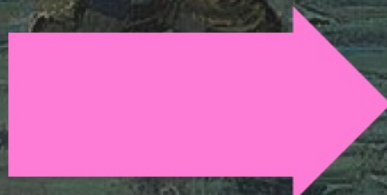


IF YOU MAKE CONTENT ONLINE HERE'S THE PROBLEM



**DAN
MALL**



I just shared an article with my agency owner students that I consider to be required reading for them.

It's called "If You Make Content Online, Here's the Problem," by Alex M. H. Smith, whose writing on strategy and positioning always makes me think "I've been trying to say exactly that."

I've spent years coaching agency owners through exactly this. Here's how I see his ideas applying to you.

Read the original article, "If You Make Content Online, Here's the Problem."

alexhsmith.substack.com/p/if-you-make-content-online-heres



ALEX SAID

[Early content creators] did not get their rewards for quality... but for scarcity. For giving people something they wanted at a time when there wasn't much of that stuff about.

The game was never making content. The game was never educating and inspiring. The game was never hacking the algorithm.

*The game was always what all business games are: **having the courage and vision to do something of value that other people aren't doing, or haven't noticed yet.***



MY TAKE

You might be surprised to hear this, but I've always maintained that agency owners don't need to do content marketing to run a successful, lucrative, profitable agency.

My agency hit \$3M/year almost entirely through warm outreach. For most agencies, warm outreach is a faster, higher-ROI path to your next client than most other methods. Master that first. Content marketing is often a long-term play that requires a minimum one-year commitment of posting multiple times per day before it pays off. And that's even in a non-saturated market. Don't let it distract you from the thing that actually closes deals today.



ALEX SAID

The key factor was always:

Is there more available attention than there is quality content?

Or:

Is there more demand than there is supply?



MY TAKE

If you're in branding, web design, or UX, you're in a market where supply swamped demand years ago.

When the market you choose to play in is too broad, the supply is usually greater than the demand.

Pick a smaller market with less supply to be perceived as higher quality.

Read more about this in my article, "Positioning by Vertical, Horizontal, and Diagonal."

danmall.com/posts/positioning-by-vertical-horizontal-and-diagonal/



ALEX SAID

When something is abundant, it loses value.

It doesn't matter how "good" it is.

If there's too much of it, nobody wants it anymore.



MY TAKE

If your answer to “what makes you different” is “we do really great design,” you don’t have an answer yet.

Everyone else does great design too.

At least in some places.

E-commerce, SaaS, and fashion have an abundance of great design.

Agriculture, pest control, and commercial cleaning don’t.

Where do you think you’d command a higher value?



ALEX SAID

Do not invest in markets with oversupply and zero barrier to entry.

If I were advising you from a purely strategic perspective, I'd just say:

Do something else!



MY TAKE

When the pipeline is light, too many agency owners are tempted by the thought, “I guess I should start posting content,” mostly because they don’t know what else to do.

So, what else can you do?

Pitch an upsell offer to a current client. Pitch a downsell offer to a lost client. Speak at an event where your ideal client is in the audience. Identify 5 dream clients and send a love letter. Find and join a Discord community where your ideal client hangs out.

Partner with an agency that does complementary work and offer referral fees.

Like Alex recommends, do something else.



ALEX SAID

If it's not difficult, it won't work.



MY TAKE

Many people try to find something proprietary, some “secret sauce” that makes it so that others can’t do what they’re doing.

But one of the most valuable lessons I’ve learned in my career is this: **You don’t need to do what others can’t. You just need to do what others won’t.**

Read more about this in my article, “Difficulty as a Moat.”

danmall.com/posts/difficulty-as-a-moat/



ALEX SAID

Our goal is to do things in a way that locks as many other people out as possible. There are three ways to do this:

- 1. Making it unfair.*
- 2. Making it tedious.*
- 3. Making it expensive.*

Preferably all at once.



MY TAKE

Say you have 12 years of fintech experience *and* formerly worked in-house at a Series B startup, and live in a secondary tech market like Miami.

Separately, those are nice-to-haves. Stacking those unfair advantages into serving Series B fintechs in Miami could put you at the top of the list.

Write down every unfair advantage you have: your experience, your network, your background, your location, your credentials. Then ask: what kind of agency could only I build with this specific combination? That's probably where you're most likely to succeed.

Read more about this in my article, "The MILES Framework of Unfair Advantages."

danmall.com/posts/the-miles-framework-of-unfair-advantages/