

Why marketing ROI should focus less on the returns, and more on the investment.

 By [Glenn Gillis](#)

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The average marketing exec in the industry today likely spends a fair amount of time weighing up the return on investment (ROI) for platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Google and influencer marketing. But the thing about ROI is that it is a balancing act and I'd wager that many are focusing more on the "return" than on the actual investment.



Glenn Gillis, CEO at Sea Monster

Accurately quantifying the return on investment (ROI) on any marketing solution is an imperfect science. Barring interrogating every customer on exactly how they decided to choose your services, figuring out how effective different marketing methods are can be surprisingly hard.

This becomes doubly difficult when you expand the customer journey all the way from them first becoming aware of your product to the customer loyalty feedback loop long after.

In a world of hyper-personalised marketing and the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act, a like (or several) is simply not enough. The most successful brands are those that have invested real time, effort and money in building a relationship with their customers.

The most recent generation of marketers might believe that they're living in the golden age of marketing analytics, given the number of tools social media provides for those advertising on their platforms. While it's true that people have never been able to target advertising with the amount of precision they can now, or track the e-commerce journey from the customers' very first click, the most valuable marketing tools are potentially being overlooked.



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While most tools allow for a brand to see how many eyeballs are on their ads, or how many click all the way through to purchase, this data misses the most important step in the process: consideration. Understanding what exactly triggers the difference in mindset from being aware of a product or service, and actually seeking it out, is crucial to expanding your customer base.

When it comes to measuring consideration, there are very few tools that can do this effectively- it's almost as if this is a missing part of the funnel. We know that the biggest influencers are great at the 'awareness' stage of the marketing funnel - they're nowhere near as good as micro-influencers at motivating the customer towards the 'acquisition' stage. What's the difference?

The difference is simple: it's a relationship which feels authentic and meaningful. And for brands this translates into owning a share of mind, rather than just getting their product in front of potential customers.

When we built our Lighthouse platform, consideration was top of mind. How do brands serve up information in a neutral way? How do they share their purpose? Because we know that brands that are purpose-led out perform those that aren't. People want to feel like a brand has invested in something, whether it's in them, its people, the community it operates in or the environment.

Lighthouse essentially allows a brand to gamify their customer engagements but it is as much about the customer as it is about the brand. Crucially, customers opt-in and get to play games, take quizzes and win rewards and at every step they feel like the brand knows them, values them and is rewarding them.



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To truly get the best ROI on your spend and ensure your brand's longevity, you need to be spending your money on getting people interested in what you're doing- and not just aware of it. And that takes far more than simply blowing the budget on ad spend or a mega-influencer.

There is a massive need to glue together different data sources that can then inform the creative work, content and other marketing initiatives to drive transactions and relationships- because we think that brands should be investing in both.

Most brands already know what drives a transaction, but very few truly understand what drives a relationship. We need to remember that acquisition is not the last step in the funnel- advocacy is, and we aren't going to get there without investing

our time and energy on the consideration phase.

ABOUT GLENN GILLIS

Glenn Gillis is the managing director of Sea Monster Entertainment, one of South Africa's pre-eminent animation, gaming and augmented reality companies. He has a Business Science degree from UCT and has been an entrepreneur, hired gun, and consultant with growing, knowledge-intensive businesses around the world for over 25 years.

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