The Best Marketing Insight I've Received in the Past 5 Years

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By Mark Schaefer , Published April 22, 2014

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Over the past few years I have had the great fortune to meet and talk to some of the greatest marketing and business minds in the world. I have learned so much from them, but there is one single sentence from Dr. Robert Cialdini that continues to hang in my mind every single day.

Although we had this discussion in 2012, his advice seems to grow more profound to me month by month.

Dr. Cialdini is arguably the foremost academic and writer on the subject of power and influence in the

world. His books include the best-selling classic Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion.

While doing research for my book Return On Influence, I asked him, “Dr. Cialdini, in this information-dense world, how does a leader stand out?”

His reply: “Be more human.”

The more I have been immersed in this digital world, the more I am sure he is right.

Ultimately people will buy from who they know, who they trust. That isn’t going to come from the best backlinks or the most optimized content. I think the most human content and the most human companies will win in this competitive world.

Connecting in a human way builds trust. Trust builds loyalty. And loyalty trumps everything.

As I work with diverse organizations ranging from Johnson & Johnson to the US Air Force, I keep hearing myself repeat those words over and over again. Be. More. Human.

- When you get down to it, isn’t that what we cherish most of all?
- Is “being human” scalable across a large enterprise? How?
- Where is the line between being human and respecting privacy? Is this changing?
- Is “being human” a strategy? Should it be?

The idea raises a lot of questions. I am trying to discern what it means for me … for all of us in this community really.

Will the most human companies win? Will the most human blogs win? Will the most human humans win? I think so. I think that is really the killer app for an era of Content Shock.

Your thoughts?

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