



YOUR
CLIMATE
YOUR
BUSINESS

REDUCE YOUR
MARKETING FOOTPRINT

Who's it for?

People in marketing

Non-marketing people who produce or prepare marketing material

People who would like to talk to their marketing departments about projecting a 'green' image

Why?

Marketing departments and individuals working on projects often don't communicate properly

Non-marketing people often produce marketing material

Many adverts and other items of marketing material contain imagery and language that does not encourage sustainable development

Glossary of terms

Marketing footprint

If your advertising or marketing contains lots of imagery or language that suggests a high carbon lifestyle, this would give it a large marketing footprint. If however you promote sustainable transport or local food then you would have a small marketing footprint.

Harmful signifiers

In the context of this document, harmful signifiers refer to visuals or language which stand for something seen to contribute towards climate change. Images that promote excessive or unnecessary car use, regular low-cost flights and excessive consumption would be said to include harmful signifiers.

Positive/Negative messages

Throughout this document positive and negative always refer to climate change.

Sustainable

Generally refers to *more* sustainable. In terms of printed marketing material, recycled paper is more sustainable than paper produced from virgin pulp. All our activities have an impact on the environment and a lot cause CO₂ emissions. In terms of imagery, a bus, train or bike is generally a more sustainable form of transport than a car. Within this document we are looking at ways to represent more sustainable lifestyle choices.

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FOREWORD

There are still a lot of advertising campaigns that use outmoded signifiers of desire for the designer lifestyle. However, in some quarters, excess is being perceived as ugly and the imagery and messaging in advertising is beginning to reflect this. It is cooler to drink the champagne rather than to bathe in it.

Celebrity climate change marketing is definitely 'in'. It has seeped into all aspects of global culture. Mr Gore is utilising it to promote himself, pitting his inconvenient truths at Mr Bush. Cameron cycles his way into the heart of politics. Ms Diaz drives a Prius, whilst Mr Di Caprio gives voice to PowerPoint presentations about climate change.

Whether it is pure publicity or heartfelt belief, the language of climate change is being used in all levels of the media. Business is catching on fast. Recycling is no longer viewed as a chore, but as a responsible action and marketing tool. Sustainability is becoming synonymous with profitability.

What about marketing in Yorkshire & Humber? It seems that to care is beginning to be cool. Current marketing terms reflect this. To live a sustainable life is becoming the desired 'model' of aspiration. What is seen as glamorous? Today, the importance is placed on quality of life, and the ingredients that make it up.

In the following pages we will look at ways in which organisations in Yorkshire and Humber can improve their communications and reduce their impact on the environment. It is imperative to the success of addressing climate change that businesses understand the impact that their visual and written messaging has on public perceptions and that it reflects their own values.

This document is split into two parts. Part 1 describes how your business or organisation can help in the simplest way. Part 2 focuses on some case studies from around the Region. Marketing departments are often quite isolated from the general running of a company. It is in companies where marketing and projects work hand in hand that the marketing is successful and more likely to communicate a sustainable message. The case studies from Leeds City Council and ARUP Sheffield help show this.

INTRODUCTION

How this document works

In a perfect world sustainable marketing and practical action work hand in hand. Our case studies show organisations where sustainable actions and marketing complement each other. We featured these organisations because most companies that don't have a sustainable approach to their business don't want to appear in a publication about sustainable marketing.

However, there are 3 ways to engage with these marketing issues regardless of how far climate change and sustainability are engrained in your company ethos.

PART 1 of this document

- 1) To remove harmful signifiers from your marketing
- 2) To promote sustainable lifestyles amongst consumers by replacing harmful signifiers with more sustainable options

PART 2 of this document

- 3) To actively promote the green issues that the company can rightfully claim

PART 1

There is a lot of work by other organisations within Yorkshire and Humber that deal with the practical elements of sustainability such as waste and energy. For the purposes of this document, we'd like you to focus on how your business presents itself rather than what your business does. We are concentrating on a purely marketing/visual slant. It doesn't matter what your business does or what it produces, this is an exercise in considering what type of material you produce to market your business, and this alone.

PART 2

This section begins with four more principles when presenting your business in an even more sustainable way. As you will see from the following case studies included in this document, once you have mastered this element, it can lead to practical benefits for your company.

So, what is it that we are asking you to consider doing? Not much, and certainly nothing that hasn't been said before and, incidentally, only what current marketing trends suggest. Being responsible and honest about your business is good for business.

