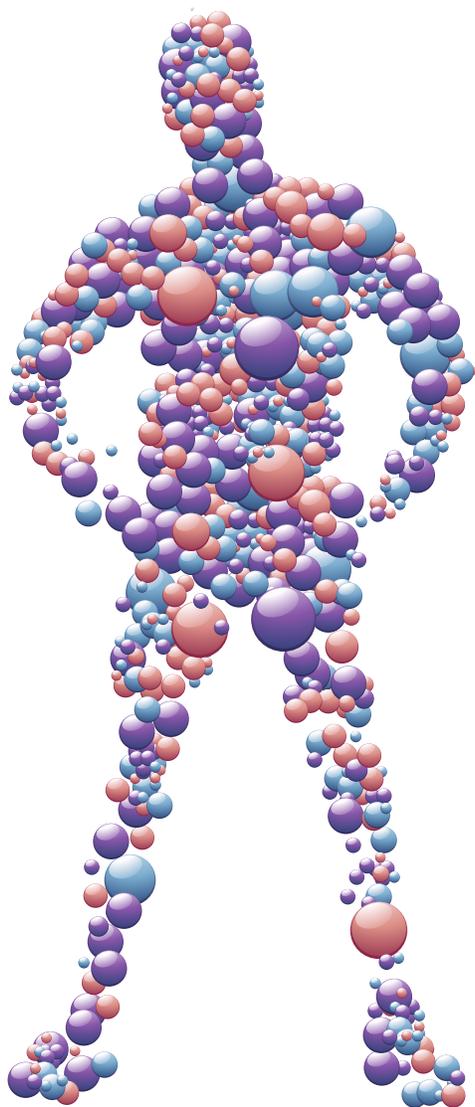


Abstract

Customer DNA

An Insightful Narrative About Succeeding



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0053D4A2(R03)

Customer DNA

An Insightful Narrative About Succeeding

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February 2010

Foreword

Finally! Here's a book that cuts through the clamor of the marketing pitches and programs of the month. This book tells you exactly what you need to know in order to focus your efforts and eliminate the white noise.

This book will comfort and reassure the independent businessperson and rejuvenate the slumping enterprise. Once you have completed this book you will no longer be tempted by the slick concept of the month. Instead, you will be able to objectively evaluate each proposed concept, extracting and successfully executing the ideas of value.

This is the book that you will re-read every time you begin to lose your focus and/or enthusiasm. The dog-eared pages will attest to its value as a valuable reference and reliable guide.

– Steve McNair

Editor and Publisher, Weekly News Summary, Transaction News and Strategies for Success
www.TransactionDirectory.com



Introduction

A book tightly shut is but a block of paper.
– Chinese Proverb

If there is one thing about which we business owners can be certain it is that we compete in a world of abundance. Today's environment is all about convincing your customers, smothered by numerous choices, that your offering rises above the rest.

The effects of abundance are different than previous impediments to success. Startling well documented information from the research firm EnviroSell illustrates the difference very clearly. Whereas the Small Business Administration, The National Federation of Independent Businesses, Dun and Bradstreet and others agree that insufficient funds and poor management are the most frequent cause of business failure, EnviroSell tells a different story. In a supermarket, for instance, EnviroSell reports that nearly 90% of all new products introduced fail.⁽¹⁾ While this number is astonishing, what is more astonishing is the fact that failure has nothing to do with the product. Failure is caused by the fact that no one ever buys any of these new products to try in the first place. Let's face it, if new products had immediate great sales, would either money or management be called into question?

And it's not just supermarket products that face this challenge. It is a universal dilemma. The problem faced by businesses today is not how to create a product to fill a need? The problem is how to explain a product in a way that will displace a competitive product already filling that need?

Offering a solution to that problem is what we do.

Manna Groups is a business consultancy. Our purpose is to explain how products are successfully promoted & sold and to foster the talent required to bring about that success.

We conduct our business in three ways: as consultants, as seminar instructors and as public speakers.

Our business model, Customer DNA, is built on the understanding that all organizations have exactly the same opportunity to be successful because all organizations have exactly the same three resources to become successful: talent, time and money. Manna Groups submits that success is not dependent on the quantity of these resources. It couldn't be otherwise or startups like Apple, with fewer resources than IBM; Starbucks, with fewer resources than Maxwell House and McDonalds, with fewer resources than White Castle could not have come into existence and flourished.

