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**“Walk The Talk:
Think Like the Sun”**

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c.2002

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Introduction

Whether we like it or not, America is seen as the focal point and source of many of the social and economic influences people in the world experience today. Media proliferation across the planet made it so.

The question is, whether this perception is consistent with who America really is and wants to be going forward. Are our actions and our perceptions living up to our own words? We need to look at this in a fresh way. Otherwise, America leaves its perception wide open to a confluence of disparate communications from a range of sources who will try, naturally, to define America from their own self-interest. They are doing so with their own communications in the media, which is now everyone's to participate in. The perspective we and our multinational corporations have affects how we operate and react to a world of rising anti-Americanism. The perspective we adopt will have a direct impact on us, our businesses and the perception of America in the future.

So, what does an advertising guy have to say that would have any relevance on this important subject? It is a career-long experience of managing and building perceptions. It is also my particular area of expertise, global brand-building. I spent most of my advertising agency career helping build perceptions for some of the world's most popular, everyday brands. My family and I lived overseas for six years from 1992-1998. And, I traveled the far reaches of the globe developing advertising programs for clients like Procter & Gamble, UBS, Deutsche Telekom, Kraft, General Foods, Duracell Batteries, General Mills and Toyota.

There has been much concern with the rising Anti-American perception that is getting much attention worldwide. Perception, how it becomes what it is and how to manage it, this will be the focus I will offer for your consideration. I believe our multinational corporations, and the brands they market in each country, are right in the middle of this issue. They are both a target and a key vehicle to help improve perception. I know many of our clients have been very concerned about the worsening economic climate, as well as the growing unfavorable perception towards American businesses and brands since 9/11.

The global village created by advances in communications technologies increasingly enables the world's populace to come into contact more with corporations and brands than governments. More people are in touch with icons like Coca-Cola, McDonald's, IBM, Nike, Pampers, American Express or Ford than any single nation's government. I believe the responsibility of a global corporation today is to help improve lives and to otherwise make the world a better place.

I intend to offer you a new frame-of-reference for considering these issues. It is a proven frame-of-reference developed from my own personal experience in managing consumer perception, market-by-market, culture-by-culture across the planet. Howard Gossage, a leading voice in the advertising business in the 1960's, had something important to say about perception and the concept of frame-of-reference. He said: "We don't know who it was discovered water, but we're pretty sure it wasn't the fish."

Like fish in water, it is hard for most of us to see what is going on around the world that would result in the anti-Americanism that has been increasing in the post 9/11 world. It is hard to see, because of the range and complexity of events people are now able to perceive in the media. The media is now truly globally dispersed. The speed with which events can be observed in the media by most people is supercharging perception.

Another key factor in all this is the relatively insular and unobjective "frame-of-reference" most Americans have had up to now, towards the rest of the world. According to the Bureau of Transportation Services, only 18% of the US population have a passport. Importantly, of these 86% traveled to Mexico and Canada. So clearly, the bulk of Americans have little first-hand understanding or appreciation of how America looks to our overseas neighbors on this planet.

Many American-based companies, indeed, even our government servants, may be trying to react to the changing global economic and social environment from the perspective of the past. Yet, there has been an insidious change in the global perceptual environment. I believe our perspective and the frame-of-reference we have typically used to see the world, is obsolete. It is no longer sufficiently relevant to serve us, our corporations, or our fellow man, today, and into the future.

A more enlightened frame-of-reference would help us and our corporations do a better job of "walking the talk", of the basic founding principles we hold so dear in America. It is time for us to adopt a holistic frame-of-reference that recognizes and appreciates the value of all of our interactions with our neighbors. A new frame-of-reference can possibly help us and our perception in the intercultural village that has been created by the explosion of media worldwide. I call this new frame of reference for perceiving the world we live in, "Think Like the Sun".

BACKGROUND: Understanding There is a Problem

On February 27, 2002, I was invited to attend a special meeting at the Department of State in Washington, DC. It was a briefing for "Global Advertisers", bringing together seasoned professionals from some of America's most respected corporations,

advertising agencies and media companies. Hosted by Charlotte Beers, Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs, and Peggy Conlon, President/CEO of the Advertising Council, the briefing focused on the deteriorating perception of America, outside the US, in particular, among the Muslim population worldwide.

