

# What Conan O'Brien taught us

 By [Mike Saunders](#)

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It's always great to look at how celebrities use online marketing to build their brand and career. Over the last few years we have watched as Conan O'Brien received a seemingly big blow to his career through a fall out with NBC.

He has, however, managed to reinvent himself through this fall out, and has successfully used online marketing to rebuild his career. Let's take a look at the lesson learnt:



@buzzfuss via [123RF](#)

## Forcing limitations helps unlock opportunity and creativity

Too often marketers are searching for options and variety – they want to cover the broadest spectrum of marketing channels for the best possible return. However, there are times when limiting your brands communication to specific channels can be better for you. It can force you and your team to think more creatively and to drive new innovative ideas.

Conan's career always revolved around television comedy, whether writing episodes for *The Simpsons* or hosting *The Tonight Show*. Then came his fallout with NBC which saw him prohibited from appearing on TV for a period of time. This major setback became an incredible opportunity to explore new channels.

Conan took to Twitter in February 2010 and attracted 30,000 followers in the first hour of his profile being made. In 24 hours, his account stepped over the 300,000 mark and today sits at over 22 million. He used the time away from TV to launch a tour, "*Legally Prohibited from Being Funny on Television Tour*", and started using social media to propel and build his brand – a brand that he has since built into a media powerhouse which houses blogs, videos, tickets, jokes and a GIF library of Conan content.

Conan has become hungry to bring new innovations into his career and its clear with his comment to *Adweek* stating "I could probably point to five different times in my career where I had to change and adapt. I've found that rather than be afraid of that – initially it was fear if you go towards it, [since] many experiments will fail – it's much more interesting when you hit on something new and it works ... it's exhilarating."

This love for innovation recently led to the use of 360° video in his show to help online viewers get a better experience of the show.

The lesson is simple: A seemingly big blow to a television career forced Conan and his team to rethink and reimagine themselves to find new ways to meet and attract their audience. His experience of being forced to limit his usual exposure led to the birth of one of the most entertaining comebacks we've ever experienced.

So, the next time you're trying to unlock innovative thinking, try taking something away instead of creating more options.

*Read more about ["How Brands Use Online Video"](#).*

## ABOUT MIKE SAUNDERS

Mike Saunders, CEO of Digitlab, is a renowned Digital Business and CRM Consulting expert acclaimed for his unique ability to blend technological expertise with insightful business strategy. His leadership in digital consulting, combined with his roles as an international keynote speaker and author, has solidified his reputation as a visionary in the digital realm

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