



## **Why you need to rethink how you market your brand in order to create more “mind share” in the marketplace**

### ***What, exactly, is mind share?***

According to Wikipedia **mind share** relates generally to the development of consumer awareness or popularity, and is one of the main objectives of advertising and promotion. When people think of examples of a product type or category, they usually think of a limited number of brand names. The aim of mind share is to establish a brand as being one of the best kinds of a given product or service, and to even have the brand name become a synonym for the product or service offered. For example, a prospective buyer of a high performance luxury automobile will have numerous brands to choose from. However, the evoked set, or set of vehicles considered, will probably be limited to about 2 or 3. Of these three, the brands that offer a high performance luxury vehicle that the buyer is most familiar with will receive the greatest attention. While there are many mitigating factors in the decision making process, knowing or being aware of someone who has purchased the vehicle desired by the buyer will many times drive the purchase decision.

### ***What, exactly, is a Brand Ambassador or Key Influencer?***

Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers are the not-so-secret weapon of many successful companies. They help the up-and-coming companies stand out among the many others in the field. To put it simply, “brand ambassador or key influencer” is a term used in the marketing world in reference to a person who represents and promotes your company. They will endorse the products and services of your company as well as embody your corporate identity in appearance, demeanor, values, and voice. Ambassadors and Influencers are simply people who represent and talk about your company and your products or services in a positive way, preferably in front of lots of potential customers (i.e. their friends and family including business associates).

It is someone who embodies the brand he or she is endorsing and has first-hand experience. They provide credible, trustworthy promotion and visibility to a brand and are willing to

“testify” as to why they are loyal and committed to your company. Many times, your brand ambassadors and key influencers also become lifetime customers.

There are two types of “brand advocates”. The first kind involves Key Influencers. These are people who have a large following on social media, they are celebrities, teachers or subject matter experts. They attract shares, comments, follows, and likes. A brand can gain tons of visibility when engaging these people. In this case, you more or less engage these people under contract to increase brand awareness, and you provide them something in return.

You do not necessarily have to contractually engage the second type which is Brand Ambassadors. These people are also influential on social media and at the grassroots level AND they promote your brand because they are happy with it. You don’t pay them nor is it required to give them free product or services, but you still provide them “something” in return — “product discounts”, branded apparel, reduce price event registration fees, access to members only instructional events, etc.. Some companies treat them with a free or heavily discounted “one time only fixed fee purchase” of a product or pre-defined package (comprised of multiple products). If you engage the right person you will be very pleased with the results.

## **Why does using Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers work?**

There are many reasons why using Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers is a proven, effective method of marketing. Here are the key reasons to why they are invaluable to your business:

### **1. They humanize your product and service**

People like to buy from people. Although organizations traditionally brand themselves through logos and symbols, social media and “grassroots” events both offer an opportunity to do more. Ambassadors and Influencers are emotionally engaged with your company’s brand promise and they espouse the brand value you promise to deliver to your customer, it is in the very fabric of their personalities to want to share information, solve problems and help others.

“Humans mimic other’s expressions and behaviors, creating emotional contagion,” wrote freelancer Stephanie Booth in an article in Psychology Today magazine. If you can positively engage someone with your brand, they could be your greatest marketing communications tool and sales person in your arsenal.

## **2. Your brand ambassadors and influencers in turn will become more loyal to your product**

The “Loyalty Ripple Effect” suggests customers can contribute to their own satisfaction by their participation in the product marketing, promotional and demo process. Satisfied customers often like to “show off” what they have purchased or achieved with your product. The cultivation of customer loyalty is an important, if not the most important, challenge facing most businesses. Indeed, businesses should be concerned about not only attracting and satisfying customers, but also developing long-term relationships with them.

## **3. Most word of mouth advertising is positive**

Overwhelmingly, most word of mouth is conversation is positive. Keller Fay Group’s research shows that overall, only 8% of brand conversations are truly negative, and 66% of brand conversations are truly positive. More importantly, according to their research, positive WOM is more credible than negative WOM. When people hear something positive about a brand, 66% of them assign a high credibility rating to it, rating it 9 or 10 on a scale of 0-10.

## **4. Demand for product knowledge and excellence in customer care is greater than ever before**

Today, it’s not enough to equip salespeople with sheets of marketing collateral, or the communications team with a wallet-sized card of key messages. Your employees absolutely must understand what your brand represents, what your company stands for and what makes it different from your competitors. By expanding this knowledge to your Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers, you will benefit from a new “direct to consumer channel” you can leverage to generate brand and product awareness with potential buyers.

