

Is Dan Kennedy the Real Deal ... or Just Damn Good at Marketing Himself?

By Paul Hollingshead

Something's happening to me these days.

I'm not sure what, but over the last year or so – ever since I hit half a century – I've found myself less accepting, more jaded of people, their motives and a long list of other things.

I've always thought it was supposed to happen the other way – where, as you age, you become accepting of others ... at peace with one's self.

Nope.

For instance, I've lost all patience with people trying to pull one over on me, and I'm less likely to hold my tongue about it – even when I'm not sure they are.

I used to be something of a news junkie, but now I'm fed up with the media, government and the games they both play. Can't be bothered with any of it.

Suddenly I hate it when people are late, so I've instituted a strict five-minute rule: If someone's more than 5 minutes late for an appointment (especially a tee time), I leave.

And then there's Dan Kennedy.

I'm the first to admit I'm probably wrong about this. I don't know Dan well at all. I met him once – at Bootcamp. Very nice guy. Definitely smart. Knows his marketing like few people I know – definitely in Michael Masterson's league. And people who know him better than I do say he's a really great guy.

But there has always been something about his writing – at least the writing I see – that puts me off. I find it on the high and mighty side. Braggadocios. There's a "you're lucky I'm even talking you" quality to his writing that I find, well *off-putting*.

So, over time, I have to admit that I've built up a little bit of a prejudice against Dan.

Now, as you know, we (AWAI) do a lot with Dan and his Academy and I found myself wondering if he really was a good influence on AWAI members ...

I asked Katie not too long ago (no doubt in a cynical tone), "Did people really get \$5,000 worth of value from his get together in Cleveland" a while back? (Yes! I was assured. And Katie should know. She was there ... plus she e-mailed me all the glowing letters from AWALers who went and said it was the best experience of their life!)

Okay, but still I wondered ...

Is Dan Kennedy the real deal? Or is he just damn good at marketing himself.

I can't say why for sure, (remember, there's something happening to me ...) but for some inexplicable reason, I had convinced myself of the latter.

And I went on my merry way.

All the while I've been getting Dan's "Look Over My Shoulder" reports in the mail. And ever since I formed my opinion about Dan, I've let them pile up, unopened.

There must have been more than a dozen of them, sitting there on my shelf – still sealed in their colorful envelopes with cartoon illustrations of Dan and someone called "Pete the Printer" on them. (Had I been harboring these feelings about Dan *this* long? I asked myself ...)

Now here's the thing – and why I'm telling you all this in the first place.

Yesterday I went to the mail on the way to picking up my son Michael up from school. And in my mailbox was the latest issue of "Look Over My Shoulder" and a bunch of bills. (Frankly I was disappointed because I was expecting a royalty check ...)

So I did what I've done with the past dozen or so LOSs ... I tossed it in the back seat, buckled up and headed to school to get Mike.

But I arrived 15 minutes early. So with no phone service (Vermont!), no papers and only bills to read, I did what I haven't done in months ... *I opened the latest issue of Dan's Look Over My Shoulder & "Marketing Your Services ...*

The first thing that fell out of the rather thick bundle of papers was a big picture of Dan and 'Pete the Printer' posing by a helicopter with "TRUMP" stamped on the side of it. (Not sure why the picture was in there, but it didn't do much to change the impression I had formed. Dan does speaking engagements with Donald Trump, so I suppose he got a ride in one of his helicopters. Somewhere I have a picture of myself with Ed Asner, but I'm not about to post it here)

So I tucked the photo away, and another sheet of paper fell out ... headlined "Dan Kennedy's 10 Wealth Creators." I read down the list assuming I'd find things I've heard a million times before.

I didn't.

I had to admit, these were good. I mean there were things on that list that made great sense ... things I've never heard before. Because they weren't strictly about writing stronger copy, like an "in-the-box" thinker might come up with when putting together

a list on how to make more money as a copywriter

They were about developing better relationships with the clients you get and have ... so they pay you more for the same effort!

Smart.

One stood out. "Find people (clients) with unmet specialized needs and match yourself to them."

What Dan is saying here (I think) is there are hundreds of thousands of smaller businesses out there that can use specialized marketing copy but have no idea how to do it themselves ... can't afford a big advertising agency ... and really don't know where else to turn. So you – with your marketing know-how and writing expertise – can come in and be the hero ... or as Dan puts it, "the guy (or gal) who showed the caveman fire."

Here's a little snippet that gives you a good idea what he was talking about:

This is what you want to do for prospective clients and then again for the new clients with the work you do: show them something as revolutionary and amazing to them as fire must have been to the caveman. The good news is, it doesn't take that much. Most business owners, corporate executives, even marketing directors still wear, as Paul Newman put it in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, bifocals, not binoculars. They don't look far afield. They are myopic. They have scotomas.

When you show them a thoughtful, probative diagnostic process for unearthing opportunities and organizing marketing priorities or at least gathering comprehensive raw material before writing copy, it'll be fire to the cavemen. When you show them a variety of approaches to each component of a marketing campaign, it'll be fire to the cavemen – and this can be fascinating fire indeed. For example, most give zero consideration to the envelope. Most (small businesses) will take whatever sales letter or material you write for them and send it in their ordinary business envelope without a thought. An envelope designed like the one shown here (MY NOTE: there's a great innovative envelope shown at the bottom of the page) would never occur to them in a million years – unless you show it to them. And if you show them faux Express mail, window with personalized check, odd size, odd shape, odd color ... options of clever, mysterious teaser copy (like – PHOTOS ENCLOSED. DO NOT BEND) ... explain the A-pile/B-pile theory ... even suggest a split test, then you will truly be The Wizard of Fire ...

