National Study of Fascination

In the national Kelton Study of Fascination, we measured the return on investment (ROI) for brands that fascinate customers. In a state of fascination, people will pay higher prices. In some cases, they'll pay up to 400% more.

Each of the seven Advantages has a different mind-set, attitude, and way of attracting attention. Each casts a specialized spell.

Finished that Red Bull yet? Moving on to ice cream.

Are You Pistachio? Or Vanilla?

Vanilla ice cream is a crowd-pleaser. Most people like it, and almost everyone will eat it. It's easy, comfortable, and safe. The Gap khakis of ice cream. Yet vanilla has a competitive disadvantage: it's an obvious choice, and it can be inherently less fascinating.

Far fewer people, on the other hand, like pistachio ice cream. Pistachio is a distinct and polarizing choice. Yet the people who like pistachio usually love it. *Reeeally* love it. Crazy love it. Although fewer people buy pistachio, the flavor has a competitive advantage: rather than dumbing down its taste to appeal to the majority, the producer can focus on serving a tightly defined core with a distinct point of difference.

There's nothing wrong with vanilla, of course. I keep vanilla in my freezer when my goal is to appeal to the maximum number of people with the minimum amount of whining. Yet while vanilla might be an easy choice for the masses, it's not necessarily the right choice for *you*. Beware vanilla (unless you have the biggest marketing budget).

The goal of pistachio isn't to please everyone. It's to engage a few people really, really well.

The Underdog's Unfair Advantage

If you have the biggest marketing budget in your category, vanilla is probably a smart place to focus on. You want the lowest common denominator. Your goal should be to avoid polarizing a substantial segment of the market, especially if your brand has an established, trusted presence among customers. Vanilla brands, such as Walmart and Kellogg, fascinate with the repetition and familiarity of the Trust Advantage, often expanding their market share through mass media (for instance, a Super Bowl spot rather than targeted social media ads).

But let's say you don't have the biggest budget. Let's assume you need to compete fiercely without vast resources, or even without an established market presence. That's where pistachio comes in.

The smaller base of pistachio-loving customers has the potential to become intensely dedicated—even fanatical.

You can either be the *vanilla* of your category, or the *pistachio*.

As long as you have the biggest budget in your category, you can afford to be boring, because you can simply repeat your message over and over to create awareness. Along those same lines, if you are the most famous in your category, you can be boring, if you can continue to generate that awareness.

But what if don't have the biggest budget? Or if you aren't the most famous? What then? Then, my friend, you must be the most fascinating. Let me explain.

Pistachio Is an Orange Ticket

In this case, my friends, you must highlight what makes you different. And that's where pistachio comes in. Instead of trying to outdo your competition, focus on what makes you different. The goal is to find where you and your product diverge from standard expectations.