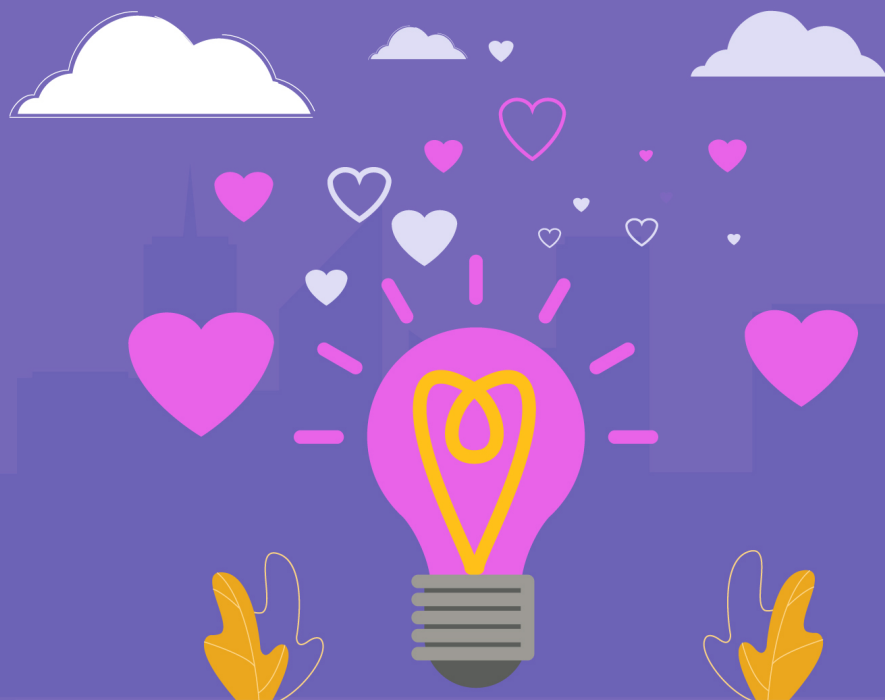


# SUMMARY

# DIFFERENCE

BERNADETTE JIWA



# **Summary of “Difference” by Bernadette Jiwa**

Written by Lea Schullery

The One-Page Method for Reimagining Your Business  
and Reinventing Your Market

Introduction	5
You Can't Just Be Different, You Must Create Difference	6
Tell a Story that Customers Care About	8
Focus on your Principles	10
Define Your Purpose	12
Be Personal and Change Your Customer's Perceptions	14
The Final Step is to Create Your Product	16
Final Summary	17



# QuickRead

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# Introduction

It was the 1970s when computer engineers in Silicon Valley were working on Xerox's research team to design a pointing device that was to be used with the computer - an invention we now know as the mouse. The first prototype of the mouse was invented by Doug Engelbart and had been around since the 60s, but in 1979, a group of visitors came to see how a computer could be controlled with this pointing device. As it turns out, one of the visitors that day was Steve Jobs who told the developers, "you're sitting on a gold mine," and "this is insanely great." Jobs also learned that day that the team at Xerox believed the product would eventually become a \$300 accessory for the computer. And just a few days after his visit, Jobs met with design consultant Dean Hovey and briefed him on the design for the mouse. He knew what they needed to do at Apple, but his mouse needed just four criteria: It needed to be built for less than \$15, it had to last two years, it needed to work on a typical desktop of Formica or metal, *and* it had to work on Jobs' Levi's.

That day, Jobs' vision for the design of the mouse surrounded the needs of the consumer. In other words, he had flipped the traditional product development model on its head. Instead of thinking of the features and functions of the product separately, Jobs also thought about what the product might mean to potential customers. He had the unique ability to stand in a potential user's shoes and design a product around the consumer, and when a product has an impact on a person's life it impacts the market as well. Luckily, you can train yourself to think like this too.

