

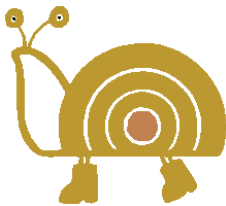


Dec. 2003

**Killer Phrases:
Long-winded and
Short-sighted**

*We don't like
their sound.
Groups of guitars
are on the
way out.*

**Decca executive,
1962, after
turning down
the Beatles**



*With over 50
foreign cars
already on sale
here, the Japanese
auto industry isn't
likely to carve out
a big slice of the
US market.*

**Business Week,
Aug. 2, 1968**

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Will Reed's Guerrilla Marketing GENIUS

"Wake up your brain, learn how to earn!"

Strike Three!

Expecting to get good ideas from meetings

Brain dead meetings are an enormous waste of time. This is a serious threat when as a Guerrilla Marketer, your top 3 resources are time, energy, and imagination—and meetings deplete all three. The biggest dilemma you face as a marketer is how to get good ideas from meetings.

Advice typically given for productive meetings is predictable and often impractical. Stick to the agenda, watch the time, make sure that everyone is informed, encourage participation, summarize, and end with clear action steps.

These things may get you through a meeting with minimum pain, but they are not enough to get you out of the meeting with good ideas. A truly productive meeting must wake up your brain, and get people motivated to make things happen.

6 ways to wake up brain dead meetings

Meetings are a turn off for most people because they have suffered through so many bad ones in the past. Most people admit that they get better ideas in the shower than at work. Short of holding

your meetings in the shower, what can you do to liven them up and make the most of your meeting time?

1. *Expose killer phrases.* Chic Thompson used the term 'killer phrases' in his book *What a Great Idea!*, to describe the things we say to ourselves and to each other that discourage new ideas. It is negative thinking dressed in sheep's clothing, and accounts for the premature death of most good ideas. For a list of typical killer phrases, click on <http://www.whatagreatidea.com/media/poster01.pdf>

2. *Overcome writer's block.* People in meetings often experience collective writer's block, a blank mind facing a blank page. Brainwriting is a technique in which everyone is given a sheet of paper, writes a suggested solution to the problem, then passes the paper to the left. The papers keep circulating around the table until they are full of ideas. Brainwriting cross-fertilizes team thinking, and generates hundreds of ideas in a short time.

3. *Keep it all on one page.* Whether you put your agenda on a Mind Map or in outline form, your meeting will be more productive if you discipline yourself to keep it all on one page. Using key words and phrases you can reduce a document to 10% of its original length and still retain clarity.

***Who the hell
wants to hear
actors talk?***

**H.M. Warner,
Warner Brothers,
1927**

***There is no
reason anyone
would want a
computer in
their home.***

**Ken Olson,
President of
Digital
Equipment
Corp.,
1977**



***Everything that
can be invented
has been invented.***

**Charles H. Duell,
Office of Patents,
1899**



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B-SMART Systems
Tamura Bldg. 6F
4-23-17 Higashi Ikebukuro
Toshima-ku, Tokyo
170-0013 JAPAN
Tel: +81 (3)-5953-8816
Fax: +81 (3)-5953-8862

4. *Compete against the clock.* Parkinson's Law says that work expands to fill the time available for it. Shorten the time available and you will still get the job done in time. Lengthen it and you won't accomplish any more. Use a timer and a soft bell to encourage people to keep their statements short.

5. *Take meeting time seriously.* Loose discipline and low expectations cause people to arrive late to meetings, be mentally absent during the meeting, and leave early. The leader of the meeting should demand full attention, and hold meetings that are worth everyone's valuable time.

6. *Produce a one-page action plan.* No one should leave a marketing meeting without a one-page summary and action plan. Between variable attention spans and complex issues, the capacity for misunderstanding is unlimited. The meeting itself should produce a one-page list of action steps, and everyone should know what they are to do next.

Resources

One of the best ways to avoid brain dead meetings is to eliminate the excess before the meeting starts. Two excellent and free software resources can help you cut out the fat and get to the point quickly. Lighten the load you put on others, and reduce the burden they put on you.

Copernic Summarizer

<http://www.copernic.com/en/products/summarizer/>

The Copernic Summarizer enables you to make summaries of any length for any digital text or document, including Word documents, Web pages, PDF files, e-mail messages, and text from the Clipboard.

Bullfighter

<http://www.dc.com/insights/bullfighter/index.asp>

Cut the bull out of business with free software by Deloitte that checks a document for readability. The Bullfighter checks syllable and sentence length and suggests ways to simplify written documents. It installs in both Microsoft Word and Power Point.

For further information on resources available to help you enliven meetings and presentations, contact:

William Reed

Cell: 070-6673-9641

info@gmarketing-genius.com

<http://www.gmarketing-genius.com>

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3 Reasons Why People Strike Out in Marketing

- *Investing money before imagination (Oct issue)—Strike 1*
 - *Missing your marketing team's blind spot (Nov issue)—Strike 2*
 - *Expecting to get good ideas from meetings (Dec issue)—Strike 3*
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