

Best of Charm Offensive

Welcome to the best of Charm Offensive ebook. 134 pages of my best posts since March 2017, when the group started.

Grab a cup of coffee, tea, or heck, a jug of long island iced tea and skim-read until you're sick to the back teeth of me.

Here goes...

Impact -> Communication -> Persuasion

The single most important thing you'll learn.

So many cold approaches fail because they go straight to persuasion.

The very first line starts with something like ... "We're the best people in the world at X... We've worked with X client and are groundbreaking X technology is a world's first..."

YUCK! Of course, that gets deleted!

Your job is to sell the idea that a call or meeting with you is not a bad idea. Not to give every little detail – or to sell your entire offering in one go. Those steps come later...

Dave Trott talks about this when talking about effective advertising.

He brings it down to a level anyone can understand.

Imagine for a moment that you wanted your other half to make you a cup of tea or coffee.

You need first make impact.

"CATH!"

That gets her attention.

The communication is next...

"Cath, will you make me a cup of tea?"

However, that's not very persuasive.

"If you make me a cup of tea, I'll take the trash out."

The same rule applies to direct mail or cold email or any form of effective advertising.

You need to make impact first.

Then communicate.

Then persuade.

You need to stand out.

Your prospect likely gets a ton of other letters and emails (and cold calls) – and they all look and read the same.

You need to make IMPACT.

It's the single most important thing you should focus on.

Without that, it doesn't matter how good your communication is. It doesn't matter how persuasive you are. It doesn't matter how good your product or service is.

Most people think persuasion is the most important.

They focus on using specific words and formulas and forget you're writing to a human.

You're not trying to beat a machine at chess.

You need to get a reaction. A bite. A nod. A smile. A laugh.

You need people to actually see and read and listen before you can communicate and persuade.

Being able to get cut-through - especially if it's done in a unique or clever way - is persuasive in itself.

Think about that.

Next post coming soon... Dun Dunnn Dunnnn!



The Warren Buffett Technique

Unusual honesty. Credibility.

People get so much crap in their email and in the post. You need to make your prospect switch gears.

We can learn something here from Warren Buffet. In his stock presentations, he starts with bad news.

Why would he do such a thing?

- a) He gets the bad news out the way.
- b) It's the honest and correct thing to do.
- c) Everything else he has to say has more credibility.

Can you do the same?

As you will most probably be aware, people on lists get hundreds of emails a week with prospective offers of services that can turnaround my business, banish my woes and answer the meaning of life. Usually they are straight in the delete bin... however, your letter with ~~the gift of time~~, and your subsequent email has caught my intention and I feel obliged to respond.

I'm reminded of an article from the Secret Marketeer in MW, who wrote about the very fact that in this world of DM marketing and customer centric communications, why on earth would I respond to a completely unsolicited approach by someone or something I have never heard of and in the most part don't want what they are offering! The fact that you started at the point of ~~acknowledging the fact that you were not an expert~~ ~~and that~~ but ever so gently ~~acknowledged the fact that~~ ~~you were not an expert~~ really was very good... and the irreverent approach of both your letter and email actually kept me engaged enough to get to this point suggests you have a very pragmatic approach to this world we exist in. This may be great work from you or a clever B2B marketer in your team but either way it worked.

DISARMING CANDOUR

What most people get wrong... and what all of my successful approaches have in common.

Here is a list of 5 common things people get wrong with cold approaches...

1. They are full of ego
2. They try to impress with design or persuade with jargon
3. The rhythm and cadence is not an enjoyable read
4. They make presumptions - This is common with 'problem-solving' type emails
5. They play it safe! (This is huge!)

You need to write captivating copy. From the subject line to the last line.

All of my successful approaches - from the absurd to the serious - have one thing in common.

They tell a story.

This is going to sound like pretentious fluff... but there is truth in here.

Why is a story important?

Think about it.

When did you last hear someone say "I saw a great PowerPoint presentation the other day"?

When did you last hear someone say "S/he told a great story"?

Do you have a compelling story that your prospect can be part of?

Or are you just going to write them a boring advertisement?

Are you writing as if you are speaking to one person individually?

Or are you rehashing key statistics, industry trends, and speaking in bullshit jargon?

One is compelling and interesting and entertaining.

The other is dull and boring and what everyone else is doing.

One of my key 'stories' I call "The Ambitious Underdog".

What's your story?

Are you writing something that your prospect can read and understand where you are coming from?

Will they want to be part of that story?

Will this break through the 'us and them' dynamic that normal sales emails reinforce?

Or will it raise the "sales alarm bells"?

A big part of this is making your intentions known.

It's about pushing your ego aside.

It's about taking a chance.

Sometimes this means using humour.

Sometimes this means letting your guard down and being more honest than is normal and expected.

There's a great video of Steve Job's where he talks about phoning up Bill Hewett to ask for help.
It's worth looking up.
That is all for now...

To: [Jon Buchan >](#)

RE: [REDACTED]

Today at 18:19

Jon,

I like your email.

I've gotta be frank right from the get go. I don't have any budget to use an agency, I don't want to give you any work, I don't want to follow up... BUT... I get loads of emails every day from companies pushing their wares, it is pretty frustrating reading and replying politely to all of these emails.

So I just thought I'd drop you a line to say that you made me laugh. Genuinely laugh out loud.

You write brilliantly (unlike me!). You are engaging and fun and you just know how to take people on a journey and tell a story.

[REDACTED]

Keep making people laugh.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

How to not suck at writing to potential clients.

How To Not Suck At Writing To Potential Clients.

Small agencies and freelancers can get the attention of senior decision makers at large brands and corporations - and do it often.

You don't need a huge budget or sophisticated technology.

You need to deliver the right words in the right order to the right people.

I'll go into a little more detail as it seems unfair to end it there.

Ignore Your Instincts. Flout Convention.

Don't use fancy graphics. Don't try and sell to them. Keep it simple.

Jargon can only be used if you're making a joke about people who think using complex jargon impresses anyone.

Start the letter with something completely different to 'the norm'. Please don't be creepy and stalk them online so you can shoehorn in how much you also love kayaking. Just trust me on that one. I have a better idea.

Tell The Truth. Be Completely Honest.

This approach is disarming and endearing.

It will catch them off guard as they realise "Wait. This letter isn't a generic piece of crap. I guess I should read this."

At this stage, your letter has done better than 99% of the other letters they get sent. I can't believe I'm letting these secrets out. If this goes viral, who knows how many people will know the "Don't write generic crap" rule?

I have some shocking news. Senior decision makers are the same species as you and me.

The main difference is they're inundated with tons of annoying letters and emails.

They have friends that take the piss out of them. They watch crappy movies and listen to rock music.

The only difference is they have the stressful responsibility of appointing a portfolio of agencies.

Learn About The Science of Persuasion.

Google "Influence and Persuade Infographic" and you'll find our infographic on the topic hosted on a range of authoritative business websites. That should get you started. Need proof these principles work? Sure. A while back we persuaded journalists to publish our infographic entitled "How To Influence and Persuade" using the very techniques listed on the infographic.

Over the years, I've been told:

"Your words won't work on luxury brands"

"Your words won't work on senior IT people."

"Your words won't work on CEOs at big corporations"

It's worked with people in all of these groups.

Practice. Test. Learn. Adapt.

With enough practice, you'll start to see some success and develop your own style. Keep trying new things.

Some of it will work like magic and some won't make a fat bit of difference.

Eventually, you may write letters they really enjoy. Heck, they may even get in touch with you.

I've got thousands of replies with the most flattering compliments. It is possible.

I think my favourite response ever was a one line email that simply read:

"My colleague forwarded me your spam email and we'd like to meet you to discuss opportunities."

I'll end with a bit of trivia. **DID YOU KNOW:** There's enough bones in the human body to create an entire skeleton?

Thank You! You've been a wonderful but eerily quiet audience.

Jon Buchan

[BREAKING NEWS!]

>> PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE!

I've decided to do start doing some posts on mindset.

I never had an issue with writing to serious and important and busy business people in an informal way.

I have the opposite problem. I can't write with jargon. I can't hard-sell. I can't do the 'serious and professional' thing. At least, I find this more difficult.

It hasn't been to my detriment.

Of course, you can't be completely off the wall bonkers if it doesn't match your personality and yes - there are circumstances where you may have to take a more serious tone.

But when everyone writes in the same cadence, you need to stand out.

Be daring. Try something different. You need to illicit a response. Make your prospect smile, or laugh or go "That's clever"... or even "This person is different..."

It doesn't matter whether someone is a CEO of a global brand or an intern at a startup - they are all HUMAN! Dun dunn dunnn!!!

So don't put them on a pedestal.

Show some personality.

What's the worst that could happen?

They ignore your message?

That's likely to happen anyway!

BUTTTT Maybe they will send an angry/mean response?!

You're sending a cold email... you're interrupting their day! That could happen anyway too!

So you may as well take a chance...

By being distinct - you're going to get far more positive responses than blending in and being boring!

Whenever you get this particular fear, remember... "PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE!"

BREAKING NEWS: PLAYING IT SAFE SUCKS!

BELIEF:

"I'm contacting [important fancy pants job title]
Therefore, I have to be professional. I can't risk [fear]!"

WHAT YOU'RE REALLY SAYING:

"I'm not even going to attempt to stand out. I'm going to
send the same bland approach everyone else does. I
probably won't get a response but better play it safe!"

NEWSFLASH:

It doesn't matter what someone's job title is. It doesn't
matter who they work for. They are all... *drumroll*

HUMAN!

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[THE THREE KEY VARIABLES]

>> There are three key controllable elements to any cold outreach campaign. (For sales purposes, at least)

Data - Your prospect data has to be up to date and accurate. If your data is crap, it doesn't matter how good your copy or offer is.

Copy - If your copy is boring... you will be ignored. If your copy is really bad, you may even get some mean words as a response. Most cold approaches fall into this category.

Offer - This is a little more complicated. Will what you're selling interest your target prospects? Do you have a good reputation and case studies? Have you given them a good reason to think a call or meeting with you isn't an awful use of their time?

Then there are the elements outside of your control. The externalities. E.g. Some prospects may be under contract with other suppliers. Some may have been in a bad mood when they get your message.

You get around externalities with scale. In short, you need to contact a lot of people!

Even with the best data and the most amazing approach, you will often have a lot of competition. Both from other suppliers but also for your prospects time and attention.

In short:

You need good data that's up to date and accurate.

You need compelling copy that stands out.

You need an offering that your prospect will likely be interested in.

You need to contact a lot of prospects.

[HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY]

>> Lesson #1 - The Reverse

Structure: [CREATE MENTAL IMAGE] -> [SHATTER MENTAL IMAGE]

These 'formulas' are taken from stand up comedy, so they may not always transfer perfectly to the written word. You can't emulate the exact same emphasis or rhythm.

However, they can still be somewhat funny. At worst, they can help make your writing more punchy and enjoyable.

The 'reverse' builds up a mental image - and creates an expectation of what is likely to follow.

The next line shatters the illusion. It pulls the rug from the listener or reader.

Some examples...

I sold my house this week. I thought I got a good price for it - but it made my landlord mad as hell.

- Gary Shandling

I know you want to hear the latest dope from Washington. Well, here I am.

- Senator Alan Simpson

The 'reverse' has even been employed to great effect by a US President. In the 1984 election, Ronald Reagan knew his age would come up in the debates. Reagan was prepared and had this killer 'reverse' planned. He got a cascade of laughter. Even his opponent burst out laughing.

I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience.

- Ronald Reagan

How can you use this?

Think about the story you wish to tell in a letter or email. Think of something specific. Write it out.

Then think of the Who, What, Where, Why, When and How of your story.

Then think about which of those elements you can remove.

Then try to structure it so you have the 'mental image' first - followed by a second statement that shatters the illusion.

Then cut it down and make it as succinct as possible. Don't blabber. Keep it short.

By playing around with this, you can turn that story into something that will elicit a smirk, smile or even a laugh.

Before using it, I suggest testing it on some friends, associates and mortal enemies.

That brings us onto the Lesson #2, "The Power of 3"...

Enjoy,

Jon

[HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY]

>> Lesson #2 - Power Of Three / Triples

Structure: [SENSIBLE] - [SENSIBLE] - [SILLY]

“The rule of three, law of three, or power of three is a writing principle that suggests that things that come in threes are funnier, more satisfying, or more effective than other numbers of things. The reader or audience of this form of text is also thereby more likely to remember the information. This is because having three entities combines both brevity and rhythm with having the smallest amount of information to create a pattern. It makes the author or speaker appear knowledgeable while being both simple and catchy.”

The key to using the power of three for humour purposes is to disrupt the pattern on the 3rd and final word.

Example:

“You can reach me on the phone, through email or by deploying carrier pigeons.”

1. Normal
2. Normal
3. What?!

You can actually stretch this further - and have additional ‘normal’ words. It’s still a pattern interrupt - and sometimes it makes sense (and it just reads better) to make the set-up longer before the payoff.

This is useful when you have a long list of things you wish to mention, e.g. a list of products or services.

This formula is probably the easiest of all the joke formulas. Don’t use it more than once in a particular email or letter, as the reader will pick up what you’re doing - and it will no longer be a surprise or funny. It will just look weird and like you don’t know what you’re doing.

Be sure to read your line - out loud if you need. You’ll get a sense for what works and what doesn’t.

If you’re feeling daring, have a go at writing your own in the comments below!

[HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY]

>> Lesson #3 - The Double Entendre

The Double Entendre is a figure of speech or a particular way of wording that is devised to be understood in two ways, having a double meaning. Typically one of the meanings is obvious, given the context whereas the other may require more thought.

Although it's common, double entendres don't always have to use innuendo!

The double entendre uses a word in one sense - and then switches its meaning for comic effect.

"I hate alcohol. I can't stand drinking—I keep falling down."

You can also set up a double entendre with context. In this case, we understand that politicians 'run for office', and they become 'sitting politicians'. The final word breaks the pattern.

"A politician is asked to run, wants to sit, and is expected to lie."

The most sophisticated double entendres tend to sarcastic statements that generally mean the exact opposite of what's being expressed.

"He's such a skilled professor he can tell you everything he knows in one breath."

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your book. I shall waste no time reading it."

- Benjamin Disraeli

There are other variations of double entendre - but I'll save those for tomorrow 😊

[HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY]

>> THE TRIPLE REVERSE

The triple reverse combines two formulas. Can anyone guess which ones?!

I wrote one that could be used as an opening line for a letter or cold email. It's ok - but can be improved!

It is more difficult to use these formulas in copy as you can't control the emphasis.

However, it'll still interrupt the reader's flow - and then you have their attention for a few more seconds at least.

Do enjoy playing with the triple reverse.

I promise it'll be the best thing you've done all minute.



HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY THE TRIPLE REVERSE

SET 'EM UP WITH A TRIPLE

I'd like to introduce a man with a lot of charm, talent and wit.

KNOCK 'EM DOWN WITH A REVERSE

Unfortunately, he couldn't be here tonight, so instead...

HERE'S ONE I WROTE...

I want to introduce myself in a way that shows I'm honest,
clever and witty.

One out of three ain't bad, right?!

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[MY MAGIC LETTER] 🌟 🌟 📧

>> **Get inspiration. Don't just rip off.** 📧 📧 📧

Charmers,

This letter/email has opened many doors for me over the years.

I've sent this copy to tens of thousands of people.

So if you're thinking of just copying it... that's probably not the best idea.

Get inspiration from the style.

But make it your own.

Don't just slightly tweak it.

Your prospects will ask you about your approach.

Make sure it fits YOUR personality. Not mine.

I naturally write like in the letter.

You need to remain congruent with your audience.

I wonder if this is an area I need to write more about.

How to use your own personality to write your own magic letters and emails.

What do you think?

What would help you guys the most in this regard?

Happy Tuesday folks,

Jon



@ColinFerret | #FoundTheFerret

... or me. (Hi, I'm Jon!) I got your details from a list *gasp*. But hey -
most worthy; that's gotta be something, right? :-)

OK. Let's get down to brass tacks. I'm writing to you from the office of Render Positive, a highly creative marketing & advertising agency I run with my brother Gary, and a team of 20 people far more talented than me.

For over five years, we've run our amazing agency - and we absolutely love it. It's a wonderful feeling to know we're not ripping clients off and producing the best work of our lives.

We're looking to win new clients over to our side and away from those evil (ok maybe not evil... but not as good) other agencies.

If you let me have a chat with you about your digital marketing or advertising, spectacular content creation, or bedroom tidying needs - I will buy you lunch/coffee/tequila shots and promise to be somewhat entertaining. If you're lucky, I may even wear a top hat. First off, I'd love to provide you with some ideas you are free to steal.

I have included a sticker containing a picture of a ferret that has been dressed up. According to the internet, his name is Colin. I trust this will charm you into submission.

I'll be in touch on email when you least suspect it... Dun Dunn Dunn!

I await your profanity filled response.

Have a splendid day.

Jon Buchan
Chief Executive Officer
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S. Do Check Out Our Case Studies @ <https://renderpositive.com/case-studies/> - It's Legit
and You May Even Be Impressed! ☺

renderpositive.com - @jonbuchan

[THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW]

>> The Follow-Up

This should be obvious - but I used to be guilty of sending just one email. I had great success with this, but I also left a lot of money on the table!

Even if someone is impressed with your approach, they may be too busy to reply. Especially if they're a senior decision maker.

Don't be annoying, but do follow up. Do make sure you give them an 'easy out'.

With tools like Quickmail.io, you can automate follow-ups to people who have not opened your email, those who've opened but not replied and other options.



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW: THE FOLLOW UP

Don't just send one email...

If your prospect doesn't reply, follow up a week later.

Always be sure to say "If you'd like me to politely go away, please do let me know..." - and of course, include an unsubscribe link in the footer of your email.

If you keep hitting a brick wall, it may be your approach isn't interesting, your offering isn't enticing, or they may be under contract with another supplier.

Luckily, there are other potential clients ;)

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[THINGS NOT TO DO]

>> BE FAKE!

Even if you genuinely LOVE kayaking, this is embarrassing!

You start off semi personable...

... then immediately go into that same awful sales cadence.

Awful. Awful. Awful.

Please don't do this.

It would be better to make a joke about all the other suckers emailing them trying this kind of approach...



THINGS NOT TO DO: BE FAKE

EXAMPLE

"I came across your LinkedIn and saw you like kayaking!
I like kayaking too! Wow! How crazy is that? By the way...
I run Company X and we offer..."

REALLY?!

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[HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY]

>> **Making fun of known problems / creating an in-joke.**

This is another example of poking fun of an industry problem.

This time I targeted marketing agencies with my mockery. Only fair!

This is a graphic of a make believe app called "Agency Bullshit Guard"

If you were a marketing agency of some sort that wanted to demonstrate your annoyance with the status quo, this would be an entertaining way of visually representing that positioning.

By mocking agencies that can talk big but deliver little, it would put you firmly on the side of the clients... who you want to win over to your side!

Once again - be careful with humour.

Think about the target (of the humour) and think about your audience...



[HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY]

>> The DANGERS of humour. Dun dunn dunnn!

I didn't use the attached image in a cold approach but it's a good example at mocking a known issue or pain point in an industry.

I wrote the copy for this and my talented friend Dylan designed it. It makes fun of overbearing brand guidelines which stifle creativity.

It's a problem many agencies or creative types face when dealing with big brands. I remember I was working on a content piece for a big corporate and I was told "Jon, we like the comic strip... but can you remove the humour? And make it look more realistic?"

This attached image could only be used in a cold approach if you knew the person you were sending it to agreed with you. It could backfire, if that person is on the side of the brand police, they will likely not enjoy it! 😞

You have to be careful with humour. It can split your audience.

That's why self-deprecation and absurdity are safe bets. The worst that can happen is someone will think you're not funny. At best, they'll smile or laugh and BANG - you've got them.



Auto-Brand-Police
The World's First Automated Brand Compliance Software

Stop daring ideas before they catch on!

BRAND NEW FEATURES IN VERSION TWO

1. Add an **unlimited** number of **pointless tweaks!**
2. Ability to delay creative progress by **weeks, months or even years.**
3. Upload your own list of banned words instantly for **quick** and **comprehensive censorship.**
4. New and improved speedy social media messaging approval process - **as quick as five weeks!**
5. Print your own **brand bible wall charts** to provide **constant** reminders of **creative constraints.**

"Fortune Favours The Meek" - Protect Your Brand Today!

