

'Consumer centricity' and raids of grey

How fortunate we are to live in high-tech times. Every bit of information that has ever existed, swelling exponentially second by second, available to anyone, anywhere at any time, right at your fingertips.

 By [Gavin Mills](#) 21 Feb 2013

Problems which before took days, months, even years, are now solved in seconds. Statistical analysis and number crunching which only decades ago were beyond the scope of comprehension, are now within the grasp of the common man.

Ironically, due to these same technological capabilities, our world is being invaded by grey - and brands, once shining icons on our life scapes, are being eroded almost to the ranks of commodities.

Before, it was all about the brand - and we created heroes. Now, it's all about the consumer, and they have responded predictably - like spoiled kids with weak parents. They no longer aspire to the worlds we create, they simply see reflection of the worlds they know...with brands playing prostitute.

Modern research and analysis tell us exactly who target markets are, how they act, what they like, where they hang out, what they aspire to - and all the players in each segment have the same knowledge! It's no wonder so many competing brands look the same - and no wonder very few have unique character, distinction, personality, individuality and selling proposition.

The unpredictable

But human beings don't work like that. Granted most have general tastes in general things, but there are also things we respond to that no one can predict. If stats and probabilities were all it was about, Elton John would not have been a rock star, Seth Godin wouldn't have been a movie star, and Mahatma Gandhi would certainly not have been a world leader!

We are enticed and intrigued by complex dreams, simple truths, high ideals and big ideas. Pander to my tantrums and I will not respect you, tell me why you are great and fill my head with great things and I will follow you into battle.

Marketing is not only about research, strategy, counting clicks and writing off percentages. It is also about the message - dialogue - the magic. I judge an encounter not by time, place, duration, or even the words. It's about the warm feeling one gets when the experience is truly enriching.

I long for the day once more when one car leads the pack, one airline flies higher, one soft drink really sparkles more, and computers? Nah. Apple have got it right - although maybe conceding ground.

Obviously we need to provide exceptional customer service, support and all the rest, but let's stop dancing only to the tune of the herd. Let's ignite the fires of imagination and inspire through the values for which we stand. Give brands back their personalities and opinions. Bring on the heroes, and the flocks will follow.

ABOUT GAVIN MILLS

Gavin Mills is the MD of Don't Forget George Events, (www.dontforgetgeorge.co.za), a specialist event production and communications company launched in 1998. He is as passionate about life as he is about his business, and believes it is up to voices of reason in a turbulent world, to help craft our future, not just accept it. Contact Gavin on tel +27 (0)11 791 3308, or gavin@dontforgetgeorge.co.za and follow @Gavinmills on Twitter. [View my profile and articles...](#)