

# The real meaning of go-to-market

**Gianni Anchois**

## Remember what a market is?

Good. So let's look at how to build a sound strategy to go to that market.

### **IT'S NOT**

It's not about your product features.

It's not about your price.

It's not about your competitors.

It's not about your marketing plan.

It's not even about the so called "differentiators" of your offering.

### **IS**

It's all about your clients and the best way to reach out for them.

It's about empowering your sales force to select the right clients and make the right recommendation about what works for them.

It's devising the best tactics to showcase "why you".

It's about understanding where the market will be, not only where it is.

It's about choosing the best places to hang out at (hint: where your clients are).

## **IN SEARCH OF A BETTER DEFINITION**

Now that I think of it, route-to-market makes a lot more sense, as a broad definition, than go-to-market. Think about the classic definition of a market. A place where manufacturers and sellers go to show and sell their stuff. And of course a place where people go to look at what's available (e.g. window shopping through the stalls) and possibly buy something.

## **BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME**

So the common wisdom is that, assuming there is a market, people will go there. That's the easy part right? As a seller, you show up, hence you've gone to market. To do that doesn't require you understand it, size it or truly know it in any details. You trust the market: if you build something, somebody will buy it. Of course this is an oversimplification of market dynamics, and of course it doesn't really work like that anymore.

## **HOW TO GET THERE**

What if you have to decide a route to the market? Then something different may happen. You will have to choose a path to get there. Short and quick will ensure you are first, maybe before your competitors but possibly even before the market is mature enough for your offerings. So, little or no buyers.

Long and arduous, may mean you will be second or third, potentially having to fight off an incumbent player, but also that you will have had a chance to learn from other's mistakes and maybe just think longer of the problems you are endeavouring to solve. And buyers might have more choices but be more self-aware of what they need.

## **BIG DECISIONS**

Now, here's the big decision that you as a seller need to make: which route do you want to take?

Is your company targeting established, experienced and shrewd buyers/clients, or fairly new – and potentially unclear in requirements – ones?

Let me tell you why I think this is important.

If you go for the experienced clients, your value proposition will need to stress areas like cost saving, efficiency improvement, risk aversion and in general status-quo protection.

If you choose the newcomers, than you will need to leverage the market disruptive elements of your offering. The bleeding-edge – but potentially unproven and risky – technical proposition that will empower the client to change the rules of the game and dislodge the incumbents from the playing field.

The decision about your route-to-market will make your offering more relevant to the market, and will enable you to articulate it in a way that resonates with your chosen audience. It will even make you look at the components of your offering in a different way, and feed back to your design team to adjust and align them to the chosen path.

So think of this next time you are building your business plan: do I need a go-to-market strategy, or should I chart the route-to-market for my offering and products?

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