

# Gold Rush: Marketing in the Yukon

Or what I learned on my summer vacation

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I just returned from a family trip - a cruise to Alaska and British Columbia. (I'll cover more about cruise marketing and managing an office from afar in upcoming posts.)

As I "checked-in" on my journey on [Foursquare](#) (which automatically fed my whereabouts to Twitter), I marveled not only at the wide vistas of the sea and mountains but also at the role of commerce and word-of-mouth marketing in shaping the development of that part of our country.

The early Alaskan settlers and prospectors were among the original risk-takers and innovators, relentless in their quest for gold. I was awestruck by the incredible [White Pass and Yukon Route](#) railway they built through solid rock to facilitate trade. They had none of the benefits of today's architectural brilliance and automation or sophisticated city planners. Just a lot of grit, determination (and cheap labor).

Even [Dolly Arthur's brothel in Ketchikan, Alaska](#) was a masterfully crafted retail establishment and saloon. She kept the operation going for years by meeting the needs of her customers (and pricing her services based on demand). During the Gold Rush, business people prospered by offering needed products, establishing credibility, communicating well, establishing strong transportation systems (and of course being in the right place at the right time).

## Fast forward to 2010...

As we disembarked at each port, a row of tour operators waited for the newest crowd of "modern day settlers." The most successful ones were those who were assertive, without being pushy. They smiled and greeted newcomers. We chose a glacier tour for our daughters because the tour operator welcomed us warmly and explained why his tour was better than his competitors' option; a simple and timeless marketing principle.

We also went on a two hour kayak expedition. Josh, our tour guide, offered to take a family photo and then playfully turned the camera on himself too, so we would have a visual reminder when we returned and downloaded. Before we climbed back on the tour bus, he asked us all to "like" his company ([Packer Expeditions](#)) on Facebook, upload our vacation photos, and write a positive review if we liked the tour. So, here's a big shoutout to Josh, a smart marketer - even in the Alaskan wilderness. After hours on the rough seas, the railway, and the oh-so-scary [zipline through the Juneau rainforest](#) (not to mention fighting the dangers at the Celebrity Cruise buffet), I am back on the challenging terrain in today's New York economy. Although tweets and posts have replaced the hand-drawn poster outside the general store, great marketing is timeless - West to East, North to South. And superior service, a warm smile, and some blasting through rock will get us all far!

## Can't get to Alaska this week?

Here are some things you can do right away. No boat, plane, helicopter or harness is required!

- Take on hard challenges and "seemingly impossible" feats if they are essential to the success of your business.
- Step outside your comfort zone - in life and in work. I am not a big fan of heights, but once I zipped 150 feet above a giant hole (and lived to tell), I realized that the first step is always the scariest. Put your trust in experts.
- Look for creative ways to use social media to stay in touch with prospects and customers.

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