

Research

Emotional Brands Bring the Bucks

By Alana Conner

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BY ALANA CONNER



FUNDRAISING

Emotional Brands Bring the Bucks

► On the morning of the 60th D-Day anniversary, two representatives of the Royal British Legion planted 1,520 “thank-you” flags on Sword Beach in Normandy, France. Each flag represented a British serviceman who died during the Allied invasion of Normandy. Nearby, another 90,000 flags bore heartfelt messages from British residents who had made a donation to the Royal British Legion—a charity that supports ex-service-people—to commemorate the event. As the day wore on, the tide washed the flags out to sea. “It was a very emotional appeal, and something only the Royal British Legion could do,” says Adrian Sargeant, the Robert F. Hartsook Professor of Fundraising at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. The fundraiser was also quite lucrative, raising a total of £1.93 mil-

lion (\$3.53 million) for the legion and recruiting some 70,000 new donors, reports the *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice* (vol. 9, no. 2).

Linking an organization to an emotion is one way that nonprofits can differentiate themselves from their competitors, find Sargeant and his colleagues in a recent study. “What drives giving is the extent to which your brand is distinctive,” he explains. “Having characteristics that will stimulate emotion—getting potential donors angry, say, or making them laugh—is one way to make your brand different.”

Sargeant points to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) as an especially effective nonprofit brand. “The name says it all. They’re angry and in your face and they convey that in all their communications.” The United Kingdom-based Dogs Trust is another emotionally unique charity. Its “deliberately schmaltzy” approach to fundraising includes birthday cards in which rescued dogs send “little kisses and paw prints and news about their

In Normandy, France, veteran Fred Matthews (center), his son, and his grandson help plant a Union Jack for each of the 1,520 British soldiers killed on D-Day.

chums and whatnot,” he says.

In their study of nonprofit brand personalities, Sargeant and his coauthors first asked people to rate how well each of 61 traits described a charity to which they had donated money. The charities in question were three animal welfare organizations, three child-oriented charities, and three nonprofits serving visually impaired people. The researchers then tracked how donors’ descriptions of the charities predicted the size of their last gift and their total number of gifts.

“Most organizations don’t understand the importance of a unique brand,” says Sargeant. “They see themselves as distinctive because they are caring, sympathetic, trustworthy, and all that other nonprofit goo.” But most other nonprofits share

these traits as well, his research finds. “Cuddly, warm nonprofit mush is not what’s going to make you different in the minds of your stakeholders.” ■

Adrian Sargeant, John B. Ford, and Jane Hudson, “Charity Brand Personality: The Relationship with Giving Behavior,” *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 37, September 2008.

PUBLIC POLICY

Universal Care Hurt Quebec’s Kids

► Many American parents, politicians, and nonprofits are agitating for universal child care. But a policy experiment north of the border suggests that opening daycare doors to everyone may do more harm than good. Six years after the Quebec provincial government began offering universal \$5-a-day child care, families were faring worse than before, find University of Toronto economist Michael Baker and his colleagues in a recent evaluation.

The researchers’ findings defy collective wisdom, which says that universal care is good for both children and parents. As Baker points out, however, most studies examine how child care helps at-risk children, such as kids living in single-parent families or poverty. “We know a lot less about how non-parental care affects not-at-risk children,” he notes.

Because the vast majority of children in non-parental care come from not-at-risk, two-parent families, the researchers focused on this population. Their findings were not sanguine: As universal child care spread

through the province, parents in Quebec reported that their children had more anxiety, aggressiveness, and infections, as well as worse motor and social development. And as some 15 percent more women entered the workforce, parents reported more hostile and ineffective parenting, maternal depression, and dissatisfaction with their spousal relationships.

For the study, the authors followed a nationally representative sample of Canadian children from 1996 to 2003. The longitudinal survey allowed researchers to track not only how the Quebecois children changed over time, but also how they compared to children in other provinces.

