



## **BRAND SECRETS AND STRATEGIES PODCAST #102**

Hello and thank you for joining us today. This is the Brand Secrets and Strategies Podcast #102

Welcome to the Brand Secrets and Strategies podcast where the focus is on empowering brands and raising the bar.

I'm your host Dan Lohman. This weekly show is dedicated to getting your brand on the shelf and keeping it there.

Get ready to learn actionable insights and strategic solutions to grow your brand and save you valuable time and money.

**LETS ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES AND GET STARTED!**

Dan: Welcome and thank you for listening. You'll need to stay to the end of this episode because my guest today has a special offer for you, but it's only for the first few brands that seize the opportunity. I spend a lot of time talking about the importance of story on this podcast and how your brand story is what sets you apart from your competition. It's what resonates with your ideal customer, it's what converts an occasional customer into a loyal evangelist, which can give you a significant competitive



advantage on any retailer shelf across any channel and any economy.

While participating in NatchCom I had the privilege of meeting Beau, my guest today. What inspired me was his unique ability to communicate the value of story to your customer and how the value of story needs to connect with that human who buys and uses our product. You've heard me say repeatedly that the big brands tend to talk at us rather than to us. What's unique about natural brands is our ability to have an intimate relationship with our ideal customer. At the center of that connection is the human, the human that we connect with, that uses our product, that evangelizes our product. Let's face it, without that human we have no reason for being. No one would buy our products. It's the human that buys our product, that gives us our reason for being. A lot of big brands tend to commoditize the shopper, thinking of us as all being the same type of person, the same type of consumer.

On the other hand, if we focus on the human at the other end of our product, the human that buys our product, then we can focus on what really meets their needs, what drives their choices at shelf, what differentiates your brand from your competition and so on. The better we know our customer the better we understand our core customer, that human, gives us more opportunity to differentiate ourselves at shelf, gives us an opportunity to build products that they'll actually buy. It gives us an opportunity to build a loyal community around our brand.



That's powerful. That's extremely powerful. You've heard me say repeatedly that's what's more important about your product is the consumer that buys your product. It's that unique consumer that the retailers are trying to attract. This is your opportunity to partner with the retailer to help them drive sales in their store.

Before I go any further I want to remind you that there's a free downloadable guide for you at the end of most every episode of the podcast. I always try to include one easy to download quick to digest strategy that you can instantly adopt and make your own. One that you can use to grow sustainable sales and compete more effectively. Remember, the goal here is to get your product onto more retailer shelves and into the hands of more shoppers.

Now, here's today's guest, Beau Haralson of Human Design. Beau, thank you for coming on today. I really appreciate you making the time for us. Can you start by telling us a little bit about yourself and your journey to Human Design?

Beau: Yeah. No, I appreciate it. Everyone, thanks so much for having me on. I'm honored to be standing in the context of some giants of the industry here.

Dan: Thank you.

Beau: It's just you've had some incredible guests and so I'm humbled to be on the line for sure. You know, my background is interesting. I came from what'd we would call in the agency world the client



side, right? I came from the side of the people that are launching the things, doing the things, building the things and it was a great place to start. I'm actually really, really grateful for that 'cause it gave me incredible perspective on running a PnL, trying to build something and grow something and all of the tensions therein. I started at a big ... CPG. Right? So, we had 1000 stores nationwide selling office supplies and we had to sell stuff. Right? So, worked at OfficeMax Corporate. Sorry, for the greater part of four years and really got to oversee everything and be a part of everything from being a buyer to actually being on the sell side of things and selling in, to the sourcing side of things. Really had just this amazing opportunity to take, what I felt like what a really comprehensive ... As comprehensive a look at retail in the early 2000's as I possibly could within the mat of time that I was at the stop within my career.

So, it might be something worth dipping into later on in the conversation but at any rate that was my first stop. Then got wind of this thing called digital that was happening and it was happening at a rapid rate and started kind of moonlighting and trying to understand it for myself just from an educational standpoint and really would run experiments. Like just little things where I'd just try to learn about something and got the itch by working with agencies, as a client of agencies to dip my toe into the marketing agency side of things and learn how to do that work. So, I was blessed with the opportunity to do that for a few years.



Then eventually got the itch to do that on my own and met a good friend of mine that ended up being my co-founder and we started a new agency of our own, ran that for about four years, grew it to be something that we cherished and loved and someone else cherished and loved and thought it was great and we actually had a few offers on the business and ended up selling that agency to Human Design roughly about a year ago. So, those are kind of my roughly four stops along the way and have really had an amazing experience going from, you know, Fortune 500 CPG work into a place of getting to grow brands and work with brands, small brands to make them big or in some cases big brands to help make them small and nimble and stay creative and ahead of their competitors. So, that's kind of the reader's digest version roughly speaking.

Dan: I appreciate you sharing that. We'll dig back into it a little bit more, but just to frame this, the reason that I'd wanted to have you on the podcast, the reason I was so thrilled about you saying yes is 'cause I had the privilege of sitting in a lecture that you did at NAIJ.com and we were both speaking there. I had an opportunity to sit and listen to what you were talking about. I love how you articulated what you were doing and how you communicated the value of paying attention to the consumer. This is at the heart of everything I do. So, if you could go back there or take us back there to that conversation, to that lecture that you gave us, that presentation, and share with us some of the key points. What I'm getting at Beau, is the way that you framed the conversation in terms of really focusing on the



consumer, I like that to paying attention to the ripples in the pond before they become a tidal wave and everyone else isn't paying attention at that point, but paying attention to those subtleties and then really identifying what motivates or what moves or what drives consumer behavior at that level and then speaking to the human as opposed to a generic focus group. So, could you share a little bit about that?

Beau: Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting. So, starting maybe backwards from the framework of how people would expect to maybe ... You know, what people would expect to hear from a marketer. Most marketers in this space talk a lot about spending an amazing amount of time and effort saying the right thing, if that makes any sense. So, building the right tagline and doing that and sharing that in the right venues. Right? Maybe it's online, through advertising and Facebook or Instagram or whatever, what have you. For sure, I think it's a valid point. I think you should spend a considerable amount of time and effort saying the right thing.