# **You Can't Just Be Different, You Must Create *Difference***

The traditional marketing structure starts with an idea - like a coffee mug, for example. From there, the idea goes into development, so you decide on the size and shape of the mug, the curve of the handle, the color, and the funny saying. Next, you launch your product and start selling the coffee mug, targeting your advertising to a particular demographic where your potential customers might reside. From there, you hope to reach your target market and generate sales. Today, however, this kind of marketing is no longer enough.

If you travel to your local shop right now, how many options of coffee mugs will you find? For many of us, the options will be endless. That doesn't even include all the options you find on the internet! In today's competitive market, it becomes nearly impossible to get your coffee mug to stand out among the rest. Therefore, the key to success isn't just trying to be different, it's creating difference. Steve Jobs, for example, was a "difference thinker." This means that he didn't need to start with an idea, he needed to start with empathy. Additionally, he had the ability to take what exists and understand what it could be. He didn't need to worry about marketing a product, he already had a product that would market itself.

Creating a product alone that is different won't work. Instead, your creative process must be different as well. Before a product idea is born, you first need a truth. This simply means that you need to identify the truth about a problem. What is it that people are struggling with? From there, you can develop an idea for a product and then launch it, ensuring that you market it to the customer's needs. This is exactly how the popular shopping cart was invented and adopted eighty years ago. A grocery store owner, Sylvan Goldman, noticed that when a customer's baskets became too heavy or too full, people stopped shopping.

In 1936, Goldman developed a simple idea of a basket carrier on wheels. Strangely enough, customers hated the new shopping cart. Men worried that they would look weak if they couldn't haul their groceries, young women viewed the carts as unfashionable, and older people didn't want to appear helpless. So Goldman took a step back and thought of a plan to change the customer's worldview about using the carts. His next step was hiring models of both sexes and all ages to push shopping carts around his store as if they were shopping. He also hired a friendly store greeter who would offer carts to customers as they arrived.

As you may now know, the rest is history. Today, the shopping cart has become a universal symbol of the buying experience, even when we're sitting on the couch online shopping. So when it comes to creating difference, we must see things in a whole new light. We must reimagine what the problem or need might be, and then decide that we will do whatever it takes to be the one to solve this problem for people. "This approach leads to the creation of innovations and solutions that redefine the rules of the game, that reinvent a category or experience."

# Tell a Story that Customers Care About

You've probably seen them. The young kids standing on the side of the road wearing a giant sign that screams something like "BUY ONE GET ONE FREE!" to capture the attention of passersby. Oftentimes, they dance around or do tricks with their giant signs to attract more attention. Their goal is to interrupt your drive and entice you to veer off and enjoy a nice sandwich or a slice of pizza. But how often does it work? Unfortunately, many companies believe in advertising in similar ways. Every year, companies are spending more money to "interrupt people, more often, with messages they don't care about and don't pay attention to. We've come to believe that the way to succeed is to have an advantage - by being different or better, more visible, or just plain louder."

Today, most of us have grown to resent advertising and the way it interrupts us and demands our attention. How does it make you feel when your YouTube video is interrupted by an ad? Or when a popup appears on a website's landing page before you've had time to read a single word? This resentment is not exactly how you want your customers to feel. With everyone shouting at us constantly, it's easy to ignore the noise and simply tune it out. In modern-day advertising, people want to be treated as individuals, as if they matter. This is why modern marketing isn't about being as loud as possible, it's about telling stories that potential customers can identify with and connect to.

The eyewear retailer Warby Parker, for example, began selling boutique-quality glasses at \$95 a pair. This price point wasn't only about having an advantage over the bigger players in the industry, but to also change the way customers buy and wear glasses. The average customer buys a new pair of glasses every 2.1 years, but Warby Parker wanted to make glasses something people would consider buying in multiples to match their mood and outfit - much like a woman buying shoes or handbags. Additionally, they used the "buy a pair, give a pair" model to change the way customers think about owning several pairs of glasses. As a result, Warby Parker's



customers buy many pairs of glasses at a time, and not just when their prescriptions expire.

