



Keynote: delivering game-changing impact

Owen Hughes, Creative Director – Wolff Olins

Introduction by Jo Taylor, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and AMA Chair

Owen Hughes is passionate about creating brands that connect with ordinary people, inspire action and change behaviour. He believes that action will become as powerful as currency in the new economic landscape. Owen has more than 15 years' experience creating ground-breaking brands and driving large-scale change for leading businesses. During his time at Wolff Olins he has re-branded the European White Goods giant Indesit, helped to democratise Tate, created award-winning product brands for City Bank, repositioned and designed Allianz's investment banking offer and his clients and his work take him across the globe. He also led the ground-breaking re-branding of MacMillan Cancer Support.

Owen Hughes

At Wolff Olins we 'do brand' and in a nutshell we believe that brand is *not* your name, your logo, your slogan, your advertising campaign or your marketing activities. At its simplest we believe that brand is:

1. Your purpose – why you exist in the world
2. The way that all your different stakeholders experience that

That's the way that we approach it. We are fortunate enough to work with a range of interesting organisations around the world from our first client back in the 1960's; Apple Records to Google who we are working with today, and big commercial organisations from a range of sectors such as Unilever and through to cultural events like London 2012. With all those clients what we aim to do is to work with them to reinvent and transform what they do and redefine the markets that they operate in – really to 'change the game'.

I guess that some of you are now thinking that I'm going to simply talk about Tate or big commercial organisations with seven-figure marketing budgets. I do understand how arts and culture funding has been affected by the economic downturn and by government policy, even if the last budget wasn't quite as bad as it might have been. So, I'm going to try very hard to make what

I'm going to talk about as useful as it can be to you. And in fact, I would argue that there has never been a better time to compete if you're small. And the reason why, is this:

'Kodak filed for bankruptcy while Instagram was bought by Facebook for \$1 billion. Airbnb is now filling more nights than Hilton Hotels.

The reality is this: business ideas from the least expected players and angles will disrupt your brand faster than advertising can save it.'

Rei Inamoto, AKQA

The end of advertising as we know it

Now I think we could usefully read conventional marketing for advertising there and who he's talking to in this quote is the Hilton's and the Kodak's of this world and what he's saying is that you can't rely on your big traditional advertising budgets any more. You are vulnerable to smaller, nimbler competitors with more innovative ideas, and a less conventional approach towards what we know as *marketing*. So, going back to what Jo said; 'people who are prepared to take the risks'. Being small is no barrier to success if you have the appetite to take those risks and if you have the appetite to do things a bit differently – to think 'new'.

Today I'd like to talk to you about five things that we think are going on in the world today which fundamentally for us change the way that brands relate to, and market to their audiences.

Shifting consumer behaviour and the 'new mainstream'

The first one for us is that shifting consumer behaviour is creating a new mainstream which is starting to emerge into the market. There are a number of things that characterise that mainstream. The first of them is that they are *more connected* – technological penetration is really rampant at the moment. In Europe half the population now have Smart Phones – penetration is at 50%, the UN have said that this year there are more mobile-connected devices on the planet than there are toilets and by the end of the year there will be more mobile-connected devices on the planet than people. This boom in communications and technology combined with shifts in cultural behaviour means that people are much more demanding of the brands that they interact with. People expect much more feedback, dialogue and input. People expect more group, collective action and people expect more control over the brands that they are interacting with. From your friends and from your social networks you expect feedback loops and people are expecting that from the brands that they interact with now. The other thing that characterises this new mainstream is that they're more active. There was a 'rule' that was coined in 2006 which was the

90:9:1 rule which means that 90% of online were 'passive consumers', 9% were 'commentators' and 1% were 'deeply engaged'. According to BBC Future Media studies that has radically shifted and 23% are now classified as passive, 60% are classified as 'easy interaction' and a further 17% are now classified as having a much deeper interaction. We are much more active in the way that we participate with the brands that we relate to. And also we are less acquisitive – our patterns of consumption are radically shifting. We're all familiar with Spotify and ZipCar but the way that we're thinking about 'leasing' or 'borrowing' is changing radically so people are now prepared to think about renting things like clothes, bicycles, tools and household goods. And that shift is also growing rapidly.