Other people would come along and say that you should also believe in the right thing or do the right thing and I think that's incredibly important as well. So, kind of what Simon Sinek would say would be starting with the why, the why behind you do something. I think within the natural products space I think eluding to that, that presentation, I think that broadly speaking the industry is kind of first movers. Right? Doing things with a purpose and triple bottom line and all of those things. I think



that's led to it's success and it's growth over the last, let's call it, five years.

But being laser focused and on the who is really where we've experienced and seen clients experience the most what we would call exponential gains. So, if humans are at the center of who we serve then I think by nature of focusing in on them that's where you're going to find the exponential gains and the unlocks that are going to really change your brand.

So, what I would say is when a brand's at the center of everything that you're doing and you're working towards maybe better email subject lines or better targeting or whatever you would have. I sincerely believe [inaudible 00:08:51] experience that you will see incremental results, but when humans are the center of what you're doing and not your brand and how awesome you are, that's where we see exponential results. That's where we see people grow and start to really create categories or find what has been called the blue ocean or whatever mixed analogy you want to use, but that's the core of what we believe and I've come to see as true in the engagements that I've had the privilege of working on.

Dan: Can you back up and talk about what is the triple bottom line. What does that mean and why is that important?

Beau: Yeah. So, you know, it's been talked about in a lot of [inaudible 00:09:28] ways that there's people, purpose or profits. That's kind of sometimes talked about and the three P's. But moving



into, you know, I think early in the 2000's we saw I think an important scenario of where this collision and a broader understanding of impact on our planet were the people that are involved in putting together product or, you know, in our supply chain or however you have that, is really kind of what's called the triple bottom line.

I apologize, I slipped in my kind of own variance on that on purpose versus planet, 'cause I think planet is obviously, obviously the majority of where that narrative started, is people focusing on sustainability, on sustainable supply chain practices, those types of things that impact our planet, but what I've personally seen is that that's grown broadly over even just purposes. Right? So, [inaudible 00:10:33] the USA. So, more broadly speaking across that. So, I think about it in purpose, people and then profit but the most common is for that first P to be planet.

Dan: Interesting. I think most organizations, agencies, etcetera overlook the people. The human factor. Again, what you said that day really resonated with me and of course when we talked later that really resonated with me too. So, the reason that this is so important to me is that I think that a lot of the brands that are out there today, small, natural, organic brands have a more intimate relationship with their core customer, so kind of as you eluded to, the big brands are always talking at us rather than talking to us or having an intimate conversation with us. Being able to incorporate your mission or your values along with what



your product does, the values of your product, what solution it offers, the people that make the product, that's a complete package in terms of the offering that these brands have, and I'm trying to teach brands as you were sharing in your presentation, how to sell that unique story or message with the end consumer because I agree with you completely. The future of the consumer packaged goods industry is in the small natural brands that have the ability to motivate and move and touch and connect with their consumers at a far different level than the big brands. Your thoughts?

Beau: Yeah. I think maybe to use a recent podcast as a good example of this, and I'm a long term believer that the entrepreneurs that do find success over the long term are typically one of those that created their product out of a felt need versus a really well orchestrated business plan that was hatched out of some overt need to make money. Which, you know, like I'm not here to beat up on that, I think that's a noble pursuit but I think ...

So, if you take like Justin from Justin's Nut Butter, his felt need, and I can identify this as a fellow mountain biker, was the fact that there's not a lot of protein rich things that you could take that were packable on a mountain biking ride. So, you know, there's a lot of gels and a lot of kind of sugar rich opportunities out there that kind of spur you on for your next hour of the ride or however you want to ... You know, whatever adventure you're in for but that was the heart of it, is he developed something for



himself that he could use in a given scenario that meant something to him and meant something to a lot of people.

Of course they've expanded out from there and we know ... I would assume most folks know the rest of the story but it was from that felt need as a human being going, "Okay, this is a real thing that I experience and I'm going to create something and a solution for it [inaudible 00:13:21]." Which sounds relatively simplistic but there's a lot of intricacy within that that I think is always really interesting to step into an existing brand or even remind an entrepreneur of their first love of why they got started doing what they're doing. There's always passion and story to be had there.

Dan: Right. Well, and I appreciate you sharing that reference. It's podcast episode 91 with Justin Gold, and excellent story. I knew that you were going to go there with that because I know you said that Justin rides with you a lot. Exactly. Being able to frame the conversation around what's unique about the product and how that product fits into the needs of other consumers. So, instead of thinking about it traditionally, thinking, "Well, peanut butter has to be in a jar because everyone else puts it in a jar" but yet thinking about how do consumers use the product or how could they use it differently, single serve and then more importantly, the fact that he came up with the squeeze pack for as you said, athletes, which I use it a lot for that as well, is a great analogy.



So, can you take that and put that back into the conversation you were having in terms of how does that relate to the human? How would you use that example in talking about how marketers and how brands need to be able to connect their product with the end consumer and all the different touchpoints within that relationship?

Beau: Yeah. So, it's interesting coming from a little bit of a product design background, I think thinking through what traditionally has been called design thinking and has been a movement for the greater part of almost two decades now and there's some good writing on this concept of design thinking which is starting with the desirability from a human standpoint, the feasibility from a technical standpoint and the viability of that thing ... Which sounds like these kind of three Holy Grails, if you can like find the center of that Venn diagram, simply viewed in a consumer world, maybe it's just a really easy example is if you take like the Heinz Tomato Ketchup original packaging was in that glass bottle, right? We all know that like ... Maybe we don't all know but a lot of people know that if you hit [inaudible 00:15:33] then it'll eventually come out. The key word is eventually. It takes a while and it's relatively frustrating and at some point some really smart person goes, "You know what? Let's just flip this thing upside down and let's let the ketchup settle down at the bottle and put it in a squeezable package."

