

RED | LINE

A REDLINE ADVISORS DISPATCH

Defying the *Algorithm.*

*How to Win Trust, Get Discovered, and Build a Narrative Worth Believing in
the Age of AI*

Mick Hollison

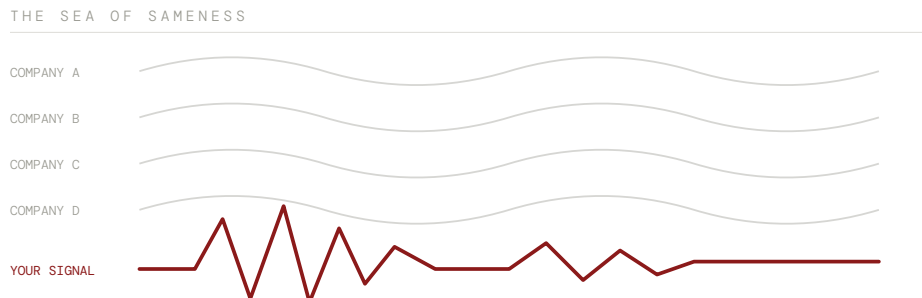
FOUNDER & CEO, REDLINE ADVISORS

Welcome to the *Sea of Sameness.*

Something broke in B2B marketing — and most companies haven't noticed yet.

Over the past three years, generative AI has democratized content production to the point where **every company can produce unlimited, technically proficient marketing material for near-zero marginal cost**. The result is not better communication — it is a monotonous, undifferentiated cacophony where brands that once had distinctive voices now sound eerily, identically smooth. We call this the **Sea of Sameness**.

Browse the websites of ten enterprise software companies in any category. Read their positioning pages. Swap the logos. If the copy still works — if you can't tell which company wrote which sentence — that's the Sea of Sameness. AI hasn't made marketing better. It has *democratized bland*.



The irony is sharp: the very tools that were supposed to give companies a voice have made them all sound the same. We're living through what we've come to call the **AI Bland-demic** — an epidemic of technically proficient, emotionally inert content that buyers have learned to detect, distrust, and ignore. The data confirms it: **73% of B2B buyers** are more skeptical of marketing claims than ever before, and **68% believe AI-generated content lacks authenticity**. The paradox that matters most: *more content does not equal more trust*.

"If you can swap your logo with a competitor's and the text still makes sense, you're in trouble."

This is not a marketing problem. It is a **strategic survival problem**. Because while the trust crisis is unfolding on one front, a second revolution is reshaping how buyers find you in the first place.

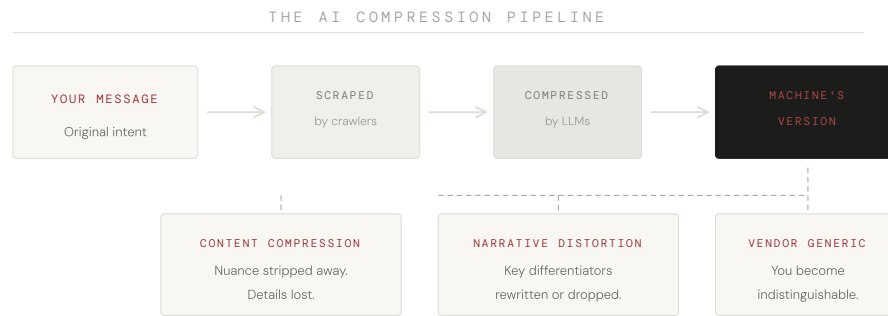
— 02 · THE DISCOVERY SHIFT

The Machine's Version of *Your Story*.

Before your message reaches a human buyer, it navigates a gauntlet of AI systems that scrape, compress, and rewrite it. The version the buyer sees may not be yours at all.

For twenty years, B2B marketing operated on a simple loop: optimize your website for keywords, rank on Google, and wait for buyers to click through. **That era is ending.** Gartner estimates that LLMs will replace traditional search as the primary buyer "front door" by 2027. McKinsey projects a 20–50% decline in organic website traffic as AI-mediated search takes over.

This is the shift from **SEO to GEO** — from Search Engine Optimization to **Generative Engine Optimization**. And it changes everything.



If AI search engines can't distinguish your signal from the noise, you effectively don't exist.

