

**CHARM
OFFENSIVE.**

CHARM ZINE

Issue 01

How to Win a Multi-Billion Dollar Mega Client including:

- + Positioning
- + Sales Hooks
- + The First Meeting
- + Research
- + The Pitch
- + Persuasion Science

Treating Your Customers Like Kings - Even As You Scale

5 Marketing Lessons From The Darkweb's Own Heisenberg

Use The Persuasion Sandwich To Persuade And Profit With Minimal Resistance

Disrupting The Game



HOW TO WIN A MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR MEGA CLIENT



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CHARM ZINE

Issue 01

- + A blistering salve of information, stories, and contentions.
- + Searing through your egg to unscramble the mysteries of charm.
- + Fun!

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Editor's Note

In case you didn't know it yet, this is the first issue of the **Charm Offensive Zine**, named as such because adding the word "Newsletter" after any combination of words instantly makes them sound boring.

This publication aspires to be thought-provoking and useful. The Charm Offensive style is all about standing out, with each platform, channel, or media type having their own peculiarities, confines, and advantages to wrestle with and exploit. This zine will cover all of our experiments; at best, you'll get actionable tactics that you won't find anywhere else, at worst you can laugh at our less successful experiments as we document them with complete transparency. Even when such openness may hurt our egos.

There's a way of being in the entrepreneurial community that I seek to change. People seek the "right way" of doing things, a "template" as it were, so as to then focus all energy on optimising that template to be its best version. I believe there are serious problems with this approach.

Firstly, the confident assertions of others, when examined, are often far from empirical. For example, Googling "best cold email template" will return blog post after blog post claiming the only way to succeed with cold emails is to send a version of the alleged "best cold email template", which is always short, functional and completely devoid of any personality or disarming properties. I don't doubt these templates work but I know from experience that assertions made such as "don't use humour" or "your email must be a maximum of 3 sentences long. CEO's can't manage any more than that" are, at best, inaccurate.

Secondly, such an approach removes the possibility of discovering creative and clever ways of solving problems. You never discover anything new if you merely optimise what's already out there. My 'drunk cold email' is a great example of this; had I been persuaded by those blog posts about how to write cold emails, my life would be very different indeed. Thank heavens I didn't.

I appreciate that the primary focus of entrepreneurial types is to make money, not satisfy creative urges. I'm not suggesting frivolous creativity or to stop doing what works; all that matters is what works. However, what works isn't limited to what's already known and sometimes what works is counter to conventional wisdom. The only way to find these opportunities is to experiment.

You need to do the wrong things, the right way. This magazine will teach you how to do just that.

Thanks,

Jon

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How to Win a Multi- Billion Dollar Mega Client

By Jon Buchan



I'm lucky to have been sufficiently desperate enough to get drunk and write an email that solved a lot of problems. It also created a lot of new problems. Good problems. Problems like, **"ok, what the hell do we have to say to a \$multi-billion a year company?"** and **"OH MY, how are we going to spend all this money?"**

My drunk email led to many meetings. But not many as important as this first big one, Symantec.

I'd won pitches and done deals with big brands before, but that was when I had the benefit of working for a big name agency, with all the advantages of scale it brings. Advantages like other big client names on our roster, lots of nice testimonials from those big names, fancy offices, and well, the appearance of competence. Such appearance is comforting to marketing teams at big brands, who will often prefer to work with similarly big agencies - seeing them as less risky.

You have to remember that full-time employees want to look after their job. Not everyone wants to try creative, daring things. Some people will go out of their way to avoid any hint of danger or innovation.

- + Our size was not the only thing working against us.
- + We had no case studies for the type of work we were pitching for.
- + We had no clients that were the same size, or even close in size to Symantec.
- + We had no cybersecurity clients or experience in that sector.
- + But we did have their attention...
- + And we made a great first impression... they invited us to their offices.

... And then yada-yada-yada... a few months later, we won the deal. There's a photo of me somewhere holding up the 6-figure purchase order for the first quarter's work like it was a WWE championship belt.

How did we do it?

I'm going to dissect the 'yada-yada-yada' above, giving you a prescriptive, step by step guide to how we closed the deal.

Positioning

The way we positioned the agency didn't change. It so happened it fit perfectly with the issues Symantec were having.

They responded enthusiastically to the amusing cold email I sent them, and we organised a phone call.

On this call, we spoke for a few minutes about the email.

As many people did, they asked, **"Do you send a lot of these out?"**

I usually replied to this with something like: **"I've sent a few. I can't claim I'm not speaking to other people I'd like to work with, for I'm quite fond of food and shelter."**

Whatever you do, don't tell people you indiscriminately bought marketing lists and then sent the same email to thousands of people. If you're like me, and this is exactly what you've been doing, be sure to use a suitably cheeky, charming, and vague response like the one above. Like the Japanese probably would out of extreme politeness, this is one time you can bend the rules slightly by telling a "little white lie" so your prospect can save face without knowing they might lose it.

After the talk of the email, I asked them **"Who wants to go first? I can do a little introduction to our agency, and then I'd love to hear about you guys and what you're working on. How does that sound?"**

They agreed and I launched into my usual pitch.

I'd mention how I used to work at other agencies and while I did great work, I never felt I could do the type of work I wanted, and that often there were tactics used that I didn't think were in the best interests of the client.

Thinking about it, this is another little bit of persuasion at work.

I was demonstrating that integrity was important to me. That I'm not a 'money at all costs' guy. I care about the work. I care about client relationships. Not just because of the money they pay, but because you should be good to people.

I would often say **"I don't know why we have this thing in business where it's OK to be dishonest almost. You can get away with a level of duplicitousness that you wouldn't in your personal life. I have never understood this quirk, and I hope I never do."**

This wasn't an act. These are genuine beliefs. I'm keenly aware they are not remarkable in any way, but they are still important. In a sea of slick, craftily prepared pitches, there is something to be said about ditching the veneer of authority, and saying to people **"Look, I'm gonna level with you..."**

Sales Hooks

There were a few different sales hooks that I would use repeatedly with all prospects. I'll run through these now.

1] "We out-think and out-work the competition."

This, looking back, is perhaps a bit of a cliché. However, we did come up with great ideas. Some of them, as this article will demonstrate, were absolutely batshit fucking crazy. We also worked hard. We really did want it. The ideas we produced showed our clever thinking. Our enthusiasm for our craft helped persuade them that we would work hard.

Enthusiasm is the single most effective cosmetic available. It doesn't prove anything at all about work ethic specifically, but it answers an important question in the prospect's mind. Can you guess what it is?

Yes?

No?

Bueller?

That question is:

"Do they give a shit?"

Results can demonstrate competence.

But case studies only show what you've done in the past, and with other people.

