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**Introduction
Excerpt**

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*Why Companies Lose Their Authenticity—
And How
Great Brands
Get it Back

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*You now have to decide what image you want for your brand.
Image means personality. Products, like people, have personalities,
and they can make or break them in the marketplace.*

—David Ogilvy

Introduction

In 2005, Apple was about to introduce a product that everyone thought was too small to succeed. Coming off the phenomenal success of the first iPod launches back in early 2000, Apple's marketing team was working on promotions for what was going to be the smallest iPod yet—the new iPod Shuffle. Shaped like a stick of chewing gum and targeted at the music lover on the go (or gadget hound), the Shuffle was the smallest MP3 player ever created. After defining the portable MP3 player market with the iPod and its scroll wheel interface, this newest iPod broke with convention again by removing the screen altogether. Judging from the reviews from early testers—concluding that consumers would never buy an iPod without a screen—it was clear the marketing for this little product had to be different.

The most important and talked about feature of the Shuffle was its size. It was probably going to be too small for some people. So, in the first shipment of iPod Shuffles in the United States, attentive enthusiasts were surprised to find a hidden four-word joke at the bottom of the instructions shipped with the Shuffle: “Do Not Eat iPod.”¹

Word spread as Apple enthusiasts who purchased the product told others about it. Soon a debate raged online about whether it was a joke or a real disclaimer required by Apple's lawyers (not a far-fetched idea if you have ever had to deal with Apple's lawyers). Blogs featured images of the packaging. International consumers talked about why Apple had chosen not to include the line on packaging for the product in their country. Those four words got people talking about the product in an unexpected way.

¹ Published as “Do Not Chew iPod” in the UK. Apparently, people in the UK are already smart enough not to eat it.

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Usually the disclaimer is the one part of marketing language that seems untouchable. Yet for the Shuffle, an unexpected product with a game-changing interface, the tag fit. It was a small demonstration of the personality of the product, and a reflection of the entire personality of Apple.

The sad truth is that most companies today would never allow this type of moment of personality to happen. Blame endless legal reviews or a corporate culture of fear if you like (we'll talk more about these barriers later in the book), but whatever the reason, most companies are adept at removing any sense of individuality or human connection from how they communicate. We commonly describe these companies as faceless. They are large inhuman blobs that do not listen or ask for our feedback, have incomprehensible policies, and use automated responses instead of real people to address our concerns.

These faceless organizations are all around us. As consumers, we can spot them right away, and we universally dread our interactions with them. Think about the last time you had to endure a 10-minute series of robotic questions from an automated call center in order to speak to a real person. There are dozens of videos on YouTube of customers who tried to cancel their service and couldn't, spent hours on hold, or were somehow otherwise treated like a number instead of a person. The media loves to tell these tales of corporate stupidity too, publishing them with headlines like "Woman Gets 300-Page Bill for iPhone" (a real headline from a *USA Today* article in August 2007).

Personality Matters

Clearly, being faceless doesn't work anymore. The problem is that many organizations today are stuck dealing with their customers, partners, and employees in a faceless way. Some don't realize it and others are too paralyzed to change. The biggest challenge most organizations today face is

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discovering how to go from a brand that people consume to one that they are passionate about. Every company has a different solution to this challenge, from focusing on product design and innovation to renewing focus on better branding in order to better tell the story of a product or service.

The theory of *Personality Not Included* is that personality is the answer. Personality is the key element behind your brand and what it stands for, and the story that your products tell to your customers. Every element of your business, from your interactions with your customers to the packaging of your product is an element of your brand personality, and these are the elements that inspire delight or indifference among your customers. In short, *personality matters*.

Of course, just telling you that doesn't make it true, so read on to learn more about what I mean by personality, what the elements are, and how you can tackle the most difficult question of all: how can you find a way to inject personality into your brand when the majority of marketing conventions today focus on helping you shield your personality from the world? The first step is changing your perception of what marketing can or should do.

Marketing Is Not about Selling

Apple's disclaimer may have been a small element in a sea of marketing, but it manifested an identity that consumers already associated with the Apple brand. The disclaimer was irreverent, different, and nontraditional, just like Apple. The power of Apple's brand is about more than putting out innovative products. Speak to any Apple enthusiast and you will understand that the real reason Apple succeeds is that it is telling a story that its customers get passionate about, and, more important, tell others about. The real genius of Steve Jobs's legendary keynote product announcements is how

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the announcement itself whips Apple's most vocal customers into a frenzy deep enough to tell everyone else they know about Apple's new products.

