

Brand-building: 3D vision and Buddhist mantras

By  Mike Freedman

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Building a business and a brand is like firing a rocket at the moon. You don't aim at the moon, but where it will be by the time the rocket arrives. A brand takes years to grow, while the marketplace is never static and what seems an opportunity now can be an overtraded cul-de-sac within a few years.

While you can mathematically predict the future position of the moon, gauging the mindspace of tomorrow's consumer is an imperfect art.

However, a vision of the future is a compass that guides you.

Building 3D vision

“*Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion.*” - Jack Welch. ”



When we facilitate a vision for a company, a government department or a city, we apply the 3D test to the outcome: does the vision have a sense of direction, discovery and destiny?

Direction eliminates the myriad alternatives that lead to the desert syndrome - chasing mirages and stumbling around in circles.

Discovery stimulates personal growth and a desire, through curiosity, to take the next step.

Destiny is the inspiration to continue along the long, hard road.

A 3D vision is not a long, involved document; on the contrary, it must be disarmingly simple: Google - organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

A Buddhist monk imparted this mantra:

- What did I learn today?
- What did I give today?

Discovery is occasionally is a big aha moment but, most often, it is a process of incremental insights.

In Branding 101, we are taught that all brands need positioning - a place in the consumer's mind. However, minds change.

Brands are organic, growing or decaying, adapting to new mindsets and environments. Together with positioning, consider directioning - where you've been matters less than where you are going.

Stock market tip

Here's a stock market tip. Ask some of your acquaintances on the corporate ladder what sort of year they had had. If you receive the same old, same old response, sell. If you hear "I learnt a lot of new things", be tempted to buy.

Innovation is important for a good customer and is vital for a good employee. Discovery and self-growth have lifted us from the primordial swamp to worlds beyond Earth.

An organisational vision that does not cascade to personal achievement is dead in the water - the status quo is a crutch for timorous minds. Instead of fearing new things, we should fear the old.

We all dream of making a mark on the world. Bold visions stretch us and promise achievement.

Destiny is more than market share and profit; it is also about making the world a better place.

“ *“Most people are not really free. They are confined by the niche in the world that they carve out for themselves. They limit themselves to fewer possibilities by the narrowness of their vision.”* - VS Naipaul ”

ABOUT MIKE FREEDMAN

Mike Freedman, a doyen of the advertising and branding community, is founder of Freedthinkers (www.freedthinkers.com) which has offices in Johannesburg (at Turbine Hall in Newtown) and Cape Town. He was a prominent copywriter at some of the big ad agencies in London and here before helping form ad agency Freedman and Rossi, and then Freedthinkers. They helped Johannesburg create its branding "A World Class African City" and the energies and strategies that flowed from that including the development of Newtown, Constitutional Hill, etc... Other major clients include Discovery, healthbridge, FOCit, Absa, MultiChoice, Coca-Cola and Nando's. Contact Mike at mike@freedthinkers.com

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