

A BRAND NEW JOURNEY TO CLEAN GREEN NEW ZEALAND

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1 Summary

Intrigued by a Ministry for the Environment report on the value of New Zealand's clean green image in dollar terms; and the economic possibilities of branding products to such a flagship, led me to research the topic further – with a commodity product – apples –as an example.

As an orchardist, I am well aware that fear is one factor relating to food in a modern world. Consumers are striving to eat healthy food to increase their feel good factor. The world and its people are telling the market; “Give us what we want! “ Healthy food without contamination. Guarantee it.

Can we live up to the demand?

Is the image of Clean Green New Zealand sustainable? Will this make a New Zealand brand sustainable?

Yes it will. If we have a definitive image, a word picture of who we are and the professional integrity to apply ourselves as a nation to that set of values in all our exports.

All we need now is a brand or a mark to identify the product to the consumer.

Do we need brands within the New Zealand brand?

Yes. As long as the core values of the parent or country brand are mirrored and honoured by the products.

2 Dictionary Definition of Brand/Image

OXFORD DICTIONARY

Brand - n. 1 a particular make of goods. b identifying trade mark, label, etc. 2 characteristic kind (*brand of humour*). 3 identifying mark burned esp. on livestock. 4 iron used for this. 5 piece of burning or charred wood. 6. stigma; mark of disgrace. 7 poet. torch.- v 1 mark with a hot iron. 2 stigmatise; mark with disgrace (*brand him a liar*).3 impress unforgettably on one's mind. 4 assign a trademark etc to.[Old English]

Image / im-ij/- n. 1 representation of an object, eg. A statue.2 reputation or persona of a person, company, etc (*company's image is at risk*).3 appearance as seen in a mirror or through a lens. 4 metaphor. 6 semblance, likeness- v.

Rob Frankel a Brand Consultant defines a brand as an identifying mark that should be as clear as a brand on a cow, differentiation, about being seen as the only solution to a problem, that delivers a message clearly, communicates quickly, projects credibility, strikes an emotional chord, motivates the respondent, creates a strong user loyalty.

“ Advertising grabs their minds, Branding gets their hearts,” he said.

3 New Zealand's Image; What is it's worth?

In 2001 the Ministry for the Environment commissioned PA Consulting Group to provide an estimate of the value for New Zealand's export trade of our clean green image. This was a very in depth and lengthy report. Even that this study is now 3 years old it is still relevant, the same values still apply. The following are some extracts from that report and the summary –leaflet.

Imagine that you live in Asia, or Britain or perhaps the US. You have driven home through the smog to your cramped apartment, and as you eat your dinner you see on TV images of snow-capped mountains reflected in crystal-clear unpolluted lakes. Cows graze in lush green pastures, native birds sing in the forests, waves thunder onto deserted beaches, and happy healthy people are having fun. It is New Zealand, and it looks like paradise. So you think to yourself, I want to eat food that comes from there. I want to go there on my holiday.

This is the vision, the impetus behind much of the way New Zealand markets itself to the international community. We are clean and green so people want to eat what we produce, experience our unspoilt environment. We know that. Or do we? Is this really what makes people buy New Zealand? Are we sure? Does our clean green image influence all those buying our food? Or just a few? And does it really matter to people who are thinking about a holiday?

Main findings are as follows:

- *New Zealand's clean green image does have a value. Environmental image is a substantial driver of the value New Zealand can derive for goods and services in the international market place.*
- *The study suggests this image is worth at least hundreds of millions, possibly billions, of dollars – aggregating value elements from dairy, tourism, and organic produce, and extrapolating to other sectors such as meat.*
- *New Zealand is relatively clean and green. This is mainly attributable to our low population density resulting in relatively benign environmental pressures.*
- *However, there are environmental problems that are sufficient to raise questions about the sustainability of the value of New Zealand's exports attributable to its environmental image. There is a risk that New Zealand will lose value that is created by the current environmental image if we are not vigilant in dealing with the problems that could threaten the image.*

4 History

New Zealand is still seen in some respects as the mouse that roars, for example, when we denied the United States access with nuclear powered or armed ships. Much of the respect generated by that decision shaped our national image of Clean and Green.

New Zealand is clean and green by historical accident. Our industrial history is short compared to the other nations.

We haven't had a massive population making a mess for thousands of years. We haven't had time to stuff it up – yet.

Centuries of mammal free existence left nothing but ruffled feathers and the odd broken moa falling down a crevice.

It is not as if we are clean and green by nature! There just haven't been enough of us to make a mess big enough to damage our overseas image. But we are far from perfect.

In some respects the perception of New Zealand as a clean and green country is an endangered species that needs as much protection as a Chatham Island robin.

