

[Bradders]

MAGAZINE

A SMART
STRATEGY IS
EXPLAINED IN
LESS THAN 15
WORDS

THE CALL
FOR NEW
LEADERSHIP

NEEDS
MAKE US
MORE
CREATIVE

THE **BRANDING**
TIME TUNNEL

CRISTIAN
SARACCO

FOUNDING PARTNER OF ALLEGRO 234



.Allegro²³⁴

In order to move forward, any human practice inexorably relies on constantly increasing its knowledge base. Branding is obviously no exception.

Thus, Branders Magazine is a lighthouse that enlightens and guides the future of branding through articles coming from different latitudes, based on diverse concepts and experiences, challenging in many cases the pre-established, making us think and inviting us to draw our own conclusions. This goes beyond the merely informative and turns ideas into a knowledge base.

What follows are those contributions we have been making over the years. It is a way of thinking, acting, and saying certain things; in some cases, with a strong dose of irreverence, although in all cases, striving to create real value through our beliefs.

We are confident in what we say, and we are conscious that this doesn't necessarily make us right. Knowledge is born out of the conclusions that each person will draw from this reading.

In a sense, what follows aims to build a story that goes from strategic to operational aspects of branding, including its creation and the skills needed to be successful in the face of the challenges that arise from the constant transformation and demand for growth of businesses and brands. Even though it is a strong conceptual structure, you will discover throughout the reading, the practicality in the application of the different ideas that are threaded together one after the other.

While we take this opportunity to explicitly thank the hard work done by the Branders Magazine team, we'd also like to invite those who read these few lines to visit its website, and delve into what other amazing authors have written and also listen to a good number of interviews, both of which are part of what makes this great publication what truly is it today.

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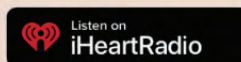
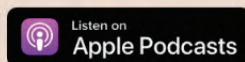
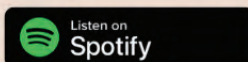
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KNOWLEDGE DISCOVER BRANDING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE CREATIVITY STRATEGY



Branding is a concept that has long been underused and misunderstood. Often, it is confused with design, marketing, or communications. While these elements are interconnected, they are not synonymous. Each has its own processes, all working toward the same goal: creating a powerful brand.

This is the very reason Branders Magazine was founded—to help brands, founders, brand managers and strategists gain a deeper understanding of branding and its importance in establishing an authentic brand.

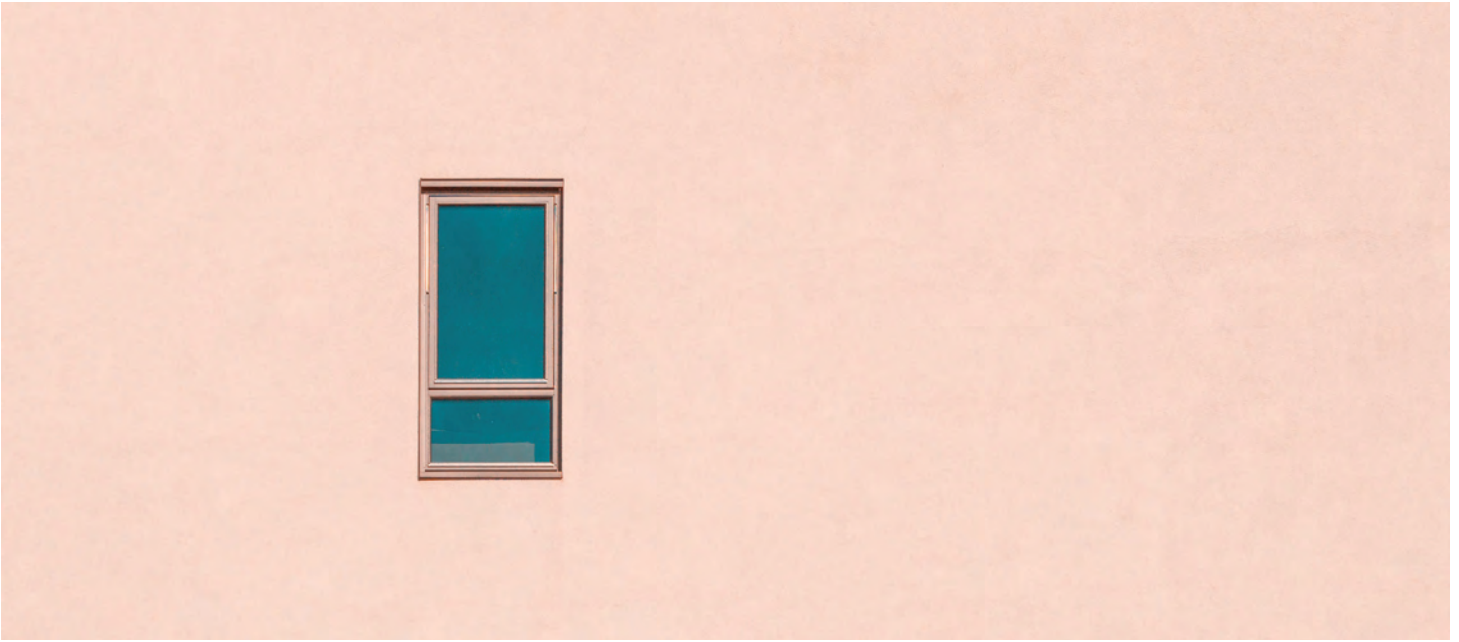
Our mission at Branders Magazine has always been to share valuable knowledge and discover branding experts worldwide, evangelising strategists about the importance of branding, and providing a global perspective on branding and its numerous components. One key objective of branding is to build connections with audiences, and with this vision in mind, we have always sought to establish meaningful relationships with branding professionals globally.

This journey led us to Cristian Saracco, one of the finest branding global experts in the field. His vision and expertise have been invaluable not only to Branders Magazine but to the entire industry. This incredible book, a compilation of his articles and editorial contributions over the years is a testament to his profound impact.

Each piece in this book is a masterpiece that will guide you in working with your brand and achieving your goals of connecting with your audience.

Thank you, Cristian Saracco, for creating this book and allowing me to be part of this fantastic project!

Luis Vergara
Founder & CEO, Branders Magazine



A Smart Strategy Is Explained in Less Than 15 Words

While it is a truism that the analysis and description of business and brand strategies need a substantial volume of written words and figures, the key lies in the fact that it can be explained briefly, simply, clearly, smartly, and executively. If you can't do this, I'd say "Houston, we have a problem!"

These are difficult times we are living through, times that we don't yet know how will be remembered, whether we will be part of the era of the technological quantum leap or the era of voluntary global dumbing down. Well, we don't know that.

Whether it is one or the other, the fact is that with these progresses, we are reading less and less, thus learning

less, and what may be worse, losing sight of the inexorable tendency to become more manipulable and thus less free.

Does this seem like a branding article which is starting off a bit strong? I would say thought-provoking and critical, even if I accept that it may be biased - even wrong - opinions.

Reading less leads to increasingly succinct messages. This is where the issue of simplification vs. synthesis

comes in. To simplify is to take parts of a whole - one leg less, to synthesise is to say everything and only what needs to be said simultaneously.

Hence, in a society whose attention span is shorter than that of a Cocker Spaniel, whether we are talking about business or brand strategy, our ability to synthesise is becoming a critical factor.

The aim is to tell a brief, easily decodable story and, above all, in a straightforward format for later



Don't be ashamed, go and enjoy Tik-Tok for hours on end!

execution - ideally 15 words. It's not at all easy!

Addressing Issues that Matter, Ladder of Abstraction vs. Funnel of Definitions

First of all, you will see that I talk about business and brand strategy indistinctly. Basically, this is because they are – or should be - two sides of the same coin:

- Business strategy looks at what to do with customers to ensure company success
- Brand strategy looks at what to do with the company to ensure customer success

A sound strategy must answer a series of questions that are key to the lasting transformation and growth of the company:

- What is the *raison d'être* of the company - and how does the brand synthesise it?
- Who are the key stakeholders - beyond customers, consumers, and shareholders?
- How is the competitive landscape?
- How will the game be won?

It takes hundreds of pages to organically answer these questions, but this is where order is needed, and nothing better than going up the ladder of abstraction. The higher up the ladder, the more abstract the concepts become, e.g.: from purpose - on the highest rung - down to strategic objectives, from there to satisfaction and measurement policies, then to resource policies, and so on to the tactical and operational plans that bring the new strategy to life.

It's like an inverted funnel that breaks down your big idea into details indicating what is being pursued, the milestones that need to be met and the steps to be taken.

BTW, remember this simple rule: hundreds for managers, tens for C-Suite.

Sharing Common Benefits, Ambitions vs. Detailed Pathway

Good synthesis is a learned skill. I remember as a young consultant I had a Dutch boss - this is important because of their cultural characteristic of being straight to the point and without anaesthesia - who every Monday made us write down what we had done over the weekend, then we had to reduce that story to half a page, then to three 15-word sentences and finally to a single statement, also of 15 words.

The second act of enlightenment that guided my way through the fields of strategy was to respect its articulation. The synthesis of the company's ambitions must be expressed in terms of:

- At least: Long-term solutions.
- At most: Benefits of such long-term aspirations.
- In a double game: The articulation of the strategy by considering stakeholders in two opposing yet complementary roles, as customers and as grievors, the latter understood as what they stand to lose if the strategy is not implemented.

By linking the two learnings, the strategy will be structured around

one idea that will open up to a couple of others, which in turn will open up to a few more - all aligned, consistent and coherent with each other. Then come the details at the level of objectives, policies, means and figures that explain even the unutterable - you know, both spreadsheets and presentations can withstand even kryptonite.

Be Shameless with Our 15 Words, Short and Sweet vs. Large and Complex

When visiting the doctor, it is important that, in a simple and understandable way, the diagnosis is given. Then come the details of what needs to be done, what medication needs to be administered and what tests and check-ups need to be carried out.

If you need a CT scan, remember that it is unnecessary to be told how the scanner works - in fact, nobody cares, especially if you are the patient. Get the metaphor?