It is presumed that all serious business undertakings possess a virtuous product(s) - but that's not enough! This is validated by the 90% failure figure cited above. Breaking in is one thing, breaking through is another and that means conquering the post-product development challenges of creating enticing and persuasive customer messages, finding rapid and eloquent solutions to problems and constantly uncovering new products and business opportunities. Sculpture, Broadcasting and Unusual Mind are the descriptors Manna Groups has given to these tenets it believes are the means to conquering these challenges.

Let's get started!



1

Popping For Profit

*The world shall perish not for lack of wonders, but for lack of wonder.
– J.B.S. Haldane*

Orville Redenbacher was a rich man and a well-educated man but that didn't guarantee he would be a successful popcorn salesman. He was a graduate agronomist from Purdue University on a mission to make the best popping corn ever. Accounts of his efforts say he tried thousands of different ways to achieve his dream of making the best popcorn.

Eventually Orville and his partner, a man named Charlie Bowman, determined they had the perfect popcorn. They named the popcorn RedBow, a joining of each partners name, and took the popcorn to market.

Around 1960 Orville began selling, out of the back of his car, what he knew to be the lightest and fluffiest popcorn ever. He priced it higher than the others because he knew it was better than the others.

For ten years, with sales that were less than impressive, Orville pursued his mission of bringing the best ever popcorn to market. One can only imagine the frustration he felt during that time. Here was an educated, well-financed entrepreneur, driven by a tremendous enthusiasm for what he knew to be a superior, self-descriptive – it could be tried

by tasting – product. Yet, he could not find a way to gain widespread acceptance for this product.

In 1971, eleven years after he started selling RedBow, Orville decided he had to change the way he was thinking about his popcorn. He consulted with an advertising agency that told him to drop the RedBow name, to personalize his product by calling it Orville Redenbacher Popping Corn and to appear himself in TV commercials.

Sales improved dramatically.

Some people say it was Orville's friendly face that shot his popcorn to the top of the charts. But that's not the case. Lots of products promoted by lots of people with friendly faces have failed pitifully.

What did it was this additional advice his ad agency gave him: "Use the word 'Gourmet' to describe the popcorn."

It was the choice of that single word, "Gourmet," which separated his product from all others. What Redenbacher's advertising agency had tapped into was an understanding of how the human mind assigns meaning to the messages it receives through the senses.



Customer DNA

"What Redenbacher's advertising agency had tapped into was an understanding of how the human mind assigns meaning to the messages it receives through the senses."



As you read this account think about what gourmet means to you. It is no doubt different than what it means to the thousands of others whom have read these words, but one thing you all have in common is that gourmet means something special, something above the ordinary.

What Orville did by using the word gourmet was to link his popcorn to a belief in your mind of something special.

No other popcorn had ever described itself that way. And from that day forward no other popcorn could describe itself that way as a means to compete with Redenbacher. What could any competitor say about his product to convince you that they had something better than gourmet? They couldn't say their product was better, fluffier, or lighter because in your mind nothing is better than gourmet.

Orville had shut the door on his competitors; and his popcorn - at a higher price - became the best selling brand, accounting for one third of all popcorn sold in the country!

It was the message not the product that made the difference.

What Orville accomplished with a single word - gourmet, is what Manna Groups defines as Sculpture. To succeed in business you must be able to communicate persuasively and the most powerful realization of persuasive communication is to be able to Sculpt a message that connects your product with

a belief that already exists in the mind of your customer.

Sculpture is a radical departure from the much-publicized practice of differentiation.

Differentiation focuses on product uniqueness and the power of the advertising budget. By definition, differentiation is a high dollar ball game in which only high dollar companies can play. This in itself brings the validity of differentiation into question. If high dollar differentiation is the path to success what explains, for example, the failure of so many car models once manufactured by high dollar automobile companies?

Sculpture is a low cost activity because it focuses on the message wrapped around the product, not product enhancements. This means Sculpture is almost indifferent to the size of the advertising budget.

