



**THE**  
**EXPERIENCE**  
**EFFECT**  
FOR SMALL BUSINESS

BIG BRAND RESULTS  
WITH SMALL BUSINESS  
RESOURCES



JIM JOSEPH





# “The Experience Effect for Small Business” Book Excerpt

Big Brand Results with  
Small Business Resources

**By Jim Joseph**

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*The Experience Effect*

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## Behind the Book

### *So I Got to Thinking...*

***"There's really no reason why a small business can't perform like a big brand, and no reason why it can't have the same kind of successes."***

I'm a marketing guy. Always have been and always will be, I suppose.

I look at everything through the lens of marketing—I just can't help myself. I knew from day one that I wanted to "do" marketing, so I spent my entire career honing my craft by making sure I got experience working on a variety of brands, in a mix of categories, across a range of consumer targets. I can't say that I've seen it all, but there are days when it certainly feels like it.

Yes, I'm one of those people who knew at a young age what I wanted to do. I'm not sure I even knew what marketing was back then, but I knew that somehow, someday it was for me.

I would watch the television commercials more than the actual shows, and I would read the print ads more than the actual articles in magazines. I just loved all the brands and what they had to say.

Maybe it was the Faberge "and she told two friends" commercial from the 1980's that really did it for me, I'm not sure. The commercial had me hooked without possibly knowing it was foreshadowing today's social marketing and Facebook! See, that's how I think.

Right after college I went into sales at the then Carnation Company, because all of my trusted advisors at the time told me that if I wanted to go into marketing, then I had better get some sales experience.

I then went to grad school at Columbia, and while at school, I joined the classic Johnson's Baby Products Company. I blossomed, and quickly became a bit of a new products expert. I launched a portfolio of new products at various divisions of Johnson & Johnson—seven new products in five years, to be exact.

Later in my career, I got bit by the entrepreneurial bug and started my own agency. I can't believe I had the guts to do it, but I saw an opportunity in the market and I seized it. This little agency was among the first to start building brand websites back in the day, and we were on top of the world.

We were a super smart and creative team doing just what entrepreneurs should be doing—good work. I then sold this agency to The Publicis Groupe, and got the chance to help even more clients solve their marketing

challenges by running agencies that specialized in promotional marketing, direct marketing, digital marketing, and of course advertising. Marketing, marketing, marketing—I can't say it enough.

After many brand assignments, many agency mergers, and lots of agency reinvention and rebranding, I finally wrote my first book in 2010 called *The Experience Effect*. It is really a compilation of all my marketing experiences, and it helped me commit to paper what good marketing is all about and how to do it well.

My book drew an incredibly positive response from the industry, including a Silver Medal at the Axiom Business Book Awards for Best Marketing Book of the year. I was thrilled beyond belief.

*The Experience Effect* discusses how creating a relevant brand experience can have a tremendous effect on your customers and on your business.

The "funny" thing is that I was writing that book just as the economy started to unravel around all of us. People were losing jobs left and right, and many people found themselves stuck. Stuck in a place they either didn't want to be in or stuck in a place that they didn't realize would become so long term.

Raises disappeared, bonuses evaporated, and promotions were long put on hold. Careers stalled and we were all standing in



place. If we wanted to keep moving forward, we had to start thinking differently. Perhaps the tried and true just didn't work anymore?

Many of us still find ourselves turning away from the expected, and counting on our own skills and experiences to make a living. Entrepreneurism is still on the rise, as America looks to Americans for our own recovery and growth.

Small businesses are growing again.

I can feel it all around me. As I go on speaking engagements, I am constantly being asked how big brand marketing principles can be applied to small businesses. It's so important as we see small businesses becoming the backbone of our economy once more. We need to support small businesses any way possible.

So I got to thinking ...

Running a small business is so much easier said than done. It's really hard work and it feels like we are often in it alone. Most small business owners lack the resources they need to truly accomplish their goals and to maximize their potential.

They look longingly at the big brands and the big corporations, wishing that they were able to replicate their marketing power and longing for those big successes. Many of these small business owners do get there eventually, but all of us could use some help.