Marketing needs to set higher standards of socially responsible conduct. In particular, marketers must pay more attention to the impact of their activities on the environment.
(FAQs on Marketing, Philip Kotler)

PART 1...

- 1) To remove harmful signifiers from your marketing
- 2) To promote sustainable lifestyles amongst consumers by replacing harmful signifiers with more sustainable options

...starts on the next page




**FRANK'S SHORTS
HE WANTS THEM BACK**

PART 1: **The simple idea**

We are strongly affected by visual references made in advertising. It may not be apparent at the time, but the constant barrage of lifestyle images does have the effect of convincing us that certain things are normal and commonplace.

Here are 2 mock advertising images for a company selling ladies tailored shorts. The image on the left has a much higher marketing footprint because it continues to pursue the idea that a luxury sports car is a desirable lifestyle choice. The image on the right has a much lower marketing footprint because it attempts to align the product with a more sustainable form of transport or activity

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue strapless tube top and dark grey shorts, stands next to a silver bicycle. She is looking back over her shoulder towards the camera with a slight smile. The background consists of dark green foliage. The lighting is soft, suggesting late afternoon or early evening. The overall mood is casual and lifestyle-oriented.

**FRANK'S SHORTS
HE WANTS THEM BACK**

The details over the next few pages combine to give the overall impression of a piece of work. When thinking about the production of your marketing material, see this as a checklist. Try to look at your ideas objectively. If you feel elements are not suitable, don't use them.

PART 1: **Thinking about the ...** **...DETAIL**

Colour

We left the excessive aspirations of the 1980s behind, for good reason. The 'growth despite the consequences approach' is one that we can no longer afford to take. The day-glo colours and acidic tones need to rest in peace with these ideals. The public concern with sustainable living is growing. Reconnecting with the earth and your locality are lifestyle issues reflected in the popular colours contemporary marketing adopts. They are soft creams and earth colours. A little more forgiving and palatable. Also, not everything has to be in colour to draw the eye. David Ogilvy, a marketing legend, states that when it comes to it, it is easier to read black type on a white background.



Approximate colour schemes of featured publications.

Tone/Mood

Generic branding of a type i.e. selling to a preconceived 'group' is becoming less effective as the traditional boundary lines are blurring. Responsibility for taking steps towards a more sustainable life is the responsibility of everybody, individually. This should be portrayed clearly.

While this is an important issue, humour is still effective. Parody and satire and recycled imagery which has been reconfigured to suit current marketing trends, are both entertaining and effective, although often quite tricky.

Parody and satire of harmful signifiers can be seen as a positive step towards presenting a more sustainable message. Beware: brashness is out!

Language

When considering the idea of responsible marketing, pay close attention to the type of language used. If it is too highbrow, the consumer is likely to assume that it does not concern them; that it is not within their remit of concern. Too lowbrow, or joking in tone, then it will not be taken seriously. In order to gain the attention of the target audience, marketing should always speak to the individual.

Respect climate change and social concerns. Don't take our word for it... current marketing 'in' and 'out' words reflect the consumers' growing interest in sustainability.

IN

**CARING, SHARING, NATURAL,
SMALL AND LOCAL, NURTURING,
GENUINE NEEDS AND ORGANIC**

OUT

**AFFLUENT, WHITER THAN
WHITE, LUXURY, CONSPICUOUS
CONSUMPTION, LARGE SCALE AND
LONG DISTANCE**

The futility of commuting by car.
Photograph: Richard Keenan
(c) environment room 2007



PART 1: **Thinking about the ...** **...DETAIL**

Imagery

If you put a picture of a car in your advertising, what kind of message is that giving out about your business? Do you use images of air travel to illustrate 'broadening horizons' or 'success'?

Have you thought about other 'status' symbols that could be used? Bicycles have many of the right qualifications. They can be designer or jalopies, involve exercise, recreation, communication, connection with surroundings, responsible travel and keep the beer belly under control.