The final and probably the most compelling thing about this new mainstream is that they're much less predictable. Shifting social structures, interrupted life-stage patterns blur the demographics as we know them. There's a statistic that says that across the globe, between 2001 and 2011, the increase in single-person households was 30%. In the UK, 50% of new businesses are started by the over 50s, and there are more over 50s social networking than there are under 30 year olds.

This fundamentally changes the way we think about our 'customers'. What used to be predictable and what used to be controllable is now up in the air. And those new 'consumers' – they're not *everyone* but they could be *anyone*; an entrepreneurial retiree, or a social-networking mum just as much as it could be a tech-savvy team. That means that although they are harder to spot this new group have a disproportionate effect on the rest of us. What we are interested in is what this new mainstream is saying to us.

They want relevance

The first thing the new mainstream is saying is that they want *relevance*. So in a world where we are inundated and bombarded with competing interests and with visual clutter, and in a world where traditional marketing is less likely to influence behaviour – I'm sure we are all aware of the statistics about how much people trust advertising versus how much people trust peer-to-peer reviews – traditional marketing is less likely to influence these people and commercial organisations have a more overt requirement these days to meet social and cultural targets. They're no longer simply the province of the arts and culture sector. This makes us think that the 'labels'; art and culture are not necessarily enough to engage people on their own. In this world, what do people want? We believe that people want experiences that are really useful and relevant to the way that they live their lives. From an arts and culture perspective that might mean aligning yourselves with your communities needs as well as thinking in terms of a clear artistic vision. It

might be thinking about how you really engage curious bystanders as well as how you engage those who are more culturally enlightened. It really means thinking about how you provide people with tangible tools to help them learn as well as simply inspiring them. And so, for us, in this particular context; 'what do brands need to do?' Smart brands need to be super clear about what they are in the world to do; 'their purpose' as I referred to before. That might seem really obvious but it's not 'what you do', it is 'why you exist'. I'm sure some of you will be familiar with Simon Sinek's TED Talk where he talked about the Three Circles; what, how and why, and what we're really talking about here is the 'why' – *why* you exist.

Brands must:

- **be clear about what you are in the world to do**
- **make it relevant to your stakeholders**
- **make it shareable**
- **be transparent, reveal your workings**
- **don't act as the authority, but as a helpful guide**

'It's an opportunity to be the 'helpful experts' who can help the culturally interested navigate the visual world. We're providing a service'

SFMOMA

Formulating a clear idea and articulation of that is really important. And then you also need to frame it in a way that is super-relevant to the needs of your stakeholders. When we helped Macmillan re-frame their purpose back in 2005 / 2006 we helped them create a purpose that was about being a life force for everyone affected by cancer and so that takes the users' needs into the heart of what the organisation is about. It really helps if you can make this purpose shareable and invite people in to be part of it – whether that's your audiences or your partners. And you need to be transparent and open up and reveal your inner workings to all the different stakeholders that you interact with. The days of brands being walled fortresses are long gone and people can find out all about you quicker than they used to be able to and therefore transparency is essential these days. And if you want to be really relevant it helps if you don't act as some kind of remote authority but if you can, act as a helpful guide to people. Some examples:

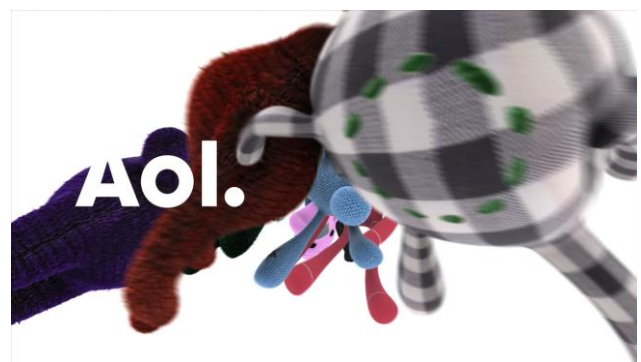
In helping to create the *Red* brand, we were very explicit about what the purpose is and that is to eliminate AIDS in Africa. The *whole* model of the organisation is based on that. It's based on the

idea of collaboration and so the idea of the brand then works around the idea of collaboration. *Red's* products feed off the reputation and equity of the brands that they partner with and in turn those brands create *Red* products which then became some of the most popular and some of the most profitable



that they sold – ‘I want a new pair of Converse (sneakers) *and* I want to eliminate AIDS in Africa’ – it’s a ‘no-brainer’ for consumers.