Your prospects need to know you are going to exert the same effort to further their ambitions.

Enthusiasm is one simple and effective way of doing this.

Enthusiasm for their results, which are fuelled by enthusiasm for the strategies you have recommended to them.

2] "We are transparent and honest to a fault."

I would often tell a story about an old boss of mine. He was talking about client reporting, and he showed us an old slide of his, where he had reversed the axis because it made bad results look good. I was as amazed this is a tactic that would work on anyone over the age of 4, as I was that he would delightfully brag about such a dishonest approach.

He could, of course, have been joking. My mind is likely biased because I'd had seen for years all the little tricks used to win clients, keep them for as long as possible and if all possible, sell them more stuff.

Some of these 'tricks' were ethical and honest.

Some of them were abhorrent and I wouldn't go along with them.

Some of them were in a grey area that made me uncomfortable.

I made sure not to spend too much time talking about competitors. You should never look bitter or 'snarky'.

Don't draw your prospects attention anywhere else, even if it's to try and gain some advantage. The focus should be on you.

Instead of decrying the tactics of your competitors, talk about your transparent approach and honest nature. As long as it's true, of course.

As an aside, if you're nervous about the whole sales process, I think it's ok to mention it sometimes.

It's disarming. Don't do it so much that they think you're not ready, but you can mention the gravitas of the situation.

I'd often ask for more glasses of water, because I would genuinely get nervous, especially after talking for so long.

I'd say something like:

"I'm sorry about this... My throat is parched! Nerves... But the good kind of nerves. Excited, innovative marketing campaign idea conjuring nerves!"

At each meeting, I would thank them for the amazing opportunity.

I know this may be at odds with other sales advice out there, but it's always worked for me.

3] "We execute innovative campaigns, not pursue pointless busy work."

This was referencing my experiences working with other agencies.

They would often do work that was only there to fill up space on an invoice.

It provided no benefit to the client.

This is pointless busywork.

It looks like a lot.

But it doesn't deliver any value.

It's often work given to the most junior member of a team.

I'd only bring up the 'pointless busywork' that I'd seen being carried out in my time at other agencies briefly.

Again, you don't wish to look bitter or resentful or at all negative.

The only reason to bring up the 'pointless busy work' employed by other agencies, was to contrast it with what I wanted to talk about, which was our penchant for developing truly creative, daring and effective marketing campaigns.

“We execute innovative campaigns, not pursue pointless busy work.”



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I'd lead talk about our case studies, and the results they achieved.

Then I'd talk about the methods we used to get those results.

And then I'd talk about how we could do something 'similar but different and better' than the examples I'd spoken about.

4] “We want you to be our next case study.”

This is a little device I'd use a lot.

I'll explain it by talking about a recent post on the Charm Offensive group.

There's a post on the Charm Offensive group at the time of writing containing an offer of free work. She asked if she could post it and I said sure. She told me she wanted **“a damn case study”** on messenger.

I told her, **“put that in your pitch.”**

She said, **“Haha. Surely, I should write about the results I can deliver?!”**

I said, **“Yes, that is your primary message, but your lust for a case study can also be used to great rhetorical effect. Your own self-interest is a clear motivator. Being honest about it makes a persuasive case that you really want results.”**

... Or something like that but less articulate. I've used this in both cold pitches and emails to my list / posts to my group before.

Here's something I came up with that you could perhaps use in a cold pitch:

“I need case studies. The more impressive the better. The more I have, the easier it is to get more clients that pay more.”

I NEED to get results as much... or almost as much as you.

Don't get me wrong, it would be unfair to suggest I care as much about your business as you do. Of course not. But as for caring about delivering results, absolutely I do.”

This is a great little device.

It's great when you can leverage good qualities (such as being unusually honest) for great ethical persuasive effect.

Let's recap:

- + your own self-interest can be used as an effective persuasive tool
- + this self interest, however, is only effective if your goals are contingent on you achieving the prospect's goals

This is a great little sales hook you can use when speaking to a client.

5] “All the benefits of a big agency experience, but without the ‘fancy offices’ price tag.”

I knew I might be up against other agencies who were bigger.

I knew that big companies often preferred big agencies because they were seen as safe.

So I took their supposed advantages and made them disadvantages.

Or rather, I took our disadvantages and made them advantages.

Big agencies may seem like a safe pair of hands, but what good is a safe pair of hands when you need to deliver results?

The big agencies were bureaucratic and set in their ways.

We were lean and flexible.

The big agencies were expensive, because they had to pay for their fancy offices.

We had lovely, 'shabby-chic' offices. If we wanted a fancy office, we'd have to work hard for it.

6] “We don't hire from other agencies, we train people from scratch”

This was true. We preferred to hire people when they were 'green' and then train them up.

“This way, we can teach them our wicked, unorthodox ways from the start.... there's no ‘pollution’ or bad habits.”



The First Meeting

I remember the first meeting. It didn't start well.

The taxi took me to the postcode I was given but it led to a residential estate. There were no gigantic corporate offices to be found. And I was about to be late.

I was frantic in the taxi. Sweating buckets. Finally, I called my contact at Symantec. Mystery solved.

My point of contact had given me her postcode rather than the one for Symantec's offices.

I got told the actual postcode and arrived 20 minutes or so later.

I think this little mistake probably helped me. We had a little laugh about it. This helped maintain the informal, friendly tone that was present in my correspondence with them.

I can't give you the absolute specifics on the first meeting, but I do know the general approach I took to all sales calls that had been a part of my arsenal for many years.

I say **"Who wants to go first? I can do a little introduction to our agency, and then I'd love to hear about you guys and what you're working on. How does that sound?"**

Then I proceed with the description of my agency.

"I used to work at digital marketing agencies for many years. My last role was running the social media department for I-Spy Marketing, working with brands like Kickers, UKTV, Radisson Edwardian Hotels and countless others."

"After 5 years of working for other people, I decided to start my own agency with my brother, Gary..."

I'd then give a brief outline of our team members, clients and the type of work we've been doing.

Then it's their turn.

This is when you illegibly write everything they say down.

When they're done, you can ask questions. You need information.

They like talking about themselves.

It's a match made in heaven. The heaven of profitable, mutually beneficial relationships, that is.

I asked questions like:

- + What are your priorities this quarter / year?
- + What have you been doing to try and achieve these goals thus far?
- + Are you currently working with any other marketing, PR, or creative agencies?
- + How have you found working with these agencies?
- + If you could give me a one line brief for what you wish to achieve, what would it be E.g. they would likely say something like "We want to be known as #1 for our expertise in the XXX sector."
- + Who would you say are your biggest competitors?
- + Do you think any of them are doing anything especially well?

Try to ask these naturally. Don't interrogate them. Have a conversation about their marketing as you would a dear friend.

