

Trapped by Ego-driven Marketing

Picture this—you are at an event and suddenly you are trapped by self-centered, “Chatty Cathy”. In a nanosecond, she exhausts you—droning on about what she does, how she does it, why she does it. As you hatch an escape plan, you think—I wish I could “click” a button to get away.

Unfortunately, in the world of marketing, escape is that easily. It is also exactly what your audience will do if you forget a core principal of marketing—it’s not about you.

Let me illustrate the principal by revisiting the party, but this time with “Engaging Edith”. She has a way of making you feel smart and interesting. Edith cleverly guides you through a conversation. She quickly ascertains what you like and don’t like and serves up a variety of stimulating topics that pique your interest, but also relate to her. The allure is so powerful, before you know it you are in the midst of an engaging and vibrant conversation, but interestingly, you hardly realize it centers on her business.

Creating a dynamic interaction is exactly what great marketing should do. However, to be engaging you first need to avoid the trap of self-indulgent, ego-driven marketing.

The Ego Trap

Egocentric marketing feels the same as interacting with Chatty Cathy. Whether it’s an ad, direct mail piece, tradeshow sign,

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brochure, video or website, the common denominator is a one-sided fire hose of company information without a buyer point of view. The result is instant turnoff.

This issue can be a confusing. After all, the point of marketing is to tell your story. How can you tell your side if marketing needs to be about the buyer? The trick is to use marketing to entice your buyer into wanting to learn more about your business.

From Ego to Engagement

Capturing the attention of your audience is hard in the face of constant distractions and multitasking. Typical prospects are doing three things at once, so it’s imperative to use multiple approaches. Avoiding dead-end egocentric marketing requires three fundamental steps:

1. Change your mindset. Think of your prospect as a guest. As the “host”, make it your job to ensure your guest has a memorable, enjoyable experience. There is no place for me, me, me marketing. Reframe your approach to first focus on providing value, creating interest and building a relationship.

2. Learn about your guest:

In marketing parlance, this is discovery. Marketing must start with learning what makes your prospect tick. Relative to your industry, take time to discover buyer likes, dislikes, issues and concerns. At the same time keep in mind, any preconceived perceptions about your business you need to overcome and perceptions you need to create.

Develop buyer personas to make relating to your guest is easier. A persona is a one page, buyer description. Include all the demographic and psychographic details you can imagine. Have fun with it. Gather insights by interviewing sales and talking directly to buyers so that a clear picture emerges. A good persona will help you create engaging marketing by presenting your story through issues, concerns, needs and wants that matter to your buyer.

3. Develop a conversation

roadmap: Becoming an “Engaging Edith” requires strategically integrating your buyer’s needs, wants, issues and concerns into the storyline.

First, help your guest decide how to engage. Think of this as laying out the breadcrumbs to create an at-a-glance, irresistibly engaging story. Parse the copy with interesting subheads, visuals and quotes. No one wants to commit to a fire hose of text. Breaking your story into interesting, relatable chunks also helps your guest focus on content of interest. Entice your buyer further by integrating what matters most to them and how it meets their needs.

Tempt your guest with more. To keep your buyer engaged, borrow tried and true techniques that work on you. For example, at the end of each chapter of a great book, smart authors add a cliffhanger to keep you reading more. Applied to marketing this is your “can’t say no” offer, tip or detail that leads your guest to the next step—an action to call, download or provide contact information.

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