AGL MARKETING LIMITED

Cabbages & Golf Balls

Musings and scribbles of a consulting marketer

Suitcase Reflections:
How much money do you have?

Late summer: Brothers Grant and Glen rest in beach cots beneath pines along the smooth limestone shore of a bay off Lake Huron. The needles whisper above them. A bottle of Forty Creek rye whiskey sits on a worn wooden side table between them and beers rest in a cooler bag in the shade; a glass of whiskey sits within reach of Grant, smoking a corona cigar. Glen draws on a cigarette, beer in hand. The afternoon has the unhurried warmth of a day with nowhere else to be. Let's listen in.

Glen: So, brother—how much money do you have?

Grant: What? – Another dumbass question?

Glen: I'm serious. You're rich. You've got a house in the Philippines, live-in staff, a driver who doubles as your bodyguard. Then you come home and live out of a suitcase. No house in Canada, no land, nothing. You gave your house and land away.

Grant: How's your beer, ya dickybird? Lemme get you another before I answer.

Glen: What... ya trying to think of an answer?

Grant: No, I'm cloaking myself as a sensitive, caring, human being. Remember this... It isn't how much you make, brother. It's how much you spend.

Glen: That sounds like the opening line of a one of your typical stupid lectures.

Grant: Only because you asked a question that needs a thoughtful answer.

Grant eases himself upright in the folding cot, takes the glass of rye from the table, and stares into the bay, deep in thought. Glen watches him with the faint grin of a man who has known every one of his brother's habits for decades.

Grant: I started working when I was about sixteen. Over all those years, I probably earned around three million.

Glen: There it is. Three million. Why was it so hard to spit it out?

Grant: Let me finish, dumbass. From that, I earned two university degrees. Bini and I bought houses, trucks, and cars in Ontario. We bought this land and built the cabin with our own hands—with friends and family pitching in. You were here. We raised two daughters and sent them to university. Then came grandchildren. We travelled when the girls were young, took them to other countries, and every year we made time for northern Ontario.

Glen: You did. You never let the girls think the world ended at the edge of their schoolyard.

Grant: And you came with us to Texas when you turned16. Those travels were important to us. We wanted the girls to know they belonged to something larger than our family and our little routines. You even spent some time with a Texan woman much older than you and got a little high.

Glen: It was chewing tobacco. And you managed all that without ever hitting people up for money.

Grant: We didn't borrow from friends. Other than our parents. I borrowed two thousand dollars when we bought our first house and paid it back within a year. That mattered to me.

Glen: Pride.

Grant: Responsibility. Maybe a little pride.

For a moment they listen to the small waves working the stones in front of the smooth shoreline.

Glen: All right, then. How much do you have now?

Grant: I honestly don't know exactly. And if I did, I wouldn't tell you.

Glen: Christ, Grant.

Grant: I have CPP, an RIF, company assets, and investments in the Philippines. I pay taxes and I have a few loyal clients. My worth is much less than it once was.

Glen: Less than it once was, he says, like he's telling me he's got one less shot from the whiskey bottle.

Grant: You can't live—or die—in Ontario for cheap. And money on a ledger isn't the same thing as a life lived well.

Glen: So what does your life cost you, then?

Grant: Not much, really. In spring, summer, and fall, Bini and I live comfortably here because our daughters look after us and the weather is warm. We don't have physical needs that aren't met. I own a couple of canoes and an old aluminum fishing boat, fishing gear, firearms, that old Ford Ranger, the place in the Philippines, and an old van there that seats nine. There's a business account, and personal accounts, a suitcase, and a closet of warm cloths belonging to me and Bini.

Glen: You always did know how to travel light.

Grant: Things are small. Life isn't. My worth may be less than it once was, but my wealth—my real wealth, the memories and the people and the way we live—is beyond any amount of money.

Glen reaches over, seeing that Grant's cigar has gone out, and strikes a match. He cups the flame against the breeze, holding it to the cigar tip without a word.

Glen: You idiot. Why did you give it all away?

Grant: Because Bini and I don't need much, never did.

Glen: That's not an answer.

Grant: It is the answer. We're near the end of our lives. We get to enjoy time with our children and grandchildren, and that time is built on some of the gifts we gave them. Not only money or land—confidence, education, the sense that they could make decisions and stand behind them. Now we get to watch and enjoy what they're doing with it.

Glen: And you're all right with that? Giving up just about all the stuff you can point at?

Grant: More than all right. People say, "You can't take it with you." Forget that. We take everything we know with us. We leave the baggage behind. We leave no mess for somebody else to clean up.

Glen: You make it sound easy.

