Purple Cow Summary

1-Sentence-Summary: _Purple Cow_ explains why building a great product and advertising the heck out of it simply doesn't cut it anymore and how you can build something that's so remarkable people have to share it, in order to succeed in today's crowded post-advertising world.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:

"In a crowded marketplace, fitting in is a failure. In a busy marketplace, not standing out is the same as being invisible."
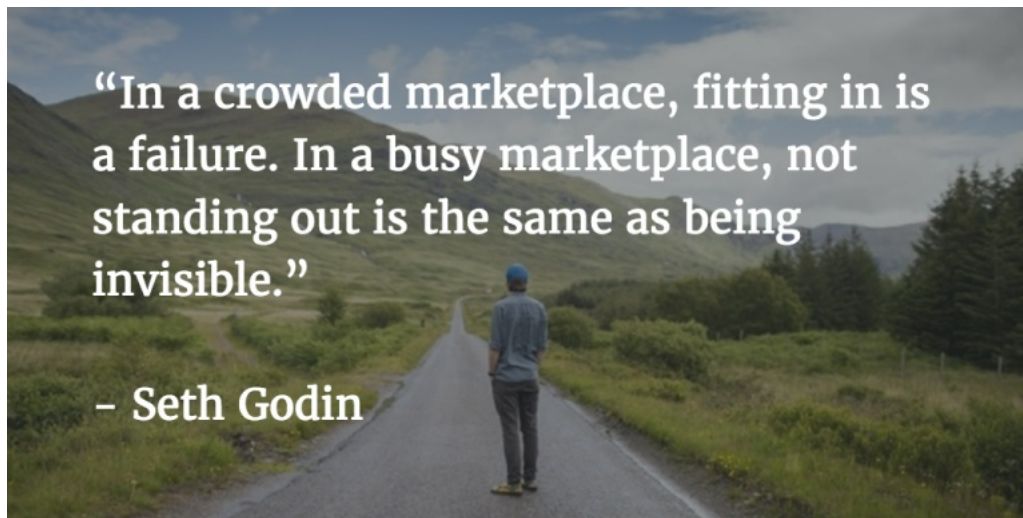
– Seth Godin

Gary Vaynerchuk has a fair point when he simply introduces Seth Godin as "the legend" on his show. You know you are one when you can type in just your first name into Google and your own blog shows up.

Seth Godin caught the magnitude of what the internet would turn into from day one, and boy, was he right. His first startup Yoyodyne, which used giveaways and contests and games to market companies to online users back in 1995 (can you believe this?) was eventually acquired by Yahoo in 1998 for $30 million and Seth got a fancy new job as Director of Marketing there.

Here are 3 lessons from this particular masterpiece of his:

1. We live in the third era of advertising, where marketing is mainly done through word-of-mouth.
2. Not taking risks is riskier than taking risks.
3. If you want your product to succeed, focus on early adopters as your first customers.

Ready to make your marketing remarkable? Here we go!

Lesson 1: Today marketing is mainly done through word-of-mouth recommendations.

Seth walks us through the history of advertising and says there were three distinct periods.

Before advertising was way back in ancient times, when people could only spread the word about great deals with their mouths.

For example in ancient Rome, when one of the vendors on the market sold particularly good fish, everyone who bought one would of course tell all their friends and family. Likely, the next time they'd go to the market, they'd visit that same vendor.

During advertising was the time during the 18- and 19-hundreds, when advertising seemed to work like magic and the only limit to how much you could sell through it was how much you were able to buy. Billboards, ads in magazines, TV commercials, they all fall into this category.

But by now we're in the era **after advertising.** Consumers completely ignore ads now and <u>are already blind to banner ads online</u>. Unless they're looking for something specific, for example a car, people won't look at car ads.

In the era we are in right now, we've gone back to word-of-mouth marketing, only that the word is now exchanged online, which makes news about good and bad products spread a lot more quickly, .

Lesson 2: Not taking risks is riskier than taking risks.

Because we live in a post-advertising world and the internet is such a noisy place, you have to be truly remarkable to stand out – like a purple cow among brown, black and white cows.

Seth calls this remarkable marketing and without it, your product is doomed to fail.

That's why the riskiest thing you and your company can do right now, is to not take any risks at all.

Following the trends and trying not to make any noise, won't make you stand out, it will make you invisible.

For example, Ford is a steady company, but they're not very innovative. They do what they know to do, again and again, which is why <u>their stock price has merely changed in 10 years</u>. They're a boring company.

Take Porsche, and you see a company that's always at the edge. In 2013, Porsche took a massive risk with <u>the 918 project</u>.

They built a car with hybrid technology, which they'd never done before, the car cost

eight times as much as any of their normal models, and they limited production to 918 units.

But what they built was truly remarkable, the car caught major attention for it's space-style design and also set an all time record on the Nurburgring.

The car completely sold out.

It's your choice.

You can never take risks, and never build something that's so great everyone will eventually want it, or you can work at the edge, occasionally fall, but rise all the higher in the long run.

Lesson 3: If you want your product to successfully reach the masses, focus on early adopters first.

The gist of it is that you need to communicate why you do things before you tell people what you do, because that'll help get your product into the right people's hands.

In both Seth's and Simon's case, these people are called early adopters.

Traditional marketing shoots its advertising right at the majority of people, when a new product comes out. The mistake with this is that **the majority isn't ready for it yet – they want a proven product, not some new gimmick**.

Instead, build your product in a way that **makes it attractive to innovators and early adopters**, the tech geeks, the people that stand in line for 24 hours to buy an iPhone, and **let them spread the word**.

When you do this and make sure that your product is easily shareable, you'll make sure your product eventually reaches the masses through diffusion, and they won't turn you down at the door.

Purple Cow Review

You can't possibly comprehend Seth by reading one summary, watching one talk, or even reading one book of his. He describes himself as a lifetime of projects, and I think he's quite spot on.

I like the inherent call to greatness in _Purple Cow_, it really carries a "get up and do something great" vibe which resonates well with me.

Considering this book is from 2003 is mind-boggling, a lot of ideas from it still haven't reached the masses today – but they will – because just like his advice, his book is – remarkable

I haven't read the full thing, but it holds a lot of great case studies, if you're new to the

topic go for the summary on Blinkist, it holds a lot of info, but Seth's great stories remain for those who get the book.

Read full summary on Blinkist

Get the book on Amazon

Learn more about the author

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why television ads are a crappy bet to make
- Examples of purple cows today
- How the music industry failed to take risks and now suffers from it
- Which other groups of customers exist besides early adopters and when a product reaches them
- What marketing's actually about and why the Leaning Tower of Pisa beats the Pantheon in tourist visitors 100x
- The kinds of advertising you can use today to reach the right customers and how to measure your advertising success
- Why most companies fail to create purple cows

Who would I recommend the Purple Cow summary to?

The 17 year old with no online presence so far, where she creates content on a regular basis, the 43 director of marketing, who's not sure whether to give Facebook ads a try, and anyone who's sick of old advertising.