

The Underground Marketer Podcast – Episode 18 – Full Transcript

Introduction 00:00:03 Marketing, explosive growth, and revolutionary secrets that can catapult your business to new heights. You're now listening to The Underground Marketer Podcast with your host Tudor Dumitrescu. The one podcast devoted to showing new businesses, how to market themselves for high growth.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:00:23 Welcome to the underground marketer. This is the place where we deliver the real truth about marketing and explore big ideas that can help new businesses thrive and grow into big ones.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:00:34 I'm your host, Tudor. And today we're going to have a special episode on mimetic desire and how you can use it in your marketing and how it can increase your results significantly - of any marketing campaign that you're doing. And it can actually make people go crazy for your product and buying droves from you if you can engineer it correctly. And that's exactly what we're going to be discussing. So stay tuned for that. But before, let me introduce you to mimetic desire, what it is, how it came about, and what exactly you need to know about it. So, um, mimetic desire is a theory that was created by a philosopher known as Rene Girard. He was a professor at Stanford, and it's one of the most revolutionary and comprehensive theories of desire in modern ages. I mean, this guy is sort of like what Freud did for psychology or what Darwin did for evolution.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:01:34 This guy did for desire and explaining what people desire. Unfortunately, there are not many copywriters or, you know, entrepreneurs who know much about mimetic desire, but that's really to their loss. I mean, for example, Peter Thiel, who is a billionaire, the founder of PayPal, he's a huge fan of Gerard and he's a billionaire. And what he's learned from Girard has definitely been very helpful for him in his whole career. I mean, what you can learn by learning the theory of mimetic desire and learning how you can apply it is that you're going to be a lot more effective when you write copy when you sell stuff and you're going to learn both what to sell and how to sell it and how to relate with other people in your life a lot more effectively. So what is mimetic desire? So basically mimesis stands for imitation and it's grounded in the observations that come from great novelists and dramatists like Stendhal, Dostoevsky, Proust, and so on.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:02:38 That basically people, all of us were not as authentic as we would like to be. So our desires, basically what we think of as our desires aren't really our own, you know, when we desire something - I want to Ferrari, let's say we think that that comes from ourselves and it's authentic to us and it's unique to us and so on, but that's not actually true. Girard proposes the hypothesis that our desires are stolen. And fundamentally we do not know what to desire. And when we do not know what to desire, we look at other people to basically find out what they desire and we model them. And I mean, if you read stuff about influence and persuasion, you've probably read Cialdini and Cialdini goes into the, the factors that go into persuasion. And one of them is basically what people do when they are uncertain and what they do when they're unsure is that they look at what other people do.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:03:44 You know, you see somebody fallen on the street and you look at what other people around you do is everybody else ignoring him? Are people going to help him and so on? And you decide what you're going to do yourself. And Girard basically tells us

that people do the same thing with their desires, you know, not consciously, but unconsciously, they model their desires of what other people do and what other people desire. So, for example, let's say that we see another person desiring a beautiful woman. You know, maybe this was the popular football player guy in high school, who all the girls were interested in and we see him, he's desiring this very beautiful girl. And in our minds we start playing a movie, right? Like he's some sort of God, he has this plenitude of being, he has everything that we lack. If we could only be like him, then we would be fulfilled.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:04:42 So what do we do as a result of that? We model his desire. So he wants this girl. So we want her too, because that must be the key to being like him and sharing in his, in the kind of being that he has. And suddenly the relationship between us and him, it shifts from a model subject where we model him to a model obstacle relationship as Girard calls it. So the truth is we both can't have the girl which gives rise to rivalry, right? We start seeing him not only as a model, but more and more as a rival. And I mean, we can take another example here. So this is very frequent in history. You know, one nation sees another having a piece of land that used to belong to it. And soon they start wanting it back, right? And the war starts.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:05:39 And the more the rivalry intensifies, and this is the point Girard wants to make, the more they become alike, even though the two nations think they're completely different, you know, each side thinks it's the other side's fault. Each side thinks that they're the good guys. Each side is using the same methods to achieve its aims. But at the same time, each one thinks that they are different than the other one. They think that they're the opposite of the other one. But what actually happens is that they become more and more identical as their rivalry intensifies and the resulting conflict. The result, basically of all this is conflict, you know, imitation ends up leading to conflict and to violence. So the model of mimetic desire basically says that desire is not a straight line. You don't go from yourself to the object. Rather, you go from yourself to the model and then to the object. So it's like a triangle, you know, that's how desire actually works.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:06:37 So, I mean, you're probably now wondering what all of this has to do with marketing and how you can actually apply it to get people to buy from. Well, it turns out that most of the time consumers do not know what to desire. You know, they, they don't know what they need, they should desire, they don't know what to go after. And when they're uncertain, people look at what others do. You know, other people are buying a Tesla. I need a Tesla as well. And so on. They don't necessarily buy a Tesla for a rational reason. They do it because others are doing it because it's cool to do it because it's special to do it. And I mean, if you look at the number of people who rely on recommendations, right, more and more people rely on recommendations to buy stuff online, to use stuff online, you know, they ask you, have you taken this course?

