



CAUSE!

A Business Strategy for Standing Out!
Jackie & Kevin Freiberg

Give History a Shove.

On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy announced before a special Joint Session of Congress the dramatic and ambitious goal of putting an American on the moon and bringing him home safely before the end of the decade. The dream was bold and audacious, but it galvanized a nation and launched a movement. That one simple, yet extraordinary, declaration ignited the entire U.S. scientific community along with an army of government officials and private sector entrepreneurs.

Thousands of people from thousands of places worked long hours making personal and professional sacrifices to bring thousands of puzzle pieces together. It was one of the greatest mobilizations of resources and manpower in history!

What was so compelling about the vision? Why were the people involved so committed?

Kennedy invited us into a cause. He asked us to be part of something BIGGER, to bring our gifts and talents to solve a problem that really mattered. His challenge appealed to our spirit of adventure. Space revolutionaries were determined to give history a shove by doing what no one had ever done before.



Not only would a successful moon landing open up a new frontier for humankind, it would also inevitably spawn new innovations.

After Kennedy's assassination, as America went through the turmoil of the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and more assassinations, the Apollo program seemed to symbolize the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of our people; it reminded us of the America we wanted to be.

Despite skeptics who said it couldn't be done, on July 20, 1969, over a half a billion people around the world watched as Neil Armstrong took a small step for himself and a giant leap for mankind.

It was a stunning achievement that represented the best of human ingenuity and demonstrated the heights to which the human spirit can rise when inspired by a noble, heroic cause.

It is said that we only knew approximately 15 percent of what we needed to know to accomplish this goal when Kennedy made the commitment. Yet, somehow a critical mass of innovators and technologists opened their minds, tapped into the intellectual capital of the nation, and rose to the occasion. What if, every day, you too could be inspired by a noble, heroic cause?

What if you could be a part of a team determined to give history a shove, rise to the occasion, and achieve great things?

What if you could be a part of a team that had a burning passion to create not just a company but a legacy that would live on long after you've left the scene?

What if you could be a part of a business that earns the love and respect of family, friends, and colleagues? A business committed to making a profit while making a difference? A business admired by clients and envied by competitors?

What if this business had a culture that is bound by love instead of driven by fear? A culture where leaders are hard-working servants who mentor and inspire rather than manipulate and control. What if you could create a place that is as human as the human beings who work there, a place where people feel valued, add value, and live their values, not because they have to but because they want to.

WILL WORK FOR A CAUSE

What if potential team members and partners beat a path to the door because they knew the business excelled at equipping people for success? They could sense the collaboration and camaraderie among people who share the same passion and belong to something bigger—people who go home at the end of the day physically tired but emotionally charged because they are engaged in a heroic cause that inspires them.

What if you could create a company that cares about the wellness and well-being of its customers and sees its customers as real people with real families and real dreams, not just market segments, prospects, and sales quotas? What if this business treated its customers with a spirit of hospitality, the kind you encounter when people anticipate your needs, are genuinely glad to see you, and consider it a privilege to serve you? What if you created a business that focused on enriching lives, not just pushing products? Think of a business that could never knowingly manipulate, mislead, or mistreat its “customers and partners.”

What if this company led the charge for a more sustainable future, one that genuinely respects the environment? What if this business was a force for GOOD in the world because it enriched the lives of EVERYONE it touched?

What if this company didn't think of itself as just a business, but rather as a community of like-minded individuals pooling talents to make good on a promise? What if you could create not just a company, but a movement that has the power to leverage free enterprise to bring peace of mind and financial well-being to life for those you serve?

What if this wasn't a utopian dream? What if you could actually be a part of a company like this? What if you weren't just colleagues at work but rather friends committed to a cause? This must be the vision for any company that wants to turn employees into ambassadors, into partners and enthusiasts, and customers into advocates. Companies must turn "What if?" into "What is!"

“What if you could create not just a company, but a movement that has the power to leverage free enterprise to bring peace of mind and financial well-being to life for those you serve?”

The ROI of Cause: The New Driving Force for Business Success

There is an undeniable wave cresting, a new breed of companies that are purpose-driven and cause-oriented. They are forward-thinking and intentional about doing good, connecting dreams to opportunities, and launching movements that make the world better. Their success and confidence comes from defining their business as a cause. Their confidence attracts and unleashes talent, accelerates innovation, strengthens brand reputation, moves markets, allows the organization to move with speed and agility, stimulates investments, and creates long-term growth.

