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## The Seven Tribal Laws

### Authentic Story Telling And The Path To Re-Building Trust

*Vern Oakley*

*"The point is, ladies and gentleman, that greed - for lack of a better word -- is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit."*

The year was 1987. The movie was Wall Street, Oliver Stone's satirical take on American business. And the character, Gordon Gecko, was attempting to seduce stockholders into believing that greed would save their company. The stockholders bit, and disaster ensued.

Eighteen years later, the bubble has burst. Stock analysts are colluding with investment bankers. Accounting firms and their clients are playing Three Card Monte with the financials. And a number of the world's most venerable institutions, as well as millions of retirement accounts, have been reduced to rubble.

The point is, ladies and gentlemen, that greed is bad. Greed obfuscates and evades. Greed destroys. Greed spreads out like a plague to infect the good name of all those around it, laying waste to our capacity to trust.

But how do you connect with a jaded public? Instill trust in investors? Inspire employees to give their best? Quite simply, by telling them the truth. By sharing your story with warmth and honesty. And by treating your audience with respect.

After working with many leading executives at companies like AT&T, American Standard, Avaya, and Lucent, we've synthesized a few of the rules for how tell your story with the sincerity and passion it will take to re-establish trust.

We call these The SEVEN Tribal Laws. They exist as a set of proven tenets to help form a successful and candid communications program.

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This is not the first, nor will it be the last, time a challenging market forces the hand of corporate change. This is an opportunity for new leaders to lead, for companies to step out of the shadow of corporate contention and create new and stronger relationships with investors, partners, employees and customers.



The best of these companies will do so in the new currency of commerce, authenticity. One well-respected branding guru, Elsie Maio, describes this new CEO challenge in *The Journal of Business Ethics* as, "dancing the tango while leading the orchestra." It is no small task, but hopefully, these 'dancing lessons' will be of some assistance.

*Vern Oakley is the founder and creative director of Tribe Pictures, a marketing media production and consulting company based in New Jersey.*

THE END

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