

## Making Your Brand Emotional: Human Goals and Buyer Behaviour

Why do people who like fun fly with Virgin Airlines while those who seek safety and control stick with British Airways? Is there a reason that IKEA's brand experience is so successful in communicating their democratic values? And why has the resurrection of LEGO to become the world's largest toy brand been one of the brand success stories of the last 20 years (even leading to one of the most successful movies of 2014)?

TapestryWorks' work is grounded in a model of human goals as seen through our proprietary StoryWorks® model. But why are these goals so important in understanding human behaviour? What can the evolution of emotions in animals and humans teach us about branding?

Evolution is at the heart of human behaviour and the heart of branding. To understand the success of Virgin, IKEA and LEGO, we need to go back in time and look at the way in which emotions have evolved. Even the simplest living organism on our planet has strategies for survival. At their most basic, these strategies are to approach objects in the environment that are likely to have value (i.e., nutrition) and avoid objects in the environment that may be harmful (i.e., toxic). That's why sugar tastes sweet and medicine tastes bitter!

Taking an evolutionary leap, Jaak Panksepp's work with humans and animals has revealed seven "emotions" with specific brain circuits, neuronal activity and behavioural goals. The most important of these is what Panksepp calls *seeking* (the drive to acquire). The other six are *rage*, *fear*, *lust*, *care*, *panic* (grief) and *play*. Going back to basics, seeking behaviour is the drive to 'approach', whereas fear is the drive to 'avoid'.

Of course, animals are a little more sophisticated than plankton, and they also need to find mates, raise children, learn new skills and work in groups to achieve evolutionary success, which is why they have at least seven independent emotional systems (goals) that direct their behaviour according to the environment and the social situation around them.

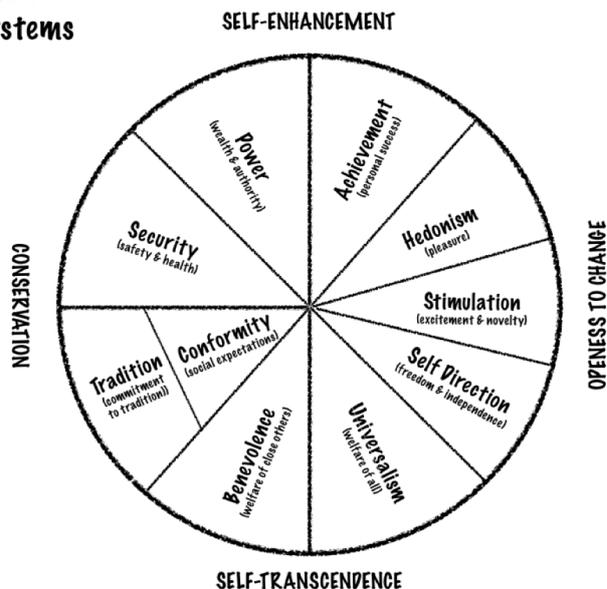
At the top of the evolutionary tree, humans have more than these seven. In particular, the top layers of Maslow's hierarchy suggest that the needs for esteem and self-actualisation are different from those of safety, love and belonging. Research into personal values and cross-cultural differences also indicates that humans have more than seven motivating drives.

Milton Rokeach's work led to the development of a specific survey tool for measuring human values. He identified 18 terminal values (desired end states of existence) and 18 instrumental values (preferred modes of behaviour that help people to achieve their terminal values). These values differ among different people in different cultures.

Shalom Schwartz took up the idea that values are beliefs (what he called 'cognitive structures') closely linked to emotional states and to desirable goals (for example, social equality or fairness).

He argued that such beliefs and goals transcended specific situations or actions, and built a model of motivation that he then tested across more than 60 countries and 100,000 people. He defined a smaller set of goals (10) that capture Rokeach's values in a smaller set of ideas: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security.

### Schwartz's Value Systems



The two dimensions of Schwartz's model are similar to those found in many motivational research models. They encompass a personal dimension between the need for self-expression and the desire for stability and control, and a social dimension between the need for individuation and independence and the need for interdependence and connection with other.