New Zealand is seen by the world to be safe, unspoilt, clean, green and non-threatening. We offend nobody.

But surely we can learn from other countries errors? Three Mile Island ? Mad Cow Disease and its causes? Genetic Engineering?

Think macro and act micro.

Beware any of the following events.

- Biosecurity incident
- Food safety scare on supermarket shelves
- Reversal of nuclear ship policy
- Endorsement of genetic product
- Political upheaval
- War / Terrorism
- Major chemical contaminants.

Perception of New Zealand and all its companies and products is a changing thing. If we do not try to maintain and control that perception then someone else controls it by default.

5 A Burning Brand?

When people doubt the health of the food chain then your brand/image better measure up or you are out of business. This includes your sources for all materials associated with your product.

A contemporary brand must equal. Total value for money every time!

- Reputation
- Quality
- An alive relationship between consumer and producer
- Image and content
- The brand needs to grow through the lives of your customers.
- Quality breeds loyalty
- They own it not you. They want it. You give.
- A brand is more than a logo it's a living thing
- Seeing a brand should evoke a feel good factor in the customer – consume me. Remember last time!
- People working for the brand – especially those in contact with consumers should be excited and happy with the quality of the product they are selling. Or they are working against your brands intent.
- Inform
- Inspire
- Motivate
- Lead. Go for it! My vision. Come aboard! You can do it with us!
- Leadership by inclusion not from on high.
- Brand image isn't just an Elle poster but everything a business says about itself.
- New Zealand needs we/me concepts. Employees need to belong and feel they fit into the company culture and ethos.
- Employees need a belief in the value of the product and a mental and spiritual stake in the product – beyond a salary.
- Commercial realities feed human needs. Conspicuous consumption creates needs out of wants. Much of what we have we have been taught to need.

6 What's in a Brand?

Apple, Telstra, Telecom, Nike, Vodafone, Aiwa, Yamaha, Levi, Philips, Sharp, Cadbury, DB, Lion, Montana, Rothmans, Pepsi, Coca Cola, Shell, Mobil, Gillette.

A quick smattering of companies that say something in a name – backed by advertising and quality product.

A winning All Black team is a powerful brand. One great try by Jonah Lomu against England when he monstered Mike Catt saw Jonah linked with New Zealand Apple promotions in United Kingdom.

The stock exchange is a minute by minute record of business status and confidence in a brand. Nisei or Dow Jones , it does not matter, all stock markets are linked across the world and anything goes wrong and it can come back to you and your brand, however indirectly, from Tokyo, New York, London, or Paris.

A national change in policy or currency fluctuation can affect a brand. As can changing social attitudes to a product. Tobacco companies are not an investment that is wise to make as the Western world changes laws and social mores follow.

Companies like Rothmans and Phillip Morris are brands under legislative attack. Brands are born and brands die. Sometimes by influences other than your own.

In business, rebranding follows a takeover or a new position in the market. In New Zealand, Fonterra and Cervena to name just two. They also have a raft of products under secondary brands.

If New Zealand companies are to succeed within the Clean Green New Zealand Brand they need to be distinctly green in their own endeavours so that if the international finger is ever drawn to New Zealand for malpractice environmentally the business stands strong alone. We do it in the spirit of being safe clean and green. A brand within a brand. Mr Tindall and The Warehouse like Mr Hubbard and his cereal empire become brands within their own brands because the personal philosophy of the men and their business are seen as identical . Ethics and morality are said and seen to be done.

7 Apples Now!

The apple industry now has BRC, EurepGAP and HACCP and I.F.P to conform with.

Initials aside – they validate a clean healthy orchard and packhouse operation and fruit quality is recognised and regulated.

It also means that foreign law has arrived in our countryside and the need to validate our products to fit the laws of the country we market to.

Every part of the apple production that can be monitored and calibrated and are audited by a certificated verification agency. This means that every grower must conform to safe apple production process.

The Pipfruit Industry developed the production method of I.F.P (intergrated fruit production) to meet international market expectations for safe produce. It is now a prerequisite for the exporting of apples from New Zealand. This production method is the bench mark for “good agricultural practice” which all growers participate in willingly.

We as a industry still needed to be recognized in our major export markets as being a responsible and safe food producer.

EurepGAP was introduced in 2002.

What is EurepGAP?

EurepGAP was started in 1997 as an initiative of retailers belonging to the Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group (EUREP). It has evolved since then into an internationally recognised standard of (GAP) Good Agricultural Practice.

What factors led to the development of EurepGAP?