Companies that are committed to solving problems that matter and dedicated to creating a better world for all stakeholders (employees, customers, vendors, and community) are almost always cause-oriented. That is, they are committed to making a profit while making a difference. These companies have answered four critical questions:

Who are we? Why do we exist? What's noble and heroic about what we do? In terms of meaningful impact on the world, if we were gone tomorrow why would we be missed?

The answers to these questions grow confidence, guide behavior, drive strategy, transcend leaders, and endure over time. They give everyone a reason to come to work every day.

Greater Long-Term Investment

According to the Deloitte Core Beliefs & Culture survey, people who work for cause-oriented companies believe their company will heavily reinvest. Consider the following investment differences between firms with a strong sense of purpose and those without:

- New technologies: 38% vs. 19%
- Expanding into new markets: 31% vs. 21%
- Forming new strategic partnerships: 31% vs. 18%
- Developing new products and services: 27% vs. 17%
- Employee development and training: 25% vs. 11%
- Leadership development: 23% vs. 11%

Confident, forward-thinking business leaders drive innovation, mold and maintain company culture, invest in technology, explore new relationships, and maximize the use of resources strategically. This makes sense. Everyone knows that reinvesting is crucial to a company's continued growth and success. Yet, the companies driven by a cause lean into this more. Why?

When there is a cause worth fighting for and a problem worth solving, the passion and the compelling business case for reinvesting is stronger.

The idea is that, when we believe what we are doing is so meaningful and so important, then we naturally believe that we can't afford NOT to reinvest.

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Attract Impact Talent

When your business is tied to a noble, heroic cause—a movement to make the world better—people will beat a path to your door. But not just any people. Not wannabes, but change makers. People who are moved by and connected to the purpose, people who also see their work as a calling and a crusade.

Changing the world is not for the faint of heart. It's for people crazy enough to step out of the routine and into the breach to have a positive IMPACT. They carry a courage that makes others question their sanity and a focus that inspires other like-minded change makers to follow.

Cause Elevates Employee Engagement

Employees want more than a paycheck. They want a sense of pride and fulfillment from their work. And, they don't want to check their values at the door when they come to work; they want a company whose values match their own.

When the business becomes a cause, what follows is a movement, and people OPT-IN to movements. Employees are most passionate and engaged when they are fighting for a cause that is tied to their own deep-seated values—when work is an opportunity to invest themselves in issues that are important to them. This makes work a natural and impactful expression of who they are. Essentially, it helps them answer two very important questions:

Do I belong here? Is there congruence between what the organization stands for and what I stand for?

The answers are telling. With congruence something very powerful happens. People bring more of themselves to work. They bring their best selves. What makes people spiritually, emotionally, and physically sick? What makes them tired? What makes them empty or depressed, not engaged? A life that is incongruent. Without congruence, well-being and engagement go out the door.

Engaged people are more open to new information, more productive, more adaptive, and more willing to go the extra mile. Moreover, engaged people are all in; they take the initiative to change their work environments in order to stay engaged.


Cause Strengthens Culture

The Deloitte Core Beliefs & Culture survey indicates that organizations with a compelling cause are more likely to have strong corporate cultures than those that don't. Here is a summary of their findings:

Companies with a compelling cause and strong corporate culture are:

- 83% more likely to embrace diversity and different options
- 80% more likely to encourage employees to innovate
- 79% more likely to encourage people to develop new business growth opportunities
- 74% more likely to provide tools for employees to reach their full potential
- 73% more likely to have leaders who seek out the opinions/ideas of others

Cause Elevates Customer Engagement

The background of the slide features a warm, orange-toned sunset or sunrise sky. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of several people in various celebratory poses, such as jumping, running, and raising their arms, suggesting a sense of joy and achievement.

Consumer preferences are shifting. It's no longer enough to sell a product or service that works. Consumers expect meaningful social impact. In the future, if you can't demonstrate that you are legitimately doing something to make the world better, you won't have a business.

Edelman's 2014 Trust Barometer study revealed that 92 percent of consumers want to do business with companies that share their concerns (e.g., economic development, the environment, human rights, poverty, and hunger) and 40 percent of consumers don't think brands are doing enough to demonstrate their beliefs in helping the world.

