



NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2016: LAUNCH

Welcome,

Reed Strategies' mission is to build on trusted relationships to form a community of clients who collaborate on market research and analysis. The goal is to provide trusted insights to lead in our diverse and changing world.

My objective is to provide you with continuous value added insights whether it's:

- recommendations from a project to support your business objectives
- opportunities to learn from peers as part of our RS Client Advisory Community (free to clients)
- implications to your business from market analysis and other business leader perspectives in the quarterly RS Market Research Insights report (free to clients)
- points of view on industry topics in the monthly RS newsletter

As always, I appreciate your feedback and ideas to improve the value that Reed Strategies can provide to you and your teams. Let me know of other people you know who would benefit from joining our RS network.

Thank you.

Marshall Reed, Founder

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1] December Topic: LAUNCH

December is traditionally a time for reflection looking back and for resolutions and predictions going forward. For me, personally and professionally, it is a time of significant change including jumping headfirst into this new entrepreneurial venture and my youngest about to head to college this fall, starting a new phase in life as an “empty nester”. I am thankful for all the support and feedback many of you have provided since I launched Reed Strategies on December 14. I’m not really into resolutions, but I have made a commitment to make more time to stay connected with friends and my business network.

When I was thinking about what topic to cover in this December newsletter I thought it only appropriate to focus on launching something new. For me, launching Reed Strategies has been a combination of anxiety, excitement, and a lot of quick learning of everything that goes into starting a small business. From discussions with several of you who are running your own consulting business or other endeavors, it sounds like it’s about managing the highs and lows.

I have had the opportunity across different companies to lead marketing teams in launching several new strategic solutions. Following are some lessons learned from my experiences. Several of these are not rocket science but I have found over my career that being aware of the need to do something is the first step, but the more significant challenge is to successfully execute.

- What Has Worked
 - **Customer Advocates:** Securing early adopter customer references for a launch has been a common challenge across companies. Establishing long term strategic level relationships with targeted clients, including ongoing collaboration and feedback, is invaluable in developing advocates who would also be strong references (vs tactical ad hoc requests for a reference).
 - Challenge: I have found that it’s important to have a couple of early references to minimize the impact on your customer from all the requests.
 - **Vision & Roadmap:** Creating a unique vision for the future that inspires others (focusing on benefits not product features) is important but laying out a roadmap is critical for others to join you on the journey from their starting point.



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- Challenge: The market has a perception of your brand based on today. It's important to extend/build your brand to be relevant in your future vision.
- **Communication:** Over-communicate. It's always interesting to check that people are hearing what you are intending to say. I have found that even with the best of intentions that we talk by each other a lot. Continuous communication to all groups internally and your partner ecosystem is critical. Pre-testing messages is valuable and best when you can team with customers, industry analysts and other influencers to refine before launch with the added benefit of developing external advocates.
 - Challenge: When launching something new it might be "unknown" to many causing them to incorrectly define it. Communicate as much what it isn't in addition to what it is.
- Other examples of What Has Worked include: Integrated plan with measurable goals, demos to show it (vs powerpoints), partner ecosystem engagement to expand reach, post launch lessons learned & refinement.
- What Has Not Worked
 - **Inconsistent Messages:** It's challenging enough when you are launching something new into an existing market or into a new market to communicate your value proposition and positioning. It's far more work to refocus multiple conflicting messages.
 - Recommendation: Create one communications plan and train spokespeople.
 - **Assumed Alignment:** With so much going on before a launch it's easy to get into the mode of focusing on checking items off the to-do list. The challenge when launching, especially something new, is that even though you held training sessions and management reviews don't assume everyone is aligned.
 - Recommendation: Engage trusted leaders in different parts of the organization to help ensure buy-in from their teams.
 - **Delays:** Although there are many inputs that go into orchestrating the timing of a launch, a delay typically creates significant issues especially if the timing has already been communicated externally. Delays cause internal frustration and rumors about readiness and external questions of commitment and trust.



