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**PARADOXICALLY
KIWI**

What we set out to do.

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**USING A
CULTURAL
LENS
WE SET OUT TO
UNDERSTAND**

Emerging New Zealand identity and how we make sense of New Zealand now

How our cultural values have shifted

What we take for granted in representing New Zealand.

Brand dynamics explored through this larger cultural context.

The 25-35 year old consumer that constitutes advertising's future: a group we might call a Newer Zealand.

How we did it.

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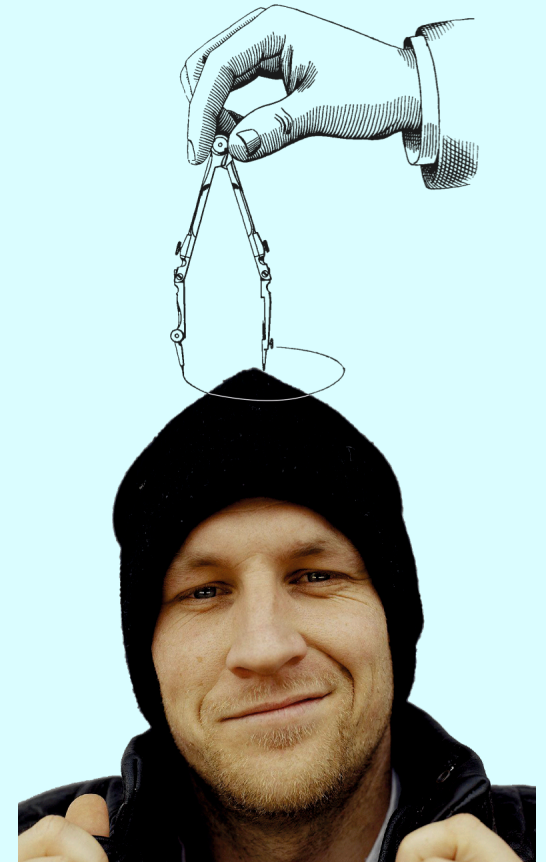
Employed an Ethnographic study of people to understand their lives and their cultural values

Commissioned identity documentaries on what it means to be a New Zealander today, with emphasis on emergent ideas, and sources of contestation (multi-media and in-person)

Examined consumer brand video diaries and the attachment and indifference consumers have with brands today

Undertook a Semiotic analysis of contemporary advertising

We had help. Two American Anthropologists acted as our cultural 'outsiders'



Why we did it.

Brands live in cultural spaces and, ideally, co-create culture.

Great advertising successfully aligns cultural meaning with brands to imbue the latter with emotional, functional and symbolic salience.

Because of this process, ads become a rich source for reinforcing and communicating not just the brand, but popular culture... assuming we get it right.



Source: Promoting Prosperity the Art of Early New Zealand Advertising, Alsop & Stewart

CULTURE is CREATED BY THE PEOPLE **AND BRANDS THAT USE IT.**

RESIDUAL

Residual codes are the receding meanings that are becoming less relevant and on the brink of being out of step with the culture around it. Most importantly, this is where brand value is being lost.

DOMINANT

Dominant codes reflect the dominant cultural meanings that are played out and how brands are currently valued.

EMERGING

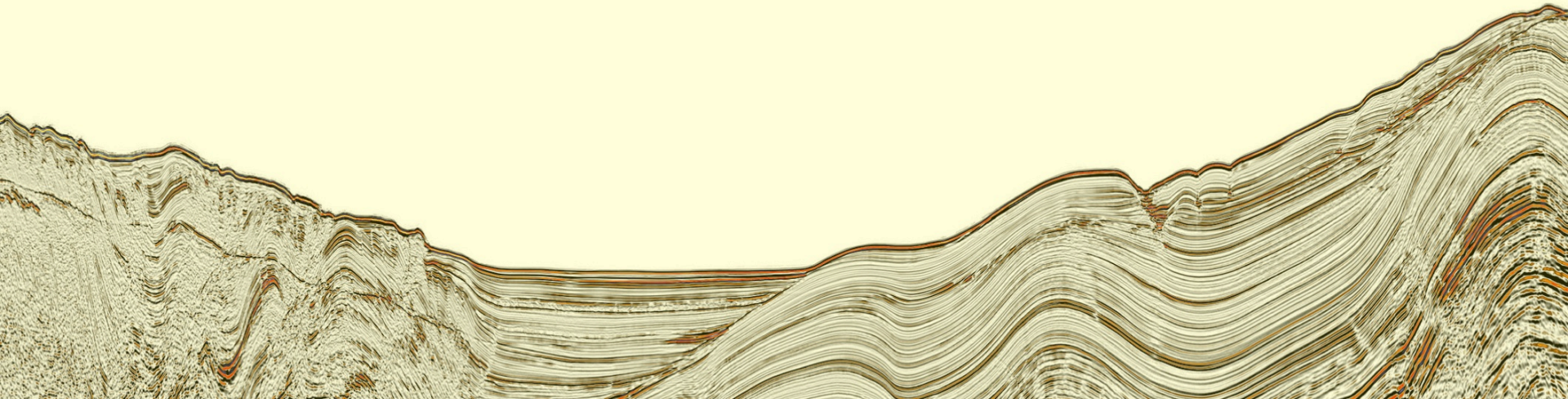
Emerging codes are what's happening at the cusp of popular culture. They are evidence of a new infiltration of thinking and approach and where brands could be of new value.