However, size and cost, being the significant considerations they are, pale in comparison to this critical human communication factor that exposes the primary flaw in differentiation.

Differentiation bases its premise on you being able to convince the consumer your product is better than another. Making such a claim is not only ineffective, it is harmful. Why? First, because it acknowledges in your customers mind that you're chasing your competitor, not leading him. Second, and most importantly, because before a customer can agree that your product is better they must first acknowledge their



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"Differentiation bases its premise on you being able to convince the consumer your product is better than another. Making such a claim is not only ineffective, it is harmful!"



existing beliefs are faulty – that they made a poor choice in selecting your competitor’s product. Few people will acknowledge, let alone set aside time to evaluate, something that makes them feel their existing beliefs are faulty.

The way to replace your competitor in the mind of your customer is to link your customer’s existing beliefs to your product, not to challenge their wisdom in product selection.

Remember Orville tried for 11 years to convince people his popcorn was better, (it was by the way much better), but it didn’t work because people would have to first acknowledge their current popcorn selection was the wrong choice.

But by calling his popcorn “gourmet,” ah, that didn’t force customers to admit they were wrong. It informed customers that they could have something special.

This is important to understand! When the customer says your product is better that compliments the customer’s wisdom. When you say your product is better that challenges the customer’s wisdom and that’s a no no.

Now you know why as a customer your own mind responds to the differentiation claim of being better by thinking, “Everybody says their stuff is better!”

Sculpting messages is not a process for creating new beliefs. It is a process for connecting with and reinforcing existing beliefs.

Well then, how does one go about Sculpting a magic message? By first discovering the basic and invariable meaning of how your product is seen by your customer. It’s called Pulsing and we cover that next.



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“When the customer says your product is better that compliments the customer’s wisdom. When you say your product is better that challenges the customer’s wisdom and that’s a no no.”



2

Riding The Crest Of The Wave

*Man is made by his belief. As he believes, so he is.
– Bhagavad Gita, 500 B.C.*

This is a true story from the early 1960's as related to us by a pioneer in telecommunications. The pioneer was demonstrating the computer terminal, (it was usually a Teletype machine or a modified IBM Selectric model typewriter), which was at that point in time considered the future of computing. The terminal was connected via telephone to a central processing unit which was located in a separate room from the one in which the terminal resided.

To demonstrate how access could be gained to the remote computer, the pioneer had written a program that would reveal the day of the week on which a certain date fell. To get observers to provide a date for testing, the pioneer would ask a member of the audience to state their birthday, type it into the terminal which would then print out the day of the week the date fell on. That was it. That was the total demonstration. That was the whole show for demonstrating telecommunications.

However, something magical happened after the show was over. The maintenance man assigned to setting the room for the next day's events came up to the pioneer and asked to have the day of week printed

for his birthday. The pioneer obliged and when the maintenance man saw his day printed on a piece of paper said, "Wow! You have invented a birthday machine!"

That statement by the maintenance man is as powerful a definition of basic and invariable meaning as can be constructed.

What the maintenance man revealed by his declaration was that the meaning of a product is determined by the meaning assigned by the customer and that emanates from the beliefs held by the customer - not the meaning or the beliefs declared by the vendor.

To the maintenance man that Selectric typewriter was not a telecommunications terminal, it was a birthday machine. And if you wanted to sell the machine to him you would have to call it that!

When you visit your doctor he doesn't ask what your heart rate and blood pressure are, he takes your pulse and cuffs your arm.

To know what your customer feels about your product, you don't ask, you take their pulse. You observe their behavior. You listen to their problems, their plans and



Customer DNA

"...the meaning of a product is determined by the meaning assigned by the customer and that emanates from the beliefs held by the customer - not the meaning or the beliefs declared by the vendor."



the way they perceive and describe your competition. You spend as much time with them as common sense and courteous behavior allows. Your objective is to capture and comprehend their beliefs. Here's a real life commercial example of how it works.

Soy powder for making soy milk had been available in the U.S. for a number of years with sales, to put it kindly, less than anticipated. Boxes of soy powder literally sat unnoticed and unpurchased in the dry goods section of grocery stores. The nutritional value and health benefits of soy were generally well known yet did not entice buyers enough to purchase the product.

