



# THE TRIBES CASEBOOK



**Tribes:**

**The Case Studies**

Written and compiled by the tribe at [triiibes.com](http://triiibes.com)

This compilation is yours to share, but not to profit from.

Feel free to post or email.

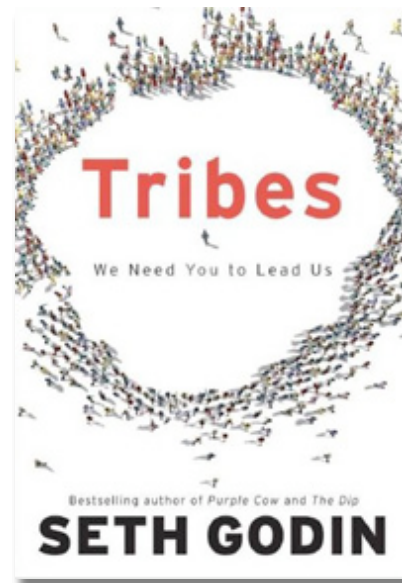
The Tribes Casebook was written (or cheered on) by more than 3,000 people. Each case had a lead author, and the community at [www.triiibes.com](http://www.triiibes.com) contributed advice, examples and encouragement. The site is by invitation only and currently closed, but the content is yours to play with.

Click on an author's name to find out more. Feel free to email this or post this or print it. But please don't sell it or change it.

**ABOUT THE COVER:** These hard-working firefighters are taking a well-deserved break from a training session. The house behind them was abandoned and is part of an exercise. The tribe of firemen (volunteer and professional) is essential to the well-being of our communities, and if it weren't for tribal behavior, there's just no way we'd have enough firemen. See details here: <http://flickr.com/photos/oldonliner/1485881035/>

# The Tribes Casebook

A companion to  
**TRIBES**



*Click for more info*

## Foreword

[Seth Godin](#)

There's a lot here. Big ideas, small ideas. Useful case studies, irrelevant asides. Links to fascinating information and black holes and time wasters. Of course, different people will have different judgments about what's what, so we left it all here. You decide.

This book was written by a group, and edited by them as well. It contains the hard work of dozens of people, assisted by hundreds of volunteers and watched by thousands. Feel free to dig in and visit the links and explore.

If you want to know more about what this is all about, consider:

An overview of [Tribes](#), the book and the idea.

[58 books](#) you might want to check out.

The triiibe's [list of tactics](#).

Thanks for reading. Have fun.

Seth

## Tribes You Don't Want to Belong to

[Jon Morrow](#)

Sometimes, you don't get to choose the tribes that you belong to. They choose you, and there's nothing you can do about it.

I'm a member of one of those tribes. It's called the Tribe of the Disabled.

Some of us were born into the tribe. Others were brought into it by an accident or mistake. But regardless of how we arrived, no one wants to be a member.

Some people take it hard. They feel like they've been kidnapped from another tribe, the Tribe of Normal People. They feel like everything they were and everything they knew was taken away.

Eventually though, most of us realize that the Tribe of Normal People doesn't actually exist. There's no bond between the non-disabled. There are no leaders among them. There are no rules. It doesn't exist.

But the Tribe of the Disabled does exist. It's a common link between all of us, and we know it, even without saying anything.

We have rules, like, "Don't stare" or "Be encouraging." It's strange, but we also tend to stay away from each other, as if being around one another could remind us that we are a member of the tribe. We prefer to forget.

Still, we have common leaders, people that inspire us. Christopher Reeve was one of those leaders. He inspired us with his

audacity, his activism, and his compassion. We were so sad when he left us, but that's the way this tribe is. Our leaders don't last long.

It's an unusual tribe, I know. For the longest time, I didn't want to be a part of it. I believed that accepting my membership would weaken me, like I would be accepting my own death. So many of us die, after all. It's the most common way out of the tribe.

But you know what? I was wrong.

This tribe isn't about death. It's about courage.

It takes courage to look at yourself and accept your imperfections. It takes courage to love yourself anyway. It takes courage to go beyond merely trying to survive your life and start trying to actually enjoy it.

How could you complain about being in a tribe like that? It's wonderful.

Would I still like to be cured of my disease? Would I trade a healthy body for my membership in the Tribe? Sure I would.

But do I regret being a part of it? No way!

When you learn to accept yourself, you also learn to accept the tribes you belong to. They don't have to be rich or clever or even desirable. The fact is, it's your tribe.

And sometimes, that's all that matters.

## Tribes: As Essential as Breathing

Posted by [Ellen Di Resta](#)

Tribes are the social equivalent to breathing. Their existence is like an involuntary process that creates social order. Where we live, what we do for work, and our hobbies are defined by association with Tribes that represent certain activities and attitudes. Our value is determined by how we compare to others in the tribe, or by how large a tribe we can create.

When asked to name the essential elements for survival, people usually mention things that they actively seek out like food, water, and shelter. But the involuntary processes, like breathing are actually more important, as anyone who has almost drowned could tell you. That's probably why they evolved to be involuntary processes.

What's interesting is that even though breathing is an involuntary process, it can be consciously controlled. Focusing on your breath is a fundamental element in many yoga and meditation practices that ultimately enhance physical and mental wellbeing.

Many people are trying to define the elements of a tribe. I think this is a lot like trying to define breathing. This is a difficult task because the value of the elements that make up a tribe will change based on the real and perceived situations the members encounter.

My observation is that successful people have learned to define their own place in the social order. Like controlling their breath, they have learned to transcend this involuntary process and utilize the tribe to create their desired experience within it.

But how do they do that? What is the first step? After posing that question to the larger group, it seems that there is usually a trigger event. A success or tragedy that causes people to stop and focus on what is truly important to them. But this can't be the only answer, as some people emerge from a traumatic event better off than before it, and others do not. And how does this affect our interaction with our tribes? The closest I've seen to an answer lies in a case study I read about connecting to your own personal tribe; the one that lives inside of you.

To paraphrase and add my own interpretation, the idea is that in your own heart and head you are the leader, and you must look to yourself to lead. Once you can do that, interactions with other tribes will take care of themselves. This is just like voluntarily taking control of your breathing. Ideally we won't need a traumatic event to trigger this action, and we can use this energy to achieve goals far greater than if we left the leadership to someone else.

## **Community tools do not create communities.**

[Tamara Adlin](#)

I talk to a lot of folks who want to improve their websites. I've decided that if I hear one more person say "we need to create a online community!" I may barf. Of course, barfing on clients isn't always a good idea. So instead, I've been looking for good examples, or at least clever quips, to support my argument. And my argument is:

**Online community features can support a community, they can't create a community out of thin air.**

So, here are some examples:

1. There are some truly pathetic 'online community' features at several bank sites. Because people LOVE to hang out and chat with other people at their banks, right? But the banks simply had to add the newest fancy shiny web stuff to their sites.
2. There is an amazing community called BunSpace.com. It's for people who own bunny rabbits as pets. There are over 6,500 bunnies and their people on there...even pages for bunnies who have already died. I recently donated money to a bunny owner who I've never met and never will who owns a rescued bunny that needs surgery the owner can't afford. BunSpace is bunny porn for bunny owners (and by the way, bunnies are incredibly funny, trainable, great pets, just fyi.)
3. Triiibes may seem like an exception, but I don't think it is. I think all of us were hungry for something, but maybe we weren't sure what it was. The point is, Seth didn't create the hunger. He created the space.

Saying 'we need community features!' is like looking at a building and saying 'it needs more concrete!' Community features, AJAX, streaming media (remember the fuss over streaming media?) are all just fancy new pieces of the infrastructure. They are



not magical new ways to create something out of nothing.

## The Tribal Instincts of Hookers and Flankers

Posted by: [Bill Gemmell](#)

This tribe can hurt but bears no grudge. They beat the living daylight out of their opponents then share and support over free flowing beer at the bar. This tribe is the followers of the Code of Fifteen – Rugby Union.

They are, to use the theme of the International Rugby Board, a world in union. Played across the globe, with no distinction on creed, race or religion, the game has become part of life for its tribe: a tribe made up of men and women, old and young.

The tribes have three key characteristics: Solidarity – they share a common interest, a common language, a common ethos; they have a Fraternity – witness the post match social aspects; and they have Energy – there are no “drains” in this tribe only “radiators”, stimulating the senses and spirit of those among them.

Who leads these tribes? The lynchpin is often the smallest man on the field – the scrum half – marshalling his forward pack to drive against the opposition and releasing the ball at the proper time to the flamboyant, responsive and dynamic backs. He may be small in stature, but the human terrier has an ambition and arrogance beyond his stature.

Every tribe needs its scrum half: to encourage greater effort, to coordinate different parts of the organisation, to pass when appropriate and to take control when necessary.

Rugby has its origins in the past when William Webb Ellis “picked up the ball and ran”. There is value to us to do the same in leading our tribes and follow the Tribal Code of Fifteen.

## When Technology Fails: A Language gets Born in an Online Tribe

[Saleh AlShebil](#)

When the internet came along and began exponentially spreading in the Arab world, chatting also grew with it, like in the rest of the world. Whilst many Arabs began using chat and instant messaging, they faced a technological dilemma. Many of the instant messengers available, like the well known MSN Messenger and Yahoo! Messenger, lacked the capability of writing in the Arabic language at the time. While the online tribe still used the famous [internet chat acronyms](#) and used English, they still wanted to write Arabic somehow, but how? They created a simple language of their own.

The Arabic language alphabet is comprised of 28 letters. Some of these letters do not have an equivalent “sound” in English. So what did our online tribe do? They began looking for numbers and other keystrokes that can somehow resemble what the real Arabic letter “looks” like. Let me explain...

For instance, the Arabic letter “ع” is pronounced as A’aa when used in a word and it got replaced with the number “3” since “3” looks like an inverted “ع”. So the word Arabic which is written “Araby” (in Arabic sounding English) and begins with “ع” was then written as “3raby.” Another example is the letter “ح”, pronounced as ha’aa, which got replaced with the number “7” (closest it could get to). So a word like “marhaba” (hi or welcome in Arabic) would be spelled out as “mar7aba.” This may not sound like a big deal, but watch what happened.

This new form of tribal net lingo began to spread like wildfire. It would probably be a safe assumption to say that any Arab who is online today (especially the youth) is pretty familiar with it. Using it was not limited to chat and instant messaging but has also swelled to include any form of writing in online communities and even in mobile text messaging (sms). The Arabic net lingo virus caught on to Arabic websites that even wanted their domain names to sound or “look” Arabic. It became a

“standard” language for the online Arab chatting tribe and the growing phenomenon was even [studied](#). Furthermore, even the “offline” world began using it as companies began offering products and services with names using this net lingo (e.g. [Mobily 3lahwa](#), [7esabi](#)) to appeal to the net generation tribe. This is not to mention advertising of course. Oh..and one more thing..just in case you were from an outside tribe and wanted to “translate” this language you can now go to the search engine [Yamli](#) to help you out.

When a tribe really wants to communicate & connect...there’s nothing that can stand in its way...

## **I am now part of the Newton Tribe**

Marcus Galica

Yesterday I received in the mail my first pair of [Newtons](#). Since I’ve been struggling with chronic knee problems, I willingly parted with \$175 of my hard-earned cash in order to buy this pair of running shoes. They’re rumored to reinforce a mid-foot strike (which is said to reduce impact on the knees.)

I took them for my first run this afternoon, on a pathway known as The Strand that goes from Manhattan Beach to Redondo. After a total distance of about 12.5 miles, I still felt light on my feet and no soreness in my knees, so they seem to work as advertised. Wonderful.

However, it was one fleeting interaction with another runner on The Strand that alerted me to Newton’s Culting of Brands approach to marketing these new shoes:

- 1) You won’t find them at your local Sports Authority; only a handful of renowned running specialty stores across the country carry them.



- 2) Most of the early adopters are intense triathletes. We're talking the Ironman crowd.
- 3) They only come in obscenely loud colors like orange, yellow, pink, and green.
- 4) They're \$175. If you're buying a pair of these, you're serious about running. (Or a poseur, maybe.)

What was the interaction? Well, if any of you have run on The Strand before, you'll know that because of the sheer density of runners and joggers, you typically won't receive the customary "runner's wave" that you'd get if you were someplace more remote. This particular Saturday afternoon, after about 10 miles, I had probably passed close to 500 other runners and joggers, and I did not receive a single "wave".

But as I approached an intensely cut-up, triathlete-looking man, I noticed he was wearing bright green Newtons. At the same moment he noticed my brilliant orange pair, and we immediately exchanged a hearty wave. On top of the "wave", our eyes locked momentarily as we passed each other, and we shared a "nod". Within this "nod" was a profound understanding: we were part of the same tribe, and this was my initiation. Even though thousands of people were running on The Strand today, our Newtons were the secret handshake no one else knew about.

## **KOTOR - When Star Wars Tribes and Gaming Tribes Overlap**

[Ed Welch](#)

What happens when you design a product in such a way that it appeals to individual members of two or more distinct tribes?

In 2002, [BioWare](#) launched an awesome role playing game for the Xbox – [Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic](#) (aka KOTOR). The game was such a big hit – it won numerous "Game of the Year Awards" in 2003 and sales for KOTOR have

been huge.

What was the appeal, why was this game such a big hit? Certainly, it was a great game. I've played it many times and it remains one of my all-time favorites. However, many "great games" have been designed, produced and marketed without coming close to the success of KOTOR. Why?

Notice the Venn diagram above. Think of each set (A & B) as a tribe. Tribe A represents the Star Wars tribe. Tribe B represents the Gaming tribe. The union (orange area) represents all the people who are members of both the Star Wars Tribe and the Gaming Tribe.

Certainly, the people who are already members of both of these tribes (represented by the orange area) will purchase KOTOR without a second thought. However, the real genius of this type of marketing is found in those areas of the Venn diagram that are outside the orange area. Think of the orange area as the center of gravity – drawing additional tribe members toward it - much like a black hole. The net result is simple. Many from the Gaming Tribe join the Star Wars Tribe and vice-versa – resulting in a tremendous boost to sales of KOTOR games. This is what happened to me. Before KOTOR, I was a member of the Star Wars tribe but not the Gaming tribe. Thanks to KOTOR – I'm now a member of both tribes.

Next time you're looking to design a new product – why not follow the lead of Bioware? Design the product for people who are already members of two or more distinct tribes – but with the potential of pulling more members from each tribe together. You might hit a home run.

## **Traditional Taekwondo**

Bodo Albrecht

[Chun's Black Belt Academy](#) is a bit like your favorite neighborhood pub: not fancy or glamorous at all, a little run down

actually, a little less air conditioned than you would prefer. Still, when you enter you feel strangely comfortable. Other than in your pub an hour of gruesome workout lies ahead of you. Regardless, people of literally all ages enjoy going there instead of watching TV at home. Why?

It all starts on the outside. It is where you leave your life behind. Your job, your income, your car... nothing matters anymore. Watches (cheap or expensive), jewelry, it all stays outside. Inside, everyone wears a similar uniform.

The only sign of distinction is your belt. It defines your status within the group as a sign not only of personal achievement but also of obligation as a universal advisor to all lower belts. Nothing is worse and more embarrassing for a higher belt student than not to be able to answer a curriculum-related question. There is little bonus for seniority alone, you have to be ready to demonstrate you deserve your belt at all times.

The color of your skin obviously stays with you but if there is one place around here where it doesn't matter it is this one. After a few sets of crunches or pushups sweat is the big equalizer.

Strict etiquette is mandatory and so is discipline paired with conscience for the consequences of your actions. Insistence on these paired with the encouragement by everybody else to discover and raise your personal limits make the experience so special – there are universal goals (the curriculum) but there is also the goal of helping you to have more confidence in your physical and mental abilities.

This environment filters out people quickly who are not truly subscribing to the spirit of “traditional” Taekwondo. It also eliminates areas of friction between tribe members. The focus is strictly on acquiring and perfecting skills and knowledge, and passing that knowledge on to fellow students.

There is a lesson to be learned from Chun's Black Belt Academy: a goal-oriented tribe is better off in an environment controlled and managed by a masterful leader, one who doesn't require his tribe to do anything that he is not prepared to do himself. Removing all elements of non goal-oriented individuality and challenging people's skills and talents is the most



efficient way to accomplish any goal. A great leader will allow for social bonds outside the Do-Jan on top of that.

## **Surfers—Where There's A Wave, There's A Will**

[Tom Bentley](#)

From many angles, surfers seem to carry the characteristics of a tribe. They have a uniform (in the water, a wetsuit, out of it, perhaps board shorts, jams or baggies, Ugg boots, Vans or flip-flops, T-shirts and Hawaiian shirts).

They have their own language. Consider:

Dude (claimed by other groups as well)

Stoked

Green Room

barrels

goofy-foot

amped

pumping

Betty

brahs

aggro

bogus

worked

And a hundred other terms.

They gather in numbers when there is a swell. There's a general sense that when the surf is clean, work is secondary. (Think the

“tell the teacher we’re surfing” line from the Beach Boys song.) Surfing road trips are legend—movies from *Endless Summer* to *Thicker than Water* reveal that surfers will go to great lengths (and many countries) to find a wave. I lived on a tiny Micronesian island for a year, a place where the American dentist told me he lived and worked there just to surf; he essentially had his own private surf break, since few tourists came to the island.

But one of the central constituents of a tribe seemed to be missing: a leader. Sometimes there’s a leader by default on any given day—the best surfer. But that default is sometimes determined by a “my beach, my wave” hostility to fellow surfers that seems antithetical to real leadership. Surfers gather in groups, it’s true, but there’s also a lone wolf element in surfing, the surfer that rises at 5:00 am, gobbles the PopTart, and is out on the board, waiting for the swell in the empty dawn.

In thinking of the notion of tribes without leaders, the behavior of my old surfer friends came to mind. I grew up in a Southern California beach town, and my closest adolescent friends were surfers. Never having been a strong swimmer, and pretty blind without my glasses, I was often the solitary dork who hung out on shore while my buddies surfed. Many years later, I moved to Santa Cruz, California, into a house a block from the beach with two of those buddies and a third housemate, all still avid surfers.

They shared a ritual. Early mornings, before leaving for work, they would all walk to the beach, coffee cups in hand, to check the waves. I’d occasionally go down too, and sometimes nobody spoke. Watching the waves was a meditation, a pulling on the mental strings of possibility. Other times, they would excitedly discuss the lefts or rights of the break, the wind, the timing between sets, a potential swell, a totally blown-out day.

In remembering that, I realized: Their leader is the ocean. The sea is a living thing, powerful, moody, globally influential. More surfers than you might think go out even when the waves are trivial, to paddle, or just to sit and contemplate. They connect with their leader. For some surfers, it’s a good day just to be in the water, in contact.

There are levels: On a good day, the surf tribe makes a simple connection with their leader. On a great day, the leader moves them to ecstasy, propelling them in great gouts of pulsing power, demanding their best, punishing them when they fall short.

(They'll always come back for more.)

Surfers take their cues from the ocean, sometimes just worshipfully staring, sometimes searching its face for meaning. And like many great leaders, the ocean is mutable, evolving, mysterious. And of course, deep.

Cowabunga, dude!

## **Can a fake passion build a tribe?**

[Michal Sobiegraj](#)

Over years Apple earned themselves a very vibrant tribe of customers having strong feelings for the brand. All of them are of course genuinely interested in Apple's products and the most zealous and passionate ones naturally want to be on the cutting edge of what they regard as defining their way of live. Those are the ones willing to give a lot to be the first to lay their hands on any new product from Apple (apparently also including couple of days of standing in a line at their nearest Apple retailer).

Having such a tribe of real followers who show candid affection for Apple's products is obviously a recommendation by itself. These people show that they truly believe in every single product Apple launches. To the same effect they might as well run the streets cheerfully shouting "I love Apple!" for three days straight instead of standing in that line (besides them finally being the first ones to touch the new shiny whatever-they-are-waiting-for-in-that-line, and even that – with such commitment – who knows).

And it doesn't end here. The truly zealous tribesmen get back home and start posting videos of their new baby on YouTube and spreading their joy wherever they can boosting the sales, demand and scarcity even more and making themselves feel even more special. Others, already convinced fellow tribesmen get more envious, the yet undecided more curious and the lines even longer. Passion appears to be contagious.



It's truly unusual to see people standing in a line voluntarily for literally days over a privilege to be one of the first. Not that there is not enough to go round, no. It's just about not being able to wait a single day longer. One may even say it's remarkable. And it's even more so given the scale and outreach of the phenomenon. Get that: New Zealanders regard themselves lucky to be the first to welcome a new day at such times.

And here we are in Poland where some time before the announced launch of the iPhone 3G in the Orange network lines of young people started to form next to Orange stores. It didn't take long before a piece of news surfaced saying that all the people in the lines were actors hired by Orange in effort to heat up the air. Obviously it didn't work. Why? Simply because there was not enough demand and not enough real fanatics. Apparently Apple doesn't have a sufficiently dedicated tribe in Poland and trying to just fake it by staging the situation at the very last moment, so that the product appeared hip the day before its launch, turned out to be far too small an effort.

To add an insult to injury, people standing in one of the lines didn't even try to appear enthusiastic when asked by a reporter about why they are standing in the line. They looked so unsure of what to say that I don't think there was anyone naïve enough to believe their story. And the funny thing is that maybe, just maybe, if Orange hired the real fans, the genuine charismatic Apple zealots, maybe their enthusiasm and passion would bring more people to the lines. Instead the message they gave was this: "we are so unsure about the sales and the product itself that we need to pay people to pretend to be passionate about it". Quite an opposite effect.

## **Inside an Arab Tribe. Did You Know?**

[Nadiine Toukan](#)

A couple weeks ago we were engaged in a talk to a group setting up a broadcast project in Jordan. The goal of the induction was to share with the group what's going on in the world of screen media to get them to think screen content vs traditional TV programming. And to encourage them to build their products with true value that is forward looking rather than worry about how to compete with the biggest and the best head on.

Sitting around the table were ages that spanned three generations, representing a wide spectrum of Jordanians. A good mix. But we were losing them when we started to talk about citizen media, the emergence of a new type of media maker/consumer, and the technologies out there. We were not getting thru on the convergence and collaboration part and they continued to dismiss it as a marginal fad.

I had a playful thought in my head and I started to talk tribal. I said that the project has the opportunity to create and lead a new tribe of screen content consumers and makers in Jordan and among Arab audiences.

A 60something TV veteran from a prominent Jordanian family/tribe immediately jumped in saying, “oh please, stay away from the tribal thing, we’ve had enough of that”. I was surprised at who it was who said that, but I wasn’t shocked it came up.

Jordan’s social and political structure is quite tribal. Hiring in public and private sector orgs suffers from influences of tribal entitlement. Tribal law is practiced and often rules in what seems like injustice. The system is abused by tribal impositions at every level from the lowest going up. Communities impede their own progress because of tribal feuds. Younger generations stop themselves from making new choices because of tribal pressures. Of course I’m generalizing, there are good exceptions to tribal practices as well. But the negative connotation of tribal is at the forefront here these days. In some groups, it is seen as an impediment to moving forward.

It dawned on me that collectively as Jordanians we seem to have forgotten the good traits of tribes, and the amazing possibilities that can happen thru tribes. We have abused ‘tribal’ and muted the philosophy of the tribe for so long that we don’t believe in the good of it anymore.

And now here I am, embedded in this tribe. Excited. Empowered. Energized. Safe.

I shared a little tribe question among [this community](#) and like how it’s evolving.

I think there's a huge transformational opportunity to bring that back. So as we develop this screen project I'm thinking about how to bring the tribe back into modern day tribal Jordan within some of the work we're doing. I think we need a new kind of Jordanian tribe for our journey forward. We have to find the right stories to lead to that.

## **Migrating Tribes.**

[Bernadette Jiwa](#)

A staggering 83,000 British residents have migrated to Australia over the past ten years.

Australia has a world renowned reputation for delivering a lifestyle second to none. (Well, two hundred and fifty rain free days a year can't be all bad). Over the past five years there has been a 300% increase in the numbers of British arriving down under. Affectionately known to the locals as 'poms', they are welcomed with open arms into a labour force struggling for skilled workers.

A look at the demography of where they settle throws up some interesting facts.

'Poms' like to huddle.

In some suburbs the 'poms' make up 20% of the population, where a 12% average is the norm.

They enjoy the proximity to the river, ocean and beaches. 'Poms' love having a swimming pool in the back yard and throwing another shrimp on the barbie.

Having migrated for a 'better' life, they still have a need to connect with each other. Thousands of miles from home they seek each other out, a familiar tribe, a connection.

Whole industries are thriving and expanding to service the specific needs of their community. British sweet shops, importing "proper chocolate" from overseas, online forums, pubs, and even the latest glossy publication <http://www.whingeing-pom.com/>



As the demography of a place changes and the dynamics of its communities alter, some important questions can be considered.

What are the specific needs of these migrant communities in a strange, new land?

How can they be enabled to make great decisions?

Where can they find the inside track information which the locals have?

Who can facilitate their connection to each other and their new community?

As a new tribes evolve, so new opportunities emerge.

## **The Taste of Mud**

[Jule Kucera](#)

1972—the summer before my Junior year in high school. Girls varsity sports were going to be offered for the first time. Boys varsity sports were:

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Bowling
- Cross-Country
- Football
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Track
- Wrestling

We wondered what sports would be added for us (I kept my fingers crossed for volleyball). The list was announced:

- Basketball
- Bowling
- Softball

Bowling? They said they only wanted to start with a few sports. They said there were no sports for the fall because it was too soon to be ready. They said we should be patient, that more would be added, that we should support the boys teams.

We organized spontaneously, brief conversations with girls I had never talked to. “Come. Play.” Collectively and without an official declaration we decided to turn the annual Seniors vs. Juniors girls powder-puff football game into a varsity sport.

We wanted to win. We broke all the rules:

- We recruited two smart football-playing Senior boys to be our coaches (they knew football and they knew the competition)
- Everybody was tested at every position and was placed where they were most effective (the tall skinny girl became not an end but a defensive tackle—where she could slip around larger opponents)
- It didn’t matter who you were off the field; what mattered was who you were on the field (the two starting running backs were a cheerleader and a jock and all they had in common were legs that were built for power and speed)
- We practiced every day (previous teams had practiced once a week—maybe)
- We were relentless in our support for one another and in our drive to win (we played without pads and with yellow flags at out waists; we viewed our bruises as badges of honor)

On the day of the game it rained. We played in the mud and it ground in our teeth. Our quarterback (the only girl in a family with five older brothers) maintained her deadly accuracy, our running backs powered through the grime, and our defense kept throwing yellow flags to the ground. We didn’t ease up until the score hit 48 – 7.

I’d like to say we stayed a tight-knit tribe but we didn’t; we went back to our study halls and our boyfriends and our cliques. We were a temporary tribe—a tribe who learned that the taste of mud could also be the taste of victory.

## Growing a Tribal Software Company with Integrity

[Mike Bennett](#)

What had driven me up the wall with many companies I'd worked for was their lack of values / ethics / morals. So when setting up a software company serving the UK NHS, I aimed to consciously design the values of the company and, as far as possible, the way it would operate. So it would be a company that I really, really wanted to work for.

We were, in fact, very successful partly through the cunning plan of being in the right place at the right time. We grew to 30+ employees and nearly won a huge NHS computer project (NHS Direct) in partnership with Hewlett-Packard to provide the hardware. We beat the world's largest healthcare software company (from the USA) but um... lost to Europe's largest insurance company.

Some of our basic ways of working were (extracted from our Values Statement):

**We are a Network, not a Hierarchy:** People's job really was Their Job. I needed to know what was going on and we'd have some meetings – but the initiatives were mostly theirs. This was helped by everyone working from homes all over the UK linked by phone and email.

**To encourage unconventional thinking, flexible and continuously changing structures, self-organisation, empowerment and generally behaving like proper human beings:** This helped to provoke people into doing new things. One response to plans I found useful was “It's a bit boring”. Not telling them what to do – but pushing them to go farther.

**To speak the Truth - even if apparently to our disadvantage:** Radical!

**To take the largest possible view of any situation - including the customer, the patient, society, the environment, the Universe and ourselves:** If you design a business model and software that meets the needs of everyone in the best way, it puts

you way ahead.

**To understand everything from first principles:** It's often things that we take for granted that obstruct great ideas.

**To produce outstanding software that makes customers say “WOW!”:** (Thanks, [Tom Peters](#).)

People responded amazingly to all of this. For example, the 5 person self-organising support team were on a demanding 24 / 7 schedule with a guaranteed 30 minute response – and took pride that they were achieving under 5 minute response times. And we could change direction as a company very fast – far faster than our competitors (who were all huge)!

You do need to recruit the right people – they need to be happy working without close supervision and to relish freedom – not be afraid of it. For the right people it was a great environment, and they gave far more to the company than they would have to a normal company. They were committed! Totally.

I found that the role of the MD / tribal leader is coach more than CEO, people development not “The Decider”, values not orders. The Visionary and also the person who keeps it all together by ensuring we're mostly going in the same direction. You only actually need one person to set it up – provided that they are in charge and don't have to negotiate with others who are more concerned about the money or have other values (like wanting power for instance).

Part of the background that I brought to this was lots of time in various spiritual groups – and I wanted to use that experience in designing and running the company. What would the company have to look like to attract people trying to live at the highest level of spiritual integrity? Well, we didn't in fact recruit anyone like that – but it still set a standard of behaviour within the company.



## The Ride of Silence

[CoCreatr Bernd Nurnberger](#)

Every year, on the 3rd Wednesday in May, cyclists worldwide join in a silent slow-paced ride in honor of those who have been injured or killed while cycling on public roadways.

This has been happening since 2003. Led by Chris Phelan, it's a mass demonstration with a purpose - beyond state, national, or cultural boundaries - to raise awareness of cyclists' legal right to the road and motorists' legal obligation to share the road.

The tribe is tied together by common elements of tragic history. They share the will to improve conditions, and join in by demonstrating their mission at the same place, same time and with same means of transportation every year.

This is beyond bumper sticker marketing. Armbands are strongly encouraged. Black for everyone (solidarity in mourning lost cyclists). Red for those who have been injured by motorists.

It's a somber and moving example of a tribe going slow, setting an example, sharing its story and growing in numbers – going, virally, slowly and peacefully.

In the words of Chris Phelan, from his blog post [Let the Silence Roar](#):

'And there is the meat of it, the power of what we do when we take part in the R of S; getting as many people on bikes as possible, at the same time that have the same voice, communicating through peaceful assembly.

With over 200 locations in the US alone, it is becoming harder and harder for the motoring public to ignore us. And that's the point. When news reports show more than the customary 3-4 cyclists the local community is used to seeing on the road and report that there [are] over 300 locations WORLD WIDE going on the same day, it is the hope and faith the our society will sit up and take notice, not only of those riding, but also those either no longer able, or those no longer with us to ride because a motorist-on-cyclist accident.

Nationally, this is akin to our Memorial Day, but without the bar-b-que sales. It's important to us that all the locations ride at the same time to make the above points. Fractured with events at several times during the month, or worse, year, is not in any of our best interests. The event loses its focus, and intent.

Our event is held on the 3rd Wednesday of May. Every calendar has that date. (For 2009, it will be May 20. Mark your calendar now.)

I can appreciate people wanting to simplify their calendar. But,...it's not about convenience. We have this one hour the entire year to show the public our strength in numbers, what we look like when we actually get together, those older, slower, faster, or leaner, with mountain bikes, racing bikes, kid bikes, etc. We have had 3,000 here in Dallas at the Ride Of Silence. That gets news coverage.

And, just in case the powers that be are concerned this is about profits or money, this event is also the largest free volunteer run event without cash flow, no budget. And that's world wide.'

That's a tribe.

## **Rucks and Mauls**

### [Bill Gemmell](#)

They invaded on Monday. They call themselves the Grafton Big River Bullrots, Ye Old Dogs of Wanneroo, the Old Vulgarians. Some answer to the Frankfurter Bembelschwenker, to Te Puke Mutineers and the Washington Poltroons. Others the Traverse Bay Blues, the Moscow Lads.

These are the Golden Oldies, troops of followers of the oval ball, Rugby Union, descending on Edinburgh for the Golden Oldies World Rugby Festival, 2008. 3,000 players from 18 countries.

These are not young men – the name gives it away – minimum entry age is a mere forty years old but many key players are in their sixties.

“I’m not quite as fast these days”, says a 62 year old half-back from Vancouver. “But the young guys say if I’m at the line, they’ll pass to me to score!” So far he’s scored a few!

But what makes these men lay their bodies on the line several years after hanging up their boots competitively? What make their spouses travel from the other side of the world to a wet Scottish Summer? What sustains their enthusiasm and tribal form?

They represent, as the International Rugby Board states, a world in union.

They have three key characteristics.

Solidarity – they share a common interest, a common language, a common ethos, a belief in Fun and Friendship sustained by membership credentials of games long gone by.

They have a Fraternity – at the social events, Aussie dances with Kiwi, Anglo jigs with Scot, German drinks with French; American parties with Japanese. Shared tribal (rugby) songs are chanted together.

And they have Energy – there are no relational “drains” in this tribe only “radiators”: stimulating the senses and spirit of those among them, energising the surrounding environment. I know, I was there, I moved among them and was made welcome.

The town will be quiet when they leave. But their legacy will remain, in the minds of visitors, participants, organisers and comrades.

Long live the Golden Oldies!

# Pecha Kucha Night

[CoCreatr Bernd Nurnberger](#)

WHAT: Live computer-aided presentation, usually with projection screen in a defined timebox. 20 slides for 20 seconds each, 6:40 uninterrupted. About 10-14 presentations per night.

WHEN: Usually once a month, depending on the city, started in 2003.

WHERE: More than one hundred cities world wide, plus an unknown number of corporate settings.

MISSION: Offer more people the chance to show their creative work to an interested audience. Keep presentations concise and interest level up. Share while respecting courteous limits.

LEADER: Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham ([Klein Dytham architecture](#)), Tokyo

TRIBAL TIES: Face-to-face socializing through attending an edutainment event. Watchers find place and time from a [tagcloud](#). Moderate entrance fee (~ 10\$). Presenters register per internet. Common challenge in simple prescribed presentation format, straightforward time control and no commercial pitch allowed. Pecha Kucha Night® is a registered trademark.

INSIGHTS: PKN offers a forum to sharers and seekers of wisdom to find each other in a defined setting and timeframe. It could be called an art exhibition on fast forward, or an unconference. The rigid presentation and timeboxing requirements 'yield the floor' to each presenter and support the audience's attention span while offering relaxing breaks by the restauranty ambience and side activity for participants by being connected e.g. by twittering. More audience autonomy in a teaching setting.

The 6:40 time requirement suits on-line video very well. Metacafe offers [420 videos tagged "pecha kucha"](#), some are labeled affiliate with [YouTube](#) which lists about 429 so tagged.

REFERENCES:

<http://www.pecha-kucha.org>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pecha\\_Kucha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pecha_Kucha)

<http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/2007/09/pecha-kucha-...>

EXAMPLES:

[Pecha Kucha Training Bite](#) by spiraltraining (one of her 20 slides shows the purple cow!)

[Pecha Kucha: High Impact Conferencing](#) by Jack Powers

[Innovation](#) by InnovationFish (corporate setting)

[Pecha Kucha Night Vol.39 “bintabon”](#) in Japanese with English on the slides, appears on Garr Reynold’s Presentation Zen blog.

[How NOT To Use Powerpoint](#) By Comedian Don McMillan

Compiled from publicly available sources as indicated, by  
CoCreatr Bernd Nurnberger

No blog, no hyperlink, just fun.

Full disclosure: I am not affiliated with anyone in the tribe studied here and have not participated in any Pecha Kucha Night or event. Here is the first “PK lite” presentation I ever watched, on-line: [Lee Lefever on Travel Technology at Ignite Seattle](#)

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## **Boaters**

[Laura Zavelson](#)

Are there any boaters out there? Adventurous and independent, this tribe values and cherishes individual freedom on the water, yet doesn’t think twice about helping another member during critical moments.

For most boaters, critical moments happen trying to get in or out of the dock. Often there are unseen currents, unpredictable wind and, of course, a whole bunch of other boats.

It never ceases to amaze me that whenever I need to come in or cast off, there’s always someone there ready to throw me a line. It doesn’t matter whether it’s my home marina or not. And when I see a boat getting ready to move, I’m always willing to stop whatever I’m doing and stand by just in case.



It's not a big deal. I just mosey on over towards their slip and stand there. If they need me, I grab a line. If they don't, I wait until they're safely in, wave, and go back to my boat.

Most of the time, you don't even introduce yourselves. Somebody throws out a line, somebody catches it, everybody says thanks and you go about your day. It's just the way the tribe does things.

What would it mean to be in business if we started acting more like boaters? What if we were always ready to share local knowledge? What if we all kept on the lookout to throw a line when things got tricky for someone else? We could be watching and ready at the most critical moments. And then just help. The only expectation would be a word of thanks. And of course the knowledge that the next time you were navigating rough waters there would be someone waiting to help you.

## **In the Eye of the Hurricane**

[Jodi Kaplan](#)

Outside, the storm rages. Unlike most storms, there is no wind or rain. Instead, there is a hail of nails, suicide bombs, and rubber bullets as two tribes clash over control of the land. Each insists God promised it to them. Neither will yield. Bombs explode, bodies are blown up, and special teams search for each fragment, to give it a decent burial.

Inside the hospital, the halls are quiet. The patients are Orthodox Jews, Arabs, Christians, and Ethiopians, but the doctors treat them with no thought for religion, race, nationality, or tribe. They are not concerned about the fighting outside, only where the patient has been hurt and what care they need.

Dr Hasham Rushi, a doctor speaking at a forum in Vienna in 2005, said, "Entering Hadassah [Hospital in Jerusalem] I don't think that I am Palestinian, and this doctor an Israeli, and this doctor from South Africa or America...We have patients. We must give them the best treatment. This is the most important thing. When a patient comes to the trauma unit, I don't ask from where he is, what is his name, what is his religion. I ask which part of the body is injured...to be prepared to call other doctors from other specializations."

It is a small, everyday miracle in the midst of chaos. How can you bring your tribes together?

## **Awon Boys Club. On Mighty Igor, & Generational Tribalism**

[Bolaji Oyejide](#)

**“Awon (ah-wohn) Boys” in my native language (Yoruba), simply means “The Boys”.**

Awon (ah-wohn) Boys is a group of 10 friends, who grew up together in Nigeria.

We went to primary (elementary) school together.

We went to secondary (middle+high) school together.

We played barefoot soccer, and basketball on cracked courts with netless rims.

We ran track and chased girls with equal vim and vigor.

We learned to drive. Played pranks. Got grounded. Together.

We grew up together.

But conditions in the country led most of us to scatter to the four winds, by the time we got to University. Spain. England. The United States. We were everywhere.

That was 15 years ago.

The funny thing is - though I continued to make friends in college, at work, in professional circles, in my neighborhood...

I still haven't been able to get rid of Awon Boys!

On the contrary - we insult each other almost daily on an e-mail list. We never matured beyond the juvenile phase of hurling

biting commentary at each other to show affection. Sue us.

And as seasons started to change, as people started to get married, we started to see each other again! Every time one of us, or a mutual friend gets married, we all excitedly discuss who's coming, what to do, who else we might see. Dare I say it? Like excited little school girls.

Ironic.

Grown men, getting so worked up over seeing their buddies.

I was one of the first to get married. They all had the usual jokes at that.  
But they were there.

But I digress. Back to Awon Boys. Now we're all married. And starting to have kids.

So for each childbirth the group seeks to unite again. In true Yoruba fashion, each child has a naming ceremony. And all attendees get to participate by naming the child. I have 17 names myself. My son has about 40. Bearing names like "Mandela". And "Adeniyi" (Priceless Crown).

Well, one of "Awon Boys" decided to name my son...

My only son...

After a childhood wrestling icon from Russia.

**Mighty Igor.**

Rules are rules though. So my child is named, among other things, Mighty Igor.

*(Why do I hang out with these guys, again?)*

Through it all, despite the distance of geography and time, we remain close as blood brothers.

You know - our parents all knew each other. They were mostly first generation Western educated, and went to the same secondary schools and Universities. My Mom and her best friends from secondary school call themselves the “Queen’s School Girls”. (That was the name of their school.)