So I decided to write a sequel to *The Experience Effect* that would be dedicated to helping small business owners become successful by creating a brand experience for their customers.

*The Experience Effect for Small Business.*

In this book I hope to give small business owners the kind of marketing knowledge they need to succeed like a big brand, despite more limited resources. There's really no reason why a small business can't perform like a big brand, and no reason why it can't have the same kind of successes. It's just that so many don't know how because they don't have the specific marketing education, skills, or experience, nor the same size budgets or access to resources.

My hope is that this book will give an inside peek at how big mega brands do marketing so that you can do what's appropriate for your size business. I hope to give you the tools to build your own Experience Effect for your own small business!

The book begins by talking about how important an incredible brand experience is to our customers and to our business's success.

We will walk through the steps necessary to build an Experience Effect for our customers, much like what the big brands do, but for small business. I will show how to replicate big brand activities on limited budgets, and with far fewer resources.

We will learn by example to serve as inspiration, because we can learn a lot by watching the work of other brands in the marketplace. I love seeing and learning what other brands do, and I write about it everyday on my blog at [JimJosephExp.com](http://JimJosephExp.com).

It is my goal to help small businesses, the backbone of our American economy, become just as successful as big businesses. I want to give small businesses access to some of the knowledge and methodologies that are used to create powerful marketing programs.

These tools will ultimately create a compelling brand experience for their customers and will keep them coming back, time and time again.

Let's get started.

## Introduction

### **Start by Observing** *Inspired by Tom*

***"Start paying more attention to marketing activity, from big brands and small."***

I have been in marketing for a long time now, and I have to say that it doesn't get any easier. It's tough work. Just when we think we've got it conquered, something new comes along to prove that we really don't know what we're talking about. The world may take a cultural shift and radically change peoples' attitudes and behaviors—like social media, or an economic meltdown, or a natural disaster, or a big new trend in pop culture.

When we're in marketing, we need to expect it to be a never-ending job. The minute we have our plan in place, something changes—like when a new competitor enters the market, or when new government legislation changes the rules of the road, or when a new technological advance requires a rethink.

This is true of big business and it is certainly true of small. Nothing stays the same and it is a tireless and ever changing job.

The minute we are feeling safe and secure, something comes along to rock our world. Our work is never done, although as a small business owner you have a much quicker ability to react, and probably a better ability to capitalize on those constant changes.

That's what keeps me going, to tell you the truth. I love the business world and I love marketing. Just when I think I am getting bored, along comes a new marketing program that completely captivates me. Like a new charity program with American Express and the television show Glee or a new line of skin care products that promises to erase the signs of aging differently.

My first piece of advice is to start paying more attention to marketing activity, from big brands and small. From television advertising, to social media, to websites, to instore displays, observe how brands attempt to connect with their customers, and the language that they use.

Check out the incentive offers that encourage purchases, and the creativity that brands put out there to attract attention. Sign up for Facebook updates and Twitter posts and read what the brands are saying. You'll be amazed at what you can learn and what you can apply to your own business.

One of the biggest compliments I receive from my first book is that people tell me how they notice "marketing" more than ever now. They find themselves analyzing Applebee's, Whole Foods, and Chase in addition to small

restaurants, retail stores, and services. They now pay more attention to the marketing of brands and are enjoying it.

They also pay particularly close attention to the experience they are having when they walk into a store or restaurant, and whether they really like it or not. They are reading print advertisements more carefully and really paying attention to brands on Twitter and Facebook.

You should start doing the same.

Some of the marketing activity will surprise you. Take the home paint category—it is incredibly competitive. The "paint wars" between Benjamin Moore, Behr, and Sherwin-Williams (to name just a few) is fascinating to watch, and very creative. Color matchers, smart phone apps, cans that are easy to pour, partnerships with HGTV—the marketing activity and the brand experiences go on and on.

Get inspired by what's in the marketplace. It will help create new ideas for customers and it will keep the business fresh. A key ingredient to being a good marketer is to stay on the pulse of pop culture and consumer behavior.

Marketing is certainly hard work but it's also in large part about being inspired by what's around you: part perspiration and part inspiration. Great marketing involves being inspired by what's in the marketplace

already, and then giving your own customers an experience to stay engaged in the brand.

Brands should be inspiring, and that should be the goal for your small business.

Since you run a small business, you may not think that you can be inspirational, but you couldn't be more wrong. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and our way of life, and you truly have the opportunity to add real value to people's lives more so than most large consumer products.

Plus it's never too early to get ready to be big!

Take a look at Facebook—a tiny little idea from a couple of kids in college. It started out very small, and grew to be a huge force in pop culture, radically changing the way that people of all ages and backgrounds communicate with each other and stay in each other's lives.

What started out as a small idea became a cultural revolution and a very big business.

The founders of Facebook had an idea, and an insight about how people wanted to join communities. They had big aspirations even though they didn't start out with big budgets. They turned a small business idea into a life-changing experience.

The guys that started Facebook were not the first entrepreneurs to create a pop culture phenomenon that ultimately changed our behavior.

Take a look at the fast food category. The history of McDonald's is another stellar example of a simple concept that slowly grew to international success. Two brothers started a small burger joint, which later became a national chain that invented consistent mass production in food service. Over a billion sold, right?

They too turned a small business idea into a big business fortune.

But it's not just about being big. Some brands stay small but their impact is still huge. Tom's Shoes is a relatively small company with a very cool concept: for every pair of shoes sold, another pair goes to a child in need. Will Tom's Shoes ever be Nike or Cole Haan? Probably not, but it's a small brand with a big idea and a huge impact. Tom's Shoes is now expanding to the sunglass industry, with the same core concept.

It's also important to point out that Tom's has also inspired other brands to include cause marketing in their brand experience. It comes up in brainstorm sessions at my agency all the time.



Skechers did an out right copy with their brand Bob's: for every pair of Bob's shoes sold, a pair goes to a child in need. Imitation is the greatest form of flattery I guess.

There is no reason why small businesses can't have big aspirations. It comes with the territory, really. Innovation and creativity doesn't come from the bureaucracy of big businesses, it comes from the entrepreneurialism of small businesses.

So run with it, and I hope this book helps.

As you read through the chapters in this book, take note of examples of influential brands that have changed the world, or certainly their corner of it.

You too can do the same, just by creating an amazing brand experience for customers. I will illustrate how to do this, step by step.

In Chapter One, we will talk about what marketing is all about, whether big or small. Many people who have never taken a marketing course in their lives are finding themselves doing marketing. Here, I will welcome you to the wonderful world of marketing.

In Chapter Two, we will talk about how your business is a brand. Thinking like a brand will open a range of opportunities, and it's the emotional connection with customers that makes it all happen.

I believe that good marketing is about creating a powerful and compelling brand experience for the customer. In Chapter Three, we will define the Experience Effect and show how it helps elevate the brand.

Chapter Four will show you that the first step in creating a brand experience is making sure that we have a really good grasp of what our brand is all about. We'll need to define the kind of business we are in, and the kind of brand we want to be, now and years into the future.

Part of defining the brand is understanding the competition. In Chapter Five, I hope to give a different perspective on the competition by forcing us to think more broadly. Then we'll draw some concentric circles that will change how we look at our competition.

In Chapter Six, we will finally turn to our customers. Great marketing begins and ends with our customers, so here we will start to put some definition around who they are and what makes them tick.

Identifying the customer is only half the battle. The challenge is getting to know them better than anyone else. In Chapter Seven, I will show how to get to know them. There are some simple ways, that don't cost a lot of money, for us to become engrained in their lives like never before.

You've probably heard about positioning. It's the holy grail of marketing, a key step in creating the brand experience, and the main

focal point of Chapter Eight. In this book, without a lot of fancy theory, I am going to show you how to create a positioning for your business that will help build the ultimate brand experience.

In Chapter Nine, I will go behind the curtain to one of the most fundamentally helpful tools in marketing. It's a classic from old school days, but I still use it almost every day. It will help put together all of the pieces that we've been building so far. It will help solidify the positioning for your small business.

In Chapter Ten, it's time we start reaching out to the customer. We'll take a look at the many ways we can intersect with their lives and give them the brand message. Here is where we introduce the concept of the touchpoint, another fundamental of the Experience Effect.

But just reaching the customer isn't enough; we have to choose the right time and the right place and string them all together. This is what I call a touchpoint tree. In Chapter Eleven I will show how to create one for your small business—it's a great way to visualize where the experiences will reach the customer.

The right place and the right time means nothing if we don't have the right message. In Chapter Twelve, I will show how to activate touchpoints by tailoring the brand message to make them appropriate to the medium. This is the crux of the Experience

Effect and it's crucial to getting customers engaged with the brand. It finally all comes together for a total brand experience.

We can't deny or ignore the digital revolution. In many ways, the digital world has made the brand experience so much more real and meaningful for customers. We'd be missing a huge piece of the Experience Effect if I didn't highlight the role of digital marketing in Chapter Thirteen. Besides, digital marketing is incredibly cost effective so we'll concentrate a lot of effort here.

In Chapter Fourteen, I talk about becoming a "benchmark brand"—an aspiration for all of us. We'll investigate what that means and how the Experience Effect can help a brand achieve benchmark status.

Really good marketing requires a long-term vision. Chapter Fifteen shows how to think beyond the daily crisis and how to manage the brand for the long run. We will work to get beyond the basic to-do list and short-term deadlines to a full-blown strategic plan—one that has a three-year horizon.

None of us act alone, and no matter how much of an entrepreneur we are, we have a team of people around us, helping us. We may not even realize it. In Chapter Sixteen, I hope to open your eyes to how motivating your team can help achieve success. We'll even dashboard it, a concept that I hope you find very useful.

And lastly, in Chapter Seventeen we will explore personal branding. When you run a small business, it's hard to separate yourself from the brand, and to a large degree you shouldn't. We'll talk about personal branding and the effect it can have on the business.

As we go through the process, I hope you will start thinking like a marketer, acting like a marketer, and being a brand. Perhaps this will be for the very first time, although I would wager you've been doing it all along without even realizing it. Now we can learn from the big boys just how to do it a little more methodically and successfully.

Enjoy building your Experience Effect every step of the way.

# 1

## Marketing is Marketing *Lightly Starched*

***"Marketing is all about building a compelling brand experience for your customers that adds value to their lives."***

Whether you realized it before or not, if you own a small business then you are also a marketer. Maybe you never trained to be one, but you are one now.

I'm not much for industry jargon and I certainly make it my business to avoid buzzwords, and I hate when people only talk in analogies. I laugh them off in fact.

I've been resisting the temptation, but I guess we need to start out with...a definition. All good business books do, right? I wouldn't want to disappoint the critics!

So let's begin Chapter One with a definition of marketing to start us out at the same place. First of all, please know that implicit in my definition of marketing is the word integrated. To me, all marketing is integrated—always has been and always will be.

I get a kick out of people who say that integrated marketing is the wave of the future. Since when was marketing ever not integrated? Maybe it's because I grew up on the

client side of the business at Johnson & Johnson, and was always responsible for the entire brand, but to me marketing has always been integrated. The customer certainly sees it that way—one brand, one voice. The customer doesn't differentiate one form of messaging coming from the brand versus another.

With that off my chest, how do we define marketing? This should be easy textbook type stuff.

It's funny because one of the LinkedIn groups asked this very question of its members, "How would you define marketing?" At first, I thought it was the stupidest question I had ever heard. Everyone knows what marketing is, and everyone will define it the same way.

Then the definitions came rolling in—one after another, hour after hour, day after day. For months on end, members of that particular LinkedIn group sent in their own personal definitions of marketing. Some caused great debate, others immediate agreements.

I even threw in a comment or two because I found the whole exercise to be so much fun. I was surprised and intrigued, and here I am talking about it. This is exactly what our customers should be doing about our brands.

The LinkedIn exercise made me realize though that there really is no simple definition of marketing, and there is no one single answer. Everyone has a different take on it, which is why it's not a perfect science. There is just as much art to it as there is science.

How did I answer the question? My response shouldn't be so surprising given the titles of my books. Marketing is all about building a compelling brand experience for your customers that adds value to their lives.