What we found.

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A series of paradoxes and seismic shifts within New Zealand culture.

New ways of contesting what it means to 'live, breathe and do New Zealand' that might be profitably put to the service of your brands and advertising.





SIX

**BIG
SHIFTS**

IN NZ CULTURE

01**NEW ZEALAND IS
A CONCEPT, NOT A
LOCATION****02****LIVING OFF
THE SPREADSHEET
NOT THE LAND****03****SHE'S NOT
ALRIGHT MATE****04****DETERMINED
IS THE NEW
LAID BACK****05****INTER-
DEPENDENCE
NOT DIY****06****SIMPLE IS
ASPIRATIONAL**



01

NEW ZEALAND IS A CONCEPT, NOT A LOCATION

New Zealanders have lost their insecurities about their place in the world, replaced instead by a newfound confidence in their identity and a clear sense of themselves as world citizens.

Concept, not location

Today New Zealanders are simultaneously here, there and everywhere even when living in New Zealand, and proudly so.

Where once, to be a 'good Kiwi', was to act very local, nowadays one does not need to 'be' here to 'think, breathe and do New Zealand'.

Iconic New Zealand activities (i.e. going to the beach, having barbeques, going barefoot) are just one of the things one can do to express life in New Zealand and importantly are just a small part of what it now means to be a New Zealander.

Whilst being local might have some emotional resonance it is very 'thin' and not in step with how New Zealanders think or do New Zealand any more.



We want to live with brands from everywhere

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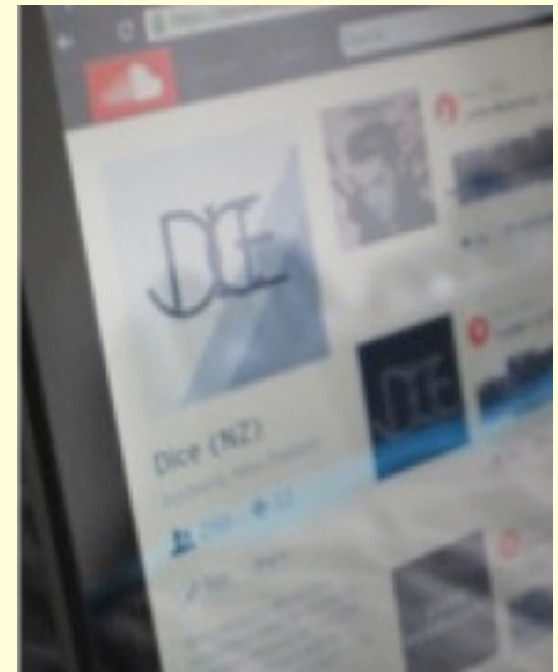
Living beyond New Zealand expands one's universe of compelling brands.

Brands and products are embraced as a way to keep current and be connected to our wider world and one's wider history and life experience.

Simply buying or valuing New Zealand doesn't necessarily have the same cachet that it may have once had. There is no automatic pass for New Zealand brands.

Nor does being the best at articulating New Zealand sentiment seem to matter as much as we might think, or at least, not to purchasing decision.

Brands that are best practice in what they do and how they do it get New Zealanders' attention.



Open source New Zealand

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In understanding this, local brands have the opportunity to pull from around the globe and to dip into their own 'global citizenry' for brand resonance.

It also means that global brands don't have to be local (and artificially so).





02

LIVING OFF THE SPREADSHEET NOT THE LAND

Contemporary NZ life is contested through an economic lens with a pervasiveness of economic terms and frames of reference to account for oneself and others in a way that was not present a few years ago.

Accountants have waged a coup on the dreams of a nation

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In New Zealand today there is a pervasiveness of economic terms to account for actions, activities and motivations of oneself, others and society.

Ten years ago it was money vs. the land. Now, the economy is central in the doing of anything and even if you stay in NZ, you have to leave a bit of NZ behind which requires a shift in narrative from the usual 'Kiwi dream'.

BUYING A HOUSE IN NEW ZEALAND



The Dream

- The 3 bedroom house in the suburbs to house your growing family (preferably in the same area as you grew up yourself)
- To entertain friends and family (especially throughout summer and holidays)
- The DIY project (Do it Yourself)
- Protecting your future
- Creating those lasting memories which come from the family home

The Crisis

- House prices are rising rapidly
- Deposits have risen to 20%
- The average house price in Auckland is \$580,000, requiring the first home buyer to come up with a whopping \$120,000 deposit
- The ultimate kiwi dream has now become the impossible dream (for most)
- Parents are having to help out their children and lots of them can due to their own capital gain (what does this mean for us though?)
- The uncertain future of renting while raising a family (lack of security & the opportunity of creating memories in the family home)
- Assets sales (overseas buyers taking over our housing market and driving up our prices)
- The inadequate feeling that not being a home owner brings, we are not able to meet our parents expectations or previous expected life goals

Working class is Kiwi class



The tension is going overseas for the “quick dollar” as a reason to leave the country rather than the experience of the ‘big OE’ as part of our Kiwi heritage.

There is also a generally articulated sense of loss of former iconic NZ ideals accompanied with a sense that cherished NZ values are something we must give up, and pragmatically so.

In order to ‘move on’ we are becoming more open minded to new ways of having a ‘Kiwi lifestyle’ (in the economic sense this is a form of pragmatism; ‘Off shore oil drilling, the economics make it ‘realistic’ for New Zealand’).

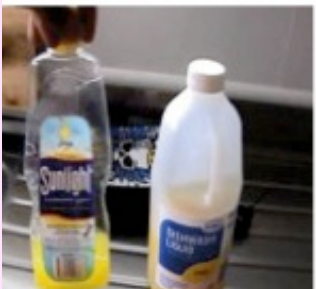
Buying NZ is not what it used to be

Implied in this, is also to leave behind dreams, goals and brands. It is a form of economic experimentation.

There is only so much 'New Zealand' you can afford in the pantry, you need to earn your place.

Trading down or giving up cherished brands to save at the household level

Consumers are happily creating their own version of brands (Sunlight Liquid bottles that have budget liquid inside), or de-branding, (putting Pams brand into Tupperware containers).

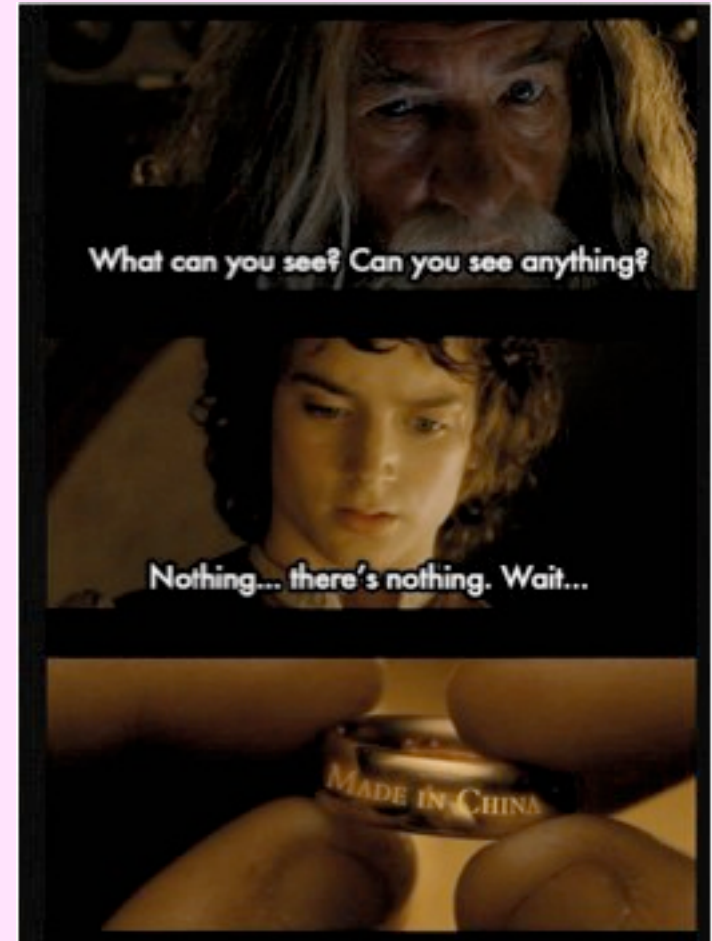


A new kind of pragmatism

Brands and advertising that help to resolve economic tension or that show how cherished values can still go hand in hand with an economic framework are likely to be viewed as helpful and meaningful.

In order to move on we are becoming more open-minded.

Brands need to frame the realities of progress and change in positive ways.



ADG



03

SHE'S NOT ALRIGHT MATE

People matter more nowadays, more so than land. The sentiment of: “Judge a society by how it treats the most vulnerable”.

People over land

There is a sense that a focus on the dollar is out of whack in New Zealand and that trade comes before human rights and profit before people and with this, a concern that economic value is too dominant.

This has brought new values to the surface of New Zealand life with new expectations of brand behaviour.



Caring about the group

Brands and companies (and the media), must also show they have not become indifferent to caring for others, not lost the sentiment of 'we', even when economics and marketing are driving forces.

Also, and importantly, if there is concern that New Zealand as a country is lacking a vision, then brands that help supply one are likely seen as useful. There is real opportunity for brands or companies to step up and fill this space.

In this regard actions are needed, not just brand messaging to demonstrate a commitment to 'living, breathing, doing' New Zealand.



People are indifferent to wasteful marketing

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Brand campaigns centred on nothing more than a marketing ploy will be scoffed at and even worse be viewed as wasteful (of money and of their time) which grates given the economic metaphor applied to everyday life.

100% NZ seen as clearly an ad for NZ, but recognized that 100% is an exaggeration and talks more to a 'lost dream' than any reality.

Anchor's light-free packaging was seen as empty marketing, the glass cow advertising as pointless. 'Nothing more than a gimmick'



Peter Beck with his Electron rocket. Photo NZ Herald

DETERMINED IS THE NEW LAID BACK

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04

Planning, effort and wanting to make a difference is deeply valued and gets our respect and our attention.

Progressive as an expression of ingenuity

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Standing up for what we believe in is a value not to be lost in New Zealand. A new age of showing we care.

NZ is liberal in its policies and outlook, so complacency or sitting on the fence can be seen as a travesty against NZ values.

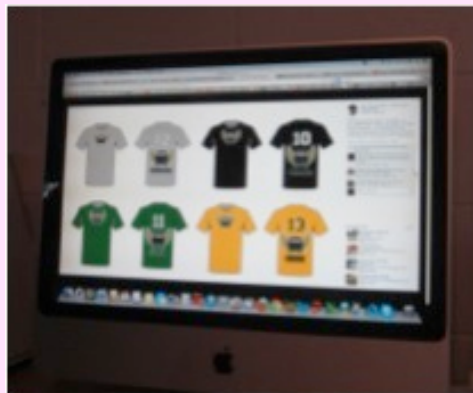
Taking a stand matters more than having a point of difference for this age group, especially in terms of being a standard bearer of progressiveness.

Determination, contribution and making an effort counts.

**“You don’t
want to be
‘that guy’
that hasn’t
done
something”**

Marketing is a communicative currency

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In the age of marketing consciousness, messages and brand advertising are now evaluated on multiple levels and many consumers are marketers too, and sometimes better than us at it.

This means they are also critical of marketing efforts they deem 'amateurish' or 'lazy'.

For New Zealanders 'empty' marketing or obvious marketing ploys are disconcerting not only because of the economic filter but also because they go against the grain of 'determination' and of making an effort.

Let me entertain you

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Ads are also rejected if they do not entertain, are seen as cheap, formulaic or most importantly without effort.

At the same time, 'just marketing' as a valid part of life sets up advertising as something that can be appreciated for its production values, as a source of entertainment, or for just triggering a feel good memory.



Take a position (don't just have a positioning)

This cultural shift opens up space for brands to create value for themselves by taking a stand against the pursuit of purely economic goals.

Being slow to react, or resting on your laurels (or brand equity), can be a bad look. Showing you care and meaning it is a good look.

In New Zealand, being ethical is more important for brand leadership than innovation (now).

- Whittaker's palm oil
 - Dairy in Devonport that stopped selling cigarettes
-



Source: 3News.co.nz



05

INTER- DEPENDENCE NOT DIY

A sense that brands and companies need 'us' as much as we need them, or that 'we' have contributed in some way to the success of those brands.

People over land

Being global means that everyday interconnectedness is a reality.

Working together - a meaningful 'we'.
Only as a 'we' (it's thought) can NZ take a stand. The tension is a collection of 'I's without common ground.

Brands need to show they are committed to caring for and not being indifferent to others.

