

Can you explain your product to a six-year-old?



Most companies—especially those involved in technology—get far too complicated when they explain themselves to the people they care about. Like customers. And investors. How many times have you heard a 10-minute presentation and wondered, “What do these guys do, again?”

What you need is a simple, clear Marketing Strategy. One that comes from your customer's perspective. Not your developer's. This holds true whether your audience is 6, 26, or 66. And whether they're OEM engineers, systems integrators, or end users.

When you're formulating your elevator pitch, sometimes it helps to pretend that you're explaining what you do to a kid. It gets you past the buzzwords and specs to the simple and compelling "reason to buy".

What's the main pain?

Your technology probably does dozens of amazing things in a lot of different areas. But what's the most important "pain" that it relieves?

Wait, before you answer that: have you picked out a niche market segment that you can win quickly? So that you can use successes in this area to leverage expansion into new ones? One of the characteristics of your initial target segments should be that they're feeling more pain. They have a more than average motivation to make a change.

Your marketing strategy should be clear, and include the main problem that your product solves, for whom, and why it's better than the current alternative. For each segment you will need a slightly different spin on your value proposition.

5 SECRETS OF TECHNOLOGY MARKETING

1) Technologies don't sell; solutions do. Which isn't to say that explaining your technology is a bad thing. It's just that communicating a focused benefit that resonates with the target audience is a better thing.

2) Folks aren't as bright—or as dumb—as you think. Making assumptions about your audience's knowledge of your technology category can be deadly. You have to really know what they know in order to say anything meaningful to them.

3) People are people. Even engineers. We all respond to the same basic emotional cues, visual imagery and linguistic nuances. Technology advertising should leverage these things the same way any effective advertising would.

4) Familiarity breeds comprehension. Sometimes it's useful to put new ideas, or new ways to do things, in a familiar context to facilitate quicker understanding by contrast and comparison.

5) In business, nothing is worse than wasting money. (Except not making any.) Narrow target markets, which technology markets usually are, should be reached through the most targeted channels. Anything else is a waste of money.