

Your listeners are asking themselves, “Why should I care?” If your product will help your customers make money, tell them. If it helps them save money, tell them. If it makes it easier or more enjoyable for them to perform a particular task, tell them. Tell them early, often, and clearly. Jobs doesn’t leave people guessing. Well before he explains the technology behind a new product or feature, he explains how it will improve the experience people have with their computers, music players, or gadgets.

Table 2.1 offers a review of some other examples of how Jobs sells the benefit behind a new product or feature.

TABLE 2.1 JOBS SELLING THE BENEFIT

DATE/PRODUCT	BENEFIT
January 7, 2003 Keynote presentation software	“Using Keynote is like having a professional graphics department to create your slides. This is the application to use when your presentation really counts.” ⁵
September 12, 2006 iPod nano	“The all-new iPod nano gives music fans more of what they love in their iPods—twice the storage capacity at the same price, an incredible twenty-four-hour battery life, and a gorgeous aluminum design in five brilliant colors.” ⁶
January 15, 2008 Time Capsule backup service for Macs running Leopard OS	“With Time Capsule, all your irreplaceable photos, movies, and documents are automatically protected and incredibly easy to retrieve if they are ever lost.” ⁷
June 9, 2008 iPhone 3G	“Just one year after launching the iPhone, we’re launching the new iPhone 3G. It’s twice as fast at half the price.” ⁸
September 9, 2008 Genius feature for iTunes	“Genius lets you automatically create playlists from songs in your music library that go great together, with just one click.” ⁹

Avoid Self-Indulgent, Buzzword-Filled Wastes of Time

Answer the one question in all of your marketing materials: website, presentation slides, and press releases. The people who should know better—public relations professionals—are often the worst violators of this rule. The majority of press releases are usually self-indulgent, buzzword-filled wastes of time. Few members of the press even read press releases, because the documents fail to answer the *one* question that matters most to a reporter—Why should my readers care? As a journalist, I’ve seen thousands of press releases and rarely, if ever, covered a story based on one. Most other journalists would concur. Far too many press releases focus on corporate changes (management appointments, new logos, new offices, etc.) that nobody cares about, and if people should happen to care, the information is far from clear. Read press releases issued on any given day, and you will go numb trying to figure out why anyone would care about the information.

For fun, I took a few samples from press releases issued within hours of one another. The date does not matter. The majority of all press releases violate the same fundamental principles of persuasion:

“_____ Industries announced today that it has signed an exclusive distribution agreement with _____. Under terms of the agreement, _____ will be the exclusive national distributor of _____’s diesel exhaust fluid.” Now, seriously, who cares? I wish I could tell you how the new distribution agreement benefits anyone, even shareholders. I can’t, because the rest of the press release never answers the question directly.

“_____ has been named 2008 Pizza Chain of the Year by *Pizza Marketplace*.” The press

release said this honor comes after the chain delivered consistent profits, six quarters of same-store sales increases, and a new management team. Now, if the chain offered its customers a special discount to celebrate this honor, it would be newsworthy, but the press release mentions nothing that distinguishes this pizza chain from the thousands of other pizza parlors. This type of release falls under the “look at us” category—announcements that are largely meaningless to anyone outside the executive suites.

“_____ has announced the addition of the ‘Annual Report on China’s Steel Market in 2008 and the Outlook for 2009’ report to their offering.” Really? I’m sure millions of people around the world were waiting for this new report! Just kidding. This is another example of a wasted opportunity. If this release had started with one new, eye-opening piece of information from the new report, I might have been slightly more interested. However, that would have meant putting the reader first, and, sadly, most PR pros who write press releases intended for journalists have never been trained as journalists themselves.

Here’s another gem, courtesy of an electric company in Hawaii:

“_____ today announced that _____ has been named president and CEO, effective January 1, 2009. _____ replaces _____, who stepped down as president and CEO in August of this year.” We also learned that the new CEO has thirty-two years of experience in the utilities industry and has lived on the big island for twenty years. Isn’t that wonderful? Doesn’t it give you a warm feeling? Again, this press release represents a lost opportunity to connect with the company’s investors

and customers. If the release had started with one thing that the new CEO planned to do immediately to improve service, it would have been far more interesting and newsworthy.

