

## [Technology + Management Smarts]

### [Why Great Leaders Start With Why]

*Hint: “I have a dream” not “I have a plan”*

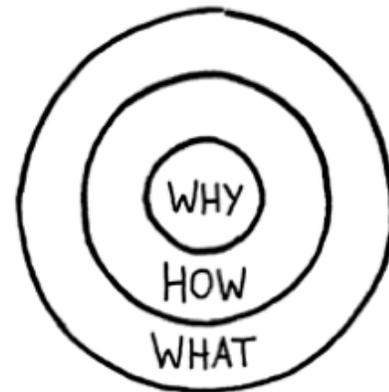
Why has Apple Computer been able to successfully challenge conventional thinking within the computer industry, the small electronics industry, the music industry, the mobile phone industry and the broader entertainment industry – while charging more for their products than the competition?

Why were bicycle shop owners (the Wright Brothers) able to achieve controlled flight, when better funded and better publicized groups failed?

Why was Martin Luther King, Jr. able to bring together thousands of people from around the country – without the use of e-mail or advertising?

Why indeed? The answer is deceptively simple, yet hard to copy. Apple, the Wright Brothers, and MLK were inspired, and in turn, they inspired others. They knew “why” they were doing what they were doing, and that led them to succeed where others failed.

In Simon Sinek’s book, “Start With Why,” (ISBN: 978-1-59184-280-4) he discusses leaders and leadership, and the fundamental difference between the two. He describes how all leaders know “what” they do, and even “how” they do it – but few know “why” they do it ... and knowing “why” is the hallmark of inspirational leadership.



In a nutshell:

- + [WHAT?] Your organization provides a product or service.
- + [HOW?] You provide it with expertise.
- + [WHY?] ... ? Why indeed?

The “why” can be derived from a number of reasons. For a success story like Apple:

- + [WHAT?] Apple sells computers and electronics.
- + [HOW?] The products are beautifully designed and easy to use.
- + [WHY?] They ‘think different’ than the status quo. They try things that have never been tried before.

And as a result? They inspire a cult-like following of believers. Believers who will stand in line to

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*Be crystal clear about what purpose, cause or belief [your organization] exists to champion, and show how your products and services help advance that cause.*

pay more for Apple products. Believers who are early adopters and will influence others. Believers who take action in a way that any business would envy. All because Apple has a firm understanding of the “why.”

“For a message to have real impact, to affect behavior and seed loyalty, it needs more than publicity,” said Sinek. “It needs to publicize some higher purpose, cause or belief to which those with similar values and beliefs can relate. Only then can the message create any lasting mass market success.”

Conversely, TiVo is a company with a similar product to Apple. The TiVo is brilliantly engineered, easy to use, and is actually superior to other products on the market. But TiVo is a commercial failure with a future that is by no means secure. TiVo went to market selling “what” they do and “how” it works – but neglected the “why.”

For TiVo:

- + [WHAT?] TiVo sells DVRs.
- + [HOW?] The products are brilliantly engineered and easy to use.
- + [WHY?] Why indeed? You can just get a free DVR from your cable company.

Sinek asks, instead of selling rational features and benefits ... what if they had started with why? What if they went to market with a message along the lines of: “Take control of your world”?

“Absent a WHY, new ideas and technologies quickly find themselves playing the price-and-feature game – a sure sign of an absence of WHY and a slide into commodity status,” said Sinek. “It is not the technology that failed, it was how the companies tried to sell it.”

How to Harness the “WHY”

According to Sinek: “Your role in the process is to be crystal clear about what purpose, cause or belief you exist to champion – and to show how your products and services help advance that cause.” 🚩

## About Technology + Management Smarts

*Technology + Management Smarts* is a quarterly electronic publication developed for select customers of First American Equipment Finance. First American is an equipment lessor that excels at providing simple, innovative financing solutions for complex projects that combine products and services from multiple vendors and service providers into a single equipment lease. Headquartered in New York, with offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Naples, Florida, First American has satisfied customers in all 50 states. Visit us at [www.faef.com](http://www.faef.com).