

// Why Does Your Company Exist?



Photo Courtesy Peter Goetz

Not that many years ago, I was sitting in as two cofounders of a startup were informally pitching a potential investor.

The would-be investor interrupted them and asked a simple question. "Why does this company need to exist?"

The room went as silent as one-hand clapping. The founders knew what they wanted the company to do—sell gear—but they didn't have an answer for why they should be selling gear in a crowded market.

Business is hard enough. To enter a market without knowing exactly what your company stands for and articulating that through spoken words, or better yet, all of the wonderful genres and mediums of storytelling available to us today, is to fail before you begin. That visionless company is now out of business.

I've written about these ideas before in *Hence Journal*, but finding meaning and not just targeting a market but **defining it** is the only path to sustainability.

One of my favorite cycling companies is POC. Their bike helmets, eyewear, and pads hit the mark because the connection between who they are and what they sell is so clear. POC makes equipment that protects cyclists. And they do that with a Scandinavian flair for design. With that reason to exist defined, everything else follows. Purpose drives their storytelling.

I was talking about this theme with Hence Roster member and acclaimed filmmaker Peter Goetz a few weeks back. Peter is a documentarian who directs and produces feature-length films, but somehow he has discovered how to make impactful, human-forward documentaries for a who's who of companies. It's incredibly rewarding work for everyone involved.

Here's what he had to say on the subject of company purpose:

"I believe that documentary storytelling is far more effective than trying to sell a product with a 30-second spot. The what and why is more important than a quick plug. If you want to have an impact or celebrate a certain element of society and how you relate to it, elevated branded content is the best you can do. I encourage brands to look at what their tent pole goals are and see if they can make a documentary of any length that harnesses those goals. People need to know why you are in business these days." —Marc Peruzzi

// Case Study: Don't Go It Alone



Of The Black Sea

The filmmakers behind *Of The Black Sea* needed strategy and logistics help. We connected them with Hence Expert Services.

From the story: "The work doesn't stop with the final edits and prestigious film festival acceptances. The filmmakers Hennie van Jaarsveld and Gray Dadali had larger plans for their project. In addition to recouping costs, they wanted to get as many eyeballs on the film as possible to share the message and the meaning. That's when Hence's Expert Services consultants stepped in. Here's how our experts helped." Read the full story [here](#). (6 min read)

// Meet a Creative

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If you think these are tumultuous times for the creative business—and they are—just know that you can adapt. The artist, designer, and illustrator **Tavis Coburn** is living proof.



Photo Courtesy Tavis Coburn

// Meet a Creative

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Peter Goetz is a director, producer, and EP of note, as well as the founder of Backroads Pictures. His documentary clients include Netflix, Amazon, HBO, National Geographic, Discovery Channel, and many more.



Photo Courtesy Peter Goetz

// New in Hence Journal

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Trade Secrets: It's OK to Start Small. Just Start.