For the most part, press releases fail miserably at generating interest because they don't answer the one question that matters most to the reader. Do not make the same mistake in your presentation, publicity, and marketing material.

Nobody has time to listen to a pitch or presentation that holds no benefit. If you pay close attention to Jobs, you will see that he doesn't "sell" products; he sells the dream of a better future. When Apple launched the iPhone in early 2007, CNBC reporter Jim Goldman asked Jobs, "Why is the iPhone so important to Apple?" Jobs avoided a discussion of shareholder value or market share; instead, he offered the vision of a better experience: "I think the iPhone may change the whole phone industry and give us something that is vastly more powerful in terms of making phone calls and keeping your contacts. We have the best iPod we've ever made fully integrated into it. And it has the Internet in your pocket with a real browser, real e-mail, and the best implementation of Google Maps on the planet. iPhone brings all this stuff in your pocket, and it's ten times easier to use."¹⁰ Jobs explains the "why" before the "how."

Your audience doesn't care about your product. People care about themselves. According to former Apple employee and Mac evangelist Guy Kawasaki, "The essence of evangelism is to passionately show people how you can make history together. Evangelism has little to do with cash flow, the bottom line, or co-marketing. It is the purest and most passionate form of sales because you are selling a dream, not a tangible object."¹¹ Sell dreams, not products.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- » Ask yourself, “Why should my listener care about this idea/information/product/service?” If there is only one thing that you want your listener to take away from the conversation, what would it be? Focus on selling the benefit behind the product.
- » Make the *one thing* as clear as possible, repeating it at least twice in the conversation or presentation. Eliminate buzzwords and jargon to enhance the clarity of your message.
- » Make sure the *one thing* is consistent across all of your marketing collateral, including press releases, website pages, and presentations.

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SCENE 3

Develop a Messianic Sense of Purpose

We're here to put a dent in the universe.

—STEVE JOBS

New York's luxury, Upper West Side apartment building, the San Remo, is located on Seventy-Fifth Street with commanding views of Central Park. Its most famous residents read like a who's who of contemporary culture: Tiger Woods, Demi Moore, Dustin Hoffman, Bono, and, at one time, a young man on a mission—Steve Jobs.

In 1983, Jobs was aggressively courting then PepsiCo president John Sculley. Apple desperately wanted to bring in someone with Sculley's marketing and managing experience, but despite Steve's charm, Sculley failed to budge. The position would require that Sculley relocate his family to the West Coast, and it paid less than he wanted. One sentence would change everything. One sentence that would transform Apple, shift the trajectory of Sculley's career, and begin Jobs's amazing path from whiz kid to failure to hero and, finally, to legend. In his book *Odyssey*, Sculley recounts the conversation that would lead to his decision to take the job. The conversation

also provided one of the most famous quotes in the history of corporate America.

According to Sculley, “We were on the balcony’s west side, facing the Hudson River, when he [Jobs] finally asked me directly: ‘Are you going to come to Apple?’ ‘Steve,’ I said, ‘I really love what you’re doing. I’m excited by it; how could anyone not be captivated? But it just doesn’t make sense. Steve, I’d love to be an adviser to you, to help you in any way. But I don’t think I can come to Apple.’”

Sculley said Jobs’s head dropped; he paused and stared at the ground. Jobs then looked up and issued a challenge to Sculley that would “haunt” him. Jobs said, “Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?”¹ Sculley said it was as if someone delivered a stiff blow to his stomach.

The Reality Distortion Field

Sculley had witnessed what Apple’s vice president Bud Tribble once described as Jobs’s “reality distortion field”: an ability to convince anyone of practically anything. Many people cannot resist this magnetic pull and are willing to follow Jobs to the promised land (or at least to the next cool iPod).