Check out these moderately interesting testimonials:

"I used to have to spend hours arguing my case against people with ideas and stuff. Now the process is automated and we are 100% brand bible compliant with 100% of our marketing and advertising! The results have been incredible, to say the least! Nobody says anything negative about our brand anymore! - or anything at all really. A job well done!"
- **Brenda Staleston, Junior Vice President of Middle Management, Withering Corporation Plc**

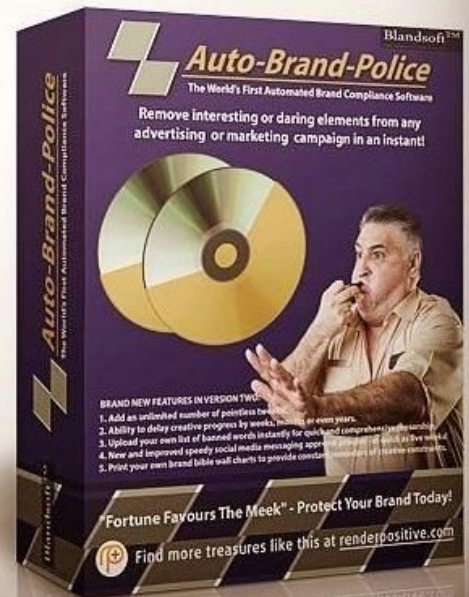
"Amazing bit of kit. Forces absolute conformity across all marketing and advertising campaigns with flawless efficiency. This cautious risk-averse approach is what entrepreneurship is all about."
- **Irwin Boreson, Head Jobsworth, Bland Name Ltd**

"WOW. This works. Compliance issues resolved in seconds. Better than Success!!! Can I say that? It's a play on words... but it may offend someone or even more than one person. I'm sorry if I offended anyone. Sorry." - **Tony Losthope, Senior Brand Officer, Safety First Adventures Ltd**

"It is better to succeed in Imitation than to fail in originality!"

We cannot be found on any social media platforms but visit our website at www.autobrandpolice.com

"Demoralising Creative Teams Together"



[BUSINESS TALK]

>> Why do we have to do the dance?

I was in a meeting with a potential client (who I cold contacted) on Friday morning. (Hey, [Robert Lough!](#))

I was a little sleep deprived - I've been juggling client work and trying to create my course - so had only a few hours sleep.

He said, "Your fee is a bit high..."

I replied "Of course it is! I know you're going to negotiate down! I have to have wiggle room!"

He started laughing.

We could be honest with each other.

We didn't have to do this stupid dance.

I wonder where all these silly rules come from.

It creates a very "Us vs. Them" mentality off the bat.

Wouldn't it be better if we could just talk to each other normally?

[STANDING OUT ON LINKEDIN]

>> "First off, 10/10 for your profile picture..."

I get this response a lot on LinkedIn.

I also saw my profile views increase when I changed my profile from a sensible one to the amusing one I use now.

People see this ridiculous picture in the search results - or see it in their "Who's visited your profile" section of their LinkedIn account - and it grabs their attention. I stand out from the crowd.

It also fits with my personality. I'm silly!

People ask "Aren't you worried you'll lose clients because people are put off by your lack of professionalism?"

No. Absolutely not!

This is a good thing. It allows for self-selection. I don't have to deal with boring, stuck up or overly serious people. There are plenty of other people who enjoy that stuff. It's not for me. Just like my detractors, I have standards 😊

It also works as a magnet for finding people I'll get on well with.

Absurdity may not fit with your personality. That's fine.

However, consider doing something with your profile picture that is distinct and unusual.

Happy Saturday folks!

Jon



[WRITE LIKE YOU TALK]

>> **A great article by Paul Graham, Founder of Y Combinator.**

Here's a simple trick for getting more people to read what you write: write in spoken language.

Something comes over most people when they start writing. They write in a different language than they'd use if they were talking to a friend. The sentence structure and even the words are different. No one uses "pen" as a verb in spoken English. You'd feel like an idiot using "pen" instead of "write" in a conversation with a friend.

The last straw for me was a sentence I read a couple days ago:

The mercurial Spaniard himself declared: "After Altamira, all is decadence."

It's from Neil Oliver's *A History of Ancient Britain*. I feel bad making an example of this book, because it's no worse than lots of others. But just imagine calling Picasso "the mercurial Spaniard" when talking to a friend. Even one sentence of this would raise eyebrows in conversation. And yet people write whole books of it.

Ok, so written and spoken language are different. Does that make written language worse?

If you want people to read and understand what you write, yes. Written language is more complex, which makes it more work to read. It's also more formal and distant, which gives the reader's attention permission to drift. But perhaps worst of all, the complex sentences and fancy words give you, the writer, the false impression that you're saying more than you actually are.

You don't need complex sentences to express complex ideas. When specialists in some abstruse topic talk to one another about ideas in their field, they don't use sentences any more complex than they do when talking about what to have for lunch. They use different words, certainly. But even those they use no more than necessary. And in my experience, the harder the subject, the more informally experts speak. Partly, I think, because they have less to prove, and partly because the harder the ideas you're talking about, the less you can afford to let language get in the way.

Informal language is the athletic clothing of ideas.

I'm not saying spoken language always works best. Poetry is as much music as text, so you can say things you wouldn't say in conversation. And there are a handful of writers who can get away with using fancy language in prose. And then of course there are cases where writers don't want to make it easy to understand what they're saying—in corporate announcements of bad news, for example, or at the more bogus end of the humanities. But for nearly everyone else, spoken language is better.

It seems to be hard for most people to write in spoken language. So perhaps the best solution is to write your first draft the way you usually would, then afterward look at each sentence and ask "Is this the way I'd say this if I were talking to a friend?" If it isn't, imagine what you would say, and use that instead. After a while this filter will start to operate as you write. When you write something you wouldn't say, you'll hear the clank as it hits the page.

Before I publish a new essay, I read it out loud and fix everything that doesn't sound like conversation. I even fix bits that are phonetically awkward; I don't know if that's necessary, but it doesn't cost much.

This trick may not always be enough. I've seen writing so far removed from spoken language that it couldn't be fixed sentence by sentence. For cases like that there's a more drastic solution. After

writing the first draft, try explaining to a friend what you just wrote. Then replace the draft with what you said to your friend.

People often tell me how much my essays sound like me talking. The fact that this seems worthy of comment shows how rarely people manage to write in spoken language. Otherwise everyone's writing would sound like them talking.

If you simply manage to write in spoken language, you'll be ahead of 95% of writers. And it's so easy to do: just don't let a sentence through unless it's the way you'd say it to a friend.

Thanks to Patrick Collison and Jessica Livingston for reading drafts of this.

>> Thanks for the suggestion, Franz Bruckhoff!

(Credit: <http://www.paulgraham.com/talk.html>)

[WILL THIS APPROACH WORK FOR ME?]

>> **Yes.**

Let me deal with a few common questions.

You'll notice they are similar in syntax.

"Will this work on CEOs?"

Yes

"Will this work on senior IT people?"

Yes

"Will this work on luxury brands?"

Yes

"Will this work on [x]?"

Yes

It won't work on ALL people.

Some people may even reply and say they don't like the approach.

I've even had 1 person (over the past 6 years) say "This is the absolute worst marketing email I've ever received."

He did follow up with "... but the irony that I'm replying is not lost on me."

But there isn't a TYPE of person it doesn't work on.

Stop putting people in boxes.

Being human and not writing like a corporate robot works.

Making people smile or laugh works. You're giving people a good feeling. In that moment, they are more likely to hit reply or call you than with a boring approach.

There is one caveat. I don't think using humour (my favourite approach as you're literally giving your prospect a free high...) would convert if you tried to translate it into another language. I've heard people say one of the hardest things when trying to become as fluent as native speakers is to be able to be funny. There are not only difference in language but in culture too.

Come to think of it, there are other exceptions.

Oh crap....

Let me list those...

It may not work if you're contacting:

1. Robots
2. Animals
3. Mutants
4. Mythical creatures

5. Deities

6. Dead people

If you're planning to approach any of the above, I can't 100% promise the "Charm Offensive" approach will work... In fact, I'd go so far as to say it won't. Sorry to let you down... 😞

... and another thing - you don't have to use humour. That's my favourite route - as it comes naturally for me to write in this way.

You can be clever and get a "Very good" smirk.

You can be creative and play with form.

You can be refreshingly honest.

All of these make you distinctive.

All of these are the antithesis of all the other approaches your prospects get.

Right. It's beer time!

Hope you're having a great Saturday.

Cheers,

Jon

P.S. If anyone can create a cold approach that works on robots, please P.M me. We may need it when A.I takes over the planet. I'll give you £20 for it.

[THIS 11-YEAR-OLD GIRL SCOUT IS BETTER AT SELLING THAN YOU!]

>> Hilarious video!

Please watch and learn 😊

... I think she might be a better writer than me ... *gasp*

[\(Click here to watch the video\)](#)

[PATTERN INTERRUPTION]

>> A very clever Facebook ad!

Imagine this ad but with motion. It's about 3 seconds long - and it looks like the drink is coming 'towards you' - like the bartender is handing you the drink.

Certainly grabbed my attention. ([Click here to watch the ad](#))



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook advertisement for Jameson Irish Whiskey. At the top left is the Jameson logo and the text "Jameson Irish Whiskey". To the right is a "Like Page" button. Below this, it says "Sponsored · ✨". The main text of the ad reads: "Up for a trip to Dublin? You'll be needing one of these before entering #CheersJameson on Instagram today. Happy #StPatricksDay!". The central image is a split-screen visual: the left side shows a hand holding a glass of whiskey with a lime wedge, while the right side shows a person in a blue shirt reaching towards the camera, creating an illusion of the drink moving towards the viewer. At the bottom, engagement statistics are shown: "You and 207 others", "40 Comments", "58 Shares", and "51K Views".

[YOU DON'T ALWAYS WIN IMMEDIATELY]

>> But you'll see if your approach is working...

Recently, I tested something a bit weird. Only to a few people... but it was an experiment.

I got my first response from my weird experiment today. Not an immediate call or a meeting, but nice words all the same.

You have to try things out.

Don't be worried about failure. If you let that control, you'll never do anything!

Also, I can stay in touch with this person.

I can add them to LinkedIn.

I can ask if they want to be subscribed to my mailing list.

This is still a great response.

RE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
to Jon

Hi Jon

Absolutely loved the letter – it's genius! And it works!

If I was in a position to get budget for this collaboration I would but right now we're committed until nearly the end of the year. Love your bold approach though and it demonstrates you have a deep understanding of what you're doing. Love it.

Do keep in touch.

[REDACTED]

[AN INTERESTING TACTIC FOR SALES MEETINGS]

>> **Bring other team members to sales meetings & pitches...**

If you're going to a sales meeting, take a member of the team that doesn't stand to gain financially from winning any deal.

If you're the company owner or a business development person, the prospect knows you gain financially from them agreeing to work with you. The company owner adds revenue and the business development person likely makes some commission.

So even if you're knowledgeable and passionate, this is always in the back of their mind. They are keenly aware of this.

If you do have a team (however small or large it may be) - you should take an account manager (or other non senior/biz dev person) with you.

They should play a prominent role in the meeting.

As long as they're not awful in meetings, it will often make a real difference.

If they show up and are passionate and brimming with ideas and super excited to work with the client, it's for the love of the craft. Not the money.

If anything, if they win the deal, their lives actually get harder! They have more work to do!

Action: Take account managers and even take more junior team members to these meetings.

Why:

1. The prospect will meet the team they're likely going to work with. This is important. It stops the "they bring out the big guns for the sales pitch" mentality.
2. The passion and excitement shown by your less senior/non-sales focused team members will come across as genuine as it's unspoiled by any financial incentives. Their enthusiasm comes across as more 'pure'.

This will help you close more deals.

[HOW TO STAND OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA]

>> **Be yourself and be direct.**

I notice Tony's posts.

I instantly recognise Tony from his style.

He's direct.

He writes in lower case.

He swears.

His videos are great too.

The man doesn't waffle.

This is his personality. It works as it's him.

I'm not suggesting you all start writing and speaking like [Tony Jack Mantz](#). That's not my suggestion.

I am suggesting you be yourself - and try to be distinct. Take a chance!

I need to work on this too. My first live stream I was very reserved. This isn't me!

Love how Tony opens his videos. 😊

This video also has a great message - even if (like me) you're not in the music business! Watch it!

(As you can see I'm broadening what "Charm Offensive" is about a little. It can be applied to many things.)

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

[BOOKS AND VIDEOS]

>> Read & Watch & Learn

On the live stream, I was asked about some books and video you should read and watch. Here you go.

Books:

Influence - The Psychology of Persuasion

- Robert Cialdini

Pre-Suasion

- Robert Cialdini

How To Win Friends & Influence People

- Dale Carnegie

Creative Mischief

- Dave Trott

Videos:

The Art of Persuasion (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYsPAGj6_hU)

- Dave Trott

Life Lessons from an Ad Man (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXneozZwJR0&t=1s>)

- [Rory Sutherland](#)

Cheers,

Jon

[HANDWRITTEN LETTERS]

>> **When was the last time you got one?**

Want to get the attention of a dream client?

Send them a handwritten letter.

Have the writing of a small child? Find someone with nice handwriting to do it for you.

This cannot be (fully) automated. It shows real effort.

You'll definitely get your prospects attention... Then your copy must captivate.

You also have something to mention if you send them an email or follow up on the phone.

More than likely, nobody else has sent them a handwritten letter... Just you.



[STOP TRYING TO BE CLEVER]

>> It looks stupid.

I met up with my friend [Keilly Natalie Foster](#) yesterday.

It's been a few years.

She has gone from being a personal trainer at Virgin to a business owner. She is preparing some exciting stuff right now.

I thought I'd be giving her advice.

It turned out she gave me probably more help than I gave her.

She told me about a copywriter that didn't enjoy her elevator pitch.

Like me, Keilly doesn't do 'fluff'.

The copywriter wanted her to use "purple prose"...

You know the deal... lots of big words... lots of fluff...

Let me get to the point.

If you wanted to lose weight, which copy would get your attention?

"I have 10 years experience in supporting those who have health and wellness objectives. I have an organic, holistic approach to the challenges of weight management."

OR

"I will help you look good naked."

Hmm... Tough isn't it?

Stop trying to be clever.

It looks stupid.

[TAKE A NEGATIVE AND TURN IT INTO A POSITIVE]

>> **Brewdog are the best in the world at this...**

Brewdog are (or were) a 'challenger' brand in the world of beer.

Their enemy is "generic boring lager".

They are the opposite of this.

The example I've linked to isn't even Brewdog's best work.

I remember when they released some absurdly strong beer.

At the time the strongest beer in the UK. I think. Or at least that was the marketing hype.

It had over 60%ish alcohol content. I can't remember the specifics.

Naturally, this got the attention of "the sensible people."

I think a question was even raised in parliament.

"What are we going to do about this terrible new drink? Think of the children!"

The drink was for connoisseurs. Not binge drinkers. It was outrage for the sake of it.

In retaliation, Brewdog released a new beer.

It had 1% alcohol content.

They called it Nanny State.

They took the situation and made it into an opportunity.

They got a ton of free PR coverage because of it.

This is another example of Brewdog's cleverness.

You can create stories out of thin air.

You just have to be creative and daring.

You can either make something newsworthy and it will go viral.

Or make something go viral and it will become newsworthy.

The former is easier than the latter.

If you can figure out the mechanics, it's repeatable and even reliable.

Brewdog are proof of this.

You can take a negative and turn it into a positive.

[HOW TO WRITE AN INTERESTING FACEBOOK POST]

>> **Lead with all CAPS but follow that with something gentler.**

Then you write a first line that gets people curious.

You need to write just enough that they have to click "Continue Reading".

This is critical: The next thing you need to do is express an opinion as if it were absolute fact.

But add in a clause that says something like "This might not work for everyone, but play with it."

Then you can go off on a tangent and talk about something else entirely.

But you don't have to...

You could even include fun sounding words like bamboozled, hoodwinked, tomfoolery, shenanigans, and antics.

You could even try to explain a concept while doing it.

Then you should wrap things up. It's up to you whether you reference the elephant in the room.

For more information, please re-read.



[WHY ARE MEMES FUNNY?]

>> **Let me ruin the fun for you.**

Memes are a very efficient form of comedy.

It's a little like if a stand-up comic had Powerpoint slides.

I know that sounds awful, so let me explain.

With stand-up comedy, the comic has to first set a premise. This isn't just about the words they say.

They also have a character and a point of view. Without this build up, there is no tension for the punchlines to break.

It's actually (a little) easier for an established comic to get laughs as fans already know their character, backstory and overarching point of view.

Memes are able to create all of this premise in an image.

This is especially true when a specific character (in the attached example, the complex and confusing human brain) has been used over and over again.

The viewer already has a lot of information (the premise) saved. The overlaid text delivers the punch.

I talk a lot about copy. Copy is important. But consider using images. They can convey a lot at great speed.

One idea - create an image (or animation, eh [Anneke Camstra!](#)) to make fun of a prospects "pain points", or to reference an industry 'in-joke'. Check out the Marketoonist. He is superb at mocking the pretentiousness of the marketing industry.

This demonstrates your knowledge to a prospect without having to use that ever so borish, "late night infomercial" cadence in your copy. It's subtle. Potentially, it's clever. And maybe even funny.

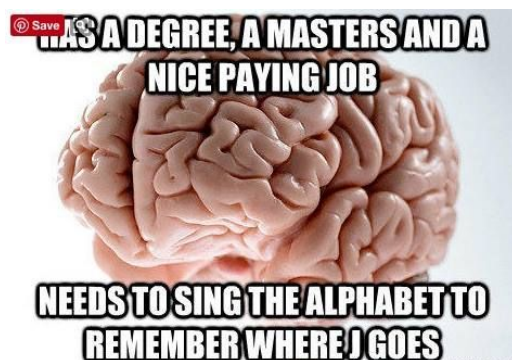
It also enables you to sell in the least offensive way possible.

Unfortunately, this isn't the easiest thing to do.

Fortunately, you have this thing called the Internet. You can experiment an almost infinite number of times until you figure it out.

Or give up.

Or pay me to coach you/do it for you.



[I TOLD YOU I WAS RIGHT!]

>> On "Risky" Copy.

"Now, if you are one of those folks who believes you can't test risky copy because B2B stands for "boring to boring," check this out: studies show that the less exciting your product or service is, the more engaging your copy needs to be and the more personality it ought to have."

[Click here to read the full article.](#)

[BASIC OVER FLASHY]

>> Keep it simple. Let the copy do the work.

This advice is for cold emails.

Don't make it look like a newsletter.

Don't make it look corporate or heavily branded or anything like that.

It can use HTML, but it should look like a regular email.

You know, like a real actual human person would.

Remember those people? After work people? Friends. Family.

And you know what's really cool?

It's not dishonest because you ARE* a real human person! Fantastic, eh?

*Unless you're a bot.

[PEOPLE INTERPRET THINGS DIFFERENTLY]

>> Be careful with your copy. Especially if you're trying to be funny!

Make sure you read your email or direct mail copy.

Read it out loud.

Send it to friends and colleagues.

This may stop you from making huge blunders.

But it's still not guaranteed!

You may **think** something is funny and light hearted...

But it could come off as too aloof, cocky and like you don't give a shit. Or something else entirely!

That's not good...

People will remember you for exactly the wrong type of reasons!

Remember, these people don't know you.

They don't know your personality.

Be careful out there!

[PLEASE DON'T TAKE THIS ADVICE VERBATIM]

>> Comic Sans still sucks...

... but perhaps you **could** experiment with other fonts?

I personally use a very antiquated "typewriter" looking font.

Just this week it helped me get on a podcast.

"I couldn't **not** look at your email with that font!" he said.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

[THE ONE SMALL CHANGE THAT REVERSED COKE'S 7 YEAR DECLINE IN SALES]

>> People like their own name

Coke allowed people to buy bottles or cans of coke with their name on it.

Coke consumption increased 7%.

People like seeing their own name.

The hashtag [#ShareACoke](#) made the campaign a "viral sensation."

They extended the campaign further.

"Those with less conventional names were served by a touring soda machine that customized roughly 1 million cans at 500 stops across the country."

Simple change. Dramatic results.

A blatant "Charm Offensive".



[HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY] 🤔.🤔.🤔.

>> Some words are just funny. Deal with it! 🤔.🤔.🤔.

Some words can bamboozle the best of us.

If you use them sparingly, they're a great pattern interrupt. They make people smile. 😄.😄.😄.

Here are a few examples...

Bamboozled

Hoodwinked

Flummoxed

Tomfoolery

Horseplay

Antics

Shenanigans

Frolics

Besmirched

I know you can't use this in all situations.

However, it's surprisingly effective. It's pretty universal. It's hard to be offended by someone using unusual or enjoyable words.

I'm sure you have one that comes to mind that you can post in the comments below... 😊.

Happy Tuesday folks,

Jon



[HOW DO I START MY EMAIL?] ! . ? , ! . ? ,

>> Fuck etiquette.   

SALUTATIONS 😊. Charmers!

A lot of people have asked me how to start their emails.

My advice is to think about what the reader will see.

Put yourself in their shoes - even if they may be wearing flippers or high heels.  

Most people see the following before opening your email:

- Your name
- Subject line
- First line or so - depending on the device used.

That first line...

You could start with "Dear Mr Buchan".

If you were a doctor writing to me about an upcoming medical appointment, this would be the most appropriate greeting. I don't want anything unusual in this context.

Assuming you're not a doctor writing to me about an upcoming medical appointment, you could start with "Hello Jon" or "Hey Jon". That would be fine...

