

Guy Kawasaki on How to Create Enchanting Content: Podcast

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Patricia:

Hi everyone. I'm Patricia Redsicker blogging for Content Marketing Institute and I'm joined by Guy Kawasaki, author of the new book *Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions*. Guy is a very respected and popular business icon with a long resume, and I wish I could introduce him for all his fascinating accomplishments, but I'm afraid we'd run out of time. So Guy is going to talk about his new book and offer some expert advice on content strategy for small businesses. Welcome to the program Guy, it's really, really good to have you.

Guy:

Thank you. Thank you very much for having me.

Patricia:

I think it's only fitting that we start this interview with a story since you are such a good storyteller. I love that you started your book with one of the most unforgettable stories that I've ever heard used to describe the word enchantment. This is a story about Karin Muller (and I hope that I'm pronouncing that correctly), and she's a volunteer in the Peace Corps serving in the Philippines during the late 1980's. For the sake of those who haven't read your book, just rehash that story real quick and use it as a springboard to explain why enchantment is so necessary in businesses.

Guy:

Sure, so the story as Karen tells it is that she was a Peace Corps volunteer, she was in a village in the Philippines and she found out that these guerillas were going to come and visit her (using the word visit loosely) and kind of terrorize her. So what she did is, during the day, she knew this was going to happen so during the day she collected a lot of sugar and coffee from around the village so when guerillas came, rather than acting all afraid (although I'm sure she was afraid) or indignant or angry or anything like that what she did, what she said to them is, "I've been waiting for you. Please come in and let's have a cup of coffee."

So she welcomed them into her house, or her hut and I think that's a very good example of enchantment. She enchanted them ... what could have been a violent and very dangerous situation. She turned into something that was completely different by inviting them in to have a cup of coffee. Kind of disarming them if you will. Literally disarming them (laughing). And so that's the story I open up the book with on how she enchanted these guerillas.

Patricia:

And why then is enchantment so necessary in business today?

Guy:

(child bursts into room and interrupts) Sorry, my little boy just came in the office (laughing). Nate, I'm on a conference. Your friends are in the house. (laughing) Now I have to get the door, one second. Ok where were we?

Patricia:

(laughing) Don't worry; we'll edit that part out.

Guy:

No, you should leave it in, that's the best part. (laughing)

Patricia:

(laughing) You're right. It's enchanting. So you were using that story to explain why enchantment is so necessary in business today.

Guy:

Yes, enchantment is so necessary in business today because there is so much noise and there's so much competition and there's so much hype that you can try to just bludgeon your customer, and promote your customer, and coupon your customer, and group on your customer and do all this kind of stuff but really what you want to do is enchant your customer because if you enchant your customer you create this deep, delightful, mutually beneficial and voluntary relationship. And by doing that life gets much easier. It's easier to sell to that person, it's easier to support that person, it's easier to sell upgrades and future products.

Think of the difference between Apple and most computer companies. Most computer companies try to get you to buy a laptop, and that's the end of the transaction. And it is a transaction. By contrast with Apple, Apple is all about enchanting you. So they enchant you and you buy into their dream so the first thing that you do is you buy a Macintosh and then you buy an iPhone, then you buy an iPod, then you buy an iPad, then you're using iTunes, and iBooks and the next thing you know you're standing in line so that you can be one of the early purchasers of the iPad 3 and you've waited overnight, outside in the cold. That's the difference between enchantment and simply a transaction.

Patricia:

In your book, I think you dedicate a whole chapter to "How to Launch your Cause." I love that chapter because it pretty much says something that we really ought to know, which is that people don't want more information. They are up to "here", they're up to their eyeballs with information and what they want is to hear a great story. And yet we have companies that continue to disenchant their audience with boring, predictable, passionless presentations.

Guy:

(laughing) Tell me how you really feel. Don't hold yourself back.

Patricia:

(laughing) No, but you have such wonderful examples in the book of real companies doing that. Whether it's with their elevator speech or whatever it is, but they just go out there and continue to create this very disenchanting content. And I'm wondering, and I'm sure a lot of people are wondering where do they go wrong, where do we go wrong, why are we continuing to create disenchanting content?

