

Consolidated Reflections of 16-30 Theses Statements of the
Cluetrain Manifesto

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Abstract

This study is a consolidation of the reflections based on how the author understands the 16th to 23rd theses statement of the Cluetrain Manifesto. Every reflection looks at the implication of the thesis statement to the market and companies. It also gives some key point on how far does the company and markets are able to do now according to the 95 Theses of the Cluetrain Manifesto. In this study, the 16-30 theses statement of the Cluetrain Manifesto deals about on how the markets communicate and some points on how should the companies do their work in order to relate with them. It also states some points on how the company should position, relate and communicate themselves to their markets.

Thesis 16: Already, companies that speak in the language of the pitch, the dog-and-pony show, are no longer speaking to anyone.

It is obvious that the people are now smarter nowadays with the help of the internet. That's why it is more difficult for the companies to relate their methods of promoting their products. It's because when we doubt about what they say, we just do search it in the internet which more likely provide us with real information. It is not us, humans who chose to ignore them because their deeds are the ones that force us to do so.

As for the companies, there are still some things that they can do for them to avoid the circumstance that they would just be ignored by the people. What is it? It would be the way they do marketing products or services. They always do things repeatedly which makes an annoyance to the customer. Imagine a magician always shows you the same trick over and over, what would you feel? Of course you will be bored and will not pay attention to the magician anymore. The same goes for the business; they must change their strategies in order to relate themselves to their customers or else they will end up nothing. But how can they relate themselves to the people? It's through changing the thought of reusing a good principle. When they want to promote their products, their idea should always be new to the people so that they catch the people's attention which also includes their customers. They will just be accepted when they are not sounding redundant anymore.

Thesis 17: Companies that assume online markets are the same markets that used to watch their ads on television are kidding themselves.

This thesis may sound real because the markets or people nowadays have the power to know when the television (TV) advertisements (ads) are true or not. It's because the repetition of ideas makes people think that they are being fooled. Fooled by whom? By those corporate guys that wants to promote their product to us. Thanks to the internet that it is now easy to gain information.

Another is that the ideas they used on TV ads are also brought up on the online advertising. These make things more complicated. It's because that there are differences on the way advertisements are treated between television and the web. What are some of this difference? In web, it's too reproduced that you have the right to view the content where you want.

What can be some solution to their problem? A sample is to know concepts on the online advertising like the advantage of a simple over complex ads. It may be surprising but simplicity in the web gets more attention than the complex ones that is difficult to load. Example is that a plain image would be more appreciated than a complex video that takes time to load. If the company fails to realize the difference in dealing with markets on television and on web, what will happen to them? They will end up fooling themselves about thinking they are actually getting markets online using their old and complex strategies that they used on television when the truth is the opposite.

Thesis 18: Companies that don't realize their markets are now networked person-to-person, getting smarter as a result and deeply joined in conversation are missing their best opportunity.

A part of being in a network is being connected to other people around that certain network. How does it help us become smarter? By being connected to other people, we are able to learn from them and share our ideas to them. That's how we become smarter being a networked market individuals.

In the case that the markets are now smarter, what should the companies do in order to relate with them? It can be by means of using their conversation medium as a source of useful information. But what is that medium? It's obviously the internet. It's because people get connected to other people and be able to exchange ideas through internet. If the companies may somehow use it to reach out to their markets, it would be an advantage to them against their competitors that only knows how to exaggerate their products to promote them. And how will they do that? They can try to find information on websites like forums and discussions about their products and some comments and suggestions about it. It sounds simple but difficult to do for they need to scan thoroughly those sites to extract the needed information. Gaining information on those sites may give them a hint about the need of their customer which they can provide through their resources and capabilities. By doing this, the companies can now understand their markets and making a better way to relate themselves on those markets which is beneficial for both companies and markets.

Thesis 19: Companies can now communicate with their markets directly. If they blow it could be their last chance.