## **5. Battles aren’t won with a single soldier, but an entire army.**

Competition is fierce, and the battle for market share, profit and mindshare is not an easy one for companies to fight. Business is not 9-to-5, and it’s not relegated behind office walls. Just as social media has enabled real-time marketing and branding, it’s also necessitated real-time customer service and community management. Having an “army” of social media and grassroots brand ambassadors at your disposal will help you win the war.

## **6. Social Media Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers let you use the viral nature of the Internet deliberately**

The tools are already in place. Anyone can share anything with their entire circle of social media friends with just one click. Enlisting brand ambassadors and key influencers exposes your company's brand to multiple social circles made up of people who want what you have, and who already trust the messenger.

## **7. Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers Build Trust**

Consumer scepticism is growing about advertising, and trust in them is eroding. At the same time, mass paid for advertising no longer reaches as many people as cost effectively as it did previously. This is due to both the fragmentation of media (due to greater choice of channels), and also due to the growth of online and social media. In a recent Nielsen survey, only 33% of consumers said they trust paid advertisements, but a whopping **92% trust peer recommendations**.

In a 2017 Sparkler study by Snap Inc, **86% of people responded that a suggestion from a friend or family member directly lead them to a purchase decision**. The "Circle of Influence" that influences purchase decisions include four friend types: "non-friends" such as brands and media; influencers such as celebrities or teaching pros; distant friends and close friends/family members.

## **8. Cost Effective**

There's tons of research out there showing that Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is the most impactful and trusted form of marketing around. What's more important is that Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers are extremely cost-effective. Most of them are happy to be compensated with perks, swag, and discounts. Many will even do it for free as volunteers, just because they truly enjoy what your business has to offer. Being a member of a "brand" team, club or special "group" where there are "benefits of membership" has been aspired by many in the sports industry and we are now seeing this trend expand across all types of manufacturers of products. Consumers are willing to contribute their time and even their money if 1) they personally use and like what they are promoting and 2) there is some return value or benefits associated with their commitment.

## **9. Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers can positively impact your company reputation**

The fact is you are not "managing your reputation online or even in the local marketplace." Your customers are. If you haven't figured it out yet, not everyone is saying nice things about

your business (as much as you'd like to think that they are.) More brand ambassadors and key influencers means more positive comments, reviews and referrals to your business. It is a numbers game!

#### **10. Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers drive new customers to you**

It's no secret that word-of-mouth has power. Just how much power? Research shows that it's at least **five times more effective** than traditional advertising, paid search, email, and other marketing tools. With the average person's "connectedness" being much greater than in the past, empowering your customers to refer their friends or help bring you new business is not just a nice marketing tool, it's critical for success in business today. Your Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers will attend key localized events where they can allow potential buyer to view your products, receive a "live testimony" and even "demo" your products.

#### **11. People pay more attention to their friends especially if they are using your products than they do your advertisements**

The effective way for your business to "break through the marketing clutter" is to work through people's social networks online and off, especially at the grassroots local level. Traditional media advertisements is being "tuned out". Think about whether you are really reaching people and if they are really listening. Often with Google or Facebook advertising it takes thousands of ad impressions before you get just one click that results in a sale.

#### **12. They are usually there to stay but you must make them feel "special"**

Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers are typically customers for life. They feel a part of the businesses that they love. We highly recommend building and deploying a special "members only website" whereby they can have access to your products and branded apparel they can purchase at a discounted wholesale pricing. This "team or members only" website should be your primary source of communications and provide each member the ability to share their testimonies and photos about their personal experiences with your products.

More Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers means more long-term customers, which means increased lifetime value (revenue.) More long-term customers, which cost less, drives referrals, and improves your online reputation. And best of all, your investment is minimal.

## **ABOUT TEAM HQS**

Visit [TeamHQS.com](http://TeamHQS.com) for more information on how we can help make all of the above a reality for your brand. We are consultants with decades of experience in how best to identify, recruit and leverage “advocates” for your brand in order to create a successful program which will deliver measureable and sustainable results “year to year”. We have the tools to help you measure the effectiveness of your social media campaigns allowing you to better leverage and manage your Brand Ambassadors and Key Influencers.