

"TARA NELSON DESCRIBES A KEY AUDIENCE FOR MARKETERS SEEKING GROWTH: SEEK CUSTOMERS (ACTUALLY, HUMANS) SEEKING GROWTH AS WELL!" — SETH GODIN, AUTHOR OF *PURPLE COW*

# THE TRANSFORMATIONAL CONSUMER



FUEL A LIFELONG LOVE AFFAIR WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS  
BY HELPING THEM GET HEALTHIER, WEALTHIER, AND WISER

TARA-NICHOLLE  
NELSON

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**TARA-NICHOLLE  
NELSON**



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# The Transformational Consumer

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*This book is dedicated to Channing Dawson, Pete Flint and Sami Inkinen, Michael and Albert Lee, and all the other entrepreneurs who are committed to building thriving businesses while modeling vulnerability and service.*

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## PROLOGUE

# Thirty Years of Transformation

I've been working on this book since I was nine years old. Allow me to share a little with you about how I got from there to here. My story is the story of a Transformational Consumer. It's also the story of why this book and the Transformational Consumer insights framework at its center both exist.

In my ninth year, my parents owned a racquet club and gym, where I spent a couple of days a week doing step aerobics with a room full of middle-age women, clad (them, not me) in leotards, tights, leg warmers, and high-top Reeboks. I'd watch them cycle in and out, noting which ones showed up all the time and who struggled to keep coming. I listened to them talk about their diets, their clothes, their instructors, even the gym itself with fondness and excitement—especially those who felt like this routine was helping them lose weight.

Even back then, I was fascinated to watch people fall off and hop back on the wagon, to see how they would create little fitness tribes with the people they saw every day at the club. I was mesmerized by the waves of people in and out of this business, which was holding this precious space for their health and, in many respects, their happiness, their energy, and their power to move, live, and be who they wanted to be.

When I was 14, I first read *Quantum Healing*, by Deepak Chopra.<sup>1</sup> I became obsessed with two concepts in the book. The first is that every single cell in our entire bodies is reborn every seven years, giving our bodies an immense capacity for healing. The second is that our mindset and thinking could impact our physical state. This blew my entire mind. I had a number of family members who were ill and dying, at the time, of high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. If this book was right, it seemed, people had great power to change the course of their physical health for the better, if only they could get a handle on their minds and their behavior.

A couple of years later, my life took a little detour, as lives do. I got pregnant, married, and graduated from high school a year early, in that order.

I started college at age 16, had my son during winter break of my freshman year, and went back to class. Through a series of miracles, I got scholarships, graduated, and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology, before moving a few hours north of my hometown to go to law school at UC Berkeley. This move happened the same summer I lost 60 pounds, got certified as a personal trainer, and got out of a bad marriage.

I put myself through law school as a personal trainer. After graduating, I practiced the law for a couple of years, representing people who had been sued civilly and charged criminally for the same conduct. Ultimately, I ended up representing a few bad-apple real estate agents whose disturbingly lackadaisical approach to their clients' transactions, flexible lifestyles, and income (much more than mine) inspired me to make a career change. "I can do this better," I thought.

So I got a real estate broker's license, quit my lawyer job, and hung out my shingle in the field of Bay Area real estate, right around the peak of the market in 2005. I represented a bunch of people just like me: smart, young professionals, buying their first homes. (I'd bought mine right after graduation.) These people researched everything. But they were often very intimidated by the prospect of jumping into the insane market climate of overbidding and over-asking offers.

Sitting with my buyer clients in the car, I spotted a lot of patterns in what people wanted out of their transactions. They didn't want houses. They wanted lifestyle design. They were looking to this single-largest purchase they had ever made to change their lives, careers, businesses, finances, and even their relationships with their kids, partners, and parents, for the better.

But I also watched and wrestled with a handful of my first few home-buyer clients as they made decisions I believed pulled against the direction of their original vision. I asked some agents in my office how I could help manage the emotions and decision traps I saw clients falling into over and over again. Their reply? "Let the market educate your clients." Meaning: let them lose the houses they love, and they'll get beaten down. Then, they'll take your advice.