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:07:29 Can you recommend this course? They post stuff on forums, on groups, on Reddit at restaurants, you have specials recommended by the house. In fashion, you have models, actual models who show you what you should wear. You know, you, you don't create in your mind, you know how you should dress. No, you look at other people. That's what fashion is. You need other people to show you how you should dress and you should dress that way because you want to be attractive. You want to be sexy. You want to attract the opposite sex. That's why you should do it. And they show it to you. You model their desire. That desire doesn't exist intrinsically in you, it's taken from other people. And I mean, social media and

Peter Thiel was one of the initial investors in Facebook. And I think that there is a very good reason that, uh, Rene Girard's theory helped him make that decision to invest in Facebook.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:08:24 There's a very good chance that that was the case because I mean, Facebook simply is mimetic desire, personified. You know, people look at what others like, people admire what others admire. You know, you look at other people's lives on Facebook and you think your own life is crap. So you want to be more like them. And so on, you know, it goes to huge extents and I mean, influencer marketing, you know, having this guy who has an audience or this gal who has an audience promote your stuff. That stuff can make your product go crazy. You know, you can make it become huge. Reviews, you know, people write as seen on TV, on their landing pages, everybody wants to be popular in trending, all those likes and shares that you see on Facebook. I mean, if you see a Facebook ad with a thousand likes, and let's say a hundred shares, you're going to watch that ad much more and reading into it much more than when you do.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:09:23 If it's an ad with, let's say just 10 likes, right? You're probably going to ignore that one with 10 likes. So I mean, that's what marketing is doing. Marketing is basically... as a marketer, you want to show people the result that they can get and also the map to that transformation so they can become more like the model. So when you market, when you want to do this effectively, you have to show people the model, you know, the transformation that they can achieve. This is what you can become like. So, I mean, if you look at fitness, for example, you see the before and after pictures, right? In the before picture, you see yourself, you that fat guy, for example, who wants to lose weight, who wants to attract the girls or whatever. And then in the after picture, you see the guy with a body like a Greek God.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:10:10 And with the girls next to him, smiling and sexy and powerful. And you see yourself in that. That's what you want to be like. So mimetic desire and this theory and learning how to apply it, it's by far the number one thing that you can do to take your marketing to the next level, you know, once you learn how to use mimetic desire in your marketing, you can really trigger people to actually go crazy for what you're selling. You know, when you do this well, and it's very, very powerful, you know, and you do that through not directly by trying to get them to desire your product, but by showing them that other people desire your product, you know, and this takes us back to what we were saying. You know, consumers don't really know what they desire fundamentally, and they have to look at others to take those decisions.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:11:02 And this brings us to a very important point that not many people realize and that's that many of us, we tend to think that people buy what they need. And the truth is that they don't and people don't really even do what they need to do. Like, you know that you need to hit the gym for example, but you don't do it. You know, people don't do what they need to do. Instead, as mimetic desire and the theory tells us, people copy their desires from others. And this means that people end up buying their passions or their fantasies and their fears, you know, something that keeps them away from their fears and gets them closer to their passions or fantasies. And none of these are original to them. I mean, they're all learned from others. You could go to something like the list of the seven deadly sins, right?

