

No One Should Need to Win the Attention War First

A short Hedegreen Research note on market access, discovery, visibility machinery and why useful work should not have to win an attention war before it can be tested.

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People should not have to win an attention war before society can discover whether their work is useful.

That is the note.

It does not mean attention is fake.

It does not mean quality should be invisible.

It does not mean every product, service, artist, shop, tool, repair worker, local drink, small restaurant, teacher, builder or project deserves the same demand.

It means the first test should not be whether someone can afford to become visible.

In many systems, starting something means competing in two markets at once.

First, the actual market:

Can you make something useful?

Can you serve someone?

Can you solve a problem?

Can you make the food, repair the thing, teach the skill, build the tool, write the piece, run the place, deliver the work?

Then the attention market:

Can you rank?

Can you brand?

Can you advertise?

Can you produce content?

Can you keep the channel supplied?

Can you buy placement?

Can you look legitimate before anyone has tested whether the work itself is useful?

For many people, the second market comes first.

That is the distortion.

The work has not failed yet.

It has not even been allowed to meet the world.

It has only failed to pass through the visibility machinery.

This is why basic market access should be treated as infrastructure, not as a private attention auction.

Discovery is not a small decorative layer when it determines who gets to participate.

If ranking, search, recommendations, reviews, maps, storefronts, placement systems and public signals are controlled by systems that sell visibility, then access to the market quietly becomes access to visibility capital.

That changes what society gets to discover.

Useful work may disappear before anyone knows it was useful.

Local capacity may look like low demand when it was really low discoverability.

Small producers may be told to become better businesses when the missing layer was not talent, but route.

This connects directly to the town-drink problem.

A town can have people able to make something ordinary and good. But if the only path to customers requires branding budgets, gatekeeper dependency, paid placement, constant visibility work or retail access controlled by incumbents, then the question is no longer simply whether the drink is good.

The question is whether the producer can survive the attention toll before usefulness is tested.

That is a bad public test.

A readable market should separate usefulness from visibility purchase.

Not completely.

Nothing human works that cleanly.

But enough that a person can list, offer, be found, be compared, be contacted, be tried, be reviewed, improve, fail or continue without first becoming a visibility machine.

Marketing can still exist.

Branding can still exist.

Discovery systems can still exist.

But they should not be the compulsory door through which all useful work must pass before it becomes socially visible.

The deeper issue is dignity.

When market access becomes attention warfare, people are forced to perform legitimacy before their work can be judged. They must become loud, optimized, attractive to ranking systems, comfortable with self-promotion, and fluent in whatever style the current discovery layer rewards.

Some people are good at that.

Some useful people are not.

A mature society should not confuse those two facts.

The person who can fix the thing may not be the person who can win the channel.

The local producer may not know how to look scalable.

The small school may not know how to perform constant novelty.

The repair shop may not be photogenic.

The good service may not excite the discovery system.

That should not make the work socially unreachable.

So the rule is simple:

People should not have to win an attention war before society can discover whether their work is useful.

The first market should ask whether the thing works.

The attention market should not be allowed to answer that question before the world gets a chance to.

Source Boundary

This piece is a public-note translation of an internal market-access claim. It does not claim that marketing, branding, search, private discovery systems or advertising are inherently illegitimate, nor does it claim that every small producer is useful or entitled to demand. Any later empirical claims about marketing costs, paid visibility, ranking effects, market-entry barriers or public discovery systems should be source-checked separately.

RELATION MEMORY

NEARBY [Every Town Should Be Able to Taste Like Itself](#) · The town-drink note shows why local products need real market routes, not only production capacity.

NEARBY [When a Platform Leaves the Market](#) · Both pieces ask what happens when discovery and customer access are owned by private gateways.

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