It's such that Heinz didn't have a moment where they said the right thing. They didn't have a moment where they reinvented



what they were doing. They were proud of their Ketchup and that's great. They'd built it with the end user and a human in mind in a simple way. So, what I'm seeing as the opportunity currently in marketing is to take and think about your marketing in a similar dynamic where you're [inaudible 00:16:18] through really the human at the end of the service ... That you're serving, excuse me, at the end of that. Where when I'd pick up that Heinz ketchup today and I pick it up, I intuitively go, "I'm really grateful for the guy at the other end of this one. This is exactly how this should've been designed to begin with" and I don't really give it much other thought but I appreciate it. Right? It's a small innovation that meant a lot.

The challenge is, in the marketing space it seems to be increasingly complex. So, the service model looks different. Right? We're not just trying to get ketchup, we're actually trying to share our story with the world and ideally impact some peoples' lives with maybe a new health benefit that comes through our product or whatever it may be. As marketers tend to do, we've stepped in and added to that complexity.

I have a broader view of it where I go, "Hey, the consumer is going to consume wherever they want to consume." So, if I'm Starbucks and I go, "Hey, you know, it feels counterintuitive to sell whole bean coffee in my store where I'm selling at a premium, you know, a prepared coffee." Then you know what? I think that's a narrow view of the world. So, I think our ... Excuse me, our perspective [inaudible 00:17:39] brands is to create an



experience that people can and feel is relevant across the channels and feels inspiring and exciting. So, I could get into funnel strategies and all of these things that a lot of folks are doing and I think a lot of that's relevant, but I much prefer to think about it as like, "How do we create Disneyland for the people that we serve as brands? How do we create an inspiring experience that lets people wander?"

If, you know ... Say they want to wake up and prepare their own coffee one day and the next day they want to go have an experience in an actual Starbucks or whatever it looks like, then great. I'm going to create outlets for all of that and I understand that humans are just naturally complex people and we're going to wander and be inspired and I think you can either take that as a challenge as a brand, that is inherent with a bunch of complexity or you can take that as an opportunity and get excited about that and go, "Okay, how do we create something with a sense of wander or inspiration or excitement around our brand and do that really for the betterment of the humans that we serve and not to look awesome and maybe make a buck or two more here and there?"

Dan: I appreciate you sharing that. Yeah, one of the challenges that I run into a lot as I'm working with these brands is the traditional way of thinking tends to commoditize the consumer and I love the Disneyland analogy that you gave on [inaudible 00:19:02] talk and thanks for bringing that up again 'cause that's really what we need to be focused on. Consumers today, like you said,



they want what they want and they are going to get what they want. If a retailer doesn't offer exactly what that consumer's looking for then they are in effect inviting that consumer to go shop their competition. So, there are a lot of dynamics at play here.

But what I really wanted to get at is that what's unique about the way consumers shop today, which is very different than way back when, is that they pick up the package and they look beyond the four corners of the package and they do research online and they go to the website and they try to find out who's using it, how are they using it, what else can they do with it, etcetera?

So, while having that conversation, that is, from my perspective, more the Disneyland point of view. So, if a brand isn't online and in different retailers and isn't available ... Let's put it this way, isn't available where the consumer wants to shop but what's unique about digital and this is one of the things I'd like to get deeper into with you, is that with the digital capability, brands are able to compete head-to-head, toe-to-toe and sometimes even outperform their larger, more sophisticated counterparts because they can offer that more Disneyland experience as opposed to going through the traditional checkout line where everything is very commoditized and very similar and very uniform. Your thoughts?

Beau: Yeah. It's interesting and I guess, you know, just by nature of teasing out an example, I think there's brands that largely start in the direct consumer space and I think what I appreciate about



that modern technology and digital marketing has allowed for us to do, is that we actually get a closer relationship through digital means to our end users than we might have previously in going with a traditional wholesale [inaudible 00:20:51] model.

Maybe, you know, went from farmer's market, which is about as close as you can get to your customer to direct to consumer, I think there's still richness to be gained once you start to separate yourself from the end user of your product. I think what I think I have an optimistic view of is that if people are going to shop they're going to shop and if I can figure out a way to get from A to B quickly with them or create an environment where they can do that online, then I have a lot of good captivity and opportunity.

Now, whether I take advantage of that and engage with people on Instagram or whatever have you, that's on me as a brand. Right? To figure that out and to do that. So, to tease out an example maybe as a primary kind of like cross channel I guess best practice, I was talking about this example this morning so it's fresh in my brain but Harry's Razors came out roughly six months after Dollar Shave Club went vital. I remember scratching my head at the time and I was like, "Man, this feels like kind of like a #MeToo or kind of this interesting player." So, sure enough I was like, "They've got the road cut out."

So, I just kind of was sort of watching them. What was interesting is they did a great job of maintaining a price point that was I think a few bucks below Gillette or some national level competitors but they owned the channel strategy of direct to



consumer first and they owned it really, really well and they created share-ability within that. So, if you told three or four of your friends about it then you would get a free shave kit and they had all these great like what we would call tripwires along the way and share-ability within the product. They did that in every platform imaginable. I remember seeing Facebook ads and Instagram and all that great stuff.

They didn't try to do like a #MeToo with a really, really viral video that was tongue in cheek or anything like that. It had been done in the last six months but they were able to maintain a new price point and come in, in that middle market kind of segment and then before I knew it, call it a year later, they're taking on four feet in Target. Now they're getting into really true, full on cross channel, omnichannel environment.

I don't know how that all came to play but I would anticipate Target reached out to them or I would think that there was enough awareness at that point because of the groundwork they had done getting in front of their customers that Target was probably like, "Yeah, this feels like an up and coming and cool brand that we should feature in our store." Then they got the call versus having to make the call, which is a ton of fun. Right?

Dan: Oh yeah.

Beau: If you can ... So, I think if you can work into that as a brand I think that would be probably the best practice and probably one



of like what I think about of companies and brands that are doing it really well and have done it in the right sequence.