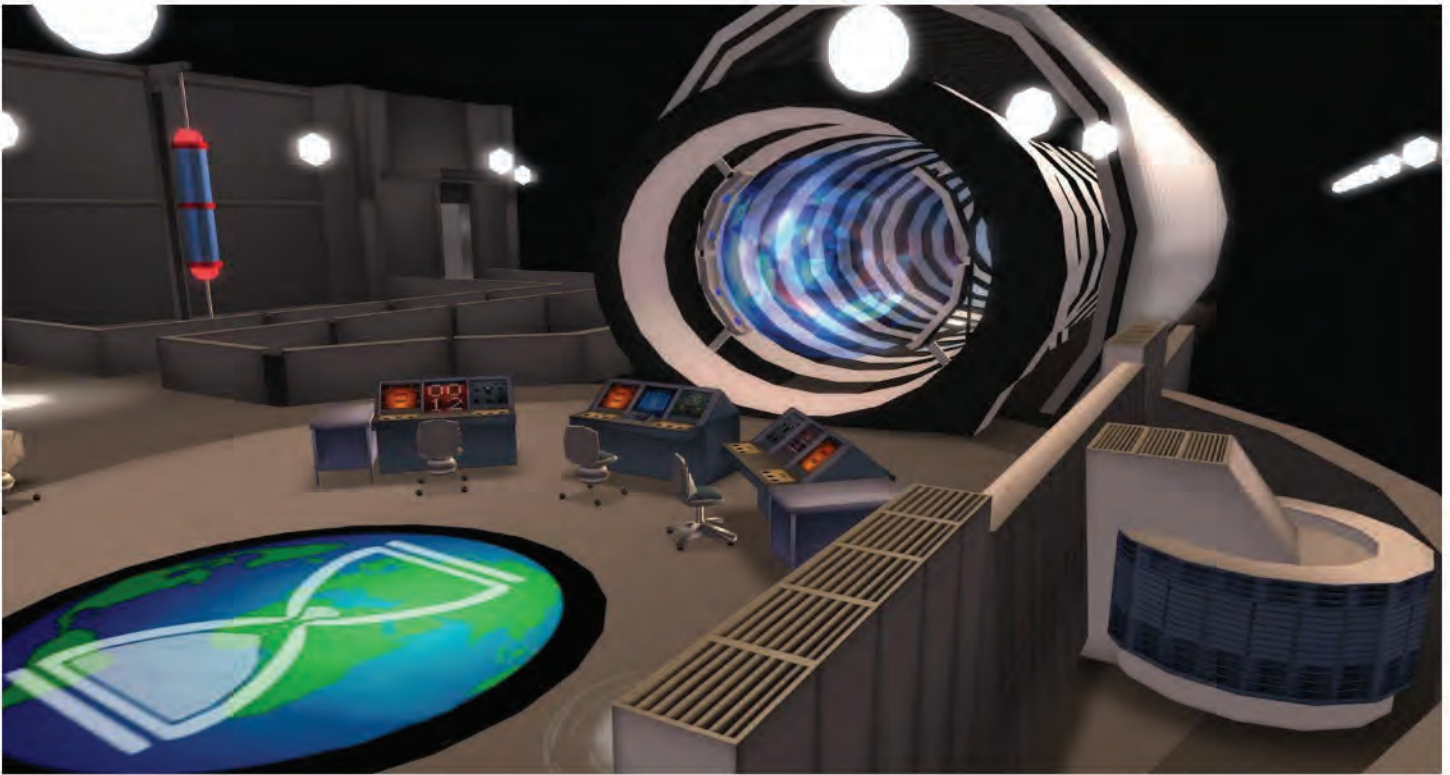
In our case, at Allegro 234 - I'm so sorry for using our own company as a blatant example... well, not

Our Ambition is to transform your company through your brand, to make it worth admiring.

so much - our strategy can be summarised as follows:

Then we continue the fun by going into detail with various analyses, milestones, objectives, policies, deployment of resources, and the list goes on. Mind you, this effort has a limit which is defined by the strategic variables of the plan, those that are independent, , though this is a subject for another article.

Nevertheless, as you'll see, if someone were to ask me what I do for a living, there's nothing better than to answer them with our main strategic objective. Wouldn't you do the same? [B]



THE BRANDING TIME TUNNEL

The new normal is a bad joke because we never lived a normal time, therefore, brands will be as eccentric as they were before... or not.

Being Under a Global Lockdown Is the Characteristic of This Strange Present
The Time Tunnel was a 1964 science-fiction TV series, where Dr Phillips & Dr Newman travel from one period in history to another, including some futuristic episodes. Throughout each episode, there were situations that bordered on the bizarre and in which both protagonists suffered a dramatic disaster of that time and finally emerged unharmed.

Today we can live the Time Tunnel experience through social networks and online media which, although in many cases convey strong distortions and fakes, present us with an almost dystopian reality that at times turns difficult to assimilate. Doug & Tony could not have survived so much misfortune, not even in their sci-fi series.

Brands, as strategic platforms for companies seeking to catalyse growth, are not detached from this situation, even playing a decisive role in the relationship among them, companies and people - as customer as well as citizen levels.

Traveling into the Past : For God's Sake, Adam and Eve Also Had a Purpose

Doug Phillips & Tony Newman landed in Eden. The first thing that struck them, besides the fact that Adam and Eve had no navel, is that everything around them had a purpose, although nothing had a brand; everything was pure creation.

Involved in a family dispute between Cain and Abel, our wise time travellers were brought back to our days.

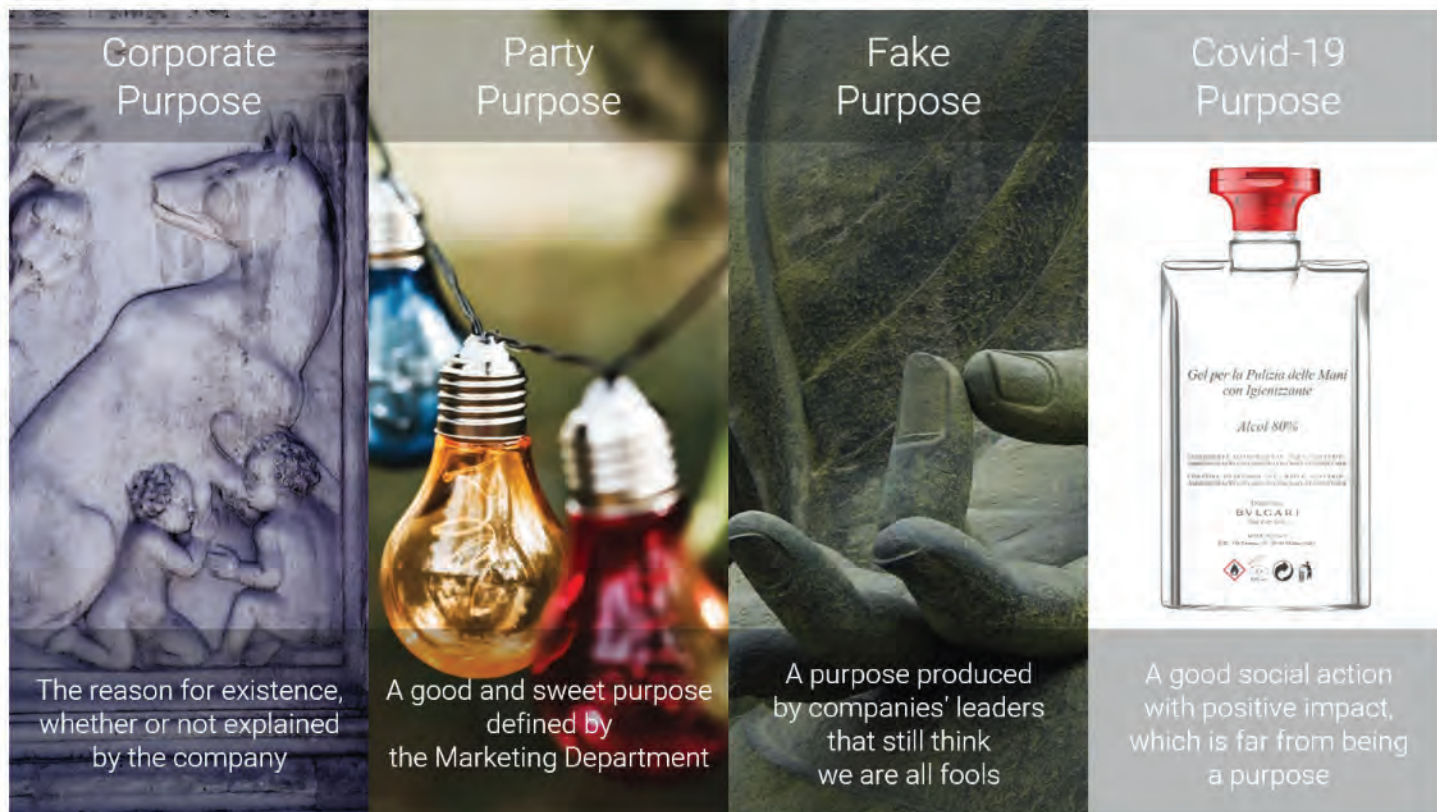
In their journey they've learned that purpose is something inherent to people and what they create. Companies have a purpose -because they are a human creation, some make it explicit, others don't.

Traveling into the Present : All that Glitters Is Not Gold

This new chapter of the series is based on the reaction when they see that now everything seems to have an almost angelical purpose, however and this is the dramatic knot, they discover that all that glitters is not gold.

Today, in 2021, we can see at least four different kinds of purposes:

- Corporate Purpose: The reason for existence, whether or not explained by the company
- Party Purpose: A good and sweet purpose defined by the Marketing Department - a good definition that I'm taking from Nikolaj Stagis
- Fake Purpose: A purpose produced by companies' leaders that still thinks we are all fools
- Covid-19 Purpose: A good social action with positive impact, which is far from being a purpose



Good Brands Give Answer to Trends, the Bad Ones Are Just Temporary Fads

The epilogue to this chapter is that brands that endure and transform businesses are those that serve, adapt to, or create trends, but are not guided by passing fads. It's a question of balancing value creation in the long term with profits generation in the short term. In this sense, purpose could be disgracefully used as a fad.

Traveling into the Future: A Less Politically Correct World

Several reasons show that we are at a turning point for humanity; however, history shows us our collective idiocy in committing the same mistakes of the past, missing the opportunity opened by a deep global crisis.

On the one hand, we have climate change, pandemics, populism, rifts, lack of freedom, democratic degradation. On the other hand, we have awareness, purpose, sincerity, rationality of consumption, circular economy, etc. In short, it seems to be a battle between degraded behaviours and forgotten values.