What Apple knows about great marketing is that it is about more than selling. Selling will usually take care of itself if you have something decent to sell at a reasonable price. If you want to create marketing focused on selling, all you need to do is answer four simple questions for your consumer:

1. **Features.** What does your product do for me and why is it different and/or better than others?
2. **Benefits.** How will my life be different/better/changed if I purchase it?
3. **Price.** Why it is worth what you are charging?
4. **Action.** Where can I get it?

If you consistently provide good answers to these questions with your marketing, I guarantee you will be able to sell whatever you are trying to sell. Of course, if it was that easy no companies would ever fail. Answering these four questions with good answers is not necessarily a simple thing, but the formula this creates for selling anything is very straightforward. The problem with focusing on only these four is what Fred Reichheld, author of *The Ultimate Question*, called "bad profits." These are the profits that you earn without keeping the customer happy. *Personality Not Included* is for marketing and sales professionals who believe that marketing needs to do more than generate this type of profit. It is for companies that want to be *loved* instead of liked. It is for organizations that want to be iconic instead of ordinary.

Every company that consumers are passionate about already understands that sharing an authentic identity inspires loyalty and belief. If you're a fan of playing "buzzword bingo," then congratulations on your

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first hit.² Buzzword bingo is a Dilbert-esque way of drawing attention to overhyped buzzwords as they are unleashed in conversation by yelling “bingo” to cause extreme embarrassment for the offending buzzword user. And since *authenticity* is most definitely a buzzword, you can go ahead and yell “BINGO!” now.

Luckily, this is not just a book about being more authentic (or about how to play buzzword bingo). Authenticity is part of the story, but it is only one element of something bigger and not an end goal in itself as many people may be tempted to assume today. I do want to help you make your business more authentic, but focusing on that alone is not enough. Your customers *want* to believe in an authentic brand, but they need the right incentive. *Personality is that incentive.*

Defining Personality

Personality is a loaded term today, which for many conjures up images of endless multiple-choice questions leading up to a formulaic four-letter description of your personality. For years, it was these tests that defined how we thought about personality. Raise your hand if you are an ENFP.³ Those types of tests have their uses, but to think about personality within marketing, we need a new definition for personality—one that goes beyond scientific scoring methods or quick answers to online surveys.

A search on Amazon.com will yield dozens of books dedicated to helping you understand your personality so you can achieve spiritual oneness, find your perfect mate, understand your work colleagues better, or be a better parent. Understanding personality seems to be the key to emotional intelligence.

² If you are unfamiliar with this game, visit <http://www.personalitynotincluded.com/bingo> to download a custom version.

³ ENFP is my Meyers-Briggs personality score. Your results may vary.

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This book is not about emotional intelligence. It's not that I don't care about you achieving a spiritual understanding of yourself. I'm Indian and all for that (and good luck with your journey, by the way). But the big idea of *my* book is that personality is the key to creating an inspiring brand.

Personality is the unique, authentic, and talkable soul of your brand that people can get passionate about.

Personality is not just about what you stand for, but how you choose to communicate it. It is also the way to reconnect your customers, partners, employees, and influencers to the soul of your brand in the new social media era.

Wait, Is This Really an Era?

If calling where we are now an era seems like a stretch to you, let's try an experiment. Without going online or asking someone smart: define an era. If you agree with the current definition on Wikipedia, an era is a "long period of time." Okay, sounds pretty simple. Now name an era from the past 500 years. Any one will do.

Did you come up with any? The Meiji era in Japan from 1868 to 1912 was also known as the Age of Enlightenment, during which the country embraced modernization and replaced the rule of the Samurai warriors with a representative government. In the UK, the Victorian era from 1837 to 1901 resulted in similar enlightenment during which time Darwin wrote his famous *Origin of Species*, the first World's Fair was held, and England introduced free education for all children. The point is, eras are pretty significant.

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Based on these examples, I think a more complete definition for an era could be “a finite period of time during which some kind of significant enlightenment happens.” That’s where we are now, and the population becoming “enlightened” is your consumers.

Power is shifting from businesses to individuals, and it is fundamentally changing how marketing works. When I walk into a car dealership to look at a car today, I already know the bottom price I should ask for, what the dealer’s margin is, and what all the options are. When is the last time a car salesman was able to sell rust-proof coating? This empowerment through information is happening all over the world.

