

B

The B Word

A book not not about it

Chris Fogg

Welcome to The B Word, a Not Not Book.

The Not Not Books focus upon the transformative power in the everyday application of a subject and not the subject matter itself. They highlight the unobvious gold that is often lost amongst intellectualisation and hypothesis. They affirm and inspire in equal measure with the aim of recalibrating your approach to how you work.

Now you have removed the subject matter of this book, let's get started and focus on *(the power of)* its application.

**To all those who have
inspired and supported
us, you know who you are.
You remain enduringly
close as business partners
and friends.**

Chris Fogg

Boring but necessary bits

We want to get right down to our focus but we know the copyright stuff is necessary, so we've put it at the back of this book.

Preface

We have always been obsessed with observing new ways of improving how a business can engage its audience. We very rarely apply popular business or strategic models to our consultation. Every project is devised in a bespoke way to ensure the outcomes are totally focused on realising the unique opportunities that face our client's businesses.

The consistently effective and often transformative work we produce is structured around a collection of methodologies that we have identified and defined. They are aligned to our four pillars: purpose, intuition, clarity and results. It has also been humbling to receive feedback from our client partners whose success has depended on these methodologies.

The best personal or professional development books are those that I have read in their entirety whilst on a short flight, at lunchtime or before bed. They are the ones that have resonated with me the most and as a result, their wisdom has been applied to my day-to-day activities.

The Not Not Books, of which The B Word is the first in the series, are conceived to work in the same way. With a focus on action rather than conjecture, i.e. thinking whilst importantly utilising the ability to bring your fantastic thinking to life, this series of books provide a fresh and unique perspective on the age-old topics of business.

This book has ten concise chapters; a collection of the most frequently observed and consistently effective approaches we have adopted and deployed over the years. They are unique and uniquely effective. They can be used individually as a cornerstone for a strategy, they can be used in any combination or as a complete sequence when building a platform to engage your audience.

I hope this book will provide you with the encouragement and determination to continually identify and maximise your professional potential through your business.

Yours in enthusiasm and entrepreneurial spirit,
Chris and the Opportunus team

Chapter 1

11 Start with a plan? Never!

Creating the perfect platform to realise your ambitions.

Chapter 2

15 You know your business' address, but do you know where it's at?

Understanding your lifestyle to optimise your unique potential.

Chapter 3

19 Flip the focus

Turning how you communicate on its head to transform performance.

Chapter 4

23 Different just to be different

Creating space to grow amongst your competition.

Chapter 5

27 Obvious is not so obvious

Aligning your business to the fundamental requirements of your audience.

Chapter 6

31 Does your audience recognise itself in you?

Presenting your business in a way that builds enduring value.

Chapter 7

**36 People don't buy what you sell,
they buy what you enable**

Transforming your sales through communication.

Chapter 8

**40 Pointy Logic: three key points
about a triangle**

Sharpening your focus to boost your
audience's engagement.

Chapter 9

45 The invisible power of design

Rethinking how you improve every aspect
of your business.

Chapter 10

**49 Enthusiasm is a renewable
source of energy**

Reenergising not just your working life.

55 About the author

56 Spread The B Word

Start with a plan? Never!

Creating the perfect platform
to realise your ambitions.

1

They say it always starts with a plan. I totally and utterly disagree.

It starts with a vision. Now, to have a 'vision' can seem like an overly romantic notion or something that only happens for the enlightened few; global leaders, philanthropists, artists and architects. It is not exclusively bestowed upon these few and I shall tell you why: visions come in all different shapes and sizes, but most importantly they are always relative to everyone's unique and individual context.

Whether you are wanting to disrupt your market, take your business to the next level or simply improve a single tactic, don't just start by making a plan. Take a step back and establish your vision.

A vision is quite simply imagining how good something could be.

Let me touch upon the way most approach this:

'If we do a, b and c,
we will get to achieve x.'

This is starting with a plan, and while it is always good and advisable to have one, I suggest you rethink how you begin. With a plan you will be organised, look busy and efficient and you will deliver a project. Great. But how do you take your business or its projects to the next level where you are maximising your opportunities and the investment you make in them?

Start in a different way. Start with establishing a 'picture of potential.'