They come to these same weddings that we go to. And smilingly indulge “Awon Boys”.

Their boys are now grown men. With children.

3 generations of a tribe. Bound together by common experience, separated by space and time.

Awon Boys Club stands in the gap between my parents’ childhood, my childhood, and that of my one year old son.

Here’s to tribal traditions. And the ties that bind.

## **Multiple Leaders in a Tribe?**

[Ed Welch](#)

It was the first day of class - Timothy was quite nervous. He was dressed in a uniform given to him by the class instructor. Securing the uniform tightly around his waist was a brand new white belt. Timothy stood toward the back of the class. His

eyes wandered around the room – admiring those students wearing belts that were yellow, green, blue, red and black. He wondered if he made a mistake – perhaps he shouldn't have asked to be a part of this group? Most of the other students seemed to know so much already. He wondered how he would fit in to this class as the environment was quite intimidating. It was at that moment, a student standing in front of Timothy turned to him and said: "You'll do fine Timothy, we're all here to help. Just watch me for now and I'll help you any way I can." From that moment on, Timothy felt much better about his decision to be in this class.

Studying Tae Kwon Do at [Burt's Black Belt](#) in Stillwater, Oklahoma offers an opportunity to be a part of tribe where almost everyone is a student, a teacher and a leader. Although the school is built around a formal leadership structure – it also has an informal leadership structure - offering tremendous benefits to all of the tribal members.

Like Timothy, when a student is a beginner – he's given a white belt which designates his rank as a beginning learner. As he learns to master more skills – he'll rise in rank - which is represented by different colored belts. As he rises in rank, he's given more responsibility and placed in a greater position to benefit the tribe.

Just as Timothy discovered, those students of higher rank are not only in class to learn but to teach and lead others as well. Throughout the years - Timothy progressed through the ranks of the school – teaching, learning and leading. He was able to give to others just as they had given to him on that first day of school and beyond.

Throughout your life, how often have you been in a position similar to Timothy? Perhaps many tribes could benefit from an informal leadership structure such as this?

## **Galaxy Zoo - The Tribe That Looks Out For Us**

[Anne McCrossan](#)

There are hundreds of thousands of millions of stars in our galaxy and hundreds of millions of galaxies in our universe. Galaxy

Zoo is the tribe that looks out at them, for us, and for one another.

It's an effort that needs a tribe. The scale of the task would simply be impossible to achieve without one.

Like tribes themselves in a way, Galaxy Zoo has found that different galaxies have different shapes, some are shaped like spirals, some are elongated, some are red ellipticals, some are blue. From these shapes and by studying these features, astronomers are learning a great deal about the world beyond us.

Astronomy is a science with a sufficiently high ambition to mean that amateurs can, and do, play a very useful part.

[Galaxy Zoo](#) is an initiative that's brought in the amateur astrologer in their droves to study the universe as a collective exercise.

With hundreds and thousands if not millions of galaxies to look at, it's not just a question of getting many heads to look at a vast amount of data. This is something that people do also because they care. Each galaxy, each star in every galaxy, has its own very particular story to tell, and it's these stories that astronomers want to discover and bring to life.

With an ambition on this scale, there's something for each person to specialize in and take ownership of, unique relationships that are being formed individually between astronomers and the stars and galaxies they study that is brought to the overall



whole of the tribe.

It's this approach that's created the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, a full digital map of the sky in the northern hemisphere, containing 200 million objects of which half are galaxies - quite some achievement - led by Professor Bob Nichol at Portsmouth University.

Amateurs have always done astronomy. They've discovered comets, supernovi, monitored the planets and explored the sky. Galaxy Zoo has brought all this together and within 72 hours of launching was doing 70,000 classifications an hour.

This collective tribal effort has found 'the penguin galaxy', so called because it's shaped like a penguin. There's a whole set of galaxies that look like roses, there's even enough different shaped galaxies to make up all the letters of the alphabet!

A Dutch schoolteacher and amateur astrologer, Hanny Van Arkel, found the Vorweerp galaxy, a galaxy 600 million light years away that defies classification because it's a galaxy without stars and will be the subject of the next exploration of the Hubble telescope because it's so fascinating.

The message is this: If you want your tribe to grow, think big. Have ambition and let your amateur tribe in. There's a whole new world out there.

## The Prius Tribe

[Ed Welch](#)

A couple of years ago, my father purchased a new Toyota Prius. He wasn't really looking to "go green" but he did want a new toy and better fuel economy. He didn't realize it at the time – but he was joining the Prius Tribe.

According to him, other people (those not owning a Prius) began to relate to him as "one of those people". He also noticed other Prius owners approaching him (total strangers) and speaking to him as if they had been friends for years. Often, he would park at a restaurant, only to discover, as he was leaving, that someone had parked their Prius beside his. Interestingly and even more amusing - he began to park beside other Prius vehicles in parking lots.

While on a road trip with him one day – I noticed him making a comment about every other Prius we saw. Additionally, at least half of our conversation that day was about his Toyota Prius. Talking to him further – he named some friends who also owned one. He even told me stories about these friends and their experience with the Prius.

It was interesting to notice the way other people looked at us that day while we were in his Prius. Although I can't exactly describe how it felt – those people not driving a Prius looked at us differently than those who were driving a Prius. It was as if the non-Prius owners were on the outside looking in and the Prius owners were looking at us like we were "one of them". Certainly, there was clearly a line of differentiation between our interactions with Prius owners and non-Prius owners. This line was much deeper than simply owning and driving different types of automobiles.

Dad never intended to join or even be a part of the Prius tribe. However, as he quickly learned, he did join this tribe and he'll be a member as long as he owns one.

## The Ten Words That Can Kill Your Tribe

[Jodi Kaplan](#)

Picture a cold February morning: time for the monthly staff breakfast at a marketing association. Attendance is required, and the meeting is early, at 8:30 AM. Business had been booming a year ago, but the dot com crash has hurt revenues badly. Event registration has plummeted. Departments with conferences that had attracted 500 or 1,000 people are struggling to sign up 50. There have been five rounds of layoffs (with two more to come). The staff cuts have meant that everyone is working twice or three times as hard, with workloads doubling or tripling. A year earlier, the breakfast buffet featured scrambled eggs, sausages, bacon, fresh pastries, and freshly squeezed juice. Now, it was a few bagels and coffee. The staff was tired, cranky, and demoralized.

The CEO stood up to give his speech. Unlike the employees, he was rested, smiling, and tanned. He'd just come back from his annual invitation-only event at his home in Boca Raton, Florida. It's a three-day meeting (at company expense) designed for high-level executives to play together, network, and make deals. He described the event in great detail: the gourmet food, the parties, and the sailing. He named some of the high-powered people who were there and talked about all the fun they'd just had. He said, "It's not just about playing golf, it's about doing business."

OUCH!!

Good thing nobody in the room had a shotgun handy.

The tribe's members were dedicated and hard-working. They needed encouragement and leadership in hard times; someone talking to them, not at them. How do you treat your tribe?

## What's your why?

[Bernadette Jiwa](#)

Why do leaders choose to lead? Perhaps the promise of fame or fortune, the ideal of loving what they do, maybe pure survival or perceived destiny. This is the story of a why.

Patty was frustrated in a failing thirteen year marriage. She had a long list of things her chronically ill husband needed to change to make the marriage work. After seeking professional guidance and following much soul searching, Patty read him her list of unmet needs and suggested a divorce.

Rod died the next day.

Patty had a long time to review that list. Rod was gone, but the list remained. Out of perhaps thirty unmet needs just one was made easier to meet by losing Rod. Only one! Patty was now free to move the drinking glasses next to the sink.

Nobody showed up to mow the lawn, earn the extra income for school fees or become a dance partner.

She was held less not more.

Patty had thought that she would receive more love when her husband gave more, now after Rod's death Patty realized that receiving love was something that she made happen not him.

Patty realized that marriage wasn't about his needs or her needs it was about loving and being loved. Remembering all the times she had been offered love by this wonderful man and rejected it, she cried her heart out for the past she'd missed and the future she'd lost.

That was the day Patty chose to become a leader, reaching out to couples in difficulty through her blog and newsletter. Patty also reviews useful literature and runs two marriage tele classes a month.

She is followed by a tribe who are struggling in unhappy marriages and who want things to be better.

Assume Love <http://www.assumelove.com> and Enjoy being married <http://www.enjoybeingmarried.com> offer resources to help couples overcome their difficulties.

She is making a difference.

Patty has a why.

What's yours?

## **CASE STUDY: 'Regulars'**

[Bernadette Jiwa](#)

We stroll past the, "please wait to be seated", sign over to table nine.

We sit there every day in winter, closest to the heater.

We don't have to crane our necks, trying to make eye contact with the new waitress.

David's got it covered.

We only buy a couple of drinks a day. They arrive without being ordered. It doesn't have to be the best coffee in town. Why? We can't explain. We feel part of this place. It's become a part of us.

We're 'regulars'.

I'm not sure when it happened. Subtle changes over time. A combination of smiles and brief exchanges.

We reciprocate good mornings with other 'regulars'. Our secret handshake, a knowing nod. We're all here so early and so often. We're passionately loyal to this place.

We don't linger on weekdays and are early at weekends, before the visiting hoards arrive for their pancake stacks.

We leave to start our day, feeling it's begun on a high. Because David cares about much more than just selling coffee.

That's why we're 'regulars'.

## **WAR CRIES & WAR PAINT**

[Bernadette Jiwa](#)

### **WAR CRIES**

THINK DIFFERENT <http://www.apple.com>

PURPLE COW <http://www.sethgodin.com/purple/>

LIVE STRONG <http://www.lancearmstrong.com>



SHARE MOMENTS [http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=2/6868&pq-locale=en\\_AU&requestid=6003](http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=2/6868&pq-locale=en_AU&requestid=6003)

COME ON <http://www.lleytonhewitt.biz>

BAN BOREDOM [http://www.mini.com/mini\\_worldwide/mini\\_worldwide.html](http://www.mini.com/mini_worldwide/mini_worldwide.html)

NO PAPER <http://nopaper.com>

BORN AUTHENTIC <http://www.wrangler.com>

FLY CHEAPER <http://www.ryanair.com/site/EN/>

PURE GENIUS <http://www2.guinness.com/Pages/Gateway-en-row.aspx?RefUrl=http%3a%2f%2fwww.guinness.com%2fTemplates%2fRedirectToGateway.aspx%3fNRMODE%3dPublished%26NRNODEGUID%3d%257b7892FE09-EC41-4F5B-A336-9EAC47569C2F%257d%26NRORIGINALURL%3d%252f%26NRCACHEHINT%3dGuest&Lang=en-row&BrandId=SO&RhCountry=&RhYear=>

FOR LIFE <http://www.volvo.com/group/volvosplash-global/en-gb>

PLAY MORE <http://www.lego.com/en-US/default.aspx>

BAN BOREDOM [http://www.mini.com/mini\\_worldwide/mini\\_worldwide.html](http://www.mini.com/mini_worldwide/mini_worldwide.html)

FOREVER BETTER <http://www.miele.com>

NEVER TRY [http://www.thesimpsons.com/bios/bios\\_family\\_homer.htm](http://www.thesimpsons.com/bios/bios_family_homer.htm)

THEY'RE GRREAT <http://www.kelloggs.co.uk/products/Frosties/Cereal/Frosties.aspx>

GO BEYOND <http://www.landrover.com/global/default.htm>

TRUSTED EVERYWHERE <http://www.duracell.com>

FREE HUGS <http://www.freehugscampaign.com>

RE IMAGINE <http://www.tompeters.com/reimagine/>

#### WAR PAINT

DO MORE [http://www.visa.com/globalgateway/gg\\_selectcountry.html?retcountry=1](http://www.visa.com/globalgateway/gg_selectcountry.html?retcountry=1)

LIVE RICHLY <http://www.citi.com/domain/index.htm>

BE FABULOUS <http://www.moet.com>

INSPIRED LIVING <http://www.haier.com/index.htm>  
CHOOSE FREEDOM <http://www.toshiba.com/tai/>  
EAT FRESH <http://world.subway.com/Countries/frmMainPage.aspx?CC=AUS>  
FEEL FREE <http://www.porsche.com>  
GO BETTER <http://www.holden.com.au/www-holden/>  
HUMAN ENERGY <http://www.chevron.com>  
DEFY OBSTACLES <http://www.aircanada.com>  
BE FEARLESS <http://www.symantec.com/index.jsp>  
CHALLENGE EVERYTHING <http://www.ea.com/language>  
COME ALIVE <http://www.colgate.com.au/app/Colgate/AU/HomePage.cvsp>  
CHOOSE FREEDOM <http://www.toshiba.com/tai/>  
YOU RULE <http://www.virginmobileusa.com>  
PURELY YOU <http://www1.ap.dell.com/content/default.aspx?c=au&l=en&%7Eck=geo>  
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE <http://w3.efel.com/home.cms>  
DEFY PHYSICS <http://www.mitsubishi-motors.com>  
PLAY B3YOND <http://www.playstation.com>  
HELLO BOYS <http://www.wonderbra.com>

## Triple Exponential Smoothers

[Paul Durban](#)

A few years back, I was asked to teach a design course at a local college. I was told by the dean that the students needed a reality check. They were learning a lot of theory, but very little practical knowledge that would help them get work after graduation. So my task was to take a group of budding freelancers and give them some knowledge of the real world.

My first day, I walked to the front of the class, introduced myself and said, “Okay, let’s get started. I am your client and I need you to design me a brochure. Go!”

The students hunkered down in front of their laptops and furiously began to design the best brochure that their professor had ever seen. I stood there – dumbfounded. “Wow,” I thought to myself. “This is worse than I thought.”

About 10 minutes passed by before a shy, blonde girl raised her hand in the back. “Um...professor? So... like.... What’s the brochure about?” The boy next to her actually had the audacity to give her the what-a-stupid-question look.

“That’s an excellent question!” I responded. “I want a brochure about my triple exponential smoothers.”

The class collectively replied, “What’s that?!”

“Oh, I’m sorry. I should explain. A triple exponential smoother attaches to custom made rabberflanges.”

After a pause, the class made an “Oooohhhhh” sound as if they actually understood my gibberish. After another 5 minutes of ‘creating’ another hand shot up.

“How big do you want the brochure?”

“Another excellent question,” I happily replied. Surely, the students must be on to my little game. The questions will start coming fast and furious now.

I was wrong.

For the next 3 hours, the students designed their little hearts out while a random question would pop up now and then. A few minutes before the period ended, I asked the students to bring their projects to my desk one by one. Then I would comment on

each one.

“I can’t accept this. It looks expensive to produce. It’s not within my budget.”

“Budget? Well, what’s your budget then?” would be the reply.

“It’s a little late to be asking that question, don’t you think?” would be my answer.

Or “Where’s my product shot? Where’s my logo? Where’s my (fill in the blank):”

“You have a logo? You didn’t say anything about a logo!” the student would cry.

And my answer? “You didn’t ask.”

The students all “failed” the first project. But I couldn’t blame them. They all belonged to a tribe that was conditioned to follow orders. They needed to be hand-held and coddled every step of the way. They were never taught to question the status quo – to simply ask, “Why?”

For the first time, they were asked to control their own destiny. I soon realized that these students needed more than a real world education. They needed someone to tell them it was okay to take charge. They needed to graduate from one tribe to the next. The tribe of independent leaders.

The next week, without any further instruction from me, we ran the exercise again. They all got A’s.

## **Group Mind & the Improv Musical**

## Erica Minton

Of all the tribes I've been involved with, only one was ambitious enough to read each other's minds.

I was heavily involved in an improvisational comedy troupe all through college and thereafter. "Group mind" is a core principle of improv; it's the idea that as you learn, practice and experience side-by-side with other members, you come to a point where you can anticipate one another. You can see one step ahead. You can create a new scene that looks and feels as though you've practiced it before, because the team's thoughts are so clearly on the same track.

Of course this isn't telepathy—it's simply a bond you forge by sharing experiences. It's an element of many tribes, whether the tribe works toward it (as an improv troupe does) or, more likely, it happens organically (as in a family). How often have you said something in sync with a loved one? Finished a friend's sentence? How often does it happen with strangers?

My best experience with group mind in the troupe was when we took on an improvised musical. If you haven't seen an improv musical, it's worth searching one out. When they're done well, they are unbelievable. When they're done poorly... well, let's not go down that road. It's terrifying.

The big difference between your standard improv and your improv musical is, naturally, the music. Our troupe hired an improv pianist (they exist!), and worked for weeks on strengthening that sense of group mind; after all, that's what makes or breaks the performance. Imagine, if you will, that you're on stage ad-libbing, and you unwittingly say something that inspires your pianist. (I recommend avoiding the phrase "Let me tell you the story about the time...") Suddenly the music kicks in, the audience snaps to attention, and you're expected to pull a song out of the air. It should rhyme, if it can. It should follow the melody, which you have never heard before (and neither has anyone else, pianist included). It should be about a story you don't know, involving characters you made up, and above all, it should be funny.

It's a daunting process to say the least... but then something odd happens. As you sing in off-key slant-rhyme, you start to notice that your friends on stage are harmonizing. They are dancing behind you as if the whole thing were choreographed. They

sing the chorus in unison with you, correctly guessing your awful rhymes. It all comes together in a way that takes you by surprise... and completely blows the audience away.

Solid tribes, be they friends, coworkers or none of the above, find that crazy and intangible group mind and make it work for them. It's what makes a team better than the sum of its parts... no matter the goal, no matter the leader, and no matter how well any one of you can sing.

## **How to grow a tribe, a yellow tail.**

[Bernadette Jiwa](#)

[Brendan Mitchell](#)

How did a family business based in Yenda (population 1000), Australia, grow from selling 500,000 cases of wine worldwide in 2001 to a staggering 11million cases in 2007?

This is the story of [yellow tail](#).

Casella Wines reframed a view held by the wine industry, which traditionally equated complexity with quality. Instead of dividing up the existing market by trying to beat the competition, they created something fresh and exciting, breaking away from their competition.

Casella didn't sell yellow tail as a wine, they sold it as a social drink, appealing to non wine drinkers who were often intimidated by traditional wines. They created the fastest growing wine brand in the history of both the U.S. and Australian wine industries, by avoiding trying to beat their competition. Casella didn't steal sales from it's competitors, it simply grew it's own new market.

They focussed on three things, making wine fun, easy to drink and select. They produced an uncomplicated wine, they gave the



customer just two varieties, one red, one white and even packaged them in the same shaped bottle. The labelling was simple too, featuring a kangaroo in bright yellows and oranges. The result was a sweeter wine, which beer and cocktail drinkers loved and could enjoy without feeling intimidated about it's selection.

By August 2003 yellow tail was the number one selling red wine in a 750 ml bottle in the U.S.

Casella has expanded it's business simply by growing a new tribe and by being approachable to them.

How would you do that?

## Tribe Evolution

Polly

Tribes come in varying sizes, shapes and affiliations. They have different names like pack, team, class or customer. They have different purposes. And, they are molded over time.

Cohesive tribes evolve, change, fade in and out, but find a way to prevail. These tribes live on through the heart and essence of the original tribe. Weaker, less thoughtful tribes fall prey to the inescapable change.

I recently experienced change in a tribe. This was a tribe made of 3. 2 humans and a dog.

The dog was a conduit. He led the 2 toward new relationships. Numerous people were brought together by way of the dog. Without the dog's intervention, these people would have drifted by one another without any notice. The dog interceded, introductions were made and connections were formed.

The dog had an open mind. He knew no strangers, came when called upon without hesitation, and continually unearthed new territories. He met each new outing with the fascination and joie de vivre that only a trusting creature, full of intrigue and stimulation, can appreciate. No maps or plans, only the idea that some kind of a venture lay ahead. Some more enjoyable than others. All worthy, since this one might be the great one. He taught his tribe the importance of tolerance, the art of forward thinking and the tranquility of faithfulness.

Mostly, he was a laid back fellow who was an agent of change. Adaptable, ready and always willing. He got up each morning without any guarantees for this day or the next. No guarantees that the 2 would return to him when they left. No guarantees that the 2 were driving him to his beloved park rather than on a mundane trip to the store or worse yet, the vet. No guarantees that the 2 would stick with him at all costs. He trusted and knew his tribe. Worry was a waste. He accepted change and worked with it.

One particular Saturday in early July, after 14 years of partnership, the dog decided that night would be as good as any to end his earthly journey. He did what the other 2 had always asked of him (make it easy), and he simply lay down and died. He was there and then he was gone. His tribe had been forever changed.

The 2 had lost a leader, their gateway to certain groups of people, and a spirit that taught the significance of unguarded accessibility, devotion, trust and openness. All of it, gone in under five minutes.

These same dynamics are at play in your tribe. There are pieces and parts of your tribe that would be deeply missed if gone. These holes will change your tribe. It can happen quickly, with little warning. It is up to you to think about what those holes mean to the tribe and react accordingly. Be prepared.

Real, genuine tribes carry on propped up by the character and spirit on which they were built. Can your tribe carry on in the face of change? Will it honor its past and still be viable, amazing, and remarkable? Or, will it lose its way and be consumed by the holes?

## Let Your Tribe Do The Talking

[Brad J Ward](#)

The Higher Education industry is a tricky one. You have aging administrators deciding how to communicate with 14-17 year old millennials. With so many universities and colleges competing for the attention of students who are becoming busier and more involved, the typical recruitment process is full of noise and static. So how do you break through and succeed?

You let go and let the students do the talking.

In my position as the Electronic Communication Coordinator at Butler University, I knew it was time to give the students a voice on our site. Student bloggers have been utilized in the recruitment process at universities for a few years, but we wanted to stretch them further, past the typical blog. By integrating tools such as photo albums, forums, Twitter, and Facebook into the communication, we were able to let the student bloggers, my tribe of 9 students, extend much further and create deeper connections with students than anyone working in the office could.

The results of the first year were astonishing. By letting go and letting current students be a primary piece of the recruitment process, we were able to engage and interact with students on a level that we could not previously achieve at the university. The site, <http://go.butler.edu/cs>, became a central hub for inquiring and incoming students. In only 10 months from launch, /cs was responsible for nearly 40% our entire site's traffic. Over 400 students joined the BUForums for a chance to ask the Bloggers questions and talk to other incoming or prospective students, resulting in over 1200 forum posts during the first year of this niche community. With incoming classes around 900 each year, we were very pleased with the participation.

And talk about a long tail. In the old ways of business, it was best to cut the latter of the 80/20 rule. But listen to this: the upper 75% of our traffic came from 1,184 pages averaging 592 page views. The lower 25% of traffic came from 233,846 page views on 8,826 pages, for an average of 26 page views per page. Nearly 90% of the lower fourth of pages come from the

<http://go.butler.edu/cs> site. These are 8,800 pages that did not exist one year ago.

Where did all of this content come from?

All user-generated from the tribe. New blog post = new page. New forum post = new page. New reply in a thread = new page. Each page might not have much traffic, but the content was more focused and students found the info they really wanted. What I learned is that the conversation is in the long tail. Cut that out, and you have a static website, a one-stop shop. As participation increases, so does content and engagement. And as those increase, so does your enrollment.

After seeing what our students have accomplished for us, how could I not give my Tribe a voice and let them speak?

## **When Members leave the Tribe: The Aramco Brats' Story**

[Saleh AlShebil](#)

Many Americans and other expats used to work in Saudi Aramco <http://www.saudiaramco.com/> (formerly Aramco), “The Oil Company” in Saudi Arabia. They lived a good part of their lives there. They were called Aramcons, as they were part of the Aramco Tribe. After leaving the company, they wanted to “stay in touch” with their fellow Aramcon Tribe members. They created the Aramco Brats website <http://www.aramco-brats.com/> . They made a movie: The Aramco Brats' Story <http://www.bratstory.com/trailer.html> ...to remember the good ol' days.

When members leave a Tribe...that's not necessarily a bad thing...

## **The iPhone Hackers Tribe: Determined to “Unlock!”**

[Dr. Saleh AlShebil](#)

When the iPhone launched more than a year ago, people realized that not everyone can get it since you had to have a contract signed with AT&T at the time. It didn't take long before the iPhone hackers tribe began emerging around the world and showing that they were up to the challenge.

“Jailbreak,” “unlock,” and “activate” became the new tribal lingo for the iPhone hacking tribe. These terms became the default language by which the tribe communicated with the rest of the world. The tribe of iPhone hackers were all collaborating toward one essential goal: to hack the iPhone. But it didn't stop there. As Apple began releasing new updates that “bricked” any hacked iPhone, the tribe of hackers was further challenged to come up with a new hack every time.

One clear iPhone hackers tribe that stands out is the iPhone Dev Team <http://wikee.iphwn.org/> , who the world now depends on for hacking the new iPhone 3 G, which they “jailbroke” already, but yet need to “unlock,” it. According to their blog <http://blog.iphone-dev.org/> , the iPhone DevTeam is “comprised of a group of people who work together over IRC from various parts of the world.” They have “never met face-to-face and” “rarely know real names” to the point that they “would more than likely not recognize each other if” they “walk past one another on the street.” They use nicknames ([http://wikee.iphwn.org/#who\\_we\\_are](http://wikee.iphwn.org/#who_we_are)) like: asap18, iZsh, and wizzdaz to identify themselves. They don't do it for money and don't accept any donations as well. The tribe even has a code of ethics... as they state:

“we follow a strict “hacker code”: ground rules by which we all abide.”

And what happens to those who don't abide by the rules? They get kicked out of the tribe as the blog post below shows:

“Geohot is certainly a bright guy, but he couldn't abide by rules...and because of this he was asked to leave the team.”

Some of the blog posts of the iPhone dev team get more than a 1000 comments <http://blog.iphone-dev.org/post/42931306/pwnagetool-2-0-1> , which kind of tells us how many people follow this tribe, not including the lurkers of course. Let's take a “live” close-up at some of their blog postings to shed some more light on this tribe:

The Passion, Challenge, Thrill & Fun:

“Well, Apple has had their turn, impressive work on SDK! And now it’s ours...”

“So the long-awaited 3G phone won’t be released until July. Another long month ahead before the fun begins again...”

Achievements & Connections with their followers:

“What you are seeing is the world’s first jailbroken iPhone 3G running our own software. I think you’ll agree that this was worth the wait.”

“Well, the response was overwhelming. :) The downloads brought down several of our servers, and some of them have yet to recover!”

“As soon as we fix this up and test a bit more we’ll be ready for release, we’ll get back to you with a release schedule soon. Please loosen that seatbelt slightly while our cabin crew serve you complimentary drinks.”

“Good Morning! Did you think we’d sleep? really?”

The iPhone Dev-Team tribe is still working on “unlocking” the iPhone 3G while the world awaits...and in the meantime...

“We’ve got something for you! (No, it’s not the 3G unlock, but still something very useful.)”

So what can we learn from this iPhone hackers tribe?

A tribe whose members don’t really know each other, unite for a single goal, challenge themselves, have a code of ethics, work

on the clock for “free”, continuously connect with their followers and get driven by strong passion.

- Get a group of people from anywhere, driven by a passion for something, target a single goal, challenge them and let them do “magic.”

Note: This is a case study. It is not meant to be an endorsement for hackers.

## **Striking a Tribal chord: Why “Shaa’aer AlMalyon” clicked with Arabs**

[Dr. Saleh AlShebil](#)

Two years ago, an Arabic satellite channel launched a TV show contest that was somewhat similar to American Idol. The show was called “Shaa’er AlMalyon.” The finalists were judged based on a combination of the judges’ evaluations and the sms text votes by the people. The winner gets a million dirhams (~ \$272 K) and “The Bairag” which is a flag representing a status symbol of the show. But what was it about? It wasn’t a contest in singing, music or dancing talent...but it was a contest in poetic talent. Yes, a contest in poetry. So what?

“Shaa’er AlMalyon” <http://www.almillion.net/> (The Million’s Poet) became a huge hit and has swept the Arabian Gulf region in particular and made it an annual happening that gets a lot of buzz going on every year. The success of the show led to the spur of several clones like Ameer AlShuaa’raa (Prince of the Poets), Shaa’er AlMaa’na (The Poet of Meaning) and Shaa’er AlArab (The Arab’s Poet). A magazine was also launched dedicated to the show. Furthermore, several websites and online communities were also created about the show and its poets, many of which created by poetry fans. Winners of the show became instant celebrities. A Google search insights shows that “Shaa’er AlMalyon” was one of the rising searches in a couple of the gulf countries during those times. Youtube took a share for its success as well, as one of the show’s famous poet videos had a view count of 1,993,681 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4as89usexAw&fmt=18> views. Interestingly, even a YouTube clone <http://www.qsedtube.com/> for Arabic poetry has been spurred after it. Kids in the region began even memorizing some

of the famous poems delivered, so much so, that a competition was held for the best kid poet by the same hosting channel. Oh and poetry cell phone ringtones followed. You knew that was coming!...Shaa'er AlMalyon was a big "hit" by all counts.

In the show's last round, the buzz was at its peak especially after the announced winner didn't go to the expected finalist. There was such an uproar that a site <http://www.laalmillion.com/> was even launched calling on people to boycott the show for the following year. The Media was all over the show, some complimenting whilst others very harshly criticizing...adding even more publicity to a show that didn't need any extra fueling.

But what was it? Why did "Shaa'er AlMalyon" click with Arabs? And what made it sweep the Gulf region like that? The poetry? Why? Well, it was because "Shaa'er AlMalyon" struck a tribal chord amongst the Arab tribe. The tribal poetry chord. A strike that was long overdue....Let me explain.

Arabs have long been known throughout history for their great poetry and strong poetic and language skills. Many famous poets have grown from the Arab tribe and have become icons of poetry whose poems became school material. Now flash forward to the twenty first century.

The show was a success because it revived and brought back to life the strong poetry that was a strength that Arabs had always boasted about and was a sign of pride amongst them. It was the strong ability to use the Arabic language words to create powerful expressive poetry that forced adrenalin and gushed emotions to the listening audience.

Strong poetry represented a cultural identity of the Arab tribe and "Shaa'er AlMalyon" struck that Arab tribal chord right on the spot. Poetry was part of the Arab tribe's DNA, and "Shaa'er AlMalyon" unlocked that DNA code

So what's your tribe's tribal chord? And has it been struck yet?

\* It is important to mention here that the contest was specifically on the "nabati" type of poetry which resembles a Bedouin kind of poetry. This also better explains its' success in the Arabian Gulf region in particular.



## **The Shoeshine Man's Tribe**

Steve Mauldin

I was getting my shoes shined in the Atlanta Airport and asked my shoeshine man how business was going. He stopped and pointed out to the concourse. "Look at all those tennis shoes and sandals. That's how business is going," he said.

As we both looked at the people passing by, a group of sports fans walked past wearing football and basketball jerseys with the names of popular professional athletes like Favre, Bryant and O'Neil. The shoeshine man put down his shine cloths and looked at me in amazement. He said something I will never forget.

"Imagine a grown man wearing another man's name on his back."

He made me a member of his tribe by honestly sharing what he saw and I didn't. Educational systems, political parties, and the workplace often seem to demand the right to name us. The wisest of our teachers, mentors, role models and friends will want us to wear our own names in life, not theirs.

## **Listening To Other Tribes**

Posted by Steve Mauldin

Years ago, Ernest Gann wrote a book on the early days of commercial aviation called Fate Is The Hunter. In one passage, an airline pilot hears an Eastern pilot decide not to continue his approach due to terrible weather.

*“He must give at least some consideration to the fact that airline pilots are separated into tribes in spite of their common occupation. Gossip has provided legend, which in turns lead to unavoidable generalization. Thus United pilots are considered colorless and sticklers for regulations. American pilots are thought to be a mixed lot, prone to independent complaint and rebellion. TWA pilots, highly regarded individually, are pitied for the chameleon management of their company. Pan American pilots, admired and envied for their long range flying, are thought to be shy and backward in their foul-weather work. The tribes are each healthy and strong in their way, but their characteristics, conditioned by their aerial territories, are as different as the Sioux, the Navahos, and the Cherokees. All of this is recognized as debatable. Yet the legends had to start somehow.*

*Now it is important for Hughen to remember that Eastern Airlines pilots are singularly determined and clever. They are not given to timidity, and if the (Eastern) pilot now beneath us has refused to continue his approach, then the conditions must be very unpleasant indeed.*

*Hughen, newly concerned with our fuel reserve, takes less than a minute to join all the factors together and reach a decision. “We are proceeding to our alternate...”*

What generalizations about other tribes lead us to good decisions? Who do we believe to be singularly determined, clever or not given to timidity? What are they wisely avoiding? How do we listen to a tribe that is not our own?

## **Leaving their tribes behind**

[Ellen Di Resta](#)

The GAP and Liz Claiborne have lost their way.

The companies behind these iconic American brands have been financially eroding over the last several years, and in an attempt to reverse this trend, both have hired top fashion designers to reestablish their relevance in the mass fashion market.

The intention is good, and superficially it makes sense. Patrick Robinson and Isaac Mizrahi are top fashion designers who have both successfully developed clothing lines for Target, showing that they can translate their style to the mass market.

Looking beneath the surface, however, it's clear that The GAP and Liz Claiborne are not asking the designers to undertake a similar challenge to what they did for Target. Target is very clear about what its brand means to its consumers, and embraces the responsibility of leading their tribe. The challenge for the designers, while not easy, becomes very clear: interpret your design sense through a product line intended for Target.

The challenge for the designers in working with The GAP and Liz Claiborne is much less clear. Why? Because these companies have lost sight of what their brands mean to their consumers, and they are abrogating the responsibility for leading their tribes. Corporate leadership of a tribe requires a holistic perspective, and the authority to align the entire organization to be consistent with the tribe. The designers are unfairly (and perhaps unknowingly) being asked to bear the responsibility for leading the tribes with a limited corporate influence.

To build a solid foundation for lasting success, these two companies need to understand their tribes as people; talk to them, shop with them, see them in their real lives, and re-establish the relationship they once had. Then they need to relearn how to accept the responsibility for leading their tribes.

I do think these brands can be saved, but it can't be done by offloading leadership and leaving their tribes behind.

## **Pour Me Another: Jack Daniel's Tribe Is 90 Proof**

[Tom Bentley](#)

There is a marketing adage in direct mail/promotion that it takes at least five contacts (or seven or nine or eleven) to provoke a response in a customer. What happens when a company takes the long view—say 30 years?

In 1976, at the tender age of twenty-two, I acceded to a solicitation I found on the neck of a Jack Daniel's whiskey bottle to

write to the distillery with any thoughts or questions I had about the distillery's product. Being a bit of a wise guy, I responded with a letter letting the good folks in Lynchburg know that not only did I enjoy consuming their whiskey in a conventional way, but that I also brushed my teeth with it, and kept a glass on my bedside table, at the ready to ward off night sweats and other less congenial spirits.

That casual screed was the opening of the editorial valve; since the distillery's first congenial response to my declaration, a flood of letters, official-looking documents and oddments of Americana have made their way through the mails to me. These missives have followed me through 30+ years of address—and lifestyle—changes, though a unifying constant, my continued appreciation of their high-proof product, has remained. I even received several letters while I lived on the tiny Micronesian island of Kosrae, where mail delivery was often an afterthought.

Tallying up the documents, I count over 100 letters, as well as a parcel of certificates, public notices (some handwritten) and photographs, and items such as a plug of chewing tobacco, a buckeye, a rubbing stone, drinking glasses, a record of abominable folk songs, calendars and much more, including a deed to a one-inch square of property on distillery land, with the accompanying declaration that I am a Tennessee Squire in good standing.

Now there's marketing, and then there's **MARKETING**. The reach and errant angle of these communications, which rarely touch upon anything related to selling whiskey—but instead might inquire as to whether I'd allow worms to be dug on my property—show a creative and quixotic whimsy. Collectively, they limn the peaks and valleys familiar to many relationships. The distillery invited me to join the Tennessee Squires very early on, and it's certainly a tribe, centered around the appreciation of good sippin' whiskey.

I was very impressed with the first five years of letters and weird gifts (some so truly uncommercial—like the snapshot of rusted items found with a metal detector on my land, with the question as to whether I needed them). That the company would continue to send letters for 30 YEARS, and many deeply amusing in a folksy way, is extraordinary. Needless to say, I am a Jack Daniel's drinker. There are better whiskeys, and I buy them too, but Jack will always be a mainstay in my house. They earned it.

## Apples Are the Sweeter Fruit

[Tom Bentley](#)

In 1986, I was hired by Borland, then a fairly big player in the software industry, to be a copyeditor. They plunked me down in front of what I was told was a smoking machine, a new, zippy IBM XT. Not having much computer experience, I plinked and poked my way around DOS, getting used to command-line instructions to open, save and find files. Some geekasauri from other departments came around, whinging because our department had given an upscale machine to the new doofus copyeditor, who didn't know just how glorious 640k of internal memory was. I didn't know memory from moonbeams, so I could only shrug.

Then my Mac Plus arrived. Lookie here—a mouse to move that cursor across the screen! A program you can draw with. A selection of typefaces. A graphical interface that quickly communicated the notion of file storage and retrieval. And something else: a sparkle, a design distinction, that holy integration of form and function. This was something else again, and I liked it, immediately.

A new copyeditor was hired. She was given a new Mac Plus. She'd only used PCs until then—revelation. A tribe of two. Our direct boss, who worked out of the office, got one too. Once a tribe, twice a tribe, thrice a tribe. Then, a goodly portion of the marketing department got them too. PageMaker 1.0 on the Mac—wow. People succumbed to the ease, the allure of the new, and again, that somewhat intangible design/desire glimmer.

But Borland's bottom line was based on selling inexpensive (revolutionary, at the time) development tools for programmers. The geeks did not speak Mac, and the machines were often derided as toys. But of course, that scorn only enhanced the “we're unique, we use Macs” (read: we're better) sense of narrow community, the tribe.

That was at least 10 Macs ago, and probably 7 PCs. I've often owned both simultaneously, because my work demanded it. I'm not a naysayer regarding PCs—they've always been serviceable machines for me, and I've gotten good work done on them.

Windows is WAY better (I don't use Vista) than it used to be. But on the Macs, I've gotten the work done, and a bit more. How Macs work (even though both platforms have more and more overlap over time) still makes more sense to me.

The Mac tribe, of course, has been written about extensively, as has Apple's design magic. There have been some clunkers, but in the main, many are marvelous advances in computing and design. I'm not quite the zealot fanboy who would immediately flame online columnists who question any aspect of the Macintosh Creed, but I get where the fanatics are coming from. I'm in their tribe, after all.

Anyway, whoever really thought a toy was a bad thing?

## **The Dead—Give It Away (and the Getting Never Ends)**

[Tom Bentley](#)

In 1971, a high-school musician friend told me I should check out the Grateful Dead. Since I was shoplifting albums then and selling them for pocket money, I stole their whole discography. Hmm, interesting: straight-ahead rock, blues ballads, country rock, twist-your-third-eye-inside-out psychedelia—I liked what they were selling. Um, letting me steal. That turned out to be prescient.

In June of '72, I went to my first concert, at the Hollywood Bowl. I'd been to many concerts, but never one like this: on some of their barnburner numbers, the band wove anticipation and partial release through the crowd, building layers of volume on a prolonged melody, falling off it, returning to it, teasing away, more volume, crowd leaning and swaying until an explosion of interwoven instruments and blended vocals—too easily described as orgasmic.

Even though the Bowl was a seats-only stadium, the crowd was remarkable for the intensity of their fervor; ripples of ecstatic appreciation seemed to spark and crackle like electric storms through the whole of the concert, building to a frothy finish, the tribe wide-eyed and sated.

And a tribe it was. Long-haired, bangled and beaded. Tie-dyed and red-eyed. After I'd been going to concerts for a few years, I began to notice some of the same people: "Oh, there's the tall guy with the braided beard and the Dr. Suess hat. Look, that knockout Grace Kelly-lookalike with the American flag granny dress," and on and on. You'd nod in recognition, and pass the pipe further down the line.

Noteworthy: a section at Dead concerts where people had big reel-to-reel recorders and 8-foot microphones. The tapers. The Dead allowed fans to readily tape their music, with just one stipulation: the tapes were to be traded back and forth, not sold. There was a huge national network of trade-by-mail tapers, some fanatical about getting their hands on one of the shows where the Dead opened the heavens.

Through the Dead, those tape traders built one of the first "free content" networks ever, mushrooming a fan base that made the Dead year-after-year the highest-grossing touring band in the US. An early album invited "Dead Freaks" to drop a line. Letters, gifts, intricately drawn posters flowed in for years—and a huge contact database was built, later used to send catalogs of Dead clothing and memorabilia, one of their highly profitable sidelines.

Free was easy with the Dead. They had benefit concert after benefit concert, started a foundation that contributed to organizations for social justice, the environment and education. They were never about the money; they were about the music.

And sometimes their live concerts SUCKED. Lyrics butchered, guitar lines trailing off. Of the 50 concerts I went to, perhaps 5 were entropic murks. But the tribe never cared—they were together, with each other and their leaders. That one, long concert lasted for more than 30 years, until Jerry Garcia's big heart gave out in 1995. The tribe still exists, the music filling iPods, still tradable after all these years.

I never stole any more albums—their store had no walls.

## The Most Organized Tribe Wins. (I'm a Mac, I'm a PC)

[Matt Kern](#)

Overheard on the way to forum:

“Now that I have my new Mac, my creativity has increased.”

“I am a designer but I feel like I have to apologize when I tell people I use a PC.”

“Now that you have a Mac, resist the urge to become an artist.”

There are roughly 1 billion computers in the world. 7% of these are Apple and 90% use Windows. For arguments sake, lets say 50% of all Mac users and 10% of all PC users are paid creative professionals.

That comes out to 35 million Mac creatives and 93 million PC creatives.

Think about that.

PC creatives are almost 3 times the numbers of Mac creatives. Almost 100 million strong and yet they hide in fear; not wanting to proudly promote their platform of choice.

As an Apple creative, you are given permission to join forums, make groups, give high fives and fist bumps and hold your head high.

As a PC creative, you just talk about your work and don't mention what platform it was made on.



One interesting thing to note is when you change the argument from “paid creative professionals” to “people that feel creative”, the number of creatives shoots to 100% for Mac owners.

## Your Personal Tribe

[Dimitri Limberopulos](#)

Has anyone ever asked you a question?

Has anyone ever asked you a 2nd question? Maybe a 3rd? And perhaps even hundreds more?

When someone asks you a question you become momentarily (and sometimes permanently) the leader of a Tribe. This Tribe may last for a few seconds, or perhaps a lifetime. But when someone asks you a question, for a moment, you and they become a part of something. They are expecting something from you, and you are thinking of how to respond.

Tribes are born out of nothing, sometimes out of a coincidence (an innocent question) and sometimes out of a shared interest (for example golf). But there is something special about Tribes, they always leave something behind.

You have as many Tribes as friends in your life, and it may become confusing. As many people have stated sometimes we just don't know when to be a father, a friend, a boss or just a colleague. Our life has become tangled in so many spaces (real and virtual) that it's easy to lose sight (and track) of all the Tribes we're living in.

It doesn't have to be so.

Tribes come and go, it is true, but there is one Tribe, the most important Tribe that is always present. And that is your inner Tribe. Inside of your heart and head you are the leader. There is no one else up there but you. It may sound like you don't really

need another Tribe... now that I have tons of Tribes I also have to deal with a Tribe that lives up there in my head? Well, the answer is yes, but if you take care of that Tribe you will take care of all the Tribes at the same time.

Tribes are relationships, and all relationships begin in you, and end in you. Your role in a Tribe is to be yourself, nothing else. By being true to yourself, you will contribute in endless ways that no one but you can contribute.

Now that you know that you know that your role is to be yourself, nothing more, you can participate in as many Tribes as you want. In fact, you already are. The easiest way to become a part of a Tribe is to realize that you already in one (or thousands). Once you realize that you have tons of Tribes and your role within them, take advantage of them. Contribute as much as possible, and learn from every Tribe. In the end if you take care of a Tribe, the Tribe will also take care of you.

## **The Little Tribe Inside**

[Sherri Welch](#)

It was a beautiful spring morning - she grabbed the front door knob and turned. Stepping onto the porch in her liz lange tunic and cropped pants, she took a deep breath. She was glowing, confident, and proud. It was the beginning of her membership in one of the oldest and largest tribes in the world. The baby bump was finally showing and all who met her would know she was now a part of the Moms-To-Be Tribe. The moment had arrived!

Everywhere she went - she began noticing other members of the tribe. Three expectant mothers nodded at her and smiled knowingly at the grocery store. At the walking track - two expectant women stopped to talk to her.

Not quite knowing what to expect - it all just fell into place naturally - she would hear these questions hundreds of times for the next 5 months: "When are you due?" "Is it a boy or a girl?" "Have you picked out a name yet?" She was unexpectedly the center of attention of young and old. Children wanted to touch her belly - young mothers with school aged children had supportive comments but looked worn out and frazzled. Middle aged "new" grandmothers had the most amount of helpful

information - they were going through it again with new grandbabies.

Older women had wonderful advice and were very supportive. The hardest ones to talk to were the women who desperately wanted to be in the tribe but couldn't. She felt guilt and empathy mixed with sadness for those women. Complete strangers would inquire of her health. "Have you been sick?" "Are you excited?" "What are you going to decorate the nursery in?" Everywhere she went - the larger she grew - she noticed more and more pregnant women. It seemed like they were everywhere - there were online communities, chat rooms, groups at church, waiting rooms at the doctor's office, and of course the Lamaze class at the hospital.

This tribe itself is unique, with an ever changing membership. It's limited to women - mostly from the ages of 15 to 45 - but it spans the entire world, and is open to all races, religions, and socioeconomic groups. Sometimes membership is an accident, sometimes a miracle, sometimes obtained by artificial means, but there is no mistaking it - once you are a member, you are accepted into the tribe without question.

These women are walking customers looking for products to purchase - they're on an emotional roller coaster. Two lives in one body - one nourishing the other - one helplessly depending on the other. She loves the baby before she can see it or feel it, and it's a love stronger than her love for herself. A mother will do anything for her baby, and the baby will have "only the best". This is especially true for first time moms. They're ready to spend money! Babies require a huge influx of products into the home - before the baby even arrives - and through the first few years.

When the Mom-To-Be graduates from the tribe (by giving birth) she'll be a repeat customer for years to come. As she grows her family, she'll become a tribe member again - this time with more influence - and she'll group with other Moms and Moms-To-Be. They'll discuss the latest thing that makes their little ones safer, more comfortable, healthier, or happier at baby showers, play groups, and mothers' days out. These are lifelong customers as they go through the stages of becoming a mother, aunt, grandmother, and great grandmother.

Perhaps you're in this tribe now? Maybe you've been in this tribe? The Moms-To-Be Tribe is always looking for leadership -

are you ready to lead?

## Create a Tribe with Power

[Rex Williams](#)

If you don't like your organization at work... create your own.

Most every company has a ski club, a hiker's club, a chess club, or a coin club. At the large corporation where I work there are hundreds of these kinds of clubs, and they have access to major internal advertising forums, have their own websites, and are allowed to use basic company resources within reason.

So what's the boundary on club subjects? What if my area of interest is more closely related to work or business, like giving presentations, or web design, or project management, or process improvement, or knowledge management?

It turns out, there is no boundary. And instead of being called clubs, we call these Communities of Practice, or Technology Interest Groups, or User Groups, and they work on the same principles, people getting together on their own time, and having fun sharing ideas together.

But these communities are starting to get a lot more attention by upper management these days because they can directly impact business results and productivity. Leaders are realizing that self organizing communities are an effective way for employees to be engaged and committed to producing great work.

For example, an off hours study group for a particular process improvement method grew from just a handful of people discussing books to a larger community with an email distribution list and an internal web site. Then they began having "brown bag" presentations during lunch where people could bring their lunch as they learned new ideas and had meaningful discussions. As the community grew and various implementations of this method began to appear throughout the company,

they realized that they were large enough and had enough material to put on an “Annual Conference.”

Each year, the conference grew in size, complexity, and visibility with executives and outside consultants participating. With a small committee, they organized elaborate 3 day conferences that included multiple internal and external presentations, tours of implementations, in-depth workshops, and certification exams. Employees traveled from all over the country to attend.

Finally, the tribe grew so much in power that multiple executives were offering to be permanent sponsors by supporting the community with a significant budget.

Let me reiterate, in a company where cost cutting is prominent, executives were asking employees if they could give them money to do what they loved to do.

Now that’s a tribe with power.

So go ahead and create a club. But if it can help improve productivity or impact the bottom line, then you might be leading your executives instead of the other way around.

Isn’t that the way a company should be organized, where people work on what interests them so that they’re engaged, productive, and committed to the work they do?

## **You Don’t Always Know Who’s Following Your Lead**

[Joel D Canfield](#)

Dana Lamb was a bank executive in the 30s. And 40s. And 50s, 60s, and early 70s. As a serious trout fisherman might tell you, there was more to Dan, as his family and friends called him, than the suit. He wrote seven books on trout fishing. Seven.

Aficionados of adventure stories will tell you, that's not the half of it.

In 1933 Dan and his new bride Ginger set off on their honeymoon. Embarking from the deck of the sailing ship *Star of India* in San Diego harbor, they boarded the sailing kayak Dan had built, and planned on sailing, one day at a time, down the west coast to Panama—and through the canal.

Their trip down the coast, chronicled in the book *Enchanted Vagabonds*, is an epic adventure. Their arrival at the canal was nearly a non-epic. The canal master was miffed. No, he was livid. A sixteen-foot canvas-covered boat, using one of the most important commercial shipping lanes in the world? Not on his watch!

Ah, but there was a precedent.

Richard Halliburton was a loner. He had friends at Princeton, but apparently he was happier tramping down the road on his own. In 1921, he left Princeton, presumably by an upper window, and set out to hitchhike around the world.

As he travelled, he wrote. His missives were published by newspapers, and eventually gathered into his first book, “The Royal Road to Romance.” (And into half a dozen more after that.)

Halliburton was an iconoclast; he did the unconventional simply because it was unconventional. His father was wealthy and influential, and Richard wasn't above using his father's contacts to gain access to the inaccessible.

Which is how he came to be the only person I've ever heard of to swim the Panama Canal.

The canal master (the same? I don't know) was indignant, unhappy, obdurate. A phone call later he was sullenly cooperative. The SS Richard Halliburton traversed the Panama Canal, being charged, as all vessels, by tonnage. Total cost: thirty-six cents.

I have no reason to believe that Halliburton and Lamb knew each other. Halliburton did not overtly try to persuade anyone to do or be anything. He wrote for two reasons: writers write, and he was a traveller who needed funds. As an intentional influencer he was a non-starter. He always seemed pleasantly surprised that anyone had read his scribblings.

Dan Lamb had. Dan and Ginger were inspired, in part, by Halliburton's books. When they came to the Panama Canal, they invoked the name of their glorious leader. Like Halliburton before them, they traversed the Panama Canal, charged by tonnage. Their boat, the *Vagabunda*, was slightly heavier than the SS Halliburton, though.

They paid over a dollar.

## Sometimes It Takes An Online Village

[Kayla Lamoreaux](#)

Meet Stephanie Nielson - a blogger and mother of four. Stephanie led a tribe of mothers and other women who checked her blog everyday for ideas, and reassurance that they weren't alone in the craziness of raising kids and homemaking.

Stephanie blogged about the daily things of life with beautiful photos that might rival the scenes you would see in Better Homes and Gardens or Martha Stewart Living. Her writings also included email exchanges with people all over the world - mothers like her.

The most interesting thing about Stephanie's tribe is not what they did while following her blog it is what has been done since August 16, 2008 - the day that Stephanie and her husband Christian were in a [fiery plane crash](#) that killed the third passenger in their plane, left her husband with burns over 30% of his body and left Stephanie with burns over 80% of her body.

The most inspiring thing about this tribe is that when their leader was no longer able to blog they stepped in to help. Readers programmed [Paypal donation links](#), [started a site](#) to help with fundraising and recovery efforts from the family, and [more](#).

Who knew that leading a tribe would lead to the tribe members rallying around their leader to support her in her time of need? That tragedy would bring out the best and change thousands of people's lives? Perhaps Stephanie's sister said it best - "I am starting to believe that there is no such thing as tragedy. There is only opportunity for growth, and should you accept it, the reward overcomes the sailing of the hardship...We have been told that Steph will likely look much different after her healing... But something in my depths knows that it will be beautiful. She will be beautiful because she is beautiful.I am left to wonder, what sacrifice would you go through personally to personally affect thousands of lives? Your beauty?"

Sometimes it takes an "opportunity for growth" in a tribe to see what it is made of - and certainly it says something that Stephanie, through her own personal tragedy, has lead her tribe to new heights.

\*\* You can read more about Stephanie and the tribe of mothers who followed her in this [New York Times Article...](#)

## **Raising kids in a tribe**

[Marcos Gaser](#)

I was born and raised in a tribe, and I would like you to consider nurturing your next generation from within a tribe, too. Let me explain myself by telling you my story.

My grandparents had to flee their country (now Slovenia - northern part of Yugoslavia at that time) right after World War II.

They arrived in Argentina, raised their children here, two of which (my parents) met and got married here in Argentina. They wanted to maintain their original way of life as much as possible, because they had hopes of going back. So they created centers where they met, socialized and supported each other. They retained their Slovene identity while living and prospering in Argentina.



I was born in '64 - almost twenty years later - and the tribal roots were still deep and strong. The language I learned at home was Slovene. And I learned to love Slovenia from the songs of my grandmother and the bedtime stories of my grandfather. I did not learn Spanish until kindergarten!

They never had the opportunity to go back. I married another descendant of Slovene emigrants, and my children speak Slovene, too. All of us have Slovene citizenship although we still live in Argentina.

We are a very tight tribe. With our own rituals, meeting places, traditions, Saturday schools, churches, sports clubs, common cultural heritage - even our own "secret" language.

To outsiders, we are a tribe of strange people who refuse to assimilate. For us, we are a tribe of people with a vision to stay true to our roots and our heritage in a different country.

Now I understand how wonderful and valuable it was to grow up in this tribal experience. From the outside, the tribe looked exclusive, self-centered and sometimes intolerant - but from the inside, there was that wonderful feeling of being connected, being protected, being trusted, being valuable, just because you belonged to the tribe. I know that I had a better youth because of this.

**So, I do think that a tribe is a better place for raising kids.** You do not need to emigrate, of course, but merely to start thinking of your family as a tribe.

Become a leader.

Craft a family vision.

Get some tribal traditions going.

Let your children work a secret handshake and war cry.

Invite your extended family and closest friends to be a part of the tribe.

Create and keep records of tribal memories.  
Have fun!

If you do it right, stories about you will be told in your tribe for generations and generations.

## **Congratulations! You're One of Us!**

[Paul Durban](#)

Have you ever noticed that you belong to the Us tribe? No matter how hard you try to shake it, you will always be one of Us. But at least you're not one of Them. They don't try to understand our views and it's so difficult to relate to Them. They probably say the same thing about Us. They like to pin the blame on Us, but we know the fault lies with Them.

Some of Us leave the ranks and join Them in their fight. But when they do, they instantly become one of Us and we ask, "What was it like to be one of Them?"

Admittedly, we should be thankful for Them. If it wasn't for Them, there would be no Us. Just like there is no top without a bottom or a left without a right, there can be no Us without Them.

Perhaps that's why we keep Them at a distance. If we should ever reach common ground with Them, then they would become one of Us. It's much easier for Us to justify our existence by emphasizing the differences rather than the similarities. Fortunately, they need Us just as much as we need Them. Just don't tell Them that.

Some of Us are actually Them in disguise. They pretend to be Us. They walk like Us and talk like Us until one of Us exposes Them for who they really are. That's just like Them, isn't it? You'd never find one of Us doing that.

You should feel fortunate because everyone wants to be one of Us and nobody worthwhile wants to be one of Them. Even the media recognizes this. We have a magazine filled with beautiful people dedicated to Us, while a gruesome horror movie is dedicated to Them.

Most of Us hate the phrase, “That’s what they say.” Why should we give all the credit to Them? Many of Us have come up with some pretty fine ideas too! Why doesn’t anyone take advice from Us?

For example, one of Us just came up with a thought: If every one of Us believes that they belong to the Us tribe, then who’s left to be Them? Have we been fighting a battle against a non-existent adversary? Is it possible that there is only one true tribe? Us?

Uh oh.

## **The Green Bean Conspiracy**

[Paul Durban](#)

When I was a young boy, my father and I were sent to the grocery to fetch some needed items for that night’s dinner. We were passing by the canned vegetables when my father swiftly grabbed a can of green beans and placed it in the cart.

“Dad, you grabbed the wrong can!” I shouted down the aisle.

“Excuse me?” he replied.

“That’s the wrong can of green beans. Mom never buys that kind.”

“It’s the same thing,” my dad chuckled to himself as the cart continued to roll.

“No, no. Mom buys THIS brand,” I replied as I handed him the correct can.

“I’m telling you,” he sighed. “They’re the same green beans.”

“But why would they be in a different can?” I asked.

My dad paused for a moment and wondered if it was worth effort to explain the concept to me.

My dad explained, “You see, when the green beans are packaged, some cans get a generic label and some get a brand name label.”

“Why would they get different labels?” I asked.

My dad continued, “Because even though the green beans are the same, some people buy based on the brand name while others buy based on price.”

I pondered for a moment. “Why would someone pay more for the same thing?”

My dad smiled. “Someday it will all make sense to you, and when it does, please explain it to me.”

Of course, my father was keenly aware of why consumers would pay a premium for a brand name product. He worked for years in the grocery business as a buyer. It would be a number of years before I grasped the concept myself. It amazed me how easily tribes of consumers were duped. Or were they?

Were these consumers simply victims of a clever marketing machine and a vast conspiracy at our nation’s manufacturing plants?

Were they lazy? Or was it that deep down, they really wanted to believe that their favorite brand was actually a higher quality than the generics? Sort of a don't ask, don't tell scenario.

There are tribes of story tellers and there are tribes of followers intently listening for the happily ever after. What a tremendous responsibility for each.

## **New Employees Unite!**

[Rex Williams](#)

New employees are always complaining.

“When will I be able to use what I learned in school? When can I make a valuable contribution? Why can't I have a cool project?”

“Just be quiet and finish reading your policies and process documents... for the next two months,” the boss says.

And then what is the natural and obvious choice of action for this new employee? To demonstrate their power by choosing to leave the company and work where their skills are valued and utilized.

But I've seen new employees choose a different path of power. Instead of feeling helpless and walking away from their undesirable environment, they chose to take initiative and change their environment.

They realized that no matter what their immediate supervisor said, they knew that the company needed them and their skills. So, a few of them worked together to create a proposal for an entire training and development program for new engineers. It consisted of creating a process where engineers could submit special projects that would help them develop technical or

leadership skills. Then their projects would be loaded into a visible web-based database for anyone to see and join if interested. Projects ranged from designing and building prototypes to helping assist with Career Shadow Day or some other big event.

This small tribe of new employees submitted their proposal to top executives (who knew about the mass exodus of new employees out the door) and they immediately supported the proposal with experienced guidance and funding.

With consulting by knowledgeable senior engineers and the backing of executives, the Project evolved and became so valuable and popular that they decided to expand the eligible participants to include all engineers regardless of years of experience.

This effort also expanded geographically to include different ‘chapters’ in multiple sites throughout the company, and the project database now has hundreds of special projects that anyone can join. Each project has clearly defined roles such as Leader, Mentor, and Member so that everyone knows how they will contribute, providing an ideal setting for new and more experienced engineers to network and learn from each other.

The new employees who took the initiative to start this effort essentially created a community (or super tribe) that housed many smaller groups (or sub-tribes) who were organized around a meaningful project that made a difference. Those who participated gained valuable experience and were able to contribute to a larger good.

Isn't that what everyone wants to do?

Now, new employees, stop complaining, and go contribute!

## **On Diversity**

[Megan Elizabeth Morris](#)

In the last 10,000 years, the vast monoculture called civilization has overrun most tribes, eating every “backwards” culture that lingers in its path. Daniel Quinn’s [The Story of B](#) explains that this controlling, mainstream tribe is slowly falling apart — killing its fellow species, destroying its environment, creating a problem for itself and everything around it.

Quinn posits that our whole world was healthier when it had *more tribes*. Each tiny culture lived its own way (the best way for that tribe). The monoculture believes that its way is the one right way, but that attitude is unsustainable. Quinn’s solution is the same as nature’s solution for every other species: thrive and let thrive. Life’s solution is diversity.

Our potential for tribal diversity is greater than ever before. We’re no longer tied to physical, cultural tribes. We can belong to tribes we can’t even touch (think Doctorow’s [Eastern Standard Tribe](#); think Triibes), and many tribes at once. Building a tribe is like growing an idea, sharing it with others who resonate with it. We can belong to physical, cultural tribes *and* non-physical, idea-based tribes. If each person finds the best way to live — for them — that diversity will be realized.

Just think: We have cultural tribes (though less now than ever). And inside those cultural tribes are *more tribes*, tribes who listen to the same music or worship the same gods or read the same books. Tribes who sing songs. Tribes who wear hats. Tens of billions of tribes, and more potential than that in the mind of every person on Earth.

This vast diversity of tribes within tribes is itself a *single whole tribe*. This tribe is one fire, one source, one spirit. This tribe is the greater community of life, not just me and you but all living creatures, all growing things, all water and air, all earth, rocks, dirt and dust. In this tribe you are my brother, and so is the bee and the acorn and the llama and the dodo. And if you think about it, even the tiniest tribe must be made up of diverse traits, talents, abilities, personalities. That’s how the best paths in biological and cultural evolution are chosen.

And so we’re all different, just as we remember that we’re the same. We feed one another, draw life from one another. And we live our own way, always.

The encouragement of creativity and independent thought diversifies tribes. To raise consciousness, to teach each individual to

grow and share ideas, is to diversify tribes. Diversity is *good*, powerful and positive. It makes the community of life — the whole tribe — stronger.

A diversity of tribes *creates* diversity in individuals. Individual diversity propels creativity, learning, insight, inspiration. Individual inspiration *further fuels the tribe*, every tribe, all the way up the line. It fuels the greater community of life, the existing tribes, and new tribes that can grow and prosper. Diversity fuels cultural and biological growth. Diversity makes everything better, many times over, constantly. We must encourage creativity and individuality to thrive, just as nature does.

So that crazy, exciting idea you had last week, the one you don't think anyone will go for: Do it. Say it out loud. Be the heretic, stand up for the thing that inspires you, that feels right and real. Drifting with the tide creates nothing, inspires nothing. Cut your own stream, and let those who follow you widen it into a river. A torrent! You have a unique spark, you can do incredible things -- and *only you* can do them. Your imperative in this life is to realize your potential, build and create, make new paths, follow your heart.

Do what you love, always, no matter what. Make more tribes.

## The Tribe of Marrus

[Jeffrey Lee Simons](#)

The tribe of Marrus would not exist without the internet.

Marrus is an artist and a story teller. In the past, entertainers like her provided connections between tribes. Medieval jongleurs traveled from town to town, telling tales, bringing news, acting as social connective tissue before newspapers.

Marrus has much in common with jongleurs. She travels from renaissance faire to science fiction convention to kink show,



often accepting the hospitality of others. She brings news. She tells stories. But Marrus is different because she's not visiting members of other tribes; she's visiting members of her own. And whenever she comes to town, the tribe congregates.

Marrus is at the center of her own tribe, a geographically and culturally diverse tribe that would not exist but for Marrus and the internet. It creates itself because its members choose to belong. It stays cohesive because the internet allows for organized, real time communication and persistent memory among its far-flung members. Her LiveJournal is the town square. Her website, <http://www.marrusart.com>, is where her art lives.

Marrus does not consider herself the tribe's leader; nor does the tribe. Some think of her more as "fodder for cocktail conversation" or "a favorite TV show." But to an observer, she is most definitely the tribe's center. She gives her tribe cohesion; they give her support. While she never tells the tribe what to do, she has encouraged it to help members with money, lodging, necessities. The tribe shares energy, ideas, creativity and emotional support, using Marrus as the hub.

Anyone can join the tribe by posting on her blog, purchasing her art and so on, but that only goes so far. There are hierarchies in the tribe of Marrus. To belong to the highest circle requires merit, which Marrus defines as "fearless...people who push. Who can live in the moment, trusting in their own greatness and fortitude, yet always, in the backs of their heads, are planning for the next thing."

A jongleur doesn't have a home, but Marrus does. It's the house/studio she and her partner Jay bought and rebuilt out of the muck of Katrina. Room for guests, hospitality without end. Her tribe cycles through; she hosts and guides them to the treasures of her city.

The tribe of Marrus is an example of the creator-focused tribes that have flowered with the internet. They are more than mere fan club or customer base. Members expect recognition and relationship that fans never dared, similar to what consumers are beginning to demand from companies. The old model, where creators pushed out content and fans consumed it, is being replaced by a vital, rewarding conversation between creator and audience via email, blog, social media and more. It is truly a tribe, and it gains support, sustenance and meaning from itself.

## Space Tribe Goes Private For Take Off

[John W. Furst](#)

Did you ever look up to the Moon and ask yourself what it might be like to live up there?

Writer Jules Verne answered this question himself, when he was writing his famous book *From the Earth to the Moon* in 1865. His novel inspired many generations to pursue a career in science and engineering and make the dream of human space flight come true. Then, in 1969, the first two men landed on the Moon. Many believed it would only take a short time until we could make further steps into space.

However, only 27 men have left Earth's orbit, and only 12 walked on the lunar surface. The last mission returned from the Moon in 1972. We did not go any further. Stanley Kubrick's realistic vision from his movie *2001 - A Space Odyssey* should not become reality, soon. It took the USA only seven years to go from zero to the Moon, but then came the big stall...

While non-manned space exploration continued to score high with spectacular discoveries in the outer solar system, manned space flight was confined to low Earth orbit.

The first chapter of manned space flight history was clearly dominated by the governments of the USA and the Soviet Union. Both were driven by prestige and fear. While the visionaries of the space tribe wanted to open the space frontier for everybody, the governments only wanted to win a race.

But who will open the space frontier for everybody?

Dr. Peter Diamandis recognized that it has to be the private sector driven by market demand. He founded the X PRIZE foundation in 1996, which offered 10 million US dollars to the first privately financed organization to launch a reusable manned spacecraft into space twice within two weeks.

Space Ship One won the Ansari X-Prize on October 4, 2004, the 47th anniversary of the Sputnik 1 launch. Shooting people up 100 kilometers (62.1 mi) merely to the edge of space is like playing in the minor leagues, but it's the beginning of going more mainstream. Altogether 26 teams from 7 countries invested more than 100 million US dollars in this competition.

The huge success is the reduction in cost. Dennis Tito, who became the first space tourist in April 2001, had to pay more than 20 million US dollars for his ticket. And he couldn't book a short and easy trip, either.

Space Ship Two is planned to bring 6 tourists at once to the edge of space as early as 2009. Virgin Galactic already sold 200 tickets at 200,000 US dollars per person for this 2.5 hour adventure, which will be scheduled to launch from Mexico on a weekly basis. Within two years the price could go down to \$20,000.

Perhaps these are the next steps: a space hotel in Earth orbit and private lunar missions are on the road map already.

The second chapter of manned space flight will be written by individuals and organizations, who want each member of their tribe to be able to get into space. All it needs is a good business case. Everything seems to be possible again.

## **The Nashville Tribe of Rock Music**

### [Stinson](#)

Nashville, TN is known far and wide for its country music roots. For decades many country music performers and songwriters

have come to realize their careers within the county lines of Music City. The honky tonks that line the street down Broadway are monoliths that repeat the great stories to every tourist who travel from the ends of the earth, in hopes to feel an inkling of their heroes in spirit. The Ryman Auditorium is said to be the Mother Church of Country Music, where the gospel of The Grand Ole Opry was preached for 31 years. Each one of these establishments collectively form the “Great Monument,” which pays tribute to some of the biggest legends to ever draw breath, touch their lips to the microphone and sing the historical lyric of genuine American down-home entertainment, straight through the vacuum tubes of Nashville’s broadcast radio.

Forget all of that. The truth is, when one digs deeper they will discover that there is a tribe in Music City whose culture is centered around an entirely different manifestation of music. This tribe is one of the most tight-knit sub-cultures in existence among our increasingly global society. This is the Nashville Tribe of Rock Music.

Within this tribe, one can find a remarkably diverse collection of rock music flavors, all crafted with a compelling brilliance. It is astonishing how these musicians dream up such an artful amalgamation of sound. Every color is acknowledged, from the smooth pop ballad with intricate textures and interwoven melody, to the blips and beeps of polyphonic emotion. From the clever expressionism of urban rhythm, to the unbridled raw power and distorted chaos of guitars with snarling fangs; twisting and writhing inside every musical change. Every context in between each of these main styles are used for inspiration as the members of this tribe set out to invoke the mood of this lesser known Nashville genre.

Perhaps the most unique quality of this tribe is their deep rooted alliance to one another. Each member of the Nashville Tribe of Rock Music is dedicated to the furtherance of the collective group, and will wholeheartedly seek the best interest of each other in order to maintain the perfect health of the tribe. One example comes from the Ten out of Tenn Tour, where ten artists who are members of the tribe supported one another on a regional tour. The video of the event [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1kwy-7z6VY>] shows the members of this tribe having a musical experience on par with a religious crusade. Another example can be made from the Movement Nashville organization, which helps to promote a selection of Nashville rock musicians and performers in hopes to “shatter the misconception that Nashville lacks a Rock scene worthy of respect.” A final example can be found in Next Big Nashville music festival and conference. For the past three Septembers, the local music industry has thrown a party, strictly for celebrating all the rock music which is created in Nashville.

Next Big Nashville serves as a common ground where tribe members take the weekend to fellowship with one another, deepening their bond.

The talent of this tribe transcends well beyond that of the performers, and into the territory of producers, engineers, managers, A&R men and women, publishers, songwriters, song pluggers, radio personalities, graphic designers and many others. Each one of these individuals is willing to donate a significant portion of their time and skills in order to help nourish the growth and well-being of the tribe. Fans are arguably the most dedicated to the tribe out of anyone, often taking it upon themselves to act as PR for the tribe. Many of these fans publish blogs, perform college radio shows, organize benefits and parties or simply sneeze as hard as they can in order to evangelize this Ideavirus.

The way the local music industry as a whole joins in as a member of the tribe, is unlike any other music community in the world. All of the core businesses are focused right in the middle of the city. 16th Ave and 17th Ave, known as Music Row to the tribe, is about a two mile stretch where all the record labels, publishing companies, artist management companies and recording studios are lined up next to one another. It puts a sincere neighborhood feel on the entire tribe, where stories are passed down to successive generations, turning Music Row into the loom which weaves the sheet of history, endearing the tribe members to one another by a common multi-generational thread.

This case study would not be complete without paying tribute to the fact that, like the country music scene in Nashville, the Nashville Tribe of Rock Music has its own monoliths which act as landmarks that truly make the whole community proud. Examples of such establishments can be represented by stores like The Great Escape, which sells a collection of used and rare CD's, vinyl, DVD's, VHS tapes, posters and comic books. Grimey's is another great example of an independent record store which the Nashville Tribe of Rock Music is proud to claim. Grimey's specializes in new and "pre-loved" music, and has a strong affinity for vinyl. In addition to music, customers can also find a small selection of books, DVD's and other collectibles. The people who run Grimey's are some of music's greatest fans, and they show it by organizing events which support Nashville's rock music tribe. Almost every week there is an in-store event held where tribe members are invited out to enjoy one another's fellowship in the comfort of one of their favorite record shop. Record shops are not the only landmarks that serve as proud moments for the Nashville Tribe of Rock Music. Music clubs like Exit/In, a historical performance hall in midtown,

has had a 30 year run of rock music greats, all of which are proudly displayed on the wall outside like a giant badge of Nashville Rock honor.

To truly understand this tribe one has to experience it, and to experience it one must be accepted as a member. There is no shortcut to the type of experience or acceptance described here. To gain the privilege of calling oneself a member of this tribe, requires a person's genuine interest in relentlessly pursuing the greater good of the culture. In other words, coming to Nashville for a quick weekend in hopes to passively catch a taste of what the tribe is about is a pointless waste of time. This tribe requires an active engagement with a generous dose of patience to be accepted in. Additionally, a weekend is not nearly enough time to begin to understand the tribe. Understanding the tribe requires a lifetime emotional investment of carrying out a role as an active member. Only after a person has dedicated their life to the tribe in this way will they begin to understand it. Until then, they are just another person with the misconception that Nashville is a country music town. The Nashville Tribe of Rock Music is one that must be lived and breathed by it's members who's lives *depend* on the tribe.

## **ROBLOX Virtual Playworld**

[Shaun Connolly](#)

My son is hooked on the [ROBLOX Virtual Playworld](#), which is a free online multiplayer game where kids play in user-created worlds...with blocks. When I asked my son what he likes about ROBLOX, he said:

“ROBLOX combines Legos and scripting...two of my favorite things!”

He proceeded to show me how he can create his own customized “Place” and publish it so he can play in it with others online. For example, he created a very popular Baseball Stadium where you can almost smell the grass on the field while having fun throwing, fielding, and hitting the baseball. It is a modern stadium complete with hot dog stands and a giant blimp hovering

over it. Here's a picture of my son...actually his avatar...in the baseball stadium he built:

While I have no vested interest in ROBLOX, I have been compelled to [write about it](#) many times.

Why? Because I consider ROBLOX a great example of a Triiibe.

It is an online destination that not only satisfies kids' social and entertainment needs but also addresses their hunger for creativity and learning. It enables thousands of kids to interact and play within virtual worlds while learning design, engineering, science and programming. The educational aspects are simply remarkable; they just may be grooming our next-generation of software developers.

Using my [7 Key Attributes of Social Web Applications](#) as a measure, I think ROBLOX scores pretty well. Every user has an Identity; the information is not rich likely due to the fact that we are dealing with kids so online privacy is important. Their Reputations are based on how they conduct themselves online as well as the quality of the places and/or scripts they create. They don't offer much in the way of Presence. People can strike up Relationships with each other, but not nearly as robust as what you get on sites like Facebook. You can't really Group your friends as far as I can tell. Conversations happen via Forums, chat, and their built in email/messaging system. And Sharing happens all the time since people can share objects, scripts, places, etc.

ROBLOX does a great job of connecting with their user community. The key developers regularly post to the [developer's blog](#) so you feel connected to the creators of ROBLOX, and they inspired an independently-[run fan site](#) that publishes all of the latest ROBLOX news.

They are also a Triiibe with a business model. Free membership provides the ability for kids to receive an avatar, play within the worlds, as well as design, build, and save a single place of their own. They offer a "Builders Club" which is a premium service that gives kids the ability to create and manage multiple places. It also enables players to earn ROBLOX currency (called "ROBUX") which can be used to purchase premium items in the ROBLOX catalog that enable much greater customization of

avatars and interactive creations.

I like how they offer a free way for kids to get started and then charge extra for increased value.

Bottom-line: ROBLOX provides a great example of how combining the social web and online virtual worlds provides value beyond entertainment and social interactions. As they say on their website, ROBLOX believes “in the theory that kids learn best by making things - by engaging in the creative and complex process of imagining, designing, and constructing. Provide them with a safe and nurturing place to build, give them the requisite tools, and let them play.”

## **What no one wants to hear about tribe building**

[Sean Johnson](#)

Gary Vaynerchuk ran an extremely successful, multi-million dollar wine company. Which he left to build a video blog.

Some people probably thought he was nuts. Perhaps he was. But in a little over a year he built his tribe to over 80,000 viewers each day.

That number is amazing to many people, and he's often asked how he managed to do it so quickly. Unfortunately, the answer isn't what many people want to hear. He attributes his success to the following three things:

Be insanely passionate.

For some, wine is a nice luxury. For Gary, wine is a huge part of life. It broke his heart that this drink had been marketed (very effectively) as something reserved for the upper echelon of society. So he launched his video blog to rip down those barriers. He sought to make wine accessible to anyone and everyone.



Hearing him talk about wine, it's hard not to notice his passion for the stuff. He wants everyone to enjoy wine tasting and appreciation as much as he does, and Gary stands out.

Too many people aren't excited about what they do. They don't enjoy their jobs, they don't have any hobbies or interests. They give people little reason to be excited about anything. Which is probably why people like Gary stand out - in a world of lukewarm they make you notice them.

Be prepared to work your tail off to cultivate the tribe.

Passion that isn't channeled into action dies, and Gary knows that. That's why he puts in 10-14 hours a day reading and replying to emails, posting on blogs, etc. He quite simply works harder than most people. He's done it from day one, making relationships with one person at a time.

When you're starting out, it can be particularly daunting to figure out what to do. You wonder which tactics for spreading the word have the greatest impact. Gary says to stop over-analyzing and just start trying stuff. He calls it "better than zero" - anything is better than doing nothing. Even if you spend 5 hours and get one person to join your tribe, that's better than no hours and no tribe.

Too many people look for a huge win, one tactic that takes very little money and time that will have immediate, enormous results. But tribe building doesn't work that way, and Gary knows it. It takes consistency, focus and determination. Instead of home runs, it takes lots of singles.

Love your tribe, no matter how big it is.

When Gary is asked how big of a tribe he would need to consider himself a success, he says one person. Whether your tribe has one person or 80,000, you engage with them and love them and do what you can to help them one at a time.

Too many people approach building tribes to stroke their own egos. They try to go for more - more subscribers, more sneezers, etc. But the best tribal leaders aren't doing it for themselves in the end - their passion is other-centered. Which means they don't care about how many people are in their tribe - just that there's someone out there whose life they can change or improve in some way.

Don't lament that you're not big or popular enough. Love the people who do believe in you.

For most people looking to start a tribe, technology isn't the barrier - for the first time in history you have immediate access to millions of people whenever you want. You have a fairly level playing field - anyone that's willing to do the work is likely to find the reward on the other side. The barrier is usually a lack of sufficient passion, or a lack of willingness to do the work.

## **1 woman = 1 plate**

### [Jule Kucera](#)

She was suddenly the member of a tribe she never wanted to join. It hadn't seemed real the month she moved out and stayed with friends. Unlocking the door to her new apartment, she was profoundly aware of the tribe she had left and the tribe she had joined.

The apartment was a 2-story loft in a converted furniture factory. It had a skylight, exposed brick walls, and massive beams that made her feel safe. The first time she tried to see it they wouldn't show it to her. When she had left him, she had left with only the clothes on her back—shorts and a ratty t-shirt. They had assumed she couldn't afford it and she had assumed she didn't deserve it. A month later she went back and signed the lease.

The furniture was an odd combination of things kept and cheap replacements for things given up—a heavy antique pine table

in the dining room, white plastic lawn chairs in the living room. She ate her dinner out of a bowl because she had no plates.

The invitations featured a heart ripped in half and a request, “Bring a plate to eat off and leave behind because I don’t have any.”

Every plate matched the woman who brought it. Allison’s was white china with a thin band of gold circling the edge. Debbi’s had a warm crackle glaze and Denise’s had big bold loops that fell off the edges. Jan, the designer, brought handmade stoneware. Chris and Susan, who had trouble seeing eye-to-eye at work, each brought the same plate—white with a precise checkerboard border. And Maria, because she hating doing dishes, brought 8 melamine plates. A sharpie marker was passed and each woman wrote on the back of her plate.

Just before cutting the cake (a 3-story chocolate wonder also featuring a broken heart) she made another request—that each woman share a ‘bad man’ story. She didn’t want to feel alone and stupid. The stories poured from the women. They were raucous, hilarious, heart-wrenching.

In the evenings when she came home, she would open the cupboard and pick a plate. She liked seeing them all stacked together, different sizes and colors and shapes. Maria’s 8 were always at the bottom of the stack, all nicely nested, the top plate the one with the inscription.

She ate dinner off Maria’s plate. She loved that every plate reminded her of the woman who brought it. Denise’s with its hearty loops matching her laughter. Jan’s, beautiful and unique, to be handled carefully. And Maria’s 8, showing both her generosity and her practicality.

As she washed the plate she turned it over. This plate was the only one whose inscription had survived soap and hot water. “Con mucho cariño—Maria.” It was these plates and this tribe of women that carried her across every dinner, sitting at the big pine table, alone but not lonely.

