

# THE PASSION CONVERSATION

## Sparking and Sustaining Word of Mouth

PRESENTATION SUMMARY | May 17, 2018

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### Marketing Problems are People Problems in Disguise

**KEY QUOTE:**

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

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

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

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

**TAKEAWAY**

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

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**KEY STATS:**

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

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

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

source: Keller Fay “Talk Track®” study

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

source: Harris Interactive Report

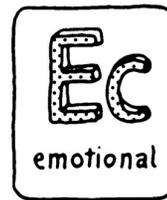
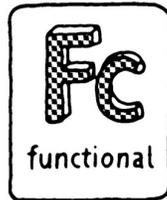
**KEY PHRASE:**

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

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## Sparking a Passion Conversation

### Three Conversation Motivations:



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

People engage in Functional conversations about brands to get information needed to make decisions and to better interpret the world around them.

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

#### TAKEAWAY

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

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

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

#### TAKEAWAY

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

#### KEY PHRASE (repeated for emphasis)

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

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

Brands that invoke strong emotions are more likely to be talked about. When we are overjoyed about a brand, we tell others. When we are disgusted about a brand, we also tell others. And, when we are indifferent about a brand, we don’t tell others.

High arousal emotions, like amusement and anxiety, spark word of mouth conversations. Low arousal emotions, like contentment and sadness, are less likely to spark word of mouth conversations.

**TAKEAWAY**

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

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## Sustaining a Passion Conversation

### Three Brand Story Strategies:

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#### Strategy #1 | Improve a Life

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The brand story of how a product/program/service can improve a person's life is one that will get shared for years and years. Whole Foods practices this story daily by sharing how eating whole foods leads to living a whole life.

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#### Strategy #2 | Make it Better

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Lots of good products and services exist. However, there is always room to make good *better*. Beer is good and many the craft beer brands are making it (beer) better through higher quality ingredients and more flavor.

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#### Strategy #3 | Right a Wrong

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

Turbo Tax fights the injustice of the poorest people having to pay the most money to get their taxes done at a tax prep shop. Instead of paying hundreds of dollars to have someone else prepare their taxes, Turbo Tax software allows people to pay significantly less by empowering them to do their own taxes.

**BIG THOUGHT**

To **Right a Wrong** is to fight an injustice ("monster") that exists in the marketplace. It's a situation where the rights of a person or a group are ignored ("are being defeated").

### Finding Your Fight

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The following exercises will help your business to better understand your core values in order to identify the monster in the marketplace that is worth fighting. Your monster should be big enough that you may never defeat it. And, your monster should inspire action from both employees and customers. By identifying what you are fighting against then you automatically know what you are fighting for. The most successful brands understand fighting an injustice is not about criticizing what is wrong; instead, it is about celebrating what is right in the world.

## **I. Design your Business as a Superhero**

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

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

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

## **2. What Then Why**

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Fighting a monster in the marketplace can become very personal. Something deep inside of you motivates your behavior when at work. This exercise will help you to uncover a personal motivation that can compel you to fight against a business-related injustice. Start by making a descriptive statement about what your business does. Then, ask "why" that is important. Once you've asked a few "whys" you will uncover a fundamental reason for why your business exists. Here's an example:

descriptive statement:

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

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

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

*WHY do the freshest local ingredients taste better?*

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

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

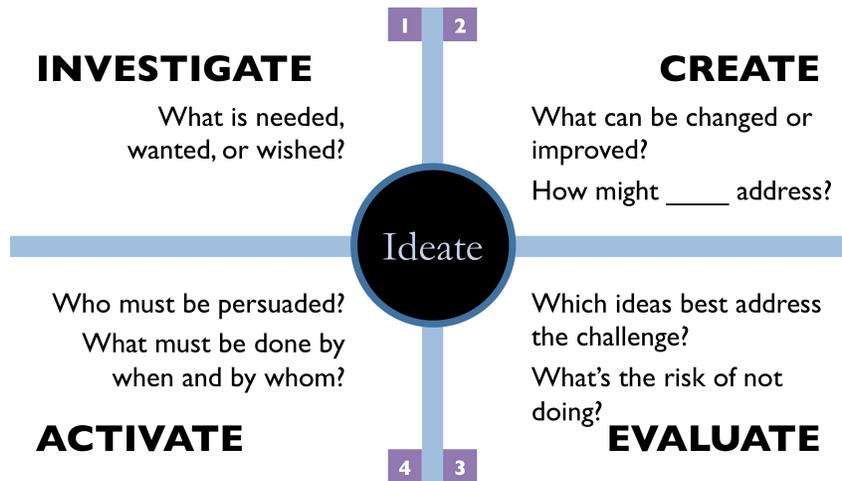
**Everyone benefits from eating foods grown by passionate and skilled local farmers. The environment benefits and our health benefits.**

*WHY is it important that everyone benefits?*

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

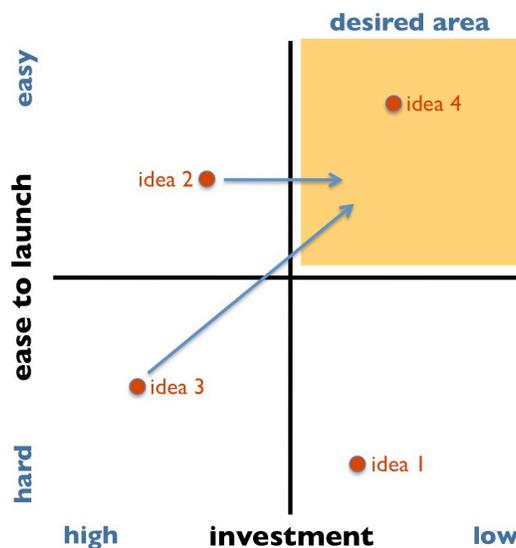
# Ideation to Innovation

## 4-step Investigation to Activation Process



## The 2x2 Decision Grid

To help you select the best ideas for your business, plot them on a 2x2 Decision Filter Grid. This grid measures INVESTMENT and EASE OF LAUNCH.



The ideas in the upper right hand quadrant are prime to act upon because they are both easy to launch and low cost. For ideas outside of the desired area, your goal is to find ways to reduce their complexity and expense in order to make them easier and less expensive to act upon.