Grant: It isn't easy. It's just clear. In two hundred years, we'll be stardust. Nobody will know we were here. Our leaving will be a ripple after a raindrop hits a pond. That doesn't make this life less meaningful. It makes this afternoon more precious.

Glen looks out across the bay. The small waves glisten like diamonds.

Glen: Get another beer for me.

Grant: You get it. I'm pouring another whiskey.

Glen settles back into his cot. Grant pours another shot, carefully and steadily.

Grant: I know you walked away from an urban farm. That was your decision. Maybe you and I aren't so different after all. Other than the seventeen-odd years between our birthdays.

Glen: Hmm.

Grant: By the way, I'm nearly finished with the draft about the chaotic years—my teens and early twenties, up to the time I married Bini. The Peacock's Dolphin.

Glen: You finally got it out of your head and onto paper?

Grant: Mostly. I'm working on one more chapter and thinking about the inside illustrations. I don't have time to wait around for your weird Gen X fine art masterpieces. I'm using AI for the cover and illustrations, other programs to convert the content to an e-book and perhaps an audio book. All digital.

Glen: Yer calling me a techie Luddite?

Grant: Exactly.

Glen: Up yours, ya hoser.

They laugh, the easy, unguarded laughter of brothers who have heard variations of the same insult for most of their lives.

Grant: But I'll tell you something else about money. I learned a lot from clever business people I worked with—the ones who accumulated substantial financial wealth and actually lived their dreams.

Glen: You always studied people.

Grant: They all had a purpose. They knew what they wanted and how to get it. Most of them were born into wealth. Their parents were business people; their families were middle or upper class. They learned how to invest early. They knew working for the man would never make them financially independent. They knew education opened doors.

Glen: You didn't know what a university was at eighteen or nineteen. What a loser!

Grant: Not really. And I had no idea how people lived in wealthy social circles, or how they made and kept their connections. I didn't know. But I watched. I learned.

Glen: Who taught you most?

Grant: All kinds of people. Veterans of the Second World War who used their benefits to build careers. An engineer who worked on his family's lakeside hotel as a kid and became owner of a consulting engineering company. Good, humble men. I worked under the supervision of a front-line German captain who was wounded and captured by Canadians and sent to Canada as a POW. Another was a decorated officer in a

Lancaster bomber crew. There were two brothers who built a successful grey iron foundry. I helped make molds and poured iron. Precast-concrete salesmen who became presidents and general managers. And a few downright borderline-evil people, if we're being honest.

Glen: You learned from them too?

Grant: You can learn what not to be from anybody.

Glen: Fair enough.

Grant: I pioneered a mobile, internet-based marketing consultancy—AGL Marketing—in 1998. I took the best knowledge I could get from all of them and applied it.

Glen: And AGL still makes money?

Grant: It does. Not what it did. My skills and experience mean little to new generations of business people. That's normal.

Glen: Doesn't sound like you're bitter about it.

Grant: Why would I be? Enough is enough. I have enough for a comfortable life with my bride until the end of our story.

Grant draws on his cigar, then frowns at its dead ember.

Grant: Damn it. My cigar's gone out again.

Glen: You want a light, old man?

Grant: Nah, gimme a cig.

Grant: Look at that osprey flying low over the bay.

Glen turns. The bird skims above the water, broad-winged and silent. For a while, neither brother speaks. There is no need to add anything to the afternoon.

Online Marketing Mentoring: Challenges and Practical Solutions

Online marketing mentoring gives tailored guidance without the travel of in-person meetings. It is a structured learning relationship rather than a webinar or workshop. A mentor works closely with one person or a small group—often fewer than 10 people—to address genuine marketing challenges and build capability. Success depends on preparation, clear communication, and dependable digital processes.

Establish the purpose and boundaries

First, define what mentoring will provide. A webinar primarily delivers information, while mentoring is interactive and tailored to participants' circumstances. Mentees should expect to discuss their work, test ideas, and receive guidance appropriate to their experience. Before the engagement begins, confirm the objectives, desired outcomes, session schedule, roles, confidentiality arrangements, and fee structure. A concise written agreement or session plan prevents misunderstandings.

It is also helpful to distinguish online from virtual. Online mentoring means that people communicate over the internet using a computer, tablet, or phone. It does not require avatars, immersive technology, or a simulated environment. This is a personal interaction, even when participants are in different locations.

Assess needs before creating the agenda

A mentoring program should begin with the mentee's needs, not a generic list of marketing topics. Early discussions should assess marketing knowledge, relevant experience, competence with digital tools, and familiarity with the meeting platform. The mentor should also identify the mentee's goals, organizational constraints, and requirements affecting their work.

Where a mentee represents an organization, a situational analysis can provide a practical focus. A SWOT analysis considers strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A PESTLE analysis examines political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors. These frameworks turn broad advice into a focused agenda. For example, an organization with an inconsistent digital presence may need to clarify its audience, message, and channel priorities before considering marketing automation.

