



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?

When my eldest granddaughter was a mere child of four years old, she asked my eldest daughter a rather precocious question, "So Aunt Katie, what do you do?" This question is one all of us encounter, particularly when making new acquaintances. I'm still not sure, despite answering this question many times, that my birth family members know what I do, other than "marketing," whatever that means to each of them.

"What do you do?" is an important question for all of us to ponder. It addresses what business we are in and our "WHY," our purpose that differentiates us from competitors. Our WHY is our Brand Idea, the theme of our differentiated Brand Positioning Strategy employed to create brand loyalty. "Create" refers to bringing customers into existence. "Brand" is that entity comprising a constellation of shared values with those customers based upon their experiences with us. "Loyalty" is about the customers' unswerving devotion to our brand, not product but brand.

First, let's address our business. Recently, my musing covered the regression of the REACH Toothbrush—characterized by a unique and purposeful design where "form follows function"—to the same design as its competitors, where "function follows form." If one were to answer the question in what business is the REACH Toothbrush engaged, the answer to the first brush design would be the "oral health business." The answer to the second is the "toothbrush business."

The distinction between the two is rather significant. The former would direct and compel stewards of the brand to seek ways to maximize the design of the toothbrush and even introduce new products that contribute to fostering better oral health. The latter business is all about manufacturing and selling what you have—just another ordinary toothbrush.

Now for the WHY. Note that there is a difference between oral hygiene and health. The first could suggest a focus on cosmetic values (e.g., a brighter smile), whereas the second is concerned with keeping the teeth you have healthy, which includes gum health. That brings me to the potential WHY or Brand Idea for the REACH Toothbrush at launch: the most thorough cleaning to advance our quest for a cavity-free society.

Let's examine an example in the ophthalmology field. The business for a given category might be cataract removal or, as an option, restoring sight. Again, there's a significant difference between the two. The first gets at the removal of a negative. In contrast, the second promises the gift of sight and

would, therefore, encourage developments that, at minimum, might result in less trauma to the eye during surgery that might negatively impact vision. As per the WHY, it could simply be providing the gift of sight nature intended.

So then, what business am I into? I think it is the development business—developing markets, brands, people (including myself), relationships, and, where possible, society. My WHY? I like to think it is to inspire and empower marketers to make a difference in advancing society by better satisfying essential customer needs and desires than their marketplace competitors. My "HOW" is coaching, mentoring, and serving as a sounding board to advance the science—proven principles, best practices, and quality processes—and art of marketing. My "WHAT" is conducting customized workshops, consulting engagements that harness the collective wisdom of the client team, and thought-provoking blogs that, hopefully, inspire marketers to reach a place they might not get to on their own.

So, what do you do?

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