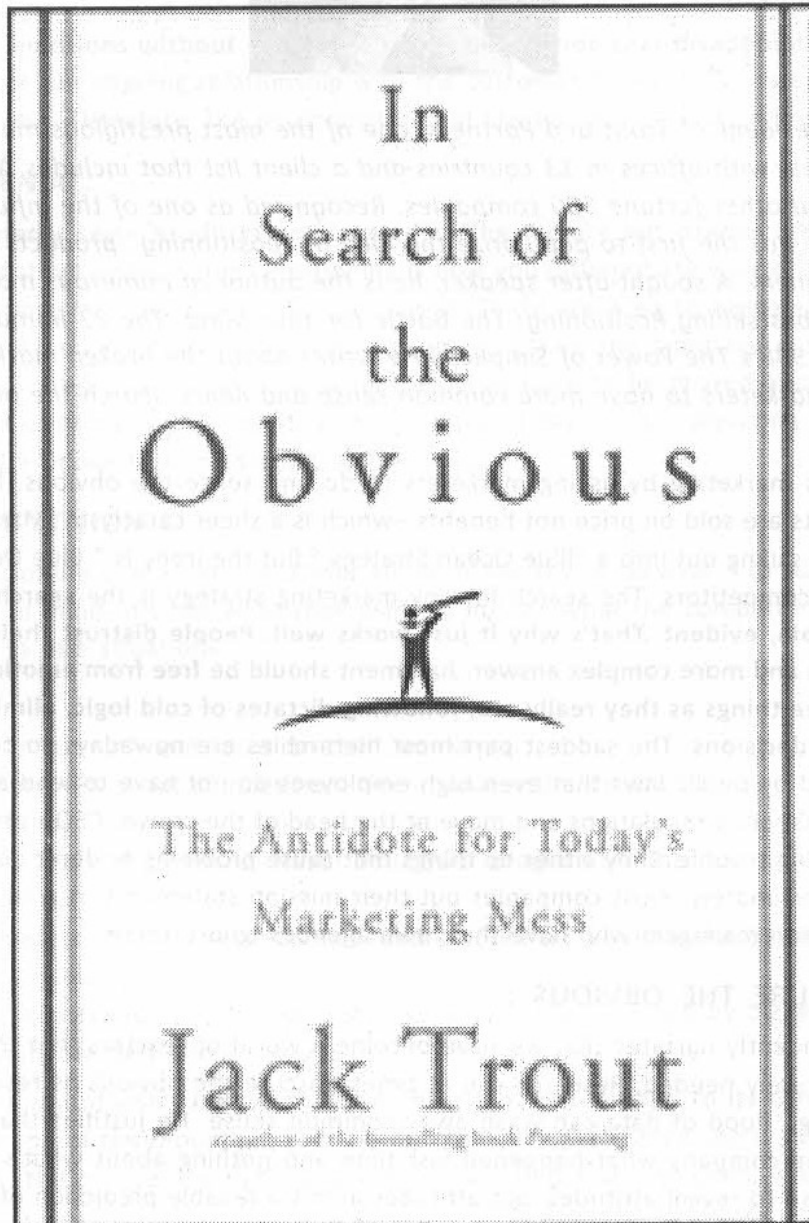


**BOOK REVIEW
ON
IN SEARCH OF THE OBVIOUS.**

The Antidote for today's marketing mess- By Jack Trout .

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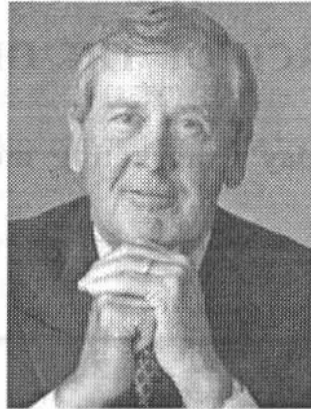


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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jack Trout is President of Trout and Partners, one of the most prestigious marketing firms in the United States, with offices in 13 countries and a client list that includes ATT, IBM, Merrill Lynch, Sears and other fortune 500 companies. Recognized as one of the influential gurus of marketing, Trout was the first to popularize the idea of “positioning” products and ideas in the minds of consumers. A sought-after speaker, he is the author of numerous marketing classics including the bestselling Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind, The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing and 1998’s The Power of Simplicity. He writes about the broken marketing world and calls marketers to have more common sense and hence search the obvious.

