A new breed of company has emerged in the last 20 years, what I term the social movement company. Ben & Jerry’s, The Body Shop, and Patagonia pioneered this movement back in the 1980s. Since then many other well-known social movement companies have emerged, including Stonyfield Farm (organic yoghurt), Tom’s of Maine (natural personal care products), Innocent (drinks), and Divine Chocolate. These companies have succeeded to such an extent that many have been snapped up by large multinationals.

These companies all begin with the ideals of a social movement – acting as a collective agent of change to resolve critical social and environmental issues of our time. But rather than organising protest marches and petitions, they seek to effect change through the marketplace. Such companies often get conflated with corporate social responsibility (CSR) but should not. CSR, despite the often lofty PR rhetoric, is almost always a philanthropic sidebar to a company’s main business, performed to maintain institutional legitimacy, not because the business has been set up to promote social change.

For instance, Starbucks and Wal-Mart are not social movement companies, as both have bolted on social business policies late in the game to buy themselves insurance against criticism in the media and investment community. By contrast, social movement companies want to use business to change the world, they let customers know it, and so their social change agenda is core to the brand.

WEAR ON EARTH
Patagonia, a company which I have researched in depth together with Jill Avery of the Simmons School of Management, earns about US$300 million annually, mostly in the US, selling outdoor clothing, primarily technical gear for outdoor adventure sports such as climbing, hiking, biking, paddling, and skiing. The merchandise is pricey and their target customers are largely upper-middle class. The company states that it is in business to help resolve the environmental crisis. Patagonia does this, for example, by pioneering sustainable technologies such as post-consumer plastics used in the organic cotton market, and by using a portion of its sales to fund a wide variety of grassroots environmental organisations, a number of which would be considered radical by US standards.

How is it that such companies advance a social change agenda while at the same time succeeding in business? The answer to this question at first glance appears obvious: they attract people who believe in the cause enough to buy. It turns out that this isn’t true. If it were, these companies would occupy tiny market niches. What is interesting is that Patagonia appeals to a much wider customer base than its politics suggests. In fact, in the course of our research, we discovered that Patagonia also appeals to young businesspeople with conservative politics.

Using the cultural branding model I have developed to study commercial brands, we analysed Patagonia’s marketing efforts from the start of the precursor company, Black Diamond, in 1971, to the present day. We then conducted two-hour in-depth interviews with 25 loyal Patagonia customers in the US. Patagonia is distinctive in that the company has always used its catalogue as its primary branding tool. We also studied how Patagonia brands through its retail outlets, the other important expression of its values.
**“PATAGONIA HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT BRAND PRIMARILY BECAUSE, RATHER THAN PREACH ITS POLITICS EXPLICITLY, THE COMPANY HAS INSTEAD MYTHOLOGIZED THEM.”**

**ADVENTURE TALES**
Patagonia does not wear its politics on its sleeve. Rather the company's branding invokes America's mythic ideals of the environment and taps into its customers' status desires. A typical catalogue contains first-person essays and artful photo-journalism documenting extraordinary outdoor adventures in exotic locales: a scientist climbing in a rain forest canopy in Costa Rica, a couple kayaking in China, a winter ice climbing expedition in ruthless conditions. It also contains a fascinating story or two about environmentalism but always in a distinctly American register, focusing on preserving wilderness, rather than on global warming or industrial pollution. Many of the photos are sent in by customers and they are generally stunning and the prose well-crafted. There is merchandise for sale, but it is as much a magazine as a sales tool.

Patagonia's stores are the same: simple loft-like designs featuring the latest in sustainable architecture, with huge photos of stunning outdoor adventure feats on the walls. In each locale, there is an informational board that promotes the particular environmental cause that Patagonia is championing for the year.

**OUTDOOR PASSIONS**
Unless you read the retail signage or website carefully, or are an insider who knows the company's back-story, which features founder Yvon Chouinard, one of the country's great environmentalists and outdoorsmen, you would not be aware of Patagonia's politics except in the fuzziest sense. Rather Patagonia's expression of their activist stance is mythic, encouraging what academics call polysemy – leaving considerable room for different interpretations. And interpret buyers do. When we interviewed customers, we found that Patagonia supports three different brands, only one of which aligns with the company's mission and what the company actually does on the environmentalist front. The three brands can be characterised as:

- **OUTDOORSY BOURGEOIS BOHEMIANS**
  This group of mainstream professionals identifies with Patagonia as a brand that represents their aesthetic appreciation for the outdoors and their cosmopolitan sensibilities – they like travelling to the exotic destinations that Patagonia dramatises.

- **EXTREME ADVENTURE GUNFIGHTERS**
  The members of this right-leaning group love Patagonia as a symbol of the rugged individualism, competitiveness, and toughness in nature that they idealize. They selectively interpret Patagonia branding by focusing on the photos of supremely challenging adventures, often undertaken solo, and the stories of extreme adventure. This segment tends toward what in the US is termed conservationism – people who believe that the earth's resources are for human use and should be husbanded wisely so that we will always have the resources we need.

- **GREENS**
  This is the segment one might expect to dominate Patagonia if the company branded in a more literal and politicised manner. Ironically, a significant percentage of Patagonia loyalists hold environmental politics that are antithetical to the company's original ideals. Others have little interest in the politics but find that the brand's environmentalism symbolises their status ambitions.

In sum, Patagonia has been successful as a social movement brand primarily because, rather than preach its politics explicitly, the company has instead mythologized them. In this manner, Patagonia engages in the same type of cultural branding strategy that has led to the success of many iconic commercial brands such as Nike, Marlboro, Jack Daniel's, and Coca-Cola.

Today’s approaches to international development emphasise partnerships between governments, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector, including multinationals. Such partnerships hope to harness globalisation, using trade systems to deliver both profits and social well-being. High profile efforts, such as Grameen Bank’s “phone ladies” and Unilever’s Project Shakti, focus on empowering women, using new technology and business systems to lift participants out of poverty while distributing consumer goods. Trading partnerships between multinationals and local women’s networks have gained a footing in several developing countries, creating new micro-enterprise opportunities that not only deliver soap and shampoos, but financial empowerment for impoverished women.

However, one of the most successful sales organisations in the developing world is one that already has a 120-year history of helping women earn. Avon has been distributing its toiletries and cosmetics through informal networks of women—many of them poor and with few earning options—since it was founded as the California Perfume Company in 1886. We are currently conducting an extensive study in South Africa to determine whether this same system, transplanted to a radically different environment and time, can act as a poverty alleviation strategy.

**The Company for Women**

Avon has long been famous in the West for its door-to-door sales campaigns and slogan, “Ding-dong! Avon calling!” Today, the firm calls itself “the Company for Women” and contributes to women’s causes, such as the fight against breast cancer, as well as conducting surveys into the well-being of women around the world. Avon sells its products through more than 5.5 million independent sales representatives who are 95 per cent female and its operations now span the globe, with breathtaking growth rates in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia. Avon set up shop in Africa 12 years ago, with headquarters in Johannesburg. In South Africa alone, there are tens of thousands of “Avon ladies” who aspire to improve their welfare and that of their families by selling lipsticks, body spray and moisturisers.

Many women throughout the world find direct sales an appealing way to earn a living. Direct sales offer women, who are often constrained by household responsibilities and childcare, the flexibility to work from home and receive direct payment for their labour through discounts on the products they sell. Direct selling enables women to draw on networks of relatives, neighbours, friends, and co-workers as the basis for sales, rather than venturing into the outside world to “cold call,” an activity that is sometimes dangerous or forbidden to women in developing societies.

