

The Marketing Zombie Apocalypse

By Jeffrey L. Josephson

They're out there, and they're coming to get you. The Marketing Zombies - the undead hoard infected by the virus of new-age marketing, social media and Web 2.0. And they will absorb you into their grotesque spasm of waste and failure! Use this guide to prepare yourself for the Marketing Zombie Apocalypse before it's too late!

Who Are the Marketing Zombies?

The Marketing Zombies are a collective of mindless and soulless so-called "experts" whose only purpose is to feed themselves off your fear, ignorance and confusion about how to grow your business in today's troubled economy. But the fact is that they don't know any better than you about what works, and what doesn't. They just want you to "join" them, and waste your time and your money in order to satisfy their own sick needs.

Who are they, and what do they do? Read on, and beware!



The Social Media Marketing Zombie

Weaned on Facebook and Twitter, the Social Media Marketing Zombie can text 50 words-per-minute with just her thumbs, and she has over a thousand so-called "friends." She'll show you all the sites you can post to; but when she starts clawing at you for content, watch out! Her insatiable appetite for anecdotes, references and clever commentary will exhaust you in no time. And when visitors fail to become customers, you'll be long overdue on your sales goals, and she'll be off, munching on her next victim.



The Zombie Telemarketer

Fired when his local call center went out of business, the Zombie Telemarketer will do anything for a job. He'll even work on a pay-for-performance basis. All he needs is a phone, and your promise to pay when something sells. To be sure, he'll dial until his fingers fall off. But when nobody closes, your business will be left a bloody corpse in the market, with nothing but a soiled reputation.



The Zombie Networking Group

Packed with hungry salespeople, the members of the Zombie Networking Group have convinced their sales managers that networking with other salespeople is the best way to find good sales leads. Gorging on chickens at \$30 a luncheon, though, just won't satisfy their endless appetite to join more networking groups - until they find a new job working for someone they met at one of their networking groups.



The Zombie Sales Trainer

Affirming that your salespeople are fine, they're just inefficient, the Zombie Sales Trainer will teach them how to qualify prospects faster, and better manage their time. But when your funnel starts dropping off, don't be shocked by a pitch for his recruiting services – because your salespeople weren't so fine after all.



The Zombie Hoard

Invading from overseas, the Zombie Hoard has mastered technology, and needs nothing more than a call center and an Internet connection to bleed your business dry. With a cost-per-hour that's a small fraction of domestic providers, the only problem is that no one can understand a word they say - as they gobble up your time, and scare off your customers.



The Zombie Consultant

Retired from his Fortune 500 marketing job, the Zombie Consultant has all the answers. From sales strategies to drip campaigns, from brochures to Webinars, if you have money, he knows how to spend it. He knows all the buzzwords, too, but that droning doesn't mean any more to him than it does to you.



The Zombie Web Designer

Caked in flashy make-up to hide her own fatal flaws, the Zombie Web Designer knows exactly why your Web site isn't working, and what to do about it - even if you just spent \$100,000 to redo it. She'll look deep into your soul to lure you in. And when you decide to "refresh," she'll take a big chunk out of your pocketbook, and leave you looking just like all the other victims she's infected.



The Zombie Data Base Rep

Dragging the fetid entrails of long-abandoned opt-in lists, the Zombie Data Base Rep has the answer to all your prayers – email addresses! But you'll be buried in bounce-backs before he's through, and gasping for air as your domain gets quarantined by every spam cop on the beat.

The Marketing Zombie Apocalypse isn't coming, it's here. And you need to be prepared. But first...

Are You Already a Victim?

Lest you think you're immune from the plague of the Marketing Zombie Apocalypse, finding one of their victims may require no more than a look in the mirror – if you can stand it. Have you already been infected?



The Zombie Marketing Manager

You may have a degree in communications, but have you ever really sold anything? Do you know what your salespeople really need, or do you just look for their approval? The fact that you have a budget doesn't make you smart; in fact, to everyone else on the team it only makes you expendable.

Stand up against the Social Media trend, and admit that it's just sound and fury. And pick up a copy of Kotler – your best defense against the plague of ignorance.



The Zombie Salesperson

You look great in a suit, and you know PowerPoint like the back of your hand. All you need to do is get in front of a prospect, and you can close anyone, anytime. But if your soulless cry is for "More leads!" as you wait for the phone to ring, remember to blame the Zombie Marketing Manager for bringing you junk you can't close.

Stop playing with your CRM, and networking with other salespeople. Get some real sales training, and use it.