Brands should take side, leaving the comfort of political correctness behind them to engage with society free of double standards. It is not a question of taking an extreme position, but of thinking, acting and communicating with honesty and interest in the others.

Companies which have already understood this "new old" paradigm have also discovered that by being authentic and acting with conviction, have improved their results and produced a greater positive impact. [B]

It's our time! We should be able to prevent our heroes - Doug and Tony, from wishing to return to the times of Caligula than being part of the rebirth of our humanity.



Image: michael-sheen-the-good-fight-roland-blum-decider.com.jpg

The Controversial Dilemma between Sincerity & Wokeism

In a world guided by stories rather than facts, building a sustainable brand would require more sincerity than wokeism.

At some point in recent years, many practitioners have believed that, regardless of whether it is true or not, we can craft facts to our liking, and persuade and influence their target audience through stories that support such “parallel realities”.

Not to mention when it comes to sustainability and how it should be conveyed by brands. We are living at a time when many companies have become so green that the blame for pollution, global warming or greenhouse gases lies with the citizens, the

cows, the cities without trees. Brutal greenwashing!

Let's talk about sins - I'll leave the sinners to you:

- “We have a plan to reduce our plastic consumption by 20% by 2030”. That's cool! What is not mentioned is that even with that reduction, they will still be the world's leading generator of plastic waste.

- “Our social commitment is reflected in being a Certified B Corp”. Nice!. However, they forgot to mention that they still have no plans to reduce and change the packaging of their goods,

and they are the third company in the world that generates pollution due to their packages.

- “We are an innovative and pioneering company that manufactures and markets non-polluting electric vehicles”. Others who forget to say that the value chain of their manufacturing system does contaminate, and this level of pollution is growing steadily at 4% per year.

- “We belong to the Fast-Fashion world, and we are cool, socially responsible and sustainable”. During this year they have been denounced for lying about sustainability and for labour exploitation in their factories.

Nevertheless, there is a climate crisis that is largely related to our activity, our disdain for the care of public spaces, to our capricious and extemporaneous habits.

What is being done by organisations that seem to be shareholders of the Diazepam manufacturers is not worth talking about.

Just look, for example, at this image of the weather in Spain, which is something like Dante's 7th Inferno, as opposed to the rest of Europe and North Africa, which does not have this crisis and whose environments remain cool.

In light of all this, brands and the businesses that are synthesised by them, it seems essential to regain and use common sense, and to behave with greater sincerity.

Damn it! Authenticity, Transparency and Sincerity Are Not the Same Thing

Let's invest two minutes in a series of concepts, not to learn them, but to establish a common basis of understanding among us - although they are pretty nice ones:

- Authenticity: It is a quality of demonstration; it's an innate

characteristic of any subject; we are born authentic. Clear enough?

- Transparency: It is a property of observation. Despite the efforts of some companies, transparency is something that doesn't lie within their control - even though they may "secretly" manipulate their image to generate that idea. It is up to each of us to decide whether a company is transparent or not

- Sincerity: It is being true to oneself without neglecting others. It's about recognising that the company lives in a world that goes beyond its own borders. It is about deeply considering its impact on the world

Babies are authentic, kids learn to behave sincerely. The same can happen with companies.

Let's Build Stories Based on Real Facts, for Fantasy, We Still Have Star Trek

Brands must be sincere - neither authentic, nor live in "Raiders of the Lost Transparency". Does this make it necessary to stop telling stories, especially given how beautiful they are?

Actually, the answer to the above question is no. It is about building

Be rational in what needs to be kept rational, objective in the way things happen, attentive in what makes a difference, emotional in what keeps us alive.

stories. It is about building stories, not telling them. To build, one needs a plan, a foundation, materials, etc.

The connection between brand and sustainability is about stories that are based on realities, that do not scare, that go to the very basis of branding, whose objectives, among others, include:

- Being relevant and belonging to a specific category.
- Differentiating oneself from the rest
- Reducing uncertainties, which in turn requires transmitting tranquillity

Some Brands Do the Right Thing, Others Don't, Even If They Tell Us Their Epic Stories

Brands should think about something as basic as the fact that sustainability issues are an additional imperative that must be part of, engage and commit those who interact with them.

It is a continuum that goes beyond the epic of their stories and that, like any experience, should propose a symbolism and rituals that invite us to be part of their experience.

Let us set aside the cancellation processes that are so in vogue today because the solution may not be the one that is acceptable for all of us, because if there was only one possibility, we would lose one of the most important characteristics of our humanness, the ability to create options and make choices.

Seek real solutions - even if they are not ideal - that will make the world a better and more liveable place. Let us take responsibility for our every action and the impact they have. Let us synthesise in brands what companies really and truly are and do. [B]

Isn't there one thing Greta and her faithful followers don't do: calming us down? And how do brands do when we find it hard to believe them?

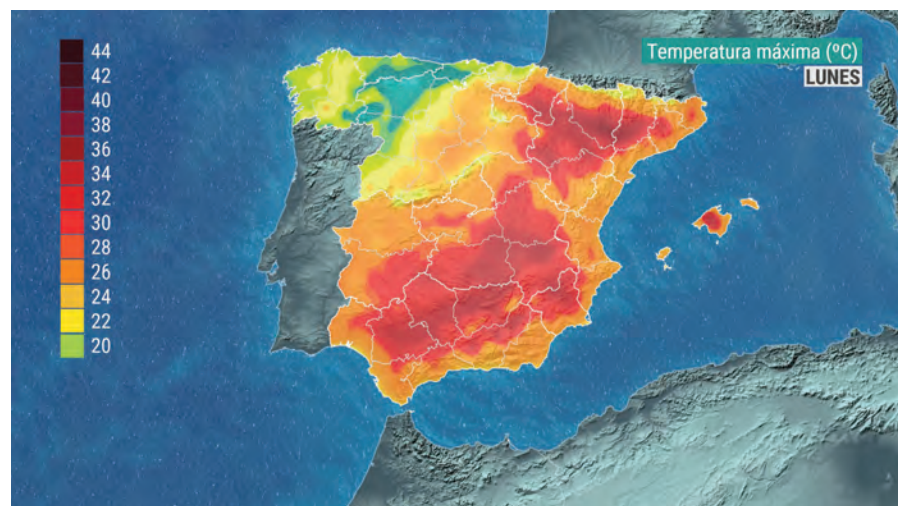


Imagen: Spain_TVE_El Tiempo.jpg



ARE THE FACTS, STUPID!

I'd like to open a discussion talking about the dark side of the storytelling, its involution towards narratives plagued by half-truths and falsehoods.

While good stories are built on realities, even those that are endowed with an epic that inspires people and gains in transcendence, big little lies behave like a boomerang that finally hits the one who threw it.

It's the people, not the narrative!

Between the 1940s and 1970s, the narrative behind a brand was simple, transaction-driven and in which, regardless of our role, we as individuals held a privileged position.

In the 70s' the world shifted to shareholder capitalism, clearly explained by Jensen and Meckling's Theory of the Firm. The emphasis on maximizing shareholder value has since become a standard of modern management and argues quite explicitly for the pre-eminence of the shareholder:

- It made organizations dysfunctional creating a wall between companies and the rest of stakeholders
- It was the trigger to develop better narratives around a brand to capture client attention. At the end of the day, all of us love to hear good stories.

Stories were brand-centered while people expected to be part, to modify, to re-create them. This situation lasted until the beginning of this century when we rediscovered that the key is people not the narrative. We needed more than 20 years to recognize what was clearly obvious.

It's story-building, not storytelling!

A couple of years ago, I was enjoying a beautiful dinner in Paris, talking with my colleague, Philippe Mihailovich from HauteLuxe. We were talking about the risks for luxury brands of having stories without real and relevant content. He said:

“Storytelling is useless, we have to think of story-building based on facts, on real wishes, on the brand legacy and aspirations.”

His point was clear and right, mine was that such structure fitted with each and every brand and that its construction should be done based on a dialogue among the different company stakeholders.

I'm not going to give you the answers, but will try to make the right questions around the following examples:

1 With the intent to “do more than sell clothes,” advocated by founders Doris and Don Fisher, Gap is actively reducing greenhouse gas emissions across its supply chain and stores, promoting female garment workers to management positions through its P.A.C.E. program, and partnering with governments and other international organizations to improve factory work environments and safety in seven countries including Cambodia and Indonesia

2 Virgin Atlantic billionaire Sir Richard Branson has emerged as one of the real villains of Britain's coronavirus crisis—in the court of public opinion. Virgin Atlantic's

suggestions for staff to take eight weeks unpaid leave during the pandemic has been widely criticized. Branson has been branded a “disgrace” by one politician and another has now told him to pay his own way out of the crisis

3 Greta & Boyan Potential #1

People and situations described above trigger several questions. I will only propose these ones:

1 GAP is in one of the most controverted industries around the world, mass-market apparel.

a. Why do Gap and its founders keep such a low profile in their plans for good?

b. Wouldn't it be a great case of story-building?

2 Sir Richard Branson is probably one of the masters of storytelling. The best known is the one based on his sayings of putting employees first.

a. How can he turn his back on his own story when faced with an exceptional situation?

b. Does his story resemble the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, the giant with the feet of clay?

c. What impact will this have on Virgin Atlantic?

3 Greta & Boyan Potential #2

It's common sense, not illogic fantasies!

We would have to go back to the grassroots and



“Forcing people to own the narrative jointly has huge benefits in both getting the best ideas on paper and building shared understandings and relationships through authorship.”

John Rossman

start -again, to build our stories. People are overwhelmed with false news, and now that's joined by companies who are communicating falsehoods, even some presenting their new, unreliable purposes.

It's a question of common sense. We are saying that our brands should be authentic and give enough contents to be also considered transpar-

ent and impactful beyond financial results. If so, we must take care of our brand stories to assure that we are building long-lasting credibility. And this is a business issue associated with its growth.

Let me end these thoughts with a simple graph which could be helpful to see where our narrative is. Hope you enjoy it! [B]

Greta & Boyan Potentias

Potential #1

Greta Thunberg (2003), a Swedish environmental activist who has gained international recognition for promoting the view that humanity is facing an existential crisis arising from climate change. Thunberg is known for her youth and her straightforward speaking manner, both in public and to political leaders and assemblies, in which she criticizes world leaders for their failure to take sufficient action to address the climate crisis

Boyan Slat (1994) is a Dutch inventor and entrepreneur, CEO of The Ocean Cleanup. Once he said: “Technology is the most potent agent of change. It is an amplifier of our human capabilities”. Also, he wrote in The Economist. “Whereas other change-agents rely on reshuffling the existing building blocks of society, technological innovation creates entirely new ones, expanding our problem-solving toolbox”

Potential #2

Greta and Boyan: On the one hand, Greta is globally recognised for her discursive activism on climate change. Like any activist, sometimes she tends to amplify problems and use untested information and data, resulting in having as much followers as detractors. On the other hand, and although he has participated in TED talks and other public events, Boyan is less well known, however, he has invented and implemented a system to clean up the plastic from the oceans. His foundation is The Ocean Clean Up and its ultimate goal is to reach a 90% reduction of floating ocean plastic by the year 2040.

a. Will Greta's activism have a future?

b. Can her story remain relevant when it is based only on what she says and her personal habits, but not on changes that directly impact the environment?

c. Will more people behave and act like Boyan?

d. Will we all be able to build a story based on practical activism to act against climate change?

Strategists are from Mars, Creatives are from Venus

In the branding zoo, strategists and creatives are different species, although this doesn't mean that they aren't complementary to each other

Maybe the roots of branding may have helped to ensure that developing a brand was done by people whose professional backgrounds were diverse, and that we have so easily and lightly attached labels representing each type of actor.

Strategy was owned by consultants whose origin was in management consultancy or advertising agency strategic planning; design was in the hands of creatives from diverse backgrounds; brand management was a clear legacy of advertising agencies, which oriented them more towards pampering the client than giving a business orientation to their brand... And so, the story goes on.

Years go by and we are still learning that it's not a linear industrial process whose operations go one after the other, in series. Branding is a fluid process that comes and goes, that needs the team as a whole and not parts acting as autarkic entities.

The Requirement of Thinking, Synthesising and Acting Simultaneously

The challenge already seems enormous, but in the midst of this situation the environment is changing faster than our normal level of resilience towards any kind of change.

Digitisation in general, artificial intelligence - AI - in particular, is shifting the ways we understand and plan for our future.

Essentially, the strategy, creativity, design and activation of a brand has to be done with more information, wider scope and in less time - much less time. That's the branding dilemma.

This deepens the need to interact by blending strictness and creativity, result and impact, strategy and design, businesses and brands.

The Imperative of Caring for Those Around Us and What Surrounds Us

If we continue adding up, we can already glimpse -I guess- that design



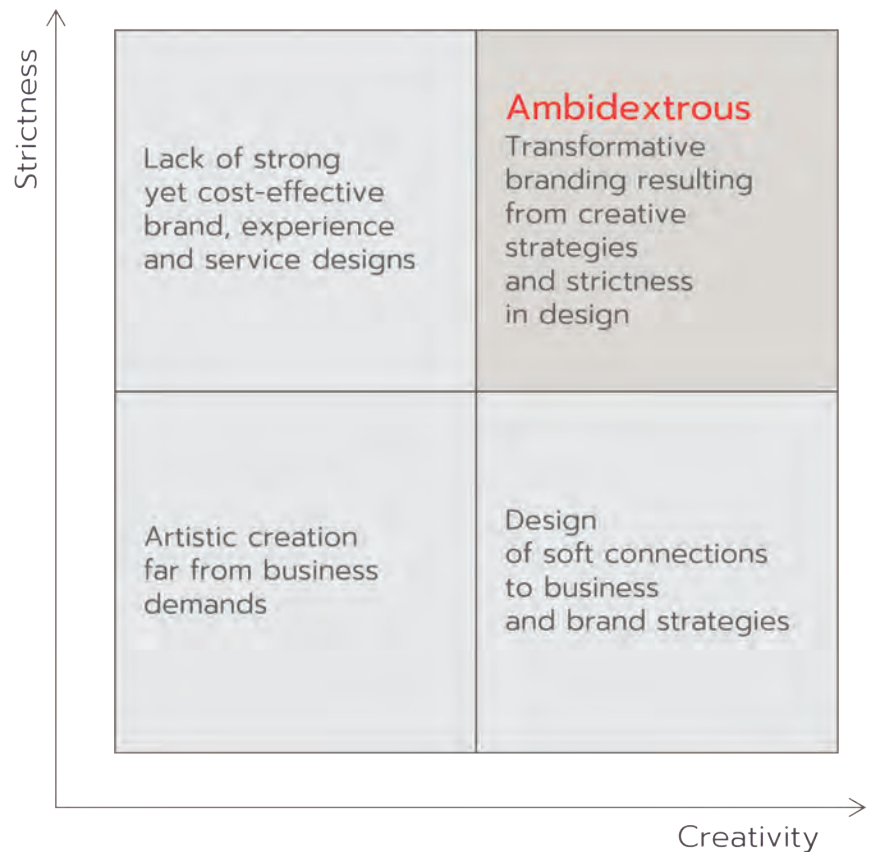
Branding requires both creative thinking along with rationality in design, and vice versa.

becomes strategic because it's not limited to the beauty of things, and it weighs again business orientation, durability, efficiency, sustainability, as well as good salaries, post-industrial reconversion, and so on.

Gone are the days when designers were ethereal art-loving beings and what they did was nothing more than an enlightening journey.

For brand design to play a strategic role, consultants, designers, managers and other actors must be brought together in a process that:

- *Is divergent and convergent*
- *Breaks with linearity, goes backwards whenever necessary*
- *Anticipates, blends, creates, distils, and executes*
- *Researches, synthesises, formulates, ideates, designs, and activates*
- *Defines and designs the right solution*



Need to Develop Ambidextrous Thinkers

Our brain has its own peculiarities. The left hemisphere thinks linearly and methodically, deals with the past and the future, is analytical and has the ability to solve logical reasoning and numerical problems. The right hemisphere is concerned with controlling the non-verbal processes of communication, which include spatial perception, mental rotation of objects, or understanding the meaning of facial expressions.

Consultants, who are from Mars, would in principle be expected to use more of their left hemisphere, while designers, who are from Venus, would use more of their right hemisphere. In other words, skills associated with analysis, problem solving or rational reflections vs. those associated with creativity, imagination, and holistic thinking.

Branding in general and design strategically developed needs both hemispheres, it requires people who are mentally “ambidextrous”.

Branding specifically addresses the implications of changing customer demands, market transformation, globalisation, digitisation and politicisation. An ambidextrous approach aims to be creative and, at the same time, foster thoroughness.

Following the Ambidextrous Branding Framework, consultancy and design continuously address the trade-off between being creative and being strict. As such, branding firms strike a balance that emphasises both dimensions. Most companies still focus on one of the two dimensions, but rare are those that manage to excel in both.

Hence, ambidextrous branding firms are increasingly making a splash in the world of strategic business consultancy. [B]



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NEEDS MAKE US MORE CREATIVE

Forget the Pangolin, Let's Talk About People. Let's stop for a moment: have a cup of coffee, take a step back and gain perspective on what has happened in recent times.

Let's talk about facts: from one day to the next we've changed our daily habits, given up our freedom in favour of more security, been part of a global experiment because we didn't know what we were facing or how to cope with it.

Let's see what has happened: In a globalised, digitised and politicised world, we, the people, are back, demonstrating our creative capacity, our humanity, our need to humanise what surrounds us - even with all the limitations of the case.

Beyond Our Own Limitations

As before the industrial age, many of us went back to working from home, with no clear boundaries between leisure, work, rest and socialising - unfortunately, via Zoom. For many, a blessing, for many others, Dante's Seventh Inferno.

Out of the many changes that took place - slowly but surely - two stand out:

- Suddenly, we realised that we had time to spare - less travel, less coffee breaks. Despite this, several "geniuses" managed to fill them with endless, unbearable and unproductive videoconferences - God Damned!
- Our new free time, on several occasions, has been transformed into those highly creative moments that we assumed were lost. Somehow, we moved beyond the limitations we put on ourselves as adults and went back to thinking like we did when we were kids.

Some people understood this novel situation as a big opportunity to convert their ideas in actions and those actions in new processes, products and services. Boosting creativity to infinity and beyond!



It's Not About the Upcoming Economic Upheaval, but Surfing the Next Wave

In this current guessing game, new consumer and business trends are emerging. New business opportunities will abound.

Given what I mentioned earlier, the global economy is in major shift, and those who can make smart bets on emerging needs may be able to redefine the rules.

Old ways of answering new questions are more of a hindrance than an advantage, hence the dinosaurs disappear because they cannot adapt quickly. This further accentuates the need for innovators to drive new ideas and shift to a new business landscape.

Is the glass half empty? We are on the brink of a major economic crisis that may paralyse creativity or trigger it. In any case, it is difficult to justify increased investment in innovation when the company may be struggling to stay alive.

When the Saints – and the Creativity – Go Marching In

As with Jaqen H'ghar, the Faceless Man in Game of Thrones, creativity has different faces. Just as food for thought, let's look at the big shifts that could be the key to unlocking our own creativity

and that of our brands:

- Reimagining the cities: We have been hearing about the concept of "15' cities" for some time now. The idea is that everything we need is just a short walk or bike ride away.

- o This leads us to transform spaces, develop micro-commerce, promote e-bikes, open pop-up clinics and develop urban agriculture, among other things.

- o We are moving steadily towards urban environments that put people first. New opportunities include micro-mobility, urban agriculture and strengthening local communities.

- Redesigning work patterns: It's all about infusing mental wellbeing into our daily duties.

- o The aim is to improve our work-life balance, including even issues related to meditation and emotional control.

- o The era of ignoring mental and emotional health is coming to an end.

- Virtualising services: Reimagining meetings for today's mixed reality.

- o It's about thinking in terms of work or leisure platforms that provide answers securely and conveniently.

- o There is plenty of space left to refine immersion, accessibility and interaction, and to create complementary services.

- Greening products: Taking unconventional routes to source greener products.

- o There are already companies

looking to reduce their carbon footprint by allowing them to work directly with producers and ensuring they receive more money than they would at typical fair-trade prices.