I rejected this. Using what I knew how to do, I sat down and created a curriculum for home buyers and required every single person or couple who wanted me to show them houses to sit down and go over it with me in the coffee shop or at my office before we ever even got in the car.

The curriculum was essentially a flowchart on which the first event was the initial coffee-shop meeting and the last event was move-in. But then I annotated it heavily, going beyond the standard "how-to," wrapping in "what to expect" and "mindset management."

And things changed, fast. My clients went from making six or seven offers before they'd get a home to making two or three. I even had a client



report that she started to freak out at one point, pulled out the chart, remembered that I'd told her she would freak out the night she signed a particular document, and went back to bed.

I turned that flowchart into a seminar, and then I wrote it up into a book, which I self-published. I like to say that I sold ten books, but the tenth was a big sale—to HGTV.

One of the founders of HGTV, a brilliant gent named Channing Dawson, had found my book and called me up asking if the company could license the book as seed content for a digital real estate site it was starting up. Of course, I said yes. And in the same deal, HGTV hired me as a digital-content marketing consultant, with my first project being to break down my 400-page book into hundreds of web articles, several video webisode series (starring me), and PR campaigns.

For the next three years, I had a contract with HGTV, in which I made more money the more traffic I could drive to its website. (This was helpful, as the real estate market was starting to crash, and I needed the income.) The levers I could pull to increase site traffic were few: a spokesperson (me), HGTV's media training, its PR team, and any sort of content I could think to create.

This consulting gig became an intensive real-time adventure in using content marketing to drive digital business results, before the phrase “content marketing” really even existed. I would put together lists of tips, search trends, cities lists, and answers to questions I was hearing a lot from my buyer clients or visitors to the HGTV site. I'd give the tips out on our site and on TV, pitch them to the big Internet portals like AOL and Yahoo!, and place them on blogs and other media outlets.

And we got it down to a science. I'd fly to New York every quarter, get up at three a.m. to do an early-morning satellite media tour, do a couple of spots on morning prime-time shows like *Good Morning America*, and then go pitch magazine editors to feature our content. We built relationships with producers and editors, who were thrilled with my fancy credentials and what they called my yoga-teacher demeanor. Viewers wrote in to us, telling us how much better they felt when I'd been on the air, even though I didn't always have the best news to give about the tumbling real estate market.

Every time I went on TV, the site hit record traffic.

Spotting patterns in what people wanted in their lives and their obstacles, then serving them how-to, what-to-expect, and mindset-management content just plain worked.

Soon, I was offered an in-house marketing role at Trulia.com, a real estate search engine and competitor of HGTV's site, managing consumer


content, marketing, and PR and serving as the company's spokesperson. We developed a whole program out of engaging users on the company's products with content, helping them save, invest, spend less, and make wise real estate decisions. We created recurring PR campaigns featuring the company's data and spokespeople that routinely earned coverage in hundreds of media outlets and brought over 11 million people to the most trafficked single-author real estate blog ever.

I left Trulia to work at a boutique tech PR agency in San Francisco, as the VP of digital and content. I launched brand-new products *outside* of real estate with these strategies. And they still worked. They worked in mobile security. They worked in cosmetics. They worked on all kinds of apps. They worked with digital textbooks. They worked when I was the spokesperson and when I wasn't. I left the agency to start my own company doing the same work, but I wanted to focus on companies that were doing work that would change people's lives for the better. And I had the best clients ever. ModCloth. Eventbrite. I continued to work with Trulia, but as my client instead of as my employer.

And then one day I got a call from MyFitnessPal, the world's largest fitness app. The company was then eight years old and had 45 million users. After working with the company as a consultant, I ended up staying on as its first and only VP of marketing.

Over the next 18 months, I built a marketing team that would use customer research, digital marketing, and content to help the company double to over 100 million customers and increase customer engagement by 22%. We went from raising an \$18 million Series A investment round when I first arrived to selling the company to Under Armour for \$475 million, in less than two years.