## The Footballguys.com message board: growing with your tribe

[Mark Dyck](#)

Summary: The story of [Footballguys.com](#) is how two men created a space for NFL football fans to gather, helped a tribe form around them, then grew their business from within the tribe.

Fantasy Football is huge. This rapidly growing pastime, where people form leagues, “draft” NFL players onto their teams and track their Fantasy progress alongside the real NFL games is now part of mainstream football. Broadcasters, Internet Portals and even the NFL itself run fantasy leagues and tailor their statistics to the fantasy player.

It wasn't always this way -- ten years ago, Fantasy Football was the exclusive domain of stathounds and football diehards. Guys who scout college players to get the inside track on improving their fantasy team. Guys who go to the NFL draft and live blog the whole two days. Guys who truly believe the NFL season begins on the Monday after the Super Bowl.

Joe Bryant and David Dodds have been part of the scene from the early days and their business, Footballguys.com, led the transformation of fantasy football from an obscure hobby to mainstream pastime. They continue to thrive even with direct competition from media giants, thanks to the loyal and devoted tribe on the Footballguys message board.

The [Footballguy's message board](#) is the centre of the Footballguys universe. The board has a life of its own, with deep discussions on statistics, strategy and complex variations of the fantasy game. The board subscribers quickly proved they were as knowledgeable, and certainly more specialized, than Joe and David. What to do? Well hire them, of course!

Over time, the very best message board contributors were drafted onto the Footballguys.com staff. They still post on the board, but offer their unique skills to the ever-growing list of paid Footballguys content.

The scope of work these guys put out is amazing, and most of the content is created by message board veterans. This year, Footballguys.com will publish more than 50,000 pages of content along with a set of weekly podcasts, HD videos and print magazine.

So what's to learn here?

- Joe nurtured the tribe forming on the message board, running contests and moderating posts. It worked -- over 31,000 subscribers will start the 2008 season.
- While most Footballguys contents requires a paid subscription, the message boards are free. No limit to the ideas coming in.
- By recruiting from within the message boards, Footballguys can get deep on a much larger range of topics. Rather than sticking to a single site owner's 'secret formula' the value in Footballguys is the sheer breadth of material. No facet of the game is too obscure for Footballguys.com
- The site itself is built 'by the tribe, for the tribe.' Ideas from the tribe are added to the site each offseason, resulting in an extremely easy to use website given the huge amount of information that's available.

For the past nine seasons, the Footballguys message board is where the tribe congregates -- before, after and often during the game. During this time, Joe Bryant and David Dodds have gone from experts in the field of Fantasy Football to experts in the field of tribe management.

## The Truck Tribe

[Ed Welch](#)

Growing up in the rural areas of Southeast Oklahoma you can't help but notice that there are as many full size pickups as cars. In fact, it's unusual for a family to not own at least one pickup.

When I was seventeen years old – my parents gave me a full size Chevy four wheel drive truck. It was like a dream come true. In this part of the country, driving an attractive, full size pickup is as prestigious as driving a slick sports car like a Corvette.

It didn't take long for me to discover a unique tribal ritual that I had suddenly been made a part of. For whatever reason, when two pickups are driving toward each other on a two-lane road or highway – the drivers usually offer a little hand gesture toward each other. This isn't really a wave – it's more of a slight lifting of the fingers from the steering wheel – perhaps a show of respect - as if to acknowledge each other's presence in the truck tribe.

Being somewhat reserved and introverted – I was totally caught off guard by this ritual. At first I didn't get it. I wondered why these people were gesturing toward me. After all, I didn't really know any of them and they weren't my friends. However, it didn't take long for me to realize I was now a part of the truck tribe and I had better learn about this ritual. Like other tribal rituals, this one has certain rules.

\* You never offer this gesture to the driver of a car – unless that person happens to be your friend.

\* Only the drivers are allowed to make this gesture toward each other – not passengers.

\* Only full size trucks are allowed in the truck tribe – small trucks like Rangers and Nissans don't count as real trucks and you never offer them this gesture.

\* It doesn't matter who gestures first, but you had better reciprocate – otherwise you're being disrespectful.

\* If you receive this gesture from the driver of a car – ignore it. Car drivers don't belong in the truck tribe.

After I had owned that first truck for about ten years – I was forced to sell it and purchase an economy car. I was no longer a member of the truck tribe and the friendly gestures stopped.

About two years ago – I was able to purchase a new pickup – a Dodge 2500 Mega Cab four wheel drive. Sure enough, the gestures started where they had left off and I was officially a member of the truck tribe again.

## **Finding Value in the Buggy Tribe**

[Ed Welch](#)

Recently, I undertook the painstaking process of researching the [dune buggy market](#). A small dune buggy can be great fun for the family – I wanted one for mine. For the first time ever – I began to wonder if Google would let me down. Search after search, buggy after buggy – the choices were foggier and murkier.

Finally, after a few days of research – I located a valuable tribe - a buggy tribe that hangs out at [Buggy News](#). Looking over the contributions made by the tribe members – I located reviews of specific buggies, found direction regarding which buggies to avoid, and tribe members quite willing to share their objective opinions of various buggies on the market. Often, they would direct me away from buggies they own – as they didn't want me to make the same purchasing mistakes they had made.

Having never purchased a buggy– the buggy tribe proved to be a tremendous source of value. In fact, the value of this tribe was so impressive – I decided to join the tribe myself.

As Seth teaches us in *The Dip* - scarcity creates value - and reliable, objective information about buggies has proven to be very scarce indeed. Economists teach us that demand creates value – which is true but not the entire picture. Demand didn't create the buggy tribe – yet this tribe does have tremendous value.

Perhaps you can identify some well hidden tribes and tap into their value as I did with the buggy tribe?

## **Tribal Enemies in Oklahoma**

[Ed Welch](#)

Very little unites a tribe of [Oklahoma State University](#) (OSU) Cowboy fans faster than a shared dislike of our number one enemy – the University of Oklahoma Sooners. Having been a long-time member of the loyal tribe supporting the Cowboys – I’ve found consistent and common bonds with total strangers who share this dislike. Additionally, I’ve seen outsiders join our tribe simply because of our shared enemy.

We proudly wear our colors on shirts, hats, jackets and more – almost inviting criticism from Sooner fans to further the bonding experiences we share with other members of our tribe. In a sense – this tribe needs and invites criticism from Sooners as it reinforces and feeds one of the foundations upon which it’s built.

Perhaps it seems “unhealthy” to look toward a tribal enemy as an opportunity for tribal growth - however, isn’t the nature of business about competition and threats? How strong would the tribe of OSU Cowboy supporters be today - if the Sooners didn’t exist? How much greater is Google - simply because of the existence of Yahoo!?

In what ways could your tribe leverage enemies and competitors to help it grow and become better united? Perhaps you could take a page from the playbook of the tribe supporting the OSU Cowboys and allow your tribal enemies to better unite and grow your tribe.

## **Leading Students of Diverse Ages in a University Setting**



## Lori Hoeck

The underground, windowless room -- smaller than most living rooms -- wouldn't appeal to many as a workplace, but within these walls, the Colorado State University-Pueblo webmaster Greg Hoeck and his six student employees crowd together to make the university web presence work. Typically, Greg's beginning employees hardly know more than how to copy and paste, but most graduate with skills ranging from basic HTML to advanced CSS.

Greg has learned four hard and fast rules about extending and teaching his webmaster duties to a combination of Generation Y, Generation X, and non-traditional students.

### 1) Lay out the University rules and expectations first

Greg explains to his student employees that certain rules, procedures, and policies, such as daily reports and filling out time sheets, are extremely tedious, but he insists they be done perfectly. He makes it clear to them that such work will always exist in the corporate or entrepreneurial world and to accept it now.

### 2) Always put their needs as students first

He says to his student employees, "First comes family, then comes your education, and then comes your work here -- in that order. Family problems? Not a problem. Just let me know you need a day off. Big test you need to study for? No problem. Go study. You are here to learn."

### 3) Give them attainable challenges

Greg empowers them in genuine ways to push the envelope of their skills. He gave one sophomore student, who was knowledgeable but lacked confidence in that knowledge, the entire alumni site to build from scratch. Greg told him, "You are going to either love me or hate me, but I will challenge you."

### 4) Let them learn on their own and find their own self worth

Greg gives his student employees the least amount of information to start any project, but fully supports them. As they need to

ask questions, they can talk to either their peers about it or ask him for help. Greg wants their imagination and creativity to rise to the forefront as they figure things out -- instead of them becoming learning zombies trained to do things as he does. This way they learn and grow from an experience that will always be theirs and not something they heard in a classroom lecture.

To make these four rules work for him, Greg insists on one common denominator for the office – respect. He tells them, “If you need time off, you don’t even have to ask for it, just let me know you won’t be in that day. But if you are working on a big project, I will probably need you here, so treat me like you would want to be treated if you were in charge.”

The bottom line for this webmaster is that he wants people to work for him because they want to be there. He says, “I want them to be there because the relationships among us all are solid, not because ‘this is your job and you have to be here.’”

It must work because students keep coming back each semester to work, seniors invite him to their graduation parties to meet their parents, and graduates keep in contact with him, including inviting him to their weddings.

## **The Green Lights Are Out And All Systems Are Go**

[Anne McCrossan](#)

Not every tribe needs F1’s fast-track culture, but F1 does represent many ways a tribe can get into gear.

F1 is a tribe that burns serious rubber. Unpredictability is the game in F1 and, out of that, it creates a fabulous show. F1 tribe’s following is huge, capable of capturing global imagination. And it just happens to make hundreds of millions of dollars as it goes. It’s a pretty impressive tribal formula.

Formula 1 is a semantic sports tribe, morphing and adapting at speed, and constantly. You can look at F1 as an adaptive

intelligent entity that's continuously learning and flexing in changing circumstances.

Every track, Melbourne, Bahrain, Canada, Monaco, Brazil is different, all 18 of them. This year, the street circuit of Valencia was untried and Singapore's Grand Prix happened at night. F1 pushes the envelope. It's in its DNA.

The rules change every year. In the last 5 years of F1, testing and qualifying rules have changed before every season. Fuel loads, engine changes, basic set-up have all had to be re-visited. Technological innovation drives change continuously too. Every race, strategies are re-calibrated second by second. It's intelligence standing up.

Everyone in this tribe plays a large part in their own right, and as individual pieces of the whole, each team member is critical. People have to show up - the car designers, engineers, the pit crew, test drivers, race drivers, technicians everyone - everyday, day after day, to perfect the combination of man, machine and method working as one. All people make big contributions upping the ante in the relentless forging forward of the tribe.

F1 can be fluid because it has a powerfully strong sense of identity and purpose. Different identities sit within this tribe. It's logomania actually but it works. Tribes within tribes. And there are rituals, for example, spraying champagne unites. Racing teams, drivers, pit crews, constructors, manufacturers, sponsors, all co-exist and do their thing. Every tribe in the group knows that it's this spark that's created off one another that ignites excitement in their audiences and that works for them, individually and together.

A distinctive aspect of F1's character is that it takes itself to its audience. There's a price of entry but no one ticket of entry, and this is no static tribe. A new wave joins and leaves the tribe in each F1 location. Race-makers and race-goers get fired up and then move on. Then they take the race with them to coffee bars, pubs, sitting at the pub TV watching, cheering and recharging the visceral energy of the F1 tribe.

The F1 tribe has different leaders who look after different aspects of the sport, globally and locally. But it was Bernie Ecclestone who brought the groups together to "hunt as a pack". When Ecclestone bought the Brabham team in 1971 he gained a seat on

the Formula One Constructors' Association and in 1978 became its President. As Wikipedia puts it, 'Previously the circuit owners controlled the income of the teams and negotiated with each individually.' However, as Bernie's tribe they raced ahead to prosperity.

Finally, it's a race that evokes the visceral energy from the fans and participants alike. Every time when the green lights go out, all systems are go!

## From Homespun To High Art

### [Anne McCrossan](#)

Gee's Bend, very isolated until the mid-1960s, is situated within a large loop of the Alabama River, deep in Wilcox County, one of the most poverty-stricken areas in the United States. People here have worked the fields for more than a century. Even today, most are descendants of slaves from the original plantation. Many still carry the slave owner's name of Pettway.

People who have little learn never to waste a thing. [The Quilts of Gee's Bend](#) were created by a group of impoverished women that came together out of bare necessity. With cotton crops failing and little money, these women used their ingenuity in many ways to solve the puzzle of how to survive. And in doing so, they turned homespun into high art as a tribe.

The quilts they've made together meet intensely practical needs - warmth, comfort and security. They've also celebrated the aesthetics and the culture of the tribe itself. The Quilters of Gees Bend's innovative and often minimalist approach to design is unique. It's design that's often been inspired by the newspaper collages dressing on the walls of the rooms they live in, put there to keep their homes warm.

Without any pretense, the quilters of Gees Bend had a vision of what they could achieve and became masters in creating both short and long term value for their tribe, working together as a collective to think about the best way to go about what they do,

an example of the self-questioning tribe that gets results.

They embraced day-to-day life with all its hardships. Arlonzia Pettway's mother made a quilt in 1942 out of her husband Nathaniel's old work clothes. He had passed away that year. And she said, "Lonnie, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to take Nathaniel's old clothes and make a quilt out of it, where I can remember him." Arlonzia kept the quilt for its family meaning. She was amazed when people first came to her home and saw art.

What came out of Gee's Bend is not accidental. It didn't happen simply because women were sewing cloth and came up with something that was beautiful or unique. It's been a conscious initiative passed down over the years. This regenerative aspect of the tribe has been an important one, a cumulative statement of heritage.

Every quilt is a different artwork in its own right. As John Beardsley, the curator of Gees Bend Exhibition puts it, 'In a lot of quilting traditions, the goal is to follow the pattern, to make a quilt exactly like everyone else's, to show how well you can duplicate the pattern. In Gee's Bend, the goal is exactly the opposite. The goal is to break the pattern. The goal is to look at what other people are doing, improvise on it, change it, substitute materials, change colors, in some way, make it your own.'

That's what makes these people so special. They can achieve remarkable variety within a very limited means and within very restricted patterns.

The New York Times called the quilts "some of the most miraculous works of modern art America has produced."

These quilts show how necessity, purpose, meaning and creativity are at the core of a really strong community that can make its mark as a tribe.

## **Cincinnati Broomball**

Brian Kaepner

This is the story of the [Cincinnati Broomball Association](#) (CBA), a non-profit organization dedicated to growing the sport of Broomball in the Greater Cincinnati area.

If you live where lakes never freeze, this is probably the first time you've ever heard of Broomball. It is a cross between hockey and soccer played on ice. Players run on ice controlling a grapefruit-sized ball using their feet and a "broom" while attempting to score in oversized nets.

How Broomball started is a question still debated to this day. Some say it began with Canadian street-sweepers, who modified their brooms for a harder shot and attached sponges to their shoes for better traction of the ice. While [Wikipedia](#) tells a different story, the fact remains that Broomball has evolved into a highly competitive sport well-known to folks throughout northern USA, Canada, and other wintery-type countries.

A popular intramural sport at Miami University of Ohio, a group of alumni banded together to form the CBA in 1992. This core tribe enlisted dozens of their co-workers, friends and relatives to grow the league. As of March 2008, the CBA has over 250 members with a few of the original die-hards still playing over 16 years later.

The CBA's main function is to purchase blocks of ice-time from area rinks. Ice-time is expensive, so the CBA secures the low-demand slots on Sunday evenings at the historic Cincinnati Gardens during the winter and Northlands Ice Skating Rink in the summer. Operating year-round on a minimal budget, the CBA generates a small amount of revenue to cover referees and equipment.

During the last two years, the CBA has experienced a surge in membership, due to increased awareness generated by new leagues. In 2007, [the Fountain Square Broomball League](#) (FSBL) was started by the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC). With live announcers and instant replay on the big screen overlooking the square, local professionals braved the cold weather to play this unique sport. Also in 2007, the [Dayton Broomball League](#) (DBA) formed, modeling itself

after the CBA.

The success of Cincinnati Broomball can be attributed to passionate & voluntary leadership, both externally and internally. While technically “competition” for dollars & interest, we viewed the FSBL and DBA as partners in our goal to grow the sport of Broomball. Thus, the CBA leadership team made a conscience decision early on to foster and promote the formation of these leagues. We shared insight on game regulations, league management and advertising. Internally, we remained focused on the integrity of the game while keeping it fun & approachable for new players. This means making it easy for people to learn & love the sport of Broomball. It is certainly a one-of-a-kind experience.

Want to play?

## **5000bc.com- How A Tribe Pitches In To Help**

Sean D’Souza

I run a tribe at [5000bc.com](http://5000bc.com). It’s specifically designed to be a tribe. And was always set up with rules and a ‘bible.’ So first you have to get the ‘Brain Audit’ before you’re a member of the 5000bc tribe. So what is unique about this tribe, is that though I created, there was a lot of work done by the tribe themselves.

They created screensavers for 5000bc.com

They acted as guides for new members that joined.

They volunteered to do transcripts for audio interviews.

In some cases, they even uploaded and downloaded files to our server. Yes, we had to trust each other a lot to give the ‘keys’ to the server.

And most importantly, there was a really bad scenario. In our early days, we were in a jam, because the entire membership site crashed, and took all the articles and all the data. Since it was on a proprietary software, we had to build the website from

scratch.

The tribe was without a 'village' for over 17 days.

So here's what they did. They created a waiting room. And congregated in the waiting room. When the site went back up again, not one person asked for their money back. Or complained. On the contrary, we got offers for help.

The tribe runs on the power of the members. I provide the leadership and the information, but the core guiding principle of the tribe at <http://www.5000bc.com> is 'be helpful, be kind, or begone.'

## The Yellow Rose Tribe

Lola Audu

It's an unorthodox business, this task of mending lives by hand. And, the leader is an unlikely shepherd. Her gray hair frames a petite face wizened by timelines...fleshly indentations created by laughter, worry, and who knows what else. But it's her eyes that draw you in. Eyes which have lived in many eons in the course of a lifetime, eyes which are clear and bright. Eyes around which smile lines crinkle a welcome to her little flock of students.

There is no set meet-up place. The group consists of young women in their mid twenties. It does not have a specific organized agenda. There is no formal process of induction. Word of mouth is the primary method of invitation.

But, it is the groups experience with a lady whom I shall call Agnes, which gives an profound glimpse into the power of communal grace. This is ultimately the groups' primary mission. It is from their experiences with this unlikely tutor that many of them will learn a most important lesson.

Unlike most of the members of the small tribe, Agnes is not young at all. She is shy and painfully reserved -barely making eye



contact even when comments are directed specifically at her. She earns her keep through substitute teaching, barely eking out a meager existence. Prior to this, Agnes had lived and worked overseas. The members of the Shepards' tribe are somewhat surprised when Agnes joins the group. Most of them have seen her, but few have initiated personal interaction. They silently wonder why the Shepard has extended this unlikely invitation.

The young women in the group have lived too little of life to know what it is to be broken. They are on the beginning stretches of adult life...new careers, husbands and babies. And yet, the Shepard knows that to fully mature, her flock must not merely brush against Agnes in passing, they need the experience of knowing...

So Agnes becomes a staple of the weekly tribal gatherings. Little, by little, she opens up to share her story. Over the course of a couple of years, Agnes begins to emerge from her shell. Surprisingly, her insights and comments even when given in a halting manner are full of wisdom. Employment opportunities eventually emerge and finally a sponsorship enables her to return back to her first love...overseas missions.

At one of the last meetings, eyes are wet with tears because we know we have witnessed a miracle of beautifully mended life. We have walked alongside one who through brokenness healed us all. The Shepards' wisdom has led the flock aright. We have lived the lesson of the yellow rose which is that life can bring us a fresh start at anytime. The tribe now understands that it's never too late to engage on a journey of new beginnings. As we bid Agnes farewell, we are reminded that although the yellow rose bids adieu, it also ushers in opportunities for the joy of Celebration and Life Changing Adventures.

\*This case study is about a small group of women during the early 90's in a mid-sized church in Grand Rapids, Michigan who were mentored by a woman we called 'the Titus' lady.

## **Tailgating with the Cleveland Browns**

[Bonnie Diczhazy](#)

I'm not sure about how Tailgating works in other cities but here in Cleveland Tailgating has become an art form. It starts in August when the Cleveland Browns take the field for pre-season and ends in about late December or early January depending on how far the Browns go in the play-offs.

Now first let me tell you that I'm not a tailgater. I'd sooner wrestle an alligator than spend the day at a football game. I am however a life-long Clevelander and it's become a pastime of mine to observe this Tailgating phenomenon on the local news from the comfort and warmth of my living room.

I am completely fascinated by the tribe dynamics. For instance it seems the only requirement for membership is to 1) Show up before the game in a vehicle 2) Wear Brown and Orange and 3) Have food (this is a big one). You get bonus points for wearing face paint, decorating your car or having a [cool nick-name](#).

Now doing these three things on their own does not necessarily create a Tribe. So what does? The fans, the camaraderie and the snow. Clevelanders are a pretty friendly bunch and showing up for one of these pre-game festivities make you an automatic Tribe member. People from the East Side and West Side come together and share burgers, hot dogs and ribs on grills set up right next to their cars. Complete strangers will offer you a beverage and a burger. Why, because they love the team. Despite a rather dismal few years Browns fans are loyal. How loyal? They not only tailgate in August, but also in December. I challenge anyone to stand for 10 minutes in a parking lot with the Lake Erie snow machine whipping winds in your face at 40 mph. No wonder the Tribe wears knitted brown and orange full face hats!

Tailgating Tribes have been a fixture in this country for years but I challenge anyone to find one as cohesive and dedicated as the Cleveland Browns fans. The tribe is both ancient and modern. They create fire, wear war paint and chant while at the same time use iPods, Bluetooth Technology and Satellite Radio. They are friends, strangers, fans and comrades, rooting for the wins and sharing the losses. It's a Tribe.

## WarriorsWorld.net Forums

Parker Patton

David Stern Has Me. Well, to be much more specific, the Golden State Warriors have me. I'm a huge fan...and there is nothing I can want to do about it. Despite the fact the team has not won a championship in three decades and has no immediate prospects to do so again (lots of young players on the squad...ah, the smell of potential), I spend hours and thousands of dollars each season to watch/attend many of their games each season. I'm drawn to the speed, the skill, and the excitement in the game.

It turns out, however, that I'm not alone.

I have been part of a fiery and [vibrant online tribe](#) for the past several years made up of people like me...people who have passion the Warriors.

The site is free and the founder just asks for donations and has a few banner ads. The format is simple and the forum technology has been around for years. What makes it special is that people like me..fans who keep a close eye on all developments..have made it their own.

This tribe experiences things together, such as games, player trades, rumors, etc. The site receives so much traffic during the night of the NBA draft that it shuts down..the technology cannot keep up with the tribe. This tribe benefits from the vital tribal component of common experience.

As it turns out, a tribe of scoundrels and malcontent Warriors fans can begin to have some voice. One of the forum posters, [Paul Wong](#) created a movement during the 2007 season and the Warriors adopted his "We Believe" as their official playoff slogan..with Paul's blessing! Most of the bay area journalist that cover the Warriors check the forum, the site is invited to have a representative at media day events, and I am very sure that the Warriors marketing dept for has someone monitoring the forum daily.

An interesting thing is the founder of the site has also set up a few “sister” sites for other Bay Area Sports teams with the exact format and technology. These “sister” sites are for teams that are much more popular and widely followed in the Bay Area (Giants and 49ers), but there isn’t nearly the activity on their forums. Why not? it’s because those fans have not made these forums “theirs” and the tribe has not formed.

I have no connection to the site outside of being a lurker, infrequent poster, and making a small annual donation. If you are not a passionate Warriors fan you won’t be very interested in this semi-lit corner of the web, but I’m sharing it as a case study of an online community tribe that has organically formed and has thrived.

## **Honor Box Chiropractic**

[Reed S. Shiraki, D.C.](#)

Back in the late 80’s to the mid 90’s, the chiropractors in Hawaii made big bucks taking care of only two types of patients: those filing work comp claims and those filing no-fault claims.

The guys paying for all the chiropractic care back then were, of course, the insurance companies. Many chiropractors in Hawaii made it rich by (over)billing these insurance companies and receiving fat checks in the mail.

But, there were two major problems.

First, because the fee schedule of services was so high and private health insurance policies in Hawaii was void of chiropractic benefits, anyone else who wasn’t a victim of a work or car accident injury had a difficult time starting and sustaining chiropractic care. Most chiropractors back then didn’t give a rip about ignoring 99% of the local population because the 1% of the people on the island they did see in their office allowed for such nice compensation.

And the second problem, they would eventually kill the “golden goose.”

In 1998, partly in response to gross over-billing, the Hawaii State government passed a law limiting the fee amount and the number of visits a chiropractor could bill for the treatment of certain insurance cases. With strict limits as to what they could charge and how much they would get, all of a sudden the money stopped rolling in.

When the new law passed, many chiropractors closed shop-- retired or moved to the mainland. It was a tough time for the profession. Those that decided to stick it out were forced to adapt to life without the huge insurance checks.

Me? I graduated from chiropractic school the same year the law went into effect.

So at this time when I started my practice, there was a growing shift occurring among local chiropractors from an insurance based practice to a cash practice. The main problem I had with this was the way many chiropractors were charging their new patients \$2000-\$4000 up front as a pre-payment for a year's worth of spinal adjusting. This meant that many who could not afford this one time payment denied themselves of chiropractic care or those who were desperate for chiropractic care and did not have the cash on hand would go into debt to do so.

I believe chiropractic is not a luxury. It is a health care necessity.

So one month after the 9/11 tragedy, when Hawaii was truly feeling the economic repercussions of the day, I started the Honor Box.

The Honor Box System is a simple way to overcome all financial obstacles that may prevent a patient from receiving the full benefits of chiropractic care. All Hawaiian Pacific Chiropractic patients have the right to set their own fee after the first visit. The standard adjustment fee is \$40. However, all patients must privately examine their own financial situation and if paying \$40 for their adjustment is affordable or if one of the pre-payment programs is within their budget, then this is what should be paid. However, as it is with many individuals and families in Hawaii during these challenging times, if the standard fee is too

expensive and my pre-payment programs cannot fit into their budget, for whatever reason, all patients may pay a lesser fee using the Honor Box. The Honor Box fee is decided by the patient at whatever amount which he or she determines to be the most honest, reasonable, and affordable amount that gets as close to the \$40 standard as possible. Honor Box payments are made anonymously. We do not track, record or monitor what gets paid into the Honor Box.

I have aggressively marketed the Honor Box since its inception. It is my purple cow. My ideavirus.

## **Tribal test: would you lie to save your friend?**

Mallen Baker

A couple of years ago I travelled to South Korea to speak at a conference on corporate social responsibility, hosted by a remarkable group called The Beautiful Foundation. Great name. In Korean, one of the words, Areum, actually mean the full amount that we can embrace in our arms, such as a big tree. When you add Daun, you arrive at the ‘proper amount of richness or affluence for one person’.

On the one hand, I was invited to the event as a leader of the worldwide tribe of people committed to the promotion of social responsibility in business - an ally for them in the promotion of ideas that are counter-cultural in one of the most tribal of societies. On the other, I was a complete outsider from a completely different tribe altogether. I saw evidence of both during my days there.

One of the things they had done was to create ‘The Beautiful Shop’, which was a second hand clothes and goods shop that raised money for charity. The concept is very well established in the UK with a number of charities such as Oxfam and Help the Aged running shops across the country. But it was a concept that provoked some resistance, even outrage in Korea.

Why? This is a country that only within living memory clawed its way out of poverty. People that remember poverty but now

enjoy affluence do not buy second hand anything.

But the idea of the shop - that it is good to share with those less fortunate - was one that they promoted with gusto and they looked to me for ideas, and encouragement.

When I visited the shop, the TV cameras were there to celebrate the first anniversary of this strange phenomenon. I was interviewed as the visiting guru. The first question: “What do you think of sharing?”. I tried desperately to come up with any answer more profound than “it’s a good thing”.

But ultimately, this was also a very different tribe. The rules are different, and I wasn’t well enough prepared. I was very well hosted by The Beautiful Foundation. One of the young women that worked for them showed us foreign speakers around, and made sure we were OK. At the end of conference celebratory dinner, I did what I would always naturally do, and told the group how well this individual had looked after us, and what a credit she was to The Beautiful Foundation. Embarrassed looks all round.

I found out why when reading the etiquette book on the flight home (of course, they didn’t sell that particular book in the airport at the UK!). To praise a group member in front of the group is to single them out. In Korean (and moreso in Japanese) culture, the group is all. I should have praised them, not her, for being wonderful hosts. As it was, I embarrassed her and her group.

Fons Trompenaars illustrates the differences well when he asks audiences across the world whether, if they were the only witness to an accident where their friend was driving too fast, would they lie to save their friend? Rules based, individualistic cultures like the US and UK tend to say no, we would not - and what’s more they have no right to ask. Group oriented cultures, with Korea right at the end of the scale, say of course they would - this person is my friend.

Ironically, both groups take the others’ answer as a sign of their untrustworthiness. It all depends what the rules of your tribe are.

## The power of crazy

[Sean Johnson](#)

When I was in college, our marketing student group set a ridiculous goal for itself. We resolved to help every member (about 70 of them) find a job or an internship.

We hadn't the slightest idea how we were going to accomplish it. Honestly, it started out as a recruiting tactic. But something interesting happened - once it was down on paper and announced to the group, it became real. We didn't have a plan, but a mental shift took place. "We're insane" turned into "we can figure this out."

The group officers started having lunch with local professionals, picking their brains on what makes a college student stand out in a sea of sameness. Those conversations turned into a series of presentations on "image management", "the pursuit of interesting projects" and "selfless networking".

We did our best to convince the members of our group that college could be about more than classes and parties. That literally nothing was keeping them from doing amazing things that would not only guarantee a great job but would lay the foundation for a spectacular career.

A surprising number of students bought into the vision. They started taking class projects and transforming them into "portfolio builders". While other students were turning in vanilla papers, they were submitting designed, bound pieces that more resembled annual reports than semester papers. Their presentations were like agency pitches, in stark contrast to the drab PowerPoint presentations of their peers. Classwork became opportunities to create things they'd be proud of long after graduation.



But they not only transformed themselves, they transformed the group in ways we didn't even expect. They started a non-profit ad agency. They brought in comedians from around the country for a contest to raise money for charity. They built a database of industries members were looking to work for and contacted local companies in those industries, finding out if they had internship programs... or if they were interested in creating one.

It was amazing to watch. We won 8 awards at the national conference. A few members won the school's case competition. One of our graduating members won the school's award for student leadership.

In the end, not everyone found a job or an internship. As much as we tried, some students weren't interested. But many more did than would have otherwise. More importantly, they developed new habits - they learned to think big, to be creative and make things happen. And their future careers benefited.

That's the power of a big goal. If our goals were more "realistic", none of that would have happened. We would have had a couple speakers, a few parties and students would add another bullet to their resumes.

Setting a crazy goal forced us to think bigger. It led to ideas we never would have thought of otherwise. And it gave the organization a vision that actually inspired our members to change who they were.

How big is your tribe's vision? How can you make it bigger?

## **Ex Libris**

[Jens Lapinski](#)

In 2002, I joined a tribe. We were six undergraduate, postgraduate, postdoc, and post experience students from the University of Cambridge. We were from England, Germany, Australia, Greece, Israel, and the US. We had all studied completely different

subjects. I think the youngest was 22, the oldest 30. We had never really met before.

We all joined the new research associate program of start-up called Library House. The company was based in Cambridge, UK. It was building a database of start-ups. Our mission was to write profiles and review all the technology start-up companies in the Cambridge Cluster. We covered over 1,000 companies in 9 months. During that time, the team became a tribe.

The leader of our tribe was a guy called Kjell. Kjell was born in the US, but grew up in Norway. He was a former reconnaissance officer in the Norwegian Army, had visited Wharton as an undergraduate, then spend time as a strategy consultant and working at DELL, and then did an MBA at Cambridge. He had the habit of putting so much snus in his mouth that he couldn't talk properly. He could also drink more beer than two of us combined. Provided you did understand what he was saying, you realized that Kjell was an extraordinarily sharp thinker, very hard working, and loyal beyond what is usually considered normal.

Kjell formed us into a tribe. We were put in a boiler room, measuring some 10 by 10 feet. We had a computer and telephone and that was it. We worked whenever we wanted, for however long in the night we wanted, how much we wanted, and how we wanted. What mattered was what Kjell called the 'Umph': "Make shit happen!". We got free drinks, free coffee and free pizza.

And yes, there was plenty of beer and wine, too.

The tribe grew rapidly from five to ten, later twenty people. The hiring criteria were simple. We were looking for very smart people who could make it happen. We needed people who had an interest to learn. To grow. Who had a deep interest in tech start-ups. Who would excel at what they did, because they loved doing it. Of ten people who applied, less than one got in. We were extremely selective. When people didn't perform, they left. There was enormous pride in the tribe. We were proud of the work that we were doing and proud to be part of the tribe. We celebrated ourselves all the time. We had enormous fun.

The spirit of the tribe that was formed in the early days of Library House has outlasted any individual team member who left. Some tribe members have formed companies together. The rest are working in dozens of companies across virtually all industry

sectors. Regardless of what we do, the bond of the tribe still connects us. There is something that we share. We are all Ex Libris.

And we still celebrate that whenever we meet.

## The Active Rain Tribe

Sharon Simms

[Active Rain](#) has been an extremely successful tribe, now numbering about 103,000 members. It's an online real estate blog, started just over 2 years ago. Apart from being an excellent source of information and dialogue, available to members and most posts to the public as well, it has developed great relationships among the tribe. Many are online relationships, from casual to deep caring. Many are phone relationships as well. And many are in person relationships, developed either at Active Rain gatherings around the country or through individual travels and arrangements to meet.

Some of the relationships are mentor-mentee; some are colleagues; some are personal friendships; some are combinations of all three. Through posts and comments the members often get a sense of the writer's personality, skills, ethics and interests.

The development of the Active Rain tribe has been viral and snowballing. Founders Jonathan Washburn and Matt Heaton had a creative and valuable idea, ran with it, and have watched it grow and thrive. Some of the more active tribe members have actually joined the staff at Active Rain.

Why are individuals blogging and commenting during the wee hours of the morning (still up, or early rising) as well as throughout the day? Because they're passionate. Because Active Rain has become part of their lives.

Certainly tribe members share their real estate experiences, evaluate tools, review situations, share expertise on software and on blogging in general. There's so much more: when there's news of a forest fire, or a hurricane, or a bridge collapse - many call

each other to find out how a particular tribe member is faring. What can the others do to help? Is sickness or death a concern for someone? Others are there to help.

There's a business benefit, of course. There's money to be made from referring business to each other, as well as the confidence of knowing a client will be well taken care of by a respected and trusted colleague. There's also money to be made from the public reading these blogs, learning about the community that someone is serving, and contacting the member to represent them in a transaction.

Not only are there official tribe gatherings, but lots of informal ones as well. As members attend a conference or course in an area, they'll often inquire who else will be there, and plan to get together. When one is traveling on business or pleasure, they'll often call an Active Rain member that they know in the area, and arrange to meet. Many members share in the successes and events of the others' lives. Something you read on Active Rain or in a newspaper or magazine will cause you to pick up the phone and communicate with a member that you care about - or just someone you want to get to know.

There are no fees to join, no requirements to stay a member. Those who truly get involved get the most benefit. That's part of what a tribe's all about.

## **Rise and Fall of Rome in Small Town America**

[Eric Baudais](#)

This past weekend, I was inducted into the leadership of Stillwater's gaming community. We went to Tulsa, Oklahoma for the [Tokyo in Tulsa convention](#). During the convention we ran the Legend of the 5 Rings (L5R) Live Action Roleplaying (LARP) game, an oriental adventure game set in a fictional feudal Japan. The game ran smoothly while generating a lot of interest from new players about roleplaying games. Some of the experienced players and leaders of the Tulsa gaming tribe wanted to see how we play locally. We went to Tulsa to generate interest in our gaming convention in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Things are looking

good for [StillCon](#). The gaming tribe is well on its way to coming together and being rebuilt. But I should start at the beginning. This case study is about the rise and fall of our gaming tribe in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

My story starts with a couple, Peter and Penelope, loving roleplaying games and opening a gaming store in Stillwater. The store was Ivory and Steel and it was heaven when I went to college. You see, Stillwater is divided into two main tribes. One is the students who attend Oklahoma State University (OSU) and the folks who work in and around the town. The store combined both worlds. The town folks ran the store and some of the games while the students became the players for the games and bought the books and equipment to play. So the tribe became self-sustaining with the students playing the games, having fun and buying stuff and the town folk working the store and the games for the students to have fun. It was a symbiotic relationship which worked well for many years. Peter and Penelope were more than the owners though. They were the “old folks”. We came to them with our problems and issues in our games and they would help us resolve them. They cared for and nurtured the games. They realized the games were the service they provided the community which supported the store. Half of the store was dedicated to the games we played there. One of our current leaders, Mike, remembers being at the store from Friday afternoon until Sunday night playing Warhammer 40,000 with few breaks in between.

Eventually, Peter and Penelope left Stillwater and John bought the store from them. John was a fellow gamer from the “old days” but didn’t understand business nor how to handle conflict. He almost drove the store into the ground until he hired a recent college graduate, Mike, to run it. Mike ran the store as manager for several years. While having good business skills, he lacked conflict resolution skills. For many years, his decisions pissed off several leaders within the town’s gaming community running the games. The community started to fracture. Meanwhile, the internet was gaining momentum and the store had trouble competing with Amazon and eBay for the student’s business. People started to spread rumors about Mike being a nasty guy and the store lost new business and interest from the students. Eventually the store went out of business.

So the roleplaying game store is still out of business in Stillwater. One of the big events the store ran was a gaming convention for over 10 years. It was called “SteelCon”, named after the store. We are trying to revive it and morph it into “StillCon”. Originally it was based on the games ran by the store. We are trying to make it community based and play games the community enjoys. Mike is still the leader but he now has a wife and a few children who have improved his conflict resolution

skills. He also has recruited several gaming leaders from the community to help plan and run the convention. We don't have nearly all the factions in Stillwater but we hope a convention will attract them and we can unite the gaming community again around the fun games we play.

## The Heart Kids Tribe

[Dr.Mani Sivasubramanian](#)

What sets a tribe apart from a group, community or cult is the triad of A's - ancestry, association and agenda.

A tribe of supporters, volunteers and donors epitomize them, and are making the dream of an Indian heart surgeon come true, saving the lives of children born with heart defects.

Ancestry of a tribe can be genetic - or intellectual. In this case, the common origin is becoming aware of congenital heart disease (CHD) through Dr.Mani Sivasubramanian, mainly over the Internet or by word of mouth. Many early tribe members are business owners who first heard of the doctor through his articles and reports on building an Internet business.

The ancestry was intentional, because the strategy all along was to 'reach the people who could reach many others'. Doing this on the World Wide Web was easier, cheaper and faster than any other alternative.

Association and engagement of tribe members is the next important facet that nurtures and nourishes the tribe, keeps it going, and growing.

A blog where updates were posted for all tribe members to follow progress, an email newsletter sharing heart-warming stories of families helped through their donations, and photo archives featuring smiling little kids who had received treatment were all helpful in creating a bond.

Discussions among tribe members spilled over onto public forums, social networks and blog comments, reaching a fresh, entirely new audience, and grew the tribe organically.

Donors and supporters are proudly acknowledged and valued, both publicly and in private communication. Tribe heroes are showcased to the others. Focus is however always maintained on the real heroes of this story - the brave little warriors who battle their heart birth defects.

Agenda is where this tribe excels. The energy with which tribe members get behind any initiative to spread congenital heart defects awareness or raise money to fund operations is inspiring and exciting.

February 14th is observed as a 'Day for Hearts', and typically drives 10,000 or more visitors to the awareness website. The annual Heart Kids Blogathon raises over \$15,000 within 24 hours.

And even during non-event periods, tribe members add trickles to the flood, buzzing about CHD, displaying button ads on blogs and websites, mentioning the tribe's work on their online property, or even in private conversations with family and friends.

The size of this far-flung, worldwide tribe is difficult to measure, but certainly runs into thousands. What matters is that it is growing - in size, in influence, and in reach.

What makes it happen? Three P's. Passion. Purpose. Persistence.

