



KILLING GIANTS

10 STRATEGIES TO TOPPLE THE GOLIATH IN YOUR INDUSTRY

The Killing Giants Interviews

Brand Fast-Trackers Podcast on *The Killing Giants Framework* with host Bryan Martin, Pete Fox of Jabra North America and author Stephen Denny

My follow-up interview on Brand Fast-Trackers with host Bryan Martin was a great opportunity to talk about how the Killing Giants Framework works in real life, with real money, real customers – and, importantly, a real client on the line with me. Pete Fox, the president and GM of Jabra North America, joins me on this podcast to discuss how we applied the concept of seizing the narrative for his brand and what it did for their business.

Here's a transcript of the podcast:

Bryan: Hello everybody and welcome to another episode of Brand Fast Trackers. I'm your host Bryan Martin.

You know how many of us actually read a book, a marketing book, an advertising book, a business book, and we read it and like oh that's great information you know that's great stuff. You know, maybe let me highlight that, let me underline that, let me think about that more. All great information, but unless the information actually gets used how valuable is it? And that's why today I'm delighted, delighted to be joined by Steve Denny and Pete Fox.

Steve is the author of *Killing Giants: 10 Strategies to Topple the Goliath In Your Industry*. Pete is the President and GM of Jabra. Pete was able to connect with Steve because he wrote this fantastic book 'Killing Giants' and Pete found something really interesting in it as it related to his business. They reached out to one another, they started working together. We are going to talk a little bit about that, how do you take some of this on a page and actually bring it to life? Steve, Pete thanks so much for joining us today.

Pete & Steve: Great, Bryan, good to be here. Thank you very much.

Bryan: First question, Stephen: I talked to you before about how much I loved the book, I loved the book because there were so many practical examples that as a brand manager not only could I align with an understand former brand manager but so many new ones that I could never even have comprehended because it covered so many different industries and spaces. I am curious how have the last 18 months been? I mean, the book is in numerous languages now, can you tell us a little bit about it, update us since we last talked?

Steve: Yeah, it's been 2 years actually.

Bryan: Oh, my God.

Steve: Time flies when you are running as fast as you can. It's been a really busy time. It's been a lot of fun. Yes, I was looking the other day online and I am catching reviews of *Killing Giants* now in Russian. I think it's six languages now and I have been very gratified that a lot of people have seen themselves in this story and have responded to it so, so that's been fun. Granted, as a technology marketer it only makes sense now that the book is out that I've had a chance to work with food clients





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and professional services companies, but the good news is that the stories have resonated and it seemed to be getting a favorable impression out there, so that's obviously great.

Bryan: Is there one area or one element, one key learning, not necessarily one chapter, but just one area of focus that you are seeing more frequently out in the market when you are working with brands? Is there one area that you are really seeing marketing leaders grab on to and say, "Wow, you know, this is something that I want to, this is where I want to go first, this is where I'm really spending my time"?

Steve: Yes, absolutely and I think that's what brings us to our conversation today. It's my initial engagement with Jabra and with Pete here that begins with this idea of *seizing the narrative*. It's so easy to when one is in the business of managing a brand to say "We exist, we are here, we are open for business," but that we are getting drowned out, we have a bigger competitor who spends more than we do or has more people or resources. So often it comes down to, "How can I get people's attention, how can I be heard in a crowded in a really loud environment?" And a sizable number of people I speak to, whether it's in a speaking engagement or a consulting work, find themselves in this position. And this is where they always start, so I think that's where the iron's the hottest.

Bryan: I saw a quote from you, Pete, that you went from being an also-ran to getting almost every lead in North America in the space of 5 months, so it seems as though you've seized the narrative... and I think the incremental sales have been pretty significant. Can you tell us about this experience?

Pete: Yes, thank you for the opportunity to do so, and I, too, when I read the book, felt as though there was a lot of really practical advice in it and that it was probably one of the more fruitful quick reads I had ever done. The first night I kind of scanned the first half of it, got really excited, got a hold of Steve and we started working right away on this idea of seizing the narrative because we realized immediately that if we allowed our competitor to define who we were and if we stayed in the box that we had been in, we've kind of had drawn for ourselves to some extent, that that was going to be the world we knew and we were going to be able to change any of the dynamics in the competitive market place. So we were pretty excited about the idea of really changing that narrative taking control, having our own message and then finding the right venues to drive that message.