The Zombie Sales Manager

Do you confuse activity for results? Do you find yourself moaning about the quality of the leads, about competition, about demand, or pricing? Don't worry. Being a Zombie means you're not responsible. Oh, and welcome to the collective.

Or, you could focus on conversion rates – the real bottom line in sales.



The Zombie Business Owner

Are you the biggest victim of them all? Have you heard all the hype, and – with no real options – did you finally drink the Marketing Zombie Kool-Aid? Just remember to ignore all the real costs of Zombie Marketing, like calendar time and waste, or you may find yourself pulling your hair out of your head.

Stop listening to the experts, and start listening to your gut. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. And if everyone is doing it, well, what did your mother tell you?

Where's the Proof?

As everyone knows from the movies, most Zombie victims don't recognize the threat until it's too late. They feel fine, until they don't. So how do you know if you've been infected by the Marketing Zombie Apocalypse?

There's no blood test, but there are clear signs that you're in trouble. Ask yourself:

1. What's the response rate on your email campaigns? If there are more digits to the right of the decimal place than the left, you've been bitten.
2. What's the conversion rate on your trade show leads? If every show doesn't produce a net profit, you're infected.
3. How much time do you spend posting to LinkedIn or Facebook? If you aren't including the cost of that time in your calculation of cost-per-lead, you've already joined the swarm.
4. Did you run out of year before you ran out of quota? Or worse, did you lower your goal? If so, say your good-byes; you've already lost.

The Marketing Zombie Apocalypse is the perfect plague for the perfect time – a salve for the recession. And while no one was looking, it ran amok through the world.

What Can You Do?

So how can you protect yourself from the Marketing Zombie Apocalypse? Use the following Guide, and beware!

1. Get Your S**t Together

Marketing Zombies are dangerous because they look just like you and me. They may be "Bob the Sales Guy" down the hall, or "Mary the Marketer" next door. But by the time you figure out that they're the flesh-eating reanimated dead of the marketing world, it's too late. Learn to recognize the Marketing Zombie infestation before it recognizes you!

2. Arm Yourself

Marketing Zombies are already dead, so you can't kill them. And they're not conscious, so you can't reason with them. The best you can do is separate a Zombie's brain from its body so they'll leave you alone. The fastest way to do that is to arm yourself with good questions. Ask for proof that what they're recommending actually works. Ask them to be accountable for sales results, not activity. And then stand back as their heads explode!

3. Prepare a Survival Kit

The Marketing Zombie Apocalypse is already here, so you need to be prepared to ride it out. According to the CDC, here's what you'll need:

- **Water** - In business, cash is like water, you can't live without it. And Marketing Zombies spend it like it's going out of style. You'll need a secret stash of cash to re-start your marketing program after they wrecked whatever they got their hands on.
- **Food** - Your customers are the lifeblood of your business. Hide them from the Marketing Zombies so they'll still be there when the Zombies move on.
- **Medications** - Your good employees are your antibodies against the Marketing Zombies. Don't let them get contaminated by the latest fad.
- **Tools and Supplies** - Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. If you have something that's working, don't stop doing it just because the Marketing Zombies say you don't need it anymore.
- **Sanitation and Hygiene** - Marketing Zombies may ask you to do things that you may find to be unethical, or just plain dumb. If it sounds to good

to be true, it probably is. Don't do it if you think it might reflect badly on you.

The Marketing Zombie Apocalypse isn't going away; in fact, it's just getting started. But it's an industry designed for their benefit, not yours; so be prepared for the worst.

4. Get Out of Town

The Marketing Zombies will tell you that it's a whole new world today. They'll tell you about Web 2.0, about the virtual economy, and even about virtual money (WTF?). They'll tell you about the companies that succeeded using their techniques, but what they won't tell you is that 99% of them failed. Make them show you the conversion process; and if they can't, then run - before it's too late.

5. Barricade Yourself

The Marketing Zombies will come at you from every direction, with solutions to problems you didn't even know you had. So you need to build a moat around your business. Demand that they show the link between their marketing recommendations and the production of actual revenue. If you need to make a "leap of faith," be prepared to get eaten.

6. Search for Survivors

Not everyone has been infected; there are people out there who actually know what they're doing. Learn to tell the difference between a Marketing Zombie and someone who's just bloody from fighting the good fight. If you can't tell the living from the undead, be prepared to join them.

7. Seek a Safe Haven

Don't expect the infection to pass. This plague is destined to evolve into ever more virulent strains before the economy eventually comes back; at which time the rising tide will lift all ships, and the Zombies will simply take credit.

But, of course, if you want to make money now, call JV/M.