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:12:00 From, uh, Christians and you land on precisely what people buy. So if you think about something like gluttony right, uh, food, tasty food, delicious food, that's what people buy. They buy the craft, the tastes well, they buy the McDonald's, right. It's so good. It's delicious. It's quick. They don't buy what they need. They don't buy the nutrient stuff.

The stuff that contains the best nutrients and is nutritional and actually helps them in their health and so on. They don't do that. They buy what they want, you know, what their passions are. What's going to fulfill them on a deep level or what they think will fulfill them because these things don't ultimately fulfill them. And I mean, gluttony is just one of them. You can look at lust. So of course, all of you know that sex sells very well and using sex in advertising is very effective.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:12:52 You see this, for example, with a lot of fitness brands, they market let's say to women, and then they show a sexy woman with a fit body in the ad using their product. So this takes us to the reason why actually in advertising, you want to see yourself enjoying the product. You know? So, um, many people when they're new to advertising, they think that for example, men want to see a woman enjoying the product, but that's not true. They want to see a man, somebody they identify with benefiting from the product, the model, you know, they, they can't model a woman because they're not a woman. So they need to see a man, somebody who can be a model for them. That's how the advertising is made effective. You have greed, of course. So everything in the finance niche is pretty much based on greed, the desire to make more money.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:13:44 You have despair, you know? So, um, a lot of the stuff in mental health has, is sold with this. You know, like you need a solution to get you out of the hole, the pit, and that's how you can do it. And then of course you have other, other sins like wrath. You also have sloth, which is very important. Sloth. Laziness. A lot of people, almost everybody wants the easy way out. You know, they want the plug and play system. Something that's easy that they can do it without any hassle. Doesn't take a lot of work, is easy to buy. You know, it doesn't, it's not complicated. And of course, you also have stuff like vain. glory or pride. So you see these are universal and we copy them from each other. You know, that's the big thing. So we see other people making money easier than we do.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:14:34 And we want to find out how they do it. You know, suddenly we desire that because we've seen that others are doing it. So this takes us to pretty much the, the very heart of mimetic desire. You know, Girard, there's a quote from him, which is great. He says "*the essence of desire is to have no essential goal. Truly to desire, we must have recourse to people about us. We have to desire their desires*". So I mean, what this tells us is that fundamentally we don't know inside of ourselves, what we should desire. And we look at others to find out what they're doing. So, um, now we need to move on to how you can actually use this in your marketing. So, um, for whatever your marketing, think about how you can use other people to get your message across.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:15:26 So obviously, the obvious one is influencer marketing. If you can use any influencers to sell your product, to promote your product, you can, and to use your product on camera even better, then you can sell a lot of it. You know? So, um, this is where influencers are key. There was this recent case actually of Cristiano Ronaldo who threw the bottles of Coca-Cola in the trash, right? And Coca-Cola sued him after that. So, um, what influencers do is very, very powerful or think about Elon Musk, speaking about Bitcoin and the price increasing the next moment. People follow what others do. You know, they look at what others do to get their desires. You know, they see Elon Musk desiring to buy Bitcoin. For example, they go and buy Bitcoin themselves. So, um, that's just one way influencer marketing to use it in your actual marketing materials.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:16:20 Then you can have recommendations and testimonials. And when you have testimonials, you have to show, and this is the key. You have to show the transformation of the person and the person enjoying the product, and then associate this transformation with the product. And you have to get this scheme going. That's how you use the model. You know, the, remember that in mimetic desire, the way it works is you don't go from their desire to your product. No, you go from desire to the model, which amplifies desire and then to the product. So you have to do the same thing. And a lot of people do this in a lot of ways. You know, you can have testimonials is just the most obvious one, but you've probably seen on landing pages, as seen on TV for a product. For example, that's another way to do this. You can have reviews.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:17:16 You can have a lot of likes and shares and stuff like that on social media. And perhaps more than anything, you can structure the whole promotion around this idea of mimetic desire. And I've seen coaches do this recently where they have a challenge, right? So you frame it as something that's collective, it's a challenge that you have to solve you, provoke people, you show the models who are succeeding in the challenge, whom they can model, you know, that can be very effective to draw people in. So you have a coaching business. If you're selling an info product, anything like that, if you can give people a model that they can see has used the product and has benefited from the product and has transformed through the product, they will associate that transformation with your product. Then they will start desiring it more and more and more.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:18:10 I mean, it's not for no reason that if you look at webinars, people are starting to show, not just 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 testimonials, but droves of testimonials, you know, they put them on one on top of each other and it doesn't even matter anymore what the testimonial says, or if it even says anything positive, because you often don't see that, but you just see that there's a lot of them, you know, that a lot of people desire this, a lot of people are getting results. And that's exactly what drives you to start taking action, you know, and to desire it more yourself. So remember that in the end, people are going to copy what others desire. And this is how even market frenzies are created. You know, when you have bubbles, bubbles are irrational, but they do have a logic of their own. And their logic is mimetic desire.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:19:04 People see more and more people doing something in desiring something and they want to go into that. And why do they want that? Why do they copy their desire? And they copy their desire because inside of themselves, they feel that there's a lack and they do not know - there's the uncertainty. They do not know how to feel that lack. So they need to find a model, somebody who has already walked that path, and model that person. You know, that's part of the reason why NLP and modeling has been so successful and has so widely adopted in the personal development niche, because this is what people want to do. Fundamentally. They want to find a model and then they want to copy what the model has done, because if they do that, they can bypass the difficulty of figuring stuff out on their own. And they can get rid of the uncertainty.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:20:00 As human beings, we do not tolerate uncertainty very well. So we want to eliminate it as soon as possible. And the fastest way to eliminate uncertainty is to buy a product. You know, you don't know how to start in business? Buy this course, you know, it's very simple. Then you will know, then there will be no more uncertainty. That's the big promise that gets people. And I mean, this is key here, you know, and if you can frame what you're doing, what you're selling as a challenge, you know, a marketing challenge or a business challenge, and you have a group of people and you can assemble a group of people where they

