



Differentiate or Die: Survival in Our Era of Killer Competition

Jack Trout

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"Any damn fool can put on a deal, but it takes genius, faith, and perseverance to create a brand."-David Ogilvy

In today's ultra-competitive world, the average supermarket has 40,000 brand items on its shelves. Car shoppers can wander through the showrooms of over twenty automobile makers. For marketers, differentiating products today is more challenging than at any time in history yet it remains at the heart of successful marketing. More importantly, it remains the key to a company's survival.

In *Differentiate or Die*, bestselling author Jack Trout doesn't beat around the bush. He takes marketers to task for taking the easy route too often, employing high-tech razzle-dazzle and sleight of hand when they should be working to discover and market their product's uniquely valuable qualities. He examines successful differentiation initiatives from giants like Dell Computer, Southwest Airlines, and Wal-Mart to smaller success stories like Streit's Matzoh and Connecticut's tiny Trinity College to determine why some marketers succeed at differentiating themselves while others struggle and fail.

More than just a collection of marketing success stories, however, *Differentiate or Die* is an in-depth exploration of today's most successful differentiation strategies. It explains what these strategies are, where and when they should be applied, and how they can help you carve out your own image in a crowded marketplace. Marketing executives in all types of organizations, regardless of size, can learn how to achieve product differentiation through strategies including:

- * Revisiting the U.S.P.

Rosser Reeves's classic unique selling proposition approach, updated for today's marketplace

- * Positioning

Understanding how the mind works in the differentiating process

- * Owning an Idea

Techniques to seize a differentiating idea, dramatize it, and make it your own

- * Competition

How to use differentiating ideas against your competitors in the marketplace

Consumers today are faced with an explosion of choices. In this environment, distinctive product attributes are quickly copied by competitors, perceived by consumers to be minimal, or both. Still, those who fail to differentiate their product or service in the mind of the consumer won't stand a chance.

Differentiate or Die outlines the many ways you can achieve differentiation. It also warns how difficult it is to achieve differentiation by being creative, cheap, customer oriented, or quality driven things that your competitors can do as well.

Praise for *Differentiate or Die*

"Another great book by the king of positioning!"-John Schnatter, CEO, Papa John's International

"*Differentiate or Die* differentiates itself on the groaning marketing bookshelf with its lucid prose, its clear vision of the future marketplace . . . and its sensible solutions for surviving the frenzied competition we're sure to find there."-Dan Rather, CBS News

"What I like about *Differentiate or Die* is the book's emphasis on the power of logic, simplicity, and clarity-getting to the essence of a problem. In Silicon Valley, attributes like that can make the difference between having lunch and being lunch."-Scott McNealy, CEO, Sun Microsystems, Inc.

"Trout and Rivkin marvelously illustrate that differentiation is the cornerstone of successful marketing." - Philip Kotler, S.C. Johnson Distinguished Professor of International Marketing, Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University

"We've built our business by being first-and executing best. Jack Trout and Steve Rivkin are doing the same, delivering the timely, powerful insights that will drive tomorrow's marketing strategies. A must read for anyone looking to win in an unforgiving competitive marketplace."-Mike Ruetters, CEO, EMC Corporation

"Dotcom executives must learn the lessons of Differentiate or Die. If they don't, I pity their investors."-Aaron Cohen, CEO, Concrete Media; Co-Founder, Bolt.com

Differentiate or Die: Survival in Our Era of Killer Competition Details

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Anna Holopainen says

Paljon päällekkäisiä teemoja Positioning-kirjan kanssa, mikä ei ole isokaan ihme, koska aiheet liittyvät kiinteästi toisiinsa. Parhaimmillaan juuri yleiskatsauksena aiheeseen ja jatkolukemisena edellä mainitulle. Paikoin tosin hieman epäkoherentti lukukokemus - osittain todennäköisesti juuri siksi, että pyrkii esittelemään aihealueen laajasti ja koostamaan yhteen aiempia näkemyksiä, joten aiheen käsittely ja esimerkit jäävät väistämättä pintapuolisiksi. Joka tapauksessa oikein lukemisen arvoinen kirja, josta saa myös ajattelun työkaluja, kunhan vain tietää millaista kirjaa on lukemassa.

Alberto Lopez says

A fantastic book on Marketing. The caveat is that many of the samples quoted reference events that, while recent, seem from a long time ago. But this just goes to corroborate the book's allegations that we live in a very dynamic environment. If you study or work within Marketing, then you must read it.

Pradit Pinyopasakul says

I read this book since 9 years ago. Even today, the concept from this book is still valid and applicable to current business environment. It offers how a business can be unique in its field. As we cannot be everything to everyone, a business has to make a choice of its brand identity and must focus. It shows that even commodities can be differentiated and that product differentiation is not impossible, but difficult, and that "Economy of Speed" is important. The book emphasizes that we do not need just to differentiate but as well to communicate our difference, to be in the mind of our target customers. It gives you a lot of examples of what can be differentiating ideas. On the other hand, it as well remind you of the pitfall like how growth can destroy differentiation, and that you cannot differentiate everywhere with the same idea. It ends with how to maintain difference and that CEO must be involve. In conclusion, we must be different to stay competitive in the market.