Few people can escape the Jobs charisma, a magnetism steeped in passion for his products. Observers have said that there is something about the way Jobs talks, the enthusiasm that he conveys, that grabs everyone in the room and doesn’t let go. Even journalists who should have built up an immunity to such gravitational forces cannot escape the influence. Wired.com editor Leander Kahney interviewed Jobs biographer Alan Deutschman, who described a meeting with Jobs: “He uses your first name very often. He looks directly in your eyes with that laser-like stare. He has these movie-star eyes that are very hypnotic. But what really gets you is the way he talks—there’s something about the rhythm of his speech and the incredible enthusiasm he conveys for whatever it is he’s talking about that is just infectious.”²

Do What You Love

Deutschman said the Steve Jobs “X” factor is “the way he talks.” But what exactly is it about the way he talks that pulls you in? Jobs speaks with passion, enthusiasm, and energy. Jobs himself tells us where his passion comes from: “You’ve got to find what you love. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle.”³

We all have a unique purpose. Some people, such as Jobs, identify that purpose from an early age; others never do, because they are caught up in catching up with the Joneses. One sure way to lose sight of your purpose is to chase money for the sake of chasing money. Jobs is a billionaire and an extraordinary communicator precisely because he followed his heart, his passion. The money, he most certainly knew, would come.

FINDING YOUR CORE PURPOSE

What is your core purpose? Once you find it, express it enthusiastically. One of the most profound experiences of my journalism career happened during an interview with Chris Gardner. Actor Will Smith played Gardner in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

In That Crazyness, We See Genius

I think you always had to be a little different to buy an Apple computer. I think the people who do buy them are the creative spirits in this world. They are the people who are not out just to get a job done; they're out to change the world. We make tools for those kinds of people . . . We are going to serve the people who have been buying our products since the beginning. A lot of times, people think they're crazy. But in that crazyness, we see genius. And those are the people we're making tools for.⁴

—STEVE JOBS

In the eighties, the real-life Gardner pursued an unpaid internship to become a stockbroker. He was homeless at the time, spending nights in the bathroom of an Oakland, California, subway station. To make the situation even harder, Gardner took care of his two-year-old son. The two slept together on the bathroom floor. Every morning, Gardner would put on the one suit he had, drop his son off at a very questionable day care, and take his classes. Gardner finished top of his class, became a stockbroker, and earned many millions of dollars. For a *BusinessWeek* column, I asked him, “Mr. Gardner, how did you find the strength to keep going?” His answer was so profound that I remember it to this day: “Find something you love to do so much, you can’t wait for the sun to rise to do it all over again.”⁵

In *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras studied eighteen leading companies. Their conclusion: individuals are inspired by “core values and a sense of purpose beyond just making money.”⁶ From his earliest interviews, it becomes clear that Jobs was more motivated by creating great products than by calculating how much money he would make at building those products.

In a PBS documentary, *Triumph of the Nerds*, Jobs said, “I was worth over a million dollars when I was twenty-three, and over ten million dollars when I was twenty-four, and over a hundred million dollars when I was twenty-five, and it wasn’t that important, because I never did it for the money.”⁷ *I never did it for the money.* This phrase holds the secret between becoming an extraordinary presenter and one mired in mediocrity for the rest of your life. Jobs once said that being “the richest man in the cemetery” didn’t matter to him; rather, “going to bed at night saying we’ve done something wonderful, that’s what matters to me.”⁸ Great presenters are passionate, because they follow their hearts. Their conversations become platforms to share that passion.

Malcolm Gladwell shares a fascinating observation in *Outliers*. He argues that most of the leaders who are responsible for the personal computing revolution were born in 1955. That’s the magic year, he says. According to Gladwell, the chronology makes sense because the first “minicomputer,” the Altair,

was introduced in 1975, marking one of the most important developments in the history of personal computers. He states: “If you were more than a few years out of college in 1975, then you belonged to the old paradigm. You had just bought a house. You’re married. A baby is on the way. You’re in no position to give up a good job and pension for some pie-in-the-sky \$397 computer kit.”⁹ Likewise, if you were too young, you would not be mature enough to participate in the revolution.