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Stronger Financial Performance

And finally there is a cause-and-effect relationship between a firm's ability to serve a higher cause, to do good, and its financial performance.

The greatest need of human existence is work that matters. Work that is meaningful. Work that makes a difference.

Isn't that what we all want? Isn't that what every company needs if its most talented people are to become fully engaged?

Lifting society up, creating a better world, serving others—that's what it means to be fully human. Deny this and you run the risk of dehumanizing the very people who are essential to your success. It's like asking them to bring only a part of themselves to work every day.

Planted in every one of us is a seed. It's called DESIRE. We have a deep-seated desire to do something heroic with our lives. Not heroic in the sense of celebrity, fame, or fortune, but rather heroic as in doing something with our lives that is eternally important. Heroism is about engaging in work that ultimately enriches peoples' lives and makes the world a better place. It's about creating a legacy you won't regret or want to apologize for.



Great Companies Help People Find the Heroism in Their Work

Heroic work is adventurous. It tests our character and our talents as we stretch to pursue extraordinary things.

To be part of an organization where you truly believe that your work is heroic is a source of fulfillment, satisfaction, and joy. It enables you to plug into a source of energy and enthusiasm you didn't even know you had. Heroic work raises your esteem for what you do and unleashes something in you that says, "I want to do it even better." But what gets in our way?

The Epidemic

The average corporate culture is, well... just average. This is a problem.

People are wired for heroism, yet corporate incentive systems and compensation plans are generally geared toward MONEY and THINGS. So sadly we are confronted with a major epidemic that threatens most businesses.

Think about the people you know in business. How many are totally fired up and impassioned about what they do? How many are bored and frustrated? How many people do you know who would say, if they were honest, that they dread Mondays?

There's an epidemic sweeping businesses today—from the largest Fortune 500 firms to the little mom-and-pop deli on Main Street. This epidemic threatens not only the success and prosperity of businesses themselves, but also the long-term economic standing of every nation in the world. The epidemic? **Dead people working**, to use a phrase coined by our friend Ken Blanchard. these are people who **quit, but stay**.

The epidemic is costing our organizations billions. It stunts the economic growth of these businesses and diminishes the quality of life for the people who work in them.

“Lifting society up, creating a better world, serving others—that’s what it means to be fully human.”



What's Killing People?

A culture that sucks the life, passion, and energy out of people. People are dead because the places where they work lack interest, audacity, imagination, zeal, and passionate, purpose driven leadership. Too many of us are working in companies that are sucking the passion, energy, and enthusiasm out of us by the hour. And the effect is disastrous because people lose their hearts, suppress their dreams, lower their expectations, and abandon all hope for a sense of adventure. Resignation sets in.

Don't let RESIGNATION kill you. Cynicism. Negativity. Doom and gloom. These are the enemies of the kind of ingenuity, hope, and perseverance that will differentiate a company from the other players in its industry. To be a Great Company, a BEST place where the BEST people can do their BEST work to make the world BETTER you need...

The Remedy

Leaders who can inspire. Leaders who can wake the dead people working!

When it comes to defining your business as a CAUSE and inspiring a movement, here's the thing: there has to be something so alive in you that it awakens something in others. When people bump into you, what spills out?

A higher calling? A commitment to a cause? An invitation to change the world?

People Follow Passion (National Life as Test Case)

National Life does not tolerate resignation. It is a company committed to creating a workplace where everyone, everywhere, every day feels valued, adds value, and lives the values.

"We can do better.

The most successful organizations never stand still. They are always looking for ways to do things better; they are always seeking to reinvent themselves, aiming even higher."

—Mehran Assadi, President & CEO, National Life Group

MEHRAN SHARES HIS LOVE FOR THE CAUSE.



From everything we've seen National Life isn't just better, they are among the BEST! They are one of the top twenty insurance providers in the United States. National Life ranks among many of the most highly rated according to A.M. Best, Standard and Poor's, and Moody's. And they remain an employer of choice in all of their local markets.

As one of the original inventors of living benefits which allow you to access the money in your life insurance policy if you're diagnosed with a chronic, critical, or terminal illness, National Life has been an innovator in the industry since the company's beginning. In addition, the founders of National Life were innovators who created one of the very first mutual life insurance companies in the country—the first with a national vision.

The company's first death claim—that of Rowland Allen, who died in 1850 while seeking fortune in the California Gold Rush—pushed the company to its limits. The young company did not have the assets to pay the claim but the directors knew their company's future was doomed if they failed to pay.

