

BRILLIANT MARKETING

New and
improved

RICHARD HALL 3rd Edition

Praise for the previous edition of *Brilliant Marketing*

Sharp, insightful and highly amusing . . . so entertaining, you don't realise how much you're learning. * * * * * 5 stars!

*Ian George, Executive President Marketing, Paramount Pictures
International*

Richard Hall's book doesn't lie. It is brilliant! Read this book. It is stimulating, entertaining and nutrient rich. Written in an engaging and inspiring style, it is packed with ideas and examples and is a must for grads and seasoned marketers alike.

Tom Hings, previously Director, Brand Marketing, Royal Mail

. . . but here is what people are saying about the new edition

From old fashioned discipline and timeless principles to futuristic, disruptive, revolutionary thinking – if you want to be a well-rounded marketer, read this book!

Daryll Scott, Director of Lab, the Digital Agency

Finally a marketing book from a person who has been there and done it – listen, learn and implement.

*Séamus Smyth, ThinkNation: the most engaging and
influential stories of our time*

Bubbling with insight, fizzing with ideas, with great game-changing tips on every page, this is a book for marketers who want to leapfrog the future! Richard Hall makes marketing thrilling! Read it, be inspired, be brilliant!

*Richard Brown, Founder, Cognosis Consulting and
Executive Coach, MindsWideOpen*

As the founder of a start-up disruptor, this book has provided a great amount of insight and knowledge that definitely will be put into

practice. We will be better equipped with the examples this book provides.

Ranvir Saggi, Co-founder, Blocksure (Blockchain and Insurance Innovation)

Brilliant Marketing is brilliant in its clarity and simplicity. From a complex and changing landscape, it extracts the insights that matter, in a style that all can access and benefit from. An indispensable primer that blends an affinity for new trends with an assured sense of timeless virtues.

Josh Davis, Seven Hills

Any successful business, large or small, new or established, depends on happy customers. This book tells you all you need to know about creating them.

Chris Rendell, Founder, the Windmill Partnership

Marketing is stuck in the past and potentially is on its last legs. Richard Hall brings it back to life with imagination and points towards a fascinating future, where the customer is its beating heart.

John Scott, Mediator, Management Consultant

The line between good marketing and failure is so fine. This book is a practical guide written by an expert practitioner about how to stay on the right side.

Paul Zisman, Founder and CEO, Europa Partners – boutique investment bank

Richard Hall captures all that is important in easy-to-digest, essential chunks. A fantastic update to a great marketing bible – amen.

Rachel Bell, Chair, Shine Communications – the PR Company

Richard Hall has produced that rarest of business books – one that delivers insight, inspiration and thoroughly enjoyable reading. If every business leader embraced this book, our companies would be much more successful and our work much more rewarding.

Matthew McCreight, Senior Partner, Schaffer Consulting

It's a rare achievement to write a book for 'everybody', but Richard Hall has done just that – half a century's marketing experience combined with a youthful spirit of continuing adventure and a sense of rebellion that will give even the digital natives pause for thought.

Nick Fitzherbert, author, Presentation Magic



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Author's acknowledgements

We've got to think again. This is the third edition of *Brilliant Marketing*. Published in 2009, revised in 2012 and now republished in 2016, at each stage there have been big changes, but this time it's much more radical. We're in the middle of a marketing revolution.

People's expectations are changing with unprecedented rapidity in today's world. Economic train crashes are normal, politics has become comically unpredictable and people in marketing and selling are under unreasonable pressure to deliver.

This book was first written in 2008. Remember 2008? It was when Lehman Brothers collapsed and the world became an even chillier and strangely alien place.

It's still icy and strange. But the temperature is fluctuating.

And it's become more fun for marketing people. Because there are more marketing toys to play with and the challenges are getting more and more exacting and more and more exciting.

If you enjoyed the first and second versions of this book, you'll find this one even more useful. Marketers need new coaching to survive these revolutionary times, to manage the constant demand to do more with less and the critical (but usually unmet) need to be more creative.

The consumer has taken over. The world of business, once driven by a command/control model, is very different now and the market place is transformed, too. Unless you respond to and anticipate the revolution, you'll become history rather than a shaper of the times.