Gladwell speculates that the ideal age of tech industry titans was around twenty or twenty-one, those born in 1954 or 1955. Steve Jobs was born on February 24, 1955. He was born at the right time and in the right neighborhood to take advantage of the moment. Gladwell points out that Jobs is one of an amazing number of technology leaders born in 1954 and 1955 (including Bill Gates, Paul Allen, Steve Ballmer, Eric Schmidt, Scott McNealy, and others). Gladwell’s conclusion is that these men became successful precisely because computers were not big moneymakers at the time. They were cool, and these men loved to tinker. The message, claims Gladwell, is: to achieve success, do what you find interesting. Do what you love, and follow your core purpose. As Jobs has said, your heart knows where it wants to be.

THE LUCKIEST GUYS ON THE PLANET

On May 30, 2007, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates shared the stage in a rare joint appearance at the technology conference D: All Things

Lust for It

In a *New York Times* article after the launch of the MacBook Air, John Markoff wrote about witnessing Steve’s enthusiasm in person. Markoff spent thirty minutes with Jobs after the conference and noted that Jobs’s passion for personal computing came across even more so than it did when he was performing onstage. Jobs excitedly told Markoff, “I’m going to be the first one in line to buy one of these. I’ve been lusting after this.”¹⁰

Digital. *Wall Street Journal* columnists Walt Mossberg and Kara Swisher covered a variety of topics with the two tech titans. In response to a question about Bill Gates's "second act" as a philanthropist, Jobs credited Gates for making the world a better place because Gates's goal wasn't to be the richest guy in the cemetery.

You know, I'm sure Bill was like me in this way. I mean, I grew up fairly middle-class, lower middle-class, and I never really cared much about money. And Apple was so successful early on in life that I was very lucky that I didn't have to care about money then. And so I've been able to focus on work and then later on, my family. And I sort of look at us as two of the luckiest guys on the planet because we found what we loved to do, we were at the right place at the right time, and we've gotten to go to work every day with superbright people for thirty years and do what we love doing. And so it's hard to be happier than that. And so I don't think about legacy much. I just think about being able to get up every day and go in and hang around these great people and hopefully create something that other people will love as much as we do. And if we can do that, that's great.¹¹

Nowhere in that quote do you hear Jobs speak of wealth, stock options, or private planes. Those things are nice, but they don't motivate Jobs. His drive comes from doing what he loves—designing great products that people enjoy.

Rally People to a Better Future

Donald Trump once remarked, "If you don't have passion, you have no energy, and if you don't have energy, you have nothing." It all starts with passion. Passion stirs the emotions of your listeners when you use it to paint a picture of a more meaningful world, a world that your customers or employees can play a part in creating.

Marcus Buckingham interviewed thousands of employees who excelled at their jobs during his seventeen years at the

Oprah Shares Jobs's Secret to Success

*Follow your passion. Do what you love, and the money will follow. Most people don't believe it, but it's true.*¹²

—OPRAH WINFREY

Gallup organization. After interviewing thousands of peak performers, he arrived at what he considers the single best definition of leadership: "Great leaders rally people to a better future," he writes in *The One Thing You Need to Know*.¹³

According to Buckingham, a leader carries a vivid image in his or her head of what a future could be. "Leaders are fascinated by the future. You are a leader if, and only if, you are restless for change, impatient for progress, and deeply dissatisfied with the status quo." He explains, "As a leader, you are never satisfied with the present, because in your head you can see a better future, and the friction between 'what is' and 'what could be' burns you, stirs you up, propels you forward. This is leadership."¹⁴ Jobs's vision must have certainly burned him, stirred him, and propelled him forward. Jobs once told John Sculley he dreamed that every person in the world would own an Apple computer. But Jobs did not stop there. He shared that dream with all who would listen.

True evangelists are driven by a messianic zeal to create new experiences. "It was characteristic of Steve to speak in both vivid and sweeping language," writes Sculley. "'What we want to do,' he [Steve Jobs] explained, 'is to change the way people use computers in the world. We've got some incredible ideas that will revolutionize the way people use computers. Apple is going to be the most important computer company in the world, far more important than IBM.'"¹⁵ Jobs was never motivated to build computers. Instead, he had a burning desire to create tools to unleash human potential. Once you understand the difference, you'll understand what sparked his famous reality distortion field.