With the cooperation of a local bank and the personal credit backing of the directors, National Life came up with the money. Its President and Founder Dr. Julius Dewey personally delivered the \$1,000 payment to the grieving but grateful widow.

Even today, employees are proud to reflect upon their history and be a part of continuing the legacy. They want to be a part of doing better. Matt Frazee, Vice President and Controller told us:

“National Life’s culture is unique. We are rooted in tradition, with over 167 years of history and credibility in doing the right thing. Egos tend to be small, reflecting a bit of where we are located, so we’ve created an environment where it’s more important to have the right people on the team vs. getting individual credit. Our focus is clearly on the future and how we will improve on what we’ve built. New ideas, products, and ways of doing things are viewed positively and encouraged. Good ideas get in front of key decision makers quickly and everyone has the chance to add value. At National Life, there are endless opportunities to make a difference and Do Good.”

This is what happens when your company starts with a noble, heroic cause. It unleashes talent and accelerates innovation, because when people are engaged they think and act like owners of the business. They are not Dead People Working, they are motivated and alive at work.

Today, the legacy of National Life's founders lives strong in the hearts and minds of its people. But their strength as a vibrant company comes from more than their history. It comes from their ability to lead today and plan for tomorrow. It comes from their deep-seated desire to be relevant today and prominent tomorrow.

Today they are recruiting to a compelling story. National Life is looking for people who get the "spirit" of the company. They invite potential employees to think beyond the job itself and they challenge everyone to think about the "why" behind their job. Today, culture is the boss at National Life. People have the freedom and tools to call out colleagues when they are not living the values or practicing Servant Leadership, and if they are holding back the culture.

The mission upon which the company was founded in 1848 lives on and is simple, "keeping our promises." Ask employees what the company's mission is and they can recite it because it's been woven into the fabric of the company. This is not just a quotable phrase that lives in the lobby. We have experienced the passion that employees have to keep that legacy alive and accomplish the mission. The deep-seated desire to deliver on a promise is alive and well.

“Ask employees what the company's mission is and they can recite it because it's been woven into the fabric of the company.”



In its ongoing quest to be an employer of choice, National Life's company culture is built around the tenets of Servant Leadership—respect, integrity, trust, passion, and service.

National Life is on a journey to help all employees and partners fully understand the importance of what they do. They don't make computers, cars, or widgets. They make promises! Their job is to deliver on those promises 10, 20, 50 years down the road.

When you believe your work matters three things will happen:

First, you will unlock a vast treasure chest of passion, commitment, determination, ingenuity, and energy—things customers and advisors enjoy and competitors will find very difficult to replicate.

Second, the organization will become a powerful magnet for extraordinary talent—people will beat down the doors to get in.

Third, you will give history a shove!

Cause Inspires a Movement

From the outside looking in, it appears that when you join or partner with National Life you are stepping into a movement. The people you work with aren't just doing a job. They're engaging in a worthy cause. There is a healthy level of fanaticism, a fervent hope for the future, and an intense dissatisfaction with the status quo. These characteristics define the people and partners of National Life.

Don't Pitch, Enrich

The people and partners at National Life don't pitch policies; they enrich lives one relationship at a time.

It sounds like “apple pie, puppy dogs and rainbows” to say that the products you are creating will bring peace of mind, but the people of National Life know it to be true—and that's what matters.