Dan: That ties nicely into what I was going to talk to you about next. A comment that you made and this is something I push a lot or something that I talk about a lot is a push strategy versus a pull strategy. The push strategy in my mind is the traditional we do things where the checkbook is the most valuable tool in any brands' toolbox. Where, you know, you're constantly buying [inaudible 00:24:06] on the shelf and you gotta buy the slotting and you gotta pay for the promotions and whatever a retailer or distributor or etcetera asks for, you do. Whereas the pull strategy, like you said, you build it and you build it so well with such a great compelling story that the retailer, whoever it is, comes knocking at your door. So, excellent example.

One of the things that I think is really unique about small disruptive brands and their ability to build a community around them is their ability to leverage a pull strategy. On that note, this is what I want small brands ... This is what I'm trying to get small brands to focus on, because if they can prove themselves in one channel and they can build a loyal community and then help ... For example, the reason I'm sure Target probably wanted that brand is because it helped them bridge into the online space and capture that unique customer that while they're at the Target store, they'd have an opportunity to sell other things to.

So, how would you recommend a brand develop a pull strategy and then how would you recommend a brand ... The same kind of



conversation, avoid being sucked in the traditional, "Here's what we do because we've always done it" push strategy?

Beau: Yeah. So, it's interesting. I think a lot about human nature and this, and when you start talking about this and I think I love the way you put it. You know, HubSpot would say it. You know, marketing with a magnet versus a megaphone per se.

Dan: Love that.

Beau: And drawing people in. So, I think naturally speaking, and this is a topic that's being discussed a lot and I think appropriately so, is that emotion and really to a fine point story is what draws people in. So, 80% of our decision making as humans when we go to buy anything is led with emotion. The other 20% are led with credibility and logic. I'll hit on those other two in a minute but at the ... [inaudible 00:26:06] the 80% is the bulk of it and I know we might be talking in a superficial sense about selling something that feels like a commodity, if you really untangle it, the majority of what we buy, we have some story that we're either telling ourselves or that we've been told about that thing.

Dan: Exactly.

Beau: That we now have in our hand and we get that dopamine hit from purchasing. So, that story that we're telling ourselves is important but it starts with a story that's being told to us and that squarely lands on the shoulders of the brand. I mean, there's behavioral psychology behind this, but when we hear a story



there's a really simple kind of psychological thing that happens where we're actually transported into that story. This is the same reason that we cry during a movie or literally if we're watching TV and we're really engrossed into something people typically have to call us by our name to get us out of that transportation.

So, as a brand, I think the opportunity is for us to create a story that's not about the brand itself but that's about the people that we serve. To unlock that is the greatest place and the greatest wedge play where David can really beat Goliath and create ... These small brands can and we've seen this done, can create really a white space and start to be known within a category.

So, I was meeting with a company that sells tea this morning and we were having the same conversation around how do we create story? With respect to their privacy I won't share the whole story but one of the founders told the story of how he originally got started doing this thing and we pushed into that a little bit further and sure enough there was this beautiful story about his grandfather and him and I was like, "Yeah. That's 30 seconds worth of video that is going to draw people in in an amazing way that I guarantee your competitors down the way that maybe are existing in the commodity space where they're fighting over percentages and market share in their own way, don't have that story of you and your grandfather." Much less, it's not built to be impactful and evoke emotion at a powerful level.

So, I would really push in to ... As a brand, I would really push in to that and then push in to the second part of that, which is



telling that story not with you at the center point but with the people that you serve at the center point. Doing that in a really either powerful way, a humorous way, I mean, emotion comes in a lot of different flavors and then moving into doing that with an eye for credibility, there's the production value and then getting into the logic and now earning the right to go, "Yeah, as a result we have this ingredient in our tea or we use this." But I think leading with emotion is the hack that I would introduce into the mix and probably the number one way I would say that you can level up as a brand and to ... You know, new market share and become that fighter brand.

Dan: I love that. I appreciate you sharing that. That's exactly why I built my free Turnkey Sales Story Strategy course, is to help brands identify what is the story? What is the compelling story that's going to resonate, that's going to connect with your end consumer? Anyone listening to the podcast, this is exactly what I try to tap into. I try to get the founders to tell me or share something with me that goes beyond their traditional, "Well, this is what we do because this is what we do because this is what ... We've always done it." So, thank you for sharing that.

In fact, one of the things I would like to throw out there is episode 52. Jon Sebastiani with Sonoma Brands shared what he calls the romance of storytelling. I love the way ... The connotation behind that. So, the [inaudible 00:29:46] idea behind it, Beau, is that he's saying, "Why would a consumer spend two grand for a bottle of wine or a \$1 or \$2 for a bottle of wine.



What's the difference?" The difference is that unique story, that fuels that emotion, that awareness behind the product. Because like you said, and I agree 100%, that the majority of our decisions are made with emotion.

Oh, and by the way, this is how you build true loyalty. So, where I want to go with that is that a lot of companies have loyalty cards. I've got a loyalty card for every airline I fly on, for every retailer in the market, they're coupon cards. They're not loyalty cards. Loyalty is something that's earned and it's earned because the brand, whether it be the retailer or the airline, the actual brand itself, whatever, goes out of it's way to deliver at a super super high level and communicate their message in terms that resonate with me. So, back to your example today, and again thanks for sharing that, that's exactly what these brands need to do. To be able to communicate that unique story far beyond the four corners of their package so that they can build a loyal tribe or community around that message and then leverage that tribe or that message to help build more brand awareness.

Like you said with the Shave Club, leveraging that relationship with our customers to go out and share or have their customers evangelize their products on their behalf, to me, that's a pull strategy.

