



NEILPATEL

THE 20/20 RULEBOOK

HOW TO **GET MORE SALES FOR YOUR**
ECOMMERCE BUSINESS

THE 20/20 RULEBOOK

Why 20/20?

Be inspired by the clarity and sharpness of perfect vision.

Acuity: Think, hear and see 20 simple rules to help you sell, whoever you are.

RULE NUMBER 1

HELP YOUR USERS FIRST

Remember the old adage 'It's better to give than receive'?

In this case you can use it to your advantage!

Ask yourself, 'What can I give my prospects that will cost me little or nothing, but at the same time help them in some way?'

It doesn't need to be a physical item (though in some cases this works very well). It could be a nugget of information you happened upon which helped you with your work; your life.

We all know of examples of when we've been the recipient of promotional products or giveaways. These are given to us to remind us of the brand, the product, or just the company themselves.

Studies have shown that when you give something to someone for free, they are more inclined to reciprocate with their custom to you.

It could be given through a mailshot, a free e-book, or a subscription to a newsletter.*

These methods obtain their contact details and again allow you to target them with further campaigns or freebies. Don't bombard them with the same information constantly. No one likes that, and you run the risk of gaining the opposite of what you were hoping for.

The concept of rule one is-do not to expect something in return.

If you get it, then all well and good.

If you don't, the worst scenario is you don't hear from them again and you've lost very little.

But if you do it right- it can come back in spades!

RULE NUMBER 2

CREATE CONTENT THAT TEACHES

Why 'teach' over 'sell'?

Because we're all bored to tears with being sold to- that's why!

You need to be subtle when you sell.

And I don't mean subliminally including your brand name or your service anywhere either!

In fact, you should not be looking to sell **anything** when you write your content.

Writing should be about informing, or engaging your reader.

Almost anyone (unless they are truly infatuated with your product or service), will be instantly switched off if they were feeling sold to.

You need to become an authority in your field of expertise.

Write about what you know rather than what you sell.

Gradually, and with good copywriting skills, the information you give will lead them to conclude you know your industry inside out.

You've built an enduring trust because you didn't sell them anything.

And yet at the same time you have!

You sold them, **'You'**!

Through your content, your prospects begin to feel you aren't going to pressure them.

They aren't pressured into buying things they don't want or need.

If you're writing content for your homepage or an article, think long and hard about your 'Call to Action'.

Merely asking them for addresses, contact details, or blocking otherwise free pages smack of selling to them.

This is acceptable if you're established enough to not impact your credibility, but otherwise stick to the tried and tested methods we'll discuss in Part 2 Content marketing.

Sure, leave a company logo somewhere on the page if you must, but don't explain what you do or who you are there.

Keep your information neutral and sales free.

A brilliant method of building your product or service awareness is through a comparison webpage.

I know many companies fear this practice as it highlights their competition.

But get over it- they know them already!

Use this as an advantage rather than an issue.

The concept of rule two is to gain trust and in turn gain sales.

RULE NUMBER 3

CREATE CONTENT THAT ITSELF CREATES CONVERSATION

Determine which approach your content is to adopt before you start to write it.

Do you intend to use humor as your way of getting your point across?

Conversely, should you play on more serious issues or problems?

Is your content about fulfilling a need or a dream, or are you looking to shock or surprise?

Will you be looking to encourage or discourage a certain action?

Do you have a unique or fresh approach or outlook on your subject, or are you out to affirm or dismiss previously accepted theories?

The concept of Rule number 3 is to get people to think, and ideally talk about way after they've read your content. This builds your longevity and helps to increase your sales.

RULE NUMBER 4

DEFINE YOUR OWN TONE

Let's assume you've already decided upon the topic you'll be writing about.

The tone of your writing could be motivational, or kind, or authoritative.

Establish how you are to tackle your content creation with a consistent tone throughout.

Content needs a captivating beginning, an informative middle, and a clear conclusion.

Whatever style you chose to write your content in from rule 3, has the overall effect here.

Don't stress about what tone you naturally fall into.
If writing in a tone that feels alien to you, it's likely to look wrong to others too.
Go with a tone you are comfortable with for your content.
Read your content aloud and hear that it pans well.

The concept of Rule 4 is consistency and to ensure you address what your readers should expect from your content. Consistency builds assuredness which in turn helps sales.

RULE NUMBER 5

WRITE TO ONE PERSON

Your aim is to write to one person, about one subject, with **one goal in mind**.
If you write as if to one person, the reader feels more important; more valued.

Keeping your subject matter to one topic makes things simple to the reader to understand and to analyse. This helps you too when writing content.

You won't have to address every conceivable argument and encompass every solution possible. If you try, you will almost certainly lose your credibility in the process.

The concept of Rule 5 is not to feel hundreds (if not thousands), of people are reading your content at once. Only one person views a monitor at one time, so address them as such.

RULE NUMBER 6

USE GOOGLE VOICE TYPING

If you find your productivity is waning as you only two finger type, try Google Voice Typing.
You can find it under the 'Tools' drop down menu in Google Docs, and there's correction facilities for a faster input.

No secret for the concept of Rule 6! Increase your efficiency -increase your sales!