Take up the challenge of using positive imagery and you could end up with a more far-reaching and interesting piece of advertising. Unless, of course, you happen to be WhizzGo. If you are WhizzGo, then cars are your thing. But they are not about status, or even ownership in the traditional sense. They are all about sharing a tool. How usual is it that not owning a car is a status symbol? Yet it is here!



bike good
car bad
train interesting

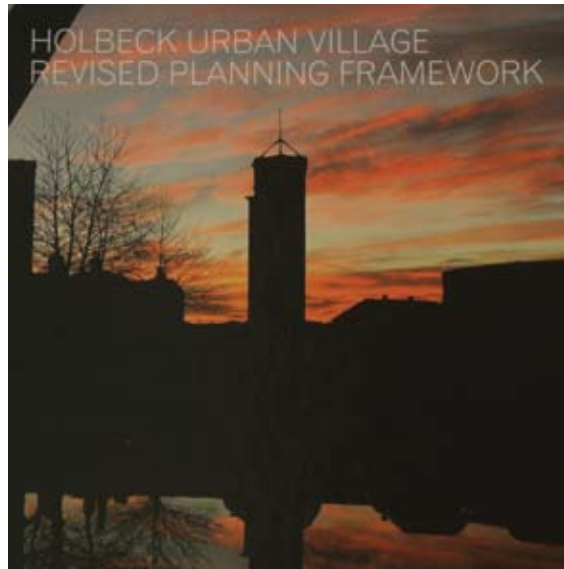
Production Choices

It's a tricky one. Unsustainable/big statement or sustainable at the risk of being ignored. Most glossy documents are not produced on recycled paper. However, as demand increases, printing companies are looking for recycled alternatives. A combination of supply and demand and technological improvements to the recycling process, will provide a much greater choice of sustainable printed marketing materials in the future.

All basic office stationery can now be produced to the same standard on recycled paper. Business cards, headed paper and promotional notebooks etc should all be produced in a sustainable way, as the technology is available to support this choice.

Ask yourself, is the document and how you produce it, worth the environmental cost of production? See the Leeds City Council case study on [page 16](#), where they worked through these issues.

Your Climate, Your Business is printed on 75% recycled paper, has some 'wasted' space in it, exists in 1000 copies and has a low marketing footprint.



PART 2... 3) To actively promote the green issues that the company can rightfully claim ...starts on the next page

PART 2: The Principles

Principle one: IS THIS COOL?

Just as ostentation is not cool for the consumer, neither is it good for business. Honesty and transparency in business draw loyalty from rapidly more discerning consumers. Consumers are beginning to count their carbon footprint, so advertising using planes and gas-guzzling cars should not be the primary choice of visuals. Aeroplanes are not a carbon-efficient form of transport, so unless you are an airline, they are not the best way to advertise. The marketing material that your company sends out should reflect socially aware and environmentally sound practice and are a reflection of your business ... so be careful! Otherwise they may end up being bad for business. What do yours say about you?

Principle two: IS THIS REAL?

Market to the individual and do not advertise a fantasy. Consumerism has become a lifestyle choice, a family activity. Many people are taking a closer look at this construct, economically, socially and environmentally and are asking for a greater responsibility to be used when marketing the growth of this spending culture. Advertisements use charm, enhanced by means of illusion (glamour) to sell products. Current trends in marketing suggest that consumers no longer want to be charmed into buying a product, be it a surface cleaner, a new car, an institution or a region. They want to make a considered choice based on quality, price and, increasingly, environmental responsibility. This means that a business will be chosen for quality, reputation and its sustainable credentials, not just price. Look at the marketing of some of the large chains - they are staking their reputation on their ability to adapt to the needs of a changing climate.



An advert from the 1970's aligning glamour and success with a large car and air travel. Many adverts still use similar imagery to sell any number of products and services. Some regional documents still sell this dream.

© Taschen Books, 2006.



Advert from 1958 edition of Woman's Illustrated. "It's so easy - it's like cheating". The beginning of the madness replace the word 'marketing', with the word 'lies'. We need to move on from this.

Principle three: **ARE YOU SURE?**

Be honest. If your business cannot advertise its environmental credentials, set out some goals. Take time to not mismarket the environment. Business, industries, regions and institutions are taking a step towards honesty, frankness and quality in their marketing strategies. One large British supermarket chain has gone to great lengths to promote its response to climate change while being careful to state that it will not happen overnight. Make sure you can deliver what you promise.

However, within this new set of goals, it is possible for companies to address climate change concerns within their marketing, whether it is to blow their own trumpet or to turn away from images which may badly affect people's attitude towards the environment and do nothing to support their own cause.