Although the study's findings may unnerve many working parents, "it's a high-quality study," says Susanna Loeb, an associate professor at Stanford University School of Education. "The researchers took advantage of a natural experiment—a sudden change that affected kids who might not ordinarily have gone into child care."

That sudden change was the Quebec Family Policy, which in 1997 began opening *centres de la petite enfance* (centers for young children, or CPEs). The program also certified home-based providers. By 2000, the program offered full-time care for children 5 years old and younger, as well as after-school care for children up to 12 years old—all for \$5 per day.

The introduction of cheap, regulated daycare accompanied a 30 percent increase in child care use. Despite this uptick in demand, however, the authors found no change in the educational credentials of providers. A fall in the quality of care is therefore not a likely explanation for children's deteriorating

outcomes, they write.

Instead, Baker suspects that the move from parental care to non-parental care didn't suit many of the kids. "Different children thrive in different environments," he says. "But in a universal system, there is one standard to choose from, aimed at some median voter." This one size did not seem to fit many not-at-risk children. The study was not large enough, however, for researchers to explore which children flourished and which ones faltered in the new system.

Until those data are available, Baker suggests that policy makers proceed with caution. "They must recognize that a lot of the evidence in favor of universal child care is for children at risk," he says. "We need better answers for children who are not at risk, because they are most of the people who will use the system." ■

Michael Baker, Jonathan Gruber, and Kevin Milligan, "Universal Childcare, Maternal Labor Supply, and Family Well-Being," *Journal of Political Economy*, 116, 2008.

GOVERNANCE

Education of the Board

► David Malone (not his real name) just quit the board of a start-up nonprofit. When he first signed on, Malone thought that he was joining "an organization of peers with deep expertise." He also understood that the board's sole requirement was to attend six meetings per year.

At his first board meeting, Malone volunteered for a project that drew on his extensive finance experience. "In my mind, I was coleading the project," he says. "But in the executive director's mind, she was leading the project and I was following." The project further

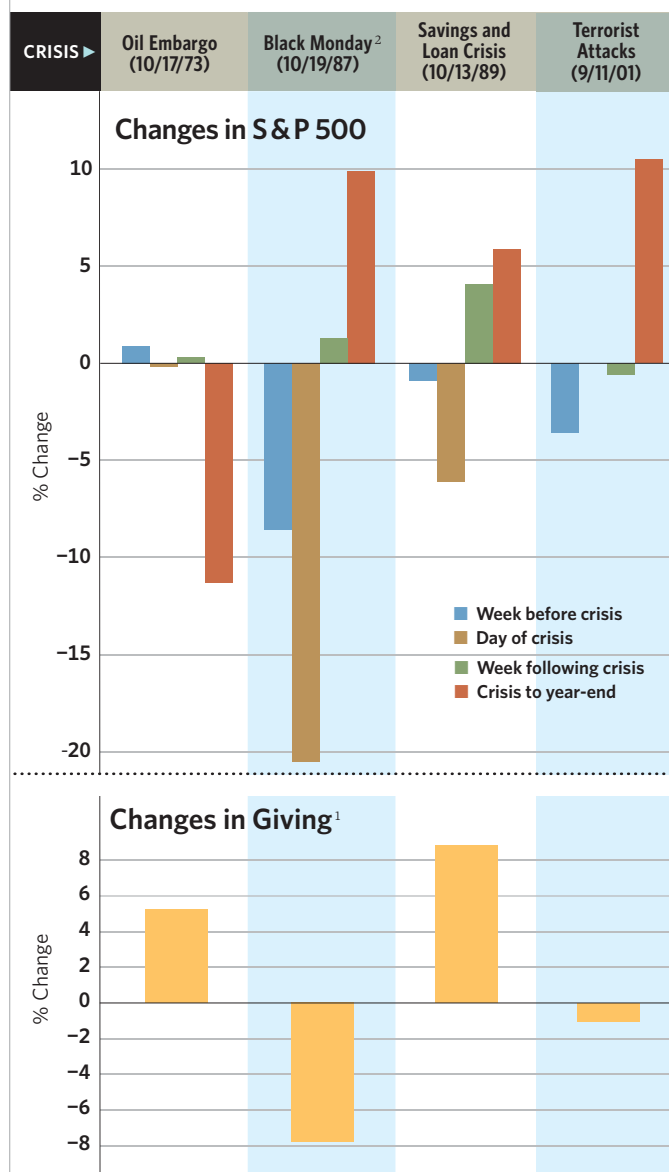
defied his expectations by requiring about 15 hours of project management per week. After the executive director overrode Malone's advice and asked him to donate even more time, he politely resigned.