Or you could open up a nearby thesaurus, or open up a new tab and see if there are any digital versions. (Spoiler: There are several! Maybe even more than several. Maybe there are numerous thesauri! Full disclosure: I'm not an online thesaurus connoisseur so I have no idea.)

Look up the other ways of saying "Hello".

Some will be refreshing and unusual.

Some will come off a little weird.

All of them are less boring and obvious.

It may seem a tiny detail but an email only contains a relatively small amount of copy.

Make everything you write is at least a little different and unusual.

It's more fun to write and it's more fun to read.

Happy Wednesday folks,

Jon

[BEING DISTINCT] 🌈🌈🌈

>> Stand out from the crowd. 😊😊🤖

I've always said that standing out is of critical importance.

One person I know does this better than anyone I know.

You may know Mr [Vin Clancy](#)... If you don't, he is the guy in the photo.

Vin always does speaking gigs (I don't know how he dresses at other times!) in crazy, flamboyant, colourful clothing.


It works. If you saw 10 speakers in a week, which one would you remember?

Obviously, his talks have to be good. However, this point of difference surely helps. You're not going to forget his name in a hurry.

I'm not suggesting you change your wardrobe, but think about what you can do that is unique to you.

It's a small detail but an important one.



[DON'T ASK FOR TOO MUCH!] 

>> Ask for a small commitment first... 

Make your first request a small one.

I cold emailed [Sue Stanley Goltyakova](#) a few years ago and got a meeting with her. I met her recently and she said one of the reasons was she felt she wouldn't get a hard sell.

If nothing else, she felt she could potentially come away from the meeting with some ideas.

This was an angle I hadn't thought about. But it makes total sense.

Want more sales calls and meetings?

Don't ask for too much of your prospects initially.

People are busy.

They have limited time.

That time is valuable.

They don't want to spend that limited time being sold to.

Unless you have some life changing technology or offering that will solve all their problems all at once while costing next to nothing, you are pretty much the least important thing on your prospects to-do list.

If you even make it onto their to-do list!

If you do want a face to face meeting, make it clear like they have something to gain from it.

Make sure they know it's not going to be a stressful 'get me the hell out of here' hard sell scenario if they do meet you.

Or ask for less... ask for a few minutes on the phone.

... Or ask for even less than that. Just ask them to 'hit reply'.

Then build from there.

[AUTHORITY] 🚧🚧🚧

>> Authority brings credibility. 🧑‍💼🧑‍💼🧑‍💼



Physiotherapists for example are able to persuade most of their patients to comply with programmes if they display their medical diplomas on the wall of their offices.

Final thought:

It's important to signal to others what makes you a credible, knowledgeable authority before you make your attempt at influencing them.

At a letting agency, the staff arranged for the receptionist to first mention their colleagues' credentials before putting them through. 'Let me put you through to Jessica, she has over 15 years experience in property management'. This approach led to a **20%** rise in appointments and a **15%** increase in signed contracts. Not bad!

[THE POWER OF RECIPROCITY] 🤝🤝🤝🤝

>> **You scratch my back. I'll entertain the idea of scratching yours.** 😄😄😄

This is powerful.

In social psychology, reciprocity is a social rule that says people should repay, in kind, what another person has provided for them; that is, people give back (reciprocate) the kind of treatment they have received from another.

By virtue of the rule of reciprocity, people are obligated to repay favours, gifts, invitations, etc. in the future.

Example: If you invite someone to a party, they are more likely (but not guaranteed by any means) to invite you to a party they put on.

How do you use this in cold approaches?

Give something first without any intentions. Without them asking. Without expectations. Just because.

This could be a useful resource such as an ebook or something like that - that doesn't require an opt-in!

It could be even simpler than this - you could introduce yourself in a way that makes your prospect smile or laugh. You're giving someone a nice feeling - remotely. That's powerful! And it's not trickery or dishonest. It's probably one of the most ethical, effective and (for me, at least) enjoyable form of persuasion there is.

People will hit 'reply' more often if you're able to do this.

You'll succeed far more often, and you'll also have the nicest rejections you'll ever get!

Happy Thursday folks,

Jon

RECIPROCITY

✓ the obligation to give back what you have received from others

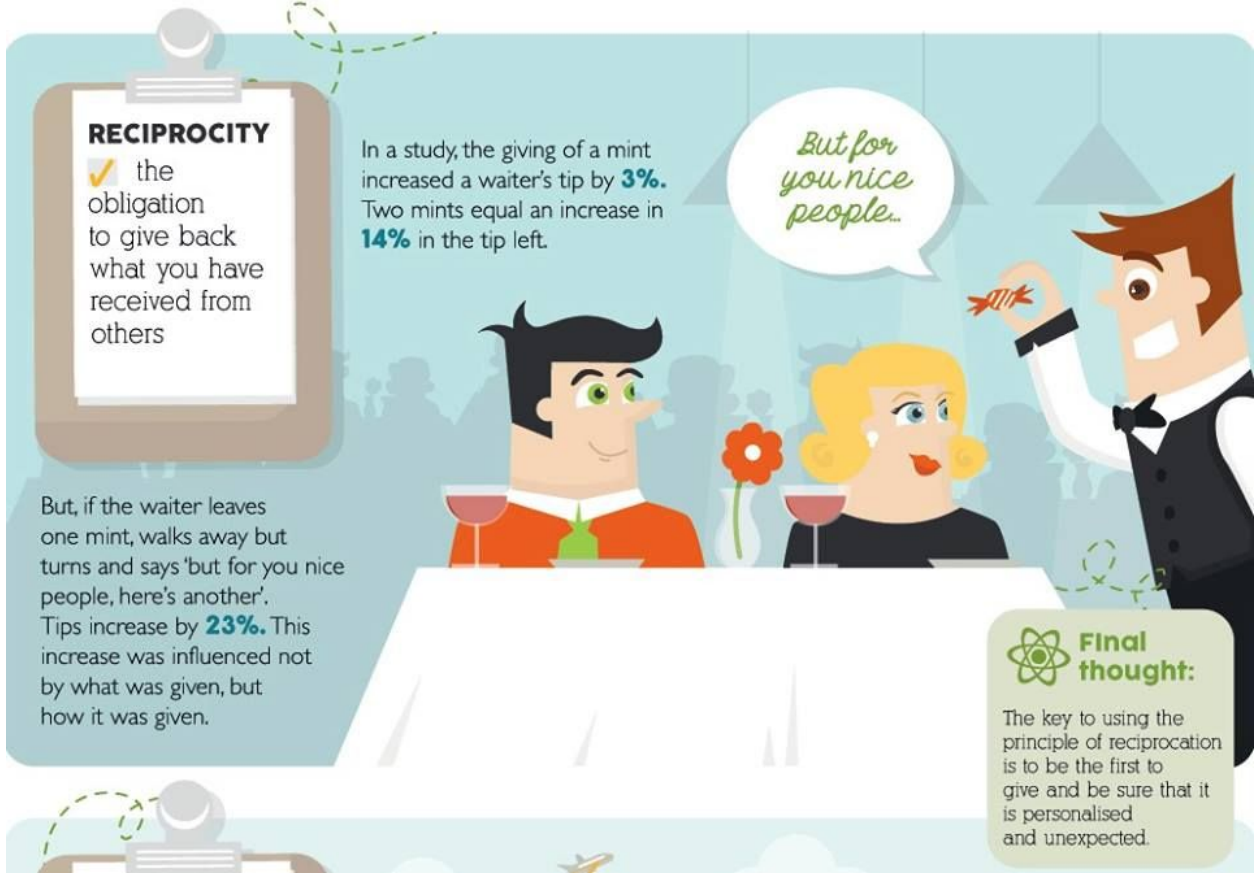
In a study, the giving of a mint increased a waiter's tip by **3%**. Two mints equal an increase in **14%** in the tip left.

But for you nice people...

But, if the waiter leaves one mint, walks away but turns and says 'but for you nice people, here's another'. Tips increase by **23%**. This increase was influenced not by what was given, but how it was given.

Final thought:

The key to using the principle of reciprocation is to be the first to give and be sure that it is personalised and unexpected.



[NEWSFLASH: PEOPLE WHO LIKE EACH OTHER LIKE TO WORK WITH EACH OTHER]



>> The power of "LIKING" 😊.😊.😊.

This is an obvious one but still important.

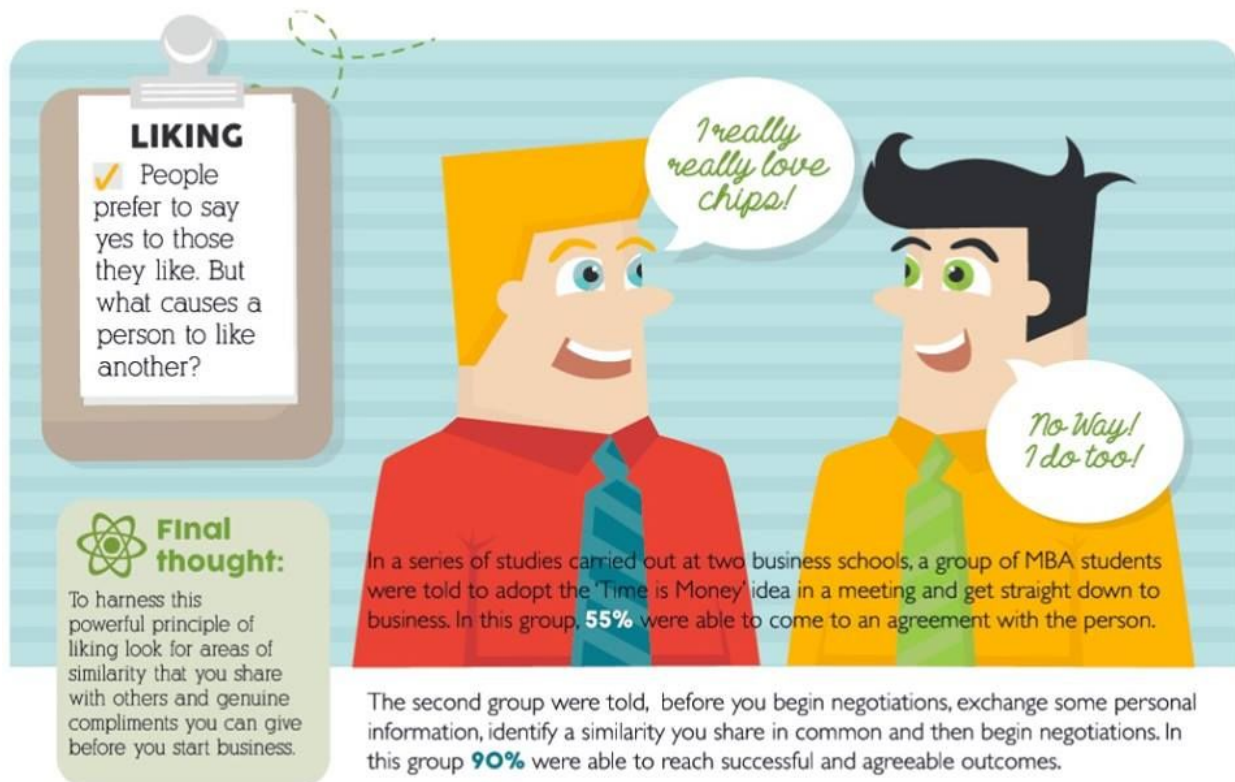
Having things in common with your customers creates a bond.

You have something outside of work to talk about.

It makes working together more enjoyable.

They have even done studies on this.

I think you'll like the attached image.



LIKING
✓ People prefer to say yes to those they like. But what causes a person to like another?

Final thought:
To harness this powerful principle of liking look for areas of similarity that you share with others and genuine compliments you can give before you start business.

I really really love chips!

No Way! I do too!

In a series of studies carried out at two business schools, a group of MBA students were told to adopt the 'Time is Money' idea in a meeting and get straight down to business. In this group, **55%** were able to come to an agreement with the person.

The second group were told, before you begin negotiations, exchange some personal information, identify a similarity you share in common and then begin negotiations. In this group **90%** were able to reach successful and agreeable outcomes.

[CONSENSUS] 🍷🍷🍷

>> **The power of social proof.** 🍷🍷🍷

People will look to the actions of others to determine their own.

When I post my results from my cold approach efforts, I'm sure it's a little like "We've seen this before, Jon....*yawn!*"

When other people post their awesome results, it's far more interesting.

This is the power of social proof.

This is the reason you see agencies put the logos of their big clients on their websites and feature the names of the newspapers and other publications they've been featured in.

The next stage for me is to get video testimonials and to appear on the podcasts of leaders or experts in entrepreneurship, sales, marketing and copywriting.

Make sure to take advantage of the power of social proof or "consensus".

CONSENSUS
✓ People will look to the actions of others to determine their own.

Hotels often place small cards in hotel bathrooms to persuade guests to reuse towels. Most do this by informing the guest of the benefits the reuse can have on the environment. This strategy leads to around **30%** compliance.

75%
of our guests reuse their towels, so please do so as well.

Final thought:
Science is telling us that rather than relying on our own ability to persuade others, we can point to what others are already doing, especially many similar others.

What happens if we took a lesson from the principle of consensus and included information on the cards that said '75% of our guests reuse their towels, so please do so as well.' Changing a few words on a sign to honestly point out what previous guests have done is the single most effective message, leading to **33%** increase in towel reuse.

The infographic depicts a bathroom scene with a sink, mirror, toilet, and door. A sign on the wall shows the 75% reuse statistic. A dashed line connects the 'Final thought' box to the sign.

[SCARCITY] 😄 😞 😱 🤔 🚪

>> I'm scared I'll miss out!

Scarcity is often abused.

E.g. "This digital product will be OUT OF STOCK soon!"

But it is powerful.

There is no doubt.

Limited time offers work.

When the supply of a product or service becomes limited, people crave it more.

give and be sure that it is personalised and unexpected.

SCARCITY
✓ People want more of those things there are less of.

*wait for me!
I need a lift!*

When British Airways announced that they would no longer be running the twice-daily route from London to New York concord flight because it had become uneconomical, **sales the very next day took off.**

Final thought:
It's not enough to simply tell people about the benefits they'll gain, you'll also need to point out what is unique and what they stand to lose.

Note that nothing had changed, it had simply become scarce and as a result people wanted it more!

[CONSISTENCY/COMMITMENT] 🧑🏻‍🤝‍🧑🏻 🧑🏻‍🤝‍🧑🏻 🧑🏻‍🤝‍🧑🏻

>> Ask for small commitments first. 😈 😈 😈

Don't ask for everything at once.

Ask for small commitments first.

Don't jump a stage unless the prospect asks you to.

CONSISTENCY
✓ Activated by looking for and asking for small initial commitments that can be made.

Once, in a street, few people were willing to display an unsightly board in their front garden to support a drive safely campaign. But in a similar street, **4 times** as many homeowners were willing to display the board.

Final thought:
When seeking to influence using the consistency principle, the influencer looks for voluntary, active and public commitments and gets those in writing.

Why? Because ten days ago they had agreed to place a small postcard in the window of their home to support the campaign. That small card was the initial commitment that led to a **400%** increase.

[GETTING FUNNY WRONG] 😂. 😱. 😬.

>> **Common Mistakes** ♻️. ♻️. ♻️. ♻️. ♻️.

I've reviewed a lot of cold copy since I've started this group.

The common mistakes people have when trying to be funny in a cold pitch usually fit into one of these categories:

1. Niche references - Picking a reference that's so specific that the audience might have no idea what you are talking about. This is fine if you know you have a very specific audience who knows that cult movie from the 80s or whatever it is you're referencing.

If you're aiming broader, you have to pick something more universally known.

2. Using celebrity references - Example: Trump. If you're in America, you're going to split your audience directly in half here (give or take 2 or 3 million, ho ho ho 😂). Some of you might say "That's good. I don't want to work with anyone that hates/supports/has no opinion of him!" That's up to you. (PLZ NO POLITICS IN THE COMMENTS K THX.)

3. Make up your mind - Saying one thing in the introduction and then later on saying something else that is completely at odds with what you wrote earlier. You can't be an ambitious underdog one minute and then a seasoned veteran the next. You can fix this by just being honest and not writing stuff just to be funny. I know incongruence is used in comedy a lot, but it doesn't work in cold pitching.

4. Rambling copy - Most copy can be cut down 25%, including this post. Get the point!

5. Ordering - You want a good balance of funny and serious. When you have a line that makes people smile or laugh, you can be salsey for a few lines after it. You have a few seconds of grace. Then you need to be funny again...

It's this contrast that makes the sales parts somewhat palatable and the other bits surprising and thus, somewhat funny.

There's plenty of other stuff, but these are the main things... off the top of my head.

I guess when people say "Don't try humour in business"... they may have a point!

But if you get it right... god damn it works.

Peace,

Jon

[ENTHUSIASM] 

>> Intoxicatingly persuasive! 

There is probably no more attractive quality than enthusiasm.

I saw [this video of Rachel Pedersen](#). She runs Become a Social Media Manager - With Rachel Pedersen - and I didn't really know much about her - until I watched this video.

I'm sure many of you are aware of Russel Brunson's Expert Secrets campaign. I'm sure many of you are also happy the campaign is now over. 

For those living under an avalanche of rocks, his band of experts were battling it out to see who could ship the most copies of his new book... "Expert Secrets".

I wasn't much interested in this contest/campaign until I saw Rachel's video.

After seeing this, I wanted her to remain in the top 10 - and to beat Tai Lopez while doing it. (Spoiler: she did!).

The thing is, Rachel is just as enthusiastic about her other people's endeavors.

I feel the same way when I see people on this group doing well. I absolutely love it.


Russell Brunson is also naturally extremely enthusiastic - about his products but also other people's success. It's palpable. I don't doubt this is completely natural. It's impossible to maintain that type of personality trait for so long if it's phony.

My lesson is this: Enthusiasm for your own and other people's endeavors is the least costly and most potent form of 'charm' there is.

It also makes people feel good.

There is literally no downside.

Show enthusiasm and win.

(and you can even beat Tai Lopez while you're at it )

Thanks folks,

Jon

[GENEROSITY] 💰 \$ 💰 \$ 💰

>> **The Badass Marketers & Founders Approach** ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

I've decided to give a lot more stuff out for free.

The reason?

I'm extremely jealous of Josh Fechter's group - It's called Badass Marketers & Founders (BAMF).

Josh (and other people in his group) give out all their best growth hacks. More often than not, they don't ask for an opt-in.

They just share a Google Doc.

They are extremely generous.

Josh is running a literal "Charm Offensive" by just giving out incredible stuff all the time.

As a result, other people in his group are as generous with their best stuff. (Reciprocation in action!)

They have one of the best communities I've come across.

It made me realise, I have to up my game.

I have to be more generous.

I aim to do this from now on.

Thank you, Josh Fechter for making me raise my game.

I do recommend you check out his group too.

Don't forget about Charm Offensive though! 😂. 😂. 😂.

Thank you,

Jon

[GRAMMARLY CHARM...] 😊. 😊. 😊.

>> Clever... ✨. ✨. ✨.

Grammarly sends you an email with stats like this one.

They give you 3 different stats.

Naturally, most people will share the one that says the nicest things about them.

This is a clever move by Grammarly.

They get a ton of free exposure on social media by charming their users!

They know people can't resist the urge to 'humble brag'.

"I'm not saying my vocabulary is great... I'm just reporting what Grammarly told me!"

I'm suspect I'm also more inclined to say nice things about Grammarly now.

It helps it's a great little tool... 😄.

VOCABULARY



4025 unique words used

You have a larger vocabulary than
99% of Grammarly users.

Share with friends:



[ORWELL RULES] 

>> Orwell's Rules 

Greetings Charmers,

My favourite book of George Orwell book is "Down and out in Paris and London."

A friend described the book perfectly by suggesting it was "a beautiful description of poverty."

I still enjoy that somewhat oxymoronic description.

If you don't know who Orwell is, you should Google him now.

Here are his 6 rules for writing.

- (i) Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
- (ii) Never use a long word where a short one will do.
- (iii) If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- (iv) Never use the passive where you can use the active.
- (v) Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
- (vi) Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

--

Your definition of 'outright barbarous' may differ from mine.

Happy Sunday folks,

Jon

XXX [LESSONS FROM MY DENTIST] XXX

>> **Get their name & shake their hand.** 🍷 🍷 🍷

I used to have really bad teeth.

I hated going to the dentist.

Not a good idea...

Eventually, I summoned up the courage and was lucky enough to meet Steve Doyle.

We organised a deal and I got veneers. I swear they are still as white today as the day I got them!

Anyway, I got to be good friends with Doyley.

He is a maverick. Naturally very charming. A natural salesman.

His life story is immense. He should write a book sometime.

He taught me a whole lot of stuff.

Lots of little lessons that have paid off for me.

One of them was this...

If you go to a new bar or restaurant, ask the bartenders or waiters name and shake their hand.

They will almost always ask yours back.

This is a good thing to do as not many people do this - and they will remember.

It's fun meeting new people anyway.

Do it without any intentions...

...But who do you think they will serve next if it's busy?

You or the complete stranger next to you?

I'm pretty gregarious so I like doing this anyway.

But it definitely 'works'.