And as I've stated before and you stated earlier, we really found ourselves in a position where having that point of view gave us the opportunity to get in front of our targets, whether it was partners of customers, in a way that no one had ever done before. And it has created a massive number of leads... and it's great to have leads, but you know leads in and of themselves are just one step of the process to build the business, so what we've been so excited about is that we've had a 20% yield rate from leads to actual qualified opportunities, which in my experience leading marketing and sales organizations is really world class results.

Bryan: So, 20% of them are yielding live proposals, live opportunities?

Pete: Exactly, to real deals in our pipeline that we are working, networking, tracking. And we've had about 4% or so of those leads close already and many of those are still in our pipeline, so we literally got thousands of leads and we continue to process and nurture and actively operate against those. So it's been very, very powerful and we continue to see the campaign we started, which we called Devices Make Experiences, around this narrative. This campaign now is in its third year, so it's been very, very successful for us. We've modified it and morphed it over time, but so far it's been unbelievable, far surpassed our expectations in terms of the activity, but then the revenue's also been there as well, so that's Steve's earlier point.





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Bryan: Now Pete, let me ask you something, you probably, you know, you are President and GM, you are high up there. You have lots of people that work with you, lots of team members. I read lots of books, you read lots of books... I mean, how would you react and have you ever had someone underneath you read a book and then come up to you and say, "Hey you know what, I think we should bring this guy in, this is interesting, I can try to apply this on my own, so why not bring him in and see if he can help our team," because I don't hear of that happening that much. I am curious – has that ever happened in your experience? Has anyone ever come to you and said that and how would you react to that?

Pete: Yeah, before the *Killing Giants* experience, no. And I think that there are some really great pearls in this and maybe it's all of the examples and the research that Steve did. I am a little embarrassed about talking so nicely about him when he is on the phone call with us here imagining, you know, his ego swelling, but realistically the companies and the references and the interviews that he did really brought it home for us and I think part of what made it so attractive for us is we really do wake up every day thinking about that 800-pound gorilla in our industry. Our reason for existing as Jabra North America is to go and compete with them and to take share from them, so I think that element of the way Steve wrote his book really resonated with us and I think if there are other companies who really feel like that 800-pound gorilla in their industry is sort of a bane of their existence, then I would suggest you take notice of this book and this content and see what resonates with you. And talk to Steve. Because we got to action very quickly. This wasn't a theoretical conversation. It got very practical very quickly.

Bryan: I am curious, if you could walk us through what were some of the practical lessons, some of the practical changes that you made for someone listening, who may be in a position where they like you are battling a pretty significant player in their market. What are some of the things you started doing right away that made an impact?

Pete: Yeah, we stopped talking about what was important to us and started talking about what was important to customers. And we knew what was important to customers because we talked to them every day, but we were kind of trained and ingrained on talking about what our products do and how they do it and instead we started talking about benefits and we started talking about trends and we started building out this position.

Working with Steve, we very quickly got to what are the unique aspects of the Jabra position in the market place, what is it that is different about us, so we then took all the industry trends and customer needs and what's unique about Jabra and we fused those together into this point of view. Then we decided we were going to go big and rather than try to do kind of a bottoms up approach to working with our partners and working with our customers that we would really try something very unique and attack the channel, our partner channel, in a way that no one else ever had. We were emboldened to do that because we had this position and we felt as though our partners also needed some thing new in order to really help customers realize another level of benefit. So, we felt like the same message delivered in the same way to the same people wasn't going work. So, we took our new message to a whole new group of people who had a different sets of points of view on what the customer was trying to do and they in their own way had some problems or challenges in getting customers to move the way they needed them to and so together we sort of were able to join forces and move our channel in a way around this message and it's been, it filled a need that the channel had to move away from sort of the old school way of selling and into the new way the solution selling customer oriented way of selling and so our position happened to resonate really well with that and had good timing from that perspective.





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And thankfully the big guy continues to sort of talk about speeds and feeds and so you know he kind of will continue to see the yield that he gets because he is big. But we are seeing results that are share gain results based on that pipeline and based on the awareness that we have been able to build.

Steve: I think a lot of this has to do with what the Jabra team has been able to do with Devices Make Experiences and its approach to its big strategic platform partners – we’re beginning to talk about things bigger than the category. We are not just talking about, as Pete said, the speeds and feeds. We have created a bit of a rallying cry, we have created a point of view that other people see themselves in, we are talking about whole product experiences now that are bigger than our category – and frankly bigger than their category – so that everyone from the end users down through the channel down to the platform providers are looking at this and saying, “Yeah this is true, you know, there is more to it than our components.” We are not talking about accessories anymore. We are not talking about bits that are added, like, “Do you want fries with that?” We are not talking about fries anymore. We are talking about the entire ecosystem and how it needs to function. And everyone looks at that and says, “Yes, this is exactly the way we need to approach this because this is our concern too.” And I say that’s why I think a lot of this has resonated with the end user and with the partners.

