

captive audience to watch your messages, or when you serve irrelevant messages, people avoid you, delete you, or put you in their mental spam folder. You know the guy at the mixer who talks only about himself? Yeah. Don't be that guy in your marketing. You might not think of your marketing as spam, but if nobody gets value out of it... sorry, you're spam.

If you're not adding value, you're just taking up space.

The schoolmarm's marketing process is costly, lengthy, and labor intensive. For big brands, it usually goes something like this: Fly around the country doing weeks of research. Fly home to have a meeting. Fly for more research. Meet again. Write a strategic brief. Create ads. Fly to test those ads. Buy media for the ads. Buy more media. And more media. Hit your audience over the head until they buy your product. Repeat.

This formula used to work quite efficiently. But not now. Today, you need to find a slightly unfair advantage.

You can go through these intricate steps to differentiate your brand. Or you can get in the express lane.

Which do you want? Schoolmarm or shortcut?

Let's put down the prissy pointer stick, and pick up a sorcerer's wand. We're about to perform marketing witchcraft.

Fascination is a fearsome force of influence, one that is not to be taken lightly. It spellbinds your listeners. It pulls them toward you, binding them to you, hypnotizing them. Ancient Romans understood this. So did the witches in Salem. So should you.*

Fascination doesn't have to scream in people's faces, repeat the same tired message, or stick out its hand and lamely ask for attention with a cold-fish handshake and a business card. Rather than

* Any force that has the ability to persuade others should be treated with respect and care. Use it for good, not evil.

pushing yourself on people, pull them toward you. You're crafting messages that people actually want. Instead of barging in on tightly protected attention spans, you're enticing the right people to become more deeply involved with you.

One More Lesson from the Most Popular Brand Nobody Likes

Your company can't always be better than the competition. But you can be *different*.

And if you follow the example of Jägermeister, you can transform even seemingly ordinary (or even foul-tasting!) products into orange tickets.

Here's an example of how I applied this myself (in a somewhat ironic way).

I first shared the story of Jägermeister in the original edition of *Fascinate*. Shortly after the book was published in 2010, I gave a keynote speech for thousands of marketers in Toronto at an event named the Art of Marketing. I was nervous. Not only was I a relatively new speaker, but I was slotted to speak immediately after someone I admired tremendously: Seth Godin. I'd followed his writing and thinking for years.

Now, if you've never given a speech immediately after someone who is a hero to the audience, well, it's pretty nerve-racking. To make matters worse, minutes before I went onstage, I went on Twitter and saw hundreds of glowing tweets of praise about his speech. The audience was swooning over him. Tweet after tweet, the superlatives flowed into my Twitter stream. Oh, did I mention I was the next speaker?

How could I follow one of the marketing greats and still stand out in my own way? I couldn't necessarily be *better* than Seth Godin. I couldn't out-Seth Seth. But I could be *different*. And different is better than better.

I'd planned to describe Jäger as a case study in my speech, and I carried a bottle in my bag as a visual aid. As I walked onto that