Principle four: **ARE YOU FROM AROUND HERE?**

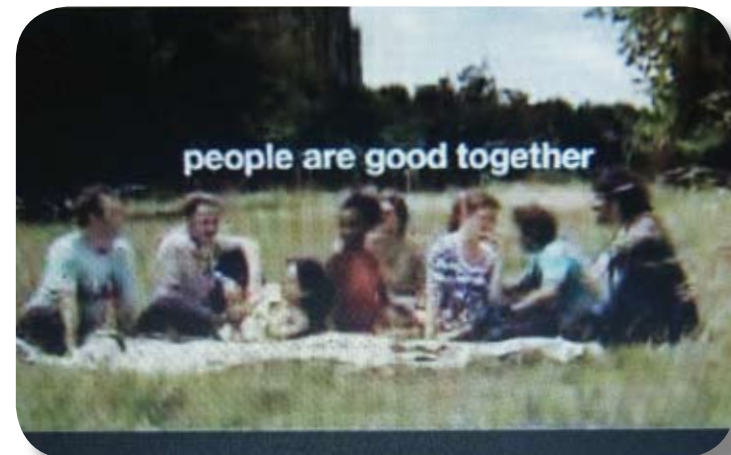
Centralised marketing is a growing trend with big business and large institutions, but such marketing departments will never have the same degree of understanding for their local market as those who are local. Regional pride - make Yorkshire and Humber the home of your business. Show it off and make it a Region of best practice. A 'forward thinking region' is not a plausible aim without some concern for climate change and sustainable living.

If your marketing focuses on the Region or locality within, it doesn't limit its appeal, but reflects a local concern that consumers respond to. No business should be above its roots. Even if the company is not local to the customer in question, a local focus is appealing. The consumer likes a company that cares, that considers its locality and responds to its needs. If the company is national, respect the regional separations. This is your opportunity to lend a helping hand to achieving a sustainable Region.



While turning down your washing machine isn't going to cure all the world's ills, this supermarket has found a way to promote climate change issues directly within a product. And it doesn't necessarily bare any relevance to the climate credentials of the product itself.

A recent mobile phone advertising campaign focused on a group of friends meeting in a park. It made socialising in this way a desirable activity. It directed the consumers' minds towards their friends and a similar physical space in their locality.



PART 2: Case Study 1 ARUP SHEFFIELD

Fundamentals: the little book of building sustainability

Contact ARUP
Web: www.arup.com
Email: sustainability@arup.com

ARUP is a large global engineering firm, who deal with a variety of projects all over the world. They have offices in all major cities, so how do they fare on a regional level?

Is this cool?

Well, the little book of building sustainability is just that, small. It is postcard-sized in a soft grey. It has a soft colour, a gentle approach, and is only fifteen pages long. It has evolved from a similar publication that was issued internally, as a prompt for staff when considering design aspirations. (Even the professionals need a bit of reminding.) It is so cute (large engineering firm - cute?) that they have just produced one for external interests. You shouldn't keep the best bits to yourself. Remember, sharing is good.

There is not much text, but the points are focused. The illustrations are simple and friendly and used to bring a more holistic identity to the subject of sustainability. It is inclusive in tone, talking of 'the issues we are all grappling with' and positive in terms of how ARUP is addressing these issues. It is a strong example of how sound and responsible practice has become a marketing tool. The transparency of the company evolving its practice is refreshing and effective in promotional terms. It therefore has relevance in terms of guidance and selling services.

Is this real?

ARUP uses commonly accepted information to look at problems and solutions. Its 10 points are clearly set out with title, problem, solution and illustration. There is not much more that can be done to make the information accessible.

ARUP market themselves as individuals in this publication. 'Everyone in our Building Sustainability team now has a shower timer'. It gives the air of 'we won't preach what we don't practise'. They refer to practical solutions that they are working on or have achieved to illustrate points of good practice. There is no glamour, little gloss and show-off technicalities in this publication. It is simple and straightforward.

Are you sure?

Businesses should only make environmental claims that they can back up. This is why the simple use of examples in this publication is so successful. At no point do ARUP say 'we are the best', however they do say 'this is what we can do'. Is this of interest to you? No business can yet say 'we are brilliant and sustainable', but if the credentials are there, or are developing, they can be used successfully. *Fundamentals ...* shows that there is no embarrassment in going back to basics, especially when it was initially designed to inspire its own staff!

Are you from around here?