- o It's also to consider unconventional routes to building truly sustainable and ethical business operations. [B]

To round off and enjoy with another coffee - or perhaps a good whisky - here are a few questions to reflect on:

1 How could you develop new ways of creating and capturing value, understanding this future path?

2 How could you rethink an experience roadmap, moving from being a traditional company to one driven by new relationship and consumption behaviours?

3 How could you adjust innovation patterns to ensure value creation, revenue generation and positive impact in this new scenario?

4 How could you redefine a category by creating a brand experience that consolidates itself in a novel and yet uncontested market space?



Design through AI, Desired or Dystopian Future?

They thought they were unscathed by the monster's silent advance. Finally it came and devoured them. AI is unforgiving!



The first to warn us about the advances of artificial intelligence -AI- were the futurologists. Many of them with trends and research information suggesting what was to come.

Of course, in this online world, we were also “mis” informed on social media by many pseudo-visionaries whose

ramblings generated only amusement -if not an immeasurable sadness.

However, two things are certainly true:

- Where AI is said, one can presuppose software -extremely complex, but at the end of the day that's what it is, a program
- To balance the above, it must also be admitted that the algorithms behind AI software allow it to learn and improve

based on the information it gathers with each iteration it performs

In this context, at least two major groups of professionals assumed they would be safe: the programmers of those damned algorithms and the creatives. Crass mistake!

Today, the algorithm feeds itself back and creatives have realised that 95% of what they do can be replicated by a machine.



Artificial Intelligence Arrived and Settled In Like Snug as a Bug in a Rug

A few days ago I read in Forbes an article written by Dawson Whitfield talking about the authenticity of brands developed by AI.

First of all, let us say that Dawson is also the Founder of Looka, an AI logo design and brand identity platform.

It argues that because a brand is the collective impression customers have of a company, every experience they have with that firm contributes to building its brand. Assuming this, AI's role in creating an authentic brand experience stems from:

- Accessing the brand by enabling a more complete experience.
- Understanding gaps in the customer experience, enabling the

It's thinking about a new way of doing things in which our humanity allows us to add that 5% that makes the difference.

brand to become the most authentic version of itself

- Personalising the experience by fostering a one-to-one connection that makes customers feel understood by the brand
- Creating brand assets that generate design and content that customers will remember
- Building brand authenticity by removing barriers and recognising that the brand's humanity benefits from automation

Somehow, what he says is that AI is coming to help, but what he omits is that for this to happen, a profound transformation in the way creatives understand and do things is required.

It is somehow funny -if it were not for the fact that our professional lives are at stake- that those who are currently talking about AI are "experts" or founders of companies in this field. It is usual to read about the benefits and efficiencies of their tools, while almost as an oxymoron they defend from their companies the search for a positive social and environmental impact, while selling

The experimental is profoundly human! And so is the experiential!

their developments in a way that is close to the cruellest and most ruthless imaginable capitalism.

In Dystopian Mode

Lately, Terry Gilliam's film *Brazil* comes to mind quite often. Other times the miniseries, also British, *Year and Years*. You'll find that, under this pressure, I don't sleep too much. Anyway!

One option is to stand still and assume the end of life on our planet; a true implosion of the creative world to start enjoying brands that are created by robots that rely on an algorithm developed by a devilish being.

If creative lines are going to respond to fads, be a copy of one another, and we stop paying attention to the fact that brands are that bridge that establishes conversations between companies and people, then let the AI take over, and let's go out and find a new job to pursue -which is also difficult because the person who interviews and filters you in the initial interviews is another robot.

In Challenge Mode

The other option is to understand the challenge and develop new skills, recreate the content of our work and leverage on new technologies to become even better. Creative, get on with things!

It's thinking about a new way of doing things in which our humanity allows us to add that 5% that makes the difference. It is to devise new ways of creating and designing, of relating events and things in ways hitherto unthinkable. If even we don't know the answers, even less can be expected from AI. It can help, it can predict -based on past experience- but it can hardly replace what we imagine and do.

AI has for a long time been a source of anxiety for professionals, now also within the creative industry. The mere mention of AI entering their field has triggered fears of being boxed in by the automation of their work altogether.

Despite their reluctance, AI could be brand builders' best bet to establish closer connections with key audiences.

How do you plan to win this battle? [B]



Does internal branding suffer from decompensated

The Dehumanisation of Artificial Intelligence, the Role of Platforms, Mass Telecommuting and an Extremist Conception of Woke Culture Could Wipe Out Brands. . . Or not!

Some time ago I was reading on a young professional's LinkedIn profile about her passionate advocacy for the company she had just joined -as an intern-.

Six months later, I could again read how she said goodbye to the company

to join a new and challenging venture -also as an intern-, and a few days ago, again with goodbyes and giving way to another passionate speech about her new workplace -still an intern, although the name of her new position puts her almost on the same level as being the president of the company-.

If we look at this with some perspective and applying a bit of

critical thinking -I'm not going to ask for excessive efforts either- we could conclude that the person is actually self-promoting, and despite his/her very well-structured and passionate narrative, his/her real interest in the company and brand he/she is talking about is little to none.

Yet, what could be the reasons behind these behaviours that result in a strong disconnection between people and companies?

A Shot of Artificial Intelligence

There are all kinds of developments using artificial intelligence (AI), with different depths and levels of maturity. Likewise, new alternatives are emerging all the time.

Just as when we were kids and our grandmothers used to tell us: "Dear, don't play with fire because you'll get burned", today we're all about trying and playing with every application that comes along, and since there are no grown-ups to take care of us, we might get burned at some point.

The truth is that AI is creating a new type of paradigm and, as Darwin said: in these changes, the fittest shall survive.

Much of what is done in companies today, due to repetitiveness, simplicity and above all, lack of human creativity, will be done by "the machine".

Internal branding is worthless if the future of work is in danger of disappearing -soon. So how does one build a brand to make the experience of working in a company relevant and unique?

The Platforms Toast

The answer to the above could be simple -which it is not- if it were not for the fact that there are more things, all of our own making, that affect our relationship between company, brand, and people.

For example: If one works for a company whose products are marketed under a retailer's brand -DOBs-, which brand would the employee be proud of?

- That of the company?
- Of the product?
- The one of the supermarket chains?

Increasingly, we are moving towards platforms that bring together a growing number of companies under a single brand umbrella. Think of Lidl, Aldi, Amazon, Alibaba... or the telcos with which, as customers, we relate to third parties and not to the company and brand that provides the service -from the call centre to the billing.

Internal branding efforts are meaningless if those who are part of the platform are not aligned with certain values that are -or should be- shared and translated into observable and measurable behaviours.

A Glass of Telecommuting on the Rocks

Telecommuting is a long-standing issue. Already at the end of the last century, it was common practice in service companies -especially in professional services companies.

The pandemic arrived and without entering into a discussion about the validity of some of the decisions taken by governments, from one day to another, everything began to be done from home -very much locked up-, offices became Terra Nullius, and the way of working found new old ways that thanks to technology could be implemented at warp speed.

Here the question is very simple: how do we make employees live the brand if they go their own way, at home, and with few elements that serve as binders and are representative of the company's spirit of unity?

The Drunkenness of a Misunderstood Woke Culture

This might generate a heated debate; however, I believe we can all agree that, in some cases, woke culture has gone too far -good reasons answered with the wrong solutions. For a moment, I would like to invite you -dear reader- to put reason before emotion, truth before sentiment.

Without going into the question of imposing a single, uniform truth and narrative, what is at issue here is that certain values that shape our civilisation have been called into question and this has a direct impact on the relationship between people and business, which is intuitively built on the existence of shared values.

If we lose the notion of values translated into behaviour, we take the risk of reducing work to a way of getting money to take holidays. The idea of thinking of work as something that dignifies us and therefore generates pride of belonging is diluted. If this is not happening, what is the point of building a brand internally?

Living the Brand Internally Is Like Going to Alcoholics Anonymous

Several issues arise and call into question our traditional ways of building a brand with the audiences of the system, of the "platform".

In my humble opinion -and sincerely open to criticism-, I believe that we need

to review the forms and understand a new context that in essence is not attacking us, but rather is disruptively changing those things that until yesterday we took as absolute truths.

We are in the middle ages of AI, in the deconstruction of platforms that are as useful as they are harmful, in accepting that we can go back to working as we did before the industrial era -from home and without splitting family and work-, in the search for a certain balance between respect for what is different and the imposition of autocratic models.

Let's learn from AA, let's think of internal branding as requiring attention to the five stages identified by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross:

- Denial: Let us accept that we refuse to admit that reality has changed and there is no turning back. It is to acknowledge that we have a sense of unreality or disbelief that does not allow us to see what is irreversible as time goes by.

- Anger: The frustration generated by trying to invite to live certain values that may no longer be relevant to the internal audiences of the system - which does not mean that they do not have values, but that they may be different, or that they may be the same but with different content.

- Bargaining: It is contacting with a new reality that needs a fresh approach. This will lead to different types of behaviour. It is about exploring novel paths that will allow for a new type of relationship that will be built on a different type of foundation.

- Depression: It comes from thinking that the old days were better -it happens to all of us. There is a sad longing for what is no longer there. Here it is worth thinking about co-creative approaches, where different actors agree and support each other while developing a new internal branding model.

- Acceptance: It means that you are now thinking in terms of solutions and benefits rather than unassailable problems. It is a state of calm associated with the understanding, not only rationally but also emotionally, that brand building is a phenomenon inherent to the life of organisations.

There is a way out, it will be different, and it is worth reflecting on what form it will take. [B]



Our solutions

Making your company worth admiring

Living in an environment of continuous transformation, people and companies look to *Allegro 234*, a consultancy firm that knows how to blend social and environmental consciousness, strategic thinking and rigorous creativity to catalyse unexpected growth.



Living Brands

How can we transform your brand into a strategic business platform?

The brand as a strategic business platform has begun a transformation process allowing a better adaptation to new challenges –and also old ones which have regained prominence.

This applies to large companies as well as SMEs, in moments of conceptualization, creation and activation of said brands.

Understood in this way, the brand as a strategic platform synthesizes its institutional purpose, business legacy and aspirations.



Innovative Culture

How can we build your brand through culture, reputation and technology?

The answer lies within thinking, saying and acting in a sincere and straightforward -though by no simple means, manner.

To achieve extraordinary results, the organisation has to manage a balance between what it promises to the outside world and the values internally lived.