Beau: Oh, completely. I think, you know, naturally whenever I talk about customer advocacy I immediately think of brands like Southwest Airlines that are just known for going above and beyond. Within the food segment, [inaudible 00:31:25] is a good



example. They have an entire department and a good friend of mine named Allison works in it where literally her entire job is to surprise and delight the end customer and I think that's amazing. I think that more brands should invest in that and I think that yeah, it might be a little bit more challenging in the immediate sense to tie that all back to, "Well, what's the number? What's the spreadsheet that tells me about how this is smart business?" But we know it's a smart business because we're humans and we know that when we're on the receiving end of being taken care of by another human in a thoughtful way that naturally we're going to be drawn to that brand for the long term. I think that's why you have brands like Southwest that stick around and make some of the hard decisions for the long term and it pays off. It's not a quarterly strategy, it's not a monthly strategy but it's a business strategy. It's a long term strategy.

Dan: Absolutely. In fact, at the heart of what I teach, the heart of the podcast, the heart of all the content I put out there and the reason I wanted to have you on today is to celebrate or share exactly this. The reality is that these small, disruptive brands are not going to have the velocity to justify being on a shelf if you look at the category from a traditional sense, but if you focus on the way the consumer shops the category and you focus on the fact that that unique consumer that buys that tea or buys that shaving product or whatever, the other products that they buy. So, at the end of the day they're responsible for all the sustainable growth across every category, one. Then two their market basket is far higher than the other products that they



compete against. So, at the end of the day this helps retailers remain relevant. This gives retailers a unique opportunity to connect with the consumers and their geography on a much more intimate level by giving them the products that they want and need, again, by focusing in on those unique stories that resonate with their consumers.

Beau: So, it's interesting. One of my mentors is a gentleman named Bob Thacker and he was one of the original guys that brought Michael Graves ... And maybe this is an obscure reference two decades later roughly but Michael Graves was a designer and a high-end one at that, and he had this beautiful teapot that was really, really well-designed and short story long Bob met Michael I think at a conference and said, "Hey, this is beautiful. What would it look like to get something this beautiful designed in Target?" That was kind of the opening question. Right?

Then low and behold they worked out the ... As you can imagine you're taking something that's, you know, really high-end, almost a piece of art into a place of where it has to be at a consumer price point. From that, one skew, that one product in that store, it defined a new category and a new strategy for Target.

Dan: Great.

Beau: That's what we've seen the dividends of now two decades later, 'cause at the time, I mean, Target was still duking it out with Kmart and Wal-Mart. So, your opportunity as a brand is to really create ... You know, as you said Dan, is new category definitions



and these new opportunities that will reflect well of the retailers that you're selling into and I think it needs to be seen as that opportunity as a brand and to create those moments. I think on the direct to consumer side of things a common question we get is, "Hey, that's great that you guys are helping us out with Amazon and we're selling more product on Amazon thanks to you guys running our ads and all that great stuff and messaging, but how do we drive people back to our own site where we can really own that relationship?"

Dan: Right.

Beau: Pretty common question. My followup question is always, "Well, how are you taking care of the people that come to your site at a different level and essentially putting loyalty into that experience? Do you have a special monthly shipping program that is only available on your site?" Just from a simplistic standpoint. Are you telling people stories? You know, the list could go on. But I think that's ... Coming at it from the retailer view and the brands point of view I think there's some really unique opportunities that exist today.

Dan: So, you're telling me that if I have a product that's out there in the market, that just 'cause my mom likes it not everyone else is going to love it too? Just kidding. I say that a lot to small brands, but you get it. You're right. You've gotta be more than a one trick pony and you've gotta develop these strategies and you've gotta develop these strategies from day one. You know, it's sort of a pay me now, pay me later kind of attitude where look, if you can



do this right from day one, choose the right retailers to go into, make sure that you've got the right messaging, the right packaging, the right strategies to get on shelf, etcetera, versus the traditional way where again you whip out your checkbook and it's a lot harder to clean up those messes later if you don't take care of it from the beginning.

Gary Hirshberg made the comment that we vote with our dollars and I agree 100%. The whole idea [inaudible 00:36:31] that was that if you choose the foods that properly fuel your health then that's far cheaper than later paying a doctor to clean up a mess because you didn't eat properly to begin with. With that mentality, that mindset, it's taking all of those things within your selling story and finding out a way to connect the dots between the consumer ... And one of the things that I find, and I'm glad you shared this, you've certainly shared this in your presentation you gave us, the short spot that you shared is that being able to connect with a consumer, you don't necessarily always know what's going to resonate with the consumer but being able to throw a lot of different things out there so that you can connect with each different consumer in their own way, back to the Disneyland model, I think that's perfect. That's a great idea.

I don't want to embarrass you. You know, the company that you had the [inaudible 00:37:20] ...

Beau: No. You're welcome to share. You're fine.



Dan: Okay. Well, one of the things that you shared was a company that came up with a mineral supplement. The part of that message that resonated the most with me being in this space, working with a lot of disruptive brands, is they took it down to the granular level and they went back to the soil and they talked about what's missing in the soil, what makes us healthy. By the way, if you put this back into the soil then that's really what's going to fuel your health or really support your growth and those are the minerals.

It was that aspect of it, which most big brands would probably just overlook. Most big brands would say, "Well, we need a \$2.99 price point." Whereas instead of focusing on how does that product connect back to or relate back to the things that are going to really fuel my health. I think that was the most impactful part of the message. The rest of it was great too, but that part of it really resonated with me because that gets back to that if you are what you eat then what you eat matters, meaning that if you eat the right products that fuel your health, that support your growth and give you the mental agility, etcetera, then that's really what people are looking for. That's what consumers are going to pay a premium for at shelf.

Beau: Completely. The company that you're mentioning is Mineralife. So, their [inaudible 00:38:38] in that, that I think is probably the crux of the first 30 seconds of the piece, which is, "You've heard it said that you are what you eat" and then the founder of the company says, "I actually believe that you are what you absorb."



It's just this mic drop moment where you're like, "Oh my gosh." I had this preconceived notion that I learned from who knows, seventh grade pre biology, right?

Dan: Right.