A central part of a briefing was a Gallup poll conducted after 9/11 in nine Muslim countries from December 2001 to January 2002. The findings reported that residents in Muslim countries perceive the United States to be "ruthless and arrogant", with most describing themselves as "resentful" of the superpower. By a 2-1 margin, residents in these nations expressed an unfavorable opinion of the US. Overall, 53% had unfavorable opinions of the US. Only 22% had favorable opinions.

Many Muslims believe that American's are faithless and that America is generally biased against all other racial groups and nationalities. The research showed that there is a strongly held belief by the respondents that American values are deeply materialistic and secular, that American culture is a corrupting influence on their societies. The conclusion was that there was a "huge gap in understanding and perception about America's real values."

A subsequent study conducted by The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in Washington DC, titled "What the World Thinks in 2002", looked at a broader audience than Muslims. The key findings were that favorability ratings for the US have fallen in 19 of 27 countries since 2000. While criticism of America is on the rise, there continues to be a solid reserve of goodwill toward the US and its citizens. People around the world embrace things American, yet are increasingly unhappy about the US influence on their societies.

A report by the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, concluded that to combat the significant resentment and misunderstanding of the US across many countries, not simply the Muslim countries, "New thinking and new structures call for new mind-sets, not new millions of dollars." I asked myself, what might that new mind-set be?

As members of corporations that cater to global markets and who service customers and consumers in an international community, we and our corporations have an obligation to consider what new thinking and mind-sets can help us operate more successfully globally. This, against the backdrop of misunderstanding, terrorism, misinformation and dangerous falsehoods, that seems to be increasing about America.

APPROACH TO THE CHALLENGE:

In tackling the challenges America faces, I have approached the issue from my area of experience and expertise—brand-building, globally. In so doing, I want you to consider for this task that America is a brand—a collection of benefits, symbols, equities and perceptions in the minds of individuals around the world.

Treating a nation as a brand is controversial. Opponents believe it minimizes a nation to the level of a product or box detergent. However, thinking of a nation in a competitive perception context and as a brand has been done throughout history.

Many nations have reinvented themselves, based on historic precepts that distinguish them and made modifications to provide greater relevance in a constantly changing world. In *Worldwide Brand Management*, Olin suggests: "Nation branding does not mean changing a country's innate sense of identity, but understanding and sharing that identity with the rest of the world. This will no doubt continue to be a confrontational issue and part of the continuing globalization debate."

My personal experience comes from over 30 years in the advertising agency business and, prior to that, an educational concentration on Fine Arts, Communications, Marketing, Consumer Psychology and Consumer Behavior. Much of my time internationally was spent getting in-market learning from consumers in places like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Kenya, as well as Europe, Russia, China and Japan. A massive amount of learning was gained about people and perception development through testing ideas designed to influence perceptions.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRIES

The following key things were learned from my experiences in building brand perceptions around the world. These seven points will help us and our corporations operate better in the world of rising anti-Americanism:

1) Communications technologies have changed the environment in which America or any other organizing concept functions. Actions, ideas and behaviors can no longer remain isolated from being perceived, sometimes involuntarily, beyond the realm in which they were intended.

The concept of "second-hand smoke" has now evolved, in a broader sense, to the effects of "second-hand culture". Our culture is now more perceivable to other cultures, in real time, than has ever been possible before, thanks to the media proliferation globally. By looking at media and its effect, I believe we can learn much about the new world we live in. Studying the effects of media can also give us a clearer view of the future.

For example, Marshall McLuhan studied the history of evolution in communications technology and the effect these advances had on man and society. He studied the effects of media going back to hieroglyphics and from there to the Gutenberg press, the telephone, radio, the growth of television and the early stages of the computer during the late 1960's.

