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**The Lesson of Kansas: Change Outcomes - Minds Can Follow**

On October 18 *New York Times* reported [1] a remarkable success in cutting carbon in the USA. Under the heading 'In Kansas Climate Sceptics Embrace Cleaner Energy' it succinctly describes a major achievement in getting cities and communities to cut carbon by saving energy and using renewables. Not through advocating 'action on climate change' or by trying to change people or their values but through propositions that start from where people already are - in this case clearly Security Driven Settlers\*, safety-oriented, authoritarian, mainly right wing, traditionalist and identity seeking.

In other words, by matching the asks and offers to unconscious values and the attitudes and beliefs that flow from them, the project succeeded in getting people we know from many surveys to be the bastion of 'climate scepticism' (eg [2]), to do exactly what legions of climate advocates want: to cut carbon.

**Common Causes of Failure**

So will climate campaigners learn from this? Some will - others won't, because they are bent on trying to also get people to act for "the right reasons". In other words, they are intent on trying to change people first, so that they become like the campaigners, and want to cut carbon for "ethical" reasons, rather than for instance to save money or because they find instruction in the bible (are told to by Authority) or because it helps protect them from foreign threats (oil imports).

I would call this the 'ethical fallacy'. The latest and most elaborate exposition is in WWF UK's report *Common Cause* [3], of which more below.

In essence, the *Common Cause* argument is that people like us do the right thing, so we need to make other people into people like us. And they propose doing this, in essence, by talking to them, persuading, cajoling and arguing them into being "like us".

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*Common Cause* states of 'global challenges' like climate change:

*"It is increasingly evident that resistance to action on these challenges will only be overcome through engagement with the cultural values that underpin this resistance. It also seems clear that, in trying to meet these challenges, civil society organisations must champion some long-held (but insufficiently esteemed) values, while seeking to diminish the primacy of many values which are now prominent – at least in Western industrialised society."*

To 'champion values' is a notion which seems logical and greatly appeals to some inner directed Pioneers - especially the Concerned Ethicals, who have a dominant unmet need for ethical clarity. This they apply to any social problem, advocating that if only we explained the problem more clearly, fully and holistically, and got people to think ethically, they would change their minds and change their wrong behaviours.

In its recommendations, the largely theoretical *Common Cause* makes numerous suggestions for a form of political correctness in communications: 'a series of principles that could come to inform civil society campaigns and communications'. For example it says:

*'Civil society organisations should lead the way in openly discussing the values that a campaign or communication seeks to activate, presenting for public scrutiny both the evidence that these values will help to achieve the aims of that campaign, and the ways that the frames they deploy will help to strengthen these values'.*

and

*'Starting with civil society organisations themselves, all organisations should openly scrutinise the values that their activities promote, draw public attention to these, and outline the justification for working to strengthen these values'.*

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The only problem is that, for most people, this approach doesn't work. It's a common cause of campaign failure, which the *Common Cause* recipe would only make worse. Forcing your values upon an audience which doesn't share them, will only enable them to find more satisfying reasons why you are wrong, and whatever you proposed as an action will then be more deeply framed as 'wrong'.

If it did work then Security Driven Settlers and Outer Directed Prospectors would long ago have swung into line with the bulk of Pioneers and agreed with the propositions of (Pioneer led) climate campaigns. For climate is a "mature issue": it's not new, people have heard about it, they have taken positions, they have made up their minds, and they have armed themselves with rationalisations about it which match their behaviours.

Indeed it is climate-campaigning and the media debates which it generates, that have mainly moulded these views. No values group was born with an in depth understanding of emissions scenarios or climatology. Their opinions on climate, which are so important politically, have been principally framed by the public politics provoked by campaigns, filtered through their values. And as those campaigns are primarily versed in universalist terms, with a heavy dose of non-acquisitiveness (giving stuff up or going without), they have succeeded admirably in provoking a response from 'people': A broadly positive response from other Pioneers; a mainly negative one from Prospectors and Settlers.

Similarly, we (my company CSL and KSBR) have found in focus groups across all values segments in the UK that the very word "environment" no longer denotes "your surroundings" but is interpreted as a political cause, and one that Pioneers tend to embrace and Settlers and Prospectors tend to reject.

The engagement of the Kansas Settlers by values-matching of propositions shows that it doesn't have to be like this. If we start from where other people are, and propose

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action which resonates with their attitudes and beliefs, it is possible to get 'climate action' but we have to accept that for many, it won't be for "ethical reasons".

