Preface

If you're getting to the age where you feel like everything is changing so fast that the world is passing you by, I want to reassure you: It's not just a feeling. (Uh, that wasn't terribly reassuring, was it?) Or if you're still young and vibrant (no one ever seems to be described as old and vibrant), you may be looking at the pace of change and saying, "But I didn't learn *that* in school." I can reassure you also: It's only going to get worse. (This reassurance stuff is not one of my core competencies, is it?)

Most of you know that marketing is changing—that's why you reached for this book. For some of you, that's exciting. For others, it's scary. Regardless of how you feel about the changes in marketing, they're here, and the pace of change is not slowing—it's accelerating. But whether change gets your blood pumping or leaves you in a pool of sweat, marketing is undergoing a revolution more profound than any of us are likely to see the rest of our lives. (Even you young and vibrant ones.) And we are just at the beginning of that revolution.

You see, for a long time, marketers were in control. For hundreds of years, marketers controlled the message, yes, but they also controlled the media. Now, they control neither, and customers still control their money. Control of marketing is shifting from marketers to customers.

Before we go any further, I want to talk about a word I use a lot in this book: *customers*. You might call them shoppers. Or clients. Or patients. Or something else entirely. In this book, I call them customers.

I won't spend a lot of time distinguishing customers from prospects, or leads, or target market segments, or any other term that tries to slice and dice people-who-already-bought-from-you from people-that-you-want-to-buy-from-you-but-haven't-yet. Maybe I should have, but I didn't.

I didn't split those hairs because most of the time it doesn't matter—you need to think the same way about existing customers (who you want to keep) as you do for prospects (who you want to buy for the first time). If you believe that you can do less for existing customers than you do for new ones, I think you're wrong—you need to work equally hard. Thinking about customers mostly the same way is smart, if only because it requires less thinking.

So because I like to think less (no, don't put the book down because I said that), you'll see me refer to this entire diverse group as "customers" a great deal of the time. There are great books written that help you treat new customers differently from old customers differently from people who bought once about eight years ago but don't return your calls anymore—but this isn't one of them. Instead, this book will talk to you about how to personalize what you do to give every customer what they really want, but with the same goal for all—*to give them what they really want*.

This also isn't one of those "sky is falling" books or one of those "put on your rosy glasses and look at the new stuff" books, either. This is because the Internet isn't good or bad for marketing any more than television was good or bad for marketing. The Internet's good if you know what to do with it. It's bad if you don't. After you read this book, the Internet will be good for *you* and for *your* marketing.

As an aside, I really struggled with names like "the Internet." Sometimes, such as in the subtitle of this book, it just sounded catchier to say "the Web" even though "the Internet" is bigger than the Web and encompasses e-mail and cell phones and other "online marketing" (or "interactive marketing"). I finally decided to use all of these words in the book because you're smart enough to apply the concepts where they make sense. And if you are reading this book a couple of years after I wrote it, then undoubtedly there will be more words to describe this stuff. So don't sweat the terminology because this book is not about terminology.

So what *is* this book about?

I was hoping you'd ask. This book could have been really short if everyone understood just two things: Marketing is now a conversation, and feedback from your customers helps you adjust what you do every day. That's it. But you're unlikely to plunk down any cash for a book that short, so I fleshed it out a little…just a few hundred pages more.

Perhaps you're asking yourself, "How can I *read this book* wrong quickly?" Good question.

Feel free to skip around. Look at the table of contents. Look at the one-page descriptions at the beginning of each part of the book. If you've been doing interactive marketing for a while and you know what your biggest problem is, dive into the section that covers it or use the index to dive in. I've tried to make it a good read if you go through it sequentially, but if you know the basics, there's no need for you to waste time reading them again.

I tried to make it an easy read, so I didn't fill it with footnotes every time I quote a statistic. For those who want to know where each stat comes from, you can head to my Web site (www.mikemoran.com/resources) to get all my research and lots more.

If you're *really* in a hurry (I like you already), you can look for the icon shown in the margin of this page—that icon appears everywhere I have a special tip to do something wrong quickly. You can start doing those things right away.

You might be asking yourself, "What's with that icon?" (And what about the picture on the cover of the book, for that matter?) To understand what I am getting at by advising you to do it wrong quickly, think about the two pictures below. Ask yourself, "Which target shows better results?"
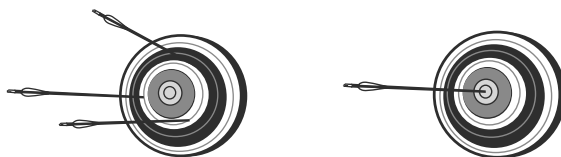
Most people would say it's the one on the right. One arrow was shot, and one bullseye was hit—100% success.