Impactful Marketing

How do we transform your marketing into a key business decision maker?

We bring to life fluid and relevant interactive touch points allowing marketing to effectively face a world of higher expectations, more data available and stronger competition.

Marketing, as a process, is the first and probably unique responsible of the P&L first line, revenues.

To catalyse growth, information and technology must be subsidiary to an engaging experience that is fresh, positive, meaningful and valuable.



Connectes Experiences

How does your brand pursue the simultaneous demands of differentiation and low-cost?

By understanding people's touch points with your brand, we develop fluid and minimalist experiences, eliminating what is perceived as low value-added and adding unexpected things that make the experience unique and meaningful.

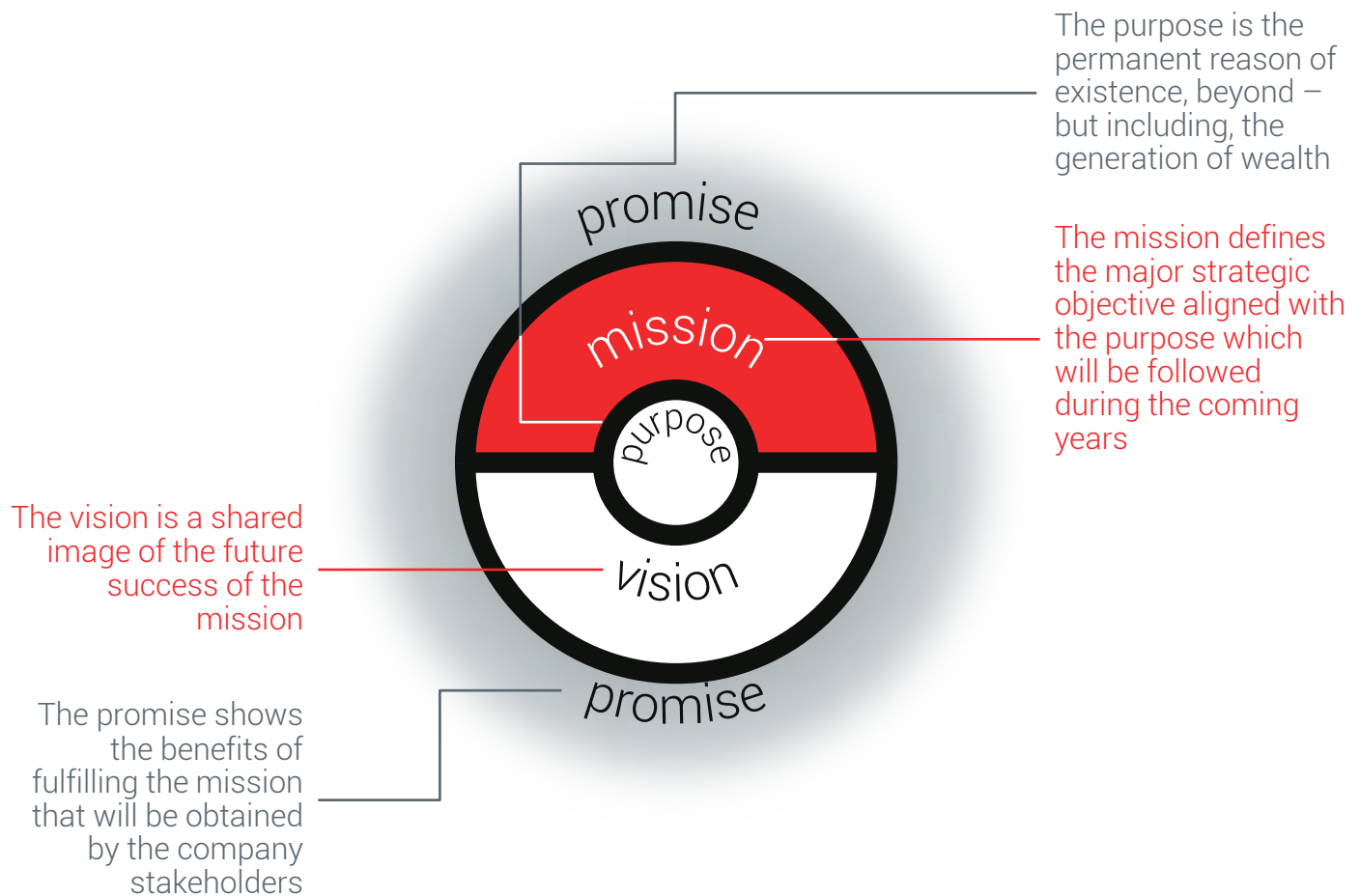
In our digitalised world, our purpose-driven and experience-based approach gives context and a human touch, and drives growth.

Allegro²³⁴

The Conscious' Brand Roadmap

In this world of immediacy, conscious brands are not created by magic.

For several reasons, among them fad, eccentricity, snobbery and corporate narcissism, we are suffering a plague of new concepts trying to explain what we already knew, but naming them differently, adding new layers of unnecessary definitions and provoking a real mess where people lose their time looking for agreements in thing they've already agreed.



“Pokeball Model” | From Purpose to Promise

Among those ideas, we hear that it's essential for companies having a “brand purpose”, especially in “times of disruptions”. It could be understood that defining “whatever for good” in a heartbeat is a “must have” for businesses today.

Hence, on the one hand, the first thing we will need to understand –perhaps accept, is that the brand, out of any symbolic consideration, historically is a business platform which synthesizes company's legacy and ambitions. On the other hand, the purpose is a company concept, not a branding one.

The success is not based on a “new brand purpose” but in the alignment of the company explicit purpose and the brand promise through its business

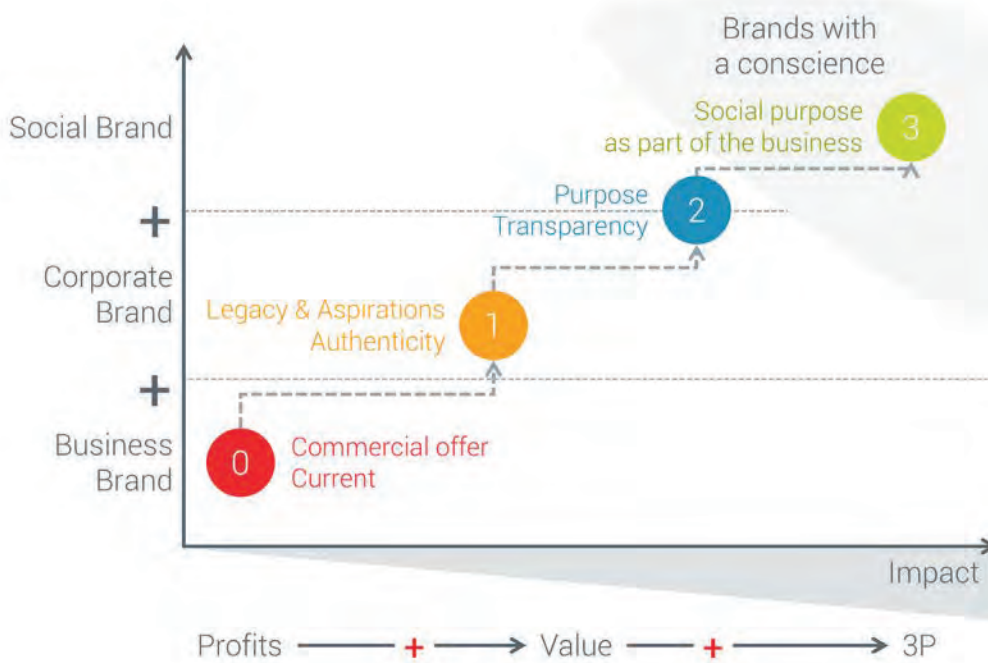
As an example: When Tony's Chocolonely says “crazy about chocolate, serious about people” it's telling us its reason of existence: to produce excellent chocolate, 100% free of slavery. However, what's important is that first they do and then they communicate it

mission and vision –strategic objectives at the highest level of abstraction. To be clear at this point, if a company define a new purpose, there would be a new company because its reason for existence has changed.

Every organization has a purpose; actually, the Mafia has one and it's not only strong but also stable over time.

Purpose and consciousness seem to be similar, but in reality, they are different things ... Capisci?

However, due to different reasons, some companies are more focused on the commercial side while others are dealing with what is known as “3Ps” – Profits, People & Planet. Most companies are somewhere in the middle.



Milestones to Build a Brand with a Conscience

Companies have a long way to go:

- Most new companies are based on a purpose –not necessarily a transcendental one, but one which should grow and maintain relevance
- Those companies which need to make their purpose explicit have to ensure they are on the path of building long-lasting value

In terms of the brand that must accompany and synthesize this evolution, companies can be in different stages and each of them has dissimilar types of requirements, and therefore, they have to develop tailored actions for each particular situation.

Understanding the starting point allows to know where the journey begins and how long it will take.

The key is to have a strategy that allows the company, in a fluid and practical way, to be prepared for such transitions, defining and developing new habits which finally will reconvert its culture:

- From a commercial offer to an authentic brand: Having in mind that

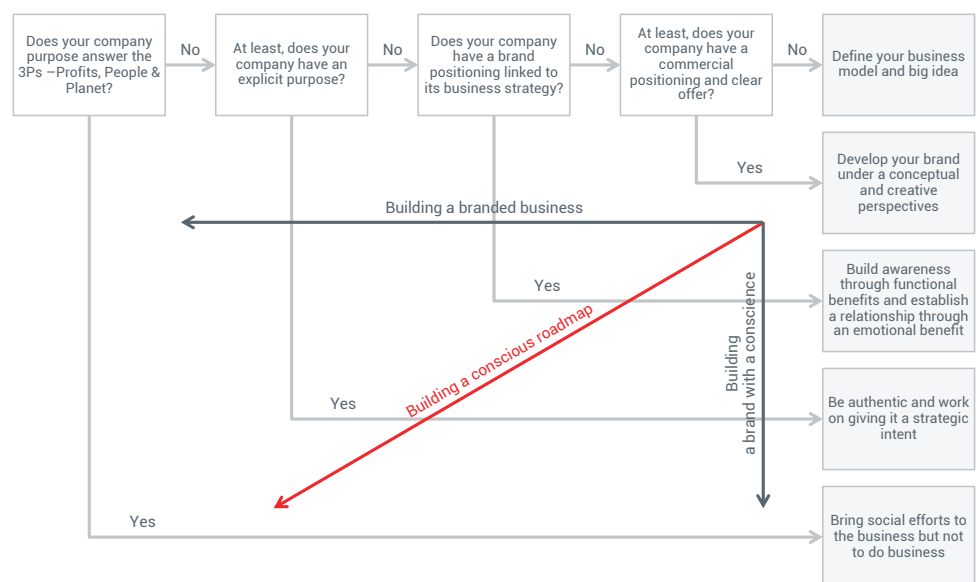
the company would like to become more humane and conscious, its first step is to go from transactional to conversational and that means to become authentic. Assertive conversations are at least sincere

- From an authentic brand to a transparent business: While authenticity is a quality of demonstration, transparency is a property of observation. Transparency is built upon company facts, not fantastic stories

- From a transparent business to a brand with a conscience: Becoming a brand with a conscience needs that the whole company ecosystem introduces social aspects into the business, but not to do business. This final transition is a deep and extremely serious decision to be taken

The way to accomplish those milestones is fluid, flexible and craftily built. This is how the brand will be consistent with what the company is and aspires to be, allowing valuable conversations between stakeholders, acting with consciousness and supporting a specific lifestyle.