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- Recommendation: Readiness reviews are key. Create a phased launch starting with a controlled introduction (to targeted regions and/or minimum viable product capabilities) that builds over time to general availability. One value of this approach is refinement based on market knowledge, especially in fast changing markets.
- Other examples of What Has Not Worked include: not establishing a unique differentiation which enables competitors to spread FUD, not willing to cannibalize your legacy product/service to launch a new solution (others will cannibalize you so you might as well do it to yourself first), confusing the market by using the internal product code name at the same time as marketing the new official product name.

Let me know of your launch experiences that could benefit others so I can include in an upcoming newsletter (marshall@reedstrategies.com).

2] Key December Market Updates

December Article Updates to 4Q2016 RS Market Research Insights Report - Future of Work (additional analysis and key message summaries will be included in 1Q2017 report)

- (Wired) The threat of AI taking our jobs has been exaggerated. The future is in the 'human services cloud' (<http://www.wired.co.uk/article/human-services-cloud>)
- (The Financial) Collaboration of all stakeholders essential to steer future of work in the digital economy to one of inclusive growth (<http://www.finchannel.com/business/62330-collaboration-of-all-stakeholders-essential-to-steer-future-of-work-in-the-digital-economy-to-one-of-inclusive-growth>)
- (Fast Company) The Top 5 Ways Work Changed in 2016 (<https://www.fastcompany.com/3066546/the-future-of-work/how-work-changed-in-2016>)
- (Sustainable Brands) Creating the Workplace of the Future Through Biophilic Design (<https://goo.gl/8yV6tH>)
- (Fast Company) These Are The Top 5 Workplace Trends We'll See In 2017 (<https://www.fastcompany.com/3066605/the-future-of-work/these-are-the-top-5-workplace-trends-well-see-in-2017>)
- (The Huffington Post) Interactive Periodic Table of the Future of Work (<https://goo.gl/q6sedK>)



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3] NEXT UP for Reed Strategies

I look forward to several follow-up discussions on opportunities to help you with your projects in 2017 and some potential partnerships to work together. I've also taken the leap to join the freelance community joining a couple of executive freelance programs. Let me know about your experience in this rapidly growing future model of work.

The next RS Market Research Insights report will be published at the end of March and posted on the RS Client Advisory Community private group for clients. The 1Q2017 report will focus on the Customer Service Experience. I had the opportunity at Avaya to be part of the strategy and marketing team that worked on the Nortel Enterprise M&A including developing an integrated roadmap to launch a new customer service experience. To this day I recall the amazing client discussions on the possibilities to transform their customer service.

Market coverage of customer service experience in December includes:

- (Forbes) The Customer Experience: 5 Bold Expert Predictions For 2017
(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/tompopomaronis/2016/12/30/the-customer-experience-5-bold-expert-predictions-for-2017/>)
- (Luxury Daily) 13 Customer Experience Trends for 2017
(<https://www.luxurydaily.com/13-customer-experience-trends-for-2017/>)
- (Forbes) Four Trends In Customer Engagement In 2017
(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/rawnshah/2016/12/27/four-trends-in-customer-engagement-in-2017/>)
- (Venture Beat) How AI and messaging are redefining customer service
(<http://venturebeat.com/2016/12/27/how-ai-and-messaging-are-redefining-customer-service/>)
- (Forbes) Millennial Customers Will Dominate In 2017. Is Your Customer Service Experience Ready For Them?
(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2016/12/27/millennial-customers-will-dominate-2017-is-your-customer-service-experience-ready/#2374341c79f4>)
- (Forbes) They're Not Making Customers Like They Used To: Changing Customer Service Trends And Expectations
(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2016/12/21/theyre-not-making-customers-like-they-used-to-how-customer-service-expectations-have-changed/>)



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- (LiveChat) The Magic of Customer Experience: Lessons from Disney on How to Improve the Customer Journey
(<https://www.livechatinc.com/blog/disney-improve-customer-journey/>)
- (LinkedIn - Bruce Temkin article) Emotion and the Four Customer Experience Core Competencies
(<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/emotion-four-customer-experience-core-competencies-bruce-temkin-ccxp?trk=hp-feed-article-title-like>)
- (McKinsey) Omnichannel, not omnishambles
(<http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/omnichannel-not-omnishambles>)

If you have perspectives on customer service that you would like included in the report (anonymously) or other future topics for RS Market Research Insights please send me a note or set up a time to talk.