In the old world, your website was your message. In the new world, **AI is the first audience**. Before a human buyer encounters your brand, an LLM — ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, or Claude — has already scraped your digital footprint, compressed your narrative, and rendered its own version of who you are. That version may bear little resemblance to what you intended. Your differentiators get compressed. Your nuance gets flattened. If your signal isn't strong enough, you emerge as just another "**Vendor Generic**" — invisible and irrelevant.

The old approach — keyword optimization, demand-generation funnels, gated whitepapers — is no longer sufficient. The new imperative is **narrative consistency across your entire digital footprint**. When every surface tells the same authentic story, you are actively *training the world's AI models on who you are and why you matter*.

— 03 · THE METRIC

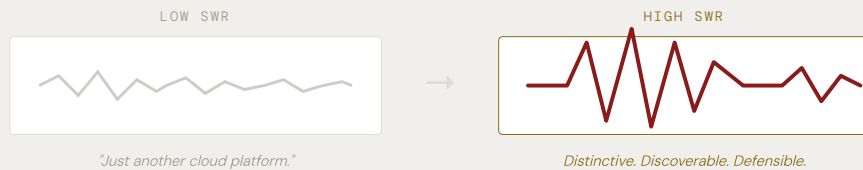
The Signal / Whisper Ratio.TM

If you can't measure it, you can't fix it. We built a proprietary metric to quantify exactly how much of your authentic signal survives AI compression.

The concept borrows from radio physics. In electrical engineering, the **Standing Wave Ratio** measures how much transmitted signal actually penetrates versus how much bounces back, wasted. We've adapted this principle for the AI era: the **Signal / Whisper Ratio (SWR)** measures how much of your brand's authentic, differentiated message survives when it passes through the gauntlet of AI summarization, compression, and redistribution.

The "Signal" is your intended narrative — the differentiators, proof points, and human stories that make you *you*. The "Whisper" is what's left after an LLM summarizes it. **If your twenty-slide positioning deck gets compressed by ChatGPT into "just another cloud platform," you have a catastrophically low SWR.**

SIGNAL / WHISPER RATIO™ DIAGNOSTIC



THE GEO PURITY TEST: ASK 3 AI MODELS TO DESCRIBE YOUR COMPANY. COMPARE THE OUTPUT.

We test this directly. We literally feed a client's messaging — website copy, pitch decks, sales materials — into multiple LLMs and ask for summaries. If the unique differentiators vanish in the summary, the signal is too weak. If the AI's description could apply to any three competitors, the SWR is failing.

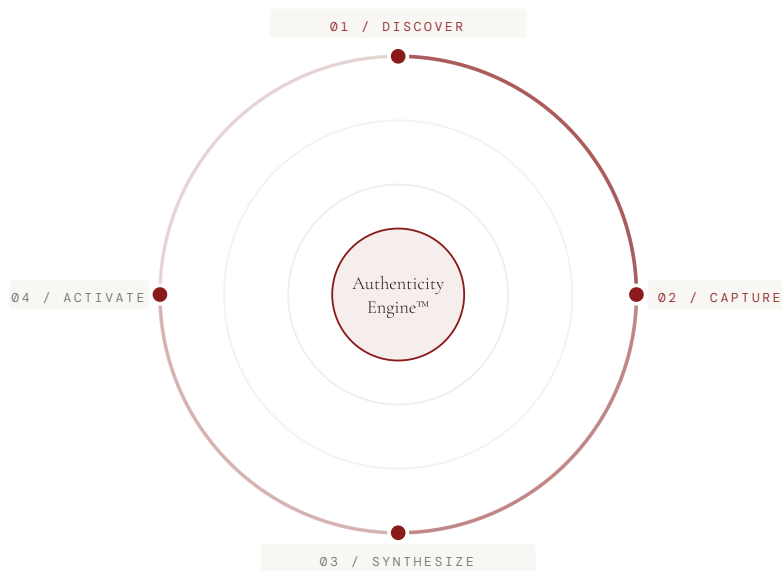
We call this the **GEO Purity Test**: ask ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude to describe your company. If all three return something that sounds like your intended positioning, you have a strong SWR. If they return generic descriptions that could describe anyone in your category — you have work to do.