When we created the rebrand for AOL, we built a purpose around bringing amazing content to people. The whole brand is based on the idea that AOL is nothing without this content and that content comes from collaborations with artists, filmmakers, photographers and what that then means is that the brand and the marketing teams at AOL are now curators of a pool of amazing creative talent.



Likewise, with Macmillan Cancer Support we quickly recognised that if you want to really achieve and deliver on the purpose of being a life force for everyone affected by cancer then you need to open up and engage as many people as possible, pull them in and help you do it. The way that we created the brand was to make it look as if it was ‘made by people for real people’ so that anyone feels like they could have put it together – a sense of everyone together as opposed to ‘us and them’.



That rough-and-ready feel even extends to the partnership that Macmillan had with Boots to help them deliver on their purpose. We encouraged Macmillan to open up, to take down the barriers, to invite people so that, for example, cancer support is being delivered by ordinary people like you and I rather than by experts. We helped them to create a marketing tool where volunteers can create their own marketing materials and get them out there so it’s not rigidly controlled and is opened up to inspire millions to get involved.

There are some fascinating examples out there of other organisations that have really revealed their inner workings to people. [Galaxy Zoo](#) is an interesting one that is an online astronomy project to encourage users to help in the classification of galaxies. Cancer Research UK is doing something very similar with the classification of cancer cells and this is a really interesting thing for us because; is it their offer *and* their product? Or is it their marketing? It's actually a bit of both together which makes it really interesting.