I'm surrounded by saints

Thank you, most of all, to my long-suffering wife ('You just try living with someone writing a book,' she told me). She has an astute eye for good design and has loads of common sense. That's a big help when writing about marketing in which so much that is written is jargon and baffling.

Thank you to Steve Temblett, my commissioning editor, who has shown patience, enthusiasm and a love of cricket. As this new edition was being completed, the marketing bandwagon of the 20:20 Cricket World Cup was in progress. Being itself a classic example of modern marketing, this seemed appropriate.

And by the rich, vivid colours of creativity

Thank you to the Pearson team – and especially for getting my books into so many interesting places – they are now published in over 20 countries.

Thank you to that band of colourful thinkers who've inspired me: James Arnold-Baker, Penny Hunt, Pete Shuttleworth, Lars Holmquist, Martin Ledwon, Ian Parker, Daryll Scott, Jim Cregan, Nicole Urbanski, Peter Lederer, John Scott, Rupert Maitland Titterton and many others.

And thank you to those of you who read me and react to what I say. The marketers of today and tomorrow are the key architects of the world we are creating.

I hope this helps with the bricklaying.

Why I'm a lover of marketing

I love the discipline, unpredictability and the art of marketing. In fact, as I wrote this rewrite of *Brilliant Marketing*, I realised that I'd fallen in love with marketing again and even more intensely.

In part, this is because we're living through a revolution of ideas. If you are a marketer, you may not appreciate just how very lucky you are – imagine, you might have been a banker.

I hope you begin to see why I love marketing and that you share this love as you read this book.

About me

I read English at Balliol College, Oxford. I then joined Reckitt's, moved to RHM Foods, followed by Corgi Toys, in senior marketing roles. Lured by the excitement and razzamatazz of advertising, I joined French Gold Abbott, FCO and Euro RSCG.

I left big-company advertising and marketing after 30 years to create my own consultancy, and became a non-executive director and chairman of several charities and successful marketing services companies.

I now live in Brighton with five young grandchildren and great nieces close by. I play more football than I probably should at my age, write, travel and coach executives on how to deal with today's opportunities.

I have never felt more optimistic.

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Preface

Everything is changing so fast that this is a revolution

The most potent tool in maintaining the status quo is our belief that change is impossible.

Kevin Roberts, ex-CEO, Saatchi & Saatchi

This completely refreshed edition of *Brilliant Marketing* helps you market in the world as it is now, not how it was in 2012. Since then, a quiet revolution has happened and it's intensifying.

Anyone who is starting their own business or is moving into a new role in which understanding how marketing works really matters, should read this book.

Not only is it full of great tips, it also has content and examples you won't find elsewhere. Most marketing books are rather prescriptive and, sadly, deadly dull. This is fun, easy to read and, through its enthusiasm, can change your whole attitude to business and marketing itself.

Sir Martin Sorrell, the founder and CEO of WPP, one of the largest marketing services businesses in the world, said:

'All business is about marketing and all marketing is about people.'

This book sees things from the practitioner's point of view, not from an academic, prosaic or a lofty perspective . . . you should be able to smell and feel the excitement and the challenge of being in marketing on every page.

It's a travel guide through the journey of marketing that teaches the reader, but also takes them on a brilliant adventure.

Smell and feel the excitement and the challenge of being in marketing.

This book is more than another 'how to do it' book. It's a '*let's try and understand how to be great marketers, not just followers of digital fashion*' book. If I do nothing more than persuade you to have a love affair with change, ideas and, most all, with your consumer, well, that'll be just great.

What is marketing about?

In my last edition of this book, I said marketing was about the art of seduction. I wish I hadn't done so because I made it all sound a bit too sensationally tabloid. Marketing is more serious than that, and these are seriously dangerous times. Marketing is about the skilful art of creating and building relationships between a brand or a company and its consumers, customers and stakeholders.

In simple terms? Marketing is about designing and presenting your brand engagingly to people so they want to know more about it, to try it and to join up with what you are trying to do. And it's about being responsive to the 'zeitgeist'. Brands that belong in the dark ages of old marketing rather than the bright shiny twenty-first century will get buried.

Left brain first: marketing is about the art of informing and persuading. It's about creating conversations. It's about maximising the effectiveness and the efficiency of achieving sales. It lies at the very heart of any business because a company is destined to fail if the CEO isn't constantly attuned to and in touch with its marketing.

