WBA

WHOLE BRAND THINKING

So, what happens and what do we learn when we apply the Whole Brain Model to the task of deconstructing a brand?

Well, we get a holistic understanding of how people will see and interact with that brand. We see all the different perspectives through which customers and clients might make judgements and evaluations. We’ll also see how people who work on the brand think and feel about it and gain a clearer understanding of how we can build a highly motivated culture around them.

So, let’s go through the process.

For the sake of having an example I know inside out, I’m going to use our own company as an illustration of the Whole Brand Model.

biG, as you’ll see, is an acronym of Brand, Innovation and Growth and was founded about a decade ago by myself and Marketing Director Mike Beckerleg who is also a co-presenter on this course.

(Insert logo and build to show endline)

There’s a standard procedure when using the Herrmann model, a protocol that requires you to start in the Blue, move to the Green, then the Red and finally to the Yellow. However, for the purposes of Branding, we have found it is easier to start in the Green, particularly if you are working in a team as you’ll find this is the quadrant that everyone will know well.

So here goes:

The Green Quadrant is where we think in terms of systems and process. The favourite question from people who prefer this quadrant is ‘How?’ How does this work? How do we operate? The Green Quadrant is all about Role and Function. It asks ‘How does our product or process bring value to the market, to our customers and clients?’

So, in the case of biG, we’d populate the Green Quadrant like this:

(Insert build of Green Quadrant attributes)

We’d say we have created a unique set of applications of Whole Brain Thinking and that these programs enable us to help our clients develop Brand and Marketing Strategies that can be encapsulated on a single page.

With the same underlying methodology, we run internal branding and innovation workshops, and we facilitate training and coaching sessions. Given our diverse backgrounds in marketing, we also consult on media strategy and creative execution.

That, in a nutshell, or a green square is ‘How’ we operate.

A Green Quadrant thinker is going to find this a fairly comprehensible explanation of how we work.

But a Blue Quadrant thinker is going to come at it from a different angle.

Of course, they’ll want to know how we operate. But their tendency to analyse and look for facts and data will lead them to question our credibility. Easy for us to make claims. But what evidence backs it up? So, in the Blue Quadrant we need to satisfy their need for proof. This Quadrant needs to give precise details constitute our Source of Authority.

So, we’d populate the Blue Quadrant like this:

(Insert build of Blue Quadrant attributes)

In answer to the questions ‘What’ makes you credible, we’d talk about what we like to call our ‘Ex-Factor’:

In this team of just three people, we have:

An ex-Marketing Director from Sony, Vodafone and Seiko, an ex-CEO from Ikon Media, an ex-Creative Director from one of the world’s largest agencies, an ex-Managing Director of an International PR firm, an ex-Chairman of Australia’s Agency of the Year, and ex-Account Director of Australia’s #1 advertiser.

To that we’d add the breadth of experience across categories, the publication of three books internationally, advertising awards and the recommendation of our clients.

All of this is Blue Quadrant evidence, hard facts that bear analysis.

So, put the Green and Blue together and you have a left-brain picture of what we do.

If we now scoot down through the corpus callosum, that nerve channel that connects the hemispheres, and go into the right brain we can now look at the Yellow Quadrant.

People with this thinking preference are going to prioritise different attributes to those who favour the Green or Blue quadrants.

Yellow Quadrant thinkers are going to be looking for differentiation. Unlike the Green Quadrant, they don’t value conformity or predictability that highly. They’re more fixated on uniqueness and the future, as in “Why is it different to all the other companies in this category?” And, “Where is it going, how will this develop and remain relevant?”

So, for those Yellow Quadrant thinkers we’d say:

(Insert build of Yellow Quadrant attributes)

We have a unique methodology and, thanks to our collaboration with the Herrmann organisation, we have bespoke IP.

We can talk about our depth and range of experience which would be hard if not impossible to find in boutique consultancy. And we could make much the same claim for our range of services.

And, as a point of difference, we talk about the many different remuneration models on which we are prepared to work – all the way from retainer to sweat equity.

From a future perspective, we’re in the process of creating new marketing and branding methods based on the Whole Brain Model and we’re currently developing on-line tools, such as this one, to help people who work in the category.

Which brings us to the last filter through which we might view the biG brand.

The Red Quadrant.

People with a Red Quadrant preference are the ones who are most inclined to see the brand in human terms. These people will want to understand the nature of the relationship they will have with the brand, they’ll want to understand its character and values so that they can anticipate its behaviour. They’ll want to understand how they will identify with the brand.

To them, we’d say:

We’re hard-working, collaborative team players. We build egalitarian relationships.

While we’re highly disciplined or, as it says here, ‘intellectually rigorous’, we’re also curious and open-minded, always prepared to try a new approach. And while we value process, we’re creative, experimental, entrepreneurial.

And, for those people-people in the Red Quadrant, we appreciate the importance of being friendly, unpretentious and down to earth.

So, now we have all four quadrants populated.

You’ll remember that, in the previous module on the HBDI, we said that research shows that the population as a whole is fairly evenly divided between the quadrants. About a quarter in each.

So, by ensuring we have found relevant claims to make in each quadrant, we can be sure that our pitch has appeal to 100% of those who might choose to investigate us.

Whole Brain Thinking is ensuring that our Whole Brand has relevance.

But this is often not the case.

We’ve seen brands, even whole categories, that limit their appeal by expressing their claims to just one or two quadrants.

Banking is one of the most notable villains in this respect.

How often have you seen a newspaper ad that has a massive number and a percentage sign beside it? 9% return on your investment blah blah blah.

This ad works fine for bankers because the numbers are all important to them. They judge performance entirely by the numbers.

But think about the audience for a moment. Money is one of the most emotional issues in their lives. More sleep is lost, more arguments are started over money-worries than pretty much anything else.

For bankers, money is a blue quadrant concern. For clients and investors, it often lives in the diametrically opposed red quadrant.

For a bank to engage its customers fully, it needs a whole brain approach. It needs to be a Whole Brand, not just a reflection of the people who work there.

So, we’ve looked at how we can deconstruct a brand into four thinking preferences to create a broad, holistic understanding and appeal.

In the next module, we’ll look at how we can expand on this model and understand how to deepen relationships with target consumers.

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