Avon itself distributes a primarily feminine product line, purchased and used predominantly by women. We are further investigating whether a “women’s sphere” of trade such as this provides a safe haven for women to develop economic autonomy, one that is less threatening to established gender roles but still offers women privacy and control over their earnings.

**Avon Calling South Africa**

**Can Avon provide a model for poverty reduction in Africa?**

By Catherine Dolan and Linda Scott
MAKING THE BEAUTY BUSINESS WORK

Women in our study reported that Avon offers a number of advantages over other direct selling opportunities and over the micro-lending schemes that have garnered so much press attention in recent times.

First, the costs and requirements of entry are low. Traditional barriers to entrepreneurship among women, such as the need for property, assets or salaried guarantors to serve as collateral, are not required. An aspiring Avon representative can join the system with a minimal credit record for a small fee (about £4). While many of the direct sales programmes springing up in poor nations require significant investments in up-front inventory, often financed at exorbitant interest rates, or require expensive capital equipment such as a computer or car, Avon does not ask its representatives to finance either inventory or equipment.

With Avon, inventory is supplied as it is ordered, delivered directly by post, and liquidated immediately through sale. This system is well suited to regions where retail distribution is not well developed, capital is scarce, and the skill necessary to manage major credit risk is often lacking.

Second, a healthy profit margin is encouraged. As one representative told us, Avon ladies “can buy a loaf of bread with one lotion commission; if they sell five body lotions their kids will have bread for the whole week; if they sell ten they’ll buy sugar and tea bags.” Indeed, financial independence was frequently cited as a major personal achievement made possible through Avon exchange, an outcome that is fostered by a range of organisational policies and practices. The company, for instance, encourages women to bank. Whereas only a third of black female South Africans typically had a bank account, 93 per cent of the women in our study reported that they did.

However, Avon schemes can present challenges for the poor. Although the company does not require advance payment for their products, representatives can become squeezed if payments from customers are delayed. This situation is particularly difficult for low income women, who typically lack the resources to cover such contingencies. Over two thirds of the traders we interviewed claimed that payment issues often caused tensions. Furthermore, although Avon offers a product range that is broad enough to capture sales from poor consumers, some representatives were frustrated by global decisions to discontinue products that have special local appeal.

FINANCIAL MAKEDOVER

Despite these drawbacks, the income earned through selling Avon products has enabled the women in our study to meet their families’ daily needs. As one representative told us, Avon ladies “can buy a loaf of bread with one lotion commission; if they sell five body lotions their kids will have bread for the whole week; if they sell ten they’ll buy sugar and tea bags.” Indeed, financial independence was frequently cited as a major personal achievement made possible through Avon exchange, an outcome that is fostered by a range of organisational policies and practices. The company, for instance, encourages women to bank. Whereas only a third of black female South Africans typically had a bank account, 93 per cent of the women in our study reported that they did.

The perceived benefits of working as an Avon representative go beyond income and financial security to take in less tangible advantages such as empowerment and self-esteem. In South Africa, the company provides skills training in financial management and team building, and recognises the achievement of individual representatives through awards and prizes. While such efforts aim to motivate and retain the sales force, they also cultivate women’s confidence and self-esteem. As one representative explained to us: “I have come out of my shell, full stop. That’s how I’ve grown. I am able to communicate with people at all levels; no one is too high for me and no one is too low for me. And I’ve got Avon to thank for that.”

HELLO TOMORROW

The initial data from our study suggest that schemes such as Avon can offer a socially innovative way to make global markets work for poor women. It is clear that the ingredients in this particular partnership—women’s ability to build on existing ties, the flexibility of the work, and the immediacy of payment, plus the fact that it is largely outside the control of men—may provide a compelling model for poverty reduction in developing countries.

Catherine Dolan is University Lecturer in Marketing at the Said Business School. Linda Scott is Professor of Marketing at the Said Business School.

HOT QUESTION

What marketing opportunities are being created by the current financial crisis?
INTERVIEW: WALT FRESEE
by STEVE COOBIER

WALT FRESEE, THE CHIEF EUPHORIA OFFICER OF BEN & JERRY'S, IS ON A MISSION

B en & Jerry's is one of the most recognised ice cream brands in the world. With its distinctive flavours, such as Chubby Monkey and Cherry Garcia, it is the luxury ice cream of choice for many. The Vermont-based company, founded by Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield in 1979, is also famous for its pioneering community-oriented approach to business. But, when it was announced in 2000 that Unilever was buying the company, part of a wider trend of multinationals buying up social mission brands, many feared the values-driven aspect of the business might not survive the takeover.

So how has Ben & Jerry's distinctive business flavour fared without its founders, first under the stewardship of Yves Cousteau, and now led by the aptly named Chief Euphoria Officer, Walt Freese. Is there still a warm glow surrounding the brand, or are things feeling decidedly chilly?

Working for a brand with a social mission is nothing new for Freese (favourite flavour currently Phish Food). He joined Ben & Jerry's in 2001, initially as Chief Marketing Officer, from another values-led company, Celestial Seasonings Herbal Teas. Starting as he meant to go on, Freese rebranded his title to "chief anti-marketing officer." "I said at the time, by definition, anything that feels like marketing is not Ben & Jerry's" – and was promoted to the CEO spot in 2004.

To those who might question Unilever's commitment to carrying on the social mission, Freese points to the nuture of an acquisition agreement as evidence of its goodwill.

"Unilever realised that large companies have a natural propensity to homogenise distinctive brands and businesses, so they built in some infrastructure to prevent that from happening," says Freese. "There is a unique acquisition agreement, negotiated with Ben & Jerry's, which provides for the CEO to report into Unilever for operating purposes, but to an independent board of directors for matters relating to the essential integrity of the brand equity and social mission."

Unilever's recognition of the importance of the social mission was one of the things that attracted Freese to the job. Ben & Jerry's mission has three parts—the product, economic, and social elements—that are treated as equally important. If I had to distil it down, "product" is to make the best ice cream that money can buy; "economic" is to earn superior returns for our stakeholders or shareholders, which today is Unilever; and "social mission" is to be a leading progressive force for social and economic justice and the environment, everywhere we do business, which is globally," he says. "And for a socially responsible business to be truly effective and change the world, we need to work upwards, and that means influencing Unilever to do the same."

So how does a company with a brand essence it describes as "joy for the belly and soul," that is fun and irreverent, has progressive values, and echoes traditional brand or marketing practices, make good on its social commitment?

Freese rattles off a list of impressive activities, first stopping to make the point that this is not "social responsibility by numbers". We never talk about Ben & Jerry's in terms of positioning. We talk about authenticity, and being an inside-out brand – what we put out there in the world is a reflection of what and who we are as human beings, as we walk into our offices every day," he says. "We draw a hard line between social mission and marketing, our goal for our social mission is to be a progressive force for change in the world, not to sell more ice cream."

The activities encompass Ben & Jerry's commitment to sustainable dairy farming, family farms, fair trade certified and other forms of socially and environmentally sustainable sourcing, reducing the company's carbon footprint and working towards becoming carbon neutral globally, and supporting the organisation Peace One Day – to mention just a few.

"We have taken very contentious positions at times," says Freese. "Prior to the US invasion of Iraq, for example, Ben & Jerry's sent a bus load of employees to Washington DC to protest and take a stance in support of peace and against the invasion."

The brand travels well abroad. It is the fastest growing global brand of ice cream within Unilever, in turn the largest ice cream business in the world – and that includes exporting the social mission. Freese is aware, though, that the mission may need to be adapted for different regions. "We do allow and encourage our regions, and markets, to take the social mission and keep it progressive, but to make it relevant for a given market," he says.

Where the founders were once the figureheads for activism within the business, today Freese sees activism as an integral part of his job. "If you look at my Facebook page, you will see that it is largely filled with people who are leaders in the field of social and economic justice and environmental change. So it is a critical part of my role," he says.

"Ben and Jerry are not just heroes of mine, but have become close friends over the last eight years. They are still my true north on the compass. If I have questions about what would feel or be right for the brand, they are right here for me to call or see. And, in the last four years, both Ben and Jerry have become increasingly re-involved with the business and brand, and have become very much involved as advocates, particularly for our social mission initiatives."

And Ben & Jerry's can teach Unilever a thing or two. Beside its undoubted expertise in non-traditional marketing, such as events marketing, guerrilla marketing, public relations (see Freese calls it) and social networking, there is of course the "working upwards" with the social mission that Freese refers to. "Took to its ultimate level, corporate social responsibility has to be built into every aspect of an integrated business model," says Freese. "It cannot be something you do as an add-on. You cannot run your business and say, we are also going to take some social good initiatives; you need to practise it every day in the way you run your business. That is the insight that Ben & Jerry's has to offer Unilever."
THE DOUBLE-ECONOMY

THE OMNICOM GROUP IS FORMING A NEW CONSULTANCY GROUP TO HELP COMPANIES DO BUSINESS WITH WOMEN.

About half the private wealth in the United Kingdom is held by women, a figure that is expected to grow to 60 per cent by 2025, as a new generation of financially sophisticated younger women come to power. The 2006 Nobel Peace was awarded to Muhammad Yunus for his micro-lending programme aimed at poor Bangladeshi women; while Goldman Sachs recently launched an ambitious international programme to train businesswomen in developing countries (see page 35). Time magazine, in one of its famous feature lists, placed investing in women in a 2008 array of “ten ideas that will change the world.” And recently, Omnicom, the world’s largest marketing communications holding company, recognised this important trend by forming a new consultancy group called G23 to advise their clients on the women’s economy. G23, whose founding was announced in the New York Times last July, is a specialised consultancy dedicated to understanding the nuances of women’s economic behaviour in a way that can be harnessed for global marketers. G23 – G is for Group, 23 is the number of the xx or xy chromosome pair that determines sex – was formed from among top female executives at Omnicom. The founders bring a range of marketing disciplines to bear on projects aimed at doing business with women.

In support of G23’s founding, Omnicom funded an extensive global study of women’s lifestyles and purchasing behaviour. A survey among 8,000 women in sixteen countries (Australia, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Spain, UAE, UK and US) covered values, aspirations, and attitudes, as well as buying patterns, while in-depth interviews in eleven of those countries added lenses for media and communications styles and beliefs about the future.

Themes from the million-dollar study include the importance of networking as a coping mechanism, as well as a shopping strategy and job-hunting tactic, among women. The overarching value women traditionally place on family was demonstrated in a globally summarised list of priorities, but so was a new and closely ranked second: personal freedom. Interesting purchase strategies, such as a buying cooperative informally dubbed “the Costco group,” emerged to demonstrate the resourcefulness, shrewdness, and flexibility of women as consumers. The data also allow women to be clustered in “tribes” in a way that crosses national boundaries to illuminate emergent similarities – one group of 30-year-old Chinese were in the same tribe with age 50 plus Americans!

G23 is not the first women-focused group in US marketing. “Girl groups” such as the one famously led by Helen Lansdowne Resor at J. Walter Thompson in the early twentieth century, were once the norm in the production of campaigns aimed at women within the large full-service ad agencies. In recent years, small special interest market research firms, such as Mary Lou Quinn’s Just Ask a Woman, and niche subgroups in larger agencies, such as LeDole, a consultancy within Leo Burnett Worldwide (part of Publicis), have also focused on marketing to women.

The Omnicom Group is forming a new consultancy group to help companies do business with women.
“A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE WOMEN’S ECONOMY – ONE THAT INCLUDES WOMEN AS BUSINESSPEOPLE AS WELL AS CONSUMERS, WOMEN CONTROLLING WEALTH AS WELL AS NEEDING ASSISTANCE, WOMEN IN ROLES AS EXECUTIVES AS WELL AS ENTREPRENEURS: IS ESSENTIAL FOR MEETING THE MARKETING CHALLENGES OF TODAY.”

Yet the founding of G23 is significant for its level, its breadth, its scope, its depth, as well as its timing and strategy. G23 is the first of such women’s groups to be formed from among the top executive ranks. Because Omnirom’s subsidiaries cover a full range of marketing disciplines, from conventional advertising to digital to PR and so on, G23 is the first women’s initiative that is not limited to one slice of the marketing pie. Further, since Omnirom operates all around the world, the intended reach for G23 is truly global. Finally, because the Omnirom team is actively recruiting vertically among younger women at Omnirom (a new group called “G23 Next”) has already been identified, as well as laterally among the global staff, the group will have a depth of understanding not previously available, not to mention substantially more “bench” in the way of human resources.

The strategic thinking behind G23, however, reflects the unique sensibility that informs this moment in the development of the world economy. CEO Janet Riccio remarks that “marketing to women is a bankrupt concept,” adding that the correct strategy for the twenty-first century “age of the female economy” is “doing business with women instead.”

To that end, the leadership of G23 is purposefully engaging with top female executives among global marketers. Though many surveys and commentators have noted that women are still under-represented at the top ranks of industry, there are, at this point, a surprising number of women in top positions among consumer marketing companies. Linda Heasley, CEO of The Limited, and Linda Boff, Global Director of Marketing Communications at GE, both advise to G23, are two examples. Others include Mary Dillon at McDonald’s and Robin Burgess, Professor of Economics at the LSE.

MYanagan’s advisory board, as another member of the advisory board, my own research interests lie in the area of women’s economy, empowerment in developing nations. Riccio herself is on the board of the Women’s Funding Network.

A holistic perspective on the women’s economy—one that includes women as businesspeople as well as consumers, women controlling wealth as well as needing assistance, women in roles as executives as well as entrepreneurs—is essential for meeting the marketing challenges of today. Conceiving of women simply as another market segment blinks managers to the potential synergies of multiple tactics, while also leaving them open to embarrassing international mistakes and insensitive gestures toward internal audiences. A deep sense of the patterns that characterise women’s transactions is essential. By rethinking the category of “women” to encompass the full sphere of economic activity from investment to production to marketing and onwards to consumption and disposal, the new economic-era comes more clearly into view.

Linda Scott is Professor of Marketing at the Said Business School and a member of the Advisory Board for G23.

NEW INTERNATIONAL GROWTH CENTRE

FELIX REED-TSOCHAS

In December 2008 Donalds Alexander MP, International Development Secretary, launched a new International Growth Centre, to be led by the University of Oxford and the London School of Economics and Political Science, to provide practical help to promote economic growth in developing countries. The Department for International Development (DFID) will provide £85 million over the next three years to fund the new centre whose co-directors will be Paul Collier, Professor of Economics at Oxford, and Robin Burgess, Professor of Economics at the LSE.

