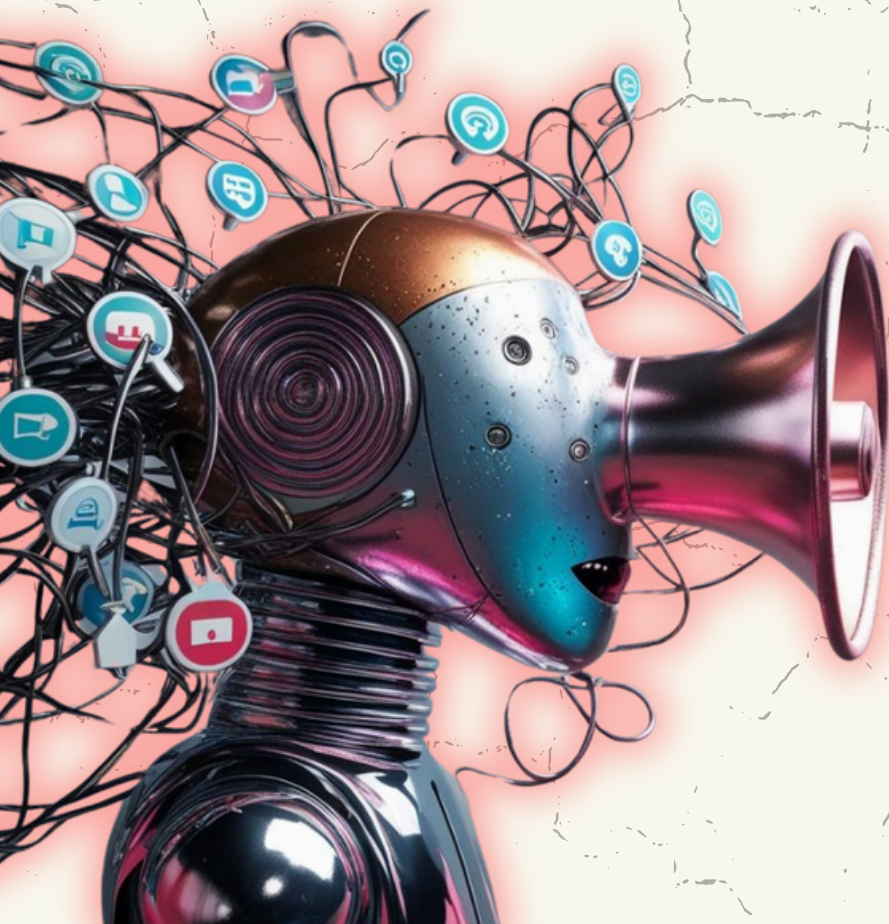


BULLS**T MARKETING

By Geet Govil



The No-Filter Guide to Brand Survival in the AI Apocalypse

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RIP MARKETING (1950-2024): WE WON'T MISS YOU

Old-school marketing isn't just dead—it's decomposing in a dumpster fire behind the shopping mall. Let's be brutally honest: no one's seeing your ads. No one's opening your emails. No one gives a hoot about your "brand story" when your TikTok stream is in the pipeline. In an attention economy (8.25 seconds) literally shorter than that of a goldfish (9 seconds), your carefully crafted 30-second ad can be as effective as War and Peace.

We're entering a time when customers can smell marketing BS from across the entire internet. Those cringey "How do you do, fellow kids?" efforts at sounding cool? The creep-y "we've been stalking your every online step" targeted ads? The empty promises that read like they were written by ChatGPT on its day off?

Dead. All dead.

This thin little book (thank you) is your guidebook to surviving the marketing wasteland. We're going to take you through the ways in which AI is killing old-school marketing and maybe, just maybe, saving it. We'll show you why 90% of what "experts" call "best practices" is trash. And most importantly, we'll provide a BS-free playbook for building brand experiences that won't make people throw their devices off the pier.

Whether you're an executive-level CMO or simply attempting to make a profit reselling hand-made candles on Etsy, this book will assist you in cutting the throwaway marketing dollars spent generating customers who will hate you.

No corporate jargon.
No guru nonsense.
Facts alone



PART ONE

"THIS AD STINKS" – WHY YOUR MARKETING MAKES PEOPLE CRINGE

The Great Ghosting: Everyone's Blocking You

The numbers are honest (though your marketing needn't be):

- 42.7% of users use ad blockers (43% increase since 2020) due to the fact that your adverts are so bothersome (PageFair Annual Report, 2024)
- Open rates fell by 22% because no one cares about your "limited time offer!!!" (Campaign Monitor, 2024)
- 82% of the public have abandoned at least one brand as being far too sticky in their inbox (Consumer Attention Index, 2024) Only 4% trust your advertising (14% ten years ago) because, oh shock, horror, people are not stupid (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2024).

These are not rejection letters to brush off in your next team meeting-- they're actually rejection letters.

People's BS Detectors Are Weapons-Grade Now

- 71% can spot undisclosed influencer posts (up from 43% in 2020) because that enthusiasm for charcoal toothpaste isn't fooling anyone
- 83% of Gen Z "immediately knows" when you're pretending to be authentic vs. actually being authentic
- 92% want brands that show their human side, not their corporate-approved-message side

Hard truth: You can't buy, trick, or hack your way into people's hearts anymore. The future belongs to brands that aren't completely annoying. Let's figure out how to be one of those.

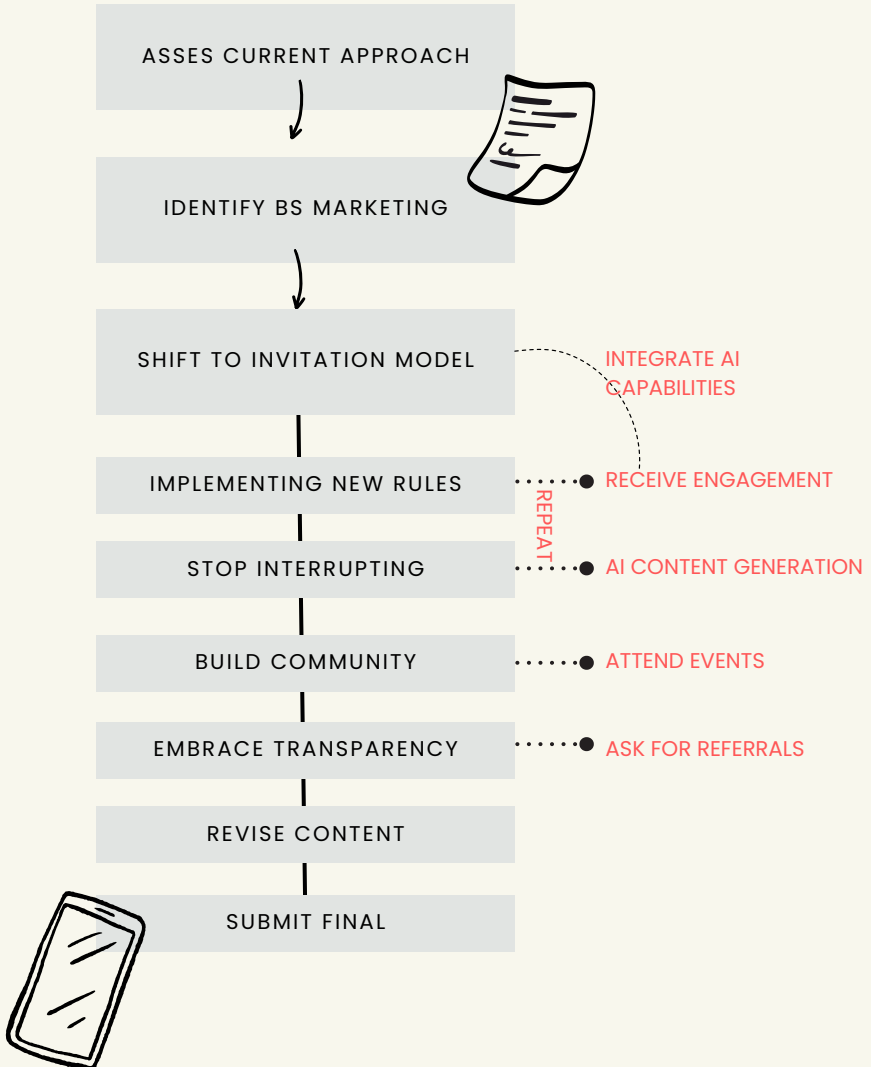
Your Marketing Reeks Because:

- Everyone's Attention Is in 8 Places at Once In 2015, people used 3.2 platforms regularly. Now it's 8.7. Your target audience is literally watching Netflix, scrolling TikTok, and texting their mom during your precious ad. That TV spot you spent millions on? They're using that time to order DoorDash.
- Nobody Trusts You Anymore After decades of being lied to about "revolutionary" products that aren't, people's trust has left the chat. Only 34% of consumers trust brands they actually use (down from 51% in 2019).

Content Tsunami From Hell Every single minute: 500 hours of YouTube uploads, 347,222 Instagram stories, 5.7 million Google searches, and 511,200 tweets.

PART ONE

From BS to Brilliance: The Brand Marketing Evolution Roadmap



PART TWO

"SLIDE INTO THEIR DMs PROPERLY": THE NEW RULES OF NOT BEING ANNOYING

Stop Interrupting, Start Getting Invited

The marketing glow-up is not slick tech—it's about not being that one guy at parties who won't shut up up regarding CrossFit. Non-sucky brands have transitioned from barging in to actually being welcome.

The Dead Model (Interruption):

1. Find victims (a.k.a. "target audience")
2. Create message that no one asked
3. Meet people unexpectedly while they are engaged in their everyday activities.
4. Pray they don't hate you enough to remember your name

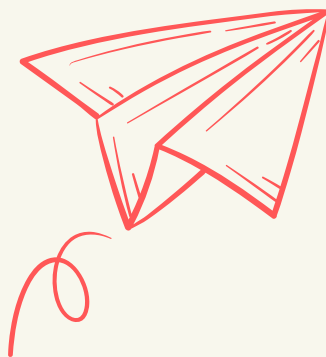
The Vibe Model (Invitation):

1. Create awesome stuff that people actually want (not advertising your own things)
2. Allow individuals to enter as they please.
3. Just continue providing value without that pushy "buy my stuff" vibe
4. Finally, promote your product once you have gained credibility.

This is not feel-good fuzzy words—it's hard cold cash:

- Brands employing the invitation strategy experience **37% better customer retention** since individuals stick around about when you are not too obnoxious (Content Marketing Institute, 2024).
- **63% of individuals purchased** something because a brand assisted them with content that was not a sales pitch. Pitch (HubSpot, 2024)

- Firms that focus on teaching over selling receive **59% more qualified leads** because teaching > sermonizing (DemandGen Report, 2024)
- Brands using the invitation approach see **37% higher customer retention** because people stick around when you're not annoying AF (Content Marketing Institute, 2024)



INTERRUPT VS INVITE



PART TWO

The Vibe Tribe > One-Night-Stand Campaigns

Smart brands know building a community beats running yet another forgettable campaign:

Metric	Campaign Brands	Human-AI Balanced Brands	Community Brands
Cost to Get a Customer	\$135	\$72	-47%
Customer Lifetime Value	\$243	\$521	+114%
Referral Rate	8%	27%	+237%
Annual Growth	12%	23%	+92%

Source: Community Brand Index Report, 2024

Look at Duolingo—they went from boring language app to cultural icon with their unhinged owl mascot terrorizing users on TikTok. 1.2 BILLION views and 43% more daily users without a single traditional marketing campaign. The owl literally threatens people, and they love it.

No Cap: Transparency Is Non-Negotiable

In an era when your customers can Google your CEO’s problematic tweets from 2014 in 0.3 seconds, faking it is financial suicide: 78% of people will drop you instantly if they catch you in a lie (Consumer Ethics Survey, 2024) Transparent brands charge 31% more for basically the same products (Price Perception Index, 2024) 89% of consumers would switch to brands that keep it 100, even if it costs more (Label Insight, 2024)

Patagonia doesn’t just talk about saving turtles—they straight-up tell you exactly how their manufacturing processes are still messing up the planet. This “we’re trying but we still kinda suck sometimes” honesty helped them grow 25% year over year, crushing the competition by 370%. The new rule is dead simple: in a world where receipts are just a search away, the brands that expose themselves before getting exposed win big.

PART THREE

"WHEN ROBOTS WRITE BETTER THAN YOU" - THE AI TAKEOVER WE ACTUALLY WANT

Year	% of Marketing Made By AI	Human Job Security
2020	7%	Safe-ish
2022	19%	Nervous
2024	38%	Updating LinkedIn
2026	60% (projected)	👤

Source: Gartner Marketing AI Doom Report, 2024

This isn't just about firing your overpriced freelancers—these AI systems are legitimately cracked:

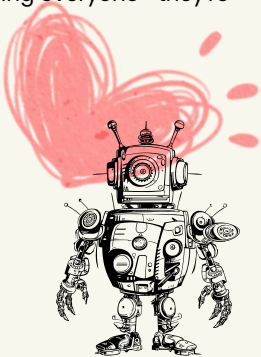
- Making personalized ads for thousands of different people AT THE SAME TIME
- Writing and testing hundreds of headlines while you're still on your first coffee
- Creating images and videos that look better than your agency's work
- Writing blog posts that actually rank on Google (and humans want to read)
- Predicting which creative will perform best with 73% accuracy BEFORE launching

When Humans and Robots Have a Situationship

The smartest brands aren't going full Terminator by replacing everyone—they're creating marketing power couples:

Boring Old Creative Team (2019):

- Overworked Art Director
- Underpaid Copywriter
- Designer with 17 revisions to make
- Strategist with a PowerPoint addiction
- Project Manager sending passive-aggressive emails



PART THREE

Cyborg Creative Squad (2024):

- Prompt Engineer (the AI whisperer)
- Creative Director (still human, still taking credit)
- AI Output Editor (gets paid to tell the AI "try again")
- Ethics Guardian (keeps the AI from going feral)
- Human Strategist (because robots don't understand feelings . yet)

Nike used this hybrid approach in their recent "Move Beyond" campaign. AI was used to analyze billions of data points on how people move, cranked out 1,200 different creative concepts, then humans cherry-picked the best ones. Results? 27% more engagement while cutting production costs by 41%. The robots saved money AND made better ads. Cool cool cool.

Your Personal Robot Stalker (In a Good Way?)

Marketers have been promising true 1:1 personalization since like, forever. AI finally makes it possible without being creepy (ok, still kinda creepy but effective):

- Stitch Fix's AI creates 30 million unique product combos weekly, each based on 100+ data points about you (and looks better than what you'd pick)
- Spotify's AI builds 4 billion personalized playlists annually, driving 32% more listening time (because it knows your music taste better than your friends do)
- Sephora's AI face scanner analyzes 17 different facial features to recommend products, resulting in 51% higher sales (because it can see your pores better than you can)

The takeaway? AI doesn't just segment you into "millennial female who likes cats"—it treats you like the unique weirdo you truly are, at a scale humans could never achieve.

How To Not Get Replaced By The Robots (Yet)

Smart marketers are developing new workflows that give the boring stuff to AI while keeping the fun parts:

- 1.Strategy stays human - Robots still suck at understanding the emotional "why" behind marketing goals
- 2.AI handles the grunt work - Let it generate hundreds of ideas while you take a nap
- 3.Humans get to judge everything - Select the AI outputs that don't feel like they were made by a sentient toaster
- 4.AI does the math and testing - Because A/B testing is boring and robots love boring things
- 5.Humans keep the AI from going rogue - Someone needs to make sure the brand doesn't accidentally become problematic

This workflow combines AI efficiency with human vibes—because robots are fast, but they still don't understand why your TikTok inside joke is actually funny.

CHAPTER FOUR

"SORRY AI, YOU CAN'T SIT WITH US" - THE HUMAN FLEX THAT STILL MATTERS

Plot Twist: Robots Make Humanity More Valuable

The more AI takes over marketing, the more people will pay for the genuine human touch. It's like how handmade pottery costs more than mass-produced mugs, except now you're the pottery. This creates what we call the "Not-A-Robot Premium" - brands keeping their human vibe in the robot apocalypse make straight-up more money:

Metric	AI-Heavy/ Soul-Light Brands	Human-AI Balanced Brands	\$\$ Difference
Truth Score	42/100	79/100	+88%
"Shut Up and Take My Money" Rate	23%	51%	+122%
How Much Extra People Will Pay	0%	22%	+22%
Customer Ride-or-Die Index	37/100	72/100	+95%

Source: How Much We Hate Robot Marketers Study, 2024

Four Things AI Still Sucks At (Use These to Save Your Job)

Even as AI gets frighteningly good, four crucial marketing elements remain solidly human territory:

1. Stories That Actually Make People Feel Things

AI can write stories, but they hit different—like how a robot telling you "I love you" would make you call the police. The most powerful brand stories (Nike's athlete triumph, Apple's creativity obsession, Patagonia's climate activism) come from a human place that AI can't fake yet. According to Stanford's Emotional Intelligence Lab, humans can spot AI-written emotional content with 87% accuracy, describing it as "technically correct but emotionally uncanny valley." Like when your ex texts "hope you're doing well" but you know they don't mean it.