"Neither of us understood what the other one expected," he says. "And that's no way to motivate volunteers."

Unclear expectations plague nonprofit boards, find Bradley E. Wright, an assistant professor

PHILANTHROPY

Giving in Chaos During economic crises, short-term market changes have little bearing on charitable giving for that year. In contrast, a good predictor of annual donations is the change in the S&P 500 from the end of the year before the crisis to the end of the year of the crisis.



1 Data reflect the percent change in annual itemized giving for the year of the event.

2 A 1986 law that reduced charitable deductions increased giving in 1986 and reduced giving in 1987, resulting in the large drop in giving for 1987.

Source: Data and analyses courtesy of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

of political science at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Judith L. Millesen, an associate professor of political science at Ohio University. Their survey of 219 nonprofit chief executives and 249 board members shows that, indeed, most board members receive neither training for nor feedback about their board activities. This lack of information leads to confusion about what, exactly, board members are supposed to do. And that role ambiguity, in turn, dampens members' commitment to the board.

The authors further show that even when chief executives know that board members do not understand their responsibilities, they are hesitant to offer education. "The board is essentially the boss of the executive director, and on top of that, the board is voluntary," explains Bradley. Many executive directors thus feel uncomfortable meting out feedback or asking board members to make an additional commitment to training. "They don't want to overextend their board members," he adds.

At the same time, "if board members feel like they're spinning their wheels, they're not likely to stay with the organization," Millesen notes. "But if they know what they're doing right, as well as how they can shift their efforts, they're likely not only to work harder, but also to get more fulfillment from their board service." To these ends, she recommends that nonprofit boards offer a formal orientation about board roles and processes, periodic updates from staff, and site visits, as well as self-assessments and formal performance appraisals. ■

Bradley E. Wright and Judith L. Millesen, "Nonprofit Board Role Ambiguity: Investigating Its Prevalence, Antecedents, and Consequences," *The American Review of Public Administration*, 38, 2008.



SOCIAL ACTION

The Ties That Mobilize

► The globe holds plenty of reasons to take to the streets, yet would-be protesters seldom act on their grievances. What stirs people out of their passivity and into action? After revisiting 182 previous studies of some 15,000 people, social psychologist Martijn van Zomeren and his colleagues find that people's social identities—that is, their attachment and commitment to their groups—are what drive them to protest.

"If you can build the sense among people that they are part of a group, then they will be more likely to act on behalf of that group," summarizes van Zomeren, an assistant professor of social psychology at VU University Amsterdam.

For their study, the authors use a statistical method called meta-analysis, which combines many previous findings into a single powerful study. The researchers find that the more

people identify with a group, the more likely they are to perceive injustice against that group, to believe their group can remedy the injustice, and to support acts of protest such as signing petitions and attending demonstrations.

Van Zomeren admits that his team is making a "very basic point: psychology matters," he says. "But other approaches don't always assume this." For example, economists, sociologists, and other social scientists argue that objective factors—a society's level of income inequality or nonprofits' access to resources, for instance—inspire social action. (For example, see "Brother Spared a Dime" in the fall 2005 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.)

Yet these objective factors are not enough to explain when people actually rally. To predict protests, "you need to know how people perceive the situation, how they perceive their group's efficacy, and, most important, how they perceive themselves" in relation to their group, van Zomeren says.

Rallying their female identity, Code Pink protesters give Bush the "pink slip" during the 2004 Republican National Convention, New York.

