

Never name your chickens: Why I believe that the future of brands is husbandry

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Abstract

If you think of your brand in human terms, you're probably not getting the most out of it.

Whilst there is a considerable amount of evidence proving benefits to projecting human characteristics onto brands for the purpose of influencing the consumer, there is very little knowledge of the effect that the anthropomorphism of brands has on the brand owner.

This paper will explore and highlight the dangers associated with projecting human qualities onto a brand and propose a model to redress the balance; brand husbandry.

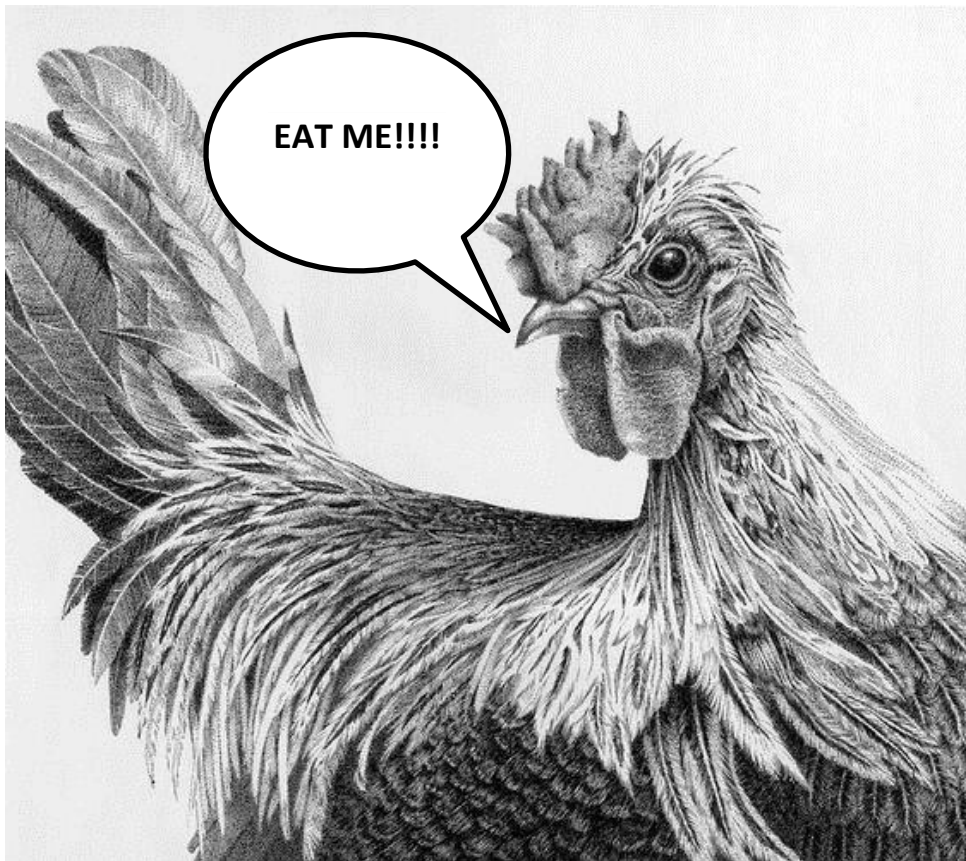


Figure 1: image credit fineartamerica.com

Introduction

Our ability to harness the full power of the brands that we strive to create is being stymied by the way that we, as marketers, perceive them: by anthropomorphising brands we have become afraid to exploit them.

I believe that building anthropomorphic brands, encourages marketers to value perception metrics, such as brand liking, impression and reputation, over and above hard metrics, and to make decisions which take the 'feelings' of the brand into account rather than the best interests of the business.

To understand how to maintain a healthy brand, whilst extracting maximum profitability, we need a process which will dehumanise the asset, and overlay a more functional approach to asset management and maximisation.

In this paper I will propose a model which allows us to maximise yield by adopting a different approach to the following facets of a brand:

- Governance
- Expression
- Culture
- Behaviour

I love lamp

The capability of independent, logical and rational thought is generally accepted as what makes us human (Corballis, 2011; Descartes 1637; Barrett 2017), and is incredibly difficult to emulate. The qualities which makes us appear human, on the other hand, are considerably easy to emulate (Tao, Tan, Picard, 2005), and can be artificially achieved by faking emotion and empathy (Wright, Shinkle, Linney, 2015; Butcher, 2014).