compete one with each other and you have rewards. You know, that's where you have, for example, a lot of courses out there which give rewards to their best performers. It's in order to create models out of people, you know, the best performers become the Greek gods.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:20:54 You know, that everybody wants to emulate and be like them. And only if they succeed to be like that, will they actually feel fulfilled. So, I mean, once you start wrapping your mind around the fact that desire is not a straight line and it's a triangle and it depends on the other, then you can start thinking very differently about your marketing. You stop looking for that one special thing. And you start looking at the basics, you know, going back to what we said, the, the passions and the fears that people have, that they copy from one another. You go back to stuff like the seven deadly sins and how you can use those to jumpstart your sales. You know, so think about your own product or service and how you can get it to fulfill these universal human needs and how you can use a model to showcase that, you know, so how can you, for example, make your product easier to use and simpler to buy?

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:21:54 How can you simplify that? So anybody can buy it pretty much. It's easy. It doesn't take a lot of work, you know, to do it. You don't have to learn a lot. It's intuitive. Think about the iPhone. You know, the, the iPhone is a device and really apple computers. They are devices for lazy people. And, you know, that's why they're simple. That's what simplicity means. Uh, you don't need to have all these customizations and all these settings and whatnot that, you know, let's say a Samsung has, you don't need any of that. You know, that's too complicated. Don't bother with it. Here's the easy thing. Doesn't get any viruses. It just works. You know, just use this, you know, why do you even need anything that would be stronger or better? You don't, that's the appeal that you can put into a product. And it's very effective as you can see.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:22:46 And I mean, these appeals, they are very effective, especially greed and sloth and laziness are very powerful. If you can integrate those into your product and think how you can use a model to do this, you know, so if you have a way to do something easier and faster, think how you can use another person and showcase them doing it easier and faster and enjoying that. And if you can showcase that to people, you know, they will start wanting what you have and the more people you can show them that are enjoying that, the more they will love it. So think how you can get your product seen on TV, showcase your product on YouTube, showcase it with influencers, show people and tell people that it's been showcased in these places. Show pictures of people, loving your product, showcase videos of people enjoying your product and showing their transformation.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:23:45 And this is what's really going to sell. You know, that's why, I mean, you see landing pages nowadays. They are pretty much just testimonials. I mean, that's all they are, you know, there's nothing else there. It's just testimonials. And of course, enough copy for you to be able to identify what the product is and what it does, but everything else is testimonials. It's other people saying that they recommended find ways to get organizations and people to recommend your product or service. You know, maybe you give them a discount. If they sell it through you, you let them sell it for a cheaper price. Strike out deals with people who already have audiences and whom people already follow, who are the "Greek gods" already, that people already, you know, that's why influencers are paid so much. And if you start applying this mimetic thinking and you start thinking of people not as unique, but rather pretty much the same, you know, and as copying the desires of one another, then you can start to think of all these creative ways to actually market your business.