EurepGAP was driven by the desire to reassure consumers. Following food safety scares such as BSE (mad cow disease), pesticide concerns and the rapid introduction of GM foods, consumers throughout the world are asking how food is produced; and they need re-assuring that it is both safe and sustainable. Food safety is a global issue and transcends international boundaries. Many EurepGAP members are global players in the retail industry and obtain food products from around the world. For these reasons a need has arisen for a commonly recognised and applied reference standard of Good Agricultural Practice which has at its centre a consumer focus.

When EurepGAP was introduced growers approached this with trepidation, however, they have found that it is just a form of documentation of the practices that were being carried out.

What it has done for the industry is that it has verified that we are carrying out production of our product that meets an international standard of Clean Green.

What of the future?

Can deregulated exporters be allied to a Clean Green New Zealand brand?

As a producer the short answer is yes , as the accreditation for the product is held by the grower.

However currently, there are too many rivals with product arriving at the same market and little differentiation with other countries product.

Chile, once a pariah is now a respected producer.

This about-turn in market perception is a result of more transparency, commitment to both fruit quality and to market delivery improvements and competitive pricing.

The industry needs to differentiate our product from competitor nations and make people want to choose our produce before anyone else's.

A generic brand or mark on every carton and every apple would indicate to the consumer that all producers have a unity in purpose.

Unless we rate our Clean Green New Zealand brand more highly then we risk its loss. We need to nourish it, protect it, and get behind it as a nation.

The 2004 season has been crunch time for the apple industry. Distance, a lack of differentiation from rivals and no clear brand. We need to refocus on our strengths and differentiation of our branding.

We must be out there to give them what they want.

8 Brands Within A Brand

A country can be successfully branded.

The Wales Tourist Board, in conjunction with a company called Springpoint and some diverse public and private sector groups examined the core values of Wales and amplified them.

They came up with a manual that embodied the spirit of Wales and used it as a baseline so that images of Wales were consistent in the public domain. It worked. Perception of Wales was altered and tourism etc flourished.

- Brand New Zealand is a flagship.
- Within lie specialty brands. Enza, Zespri, Tip Top, Mainland, Fernleaf just to name a few.
- Anchor butter has such brand loyalty in United Kingdom that it a leader in the butter market.
- Anchor proves that is quality has won customers over for generations.
- That consistent quality within a brand makes the image real.

9 Project Brand

Project Brand is based on a concept that 64% of New Zealand Exports are Food based products. We have our Clean Green image that is worth Billions.

- We need a national logo designed, that incorporates our clean green image.
- Quality produce is backed by regulatory demands and a desire at grass roots level to validate the claims intrinsically embodied in the logo.
- All New Zealanders' need to have a personal stake in the Brand and protecting its core values.
- The brand should be backed by an international advertising campaign for the projection and of our image.
- Primary producers become the catalyst to changing and differentiating our product.
- Project Brand could apply to all NZ exported food products and extended to other products if the producers support 100% the Clean Green New Zealand Brand.

10 Conclusion

Brand New Zealand needs to reflect the heart of this nation and the customer will buy because of our difference in the market place. It is the perception that should enhance the brand.

Clean Green New Zealand is a image / a perception that has massive value that needs to be respected and nourished.

Clean Green New Zealand is a perception founded on tourism, publicity, history, historic brands and alliances, and a plethora of feature films from Lord Of The Rings to The Last Samurai.

Brand New Zealand is important and any business to be part of its success has to honour its principles.

However we have our image, now we need to maximise and nourish it or risk its loss.

Any NZ brand will be founded on supporting brands, needs to be a stand on its own Baby Brand. The parent brand may be New Zealand or **Clean Green New Zealand**.

If the parent brand fails in any way, the supporting brand must still be seen to be a clean living company.

- The further you get from face to face with the people the more your brand deteriorates.

New Zealand needs to own its own.

Each region proud of its own

Each place of business proud of its own

Every employee is proud of their work.

No wars at the point of sale. Celebrate quality don't duel with it.

At the point of sale we need to know our value. Quality Product Responsibility at My Door. This is my brand .This is my quality product that lives up to the image and promise of the image I have told you is a true one. It is real and good value.

Imagine a possibility of all our primary produce arriving as a clean green wave on the overseas market. That is one future if we choose it.

11 Sources

Oxford Dictionary

The Revenge of Brand X by Rob Frankel www.revengeofbrandx.com

Warriors on The High Wire The Balancing Act of Brand Leadership in the 21st Century by Fiona Gilmore

Ministry for The Environment report(Our clean green image: What's it worth.)www.mfe.govt.nz

www.eurep.org

www.nzedge.com

Personal knowledge of production of Apples for 25years

Having visited overseas markets on two occasions to study the marketing of Apples.