



CRE8TIVE SUCCESS

Inspire Your Customers, Amplify Your
Profits & Dominate Your Competition
the RIGHT (Brained) WAY

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INTRODUCTION

Do you know the **story** your customers share about your business? Have you crafted the *specific conversation* you want others to tell the world about your product or service?

More than any other time in history, story helps determine the success of a business. The meteoric rise of Internet sites like Yelp and Angie's List invigorated throngs of potential customers to open their computers, tablets, and smartphones and assess if a business' offerings are worth their hard-earned dollars. What metric do they often use to evaluate? Read some of the reviews on these sites. You'll be hard pressed to find itemized, point-by-point appraisals of a company's products or services. Instead, prepare to be inundated with *stories of the experience* they had with the company.

Did you catch that? Reviews on sites like Yelp or Angie's List rarely stop at the company's product or service. The reviews read like stories and the stories often focus on the

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experience. Successful companies don't merely produce great products and services; they know how to garner positive experiential stories. Without controlling your story and without focusing on the experience, you leave referrals to chance.

Stories do not just happen on desktops, laptops, and smartphones. Let me throw out a hypothetical scenario. Say you attend a cocktail party with friends. Prior to the party, you met with your current accountant and... well, things aren't working out. The relationship has soured, but it's tax time and you need someone to fill the gap quickly. During the evening, you share your frustration with a friend at the party. Let's suppose your friend offers two different referrals:

Referral 1: "I have an accountant; his name is John. He might be able to help..."

Or

Referral 2: "You must call my accountant, John. He's got me so excited about my financial future!"

Which referral had more impact?

Did you notice the difference in tone, emphasis and action in the second referral? In the first referral, your friend explained he has an accountant named John, and that he might be of service. In the second referral, your friend could not wait to talk about John. One referral presented information. The other was peppered with emotion and personal assurance. One referral included facts; the other produced *inspiration*. When we are presented with facts we process, evaluate, and often discard. When we are inspired, *we act*.

Let's talk about John from the second referral for a moment. The second John understood the power of the referral story and specifically *designed* his business and his business'

experience to produce those words and create that level of excitement and intensity. Your friend became John's ambassador. But the position wasn't left to chance. The "inspiring" story your friend told at that cocktail party was intricately interwoven into every aspect of John's business.

Your friend and the rest of John's clients spread powerful words about John's business. John knows *that* they tell his story. More importantly, he knows *what* story is told. How did he do it? To control the story, John needed to think **creatively**. John, even though he's an accountant (and the furthest thing from, say, an artist), moved his business to the RIGHT and he has the success, clients, and profits to prove it.

You might be asking yourself, what does it mean to move my business to the right? Am I supposed to switch political parties? Should I stick Rush Limbaugh on my call waiting soundtrack? The right I am referring to isn't political. It's neurological. Success and influence have shifted to those able to capitalize on right brain *thinking*.

WHAT IS RIGHT (BRAINED) THINKING?

While we are each unique, we think in similar patterns. Whenever we think or act, we operate out of two regions, or two brain hemispheres, the Left or the Right. For the sake of brevity, I will quickly break down the difference in thought and action between the left and right brained:

If you are left brained, you are most likely influenced by numbers, facts, routine, order, and logic. Vocationally, you might be an accountant, a math or science teacher, an I.T. specialist, a draftsman, an insurance salesperson, or the owner of one of these types of businesses.

If you are right brained, you are more likely ruled by creativity, metaphor, visual beauty, and lyric. Vocationally, you might be a graphic designer, a musician, an author or singer, a painter, or even a salesperson.

There are numerous books spotlighting the differences in left and right brain thinking for psychological and interpersonal motivations. This book harnesses the principles, or “operating energies,” of a right brain thinker for the sake of *business* success. We will peer into the psyche and history of right brain thinkers, extracting what makes them instrumental in our lives today. We will then apply those findings to the shaping and crafting our businesses, companies, non-profits, sales processes, and the like for greater customer loyalty and increased profitability.

For the past forty-plus years, technology, media, publishing, and education have evolved from left to right brain thought.

What about business?

Granted, there are more creative agencies and companies run by right brain thinkers in the U.S. today than at any other time in history. But what about your business? In today’s world of automation and commoditization, a right brain business approach is essential. When the economy goes down and your service or product prices tumble, you must stand out. When the economic tide rises, you must avoid losing business and market share to those that can automate your skillsets and/or products into binary code and make you and your business irrelevant.

This book teaches you to craft and design your business and your business experience. Craft and design are very right brain words. Allow me to give you a few more: create, story

tell, shape, and compose. By using the energies of the artist, the poet, the scriptwriter, the musician, and the designer you can create a business producing more loyal customers and the strongest of referrals.

Though the storyteller, poet, musician, artist, and designer are not always the highest paid members of our society (everyone in Los Angeles has a script, and everyone in Nashville has a song catalog), they change *how* you view the world. They are world creators and perception skewers. You will use their energies to create the perception you want to share of your world of accounting, pharmaceutical sales, insurance, architecture, or any other vocational field.

Because, if Daniel Pink, New York Times and Wall Street Journal best-selling author, is right (and I believe he is), this is now a right brain world, baby! You must adapt or perish, recreate or be crushed. It happens every day. Failed businesses put “For Lease” signs on their now empty office spaces after solely relying on the left-brain idea that they only need their product or service to generate revenue. It worked for around the last 150 years but it isn’t going to work as well now. In *Knowledge Worker*, Peter Drucker posited that left-brain thinkers would flourish in the modern economy. For a time, his predictions held true. But that era is nearly over. Now it’s, “long live the creatives,” or, better yet, the creative *thinkers*.

It’s a radical shift, but it is not as hard a shift as it used to be. The technologies, ideologies, and worldviews of today allowed it to occur. A creative thirteen-year-old YouTube sensation now gets a million-dollar endorsement contract in the blink of an eye. That might take over 10,000 customers through your hairstyling business or 500+ customers through your tax

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accounting firm. It took a year of blood, sweat, and tears for you to make that kind of money. It took the kid a few hours (at least to sign the contract). The rise of information transmission and the embrace of form over function have broken rigidity, the status quo, the logical, and the literal.

Do not think this means creative companies, those providing right-brain products or services, are given a pass. You can own a graphic design company but still think with the left brain when it comes to the design of your business and business experience, not your art. Highly creative individuals fail to get their companies out of the basement because they forget to apply the very context of what they do to their own small business practices. I take market share away from these individuals every day.

In this book, I'll discuss the what's, why's, and how's of this right brain shift. Then we'll look at designing a business and creating the story that you want to tell and you want your clients to tell about your offerings. Finally, we will look at what to do when you achieve success.

STRIVING FOR SIGNIFICANCE

I believe that if you follow the steps and principles in this book, you will not only gain financial success, *you will also strive for significance*. You will create meaning for yourself, your customers, your business, and the world. Rather than pushing widgets or strictly selling services, you will inspire others to live with passion, interest, and drive.

I've written three books. Four, if you count a 50-page ebook. I did not mean to write books. I tried writing simple blog posts. Then blog posts turned into articles, which grew

into Ebooks, which became the length of books, so I published them. In writing these books I attempted to teach people to see value in their world, in themselves, and, since I've written on theology, in their faith.

If I am going to write another book, it's not just going to be about making money. I believe everyone on this planet is inherently capable of making a difference in this world. Many people never realize it. They let 'Resistance' (the personification of fear and procrastination) win as spotlighted in the *War of Art* by Stephen Pressfield (I highly recommend reading his book).

That's tragic.

Even more tragic are the ones that *do* make it: those that have the *capacity* to produce significance and meaning but focus success back onto themselves. They often become, like Scorsese's *Wolf of Wall Street*, shallow husks of men and women that had it all, only to become caricatures for others' amusement. It is not funny to those in their relational circles.

The world needs more Bono's.

It needs more men and women who do not just accumulate stuff but use their stuff *to make a difference*. Maybe you are next. Before you dust off the Stratocaster, I think you can get there through your business. It does not matter whether you provide left brain or right brain services, whether you're a financial analyst or a studio musician, these principles and action items allow you to rise to the top of your profession and tower over your competition and provide benefits to humanity.

I'm excited. I hope you are. The journey begins for both of us now. You see, I wrote this chapter prior to writing the book.

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I hope I gain as much insight in the writing of this book as I believe you will gain in reading it.

Live inspired.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Most chapters of this book are broken into two sections—both with identical content—based on the right or left brained temperament of the reader. The first section of each chapter contains visuals and text content that play off the creative tendencies of those with *right-brain* proclivities. The second section is written in the standard line-by-line format of most writings; which plays more into the temperament of a *left-brain* thinker.

You can choose to focus on the first section of each chapter and easily read the entire book in less than 20 minutes. For some, in an age where time is precious and fleeting, this may be enough. For others, the first section will serve as an overview of the chapter, which can be delved into in more detail after reading the second section of the chapter. If you are completely left brained you might avoid those “pesky” visuals altogether and strictly read the second section of each chapter.

Regardless of how you choose to engage, I encourage you to read the “Action Items” section at the end of most chapters. These are practical questions and recommendations that allow you to apply the teachings presented in this book for even more business success, significance, and influence.

If you have any thoughts, comments, or insights while reading, or would like to schedule a *design, story, and meaning consultation* for your business, feel free to reach out to me at: david@purefusionmedia.com - I love thoughtful, interactive dialog so don't be afraid to engage.

"THINKING" ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN

Left and Right Brain thinkers see the world (and our hands) very differently:

LEFT BRAIN DRAWING



The Left Brain focuses on the appearance of a hand, considering the fingers and nails as items. Left brain doesn't focus on shape, tone or texture.

RIGHT BRAIN DRAWING



The Right Brain doesn't look at the "hand," but the shapes, curves and lines that form the hand. It creates a realistic interpretation of shape and form.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE LEFT AND RIGHT BRAIN

(LAST 150 YEARS)

LEFT BRAIN:

Analysis
Sequencing (Deconstructive)
Reason
Literal
Logic
Compartmentalism
Science (of the past)

"Knowledge Workers"
(PETER DRUCKER)

(LAST 30-40 YEARS)

RIGHT BRAIN:

Insight
Connectedness
Creativity
Metaphorical
Discernment
Meaning
Spirituality

"World Creators"

Left Brain thinkers like order, they like reason; facts and figures, numbers and graphs.

Right Brain thinkers like creativity, aesthetics, meaning, painting, metaphor, beauty



LEFT BRAIN:
Asks “What”
and “How”



RIGHT BRAIN:
Asks “Why”

RIGHT BRAIN (World Creators): 

Shape and craft how we view the world through art, story, lyric and note.



LEFT BRAIN COMPANIES:



AUTOMATED

COMMODITIES

IRRELEVANT

(times of abundance)

(times of lack)

(always)

A Right Brain Thinking Company uses the traits of a Right Brain Thinker to create an “Experience” that transcends automation, commodization and irrelevancy.

CHAPTER 1

“THINKING” ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN

I founded two highly successful design agencies and have been a graphic designer for nearly three decades. My firms have provided creative services for some of the most well-known Fortune 500 companies in the world. I started my current company, Pure Fusion Media, with under a thousand dollars, and because of my creative skillsets and strategic business dealings, I cleared 25K the first month and over three million in the first two years. Visual design has dominated my life and filled my coffers since the late 1980s, but before I turned seventeen I was anything but an artist.

I remember my first high school art class. The initial assignment was to draw your hand. I did my best, drawing something Picasso would have gagged at. Somewhat

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sheepishly, I handed my poor attempt to the teacher. “Well, that is certainly a *left-brain* rendition of a hand,” she chuckled.

I didn’t know what that meant. Back then, none of us did.

The next day, she had us draw our hands again. Instead of the safety of looking at the paper, we were encouraged to draw “what we saw” without looking down. You can imagine how hard is to shape forms without assessing your progress. Once finished, I looked down at the paper. I was surprised how much better the hand looked than the “left-brain rendition” of the hand drawn the previous day. Sure, fingernails failed to line up with fingers and lines went up into nowhere, but I could tell it had the inklings of a somewhat realistic looking hand.

The following day, the new assignment was to *combine* the two techniques. We were allowed to look at the paper but only to center our lines or to make sure that fingernails lined up, etc. I crafted shapes and tones, looking down only when necessary as the teacher requested. After completion, I surveyed the whole of my drawing.

I had drawn a hand!

Not the idea of a hand, but a lifelike hand, one that appeared to be coming out of the paper into three-dimensional space. I could not believe it! I showed it to the teacher. She could not believe it either. “Class,” she said, “this young man is shifting his brain from left to right.”

That night, I went home and drew hands. I drew lots of hands. Hands open, hands clenched. Palm up, palm down, any way I could draw a hand. I took the paper to school and proudly handed it to the teacher. At parent/teacher night that next week, I was the visual example of her experiment in

“THINKING” ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN

teaching from a revolutionary new book entitled, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* by Betty Edwards.

Today, we pretty much understand left and right brain dynamics. Back then, only a few years after the invention of the fMRI machine, this was a revolutionary concept. I am a success story of that teaching and its transforming power in my life. It changed the course of my future.

Don't pick up a drawing pencil just yet (although you might want to get Edwards' book). The point is, right brain and left brain centric people see the world (or, in the case of my art class: our hands) very differently.

THINKING WITH THE RIGHT SIDE OF YOUR BRAIN

What does it look like to think with the right side of the brain? Let us reflect on the difference in thought between the left-brain and right-brain thinker.

LEFT-BRAIN THINKING

Analysis
Sequencing (deconstructive)
Reason
Literal
Logic
Compartmentalism
Fueled on the sciences of the past

RIGHT-BRAIN THINKING

Insight
Synergy
Creativity
Metaphorical
Discernment
Meaning
Spirituality (of the past and present)

“Knowledge Workers”

“World Creators”

Left-brain thinkers like order, reason, facts, figures, numbers,

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and graphs. Give them the facts and let them run with them. No debate is needed and no additional thought is required. They rarely connect many dots, unless the facts require it, and they are very literal. One plus One always equals two. It does not equal four, and it certainly does not equal color, tone or lyric. Science is broken into different and separate parts, known as “reductionism:” “Let us learn all we can about X and then we will learn all we can about Y.” But X in relation to Y is seldom considered.

Left brain thinkers often excel (at least in the past) in school. They are especially proficient in math, science, and logic. If you aced your Trig and Chem classes but struggled in Creative Writing 101, you might be left-brained.

Right-brain thinkers are harder to pin down. To a left-brain thinker they are nuts. Where analysis dominates the left-brained thinker, the right-brain thinker wants more insight. The left-brain thinker focuses on what and how while the right brain thinker asks, “Why?” Right-brained people often refuse to be told the correct or reasoned way to do something. They want to blaze their own trail, even if the answer fails to make logical sense. Left-brain thinkers focus on facts. Right-brain thinkers like stories and the more creative the story the better.

Right-brain thinkers fixate on the aesthetic and its many forms. They love and create novels and screenplays, songs, poetry, paintings, pottery, and the like. They are often fashion designers, creative app developers, product designers, or movie directors. Left-brain thinkers play Words with Friends against the computer. Right-Brain thinkers spend hours playing The Sims in massively multiplayer environments.

KNOWLEDGE WORKERS vs. WORLD CREATORS

Peter Drucker described those that excel at left-brain thought as “Knowledge Workers.” I will describe right-brain thinkers as “World Creators.” **World Creators craft new and innovative ways of seeing the world – and ourselves.** Remember *The Matrix*? The movie not only created a digital world, it also left you with a new way of looking at the real world. How many times has your life been affected by a song or a book? For many country music listeners, the song “*I Hope You Dance*” changed their view on the value of life. For most of the rest of us, pick about any song by the Beatles.

Think about the teachers that inspired you. What caused the inspiration? Was it that they spoke about the particulars of geometry in rote formulas, or did they connect geometry to life so that it resonated deep inside your soul? I once read a highly secular, highly anti-religious book encouraging history professors to present the subject as little more than dates and names (or, as my good friend Stephen Mansfield penned, little more than “Dates and Dead People.”) According to the book, if a student equated meaning to history, he or she might question naturalism and the random-chance nature of the secularized, religious-free life.

Forget that!

My favorite teacher during my education was a college history teacher that “showed” us history and its connectedness. He didn’t teach history in “fill in the blank” fashion.

What about business? Or, better yet...

WHY BUILD A RIGHT BRAIN THINKING COMPANY?

Here's the bomb drop.

Left-brain thinking companies often become irrelevant, commodities, or automated.

I took typing in junior high school. I got up to about 50 words per minute. I took typing... using a typewriter. Ask anyone under twenty what a typewriter is and you're likely to get blank stares. The typewriter produced some of the finest creations from both the right and left-brained alike for well over a century. Now, a few stalwart authors aside, it's gone. The function of the typewriter was replaced by an entirely new functioning invention that swallowed up the product.

Before traveling to Hawaii in the early nineties, I bought about five disposable cameras to mark my trip (well, mostly to take pictures of the women we met, but I digress). Back then, they were on the impulse shelves at the front of every grocery store. Seen any recently?

Even new inventive products like FitBit, putting millions into their "cool," right-brain focused hardware and software, risk being gobbled up by a single app on the Apple Watch. As long as someone can build something that assimilates our product or service into itself, we are in jeopardy - if we strictly focus on our product or service.

How about *commoditization* and *automation*?

They are often directly correlated to America's fiscal status. In times of great growth, people a lot smarter than us build products that *automate* what we bank our futures on. In times of lack, people with less skill than us use those newly invented products to undercut the market, and our industry suffers from *commoditization*. During the growth of

automation, the speed of the product goes up and the price of the product goes down, making entry into your market easier and easier. During the growth of commoditization, the number of individuals in your market goes up, and your pricing goes down. In our “flattened” world, you are competing with people from China, India, and Pakistan willing to work for ten times less than you or your workers and still live like kings.

How can you compete with that?

I’ve survived through three shifts in this automation/commoditization quagmire. The first was the desktop publishing onslaught, where everyone who bought the programs Pagemaker or Quark Express thought they were graphic designers. I often fought for business against the eighteen-year-old with no experience or the sixty-five-year-old scrapbook mom who pursued design after the friends in her coffee klatch told her how good her scrapbook boards were.

Five or so years later, the web designer wave exploded onto the creative marketplace. Everyone who bought FrontPage, Dreamweaver, or Flash thought they could become web design gurus. The market again flooded with fresh new “creatives,” producing websites with no structure, no forethought, and no marketing strategy. Still, most prices were economical, so people paid one-fifth of the amount I charged at my firm to be, “up on the web.” Two to four years later, I snatched up all those companies’ website redesigns.

We’re now in an even more complex shift. Employing new strategies are essential for survival. Enter the era of crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing is a small agency killer. Crowdsourcing sites make millions on creatives who either “bid” on potential projects or “compete” for a client’s

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business— with the rest of the global community. What used to be a flooded market that would undercut your agency for one-fifth the price is now bid out to designers who'll do the work for free, in hopes of getting a project for one-tenth of the standard small-agency price.

Bigger and bigger companies are realizing the value of crowdsourcing, taking business away from the design conglomerates and handing it to the best of the best single shop creatives in Romania, Russia, Brazil, Pakistan, etc. Why not? You can now avoid the big agency's overhead and get better design for one-tenth or less of the price, depending on the agency you used to work with.

I can't compete with Romania or Pakistan if it all were focused on price, so price is not my focus. I've applied the principles in this book and centered my attention on **the experience**. I've crafted my ethics, as you will soon discover, to ensure success beyond my services and I created a powerful story that gets discussed often. But that's getting ahead of ourselves a bit.

SURVIVING AND THRIVING

Let me tell you how I not only survived but also thrived during this crowdsourcing wave. I started in the early 2000s, with decent sized agency of ten creatives, but I never saw my family. I was always at work, stressed over keeping my internal employees happy while juggling a large book of business. A few years later, I read Timothy Ferriss' book, *4 Hour Work Week*. Around halfway through the book, I embraced the idea of outsourcing and streamlining my business practices. I shifted my entire business model to outsourcing projects to

local and national designers and keeping the company sleek and fluid.

When the crowdsourcing model exploded, I noticed prices dropping and many expressing frustration over losing to single shop designers across the globe. I refused to add my voice to the dissention. Instead, I scoured these sites for the best of the best creatives. Finding their websites or email addresses, I sent them direct messages, offering them the opportunity for *guaranteed* work rather than the erratic speculation of the global creative market.

I hired skilled and affordable contractors from around the globe, paid them a competitive wage, and gave them the stability that they sought. This allowed me more time to cultivate and grow the creative aspects of my business and afforded me the opportunity to engage in other activities, including the writing of this book.

