

Brand Journalism

The Uncommon Guide to Marketing

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The best effect of any book is that it excites the reader to self-activity.

Thomas Carlyle, Essayist and Historian

Can you imagine a really useful marketing guide to be just a page long?

Why not? Isn't it true that the most elegant and effective designs are often the least complicated? Think paperclip. Think frisbee.

Before I go on, let me point out a couple assumptions I am making here:

- a. You know EXACTLY who your target audience is.
- b. You are good at what you do.

I am using the craft of journalism as a metaphor for illustrating a simple approach to nudging your story into every day conversations. But why this metaphor? Here's why: while the new paths to media success are constantly being charted, the basic premise of the craft of journalism remains the same: putting one word after another so that the reader gets the message.

In marketing, your job is to create a constant stream of opportunities for your target audience to experience your brand.

And why must you do this constantly? Three reasons:

- a. Repetition is a convincing argument. No matter how acute an experience, our memory of it fades over time.
- b. In today's digitally-powered world, media consumption is continuous, and decision making is continuous.
- c. Big businesses such as Disney, Apple and BMW take such things seriously—how can you afford not to?

As Simon Sinek notes in his remarkable book titled *START WITH WHY*, "We don't personally know Steve Jobs. We haven't spent time roaming the halls of Apple's headquarters to get to know their culture. The clarity we have for what Apple believes comes from one place and one place only: Apple... Apple has a clear and loud megaphone and is exceptionally good at communicating its story."

It all starts here: study the art of self-presentation. And remember: you don't have to invent everything, just find something that works well, improve on it, and adapt it to your needs. Learn from the best. For instance, Apple has eliminated jargon from its product descriptions, created a library of simple explanatory videos, and instituted off-line Genius Bars, all of which ensure proactive stream of consistent marketing touch points grounded in a clear sense of priorities. This is why their customers' engagement with the Apple brand doesn't necessarily begin or end with a purchase.

Don't rush to say, "Life's easy for Apple—their products sell themselves." (A hint: the design of a product/service is a marketing touch point.)

Great brand journalists concentrate your attention, engage your emotions and give your mind a clear destination even if what the brand is selling is but a commodity*. Not convinced? Consider the GEICO brand—has it not become more than just another auto insurance company, and a key figure of modern pop culture, mainly because it is great at self-presentation? (*With the word commodity we usually define goods or services which can be purchased from any supplier and the end-result is, give or take, the same.)

Thank you for your consideration. Could this guide assist you in your marketing efforts? If yes, please share it with others. If not, delete it now.

Jenan Mujkic, Dec 29 2010