

# thinkingbrands

CREATIVE SHOWCASE

Creature  
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4i's

Trust and the trusted. Brands that build trust are the brands that will survive in the new age of candour. Here's how

It's tempting to think that the recession is a temporary dip—that sooner or later we'll be back to business as usual. Warren Bennis begs to differ. The much-respected US management academic warns that among the many changes this recession will bring is a new 'culture of candour'—that is, a much higher expectation for transparency in business.

Fifty-five percent of consumers say they have stopped buying from businesses they don't trust in the past six months, and 61 percent of them then urged family and friends to do the same

"It's clear we need a better way to evaluate business," he says. "The new metric of corporate leadership will be closer to this: the extent to which executives create organisations that are economically, ethically and socially sustainable."

Bennis isn't alone. The June edition of the *Harvard Business Review* contains a cover story called 'Rethinking trust'. Its radical hypothesis is that our propensity to trust our fellows is potentially a curse. "Our willingness to trust often gets us into trouble. Moreover, we sometimes have difficulty distinguishing trustworthy people from untrustworthy ones. At a species level, that doesn't matter very much so long as more people are trustworthy than not. At the individual level, though, it can

be a real problem. To survive as individuals, we'll have to learn to trust wisely and well."

## Trust under threat

Revising the value of trust as a virtue is perhaps just another way of saying "sharpen up!" That's a message we all need to hear, especially after we all piled into dumb investments such as leaky apartments.

More disturbing is the low level of trust that already exists in New Zealand. A new report called the *Sustainability Priorities Monitor*, conducted for Sustainable Advantage by research company Perceptive, shows that consumers do not have much trust in business to balance economic, social and environmental responsibility. "Only 27 percent of respondents said they trusted business to balance these responsibilities and 37 percent said they didn't ... The remainder, just over one-third, were uncertain and could tip either way depending on what the business does," says Nick Jones of Sustainable Advantage.

Amazingly, 55 percent of consumers say they have stopped buying from businesses they don't trust in the past six months and 61 percent of them then urged family and friends to do the same.

That's an incredible statistic and perhaps sheds light on why so much of our marketing effort simply falls on deaf ears—and wallets.

## Brands build trust

One response to this disturbing lack of trust is to invest in brand. Brooke Ashton Taylor

of Wellington design agency Creature sums it up nicely: "Brand is a five-letter word that spells trust."

But not any brand will do. Enron is a strong brand, strong in everything bad. Warren Bennis goes on to describe the attributes that 'leadership brands' display. Brands such as Johnson & Johnson, Pepsi and GE:

1. Do the basics well, like setting strategy and grooming talent
2. Ensure managers internalise their customers' high expectations
3. Evaluate their leaders according to those external perspectives
4. Invest in leadership development, honing the skills needed to meet customer and investor expectations
5. Track their success at building a leadership brand over the long term.

Most of us in business would be terrified to really know what our customers—or non-customers—really hope we could do for them. Marketing guru Theodore Levitt was famous for saying "People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill—they want a quarter-inch hole." By focusing on how our brands can serve those external expectations, perhaps we'll stop wasting our time on flogging drills.

The following showcase is full of people who have listened, interpreted and given back what their customers really want. Brands that build trust are the brands that will survive in the new age of candour.

# Stand by your brand

Creature is taking your brand personally

The pressure on brands to deliver performance has never been greater. At Creature, we believe the solution lies in a simple five-letter word: Trust. Trust is the secret sauce that sells a brand. If we trust a brand that never—or rarely—fails to give us a positive experience, we'll use that brand again and again because it delivers on its promise. But trust us, a brand is only as good as the promise behind it.

We think that the creation of a brand is a three-way exercise in trust: first we, the agency, promise to create a visual context and a series of experiences that reflect the client's values and business strategy. Second, the client commits to maintaining the integrity of those values. Third, the customer engages with the brand promise. Buys it, eats it, wears it or does whatever it's designed to do. Sounds pretty straightforward, but for those of us in the brand creation department, the reality is so much more than simply creating a pretty logo, typeface or colour palette.