The tides are changing. The waves of irrelevance, commoditization, and automation swell ever higher. Today, you can't simply survive the wave. You need to ride it. Then you must create new waves and let the power of all this right-brain inventiveness broadcast its effects out into the world.

To understand the tide changes, we must understand where we have been and where we find ourselves today. The next chapter is a bit of a history lesson. It serves as a powerful understanding of why we went right and how to see your path to navigate.

HOW BUSINESS MOVED RIGHT

America has been predominantly a LEFT BRAIN thinking culture for centuries.



THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



Invention was mostly about FUNCTION, not form.



But what about the REST OF SOCIETY?



EDUCATE BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

{ Math and Sciences }



Brightest in LEFT BRAIN attributes rose to the top and transcended the worker class.



WORLD WARS I and II

Tanks, Guns, Planes didn't have to look good,
they had to function perfectly.



ALLIES WIN!



National Pride
Business Growth
Traditional Values



THEN CAME THE 60s

Counter Cultural
Rebelious
Searching for Meaning

These are disciplines of the RIGHT BRAIN

REBELLION NEEDED A VOICE



ART



MUSIC



FILM



LITERATURE



RIGHT BRAIN developments

**ATTITUDES OF THE
1960S SHIFTED
THE BUSINESS WORLD**



Brightest in RIGHT BRAIN
attributes began to be
recruited by businesses.

People fought for Individualism

INDIVIDUALITY ➡ NEW INVENTION



Style requires
Creativity

THE EMBRACE OF

Style

Things were judged
on how they looked
not how they
functioned



THE PERSONAL COMPUTER (MACINTOSH)



Allowed the right brained unlimited
and easy access to creativity.
Radically lowered the barrier to entry.

INCREASED CREATIVITY
= THE NEED TO SHARE!

ENTER



THE INTERNET

Class, age and education barriers
shattered. No valid metrics.

Success became based on (Global) Subjectivity

Now - RIGHT BRAINED CEOs hire the brightest Left Brain
Thinkers to staff IT or run the accounting department.

LESSON LEARNED?

If society has shifted from Left Brain to Right Brain,
then businesses need to make THE CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE more valuable than money.

CHAPTER 2:

HOW BUSINESS MOVED RIGHT

For at least the last 150 years, left-brain centric thought has dominated and accelerated American society. But the left-brain shift incubated earlier in America's history. Fueled on the scientific discoveries and philosophical ideologies of the previous 100 years, the industrial revolution exploded onto the U.S. landscape in the late 1700s. It brought a rise to inventiveness like the world had seldom seen. Unlike the inventions of the previous millennia, the production machines that crafted and assembled these inventions were so gargantuan they required myriad of individuals to see them realized. Factories were filled to the brim with workers. Salesmen flooded the suburban and city streets peddling new ideas.

But invention was predominately about function.

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We were learning new and better ways of accomplishing things. Neil Postman in his book *Technopoly* describes our cultural shift from a tool-based society (slow and limited) into a Technocracy (automated tools and technologies allow us to function efficiently) and, finally, into a Technopoly (technology now dominates us... and that's bad). The hand led to the hammer, which led to the nail gun, which led to the automated machine, which led to the hand becoming irrelevant. Musician Jack Johnson stated.

*“Our feet became the wheels
and the wheels became the cars
and then the rigs began to drill
until the drilling goes too far.”*

That's a singer songwriter crafting an ecological point lyrically, but you get the idea. We spent nearly two hundred years in United States crafting more efficient ways of functioning. Invention was based on utility. Price was often dictated on the performance of that utility. You didn't pay more for a typewriter in the 1940s by how it looked but according to what additional functions it accomplished. Aesthetic design was employed on right brain activities, such as the look and feel of a violin or the crafting of fine china bowls.

(DON'T) BLAME IT ON THE RICH!

The rich could afford to own things beyond utility. They had often made their money off the backs of those having fabricated their left-brain utilitarian inventions in their factories. While the rich could appreciate creations crafted by right-brain thinkers, such as expensive paintings, fine

architecture, and the opulence of high priced jewelry or sculpture, the rest of the society was *forced* to think left.

Since the rich only constitute about 1% of the population as the Occupy Wall Street folks mused, thought needed to shift toward educating the other 99%. If the focus were utility and expanding the reach of utility, then the training of the young would be based on knowledge. Invention is often birthed out of the fetal tissue of science and math, so train the youth in rigid principles and equations that produced inventiveness and societal usefulness.

Those lucky few that rose to the knowledge-based surface experienced the luxury of transcending the life of the menial worker. Thinking with the full capacity of the left brain often allowed those individuals to accelerate the ranks and collect wealth, affording them the opportunity to also invest in the aesthetic creations designed by those on the right.

If design was only afforded to the rich or the esoteric then let the eccentrics of the world focus on their needs. At the ground level, we need left-brained geniuses to invent cars, planes, boats, road paving machines, etc. The rest of the populace can construct and assemble those inventions. Left-brain education filtered out the executives, the managers, and the menial workers.

The rise of left-brain thought, both culturally and academically, wasn't bad or erroneous. It was necessary for societal growth. America was a baby eagle stretching its legs. Those legs didn't need to be fashioned with Ugg boots quite yet.

Two World Wars also stoked the flames of left-brain innovation. In the cross hairs of your enemy you didn't need a

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gun, tank, or plane to look good. You wanted that invention to work as efficiently as possible. Factories created disparate, uninspiring parts that were finally put together in another factory to form a plane, tank, or gun, leaving the right-brained in the ranks painting pretty ladies on the side of their B52's fuselage to give the flat gray machines some life and character. Then tragically, across Europe, Africa, and Asia, bombs and bullets destroyed millennia of right-brain art and architecture.

The horror of Pearl Harbor aside, war never reached the continental United States. While the rest of the world was digging out and rebuilding after the Second World War, the United States boomed technologically and fiscally.

Despite the success and growth, a new shift was on the tide...

Tom Brokaw heralded the World War II Generation as the "Greatest Generation." While the Industrial Revolution often led to greed, class warfare, and distaste of the fellow man beneath you, our victory in war brought the country together as one. We'd won and we'd done it together. Yet in all the power, value, and performance inventiveness of left-brain thinking, it began to wane.

People wanted more. They were no longer content with the logical and literal. The new clarion call didn't come from society's leaders. It came from those many would call society's deviants.

IT'S ALL ABOUT ORIGINALITY, MAN...

While the Left-brain rich rested in their ivory towers, convinced the world would never change, many of those never making the grade to Knowledge Worker started congregating.

Their dissention was more ideological than neurological. They weren't rebelling against the left brain. They protested *the ideals* of the left brain: order, control, unabated commitment, and reason. They questioned the path to success of the Knowledge Worker and their wealthy employers. To the rebel, there was no meaning in it. There was no heart.

Questioning the status quo, logic, and reason is, by its very nature, a shift toward the right. This dissention needed a voice and a transmission mechanism. Since these rebels were already thinking toward the right, why not use the tools of the right to broadcast the message? The voice of left-brain dissention did not come out of America's mechanics or its government, but through paint, lyric, and note. Americans artistically viewed and lyrically listened to a new way of thinking. It wasn't about fiscal and technological progress. It was about meaning and purpose and embracing of the great questions of life.

It was also laced with drugs, protest, and violence, but the intention was to celebrate individuality and rebel against conformity and dogma. Rebellion is often considered erroneous by the party in charge. I remember a line from the brilliant film *The Count of Monte Cristo*: "*In the end, treason is just a matter of dates.*" I don't subscribe to that idiom but it brings up a valid point. When Orwell penned *1984*, it was a literary celebration of the right-brain mind, followed quickly by oppression and subjugation from the left-brain mind.

The embrace of individuality led to new invention. Not of utility, but of style. People wanted to celebrate their uniqueness, so companies needed to create products embracing individuality. This is not a left-brain virtue. Order and conformity fill the edifices of the left-brained. It did not require

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Knowledge to design with style and individuality. It required creativity. By the time the beat poets, authors, and artists reached their early thirties, the really smart and innovative left-brained thinkers started employing them.

The auto conglomerate sat in his office scheming: “I’ve got all the left-brain Knowledge Workers making the highest performance vehicle possible, now I need the right-brain artists to make it look good.” The elite snatched up right-brain individuals from obscurity and poverty. Quickly, these new right-brain workers surpassed the financial status of their left-brained coworkers, yet they rarely reached the success pinnacle of their employers.

THE AUTOMATION EXPLOSION

Then this budding right-brain thinking collided with the digital age. The original Turing machines and the IBM computer were created to serve specific purposes. But the *personal* computer was developed to serve a person’s uniqueness.

In the early world of DOS, creativity was led by the most creative left-brained thinkers. With DOS, you couldn’t see what you were designing. Coding looked a lot like math and science, but as we reached Orwell’s year of supposed domination, 1984, Apple and IBM released the first versions of the WYSIWIG (what you see is what you get) operating system. The Window’s version predominantly thought left, so the creative world embraced one of the first right-brain technological edifices, the *Macintosh*. Inside the camel-colored box was a utopia of left-brained thinking and components, but on the screen, it was a right-brain fantasy world.

High-school computer classes shifted from analytics and calculation to digital art. The left-brained rich were losing their grip, but with enough right-brain workers in their arsenal they could retain a bit of market share.

As a general rule, people don't want to create in obscurity. They want to share and interact. Woodstock was more than a music gathering; it evidenced the individual's desire to connect in their individuality. And the Internet was created. Through the web, *everything* changed.

Not only could we communicate with each other globally, we could also create things that were better than others. Then the global audience could evaluate what was beneficial and what should be discarded. The world was not only flat but class structure was obliterated. It didn't matter if you were a corporate mogul with three PhD's or a twenty-year-old high-school dropout. If the public spoke, the dropout was in and the mogul was out. Creativity now rules the day. The final nail in the function-centric coffin of the Left-Brain elite had been pounded down hard.

Left-brain thought contained logical and quantifiable success parameters. With the Internet, success needed no metric. Fame and fortune became a subjective phenomenon. And subjectivity is a byproduct of the right brain.

Culturally, it's no longer the Left-Brained at the corporate business head, surrounded by a cadre of Knowledge workers and a few right-brained workers to beautify the product or visually market the service. It is now Right-Brained executives, hiring other right-brained workers, and employing a few left-brained workers to create the web or app code, run the I.T. department, and staff accounting. Sales moved from the

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regurgitation of figures and statistics to creative thinking and story generation. Human resource departments now invent innovative and creative ways of keeping their employees satisfied – from Yoga classes to the recommendation of holistic medicine – certainly disciplines of the right.

The Internet allowed for the meteoric rise of anyone with a video camera, typing, or design skills to experience success, fame, and fortune today. It doesn't even have to be human. Grumpy Cat made tens of millions of dollars for simply being... a grumpy cat. What's utilitarian about that? Attractive girls like the two sweethearts of *#EleventhGorgeous* garner huge contracts by staid beauty conglomerations for simply putting on makeup and being kitschy and cute. Billion-dollar companies now take advice from creative fourteen-year-olds with two million subscribers on YouTube.

NOW ABOUT YOU

You've got to compete in all of that. You must create a way to get noticed by the regional, national, or global audience. Sure, you need to use social media to get your product or service out in the market, but so is your competition. You need to differentiate yourself from everybody out there.

How are you going to do it? Naturally, to be successful you need to make your customer's time and your products and/or services more valuable than their money. Your customers have to believe in the value of your offerings over their hard-earned finances.

What this chapter has taught us is that success has shifted beyond those initial parameters.

The new standard is that you also have to make *the experience of working with you and your business more valuable than their money*. And for that, you need to think like the right-brained. You need to employ design. You need to master storytelling. You need to weave intentional creativity into every aspect of the customer experience.

I know for the right-brained, this chapter may read like a cumbersome history lesson (although I did my best to respect your temperament). Regardless, there was a crucial point to this exercise. By understanding the societal shift toward right-brain thinking and design, you can see what and how your customers are thinking and how they now engage. Hopefully, you've also recognized the need to employ right-brain thought and design into *your* business.

No, I don't just mean that you must hire a great graphic designer or agency to market and message your operation, though you will soon see that is essential. Instead, you must design the *processes and standards* of your business. You're about to learn how to become an artist, composer, and storyteller of everything about your company – not just your products or services– through design, story, and meaning. I will start with a new way of looking at design.

A QUICK CAVEAT: WHEN TOO MUCH RIGHT GOES WRONG

Upon finishing this chapter, I forwarded it to a number of my closest friends. Receiving positive feedback, I pressed forward with minor grammar edits, until I got a call. It was from a good friend of mine who works with government contracts in the defense industry. Most people were inspired, even liberated by

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this chapter, but he was downtrodden. He had seen a blitzkrieg of right-brain marketing hype and emotional decisions influence contracts at the highest and most crucial of levels. In his industry, pragmatics and professional standards had eroded, leaving those defending our nation with products and equipment which he considered subpar and counter intuitive. The dangerous implications of an all right-brained society were very real to him.

I don't believe in a right-brained domineering utopia as was his fear. Too much right-brained acceptance, too much emotional decision-making, and quality and professional standards are replaced by well-crafted marketing hype. Manufactured obsolescence and poor craftsmanship can be justified through the right "brand messaging." Left-brain dominance may have eroded culturally, but its positive characteristics of decency, structural significance, quality, and respect must never be forgotten. In 1984, Orwell proposed that a Left-brain domineering society would imprison us. Neil Postman in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, posited that we were dangerously becoming more like the right-brain domineering culture of Huxley's, *A Brave New World*. Neither Orwell's nor Huxley's conceptualizations should have any place in a prosperous, creative, and empathetic society.

DESIGN

DANIEL
PINK

“To take what already exists and transform it into something new...” (A Whole New Mind)

DAVID W
LITWIN

“... and hopefully *revelatory!*”

“FOR EVERY **1** PERCENT OF SALES INVESTED
IN PRODUCT DESIGN, A COMPANY’S SALES AND
PROFITS RISE BY AN AVERAGE OF **3 TO 4**
PERCENT.”

(Daniel Pink, A Whole New Mind)

Standard thinking is that Business Design
means ARTWORK

BUT DESIGN IS:

Creative
Unique
Significant
Intentional



Why not apply these “design”
traits to your
BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

Design a creative and unique experience for your customer
and you set yourself apart in the marketplace.

THIS REQUIRES INTENTIONALITY!

CHAPTER 3:

(BUSINESS) DESIGN

“There is nothing new under the sun...”

... Said the famous poet, philosopher, and king – Solomon. The same mantra applies to most design. For the painter, the paint already exists. For the musician, the notes are already available. For the poet or scriptwriter, the words have already been created. How the paint, notes and words *are combined* determines the value and wonder of the art, composition, or poetry.

Daniel Pink, in his book *A Whole New Mind*, describes design as “*to take what already exists and transform it into something new...*” and, I would add: “... and, hopefully, revelatory.” Design requires us to understand the components

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of our craft, only to learn new and innovative ways of orchestrating those components to produce something radical and disruptive.

Integrating design is essential for any successful company. Pink explains that, according to the London Business School, *“For every percent of sales invested in product design, a company’s sales and profits rise by an average of 3 to 4 percent.”* While that number is fairly significant, I can go considerably higher.

During the height of the recession, my current agency rebranded a Nashville-based limousine operation. The initial request called for an updated website. After scrutinizing their original branding and messaging, we assured the client that a brand overhaul was needed. Applying a poor brand over a fresh and relevant web design was not going to produce success nor synergize with *our ethics*, a concept you will discover shortly.

Skeptical at first, the company agreed to our recommendation. In the information-gathering interview, using our Needs Based Analysis Questionnaire (NBA), we asked them to outline the project’s Conditions of Satisfaction. Among those conditions was the criterion that the new branding and site increase revenue by 25% over the next year.

We nearly doubled their revenue in six months.

During the height of a recession, a luxury service experienced unfettered growth. When other businesses were battening down the financial hatches, this newly-branded, high-dollar operation was bursting at the seams. You will view that brand later in this book.

Three years before the downturn in the economy, we rebranded a non-profit, the oldest day home for inner-city

children in the country. They were skeptical and cautious at first. After all, they were a non-profit. But we assured them of the value of the image shift. The result? They *tripled* the amount procured from corporate donations that year.

The new image evoked something powerful in the day home's ambassadors. They were so excited about the new imagery that it translated into positive energy on their faces and smiles. When corporate donors observed that energy, they felt inclined to invest more money.

People often argue with me, especially in the South. They question, "Why should I pay your agency rates when I know a guy who knows a designer that can design my logo for \$50 bucks?" Decent design looks attractive. Good design may produce compliments. But exceptional design generates power, effective action, and trust.

I'm getting ahead of myself a bit. I have presented business design through the standard lens: that of artwork. This is often where our perception of business design ends. That's tragic. It's also unprofitable. Consider the nature of design for a few moments. Design is more than visual artistic beauty. Starting with the obvious...

Design is Creative

Great design, no matter the medium, requires creativity. We must step outside of the box and look at things from a new angle and a fresh perspective. With a few exceptions, the more creative the design the more interest it garners. Creativity evokes action. Consider for example, that scriptwriting generally followed a standard, three-act format for decades. Then Quentin Tarantino turned scriptwriting on its head with

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films like *Pulp Fiction*. His film, and its format, shifted the status quo. It created a new style other scriptwriters soon embodied.

Design is Unique

We separate one design from another by its uniqueness. Songwriters and music artists spend countless dollars in litigations after the notes of a new song resemble the tonal structure of a previous musical track. When we look at Picasso, we don't see Monet's work. While design is often influenced by past work, it must retain its own unique characteristics or it's not design, it's plagiarism.

Like *Pulp Fiction*, or Elvis, or *the Beatles*, when something really unique comes along we celebrate it with fervor. If we design something that hasn't previously hit the societal landscape, we often experience years, decades, or centuries of success. Now, with the Internet, unique design can populate and propagate in nanoseconds.

Design is Significant

As I stated before, design should be revelatory. It should evoke a visceral response leading to a change in perception. Think about the great art, music, lyric, or literature you've experienced in your life. Has it changed your perception of the world? Has a form of design shifted the entire course of your vocational future? Think about how many people became painters and photographers after viewing the works of Warhol, musicians after listening to The Beatles, and authors after reading Hemingway. Design, not just historically, but also holistically, produces significance.

Design is Intentional

Design is purposeful. It has intent. Even if that intent is to make money, there is something driving the artist, the musician, the poet, and the scriptwriter. For most of the right-brained, it's more about the experience than the final result. Whether for selfish or altruistic reasons, there's intent behind design.

Design is also intentional in that it takes work, focus, and determination. A painter cannot "will" a masterpiece onto a canvas. He or she must utilize every ounce of creativity and summon every skillset to make something magical and memorable. Many people never chart the world's best song, write the world's best story, or paint the world's best picture, simply because they refuse to do the work necessary to make it happen.

Let's look at this list again:

Design is: Creative | Unique | Significant | Intentional

Why then must design refer to something artistic? If the criteria for design is to be creative, unique, significant and intentional, can we transcend the aesthetic? Can you design your business in the same manner? If we think solely about our product or service, design is most likely fixed on marketing and visuals, but if we focus on our business *experience*, the creative opens up in fresh, new, and relevant ways.

Can we get creative with the customer/relational experience? Certainly. We can create new and innovative ways of engaging the customer in a manner that's fresh and unique. Why retain the status quo when you can shock the standard

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system of conduct? I often tell my eighteen-year-old daughter that there is a reachable “bar” in business ethics and attitude. Most young people don’t even acknowledge there is a bar, let alone know how to reach it. Simply recognizing a bar exists already places you ahead of the curve. Design a creative and unique experience for your customer and you can set yourself apart from your competition.

Can you produce something significant in the lives of your customers, clients, or employees? Absolutely. You can design principles and practices respecting the energy, time, and temperament of your customers while creating something new and powerful in their lives.

All this requires intention. Just like the artist, you will not get there without serious forethought, planning, and strategy. Do it well and it flows effortlessly. But it takes well-crafted planning. In the following pages we will, like an artist, meticulously craft our businesses for greater success. The process begins at the core of your business. It begins by designing *your ethics*.

CRAFTING YOUR COMPANY'S ETHICS



CUSTOMERS COME BACK, NOT JUST BECAUSE OF YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE, BUT BECAUSE OF THE

EXPERIENCE

OF LARGE COMPANIES:

85% **54%** **>20%**

Mission Statements

Vision Statements

Purpose Statements

BUT HAVE YOU CONSIDERED YOUR COMPANY'S

ETHICS?

Ethics set parameters, establish non-negotiables, produce success metrics.
Determine courses of action & the treatment of customers, vendors,
employees and the world.

COMPANY ETHICS >> CUSTOMER STORIES >> RETURN CUSTOMERS & REFERRALS

LIKE ANCIENT ISRAEL'S 10 COMMANDMENTS



Ethics are not meant to restrict,
but to liberate and evoke opportunity.

OUR COMPANY ETHICS INCLUDE:

1. We are not about the job, we are about the referral
2. If a client contacts us about a job, we've lost power
3. Nothing leaves the office if it can be broken apart visually.
4. We are always going to be positive: office, phone & emails

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN STRATEGY 1:

CRAFTING YOUR COMPANY'S ETHICS

A year ago, I met with a man about switching insurance companies. Handing me his business card, I commented on the attractiveness of his company's text-based logo design. Text-based logos are hard to perfect. Most look like they were designed in two minutes using Microsoft Word.

Instead of thanking me, he rolled his eyes. For the next five minutes, he recited a story of frustration, misinformation, bad practices, and unprofessionalism. The narrative, and his stalwart determination to not give the design agency having created the logo another dime, was based on the failure of the experience, not the work provided. Your business experience often matters more than your business offerings. How do you

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start to create a positive and memorable experience for your customers?

Craft your company's *ethics*.

Statistically, 85% of large companies have mission statements. A slightly less 54% have vision statements. Far fewer take the time to craft purpose statements. But have you considered and honed your company's ethics?

I'm not referring to a personal morality that might bleed over into your business. Ethics are business standards that set parameters, establish non-negotiables, and produce verifiable success metrics. They determine your courses of action, which reflect on the way you treat your customers, your vendors, your employees, and the world.

Far beyond your product and service, ***ethics produce stories, and stories, if positive, produce repeat customers.*** Science Fiction storywriters build boundaries around their worlds. They alone determine what can and can't be done in the framework of their universe. In a similar manner, ethics help craft the stories others will tell about your business. Think of them as the "Ten Commandments" of your business. In the distant past, an entire nation (Israel) was founded to flourish on ten simple declarations. I believe that creating 10 ethical declarations around your business will help you flourish in a similar manner.

Like the original intent of those Ten Commandments, ethics are not meant to restrict. They are designed to liberate and evoke opportunity.

Let me break down a few of the ethics that frame our business and recount some of the stories they produce.

1. We're not about the job; we're about the referral.

Most companies focus on the job. They (hopefully) work efficiently, then collect payment and move to the next customer. At my firm, we recognize it's not the specific job that generates the referral. It is realized through way the client *is treated* during the process of completing the work. We put as much (if not more) emphasis on honing the customer relationship as we do on providing creative aesthetics.

Clients describe our operation to others with comments such as, "it was such a memorable experience." Having past clients reference the relationship, not just the work, accelerates our reputation among potential clientele.

2. If I client has to contact us to ask about the status of a campaign, we've lost power.

To us, power is the ability to generate effective action. A client checking on a project erodes our ability to act in the future, both financially and relationally. They must disengage from their daily responsibilities to check the status of their project. Power is diminished, and that lack of power must transfer somewhere. Allow that to happen too many times, and you will immediately recognize where the power has lapsed. (Hint, *you* are the one losing power).

We consistently hear that working with us is easy and "painless." Whether they realize it or not, we painstakingly ensure that our clients are always informed during every phase of their project. We often assess a deadline then add two days (if possible) to that date. For our business, completing projects two days ahead of schedule produces the strongest response.

In conjunction with this ethic, one of our NBA questions is: *“What is the most efficient way and times to contact you during this project?”* By working around the specific routines of our clients, we allow them to flow seamlessly through their day. We only interrupt at times, and in ways, that come off benign and pleasant.

3. Nothing goes out the door that can be broken apart and dissected through the program(s) it was created in.

Having designed for nearly the past three decades, I can break apart bad design instantly. A wrong typeface, a simplistic computer effect, or a poorly cut path around an isolated image; they all create subconscious agitation on the right brain side of the mind of the viewer. Poor design rarely resembles a cohesive visual but a disparate amalgam of parts.

If I can determine how something was created, it doesn't go out our door. Everything must flow effortlessly. It must wash across the mind without a hint of critique, only appreciation and action. I often spend forty percent of my time on the initial design and sixty percent of my time making the last five percent of the design adjustments.

This leads to comments like, “Their work is so beautiful and layered,” or, “They make everything visually perfect.” Clients even create new verbs around our work. For example, clients present us previous agency attempts, then request that we “PFM” (Pure Fusion Media) the project.

4. We are always going to be positive: at the office, on the phone, and through our emails.

Positivity is not just a state of mind. It is a practice. It requires consistency despite the circumstances. How do you test a person claiming to be patient or humble? Place them in situations where patience and humility are not often present. I love shows like *The Celebrity Apprentice*, where candidates defend poor ethical actions with comments like, “I am a person of high character, Mr. Trump.” Too bad the viewing public sees, not hears, otherwise.

I, and my team, do not always want to be positive, but I do not have a choice. I have chosen an *Inspirational Experience Genre* for my business (more on that later). It is therefore required. We are often told that we are an “uplifting” company.

That’s calculated.

Nowhere is this more practically realized than through our emails. Once I have completed an email, I reanalyze the message. I want to make sure it is not only positive and encouraging, but that I have also added exclamation marks where needed. An exclamation mark over a comma or period makes a positive difference in the mind of the reader.

Whenever any client asks how I am doing, my common retort is, “I am absolutely fabulous.” It became part of my brand. One day, I had the worst 24 hours experienced in years. It dampened my spirit. It darkened my mood. Halfway through the day, a client called. She asked how I was doing. “I’m doing all right, thanks,” I commented, mustering as much enthusiasm as possible. A long moment of silence ensued. “All right?” she inquired, in serious tone, “Okay, what’s wrong?”

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I felt good that commenting on an “all right” day would evoke that kind of response.

These four ethics serve as examples to inspire you. Based on your specific industry and temperament, yours may be different, but I highly recommend adopting Ethic one and two.

ACTION ITEM:

Take *at least* a week and craft ten ethics for your company. Coordinate with your team so that everyone feels part of the development process. Once finished, speak these ethics at various times to your clients and customers. Let them know that you have created your ethics, in part, for their benefit. You can frame these ethics in your lobby, conference room or office. Presenting them visually creates an accountability touch-point for customers and employees.

CUSTOMER DESIGN PREPLANNING

TO PRODUCE SOMETHING FRESH
AND RELEVANT IS TO ANTICIPATE

WHERE YOUR AUDIENCE IS HEADED.



in 2014, Apple spent 6B Billion on
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

If you don't know your customers intimately, how
can you effectively design your business, and your
business experience?



TAKE 20 OF YOUR TOP CUSTOMERS TO LUNCH

ASK

? 'S



Look for congruent
threads in the answers.
(Connectedness)

FIND SIMILARITIES IN THEIR

STORIES.



Like a painter uses preferential
paint colors, use those similarities
to begin to design the framework
of the customer experience.

CHAPTER 5

DESIGN STRATEGY 2:

CUSTOMER DESIGN PREPLANNING

Before designing a client's first concept or layout, we employ a rigorous prequalification process. I must know everything about a client's business, customers, competition, vision, and culture. This allows us, with pinpoint accuracy, to create unique design styles, catered for each client. Often, design agencies are either known for (if exceptional) or rarely break out of (if mediocre) a particular design style.

We transcend uniformity through qualification techniques honed and refined over twenty-five years. Remember how a right-brain thinker focuses on synergy (pattern) over deconstruction (separation)? You are now going to use this right-brain energy in *your* business.

Have you ever heard a wife talking about her husband and claiming, "He doesn't get me?" Or perhaps you've seen a film

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that failed to capture the needs of the audience? Music artists always face the dilemma that veering too far from their previous album might alienate their current fan base. To produce something fresh and relevant is to anticipate where your audience is headed. For right-brain thinking companies, it isn't left to chance.

In two thousand and fourteen, Apple spent more than six billion on research and development. It was a new investment record for the company. We marvel at the prophetic foresight of men like Steve Jobs. Yet consider what was just said: six billion on *research* and development.

How well do you know your customers? Without an intimate understanding of your customers, how can you effectively design your business, and your business experience, to cause resonance and generate future action? Often, we rely on our product or service like it carries universal importance. There is *some* truth to that idea. After all, everyone must pay taxes on the fifteenth of April. Most people need to go *somewhere* to make that happen. But the individuals drawn to your accounting business come back because of the experience they have with you and your company. That experience has to resonate with their wants, needs, and desires.

That means that for most of us, we need to get to know our customers on a deeper level.

Try this: take fifteen to twenty of your top clients/customers out to lunch or dinner. Create a comfortable environment and ask them five to eight questions that encapsulate their lives and their relationship with you and your business. Then take those answers and look for congruent threads.

The similarity in those stories is like the particular paints an artist uses to craft a masterpiece. Most painters employ a preferential color palette: choosing favorite colors like Yellow Ochre, Burnt Umber, and the like. We often recognize the “style” of an artist by the tones and shades of his or her work.

CUSTOMER DESIGN PREPLANNING

Singer songwriters, like my personal favorite artist, Jack Johnson, generate specific and unique guitar licks that are quickly recognizable.

You need to learn the “artistic tones” and “musical licks” of your customers and clients. These similarities will help you craft the masterpiece experience your clients will have with you and your business.

Take the time to understand:

- The personal needs of your customers.
- The fears of your customers.
- The future visions of your customers.
- The reason they choose to repeatedly use your products or services.
- The perceptions of your industry in the eyes of your customers.
- The things they would like to see improved through working with you.

Once equipped with the answers to these questions, and after you’ve discovered patterns of congruency, you can begin designing the customer experience.

In the next few chapters, we will utilize these insights in powerful and profitable ways.

FUNCTION VS. FORM



CASINOS EMPLOY OVER

15,000

TACTICS TO SEPARATE YOU FROM
YOUR MONEY.

What are YOU doing to make the customer
experience more valuable their their money?

FUNCTION vs. FORM

We all need things to make our businesses FUNCTION



PHONE SYSTEM



COMPUTER(S)



OFFICE SPACE



VEHICLES

BUT WHAT FORM DO THEY TAKE?

Analyze your customer base (last chapter) and chose
forms that are 1 income level above your average
customer.

PLAN EVERYTHING THROUGH YOUR
EXPERIENCE GENRE

Inspirational | Educational | Future/Vision

(JUMP TO CHAPTER 13 FOR MORE)



Do you MAGAZINES in your office lobby?

Why not a
company E-Book?



"INSPIRATIONAL" EXPERIENCE
GENRE
(Bold Neckware)

CHAPTER 6

DESIGN STRATEGY #3:

FUNCTION VS. FORM

Did you know casinos design and employ over fifteen-thousand tactics to separate you from your money? Not fifteen or a hundred and fifty, but fifteen-thousand! While you gamble, your brain, body, and ego are being intentionally blitzkrieged. Those tactics work. Look at the opulent splendor of the casinos on the Vegas Strip. I know I paid for a few light bulbs on the welcome sign at the MGM Grand hotel in my former days at their poker and black jack tables.

What are *you* doing? Have you crafted strategies to evoke a response at both the conscious and unconscious level so that your customer is left with irreproducible takeaway moments? Better yet, have you intentionally crafted the right form for every function of your business?

FUNCTION VS. FORM

Every business operates on certain functions. To work efficiently you probably need a desk, a computer, and a phone or phone system. You might need a filing system or cabinet. If you have a waiting room, you need chairs for your customers and maybe a coffee table or two. You probably need a writing utensil to write notes with, and so on and so forth.

All of these items are necessary *for the function* of your business. But *the form* they take creates an impression of you, your company, and your reputation. Let's say you're a financial planner working with high net individuals. What pen is in your pocket? Is it a Mont Blanc? Or do you throw a Bic Roller pen in your computer bag and assume it's acceptable? The Mont Blanc pen communicates success, structure, and sophistication. Your audience will determine your form. If you are an auto mechanic, for example, flashing a Mont Blanc pen might cause the customer to think your service station gouges its customers.

Consider all the functions required to run your business efficiently. Then analyze your customer base (based on the research gained from the previous chapter) and choose forms *one income level* above the demographic you serve. Don't buy a Ferrari, even if you can afford it, if you are in sales for a company working with small, struggling businesses. Don't purchase a late model Yugo either. Everything about your company's appearance is speaking to your potential customer. Designing your forms with intention can shift perceptions, often before the first word leaves your mouth.

Take, for example, the way you dress. If you are in the financial sector or are an executive, chances are you wear a suit to work. What type of tie do you put on in the morning? Don't choose based on personal preference. *Base it on the corporate personality you wish to evoke.* I have a friend attempting to create a line of ties specifically catered around an individual's DISC® personality profile. It is a brilliant concept. Effective

business design takes the idea a strategic step forward. Give your company a “personality.” Then carry that personality through all the “forms” in your business.

Do you have a book on your desk? What is it? Is it the latest James Patterson novel? Or, have you specifically chosen the book or books as an intentional sales opportunity? Place a book on your desk that is well known and topical to your business or to your customer’s needs. Use salient points from the book to metaphorically point to key aspects of your business (more on the power of metaphor later).

How about the reception area? Do you have *magazines* on the end table? What a wasted opportunity! Instead of giving your customers and prospects unimportant fodder about the latest Kardashian blowup, create a twenty-page mini book spotlighting your business product or services. Be strategic. A single copy on an end table evokes importance and specialty. Customers garner pertinent information on your operation before the first handshake occurs. Encourage the customer/client to take the mini book. Then lay out another book for the next person that graces your office.

A POWERFUL EXAMPLE: ARCIPLEX

The forms you choose don’t have to break the bank. They should reflect the culture, reputation, and vision of your company and the demographic makeup of your clientele or customer base. Below is an image of the wall behind the desk of the president of the idea/inventorship operation: Arciplex. Located in a drafty, nondescript industrial warehouse in downtown Nashville, its founders figured it would be inappropriate to furnish the place with high-end Le Corbusier couches and the latest Herman Miller office furniture.

Instead, the president’s “office” area features an oversized custom-crafted wood and glass table in front of a two-tone painted wall with exposed piping.

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Everything on the back wall, taped up with nothing more than a fifty-cent roll of scotch tape, communicates something about Arciplex' culture, vision, and beliefs. Sitting in front of the president, the customer visually understands Arciplex and its visionaries at a far deeper level than if the owners had nailed up "Successories®" style framed art prints.

Let's look at the wall in more detail...



The right section of the wall, features articles and imagery from magazines such as Inc., Entrepreneur and Wired, and self-designed messages such as, “Create the things you wished existed,” and, “All Limitations are Self-Imposed.” In a glance, the customer is overcome with expectation and inspiration while instantaneously understanding the methodology, character, and vision of the company.

Coherency is critical. The more consistent the impression, the greater the probability your customer’s referrals will reflect the story you want told.

ACTION ITEM

Take a piece of paper and draw a vertical line down the center of the page. On the left side write, “Function.” On the right side write, “Form.” On the left side, jot down all the necessary components necessary to run your business efficiently. Then consider the appropriate form for that function, based on *the Experience Genre* you have chosen for your business (jump to chapter 12 for that insight), or the demographic you work with. Remember, it’s not about personal preference. Base your decisions on your company’s vision, culture, and services, and the demographic makeup of your customers/clients.

THE ANIMAL KINGDOM KNOWS HOW TO COMMUNICATE



Bees through dance



Whales through vocalizations



Beetles through Morse Code

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?

THE ABILITY TO LANGUAGE

“Communication allows us to interact,
but language **CREATES THE WORLD** we
interact in.”



Is this a “chair,”
or did someone
LANGUAGE it as so?

BATTLE FOR LANGUAGE RAGES ALL AROUND US

Pro Choice \neq Pro Life

“Anti Abortion”

“Pro Abortion”

“Control the language and you influence
the actions associated with the words.”

Design a language around your business in such a manner
that you create a new world for your customer to
participate in and create action through.

CHAPTER 7

DESIGN STRATEGY #4:

THE POWER OF LANGUAGING

Do you think the ability to *communicate* is unique to humanity? The entire animal kingdom knows how to communicate. Bees communicate through dance. Whales communicate through sounds and vocalizations. Beetles use Morse code. What separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom is not the ability to communicate; it is the ability to create *language*.

Simply put:

“Communication allows us to interact, but language creates the world we interact in.”

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The chair you may be sitting in at this moment is only a “chair” because someone language it as a chair. We accepted it universally, because we needed a standard, but it really isn’t a “chair.” It was simply restrictive to repeatedly refer to it as a wood plank with a back and four posts.

Without much consideration, we accept the language presented to us, unaware that *the battle for language* ensues continuously. Whatever side of the Abortion/Life issue you find yourself on, a battle for language control rages around the event. For example:

One side refers to its supporters and detractors as Pro-Life or Pro Abortion (or even ‘Pro Death’ among extremes)

Or

The other side refers to its supporters and detractors as Pro Choice and Anti-Abortion (or ‘Anti Women’ among extremes).

It is doubtful you will hear a pro-choice supporter speak about a pro-life advocate and use their term, “pro-life.” Nor will you hear a pro-life advocate describe his or her detractor as, “pro-choice.” Both sides compete to control the language.

In 2014, America discovered North Korea was responsible for cyber-attacks on Sony’s Hollywood studio. In the media, a battle of language began. The highly conservative *Fox News* described the incident as an “act of terrorism.” The White House Press Secretary branded it with the term, “Cyber Vandalism.”

Why the change in language?

Control the language and you influence *the actions* associated with the words. It is doubtful the American public

would declare war on North Korea over “cyber vandalism.” It’s a word picture connoting little more than a New York spray paint artist “tagging” a company’s wall in digital space. “Terrorism” evokes a different response.

Controlling the language around your business is critical and highly influential. Your goal is *not* to manipulate. It is to design language around your company and its products or services so that your customers only receive the newly languaged insights and understandings through working with you. Consider the following quote from inspirational speaker and “The Mentor to Millions,” Keith Froehling. He understands the importance of his brand and shares this description of everything he offers his clients:

“When you live, communicate, and act with certainty, you have power. Create Mastery & Develop Your Rhythm of Success.”

“Rhythm of Success.” What is that? What does it evoke in your soul? Everyone desires a “Rhythm of Success” in their life, business, and family! Right? Of course. We understand that. Keith created a language (a communication style) that is irreproducible. When you decide you want Rhythm of Success in your life, your business and for your family, you must visit Keith’s website, attend one of his seminars, or come to him for mentoring! Now, as other speakers and mentors talk of testimonials from past attendees and clients, you’re still thinking about how to gain a “Rhythm of Success.”

This doesn’t mean you should concoct new words. Do not walk up to people and exclaim:

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“I’m a business *stragerist!*”

Remember the words already exist; design them in such a manner that you create *a new world* for your customer to participate in and create action through. Suppose you are a financial planner. What about creating a “Power Strategy” for your customers? Consider the following declaration:

“Time equals money, and money equals power. Power to do what you want, to be who you want, to help shape the world you want. I want to help you increase power in your life and the world around you, so let’s assess your current financial situation and discuss your future power strategy.”

Suppose that, as a financial planner, you work most with high net worth males in their thirties to early fifties. Are these men looking for power? Certainly! Notice how the conversation was crafted:

“Power *to do* what you want (Id), power *to be* who want (Ego), and power *to shape the world* you want (Super Ego).”

The sentence above hit all the bases of Freud’s psychoanalytic personality theory, resonating on a visceral level with all of your understood clientele. If you were to discover that your demographic were middle-income mothers, ranging from ages forty to sixty, the conversation would be radically different, but if you were designing your business the RIGHT way, it would still be calculated.

ACTION ITEM:

Start dissecting the language of your business. Highlight the standard descriptions of your industry’s products and services and create new languaging around those distinctions to

THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

separate you from your competition. Create phrases that resonate at a deep connective level in the souls of your customers and clients. Test these phrases on your friends and employees. Then implement the languaging standards across the entire organization. The more cohesive the language inside the company culture, the more it'll resonate with your customers.

BRANDING (PERCEPTION EQUALS REPUTATION)

Based on the brand images below...

WHICH COMPANY WOULD YOU CALL FIRST?



OR



WHY?



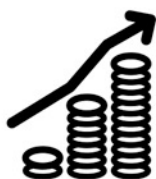
When we look at a business' website, logo or marketing material, we not only evaluate their capabilities....



