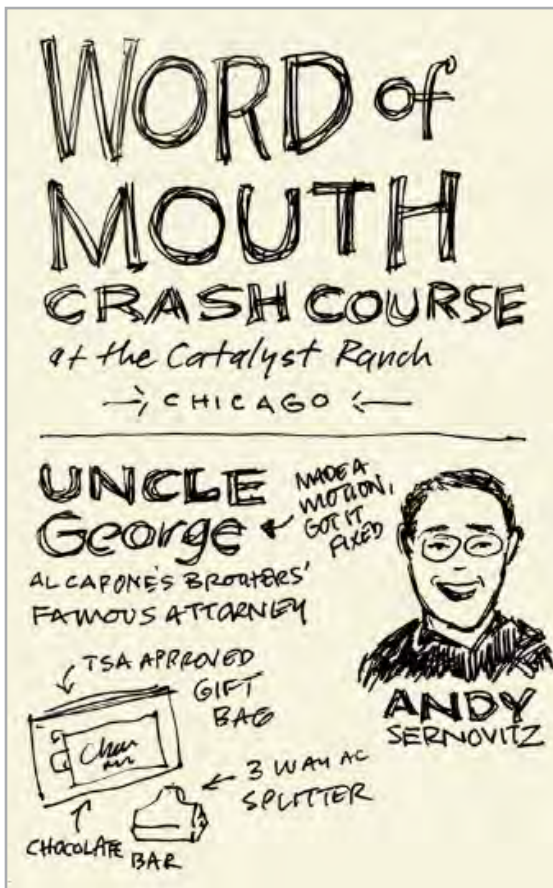




## BOOK EXCERPT



# Word of Mouth Marketing: The Sketchnote Edition

Mike Rohde

Mike Rohde is a designer, sketchnoter, and writer who has a passion for simple and usable design solutions. Mike believes it's important to share thoughts, ideas, and process, so others can draw insight from his experiences. Professionally, Mike is an interface and experience designer at Gomoll Research + Design, a human-centered research and design firm, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Conference organizers hire him to capture real-time sketchnotes at live events like Chick-fil-A Leadercast, An Event Apart, SXSW Interactive, and Storyline Conference.

You can see Mike Rohde's website at:  
[www.rohdesign.com](http://www.rohdesign.com)

# WORD of MOUTH CRASH COURSE

at the Catalyst Ranch

→ CHICAGO ←

## UNCLE George

MADE A MOTION, GOT IT FIXED

AL CAPONE'S BROTHERS' FAMOUS ATTORNEY



ANDY SERNOVITZ

TSA APPROVED GIFT BAG



CHOCOLATE BAR

3 WAY AC SPLITTER

BIG ideas  
KEY best practices  
Repeatable FRAME WORK  
ACTION PLAN

WHO would share a story

WHY?

WHAT would they say?

HOW?

How many people will they tell?

# WHY WOM?

REPLACES PAID MARKETING  
WITH FREE MARKETING

---

## WOM economics

STARTS CHEAP →  
GETS CHEAPER →  
BUILDS ASSETS →

---

• ADVERTISING

• AFFILIATE

• SEARCH

• WORD OF MOUTH

EVOLUTION OF MARKETING →

# BREAK OUT

OF TRADITIONAL  
MARKETING

Word of mouth  
Keeps on going  
even after  
you've paid for it

# 5 simple steps

RED ENVELOPE - changes  
the discussion from the gift  
to the wrapped box

JONES SODA - creates odd  
sodas at thanksgiving - terrible -  
but it makes them unique

DRURY INN - unspectacular  
hotel chain gets people talking  
because they offer free calls.

1. Give people a  
reason to talk  
about
2. Make it easy  
to continue the  
conversation

**Be unique** - when you have something unique to offer, people who encounter what you have to offer will talk.

**make it easy** - give those who want to talk about what you offer an easy way to share it with others.

**MARKETING** <sup>deep thought</sup>

**IS WHAT YOU DO** → **NOT WHAT YOU SAY**  
Angry customers will spread word of mouth on their own.

Happy customers need more help sharing their thoughts.

the SOLUTION to POLLUTION is **DILUTION!**

angry comments build up over time - dilute them by creating HAPPY customers.

**HAPPY**   
**CUSTOMERS**  
are the best ads.

ZAPPOS sells so many shoes because they are completely obsessed about making their customers HAPPY.  
75% of ZAPPOS customers are through word of mouth.

\* makes for a recession-proof competitive advantage  
THAT'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT

# 3 LESSONS of LOVE

1. NEW LOVE is very powerful
2. LOVE and MONEY don't mix.  
(incentives can kill WOM)  
no amount of money will get someone to talk about you if they weren't in the first place.
3. NOBODY talks like a lover who has been scorned.  
it's about REPUTATION they have put on the line

WOM = Lifetime Customer Service

## 3 MOTIVATIONS:


YOU - the product/company

ME - I'm the talker

US - We together

YOU: make great stuff people want to talk about, beyond the default. Talking about your chocolate as just chocolate isn't enough.

Hey, ever heard of chocolate?!



SOLVE THE CHOCOLATE problem  
create a more special chocolate

ME: Talkers are people like us - the world is full of TALKERS who want to be experts who feel good sharing.  
→ MAKE 'EM FEEL SMART  
BY OFFERING GOOD INFORMATION  
TALKERS CAN USE EVERY DAY.

→ EGO + PRIDE - HELP YOUR TALKERS FEEL IMPORTANT. Maybe it's an exclusive event for your very best customers. VIP CLUBS, BETA TESTERS

→ FUN - MAKE IT FUN SO YOUR STUFF STANDS OUT AGAINST EVERYBODY ELSE'S STUFF. (2/14) White Castle does "Love Castle" with reservations + tableside service for date-night customers.

## BUILD THE ARCHIVE WITH FUN STUFF.

US: Being part of a group is powerful - creates a belonging which encourages tattoos on the most rabid members.

▷ MAKERS MARK Whiskey Ambassador Program

BILL SAMUELS, CEO emails the email list (ambassadors) for free drinks where he is, access to events, membership card and more - which work to encourage their brand.

• NAME ON YOUR OWN BARREL OF AGING WHISKEY members get cards to give away to other potential members at the liquor store.

BELONGING WE ALL WANT TO BELONG

## 5 TS: ESSENTIAL STEPS IN ALL WOM

1. TALKERS - find them
2. TOPICS - give em a reason
3. TOOLS - help the message spread
4. TAKING PART - conversation
5. TRACKING - measure + listen

# 1. TALKERS

Like to talk, but are probably not incited by promotions

FERRARI TALKERS are teen boys not necessarily 50 year old CEOs.

\* New customers are talkers because the impression is new, fresh and different.

LAS VEGAS - the WYNN hotel's talkers are cabbies - so they brought in cabbies to stay rent free, made it fun & memorable.

## 2. TOPICS

- must be repeatable, portable + fun - NOT about your features!!!

**REAL PEOPLE**  
don't repeat copywriting

The topic is a carrier that brings the message far and wide. Not technical specs

WOULD ANYBODY TELL A FRIEND? <sup>the question</sup> ←

Advertising is the cost of **BEING BORING.**

LOOK! →

HEY! ←

# 3. TOOLS

- ▶ ASK - would you tell a friend? Tell-a-friend form on every page of your website > 3 secs
- ▶ GET IT IN AN EMAIL - get signups, build an opt-in list for your talkers.

▶ SOLVE THE MATCHBOOK PROBLEM  
Matchbooks are hard to find  
but served a great purpose -  
give something to your customers  
when they leave to remember you.

FREE SAMPLES - what tangible  
things can your customers share?

▶ FIND A MULTIPLIER - tell a  
friend form - should have room  
for more than one person.

POTBELLY - mailed coupon to  
those moving from Chicago to  
Austin - but mailed 10 coupons  
not just 1 coupon. Encouraged  
recipients to bring friends along.

HELPS THE WORD OF MOUTH  
TRAVEL FARTHER + WIDER

4. TAKING PART - when  
fans start their own stuff  
around your brand - you win.

Get involved easily -

- when people say nice things  
say thank you
- when people say bad things  
say you're sorry - let me  
fix this for you.

THANK YOU.

I'M SORRY.

LET THE WORD OF MOUTH  
BE THE HAPPY ENDING

10 X DAY = SORRY / THANKS =  
3,600 LINKS / YEAR

1 : 5 : 10

## WORD OF MOUTH EXERCISE

# AVOID the word "CAMPAIGN"

This is all about getting people talking on their own about the thing you would like them to talk about. Think simple!

We don't care how people recommend us - we just want them to talk!

WEDDING PLANNER GOLF OPEN - make an invisible group feel special. NEW GOLF RESORT



SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP CARDS THAT LET A FRIEND PLAY A FREE ROUND OF GOLF. staff can see who they are

# DIFFERENT types of TALKERS BE CREATIVE

TOW TRUCK DRIVERS TO SHARE ABOUT AN INSURANCE COMPANY BY MAKING THE DRIVERS FEEL SPECIAL & IMPORTANT:

- DUFFEL BAGS FOR THEIR CLIENTS
- FEDEX PAYMENTS to DRIVERS
- TOW TRUCK OLYMPICS

Think differently about who your talkers could be. Break outside the easy choices.

LAZIK DOCTORS' TALKERS?

- HUNTERS
- SHOOTING TRAINERS



FIND UNUSUAL TALKERS TO SPREAD THE WORD FARTHER

# What is the TRIGGER?

TO START A CONVERSATION

IT MUST BE TRULY  
GENUINE AND REAL

Don't let it be a veneer of cool.

## Talkers

TALK TALK  
TALK TALK!

FINDING & FEEDING EVANGELISTS

- IDENTIFICATION
- EXPANSION
- COMMUNICATIONS
- RECOGNITION & REWARDS
- ORGANIZATION

## IDENTIFYING TALKERS

- Find the moment they are ready to talk
- Who is Already Talking?

- YOU HAVE FANS
- YOUR CATEGORY HAS CONVOS

### → INFLUENCERS

- WHO SURROUNDS THE CUSTOMER?
- VENDORS, BLOGGERS, EXPERTS
- WHO IS ALREADY TALKING

### → KEY QUESTIONS

- LIFE CYCLE: when do they talk?
- HOW CAN THEY VOLUNTEER?
- HOW CAN YOU RECOGNIZE THEM?

THESE APPLY TO BOTH  
BUSINESS TO BUSINESS and  
BUSINESS TO CONSUMERS

LOOK OUTSIDE OF THE OBVIOUS ONES

SEARCH FOR, BE AWARE OF and CULTIVATE UNUSUAL GROUPS OF TALKERS YOU CAN WORK WITH.

Be Ready - word of mouth can jump in unusual places and in unusual ways.

TALKERS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE when in CLUMPS and much easier to work with, too.

Talkers with Infrastructure can be incredibly powerful.

## Communications

- make it regular via blog, newsletter, offline, etc.
- get talkers connected in SOMEWHERE!

## RECOGNITION & REWARDS

→ NOT CASH/INCENTIVES!

→ PVN!

→ EGO

SHARE  
STATUS  
↓  
REPUTATION

- Let them know they are truly important by talking
- secret VIP benefits
- Exclusivity + Access

→ RECOGNITION / THANKS

- PUBLIC, SO THEY CAN SHOW OFF TO FRIENDS
- PRIVATE: WOW! THEY REALLY HEARD ME!

## THANKING THEM

IS A HUGE START  
Because they have been recognized + appreciated.

