

**I DONT UNDERSTAND,
IT WAS GOING SO WELL..**

ON LOCATION



IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU

GEOSPATIAL MARKETERS NEED TO LEARN TO STOP TALKING AT CUSTOMERS AND TO START LISTENING TO THEM INSTEAD, SAYS ALISTAIR MACLENAN

Not long ago, a very good friend of mine was talking me through a date she had been on recently and was bemoaning the fact that the man she had been paired with had spent the entire time they were together telling her about himself.

"We spent two hours over dinner and I bet he doesn't know the first thing about me," she said. "That sounds like most of the marketing in the geo industry," I said.

I now know that if your very good friend is telling you something about her personal life, your job is to listen and nod in all the right places – it is not to compare her misfortune to your working-life obsession.

I'm sure the bruising will fade soon.

But I was always taught not to look a gift metaphor in the mouth, so while I am out of range of what is an extremely effective left hook, I won't let this one pass without further examination.

The behaviour and the subsequent impressions that are created on a first date are very often the difference between whether the encounter is tearfully recounted to a good friend and willing listener in an empty bar or used as an amusing and usually overly long anecdote at the subsequent wedding.

It still floors me to see how many companies in the geo industry just don't understand that – don't their marketing directors want to pick out certain colours with new customers? How many times have customers in the geospatial industry had to look at the marketing from a potential supplier, only to be reminded of the self-aggrandising suitor from my friend's less than enjoyable evening out?

Why is it so hard for those responsible for presenting their companies to understand that constantly talking about what it is their companies do the first time – or any time – they meet (have contact with) prospective clients is just not the way to turn them on?

Reading through a list of the features of what a product does isn't interesting and, most importantly, it isn't relevant to what customers

want out of the relationship. They want it to be all about them.

Geospatial marketing directors may take umbrage with what I'm saying and point out to me that they are making sales with the marketing they are doing. Even if their marketing explains in every last minute detail what is they do, they are making sales.

And they would be correct, they are making sales. But maybe, just maybe, it is because they have always been the only eligible bachelor in town. It therefore doesn't matter what shirt they wear to the first date.

But the geospatial dating pool is expanding. Nearly every day, a tall dark stranger with a new geospatial technology or location dataset pushes through the swing doors of the saloon bar and is happy to take the time to explore the prospect's life ambitions while looking deep into their eyes and whispering sweet geo in their ear.

Okay, I was actually brought up to wring the neck of an available metaphor.

My simple point is that if your marketing was bad before, it will be worse tomorrow. More companies, bigger companies are looking at geospatial offerings as a way to expand their presence – for example, IBM recently announced a partnership with Mapbox . Yes, this should result in more opportunities for everyone, but if you're talking about yourself, pretty quickly you'll find yourself in an empty restaurant, talking to the waiting staff as they clear the tables around you.

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BACHELOR IN TOWN**

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