**WE MAKE JUDGMENTS
ON THEIR
PAST
REPUTATION**

PEOPLE WORK WITH COMPANIES THEY FEEL THEY CAN TRUST.

Trust often begins at the  Visual Level.



**GOOD BRANDING
IS AN INVESTMENT**

That pays off in substantial dividends in the future.

**SPEAK &
DESIGN YOUR
FUTURE VISION.**

QUESTION:

Does your current branding, marketing, and messaging communicate a **positive past reputation**?

CHAPTER 8:

DESIGN STRATEGY #5:

BRANDING (PERCEPTION EQUALS REPUTATION)

I'm not a handyman. I outsource most service projects around my house. There are two criteria I use to determine which service company will garner my business. First, I look for the referral. I seek out other's recommendations, often asking them to describe *the experience* they had with the company.

If that fails to produce, I scour the Internet and find the company that "looks" the most attractive visually and informative linguistically. I believe any company willing to invest in good design and marketing has the character to provide good service. Am I always correct? Certainly not. But then *I have a story* about the company that others can learn from.

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I do this deliberately, but what most people fail to realize, yet succumb to everyday, is that...

Perception equals reputation.

When we look at a business' website or marketing material, we not only evaluate their capabilities. We also make judgments on their *past reputation*. The attractiveness or weakness of the design mentally equates to an unsubstantiated reputation of excellence, or poor service and shoddy quality.

Creating a positive business history through professional, targeted, and attractive design is worth its weight in gold. As designers, we manufacture a historical story for our clients that may or may not exist. Ethically, at PFM we won't work with companies that fail to deliver on the promises and visuals we espouse in their branding and marketing.

People work with companies *they feel* they can trust. Trust often begins at *the visual level*. In rebranding the limousine company during the recession, we started by surveying the regional competition. Discovering a disturbing trend, we analyzed limousine companies on a national level. The majority of limousine companies had poorly designed and incredibly user-unfriendly websites. The average limousine rental is around \$175 - \$350 dollars for three to four hours, depending on the location. The majority of their sites were cheap looking and unprofessional. I was shocked! Instead of retaining an upper echelon style catering to their demographic, their websites better resembled the mismatched work of a high school student in his or her first digital design class.

BRANDING (PERCEPTIONS EQUALS REPUTATION)

In rebranding the limousine company and producing their new site design, we created a perception that didn't exist on many other sites. This company was professional. This company was elegant. This company associated with their upper income clientele. It translated into skyrocketing company sales, during a recession. The bar was so low, that a shock to the system produced an immediate and profitable response.

Whenever anyone asks us to justify our price point, I tell him or her that *we are an investment*. Any designer can provide a logo, a product, to their customer. But exceptional companies create branding and marketing that produce substantial dividends. Our rebranded limousine company spent around 1/500th of the return on investment garnered in the first year of the new brand rollout. The next time you consider an agency to be overpriced, consider what you might lose by simply choosing the lowest priced option.

SPEAK (AND DESIGN) THE VISION

In our prequalification sessions, we ask our customers to detail their five-year vision plan. We create branding and marketing to reflect the five-year vision – today. This allows the company to walk into that vision faster. Like a vision board, their entire company image visually reflects their future, allowing employees to see, explain, and live that vision, not just in the future, but also in the present.

ACTION ITEM

Take a look at your current marketing and ask yourself: “Does our marketing and messaging communicate a positive past reputation?” Do not look at your visuals as information points,

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but view the design as a whole and ask yourself what story are you telling?

Secondly, ask yourself: “Are we visually addressing our future visions or do we look like our present situation?” Design your visuals bigger than where you are today. This is not to lie but to help you achieve your future desires expeditiously.

ALWAYS BE INNOVATING



The human body wants to rest in a state in a state of **homeostasis**.

TO RELAX



Perturb the body (such as working out) and the body now rests at a higher physical state.

THE GOAL:

“PERTURB” YOUR BUSINESS SO THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS IN THE PROCESS OF ACCELERATION

CREATIVITY cannot be automated... only plagiarized.

BOTH COMPANIES
STARTED AS
SEARCH ENGINES...



WHICH COMPANY
IS KNOWN FOR
MUCH
MORE TODAY?



The **Right Brain thinker** is always stepping out of the box, exploring new ideas, new creations, and new models.

CHAPTER 9

DESIGN STRATEGY #6:

ALWAYS BE INNOVATING

Your physical body wants to rest in a state of “homeostasis,”—a level of physiologic comfort that retains the biological status quo. The couch potato not only enjoys his own relaxed comfort; his independently-driven body revels in that same state. Should the couch potato decide to get off his or her couch and exercise, the body goes through shocking moments of *perturbations*.

Once the moment of perturbation is completed, the physical body goes back to a state of homeostasis. But the new state of homeostasis is accelerated. The body now *rests* in a higher state than before it was perturbed.

The goal in life, and in business, is to always be perturbing your body, or your business, so you are constantly engaged in the process of acceleration.

Why?

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Because creativity cannot be automated; but it can eventually be plagiarized.

A few hours east of Nashville, is a company that created its entire business model on copying the branding and product success of other, more established brands. Centering on the beauty/skin care space, the company takes a well-known cosmetic brand offering, copies much of its formula and packaging style and sells the new product to big box, lower-end retailers.

This company waits for the big cosmetic companies to “rest,” then captures the look of their most successful products. How would you put the copycat company out of business? Always be innovating. Consistently improving your product and your brand forces the copycat to expend countless dollars to catch up. Eventually your continual innovation cripples the smaller copycat.

The moment you rest is the moment your competition can catch up and surpass you. Yahoo started as an Internet search engine. As did Google. Google is about to revolutionize the business landscape in Nashville with “Google Fiber.” Think Yahoo can catch up? Have you even used Yahoo as a search engine in the past few years? Google transcended the search engine space, and a host of other domains, by consistently and continually innovating.

A good friend of mine worked for one of the most recognized office furniture companies in the world. Each year, his team was sent off on a weekend retreat. The intent of the retreat wasn’t just to strengthen the company. The assignment was to put the company *out of business*. They were charged with coming up with strategies that could take the company down and then address the potential pitfalls. They didn’t think outside the box. They mused on how to make the box implode and then reverse engineered the strategies. They designed their next year of success by deconstructing and amending their potential failures.

ALWAYS BE INNOVATING

Great designers never rest on their past successes nor failures. The right-brain thinker is always stepping out of the box, exploring new ideas, new creations, and new models. Never be content with the status quo. It doesn't work well for the physical body and it certainly doesn't produce the accelerated success that comes from constantly and consistently innovating.

CHAPTER 10

STORY

I originally left California and journeyed to Nashville to write movie scripts. I know what you're thinking. People in both geographic locales thought I was nuts, or, at least misguided. Years later, after crafting my agency and developing the visuals and marketing for my myriad of customers, my background in storytelling has been invaluable.

Script guru, and author of *Story*, Robert McKee, is consistently contacted for speaking engagements. The request isn't always from university film departments or for keynotes at writer's conferences. Instead, he often speaks in front of the top-level executives of some of the largest Fortune 500 conglomerates. The power of story has transcended page and screen and landed in the lap of business.

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Why now?

One word: Access.

Around seventy years ago, there were a limited number of stories in the world. Television was a budding entertainment choice. Movie-going was often a luxury. Persnickety publishing houses ensured there were a fixed number of authors. Today, forms of story are everywhere. Print-on-Demand allows *anyone*, no matter what age, income level, or educational degree, the ability to produce the next great novel or non-fiction tome. Four-hundred plus channels of Satellite television and millions of Internet programs position themselves for our precious time. Companies that used to ship movies have grown so large that they now produce mainstream theatrical and serial releases.

Neurologically, the more we engage in a particular action, the more our bodies desire to repeat that action. It is part of an understanding referred to as “neuroplasticity.” Do something once and you are more neurologically inclined to do it again. It finds its positivity in working out and eating healthy. It finds its danger in sexual addiction, but it presents a powerful insight. We crave more stories because we are inundated with them.

Years ago, you could present the facts of your product or service and retain market share. **Now, you must create stories around your company, your products, and your services.** It doesn't matter if you have a left or right-brain temperament; *stories transcend the sides of the brain.* We need them like we need air.

Stories are often employed in the marketing of our business materials, but we fail to recognize that stories generate the revenue necessary for marketing. *I am talking about the power*

of the referral or the personal recommendation. On sites like Yelp or Angie's List and at cocktail parties and networking events, your customers tell stories about your operation. Are you willing to leave those declarations to chance?

So far, we've used the right brain energy of *design* to shift customer perceptions and make intentional headway toward greater business success. Now, we'll employ the strategies of the storyteller to further ensure our customers' testimonials are targeted, potent, and profitable.

BRANDING: EVERYTHING COMMUNICATES

Your **BRAND** reflects EVERY aspect of your business.



CORPORATE LITERATURE



WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA



CONDITION OF YOUR OFFICES



THE WAY YOUR RECEPTIONIST(S) ANSWER THE PHONE

People may forget your company's logo but they rarely forget our **brand stories**.

Walmart 

1.8B in advertising in 2013

PERCEPTION:

Cheap • Poor Quality •
Disheveled stores • Rude •
disinterested Employees

VS.

NORDSTROM

23M in advertising in 2012 &
one "Tire Story"

PERCEPTION:

Elegant • Professional •
Customer Service Centric •
Friendly • Caring

Story Experience is not income specific-
it's a conscious and intentional state of mind.

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT YOUR BRAND STORIES

CHAPTER 11

STORY STRATEGY #1:

BRANDING: EVERYTHING COMMUNICATES

I started the beginning of the *Design* section of this book revealing that business design is far more than artwork. Let me bookend that by explaining that business branding is far more than a company's logo. We'll get to visual logo branding in a few chapters, but for now you need to understand that *everything* about your brand *communicates*. A great logo is nothing if the company fails to present a cohesive and committed brand story.

Your brand reflects every aspect of your operation. The literature you offer your customers; the look of your website or social media pages; the condition of your offices; the way the receptionist(s) answers the phone, it all speaks volumes. Whenever my company works with a client on a new branding

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project we tell them that *everything* is about to change. You must be committed to the energy, professionalism, and story of the new brand. Without it, a logo *is* just artwork.

There is nothing worse than a company that assumes it can slack on its responsibilities because: 1. Its logo imagery looks good, or 2. It has established itself as an icon in the marketplace or social sector. Brands go down quickly with that level of arrogance.

A good friend of mine, an author and a speaker, describes a moment where his young daughter needed to find a restroom in an area where gas stations were sparse. Pulling into a well-known motel chain's parking lot, he asked the attendant at the front desk if his daughter could use their restroom. The attendant stated that the use of the restroom was prohibited to non-guests. After a brief tete-a-tete with no successful conclusion, he left.

The moment left a hole in his heart, so he wrote letters to the higher ups at the motel chain. He was blown off repeatedly. After months of no resolve, he began telling his "brand story" (using the actual name of the motel) to the attendees of his seminars and talks. He has concluded that over 1.6 million people have either heard, or indirectly heard, the revenue-crippling story about this particular motel "brand." How's that for (negative) brand awareness?

People often don't remember our company's logo, but they rarely forget our brand stories. I could not tell you what the Nordstrom logo looks like (it's really just a typeface), but I'll never forget this story. In my late teens, I was working toward a career as a clothing buyer for a high-end department store. In

fashion merchandising class, we heard the “brand story” of Nordstrom. The mantra at Nordstrom was that they would take back *any* return, no matter how worn or damaged. The brand story told of a man walking into the customer service department carrying a set of tires and demanding a refund for his purchase. The catch? *Nordstrom doesn’t sell tires*. It never has. It probably never will, but because of their return policy “*ethic*,” the management at the location calculated an estimated price for the tires. The management then returned the man money he never spent at Nordstrom.

If you want to know how many people have been impacted by this brand story, just Google “Nordstrom tire story” and read the comment threads. Nordstrom, through its ethics, created a brand story that has carried well over three decades. It’s probably led to countless millions in sales. No design agency can build brand equity for a business like that, despite how spectacular its logo might be.

The megalith retail, big box store, Walmart, spent almost two billion in advertising in 2013. Walk into a local Walmart and ask yourself, *what “brand story” is being communicated?* The stores are often dirty and disheveled. The employees are predominantly uninformative, rude, or nowhere to be found. The customer service department is usually coy and disinterested. Walmart spent \$1.8 Billion in 2013 to build a brand story that predominantly fails the second you walk into the store.

I spoke the previous paragraph to a group of business executives and instantly received sighs of frustrations and rolled eyes. No one in the room considered going to Walmart to be a “positive experience.” What was the real brand story of

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Walmart in their eyes? Low priced, cheaply made items. No care for the customer. No pride in workmanship.

The attitude of *the customers*, not just the employees, reflects that brand story. Act chipper and jovial in a Walmart and be prepared for negative stares and rude comments. Act that way in Nordstrom and the attitude will be returned in kind.

Story Experience is not income specific. It's a conscious and intentional state of mind. Walmart isn't forced to keep its stores in an inadequate condition, nor poorly train its employees. That wasn't Sam Walton's vision. Nordstrom could easily rest on its brand equity, choosing to come off snooty and elitist. After all, Nordstrom sells nearly three-thousand-dollar Jimmy Choo pumps and thousand-dollar Moschino backpacks. Much of their customer base is used to the standoffish treatment received at higher-end boutique establishments. Instead, Nordstrom chooses to respect its customer base. It also respects those individuals for whom a trip to Nordstrom is like going to the Super Bowl.

We physically respond to how a brand story is presented. Have you ever dressed up before walking into and shopping at Nordstrom? How about before heading to Walmart? There are websites devoted to spotlighting the poor garment choices of Walmart customers. There are none mocking Nordstrom consumers. We respect the temperament of the Nordstrom brand, while some mock the poor temperament of the Walmart brand.

Have you ever been in a great mood, then dealt with a customer service representative over the phone, only to find

him or her combative? Did you return the sentiment? How about the converse? Have you ever been angry over a product or service, contacted customer service and been treated with such respect that you left the conversation in a better mood than you had when you woke up that morning?

It really isn't hard to tell a good brand story. It's simply being intentional. It's a change in *attitude*. It's not resting on the advertising prowess of a bunch of Chicago ad execs to positively recast what the general public negatively sees after interacting with the company's employees or walking into their establishments.

One tire story from one Nordstrom location from three decades ago, juxtaposed with Walmart's 1.8 billion spent on international advertising in a single year.

Most of us do not have businesses that large. That may be a good thing. Getting the rudder to turn on a schooner is a lot easier than turning the rudder on a cruise ship. Regardless of your business' size, you can be intentional about every aspect of the brand story.

ACTION ITEM

Dissect every aspect of your business operation and ask, *what's my brand position?* Consider talking with each employee to see if they can recite a cohesive brand story with customers, friends, and other employees. If you find incongruent messaging, consider further training and consulting until your final brand messaging is clear, concise, and actionable.

CRAFTING YOUR BUSINESS' "EXPERIENCE GENRE"



When a scriptwriter wants to develop a story, the first question asked is:

WHAT IS THE GENRE OF THE STORY?

THE GENRE DETERMINES THE EFFECTS OF THE STORY EXPERIENCE

DEVELOP YOUR BUSINESS' EXPERIENCE GENRE



INSPIRATIONAL E.G.

EDUCATIONAL E.G.

FUTURE VISION E.G.

THE EXPERIENCE GENRE FRAMES THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

70% of the buying experience is based on how the customer **FEELS** they are being treated.

CRITERIA #1

you must care about your customers and employees!

These three genres create an environment around your company that not only transcends your product or services, but also encourages your customers to broadcast the genre (not just the products or services) out to the global marketplace.

THEN THEY WILL SHARE STORIES ABOUT YOUR COMPANY

CHAPTER 12

STORY STRATEGY #2:

CRAFTING YOUR BUSINESS’ “EXPERIENCE GENRE”

The first question a writer must answer in the development of a literary or theatrical story is, “what is the genre of my story?” The genre describes the type of story the writer will tell. Is it an action flick, a “rom-com,” or a mystery? An action flick is full of action, energy, and (no doubt) explosions. A romantic comedy is laced with humor and heart-felt emotion. The genre of the story often determines the style and movement of the story. Dictionary.com describes genre as:

“1. a class or category of artistic endeavor having a particular form, content, technique, or the like:”

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For a scriptwriter, the chosen film genre he or she chooses creates a different experience in the mind, heart, and life of the viewer. You leave a theater after watching a romantic comedy differently than if you had watched a gory science fiction film. The film genre determines *the effects* of the experience. They are still both films, but the chosen genre produces different results.

DEVELOPING YOUR “EXPERIENCE GENRE”

Like a story genre, your business’ “Experience Genre” is the particular chosen way your business speaks to and interacts with its customers. The Experience Genre frames the customer experience. It deliberately and articulately crafts the stories you want your customers to tell.

An Experience genre is more than a company ethic. A company ethic might be, “our employees will always have a cheerful countenance.” That is a behavioral trait, or attitude that changes your employees. Experience Genres *change your customers* – whether their emotions, futures, insights or world perceptions. Experience Genres are deliberate and intentional. They require intricate crafting. Bottom line, your goal is to improve the lives of your customers through your chosen Experience Genre. Jumping ahead in the book a bit: you will bring *Meaning* into the lives of your customers.

This is high level conceptualizing both at a business and a philosophical level. To create an Experience Genre requires that you first care about your customers, and your employees. Tragically, there are many companies that avoid caring. They create products or provide services they know are harmful to their customers and the world. If you subscribe to a “survival of the fittest” mindset, the rest of this book is probably not for you.

It isn’t that you will fail to make money and grow more fit if you follow these ideas. I’m confident you will. According to a McKinsey study, seventy-percent of buying experiences are

CRAFTING YOUR BUSINESS' "EXPERIENCE GENRE"

based on how a customer *feels* they are being treated. Money follows valued customers. But money is a byproduct of a positive and powerful business experience. When money becomes the goal, it loses its luster, and, more often than not, you eventually lose customers.

The rest of this chapter will discuss three Experience Genres to adopt in your business. You may come up with more, but whatever genre you choose, it must be adopted with holistic consistency. People respond to a consistent message, attitude, or ideology. We lose impact when our message is fractured and incongruent. Let's explore three Experience Genres.

THE INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCE GENRE

My Meyers Briggs personality profile claims that I'm an ENFP (Extraverted intuitive Feeling Perceiving). One of the monikers for an ENFP is "The Inspirer." The dark side of an ENFP is manipulation and wiliness, but I've attempted to "sanctify" my ENFP characteristics. Therefore, the *Inspirational Experience Genre* is right in my wheelhouse.

A business or individual choosing to adopt an Inspirational Experience Genre crafts everything about their business, branding, messaging, and customer interaction around inspiring their customers. It's more than just a friendly, positive demeanor (which is essential). The Inspirational Experience Genre assesses each client uniquely and then asks, "How can I inspire this client today?" Friendly people produce positive responses but inspirational employees build the power, character, and future of their customers.

Every advertising message, brochure copy, phone conversation, and personal interaction (inside and outside the office) should be met with the "How can I inspire?" question.

You must understand and connect to your customer's story in such a manner that you elevate that story after the customer interacts with you and your business. Positivity is a must, but it

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most transfer from you to the customer. A couple of places to start:

1. Pick an inspirational quote and place it in the signature section of your emails. With every email, your customers will see that message, and after a number of “touches,” it will stick in their minds and hearts.
2. Change your voice mail messaging to a very upbeat and positive tone. Smile as you speak over the phone, the listener on the other end will hear a difference.
3. Start reading and recommending inspirational-style books to your clients. Quote inspiring authors during conversations.
4. As I stated before, go through every email and add at least one positive exclamation point to any sentence. Whether it is in the introduction or the closing, make the reader feel included and energized.
5. Take your employees out to a fun, lighthearted film. Get them engaged and laughing often and it will translate to happier employees and better relationships with clients.
6. Train your employees in positive engagement and customer service skills, even those that do not work in a sales/service capacity.
7. Ask your management team, who in your operation is “inspiring” and who is not? Work with those who lack inspiration to encourage change. If, after a chosen period of time, these individuals do not adapt, consider letting them go, or at the very least remove them from public contact.

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE GENRE

Do you love to teach? Do you revel in that moment the light dawns in the mind of whoever you are informing, whether a friend, office mate, son, or daughter? You may be a perfect

CRAFTING YOUR BUSINESS' "EXPERIENCE GENRE"

candidate for the *Educational Experience Genre*. In the same manner of the Inspirational Experience Genre, The Educational EG adopter questions, "How can I *educate* our clients today?"