In developing this conscious roadmap, what matters are the milestones beyond the path that one wishes to follow. This is because it's a medium/long term process and what today may be the right way, next year could require adjustments of premises and/or plans. [B]



Decision tree to build the conscious roadmap

The Legend of a Sustainable Brand Comes True... Right?



Image by Ryan McGuire, Pixabay

Trying to find a definition for business, brand and sustainability is like a dog chasing its own tail:

- Businesses are undergoing a process of transformation in which new demands from their key audiences in their role as citizens are the most prominent

- Brands, as strategic business platforms, must synthesise an increasing number of promises while maintaining credibility, relevance, familiarity, and differentiation

- Sustainability gets into business and branding as a topic that is hard to define, or even worse, it is defined into grey areas to express something that the company and its brand are far from being

The above generates new challenges that are far from the often boring and even snobbish attitude of seeking a single definition to issues that, by their very nature, end up becoming sterile and pointless discussions.

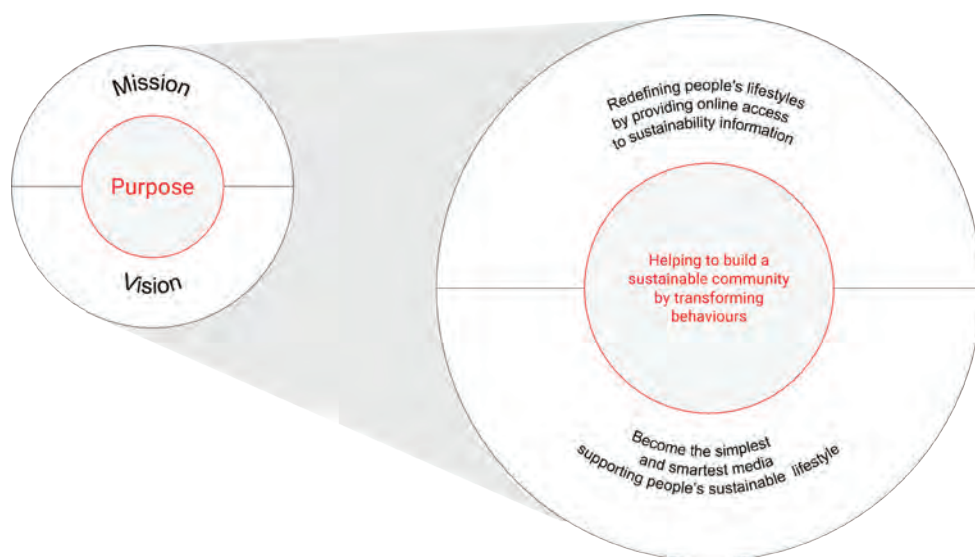
That's not the issue! The big question is to seek sincere and executive answers to what the company can work on and invite its audiences to align behind it for

a better world economically, socially, and environmentally.

The Logic of a Sustainable Brand

Considering that, for lack of clarity in the definitions we are plunging ourselves without a parachute, a sustainable brand, regardless of how you understand it, synthesises a company's own behaviour that seeks an impact beyond its economic results.

To clarify things: a sustainable brand is not built by the marketing and CSR departments, but by each and every person who interacts with the company:



Unfortunately, several well-known-companies and their brands are blatantly lying to us, favouring a pretty but insubstantial narrative.

- Internally because they seek to redefine their processes to address issues ranging from governance to social and/or environmental impact.
- Externally because new standards of performance and greater responsibility towards people and the planet are demanded.
- In general, because we have reconnected with our environment and are looking, at least, to stop damaging it.

The Entelechy of a Sustainable Purpose

Let's go to the top 10 of the most used words in business in recent times, even if in some cases one doesn't know what they really mean... They just sound cool, though!

1. Resilience
2. Empowerment
3. Synergy
4. Disruption
5. Deep dive
6. Core Competence
7. Incentivise
8. Out of the box
9. Bleeding edge
10. Purpose

Let's take number 10, "purpose", which is a word we can use on its own or with some adjectives such as new

purpose, business purpose, brand purpose, personal purpose, ... sustainable purpose.

My point is that sometimes it is good to go back to basics and stop dissecting certain terms and end up saying the same thing as 100 years ago:

- The purpose is the *raison d'être* of the company
- If the purpose changes, so does the business
- An effective purpose is one that becomes translated into mission and vision, and permeates every last operational action of the business

• A purpose lives if it is intuitively recognised by the company's key audiences

As an example of purpose and its relationship to mission and vision, let's use Komoneed, an online community of pragmatic activism:

Komoneed, the Case of a Highly Purposeful Venture

As you will have seen, Komoneed's purpose is ambitious and challenging. It is also a proposition that invites people to reflect and act on their own existential decisions, those that are indeed transcendent inviting to change lifestyle for the better.

As a brand it is sustainable due to facts beyond its own story, as I men-

tioned at the beginning of this article:

- Existence and online work
- On servers that consume clean energy
- Supported by other brands that are selected with the utmost care and ensuring that they share the same values.
- Attentive to leading by example ideas about sustainability in the broadest sense of the word.

In one year, this brand has built a community of more than 3.500 members, most of them living in North Europe. [8]



The Call for New Leadership

Today's leaders face new demands from society due to the speed of technological, social and economic change. Do these new challenges demand a new kind of leadership?

In a world of disruptive, networked, fluid, collaborative and shared business models, organisations are pushing the C-Suite to position itself on social and environmental issues, besides the traditional demands of delivering results and creating sustained value.

New leadership models are needed to help effectively navigate greater ambiguity, manage rapid change, and engage with all stakeholders.

There are companies - such as Apple, Virgin, Facebook - that have strong leaders who are able to lead their organizations... or others. These companies go further by building certain more general leadership skills. Specifically, they build what is known as a leadership brand.

Leadership Brand

The leadership brand is often linked to the reputation of the top management in meeting stakeholder expectations. Intuitively, people recognize the attributes that a company with these characteristics will bring to life in their brand experience. Interestingly, these actions are also aligned to a recognizable purpose.

A leadership brand drives long-term success. Leaders come and go while leadership is the process that takes care of the good of the company.

The Five Principles of Leadership Brands

Building a strong leadership brand requires that companies follow five principles.

1. They have to accomplish the basics of leadership well
2. Top Management must cover stakeholders' highest expectations
3. Leaders' evaluation must be defined under external perspectives
4. Meeting stakeholder expectations requires to hone leadership skills
5. The company should track its success at building a leadership brand over the long term

Management vs. Leadership

Management means doing something and being accountable for the result. Leadership is about influencing, guiding, innovating, and following a unique path.

For brands to be at their best in the marketplace, stewardship, integrity, sincerity, and trust must permeate the entire organization. These are qualities that brand leadership builds into the culture of the organization.

This can only happen with leaders who inspire shared values, and align and engage the organization that is synthesized in its brand.

The Three Major Gaps to Fill

1. Transparency. This is one of the most valuable characteristics of the organization. When it is recognized, it generates trust and respect in a world where many question the true intentions of organizations.

2. Internal collaboration. Today's organizations can benefit when C-Suite leaders shift their focus beyond their own responsibilities and work collaboratively with each other.

3. Performance management. Measuring the success of individuals remains a powerful way to shape behavior. The most important criteria used to measure the success of leaders are driving strategy, generating economic and financial results, creating positive social and environmental impact, and a good governance system.

Brand leadership helps reinforce behaviors that create a culture in which leaders are encouraged to embrace change and recognize opportunities to innovate and pursue excellence.

If organizations want 21st century-ready brand leadership, they must first examine their values structure and principles to create an environment that facilitates the success of their leaders.

Brand leadership today is about working extraordinarily well with and through others. How we connect with others remains paramount, especially in the interfaces between the organization and its external audiences. Every relationship we establish contributes positively or detracts. **[8]**



Building a leadership brand requires the company to evaluate its leaders from the customer's perspective.



C-Suite members need to ask themselves one simple question: how can we lead in a challenging environment like this?

BLENDING UNCONNECTED IDEAS

Bold entrepreneurship is based on knowing how to blend those ideas which create new synthesised ways to solve certain needs.



f all the different ways to start a new venture, possibly, the ones that want to address a need by blending different ideas are

among the most attractive, as well as the boldest and most ambitious.

Two Blending Options

The sequel

There are certain movies which the sequels were better than the originals, indisputably one of them, "The Godfather Part II".

This situation also happens with new initiatives that are copies of something discovered in other markets, sold in different channels and/or positioned to other audiences.