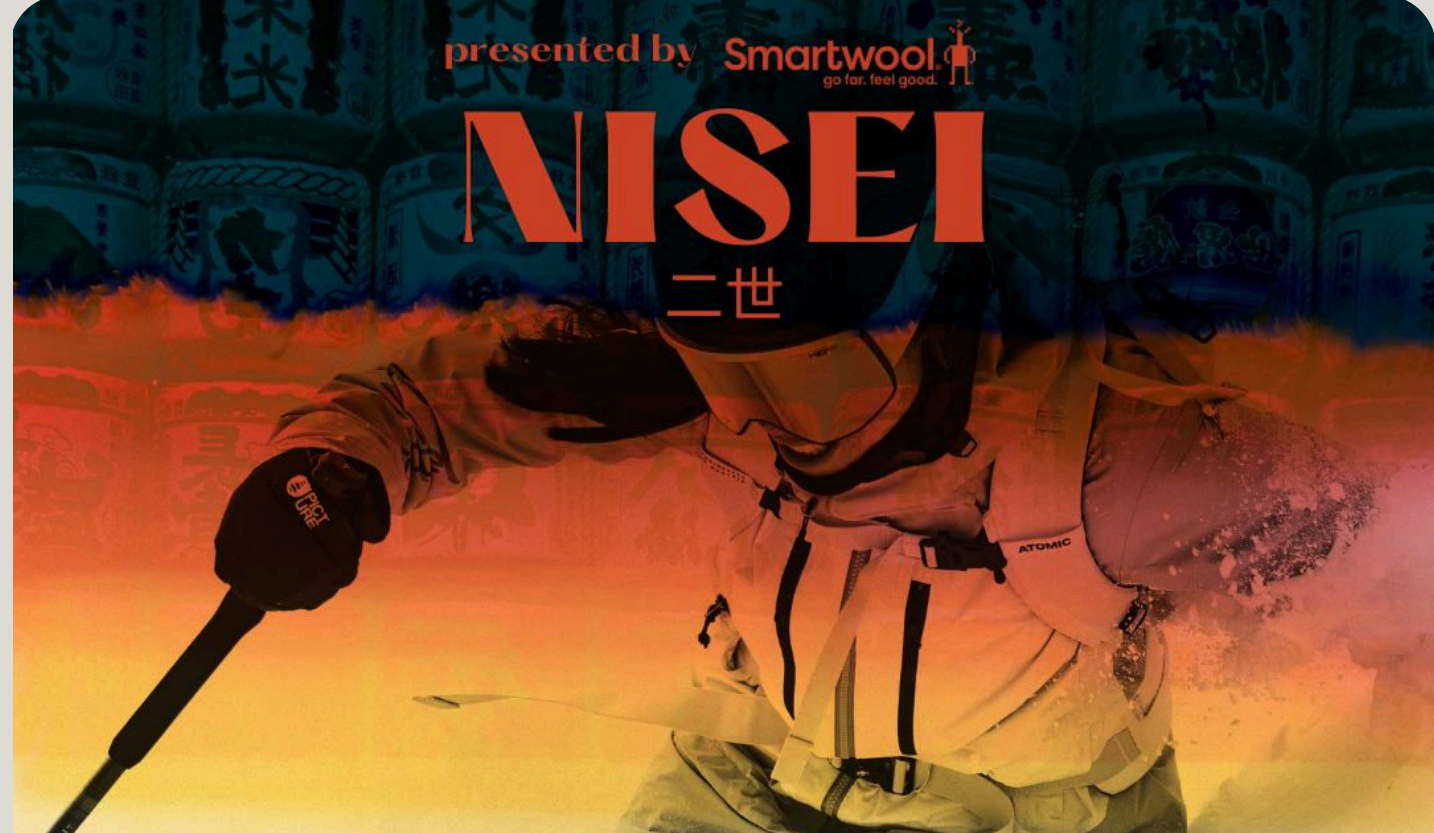
"I put Tony Hawk on hold on one of my first days at work," says the media magnate Selema "Sal" Masekela. "How cool is that! I raised my hand and went for any opportunity I could get. Your first job doesn't have to be glamorous. Your first job is about getting you in the game." [Read on.](#)



Trade Secrets: When in Doubt, Force Your Way In.

"There's always a way into the boardsports media world if you want it bad enough," says the on-air talent Chris Côté. "It's still punk rock enough to force your way in. Start from the bottom. Talk to the janitors. Be nice. Make everyone's job easier. And it will happen." [Read on.](#)

// From a Hence Creative



Hence Roster Member Iz La Motte On Location With Sierra Schlag in Japan.

In *NISEI* (nee-say), which is hitting the festival circuit now, Iz La Motte tells the story of Sierra Schlag's biracial life via gorgeous cinematography and ski action. "Bringing Sierra's vision to life for this film was an absolute joy," says La Motte. "It was an honor to work with a friend on such a personal piece that speaks so deeply to her lived experience. Sierra encouraged creativity in this piece and it felt really great to step outside of the typical box a bit."

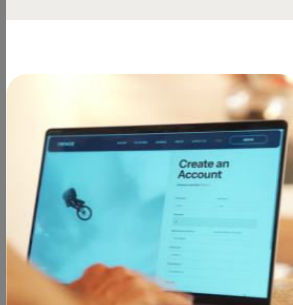
MORE FROM THE BROADER CREATIVE WORLD

What We're Reading Now

Taking Back Childhood From Phones. If we want future generations of citizens who can read books and sit through feature-length films, it's time to take action. Jonathan Haidt put that idea out there last year with his book *The Anxious Generation*. That idea is now a groundswell led by parents. Today, Haidt is following up with reporting on that movement: "In moments of hardship," he writes, "come opportunities for cultural and political change." Now is that time. ([TheFreePress](#))

The Digital World and its Effect on Photography in Mountain Biking. Ian Hylands takes on the elephant on the singletrack in this LinkedIn article. Here's the intro: "I've been shooting photos in the mountain bike industry for about 30 years now, and I've watched the sport and the culture around it grow into something special. However the switch from print to digital media, and social media in particular, has had some less than exciting consequences for athletes and mountain bike photographers alike." Read on: ([LinkedIn](#))

I Tamed the YouTube Algorithm. From Ted Gioia's Substack: "Google is driven by an obsessive desire for centralized control, and repeatedly ignores users—manipulating and deceiving them endlessly. Yet their colleagues down the hall at YouTube are cool cats. They showcase indie creators, pay them lavishly, and attentively serve the needs and desires of the audience. As you may have noticed, I'm hard to please—but YouTube gets one of my few endorsements. That's especially true now because I've trained the algorithm." Read on to take control of your YouTube account. ([The Honest Broker](#))



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