

Insights from *Perennial Seller* by Ryan Holiday

“In every industry—from books to movies to restaurants to plays and software— certain creations can be described as “perennial.” By that I mean that, regardless of how well they may have done at their release or the scale of audience they have reached, these products have found continued success and more customers over time. They are the kind of art or products that we return to more than once, that we recommend to others, even if they’re no longer trendy or brand-new.” – Ryan Holiday

How can we make a product that remains valuable?

The movie ‘Star Wars: A New Hope,’ and the book ‘How to Win Friends and Influence People’ are perennial sellers. Like all perennial sellers they live on by **word-of-mouth**. I learned about Star Wars from a friend in grade school, who heard about Star Wars from his dad... 20 years after its release date.

Ryan Holiday has uncovered methods of making and marketing products to maximize word of mouth. By using his methods, our work (blog posts, videos, books, etc.) can remain valuable long after its release date. By learning the tools to make a perennial seller we can do the hard work now and reap the benefits for years to come.

Here are three methods we can use to maximize word of mouth and develop a perennial seller.



Make it Timeless

Focus on a topic or problem that never gets old.

Author Dale Carnegie released the book 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' in 1936. People still recommend 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' it to their friends in 2017. Why?

Dale Carnegie’s book solves a timeless problem: social anxiety. People struggle with social anxiety today as they did in 1936. People will continue to struggle with social anxiety for the foreseeable future.

If you want to make a perennial seller ask yourself: **why will people still be talking about this ten years from now?** (tip: focus on reoccurring human problems and not the latest technology)

“Focus on the things that don’t change.” – Jeff Bezos



Make it Specific

People share products they love.

When people enthusiastically share a product with their friends, the products audience will grow organically over time (like compound interest).

If you want to make a perennial seller, you need to ask yourself: **Who specifically will love this?**

“It’s better to make a product that one hundred people love than a product one million people just like.” – Paul Graham (Y Combinator founder)

People love products that fit their needs, wants, and interests. Therefore, you must narrow your focus and direct your energy on making a product for a specific person (or niche group of people). All perennial products can be described in one sentence: ***This is a __, that does__ for __.***

When you help a specific person solve a specific problem, that person (and people like them) are more likely to fall in love with your product and share it with everyone they know.

“Many creators want to be for everyone . . . and as a result end up being for no one. Picking a lane isn’t limiting. It’s the first act of empowerment we take as a creator.” – Ryan Holiday



Make it Accessible

It’s better to be underpaid than to be unheard of.

“Think about all the stuff out there that you haven’t checked out— even though most of it is really cheap. That’s the kind of abundance we enjoy as consumers. There is so much out there that you couldn’t possibly consume it all in your lifetime. So we ignore a lot of it, especially the stuff that looks expensive. Which is why as creators we have to get more comfortable with giving people a taste of our work— or, in some cases, giving some people the entire meal for free. That’s how we build an audience and gather momentum.” – Ryan Holiday

Don’t be afraid to mark down your product at first (make it free!). The low cost will make it accessible to more people. When a low-cost item is of high utility and quality, people will share it with everyone they know.

“As a general rule, however, the more accessible you can make your product, the easier it will be to market. You can always raise the price later, after you’ve built an audience.”- Ryan Holiday