As with Orville's popcorn, one can only imagine the frustration felt by those marketing the product. It seemed inconceivable that in a world of health conscious consumers a heart healthy high quality protein product, low in fat with zero cholesterol, wouldn't literally jump off the shelf. But it didn't. There had to be an explanation. The question was where to go to get it?

By observing customer behavior, by taking their Pulse, it became abundantly clear that when people went to buy milk, they went to the dairy case, not to a shelf that housed warm, dry powder. Customers could not make the mental leap of seeing how soy powder could be thought of as milk. There was just something wrong

with calling powder in a box - milk. It didn't conform to people's existing beliefs of how milk should look and feel.

In 1996 a company called White Wave, aware of the pulsed results from milk buyers, capitalized on understanding the basic and invariable meaning by which customers defined milk. White Wave learned that if a product is going to be labeled milk it has to be liquid, it has to be cold and it has to be packaged in a carton that looks like a milk carton.

Today that product is called Silk. It is a liquid, packaged in the customary gable-top carton and is located in the refrigerator case next to cow milk. Did it work? You bet! Silk enjoys continued sales growth and is available in more than 90% of all supermarkets.

Silk is also available as a chocolate drink and is reported to be the second best selling chocolate milk in the country even though there is no milk in Silk.

It was the message not the product that made the difference.

Pulsing revealed the belief that milk held in the customer's mind. It was the discovery phase, the essential act of discovering the basic and invariable meaning of something.

Packaging Silk in a gable top box and displaying it in the refrigerator section next to cow milk was the Sculpture phase, the act of constructing a message that parlayed with the customer's beliefs.



Customer DNA

"It was the message not the product that made the difference."



3

Let's Go For A Cup Of Coffee

*Be not afraid of growing slowly; be afraid only of standing still.
– Chinese Proverb*

Now here's a story worth repeating for those who are waiting to read about the role of research in product promotion and business development.

Starbucks was a very small locally known business when Howard Schultz decided he wanted to buy them. The "research" that led Schultz to that decision is a classic example of Pulsing. Here are Schultz's own words explaining how he decided to buy Starbucks.

"I went to Seattle in 1979 for the first time; it was one of those majestic days, which we have now and then of sunny skies. I saw this little coffee company and did everything I could to get them to hire me. I was fortunate enough to join Starbucks in 1982 when there were 4 stores. In 1987, with a group of investors, I had no money of my own; I was fortunate enough to buy Starbucks for \$3.8 million. We had 6 retail stores and about 100 employees.

... I was in Italy in 1983 and like so many people I became enamored with the Italian coffee bar, which is so ubiquitous throughout the

country. What I saw was not only the coffee but also most importantly the human condition and the sense of community that existed in these stores. The dream was to bring that back (to America) and to create a place, a third place between home and work that could act as this community-gathering place.

... Technology has given us lots of tools and lots of resources but it's also made us very secular in what we do everyday and there is a need and a longing for human connection and that human connection comes to life every day in a Starbucks store."⁽²⁾

What Schultz discovered was the basic and invariable meaning of a Starbucks store. Nearly all Americans not only believe in, but everyday participate in, something called a coffee break. Schultz Sculpted a message in harmony with that belief. Until Starbucks there were only two places where the coffee break existed – home and work. Starbucks provided a third place for those longing for human connection outside the home and away from work.



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"What Schultz discovered was the basic and invariable meaning of a Starbucks store."



“We are not in the coffee business serving people, we are in the people business serving coffee. It’s interesting that people say, “I don’t talk to anyone at Starbucks, but it’s the most social thing I do all day!”(3)

It was the message not the product that made the difference.

At last count Starbucks operates about 16,000 stores in 49 countries making them the largest coffeehouse company in the world. Several years ago, on a square foot basis, they outsold Wal-Mart in music CD’s.

Starbucks spent no money for “formal” research to make the decision to create a public place to take a coffee break. During its early fast growth years it also declined to advertise.

What Howard Schultz did with Starbucks is a quintessential example of what can result from discovering the basic and invariable meaning of your product and sculpting a message around it. Schultz did it. How can you do it? We answer that next.



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4

Unusual Mind

*It takes a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious.
– Alfred North Whitehead*

Ask yourself how often you or those around you, after learning of a successful new product or a solution to a problem, proclaim, “Why didn’t I think of that – it’s obvious?” It makes one wonder why we don’t, “undertake an analysis of the obvious,” more often considering the reward that such an undertaking generally provides.

The obvious gets overlooked because it lies outside our frame of interest. It’s the classic dilemma that product planning and marketing groups live with. If we work for a widget factory our minds unwittingly constrain our research to the world of widgets. The fact is we make our money selling widgets so we concentrate on ways to sell them.

Thinking in an unusual way is just not an automatic activity. If it were, soy milk wouldn’t have sat on the shelf for years being ignored by the very same people who later embraced it wholeheartedly.

Thankfully, Unusual Mind is an identified process and that means it can be taught and it can be learned.

Here’s a puzzle we have been using for years in our Unusual Mind seminar to illustrate what we mean. We call this

step in our seminar, 3D - for Deny Data Dependency. It means that to develop an Unusual Mind you must deny data the power of determining the process you use for seeking a solution to a problem.

Here we go!

As chairperson of a tennis tournament it is your job to announce the annual tournament and arrange the matches.

It’s a singles only tournament with a single elimination rule. That is, it’s one against one. You loose once and you’re out of the tournament. Got it? One on one, loose once and you’re out.

You post the tournament notice and 111 people sign up to play. Now here’s the question: what is the minimum number of matches you have to arrange to determine the winner of the tournament?

The answer is given below, but before you read on try and determine the answer for yourself. What is the minimum number of matches you must arrange to determine the winner?

Above we said that what makes a mind unusual is that first it does not permit the data to drive the analysis. Stated differently, it does not permit a problem



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“The obvious gets overlooked because it lies outside our frame of interest.”



containing numbers to infer that arithmetic is the only solution finding process.

Before we give you the answer to the tennis question, let's rephrase the question using the exact same data. One hundred eleven signed up. It's a one on one, loose once and you're out tournament.

Now here's the question rephrased. If 111 people signed up, how many of them would have to loose if there can only be only one winner?

Well, if 111 started, 110 would have to loose - and that's the answer.

Now you could solve this problem using math and perhaps some of you did by setting aside a by on the first set of matches to start with 110 players that you divided by 2 to get 55 survivors. Then you added in the by player to get 56 survivors and divided again by 2 to get 28 survivors and so on until you concluded that 110 was the answer.

Your solution is acceptable, but it's costly. It cost you time. And time, as we said in the introduction to this book, is one of only three resources you have to succeed in business (the other two are talent and money). The more time you take to solve a problem the more your solution costs.

Earlier we said that quantity of resources is not a deciding factor in breaking through with your new enterprise. This is a clear example of how thinking with an Unusual Mind can negate the greater quantity of

your competitor's resources and levels the playing field. All you had to do was stop, (we call it Interrupt and you'll read more about this in the next section), and rephrase the question. If you did, the answer would have been obvious in less than 2 seconds.(4)



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"The more time you take to solve a problem the more your solution costs."



5

Stop The Insanity



Customer DNA

Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.
– Albert Einstein

Within the last decade much in the way of new and remarkable explanations about human communication and their direct applicability to business have come forward. This new information is astonishing!

Yet, many of the old ways of searching for business opportunities and promoting virtuous saleable products persists. Why don't we ever ask this critical question, if case studies and statistical data explain how others have been successful, and we have that information, why can't we duplicate their success?

The answer is because what others did and why they did it doesn't answer the key question, how did they know beforehand, that it was the right thing to do?

To answer that question we have to destroy the belief that there exists a select chosen few whom posses a unique and mysterious talent that permits them to exist on a creative level beyond our reach. This is simply not true. Thinking with an Unusual Mind is a process that can be identified and learned.

A strong message cries out from the examples cited in this book. Take stock of what you're doing. If it isn't working,

stop it. This is the first of several action items we explain in our seminar on how to develop an Unusual Mind. We call it Interrupt.

A fellow goes to his doctor and says, "Doc when I swing my arm like this it really hurts, what should I do?" His doctor replies, "Stop swinging your arm like that!"