Now if you've never been in marketing before, none of that will make sense. If you've already been doing marketing, then that sentence may be a new way of thinking about the craft. Either way, I hope that by the time you finish this book I will have you sold on the concept.

Think of your own behavior.

Like many people, I have a favorite dry cleaner that I go to all the time. They clean all of my shirts (and if you know me then you know I love my shirts), suits, pants...you name it. I go to this particular dry cleaner because they have never made a mistake, ever. They even catch things that I don't point out like stains or a loose hem—and they just fix them.

I don't even know what they charge me because I'm quite sure it's completely reasonable.



Now I've been to other dry cleaners in the neighborhood, several actually. And they all did a good job too. So why did I switch around until I found this particular one?

For one simple reason—at this dry cleaner, they remember me.

The employees/owners greet me on a first name basis, and say hello each time. They inquire about my kids and ask me if the clothes are coming out ok. The other places never really acknowledged me as a person. I would go into the store week after week, and they acted like they were seeing me for the first time.

I found it annoying, so I switched. The next dry cleaner I visited did the same thing, so I switched again.

I finally found a place that knew me by name, sort of like the bar Cheers. Now why was this so important to me? I actually had to stop and analyze my own behavior to figure it out. It's the emotional connection and the experience that made me finally stop looking for a "better" place.

For me, going to the same dry cleaner is a symbol of belonging to a community. Having the people there know me makes me feel like I'm a member of the neighborhood, and that people in the neighborhood really do know me and care about me on some level.

It's completely emotional. Again, the truth is that the other places did just as good a job of cleaning my clothes. There were no problems, but they didn't seem to care. What I haven't told you is that the place I go to regularly now is actually out of the way. I go out of my way to go there because it's a better experience. It is an experience that makes me feel better and that keeps me coming back.

Those emotions have turned what could easily be a generic dry cleaner into a...brand. It's the brand experience that has built my loyalty and keeps me coming back. It forced me to choose that brand over others of similar quality that were perhaps even a tad bit more convenient. A positive brand experience has the power to negate other factors.

Now that's good marketing. That's the Experience Effect!

Notice I didn't mention any advertising, and certainly no television advertising. You don't have to do advertising to do good marketing or to create a brand experience.

Chances are you don't own a dry cleaning business, and you probably don't run a Fortune 500 company, but that part doesn't matter. Marketing is marketing, big or small, regardless of the business. It's all about building an incredible experience for customers, whether you're cleaning their shirts or making them dinner or providing them with financial services.

The methodology needed to create an amazing brand experience remains the same whether you're Walmart, Coca-Cola, a local restaurant, a consultant, or Apple. It's the same marketing process regardless of the business. Sure, the budgets may be different, and the details work out differently, but how you get there is the same.

I believe that as a small business, you can in fact get the same kinds of results as the big brands, perhaps on a different scale, even without the big brand budgets. That's what this book is all about.

It takes a special kind of person to be an entrepreneur and to run a small business. It's not an easy life. It's not like small business owners are surrounded by lots of colleagues and a large support staff. Entrepreneurs do not have a clearly defined role within a well-oiled machine. None of us can count on others to watch our back or to cover us when we're out. There's no marketing team to do the heavy lifting for us.

Is that why we love it so much?

You may not have any formal marketing training—what you do know, you've learned along the way. With no MBA to fall back on, and no classic brand management training, you may just have a lot of experience and common sense, which quite honestly will do you well.

As a small business owner, you are now also a marketer, so add that to your resume. You are marketing your business—building a brand experience that will propel you to success.

This is marketing, defined. Welcome aboard.



## About Jim Joseph



Jim Joseph is a real-world marketer who has been practicing his craft for over twenty-five years in marketing and sales, on both the client and agency sides of the business, for brands both big and small.

He is an award winning marketing master who has specialized in building customer brands and agency businesses across virtually every consumer category. Jim's consistent goal has always been to help blockbuster clients including Kellogg's,

Kraft, Nestle, Cadillac, Tylenol, Clean & Clear, Aveeno, American Express, Durex, Nexium, AFLAC, Ambien CR, and Walmart create successful brand experiences that engage customers and add value to their lives. Jim was practicing integrated marketing well before it became the buzzword du jour.

