

The Inside Story On... Tide Loads of Hope

A lot of companies say that they help disaster victims. Tide Loads of Hope actually does it.

For the last five or six years, a new truck has appeared at the site of major disasters along with the ubiquitous disaster response vans, like the Red Cross or UNICEF. It's a brightly colored, oversized truck that always brings a smile to the faces of disaster victims. Once it parks, the side of the truck opens to reveal a row of bright, shiny high-capacity washers and dryers. T-shirt clad Procter and Gamble employees are ready to wash, dry, fold and gift wrap laundry before returning it to their owners, people who simply want to feel clean again.

Tide Loads of Hope helps disaster victims by bringing normalcy to people in the midst of chaos.

Who would have thought that a company could have changed so many lives with such a simple concept?

After Hurricane Katrina the team at Procter and Gamble, in charge of non-profit efforts met to find a way that they could help people impacted by this and other storms. One thing that bothered them, was the fact that the basic needs of the hurricane victims were being met, but only their most basic needs. They realized that once needs like water and first aid are taken care of, people need other things that are just as vital. Like having clean clothes.

They came up with the idea of using the Tide brand to clean victim's laundry, a simple concept that no one could have predicted would end up being such an enormous success. Just a few hours out of their day would give disaster victims another step towards normalcy. First though, they had to figure out how to do it. The team found a beer truck that was out of service and retrofitted thirty-two high-efficiency washers into it. Next they set up a partnership with Feeding America, that put them right in the middle of the disaster zone. By the end of their first on-site disaster, the team was hooked. Since then Tide Loads of Hope has been on the scene of dozens of disasters, starting with the San Diego fires.

Logistically, getting trucks and washers to the site of any disaster could easily be a nightmare. Since that first disaster, the P&G team has created a three-tiered system to decide which disasters need their direct attention with Loads of Hope trucks and which can best be served by just partnering with laundries in the area to wash and fold the clothes, or even simply sending product to help out. When the trucks are on site, 60-65% of the people handling the laundry are Procter and Gamble employees who volunteer to help out – the rest local volunteers from the area, looking forward to a new way to serve their neighbors and their community.

Loads of Hope has been so successful that two other types of trucks are now appearing at the site of international disasters – like the Haiti and Japan earthquakes – Duracell batteries and Pampers.

The Duracell truck not only provides batteries after disasters, but it gives people the ability to make phone calls and use charging stations to charge up their electronic devices like cellphones, portable radios and televisions or computers.

One thing that Loads of Hope has received from the beginning is grass roots support from Procter and Gamble customers. People love the idea that the money they pay for toothpaste or soap, goes to a company that is focused on changing the lives and circumstances of disaster victims. In just a few years, Loads of Hope's Twitter and Facebook pages have gained more than 2 million fans. P&G is using this attention to drive the need for disaster preparation for all of its customers, through partnerships with Ellen DeGeneres and Maria Menunos and with washing machine manufacturers like LG, Whirlpool and GE .

For Kash Shaikh, the experience of working with Loads of Hope has not only transformed his career, but his life. Kash oversees the international arm of Tide Loads of Hope, which often puts him right in the middle of the action. He loves the fact that the global part of their enterprise has been able to renew a sense of hope to countries devastated by unthinkable disasters. It also keeps Kash and his team on their toes. For example, when a his team found out that a hospital in Haiti had no way of cleaning the linen that they were using for wards full of injured earthquake victims, they had to step in and began providing laundry service for the entire hospital.

"We named our effort "Loads of Hope" because consumers kept telling us how much hope it gave them to see the smiling faces of people being presented with a clean stack of laundry." It fits right in with the motto of P&G's social project efforts -- Live, Love and Thrive. P&G has even been giving customers a way to be involved with the effort. Specially marked bottles of Tide feature the faces of the people that Loads of Hope has helped and a portion of the proceeds of those bottles goes to help those people and their communities. One of the most popular customer promotions has been vintage Tide Loads of Hope t-shirts, which can be purchased from their website.

The whole undertaking of Loads of Hope has really helped Kash shape his own purpose. "It helped me appreciate my life and loved ones more. I've seen people who just lost their loved ones, their homes and everything they have, and yet they got back on their feet. It's made me appreciate the resiliency of the human spirit."

The Inside Story On... The Circa Address Book, by Levenger

Steve and Lori Leveen set out nearly twenty-five years ago to create a different type of store. A store where extraordinary leather bound notebooks and fine ink pens are the rule, not the exception. So it makes perfect sense that their store, Levenger, would be the perfect place to go for a different kind of address book. An address book that actually grows and changes as quickly as your friend's contact information.

Have you ever finished filling in your beautiful new address book, only to learn a week later that one of your so-called friends just moved and changed all her contact information? The only way you can change that address is by putting in a new entry or scratching out the old one. No matter what, the page and your once pristine book, are ruined.

We sure have and so has Steve Leveen. That frustration gave Steve the idea to take the old medium we all know and love – paper – and update it for the twenty-first century, by giving us the ability to change an entry in our address book as often as our friend's numbers change, without messing up the rest of the book. It's called the Circa Address Book.

Circle notebooks have been around since World War II. If you haven't seen one, circle notebooks replace wire or ring binding with round, reusable discs, to create a notebook that isn't restricted by its binding. With a circle notebook, you get a cover and a back held together by the round discs. A small disc holds a small amount of paper and a larger disc a greater amount of paper. Since there is no binding, if you need to take out a page, you just remove it and replace it with another one.