The reason that this is important, is that we do not, as human beings, attach sentiment to the fact that something is a human by nature, rather it is human characteristics which encourage empathy: personality, feelings, heritage, culture and the resultant consequences of breaching societal norms influence our actions (Hoffman, M.L, 1970).

For the overwhelming majority of human beings, our moral compass is strongly averse to committing harm to others, or rather to anything which possesses human characteristics. Evidence of this can be observed in psychopaths; whilst they recognise the form of a human, they lack the

ability to recognise emotion and human characteristics, enabling them to act with emotional impunity when committing acts of violence (Ronson, 2011).

Such an aversion to committing harm to another human being can be overcome in the general public through psychological manipulation and the process of dehumanisation (Bandura, Underwood, Fromson 2005).

Dehumanisation is the process of persuading one party, that another does not possess the requisite characteristics and traits to be considered a person, and therefore can be treated as an object; “counterfeit human beings” (Livingstone Smith, D. 2011). This is how European colonists conceived of Native Americans, Slave owners their slaves, and Nazis of the Jews (Livingstone Smith, D. 2011).

More common examples of this are the increased aggression that a person can feel behind the wheel of a car (Sharkin, B. 2004), and the aggressive towards representatives of a business, often in call centres, over the telephone.

Just as dehumanisation removes human qualities in order that people can commit morally outrageous acts, anthropomorphism projects human qualities onto objects, causing us to treat them in a more compassionate manner, as discovered by Tina Kielser and Sara Kielser (2004) in their experiment to investigate Belk’s (1988) construct of self extension.

My Pet Rock

Kielser & Kielser (2004) set out to discover the quantitative relationship between the behaviour of those who give an object a personality and the way that they perceive and treat the object: their hypothesis being that those who anthropomorphise an object are more likely to treat it favourably than those that do not, providing evidence of the Extended Self, Belk (1988)

The experiment recruited 106 volunteer undergraduate students, and provided them with a Mexican river rock, assigning each individual randomly to either design the rock for themselves (the Self condition), or to design a rock to sell (Seller condition).

Those in the Self condition were twice as likely that the Seller condition to agree that “the rock symbolises me.” There was also a strong correlation with the statement “the rock symbolises my beliefs” and “the rock symbolises a loved one.”

Most importantly, those within the Self condition rated the rock as more “special” to themselves personally, than the Seller condition. Crucially, those in the Self condition were averse to creating

copies and variants of their rock, insisting that it was so unique that it “could not be extended into a product line.”

The experiment provides clear evidence that when people anthropomorphise an object, they treat it preferentially, and have an increased propensity to endorse and to protect it.

Not a conscious decision

The emotions that we feel towards objects upon which we project human qualities exist in the subconscious (Barrett, 2017). If Gordon (2016) is correct in her deduction that 95% of behaviour comes from the subconscious, then it is almost certain that our emotions exert a powerful influence over almost everything that we do. Kahneman’s (2012) work supports Gordon (2016) in determining that system 1 originates “impressions and feelings which are the main source of beliefs and deliberate choices of system 2,” although the ratio of influence is not quantified.

Kahneman goes further, offering a more detailed explanation of the effect of emotion on behaviour, by proposing that system 2 overlays societal morals and values to moderate system 1, much as the super ego moderates the id (Freud, 1923).

Evidence of the effect of morals and values being projected onto non-human things, can be observed in the considerable majority of people’s horror at the idea of killing a dog or cat, versus a cow: we have domesticated dogs and cats, and anthropomorphise them, whereas we raise cows as livestock by dehumanising them, or at least by refusing to sentimentalise them (Urqunza-haas & Kotrschal, 2015).

Societal Values & Morals

The morals and values which we apply to non-human entities are determined by the dominant culture in the country in question; broadly speaking the countries which comprise the West share common values, which is where this paper will focus.

The Home Office (2013) outlines the core tenets of British society for those wishing to immigrate to the UK which are mirrored by Ofsted, the Telegraph¹ adds some more specific and patriotic facets, and a US source² for balance.

These tenets can be split into four groups: Governance, Behaviour, Expression, Culture.

¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationopinion/10889884/The-core-British-values-that-define-our-nation.html>

² <https://www.thenation.com/article/our-moral-values/>

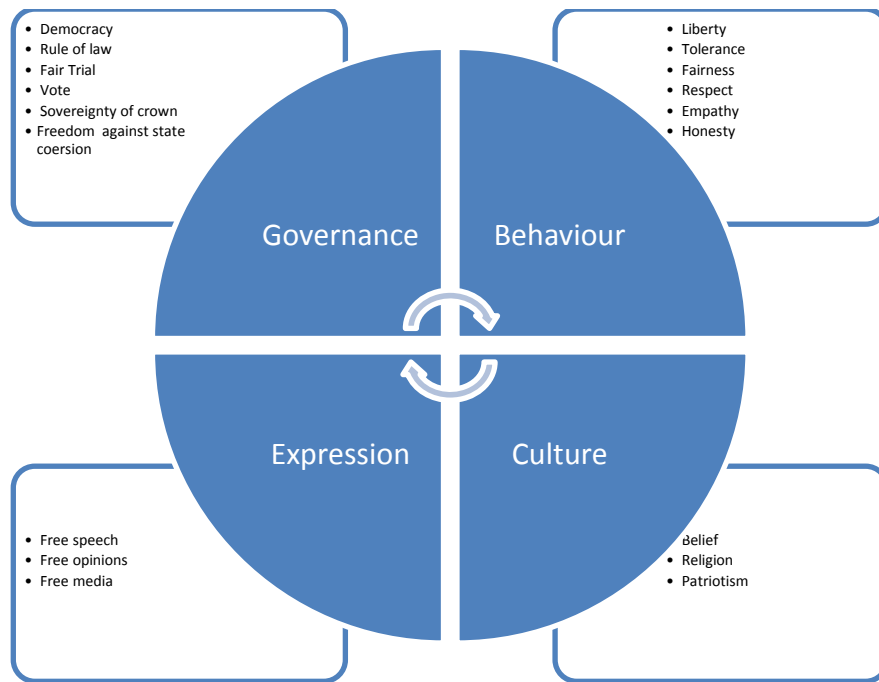


Figure 2

These values outline the behaviour and values that society deems acceptable, and those which should be afforded to all human beings.

If we, albeit subconsciously, transfer societal values and morals to that which we believe to have human qualities, then these are the values that we are projecting onto non-human entities.

Two sides of the coin

There are two protagonists in this relationship: those who create and /or maintain a brand and those who decide whether to buy it³; the brand owner⁴ and the consumer⁵.

This paper will now proceed to discuss how both parties develop anthropomorphic perceptions of the brand, and the effect that this has on their behaviour, with particular focus on the brand owner.

The Consumer

A considerable body of work already exists, extolling the virtues of building brands which the consumer considers anthropomorphic; this paper is not intended to add to that, although it is

³ Author acknowledges that this is arguably somewhat of an over simplification, but is satisfied that it suffices for the purpose of this paper

⁴ "Brand Owner" refers to anybody who has an active and influential role in the conception, creation and/or maintenance of the brand

⁵ "Consumer" is not restricted to those who choose to buy (customers) but meant in the broader sense of the word; the public with purchasing power

important to recognise the positive effect that it has on consumer influence to give context to the paper as a whole.

Aakers (1997) quotes Park when summarising that “perceptions of human personality traits are inferred on the basis of an individual’s behaviour, physical characteristics, attitudes and beliefs, and demographic characteristics (Park 1986). In contrast, perceptions of brand personality traits can be formed and influenced by any direct or indirect contact that the consumer has with the brand,” including advertising, packaging, brand name, logo price and distribution channel. (Batra Lehmann and Singh 1993).

The characteristics of the brand are actively created through marketing and brand positioning by the owners with the intention of differentiating a brand in a product category (Halliday 1996).

Belk (1988) concludes that the brands that we chose comprise the Extended Self, and therefore people chose only brands which fit with their desired image, to either themselves or others depending on whether their personality type is extrovert or introvert.

John Clammer (1992) suggests that “Shopping is not merely the acquisition of things; it is the buying of identity.”

Aakers (1997) provides quantitative evidence to support this, and highlights the commercial motivation: “research has suggested the the greater the congruity and distinctiveness between the human characteristics that consistently and distinctively describe an individual’s actual or ideal self and those that describe a brand, the greater the preference for the brand (e.g. Malhorta 1988; Sirgy 1982).”

In essence, consumers are drawn, often unconsciously although not exclusively, towards brands which complement their image. Brands have, for years, designed their image to appeal to the most profitable groups of people in order to secure their market position and maximise sales.

This is not news.