- FIND A PLACE TO SAY THANK YOU A LOT

## CREATING an ORGANIZATION

Create a formal talker community - this gives it scale and longevity.

→ Make it fun + exclusive and start w/ FREE + simple (FACEBOOK to start or NING)

→ GIVE THEM STATUS

→ SETUP A QUICK COMMUNITY platform doesn't matter - just that it's easy to join and share with others

→ FEED NEW REASONS TO TALK

- EXCLUSIVE VIP ACCESS, EVENTS, etc.

→ ENCOURAGE THEM TO ACT ON THEIR OWN

- LET TALKERS CREATE BENEFITS

- PROVIDE THE TOOLS FOR MEMBERS TO USE TO SETUP THEIR OWN EVENTS!

QUESTIONS + DISCUSSION:

## HOW do I sell this to my boss?

- Sometimes you just have to do it and see what happens

- Adoption cycle is common - take tiny steps to prove these ideas work w/ little risk

- Experiment + improve iteratively - inexpensively

## PROOF POINTS

these help you prove the ideas.

- Solving a problem and writing a blog post means your solution can continue to be found and help people out.

- NOT JUST COST SAVINGS! it's the talker, the context and the results of choosing wisely who talkers are.

- WHY THE RESISTANCE TO WORD OF MOUTH? It requires creativity and work to do word of mouth. Bad marketing is easy. Word of mouth is easy but different than traditional marketing.
- Make use of your company email signature - free + easy.

# TOPICS

PORTABLE  
REPEATABLE  
EMOTIONAL


OK, here's the deal - people are going to write what they want anyway - why not step in and encourage talkers so they make more positive.

## TAP TOPICS

1. Existing attributes
2. External conversations
3. Remarkable features
4. Stunts!

## HOW TO START THE TALKING?

- Match topics to talkers
- Create a vehicle for delivery
  - newsletter, phone call or a blog for delivery
- KEEP IT SIMPLE + EASY
  - Simple: don't spend!
  - Lots of small bets
  - Hot bets will take off on their own with minimal support.

 EVERY TOPIC NEEDS A TOPIC TO GET STARTED

## 1. EXISTING ATTRIBUTES

You already have great topics but you are jaded. You need to present them in a way that starts a conversation.

- Dig deep in your company experience to find topics

→ What's really new to you  
is very attractive to others

## 2. EXTERNAL CONVERSATIONS

what are people already  
talking about? Find a way  
to join that conversation.

- DUCK TAPE clothing for  
the prom w/ scholarships
- STRIDE Gum - sponsored  
Matt's dancing video travels

VIRAL IS AN ADJECTIVE -  
there are no viral videos until  
the audience decides it's viral

- FLUGTAG plane contests

## 3. REMARKABLE FEATURES

would anybody tell a friend?  
we talk about the 1% that is  
remarkable, not the 99%  
that makes it work.

→ Add features to make it  
buzzworthy

→ Brand messages or  
product features ARE  
NOT necessarily good  
topics for WOM.

→ Get WAY outside the box  
or create a wacky box

## 4. STUNTS!

→ doing something silly  
for recognition

- Publicity stunts
- Secret coupons
- Contest

- Crazy sale
- Nutty product
- unusual ad
- Fundraisers

Think about ways to ease  
the transfer of ideas -  
facebook coupons / email  
that can be forwarded.

FRESHBOOKS PANCAKE →  
BREAKFAST @ SXSW! \$400

---

"the best thing about WAM  
is - if it doesn't work, nobody  
knows about it!" - Andy

---

TOPICS run their course after  
a while - at some point  
making a crazier / wilder  
version of the topic unit work.

---

CONSIDER competing groups  
of talkers in competition to  
encourage participation.

---



BLOG POSTS written  
from the point of view of a  
GOOGLE SEARCH. Over time  
you establish a library of  
great resources for clients  
and prospective clients.

