



Making Brands Happen:
An introduction to



Lawes Consulting
FUTUROLOGY. INNOVATION. BRANDING.

www.lawes-consulting.com
020 8349 7223

Content

Branding

Futurology

Innovation

Segmenter

Digital Brands

How do you do semiotics?

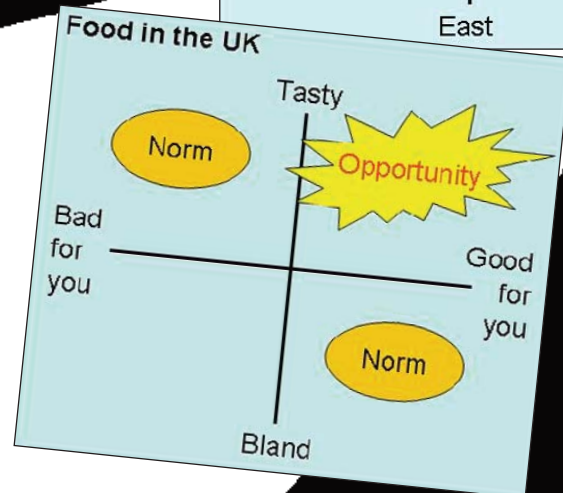
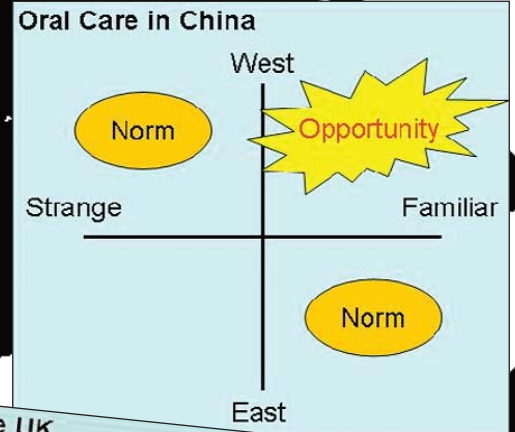
Branding

Lawes's unique approach, using the latest research methods, helps our clients create relevant and memorable brands.

For a major bank, we helped to create and market a new brand that met the needs, and overcame the prejudices, of the Scottish market (a notoriously sensitive consumer group). We did this by supplying a complete picture of contemporary Scottish culture, and showing our client where Scottish consumers' emotional investment is. We then provided the bank with clear and specific guidance on capturing Scottish consumers, with a brand designed to meet their emotional needs, and a communications strategy to match.

Opportunities for new brands are easily discovered using Lawes's own version of the Semiotic Square. The Square identifies cultural norms and shows where the gaps are. It is a well-established semiotic technique that Lawes has adapted for use with any size of market, from minority subcultures to global consumer culture.

We also helped reposition an oral care brand that was under-performing in China. We did this by showing our Western client how to look at Chinese supermarket displays through the eyes of Chinese consumers; using their cultural and historical knowledge about oral hygiene, and not just relying on the client's own knowledge about their products & sector. The brand is now performing better, not because it shouts louder than every Western competitor in the store, but because it now speaks Chinese.



Futurology

Futurology is the art & science of envisioning possible, probable & preferable futures. It is done by tracking changing ideas: trends in belief systems that vary over time, and around the world. Lawes is able to offer futurology because we are experts in semiotics: a research method designed to identify cultural belief systems & plot their trajectory.

How we do it

- Identify new phenomenon.
- Identify its cause.
- See if the cause links this phenomenon to others.

The future of 'male' & 'female' gender categories.

Prediction: In the future, populations will no longer simply divide into 'men' and 'women'. Gender category will be a choice, and there will be more than two options.

Evidence: The fragmentation of sexual orientation categories, in line with technological innovation. Over time, the category 'gay' has disintegrated like this: lesbian & gay; LGBT; LGBTQQA. Gender categories are going to go the same way.

The future of greeting, gifting & celebrations.

Prediction: In the future, people's private celebrations will focus more on birthdays & anniversaries than on weddings & graduations.