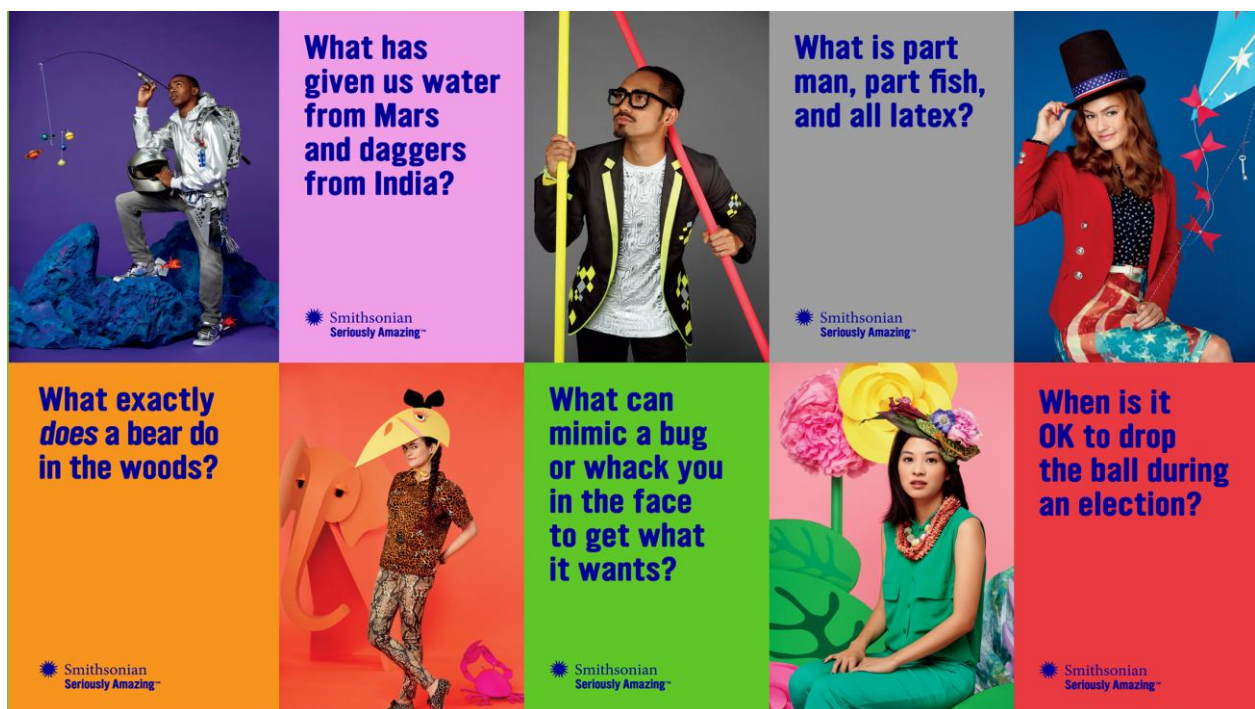
Lack of trust

The second thing that this new mainstream is saying is that they don't trust the institutions that they used to; governments, big commercial and financial institutions but also the media and NGOs. So, if we are all hyper-connected, more so than before, we are more able to question, scrutinise and interrogate the world around us. This perceived lack of trust in these institutions leads people to want to create their own truths and proofs for things rather than relying on what they were told before. Those 'top-down' messages that were pushed at them in the past are no longer trusted and people are more suspicious of models and systems which disenfranchise them or don't allow them to have their own self-expression. That results in people side-stepping this top-down, perceived wisdom. What they want is their own truths and proofs rather than those one-way, mediated push messages that come to them from these big organisations but increasingly from all organisations. What people are choosing are brands that offer them an alternative to that, brands that offer them platforms to express themselves, brands that offer them platforms and tools to share information and ideas with each other. It means that 'bottom-up' is actually more important than top down and that has implications for marketing. What brands need to do in this landscape is to open up and invite people in to become part of the process and to contribute to the process. It sounds a bit abstract but if you think about retail, that's what Amazon and ASOS do because they understand it's not about them pushing stuff out there it is about making you the user, part of the experience, part of the product and part of the service. That means relinquishing control of some stuff that you may have traditionally held quite close to you such as conventional marketing. It means understanding that there isn't one way but that there are as many ways as you have customers and audiences. It means that the stories you need to tell need to be about those audiences and about real people *not* about the brand or the organisation. That might be a reason why the latest Apple TV campaign was less well received than previous ones as they appear to have spent a lot of time talking about themselves rather than about the stuff that you might get to make your life better. I think that's really interesting because what that requires from the marketing community is a new set of skills and marketers need to be just as good at listening

as they are at talking. They need to be just as good at understanding what the mood and vibe around their brand is – what are people thinking and saying about you? Where and when are they saying it? And how do you engage with people who don't necessarily share the same point of view as you in a way which is meaningful rather than just shutting them down.

A really simple example of this was the English National Opera's; *Opera Undressed* initiative which is an example of the brand reassessing its view point and inviting users in to make the experience something which suited them rather than suiting the organisation.

When we created the *Seriously Amazing* campaign for the [Smithsonian Museum](#), our aim was to encourage and inspire younger people with the wealth of amazing stuff that's in the museum. We deliberately framed the language and the messaging in a way that would make sense to them so it's always from the users' point of view and never from the museum's point of view. It is always put together in terms of its structure and its language in a deliberately short and punchy way, never more than 140 characters.



Another fascinating example is the Rijksmuseum's Online Portal; [Rijks Studio](#) – they made all their artworks freely available to anyone to use however they wanted to. There's something counter cultural about it in that you can create your own products and do whatever you want with the products. That really is about letting go of the control and doing it in a way that really suits the users.

Another really good example from outside the sector is the Mina Kvarter from Sweden. This was a new way to help people engage with the regeneration of their neighbourhoods using widely available and easily accessible technology such as MindCraft. They allowed people to build to inhabit and to modify their own neighbourhoods and experiment with how it worked. Those designs that people created were then actually used in urban planning decisions. Again, it's about opening up and taking down the boundaries.