THE SECONDARY MARKET FOR HEDGE FUNDS

TARUN RAMADORAI

A research project carried out by Felix Reed-Tsochas, Lecturer in Complex Systems at the Said Business School, together with a team of international researchers, revealed which business connections are most likely to provide stability in economic conditions. The team analysed a new dataset from the New York garment industry, comprising 700,000 financial transactions over a nineteen-year period, during which the total number of firms in the industry dropped dramatically from over 3,000 to 190. The project’s findings may be of relevance to other networks undergoing severe contraction, such as ecological networks facing habitat destruction, networks of neurotised affected by degenerative diseases, or the rapidly shrinking network of interbank loans.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF EUROPEAN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND MARKETS

COLIN MAYER

Colin Mayer, Peter Mores Dean of the Said Business School, Xavier Freixas, Professor of Economics at the University of Barcelona, and Philipp Hartmann of the European Central Bank, have brought together a network of leading economists from across the world to analyse the transformation of European financial institutions and markets brought about by financial integration. The Handbook of European Financial Markets and Institutions, published by Oxford University Press in January 2008, is written for everyone involved in financial markets—practitioners, policy makers, scholars, students and others.

WORKING KNOWLEDGE

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African giant pouched rats weigh up to 1.5 kilograms. They live in burrows and find their way around using their sense of smell. They collect food in their pouches and store it underground.

The rats are trained using a combination of click training and food rewards. They are put on a leash and sniff out increasingly challenging TNT targets, initially using de-activated landmines in a simulated minefield.

The rat wears a small harness and is guided by a search string, which is connected between two trainers. The rat moves systematically up and down the search string and scratches the spot when it detects a landmine.

Each rat has its own handler, and caretakers regularly take the rats out for play and exercise. However, rats don’t get as attached to their handlers as dogs do, meaning rats can work with any trainer.

The relatively light weight of the rats means that they are far less likely than dogs to set off the landmines when they find them.

**Sniffer Rat Facts**
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**Giant Rats Generally Get a Bad Press, but as Christie George and Classmates Discovered, They Can Be Life Savers.**

In her childhood, Bart Wetsjens has had a passion for rodents. Here are some of the things he admires about rats: they are easy to tame and train; they are adaptable; they love repetitive tasks; and they have a highly developed sense of smell – qualities that Bart, originally a product engineer from Belgium, realised would make them ideal landmine detectors. So ten years ago, he and fellow Belgian Christophe Cox set up APOPO, a non-profit organisation designed to train sniffer rats to detect explosives and diagnose diseases.

By contrast, Christie George, an MBA student from the Said Business School, didn’t like rodents very much at all. In fact she’s not that keen on animals. So when she and classmates Lindsay Miller, Alyson Goodner and Mitsuhito Saito set up APOPO’s, a non-profit organisation designed to train sniffer rats to detect explosives and diagnose diseases. By contrast, Christine George, an MBA student from the Said Business School, didn’t like rodents very much at all. In fact she’s not that keen on animals. So when she and classmates Lindsay Miller, Alyson Goodner and Mitsuhito Saito set up APOPO, a non-profit organisation designed to train sniffer rats to detect explosives and diagnose diseases.

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The MBA team was tasked with charting the market landscape for both landmine detection and tuberculosis detection (a new application APOPO is developing) and with providing pricing recommendations for detection services in both these markets.

Over the course of two weeks research in Oxford and six weeks at the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro where APOPO has been based since 2000, the classmates put into practice much of what they had learned on the MBA programme.

“Positioning rats as life savers was a fascinating marketing problem, and the project offered the opportunity to put into practice many of the marketing theories we had learned in the classroom,” Christie says.

The team’s final recommendations included: a competitive product package for de-mining which could be presented to governments around the world; a range of potential business models for launching detection and tuberculosis detection (a new application APOPO is developing) and with providing pricing recommendations for detection services in both these markets.

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On its way to becoming fastest-growing top five world beer brand, Cobra Beer has run a number of innovative advertising and marketing campaigns, from Curmulus Days to a series of television commercials around themes such as imagination and ingenuity. So what does the Cobra brand stand for? What makes it so successful?

A brand is what a brand does. Is it the packaging? Yes. Is it the liquid inside, and the less gassy extra smooth taste? Yes. Is it the way the brand communicates, through its events, through its advertising? Yes.

One thing that sums up the brand is its attitude. It is constantly breaking the mould, constantly going against trends. It is also the people who work with a brand in terms of the entrepreneurial spirit, the David and Goliath attitudes. All those things make up the brand.

There is this combination of being cool and contemporary on the one hand. We have an amazing cult following for the brand that has developed from day one, built up from the grass roots. And on the other hand, there is this impression of Cobra that it has been around for ever. It sounds so familiar, as if it has been around for centuries.

Tell me a little bit about the latest “now you’re talking” positioning?

Part of the vision for Cobra was always to have a global brand, and so the taste had to be globally appealing, so there was this quest for the perfect beer. The extra smooth less gassy taste is at the heart of the brand and gives it its drinkability and ability to go so well with food. We have always expressed that idea in our communications from the “less gassy beer” message earlier on, and the early Curmulus Days adverts, all based around the drinkability and less gassiness.

Cobra is so easy to drink, it is effortless. And we have now translated this concept into effortless engagement. When you are drinking Cobra you are more comfortable because it is not so gassy. So you can eat more if you want to because the drink class not bloat you up – and so the banter flows — “less gassy, more banter”. So this is where the “beer for banter” line came from, which leads to “now you’re talking”. Which of course has the double meaning of “now you are talking” as in “this is a great product”.

Who are the most loyal Cobra drinkers?

The key target in marketing terms, the primary consumer group, is called “premium image chasers”. They are 24- to 35-year-olds, who tend to be very image and fashion conscious, pre-family but living with a partner, they appreciate quality products, are willing to pay more for them, and are very brand loyal. Also premium male drinkers are our target market because they appreciate Cobra as well.

That is why for example we reach our target market through sponsorship of a television channel like Dave.

Then again, our market is very wide. We now have distribution to over 80 per cent of Indian restaurants. Everyone goes to Indian restaurants regardless of age group, so everyone comes across Cobra. We have always had a cult following, because Cobra built the brand up from the grass roots with no advertising expenditure, with no ability to advertise or commercialise the brand in any way. We have a very loyal and solid foundation to build on. So we have to be very careful never to dilute that, never to commercialise the brand.

Is it important to keep your brand’s roots alive?

It is where you are from. You cannot change where you are from. This is the whole thing about identity, I am Indian and proud of that. I was born in India, brought up in India, I love India. I am Indian, but I am also British, I am also a Zoroastrian Parsi. I am also an Asian Briton.

You are not just one thing as an individual; you have multiple identities. Similarly with Cobra, it is beer of Indian origin, and now manufactured in India. However, it is also very much an international emerging global beer brand, exported to over 50 countries around the world.

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LINDA SCOTT

India Scott does not live in an ivory tower. While she believes in the value of rigorous research, the projects she is involved in are firmly rooted in reality and are designed to have a positive impact, in particular on the economic empowerment of women.

Scott’s current projects include working with Avon on direct selling in South Africa (see pages 08–09), acting as an advisor for Omnicom’s recently formed G23 consultancy (see pages 14–15), and collaborating with Procter & Gamble on a research project to test the theory that providing sanitary pads is likely to be a simpler and cheaper way to improve girls’ school attendance in developing nations than other comparable interventions.

This last project is important, Scott says, because female education is firmly linked to economic development, affecting not only national productivity, but also fertility rates, infant mortality and disease. Colleagues Sue Dopson, Paul Montgomery and Catherine Dolan have already conducted qualitative research into the problem, using Ghana as a prototypical site, and the team is now preparing to carry out a trial study at selected sites. The research is being conducted in partnership with CARE International and is being facilitated by the Ministry of Education in Ghana.

