Marketing in the Age of Accelerated Change:
What's Your Risk Tolerance?

Ross Evans, VP Redpoint Marketing PR

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marketing, pr, websites, design
in travel & hospitality

Redpoint is a boutique PR and marketing agency based in NYC that serves the tourism, travel, and hospitality industries.

We offer public relations, digital marketing, website development, graphic design, and social influencer marketing services.



Little bit more about me…

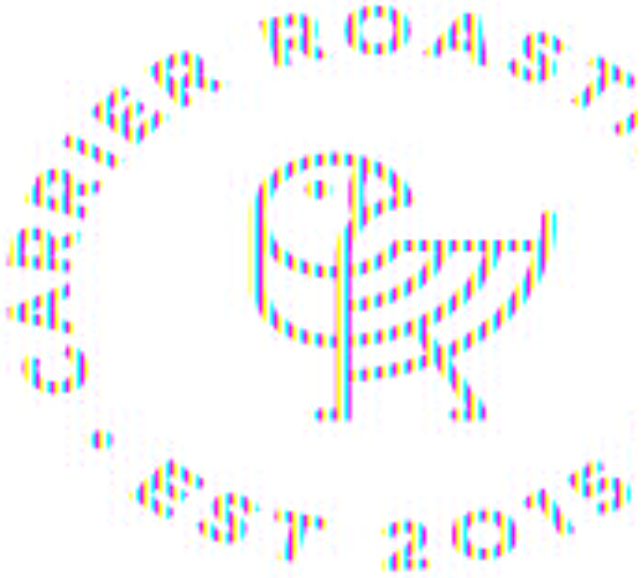
- Proud Vermonter
- College + 10 years in Mass/Boston
- Spent three years as director of marketing & ecomm for Simon Pearce
- +13 years as Vice President of Redpoint
- Somewhere along the way I got the itch that hits every Vermonter…

…I started a beverage business in my parent's barn.



Carrier Roasting Co.

- Started in 2015
- Ross Evans & Scott Kerner
- Two cafes of our own (Northfield & Burlington); roastery in Waterbury
- +50 wholesale accounts + online



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Lawson's
Finest Liquids
Super
Session #2
Keep Cold!
Enjoy Fresh!
TWELVE
12 FL OZ (355mL)
CANS PACK
SESSION IPA
4.5% ALC/VOL
Sip of Sunshine
IPA
INDIA PALE ALE
LAWSON'S
FINEST LIQUIDS
CARRIER
MILD
CARRIER

Show of Hands…



Marketing is all or part of your job.



If you are using AI tools (chat bots, agents) in some form every day.

How many people from outside of Vermont do we have?

