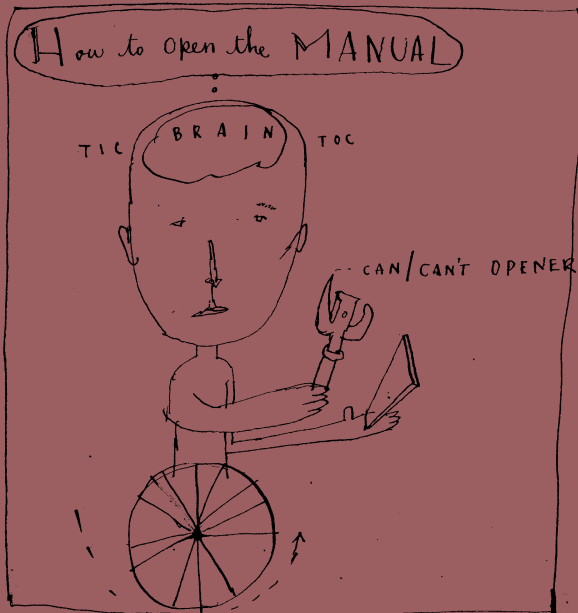


WPP Group plc

# Why Every Brand Encounter Counts:

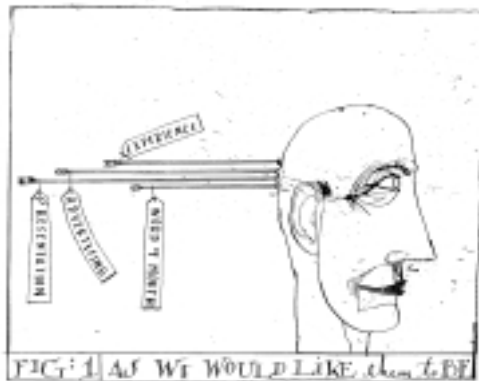
Seductive, Anarchic or Catastrophic



*Jeremy Bullmore*

Reproduced from WPP Group plc  
1999 Annual Report and Accounts

# SOURCES OF BRAND



You read a compelling advertisement for a piece of electrical equipment and you buy it. And then you open the instruction manual.

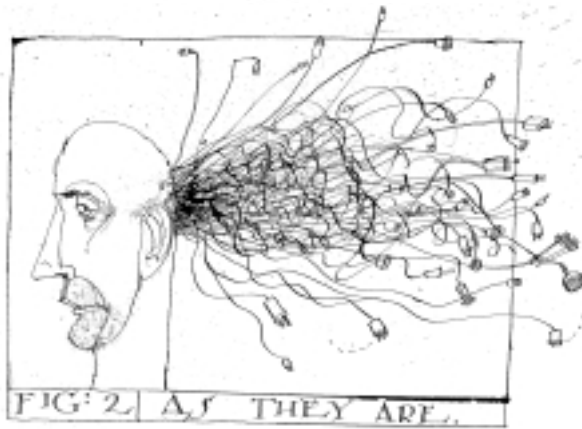
It is incomprehensible in seven languages.

The advertisement understood the reader; the manual does not. In design and empathy, the brand of the advertisement and the brand of the manual have nothing whatever in common. For the purchaser, those first moments of ownership are crucial. Critical faculties are on full alert; apprehension lurks; reassurance is anxiously awaited. And that's exactly when the dreaded manual strikes.

Not only has a perfect opportunity been lost to confirm new users in the wisdom of their choice, but a perverse and wilful act of brand mutilation has been committed.

For the best part of 50 years now, we've spoken confidently about brand image and brand reputation. Nobody has seriously challenged the view that people hold opinions about products and services that are based on more than

# REPUTATION



function and direct experience. This shared understanding has helped shape and improve all conventional marketing communications: no-one much doubts that advertising, direct marketing, promotions, public relations and pack design, among others, can enhance the reputations of competitive enterprises (they don't have to be objects) to the benefit of buyers and sellers both.

Where we've been less assiduous – perhaps because we sense the quest would be such a nightmare – is in trying to identify the less obvious sources of a brand's reputation.

