

# E.li-vating The Market Constraint

By Tony Rizzo

**If selling were the same as shooting sitting ducks while they ate corn by the side of a lake, then advertising would be the same as spreading corn for the ducks to see and come ashore to eat.**

Let me begin with a confession. The analogy that you're about to read, between marketing and duck hunting, didn't originate with me. It's Eliyahu M. Goldratt's analogy, and it's every bit as powerful as his analogy between a chain and a corporation. In fact, upon hearing Eli Goldratt use his duck hunting analogy to explain the difference between selling, advertising, and marketing, I began to suspect that the marketing skills of most of us were to this man's marketing skill as the jaw bone of an ass is to a laser guided bomb. A few minutes later, when I heard Eli's lecture on TOC marketing, I no longer suspected it. I was convinced of it.

Here's his very interesting analogy. If selling were the same as shooting sitting ducks while they ate corn by the side of a lake, then advertising would be the same as spreading corn for the ducks to see and come ashore to eat. Marketing would be figuring out that ducks ate corn in the first place. The question is, "How do we figure out what our targeted ducks like to eat?" In other words, how do we figure out what solution to offer our prospective customers? That's what TOC marketing is all about. Read on.

Before we reveal the TOC marketing strategy, we need to prepare the foundation. We need to discuss the first of the Thinking Process tools, the Current Reality Tree. The Current Reality Tree is a sufficiency-based logic structure (a diagram) that lets us identify the root causes and, at times, our organization's core problem, i.e., the one condition that, when eliminated, takes with it all or most of our organization's problems.

Construction of the Current Reality Tree begins with a list of our organization's headaches. These are called undesirable effects or UDEs (pronounced oodies). Collecting such a list of UDEs is a surprisingly easy thing to do. We simply

exploit the innate desire of most individuals to "bitch and moan," as Eli puts it.

While this may seem like a lighthearted approach to problem solving, it is really quite effective. People know what problems plague their organizations, because they live with those problems daily. What we need to do is to ask them to verbalize the problems in simple, declarative statements. The process will uncover the UDEs with which we can construct an organization's Current Reality Tree.

The actual construction of the Current Reality Tree is a slightly challenging, iterative process. Nevertheless, once the Current Reality Tree is complete, it reveals the few or even the one real cause of most of the organization's problems, the core problem. The key is the very structure of the Current Reality Tree. That structure literally points to the core problem. But why is it important for us to identify the core problem?

Identifying the core problem is a vital part of any improvement process. By identifying and attacking the core problem, we avoid wasting resources and time spent fighting mere symptoms. We are able to treat the root disease, so that the symptoms don't return. In other words, the solution that we implement to eliminate our organization's core problem is the most effective and the most valuable solution. This is what makes the Current Reality Tree such a powerful tool.

OK! So the Current Reality Tree is a powerful tool with which to improve organizations. But what does it have to do with strategic marketing?

Recall that we begin constructing the Current Reality Tree with a list of problems and headaches. We get such a list with the eager help of the people in our organization, who just love to bitch and moan. What if, instead of asking the people in our organization to bitch and moan, we

[picture]

asked our customers to bitch and moan? Wouldn't such a list of UDEs help us construct a Current RealityTree for our market? You bet! That's exactly the TOC marketing strategy.

The Current Reality Tee, which is already a powerful tool for identifying what to improve within our own organizations, is an equally powerful tool for identifying what to improve for our customers. With the Current RealityTree, we can identify the core problems for most of our customers. Thus, we can configure a solution that brings our customers the greatest possible value. Just as attacking our core problem is the most effective way to bring about improvement in our organization, so too, identifying and attacking our customers' core problem is the most effective way to bring value to our customers. This is how we figure out what ducks like to eat in the first place. The rest becomes as easy as spreading corn and shooting sitting ducks.

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