Vismay says

Life was getting pretty boring, as such. The pile-up of books to be read was getting pretty thin, it was time for me to cough up some good book from my father's overhead storage. In that process, I came across a book 'Differentiate or Die' by Jack Trout (along with Steve Rivkin). After reading the book, I firmly believe that it is the Mecca of the modern advertising campaigns launched by varied products across the world- whether it is on T.V., magazine, newspaper or the internet.

For the survival in this era of killer competition it becomes necessary for any product to carve for itself a niche, at least in the minds of the consumers- he must differentiate himself from the other competitive products to sell. Though this book was written way back in 2000, the idea of the book is reinforced in today's testing times as the business houses battle two-pronged challenges, one emanating from the global

slowdown and other from the killer competition in this globalized world with the presence of gazillions of choices that consumers have when they decide what to shop. See the internet Shopping Boom spreading across India- 'Yebhi.com', 'Flipcart.com', 'Onlineshoes.com', 'Zomato.com' and many more that are following the suit.

Read this book and surf across the television- you would surely be able to pin-point out the type of differentiation technique used by the so-televised brand. It seems that the Indian Advertising Agency has taken this book to the heart.

The book is written in simple and lucid style; the concepts are pretty well explained. Loaded with examples ranging from the Coca-Cola to Walmart, from Volvo to Bentley and from Oral-B to Gillette, the book drives this point straight to the heart that survival depends on our ability to project the image of our being different in the mind of the consumers. It may be 'Being First', 'Owning an attribute', 'being a Leader', 'having a Rich Heritage' or any other differentiating idea listed in the book, the authors strongly believes that the differentiating idea of a product should be firmly drilled into the consumers' mind.

Though the authors seemed pessimistic and prophesized bleak future for those internet companies that offered free email services or free softwares- they should have by now changed their opinion with the business that Gmail or Yahoo (though it is a stage of massive overhaul today) is garnering as well as how hugely popular Mozilla Firefox or Linux probably is (though not all its softwares are free).

Anything said, I strongly recommend this book if you are to take your product to the market- it would act like a guiding beacon for the way you boost your sales. I am looking forward to read Jack Trout's 'Positioning'.

Th?o Ph??ng says

Cu?n sách hay nh?t tôi t?ng ??c v? marketing, cho tôi th?y r?ng s? khác bi?t, không ch? là chìa khóa thành công trong mar mà còn trong c? cu?c s?ng.

Shita Dewi says

I read this book almost 6 years ago yet I think this is one of good books that every marketer should read,.

Differentiation is the key element to long-term success and profits; furthermore, it is an essential area of discussion in any corporate strategy discussions and is frankly the biggest and most important thing that I learned while getting my MM a few years ago (still, in progress of finishing it,..heuheu)

Differentiate or Die by Jack Trout and Steve Rivkin is an excellent read for those learning how and why businesses succeed in the LONG-TERM. This book is another excellent marketing book by one of the authors. Jack Trout first came to popularity with his book "Positioning," which he co-wrote with Al Ries. For those interested in marketing books The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing by Al Ries and Jack Trout is another truly great book by one of the authors.

That being said, if you haven't read anything by Jack Trout or Al Ries then this book, or one of the aforementioned books, is essential reading for marketing and brand managers.
Are you one of them??

Edith Yeghiazaryan says

The book demonstrates the importance of differentiation nowadays and shows various ways to differentiate a brand in the marketplace. It claims that if the brand is not the first mover, it can still win by distinguishing itself from the competitors.

Lionkhan-sama says

I'm not saying this book is bad per se, it's just ridiculously repetitive. The author makes a lot of fair points about marketing though, and definitely puts forth enough examples and evidence to prove his opinions.

But the worst part is the fact that I listened to the audiobook of this book. The guy they have reading it is most probably the WORST possible person to read an audiobook to an audience, EVER. In fact, he was so bad, bland and effin boring it made me downright hate this book, although it's pretty good in it's own right. To summarise, never, ever, ever listen to the audiobook. Words cannot express how bad it is. ><

Toàn Khôi says

Gi?a m?t r?ng s?n ph?m t??ng t? nhau, s? khác bi?t c?a m?i th??ng hi?u chính là ph??ng cách duy nh?t giúp b?n t?o ra đ?u ?n trong tâm trí ng??i tiêu dùng và giành ???c l?a ch?n c?a h?. ?n b?n Differentiate or Die - Khác bi?t hay là Ch?t ??u tiên khi xu?t hi?n trên th? tr??ng ?ã ???c xem là m?t c?m nang ngh? nghi?p c?a gi?i marketing – nh?ng ng??i ?ang n? l?c làm cho s?n ph?m hay th??ng hi?u c?a h? khác bi?t so v?i s?n ph?m hay th??ng hi?u c?a ??i th? c?nh tranh.

