

Campaign Strategy Newsletter 104 March 2018

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Many thanks

Chris [chris@campaignstrategy.co.uk]

The Explosion of Plastic Campaigning

The number of plastics campaigns continues to rise rapidly, helped along by almost daily scientific revelations about the ubiquity of microplastic pollution (eg inside plastic bottles but also just falling from the air in households, streets and shops). If it turns out that microplastic has any sort of detrimental health effect, and it is an act of stupendous optimism to assume it has none, then governments have a 'mother of all pollution problems' to deal with.

Two trends seem to be occurring in parallel. The impacts and threats of plastic pollution, pharmaceutical pollution (pain killers, antidepressants and more washed into our water system and ecosystems), pesticides and the gigantic die-off of pollinators like bees, moths and many other insects, plus climate change and the melt down of the Arctic, are all combining to push 'pollution' up the social agenda, with governments trailing along behind.

At the same time major technological and industrial change driven by existing and emerging responses to such threats – such as the impending phase out of diesel cars in many countries, privately anticipated by many motor manufacturers – are creating an expectation and acceptance that 'anything is possible'. The conversion to electric based transport will send a massive psychological signal as fuel stations disappear from our streets.

A friend of mine who does a lot of audience research thinks that this flux of change will lead to more change as it will shrink the gap between what is seen to be possible, and willingness

to undertake new behaviours that make those things a reality, and this will spill over from experiences such as having an electric car, to many other areas of life. A new version of the 1960s?

The Cambridge Analytica-Facebook scandal may lead to a third wave of consumer-industry driven change, and a reconfiguration of the basic personal-data-as-resource model underpinning much of the 'online economy'.

In their own ways, all these are about the public politics of technologies and risk distribution (Ulrich Beck maybe your time has finally come?) and a greater role for government, even if governance itself is in crisis in many countries. The dominance of TNCs no longer looks like a stable certainty. Neoliberalism is dropping from favour in both the US and UK: it's just not yet clear what will replace it.

Consumer Revolt

As I discussed in a previous Newsletter and blog an interesting aspect of the 'plastics issue' is how it has emerged as a 'consumer revolt' geared by media and social media and science discoveries, as much as through organised campaigns. I recently published a couple of survey questions on plastic from CDSM (UK data) which showed pretty much across the board concern (hardly any difference in class and values), first when we asked people if they would support a phase out of plastic except for 'essential uses' (the Montreal Protocol 'ozone layer' CFCs model), and second, whether supermarkets should stop selling plastic bottles. (See <http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=2017> and <http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=2025>)

Over 80% said yes to the phase out and over 70% to the ban on bottle sales but aside from a tendency for older people to be 'harder on plastic' than very young people, the 'issue' appeared to pretty well 'normed'. In other words attitudes were deeply and widely anti-plastic. From a campaign and regulatory point of view this means it's an 'open goal', at the moment. And the industrial users and producers of plastic have got the message: BP even forecasts a reduction in oil use for making plastic.

For students of campaigns I suspect this also signals that the emergence of the issue with strong alignment, without having been first surfaced by challenging behaviour or advocacy-led campaigns, means that there is no 'footprint' of campaigning: people have not felt criticised or faced dilemmas, or been asked to make significant lifestyle changes based on contested evidence. Consequently there is no social-psychological divide caused by previous taking-of-positions. The situation at least in the UK, is therefore more like climate change in China in the 2010s (wide acceptance, widespread government-endorsed action on

renewables etc) than climate change was notoriously like in the US and UK: values polarised as a result of Pioneer-led and framed campaigning and paid-for sceptics campaigns.

Also on plastic, there was a great example of an issue turning from a long term or diffuse problem into an acute one for decision-makers at the start of 2018, when China brought in a ban on most imports of plastic waste for 'recycling' (in fact most of that waste ended up burnt or dumped, hence lots of that 'Chinese' waste entering the Pacific probably originated elsewhere, eg Europe or Australia). It is explored here: 'Good News: Britain Has An Acute Plastics Crisis' <http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=1939>

Values and Identity

The British have been subject to much introspection and punditry over their identity in the wake of the EU Referendum vote for 'Brexit' in 2016. That still sucks the air out of almost every other issue in Britain and occupies almost all the attention of politicians, even as it is a fourth or fifth order political topic in Europe and presumably largely forgotten everywhere else.

Earlier this year I published the results of a UK values survey on identity: Identity Factors and Values in Britain (<http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=1903>) based on 3594 people. They were offered 31 'facts' as options important in forming identity and asked to chose all those they considered important, and, their three most important.

The five most frequent when asked to 'Choose the THREE facts that are MOST important to you', were: 'my principles and values' (1), 'being a parent' (2), 'my intelligence' (3), 'Being British' (4), and 'my emotions and feelings' (5).

In some cases there are quite marked differences in the choices in relation to values, age, sex, or class (later), which may be relevant to audience targeting. In other cases there are no such differences, meaning that these are potential options to reach 'across divides'.

Perhaps interestingly, a number of options touched on factors frequently debated in the news and social media on identity grounds but many of these do not appear in the more frequent choices.