Passion for helping unfortunate children from under-privileged backgrounds is the shared force that pulled the tribe together.

Purpose in every activity, event and communication that is clear, explicit, and deeply satisfying keeps the tribe integrated over years.

Persistence in achieving the goal, reaching out for a seemingly hopeless dream, spurred on by knowledge that the end is worth the wait are traits that each tribe member has internalized.

With the three A's and the three P's, ANY tribe can survive and succeed.

## **Queen of the Garage Sale Triiibe**

[Bonnie Diczhazy](#)

For the past few years our neighborhood has been hosting a community garage sale. Basically the community sets the date, gets a permit and places an ad in the newspaper. Each homeowner is then responsible for hosting their own garage sale on their property.

Now I'm not sure how garage sales work in other parts of the country but here in the mid-west people take these sales very seriously and there are rules. For instance, if you say you're going to open at 8am then open at 7am. Serious buyers are early birds and no one likes to wait! Another must is having a spectacular ad, big, bold, wordy works. On to the sale...you must have stuff, lots and lots of stuff. 3 Flintstone mugs, a lighter and your grandmother's bowling ball won't cut it. People will turn on you if only have a few items out and no one wants to see an angry tribe of buyers. And for goodness sake have good signage, no one can read an index card taped to a fire hydrant!

For some reason my tribe of neighbors didn't get the garage sale handbook or if they did they chose not to read it because the first year no one followed the rules. People had haphazard signage, sub par merchandise and worst of all a really tiny ad in the newspaper. I however thought ahead. I put my own huge ad in the paper and festooned the area with balloons and signs. My front yard looked like an episode of Sanford & Son (I had the antiques and the junk), I had mayhem, but most of all I had customers! Soon other members of the Tribe were flocking over to my yard. They were impressed and amazed. How did I do it?



What was my secret? I shared my knowledge, I became the leader. I was the garage sale Queen.

Since that first year we gained a small local following and now get regulars. We've now got a great tribe of buyers and sellers. I myself have scaled down a bit and don't have the notoriety I once had. New Tribe leaders have stepped up and now wear my crown. I still have stuff, but not as much stuff as I used to, mainly because I've sold everything and am trying not to acquire more. I'm actually a reformed pack rat and my dirty little secret is that I was the Garage Sale Queen of my old neighborhood too.

I never had any intention of becoming Queen of the Garage Sale Tribes, it just sort of happened...a momentary blip. It wasn't rocket science. I didn't solve world hunger or win a Nobel Prize I simply lead a Tribe of people who needed a leader. I was the Tribal Queen for a day. Sometimes it's as simple as that.

## IFYE

### [Pamela Waugh](#)

I joined a great Tribe in 1971 – International 4-H Youth Exchange Alumni. This is a Tribe of Exchanges who represented their county in an exchange program to promote Peace through Understanding. Each person traveled from their home country to another country - this first started just between the USA and other Countries. While in that country the Exchange would live with rural families in the host country to learn more of their ways and to let them get to know more about the person they were hosting. This was for a period of from 6 months to 9 months originally but then some programs only went for about 6 weeks. Starting as a program associated with 4-H because it was supported and organized through the Agricultural Extension Program based at Land Grant Colleges.

The details have changed about participation through the years but the main focus has always been Peace through Understanding. This tribe started in 1948 by exchanges taking part. This is a tribe that is ongoing with various persons as the

leader as they are able, have renewed interest, and can meet together. The tribe supports the program that produces the tribe's members through monetary contributions, guidance, and training. Newsletters and e-mail are means of updating information nationally for tribe members. Many states have their own division of the larger tribe who may meet more often than once a year for formal meetings.

The IFYE Tribe is a state of mind as well as a formal organization. Participation begins for many reasons but the participants learn the natural goodness of everyone. They believe in the inherent love for other human beings regardless of politics and country barriers.

## **First Tribes Matter**

[Bonnie Diczhazy](#)

I'll bet one of the most important times in your life was high school. Be it good or bad we seem to be able to recall the smallest details with vivid recollection. I remember who was best friends with who, the smell of the cafeteria, school dances, teachers...I may not think about it everyday but it's all stored up there and can be recalled at a moments notice. Your class is one of the first Tribes you'll remember.

It's been 20 years now since high school and my Tribe is spread all over the world yet we are still able to connect via the internet and our Tribe is still pretty much the same as it was 20 years ago! We're a little older, wiser and grayer but we still can laugh about gym class, Honors Biology and the dress code. We have fond memories and tribe loyalty.

First tribes matter, they shape our lives and determine our future. Whether it be a high school, a first job, your first car or even opening your first checking account. People remember their first experiences. What if companies focused on giving people fantastic, memorable first experiences? On the flip side what happened the last time you had a horrible first experience? Did you stay in the Tribe or run the other way?

## Squandering your Tribe

[Rob Chant](#)

In the late '90s, I discovered a mind-opening record label called em:t (yes, that's meant to be a colon). This was before the days of easy access to the web and social networking. I found them on one of many forays into second-hand music markets and the like. The albums seemed rare; little did I know at the time, but the label had gone out of business just as I found them... hence the scarcity.

Skip on a few years, and you find me searching for em:t on-line for the first time. I found a fan site, and, much to my enthusiasm, discovered a thriving tribe of hardcore em:t fans. I also discovered the label's history, got in touch with some of the original artists, and discovered just how much second-hand em:t CDs cost on eBay.

Through this fan site, I also managed to get on board with the re-launch of the label, doing branding, design and marketing (they happened to be based quite near to me). This was in 2003. And this is where the case study starts properly.

The management of the new em:t had little or no connection, attachment or interest with the original label. I was stunned. They were sitting on top of an absolutely amazing, committed tribe of fans, and yet most of the label manager's sentences used to begin with, "It's great to have lots of fans already, but..." He also took pains to point out that the original of the word 'fan' is in 'fanatic'. I guess that demonstrates his attitude pretty well.

I could understand the new team wanting to put their own mark on the project, but I did fight hard at least to keep the old branding and work with a lot of the original artists. Even trying to keep the brand and overall aesthetic relatively pure was a hard task (the original label had been very strongly branded, and that branding was a very strong part of the cult around the label). The new manager only really wanted one thing from the tribe he had inherited -- to buy the records. And he wasn't

willing to do anything for them in return.

So what's the moral of the story? That it's possible to take a really strong tribe that someone's carefully built, and squander it within just a handful of product releases. So be careful! The new version of the label folded pretty quickly, needless to say, and everyone was left with a pretty bad taste in their mouths (especially the fans themselves).

In retrospect, there's so much that could have been done to build and reward the tribe, especially that the web was now a big thing (it's amazing the following that the original label had had, given they had no web to help them build it). There was a huge amount of promise there that went to waste.

## More than running

[Claudia Rosani](#)

Few brands have the following that the Disney brand does (with supporters all over the world). Few individual sports have the social side that running does, with clubs everywhere and runners always happy to offer help and advice to others.

It was only a matter of time before these two worlds collided.

For over 15 years now the Walt Disney World marathon in Florida has been a popular event, garnering more and more participants every year. It probably started out as a way to increase revenue in quieter months of the year (the marathon is in January) but has grown to become a whole weekend's worth of events for the whole family, including 5K family races, a half marathon and the ever popular diaper dash for the littlest ones. This is a great marathon for beginners because the course is easy, the supporters great and photo opportunities abound.

A couple of years ago someone had the bright idea to put together a website that talked not just about Disney, but about

running at Disney. After all, the company had expanded to other events including triathlons, shorter races just for women and many others. So where could a Disney and running fan get his fix? Disneyrunning.com was born.

This site now boasts a very friendly forum where people can not only discuss what is the best place to stay in the resort or how to best purchase attraction tickets, but also what running trails are the best ones and where everyone shares training plans and works together towards the main goal. The site has become Mecca for all those newbies that sign up for the marathon and, having never done one before, have no idea what to expect or how to best prepare for the race.

This is a tribe in the truest sense – where everyone shares not just a passion for running but a passion for Disney. There is a shared goal and clear leadership and is everything a Disney running fan needs to feel supported and ready come race day.

## **David and I**

### [Barry Adams](#)

Thursday afternoon of the 2008 camp week I found David crying in a corner. I walked up to him, gave him a gentle hug and asked him why he was crying. In his usual stuttered, vowel-heavy but clear voice he said “I cry because I am happy.”

David is 30 years old and both physically and mentally handicapped. He is bound to a wheelchair, as he cannot walk for more than a very short distance and then only when aided by someone sufficiently strong to support his not inconsiderable bulk. He has a mental capacity the equivalent of a child less than a third his age.

I see David once a year when he joins our annual summercamp for mentally handicapped youth. Outside of the camp I have no contact with David. Just eight days a year I spend time with him, help him with clothing, eating, showering, moving around, and all the fun things the camp provides.

The camp is a magical environment. We're secluded from the Real World, living in our own magical realm for one week. We are free to be who we want, unshackled from the constraints that our parents, our families, our friends, our employers and all of society place on us, wittingly and otherwise. We are free to be.

Outside of the camp David and I cannot be friends. I work in high-stress corporate environments. I have a demanding but fulfilling long distance relationship. I have trouble finding the right balance between work, family, friends and my partner.

David spends most of his time in a specially adapted home with a handful of other handicapped people and a small 24/7 staff of medically trained professionals. He often comes home for the weekends where his parents smother him with their well-intentioned care.

Our worlds are not compatible. In our daily lives we are both a part of different tribes, tribes that very rarely mingle. When corporate environments intrude upon the realms where David and his peers reside, it is often staged and permeated with poorly concealed discomfort. As a result I spend no more than eight days a year in David's company. Yet David has had such an immensely positive impact on my life that I cannot call him anything else but my dearest and closest friend.

The camp is organized by a tribe of volunteers that comes together specifically for this purpose. Outside of the camp most of the volunteers rarely see each other. There are some bonds among us outside of the camp, as many volunteers are drawn in through friends or relations, but as a whole the group is barely connected.

Yet we are all exceptionally close friends, a very intimate tribe formed by an annual life-altering experience that is exceedingly difficult to explain. We have shared something that most people would find hard to understand, and it binds us on a level that transcends the boundaries of conventional friendship.

David cried on Thursday, a few days before this year's camp ended, because he was truly happy. I cried with him then, because his happiness made me happy. It had been a fun week, with lots of great activities. We'd sung and danced together, we'd created things together, we'd shared jokes and laughter and solved puzzles and overcame challenges. We were tired from the exertions,

but sad that it was going to end so soon.

I thought I knew what happiness was, surrounded as I am with material wealth, a loving family and a strong relationship. But that moment of shared happiness with David, and all the preceding moments throughout the years I've been a part of the camp, have truly taught me what it means to be happy. David's tears of joy represent the apex of my own personal fulfillment.

## Ironing the sheets

[Becky Blanton](#)

On any summer day in the south you can still see them flapping in the hot breezes or hanging limp in the mid-day swelter...bedsheets drying on a clothesline... They billow and snap and soak up the smell of sunshine and fresh cut-grass. But for all their freshness, line-dried sheets have one thing going against them - they're stiff. To bring out all that summery freshness line-dried sheets must be ironed. Ironing breaks the stiffness down so they become soft, inviting. After a proper ironing line-dried sheets become the thing of childhood dreams, a wonder to sleep on, to wrap round your shoulders in the coolness of a summer morning when a blanket is too hot, but a sheet, thin and light is just right.

But when I was 8 years old my mother went to work to put my father through school. And she stopped ironing the sheets. There was just no time. Then one day I came in from school to see her ironing sheets and I asked her why.

"Your grandmother's coming to visit and I want her to sleep well." We were poor then - my dad in school, mom working two jobs. Grandmother didn't get anything special in terms of food or accommodations, but my mother did what she could to make her comfortable. She put fresh flowers she picked from the yard in a jar by the bed. She placed the nicest and biggest towels on a chair by the bed. She ironed the sheets.

I watched. Jealous. Only 8 years old I was too young, she thought, to iron my own sheets.

Over the next five years that's how we knew company my mother cared for or wanted to impress was coming. She ironed the sheets. It set the tone for my brother and I. Not everyone got ironed sheets. The visiting cousin who was "living in sin" with his girlfriend didn't get ironed sheets. He got the couch and a sleeping bag. And from my mat on the floor I could tell his girlfriend, who was given my bed, didn't get ironed sheets either. The uncle who came in drunk at 3 a.m. because he couldn't remember how to get to his own home didn't get ironed sheets.

My brother and I eventually made a joke of it, "She's worth ironing the sheets for," was a high compliment. It was a small touch, an intimate and private one. No one ever got up the next morning and said, "Wow, thanks for ironing the sheets," or "Gee, I sure slept good on those freshly ironed sheets." Yet such a simple thing shouted (in my mind) quality and caring.

As I grew up I noticed if you spent the night at a Motel 6 or the "Dew Check In," chances were the sheets were not ironed. Clean maybe, but not pressed. But at any Five Star hotel or even at a small hotel where the managers care - the sheets are ironed. I still remember this no matter where I go and as silly as it seems, it's how I feel welcomed and pampered - the sheets are ironed. At home I use a hot dryer and if I get them out in time I rarely iron sheets anymore myself.

But today I pulled a new set of sheets out of the dryer where they sat crumpled all night. They haven't had time to get "broken in" yet so I started to just throw them back in the dryer. But I wanted to get to bed and the iron was already set up. So I ironed them. I listened to the steam hiss and watched the fabric billow and then buried my face in the warm softness. I thought of my grandmother, my mother, my brother and all the ironed and un-ironed sheets that have gone before me. I don't run a hotel, but I have now vowed to resurrect the phrase and to start looking for ways in my business where I can "iron the sheets."

## **Passion, Chaos, Giver's Ego and The Lesson**

Chef Keem



One of our most popular fellow Squidoo lensmasters reported in the “Chatter Box” of the SquidU forum about her extensive losses through severe storms and flooding in her area. The damage to her property’s floors, walls, plumbing and electrical burdened her with the prospect of expensive repair bills. As a disabled person, she lives on a small monthly income and can’t afford fixing her home without financial help from the outside.

Many comments in the forum offered emotional and spiritual support. A tribe emerged - lensmasters showed that they care. That gave me some ideas:

1. We all flood her Squidoo pages with visits, comments, and positive ratings. The lensrankings will increase and provide her with extra royalty income.
2. We’ll feature her PayPal address so the tribe can contribute directly.
3. We’ll create a new page called “Lensmasters helping Lensmasters” and introduce a new recipient of our tribal love for every following month.

### The Passion

The energy in the forum was amazing! Everybody got excited about helping our friend. Within a few hours, over 70 people left comments like “count me in”, “I’m on board”, “how can we help more”, and so on. Hundreds more viewed the forum posts and acted on our call without leaving comments. I emailed to HQ and some of our community leaders with a request for support.

### The Chaos

HQ informed me that a “ratings parade” cannot be officially supported - it would not be fair to other lensmasters. Several of our more seasoned members voiced similar concerns: What if other folks feel that they are just as deserving of our support? When will it be their turn to receive some attention? Who will decide which lensmaster should be the next squidlove recipient?

Shouldn't we better wait for an organic emergence of our "next case", rather than pick and choose monthly candidates who might not even be comfortable with all the attention directed toward their personal issues?

### The Giver's Ego

I must admit, honestly - being the initiator and leader of such a successful and passionate movement feels good. Adrenaline flows, and any attempt to slow us down feels like "rain on my parade". Why should it be so difficult to help our friends in distress? Do we really need a bunch of rules when there is obvious passion and willingness to contribute? (If it's too hard I'll give up.)

### The Lesson

A tribe is made of human beings, with all our brilliance and weaknesses in the same mix. That's why we need guidelines, rules, leadership, and discipline. Without these organizational safeguards the danger of premature burn-out is imminent. We need to recognize our limitations but soar with our possibilities.

Our lensmaster friend received a number of donations along with a slight increase in royalty payouts. At the same time, FEMA acted quickly and provided additional funds within days from the date of inspection. Synergy?

## **A Mary Kay Senior Director -- Joy Shultz**

### Jaguar Julie

Mary Kay representatives are some of the most determined triibe leaders that I think I've encountered. Joy Shultz is such a leader.

Joy is a Senior Director here in Jacksonville, FL who became involved selling Mary Kay many years ago when she left her job as a female executive with Wachovia Bank. She was accustomed to being a leader at the bank and naturally assumed such a role with Mary Kay. She worked up the ranks to become a Senior Director after recruiting women as reps.

She has earned a variety of cars throughout the years, but never went for the pink Cadillac. This year, she will probably be banking the monthly allowance rather than taking the car.

I first met Joy 8 years ago while tailgating at a Jacksonville Jaguars game. Since that time, I've attended numerous Mary Kay functions which Joy organizes -- and even did a 'purse party' coupled with her Mary Kay merchandise. My husband has known Joy for probably more than 20 years and will tell you that she is the LEADER in the family -- that she is used to being the director of more things than Mary Kay. I think that's why she has been so successful at selling. She's a born leader who is creative and has that drive and determination to go after her goals -- not just to earn that car.

More than 33,000 women across the world have become Independent Sales Directors. In the United States, more than 14,000 women have attained this goal. Approximately 500 women worldwide have become Independent National Sales Directors, the highest status within the independent sales force. In 2007 sales of Mary Kay® products reached \$2.4 billion in wholesale sales.

Mary Kay is not for everyone -- to be successful and earn a living, it really is necessary to become a 'leader of a tribe' so to speak. The Independent Sales Director works with the women that she has recruited to help make them more successful ... to ultimately one day become her own 'leader of a tribe.'

P.S. When you can get Joy away from her Mary Kay, it's a rare occasion. The picture of the two of us was taken at a New Year's Eve party. Oh, I think I bought some Mary Kay merchandise that night! Ah, Joy -- the eternal sales person.

## Junior travel guides

Tsahi Levent-Levi

When I was in the ninth grade, our school offered some of the kids to go to a training during the summer vacation to become junior travel guides (it has a better name in Hebrew). The purpose of this is to train kids to become travel guides and then send them off in school trips of lower grades from school, assisting teachers and external travel guides during the trips.

I went with about 5 more kids from my school to the training program, a program which takes two weeks. The training itself was intensive, and I had the opportunity of meeting a lot of other kids from other schools from around Israel, including 10 more guys from my own hometown but from different schools. At the end of the program, we cried from having to leave each other.

The guys from my hometown became my best friends since then, each bringing his own group of additional friends. We ended up hanging out on weekends in groups of more than 20 kids, going to the movies or to the local pizza place. We did large birthday parties, scheduled parties with no good reason and more.

Nothing substantial connected us besides that two weeks of training we did together - we don't really share interests, we have occupations - but the time we spent since then makes most of these guys my best friends up until today - I like inviting them over for dinner and cook, they were the people I wanted next to me when I was told my father passed away, they were the people I wanted at my wedding.

I think that an intensive event, either designed or made accidentally can bring people together and glue them for a long time.

## You don't have to spend money

## [Jane Lindsey](#)

Up until 2007 I was a seller of home grown cut flowers at the farm gate. My tribe was easy to identify – it was the 40 or so people who drove up every Friday and bought themselves flowers for the weekend. Many stayed for a coffee, wandered round the cutting garden, there was a specific community and people would arrange to meet friends at my stand.

Then, in August, an increase in mortgage interest rate coincided with a hike in petrol prices. By Friday the tribe had no money left in their wallets – no £5 for a treat. They stopped coming, cars decreased from 40 to 3 within one week – you can't be part of a farm gate tribe if you don't buy anything.

The demise of this side of my business was sudden and shocking. It made me think about how I had created a tribe which seemed welcoming but where you couldn't actually belong if you didn't spend money.

I had worked on having fantastic customer service, on providing a great product, but people were either in or out of the tribe – and when money became tight people had no option but to leave.

In this financially difficult time, people have to make difficult decisions and it is often the personal treats that get cut first to balance the budget.

I now recognise that the most important thing is to keep people in my tribe, to lower the bar so that people can belong just because they want to. They no longer have to prove their membership by spending time or money. Of course it will need to be a much bigger tribe to work out financially, but only by stopping thinking of my tribe as primarily a source of income can I garner the community to make the business succeed.

Over the past year I have found that it is preserving the tribe that matters most; no tribe, no business.

# GetUp.org.au

## [Tom Dawkins](#)

In 2007 in Australia 12 years of conservative government came to a dramatic end in a landslide that saw even the sitting Prime Minister John Howard lose his seat, only the second Prime Minister in Australia's history to do so. Amongst the organizations who could take their share of the credit for this stunning result there was one which stood out for the grassroots and distributed nature of its contribution, fueled by the energy of thousands of activists, many of them getting involved in politics for the first time. That organization was [GetUp!](#), a progressive website based on online activism model first exemplified by MoveOn.org in the US and which by election day had over 230,000 members, or just shy of an astonishing 2% of the voting-age population of the country.

Journalist Michelle Gratton described them as “one of the big innovations of the campaign.” GetUp!'s success during the 2007 election is testimony of the power of tribes which choose to act on their values and beliefs in coordinated ways. Such groups can change the world.

But let's back up a bit and think about where GetUp! came from and how and why they so quickly grew to such influence.

GetUp! was founded by young Australians Jeremy Heimans and Dave Madden in early 2005. Fresh from involvement in online activism during the 2004 American Presidential elections they saw a need to create a platform for new voices and a new type of activism in Australia. As Jeremy says “we saw an opportunity to bypass all those calcified institutions and create something that created power and influence that could help change the country in a much more organic way.”

In 2005 the need for this new locus of activism and involvement was starkly apparent. The parties themselves had long-since ceased to be a forum for debate or citizenship, their tiny membership focused almost exclusively on internal battles and turf-wars. Progressive organizations were siloed into exclusive areas of interest, competing for activists, funding and attention. And

no-one was doing effective web-based organizing.

The key insight of Jeremy and Dave was that people are values driven, not issue-driven, and they think in terms of multi-issues. Australia had seen huge spikes in activism around particular issues; the Iraq War, Aboriginal Reconciliation and against Mandatory Detention of refugees, but these spikes came and went without coalescing into something bigger. GetUp! was able to draw these people together into a critical mass by offering a single location where people could easily get active on the issues they care about. As Gratton observed “the net helps overcome the financial and geographic disadvantages suffered by small, unfinancial and scattered political groups. It is unsurpassed for ease and convenience.”

GetUp! has grown in reach and influence due to the energy and activism of its members, who sign petitions, forward them to friends and donate money to fuel campaigns. During the election they raised over \$250,000 in 72 hours (more than a dollar for each member!) to put a climate change ad on air. They letterboxed and handed out voter information. On election day hundreds of them volunteered in the Prime Ministers seat and were credited for his humiliating defeat.

GetUp! succeeded because it met a strongly-felt need, for people to express themselves on and make a contribution to changing the direction of the country, and it did so with very low barriers to participation and in a way that emphasized the network effect of its members. You didn't have to agree with everything GetUp! campaigned on, but so long as you agreed with something you became part of the tribe, provided with regular opportunities for participation and a sense that your voice mattered. And, given this sense, people found they wanted to promote this opportunity to others, donate money and give their time both online and off, doing their bit to bring about a new beginning in Australia's politics.

As of writing (August 15 2008) GetUp! now has 283,455 members, making it by far the per-capita largest such group in the world.

## **BURNING MAN**

## Tom Dawkins

Burning Man is unlike any festival you've ever been to. It takes place in the middle of one of the harshest deserts on earth, in temperatures which often head over 100F (38C) by day and drop towards freezing at night. It has no line-up, no headline acts, and no promotion. Attendees are required to bring in everything they require, with no food stalls available when they don't feel like cooking and not even a bottle of water for sale. And yet it pulls 45,000 people out into the middle of nowhere for a week. There's nothing on earth like it.

Burning Man is a true community, literally the second biggest city in Nevada for the week it exists, and a place where people are bound together by the elements, gift giving and a shared love of art and expression.

Burning Man began as a bonfire ritual to celebrate the summer solstice on a beach in San Francisco in 1986. Larry Harvey and Jerry James built a crude wooden effigy which was burnt during the event. Fun was had and they decided to do it again the next year. The "man" being burnt grew to 15 feet (4.6 meters) in 1987 and 40 feet (12 meters) in 1988 while attendees increased from the initial 20 to 200. By 1990 there are 500 people on the beach and the event was shut down by police without the man being burnt. It was subsequently re-assembled and taken out to the brutal Black Rock Desert to be burnt at a separately-organized event focusing on situationist art and performance. In 1991 the first official Burning Man festival took place.

For the five years following the attendance doubled every year, reaching 10,000 by 1997. Ten years later over 47,000 participated in the event.

Describing Burning Man to someone who has never been is nearly impossible. It's a vast city layed out in an orderly clock face structure with named roads. There's a functioning postal service and airport, and hundreds of venues, all organized by attendees, play a bewildering variety of music. Everything is given away, there is no vendors or commercial operations allowed. Vast and tiny works of art dot the desert playa, many of them interactive and designed to be climbed on or played with. "Mutant vehicles", cars and buses converted into mobile works of art, from giant cats to Spanish galleons to the Jawa Sandcrawler from Star Wars, cruise slowly around with thousands of people on bikes darting around them. Clothing is optional and strange and



wonderful performances are around nearly every corner. Camps range from art galleries to music venues to mini golf to pizza kitchens. Everyone comes with gifts to share. As Burning Man says, there are no spectators, only participants, and it is the energy, commitment, talents and spirit of the community that creates the event. They (we) bring the music, the art, the performances, the “organizers” simply create the space, the platform, to bring everyone together and allow this expression to take place.

Sound familiar? It’s festival2.0, entirely user-generated, and it feels like it. It works because people subscribe to a set of shared values: self-reliance, self-expression, participation, gifting, communal effort, civic responsibility and leave no trace. It’s impossible not to be effected and inspired by contact with this ethos. Larry Harvey has described these as “the kind of values a community creates.” But they’re also the kind of values that create community.

Burning Man has also spawned a range of spin-off and affiliated communities, from regional burns to Burners Without Borders who engage in humanitarian and community-development work to the Cooling Man organization, dedicated to making Burning Man more sustainable.

And yes, on the Saturday night of the event the man, these days towering at over 70 feet (22 meters) high and accentuated with neon tubing, burns, and we know that it is almost time to go home for another year. But we take so much away with us. As Harvey has said “If you look beyond the horizons of this world we’ve created here, you begin to understand that there’s an enormous appetite out there for a kind of community in which culture is created.”

## **Hardwired**

[Becky Blanton](#)

The need to be in a tribe isn’t limited to status, income level or occupation. Belonging is hard-wired into us.

Lines for free meals start forming at 10 a.m. for the noon lunch - a sandwich, a piece of fruit, a glob of potato salad or macaroni. Lines for free medical treatment - anti-psychotics, anti-depressants, HIV cocktails, start forming at 5 a.m. for doctors who arrive at 9 a.m. Being homeless doesn't mean you don't have a schedule any more. It just involves more waiting, usually in longer lines and usually with people who talk to dead relatives, scratch their crotch, howl or simply stare while they wait. But even among the down and out, tribal leaders emerge.

Joyce did. An amputee with a leg lost to a freight train after she mistook a train yard for a bedroom early one morning, Joyce still soldiered on from her wheel chair outside Denver's homeless headquarters. A self-proclaimed "crack head" and admitted addict, Joyce none-the-less ruled her "tribe." In filthy purple sweatpants and sweatshirt, face grimy with weeks of unwashed dirt, she wheeled her wheelchair up and down the line of homeless people, addicts, recently released prisoners, the mentally ill and the morally bankrupt and plied her skills.

"Gotta match? Gotta cigarette? Joe I gave you some of my crack last night you owe me a cigarette." When Joe claimed not to have any, 10 minutes of cajoling and wise cracks managed to produce a half a pack in spite of his initial pleas. Up and down the line she went...collecting cigarettes, food, a ratty scrap of a blanket. She stopped fights, calmed tears, stared down men four times her size as she rolled along. Her empty pant leg dragged the street as she leaned forward again and again to reach for a cigarette. The cigarettes that disappeared under her thigh would reappear slyly, almost magically when someone else needed one. The rag of a blanket she had begged from a man lying in his own vomit turned up minutes later, wrapped around an infant whose mother had simply tossed its dirty diaper in the street. This went on for four hours.

But when the doors to the free-clinic finally opened Joyce disappeared. She was not waiting for medical care. She was tending to her tribe. This was the only time of the day they were all together and it was almost safe to do so. Yes - her tribal skills, the barter, the connecting, the networking and support were probably 90 percent self-survival driven, but it showed me that even when people can't sink much lower in life the drive to belong to a tribe - even a tribe comprised of the mentally ill, the addicted, the walking dead and the criminal - is there. We still need to belong to something - if only to stay warm for the night, fed for the day or to be needed for a smoke.

## Rodney's Got Nothing On These Guys

Dina Amadril

Business Credit Managers are the Rodney Dangerfield's of the corporate world. Management loves the Sales Man and discounts the Credit Manager who handles a company's second largest asset.

How do these valuable workers get some respect? They join together to share their best practices online and mentor each other on the anscers Community. They don't take to it naturally, numbers are their game and it's taken a while for this tribe to warm up.

Now at 1091 strong the tribe still has many lurkers, and orbits around one knowledgeable tribesman who has posted over one-quarter of the responses. Michael Dennis, CBF the knowledgeable tribesman, encourages others to post and become involved. A 20 year veteran of the credit profession he educates and mentors professionals online and in-person. He reached Super Mentor status quickly and many others have done the same.

It is a no frills ride online, just business – an emoticon here or there –they are here for the data. How can you help me, and can you make it fast because my boss is breathing down my neck. They use the classic version of UBB software which focused heavily on the conversation, not so much on the profile of who is talking.

Participants gain status as they post and share their experiences. They disagree often especially about cash. Since these are people who handle disagreements about payment all day long the Community clashes are no big deal.

Many Business Credit Managers enter their position without the training needed for the job and the anscers Community becomes their trainer. Reaching out with questions no one at their company could begin to answer, they wait for a response. Here comes a response from Michael Dennis, CBF (does he ever sleep) and now more from other Super Mentors. By day-end

they have a plan; they have the support of the Community behind them, and their ready to take on the discounters.

The anscers Community was started by CMA Business Credit Services back in 2001. It has taken 7 years to get good traction and now the Credit Professionals dedication to each other is paying off. To visit the anscers Community go to:

<http://community.anscers.com/community/ultimatebb.cgi>

## **Bi Poly Kinky Pagan Gamer Geeks**

[Pace Smith](#)

When you live an alternative lifestyle, you often feel marginalized. When you live six alternative lifestyles all at once, you often feel completely isolated and alone. Can you imagine my surprise when I created an online community for bisexual polyamorous kinky pagan gamer geeks and had over a thousand people join? “I can’t believe there’s a community for people just like me!” new members often say.

Just in case you’re not amazed enough by that, let me put it in a global perspective. To pull a number out of the air, assume that one out of twenty people in the world identify as each of those adjectives. One out of twenty people identifies as bi, one out of twenty people identifies as poly, etc. If these groups were independent, that would mean there would be less than one hundred bi poly kinky pagan gamer geeks in the entire world, not even taking into account how many of them never even heard about the online community!

Obviously, the groups aren’t independent. But why not? Sure, some of them make sense, like “bi” and “poly”. Perhaps bisexuals are more likely to be polyamorous, so they can have relationships with both genders and/or sexes without resorting to serial monogamy or cheating. But even if that makes sense, what about “pagan” and “geek”? I would have thought that the overlap there would be almost as small as for “stripper” and “nun”.

I'd imagine that pagans would generally like to be out in nature, and geeks would generally like to be inside on the computer, so that makes me think that a pagan would be less likely to be a geek, and a geek would be less likely to be a pagan. Despite that, it turns out that if you're both a pagan and a geek, you're much more likely to be bi, poly, kinky, and a gamer.

Imagine you're at a con or a game store and you meet someone who's playing a board game with Icehouse pieces. What's the chance that they're a bi poly kinky pagan gamer geek? You'd think it would be pretty slim, because bi poly kinky pagan gamer geeks are so rare, right? In my experience, it's about a one in twenty chance, and about a one in three chance that they're at least one of bi, poly, kinky, or pagan. (Gamer is a given, and geek is unsurprising given gamer.)

But why? My theory is this: the owners of the company that makes Icehouse games live alternative lifestyles themselves, and so the games spread largely via social networking. Since tribes stick together, Icehouse fandom stays largely "in the family".

When people join enough of these alternative tribes, they sometimes blend together into a kind of meta-tribe. Instead of identifying as "bi" and "poly" and "kinky" and "pagan" and "gamer" and "geek", they simply identify as "queer" or "freak" (a word that's being reclaimed these days).

Like draws to like, whether it's a tribe or a meta-tribe. Queer freaks will go to great lengths to find each other, and once we find each other, we tend to stick together.

## The Butterfly Effect

[Becky Blanton](#)

Tribe member Joe Noonan looks back on a man who had a tremendous impact not only on his life as a young man on a baseball team, but as an adult. Steven Jobs most telling story during his commencement address was about his birth mother

and his adopted parents. The people in my life touched and molded me and impacted me greatly as well. And the thing is, it hasn't stopped.

The phenomena is called "The Butterfly Effect" - a belief that a butterfly's wings flapping eventually create a typhoon that hits land on the otherside of the world. It's a principle that viral marketing - or all successful marketing is built upon - one small thing leading to another, and another.

A snowflake by itself weighs nothing. Put it with a ka-trillion others and it will collapse oak trees, roofs and any structure known to man by its sheer weight.

Most of us know who Rosa Parks is and how her refusing to move to the back of the bus sparked the Civil Rights movement, but how many of us know that she was not the first African American to refuse to move to the back of the bus. Ten years before Rosa Parks took a stand, baseball legend Jackie Robinson was court-martialed (and acquitted) for not moving to the back of the bus. Robinson, a second lieutenant at the time, was on trial not because he had violated any articles of war, his attorney told the board, but because a few officers "were working vengeance against an uppity black man."

All charges were dismissed, and several months later, Robinson received an honorable discharge from the Army. But the butterfly's wings had flapped and ten years later the winds of a typhoon called the Civil Rights movement began to stir. "A life is not important," Robinson said, "except in the impact it has on other lives."

How true. Some of us, like Joe and myself and many others here, can identify the butterflies who stirred the wind that moves beneath our wings. Others only know they've felt the breeze and puzzled over the events in their lives that seemed to be a "stroke of luck or fortune."

And while we all have been touched by the butterfly effect - sometimes we forget that all we do creates our own breeze, or typhoon. It doesn't take much. A careless remark, a timely compliment, a smile, a welcome, an insight, an email or an invite for a cup of coffee. There are many ways to stir the winds of change. How will you start?

## Project Help Triiibe, Supporting the Troops

Kirsti A. Dyer, MD, MS

The inspiration for remarkable projects is often planted as seeds from unexpected sources. The best ideas often involve contributions from different people to create a synergy where the sum of the parts is greater than anything each person could have done on his or her own. Project Help Triiibe, Supporting the Troops is an example of the kind of synergy that can happen when three different people come together to support a common cause and how the strongest, most devoted tribes are often forged from friendship and loyalty.

The seed for the idea of supporting Operation Helmet was planted over a year ago as Achim Thiemermann listened to Al Franken discuss the tremendously efficient non-profit organization on his radio show. Franken's plug generated donations to save lives for the thousands of desperately needed helmet padding upgrades for our troops.

That seed of an idea lay sleeping until July 2008 when the Squidoo Activists Group was founded to unify charity-minded lensmasters to raise funds for charities. Achim immediately thought about adding Operation Helmet to the list of the Squidoo Charity recipients. A few emails to founder Dr. Bob Meaders and Squidoo NonProfit Organizer Anne Reidy and Achim's seed of an idea began to germinate as Operation Helmet was approved as a Squidoo NonProfit.

Two fellow Squidoo Activists, Bonnie Diczhazy and Kirsti A. Dyer MD, MS were nurturing idea seeds of their own. Sensing of urgency and the need with Operation Helmet combined with their loyalty to a friend, Achim, these women quickly became part of a passionate tribe formed to support the troops. Bonnie Diczhazy created the inspiring lens "Over 50 Ways You Can ' Change The World' Using Squidoo!" donating all proceeds from the lens to Operation Helmet.

Dr. Dyer's seed to support the troops was planted as a medical student working in Veteran's hospitals. She had already created

several lenses to support Soldier's Angels, another Squidoo NonProfit that supported the troops. Dr. Dyer approached Achim about encouraging the Squidoo Activists to hold a fundraiser for the troops and then created the We The People – Support the Troops Group to benefit Soldier's Angels and Operation Helmet.

Once the Triiibe was up and running, Bonnie posted the thought provoking question, “Project Help: Can a Triiibe change the world?” on the Triiibe discussion board to encourage Triiibe members to become part of the passionate tribe to support the troops. Bonnie's post inspired Dr. Dyer to create the Project Help Lensraiser on Squidoo, as an ongoing fundraising effort for Operation Helmet within the Squidoo community.

Three different people, three different seeds all came together, forged by friendship, loyalty and a common urgent mission, formed a strong tribe and created the Project Hope Triiibe to Support the Troops.

Bonnie Diczhazy - Over 50 Ways You Can “Change The World” Using Squidoo!,

[http://www.squidoo.com/Change\\_the\\_World\\_Squidoo](http://www.squidoo.com/Change_the_World_Squidoo)

Kirsti A. Dyer – Project Help on Squidoo, <http://www.squidoo.com/project-hope>

We the People - Support the Troops Group / Fundraiser, <http://www.squidoo.com/groups/support-the-troops>

Achim Thiemermann - Operation Helmet, <http://www.squidoo.com/operation-helmet>

## **A PITCHER OF HEROS**

[Joe Noonan](#)

Everyone's had a special mentor growing up; reflecting on them inspires us to further their legacy.

I hated organized sports as a kid. The worst was baseball. I looked great in uniform, did a wonderful job filling up left field, but when it was time to hit the ball, I sucked.



I'd stand there palms sweating, staring the pitcher down, but would become terrified as the ball came whizzing at me. I'd swing so hard my hands hurt, but that flying white nut eluded me. I was mystified; how were you supposed to figure out which ones to swing for, and which ones to let pass?

Towards the end of the season, I'd swing at just about anything, mostly just to get it over with. And then the judge's inevitable verdict, "You're out!" Duh! Like shouting, "You're dead!" to someone swinging from the gallows.

It didn't make any sense. I knew I could hit. But somehow, when it came to little league, with all those grownups taking everything so serious, I'd freeze.

Later that summer I stayed at a friend's camp. Every night after supper, everyone would gather at a field in the pines for a ballgame. Seemed like a stupid idea to me, 'til I went.

It was an awesome sight; kids six to sixty. What made it special was the pitcher. An old guy, he ran the show, and we did what he said as he lined us up and made teams. And then he pitched. To both teams, the whole game.

I don't remember his name, I forget what he looked like, but I'll always remember his pitch, for he pitched to hit.

Boy, what a gift he gave. I knew it was in me to slug that ball way out into the outfield. All I needed was a fighting chance. Every kid who ever picks up a bat deserves that chance, and thanks to him, I got mine.

He threw that ball so slow and sweet, I was drooling by the time it got to the plate. Time and again, I got to feel the wonderful 'kerthunk' as the mighty bat in my little hands creamed that ball.

The old man was a master. To the older kids, he pitched fast balls. And by the end of the two weeks, he was pitching them to me. He pitched to everyone where they were at, delivering exactly what they needed. He was 'pitch perfect'.

He was a Godsend for me, appeared at a difficult time in my life when nothing made sense and I was tribeless. He gave me respect, mutuality and inclusivity. Just by showing up, we were equal players in his tribe, regardless of age or skill. Powerful stuff to a kid of any age.

He profoundly influenced my life. Creating a safe place for people to open and take risks, building tribes where everyone is equal and has equal access to resources is the foundation of my work. Such is the power of one person's tribal leadership.

## **The answer is 42 - tribal language**

[Gila von Meissner](#)

“The answer is 42” must have been one of my all-time favorite sayings.

Very much an us/them thing... You had either read the book, or you hadn't. Obviously, that saying became a tad less “cool and nerdy” once the movie came out. (btw, I am talking about the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy here)

When quoting from books, movies or tv, you show your colors, your affiliation, what kind of person you are. You gauge the other person's coolness factor, in a way. And if that other one actually gets what you are saying, you automatically feel a tad closer to him, you have something in common. If that someone had answered with “the question to life, the universe, and everything”, well, I might have married him the next day!

