



101

Ways to
Destroy
Your Tribe

By Ed Welch



Do you lead a tribe?

Suppose for a moment you think of your customers or website visitors as a **tribe**. Perhaps you're the CEO of a Fortune 500 company – how do you care for your tribe (customers)? Maybe you own a corner grocery store - do you take your customers for granted?

Suppose you have a website or blog – your visitors are your tribe – how do you care for them? Do you care more about finding new customers/visitors than properly caring for those you already lead?

This list is meant to help you. Whether you're the CEO of a Fortune 500 company or a blogger working to gain readers – this list is for you. It *isn't* designed to teach you what to do – but it does show you *what not to do*.

For too long, I have watched organizations destroy their tribe while naively wasting money to replace them.

If any of the items on this list ring true – you're probably destroying your own tribe – one customer at a time.

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- 1. When you have a great product that's selling well - look for ways to make it cheaper – your customers won't be able to tell the difference.**
- 2. Never honor a warranty if it's expired – even if it's only been expired by one day.**
- 3. Don't ask for feedback from your customers. Make them take surveys but never engage them in a conversation with you.**
- 4. Don't worry about what one customer might tell another – after all, you have millions of them, right?**
- 5. Do everything you can to keep your customers from creating a community – you don't want them talking to each other.**



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- 6. Make your customers wait every chance you get. They're not busy like you and it helps them meditate.**
- 7. Always work toward increasing your company's earnings per share – it's all that really matters.**
- 8. Make big decisions first – then wait and see how they will impact your customers.**
- 9. Always make sure your employees are underpaid and frowning – customers will feel sorry for them and buy more products.**
- 10. Don't waste money having a real person answer the phone – use a voice menu.**



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- 11.** Use focus groups – don't engage in real conversations with real customers.
- 12.** Never go out of your way to make a customer happy. Soon they'll all expect it.
- 13.** Always follow your company's policies – never break a rule – regardless of how you could help a customer.
- 14.** Spend most of your marketing budget on big television commercials – like the Super Bowl.
- 15.** Don't take viral marketing seriously. How fast can a message spread anyway?



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- 16.** Make sure your employees care more about procedures and rules than customers.
- 17.** Take your time shipping products to customers – they're not in that big of a hurry.
- 18.** Don't empower your customer service people to make wise decisions that make customers happy.
- 19.** Change the rules in the middle of the game – your customers will love it.
- 20.** Don't let your customers push you around – after all, what can one customer do to hurt your company?



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- 21.** When it's time to cut expenses – start with the customer service department.
- 22.** Never try to build customer evangelists – mass advertising has always worked better!
- 23.** Use gimmicks such as hiring people to pretend they like your product – your customers aren't smart enough to know the difference.
- 24.** When you're employees are suffering – make sure they know how much fun you're having playing golf.
- 25.** If you happen to be the CEO or a high-level manager of a company – never stoop to the level of an ordinary customer – don't visit with one in your office – it looks bad.



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- 26.** Never, ever, ever work for a cause greater than your company – it's a waste of time & money.
- 27.** Make sure your customers don't receive a penny more than they deserve.
- 28.** Never post too many people at checkout registers – it's okay to make your customers wait – they'll get to know each other better.
- 29.** Make your products the way you want to make them – customers will buy them anyway because of your brand.
- 30.** As soon as your business becomes successful – change strategies such that your business will appeal to the masses.



- 31.** Routinely email your customers without their expressed permission. The more frequently you send email, the better.
- 32.** Call your customers on the phone regularly. People love to be interrupted and coerced into purchasing things they don't want or need.
- 33.** Make sure everyone understands that your time is more important than their time.
- 34.** Spend more time listening to your management team than your customers.
- 35.** Make sure your customers have a difficult time verbally communicating with your customer service people.

- 36.** Make your customers wait in an airplane (on a tarmac) for several hours. They'll love the bonding experience.
- 37.** Just because you can get away with a business practice today – means you should do it from now on!
- 38.** If you happen to be in an industry that has little competition – take advantage of your position by offering poor customer service. They won't remember the poor service when your competition shows up.
- 39.** Make things hard for your customers – you know – they love to solve problems.
- 40.** Be secretive, never transparent – your customers aren't smart enough to see the real you – don't worry.

- 41.** Never give anything away – make your customers pay for everything. After all, isn't that the definition of a customer – someone who buys from you?
- 42.** Don't browse the internet – don't look for what people are saying about your company.
- 43.** Hassle your customers about warranty conditions – you're in the right – it says so right there!
- 44.** Make sure your customers sign those fine print legal documents – then enforce them with an iron hand.
- 45.** If you're the CEO – make sure you're a real ass – people below you will also feel compelled to be an ass – and ultimately, those people who deal directly with customers will also act like an ass. Well done Mr. Ass!

- 46.** Don't make any effort to see that management relates to your customers. Customers will never be on that level.
- 47.** Make sure everyone in your company understands that people are loyal to products and brands – NOT other people and relationships.
- 48.** When marketing – shoot for the masses – you know – the biggest audience – like the Super Bowl.
- 49.** If you don't think your market is hearing you – yell louder and more frequently.
- 50.** Take your customers for granted – they bought from you once – they'll buy from you again.