You can even add a dash of charm to these requests too. **"Sorry for being maybe impertinent, but would you mind telling me if you're working with other agencies at the moment?"**

From asking such questions, I discovered:

- + They wanted to be more well known for their expertise in the enterprise BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and Cloud Security offerings.
- + They wanted to use social media / clever uses of digital marketing to achieve this.

Research

We audited the social media and content marketing efforts of Symantec and their direct enterprise competitors.

This was partly automated, using some industry standard tools at the time, and some of our own scraping tools.

We scraped their enterprise competitors' websites.

This showed us some important information for each individual page:

- + How many links from other websites pointed to this page.
- + The Google Page Rank (1 to 10) or Moz Rank (1 to 100) of each page. This shows how important this page is to Google.
- + How many shares the page generated through Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and LinkedIn.

Armed with this data, we were able to create a deck that gave a fair representation of the social media / content marketing landscape for the their sector and for their particular target areas.

Symantec, as expected, didn't come off looking great.

However, nobody looked spectacular. We saw this as an opportunity for Symantec to innovate.

But our analysis of their market provided us with little content that inspired or excited us.

We decided, instead, to look at successful content from a wide array of sectors.

Success meant the content had achieved mass social media shares, PR coverage, or both.

- + They weren't happy with their existing social media / content agency; who weren't creative, were slow to respond to requests, basically couldn't keep up.
- + They 'had budget to play with'. Whatever that means...

I repeated this information back to them and asked if it was correct. I can't recall if I did so at the time, but if I were to do it again, I would definitely have included the final bullet point to add some levity to what is essentially not an especially exciting piece of information.

I said, **"I'd like to put together some research and a few ideas on how we could help you achieve your goals. Would that be ok? In my original email, I did promise to provide you with some free ideas you can steal."**

They were always likely to say "yes" to such an offer anyway, but it never hurts to add a little light-hearted remark at the end. All of these little interactions add up. You're building up a case that not only are you competent enough for the job, but they like you, and wouldn't mind working with you. There is no magical persuasive silver bullet. The key is to become naturally disarming and persuasive, which you can theoretically learn with guides such as this one. However, the real reflexive knowledge and fluency only comes with consistent practice. So, like everything else then...

They said yes to my offer of research / initial thoughts and we booked in date and time to come and present our findings and thoughts.

The Research / Initial Thoughts Deck

Now, the task at hand was simple: Create a deck that showed Symantec we were experts at what we did and that we understood their market... Oh, and come up with scaffold for that too.

IN-DEPTH BREAKDOWN

This included:

The Evolution of Western Dance Music - How Music Travels

This piece showed how music has developed over time, showing which genres and styles influenced others. It was visually intriguing. This piece is actually by a travel brand, rather than something music related. The last word in the title, 'travels' makes it somewhat relevant.

It also benefits from being contentious. People are going to argue about the minutiae of history. The visually enjoyable format chosen makes this content all the more irresistible to share.

The Trainline - Interactive Michelin Star Restaurant Map

This was a Google Maps mashup that included the locations of all the Michelin star restaurants in the UK.

Simple. You could sort the list by number of stars. That's it.

However, it's relevant to what The Trainline offer.

It's somewhat useful.

Nothing amazing, but it had been linked to and shared extensively.

This demonstrated the power of "branded utility".

Simply Business - Small Business Guide to Twitter

This was a visual flow-chart / infographic that introduced small business owners to the subject of using Twitter for marketing purposes. It directed people to various external guides and articles.

If you can curate information in a visually appealing way, you can create a resource someone will link to.

This piece has been linked to extensively by authoritative publications.

This made me realise that there is a real demand for content that's easy to digest and

visually stimulating. Sometimes, reading big long reams of text isn't the best way to learn.

I said sometimes.

These examples demonstrated the kind of content we thought Symantec could make.

Or at least, a jumping off point.

Nothing too crazy. Nothing too daring.

We could demonstrate how each of those examples had lead to:

- + Increased PR coverage (containing links)
- + Improved visibility in Google.
- + Increased social media visibility.

Our big pitch was, "To achieve amazing results, you've got to bring something to the table."

"We need to take your expertise and turn it into content that will get featured in relevant tech publications and shared extensively on social media."

The presentation was received well.

We had demonstrated rigour with our research.

We earned their enthusiasm with our idea to create truly innovative content pieces.

I actually had a name for such content pieces. I called them "Content Stunts".

Other people have called this exact same thing, "Big content".

It refers to content that's more than a blog post. It's graphical. Or better, interactive. Or animated. Or something else that makes it stand out from the usual dross.

It's important to have an offering that's yours.

IN-DEPTH BREAKDOWN

The more you can make your pitch look like a coherent plan, rather than an amalgamation of all sorts of ideas, the better.

You can have lots of ideas, but you need an overarching system. A process. Something repeatable. Something you can easily describe.

This is made easier by telling stories.

Well, going through case studies.

This takes away the objection,

"this all sounds good... but would it ever work in real life?"

In normal circumstances, one might think it's a weakness that we couldn't find niche specific case studies impressive enough to point to. Like with many of my weaknesses, I turned this into a strength. The lack of examples pointed to an opportunity for Symantec.

They agreed that they needed to be creating the 'Content Stunts' I'd mentioned.

We had convinced them of the type of thing they should be doing.

"May I put together some specific campaign ideas based on what we've discussed today?" I asked.

They agreed. We arranged a date to present our ideas for potential content marketing campaigns.

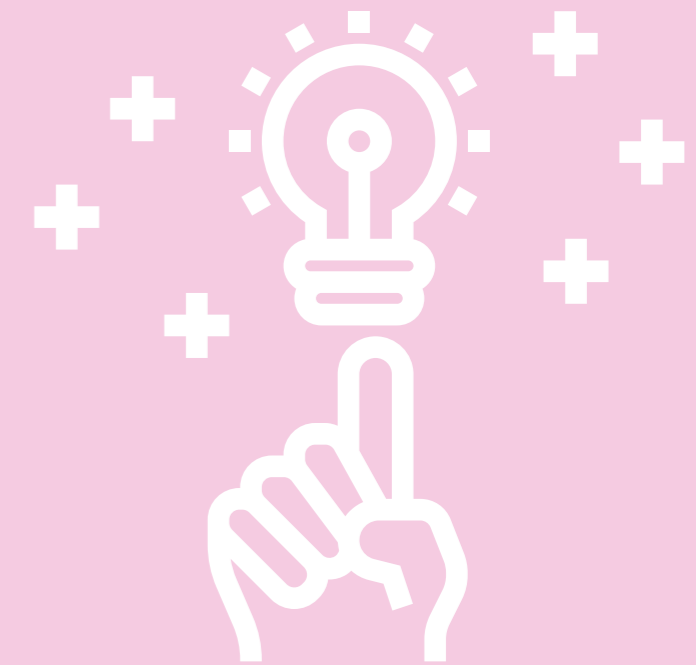
Brainstorm Time

Now all we needed to do was to devise a sales pitch containing relevant, creative ideas with an effective process to develop and promote them.

