

# Why you should become a purple cow



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Andrew owns a successful personal training studio in Sydney. He combines a business background in accounting/law with more than eight years hands on experience in the fitness industry. He was the strength and conditioning coach for the 2004 Athens Olympics sailing team and is a service provider for the Australian Institute of Sport and NSWIS athletes.

The 'purple cow' phenomenon comes from a book of the same name by marketing guru, Seth Godin ([www.sethgodin.com](http://www.sethgodin.com)). In it he claims that if you were on holiday and saw a group of brown cows from your car window then you would think them pretty unremarkable. But, what if one cow in the group were purple? Would it grab your attention? Would you slow down to look at it? Would you tell people about what you saw? It would be remarkable wouldn't it? Something remarkable is worth noticing and worth talking about because it is exceptional, new and interesting; we just drive by those brown cows without even looking.

Godin suggests that, as businesses, we need to become that purple cow to differentiate ourselves from the brown ones. Look around at the majority of personal trainers and businesses throughout the country and you will see thousands of brown cows, many quite unremarkable. Today, due to being overwhelmed with marketing on a daily basis, consumers are too busy and too indifferent to pay attention to traditional marketing methods. They are hard to reach. Traditional advertising, he says, is dead. Now only big business can afford mass media advertising for the small reward it brings.

Today's consumer, however, is desperate to find good services to solve their problems, and when they are satisfied they are more likely to tell others. Services that are worthy of mention are raved about to friends and colleagues, so the marketing is done for you. The recent successes of the Nudie Juice launch and the Krispy Creme doughnut stores testify to this. In both cases no advertising was undertaken, but everyone was talking about them and going out of their way to seek out and try them because they were perceived as being new and remarkable, which made them the talk of the town.

**The new marketing rule is to create a remarkable product or service and then get the right people to seek it out.**

So who are these 'right people'? Godin refers to them as 'early adopters'. They are risk takers, idea spreaders and innovators, and also termed by Godin as 'sneezers'! Why sneezers? Think about how a cold virus is spread. It's often by sneezing that germs are passed from one person to another. Sneezers, then, are people who will pass a great product or service they have found onto their friends and colleagues. 'Big deal' you say, 'we have all dealt with and strived for referrals for as long as we have been trainers, nothing new here.' But there is! This concept of an 'idea virus,' as Godin calls it, is the key. For you to have these raving fans (read *Raving Fans* by Ken Blanchard or *Flying Solo* by Robert Gerrish) you need to have a remarkable product or service, because if you are just a brown cow you will probably not be sneezed about. You need a service that is so useful, so interesting, so different,

attention-grabbing and innovative that the market will seek you out. You need to break rules, traditions and expectations of what a personal trainer is, does and offers. So, how can you be different?

Look back at our new rule - we need to create a remarkable product or service. This will be different for every trainer and every business; we just need to set ourselves up correctly now that we know what to do. Godin advocates looking for target markets and individuals that are 'otaku', a Japanese term meaning 'more than a hobby but less than an obsession'. Find people with an overwhelming desire or need for what you offer. Think, how can you be different? If you could pick one niche market to dominate, what would it be? Think outside the traditional ones - seniors, mums, kids, weight loss. These are not remarkable; they do tend to be brown cows now.

Godin outlines the following strategy for becoming a purple one.

## The purple cow process and plan

1. Review your 5 P's - place, presentation, product or service, price and position
2. Identify your sneezers
3. Gain permission to market to them
4. Work with them to offer exactly what they need
5. Let sneezers spread your virus
6. Leap from remarkable to profitable.

Are you just making a living, or creating something new and exciting? Remember, be remarkable, be otaku, be a purple cow! ♦



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