Anything Star Trek or Star Wars-related always went right over my head, but I could quote “One ring to find them all and in the darkness bind them” ages before the movie came out. My then-boyfriend actually left the room when we were watching the first dvd with another friend, because we insisted on pitching lines back and fourth the whole time and discussing missing scenes... reading The Lord of the Rings >30 times does that to you.

My current favorite - the unknown element of “narrativium”. Who knows what I am talking about? I will befriend you immediately! :)

Language is a huge part of a tribe’s identity. Each tribe has its code, its abbreviations - talking in code makes you feel clued-in, part of a community that outsiders just don’t get.

It happens at work, in online communities, in sports clubs. I bet even church groups have abbreviations and a vocabulary that outsiders couldn’t possibly understand.

So what does YOUR tribe do to lower or raise this language hurdle? How easy or difficult is it for Newbies to understand your tribal language? How aware are you of your tribe’s own language?

Should you offer a dictionary when new guys enter the tribe, or is the language hurdle part of a first test to see whether they are “worthy”?

## **The Rise and Fall of Kappa Delta Epsilon**

[Richard Millington](#)

Tribes are genetic. They attract more of the same. More of what they do.

In 1844, fifteen men formed a tribe which has had a remarkable affect upon the world. If you were a member of this tribe, then you were in extremely good company. Members of this tribe included J.P. Morgan, James Gamble (P&G), Thomas Landry and no less than five former presidents, including the incumbent.

In Delta Kappa Epsilon, the founders created a new sort of fraternity. They created a fraternity which valued gentlemanly

conduct, scholarly ability and “Jolly good fellow” above all else. The tribe rigidly pursued an ambiguous, but successful, “mutually beneficial” purpose. This purpose became genetic within the tribe. It attracted people with the characteristics to succeed in their careers and help others. The quality of members got better and better.

The fraternity thrived for 120 years. They had their pick of a very creamy litter. The fraternity bonds continued beyond the dormitory walls. For over a century, alumni worked together – always helping and pushing each other to achieve greater success. Some rose higher than others, one alumni planted a Delta Kappa Epsilon flag on the moon. Take that China!

They were one powerful tribe.

The problems began with the 60s youth awakening. A membership which one dreamed of being tomorrow’s business leaders, now dreamed of bigger and better parties. They wanted to enjoy themselves today, not run wall street tomorrow. Juvenile hazing practises crept in, alcohol poured forth and throwing bigger and better parties than rival fraternities became the raison d’être

It soon became genetic. The tribe attracted members that wanted juvenile hazing practices, drinking competitions and the best parties. The tribe attracted the top party-goers, not future presidents. Soon the parties became too extreme for even the most hardened revellers. Membership dropped. Legislation was passed. Chapters were closed.

Today the tribe lives in the shadow of the prestige and power it once had.

A tribe attracts both more of what it does. If a tribe develops tomorrow’s leaders, it’s going to attract tomorrow’s leaders. If the tribe says it’s going to develop tomorrow’s leaders, but throws the best parties, it’s going to attract the top party-goers. It’s genetic, a tribe develops towards its actions.

## **At the base of it all**

## Becky Blanton

Man started life in tribes. Tribes were integral to his survival. If you didn't belong to a tribe you didn't live long. Life was too rough. Foraging. Shelter. Wild animals. Attack from other tribes. To be sanctioned and "cast out" was more than disapproval. It was a death sentence. Our environment may have changed, but our fears haven't.

"Can I survive on my own?" now involves financial security, not wild animals, but the fear is no less intense.

We are "hard wired" to belong, to be part of something because tribal membership is about survival really. It's not just being alone with our thoughts, but being alone that wears on us - as though that reptilian part of our brains knew we must belong or die. On the streets even the homeless will ally themselves with each other, or a shelter or a "town" to belong to a tribe.

We have Boy Scouts, the Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Social Networks, church, sports, Bible studies, Sororities, Fraternities, families, support groups.....all which arise out of our need to belong to a group of people "like us," people who share our faith, our values, our profession, our hobbies, our interests or passions.

Out of this need for tribal membership come the basic tools of marketing - (1) fear (2) need (3) belonging (4) exclusivity.

(1) Fear - most marketing plays off this one basic reptile brain motivator. IF you don't own this, drive this, wear this, eat this, drink this, buy this, have this, know this, have sex with this, you will die. That's not on the surface, but follow the logic. If you are not desirable, you will not fit in. If you do not fit in you will be cast out. If you are cast out you will not survive on your own.

(2) Need. You need "X" if you are going to attract women/men, fit in with the tribe and be accepted you need this. Why? Your tribe wears this, supports this, drives this, lives here - so should you if you want to continue to belong.

(3) Belonging. To exist in a tribe you must belong. Belonging = fitting in either through identifying with other tribal members in values, looks or lifestyle. The only way to belong to a tribe and not be a clone is to be exclusive or better than the average.

(4) Exclusivity. The best warriors, the best hunters, best gatherers and most fertile women were accorded exclusive status. Exclusivity was a reward and a survival tactic. Not only did their higher quality skills bring more to the tribe in terms of food, safety and progeny, granting them a reward – more food, more privileges, better housing etc. guaranteed the survival of the fittest.

Being remarkable, being exclusive, being better than is a quality we all recognize and equate with survival and quality. How remarkable, how exclusive is your tribe? Will they survive a market crash, a skewed economy or a financial drought?

## San Marino's Dividing Lines

### [Irina Netchaev](#)

I love living in San Marino. It's a great, family oriented community with its own Police Department, high ranking San Marino School District, Fire Department, a newly rebuilt Crowell Library and a beautiful City Hall.

We have several banks and real estate companies within the city boundaries. San Marino has its own Starbucks that avoided the recent Starbucks closures, a Chinese Restaurant, a Japanese Restaurant, a pharmacy and a Seafood place.

So why is it that in this well educated, wealthy community, we still have “the wrong side of the tracks” mentality. Here's how I hear the locals refer to San Marino at times:

\*\*\* There's living North of Huntington Drive San Marino - Homes North of Huntington Drive are much more stately in many cases than South of Huntington Drive. These San Marino luxury homes have larger lots and we have seen much higher sales prices attached to them. This is where the famous Huntington Library and Lacy Park sit.

\*\*\* There's South of Huntington Drive San Marino - Homes tend to be on 10,000 to 12,000 sq. ft. lots and average 4 bedroom and 3 baths.

\*\*\* There's Valentine Elementary School San Marino - preferred by some over Carver Elementary school.

\*\*\* There's what some locals refer lovingly as "Sub Marino" - an area of unincorporated Los Angeles, East of San Gabriel Blvd where some homes have access to San Marino schools without the San Marino address.

\*\*\* And, there's what some refer to as "Baja Marino" - a newer tract of homes off of Muscatel that have a San Gabriel address, but option to go to San Marino schools.

Both of my kids had an opportunity to attend both Valentine Elementary and Carver Elementary and both schools are terrific. The scores for both elementary schools are very similar. Kids from both South and North of Huntington drive play together and form long-standing friendships.

So is it simply the size of the homes North of Huntington that make it such a desirable area of San Marino for some? Do we really need these dividing lines?

So, I ask you again, why would well educated, well to do citizens able to afford a median priced home of \$1.55 million worry about living North or South of Huntington Drive?

## **Go Back To Your Roots**

[Dr.Mani Sivasubramanian](#)

In March 2001, on a trip to Dublin, Ireland, we took a coach tour guided by an amazing lady. I'll call her Mary. She educated

us on Irish history, culture and lifestyle better than any book or course could.

Speaking with passion in a thick Celtic accent, she brought the past alive on a scenic drive along the coast. And she also spoke about nuances of the delightful Celtic language.

A tribe's primal need is communication.

Even animal tribes communicate. It begins as noise, grunts, snarls. Evolves into words. Distills into language. Every tribe has its unique dialect, lingo, and jargon.

Over time, as tribes diversify, merge and migrate, changes happen. Often the original tribal language is forgotten. Or ignored.

Reviving it again, going back to your roots, may be the most energizing way to revitalize your tribe. The Irish are doing it.

Every summer, they have a ritual. Tribe members send their children to residential Celtic schools for 2 weeks.

There they are taught about the rich history and culture of the Celtic people. They take pride in the great deeds of their warriors past. And they learn to write and speak the ancient Celtic language.

The school has one rule that may never be violated, on pain of expulsion. No one should speak in any tongue other than Celtic!

It is a point of honor with the children to stay the course. Mary told us the story of how a young girl was sent back home on the second day of her stay - because she sneezed, and then said "Excuse me"... in English!

She left school in tears. And came back next year to successfully complete the program.

Learning the tribe's language and culture became a goal to strive for.



Doing it binds the tribe tightly together.

Getting future generations of the tribe involved ensures perpetuity.

## **Attorney Oasis**

David Leffler

From nationwide to niche, that is what I thought when I started an email discussion group just for lawyers admitted to practice law in New York. For many years I had been part of a nationwide email discussion group for lawyers, but too often the topics were about practicing law in another state, which were of limited use to me.

So one day I did it. Created Attorney Oasis, the email discussion group for New York lawyers. At first there were only about a dozen lawyers, but there were still some interesting discussions. Over the past year, without much effort from me, we've grown to over 70 lawyers, and the quality of the posts has improved along with the growth.

Now not only are complicated legal issues discussed and analyzed, but referrals of business regularly go on between the lawyers. It's what I anticipated, because the lawyer's market is horribly inefficient. I've actually written about this - right now there are people out there that need a lawyer and don't know where to turn. It is the lawyer's job to find these people, but there isn't an easy way to do this. You ask friends for suggestions. You can check out Google lawyers' ads when you put in the relevant legal search term, or look at some of the efforts out there now that attempt to market lawyers over the Internet. But those efforts have not met with great success because the lawyer-client relationship tends to be a very personal one, and so people don't like shopping for lawyers the same way that they shop for books on Amazon.com.

I've tried local F2F gatherings of the Attorney Oasis tribe in Manhattan, but that has not met with much success, which

surprises me because in the past when I've invited people to events, a very high rate of invitees typically attends. Not so with this group. I'm guessing that this is because these were gatherings at a Midtown bar without a particular purpose other than to network with other lawyers, which doesn't rank high in importance with this group. However, the lawyers that did show up often formed friendships with the other lawyers that led to support for their careers, whether in new business or another professional to reach out to when there was a question or other need for their practices.

Attorney Oasis is a bit like an insider's resource, but as it grows I wonder what it might morph into. My policy in running the group to date has been pretty much laissez faire, which has worked well, but I wonder if I'll have to introduce more structure as the group doubles and triples in size.

For now I'm just happy that I've created something that has improved the lives of my fellow professionals. Tomorrow, who knows?

## **A 12-Hour Geek Tribe**

[Erica Minton](#)

For a few hours in November 2007, I was someone special: I was one of a very small percentage of people who had a Nintendo Wii.

This story isn't about the after tribe of Wii owners, but the before: the ragtag tribe of people who decided it'd be lovely to camp out overnight in an Ohio autumn, on the sidewalk of a Best Buy.

The usual things brought us to that sidewalk: exclusivity (it was the night before the product launch), camaraderie, curiosity, masochism (it was cold!).

As you might be able to imagine, we spent those cold hours in purely geeky ways. We had shopping cart jousts and races. Some teenagers hooked Mario Kart up through their car and played out of the trunk. We linked up our Gameboys, played kickball, speculated about the Wii.

We did all this because we had similar personalities, but we didn't become a tribe until we found a common enemy. This came around midnight, in the form of an ironic heckler who drove past us yelling something to the tune of, "Is it worth it, geeks? To be homeless for a night?"

His jeers were ridiculous—it's at least as pathetic to be the guy heckling the geeks as it is to be the geek itself—but they were what we needed to band together. My friend produced a megaphone and we were able to quip back in true nerd form.

For the rest of the night and into the morning, our bonds were strong. We shared doughnuts and made half-mile treks to the Kroger bathroom with people we'd never met. (Sure it's creepy, but not as creepy as going alone.) We took turns huddling in strangers' warm cars and writing Zelda-themed Mad Libs together.

When the doors to Best Buy eased open, the spell was broken. With nothing—not even adverse weather—to band us together, we lapsed back into a clutch of individuals. I haven't talked to anyone from the sidewalk again.

Not every tribe needs something to rally against in order to form or succeed, but it's one of the quickest ways to see people snap together and form something stronger. After all, the enemy of my enemy is my friend (and we geeks have little trouble finding either).

## The Hunting Tribe

[Ed Welch](#)

One cool October evening Larry was bow hunting for Whitetail Deer. Although he was about an hour from home - Larry knew this land well. The day before, he had spotted a herd of seven deer. Two of them were nice bucks and he hoped to see them again, but this time he hoped they would be within range to make a good shot. Approximately 30 minutes before sunset, Larry spotted what he'd been waiting for – a well built buck deer with six points of antlers. Heart pounding with excitement, he slowly drew the string back on his bow, took careful aim, and released the arrow. Excitedly, he watched as the arrow quickly hit its mark, the deer was struck in a vital area, but it ran off into the woods and would need to be tracked.

Bow hunting for deer is much different than rifle hunting. Often, a bow hunter is required to trail a deer many yards after making a great shot. Tonight was no different for Larry. When the arrow struck its mark – the deer quickly ran into a section of very dense and heavily grown area. Quickly, the sun set and darkness fell. Larry had been hunting for several years, but he didn't have much experience tracking deer at night. However, undeterred, he set off looking to pick up the deer's trail. With flashlight in hand, he circled the area where he last saw the deer. After trailing this deer for about 50 yards, the trail completely disappeared. Frantically, he looked to pick up the trail but it was no use, the trail and the deer had disappeared. Larry hung his head low at the thought of this failure. He knew all too well that a hunter only has a few hours to trail and find a deer before he's unable to use it for meat.

Much like other tribes, most hunters share a common respect, admiration and willingness to help each other. Completely disappointed and feeling despair, Larry remembered the words of a good friend named Kevin - "if you ever need any help and I'm not around – call Tracy". He thought to himself, "I don't even know Tracy – but I must find this deer" so when he arrived home he called Tracy's number. Hesitantly, Larry told Tracy exactly what happened. Although the time was well past 9:00 pm and the following morning meant a long day of work – Tracy's words turned Larry's frown to a smile: "Let's go find that deer." – Tracy spoke with enthusiasm.

Leading Tracy to the exact spot where Larry had lost the deer's trail, Tracy quickly picked up that trail where Larry had failed. It was only minutes before the deer had been found. Tracy helped Larry field dress it and carry the deer to his truck. Needless to say, without Tracy's help, this deer would have never been found.

Who knows how many thousands of years hunters have been selflessly helping each other achieve their goals, teach each other, and share knowledge? Larry learned a great lesson that day. Many hunters are members of a tribe - looking out for each other and helping each other with no thought of reward. Even though he hadn't met Tracy before this day, they were instantly bonded because they both belonged to the same hunting tribe.

## **Packing Them In**

Dave Rendall

It was January and the temperature had fallen to -3 degrees with a wind chill of -25. I was wearing four pairs of pants, a ski mask and two pairs of gloves, but I still couldn't feel my fingers. The guy next to me had a beer and it was frozen. My brother and I paid thousands of dollars and travelled thousands of miles to be here. We'd always been members of the tribe but hadn't been able to make it to one of the meetings. There are only eight each year and it is almost impossible to get an invitation.

This would be the last meeting of the tribe for this year. We were hoping to have one more, in a warmer location, but it didn't work out. After standing in one place for four hours, Brett Favre threw an interception in overtime and the Green Bay Packers lost to the New York Giants in the 2007 NFC Championship Game.

The Packers are an unusual football team. Green Bay, Wisconsin, with a population of just over 100,000, is the smallest market for any NFL team. Local streets are named after past coaches and players. Those streets are empty during every game.

The Packers are the only major league professional sports team in the United States that is a community-owned, nonprofit organization. In 1998, the team sold more than four millions shares of stock. However, no dividends are paid and the stock cannot be sold for more than face value. In other words, purchasing stock was a donation to the team. Until recently, if the team was sold, the proceeds would have gone to local American Legion post for a soldier's memorial. Now, the proceeds would go to the Green Bay Packers Foundation and would support charities throughout Wisconsin.

Every game is sold out, even when the team is losing, and they've done a lot of losing. The team won the Super Bowl in 1996 but the previous 25 years were marked by mediocre teams and poor results. For example, the Packers didn't even win a single playoff game from 1983 to 1994. This didn't affect attendance or demand for season tickets.

The waiting list is so long for season tickets that people put their children on the list, the day they are born. People who have season tickets often leave them to their children as an inheritance. There are currently more than 75,000 people on the waiting list and the wait time is 35 years. It is so difficult to get game tickets that many fans travel to away games to watch the team. For example, at some games in Detroit, Packer fans actually outnumber Lions fans. Prior to the NFC Championship game, my brother and I had only seen games in New York, Seattle and Detroit.

I think there are four tribal lessons from this case study.

1. People will endure pain to join the tribe.
2. Tribal membership is more emotional than rational.
3. Exclusivity makes membership more valuable.
4. The best tribes are owned by the members.

## **Now I'm a Believer**

Jennifer Greer

Recently I've had a glimpse into the rituals of an ancient tribe. For years I've known of its existence; I've heard the stories and known they were out there. I've scoffed at the devotion and sacrifice, mocked its followers, and wondered at the power its leaders held over young and old alike.

This spring, though, my oldest child begged me to go to a meeting. All of his friends would be there. How could it hurt? I rationalized that refusing him might push him further towards them and agreed to go. I was sure that a taste of the cult would remind both of us why we had stayed away so long.

I was wrong.

During the first week of spring training, my inherently lazy and cautious child ran his heart out for hours in the Georgia heat and threw himself against the bodies of other young men with reckless abandon. He came home, bruised and beaten, smelling of war, grinning with victory.

All summer long the child who acts as if walking up the stairs to put away his own clean laundry is the equivalent of ascending to Everest's base camp awoke in the wee hours of his vacation days for conditioning and weight training sessions. "Coach says," became the formal beginning of virtually every declarative sentence. His body grew lean and muscular, and my boy gradually disappeared.

As fall approaches I sit on the sidelines with the other mothers. We wince at the rough tackle and cheer at the pass received. School has started again, and the boy who once neglected his books now bends his head in study to allow for practice days. He knows the coach will look at his grades and decide who plays on game days and who sits on the sidelines in disgrace.

Even I, the skeptic, have fallen into the routine - two dinners a day, washing uniforms, filling water bottles, driving carpool. What once seemed too high a price to pay for a game now seems like fair compensation to watch your boy become a man. And when I see those young men stride across the field into battle, lean close to hear the words of the man, wiser but smaller than they, and respectfully roar, "Yes, Coach!" I feel it is worth it. When I see him clap their shoulders and encourage them or chide them or console them I think it is worth it. When I see him kneel with them to pray before a game and hear the thunderous "Father Son and Holy Spirit...Blessed Trinity...TITANS!" just before they rush the field for kickoff, then I know it is worth it.

I have witnessed an ancient tribe whose rituals turn boys into men, and now I'm a believer.

Football is my life.

## **The Audience Tribe**

Peter Davies

In my teens I was a very keen musician and ended up studying it at university because I couldn't think of anything else I would rather do. Since then I have embraced the business world and don't actively play music anymore, partly because it is very frustrating to me to play badly when I used to play quite well.

What I am is a very keen member of the audience tribe. Living in London is a good place to be part of that tribe. There are lots of concerts, plays, opera, dance, theatre at every level from church hall to West End and South Bank and of course the Albert Hall, home of the BBC Proms.

Although many members of this tribe are grey/white haired, I am fascinated by the continuous process of renewal amongst the audience tribe in London. Younger members arrive continuously, some clearly dragged there, but others definitely by choice and with passion. New residents mean that you are as likely to hear Russian as English at Covent Garden Opera. During the interval, the enthusiastic buzz and chatter in a multitude of languages gives a special meaning to live events.

There are lots of ways to consume all the arts, and more choice than ever in cds, dvds, tv, internet etc. But there is still something entirely special about being part of a live audience no matter what the event or discipline.

And the interesting thing is that there isn't really a leader for this tribe. Sure there are critics who can influence the commercial success, but the audience tribe is big enough, diverse enough and enthusiastic enough that just about any event can find a following in London. Something good spreads through the grapevine and finds its own subset of the audience tribe.



## Longing to join a tribe

Geni Whitehouse

Some people are organized. They use their Daytimers systematically. They can always find the top to their Tupperware containers. They separate the whites from the darks. They make to do lists and work through them in order. They divide their day into segments. They go to the grocery store with lists and they follow them.

Almost all accountants are very organized. They're linear. They budget, plan, analyze. They don't make decisions impulsively. They research every major purchase. They don't buy cars just because they like the color.

Imagine being an unorganized accountant. You pile things. You put folders in different places. You jump from one project to another. You are full of ideas. You don't like repetitive tasks. You like solving problems, finding ways around tax laws. One day you look around and realize that you're not like the other accountants. You're not in the same tribe.

But then you happen into a store. It's brightly lit. It's staffed with smart people who answer your questions. It is orderly and uncluttered. It sells devices that promise to make you organized. You know if you can just find the right-shaped box, the perfect-sized container, the perfect coordinating accessory for that chaotic space, you can be organized too. And so you buy. You fill your cart with closet accessories, with see-through shoe boxes, with rolling carts, with colorful tin cans, with plastic kitchen storage devices with lids, with wrappers for your computer cables, with bulletin boards and plenty of extra magnets.

And you know these tools will finally make you a member of the organized tribe. The tribe with the matching nametags properly placed on the right side, their names written in perfect handwriting in a straight line. (Your nametag is only slightly smudged with the name written in an imperfect diagonal.)

In a very short time you lose the lids to your containers, your shoes outgrow the boxes and tumble to the floor. You cover the bulletin boards with notes and never turn the page on your calendar. You create a new folder every day for the same subject, but give it a different name.

So you decide that you need to get closer to this tribe. You need to learn their language. Understand their methods. Shadow them as they go through their day. So you get a part time job at this store. You revel in its order. Its customers are members of the tribe. They shop from lists. They disdainfully watch your bag stacking skills and make corrections. They rearrange the contents of their shopping cart so their items fit perfectly. You are able to blend in. The store has studied its tribe members and has rituals that serve it. It trains you in its ways and you are happy. Almost no one knows you don't belong there. And you feel safe there. Every day you identify another talisman that proves you belong. You must have that new refrigerator clip. You need that cloth box that is beautifully coordinated with your living room. And then your chaotic schedule calls you back from the order. You sadly realize that you were a mere visitor in that tribe, that no amount of longing will make you belong there.

Eventually you find a new tribe with people like you. They welcome you with open arms. You can be yourself. You add a smiley face to your crooked nametag and proudly wear it to tribal gatherings.

## **NaNoWriMo, a tribal leader is born**

[Becky Blanton](#)

Be careful for what you wish for. You might just get it. And, as Chris Baty discovered, you might become an adult in the process.

In 1999 Baty, an aspiring writer, “just wanted to make noise.” He and 21 of his friends wanted to write novels for the same reason twentysomethings start bands, he said - because it would make it easier to get dates.

That year Baty and his friends kicked off a one-month novel writing binge - the plan - to start, write and complete a 175-page, 50,000 word novel in one month. They turned what most consider a writing atmosphere - seclusion, alcohol, despair and a straining for the whisper of the muse on its head. They kept the alcohol but gathered in a group to eat, “talk smack” and type. They called it “noveling.” And it was a blast. The next year word got out about it and 140 people showed up. And they wanted “rules” to write by. Rules? Baty waffled and stalled but realized there had to be rules to both motivate and focus the writers. Year three the old saw about everyone wanting to write the Great American Novel seemed to be true. Chris calls year three the year the literary tornado touched down. He was expecting 150 people to sign up. He got 5,000.

By 2007 Baty’s dream of “Getting a date,” with his novel scheme had grown to 101,000 participants. Not only had he been thrown into finding funding, a website, a webserver, t-shirts, shipping and media attention had turned his life into a nightmare. From an event originally emailed and forwarded to friends, NaNoWriMo was on the front page of Yahoo; in the New York Times, in newspaper after newspaper, on BoingBoing and website after website.

In recounting those times on his website he says, “I fell ever-further behind, the rising tide of Wrimos went from fun to frightening. STOP THE BOATS! I wanted to scream at all our referring websites. TURN BACK! WE HAVE NO MORE CABANAS! OUR BEACHES ARE FULL! WE’RE MINING THE HARBORS!”

Then suddenly he went from panic to possibility, landing approval as a non-profit organization almost seven years into his efforts. He had wanted to name the corporation NaNoCorp, but was convinced to find something that sounded more like he was a serious business rather than “someone who would run off to Mexico to build sand castles.” Still, in the end he did get a great name, “The Office of Letters and Light,” he said. “It’s like a little glowing governmental bureaucracy staffed by elves.”

Last year Baty learned what we all learn, that somewhere along the way, from what begins as a “fun idea” that turns into managing funds, finding office space, hiring staff and answering emails to finding talent to create websites, answer phones and mail t-shirts and deal with the press - you become an adult.

After getting the non-profit status he wrote, “I went home and stared at the wall. When did this happen? Between 1999 and

2006, I realized, I had somehow become an adult. One who hired full-time employees and picked out company health plans and went to seminars called “Philanthropic networking with banking institutions.

“Of all of NaNoWriMo’s weird twists and turns over the years, this may have been the strangest,” Baty writes. “And you know what? I absolutely loved it. Being an adult was much more interesting than not being an adult. The fact that my adulthood had arrived courtesy of a month-long novel-writing escapade just made it all the sweeter.”

Maybe this whole tribal thing is about finding what you’re passionate about and attracting those who are passionate about it too. Maybe you learn to lead along the way while you’re in the middle of it all - while you’re mining the harbor and turning back the boats. And maybe, just maybe, that’s the whole point.

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I strongly encourage anyone who loves to write or simply wants to see if they can, to enter this year. It’s free, but you have to register. Free or not, I encourage you to donate as well. And if you haven’t already, go over to Chris’ site and [read his brilliant, funny, stirring and emotional history](#) of how NaNoWriMo got started. I quoted heavily from it here...but it’s so much better in context. Warning. It’s long!!

More than a billion words were written last year and he expects even more aspiring or professional writers this year...I hope you’re one of them.

You don’t have to have a plot. You just have to have 50,000 words. Read the rules and basic FAQs [HERE](#). See you there.

## **The Merger Tribe**

Peter Davies

I used to belong to a Cambridge tribe. Some of the characteristics of that tribe were very interesting, but not unique. Very smart, arrogant, and with a culture where only software engineers had value, and others had very little. We sold software to mobile/cellular companies very successfully for a long time, then lost our way.

We got bought, and the merger tribe arrived. Both parties expected a mismatch between the cultures, but I don't think either were prepared for what actually happened. Perhaps the most important difference is that the Cambridge tribe was English to the core - and the most important aspect was a sense of fairness. Its a defining trait - its why English games and their rules and sense of fair play have been exported all over the world.

We were told that we should keep on doing exactly what we were doing; we were part of the solution, not part of the problem. Keep the small company values, keep the engineering smarts, keep the management. That's what their senior management said.

The people that the merger tribe sent to actually implement the takeover had different ideas. They stripped away the name and the identity, except for the legal entity so that they could avoid potential liability. They gradually stripped away all the other customers so that we became just an R and D department. They reduced any independent capability to sell, support or provide infrastructure. Inside a year we had new processes, new systems, new checklists - all required to be part of the merger tribe. We thought some of them were pretty good, and that we were learning to play by the rules we were given.

What the merger tribe didn't do was provide an incentive for the old Cambridge tribe leaders to stay and be part of the new tribe. Nor did they provide new tribe leaders with the right credibility from the merger tribe. That made it easy to divide our tribe into factions. We didn't have the right representation within the merger tribe, and therefore not the political backing to get our offering to market.

Times changed, management changed, the market got tougher. So when the merger tribe had to make some tough choices, you can imagine what happened. They chose people and projects from the merger tribe. Our tribe has been expelled. The Cambridge tribe understood too late that although the merger tribe talked a good game and appeared to be following the rules,

actually their behaviour was more like “all’s fair in love and war”.

## The Entertainment Industry Is All About Building Tribes

[Matt DuBiel](#)

Every facet of the entertainment industry is based on building Tribes in order market to the Tribes within those Tribes. It’s like those Russian dolls where each doll has a doll inside the doll. NBC builds Thursday nights to X sized audience of people 25-54. Seinfeld aces adults 35-54, Friends aces adults 18-34 and Procter and Gamble wants to sell Tylenol to all of them, McDonalds wants to sell Happy Meals to the ones with kids, AARP wants to hit up the ones on their way to retirement and Tribes are at the center of it all.

People who went to see The Dark Night represented various Tribes for instance. There were the comic book fanatics, movie buffs, blockbuster movie buffs, Heath Ledger fans, men 25-54, men 18-34 and on and on. The movie trailers before that flick mostly went after men 18-34. What’s interesting with entertainment Tribes (audiences) is that they are rarely lead by whatever the Tribe’s focus is. You will not see Christian Bale heading up the Comic-Con. You will not get an email from McDreamy or McSteamy inviting you to a Grey’s Anatomy viewing party at Chi Chi’s.

So who leads the Tribe? Who is the chief? Who is the medicine man? Inevitably in these Tribes, the show/star/theme is all of these things or none of these things. Which roles they play and which roles they fail at depend on the people in the Tribe. The Tribe gives the leader of the Tribe the power of leadership, or takes it away. You can’t force leadership. You can’t force a Tribe either. There are Trekkies and Dead Heads....and then there are folks who like Lyle Lovett an awful lot, and really enjoy Deal or No Deal. The Lyle Lovett fans aren’t staying up all night making PB&J sandwiches for his concerts the next day, but Dead Heads did....even though Jerry Garcia never asked them to.

TV & Radio companies build Tribes of listeners on their stations. They then work to build Tribes of listeners for shows on

those stations. They group the show Tribes with other show Tribes to make even more Tribes. They even link their various TV, Radio, and Interactive Tribes together to create a grand network of Tribes. And they naturally do all this to sell interruption advertising to companies who want to reach specific Tribes of their own.

Many successful entertainers do actively lead their own Tribes. Up and coming comics and bands are often booked based on the crowd they bring with them. Dane Cook is a comedian who fills stadiums on his own because he's built a Tribe of over 1 million using MySpace. A-list celebrities are paid handsomely to star in a movie based on their draw. Howard Stern was paid \$500 million dollars not because he has a good speaking voice, or the folks at Sirius thought his show was good. Howard was paid this money because it was believed that his Tribe would follow him, and if a certain percentage did it would be worth \$500 million. Keep in mind also that the Tribe Sirius was banking on was not solely a Tribe of listeners/subscribers. Another example is Rush Limbaugh's recent \$500 million dollar deal...which has more to do with his advertiser Tribe than listener Tribe as he is not subscription based. The motivation behind all of this of course is to market those Tribes to the soap, car, mortgage, cola, food, and liquor companies paying for the privilege of reaching that Tribe.

One of the oldest examples of this might be Soap Operas. They were weekly radio and TV "serial dramas" which were eventually called "Soap Operas" because they were sponsored by Proctor & Gamble or Colgate-Palmolive who wanted to sell their household products (soaps etc) to housewives (the Tribe) who were at home listening or watching. Now there isn't just a Soap Opera Tribe, but a Days Tribe, General Hospital Tribe....and on and on and on.

I met a really interesting guy this evening when I rented True Romance at a small mom and pop video rental store. He told me all about buying the place, serving the customers, talking with folks and his love for movies. Then he told me the store is barely break even. It cost me \$2 to rent True Romance, and I would have paid \$4. I went to Blockbuster last week and they didn't have Ghostbusters.....it wasn't checked out....they didn't carry it. This guy had True Romance when I wanted it, in the sticks and he's breaking even. He thinks he's in the DVD business.....but he's in the business of building a Tribe. The entertainment is just the catalyst for the relationship.

# The Furngate Story

[Richard Millington](#)

Furngate were a terrible youth football (soccer) team. It's a decade later and we still hold the league record for biggest defeat (0 – 26). We were bad, and we knew it.

Our manager, Steve, was worse. He ranted, he raved and he complained. It was the little things that annoyed him most. Like this frantic interchange when an opposing striker skipped past me.

“Tackle him Rich”

“no way”

“Why not?”

“he's massive!”

That reflects bad upon me, I know. But if you compared my frail, puberty-awaiting, frame against my opponent's abnormally hairy mass you would've understood. Maybe sympathised.

In time, the defeats took their toll. Our morale dropped, our members dwindled. It was only a matter of time before Steve had seen enough. That time came when our goalkeeper decided to let the ball trickle into the net, rather than risk bruises diving onto a hardened pitch.

Steve just left. He didn't wait for the final whistle. No goodbye, no “the team is finished”, he just left. Which explains why 10 of us turned up managerless the following week. Faced with forfeiting or playing one final game, my Dad stepped in and asked a great question:



“So what do you all want to do?”

We wanted to play. Actually, I wanted to take a turn in goal and see what it would be like. The strikers wanted to play in defence, the defenders up front. Our best player (the one who dared to head the ball!) fancied being the team captain. So that’s what we did.

I would love to say we won that game, or the next, or any game that season. But we didn’t. I’m not too sure I can say we improved. But we did turn up the next week, and the week after. We even had substitutes for our 3rd ‘final game’. By the end of the season we had one of the largest squads in the league, 20 registered players.

There even came a day when we began turning kids away...from the worst team in the league!

I should be clear, my dad isn’t a football genius. He hates football, it’s too soft for his Northern roots. But he was the only dad who still watched his son’s weekly humiliation. Still, he knew the team well, he knew the objective wasn’t to win.

As you can guess, the games were great fun. My dad was the manager, but he acted like our host. He gave the Player of the Match medals to the worst performers, and told us the secret ingredient of the ‘healing spray’ (H<sub>2</sub>O). He generally let us play as we liked. When you stop trying to win, and start trying to play, you have a lot more fun.

Almost three years later my dad had a second heart-attack and handed the team to a new manager. A new manager who boldly proclaimed he would “Set this team on winning ways within 6 months”. The team folded in 3.

## **Bluewater Cruising**

[Trish Lambert](#)

Living aboard a sailboat is a way of life, not just a choice of habitat like a house vs. a condo vs. an apartment. Cruising a sailboat across oceans to other countries puts one into the world's largest small village—one of the first global tribes to form in our society and one that preceded the existence of the Internet by at least a century.

Membership in the bluewater cruising tribe isn't based on education, wealth, or nationality. It stems from a deep passion that is hard to characterize. For some people, it is the love of the ocean and a fascination for the boats that bob along its surface. For others, it's the lure of a life off the grid, completely self-sustainable. And for still others, it's the unique travel opportunity—seeing the world from one's front porch.

Whatever the driver, anyone who gets bit by the cruising bug soon discovers that they have joined a tribe.

There is the lingo. Where boating in general has a special language, bluewater cruising is even more specialized in its vernacular. Cruisers discuss scope, trailing warp, heaving to, running under bare poles—and all kinds of other things that are obscure to others (even other boaters!).

Get a couple of cruisers together, and conversation will inevitably turn to topics of mutual interest: how to prevent damage from lightning strikes, the most effective watch schedule when underway on the ocean, the best anchor for a particular holding ground, the effectiveness of a particular solar panel set up, the best cove to hold up in for the coming storm.

There is the unquestioning loyalty. Even on land, when one cruiser meets another, there is an instant bond. In farflung anchorages, acquaintanceship is not necessary to prompt the immediate assistance of the cruising tribe. I have been part of many rescue efforts—of a boat that ran aground on the Pacific side of Baja California (Mexico), of an old singlehander who lost his home to a propane fueled fire, of the sudden widow of a skipper who died of a heart attack in the middle of the night while at anchor in Puntarenas Costa Rica. It is a no-brainer to rush to the aid of fellow cruisers whose anchors start slipping as the wind rises, or to stay on watch through the night on a shared VHF channel either to keep watch for possible thieves or to proactively respond to deteriorating weather.

This tribe has no chief, but each floating home has its leader. The skipper is the final word on all aspects of boat operation and maintenance. He or she is responsible for getting all hands safely to port. In a double-handed situation (e.g., a husband-wife team), the first mate must have enough knowledge to fill in for the skipper in an emergency. And in all situations, the crew, no matter how small or how large in number, must work effectively as a team under the skipper's direction.

And of course the tribe has its rituals. Cruisers carry on the traditions and superstitions of sailors down the years--it's bad luck to start a voyage on a Friday, changing the name of boat requires Neptune's blessing, crossing the equator for the first time calls for an initiation ceremony.

Anyone outside the tribe often finds this community fascinating, and many people have a hard time fathoming why living in a very small, constantly moving space could be attractive. Tribal members just smile at this attitude, and get on with the next voyage.

This tribe has such a deep passion for its venue that when someone chooses to leave, reactions from the other members can border on unsupportive. A cruiser can't imagine a fellow cruiser choosing to leave the sea and permanently move onshore. The only reasons "must" be extreme—bad health, lack of money, family emergencies. Anything other than that is suspicious and borders on betrayal of the tribe.

The bluewater cruising tribe has its roots in an ancient tribe--that of the seafarers who have roamed the waters of the planet for thousands of years. It carries the traditions of the sea into the technology of the future without losing its cohesion and distinctness.

## **Burning Man**

[Alexis Martin Neely](#)

Today, it's a tribe of 48,000+ people who gather in the desert for a week of fun, fancy, fantasy and a whole lot more. While there, they build a city ... [Black Rock City](#). Before they leave, they burn "the man". When they are gone, they leave no trace.

It began in 1986, the brainchild of Larry Harvey and Jerry James with just 20 attendees and it was at Baker Beach where the fire ritual was held for the first four years until the Golden Gate Park Police no longer allowed the fire ceremony due to fire hazards. In 1991, the man first burned in Black Rock City and it has continued to do so every Labor Day weekend since. Twenty-two years later, Larry Harvey remains the leader of Burning Man, now under the formal title of Executive Director.

2008 will be my first [Burning Man](#). I'm packing up my 5 year old son and 8 year old daughter and we're heading into the desert for a week of massive, unlimited self-expression. I see it as an unbeatable opportunity to pass on my [family values](#).

We will brave the harsh conditions so we can be who we are, no matter what that looks like for a full 7 days. We will indulge the creative fantasy that we are holding in the rest of the year and through that indulgence backdropped against the bleakness of the playa, we will discover more of our own authenticity.

Like the most cohesive tribes, Burning Man not only has a leader, it has a mission and a set of guiding principles that themselves are fully authentic representations of the tribe members.

The over-riding theme of the [mission](#) and everything else about Burning Man is radical self-reliance, just 1 of the [10 guiding principles](#), which also include radical inclusion, gifting, leaving no trace and 6 others.

It's a tribe for the misfits who grew up feeling lost and tribeless. It's freedom.

## **How to get a Tribe to accept change...**

[Colleen Kulikowski](#)

Many times closed communities become their own little world, and in their eyes perfect. This is something that I experienced over at ActiveRain (<http://www.activerain.com>), which was created for the Real Estate industry. The members at times consider it “cheating” if they left the confines of this community. The comments and discussions always lack something. The best way to describe the mentality of the membership is the Borg in Star Trek. It was almost scary how so many members did not want to venture from the safety of the hive, let alone read a link outside of the collective. Only do what the collective deemed acceptable.

This was never more evident when as a moderator; I had the ability to run contests and award prizes. Members were motivated by points (and still are), so fellow Moderator Laurie Manny and I created the mother of all contests in the Laurie Manny Challenge. At the time the system was full of posts that lacked originality and members were starved for great reading material.

The initial reaction was sheer terror from the membership, countless calls and emails from members that were actually terrified to go read other blogs, much less comment. Others mad that we would dare send people out of ActiveRain. The Laurie Manny Challenge was simple result of my own exploration outside the safety of the system, nudged by Laurie. Laurie had been planting the seeds in many members to read “Outside” so the contest was named after her. The high number of points that were up for grabs got people to enter, the posts were highly read because so many participated. All these posts had three links to outside the collective. There was an air of excitement and the weeks that followed were wonderful to watch as members were exposed to new ideas.