Here are three examples of how we employ trust to build and enhance authentic, meaningful brands. Perhaps we can do the same for you.

## Learning a new language

Did you know that butterflies are deaf? Neither did we. But along with a new language, it's one of the many things we learned about our client, the Deaf Association of New Zealand, when Creature was commissioned to produce promotional material for 2007 Sign Language Week. The Association has audacious goals for what sign language could mean for both the deaf and hearing communities of New Zealand and really are a client we work proudly with, not for.

We helped to refine the core 'butterfly hands' imagery, breathing life into a symbol that has now come to define Sign Language Week. And more importantly, we helped rename and relaunch as Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand, creating a butterfly-inspired visual signature. This mark and signature work to promote the organisation's uniqueness and connect it to the local community while promoting difference internationally.

Now the name and brand imagery are in place, we continue to build a diverse range of touchpoints, including print collateral, a website (in development), promotional posters, sign language spelling cards, billboards, t-shirts for volunteers, stickers, online banner and magazine advertising.

Result? A brand that delivers to its client's and customers' expectations—and creates a distinct message and profile for a truly amazing sector of our community.

## Connecting with New Zealand

With a new identity, Telecom's new network business Chorus arrived at Creature's door seeking advice on adding depth to their brand story. While the core mark was strong and recognisable it didn't communicate enough about who they were and how their 'heroes' in the field deliver a world-class network to New Zealanders every day.

Working with the key corporate colours, we created the 'Chorus landscape', an authentic New Zealand visual story that captures the wide variety of work they do and brings their brand proposition as a dynamic and dependable telecommunications network company to life.

## The perfect mix

For a select group of New Zealand musicians and one design practice, the summer of 2007 will be forever preserved. Having travelled to filmmaker Gaylene Preston's Takaka woolshed to record an iconic album, *The Woolshed Sessions* came to be.

A key driver of our business is the desire to work on projects that provide positive experiences, develop New Zealand's cultural voice and are inspiring to the design team.

Creature really wanted to invest in this project and wanted to take on the challenge of creating a brand package that captured this quintessential New Zealand sound.

Using a warm colour palette and graphic elements that echoed the strong lines of corrugated iron and the weave of woollen blankets, Creature designed a logo, brand signature, packaging for the CD and media release material, as well as an accompanying book that embraced the documentary-style photographs by Andy Morley-Hall.

Creature is a Wellington-based design practice—with integrity. We see our role as understanding our clients, discovering the promise of their business and then consistently delivering on it. It also means giving it some heart and making an emotional connection with the end user—deconstructing the customer experience and finding out how we can make it better. Brands rarely get a second chance to connect with an audience, particularly in this economic climate. At Creature, we're refreshingly big on building trust at all levels of the brand process. It all comes back to a simple, yet profound, question: how can we help?



Connecting with New Zealand: Chorus



## Your trusted partner

At Creature we're refreshingly big on brand logic and even bigger on creating trust. To talk to us or discuss an idea, call Brooke Ashton-Taylor on 04 801-9002 or email [brooke@creature.co.nz](mailto:brooke@creature.co.nz)



The perfect mix: The Woolshed Sessions



Learning a new language: Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand



# Open for anything

Ogilvy helps Open Polytechnic rediscover itself—out in the open

Sixty-three years of history, 30,000 students across 41 countries, and a unique position in New Zealand tertiary learning makes for a strong brand, right? Well, yes and no.

Like many long-established brands, in 2008 the Open Polytechnic brand was suffering from familiarity and a perceived lack of relevance. People knew the name—brand awareness was strong—but, for many, it meant little.

Amanda Malu, executive director of Marketing, joined the Open Polytechnic in early 2008. “One of the first things I noted was that the reality of the organisation was not matched by external perception. We had very satisfied students, many of whom have gone on to extremely successful careers, international awards and a talented and passionate faculty. But many of our external target audience felt that an Open Polytechnic education was less relevant to employers than a university education.”

Open and distance learning is the fastest growing area of education in the world. Increasingly busy lifestyles and an entire generation of consumers used to doing things

on their terms make distance learning more relevant than ever. So why wasn't Open Polytechnic enjoying the upside?