Before the first session, the mentor can review the organization's public website, social profiles, and available market information. AI agents can accelerate this scan, but it should not replace professional judgement. Verify important findings, protect confidential information, and explain the limits of AI-generated insight. This preparation helps set a realistic scope, outcomes, and fees.

Make scheduling and technology reliable

Time zones are a frequent obstacle. Agree on a recurring meeting time that is reasonable for everyone and use a shared calendar. If the difference is substantial, both parties should share the inconvenience across sessions rather than expecting one side to work unsuitable hours every time.

Punctuality requires cultural awareness. Expectations about start and finish times vary among nationalities and organizations. Rather than assuming a shared approach, explain the timetable, allow a short technical check-in, and agree how late arrivals will be handled. This protects learning time.

Technology problems can undermine confidence before a session starts. Select a familiar, low-complexity platform and test audio, video, screen sharing, and access permissions in advance. Provide a short joining guide and an alternative contact method in case the platform fails. The mentor should be comfortable using the required tools, but the process must remain simple enough for every participant.

Communicate for understanding and action

Online mentoring is most valuable when people can ask questions and apply ideas to their work. The mentor should understand each participant's role, authority, learning

preferences, and marketing responsibilities. In a group, this reduces the risk that one confident participant will dominate the discussion.

Language needs attention when English is not everyone's first language. Use plain terms, define essential technical language, avoid idioms Like, a loonie or toonie or two-four, and speak at a measured pace. Pause regularly for questions. Asking participants to summarize key points in their own words identifies misunderstandings early and confirms their next actions.

A recording can extend the value of a session when everyone consents and confidentiality is protected. A searchable transcript lets mentees find advice, decisions, and actions quickly. After each meeting, share an action summary, relevant resources, and the next session's focus. This turns a helpful conversation into visible progress.

Simplify file exchange

Mentoring commonly involves plans, drafts, reports, and presentations. Without an agreed exchange process, files can be misplaced and versions can conflict. Choose one secure, accessible sharing location, such as a shared cloud folder. Establish simple file names, permission levels, and a rule that the current version is stored there. The best system is the one all participants can use confidently.

Conclusion

Effective online marketing mentoring combines sound marketing judgement with thoughtful facilitation. By assessing needs first, setting clear expectations, reducing technical friction, and recording agreed actions, mentors can create a practical and productive learning environment regardless of distance.

Why clients sometimes resist professional marketing advice

Marketing professionals are frequently asked to diagnose weak communications performance, identify an audience, sharpen or integrate a message, and recommend tactics. Yet the recommendation can be rejected in favor of an owner's intuition, a staff's opinion, a colleague's anecdote, or the latest idea seen on a competitor's social feed. It is tempting to describe this as simple ignorance. That explanation is incomplete and usually unhelpful. Resistance to marketing advice is more often a predictable response to uncertainty, identity, trust, and the way a marketer's guidance is communicated.

Business leaders possess information that a marketing consultant may not have. They know the product history, customer complaints, operating constraints, and internal politics. Because this knowledge is immediate and emotionally vivid, it can seem more important than broader market evidence. Data sources used by a marketer can be suspect. This is not always irrational. The leader may spot a practical limitation that the strategy has missed. The problem emerges when firsthand experience is treated as proof that tested marketing principles, standards, and ethics do not apply.

Marketing decisions feel personal. A client may regard a brand, campaign, or website as an expression of personal taste and years of effort. Advice to change the message or abandon a favored tactic can therefore sound like criticism of judgment rather than a neutral business recommendation. Motivation to restore a marketing tactic perceived as threatened, helps explain why a directive such as "you must do this" can provoke the opposite response. The more prescriptive the language, the more a client may defend the original idea.

Trust also matters. Marketing has an uneven reputation because outcomes are uncertain, and some providers promise more than they can demonstrate. A professional who presents a polished framework without understanding the client's business may inadvertently confirm the fear that the recommendation is generic. People tend to discount others' advice when they are highly confident in their initial view or place little trust in the adviser. Credentials alone rarely overcome that barrier.

There is also a visibility problem. Many experienced marketers recommend foundational work—customer research, positioning, measurement, conversion

improvements, and consistent creative execution. These activities may feel slower and less exciting than buying an advertisement, changing a logo, creating a new website, or opening another social channel. Inexperienced opinions often win because they offer a visible action, a simple story, and immediate emotional relief. Professional advice may be better, but it can lose when it is not translated into a clear decision, consequence, and next step.