Beau: Then it totally turns that on it's side and you're like, "You're right. My body can only absorb and build upon what it can absorb." From there, like, "I'm in." Right? 'Cause I'm like, "Okay, he's taken some preconceived notion that I have, flipped it on it's head and now I want to hear the solution of how to absorb nutrients at a different level." Right? I think that's what we look for, I think, the only reason ... And the punch line is there's this thing called fulvic acid that helps you absorb minerals better. Right? But if I led with this thing, this really science-like technical thing of, "Hey, there's this thing called fulvic acid and you should take it" consumer behavior would be like, "Yeah, I might take it once" or, "You know what? Why should I care?"

So, going back to that emotion thing, if you don't lead with these groundbreaking concepts from a construct that people understand it likely won't go as well or it won't go as fast as it could have in terms of getting [inaudible 00:40:00] and getting people excited about what you've built.

Dan: Right. Well, and that's a ... Going back to what Justin did. It's not about having a unique product that it's ... Let me rephrase that. Having a unique product that provided real energy to you was, "Well, that's great." But to have something that's clean, that's not



full of sugar and not full of stuff that you can't pronounce, something that's healthy and wholesome that your body can instantly metabolize gives you that extra fuel to power up the mountain. At the heart of the message, the people, the consumers that that resonates with are the consumers that are driving sales for Justin, are the consumers that are going to buy the mineral products, are the consumers that are going to buy a lot of the other brands that we're talking about today.

Again, we're talking about connecting with the consumer at the human level and building a story around what's important to them. Like you said with your tea example, I love the fact that you're able to incorporate the personality of the brand 'cause I think that's another thing that needs to be brought into this conversation too. Do you have some stories or anecdotes around that?

Beau: Yeah. So, it's interesting. In terms of just bringing in the person or the founder story, I definitely could go deep. I've got kind of a roster that comes to mind. For whatever reason, immediately what comes to mind is Allen, a guy that started Skratch Labs, which is a supplement company here. It essentially helps people ... It's a sports performance drink mix. Right? So, if you're biking you can throw it in a standard water bottle and mix it up and ... You know, electrolytes and all the things that you would expect. I could get into the science of that but his story is he came from ... He was working on Lance Armstrong's team at the



time and helping him with nutrition and was definitely impacted as you could imagine, when news broke around Lance.

So, he had to start his career over from scratch on the back end of that and he was no innocent bystander in a relatively national scandal. Right? But there's such a hero's journey behind that. There's such an entrepreneurial story about that, that you can't not hear that and go, "Man, I want to be a part of that brand. I want to be a part of what Allen and his team at Skratch Labs is doing." 'Cause there's ... It's inherent in the way that we look at story and I think that's empowering and what I'm seeing is that marketing is growing from a place of creating emotion, which is natural and has always been a part of it and will always be a part of it.

So, the example I used is a three year old at home. So, to sell cereal to my three year old is relatively straightforward. You have to put a picture of Tony the Tiger on front of it, when we're walking down the aisle and he see's it and he's good to go. But the modern consumer has kind of ... We're paying attention, like you said earlier. We're looking beyond the four corners and we're looking at what brings credibility to it? Is it logical, is it important? Is that what I should be putting in my body? So, now we have this opportunity where our attention can go elsewhere and we can make more choices in our buying decisions.

My hypothesis is, and human's hypothesis is we look towards the future, as that emotion plus that attention and getting attention on the right spots is being met very rapidly with brands that are



doing that with intention, that are doing that thoughtfully, that are doing that in the right moments and not just talking about themselves all the time or doing that with kind of a spray and pray strategy where it's the same ad across all channels and they just hope that at some point someone will buy from them based on the frequency of that 20% off promotion or whatever that looks like.

But the trifecta of the brands that we see excel is when they're doing a great job in all three categories. They're telling an emotion driven story or an emotionally driven story, they're doing that in the right venue at the right time and getting the right person's attention and they're doing that thoughtfully. They're not robbing that person of their attention and just doing that carelessly. That's really where we see the most growth from ... And we run every piece of content that we build as an agency, whether it's ad creative or copy or video work or the campaign strategy as a whole through those three things at all times. Everything has to touch those three things and have a logical path moving forward through them.

Dan: I love that. In fact, I would want to go one step further. How about personalization? That's the way I've been framing it. What I mean by that is it's being able to connect with an individual on their level, on their terms, etcetera as opposed to like you said, just throwing it out there and seeing what sticks. So, the idea that what we're talking about is ... Is another way that I would put it is creating theater for the consumer, that excitement, that



awareness, and bringing them into that conversation, that would be the attention piece. The emotion piece being able to connect with them on the individual level. The intention, what's great about that is building the loyalty. If you do this right then you can leverage your consumers, your loyal fan base to evangelize your product. To me that's the Holy Grail. Your thoughts?

Beau: Yeah. I think that the most natural and easy way for us to see this as humans is through just relationships. Relationships don't work in the construct of how we as brands want people to buy our product. What I mean by that is when I'm getting to know another human being, I don't get to skip straight to marriage with that human being. So, when I was getting to know my wife if I had met her on the first date and said, "Hey, we should get married" I'm breaking some social constructs.

There are outliers out there that that has gone well for, but that wouldn't have gone well for me. We needed to date each other and get to know each other and provide value and share and reciprocity and sharing our stories, which sounds really emoted in the context of selling, maybe peanut butter, right? But if you think about your buyers' journey in a similar way where, you know, you might not need to sell them three jars out of the gate. You might need to just sample and date a little while and provide an opportunity for that. I think that's a more expansive view of creating connectivity with the people you serve and doing that in a really simple but profound way of just not rushing that dating process into, "Hey, here I am, buy from me, I'm making awesome



stuff." That's not how a human relationship works so I don't know why we think as brands that's the way it's going to work for us for the long term.

At the end of the day that's a numbers game. There will be a certain amount of people that buy from you and [inaudible 00:46:48], and a certain amount of people that don't, but if you really take the time to slow down, build a path into advocacy as you so well put it, that will always go well in the mid to long term compared to just playing the numbers and trying to get in front of as many eyeballs hoping that a certain amount will convert.