We got the team downstairs and wrote out all the pertinent details about Symantec and their objectives.

Then anyone is free to contribute any ideas or thoughts they think might somewhere useful. Anything goes.

Not everything will be good. Some will be hilariously bad. You can always cull those later. But for now, you need it to be as free as possible. Have fun. No judgement. There are no wrong answers. It's time to be playful. Well, as playful as one can be about enterprise level cybersecurity solutions, anyway.



These brainstorms would more often than not, take place on Friday afternoons, a time when we would take advantage of the contents of our drinking globe.

We did multiple brainstorms. I sorted through the ideas and picked a selection of what I thought was the best. (I still let some absolutely insane ideas get through...)

Now, to put a pitch deck together...

The Pitch Deck

The first few slides should always be a brief introduction to the campaign and how you've gotten to this point. Most people will skip it, but others will read it to remind themselves of the specifics, and others may have never even met you before. You must remember that your document is likely to be forwarded to colleagues and superiors too. Be sure to add a slide or two so that as many people as possible can be persuaded by your slide deck.

I had the middle bit - the ideas.

I needed to show how these ideas would lead to the kinds of results I had suggested were possible.

It was at this point I started talking about **'premarketing'**.

Most of the time businesses create content and then beg for journalists to publish it.

Instead, we would ask journalists their thoughts on our ideas. We would ask them if they would publish an article based on what we wanted to create.

If we got enough positive responses, we would create the piece. If we didn't, it would be back to the drawing board.

This mechanism, we said, would mostly protect us (notice the use of 'us' and 'we' when I refer to conversations with Symantec...) against creating content that fails to achieve any significant results.

The other major benefit is it creates a win-win scenario for us, the client, and journalists. We don't waste time or money creating work that won't get seen. The client gets work that will get seen. And journalists get free work that fits their audience and makes their day easier.

There's also a little bit of persuasion psychology working there (the consistency principle) - if a journalist has been involved even in a very minor way in creating or guiding the piece, they are much more likely to promote it upon release.

Premarketing is a technique that is reliably effective as it provides a counter to the objection **"What if people don't like our ideas?"**

Such a tactic doesn't cost anything, either

While we couldn't share the risk financially, as it costs to do great work, we could design our process so it involves less hoping, and more predictability.

You can then begin to stack these little persuasive devices.

Rigour

We had research showing us the exact types of content that do well in their niche. We know where the gaps were.

Creativity

We developed a range of interesting, creative ideas for content pieces. We were confident the client had never been pitched anything like what we were about to propose.

Security

We had a process for getting those ideas validated by journalists at key publications. This approach can be persuasive to journalists who appreciate being involved in an idea from the start, rather than having it rammed down their throats later.

The key is to have an intoxicating mixture of creativity and compelling logic and process.

Rehearsal

We were going to take more of the team with us this time.

We actually rehearsed. We never usually did.

Nothing over the top. But we needed to ensure our presentation didn't go over time and nobody fumbled over anything too much. Often, when someone is fumbling over something, it's because they either don't understand or don't believe it. Neither of these signals are especially helpful to our cause.

When I worked at other agencies, I would often delete the most jargon-filled, bullshit-rich slides from my presentations. If I was unable to delete them in time, I would rush through them.

Cut your deck down to what's important.

That is, the magic that's going to help them achieve results.



The Big Pitch

We had 4 members of the team at the big pitch. There was me, my brother Gary, and our account managers, Kevin and Heather. (They handled client relationships and managed the campaigns for those clients.)

This is where we could pitch our ideas and our process for achieving results with those ideas. We delivered a pitch that was approximately like this:

Pitch Timings

10 minute introduction - How we've got here. What we are going to talk about today.

30 minutes - Our ideas.

20 minutes - Our process for getting results.

10 minutes - Intended results.

?? minutes - Questions & Answers.

Another benefit of the content marketing campaigns we had pitched is that they benefited multiple departments.

- + Increased social media shares / visibility.
- + Improved visibility in Google.
- + Increased positive PR coverage.
- + Increased traffic.

Who doesn't like showing their superiors improvements?

Especially when they don't personally have to do anything to achieve them, save for having some faint involvement. But enough involvement to take some of the credit. That was fine with me. I'd much rather share the glory and have internal advocates endorsing me, or at the very least, not saying anything bad about me.

Made the team bigger

We also teamed up with a design and development agency. We talked up how closely we had worked together before. They had their own great case studies which no doubt further helped our case.

Every Little Helps

As we were told their current agency were too slow and unresponsive, we made sure to reply to their emails within 5-minutes.

We went further than that.

We made sure to always be first.

We would be proactive. We would send over a thank you message containing all of the meeting notes no more than a few hours after the meeting had ended.

We would send over additional ideas or thoughts that we thought might be useful to our efforts. This demonstrated how enthusiastic we were while also employing a classic sales trick: **the assumptive sale**.

We didn't bombard them but we made sure to make an impression. We only ever sent impromptu emails if we had a genuine reason. It had to have a purpose, as well as helping persuade Symantec of our ridiculous levels of enthusiasm and hardcore work-ethics.

IN-DEPTH BREAKDOWN

We wanted to show Symantec what working with us would be like. They wouldn't have to imagine it. We would demonstrate it.

I also made sure to try and get on the phone with my points of contact as often as possible. The phone is a far more efficient tool for building rapport quickly than email alone. I wanted to involve my points of contact in the creative process as much as possible. If they're engaged in the ideas, and take ownership of them mentally, they will be far more likely to pursue actions that benefit our campaigns.

This also gave me more opportunity to talk informally with my contacts. I'd level with them, and tell them how exciting the whole process was, but I'd never be desperate. You can be meek and self-effacing, but never put down your work. You should have confidence in your work. While you don't need to always show absolute certainty, you don't have to pretend such opportunities are no big deal.

You should use these opportunities to build personal rapport with your prospects and to help feel more involved in the campaigns you are creating.

You should use language ('us' and 'we') and behave in a way that shows you are a reliable, trusted advisor who has their best interests at heart. I know. It's not rocket science.

It is not always possible to have clients that are as enthusiastic as you about their campaigns. If you are able to engender such an attitude, it makes the process far easier.

You should also mention your own goals and how they are contingent on the client achieving great results.

I often told Symantec this was my opportunity to get a case study that would change my business. My self-interested motivation benefited Symantec. I made sure to repeat this additional motivation wherever fitting.