You can try it out tonight 😊,

Happy Friday folks,

Jon

[TAKE imperfect ACTION] 100 100 100

>> Only action will move you forward. 🧑 🧑 🧑

I get messages from people worrying about 'pulling the trigger'.

You are never going to write a perfect email.

I still have campaigns that flop. I try new things, and sometimes they don't work.

And yes, every single time I still worry if I've 'lost it'.

Despite getting thousands of positive replies over the years, doubt creeps in.

I can imagine what it's like trying to send your very first cold email, or letter or whatever it may be.

I was lucky as the first one I wrote worked incredibly well.

This will not always be the case.

Some people win clients from their very first email.

Other people send hundreds until they find something that works.

We all have different circumstances. We are in different sectors. We have different prospects. There are all sorts of externalities we can't control.

The only thing that will move you forward is to start taking action. See it as playing. Experimenting. There are no stakes.

The sooner you start, the sooner you will see success.

The sooner you will figure out systems you can repeat.

And that is a great position to be in.

So get cracking!

Happy Thursday folks,

Jon

[THE TIME IS NOW]

>> **There's never been a better time to be in business.**

I would say that as I'm on a bit of a roll right now...

But I genuinely believe there's never been a better time to be in business.

You can (try to) get the attention of pretty much anyone.

You can have customers and advocates in every corner of the globe.

I am reminded of a Bobby Kennedy quote, who was talking about matters far more important:

“This world demands the qualities of youth; not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease.”

Now I have it easy in many ways...

For a start, I live in the United Kingdom.

I take many of the inherent benefits of living here for granted.

I know many of you here face bigger every day battles. I won't go into these, but I thought I should at least acknowledge this.

Despite the additional challenges many of you face, I stand by my statement.

You can tell the world about your business easier than ever before. (Social media, content, search)

You can find and speak to your ideal clients and customers one to one. (Cold pitching through email / social media channels)

You can make a name for yourself by getting the attention of people who already have an audience. (Getting on podcasts / getting journalists to write about you)

You have enough information to take actionable steps without ever buying a single course, ebook or template.

You just have to be willing to keep taking chances.

I'm not a gambling man. But I think if of it like this.

It's almost like you're gambling but you can keep rolling the dice. And the only thing you stand to lose is your ego.

And that's not a bad thing.

You begin to realise there are no stakes.

You can keep 'gambling'.

After a while failure becomes meaningless.

Rejections and mean responses don't touch you.

As you realise the more you put in, the more you get out.

And that includes getting good news. Like getting nice responses to your cold pitches, or booking a sales call, or closing a deal, or closing the biggest deal of your life, or getting PR coverage, or getting on a podcast, or hearing back from someone that you look up to, or.... whatever it may be.

I didn't have a 'following' less than 3 months ago.

Now I do.

All I did was launch a Facebook group on a whim.

One of my first posts read "I have no idea what I'm doing."

And [Beth Scott](#) replied "But when it comes to cold email, yes you do!"

(I deleted the post soon after!)

Now I've got a Facebook group and email list that grows every day.

I sell something nearly every day. (Ebooks, templates, trainings)

I get leads coming to me every day.

I get to speak on podcasts and at events.

I could have very easily not 'had a go'.

Thank heavens I did.

There were no stakes. There never were.

If I can do this, so can you.

People ask me what my 'strategy' has been... or my 'thought process' for all of this...

I don't really have one.

I don't monitor analytics obsessively.

I don't have a long term view.

My way of doing things is quite simple...

Whatever your goals and dreams, start 'gambling'.

Try things on a whim.

Keep playing and trying new things.

Keep doing the things that work.

Review the things that don't.

Keep having fun.

And you'll make progress.

It's not the most advanced or probably even the most efficient system, but it works for me.

Don't get lost in complexity.

This stuff is far easier than you think.

Happy Tuesday folks,

Jon

[MAKING THE EFFORT] 🤔🙏🏃‍♂️

>> How to get noticed by people more influential than you... ☀️☀️☀️

I can't do a Facebook Live tonight as I'm doing two webinars with this Dan Meredith.

Many of you will know him. For those that don't, his name is Dan Meredith and runs the action-taking, 'no excuses' entrepreneurial group Coffee With Dan. (And a paid group called "Espresso with Dan")

Instead of writing a post myself, I'm going to quote Dan's own post from June 8th.

Dan Meredith

June 8 at 8:28pm ·

"A little bit off effort can get you a LOT back

A few weeks ago I - on a whim (shocker) - held a little 'get shit done' afternoon in London

Had about 30 folks turn up in total

One was a chap called Jon Buchan

Turns out Jon had trained an old private client and friend of mine Charlie Price; and another mate and team member of 'PLANET DAN' Luke Nevill

^^^ those two are fucking good

And this chap trained him

I ever knew when i met him though

See, Jon had followed me for a while and knows I am breaking into stand up comedy

So - thoughtfully - decided to get me this book

(It's fucking brilliant for anyone wanting to be more 'infotaining' in their biz btw)

Small gesture that goes a long way

He also added a fuck tonne of value to my group - 'espresso with dan', freely shared his best content with them and has helped folks when asked

So

Who do you think I asked to do a webinar on pitching with me?

Jon

Who do you think I reached out to for some coaching for my team to sharpen up their skills for a project I'm doing Jon

Who do you think I invited down for a day - my treat - to spend a day writing together

Lol



But seriously this is how my parents taught me (if I went to a friends house or client I'd always bring a wine to match the meal or a relevant book respectively)

Understand this

A

LITTLE

BIT

OF

TAILORED

PERSONAL

EFFORT

GOES

A

LONG

FUCKING

WAY

!!!!

My advice?

TRY IT!

Find someone you admire, respect, or want to learn from - spend either a) some time, b) effort or c) money - and it doesn't have to be much

And get in front of them

Look I fucking LOVE social media; it's changed my, my families and my clients lives

But nothing

Absolutely nothing beats making the effort to spend time with someone

Try it

Let me know what happens

Oh and if you've done something like this before?

How did it work for you? What happened? Love to hear how you did it"

[Back to me...] 😎.😎.😎.

I am doing two webinars tonight with Dan.

We are organising the writing day.

So you may be wondering a few things.

1) Why do us entrepreneurial types insist

on giving our advice

without paragraphs?

ANSWER: I don't know. I blame Dave Trott. He writes like this in his books!)

2) Did I intend for this reaction from Dan?

ANSWER: I'd be lying if I didn't say I was hopeful something like this may happen.

HOWEVER, I didn't have expectations.

I did know Dan is doing stand up soon.

I know how difficult that is.

I knew this book was the best on the topic, and suspected that the style would work well with how Dan thinks.

I ummed and arred putting the book in my bag before I went off to the "meet up" that day.

I decided I'd do it if it felt right. It did. He brought up the topic of him trying stand up when we were chatting.

So when I was leaving, I handed him the book and said "Thanks for the group" - or something like this.

And he gave me a hug and said thanks. And said "Stay in touch about cold email / direct mail stuff. I love that stuff!"

And here we are.

So what's my point?

If he hadn't invited me to do webinars, or even messaged me, I would not have been depressed or mopey or anything like that.

The funny thing is, Dan messaged me (the first message I've ever had from Dan) the next day and said "When is this?! I want them!"

I replied "I have no idea. I've deleted the message so it may have been something embarrassing."

Then he showed me the screenshot.

I'd offered to send these rainbow roses.

I remembered. I sent the message when he had posted his sister wasn't doing so well. She was in hospital. (I can write about this, as Dan has posted publicly about it many times.)

Alas, he was likely inundated with messages. Especially considering what he was going through at the time. So I didn't get a reply. Until that day.

I chuckled to myself. That was my first attempt to get his attention. I'd completely forgotten about it!

It goes to show you, this stuff is on auto-pilot for me.

And my intentions are good.

I have no expectations.

But often good things come back.

With a mindset like that, you will go far.

I often say "The right words to the right people at the right time can get you anywhere in life."

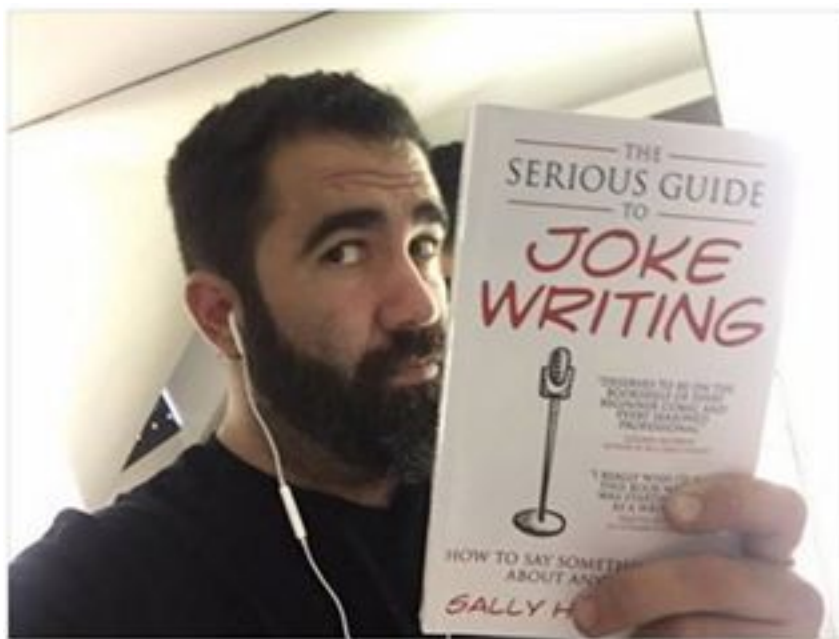
You could probably say the same about the right gestures too.

I have to go now. I have two decks to finish.

Actions: Think about how you can apply the lessons in this post to your own life.

Happy Wednesday folks,

Jon



[MOMENTUM] ! . ! . !! .

>> I wrote this advice for me, but you may find it useful too.

I have a tendency to plunge wherever the momentum of my life takes me, for good or ill.

Right now, my business is rocking. I've got so much I didn't have just 3 months ago. I'm confident. I'm excited. Naturally, this makes work enjoyable. It doesn't feel like work. I'm also helping people. I feel I've found what I'm meant to be doing. And I am just getting started. I am sprinting with this. There is no finish line for me. I don't think there ever will be.

However, I've let other elements of my life slide. I need to start exercising, eating better and have other things mind to think about outside the world of business. E.g. Writing every day - and not just about business. Writing just for fun.

I think it's a book called "The Power of Habit" which talks about how taking up one positive habit (e.g. Running) leads to other positive habits (e.g. eating better). If they're closely related, I can see how this makes logical sense. We have a tendency to slowly go 'all in' on a given route.

However, this sometimes doesn't crossover to less closely linked areas of our lives. The momentum is slower to carry over. It's less 'automatic'.

I realise this and I'm making a conscious effort to start building momentum in areas I've neglected.

You may have a different situation. Maybe your business is not progressing as you would like. As a result, this stifles your keenness to take further action. It feels like 'work'. You move forward with hesitation, rather than enthusiasm. You feel anxiety, rather than self-belief. You plod forward, rather than push ahead.

Eventually, you may come to a full stop.

I say 'you', but I really mean 'me'.

I'm going to get in great shape again. It won't take that long. 3 months will bring dramatic change. I know this. I know the result will bring me countless benefits. But I don't have those small wins. So I have no momentum.

Today, I will start racking up points. The momentum starts now.

If I can make this much progress in 3 months in business, I can do it in every other aspect of my life.

I'm going to start with one area.

I'm going to keep it simple.

I'm going to start with an effortless first step.

And I'll keep trying to beat what I did the day before.

REMEMBER: Just taking action is a result in itself. Taking more action is an even better result. And so on...

Eventually, the tangible benefits will reveal themselves. But you can't wait around for them.

Whatever your goals, I implore you to do the same.

You want more clients?

Start small... update your LinkedIn profile perhaps.

Have a go at writing a cold email.

Post it on this group and ask for feedback.

Email 1 potential client.

Then email 10.

Then email 50..

Then email 100...

And keep going....

(You can do the same with LinkedIn invites/messages)

Keep going until you get a response.

Keep going until you get a nice response..

Keep going until you get a sales call...

Keep going until you close a deal....

... You get the picture ...

The formula is simple:

1 Action

2 Results

3 Momentum

4 Go To 1

This applies to whether you're trying to lose pounds or make £pounds.

Ok. I'm done. And I achieved one of my goals. I wrote something purely for fun. If only writing burned calories. Alas, I guess I'll settle for it making me money. Ho hum. 😊

Time for me to take my own advice.

And go outside and move a little.

Happy Saturday folks,

Jon

[[This weird rambling lecture was brought to you from a group ostensibly about writing funny cold emails. 😂.]]

Hope, systems and preferences. 🙏.

This post is far more interesting than the title suggests. I promise!

My life has been up and down.

The best of times follow the worst of times.

In some respects, I've had a bad few years.

I had given up on myself. Business as ok. I was getting by on auto-pilot. Thanks to my approach to cold email and direct mail, I can always open up opportunities for myself. It's a pretty good business life support system. I can put in a token effort and be OK.

But I was floundering. I had no purpose. I was barely existing. I was depressed. I didn't 'want' anything. I didn't find enjoyment in anything. I had zero momentum. In short, I was hopeless.

Then I set up this Facebook group on a whim and my story and message resonated.

I very nearly didn't.

I didn't do it with sales targets, a strategy or deadlines in mind. I did it 'just to see'.

This way there was no pressure. I had set up a situation where failure wasn't possible. There was no way to fail when you don't have specific goals. This one tiny little decision has changed my life.

As it turns out, my experiment led me to a place where I can help people in a very real way. When I help people get their first sales call, or close their first deal, it feels good. This feeling is addictive and the more I help people, the more opportunities come my way. This momentum propels me to take further action with greater enthusiasm and purpose. I'm naturally going to keep doing something that feels good. It just so happens it helps me get more exposure, build credibility, generate leads, and sell more products. This is a system that works.

So what's going on behind the scenes?

Everything I'm doing seems to work.

This may be how it appears, but it's false. I just try so many things, that I have a lot of successes. This is another simple system that works.

My most useful skill is to be able to use 'conflation'. Dave Trott explains what this is:

"I looked up 'conflate' in the dictionary and it says, "to fuse or bring together separate elements". I thought this was called 'creativity'.

I do this at great speed.

I see what works, and I keep doing those things.

Then I optimise them.

I could probably spend more time 'optimising' and being analytical but I prefer to experiment with new things. I'll likely fix this weakness by employing someone who is as enthusiastic with 'optimising' as I am 'conflating'.

I try not to have specific goals, and if I do have them, I don't insist they must happen. This is something I learned from cognitive behavioral therapy. You don't have rigid demands of the world, you have flexible ones. You don't think 'this must happen', you think 'I'd like this to happen'. This

single change in mindset has been life changing for me. A lot of anxiety is driven by making demands of life that none of us have the power to force into existence.

Instead of specific goals, I have systems.

And these systems are always running.

And this is how I see progress.

For example, you saw the example where I wrote about getting the attention of Dan Meredith, of Coffee with Dan fame. He has a level of success that I would like to achieve. I was not on his radar. I thought it wise to change this.

I had tried to get his attention 3 months earlier. It didn't 'work'.

But then another opportunity came up, and I took another shot.

This time it 'worked'.

He actually had to show me the earlier message I sent him three months earlier. He hadn't looked at it either. I'd completely forgotten about it.

This is an example of a system at work. I don't mean that to sound robotic or insincere. Not at all! Dan himself recommended my approach to others on his Facebook wall.

I'm going to get the attention of Gary Vee at some point. Either he will know about me sooner, or he will know about me later. I've got one idea that I am sure will 'work'. Him and his close team will have a conversation about me. I can guarantee that. I can't guarantee it will go further than that. I hope it does, but if it doesn't, I won't be disheartened. I've got other ideas. It's not something I obsess about. If it doesn't happen, then no big deal. I'm not relying on it. I'm not emotionally invested in it. It's running in the background. By approaching it this way, there are no stakes. I literally cannot fail. But I can succeed. This is a marvellous little trick and anyone can do it.

I'm going to keep running with this. For the first time in my life, I know I can 'make it'. It's not beyond my vision, nor is it beyond my control. Nothing about the universe changed other than me. I just tried something with no expectations. I literally couldn't fail. And it worked.

You should do the same.

TL;DR: Don't have your happiness contingent on any one objective. Have systems not specific goals. Have preferences, not demands. Try new things without expectations. When you do this, you'll be far less hesitant when trying something new. And when you try something new, there's always the possibility it could lead to somewhere exciting. And you end up writing a long winded Facebook post about it. Damn it, I could all the way to the end without trying to be funny. Oh well.



Happy Sunday,

Jon

Who Influenced Me? 🤖

People often ask me who I look up to, or who has influenced me.

I'm not really someone who has a lot of specific people I 'follow'. They ask me "Have you heard of such-and-such?", and generally it's a well known copywriter or marketer. I don't know most of them. I know 'of' more of them now, but that's about it. This isn't me being arrogant, I just don't have a lot of time.

I usually tell people a few names. Dave Trott is one. His books are awesome. They're not 'how to' books. They help you develop your lateral thinking capabilities. I also say Rory Sutherland. He is a presence to be around. He is an amazing speaker. I want to be that good. One day, I will.

There are countless people and ideas that have influenced how I think. Many I'm aware of but doubtless there are many more that I'm not aware of.

My brother [Gary](#) is one influence I'm definitely conscious of.

Gary told me at a very young age to "Always Be Different" and for some reason it stuck with me.

Gary introduced me to a lot of music, comedy, Hunter S. Thompson, Pulp Fiction, Withnail & I, and many other crazy things. I think most importantly, he encouraged me to try stuff. He would take an interest in whatever new thing I was excited about.

I've been playing with this digital stuff for 20 years now. All that experimentation and experience adds up. It becomes instinct. And I'm still learning now. And it's still fun. And Gary is still influencing that, it was actually him who introduced me to Dave Trott and Rory Sutherland. He was trying to broaden my horizons outside of digital.

When people ask me "Where did you get that idea from?" I often don't have a concrete answer. It's because of lots of different influences. It's powerful because of all the weird things I've experimented with, and all the different ideas I've been exposed to.

Gary introduced me to many of these things, and encouraged me to experiment and 'always be different'.

I imagine this is why I don't follow many people. I've always had more than enough to get excited about.

I started this post to get my brother's name out there as someone you should hire if you're looking for a digital marketing consultant. But then I started writing and all this stuff came out.

I'll try to stop writing now and give you the pitch using the wonder of bullet points:

- Gary knows his stuff and will have creative and unusual ideas.
- He has an offering where he could be your virtual marketing director, which is an interesting idea in itself if you can't afford £80k+ a year for a CMO .
- He's offering free 15 minute Skype calls to anyone in this group for any reason.
- If you need help with anything relating to digital marketing, I think you should send him a message or email him at gary@zag.ltd (mention the group for a discount!).

Of course, you don't have to take my word for it. When Gary showed me this reference he got from The Government way back in 2001 I knew I had to work with him, and I have. Several times.



CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION AUTHORITY

Tay House
300 Bath Street
Glasgow G2 4LN
DX GW 379 Glasgow

Direct Dial: 0141-331-5821
Switchboard: 0141-331 2726
Fax No: 0141-331 2287
Ecophone Text: 0141-331 2726
Website: www.cica.gov.uk

To Whom It May Concern

Your Ref

Our Ref

Date 12/09/2001

Dear Sir or Madam

REGARDING: MR GARY BUCHAN

I have known Gary Buchan since he came to work at my team in March 2000.

I am unsure why Gary has picked me to provide a reference for him. Perhaps he feels that of all the managers within this organisation, I am the one he has offended the least. I would wish to disabuse you of this notion straight away.

In all honesty (and I have to say I am glad of the opportunity to put my feelings down on paper in this way), I have found Gary to be lazy, unmotivated, a shirker and a man who very rarely attended his work. I am, frankly, amazed that he had the bare-faced audacity to accept his pay check from us at the end of each week.

I would have no hesitation in recommending that you should not trust him, under any set of circumstances.

This Eric Clapton/Shaggy from Scooby-Doo dopelganger was about as much use as an invitation to Jill Dando's wedding, or Stevie Wonder's Rubik's Cube. A totally useless (and occasionally slap-headed) streak of piss.

Rather than inviting him over your doorstep, I would slam the door in his hairy face and immediately call the police for assistance in removing him from the neighbourhood.

Gary can be adequately described in two words - **solid cholera.**

Avoid him.

I hope that the foregoing is of assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the number above if I can be of any further help.

Yours faithfully

John

A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down.

There is a benefit to being direct. No doubt.

However, you can be direct but make your requests more palatable.

An obvious win is being polite. Another is being honest. Another is to start with relatively small requests.

You can also engineer your copy so that your request is sugar coated.

E.g. "I'd like to have a 5-minute call with you."

That's still 5 minutes of someone's day to talk to a stranger.

Think about your prospect reading your request.

I'd like to have a 5-minute call with you. _____

Here are a few ways to finish that sentence.

I'd like to have a 5-minute call with you. If you agree, I'll give you some ideas you're free to steal.