The remedy is not for marketers to surrender expertise or for clients to accept every recommendation without scrutiny. Strong collaboration makes the reasoning verifiable. Marketers should begin with the client's purpose, goals and constraints, explain the evidence behind the recommendation, distinguish facts from assumptions, and offer bounded tests where uncertainty remains. Clients should ask what success looks like, what will be measured, and what evidence would change the plan. This maintains control while requiring clear reasoning behind intuitive decisions.

Ultimately, the most effective marketing relationship is neither blind deference nor a battle of opinions. It is a disciplined partnership in which professional judgment guides the process, business knowledge sharpens the context, and results—not status or taste—determine the next decision.

CIMMO credentials assure employers and peers of competence and performance

Grant Lee is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing Management of Ontario. CIMMO credentials affirm that a marketer possesses recognized, current professional marketing knowledge and principles, helping assure employers and peers of their competence and performance

The Chartered Institute of Marketing Management of Ontario (CIMMO) grants the Chartered Professional Marketer (CPM) certification to people seeking a life-long career in marketing. Certification requires a formal education in marketing from a university or college, professional exams, and mandatory continuing education. CIMMO is chartered by the Ontario government, but membership is not legislated and overseen by a government agency. Membership is voluntary and no licence is required to practice marketing.

Without a licencing requirement to practice marketing, the industry is wide open to anyone wishing to call themselves a marketer without any formal education, training, and skills development. CIMMO's membership recruitment from marketing schools, people working in government with marketing responsibilities, and marketers in private practice is a daunting challenge. For CIMMO, the draw to membership is certification by a chartered institute, mandatory continuing education, and a global reach of its purpose - to make the world a better place through ethical marketing.

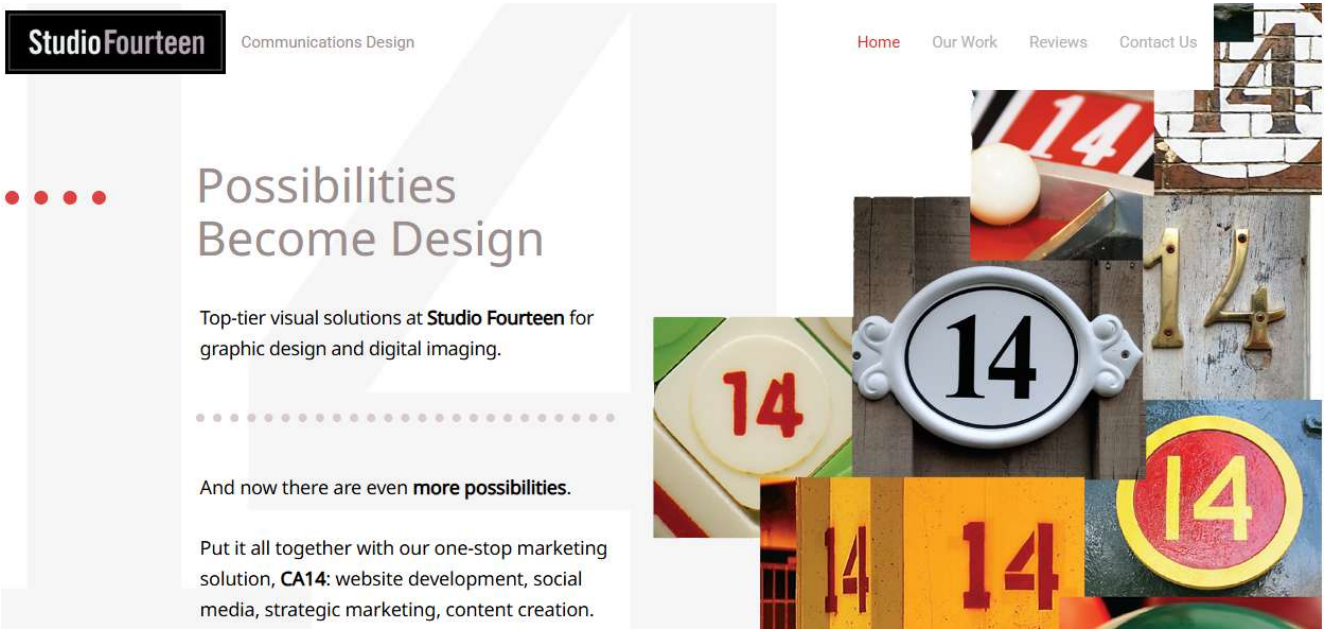
CIMMO

The CA14 Marketing connection: Experience and Capacity-Building

AGL Marketing Limited combined strengths, creativity and resources with the CA14 Marketing Team to bring service excellence on a global scale to a wider range of clients.

Combined portfolios ensure practical applied marketing for small to medium-sized enterprises.

CA14 MARKETING WEBSITE



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