McLuhan's books, *"Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man"*, *"The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects"* and *"War and Peace in the Global Village"*, analyzed the effects of media on human perception in terms of the extent of psychological and physiological impact on people. He urged us to understand media and understand man.

As early as the late 1960's, McLuhan predicted major social and economic changes would occur with the collision of what he termed "the electronic media", eg. particularly the convergence of television and computer technologies. Indeed, I am sure we can agree, media proliferation over the last 20 years has altered the perceptual environment for relationships between citizens, countries, cultures, governments, corporations and brands.

The information one is exposed to influences perception and, in turn, effects a person's beliefs. In the end, we know that a person's beliefs drive their behavior (*Belief Dynamics* by Wally Armbruster). Today, the actual experience in one's own culture and economy can be directly compared to the rest of the world by what people see and learn in the media. This exposure to comparison affects their perception, their beliefs and, in turn, their behavior.

Importantly, the new media of wireless telephone, satellite TV and internet access significantly amplifies the amount of control an individual has over what they choose to perceive. This has also made it far more transparent to check and crosscheck information against institutions, corporations, leaders and governments. Control of information is, therefore, less centralized and more individualized.

Today, we are bombarded by fragmented media, a quantum leap in the amount of messages, over-choiced opinions and facts, multi-tasking and over-committed minutes. Some may think this is only the case in developed western markets, because we have seen the evolution occur over time. However, what is typically the case in developing markets is an immediate "leap-frog" to the latest communication technology, without the evolutionary stages of development. The impact can, therefore, be more severe and abrupt on these cultures.

Internet and web usage is exploding, going from 67 million users in 1997, to a projection of over 500-million users this year. Television penetration continues to grow, even to the smallest market economies, villages and huts. Much of the world outside the US has jumped from having "no phones" to "cell phones". The medium of the wireless cell phone, for example, is clearly a different "experience" than the land wire phone technology. It is having an effect on the way people live; the way we all perceive. The array of media available to us today is also having an effect on our emotions and relationships. This access of communications across the planet is having

some of the effects that McLuhan predicted. Our world is definitely getting smaller. It is now a smaller, interconnected, intercultural village.

There has also been an explosion in the diversity of content gaining exposure. With this has come the ability for audiences to be exposed to communications material and content, involuntarily (like seeing *"The Sopranos"*, *"Sex in the City"*, *"CIS"*, *MTV* or the *Super Bowl Broadcast* on television in Middle Eastern countries or being able to watch Japanese Sumo-Wrestling in Germany). Users of the media can readily access content that is totally antithetical to their own culture, beliefs or economic capability. I am reminded of the Blue TV from Scandinavia that come into our home mid-afternoon, while we lived in Brussels. It was pretty jarring to zap along the stations and come across this when I sitting with the kids watching TV, let me assure you!

This media explosion is creating a social revolution where cultures and communities are being transformed by the instant access to information. It is possible to be in touch with individuals anywhere on the planet. In a new book on the effects of wireless and computer convergence by Howard Reingold, he refers to "Thumb Tribes", which are forming in "wearable computing communities". He says: "Mobile communications and pervasive computing technologies, together with social contracts that were never possible before, are already beginning to change the way people meet, mate, work, fight, buy, sell, govern and create."

What effect will this have on the new emerging culture? The second-hand effects are creating a sort of global interculture. It is heavily American in content, but not driven by a centrally driven force. Authors Berger and Huntington brought several scholars together to look into globalization and its effects across many different countries in the book *"Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in The Contemporary World"*. They see many influences impacting on the developing global culture, due to the broad access diverse groups have to make use of the media themselves.

With the new technologies of communication, audiences are increasingly able to re-translate, alter and redirect the content to frame public perception. Now, many audiences are able to formulate powerfully persuasive arguments of high moral and emotional impact and consequence. The change is not that globalization is new or that isolationism is more difficult. The key change is the "second-hand culture" created, as more advanced media technologies become available to more individuals.

