

TEQUILA SHOTS

brains on fire style





OUR MANIFESTO

Brains on Fire builds movements for great companies and causes. Born out of the bond between **word of mouth marketing** and **identity development**, we are devoted to helping organizations **discover and sustain excitement** about **who they are** and **why they exist**.

Our beliefs:

Great organizations are driven by **purpose**, not just profit.

They grow **relationships**, not just transactions.

And they thrive through **movements**, not campaigns.

P R E F A C E

This book was originally an internal document, meant to inspire and energize Brains on Fire employees, rallying us all around our beliefs and goals. Now, in its new shared-with-the-world iteration, we thought a few clarifications would be helpful.

First – we have removed some pages. You see, under each of our twelve beliefs, we have very specific company goals pertaining to things like financials, web traffic, internal deliverables, net promoter scores, review processes. All the stuff nobody cares about but us. So we took all that stuff out and left the heart of the book for you!

Second – why tequila shots? You see, we are big on communicating our goals – they are the things that make our beliefs tangible and trackable. And, whenever one of those goals is reached, we come together as a company to celebrate... with a round of tequila shots. TEQUILA! It's a joyful ritual, and it just seems a little more "us" than checking off a white board or cracking open some Dom.

So there ya go. We hope you enjoy sharing our tequila shots. And you may want to refrain from operating heavy machinery for a while after.





DRINKIN' BUDDIES



“You should check out [Brains on Fire’s] “pirate’s manifesto.” If you didn’t know, Brains on Fire is the answer to the stuffy, pompous, egotistical advertising age we live in.”

- Robbie Cobb
Fix 22 Creative

A photograph showing a man lying on his back on a wooden floor, appearing to be in pain or unconscious. A woman stands over him, holding a large knife that is stuck in his back. The scene is set in a room with a brick wall and a wooden floor.

P R E A M B L E >



**SUPER SIZE
MY DREAMS**

**WOULD YOU
LIKE TO
SUPER-SIZE THAT?**

Big dreams are much easier to keep in sight.

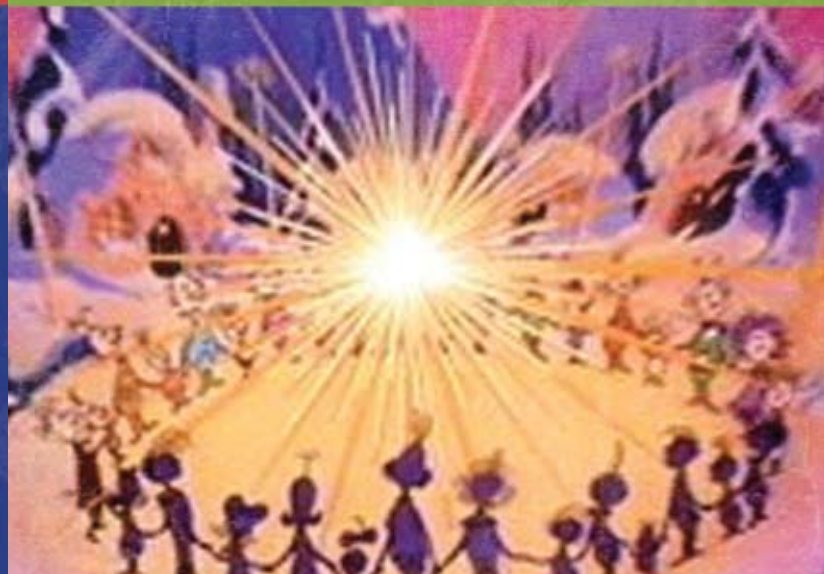
**NOT A
WHAT.**

**IT'S A
WHO.**

CHRISTMAS DAY IS IN OUR GRASP

SO LONG AS WE HAVE OUR HANDS TO CLASP

It's about a Who not a What.
Focus on the What and you miss It.



**BELIEFS √
FEELINGS √
BEHAVIOR**

One thing leads to another.

- The Fixx (we think)



"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful.

REAL

takes courage

"When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

— from The Velveteen Rabbit

AWARE AWARE AWARE

Brains on Fire is about becoming aware.

Which leads to being more responsive.

More empathetic.

More innovative.

More real.

Make It Personal

REALIZE:

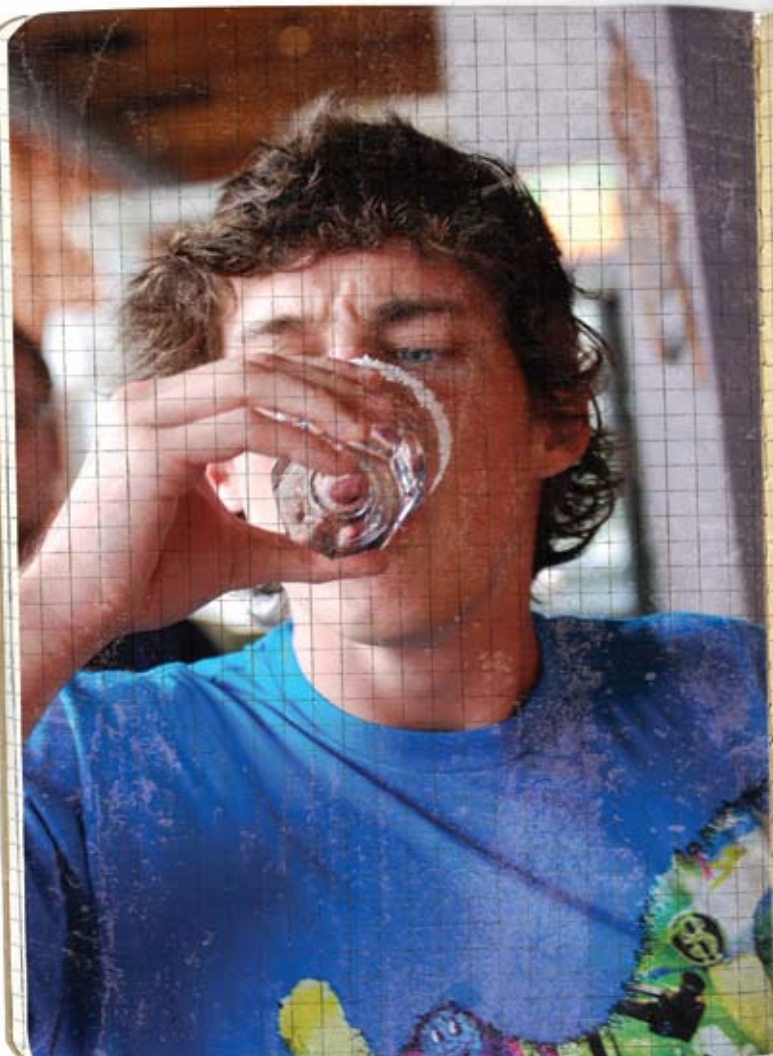
1. to grasp or understand clearly.
2. to make real; give reality to (a hope, fear, plan, etc.).
3. to bring vividly to the mind.

It's not about having all the answers,
it's about asking all the right questions.



**Fun cannot make you happy
unless you share it with someone.**

- greg cordell (we think)



DRINKIN' BUDDIES



**"Anything with purpose needs a manifesto.
And just maybe, it's a yearly anthem presented
in a 100+ page, kick-ass creed formed around
12 core principles."**

**- Cale Johnson
The Rally Flag**



DRINKIN' BUDDIES



“This book is a stellar way to show the company culture... both to potential clients and to new employees. You instantly get a feeling for the pulse of the place.”

**- Dave Knox
Brand Manager, Procter & Gamble**



A DOZEN THINGS WE BELIEVE

TEQUILA SHOT

#1

brains on fire is a movement



BRAINS ON FIRE IS

NOT A COMPANY

I'VE GOT A
CONDITION.

Brains on Fire is not about us.
It is about what we do.

We create Brains on Fire.
It is a state of mind, an attitude, a cause.

When you work with Brains on Fire,
you understand who you are
and what you stand for.

Your work, your passions become a calling.

Brains on Fire is not a company.
It's a condition.

