

AL RIES & JACK TROUT

THE 22 IMMUTABLE
LAWS OF
marketing

Violate Them at Your Own Risk!

Authors of the bestseller *Positioning*

**The 22
Immutable Laws
of Marketing**
Violate Them at Your Own Risk

Al Ries and Jack Trout



**Dedicated to the elimination of
myths and misconceptions
from the marketing process**

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Introduction

Billions of dollars have been wasted on marketing programs that couldn't possibly work, no matter how clever or brilliant. Or how big the budgets.

Many managers assume that a well-designed, well-executed, well-financed marketing program will work. It's not necessarily so. And you don't have to look further than IBM, General Motors, and Sears, Roebuck to find examples.

The tools and techniques used at Sears, Roebuck might have been right, sometimes even spectacular. And the managers who ran the GM programs might have been the best and the brightest. Certainly the best and the brightest people traditionally have been attracted to the biggest and the best companies, like GM and IBM. But the programs themselves were based on assumptions that were flawed.

John Kenneth Galbraith, when asked what he believed was America's perception of the country's giant corporations, said that we feared corporate power. Today, we fear corporate incompetence!

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All companies are in trouble. Especially big companies. General Motors is a good example. Over the past decade the company paid a terrible price for destroying the identity of its brands. (It priced them alike as well as made them look alike.) Ten share points evaporated, which translates into about \$10 billion a year in sales.

GM'S problem wasn't a competitive problem, although competition did increase. It wasn't a quality problem either, although GM obviously wasn't delivering top-notch quality. It was very definitely a marketing problem.

When a company makes a mistake today, footprints quickly show up on its back as competition runs off with its business. To get the business back, the company has to wait for others to make mistakes and then figure out how to exploit the situation.

So how do you avoid making mistakes in the first place? The easy answer is to make sure your programs are in tune with the laws of marketing. (Although we have defined our ideas and concepts under the "marketing" banner, they are useful no matter where you are in a company, and no matter what product or service your company is selling.)

What are these marketing laws? And who brought them down from Mount Sinai on a set of stone tablets?

The fundamental laws of marketing are those described in this book.

But who says so? How come two guys from Connecticut

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have discovered what thousands of others have overlooked? There are, after all, many sophisticated marketing practitioners and academics. Why have they missed what we think is so obvious?

The answer is simple. As far as we can tell, almost no one is willing to admit that there are any laws of marketing—certainly none that are immutable.

There are laws of nature, so why shouldn't there be laws of marketing? You can build a great-looking airplane, but it's not going to get off the ground unless it adheres to the laws of physics, especially the law of gravity. You can build an architectural masterpiece on a sand dune, but the first hurricane will undermine your creation. So it follows that you can build a brilliant marketing program only to have one of the immutable laws knock you flat if you don't know what they are.

Perhaps it's human nature not to admit there are things you can't do. Certainly most marketers believe that anything is achievable if you are energetic enough, or creative enough, or determined enough. Especially if you are willing to spend enough money.

Once you open your mind to the possibility that there are laws of marketing, it's easy to see what they are. In truth, they are obvious.

We have been studying what works in marketing and what doesn't for more than 25 years. What we have found is that programs that work are almost always in tune with some fundamental force in the marketplace.

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In our books, articles, speeches, and videos we have analyzed marketing principles in some detail. We have developed strategic models of the marketing process, including a physical model of the human mind, which we helped popularize under the concept of “positioning.” We also developed a military model of the marketplace, which assigns companies and brands to either defensive, offensive, flanking, or guerrilla modes of marketing warfare.

After years of working on marketing principles and problems, we have distilled our findings into the basic laws that govern success and failure in the marketplace.

We call these principles the Immutable Laws of Marketing, and there are 22 of them. Violate them at your own risk.

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The Law of Leadership

It's better to be first
than it is to be better.

