ASPECTS

// Talk to Your Entire Audience



I once sat at a conference table explaining to ski resort executives from a conglomerate the difference between *SKI* magazine, which at the time catered to

passionate user. Time Inc. owned both titles and this conversation came up a lot. I said something to the effect of: "Both audiences have money for ski passes and condos, it's just that the *Skiing* reader is more inclined to ski through lunch and when they do sit down they might brown bag it."

The brown bagging bit did not stick the landing. Memory is a poor fact checker so I won't try to quote anyone, but amongst a raft of ridicule, the sentiment was: We don't want no stinkin' brown baggers. The term "core is poor" might have been

thrown around. Because the executives came from theme park and airline

That same mistake is repeated across markets. Outdoor apparel is a great

appeal to its entire customer base just didn't register.

backgrounds—certainly not ski area operations—the idea that a ski area could

the luxury crowd, and Skiing magazine, which I edited and was targeted at a more

example. It's a dream of apparel CEOs to achieve national relevance not just with their customers who recreate outside, but with everyone. Celebrity is seen as the way to make that connection. If someone famous wears a fleece by The North Face, then the fraternity and sorority brothers and sisters will too—and the mark-up on fleece is way better than it is on Gore-Tex pants.

Celebrity also brings fashion—another path to the general market. My fashion

conscious daughter has been buying Salomon trail running shoes for years. And

summer" and she loaded up. Last winter she rifled through my ratty old Arc'Teryx

then this past summer Vogue said Salomons were the "French girl shoe of the

outerwear—I used to review their gear—for the same reason. The hip hop crowd loves the bling of Arc'Teryx's premium pricing and gorpcore styling and suddenly a brand founded by British Columbian alpinists became a fashion statement.

By all means, brands should ride the wave. I would never argue otherwise. It's a tough business. The problem happens when a company forgets that it is the core appeal that drove the new business and will drive it in the future. Ignoring that will hurt you when the celebrities move on—and they will.

The thing is, smart marketing can appeal to core users and the mass market. I've

commercial with German drivers hauling ass, drifting, and jumping Rabbit GTIs. It

driven Volkswagen GTIs my entire life because in 1984, VW aired an irreverent

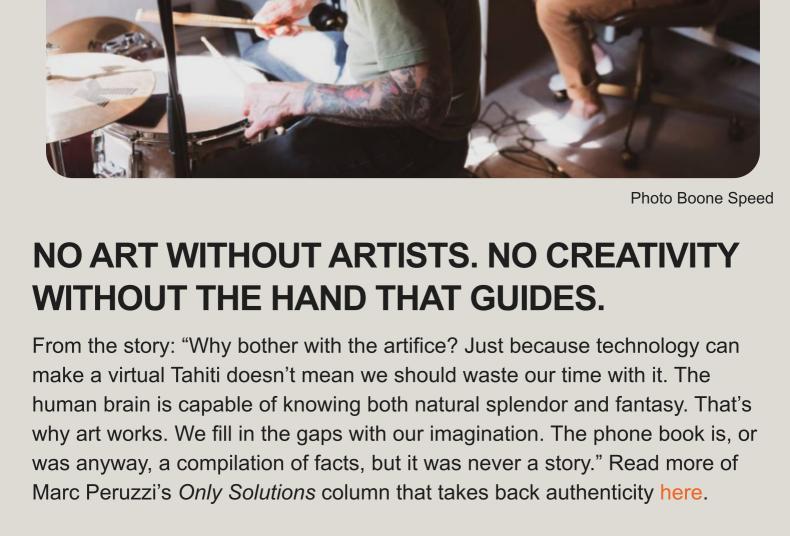
became the sports car for the people. I burned the tires of mine on mountain roads, even if I never jumped them or raced them. The car and the messaging resonated with me. It was a core product with mass appeal.

All of which is to say, when you stay authentic to who you are, relevance follows. And with the right creative teams, you can speak to the largest audience possible without alienating your base—brown baggers or otherwise.

// Authenticity is Not a Buzzword

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For more on why authenticity matters, read the next story.





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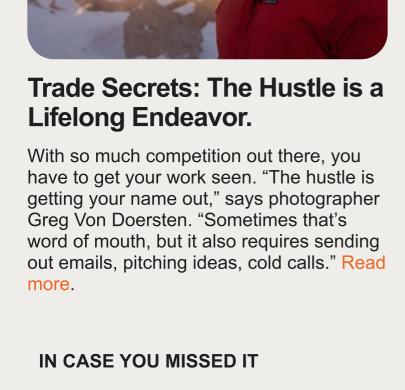
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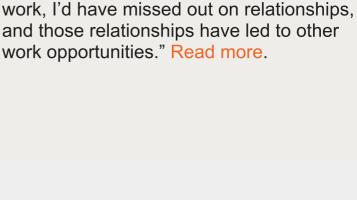
Today, Hilary Hutcheson is a fly-fishing outfitter and guide, owns and runs Lary's Fly & Supply in Columbia Falls, Montana, and is an award-winning filmmaker, journalist, and contributing editor at *Fly Fisherman* magazine.

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Photo Courtesy Hilary Hutcheson

// New in Hence Journal





Trade Secrets: Open Yourself

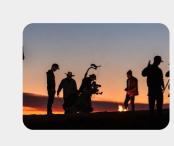
corporate copy," says Gordy Megroz. "But

I've learned a lot about how businesses

work along the way. Had I dismissed that

Up to Opportunity.

"I didn't think I would enjoy writing



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need that to stop. Here's how.

Story Gordy Megroz | Photo Illustration Dave Cox

Outdoor creatives tend to devalue their work. We

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