

THE  
ONE  
THING

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# What is the One Thing?

In the movie *City Slickers*, Curly (*Jack Palance*) gives Mitch (*Billy Crystal*) a life lesson while sitting around the campfire.

Curly: Do you know what the secret to life is? (He's holding up one finger.)

Mitch: Your finger?

Curly: One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and the rest don't mean s@&\$.

Mitch: But what is the one thing?

Curly: That's for you to find out.

Unbeknownst to the rough and tumble Curly, he was revealing one of the most important things every marketer should know:

**What is the One Thing?**



# Everything vs. One Thing

It is perfectly normal for anyone marketing a particular product to know every feature and benefit it offers, and it's common to believe that we need to tell the entire world about every last one of them.

But to be an effective advertiser and a successful challenger brand, we must resist this urge and focus our product down to the one thing it does better than any other product. It may not be easy, but the stronger the focus is on that one thing, the greater the chance of success.



**Next, it is important to determine the specific group or demographic that will care about this "one thing" more than anyone else.**

# Indication May Be the One Thing

When consumers are shopping for a functional CPG product, they don't want a Swiss Army knife-like solution. Sure, it has a pair of tiny scissors, a little spork and a pop-out tooth pick, but would anyone actually buy a Swiss Army knife just for one of these tools? No. Why? Because everyone thinks that a product that says it does everything, does nothing very well. Remember that it is the consumer's reality that matters, not ours, when it comes to crafting a winning advertising message.

**Extensive research shows that, on average, 75% of consumers cite specificity of indication as a deciding factor when buying a product.**

Think of some of the examples that demonstrate consumers are looking for specific solutions at retail. There are shampoos and conditioners for oily hair, dry hair, thin hair, long hair, red hair, blond hair, black hair, curly hair, no hair, aging hair, split-end hair, dyed hair, processed hair, and on and on...



# The Secret is One Thing at a Time

Out of all of the shampoo examples, how much chemical difference do you think there really is between any of these different SKUs? As a percentage of the formula, most of the differences are probably in the single digits.

These marketers have learned that consumers are far more likely to select a product they identify as being highly targeted just for their needs. Even better, they are often willing to pay more for it.

**Note: Let's say you have a product that really does work for more than one indication. You should be able to successfully promote up to three key features and benefits, as long as you focus on one feature at a time, and one demographic at a time.**



**This requires separate messaging for each feature (one thing) and delivery to the specific demographic. It can be done, but it requires a satisfactory budget. For most advertisers, it makes sense to use a laser focus when developing messaging and budget. Once a stronghold has been established, you can shift the focus to expand to your target audience. There's no reason to try to do too much.**

**Just remember:**

**Keep the main thing the main thing.**

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