---

IF YOU HAVE REAL  
ESTATE think of  
ways to utilize  
that asset. <sup>HOST A</sup> PARTY!

---

CREATE A MARKET FOR  
YOUR TALKER GROUPS

---

Talkers + TOPICS  
Keep trying them til they click!



- IS IT FORWARDABLE? How?
- ASK EVERYWHERE
- TEL-A-FRIEND FORM
- EMAIL
- OFFLINE HANDOUTS
- WEB SHARING - easy! Let them share however they want.

### DO WE NEED A BLOG?

probably. Most useful way to reach core talkers with fresh stuff to share.

SMALL READERSHIP CAN STILL CREATE GREAT WOM

### DON'T DO A BLOG IF:

- You can't do it right (not time!)
- A website can support a wide range of content that can go viral

SHAREABILITY PRINCIPLE  
Adding a WOM tool to each marketing campaign and get a measurable improvement.

- ALL MARKETING OUGHT TO HAVE REFERRAL REQUESTS & TRACKING
- You get bonus impressions for free
  - SAMPLES
  - PEEL OFF COUPONS
  - etc.

### WOM BUMP

By building in WOM components, you get sharing + forwarding for free! 1/5 shares + 20% →

1,000 impressions  
+ 200 SHARES  
CPM is less, 200 free shares

# ASKING

## ▷ WHEN?

- BROWSING
- POST PURCHASE
- ANNIVERSARY
- NEWS MOMENTS
- LIVE EVENTS

## ▷ WHERE?

- WEB PAGES
- IN PERSON
- CUSTOMER REFERRAL
- RECEIPTS
- CUSTOMER SERVICE

## ▷ HOW to make it easier?

- FORMS
- MULTIPLE COPIES
- SHARE THE LINKS
- EMAIL TOOL



# CREATING CONTENT TO TRAVEL

- FORWARDABLE
- PORTABLE / EMBEDDABLE
- DISCOVERABLE

Is it easy to steal? is it quotable?

\* eMarketer Graphs - they give you stuff to steal so you can show it off.

DO YOU LOSE BECAUSE YOU GIVE IT AWAY?

no, as long as you create it to have value yet pointing at your own product or service

▷ Video on YouTube so it's findable + discoverable

Get videos on YouTube, your powerpoints on Slideshare - getting your content out gives it the opportunity to be viral and useful / discoverable.

## VIRALIZE EVERYTHING

- WHITEPAPERS + WORKSHEETS
- VIDEO, PODCASTS
- PRESENTATIONS
- HOW TO'S
- RESEARCH
- SIGNS

Watch the downloads and set up schedules to post up your information.

## OFFLINE (matchbook problem)

Never let them walk out the door without something to share.

- At the register
- What's in the box?
- Triggers
- What will they carry as they walk down the street?
- What turns non-buyers into talkers?
- What do you do at speedies + trade show booths

FATBURGER Triple King Challenge  
eat the big burger - get a photo on the wall, t-shirt and a certificate - that's a trigger.

## MULTIPLIERS

Get your talkers to share  
your tools with others

- Think multiples so that  
your tools are shareable -  
this multiplies the trigger.
- PROVIDE tools to groups  
to multiply talkers.

HOW? should change to  
HOW MANY.

---

“Dumb Stuff works.”  
(tools as triggers) — Andy Sernavitz

---

---

Little bunches of talkers spring  
all sorts of new conversations

---

Keep trying things out!

SEND me

SOMETHING

INTERESTING!

talking about mixing up the  
messages and trying more  
targeted mailings that are  
in context to the recipient.

---

Stop sending BORING thank  
yous to customers / talkers.

Instead, get to the

“I CAN'T BELIEVE  
YOU SENT THIS!”

# Listening & Participating

START HERE: LISTEN + RESPOND

They are already talking about you!

→ Who does daily tracking?

- FREE TOOLS

- CHART BASIC VOLUME

→ Who does basic responses?

- Free to respond real-time

- Be positive, not defensive

- Everyday customer service

THIS ENGAGES YOU + YOUR TEAM IN THE CONVERSATION.



\* Start simple, have a very positive attitude

# DELL HELL

Jeff Jarvis' critical blog post went bad before Dell got active in responding to the blogger critics.

\* IDEASTORM (2006) \$400

- Ideas, comments + voting  
6mo - 4,000 ideas 40K comments, 4,000 votes

| PEOPLE JUST WANTED TO SHARE THEIR IDEAS |

Linux people got Dell to add Linux pre-orders to laptops which exploded positively on the Linux discussion areas.



## Build Measurement Into Tools

Be sure each WOM tool includes measurability

- Tell a Friend
- Buzzworthiness (TAF/Views)
- Coupon Redemption
- Secret/WOM-only offers
- community members
- comments/posters

## HIDDEN STATS

- Lead source
- Email / DM finds
- CRM system
  - database you talkers



## Joining the Conversation

Go where people are already talking - you don't have to start the conversation.

→ online conversation can be intense

→ If they are already talking about you - you are welcome to join in.

---

## POWER OF PARTICIPATION

The more you talk, the more you'll get talked about.

- Drive by vs. Norm or Cheers
- Earn credibility
- Multiple voices + participants
- \* Take customer service into the blogosphere

## GO WHERE:

- How customers already are
- Where you can make a positive impact + be involved

# WOM isn't STEALTH

There is no second chance to recover your reputation.

→ etiquette: good taste and common sense

→ Honesty ROI

→ Disclosure

- Policy

- 10 magic words

→ Training

- Guideposts + guardrails

- 20 questions ↑  
DOs + DON'Ts

[blogcouncil.org/disclosure/](http://blogcouncil.org/disclosure/)

Templates to create policies

• 27 legal teams of fortune

500 companies approve these

# 10 MAGIC WORDS

I work for \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my personal opinion.

→ works well to establish where you are coming from

---

## Honesty ROI

- of relationship

- of opinion

- of identity

Makes your status clear right away.

## COMMON SENSE!

IF YOU HAVE TO ASK IT'S WRONG.

## DEALING WITH DETRACTORS

- Build credibility BEFORE you need it.
- Bring discussion inside the tent - let them vent in your space (blog) surrounded by your biggest fans.
- LET YOUR FANS RESPOND This has more credibility.
- \* Crack pots - people will understand

## RESPOND FAST

do it the same day to have the most impact.

**BE HUMAN** harder to hate a person responding and trying to fix it.

→ Put your side on the record  
**IT'S NOT ABOUT WINNING**

It's about responding and trying to correct the opinion.

---

## CREATING YOUR ACTION PLAN

TRUTH: Nobody knows what will work - you have to experiment

---

**WOM** is just talking to people. Try it - play!  
experiment + explore

---

COMPANY-WIDE  
ACTIVITY get everyone  
comfortable with WCM

- ONE PERSON in charge  
and not CEO or CMO!
- GET ORGANIZATIONAL  
BUY-IN: start small,  
with low-risk steps  
then measure results
- OPEN IT UP TO EVERYONE  
because employee buzz +  
enthusiasm will bloom  
when you support what  
they are doing.

HIT ALL WOM BASICS

make it easier for fans to  
get / keep on talking

VIRALIZE EVERYTHING

→ Put your information  
out on the web to be  
discovered

START LISTENING

Get into your Google search  
terms, RSS feeds - get a  
feel for what is being said  
about you online.

START TALKING

Produce quality content daily  
doing Thank You / I'm sorry

TRY SOMETHING  
EVERY WEEK

Experiment 'til you hit it.

GO DEEP!

Are you buzzworthy?

Do customers love us?

Review results of your efforts in way to find what works - then adjust!

→ next! ←

HAVE

FUN!

---

Word of Mouth should be fun and exciting! 