In an age when disengagement was rampant and many people were saying that email is dead, here are a few Tweets we received in the early days of the MyFitnessPal content program:

- ▲ “Whoever does the newsletter at @MyFitnessPal, you're awesome.  #fitnessmotivation”
- ▲ “@MyFitnessPal Just wanted to say how much I love your blog. Every article is relevant to me and an interesting read. Very well done.”
- ▲ “@MyFitnessPal love your newsletters very interesting articles . . . keep them coming! :D”

This was not an isolated occurrence. I used to keep a massive file of the exact same sorts of notes while I was working on the content programming at Trulia. One I remember by heart. It was an email that started out, verba-

tim, “Your newsletter just saved my marriage.” Now, I can’t tell you what was going on in that marriage. But I can tell you that it was clear the content was connecting with people and their real issues, their real journeys. They cared about it enough to open it, click on it, read it, and rave about it.

What I’ve seen, time after time, is that billions of people worldwide are coming to the marketplace specifically looking for the products and services and brands that can help them live healthier, wealthier, and wiser lives. I’ve seen that they become deeply devoted, repeat customers of the companies that help them do this more effectively, easily, beautifully, or joyously than they could do it on their own.

After a decade of spotting these patterns and helping companies create thriving businesses from this point of view, I created a new consumer insights framework for helping companies spot opportunities for innovation, drive customer loyalty, and build beloved brands and content that people care about. I started to speak and write about my firsthand observations that the companies that grow and win in this era of social media and content marketing are not the companies that focus on boomers, moms, or millennials. They are the companies that focus on serving a massive, rapidly growing customer segment I call Transformational Consumers and unlocking progress along their journeys to live healthier, wealthier, and wiser lives.

If you’re looking for the lever to pull to get your company growing, winning, and out of the tired old story of disengaged customers and employees, you are in the right place. Serving the Transformational Consumer is that lever. But it doesn’t *just* help you escape that old narrative. It also unlocks the possibility for a transcendent new story: the story of a wild, life-long love affair with your customers.

## INTRODUCTION

# How to Transcend the Transactional

Advertisements are so numerous that they are very negligently perused, and it is therefore become necessary to gain attention by magnificence of promises and by eloquence sometimes sublime and sometimes pathetic.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1759

Have you ever started up your car and had the warning bell start going off, but it wasn't obvious what was making it ring? You open and shut the doors, check to make sure everyone's seat belts are on, slam the trunk a couple of times, and still it dings. Only after you give up and realize you're driving against resistance do you realize that your parking brake is on. Unclick it, and you're *off*.

That's what I see happening with entrepreneurs and executives in every size of business, in every sector, around the world.

I talk with these people every day for a living. There are three things they say they're most stressed about:

1. Growing the business (Growth)
2. Beating the competition (Winning)
3. Posting the right "content" to the right social media channel at the right time (Content)

While the first two of these are worthy objectives, the levers that most executives and entrepreneurs try to pull in order to achieve them are, like slamming the trunk, barking up the wrong tree. The number-one limiting factor of almost every business is neither growth nor the competition. It is disengagement. It has been since at least 1759. More on that in just a bit.

The third question is a beast of its own. "What should we do on social media?" sucks up a stunningly disproportionate amount of time and energy at the highest levels of almost every company I meet for such a tactical issue.

These are the wrong questions. We're having the wrong conversations. Here's how I know.

I was the VP of marketing for the world's largest digital health company. The company was called MyFitnessPal. Our logo was a little orange dancer. We called her "tiny dancer." She was clip art, from a time when the founder built the app in a back room, just he and his cat.

Yet, with these brand assets, the founder grew that company to have 45 million users, over eight years. Then we grew from 45 million to over 100 million users in 18 months. We started a blog with zero readers that had ten million uniques a month less than ten months later.

And we did it with zero paid advertising.

How?

We paid attention to the humanity of the people we served. We paid attention to how they wanted their lives to be different and how we could help them achieve that. This deep, human motivation—transformation—is one of the most elemental reasons people do the things they do. The drive for their lives to be different and better than they are right now is the pure, primal force underlying nearly every purchase decision and brand interaction people make.

In particular, there are three ways in which people have wanted their lives to be different throughout human history. And each of these involves a set of behavior changes that are extraordinarily difficult for people to make.

- ▲ They want to be healthier.
- ▲ They want to be wealthier.
- ▲ They want to be wiser.

