



by Seth Godin

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# How Much Would You Pay to Be On Oprah?

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What would happen to your organization if you had a solid ten minutes with Her Majesty? How much benefit would you receive if you were able to tell your story to millions of people on television? Of course, you can't pay to be on Oprah, but if you could, no doubt you would. This simple thought exercise exposes a paradox that we're finding online. Should authors get paid to put their work into Google Print, the online service that lets you search for information inside a book? How do you measure how much to invest in a blog? The persistent reporter who spoke to me the other day wouldn't stop asking the same question: "What percentage of your annual sales are directly attributable to your blog?" Perhaps you've heard the same question from your boss. Proof is what they seek! Management doesn't want to invest in new media without understanding what the short-term payoff is. Authors don't want to "give away" content without proof that it'll pay off. But they'd all pay to be on Oprah. That local paper, the one that struggles to make its subscription and newsstand bottom line every day, wants

you to register before you can read an article online. And they want to know a lot about you (your gender, your date of birth) before they will allow you to pay attention to their site.

The same company that runs ads hoping you'll buy a newspaper that costs more to print than it does to sell puts up roadblocks to keep you from reading online. Wait.

"Pay attention" are the key words. The consumer is already paying. They're paying with a precious commodity called attention. Instead of fending them off and holding them back, perhaps the newspaper ought to be making it easier for them to give their precious attention away.

A quick gut check will probably confirm what many of us truly believe: The number of channels of communication is going to continue to increase. And either you'll have a channel or you won't. Either you'll have access to the attention of the people you need to talk with (notice I didn't say "talk at"), or you won't.

So, the real question to ask isn't, "How much will I get paid to talk with these people?" The real question is, "How much will I pay to talk with these people?"