[See the challenge here](#)

A year later, people still talk about it, and it gave the many members who were afraid to leave the collective permission to do so, the system would still be there. What resulted was an awakening of many members. Growth happened, people started to think independently. Healthy debate happened. One member called me soon after proud that she left a comment on a post on another blog. This was big, not only to the members that participated, but those that lurked in the sidelines. Many of these Realtors had no idea that there were local blogs that they could connect with.

[See the winner's list here](#)

Today members think nothing about following a Read More off the site, quote from other sites or even sharing what they find on the Internet with fellow members. In fact I regularly run into members on all sorts of sites engaging in the conversations around them. Once a change is accepted it is really amazing to see it in action!

## Should I Stay Or Should I Go?

badmsm

For the first time in the 7 years since I started my first blog, I had to ban a member for flaming my tribe, my site, and me personally. All this on his very first post to the forum. His complaint: that the group was not “chatty” enough. My question: then WHY did you join?

This person did not read through my site to see if he would fit into our tribe. He didn't look at the pictures, the links, or the previous posts in the forums. He just saw a topic, and assumed he had made the correct choice without looking into the details. When he did discover his error, he chose to attack and blame others rather than place responsibility in the proper place, with himself. He could have quietly opted out of the group if it did not meet his needs, but he chose to name call and unfairly criticize instead. So I made the choice for him to opt out quietly.

I see this all the time. Some people are always claiming they were duped by (fill in the blank), and it's always someone (or something) else's fault. The truth is they don't want to see facts or take responsibility for their errors. So they lash out or pout.

If a group or situation has not worked for me, I chose to leave, chalk it up to experience and MOVE ON. I don't waste anyone's time complaining about it, I just go.

Moral: Be knowledgeable about the tribes you are seeking, be kind to those you meet along the way, admit your mistakes, and if you need to, GO! Remember, the decision to go can always be made for you...

## Power to the Players

[Melissa Tan](#)

On September 29 2007, a small Australian town of around 200,000 people erupted, as its Australian Football League team won the Premiership. It had been 44 long years since the Geelong Cats were last crowned the (world) champions. And it took a significant shift in power for this tribe succeed.

The Cats were not doing well in 2000 - in fact, they 'were in a bit of pickle on the leadership front', as one Senior player describes it. Both the coach and captain left the team and the players had no say in matters that affected them. Mark 'Bomber' Thompson joined as the new coach and under his cool, calm influence, the team began a slow transformation. And it was slow - despite being favourites for the Premiership at one point in 2006, the Cats still disappointed. It wasn't until 2007, with his job on the line, that the effect of Thompson's subtle transfer of power to the players became clearer.

The story that epitomises this change revolves around Steve Johnson. Described in the press as 'wayward', 'stray' and 'cheeky', Johnson was arrested on Christmas Eve in 2006 for public drunkenness. The player leadership group was given responsibility for disciplining him and decided to suspend Johnson indefinitely at the start of the 2007 season. In the meantime, he had to play and train with Geelong's junior team and would undergo a review after 6 matches. If his fellow teammates weren't satisfied that his 'attitude and behaviour' had improved, he could face dismissal.

Giving power to the players was undoubtedly a crucial part of the Cats' success. In contrast to a punishment doled out by the coach or the club's board, a punishment imposed by your peers is much more severe. It's easy to defy authority, or to dismiss

them as out of touch. But when the tribe you are part of collectively agrees that what you're doing is unacceptable, it hurts. It was lonely and it was hard work for Johnson, but as he said later in the season, 'I knew if I worked my butt off then I could get back and earn the respect of the players. I was pretty much out the door and things have turned around for me.'

The Cats also took a similar approach in areas other than discipline. Players at all levels know they can speak up when they have an issue - even if that issue is with the team's star player. For one training session a week, the players coach themselves. And even during a match, players can swap positions and arrange their own match-ups. As one player described it, 'There's been a greater responsibility given to the players and a greater trust. And I think by coaches and boards giving that to players, that trust is returned.'

Last year, Johnson was not only part of the victorious team, but he also won the Norm Smith medal, awarded to the best player in the Grand Final. For all those Geelong supporters, let's hope both he and the Cats can repeat their success this year.

## **He led with an ironing board**

[Becky Blanton](#)

Not everyone who leads a tribe intends to. Some leaders are appointed. Others are hired. Many fall into the position through default. But David, a slightly built, African American 12 year-old who rarely spoke except to say "no" or "please," managed to do what no other child had ever done in the months he lived in the John Tarleton House. He led. Not only that, he led a tribe of unruly white teen agers, some of whom refused to eat at the same table, shower in the same bathroom or share a room with a black housemate.

Boys and girls from poor backgrounds of any color, per the founder's request, come to this orphanage after losing parents to death, drugs or detention in one of the state's jails or prisons. Boys and girls stay in separate houses, 6 to 12 in each cottage, on either side of a 130 acre campus. The cottages, as they are called have full kitchens and separate bedrooms. A "house parent,"



lives in the house with the children throughout the week, acting as surrogate parent while the children's future is worked out. The atmosphere and setup is supposed to give the children a sense of "home" and belonging, but judging by the sobs I heard at night, it didn't always do that.

Days and night are a mix of tears, acting out and fights as the boys struggle not only with losing a parent or parents and their homes, but with puberty. They struggle to fit in to their new tribe, to find their place in the pecking order and to deal with authority. They must manage their new feelings of shame at being unwanted and without a family, the court system and new rules that would confuse an adult. New residents cycle through almost weekly and the cycle of fitting in repeats itself each time as the pecking order is shifted. Being young and Black, David came into the house at the bottom of the food chain in many ways. I wondered how he would fare.

Once checked in and settled, boys with drug addicted parents who used to sleep on the couch in their own home, or a mattress on the floor, or who roamed the streets all night are now expected to make their beds, do their own laundry, study and control their rowdiness. Few of them come from homes where discipline ever sat at the table. Many ended up in juvenile detention. Some ran away. Some turned 18 and turned to prostitution and drugs themselves.

With a good houseparent and leadership in the cottages, life might have been easier, but the stress, the violence and mental health of some residents and the constant tension of a house full of teen aged boys drove many houseparents away. That was the situation I walked into and wondered how to change.

Then David arrived. His father in prison and his mother recently deceased, David was scheduled to be sent to Atlanta where his brother was in training to become a police officer. In the interim, before his brother was able to get him, David would be staying in my cottage. For awhile he was the only black resident in a house of white teens. A weekend houseparent, I lived in the house from Friday night through Monday morning, cooking, keeping order and helping the boys make sense of what was expected. Runaways, calls to the police, fist fights, remembering to lock the dog in my room so the boys wouldn't rape him...I understood why the staff turnover was high.

But then one night David asked me for an iron and an ironing board. Stunned, but trying not to show it, I gave them to him. For the rest of the time he was there, David would set it up and carefully iron his clothes for the next day. The rest of the house would hoot and holler and tease him but he ignored them and just ironed. Impressed, I bought him a can of starch to make the task easier and I watched as he left the house each Monday. Even his jeans had a crease so sharp they'd cut cold butter. One Sunday one of the other boys knocked at my door and asked for the iron and the ironing board after David returned it. Then another and another wanted to use it. And one by one, each one learned to iron. They might wear t-shirts to school, but they were ironed t-shirts. They started actually making their beds instead of just throwing a blanket over them. The transformation was amazing. The house parent who stayed during the week asked me what I was doing on the weekends to cause such a change.

"It's not me," I assured her. "It's David."

Afraid to say anything that would disrupt the miracle, we just watched. David taught the boys how to cook pancakes, fold clothes, polish their shoes. The boys began asking for haircuts instead of fighting our insistence they needed them. They showered twice a day, once in the morning and again before bed. They said "Yes M'mam" and "No M'mam," and they picked up their wet towels. And one day I couldn't stand it any longer. I called one of the older boys into my office and asked him, "What did David say to you all that has caused all the changes around here?" He fidgeted and shrugged. "Seriously, what happened?" I asked.

Tears came to the boy's eyes as he said, "David said it's how he keeps his mother alive. If he does everything she taught him, it doesn't hurt so much she's dead. And his brother said he will send him back here if he doesn't do all this stuff."

My eyes teared up.

"So why do you guys do it?" I asked.

"To get girls," he grinned. "All the girls at school love that David smells good and looks sharp."

I nodded as he left. I knew the real reason was closer to their sobering realization that as wild, angry, unkempt teens they were not likely to be adopted or find foster families and now they too realized that. And for many, a girlfriend was as close as they might ever get to a sense of family. To have told them so would only have hurt and alienated them more. For all their bravado,

they were dangerously fragile. They had to find out from one of their own.

A few weeks later David's brother graduated from the police academy and picked him up for good. I never got to say good-bye. I know David did not intend to lead. He got through his situation the best he could with the tools he had. He led by example, setting the tone without even realizing what he was doing. And while each member of that tribe was different, ultimately they all wanted and needed the same thing – a tribe to call their own.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the root of every problem are people. Solve people's problem and you solve "the" problem. People who have their needs met want to keep them met and will do whatever it takes to maintain that sense of Tribe. People of all ages - from the cradle to the grave, want to belong, want to be accepted, want to feel loved, to be noticed, to be appreciated. I learned that watching these boys while I was a houseparent. Their fears were deep and powerful. Looking back, I realize now that most of them are now in their late 30's, probably with young families of their own – I hope so.

I learned a lot more from them than I was able to teach, but the one lesson we all got was it hurts not to have a tribe who truly loves you. No matter how old we get, how competent we become, how successful, we still do what need to do to fit in, to belong, to find our tribe.

## **Are You Ready to Lead The Tribe?**

[Brendan Mitchell](#)

In the morning the disciple would awake before dawn

He would draw water from the well & carry it up the hill

He would clean & sweep the temple

He would pick fresh mangoes, wash, slice & prepare them

He would grind coffee by hand

He would boil the water

He would awake the guru at sun rise

He would wash him

He would dress him

He would prepare the Guru's seat

He would sit quietly, while the Guru ate

He would clear everything away

He would then sit in silence, listening to the Guru's words of wisdom

He did this every morning for years, until one day...

He awoke

He collected the water

He picked the fruit

He prepared it

He ground the coffee

He boiled the water

He sat on the veranda and consumed the lot, as he watched the sun come up

He had a pang of guilt for what he had just done

How will the Guru react?

He turned, only to find the Guru standing quietly behind him, smiling from ear to ear

He said to the disciple “so now you’re a Guru”

Only you, can decide when it’s time & when you’re ready to lead your tribe.

## **How to Lead a Tribe**

[Brendan Mitchell](#)

-

Make your passion your goal & be committed to it

Be true to your ideology

Wear your values on your sleeve

Listen with an open mind

Speak from the heart

Be honest, most of all to yourself

Give respect where it’s due

Know when you're right

Admit when you're wrong

Give your audience what they want & be generous

and most of all

Be an inspiration & make a difference

Your tribe will gather, and when they do

**Empower them to do the same**

## Where's the fish?

[Jodi Kaplan](#)

Two men, whom I'll call Mike and David, each decided to start a new company that offered free newsletters. The plan was to build a subscriber list, and later sell the company. Each picked the same target audience: military families. The newsletters would consolidate information about benefits available to US military personnel.

Mike raised \$7 million to start his company. He used the money on office space, staff, furniture, and ads on the sides of buses in Washington, DC. David, on the other hand, spent \$30 to run off 500 issues of the first newsletter on bright yellow paper. He stood in front of the Pentagon handing them out to people as they left the building.

Mike burned through the cash in six months, went broke, and lost his house. David had 250 sign-ups by the time he got home that first day, and built the company virally to 300,000 subscribers.

Thousands of people saw Mike's ads, but they weren't necessarily military people – the target audience. In contrast, David figured out where to find his target audience, went there, and offered them something relevant.

David picked a particular audience and went to the right place to find them. Mike closed his eyes and started “spraying and praying”, hoping to hit something.

If you're going fishing, go where the fish are.

## **The most powerful tribe in the world**

[Jean-Paul Pangalos](#)

Never underestimate the power of a passionate tribe. Throughout history, numerous tribes have been in conflict over religion, territory, politics and love. Their power of destruction can be fatal.

But out of all the tribes, one exists that is almost magical. Such is the power of this tribe that it is capable of uniting tribes that have been in conflict for decades.

This is what happened in Seville, Spain on Wednesday, December 27 of 2006.

A soccer game between the Spanish national team and a team formed by Israeli and Palestinian players took place. It was organized by Shimon Peres and the Peres Center for Peace, in an attempt to strengthen the trust and collaboration between

Israelis and Palestinians.

What numerous peace talks and summits have been unable to accomplish, soccer has made it possible.

But it's not magic. Actually it's a little bit of theater, art, love and simplicity. Yes simplicity. There are only two requirements to be part of this tribe: a ball and passion for the game.

Actually, not even a ball is needed- it is common to see children in Brazil playing soccer with an empty can of soda. The same thing happens in the suburbs of Nigeria where boys and girls congregate to play with a ball made of cloths and ropes.

The dimensions of this tribe are impossible to measure. But there are some clues. This tribe is so universal that it's main event is simply called the World Cup. Remarkable branding there.

It is also the most viewed event in history of television. The final game in the 1998 World Cup was viewed by more than 1 billion people. Total viewership of the 2002 World Cup event exceeded 28.8 billion viewers.

Few tribes share such a [raw emotional passion](#) across the globe.



# STIG your Brand

[Rahul Deodhar](#)

[Anne McCrossan](#)

Cars are embedded in the Y chromosome. This must be the only possible explanation as to why men love cars. It is visceral! Irrespective of affordability, irrespective of usability, irrespective of any logical consideration, men and cars go together.

Men watch lot of shows about cars, avidly too, but there are shows... and then there are shows. A couple of hosts create their brand with unbiased, frank opinion on cars and life... and... soon we have a tribe.

The show is Top Gear and the celebrated hosts are Jeremy Clarkson and the slightly-less-celebrated James May and Richard Hammond and they tower over public imagination. Their unique no-nonsense reviews and comments makes or breaks cars. Each of them is a test driver; each knows the cars and the pulse of the buyer. They are all at the core of the brand that is Top-Gear.

And on top of that there is the element of mystery- the STIG. STIG is the Top Gear test driver whose identity is unknown. He never shows himself, only what his cars can do. But he really does some amazing stuff with super cars, lap times that are really among the best in business.

It's impossible to mistake the STIG for an average person, his performance tells you he is the best. This unidentified, enigmatic "John Doe" has started a viral movement that has caught fire.

There are t-shirts “I am STIG”, there are rumours (is STIG actually Lewis Hamilton?). The buzz subsides when they go head to head. And STIG beats Hamilton! When US Top Gear was announced - off it went again - Who will be STIG in US?

This mystery generates a viral fever that unites the tribe. It gives them the secret sign, secret language, a talking point that evokes the passion for this tribe. “You know STIG did...” and you are off, no introductions necessary!

Authors and artists have used this mystery through pseudonyms, pen-names. Performers like the Unknown Comic, the Residents, Banksy and Los Straitjackets, all performers who have used masks and hidden identity to heighten interest in their work.

There’s almost something compelling about this anonymity that makes people want to come out and declare their allegiance. Not exactly the stuff of traditional marketing theory, but the combination of grapevine, grass roots and the opportunity for people’s imagination to fill the communication vacuum creates the tribe.

Mystery addresses curiosity. It spices up the tribal connections. It’s something that’s not always critical to the main event, but when it represents all the core values of the tribe and has integrity, it becomes a “true” bond capable of creating tribal cohesion.

So then - doesn’t every tribe need a little bit of STIG to catch popular imagination?

## Be careful! Passionate tribes are dangerous

[Jean-Paul Pangalos](#)

Don't mess around with passionate tribes. Their leaders are powerful and their followers are dangerous.

The same traits that make a great tribe remarkable can also make it extremely dangerous and violent.

Passion is the fuel that propels tribes to do the best things and also the worst.

Soccer is the perfect example of this.

It's the most popular sport on earth and has achieved things that even the most powerful politicians in the world could not accomplish. In World War I, it has been documented that the allies organized soccer matches against the Germans during the [Christmas Truce](#).

When two religions have been at war for thousands of years, soccer has been able to create a bridge and put them on the same team. This is what happened in Seville, Spain on Wednesday, December 27 of 2006.

A soccer game between the Spanish national team and a team formed by Israeli and Palestinian players took place. It was organized by Shimon Peres and the Peres Center for Peace, in an attempt to strengthen the trust and collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians.

But not everything is pretty and pink.

A father in Brazil slammed his baby boy to the floor while watching his team lose a game on TV.

Hooligans have become world famous for their violence, fights and outright rioting.

In Argentina, the Gimnasia de Jujuy team bus pulled into the parking lot of their stadium for practice before an away fixture. According to local news reports, a group of eight to 10 fans, some with guns, boarded the bus and accosted the players. They demanded better results.

Passion is the common denominator of all these stories. Channelled positively it can do miracles. But an excess of passion can produce horror.

Just remember, be careful with the power of passionate tribes or things can get out of hand.

## **The Twin Tribe**

Jill Anderson

I am a twin...an identical twin. When I grew up twins were unique. People stared. People asked questions.

“Can you read each other’s minds?” Not really.

“Who’s older?” Jill

“By how many minutes?” Four minutes, we would reply

“What’s it like to be a twin?” What’s it like to not be a twin? was our reply.

We never had to start the first day of school alone.

Of course, we never had our own birthday party. Although, my mother always did bake us each our own birthday cake.

In fact, it wasn’t until College graduation that Jennifer or I ever had our own celebrations. We had each taken time off during college and ended up graduating a year apart. I can still remember being at my party and “thinking, wow, all these people are here for me. And, all those gifts are for me!”. It felt strange and odd to have all that attention focused on “just” me.

Things change. We grew up. We live thousands of miles apart. No one stares at me anymore....at least, not because I'm a twin. I have my own birthday party.

Fertility drugs were invented. Twins are everywhere. We never ask "how many minutes apart". They are all born by Caesarean.

## True lovers

Tony Williams

Sometimes you don't realise there is a tribe that feels you are a member until it recognises you.

When I was 44 I visited England from my home in Australia for the first time. It was a moving experience, never more so that when I visited Stratford-upon-Avon. I've always loved Shakespeare's plays, I saw my first at 3 when my mother played the Lady in the Scottish play. One of the most memorable events of my childhood was travelling the hundred miles to Sydney to see Judi Dench and the rest of the Royal Shakespeare Company in "As You Like It." One of the proudest was playing Henry V in a high School production.

I walked into that small church in Stratford and saw the stone set into the floor behind the red rope and had to sit down in the second pew as the emotion overwhelmed me, followed by quiet tears. They were still flowing ten minutes later, the whole time I had been aware of people moving through the church to visit Shakespeare's grave and then move on when suddenly a hand rested gently on my shoulder.

I looked up to see an old man in a vicar's collar who said "Would you like to go forward, I keep the rope there for the tourists." He took me forward, moved the rope and let me kneel down and touch the grey stone, his hand on my shoulder. An old man had recognised a fellow tribe member.

## **Are great leaders born or made?**

Tonja Conway

During the Olympic opening ceremonies, I was struck by the story of Lin Hao, the nine-year-old Chinese boy who survived the earthquake that killed many of his classmates and countrymen. When asked why he went back into the building to save his classmates, he seemed almost matter-of-fact when he replied, “I was a class leader. It was my responsibility to help them.” I can almost see him shrug as he said it. It was obvious to him, even at such a young age, that it was the right thing to do, and he seemed to have no hesitation in doing it.

I would submit that great leaders are great because 1) they have an innate sense of what is right to do, and 2) they are bold enough to do it despite risk or opposition.

Many aspire to be a great leader - some with right motives and some not. Can it be learned or cultivated - this leadership that is worthy of the label “great”? There are certainly helpful attributes that can be developed, but I think that anyone who’s achieved the status of “great leader” can look back on their life and see that they had it in them all along. It just took the right circumstances to bring it out.

Are you positioning yourself to be ready for the situation that will develop your potential?

## **Spontaneous miniature temporary tribes**

Barry Adams

We were all staring at the ceiling of the grand staircase of the [Würzburg Residence](#) palace. There were seven of us: myself and my girlfriend, a British couple, two Chinese women and our German tour guide. The guide had just explained in accented but well-articulated English that this ceiling was a marvel of 18th century architectural and artistic skills, the result of the work of Balthasar Neumann and Giovanni Tiepolo. Now we were marveling at the detailed fresco covering the entire surface of this massive unsupported ceiling.

We formed a small, temporary tribe during the course of the tour. The guide maintained a perfect pace, allowing us to enjoy the spectacle that she was explaining to us, giving us just enough time to absorb it before bringing us to the next highlight. After a few minutes we started chatting a little among ourselves during the pauses the guide gave us, agreeing with one another on the beauty and grace of the art on display.

I never learned any of the names of my fellow tourists, but we formed a temporary bond during the 45 minutes of the tour, becoming a small tribe amidst other tribes, connected by our appreciation of our surroundings.

Three days later I was breathing heavily, gulping down as much air as I could to desperately feed oxygen to my aching legs as I struggled up a steep incline on a mountaintop in Austria. My girlfriend and I were visiting friends, and Würzburg had been a brief pause in our two-day drive from my home in the Netherlands to the small town in Austria where our friends live.

Our friends had decided that we would best enjoy the scenery of Austria from the top of a relatively small and easy to climb mountain, though for me it felt like a heroic ascend of the K2. That feeling quickly passed when one of our friends, seven months pregnant, passed me on our way to the top and merrily said some encouragements to me as she seemingly without effort scaled the narrow winding path that lead to the top.

An Austrian family was catching up with me, a mom and dad with two young children and an older man I assumed was the grandfather. The mom carried one of her kids on her chest in one of those elaborately wound scarfs, and the dad carried the other youngster on his shoulders. They walked through this epic climb as if it was nothing more than a stroll in the park. Which to them it probably was.

Of course they didn't fail to notice my overweight bulk dragging up the mountain, but instead of getting annoyed, or even politely ignoring the unhealthy fat-arse blocking their way, they engaged me in conversation. My German is spotty and unpracticed but with some effort I could make myself understood, and they slowed down their speech to allow me to understand them better. They accompanied me up the mountain, not passing me even when I gave them the opportunity by resting for a bit by the side of the path. Instead they paused with me. They seemed to realize I needed some encouraging companionship to get me up that mountain, and they provided it without hesitation. Not once did they say anything to make me feel ashamed of my lack of physical prowess, especially feeble as I seemed compared to their mountaineering physiques. They treated me as an old acquaintance, quietly and indirectly coaching me up the mountain with their chatter and their presence.

I never learned their names either, but they took me in their tribe for half an hour and allowed me to share in their combined joy of the outdoors, enhancing my own enjoyment of the experience. I lost track of them when I reached the top and joined up with my friends again, but their spontaneous companionship is something I'll never forget.

That was the second time in three days that I'd been a part of a small, spontaneously formed tribe that lasted only for a short while. Humans tend to form a lot of those tribes whenever the opportunity presents itself, and it never ceases to amaze me how easily we can connect with one another.

## **Fear or Fear Not, There Is No Try.**

Adam

Tribes are a useful way to conquer fear and to create your life the way you want it.

I have read that fear is the opposite of love as darkness is the absence of light. I'd believe that. When people fear something,



they certainly don't appear to be loving the experience, do they? That contrast gives us an easy, simple test. Whenever you need to weigh someone's words, you can ask yourself, "Is this message based in fear?" If it is, then it is probably something that needs to be changed or avoided.

I am always wary of fear-based marketing. McDonald's doesn't make money by scaring you away from Wendy's. They focus on how good McDonald's is. Fear-based marketing is easy to do, but I don't see it as the "high road". I like to think that if I am going to market something, the product is good enough as it is without scaring people away from the competition.

Fear is a crippling thing in all walks of life. Fear sucks out your soul and smothers your passion for life like a heavy wet blanket. People who are unhappy are usually, but not always, full of fear. People who preach fear are usually full of fear. Fear is easy to peddle because there are so many buyers out there in the world. Fear keeps you from doing. Fear seeks stagnation. Fear holds you hostage to get you to stay the same, its victim. Fear allows people to control you, reacting to the waves they create in your world.

When you crack open a door to a dark room, the darkness flees in the presence of the light. Fear does the same in the presence of its opposite.

Tribes can be useful in this fight against fear. Tribes give us support and a consistent environment. Tribes help you to grow courage and resolve to put fear aside and do what needs to be done. Garrison Keillor and his commercials for Powdermilk Biscuits notwithstanding. Courage against fear is not easy, but it is always worth it. Roosevelt was right.

"Fear not" are the two most powerful words I know. "Do" is the single most powerful word I know. Yoda was half right. Do or do not, there is no try. However, the Dark Side need not dominate your destiny. You can change anytime, risk-free or your money back. All you have to do is intend and commit to change. This is where Tribes help.

Those of you who have fought this battle know exactly what I am talking about. Many of us have done so without a tribe, at least, without a tribe that we were aware of. Now that we are aware of tribes in our lives, this internal combustion of conquering

fear in our lives is that much easier. Tribes can indeed be very powerful. Possibly the most powerful force on the planet.

## **Tribal Activity.**

Sean McMenemy

Routine can be a big part of tribal interaction. One such routine is lunch. When the same pack of workers go out to lunch everyday, certain processes and pack orders are established. Shotgun being the second highest order next to the driver, then you have the back seat drivers that complain about the drivers abilities but rarely offer to drive the pack.

When this routine is firmly established it can easily cross over into other forms of the tribal mobility. Once the tribe realized that eating hot dogs everyday was weighing on the group in a bad way. They opted out of a motorized form of transportation and used the old fashion method of walking. During several journeys to the sub shop in an attempt to replicate the Jarad method of weight lost. The tribe noticed the same seating arrangement was firmly established in the ranks of the group and the sidewalk was just wide enough to reinforce this behavior.

When at least four members of the tribe was making the journey the driver would lead the pack by taking the front left position and owner of the imaginary shotgun would always be front right. Also the two ride-a-longs maintained their position bringing up the rear. When obstacles would disrupt the established pattern, such as other tribes walking in the opposite direction, or sidewalk maintenance, the tribe order would scatter and reorder themselves. After a short distance this just didn't feel right to the group and the order would drift back into the already comfortable established pattern.

## **Rudius Media Messageboard - A New Type of Fan Club**

Tom Hosford

“rudius (n.) – A wooden sword, given by the roman emperor to a gladiator upon attainment of his freedom”

Atop [the Rudius Media Messageboard](#) lies this definition, alongside the silhouette of a warrior basking beneath dark clouds. While this header may be a bit haughty, it stands to represent the underlying philosophy of the board: to live life on your own terms, to not be defined by others, to speak and act truthfully.

The Rudius Media Messageboard is a tribe of fans who have grown into a community. Most have been brought there by their interest in their leader, Tucker Max, an internet celebrity who is loved by many, and hated by the rest. But most have stayed for additional reasons. Some post short stories on “the writing forum”, and receive critiques from experienced writers. Some discuss work-outs and nutrition on “the ChasingKaz forum”, which is run by a professional Strong-man competitor. Most just post their own musings on “the Idiot Board”, described as about “all topics that divert and entertain.” Max’s messageboard has grown into something much larger than the site it originated out of itself, and represents a community much larger than those just interested in the tales of booze and sex he is famous for.

For most, the board is just a vehicle for entertainment. In 2004, Max and his fans joined in deriding a man named Anthony Dimeo, a self-proclaimed heir to a blueberry farming fortune who referred to himself as a “widely respected and often quoted 28-year-old financial advisor, and SAG actor.” One fan called him a “lazy-eyed retard,” while Max titled him “the blueberry douche.” Dimeo later sued for the incidents, claiming they caused him emotional and financial distress, although the case was ultimately dismissed. While incidents such as these can stir fans to cheer on their hero, most threads don’t even concern Max. Discussions are diverse, ranging from topics such as the [credibility of postmodernism](#) to questions like [“How do you wipe your ass?”](#)

But like all virtual tribes, there are casual users, and there are extreme ones. In 2006, one frequent poster broke down and announced his departure from the board, confessing that it had consumed his whole life. “This whole week I’ve spent eighty to ninety percent of my time on this ... board... I’ve been so sheltered from reality for so long that I’ve lost emotions, lost motivation, lost interest. This place became my life.” In response, Max issued a warning to other members: “Use this place... for

what it is--an entertaining diversion... Do not let it substitute for a real life.”

Through his messageboard, Max has cultivated a new form of direct interactivity between artist and fan. Fans have helped him choose the cover for his New York Times bestselling book [“I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell”](#), and have helped him choose songs for his [new movie](#) of the same title. What has resulted is a legion of dedicated fans, wanting to see him succeed. Says one of Max’s assistants, “Talk about ‘branding’. This is branding re-defined, Tucker’s brand has become the thoughts and ideas of his fans. This exchange IS his brand.” At their core they share an interest in Max, but it is the exchange of entertainment and advice from fan to fan through which this tribe has truly thrived.

## Which Tribe would you rather join?

### [Bonnie Diczhazy](#)

What people say...

Help Wanted: Looking for a motivated self-starter who enjoys working in a fast-paced environment. We offer competitive wages, benefits, free uniforms, meal discounts and a chance at advancement.

What people mean...

Help Wanted: Looking for a 5am starter who’d like to serve 100 breakfasts by 9am without any help. We offer 25 cents above minimum wage, discount movie tickets, a free poly/cotton blend polo shirt and .75 dounts with a chance to be head server if you last here more then a year.

It would be so much easier to figure out which Tribe to join if people said what they meant and not what they wanted you to believe.

Better yet...

What if people created a better Tribe instead of a better ad?

Help Wanted: We are looking for a team of 3 people to serve breakfast to 100 people. We offer profit-sharing, health care benefits, a \$100 uniform allowance, free breakfasts and management training.

If you have to exaggerate the truth to get people to join your Tribe, maybe your Tribe isn't worth joining.

## **You Don't Always Know Who's Following Your Lead**

[Joel D Canfield](#)

Dana Lamb was a bank executive in the 30s. And 40s. And 50s, 60s, and early 70s. As a serious trout fisherman might tell you, there was more to Dan, as his family and friends called him, than the suit. He wrote seven books on trout fishing. Seven.

Aficionados of adventure stories will tell you, that's not the half of it.

In 1933 Dan and his new bride Ginger set off on their honeymoon. Embarking from the deck of the sailing ship Star of India in San Diego harbor, they boarded the sailing kayak Dan had built, and planned on sailing, one day at a time, down the west coast to Panama—and through the canal.

Their trip down the coast, chronicled in the book *Enchanted Vagabonds*, is an epic adventure. Their arrival at the canal was nearly a non-epic. The canal master was miffed. No, he was livid. A sixteen-foot canvas-covered boat, using one of the most important commercial shipping lanes in the world? Not on his watch!

Ah, but there was a precedent.

Richard Halliburton was a loner. He had friends at Princeton, but apparently he was happier tramping down the road on his own. In 1921, he left Princeton, presumably by an upper window, and set out to hitchhike around the world.

As he travelled, he wrote. His missives were published by newspapers, and eventually gathered into his first book, “The Royal Road to Romance.” (And into half a dozen more after that.)

Halliburton was an iconoclast; he did the unconventional simply because it was unconventional. His father was wealthy and influential, and Richard wasn’t above using his father’s contacts to gain access to the inaccessible.

Which is how he came to be the only person I’ve ever heard of to swim the Panama Canal.

The canal master (the same? I don’t know) was indignant, unhappy, obdurate. A phone call later he was sullenly cooperative. The SS Richard Halliburton traversed the Panama Canal, being charged, as all vessels, by tonnage. Total cost: thirty-six cents.

I have no reason to believe that Halliburton and Lamb knew each other. Halliburton did not overtly try to persuade anyone to do or be anything. He wrote for two reasons: writers write, and he was a traveller who needed funds. As an intentional influencer he was a non-starter. He always seemed pleasantly surprised that anyone had read his scribblings.

Dan Lamb had. Dan and Ginger were inspired, in part, by Halliburton’s books. When they came to the Panama Canal, they invoked the name of their glorious leader. Like Halliburton before them, they traversed the Panama Canal, charged by tonnage. Their boat, the Vagabunda, was slightly heavier than the SS Halliburton, though.

They paid over a dollar.

## Micro-tribes Making Micro-loans

[J.D. Stein](#)

Erika Dinora Roque Luna, a young woman living in Queretaro, Mexico faced a situation that is common for the world's poor. She had a job, but her salary wasn't high enough to cover her own living expenses and provide for her elderly parents. So she quit. Erika began going door-to-door selling products from a catalogue. Her enthusiasm made her a natural salesperson. She gradually built up a clientele, but she was hindered by a lack of reliable transportation. Depending exclusively on the bus made it difficult to deliver products to her clients. Erika had a car, but it was broken and the \$475 repair cost seemed insurmountable as local lenders wanted upwards of 76% interest to provide the funds.

For the poor, sometimes the difference between just getting by and actually moving ahead is only a few hundred dollars. In Erika's case she was finally able to get a loan at a reasonable interest rate. I know because I was one of nine people who provided funds to fix the car. I am a member of Erika's tribe. I found her through Kiva (<http://www.kiva.org>), an innovative not-for-profit that uses the Internet to match individual lenders with needy entrepreneurs in the developing world.

Kiva partners with local microfinance organizations that screen applicants, process the loans and work with entrepreneurs on their businesses. For as little as \$25, individuals can join a tribe to help a beekeeper in Ghana improve hive production, or another tribe to provide the means for a farmer in Cambodia to buy a tractor to increase crop yields, or help a cosmetics shop owner in Afghanistan expand inventory. These are micro-tribes that make micro-loans.

The loans are indeed small—averaging only \$473—and the terms are short, typically 10 to 12 months, but the impact is huge. Since October 2005 more than 300,000 individuals have lent over \$40 million to small businesses through Kiva.

While these aggregate numbers are impressive, Kiva is not my tribe. Nor is the local field partner that administers the loan. My tribe is the two-dozen people who provided capital to Edelmira Sevilla Gomez of Chinandega, Nicaragua so she could expand

the inventory in her small grocery store. Edelmira leads our tribe. If she is successful than our tribe is successful.

My nine-year old daughter Breanna and I once discovered a girl kneeling at the base of an escalator at the Paris Place Charles De Gaulle subway station. Her scarf-covered head was bowed, eyes closed and her hands pressed together in prayer. The bright silk of her dress spread out on the cement like a paper fan. An empty cup sat in front of her.

Breanna stopped and asked after we had passed. “Is she poor for real?”

“I think so,” I said, handing Bre some change. She retraced her steps and let the coins clink in the cup. The beggar girl raised her head, lifted her hands, and appeared to whisper a blessing to my daughter. The gratitude revealed in her piercing brown eyes left no doubt. She was poor for real.

This simple act of disbursing coins provided only temporary relief. I am certain the beggar girl still kneels at the base of the escalator. She should be in school. She probably wants to be in school, yet her financial plight keeps her away.

Kiva allows me to reach out to the beggar girl and become a member of her family’s tribe. Then she can put away her cup and go to school, because her parents have capital for their small business. No longer will she be “poor for real.”

## **Transcending Your Tribes’ Identity**

[Ana Lorena Hart](#)

Identity is a powerful motivator. Individuals stretch beyond reach to protect, hide, promote and even leverage their own identity factors to validate self-worth. The same is true for the identity of a tribe.

For every time Tribe Members seek to assert their identity as individuals, there is an equal response in the name of the Tribe to



preserve its own identity as a whole. This equation quickly becomes privilege and prestige.

To protect privilege and prestige, tribes create norms of interaction that in practice lead to the generation of culture. Culture glues the tribe together and becomes a tangible source of pride and sometimes, irrationality.

The complexity of an individual's identity can't be contained within a tribe, but a tribe can certainly represent a factor –or groups of factors – of such identity. Whether it is gender, race, hobby, skill, faith, physical ability, national origin, political affiliation, etc., one does not fit all, but many.

We belong to many tribes because not one single approach to “feeling proud to be a member of...” xyz identity factor provides a fulfilling answer to the questions: Who am I? And, what would my legacy be? Individuals join, accumulate, and renege tribes throughout their lives.

It is the experience of that cumulative interaction that unleashes the individual's potential and given right to define their own legacy towards the greater good. We are more than our tribes, but we will not comprehend this until we transcended them through service and collaboration.

We are not our employment titles; but what we have done through them.

We are not our tribes; but what we have done –and will do- for others through them.

Is not who we are in isolation; but who we become when we reach out in community.

That's the journey! What would your legacy be?

**PowerPoint doesn't always work!**

Claudiu Murariu

It was late December, Christmas eve, when i had to start working on a Power Point we needed to present to 3 Roma communities in North Kosovo. We had to convince them that they needed to relocate. They were living on ex lead mines and all kids were highly intoxicated. UN and WHO neglected them for 7 years till a journalist uncovered their situation. UN decided that forced relocation will not look good in the media and hired a group of activists to convince the people to move on their own to a special designated living facility (ex military)... I was part of that team, and for our first meeting with the communities we prepared a power point presentation.

Really well done, simple points, strong messages, very well presented. We did it in each of the 3 communities and all of them reacted the same. We were applauded. Everybody thought it was great. The big screen, the nice done presentation, the nice images all of them were great. They all were so amazed that they barely heard a thing we were saying and left after the presentation.

We've been great entertainment but so out of their world and problems. We looked around us and even the electricity that has been provided to us by them was a luxury. The kids were in a terrible shape. We really were interested in their faith. We, with high educational background, with power point knowledge, with knowing how to manage projects... we failed to communicate something that for us was so obvious. We thought that after people will understand the situation they were in would want to move right away... so strong were the facts and the power point slides.

But power point slides was just pure marketing bullshit compared to their real problems. They didn't believe the lead issue as for 7 years all the doctors that came in the villages told them that they were all healthy. They couldn't relocate: Serb military sections were threatening them to move otherwise will rape their daughters and kill their sons and the Albanian ones threaten the same if they would relocate.

All this and we just came to them with a power point presentation. For the next 3 months we only gave Power Point presentations to UN. To the communities we used spoken words that came from our heart. We managed to relocate them. We

educated a political activist group between them and gave basic negotiation trainings.

That was the most sustainable project i have ever seen, and when i think about it almost didn't happen because of a power point presentation!

## **United States of Assimilation.**

[Bolaji Oyejide](#)

In 2005, I became a proud citizen of the United States of America.

But I've been a citizen of the United States of Assimilation, since childhood.

There I was.

It was the late eighties / early nineties. I was in high school, back in Nigeria.

I was rocking the stone washed jeans and Reebok ankle boots.

I was killing 'em with the high top fade.

I loved watching The Cosby Show, and though I didn't own Hammer pants, I did have all his videos. And knew all his moves.

Please forgive me.

You see - I was a typical Nigerian kid, raised (at least partially) on American culture.

I could fake a Brooklyn accent with the best of them.

I remember my Dad telling me stories of growing up. One of his heroes was John Wayne. Yes, he grew up watching old Westerns.

Indeed, America's greatest export is its culture. And it's a beautiful thing.

Fast-forward a few years. I moved from Nigeria to attend college in Atlanta, Georgia. I thought I knew everything necessary to fit in.

I did not. I stuck out like a sore thumb.

And so I worked harder to fit in. If anyone noted a hint of an accent, I covered it up. (Only later would I learn that the ladies dig accents. Bummer.)

I wasn't the only one working hard to assimilate. While American culture has blessed the world from sea to shining sea, a lot of kids are eschewing their own culture in favor of "being American". And even in the US, here, today, kids are under pressure to "fit in". To not color outside the lines. To not be different. To not be remarkable (except as narrowly defined - football star, cheerleader, social butterfly, or math geek. But heaven help you if you choose math geek.)

There is comfort in being homogeneous. Isn't that what being a tribe is all about?

And yet - the United States of America was founded and strengthened by a melting pot of cultures. It is what makes the USA unique today. And it is what makes the great tribes, great.

As we trek forward in the 21st century, we must be watchful against imposing assimilation at all costs, and promoting

homogeneity for its own sake.

A tribe needs guidelines and mores. It needs common goals and shared experiences. But it is those unique flairs that a new perspective, a new culture, a new tribe member brings... that gives the tribe its greatness. Its color. Its vibrance.