Here's what we're not covering…

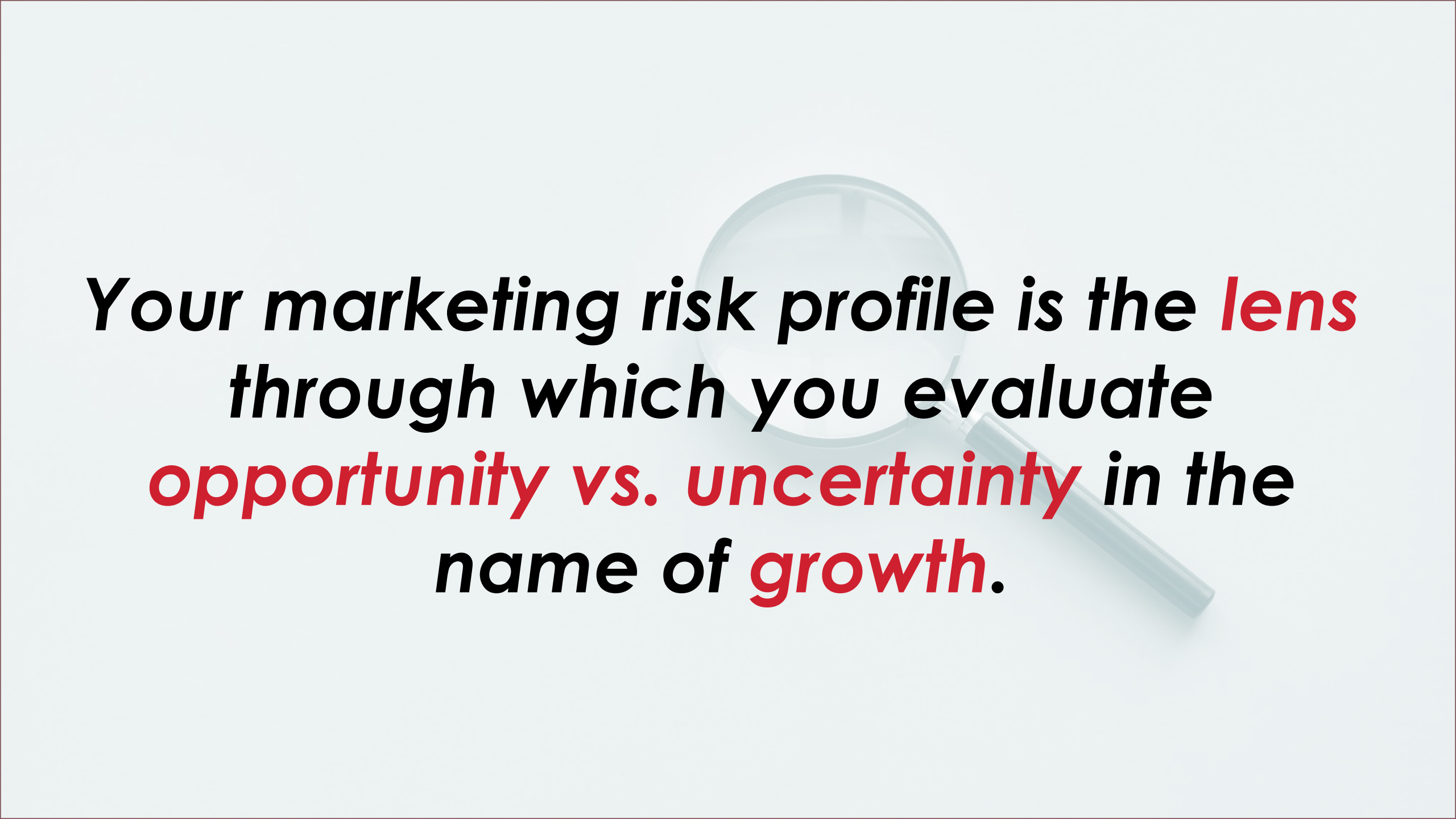
- The best way to use ChatGPT for marketing
- How to use Claude Code to build an app
- The best AI agents for marketing
- AIO/GEO/SEO/ABCs…

Session goals… here's what we're doing:

- Looking at decision-making through a platform-agnostic lens.
- You're going to gain a better understanding of your own risk tolerance and why you make the decisions you make.
- We're going to look at case studies and risk profiles that I've observed from +13 years in hospitality marketing.
- You'll leave with a practical step-by-step framework for decision-making that will help you navigate new trends with confidence.

Important: I'm not in the "marketing risk profile" business… but it's something I've observed throughout my career.

What is a Marketing Risk Profile?


Your marketing risk profile is the lens through which you evaluate opportunity vs. uncertainty in the name of growth.

Why is this relevant now?

Taking risks has always been part of marketing and business.

Customer trends, how they find us, and how they interact with us are changing dramatically. It feels like the "rules" of marketing and how we interact with guests are unclear.

This means the road ahead feels uncharted. Knowing how to make the "right" decisions feels more difficult.

Why is this relevant now?

Spoiler alert: "gut instinct" is a hoax!

