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# THE ART OF PERSUASION IN THE ERA OF AVOIDANCE

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Advertising was created for a different day and age—when tuning out a commercial meant walking to the television to change the channel. When people actually read. When the web, cell phones, iPods, video games, and the white noise of technology weren't competing for our attention. And when consumers weren't as marketing-savvy, cynical, or overwhelmed. So how do marketers make an impact on today's desensitized consumers? By finding inventive, relevant ways to reach people.

Studies show, the average consumer is exposed to between 3,000 and 5,000 marketing messages *per day*. Seem impossible? That's because like the rest of us, you probably tune them out. And consumer data\* backs it up.

- 54% of consumers say they try to resist “being exposed to” or “paying attention” to marketing
- 56% say they avoid products and services that overwhelm them with marketing they can't control
- 69% say they are interested in products that enable them to block, skip, or opt out of marketing messaging

## CONSUMERS ARE TUNED OUT

For every type of marketing, there's a way to avoid it. The invention of caller ID, privacy screenings, and the federal “do not call” list help people weed-out telemarketing. For those looking to clean up their mailboxes, a “do not mail” list is in the works. The list goes on.

So why don't we all just give up and start a fishing business? Because this isn't the death of marketing at all. It's the beginning of a new era. The only problem with the old way is, it's old. It doesn't fit into today's “why should I care?” mentality. So just as other industries adapt to the ever-changing world, so must ours.

To develop relevant, buzz-generating creative, marketers need to first think, “What's the most unexpected, relevant way to reach people?” Starbucks stuck a red branded coffee cup to the top of a car, triggering pedestrians to alert the driver. Each of these helpful people received a coupon for a free coffee. Ikea drove a truck with a gigantic glass box in tow showcasing an entire Ikea-designed living room. The other day, I walked down Wacker Drive to find a frightening line of five men in orange jumpsuits handcuffed and chained together by their ankles. As I warily passed, they handed me a sticker to promote the movie, *The Condemned*. Will I go see it? Maybe. But I told everyone I knew about my experience and looked up the movie online. And because I interacted with the brand, my recall and loyalty are far beyond that of watching a 30-second TV spot.

## MARKETING IS A TWO-WAY STREET

My experience with *The Condemned* illustrates another guideline for twenty-first century marketing: getting consumers involved in the brand. As the cost of media goes up, companies need to find more cost-effective ways of getting into consumers' heads. How many times have you seen a commercial you loved, but had no idea what the product was? And this was a commercial you actually enjoyed. Many companies simply can't afford big-budget

TV spots that run every half hour. So they need to find new ways of involving consumers to build recall and loyalty.

Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi says, “We should be measuring return-on-involvement. Marketers should be asking how involved consumers are with their messages.” Because once consumers are involved, as I was when I visited *The Condemned* website, the value of what’s being delivered makes them either forget or not care that they’re being marketed to.

## BECOMING RELEVANT

So has Remedy stopped recommending print ads? No way. Traditional media still has its place. But we also look a lot closer at where our audience goes, what they listen to, who they trust, and what they value. That way, we can invent new ways of reaching them. That means unexpected, guerilla, and never-thought-of media. From handing out sunflowers to brighten people’s day, encouraging people to submit their own photos to a microsite, or nailing a can of paint to a sidewalk to say, “We’ve remodeled.”

By knowing as much as we can about how people think, we’re smarter about how to reach them. And how to build brands that give the audience a reason to give a darn.

\* Source: Yankelovich Partners