The recent Olympics are a reminder that each of us is an ambassador for our tribe. And in true Olympic spirit, you want to share the best your tribe has to offer, but also bring back the best of theirs.

Moral of the story: If you have a high-top fade, don't take so many photographs. 15 years later it will come back to bite you in the butt.

Other moral of the story: Remember what the tribe is about. Keep it open to different ideas, different personalities, and different perspectives. Different cultures. The goal that brings you together will remain unchanged. But the culture that carries you toward that goal should flow like water.

## **The Parrothead Tribe**

[Trish Lambert](#)

There's a guy over there doing Jello shots in a shark costume. Check out the girl in the sunhat with little boxes of Junior Mints hanging from the brim. And if you kind of blur your vision a bit, you'll think you're in a garden, there are so many Hawaiian shirts in the crowd.

What? You don't know where you are?

It's a Jimmy Buffet concert, of course!!!

James William Buffett, singer, songwriter, author (and incredibly astute businessman, but let's not talk about that part) has created one of the most age-diverse tribes on the planet. Just hang out at the pre-concert party in the parking lot and you'll see what I mean.

A little bit country, a little bit rock and roll, and a lot a genre of his own, Buffett was a one-trick pony for a long time in the eyes of Top 40 music followers. "Come Monday," one of the least attractive of his bulging portfolio of songs, made the charts for a brief period a long time ago. Surprisingly, "Margaritaville," the song that has become the anthem of his tribe (followed closely by "Fins" and "A Pirate Looks at Forty") never hit the charts. But Buffett never cared. Most of his career has been spent doing it his way, in spite of being told by industry "experts" that if he didn't conform he'd never make it.

Boy, has he made it. Today, 8 of his 30 albums have gone gold and 9 have gone platinum. Even more significant, he leads a tribe of Parrotheads that covers the globe and spans generations. Members recognize each other various ways--from wearing the usually clever branded merchandise to the simple "sign of the fin," flat hand held perpendicular to the top of the head.

Jimmy is a story teller, an icon, and a jester to his tribe. He endorses the mythology of the tropic slacker, the person who escapes the crazy making everyday world and takes up residence aboard a boat or on a beach on the island of "St. Somewhere." Ironically, his mythology is self-stoked by an amazing business enterprise that stretches from his famous concerts to a chain of well-placed restaurants/gift shops.

Jimmy is a man of surprises that delight his tribe. His Broadway collaboration with novelist Herman Wouk and his own three #1 best selling books are just a couple of examples of his continuous forays into new things. And the Parrotheads flock to almost all of the ventures he launches, whether it is his streaming Internet station, Radio Margaritaville, which is broadcast live from his Margaritaville restaurant in Orlando, Florida, or the Land Shark Lager he produces with Anheuser Busch, or the Margaritaville casinos he is building (in partnership with Harrah's) in Biloxi, Mississippi and Atlantic City, New Jersey.

And while he is both the chief and shaman of his tribe, the Parrothead population has taken on a life of its own.

Parrotheadness is not just the songs, it's not just Jimmy himself--it's a state of mind, a particular world view. Here, put on this Hawaiian shirt, suck down this Jello shot, take off your shoes, turn your face to the sun, and you'll start getting into the Parrothead groove. Now, hit the play button and get lost in "Son of a Son of a Sailor" or "One Particular Harbor," and you'll grok the tribe for sure.

## **New Parents Tribe**

[Russell Fisher](#)

I realized I was in a new tribe when I stumbled into the local grocery store for a few items soon after the baby's birth in August of 2008. Because I am not too creative, I call it: "The Tribe of New Parents" (the title works because it is descriptive).

My faltering steps were a result of the previous evening—it was one of those devastatingly disheartening all-night events, during which I wondered if I was going to make it as a new father. While there, I noticed a young mother with a baby that I could easily see as my child in the next few months. I asked her how old he was and she responded that he was four—members of this tribe understand that units of age are typically measured in months. I gave a weary smile and explained that I had a three-day old son.

Suddenly I had a friend.

Within seconds I had just the encouragement and added knowledge I needed to make it through the day. And then the following day, I met another young parent at the pediatrician office. She gave advice about helping with sleeping. A work associate offered very personal encouragement as we have worked through these first few days of adjustment. Other colleagues offered pertinent counsel.

These new parent times are prone to be very tender and it is at moments completely overwhelming to understand how one can

care for these little humans. Mothers and mothers-in-laws become saints. Neighbors become family. Strangers become friends.

We look to “What to Expect” and doctors as leaders and to others for support. We give and take encouragement and advice, but are loath to correct—that is sometimes relegated to those who don’t understand because of lack or faded experiences. We receive and make meals and offer and accept gifts. We understand that sometimes we lean and sometimes we bear up.

And now as I have found my footing, I have been able to reach out to others.

Ever since this blessed day—now blessed as I have been able to cope—that we have welcomed a parade of helpers—from our familial, neighborly, religious, and other friend-based circles—offering dinners, baby gifts, flowers, prayers, and companionship for our benefit. It would a have been a truly difficult time without this support.

It is a community that is built on the mutual knowledge that everyone can use some help. It is particularly poignant in this one area to see the succoring offered by those who still have these new experiences fresh in their minds; they are able to truly and acutely empathize with the newest father and mother. It is also a community built somewhat on reciprocity, but more in a “pay it forward” approach.

How grateful I am for this tribe.

## **Evolving Tribes**

Polly

Tribes come in varying sizes, shapes and affiliations. They have different names like pack, team, class or customer. They have different purposes. And, they are molded over time.



Cohesive tribes evolve, change, fade in and out, but find a way to prevail. These tribes live on through the heart and essence of the original tribe. Weaker, less thoughtful tribes fall prey to the inescapable change.

I recently experienced change in a tribe. This was a tribe made of 3. 2 humans and a dog.

The dog was a conduit. He led the 2 toward new relationships. Numerous people were brought together by way of the dog. Without the dog's intervention, these people would have drifted by one another without any notice. The dog interceded, introductions were made and connections were formed.

The dog had an open mind. He knew no strangers, came when called upon without hesitation, and continually unearthed new territories. He met each new outing with the fascination and joie de vivre that only a trusting creature, full of intrigue and stimulation, can appreciate. No maps or plans, only the idea that some kind of a venture lay ahead. Some more enjoyable than others. All worthy, since this one might be the great one. He taught his tribe the importance of tolerance, the art of forward thinking and the tranquility of faithfulness.

Mostly, he was a laid back fellow who was an agent of change. Adaptable, ready and always willing. He got up each morning without any guarantees for this day or the next. No guarantees that the 2 would return to him when they left. No guarantees that the 2 were driving him to his beloved park rather than on a mundane trip to the store or worse yet, the vet. No guarantees that the 2 would stick with him at all costs. He trusted and knew his tribe. Worry was a waste. He accepted change and worked with it.

One particular Saturday in early July, after 14 years of partnership, the dog decided that night would be as good as any to end his earthly journey. He did what the other 2 had always asked of him (make it easy), and he simply lay down and died. He was there and then he was gone. His tribe had been forever changed.

The 2 had lost a leader, their gateway to certain groups of people, and a spirit that taught the significance of unguarded accessibility, devotion, trust and openness. All of it, gone in under five minutes.

These same dynamics are at play in your tribe. There are pieces and parts of your tribe that would be deeply missed if gone. These holes will change your tribe. It can happen quickly, with little warning. It is up to you to think about what those holes mean to the tribe and react accordingly. Be prepared.

Real, genuine tribes carry on propped up by the character and spirit on which they were built. Can your tribe carry on in the face of change? Will it honor its past and still be viable, amazing, and remarkable? Or, will it lose its way and be consumed by the holes?

## **Msafara- Wheels of Hope**

[Kangai Mwiti](#)

Msafara: Swahili for a caravan.

On December 27, 2007, an entire nation braved chilly mists and drizzles to stand in long lines and vote for change. Kenya gathered to elect their president. That same morning, I voted for the man that I thought would bring the change I envisioned for my country. I believed in the power of my vote, and in the power of the millions of votes cast that day throughout the country. Sadly, my vote brought in the most chilling experience in the history of Kenya.

In January 2008, over 1000 people died, and close to 300,000 immediately became internal refugees. The sworn-in president was a member of the Kikuyu tribe, and his most fierce opponent a member of the Luo tribe. These two tribes have fiercely reviled each other for decades, and the results of the elections tipped the already tumultuous situation into something that every Kenyan will remember for years to come. People were slaughtered merely for being members of opposing tribes. Their children's feet were cut off, and their homes razed to the ground. Here in Nairobi, matatus (public transportation vans) were stopped, their passengers ordered out and their identity declared. Hope died. The nation was at a standstill.

A group of church leaders in Nairobi got together and decided to do something about it. Their plan: to go into battle with the spiritual forces that gripped the country. These church leaders, in one week, would visit the main cities that were spiritual hotspots and literally wage war against these forces of spiritual darkness. What numerous Kenyans did not know is that their esteemed parliamentary candidates had visited witches, sorcerers and wizards seeking spells and powerful amulets that would aid in their political aspirations. Animals were offered as sacrifices to special gods that would ensure success at the polls. Toenails, bits of hair and other body parts were also proffered as burnt offerings unto spirits and ghouls that would bring about the dreams that many aspirants had been salivating over.

With Christianity in Kenya almost at 80%, no one really believed that witchcraft would be used as a campaign strategy. And no one really believed that these church leaders would have any sort of impact.

For two months, they told anyone who would listen about their plan. They alerted the media, CEO's of companies, non-governmental organizations, international foundations and even international peace keepers. Churches united to plan and implement the journey. Companies united in giving of clothes, feminine products, food, cleansing products, water and shelter to the internally displaced people. Teachers volunteered their time and money to set up schools in the refugee camps. Volunteers gave themselves to just going and playing with orphaned kids, or those kids who'd gotten lost in all the confusion. Other more affluent kids gave away their Christmas toys to those that didn't have any. Youth groups planned to travel to give their time and attention to people who only weeks before had been hunted. Parents gave extra cans of food lying around their homes. Women searched their homes for extra pairs of socks for little kids, and feminine products for displaced women. Mothers mobilized themselves to knit clothes for new born babies, while their husbands ransacked department stores for baby food and diapers. Suddenly, there was one voice. There was unity.

And the caravan of hope started their journey. For one week, they travelled throughout Kenya ministering to the bereaved, and giving food and other items to those that needed it. And with each city they visited, their numbers grew. From 100 pastors and 300 volunteers in Mombasa to tens of thousands of hopeful Kenyans in Kisumu. Their journey to heal the land, and give hope to it's people brought back the basic humanity that had been abandoned weeks earlier. According to their website, they would pray, cry, hold, laugh and counsel with the hurting, seeking to be the hands and feet of Christ to the people.

These church leaders united a tribe of people that was passionate about upholding basic humanity over personal gain. And that tribe grew with each passing day of the Msafara.

Msafara was more than just a week-long project conjured by a group of church leaders. It was a caravan of hope that instilled in my country the belief that we are more than just Kikuyus or Luos or Kalenjins or Kambas or Merus. We are humans first.

## **The Golf Tribe**

Peter Davies

For many years I paid no particular attention to this tribe. Then I decided to try it. Now I am a fully fledged member of the hacker sub genre of the golf tribe.

What are some of the characteristics of the golf tribe?

First, its quite exclusive. Only a small % of the population play, and although the numbers are increasing in countries where a growing middle class is taking it up, by and large the numbers are static.

Second, the golf tribe do like to spend money. They spend money on clubs, they spend money on joining a course, they spend money in the bar and restaurant after a game, they spend money on silly clothes and shoes that you couldn't wear anywhere else.

Third, there are definitely rules and rituals. So jeans are a no no on most courses, but stupid checks, plaids, and outrageous colours are OK. Beats me.

Fourth, most members of the tribe think they play better than they do. Its a game where you play mostly against yourself, but you tend to cheat yourself too.

Fifth, less than 1% of active golfers are actually good enough to go round a course in “par”. That is, virtually NO ONE is capable of meeting the accepted “standard” number of shots for each hole on the golf course. So its an immensely frustrating game because perfection is so hard to achieve.

What is apparent to me is that golf is a good way to get an insight into people’s character and how they deal with setbacks. There are plenty of setbacks in golf, and switching off the negative feedback from a bad shot is quite difficult to do.

The social interactions of members is also fascinating. You play in twosomes, threesomes or foursomes. You have a variety of ways to keep score. And then you end up back at the bar discussing how it went with other people who played the same course before or after you did.

It also seems to me to be a profoundly sexist and divided game. I have played with lady golfers but this seems to be the exception rather than the rule. For whatever reason this tribe tends to play with people of the same sex. In traditional clubs, ladies have restrictions on when and how they can play.

Finally, golf has attracted a ton of wonderful quotes. Here are just a few of my favourites:

Golf is essentially an exercise in masochism conducted out-of-doors. ~Paul O’Neil

They call it golf because all of the other four-letter words were taken. ~Raymond Floyd

Golf gives you an insight into human nature, your own as well as your opponent’s. ~Grantland Rice

Golf is a good walk spoiled. ~Mark Twain

## EcoHousing...Green Neighbors

[Susan McFee](#)

Go to your window and look down the street. What do you see? Do you see neighbors gathering for summer barbeques or potluck dinners? Do you see your children safely playing outside with the neighbor's kids? Most likely not, as our streets have changed from the nostalgic "Sesame Street" styled neighborhoods to car owned pathways. It is now so easy to drive into your garage, park the car, and go inside without ever interacting with a neighbor. We live like this for years; never knowing even the name of someone next door. This social isolation could be creating higher rates of depression according to [Home and Community Care Digest](#)

How could we design our neighborhoods to reclaim this lost sense of community? What if homes and streets were partially designed by the people who live there? People open to a different neighborhood paradigm. What do you think of when you hear the words "ecological sustainable housing"? Do you see green building technologies such as wind power, solar hot water panels, or in-floor radiant heating? Do you see people walking down a pedestrian street saying "Hello" to one another instead of walking on by? Do you see spontaneous interactions of support for childcare, repairs, or simply getting together for coffee?

What would it feel like to live an average week in an EcoHousing neighborhood? One of the first differences you notice is a shared community center. On one day you might reserve the multi-purpose room for a future ballroom dance class; and later attend a book club discussion in the lounge. The next day you might learn about the latest conflict resolution techniques as well as communication skills, as everyone makes the strata council's decisions by consensus. Perhaps after school, the kids enjoy the community center playroom while you go to the neighbourhood workshop and borrow the lawn mower, the power washer, the snow blower or even the band saw. You realize that you share resources amongst your 30 or so neighbours and you make a mental note to suggest a proposal to discuss a bicycle sharing or even a car sharing program at the next community meeting. After sending the kids off to school in the neighborhood carpool, you go back to your self contained home and begin telecommuting to work and decide to visit the community center office for photocopies of a special event poster and reserve the

“motel styled” guest room for your sister who is attending your celebration.

You suddenly stop and think of all the ways you’ve saved money, helped the environment and made a difference in people’s lives that you question: Are we a neighborly tribe just by where we live? Or is it our daily interactions and how we go about each day that creates that special cohesion? Words can hardly do this concept justice; a tour of your local EcoHousing neighborhood and its socially sustainable lifestyle may just surprise you.

## Ultimate Frisbee

Edward Beshers

Ultimate Frisbee can be summed up in four words: Spirit of the Game. The sport’s motto has two meanings, and together they explain why Ultimate is a fast-growing sport and a loyal tribe.

The first meaning is passion. If you’re not familiar with the sport, go to YouTube and experience it for yourself. It requires both speed and finesse, and it demands a high level of fitness. At all levels, the game is played in tournament format. A tournament is a grueling affair, consisting of eight 90-minute games played over the course of two days. True acceptance into the tribe requires willingness to sacrifice one’s body for the sake of the game. In this respect, Ultimate attracts warriors, those with a fierce and competitive spirit.

Men and women of all ages eagerly devote their nights and weekends to Ultimate. Simply put, this is not something a person chooses to do without great passion for the game. However, if you ask any of them what keeps them coming back, they’ll tell you it’s not about the sport. Really, it’s about the people.

Ultimate Frisbee attracts high-quality people. Since it’s creation in the 1960’s, it has exploded in popularity in America, and it has done so primarily in Ivy League and elite liberal arts colleges. Only in the last 5-10 years have the big state schools with

their massive recruiting bases produced the best teams in the game. Before that it was a who's who of the country's top schools, and to this day Carlton and Brown have two of the most select programs.

Frisbee people are, as a whole, one of the nicest groups of people you will ever meet. It is also a close-knit subculture. Large parties often come hand in hand with tournaments. Many Ultimate players meet their closest friends, business partners or spouses through the sport (which is still played coed by many teams, even at higher levels). There is an impressive amount of dedication to the tribe.

To understand this culture, one must appreciate the original meaning of Spirit of the Game. There are no referees in Ultimate. No officials. No umpires. Nothing. No one is responsible for making calls, for keeping a game fair and clean, except for the players themselves. It is truly an accomplishment, considering the high level of competition.

This sport was founded upon the idea that no amount of rules can ever replace the principle of sportsmanship. In an age of steroids and instant replays, Ultimate Frisbee is a refreshing reminder of what is important in athletics: the Spirit of the Game. It is a sport and a tribe for the 21st century.

## **Learning to Move as One**

[Jaculynn Peterson](#)

We lined up like ants against the wall at the back of the cavernous dance hall, which was bright, hot, and bare.

It was a fitting environment to incubate our newly formed travel tribe – each of us from a different part of the world. Like the barren room, our connection to one another was about to become free of some of the more popular accessories in life: Pretense and Preconceived Notion.

That particular dance hall moment was in stark contrast to our brief encounter the day before when we met for the first time.



After a bit of posturing and polite pleasantries, we impressed each other with our tall travel tales, nodded a crisp good night and stiffly strode with our still-cramped plane legs off to bed.

So there we stood the next day, baking in the sunny airless room, feeling our sweat beading, our reserves melting. As our group huddled nervously together, we contemplated the unfamiliar and unknown. We shared the same feelings: “Will I be successful?” “How can I get through this without making a complete fool out of myself?” “Is it going to be possible for me to give up total control?”

Soon, we were interrupted by our tribal leader when she spoke, in her native language, to a stranger. Then she vanished out the door to the streets of Buenos Aires – leaving us alone to complete our tribal mission for the day: Learning the Tango.

Like children learning to walk for the first time, we began our mission with furrowed brows and intense concentration. Our small successes were applauded. Our big blunders were met with encouragement. As the hours wore on, the room continued to warm but this time with the passion associated with dance and the joy of newfound camaraderie. Soon our silent determination to achieve a common goal gave way to intermittent bursts of laughter. And as we finally gave in to the dance itself, the chamber began to echo with a beautiful laughter that erupted from deep within our bellies. It was a sound that can only come from those who’ve been humbled and have nothing to lose.

Ultimately, our perceived barriers to success evaporated when we decided to have faith in being led – and in each other. And from there we were able to move in creative new ways – as one.

By the time the last song played, we were moving with a fair amount of fluidity – some of us even had our eyes closed. In the end, all we really had to do was listen (to the music) and feel (what was in our hearts). The rest came naturally.

When we finally left the room – eager to join the rhythm of the bustling streets – we didn’t even think to retrieve the egos we had voluntarily checked at the door three hours earlier.

# The Tribe That Deals With Life, Death, and Chaos

Lori Hoeck

The 9-to-5 workplace is filled with its own critical moments, but rarely life and death decisions that need to be made and certainly not made in split second moments amid horrific conditions. That kind of workplace belongs to emergency response workers and law enforcement officers.

Firefighters, paramedics, cops, and federal agents often find themselves in traumatic situations where lives hang in the balance. Those who end up in the thick of things and as first responders must cope with amazingly dangerous, difficult, and demanding situations.

These men and women are often asked to go to the extreme limits of mental, physical, and emotional abilities. The saying among firefighters is “We run toward whatever everyone else is running from.” They realize they can die on the job, but they are willing to put their lives on the line in the cause of saving and protecting the public.

Several group dynamics occur across these occupations that making the work more bearable.

## 1) Extreme challenge

Since extreme abilities are required, all these groups have a certain sense of ongoing challenge among its members. Everyone wants bragging rights about the toughest 9-1-1 call, the biggest fire, or the longest stakeout. The bragging isn't simply ego manifesting or a contest, but rather a challenge to do better so the bar is always kept incredibly high and standards never drop. When your life is in the hands of a team member, you don't want a simple braggart backing you up, you want someone who will have your back competently.

## 2) Extreme humor

When faced with life and death situations as a job description, being somber all the time is a killer emotionally. To compensate for the horror, trauma, and devastation they may witness, members of this group use a type of black or gallows humor that would never pass any test of political correctness. A great example of this in the sectioned titled Cop Humor in this post [“So What’s it Like Being Married to a Cop?”](#) at officer.com.

### 3) Extreme stories

Waiting in the trenches, between ambulance calls, or taking a break at the fire station are all times to bond members together with the crazy, mind-boggling, or incredibly difficult stories about what others have gone through in the same line of business. Each story reveals more of the culture in some way, whether it is never-taught-in-the-book techniques, local problems a new person might face, past members who were great or horrible examples, how to think outside the box tough situations, or the times someone said thanks in a memorable way.

Despite the alpha wolf mentalities, the obvious desire to do the job better than the next person, and the sometimes seemingly insensitive communications; the best of the group serve the most professionally when the call goes out, all the “BS’ing” is left behind, and -- as one -- they rally to the cause for which they volunteered. The unity transforms chaos into workable solutions. In the end, the ability to put everything aside for the team during the crisis helps them save lives and return home to their families.

## **A Tribe Begins With A Dream**

Laura Hicks

Sitting around the coffee table in her living room, an entrepreneur and a Symphony Fellow (who was residing with her for a time) saw the need to expose a younger demographic to classical music in a small city in central Alabama. It seemed liked an oxymoron. To bring arts and culture to Montgomery, AL - typically known for football and truck driving - through a series of musical performances seemed preposterous. Nevertheless, there was passion on the part of two, and the seed for a tribe was

germinated. Not long after, a creative director for a local advertising agency was brought into the fellowship, along with a handful of businessmen and women passionate about arts and music. With the seed planted, the idea began to grow with many conversations about how to present chamber music in a unique way to a younger generation. A house party idea was suggested so as to hear chamber music in an intimate social setting. The tribunal gathered to discuss the possibility of a series of house parties leading up to two musical performances incorporating the arts and culminating with a street party in a prominent, historic neighborhood. The group needed a name. ClefWorks was born.

To ensure the viability of the organization, the first year needed to be solely volunteer-based. The premiere season birthed a devoted group of entrepreneurs, international performers, arts organizations, school groups, donors and volunteers. The coordination of talented musicians, artists and organizations willing to give of their time began with a dream and was made a reality by the volunteers. Of course, the group needed a web site (<http://www.clefworks.org>), T-shirts, CD's, e-mail, the help of the media and communication channels to reinforce the tribe. The idea spread through viral marketing. ClefWorks is unique and successful because it is a non-intimidating cultural experience in a community hungry for approachable arts and musical entertainment. The success of ClefWorks continued with the second season as volunteers came together again to present two performances at a local theatre thus incorporating more partners into the group. The third season planning is underway with each season having a new theme to spark interest but staying true to the tribal roots with intimate house parties. The ClefWorks Composition Competition was established to encourage future tribal interest and was posted on the Web site to solicit applicants through relationships all over the world. Artists from China to Portugal entered the competition and the Web was utilized as a channel for information. They posted a video on YouTube to announce and promote the winner and spread the link electronically. A number of internationally-renowned artists have emerged to continue to perform for and promote Clefworks.

New tribes emerge every day. They begin with a dream and are realized through the spirit of community. Success and growth are realized as members get to own it through participation.

## Temporary Tribes

[Carole Stewart](#)

She came from no roots, no family. Sometimes she feels like she's waiting for the spaceship that left her here to return for her and take her back to her tribe. She has done many things in many places. She thinks she knows why she's here. She thinks she knows what she's supposed to be doing. She even thinks she's pretty good at doing it. It's just that she's never done it for very long with the same tribe.

Belongingness is a much longed-for unfamiliar. So what if her tribe is temporary? A tribe for a time? A tribe that can maybe use fresh eyes, a new math, a radical solution? So she sojourns, searching and showing up; passionate about belonging and catalyzing and contributing to her tribe.

May I tell you a story? You like stories, don't you? OK.....here's mine..

He died in the year 1505. Before he died he gathered his three (3) sons at his bedside and he told them "When I die everything I own will be yours. My first son is to receive one-half of everything I own. My second son is to receive one-fourth of everything I own and my third son will get one-eighth of everything I own. Everything I own is out in the corral."

And then he died.

After the three sons buried their father, they went out to the corral to gaze upon seven horses. "Hmmm" they muttered, "This will be a very messy job."

But before they could finish sharpening their knives a lone horse and rider appeared from the west. Stopping at the corral, the rider got off her horse and asked “Why all the knives and long faces?” The sons told their story and she said “OK, let me think this over.”

She then led her horse into the corral with the others.

“Now” she said “The eldest son shall take one-half of eight horses; the second son one-fourth of eight horses and the youngest son one-eighth of eight horses.”

So the oldest son took four horses; the second son took his two horses and the youngest son removed his one horse.

She then got back on her horse and rode away in search of her next tribe.

Tribes Exist

Tribes Matter

Follow your passion and you’ll find your tribe.

And you’ll matter.

## **The Real Estate Exchange**

[Dustin Miles](#)

There are many members in my tribe. Some of them have been in the tribe for weeks or months and others have been in the

tribe for 30 plus years. My tribe has actually been popular enough that there are a few television shows about it. There are people from all backgrounds in this tribe: doctors, lawyers, housewives, or people who work in the tribe full time. It's a unique tribe that affects the lives of people around the country. These tribe members, real estate investors, belong to various real estate investing clubs and associations, or tribal meetings. While there are many real estate investors and many real estate investing clubs, it is a fragmented tribe as a whole. Depending upon the club you go to, you'll meet a very different set of people. When networking with them, there have been many occasions where I've received business cards from other investors, only to lose them. Even worse than that, I've also run out of business cards. A lot of these club or tribal meetings also occur on the same day so from the perspective of the tribal member, you have to decide on which tribal meeting to attend. Some of the tribal meetings allow continued interaction among tribal members through <http://meetup.com>, but it certainly has its limitations.

I'm attempting to gather these local tribal meeting members and make networking among real estate investors a more efficient process. You can never beat the connection that people feel between one another when they meet in person, but I plan on creating an environment, a website, that aims to facilitate networking among this tribe of people.

Will these tribal members and tribal meetings want to unite and network in harmony amongst members of smaller tribes? That's hard to tell at this point. The various tribal meetings are businesses. As businesses, they seek to attain profit (not that there is anything wrong with that). Perhaps within the walls of the website, <http://thereexchange.com>, tribal members and the smaller tribes within the DFW area will let down their guard and see the value in having a central tribe and the networking opportunities it represents not only for the tribal members, but for the tribal meetings as well.

I hope that there can be tribal harmony, but only time will tell.

## **The Mavuno Tribe**

In August 2005, [Mavuno Church](#) was founded in Nairobi, Kenya. Mavuno means harvest in KiSwahili. In three years, this passionate tribe has grown from 300 congregants to over 1000. It has a language of its own, and a culture unique and apart

from any church in Nairobi.

Mavuno is a church that strives to not only impact the Christian community in Kenya, but the secular community as well. This church frequently holds events in clubs like Carnivore, where Worship Pastor Kanjii holds concerts. They market themselves on secular radio stations and frequently attract secular organizations to partner with the church. This has resulted in efforts such as [Msafara, Wheels of Hope](#) that have united the country as a whole.

To any Mavunite in Nairobi, this church is not only a tribe, but also a tribe creator. According to their website, newbies sign up for Mizizi Classes- highly focused 10 week learning experiences that are designed to help them develop a strong foundations for their faiths, incorporate them into the life of Mavuno and help them begin to live the abundant life God made them for! These classes spit them out as a tight group of individuals (also known Mavunites) whose lives have been changed. They then form Bible Study groups where they get involved in various church ministries that go out into the community to help, heal and encourage people. The cycle begins again when members of the community, after encountering a Mavunite, visit the church to learn more. After all, being a Mavunite has become a badge of identity for many Nairobians.

## The Group Theater

[Colleen Wainwright](#)

“Pride of ownership can wreck this.”

One of the “trivial rules” laid down about this ebook. And a central truth of pretty much any project of scale.

But how to reconcile the need of the Big Project—sacrificing individual glory for the greater good—with the very human needs of the people who fuel it?



That was literally the premise behind the famed Group Theater—that individual actors would put aside their need for individual glory to serve, as a group, the story. Actors. A group not usually known for disinterest in personal glory. (Hell, it's why most of us get into the trade.)

The three founders of the Group Theater—Harold Clurman, Cheryl Crawford and Lee Strasberg—had a few things going for them. Timing, for one: they came up with the idea for their groundbreaking collaboration in 1931, two years into one of the most harrowing collective stories their country had known.

Another was building on precedent. Both the idea of a true theater collective and the development of a particular style of acting to serve it came straight from Constantin Stanislavsky's own work with the Moscow Art Theater. Stanislavsky, and later, Lee Strasberg, taught actors how to draw from their own experience to illuminate the actions of the characters they inhabited—taken for granted now, but revolutionary at the turn of the last century.

And in this new style of acting, there could be no small parts: a character player with two lines was as critical to shaping the reality of the experience as the lead, because it was the effect of an entire group working as a team, not individual star turns, that would make the theatrical experience real and meaningful for the audience. The story was the star, the actors existing to serve it. Pride of ownership? Would wreck everything.

Finally, a huge part of what fueled the passion of the Group Theater collective was that the stories themselves would be something bigger. Not the frothy, escapist entertainment of the time, but stories that both reflected the dismal state of the world and offered a prescription for changing it. The Group Theater offered actors a chance to do nothing less than change the world; for a particular kind of actor, that was more than enough incentive to put aside notions of personal glory.

When you think about your big project, it's worth spending some time to come up with the story you're trying to tell: That our planet is fragile and it needs protection. That teaching a man to fish is better than buying him a flat of canned tuna.

What is your story? Who can help you tell it?

Hitch individual passion to higher purpose. Rinse. Repeat.

## **Susan Komen Race for the Cure**

Michael Gibbons

This tribe is on the move. Over twelve million Americans participate in a charity walk fundraising event each year, raising an astounding \$1.6 billion in 2007 according to Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council. That's quite a tribe, actually its a conglomerate of large organizations like The Juvenile diabetes Research Foundation, Susan Komen, March of Dimes and smaller charities like autism Speaks and the National lung cancer partnership.

Many charities have found active fundraising events to be an effective (if not perfect) way to promote their cause and raise money. The events have spawned hundreds, thousands of tribes and sub tribes passionately dedicated to the cause and fundraising. Most of these charity walk tribes have different rituals and icons but they share the same defining attributes.

In this case study we will explore one organization's tribe, the Susan Komen For the Cure and 3 Day breast cancer walk tribe. Patrick Hanlon wrote a great book Primal Branding which I think is a striking compliment to the idea of tribes. I will use his Primal Code as a way to explain my thesis on the Susan Komen tribe.

Creation Story: Nancy Brinker founded the Susan Komen Foundation to honor a promise to her beloved sister Suzy (Susan Komen) to lead the fight to cure breast cancer and to care for the women fighting this disease. Creation stories do not get more personal or poignant than this.

Creed: Susan G. Komen for the Cure is fighting every minute of every day to finally, once and for all, finish what we started and achieve our vision of a world without breast cancer.

Icons: Pink everything, ribbons, boas, hats and balloons denoting years of survival

Rituals: 3 Day / 60 mile walks with the requisite campground and pink two person tents. Survivor ceremony with survivors carrying one pink balloon for each year of survival. (and more that as a 46 year old guy I am sure I am not privy too!)

Pagans / Non Believers: The other charities, the non-believers, the competition if you will. Organizations like Relay for Life, March of Dimes and Walk to Cure diabetes who compete for walks and donors (metaphorically speaking of course) but this is an important distinction for a tribe to understand their antagonist.

Sacred Words: Words that define and bond the tribe. For Komen it's words like 3 Day pink, breast cancer, cure, boobs and more that I would not be privy too!

Leader: Clearly Nancy Blinker is the visionary leader for Susan Komen but there are many more people in the organization and regionally who take on leadership roles

So...Why do so many people participate in a charity walk fundraiser? Why do they so intrepidly ask friends, family and co-workers year after year for \$5, \$20 and \$1000 donations? Why set up lemonade stands or hold people ransom with purple toilets in their front yards? Why do ordinary people sleep in a tent and walk 60 miles over three days? It's not so much the Why it's the Who. The charity walk tribe is made up of ordinary people who have extraordinary stories to share -- the charities provide an environment where people can take this inspiration and turn it into good!

## **Captain Gabriel de Clieu**

[Rick Wilson DMD](#)

[Megan Elizabeth Morris](#)

For most cultures in most of human history, no adult was ever completely sober.

That's right. You didn't think they drank water, did you? Water was always suspect. Without modern sanitation facilities there was always the risk of water-borne diseases: cholera, typhoid, dysentery. Some have called these diseases the biggest killers of all time. So if not water, then what? Depending on the culture, they drank beer or wine. The process of fermentation did away with much risk. Most people in most places, since the dawn of agriculture, did not drink plain water. They went through their lives in a constant state of mild inebriation.

Coffee, tea, and hot chocolate were available in some parts of the world (depending on how strictly the Islamic prohibition against alcohol was enforced). Nowadays, each has a staunch following of devotees. But until the 1600s, coffee, tea and chocolate -- the only plant sources of caffeine edible by human beings -- were completely unknown in Europe and the Americas. Even after Pope Clement the VIII proclaimed that it would be "a shameful waste" to leave the enjoyment of coffee to the heathen, officially sanctioning it to the vast, influential tribe called the Catholic Church, one tribe -- the Dutch -- exclusively controlled its production. Prices were very high, and supplies were limited. Simply put, there were no competitors.

This is the story of the man who changed all that.

Gabriel d'Erchigny de Clieu was a French naval officer and resident of Martinique, in the Caribbean. De Clieu had a secret ambition: to steal a coffee plant from the Jardin des Plantes, where Louis XIV had them jealously protected. De Clieu's plan was to cultivate coffee plants in the West Indies, but getting such a plant was an incredible challenge. The plants were guarded with great zeal.

De Clieu's solution was a lateral attack. He persuaded a young lady of the Court to prevail upon M. de Chirac, the Royal Physician, to purloin one of the rare plants from the Jardin. And in 1723, de Clieu sailed from Nantes with his single, precious coffee plant installed in a glass-framed box on the deck of the ship -- a sort of protective greenhouse.

His crossing was difficult. A Dutch-speaking passenger (perhaps a spy!) seemed intent on disrupting de Clieu's plans; on one occasion de Clieu surprised him in the act of opening the greenhouse and snapping off a twig. But that wasn't all -- the ship barely escaped an attack by Tunisian pirates, and heavy storms nearly smashed the greenhouse. The greatest threat, during a prolonged calm, was the rapid depletion of drinking water aboard ship. De Clieu wrote:

“Water was lacking to such an extent that for more than a month I was obliged to share the scanty ration of it assigned to me with my coffee plant, upon which my happiest hopes were founded and which was the source of my delight.”

Despite all, de Clieu did make it home to Martinique, coffee plant intact! He set it out with great care, under guard. Upon reaching maturity it bore coffee beans, and propagated with ease in the friendly climate. Eventually coffee plantations sprang up all over South America, particularly Brazil. Many botanists feel that the entire population of coffee plantations in the New World, until recent mixing, descended from De Clieu's single enterprising plant.

By 1746, with lower coffee prices and greater cultural acceptance, de Clieu was presented before Louis XV, who (unlike his father) was a serious coffee drinker! De Clieu was appointed Governor of Martinique, an honor bestowed for his cultivation of coffee.

The shift from wine and beer (which dull the senses) to coffee and tea (containing stimulants) was world-changing. Along with railroads and the telegraph, the partial replacement of alcohol with caffeine as the most commonly used drug in the world encouraged modern work methods and industrial progress. Thanks to the vision and perseverance of one man willing to challenge the status quo, the coffee tribe's barrier to entry was altered dramatically: from wealth and influence to simple taste.

## **Get to Know Your Surfer Tribe**

[Charles Bohannon](#)

Not so long ago, surfing was high up on the priority list of the ancient Hawaiians who pioneered this beautiful, magical sport. Despite life essentials like farming, fishing, hunting and battling for survival, they made time to step off the land and seek harmony with the mighty ocean. With nothing but their bodies and a board (sometimes not even that), these men and women honed their strength, wits and patience in exchange for a few short seconds of unrivaled bliss.

Surfing hasn't changed much since then, but the tribe certainly has grown. Hundreds of thousands of people around the world have caught on to the simple act of catching waves and getting stoked. The ocean is their gathering place, and catching waves is their ritual. A good surf is still better than a day at work, and a great surf really sucks if you're not doing it.

Surfer tribe leaders are people who, over their lifetime, embody the values of aloha and stewardship of the land and sea. They are legends like Duke Kahanamoku, Eddie Aikau and Rell Sunn. Professional surfers can also be icons in their own right. These are the talented "shredders" like Kelly Slater and Andy Irons who get paid to rule the waves and inspire young surfers – known as "groms" – to master their boardriding abilities.

Surfers will go to great lengths to surf. It's not uncommon to hear about surfers who "aren't really morning people" program their coffee makers, wake up at 4 am, strap a board on their car and drive 25 miles down the coast to check out a swell. And so what if the water is freezing or it's really crowded or the wind is howling onshore? None of that matters if you can paddle out there, catch some waves and seize the day!

Regional surfing tribes have their own lingo. For example, in Hawaii, wave size is measured from the back of the wave, and everywhere else it's measured from the front. The conversion is about double, so a six-foot Californian wave is known as "three feet Hawaiian." Imagine 20-foot Hawaiian!

Surfers live by two universal rules, both of which call for great respect of the ocean and fellow surfers. The first rule: never turn your back on the ocean; it might be the last thing you ever do. The second rule: the surfer nearest the breaking part of a wave in either direction (left or right) has priority to go. So say you're surfing in Hawaii, and you hear someone exclaim "hwui!," it's best you bail out because you've just "dropped in" on them.

Violate this rule on a regular basis and you're out of the tribe. Follow it and you're in – it's that simple. And it doesn't matter who you are, where you're from, what you're riding or how good you surf – the surfer tribe is open to anyone willing to jump in the ocean and paddle after their bliss.

## It Takes a Drip

Bonnie Larner

“A year from now you'll wish you had started today.” That's what the sign on my office door read. I was revved and ready. The world of advertising was about to implode, but no one except me seemed to notice.

Boing! Up sprang an idea. Start with a drip and wait for takers.

Right then, I made a commitment to three years of drippage. Once a month I sent every client - and every department head in the agency - a personal email along with a link. The link offered a threat-free way to learn about new thinking, specific to their industry and area of expertise. No selling. No pushing. Just a drip, drip, drip.

There were drips for my airport client! About flight-schedule widgets, ads on baggage carousels, tango lessons for flight-delayed passengers. Drips for my retail clients! About pop-up stores, CEO tweets, hundred-dollar handbags made of recycled tires. Drips all around! About blogging, SEO, the million-pixel website. The more I dripped, the more I dreamed.

Drip report - year one. Not much happened. Drip report - year two. I noticed a shift. Some of my co-workers started sending me links with the message, “Seen this one yet?” One client wrote, “Where do you find this crazy stuff?” Another replied, “Keep ‘em coming please.”

Could this be a closet tribe of new thinkers in search of a leader? I wanted to believe the answer was “yes.”

Here’s a sample of what to expect from a tribe of new thinkers. Picture a semi-trailer truck with glass sides; inside is a flurry of man-made snow falling on a scale model of our client’s mall. The truck starts moving slowly. What’s it doing now? Driving back and forth in the competitor’s parking lot. That year - the year of the truck - our client saw their biggest gain in holiday sales since the year they first opened.

Drip, drip, drip. It really works. If you’re impatient like I am, you might feel like you’re wasting your time. You may even be tempted to give up. But stick it out and keep on drippin’.

Your tribe is out there somewhere and they need you to lead them.