Those of us who have taken on business as our life's work must now elevate our thinking. We must dare to be different. Let's stop fixating on which pic to post on which channel. Instead, dedicate yourself and your company to the endeavor of becoming an agent and facilitator of the transformations that people want to make in their lives.

That's what we did at MyFitnessPal. Our business model, our product, our marketing, even our internal culture—everything about the company was devoted to helping our customers change their behavior to make progress on their transformational journeys.

That's how we achieved greatness. Even with an orange dancer logo. Even with the word "pal" in our brand name.

This might sound like it's difficult to do if your company sells soap or paper products. It might sound impossible if your company has sold drugs

or home-improvement supplies for 100 years. This might sound really hard if your business model is B2B enterprise software or retail or grocery or even apparel.

Trust me when I say that it can be done. And if you choose to take on this challenge, which this book explains how to do, you can opt out of the disengagement epidemic and transcend the transactional nature of your company's relationships with customers.

## **Meet the Protagonist of Your New Love Story: The Transformational Consumer**

Transformational Consumers are a massive and growing group of people who see life as a never-ending series of projects to live healthier, wealthier, wiser lives.

They spend a great deal of their time and money on the products, services, and content that can help them make these changes.

They are early adopters. They influence the buying behavior of everyone around them. And they engage in joyful, two-way love affairs with the brands that change their lives.

They are triathletes, Crossfitters, and fitness walkers. They do Soul-Cycle and the senior exercise classes at Kaiser Permanente. Some of them are hardcore health nuts. Others might call their lifestyles "healthy-ish."

If you have been vegan *and* Paleo, at different times in your life, you might be a Transformational Consumer.

Transformational Consumers pick carefully the things they put in, on, and around their bodies.

They are always studying a course in something, exploring a new certification, or starting a business on the side. They read lots of business and wisdom literature, such as this book.

They experiment with frugality. They think a lot about designing their lives and course correcting the total picture of what they do with their work, their careers, and their time. They may have rejected a regular day job to drive for Uber or rent out their spare space on Airbnb, so they can work on their art or their entrepreneurial endeavors.

The specific aspirations of an individual Transformational Consumer at a given time don't matter right now. For now, the most important thing to understand is how these people define and view themselves. Transformational Consumers consciously view themselves as committed to growth, development, change for the better, and constantly making progress toward living a healthier, wealthier, wiser life.

And Transformers are the companies that transcend the transactional by understanding, reaching, engaging, and serving Transformational Consumers in the same way these people see themselves: through the lens of change.

## Disengaged and Disgusted: The Trouble with Transactional

Most companies are very fixated on growing sales and increasing revenue. So they look at customers through the lens of the transaction, tasking their teams with one overall objective: how can we get people to buy more of what we sell? Even so-called Customer Relationship Management and loyalty programs often focus most closely on the desired transactions themselves, funneling customers toward making purchases and rewarding them when they do.

This transactional focus pervades the relationships these companies have with their customers. Strictly transactional relationships with your customers are a quid pro quo. You provide a thing, and they buy the thing. That's that.

The thing is, this type of tit-for-tat, transactional relationship is what my dear grandmother would call a hard row to hoe. Because it's a row that has to be constantly seeded. Incessantly seeded. Expensively seeded.

And that's exactly what most companies do. They hire growth hackers. They pay for "user acquisition." They spend millions on brand marketing. They spend all their money trying to plant new seeds in new fields, getting new customers into the top of their funnel, because they can't count on their existing customers to visit again, buy more, or get their friends to come into the fold. This is a losing game, unless you can count on it being cheaper to acquire new users over the long run than to engage the customers you already have.

Spending millions to acquire disengaged "customers" who buy your product or download your app and never buy it again, never tell anyone about it, never read or watch your marketing messages again is an unsustainable business model.

On the other hand, any company, of any size, in any sector will be successful if it engages two audiences, over and over again: customers and employees.

