

THE PASSION CONVERSATION

Sparkling and Sustaining Word of Mouth

PRESENTATION SUMMARY | Nov 7, 2016

BRAND EXPLORATION

Why did your founder start the company?

When did your company know it was onto something special?

Marketing Problems are People Problems in Disguise

KEY QUOTE:

"We are not in the coffee business. It's what we sell as a product but we are in the people business serving coffee."

Howard Schultz | Starbucks chairman and ceo

Companies face all sorts of *marketing* problems. If they would reframe those issues as *people* problems, their perspective would change.

- 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.

KEY STATS:

In our daily conversations with people, brands are mentioned at least 3,300,000,000 times.

source: "Word of Mouth & the Internet" study (Keller Fay & Google)

The typical American will mention specific brand names about 80 times per week.

source: Keller Fay "Talk Track®" study

71% of Americans believe conversations with people have a "great deal" of influence on our purchase decisions.

source: Harris Interactive Report

KEY PHRASES:

No passion, no conversation. No conversation, no word of mouth. No word of mouth, no successful business.

The Passion Conversation is not about getting people to talk about you —THE BRAND.
It's about getting people to TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES.

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.

With new and/or complex products, people need help to understand why to use it, how to use it, when to use it, and where to use it. Brands that are new and complicated to understand will benefit most from sparking a FUNCTIONAL word of mouth conversation.

TAKEAWAY

Focus marketing efforts on getting current customers to tell their friends and friends of friends to spark and spread word of mouth.

#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.

TAKEAWAY

The more distinct a brand, the easier it is for customers to project their uniqueness by visually identifying with the brand.

KEY PHRASE (repeated for emphasis)

The Passion Conversation is not about getting people to talk about you —THE BRAND. It's about getting people to talk about themselves.

#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.

TAKEAWAY

Bring forth brand-related stories that evoke strong emotional reactions to spark conversations.

Sustaining a Passion Conversation

Three Brand Story Strategies:

Strategy #1 | Improve a Life

The brand story of how a product/program/service can improve a person's life is one that will get shared for years and years.

The Fitbit story is shared because it's a story that clearly improves the lives of the people who use the device as well as improve the lives of people connected to the person using the Fitbit. The simple luxury of a grande latte from Starbucks improves the life of a person enjoying it because it can help them escape from the daily grind as well as more personally connect with someone they love over a cup of coffee. The Container Store has long used the story of how they help people save time by being more organized. That savings of time can allow someone to spend more time doing the things they love.

Strategy #2 | Make it Better

Lots of good products and services exist. However, there is always room to make good *better*. Beer is good and Sam Adams, along with smaller craft beer brands, are making it better through higher quality ingredients and more flavor. MySpace was good until Facebook made it better. Blockbuster was good but Netflix by mail was better. Redbox for some was even better than that. And now streaming Netflix has bested them all. This "make it better" sequence is a tried and true brand story strategy.

Strategy #3 | Right a Wrong

When a business corrects a perceived injustice in the world, it not only wins new customers... it also sparks word of mouth conversations.

Turbo Tax fights the injustice of the poorest people having to pay the most money to get their taxes done at a tax prep shop. Instead of paying hundreds of dollars to have someone else prepare their taxes, Turbo Tax software allows people to pay significantly less by empowering them to do their own taxes. Whole Foods Market long ago identified a wrong in the marketplace of grocery stores selling food with artificial ingredients and meat/poultry pumped up with antibiotics and growth hormones. Whole Foods is very authentic and transparent in telling the story of why they sell only natural and organic foods.

TAKEAWAY

Deliver upon one brand story strategy and your business will be very successful.

Deliver upon two brand story strategies and your business will be a market leader.

Deliver upon all three brand story strategies and your business will become a **BELOVED** brand.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

To help you tap into the “Right a Wrong” brand story, design your business as a Superhero. (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.

NOTES:
