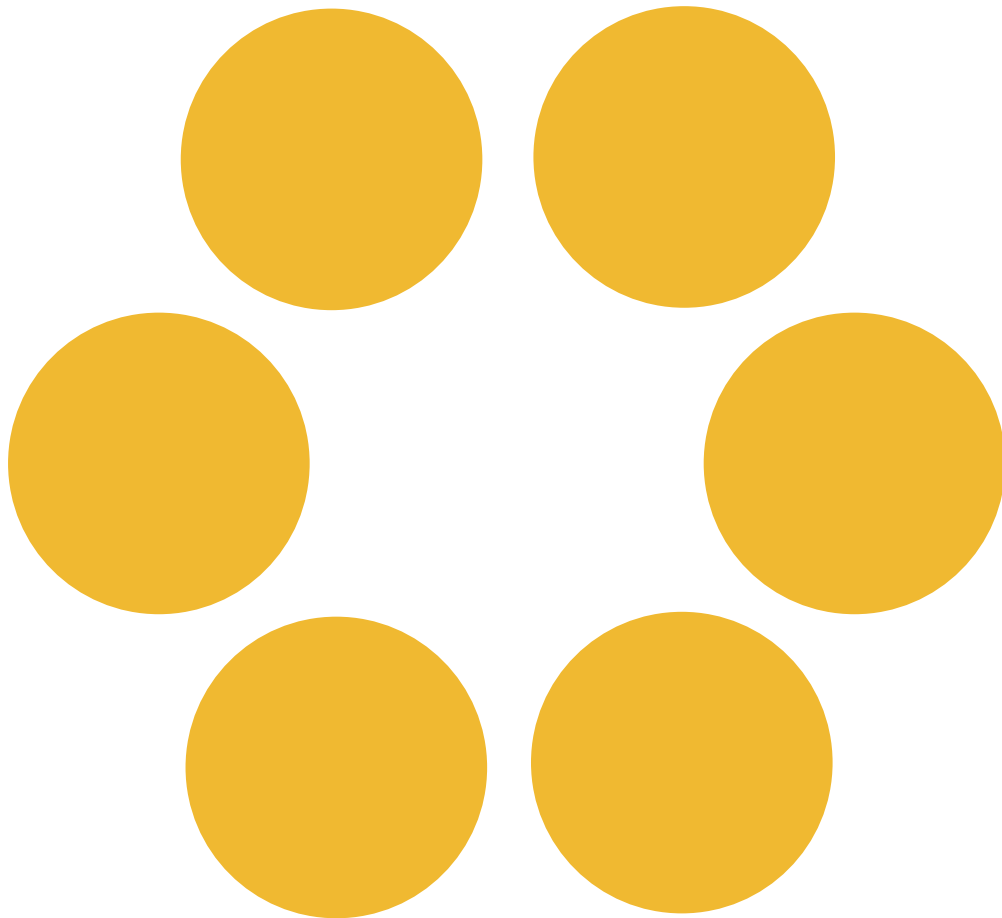




HOWTOFASCINATE
DISCOVERED BY SALLY HOGSHEAD

THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS OF A FASCINATING BRAND

(OR IDEA, OR MESSAGE, OR PERSONALITY)



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THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS OF A FASCINATING PERSON, IDEA, OR BRAND

Fascinating people and companies don't just talk at us. They get under our skin and into our conversations.

They challenge and move us. They're unafraid to ask questions, and along the way, change the way we think.

INSTEAD OF GETTING US TO MERELY NOTICE THEM, FASCINATING BRANDS CHANGE US IN SOME WAY.

They earn our business, as well as our trust and our conversations. This is what makes **fascination** different than **marketing**: Marketing is based on what *you* say to your target audience. Fascination is the opposite:

FASCINATION HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH WHAT YOU SAY, AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH WHAT YOU INSPIRE OTHERS TO SAY ABOUT YOU.

Is your brand fascinating? Are you? There are 6 distinct criteria. Using the exercise below, you can start to determining whether or not you are successfully persuading and captivating the world around.

THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS

A fascinating message, like a fascinating person, steps outside the norms in one or more of the following ways:

GOLD HALLMARK #1: PROVOKES STRONG AND IMMEDIATE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

People respond to the brand immediately, almost involuntarily. The advertising might stimulate a “love it or hate it” response. Or the company might have a simple gesture that makes people bond with a product.

WHY DO CERTAIN MESSAGES CAPTIVATE, WHILE SEEMINGLY EQUALLY DESERVING ONES NEVER GET ATTENTION?



Most marketers aspire to create messages that offend the fewest people. They're playing not to lose.

Here's an example: “Pret A Manger”, a gourmet take-out chain, evokes the Passion Advantage through tiny details. Each location of this chain stirs its granola by hand, using a four foot-long wooden oar. Sure, the company could far more easily stir it with a mechanical mixer, but, they insist, this would damage the oats' flavor and texture. With this one tiny detail the brand stirs our imagination.

THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS

For example: FOX News, Disney, Acid rap, Trader Joe's, NASCAR.

ASK YOUR TEAM:

1. Do we provoke strong and immediate emotional reactions?

2. What types of reactions do we want to incite?

3. Are we watering our messages down to mush (through committees, or safe thinking, or fear)? If so, how could we end this?

GOLD HALLMARK #2: **CREATES ADVOCATES**

Regular consumers become passionate advocates when your brand effectively activates one or more fascination Advantages. These dedicated fans may be a small slice of your overall base, but they're the most active and vocal, and they'll exponentially increase your marketing efforts.

Fascinating companies create more opportunities for people to connect with each other, through the brand.

AS MUCH AS WE'D LIKE TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE, THE TRUTH IS, CONSUMERS DON'T WANT TO CONNECT WITH BRANDS. THEY WANT TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER.

How to do this? Reward your fans, inspire them, and support their communication with you, and with one another.

ASK YOUR TEAM:

1. What would it take to make someone want to pay for a T-shirt bearing our logo?

2. What would it take for people to be willing to stand in line for hours to purchase our product?

3. What would it take for our product to become so beloved that it never, ever went on sale?

**GOLD HALLMARK #3:
BECOMES “CULTURAL SHORTHAND” FOR A
SPECIFIC SET OF ACTIONS OR VALUES**

The brand represents such a distinct point of view that it can stand alone as a symbol for a defined set of values; it becomes a reference point for how people identify themselves, and their world.

These companies earn attention by focusing on a specific set of values: **HOME DEPOT** (do-it-yourself), **PATAGONIA** (sustainability), **TARGET** (accessible style), **IKEA** (democratic design), or **DE BEERS** (romantic expression).

◀ Fascinating brands, like fascinating people, because so strongly and immediately identifiable that they serve as reference points for helping us to evaluate other people and brands.

ASK YOUR TEAM:

1. Do we embody a specific set of values, or actions?

2. How could we turn our unique attributes into emblems of our beliefs?

GOLD HALLMARK #4: **INCITES CONVERSATION**

The more people want to engage with, play with, learn from, talk about, and, above all, connect with something or someone, the greater its influence. Influential brands spark spirited conversations and debate among consumers, competition, and the media.

FASCINATION LIVES NOT IN YOUR OWN COMMUNICATION TO THE WORLD, BUT IN HOW THE WORLD COMMUNICATES ABOUT YOU.

For instance, on your web site—it's not about the number of links in your site, but about how many sites, and the quality of the sites, that link to you. On **FACEBOOK**, the status updates that last in the news feed are the ones that generate the most commentary. On **TWITTER**, it's just not about what you say, but how many followers re-tweet your message to their followers.

The U.S. military employed this tactic. Here's how:

When the number of recruits dropped, the military started conversations among potential recruits by creating a video game. Named "Future Force Company Commander," or F2C2, portrays the nation's futuristic military as an invulnerable high-tech organization, giving its consumers (teenage boys) a carefully controlled glimpse of battle. Even if you don't agree with the use of F2C2, you can't ignore how this outreach effort got so many potential recruits talking, and connecting, around the brand.

Examples: NFL Fantasy Football, Adidas original, PBS, TMZ.

◀ It doesn't matter what types of messages you create about yourself. What matters is how those messages are heard, remembered, and acted upon.

THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS

ASK YOUR TEAM:

1. Are we inciting conversations?

2. What opportunities do you create for people to connect with one another?

3. Does your message create debate? (No? Your point of view might not be distinct or vibrant enough.) How could you stir more discussion and debate?

MOST MARKETERS ASPIRE TO CREATE MESSAGES THAT OFFEND THE FEWEST PEOPLE. THEY'RE PLAYING NOT TO LOSE.

**GOLD HALLMARK #5:
FORCES COMPETITORS TO REALIGN AROUND IT**

These companies don't chase or mirror trends, but rather, establish new standards for the category. They think, act, and behave unlike any other. Often, they inspire imitators, look-alikes, and me-toos.

IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT, THE MOST FASCINATING OPTION WINS.

Examples: Trader Joe's, Axe Body Spray, Wal-Mart, Swiffer, Microsoft, then Apple, then Microsoft again.

ASK YOUR TEAM:

1. How could you communicate so distinctively that your innovations turn into your consumers' expectations?

2. How could you become irreplaceable for the audience, impossible to exactly replace or duplicate?

THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS

3. Could people describe themselves by comparing you to your competition (“Are you a Mac, or a PC?”)
-
-

GOLD HALLMARK #6: TAPS INTO (OR EVEN CAUSES) SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS

When people become fascinated, they merge with larger groups of people fascinated by the same message. These groups dramatically accelerate your marketing, inciting others to join a bigger cultural movement.

SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS AREN'T ONCE-IN-A-DECADE EVENTS.

They're happening constantly, every single day, when we shift our decision-making. **ZAPPOS.COM** changed online shopping. **RED BULL** changed cocktail culture. **DOVE** changed the conversation around female body image. **NETFLIX** changed media consumption. **VIAGRA** changed the perception of impotence to “erectile dysfunction.”

◀ You don't need to create fascination from scratch. You can tap into what people are already fascinated by.

Even if you don't trigger social revolutions, you can make your budget go farther by tapping into cultural changes.

THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS

ASK YOUR TEAM:

1. How can our message take advantage of emerging changes in behavior? Said another way, what trends could we capitalize upon?

2. What groups, communities, and tribes could our message excite and activate, so that they champion our message as part of their own?

3. Could we tie our message into what people are already doing and saying around a specific cause or effort?

**IDENTIFY AND JOIN THE CONVERSATIONS
AND CAUSES THAT ALREADY CAPTIVATE
YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.**

APPLYING THE 6 GOLD HALLMARKS

Now that you know the **6 GOLD HALLMARKS**, how will you start creating a more trusted, admired, and talked-about brand?

THE WIZARD OF OZ SAID, “A HEART IS NOT JUDGED BY HOW MUCH YOU LOVE, BUT BY HOW MUCH YOU ARE LOVED BY OTHERS.”

The same is now true for brands. Marketing is no longer about creating messages—it’s about getting the market to participate, and to create fascinating messages about you and with you.

By evaluating our communication according to these **6 GOLD HALLMARKS**, we can begin to make any type of message more fascinating: a sales presentation, a book, or anything else that must influence behavior in order to succeed.

Fascinating brands win more consumers, more PR, bigger budgets, more time, better talent, greater admiration, deeper trust. Brands that fail to fascinate will, increasingly, lose the battle. *It’s that simple.*

The 6 Gold Hallmarks of a Fascinating Brand

1. Provokes Strong and Immediate Emotional Reactions
2. Creates Advocates
3. Becomes “Cultural Shorthand” for a Specific Set of Actions or Values
4. Incites Conversation
5. Forces Competitors to Realign Around It
6. Taps Into (or Even Causes) Social Revolutions

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