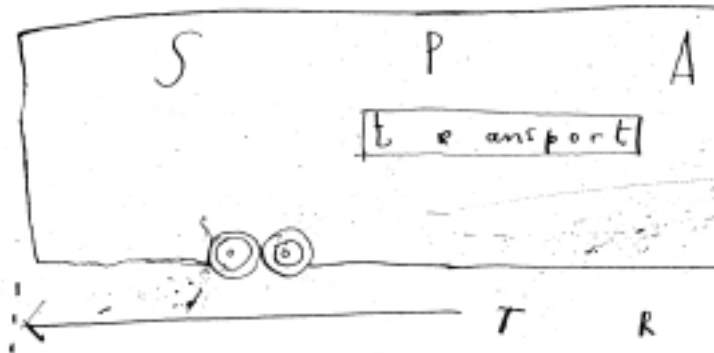
Imagine for a moment that it was possible to scan the human brain, isolate the cell that contained that particular brain's opinion of a particular brand – its image – and then trace and log its origins. Not for one second should we expect to see just a few strong, clearly differentiated wires labelled Experience, Advertising, Word-of-Mouth, Presentation. If we successfully traced and identified every encounter that had contributed over time to that brain's view of that brand, the resultant three-dimensional map would be like a huge bowl of multi-coloured spaghetti:

as if we believe that only conventional communications will be noted by our publics and that all other encounters will be screened out. But no manifestation of a brand is ever ignored; and all will make some contribution, positive or negative, to that brand's reputation.

The ill-conceived and incomprehensible instruction manual is one such example. But there are many other brand encounters which differ from seductive encounters in that they all have a reason for existence other than the courtship of the consumer. It's just such a pity that this primary function so often seems to blind companies to their potential for simultaneous (and free) brand-building.

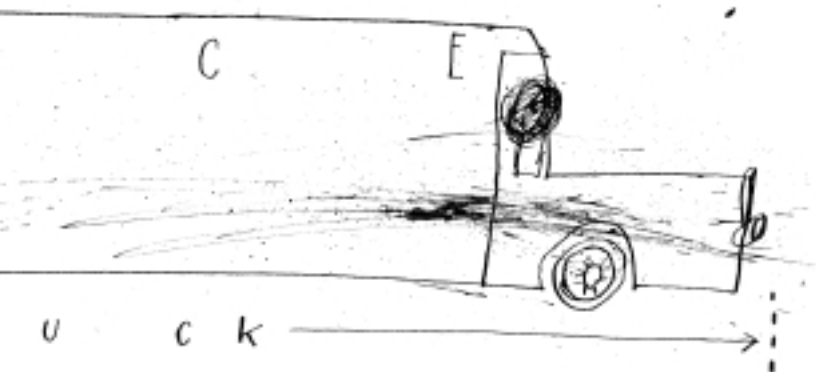
It is odd how little brand use is made of trucks. Vast travelling billboards, already paid for, thunder up and down the highways being seen by hundreds of thousands of people: yet with little or nothing on their sides to promote or enhance the company or the brand. Can it be, in the corporate structure, that trucks come under transport rather than communications? And who is a transport manager to know about brand values?

The contribution of architecture to corporate brands is widely debated but infrequently practised. At a time when



all are agreed that corporate brands need to be as clearly differentiated one from another as repeat-purchase consumer goods, tens of millions can be committed to buildings and internal design without a single reference made to the likely effect on the ultimate customer. It is as if senior management believes that creating a competitive reputation can safely be left to the hired hands in the marketing department and is nothing whatever to do with them.

Financial services companies were slow to understand the need for simple brand distinction – but they’re catching up fast. Savings schemes and pension plans are now packaged far more attractively and the language in which they are described is sometimes even coherent. But then you get a letter from head office – and your conclusion is immediate. The presentation was a sham, no more than cosmetic. Behind that glossy package lies a company as bureaucratic, self-obsessed and insensitive as we always knew such companies to be. In its advertising – in its planned, seductive encounters – a large British financial institution makes much of its friendliness. But a recent head office communication from the same company contained the following sentence: “This is a computer-generated message and therefore has no signature.”