Brand Owners

I believe that when we anthropomorphise a brand as marketers, we do not realise the damage that we are doing: by thinking about the brand as possessing personality and characteristics, we are in danger of making poor decisions.

All brands need good parents?

Scott Bedbury (2002) is explicit in his view of how a brand should be conceived and grown:

“A brand is like a newborn child, you have to protect it, nurture it, instil positive and enduring values within it in the hope that it will be productive, desirable and welcome wherever it goes.”

Bedbury also quotes Mike Homer of Netscape, as he refers to the lifecycle of his business from his ‘child’ being born (IPO) then sent to war (with Microsoft) and sold into slavery (Bought by AOL).

Simmons (2008) writing about the conception of Innocent, notes that starting around the 1990s Brands have been developed with personalities that make them like people. He goes on to reference the consultancies of the late 1990s who talked to them in terms of brand values, personality and

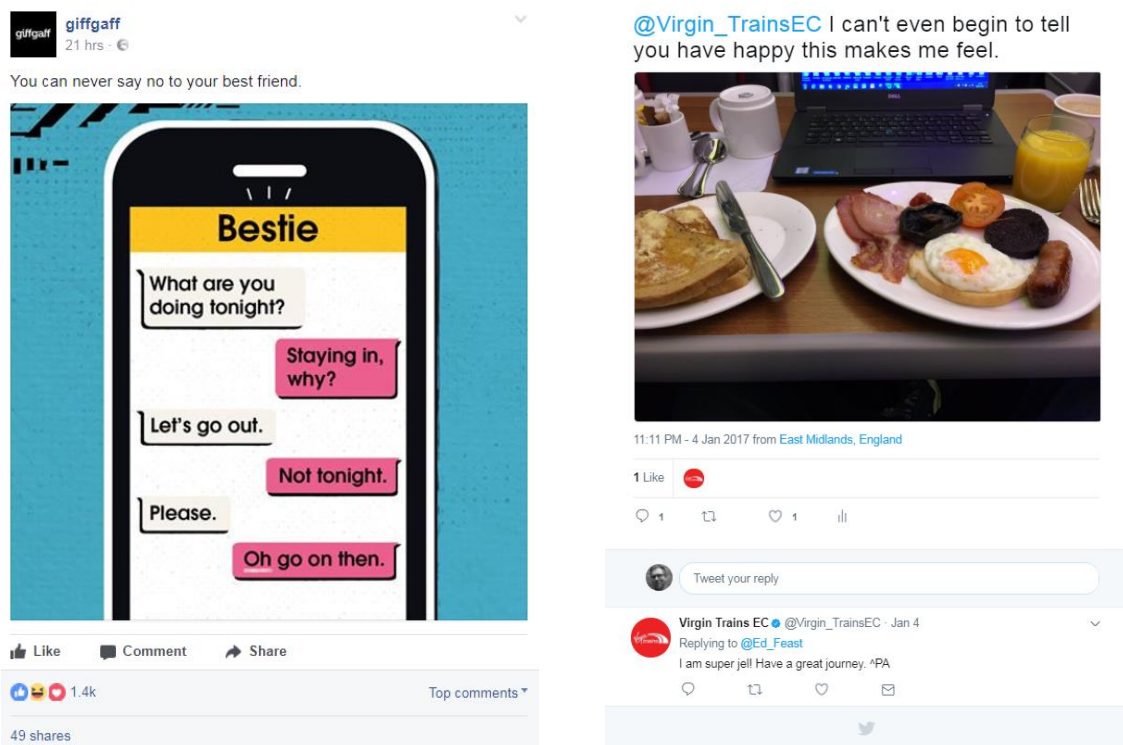


Figure 3

characteristics “as if they were analysing human beings rather than corporations.”

This approach has burgeoned with the mass-adoption of social media, with some brands like giffgaff, Virgin, Innocent, Starbucks, JetBlue, using it effectively to communicate their ‘personality.’

It is clear, that from inside marketing departments, the brand has been developed as a person for at least the last 20 years⁶, and for good reason; John Watson, the psychologist hired by JWT in 1921, conducted first blind taste test with the top 4 brands of cigarettes, and determined that they all tasted the same (Gordon, 2016), highlighting the business case for differentiation achieved through brand personality.

The spotlight has always been focussed on the effect that this has on the consumer though. What if there was an equally strong effect on the brand owners, which has not been identified, which is harming growth and effectiveness?