Let's look at the core elements that helped convince Symantec we were the right agency for the job:

- + We are on the same side. We share the same goals. Our goals of growth and world domination are contingent on doing work of sufficient excellence and effectiveness that we can write a case study about it.
- + We like each other and share a similar sense of humour. (This might be most fitting for the person who responded to your email, but the same may apply to their colleagues.)
- + We have researched the market in detail, providing us with useful intelligence to guide creative content pieces with the greatest chance of developing content there's a need for.
- + We have outlined a full process that maximises the campaigns' chances of success.
- + We respond to their emails quickly and we are proactive almost to the level of obsequiousness.
- + We're honest and transparent. Our correspondence in all forms will demonstrate this.

IN-DEPTH BREAKDOWN

Here are the principles of persuasion at work:



Liking - They enjoyed the initial email enough to invite us in. We then proceeded to smother them with enthusiasm, good ideas, and yet more enthusiasm. We get on.



Reciprocation - We've given them a whole range of expert guidance that will be useful to them regardless of our future relationship. Such ostensibly virtuous efforts don't guarantee success, but it can increase your chances.



Consistency - They said yes to a meeting. Yes to putting ideas together. Yes to the type of campaigns we should run... Next steps: Get a yes to our ideas. Yes to our prices. Yes to signing the contract.



Authority - Our expert review of the social media and content marketing efforts in their sector helped position us as experts. We genuinely knew more about the social media and content marketing landscape in their market than they did. On top of that, we explained how brands in other sectors had devised content projects that delivered impressive results. We knew this stuff. This wasn't pretend. As such, we are able to present these ideas confidently. It is this mix of self-effacing charm and confident, enthusiastic ambition that has helped me win every client I've ever signed.



Consensus - The campaigns we were proposing would benefit multiple departments within Symantec. We would provide increases in social shares, search engine visibility, PR coverage and targeted traffic. This helped persuade their colleagues that they should support our engagement, or at least not try to derail it.



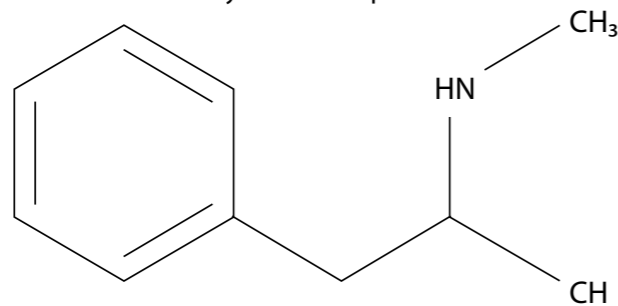
Scarcity - I can't take credit for this one. They had targets. And deadlines for those targets. As such, they probably didn't delay our engagement anywhere nearly as long as they would have been familiar with.



Unity - We build rapport with our key client contacts by trying to speak with them regularly, being frank, honest, and enthusiastic throughout. In addition, we wanted to ensure our contacts felt involved with the campaign construction. It would be their work too. They can use the results to further their professional ambitions.

5 Marketing Lessons From The Darkweb's Own Heisenberg

By Silvestru Iapascurta



Before I tell you the story of this Darknet Villain — a minor eccentric Heisenberg on the British Darkweb scene — here's how I got the scoop in the first place.

I ain't into meth or any drugs in that category. However, I love to study subcultures of all types.

Whether it's music, ethnic groups, religions or religious rituals, I'm like an anthropology geek, fascinated by human behaviour in groups.

So when I found out about the infamous (now-banned) /r/DarkNetMarkets sub-reddit, I immediately got hooked on the stories and drama that unfolded in this online "underworld petri dish".

It was interesting to see the power dynamics and how one faction gained ground over another in mere days: sometimes by virtual propaganda, other times by sheer economic incentive.

Just like in a true free market.

So amidst this underground bazaar, this sounding board for illicit activity and illicit goods, you can imagine that vendors automatically tried to shine the best light on their wares.

One that did this almost effortlessly went by the moniker of "Vendor BBMC".

The Mad Hatter of the UK Meth Scene

Whatever people said about him, it was undeniable that Vendor_BBMC had great writing skills.

He would take exquisite time and attention to write stories about exotic experiences, highs and escapades that resulted from his product. He would also go on a great deal about describing and warning others of his foes, both real and imaginary.

Of course, all this energy and prowess in using the written word as clay for moulding desire was fuelled largely by his own artisanal meth.

"Selling it is the easy part," he said: **"It's the cooking, testing and refining of the process to obtain the purest product that is a 6-day, full-time job."**

You see, BBMC, wasn't just your average petty meth dealer.

No, no, no, no.

The **"British Brotherhood of Meth Chemists"** was someone who provided true high quality, home-made, artisanal British meth.

An experience reserved only for those who value **"the finest life has to offer"**.

So if selling was the easy part, what exactly did this Mad Hatter of the Darkweb do to stand out and command significantly higher prices for what was essentially a not-in-demand drug in the UK?

5 Marketing Lessons From A Marketing Villain

1] Polarise to get a response (visceral content, stories, attack competitors, create drama)

One thing that Trump, Howard Stern and Vendor_BBMC have in common is knowing how to polarise an audience.

The main gateway for his marketing efforts was visceral content.

The kind of writing that grabs your attention by the lapels, compelling you to read and respond. One of the ways he did this was through personal stories.

He often talked about his Thai wife's latest impossible lust mission, such as helping her choose a new "slave girl" (she was presumably a pimp) or having enough stamina to satisfy her for days of non-stop love-making on the newest batch of "Black Magic(tm)".

Little things like that.

Another device was to stir the pot and start shit up with different vendors who also sold meth, either lambasting them for bad quality or forming some strategic alliance with someone who also provided meth (possibly just using Vendor_BBMC for his star power).

Whatever it was, this guy was not afraid of controversy. He could always back up his claims with a new batch or suddenly create scarcity and announce he was out of stock.

Whether it was real or fake, no one really knew. What's important is that he kept at it for long enough (~2 years before he stopped posting) that people never had anything significantly bad to say about his product.

2] Prove your worth (and rally your troops)

One interesting element of BBMC's rants was that he always backed up his claims with proof. Or at least proof of knowing enough about the science of synthesising meth that he wrote in detail about his thoughts and experiments in the pursuit for the best chemical aphrodisiac known to modern man.

He wasn't afraid to talk about chemistry in the open, suggesting chemical alternatives, improved purification processes and obsessing about the structure of the mythical crystal. This is exactly like Mr. Walter White would do. But BBMC differed as he doled out these chemistry facts to his market and users, making people pay attention and leaving his competitors in the dust.

Why?

Simply because he described and talked about something no one else did.

Of course this trick is nothing new.

