

No matter where we rank on the social food chain, no matter the group with whom we align, our alpha members fascinate us. Our obsession with powerful people is far older than *People* magazine; in fact, we inherited it from our hairier ancestors.

Programmed deep into our social code is a need to “follow the leader,” to find alpha idols and fixate on them. Dr. Michael Platt, a Duke University neurobiologist, proved this by offering thirsty rhesus monkeys a choice: a drink of their favorite beverage, or an opportunity to look at photos of dominant monkeys in their own pack, the ones with food, power, and sexual magnetism, which Platt dubbed the “celebrity” monkeys.

So strong was the fascination with these celebrities that the parched monkeys chose photo viewing over imbibing. Even the most celebrated monkeys were fascinated by images of fellow celebrity monkeys.

Similarly, our brain's innate fascination with “following the leader” sets us all up to be spellbound by sports hysteria, high school cliques, and other group activities that grip attention.

### Pursue Specific Goals

By focusing on a specific outcome, Power companies stay focused until they reach the finish line. They sustain fascination over long periods of time by staying rooted in lasting qualities of substance, such as courage, intelligence, and work ethic.

Warren Buffett's singing voice might not be as strong as Beyoncé's, but his investing results are music to investors' ears. His company, Berkshire Hathaway, is ranked number four on the Fortune 500 (as of 2015). The company wholly or partially owns several world-class brands.

Buffett has consistently beaten the market by sticking to his own principles. He often ignores economic facts. He puts his money in businesses, not stocks. He shuns trendy themes. But when he's confident, so are investors.

What specific goals does your brand pursue? Revenue? Employee happiness levels? Shareholder profit? Media fame?

What goals do you want your audience to pursue? Do you want them to improve their lives? Switch to your product? Stay loyal (rather than being lured by a competitor)?

Be confident and clear in establishing goals, starting with Opinions of Authority.

### Voice Your Opinions of Authority

Powerful companies have a strong point of view. The more clearly you can define your opinions, the more customers will see you as an authority. These are your “Opinions of Authority.”

An Opinion of Authority is a strongly worded viewpoint that is not a statement of fact, but rather a firm belief that reflects your expertise. It must be rooted in your area of experience and reflect a core belief. It provides a clear point of view and is a very effective way to differentiate yourself from others in your market, so that your message will convince and convert.

Leading brands don't just get attention—they drive behavior.

They incite action. If people don't change their actions as a result of your message, that message has failed.

Invest in establishing a reputation as a confident, knowledgeable expert with the experience to guide others. You must be prepared to lead. How will you speak the language of confidence? In many situations, if you want to gain influence, you must be perceived as a decision maker. You won't stand apart from your competition if you won't first take a stand.

Fascinating messages, like fascinating people, have the potential to consume us as almost nothing else can, sucking us into a vortex of intensity. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes this as the addictive nature of flow, and “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost,