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The Internet and everything else

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Seth Godin is one of the most brilliant business thinkers of our time. He understands human motivation and behavior. That's why I go to him for ideas. I choose to follow him because his ideas are valuable to me, and I'm a customer, having purchased his books and patronized his advertisers. I'm sure that Godin would be glad to know that I'm a follower and consumer.

On the other hand, let's take the CEO of say, Proctor & Gamble. I had no idea who that is, although I found out in a snap. He might care about me as a consumer though, and want my business for multiple products. Should I be loyal to P&G brands, I would spend hundreds of thousands, potentially a million on P&G products throughout the course of my lifetime. I've used their products but I'm indifferent to them and most of their competitors' as well. I'm bombarded with their messages delivered through mass media every day and it hasn't made a bit of difference in how I feel about their brands.

I'm sure Alan Lafley would be concerned to know that most consumers feel as I do about P&G brands - indifferent to them vs the competition (product parity and no attractive differentiation). P&G broadcasts its messages at me but Godin simply gives away his specialized "product" on the Internet, and somehow I find it because I seek it. When I need something of his that he isn't offering free, I go to Amazon and buy one of his books. In essence, I'm a micro market to Godin.

Whatever approach you use to push your message (advertising) in mass media to reach a mass audience, use the opposite approach on the Internet. There's a fundamental difference between Internet marketing and traditional advertising channels. Let me sum it up succinctly:

Web = "I seek and want your offering." All other = "What do you want out of me?"

Godin offers, "When someone wants to know how big you can make your audience, your market share, your volume, it might be worth pointing out that it's better to be important, to be in sync, to be the one that's hard to be replaced. And the only way to be important is to be relevant, focused and specific." He goes on, "Mass marketers don't like this and they often don't even see it. They're struggling to turn Snapchat and Twitter and other sites into substitutes for TV, but it's not working, because it's an astonishing waste of attention."

Broadcast media exists mostly to enable mass marketers to advertise. TV was essentially invented for that purpose, but the Internet was not invented to enable big brands to reach their audiences. It was first developed for the purpose of sharing information quickly among scientists - highly specialized knowledge.

On the Internet, whether it's your website, blog or social media channels, you need to think micro. Appeal genuinely to individuals who would benefit from the use your product or service and develop relationships with each one that finds you.

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