-American Vaudeville

As in all processing schemes an interrupt is designed to permit a processor, in this case you, to temporarily suspend a current activity to service a new request. That's what we want you to do. Interrupt what you are doing to ask yourself this question, if it isn't my product that's being rejected what else can it be but my message?

Orville Redenbacher locked in on flavor and fluffy. The soy milk people locked in on heart healthy. Both were so convinced that product virtue was the correct way to market their product that they attributed poor sales to a failure in accurately explaining their products virtue. As we now know, that wasn't the case.

And remember another thing about Redenbacher's popping corn, its price did not determine its success!

"Thinking with an Unusual Mind is a process that can be identified and learned."



6

Broadcasting

Managements role is not to make decisions. It is to monitor the decision making process!
– Bob Manna

Customer DNA is luxuriant with key phrases and tenets, such a Pulsing and Sculpting, about which you have already become familiar. There is another, Broadcasting. Broadcasting is a management technique specifically designed to stimulate discoveries.

If one had all the facts required to make a decision and if all the facts arrived in the proper sequence and at exactly the right time it could be concluded that no one need interpret the facts in order to make a decision. After all, facts justly aligned interpret themselves.

Such a situation would indeed be a wonderful thing. But it doesn't happen. Decisions have to be made without all the facts and without the facts arriving in proper sequence and in a timely fashion.

So what can be done to provide the best possible environment for making correct decisions? Ensure that the persons with the most knowledge on the subject(s) being decided are part of the decision making process. We call this Broadcasting.

Broadcasting demands that neither title, position, time on the job nor any other criteria except knowledge of the subject

being decided should determine who may contribute to the decision making process.

The essence of Broadcasting is simple, knowledge has the right to judgment.

All organizations require two paths of communication. One for giving direction. And one for seeking direction.

The communication path appropriate for giving direction is well defined, visible and well known. It is a hierarchy, the path best described by the lines and boxes of an organization chart.

Hierarchy describes how a football team performs on game day. The team huddles, the play is called, the snap count given and the play executed. There is no discussion. If each player carries out his assignment and if the proper play is called, there's a good chance for a successful outcome.

But before that can happen, someone or some group of people has to decide, long before game time, what play to call.

Team management analyzes a host of usual suspects. Opponent's game films are reviewed. Appropriate practice time is scheduled. Probable field conditions are considered. Personnel physical health



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“Knowledge has the right to judgement.”



is evaluated. The effects of travel are calibrated. To win each week, a team must create a new plan using the same usual suspects. And there's always a scramble to find an extra something, to give a new twist to an old play, in short to find a way to gain a new competitive advantage from the analyses of the same usual suspects.

No one knows if that competitive advantage exists, and if it does, where it will come from. When a newly discovered competitive advantage does come into play, there is no time for it to make its way up the hierarchical chain. It needs direct access to the top. That is an important benefit of Broadcasting.

Broadcasting is the communication protocol that ensures any and every person with a solution, regardless of position within the company, can contribute directly to the decision making process.



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Manna Groups has published a separate book on the subject of Broadcasting. You can download this book for free at mannagroups.com



7

Summary



Customer DNA

Talent is the scarcest business resource and managing talent the scarcest skill.
– Manna Groups

This book is designed as a crisp, brief introduction to Customer DNA.

Pulsing is presented to illustrate that customer observation is the proven way to uncover the basic and invariable meaning your customer attaches to your product or service (Silk and Starbucks).

Sculpting is presented to illustrate that creating persuasive messages is not a hit or miss game of chance, but a clear-cut proposition (Gourmet).

Unusual Mind is presented to illustrate a way to escape the trap of repeating what isn't working (110 losers).

Broadcasting is presented to illustrate that the path for seeking direction cannot be the same as the path for giving direction.

We began this book by stating that all organizations have exactly the same opportunity to be successful because all organizations have exactly the same three resources to become successful: talent, time and money.

We conclude by declaring that talent is, of the three, the scarcest business resource and that managing talent the scarcest business skill.

Business success, in fact the success of any organization, results from talent not a template. This is why the tenets herein are not presented as rules.

For most, skill in business is no more a natural gift than is playing an instrument.

Skill comes at a price, the time and effort to learn and practice to become skillful. That is the price to be paid for achieving your business goals and it is how you get there.