Educational Experience Genre adopters realize they have something powerful to communicate to their customers. They are always training their employees on the latest attributes of their business product and services. An Educational Experience Genre adopter has answers for the client before they even think of the question. Have you ever been a store and asked an employee a question and received the answer, "I have no idea..." That cannot happen with a company that employs an Educational Experience Genre. These individuals are trained and retrained to know the answer to every question.

More than just resources of information, these employees also ask questions *of their customers*. The goal isn't just to provoke future sales but also better the lives and countenances of those with whom they interact. "Have you considered...?" "What if...?" "How can we...?" These are common questions that employees ask if subscribing to the Educational Experience Genre.

Here are some places to start:

1. Have a training day with your employees followed by a quiz show where you reward the employee(s) who can answer the most questions about the company. Provide monthly incentives to the most educated members of the team.
2. Always have books available to your employees and your customers that either educate about your field, or produce better learning on subjects you determine are beneficial. Consider writing your own ebook and providing it to your customers and your employees.
3. Send employees and customers to educational-style conferences and seminars. Sit with your employees or customers after the conference or during lunch and talk about what has been spoken.

4. Plan a fun day with your customers: let them get to know your team better, to answer questions, and to fill them in on the latest happenings in your company.

THE FUTURE VISION EXPERIENCE GENRE

This genre works best for those working with clients for the long haul, such as financial planners, mentors, or insurance providers. Future Vision adopters are always encouraging the customer to see the good in their futures and keep them thinking positively beyond the immediate moment.

Surprisingly, the neurological benefits of this model are immense. The brain contains a number of neurotransmitters linked to various life activities. The neurotransmitter dopamine, which is highly connected to a positive mood and overall outlook, is released not simply at the moment of engaging in an enjoyable event, but based on *the expectation* of a future enjoyable event. By always keeping your clients looking to future positive goals, you are improving their overall health and wellbeing.

A Future Vision EG adopter is encouraging in the moment but inspirational about the future opportunities for their customers. They encourage their customers with the latest and greatest new offerings of their company's products or services. But, more importantly, they are champions in the lives of their customers. They delve into their customers' stories, offering encouragement, insight, and even caution as you will see in chapter 24.

Ways to start:

1. Get to know your customers' stories to understand their life goals. Ask them questions about their lives, and encourage future progress. Celebrate their life victories.

CRAFTING YOUR BUSINESS' "EXPERIENCE GENRE"

2. Provide them with books that help increase their power and profits in the future.
3. Dream with your clients: speak about long term goals, show them a positive future, and reveal how your products or services interact with that dream.
4. Warn them of damaging issues in the future that might affect them personally. Address business pitfalls and empathetically help them see the responsibility of their actions. Future Vision EG adopters do not let their customers, clients, and friends damage the potential of their futures.

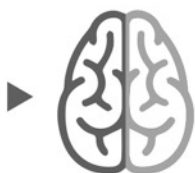
"YOU HAVE TO HEAR ABOUT..."

These three genres create an environment around your company that not only transcends your product or services, but also encourages your customers to broadcast the genre (not just the products or services) out to the global marketplace. When your customers feel engaged, encouraged, welcomed, and loved, they react positively. Then they share. Think about what happens after you watch a phenomenal movie or television show. Do you keep your excitement to yourself? No, you can't wait to tell others about the experience! Your customers, because of interacting with your chosen Experience Genre, will go out of their way to relay that experience to those in their relational circles and on review sites like Yelp and Angie's List.



The use of metaphor is a sign of genius
Aristotle

METAPHORS WORK FOR BOTH THE LEFT AND RIGHT BRAINED



AN INFORMATIONAL BRIDGE
BETWEEN CONCEPTS



AN EMOTIONAL BRIDGE
BETWEEN CONCEPTS

WAYS METAPHORS ARE POWERFUL IN BUSINESS



Great metaphors transcend a person's worldview preconceptions.



Great metaphors can create new relevancy to stagnant ideas



Great metaphors allow the listener to delve deeper into the metaphor



Great metaphors turn boring actions into engaging opportunities:

CHAPTER 13

STORY STRATEGY #3:

THE POWER OF THE METAPHOR

Any writer worth their salt recognizes the great power found in the wielding of the metaphor. Aristotle, one of the most influential and brightest philosophical and creative minds in history, described the effective use of metaphor as, “a sign of genius.” Stepping into the modern day, Brian Clark of Rainmaker.FM described metaphor in some detail.

“Metaphors allow you to make the complex simple and the controversial palatable. Conversely, metaphors allow you to create extraordinary meaning out of the seemingly mundane.”

Metaphors work in powerful ways for both the left and right-brained. For the left-brained, metaphors often serve as an *informational* bridge between the hyper complex and the

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layperson. A doctor may speak in metaphor when describing a patient's physiologic condition or ailment:

“Sir, Imagine the heart as baseball, it's perfectly incased. Unfortunately, you heart has started to resemble a whiffle ball and if we don't do something about the potential tears in your heart wall, you could quickly face far more serious complications.”

For the right-brained, metaphors often serve as an *emotional* bridge between that which can't be logically classified and the real world. For example, a musician might claim:

“My music is a butterfly. You try to grasp at it, but it just flutters away on the breeze.”

A good friend of mine overhead someone describe art as the moment when, “words just won't do, but silence isn't enough.” Metaphors are powerful tools in the arsenal of the writer, journalist, and blogger. But they're just as powerful and profitable in the toolbox of business. Below are four key reasons:

Great metaphors transcend a person's worldview preconceptions.

Each of us subscribes to a set of beliefs. We have our own answers to life's biggest questions: Why am I here? Who or what created me? What is my purpose? What happens to me after I die? Those answers not only frame our ideals but *our actions* (more on that later).

Yet we live in a post-modern society. As participants in this post-modern world, we may hold strongly to our beliefs, but so do the rest of the participants in the society. In America, beliefs and worldviews collide every nanosecond. We're a nation of immigrants, each with a broad range of worldviews. We must acknowledge and respect the views of others or face judgment and vilification from our more tolerant brothers and sisters. This leads to avoidance of certain topics because our opinions

of those topics are deeply entrenched in our worldviews. I am reminded of a country music song, where a heartbroken man tells a friend that they can talk together about anything but “politics, religion, and *her*.”

A great metaphor is ideologically transcendent. When Jesus Christ stated, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a seed,” those listening didn’t question: “Is it an existentialist seed? Is it a nihilistic seed? Is it a deistic seed?”

No, it was simply a seed! By using the daily and the recognizable to define and redefine an aspect of your product or service, you create bridges beyond stalwart beliefs and preconceptions that often breed animosity, disdain, and distrust.

Great metaphors allow the listener to delve deeper into the metaphor itself.

I once read a passage from a great atheistic philosopher describing his local pastors and their petitioning of money from their congregations. The metaphor these religious leaders had adopted was from the Biblical scripture:

"You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing."
Deuteronomy 25:4

The philosopher conceded chidingly that if they were willing to refer to themselves as dirty farm animals then maybe they deserved the money. I don’t know if this was a bad metaphor but the comment was certainly funny...

Unlike the “threshing ox” metaphor, a great metaphor allows the listener to meditate on the idea and search it out in deeper ways. The listener extracts new and relevant information beyond the spoken words. When Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven was like a seed, the metaphor didn’t end. Want to learn more about the Kingdom of Heaven? Go sit with a farmer. I believe the depth of the metaphor is limitless. A

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friend of mine once described Jesus' metaphoric power as operating from "profound simplicity." This should be your aim. Drill down to the most simplistic concept, but ensure that it's rich with future possibilities. For those employing an Educational Experience Genre in your business, metaphors are central to the Genre. They are the conduit between the wisdom you possess and the current mindset of the customer.

Great metaphors create new relevancy to concepts and ideas that appear stagnant or single sided.

In 2013, I wrote a book entitled, *Parables and Parallels: Modern Day Insights into Many Ancient Words*. Featuring twenty-six chapters of insights on Biblical scripture, the book often uses modern day metaphors such as the DVD Director's Commentary, the storyline of the hit action series, *24*, and "body snatching" alien films. In utilizing these metaphors, I extracted profound and relevant spiritual ideas and scriptural concepts that, inside their own theological confines, appear stagnant, hyper-moral, and restrictive.

By utilizing the metaphor, you not only transcend a person's worldview but you can also alter (and even shatter) their preconceptions of a concept, idea, or belief. For example, for a financial planner, your customer's preconception of budgeting may be, "*Budgeting is the most boring, arduous task on the planet.*" By crafting new and energetic metaphors around the concept, you open up a new world for the customer, unveiling the value and even "fun" of proper budgeting.

Great metaphors turn boring aspects of your business into engaging opportunities:

There are parts of business that are cumbersome and uninteresting. But they're necessary for customer/client function. For example, the filling out of paperwork or the time spent in a phone survey is often arduous. Craft interesting language and metaphorical stories around these events and you

create interest and excitement around what often produces irritation.

Add a sense of fun, humor, and whimsy to these events through metaphor and you take the edge off. A good metaphor acknowledges preconceptions then transcends the standard and offers new opportunities.

ACTION ITEM:

Look at the scope of your services or products and create metaphorical concepts around the most complex and/or mundane attributes of your business. Hone your metaphors until they are rich with future possibility. Test out your concepts on family and friends, asking for critique on their uniqueness, likeability, and insight.

Use your chosen metaphors in your daily business interactions and scatter them gingerly through your marketing messaging. Metaphors also open up great possibilities in daily relational interaction, so be conscious to also add them into conversations with your *personal relationships*. You'll find them to be a value-added asset to your personality and character.

DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS' STORY'S "HIGH CONCEPT"



“So what do YOU do?”

#1 Question people ask or are asked at parties...

Do you REALLY expect a powerful answer?

TO SHOCK THE SYSTEM YOU NEED TO PERFECT YOUR
BUSINESS' HIGH CONCEPT



Like a scriptwriter pitching a script, you need a

**1-2 sentence statement
that powerfully summarizes
your business.**

**You have approximately
seven seconds to make
a powerful impression...**



Answering the “what do you do?”
question with a **high concept
answer** makes you and your
business memorable.

CHAPTER 14

STORY STRATEGY 4:

DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS' STORY'S "HIGH CONCEPT"

"So, what do you do?"

The words above summarize the number one question people ask, or are asked, at parties and networking events. Have you ever considered the incredible power in the answer to that question? It may mean the difference between the success and failure of your business. Have you given your answer that level of thought?

I'm guessing, probably not.

We inquire with such a question because it's easy. It's an icebreaker. It's benign. It has no religious, political, or ideological qualification. We're pretty safe with the question.

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We really don't expect a dynamic answer. Oh sure, maybe the answer will excite us: "*I am Steven Spielberg's personal assistant!*" Perhaps the answer will inspire us, "*I rescue street children in Manila, Philippines.*" For the most part, we subconsciously half listen to the person in front of us describe their business, product, or service, hoping that the moment creates enough of a relational connection to move us into deeper dialog.

It is not that we don't care about what they do. We're just so used to a formulaic answer that our brain shuts off until we get into deeper conversation. It happens at the neurological level; our prefrontal cortex stops firing at high levels when an action or conversation becomes repetitive. It's why we remember the cool parts of someone's story and often forget the minutia of the conversation.

This is where your power lies. In this chapter, you are going to learn to break the mold, to discover how to shatter the preconception that often precedes the answer to, "So, what do you do?" You are going to have a different answer and a different way of crafting your business. And that difference creates new, powerful, and profitable opportunities. You are going to shock the status quo.

Years ago, I dated a woman in Florence, California. Living in San Jose at the time, I commuted by plane nearly every weekend to make the jump between Northern and Southern California. Being younger, and a little wilder, very little of the hours of those weekends were unused. This led to late nights out. Like clockwork, I caught a plane back to San Jose early Monday morning to stagger into my office by 9am. After one particularly long, event-riddled weekend, I passed out on the plane. While I was in dreamland everyone exited.

A flight attendant noticed me crashed out all alone and attempted to remove me from slumber. Asleep, I heard these words...

"Excuse me, sir? It's time to get up... sir, we've landed..."

DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS' "HIGH CONCEPT"

She nudged me but nothing worked. I heard the words, but they did not process into action. Finally, the flight attendant, realizing slapping me senseless would have evoked a lawsuit, tried another strategy.

“Sir, you need to get up... Wakey, Wakey!”

In a micro moment, my eyes shot open wide. Now fully cognizant, I looked at the flight attendant with the most puzzled look on my face. “Did you just say ‘Wakey, Wakey?’” I inquired. She looked at me sheepishly. I burst out laughing, telling her that was the greatest thing I’d ever heard!

I remember hearing the other words. I felt the nudges. But nothing resonated until the flight attendant said something so radical and different that it shocked me out of my slumber.

You are going to have “Wakey, Wakey” moments during every conversation. You are going to craft a “Wakey, Wakey” business. You are going to build a “Wakey, Wakey” brand. To do so, you need to hone and perfect your business’ “High Concept.”

WHAT’S YOUR BUSINESS’ “HIGH CONCEPT?”

Spend any time in Los Angeles and you are likely to overhear someone pitching a movie script in a coffee house, hotel lobby, or restaurant. Scripts are usually 105 to 120 pages of painstaking sweat and labor, often crafted over years or even decades. In the immediate moment of the pitch, the studio exec avoids all that. He stares numbly at the anxious scriptwriter and mouths a phrase he’s uttered a thousand times: “So, what’s your high concept?”

A high concept is the one to two sentence descriptive pitch that encompasses the entire story and separates the story from over one hundred years of other films. A writer will spend days and even months crafting and refining that two-sentence pitch,

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until every noun, adjective, and verb in that high concept description glisten with power and emotion.

Can you summarize and encapsulate your business in two sentences? “Sure,” you might say, “I can do it in four or five words; ‘I’m a financial planner.’” Great, but so are thousands of other people in your direct marketplace; so is H&R Block, so is Morgan Stanley, and so are a host of other small, medium, and large financial operations.

Imagine a description that basic working in a script pitch. After the studio executive asks for the high concept, the writer says, “It’s about a car chase.” Think that idea would get optioned?

Suppose the writer stated:

“An eighteen-year-old joyrider accidentally kills a young girl, leaving her single mother struggling with anger and confusion, only to choose redemption and develop a healing relationship with the young man in prison.”

Think that might be more lucrative? Inspirational films are big at the moment and this high concept allows the listener to imagine the story and delineate it from any other previous film offering.

You have approximately seven seconds from the first moment of interaction to make an impression. Answering the “What do you do?” question with a high concept answer makes you and your business memorable. The more you tie that concept into the needs of your customers or clients, the stronger the response.

Since we have just spoken of scriptwriting, let’s consider how this might play out in script format:

FADE IN

INT. HOUSE PARTY NIGHT

A BUSTLING PARTY in an upscale Manhattan apartment is in full swing. About 30 PEOPLE

DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS' "HIGH CONCEPT"

congregate in groups, laughing and chatting.
In the middle of the room, a husband and wife
saunter up to a well-dressed man.

HUSBAND

Great Party, isn't it?

MAN

(turning toward couple)
Absolutely.

HUSBAND

I'm John, this is my wife Susan.

MAN

(Shaking hands)
Great to meet you both. I'm Larry.

HUSBAND

Great to meet you, Larry.
(a beat)
So, what do you do?

LARRY

I help build future power.

JOHN

What? Are you in solar or something?

LARRY

(laughing)
Ha! No, you've heard how time equals
money right?

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SUSAN

Yes, of course.

LARRY

Well, money also equals power. Power to do what you want, be who want, and help you craft the future you want.

HUSBAND

Yeah, I see that.

LARRY

Most people just see money as a product; something to save or something to spend. I help them to recognize that the more financial security you have, the more power you have the capacity to use. You may not always use that power, but isn't it better to have the capacity to use it?

SUSAN

I would say so.

LARRY

I use the area of finance to help people build capacity now and in the future. Had to use my education for a reason, right? Figured I'd use it to make a difference in the lives of the people I am blessed to touch.

HUSBAND

That's great. I've never seen it that way.

DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS' "HIGH CONCEPT"

LARRY

Yeah, it took me a while to notice it as well. I was little more than an accountant till I read this book called *CR8ETVE SUCCESS* (wink, wink!) and it helped me use the operating energies of a right brained thinker to creatively recraft my entire business.

HUSBAND

Wow! I'll have to pick that up.

LARRY

You should! It changed my life. By the way, here's my card. If you ever want to increase the power capacity in your lives, give me a shout.

HUSBAND AND WIFE

Thanks! We will!

LARRY

So how do you know the host of the party?

Conversation continues.

Let's break this conversation down, because a lot has just occurred.

HUSBAND

Great to meet you, Larry.

(a beat)

So, what do you do?

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LARRY

I help build future power.

This first statement was a chance to shock the status quo. It was quick and high concept; the word “power” evokes strength and confidence and the word “future” transcends the realities of their immediate moment.

JOHN

What? Are you in solar or something?

LARRY

(laughing)

Ha! No, you’ve heard how time equals money right?

Larry’s laugh is genuine but also calculated. That kind of question makes sense after his declaration and he’s prepared for the question, but Larry quickly shifts the conversation back to John. This gets John and Susan thinking and engaging.

LARRY

Well, money also equals power,
Power to do what you want, be who
want, help you craft the future you
want.

HUSBAND

Yeah, I see that.

Larry got John and Susan to get excited about power by making it personal. We all want to do what we want, that’s part of this right-brain culture. John agrees with Larry because Larry got into John’s nervous system (chapter 18).

DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS' "HIGH CONCEPT"

LARRY

Most people just see money as a product, something to save and something to spend. I help them to recognize that the more financial security you have, the more power you have the capacity to use. You may not always use that power, but isn't it better to have the capacity to use it?

Larry understands the current trend but he's risen above it. John and Susan may grasp the current trend but to learn more they need Larry. Larry throws the conversation back in their direction.

HUSBAND

That's great. I've never seen it that way.

LARRY

Yeah it took me a while to notice it as well. I was little more than an accountant till I read this book called *CREATIVE SUCCESS* (wink, wink!) and it helped me recraft my entire business.

Self-effacement is a great attribute. Larry downplayed his discovery while also separating himself from the rest of his competition. And dear reader, please, shamelessly promote *this* book.

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LARRY

I encourage you do to so, it changed my life. By the way, here's my card. If you ever want to increase capacity for power in your lives, give me a shout.

See how easy that ask was? It almost came out as an afterthought. *"If you want to increase the capacity for power?"* Who doesn't? Larry got John and Susan to think beyond the realm of accounting. If you want the capacity for more power, you need Larry!

ANOTHER, MORE "SHOCKING" EXAMPLE

The other day I entertained a good friend of mine at a local fine dining restaurant. During the course of the evening, I overheard a young man talking to an attractive woman sitting in the bar. Naturally, "What do you do?" came up in the conversation. The woman smiled at the young man and said, "I sell *lubricants*." That got some attention! It was certainly a shock to the system. It turned out the company she worked for sold oil-based products to gas stations and manufacturing plants. Had she stated, "I sell oil-based products to gas stations and manufacturing plants," her comment wouldn't have made this book, but "I sell lubricants," will stick in my head forever.

ACTION ITEM:

Figure out your two-sentence high concept. Start by free-associating numerous ideas and then pairing down the best concepts. Once you have it down to two to four sentences, keep perfecting it until every word drips with significance and future action. Begin to role play possible scenarios of how to steer conversations in your favor after speaking out your high concept. When it becomes a natural part of daily interactions, you've arrived.

CREATING YOUR BRAND'S "VISUAL STORY"



Great branding equates to visual storytelling

LOGOS: IT'S MORE THAN DIFFERENTIATION

4 major components to a
company's visual brand story



VISION

Where is this story going?



CUSTOMERS

Who is most interested
in the story?



CULTURE

What are my story characters
like?



CAPABILITIES

Who is accomplished
through my story?

CHAPTER 15

STORY STRATEGY 5:

CREATING YOUR BRAND'S "VISUAL STORY"

One of the most potent storytelling aspects of your company occurs through your company's logo branding. "Wait," you might say, *"isn't logo branding part of the Design section of this book?"* This is true for a majority of the logos created in the global marketplace. They're aesthetic icons, fashioned with the name of the company, in (hopefully) an interesting font.

Great branding, however equates to *visual storytelling*. A well-developed brand tells the story of the company. Superb designers are visual, and visceral, storytellers. Instead of words, they use shape, color, and tone. Every line and every

color block of the brand image is meant to convey and portray some meaning and aspect of the business operation.

IT'S MORE THAN DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiation is a given in branding. The most novice designer or agency recognizes that a developed brand *must* set itself apart from its competition. As designers, if our created brand too closely resembles another brand we risk facing litigation. Even a seven-year-old can create differentiation and uniqueness in a crayon sketch.

In Chapter 1, I explained that as the barrier to entry in the design world eroded, through highly intuitive and low-cost design programs, the market flooded with would-be creatives. Many of their logos still reside on corporate buildings and the sides of fleet vehicles today. While those designers created art, they often neglected to craft stories. They developed “unique” icons that failed to evoke action. At best, their imagery helped delineate one company from another.

A great brand developer addresses four major components of the company’s story: Its Vision, Culture, Customers, and Capabilities.

VISION: *Where’s this story going?*

A great brand not only communicates the current state of a company but also prophetically addresses its future vision. As I stated in chapter 10, you must always be innovating. A great brand is not stagnant. It has its own life and its own energy. It is a forward-thinking energy. One of our NBA questions is, “*Where do you see your company in five years?*” We then create the new brand to reflect their unique five-year vision.

CREATING YOUR BRAND'S "VISUAL STORY"

This often occurs through the brand mark, but it can also be realized through the company *tagline*. The tagline is a powerful opportunity to linguistically communicate your message in a way that accents the visual or adds to the conversation. A good design agency spends as much time crafting their tagline as they do developing the logo mark itself. Taglines can be informative, often detailing the specifics on the operation. They can be inspirational, drawing the viewer into an energetic experience with the brand. They can be questions designed to evoke future conversation. Consider the UPS tagline, "*What can Brown do for you?*" It encourages the viewer to answer the question in his or her own frame of business.

CULTURE: *What are my story characters like?*

One of the arenas most missed by brand developers is reflecting a company's culture. As a business owner or independent contractor, you not only create an organization – *you create a culture*. People gravitate to various cultural personalities. Growing up in Silicon Valley, the culture of many dot.com startups was whimsical, irreverent, and energetic. Would you qualify IBM with the same adjectives? I doubt it.

Based on its brand visual, I would consider IBM to be more of a left-brained operation. It draws that type of employee and customer. If that is the customer they are pursuing, they have done their job well. If not, they may have missed the mark for decades. By creating a brand that reflects both your employees and your customers' personalities, you draw in those of like mind. This can be done through color, font type, sharp lines, or soft strokes; it all matters.

CUSTOMERS: *Who's most interested in the story?*

A great story brand reflects all aspects of the customer. It must resonate deep in their souls. Story genres often draw certain types of individuals. It is unlikely that a sci-fi horror enthusiast would be drawn to the latest romantic drama so the movie trailer production team doesn't craft their story pitch to tantalize the person who just caught the latest Alien hack-and-slash picture. Recognize your audience (Chapter 5), then craft a recognizable and resonant visual story.

If done correctly, you create brand ambassadors based on the brand itself. Consider the power of the Under Armor Brand. Originally geared for athletes to address the rigors and sweat-laced results of exercise, the brand has taken on a life of its own. It is now worn by anyone inspired by the iconic U and A that formulate the logo. Under Armor became a fashion mark, transcending the company's message and products.

EXPERT LEVEL BRANDING – TRANSCENDENCE

This leads to the *expert level* of branding: customer (or demographic) transcendence. A great friend of mine, Brian Church, author of *Relationship Momentum*, refers to transcendent customers as “*Unlikely Ambassadors*,” individuals or groups that crave your brand based on the energy and experience of the brand itself:

“It is the sixty-year old millionaire businessman sporting a pair of Chuck Taylor All Stars. It is the 300-pound ex-NFL player who buys a Snuggie and then tweets (twitter) about it.”

The best designers create brands that become fashion and cultural icons. When the desired customer wholly embraces the story, the brand pendulum creates such a sway that the *unlikely ambassador* wants in on the movement.

CAPABILITIES: *What is accomplished through my story?*

This is the most obvious arena; which is why I placed it last. Any decent designer will address a company's capabilities in the brand story. Often, that brand simply reflects the most generic motif of that company's capabilities:

A law firm that uses a scale in their logo; A doctor that uses a simplistic rendition of the medical cross; An accountant who uses a rising arrow or a fiscal chart... these are not only basic, they are also benign. They have little or no power. It's like a movie with a plotline so basic and formulaic that people walk out and demand their money back. In the case of your brand, they may avoid offering you money in the first place.

The next chapter will provide you some examples of powerful brand stories, and allow you to assess your own branding.

CHAPTER 16

BRAND STORIES APPLIED

The following pages contain three “brand stories.” Before reading the descriptions, try to associate yourself with the potential story you believe the brand is telling. Then read the comments below the brand to see how consistent your thoughts were to the actual explanation.

1ST BRAND STORY: CROSSTOWN



Crosstown Courier was a regional courier company operating in the General Nashville Metro area. Having experienced significant success as a localized courier, they were looking to establish themselves as a stronger player against the bigger logistics operations such as UPS and FedEx. They came to us for a rebrand.

What story are we communicating here? First, the obvious; what did we remove? The name “Courier.” They are now simply “Crosstown.” This opened up new possibilities, both in the moment and in the future. Secondly, we added their three focuses to the tagline text, using the broader and more universal term “delivery,” rather than “courier.” We also chose arrows to separate the services, avoiding traditional dots. Why? To get the viewer’s eye to travel down their list of services. Logistics and Warehousing were somewhat recent offerings of the new Crosstown, so the arrows allowed the viewer to engage the full scope of current services.

Then, consider the visual expression. The three services are represented as curving arrows, showing speed, efficiency and power. The arrows expand out to the corners of the circle; referencing how their services travel out beyond local regions. In addition, the blue sphere is a depiction of the globe, showing the breadth of their new operation. The three arrows come together in the center, illustrating the cohesive ethics and vision of the operation.

In addition, the company's founders held very strong Christian beliefs. Their previous logo predominantly focused on the cross, which could often prove divisive. The new design still featured the cross, but it was less prevalent, creating a more universal relationship with their customers. We did not want to hide their convictions, but instead made it an integral component of the brand, rather than its central focus.

2ND BRAND STORY: ALPHA LIMOUSINE



We rebranded Alpha Limousine, as stated previously, during the height of the recession. Even though the company was less than a few years old, the owners had the foresight to

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recognize the need for a stronger brand presence. After a thorough pre-qualification process, we developed this brand. Based on the design presented above, would you speculate this business might have a 1928 Rolls Royce Phantom in their arsenal of cars? Probably not. If you were looking to be escorted across town in the newest in the modern luxury vehicles, (such as HUMMER vehicles, AMG Mercedes, or Chrysler 300s) would this be the company to call?

From a sleek modern brand mark, commensurate to an automobile company emblem, to a hyper modern gold fade, to a custom created sci-fi style font for “ALPHA,” the brand was designed to evoke a story of modern sleekness and style. We wanted to portray refined, modern luxury. Now, if the company was smart (which they are), they would have a partnership with another charter company utilizing vehicles such as Rolls Royce Phantoms and other classic automobiles. This way every customer call produced some level of revenue, whether direct or indirect.

We also left off a distinguishable tagline. Why? The name creates the necessary association. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet. It represents power, innovation, and force. It is a bold declaration that carries a lot of gravitas. Think of the term “alpha male” and all it connotes. By calling themselves the “Alpha” of limousine companies, they were boasting of their expertise, their dominance, and their bravado. Everything you needed to know about the company was communicated through its name. We’re a force not to be reckoned with, *‘enough said.’*

3RD BRAND STORY: ARMODA

This is my personal favorite of the three designs presented. It is hyper-artistic but retains a strong graphic brand style. Suppose you were in the market for French Colonial Style Bedroom Furniture, do you think this is the right company for you? Not necessarily. But that was not the philosophy of this firm. They were modern, sleek and cool sixties/seventies-retro design fanatics.

If you were a bar, a restaurant, a hip new business, or an individual having recently purchased a modern style home, do you think design this might resonate? Absolutely! The image not only reflected the character and culture of the firm, but also directly represented the artwork and furniture potentially utilized on a client's design project.

While the logo mark was quite graphic, there'd be times where the full color logo was not conducive, such as multi-color background applications. Therefore, the logo name was given just enough customization that it could stand alone,

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without appearing to be just a couple lines of standard text. In addition, the culture of the firm was fun and lively, so we chose a more playful and off kilter font for the “interior architectural design” tagline. The colors are shocking, reminiscent of an Andy Warhol color palette. The white pillow in the center of the chair presents the perfect amount of negative space while drawing you directly into the center of the design.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

These brand stories not only communicate the product, services and cultures of these businesses; they also pre-qualify the customer. A customer can associate themselves with these companies without any preconception of the operation. It’s all visually provided in the brand mark and message content.

Statistically, every business phone call strips away fifteen minutes of productivity after we hang up the phone. By visually prequalifying your customers, you ensure customer phone inquiries are targeted and the customer is engaged. This keeps productivity high and respects the time and power of future customers and company employees.

Your brand always communicates a story – positive or negative, strong or poor. The clarity of that story is the direct result of the care and creativity of the individual or firm designing your logo or brand.

ADDING OUT OF NECESSITY

Failing to create a story with your logo mark forces you to devote more time and money to developing additional messaging and visual communication. People rave at the Apple Logo. It is brilliant. But its brilliance doesn’t center solely on

the logo itself. It is contained in the brand design and messaging surrounding it. The logo could be used for a restaurant, food product or food service company without any modification. The visual messaging surrounding the Apple logo communicates the full story, but ask anyone never having seen the logo or having no knowledge of the company to tell its story. It's highly doubtful they would profess it's the brand of technology company, despite how powerfully that brand developed over nearly the last five decades.

A great brand's auxiliary components accent and amplify the story. They aren't forced to fill in the messaging gaps of a brand too generic to qualify its customer base or communicate the company culture.

Great branding is a clever balance. Too much story in your logo and it can look convoluted and be difficult to reproduce. Too little story and you must reinvest time and money in additional brand imagery.

Bottom line: you need to work with a reputable and well-established firm to develop your logo and brand story. The razor's edge is thin and many design companies gash themselves on either side of the blade. After the design agency moves on from your project, you, and your company, are left to deal with the aftermath. Spend the extra time, energy, and finances to make sure things are done correctly in the beginning. It will pay off in huge dividends in the future. You lose both profits and power through poor logo brand storytelling.

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ACTION ITEM

Look at your company's current brand and ask yourself if it tells the right story. Hand your business cards out to others and ask them to describe the culture, customer, and vision of your operation. Look at the fonts chosen, the colors, and the visual mark; are they all on target? Is the logo too generic of a motif? Does the brand need additional messaging and marketing to communicate the full story? If you and your relationships fail to answer the questions in an acceptable manner, your customers and prospects may see your company in the same light. Devote the time to find an effective design and branding agency that can address these issues.

CHAPTER 17

STORY STRATEGY 6:

GETTING INSIDE YOUR CUSTOMER'S “NERVOUS SYSTEM”

In the mid nineteen nineties, I developed and managed a design department inside a Silicon Valley-based tradeshow display company. Silicon Valley was a frenetic cauldron of technological activity at the time. The internet was spreading its wings (I actually designed graphic panels for Mosaic Communications, Netscape's original name in 1994), and semiconductors were in huge demand and supply. Speed and thickness were the driving motivating factors of wafer chips at the time.

Since we were centrally located in the heart of Silicon Valley (Santa Clara), we were inundated with semiconductor companies bringing their tradeshow needs to our doorstep. For

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years, I created signage for the biggest technology companies, regurgitating the micron width and speed of wafer chips. Every company initially described the same speed or thickness of their product offerings. For the most part, I could have swapped any of the companies' signage with any other company and no one would have been wiser.

These graphics focused on statistics, instead of isolating needs and addressing those needs with their product or service. Imagine a tradeshow where nearly every booth communicated the exact same message. Where's the differentiation?

A few years later, I attended a high-level, invitation-only two-year business program. The inaugural day of the conference, the facilitator and founder held up a cellular phone in front of the gathered audience. He asked the audience what he was holding. In the crowd were many captains of industry, technology innovators, and Fortune 500 mega-players. The question seemed beneath them. Finally, someone answered in an underwhelming tone, "It's a cell phone." The founder looked over the crowd with a sly smile, and responded, "Is it?"

He placed the phone on top of some papers on the podium and said, "Imagine it's a windy day and the papers on this podium could blow away in the wind." "Now, what is it?" he questioned. Someone in the audience chimed in, "It's a paper weight." The wise founder looked over the well-educated and well-established crowd. "Good," he exclaimed, "stop selling your product or service. Sell what your product or service accomplishes or addresses for your customer."

Getting inside someone's nervous system is to cause them to associate with a particular need or dilemma *prior* to the introduction of your product or service. You want your potential customers shaking their head in agreement before you've offered what they're agreeing to. This requires immediate listening (in sales conversations) and collecting strategic data (when it comes to your marketing).

Let's start with the immediate sales conversation. Suppose you're a salesperson peddling a computer that is two-times faster than the computer sitting on the desk of your prospect. You could say, *"With this computer you will be two times as productive."* That might have some merit. But let's say you start the conversation with interactive and engaging dialog. You first enter into the *story* of your customer, looking for salient points of connection.

Let's suppose the customer (we'll call him "Mark") describes his family, bragging about his son's sports prowess, even showing you a picture of his son's last soccer championship. He also speaks about how he hates the traffic in the area. He leaves his office at approximately five-thirty every night only to get home moments before dinner at seven. He manages to spend an hour with the kids before watching a bit of television with his children and putting them to bed. He lets you know he's stressed; he has little time between work, the drive, and the nightly routine.

You have your points of connection through listening to his story, and so you present your own:

"Mark, it's obvious that you're family man, and congrats on your son's soccer success. I'll bet it would be nice to see a couple of his games every once and while. And believe me, I understand the traffic situation in this city after five. But what if you could get out the door before five o'clock, and what if you had time to catch those games? This computer has double the processing speed of your current computer. That means that you could save approximately 2-3 hours of time per day in productivity. The question is: What would you want to do with those extra two hours? Because it seems to me that you already know the answer to that question."

By crafting your story around the other person's needs, you create a new story; a story specifically covering that person's

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desires. The previous scenario works for face-to-face conversations. What about marketing?

Marketing requires you to have done the research, as referenced in Chapter 4, to understand the needs and pain areas of your customers and the preconceptions of your company. For example, one of the questions on our NBA is, “In addition to your product or service, where are your customers spending their time and money.” We strive to get to know all we can about our clients, so that we create a story that resonates with their conditions, their attitudes, and their personalities.

Craft the first few paragraphs of your company’s brochure, for example, around understanding and describing those needs, pain areas, and preconceptions. You want the potential customer already shaking his or her head in agreement prior to ever hearing a word of your sales pitch or product specifics. Creates points of agreement prior to the introduction of your product or service. This allows the messaging to serve as a referral mechanism. Customers go from cold to warm leads because you’ve gotten them to *associate* with you and your business.

Understand your client’s story – then craft a new story, either during the sales conversation or through your marketing messaging. Then present the opportunity of your product or service to your client.

CHAPTER 18

APPLYING THE WHOLE STORY

In this chapter, I'll present three fictional operations and utilize the tactics we learned in the *Story* section of the book to help shape these businesses. These examples should serve as inspirational models for your own business. Please make these ideas your own. Your customers and shareholders will thank you.

APPLICATION: HEALTH CLUB

Suppose you owned a membership-driven health club. How would you apply the correct plot line to your operation? Regardless of your crafted Experience Genre, I would ensure there was a cadre of people at the front entrance, ensuring no one was ever greeted by a person on the phone. There is nothing less winsome than entering a facility and discovering

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that the person manning the desk is busy conversing on the phone. Executing with a personal touch is critical. It immediately sets you apart.

I'd have the front entrance staff greet and interact, based on your designated Experience Genre. An Inspirational Genre would merit employees that were always uplifting and encouraging. Educational model employees would inform members of everything about the gym, fitness, and the breakthroughs in body mechanics and health. Future Vision model employees would have front counter staff congratulating members for their health successes.

Most health clubs offer their members workout opportunities with one of their personal trainers... for a price. What if the health club had a paid personal trainer on staff? His or her job responsibility included walking around the workout floor and helping members train better and more efficiently complete their exercises. That trainer would craft his or her message and help around the chosen Experience Genre. People want to be inspired, they want to be educated, and they want to be told that what they are doing is working. Pick one Genre (or all) and run with it.

The club would offer health and wellness consulting evenings, where fitness experts would inform members of the latest in nutrition and exercise, take their weight measurements, and rigorously plan workout schedules. Marketing material would address the needs of the customer base, not simply show people working out on machines. Commercials would spotlight these free value-added Resources. Every gym offers workout equipment and cardio classes; but this club provides so much more.

APPLICATION: REAL ESTATE AGENT (HIGH DOLLAR HOMES)

I often tell others that if wasn't in my current vocation, or writing, or scriptwriting, or inventing... I'd be a real estate

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agent selling multi-million dollar homes. My routine for accelerating in estate and manor sales would be as follows. First, any person or couple requesting my services would be treated to a top of the line two-day spa excursion. The first day would be their own, to enjoy the spa at their leisure with all amenities paid for up front. The second day I'd meet them at the pool for lunch, spending two to three hours with the person or couple. During this relaxed qualification session, I'd garner all their critical information, including their hopes and dreams, future plans, and all their personal desires for the new home.

I'd take the information garnered and find them the perfect home, providing them access to the potential home sites through an IDX platform catered personally to *their* needs. The exclusive site would contain a detailed list of the verbal requests of the client, ensuring that both I and the client were ensured all criteria were being met. Once the client(s) purchased their home, I'd provide another two-day spa treatment or plane tickets to a destination of their choice at a similar price.

This strategy would require a decent financial payout (the cost of the spa weekend) before any commission was garnered. But what individual or couple wouldn't jump at a two-day spa excursion on someone else's dime. What individual or couple wouldn't tell others about the experience? By investing up front, you create a one-of-a-kind experience to be lauded repeatedly. Anyone can sell someone a home, but who provides a free spa weekend in the process? Taking a few thousand dollars out of a \$20+ thousand-dollar commission check would be well worth it, in the experience it generated, the stories it garnered, and the referrals it provided.

I presented this scenario in the context of real estate sales. A similar model, with a broad base of incentives, can be offered through your operation. Suppose that you are a financial planner. If you chose the *educational plot line* for your business, perhaps you enrolled every client into the local

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Dave Ramsey course, or offered paid subscriptions to magazines such as *Money*, *Worth*, and *The Bottom Line*.

Consider how you can apply the preceding story to your business. Take the time (and money) to invest in your customers, and they will invest back into you through repeat business and the strongest of referrals.

APPLICATION: PRODUCT SALES

So far, I have focused on service operations. What about product-centric companies? First, I'd make sure my marketing material and website got into the "nervous system" of my customers. I'd insure my brand and product packaging was exceptional and revelatory; that it not only told the story of the business and culture, but also visually reflected how I view the world.

Then I'd analyze every potential touch point I might have with my customer. I would first set up a question and answer #800 number clearly displayed on every product package. A potential customer could contact a live person at any time with questions before or after the purchase. I'd train the customer service staff in the Experience Genre chosen for my operation, so that everyone was on task and on message when communicating with the customer. I'd also have a designated complaint department, managed by a top-level manager, who addressed customer concerns directly.

I'd include customers in the process of new business development, sending them comment cards and surveys to help better shape new product offerings. I'd partner with a large retail store or well-known coffee shop and offer gift cards for participation. I'd encourage customers to be part of monthly conference calls, letting them be part of the research and development conversation, similar to share-holders at an annual share-holder meeting.

Customers would feel a sense of ownership and belonging *with the company*, not simply the product. A company with

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great products can quickly bankrupt itself if it fails in providing a strong customer interaction and experience. Your product is only a fraction of the overall experience. Sites like Yelp rarely detail the mechanical problems of a company's product. Most participants in sites like these broadcast the lack of a company's professionalism and care through the experience of poor customer service and standoffish call center workers.

Bottom line, all of this takes time and *intention*. But in this case intention is an investment. It is an investment that will pay off in massive dividends in future.

The other day I was working with a new client on a commissioned portrait art piece. It was her single need. Working through the online back and forth design process, spanning through numerous conversations and design options, she sent a message back to me:

“Well I know what your strength is.”

