

A Target of One

Seth Godin shared a thought in 2014 about how marketers can learn a lesson from Broadway. I copied this quote and have often used it to suggest a point:

“Make plays for your audience instead of finding an audience for your plays.”

This thought begs the chicken/egg question: “Which came first, your message or your audience?”

I hope your vision for your message came from something you saw or heard that begged you to step up. It happened quietly, almost without fanfare. But it made you feel something that didn't go away. Maybe weeks passed, but you kept feeling that you could do, must do, something to help.

Then, you began to see others whose pain called out to you for help. The call from hurting eyes is persistent and loud. “Help me.”

The call won't stop and so perhaps you write or speak about a path to help. You provide guidance for a way forward. In short order, you stop speaking about anything else. Perhaps you start a blog or write a book, but you know in your heart, the path you write about is a way forward for those who need the path.

In about a year, you notice that testimonies from people you helped have surfaced. Several people have said the equivalent of “I once was blind, but now I see.” Perhaps you also note the people who respond to you are similar in many ways. And most of them have a friend or two who want to learn about the path you teach.

This is a short story of how efficient target markets are formed.

The target was always there, others didn't see it. The vision of others focused elsewhere. When you saw it, you helped.

A target market emerges from a need and not a demographic. Age and gender classifications do not define a target market.

Markets are segmented on the basis of need.

Don't send your heart-mined message to a demographic. Send your message to a segment of people who need your help. Benefit segmentation is just marketing language for meeting specific needs.

The audience for your method of help will grow as you help people, one by one. Think of your target market as one person with a need. Serve the need with excellence and you will notice a line forming to meet you.

Another quote from Seth seems to seal this thought:

"Activate people who already like you. It is far more productive and profitable than it is to spend time and money yelling at people who are ignoring you."

Target the line who needs you.