IT'S A MOVEMENT



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TEQUILA SHOT

#2

our work is powerful

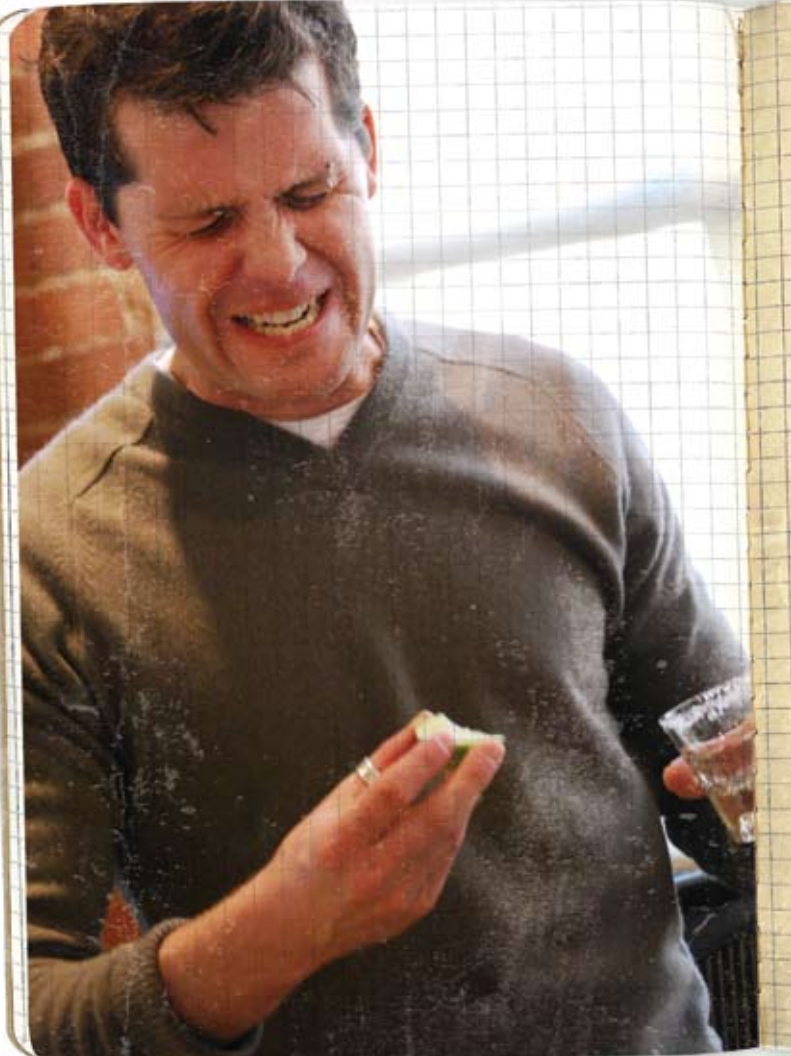


OUR WORK IS

POWERFUL

We practice what we preach and we think our work shows it.
We don't just talk theory, we actually make things happen.
We bring ideas to life with our story telling and visual skills.

Our work is clear, honest, visually rich and most of all, it is moving.
If it doesn't move you to a reaction or an action, it is not worth doing.







TEQUILA SHOT

#3

work that matters
gets under your nails





WHAT'S UNDER

YOUR FINGER NAILS?

If it truly matters – it becomes a part of you.

Like the mechanic who never really loses

the oil stains under his fingernails,

our work stays with us wherever we go.

the work you do

It becomes a part of our language and

our very being. That is not to say work is

everything, but if your work is your calling

and not just a job, you will embrace it

in everything you do.





80/20 rule: You can't wait the opportunity, creativity/strategy combo could never solve a h it was created. So we try thinking by getting a ckgrounds—MBAs, who look at a problem from different st on board. s have to understand human behavior yalty. I can explain how brain and and process information around ates our choices. Companies are and insight. They can't get that ntly available to them."



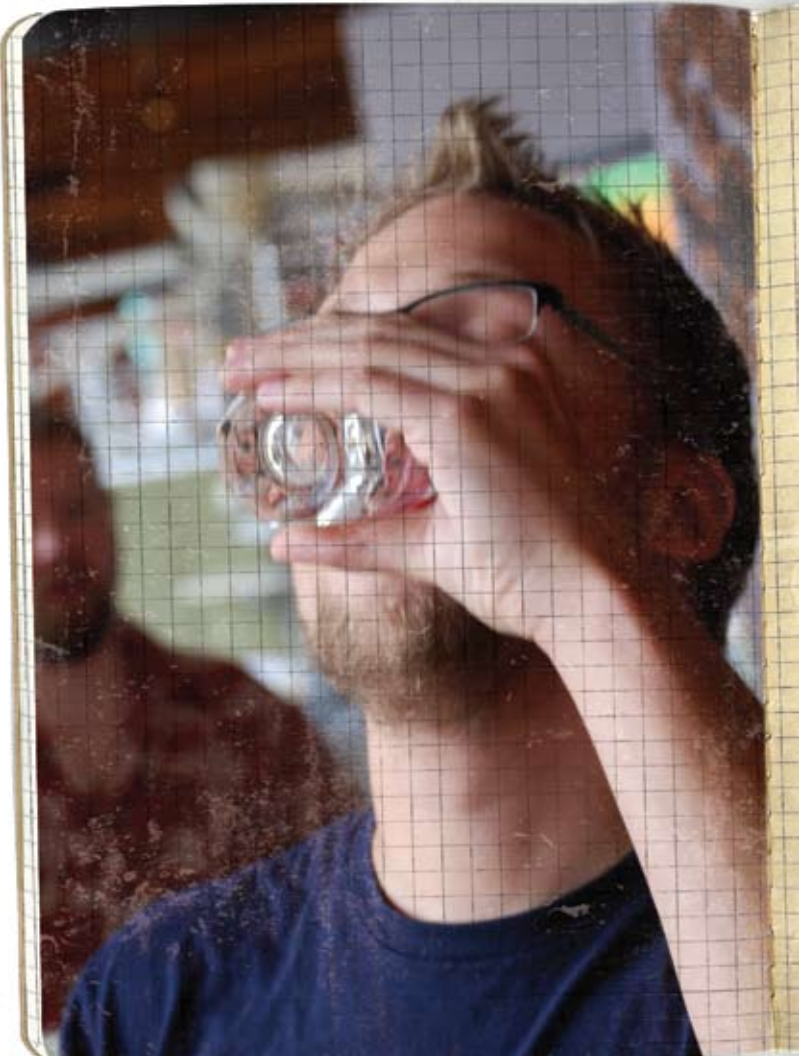
THE NE

Remember ruled the w
Creative thi
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less" acad
into busines

Interviews by
and Melissa K



FAST
Tall





TEQUILA SHOT


#4

love is a circular transaction



TRANSACTION > LOVE IS A CIRCULAR

The cool thing about Love is that it always makes its way back to those who give it away. It works in relationships and it works in business. Wait a minute. Strike that. It works in relationships. Period. Business would not be business without relationships. So, we believe the quickest path to growth is to shower the people you love with love. Like J.T. says – they'll tell you the way that they feel. It's really the only way to meaningful growth and success. You love them. They love you. They spread the love. The love comes back. And the whole thing just keeps going and going. Try it. It works.