Arguably, 18 are too many, but is ten enough? Are there different types of power and different ways to achieve success? In means-end chain models, researchers investigate the 'ladder' of meaning, normally starting with concrete attributes, through to functional and psychosocial consequences of the attributes and finally finishing with 'terminal' values (long-term goals). For example, in a salty snack, flavour might be linked to perceptions of strength, leading to eating less of the snack, which leads in turn to ideas that you will not get fat, meaning that you will have a better figure and higher self-esteem.

Means-end chain models almost always end in around 12 long-term goals that consistently appear across studies. These 12 goals (or 'emotional rewards'), bear a striking resemblance to the characters of the archetypes found in mythology and stories from every culture around the world. For example, esteem and self-actualization are seen in myths through the central hero(ine) who discovers themselves through the course of the story, and also in some of the figures who help them on their journey, like the Guru (or Sage) and the Catalyst (or Magician) who achieve emotional satisfaction through their understanding of the world or their power to "make things happen".

Archetypes are not random products of culture and storytelling, but reflect more fundamental human aspirations for finding meaning in the world. This is what makes archetypes such

powerful tools for creating brand identity. There are as many human universals as there are cultural differences or, as Joseph Campbell put it, “Why is mythology everywhere the same, beneath its varieties of costume?”

The role of brands is to work as symbolic signifiers of identity, lifestyle and taste, depending on the specific identity or role that we wish to play in the consumption context (for example, mother, friend, wife, businesswoman, sports player, gourmand, lover, etc). These 12 archetypes relate back to the goals, evolutionary strategies and emotional rewards that consistently appear across all models of behaviour and personality.

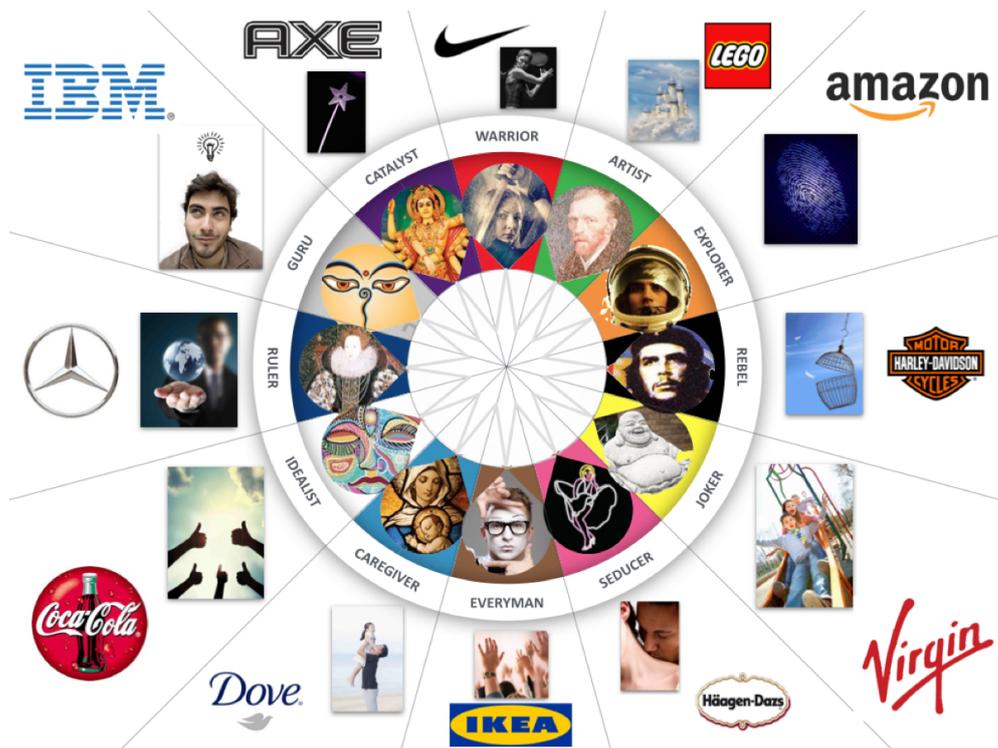
Recent research in the social sciences, particularly in evolutionary psychology, show that emotional goals frame decision-making and may even have their own sub-systems or modules in the brain (in the same way that animals have seven ‘emotional systems’.

