



# Why Your Marketing Shouldn't Be "Creative" (And What to Do Instead)

Brad Smith

Cirque du Soleil was founded by two Canadian street performers in 1984. If you've never seen a show, then it's been described as a mix between a circus and theatre performance.

Since their opening, Cirque shows have been seen in over 271 cities, employ over 4,000 people and make close to a billion dollars each year.



Not bad, considering every show is basically the same.

The same tricks, the same theatrics, and the same vague storylines. But re-imagined in fun, interesting ways that are endlessly entertaining (no matter how many you've seen).

Cirque du Soleil takes something widely understood — like the daring feats from the circus and the emotion from a play — and changes it ever so slightly.

Each show has wildly different characters and themes. But each performance has the same acts (more or less). They stick to a winning formula. Yet provide new context to re-frame the issue. Most people believe the arts — like singing, dancing, acting, writing, and others — are innate,

natural talents. You're either born with it, or you're not.

I disagree. (Read the excellent [Talent is Overrated](#)<sup>1</sup> for empirical evidence.)

But mainly, it's because the illusive, intangible ingredient known as "creativity" is largely a myth.

Here's why.

## The Myth of Creativity

The best book about content marketing — [Made to Stick](#)<sup>2</sup> — isn't about marketing at all. But about how to construct and package an idea for maximum stickiness.

Here's a perfect excerpt that illustrates why creativity is a myth: In 1999, an Israeli research team assembled a group of 200 highly regarded ads — ads that were finalists and award winners in the top advertising competitions. They found that 89 percent of the award-winning ads could be classified into six basic categories, or templates.

According to this study, the most successful ads of all time can be grouped into the same similar categories! For example, one of these successful "templates" deals with extreme consequences (like the infamous, "This is Your Brain on Drugs" commercials). And what about the "unsuccessful" ads? Why weren't they successful?

The researchers also tried to classify 200 other ads — from the same publications for the same

types of products — that had not received awards — and they were only able to classify 2%.

These unsuccessful ads were either too new, or too different, and couldn't link up with our mental [schema](#)<sup>3</sup>. People couldn't relate to them. And they didn't resonate.

The surprising lesson?  
*Highly creative ads are more predictable than uncreative ones. They often share common traits. And they stick to formats that are routinely successful.*

## Why Your Marketing Results Are Lacklustre

The reason you have low [social media engagement](#)<sup>4</sup> isn't because of your "boring" industry.

The reason your [email marketing](#)'s<sup>5</sup> not converting isn't because of the graphic design. And the reason your [search engine optimization](#)<sup>6</sup> is at a standstill isn't because of the Google Gods.

It's because your content (probably) sucks. It's too vague, too general, unimportant and insignificant. And it doesn't follow proven, successful content templates that have worked for years. That's why popular T.V.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=0d6c63f7ba&e=865a0fb7f3>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=809aa60016&e=865a0fb7f3>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=b84fe6a86e&e=865a0fb7f3>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=839ba79769&e=865a0fb7f3>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=7fd4a313cc&e=865a0fb7f3>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=bedcdc1813&e=865a0fb7f3>

shows still [steal content ideas](#)<sup>7</sup> from the 1800's.

*The best content needs to be expected and similar, but altered slightly to make it stick.*

## Discover How to "Fix" Your Content Marketing Today

If you'd like to find out how to improve your content marketing, then I've put together a free "Content Marketing Kit" that includes:

- ✓ Free On-Demand Video that Shows You How to Use Content Marketing to Get More Clients & Customers
- ✓ 18 Page Report about How to Create Compelling Content that Sells
- ✓ Critical Links to Other Content Marketing Resources so You'll Get Results

All you have to do is take my one minute survey and you'll get instant access to my Content Marketing Kit. [Click here to get started](#)<sup>8</sup>.

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## About the Author

FixCourse is an online publication that teaches organizations how to grow using internet marketing. Their free weekly email newsletter will teach you how to get more traffic, leads and sales. Visit: <http://www.fixcourse.com/newsletter/> for details.

FixCourse was founded by Brad Smith. Brad is an entrepreneur and digital marketing consultant who has worked with clients in a variety of industries including software, insurance, real estate, journalism and travel: everything from start-ups to the Fortune 500. Brad has an MBA in Entrepreneurship, and a BA in Finance and Marketing.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=b6c983ecf0&e=865a0fb7f3>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.fixcourse.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce0b45e143c250d5bf81bc7aa&id=f1ad8c428d&e=865a0fb7f3>

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