Levenger's version of the notebook is called Circa, which is the basis for an entire system of organizers, including Behance. After talking to their customers, Steve realized they were as frustrated with traditional address books as he was, and that customers wanted a flexible solution. So Steve and Lori created address book pages for their Circa notebooks. With Circa, not only can you replace an address book "page", but they went one step further by making every entry on the page perforated, allowing people to replace the whole page or just a single entry! Although notebook sales worldwide are on the decline, Levenger's sales are growing, mainly because of the design and flexibility of their notebooks.

Levenger's mission is to keep old technology alive by improving it with modern advances. Just as bicycles keep on evolving by adding new features and the latest technology, everything Levenger sells, stays fresh by incorporating new options and featuring the highest quality papers and inks their merchandising people can find.

One thing Steve and Lori stress is sustainability – and not just where address books are concerned. They have made a commitment to use reforested paper. Reforested paper takes environmental responsibility to a whole new level, not just by not using paper to save a tree, but

to ensure that when trees are used, they are replaced. Trees and paper are harvested and planted like food and then they're re-cropped to begin a new twenty-year cycle of growth and harvest.

But will the notebooks last as long as the harvest? According to their customers, yes! "When you print things on the best paper possible," says Steve, "it will last an incredibly long time. In fact great quality paper, pressed tightly together remains strong even if it's scorched. It takes a lot of heat to go all the way through a notebook enough to destroy it." Evidently the same holds true with water. Many customers have written Levenger to tell them that they've dropped their notebooks in water, only to find that they survived. Between replaceable address entries, water and heat resistance, a new Levenger Circa address book, is the best thing since the Post-It Note!

The Inside Story On... Zomm

Zomm can not only save your phone, it can save your life.

Henry and Laurie Penix are a very talented couple who came up with an idea. As with any unique idea, it was born out of a need. We had the pleasure of speaking to Henry about Zomm, but first, here is Laurie's story.

"Every day while walking on the treadmill and watching Oprah, I prayed that God would send me an idea that will enable me to work smarter, not harder. During one of these workouts, one of my girlfriends called me and asked me if I had an extra mobile phone. Her husband had lost yet another one of their phones. What made this day special was that I had just finished reading an article on *Bluetooth*® technology. The article mentioned how this technology can be used to connect products within about a 30' distance. It was at this moment that I had what my husband, Henry, calls an 'exercise, Oprah-induced, epiphany.

Laurie and Henry have a history of successful ventures and have helped many other business leaders grow their companies. From her entrepreneurial experience, she knew this idea was special!

I told Henry my idea and we both became convinced that a "wireless leash™" product would be a solution to a very common, modern day problem. We immediately went online and searched *Bluetooth*® technology and the name Peter Hauser kept coming up over and over. We contacted Peter and invited him to our home in Tulsa to explore the idea further.

In the months that followed after the initial meetings with Peter, Zomm quickly grew from a concept to patents, drawings and specifications. Henry and I believed so strongly in Zomm and its potential that we made the decision to put all of our resources towards making Zomm a success.

With the team assembled, Zomm (the company) was born. What followed was arguably the fastest development project in history. Zomm grew from a concept to a functional, mass-producible, high-end consumer product in less than a year. In the process, Zomm won a prestigious CES Innovation Award in its category in 2010."

Henry is so passionate about Zomm that his enthusiasm is contagious. Whether on QVC or the newest Zomm commercial, the possibilities of this seemingly simple invention spring to life, every time Henry speaks.

Zomm, is the world's first Wireless Leash for mobile phones. The idea is simple. You sync Zomm to your phone electronically and clip the Bluetooth-enabled Zomm to your keychain. If

you walk away, leaving your phone behind, Zomm will begin to flash, vibrate and if you don't pay attention to it, sound an alarm alerting you to go back and retrieve your cell phone.

Not only does it act as an alert for a forgotten phone, but it also lets you know if your phone is being stolen. So let's say you're really good about keeping tabs on your phone. That's when Zomm's other features come in handy. How many times have you been in the car when your phone rings, but you can't get to it. If it's at the bottom of your purse, briefcase or bag, there's just no way, short of pulling over, that you can safely retrieve your phone while driving. But your keychain? That's always right at your fingertips. All you have to do to answer a call (at least where that's still legal!) is click the Zomm and it turns into a crystal clear speakerphone.

One of the features that we love best is that the Zomm also comes with a panic button. When you get a Zomm, you can program an emergency contact number into it, that will dial a loved one or friend for assistance. In fact, you can also sound an emergency alarm to alert people around you, that you need help.

In fact, Zomm works so well, that Henry and Laurie's company began getting calls from 911 call centers. They sent help of course, but had no idea what the device was, that was calling them for assistance! So the people at Zomm began dispatching team members out to emergency call centers to show emergency responders what Zomm could do. They absolutely loved it. For years, people who had been in a car accident couldn't reach their cell phones to call for help. In an accident, cell phones usually go flying across the car, completely out of reach of the drivers or passengers. But since Zomm is at the end of their keychain, the panic button is usually within easy reach, making an enormous difference in getting assistance to accident victims, when minutes count.

Early in 2012, Henry and Laurie announced a new product that has already won three innovation awards at the Consumer Electronics show. It's a lifestyle connect device that gathers information constantly from people that need monitoring, or seniors with an alert system, that feeds the information into a hub that, when triggered can go to their emergency contacts, their caregivers, their doctors and brings all of that information into one place so help can come immediately.

As for us, we can't wait to see what they will come up with in the future!