Scott is motivated by a passion to make a difference. “I believe the time is right not only for eradicating the most extreme instances of poverty, but for erasing the horrific forms of gender oppression that still occur in much of the developing world,” she says. “The combination of available funding, plus institutions and corporations willing to take up the work, and media interest, make this the ideal time to be working in this field.”

She is particularly interested in market-based approaches to solving these problems, and her work with multi-nationals takes her to corners of the Earth she would otherwise never have visited. “It’s not always pleasant and I experience culture shock fairly often, but I feel lucky to be doing what I am doing,” she says.

Scott joined the Said Business School in 2006 from the University of Illinois where she held professorial appointments in marketing, art, women’s studies, and communications. Her humanities background (she has bachelors and masters degrees in American literature and history) combined with experience working in corporate banking and advertising, and her MBA from a top US school, make her a formidable force.

As Professor of Marketing at the School, Scott continues to be closely involved in advertising. Much of her past research work focuses on the use of music, art and language in advertising, and she is now the editor of Advertising & Society Review, the first scholarly journal devoted entirely to advertising and its relationship to society, culture, history, and the economy.

Many people have a naïve view of advertising, Scott says. While she agrees that advertising can be a negative influence on culture, contributing to overly materialistic societies and the objectification of men and women, she says it is “bolish and uninformed” to believe that we would be better off just using goods for “what they are” without all the meanings, values and images attached to them by advertising. “Without some way of distinguishing culturally among the proliferation of objects around us, we would not be able to make sense of modern material life at all,” she says.

She is cautious about condemning the advertising of any particular products – whether it be toys or fast food. “We all have products or services we would rather not see advertised,” she says, “but I feel any constraints on speech, even commercial speech, should only be applied if it is certain that the public good will significantly benefit. Remember, the fight against HIV-AIDS transmission has been substantially held back by religious groups who object to condom advertising. It’s a slippery slope.”

So what recent ads have impressed her the most? “Like everyone else, I love Apple advertising,” she says. “It’s beautiful, whimsical, inspiring; often funny; and strategically it’s always focused and right on target.” She admires the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty for the sincerity of intent, even though her book Fresh Lipstick debunks the feminist critique of the beauty industry. The CARE “I am powerful” campaign also appeals. “I love it because it fits in with my work, but also because the photography in it is simply stunning.” As for campaigns that repel her, “American beer advertising is really gross,” she says.

Scott is optimistic about the future prospects for advertising despite the recession, new technologies such as ad-skipping, and the fragmentation of audiences. “I am always amazed at the way every economic downturn and new media technology causes folks to declare ‘the end of advertising,’” she says. “For at least a hundred years, pundits and especially advertisers have been saying last rites over the ad agencies. These declarations have been wrong every time and they will be wrong again. I often joke to my classes that, due to an incredible ability to mutate in self-defence, advertising agencies and cockroaches will both survive when the rest of us are long gone.”

In her teaching, Scott encourages students to see how their marketing activities can have a positive impact on the communities in which they operate by providing an understanding of the relationships between individuals, social systems and goods. The marketing, culture and society elective she teaches to MBA students “taught back in the crucial elements excised by classical economics,” she says, “getting them to consider markets in a way that is culturally situated and historically informed.” It is an approach that chimes in well with the Said Business School’s broader goal of preparing students to operate effectively in different global markets.

The Said Foundation is funding Linda Scott and Catherine Dolan to work with CARE International to study the livelihoods of poor women in Bangladesh as they engage with globalization. The project will assess the earnings opportunities presented by new distribution arrangements for global consumer goods, multinational’s efforts to effect positive changes for women at work and at home, and the impact of manufactured goods on women’s well-being.
MARKETING ANALYSIS MAY GIVE INTERNATIONAL VACCINE DELIVERY PROGRAMMES A MUCH NEEDED BOOST

BY JACOB MCNIGHT AND DOUGLAS HOLT

The global public health sector has made massive investments in recent years to improve the vaccination rates in the 70 poorest countries in the world. Backed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, developed countries now provide free vaccines to these countries for all the basic infectious diseases through the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). In addition, organisations such as the WHO, UNICEF, CARE, Save the Children, and nongovernmental foreign aid agencies have worked intensively with health ministries to design, resource and implement more effective vaccine delivery programmes.

While great progress has been made, reaching national levels in many countries, in about a dozen countries these interventions have been unsuccessful. In countries such as India, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Indonesia, vaccination rates often run below 50 per cent in certain regions compared to the 80 per cent in other countries. In Ethiopia’s Jimma Zone, for example, the Somali region struggles to vaccinate nomadic populations is even more difficult. Successful delivery systems, seemingly efficient from a supply chain viewpoint, actually severely impede vaccination. It is not reasonable to expect mothers living at subsistence level to organise their lives around a single day for vaccination, which we are currently exploring.

One key component of the Saïd Business School’s marketing, culture and society initiative is to apply leading-edge marketing analysis to create innovative solutions to some of the most challenging social and environmental problems of our day. Vaccine delivery is one area where we feel our approach can bring unique insight. By analysing the vaccine delivery system from a marketing perspective, we have gained a good idea of the barriers to vaccination from the customer’s perspective, solving the way for a range of innovative solutions, which we are currently exploring.

1. Ethiopian mothers generally value vaccination for their children and, all things being equal, would be happy to have their children immunised. Under-vaccination does not result from the mothers’ ignorance or negative perceptions about vaccine efficacy or safety.

2. Mothers are often unable to get their children vaccinated because of the logistical hurdles involved. In Ethiopia, over 90 per cent of families live in rural areas, of which about 25 per cent are nomadic. The health posts that serve them are often a considerable distance away. Mothers can’t afford to lose a day’s work to get their infants vaccinated, they can’t find care for their other children, and have difficulty arranging transport.

3. Mothers have little trust in the delivery system. They don’t believe that they will get good service from the Health Extension Workers (HEWs) who deliver the vaccines; they believe they will be made to wait a long time, the HEWs will likely be rude, vaccines may not be available, and the HEWs may not administer the vaccinations when scheduled. They also hold the HEWs’ skills in low regard.

4. HEWs are constrained by the system, their management strategies to get their work done when the system allows them to do so, and the various types of service encounters which we are currently exploring.

5. Given that mothers point to front-line service provision as the key barrier to vaccination, we are also investigating what it is that the marketing system does not successfully enable the HEWs to fulfil their responsibilities. We are examining how HEWs are constrained by the system, their management strategies to get their work done when the system allows them to do so, and the various types of service encounters which constitute their work.

We are finding that the design of the delivery system, seemingly efficient from a supply chain viewpoint, actually severely impedes vaccination. It is not reasonable to expect mothers living at subsistence level to organise their lives around a single day for vaccination, which is entirely reasonable for them to be less than enthusiastic, given the verbal reports in their neighbourhoods about missing vaccines and closed facilities.

To help address this problem, we designed a research project which uses marketing techniques to diagnose the systemic barriers to effective vaccine delivery in the problematic countries. Our ultimate goal is to propose alternative interventions that will significantly boost routine vaccination rates in countries that are not on track to achieve “hard immunity” public health goals.

To do this, we have identified a problem-solving framework adapted from marketing strategy. We study vaccine delivery as a complex marketing system and seek to specify why the vaccine delivery system fails to deliver on its service goals. This analysis requires two types of data: afrm, nrm understanding of how our “customers” — in this case mothers with infants — understand, value, and use vaccine delivery, combined with a close study of how the current system is designed to deliver this service.

