

Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™

A Marketing Approach for Conscious Capitalists

By Jeff Klein, CEO, Working for Good

Marketing is misunderstood. The deeper purpose and potential of marketing are rarely recognized or embodied. While marketing is often used and perceived as manipulation, it can serve as a process to bring a company's mission to life and to engage its stakeholders in ongoing and ever-deepening relationships. While all marketing can function in this way, I call the approach to marketing I outline below Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™ to emphasize this potential and intention.

We live within an increasingly crowded and complex marketplace, with infinite messages calling for attention, increasing transparency, and heightening expectations for business to provide inspiration and meaning and to serve society beyond producing great products and delivering excellent service. In this context, companies have an opportunity to establish trust-based relationships with their customers, vendors, employees and other stakeholders, enhancing the resilience and sustainability of their business. While other business functions can contribute, marketing holds a special role in this process.

At its root, marketing is a process of communications, and related systems, to cultivate and sustain relationships. Marketing includes, but is more than, facilitating transactions (such as, generating sales, attracting investment, etc). Marketing is like skin: a permeable membrane that connects the business with the marketplace. Like skin, marketing serves an integrative function, holding a company together and reflecting its essence and integrity.

Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™ advances a company's mission and addresses its objectives through an ongoing, systematic process of communicating, connecting, engaging, and exchanging value with and between its stakeholders.

Context

As Ed Freeman, “father” of Stakeholder Management Theory, observes, “Capitalism and business are the greatest form of social cooperation every created.”

This point is beautifully illuminated by Leonard Read in his 1958 essay [*Pencil*](#). “*I, Pencil, am a complex combination of miracles: a tree, zinc, copper, graphite, and so on. But to these miracles which manifest themselves in Nature an even more extraordinary miracle has been added: the configuration of creative human energies—millions of tiny know-hows configuring naturally and spontaneously in response to human necessity and desire...!*”

“Actually, millions of human beings have had a hand in my creation, no one of whom even knows more than a very few of the others. Now, you may say that I go too far in relating the picker of a coffee berry in far off Brazil and food growers elsewhere to my creation; that this is an extreme position. I shall stand by my claim. There isn't a single person in all these millions, including the president of the pencil company, who contributes more than a tiny, infinitesimal bit of know-how.”

This interdependence and inherent cooperation forms the foundation of all business and of the economy. Recognizing this interdependence and far-reaching cooperation inherent in business is an insight underlying [Conscious Capitalism](#). And by recognizing the human foundation of business, cultivating shared purpose and purposefully creating value for all of its stakeholders, a company can amplify and leverage this natural process.

When we purposefully look for opportunities to create value for and engage with our stakeholders, we will find them. Just as if we look for tradeoffs and conflicts between our interests and those of and between different stakeholders, we will find them.

How does Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™ work?

Here is a brief overview of steps in the process of designing, producing and [facilitating](#) a Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™ campaign, followed by an illustration, using the Liquid Revolution campaign I am designing and facilitating with O.N.E. Coconut Water.

These steps are not linear but iterative and interconnected.

First Phase: Develop the Core

Step 1. Define your purpose/mission. You've got to know what you stand for before you can reflect and amplify it through your campaign, and before you can invite others to engage with you in the process.

O.N.E. Mission

We started O.N.E. with the intention of making a positive difference through business. We believe that everyone makes a difference and we commit to making a difference through every O.N.E. beverage we make and sell.

We are dedicated to driving improvement in food, health, business and the environment, to creating value for all of our stakeholders and to serving as an example of Conscious Capitalism in the beverage industry.

Step 2. Outline campaign objectives, reflecting your mission.

O.N.E. Campaign Objectives

- Advance the O.N.E. mission, and foster change in what people drink, leading to healthier choices.
- Create value for O.N.E. Stakeholders and engage them in the campaign.
- Generate energy and excitement throughout the O.N.E. system.
- Build brand awareness and loyalty.
- Drive product sampling and sales,
- Support O.N.E. sales and field marketing team and distribution channel partners.
- Serve as an exemplary company, embodying the [principles of Conscious Capitalism](#).

Step 3. Identify the stakeholders you want to engage.

- **Which stakeholders do you want to engage with the campaign?** Customers? Employees? Distribution chain partners? The media? Others?
- **Who are they, in more depth?** What are their needs and interests? What is their orientation? What do they relate and respond to? What channels do they receive information through?