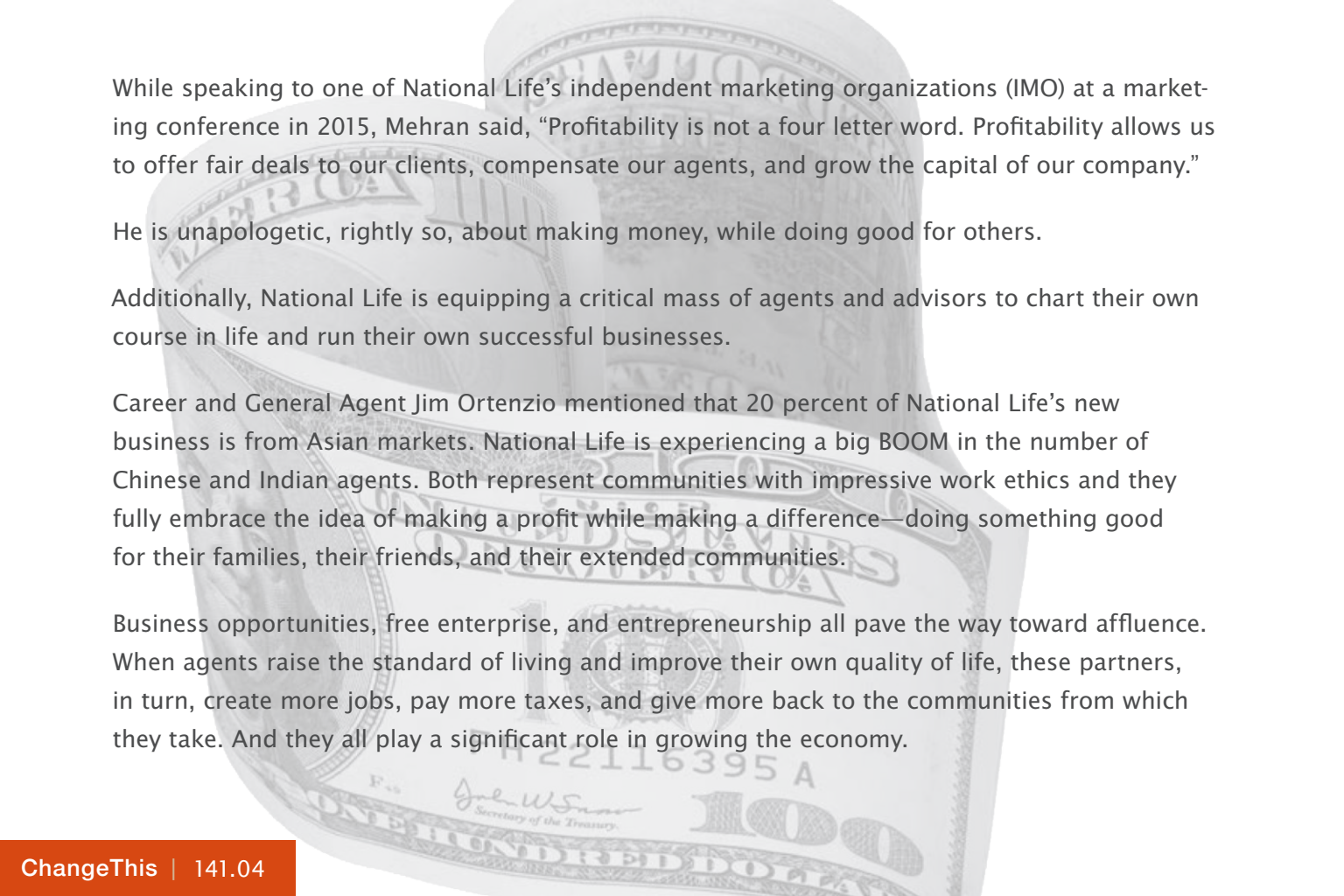
Ruth Smith sees peace of mind, dignity, and life assurance delivered regularly in her role as Executive Vice President of Protection.

"I have the good fortune of working directly with our agents who offer protection solutions to clients if they die sooner or live longer than expected or become ill or injured. We are also a leader in providing living benefits to our policy holders by offering life insurance you don't have to die to use.

My team and I have received many policy holder requests to access their living benefits for things like experimental medical treatments that might not be covered by their health plan, or assistance that will allow them to continue living in their homes while recovering from a critical illness.

For years we've heard heartwarming stories about how a life insurance policy from a National Life company has helped a family or a business owner in the most difficult of times. My team and I are reinvigorated knowing that by keeping our promises to our policy holders we have made a positive difference in someone's life."

Empowering free enterprise, National Life is about making a profit while making a difference.



While speaking to one of National Life's independent marketing organizations (IMO) at a marketing conference in 2015, Mehran said, "Profitability is not a four letter word. Profitability allows us to offer fair deals to our clients, compensate our agents, and grow the capital of our company."

He is unapologetic, rightly so, about making money, while doing good for others.

Additionally, National Life is equipping a critical mass of agents and advisors to chart their own course in life and run their own successful businesses.

Career and General Agent Jim Ortenzio mentioned that 20 percent of National Life's new business is from Asian markets. National Life is experiencing a big BOOM in the number of Chinese and Indian agents. Both represent communities with impressive work ethics and they fully embrace the idea of making a profit while making a difference—doing something good for their families, their friends, and their extended communities.

