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Marketing Thought Leaders

A playbook for leading your company to future success

Want to Market Remarkably? Look to the Edge

by [Nancy Pekala](#)

In 2012, it's not enough to market well. You need to market *remarkably* well. That means understanding that Job #1 for every marketer is getting the attention of today's consumers who have a multitude of options and channels before them.

Back in the days of Mad Men, long before it was just a television show, mass marketing worked. Ad agencies understood that their ad campaigns didn't necessarily need to be very good; they just needed to run a lot of them. Those days are long gone. Today, marketers must market for a connection economy, one where one-to-one marketing is difficult, but essential.

Speaking at a recent [Art of Marketing](#) conference, Gary Vaynerchuk, online marketing entrepreneur and author of *The Thank You Economy* and *Crush It!*, noted "We're all marketing like it's 2002 instead of 2012. We're not marketing for current situations and are hurting our brands. We need to build remarkable products and think of the end user."

"If content is king, then context is God. Customer acquisition is a commodity. The game we all need to understand is retention."

Acknowledging that performing one-on-one marketing at scale is challenging, Vaynerchuk stressed the importance of context marketing. "Content is a commodity today," he said. "If content is king, then context is God."

Building brand equity through context generated from content is the way to get consumers' attention. "We are living in a stream economy," Vaynerchuk said. "Marketers need to start tapping into the social and interest graphs of consumers online."

He added, "The consumer has shifted on us so we need to learn how to scale caring about the end user and leveraging that emotion to create new customers."

This change in consumer behavior is requiring a paradigm shift from customer acquisition to retention. "It takes time and patience to develop customer engaged marketing," Vaynerchuk admitted "but customer acquisition is a commodity. The game we all need to understand is retention."

Also speaking at the conference, Seth Godin, author of *Purple Cow*, *Tribes* and *Linchpin*, agreed that a significant in marketing practice and approach is needed. "We grew up believing we needed to buy into this perpetual profit-making machine," he said. "We have branded ourselves to death."

However, Godin suggested that "the scary news for marketers is that a purple cow is no longer remarkable; remarkable means the product must be worth making a remark about. Consumers are saying 'You can't interrupt me; but you can make a product or service that my friends will tell me about.'"

The new focus for brands is to create products and services that are worth talking about and do it in a connection economy where it's cheaper than ever before to connect people. Creating personal and relevant messages via connections leads to engagement with consumers Godin refers to as "tribes".

“Connections lead to tribes which like being in alignment and want a culture created for them,” Godin explained. “Nike invented the tribe of the super skinny marathon runner. The challenge for marketers is to identify their tribes and develop personal and relevant messages for them.”

The key to future success may lie in looking beyond the mass market tribe. Godin suggests marketing to the edge. “Weirdos are better markets than the boring middle who don’t want to hear from you,” he said. “Weirdness is the new norm because people are doing and buying what they want. This is hard because we’ve been taught to hold back a bit because if we go full out, someone might ask for a little more.”

Keith Ferrazzi, founder and chairman of Ferrazzi Greenlight, a research-based consulting and training company and author of *Never Eat Alone & Who's Got Your Back?*, agreed that tapping into the power of customer relationships is essential and suggested marketers start thinking in terms of “people plans”.

Based on extensive relational style research his firm conducted, Ferrazzi suggested that personal psychography plays an important role in making both brand connections and creating organizational success.

“Marketing is not just a broadcast medium; it’s a very personal medium,” he said. “You need to figure out what your brand brings to people and proactively develop a people plan.”

Relationship Quality (RQ)		
Rank	Primary Descriptor	Standard/Test
-1	Problem	Relationship issues exist that require resolution.
0	Aspirational	Someone you’d like to know.
1	Introduced	Evidence of a prior introduction.
2	Acquaintance	You can write down their agenda.
3	Friend	You’ve advanced their personal or professional agenda.
Source: Executive Relationship Management Blueprint, MyGreenlight.com.		

Ferrazzi suggested, “Think about your brand as an organization. Is there an essence of humanity to it? Do employees believe you care about their success? Do you create teams of individuals who have each other’s backs, push responsibility down and demand that teams step up?”

Tapping into the power of tribes and driving cultural transformation within organizations is critical for today’s marketing leaders if they are to influence others. To do, Ferrazzi suggests adopting a seven-step mission action plan (download the [Executive Relationship Management Blueprint](#)) that involves assessing your key relationships in terms of relationship quality.

Mission 1: Make relationships central to life by aligning “what” and “who.” Connect a goal to three people who can help achieve it.

Mission 2: Systematically manage your targets: Measure the intimacy strength of each individual

Mission 3: Expand your currency: Do your homework on one individual and prepare a way to help!

Mission 4: Accelerate the Relationship in each interaction: Find a way to care.

Mission 5: Lifeline Relationships are a way of life. Find Lifelines, Ambassadors and Mentors.

Mission 6: Build your brand and establish your social media presence.

Mission 7: Lead with generosity, candor and accountability. Send a note of gratitude.

Ultimately, to conduct remarkable, memorable marketing, today’s marketers need to think in terms of context, connections and consumer tribes.

[Nancy Pekala](#) is the AMA’s Senior Director of Online Content and Editor of [Marketing Thought Leaders](#). Continue the conversation about current challenges and trends for marketers in the Marketing Strategy Group in [AMAConnect](#), the AMA’s online community exclusively for marketing professionals. Follow us on Twitter [@marketing_power](#).