2)The media and its content, the bulk of which originates from developed market culture, is out of sync with most developing markets, particularly Muslim-dominated countries. This gap alienates some audiences. It creates a negative emotional chain-reaction, which automatically accrues to the

perceived originator of the media--- America. Most developing markets, especially the Muslim-dominated markets, perceive the bulk of cultural material they observe in the media, and the economic and social changes they are experiencing, as originating from the leader of the western world, eg. America.

A recent New York Times report showed that US television shows are losing relevancy around the world. This is one manifestation of the decline in favorability about the US. Some people outside the US are relieved that American culture may be losing some of its appeal and effectiveness on television. This has significant economic ramifications on the communications industries. They will want to pay attention to what the head of the European Institute for the Media, Dr. Jo Groebel says, "There has always been a concern that the image of the world would be shaped too much by American culture." Our communications companies, marketers of products and the "image-makers" in the advertising industry should understand the impact of these trends. They will need to adjust accordingly.

Communications grow out of culture. Communication, when perceived as not relevant, is perceived as propaganda. And, propaganda, that is overwhelming and omnipresent, can be destructive to private, individual identity.

Globalization and the expansion of media are not new developments. Both have developed over the ages, resulting in major socio-economic change and reactions with each development. For example, when medieval institutions were changing at the close of the Middle Ages, and economic individualism was advancing, there were protests against the disruption of the old order, as evidenced in literary works; some that supported the new order and others that criticized the newly emerging capitalist society of that time.

Thomas More's "*Utopia*", published in 1516, exposed the concern in the rise in unrestrained economic individualism. The key media of that time, the printed word, was made possible by the new technology of the Gutenberg press. Printed communications combined with the advanced "media" of sailing vessels, and the expansion of the canal systems across Europe impacted the status of previously autonomous, isolated communities. Thomas More wanted to turn back the clock. He wanted to restore the old village culture that had been changed by expanding commerce and media exposure to new cultures. An outgrowth of that time was a significant influence, which is now referred to as "Reformation". It was manifest in development of some unique "chain-reactions" via social movements in communities and settlements at that time.

The subject of globalization is getting considerable attention today. Much has been written, with many divergent views on the subject. Naomi Klein's critique of

globalization, *"No Logo"*, says globalization has many negative ramifications, on people, economically, as well as culturally. Klein calls for more controls to slow it down or to rebel/protest against globalization's effects.

Thomas Friedman's, *"The Lexus and the Olive Tree"*, takes a position that globalization is "inevitable" and has many positive ramifications, which will ultimately be good for the people of the world, on balance overall. He argues that there is no turning back, that we have seen acceleration in globalization since the end of the Cold War. However, he also thinks we must be aware of some of its potential shortcomings.

In a recent New York Times article, Friedman suggests that terrorism is a reaction to globalization, attributable to "undeterrable youth": "They look around their home countries and are humiliated by the contrast with the West and how it makes them feel, and it is this humiliation—this poverty of dignity—that drives them to suicidal revenge."

The focus on the "chain-reaction" effect was also discussed in a recent book, *"World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability"* by Amy Chua, a law professor at Yale University. Chua offers that the spread of free-market capitalism stimulates hostilities between the national ethnic majorities and market dominant minorities. These hostilities "foment active ethnonationalist movements."

Finally, Marshall McLuhan had his own explanation for the "chain-reaction" effect cultures can have on one another. His explanation was in reference to our own revolt and violence over the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement in the last 1960's. His insight was that the introduction of a major medium of communication, such as television, involved a major shift in mental posture of that medium's users. He explained; "When our identity is in danger, we feel certain that we have a mandate for war. The old image must be recovered at any cost."

I wonder, is this what we are seeing happen with our Muslim neighbors on the planet? Are we not seeing a sort of "chain-reaction" effect and experiencing this ourselves?

3) America's economic and social policies are not meeting the needs of developing markets, especially Muslim-dominated markets. America's product needs improving. Differences in economic development are also a key cause of the gap that stimulates cultural backlash. One thing most people in my business know for sure, is that the best way to find out that a product is not living up to expectations is to advertise the product. People draw conclusions based on their experience with the brands or products.