O.N.E. Stakeholders

Here is a brief overview of O.N.E. Stakeholders we aim to engage with the campaign, including needs and interests of some of them, to provide tangible examples.

- **Customers:** (People who drink O.N.E. Coconut Water or who may in the future – of various ages and profiles). They look for and respond to information and inspiration relevant to their health, well-being, interests and concerns.
- **Team Members:** O.N.E. Employees and other Team Members (including outside service providers).
 - They want to feel like they are part of something meaningful and significant.
 - Sales team and field marketing team members need tools to represent the company, its products and the campaign to customers (distributors, wholesalers, retailers and people who buy and drink O.N.E. Coconut Water and other O.N.E. drinks)
- **Vendor/Distribution Chain Partners:** (Distributors, wholesalers, retailers). They want to be inspired and energized, while they are selling products that generate revenues for them.
- **Supply Chain Partners:** (Farmers, producer/packagers, packaging supply partner – e.g. Tetra Pak). In addition to dependable relationships, they want partners who support them in their relationships with their stakeholders and who add value for them beyond that of buying their products.
- **Campaign Partners:** Allies and Ambassadors want to associate, collaborate and be identified with a campaign, company and products that resonate with their values, purpose and identity, and that connect them with other stakeholders in a meaningful way.
- **Investors/Financial Partners:** They want the companies they invest in to be solid, stable and flourishing and increasingly recognize that engaging stakeholders by standing for something beyond money and creating value for stakeholders creates a healthy company with strong financial returns.
- **Communities:** (Including communities where the Coconut Water is produced and where it is sold). They expect companies to participate as engaged citizens.
- **The Environment:** People need and expect companies to consider their effect on the environment.
- **Society:** Beyond considering the environment, society as a whole is served when companies elevate the overall functioning of business and address specific needs and opportunities for advancing human flourishing.

Step 4. Define your positioning. What is an overall message that reflects your mission and connects with the needs and interests of your stakeholders, in a way that they will relate to and be inspired by?

O.N.E. Positioning

Based on all of the preceding – O.N.E.’s mission, it’s objectives, the needs and interests of its stakeholders, it’s positioning can be simply stated as:

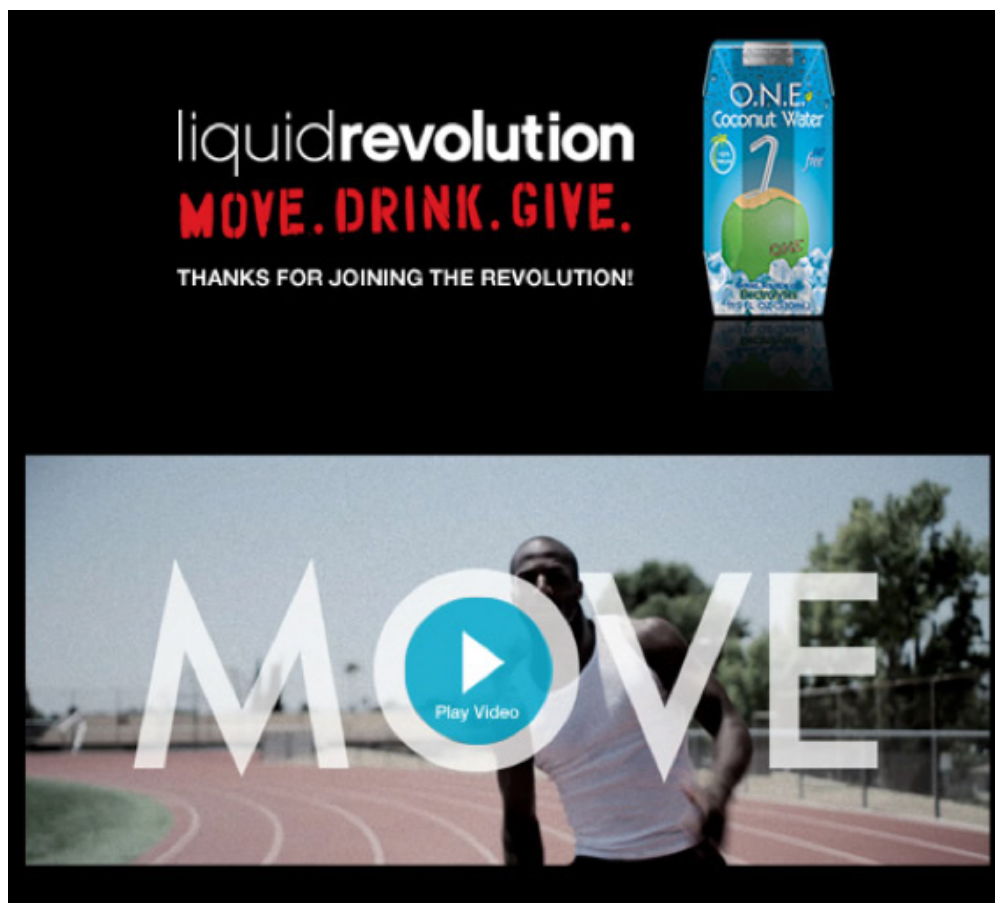
Making a difference, together.

Second Phase: Design the Campaign

Step 5. Establish campaign identity, reflecting your mission and positioning (which, by definition, connects with your stakeholders).

O.N.E. Campaign Identity

Building on and emerging from the focus on the core is the identity of the campaign, which we call the Liquid Revolution. Click on the image below to see a short video that represents the campaign and provides more information.

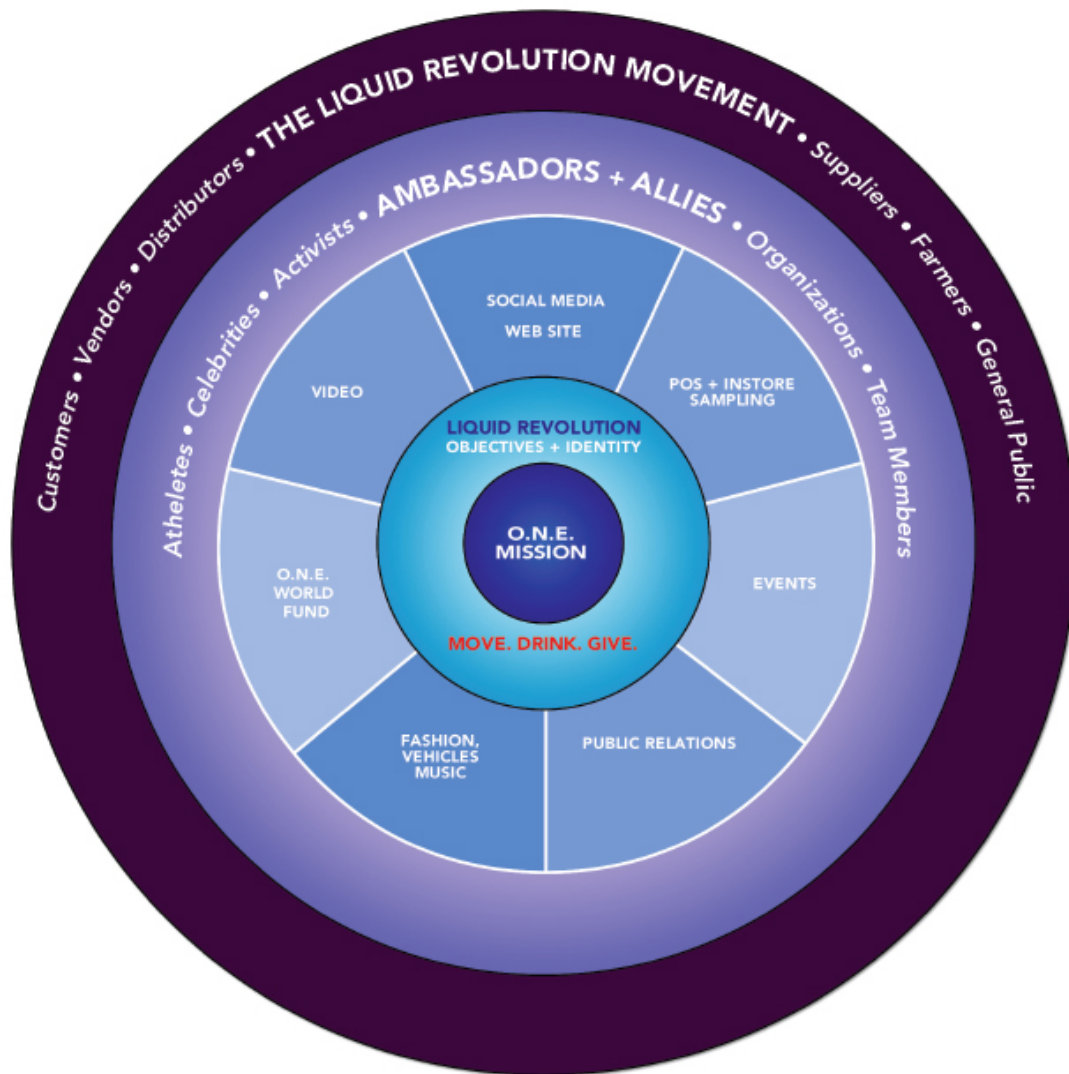


Step 6. Develop strategies, tactics and plans, reflecting mission and positioning, addressing objectives and embodying the campaign identity.