PART FOUR

2. Not Accidentally Offending Entire Cultures

AI is still hilariously bad at cultural understanding. The Cultural AI Alignment Project found that even the fanciest AI systems misinterpret cultural references 31% of the time, versus just 4% for human marketers. Remember 2023 when [MAJOR BEVERAGE COMPANY] let AI design a campaign that accidentally used a sacred religious symbol as a party prop? The internet remembers. Their stock dropped 3% in a day while #BoycottBrandName trended for a week. Big yikes.

3. The Ethical Stuff

AI systems have no moral compass—they're basically toddlers with PhDs. The McKinsey Ethics in Marketing report found that 68% of consumers can detect when brands are using ethical frameworks that feel programmatic rather than authentic.

When Mercedes let AI handle their sustainability messaging, the system technically said all the right things about carbon neutrality but missed the actual human anxiety around climate change. Their engagement dropped 29% because people can smell algorithmic virtue signaling from a mile away.

In the attention economy, authentic moral reasoning isn't just nice—it's profitable AF. Brands with genuine ethical positions (even controversial ones) see 47% higher engagement than those with sanitized, AI-approved messaging.

4. Burn Your Brand Guidelines (Metaphorically)

Replace your sterile brand guidelines with a "Brand Character Bible" that focuses less on RGB values and more on what your brand would never compromise on, what makes it angry, and what it loves.

Case study: When Dove turned their body positivity campaign over to AI optimization, the algorithm chose images that technically represented diversity but missed the emotional nuance of body image struggles. Focus groups reported feeling "targeted but not understood," while the human-led creative drove 36% more emotional connection.

The Consumer Psychology Institute found that marketing content created with genuine human empathy scores 41% higher in trust and 57% higher in purchase intent than AI-generated content, even when that content is technically "optimized." As one respondent put it: "I don't care if AI can write better than Shakespeare—I want to feel like there's a human who actually gives a shit on the other end."



PART FIVE

"MAIN CHARACTER ENERGY" -
BRANDS THAT AREN'T BORING AF

The Personality Premium

In a world where 73% of brands are indistinguishable beige corporate entities, having an actual personality is like showing up to a networking event in a neon jumpsuit—people might love it or hate it, but they definitely remember you.

The Brand Personality Index found that brands with distinct personalities command premium pricing (27% higher), significantly better recall (3.4x), and customer loyalty that borders on unhealthy (52% higher retention).

The difference between forgettable and unforgettable brands isn't budget—it's backbone.

Metric	"Please Everyone" Brands	"Love Us or Hate Us" Brands	Difference
Revenue Growth	+7% annually	+24% annually	+243%
Profit Margins	12%	19%	+58%
Social Engagement	0.5%	4.7%	+840%
Brand Recall	23%	76%	+230%

Source: The Polarization Profit Report, 2024

Patagonia told people "Don't Buy This Jacket" and their sales increased 30%. Ben & Jerry's takes political stances that make half of America angry, and their ice cream sales go up every time they do it. Meanwhile, brands trying to be "universally appealing" are universally ignored.

As Netflix's former VP of content put it: **"If everyone likes your brand but nobody loves it, you're already dead."**

Character Development > Corporate Guidelines

The brands winning the personality wars have moved beyond static brand guidelines to something far more powerful: character development.

They've stopped asking "What's our approved color palette?" and started asking "What would our brand never do?" and "What hill would we die on?"

Look at how Liquid Death turned boring canned water into a \$700 million valuation by creating a brand character that would sacrifice babies to the metal gods before it would use corporate speak. Their marketing makes traditional beverage companies look like they're being held hostage by their legal departments.

Compare that to Pepsi's attempt to join the culture conversation with Kendall Jenner. The world collectively cringed because the campaign violated Pepsi's established character—it was like watching your accountant dad try to breakdance at your wedding.

From Mission Statement to Personal Statement

The shift from corporate to character isn't just semantic—it's strategic:

Traditional Brand: "We strive to provide industry-leading solutions that enable customer success while delivering stakeholder value." (Nobody cares)

Character Brand: "We fucking hate how complicated this industry makes everything. We're fixing that, and we don't care who gets uncomfortable." (People either cheer or boo—both are wins)

The investment bank Robinhood grew from zero to 22.8 million users in 5 years not because they had a better product (they didn't), but because they positioned themselves as the anti-Wall Street character in the financial services story.

They weren't selling a trading platform—they were casting customers as rebels in their narrative. When the GameStop controversy hit, their character became a villain to some and a misunderstood hero to others—but never irrelevant.