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## Advertising

Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide  
[www.ogilvy.com](http://www.ogilvy.com)

J. Walter Thompson Company  
[www.jwtworld.com](http://www.jwtworld.com)

Conquest  
[www.conquestgroup.com](http://www.conquestgroup.com)

Cole & Weber

Asatsu-DK<sup>1</sup>  
[www.asatsu-dk.co.jp](http://www.asatsu-dk.co.jp)

Batey<sup>1</sup>  
[www.bateyads.com.sg](http://www.bateyads.com.sg)

Chime Communications PLC<sup>2</sup>  
[www.chime-plc.co.uk](http://www.chime-plc.co.uk)

Equus<sup>1</sup>

SCPF<sup>1</sup>  
[www.scpf.com](http://www.scpf.com)

## Media investment management

MindShare  
[www.mindshareworld.com](http://www.mindshareworld.com)

Media Insight/Maximize

Portland Outdoor  
[www.portlandoutdoor.com](http://www.portlandoutdoor.com)

The Media Partnership<sup>1</sup>

Tempus Group PLC<sup>2</sup>  
[www.tempusgroup.com](http://www.tempusgroup.com)

## Information & consultancy

**The Kantar Group:**  
Research International  
[www.research-int.com](http://www.research-int.com)

Millward Brown  
[www.millwardbrown.com](http://www.millwardbrown.com)

Kantar Media Research  
– AGB Italia<sup>1</sup>  
[www.agbitalia.it](http://www.agbitalia.it)

– BMRB International  
[www.bmr.com](http://www.bmr.com)

– IBOPE Media Information<sup>1</sup>

– Symmetrical Resources<sup>1</sup>/Simmons<sup>1</sup>  
[www.smr.com](http://www.smr.com)

Goldfarb Consultants  
[www.goldfarbconsultants.com](http://www.goldfarbconsultants.com)

IMRB International<sup>1</sup>  
[www.imrbint.com](http://www.imrbint.com)

Winona Group  
[www.winonaresearch.com](http://www.winonaresearch.com)

Center Partners  
[www.centerpartners.com](http://www.centerpartners.com)

## Public relations & public affairs

Hill and Knowlton  
[www.hillandknowlton.com](http://www.hillandknowlton.com)

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide  
[www.ogilvypr.com](http://www.ogilvypr.com)

Timmons and Company

The Wexler Group  
[www.wexlergroup.com](http://www.wexlergroup.com)

Carl Byoir & Associates

Buchanan Communications  
[www.buchanan.com](http://www.buchanan.com)

Chime Communications PLC<sup>1</sup>

## Branding & identity, healthcare and specialist communications

**Branding, identity & corporate consultancy**

Addison  
[www.addison.co.uk](http://www.addison.co.uk)

Banner McBride  
[www.bannermcbride.com](http://www.bannermcbride.com)

BDG McColl  
[www.bdgmcoll.com](http://www.bdgmcoll.com)

Brouillard  
[www.brouillard.com](http://www.brouillard.com)

Coley Porter Bell  
[www.cpb.co.uk](http://www.cpb.co.uk)

Enterprise IG  
[www.enterpriseig.com](http://www.enterpriseig.com)

– BPRI  
[www.bpri.co.uk](http://www.bpri.co.uk)

– Clever Media  
[www.clever.co.uk](http://www.clever.co.uk)

JWT Specialized Communications  
[www.jwtworks.com](http://www.jwtworks.com)

Lambie-Naim  
[www.lambie-naim.com](http://www.lambie-naim.com)

Scott Stern  
[www.scottstern.co.uk](http://www.scottstern.co.uk)

Tütssels  
[www.tutssels.com](http://www.tutssels.com)

## Healthcare

CommonHealth  
[www.commonhealth.com](http://www.commonhealth.com)

Ogilvy Healthcare

Shire Hall Group  
[www.shirehall.com](http://www.shirehall.com)

## Direct, promotion & relationship marketing

A. Eicoff & Co  
[www.eicoff.com](http://www.eicoff.com)

Brierley & Partners<sup>1</sup>  
[www.brierley.com](http://www.brierley.com)

Einson Freeman  
[www.einsonfreeman.com](http://www.einsonfreeman.com)

EWA  
[www.ewa.ltd.uk](http://www.ewa.ltd.uk)

High Co<sup>1</sup>  
[www.highco.fr](http://www.highco.fr)