A woman in a white chef's uniform and hat is smiling and looking towards the camera. Behind her, a man wearing a grey mask with a menacing, toothy expression and a dark suit is gesturing with his hands. The background is a cluttered room with various objects, including a lamp and some papers.

**Love is a verb. It's what you DO
even when you don't feel like it.**
- greg cordell (we think)





TEQUILA SHOT

#5

the growth and development
of people is the highest
calling of leadership

THE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE

That's the Leader

IS THE HIGHEST CALLING OF LEADERSHIP

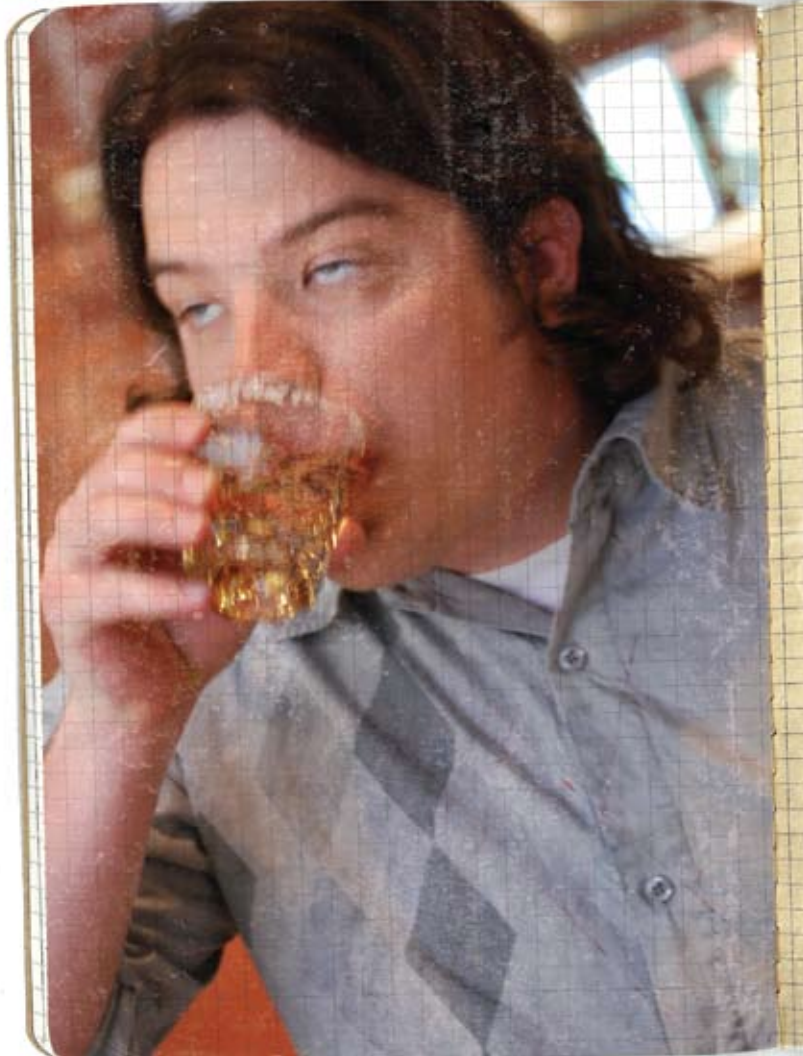
We like seeing people grow. Ourselves. Our clients. And for us, growth and leadership go hand in hand. Around here we believe that we are all leaders. Not just the partners. Not just the ones who have been here the longest or have the most experience. We all are leaders, both individually and as a whole. But to lead we all must grow. It's not an option. If we are to lead this movement and our clients forward, then we must grow. So let's all find a way to grow. And lead.