Môi tr??ng c?nh tranh gi?a các s?n ph?m, d?ch v? t??ng t? nhau ngày càng c?ng th?ng và ?i?u này ?ã làm cho tính khác bi?t tr? nên vô cùng quan tr?ng. Cu?n sách này trình bày m?i v?n ?? ?? khác bi?t hóa m?t th??ng hi?u: t? h??ng ti?p c?n c? ?i?n b?ng cách s? d?ng “?u th? S?n ph?m ???c ?áo” ??n vi?c ??nh v? s?n ph?m theo t?ng chi ti?t nh? nh?t. B?n có th? tìm th?y m?i chi?n l??c hay nh?t, hi?u qu? nh?t ?? khác bi?t s?n ph?m c?a b?n v?i s?n ph?m c?a ??i th? c?nh tranh trong th?i ?i?m th? tr??ng vô cùng c?ng th?ng. ?? có cái nhìn ??y ?? v? v?n ?? khác bi?t hóa trong th? gi?i kinh doanh ngày nay, b?n hãy gi? bên mình cu?n sách Khác bi?t hay là Ch?t ?? làm kim ch? nam cho vi?c kinh doanh c?a mình.

<https://www.firstnews.com.vn/vi/tac-p...>

Shrutin says

A must-read for anyone who takes their business seriously.

Filled with industry examples.

Some might argue that some companies showcased as differentiators haven't subsequently fared well. This however, does not reflect the solid, and logic-backed learning in the book, but rather that those companies, after a point, forgot the learning and drifted from their core purpose.

Ashley says

This book reminded me a lot of *Selling the Invisible*. It's an easy read, packed with lots of examples and information that sometimes seems counterintuitive. The point of the book, in simplest terms, is that although we may think it's best to be all things to all people, it's actually best to pick one thing and do it well. Products and services should be marketed with one differentiating idea, which may mean sacrificing a share of the market.

My main critique of this book would be that for many of the examples, I could think of a counter-example. And at times, the book seemed to contradict itself. At first, I thought maybe I just wasn't understanding some of the concepts, but I don't really think that's the case. Interestingly, the last chapter of this book directly contradicts some of the recent business and marketing books that I've read, particularly Jack Welch's *Winning* and Larry Bossidy's *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*. That in and of itself isn't particularly interesting, but the fact that none of these authors is willing to take the middle ground and complicate matters a bit seems interesting to me. Maybe I'm just too familiar with academic writing.

Richa Seth says

After having read 'Positioning' by Al Ries and Trout, I was intrigued to read 'Differentiate or Die' by Jack Trout especially because of its title. The key message Trout is trying to convey is that all enterprises have their unique selling propositions (USP); all they need to do is package, position and communicate it to their target audience. He has analyzed many successful differentiation initiatives from giants like Dell, Southwest Airlines, and Wal-Mart to smaller success stories like eToys Inc., and Connecticut's Trinity College to determine why some marketers succeed at differentiating themselves while others struggle and fail.

Trout has also stated some logical steps for developing the differentiating idea based on the existing credentials of an enterprise and the ways of communicating this to your stakeholders. He has done an in-depth exploration of how some of the attributes which can be packaged as a differentiating idea for your enterprise.

Towards the end of this book, Trout has talked about differentiating anything, from changing a country's image to unmarketing of drugs and differentiating the Democrats from Republicans, which really makes me think if any one of us have ever defined our own USP's/differentiating factors which can help us develop our own strengths and niche in the industry? Maybe we should.

Coming back to the insights from this book, the last chapter asks the most crucial question 'Who is in charge of Differentiation?', according to Trout most of the CEO's treat marketing and innovation as their secondary objective whereas the sales is obviously the priority. Trout takes us through various examples of CEO failures showing more lousy strategy than lousy execution, this is mainly due to not knowing 'what to do and what not to', which is essentially caused due to the top level executives not getting involved in strategic initiatives and perhaps are more involved in showcasing the numbers on the bourse. The lesson to be learnt, top level management not only needs to be aware about the organization's USP and the key differentiating factors but also communicate and share these with the employees, customers, investors and most importantly with the marketing consultancy. CEOs need to understand that marketing and innovation help produce results whereas all the rest are costs.

For all those in marketing, branding, public relations this book can help you carve out various differentiation

strategies and develop the appropriate positioning and identity for your clients in a crowded marketplace.

Vivu says

Nhi?u thông tin nh?ng ??c bu?n ng? quá.

Derek Neighbors says

Jack is the king of positioning, but this book was pretty stale. Seemed like a rehash of his other works. Only not as good. I recommend Positioning instead.

Alejandra says

It seemed like it would help both of my businesses. As with all marketing, branding and positioning type books, there are a lot of case studies and "I told you so"s.

But on the same note, I love these writing stories because they contain a lot of lessons learned and useful examples of directions companies have taken. This is the type of book that doesn't pretend to know your business' unique problems, or try suggest any surefire solutions that work in every scenario. It's a wealth of information to be chewed up, and applied. You can learn so much from other people's mistakes and successes.

A quick read, and not too repetitive, which I also always appreciate.
