

## Q&A with Paul Caldera, Partner & Co-Founder, Katie Karatzas, Customer Research & Design Strategist and Drake Pusey, Strategist, Brand & Product Development of Saltworks Enthusiast Branding – a leading brand experience design firm with a specialized focus on companies that serve enthusiast markets



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**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Caldera, according to the Saltworks site, you are a branding and design firm where enthusiast brands find their following. How so? What is the focus at Saltworks today?*

**Mr. Caldera:** Our focus is on helping folks build enthusiast customer relationships for their experiences, products, and services. Along the way, we unpack what enthusiast brands are. They typically offer products and services that have a high emotional component and a high consideration component.

**CEOCFO:** *Do most companies understand the need for enthusiasts or are people still learning that it makes sense to have this following?*

**Mr. Caldera:** I think that people are still learning. Across the board, most organizations have what we call an “inside looking out” perspective. That means that they have some deep-seeded thoughts, not unfounded, about what their value is to the world, to the marketplace – Why does the world need another “fill-in-the-blank”? – and they have reasons for why their product or service stands out. We take a look at that and find out what is really valid, then bring what we call an “outside looking in” perspective to that process. Combining the “inside looking out” and “outside looking in” perspectives helps brands understand what they are doing and address the gap between what they think about themselves and what the outside market is thinking about them.

**CEOCFO:** *Would you give us an example of what an assumption was that a company had and what you did to unearth what was really going on?*

**Mr. Caldera:** We did a project for TomTom. These are the folks that do the GPS devices. TomTom had a dominant market share in the EU and they were a market challenger in the United States. We were hired to help them gain market share in the US. Their “inside looking out” assumption was that their value proposition to the marketplace was based off of their ease of use. In fact, all of their messaging, all of their taglines, and everything about the way the product was named and positioned was based on that notion. What we did first was look at secondary research to find out which brands were