### **Global Cool Shows How To Engage Prospectors**

Of course the Settlers are only half the picture in terms of the conventionally 'disengaged'. The other problem group for climate campaigns is the Prospectors. These are the people who the Concerned Ethicals love to blame the most. Fun seeking, hedonistic and fashion following, the Outer Directed Prospectors don't just look conservative and head-in-the-sand like Settler denialists, they positively revel in getting the latest must-have thing. If you've got, flaunt it, is a Prospector reflex.

This deeply dismays the Concerned Ethicals and they tend to respond by lecturing Prospectors about 'over consumption', and the need to lead better, more ethical lives. They often fail to connect with Prospectors because their favoured channels of communication are used mainly by Pioneers (eg the current affairs sections of 'serious' newspapers) but when they do connect, the effect is often to annoy.

Hence, as I've reported before in this *Newsletter*, the reactions to environmental campaigns from Prospectors along the lines of *"if I hear one more thing about what I shouldn't do - my next car's going to be a Ferrari", or "I know we've got to save the planet but there's more important things as well"* [verbatim].

Fortunately we also know how to get Prospectors to take 'climate action' by matching asks and offers to their particular values. The best example is the work of Global Cool [<http://www.globalcool.org>]: motivating the uber-Prospector 'Now People' group to turn down their central heating by following fashion and wearing jumpers, avoiding flying by using Eurostar for hedonistic holidays, incentivizing bus travel with lessons in how to chat up strangers, and cutting embedded carbon with Swishing parties.

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Caroline Fiennes, Director of Global Cool points out that it sells the action, not the problem. Unlike conventional 'climate campaigns' it doesn't take you through the problem to get to the action.

At its 'public engagement' or front of house website, Global Cool describes itself as a 'green lifestyle' organisation. Not a 'campaign'. See <http://www.globalcoolfoundation.org> for a more 'rear of house' website which gives a more conventional NGO explanation of the organisation.

So as this works, whereas preaching ethics doesn't, should more climate communications resources be targeted in this way? Obviously yes (as I have probably bored you with for years). But WWF UK disagrees.

**Why *Common Cause* is Wrong as a Strategy for Campaigns**

In *Common Cause*, Tom Crompton and others argue a form of moral hazard, in other words although this values-matching might work, it will have a perverse effect of reinforcing a bad behaviour because of its motivation, even if it's a good one in terms of outcomes. It's the motivation that *Common Cause* authors dislike: the desire for more, latest stuff or trendy behaviours. This, they argue, is a weaker basis for a good behaviour (eg which cuts carbon) than an ethical, internally driven or "intrinsic" one. They reject the pragmatism of Saul Alinsky who noted that the 'right things' are rarely done for the 'right reasons'. Consequently there is nothing for it but a crusade to change the people.

This argument is fundamentally flawed for a number of reasons.

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**Reason One - Un-Met Needs Give Way Once Met**

First, Maslowian needs are not conscious but unconscious, and the sequence of needs identified in Maslow's Hierarchy is not just a segmentation of needs but a sequence of un-met needs . We cannot change them by asking people to reflect - we cannot get Prospectors to become Pioneers by talking to them about it.

By the same token, once the underlying dominant unmet need is met, a new one takes its place. So if Settlers meet their needs for safety, security and identity, they become Prospectors seeking esteem of others, and then self esteem. If meeting a need (eg to belong or to be safe) simply reinforced that need, we would have a uniform population of security driven Settlers - they would not have developed a desire to find the esteem of others. It is this search for esteem which drives them to acquire and display symbols of success, which in our society has long taken the form of material goods and services, and which so annoys the Concerned Ethical subset of Pioneers.

So, if Prospectors meet that need by getting enough stuff and following sufficient fashion etc, they do not stay Prospectors but develop other needs - ie they become Pioneers.

Does this happen? Yes - otherwise where did the 41% of the UK population currently inner directed (Pioneers) come from? Unless, as is not apparently the case, Crompton et al think Maslow was wrong and some people are born with these values.

There is also substantial evidence that Maslow was right and that if conditions allow us to have the right experiences, we meet previously unmet needs and new ones emerge. For example:

- The attitudes and beliefs mapped in huge detail in CDSM's British Values Survey (1,000 questions put to 8,500 nationally representative adults) clearly map into the three

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main Maslowian Groups. Very similar systems have produced the same results in many other countries: for example the work of Shalom Schwartz in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Sociovison in France, and Environics in Canada.