The first question to ask is why that the companies can now communicate directly to their market? It's because the companies can now listen to the markets. As they listen to them, they understand what their market needs. If they understand their market, it is also the same as communicating to them directly. But what if they failed to realize the needs of their market in the middle of their conversation with them? What will be its effect to them? A possible effects of it to them is to lose their markets because if the product that they offer will not satisfy the needs of the market; it will just be ignored. It may also lead to the end of their life as a business. An example of this is when an employee that communicates to a customer using a forum for an instance. When a customer has a complaint on their processes which is posted on the forum site, the company must explain their side and be able to solve that complaint. If the employee that is assigned to solve the problem in accordance to the customer satisfaction, it would result to a more enraged customer that would easily spread over the web. The thing here is that the only option of the company is to accept your fault or face their negative feedback that might lead to their shutdown. They should remember that if they do mess in their conversation, it would be the cause of their downfall.

Thesis 20: Companies need to realize their markets are often laughing at them.

Is it really true that the markets are often laughing at the companies? I think it is true to the people who have already solve their problems on a certain product without going to a service center just to let them fix it. What is a possible reason behind it? A reason for it is because that we, the markets, became smarter through our new resources especially the internet that offers many possibilities. As a result, we now find solutions in our problem with our things by ourselves first before asking help on the service centers. Even we already ask for their help, we somehow have doubts if the information they give was reliable. It is because we somehow learn from our experience. I myself already have doubts on those service centers whether they really can fix the problems because they may intentionally make it worst just to make money. But unfortunately, I already know that method that is why I already take more precautions when consulting on the service centers for my stuffs.

What is main point of the statement? It is that the markets do laugh at the companies when they have the knowledge they need in order to fix their problems without wasting too much money for service centers that doesn't assure us whether they can really fix it. That's why the companies need to guarantee that there would be methods to know if something is really broken on our things before sending information to the customers.

Thesis 21: Companies need to lighten up and take themselves less seriously. They need to get a sense of humor.

I think that this statement is not too literal in its essence. But what does this statement wants to imply? In my understanding, I think it just want to remind the companies that the must know how to calm themselves. In what way they must calm down? They should calm down in they way that they confront problems of their customers in a nice way and not being arrogant and putting all the blame on the end-users. It's because those kind of attitude may lead to filing of complaints against the specific organization. It is not only rules that are in this world. They must know that humans have the right to express themselves to others. One of this means is through their opinions. But how can listening to them help the company? It's simple; the company must loosen up themselves because the one talking here is the market that has the power to make us ashes when we can't communicate with them in the human way. What is the human way of communicating to them? This human way may also refer to the sense of humor in the statement but not literally. It just implies that they should talk in the human way that it is in a normal state not in a serious manner. Talking humanly also means that we are also ready to listen because you cannot just talk all along without hearing their side. Unfortunately, there are many businesses that need to learn more on it.

Thesis 22: Getting a sense of humor does not mean putting some jokes on the corporate websites. Rather, it requires big values, a little humility, a straight talk, and a genuine point of view.

What does a humor means on this statement? In my point of view, it is the human characteristics of speaking. It is in which you tell them what you know even it is positive or negative. At the very least, you have told them. How this *humor* can be applied to the company's conversation mode? It can be applied when communicating with customer on every instance. They way they promote products must be clear and fair. They should not be biased on a product of a certain manufacturer. They must also cater what the person wants in case that the customer already has a chosen product on his mind. They should tell the person everything they know about the product that the customer wants. Even its disadvantage must be included on their talk for it is also important. After that, they can know recommend products that may be cheaper but superior than what you want. In that way they provided the customer detailed information about the product and was able to recommend better alternatives. Is it a real *sense of humor* conversation? Yes, it is because in that manner of talking there were great values of honesty and fairness in products being promoted, humility on the down side of the product, a straight-forward character that only tells the truth and an original idea of the person communicating on recommending better alternatives on the product needed. It is great when people speak with own ideas and not a subscription of it.

Thesis 23: Companies attempting to "position" themselves need to take a position. Optimally, it should relate to something their market actually cares about.

