

Swimming in Troubled Waters 1



PETT
USA TODAY
Arlington, VA
USA



Gastronomic Delight-elBulli experience!

Each year some 2 million people try to reserve a dinner table at **elBulli** in Spain. That's a problem, because chef **Ferran Adrià** seats only 50 a night, and is open just half the year!!

What does Chef Adrià know about marketing that puts his scarce product in such high demand??

He understands that what he is serving is only partly about food.

Here is what the lucky few elBulli diners receive for their 230 euros!!

In a five-hour sitting guests will encounter more than 30 completely original dishes prepared by the chef and his team.

In addition to engaging a diner's five senses, Adrià and his team hope to evoke irony, humor, and even childhood memories with their Creations.

Just WOW!

How to market in such trouble times?

- It's really quite simple!
- Understand customers' shifting needs and fears.
- Segment customers according to their recession psychology
- Categorize their purchases/products.



"Are we afraid of a little competition? Based on the figures, absolutely."

How to classify the products?

- **Essentials or Must haves**

Necessary for survival

- **Treats:**

Indulgences

- **Postponables:**

Can be reasonably put off

- **Expendables:**

Perceived as unnecessary



Categorizing Customers

❖ **Slam on the breaks people: (Urgent rethink!)**

- Most vulnerable and hardest hit
- Reduce all types of spending by eliminating, postponing or substituting purchases

❖ **Pained but patient types: (Sigh!)**

- Resilient and optimistic about long term
- Economize in all areas but not aggressively



Categorizing Customers

❖ **Comfortably well-off ones: (Nah, I can manage!)**

- Feel secure about their ability to ride out current and future ups and downs in the economy
- More selective in their purchases

❖ **Live for today (Who cares about tomorrow?)**

- Unconcerned or unaffected
- Extend their timetables for making major purchases

Tailor your tactics!!

- Sell an experience not a product!
- Track how customers reassess priorities
- Market throughout the recession!
- Streamline product portfolios
- Improve affordability
- Assess the core of your brand
- Use reassuring messages that reinforce an emotional connection with the brand!!
 - E.g. Dell uses the message “Depend on Dell for simple solutions in tough times” or “Ideal laptop works anywhere in any economy!”

Sources

- John A. Quelch Katherine E. Jocz “How to market in a downturn” Harvard Business Review
- Marketing lesson “elBulli experience”