AND
2-NITE
WE
HAVE
CRAYONS

**EVERYONE
IS CREATIVE**





TEQUILA SHOT

#6

my family is our family
your family is our family



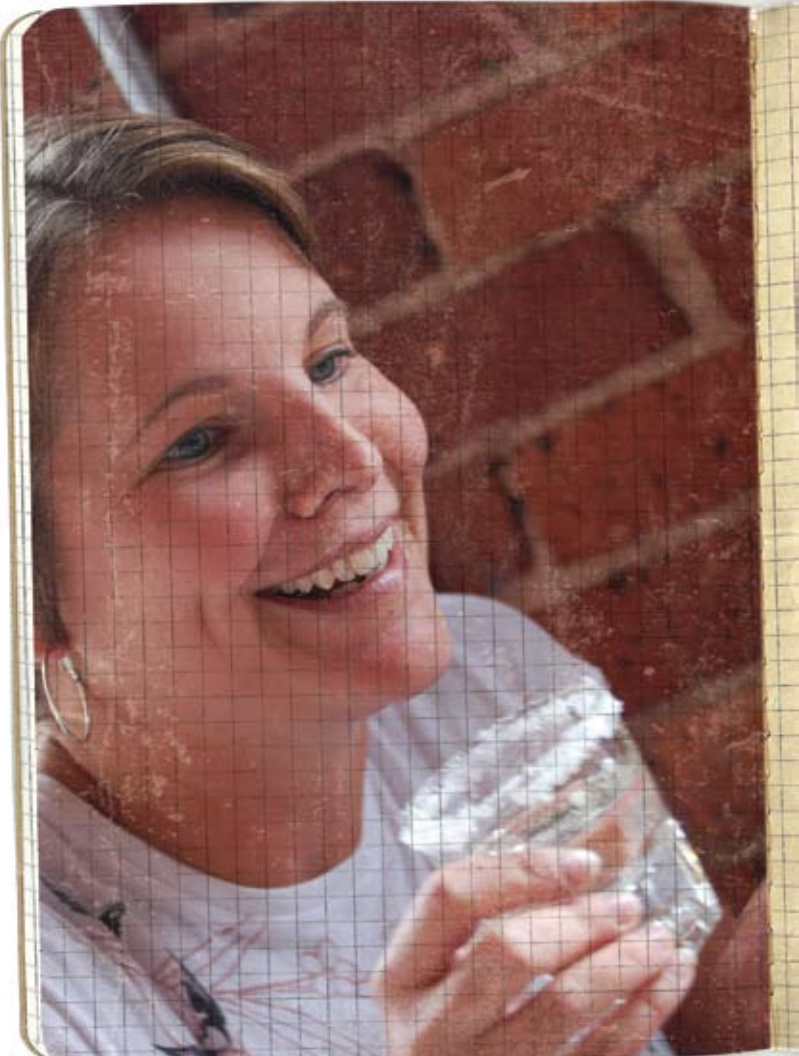


MY FAMILY IS OUR FAMILY

Brains on Fire is so much bigger than the people who work here. We provide food, healthcare, shelter and joy for every one of us, and that includes your kids, my kids, your dog and your goldfish. Your significant other or mine. But more than that, we really care about people's lives. What they are about, have to say, what they think and what they stand for. Yes, we work hard while we work, we play hard when we play. We cover for each other when times get tough. We celebrate together when things go great. But, to us the most important thing about work is the people who do it and the people we do it for. So let's live that way.