Is there really a need for a position statement in a company? The answer is definitely yes. Why is it so? It is because that as defined by businessdictionary.com, "it is a written description of the objectives of a positioning strategy. It states how the firm defines its business or how a brand distinguishes itself, how the customers will benefit from its features, and how these benefits or aspects will be communicated to the intended audience." As the definition states, it is needed for the reason to make a path on where your company will pursue. If the company fails to define their positioning properly, what is likely to happen on that organization? An organization might fall on a state where the chances of their recovery is very small which would eventually lead to their bankruptcy.

That is why positioning an organization needs to be done clearly and specifically. It should be clear that company can fully understand what should be done in order to align their activities with their goals and objectives. It must also be specified so that there will be a focus on it. But there is another element to be considered when creating a position statement. It is its relevance to their intended market. It is because whether your positioning is clear and specific, but the market has nothing to do with it, it is still useless. Positioning is best when all three elements are considered which might lead the company to its stability and success.

Thesis 24: Bombastic boast-“We are positioned to become the preeminent provider of XYZ”-do not constitute a position.

It is true that there are companies that boast about their positioning such as being the prominent one providing a product. Is there a basis on doing that? The possible basis of it is to gain customers. Is that really a good positioning? It may be good to hear those words but as a position statement, it fails. How does being prominent provider fails as a position statement? It fails on being irrelevant to their target market. Why? It is because they don't have a market at the first place. What their position implies is only to promote their product and wait to have interested customers on it. If we refer to the 23rd thesis statement, there should be relevance to your intended market so that the market would at least pay their attention to it. It should also be specific and clear for the organization to understand and align their activities and plans on to it. But this kind of positioning doesn't have any of the three criteria. This becomes blurred and difficult to understand. Thus, it fails to fulfill the qualities of a good positioning of an organization.

Now that we had the analysis of this kind of statement, is there still a way for those organizations to constitute a position? The answer is yes, there is. They just need to revise their positioning statement in accordance to the guidelines that are given in the 23rd statement. It's because if they don't, they are likely destined to fail.

Thesis 25: Companies need to come down from their Ivory Towers and talk to the people with whom they hope to create relationships.

We are all familiar that relationships, no matter what kind it is, have communication as a huge part in forming it. But, how does it relate to the 25th statement? The answer is simply that if companies want to create relationship with their customers, they must communicate with them. And how they should do it? They must personally talk to them like the common. It may be degrading on the part of the company but it's their only choice in order to relate with the people whom they eventually want to gain profit with. Is that the only implication of this thesis statement? If I were to be asked of it, I would say no. It is because that I somehow can still look at this statement in a different angle. It may mean that companies should remember how understand their market. Because in their organization, they have their own strategies and practices on how they promote their products. If they always stick on those, they will be forgetting the way markets do conversation. It is another reason why they must talk to their intended markets. It is explain on the previous theses that they should communicate in a human way but if they just focus themselves on their company, they can't create relationships on their intended market instead they are just fooling themselves that they can attract their markets in that way. They must remember that relationships can't be formed without communication which is they on understanding their markets.

Thesis 26: Public Relations does not relate to the public. Companies are deeply afraid of their markets.

Public Relations as defined by managementhelp.org, includes ongoing activities to ensure the overall company has a strong public image. Therefore this component always does everything just to keep the good image of the company as a total. But sometimes they are getting over the borderline. What does it mean? It simply means that they are not always doing right in order to maintain their good public image. Does this have an effect to them? Of course there is. It may not be always visible but they are the ones that are putting themselves into the cliff of danger. And what does it implies? It simply tells us that they are afraid of their markets. It is because they don't want to be judged by their markets and eventually their public image will be ruined. Is that always being the case? Of course not, because they again forgot that humans have their own intellect and reasoning. They may not judge their weaknesses but instead they would understand why it became one of those. The companies are just over thinking on those matters. They may be true that they might be judged but it would really happen when they try to hide something from their markets. It is a simple thing that when a person lies to you, of course you would easily judge that person because of what he did. The point is that companies should have the courage to face their weaknesses by being honest and real to their markets.