Taking care of each other and pulling together is more important, or at least equally as important, as taking care of the land.



Everyday interconnectedness

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Kiwis feel they have contributed to making companies successful. This is why people can be annoyed when companies or brands treat them as customers to be nickel and dimed, acting like a 'bank' and monetising services rather than creating a communal infrastructure that fosters interactions.

Critically, the more 'settled' you get, the assumption is the more you can help others.

Brands that are felt to 'have your back' and deliver on promises will win.





06

It used to be 'work hard, play hard' but now it's just work hard...so the play looks different.

SIMPLE IS ASPIRATIONAL

Simple is aspirational

Non-monetised activities and simple things in life become both appealing and aspirational.

Given an economic frame is invoked to explain many decisions and actions of not just oneself but of brands, companies and society at large.

Trying alternative brands is more than just an expression of a Kiwi 'give it a go' mentality, it is a celebration of Simple.



A push back metaphor

Brands that ground you are appreciated.

Values that use to be functional have taken on deeper meaning. Reliable is no longer viewed as 'boring' but rather, holds more value than 'flashy'.

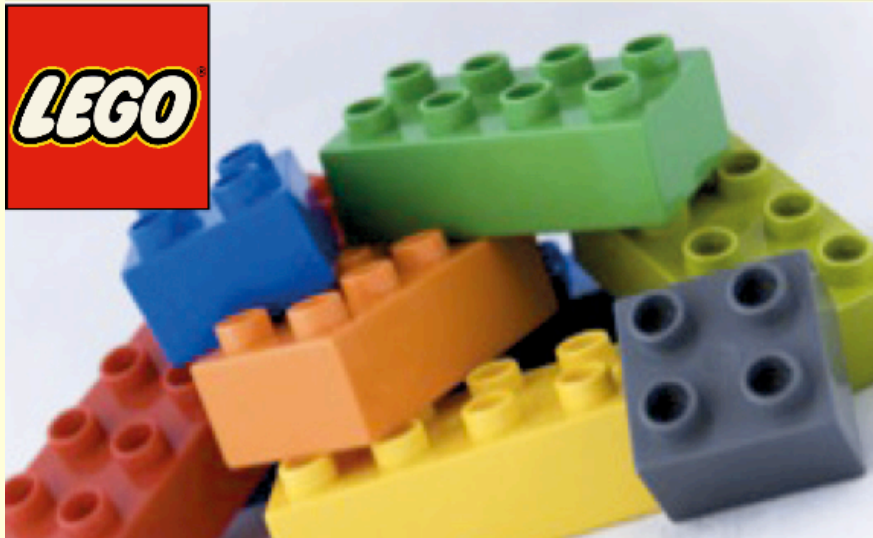
Simple could also mean parking the economic framework and other frames discussed, and thereby being able to give the consumer some respite, a way of getting away from these things (for a bracketed time) because they are so pervasive.

If technology is incorporated, it's to make one's own life and goals simpler and easier, not more complicated or time or attention-consuming as a result of the technology.

“Bread that does not rip or break when you toast it so that every slice counts”

Simple is aspirational

Given the driving metaphors, “the simple life” is something “we must give up”. In many ways ‘simple’ is used as shorthand for a world that is unmediated by money (cost) or pace of life and in which meanings are materially honest and transparent.



A push back metaphor

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Brands that provide an antidote to an overly-monetized world will hold appeal.

Sistema – is held up as a good NZ brand that has allowed itself to be a great ‘simple’ alternative to Tupperware.

“A brand that has blown up for us in New Zealand, it’s good but not pricey”.

sistema

“I was skeptical at first, I always thought of Fisher & Paykel as the brand to buy but I’ve been converted, it’s [LG] a really good workhorse”

 LG

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There are different ways that brands can matter.

It is important to develop a deep understanding of how these 6 key paradoxes currently manifest themselves and how a brand might best respond to changes occurring within these strong cultural themes or stories.

Choices are renegotiated constantly through filters of...

Everyday lives and imaginations extending well beyond New Zealand

Taking a stand against something and being a standard bearer.

Respect for hard work, effort, determination. Interdependence, caring for, not being “indifferent” to others, and a meaningful ‘we’ counts.

The importance our immediate reality, as opposed to the unattainable ‘lost’ Kiwi dream”. Today’s icons are people, policies and brands that address the driving global, economic and marketing metaphors in ways that resonate.

Simple as an aspirational value, and a push back metaphor, given so much is framed in economic terms and concerns.

**LET YOUR
BRAND
& ADVERTISING
LIVE IN THE
FUTURE NZ**



THANK YOU

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