In social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the touchstone groups with which people identify. So to propel a movement forward, NGOs must strengthen their members' emotional ties to themselves and to the cause. Some movements do this better than others, notes van Zomeren. In the environmental movement, for example, "people know the issues, but they don't yet identify with any specific groups," he says. "For the environmental movement to get off the ground, people need to identify with specific organizations."

Van Zomeren suggests that organizations tell members how many people are ready to act. "You have to make movements about people," he says. ■

Martijn van Zomeren, Tom Postmes, and Russell Spears, "Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives," *Psychological Bulletin*, 134, 2008.

SUSTAINABILITY

The End of the World Is Nigh (Maybe)

► Life as we know it will come to a screeching halt within 200 years unless humans reduce their consumption, suggests a new research report. “If the current trends continue, there is a very realistic possibility that we will run out of resources,” explains Yogendra Shastri, the study’s lead author and a research engineer at the Vishwamitra Research Institute in Westmont, Ill. “There just won’t be enough food to eat.”

To study whether sustainability is even feasible, Shastri and colleagues first used known data to develop a computer model of how the world’s major systems—resources, plants, herbivores, carnivores, industries,



Killing forests like this swath of the Peruvian Amazon is hastening the extinction of humankind. To save our species, people must consume less.

and humans—interact with each other. They then played out different scenarios—a population explosion and continued growth in rates of per capita consumption—over the course of 200 years. (Their scenarios did not account for climate change.) They found that if consumption rates follow the same trajectories they have in the past, human beings will face extinction within 105 years.

“Human population growth does not affect sustainability so much, but if consumption increases, we are in trouble,” concludes coauthor Urmila Diwekar, president of Vishwamitra Research Institute and a professor of bioengineering at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

But as Heriberto Cabezas quickly points out, “these scenarios are not predictions of the future.” Cabezas, also a study author, is chief of the Sustainable Environments Branch of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. “We will get different technologies, policies, organizations, and public consciousness” that will change the parameters of the model. “A lot can change in 100 years. We barely had airplanes 100 years ago.”

The authors tested several such changes, including limiting herbivores’ consumption of plants and levying “discharge fees” (such as carbon taxes) on polluting industries. These small interventions sent ripples throughout the model—increasing prices for some resources, decreasing demand for others, reducing stress on some sensitive systems—that ex-

tended the longevity of our species by up to 30 years. The more of these interventions the better, the data suggest. “Reaching sustainability is going to take a lot of strategies and a lot of people,” says Cabezas. “There is no magic bullet.”

In the meantime, “the No. 1 priority is to reduce consumption of everything, especially plant-based resources,” says Shastri. In other research, he finds that reducing deforestation and converting agricultural land to forest land can forestall a catastrophe for 25 to 30 years. Conversely, “if you divert plant resources to biofuels, you’ll encounter a food crisis,” he says, as disruptions in plant resources ricochet throughout other ecological and economic systems.

“I can tell you what I do,” offers Cabezas: “I am installing low-energy bulbs in my house. I improved [its] insulation. I take the bus. I ask my children to take five-minute showers. I think twice before buying something that I may not need. I use a high-efficiency clothes washer. Over time,” he says, “these little things add up.” ■

Yogendra Shastri, Urmila Diwekar, Heriberto Cabezas, and James Williamson, “Is Sustainability Achievable? Exploring the Limits of Sustainability with Model Systems,” *Environmental Science & Technology*, 42, 2008.