It appears there is a gap in relevance for our economic product, our policy, as it relates to other cultures. In his recent book, *"Globalization and Its Discontents"*, Joseph

Stiglitz, former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, also former chief economist of the World Bank, discusses the gap in economies between cultures, particularly the developed and the developing markets. He refers to the gap in relevance being generated by the three main institutions that govern globalization; the International Monetary Fund(IMF), the World Trade Organization(WTO) and the World Bank. These world financial institutions operate from the perspective of Western economic theory, particularly America's. Yet, market forces and the economies in most developing markets do not react in the same way as the economies of the developed markets.

We now know developing markets, especially Muslim-dominated markets, perceive international economic policies as being predominantly American policies. Stiglitz, who was involved in setting these policies, believes there is a gap in understanding their effect. He says: "The decisions of any institution naturally reflect the perspectives and interests of those who make the decisions. Not surprisingly, the policies of the international economic institutions are all too often aligned with the commercial and financial interests of those in the advanced industrial countries." Stiglitz acknowledges that the economic policies of the IMF, WTO and World Bank are driven by the US and that they are out of touch with many of the market economies they are intended to help. He refers to the situation in a very introspective way (when you think of our own history) as—"taxation without representation".

Globalization, as conveyed via the media and experienced via the economy in most Muslim-dominated populations, has not been positively perceived. The perception, confirmed in the Gallup findings, continues to deteriorate. Stiglitz' says this of the worsening perception of our policies; "It has not brought benefits to all; the net effect of the policies set by the Washington Consensus has all too often been to benefit the few at the expense of the many, the well-off at the expense of the poor". He concludes: " In many cases commercial interests and values have superceded concern for the environment, democracy, human rights and social justice".

A commonly used expression in advertising is 'perception is reality'. Imagine what impressions are generated about America's economic policy and our culture among the poorer populations of the world, who now have all the communications technologies we have? We must ask ourselves, do the perceptions reflect our own portrayal of ourselves in the media? Are we perceived as rich, fat(with fully one-third of our population now officially obese) and oblivious to the rest of the world? This is the perception that seems to come through in the Gallup study. Looking at ourselves, perhaps one can conclude that perception is, in fact, the reality. There is a dangerous cultural and economic gap emerging.

For example, data from a recent study looks at the distribution of income in America. This study, brought to light in a NY Times article by Paul Krugman, summarized the

current gap in our own backyard: "The 13,000 richest families in America now have almost as much income as the 20 million poorest. And those 13,000 families have incomes 300 times that of average families." This gap is similar to the disparity in income that existed in the US in the 1920's.

Another factor that is contributing to the negative perception of America is the gap in fossil fuel consumption between the West and developing markets. America's heavy use of fuel and the method of energy used have had a significant impact on relationships between nations. The dynamics of a depletion in fossil fuels and the ramifications this will have on socio-economic structure is discussed, in depth, in Jeremy Rifkin's recent book, *"The Hydrogen Economy: The Creation of the World-Wide Energy Web and the Redistribution of Power on Earth"*. Rifkin predicts a vastly different world of less centralized energy sourcing in the future.

The need for self-examination and repurposing America, is a key conclusion drawn by Kevin Phillips in the book *"Wealth and Democracy"*. He says: "Either democracy must be renewed, with policies brought back to life, or wealth is likely to cement a new less democratic regime—plutocracy by some other name." (I wonder, might that other name be terrorism?)

Martin Luther King surely understood the chain-reaction that can occur in response to culture and policies that are not relevant. He said: "There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society, who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society, protect that society, but when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it".

The factors of the media, economic and social policies are clearly creating a new, intercultural global society. The new society being built is more borderless and transparent. It is a society in which some cultures feel they have no stake and other cultures, like ours, seem absolutely oblivious or insensitive to the other's needs, wants and desires.

4) The developing markets are predominantly a "Youth Culture", significantly different in lifestage, economic status and mindset than developed markets in the world. This is another factor that is influencing the gap in understanding. The dynamics of youth is another important factor to consider in the issue of the "misperception" discussed in Washington at our State Department meeting. It is also a primary factor in the resultant behaviors we are seeing from some individuals and countries.

