

# Business Success in '16: Will The Force Be With You?



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[Star Wars](#) has landed with a vengeance. Not only is the new movie on track to break all previous box office records, but the associated marketing machine has surrounded us on all sides with a wide array of associated merchandise and services.

For marketers, the lesson here is that the **brand is** the force. Even after a ten-year hiatus, the Star Wars brand is so strong it is attracting its own supergravity. Building and communicating a strong brand will be even more critical to marketing success for businesses in 2016. **Here are 7 other trends we predict will impact businesses this year:**



(Source: Wikipedia)

**We're still in that same election cycle.** After a long, long warm-up, we're finally headed to the presidential election in November. Between now and then, expect major ongoing media distractions, but little in the way of major legislative change that will impact business.

- **The economy is solid.** In spite of all the doom and gloom of political sound bites, the U.S. economy is solid and growing. Employers will continue to look for talented employees. Consumers will continue to purchase from providers with whom they identify. The key is to identify ways you can provide unique value to your key audiences.
- **App this or else.** Mobile devices hit a tipping point last year. Now it's highly likely a customer will first learn about your business, access your information, and even engage in commerce with you through their mobile device. In this environment, it's not enough to be mobile-responsive. The most successful businesses will be actively looking for ways they can use technology to make life easier for customers through increased

functionality and added services.

- **Experience is the new differentiator.** In a world where instant access is expected, the brands that stand out will do so because they offer a unique engaging experience. Customers want to be entertained and stimulated—even when conducting mundane transactions. Sellers be warned—use your brand force creatively!
- **Heightened security will be the norm.** Recent worldwide terror events, as well as ongoing domestic gun violence, will result in a continuous heightened level of consciousness about security. Organizations that can provide products and services to reassure consumers or improve business security will find an opportunity to thrive.
- **Disruption is more than emulating Uber.** Uber was the beginning of the cycle, followed by a series of apps positioned as the Uber of This or the Uber of That. Moving forward, real disruption will occur in businesses that use technology to dramatically improve a customer's daily experience—not those that simply adapt Uber's business model to their own industry.
- **Back to Basics: Get the blocking and tackling right.** From a communication perspective, it's even more important for businesses to get the basics right: Have a solid strategy, know your customers, understand your market, build your brand, deliver an outstanding product or service. Sometimes the more things change, the more they stay the same.

The more of these trends you can leverage, the stronger the power of your marketing force...and the more likely you will live long and prosper (yes, there's a new Star Trek movie due this year, too!).

**About the Author:** Linda J. Popky, founder of Leverage2Market Associates, is an award-winning Silicon Valley-based strategic marketing expert who is the author of the new book *Marketing Above the Noise: Achieve Strategic Advantage with Marketing that Matters*. Follow her on Twitter at @popky #mktgabove.