The ARUP publication is available now, but has been designed and issued by their London office for their clients throughout the UK. Most of the book is generic and looks at a range of global and European projects. The regional offices should perhaps be able to showcase more local successes. The Sheffield office of ARUP is putting together a version of the book which celebrates sustainable possibilities and developments which have a more local relevance (a Yorkshire slant). This is to go alongside a series of talks by ARUP Leeds, about sustainable policy in Yorkshire and Humber, and ARUP Sheffield, about sustainable building in the region. A local focus is key to a business which cares about the communities on which it has an effect. Global companies still need local focus, otherwise they get the reputation of a giant who doesn't care.



Some of the imagery from *Fundamentals* ... Perhaps the only criticism is the image of the van. While a subtle point, the language 'drivers of change' and image reinforce the idea of road transport. However the van is made from cardboard, so ...

Local and local food

Colour

Most of the text pages are printed on a white background, for ease of reading and less wasteful printing. The cover is granite, plain and smooth, to suit the content. The colour is minimal. If something feels nice, people will hold it. If it looks simple and has appealing pictures in it, people will read it. Like picture books for grown-ups. A little bit of light relief that has a moral to it.

Tone/Mood

Accessible. Greater technical details exist in other publications, but *Fundamentals* ... is approachable. Rather than trying hard to impress, it impresses by simplicity and readability.

Language

Earnest, clear, succinct, positive, strong and inclusive, "This is a little book about some of the issues we are all grappling with ...". The phrasing doesn't preach or come from on high, but makes suggestions that invite others along.

Imagery

The imagery uses simple line drawings with 'painted' colour washes. Open, descriptive, creative tone rather than fancy graphics.

Production choices

The booklet was printed by a company who specialises in environmentally conscious printing. The materials are recycled paper and are of a high standard, dispelling the myth that recycled products are inferior. An eco-friendly laminate gives *Fundamentals* its high quality finish. The producers purposefully didn't shout about this in the booklet, as they didn't think it was necessary with ARUP's reputation. It is also available in PDF form, which all paper publications should be, as a sustainable if less tactile alternative.

PART 2: **Case Study 2** **Leeds City Council**

*Holbeck Urban Village -
Revised Planning Framework*

Contact Holbeck Urban Village
Web: www.holbeckurbanvillage.co.uk
Email: huv@leeds.gov.uk

Holbeck Urban Village is a large, ambitious regeneration project, delivered through a partnership between Leeds City Council and Yorkshire Forward.

Is this cool?

Well, it has not been overly glamorised. The project has been designed to raise the stakes of sustainability with city developers, putting more stringent restrictions on the planning policy in this 50 acre development area to the immediate south of Leeds city centre. The marketing presents the plans to the developer with a clear vision, which creates positive discussion by focusing on quality.

The success of this project coming to fruition has much to do with the style of marketing. It is clear that the marketing team paid close attention to the detail of the project, and as such have an understanding of its issues. This is integration of marketing and project practicalities, and not just a 'slap an identity on it' job. The marketing has not tried to make Leeds City Council look like the perfect model, but a council that is happy to show its goals and progression and successes. The design of the marketing and the design of the project go hand in hand.



Is this real?

Leeds City Council are not using this project to shout 'we are the best', but more to say we are trying these ways to improve the quality of our City; this is what we are aiming for. There is a clear illustration of which processes need to be considered to make the project work and who needs to be involved. To any developer, this project is harder, more expensive and more involved than most. The marketing helps to turn these challenging issues into desirable goals. The restrictions placed on development of land in the area and the conditions for sustainability represent challenges for most large developers, therefore the marketing has to be appealing and desirable - the marketing drives the project in this sense. It's about raising aspirations and encouraging developers to go the extra mile to create something that is truly unique.

Are you sure?

The marketing of the project matches the ethics of the project. Because it is presented in an honest way, the sustainable goals are believable. It is a transparent process. The website includes video footage of representatives for the developers, explaining how they intend to achieve the high goals set by the council. This allows the developer and the council the opportunity to show themselves as responsible and willing to achieve best practice goals, and therefore their 'green' credentials. The design of the publication and associated marketing allows and provides the space for this to happen.

Are you from around here?

As part of the marketing for the proposal, Leeds City Council went to a conference on sustainability (see website for details), and took with them a local company of juice makers to provide the refreshments. It is clear that there is a great deal of pride in what they are achieving, and pride in the Region. The project was presented as a local model, from which other companies/councils could hopefully take aspects of good practice to apply to their local concerns. It always retains the consideration of the individual place and the responsibility to that cultural history that needs to be preserved.