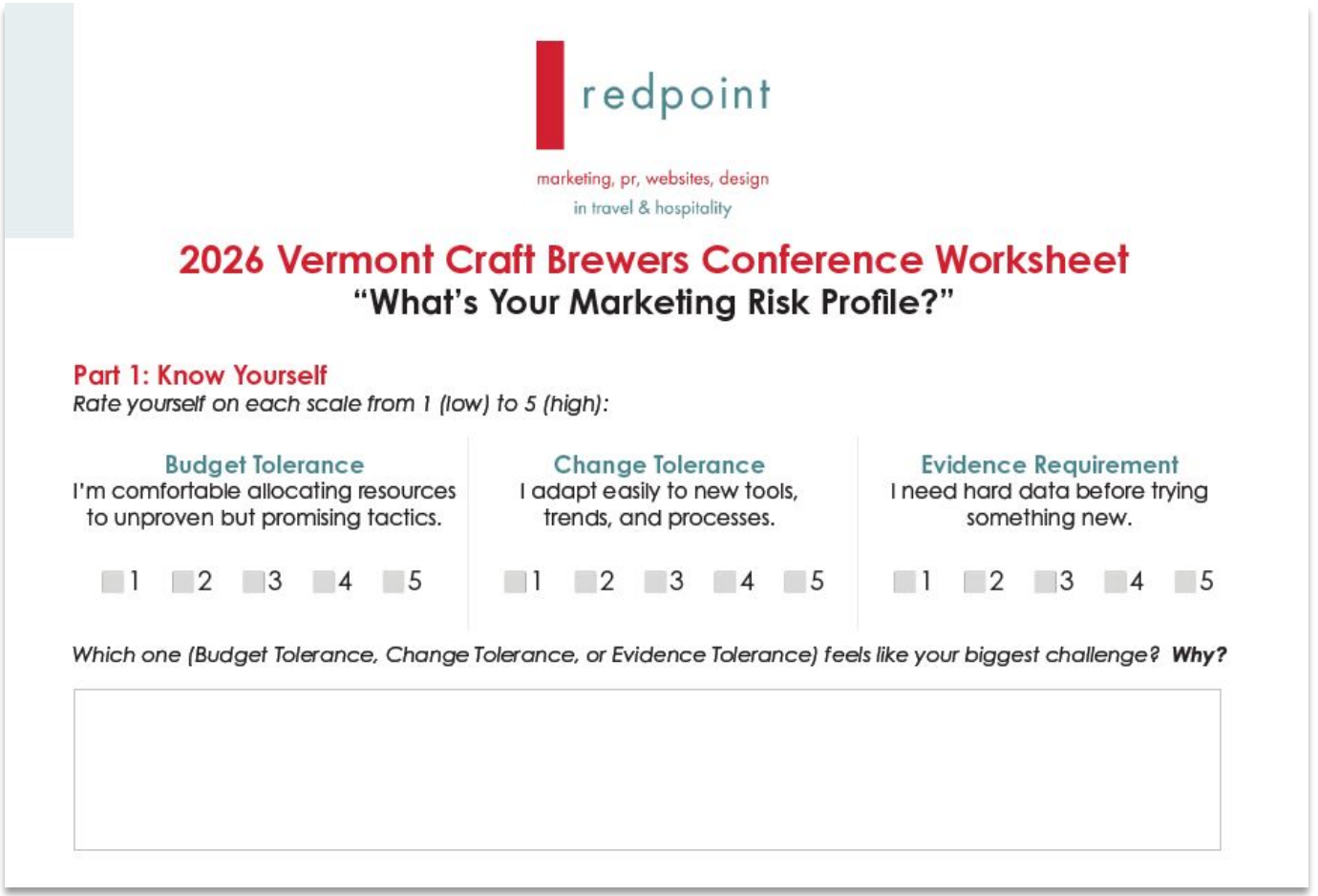
Most people make decisions based on past experiences that form a risk profile.

Why is this relevant now?

BUT, those profiles drive decision making almost every single day.

This session is about helping you understand your risk profile and bringing more awareness to your decision making.

I've got a worksheet for you!



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2026 Vermont Craft Brewers Conference Worksheet
"What's Your Marketing Risk Profile?"

Part 1: Know Yourself

Rate yourself on each scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high):

Budget Tolerance	Change Tolerance	Evidence Requirement
I'm comfortable allocating resources to unproven but promising tactics.	I adapt easily to new tools, trends, and processes.	I need hard data before trying something new.
☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5	☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5	☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

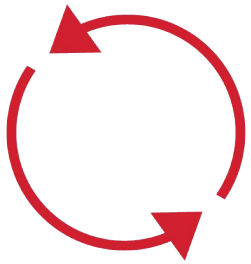
*Which one (Budget Tolerance, Change Tolerance, or Evidence Tolerance) feels like your biggest challenge? **Why?***

3 Spectrums of your risk profile in marketing



Budget tolerance

How much financial uncertainty are you willing to accept?



Change tolerance

How comfortable are you with new platforms, tools, or messaging styles?



Evidence requirement

Do you need hard data or are you open to educated experimentation?

Part 1: Know Yourself: Scale of 1-5, how much do each of the risk spectrums impact your decision making?



1

5

Strongly Disagree

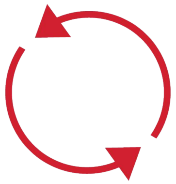
Strongly Agree

Which one is your biggest challenge? Why?



Budget tolerance

How much financial uncertainty are you willing to accept?



Change tolerance

How comfortable are you with new platforms, tools, or messaging styles?



Evidence requirement

Do you need hard data or are you open to educated experimentation?

Your Turn:
2 mins

Fill in Part 1:
Know Yourself

5 Ways to Unlock Better Decision-Making

1. Zoom Out Before You Dive In

Context matters. Don't evaluate trends in a vacuum.

AI is changing search… but many of the "old" rules still apply.

ContentGrip

[Reddit marketing for AI search: how brands get cited by LLMs]

Reddit is becoming a top source for AI search results. Learn why brands are investing in Reddit visibility.

