

## THE AGE OF THE HELPER AGENT ®

*“People are hungry for compassion. There's never enough of it. And the tougher the times are, the more important it becomes”. LOVE IS THE KILLER APP - TIM SANDERS, the Chief Solutions Officer at Yahoo!, consults with Fortune 500 executives and world-class brands on marketing and Internet strategy to succeed in tomorrow's workplace.) I don't think there is anything higher than Love ... Love is so expansive. I had such a difficult time coming up with a definition for Love in my book, but the way I define Love is the self less promotion of the growth of the other.*

A new era - In an era of high tech, SMS, email and super efficiency; an era where the incidence of depression and mental disorders are increasing; where 60% of the population is mostly unhappy and classified as languishing, living lives of quiet despair (Keyes and Haidt) – consider the faces of people in trains in major cities, they are haggard, drawn and sallow and yet once they were in maternity wards as happy looking gurgling babies – what happened ( Maslow); where corporate collapses like Enron have generated an environment where the community knows large companies are successful but crooked (Tata website); people are craving care and respect – that is love. Love helped turn Southwest Airlines into the most profitable airline ever with 33 years of unbroken profitability. “Appropriately its stock symbol is LUV” ( Sisodia, Sheth, Wolfe).

This new era which some are referring to as the “Age of Transcendence” (Sisodia et al) we are seeing the rise of subjectivity though the use of the **right brain**. Whereas **previously business was dominated by reasoning, left brain** objectivity, there is a shift to a more balanced use of both sides of the brain, to a more intuitive holistic approach. This is the strategy that sets the high performing “Firms of Endearment” from the rest. Their leadership is emotionally intelligent and is not just the realm of senior management it is *“but woven throughout the fabric of the organization, and reflected in the dealings of employees with each other, with customers, with business partners, and with society at*

large”(Sisodia). They show love to all, staff, clients, society, service providers and management.

### **Customers – the POWER OF LOVE**

*Perhaps the most powerful qualitative factor present in the culture of FoEs we have examined is love--a deep, tender, ineffable feeling of affection that runs from company to stakeholder and back again to the company (Sisodia et al).*

James Autry former CEO of Meredith Corporation Magazine Group which publishes Better Homes & Garden, Ladies' Home Journal, and Country Life, among other titles, in his book *Love and Profit* says "Good management is largely a matter of love." He elaborates:

*“Management is, in fact, a sacred trust in which the well-being of other people is put in your care during most of their working hours. It is a trust placed upon you first by those who put you in the job, but more important than that, it is a trust placed upon you after you get the job by those whom you are to manage.”*

Kevin Roberts, CEO of one of the world's largest ad agencies, Saatchi & Saatchi, proposes in his book *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands* that love should be the foundation of all marketing:

*At Saatchi & Saatchi our pursuit of Love and what it could mean for business has been focused and intense. Human beings need Love. Without it they die. Love is about responding, about delicate, intuitive sensing. Love is always two-way. When it is not, it cannot live up to the name Love. Love cannot be commanded or demanded. It can only be given.*

Copyrights. Trademarks. Servicemarks. Now Lovemarks, says Roberts. That's how the strongest brands will institutionalize their uncopyable distinction from competing brands. This is more than a sea change. It is a planetary change. A cosmic change. It is as far removed from marketing theory of the past as instant messaging is from Victorian-era letter writing.

Another aspect of the successful 28 FOE's is their marketing strategy. They have moved away from the "aggressive promotion and selling that put seller's objectives ahead of the *real* needs of consumers.

Whilst there will always be individuals and companies who exploit people the future of marketing is dominated by moral character if the results of the FOE's is any indication.

*Love is the antidote for this dehumanization.* Sounds too New Agey, maybe? Pause for a moment and think. The former head of Meredith Publishing Magazine Group, the former chief solutions officer of Yahoo!, and the CEO of one of the world's largest advertising agencies, as does Lance Secretan an international leadership consultant who works with *Fortune* 500 companies and Chris Lowney former managing director of JP Morgan in New York, London, Tokyo offices talk about love in the marketplace without being concerned about raising eyebrows. Perhaps love has indeed established a secure beachhead in mainstream business thought. In any event, it is not possible to fully understand how FoEs outperform their closest competitors without understanding the role of love in their success. FoE executives lead with strong spines and dedicated resolve, but they retain their capacity to love and inspire love—in the workplace, in the marketplace, and across the full spectrum of their stakeholder groups.

*New Balance* moved from twelfth place in 1990 to second in 2004. It made those gains in a shrinking sneaker market. In the 1990's *Nike*, *Reebok* and *Adidas* experienced declines in sneaker sales as well as market share. During that period *New Balance* market share grew dramatically with a sales growth of 25% between 1995 and 2003.

## “Be Distinct or Extinct”

**Heart** - a symbol of empathy, love, nurturing, caring, giving, helping and likeability- is in the middle of mainstream business consciousness.

According to TIM SANDERS you need a killer application. (What's a killer app? There's no standard definition, but basically it's an excellent new idea that either supersedes an existing idea or establishes a new category in its field. It soon becomes so popular that it devastates the original business model.)

What is that application? Simply put: **Love is the killer app**. Those of us who use love as a point of differentiation in business will separate ourselves from our competitors just as world-class distance runners separate themselves from the rest of the pack trailing behind them.

Love is defined by the noted philosopher and writer Milton Mayeroff's in his book *On Caring*: "Love is the selfless promotion of the growth of the other." When you are able to help others grow to become the best people they can be, you are being loving—and you, too, grow. Mayeroff actually used the word *caring* more often than the word *love*, although love is interchangeable with such terms as *caring, charity, and compassion*. This isn't just a feel-good message that I sense audiences want to hear. I believe that the most important new trend in business is the downfall of the barracudas, sharks, and piranhas, and the ascendancy of nice, smart people.