There was an example in Scientific Advertising (considered by some marketers to be the Bible of direct response) of a beer manufacturer

who won the highest share of the beer market by doing an "exposé" on their process of beer manufacture and how their process was oriented toward quality.

3] Use other channels for different types of exposure

What better way is there to prove the quality of your product and the experience it provides than shooting a video of a meth pipe smoking your product, set to psychedelic lights and mirrors with some funky music playing on in the background?

(Search YouTube for "100 Proof Aged In Soul - Everything Good" for a music reference) Sadly, the videos have since been removed for "dangerous content".

But if there was anything that characterised the madness of BBMC, it was this mix of content marketing genius with sheer stupidity. Although the pipe was only smoked from a POV perspective and the smoker never actually SEEN, it was this kind of daring that got the attention of everyone. Possibly even more than his intended audience.

I'll give it to him though: he had really good taste in music. That alone made his methfuelled videos something that everyone remembered.

4] Provide good service

All of this P.T. Barnum-esque power would not last if our anti-hero didn't deliver on his goods. While he was active and attentive to customers (or so we're told), reviews were varied for his product.

Some praised it, others said it was nothing special.

In this sense, it was certainly his marketing and storytelling savvy that won him customers, not just his product.

There's also no way people would have justified spending £170 on a gram of something that was available but just not that popular in the UK.

While not poor, BBMC confessed that he wasn't rich either. This was directly tied to his limited, one-man band operation.

That said, he continued posting and selling for long enough that he soon acquired a legendary reputation on /r/DarkNetMarkets.

This undoubtedly brought him some glee together with newfound attention for his offer, something that he had every opportunity to monetise.

5] Keep doing it

Up until the last day he posted, BBMC kept up with a daily content posting schedule.

This alone earned him top of mind for the market frequenting the Reddit channel.

Whether you were a meth-smoker or not, everybody knew about BBMC because of his prolific posts and entertaining stories he shared.

Undoubtedly the meth he made (and smoked) helped his brain find the right words for this kind of content and provided the motivation to do so on a consistent basis.

But consistency is something that can be learned with some effort by everyone. You don't have to be the best.

You just have to show up and do a good enough job that people keep coming back for more.

This is something that the British virtual meth wizard did... until he stopped.

Allegedly, he has been caught by authorities or experienced some other fate.

The story is still out on what happened because there is no official source to this claim, only rumours.

Some denizens of /r/DarkNetMarkets/ pointed out that BBMC's distinct writing style, gonzo-journalism and dick-measuring contests about "meth purity" drew enough attention from other places that he frequented online (and posted under different pseudonyms).

It's very likely that one of these slip-ups, among many others, led to his demise.

Either way, Reddit's administration has since banned this forum and the related posts were deleted.

So for all intents and purposes, all I just told you could be a fictional account (minus some clues on Archive.org).

What's important however is the set of principles behind the actions of this Darkweb Villain.

If you implement the same kind of approach to marketing, story-driven, unconventional and service-oriented messages to your prospects, you can expect to see a higher response to your own offers.

Although these things happened on a message board related to illicit goods the principles behind it can be applied to any market where having a unique voice and entertaining content provides you with a strong enough unique selling proposition that commands more attention, elicits more emotion and ultimately makes more sales.

The secret, in his own words?

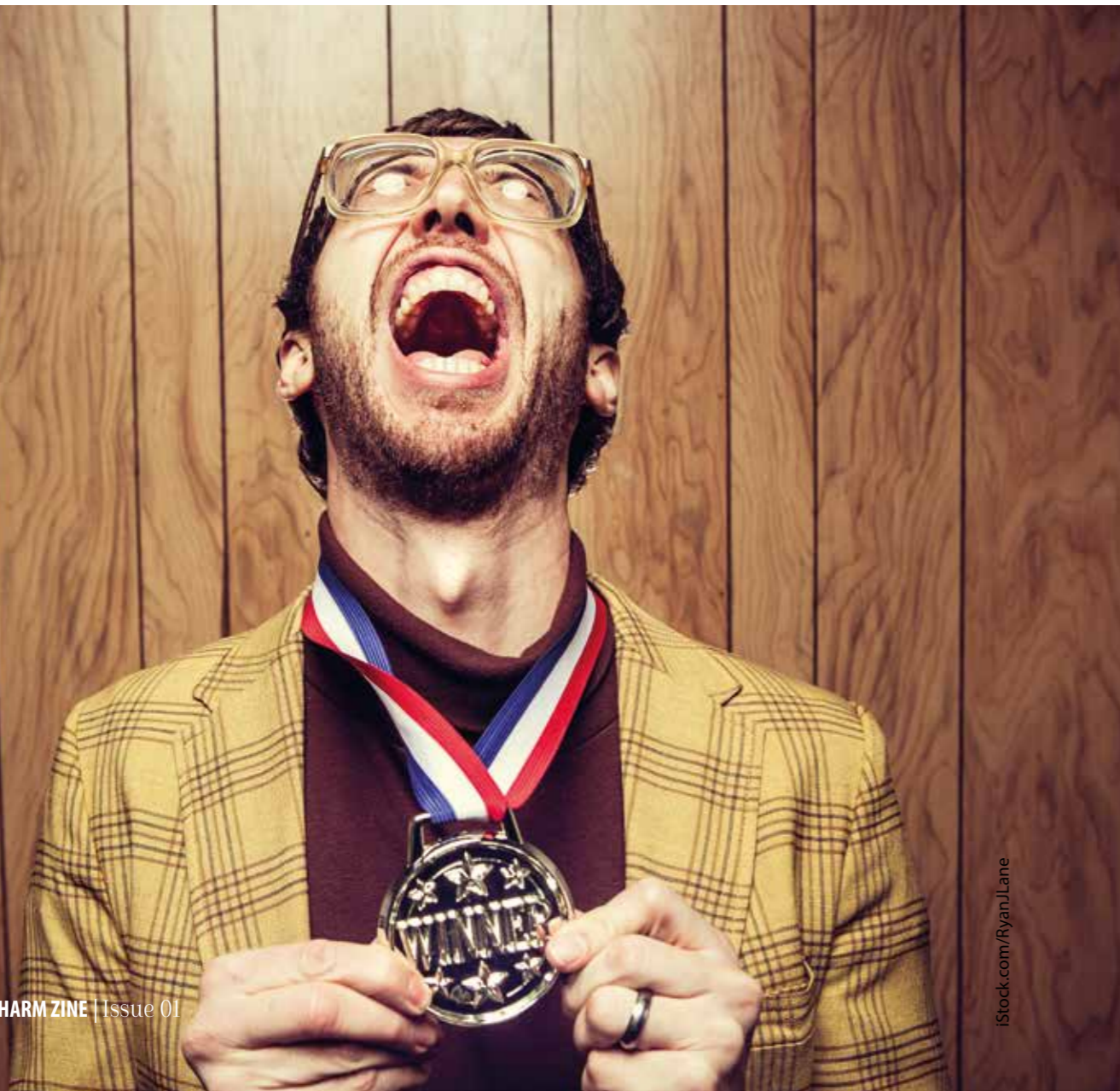
Don't provide just a product. Provide an experience. One that starts before they even have your product in their hands.