Farmers in Kenya are using their cell phones to check crop prices and run their businesses, saving wasted trips and even conducting banking through mobile transactions. Hollywood movies can no longer rely on a big opening weekend for a subpar movie to cover the production costs. Word is out by early Friday night. I call this the “window of suckiness” (i.e., how long a movie is able to suck before everyone knows about it), and it means a big opening weekend is no longer guaranteed. There are hundreds of ways to buy the same product today, online or offline. Along with growing access to information and increasing choices, technology is also putting consumers in control with tools like DVRs and pop-up blockers help consumers filter out marketing messages.

Enlightenment is happening right now. People are moving from simply consuming content to creating it. RSS feeds, blogs, wikis, social networks, and media online and on demand are giving people more ways than ever to control the content they choose to watch, read, or interact with. The Internet is evolving too, shaping itself around the people who access and contribute to it, rather than a directory of pages about topics. That’s Web 2.0 and we all know it’s here.

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Consumers are enlightened because they have the power to decide what to buy, where to buy it, how much to pay for it, and what marketing messages to believe about it. They are powerful because they have the ability and desire to share their voices with others.

This is the social media era, where all forms of media are portable, personal, and filtered—where brands have fewer secrets and have their identities shaped by perception as much as communication. We are in an era, and that era means you need to think differently about how you market your products and services.

The Case for Personality

Thinking differently requires focusing less on marketing your products and benefits, and more on understanding how to use the personality behind your brand to build a relationship with your customers. Talk to any brand that has found a passionate customer base and you will see the same elements come forth. The power of personality is something that I have slowly realized over more than a decade of helping hundreds of brands of all sizes create marketing strategies that works. Every company is trying to solve the same challenge: how to stand out from its competitors and build a relationship of trust with its customers.

Whether you are a large multinational technology company or a small dental surgery practice, the power of personality is equally important. Personality inspires trust and trust builds loyalty. It is a very simple progression that most people intuitively understand. Throughout this book, you will see more than a hundred examples of companies and influential individuals who have all uncovered the power of personality as a core element of their success. You will understand how personality can often be the secret weapon driving great companies to build the kind of customer loyalty their competitors envy. To do that, we need to first

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become comfortable with what could be the most dangerous word in marketing: truth.

Finding Your Yoga

Truth is a loaded word. Marketing is not about the search for truth, and we all know it. If it were, no one would believe that a bottle of water shipped halfway across the world with an image of a Swiss mountain on it was any more healthy than one bottled in a Coca-Cola plant in Connecticut. To compensate for having a less than interesting “truth” behind their products, brands often invent a truth. If I told you the number of times I have been in meetings where people debated whether we should use the word *healthful* or *healthy* to describe a product, you’d understand the pain involved in trying to find a truth. Maybe you feel it already.

The truth behind your product is not the terms you are legally allowed to use. Instead, truth is something deeper. In a manifesto written for the Web site ChangeThis.com, Piers Fawkes and Simon King, authors of the popular marketing blog PSFK.com, shared the idea of finding your “yoga.” Yoga, they wrote, was “the truth which people want to see, stripped to the core. If you are going to tell the truth, then you have to be sure that at the centre of your brand there is a bit of Yoga going on (and that it’s the truth).”⁴

In the context of their manifesto, yoga was what brands should aim for, the ultimate truth of your product or service that you share with the world. Of course, businesses tend not to do well when it comes to telling the truth. It is part of the reason why storytelling is such a popular concept in marketing today. Indeed, marketing guru Seth Godin famously titled his book on the necessity for marketers to tell stories *All Marketers Are Liars*. Of course, he used the title to entice you to open and buy the book,

⁴ ChangeThis Manifesto—Is Truth the Next Big Truth? (<http://www.changethis.com/13.Truth>)