Those among us here today from the "baby boomer" generation, will recall how

America's population skewed significantly young, during the 1960's. Then, the mean age in the country was 24 years old. This had an enormous effect on American culture, politics, economic focus and behavior, and it has been well documented. Today, the mean age in the US is about 36 years old, creating a very different environment than most of the developing markets in the world. In the developing markets, populations average 67% under the age of 24 years old. This is a huge "generation gap" versus the developed markets.

Osama bin Laden understood this when he said in a recent airing played by al-Jazeera and over the internet: "The youth of God are preparing things that would fill your hearts with terror and target your economic lifeline." The combination of this more youthful audience composition and the media proliferation has resulted in an "external" audience with far more access to diverse information, and the ability to alter and control dialog themselves. We have first-hand experience with this in our learning about Al-Qaeda and how it was able to develop, communicate and influence perceptions using the new technologies

Bin Laden and his followers developed communications to influence their more youthful, impressionable audience. He well understands the power of the new media to influence perception and behavior. Even our Department of Defense has caught onto this in its new pamphlet *"The National Security Strategy of the United States of America."* It suggests "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few".

We have seen the almost overnight "turning back of the clock" by a relatively progressive developing market like Iran. This chain-reaction to western freedoms and culture was thrust on the world with pronouncements from bin Laden's forerunner, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, He protested against Western influence: "You, who want freedom, freedom for everything, the freedom of parties, you who want all the freedoms, you intellectuals: freedom that will corrupt our youth, freedom that will pave the way for the oppressor, freedom that will drag our nation to the bottom." Can this perspective be more diametrically opposite from ours?

5) The prevailing marketing and communications "frame-of- reference" of the last 20 years has been rendered obsolete. We need a new model for developing public policy and for addressing the gaps in understanding. The commonly used marketing management concept, "Think Global/Act Local", originated in the 1970's. This marketing frame-of-reference (or its more recent version, "Think Local/Act Global"), is, today, severely limiting our ability to understand the consequences of economic, social and environmental policies and actions.

"Think Global/Act Local" is inherently a geographic concept. It assumes borders and barriers that do not exist as definitively as they once did, especially in regards to commerce, travel and information access. Nor does it reflect the full effect of the aforementioned communications technologies that the world's population are experiencing.

This is the kind of thinking we have seen in the marketing and advertising world where brands are presented with a uniform, and often irrelevant, appeal across cultures (some call this "lowest common denominator" advertising). It comes from marketing myopia.

Our government servants, policy makers and commercial enterprise leaders could benefit from some of the learning that has been obtained from companies who have experience from developing successful communications programs globally. Many companies have direct experience in the Muslim communities. Companies like Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Johnson & Johnson, and others, have enormous experience in developing communications programs designed to appeal to these markets. While all the experience has not been successful, there is much that can be gleaned from their success models, as well as their mistakes. They are further along the learning curve.

I believe there is a need for a new, more useful frame-of-reference for brand-building, and international communications. It will need to be one that reflects on the changing perceptual landscape for American corporations, one that links up with what Howard Gossage termed an "extra-environmental" point of view.

Gossage spoke to our need to look beyond the horizon of what we can literally see and perceive: "Awareness is becoming conscious that there is something bigger controlling us than what we thought. Two things make us aware of an environment; either it changes or we change."

To illustrate, Gossage used the story of an ant who lived all his life inside an anthill. The ant was not aware that the anthill was his world, because he could not see it. "So, one day they send him off on an important assignment to drag back a dead beetle, say. He goes outside the anthill. Two things happen: 1) He sees the anthill for the first time; 2) he becomes aware that the world is a very big place. Does this mean that he is aware of his environment? No, because what he doesn't know is that his anthill is inside a greenhouse. The only way he'll become aware of the greenhouse is if he goes outside of it. And even then it won't do him much good, because, you see, the greenhouse is inside the Houston Stadium, and so on."