I think (and own, and do) therefore I am

I believe that the relationship that Brand Owners develop with their brands, leads it to be an extension of their self, the potential ramifications of which we will explore in this section.

I propose that the consequences of this are that the Brand Owner acts in a protective fashion to preserve the rights of the brand, which inhibits full exploitation of it as an asset, furthermore that it encourages emotional decision making, excuse making for poor performance, and focus on long term soft metrics at the expense of return on marketing investment, and the other hard business metrics.

Belk's paper *Possessions of the Extended Self (1988)*, writing about the motivating factors for brand selection, proposes that the things people possess are "a major contributor to, and a reflection of our identities." Whilst this is intended to be reflective of the consumer, it is equally relevant when considering the relationship with the Brand Owner.

Belks concludes that "we are what we own," and builds on Marx (1967) & Locke (1690) who argue that the things that we do, and specifically our work, are central to existence and self-worth, and ultimately happiness.

The ultimate conclusion of this is that our possessions, together with all of the other elements within our extended self, including our work, make up who we are; our identity.

It is important to note that Belks' paper received criticism, from Cohen (1989) for lacking empirical evidence, specifically that the paper was lacking "sufficient enumeration of the evidence required to establish that the specified criteria are met and that there is a linkage of possessions with the

⁶ This is by no means a definitive start point, although the evidence suggests that this is the time that there was a shift towards brand personality being front and centre of brand positioning and development

extended self.” I propose that the quantitative evidence presented by Kielser & Kielser (2004) substantiates Belks’ theory of the Extended Self.

There are a number of examples of peoples’ pride in the brands that they have created, and worked with which support this supposition. The most extreme of which is almost certainly Fredric J Baur, of Cincinnati, inventor of the Pringles can, who had his ashes placed in one of the cans, and was buried in it.

The personal nature of creating a brand creates a strong bond between the owner and the brand itself, which in turn becomes part of the extended self; it becomes one of the defining elements of the person. When combined with the human characteristics that the brand owner projects onto it there is a deepened bond and feeling of responsibility to protect from harm, avoid deviation from provenance and ensure legacy, extraordinarily similar to the role of a parent.

My interpretation of Oliver James’ work (2002) on the relationship between Parents and their children, is that if we anthropomorphise brands we:

- Put success down to enlightened nurture but failure down to genes
- Overly positive spin on the future
- When asked what makes the brand tick, they plump for theories which help them feel they’re doing the right thing, i.e. mothers who work will say a child benefits from being looked after by other people, whilst stay at home mums say a child thrives by spending time with the mother
- Conscience drives decisions not reason
- We repeat our previous experiences i.e. more likely to repeat what we have done before rather than do something new

If these characteristics are the driving force behind modern marketing, then there is a need for significant change.

Don't name your chickens

Just as people are advised against naming a chicken if they intend one day to eat it, brand owners should avoid projecting human characteristics on their brands if they one day mean to exploit it for profit.

The brand is the chicken that wants to be eaten (Baggini, 2010), yet it enjoys the protection of the Brand Owner because of the extension of the self theory.

This protection manifests itself in the following ways:

- Dichotomy between CMO and CEO expectations
- Decreased predilection for performance campaigns
- Prevalence for softer metrics
- Over confidence in popularity

This paper will now explore the each of the statements above, before suggesting a model to address the issues, referencing the four tenets of Morals and Values as identified above.

Dichotomy between CMO and CEO expectations

Investors' expectations and demands on businesses to post significant year on year growth is at a five year high⁷ which, according to TMG (The Miles Group) is translating into significant pressure on CEOs and their boards to accelerate their current trajectory⁸. This is particularly poignant for marketers, as investors are primarily focussing on Mergers and Acquisitions to post the fastest growth numbers. Extensive research by Fee, Hadlock & Pierce (2008) concluded that:

"Combined buyer plus seller announcement returns are positively related to measures of post-acquisition cuts in advertising spending and also to indicators of corrections to past investment biases by prior owners." Fee, Hadlock & Pierce (2008)

The relevance here is that CEOs are asking for results to be more quickly noticeable, and when combined with Mergers & Acquisitions, are often expected on a smaller budget.

Field and Binet's (2017) analysis of businesses effects caused by advertising on a 10 year rolling average, highlights an increased focus on short term metrics as being the root cause of a decline in effectiveness.