YOUR FAMILY IS OUR FAMILY







TEQUILA SHOT

#7

our work grows from
courageous insight

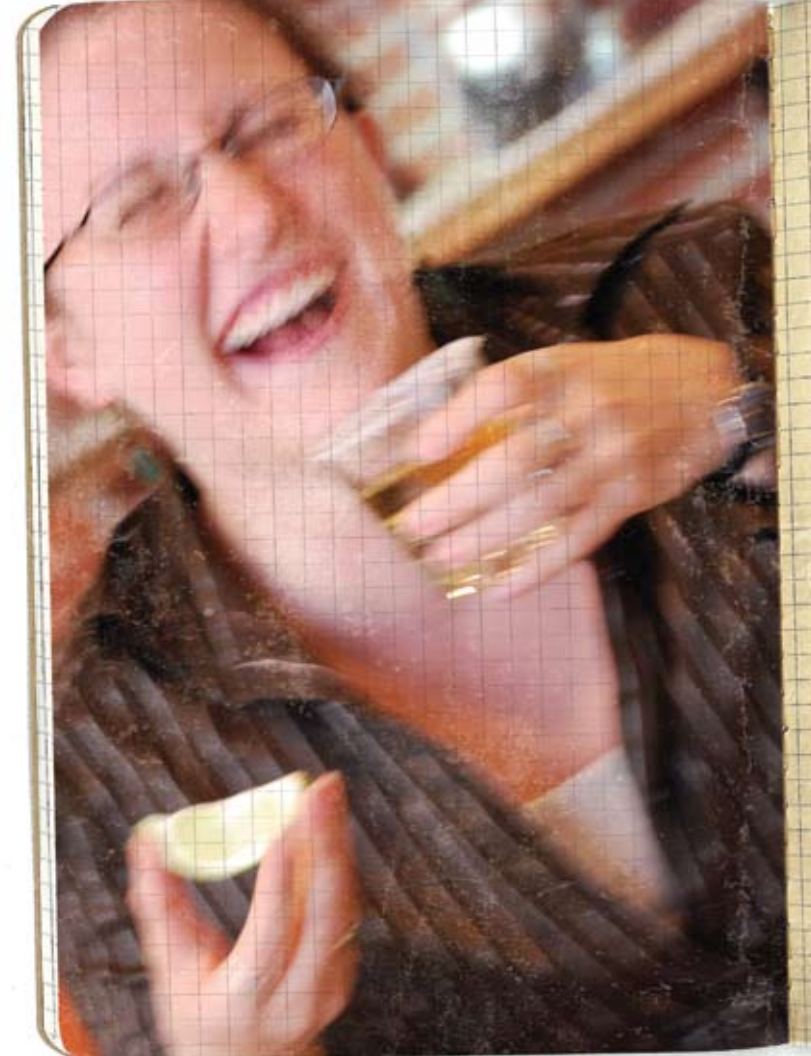




How can we make it better, smarter or easier? Who are you? What do you stand for? What would you do without pay? Why is it done this way? What do you really mean by that? Can I read that book after you? Have you seen this? At Brains on Fire we ask lots of questions and listen intently to the answers. Curiosity is a powerful thing and it leads to smart work.