Okay – what Dan's telling you here is something not many people have ever bothered to tell you: *How to not only get a client – but how to "manage him," so that he regards you as a knowledgeable genius who's crucial to his business.*

Of course, you'll need to eventually 'deliver the goods' in the form of some good, effective advertising. And this is something AWAI shows you how to do *at length*.

But Dan also chips in in a very real way with the other material he stuffs into this monthly package – mainly in the "Look Over MY Shoulder" component of the package, where he not only shows you one of his current campaigns in progress, but his *thought process*

behind it as well.

It's powerful stuff – and as I read it I can feel my 'pre-judged' image of Dan starting to melt away: *this guy not only knows his stuff ... but he also has some fascinating insights into marketing techniques I'm sure you won't hear anywhere!*

In this issue it was work he was doing for "Proactive" acne treatment – a Guthy-Renker product you see advertised on TV infomercials now and again. Included are a bunch of copy ideas he may or may not use, but there was something in his preamble that struck me as very valuable because, again, it was new to me. In my 17 years of copywriting I had never heard it before – at least not the mind-grabbing way Dan presents it.

And it was simply this: Sometimes, there are times when you don't need to focus so much on "credibility" in your copy. And in the case of the Proactive Ads, this was one of those times. Reason being? Well, Dan's done a lot of research that suggests the younger your audience is – the less credibility you need. He says Seniors need a lot ... boomers quite a bit ... 40+ some ... under 40 hardly any and under 30, virtually none.

In other words, Dan says, when you're marketing to a younger audience, they don't necessarily care that your product is #1 in the marketplace ... or why the ingredients work like they do. And if you make "credibility" the focal point of your marketing campaign, you're going to make a big mistake. (Then, of course, he shows actual examples of the kind of messages he's considering using for the Proactive campaign ... it's really good stuff!)

Now imagine having this knowledge for a client who may be targeting a younger audience – and being able to go to your new client armed with that information ...

You come off looking like a marketing genius. That's instant credibility and, in all likelihood, a client (and fan) for life!

Of course these are just two of the very valuable tidbits of information I found in this month's issue of "Look Over My Shoulder" while waiting the 15 minutes to pick up my son. Two things I know I'll remember and use for the rest of my career.

And when I got home, I started ripping into my backlog of unopened "Look Over My Shoulders" and I'm finding tons and tons of very useful stuff.

But what makes Dan's "message" about these things memorable is *the way* he talks about them. Dan has an extraordinary way of "shocking" you into remembering important marketing ideas with fantastic (and sometimes really out there) analogies between real life and marketing. (For instance, who else could use "D-list star Kathy Griffin to make you realize how much more you really know about advertising than your clients – and how you should use this fact to your advantage!")

Now I don't know how much Dan's "Look Over Your Shoulder" costs. (Even though I should, because I was involved in the initial promotion of it I believe ...)

If its \$1,000 a year, it would be a very good deal. Because from what I saw from this month's alone – just on the stuff about "managing your clients" you could easily use the knowledge and advice delivered to command an extra \$10,000 a year in fees from every client you get – maybe more.

I believe, though, it's something less than that.

Regardless, you can find out the actual price and more because I've asked Katie to link the promotional letter to this little essay I've written. Just click [here](#).

Why? Because whether you're at the stage where you're learning about what makes good copy – or you're working with clients already – you should be getting this resource regularly.

Dan's style may or may not rub you the wrong way. But please don't make the mistake I made and let his bloviating tone get between you and the powerful knowledge he generously shares in these issues.

I promise you, there's something you will take from it every month ... something that, when used properly, can't help but lead to thousands of dollars in extra income – whether it's higher royalties because of a copy tip you've used ... or extra money you've earned by better "managing" your client.

And if after three months you don't feel this way, just let us know and we'll make sure you get back every penny you've paid.

Again, you can order now, risk free, by clicking [here](#) ...

Or go to the sales letter to learn more [here](#).

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2 Responses to "Is Dan Kennedy the Real Deal ... or Just Damn Good at Marketing Himself?"

Paul I enjoyed reading this.

Meeting Dan Kennedy and having the opportunity to spend a few days 'in his head' in Cleveland was possibly one of the most valuable experiences I have ever had.

Yes, the content was unparalleled, however I am referring to what changed for me personally by absorbing the experience of being there. I began to understand the enormous significance of perceived limitations and the possibilities there for the

taking without these perceptions. I have hardly spoken of this time in Cleveland to anybody, and have been quietly processing my experience. You see, I absolutely could not afford that Cleveland trip, and made (some would say) extreme compromises to be there. Had Dan not even shown up, I would have left a richer person, just by knowing I had attached enough importance to something to make it happen, against all odds. So had others; the price was steep but there wasn't an empty seat. Ultimately, a price tag is arbitrary. If the client perceives the value, a hi

marion – over a year ago

Paul - thanks for addressing my own skepticism about Dan Kennedy.

I always enjoy reading your writing. Are you planing a book on your copywriting and marketing secrets, or a report at the very least?

I find your explanation of Michael Masterson's copy secrets refreshing and enlightening.

Thanks again

MikeC – over a year ago

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