People want it on their own *time*

The third thing that people are saying is that they want things on their *time*. As we all know, our time is becoming increasingly compressed and communication is 'always on'. This always-on communication combined with flexible working time and the 24/7 culture means that those traditional anchor points and routines that unite us all are being slowly eroded. You might watch *Coronation Street* in the evening on the TV and I might watch in on my way to work on my phone. That means that people are looking to manage their time in completely new ways that suit them and on their terms.

What people want in this landscape is new patterns of communication. We're all familiar with the transition from individual to group communication epitomised by BBM. People are increasingly rejecting forms of communication that are about 'summoning' – the phone ringing and telling me to pick it up, the TV coming on with a programme that's on right now. People are embracing more fluid forms of communication like Google Hangouts where I can step in and out of it as I want to. We've also noticed a huge increase in the use and sharing of video. On Facebook, video is 1,200% more likely than links or text posts combined. The use of mobile phones mirrors that and making a phone call is now the fifth most frequent use for the mobile phone. People are moving towards more asynchronous forms of communication – we're used to the fairly obvious back and forth phone call where you say something, I say something and then we hang up. Whereas now, something like Whatsapp allows me to communicate in a more ambient way and I can be part of it, drop out and join back in – in a way that I'm more likely to communicate with people I am present with. Then there's the type of communication where people are immersing themselves and living in the 'now' which is typified by things like SnapChat.

You could go as far as to say, as does Douglas Rushkoff that;

'This is the new "now"...Everything is live, real time, and always-on ... If the end of the twentieth century can be characterized by futurism, the twenty-first can be defined by presentism.'

Media theorist Douglas Rushkoff on 'Present Shock'

What Smart Brands need to do is to interact with people in the time frame that people want, to not interrupt them or impose on them. That means being more generous and less acquisitive – rather than demanding time or attention all over the place from people. It means allowing people to do stuff on their terms. You need to be super clear about when you are asking for peoples' attention and when you are not but maybe just not quite so widely. If you think that in the past it was about making integrated campaigns that were all joined up, we wonder now if you might be better off doing just one thing really well and building deeper relationships. Then there's a useful role that you could play which is guiding people to help them make decisions to make the most of the ways to spend their time. A couple of examples of this could be [Curzon Home Cinema](#) – a bit like NetFlix for Independent Film and another really interesting one which is [D-Day: As it Happens](#) which allowed users to track D-Day events as if they were happening in real time – online, on TV and via social media. What was nice about that was that it was done on a platform and a time frame which reflected how people want to consume rather than how they might have consumed before or how an organisation or museum might have wanted them to consume before. It used rolling TV coverage, live feeds and Twitter updates and what that meant was that people could just dip in and out in a way that suited them.

The need to *change stuff*

The Fourth Thing that this new mainstream are characterised by is *the need to change stuff*. They are no longer satisfied with 'standard products' and 'standard services'. They want to change things to suit them. So in tough and uncertain times the culture of inventiveness is flourishing and because of the technological barriers being lowered and because of the more free and fluid flow of ideas people are more able to make connections with each other and with things. What this means is that things like tinkering and personalising and what people trendily call 'hacking' are no longer the province of a bunch of nerds any more but becoming more of a mainstream activity. Because of the scale of it, whole services and industries can be reimagined by this, even things like manufacturing. Think about 3D printing where the control is in the hands of the people who want to make things the way they want to make them and not the way we assume they want to receive them. This may seem like it is geared more towards commercial organisations but this mind set of people wanting to change stuff it equally applicable to arts and culture organisations or any brand that is out there.

We've seen a move from people being consumers to 'pro-sumers' and now increasingly becoming 'makers' where they want to make things themselves. They want to sell and barter just as much as they want to buy. Smart Brands are giving them the ingredients and the guidance to do that but

less and less we are giving them the finished article. What people want is Open Source from brands so that they can go in, learn, make and share stuff with their own communities.

There's a great example from Ikea where a group of people realised that all the fixtures and fittings on all Ikea furniture is pretty much interchangeable so that you can make all kinds of weird, Frankenstein furniture. They started to share this hybrid fantasy furniture and Ikea did what you would expect brands to do and said 'no, it's not official, you can't do it'. They soon realised that those people were going to do that anyway and decided that it would be much better to allow them to do it and what they do, although they don't publicise it too much, is that they secretly fund them to keep going and allow this community to grow. That becomes part of the Ikea experience and I think that in the future this will happen so much more as that's what those people want from it.

