

Love bytes



By [Helen McIntee](#)

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John's profile on a well-known dating site reads: 'I'm a loving, kind and sensitive, patient, happy-go-lucky faithful kind of guy looking for that special woman to spend the rest of my life with. Someone who can be my best friend, my lover and my rock. If you like romantic dinners, walks on the beach and picnics in the sunset....'

What dusty Mills and Boon novel did John pick up? Unfortunately for John and his kind, this type of rhetoric is over-played and, sorry John, just utterly boring and dull. Not all women are created equal, and quite honestly the match he makes online will be about as exciting as two nails in a coffin.

Had John said, with brevity, 'Johnny Depp/George Clooney/Brad Pitt envies me,' he would have created enough curiosity that would certainly make that statement at least partly true. What John hasn't realised is that an online dating profile actually mimics business marketing strategies in order to encourage prospects view your 'goods'.

Breaking this down means applying some of the basic rules of marketing:

- **Focus on your audience** and give them something very different from your competitors. Bearing in mind that GlobalWebIndex reports that 91-million people worldwide use dating apps, competition is fierce, so seeming to be extraordinary is crucial if you want to be noticed.
- **Ensure you provide visuals** but make sure they are authentic, recent, of good quality and reflect your interests: if you're into sports, a picture of you fencing will attract plenty of online pokes (pun intended). Also be aware of the background because aesthetics are important to projecting an image of how you live your life. You don't want your 'selfie' sniffed at because it highlights a bulbous nose! Ask a close friend to take a couple of flattering pictures and choose together those you both like.
- **Avoid cutesy jaded cliché's and don't write the things you think someone wants to hear.** Reading about romantic dinners and a love of travel in 10 or more profiles is like trying to isolate one cow in a herd of cattle.
- **Ask for help.** Writing about yourself can make you feel as vulnerable as standing naked in the middle of a full stadium of spectators. If the thought of writing a profile has your palms sweating and/or your heart palpitating, get someone who knows you well to help you, and preferably someone of the opposite sex if that is your target audience.
- **Engage with your audience and react immediately:** nobody likes to be kept standing at the proverbial altar. Even if your interest wanes as communication develops, rather end the relationship with diplomacy as soon as possible,

instead of ignoring messages. That said a bunny-boiler needs no response.

- **Less is more for women; and more is required from men.** Women have a tendency to over-share, and men don't share enough. However verbosity in both cases is off-putting, too much information and you'll have nothing to talk about when you connect with matches. Create intrigue by providing basic information cleverly.
- **Provide a hook.** It's what is suggested and not said that intrigues others, and more importantly may just be the way to start a conversation. Hints provide opportunities to open a conversation and create curiosity.

All in all, remember you are marketing yourself - so use the same tools you would when describing or communicating your product. Differentiation from the competition is exactly what you are trying to achieve if you want to be noticed.

By the way, I am a crocodile wrestler who enjoys re-enacting Roman battles, and only eat olives from my Martini (shaken not stirred).

ABOUT HELEN MCINTEE

Helen McIntee, well-known and respected African marketing personality, is qualified with BA, MBA and CFM degrees, is a published author - including academic textbooks and publication articles - and a lecturer and keynote speaker. She is also the President of the African Marketing Confederation (AMC) and a director of the Institute of Marketing Management.

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