7 hours ago



Yahoo Finance

Reddit Emerges as AI Search Winner

Reddit Emerges as AI Search Winner ... This article first appeared on GuruFocus. Reddit (NYSE:RDDT) may be in the right place at the right time as...

Dec 29, 2025



CMSWire

Reddit's Rise in AI Citations: What Marketers Must Know About AEO Strategy

Reddit is shaping AI answers — and brand perception. Here's how AEO strategies must evolve to track, influence and compete in...



‹ Think with Google

Sign in

SUMMARY

Brendon Kraham, Google's VP, Search & Commerce Global Ads Solutions, cuts through the AI Search hype with five 'don't' rules:

Don't chase acronyms: Good SEO is good GEO, AEO, or LLM SEO — they're all SEO

Don't optimize for bots: Google understands language like a human

Don't create generic content: a running store's deep-dive on shoe collapse beats a 'Top 10' article

Don't forget your website: latency, mobile, rich elements still matter)

Don't get distracted by noisy metrics — focus on concrete business goals.

1. Zoom Out Before You Dive In

Context matters. Don't evaluate trends in a vacuum.

AI is changing search… but many of the "old" rules still apply.

The reality: most websites (a platform you own and have control over) lack basic foundational elements of successful SEO.

Chasing a REDDIT strategy is wasted time.

You only see that if you zoom out.

2. Budget for Curiosity

Set aside a "pilot" or "R&D" slice of your marketing budget.

Shift your mindset from

If it fails,
we wasted money



If it fails, we learn from it.

And if it works, we scale.

2a. Budget for Uncertainty

Set aside funds for unexpected opportunities or changes in business as usual

Brewers Association

Restructured Aluminum Tariffs Continue to Pressure Craft Brewers

Changes to Section 232 tariffs on metals are likely to drive up production costs for craft brewers, impacting pricing and supply chains.

Apr 3, 2026



WPTZ

Burlington restaurants, breweries brace for impact of President Trump's newest wave of tariffs

Sadri said he fears Canadian traffic will continue declining when the new tariffs go into effect in the coming weeks. Sadri said: "It's going to...

Jul 22, 2026



BBC

Sapporo to move some beer production from Canada to US after tariffs

The Japanese brewer plans to shift non-alcoholic beer brewing to the US from Canada as tariffs bite.

Sep 9, 2026



AL Circle

US aluminum tariffs push Canadian beer can costs up nearly 13%



3. Test Like a Scientist, Not a Gambler

A/B testing, micro-campaigns, clear hypotheses.

We started a long-form email marketing program for a client… the owners didn't believe people wanted to read about them.

Open Rate: went from 38% to 45%

Click-through Rate: went from 4.5% to 6%

Conversions from email: +8.5%

4. Listen to Resistance – Then Challenge It

Differing opinions are okay… just be prepared to challenge each other

We sent out an onboarding survey and one of the questions asked the client what social media means to their business.

The CEO

> ***We've never gotten business from social media.***

The marketing person

> ***We've never put resources into social media.***

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5. Prioritize Clarity Over Certainty

You'll never have all the answers. Instead, look for "enough" clarity to move forward.

There are very few certainties in business and marketing.

How do we get "enough" clarity?

You need a process or framework to evaluate opportunities and build a "case" for or against them.

Case Studies in Risk

Marketing Risk Personas



The Reluctant Innovator



The Early Adopter Who Won



The "SQUIRREL!!!!" Marketer



The Exacting Entrepreneur

Marketing Risk Personas



The Reluctant Innovator

- The tour operator STILL (in 2026!!!) operating a website that is 100% image based (no live text).
- The ocean-side hotel owner who's still unsure about running off-season packages… and we're heading into the off season.

Marketing Risk Personas



The Early Adopter Who Won

- The association that invested in an SEO audit on the cusp of AI-powered search.
- The restaurant group that brought their merch and love for cooking online.

Marketing Risk Personas



The "SQUIRREL!!!!" Marketer

- The Inn owner who LOVES shiny new toys and has serious FOMO
- The hotelier who lost their voice… but gained a lot of em dashes and emojis (thanks ChatGPT)!

Marketing Risk Personas



The Exacting Entrepreneur

- The hyper controlling entrepreneur who gave up setting rooms rates to an AI-powered revenue management software.
- ADR is up 12%.
- Occupancy is flat.
- But you know what?
- He's unhappy with the software.

Important Note: The point isn't that there are right and wrong answers.

The points is how well do you know your marketing persona.

And how well do you match that persona to marketing decision-making.

What are the drawbacks of each persona?

The Reluctant Innovator and the "SQUIRREL!!!" = no framework to fallback on to help them make decisions.