Most countries have a nation-centric perception of their environment. Like the ant in the anthill, I believe America, despite our worldliness and our global commerce, is generally suffering from the need to have a more extra-environmental view. We need a

frame-of-reference that understands we are now living in a global intercultural village. One that understands the effect of media on perception. One that captures the importance of local cultural relevance, understands our audience and that better recognizes the fragile dynamics of our global economic environment.

When we think about perception, especially that of our country, our corporations, our policies, our values, principles and our brands, we need to think from outside our vantage point on earth. We need to look at the earth from the outside in, from a vantage point similar to.... the sun's-- Think Like The Sun.

Everywhere on the planet we gauge our days with the rise and fall of the sun. At the end of the day, when the sun goes down, we turn off the lights, put our head on our pillow and fall asleep. For all intents and purposes, perception seems to stop in suspension, until the next day, and the new dawn, when the sun comes up, and we resume our activities once again.

That is the way it seems, however, the sun does not go up and down. It is we here on earth that revolve. The sun remains constant and we, from our own geographic and perceptual vantage point, are revolving. Increasingly, with the interconnected media environment that is either fully wired, or "wired" by wireless, we are no longer operating in isolation. Our world is one where we are increasingly connected to each other, increasingly able to communicate with each other, from one side of the planet to the other. Our perceptions of other nations, individuals and cultures, as well as their perceptions about us, are influenced by information all the time, beyond what we see, beyond the day and the night we experience. Like the constancy of the sun, perceptions are being made and beliefs driven with individuals, somewhere, all the time, in "real" time. I believe it is helpful, if not necessary, to adopt this frame-of-reference for brands, nations or population groups.

Think Like The Sun is a frame-of-reference, which can help us think outside our immediate geographic and cultural environment to acquire better understanding. It can help us better consider the effects our ideas, actions and communications are having more broadly. Robert Samuelson, in a recent Newsweek article says: "Experience has taught that no two countries react identically and that, in any case, success requires patience and persistence. The present backlash partly reflects unrealistic expectations but, perversely, could create self-defeating reactions. Countries that have become dependent on the rest of the world cannot easily withdraw without damaging themselves—perhaps the others, too."

Think Like The Sun recognizes our behavior and communications in the global village, have a second-hand effect, besides what we see or intended. It also recognizes the interconnectedness that exists with the growth of new media technologies.

6) Despite the rising anti-Americanism, America's brand equities are strongly embraced by most citizens of the world, including most Muslim populations.

Most Muslims, support the principles and values outlined in America's founding vision, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. However, there is little awareness today that these are the fundamental principles behind our culture. This is due to lack of education and low awareness. It is also due to a growing discontinuity between what our founding principles say, in actual words, and what is observed by the broader world outside the US in the media they consume. More than ever, they see our actions and experience our policies.

First, let's look at what America, the brand, says to the rest of the world, in our words, from the **Declaration of Independence** and consider if we are walking the talk:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the Governed,— That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

(our intentions are relevant, regardless of race, religion or culture, but are we walking the talk?)

Consider what **The Constitution** says to an audience broader than just ourselves:

"We the People....in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure... tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity..."

Finally, another equity to be looked at closely, in which America is a participant, is the **Charter of the United Nations**:

"We the peoples of the United Nations... reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international

machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples." Are we walking the talk?

Consumers tell you very quickly if your product is not meeting expectations, or otherwise not "walking the talk". I believe this is what the State Department found from its recently aborted campaign, called "Muslim Life In America". This campaign ran briefly in a few Muslim dominant markets and was pulled after it received much criticism.

It is not just the responsibility of our government servants to assure that America's perception is accurate. It is all of our responsibility, particularly the institutions that most readily interface on a global basis, notably America's corporations, brands and media content providers. We must ensure that the perception is relevant and that our actions live up to our words. We must be certain we are "walking the talk".

Here now, let me say, unequivocally —I abhor the violence I observed out my office window in New York on September 11th and that which we see in Israel/Palestine and Bali. It and all the other forms of terrorism and violence we have experienced, either first hand or in the media, is wrong. Those that commit these acts of terrorism must be brought to justice. There should be no question about this.