- numerous cases of individual values transitions can be seen in everyday life, eg the fashionista celebrities and serial achievers who suddenly decide that "there's more to life than this" and get into ethical causes (ie have become inner directed Pioneers)

- in the UK there is a preponderance of Settlers and Golden Dreamers (entry level Prospectors) amongst younger teens, and the increasing number of Now People and Tomorrow People (later sequence Prospectors), and Pioneers, at student age. This is consistent with needs groups emerging as the population reaches adulthood and some move on from being Settlers, which all start as (ie all children are initially Settlers)

- inter-generational shifts in values have been mapped across whole societies, from Settler to Prospector and then to Pioneer, as socio economic change has improved conditions, as predicted and charted by Ron Inglehart [4] and others, and, eg in the UK, the recent drop-back of some Prospectors to Settlers in circumstances of recession\*\*

So there is no reason to think that the dominant Maslowian needs of a person are immutable, and as meeting them causes new needs to dominate, that is not 'a problem'. At any event it is infeasible for any campaign group to exert enough influence over existential conditions for any conceivable campaign plan could affect the unmet needs of large audiences. No campaign group is likely to have the resources to meet individual psychological needs - which requires providing people with experiences that have that effect - for any significant number of people.

Even so, do social conditions make it harder than is desirable for people to meet needs? That's a huge political question as it presages fundamental social engineering. Might for example it be that advertising and product development makes it harder for

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people to satisfy the need for stuff? Possibly so - and that might be one of a number of reasons why the US is a Prospector dominated society than those in NW Europe.

Yet even if this were the case, it is going to be far easier and so more practical to get Prospectors to undertake low carbon behaviours by making those behaviours generate esteem, as Global Cool do, rather than to try to change the entire commercial culture of a society to remove all products or services which are associated with environmental damage. Nice perhaps but wishful thinking.

In values terms that is the root of the debate over use of values - between what would be ideal and what can be achieved. I am obviously in the latter camp.

So, to revert to the case of Kansas, the *Common Cause* approach would say no, this is wrong - instead of getting Settlers from Kansas to cut carbon for their own reasons, we should be trying to convert them to universalist, ethical, holistic thinkers of the sort that you might meet at a Schumacher College seminar or in a Deep Ecology retreat. The *Common Cause* approach would also say it is wrong to be getting sociable, esteem seeking predominantly female, young and fun loving fashion followers to adopt green lifestyles, as Global Cool does, because they should be somehow educated out of their extrinsic motivations and persuaded to act for 'intrinsic' reasons. *Common Cause* doesn't give any suggestion of exactly how this will be achieved.

**Reason Two - Taking No Account of Strategy**

The second main reason why I think *Common Cause* is wrong as a guide to campaigning is that it draws conclusions without taking account of strategy. Strategic change can be used to lock off the opportunity to undertake 'bad' behaviours in outcome terms. Indeed the whole point of campaign strategy is to get a big result with the greatest efficiency in terms of effort, assets and resources.



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There is, for example, no reason why esteem-generating behaviours cannot be decarbonized. For instance, getting a car is obviously a status enhancing event in many places because it enables you to do many things, including social activities that are otherwise more difficult or impossible. That is a 'problem' if cars emit carbon but not if they are made electric and run on renewable energy.

Similarly, campaigns might aim to change markets so that 'market forces' drive a desired change. For example if the price of a product like a solar electric panel was dependent on scale, a campaign to drive down the price by market building and upscaling production, or to ensure a new technology was applied by breaking a new entrant into a market, might create a new market leader whose product would then dominate the market. If that was cheaper to own than other forms of power, it could then crowd out other sources of (more polluting) energy. Here the strategy would not involve changing decisions by all consumers but only a certain group, whose actions were enough to bring about the change in commercial activity which had the inevitable consequence of changing the market for good.

**Electric Cars - Potential Perfect Storm**

In fact of all the carbon-transition developments which we can now see are likely to happen anyway - that is, the opportunity will be created for campaigners rather than them having to initiate it from scratch - the entry of affordable, performance-comparable, conventional-brand electric cars onto developed-country markets is probably the most important. In a country like the UK, it is also imminent: electric cars are going to be on the mass market soon.