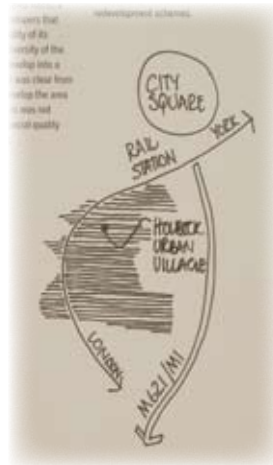
The only criticism of the publication is that cars and car parks feature more than public transport and bicycles. This has the effect of suggesting cars have their usual dominance within this development. This is a shame as the text confirms a different story - of discouraging car use and encouraging cycling and public transport use. As there is currently only one completed development, it is hard to show how an area may be, once it is finished.

Colour

The colours are of a natural and earthy palette which reflects the industrial and architectural heritage of the area. The cover has chemical colours, but all are based around natural elements. The background and banner headings are browns. All text pages are on a white background. Colours chosen hark back to history, but presented in a simple modern style.

Tone/Mood

The tone of the literature is very well balanced. Not too highbrow and not too lowbrow. It is therefore accessible to most to explore the reasons and process behind the development, both individuals and companies. Its tone is positive and the imagery honest. There are no grand claims, but there are positive solutions. It is a planning framework, so there is a lot of technical language, but in layout and phrasing it has been designed to be accessible to both developers and other interested parties.



The maps etc have a hand-drawn quality, a human touch, and people and pathways are a main focus.

Language

The language used is positive and quite forceful, engaging with the heavyweight standards of the development. It is clearly reflecting the need for higher standards, in a way that both the developers and the public can easily recognise. It is a no-nonsense approach but it was developed through a process of extensive consultation and reflects the views of the local community and the development community alike.

Imagery

The photographs are natural and beautiful and pay close attention to the materials of the area. Stonework and water are the focus. Leeds City Council invested quite heavily in new photography to show a people element, to suggest the human side to life in the urban village.



Production choices

Leeds City Council needed a document that developers would take notice of and keep referring to, hence the investment in a high specification document.

The main objective with regard to the design choices and the choice of materials was to show quality and a commitment to creating this high quality sustainable area. The document shows that people can live a sustainable life without compromising on quality. They chose not to use recycled paper, but felt that what they would have saved on this publication, they would have lost in support for the bigger picture of sustainability in regeneration.

They had 1,000 of the printed books produced for developers and key decision makers from other councils and organisations such as the English Partnerships. Generic enquiries are directed to the key documents section of the website.

Leeds City Council made these decisions after careful consideration, to have limited short-term environmental impact for maximum long-term sustainability.

For those of you who are in a mild state of panic after realising that yes, you can address your marketing issues, but have yet to explore the practicalities of sustainable business - find some organisations that can help at www.yourclimate.org/yourbusiness

Summary

So, should you produce paper marketing at all? It is wasteful, and high in energy costs. But what if one developer chooses to build a low-carbon housing scheme after reading the *Fundamentals ...*? Or one developer chooses to sign up for the higher standards set by Holbeck Urban Village? Or you choose to hire a car when you need one, and get rid of the gas-guzzler in the driveway, and use that space to plant some vegetables? The answer is that we don't know how much the negative impact of paper publications outweighs the longer-term gains. It is worth thinking twice if it is needed at all, and if the decision is yes, then to spend some time really thinking through the reasons, the quality and the production costs, both monetary and environmental. We have taken a chance with this one, written it in a style and presented it in a way that we hope will grab your attention.

Word of mouth and reputation are still the best credentials any business or organisation can have. So perhaps it is worth spending your resources on improving the sustainability of your business practice, product and letting those qualities speak for themselves.

Selected key texts

Culture and Materialism, Raymond Williams, Verso, 2005

FAQs on Marketing, Philip Kotler, Marshall Cavendish Business, 2005

Objects of Desire: Design and Society since 1750, Adrian Forty, Thames & Hudson, 2002

Ogilvy on advertising, David Ogilvy, Prion Books, 2004

On Brand, Wally Olins, Thames & Hudson, 2004

Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind, Al Ries and Jack Trout, McGraw Hill, 2001

Visible Signs, David Crow, AVA Publishing, 2003

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Please note that any case studies featured in this publication or on the associated website do not constitute a recommendation of the company's or organisation's services. It purely reflects the piece of marketing featured.

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Back Cover Image: Anton Want

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ARUP



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