Guy:

That's a very good question. I think a lot of it is because maybe people have too many MBA's in their companies.

Patricia:

(laughing)

Guy:

The best way to introduce a product is to tell a story, and the story ranges from two people in a garage saying that we were not happy because the only place we could use a computer was to drive to a university, or to drive to a large company, or work for the government. So we thought surely there must be a better way, there must be a way that I can have my own computer, a personal computer, so we started Apple. That's the kind of story that people want to hear.

They don't want to hear about patent pending, curb jumping, paradigm shifting, I triple E standard enhancing kind of gizmos. Nobody cares about that. Nobody understands half of what you're saying. So it's to tell a story about how your wife died of breast cancer so you dedicated your life to finding the cure. You know some kind of story.

Patricia:

Guy, among the many, many things that you've done, you've written 10 books, and you've had an illustrious career at Apple, but you've also built a reputation for yourself as the King of Content Curation. I mean we all know Alltop, we use Alltop, so we know you for being that guy who gives us that platform. Talk to the person who functions as a content curator for their audience and tell them how they can strengthen that position to become a thought leader in the environment.

Guy:

You know I think one of the best ways to realize this positioning and achieve what you just said is using Twitter. So on Twitter, what you want to do is you want to tweet out stuff that's very compelling and very interesting. This means that most people don't care if your cat rolled over, honestly. So what you need to do is figure out, let's say you want to be positioned as an expert in food, right, so you want to be this foody expert. So the question is how do you find interesting stuff about food all the time? Well my website Alltop aggregates all the food blogs at a topic called Food.Alltop.com. So you could go to Food.Alltop and find all the interesting stories about food and then grab their links and then tweet them out. So this is a way that we curated all this content about food down to a manageable page that you can then use to position yourself as an expert in food. And we have about 900 topics.

Now I'm not trying to tell you to use Alltop as much as I'm trying to show that the way to be a great curator is to find great stories, get their links and post them to Facebook and Twitter. Although I will tell between Facebook and Twitter, I think Facebook is basically a picture economy where you should post pictures all the time and Twitter is the link economy where you should be posting links all the time.

Patricia:

As I was reading this book, Guy, I couldn't help but see a lot of content marketing relevance in your book mainly because that's the lens through which I look at things because I'm a content marketer, and partly because my audience is made of people who do content marketing. A lot of us, number one problem that we face is the consistent creation of original content. Consistently creating original content. So talk to us about the right balance between using other people's content, OPC if you will, and original content. Because the demand to create new content every single day is just daunting and at some point you kind of feel the pressure of "Let me just grab something from somebody else." What's the right balance that we should be seeking?

Guy:

(laughing) The right balance is whatever you can survive with. (laughing) When I first started my blog I was posting a really good article once a day, ok. And trust me when I tell you that didn't last too long because I didn't have 365 good ideas. So I think there's always a tradeoff. Right now I blog about four or five times a month, primarily at the American Express Open Forum but the rest of the time my contributors and I are constantly looking for links to curate. I think that curation is easier than creation, duh, of course but don't underestimate the power of curation. I could make the argument that there's already plenty of content and that curation is as valuable a service as creation. I don't know if the world needs any more creators, it could probably use more curators.

Patricia:

So you're giving more emphasis to one than the other, is that what you're saying?

Guy:

Well it depends on what you're expecting your audience to read. I don't think you could have a ratio of 80:20 curation to creation on your blog. So if 80% of your content was curation and 20% was original on your blog, your blog would fail. On the other hand, for your Twitter stream, your Twitter stream could easily be 90% curation, 10% creation. My ratio is probably much higher; my ratio is probably 99:1 curation, on Twitter.

Patricia:

And what about on Facebook? I know you talked about pictures and all.

Guy:

When I first joined up and started using a Facebook fan page I thought I would do just like I did on Twitter. Mostly I would be curating and providing links and I noticed that on Facebook people very seldom like, like as in the Facebook word "like", they very seldom like links and they very seldom make comments to links. And what they really "like" and what they really comment on is pictures. So now I just post pictures all the time.