For example, despite the huge amount of media discussion about sexual identity, politics, and feminism, 'being the sex I am' came in (top three question format) at rank 21 (in 3.6% of the choices), 'my political convictions' ranked 25th (2.7%), and 'my ethnic origins' and 'my skin colour' were both included in less than 2% of the 'top three' selections. Nor did the British often define themselves by 'social class', ranked 30th at 1.4%:

'Being European' came last, however this was run in 2014 before the 2016 Referendum. Since then other studies have suggested that voting Leave or Remain has now lodged in the memory as a definer of politics as powerful as affinities to political parties. Yet politics itself rarely featured as a top 3 choice (2.7%), and that was also found in earlier surveys. So perhaps Leave-Remain voting which is itself highly values charged and defined, has redefined British political divides, while political identity remains a very minority obsession for the British.

(For those few who may be waiting for my 'final' blog on what Brexit means for campaigns – I'm sorry I ran out of time again but will finish it soon! 'Political correctness' features.)

Jon Castle RIP: A Human Moral Compass

My friend and in many ways inspiration, Jon Castle, passed away earlier this year. He was most widely known as a long-term if intermittent Captain of the Rainbow Warrior for Greenpeace, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. He was a complex, generous and kind man, brave, funny and intensely troubled by ethical challenges. He had many run-ins with colleagues in Greenpeace, particularly if he felt 'the organisation' was not taking 'doing-the-right-thing' to its moral or ethical conclusion.

I cannot do justice to Jon's life or contribution to the many campaigns he served inside and outside Greenpeace but he was an extraordinary human being and I'm not sure anyone really knows what truly drove him. When she heard that he had died, a good friend of mine said "I can't think how else to say it but I've met a lot of people who are convinced they are in touch with something magical, something bigger than all of us but it was only in Jon Castle's case, that I thought it could actually be true".

Jon was also very modest. Some of his exploits led to him being treated like a hero, which he hated and could not cope with, and that sometimes led to him falling out with Greenpeace. Sometimes he was used by others to represent 'the good old days', idealised as a simpler smaller 'truer' time. I recall him writing a message which went around Greenpeace in which he gently admonished his followers, saying something along the lines of "there was no Golden Age, there were only golden moments".

Compass or Chart

In campaign terms I think the thing that he found hardest to grapple with was the toggle between operating on calculation (what will work) and on heart or intuition (what feels right). In this context he often personified the moral compass, and people loved him for it, or were stressed and frustrated when he went seriously 'off piste'. But in his heart and in his head, and he was a constant reader and thinker, he often knew that like a seaman who only has a

compass and no chart, to simply head for the objective on dead-reckoning, can result in a noble course running onto the rocks.

I remember standing next to him on the Brent Spar half way between Britain and Norway, watching the sea running past far below us, as we waited for Shell's "salvage" crews to come and try and evict us. He was on the satellite phone to a BBC interviewer in London, after Shell had obtained a legal injunction against us. The interviewer asked something like "but Mr Castle, what would you say to a judge who said, 'but you will be in contempt of my court'?". [This was why Greenpeace did not normally break injunctions – it put you in confrontation with a court not the opponent].

I looked at Jon and he looked at me and grinned. "I would say", he began in his slow Guernsey drawl, "that I have nothing but contempt for your court". So of course we stayed. I could imagine our legal team pulling their hair out in London, Amsterdam and goodness knows where else. Strangely enough, when he did get face to face with the likes of judges and the authorities, his benign Quaker-like honest convictions often stood him in good stead.

I don't think he ever resolved this tension but he was at his happiest in battlegrounds of ethical and moral clarity, as in his most recent voyages to rescue migrants at the mercy of the sea between Libya and Europe. Read more about that in this post by Judith Beuthe <http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=1952>

If you wish you hadn't missed any of these blogs, sign up for automatic notifications using the link [here](#). If you are glad you didn't ... then take no action!

Join My Campaigns Course: 9 April, Oxford, UK

I'm running a course 'Planning effective Campaigns' before the 2018 ECF in Oxford on 9th April. It covers: Introduction to Campaign Tools

- Key elements and characteristics of instrumental campaigns and their history
- Levels and key development steps
- Motivational steps and CAMPCAT
- Critical paths, audiences, PSB and credibility
- Exercise

Propositions, Visual Language and Framing

- Development, meaning and pitfalls of visual language
- Constructing campaigns with events and framing

Heuristics and Motivational Values

- Effect of unconscious processes on real-life communications
- Examples of heuristics
- Explanation and illustration (issues, channels etc) of the CDSM motivational values psychographic system
- Small group exercise

A full one day event.

Details and booking here:

<http://fairsay.com/events/trainings/strategy/2018-04-09?s=crpromo>

ECF itself is a brilliant event (10th and 11th in Oxford) and well worth joining – see

<http://fairsay.com/events/ecf/2018/overview>

Hope to see you there

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<http://www.campaignstrategy.org/threeworlds/> - where the Book '*What Makes People Tick:*

The Three Hidden Worlds of Settlers, Prospectors and Pioneers' can also be purchased via

PayPal. The book *How To Win campaigns: Communications for Change* can best be

purchased [from the publisher](#), and is also available via Amazon.

To offer contributions or comments contact the author chris@campaignstrategy.co.uk