

Jake Beyhl – Point of Pride Transcript

[00:00:00] **Jake:** This is the story about what can happen when a client and a creative director have a few drinks together and start tossing around ideas. Marketing can be an ugly process, but to make it work, you really need to have a great relationship with your client. And if you care about your audience and you're passionate about delivering the right message in an authentic way, then great things can happen — like resonating with your customers or even maybe winning an award.

[00:00:34] **Misty:** Hey there friends. Thanks so much for checking out our Point of Pride series. In celebration of our 40ish anniversary, Simantelites are sharing their story about the work they're most proud of that made a difference for Simantel, the client and perhaps most importantly, themselves. I'm excited to share this story with you from a veteran Simantelite who's come up through the creative side of the agency.

[00:00:55] I'm talking about Creative Director Jake Beyhl. Jake has been involved in a lot of high-profile work, as well as community projects. Have a listen as he shares one of his most memorable experiences: his Simantel point of pride.

[00:01:16] **Jake:** My point of pride at Simantel was directing the Caterpillar's 2013 Dealer Technician Recruitment Campaign featuring Mike Rowe and bringing home the gold for the B2B Campaign of the Year from the Ad Age Small Agency Awards. My name is Jake Beyhl, and I'm a creative director here at Simantel. How long have I been at Simantel is up for some debate.

[00:01:33] I was telling everybody, including my wife, that I was coming up on my 15-year anniversary and I got a message from HR saying, Happy 14th. So, apparently, I've been here for just over 14 years, but onto the story that you really want to hear. There are more skilled trade jobs than workers with skills needed to fill them. As the world's leading manufacturer of heavy equipment and machine, that's a big problem for Caterpillar and one they came to us to help solve.

[00:02:01] The ask came from our longtime client, Sarah McDonald. The goal was to help change how people view hard work and recruit technicians to maintain the machines that build our world. Sarah's one of those clients that's a big thinker and a risk taker, so to speak.

[00:02:16] And way back in the day, she and I were working on an internal leadership meeting together. I remember we were at a bar in Albuquerque, New Mexico and we were talking about how great it would be to take it up a notch and work with people in the industry that get it — who understand the market and are easily recognizable.

[00:02:31] We were pretty buzzed, but I remember specifically talking about the idea to potentially work with Mike Rowe. I didn't even know at the time how dialed in Mike Rowe's message was to what we were trying to accomplish; of course, I knew him and I knew of "Dirty Jobs", and I thought he was a charismatic guy, but at the time I didn't know about all of the work that he was doing to promote the skilled trades.

[00:02:52] I'm not exactly sure what happened after that conversation Sarah and I had. We went back to work on our current job and didn't even think about it for a while. Then, all of a sudden, I got a call and I was pulled into a meeting to talk about the possibility of working with Mike Rowe. Somehow Sarah had convinced Mike and his business partner to consider collaborating with us.

[00:03:12] From the beginning, we knew it would be a Cat® centric message, honest and authentic. But we also knew it needed to be disruptive. It had to push the boundaries of Cat's, conservative nature to get the attention that we needed. We needed a hook, and Mike Rowe was it. The target audience was moms because they have so much influence on their children, high school students, mid workforce techs looking for a career change and people coming out of the military.

[00:03:36] That was way much different than the typical audience because we weren't selling Cat equipment — we were asking people to go into the trades. Fast forward, me and Sarah and some other Simantelite people fly down to San Francisco to meet Mike.

[00:03:49] We went in there with the mindset, "this guy's going to jump on the bandwagon for technician recruitment with us; he can help us sell the brand of Caterpillar." Then we started talking about our ideas, pitching what we think would be great — not knowing that they like to be collaborators and not people being pitched to.

[00:04:05] So we got our asses handed to us very quickly in the process of how to work together. We ended up sending out a casting call to the best of the best technicians that were out there for Caterpillar — people who were the salt of the earth that knew the equipment, that built the relationships with their customers.

[00:04:21] We wanted to profile their lifestyles and just how badass these guys are because they're really smart and they make good money doing hard work. I flew all over the world to capture their stories. I went to just outside British Columbia, where the technician's back froze to the ground while he was under the machine working on it.

[00:04:38] I went to Nebraska where there's a technician that flies down to an island called Barbuda, which is no bigger than a football field to work on Cat generators at this resort four times a year; and little village kids were running around with our gear. I went to Miami and filmed the technician that works on yachts and was on the ocean doing shots in the sunrise and on a pier at sunset after a storm.

