



THE BEST OF 2013

It has been quite a year! There have been scandals at the Loeries, scandals at Nkandla, and the passing of South Africa's greatest hero - and our most successful brand of all time - Nelson Mandela.

Our work has taken us all around the world this year, running projects from China to the US, Poland to Russia. We've embarked on such exciting work with our pan-African clients that we've opened an office in Kenya. And we launched our [white paper series](#) this year, with the goal of exploring, unpacking and offering practical advice in the areas we believe are key to building resilient, powerful brands in South Africa today.

Thank you for joining us on the journey this year. I hope we've managed to inspire you and give you food for thought. As our Ask-Y newsletter approaches its first birthday, I thought I'd pull out some of the best articles we produced this year - as voted by you, in those all-revealing click-through rates (yes, we see everything).

Have an excellent December break, and we'll see you in 2014.

All the best,
Al

FEATURED ARTICLES



INNOVATION INSIDE THE BOX BY HONORE GASA

3 October 2013

While working as part of a specialist team of innovators for a multinational FMCG company, Honore realised that most ideation sessions spit out the same ideas over and over again. **Encouraging participants to think 'outside of the box' often leads to failure.**

Having a clearly defined problem with clear parameters forces people to engage in real problem-solving. In this article, Honore unpacks some of the **neurological reasons for our resistance to innovate**, and outlines a method that generates truly new thinking.

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ACTING FROM PURPOSE IS GOOD BUSINESS BY DHATCHANI CHRISTIAN

25 February 2013

Marketers talk so much about brand engagement, but there is no possible way to engage consumers if you are not authentic. Consumers can spot inauthentic brands a mile off, and will certainly never form an emotional bond of trust, affinity or loyalty with them. In building a connection with consumers, it's important to remember that **what your brand does is more important than what it says** - it is the gestures and actions it takes that contribute to how it is perceived in the world.

These actions and gestures need to be guided by something coherent and meaningful. **It is no longer enough to have a good brand positioning; brands need to have a clear purpose.** Dhatchani outlines four simple steps to get your brand on track to succeed in this new world of transparency and authenticity.

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FROM THE BLOG



TURBULENT SA: CAN CONSUMERS HELP ACHIEVE SOCIAL GOOD?



Posted by: **Al Mackay** on 14 January 2013
Reading time: 1 min

South Africa is a tumultuous place to live, and many of us feel powerless to make our country more stable, equitable and healthy. We don't understand the power that we wield in consumer-facing industries. In these industries, consumer choice determines the success or failure of the players. Ethical consumerism isn't just about protecting the planet or 'buying green' - it means researching how the brands we love treat their workers. It means buying Fairtrade-certified wine, choosing local designers or switching to generous brands that work to improve communities. We have a lot of power to change South Africa, through our democratic institutions, but also through every little purchase decision.

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VERNACULAR ADVERTISING: UNDER-USED, BUT VALUABLE FOR BRANDS



Posted by: **Mondli Nhlapo** on 28 May 2013
Reading time: 2 mins

In a country as linguistically diverse as ours, it's no wonder that most brands shy away from vernacular languages. It adds enormous complexity when there are multiple languages spoken in each customer segment. But the most convenient path is not necessarily the most effective. Mandela put it well when he said, **"if you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."** Vernacular communication has enormous potential to connect emotionally with customers, and that adds huge value to brands.

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FEATURED WORK: RAND REFINERY



Once, South Africa was the largest producer of gold in the world and there wasn't much need for producers to think about branding. But by 2004, competitive advantage was eroding rapidly.

Yellowwood helped re-position Rand Refinery for growth. We delivered market insights, redesigned their corporate identity and crafted go-to-market, ingredient branding, and internal brand engagement strategies to take the brand from idea to operational excellence.

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ANDY RICE
CHAIRMAN & FOUNDER

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