Now the prospect stands to gain something. It's a little bit vague, but the prospect can choose to trade their time in exchange for some ideas.

This can be improved further:

"I'd like to have a 5-minute call with you. If you agree, I'll give you some ideas you're free to steal. I may even tell you the lamest joke I know."

The 'I'll even tell you the lamest joke I know' is unexpected. None of the other suppliers emailing have offered this. So you'll stand out.

If you want to get really specific, the humour is in the words "even" and "lamest".

The word "even" suggests that you're really going the extra mile with your offer to them. As if telling them "the lamest joke I know", is pulling out all the stops. The word "lamest" shows that even when you're offering "a joke", you're completely honest in how you describe it. It wouldn't be funny if you didn't include "lamest". The prospect may think you're being serious. You don't have the benefit of intonation. This means some humour doesn't work, or you have to vary it for use in this context.

This line may make the prospect smirk, smile or even laugh a little. If nothing else, it's distinct and unusual. And that is a good thing when you're trying to stand out in someones inbox.

It also frames the call as possibly being enjoyable, rather than 5 minutes of being hard sold to by an overbearing salesperson. It has become a brief, light-hearted, no pressure phone call with some free ideas on offer.

See how this tiny little addition totally changes the request? And at the same time, the prospect may be smiling just a moment after the request is made. This all adds up.

You can also preempt your requests.

"Rather predictably, I'd like a 5-minute phone call with you."

This is subtle. You're easing into the request. It's almost like you're doing a running commentary on the email. Sort of like both of you are enjoying an 'in-joke' together.

So the request has become:

"Rather predictably, I'd like to have a 5-minute call with you. If you agree, I'll give you some ideas you're free to steal. I may even tell you the lamest joke I know."

This is something I've just always done and it's worked well for me.

This stuff isn't trickery. We're not 'getting one over' on anyone. We're just using words better than other people. These little things add up and they can make a huge difference.

It also helps that this doesn't cost a thing to implement.

If you're reading this and thinking "This just isn't professional!"

Which are you first?

A human or a professional?

Exactly.

Your prospect is the same.

That's it for today.

Please play around with this. Don't just copy and paste! 😊

Happy Thursday,

Jon

I enjoy a good speech.

I love the grandiose imagery, the rhythmic pacing, the subtle nuances that inspire, captivate and persuade.

You can use rhetorical devices in your own writing.

I'm going to write a series of posts on this subject.

Let's start with "Tricolon".

This is a series of three words, phrases or sentences that are parallel in structure, length and/or rhythm.

Barack Obama uses this device in his speeches all the time.

Here's an example:

"The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works - whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified."

This device can found outside of the world of speechwriting.

Here's an example from "The Wizard of Oz":

"You are talking to a man who has laughed in the face of death, sneered at doom, and chuckled at catastrophe."

And one from "The Naked Civil Servant" by Quentin Crisp:

"If you describe things as better than they are, you are considered to be a romantic; if you describe things as worse than they are, you will be called a realist; and if you describe things exactly as they are, you will be thought of as a satirist."

How can this device be useful in a business context?

Let's take a sentence that a CEO might send in an email to his team.

"We face significant challenges. To overcome these, we need to work hard and stay determined."

Let's use the part of 3s...

"We face significant challenges. To overcome these we need to work hard, stay determined and remain focused."

You can experiment with removing the conjunction "and". We can also use repetition for dramatic effect.

"We face significant challenges. To overcome these we need to work hard. We need to stay determined. We need to remain focused."

Play around with it.

You can probably do better than this. However, I have to hit 'post' now or I'll keep tinkering with this forever.

You can also disrupt this pattern to form a 'comic triple'.

I wrote a post on “comic triples” a while back. You can find it here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/charmoffensivegroup/permalink/276083916170970/>

You can also employ a “triple reverse”. These are great for writing opening lines that immediately win the attention of the reader. I wrote about that here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/charmoffensivegroup/permalink/277377882708240/>

“Everything I love, destroyed by everything I hate.”

Powerful headline, eh?

Behold the awesome power of antithesis!

Definition: Antithesis is a literary and rhetorical device where two seemingly contrasting ideas are expressed through parallel structure.

A few more examples:

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

- Martin Luther King

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

- Neil Armstrong

"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

- Muhammad Ali

"There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America."

- Bill Clinton

All you need:

- Look for an antonym dictionary on Google

- Create a parallel sentence structure

Formal/Informal

Charmers,

I've been analysing some of my old cold emails and letters and find there's a pattern I use that I've not spoken about.

I'll start a sentence using words that are often used in formal (or at least sensible) correspondence.

"I trust"

"I await"

I'll then complete these sentences with something unusual.

"I trust this will charm you into submission"

"I await your profanity-filled response"

It almost fits the standard joke formula.

[Set up] - [Punchline]

[Formal] - [Informal/Unusual]

This builds the expectation that the rest of the sentence is going to continue down the same path. The reader is then misdirected as the remainder of the sentence isn't congruent with the set up.

I doubt many of you would write the following closing line in an email.

"I await your response with great interest"

It's a bit old fashioned. I've seen this line in a lot of old handwritten letters.

The addition of one word can transform this into something that may elicit a smirk.

"I await your baffled response with great interest."

The word 'baffled' sticks out. It sounds funny, especially when surrounded by serious sounding words.

The reason I got thinking about this was seeing my brother's 'gag' reference letter he got from an old employer. This was printed on headed paper, building the expectation of formal copy. The opening lines build on this expectation.

"Dear Sir or Madam,

REGARDING: MR GARY BUCHAN

I have known Gary Buchan since he came to work at my team in March 2000,

I am unsure why Gary has picked me to provide a reference for him. Perhaps he feels that of all the managers within this organisation, I am the one he has offended the least. I would wish to disabuse you of this notion straight away."

It goes on - but I wanted to focus just on this bit.

I love that line "I would wish to disabuse of you of this notion straight away."

It's such a serious statement but is hilarious in the context.

This is an area you can have a lot of fun with.

You can play around with the syntax of formal dialogue and make it funny.

Humour is about many things, two of which being surprise and incongruence.

This is a great way of being able to deliver both of these.

Happy Friday folks,

Jon

How To Be Somewhat Funny

Introducing...

DRUM ROLL

Understatement.

"A quality that is much revered – and exploited – by the British, understatement is frequently seen as being synonymous with good manners.

Understatement is characterised by a number of negatives: a refusal to be effusive, overdramatic, emphatic or didactic. More direct remarks are frequently accompanied by tentative or provisional qualifications: 'perhaps', 'it could be', 'I wonder if', 'maybe'.

The overall effect is an aura of modest reticence, quiet understanding and considerate behaviour. Like self-deprecation, understatement is an attractive and effective quality, which is often more persuasive, and appealing, than a direct approach.

Understatement permeates British humour; the unexpectedly low-key response to dramatic crises is a staple of the likes of Monty Python: when, for example, a bourgeois English dinner party is disrupted by a visit from Death, in the guise of the Grim Reaper, in *The Meaning of Life*, the classic response is 'Well, that's cast rather a gloom over the evening, hasn't it?'. "

- Debretts guide to British social skills, etiquette, and style.

Understatement is great for adding humour to your copy.

One example of understatement is the use of the moderating expression 'somewhat' in the title of this post.

This serves two purposes, a) It's a more honest description of the content and b) It's not common practice to deliberately tame your own headline.

These little tricks add up. It's won't elicit side-splitting, rolling on the floor laughter, but that's exactly what I promised 😊.

I'm back with more understated advice.

Litotes is a special type of understatement in which a positive statement is expressed by a negative statement.

Use litotes to add emphasis or discretion to a statement.

A few examples:

Instead of "He's unpleasant."

"He's not the friendliest person."

Instead of "I had a bad day."

"It wasn't the best day of my life."

Instead of "She's rich."

"She's not poor."

Instead of "I'm old."

"I'm not as young as I once was."

Enjoy!

LinkedIn Laser Targeting

Charmers,

If you want to be able to 'laser target' your searches on LinkedIn, read on at once or forever hold your peace...

You will need a LinkedIn Sales Navigator subscription for this.

The two keyword search filters can be especially useful to make your search 'laser targeted'.

Here are a few examples:

1. Finding people with niche skills or interests:

I had a client who wanted to find people who had an interest in "kubernetes" - don't ask me to explain what this term means - I'm no developer 😊

The keyword search can be used to find people who have this term in their bio.

The 'keywords in posted content' search can be used to find people who have posted content on LinkedIn containing this keyword.

This will often find engaged LinkedIn users, so you can get their attention by commenting on their content.

It's also useful for researching content ideas.

2. Finding people with specific traits:

Use keyword search to search for 'enthusiastic', 'ambitious' or some other trait you are looking for.

This will return people who self-identify with that term (which may sometimes not be accurate!), and/or people have added a recommendation to their profile with this term.

You can craftily use this when cold messaging them.

Combined with the other search filters like location, job title, time in role, these functions allow you to narrow your search.

BONUS: You can use 'AND' & 'OR' & 'NOT' search operators with both of these keyword search filters to expand or narrow your search further.

E.g. Job title: CEO NOT Assistant NOT PA








E.g. Keywords: Marketing AND Advertising NOT B2B

Add in automation & clever copy and you can get some rather excellent results from this.

These searches aren't perfect - but they're pretty damn good.

Have fun!

Jon

< 817 Total results	56 Changed jobs in past 90 days	4 Mentioned in the news in past 30 days	236 Posted on LinkedIn in past 30 days	>
Selected filters (2): kubernetes, CXO View all filters				
	Russell Sellers · 3rd Citi Sr. Vice President - Containers & Kubernetes 2 months in role and company Austin, Texas Area Related Leads		<div data-bbox="1170 436 1349 474" style="border: 1px solid #0070c0; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">Save as lead</div> ... <div data-bbox="1203 583 1377 621" style="border: 1px solid #0070c0; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">Preview Message</div>	
	Michele Sciabarrà · 2nd Sciabarra.com   CEO 3 years in role and company London, United Kingdom Shared Connections (2) Related Leads		<div data-bbox="1170 682 1349 720" style="border: 1px solid #0070c0; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">Save as lead</div> ... <div data-bbox="1187 829 1360 867" style="border: 1px solid #0070c0; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">Preview Message</div>	
	Stéphane H. M... · 2nd OpenStack Foundat...   Member 5 years 8 months in role and company San Francisco Bay Area Shared Connections (1) Related Leads		<div data-bbox="1170 934 1349 972" style="border: 1px solid #0070c0; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">Save as lead</div> ... <div data-bbox="1187 1081 1360 1119" style="border: 1px solid #0070c0; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;">Preview Message</div>	

Think Like An Underdog 😊

In 1915, deep in the jungles of South America, the rising conflict between two rival American fruit companies came to a head. Each desperately wanted to acquire the same five thousand acres of valuable land.

The issue? Two different locals claimed to own the deed to the plantation. In the no-man's-land between Honduras and Guatemala, neither company was able to tell who was the rightful owner so they could buy it from them.

How they each responded to this problem was defined by their company's organisation and ethos. One company was big and powerful, the other crafty and cunning. The first, one of the most powerful corporations in the United States: United Fruit. The second, a small upstart owned by Samuel Zemurray.

To solve the problem, United Fruit dispatched a team of high-powered lawyers. They set out in search of every file and scrap of paper in the country, ready to pay whatever it cost to win. Money, time, and resources were no object.

Zemurray, the tiny, uneducated competitor, was out-matched, right? He couldn't play their game. So he didn't. Flexible, fluid, and defiant, he just met separately with both of the supposed owners and bought the land from each of them. He paid twice, sure, but it was over. The land was his. Forget the rule book, settle the issue.

This is pragmatism embodied. Don't worry about 'the right way', worry about the right way. This is how we get things done.

Zemurray always treated obstacles this way.

Told he couldn't build a bridge he needed across the Utila River - because government officials had been bribed by competitors to make bridges illegal - Zemurray had his engineers build two long piers instead. And in between which reached out far into the center of the river, they strung a temporary pontoon that could be assembled and deployed to connect them in a matter of hours. Railroads ran down each side of the riverbank, going in the opposite direction. When United Fruit complained, Zemurray laughed and replied "Why, that's no bridge. It's just a couple of little old wharfs."

Sometimes you do it this way. Not by deploying the tactics you learned in school but adapting them to fit each and every situation. Any way that works - that's the motto.

- The Obstacle Is The Way, Ryan Holiday

(Awesome book. I recommend it!)

THE OBSTACLE IS THE WAY

'A book for the bedside of every leader in the world'
Robert Greene, author of *The 48 Laws of Power and Mastery*

THE OBSTACLE IS THE WAY



The
Ancient
Art of
Turning
Adversity to
Advantage

RYAN HOLIDAY

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 armor. What is nobody else doing?
- Why is nobody else doing it?
- Would it be beneficial to get good at it?
- If so, try it.

When everyone else was focusing on writing the short, functional cold emails, I wrote longer, funny cold emails.

When everyone else wrote copy that directly mentioned customer pain points, I made light of them with satirical copy or imagery.

When everyone else said "Don't talk about yourself", I wrote my story but in a captivating way.

I wish all of this was more deliberate on my part. Alas, I was clever by accident! 😊

I am going to start doing this more deliberately.

I shall post the results of such experiments here.

Happy Sunday folks!



Standing out on social media.

While this group is ostensibly about cold email, direct mail and ad copy, it's really about standing out, interrupting the pattern and getting your message heard.

Social media is another battleground for attention.

If you need a case study that proves you can build a case study on content and having a distinct message, you need not look any further than the content you're reading right now. This Facebook group has opened many opportunities for me. I have an entirely new business selling my course, "Always Be Winning"

If you need another example, you should look to [Emily-rose Alice Knowles](#).

Her copy is punchy, opinionated and direct while being empathetic and at times, self-deprecating and funny.

She doesn't hold back - and this is why she is hard to ignore in your newsfeed.

You can get a good idea of what she stands for, and what she's against.

Her tagline on Facebook reads "Small, red ridiculous woman. I help entrepreneurs un-fuck their heads and realise their potential."

This stands out. It says a lot with few words. It's hard to ignore.

"But won't that offend people?"

"Isn't she going to lose business?"

I suspect that is exactly the point.

Like her detractors, she has standards too.

Cleverly, she has taken care of part the 'qualifying' aspects of the sales process in advance.

The lesson:

Be yourself and be bold. If you're a good person, it will 'work' - and it will feel better too.

You don't have to be as bold as [Emily-rose Alice Knowles](#), but she sets a good example. You should follow her on Facebook, and follow her example too.

Happy Thursday folks!

[\(Link to her post\)](#)

Some Friday fun!

SAAB was a crazy Swedish car manufacturer started in 1945.

I'm not into cars but I do love quirky advertising.

They had some splendid advertising campaigns. There's one attached here that copywriters and advertising folk will enjoy.

You'll also find an outdoor ad they ran in Washington D.C.

SAAB had crazy ideas in general. They even had a car with no steering wheel. It had a joystick instead.

Fun fact: Tony Scott was hired to direct Top Gun after the producers saw the ad he created for SAAB.

Search on YouTube for SAAB Adverts - there are some rather epic ones.

A CAR FOR THE LEFT SIDE OF YOUR BRAIN.

The left side of your brain, recent investigations tell us, is the logical side. It figures out that $1 + 1 = 2$. And, in a few cases, that $E = mc^2$.

On a more mundane level, it chooses the socks you wear, the cereal you eat, and the car you drive. All by means of rigorous Aristotelian logic.

However, and a big however it is, for real satisfaction, you must achieve harmony with the other side of your brain.

The right side, the poetic side, that says, "Saab. Car X has a reputation for lasting a long time but it's so dull, you'd want to drive it that long anyway!"

The Saab Turbo looked at from all sides.

To the left side of your brain, Saab turbocharging is a technological feat that returns good gas mileage while also increasing performance.

To the right side of your brain, Saab turbocharging is what makes a Saab go like a hot out of hell.

The left side sees the safety in high performance. (Passing on a two-lane highway. Entering a freeway in the midst of high-speed traffic.)

The right side lives only for the thrills.

The left side considers that Road & Track magazine just named Saab "The Sports Sedan for the Eighties." By unanimous choice of its editors.

The right side eschews informed endorsements by editors who have spent a lifetime comparing cars. The right side doesn't know much about cars, but knows what it likes.

The left side scans this chart.

Warranty	30 months
Length	177 inches
Width	68 inches
Depth	55 inches
Wheel circumference	24 inches
2,314 lbs.	27 hp
2,375 lbs.	30 hp

The right side looks at the picture on the opposite page.

The left side compares a Saab's comfort with that of a Mercedes. Its performance with that of a BMW. Its braking with that of an Audi.

The right side looks at the picture.

The left side looks ahead to the winter when a Saab's front-wheel drive will keep a Saab in front of traffic.

The right side looks at the picture.

The left side also considers the other seasons of the year when a Saab's front wheel drive gives it the cornering ability of a sports car.

The right side looks again at the picture.

Getting what you need vs. getting what you want.

Needs are boring; desires are what make life worth living.

The left side of your brain is your mother telling you that a Saab is good for you. "Eat your vegetables." (In today's world, you need a car engineered like a Saab.) "Put on your raincoat." (The Saab is economical. Look at the price-value relationship.) "Do your homework." (The passive safety of the construction. The active safety of the handling.)

The right side of your brain guides your foot to the clutch, your hand to the gears, and listens for the "stuzzomaten."

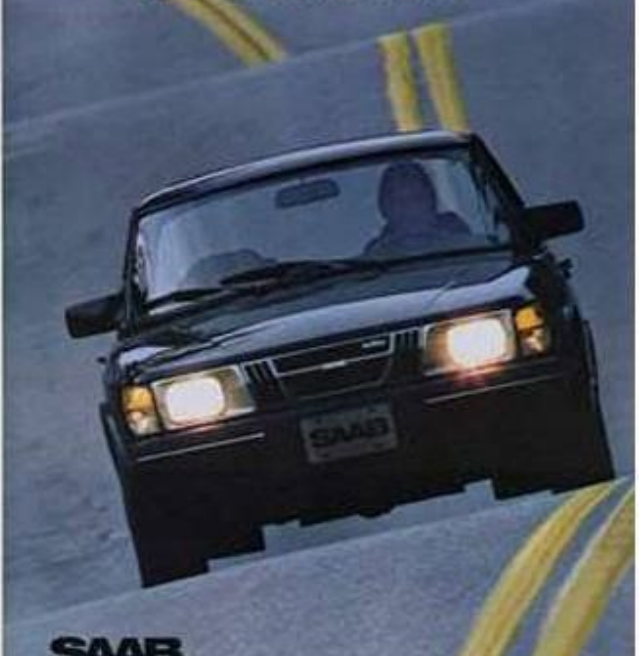
Together, they see the 1987 Saab Turbo as the responsible car the times demand you get. And the performance car you've always, deep down, wanted with half your mind.

1987 SAAB TURBO LIST

1987 4 Door	4 Cyl/160	\$25,000
1987 2 Door	4 Cyl/160	\$23,700
1987 4 Door	6 Cyl/200	\$33,000
1987 2 Door	6 Cyl/200	\$31,700
1987 4 Door	4 Cyl/160	\$23,000
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$13,000
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$11,700
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$11,000
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$9,700
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$8,400
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$7,100
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$5,800
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$4,500
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$3,200
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$1,900
1987 Saab 900	4 Cyl/160	\$600

All vehicles include 2-year/50,000-mile warranty. Excludes taxes, title, license, destination charge, dealer prep, and optional equipment. The price set by an owner. Excludes destination charge.

A CAR FOR THE RIGHT SIDE OF YOUR BRAIN.



Disrupting The Pattern

A few days ago, I wrote about Stephen Curry who disrupted the game of basketball with his ability to shoot at long distances that defenses were not accustomed to.

That post got a lot of engagement, so I've decided to continue writing a series on other 'pattern disrupters'.

There's a phrase in boxing, "Styles make fights".

Every boxer has their own different techniques and strengths and tendencies.

It's what makes match ups interesting and the lead ups to fights filled with much debate.

There's crafty brawlers, master technicians, fast hands, body punchers, all rounders, knockout artists and everything in between.

But people had never seen anything like Prince Naseem Hamed.

A flamboyant showman with an unorthodox style that involved... well... doing a lot of things 'wrong':

-> He usually keeps his hands down below his waist.

->He rarely blocks punches in the conventional manner; instead, he relies on his reflexes and uses head and upper body contortions to duck or lean away from incoming blows, forcing opponents to hit thin air when they swing.

-> He is a natural southpaw, but an ambidextrous puncher.

-> He is quite small (he fought at flyweight, bantamweight, and featherweight), and very fast, but also has enormous punching power; he was constantly described as hitting like a middleweight (or occasionally even heavyweight).

-> His punches are bizarre and awkward; almost always heavy, lunging blows; thrown from all over the place (sometimes even behind his back) and coming in at crazy angles most boxers would never even consider attempting.

-> He often does something no trainer would ever recommend: leads with an uppercut. He gets away with it most of the time because he's simply too fast to be caught (he was only knocked down about 6 times in 37 fights, and never knocked out).

-> He switches his stance frequently, from southpaw to orthodox to square, and is equally dangerous in every stance.

-> One of his weaknesses is the result of his defensive and offensive techniques: because he avoids punches by throwing his body in all directions, and because he throws punches from such awkward angles, he is very frequently off balance and on the verge of toppling over.

(Source for the bullet points above: Expertboxing dot com)

Many of the things he did 'wrong' were exactly what made him difficult to train for and difficult to beat.

This exciting, unusual, unpredictable style combined with his over the top personality, showboating and charisma made him a superstar.

Unfortunately, Hamed got complacent and stopped training diligently.

He lost a fight.

He came back for one fight and won in uninspiring fashion and then retired. It's unfortunate. He had enormous potential to be so much more.

The lesson here:

Even the most disruptive, innovative and talented have to work hard - or they get beat.

It's an advantage, not a panacea.

This is good.

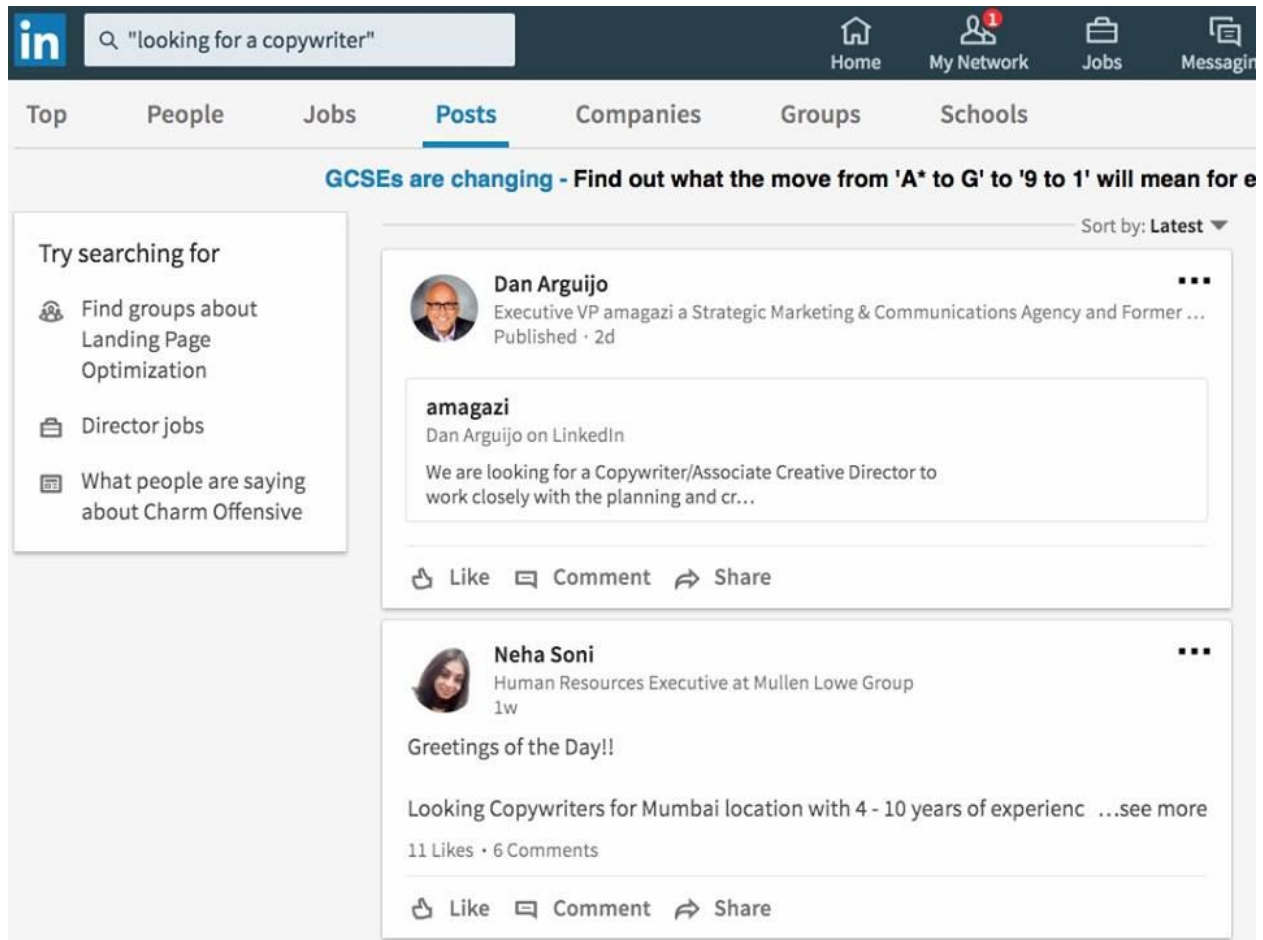
Styles make fights.



Find leads using the "search posts" option on LinkedIn.

Just replace these search terms, send personalised invites & follow up messages.

Seems obvious I know... I just saw a blog with this tip on - can't believe I never thought to try this.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn search interface. At the top, the search bar contains the text "looking for a copywriter". The navigation bar includes Home, My Network, Jobs, and Messages. Below the navigation bar, the search results are filtered to "Posts". A banner at the top of the results area reads "GCSEs are changing - Find out what the move from 'A* to G' to '9 to 1' will mean for e". On the left side, there is a sidebar with the heading "Try searching for" and three suggestions: "Find groups about Landing Page Optimization", "Director jobs", and "What people are saying about Charm Offensive". The main content area displays two search results. The first result is from Dan Arguijo, Executive VP at amagazi, published 2 days ago. The post text reads: "amagazi Dan Arguijo on LinkedIn We are looking for a Copywriter/Associate Creative Director to work closely with the planning and cr...". The second result is from Neha Soni, Human Resources Executive at Mullen Lowe Group, posted 1 week ago. The post text reads: "Greetings of the Day!! Looking Copywriters for Mumbai location with 4 - 10 years of experienc ...see more". Both posts have interaction buttons for Like, Comment, and Share.

STATS SHOW IPHONE OWNERS GET MORE SEX

Sex sells, especially when paired with one of the most contentious, divisive and profitable issues of our time: Our choice of smartphone.

This piece from OKCupid pulled in coverage from hundreds of publications.

A search on Google for "iPhone users have more sex" reveals coverage in Time, Wired, BuzzFeed, Cnet, Business Insider, Gawker, CBS News, Huffington Post, Engadget, Gizmodo - and this is just the top 10 results.

OKCupid surveys their users on a whole raft of subjects, from what smartphone they use, to how often they have sex.

This data (anonymised, obviously) can be used to create stories.

This coverage was because of a blog post containing a graph. Nothing fancy. The right words.

It contained content that was irresistibly shareable by both iPhone users and Android users as they partake in one of the pointless endeavours of our time: arguing with strangers on the Internet.

Here are the key reasons why this worked:

-> The subject matter... sex & smart phones. It's hard to imagine a better pairing of topics.

A few ideas that could easily have been done before:

-> Apple / PC laptop choice and alcohol consumption per week

-> IQ and political affiliation

-> Average life expectancy and socioeconomic status

-> Reported salary and favourite NFL team

-> Average number of children and level of education

-> Divorce rate and religious affiliation

-> Reported happiness and job title.

-> Suicide rate and birthplace. (Morbid, I know)

You'll note some of these involve surveying an audience, (e.g. Apple/PC and alcohol consumption per week) and others are take existing data and creating a story out of it (e.g. Divorce rate and religious affiliation).

Surveying has long been used by PR professionals to craft stories, but often these are resigned to the middle pages of free newspapers.

One example was an online bingo company who surveyed the UK asking "How lucky are you?" and "Where do you live?". From this, the company could identify which area in the UK was the 'luckiest'.

This got coverage... but it's not really a story that you'd remember, save for trying to finding an example of the obvious use of surveying for PR purposes.

Few experience coverage in countless highly authoritative publications like OKCupid's piece.

Here is how you can do the same.

The recipe:

Just add 1 metric that is a barometer of success, e.g. average salary, life expectancy, IQ, suicide rate.

And add 1 metric that is either:

- a personal choice (Apple/PC, smartphone choice, favourite NFL team, job title)
- an event of circumstance (birthplace)

There also needs to be:

- 1 winner
- 1 loser
- A big patch of grey area.

On that last point:

There has to be room to readers to pontificate with reckless abandon.

It's obvious the iPhone story is based on self-reported survey answers.

Perhaps iPhone users, like men under the magical 6ft mark, are known to exaggerate on dating profiles or surveys?

Perhaps Android users, with their penchant for standard headphone jacks, prefer to express more discretion?

You can see the arguments forming when you start connecting the stories.

For the PC/Apple example, you can imagine the jokes and memes already:

"PC users drink more because they have to dim the pain of using Windows!"

"Mac users drink more to dim the pain of having to take out another mortgage to buy a laptop!"

Here lies the fun. Just like smartphones, everyone has an opinion.

The Internet, with all its transformative power, has somehow convinced people they should definitely tell the world their opinions, insights and inventive pejoratives.

When I speak to journalists about a potential story, I show them examples of how other stories containing elements of mine have gained traction on social.

I show them Google Trends examples to show how much interest my themes have.

I give them headline ideas.

I talk in their language.

Journalists have KPIs too. Unique views, page views, new visitors, social shares, comments etc.

If you can help them write a story that will interest their audience and help them give their stats a boost, you have the magic formula and it's likely they will cover your story - even if they're on team Android.

I've attached a second picture, which is from the website, "Spurious Connections" which shows "the number of people who drown in swimming pools" is closely correlated with the number of films Nicholas Cage has starred in.

This also got a lot of coverage - just because it's an amusing story that proves a point "Correlation does not mean causation."

While this is a funny example, one can imagine a swimming pool company reacting, adding to the discussion that there is also a correlation between swimming pool ownership and "Who has the best pool parties?"

So there you have it - how to create a viral news story using a blog post, a graph, and internet users who know they are 'right'.

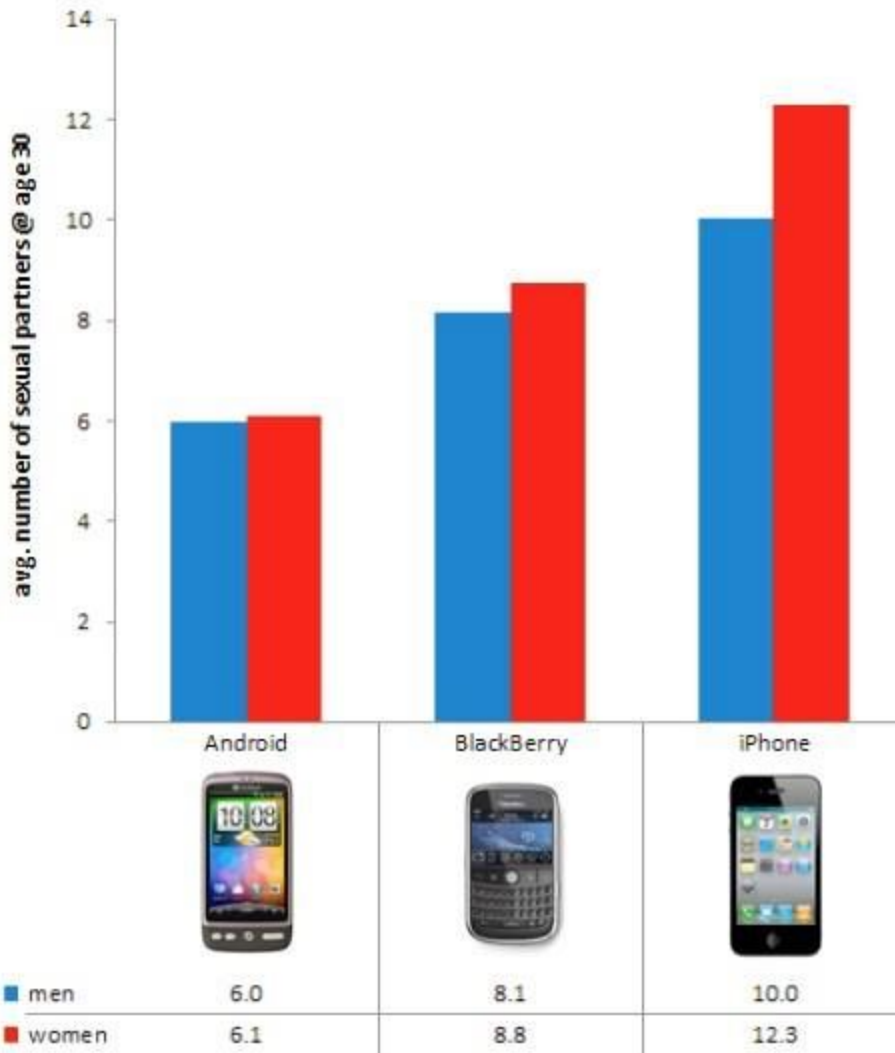
I'll end with a quote:

"Last night's 'Itchy and Scratchy Show' was, without a doubt, the worst episode ever. Rest assured, I was on the internet within minutes, registering my disgust throughout the world."

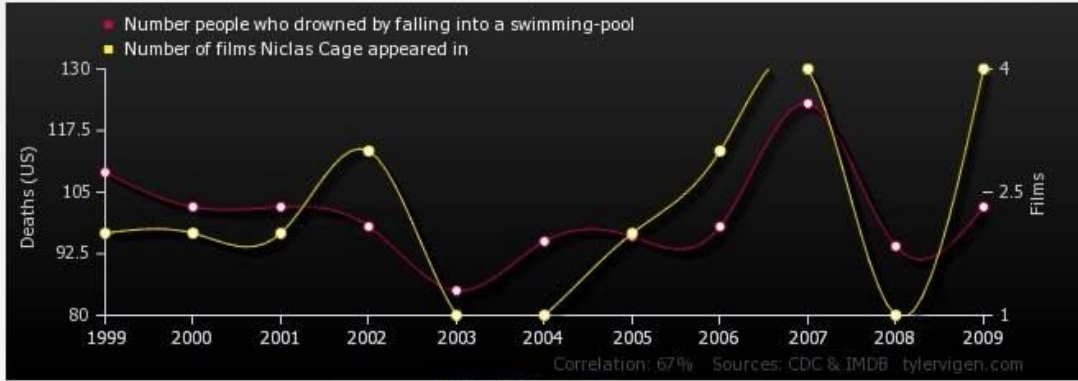
- Comic Book Guy, The Simpsons

(pictured, right, yellow face, smug/angry disposition, has opinions)

Sexual Activity by Smart Phone Brand



Number people who drowned by falling into a swimming-pool correlates with Number of films Nicolas Cage appeared in



Upload this image to imgur

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number people who drowned by falling into a swimming-pool Deaths (US) (CDC)	109	102	102	98	85	95	96	98	123	94	102
Number of films Nicolas Cage appeared in Films (IMDB)	2	2	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	1	4

Correlation: 0.666004



Become the de facto resource

One excellent way to consistently get PR coverage is to create the de facto resource in your sector that journalists use to create stories.

In the UK, the RightMove Property Price index is a great example of this.

RightMove create an index of property prices throughout the UK and provide an analysis of trends.

More often than not, when a journalist wants to write a story about property prices, they will quote this index.

Sometimes, they will link (yey SEO juice) to the specific parts that back up their articles.

You'll notice there is a 'regional' trends page, which makes it easier for journalists at local publications to find stories that would interest their readership.

Back in 2009-ish, I suggested that JobSite (a UK job portal) should create a 'jobs index', which would show average salaries per region, job roles per region and any other key metrics.

This makes it easy for journalists to use the index to find angles for potential stories, or back up their planned ones with some data.

Unfortunately, they didn't do it. Reed do have a salary index, which I've seen often quoted.

There are doubtless opportunities to do this in many sectors, especially if it's a story that is perennially in the news.

The Economist's 'Big Mac' Index is an interesting example of creating a 'de-facto' resource.

Here is the Economist's introduction to their index:

"THE Big Mac index was invented by The Economist in 1986 as a lighthearted guide to whether currencies are at their "correct" level. It is based on the theory of purchasing-power parity (PPP), the notion that in the long run exchange rates should move towards the rate that would equalise the prices of an identical basket of goods and services (in this case, a burger) in any two countries. For example, the average price of a Big Mac in America in July 2017 was \$5.30; in China it was only \$2.92 at market exchange rates. So the "raw" Big Mac index says that the yuan was undervalued by 45% at that time.

Burgernomics was never intended as a precise gauge of currency misalignment, merely a tool to make exchange-rate theory more digestible. Yet the Big Mac index has become a global standard, included in several economic textbooks and the subject of at least 20 academic studies. For those who take their fast food more seriously, we have also calculated a gourmet version of the index."

On a similar note, I've always wanted to do an index of some key financial metrics, e.g. average house price, salary, interest rates etc, and then tie in some amusing element, e.g. The price of a "Freddo" - a small Cadbury's chocolate bar that is a constant source of irritation for UK consumers whenever it increases in price. Search Twitter for "Freddo cost" and you will see what I mean. You may have a similar item where you live.

This idea is just a bit of fun, but it would get PR coverage.

Alas, I couldn't convince any property or financial sector clients to go for it. Ho hum.

Can you create a de-facto resource in your sector?

Could you create a resource that explains a difficult topic in a way that is more digestible?

Fuck writing recipes*, let's see what we can destroy.

BlendTec sell blenders. Heavy duty ones. They're as tough as nails. Well, at least as tough as marbles, iPhones, and Vuvuzelas.

On October 30, 2006, BlendTec put their own powerful spin on content marketing by creating a video entitled "Will it Blend? - Marbles".

That video has over 7 million views. That may sound paltry by modern standards as today's influencer is able to achieve this kind of reach in their sleep, no doubt with one hand tied behind their back while taking a selfie that endorses a veritable smorgasbord of essential kitchen items simultaneously. [#nofilter](#).

That 7 million figure was merely an anchoring device so you'll be far more impressed by the much bigger numbers I'm about to reveal.

At the time of writing, BlendTec now have nearly 900k subscribers and have had 283,285,506 views. So there!

Let me get to the point.

It took a 'dumb idea' for BlendTec to become a viral sensation.

It's the type of idea that you'd imagine was first discussed after drinking too many Jack Daniels and Coke Slush Puppies made in some kind of heavy duty blending device that has excellent name recognition for reasons not fully explained. (Yet!)

I don't have a full transcript or any idea if this is remotely accurate, but I like to pretend the idea for the "Will it Blend?" series started like this:

"How about we blend loads of random stuff that nobody should ever blend to prove our blender is tough like marbles and golf balls and I dunno... vuvuzelas?"

"Aren't you worried idiots will injure themselves trying this stuff... and more importantly, we will get blamed for it?"

"Nahhhh. Let's do it. Come onnn!"

"Ok, but we have to write 'Don't do this' somewhere on these videos."

"Deal!"

BlendTec could have gone the easy route and created a dedicated recipe section for their site.

Indeed, they have such a resource on their website now. It's almost obligatory they do.

It's useful to consumers, check.

It's relevant, check.

It's pretty easy to compile, check.

Sensible. Smart. Borrrrrring.

The sterile and sanitised meeting rooms of corporate America don't have these kinds of "How about we..." conversations, or at least, they don't take them seriously.

It's one of the reasons why big brands opt for the "Sensible. Smart. Boring" route.

That is to create content that answers the questions that consumers, often with the unsolicited assistance of Google's 'Did you mean?' function, are asking on a daily basis. E.g. "How to make covfefe smoothie???"

BlendTec, on the other hand, asked the big questions that nobody had ever asked, such as "Can you blend a hockey stick?" The result? They achieved hockey stick growth.

Great ideas don't need to be sensible or smart, but they should never be boring.

P.S. BlendTec have never blended a hockey stick, only hockey pucks. Alas, 'Hockey Puck Growth' is not a phrase in common parlance in the entrepreneurial world.

Do Hockey Pucks blend, you ask?

Yeah.



(Hey guys... I wrote this piece a year or two ago and thought you guys might like it...)

Finding A Way To Win

There are many stories in business. One that I've always found interesting the world of professional wrestling. This particular battle was anything but choreographed.

"The Monday Night War(s) is the common term describing the period of mainstream televised American professional wrestling from September 4, 1995, to March 26, 2001. During this time, the World Wrestling Federation's (WWF, now WWE) Monday Night Raw went head-to-head with World Championship Wrestling's (WCW) Monday Nitro in a battle for Nielsen ratings each week."

Under the leadership of Vince McMahon (pictured), the World Wrestling Federation turned professional wrestling into a global business with annual revenues of over \$500million.

They were the number one brand for their unique form of entertainment. This status was unchallenged for over a decade.

That was until the early 90s when Ted Turner decided he quite liked wrestling and wanted to see if he could compete with McMahon.

While McMahon was not exactly poor himself, Turner was a bonafide billionaire, owning a massive broadcast network.

Turner created a new show called WCW Monday Nitro and put the show on head to head against WWF's Monday Night Raw.

He hired a young executive producer called Eric Bischoff to modernise the show and "have it compete with Vince's product". Bischoff made many changes, but let's focus on the most critical ones.