We are carrying out this research in Ethiopia’s Jimma Zone. In Ethiopia, infant vaccination rates are running at about 57 per cent, with huge variation between regions. Urban areas such as Addis Ababa achieve rates of over 90 per cent while rural areas struggle to immunise more than 20 per cent of their infants. In Jimma Zone, vaccination rates hover around 40 to 50 per cent.
Widely speculation and Internet start-ups are out of hand, but in the web 2.0 era, a more scientific approach to investment is required. Thus this end Younoodle, an online community for entrepreneurs, based in San Francisco, launched the world’s first business start-up valuation tool. Its creators are claiming that its patented scientific prediction technology will revolutionise the funding process for would-be Google and YouTube.

The founders behind Younoodle, Bob Goodson and Kirill Makharinsky, teamed up with Rebeca Hwang, an engineering graduate from MIT to gather information from 3,000 established start-ups. They assessed each one, looking for patterns in four areas: the team, financial factors, the concept, and advisors. The results were then used to create the so-called algorithm that drives the “start-up predictor”.

To use the predictor, a start-up company simply fills in a survey with detailed questions to use the “start-up predictor”. So the predictor for a start-up company simply fits in a survey with detailed questions focused on these four areas. They receive a valuation calculated as both a score out of 1,000 and a cash valuation based on three years of trading. Entrepreneurs can also see how their valuation changes when different skills or mentors are added.

Co-founder Bob Goodson says it’s archaic that venture capitalists invest millions of pounds a day in start-up businesses based largely on a hunch. “Last year in the US alone there was US$67.7 billion invested in start-ups. It’s a huge amount of capital and it’s high risk,” he says. “But there is no quantitative modelling being done to help inform those decisions.

Those decisions are being made by humans, meeting each other and making a decision. No other industry in that size operates in that way.” In contrast, Goodson cites the insurance industry, which has long used mathematical equations to understand the potential risk that comes with each customer.

One of the most interesting aspects of the start-up predictor is that it focuses not just on the concept but also places emphasis on the people—having the right team and right advisors. But can the human factor ever be mathematically quantified? Not according to some of Younoodle’s critics who have suggested that a team dynamic and human chemistry cannot be measured by a computer.

On Younoodle’s launch, Michael Arrington, co-editor of TechCrunch, a popular blog covering Silicon Valley’s start-up communities, put a few household names through the predictor. He found, for example, that Google would yield a valuation of US$808 million 33 years after its founding. This figure is short of the reality for Google after three years, but given that the average Stanford start-up comes out with a Younoodle prediction of US$310,000, it was clearly identified as an outlier. And how does Younoodle do on its own test? According to recent investigations made by Daily Telegraph’s enterprise editor, Richard Tyler, Younoodle thinks Younoodle will be worth US$16 million in 2010. Only time will tell.

www.younoodle.com
Entrepreneurs need to think about how the structures and rules of engagement can be changed. For example, 25 per cent of all fuel use in Europe and the US is in ‘planes stacked up waiting to land. Probably around another 15 per cent is in ‘planes waiting to take off. Why? Luggage. Everyone in the world has a different bag, so you need baggage handlers to load it. I spoke to the Foreign Airlines Group about this recently, and it said, ‘Why don’t you all get together and lay, from now on passengers are all going to use exactly the same bag?’ They will fit on a conveyor system and each passenger will have their own barcode. You could load and unload luggage from a ‘plane in around five minutes.” The CO₂ impact would be enormous.

I’m fascinated by risk. It’s like walking to the top of a high diving board. You think, ‘I’ll do this badly, it’s going to hurt like hell and I’m going to have to pretend it’s really funny. You’re also wondering if the exterior, on your swimming trunks is done enough.”

The energy you put into worrying about and analysing the risk, could better be put into taking action.

At the Eden Project in July 2003, the accountants said, “We need to close the budget, make redundancies, and cut costs.” Instead, I decided to take an enormous gamble and build an ice rink. The accountants said, “you should do a study.” I said, “If we do a study, we won’t have time to order.” We spent a million and a half pounds, but 140,000 people visited the Centre as a result. We kept all our staff, and now the ice rink is a cornerstone of our Cornish winter celebrations.

I live by a number of rules. Firstly, I believe in “Tinkerbell theory”, if you can get four people to believe in something as passionately as you do, it will almost certainly happen. You have to choose your four friends carefully. Make a list of what you’re genuinely weak at and hire people who can do those things. You want someone who’s a great speaker and salesman, who is aware of the world at large; and despite what I’ve said about accountants, you should always have a numbers person, someone who is cautious but not negative. Another rule I live by is “last man standing”. If you have a certain amount of charm and people know you’re not going to go away, they will eventually pay a large sum of money to make you go away. That’s been the entire basis of my success.

Another secret of success is lying or, as I prefer to say, “the telling of future truths”. Most people are beyondbound, self-judging and envious of people who have more talent than they do. The way to become successful is to have your idea, and gather at the people you admire together and say to them publicly, “I’m going to do this.” The fuel you will get from the potential shame of not doing it will be all you will need to drive you to success.

The last rule of life I have is that I accept every third invitation I receive. I might accept the first and second, but I always accept the third. I do it deliberately because I want to put myself in the jeopardy of meeting people I wouldn’t otherwise have met. As a result, I’ve opened an old people’s home and judged an orchid prize. The way to become successful is to order it.” We spent a million and a half pounds, but 140,000 people visited the Centre as a result. We kept all our staff, and now the ice rink is a cornerstone of our Cornish winter celebrations.

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Another secret of success is lying or, as I prefer to say, “the telling of future truths”. Most people are beyondbound, self-judging and envious of people who have more talent than they do. The way to become successful is to have your idea, and gather at the people you admire together and say to them publicly, “I’m going to do this.” The fuel you will get from the potential shame of not doing it will be all you will need to drive you to success.

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NEW ALUMNI FROM OXFORD
ALUMNI RANGE FROM A WEBSITE FOR CAR ENTHUSIASTS TO A BOUTIQUE INVESTMENT BANK FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS.

MORGAN MURPHY
MOTORPOOL

Morgan Murphy, a former Oxford Executive MBA student, has gone from middle manager to president and owner of a five-figure start-up company in just 18 months. Murphy used the Executive MBA, and in particular the programme’s compulsory entrepreneurship project, to develop his idea for Motorpool, an online community for classic car enthusiasts.

SCOTT PATTERSON
STUDENT CHOICE

Scott Patterson, an Executive MBA alumnus, has launched a new student loan venture. The company called “Student Choice” is designed to help thousands of US students afford quality higher education. Access to higher education is increasingly difficult for the average US family. The government offers federal loans but these are capped, so until now families have bridged the gap in provision by borrowing from traditional lenders at relatively high rates.

David Langer and Andy Young
GROUPSPACES

GroupSpaces, an Oxford-based web company providing online tools for real-world groups, has recently returned from Silicon Valley’s WebMission 2008, a trade forum for the UK’s 20 most promising web companies. Founded by two members of the Oxford Entrepreneurs society, David Langer and Andy Young, GroupSpaces arose from the pair’s frustration at the multitude of different websites membership databases, websites, events, polls, surveys, the sharing and more.

NYLIE CHARTON
UNITUS CAPITAL

Nylie Charlton, an alumna of the Said Business School, is applying her experience on an investment banker’s career to improving the lives of those who live on less than US$2-a-day. Charlton recently teamed up with Eric Savage, an alumnus of Harvard Kennedy School, to launch Unitus Capital, one of the first financial advisory firms designed to meet the investment needs of social entrepreneurs. With US$5.5 million backing from private investors, Unitus Capital is a boutique investment bank for social entrepreneurs who are working to improve the lives of those at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

“I want to transform the financial markets so they are accessible to social entrepreneurs and become a fundamental source of growth capital for businesses focused on empowering the millions around the world living at the bottom of the pyramid,” says Kylie, who is managing director of the newly-formed organisation Unitus Capital.