**OUR
WORK
GROWS
FROM
COURAGEOUS
INSIGHT**







TEQUILA SHOT

#8

we are honest and realistic
with ourselves and with others



**HONESTLY
NOW.**



**HONEST &
REALISTIC
WITH
OURSELVES
AND
OTHERS**

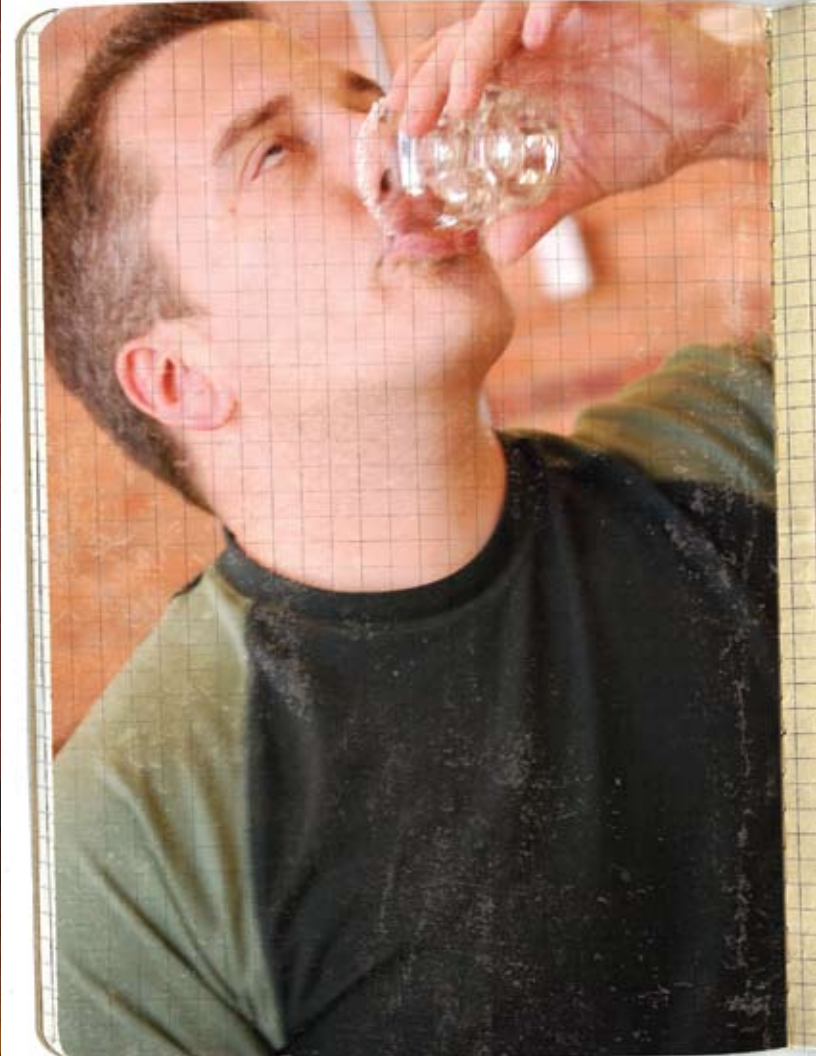
WE WON'T TELL YOU WE CAN WHEN WE CAN'T

WE WON'T TELL YOU WE WILL WHEN WE WON'T

WE WON'T TELL YOU WE DID WHEN WE DIDN'T

**If you mess up, we'll tell you.
We don't make promises we can't keep.
We are courageously honest.**







TEQUILA SHOT

#9

there is nothing wrong
in simple





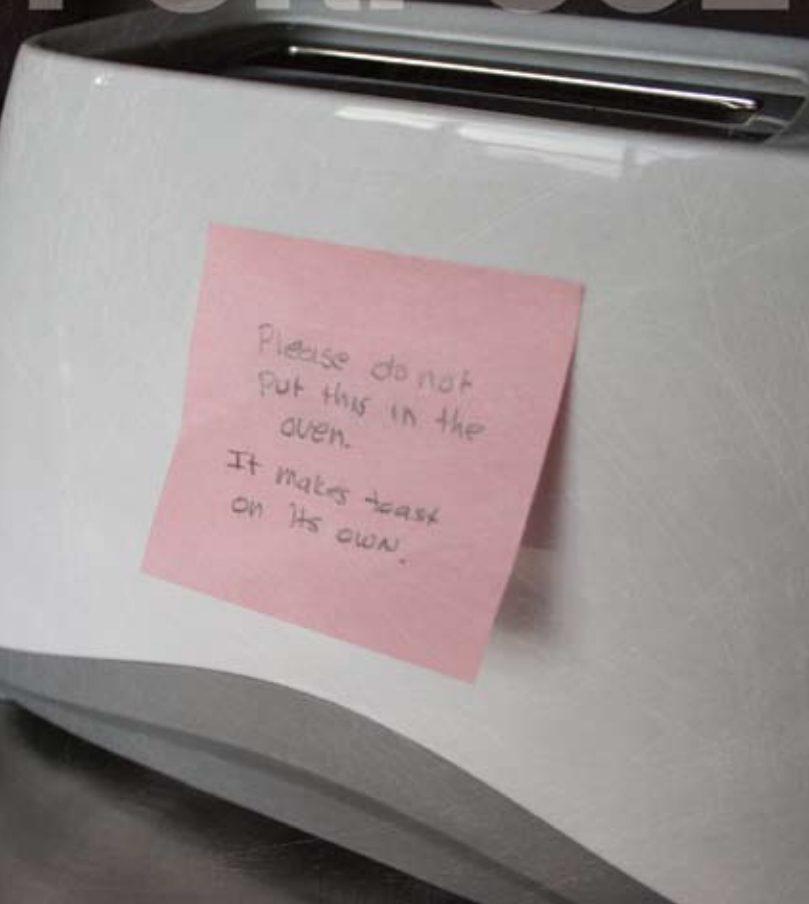
Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, harder and more complicated. It takes a genius to make things simple. A wise man named E.F. Schumacher once said something to that effect.

THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN SIMPLE.

Not sure who E.F. is, but we believe him.

The world is a cluttered place, so we try to make our lives and our clients' lives simple by keeping all of our communications, presentations, proposals, invoices and meetings simple, clear and straightforward. We don't use a 10 dollar word when a 5 cent word will do. We don't make up fancy names for our work or processes in an effort to make it appear more unique. It's just that simple.

PURPOSE







TEQUILA SHOT

#10

if it ain't fun we must be
doing something wrong





IF IT AIN'T FUN

WE MUST
BE DOING IT
WRONG

This could apply to a lot of things in life. But we think it applies to work just as much as anything. We need to constantly ask ourselves, "is this fun?" If it's not then let's find a way to add a little fun to what we're doing. Sometimes work can really become work and when it gets that way – well, it usually ain't too fun. So, let's make it as fun as it can be. Heck sometimes we can even put down the work – and just go have some. The work will be better when we get back. Come on Winnie, let's go play some fetch.









TEQUILA SHOT

#11

we can't make a difference
if we cease to exist



(Raphus cucullatus) THE DODO BIRD

cause of extinction directly related to foolish human behavior

We can't make a difference if we

CEASE TO EXIST

And in order to exist we have to be a growing, profitable business. That means we need to add value and charge for that value. While we understand that happiness is the ultimate scorecard and profits are not always measured in dollars, we also realize that we must keep our eyes and ears focused on ways to stay strong financially. Our goal is to keep Brains on Fire alive forever. And we are committed to sharing the rewards along the way with those who make that happen.







TEQUILA SHOT

#12

we can save the day

A close-up photograph of a person's torso wearing a bright red t-shirt. The t-shirt has white, bold, sans-serif text printed on it. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be a brick wall and a window frame.

**THIS IS THE
PART WHERE
I SAVE THE DAY.**

And last but not least.

WE CAN SAVE THE DAY

If every human being in the world lived life in a state of Brains on Fire, well... imagine that. Yep, in this world where 87%* of us feel we'd be happier if we were doing something else, we can save the day by helping our clients and their customers find their callings. It really is just that simple. We can super-size our dreams and make positive change in the world. Brains on Fire can save the day!

*from monster.com

THAT'S
AN AWFUL
LOT TO
PACK
INTO ONE
YEAR...





**...BUT
THAT'S
HOW WE
ROLL AT
BRAINS
ON FIRE**



FIREitUP CHEER



**Icky la boom ba
Effen lo-geffen weffen**

**Sammy wears your
grammy's jammies**

INSTRUCTIONS:

[OK bring it in now, pick a leader, in our case it's always Spike - do it military style (no not missionary style - military style) - you know, sound off 1-2, start slow but with volume, gradually adding more and more volume, and speed, now let's more volume, until you can't yell any louder. Got it?]