Without great marketing, companies wither. Then they die.

OK, right brain now: marketing is about putting on a show. It's about dramatising your brand. It's about creating audiences and applause. It's like telling a great joke. The punchline

is ‘*Try it – you’ll like it.*’ Without great marketing, companies wither. Then they die.

In a small company or a start-up, the reason a company fails is likely to be one of three:

- 1 inferior product
- 2 cash flow problems
- 3 poor marketing.

When marketing really works, you just know it – sales go up, shares go up, research tells you that it’s working, you get write-ups in marketing magazines and there’s a buzz about. But, when it’s working, it’s also fun because marketing deals with what makes people tick. And what could be more fun than being with, relating to and influencing the way people behave?

There’s been a quiet revolution, so marketing has to change

The most potent words you’ll still see in-store are ‘new, improved’, which means good old values, but better performance.

That’s what this book is about, but it goes a stage further. Not just new and improved, but radically changed . . . brilliant marketing needs to reflect this revolution.

Marketing is in the spotlight because everyone realises that the chase for sales growth (or, even, business survival) is something brilliant market-

Only marketing can achieve sustainable sales growth.

ers, who really understand their trade customers and their end consumers, can achieve and no one else can. Only marketing can achieve sustainable sales growth.

To keep up with the revolution, you have to not just have your finger on the pulse of the modern world, but also you have to

tightly embrace the changes within it (and more than simple change – we’re talking radical here):

- 1 *Innovation* is expected the whole time – same-old, same-old isn’t good enough.
- 2 *New technology* is the catalyst to change – use it, don’t be in awe of it.
- 3 *Sniper targeting* – there are specific demographic segments of key interest – the Millennials (generations Y and Z); the young-elderly (the wealthy greys); twenty-first-century working women as a discrete sector; ethnic minorities (over 5 million in the 2014 estimates); the leading-edge opinion formers, and so on. We can target all of these with sniper accuracy now.
- 4 *Feelings and attitudes*. Embrace psychographics – what sort of people are you targeting? What turns them on (and off)? Reach their emotions, not just their wallets. We need to empathise with and share with people, not just tell them stuff.
- 5 *Consumers* are smarter than ever. Be innovative in the way you talk to them. Inspire their intelligence. Be in step with their new interests and concerns.
- 6 *Creativity works*. If you aren’t being creative, entertaining* and exciting, you deserve to fail. Slightly creative is not enough. We are talking about breakthrough creative. Shock, surprise, enthrall.

*I thought it might be helpful to enclose a definition and some synonyms, just in case you think ‘entertaining’ sounded too flippant:

Entertaining: providing amusement or enjoyment; charming and entertaining companion; delightful, enjoyable, diverting, amusing, pleasurable, pleasing, pleasant, agreeable, nice, to one’s liking, congenial, charming, appealing, beguiling, enchanting, captivating, engaging, interesting, fascinating, intriguing, absorbing, riveting, compelling.

Whether you are already in marketing or are intrigued by the subject as an outsider, welcome to this mind-blowingly, strong, exotic alcohol of ‘*new, improved, revolutionary marketing*’.

Marketing is a fuel that can really transform things.

Why marketing just makes me laugh with pleasure

I love shopping.

I love new products.

I love quirky stuff.

I love the National Trust doorstep that is a life-size hare.

I love Hotel Chocolat’s Chilli Chocolate.

I love the storage boxes in Selfridges that are each decorated with a different pantone colour.

I love Ryman . . . all those useful office things.

Yes, unashamedly, I’m in love.

And I loved the Google logo (not so much the new one): colourful, three-dimensional and, through Dennis Hwang’s Google Doodles, it is topical, too. The doodles are the inventive way he plays with the logo on special anniversaries, so you have the sense that the brand is constantly being refreshed. But why did they change it? Boo. You see I am involved . . . I care . . . I’m one of billions in this love affair with marketing.

So, I confess. My name is Richard Hall and I’m a marketing junkie.

But isn’t the enthusiasm of marketing precisely what makes London, New York, Hong Kong or the North Laine in Brighton so exciting? Give me a busy street full of shops trying to sell me new stuff rather than any museum or art gallery.

There isn’t enough time NOT to be brilliant at marketing

Speed rules our lives.