We use the term usual suspects in the previous section of this book to refer to data which is available to all. It's tempting to think that success results from adding and analyzing new data.

But there is another way to think about data. It is the way people with an Unusual Mind think.

Consider the following sets of usual suspects. There are only 12 tones in music and 26 letters in the English alphabet. Yet each day these 38 pieces of raw and identical data provide the means for writing boundless numbers of books, poems, movie scripts, symphonies, hymns and popular songs.

How can that be?

“Success results from talent not a template.”



How can so many different results arise from such a sparse and identical set of data?

The answer, of course is, by how the data is used. That usage is driven by the skill of those using it.

The usual suspects that determine success in business are the beliefs that are already held in the mind of the customer. It is a test of your skill to use those beliefs to sculpt a message which will persuade customers to take the action you want them to take.

The alternative is to use programmed planning and packaged messages hoping that if you throw enough stuff against the wall some of it will stick.

With unlimited resources, one can use a word processor to put print on paper,

bang on a piano keyboard or script a play and do enough of it to challenge the odds.

But for those of us with limited resources, to publish a best seller, to win an Oscar, to capture a Grammy, to rise above the ordinary, ah - we do that with the skill afforded to us by developing an Unusual Mind. It is likewise in business!

Author's Note

The examples used in this abstract were selected because they are current stories about universally known companies.

In practice there is no company size or product type that serve as a barrier to Sculpture, Broadcasting and Unusual Mind. Indeed the scope of Customer DNA covers all industries including non-food, commercial, legal, political and charitable organizations.



Customer DNA

The full version of Customer DNA: An Insightful Narrative About Succeeding is due in the late summer of 2012. If you would like to be notified when the book is available please send an email to: book@mangnagroups.com

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Suggested Reading

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Bob Manna

Bob's public speaking, seminar and consulting activities have taken him around the United States and to several foreign countries.

He began his industrial career as a systems programmer and quickly rose to the position

of systems software support manager. Eventually he simultaneously held the positions of V.P. of Technical Services and V.P. of Marketing in a prevalent, publicly traded, computer company.

In 1979 Bob formed his own company which specialized in products for the check, remittance and forms processing industries.

The company created most of its products in cooperation with its customers, giving rise to the reputation that it was "the company that listens". The products, and the stories behind their creation, spread throughout the industry and created rapid company growth. What began as a 3-man startup, "the company that listens", grew to a position of dominance with sales throughout the United States, Europe, Australia, the Middle East and South America.

Clients consider Bob's principal attributes to be a special ability to communicate across disciplines, to appraise markets and to create compelling messages about products.

Bob has presented to Congressmen, business and education executives, industrial and charitable organizations and university professors. He has appeared on programs with such well know personalities as PBS TV host Adam Smith, Senator William Roth and former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Danny White. He has several published research papers and his writings have appeared in The Christian Science Monitor and "D" magazine.

In 2007 Bob, and his son Matt Manna, founded Manna Groups, a business and communication consulting company located in Dallas Texas.



Matt Manna

Matt Manna has more than 20 years experience as a communications specialist and public speaker. His seminar "Why Things Sell" was recognized as best of show at the 2007 PMA International conference in Las Vegas.

Matt majored in computer science and business administration and entered the financial industry in 1985 as a customer service representative.

He was struck by the number of customers who dismissed his company's advertising simply because it was advertising. He concluded (and continues to believe) that behavioral effects are achieved by parlaying with customer expectations, not by transmitting company offerings.

Drawing on his technical knowledge he convinced his company to redesign its customer service software into a system that parlayed with customers expectations. This change led to the behavioral effect the company had tried to achieve through advertising.

In 1988 Matt left the financial industry to join his family's firm as Corporate Communications Director. His task was to create communications that would establish the firm as vendor of first choice. In this capacity he created and frequently delivered conference presentations, produced the company's nationally distributed catalog, originated video and print sales material and produced user product manuals.

In 1994 Matt was promoted to Chief Operating Officer. He retained the corporate communications task and performed in this dual management role until the firm was sold in 2005. The new owners retained him in an advisory capacity for a one-year period.

In 2007 Matt, and his father Bob Manna, founded Manna Groups, a business and communication consulting company located in Dallas Texas.



Customer DNA