When we begin a project or a piece of consultancy with a client, we begin by prodding and poking the business leader. Not literally, but we question and challenge from lots of different directions

and standpoints. We push them on what they believe their ambitions to be.

Don't just arrive at your vision, challenge your thinking: could this be more? What would this lead to? You can then be satisfied that you are making the most of your opportunity.

So how do we capture a vision to be able to develop the plan to then realise it? Well we must visualise and verbalise it with pictures and words. You can have the best vision ever but if you can't communicate it or get your audiences to engage with it, it will never come to be.

Visualise and verbalise your vision and you will have made the perfect start to making the most of your potential.



You know your business' address, but do you know where it's at?

Understanding your lifestage
to optimise your unique potential.

2

Take a moment to reflect on what life stage your business is at. I often find this really quite obvious, but I am continually surprised that it is overlooked, no matter the scale or how well established the business is. One good thing about this is that you can make a difference straight away!

What we're talking about here is your business' current strategic phase (proof of concept, traction, scale, growth et al). Its duration is usually defined by the timeline allocated to the business plan or financial model and is often shorter than you think because quite simply, it is impossible to see too far into the future and predict market forces.

Once you have defined what life stage your business is at, you are able to make better decisions relative to the needs of its context today. Not just decisions based on businesses you admire or may be in competition with, but relative to where you are as a business.

Every life stage will present its own unique challenges and opportunities. Therefore, if you consider tactics that were deployed for your business at a totally different life stage, it will only serve to diminish or distract from your true opportunities.

For example, a business that is long established may require considerations, strategies and tactics within the context of 'relevance' where it feels that whilst they have a great heritage, the key to realising the potential of its current life stage is to promote a purposeful relevance.

Another business might be in startup phase and whilst you may admire their energetic and copious communications around their culture and proposition, their life stage requires them to establish themselves quickly. This may not be the opportunity your life stage presents.

One of the benefits of this way of thinking is that it relieves a certain pressure of 'we should be doing this because it has worked so well for them.' When this unnecessary pressure is removed it enables you to think more freely and with greater clarity when building your strategy.

Remember, the opportunities that face your business, even in a crowded marketplace, are uniquely your own.



Flip the focus

Turning how you communicate on its head to transform performance.

3

Often when people are communicating they start closest to home. They talk about themselves because it is most familiar. This is the case with businesses too. They start talking about what they do and how they do it, because this is easy and it comes naturally.

While this traditional way can be effective, rarely do businesses align it to the needs of their audience by addressing the ‘how’ and the ‘why.’

You can transform your sales and marketing by flipping the focus.

Let me give you an example:

Company A naturally wants to stand out against the frequent communications from its competitors. It is confident that the business has achieved good awareness in the market so places its logo top and centre.

Once it has grabbed the attention of the audience, it structures the creative with a product or service it is promoting, confident that there is a gap in the market.

Then it is only natural to finish off with some small print stuff: the features and benefits bits.

All sounds pretty robust right? It’s a natural flow through a piece of communication. Well I beg to differ. Instead, I propose flipping this logic on its head:

Company B has spent time speaking with its audience and has a real understanding of what customers find valuable in its products. So, it focuses its communication

by placing a message that addresses the needs of its customers front and centre.

The company then makes its product or service the hero that serves those needs, this continually makes for higher engagement.

The communications piece is then resolved with the company's logo. It is presented with relative modesty, conveying the confidence that the business' proposition has already resonated with a tone and structure uniquely attributable to the company.

Introducing this new structure or hierarchy will improve the resonance of both your communication and sales conversion. It also improves the way your team understands the real value of what you do. It reenergises and brings clarity to the way you communicate.



Different just to be different

Creating space to grow
amongst your competition.

4

I don't tend to use the term unique but prefer to talk about uniqueness. Ideas and concepts in business are rarely ever unique; they usually have their origins someplace else. Don't be disheartened by this, instead let's look at differentiation, which, when deployed with purpose, can be a significant competitive advantage.

Differentiation is *'the process of distinguishing a product or service from others, to make it more attractive to a particular target market. This involves differentiating it from your competitor's product or service.'*

It is a healthy and necessary benchmarking exercise to be consistently aware of your competition; how they are communicating, their product and service offerings and their tactics so that you can create a proposition that is different and therefore stands out.