Most companies score below 50 on their initial scan. The average engagement with RedLine yields a **30% improvement** in signal clarity — not through producing more content, but through engineering narrative consistency and injecting authentic human stories that AI systems cannot flatten.

The Authenticity Engine.™

Four phases. One outcome: a narrative that isn't just heard — it's felt, trusted, and chosen.

The Authenticity Engine is not a branding exercise. It is not a messaging workshop that ends with a slide deck and a wish of good luck. It is a **systematic methodology for engineering narratives that survive AI compression and earn human trust simultaneously**. It was born from decades of operating experience at companies like IBM, Citrix, and Cloudera — and refined through dozens of engagements with technology companies navigating the AI era.



A Sprint Designed to Transform Your *Market Position*.

PHASE 01 · DISCOVER

AI-Powered Discovery & Message Architecture

We deploy AI as a powerful intelligence engine — not a content generator — to build the strategic foundation. Competitive takedown. Audience psychographics. Core message blueprint defining your "Why," "How," and "What" with crystal clarity.

PHASE 02 · CAPTURE

Human-Powered Story Capture

With the logical framework in place, we hunt for the human stories that bring it to life. Customer champions. Passionate employees. Strategic partners — the voices AI will never replicate. The crown jewels remain strictly human.

PHASE 03 · SYNTHESIZE

Multi-Format Asset Creation

We fuse AI-generated architecture with raw, authentic human stories. Video testimonials. Podcast segments. Written narratives. A portfolio of assets designed at multiple compression levels — 10 words, 25 words, 50 words — so your signal survives any medium.

PHASE 04 · ACTIVATE

Sales Enablement & Training

A powerful story is only effective if your team can tell it. Battle cards. Talk tracks. Hands-on workshops. We build muscle memory so your narrative is owned, not just delivered. Then we measure — running the SWR diagnostic again to prove the improvement.

The Checksum & the *Signal Brief.*

Two proprietary deliverables that protect your narrative integrity — one for humans, one for machines.

The Brand *Checksum*

In computing, a checksum is a mechanism for verifying data integrity during transmission. If data is corrupted in transit, the checksum fails, and the system knows something went wrong. We've applied this concept to brand messaging.

The **Brand Checksum** is a core set of truths — distilled into 12 to 25 words — that must be present in every interaction with your brand. If the sales pitch doesn't match the website, the checksum fails. If an AI summarizes your positioning and the checksum words disappear, trust has been broken. It acts like a *digital signature for your narrative*. If copilots and analyst tools distort or drop it, you know the message has degraded.

"I have only made this letter longer because I have not had the time to make it shorter."

— BLAISE PASCAL

The *Signal Brief*

If the Checksum protects your story for humans, the Signal Brief translates it for machines. It is **the canonical source of truth for describing your company's core business and value proposition — written for AI consumption.**

The Signal Brief expresses your positioning at multiple compression levels: 10 words, 25 words, 50 words. This isn't an exercise in brevity for its own sake — it's an engineering discipline. When an LLM encounters your digital footprint, it needs a clear, consistent signal at every resolution. The Signal Brief ensures that whether a model is generating a one-sentence summary or a three-paragraph overview, the core differentiators survive.

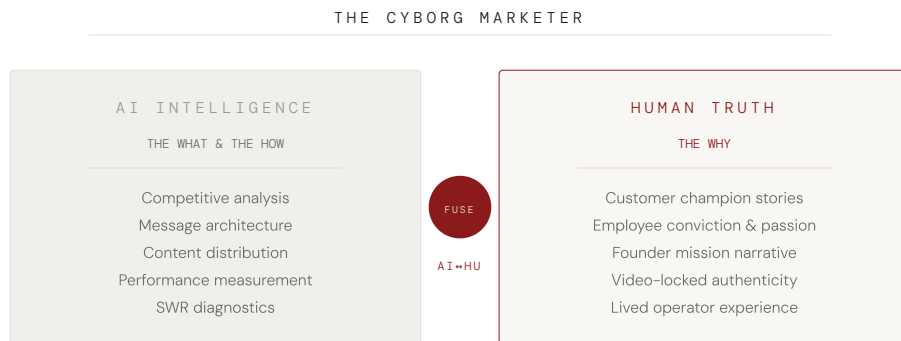
Most companies have never done this. They have websites written for humans, pitch decks written for boardrooms, and sales collateral written for deal cycles — but nothing written for the machines that now mediate every one of those interactions. **The Signal Brief is the most important document your company has never written.**

The Cyborg *Marketer.*

The answer to the AI era isn't less AI. It's knowing exactly where AI ends and where the human must begin.