Bischoff offered generous contracts to the most famous wrestlers that McMahon had helped make into superstars, including Hulk Hogan, the most famous wrestler of all time. Bischoff then offered guaranteed contracts to two of WWF's most popular new stars, knowing McMahon couldn't afford to match the offer.

He had wrestlers use real names over cartoon characters and created edgy, more realistic storylines. In comparison, WWF's events often felt like pantomimes.

The WWF's creative team invented characters using the same formula that had always been successful. There are too many to mention, but these included a garbage man, a plumber, and a dentist who had bad teeth.

The audience was bored.

The formula had stopped working.

Audiences switched channels.

They wanted the edgy, exciting and more realistic WCW Monday Nitro.

For over 80 straight weeks, Ted Turner's WCW Monday Nitro defeated WWF Monday Night Raw in the ratings.

The business McMahon's father started in 1960 was perilously close to being out for the count. He picked himself up from the canvas and fought his way back.

While McMahon had overall control, he listened to the wrestlers who interacted the audience almost every day.

They told him what the problems were.

He listened.

McMahon went on television and told viewers they wouldn't have their intelligence insulted anymore and to expect a much different show in future.

He gave the talent creative license to be daring and develop new characters.

Over the period of a year, the product was unrecognisable from its former self. Monday Night Raw was provocative, offensive, sexual, vulgar, bloody, violent and at times, downright fucking weird.

New stars blossomed.

Consumers we're being entertained again.

Meanwhile, WCW was still parading around the same aging wrestlers from the 80s.

WCW couldn't copy WWE's new format as Ted Turner's organisation has 'standards and practices' that wouldn't allow them to feature the demonstrably popular format. I believe we call these brand guidelines in our world.

The WWF had to rebrand to WWE due to a lawsuit from an animal welfare charity of the same name. However, this was of little importance. WWE's daring new format and WCW's lack of further innovation and inability to develop new stars of their own led to the company falling into serious decline. They could no longer poach talent from the WWE, as few wrestlers wanted to join a sinking ship.

It took time, patience, hardships, and brass balls, but the plan eventually worked.

WWE's Ratings increased as WCW's declined.

Once again, McMahon's WWE was the biggest professional wrestling business in the world.

The years that followed (from 1997-2001) became known as "The Attitude Era." Wrestlers, fans, and pundits agree it was the most creative, daring, entertaining and financially successful period in the company's 35-year history.

In 2001, McMahon bought WCW for just \$1million.

The war was over.

The winner was clear.

What can we learn from this?

1. You can get repositioned by a new brand at any time - and they may genuinely have a better offering or be in a stronger position than you - including being cash rich. Hopefully, Ted Turner won't be invading your niche soon.

2. You can't always play it safe. Dave Trott once said in an LSE lecture that his favourite clients were those in peril, as they had to be daring.

WWE stayed with their model of 'gimmicky' characters but got lazy. Shock horror, the garbage man wrestler never became a superstar and didn't sell much merchandise.

3. Not everyone will survive these genuinely terrifying moments. Someone has to lose. However, these moments should force you to experiment and rather than merely surviving, you may excel. It could be your 'tipping point.'

4. Don't self-harm. WCW's "standards and practices" guidelines were a marzipan shield that attempted to protect their brand from negative feedback. It prevented WCW from even trying to give consumers what they clearly desired.

Creativity was only allowed within certain confines. A gigantic budget is pointless if you're only allowed to create crap that nobody wants.

5. You don't have to go toe to toe with a giant, in this case, Ted Turner's seemingly endless pockets. WCW's strategy was to steal talent away from WWE. WWE couldn't win that battle.

Instead, they thought laterally and changed the fight to one they could win. They dramatically changed their product and aimed it at an older audience with mature, risqué content.

It was a huge gamble, but it paid off, and McMahon reigned supreme once again.

Thanks for reading! We will be back with more "Business Adventures" in the coming days, weeks and months and . . . that's as far as I can see forward right now.

(Note: This never happened... I wrote this a year or two ago! I might be tempted to actually do this now, based on the engagement/feedback on this post.)

Happy Saturday folks!



A few things I've learned as a veteran influencer of ... 5 and a half-ish months.

I started this group at the end of March this year. It now has over 4,300 members.

I see a lot of new FB groups popping up. Starting my own was one of the best decisions I've made in a long time.

I will now impart my 5 and a half-ish months worth of wisdom on you.

It's a worryingly short read. 😊

1. A unique hook and a good story are helpful

I combined two elements (humour and cold pitching) and had an interesting story that involved getting drunk.

This makes it easy for people who want to tell people about this group.

People enjoy telling others about something new and unusual, especially if it's interesting or entertaining.

If you can tick all those boxes, you have a significant advantage.

The reason I even considered starting my own group was because of [Colin Theriot's](#), The Cult Of Copy. I liked the 'atmosphere' of his group.

He'd created something interesting. At the end of March, I had a (paid) call with Colin.

If it wasn't for him telling me "you have something different enough that it'll work", I doubt I would have started this group. I may have also called it something else!

You can always evolve your group's theme and message, which is what I'm gently doing right now.

If you want to create a Facebook group, I suggest trying to have some unique angle or style that makes people want to tune in.

If you're struggling for ideas, can you combine two things (that don't ordinarily go together) to create something unique?

2. It gives you options and opportunities

Having an audience allows you to launch something with ease.

For example, If I wanted to launch a podcast, I'd have an audience immediately that would stick around if the content was useful, entertaining.

It also provides opportunities. I get invited to go on podcasts, people recommend me to prospective clients, etc.

To me, there is an amusing irony to receiving opportunities inbound, as my whole schtick has been around cold pitching.

3. You can try to do too much

Having options doesn't mean you have the bandwidth or skill to capitalise them effectively.

It can be counterproductive as you lose focus and feel overwhelmed. You understand how crucial and valuable your time is.

Being able to manage your time requires you to change your mindset.

There's a reason there's a whole industry around helping people with these matters.

I am working on this every day.

4. It provides credibility

Mentioning the fact I have an active, engaged Facebook Group with over 4,000 members provides some evidence I'm onto something.

Numbers aren't the most important factor, but it does help.

More importantly, this group provides valuable social proof when people post their positive responses, results and other combinations of nice words about me.

5. Scarcity really fucking works

I wish it didn't.

There's a reason you see gigantic countdown clocks of doom everywhere.

There are more people that respond to them than that are repelled by them. This is the unfortunate truth.

I'd hope this trend changes but I'm not confident of this. It's ingrained.

For my own sanity, I try to only use scarcity if I'm selling something that is actually scarce by definition (e.g. a genuinely limited launch of a product) or if I'm running a flash sale.

6. Reciprocity also 'works'

When I started this group, I helped a lot of people one to one for free. It's far more interesting and compelling for other people to show they've tested your methods and seen success.

The more I helped people, the more of these success screenshots would get posted, especially as I actively solicited them.

This inspires other people to take a chance, give my unorthodox methods a shot.

When they achieve success, they often make a post about it. Partly as it's nice to talk about good news, but partly because they want to show their appreciation for the content I've provided for free.

I now have an ever growing gallery of success screenshots I can leverage when I'm selling my products, pitching to a prospect or need to look at when imposter syndrome decides to creep in.

Short term, reciprocity isn't nearly as fast or effective as scarcity but it feels better. Long term, it's effectiveness compounds.

You can jump start reciprocity. All it takes is an absolute ton of your time.

BONUS: You get a warm feeling that you're helping people. This is addictive and can be troublesome as your time is a finite resource, see point 3.

7. Your ideas evolve

This happens in two ways.

a) Your ideas and principles get put into action at scale under circumstances far different to your own. This highlights their strengths and exposes their weaknesses.

This allows you to improve your methodology, especially when your 'students' experiment with your ideas, adding elements you may have never considered.

Essentially, you are getting a lot of experimentation and optimisation done at scale at no cost.

b) You take your ideas further. You don't to grow stagnant so you work on further building your skill set.

For example, I'm experimenting with adding my own "Charm Offensive" style to Facebook ads.

This creates a good content as you document the process and provides further opportunities to build new products. 😊

8. Everything becomes an inspiration for content

I was worried I would 'run out' of ideas for content. I don't have a content calendar. I don't plan. This is probably not the most efficient approach to take, but it works for me.

Every news story, every event in my life, every quirky Facebook ad are potential angles for content.

Not all of them are great but some of them knock it out of the park or in the case of my Stephen Curry post, score a 3 point shot from a distance nobody thought to shoot from, completely disrupting the game of basketball while simultaneously providing a valuable lesson to entrepreneurs about why experimenting with unusual ideas is important.

You figure out new and interesting ways to spread your message and ideas.

Some of these will work well and you discover new 'forms' or 'structures' you can use to create further content. The cycle continues.

When running short of good ideas, you can always scrape the barrel and write a post an article titled "A few things I've learned..."

It might even turn out to be pretty good.

Your audience will let you know.

Happy Monday Charmers,

This is the first piece of content created during my newly organised session that appears in my diary as “WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!” each weekday morning.

Want to grow your business?

"yea... i guess so..." I hear you SCREAM!

I recommend you start doing 3 things today without delay...



- Build An Email List

I had no email list until May this year. There's a reason why there are so many "Build Your List" Facebook ads. It's a massive asset.

Facebook Groups are great but there are many reasons to build your own email list too.

Here are my top reasons:

>> Not everyone likes Facebook - you'll have a new audience who just want to consume your content on email.

>> You own your email list. You can use whatever email marketing provider you want.

>> You can use your email list as a custom audience / and to build Lookalike audiences when advertising on Facebook.

>> If Facebook does decide to reduce the reach of groups, or make them more 'pay to play', you can be safe in the knowledge you have a direct line to a good portion of your audience outside of the Facebook Universe.



- Start a Facebook Group

Starting this group at the end of March this year was the best decision I've made in a long time.

The public nature of Facebook groups opens opportunities that would not have happened if I hadn't started my group.

Having any kind of following on social media helps but Facebook groups are especially useful for 2 reasons.

a) You are seen as the 'leader' of an ideology or philosophy that has an explicit number of members. At least, an explicit number of members are seen to subscribe to the idea that you are an expert on a given topic.

b) You don't need hundreds of thousands of members for point 1 to be beneficial.

I get invited onto podcasts, I get inbound leads. I get to sell my own products. I'm writing a book.

I have a whole new business because of that decision earlier in the year.

If you have a way of doing things that's different, or you're the master of something, start a group, invite some close friends and start posting daily.

There's more to it than that, but not to start with.

So get started.

Now.

Or else... You'll regret not having done it in 5 months time.

What makes Facebook Groups so damn good?

>> Those damn notifications from Facebook help drive people to your posts. Great content + notifications = views.

>> On the assumption that your group is useful/entertaining, members will invite their peers. The group will grow organically.

>> The sense of community. Other people post content. Questions get asked. Jobs get posted. There is less reliance on you having to post all the time.

>> You can go live to your group. Live streaming is super effective at building trust and a closer connection with your audience. I'll be doing this more 😊

>> You can use your Facebook group to build your email list. I do this by:

a) Occasionally posting content that requires an opt-in to download.

b) Using the "Ask Questions" feature to offer new members a "Magic Email Cheat Sheet" if they enter their email address.

🏆 - Start Cold Pitching

Surprise! Cold pitching is at number one. Who would have guessed?!

Why does cold pitching have the top spot?

>> It's effective. You are one email or letter or LinkedIn message away from a meeting with Coca Cola, or Apple, or Google, or Uber or some other brand that you'd love to work with.

>> It's cheap. You can cold email for free. Granted, it's easier if you outsource parts of the process, or you have clever software to automate elements and all that good stuff.

However, anyone can send a cold email.

Anyone can send a LinkedIn Invite. Anyone can send a postcard.

Even with all the technology we have today, a simple postcard with a personal handwritten message can score you a life changing meeting.

>> It's not time-consuming. Anyone can send 10 emails/postcards/letters per day.

>> It's fast. You can get almost instant gratification. This is why it appeals to me so much. Many of us don't have the patience to wait a *whole* 5 months for something to 'work'.

>> If it doesn't work, you find out fast and you can change your approach.

>> It puts you in control. Inbound leads are great. I love leads coming to me.

However, outbound allows you to select the prospects you'd like to work with.

You make the first move. Those big opportunities often come when you take initiative and make things happen.


It feels good to close a deal that you opened completely cold.

You made that deal happen. It would not have existed had it not been for your efforts and daring.

Being able to both open and close deals is a powerful attribute.

With both, you are a complete salesperson.

>> You can use this skill not only to get clients, but get onto podcasts, get journalists to reply to you, get people to events, interview people you look up to, and make all sorts of other 'asks'.

 You learn how to use your words to open doors. It is the master key of opportunity.

A few notes:

Facebook Ads came in close at number #4. The only reason for this is my level of competence with them. I suspect when I rewrite this article in 6 months, Facebook Ads will be in the top 3.

I see email marketing and Facebook groups as under the umbrella of content marketing. Yes, there are occasional direct pitches, but overall they are mediums to educate and entertain.

I recommend setting up a blog and creating content outside of these mediums too. This is a topic I will be covering in greater detail going forward, especially as I take my own advice in this regard.

So there you have it! 3 things you should start doing NOW - or at least, revisit with enthusiasm WITHOUT DELAY!

Do you agree without question?

Disagree completely?

Think that I've cruelly maligned Google AdWords to a spot outside the top 3? "It should at least be on the podium, Jon. Come on..."

Think I'm behind the times because I've suggested building an email list when Messenger Bots are clearly the future?

Or do you not care whatsoever and have no idea why you keep reading my posts?

ENQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW! / I WANT MORE ENGAGEMENT ON MY POSTS.

Please leave a comment below!

Happy Monday folks,

Jon

I wrote yesterday about the 3 things I suggest people start doing if they wish to expand their business.

Today, I've cobbled together a bigger list.

This list is in no order whatsoever. It's just what I was able to come up with this morning.

I'd love for you to add to this list in the comments below.

Methods to finding new clients:

- > Cold email (mass)
- > Cold email (one to one, personalised)
- > Video cold email
- > Direct mail / postcards
- > Cold calling
- > Visit local businesses and build relationships
- > Cold messaging on Facebook
- > LinkedIn Invite / Message
- > Search LinkedIn posts - "Looking for a XXXXX"
- > Search Twitter - "Looking for a XXXXX"
- > Search Facebook - "Looking for a XXXXX"
- > Build an engaged following on [Insert Social Platform Here]
- > Live streaming
- > Blogging
- > Guest blogging
- > Post useful content In Facebook Groups
- > Paid search (AdWords etc)
- > Search Engine Optimisation
- > Content marketing
- > Facebook Ads
- > Other Social Media Ads
- > Display advertising
- > Referrals from current clients / suppliers / peers / friends / family (ask for them!)

- > Email prospects you didn't end up working with
- > Email old clients
- > Partner marketing (e.g. Be the SEO partner of a PR agency)
- > PR Stunt / Go Viral
- > Upwork / Fiverr / Other freelance portals
- > Respond to job adverts
- > Public speaking
- > Networking (and have a creative business card)
- > Go to conferences, seminars and meetups
- > Start a meetup group
- > Use a co-working space
- > Get booked on podcasts your audience listens to
- > Build an email list - email it regularly
- > Build a chat bot - build subscriptions
- > Start a Facebook Group
- > Get an influencer to talk about your awesome skills
- > Write an ebook / create a slideshare / other resource
- > Write a book and promote it
- > Create a course and promote it
- > Comment on Facebook Group 'Pitch Day' posts
- > Apply to take part in this groups, "Offensive Takeover" thingy
- > ... Please comment below with more ideas!

Thank you, folks!

If you'd like to know how to compete with big name competition, read on.

One of the questions I get is "Don't you find you feel pressure to be funny after sending humorous cold emails?"

No. This is just an opener. The humour is only there to be remembered and to get a positive response. It has a function.

I follow-up with enthusiasm. I've won deals over agencies with bigger, fancier offices (plural), ostensibly better case studies, more (read: some) awards, bigger budgets, larger teams and more impressive client lists.

Why? Positioning and enthusiasm.

Being able to demonstrate your competence and having a solid pitch is important.

To compete with bigger players, you need to bring something to the table to compete with all the advantages they have.

Enthusiasm is the most cost-effective cosmetic there is.

You can turn your competitor's advantage into a disadvantage.

Your competitor may be much bigger than you and thus be a 'safe option'...

This may be true, but this could also mean:

-> They're inflexible

-> They don't innovate and are 'set in their ways'

-> They're expensive

-> Customers become a 'cog in the machine' unless they're one of the 'big' accounts

This means you, the smaller player, can promote yourself as:

-> Flexible

-> Creative and innovative

-> You treat every customer as important, not just the top 10% of spenders.

You don't have to be negative about your competitors in your pitch. This can backfire. You can look bitter.

Instead, highlight your own positive attributes. This indirectly highlights the disadvantages of your bigger competitors.

While doing that, show your enthusiasm. Come prepared with lots of ideas. Make it clear who wants this work more.

This combination makes their positive attributes can look a little shallow.

"Agency X has really nice offices... but Agency Y has amazing ideas, and REALLY want the work. Who do I go with?!"

This doesn't always work. Sometimes people pick the safe option. Decision makers have full-time jobs and the safe option is a good way of keeping one's job. Nobody gets fired for picking the mediocre.

But a lot of the time it does work, and enthusiasm, unlike fancy offices, costs nothing.

That's a roundabout way of answering the question, "Do you find you have to be funny after the first email you send?"

No.

Humour opens opportunities.

Competence, positioning and enthusiasm make them a reality.

I still remember the day I won my first gargantuan sized client.

I had been sending cold emails for a short while.

It had been getting us new sales calls and meetings reliably. I knew the system worked. It was somewhat predictable.

I'd had meetings with some big brands but I hadn't closed anything.

Then I got an email from the Head of Marketing for Symantec.

I got a reply to the 2nd or 3rd email in the sequence I'd set up.

It read "Ok. Ok. Well done! You made us laugh again. Great timing... We would like to meet you! Are you free next week?"

So we went to meet them.

They told us they were firing their social media agency.

Their agency were not giving them any 'good' creative ideas.

... and they couldn't keep up with Symantec's demands.

We impressed them with our knowledge and passion. We got a brief from them.

"How do we make a name for ourselves in BYOD on social media."

I won't bore you with specifics, but we went back to the office and brainstormed tons of ideas.

These varied in quality. Some good. Some ok. Some terrible.

We went back to see Symantec and put on the best pitch of our lives.

Near the end of our pitch, the most senior Marketing Director said: "We only have £Most-Money-I-Had-Ever-Seen per quarter... is that enough?"

I had to resist showing them a beaming smile. I think I bit my lip!

We had won it.

I remember sticking the purchase order on my wall with the full amount on it.

And staring at the bank account when the money went in.

A good friend of mine remembered some additional information... (see attached screenshot from James Smith) This does sound like something I would have done...

The next part... we had to deliver results.

We had created an awesome piece of content.

Their internal PR team had either a) done nothing or b) just sent out a generic press release, which is as effective as a).

We had to turn this situation around. Creating content that doesn't get seen has no point whatsoever. We were being judged on how much reach and exposure we were generating.

We managed to get Symantec front page coverage on VentureBeat, which has tens of millions of page views per month. (see attachment)

This led to coverage on other sites such as CMSWire, Enterprise-CIO and other websites where Symantec's prospects were part of the audience.

If you Google "Create BYOD Policy", the top results are our coverage in VentureBeat, and then our content on the Symantec website. (Granted, they've for some reason turned it into a PDF, but it still ranks...)

The former editor of VentureBeat, Dylan Tweney, still remembers my pitch to this day. (See attached)

This was 4 years ago and he still remembers it!



James Smith I remember when you first showed me that purchase order. I have a photo somewhere of you drunk in the office holding a print out of above your head like it was a WWE belt.

Like · Reply · 3 · June 3 at 7:58pm



Jon Buchan Hahahahaha. I'd love it if you could find that out!!!

Like · Reply · 1 · June 3 at 7:59pm



James Smith it might be one of many incriminating photos I deleted. I'll have a look.

Like · Reply · 1 · June 3 at 8:10pm



Jon Buchan uh oh.

Like · Reply · June 3 at 8:13pm



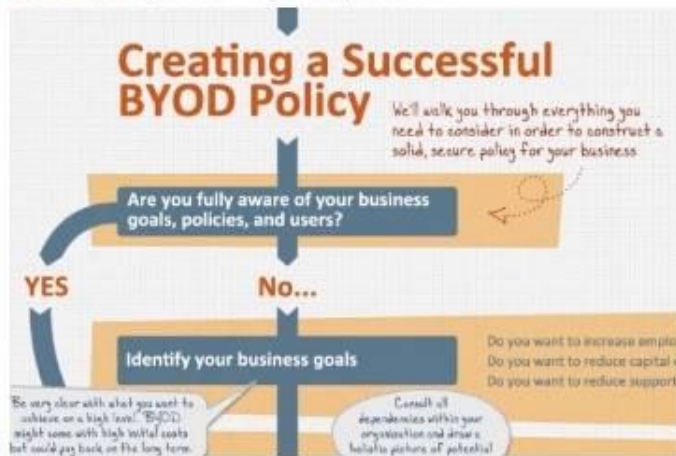
Write a reply...