But do not obsess, it is only a means to an end – just half of the opportunity.

To endeavour to make your products and service offering different for the sake of it may only serve to limit your business. In other words, there's no point in being different purely for differentiation's sake.

Rather let's look at it as the first part of an extremely effective exercise. Start by looking at your competition, but instead of reporting this back with ways your business can differ, build upon it.

With a good understanding of the competition and the nuances between them, we have what I call an understanding

of the language of the sector. The truth is this language is often robust and effective; it is well established and works reasonably well. It is what the audiences in your market recognise and understand. To reinvent it completely is a risky strategy and often requires significant marketing investment.

At this point, shift your thinking away from creative ways to be different and focus on identifying opportunities to build upon the language of the sector. Elevate your communications by introducing a more meaningful and purposeful value.

It's not just about finding gaps in-between the competition, rather it's about building upon what is 'said' by everyone.

Here you will create true differentiation and competitive advantage. You will be different, but with purpose.



Obvious is not so obvious

Aligning your business to
the fundamental requirements
of your audience.

5

Of course, you are very familiar with what you do and how you do it. But because of this familiarity you can often overlook some key aspects of what your audience finds valuable. Moreover, it is highly likely that your competitors will miss the same things. This presents another opportunity to create a competitive advantage.

Naturally you have a lot of things to communicate about your business. From product or service updates to offers and news, it's quite a feat to manage all these aspects even in a small company.

It's not just a matter of identifying, composing and deploying these communications either. First you have to work really hard to compose a compelling 'manifesto' about your business. After all it's the core essence of all communications; the why, what and how you do what you do.

Here lies the problem. You overthink your proposition, trying too hard to be unique and end up creating unnecessary complexities.

So, let's pause for a moment, retune our efforts and turn this into an opportunity.

It is quite complex to compose the core descriptor of your business. We have to consider not just what you do but how the competition describes itself too. Only then can we begin to engineer a compelling, differentiated proposition.

The aspects that will resonate most powerfully are those that are closest to us.

They are so close we either overlook them or dispel them as obvious and trite.

Wait a minute – those bits are the gems!

Step back, remove yourself from being immersed in the daily demands of your business. Step outside, look back to your office and put yourself in the mindset of your audience. Ask yourself:

“What do we want to be to our customers and what do they want us to be?”

Don't invent or aspire to traits you admire in others, but rather identify and harness those factors that represent your business with the most purity, honesty and authenticity.

Being rigorous in reflecting upon and harnessing the obvious in this way will align your offer to the fundamental requirements of your audience without complication and give your proposition clarity and resonance. It starts to address the real need for your product or service and doesn't get distracted by the perceived need or complexity.



Does your audience recognise itself in you?

Presenting your business in a
way that builds enduring value.

6

**How can you expect
your business to grow
if your audience can't
see its needs reflected
in what you say about
your business?**

In the previous chapter I talked about how to improve your proposition by not overlooking the obvious, as these factors will align your offer to the fundamental requirements of your audience.

Great, so if the last chapter is about the identification of these factors, this chapter is about their presentation. Successful presentation will enable your business to capture the imagination of your audience and demonstrate genuine relevance for your products or services.

When a business solely focuses upon being 'unique' to their audience, they forget the catalyst that gives uniqueness true relevance. This is the ability for your audience to recognise their needs in what you communicate or sell.

There are a number of ways you can acknowledge this to enable your audience to recognise their needs in your business and also establish what works for you. I recommend categorising them under two headings, whether they come deployed in tandem or in isolation.

Explicit communication

Here you are likely to have identified a specific need in your audience for your products or services. This could be a market force such as a change in legislation or a comprehensive change in behaviour, like when 'staycations' became a popular holiday choice. It would be remiss not to address these needs with directness and immediacy. It doesn't mean you can't be creative or inventive in your communication, it just means you must not miss the strategic opportunity.