⁷ <https://www.ft.com/content/d805182d-0f72-303c-af4f-a1d8cf8352b7>

⁸ <https://miles-group.com/news-insights/miles-to-go/eight-reasons-why-being-ceo-2015-will-be-tougher-ever>

My interpretation of their observation is that Brand Owners have not sufficiently changed their approach to brand communications to accommodate the shift in metrics from long to short term. I believe that there is prevalence amongst marketers to continue to produce advertising campaigns which are designed to work over the long term by building mental structures (Field & Binet, 2017) as opposed to adverts and campaigns which are constructed to deliver in the short term.

I propose that Brand Owners feel a passionate sense of obligation to their Brands, and are therefore reluctant to do what is necessary to achieve the targets: focus on performance.

Decreased predilection for performance campaigns

My observation is that the modern industry as a whole has a strong disdain for performance as a discipline: creative advertising agencies are visibly repulsed at the thought of having to produce a campaign with a call to action, and media agencies spend as much effort as possible diverting clients away from attempting to analyse the immediate effects of their campaigns in favour of econometric analysis, which is all but useless at quantifying the effect of shorter campaigns.

Brand Owners who have become over protective of the Brand at the expense of the business, support the opposition to campaigns designed to deliver results in the short term, even in cases where they have been charged with delivering exactly that, which is now around 25% of cases according to Field and Binet (2017).

This is illogical if we consider the marketing team to be the tail and not the dog.

Wikipedia succinctly describes Marketing as the “study and management of exchange relationships.”

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."

Byron Sharp (2013) rather clinically boils it down to “Marketing is trading – buying and selling.”

Personally, I would define the role of the marketing department serving the business through the creation, maintenance, positioning and promotion of the brand to secure trade now and in the future.

None of these definitions address deciding financial goals and targets; these are goals which are provided for the marketing departments to achieve. Whilst it is healthy, and expected for the marketing team to challenge targets and short term strategic decisions which could lead to a drop in market share in the future, the decision (however wise) from the CEO and Managing Director is final.

The most likely conclusion that I come to, is that the personal feelings of the Brand Owner and their attachment and obligations towards the Brand cloud their judgement.

Prevalence for softer metrics

My position is that metrics are only any use if they can be quantifiably linked directly to a desired outcome within a predictable timescale, be that this week, or next year.

Brand Owners who show prevalence for metrics which are overly distant from the objectives of the business, or that have only a tenuous relevance, are also showing signs of the effects of anthropomorphism.

The ideal marketer will commit to results in the short term whilst strategically moving towards next years goals.

Reluctance to be measured on results immediately following activity, in my opinion, indicates one of two things: poor and unrealistic target setting, or a lack of confidence in the ability to deliver results.

Prevalence for soft metrics is a way to protect the Brand from attack, which I interpret as a sign of the Brand Owner's attempt to shield it from criticism.

Over confidence in popularity

Some brands have a face only a mother could love, but the vast majority are perfectly lovely.

That said, over confidence in the how interested the public are in brands has caused a considerable amount of wasted time and capital to be invested in chasing earned media, and investing in viral campaigns, and guerrilla marketing, the pursuit of which I consider to be a folly instigated by the passion that Brand Owners feel for their 'progeny' over and above reason.

British consumers would not care if somewhere between 74%⁹ and 94%¹⁰ of brands disappeared, so any attempt to convince ourselves that any more than a handful of people are going to actively engage with or share content is misguided, although you would be forgiven for thinking that this was not the case given the amount of money invested over time in these activities.

Whilst it is natural and healthy to take pride in your output, Brand Owners who overly anthropomorphise their work, and particularly those who model it on themselves, are in serious danger of investing in these vanity projects with unrealistic aspirations of success.