But there's one problem. Suppose the game is being played based on the most points scored? The archer with three arrows on the board has a better chance to win than the archer with one. And that's the point. In business, you don't get any awards for the highest percentage of customers you win—you get awards for making the most money. So if you can take three shots in the same amount of time your competitor takes one, well, too bad for your competitor.

That's what "do it wrong quickly" is about—the new rules of Internet marketing. I'll summarize the book here, but you can also read the introductions to each part of the book or read the summaries at the end of each chapter to decide what to look at first, so you can read this book wrong quickly.

Part 1 explains how marketing is shifting from monologue to conversation. The Web is not just a new medium—it's an *active* medium rather than a *passive* one. Yes, the Web brings new advertising models, but the changes in direct marketing and in publicity are at least as profound for marketers. Customers don't just *hear* your message. They comment. They argue. They applaud (sometimes). And the rest of your customers hear what these vocal customers say. Marketers no longer have control over the marketing message—all participants in the conversation control their own voices.

Marketers must do more than *listen* to customers, however. Part 2 describes how you must *observe* your customers. Your customers vote with their mice. They click on your

message to learn more. They sign up. They buy. If you're not watching what they do, you're missing an immense amount of free feedback. What customers *do* is just as important as what they *say*. You need to pay attention and change your marketing approach in response. And then watch them again, in a never-ending cycle that leads to continuous improvement.

So, those are the big ideas, really. Marketing is now a conversation. Customers give you feedback in word and deed. And you must become flexible enough to change direction every day based on that feedback. You need to do it wrong quickly and then fix it—just as quickly. Every blessed day. Try something and then see what happens, then try something new—all the time.

I know that when I urge you to do it *wrong* quickly, some folks bristle. They *so* want to do it right. And I do, too. But the way to eventually do it right is to admit that what you are trying right now is probably wrong. That's why you're *trying* it, see? Everything is an experiment—you need to find out what works. So we can't pore over the details for months and reach consensus before we try something. We need to accept the fact that our first try will stink on ice, and then we'll start making it better—so that it stinks a little bit less each day.

Am I the first one to say these things? Nah. But I set out to explain them in a different way than you may have seen before. I wanted to talk to the people that I meet every day who are struggling with the big changes the Internet is inflicting on our comfortable marketing practices.

When I meet these smart, hardworking folks, and I explain these big ideas, they almost always agree that the world is changing and changing fast. They agree that these ideas are imperative for marketers to understand, that all marketers must adapt, and that marketers must adapt now—with one glaring exception. None of them think that *they* personally need to adapt now. When I ask them what *they* are going to do about these changes, I get back a list of the *Reasons Why Not*. The reasons why it's too soon in their industry. Or why it won't work at their company. Or how they are doing a couple of things, but they're "not ready" for any more. Or (my personal favorite), "You don't know my boss."

And that's why I wrote Part 3 of this book. Because even though it's true that I really *don't* know your boss, I can help you work through whatever is blocking you from embracing the changes you need to make. (And if you don't feel comfortable embracing the changes, perhaps you can at least offer them a firm handshake.) You'll also learn how to help colleagues at your company make changes within themselves and in your organizational culture.

In addition, Part 3 helps you to think about the industry changes still ahead of us in marketing, with a pointer to my Web site (www.mikemoran.com/resources) to help

you keep learning long after you close this book. There's also a glossary in the back to help you make sense of all the new jargon that Internet marketing has spawned—throughout the book, you'll see key terms in *italics* that are defined in the glossary. Between the glossary and my Web site, you should have enough resources to get started with the real work of adapting your marketing approach.

So that's what this book is about.

I wrote the book for marketers, but not only for marketers. Because Web marketing involves your whole company, every employee can be a marketer. So you need to know how to reach out to all those other folks who work with you so that *they* understand Web marketing and so that they know what they should do in their own jobs. This book has been written so that even non-marketers can understand the marketing stuff. (And you don't need to be a geek to understand the techie stuff.)

So if you're a veteran brand marketer, this book helps you adapt to the new way to market online—you'll learn to get feedback and adapt. If you have a background in *direct* marketing, you already understand how to adapt based on feedback, but this book shows you how to collect the feedback on the Internet and what to do with it. And if you're not a marketer at all, read this book to find out how everyone working in any business needs to be part of interactive marketing.

Gee, that takes in a whole lot of readers, doesn't? For anyone with a neck, this book's for you. (How's that for targeted marketing?)