There's a dangerous false binary in the current discourse: you're either "all in on AI" or you're a Luddite. The truth is more nuanced and far more powerful. **The companies that will win are the ones that master the hybrid model** — what we call the Cyborg Marketer approach.

The principle is simple: **use AI for the What and the How. Use humans for the Why.**



Don't outsource your thinking. Only outsource your tasks.

AI is a superb engine for research, pattern recognition, and structural analysis. It can map a competitive landscape, identify audience psychographics, and draft message architecture with remarkable speed and precision. These are the "What" and the "How" — and AI excels at them.

But AI cannot sit across from a customer and hear the tremor in their voice when they describe the moment your product changed their business. It cannot capture the conviction of a founder who mortgaged their house to pursue an idea. It cannot replicate the hard-won wisdom of an operator who has weathered three market cycles and knows — in their bones — what works.

That is the Why. And it is exclusively, irreducibly human.

Video locks it in. You can fake text. You can generate convincing prose. But faking the energy and belief of a real person on camera is much, much harder. This is why **video is the ultimate checksum** — the format that protects authentic signal from AI corruption.

From Rent to *Results.*

The Sea of Sameness isn't just a messaging problem. It's the leading indicator of a structural reckoning in how technology companies price, package, and deliver value.

In February 2026, **\$285 billion vanished from SaaS valuations in 48 hours.** Wall Street didn't panic. It woke up. The premise that had underwritten two decades of enterprise software — that companies would pay recurring per-seat fees for access to tools — cracked under a simple question: *if AI can do the work of twenty people, why are we licensing software by the person?*

For twenty years, SaaS companies have been digital landlords, charging rent based on how many human seats were occupied. That model is structurally unsound in the age of AI agents. When a single AI tool can replace an entire SDR team — as one company demonstrated by replacing 100 sales development reps with AI agents — **per-seat revenue doesn't just decline. It collapses.**

The implications run deeper than pricing. If your revenue model is tied to headcount, you are now officially incentivized to make your customers *less efficient*. That is a terminal business strategy.

DIMENSION	LEGACY MODEL	FUTURE MODEL
Pricing Unit	User Seat	Task / Outcome
Revenue	Fixed ARR	Variable Consumption ARR
Delivery	Self-Service / DIY	Services-Assisted (FDE)
Promise	"Empower the Team"	"Engineer the Outcome"
Buyer Frame	OPEX Line Item	Strategic Investment

The distance between "User Seat" and "Task / Outcome" is the distance between a commodity and a monopoly. The companies that reframe their value around **measurable business outcomes** — not features, not seats, not "empowering the team" — will command premium pricing and earn strategic relationships. Everyone else will be squeezed by AI agents that make their per-seat model obsolete.

This is where narrative meets economics. **A company that cannot articulate its unique value in terms of outcomes — that cannot survive the SWR test — is a company that will be repriced by the market.** The Sea of Sameness isn't just about sounding generic. It's about becoming generic — and being valued accordingly.

Radical Authenticity as the *Only Moat*.

In a world where everyone has access to the same AI tools, the only competitive advantage that cannot be replicated is the truth of your lived experience.

Every technology trend eventually reaches a point of commoditization. Cloud computing was once a differentiator; now it's table stakes. Mobile-first design was once visionary; now it's expected. AI-powered content generation is following the same curve — and it's doing so at an unprecedented pace.

When every company in your category has access to the same LLMs, trained on the same internet, producing the same gray noise — **what's left?**

What's left is what was always there, hiding in plain sight: the **real stories of real people**. The customer who chose you over the incumbent and can explain exactly why. The engineer who worked through the weekend because they believed in what they were building. The founder who saw a problem that nobody else was naming and refused to look away.

"Technology doesn't build trust. People do."