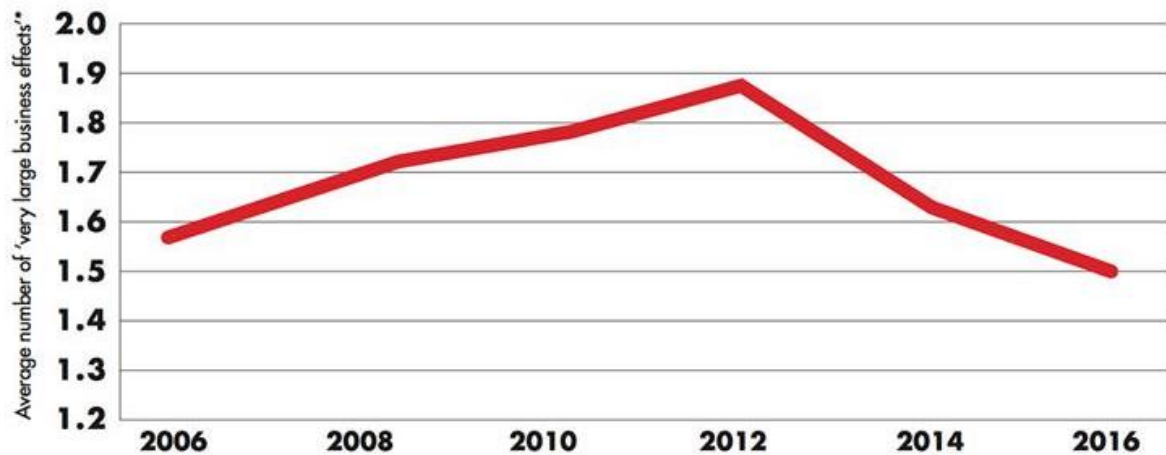
⁹ <http://www.thedrum.com/news/2017/02/01/decade-most-people-still-wouldn-t-care-if-74-brands-disappeared-finds-havas>

¹⁰ <https://www.marketingweek.com/2015/07/22/british-consumers-would-not-care-if-94-of-brands-disappeared/>

We're no better than we were 10 years ago

Before we move onto a model for the future, it is important to understand where we are; as an industry, after all of the advances in thinking, new theories and models, new approaches, big data, rise of digital etc, we are not delivering any better results than 10 years ago.

A FALL IN AD CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVENESS



Source IPA Databank, 1998-2016 case studies (data is aggregated over ten years for statistical reliability)
*Profit, sales, market share, penetration, loyalty and price sensitivity

My interpretation of this is that there is an underlying resistance to change, and that whilst numerous opportunities for change occur, that as an industry for reasons of professional satisfaction, we stick to what we like doing, not what we should be doing.

"How quick come the reasons for approving what we like!"

Jane Austin, *Persuasion*, 1987, chapter 2

Sharpening the axe

If you find yourself arguing with the CEO to protect your brand, baulking at short term campaigns and asking for soft metrics, whilst forever thinking that if your brand disappears the world will end, I would argue that you've named your chicken.

So what do you do?

Governance (democratic)

The Anthropomorphic Brand Owner (ABO) affords their brand the right to a fair trial and the right to defence even in the face of certain culpability. Decision making is democratic and free from state coercion, and crucially, enjoys the right to vote.

Governance ~~(democratic)~~ (autocratic)

The brand must be held accountable for failings, and correctional measures instigated to prevent future reoccurrences. No special dispensation should be afforded to initiatives that are very 'on brand' but fail to contribute to the business goals, or to deliver progress towards the overlying strategic objectives.

Whilst the people in the marketing team make the decisions, senior management should attempt wherever realistic, to divorce the failings of the brand from the marketing team; if the brand is struggling due to competitive activity, changes in consumer preference, it is counterproductive to view the brand as the marketing team. Senior management will need to instruct the ABO to implement a change of course though, as it is likely that they will be slower to see the failings.

State coercion should be encouraged, and input from a wider range of internal stakeholder sought. Whilst the ABO will attempt to retain control of every element of the brand, this will not deliver a well-rounded brand. The ABO will argue that people who have no experience in branding should not be involved; if you find yourself doing this, it is likely that you have created a brand positioning that you cannot provide a watertight rationale for. In general, if the ABO believes that 'people don't get it' then there is a problem. The broader the input, the more well rounded the output. Caveat here is that the CMO retains the right to all final decisions, but should seek regular feedback and input from a broad range of interested parties within the business across all ranks.

Expression (mirror)

The ABO allows their brand to develop a tone of voice which reflects themselves, or their desired perception of themselves (the mirror). It is free to express itself and its opinions with the caveat that negativity is filtered out, presenting the brand as an omni-positive entity.

Expression (~~mirror~~) (window)

Whilst the ABO will often project their own qualities, or qualities that they find desirable onto their brand, this will encourage them to be over protective and react defensively in periods of pressure.

The ABO should strive to think of the brand as somebody that they do not have strong feelings towards; a co-worker or school acquaintance. In the extreme the ABO could chose somebody from amongst their social circle that they do not like in order to take a totally objective view. This approach takes a considerable amount of discipline though to avoid projecting negative characteristics, although with effort would yield stronger results. The reason that this works is that often the reason for disliking another person (without an offensive event having occurred) is that the person sees desirable traits and characteristics in the protagonist (Freud, 1923).