After a few more interactions, I went back to the comment. “So what is my strength?” I inquired. Her response was:

“I think the portrait thing you do is amazing. Communications are good and attitude is your number 1 differentiator.”

followed by:

*“I know **I will find** other opportunities for us to work together.”*

This could have been a “one and done” project. I could have collected the money and moved on. Instead, this client is looking to “find” new opportunities to work with each other, and expend more of her hard-earned dollars, because of my attitude! Be intentional, press beyond your products and services and soon you will have an arsenal of your own stories and profits to share. Which brings us to the final section of the book.

CHAPTER 19

MEANING

“I want to work hard, collect my paycheck, commission check, or stipend and go home.”

The sentence above reflects the mindset of many American workers. Work is a requirement, a rather extended chore. Real life or, better yet, *the benefits* of real life, occur once I clock out or shut off the light in my corner office and head home. Responsibility and concern are not necessarily right-brain energies. But the concept of *meaning* is.

The majority of right-brain individuals strive to find meaning and inherent purpose in and through their lives. Remember the history lesson of chapter 2– the rebellion of the

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1960's? It was a generation crying out for greater meaning, greater purpose than the mindset of the sentence that started this chapter. For many, meaning centers on the individual. What's the meaning of life... *for me*? We're often questioning narcissists, focusing on the value of the one, and forgetting the value of the many.

The right-brained differ. The great screenwriters, authors, songwriters, and artists *want* to communicate something to the world. They see the world as bigger than themselves, or, at the very least, that *their ideas* are bigger than themselves. An old Irish quote stated something like: "I don't want to write the country's laws, I'll change society through *lyrics*." There's often a higher purpose driving the visual, literary, or musical artist. Watch *any* awards show and somewhere in the first fifteen minutes someone will reference how importantly their creative craft influences and benefits humanity.

Despite a left of right-brain temperament, your medium for difference making, from at least 9 to 5, five days a week, is *your business*. We don't often view business in that light. We use the outcome of business to make a difference in the world. If we're successful or fiscally generous, we might donate financial resources or give our time to charities, NGOs, or churches. Instead, we can create meaning directly through our businesses.

A social battle rages, especially in conservative circles, over whether a corporation is a "person." Despite the politics of the matter, a corporation has the capacity to change lives, hearts, minds and, I believe, even souls, if its directors, founders and employees recognize that the business can produce meaning in the lives of those interacting with it.

I'm confident that applying the principles and practicals in this book will produce success in your business. Take them to heart personally and they'll improve your relationships. But success means little if you don't contribute something to the world. Jack Johnson lyrically penned this about life:

"...cause it's a lonely little chain, if you don't add to it."

I want you to add to the world. I want you to share your great ideas and ideals with humanity. Regardless of whatever product or service you provide, you have a bigger platform than you realize. That you will soon discover.

You don't *have to* apply these principles and practicals if you choose against it. You don't have to read this upcoming section. Yet remember: there are few people that want to *be* Justin Beiber or Kim Kardashian. *We just want their stuff.* Can you say the same thing about Bono, Pope Francis, Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King Jr., or Nelson Mandela? They used their "stuff," whether talent, influence, money, character, or wisdom to make a difference.

In the end, do you want people to be jealous of your money? Or do you want them to be jealous of your character, compassion, insights, and wisdom? If you'd rather be known for the latter, I encourage you to read further. I believe the world will be better for it.

CHAPTER 20

MEANING STRATEGY #1:

BUILDING THE “POWER” OF YOUR CUSTOMERS

There are two main ways to be recognized as the most powerful person in a room. The first is to speak in such a lofty and authoritative way that everyone in the room succumbs to your superior intellect and commanding presence. The second is to inspire, challenge, and encourage others in the room so that they leave the room more powerful than they were before they walked in.

The first way is fairly easy, but it's elusive and laborious. At any time, someone else might step up to the plate, challenge our prowess, and put us in our place. More often than not, power plays are a ruse. All the patronizing speech is merely a cover up for our insecurities.

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The second way to be recognized is far more rewarding and intentional. It stems from the recognition that you do have something to say to the world. But your focus is on giving that information away to others, rather than steering the credit toward yourself. Each moment, you have the capacity to build someone else up, exalt yourself, or tear someone else down. The issue becomes who or what takes precedence in your life: your own sense of identity or the value and enrichment of others? There are obviously times to look out for number one, but remember in those moments, you already know what you know. It does you little good to use it to your advantage. At the end of day, doing so does little to improve *your* life.

By being intentional and attempting to build others up, you must delve into their conversations and listen more than you speak. That way, when the powerful moments present themselves, you're ready to offer whatever you have to share with the world. Each one of us is powerful in our own way. We all have the capacity to share something that will benefit others even if it is to help others learn from our mistakes.

There is nothing more rewarding then to hear someone say, "You can't believe what someone told me; it changed my life," only to smile and know they failed to realize I was the one that shared the idea. The reward is not rooted in the recognition, but in the fact that you were able to change someone's life.

Two ways to be recognized as powerful: the first may offer some egotistical satisfaction but, in the end, little is remembered and others leave the room deflated and discouraged (if not slightly disgusted). The second usually gets less fanfare, but you can rest comfortably at the end of the

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night, knowing that the little difference you made in the lives of others may just change us all.

Working from an Inspirational or Educational Experience Genre requires that you take the focus off yourself, and transplant it to your customers— both present and potential. Like a date where the other party spends their time engaging in the stories of their potential mate, the ability to build up and encourage your customers can be the difference between a single job opportunity or the repeat customer and referral.

People should feel good about themselves and about life after engaging with you and your company. This is harder to achieve than you might consider. Many of us default to the negative and it carries over into our business transactions. *Never* get a customer to agree with your bad mood. It’s a bad ethic and a poor way to retain customers. People may associate, but its outcome is fleeting. Customers are looking to be *encouraged and inspired*. It is why positive films with inspirational messages often generate the most box office receipts. Think of your opportunity to increase your customer’s power like going to a film: your role is to improve the lives of your customers during those moments of interaction with you or your employees.

Change peoples’ moods; shift their perceptions; increase their wisdom— and watch your customer base grow exponentially, your relationships blossom substantially, and your profits expand considerably.

ACTION ITEM

Examine your service and sales processes to determine if you’re truly making a positive impact in the lives of your

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customers. Interview your employees to ascertain who in your organization might be draining your customers' power and mood. Create actionable standards that benefit your customer base and encourage your employees.

CHAPTER 21

MEANING STRATEGY #2:

Never Forget “The One”

Success often equates to influence. Like moths to flame, people gravitate toward those having reached financial, social, and vocational pinnacles. Some of those having reached such pinnacles share wisdom-laced tales of humility and graciousness. Others employ PR companies to address the issues that arise from the dark sides of success.

Success is a powerful and potent phenomenon. Remember the axiom, *Perception equals Reputation*? We can say, in similar manner, that, Success fosters Emulation. People emulate successful people. It's why many that “make it” in society are paid extravagant amounts of money to address massive throngs at conferences and seminars. People carrying

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this level of success often revel in the energy of the crowds—and forget the importance of “the one.”

Conversely, I had a conversation with a twenty-one-year-old self-motivated young man just out of college. He had no tangible success nor little influence. This young man was struggling with life purpose, and, being a Christ follower, he was concerned with the “path God had for him.” He was thinking vocationally; what “job” was he going to take to stay on the “path?”

I ignored the question, offering him this assertion: “Your path is to positively influence whatever person God has placed in front of you in that moment.” Like many, he thought the goal was attained through a business vocation. Instead, business opens doors for the true purpose of our paths—influence.

These two examples, the successful keynote speaker and the young man with little societal credibility, need to recognize their visions carry the same clarion call; “Never forget ‘the one.’”

“The one” is the person in front of you at any moment.

As your success level elevates, your audience becomes a group, a crowd or even a society. Regardless, at any given moment along the way, interacting with “the one” still matters. Often, the person who has reached societal notoriety feels that speaking with just “the one” is beneath them. They’re too big for small moments. Sadly, they fail to recognize that those moments with “the one” can produce levels of insight rarely achieved in large crowd settings.

I have been around many on both sides of the influential spectrum. I am saddened by the young person who feels he or she has nothing to offer to the world and neglects “the one” due to a lack of confidence. But I am deeply burdened by the successful leader who feels that moments with “the one” are inconsequential and demeaning. Like a Ferris wheel, what goes up will most likely come back down. The arrogant leader’s

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crash is hard and often public. When you become successful enough to rudely inquire of those of with less influence, “don’t you know who I am?” the Ferris wheel is tumbling downward. People who produce meaning openly share their insights to the world but also never forget the importance of “the one.”

CHAPTER 22

MEANING STRATEGY #3:

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL EFFECTS OF EMPATHY

As much as we love to watch and read stories, we often forget that every person on the planet has a story of their own. Forgetting those stories often opens us up to judge. Judgment stems from a short sided and immediate view of the world. Judgment categorizes people in the moment. It fails to acknowledge a person's past, the parts of the story that comprise the person whose actions, beliefs, or preferences we judge.

Religious people often appear to be the most judgmental. They compare. They label. They look down upon. Ironically, the Leader of the most subscribed to religious system on the planet, Jesus, said metaphorically...

“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” Matthew 7:4-5 NASB

Why do you think this Man chose to use the word “speck” for something small, but “log” for something large? If you are describing something “large,” why not reference a boulder or a mountain, something that is actually big? Why a log?

Unlike a boulder or other large inanimate object that just “is” large, *a log is organic*. It starts from something *small* and that something is a seed. Slowly, with both time and the right amount of watering, the seed grows and germinates, sprouting into a solid and permanent tree. Eventually, the tree would be cut down and the final result of an initial seed is the log.

Like a log, the person we are at any moment is the culmination of that historical germination process in our own lives. Sometimes we carry a log of our own making. Other times, through tragic circumstances, our log has been made for us. But every log started as a seed. Jesus is not saying that there is no perceived speck in your brother’s eye; instead, each and every one of us has a log—and a seed—in our eyes. The question is *which object are you going to focus on?*

Judgment sees people for their logs; empathy recognizes and acknowledges seeds.

If we were to describe empathy in scriptwriting terminology, we would say that empathy cares about a character’s backstory. The seed of a person’s backstory makes up the story character of the moment. Empathy not only recognizes the backstory, it also enters the story through the other person’s eyes. An empathetic person sees the person holistically, understanding how the past formulates the present. He or she also strives to help the individual create a better future, not for himself or herself, but because that individual is a glorious part of the human race.

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Judgment sees logs. It often turns man against man. Empathy recognizes seeds and creates concern between men. Empathy requires us to relate, not merely be in relationship. I can be in your PTA, book club, office building, or church group, and, by default, be in relationship with you, yet never relate to your backstory.

SYMPATHY vs. EMPATHY

People often confuse sympathy with empathy. Sympathy creates a standard; measures others by that standard; then self-righteously grieves for the person missing that standard. Do you see how religion often fosters this mindset? In the highly successful and inspiring book, *The War of Art*, Stephen Pressfield compares fundamentalism and art, stating, “*There is no such thing as fundamentalist art.*” We could reinterpret and say that fundamentalism and the search for human meaning are mutually exclusive. Judgment is often bred in fundamentalism. Empathy develops when we recognize that not only does everyone have a backstory, but also that everyone has value. Sympathy is far more bent toward fundamentalism than empathy. Sympathy is feeling at someone, but empathy is feeling with someone.

What does that have to do with business? The better question is; who do you do business with? People! By relating to your customers through their backstories you create greater relational bridges, producing both meaning in their lives and profit in your corporate bank account.

EMPATHY THROUGH DESIGN

How can you create empathy through your visual design, branding, and advertising? Recognize that not everyone relates to visuals in the same manner. Too often, design agencies create work for their clients, and then for their client’s customers, based on personal visual preferences. A company’s look reflects the attitude and culture of the operation, but it

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may not resonate with the public it serves. Consider a racy commercial for a line of yogurt snacks, the arrogant attitude of a luxury car commercial, or a punk rock soundtrack in an advertisement for a line of preteen backpacks.

These advertisements make judgments on their customers that may or may not be accurate. They're often based on the effectiveness of the pitch of the agency on Madison Avenue, not on a sense of empathy to their customers.

Who buys the yogurt snacks and kid's backpacks? Moms! Who purchases luxury cars? Hopefully, those having gained some wisdom and some gracious life experience. Empathy says I am going to respect the temperament of my audience, across its broad and diverse demographics. Think about the commercials and messages that have inspired you to action? Would you say that they had *universal* appeal? Or did the commercial spotlight a small segment of the marketplace?

Great designers create visuals that inspire and energize the right-brained, while creating appreciation among the left-brained. Too much focus on the right-brained temperament and you alienate the left. Too much focus on the left-brained and you bore the right. Look over a magazine in your home and ask *which ads create empathetic bridges because the two brain types?*

EMPATHY TO YOUR CUSTOMERS

A good friend of mine has studied personalities for decades. She's been invaluable to me in walking out certain relational situations in business. She has focused on four segmented personality types: Analytical, Driver, Amiable and Expressive. Thankfully, unlike a program like Meyers Briggs (so what's an ETSJ exactly?), these name distinctions reflect their attributes. The trickiest personality type to negotiate is the Driver personality. The Driver is most often the central alpha male (or female) – they command control. They're natural leaders and usually have great ideas. The problem with the

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL EFFECTS OF EMPATHY

Driver, however, is that they think that the way they see the world, is the way *everyone* sees the world. Drivers are successful but they have little capacity for empathy.

I'm a Driver. I can get things done without much help and I can make things successful across many domains. But I'm a *redeemed* Driver: I recognize that the power I hold can be transplanted onto others.

Empathy creates the broadest swath of relational connection to you and your product or service. It presents an open hand to all comers. Bottom line, empathy takes work. Lots of work. Catering to a niche market requires you to understand a small segment of humanity. Empathy pushes beyond the niche boundaries.

Nordstrom could be considered an empathetic business, as could Disney and Apple. I'd also throw Southwest Airlines and Hampton Inn into that list. Can you name ten other empathetic companies? I'd be surprised if you could.

This doesn't mean that you don't target a particular demographic; it means that you never alienate *another* demographic with your visuals or messaging.

I recommend that you also take this approach in your personal life. Consider every conversation, every social media post, every Snapchat, or YouTube video and ask yourself, "Am I speaking with and acting with empathy – or my own self-serving agenda? Am I fulfilling my own needs or the needs, desires, and futures of others?" Social media would look entirely different if we started with that mindset before clicking a single key on our phone, keyboard, or video device.

Okay, enough preaching in this chapter; it gets really thick in the next one.

CHAPTER 23

MEANING STRATEGY #4:

HOW THE DOMINOS FALL: UNDERSTANDING THE OBJECTIVE OVER THE SUBJECTIVE

If there is one thing I'd like to skywrite over the entire face of the planet, it's this: *Subjective actions and declarations produce objective consequences.*

Imagine a man named John. John's the top performer in his small sized marketing firm, a five-year-old start up with twenty employees. John's in his late twenties and is an above average looking man. His youthful vigor and attractive charm serve him well at the company. As a marketing stud, John fancies himself as a bit of womanizer and often brags to his co-workers, "I can sleep with whoever I want. It's not really hurting anybody."

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Now, let's not get moral here. To John, his statement is true. He can sleep with whomever he wants, without consequence, as long as the moments are consensual. While his above declaration is subjective, there's been little objective repercussion, at least that he *knows* about. Suppose John contracts a serious STD, such as HIV, that one time he wasn't careful enough. Now John's life faces radical changes.

First, he must deal with the psychological complications of his new condition. His countenance falls and his anxiety rises, knowing he is now a "marked man" in future intimate encounters.

Second, he must visit the local clinic two times a week to monitor his condition, which thankfully remains negative. But since the clinic is only open between 8am and 6pm, he must leave the office during business hours at least once a week. The psychological pressure mounts and John's performance at the office suffers. John's attitude and lack of focus causes the firm to lose one of its top clients, a company responsible for a sizable twenty-three percent of the firm's yearly revenue.

Left to deal with the financial aftermath, decisions must be made. Do they fire John? Absolutely not. John still manages more accounts than any other employee. Instead, the firm decides to fire two lower tier employees. The first employee was a man in his mid-forties. In addition to a first and second mortgage, the fired employee had a daughter about to enter college. The prestige of the collegiate institution she could attend was contingent on his salary, and, without the funding, his daughter is forced to go to a lower quality school academically. This causes years of financial and social repercussion on the daughter, while daddy defaults on his mortgage obligations.

The second employee, a younger male just out of college, didn't have to deal with such critical financial decisions as paying a mortgage; but he did have a nine dollar a day latte habit at Starbucks. Unable to afford his java fix, Starbucks

loses approximately \$2,500 in yearly revenue. Add on a few more bad situations brought on by a few other Starbucks patrons and the local Starbucks lets one of its baristas go to cover the expenses, leaving the barista to also suffer the aftermath.

Back to John's company one more time. John never really shakes off the anxiety and depression and more clients travel elsewhere, taking essential revenue with them. Eventually, the company fires John. A year later, the company folds, the employees scatter, and the founders are left carting a quarter of a million dollars of debt. John's womanizing declaration had real and powerful consequence when the subjectivity of his verbal statement clashed with the objectivity of the real world.

Notice that the outcome started with John but traveled quickly and effortlessly, like a virus, into the surrounding landscape. Situations like John's happen around us ubiquitously, *we just rarely connect the dots*. As Jack Johnson brilliantly penned,

“...Wanna take a time lapse and look at it backwards.”

Connecting dots often begins by tracing them back to their sources.

You might think I'm a bit extreme here, but consider the power of this understanding. A good friend of mine is a private practice physician. He believes that diseases, such as diabetes, are not merely biologic complications but are strategic conduits. The *intent* of diabetes is to destroy the body. It is not that diabetes *inadvertently* causes body destruction. Diabetes needs a driver and that driver is poor diet, lack of exercise, etc.

My doctor friend sits with his patients and asks them to imagine a predatory animal such as a lion or bear. He then asks his patient, “If that lion could attack you, what would happen?” The patient naturally declares that the lion would most likely destroy your flesh and consume your body parts: your eyes, stomach, heart, etc. He explains that diabetes is like that lion; it

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craves to destroy you. The more you engage in poor dieting and lack of exercise, the more powerful the lion can become.

His insights have allowed him to speak to hundreds of doctors at conferences and he's changing how physicians see disease - not as complications or outcomes, but as deliberate strategies.

Years ago, I sat down with the Managing director of the Neurology Center at one of the top universities in the country. I presented him with a five-page paper on my findings in Neuroscience, and specifically how neuroplasticity, addiction, and certain seemingly "fundamental" moral declarations played out strategically. I took three seemingly disparate findings and connected dots.

A few days later, he called my office, asserting, "I don't know how you know my field at this level, but these are more profound insights than any of my neuroscientists and neurosurgeons have previously presented. After years of scientific study and the latest in technological advancement, the best we've been able to do is to pump people full of drugs or cut them. You're telling me there's a third way, and I believe it." We were negotiating a day of talks with his team to discuss these insights, until the economy collapsed in 2008 and, unfortunately, the moment passed.

I have another friend who started a non-profit centered around government and law enforcement partnerships to turn the tide on human trafficking. As we sat to discuss his business formulation, I told him, "if you want to address human trafficking, you need to go back to one of the main sources: *internet pornography*." I didn't make this declaration because of the "moral" implications of porn. The declaration was founded in the objective neurological complications attached to looking at porn, in private, in massive quantities, with little societal repercussion. I wrote a forty page Ebook entitled, "*Addictions Tipping Point*," elucidating how and why addictions are tipping in our society. The tip is not because of

the “sinful behavior” of its users, as a moralist might purport, but based on the physiological, philosophical, and technological evolution of our postmodern and secularized society.

Humanity suffers from disease, divorce, depression, despair, ad infinitum not simply due to our subjective actions, but also because of *the objective consequence* of our subjective actions. Those consequences weigh heavily on society, both individually and collectively.

Connecting dots requires us to drown out the surface noise of peoples’ declarations and focus on the outcomes that occur both to the individual and to the society at large. Empathy cares for the individual beyond their personal desires. It sees the big picture: past, present, and future. Apathy encourages people to continue down damaging pathways unhindered, blinded or callous to the objective consequence lying just beyond their subjective declarations.

A QUICK NOTE

I understand how these examples may align with certain religious beliefs. That’s an inevitable and tragic outcome. It’s also a gross failure of the religious... not the religion. Religious people often stop at the moral declaration; they see *the standard* over the individual and/or the local, national, and global community. That’s why the culture harbors so much animosity against many of the religious. Stopping with the standard fails to reveal the love behind the standard itself. Connecting dots requires the questioning of moral declarations, not for the sake of refutation, but for the sake of understanding *the reasoning* behind them.