Another company that tells a great story is the online vacation rental company Airbnb. The company understands that hotels can be expensive and impersonal; therefore, Airbnb doesn't simply offer cheaper hotel rooms, they offer a home-away-from-home experience and encourage customers to explore the world more comfortably. Customers of Airbnb and Warby Parker aren't buying the product, they're buying the story. "They buy the fortune, not the cookie; the experience, not just the raw ingredients - why don't we as marketers work harder to give people a story to believe in?"

# Focus on your Principles

One of the first things you should do when following the difference model is to ask yourself, “What’s the truth about us, the industry, the market, and the people we want to serve?” Answering these questions will help you identify your principles - your fundamental truths, cornerstones, and guiding lights. Every organization, business venture, or tiny project is founded on principles and even if they haven’t been explored, they still exist.

Principles can be divided into three categories: the truth about you, the truth about the industry or the market, and the truth about the people you want to matter to. Let’s first focus on the truth about you. What does your organization stand for? What do the people who are building the business believe in? What are your goals? Your strengths? Weaknesses? Take a look at the founders of Airbnb who recognized the truth that they had little hard cash to build their business. They did, however, have a creative vision for what could be and the design and tech skills to bring it to life. They understood the whole truth and knew how to play to their strengths and create strategies to overcome weaknesses.

Next, you have to recognize the truth about the industry or the market. What is the state of the industry you work in like? Take a look at Steve Jobs who developed the iPhone around the truth that cell phones were purely functional. Jobs took this a step further by developing a phone that could function as more than just a mobile phone. As Apple product manager Bob Brochers explains, “The idea was, he wanted to create something so instrumental and integrated into peoples’ lives that you’d rather leave your wallet at home than your iPhone.”

Lastly, you’ll need to recognize the truth about the people you want to matter to. To recognize this, ask yourself, What is the truth about the reality your prospective customers are living with? What do they believe? How might they want to change? What might they need? The most important

thing any business should understand today is the worldview of its customers and the reality they live with. Sara Blakely, for example, became the youngest self-made female billionaire by understanding the reality millions of women lived with each day when they pulled on their clothes: poorly-fitting underwear that caused visible panty lines. So she created Spanx, body-shaping underwear that eliminated these lines and made women feel confident each day.

# Define Your Purpose

Why does your business exist? Why do consumers want to buy your product? These questions are some of the most important questions any business owner should answer. In fact, according to author Bernadette Jiwa, “the fifty top-performing brands, in good economic times and in bad, were the ones founded on what Jim Stengel calls an ideal. In other words, they had a bigger purpose, a mission that the company set out to fulfill. For example, Google exists to satisfy the curiosity of anyone with access to the Internet; Method, the household cleaning brand, wants to inspire happy, healthy homes.”

The second step in the difference model is to carefully question what you want to achieve and what impact you wish your business to have on the world. For instance, Jane Ní Dhulchaointigh invented Sugru, a brand of silicone rubber meant to be used to fix, hack, and reinvent things. Her purpose for her brand was to help the world get fixing and customizing again. She wanted to go beyond “making do” and take control and repair, modify, and evolve the products we own so that they work longer, harder, and better for us.

When you have a strong purpose like this, you can use it to guide your company in the right direction. Of course, it's important to remember to focus on what's important: the people. The mistake many businesses make is viewing their customers as a particular demographic or as a bunch of numbers in a data chart. But when you treat your potential and current customers as humans with real emotions and problems, you can begin to use empathy to truly help them and give them what they need.

Take a look at Simple.com who understood that the banking industry is designed to make banking work, and not for the way people think. Additionally, bank systems were built 20-40 years ago, and the industry profits from keeping people confused. So Simple.com aimed to make banking awesome by helping people understand and better control their

finances. They wanted their customers to feel comfortable banking online, and their simple service and purpose have led to their rise in popularity and success.