The Early Adopter = confident in their decision making…probably budgeting for curiosity. But, heavily reliant on gut instinct.

The Exacting Entrepreneur is trapped between being an Early Adopter and a SQUIRREL!! Marketer.

What are all the personas missing?

An honest understanding of their marketing risk profile and a clear decision-making North Star.

Your Turn

With the person next to you, share which persona are you most like? What about the people you work with regularly?

Marketing Risk Personas



The Reluctant Innovator



The Early Adopter Who Won



The "SQUIRREL!!!!" Marketer



The Exacting Entrepreneur

Building Your Own Risk Profile & Plan

Let's get back to our worksheet: Parts 2 & 3

Shorts



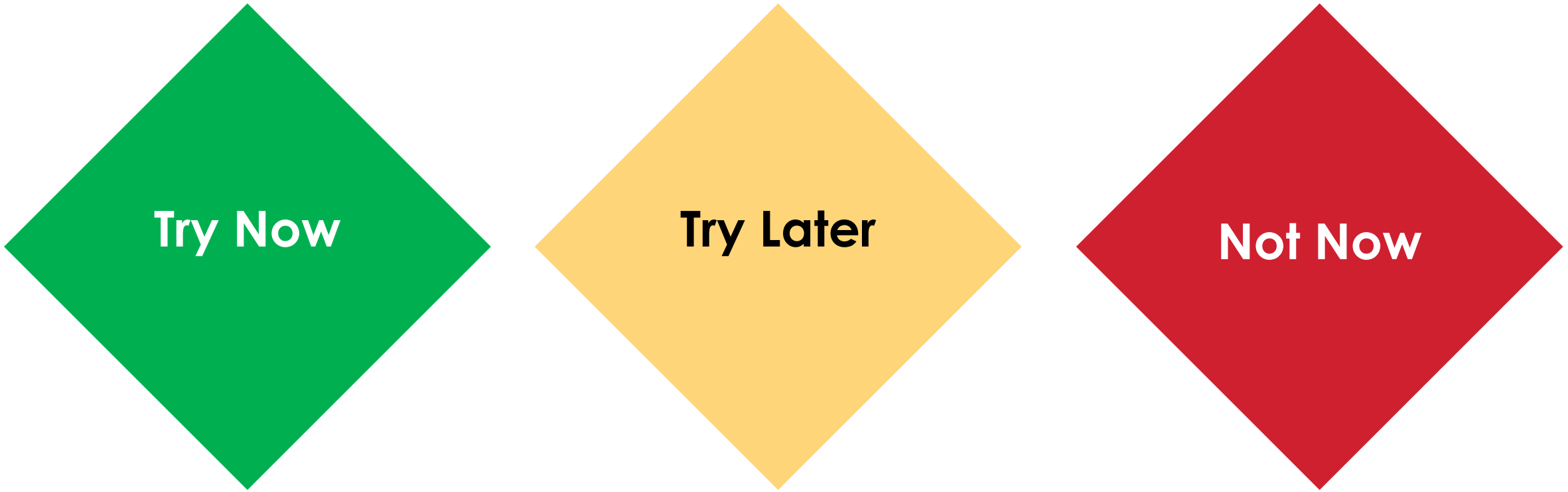


Identify a Marketing Opportunity You're Considering

2. Run It Through a Mini Decision Matrix

Opportunity	Cost	Potential ROI	Brand Fit	Internal Buy-In
Example: Video Series	$$	Med-High	Strong	Needs selling

3. Decide: Try Now, Later, or Never



Your Turn:
6-8 minutes

Fill in Part 2 & 3 on your own or with a partner

Who wants to share?

Final Takeaways & Q & A


Marketing success doesn't
come from avoiding risk.
It comes from managing it.

In-house Marketers: Use the worksheet to formulate pitches for your next project

Everyone's job in an organization isn't to always agree with your suggestions 100% percent of the time.

Understanding your risk profile (and the profile of those you work with) will help this process.

The process outlined in the worksheet will help build a stronger case.

Wrap-up – Closing Thoughts

- Be aware of which risk profile spectrums are most present (in yourself… and the people you work with)
- Match your decision-making with your risk persona (but don't fear pushing outside of your comfort zone)
- Don't evaluate new tools/trends in a vacuum
- Budget for uncertainty, curiosity and "marketing R&D"

Your assignment (next 30 days):

- ❑ Pick one marketing initiative you've been on the fence about and explore it
- ❑ Have a risk tolerance conversation with your team
- ❑ Identify one internal blocker and find a workaround

Email me and let me how it goes:

evans@redpointmarketingpr.com



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Questions?

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