Regardless of your belief system, actions produce consequences, no matter how emphatically an individual presents his or her arguments otherwise. When you, “*take a time lapse and look at it backward,*” in the life of your

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customers and employees, you can see paths to a better wellbeing than they may see through their own eyes.

CHAPTER 24

MEANING STRATEGY #5:

WHY YOUR WORLDVIEW MATTERS, or, “Why the Beliefs (often of others) Can Harm You.”

A number of years ago, I had the opportunity to speak on a radio program called *Ideashares Radio*. Its founder and principal host, Brian Church, is a good friend of mine. I have worked with him on his book cover designs as well as referenced him often in this book. His show is geared toward exploring and shaping the lives and passions of innovators, inventors, and entrepreneurs. Most often, his listeners are creative people who want to make a difference in the world—and make money through their visionary technological ideas.

I was brought on to discuss the power of technology in our modern world. As the conversation progressed, I noticed a thread in the dialog I wanted to unravel. We’d discussed the financial and personal implications of creating modern

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technology ad nauseum and I thought it was time to delve deeper. I threw out my own “high concept.”

“The single most important thing to consider when it comes to technology,” I asserted, “*is your worldview.*”

That was a shock to the system. After all, although we culturally argue over separation of church and state, ‘belief and business’ or ‘faith and tech’ (apart from a few parachurch organizations) are seemingly mutually exclusive. We shouldn’t mix our beliefs with our products, should we?

Actually, I will assert, that you do so every minute of every day. Unless you are a hunter gatherer in a nomadic tribe in a place like Botswana, having made all your own tools, cooking instruments, and dwellings, you are dangerously susceptible to the beliefs of others through everything you turn on, crank up, plug in, or operate.

Why?

The power of technology is not principally based on inventiveness, or ease of use, or material costs, or mass social application and adoption. **The power of every technology you own is based on TRUST.** When you turn on your car, pop a pharmaceutical product, click on your mobile phone, or hit the buttons on your microwave, you are first and foremost *trusting* that the product is going to work. We’re trusting it is going to turn over without us blowing up, help us heal without giving us heart disease, allow us to post to social media without catching fire, or nuke our breakfast burrito without destroying brain mass. How arrogant – or deceived – are we to believe that?

What gives us the right to believe that the things we purchase are going to accomplish working according to the manufacturers claims, rather than harm us?

Nothing.

How can we be assured that when we turn on the light switch, our house won’t catch fire?

We can’t.

How can we be sure that the diet soda we daily drink to lose weight won't cause brain cancer in twenty years?

Sadly, science (and legal litigation) proved that last sentence to be rhetorical.

Here's the question: By what standard do we trust that any product will function correctly and safely? With every technology we use, we unknowingly trust in the belief systems of the ones having created it or holding stake in the company, and that they care about us... over the bottom line.

Although it's absolutely necessary, it's also pretty bold. After all, you are educationally taught from about your early teens that many worldviews are irrelevant, or at best arcane and irrelevant. Consider this quote from Richard Dawkins, a man who has made a career out of dismantling certain "fundamental" worldviews while promoting naturalistic science:

"It's one thing to say people should be free to believe whatever they like, but should they be free to impose their beliefs on their children? Is there something to be said for society stepping in?"

What about bringing up children to believe manifest falsehoods?"

http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/atheism_pr.html

This mindset is a growing trend in society today. In place of religious and fundamental fallacies, we further celebrate a naturalistic, "survival of the fittest," Darwinist philosophy. I don't claim that this is scientifically wrong. Instead, I'd like to purport that it's technologically dangerous. I don't plan to argue the science of naturalistic belief. I (or any of us) wasn't there at the big bang, or the dawn of creation, or the moment of the first alien spawn of human life, or however it was accomplished. It is not the academic philosophy or tenets of the belief that carries problems, it occurs when those beliefs are applied.

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Consider, if you will (again), a young boy named Peter. Peter grew up in his early years in a religious home in the buckle of the Bible Belt (let's say Nashville). Although he attends his local church or synagogue or whatever, in Junior High he learns that his parents have lied to him and that the universe is devoid of intention. He's a product of random chaos, with no inherent meaning. Through proper and repeated direction, he rejects his previous beliefs. He continues into high school, learning more about the "survival of the fittest nature of man." In his late high school years, he reads (for credit) Nietzsche's *Uberman* and other naturalistic works, adding fuel to his self-centric fire. Maybe in college he tests these theories by stealing a young co-ed away from a close friend because, after all, "he's better looking, stronger, and savvier" than his weaker friend.

He fixates on the axiom that he's the center of his own universe. The television shows and movies he watches show people acting according to their own desires. His philosophy professors encourage him to trust only in himself. He's bombarded by naturalistic affirmation. By the time he receives his Master's degree, he's become the perfect secularized adopter, wholly rejecting the error of his previously antiquated religious ways. Chalk another one up for Richard Dawkins.

But let's suppose he gets an idea for an invention and a \$50,000 loan from his father to make it happen. He knows this product will make him a lot of money. Business coaches have encouraged him, test market theory validates it, and preorders are lining up to the tune of \$500,000 based on the working prototype he unveiled at a national convention.

But there's a problem.

Weeks before mass production, one of his techs discovers a major flaw in materials. There's an ever-so-slight possibility that the microprocessor in his widget can heat up enough to cause a spark and ignite a fire. It's a really slight possibility. It only happened in one of the two hundred tests, but to retrofit the problem will require another \$25,000 and set the project

back at least four months. Peter doesn't have the money, nor the time.

Peter has a decision to make. Does he release the product and make money or go back his retail stores, tear up his Letter of Intent, and tell them he's made a mistake? He may never recover. Dad's money is on the line; not mention his reputation and profitable future.

What does Peter do?

Does he do the "right" thing and shelve the product for the good and safety of his customers? Or, does he focus on profits and his personal future desires and release the product into an unsuspecting market? A better question is, what grounding is his decision based on? The belief system he spent decades marinating in, championed by the media masses and his collegiate professors, or a sense of "moral" obligation to humanity? Morality is a non sequitur according to everything he's been taught to believe. Why do we presuppose he would chose to forgo his own future for the good of those he has no vested interest in and reject the tenets of his own system of belief?

Is this extreme?

To answer that question, I'll ask another question. How do we ALL, regardless of our belief systems, react if Peter releases the product *despite* its danger. We scream bloody murder. We sue. We vilify him in the press. We jail the man. Then the last question is, "Why?" By what standard do we condemn Peter? The one we inculcated into him academically, culturally, scientifically, and philosophically, or some other standard?

According to a growing sector of our culture, you need a survival of the fittest, secularized worldview. That's great. Unless it clashes with a preconceived form of decency and empathy that the worldview itself doesn't adopt.

Think about it. The Airbag controversy of 2016; Merck's sale of a pharmaceutical product they knew caused heart

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attacks; Wells Fargo's deliberate hijacking of their customers' funds; the subprime lending debacle that led to the biggest recession in over fifty years—these were all based on a belief that money was more important than humanity.

I matter more than the people using my product or service.
The savvy should dominate the masses.

What belief systems champion this mindset?

When it comes to our trust in technology, we want, no, we desperately need, for people to subscribe to worldviews that value humanity over themselves, that purport that man has inherent value, and that the master should be the servant— even over his or her own desires. Where do these worldviews originate?

I'll leave that question hanging and say that marketing people and savvy corporations are starting to understand and adopt this cultural inherency, but what is their overarching reason?

To make more money!

The goal is get your customers *to believe* that you care, through your marketing and advertising, while often still focusing on the bottom line over the lives of your users.

Yes, despite a vehement cultural desire against the next comment— your worldview matters. This is not to say that a secularist will turn on his or her customers, or that religious people would never chose money over other people's wellbeing. The situation is *far more* nuanced than that. My point to you in this book is:

Don't be Peter.

Believe in something bigger than yourself and your own personal or corporate agenda. Care for humanity over the bottom line. Create good in the world, even if it means that profits might suffer.

We need more trust in the world.

CHAPTER 25

MEANING STRATEGY 6:

USING YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE TO COMMUNICATE HOW YOU VIEW THE WORLD

In conjunction with the last chapter, perhaps the most advanced form of meaning is learning how to use your business' product or service to communicate how you view the world. As business owners, we often temper our beliefs and worldviews in the workplace and marketplace. But as individuals, we are passionate about how we see our world, and our place in it. Can you mix personal convictions with business? *Should* you mix the two?

I believe it's possible and even necessary. You may be instrumental in the lives of your customers or those that come

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in contact with your product. But avoid the general misconception. Don't simply advertise *what* you believe; communicate *the evidence* of your beliefs.

You don't need to put a cross on your business card nor a Buddha on your website. That communicates *what* you believe. It often causes polarization when your beliefs conflict with another person's preconceptions. It also often creates hypocrisy, when your actions don't line up with your particular belief system's standards. Living in the Bible belt, I am fully aware how many people avoid companies displaying crosses or fish on their business cards and commercial vehicles, strictly because those business peoples' actions often fail to line up with any respectable standard of ethics.

Instead, *communicate the byproducts* of your beliefs or worldview. Most of you have something to contribute to the world beyond your product or service. I encourage you to broadcast it to the rest of us if it meets the following criteria:

What you communicate should not polarize.

I'm not a fan of Fox News nor MSNBC. It's not that I always disagree with what is said, I just don't like the way it's presented. Creating polarization may work for commercial ratings but it's terrible as a business and social ethic. While certain companies create niche marketshare by siding with one position or another, they are hurting humanity by alienating segments of the human race.

If your message creates polarization or division, I'd avoid placing it on your product box or adding it to your marketing message. That is not to say that *the preconceptions* of your worldview might not cause division. That's something that

may not be avoidable. But consider this: *your message* just may turn the tide of opinion on a preconceived idea or belief.

What you communicate should inspire and encourage humanity.

If your worldview holds transformative merit, it should inspire and encourage humanity. If you hold something in your heart you know could positively change the world, please present it. The book of Proverbs states: “*do you see a man who is skilled in his work, he will serve before kings, he will not serve before obscure men.*” I don’t believe this statement is simply stating; “be excellent, and you will have a large, influential platform.” Proverbs is a book devoted to wisdom and its application. Therefore, I believe the statement is claiming: “Be excellent, so that you have the opportunity to get audiences with influential people, and, at that moment, present the wisdom you have garnered.”

Today, the platforms are available *despite* the skilled work: from blogs to video blogs to Ebooks to YouTube and Vimeo clips— anyone, at any time, may have a “king” check out their online content and change the course of an entire nation.

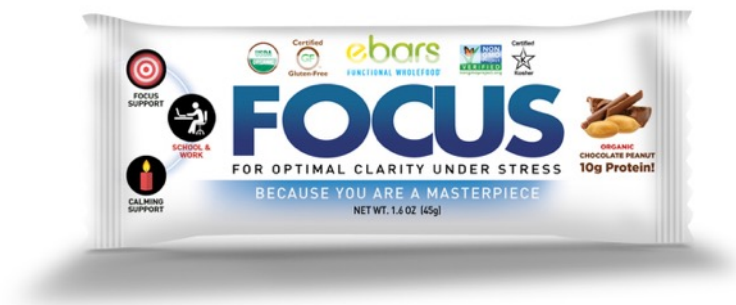
You may even be able to use your **product packaging** to communicate how you view the world:

eBars is a company I have worked with for nearly two years. Working with the company and developing a deep friendship with its proprietor, we had an incredible opportunity in the redevelopment of their energy bar label designs. This man has deep convictions in the value and importance of humanity, based on his worldview. While working on the

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redesign of the packaging, I encourage him to use this platform to communicate his insights to the world.

What we did was simple and concise. But it is as powerful and potent as anything I've seen in the marketplace. This is an image of the product packaging of one of their energy bars.



At the bottom of every bar, and on the front of every box, is the phrase: *“Because you are a masterpiece.”* This is how he views humanity. It is inspiring and encouraging. The impact of that single statement can change lives. Imagine a young girl, heavily depressed or even suicidal, walking into a health food store feeling hopeless about life. Looking over the variety of bars, she is hit with a statement that shifts her viewpoint: “I’m a masterpiece. I matter. I have worth.” Whether she buys the product at that point is inconsequential. He has made a difference in the world with this product packaging.

What you communicate should be subtle

If you are going to employ this strategy (and believe me, you don’t have to), you need to make it subtle. It needs to wash over the viewer or listener effortlessly. Don’t preach... *reveal*. Find a clever and subtle way to get your wisdom across to your

audience. Connect, encourage and respect your audience's sensibilities.

Perhaps the most subtle and powerful example is the door presented here.



This is the most popular door style in American homes. For most door owners, the intent of its original designers (crafted over 300 years ago) goes unnoticed. We have over a dozen of these doors in our home. It features six total raised panels. But do you see the significance of the panels? Do you recognize the motif? The door features a well pronounced cross, and, the slightly more subtle, open Bible. The original creators designed this door to communicate how they viewed the

world.

To this operation, the cross mattered so much that they made it a pattern on their products. They believed that when someone gazed on the door and recognized its significance, it would create transformation. For most people, it's simply a six-panel door. But I often wonder how many people have been radically impacted when the intent of the door unveils itself in full view.

Use subtlety and respect if you chose to evoke meaning with your product or service. If you have been given insights you feel the world needs to hear, and it meets the three criteria

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presented in this chapter, I'd love to see it in the global marketplace.

CHAPTER 26

ARE YOU MAKING “IT?”

A good friend of mine runs a C-level strategic consulting service. He works with numerous influential business leaders to improve internal operations, strengthen sales offers, and heighten marketing messages. His services are employed for the sake of his client's company's profitability. The bottom line matters and so they invest in my friend. After working with these high net-worth individuals for a number of years, he realized that while their companies were fiscally improving, these executives personally remained the same.

Oh sure, they had more money now, and that made them happier, maybe. Or, they'd gained more respect among their marketplace peers and that filled a pent-up need, perhaps. Still, while he transformed their companies, he saw little transformation in the lives of the executives.

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One day, he decided to ask a very successful executive a question during his exit interview. “I’m glad we produced such demonstrative success for your company,” he began, “but I have one more question if you don’t mind. This is one is about you personally.” The executive’s eyebrows furled slightly. “Shoot,” he said. “Okay,” my friend inquired, “what do *you* want to accomplish in life? Not your company, but you specifically?”

The executive, with throngs of employees under him, a substantial board of directors supporting him, and millions upon millions of dollars collected for him, looked at my friend inquisitively. “You know, I haven’t really thought about that,” he mused. After a few moments, the man said, “I guess I just want to know that I made it.” That was the answer my friend hoped he wouldn’t hear. This man had everything, but all he could think of was how to amass more.

Something came over my friend in the moment. Call it inspiration or his still Small Voice, but he knew what to say next. “Thank you for your honesty,” my friend said compassionately, “So the question then becomes, what is the ‘IT’ you’re trying to make?”

Since then, my friend has transformed his consulting approach. He now works with high net individuals to help them find their “Its” for the rest of their lives. He shifted his approach from success to legacy. One of my favorite lines of his is: “Are you making a living? *Or, are you making a life?*”

I ask the same of you. Are you just hoping to make it or are you willing to ask yourself what that “It” might be for you, your family, your community, or your world? Like I stated in the introduction of this book, I wasn’t going to write a book just to help you make money. I want the successful outcome of this book to fuel and propel the personal “its” of your life.

THE TWO SCREENS

As a Christian believer, I have been taught since I was a little child that prior to entering those “pearly gates” after we die, we will be shown a replay of our lives. All the good and bad things we’ve done will be cinematically brought before our eyes: helping the older lady across the street, that time we got too drunk in public, those fights we had with our spouses. I had been told all that stuff would be visually broadcasted. Then after the film ended, how we have lived and the choices we made would determine where we were headed. I’m not so sure that’s the replay.

I think there will be TWO screens.

The first screen will have all that: a collection of snippets from the life you lived, but the second screen will be a video account of the life you were *supposed to live*. The true intention of what God had for you to accomplish during your lifetime. In that moment, we will see how things like insecurity, pride, greed, fear, anger, resentment, and unforgiveness prevented us from listening and acting on the God-intended life meant for us. As we stand, facing the differences between those two screens, I believe many of us will weep in heaven.

I wrote this book in hopes that I could be some small part of helping those two screens merge, however so slightly or profoundly.

We can entertain. We can influence.

We can collect. We can bestow.

Success affords us options. The options we choose to further with that success are entirely up to us.

Unlike the introduction, I wrote this chapter *after* nearly finishing this book. But the implications of this chapter coated everything written prior. I don’t know your story. I don’t know what past circumstances turned you into the man or woman you are today. Too often, we demean people in the present

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without acknowledging their pasts. But I hope I have a slight say in your future. Don't just strive to "make it." Figure out what "it" is and make it your life's mission to fulfill that "it" with all the gusto you can muster.

CHAPTER 27

IN CONCLUSION...

Design. Story. Meaning. In this book, I presented and detailed three of the “operating energies” of the right-brain thinker. Sit with an artist, a poet, a musician, or a writer. At some point in the conversation, one, or all, of these energies will come up in the conversation. I don’t know why right-brain centric people are so passionate about creativity and purpose, but we are.

We draw people in. It often starts with our creative talents and then captivates further with our expressiveness about life. In similar manner, your products or services should draw people into your business. The ways they are presented play a huge part in their allure, as we learned in the first two sections of this book. But once you draw in the customer, keeping them requires that you evoke passion. Passion in your interactions. Passion in your employees. Passion in your customers. Without

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it, a potentially long-standing customer may simply be a one-hit-wonder client.

A few days ago, I sat with one of the most powerful men in the advertising world. He built his company billing well into the nine figures and sold it a short time later to one of the most recognized agency conglomerates in the world. He had read the galley of this book and wanted to share his thoughts.

“David,” he started, with a compassionate but commanding tone, “I understand precisely what you are saying here. In my agency, we went from being partners with our biggest clients, to preferred vendors, to vendors, to just another company filling out RFPs (requests for proposals) to get the bid.”

Despite the fact that they were producing right-brain products, the times and the circumstances had caused them to become just another agency in a sea of competitors. Do not think the change was based on a lack of creativity. These people developed some of the most iconic slogans and brands in the history of advertising, but it wasn’t enough to keep them out of the commoditization game.

My company gets referred often. Granted, we produce phenomenally creative work. But ninety-percent of those referrals have nothing to do with our services or the visuals and marketing we output. Instead, our clients talk about how, “great we are to work with,” or how, “we just simply understand them as people.” It’s *all* calculated.

We are ending the book now. The last few lines of this chapter are being typed as we speak. My worst fear is that you place this book (or tablet, or smart phone) down and, with an elated sigh, think, “Well, that was an enjoyable read.” Instead, I hope I have disrupted your thoughts and influenced your future.

I often tell people I was personally mentored by Jim Collins, Malcolm Gladwell, Timothy Ferriss, and Seth Godin. When they energetically question how I was so fortunate to have accomplished this, I simply state, “I *applied* why I learned

in their books.” That might deflate them a bit, but it’s true. We’re the great collective of our past learning— as long as we apply those authors’ insights.

Many people claim that men like Socrates and Aristotle may have been the smartest men to have ever lived. I disagree.

They had their moments in historical time. But we have a vast array of additional intellectual wealth to connect together to produce new insights yet uncovered. We can combine the thoughts of men like Aristotle with others like Descartes, Hawking, and Kiyosaki and create something entirely new and more revelatory than any of these men discovered on their own.

Sorry to shift to a philosophical tone at the end of a book on right-brain creativity, but I warned during the introduction that I wasn’t just going to write another book. Besides, if you leave thinking this was just a book about creative thinking then I missed my mark entirely.

It’s time to revolutionize your industry. It’s time to stand before kings. It’s time to rival Bono in your ability to produce success and significance. I’ve given you a few pointers to help get you there. I’ve revealed a few signposts to consider on the roadmap of your personal journey. The Design and Story sections help accelerate success and increase your company’s infrastructure. Meaning gave you the tools to understand how to operate with your customers and employees when you get there.

For now, I am handing off the baton. Run forward, always observing those running next to you, those running behind you, and those running ahead of you. Never attempt to beat those ahead of you by neglecting those behind. Never brag to those running next to you, too often you’ll find yourself quickly losing pace.

I hope to hear about your company in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes* or *Inc. Magazine*. I will revel in your success.

CRE8TVE SUCCESS

But I will energetically rejoice if the story is about the difference you are making in the world.

Live inspired.

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