It is salient - as cars are 'in my life' for many people in a way that power stations or sea level rise is not - and it is tractable because cars are consumer purchases, and understood. It is clearly strategic as widescale adoption of electric vehicles forces or is constrained by power infrastructure and/or policy, and fiscal policy and interacts with

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mass popular culture. It has the potential to make oil look and feel un-necessary. The transition to electric vehicles has the potential to be a perfect storm of change in decarbonizing economies - all without having to 'change people'. It is an example of how campaigns could bring about lock-in or close off options for behaviour, and to create aspiration, recommendation cascades and norms, if the campaigns are designed and targeted strategically.

In terms of achieving change therefore, even if it were possible, trying to 'change the values' of someone who might at some point buy a car, as a way to change the outcomes of car buying and use at a population level, would come way way down the list of strategic options for campaign design.

A strategy to exploit that opportunity means looking at and understanding the dynamics of car buying, and the commercial interests in play within the market and understanding how that interacts with government tax and subsidy and what signals will have an effect on politicians, officials, manufacturers, distributors, the business press and so on. We already know what social signals would best motivate Pioneers, Prospectors and Settlers to go out and get an electric car, and who to start with and how not to talk about the behaviour as well as how to do it.

Carbon itself could also be made unfashionable - desocialised. If carbon slimming became as aspirational as being physically slim, it would soon spread amongst Prospectors. Not easy to start but possible to achieve.

And most obviously but apparently ignored by *Common Cause*, no decent campaign strategy should set out simply to convert an entire population, one by one, as in the manner of government social marketing schemes. Indeed if that is the thinking behind *Common Cause* then WWF UK and its partners might better ask themselves why they are not more successful in engaging the 41% of the population who are not esteem-

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seeking Prospectors or security driven Settlers but Pioneers who are much more willing to think about 'issues' and accept personal responsibility for taking action on them.

It was once said that capitalism is the operation of the market without the intervention of human intelligence. To try to initiate campaigns without strategy is the equivalent in NGO terms - a broad brush crusade which will soon squander its resources and exhaust its assets.

**Reason Three - Practical Politics**

The third practical reason why campaigns should not be modeled on the *Common Cause* formula is that they won't generate political space for population-wide measures. Politicians in government are only too aware that governance is the art of the possible and that they must bring along or gain consent from constituencies far wider than those who may have elected them.

Even if they are unaware of unconscious motivational values, and have never heard of Maslow, almost any politician, and even more a government with many officials, departments and agencies, is going to sense whether or not a proposition has broad support. That's not just a question of numbers but of qualitative evidences - signs that 'different types' of people will accept it or want it. Which means that any campaign designed to sell a big political idea, as many (probably too many) are, needs to have some sort of support base amongst all three Maslow groups - Prospectors, Pioneers and Settlers. Politically and socially these people tend to look different, sound different, act different and think differently.

It is clear therefore that if your project sets out to tell Settlers and Prospectors that they are wrong to hold the values (expressed as attitudes and beliefs) that they do, and instead should think like Pioneers, you are going to generate rejection and debate

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rather than signs of agreement and support. Politically you will simply create evidence that your idea is not a flier, has no legs and is a difficult political cause, best avoided.

If you doubt this and sympathise with the sentiments in *Common Cause*, then try a simple thought experiment. You will probably have heard of the Tea Party. They scarcely could have had more publicity than they have in the past year or so. So you will have become at least as aware of their values, attitudes and beliefs, as they will be of yours. And most Tea Party approved candidates at the recent US Elections were hostile to the 'global challenges' embraced by the authors of *Common Cause*, eg climate change. So are you persuaded? They have been vocal in promoting their 'values'. Did it make you agree with them? Think they are right? If so, then maybe *Common Cause* is correct but I find that unlikely.

As it happens, we do know something about the values of the Tea Party. A recent US study using samples gathered via Facebook and asking questions which enable mapping of values in terms of the 'Schwartz dimensions' (much discussed in *Common Cause*), surveyed supporters of the Tea Party, the Democrats, and the Republicans, and can be compared against UK political affinity results (previous CDSM surveys reported at [www.campaignstrategy.org](http://www.campaignstrategy.org) and [www.cultdyn.co.uk](http://www.cultdyn.co.uk) - CDSM pers comm).

If you take Universalism for example, which most strongly correlates with the values championed by *Common Cause*, the proportion of the total US population aged 18-60 in the top quintile on that value is 20.3%, and the UK figure is 19.6%. These people are most like those who *Common Cause* would describe as having 'helpful' values. But if you look at the Libertarian wing of the Tea Party, only 6.7% fall into this bracket - an astonishingly significant result, and an even more microscopic 1.4% of the Religious wing of the Tea Party do so. A pretty steep hill for the *Common Cause* approach to climb then - as opposed to going the Kansas route. In communications terms it might be a noble endeavour to try and change these people into ethically minded greenies but it is a futile exercise.