**Itty bitty
mountain top,
momma does
a belly flop**

**Frickin' frackin'
jumpin' jackin'**

**I don't want my
money backin'**

BIG FINISH >

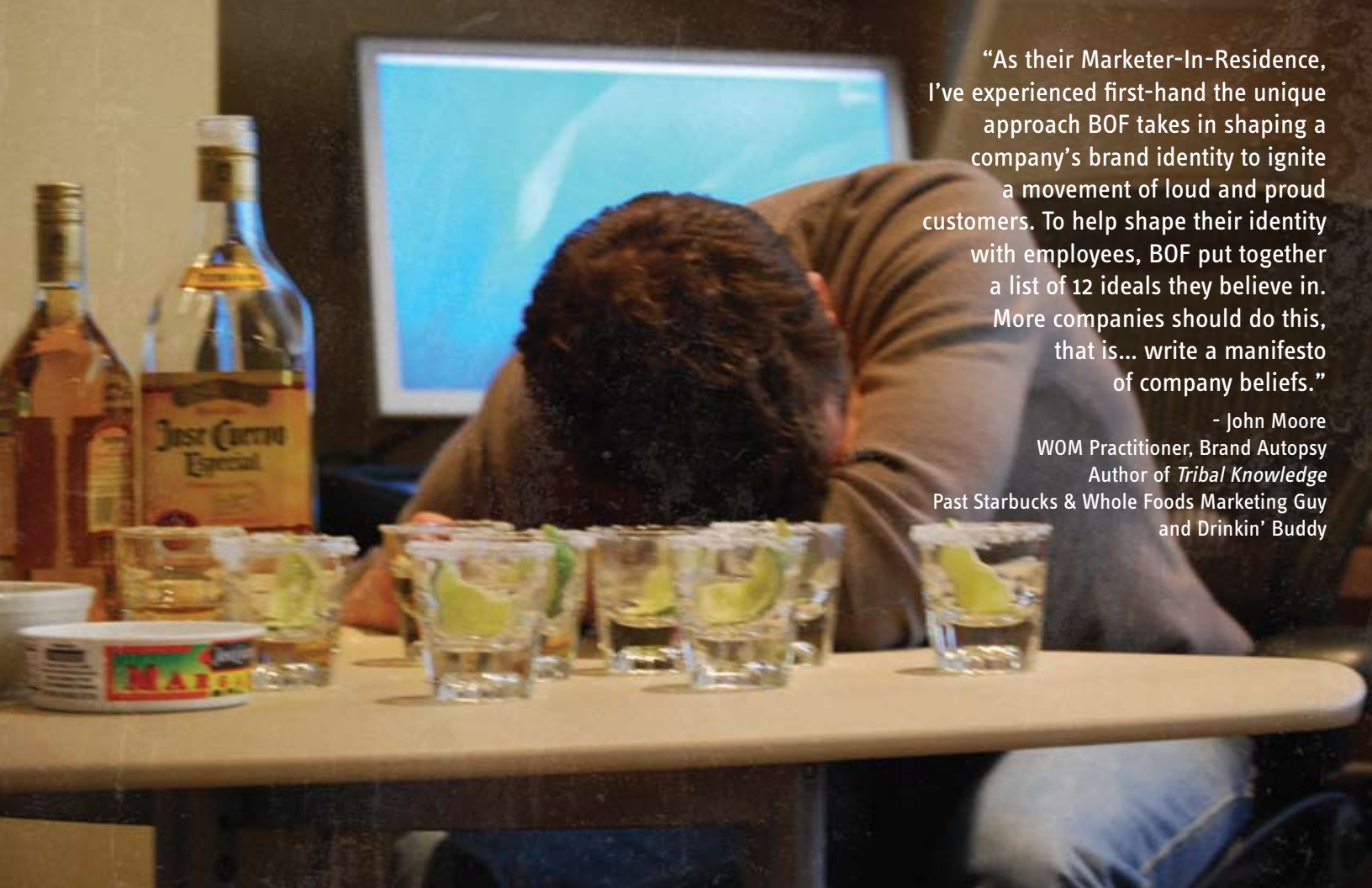
Fire it Up!



Fire it Up!

FIREitUP!






“As their Marketer-In-Residence, I’ve experienced first-hand the unique approach BOF takes in shaping a company’s brand identity to ignite a movement of loud and proud customers. To help shape their identity with employees, BOF put together a list of 12 ideals they believe in. More companies should do this, that is... write a manifesto of company beliefs.”

- John Moore

WOM Practitioner, Brand Autopsy

Author of *Tribal Knowledge*

Past Starbucks & Whole Foods Marketing Guy
and Drinkin’ Buddy



"good dog, mud"

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Greenville, SC 29601

To talk to a real, live person: 864.676.9663

Fax: (What's that?)

To talk that fancy-pants email language:

firestarter@brainsonfire.com

Tweet Us: www.twitter.com/BrainsOnFire

To find electronic versions of us and what's inside our heads:

www.brainsonfire.com