LEADERSHIP

Objects of Power

► “Karl Marx really nailed it,” says Deborah H. Gruenfeld, a professor of leadership and organizational behavior at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. The father of communism described how employers in capitalistic societies value workers solely on the basis of their ability to create wealth,

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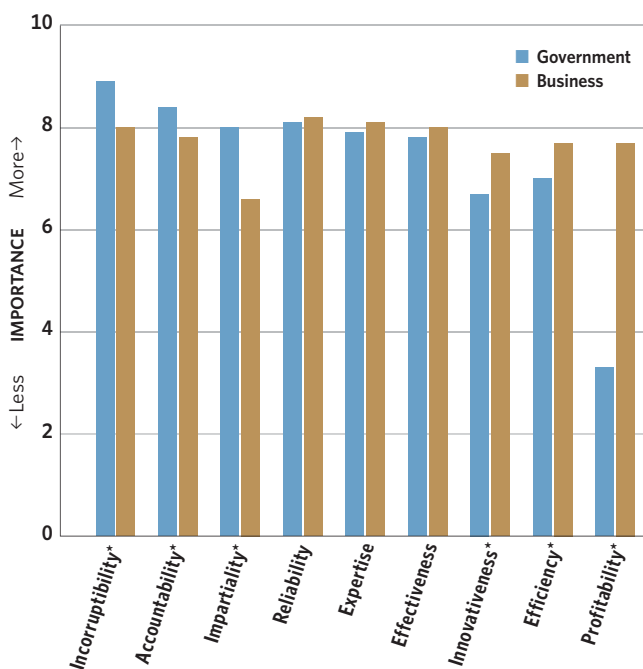
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Different Sectors, Similar Values

Government and business managers share a common core of values—at least in the Netherlands. And even where they diverge, their differences aren't so stark, finds a Dutch survey of 231 public sector managers and 151 private sector managers. "There might be even more core values in the United States, because government started becoming more like business in the 19th century," says Zeger van der Wal, the study's lead author and an assistant professor in the department of public administration and organization science at VU University Amsterdam. "Government cooperating with business is more of a new thing in the Netherlands."

Zeger van der Wal and Leo Huberts, "Value Solidity in Government and Business," *The American Review of Public Administration*, 38, 2008.



*Government and business leaders significantly differed in how much they valued this quality.

and not on the basis of their kindness, morality, and other human qualities.

Adding grist to Marx's mill, Gruenfeld and her colleagues recently published research showing that power often makes people objectify others—that is, treat others as means to ends, rather than as ends unto themselves. Powerful people also "scan the landscape looking for people who can be helpful or useful for their own goals," she says. "They are less prone to value a relationship for the sake

of the relationship."

The authors of the study first compared executives to MBA students and discovered that the executives had a stronger tendency to view their relationships as instruments for their personal success. The researchers then manipulated participants' feelings of having more or less power, as well as their work, sexual, and social goals. Across five experiments, they found that when participants felt powerful, they preferred to be with people who could advance their

goals—even if these people weren't very nice.

"There is a knee-jerk reaction that objectification is bad," says Gruenfeld. "But in fact, it's what makes organizations work. The ability to engage other people in accomplishing your objectives is what you have to do if you are going to have an impact," whether that impact is "building your own empire or trying to save the world," she says. "It's a very American thing to want to make power differences go away. I don't think it's doable, and I don't think it would be as good as we fantasize it would be."

At the same time, objectification does do damage. "Subordinates sometimes end up having to play along with the high-power person's goals and intentions, even when they are not in [the subordinate's] best interest," Gruenfeld notes. And as Marx observed some 150 years ago, "objectification by people in power leads low-power people to be alienated from themselves," she says. "They start thinking of themselves in terms of what they can do for other people," rather than in terms of what they want for themselves.

Underlings do have recourse, however. "You can have straightforward, explicit conversations about your own goals in the relationship [with the person in power]," says Gruenfeld. She acknowledges, however, that initiating these conversations "is all the more difficult for low-power people." For their part, organizations should try to curb their leaders' less egalitarian tendencies by reminding them of their responsibilities to their subordinates, the authors write. ■

Deborah H. Gruenfeld, M. Ena Inesi, Joe C. Magee, and Adam D. Galinsky, "Power and the Objectification of Social Targets," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 2008.

We Hate Heroes

► After a month of anguished indecision, Joseph Darby, a U.S. military policeman stationed at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, sent Army authorities photographs of his colleagues torturing prisoners. For his act of heroism, he received so many death threats that he had to live in protective military custody at an undisclosed location.

