



The Marketing Playbook: Five Battle-Tested Plays for Capturing and Keeping the Lead in Any Market

By John Zagula

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Every company needs to figure out the best way to beat the competition. What do you do if the other guy is already dominating the market? Should you challenge them head on or lie low for a while? Should you offer customers high-end features or a low-end price? Or both?

During their years at Microsoft, John Zagula and Richard Tong answered such questions so effectively that they helped Microsoft Office and Windows grow from a 10 percent to 90 percent market share. As venture capitalists, Zagula and Tong have continued to test and perfect their system with hundreds of companies of all sizes and at all stages.

Now they're sharing their best ideas and methods in an easy-to-apply book that will be enormously helpful to marketers in every industry and leaders in every size company.

The Marketing Playbook explains the five basic strategies for a competitive market—The Drag Race Play, The Best of Both Play, The High-Low Play, The Platform Play, and The Stealth Play. It illustrates how each one works, how to pick the best one for a given situation, and then how to implement it effectively in the real world.

Just like a great sports coach with a well-designed playbook, managers who read this book will have the tools, tips, and tricks they need to leapfrog market research, craft a smart strategy, motivate their team, and start scoring major points with customers and against the opposition.

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The Marketing Playbook: Five Battle-Tested Plays for Capturing and Keeping the Lead in Any Market By John Zagula Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #419121 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Portfolio Hardcover
- Published on: 2004-10-21
- Released on: 2004-10-21
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.54" h x 1.13" w x 5.82" l, 1.08 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 336 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This engaging primer contends that all marketing campaigns can be boiled down to five basic strategies, a typology distilled from the authors' experience as marketing executives at Microsoft and as venture capitalists. The "plays," schematized with football diagrams, are: the "drag race," in which your product squares off against a single competitor in an attention-getting battle for market dominance; the "platform play" (Microsoft's *forté*), in which your product becomes the essential infrastructure for an entire industry (à la Windows); the "stealth play," in which you go after markets ignored by larger competitors; the "best of both" play, in which your breakthrough product becomes all things to all men; and the "high-low" play, in which you pit both your deluxe high-end product line and your cheapo down-market line against a rival's mediocre compromise offering. This illuminating conceptual framework is perhaps less important than the authors' lucid analyses of real-world marketing situations, drawn from case studies and from their own gaffes and triumphs in marketing Excel, MS Office and other software milestones in Microsoft's march to monopoly. They throw in lots of practical tips on market research, managing a marketing team, finding the proper rhetorical formulas to use in a marketing brief and writing mesmerizing ad slogans that incorporate "the rule of paradox"—i.e. buy this and you can have your cake and eat it too. The authors' wealth of insights, presented in a breezy, down-to-earth style free of management-theory cant, will give marketing managers much useful food for thought.

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Review

Zagula and Tong have produced an ingenious and persuasive book that really does break marketing strategies down. -- *Financial Times*, 11/11/04

About the Author

John Zagula spent eight years at Microsoft, where he developed the Microsoft Office brand and marketed the desktop and server application product lines.

Richard Tong worked at Microsoft for ten years, serving as VP of marketing and business development for Microsoft Windows, Office, and Back Office. Both are venture capitalists with Ignition Partners.

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