

Renegade Millionaire

By Dan Kennedy

5 UN-Creative Thoughts About

Creativity

Entrepreneurs and marketers are constantly challenged to be creative. But creativity as it is commonly thought of and practiced is sin not virtue, because it is slow and ponderous; because it begins with a blank slate. One of the most profitably creative entrepreneurs of all time, Walt Disney, said “....stop talking and begin doing.” To be profitable in the real world, creativity must be fast, decisive, practical, implementable and implemented. There’s little room for creativity for creativity’s sake.

I tend to practice “creativity cheating” – and thought I’d give you a few quick “cheats”, from the many I talked about at my one day Creative Thinking For Entrepreneurs Seminar.*

#1: STEAL AND ADAPT WHAT’S ALREADY BUILT

From Tony Baxter, Senior V.P., Creative Development/Imagineering at Disney: “For the climactic scene in the Indiana Jones Adventure at Disneyland, we wanted the ride vehicle to suddenly start backing up as the giant rolling boulder comes thundering toward us. Having a ride vehicle back up in the middle of a ride is SOMETHING THAT’S NEVER BEEN DONE, BECAUSE IT’S NOT POSSIBLE. With eighteen vehicles traveling down the same track at the same time, a vehicle going in reverse would collide with the next vehicle coming behind it along the track. But if you’ve ever ridden in the Indiana Jones attraction, you know your vehicle *does* suddenly start backing up. At least that’s your perception. Your vehicle has actually stopped. It’s the walls and ceiling that are moving, giving you the undeniable feeling that you’re traveling backward.....so, where did we come up with this solution? A car wash. One of those self-service machines at the gas station where you pull your car in and park while a series of brushes and spray heads mounted above and beside your car travel back and forth.”

There’s more to Tony’s story, but enough here to make the point: whatever you’re trying to do, *somebody* has already figured out and built --- just not in your business or industry or in an application you might ordinarily, easily think of in connection with your business. You do NOT want to invest umpteen days, weeks, months duplicating all the figuring out and innovation and engineering – you want to find the thing that’s already built.

Oh, and a key question to ask every time you see anything, go anywhere, experience anything: *how can I use that?*

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#2: WORK BACKWARDS

Most people approach creative thinking from the front – the idea. Let's say you're going to open up a new restaurant. You'll probably start with the name, maybe the theme, the menu. But the best place to start is with what will insure a customer keeps coming back. Or his final few minutes in the place. What goes on at the cash register. What will create the highest average ticket. In short, you start thinking about outcomes and then build backwards. Right now, in the movie business, a ton of very important money comes from stealth advertising and product placement. So very, very, very early in the creative process, in many cases prior to script and definitely prior to picking actors, the list of every possible product/advertiser that can be integrated into the film is thought through. I am told in one blockbuster movie of 2005, a scene that took place inside a ski resort's dim-lit bar at night in the book was moved to daytime, outside on the restaurant's deck because they could get a sunglasses company, a parka company, and a liquor company with its name on patio table umbrellas to pony up money.

#3: BE MARKET / BUYER DRIVEN IN (ALMOST) EVERYTHING YOU DO

I started out, ever so briefly, in the 'traditional' advertising business, and have occasionally been involved – such as a few years back when I butted heads with Weight Watchers' big name Madison Avenue agency. They tend to start their creative process with random ideas. If you watch the advertising-related exercises on 'The Apprentice', you've seen this same mistake made. So, gather a bunch of ad industry creative types together to talk about advertising for a new perfume, they'll instantly leap off a dozen creative cliffs: names, colors, package, celebrity, music. I say: wait a damn minute! Tell me who the 'target' is – don't even bother telling me about the product. I don't give a rat's patootie that it smells like jasmine or ocean breezes or beached whales in the last throes of death or is made from cedar planks or horny minks' glandular secretions. I want to work backwards from who the intended buyer is. And it matters whether she's 18, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, single, married, etc. I catch clients constantly playing BLIND ARCHERY. Don't develop a product or service or offer or Marketing Message unless you are developing it *for* a particular somebody. Not only is that the best and surest way to make money and avoid flops, it's a terrific creativity shortcut because it narrows your range of creative work from

the git-go. If you want to manage time better, by now you probably know my best strategy is to give yourself less loose time to manage. If you want to get through the creation process quicker, give yourself a smaller canvass.

#4: SWIPE, SWIPE, SWIPE, SWIPE (LEGALLY & ETHICALLY)

I get real joy out of hearing from GKIC Members as I did the day I wrote this, and hearing one after another telling me how they took an example from the *NO B.S. MARKETING LETTER*, etc., etc. Again, you should never start with a blank slate. Too hard, too slow. Gather up some stuff to give you a jump start.

#5: DOODADS AS INSPIRATION

One of my favorite shortcuts is finding the little doodads, promotional items, grabbers that are available, that suggest or furnish the theme for my marketing campaign --- especially when doing direct-mail. The copywriting I did for Rory Fatt's boot camp one year, 'The Magical Business Life Boot Camp For Restaurant Owners', was because I first found a bunch of magic stuff in the Oriental Trading catalogs: tricks, cards, top hats, etc. I picked the theme because these things were available cheap.

If you don't get these catalogs, you must:

Hands On Fun – Creative Tools
www.handsonfun.com

Oriental Trading/Business
www.orientaltrading.com

Fun Impressions
www.funimpressions.com

Here are just a few items that beget ideas:

Magnetic Construction Set

“Build a better _____”

Foam Fall Leaves

“The leaves have started to turn colors – your reminder to _____”

Dinosaurs

“Once upon a time, mighty dinosaurs ruled the earth. They no longer even exist/ Why? Because they didn’t adapt to change. Don’t risk extinction!”

Jumbo Foam Dice

‘If you want to gamble, go to Vegas.

If you want a sure thing: _____”

Seasonal Themes....a little more obvious. For example, Chinese New Years, St. Patricks Day

So, for example, instead of the Magic theme, next year Rory might use : Build A Better Restaurant Business. There’s the construction set I just talked about, hard hats, toy hammers and tool kits, sales letters printed on architects’ blueprints, building permits, and on and on and on. Who else could use this? Kitchen remodelers.....fitness center (build a better body).....karate school (build a better kid)....

See, wandering through one of these catalogs is another creativity shortcut.

There’s a business term: “speed to market.” It’s extremely important. The entrepreneurs I work with who make the most money are “speed to market” people. They rely on creativity shortcuts. You should too.

DAN S. KENNEDY is a serial, multi-millionaire entrepreneur; highly paid and sought after marketing and business strategist; advisor to countless first-generation, from-scratch multi-millionaire and 7-figure income entrepreneurs and professionals; and, in his personal practice, one of the very highest paid direct-response copywriters in America. As a speaker, he has delivered over 2,000 compensated presentations, appearing repeatedly on programs with the likes of Donald Trump, Gene Simmons (KISS), Debbi Fields (Mrs. Fields Cookies), and many other celebrity-entrepreneurs, for former U.S. Presidents and other world leaders, and other leading business speakers like Zig Ziglar, Brian Tracy and Tom Hopkins, often addressing audiences of 1,000 to 10,000 and up. His popular books have been favorably recognized by Forbes, Business Week, Inc. and Entrepreneur Magazine. His NO B.S. MARKETING LETTER, one of the business newsletters published for Members of Glazer-Kennedy Insider's Circle, is the largest paid subscription newsletter in its genre in the world.<https://gkic.isrefer.com/go/CCLOS/milteer>