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:24:54 And it can revolutionize your marketing strategy because before you are focused on how you can get one person to like your product and to desire your product. Now your focus shifts to how you can show that person, a model of somebody who loves your product so that they will desire it, right? It's no longer going to be a straight line. It's going to be a triangle, but it's going to be a lot more effective. You know? So if you take a regular funnel that you've built around, attracting somebody who already desires the product and you take that funnel and you convert it to a funnel that's based around mimetic desire. You're probably going to see a spike in results. You know, a funnel that's based around showing that person a model who enjoys the product and how the model is transformed, thanks to the product, and then showing them and tying that in with your product.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:25:53 It's going to build a lot more desire for your product, and it's going to be a lot more effective for you to market your product through. So remember, I will now try to summarize what we went through, but the basic message was that the mimetic theory that Rene Girard developed is very effective at understanding desire and how desire comes to be. You know, we think that our desires come from inside of us and they are unique to each one of us. And we know what we desire, but that's not true. We copy what people desire. And we copy what people desire a lot more than we will ever admit that we do it, but we still do it. And you have to use this. You know, if you want to be ahead of your competitors, if you want to outsell them, if you want to grow a massive business that does millions in sales, you have to start using this.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:26:45 You know, you have to stop going for the straight line from your product or their desire to your product. And you have to go from their desire to the model and then to your product, it's going to be a lot more effective. And also remember what the, the core of what Girard tells us. People don't know what they desire and people definitely do not buy what they need. You know, they buy what they copy from other people, what they see other people as desiring, they buy their fears and passions. We said that the seven deadly sins, for example, are a very good list of stuff that you can resort back to when you're trying to think of ways to make your product desirable. You know, that's what you have to go back to. And I mean, we also discussed how the model over time.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:27:35 I mean, think about, for example, offering the challenge to people as many coaches do, and you can join a community. You can participate in the challenge. You can be rewarded, it's gamified pretty much. And what does being gamified mean? Really? It just means that the mimetic desire is intensified. You know, the other, as we said, initially, the relationship transforms from the model-subject relationship where you just imitate the subject to a rivalry, or when you, you and the subject are both competing for the same thing, which is the reward of the challenge being the best or whatever. And when that happens, you know, then people really intensify in their desires and the relationship changes to a rivalry, right? It's no longer a model subject. It's a model obstacle because if the other person wins the challenge and gets the reward, you don't, right? So that's how it works.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:28:32 And I mean, Facebook has done a tremendous job at mobilizing the mimetic desire of people. I mean, that's all Facebook is right. That's what people do when they like photos. They compete over who has the most likes, who is the most popular, who has the most friends and whatnot. That's all it is. It's pure mimetic desire. And that's why it's so powerful. That's why Facebook took off because it really understood how to play this mimetic desire angle. And it's not surprising that Peter Thiel, who is a big fan of Rene Girard was an early investor in Mark Zuckerberg himself was, uh, studying psychology in university. All these

things were key there. And once you learn how to use mimetic desire, not only do you think differently about your business and your marketing strategy, it's a big revolution, you know, and it's going to be a big revolution in your results as well. So I will leave you with this now. And remember mimetic desire is about going from the person, the target prospect to a model, and then to your product, not to your product directly. So I leave you with this message and stay tuned for the next episode.

Tudor Dumitrescu 00:29:46 And until next time, keep growing your business and providing massive value to the world. Remember you are the reason why we're all growing richer. Our freedoms are expanding and we're all living in greater prosperity. Thank you. And talk to you next time.