Evidence: Sociology shows that what it calls 'rites of passage' (vs 'rites of progression') are on the decline. Consumers today want to be young forever, traditional life-stages are collapsing & family structures are changing; we no longer all go through the same things at the same time. Consequently, people prefer to celebrate rites of progression, which are about people still being here and things still being the same.

The future of leisure & play.

Prediction: In the future, we'll revise our definitions of 'work' and 'play' because the old ones aren't doing the job any more. Brands competing in the field of entertainment & leisure will need to think afresh about what leisure really is.

Evidence: You already know that work is becoming more playful. Recently, this idea has been supplemented by ludologists: play is becoming more like work. Castranova, the economist, surveyed 3,500 players of Everquest, with an average age of 24. They played well over 20 hours each week, and close observation of their activities shows them working: 'grinding' for desirable goods, farming, commodities trading & managing guilds.

Talk to Lawes about the future

- health & illness
- food & eating
- pregnancy, birth & parenting
- shopping
- money

Example:

We helped a British national newspaper update its brand by thinking afresh about its core customers. The client had been using a highly rational segmentation model, based on demographics and lifestage (e.g., 'Baby Boomers'). We determined that the brand was losing favour because the 'Baby Boomers' category did not capture cultural change over time. We showed our client a model of Britain's emerging New Middle Class, defined by ideas more than cohort or lifestage, and now the brand is much more in line with the target market's interests and values.

Innovation

A large percentage of new products and services fail, many because they are too complicated or don't resonate with consumers.

Lawes has developed a simple method for innovation that takes into account all market trends to guarantee a new product has appeal and relevance.

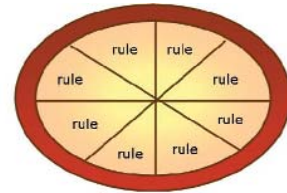
We analyse the category using semiotics so we understand all the rules and conventions.

Then we analyse successful brands from other markets and identify what their appeal is.

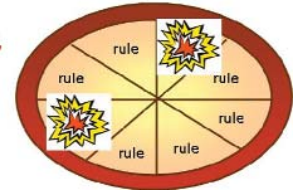
Then we identify which rules are holding the category back the most and break it by adapting successful ideas from other markets.

This ensures that the innovation feels both familiar and new as well as relevant to consumers.

1. Identify all the rules of the category.



2. Break the rules that hold the category back. The more radical you want to be, the more rules you break.



For example, we've used this approach to:

Revolutionise the In-store Confectionery Experience

The Rules We Broke: Shelves are grey/white, shelves have to be geometric, shelves are rows, banners at the top, all shelving is the same.

The Solution: Our semiotic and ethnographic studies demonstrated that shelving was causing confectionery to be treated as a commodity instead of being unique to the segment it represented. We devised practical and interesting display solutions that illustrated how fixtures should support the category.

Communicate Change through Direct Mail

The Rules We Broke: In letters about serious financial issues, language should be formal and detailed, envelopes should look formal and dry, branding should be minimal.

The Solution: The rules we broke were barriers to customers reading and understanding the changes. We adapted elements from promotional DM to make it more accessible and readable while maintaining a degree of formality to communicate the seriousness of the message.

Developing New Product Ideas for a Health Supplement Brand

The Rules We Broke: Food should look like food, drinks come in a bottle, food lives in the kitchen, food is self contained.

The Solution: Through insights gained from semiotics and ethnography we developed a wide range of new product formats that pushed the brand beyond its confines. These included innovative types of packaging and dispensers, products that could be added to other foods and products that could be used in cooking.

Segmenter

Lawes offers a new approach to consumer segmentation.

The old approach to consumer segmentation looked something like this:

Define the scope of your project: what's your market population, e.g., the UK.
Map the market, showing which brands have the biggest shares as measured by past sales.

Work out who among your target population are the decision-makers.
Decide how those consumers make their purchase decisions (possibly, but not always, using market research).

Form your population into segments, based on the things that motivate them. Target your key segments with the right marketing mix.

The new, Lawes approach to consumer segmentation looks like this:

Define the scope of your project in cultural terms, eg the British market.
Map the market, showing which semiotic codes define it. Which brands are using lapsed codes, which are using the dominant codes, and which are using new and emergent codes. Semiotic mapping also often uncovers new and emergent codes in consumer culture that no brand is yet using, which represents an opportunity for any new brand wishing to occupy that space.

Work out who among your target population are the key decision-makers. The decision maker is not necessarily the same as the person who makes the purchase, as we know from examples such as women going from one supermarket to the next to find meals that comply with their husbands' and children's finicky preferences.

Find out how the decision-makers make their decisions. This can be accomplished through semiotic analysis or through ethnography, depending on how much is known already and how useful video output is going to be.

Form your population into segments, based on the things that motivate them. Target your key segments with the right marketing mix.

Digital brands

The digital landscape has proven itself difficult territory to conquer for many brands, because companies have struggled to recognise what consumers want from the digital medium. Lawes knows what consumers want and how you should deliver it to them.

The key thing to remember is that consumers treat the internet as their personal space, therefore you have to make them feel like they are the 'centre of the universe'.

Some of the most popular websites provide spaces where consumers can build their own highly customised profiles, upload their own videos and photos.

We have developed a number of simple approaches to make brands successful online.



1. The Internet is a Mirror

Consumers look at and learn about themselves and order their lives.

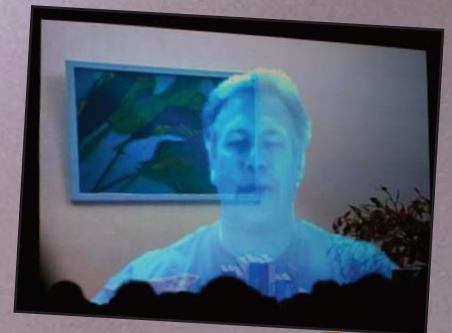
2. The Internet is a Projector

Consumers want to display versions of themselves and project them out there for others to see and admire.

3. The Internet is a Construction Kit

Consumers want to play and experiment with their identity using digital tools.

Digital branding needs to prioritise the needs of the individual consumer, not the community.



Lawes has used this unique approach to show brands how to design online experiences and services that consumers get genuine benefits from.

For example, we helped one brand develop a tool that allowed consumers to try out products online before they buy them.


We've also helped brands design cross platform communications in online contexts.

And we've helped gaming and virtual world companies understand the kinds of issues and themes that future games should focus on.

How do you do semiotics?

Lawes's approach is founded on Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, which incorporates elements of sociology, psychology, anthropology and linguistics and has over 100 years of methods and case studies to build on.

Let's see how it's done using this consumer's photograph of their kitchen.



Pepper grinder and pepper container on display, placed to imply that the owner cooks from scratch and has some expertise

Varnished wood and dark colours suggest that the owner is going for a more traditional and homey feel for their kitchen as opposed to the more modern look.

Fairy uses deep green for its liquid to suggest efficacy—cleaning dishes. The efficacy message is softened with a feminine shaped bottle and images of bubbles and babies.

Carex's liquid is lighter green implying gentleness—for use on hands. The container is more functional (shape and pump) signifying hygiene.

Freshly cleaned and clear surfaces: demonstrating that the owner is in control of the kitchen

Fairy and Carex take pride of place by the sink even though their commercial aesthetic clashes with the homey look of the kitchen. Allies in the goal to keep the kitchen tidy and clean.

What would we learn from this example?

A number of insights arise straight away. Firstly, it's interesting to see that Fairy and Carex are given pride of place in this consumer's portrait of her kitchen. The brands are working hard to say something about the owner. The consumer is displaying herself as in control of the kitchen and as a competent cook. Also notice the visual balance: Fairy and Carex mirror the pepper crusher and the bottle of spices to the left, creating a picture of skilled cooking, cleanliness and decoration. The cleanliness message is strongly supported by the hygiene cues of the pump-action Carex, mimicking medical practice.