

Creative B2B Branding (no, really)

Scot McKee

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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

6 The creative platform (managing creative appetite)

- ▶ Figuring out what it should look like. And what it shouldn't
- ▶ Seeking and securing creative approval
- ▶ Distilling a brand strategy into messages
- ▶ Shifting gear from 'clever' to 'cool'

It's hardly rocket science

Don't you just hate that? 'It's hardly rocket science.' It's a phrase that almost every marketing person with corporate brand responsibilities (however great or small) will have had thrown at them in a typically disparaging manner – 'We just need something creative for our brand, it's hardly rocket science is it?' The phrase is usually followed by a dismissive wave of the hand in the vein of, 'You can do that brand stuff creative thing because I'm busy with the more important and difficult aspects of business...'

In fact, rocket science would make a fine analogy for creative business branding. If the dismissive sceptic ever stopped to consider the achievement of placing a man on the moon in 1969, they might recognize that the rocket science wasn't the hard bit. The rocket science was theoretically proven many years previously on the back of a cigarette packet by a bunch of smart-ass physicists. But that didn't put a man on the moon. First there was the politics. Global, icy-cold, we're not drinking pinko commie vodka in the land of the free and the home of the brave international politics. Then there was Joe Public. Joe had to be convinced that the Moon was a good place to go to. And then a bunch of conscripts had to sit their backsides on

top of 30,000kg of rocket fuel while the fuse was lit. Others had to help the astronauts get there and back. Preferably alive. And when it all worked out swimmingly well, the dream had to be kept alive for the next 50 years (and counting...). Rocket science played its part at putting a man on the Moon, but it was achieved predominantly by branding.

A single, clear vision (to put a man on the moon before the commies did...); multiple audiences believing in a common goal – internal and external (including government, crew and, ehh, the whole world...); and a badge that would carry the reputation of the endeavour and all that it stood for. The brand was, and still is, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration – [NASA](#). It's a tricky business rocket science. But it's not nearly as tricky as putting a man on the moon. The difficulty isn't the complexity or 'science' or functionality of the process, it's the recognition and willingness of the participants to believe in the process and, crucially, to join in – because that requires a brand strategy, which is an art. So the next time some bean counter plays the 'it's hardly rocket science' card – hit them, really quite hard.

The process of creativity

It's wrong to think that creativity is the inspired moment of genius born out of the otherwise incomprehensible ramblings of a stubble sporting, [pony-tailed](#), fashionista. It is entirely possible that the inspired moment of creative genius takes place after the better part of two quarts of [Jim Beam](#) have been consumed in a dark and shady bar, but it's wrong to think that way. The reality is that the 'creative fire within' burns only on the fuel it is supplied with. It's not a random connection. It might be a random connection after all the data has been input, but the raw materials need to be in place first. Left to their own creative devices, the creative articulation of a brand would amount to little more than the best colour clash of socks and sweaters that the creative team can conceive on any given day. Creative articulation is, nonetheless, the key component in bringing any brand of any meaning to life. As such, we need a process for achieving consistent, creative, delivery.

Chapter extract

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