



**If I drink poison,
will the Gartner
(or Forrester)
analyst die?**

Every week or two, we hear the same complaint from at least one company we start to talk to.

“The analyst we deal with is an idiot,” the CMO will tell us. “He simply doesn’t understand this market and we’re thinking our best approach is to ignore him.”

Playing the odds

In the UK, there is a weekly national lottery, with a top prize of several million pounds. The chance of actually winning this prize is 1 in 45 million, making it 42 times less likely than being struck by lightning. You are also 2000 times more likely to be murdered than to win the lottery. Yet 50 million tickets are bought every week by people who believe that they can be that person. Half the UK population buys into the dream at least once a month.

For many years, the National Lottery’s slogan was “It could be you”. The essential message, though, was that if you didn’t buy a ticket, it couldn’t be

you – even though, actually, you could be pretty sure it wouldn’t be you anyway, with or without a ticket!

Persuading an analyst to see a different perspective on a market is undoubtedly a tough challenge. But the odds are nothing like as bad as 1 in 45 million. Yet we find ourselves talking to any number of companies that seem to believe the best strategy to win this lottery is to not buy a ticket. Frankly, if you don’t engage with the analysts, you have zero probability of changing their view of you or the markets you operate in.

The Forrest Gump solution

Or maybe not. Could there be some logic to this approach?

Do you remember what happens in the movie Forrest Gump? The hero, a simple soul played by Tom Hanks, buys a boat and tries to make a living catching shrimps. Knowing little about shrimping, and not making any effort to learn how to do it, Forrest catches next to nothing. But he suddenly becomes a shrimp millionaire overnight, when a freak storm wipes out all his competitors. Is this the answer?

It amazes me to see technology vendors whose strategy for success, when they’re hoping to get Gartner to recommend them, is pure Gump. Their idea of a strategy is to hope and pray for that once-in-a-century storm that will sweep the analyst away or suddenly make this individual see the light. Or perhaps these firms believe the storm will wash away this \$3.3bn business gorilla completely. How close to the 1 in 45 million odds is this approach? Rain or shine, Gartner is not going to be going anywhere and that analyst will likely be doing their thing for years.

Facing the stark reality

To put it bluntly, with analysts influencing as much as 80% of all enterprise IT purchase decisions, getting value from the analyst channel requires you to engage with it. You have no real option. As ever, though, engaging is not the same as arguing. Screaming at the analyst is no more

of a success strategy than burying your head in the sand. But with the right approach, it is actually possible to slowly win around even the most frustrating and implacable analyst.

No, honestly, we have done it, quite a few times.

If they won't change, you should

Engagement means telling your story – the story of your market, your company, your products and services – unambiguously and powerfully, and specifically through the use of solid evidence. Opinions don't change overnight. A single telling of your story won't be that one epic storm that changes the landscape and everyone in the company needs to understand that. You need to be clear, persistent and relevant – and talk facts. You need to do this regularly even if it means holding your nose when you do so. The

alternative is to prepare yourself for the business storm that may arise from the analyst calling it wrong.

And if you want to know exactly how you can effectively change an analyst's opinion, join the webinar Jonathan Yarmis and I are doing on February 28th when we'll reveal how we have successfully changed analyst opinions many times over.

So, what am I really saying here?

If your company is engaged now in that perennial discussion of how stupid this or that analyst is, because of his or her failure to see your market the way you do – or to see the value of your company the way you do – please don't forget the lottery. If you have any thoughts of wanting to win, I strongly suggest you shorten the odds by buying yourself a ticket. Or to put it another way, if you drink the poison **THEY** will not die, **but somebody might.**





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About The Skills Connection

We are a team of former senior research analysts, with over 70 years of experience at Gartner alone. As such, we bring a unique set of market skills and experience to the process of analyst engagement. We are able to draw on deep industry knowledge of advisory research processes and people.

We know how to engage analysts, and we know what drives their analysis and evaluations. And, as experienced analysts, we are able to rapidly apply our understanding of the process to each and every aspect of analyst engagement creating truly tangible business results for our clients.

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