Brands need to move away from the simple, monotonous, one-way push to consumers and audiences to a more agile, nuanced interaction with people. Product and app developers talk about 'minimum viable product' and what they mean by that is; let's give it the minimum functionality, get it out there and see what early adopters think of it and then we can carry on refining it. We have to wonder what 'minimum viable brands' and 'minimum viable marketing' might start to feel like in this context. You could provide people with ingredients, a playing field and some parameters to let them make stuff and see what they can come up with. Some people will DIY because they want to be a bit different, some DIY because they are super creative and some will do it because what you've given them just doesn't quite work for them. What you somehow need to do is to engage these people throughout your innovation, planning and marketing process. Invite them in to contribute and to see what they can offer. That doesn't mean abdicating responsibility. It's still your responsibility as brands and marketers to make the right strategic decisions and give them the right prompts. But, the more that you involve these people who are making their own 'in', the more you can give them the stuff that they need. And there are all kinds of examples of people doing this all around the world. One example of how people will take things and change them for their own use and in a way that suits them is from San Fransisco; an initiative that has now gone global called [PARK\(ing\) Day](#) – where people took over parking lots and turned them into parks.

Another really nice, simple example, again from the States, is [MoMA Unadulterated](#) which is an unofficial audio tour where 3-10 year old art 'experts' create audio tours for the art in the galleries telling you why they think it's great and what they think might be the meaning of it. You get a completely different perspective that's really homemade, super fascinating and probably more relevant to other kids who want to go and visit.

When we created the *Little Sun* brand last year we helped artist Olafur Eliasson create the business model and the identity for the new brand. Little Sun is a small, solar-powered light designed to bring light to off-grid communities around the world so that children can do homework and families can eat. What's really interesting is that it is designed to keep the power in the hands of the users. It is sold to the vendors in the local areas in part form so that they assemble it and therefore get more of the profits and more of the control. It's designed to be adapted, to be 'hacked' – a kind of 'minimum viable product'. The brand that we created for it was like a 'minimum viable brand'. We made it as simple as it could be so that people didn't have to rely on expensive pre-produced signs and that people could simply paint it on their walls – again keeping the control in the hands of the people who use it rather than the people who create it.



Likewise, when we created the brand for [New Museum](#) in New York we built the idea of 'adaptability' into the brand and the way that the brand expresses itself. The logo and the language have the capacity to incorporate ever-changing ideas and ever-changing messages within the confines of the logo itself. That means that you can also incorporate the ideas of your audiences and publics who you are talking to and means that you can stay constantly plugged into them. When the brand launched they had 600% increase in visitors and 400% increase in membership within the first four months. An example of how that adaptability is built into the way that the brand works.

So, what does this all add up to? What does this all mean for brands and marketers today? How do you make sure you are on the right playing field to create game-changing work?

The first thing I would say is that you have to be super clear about your purpose – why you are in the world, why you exist – and use that purpose to guide your strategy, to galvanise your people and to create a common cause with your audiences and your customers.

The second thing you need to do is to be open, be generous, reveal your workings, invite people in and make them part of the process. Allow them to form communities in and around your brand.

The third thing you need to do is to think that there are as many ways as you have customers ... there isn't just the one way and you need to move away from this one-way push communication and think it a way which is much more multi-nuanced interaction.

The fourth thing is; see if you can think about how you might create a minimum viable marketing approach. Give people the ingredients, set them the parameters and give them a playing field to play on and allow them to do what they want within that playing field. See what they come back with.

Let people do things in their own time is the fifth thing, be less acquisitive, think about how they might want to consume and when they might want to consume and think about how you can actually change your offer and change what you give people to fit the patterns of their time. Maybe those time frames aren't synchronous and maybe you need to allow people to do things at different times and in different ways.

The final thing would be to think about how to do your segmentation. For us however, if you think about this new mainstream, it's less about demographics and psychographics and much more about the kind, the quality, the type and depth of the relationships that you have with your customers.

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