## The challenge

The Open Polytechnic briefed Ogilvy to develop a brand repositioning campaign to give the Open Polytechnic the stature and currency that it deserves, positioning it as the learning organisation for today's world.

## Solution

Our research gave us two important insights:

1. Potential students wanted tertiary learning to fit around 'their' world;
2. People felt the world had changed—it was more fluid and diverse than ever before. That change creates both challenges and opportunities

Michael Prentice, head of planning at Ogilvy, comments: “Our conclusion was that the Open Polytechnic's time had arrived—the open way of learning placed it in a category all of its own, exactly right for our times. This led to our creative brief's key message: Open learning for an open world.”

The launch 45-second brand TV advertisement captured this message through an inspirational, richly-textured contemporary animation that takes the viewer from the start of their life through to a fluid, changing world full of possibility: “But now your world is bigger than it's ever been. And it has no boundaries. We are no longer limited by tradition, language or distance. What was once fixed, is fluid. And there's no one path.”

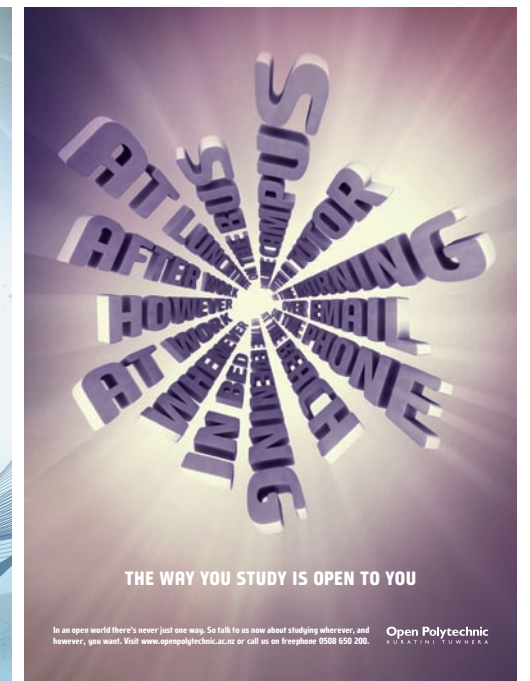
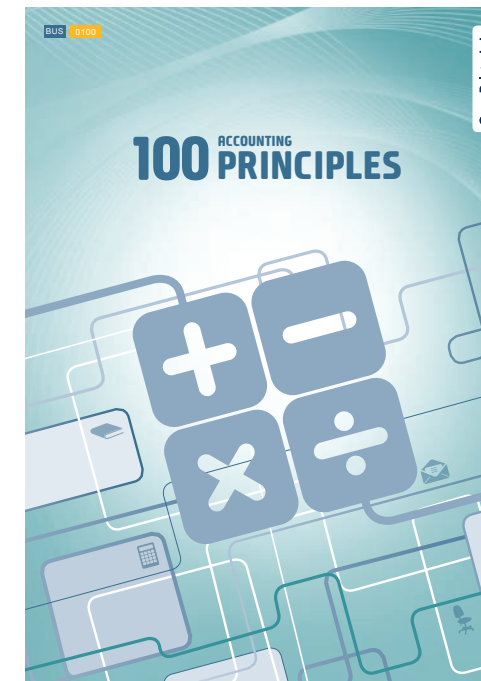
Through the use of evocative language and imagery, we moved the Open Polytechnic to a unique, inspirational space—one that is uniquely 'open'. Where “Everything is possible. Everything is open.”

The launch brand TVC has been supported by print, outdoor and online advertising, and 15-second TVCs delivering key messages.

## Visual identity

To support the new brand positioning, a new visual identity was developed for use across materials such as the 2009 prospectus and course brochures.

Paul Irwin, the general manager of strategy and planning at Ogilvy Wellington,



notes that “many design agencies lock their clients into a design straightjacket. For the Open Polytechnic, it was critical that we created a design style that was flexible, providing both the inspiration to attract potential students, but also practical enough to apply to a huge range of course materials.”

