



30 RULES: HOW MARKETING SINCE WEB 2.0 CHANGED EVERYTHING

FlashPaintLabs
THOUGHT-LEADING CONTENT FOR BUYER-DRIVEN SALES

30 RULES: HOW MARKETING SINCE WEB 2.0 CHANGED EVERYTHING, And Made Content King

Marketing has been forever changed. The paradigm shift is well-underway, and the dinosaurs clinging to the old ways are seeing ever-diminishing returns. The days of 'target, interrupt, harass and prevent attrition' are over. This is why we see 7,000 ads a day, and ignore 99.5% of them. The old way enriches only ad networks. It kind of works, when done at scale (millions of impressions), but there's a better way.

Something interesting happened around 2010, or once Web 2.0 got into full swing (10 years after Google eclipsed Yahoo!'s directory-based starting point for the Internet): people like Seth Godin, Joe Pulizzi, Jon Weubben, and eventually Gary Vaynerchuk, Mark W. Schaefer, Marcus Sheridan, and others all began to recognize the rules of marketing had been changed, first by this thing called a search engine (that was orders of magnitude better than anything before it), and next by the explosion in user-generated content, smart phones, and dynamic social media. We have explored the mechanics of how buyer empowerment changed buying habits in other articles.

Here we will focus on getting the average company's head in the right place: basically telling them that the buyer is everything, and a given company is nothing, and you win by orienting yourself to this reality, by giving to receive, by putting helping customers first, and by surrendering your pushy, unwelcome, obsession with 'selling' people. Sales is dead.

It's bitter pill, especially for young gun marketers and salespeople who have mistaken notions about how things work.

Internet search transformed how we buy. Today, for any purchase over \$100, we research and consider, on our terms, on our time, in our timeframe. By the time we contact a company, we're 80% – 90% decided on a product. The sale is basically any given company's to lose. Your sales team be damned.

That's it. That's the big secret. You can 'judo' this knowledge – go with it – or you can resist it, at your own peril.

In this post, we'll offer something like Mark W. Schaefer's Manifesto For Human-Centric Marketing: a top-level, 20,000 ft. view of how to best conduct yourself in what Vaynerchuk calls the Thank You Economy, and what we call the Selective Consumption Economy.



1. **Recognize that the game has changed and buyers don't want to see your ads.** We see between 7,000 and 10,000 ads a day, and we ignore them. Paid ads – when sales are driven by buyers searching – are interruptive, and only kind of work because we can shoot them at buyers, in the thousands or millions a day. Marketing has changed, evolved. You don't have leads cornered like a 1950's Don Draper; your Glengarry Glen Ross sales war stories just look like getting lucky after having abused someone; Nobody gets to be a pushy Ford salesmen like they could when there were three automakers.
2. **Respect buyers.** Discard all the disdainful metaphors that egocentric marketers have for describing how they get sales (targeting, hunting, funneling, etc.) and seek rather to help or rescue leads.
3. **Accept that selling your product is about your desires, not their need.** Even 'lead magnets' are selfish and disingenuous.
4. **Recognize that buyers have more options than ever, and more objective information than ever.** This is true because of the Internet, user-generated content, but also smart phones and the speed of information.
5. **Recognize that buyers outnumber you.** You are *one* agent, one voice, and one platform; the public outnumbers you.
6. **Recognize that buyers don't believe your sales copy, and can spot it a mile away.** Buyers believe reviews, articles – ideally from objective, third-party, publishers. Though you are not a third party, they can also spot helpful content that's attempting to be objective. This is the best you can do.
7. **Recognize that most of what is known about your company, online, isn't content you created or control.** It's your actual reputation.