Liquid Revolution Campaign Strategies, Tactics & Plans

The foundation of the strategies for activating a Stakeholder Engagement Marketing campaign is the Core developed in phase one, including ever-present consideration of stakeholders – how to create value for them and how to engage them, and an intention to foster integration between campaign elements and actions. Every element should address more than one objective and every objective should be addressed by more than one element or action, creating a rich texture and a strong and resilient web of activity, in which every action reinforces and leverages other actions.

Since the Liquid Revolution campaign is still in the early stages of the Design phase, I'll let the video, related [Facebook tab](#), and the campaign “map” below tell the story for now.



Step 7. Identify and engage Allies and Ambassadors, aligned with your mission, positioning and campaign identity, and relevant to your stakeholders.

Ambassadors and Allies extend the credibility, reach and relevance of your campaign and reinforce your identity and positioning.

Liquid Revolution Ambassadors

We are building a broad and diverse group of Liquid Revolution Ambassadors to bring the campaign to life.

A graphic titled "liquidrevolution AMBASSADORS" on a black background. The text "liquidrevolution" is in white and "AMBASSADORS" is in blue. Below the title is a paragraph: "Liquid Revolution Ambassadors inspire people to **MOVE** in ways that promote well-being, **DRINK** healthy beverages like O.N.E. Coconut Water and **GIVE** through their choice of drinks and through service to others." Below this are six portraits of ambassadors arranged in two rows of three. Each portrait is followed by the name and a brief description of their role.

liquidrevolution AMBASSADORS

Liquid Revolution Ambassadors inspire people to **MOVE** in ways that promote well-being, **DRINK** healthy beverages like O.N.E. Coconut Water and **GIVE** through their choice of drinks and through service to others.

Barton BROOKS
Founder
Guerrilla Aid

Jeff KLEIN
Author + CEO
Working for Good

Ana GETTY
Organic Chef. Yoga Teacher.
Mother. Environmental Protagonist.

Jarrett BUSH
Defensive Back
Green Bay Packers

Cathleen LAPORTE
Founder + President
Athletes for Charity

Brian JOHNSON
Philosopher + CEO
en*theos

Step 8. Engage, reflect, refine and expand.

To truly engage stakeholders requires real relationship with them, based in communication, co-creation and community-building. This requires establishing channels for feedback and dialog, and fostering the needs, wisdom and energy of various stakeholder groups to inform and contribute to the ongoing expression of the campaign.

Tools for Designing & Implementing a Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™ Campaign

At the core of any Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™ Campaign, as with any aspect of a Conscious Business, is [Conscious Awareness](#). Cultivating relationships with Allies and Partners and engaging stakeholders calls for listening and [facilitation](#).

The Bottom Line

Marketing can certainly be manipulative. And it often is. But marketing can also serve the deeper purpose of a business, create value for its stakeholders and catalyze deep collaborative relationships between a company and its stakeholders, which reflect the core, underlying interdependencies and cooperation inherent in business, and in the process, serve the greater good.

Informing and infusing your marketing with your mission increases the likelihood that you will advance your mission and provides shared purpose, meaning and inspiration for your stakeholders.

By explicitly considering the needs and interests of your stakeholders as you develop the core of your campaign, you are more likely to address their needs and interests, serve and engage your stakeholders as you design and implement campaign elements.

Please join me for [It's Just Good Business](#) at the en*theos Academy and join us for conversation on [our Facebook page](#).

Jeff Klein is CEO of Working for Good, a company that activates, produces and facilitates mission-based, Stakeholder Engagement Marketing™ campaigns and Conscious Culture development programs.

Jeff is a founding trustee of Conscious Capitalism, Inc. and authored the award-winning book, *Working for Good: Making a Difference While Making a Living*, to support conscious entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, leaders and change agents at work.

For more information, visit workingforgood.com