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- 51.** Never ask your customers' permission for anything. You have the right to barrage your customers with any useless information you desire.
- 52.** Remember, you know your customers better than they know themselves – treat them that way.
- 53.** It doesn't matter if you get a customer's order wrong – they can always exchange it.
- 54.** Design your customer service in a way that makes it challenging for them to receive help – they might forget about the problem and go away.
- 55.** Don't share too much information about your company or products - something bad could happen.



- 56.** Make your customers pay for the fraudulent actions committed by criminals. You know, make them start the auction over completely – punish those customers.
- 57.** Never follow up with a customer after he/she has done business with you – as you might be required to solve a problem..
- 58.** Always “suck up” to your Board of Directors – keeping your job is more important than keeping customers.
- 59.** Put earnings per share ahead of customer service – EPS makes the world go around – not satisfied customers.
- 60.** When you find a remarkable product or service – stick with it for years and years – don’t waste time looking for others.

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- 61.** Make sure your hours of operation are at your convenience – not your customers.
- 62.** Send your customers a bunch of crap with every order they place – they love wasting time and throwing junk away.
- 63.** If you bill your customers monthly – use those envelopes that have ads attached to them – they're so much fun to loosen and throw away!
- 64.** Enjoy the status quo of success and keep doing what you're doing. No need to shake things up.
- 65.** Make sure the people in charge (yes, the executives) have yesterday's education – there's nothing new to learn anyway.



- 66.** Don't listen to employees who have new ideas – those ideas are dangerous and can lead to “problems” – punish those people by calling them trouble-makers.
- 67.** Never leave your executive office – except to attend meetings with other executives.
- 68.** Don't listen to people who might have a better grasp of the “big picture” in relation to your company than you have.
- 69.** Be sure you understand that internet marketing is just like “old school marketing”.
- 70.** It's always wise to throw more money at a challenging problem – rather than listen to advice of those you've hired.

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- 71.** Only hire big “well-known” consulting firms to help you. They’re the only people who know anything.
- 72.** Always focus on price and cost – they’re most important – it’s all about the bottom line.
- 73.** Customers are like cattle – you only need to herd them in the right direction with your clever marketing.
- 74.** It’s all about the packaging – spend a lot of money on packaging research.
- 75.** Don’t buy into any of this nonsense you’re reading! It will only get you in trouble with your boss.



- 76.** Dismiss all this talk about “tribes” as more “silly talk” from people trying to change things or “make a buck”.
- 77.** Always keep doing business the way you’ve been doing it in the past – some things aren’t meant to change – like your company.
- 78.** Your customers really should just understand things from your perspective. They just don’t get it.
- 79.** Only hire employees who appear to have the best-looking resume’ – those are the people who will think “out-of-the-box” and help your company the most.
- 80.** Design your business such that self-serving behavior is rewarded (i.e. if I don’t spend the entire advertising budget – I might not get as much money next time).

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- 81.** Design your business such that good customer service is punished (i.e. I'm not allowed to authorize that).
- 82.** Focus on petty little details – avoid the big picture. After all, it's those petty details that make up the big picture.
- 83.** Only hire the most attractive people – it's a winning formula for a successful business.
- 84.** Use “old marketing” techniques in a “new marketing” environment.
- 85.** Always wait until you have a huge PR crisis before attacking the problem.
- 86.** Punish those who challenge the status quo of your organization – no new ideas allowed!



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- 87.** Always try to be right – you knew you were anyway. It’s fun to be right, isn’t it?
- 88.** If I hear one more word about this “new marketing” I’ll scream! Scare them into submission.
- 89.** Why does the customer always have to be right? Customers don’t understand my problems.
- 90.** Keep hold of that power – it’s all that can help you in these difficult times.
- 91.** Surround yourself with people exactly like you – fresh new ideas only cause trouble.



- 92.** Market to a demographic – not a need. Stick to what’s worked in the past – surely it will start working again!
- 93.** It doesn’t matter how long a product lasts – we only need to sell it – customers will always buy our strong brand.
- 94.** Don’t try to help your customers – always focus on helping yourself – that way you can better help your customers later.
- 95.** Customers should be like soldiers – they should eat what they’re fed.
- 96.** Understand that your company is bigger than any changes happening right now. All this new stuff doesn’t apply to you. The business world revolves around your company – much like the Earth orbits the Sun.

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- 97.** Cutting costs really is the ONLY answer. Always take the easy way out – cut costs and save your job.
- 98.** Stay in your comfort zone – never try anything new. Why do anything that might jeopardize your great job?
- 99.** All customers are the same. If you've heard from one - you've heard from them all.
- 100.** Never give the customer the “benefit of the doubt” – whatever they did IS NOT covered by the warranty. Too bad!
- 101.** Make your customers pay for ice when purchasing tea. If a customer refuses to pay for ice – give them tea without ice. You're such a sly cost cutter!



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About the Author

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