



# Forget advertising, think “genetic marketing”

By Phil Darby. The Full Effect Company

**While social conditions, political actions and financial constraints might influence our character these are just the fine-tuning. The real decisions about who we are, what we feel and how we respond to these and other outside influences are set much earlier in our lifecycle, before we are born in fact, maybe even before our parents or grandparents were born – its genetics!**

With almost all of the 20-25,000 components of the human genome now discovered it's clear that everything we do, everything we are and every disease we contract is determined by our genes.

There has been a great deal of debate about how we can use this growing realisation to combat or treat physical conditions. What I want to do here is explore a couple of other areas where genetic insights could be applied to change the way we all live.

## **The impact on business generally**

So, it's confirmed that there is a non-conformity gene, a leadership gene and genes for pretty much every trait required of a successful manager. Companies could soon be selecting their directors on the basis of their genetic make-up and the world's most successful companies will be those whose employees at every level are recruited using the same approach.

I have long been an advocate of appointing people to roles based on their personalities even in preference to their education, now there's no excuse for not doing so. Each of us will soon have a genetic certificate that shows our genetic make-up and we will present this in preference to our school certificates when we apply for roles. Sure, advancement through the organisation would be subject to learning and experience, but the basics required to succeed will always be there – they will be a part of us and we will be able to prove it!

Building an organisation in this way will not only assure you of success, but ensure the contentedness of every employee, a factor that will itself generate further success – It's a win, win, win situation! The satisfaction will be down to the fact that every employee will have a job that they are comfortable with – because it will be second nature to them. Stress will be reduced and work-life balance restored.

Genetic testing is already a fact. What we need to do to kick this thing off is gather research and test the world's most successful people to identify their genetic make-up. There will be patterns for sure, and that will establish what we are looking for to fill key roles. As more of us are tested for job applications the data will become more comprehensive and the practice will then be able to extend to less senior roles.

## **How this will influence marketing**

An aspect of business where genetics would have a considerable impact for another reason is marketing.

Today effective marketing communications media strategies are a matter of reaching people with a purchase propensity by the most cost-effective route. Media fees are quoted in cost-per-thousand targets and the targets defined in many different ways. In future this will include genetic make up.

If people have a genetic propensity to purchase things, align themselves to causes, follow a particular lifestyle (Apparently, there's a "risk" gene that dictates our involvement in extreme sport) it would be a simple matter to cross-match that data with media routes to identify how to reach them quickly and efficiently. And sales would be assured.

Marketers understand that it costs ten-times as much to attract a new customer to buy from you for the first time than it does to sell to the same person a second time. A customer is fifty-times more profitable in his/her tenth year of loyalty to one brand than in their first so the real battle on the sales front line is to retain customers. Just imagine how simple life could be if loyalty were genetic!

Genetic loyalty would be a simple matter of implanting the right gene in your customer. OK, so implanting genes is a tricky business. Hundreds of people are supposed to have died as a result of genetic experimentation and as things currently stand, implanting genes is more likely to turn you into a corpse than a genius, but flight was tricky once, now it's all too commonplace, so stick with me on this.

In fact, let's take that thought a stage further. Imagine there wasn't a specific gene that dictated loyalty and anyway, loyalty is only half-way there, as a manufacturer you want specific loyalty to YOUR product. What if we could synthesise genes? I bet someone, somewhere is working on that right now! Say, you appointed a genetic design lab to create a gene that made people loyal to your product or brand? Introducing it would be simple, a least for food manufacturers, you'd just add it to the ingredients. Attracting new customers would be a simple matter of running tastings at supermarkets – once a customer had tasted it they'd be sure to buy. But there's more.

What do the non-food manufacturers do to get on this bandwagon? Well, its obvious isn't it? The food manufacturers are the new media. They could sell access to their customers to manufacturers of other types of product. Just think, you could be eating your fish-fingers and suddenly get the urge to rush out and buy a Ferrari, financed by a loan company whose name just popped into your head!

What does all this mean to the marketing services world? Big changes in focus I guess. The creative element of advertising will be less important, there will be fewer visible marcoms although there might be an increase in point-of-sale advertising just to point customers on a mission to buy to the product they are seeking. The Armani suits would be gone, usurped maybe by white lab coats as marketers, as they do, seek to align themselves to the new buzz - the "science" of marketing.

If you think this is all bit far-fetched consider for a moment the data that can be carried on the chipped passports that are becoming increasingly popular around the world, or the ID card that the UK government is still trying to introduce. Remember too that it was only recently that the UK government were considering adding folic acid to bread to address the problem of spina bifida. As one of the commentators to my blog said – “... whatever next – fluoride in the water?”

### **About Phil Darby, The Full Effect Company and Pink Duck.**



I'm a consultant with years of involvement in marketing and the development of business strategy.

These days I promote a new approach to business called Full Effect Marketing through seminars and workshops across Europe and occasionally further afield and I have established a consulting firm The Full Effect Company to assist organisations implement the business and marketing thinking they need to succeed in today's competitive environment.

Pink Duck is an icon of the innovation that I believe is the basis of marketing. Marketing is about doing things and going places that nobody had done or gone to before, thinking outside the box, pushing the boundaries, being conspicuous.

You can find out more about all of this and join the debate at:  
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