Darby is no exception, shows a recent research article. "We don't necessarily like people who do the right thing," says Benoît Monin, an associate professor of organizational behavior at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and the report's lead author. "They call into question our own lack of moral entrepreneurship."

In one of his studies, for example, undergraduate participants who completed a racist task disliked a "moral rebel"—a person who refused to complete the task on moral grounds—more than a person who, like them, had gone along with the study. Yet participants who merely observed the experiment, but were not asked to complete it, liked the rebel more. "Observers will rate the rebel as a more moral person, but as soon as you set foot into the situation, you like the moral rebel less," Monin explains. A subsequent study showed that these ireful participants expected the moral rebel to reject them for their moral lassitude. In other words, they viewed the rebels not as righteous, but as self-righteous.

As a result, "people should expect a backlash when taking moral stances," concludes Monin. "That's true of individ-

uals, as well as of organizations. If one organization chooses to be more ethical, other organizations may take it as an implicit reproach, as an accusation.”

And so, “when you take a moral action, think twice about sharing it with others,” Monin recommends. “It’s like that Bible passage: [‘When you give to the poor] do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.’” He also suggests not framing ethical steps in ethical terms. “People want to do good, but it’s not cool to say so,” he says. Rather, he and other researchers find that couching scruples as self-interest can make the high road more appealing. (See, for example, “From the Bottom Line of Our Hearts” in the summer 2007 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.)

Finally, “if you want to take a

moral stance, you may want to reveal that you aren’t perfect yourself, so that you don’t sound like you’re putting yourself on a pedestal,” says Monin. “Then reveal the steps you took to come to your conclusion.” ■

Benoît Monin, Pamela J. Sawyer, and Matthew J. Marquez, “The Rejection of Moral Rebels: Resenting Those Who Do the Right Thing,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 2008.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Starting Up Women

► Hidden inside most people’s minds is the belief that Warren and Bill should start businesses, but Oprah and Martha should not. This subtle, yet culture-wide association between maleness and entrepreneurship discourages women from launching their own start-ups, research shows.



Oprah Winfrey opens her Leadership Academy for Girls in Johannesburg. Stereotypes scare many women away from entrepreneurship.

Yet a new psychological study finds that “we can encourage more women to open businesses just by changing the way we talk about entrepreneurship,” says Vishal K. Gupta, an assistant professor at the Binghamton University School of Management and the study’s lead author. “You don’t have to do anything dramatic. Just make sure that the message you are sending is that entrepreneurship is gender neutral.”

For the study, Gupta and colleagues asked 469 undergraduate business students to read one of several articles about the qualities of successful entrepreneurs. In the control condition, the participants read a story that made no mention of gender. In the female stereotype condition, they discovered that humble, social, and caring people make good entrepreneurs. And in the gender-neutral condition, they learned that successful entrepreneurs show characteristics of both men and women, such as being creative, well-informed, and generous.

The researchers found that for women, entrepreneurial aspirations were highest after reading the gender-neutral story, which explicitly affirmed that gender does not matter in entrepreneurship. In contrast, women in the gender-free control

condition had weaker intentions. “Even when you don’t say anything about gender, the first connection people make in their heads is with masculine characteristics,” Gupta explains. Women in the female stereotype condition had similarly lukewarm ambitions: “It may be that redefinition of a masculine stereotype as feminine is only possible when the alternative stereotype actually exists in society,” the authors write.

Although popular culture overwhelmingly depicts entrepreneurs as aggressive, risk-taking men, “it’s a myth that stereotypically male characteristics make you succeed,” says Gupta. To counteract these powerful messages, “we need to reach kids when they’re young and tell them that entrepreneurship is a good profession that men and women can do equally well. By the time they reach 19 or 20,” he adds, “it becomes more difficult to change their ideas about who can be an entrepreneur.” ■

Vishal K. Gupta, Daniel B. Turban, and Nachiket M. Bhawe, “The Effect of Gender Stereotype Activation on Entrepreneurial Intentions,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 2008.

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