Implicit communication

Implied messages are just as effective as explicit ones, but they are harnessed, communicated and engaged with in different ways. They may be present in an experience rather than just read or watched. For example, an 'empathetic yet purposeful' tone of voice could weave through all your communication. It can manifest in the activities you adopt and the charitable work you are involved with. Just because this is less direct and more subtle, don't underestimate its value over time. Remember most communication is nonverbal.

So, to get the most out of your communications and activities, reflect and question; would our audience see their real needs reflected in what we do and say?

This is where their relationship with your business can be so much more than purely transactional. It will ensure that you're not just meeting their immediate needs but demonstrating your ultimate value.



People don't buy what you sell, they buy what you enable

Transforming your sales
through communication.

7

Is there a switch you can flick to transform the performance of your business? If there was ever a simpler but more effective mind shift, it is this: your customers don't buy your product or service, they buy the value that you add to their lives.

I have observed this opportunity to fundamentally improve the way you engage your audience in nearly every business I have ever worked with. Its thinking has informed almost every transformative strategy we have deployed.

Most businesses, without knowing, only sell half of their value. The other half is forgotten at best, mainly overlooked, but certainly where massive, untapped potential resides. You don't have to create this potential, it exists, you merely have to unlock it and communicate it.

It is quite simply your actual value to your audience.

Most businesses sell what they do or what they make, sometimes they sell the benefits of those products or services and if they have a real handle on marketing, they may supplement this with why they do what they do.

Because you spend so long on your product or service development, naturally you want to communicate how good it is and its features and benefits prevail as your main subject matter.

You imagine that this alone is what your audience needs to know. But then you

wonder why it is increasingly difficult to get your foot in the door, get them to change supplier or simply choose you ahead of your competitors.

Think a bit harder and ask yourself:

'What is the extra dimension in what I communicate that will make the difference?'

Let's go through the checklist again; what we do CHECK, how we do it CHECK, why we do it CHECK. The extra dimension is what it achieves for your audience in their world.

Does your product enable them to spend more time on what they are good at? Does it enable them to live a more connected life? What could they do with the hour they save by using your service?

Capture and communicate this and you will own it as a competitive advantage. Your competitors will only be able to communicate an incomplete value proposition.

Never forget this extra dimension; that you don't actually sell what you sell, your audience buy what you enable in their worlds.



Pointy Logic: three key points about a triangle

Sharpening your focus to boost
your audience's engagement.

8

You are rightly proud of your business and like to talk about what it does, how good you are at doing it and why you do what you do. You are happy to provide more detail about your product or service range and if your audience is still with you, you will then entertain them with your impressively in depth knowledge about what you offer, if you can see even a flinch of disinterest, smash them with how characterful your talented team are and what hobbies they all like doing outside of work, don't forget the charity bike ride you did 18 months ago, oh and heaven forbid you miss out Rover the office dog's dietary requirements!

Wow, all in one breath!

Quite an opening paragraph hey?

The point is most businesses overload their audience at the first instance the conversation begins. They are delighted to have attracted their potential customer's attention and now they are going to keep it.

This approach is currently at epidemic levels, so here is how to relieve your audience and effectively engage them through a more focused sales funnel.

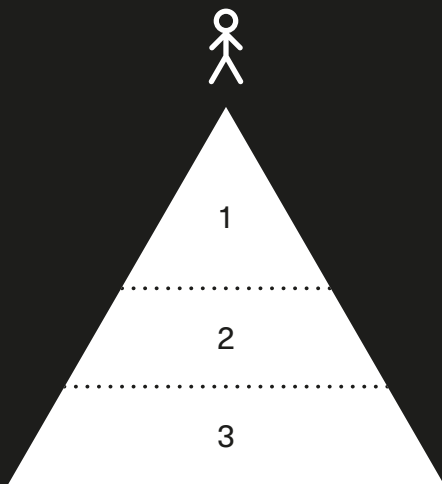
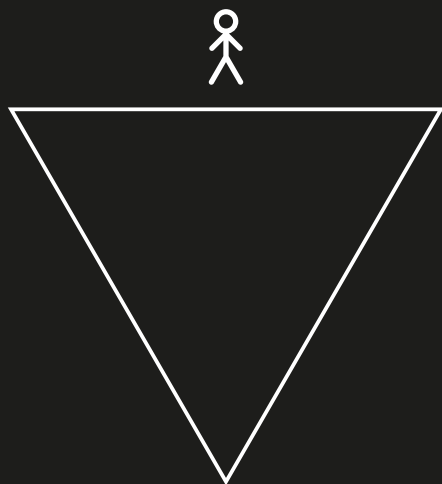
In Chapter 3 we discussed flipping the focus, well now let's try flipping the triangle. Most businesses present the broad side of the triangle to their audience, naturally verbose and enthusiastic about what they do, but in effect it's overwhelming to their audience. Your audience cannot begin to find what they want from your business, there is too much information. In the time they have, they cannot possibly recognise their needs in your offer.

