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MAGAZINE

June 2019

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COMMISSIONS CONTINUE TO BE UNDER ATTACK

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THE SOCIAL MEDIA EMPEROR

Gary Vaynerchuck spins marketing gold on the Bill Levinson Experience Podcast



Gary Vee with Bill Levinson, podcast host and managing partner at Levinson & Associates

When Gary Vaynerchuck speaks, smart marketers listen.

For more than 20 years, Vaynerchuck, aka Gary Vee, has not only preached social media marketing techniques but also connected with consumers on a personal level never seen before.

He's also built countless business empires and inspired millions to "hustle and grind."

In this exclusive interview with Bill Levinson, managing partner at Levinson & Associates and host of the Bill Levinson Experience podcast, Vaynerchuck reveals his insights on the insurance industry and the secret to staying relevant in today's ever-changing market.

LEVINSON: If you were an insurance agent, how would you market

yourself? What would your advice be to agents getting started?

VAYNERCHUCK: Almost everyone who is successful in this industry built their business on their personal brand, their reputation and word of mouth.

Today, social networks are a vehicle for word of mouth.

Producing content in written, verbal or video form and spreading it on LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter or a podcast is today's way to get in front of your audience, build awareness of your expertise and strengthen your reputation in your industry.

Most people focus on sales. I focus on brand.

If you build something for the long term, people will come to you. And, isn't any relationship more fun when customers come to you than when you're chasing them?

LEVINSON: Exactly! I teach this every week on the Levinson training webinars.

VAYNERCHUCK: But people don't want to put in the work or they don't know how to go about it.

LEVINSON: This is why Levinson & Associates built a marketing platform for agents called "Sell While You Sleep" with over 10 insurance products that are 100 percent client-driven, in addition to a free website with quoting engines. People can make purchases while the agent sleeps. Everything the customer needs is right there for them. But agents need to drive customers to the site with content. So I was hoping you could share with us the type of content you think works best.

VAYNERCHUCK: Stories! I talk to a lot of life insurance agents. A lot. [The agents ask], "What content, Gary? What do I talk about?"

Prospects want stories. Tell truths about your career.

"Let me tell you about the time four years ago when Mr. and Mrs. Greene needed something. They came to me and said this. I [went] to them and said that."

"Or, let me tell you the story of my good friend Harold, whom I miss very dearly because he tragically passed away. Harold made a decision 16 years into our relationship that financially saved his wife, Gertrude, after his death. Back then, Harold reached out to me and said he needed a policy — just in case. But when I saw how it played out for his family after his death, I refused to wait for people like Harold to reach out to me; I'm reaching out to them."

And if you're a new agent, talk about what you learned in school or from your grandfather who was in the business and how you see the world differently because of it.

LEVINSON: It's great advice to tell stories about your experiences or viewpoints. But how should agents communicate that message? Should they use video, audio or something else?

VAYNERCHUCK: Everybody has to figure out how they communicate best. And that takes being self-aware. Like for me, I'm not a writer. I can't write. I've written five bestselling books thanks to my ghostwriter. I talk it all out. It's all me. But I can't put sentences together. That's just not how I communicate.



So you have to decide whether you have the gift of gab or whether you're a writer. If you have the gift of gab, but you're insecure about the video camera, maybe you just do audio. And, by the way, audio is amazing. **I think all the platforms are headed toward audio.** You're in the car and you have a thought, you just have to pull over, open

your recorder, spit [out] your truth for nine minutes, post it and away you go.

Once you figure out your medium, you have a strategy to market yourself on social media, your website or both!

"I'm telling you right now, **do not underestimate technology. If you don't adopt technology, you will go out of business."**

LEVINSON: I always preach to my agents that, these days, your website is your brick and mortar. There's no more great location on University Drive. Your website is your office. And thanks to the internet, everybody has a chance to be on Main Street for free, if they market themselves right. Would you agree?

VAYNERCHUCK: Yes! If you don't have a personal website as an insurance agent in 2019, you're driving a horse around town.

Do you know how big Blockbuster, Toys "R" Us, Sears, Woolworth's or J.C. Penney was?

Everybody knew who they were. Everybody knew. I'm telling you right now, do not underestimate technology. If you don't adopt technology, you will go out of business.

LEVINSON: It's only a matter of time before little Jimmy graduates high school, gets licensed and — growing up with technology — is able to send mass emails to your clients. And it's a matter of time before your clients reach out to young Jimmy and, just like that, you lost your book of business.

VAYNERCHUCK: What if young Jimmy is now working with his mother, Susan, who was a C player in your market. But now Jimmy is bringing content online that takes them from

the third best agents in your market to the first because, I don't know if you heard, 50-to-80-year-olds live on Facebook. They live there.

LEVINSON: My grandma's on Facebook. She loves it!

My agents have been listening to me talk about this for years. But now you're getting it straight from the horse's mouth. Remember, Gary is a guy who has built businesses in virtually every industry. He knows how to stay relevant in the market.

VAYNERCHUCK: More important, I know what the end consumer is doing. People often ask me why I am so successful in helping other businesses. It's because I focus only on the consumer. I care only about what 53-year-old Karen in Naples, FL, does with her life. How she consumes content. How she makes buying decisions. What dictates her behavior.

And if you know that, it doesn't matter whether you're selling an expensive ring or a cheap ring; if you sell life insurance or car insurance. It's all the same, my friends. •

This has been an excerpt from *The Bill Levinson Experience Podcast*. Visit www.ModernWordOfMouth.com today for the **full 36-minute episode**, to **access the eye-popping report *How to Tell a Story on Social Media*** and to **get your hands on the all new "Sell While You Sleep" platform** — with over 10 insurance products from 3 carriers all 100% consumer driven (just think Amazon for insurance products) — that makes Levinson & Associates agents the best equipped in the industry!



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