MOBILE

How to create a BYOD policy for your company

DYLAN TWENEY @DYLAN20 FEBRUARY 23, 2013 10:45 AM



So you say you want a bring-your-own-device policy at your company?

Great — everybody's doing it! But hold on there for a second: You can't just start telling all your employees to bring whatever gear they've got and expect them to magically figure out how to make it work with your IT systems. (Well, that's how we do it at VentureBeat, but like many startups, we fly by the seat of our pants a little bit.) As we reported earlier this month, 81 percent of companies have some kind of BYOD program in place, but only 37 percent of IT managers thought that their company's mobile strategy was working well. In other words, there's a lot of BYOD pain in the IT department.

ENDPOINT AGENT

Monitor remote employees on remote networks.

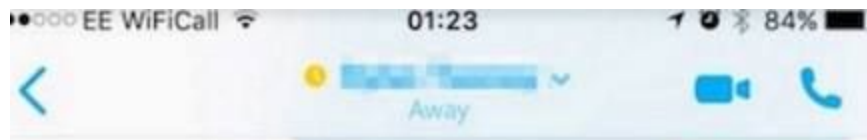
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VB Recommendations



Samsung creates \$300 million fund and new business unit for autonomous driving tech



madness



I recently cited you as an example of someone who got my attention -- and got me to publish something -- based on a completely off the wall pitch

In a conversation about PR & how to pitch editors with some startup folks here in SF

Nobody pitches like you 😊

One of the great things about running a community like this is I get to speak to a lot of new people.

I have more one to one conversations than ever before.

I'm a fairly gregarious person and this suits my need to constantly occupy my mind.

Often these conversations start with 'business talk' before moving into areas more personal.

It is now impossible for me not to understand that almost everyone goes through painful and intractable issues. These can seem never-ending and unforgiving.

These issues can make motivating oneself, especially on a dreary Monday, quite difficult.

I have been there too. It wasn't long ago. I will no doubt find myself there again sometime.

I don't have any specific advice but I thought I'd start this Monday with a few quotes.

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about."

"The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel."

"This too shall pass."

Sometimes platitudes are important. We need to be reminded of wise words otherwise unwise words get their way.



I hope this post has been helpful to someone.

Peace,

Jon

P.S. If you're feeling that dread, do tell someone. Isolation makes everything harsher.


P.P.S I could do a post like this every Monday if anyone thinks it would be helpful.

 **How To Be Likeable.** 

I promised myself I wouldn't veer into general 'how to be charming' territory but after reading Mark Rinard's testimonial

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/charmoffensivegroup/permalink/349726315473396/>) , I thought maybe I should.

It's been awhile since I've read it, but I maintain that "How To Make Friends & Influence People" is a good book. It's old but there are good lessons in there.

Ignore those who smugly look down upon liking a book because it's popular. I'm not saying they're wrong, they're just less right than me. .

One of the most likeable qualities a person can have is that they show genuine interest in other people.

I have a good friend, [Curtis](#), who is always as enthusiastic about other people's endeavours as his own.

This combination of genuine interest and enthusiasm makes him extremely likeable. This has served him well. It's a powerful attribute to have.

Many folks have asked me how this group has grown at the rate it has. There are many reasons for this. Indeed, I have an entire training module in Always Be Winning that covers the plethora of tactics I've used.

However, the main component is not a growth hack. It's because I'm naturally gregarious.

I regularly message people and ask them how they are doing, what they're up to and what exciting plans they have.

This isn't 'work' to me. I'm genuinely interested. I learn things. In return, people ask me those same questions.

I've never thought about this as a tactic to "build my network" or to "build rapport". Those are just tertiary benefits.

You don't need a Facebook group for the information in this post to be useful.

Email old clients and ask them how things are going. Ask them what they're up to. Don't pitch anything.

You can do the same with suppliers too, or old colleagues, or people you met at events you found interesting, or experts in your field.

If you're on someone's email list and you find something they've said interesting, hit 'reply' and ask a question.

One by one, more people will be aware of you.

They will remember you because you showed an interest in them.

You may get inspiration from their plans.

You may learn some stuff.

You may even generate some leads. Maybe not immediately... although sometimes you may just message them at the right time...

Action: Spend just 10 minutes each day starting more conversations with people you find interesting.

Bonus Points: If you can do this with people you feel are more successful or skillful than you, even better.

HOW TO BE SOMEWHAT FUNNY - FUNNY WRITING EXERCISE - THE LETTER OF HATE 🤔

My friend, Sam, used to work at Primark (discount retail store) until we took him on as a copywriter.

I asked him if he missed it.

This was his response.

Hilarious.

This reminds me of a great exercise for writing funny copy from the book "Be A Great Stand Up" by Logan Murray where you write a "letter of hate".

Think of something that has made you angry. Perhaps you had some bad service somewhere.

Then write a letter congratulating the owner on the bad service you received.

Instead of turning the volume up on your anger, you twist the knife by ostensibly praising someone (or something) while you're actually mocking them.

This gets you into the habit of saying one thing and meaning another. This is a critical skill for writing comedic copy.

It also enables you to take your anger in the moment, and all those exaggerated feelings, and turn them into something funny and positive, rather than just have a depressing winge that nobody enjoys.

Letters like this (if they're genuinely funny and not overly angry/bitter/scathing) can go viral and can lead to a response from whomever you are annoyed with. Bonus!

So start using the "Letter of hate" experiment today! If you're feeling daring, post yours below.

Happy Monday Charmers,

Jon

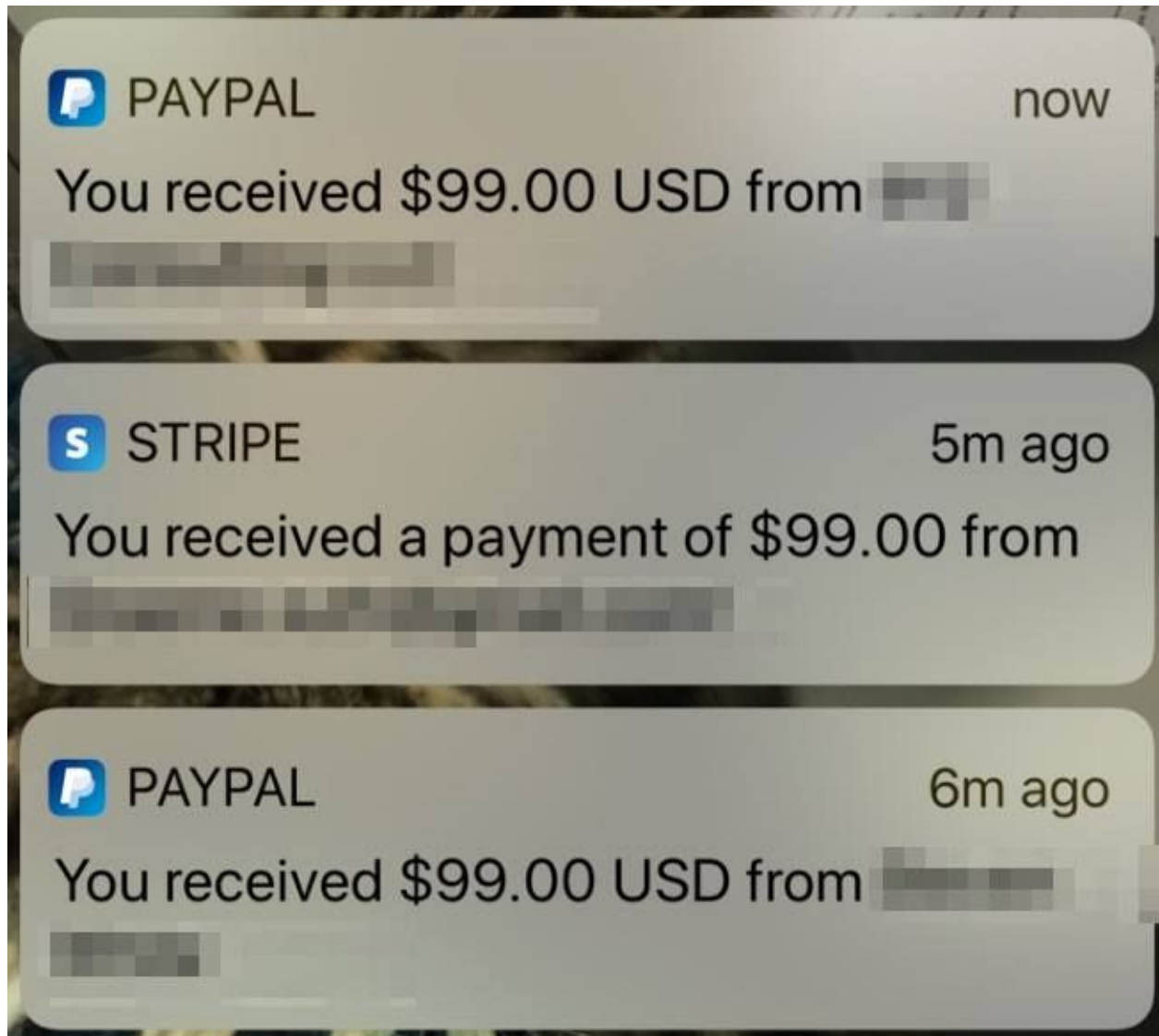
P.S. I have my own 'letter of hate' from around 2008 that I wrote to my letting agents that I can trot out if you'd like.

It's been a long time since I read it, but even back then you can see glimpses of my writing style.

You're right. The thrill of picking up an item of clothing, the rush of adrenaline I get when I fold, then the anticipation of a charming customer throwing it all on the floor so I could relive the excitement of folding it again. The dusty aroma of the hundreds of boxes I was carrying clogging up my lungs, the stimulating conversation with customers about how there should be more signs in the shop, the empty coke cans snuck into a pile of clothes by considerate customers keeping things interesting, those were the days and I threw it all away for something I'm more interested in. Every day when I'm at home working in a way that suits me more, I pine for those brain tumour-inducing strip lights, the air conditioning we apparently had and the many beautiful customers, with their constructively abusive comments. I lose sleep at night thinking about the exciting retail career I could have had, dreading the next day when the nightmare begins again, and only fall asleep after crying myself into exhaustion.

👍👍👍👍 It's all about the offer. (It's mostly about the offer).

This post contains a ton of knowledge that I should probably turn into a paid training, but fuck it, I'm in a good mood!



I've had a splendid few days. Damn, you guys like template packs!

Ready for some platitudes?

I've just experienced how important "the offer" is.

January didn't start well. My motivation was shot, that filthy imposter syndrome was playing tricks on me and to top it off, I wasn't selling a lot of stuff.

Partly, that was because I wasn't showing up and pitching.

You have to show up every day.

You have to sell something every day.

This is one of the best lessons that [Dan Meredith](#) taught me.

Even if you make a few dollars, it's better than nothing.

It adds up. More importantly, you have to keep the routine going. Or you stop. Then you look at your performance for the month and you have big stretches of zero sales. This isn't motivating.

However, even when I was selling, I wasn't getting the level of response from my list that I'm accustomed to.

This then fed back into the problems I was already having and I wondered "Did I screw up?", "Have I lost it? etc.

I started polling the group. I asked what people wanted. Writing "entertaining copy" was the top result by FAR. This was followed by 'winning new clients' and 'sales funnels'.

When I polled the group specifically about the type of copy/content people wanted, 'writing jokes - technical humour writing' was last on the list. To me, there seemed to be a disconnect there.

I forget how it came up, but [Katya](#) had a great line on this, "Entrepreneurs don't want to be funny, they want to make money."

She's absolutely right but I'd put it a slightly different way.

Entrepreneurs want to make money and if funny is a route, some will take it. If the 'funny' is done for them, that makes taking that route even easier and more will take it.

Yeah, Katya's line is far snappier than mine. 😊

I looked at my previous sales.

It was obvious what you guys want the most. You want products that you can add to your toolkit that will help you succeed as quickly and easily as possible. In other words, 'done it for you templates'.

Then I made an offer that was easy for people to say 'yes' to and added a sweet bonus.

Then I made that offer time-limited.

I've come round to using scarcity more. You can't change human nature. If I was selling shitty products, I'd be more concerned, but I know my stuff works and if anyone is unhappy for any reason (which thankfully is a rarity), I will always refund them.

So, I've become OK with using scarcity a bit more.

Then I made sure I told people about that offer through as many channels as I could.

These were:

✅ This Facebook Group

First touch -> The poll "What templates would you like?"

Second touch -> Competition to win the template pack for free. (Massive reach)

This was followed by 4 or 5 more posts promoting the offer.

The group cover art was changed temporarily to direct people to the offer.

Pinned post added that promotes the offer.

LinkedIn

First touch - Competition to win the template pack for free. (Massive reach)

This was followed by one post per day promoting the offer. Some of these I asked the 2 LinkedIn pods I'm in to like/comment on.

I could have done more here by optimising my profile and changing my tagline.

Email list

A set of 6 emails to promote the course.

1 Thursday

1 Friday

2 Saturday

2 Sunday

This included one email driving people to the LinkedIn competition because it needed a boost. It worked.

Remember to think about how you can use your different channels to help specific micro-campaigns succeed.

Personal Facebook

1 post about the offer

I can do more here in future. I don't use my personal Facebook anywhere near as much as I should.

Twitter

2 Tweets about the offer

Reddit (Yes, I have a subreddit!)

1 post linking to the offer

Facebook Ads

Ad featuring video testimonials targeted towards my subscribers and website visitors.

These were not that effective but they were done in a rush. I'm sure the additional touches helped indirectly but I need to make improvements here.

I'm also running FB ads to scale up. Those are going well. I wish I hadn't turned off Facebook ads back in August. Why I don't know. It's the silliest decision I've made since starting this group.

(Although, having a huge buyers list to create lookalike audiences from is awesome!)

Anyway, the title of this post was "It's all about the offer. (It's mostly about the offer)."

Let's look at why my recent promotion was a success.


All of those tactics above only work if your offer is something people want.

You can hype a shitty product and with the right tactics, I'm sure you could achieve success with that approach but let's make the assumption we're not sociopaths and you care about your customers and delivering a great product without being misleading in any way.

How do you achieve that?

I can only speak from my experience.

Here goes...

 I'm lucky that my methodology has a unique mechanism.

I don't have to come up with something convoluted.

It not only doesn't adhere to the principles and 'best practices' we are told when it comes to b2b prospecting and marketing, it actively rejects many of them.

Its efficacy is because it's mechanism of action (humour, irreverence, focused on getting attention and getting a response 'in the moment') is different to the traditional route (using persuasive copywriting and traditional sales prospecting.)

(FYI: I'm currently studying direct response / persuasive copywriting and enjoying it. This is not a knock on DR copywriting whatsoever. DR copy is absolutely what you need to study if you want to be able to create effective sales letters, email sequences etc.)

I have a ton of social proof.

Every few days we see people posting their screenshots and saying nice things about me.

I have an entire gallery of screenshots proving it's efficacy (that needs updating, Andrei).

I have a following that I've built over 10 months on Facebook, LinkedIn and my email list.

I put a lot of effort into this launch even if it didn't feel like it. I had fun.

I look at previous launches and flash sales, and I held back. I didn't post as much.

I didn't send as many emails.

I didn't put the required effort into the posts and emails I did create.

Not good!

Finally, what everyone says about having regular buyers is true.

I've had many emails from folks telling me "I buy all of your stuff now. I'm addicted".

This is something that comes with time as long as you deliver effective products and offer decent customer service.

Let me summarise this post:

Know what your audience wants

Have a unique way of solving their problems

Be able to prove your methodology works in the real world

Put effort into your launch content. Every. Little. Helps.

Scarcity is the single most effective driver of sales. (From my experience and this is coming from someone who was perhaps naive on this topic.)

Start building a following! Go to the files section and download “Stop Selling Time”. This will get you started.

Over time, you will have repeat customers who buy all your products as long as the quality of your product is high.

I told you I had platitudes.

I hope they were useful and perhaps, I even had something new and interesting to say.

I best be off now. I have templates to work on. Annd everything else.

Thank you so much.

Have a wonderful week,

Jon

“What niche should I enter?”

I get asked this question a lot.

Or something similar - “What particular digital discipline should I learn?”

My answer is often another question, which is “How do you want to spend your time?”

What do you enjoy doing? (Or to phrase differently, what niches interest and intrigue you?)

What are you a master of?

What can you easily make money from?

If you are doing something you enjoy, you will do it without reluctance. This is a good start.

If you can pick something that you enjoy and that you are a master of, you are in a better position.

You will take action without reluctance and you will do it effectively.

If you can pick something that you enjoy, that you are a master of, and you can easily make money from, you are in the best of circumstances: You will take action without reluctance pursuing activity that will make you money, and you will do this effectively.

You don't 'need' the first one for financial success. However, it does make the whole process easier.

Even if it didn't, I would recommend trying to find this sweet spot anyway.

Time is the most finite resource you have, it would be prudent to spend it in ways that bring you joy.

I felt a new feeling today.

I've been writing at least someone legibly in a journal since the middle of 2016, scribbling down whatever came to mind and being more honest than I've been with anyone, probably even myself. I'd speed write and not stop until everything was down. I never read any of it back - until today.

Reading your own, often desperate thoughts reminds you that difficult times always feel heaviest when they're happening. In the past, they don't have that same bite. They're not pleasant, but they don't feel you with feelings of impending doom. You notice the same rationalisations, fears, and even phrases come up. You see the certainty you thought you had. You see what you without hope looks like.

On the other hand, you see when you snapped out of it and tried something new. You see all the ideas you had. All the stuff that went nowhere and the stuff that went somewhere. I've had some ideas far longer than I realised. I notice how much I've achieved, despite the circumstances I was in.

Some of these achievements perhaps could not have happened without going through the right set of unfortunate events that lead you to them. I have experienced a lot and I'm better for it.

It does make me think about 'now' differently. As someone who has a natural tendency to get too excited or too anxious, it shows me clear evidence of what time can do. We think of our problems in terms of the immediate, where everything remains constant.

It was striking to see how often I worried about things that never happened. This could be little things such as thinking I hadn't impressed someone I needed to. I was so confident I'd messed up. My journal the next day revealed I was wrong.

This happened frequently. I put massive energy into giving things too much weight, doing my best to avoid invisible Saber-Toothed Tigers that never showed up. Metaphorically speaking, of course, I'm not that batshit insane.

That's not to say we should pretend life is amazing when it isn't. We shouldn't be naive or delusional. However, this has two sides to it. Being consistently negative and fearsome is equally as naive and delusional as pretending life is without any problems at all. They're both extremes, but only one is treated seriously. You feel 'safer', thinking this headspace will at least try to solve the protracted issues you are having. However, in the process, you end up damaging yourself.

At one point, I had no excitement for any area of my life. I was completely hopeless. Of course, things have changed since then. Unless I let myself slide into negative thoughts and self-pity, it doesn't happen. It is easier to do this because my circumstances have improved, but the option is still there. I just need the right thought to pop into my head and boom. I'll go there. Woe is me. Self-pity is weirdly addictive but it destroys everything but itself. It serves no purpose. It's counter-productive. It sucks the life out of you. It gives you all the excuses you need to not make any changes.

I will never be a calm person and I wouldn't have it any other way. Excitement and anxiety are the same stimulated state, it's just one feels good and the other feels bad. I wouldn't trade my hyper brain for a calmer one. Instead, I manage the negatives. I control the controllables.

I started meditating again. I've noticed it stops my racing thoughts. It gives me pause. Search for "The Honest Guys" on YouTube for great guided meditations. When I go for walks, I put a meditation

playlist on Spotify. It works. It turns down the volume of my thoughts. If you have a brain that doesn't ever shut off, I highly recommend you do the same.

But most of all, I recommend you start writing a journal and write your most honest thoughts down. Just keep writing. Get it all out. Do it every few days at least. Don't read it back for at least a year.

When you do read it back, I hope you enjoy the same feeling I did today.

You realise "Oh, I've been here before." and "I'm much more resilient than I give myself credit for."

And when that day comes, you should absolutely prostitute that feeling for engagement on social media.

Come on, I went a good few minutes without levity! You knew it was coming at some point.

I hope this was useful in some way.

Thank you,

Jon

P.S. I found a poem I wrote way back in December 2014 called "On the adventurous mind". I thought it relevant to my musings today.

We can likely agree that none of us are saints

Our brainwaves constantly craving complaints,

Continually demanding debilitating debates,

The mind's visions become analysed whilst unduly amplified,

Before becoming magnified and overwhelmingly intensified,

It happens in seconds and the journey repeats without pause,

Let's have it: your ideas, your life's dreams, and all your flaws,

At its worst; It's sneaky, slimy, and slanderous,

At its best? It's extraordinary, exciting, and glamorous,

I wouldn't mind all of this, if this activity were not so frequently ill-timed,

But then, who am I to argue with how my beautiful mind is designed?