Dan: Well, and to go one step further ... And thank you for saying that, that's not sustainable. That's getting back to the old fashioned strategy where you get out your checkbook and if you can continue writing cheques then, you know, more power to you. But the reality is, if we can teach these small disruptive brands how to get more runway through their story and be able to leverage that with the retailers to be able to get more incremental shelf space, more promotions, etcetera, then that's how we amplify our healthy way of life. My mission is to make our healthy way of life more accessible by getting your brands on more retailer shelves and into the hands of more shoppers. The point being is that by focusing on these core tenants, that's how we do that.

One of the other things that you said that I loved, that again resonated so much with me, I talk about this a lot, is you've gotta start with the end in mind. So, once you define or once you define who your consumer is ... Not age 29, 2.3 kids, all that



other stuff, but yet, "Do they like yoga? Do they go mountain biking?" I mean, the fact that, you know, I learned a lot about you when we were talking about mountain bikes and your passion for them, so learning more about your customer, your core customer and getting to know them on a more intimate level like you did your wife before you married her, that's how you develop that relationship, and again, building your story around that. Can you talk more about what you were sharing with the group when you said, "Start with the end in mind." How would you recommend a brand craft their story, and more importantly, how would you recommend a brand identify those things that need to be baked into their story?

Beau: That's a big question.

Dan: It is.

Beau: So, I think ... Man, I think if you're coming up from a CPG space, if you want to create a category, more power to you. Go do it. If that's the end in mind. If you want to be a curated small brand that sells only direct to consumer, then that's great. Those things change the story of your brands trajectory if you make them early. Yes, there's brands that have had organic success where eventually they just kind of get tapped on the shoulder as they continue to grow, but man, there's a lot of heartache that can be solved for if you really begin with, "Okay, if we want to command four feet of space at Target someday" that's a different conversation then, "You know what, I really want to serve moms



with a very specific niche product that I own the audience for and that's the end of the day." You know?

So, I think that's pretty simple business. I think, you know, defining your north star and then holding to that is probably the hardest part, is actually holding to that and not getting caught with shiny objects along the way. I think digital marketing is probably the easiest example that I see a lot of people build what I would call half built bridges or where they get, "Well, we tried this and it didn't work and then we went to a conference and heard about that and so we tried that and didn't work." They end up into this place where they've built kind of a half built bridge between where they are now and where they want to be.

A lot of folks just need to just kind of buckle down, go, "Okay, what is the most predictable way for us to get from what we offer to the world, to someone buying that?" What is the number that it costs to get someone to do that? Is it \$3 for them to buy a product online and we sell something \$10 or \$12 [inaudible 00:50:40] make money, then great. Figure that out. Understand your acquisition cost. We live in a modern era. Or maybe they only have shelf placements only and they want to activate people at a store. Great. Focus in on the [DC 00:50:53] that you're shipping to those ... You know, that you're fulfilling that product through, run a set of targeted ads to those zip codes that are served, and see if you see a lift in your next order from that DC.

If you really want to get scientific about it, insert a landing page in between your brand and the store locator or whatever you're



pushing towards, that tells a story about what you're doing. Support that retailer with what could be \$50 of advertising a day to support that initiative and actually increase turns at that store, and be scientific about it but also surround that with good art where people can understand and get excited about walking into that whole foods or whatever it is to find your product and have already seen your story because you sent them to a landing page and then you followed up with some good re-targeting and said, "Hey, by the way, this is just down the block from you." Be conversational about it and use modern technology to do that.

Dan: Very creative. I love that. It's what ... What I really like about that the most, that idea, and thank you for sharing that, is that instead of looking at everything as so transactional, this promotion costs me X amount of dollars, the promotion as you described it creates a lot of goodwill. If you can help the retailer get what they want and more shoppers, a reasonable profit, then they're going to help you get what you want; more customers, more shoppers, more exposure. So, love that idea. That's fantastic.

Beau, I know we've talked about a lot of different things. What else should we cover or what else would you like to share? Then what are your closing thoughts around how you would recommend a brand connect with, for example, Human Design? Then after that I want to talk about Human Design. What's unique about you and then share a little bit about what you guys are doing.



Beau: Yeah. So, I mean, I've had an interesting 10 years, 10 plus years of doing this thing called business, and you know, I've gone from having an HR department and 35000 other people that I'm in trenches doing work with in a big corporate environment to having two people. You know? Doing this thing called business and trying to figure that out. Right? And going, "Where do I process ... Where's the HR department?" Whatever, right?

So, having this opportunity to go from big to small and then working towards big again and having the opportunity to work with big brands like Nike and Netflix and some of the opportunities that we have as an agency and the people that we serve, I think the number one thing I would say is don't do it alone. I think that the complexities of the modern business environment are so big and so vast that the days of ... Man, as much as I'd love it if we could all be Renaissance men and women and really know a lot about a lot and be excellent at of all that, I would say that would be awesome. 'Cause I have enough pride where I really want to know a lot about a lot, but I would say that would be the piece of advice I would hand any entrepreneurs. Don't do it alone and don't pretend to be good at something that you're potentially not. Find people, surround yourself with others that can at the very least speak into those blind spots.

Dan: Absolutely, and couldn't agree with you more. One of the things that I find is a lot of brands, they either try to go it alone or they hand the keys to a group or to an agency or a company, or a broker, doesn't matter, without even knowing some of the basics.



You know? I believe that brands need to keep their hand firmly on the wheel at all times and you surround yourself with the people that could really help amplify your message, that can really compliment you, that have the strengths that you don't possess as an entrepreneur. Most people as an entrepreneur are not really good at everything. They're good at one specific thing. Creating a product, getting it out, marketing, selling it, whatever it is. So, surrounding yourself with the right people is so important.

Thank you so much for sharing that. You know, I was looking at your LinkedIn profile. You are a mentor for Boomtown Accelerator. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

Beau: Yeah. So, Boomtown is essentially a startup accelerator here in Boulder, Colorado and they have roughly 10 teams that come through per cohort and with really, as the name would inspire, the idea to accelerate their business through working through not only getting some funding in the mix but also getting some mentorship and really ideally putting a fast forward button on what they're doing. Typically it's about a two to three month program. So, you know, my role as a mentor is to sit in on and help out some of those teams, offer some level of expertise that I've gotten from just muscle memory of doing this thing for a little while and I'm surrounded by other mentors that have respective expertise as well.

