

# The Shiver Effect™

January 2011

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*Strategy and Marketing*



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### The Shiver Effect™

By Heather Rooney | *An Excerpt from Heather's Blog: [www.HeatherRooney.com](http://www.HeatherRooney.com)*

Have you ever felt The Shiver Effect? Maybe you have, but you didn't recognize it when it happened. It is a moment when your hair stands up on end, goose-bumps spread across your arms, and you feel a slight shiver. You aren't experiencing a shiver because you are cold; rather, your body is telling you that you have come into contact with something genuine, authentic, and real.

Let me give an example from pop culture. In 2009, an unknown and awkward-looking woman ventured bravely onto the stage of Britain's Got Talent. Most people were expecting disaster. Then, she opened her mouth, and the voice of an angel emerged from this most unassuming candidate. It was like her very heart was singing, as her unique sound swept across the live audience and the millions of people watching.

Her performance was powerful, and it produced dramatic results. Just a short time after her television debut, she launched her album and it became the single largest female debut ever. Ah, I've got the shivers again even as I am writing this! If ever there was a perfect demonstration of The Shiver Effect, it is Susan Boyle. Look at the power of an authentic brand – the results that one can achieve when the real heart of a person shines through and touches us beyond the surface.

Although I haven't written about it much, I coined the term "Shiver Effect" shortly after founding my business. As I worked with home care and hospice providers, there was one common theme; everyone was trying to achieve competitive differentiation, and they were looking for a way to resonate with their targeted audiences. The more we worked together on their brands, the more I found that providers often said the same thing: "We deliver compassionate care," or "We are patient-centered," or "We are committed to quality care." Over time, it became clear that these statements are just "catch-all" phrases to describe something so much deeper.

Because it is often difficult to touch people beyond the surface, providers ended up relying on summary phrases to describe their services. The problem is that everyone uses these statements, and it has become, effectively, noise in our industry. Everyone says that they deliver compassionate care. That's like saying, "I have two arms and two legs. I am a human being." Okay, you have two arms and two legs; what makes you different?

**Look at the power of an authentic brand – the results that one can achieve when the real heart of a person shines through and touches us beyond the surface.**

This is the question we must all address if we are to attain the level of market penetration that we desire. We work in an industry where referral sources are beginning to commoditize home care. It is up to us to demonstrate how we are different from all of the other agencies in the community. It is up to us to dig beyond the word “compassion” to capture the very heart of what we are trying to communicate. When you have hit the nut of it, you will feel shivers . . . and that is The Shiver Effect.

A few years ago, I helped to launch a private duty business here in Seattle/Bellevue, Wash. The gentleman was starting from scratch and had a tremendous vision for his company. As I devised his growth strategy and developed his marketing collateral, I enjoyed discussing the heart of his business grounded in exceptional service, compassion, and care.

Last fall, when my dad was facing the end of his life, we realized that he was in need of a live-in caregiver. Immediately, I called my friend and former client for help, and within minutes, he was on the case. I felt so cared for, like I had an advocate working to help me and my family in our time of need. It was amazing to experience firsthand the exceptional service that we had discussed a couple of years before.

Then, The Shiver Effect happened to me in a very personal way.

On the day my father died, there was a new private duty caregiver in the house. She worked hand-in-hand with the hospice team as they provided amazing care to my dad and the entire family. After he passed, and everyone had said goodbye, it was time to prepare his remains for transport to the funeral home. Emily went to Dad’s bedroom and offered to help. A short time later, he was wheeled out and the family had one last chance to part ways. At that moment, her incredible action became clear – she had tenderly wrapped his body in the custom blanket that friends had made for him. It was a woven blanket with the picture of Big Mike (Dad) kissing his one and only grandbaby, my daughter Caitlyn. She was his heart, and Emily knew that. His body literally was enveloped in the love that he had for his granddaughter, and the love she had for him.

**She was giving us the gifts that she knew we needed, because she had been there before. This is compassion – and it is something that we do every day in home care and hospice.**

Compassion is more than just a word; it is a feeling. And as I am writing this, I feel shivers up and down. This is The Shiver Effect.

If you want to grow, you must help your audiences experience The Shiver Effect. They need to feel the heart and soul of your organization. It must be real, genuine, and authentic. It must touch people and resonate deeply inside of them.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Heather is the President and CEO of Heather L. Rooney Strategy and Marketing, a national marketing and strategic planning firm. With an innate ability to forecast future trends, Ms. Rooney is among the most respected growth strategists in the home care industry.

Having been a member of the home care community for more than 10 years, and with nearly 18 years of sales and marketing experience, Ms. Rooney is accustomed to guiding a diverse cadre of home health, hospice, private duty organizations in their quest to transcend performance plateaus. From small agencies to large national chains, she is known for infusing clients with energy and empowering companies to achieve unprecedented growth.

Ms. Rooney has served on the Board of Directors for the Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP) and the Distinguished Board of Judges for the Stevie Awards. She is a nationally respected keynote presenter and published author on topics related to emerging market trends, sales, marketing, business development, business intelligence, leadership, strategic planning, growth, and more. Amidst her diverse content expertise is one essential thread: she is consistently recognized for her ability to cultivate vision, build unity of purpose, offer practical guidance and inspire change.

Ms. Rooney is also an award-winning CEO - She was named the 2008 Entrepreneur of the Year by the Stevie Awards for Women in Business, and she won the 2006 Stevie Award for Best New Business.

Prior to founding Heather L. Rooney, Heather built and directed all aspects of Sales, Marketing, and Business Development for a leading provider of business intelligence in home health, hospice and private duty. Her background includes real estate investment, franchise businesses, international pharmaceuticals, cultural diversity, non-profit juvenile delinquency prevention, community policing, and federal grant management. She is a trained conflict mediator and professional facilitator.

Heather graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Washington with a focus on Criminology, Sociology and Criminal Justice. She resides in Seattle with her husband and young daughter.



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