Thesis 27: By speaking in language that is distant, uninviting, arrogant, they build walls to keep markets at bay.

Companies as we all know are speaking in the way that it would always be in their favor. But then again they are forgetting about something. And what is that? It is the language that they are using to speak with their markets. What is the language that the companies must always use in communicating with their markets? Of course it is the language that is humble and close to them in that way that they can easily understand what they meant. Sad to say but what is happening is the opposite. Some companies are speaking to their markets as if that they are higher ups and their customers are their employees. This kind of strategy is the one that makes their language distant, arrogant and uninviting. If they still continue this kind of strategy, what might happen to their relationship with their customers? This strategy would build distance to their customers and they might want to find other providers for their needs that utilize their budget. On the side of the company, their customers would be decreasing as time passes. It is for surely that there will be other service providers that would sprout which would cater the needs of the customer more than they do. It is for the reason that they are the one which build their own walls against their customer which should not be the case. They must always be open on new ideas because they are always aiming for the satisfaction of their customers.

Thesis 28: Most marketing programs are based on the fear that the market might see what's really going on inside the company.

There might be some truth to what is state in this thesis. There are really suspicious things that are happening on every company but they don't want the people to know it. Why is it so? It's because they are afraid that the markets would know what is really happening inside their organization. But do they think it will help them? Of course not, they are just making their problems worse. It is because in the event that their customers found out the things that they were hiding, it would surely cause them a lot more problems. But is hiding their weaknesses and failures through marketing will solve their problem? It is not the solution to what their problem is because they must admit their failures and move forward to correct those weaknesses in order to satisfy their market.

An example is the case of the System Loss charge of Meralco Inc. All this times, they were not telling the people about this and it only happen when they are already questioned by the government which at that time is trying to find solutions on how to lessen the electricity charge. They found out that this System Loss charge is still a burden to the consumer which in fact is a failure of the company to secure their electrical structures. That is why the companies and even the government should tell everything even their failures and irregularities for the sake of their markets which would suffer in the very end.

Thesis 29: Elvis said it best: "We can't go on together with suspicious minds."

In a communication, we always wonder how it can be successful or not. And why is it? It is because we wonder on how the minds of both parties came to an understanding. We know for a fact that people are very suspicious when it comes to material things whether they can gain something good on it. So what will happen if both sides are suspicious to one another? They will surely reach nothing. We can take an example of a company and a customer. If the company doubts that the customer will not really purchase their product and asks questions that only take their time, they will surely don't assume that the customer is a sure buyer. On the other hand, if the customer doubts that the company is only fooling him with flowering words instead of being the real provider, the customer will not assume that the company is really offering a good product to him. So in the end, there will be no earnings for the company and no purchase for the customer.

So what does this example tells us? It only tells us that even only one party is suspicious on the other; there is no better thing that will happen. What's more if both parties are suspicious to each other? This statement reminds both companies and markets that their doubts should have limits that they recognize the differences of real and not. If they don't, they won't get to continue in their real business deals.

Thesis 30: Brand loyalty is the corporate version of going steady, but the breakup is inevitable-and coming fast. Because they are networked, smart markets are able to renegotiate relationships with blinding speed.

In the past, most of the people are saying that they have the high end product because it is a Brand A something. When you also have the same kind of product but with a different brand, they would say that it is a fake or imitation. What is the reason behind it? It's because they think that the product of a Brand A is better in terms of quality than the product of a different brand. But they are totally mistaken on that kind of judgment. It's because the only difference of the two is only its brand, nothing else. Another thing is that people have the mindset that when a product is too expensive, they say it is because of its brand. But is it the brand that makes it expensive? Or it is just an overpriced product? Well, it may be the latter because if you can find a product that has the same number of features with a lesser price, you surely choose the cheaper one.

Is it reasonable to rely on Brand Loyalty? No because companies that rely on brand loyalty are the ones which would likely to fail. The reason is that markets are now networked. It makes easy for them to find alternatives on those expensive products at the same level of quality. It is also not a justification to overprice products just of the brand because in today's time, no one cares about on the brand but the performance against its cost.

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