The other night I stayed in a hotel in West Hollywood called the London, and it had this desk in the room that had to be 8 ft long, it was made out of granite or marble or something, so it was rock solid as opposed to the flimsy crappy desk you get in many hotel rooms and it had a good lamp and it had on top of the desk three plugs for iPad, iPhone, and Macintosh. And I'm so used to having to look underneath the desk and you find that there's a 2 plug outlet underneath the desk and one plug is dedicated to the lamp and the other plug is dedicated to the TV so you can either have light, TV, or battery charge. Pick 2, right. And so I posted a picture that this was the best desk that I've had in a hotel room, it was 8 ft long, it had all these plugs, it was rock solid. So I posted that picture and I must have had 50 "likes" and 25 comments. And that's for a stupid iPhone picture of a desk.

Patricia:

Wow.

Guy:

And so I've seen that happen over and over again. So on your Facebook fan page, your most useful tool is your iPhone.

Patricia:

A lot of brands are going out there and trying to create viral content. Everybody wants to make a viral

video like the Old Spice Guy video that enchanted us two years ago. And everybody wants to do that and you're saying 'No, that's a mistake. You don't want to necessarily make that your goal.' And my question to you is what's wrong with that and what should content marketers be focusing on instead?

Guy:

Don't get me wrong. I mean every one of us would like to have viral content like that, right. But that is kind of the problem. It's not like 99% of the world is saying, "I want to make crappy, boring content that no one will share," and then 1 out of 100 person say, "Oh, I'm going to be different. I'm going to make something interesting and viral." Everybody is saying they want interesting and viral and so the problem with that theory is that up front nobody can predict what's going to be viral because if you could predict what was going to be viral every one of us would make viral content, right?

So, if someone said to you, "Well, I'm going to show this handsome black actor calling out various social media figures and we think that's going to go viral." I mean how many of us would have said "Oh yeah, of course. People are interested in aftershave and hot black actors making fun of social media figures. Of course that will be viral." Well why don't we show babies roller-skating and we're a water company, yeah that will be viral. Or how about United Airlines broke my guitar so I'm going to make a song about United Airlines breaking guitars. Tell me who among us would have said, "Oh yeah, those three are going to go viral." And so the strategy of "we're going to be viral" is a flawed strategy because it's just total luck when you're viral. Show me an example where people can consistently put out viral videos.

Patricia:

Actually, one of my favorite YouTube videos is "Charlie Bit My Finger," and you're right. There was no plan in that and look at how wonderful that video is, so you're right about the luck. But I'm still wondering there, are you saying that there's absolutely no planning here, no strategy, no thought goes into these wonderful viral videos? (laughing)

Guy:

(laughing) Well, if push comes to shove I would say yes. Can you honestly tell me that the people who started dropping Mentos into Diet Coke had a plan; you think they had a strategy laid out?

Patricia:

Probably not.

Guy:

Well so we're seeing a pattern here. If somebody comes up with a social media plan and says strategy #1 - Produce viral videos. You kind of have to scratch your head and say, "Duh, of course you want to produce a viral video but that's not a strategy, that's an act of God."

Patricia:

I have tons of questions to ask you but you know time is not on our side so I'm just going to grab one or two of my most important questions and one of them is a very wonderful idea that comes across in your book. The concept, the idea that "Nobodies are the New Somebodies." And I love that, I love that so much because I really think that there is someone out there who needs to hear that, myself included. When I read that I jumped up and down for joy, it's a liberating concept. You're saying to people who are invisible "Don't worry if you're not Mari Smith. Don't worry if you're not Mike Stelzner, or Guy Kawasaki. No matter what you are doing this is your moment, seize your moment and make something happen, and I love that. Could you just elaborate on that a little more? Why is it that this is our

moment?

Guy:

Well there are actually two different concepts here. So the concept that you're alluding to is that in an early market like this there are really no true experts. To this day I think a social media expert is an oxymoron, ok. None of us really know what's going on. Some of us have bigger mouths than others, there's no such thing as a social media expert. It's too early to determine who the experts are so it's a wide open, you just crossed the Mississippi River baby and you've got all of the west coast and the winners have not been picked yet, so have at it. Stake your claim and go for it. Who knew who Mari Smith was 10 years ago? Nobody. Who knew who Chris Pirillo was or Brian Solis? Nobody. So in an early market like this grab your territory, make your claim and do good work. So that's what you're talking about.

