

Thinking out of the box

| Text/Patricia J. Fiske |

Thinking out of the box is an old cliché, but a good one that continues to apply year after year. For entrepreneurial agencies, thinking out of the box encompasses all and every aspect of a client's brand. I was on a transatlantic trip this week and read Scott Bedbury's first book, *A New Brand World*. Scott's branding credentials come from his experience in key marketing positions at times of critical growth for both Nike and Starbucks. I liked his definition of branding. He writes, "Branding is about taking something common and improving upon it in ways that make it more valuable and meaningful." Improving upon a brand in our constantly changing industry requires thinking out of the box, examining all aspects that touch the brand today and have touched the brand in the past.

Distribution is one of the aspects of branding that locally owned agencies consider. They use

their local knowledge and entrepreneurial creativity to be proactive in generating increased value to clients.

Client: FincaFlichman

Entrepreneurial Agency: GTGA/WP

Let me take you to Argentina, where Gonzalez Taboada/Guevara & Asociados/Worldwide Partners (GTGA/WP) has created advertising for more than 200 brands and services. Some of GTGA/WP's best-known work involves advertising for fine beverages—wines, distilled liquors, and bottled water. The agency recently celebrated the production of its 100th beverage ad, with a collection that includes both imported and local brands.

One of GTGA/WP's clients was Finca Flichman, a local winery with an excellent vineyard well-known to connoisseurs of fine Argentinean wine. In a casual conversation one

day over a long business lunch that is usual in Buenos Aires, the owner of Finca Flichman and agency president and creative director Guillermo Taboada Gonzalez talked of growth. The conversation ranged from the difficulty the client was having establishing itself in the very best hotels and restaurants in Buenos Aires to the opportunity to become the distributor of Perrier, the internationally recognized and prestigious brand of sparkling water. The Perrier decision was not easy. It would be an interesting and profitable addition to the winery's brands but it was not mainstream to its product line.

After lunch, Guillermo returned to the agency and told the account team about his conversations with Finca Flichman. As locals, they knew the city, its people, and the best hotels and restaurants. As they talked, ideas began to form, and they moved into action. The strategy was

simple but they thought it would work. If Finca Flichman would bundle Perrier, a most desirable high-end product to its lesser-known but also highly desirable wines, they thought that distribution would be assured. The message was direct and very Latin in the way it built relationship: "I will sell you Perrier water, if you will add the wines from my company to the list of wines you sell."

Within twenty-four hours, GTGA/WP developed an ad that showed a silhouette of the famous Perrier bottle, formed from the names of the restaurants and hotels to which the winery wanted to sell their wines.

It worked. When the winery's sales force showed the ad to the targeted buyers at the best of the city's hotels and restaurants, none wanted to miss the opportunity to have the Perrier brand available to their guests and patrons. The result

was that Finca Flichman's wines, along with Perrier, became a permanent part of the menus and wine lists in many of the city's best local establishments.

The benefits of this swift, creative thinking and intimate knowledge of the local market were enjoyed by everyone involved. First, Finca Flichman wines became a recognized choice in the city's most respected establishments, which enhanced the brand names of the wines. Second, the agency's work for Perrier resulted in memorable ads that enhanced Perrier's business and became part of the French company's international campaign. And finally, GTGA/WP welcomed the opportunity to build the brand of a local product—a feat that locally owned entrepreneurial agencies do very, very well.

GTGA/WP's ability to bring these two brands together so effectively, and quickly, was based

on its operating philosophy of creating customized solutions to marketing problems. The agency takes pride in knowing and learning about a client's business in depth, asking the right questions, and acting as responsible advisors. Entrepreneurialism, for a locally owned agency like GTGA/WP, is a matter of seeing opportunities for its clients.

With its expertise about the local market, and the absence of any foreign corporate bureaucracy to which GTGA/WP must answer, the agency made swift strategic moves. An entrepreneurial agency makes course corrections rapidly, and turns in new directions when opportunities arise. When comparing his agency to the foreign-owned agencies in Buenos Aires, Guillermo says, "They are like aircraft carriers that take hours to stop, change directions, and start moving again. The entrepreneurial agency is more like a battleship that

can turn around and attack before the carrier does its job. That's a metaphor we like, because we try to make this happen every day."

Client: KemppiWelding

Entrepreneurial Agency: Imageneering WP

This next example of entrepreneurial agency intelligence starts with a basic question. Who are the most critical voices to branding a company and its products? I would argue that it is the people who work for the company. They must be the first to know of change, the first to adopt new strategies, the first to participate in their implementation.

Let me take you to Finland where Kemppi Welding is a world-leader in the manufacturing of industrial welding equipment. Kemppi is a conservative and traditional family-owned business started by two brothers in the 1950s. Two years ago, Kemppi set ambitious

new marketing goals for itself. Although it was already exporting successfully to more than 50 countries, Kemppi wanted to improve its worldwide level of recognition.

When Imageneering Worldwide Partners met the executives from Kemppi, they agreed that the company needed to refresh its marketing if they wanted the superior quality of their welding machines to be recognized. The Kemppi family was very clear in its direction—the strategic road was wide and clear with one exception. There could be no changes to the company's name, logo, and distinctive orange color.

It was an intriguing assignment for the branding and advertising professionals at Imageneering. This business-to-business assignment presented a unique set of challenges. Let's face it. Most people never think very much about the business of giant welding equipment.

Imageneering wanted to make

Kemppi a strong international brand that its customers would relate to and return to for all of their welding needs. Before developing their branding strategy, Imageneering developed a questionnaire and asked the senior management of Kemppi to send it to all employees and international sales distributors.

Imageneering was hoping to isolate and multiply the power of an unusual brand attribute. What they found in the research was the genetic code of the company. Deep and strong within Kemppi was the caring pleasure that workers find in their jobs. A great dedication—from machine worker, to sales force, to executive—to the kind of work they did.

Imageneering helped the company uncover its "attitude"—the way in which they could take pride in their excellent employee relations as well as the way they could advertise their products.

Being the company they are,

Kemppi launched the campaign internally first, to the employees. Being the company they wished to become, the company's CEO brought the workers together for company-wide presentation of their new communications platform. "Kemppi: The Joy of Welding." It was a portrayal of themselves, a workforce who loves what they do, and who are optimistic about their company. The top Kemppi executives went to the stage, formed a line, and took out their parasols—the kind of umbrella that Gene Kelly used in his dance in the 1950s musical classic *"Singing in the Rain"*. That famous movie song says to listeners, "Life is truly wonderful, I couldn't be any happier, and I have every reason to celebrate." When the company's leaders on the stage sang and performed some of Kelly's dance moves, the laughter and applause of employees in the audience confirmed that a great new brand had been born.


After Imageneering finished its

first work for Kemppi, the internal branding campaign inside the company, the agency and client agreed to take "Joy of Welding" into the marketplace. Welding is a highly skilled, technical occupation with precise and demanding scientific requirements. Research showed that the Kemppi's genetic code was transferable to its customers—working with the world's best equipment is, indeed, a pleasure.

One print ad, *"Time to Get Up,"* shows a simple, early-morning scene, with the statement: "The best way to enjoy life is to make sure that you have the right equipment. So why settle for second best, when you can weld with Kemppi." Another print ad, photographed in Lahti, Finland—the hometown of Kemppi—shows a world iconic image renamed "Hollyweld." The text states: "Star-class welding equipment others can only dream of."

During their work with Kemppi, Imageneering thought of a new way

for people to think about welders, and about welding. One of the promising results of the campaign is that Kemppi has launched a line of welding products for the consumer. Yes, "Joy of Welding" is also the theme of the consumer campaign. How could it not be? When an entrepreneurial agency cracks the genetic code of a company, the message can only be enduring.

You can see why I like Scott Bedbury's definition. Each of these branding stories are fine, culturally appropriate examples of how locally owned, entrepreneurial agencies made the brand more valuable and meaningful. 

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