

I have to be honest, I watch fox news more often than any of the other cable news nets. I watch CNN next , then MSNBC. So lets get that out of the way.

I watched Fox and MSNBC during the election cycle because it told me the worst possible elements that could be found about President Obama. and Governor Romney. Both networks work so hard at branding every possible negative issue about the other side that it's very interesting to look at it as an exercise in branding and marketing. Neither truly was reporting the news. They were telling us how they believed a negative brand could be built. And not only did they tell us how negative the other brand was, they were relentless in trying to create confirmation of that negative brand by bringing in "experts" to confirm their brand bias.

You know who both networks reminded me of ? All of their shows, with the exception of Bill O'Reilly reminded me of the old Coast to Coast with Art Bell radio show. Every night Art Bell would bring in what were essentially crackpots talking about life on mars, alien abductions (accept for the true ones of course :), Black Helicopter operations , pretty much crazy thinking across the board. What made Art Bell masterful was that he interviewed them and talked to them like there was absolutely no doubt in his and his listeners mind that everything the interviewee said was true. Of course there is life on mars. Of course there are aliens living among us who can shift change to different animals. Of course the government has been working with Planet X for years . Callers would call in and give their personal experiences with all the above. He confirmed for his listeners, callers and the crackpots he interviewed that it was all true. Just because Art Bell made you believe he believed it was true. Whether or not he actually did, I have no idea. His show had a huge radio audience nationwide.

Both MSNBC and FOx News do the same thing with their branding efforts. No matter what the story, true or not, they were going to pull out every stop to make you think its true. Facts be damned. Gov Romney lies about everything. Here are 3 people to confirm it. President Obama is running the dirtiest campaign ever, here are 3 people to confirm it. For every attempt to create a negative brand association for the other side, there were 3 experts confirming it multiple times a day.

When we got to the last week before the election, I noticed a subtle change in the branding of this election by Fox. Maybe MSNBC did it and I just didn't see it. But Fox started branding hard the notion that Romney had all the momentum and was on his way to a win. Dick Morris predicted a landslide over and over. Karl Rove would tell stories about Romney momentum and Obama being on the run. Which ever poll showed Romney in the best light, that was the focus. Charles Krauthammer was relentless in talking about the imminent disaster for Obama and win for Romney. It seemed to me in hindsight that only Bill O'Reilly , (who's show I like and who is a master of asking questions that are pre -spun so that the answers fit his needs, and dis engaging when he knows he is beat, like he says, "Its my show. I can do what I want"), and Chris Wallace really tried to temper the branding blitz.( I like Chris as well. He asked questions the others seemed afraid to ask). Outside of these two, Fox was relentless in sending the message that a Romney win was imminent. There was no doubt about it and if you didn't believe it , it was because you either followed the mainstream media too much or you were just stupid.

Like Art Bell, Fox made you believe that a Romney win was all but assured. In the last couple days it was all they focused on. We got this. Here is the proof. Here are people you trust telling you that its the truth.

But Fox had two huge problems. The first was that there audience was far, far bigger than MSNBC or the other networks. They were the biggest during the debates. They were the biggest time and again leading up to election day. You would think that was great for Governor Romney. Right ?

Wrong.

The 2nd huge problem for Fox and as a result Governor Romney is that they didn't know the Dancing with the Stars bottom two principle. You would think that when one of the couples on DWTS is in the bottom two, thats a horrible sign. It must mean they are close to elimination. Not for couples with a large voting base. When you have a large voting base and find yourself in the bottom two, your voting base recognizes that you are at risk of losing. Because they want you to stay on the show and voting counts as much as the dancing, they will step up and vote and keep you on the show until you find yourself up against couples that have a bigger voting base than you.

So what does this have to do with Fox and the Presidential election ?

I truly believe that supporters of Romney that watched Fox News thought it was a no brainer and that Gov Romney would win. Living in Texas I was around a lot of Romney supporters on Tuesday night who had no doubt that Gov Romney would win. None.

On the flipside, MSNBC doesn't have the audience or do as good a job at branding issues as Fox News. Fox News viewers take to hear what MSNBC viewers don't. When President Obama's team reached out to minorities , women and others who felt threatened, it was easy to convey to them that they were the underdog. That no one thinks they can win. That they could make a difference.

And they did.