Business opportunities, free enterprise, and entrepreneurship all pave the way toward affluence. When agents raise the standard of living and improve their own quality of life, these partners, in turn, create more jobs, pay more taxes, and give more back to the communities from which they take. And they all play a significant role in growing the economy.

And in 2008, when the recession hit, National Life field leadership teams made it a primary focus to train and equip their advisors and independent marketing organizations on creative ways to build and grow their businesses despite the threatening economy.

People OPT-IN to movements. They don't have to be manipulated or head locked into joining; they enlist themselves. They don't have to be bought—enticed with fancy cars, epic trips, or CPS (cheap plastic stuff) to sign up; they are already drawn to the psychic gratification, the deep meaning, and the significance they garner from solving a problem that matters, enriching lives, and providing peace of mind and assurance for life unexpected.

You don't have to “recruit” them; they have already been recruited by the CAUSE.

Let's get real. Building a business is extremely hard work. It's not enough to dream with great boldness. At some point you have to wake up and bust your butt to make that dream a reality. Fulfilling an audacious dream means you must be as bold and daring about realizing the dream as you are about the dream itself.

“People OPT-IN to movements. They don't have to be manipulated or head locked into joining; they enlist themselves.”



When it comes to motivating people, movements outperform companies. In a company, the basis for exchange is transactional or contractual—a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s labor. In a movement, the exchange is voluntary and transformational—you give your gifts, talents, and time in exchange for an opportunity to do something heroic and meaningful, to make a difference.

In a company, you are an “asset” to be managed, a tool for production, a means to an end. In a movement, you are a partner in a cause, a “co-sojourner” if you will, fighting against some evil or ill in the world that you want to make right.

In a company, people are loyal to the firm, and vice versa, because they depend on each other economically. In a movement, people are loyal to each other because they share a commitment to a cause and a sense of belonging to something bigger.

National Life and its associates are in partnership with general agents, independent agents, and financial advisors.

You can't manage partners like you would a direct reporting relationship in a company. Why would you want to? Most companies rely on rules, regulations, and thick, convoluted policy manuals to control people. Movements, by contrast, give people the freedom to operate within the vision, values, and norms defined by the cause.

The people of National Life see their products and services as a means to a bigger end, the tools with which they address the bigger WHY. We suspect the reason their agents have been so successful when other companies are flat is that they aren't just hocking yet another insurance product with unique features. Rather, when potential customers bump into them, what spills out of their agents is the WHY:

- ... ensuring that families stay together and businesses and legacies continue
- ... preserving the dignity and financial independence of seniors
- ... helping people through illness and providing streams of income when they're needed most
- ... creating a safe and secure haven in unpredictable times
- ... giving newly-acquired friends peace of mind

Ultimately, this is what the people of National Life are selling. And guess what? It resonates. Their promises (the WHAT) are cool, but what makes the people in the field so successful is their passion for talking to customers about using those promises to build a better world for their families (the WHY).

Unpacking the National Life story has us asking: “Why not create a movement that sees people not as assets to be managed, but rather as talented, impassioned, and gifted entrepreneurs to be enabled, empowered, and trusted to Do Good?

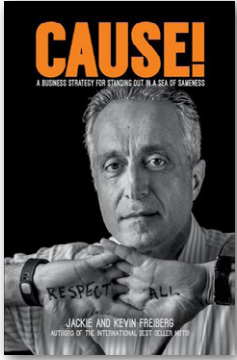
Why not create a community that loves and values people and uses the products it produces to enrich lives?”

What if we created a company that was as human as the human beings in it? National Life is, and as a result they stand out in a sea of sameness.

Want to legislate passion, creativity, initiative, and accountability? Good luck!

**We suggest you swap luck for strategy and define your business as a CAUSE.
It is far more sustainable. 🌱**

Info



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS | Jackie and Kevin Freiberg are bestselling authors and founders of the San Diego Consulting Group Inc. The Freibergs are dedicated to helping leaders create Best Places where the Best People can do their Best Work to make the world Better. The Freibergs speak on leadership, innovation, and change all over the world. They have a global practice including firms in Europe, Japan, South Africa, India, Central and South America, as well as companies throughout the United States and Canada. Learn more at www.freibergs.com.

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