

KEVIN ROBERTS ARTICLE FOR L'espresso, February 2005

VIVA LA DIFFERENCE

Human progress was never reasonable. It is driven by flashes of inspiration, streams of emotion and buckets of passion. Across time, a burning drive to make a difference has been *the* difference. Never truer than in this crazy age. Here's 20 ways you can make a difference in 2005.

Sirens

1. Be Soft

Soft is strong. King Kong (and its director Peter Jackson of Lord of the Rings) are big softies. And a kangaroo can't jump unless its tail is touching the ground. The future will belong to soft connections. Emotion not reason. Software not hardware. Soft not hard power. Soft is transparent. Soft is enabling. Soft is flexible. Soft is inclusive. Soft is slow Italian Food not Fast Fat Food. Soft.

2. Be in Spirit

To be inspired means to be "in spirit." To be an Inspirational Player, a radical optimist, wherever you stand or fall. Remember the return of Steve Jobs and Apple's "Think Different" campaign? Says Jobs: "That ad was to remind us of who our heroes are and who we are". Want to be in spirit? By the end of this month pass on the best piece of advice you've ever been given to ten people under 20.

3. Be Sensuous

Touch. Sound. Scent. Sight. Taste. Designing products, services and experiences around the five senses calibrates a better world. Holistic is the new reality. In the food business? Sell all fruit with leaves attached so consumers see it's fresh. With all five

senses put on high alert, magic happens.

4. Simply Sustain

Jeffrey Sachs' UN Millennium Project Report on poverty is required reading. An aperture is opening. A beam of light shines, one energized by low-cost simplicity. Every month 150,000 African children die of malaria because they don't have bed nets to keep out mosquitoes. Nets in Africa and Asia could save one million children this year. How about "Adopt a Landmine"? You send the \$300 it takes to dig one up and disarm it; you get sent a certificate with your mine's code number.

5. Sleep

Joan Klempner said: "To achieve the impossible dream, try going to sleep." With 24/7 lifestyles, we're getting less and sleep. Yet for success, achievement, and happiness, sleep is fundamental. Now science says our best ideas surface when we drift into sleep. Anytime sleep is pure competitive advantage. Walt Disney got it right: "If you can dream it, you can do it."

Global Rap

6. Go LoGlo

The local / global debate is the soap opera of business. 'Should I be thinking local?' 'Should I be thinking global?'... 'Should I be glocal? Start with action in the local (there are no global consumers!). Then cross boundaries. Wherever you are, export is the way to go. It's not about thinking. It's about acting, and going. Act Local; Go Global. Go LoGlo.

7. Learn to say "Ni Hao"

Unlike other Asian countries China was "born global". The dragon opened up and ventured out simultaneously, putting the globe in a spin. China is an Aladdin's Cave for enterprise. Open it! Learn to say in Chinese "Hello", "I love you" and "Pass the pasta"

before the 2008 Olympics.

8. BRIC it!

Brazil, Russia, India and China is where the action is. BRIC's share of world growth is predicted to rise from 20 per cent in 2003 to more than 40 per cent in 2025. Global economic activity is re-positioning from the developed to the developing world. Demand for consumer goods will boom. BRIC is the next Big Bang. Strike the match.

9. Don't invent; innovate

The difference? World-changing. Arno Penzias, a Nobel Prize winner in physics, makes the distinction. An invention is the product of a creative or curious mind. Innovation, however, changes customers' lives in some way or the world in which customers experience things.

10. Be Irreplaceable and Irresistible

Hating America while loving all things American is the 21st century paradox says Louis Chunovic. Wherever you stand, America's creative spirit remains irresistible and a beacon for modern enterprise. Brands set national and cultural boundaries. Lovemarks explode through them. They dazzle.

Love is the Potion

11. Don't be a Polar Bear

Polarization of values – cultural conflict – is as a bigger opportunity as a threat. Brands that take sides will lose. Brands that listen and bring sides together can become Lovemarks. In the US, stone barricades erected near government buildings post-9/11 have been replaced with stone-containers filled with plants. Lovemarks are part of a human conversation. They make the world a better place.

12. Join the Consumer Republic.

Manufacturers and retailers now work for consumers - not vice versa. Technology has given power to consumers. We're in the Consumer Republic – at last! It's a time of instant connectivity, transparency and accountability. Message to marketers? Stimulate me, surprise me, intrigue me, involve me, entertain me, love me – just don't bore me.

13. Be an Inspirational Consumer

The people who love a brand are its Inspirational Consumers. The passionate advocates, the radical optimists, the storytellers, the trendsetters, the moral guardians, the reconcilers of “stuff” and “spirit”. Is it really impossible to lick your elbow? Go ask an Inspirational Consumer. She's the medium.

14. Touch technology

Smart objects like Adidas smart shoe. Content co-creation like blogging. Customization like Ipod. All are part of this power and control shift to consumers. Question *du jour* - does technology make people happy? No. Does it make people happier? Yes. Lets get over this one and move on. It's technology and happiness. It's And / And not Either / Or.

15. Build it, they will come

Globally, the supermarket experience is a 20-minute dash through hell. Radio, lighting and air con should be done for assault. The Store – where 80% of purchase decisions are made - is the last mass medium and the biggest opportunity in business today. Solution? Drip it with mystery, sensuality, intimacy. Build a theater of dreams.

Lightening Strikes

16. Build windmills

A Boeing 747's wingspan is longer than the first flight of the Wright brothers. You can resist change and go backwards or embrace it and go forwards. When hurricanes come, build windmills! Pursue failure – you

discover your limits when you crash up against them.
When others Zig, Zag.

17. Live on the Edge

Edge of the world. Edge your seats. Edge of your dreams. And edge of time in my home New Zealand, half a day ahead of Italy. Edge is a big idea. Where will competitive edge cluster? In regions with technology, talent and tolerance. These will attract and unleash deep emotional intelligence.

18. Surprise with the Obvious

The most popular first name in the world is Muhammad. No piece of paper can be folded more than 7 times. The stall closest to the door in a bathroom is the cleanest, because it is the least used. Obvious. Overlooked. For cut-through innovation, communication, surprise with the obvious.

19. Get Together

To be inspired Europe needs to be together. Airbus A380 knows it (now so does Boeing). A belly from Spain, wings from Britain, a nose from France, interior from Germany, fuselage from Italy. The headline: "New technology from 'Old Europe' overwhelms old technology from new America." Creativity is connecting things.

20. Make Love

It's a timeless classic: "what the world needs now is love sweet love." Italy, with its chronic population challenge could sure use some. Go to work for Italy!!

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