Jim is President of North America at Cohn & Wolfe, a global communications company specializing in brand building and consumer marketing.

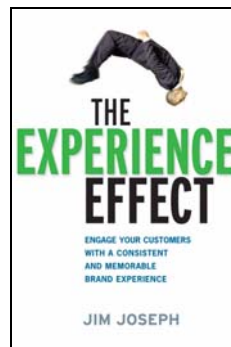
Prior to joining Cohn & Wolfe, Jim spent the bulk of his agency career at The Publicis Groupe. He started his own agency, which he sold to Publicis and then merged it with two others to create Arc-NY, the largest integrated marketing services agency in Manhattan at the time.

He then went on to Publicis' Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness where he led the transformation of the agency from traditional pharmaceutical advertising to diversified wellness marketing. During his tenure, the agency won several prestigious industry awards including "Agency of the Year" from DTC Perspectives on Excellence, "Most Creative Agency" from The Manny Awards, and a Grand CLIO in Advertising.

Early in his career on the client side at Johnson & Johnson, Jim became a new products expert by launching seven new customer products in less than five years—including the number one Reach

Wondergrip toothbrush for kids and the reinvention of Clean & Clear skin care for teenage girls. Jim then went on to become the lead marketer for the Arm & Hammer toothpaste line.

Jim is a graduate of Cornell University and has an MBA from Columbia University. Fulfilling a lifelong dream (aside from writing), Jim also teaches a course in marketing at New York University (NYU), modeled after his first book, *The Experience Effect*.



While writing his first book, *The Experience Effect*, Jim found his writing "voice" and he now writes a daily blog about marketing that has quite a following and was also a 2011 finalist as "best blog" from *PRNews*. Winning a silver medal at the 2011 Axiom Business Book Awards for best marketing book is the culmination of that incredible experience.



He is also a regular guest blogger at CustomerProductsGroup.com and RetailShoppingExperience.com. Jim sits on boards of OTC Perspectives, DTC Perspectives, PRSA Counselors Academy, and The Council of PR Firms.

Jim is a frequent contributor to trade publications and is continually quoted in articles for *Advertising Age*, *AdWeek*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has done radio interviews for TheMarketingShow.com, ThatAdvertisingShow.com, and Blog Talk Radio to name a few. Jim was also named a 2011 top 100 worldwide business author on Twitter by *Social Media Marketing Magazine*.

Jim lives in Manhattan and Bucks County, PA with his partner of fourteen years and his two teenage children. When not writing his blog or spending time with his family, Jim can be found running along the Hudson River, Lady Gaga in ear!

You can find Jim Joseph every day at [JimJosephExp.com](http://JimJosephExp.com).

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<http://www.happyabout.com/linkedinhelp.php>
- 42 Rules for Effective Connections:  
<http://www.happyabout.com/42rules/effectiveconnections.php>
- I Need a Killer Press Release—Now What???:  
<http://www.happyabout.com/killer-press-release.php>

## MARKETING

In his first book 'The Experience Effect,' marketing master Jim Joseph found his literary voice with an award-winning, critically-acclaimed easy to understand volume of marketing advice that centered on how to build the ultimate brand experience. Now he's back with a new book that focuses on how small businesses can replicate the work of the big brands without the big brand budgets.

"This marketing book delivers insights into how small businesses can build their brand while creating strong connections to customers without requiring the big advertising budgets typically found in Fortune 500 companies. It's a must-read, and Jim's practical approach to marketing is full of useful concepts and strategies that are easily adaptive to all types of small businesses."

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"Jim's wisdom for building a consulting practice has been invaluable. In a world of books that champion big budget solutions for big corporations, Jim focuses on the small business owner with smart, inexpensive approaches to building a real brand experience that will grow sales."

— Mark Schnurman, President of Filament, Inc

"No doubt this book will challenge and help shift the mindset of many small businesses. Using examples we all relate to, Joseph makes his points with clarity and relevance. The book is most enjoyable AND engaging...unlike any other marketing book I've read (except the original "The Experience Effect"!)." Can't wait to use it in my next marketing class at St. Joseph's University!"

— Laura L. Barry, Entrepreneur and Adjunct Professor

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