Ogilvy's design solution was to create a 'brand funnel', which specified which design elements should be used at different stages of the potential student's engagement with the Open Polytechnic. The three stages spanned 'browse' (discovering possibilities such as prospectuses), 'active research' (reviewing specific details such as course brochures) and 'engage' (studying with the Open Polytechnic such as using course material).

The design toolkit provided a wide range of design elements, including dream-like elements such as birds and a light device to reflect possibility and discovery through to colour-coding and icons for specific courses and Maori design motifs.

## Results

The TVC was launched on 21 September

2008 and the feedback was exceptional, both externally and internally:

“I'm delighted with our new TV ad campaign. Respect for all Open Polytechnic stakeholders, and respect for our role in education and training, is overwhelmingly evident. The key messages that have been articulated and crafted are substantive and profound,” says a senior faculty member.

Post-campaign quantitative research in February 2009, compared with a pre-campaign benchmark, revealed the campaign had been very successful in changing perception.

Agreement with statements around key brand messages increased by between 20 percent and 57 percent (such as a 57 percent increase in agreement with the statement “Open Polytechnic has courses that will open up new possibilities for you”). Additionally, the Open Polytechnic had a 14 percent increase in the perception that it is the tertiary organisation that best provides learning relevant to your work and career, with the next closest tertiary institution only showing a two percent increase.

Course enrolments for the January–May

2009 period were up 22 percent compared with the previous year, with May up 20 percent year on year.

## Innovations

To reinforce the rebranding, Open Polytechnic has in 2009 launched further innovations in education including a free training offer for employees made redundant or participating in the nine-day fortnight (taken to market within a week!); partnering with the Department of Labour to promote courses to immigrants and returning expats; and increased partnership with industry bodies and employers.

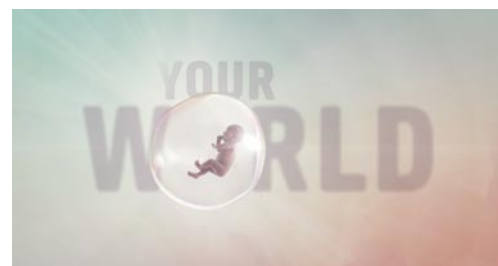
## Conclusion

The world has moved in favour of Open Polytechnic's style of education; now, thanks to the work of Ogilvy, it has found a genuine way to connect to the opportunity. The world really is open.

For more information, contact Paul Irwin at Ogilvy 04 801-2602 paul.irwin@ogilvy.co.nz

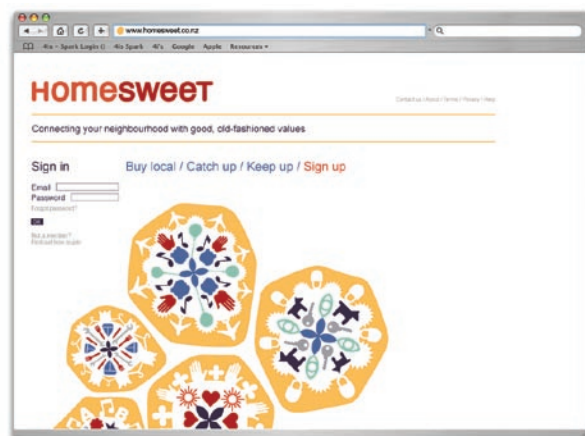
Print collateral includes (from left) course material, prospectuses and press ads

Stills from the TVC Ogilvy produced to launch the Open Polytechnic's new campaign



# In yer neighbourhood

Using branding to build social media to build trust—nice!



Dennis Murray had an old problem with a unique twist. Murray had a strong concept for an online community—use social media to generate interaction in the physical community around us. But while he had all the smarts for new media, Murray needed some good, old-fashioned, real-world brand engagement to make it all happen.

## The Homesweet idea

So here's Murray's idea: It used to be that you could go out and leave your back door unlocked; everyone knew their neighbours and the kids in the street all played together after school. Things have changed. Technology has shrunk the globe but those living right next to us are now virtual strangers.