Bryan: Steve, I am curious from all of the case studies that you’ve analyzed in the past and now I think you have a new update coming because there is a new e-book update. Do you see any similarities between any of the other case studies that you’ve looked at and what Jabra has done?

Steve: Well, when we talk about being a bigger idea than the category, yes, for sure. And I see a bit of my interview with Bob Parson at Go Daddy in here. I see a bit of my interview with Jim Koch at the Boston Beer Company. The deeper Jabra story is actually in the e-book, which is called *The Killing Giants Framework*, up on the Kindle storefront now. It’s a short form read because these are stories that really need telling and they are important and I think if someone can look at this and deconstruct the way we approach this, it can help them in their business too. So, yes, I see this resonating a lot and even with other clients I have been able to work with where we’ve moved away from talking about the physical product itself, the actual atoms, and have been able to talk in terms of a movement. What’s the name of your movement? What if you were to create something bigger than yourselves – what would you call it? And it is critically important that we give it a name because it personalizes things. We didn’t call this, “Operation Rock-a-Bye-Baby,” or something – we called it Devices Make Experiences. In and of itself, this completely defines this bigger idea. It is not about the device – it’s about experience, about the whole ecosystem. And I think that’s very powerful. Marketers gravitate to that because they get it and we all we want to follow something, we all want to believe in something. And that’s what we have been able to do here.

Bryan: Great stuff, I have one last question because I want to be conscious of time – it’s amazing how quickly it’s gone, but Pete, a question for you. You know you have a number of marketers and executives out there who may be listening are saying, “Wow, you know I read lots of books, but I don’t know if I actually use them,” and you know this is all oriented around growth – you know you aren’t reading fiction, you are reading a book that has something to do with your craft, something that could improve your business, something that you are passionate about. What advice do you have for those out there who may not be president or GM, but aspire to be there? What advice do you have for them as it relates to any lessons they can learn from you about continuing to grow, constant never-ending improvement, and also taking action to realize that you must apply what you’ve learned or else you haven’t really learned it?





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Pete: Yeah, I think part of the opportunity here is to realize that there are times when a fundamental new approach is needed and it takes a lot of courage and it takes a lot of fortitude – and frankly, sometimes money, although, that wasn't the big factor here – for us to reinvent the way we do sales and marketing in the company.

Bryan: Amazing.

Pete: And you know, someone had to make the call for that to happen and I didn't do it completely on my own certainly to make that decision, but that's what we ended up doing. I am not sure that we saw that day one, the courage to say we actually need to make a fundamental change I think there is one of the more important elements of this. We were tired of getting what we were getting – we wanted more and if you really want more, you have to be able and willing to do things differently. So I think it's really about being able to step away from the business and say that what we're getting isn't enough and how we are doing it isn't efficient.

Bryan: And also about the word courage, you know, the courage for someone to be able to realize that sometimes the thing we're afraid of most is how much time we're going to actually have to put in and how much hard work we are going to have to put to get where we want. And sometimes that time comes in dark hours on a plane where you are traveling and choosing to read and educate and learn something as opposed to sleeping or reading US Weekly, right, actually consciously choosing to do that work and then having the courage to bring it back and not just have it live in your mind, but how can you actually apply this to your business. And that's a marvelous example of what you two have done to the benefit of stakeholders and shareholders and everybody else at Jabra, right?

Pete: Yeah, it's been a great decision, a great campaign that lives on and our relationship with Steve has turned out to be one of the more important ones for the entire company, so we are thrilled with the way it's gone. I would encourage people to have the strength, I guess, and the courage to make those change decisions. It's difficult and letting go is hard. No one wants to have their cheese moved, but sometimes you got to move your own cheese.

Bryan: Well said we'll leave it at that. Steve, Pete thank you so much for joining us today, continued success, excellent.

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Many thanks to both Bryan and Pete for their time in making this podcast!

You can pick up your copy of Killing Giants: 10 Strategies to Topple the Goliath In Your Industry (Portfolio, 2011) [here](#).

You can also pick up your copy of The Killing Giants Framework: 3 Areas of Excellence that Define How Davids Topple Goliaths at the Kindle storefront [here](#).