Unfortunately, most companies are not doing so well with either:

- ▲ One in four mobile app users abandon apps after a single use.<sup>1</sup>
- ▲ Viewers avoid well over 60% of commercial messages simply by turning their heads.<sup>2</sup>

- ▲ Nearly 70% of employees, the people we *pay* to be engaged, rank somewhere between mildly disinterested and actively, toxically hateful when it comes to their employer and their work.<sup>3</sup>

Let that sink in for a minute. *We can't even pay people to be engaged.*

The other problem with taking the transactional approach is that it tempts companies into short-term thinking and bad behavior. Imagine, if you will, that a *New York Times* article about your company triggered readers to describe your company as “cravenly amoral,” your products as a “dystopian disaster,” and your strategy as “crony capitalism.” That’d be a nightmare, right?

Well, that nightmare came true for a number of Big Food companies in February 2013, when an excerpt from Michael Moss’s Big Food exposé *Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us* ran in the *New York Times*, eliciting those real-life reader quotes.<sup>4</sup> Under the headline “The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food,” the piece told how Moss discovered overwhelming evidence that food companies make “a conscious effort to get people hooked on foods that are convenient and inexpensive.”<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, these same foods played a disproportionate role in kick-starting America’s obesity and diabetes epidemics.

Moss wrote of meeting a pioneering “food optimizer” who had “no qualms about his own pioneering work on discovering what industry insiders now regularly refer to as ‘the bliss point’ or any of the other systems that helped food companies create the greatest amount of crave.” He wrote about a meeting he had with the food scientist Steven Witherly, bringing the well-known food optimizer a bag of junk food from which Witherly immediately extracted Cheetos:

“This,” Witherly said, “is one of the most marvelously constructed foods on the planet, in terms of pure pleasure.” He ticked off a dozen attributes of the Cheetos that make the brain say more. But the one he focused on most was the puff’s uncanny ability to melt in the mouth. “It’s called vanishing caloric density,” Witherly said. “If something melts down quickly, your brain thinks that there’s no calories in it . . . you can just keep eating it forever.”<sup>6</sup>

The result? More Cheetos sold. More transactions. In the short term.

This decades-long campaign to get people addicted to unhealthy foods is exactly what people think of when they think of companies trying to create habit-forming products. They think of big, evil conglomerates on a sinister mission to get people addicted to retail, screens, friend feeds, and bad foods, while they laugh all the way to the bank.

This sort of bad behavior happens when a sector of companies has exclusively transactional relationships with customers.



Cravenly amoral. Disgust, distrust, and, ultimately, disengagement. (*Fortune* reports that soda sales are down in 2016 for the 11th year running.)<sup>7</sup> That taking a transactional approach to your customers is bad for business seems like a serious understatement.

## What Does a Love Affair with Transformational Consumers Look Like?

This whole behavior-changing business scenario *could* have played out a totally different way. It's already starting to, in some of the great businesses of our time. The flip-side conclusion of Moss's investigation is that businesses *are* in the position to understand how to change and influence people's behavior, even the hardest ones to change. There's nothing that says companies can't wield that influence for good, instead of for evil.

From this vantage point, the Transformational Consumer framework poses a challenge, a revolutionary new possibility: what if companies used what we know about building habits and changing behavior to help people create the healthy, prosperity-inducing habits that people are out there trying to build on their own? What if we aligned our business models with people's personal goals for themselves, to change their behavior for the healthier, wealthier, and wiser?

Massive, massive change, that's what would happen. Healthy, prosperous people whose behavior aligns with their higher hopes and dreams for their lives.

And the consumer response to businesses would change, too. Love and long-term, sustainable profitability. That would happen, too.

These "what ifs" point to an alternative realm of possibility for company-customer relationships, a path beyond the epidemics of distrust and disengagement. In this new realm, business becomes a force for beneficial transformation in individual customers' lives. There, companies and their customers have real, deep, lasting connections. Customers look forward excitedly to the opportunity to buy their products, tell their friends about it, open, click, like, and review.

I've seen it happen, firsthand. I saw it when I worked with HGTV, when I worked at Trulia, and definitely as the chief marketer for MyFitnessPal. This new possibility for business is anxiously waiting in the wings, just itching to replace the tired status quo of companies begging for attention, stuck and limited by disgust and disengagement.

In this new realm, customers are the hero of their own life journey. They take on a never-ending series of quests to change their lives for the better, coming back from each quest challenged and changed. Every time they go

out on a quest to live a healthier, wealthier, wiser life, they seek and find mentors, advisers, and tools to help them overcome their challenges.