The book simplifies marketing by asking marketers to do and sense the obvious. The incongruity today is more and more products are sold on price not benefits –which is a sheer cataclysm. Marketers must avoid head to head competition by sailing out into a “Blue Ocean Strategy”. But the irony is “Blue Oceans” are hard to find these days in a sea of competitors. The search for any marketing strategy is the **search for the obvious: easy to see, understand, plain, evident. That’s why it just works well. People distrust their instincts as they feel there must be a hidden and more complex answer. Judgment should be free from emotional bias or intellectual subtlety by trying to see things as they really are, following dictates of cold logic, eliminating both sentiment and self-interest from decisions.** The saddest part most hierarchies are nowadays so cumbered with rule and traditions and so bound by public laws that even high employees do not have to lend anyone anywhere. They simply follow precedents, obey regulations and move at the head of the crowd. CEO’s often make bad decisions that eventually lead to big trouble. They either do things that cause problems or don’t do things that could have avoided problems. Unfortunately, most companies put their mission statements in gold frames and hang them in their lobbies where top managers who have their own agendas ignore them.

RESEARCHERS OBSCURE THE OBVIOUS :

The authors despondently narrates that we have become a world of reactors, not thinkers, at a time when good thinking is desperately needed. Research can at times obscure the obvious as researchers don’t get paid for simplicity and a huge flood of data can wash away common sense. He justifies that customer satisfaction studies can only tell the company what happened last time and nothing about what’s going to happen next. Researchers may promise to reveal attitudes, but attitudes aren’t a reliable prediction of behavior. People often talk one way, but act another way.

INFO CLUTTER :

“The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook”-William James.

Word of mouth is now a buzz, evangelist, cause marketing. That’s good stuff that creating a lot of viral effect and widespread reach. What’s not good is shilling, infiltration, spam, defacement and falsification that’s just to

keep products floating. Buzz can kill you if you don't have the right product or a have a positioning that's just smoke. Jack Trout reveals that Information overload will become a medical problem as very brusquely people will be popping pills to help empty their minds. Endemic condition of Info mania is a disease that can drain the brains. Today the mantra is 'differentiate or die'. Differentiated brands like Toyota [Reliability] ,Volvo [safety] ,Mercedes [Engineering] ,Ferrari [speed] have their USP intact. Think general its ford. Similar thinking takes us to the road of rack and ruin. Welcome to abyss. To be different is not to be the same. To be unique is to be one of a kind.

ADVERTISING THEATRE :

The book explains that most advertisers and their agencies create ads to entertain, not sell as they are a little fanatical and focus on all about getting laughs or generating shock value. It's about theatre, not marketing sometimes. **Playing on emotions without substance is like infatuation that disappoints in the end of the day.** Without a real difference, an ongoing relationship with the customer is lost .Differences between products and services are becoming less. Therefore, the psychological and lifestyle differentiation are more important.

BRAND SCHIZOPHRENIA :

Jack Trout undoubtedly says **"Products are created in the factory but brands are created in the mind"**. Powerful brands have distinct personalities .Positioning is how you differentiate yourself. Staying focused on that position is how you survive in a brutally competitive world .There are ways to execute line extensions without confusing and losing customers. If extensions are meaningless then the company has obviously lost its fizz. Brands cannot be simply created with smoke and mirrors, they have to be proved and the difference must be unwrapped freezing the customer's choice. Citing the example of Pepsi-Cola's Aquafina that positioned itself on 'guaranteed purity' did a brilliant job of dramatizing nothing.

COPING WITH COMPETITION :

Today, the Ugly fact of life that most companies adopt as the key to survival is to start every marketing plan with your competition in mind. It's not what they want to do; it's what the competition will let them do. The book offers some tips in dire situations.

Survival Tips :

1. Avoid a competitor's strength and focus on their weakness.
2. Always be a little paranoid about competition. Never underestimate your competitor. In fact, you're safer if you overestimate them.
3. Competitors will get better if provoked. Never build your program around your competitor's mistakes. They will correct them.
4. When business is threatened, competitors aren't rational .Survival is a powerful instinct and when threatened, all irrationality goes out of the window.
5. Know your enemy, Squash your smaller competitors, avoid being squashed by bigger competitors. If you're losing the battle, shift the battlefield.

Nowadays, a leader who doesn't brag is the best thing that can happen to its competition. When they've paved their way to the top of the mountain, they better plant a flag and take some pictures. If they don't take credit for achievement, the competitor right behind them will find a way to claim what is rightfully theirs.

Jack Trout ends saying "When you try to be all things to all people, you inevitably wind up in trouble. Better advice comes from a manager who said, 'I'd rather be strong somewhere, then be weak everywhere'."

In précis, marketing guru Jack Trout clears up the mystification that surrounds the marketing profession. Instead of focusing on segmentation or customer retention or search engine optimization, marketers should be penetrating for that simple, obvious differentiating idea. Obvious solutions are often hidden in plain sight, and sometimes even ignored in favor of something more clever or creative.