Email Embellishments

Email Embellishments was founded in early 2007 by a pair of Oxford MBAs from the class of 2006-07: David Maren and Cameron Turner. An Email Embellishment is a hyperlinked icon in the email signature, drawing attention to a cause, increasing awareness, and encouraging small giving. Recipients of the emails can view and click the email, allowing them to learn more about the cause, make a small donation and get their own emblem.
IN REAL LIFE THE TORTOISE LOSES

“THERE ARE HUGE AUSCIECS FOR MATERIAL THAT IS NOT DUMBOWN. THE ECONOMIST RECKONS ON ABOUT 30 MILLION PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD WHO ARE INTERESTED IN HIGH END JOURNALISM.”

WHY THE HARE WINS

So why is The Economist such a successful brand?

Firstly, I would credit our excellent editorial work with its relentless focus on quality. This is made possible by the degree of editorial independence guaranteed by the organisation’s distinctive structure. It is also made possible by investing in journalists. Our journalists are quite well paid, with good benefits and a congenial working environment.

Secondly, world forces in recent decades have played to the strengths of the brand. Globalisation, terrorism, financial market turmoil, the rise of the BRIC countries, free trade, and market forces, not to mention the complex interrelationships between them, certainly need explaining.

Thirdly, the British origin of the brand helps. The Economist is not in some international departure lounge without personality where no one speaks proper English, and everyone has a Montblanc pen. The fact that The Economist has a personality is crucial. Having a point of view gives the paper a personality.

There’s something else about the British origin that’s important, and that is the place of Britain, like it or not, as translator of the Anglo Saxons to those on the continent, and the place of the British as constructive friend to the Americans. The Economist brings them the outsiders’ view, from someone they trust. London’s role as a world centre is also helpful, because it is “in the swim.” The peer of journalistic talent in this city is useful too.

The fourth element is The Economist’s success is long-term investment in the brand and brand management. This means knowing what the brand stands for across all audiences and how that should inform everything that is done in all areas of the business. As noted in its contents page, The Economist’s goal is to “take part in a severe contest between intelligence, which presses forward, and an unworthy, timid ignorance obstructing our progress.” We want to lead the debate in the pursuit of progress, making sense of what is happening in the world.

The brand is managed not only by intelligent advertising, but through marketing in all its forms, with money committed over a number of years, and consistently.

The final element is our emphasis on customer insight. We carry out a lot of market research to ensure that we put the needs of readers and consumers of The Economist at the heart of what we do.

THE LESSONS: WHAT IS TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER MEDIA COMPANIES?

The media industry in the UK is incredibly competitive, with 8,500 magazine titles in over 54,000 outlets vying for readers’ attention. Competing in such an environment makes any company leaner and fitter.

Many other parts of the media industry are equally as competitive in the UK, one of the reasons we have a fit and lean media industry compared to international competitors.

The second area where there are transferable lessons is in the business model. Having learnt to put the reader first, we price the magazine at a premium so we make money on every copy. The business is highly international, which helps to balance out downturns in one particular region. Additionally the existence of two strong revenue streams can help in countering cyclical swings in advertising revenue.

The third lesson is around brand management. Having consistent values, well documented and consistently implemented is essential. Brand extension activity needs to have skin with its ears. And success is far from guaranteed. “Sticking to the knitting” is usually good advice. Don’t move too far from the core. The Economist Intelligence Unit is a good example.

Fourth, is the use of different media. During the initial dotcom boom, we didn’t “bet the farm” on our online presence. Seventeen per cent of our revenues are now digital but these have built up over time, based on an in-depth understanding of what our customers want. The future will be about how to do even more on the web, but in the end it’s not the medium which will tell.

Lastly, we understand the market for “serious stuff”. As the editor of The Guardian said recently, we can both enjoy watching a football match and enjoy watching a serious play at the theatre. There are huge audiences for material that is not dumbed down. The Economist reckons on about 30 million people around the world who are interested in high end journalism.

Above all, it’s the people that matter – having the talent and the teamwork to get excellent execution and growth both in the business and in value to shareholders.

Helen Alexander is vice-president of the Confederation of British Industry. She was chair-executive of The Economist Group from 1997–2008. She is an Honorary Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford. This article is an edited excerpt from a talk she gave at the Said Business School in October 2008.
BUSINESS AT OXFORD

BUSINESS AS USUAL

SAID BUSINESS SCHOOL APPOINTED WHITE HOUSE FELLOW

Oxford University has appointed a new Senior Fellow to the President’s Advisory Board, including Sarita James, a Said Business School alumna. The Fellows are selected by the President’s Commission on White House Fellowships, to participate in America’s most prestigious fellowship programme for leadership development and public service. Sarita is Senior Vice President of the 50-person Strategy and Policy Division at New York City Economic Development Corporation. Prior to NYEDC, Sarita worked as a management consultant for McKinsey & Company, where she advised clients in the technology and telecommunications industries. Sarita’s humor writing has appeared in the New York Times, and she serves on the board of Anark Kala, a Kolkata-based women’s non-profit.

SAID BUSINESS SCHOOL JOINS GOLDMAN SACHS “10,000 WOMEN” INITIATIVE

In September 2008 the Said Business School at the University of Oxford announced its participation in Goldman Sachs’ “10,000 Women” initiative. The “10,000 Women” programme supports partnerships between universities and development organisations designed to provide a generation of women in under-served areas around the world with a sound business and management education. The initiative is grounded in the belief that expanding the entrepreneurial talent and managerial pool in these economies especially among women, is one of the most important means of increasing economic opportunity. Specifically, the Said Business School will partner with Zhejiang University in China to support training for 500 women entrepreneurs.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD TOPS ITUNES U DOWNLOAD CHART

The University of Oxford launched its podcast site on iTunes U on 7 October 2008. In the first week there were 168,000 visitors to the site and 60,000 downloads. This free site features public lectures, teaching material, interviews with leading academics, information about applying to the University, and much more.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY ESTABLISHES CENTRE FOR CORPORATE REPUTATION

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The Clifford Chance Conference on Professional Service Firms, organised by the Centre for the Management of Professional Service Firms at the Said Business School and held in Oxford on 6 and 7 July 2008, raised some new and challenging questions about what it means to be a professional. Papers were invited on the themes of: What do professionals know about their profession’s changing and how we are studying them is changing also,” said Professor Tim Morris, Academic Director of the Centre. “We are less explicitly concerned with the firm as a unit of analysis. The firm is but one actor in a whole network of relationships between individuals, organisations, regulators, and governments. We are beginning to look less at what is happening within professional service firms and more and more at the links between the work of professionals and big issues such as regulation and government.”

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The Centre will undertake a major set of research programmes within Oxford and will also appoint a number of international research fellows in the area from leading universities and business schools around the world. The findings of this research will be transferred into the Centre’s teaching programmes, including invitation only courses for senior managers including chairmen and CEOs, open programmes, an elective for the Oxford MBA and Executive MBA programmes, and a Distinguished Speaker annual lecture for undergraduates.

SAID BUSINESS SCHOOL ALUMNA APPOINTED WHITE HOUSE FELLOW

Oxford University has estab- lished a new teaching and research centre at Said Business School focused on corporate reputation. The Oxford University Centre for Corporate Reputation will be concerned with the underlying determinants of corporate reputation globally and how these impact on firms and their overall performance. Its director, Rupert Younger, previously co-founded Finsbury, the financial communications group.