When I say nobody's are the new somebody's its different. What I'm saying is that it used to be in the old world of marketing that the A-listers and the journalists and the analysts, the powerful people you could identify who they were, you would suck up to them, you would hope that they like what you do and that they would bless what you do and that they would quote/unquote make your product, right. So the *Wall Street Journal* writes about your new gadget and boom! Everybody reads the *Wall Street Journal* runs to Best Buy to buy your product, and you're successful. I don't think it works like that anymore.

I think that now the A-listers and these experts they write about products that are already successful, not that they make successful. So the question becomes how does a product become successful? And I think it's because of the nobodies, that is lonelyboy15 with 15 followers on Twitter and you've never heard of him, you never probably will hear of him. He's non-identifiable, he doesn't work for the *Wall Street Journal* but he just happens to love your product and he tells Tiffany15 and Tiffany tells Brooke75 and next thing you know there's a bunch of people you've never heard of using your product and you reach critical mass. At that point all these so called A-listers have to write about you because if they don't write about you they look clueless.

So what I introduce *Enchantment*, for example, my book, usually you send out about 150 review copies. I sent out 1600 and these 1600 went to any blogger, anybody who asked and so right now I have about 350 reviews of the book and they are in vegetarian blogs, they are in dog trainer blogs, they are in especially esthetician blogs, I own the beauty blog market. I don't know why but beauty bloggers love to write about enchantment. Have any of you heard of these beauty bloggers? No. Does the beauty blogger necessarily work for Vogue or Elle? No. And so this is Trixie who's been writing a beauty blog and she got my book and wrote about Enchantment, Hallelujah. Can you imagine if I got 1% of the women who are interested in beauty to buy Enchantment how many copies that would be? So don't just focus on the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, nobodies are the new somebodies. That's my theory.

Patricia:

I just want to ask you if you have some closing words of wisdom for those who are trying to tell enchanting stories and maybe they're having difficulty, what can you tell them?

Guy:

Several things. First of all I have a promotion that's, it's not going to get better than this promotion so I have a promotion going right now that if you buy Enchantment you can get a free copy of Presentation

Zen by Gar Reynolds. So this is probably one of the top 2 or 3 books about making great presentations. So you buy Enchantment for I don't know \$15 and you get this \$25 book for free, so it's not going to get any better than that. And maybe offline I'll send you the link to that so people can redeem. People can buy it anywhere in the world, in any form and all they have to do is prove purchase and they'll get a free copy of Presentation Zen. So that's number 1.

So getting back to Enchantment, the key to enchantment is three things that you're likeable, trustworthy and you have great quality.

So I'll just through and give you examples of this so that people can keep in their mind who the goal, who the target is, whose this great example. For likeability, when I first met Richard Branson it was in Moscow. He asked me if I flew Virgin and I said no so he just got on his hands and knees and he started polishing my jacket (means to say shoes) with his elbow, with his coat. That's likeability. So you want the likeability of Richard Branson.

As far as trustworthiness I think you look at Zappos. Zappos has convinced millions of women to try shoes without trying them on. That is fricking amazing to me and that is because women trust Zappos and they know they can send back anything that they bought and they know that Zappos will pay shipping both ways. So that's trustworthiness.

And quality is Apple, Macintosh, iPhone, iPod, iPad, iAnything. So basic to be enchanting, in a nutshell, you want the quality of Apple, you want the trustworthiness of Zappos and you want the likeability of Virgin and Richard Branson. If you do those three things, arguably, you don't need to read the book. (laughing)

Patricia:
(laughing) But you should anyway.

Guy:
Yeah, but you should anyway.

Patricia:
Well thank you very much Guy. I know you're a busy guy and I really thank you for the time that you've spent here with me. It was a wonderful conversation. Ladies and Gentlemen the name of the book is *Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions*. Pick it up at Amazon or wherever books are sold and you can also find Guy on his Facebook page which is <http://www.facebook.com/enchantment>. With that I'd like to thank you all for joining me. Enjoy your day.