I hope this was entertaining and profitable. If you want to know more about how to create this kind of copy, to produce daily, bursts of "fire" that generate more response and sales, check out my "Copy Magic" guide at: <http://silvest.ru/copy-magic/>

Treating Your Customers Like Kings - Even As You Scale

By Liam Atkins

How treating every client like royalty brought in sales worth over £1.24 Million...
...in 6 months, while being a 'SAHD', with just a £2k loan.



istock.com/RyanLane

I'm Liam Atkins. Between July 2017 and January 2018 I launched and then sold a new cryptocurrency brokering business.

I brought in over a million pounds worth of sales within that 6 month period.

Treating each customer as if they were an HRH was how I did it.

Some context...

A 'SAHD' is a 'Stay At Home Dad'. I'd been a struggling internet marketing guy for a years, but it was all drying up.

Having started freelancing in my early twenties, I was way too eager to get my sweaty hands on the next paycheque to provide any kind of positive customer service.

One by one, clients left - with me, literally, 'holding the baby'.

We were living on credit cards, and the cash from a previous Bitcoin investment - it was crap.

Inspiration struck. I launched a brokering website, selling cryptos directly to wannabe investors, while taking a tasty commission.

I borrowed £2k from my Dad to get going. This had to work.

It went from zero clients, to £200k+ each month, before being bought by a large London VC (my competition). As new sign-ups poured in, it didn't matter if they were only spending £100 or £100,000 - they were treated as if they were royalty.

Even as we scaled, we treated our customers like kings. Here's why...

Retaining vs. Acquiring Customers:

It's a given that it's easier and cheaper to sell to someone who's already a customer.

Research tells us that the probability of selling to an existing customer is 60 - 70%, while the probability of selling to someone new is only 5 - 20%.

Which shows that going out of your way with a customer concretes loyalty, repeat business and the chance of referrals, deeply into the relationship.

Cynically, it doesn't just give you both a warm fuzzy feeling - it's a cheap and easy way to make more money.

But, keeping this personal touch going, especially as we try and grow isn't always easy.

Here's a few quickies on how, despite scaling at lightning speed, I maintained this personal touch.

1] The Phone

Yeah, calls suck. But, I personally spoke to every customer, within 10 minutes of them registering.

It made the customer feel like we genuinely cared, and it put a voice and a name behind the business for them.

This quick courtesy call would, in 8/10 cases, result in an immediate currency order. While this order may have been made later on, it saved us time and pushed for the sale before the hassle of email tennis began.

2] Live Chat

This was an effort suck, but it helped to increase conversion rates, while at the same time answered prospect questions in real time. The website live chat also had an iPhone app, which meant I could maintain this personal service as we grew, (even while watching Peppa Pig with my son).

3] Handwritten Thank You's

At 4am you'd find me handwriting thank you notes to each customer from the previous day.

Clients loved receiving this ultra-personal touch, and with a favour request to help my 'poor, small, growing business' by referring two friends to my service (using the business cards enclosed), it was well worth the writer's cramp.

As we began pulling in 20+ orders a day, this was outsourced, but nonetheless continued to work.

5] Taking A Genuine Interest

Being able chat with clients about things that weren't just about money, their interests, goals and lives was important.

This also allowed me to add personal offline touches. Whether it was sending birthday cards, or even a luxury baby hamper to one heavily pregnant customer. (Which resulted in a £120k order from her own father).

Again, I'd have the idea, someone else would fulfil the mailing.

Softly softly catchee monkey vs. a take their money and run was 'wot did it' for me. And what, almost always, put extra money in my bank account.

We all want a passive income, millionaire lifestyle, Tim Ferriss 4 Hour Work Week pay off from our businesses. Becoming a faceless entity tinkering behind our websites, while sat on a Thai beach.

It's the dream right? But it's not always reality.

So how can we make life a little easier for ourselves, even as we try to scale our regular businesses here at home?

By doing everything possible to keep each relationship, with every client, personal.

And as I've shown, with technology, it's even easier to maintain this connection.

As you scale get these habits firmly embedded. Devise a step-by-step template anyone can follow, from initial contact, all the way through to aftercare.

Find mini-hacks to make it easier.

Whether it's investing in automation, redirecting calls, live chat apps with FAQ bots, or just outsourcing the time sucking stuff.

It's ultimately just about proving that you actually do care and going that extra mile.

The Opportunity for You

Only around 18% of businesses have a greater focus on keeping current clients vs. finding new ones. Which shows that, not only is client retention vs. acquisition cheaper, it's probably what your big competitors are sucking hard at.

Which leaves a huge opportunity open in the market for an agile business, hungry and willing to do what the big boys can't (or won't), to snatch up customers, and make them loyal for life.

Treating customers like Kings - even as you scale, is never forgotten, and in the long run, is key to your businesses success.

PERSUASION

Use the Persuasion Sandwich to Persuade and Profit With Minimal Resitance

By Finn Lobsien

If you don't know me: I'm Finn, former direct-response copywriter turned direct-response copywriter who has fun.

In the direct-response world, funny marketing was something I despised (but I had a secret crush on it). When I saw admirable marketers create funny AND effective marketing, I was skeptical. They were actually having fun — unbelievable. Nevertheless, I tested humour—with amazing results: The place I live in is triple the size of my previous home! Best cardboard box ever!

Kidding. After making some money, blending humour and persuasion actually got me a home. My ad attracted dozens of offers for housing, more than 330 likes and over 190 comments (180 of which said "potato") as well as invitations on dates and free beers. Before you hear the story, you need to learn the first rule of writing funny copy. You see, I hate gimmicky, slap a pun on a billboard ads. Even though I write humorous direct-response copy, I agree with this quote:

"Ads are not written to entertain. When they do, those entertainment seekers are little likely to be the people whom you want.[...] [Ad writers] forget they are salesmen and try to be performers. Instead of sales, they seek applause." Claude Hopkins, Scientific Advertising

Though I love funny copy, he's right. We write ads to sell—which is what divides humorous persuasive copy and puns on billboards. If it's easier for you, here's my supersophisticated, ultra-complicated, mind-bogglingly—complex framework for using humour in marketing:

**Using humour as a tool to reach your persuasive goal = good.
Making humour the persuasive goal of your communication = bad.**

You need a persuasive goal (PG) before you write. When you write funny, attention is nice—but you want to make money. The praise should be a by-product of persuasive communication, not the goal. Whether you want to convert to sales, get email signups or make people read your Jon Buchan fan-fiction, you need a PG.