Enter Homesweet, a closed social network that hopes to reconnect people with old-fashioned values: neighbourliness and safety through familiarity and support.

It's about winding back the clock to when we all knew our neighbours and we felt safe and secure in our own homes, says Homesweet founder Dennis Murray.

"Despite the growth in social networking worldwide, there's a feeling of disengagement from your local community. People tend not to know their neighbours," he says. "There's a need for something like Homesweet that brings together like-minded people and connects them with local service providers within an atmosphere of trustworthiness, and builds their collective sense of belonging to their community."

Daniel Thurston, owner of 4i's, became involved while the idea was still a nameless concept.

While other online social networks are open to anyone anywhere, Homesweet creates

'socio-local networks': neighbourhoods confined to natural geographical groupings of people that can contain up to 16,000 households. Members are security checked to ensure everyone's safety, and can create their own network profile, enabling them to socialise, find and book local services, learn about and promote community and private events, and buy, sell or trade locally.

"As far as we know, it's a unique concept," says Thurston. "We conducted research around the world and could find no direct comparison."

## Defining the need

Together with Homesweet chief executive Nicole Phillips, 4i's designed and administered 'friends and family' market research to establish what householders felt was lacking in their community in terms of security and interaction, and to gauge their appetite for products and services that could be delivered by Homesweet. The branding brief emerged once the product, pricing and distribution model had been refined.

"We defined the intrinsic, 'soft' qualities of the organisation, distilled its essence into an idea that was sincere and easily expressed, articulated the tangible attributes that would inform the language and behaviour of the brand owners and other internal stakeholders, and then developed a 'brand expression toolbox' to help market the business," explains Thurston. The name, Homesweet, was 4i's first concrete brand identity output.

## Expressing the values

While the brand platform was about connectedness and the benefits of interacting in a friendly, secure environment,



it was important to communicate Homesweet's other values: sustainability, self-determination, and a comforting degree of predictability—Homesweet's promise is that homeowners in all neighbourhoods will enjoy the same degree of customer service, quality and openness.

"We also wanted to convey professionalism and scale," says Thurston. "It's not just some guy cobbling together a bunch of households, providers and advertisers—this is a community-building business with large aspirations and the resources to make it happen."

## Visual ID

The main component of the branding imagery is the cell. As the basic building blocks of life, Thurston says cells are a great metaphor for Homesweet and the concept of neighbourliness.

Bright and playful, they incorporate iconography suggestive of variety and largesse. Additional cells can be made up as required.

"Each of Homesweet's functions is self-contained, but they all sit together perfectly to ensure easy user access," says Thurston. "The business is organic and very human-oriented; it will evolve according to the needs of the community."

Bold colours express the friendliness and richness of the network itself. Homesweet is the opposite of minimalist, pretentious and standoffish, says Thurston.

## Toolkit

"We broke down the brand expression elements into a toolbox system, creating a simple modular solution. The stationery, signage and uniforms feature an organic arrangement of cells. The website starts out there, but is built on Web 2.0 functionality. It's a shell into which members, service providers and advertisers upload their profiles, updates and offers, and then freely interact."

## Engaged at every step

By including Murray and Phillips in every step of the process, 4i's ensured their continued

input and absolute buy-in.

"Because they were so well integrated into the process, they felt comfortable handing the creative problem-solving responsibility over to us," says Thurston. "They are now living the brand because they've been fully immersed in it since conception."

"The work that 4i's has done on the branding is absolutely sensational," says Murray. "The process has been very clean, very focused. We wanted something that had a sense of the old familiar values, a little bit of nostalgia in it. For example we selected the Mini as the brand vehicle because it has those emotions attached to it. As brand developers they fully engaged me in the process of thinking about the whole brand. I couldn't have asked for more."

For more information, contact: Daniel Thurston or Jacqui Stevens at 4i's 09 360-2469 [www.4is.co.nz](http://www.4is.co.nz)

Homesweet's stationery, signage and uniforms feature an organic arrangement of cells. The website (left) starts out there, but is built on web 2.0 functionality. It's a shell into which members, service providers and advertisers upload their profiles and offers