

# Dare To Be Different

by Angel Rodriguez

*T*here are so many choices, yet most appear to be the same, it takes something truly different to catch people's attention. Being different is often accompanied with the promise of some added value, something worth paying for. As time passes, what was once truly different and worth a little extra is in danger of becoming ordinary. So how can you be truly different, and keep being so, in a way people value? Being different just for the sake of it is not going to work. However, if you dare to be different in a way people value, you will at the very least keep the attention of existing customers and probably acquire new ones happy to pay more... just for a little something different!

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In a world with so much choice for just about any product or service and little time to explore them, it is not surprising the plain ordinary appear “invisible” during the selection process. The sheer volume of information has people scanning their options, seeing right through any that look the same or boring. Only something truly different suggests the unknown and creates intrigue. If you fail to attract attention on first glance, the opportunity may be missed. Why? Because people have probably seen it before and what was different then is now just plain ordinary. Over time people become jaded so your marketing needs to be continuously evolving to catch their initial attention.

You need to be different in order to break through the bombardment of marketing thrown at people every hour of every day. This will reduce your risk of being invisible during the selection process. However, being different just for the sake of it is not going to work. True, every successful marketing strategy acknowledges the importance of having to differentiate in some way. It equally recognises the need to be of value.

So how different do you need to be? A child who sees a real goldfish for the first time would think one to be different and would like one, at least for while. A blue goldfish on the other hand, now that is truly different, especially if the child had the ordinary kind before. Every child that sees this blue goldfish, a fish few other kids have, will want to own one, and would be willing to pay more for one! OK, so it might not be a goldfish, but do you think a child cares about that? The promise is of something truly different to the ordinary goldfish. The key for the pet store owner is to ensure people

value the difference enough to pay for it, even pay a premium for it, and that they fulfil their promise of providing something truly different from the ordinary.

In many mature markets a similar departure from the ordinary is a welcomed difference. Take a cup of coffee for example. Starbucks, in business since 1971, decided one day to offer a different environment to enjoy coffee. Most people could not tell if the coffee was a “real” cappuccino and, like the child with a blue goldfish, did not care about that. Yet Starbucks charge significantly more for a few coffee beans than most. In this example people were promised a different “experience” and were perfectly happy to pay for this added value, and still do so today by the millions. Truly different products and services with added value sell – they are different – truly – from the rest.

Being different however is a constantly moving target. As time passes competitors innovate, or imitate. New ideas arise and preferences change. What was once interesting and visible is in danger of becoming boring and transparent. To dare to be different in fact means having the courage to “keep” being different. At the very least you will keep the attention of your existing customers and probably acquire new ones happy to pay more.

Now ask yourself this question. Are you promising something different and visible to people, and if so, is it being marketed in the most effective manner possible?

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