My PG was getting a room in Groningen, The Netherlands.

When I first went to Groningen in March, I told people at a cafe I considered moving there. They looked at me weird. Not because of my lack of pants (I think), but because of the terrible housing market. Apparently, finding a coveted treasure called apartment is essentially striking gold. I brushed it off as them whining. Two months later, I'm trying to move there and face reality:

FB groups are swamped with people jumping at every opportunity to not be homeless (fair point, I guess). Whenever a room is offered, dozens respond in minutes.

After deciding I wasn't playing that game, I downed two Mojitos and combined direct-response with humour into an ad which got me dozens of offers, over 330 likes, more than 190 comments and made me the self-proclaimed least-known viral sensation ever.

See the ad right, you might get a chuckle out of it:



[Do you want this half-naked man to live with you?]
 You might be wondering "WTF is this?" "Is Finn crazy?" or "if I had that body I wouldn't post topless selfies..." and you might be right.
 However, if you have a free room (even temporarily) starting in July or August, keep reading.
 Because I'm, surprise, the 32894385089th international student looking for a room starting mid-late August.
 But, unlike all the other posts, this post might make you smile a little bit, yay!
 Okay, you probably don't want to move in somebody from the internet based on a picture of his half-naked skeleton-looking body at an underwear run - which is understandable.
 You need more info.
 So here's a bit about myself:

- The half-naked thing was only to catch your attention. I don't actually walk around half-naked. Shocker, I know.
- I don't enjoy living in a dirty hole. Neither do you. With me you don't get one of those roommates that lets food rot until it walks out on its own. And I won't leave the bathroom filled with my hair cause that's disgusting.
- I've always paid my rent on time.
- I LOVE cooking. So, if you catch me making food, you're getting a free meal! Say goodbye to always eating pasta and tomato sauce!
- I'm somewhat funny and might make you laugh when you're stressed so you're a bit more happy :D
- My math skills are HORRIBLE. SO if you hate math, we can cry together. And if you love math, you get to feel like a genius around me.
- My showers in the morning take like 3 minutes - then the bathroom's all you. Take your time.
- Aannnnnd... last but not least *drumroll*... I'm not a crazy cat man and won't bring 17 cats into your apartment.

Got a free room?
 Message me or comment below right now with your offers - let's discuss budget and other details privately.
 - Finn Lobsien
 P.S. The girl in the picture is my sister and no, I'm not bringing her.
 P.P.S. If you don't have a room for me but you think this post is somewhat entertaining and you wish me best of luck, please comment the word "potato" so others are confused and my post gets more attention. Comment "potato". Thanks.

What Made The Ad Effective?

Why it worked might seem obvious, but the techniques go deep. You see, humour is a persuasive device. In my eyes, being funny does three things:

1. Disarm the other person to reduce resistance
2. Build rapport with your reader
3. Keep/grab attention

You can use humour at will, like any other tool on your toolbelt of persuasion. So whenever you need to build rapport, keep attention or counter an objection, can you crack a joke and bathe in money?

Nope.

Jokes only work when unexpected. If you've ever heard a joke explained, you know it makes the joke about as funny as toenails—which is why you need to understand this:

Our brains direct attention to inconsistency. To illustrate this, picture a busy pedestrian street. While people pass by, something odd strolls down the street—a clown. Who do you look at? You look at the clown. You try to find an explanation for why he's there. Your brain has noticed a pattern—and the clown breaks it. Now imagine a street filled with clowns. Which one do you pay attention to? None in particular—unless one stands out. Funny copy works the same way. Humour disarms, gets attention and builds rapport as long as it's unexpected. When you do the expected, your prospect's gone. So you can't go full funny OR go "here's average marketing".

Then what's the secret to funny and effective?

1] There's not one joke in my ad.

Every single funny element is tied to persuasion.

Two examples:

- + "Okay, you probably don't want to move in with somebody from the internet based on a picture of his half-naked skeleton-looking body at an underwear run—which is understandable."
While I'm funny, I show I understand them.

- + Benefits for them: "My math skills are HORRIBLE. So if you hate math, we can cry together. And if you love math, you get to feel like a genius around me."
While I'm funny, I tell them how they'll feel around me.

My ad is supremely average—except for the humour. Everybody tells you they're tidy and pay on time, but my humour grabbed attention and made my persuasion less overt. The point is...

2] Humans reject unwelcome influence, but entertainment lets persuasion slip through.

Think of satire and comedy. The difference is that satire delivers a message as entertainment while comedy's point is to entertain. Now, humour won't make people believe anything you want them to believe. You can't crack a joke while asking for \$5000 and get rich—which is why persuasion is inseparable from humour in funny copy.

Now, how can you write your own funny, persuasive copy without being gimmicky? You use what I call...

The Persuasion Sandwich

Even though it sounds like it, the persuasion sandwich is not the world's worst marketing agency mascot.

Instead, the persuasion sandwich gets you into your prospect's mind. Classic persuasion is the bread of the persuasion sandwich. It holds everything together. While it's bland by itself, it's the main source of energy. Humour is the onions, turkey, lettuce, tomatoes and, for crazy people, the jam and cheese. The humour makes it enjoyable and digestible, but doesn't satiate on its own.

So whenever you write humorous copy, keep the persuasion sandwich in mind. Don't crack jokes. Sandwich humour in with the proven principles of persuasion to minimize resistance and be persuasive.

Now go out and convert them with the power of the persuasion sandwich!



LIKE THE DESIGN OF THIS SEXY ZINE?

Want your lead magnets, ebooks, and printed newsletters to be as beautiful as this publication?

"Yeah I guess so m8" I hear you scream!

Well I have good news for you.

I know who made them. It was one of the nicest people I've ever met, Louise Carrier.

She is responsible for making this newsletter so sexy and easy... (to read, pervert!)

I implore you to stop what you are doing and email her at louise@louisecarrier.co.uk immediately, begging her for the opportunity to work together.

Do it!



Disrupting the Game

By Jon Buchan

Stephen Curry shoots 3 point shots from much longer distances than his peers. Why?

Because nobody else takes them.

Why does nobody take them?

Because they're low % (Shoot / Score)

Why are they low %?

Because you can't hit them well from that far away.

That means nobody was defending these shots.

Curry trained and trained and trained until he got great at hitting these shots.

That disrupted the game.

Many players and analysts have called Curry the greatest shooter in NBA history.

The lesson here:

- + Find a gap, a chink in the armour. What is nobody else doing?
- + Why is nobody else doing it?
- + Would it be beneficial to get good at it?
- + If so, try it.



CHARM
OFFENSIVE.