Brian Burger Intro Speech

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. I'm Brian Burger, and I'm the co-founder

and co-owner of Fathom 4. We may not be the biggest company in town, but we

are absolutely the most grateful, and I'll explain what I mean in a minute.

But before I start boring you with *what* we do, I want to talk a little bit about

why we do it.

We exist for a single, simple, straightforward reason:

Every day, a lot of brave Americans go into harm's way to keep us safe.

And we want to help *keep* them safe.

Well…that…and once as an eighteen-year-old grunt, I threw a very

complicated, what I *thought* was broken radio against a tree…before checking the

battery…

And I busted it up pretty good.

Did I mention the radio cost $20,000?

'Cause my sergeant *definitely* did when I reported it to him…

My business partner, Glenn Chave, and I are both veterans. Glenn is a former

Navy Oceanographic Officer, and I was active duty infantry in the Marine Corps—

a true grunt, 0311 for you Marines out there, and I'm very proud of that.

When you're out in the jungle, under fire, trying to remember 1,000 things at once, the *last* thing you want to be worrying about is whether or not the equipment's working. I mean, I'm sure we'd all just prefer the darned stuff worked, do our jobs, finish our mission and go home without any casualties, you know?

Now, I absolutely loved my time in the Corps and wouldn't trade it for anything. I enjoyed what I did, and I'm extremely proud of being a part of something larger than myself.

But over time, you "bust up enough radios," and you start to realize that there's probably a better way of doing things out there, you know? In fact, I realized that a lot of the equipment I used in the Corps was overly-complicated, tough to operate, and that ultimately could put lives at risk.

That's why when I got out of the Marine Corps, I went to Clemson and graduated with a mechanical engineering degree. I wanted to develop the problem-solving side of my brain, the analytical side. Not that I hadn't been tasked with thinking on my feet as a grunt, but this was a much higher level-view of how things are made, how different processes interact to create different outcomes—you know, those sorts of things.

I thought about my eighteen-year-old self, banging that $20,000 radio on a tree trunk like it was a coconut, and realized that it would be much more effective to just build a simpler solution in the first place.

That eighteen-year-old grunt is still inside of me. Just like the engineer is still inside of me, too. And I wear *both* hats when designing solutions for our warfighters: I combine the professional rigor of an engineer with the practical know-how and "finish the mission" attitude of a grunt.

And Glenn and I both look for those kinds of people when hiring for Fathom 4. We [want to] run a company of really smart people who solve really tough problems with solutions that save lives.

Period.

We don't *want* to keep putting our finest citizens under fire. We *want* to outsmart the enemy. To outthink those who would harm us without having to resort to "bulling our way through" with brute force.

Deep inside me, I *knew* this truth, but for the life of me, I could never really put it into words.

Until I had the opportunity and good fortune to attend a presentation given by USMC Major General Michael Dana back in March of 2013. General Dana gave a powerful talk about how, for the first two-thirds of his career, he had been

trained to "close with and destroy" the enemy with an "infantry-and-artillery" type of thinking, where it was just, "next guy up," into the fog of war, and casualties just "came along with the turf." Just, you know, kind of a by-product, [shrug shoulders] "what can you do?"

In fact, General Dana had over one hundred marines in his command killed in action. Think about that for a minute: [pause] one-hundred young men [&women?] who didn't come home to their families [pause].

And for the longest time, it was just, "yeah, but what can we do?"

Once the General started working with industry and in academia, he realized that's not the way things have to be. He saw that there were people out there like us trying to *prevent* those casualties, working hard *to bring* those soldiers home…

…and he became a big fan [snap] *instantly*.

General Dana ended his talk with a quote that I remember verbatim—I never wrote it down even once, and I'll never forget it, since *in a single sentence,* he summed up what I had been thinking for almost twenty *years*.

He said, "Embrace the nerds. I would much rather outthink someone than watch another kid bleed."

[Pause]

That's all that Fathom 4 is here to do:

We're here to keep our kids from bleeding.

And I think, deep down, it's why all of *you* are here, too.

And *that* is why we're the most grateful company in town: because we are also grateful for all of *you*…

…and *everything* that you do. Everything that you do that makes *you* the *true heroes* for keeping our kids from bleeding.

[Pause to let it wash over/sink in]

So now that we've established why we get up in the morning (and why I have a penchant for destroying tens of thousands of dollars' worth of equipment), let me go into what we can actually do for you…