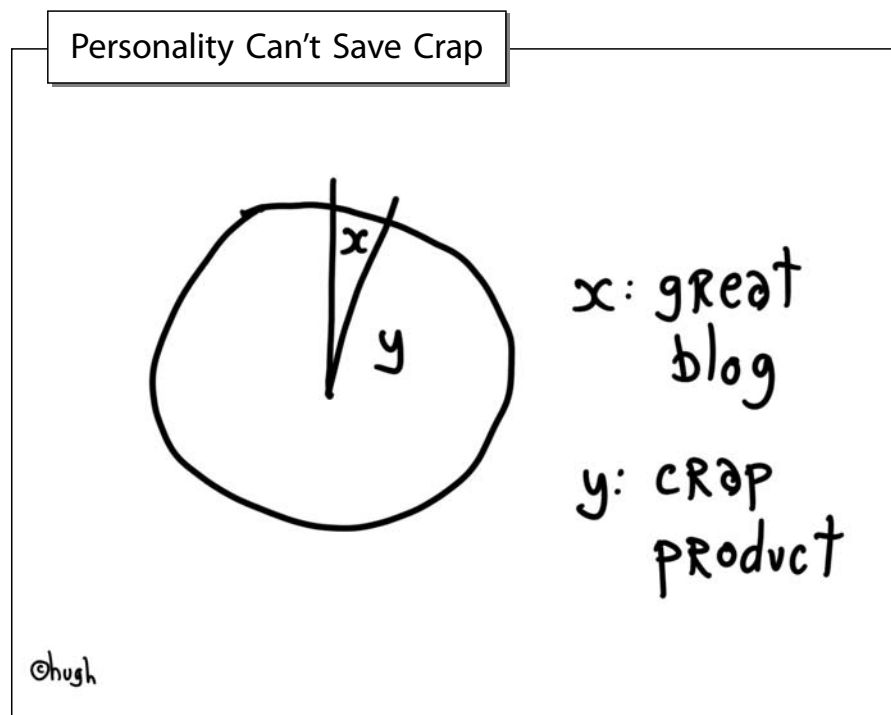
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but it raises an important point. All marketers *do* need to create a story that consumers can believe and associate with based on their view of the world. And in their quest to do so, marketers often stretch the truth.

Part of the power of personality is that it can help you bring your marketing closer to the truth, because it requires you to rely on many messengers to tell your story for you. It is nearly impossible to continue in a lie, no matter how well crafted, when you are relying on others to spread the message for you.

Bad Ideas Don't Get Better with Personality

You will find a lot of ideas in this book for how personality can be used to reinvent your marketing and how your customers perceive and relate to you. Before getting too deep into these ideas, I should probably let you



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know the one thing *personality* can't do for you. Personality can't turn a bad idea into gold, and it can't compensate for a product or service no one wants. This is not a book about how to create a great product or find the right business to start. There are several insightful books on this topic that I highly recommend, including Guy Kawasaki's *Art of the Start* and *Blue Ocean Strategy* by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne.

Each will help you to craft a product or service that stands apart, has a strong business reason for existing, and has a unique value. Guy's suite of great books on the subject will even teach you the all-important job of getting your revolutionary idea funded. The job of marketing should not be to trick unsuspecting customers by creating a false need or promoting a substandard product.

By picking up *PNI*, I suspect you believe that your product or service is more than a pig in need of a makeover. This is where most businesses are: they have something marketable, but have trouble taking the next step. As a result, they are under constant threat from competitors and struggle to maintain their slight success.

Whether you have a new idea that you believe will change an entire industry, or are stuck in a commodity business where you are forced to compete on price, the lessons in this book are all about helping your business stand out. Personality is the reason consumers love one product more than another. It is what sets great companies apart and it is about more than having a game-changing product. If every product you plan to launch is the next iPhone, then you have a great head start. But that is not a necessity. Personality can help you go from good to great.

Why You Need This Book

The question you need to ask yourself is what do you want your marketing to do? If you are like most businesses, you want your marketing to

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tell people who you are and inspire them to buy whatever you are selling. It's that simple. I mentioned how marketing is not about selling but about building a relationship. The traditional way to look at marketing is by the four Ps. If you have ever taken a marketing course, gone to business school, or met someone who has, you will know these well. Product, price, promotion, and place were seen for decades as the core elements of all marketing. Guess what I think the fifth "P" should be?

Personality is the missing ingredient keeping most organizations from becoming great. The real reasons that you should read this book are not only so that you can outpace your competitors (you can), make more money than them (you should), or inspire your customers to be more passionate about your brand (they will be). Those are the reasons you would read any business book, aren't they?

There are four simple things that set *PNI* apart.

1. **Personality is *the* macro trend.** The three hottest topics in business today are how to do more with social media (blogs, social networks, etc.), using word-of-mouth marketing (the number one source of influence according to just about every international study), and interacting more authentically with customers. Personality is the theme that incorporates all of these topics.
2. **I still have a day job.** I work at one of the biggest marketing agencies in the world, with a client list that includes some of the world's largest and fastest-growing brands. When companies work with us, they buy time from people like me. People who lead the strategy meetings and actually figure out what to do.

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I am not a professional theorist. Every idea in this book is one that I am using for real clients to get real results every day.

