



**‘Vision without action is hallucination.’ Benjamin Franklin**

Following through with ideas is as important as having them in the first place so they don’t just become conversation fodder for cocktail parties (‘I had this great idea once. You should have seen the size of it. Huh ... wonder whatever happened to it ...?’). Most great ideas only saw the light of day as a result of the tireless perseverance of an individual or group of dedicated people, each of whom had battled against all odds. In fact, it takes blood, sweat and tears (and luckily there are washing powders that will get rid of even the toughest of stains). Inventor James Dyson built 5,127 prototypes of his bagless vacuum cleaner, the Dual Cyclone, before he perfected his design, yet all the major vacuum cleaner manufacturers who were making too much money selling vacuum cleaner bags rejected it. Hoover Vice-President, Mike Rutter, later said on national television, ‘I do regret that Hoover as a company did not take the product technology off Dyson; it would have lain on the shelf and not been used.’<sup>1</sup>

**Having conviction in the idea is vital.** Even if it’s not perfect yet, belief in it will have an effect on others who might realise it’s an unstoppable train that they should get on, or miss and lose out on a big opportunity. Sometimes you just need to take a deep breath, look supremely confident, and go for it. Henry Ford said, ‘If you think you can, or if you think you can’t, you’re right.’ Burt Rutan, who ran the team that developed the Voyager spacecraft, said, ‘Confidence in nonsense is required.’<sup>2</sup> And it’s said by people who have worked with Apple co-founder Steve Jobs that he has a

<sup>1</sup>[www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/supportservices/2795244/James-Dyson-the-vacuum-dreamer.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/supportservices/2795244/James-Dyson-the-vacuum-dreamer.html)

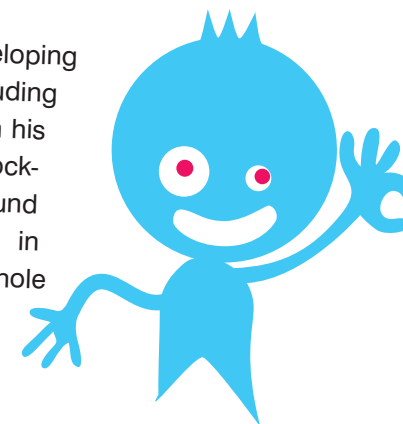
<sup>2</sup>‘The Weird Rules of Creativity’, Robert Sutton, *Harvard Business Review*, September 2001.

‘reality distortion field’, or a spell that he casts on those around him, convincing them of the success of an idea. Not that any of what Steve Jobs does is nonsense; it’s just that he just has an amazing knack for selling the ideas he likes.

**Christian Audigier, who runs his own billion-dollar clothing empire, says in his wonderful French accent that, ‘You need to insist to exist. If you don’t insist, you’re not going to exist.’**

Someone can close a door – this one doesn’t want you – you can come back a week later or a month later and one day this door’s going to open for you, you know.’ His success with Von Dutch gave him his moment in the spotlight, his 15 minutes of fame, but he still had to work incredibly hard to make inroads with his own venture,<sup>3</sup> Ed Hardy. He had to prove to the retailers that he could deliver. To launch the brand to them he put on his own trade show in Las Vegas that competed head-on with MAGIC, traditionally the largest gathering of men’s fashion-buyers in the US. His show was called *When I Move, You Move*. It was an expensive and audacious ploy that got the attention of the whole fashion industry – something that just having a booth at MAGIC would never have done. The next year the organisers of MAGIC came to Christian asking him to collaborate with them. He moved and they moved.

In addition to Ed Hardy, Christian Audigier is developing other fashion projects that break the mould, including the high-end casualwear label Crystal Rock with his daughter and, with Dave, Rock Fabulous, a rock-and-roll lifestyle brand. When Business Playground interviewed Christian he had recently been in conversations with Madonna about creating a whole fashion empire around the Madonna brand.



<sup>3</sup>He was head designer at Von Dutch, but it was owned by Tonny Sorensen.