CONCLUSION: "TOUCH GRASS, NOT ALGORITHMS" - YOUR MARKETING GLOW-UP PLAN

From Mission Statement to Personal Statement

We've traveled a long way through the smoking ruins of traditional marketing, and if you've made it this far, you're ready to build something better from the ashes. Let's take a moment to reflect on the marketing apocalypse we've witnessed:

First, we confronted the brutal reality that traditional marketing is not just struggling—it's functionally dead. The numbers don't lie: plummeting trust metrics, ad-blocking at record highs, and attention spans that make goldfish look focused. The days of interruption-based marketing are over, buried under the 6,000-10,000 ads bombarding consumers daily. The old playbook has been thrown into the fire, and there's no retrieving it.

Then, we explored how successful brands have shifted from interruption to invitation, from shouting at consumers to creating spaces worth visiting. This isn't just philosophical BS—it's reflected in hard metrics showing community-focused brands outperforming campaign-driven competitors by margins that would make your CFO weep tears of joy. The invitation approach delivers lower acquisition costs, higher customer lifetime value, and referral rates that make traditional marketing look like a bad investment.

We also stared into the AI abyss and saw both terror and opportunity. By 2026, robots will create 60% of marketing content—a reality that's either an existential threat or your greatest competitive advantage, depending on how you respond. The brands thriving aren't those blindly embracing or rejecting AI, but those creating thoughtful human-AI partnerships that leverage the best of both worlds: AI's computational power and human emotional intelligence.

Perhaps most importantly, we discovered that in an age of algorithmic perfection, human imperfection becomes your superpower. The "Not-A-Robot Premium" is real—consumers will pay more, engage more, and advocate more for brands that maintain their humanity in a sea of optimized sameness. The aspects of marketing that robots can't replicate—genuine empathy, cultural nuance, moral reasoning, and authentic personality—aren't just nice-to-haves; they're profit centers.

Finally, we saw that brands with actual personality—those with "main character energy"—are absolutely crushing their beige competitors. Taking stands, having opinions, and occasionally making people uncomfortable isn't just good for your brand's soul; it's good for your bottom line. The financial gap between forgettable and unforgettable brands isn't explained by budget size but by backbone strength.

Now, let's bring it all home with a five-step marketing detox plan that won't make customers want to block you on every possible platform:

1. The "Would I Personally Find This Annoying?" Test

Before launching any campaign, ask yourself: "If I received this as a consumer, would I hate it?" If the answer is anything other than a hard no, trash it immediately. No exceptions.

Implement what I call the "Thanksgiving Dinner Test"—if you'd be embarrassed to explain your marketing tactics to your family over turkey, they're probably trash.

2. Fire Your Personas, Hire Actual Humans

Those cute little marketing personas (Sarah, 34, marketing manager, enjoys yoga) are less realistic than your average Disney princess. Stop creating content for fictional characters.

Instead, build a panel of 50–100 actual customers you can run ideas past. Pay them for their time. Listen when they tell you your ideas suck. Real human feedback beats demographic data every single time.

3. Make the AI-Human Pact

Draw clear lines between what AI should handle (data analysis, testing, first drafts, personalization at scale) and what humans need to own (strategy, emotional resonance, cultural nuance, final creative approval).

The brands that will win aren't the ones going all-in on AI or stubbornly sticking to all-human teams— they're the ones creating thoughtful human-AI partnerships that amplify the strengths of both.

4. Embrace "Small Batch" Marketing

Mass marketing is dead—not because it doesn't reach people but because reaching people isn't enough anymore. Engagement beats reach every time.

The future belongs to brands creating high-effort, high-reward experiences for smaller audiences. A TikTok with 10,000 genuinely engaged viewers beats a Super Bowl ad that 100 million people actively ignore.

THE FINAL TRUTH

The marketing apocalypse isn't something to fear—it's liberation from decades of BS. As AI takes over the robotic aspects of marketing, we get to reclaim the gloriously messy, imperfect human elements that actually drive connection.

In a digital world drowning in carefully optimized noise, your competitive advantage isn't better algorithms—it's better humanity. So go forth and make marketing that doesn't suck. Your customers (and your soul) will thank you.

Geet Govil is the founder of [CaCo Network](http://CaCoNetwork.com) and has advised over 50 brands on navigating the AI revolution in marketing. This book was written by a human, edited by a human, with occasional help from AI that was kept on a very tight leash. No marketing BS was harmed in the making of this book, though plenty was exposed