[00:05:01] There were others too, but the locations and the people were so genuine. We knew Mike would be the perfect person to help tell their stories. He was already doing that type of skilled trade advocacy, so he was perfect. It was a perfect storm of getting the microworks foundation off the ground and working with big brands to help promote it.

[00:05:20] They were giving out scholarships for skilled trades, so it was a great fit because we were promoting the skilled trades and trying to get people to work in the industry like Caterpillar; to be a technician and not to worry about having to go to college — work with your hands and make over a hundred thousand dollars a year.

[00:05:35] It was a pretty amazing thing to put the two together. But it wasn't all roses; there were challenges selling the idea both internally and externally because of the conservative natures of Cat's brand, and even Simantel at the time too. It can be difficult to get everybody on board with an idea, especially if you're one of the first people trying to do something that nobody else is doing.

[00:05:54] But authenticity was important. That's a big lesson that I've learned, not just from working with Mike, but throughout my career at Simantel. The more authentic it is, the more effective it will be. It's less effective if it looks like advertising, so everything needed to be real. We didn't want it to feel like a concept.

[00:06:11] Mike is the concept. His brand and his authenticity is basically how you work around that. We even played a joke on him during one of his first shoots because he specifically made sure that we were clear that he was not going to be a dog and pony show. We just kept adding all the Cat gear to him and it was really over the top.

[00:06:29] He was very accommodating, even though it was uncomfortable. Since it was the first time he worked with Cat, he really wasn't comfortable enough to push back and not do it. But finally we said "gotcha, we're not going do that to you". The entire process was a memorable one, but then we found out that we were up for the Ad Age award.

[00:06:48] I mean, this is Ad age — what an honor to be even up to the award. So, Sarah and I are sitting there at the award ceremony with the owners of Simantel at the time and they announced

the Gold Award winners, but we hadn't won. But then, there was one final award for the campaign of the year — there's only one that goes out.

[00:07:06] It's so precious. We won. It was really gratifying, especially since there had been so much pushback on us as we were pushing the envelope. Since we were in Austin, we went out to grab some barbecue afterwards. I was standing there surrounded by Simantel's owners, and I did a fist pump in the air and the award was in my hand and it slipped.

[00:07:25] It had barbecue sauce on it and hit the ground, chipped and cracked across the top, so everybody was giving me a hard time about it. Whatever. In the end, the work was a catalyst for pushing the Cat brand further. The campaign was successful in terms of driving leads, but maybe even more important than that, is the relationship that Sarah and I built.

[00:07:44] None of this stuff happens if there's not some sort of tight bond between you and the person that has the decision-making power. The client-agency relationship can be a tough one, but it's so important to build trust. Sarah and I have fought like brother and sister. That's also how we actually got to where we are because we took risks and we made people feel uncomfortable. And every time somebody said no, we just kept pushing and now it feels more normal.

[00:08:07] When I started at Simantel, I knew I wanted to do work that actually mattered. I knew I wanted to do stuff at this agency that people cared about and saw. I wanted to make advertising that was memorable and had an emotional effect on people, and this did that. Out of all things I do in marketing, what I enjoy most is storytelling in an authentic way.

[00:08:26] I select this as my moment of pride because of the people, the locations and the crew. Knowing that I was part of something pretty big in my early years as a senior art director was great, and getting to know Mike Rowe was just icing on the cake. Mike's a very intelligent, charismatic guy, and we're still friends to this day.

[00:08:44] One thing I love about Simantel is that they've given me the opportunity to create my own path here. I'm not the same Creative Director as others that work here. We're all individuals, we're all different and bring something different to the table. I might have heard "no" a few times, but it never held me back to the point where I feel restricted creatively.

[00:09:03] We're not just checking boxes and creating advertising, or marketing just to market. It's so much bigger than that.

[00:09:15] **Misty:** I'm so proud of the work we did in collaboration with Caterpillar and Mike Rowe, and not just because it won Ad Age's B2B Campaign of the Year award. Of course, that's nice but like Jake said, it's more about authenticity. It's about telling a story about real people, about real life and shining a spotlight on the hard work — the very important work — that these technicians do to build and support the world as we know it.

[00:09:37] If you liked Jake's story and want to hear more, head over to marketing.sweats.com and check out our very special season six, where you can hear my full interview with him, and other Simantelites, as they share their point of pride in celebration of our 40ish anniversary.