8. **Recognize that the bulk of the Buyer Journey is a crazy, arbitrary, winding path of 'research'.** The 'awareness' and 'consideration' stages – about 90% of the Buyer Journey – are marked by the private investigation of options, entirely on the buyer's terms. It's researching fit, cost, value; known unknowns and unknown unknowns. Respect that process and don't interrupt it. They don't want to see you talk about yourself. They don't want ads or brochures or emails or sales calls.
9. **Recognize that your ads have never meant less than they do now.** Collapsing click-through rates validate this. Your own buying habits validate this.
10. **Recognize that the Buyer Journey is buyer-driven** and buyer-centric.
11. **Stop pretending almost universal avoidance of your ads** (a .2% – .35% display click-through rate; 1.91% – 2% for search) **means anything but that people don't want to see them.** Don't be a slow learner. Don't count on your VC money. Recognize. Stop using the few clicks you get at scale (thousands or millions of impressions) to rationalize this unwelcome practice.
12. **Market as you buy – don't be a hypocrite.** It's breaking the Golden Rule to ignore ads and delete emails, then go to work as a marketer or business owner to do what you, yourself, don't like.
13. **Stop interrupting people to talk about yourself, with the hope of taking money from them, later.** If you must interrupt with paid placements, offer awesome, or content, or both. Brochures and sales prices – which are buyer-centric – are neither awesome nor content.
14. **Don't assume that a prospect's search for a product is a) a search for your product, or b) an invitation to interrupt them.** Again, it's all about the Buyer Journey. Even if your product helps a buyer, or is the best solution, if they aren't seeking you out, showing ads is marketing without consent. How sick is it to force yourself on a person – in any way – on the grounds that what you want will be something they happen enjoy, also? Stop marketing this way.
15. **Recognize that marketing today runs on choice;** by consent – and you have virtually no power over any single consumer, and embarrassingly little impact on the public at large. Accept that, today, you are selected, and you receive – you don't have the power to 'take'. You must give to receive; you must earn attention and popularity. This reality can't be overcome – for long – with a big ad budget or clever technology.
16. **Recognize that buyers don't see you the way you see you.**
17. **Recognize that nobody cares about your ad or brochure, until they care about it, and at that point, they'll seek it** (after they've digested lots of objective content). So, have your brochure, but recognize it's you talking favorably about you, and nobody believes it early-on.
18. **Recognize that the win distribution has never been more tilted toward the best,** and that those who follow these rules can dominate.
19. **Recognize that brochures and ads are seller-centric,** or egocentric, and stop expecting people to care about your interests the way you care about them, and that wins come from caring about consumers and prospects the way they care about themselves.
20. **Recognize that you must give to receive.** That you have to offer a better product, web experience, or content, to win traffic, thought leadership, and sales.

21. **Understand that buyers are skeptical**, harried, information-overloaded, distrustful, busy, and disinterested – and proceed accordingly. Have an extremely good reason for interrupting them.
22. **Recognize that you really have to function like a small business in a small town** – that you can hide nothing.
23. **Stop believing that success requires complexity**. Stop obsessing about technology when there are wins to be had in other areas (better product, website, content, offers).
24. **Stop believing monitoring (using analytics for a high-resolution, lagging edge, look at behaviors) gives you control; you have no control**. Buyers are in control.
25. **Stop building funnels as though buyers are rats**. You'll never be able to anticipate behaviors at scale. Obsessing on this will come at the opportunity cost of content.
26. **Fix your product**. Don't expect to be able to cover up anything mediocre.
27. **Make your website amazing**. Everything converges on the web. You simply can't have a mediocre web presence and not expect everybody to go around it, to the best.
28. **Recognize 'fake offers' (discounts, self-flattering comparison infographics, content pointed at selling, but that are not 'brochures') – are still seller-centric**. Seller-centric thinking has a way of posing as altruistic, as buyer-centric. Cleanse yourself of those demons and genuinely put others first. Watch what happens. Be humble and generous. Give with no expectation of receiving. Watch what happens to your credibility when you – sometimes – advise people not go with you, when you provide information that helps them solve their problem, not necessarily solve your problem by enriching you. If your product or service or solution is genuinely the best, they will choose to transact with you. Be confident. Let them come to you; don't chase them around.
29. **Keep your tech stack, but align it with a buyer-centric mentality**. Optimize it for being helpful, not selling. Stop marrying high technology with an antiquated (pre-Web 2.0) understanding of marketing; stop weaponizing marketing with technology.
30. **Offer valuable content without expecting anything in return**. Produce the objective, helpful, content buyers seek as they research – and offer it for free. That's it: be helpful. Be generous. Look at things from a buyer's perspective. Remember your own sensibilities when you are shopping. Follow the Golden Rule.

Give objective content, upfront, with no strings attached. See what that does for word-of-mouth and social shares. See what it does for your credibility and thought leadership.



*Pursuing people with all the money and brochures and technology in the world cannot match the effect of people *wanting* to come to you. You are *one* agent, and you are biased about your product; the public outnumbers you, and they believe *themselves* more than they believe you. You will get rolled if you try to control, rather than cooperate with, these realities.*

In summary: vendors must understand that it only seems like buyers' need for a solution and your desire to sell them a solution are aligning interests. In truth, you want their money, whether it's the right fit or not (most of the time), and they want to research, consider, and choose the best fit for their problem. Go upstream helping them get to a solution, rather than trying to corral them toward giving you their money.