And every time they return home from a quest, they inspire their friends and loved ones to go out on life-changing quests of their own—to be the heroes of their own journeys.

In this new realm, these thriving, engaging companies have a single thing in common: they *are* the knowledgeable mentor, the compassionate adviser, and the invaluable, transformational tools these customers can't bear to be without (and can't stop telling their friends and loved ones about, either).

This new future is already reality for start-ups like the ones I mentioned earlier. It is also the new reality for much-larger, more mature incumbent, nondigital companies, such as CVS/health and Target. It is possible for companies in the health, fitness, and lifestyle-design industries, but it is also already manifesting itself for companies in much less obvious verticals, such as Airbnb and Apple.

There is a uniquely human force that these brands have all tapped into, whether by design or out of their sheer love for their users. This force is bigger than any brand, bigger than any product, bigger even than any demographic group—even millennials, even boomers, even moms.

This future, in which companies engage in wild, two-way love affairs with their customers by helping them along their journeys, is available to any company or brand that gets serious about tapping into this force.

It is available to you and your company.

This force is the human drive for transformation.

And the companies that are tapping into this force have pioneered a path to the other end of the engagement spectrum, with their customers and employees.

They are consistently ranked as the most innovative companies in the world.

They are consistently ranked among the most beloved, engaging brands.

They consistently achieve stellar growth and beat their competition.

They are consistently crowned the best places to work.

By helping their target audience make the critical life changes they crave, these companies have become linchpins in the lives of a powerful group of consumers. They have engineered—and sometimes reengineered—everything about their business to serve Transformational Consumers.

And Transformational Consumers are responding. They engage in love affairs with the companies that help them change their lives, their habits, their bodies, and their finances for the better all the time. But these love affairs don't always look the way you might expect. Brand-love, affinity, or sentiment metrics begin to capture the emotion of this phenomenon, but they do little to reveal the profound business impact of the "love" of a Transformational Consumer.

Some of those love affairs are wild and rollicking and sexy. The love of some Transformational Consumers for lululemon gear or SoulCycle spin classes is something they proudly proclaim, literally wearing their hearts on their sleeves (and headbands and pant legs). This doesn't mean these relationships are necessarily short-term infatuations. Rather, the branding and subject matter and life-improving impact of these brands has enough power and cachet that people tend to talk about them, a lot.

But many Transformational Consumer love affairs with the products that make their lives healthier, wealthier, and wiser look much more like a long, lovely, devoted marriage than a heady entanglement. Customers may not wander about starry-eyed or head over heels, but they do read the blog every day. They do open the newsletters. They do share the content. They do buy or use the product every day, week, month, or every time it becomes relevant in their lives. They do tell their friends, when asked, what their go-to budget or online learning software is and who their go-to real estate broker, life coach, CPA, or insurance agent is.

I may not go about wearing T-shirts proclaiming my love for my go-to protein powder, but I buy it every month.

Unprecedented growth, beating the competition, lifelong customer loyalty, and word-of-mouth referrals: that's what it looks like when Transformational Consumers engage in lifelong love affairs with the companies that help them change their lives.

## How to Use This Framework

Leaders, brands, and companies use the Transformational Consumer framework to get clear direction and answers to the kinds of questions that executive teams struggle with regularly:

- ▲ What products should we build or invest in next?
- ▲ Will this marketing, message, content, or campaign resonate with people? What messages will work?
- ▲ What features do our customers really want—and will they want next year or three years from now?

- ▲ How should we take this product to market? How should we package and market it?
- ▲ Where are our customers, and what do they care about?
- ▲ Why are our customers disengaged, and what should we do about it?

It provides direction on some of the big, strategic questions to ask and clear direction for how to answer them:

- ▲ What is the human-scale problem we aim to solve, as a company?
- ▲ What do we have to do over and over in order to achieve the impact we want to have on the world?
- ▲ Should we focus on growth, engagement, or both, and which teams should be held to account for these objectives?
- ▲ How might we drive innovation here, on an ongoing basis?

And it also translates into more tactical guidance for R&D, product launches, and marketing campaigns:

- ▲ How can we reach our audiences? Who are they, where are they, and what messages will resonate with them?
- ▲ How can we create lifelong relationships with customers?

