

# Willingness to Listen Creates Opportunity

How to grow a bigger brain in 10 easy steps, Part 1

By: *Nancy A. Shenker*

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## Step 1: Open Your Head

Marketing innovation ultimately comes from thinking in new ways about old problems. As a marketer, I have lived through five decades of the marketing industry - the good, the bad, and the ugly. I have worked with some incredibly brilliant marketers; people responsible for conceiving and launching new products that revolutionized industries (like the ATM). And I have seen others crash and burn - because they either clung too fiercely to a truly awful idea or they simply refused to recognize that the world (and the consumer) was changing, and they did the same old stuff while their competitors grabbed market share. That leads to the first important step in innovation - a willingness to listen to and process facts, data, trends, and people who challenge truths. Create opportunities in your life and business for continuous learning.

- Welcome at least one person into your business life who is not a “yes man” (or woman).
- Exercise your brain. Research shows that learning a new language or skill, combined with the right food and exercise, can help boost your brain power. Here are [50 “brain growing” tips](#).
- Look outside your own industry for creative ways to market. For example, many restaurants are using social media in creative ways to drive in new customers. If you have a retail business, some of these ideas may also apply.
- Hang out with people who are not in your industry and ask them lots of questions
- Do customer research periodically and do not discount facts that are counter to your beliefs.

And above all, when faced with facts or ideas that challenge your beliefs and experience, just take a deep breath, realize that you may not always be right, and ask yourself, “Is there anything here that I can apply to get better results?” Next week: Part II, Reading is Fun...and Profitable!

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