These stories are not AI-generatable. They are not compressible. They are the one form of content that survives every filter, every algorithm, every summarization engine — because they carry the signal of conviction. A buyer can feel the difference between a story that was *generated* and a story that was *lived*.

This is why we call it **radical** authenticity. Not because it's extreme, but because it goes to the root — the *radix* — of what makes a company worth believing in. It requires a willingness to be imperfect, specific, and vulnerable in a market that rewards polish and generality. It requires the discipline to mine for human truth when it's faster and cheaper to generate synthetic content.

Imperfection is the new premium. In a market saturated with technically flawless, emotionally vacant content — what we've called "Smooth Jazz" — the rough edges of genuine human conviction are not a liability. They are the signal.

The NewCo *Advantage*

There is a silver lining for companies building from scratch. If you're launching today, you can engineer narrative consistency from day one — no legacy content to unwind, no years of mixed messaging training AI models on the wrong version of who you are. **You can build your authentic signal into the foundation.** For established companies, the work is harder but no less critical. Every day your digital footprint contains contradictory or outdated messaging. AI models are being trained on the wrong story. The longer you wait, the deeper the narrative debt compounds.

— 09 · THE CALL

Defect from *Average.*

This dispatch is not an academic argument. It is a call to action for every CEO, CMO, and founder who suspects that their company's message has been swallowed by the algorithm.

If you've read this far, you likely already know that something is wrong. Maybe your pipeline has softened despite record content output. Maybe your sales team reports that every deal sounds the same because every competitor sounds the same. Maybe you've asked an AI model to describe your company and the answer could have described anyone.

That's the Sea of Sameness. And you're in it.

Getting out requires three things:

1. *Measure* Your Signal

Run the GEO Purity Test. Ask three different AI models to describe your company. If the summaries don't match your intended positioning — if your differentiators vanish — you have a low SWR. That's not a marketing problem. That's a strategic risk.

2. *Mine* Your Human Truth

Identify the three most powerful authentic stories in your organization: a customer champion, an employee believer, and your founder's "why." Capture them on video. These stories are your competitive moat — the content that AI cannot replicate and algorithms cannot flatten.

3. *Engineer* Your Narrative

Build a Signal Brief. Write your Brand Checksum. Ensure that every surface of your digital footprint — from your website to your founder's LinkedIn to your partner ecosystem — tells the same coherent, authentic story. Train the machines on who you really are, before they decide for you.

*"Defying the algorithm means refusing to be average.
It means choosing human connection
over automated perfection."*

The tools have never been more powerful. The noise has never been louder. And the window for building an authentic signal — before AI models cement their version of your story — has never been shorter.

The algorithm is not your enemy. It is an amplifier. If you feed it generic content, it will amplify your invisibility. If you feed it authentic, consistent, human-grounded narrative, **it will amplify your signal to every buyer in your market.**

The choice is yours. But the clock is ticking.

Stop whispering. Start selling.

Mick *Hollison*

Mick Hollison has spent more than 30 years at the intersection of technology, go-to-market strategy, and the messy human art of getting people to believe in something. His career arc reads like a field guide to enterprise tech. He led a worldwide software sales team at **IBM**. He ran global marketing and strategy at **Citrix**. As CMO of **InsideSales.com**, he helped pioneer the application of predictive analytics and big data to B2B sales. And as **President of Cloudera**, he guided the company's transformation from open-source startup to enterprise data cloud leader.

Along the way, Mick has delivered keynotes at global conferences from London to New York and published in **Inc.** and **Forbes**. He's become a trusted voice on what happens when technology collides with human decision-making. More recently, he has served as an advisor to multiple enterprise AI ventures, helping dozens of technology companies find their purpose, uncover their secret ingredient, and engineer the narratives that unlock market momentum.

In 2023, Mick founded **RedLine Advisors** in Park City, Utah. Not because the world needed another consulting firm, but because he saw a crisis forming that nobody was naming. AI was flooding B2B markets with technically perfect, emotionally dead content. Every company was beginning to sound alike. The old playbooks, built for a world of search engines and blue links, were quietly becoming obsolete. RedLine was built to fix that: to help technology companies *defy the algorithm* by engineering narratives grounded in the one thing AI will never replicate. **Genuine human truth.**

— SOURCES

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