

# THE PASSION CONVERSATION

## Sparking and Sustaining Loyal & Talkative Customers

PRESENTATION SUMMARY | April 15, 2021

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### Marketing Problems are People Problems in Disguise

#### KEY QUOTE:

“We’re not in the coffee business serving people; we’re in the people business serving coffee.”

**Howard Behar** | long-time Starbucks executive

**Companies face all sorts of *marketing* problems. Reframing those issues as *people* problems will change perspective for the better.**

- A company is suffering from *sluggish sales growth* because not enough **people** are buying.
- A business is experiencing *low retention rates* because not enough **people** are buying *repeatedly*.
- A brand reeling from *poorly conceived products and programs* doesn’t have enough **people** truly interested in what they offer.
- An organization dealing with *low engagement* hasn’t been able to make its cause relatable to enough **people** who can help them sustain support.
- A business hurting from *unsatisfactory customer service* must confront the problem of too many unhappy **people**.

#### TAKEAWAY

Products and programs do not grow sales. Only **PEOPLE** grow sales.

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#### KEY STATS:

Every week Americans talk about brands at least 17,000,000,000 times.

source: Engagement Labs study (2021)

83% of word-of-mouth conversations occur through “Personal Media” (face-to-face, text/voice, video chat, email). 17% of word-of-mouth conversations happen through Social Media channels.

source: Engagement Labs study (2021)

25% of Personal word-of-mouth conversations are driven by Social Media mentions.

source: Engagement Labs study (2021)

#### KEY PHRASE:

People talk about stuff they are passionate about.

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# Sparking a Passion Conversation

## Three Conversation Motivations:



### #1 FUNCTIONAL | Factual Knowledge, Nuts & Bolts Information

People engage in Functional conversations about brands to get information needed to make decisions and to better interpret the world around them. These conversations can be as basic as discussing differences between two similar cars, information on nutritional labels, and explaining how to use a new app.

### #2 SOCIAL | Show Distinctiveness, Express Individuality

People engage in Social conversations about brands to impress others, to express uniqueness and to increase their reputations. Academics refer to this as “Social Signaling.” People will signal to society their uniqueness, their expertise, and their passions by talking about brands they uniquely identify with. Social Signaling is a form of self-enhancement. People can feel better about who they are by talking to others about brands that are as distinctive and interesting as someone views him or herself.

### #3 EMOTIONAL | Love & Hate, Shock & Awe, Giggles & Glares

Brands that invoke strong emotions are more likely to be talked about. When we are overjoyed about a brand, we tell others. When we are disgusted about a brand, we also tell others. And, when we are indifferent about a brand, we don't tell others. High arousal emotions, like amusement and anxiety, spark word of mouth conversations. Low arousal emotions, like contentment and sadness, are less likely to spark word of mouth conversations.

#### KEY PHRASE:

We, the business/brand, do not decide what people talk about. **PEOPLE** decide.

#### KEY QUESTION:

What is your business doing to earn opinions from **PEOPLE** ?

# Sustaining a Passion Conversation

## Pathway #1 | Delightful Customer Experiences

The customer experience is about **designing** an easy-to-follow path to purchase, **delivering** at every stage during the path, and the result being **delighting** customers

### KEY QUOTE

*“You can play a shoestring if you are sincere.”*

**John Coltrane** | jazz icon

### MAJOR STATISTIC

27% of consumers would pay 15% or more to receive a superior customer experience.

source: RightNow & Harris Interactive, “Customer Experience Report”

## Pathway #2 | Outstanding Customer Service

### BIG THOUGHT

**Customer Service starts when the Customer Experience falls apart.**

Customer service is about **reacting** in-the-moment to customer needs, **rescuing** potential mishaps, and **relaying** information in the right ways at the right times.

### KEY QUOTE

*“When you hit a wrong note, it’s the next note that makes it good or bad.”*

**Miles Davis** | jazz icon

### MAJOR STATISTIC

55% of consumers recommend a company because of its customer service.

source: RightNow & Harris Interactive, “Customer Experience Report”

### INSPIRATION

“Fanatical Support Promise” from Rackspace:

*We cannot promise that hardware won’t break, that software won’t fail or that we will always be perfect. What we can promise is that if something goes wrong, we will rise to the occasion, take action, and help resolve the issue.*

## Pathway #3 | Great Brand Stories

**Before people buy from you, they should buy into you.** The best brand story to tell that fosters greater loyalty and sparks more conversations is a story of how your business improves the lives of its customers.

# Finding Your Brand Story

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The following three exercises will help your business to better understand your core values in order to design and deliver a brand story that earns opinions from customers (and employees).

## I. Know the Founder's Story

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Every business has a “Founder’s Story.” There is a reason why a business began and usually the reason isn’t to make money. If you (or your team) doesn’t know or appreciate the reason your business began then it’s time to learn that story. Capturing the founder’s story can help to rekindle the passion employees have for your company, and serve as an emotional reminder to employees *why* the business exists and *who* it exists to serve. Answering these questions will help you to learn the Founder’s Story:

- What sparked your company’s founder to get the big idea?
- Who was your company’s first customer?
- What were the early days at your company like?
- Did your company face a turning point? If so, what happened and why?
- What gives you the most pride about the impact your company has made?

## 2. Design your Business as a Superhero

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What brand doesn’t want to be a hero in the lives of its customers? Thinking about your business as being a Superhero will change how you view what you do, why you do it and who you serve. Gather a large group of employees together and divide them up into smaller teams of five people. Give them a large sheet of paper with plenty of markers and have them visually do the following:

- Name your Superhero.
- Give her a “Superpower.”
- Who does she protect?
- What injustice does she fight?
- Who are her arch villains?
- What is the hero’s kryptonite?

Bring the large group back together and have each team share their Superhero design. The conversations that will be sparked will help your business to better understand its purpose, its fight and the difference you can make in people’s lives.

## 3. What Then Why

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Something deep inside of you should motivate a collective behavior from employees at work. This exercise will help you to uncover a personal motivation that will identify the reason(s) you are in business besides making money.

Start by making a descriptive statement about what your business does. Then, ask “why” that is important. Once you’ve asked a few “whys” you will uncover a fundamental reason for why your business exists. Here’s an example:

descriptive statement:

**We make organic juices with the freshest local ingredients.**

*WHY do you make organic juices with the freshest local ingredients?*

**Because the freshest local ingredients taste better.**

*WHY do the freshest local ingredients taste better?*

**Local farmers put their passion and expertise in growing the best produce and vegetables.**

*WHY does it matter if local farmers use their passion and expertise?*

**Everyone benefits from eating foods grown by passionate and skilled local farmers. The environment benefits and our health benefits.**

*WHY is it important that everyone benefits?*

**Because factory farming is hurting more than the earth... THE PERSONAL STORY.**

#### **4. Magazine from the Future**

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Think at least 10 years into the future. Where will your business be? What impact has your business made? How have you changed the lives of your customers?

After you've envisioned your future business, create the cover story from a well-known magazine that has written a long story about how successful your business is. Include the following elements:

- Magazine name
- Headline
- Cover Image
- Quote from the CEO
- 3 images that accompany the story
- Sidebar headlines

Now, how will you get there? What actions must be taken today to set in motion the future of business as described in the magazine?