There are key elements that, alone or together, need to be considered:

- Ideas take things that do not normally exist together to conform a new, previously unknown concept. This is blending!
- The product or service answers to a new need or an emerging need -one that nobody attended so far. This is surprising!
- The brand promise shows a clear functional and an out-of-the-ordinary

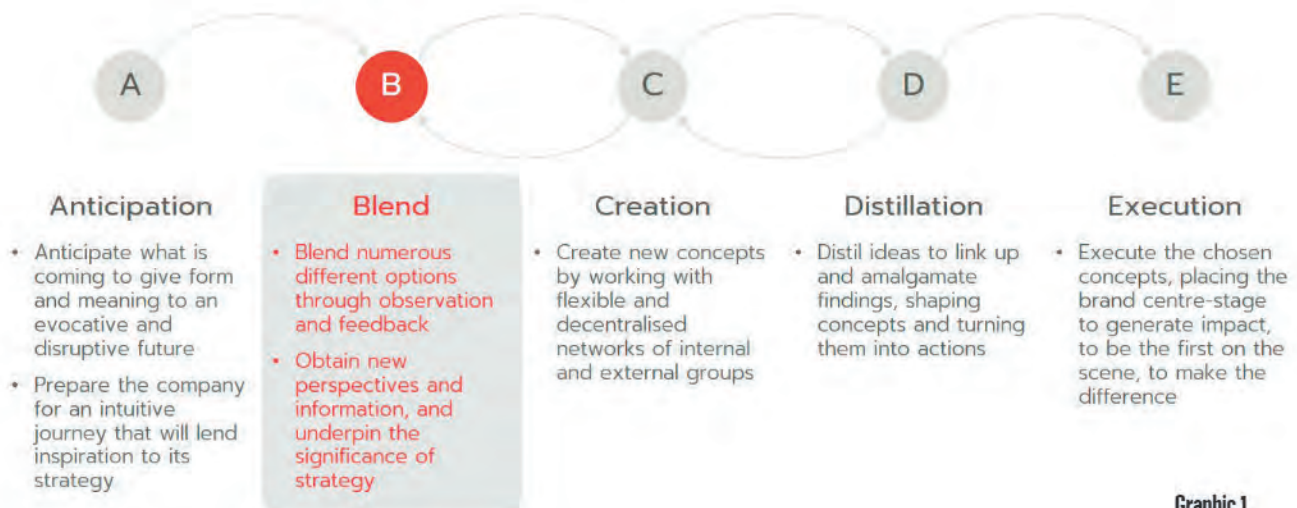
emotional benefit that is lasting over time. This is deeply amazing!

The risk of this approach is that the venture could end up being the MiniMe of the original.

Krating Daeng

It's a drink sold in pharmacies as an energizing tonic, and was the origin of Red Bull. Actually, Krating Daeng is a popular beverage in the Eastern world that combats fatigue and keeps people awake.

Red Bull's success lies in blending ideas that allowed the creation of a new product category, namely "func-



Graphic 1

tional foods", a beverage that refreshes and energises at the same time. And without going into detail, it was supported by a consistent and coherent brand, both in its functionalities and in the experience it encourages to be lived. Red Bull gives you wiings!

A beautiful one in a million story!... Though then came the Danone dairy and plant-based products.

Blending as Part of a Process

Blending is a process in itself within a broader creative process. While creativity and process may sound like an oxymoron, becoming an entrepreneur, entails that our minds merge ideas that aren't usually connected, creating sense of structure.

The whole process and its blending step are summarised in the following graphic. To make it simple, we use the acronym ABCDE™. (Graphic 1).

Following this process -implicitly or explicitly, is a good starting point for a new venture which could give answer to new needs, create a new category and improve the chances of success.

To Make It Simple, Let See Some Examples

Samsonite

Eco-Friendly + Wheels + Suitcase = Samsonite Ibon

Wheels + Suitcase + Traveling with Kids = Samsonite Dream Rider

During more than a century, Samsonite has been focused on innovation and design. However, it was Bernard Sadow who only 50 years ago blended suitcases (8th century BC) and wheels (5th millennium BC). In any case, back to Samsonite, they are pioneers in developing new solutions to help make travel more comfortable, also for parents and kids.



Free2Move

Mobility + Effectiveness + Sustainability = Free2Move Carsharing

It simplifies and guarantees mobility providing an electric shared car service to meet its customers travel needs. The idea behind the scene is that they make vehicle use more effective, while taking care of the environment. They provide mobility, not cars.



GROW

Light + Art + Plants' Metabolisms = Studio Roosegarde's GROW project

Studio Roosegarde's GROW consists of a design-based light recipe which shines vertically across 20,000 m² of farmland with leek in The Netherlands. It's based on photobiology light science technologies which have shown that certain recipes of blue, red, and ultraviolet light enhance plant growth and reduce the use of pesticides by up to 50%. It is also designed to blend in with the landscape and avoid creating any sort of pollution.



MUD Jeans

Apparel + 360 Economy = MUD Jeans Leasing

MUD Jeans is concerned about and committed to the 360 economy. To this end, they have developed a jeans rental service on a monthly payment basis.

The lease contract lasts for 12 months, after which the customer can keep the jeans, exchange them for new ones or return them. When the jeans are returned, MUD Jeans starts a process of manufacturing new ones from the old denim, keeping the fabric in a closed loop.

Live Real Farms

Dairy Milk + Plant-Based Alternatives = Live Real Farms Products



It's new brand developed by Dairy Farmers of America which combines dairy milk with plant-based alternatives in what it calls the "first-ever blended beverage of its kind." New Dairy Plus Milk Blends feature 50-50 blends of lactose-free dairy and almonds or oats. The beverage comes in five varieties: almond, almond unsweetened vanilla, almond sweetened vanilla, almond chocolate, and oat.

Summarising

Blending ideas offers a wealth of new opportunities. By combining one with another then another, it builds an endless source of new products and services -BTW, this is the basis of lateral thinking.

This leads to concepts which are new ways to serve people. Under a branding perspective, a new venture based on blended ideas not only creates meaning, but also value. [B]

While creativity and process may sound like an oxymoron, becoming an entrepreneur, entails that our minds merge ideas that aren't usually connected, creating sense of structure.



CRISTIAN SARACCO

FOUNDING PARTNER OF ALLEGRO 234



IN A WORLD OF MEGA-CORPORATIONS, BRINGING YOUR VENTURE TO LIFE BECOMES AN INSANE AND RADICAL ACT CARRIED OUT BY PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE MORE IN THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THEIR IDEAS THAN IN THE NEXT QUARTER'S RESULTS.



What inspired you to embark on the entrepreneurship journey and become a founder?

Having the opportunity to join another international branding company - I came from FutureBrand - I felt a deep need to explore new ways to make things happen, to bring value through a new strategic approach for businesses and brands.

I remember that in 2003, when we launched Allegro 234, we were the first value-based, business-driven branding firm in Europe - and perhaps the world.

In fact, our company name comes from a piece written by Vivaldi called L'inquietudine - The restlessness -, taking its positive part, the Allegro, and its RV number - it's an abbreviation for the catalogue of Vivaldi's music -, the 234, Allegro 234

Reflecting on your journey, what has been the biggest challenge and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge was my state of mind when I saw that we were in a developed but not modern market, and with limited knowledge of branding. I overcame it stoically: courage and discipline, each and every day. It was not easy, but with the support of my family, and

especially my partner, I was able to overcome it and move forward.improvement.

Could you share one or two key pieces of advice you'd give to aspiring entrepreneurs aiming to become successful founders?

1. Knowing that you have to take risks and put your body on the line in adverse moments and in front of other affected people - imagine telling your employees that they will be paid late.
2. Be willing to take risks, otherwise you can be great employee, even a partner in a big company, and that's fine too - adrenaline sometimes tastes a little sour
3. Assuming that your company is like a baby, it is a balance between great satisfactions and sleepless nights - even nappies have to be changed

In your opinion, what makes a founder a successful founder?

I believe there are two major issues to consider: the first is to believe in yourself and that you have the power to make a difference, to change your world - not necessarily the whole planet or the universe; the second is to never believe that you are a successful founder. [B]

[Branders]

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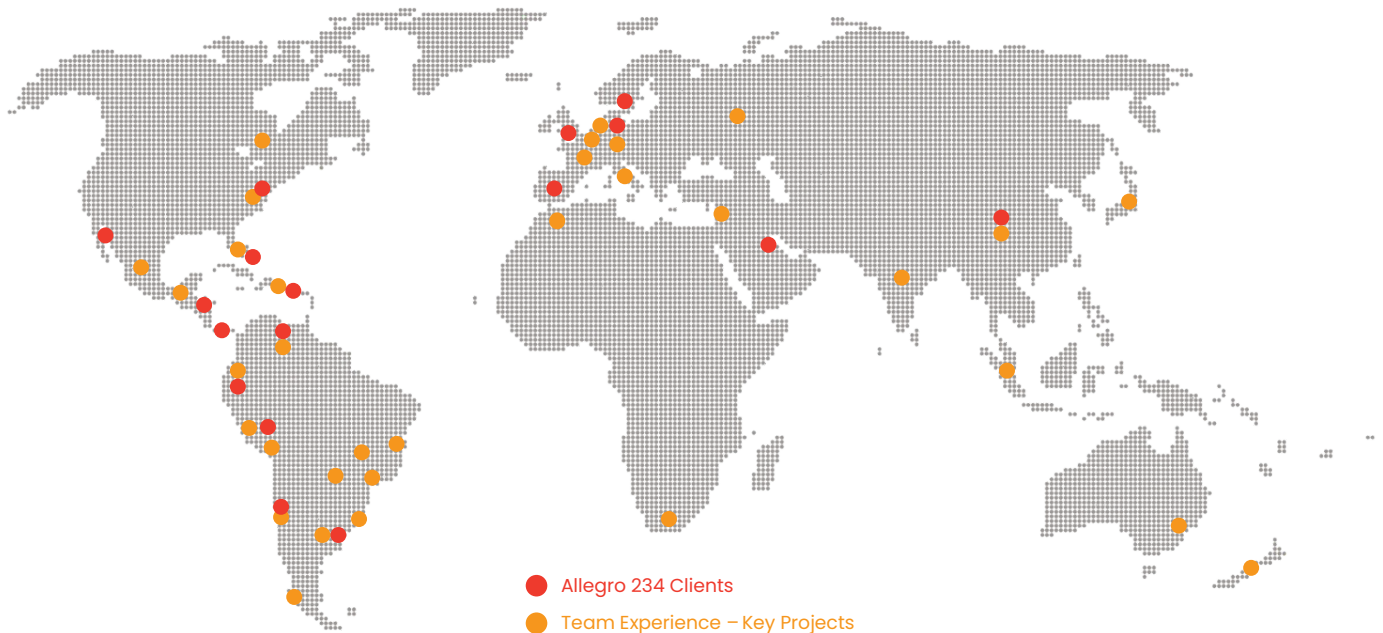
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