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(By comparison the UK (affinity to) Conservative Party score is 11.4%, Labour 22.9%, and the Liberal Democrats 25.4%. Only the BNP at 4% look similar to the Tea Party in this respect). Tea Party adherents from the two wings of Libertarians (angry Prospectors) and the Religious (scared Settlers) themselves are split by a values antagonism from stimulation to tradition and conformity but that is another story, which Cultural Dynamics will tell.

### **The Minds Will Follow**

There are also intensely practical reasons to believe that it is more effective to change outcomes in order to lead opinion, rather than to try and 'change minds' at the level of deeper attitudes and beliefs. These apply even if you not fully accept the above arguments about values.

An article [5] in *Organizational Dynamics* recently triggered a round of confused debate about values and behaviour but in two respects the author (Andrew Hoffman) is certainly right. As he said in an email "We live in a world where scientists can talk until they are blue in the face ... but if businesses pay money on it, people will think it must be true". That particularly applies to the way Settlers and Prospectors construct proofs and truths, as has been seen in countless qualitative research and framing projects. It's the same rationalisation reflex which led many people to conclude after the 'failure' of world leaders to agree much at the Copenhagen climate talks, that there couldn't after all, have been much to agree (or worry) about.

As Hoffman says, like cancer and smoking and the abolition of slavery, an issue, a contested topic, has to mature into 'social fact' for wholesale change on it to be acceptable. This is why campaigns 'on climate' should, as argued in previous editions of this Newsletter [6], focus on generating those signs, of showing that the response is real, happening now, and mainstream. The material is out there - in the burgeoning 'green' industries and jobs (particularly renewable energy) - it needs to be made to resonate and connect with people's realities, especially Settlers and Prospectors, to be

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opened up and laid out to see, to be felt and experienced, to be made to count in daily life, so that it becomes experienced as the norm. This is not what conventional campaigns do but it is what they should do now.

It's the consistency principle or 'heuristic', also described in earlier editions of this Newsletter [7], which lies at the heart of this process. Opinions change to stay in step with behaviours. Life and lifestyle has to make sense for it to be tolerable and satisfying, so what you do must make sense, so if government and business are doing renewable energy, and if you are using it yourself or you know a friend, relative or neighbour who is working in it, then it becomes a reality "that works". The connection to the underlying cause then comes not analytical and reflective and open to debate but accepted as the way things are. Up until recently this worked in favour of fossil fuels, the oil industry and the "climate problem". Every time you filled up your car with petrol or diesel you were reinforcing the notion that we need to keep on using this stuff. Now there is the potential to make it work the other way around.

\* See [www.cultdyn.co.uk](http://www.cultdyn.co.uk) and Using Values Modes at this website for an introduction to Maslowian values analysis, or <http://bit.ly/asEXdn>

\*\* but not from Pioneer to Prospector, as consistent with a one-way transition on achieving self-esteem

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- [1] <http://bit.ly/aBvPY8> *New York Times* article, In Kansas Climate Sceptics Embrace Cleaner Energy
- [2] <http://www.campaignstrategy.org/whogivesastuff.pdf>
- [3] [http://www.wwf.org.uk/wwf\\_articles.cfm?unewsid=4224](http://www.wwf.org.uk/wwf_articles.cfm?unewsid=4224) *Common Cause: The case for working with our Cultural Values*, Tom Crompton et al 2010
- [4] Ron Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* published Cambridge University Press, 2005
- [5] Climate change as a cultural and behavioural issue: Addressing barriers and implementing solutions, Andrew J. Hoffman, *Organizational Dynamics* (2010) 39, 295—305 [http://www.eenews.net/assets/2010/10/28/document\\_cw\\_01.pdf](http://www.eenews.net/assets/2010/10/28/document_cw_01.pdf)
- [6] See for example *Campaign Strategy Newsletter 57* and [www.campaignstrategy.org/climate\\_campaigns\\_keep\\_calm.pdf](http://www.campaignstrategy.org/climate_campaigns_keep_calm.pdf)
- [7] [http://www.campaignstrategy.org/articles/VBCOP\\_unifying\\_strategy\\_model.pdf](http://www.campaignstrategy.org/articles/VBCOP_unifying_strategy_model.pdf)

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