Mando Marketing  
[www.mando.co.uk](http://www.mando.co.uk)

Oakley Young  
[www.oakley-young.co.uk](http://www.oakley-young.co.uk)

OgilvyOne Worldwide  
[www.ogilvyone.com](http://www.ogilvyone.com)

Perspectives  
[www.perspectives.co.uk](http://www.perspectives.co.uk)

Promotional Campaigns Group  
[www.pcguk.com](http://www.pcguk.com)

RMG International  
ROCGM

[www.rocgm.co.uk](http://www.rocgm.co.uk)

RTCDirect  
[www.rtcdirect.com](http://www.rtcdirect.com)

SpeechNet  
[www.speechnet.co.uk](http://www.speechnet.co.uk)

The Grass Roots Group<sup>1</sup>  
[www.grg.co.uk](http://www.grg.co.uk)

ThompsonConnect Worldwide

## Strategic marketing consulting

The Henley Centre  
[www.henleycentre.com](http://www.henleycentre.com)

Management Ventures  
[www.mventures.com](http://www.mventures.com)

MSI Consulting/Charles River  
Strategies

[www.msiconsulting.com/](http://www.msiconsulting.com/)  
[www.crstrat.com](http://www.crstrat.com)

P-Four Consultancy  
[www.pfour.co.uk](http://www.pfour.co.uk)

Planners<sup>1</sup>  
[www.planners.es](http://www.planners.es)

Quadra Advisory<sup>1</sup>  
[www.quadradvisory.com](http://www.quadradvisory.com)

## Sector marketing

**Business-to-business**

Primary Contact

[www.primary.co.uk](http://www.primary.co.uk)

**Demographic marketing**

The Geppetto Group

[www.geppettogroup.com](http://www.geppettogroup.com)

The Intuition Group

The Market Segment Group<sup>1</sup>

[www.marketsegment.com](http://www.marketsegment.com)

Mendoza Dillon & Asociados

**Foodservice**

The Food Group

[www.thefoodgroup.com](http://www.thefoodgroup.com)

**Investor relations**

International Presentations<sup>1</sup>

[www.intpres.com](http://www.intpres.com)

**PR & sports marketing**

PRISM Group

[www.pristeam.com](http://www.pristeam.com)

**Real estate**

Pace

**Retail**

Walker Group/CNI

[www.wgcn.com](http://www.wgcn.com)

**Technology**

Smith and Jones

[www.smithandjones.co.uk](http://www.smithandjones.co.uk)

## Media & technology services

Clockwork Capital<sup>1</sup>

DigiReels

Metro Group

[www.metrobroadcast.co.uk](http://www.metrobroadcast.co.uk)

Savatar

[www.savatar.com](http://www.savatar.com)

The Farm<sup>1</sup>

[www.farmpost.co.uk](http://www.farmpost.co.uk)

## New media investments

BigWords<sup>2</sup>

[www.bigwords.com](http://www.bigwords.com)

Concept<sup>1</sup>

[www.concept.com](http://www.concept.com)

Deckchair<sup>2</sup>

[www.deckchair.com](http://www.deckchair.com)

e-Rewards<sup>2</sup>

[www.e-rewards.com](http://www.e-rewards.com)

Imagine<sup>2</sup>

[www.imagine.com](http://www.imagine.com)

Intraspect<sup>2</sup>

[www.intraspect.com](http://www.intraspect.com)

Media Technology Ventures<sup>1</sup>

[www.mtventures.com](http://www.mtventures.com)

Metapack<sup>2</sup>

[www.metapack.com](http://www.metapack.com)

NewsEdge Corporation<sup>2</sup>

[www.newsedge.com](http://www.newsedge.com)

Red Sheriff<sup>1</sup>

[www.redsheriff.com](http://www.redsheriff.com)

Syzygy<sup>1</sup>

[www.syzygy.net](http://www.syzygy.net)

TWii<sup>1</sup>

[www.imgworld.com](http://www.imgworld.com)

Visible World<sup>2</sup>

[www.visibleworld.net](http://www.visibleworld.net)

<sup>1</sup> Associate investment

<sup>2</sup> Minority investment

<sup>3</sup> Venture fund

Details correct at 10 May 2000

## WPP Group plc

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