Chapter 1:

Know your enemies--
Act like a friend

Great marketing is the difference between a billion-dollar company and a million-dollar company. Even if you have a great product, if people don't know they want to buy it they might take their money elsewhere.

Like so many things, with marketing you get what you pay for. From hiring the best minds in advertising to saturating the media, a bigger budget means a bigger market for your software.

Marketing isn't just about highlighting the good points of what you sell-- it's about *inventing reasons* that people want and need your product, and then convincing people of those reasons.

Of course if those reasons refer to things that are true-- such as new features that actually exist, or testimonials from a few satisfied customers-- those truths make it that much easier to get people to swallow whatever you made up or "exaggerated" (let's say "dressed up") about the product.

It's just as important to go on the offensive about your competitors, and we will talk about that in other chapters. But a company's image is an important part of its brand, and you want an overall *positive* image no matter what. No matter how much you talk about piracy, inferior products from competitors, or how unfair the antitrust laws are, you still want to appear as a confident, competent-- **strong** vendor with a plainly *superior* product.

Before you go on the offensive and defend your product, you have to really sell it and make it look like a good thing.

And no matter how much you violate customer privacy, forge partnerships to shut out other competitors (especially upstarts) in the market, or do things solely for the benefit of your company at the expense of users-- it is absolutely necessary to **look like** you care about their wants and needs.

Your brand won't survive if you keep telling people "*we spy on you, we remove features you rely on to force you to update the software you've grown accustomed to, we work hard and do dirty things to keep the playing field from ever becoming even or allowing a competitor the opportunity to sell you a better product.*" You **must look like you care.** And nobody knows more about fooling people into thinking you care, than your marketing team.

As important as marketing is to keep your customers like a flock of sheep, good public relations are vital to dealing with competitors and the press.

When you fleece them, you want to always have a smile on your face-- so they know you are well-intentioned and friendly.

For example, suppose you want to add a feature that tracks users across every computer they use with your software-- even if they haven't created a user account.

This feature will provide you with more data about every customer than ever before. You can then hand that data to your marketing team or even sell it to third parties, who then sell it to advertisers for companies you aren't competing with. It also provides insight into what features of your products are most valuable to your brand.

Those are three good-business-sense reasons to include this feature (which thanks to good marketing, actually exists in a growing amount of proprietary software) but it does have its downsides-- it might violate European privacy laws, or be used by oppressive governments to find and torture dissidents.

People will say these things sooner or later, but the important thing is that your brand and marketing *outweigh* anything said by critics.

Later we will talk about how to dismiss critics and win the press to your side. But for this chapter, the key lesson is:

Accentuate the Positive!

"Our software has new features which ensure a better experience and help us understand the changing needs of users."

Even if several people are sharing a laptop, third parties want accurate data on each individual user. This can be spun into the usual lines about how the invasive technology is "new, innovative, unique, helpful, useful"-- any good adjective you can think of-- find a way to focus on how the probably-unwanted or unneeded features are something the user **gains** rather than **loses** by choosing (or remaining stuck with) your product.

Focus on your fans and sycophants in the press first-- you can deal with critics later.

Demonstrating this attitude is just as important with other vendors and corporate partners, as well as customers and the press. Always put your *best face forward,* so this is your brand and image when it's time to show your "good offense."

Dealing with everyone this way first leads to trust, and trust leads to opportunities. People like to know they have a good thing, and many of them will stick with you through the hard times, once you've lead them through a superficially positive experience.

This is even more likely, if they have made a profit along the way. Many vendors like you, care only about the bottom line. Of course it's a billion-dollar industry to make it look like something more than that-- but that's the point of this chapter:

If you want to have a billion-dollar company, you have to bullshit like a billion-dollar company.

We are all friends here.

And people who feel like they're your friends will share more with you than people you treat like a competitor. It is a natural human response to let the guard down and trust people eventually. So come on, everybody-- can't we be friends?

Always remember, when you start to take advantage of your friendships and corporate partners-- to do it with a smile, a friendly word, and a focus on the positive. Your smile is contagious, it's your best asset-- your sheep's clothing. Wear it well.

You look great!

Relevant quotes from the Halloween documents:

"Sleazy behavior, covered by utterly brilliant marketing, has been a pattern in Microsoft's business practices since they were a garage outfit running on subsidies from Bill Gates's wealthy parents."

"Bill Gates pretends to defend ``innovation'', and if he did I'd love him for it. But there's very little evidence that Microsoft even knows what the word means."

"he's conditioned computer users to expect and even love derivative, shoddily-implemented crap. Millions of people think that it's right, it's normal to have an operating system so fragile that it hangs crashes three or four times a week and has to be rebooted every time you change anything deeper than the wallpaper."

From http://www.catb.org/~esr/not-the-osi/halloween-rant.html

*"for Microsoft to win, **the customer must lose**."*

"The great fear at Microsoft is that somebody will come behind them and make products that not only are more reliable, faster, and more secure, but are also easy to use, fun, and make people more productive."

"Programs built this way look user-friendly at first sight, but turn out to be huge time and energy sinks in the longer term. They can only be sustained by carpet-bomb marketing, the main purpose of which is to delude users into believing that (a) bugs are features, or that (b) all bugs are really the stupid user's fault, or that (c) all bugs will be abolished if the user bends over for the next upgrade."

"Perhaps we're fortunate that `organizational credibility' looms so large in the Microsoft world-view."

From https://antitrust.slated.org/halloween/halloween1.html

"Rule One of public relations: when life hands you a lemon, make lemonade."

From https://antitrust.slated.org/halloween/halloween3.html

"when Microsoft brings you flowers, they're likely to end up decorating your grave one way or another."

From https://antitrust.slated.org/halloween/halloween6.html

"Microsoft should avoid criticizing OSS and Linux directly, continue to develop and aim to eventually win the TCO argument, and focus on delivering positive Shared Source messages..."

From https://antitrust.slated.org/halloween/halloween7.html

"Microsoft marketing is thorough and ruthlessly opportunistic. You can bet money that the reason they're not making these arguments is because they tried them on smaller focus groups, or individually with key customers, and they didn't fly."

"Do I even need to point out that most of the factual claims are blatant lies brought to you by the same people who got caught faking video evidence in their Federal antitrust trial?"

"Semantic warfare — struggles over the meanings of words as proxies for political or market positions — is just like other kinds of warfare; you want to fight it on the other guy's turf, not yours."

From https://antitrust.slated.org/halloween/halloween11.html