

Welcome email campaign for David Brier of RisingAboveTheNoise.com

#1 reason most startups fail within the first year

Why do some businesses become wildly successful while others fail?

Steve Jobs knew the answer. And with that knowledge, he created the most valuable company on the planet. What was his secret?

HE CREATED A HERO

In fact, any blockbuster producer knows to build his movie around a hero and an antagonist.

Jobs knew you needed both which he brilliantly created in the “Hi; I’m a Mac... and I’m a PC” [campaign](#) . (Image courtesy of [Wikipedia](#) .)

That campaign is a perfect example of differentiation at its best. Great companies succeed because of it. Others fail for lack of it.

HOW TO CREATE A HERO

First, never rely on old rituals like focus groups. Instead, know your customer better than they know themselves.

When you do, you have the superpower of “prediction.” Steve Jobs had it: The ability to predict what his customers wanted.

“It’s really hard to design products by focus groups. A lot of times, people don’t know what they want until you show it to them”. –Steve Jobs

Your brand hero should embody the:

- vision
- aspiration
- purpose your audience can rally behind, or

- Simon Sinek's "Why." The enemy can be:
- a competitor or maybe
- an irritating "compromise" we've had to deal with or
- some unrealistic standard of beauty, intelligence or skill we're supposed to match, or
- a "cliché promise" that never materializes.

FOLLOW THIS SIMPLE TEST

It's very easy to know if you're headed in the right direction.

Right : You have the right answer if it unites us (with each other and the brand).

Wrong : The wrong answer divides us.

For Apple , it was liberation from an IBM world and the shackles of digital hell. Instead, they gave us an easy-to-use tool that spoke our language.

For Uber , they eliminated the frustration of getting around without a car or having to resort to the prehistoric system of taxis and dispatchers. They made it easy and safe to go any place, any time. And for that matter, for car owners to make an extra buck or two.

For Airbnb , they gave travelers an alternative to pricey hotels and apartment dwellers an opportunity to generate additional income. Instead, they offered travelers unique places to stay far different from the typical cookie-cutter hotel setting. Important note: Each of these new solutions provided more value to the customer.

TODAY'S ASSIGNMENT

Write down your answers to these two vital questions:

1. **Who (or what) are your brand's heroes?**
2. **Who are the antagonists that your brand will help overcome?**

Take your time on this. It's important to get it right. I'd love to hear what you come up with. Hit reply and let me know.

Using “the hero method” to grow your brand

HOW THE HERO SELLS MORE

In my last email, I talked about how creating a hero can increase your sales.

I left you with a short assignment:

Write down your answers to these two vital questions:

Who (or what) are your brand’s heroes?

Who are the antagonists that your brand will help overcome?

To help you further here are 3 actual examples of how this two-sided approach works:

Example #1:

When a chocolatier approached me [to help grow their brand](#) , I knew

- **the hero** was their product’s decadent authenticity, and
 - **the antagonist** was the dubious “cosmetic” packaging so common amongst handmade chocolates. **The result?** A 300% increase in sales. In 30 days after the launch of the rebrand. We didn’t make any other changes. **Example #2:** When a young software company approached me, we decided to rebrand them with
3. **the hero** being the overworked network administrator (their target audience) and,
 4. **the antagonist** being the “ordinary, mediocre solutions” that frustrated these same administrators.

The result?

Doubling sales four years in a row resulting in them getting onto the INC 500.

Per CEO Stu Sjouwerman, “David and I go a long way back. He helped me build an INC 500 company which I later sold. I was retired for five days and decided to start my fifth IT company: KnowBe4. David is an incredible

resource for branding and marketing—he and I created the name and positioning for KnowBe4, and we are growing well over 100% per year. The man is worth his weight in gold.”

Example #3:

When a Napa Valley startup asked me to [rebrand their packaging](#) , we created magic and profits this way:

- **the hero** being anyone seeking an amazingly delicious indulgence and the unwavering curiosity driven by a single question, “How delicious can it be?”
- **the antagonist** was the proper, British afternoon cookie that lacked any element of delight and surprise.

The result?

300% increase in sales in the first year. Another 300% increase in year two after the rebrand. In other words, 900% increase in 24 months.

WHAT TWO VITAL QUESTIONS WOULD STEVE JOBS ASK?

First of all, it's a fact your brand needs to define its hero.

From there, you can work out the antagonist that your brand will help overcome (or obliterate).

Now it's time for some research.

1. Think about why your customers come to you instead of your competitors. Do you have a better online reputation, faster service, or more qualified staff?

Are you getting a good idea for your hero?

2. What are people saying about your competitors? Check online reviews or social media. This research can be a wealth of information. Maybe there are complaints about slow service, substandard products, or consistent glitches.

Are you getting a clear picture of your antagonist?

WHO'S YOUR HERO?

If you don't know the answer to that, then let's talk. (In case you were wondering, I have a red cape next to my desk at the office. It's great at defying gravity. ***Let's get awesome together.***) You can reach me direct via email.