

Reimagining Marketing



By Diane Hames

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I've been around trucks and trucking customers for my entire adult life. I am passionate about this industry and maintain an unending desire to learn more about what drives our customers' success. As the leader of

Navistar's marketing organization, I am in the perfect position to reimagine how to better serve the market and develop solutions to the ever-evolving challenges that our customers face.

I also have a reputation for changing things up. Rewriting the rules. Breaking paradigms. Challenging existing assumptions. That said, I am committed to being part of a team that builds a better future for Navistar and our customers. That makes me a champion of Navistar's stated purpose: *reimagining how to deliver what matters*.

My experience is not typical of most marketing leaders. I come to this role with a diverse background of business and financial experience. Many people think of marketing as catchy slogans and shiny ad copy. While those are important, they are only as good as the products, services and people that they stand for.

Enabling our professionals to connect with their markets, understanding the industry challenges that their customers' face, and working with our engineers to find new and innovative solutions is the key to building a leading marketing team.

A purpose driven organization that places the customer at the center of everything they do can only happen with a team that is continuously engaged in the market, a team that is relentlessly committed to delivering value for their customers.

Back this up with good market and customer data and you have the foundation in place to support your sales organization in ways that will drive success. After all, good marketing is ultimately about connecting the customer with a salesperson and giving them something compelling to talk about.

That sounds fairly simple, but what do our customers really want to talk about? Like us, they want to solve problems. Specifically, they want to solve *their* customers' problems.

Framed from this perspective, we're not really building vehicles – we're delivering commercial transportation solutions. That means we need to fully understand each challenge, each opportunity, and think about how we can help our customers take their business, or their mission, or their community, to the next level. That requires doing the homework and getting upstream of our customers' challenges.

To do this, we rely on a deep understanding of the industry segments that our customers operate in. By diving into the business that our customers operate in and the market dynamics that they are facing, we put ourselves in a better position to design solutions that meet their future needs. This includes not just the macro challenges like greenhouse gas regulations, electrification and the ever-evolving demographics that drive skilled labor shortages, but also myriad issues specific to our customers' industries.

We want to be part of the conversations they are having, at conferences, or tradeshow, or wherever they engage with their peers. We don't want to be

just another voice talking about their industry. We want to be the voice *in their industry*. We want to see and understand the types of challenges they are having in the real world in order to help define, develop, and deliver solutions. Consider the utility segment. Maybe there's a regional electric company that's interested in making their budget stretch a bit farther. They've got older equipment they need to replace. They also have a mandate from their local government to reduce their carbon footprint through increased use of electric vehicles in their fleet.

We can assist them in identifying how to make electric vehicle adoption a reality while staying within budget and increasing productivity. Working upstream with our industry partners, we can deliver a complete solution including the financing, charging infrastructure and support network that recognizes the parameters and constraints which they operate under.

The essential role of our marketing team is to align what matters to customers with what matters to Navistar. By making sure we have an intimate understanding of customers' needs and challenges, we are equipped to anticipate and deliver the solutions that work for them in a way that they could not achieve on their own.

Marketing is the voice of the customer at Navistar. To accomplish this, the marketing team must translate future customer needs into discrete requirements. This is particularly true for the engineering team that designs and develops new products that may not reach the market for another five years. Understanding customer needs and anticipating the right products is never more important than when it comes to making future product investment decisions. Getting it right can put you in the leading market position. Getting it wrong can put you and your customers out of business.

As part of this customer advocacy role, we're obligated to engage earlier in the process and to look further down the road, so that we are part of a larger value chain. We work with companies that are busy trying to turn a profit in the here-and-now; they appreciate partners who think about the sustainable

prosperity of their businesses and the commercial trucking industry as a whole. Government regulations relating to decarbonization targets won't go away. Neither will the very pressing demands of the evolving marketplace. Vehicle electrification and autonomous driving are imminent, and they require vast infrastructure solutions.

Remember that utility customer I mentioned? When that customer's fleet of bucket trucks is responding to an incoming hurricane in the year 2029, they will need to know they can recharge their electric vehicles in the midst of a power outage, even while they are working 24/7. That's a future problem. We're on it today. Because it's our job to reimagine how Navistar will deliver what matters.

We also hold ourselves accountable to the population at large. I think of a school superintendent in Denver. What matters to her? Well, beyond ensuring the safety of her school district's students in our IC Bus, our trucks deliver classroom supplies, cafeteria food, sports equipment, and musical instruments for the band. And at the end of that cycle, refuse vehicles pick up and remove recyclable materials and waste from her schools. If the school has a power outage, the solution will arrive in the form of a utility truck.

The transportation industry is ubiquitous to the point of being invisible. But whether people realize it or not, all the goods that magically appear in the stores where we shop arrived on a truck. And I'm proud to say that Navistar is evolving to better deliver what matters for all these stakeholders – and disrupting ourselves to find new opportunities to serve.

I suppose we all get to a point in our career when we say, what else can I do? I guess that's why I like to disrupt things. To reimagine something different. Something purpose driven. And if I can lay a few bricks that are foundational to the future of our industry – if I can help define what that looks like – then I have brought something of value. That's what matters to me.

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