



A B2B Manifesto for the Next Decade

By: Shama Hyder, CEO of Zen Media

1) You have to fight irrelevance every single day.

The hardest battle today is not for attention or visibility. It is for relevance. Even in the best of times, you are slowly falling out of product market fit. In business, just like in nature, there is either growth or decay. No stagnation.



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Attention is the kid on the sidewalk in a panda suit spinning a banner. Relevance is the mere whisper that's now trending on Twitter. Attention gets you noticed, but relevance gets you business.

2) It takes an integrated approach to succeed.

Rented, Owned, Paid, and Earned media all playing together.

Even Google, *the king of paid*, agrees.



Joshua Spanier

VP, Google Media Lab

When marketers think about media, we tend to think about ads, because they're the portion we know the price of and pay for. Today, focusing on ad buys alone is too limited. There are countless other ways and surfaces where people can interact and engage with products. Marketers need to think expansively and consider the totality of these consumer interactions as media, and as an opportunity to see and engage, not just to achieve reach and frequency.

If every consumer moment, interaction, and surface is a marketing opportunity, how can your brand be useful, adaptive, and flexible in those spaces?

In Google's Media Lab, we've made a commitment: We won't present a stakeholder with any media plan that doesn't have integrated paid, owned, and earned components. We talk about the whole thing together, the way users experience it.

When you build 360-degree media plans, AI becomes a key enabler — unlocking efficiency, productivity, creativity, and profitability.

3) Consumption IS engagement.

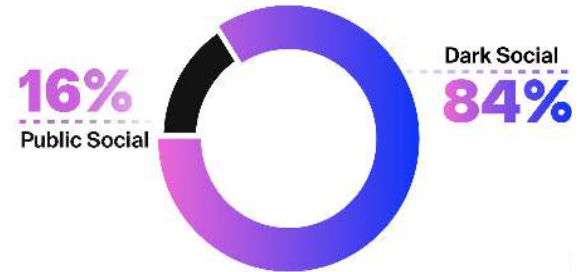
We consume publicly but share privately.

Search engines with a massive agenda have convinced marketers and brands that views and impressions are simply “vanity metrics” but in truth they are the true value metrics.

The truth is that consumption IS engagement.

This means that if you are only measuring the success of your content based on comments or public reactions, you are missing out on the true impact of your work.

Trackable Social Sharing



4) Relevance = Brand x Cultural Moment

What makes something go “viral?” It’s when a brand collides with a cultural moment (ex: a trending meme.) Doing this constantly is what creates meaningful moments of engagement with your audience.



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Attention out of context is simply SPAM.

5) Do, then Tell.

Telling people who you are and what you stand for isn't going to be enough. You have to create an experience worthy of word of mouth AND then create the word of mouth around it.

Is this worth talking about?

How are we going to talk about it?

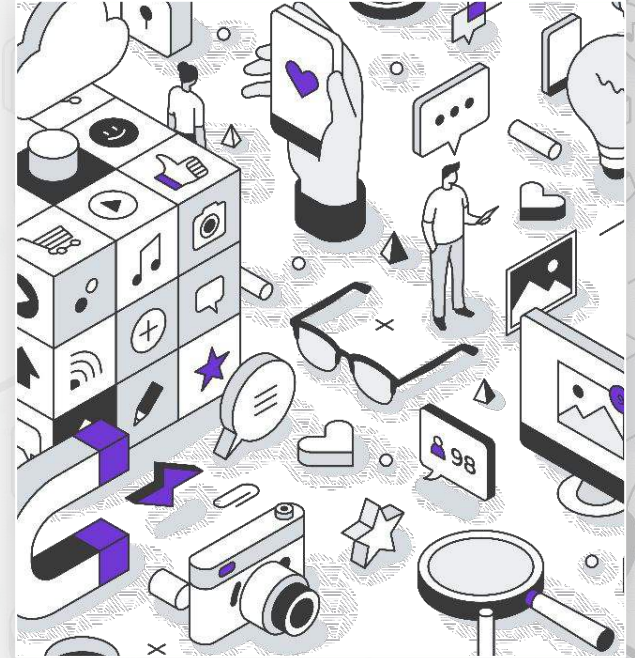
Think substance AND sizzle.



6) Everything is Media

Media is no longer the bastion of a few. Instead, it's everywhere your audience consumes information... the WSJ, podcasts, LinkedIn feeds, IG reels, substack newsletters.

This means you have to broaden your lens around what actually influences your audience.



7) Credibility and Distribution are two different things.

You need both.

Historically, all earned media channels provided credibility and distribution. Landing in the New York Times for example provided a high dose of both. Even showing up in your local paper meant you could reach your target audience with the right intended message at scale.

Those days are over.

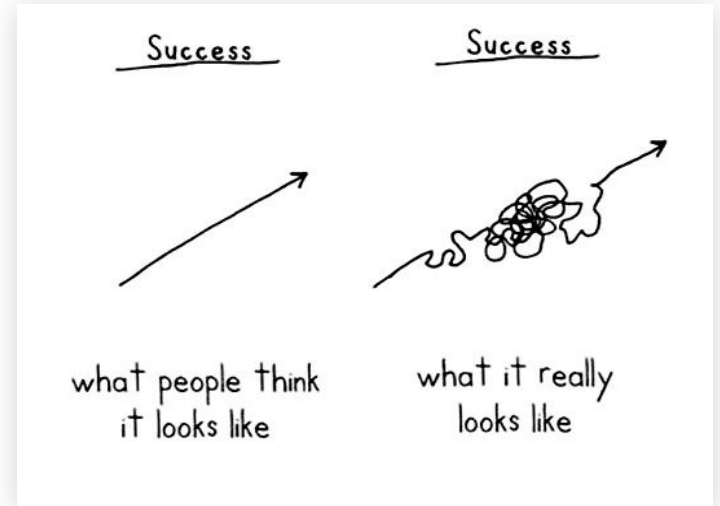
Even once you have third party credibility, you have to provide the distribution for proper influence at scale



8) Meaningful > Merely Measurable

So much of marketing today is structured for business efficiency but not buyer effectiveness.

People do what they are incentivized to do. You have to incentivize the meaningful over the merely measurable.



9) AI is an **amplifier** of human abilities.

From the dawn of time, humans have done three things: create, communicate and collaborate with each other. AI will allow us to amplify that but it won't take away the core human instincts to keep doing those three things.

AI will quickly become the interface for how we interact with the world at large.



10) Being a recognizable and trusted brand is the ultimate unfair advantage in an unknowable future.

Information was scarce so our entire world was built to exploit that scarcity. What happens when information is abundant? What becomes scarce is trust. The best time to start building a brand was yesterday. The second best is today.





We specialize in influencing discerning audiences in complex industries.

If that sounds like you, we should talk.

We are the only new media agency to be honoured by both the White House and The United Nations as a Top 100 company in the United States.

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