So, I would recommend ... There's food specific accelerators out there. There's all sorts of different accelerators out there. If that's something that you feel like, you know, something that you're



looking for that fast forward button I think there is a time, it's definitely the right thing and it has to be the right time for any given brand to look into that. The Global Accelerator Network's probably the most massive directory out there. GAN.co has a pretty great directory of all the accelerators out there. So, if that's of interest definitely check that out. Then by all means if you're here local or if you'd like to reach out to me specifically I'm happy to ... You know, I've got a certain amount of time booked in my week just to try to help out brands and try to share from some of the mistakes and the steps that I've taken along the way as best I can.

Dan: I appreciate that. That's what makes natural, natural. That's what makes us unique is that we bend over backwards to help nurture the community around us because we all rise together. So, thank you for sharing that. Is there anything else that you want to share that we haven't talked about? Do you want to talk more about Human Design? Do you want to talk about mountain bikes? No, just kidding. Anything else that you want to share?

Beau: Yeah. I would say, simply put, if you're looking for what we would call exponential growth or having someone look at your brand fresh, that is really what we at Human Design are well known for, is coming in and really being a SWAT team or a wedge play or whatever analogy you want to use, on behalf of brands really to give them a fresh perspective through what I think is a pretty unique lens. I'm obviously biased, but I think we have a pretty unique team here. We've had the opportunity to serve some big



and small brands and the mostly what we serve and help out people with is in brand strategy and brand positioning and the actual design work behind all of that. Video production obviously as has been mentioned and then this thing called marketing.

So, it could be something as simple as running your Facebook ads or building out a collective omnichannel campaign for you. That is really built to get people's attention. Do that with emotion and do that above all with intention and thoughtfulness.

Dan: More importantly, you're great to talk about mountain bike riding with. No, I'm just kidding. No, we've had some great conversations and we're just beginning that obviously but that is so important. So, thank you for sharing that because I think a lot of people, they get blinders on and we all do. We all have our head down focused on what we're trying to accomplish and sometimes we can't see the forest through the trees because we're not really in a position to really think of the world differently. Sometimes having someone else step in and at the very least give us a check up or take a look at what we're doing and think about a way to do it better. You know, that's invaluable and even more important, having someone who's been in the industry, who's had the privilege of working with a lot of brands and as you said, seeing what works and what doesn't work, those perspectives are worth their weight in gold.

At the very least I highly recommend any of the brands that are listening to this, consider looking at some of the different opportunities to work with an agency like Human Design and



working with you. Again, thank you for giving back through the accelerator and everything else you do. It's been a pleasure getting to know you and thank you for your time. I look forward to the next time we get a chance to connect and talk.

Beau: Yeah. While we're at it I'll go ahead and just in the spirit of giving, for the first five people that reach out to me once this thing publishes via we'll just go LinkedIn to keep it simple, we'll do a free Amazon or Facebook or just digital advertising audit on whatever you have going or are aspiring to get going to get in front of folks that you want to serve. If you don't operate in those channels we'll do a creative audit. We'll look over your existing creative for you. Again, that's for the first five people and then you can just reach out to me on LinkedIn and say, "Hey, I heard you on a podcast or Dan's podcast." My name is Beau Haralson. There's not too many Beau's out there so hopefully that's pretty findable.

Dan: I appreciate you sharing that so thank you very much.

Beau: I appreciate it. Yeah, feel free to look us up on humandesign.com too.

Dan: Perfect. Thank you. Yeah, I'll definitely make sure that I put a link in the website and in the podcast show notes. So, thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Beau: Awesome. Well, hopefully that was helpful content and I think we're like minded in a lot of ways.



Dan: Yeah.

Beau: So, I don't know if that's ... Sometimes people like a little bit of conflict but it's funny to hear, I think you're like minded in the way that you think about story and brand strategy and things like that. So, that was a lot of fun for me. Hopefully it's inspiring for your listeners too.

Dan: No, thank you. Well, and I agree with you completely. Again, that's why I built that course is to get brands to start crafting their story, crafting their message so that when they come to talk to someone like you they have the wherewithal to be able to share some of that stuff so you don't have to work so hard to get those answers to be able to really support the brands.

Then of course, the other benefit is be able to help the retailers too. So, Beau, thank you for coming on. I really appreciate that. Thank you for your time and your insights.

Beau: Awesome. Well, Dan ... Yeah, don't be a stranger and thanks so much for the honor of being on the podcast. Hopefully I did you justice.

Dan: Thank you. Appreciate it. You did. Absolutely. Thank you.

I want to thank Beau for coming on today and for sharing his insights and his wisdom. I also want to thank him for the special offer that he made to you, the podcast listener. I'll be certain to put a link to Human Design in the podcast show notes and on the podcast webpage. Today's free download is my Turnkey Sales



Story Strategies course. You can get it instantly on the podcast show notes or by going to [turnkeysalesstorystrategies.com/growsales](https://turnkeysalesstorystrategies.com/growsales).

On today's podcast we've talked a lot about the importance of story and really understanding who that unique customer is that you serve. I mentor and work with a lot of brands in all stages of development. Knowing your ideal customer is something that all brands struggle with. You may think you know who your customer is but trust me, there's a lot more to them than just knowing that they're female, head of household, etcetera. Take the course. I urge you to take the course. It's the foundation of everything I teach. This is the strategy that I use to help differentiate myself from other brands. I talk more about this on podcast episode 68. You can download the show notes at [brandsecretsandstrategies.com/session102](https://brandsecretsandstrategies.com/session102). Thank you and I look forward to seeing you in the next episode.

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I appreciate all the positive feedback. Keep your suggestions coming.

Until next time, this is Dan Lohman with Brand Secrets and Strategies where the focus is on empowering brands and raising the bar.