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ECONOMIC EMPIRE BUILDING

The opportunity to train and teach in a major firm’s home town was the underlying concept behind Snagsta, the UK’s new online recommendations business. Said Business School alumnus, Phillip Hofmeyr, focussed on making the transition from SMes to a larger corporation. “Prior to Oxford i worked in smaller companies and I wanted a way into

SAID BUSINESS SCHOOL ALUMNA APPOINTED WHITE HOUSE FELLOW

On 26 June 2008 the White House announced the President’s appointment of fourteen White House Fellows, including Sarita James, a Said Business School alumna. The Fellows are selected by the President’s Commission on White House Fellowships, to participate in America’s most prestigious fellowship programme for leadership development and public service. Sarita is Senior Vice President of the 50-person Strategy and Policy Division at New York City Economic Development Corporation. Prior to NYEDC, Sarita worked as a management consultant for McKinsey & Company, where she advised clients in the technology and telecommunications industries. Sarita’s humor writing has appeared in the New York Times, and she serves on the board of Anark Kala, a Kolkata-based women’s non-profit.

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TWENTY20 VISION

A TEAM OF OXFORD MBAS WORKED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CRICKET COUNCIL ON THEIR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TWENTY20 CRICKET.

THE MCCA (ICCC) AND AN ALUMNUS OF THE OXFORD MBA PROGRAMME, HAS CONVINCED THE IT CAN ENGAGE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF THIS SPORTS PRACTICE.

THE MBA TEAM FOCUSED ON A FEW KEY AREAS. THE FIRST WAS ECONOMIC VALUATION. TWENTY20 CRICKET HAS SMASHED RECORDS FOR THE SALE OF MEDIA AND SPONSORSHIP RIGHTS, AND WALLER WANTED TO UNDERSTAND THE ECONOMIC DRIVERS INVOLVED AND DEVELOP A LONGER TERM VIEW OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TWENTY20 ON GLOBAL CRICKET.

ANOTHER AREA WAS CONSIDERING WHETHER TWENTY20 COULD BE USED TO MARKET CRICKET TO PARTS OF THE WORLD NOT SEEN AS TRADITIONAL CRICKET TERRITORIES, SUCH AS NORTH AMERICA, CENTRAL EUROPE AND EAST-ASIA.


THE MEDIA BUZZ FOLLOWING THE INDIAN TEAM WINNING THE INAUGURAL ICC WORLD TWENTY20 COMPETITION, COMBINED WITH THE LAUNCH OF THE INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE, HAS FUELLED WIDESPREAD CONSUMER INTEREST IN THIS FORM OF CRICKET, SAYS WALLER. "TWENTY20 HAS OPENED A VALUABLE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GAME. TO SECURE ITS LONG-TERM SUCCESS, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE ICCC ENGAGE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF THIS SPORTS PRACTICE."

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BUSINESS AT OXFORD
BRAND NEW WORLD

ArGueS the iSLAmiC wOrLD, the globe from France to China and beyond. Minority Muslim populations girdle the nations in the Middle East, significant populations as concentrated in a crescent of the Qur’an. While business leaders know their own national stamp on Halal products. Islamic brands also run foul of the “country of origin” issue. Muslim women in the West and a negative reaction often kicks in. The biggest challenge for those promoting Islamic brands to non-Islamic audiences is to move attention away from where products have come from to what they actually are and the qualities they possess. There is a parallel here with the shift in consumer perceptions which has been achieved regarding the label “Made in Japan” since World War II. Immediately after the War that label meant cheap copies of Western products; now it connotes high tech products of high quality and reliability. Many Muslims, like non-Muslims, want the latest, most beautiful and best designed trappings of the Western world. They adore Western brands – Manchester City and Aston Martin included – and want to have more. But while Islamic audiences love the Western big brands, they want their own, for two reasons. Firstly, many Western brands are not yet compliant with Islamic values; and, secondly, Islamic countries want to create their own global brands which they see as strategic business assets and national brand ambassadors.

For both East and West the challenges are daunting. Western brands have the marketing and branding expertise but often lack the cultural awareness and local knowledge to penetrate Islamic markets successfully. For leaders in predominantly Muslim countries there is an array of branding opportunities ranging all the way from products and companies through to national identities. But they admit to not having enough knowledge and skill to do the job properly. They are buying a lot of brands but still do not know how to run them, relying instead on ex-pat employees. Islamic business schools lag in teaching branding. But then do Western business schools – both see it as a subset of marketing rather than the other way round.

So, there is enormous pent-up demand in Islamic countries to learn about global branding and marketing and a keen desire from a business perspective to learn the techniques and skills so ably demonstrated by the West. It is therefore timely that the executive education arm of Oxford University’s Said Business School is to undertake a project concerned with research and education in Islamic branding and marketing that is intended to address both aspiring brand owners and managers in Islamic countries and marketing managers in Western corporations keen to succeed in Islamic markets.

Paul Temporal, an Associate Fellow of the Said Business School, is one of Asia’s leading brand experts. He is currently leading a major research project into Islamic branding and marketing.

BUILDING BRAND OBAMA

Barack Obama has built a global brand in less than two years – a phenomenal achievement accomplished using the methods of many successful international brands:

• A central vision: Obama’s vision is “change for the better”, a vision given emotional power by such universal triggers as “yes we can” and “hope”. In all Obama’s speeches those words are forcefully repeated.

• Core values: In Brand Obama these are honesty, openness, integrity, professionalism, passion, patriotism – all complemented by a powerful brand personality – that of Obama: approachable, caring, understanding, warm, firm but fair, visionary, cool and cosmopolitan.

• Understanding the target audience: Obama’s soaring aspirational rhetoric is noted in practical understanding of the voter: for instance, the pain and helplessness they might have experienced, or the hope they carry for their children.

• Empowerment: No consumer can resist an approach that talks about them and helps them feel they are in control. Obama would say things like, “This election is not about me – it’s about you” and “I’m asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington...I’m asking you to believe in yours.”

• Multiple touch points: Obama reached out to every demographic and psychographic target group, exploiting a mix of traditional media and modern technologies. Those ranged from “Obama branches” selling memorabilia such as his “change the world” T-shirts, to online tools for local fundraising; and from “Barack TV” to texting “HOPE” to support the Obama campaign.

In creating a compelling brand, Barack Obama has not just changed perceptions about himself but also about America. The American Dream has been brought to life and Obama has made everyone feel they can have a piece of it.

Paul Temporal
ECLIPSED OR ILLUMINATED?

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD: EDUCATING LEADERS FOR 800 YEARS

Combining the resources of the business school and the wider university, Executive Development at Oxford University’s Said Business School shapes the 21st century leadership agenda by working with individuals and organisations to create and meet new opportunities in the present and for the future.

OXFORD EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

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NEW! THE OXFORD DIPLOMA IN ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

THE OXFORD STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

THE OXFORD HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

WHAT NEXT? FOR LEADERS WITH MORE TO OFFER

THE OXFORD-HKU SENIOR EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

STRATEGY & CHANGE

THE OXFORD PROGRAMME ON NEGOTIATION

THE OXFORD SCENARIOS PROGRAMME

NEW! THE OXFORD STRATEGIC PRICING PROGRAMME

NEW! THE OXFORD SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME: NEW PATHWAYS TO PROFIT

CONSULTING AND COACHING FOR CHANGE

THE CIO ACADEMY

FINANCE

THE OXFORD DIPLOMA IN FINANCIAL STRATEGY

THE OXFORD FINANCE FOR EXECUTIVES PROGRAMME

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