RULE NUMBER 7

USE ACTIVE VOICE OVER PASSIVE

If you want to show authority there's little point in passivity.

Even if you are an expert in your field, your writing might not show it and you can lose credibility.

Practice writing through editorial web helpers like 'Hemingwayapp.com'.
You'll immediately see if your copy errs on the side of an active voice or passive.

The concept for Rule 7 is show authority, gain credibility.

RULE NUMBER 8

USE SHORT PARAGRAPH LENGTHS

Sometimes, writing rules that are normally implemented in print, scan badly when read online.
Sentences tend to look more cramped in digitized form.

Make your paragraph lengths shorter than you might otherwise to overcome this issue.
You'll find the presentation is more pleasing and is less inclined to lose your reader.

The concept of Rule 8. Keep it lean and you'll keep 'em keen!

RULE NUMBER 9

USE SIMPLE WORDS

If you come across as though you've swallowed a dictionary, you'll appear condescending to others.
If your reader doesn't get the gist of what you are trying to say because of your superior vocabulary, you've lost them straight away.

The concept of Rule 9. Keep It Simple Stupid!

RULE NUMBER 10

ALWAYS BACK UP YOUR FINDINGS WITH RESEARCH

Don't pretend you know something that you don't.
There's a good chance an expert will shoot you down in flames later!

Whenever possible, quote from reputable authorities where you can or do your own research.

The concept of Rule 10. Authority brings credibility.

RULE NUMBER 11

READ INSPIRATIONAL WRITERS

Don't be too proud to learn from others.

It doesn't matter if you want to do it your way- your way came about because of others.

You might be inspired to do things differently because of other writers.

Again, learn how writers you admire do what they do to make you feel that way.

Study their style; their tone; their content.

Your inspirational writers need not even be within your field

The concept of Rule 11. Learn what works and builds your sales from other's successes!

RULE NUMBER 12

ADD VISUAL MEDIA

As the internet gets quicker and images and videos more easily viewed, Google seems to be beginning to add ranking points to them.

The concept of Rule 12. Check the speed pages load before and after adding videos and images and optimize for page speed over content

RULE NUMBER 13

GUIDE THE USER TO THEIR NEXT STEP

Make reading your content a pleasurable experience.

Linking to internal areas within your web pages can add ranking points to your website.

Linking to external resources gives you credibility and authority.

In turn, it improves your chances for reciprocal linking to relevant sources.

The concept of Rule 13. Another method of building your site's authority and ranking.

RULE NUMBER 14

START AT THE END

Generally, the best way of determining your goals is to work from the end goal back how you want to achieve them.

The concept of Rule 14. Make things as easy as you can for yourself. Build a structure from the ground up by knowing how tall the structure is at the end!

RULE NUMBER 15

START WITH A PERSONAL STORY

If you begin content with a human persona, you touch on emotions which are more easily bought into.

Often, readers will like to know if there is any common ground between you and them. This is especially so if they admire you or your company or the success you've had.

They want to know if any part of your life bears any similarities to theirs.

Showing yourself as human and offering anecdotal evidence buys into this. Personal stories often imply that they too could achieve some success which brings them some comfort.

The concept of Rule 15. Your reader doesn't have to aspire to be like you. But it helps them believe in you more if you write in a personable way.

RULE NUMBER 16

EDITS CAN WAIT

Get something down before concerning yourself about content and how it all looks.

If you constantly procrastinate, you'll always build barriers that need not be there.

It's far better to have a thousand words where more than half is drivel, than no content at all! At least you have some content that is quality!

The more you write, the easier it becomes as one sentence can spawn another.

The concept of Rule 16. Don't put off until tomorrow, what you can do today.

RULE NUMBER 17

END CONTENT WITH A QUESTION

I'm not saying end all content literally with question, it could equally be rhetorical. The idea is to get your reader to think about what you've written and to build on that.

The concept of Rule 17. Increase engagement at the end and you're building a community by inviting open thought and rhetoric.

RULE NUMBER 18

PROMISE YOURSELF TO START

Another example of Rule 16, in which procrastination leads to complacency and negativity.

Discipline yourself.

Build good habits and adhere to them and keep to a schedule.

This is especially important if you work from home and your creature comforts keep calling!

The concept of Rule 18. Procrastination leads to failure.

RULE NUMBER 19

CREATE A SOLID OUTLINE

Any content needs a format.

You have a 'Hook': A subject of interest or bait that engages the reader's interest .

An 'Opening': This is an argument that strengthens your hook.

The 'Body': Where you constantly impose your argument with your convictions, authority, and findings.

The 'Close': Which loops back to the 'hook', summarizes the 'body' and concludes with your goal in a rhetorical manner.

RULE NUMBER 20

LET THE CONTEST REST FOR A DAY!

Once your content is completed, sit back and rest for a bit- you've almost certainly worked hard doing it.

Put it away for the day and forget about it.

Do something entirely, totally, utterly different.

The following day, come back to it with an open mind.

Scrutinize each aspect of the content against the 20/20 rules and make changes.

There'll always be changes. It's the nature of the beast!

The concept of Rule 20. Coming back to your work in a fresh way means you'll look at things differently. Parts of the content won't read as well as it could have and you might have things out of order or context.