# Be Personal and Change Your Customer's Perceptions

The next step in the difference model is identifying who you are serving. Who is this for exactly? Who are the people you want to serve? What do they value? What do they care about? And what is their current reality? Avoid thinking in terms of demographics, but think about your customers' worldview and how they navigate the world each day. "When you craft your intention around the difference your product or service will create in the lives and stories of these people, your customers, is what will enable you to go beyond simply being another alternative in a crowded marketplace."

For example, Dollar Shave Club understood that men didn't like paying too much for feature-filled, quadruple-blade, titanium razors. They were overwhelmed by choices when all they wanted was something simple. The founders of Dollar Shave Club also discovered that men often shaved with dull blades because they had forgotten to pick up new razors. To solve these problems, the Dollar Shave Club created a subscription service of affordable, simple razors that arrived on schedule so men would never have to pick up new razors, use a dull one, or spend too much on fancy features.

It's also important to focus on the personal step of the difference model. As Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com states, "We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little bit better." To do this, you should ask yourself, How can we change how people feel? How can you become more relevant and significant to the people you want to serve? What difference does your product make? Take TOMS, for example, who makes customers feel good about buying their footwear by using the One for One model - for every pair of shoes sold, the company donates a pair to a child in the developing world.

Your job is to offer a product or service that customers can feel good about. For instance, take a look at the taxi service Uber, which became successful

when they realized that people had become frustrated and distrustful of the taxi industry. So they set out to offer a transportation service that people could trust, and it was this upfront honesty that helped the company make a difference. Today, Uber has changed the way we look at transportation by offering a service that allows people to get a ride with just the touch of a button. “With the Uber app, users can book a driver, see how long it will take for the car to arrive, track the driver’s journey to them, pay for the ride without using cash, and get the receipt - all via their smartphone.”

Ultimately, Uber has set a new standard for transportation by figuring out how to solve the frustrations with the current taxi industry.

# **The Final Step is to Create Your Product**

The time has come to finally start focusing on the final P: product. Once you've recognized your purpose, your people, how to connect with them, and how to influence their perceptions, you can finally start designing your product. As author Bernadette Jiwa states, "When you have all of the pieces of the puzzle in place, you'll be ready to bring that product to the people who actually wanted it in the first place." So begin by asking yourself, "What do people really want or need?" and "What value does your product or service create for customers?" Don't aim to just seek holes in the market; instead, you should set out to fill a void in people's lives with a single product or service - something that changes your customer's life!

Let's take a look again at Airbnb, whose founders didn't simply create an easier platform to find a place to stay, instead, Airbnb changed the way we travel. Sure, Airbnb could've simply made a service that provides private rooms in homes that you book online instead of hotel rooms, but they went a step further. Their service provides a secure platform where they can list and book a place to stay - almost any kind of space, almost anywhere. Additionally, they created a way to connect people who need a place to stay with people who have space to rent. Now, travelers can easily interact with hosts and talk to one another before, during, and after arrival.

Airbnb offers a seamless experience that allows travelers to discover, enquire about, book, and pay for a place to stay - all in one place! They even gave the ability to rate each other and offer feedback, which helps other members of the community. Ultimately, the Difference Map is designed to help you recognize opportunities that create value, to develop products and services that people want, and to matter to your customers. So try the Difference Map out yourself, use it to design, plan, structure, reimagine, reinvent, market, and grow your business. What are you waiting for?



# Final Summary

Traditional marketing begins with a product that is developed and marketed toward a target audience. In today's modern world, this form of marketing no longer works. The Difference Map, however, turns traditional marketing on its head and allows you to look at principles and fundamental truths first. When you focus on the truths or insights about you, your customers, and the market or industry you operate in, you can begin to understand where the opportunities to innovate and create difference are. You must then consider the reason your business exists and the people who will become your customers. Focusing on the Difference Map allows you to focus on six key areas: Principles, Purposes, People, Perception, Personal, and Product. When you ask and answer the right questions in each area, you'll soon be on your way to developing ideas that matter!



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