In one experiment, the choice of restaurant for a date, was shown to depend on which movie the participants had seen before making their decision. If they had seen a scary movie, they chose a restaurant that was popular, with lots of other people around, whereas if they had seen a romantic movie, they chose a much more exclusive restaurant where they could be alone with their dinner date.

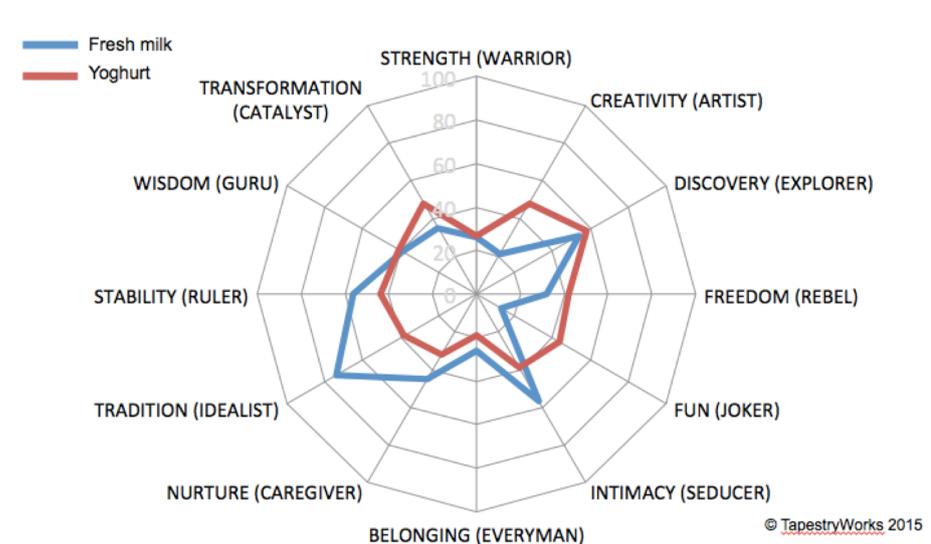
When your goal is self-protection, your ‘self protection’ module takes control, filtering incoming information according to its relevance to this particular goal. If the information is not relevant to this goal, then it’s likely to get ignored (as in the Invisible Gorilla experiment). In this example, the brain seeks information in the environment associated with safety and ignores information that is not associated with this goal (i.e., the words ‘crowded’ and ‘popular’ would get prioritised over words such as ‘exclusive’ and ‘expensive’).

This makes sense in light of our understanding of the interplay between emotions (which are initially physiological responses that direct us towards ‘rewarding’ behaviours and away from ‘non-rewarding’ ones). Kringelbach and Philips define emotion as follows: *“Emotions are evolved mechanisms for motivating behaviour, helping us to seek what we need to survive by guiding us towards what we like and find pleasurable, while avoiding what may be harmful, damaging or painful. Emotions are a way to assess and interact with our ever-changing environment, taking into account our current needs and our past experiences.”*

TapestryWorks use a model based on 12 human motivations (emotional rewards) that are relevant for the vast majority of marketing applications, including understanding, transformation, courage, creativity, exploration, freedom, play, intimacy, belonging, care, idealism and power (authority). These motivations are reflected in emotions that are associated with the positive and negative aspects of achieving the goal. For example, if you seek understanding and knowledge, you will value feeling intelligent, wise, expert, analytical and thoughtful, you will fear feeling ignorant and should avoid the vice of dogmatism. All these different emotions reflect the ultimate need to understand the world around you.



Human goals and the emotions related to them are important to understand categories and brands. Even in a simple example such as milk and yoghurt, the emotions associated with products are quite distinctive. Milk is strongly associated with optimism, purity and tradition, while yoghurt is associated with self-expression and fun and this is seen in the emotional profiles of the two categories.



So how do you find the right brand story? A case study from the telecommunications industry will serve to show how an understanding of human goals helps brand owners find successful communication platforms. The case study has a number of steps, starting with understanding the back-story of the brand, followed by decoding the category, and then uncovering individual consumer stories. This was followed by a separate piece of work to validate findings quantitatively.

The case study started as an evaluation of an advertising campaign by a Hong Kong telecommunications brand, 1010. They had launched their first high profile campaign for many years, targeting entrepreneurs, expats and business travellers and other segments. Initial indications showed that performance targets were not being met and the client wanted to understand why their campaign was not working.

TapestryWorks did some initial decoding of the campaign before looking more broadly at the category. Our initial diagnosis was that there were mixed messages in the campaign executions that might be causing confusion. Were the people depicted in individual executions, independent or arrogant? And were they rebellious or destructive?



TapestryWorks then looked at the category. It was clear that the campaign messaging was a little bit different to the category norm, which focused on selling handsets rather than services, especially in retail outlets, and talked a lot about variety of plans and goals of exploration and individualism. The category codes seemed to be much more focused on territories associated with the Explorer and Everyman archetypes (feeling individual versus feeling that you belong).

The next step of the research was to talk with individual customers about their relationship with the brand and then their reaction to the advertising itself. Our approach used storytelling techniques to help participants articulate their deeper feelings, using images that they have pre-selected. We talked first about the individual stories and then looked at the bigger picture that linked individual images together. We uncovered some key contradictions and oppositions in their stories and the relationships between different ideas.

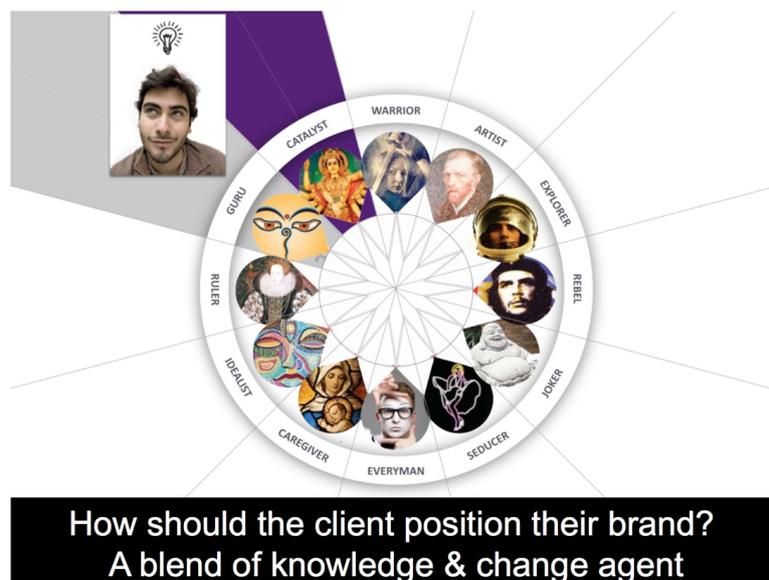
In this work we found some consistent themes. Those we spoke to were not rebellious or aggressive, but were more interested in safety, connection, knowledge and creativity. There was a

hierarchy to these emotional goals, with reliability and care of the network enabling customers to 'stay in the know' and create opportunities.

When exposed to the advertising, there was a clear disconnect between the imagery and the aspirations of the customers, who did not make a strong association between the advertising themes and the brand or category. They were not seeing the advertising because the emotional tone of the executions was not relevant to their goals in the category!

When we later quantified these aspirations in a bigger segmentation study, it was clear that the targeted customers were a little different to other Hong Kong mobile phone users. Business travellers looked for confidence and the innovative spirit, entrepreneurs were a little rebellious in the sense of wanting to make an impact on the world and geeks wanted to have fun and be different (cheeky rather than rebellious).

All of these segments sought reliability and connectedness, but only in order to enable them to achieve knowledge and their ultimate goals. TapestryWorks recommended the client focus on knowledge combined with transformation, as the core of their brand promise, updating rather than reinventing the brand's existing values. This also linked back to the brand's history as being reliable and 'efficient' (getting things done).



Did the client go with our recommendation? They are still using the tag line of 'Make yes happen', but stopped using the visual executions that had not been working.

In summary, brand communication should always be based on an understanding of the goals of target customers. Successful brands first understand the "Why?" of the human story, before moving to the "What?" and "How?" of executing products and services and building brand communications.

Neil Gains is Managing Partner of TapestryWorks and author of *Brand esSense*. He can be reached via @tapestryworks or [neil@tapestry.works](mailto:neil@tapestry.works)

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*This is the first in TapestryWorks' series of case studies and white papers. TapestryWorks decodes people and culture to build consistent meaning into brand experiences. We help build culture sense for brands.*