## How to Use This Book

First, I'll introduce you to the Transformational Consumer in a lot more depth. I'll help you to understand exactly why it's so important that you continue to study, reach, and engage these people. The business case for behavior change is a compelling one.

Then I'll issue a call to action, a call to adventure, really, to you as a business leader.

The last half of the book is the change-management section. That's where you'll learn how to embark on the journey of actually reorienting your company to transcend the transactional by focusing on serving the Transformational Consumer. I will walk you through the process of elevating the way your teams think about five elemental focus points of your business: your customer, what you sell, your marketing, your competition, and your team.

All along the way, I'll share stories, case studies, insightful data, and tools for asking higher-level questions and getting transformative answers.

## Painlessly Get This Book into Your Brain

When I embarked on this project, I was told that people would *buy* this book, but 95% of them likely wouldn't read it. I reject that. So I took it as a content strategy challenge.

I've built some recurring features that you'll find throughout the book with the intention of boosting the chances that the most important content will have the opportunity to impact your business, your life, your team, and the lives of your customers and your employees, for the better:

- ▲ **Transformational Takeaways.** I've put the three most important points, in one-liner format, near the beginning of every chapter instead of at the end, so you know from the start where it fits into what's important to you.
- ▲ **Digital Dossier.** If you're more of a video person, have a short attention span for the written word, or simply want to continue your own journey, the interactive materials in the Digital Dossier at TransformationalConsumer.com is for you. There, you'll also find a set of free resources to help you gear up, craft, and carry out your individual and organizational action plans for transcending the transactional.
- ▲ **Stories.** Neuroscience researchers have found that our brains light up for several days when we read or hear a story. My mission is to help you meet, understand, reach, and engage the Transformational Consumer primarily by telling you stories and sharing case studies that make the case and teach the frameworks. Some will be from brands that are clearly transformational, some will not. But all will help illustrate the frameworks and flesh them out in a way your brain can retain.
- ▲ **Transformer case studies.** These case studies showcase examples of strategic product, business model, marketing, and cultural moves that a series of world-class companies have made to connect with Transformational Consumers. They then explain how these moves played out.
- ▲ **The Transformational Consumer Self-Assessment: What Do You Need to Rethink First?** To help you convert the concepts and marching orders in this book into an individualized personal and organizational roadmap, I've created the Transformational Consumer Self-Assessment: What Do You Need to Rethink First? (available from Berrett-Koehler Publishers at [www.bkconnection.com/transformationalconsumer-sa](http://www.bkconnection.com/transformationalconsumer-sa)). Take the assessment either

right before or after you read chapters 5 through 9, to start sequencing your action plan and transcending the transactional.

If I tried to walk you step by step through how to execute every conceivable tactic for engaging the Transformational Consumer, this book would be many volumes long. Worse, it would be out of date by the time it went to press. This is not a textbook, though I do provide frameworks, principles, and guideposts for taking action on these insights.

My mission for this book is to impact the lives of billions of *your* customers for the better, by driving a fundamental change in the way you understand, serve, and connect with them. I want to change what you're thinking about as you lead or run your business, whether you're a personal trainer or the CEO of a public company. I want to change how you think about your customers. I want to elevate the conversation.

And I want to do that by injecting it with the beautiful vision for the world of customer-company relationships that I know, from firsthand experience, is possible. I want to share what I know works to help companies transcend the fray and engage customers in wild, two-way love affairs, even in this era of digital overwhelm and customer fatigue.

Disengagement is not a digital problem. It is a human problem. And the solution is human, too. Once you understand the powerful motivation of the human drive to live healthier, wealthier, and wiser, clarity will replace confusion about how to connect with people.

Eternal principles of story and content and humanity and transformation will replace the dramatics about what social media channel you *simply must* be active on (this week). Deep insight into your customers' journeys will provide clear, self-updating direction on where and how to reach them at any given time.

Every team and initiative of your business will be able to operate in a way that drives change for Transformational Consumers.

This is how your company becomes great: by transcending the transactional. And how you transcend the transactional is by becoming a force for transformation in the lives of the people you serve.

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