And it’s distorting our sense of priority.

We are not seeing slow evolution in our world. It's all changing right in front of us now.

If a deadline matters more than the quality of what is done by that deadline, we're doomed.

Yet many people seem to feel too busy to even try and be anything other than mediocre nowadays. If a deadline is more important than the quality of what is done by that deadline, we're doomed.

Despite the improvements in technology, we seem to have less time than ever. All executives are switched on 24/7/365 with smartphones, teleconferences, to-do lists, spreadsheets and nervous ticks. We simply need to find time to be more creative if we want to shine in marketing.

This is not just a skillset thing; it's a mindset thing, too.

We have to find ways of maximising the stimuli to creative brilliance. As Maurice (now Lord) Saatchi said:

'Creativity is the last legal way to gain an unfair advantage.'

This book is a manifesto for brilliance.

This book is a manifesto for brilliance, the kind of brilliance that comes from an intuitive leap that all brilliant marketers make in working

out how to get their target consumers to do and think something they otherwise wouldn't have thought about or have done.

Brilliant marketing is that magic stuff, the ideas, the actions and the campaigns that make a real difference.

This is not a textbook. It is not a business book either, although of course it is about business.

It's a thriller, pure and simple.

Introduction

Why you must read this book now

This book is now in its third format. But this is a completely new book because the way we think about marketing has changed, and is changing, and is now in revolutionary freefall. As Bobby Rao of Hermes Growth Partners (previously Strategy Director of Vodafone) said:

'Nobody knows where the ball is right now.'

Technology and speed of communication is transforming our world.

Life has morphed from being a considered, gentlemanly game of golf, played quietly in rural Surrey by CEOs, to a rough and tumble game of noisy, brutal, take-no-prisoners ice hockey in which, as star player Wayne Gretzky put it:

Life has morphed from being a gentlemanly game of golf to a rough and tumble game of noisy, brutal, take-no-prisoners ice hockey.

'I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been.'

Is it really a revolution or is it *plus ça change*?

We tend to be overdramatic.

There's a swine flu epidemic in Moscow and it's the end of the world. There's a new iPhone and my life is transformed. There's a cranberry and orange variant of hot cross buns and we behave like there's been a breakthrough. I cannot live without Coca-Cola Life.

‘Calm down,’ I’m told.

But is it the right time to be calm? From my own perspective of half a century of marketing, it would be bizarre if I couldn’t spot big trends by now. It would be stranger still if I hadn’t screwed up, learnt a lot of lessons, made countless connections and exploited a few opportunities.

Most of all, I can see what hasn’t and isn’t changing . . . those eternal truths of marketing:

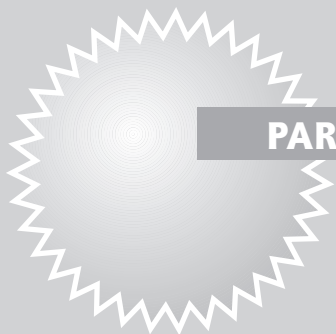
- The basic human urges – fear, lust, greed, envy . . . *no change*.
- Great urgent and vivid words still sell . . . *no change*.
- Shops that make products look appetising still work their wonders . . . *no change*.
- Innovation excites . . . *no change*.

The big changes, though, are mighty:

- Ways of reaching people . . . *massive change*.
- Decline in creative content . . . *massive change*.
- Quantity of messages . . . *massive change*.
- Innovation – Moore’s Law* applies to new product development . . . *massive change*.
- Market disruption – no one is safe – all markets are vulnerable . . . *massive change*.
- Consumer cynicism and promiscuity . . . *massive change*.

So this is revolution. Be ahead or be dead.

*Moore was a co-founder of Intel who asserted that the number of transistors in circuit boards would double every two years. The idea that such rapid change is inevitable with transistors is a telling commentary to apply more broadly to our changing world.



PART 1

Putting
marketing into
context

Before we get down to the nitty-gritty of the tools of marketing, it's important we know how to get in the right frame of mind so we understand its essence.

There are countless books on the 'Science of marketing'. They tell you how to assemble a marketing plan in much the same way as you'd put together an IKEA bookcase. Now look, there's nothing wrong with that, except to say there's a lot more to marketing than having a marketing DIY manual.