Be genuine and allow the brand to express negative sentiment on occasion. Brands operating within social media are often terrified of negativity. Handled properly this can make the brand feel more genuine and illicit response. Negative responses should be embraced and dealt with as publically as they are announced.

Constantly seek to look out through the window and pull in new influences – being open to change will prevent brands from standing still and ensure that they remain relevant and current. Do not wait until brand tone of voice guidelines are amended before embracing change.

Culture (monotheism)

The culture of the brand will have multiple stakeholders, although often the ABO will be a leading influence in shaping this. The belief systems will which exist will influence all decisions across the business and the employees that buy into it will experience a strong feeling of patriotism towards the brand; any criticism will be viewed as a personal attack and result in an emotional response over and above the rational.

Culture (~~monotheism~~) (polytheism)

The ABO is likely to strongly oppose the idea of challenging the brand, treating it and its assets with God like status; challenge it and be dammed.

The responsible business should ensure that brand owners encourage stakeholders across the organisation to challenge the way that things are done, and to question historic wisdom and approaches. Challenges and critiques of positioning and approach should be embraced and encouraged as part of a regular navigation session.

The brand should be open to adopting new facets as part of the process of evolution, which should be Darwinian; brutal breeding out of anything destructive, or that which does not help contribute to the forwards movement towards achieving the strategic objectives as set out by the leadership of the business.

An open minded, almost agnostic approach should be taken to the other Gods – the competition. Encouraging a love of the category and respect for the competition is not natural for the ABO, but is more likely to lead to faster development; blanket bombing the competition as hapless morons who do not have a clue what they're doing is tempting to the ABO but ultimately useless. Instead, sessions should be instigated which encourage people within the business to present competitors' branding and products in a positive light.

Behaviour (supportive)

The ABO will respect the covenant of the brand and be quick to forgive any failings, showing a high level of tolerance for disappointing results, in the spirit of fairness. The ABO will have strong feelings of empathy towards the brand and be able to relate to its troubles, particularly not being understood or properly valued by others.

Behaviour ~~(supportive)~~ (challenging)

The natural state of the ABO will be to treat the brand, as highlighted above, with reverence and mutual respect. In order to be able to maximise the yield that can be extracted from the brand, it is important to treat the brand like an asset.

When approaching this, it can be helpful for the ABO to think of themselves as a livestock farmer; animal husbandry is an excellent metaphor for managing brands.

Farmers make their living through selling the produce, breeding, and ultimately slaughtering their assets, stripping and monetising the asset once it has ceased to be useful.

Sickly animals amongst the flock are only treated if the time and financial cost of the treatment is less than the value realised through produce, breeding, or slaughter in the future.

Over sentimentality could cause a farmer to hold on to animals which are costing more than they yield. Failing to take timely and rational decisions takes time and resource away from the new assets, harming their development and value in the long term due to neglect in the early years. The same is true with a brand, and the products which comprise it.

The adjectives that we use to describe our brands are universally positive, and almost inevitably identical to everybody else, with the exception of perhaps one or two ideas. Challenge the beige and ubiquitous adjectives such as, 'approachable', 'courageous', 'dynamic' and focus on their differentiators: they are the facets of the brand which will deliver an increase in share of market; the others are a distraction.

The Model

This model is applicable both to clients, and agencies. I would suggest that clients use this to ensure that they are consistently making decisions for the benefit of the business, whereas agencies can use this to actively challenge clients and a tool to rationalise alternative approaches to briefs.

	Anthropomorphic Brand Owner	Brand Husbandry
Governance	Democratic	Autocratic
Expression	Mirror	Window
Culture	Monotheism	Polytheism
Behaviour	Supportive	Challenging

Conclusion

The requirement to differentiate brands in categories where there are often very few, if any distinguishable tangible differences has caused some brands to be developed with human characteristics. Research has proven that this is a powerful influencer of consumers to the benefit of the brand, with little thought to the effect that this has on the brand owners.

Anthropomorphising brands can lead its owners to treat the brand with kid gloves, encourage over sentimental treatment, and foster an over-protective attitude which can hamper effectiveness and growth in a climate where posting strong year on year financial growth is paramount.

In the future brands could benefit considerably from not naming their chicken.

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