Let us flip the triangle, where now the sharp point faces your audience. Present them with a laser-focused compelling reason to spend a second more with you.

1. Grab their attention as they are browsing in their busy lives. Your primary mechanism may be a great word or two, an arresting image of some sort or often it's a harmonisation of the two that prepares them to listen.
2. Acknowledge their needs, let them see themselves in what you offer.
3. Enable them to navigate around the detail of your product or service to a transactional point of either purchase, a request for more information or a meeting.

It makes perfect sense, right? Sometimes it may occur in pockets of your communications, but it rarely occurs wholesale across all activities and touchpoints of a business. By adopting this simple yet 'pointy' logic you will improve the effectiveness of your communication, compound this improvement across multiple areas of your business and you will transform its performance.





The invisible power of design

Rethinking how you improve
every aspect of your business.

9

All the chapters so far have been about considerations and reflections on how to engage your audience. Now we need to bring this thinking to life by turning it into something your audience can actually engage with.

How do you make your thinking real and its results tangible? Well, you give it structure, form, a body, a voice, a personality, you enable it to speak, you instil it with experience. You design it.

I could write a whole book on this subject, but let's focus primarily upon the ability to make good thinking manifest through design and how it can enable many aspects of your business – not just its image.

In the dictionary definition of design, the problem-solving aspects come before the aesthetic. Yet a common mistake made by marketing teams is limiting design to the visual aspects of business; just the corporate image and its presentation. This overlooks a vast amount of latent potential to optimise the performance of many aspects of your business beyond marketing.

From sales to operations, when you rethink the concept of design in terms of 'problem-solving' you unlock the ability to realise a far greater level of effectiveness. As I said in the first chapter, nothing should ever start with a plan, it starts with a vision and to capture that vision you need to visualise it. This too is actually a form of design.

The broader power and effectiveness of design is in applying it to define the function, hierarchy and architecture of your business.

Consider it as how you build and put things together, whether it's constructing a new service or product or improving any aspect of your business. For example, from enabling customers to understand the breadth of your offer in a concise and relevant way, to expediting the way your audience navigates through to a transaction. Visualising and designing the potential will help you both shape and realise a more effective solution.

Approach every business review with the design mindset:

'How can this work better and unlock our latent potential?'

Don't write it down, draw it, scribble some shapes, break it down to its constituent and component parts. This will help you prioritise the actual value and prune away the superfluous waste (these are usually the things that are compounding inefficiency).

If you can visualise it, you can realise it!



Enthusiasm is a renewable source of energy

Reenergising not just your working life.

10

If we consider the chapters so far as the component parts of the engine to elevate your business through improved audience engagement, this chapter covers the fuel. Without it the other chapters would remain as simple observations and what use is an engine without the means to achieve its potential?

From all of the greatest business triumphs I have been privileged to play a part in, I've always identified unwavering enthusiasm as the most instrumental factor to their success. It is so overlooked but as an energy source it can never be depleted. We all have it but we can sometimes believe it belongs solely to the most gregarious people or fear deploying it in case we look frivolous or lack seriousness.

Having enthusiasm is not about being the biggest personality or having the loudest voice in a business, it is more about the consistent deployment of integrity and conviction. It is the belief in a vision that there is a better way.

I have seen enthusiasm activate great thinking and transform businesses. Here's why I think it's so effective:

It gets your team engaged in your vision. Without this there is no chance of realising any potential.

We are creatures of comfort and change can otherwise be perceived as uncomfortable and difficult. So it gives people the confidence to embrace change.