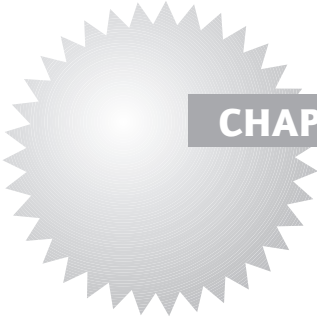
All marketing is about people, how they think and feel, what turns them on, how they change their minds, why they laugh and how we, as marketers, can make a difference.

In a world of rapid change we often exaggerate the importance of minor innovations (like being able to adjust the temperature and pouring of your bathwater by mobile phone on the way home from work). By taking a view over the past 50 years, the changes – but, more importantly, those things that haven't changed (greed, fear of loss, lust, competitiveness, envy and a sense of humour) – can be identified.

This puts 'marketing', one of the oldest trades in our civilisation, into sharp perspective.

Philip Kotler, Professor of the International School of Marketing at the Kellogg School of Management, puts the skills marketing demands rather nicely into context:

'Marketing takes a day to learn. Unfortunately, it takes a lifetime to master.'



CHAPTER 1

Brilliant
marketing
starts with a
sense of smell

Imagine Sherlock Holmes and his ‘mind palace’. Imagine that massive brain in action. Imagine him trying to work out exactly what has been going on . . . with whom and why and how.

Any of the great detectives would have been good at marketing because they’d have been temperamentally adept at the first thing that matters, ‘whodunit’. Just as a city trader, presumably, has a nose for the market, its shifts and swings, so the marketer, just as skilled and, arguably, a lot more useful, can smell gaps in markets, opportunities and know how to position a brand to best advantage. They’ll have the charm to engage a potential customer in an interesting conversation and will have an absolutely voracious appetite for winning market share.

Most of all, do you have a nose for this? Can you be like Helena Rubinstein, the founder of that great eponymous, cosmetic brand who, on being asked why she’d chosen a new perfume, said, immortally, ‘because it smells of money’?



brilliant tip

Have an insatiable hunger to win; insist on understanding issues; refuse to be dull.

This is revolution.

Here's what I wrote four years ago:

'The world in which we now live will be tougher than the heady days of the early and mid-noughties, tougher but more exciting.'

Reading this now I think I was being rather complacent about those emerging trends.

Because, as it's turned out, the world today is a very different one from the one in 2012. From e-commerce to the demise of old brands to hero-to-zero digital brands (remember Myspace?) to innovations in all sectors to . . . and this is the big one:

a major change in consumer attitudes and behaviour:

- in their trust (of nearly everything)
- to their perception of where they sit in the social hierarchy
- to their promiscuity in brand usage
- to their aspirations and energy levels.

Getting a sale now is really hard and takes longer than ever. And (did we ever think we'd see this day?) *when marketing people talk about sales more than they talk about image, that's a huge and important change.*

The average CMO lasts maybe two years now. The older ones are a frightened and confused breed and their boards are a sceptical and bemused bunch. Everyone is working harder and trying to be smarter.

Three things should now be at the top of any marketing agenda:

- 1 Do we have a *great relationship* with our customers?
- 2 Are our products and services *good value* for money?
- 3 Are our consumers *really engaged* by us?

**brilliant tip**

Build engaging relationships with customers and end consumers.

How do you keep up?

Most marketing textbooks don't help you. It's not that they're bad books, but they offer only ordinary solutions and usually are boring. They tell you too much in a dull drone.

Turn your back on dull and on prevarication.

Always have a list of 'must dos' on your desk. And do them.

Put away your calculator. Marketing has more to do with art than science, more to do with feelings than logic.

Here's the hierarchy of talent: mindset first; skillset second; smartset third. How you feel; what you know; how you utilise both together. Getting it together is the way to focus.

Ask yourself if you are being remarkable. Here's what Seth Godin, the brilliant author, said:

'Quit or be exceptional. Mediocre is for losers.'

**brilliant tip**

Marketing has more to do with feelings than logic . . . trust your gut instinct.

- **Focus on 'doing things'.** I love seeing people do clever things, such as Nestlé's launch of its Skinny Cow Hot Chocolate drink. The brand was targeting young women who loved fashion, but had limited budgets. So it was showcased in Oxford Street and Manchester, at House of Fraser