3. **Stories, stories, and more stories.** As you read, you will notice that there are lots of company stories. Throughout the book there are more than 100 examples of people, organizations, or products that are using personality in some way to market a product. Just about every point is made with a company as an example, in order to bring the ideas to life and demonstrate that the idea of putting personality into your business is more than just a theory.
4. ***PNI* progress from theory to action.** Giving you another book with just a big idea and leaving you on your own to implement it is not useful. I know because I've read too many books like that. For that reason, *PNI* has two parts. The first reveals the theory of personality and the second is all about putting the theory into action. I want to help you understand why personality matters, and also give you the tools and action plans to use it immediately in your business.

Inside Part One: The Theory

To take you inside the book in more detail, here is an overview of what you will learn in each chapter and section.

The first section is all about personality and its role in marketing. Consider this part the theory.

Chapter 1 delves into how being faceless used to work and how it led many organizations to make choices designed to hide their authenticity and identity from their customers. It also addresses the common

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myth that only large companies are faceless and introduce the real secret to building a personality that most companies don't know.

Chapter 2 looks at how social media is fundamentally changing the way that organizations communicate. I introduce the idea of “accidental spokespeople” and how they are often the unofficial voices that are reinventing how consumers view companies and brands. You will learn about the key types of spokespeople and how accidental spokespeople are creating an entirely new way of looking at who speaks for your brand.

Chapter 3 returns to the definition of personality introduced at the start of the book and takes you through a new framework of thinking about your brand and products called the *UAT Filter* that will help you to understand the personality of your organization and products and how to translate this into a communications strategy to drive your marketing.

Chapter 4 explores the concept of a *marketing backstory* and takes you through a range of real examples of products and companies that have crafted these backstories to great success. Going through these cases, you will learn all the elements of a good backstory and a process for creating yours based on the little-known techniques that screenwriters in Hollywood pioneered and still use today to create a compelling story line.

Chapter 5 talks about the common situation every ambitious person is likely to encounter at least once no matter where he or she works: the roadblocks. Drawing on case studies of people who have managed to overcome personal and organizational resistance, this section will teach you how to navigate the roadblocks that prevent us from using personality, obstacles that are created by bosses, peers, investors, and lawyers, without getting fired or flamed.

Chapter 6 (the last in Part One) introduces the idea of “personality moments” and how to recognize what these are in order to put your personality to work. Based on examples of the types of situations where per-

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sonality can make a difference, this chapter will offer a guide for evaluating these moments and the right way to take advantage of them. A bridge to the second part of the book, this section will lay the framework for putting your personality into action.

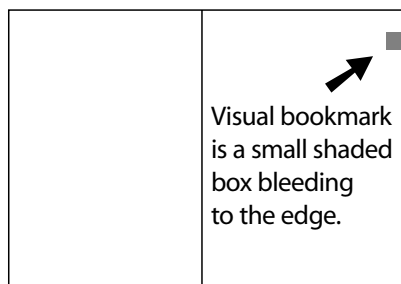
Inside Part Two: The Action

In Part Two you'll find a collection of materials designed to help you take the ideas and theories from Part One and put them into action. It is divided into two key sections.

<p>TECHNIQUES Ideas and insights</p>	<p>These are methods of marketing and new ideas that you can use to put your personality into action in order to devise new forms of marketing and communications. While these do introduce new ideas, each comes with a practical step-by-step implementation strategy that allows you to immediately put the idea into action.</p>
<p>GUIDES & TOOLS How-tos that are related to each chapter in Part One</p>	<p>These are a collection of guides, checklists, question forms, printable resources, sample text for ideas, and more. Essentially, these are all the practical step-by-step lessons that relate to each chapter to help you move from theory to action.</p>

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Introducing Visual Bookmarking



To help relate the theories in Part One to the associated action in Part Two and let you go quickly between them, this book uses an idea called visual bookmarking. The guides and tools in Part Two are organized by chapters and each chapter has a small tab on

the side of the page whose vertical positioning corresponds to the guides and tools associated with that chapter in Part Two.

Getting Started

Every product and company has a personality. The problem is that businesses today have gotten extremely good at hiding it behind carefully scripted disclaimers and processes. The future of business means building real connections with customers. That future requires you to rediscover the personality of your organization and use it to bring more humanity to the way you interact with customers.

To get started, we need to take a page from the techniques of counselors who help people with all sorts of issues. The first thing they always do is get their clients to admit they have a problem. The problem with business is facelessness, and the first step is to admit that you have a problem and to recognize why it exists.