An Incredible Journey

Apple was this incredible journey. I mean, we did some amazing things there. The thing that bound us together at Apple was the ability to make things that were going to change the world. That was very important. We were all pretty young. The average age in the company was mid to late twenties. Hardly anybody had families at the beginning, and we all worked like maniacs, and the greatest joy was that we felt we were fashioning collective works of art much like twentieth-century physics. Something important that would last, that people contributed to and then could give to more people; the amplification factor was very large.¹⁶

—STEVE JOBS

What Computers and Coffee Have in Common

Lee Clow, chairman of TBWA/Chiat/Day, the agency behind some of Apple's most notable ad campaigns, once said of Jobs, "From the time he was a kid, Steve thought his products could change the world."¹⁷ That's the key to understanding Jobs. His charisma is a result of a grand but strikingly simple vision—to make the world a better place.

Jobs convinced his programmers that they were changing the world together, making a moral choice against Microsoft and making people's lives better. For example, Jobs gave an interview to *Rolling Stone* in 2003 in which he talked about the iPod. The MP3 player was not simply a music gadget, but much more. According to Jobs, "Music is really being reinvented in this digital age, and that is bringing it back into people's lives. It's a wonderful thing. And in our own small way, that's how we're going to make the world a better place."¹⁸ Where some people see an iPod as a music player, Jobs sees a world in which people can easily access their favorite songs and carry the music along with them wherever they go, enriching their lives.

Jobs reminds me of another business leader whom I had the pleasure of meeting, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz. Prior to our interview, I read his book, *Pour Your Heart into It*. Schultz is passionate about what he does; in fact, the word *passion* appears on nearly every page. But it soon became clear that he is not as passionate about coffee as he is about the people, the baristas who make the Starbucks experience what it is. You see, Schultz's core vision was not to make a great cup of coffee. It was much bigger. Schultz would create an experience; a third place between work and home where people would feel comfortable gathering. He would build a company that treats people with dignity and respect. Those happy employees would, in turn, provide a level of customer service that would be seen as a gold standard in the industry. When I reviewed the transcripts from my time with Schultz, I was struck by the fact that the word *coffee* rarely appeared. Schultz's vision had little to do with coffee and everything to do with the experience Starbucks offers.

"Some managers are uncomfortable with expressing emotion about their dreams, but it's the passion and emotion that will attract and motivate others," write Collins and Porras.¹⁹ Communicators such as Steve Jobs and Howard Schultz are passionate about how their products improve the lives of their customers. They're not afraid to express it. Coffee, computers, iPods—it doesn't matter. What matters is that they are motivated by a vision to change the world, to "leave a dent in the universe."

This book is filled with techniques to help you sell your ideas more successfully, but no technique can make up for a lack of passion for your service, product, company, or cause. The secret is to identify what it is you're truly passionate about. More often than not, it's not "the widget," but how the widget will improve the lives of your customers. Here is an excerpt from an interview Jobs gave *Wired* magazine in 1996: "Design is a funny word. Some people think design means how it looks. But of course, if you dig deeper, it's really how it works. The design of the Mac wasn't what it looked like, although that was part of it. Primarily, it was how it worked. To design something really well, you have to get it. You have to really grok what it's all about. It takes a

The Charismatic Leader

When I wasn't sure what the word charisma meant, I met Steve Jobs and then I knew.²⁰

—FORMER APPLE CHIEF SCIENTIST LARRY TESLER

passionate commitment to really thoroughly understand something, chew it up, not just quickly swallow it. Most people don't take the time to do that."²¹ Yes, *grok* is the word Jobs used. Just as Howard Schultz isn't passionate about the product itself, coffee, Jobs isn't passionate about hardware. He's passionate about how design enables something to work more beautifully.

Think Different

Los Angeles ad agency TBWA/Chiat/Day created an Apple television and print advertising campaign that turned into one of the most famous campaigns in corporate history. "Think Different" debuted on September 28, 1997, and became an instant classic. As black-and-white images of famous iconoclasts filled the screen (Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King, Richard Branson, John Lennon, Amelia Earhart, Muhammad Ali, Lucille Ball, Bob Dylan, and others), actor Richard Dreyfuss voiced the narration:

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square hole. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.²²