However, I want to also express, with equal fervor, the issue we need to acknowledge-- our actions are not completely living up to our words. . The respondents in the international research studies have less of a problem with America's principles than the apparent inability of America to live up to these principles. Do we really think our actions are living up to our principles?

An ideology, as defined by *Webster's Dictionary*, is "a body of doctrine or thought forming a political or social program. For example, Democracy is an ideology. The Muslim religion and Christianity are ideologies. America is an ideology. Our brand, is an ideology. And, the point is, that it is now "owned" by a broader audience who perceive it and are affected by it. It is a brand of ideology that is in need of repurposing for its broader audience. More than ever, we are being asked to walk the talk. The whole world is watching.

7) The needs and desires of the world are well known and offer a platform for improving America's perception, especially through cause-related corporate responsibility. I believe our corporations are in the best position to communicate what Americanism really is. Our multinational companies are in communities of vast cultural difference across the planet. They offer these communities employment and educational opportunities, no government can keep up with.

A research firm called Roper-Starch, conducted a worldwide study to learn about cause branding and whether doing social good can translate to market share improvement for companies or brands. Overall, 38% of the world's consumers say "it is very important in their decision-making that brands and companies make efforts to address social issues or causes." The top issues consumers across the world want to see companies take on are: The Environment (22%), Education (20%) and Hunger/Poverty (16%). Emerging markets, in particular, have strong expectations for companies to help address these key social issues.

The Roper study speaks about the importance of corporate involvement in social causes. It also reflects the most relevant issues for people in developing markets. It is against this backdrop of needs, wants and desires, that the perception of America is gauged. It is against these needs and desires that America's culture, via its media, commercial messages, policies and entertainment, can be perceived to be in such disharmony. While this does not suggest that America should step back from its principle of freedom of speech, it does suggest that we need to be a lot more sensitive to all our audiences. So, if you are a multinational corporation who is concerned with rising anti-Americanism, I ask what is your company doing to address these most relevant social needs? What are you doing to match your corporate behavior to the needs of the communities in which your company lives and operates? How are you walking the talk?

RECOMMENDATION

America and its corporations must repurpose themselves behind their core equities. We need to "walk the talk" and have a more globally relevant frame of reference in our dealings and communications with the rest of the planet.

To this end, it would be helpful for our institutions and corporations:

1. To understand and acknowledge the issue, that some aspects of America's culture and external economic development policy and practices, are inconsistent with our founding equities and historic appeal. Take note of the second-hand effects of our Culture.
2. Like many leadership brands who sometimes lose their way, we simply may need to get closer to the consumer, our global neighbors, and find ways to get back on track with our core principles that continue to be admired by most people in the world. Instead of thinking of the challenge as globalization, which is largely about geographic coverage, perhaps it is time for us to see the challenge as one of better appreciating interculturalism. Our products, programs and the communications of our corporations need to better reflect our global audience, including the Muslim world. Think Like The Sun.

3. To find ways for your company and your brands to listen and more responsibly address the needs of the communities in which you operate. Better social responsibility and relevance will greatly help your company and our country.

One final note to make is that each of us can do something, right here in our own community. We can vote to make sure we have people who are walking the talk for our brand. Renewal is an equity of the American ideology. We are one of the only brands that regularly reinvents itself via our election system of governance. An enlightened refocus on our core principles, embraced multilaterally, can help serve all mankind better and provide a means to help improve America's perception as being more cooperative. Importantly, no matter what, America must be perceived as having been created by the people, for the people, where "the people" are the citizens of the world.

CONCLUSION

In responding to the questions raised at that State Department briefing, I have tried to address the problem from my area of expertise, advertising and brand building.

I believe Martin Luther King's perspective rings clearer today, than ever before: "Violence is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent, rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral, because it thrives on hatred rather than love".

The international advertising industry needs to help further on this. I hope this can be of help to our corporations, who have such an influential opportunity to change perceptions by example in virtually every community and culture on the face of the earth.

Tim Love
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