It aligns suppliers in support of bringing your plans to reality. When you aren't with partners every day, you want your time with them to resonate. When they go away to do what you have invested heavily in them to do, your enthusiasm ensures that they too are inspired by your vision.

It provides you, the catalyst, with the conviction to identify and overcome blockers to your vision and sometimes the astuteness to pivot when realising there is something greater than you initially observed. With every journey there will be rocky patches that inevitably knock your confidence, yet enthusiasm instils a natural resilience.

Enthusiasm fuels the momentum that is required with any change:

- It provides the spark of energy in the beginning and the desire to realise the potential of your business
- It ignites the inspiration required when creating your vision
- It overcomes inertia when starting your plan of action
- It establishes momentum when you are seeing the first shoots of success

- It sustains the momentum that enables you to evidence the successes
- It gives you the ability to do it again and again throughout your career
- It spreads to epidemic levels in your business, motivating team members and providing pride in being a key component to its success and transformation

Enthusiasm's source is you. It emanates from you, but it is bigger than just an individual leader. It makes the salient and critical points of your vision and/or strategy resonate with memorable clarity, so when team members are off working on their part, they maximise their individual efforts as a part of the collective goal.

It's good, this enthusiasm thing. But that's not all. I'd like to close for now with perhaps the most essential consequence: it provides you with satisfaction.

Not just periodically at key life stages, but every day. What an incredible cycle; you give it out and it gives back to you. It enables you to get the most out of your business and therefore reenergises your life beyond work too.



Appendix

About the author

After graduating from the renowned Glasgow School of Art, Chris was invited to work at Saatchi & Saatchi, London.

In 2008 Chris founded Fogg, an award winning brand consultancy that achieved an international reputation for combining the energy of creativity with the rigour of consultancy.

Over twelve years, Fogg developed a proven approach that accelerated business performance and created significant value for its client partners. In 2020, Fogg evolved into Opportunus, an internationally recognised growth consultancy and award winning activation studio with a focus on identifying and activating growth opportunities for entrepreneurial businesses all over the world.

Alongside business consultancy, Chris' expertise and entrepreneurial spirit inspired him to create the retail technology platform, Everywalk.

His diverse work has won multiple accolades, one particular project being recognised as a 'world first.' Chris has also been a key contributor to industry associations and broadcast media including D&AD and the BBC.

This book marks the first in his Not Not Books series where Chris marries his wealth of expertise and experience to inspire others to realise their business and professional potential.

Spread The B Word

If you know someone who would benefit from a free copy of The B Word, please visit **opportunus.com/about/books**

Published ©2020 by Chris Fogg

This edition published in 2020

Text and illustration copyright ©Chris Fogg 2020

The right of Chris Fogg to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form (electrical, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without prior written permission of the copyright holder(s).

To find out more about the books or author, please visit **opportunus.com/our-story/books**

Published in the United Kingdom.

“A brilliantly creative and insightful book with lots of practical ideas and wisdom for the busy CEO...Enjoy!”

Roger Draper

Boston Consulting Group

“I have been through several branding and rebranding exercises in my career and wondered if I would learn anything new from this book. In reality, it was a great reminder of things that I once knew, but had stopped thinking about. A great refresh that has led to several quick actions.”

Ben Legg

McKinsey, Coca-Cola, Google

“An insightful primer full of actionable information on how to delight your customers and stand out in today’s marketplace.”

Dr. Karl Tauscher

Alliance Business School, University of Manchester

“Chris’ contemporary and conversational approach to complicated concepts is highly valuable to anyone looking to shake-up the way they approach their business.”

Kelly Reemtsen

Painter, Los Angeles

To involve yourself in the contents of this book, you first have to remove the ‘subject.’ This act of putting aside the term ‘branding’ aims to strip away the intellectualisation of the subject matter, instead replacing it with a direct focus on the power of its application.

In ten fast-paced, insightful and energetic chapters, *The B Word* provides a refreshing perspective on improving business performance. From his global perspective, Chris Fogg identifies approaches that have had a transformational influence upon professionals and entrepreneurial businesses worldwide.

Business & Academia

opportunus.com

Designed by Opportunus

