

# The Brand Strength of Sustainable Tourism

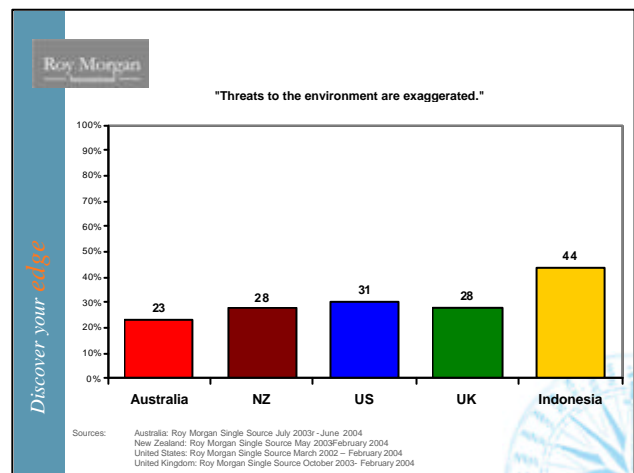
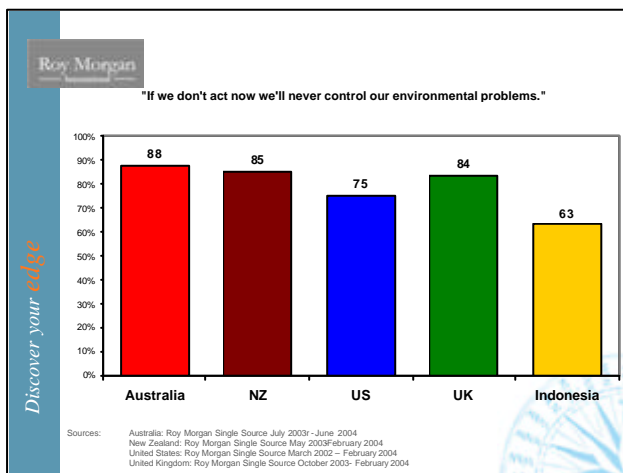
## Alpine Resorts Sustainability Forum Melbourne, Australia April 29, 2005

By  
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The environment as an issue evokes a strong response. Looking at Roy Morgan International Single Source research<sup>1</sup> across Australia, New Zealand, the USA and the UK, there is clear support for the environmental message. Although Indonesia, the only Asian country so far included in the Roy Morgan Single Source data, shows a somewhat different pattern, it is still fair to say that there is evidence of a core set of global environmental values.

Well over three-quarters of Australians (88%), Brits (84%) and New Zealanders (85%) believed that “*if we don’t act now we’ll never control our environmental problems*”. While three-quarters of Americans (75%), and a solid majority of Indonesians (63%), believed that “*if we don’t act now we’ll never control our environmental problems*.”

Consistent with this is the poor support registered for the idea that “*threats to the environment are exaggerated*” – less than half agreed with this view in any country. Australians were least likely (at 23%) to agree and Indonesia being most likely to agree (at 44%) followed by the US (31%), NZ (28%) and the UK (28%).

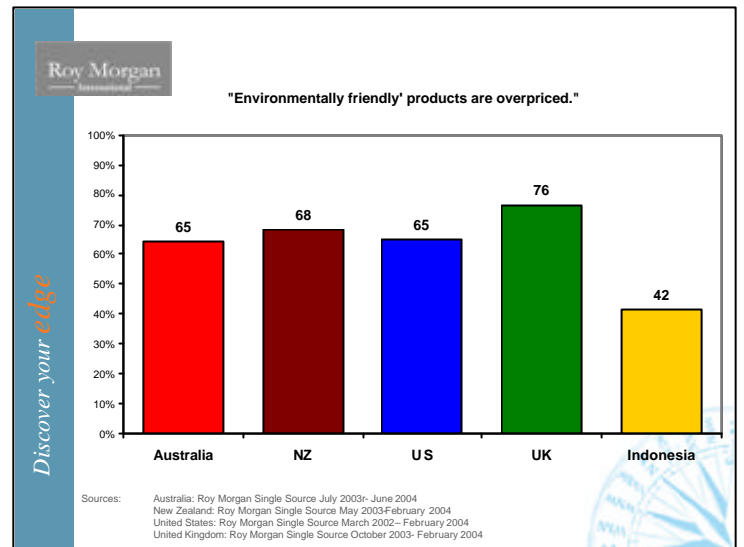
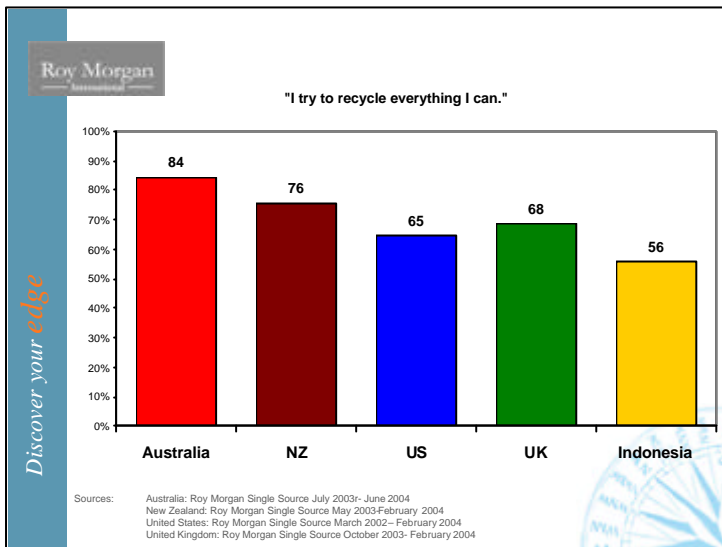


<sup>1</sup> Roy Morgan International Single Source research is part of the continuous Roy Morgan Single Source Survey. [http://www.roymorgan.com/products/single-source/single-source\\_home.cfm](http://www.roymorgan.com/products/single-source/single-source_home.cfm)

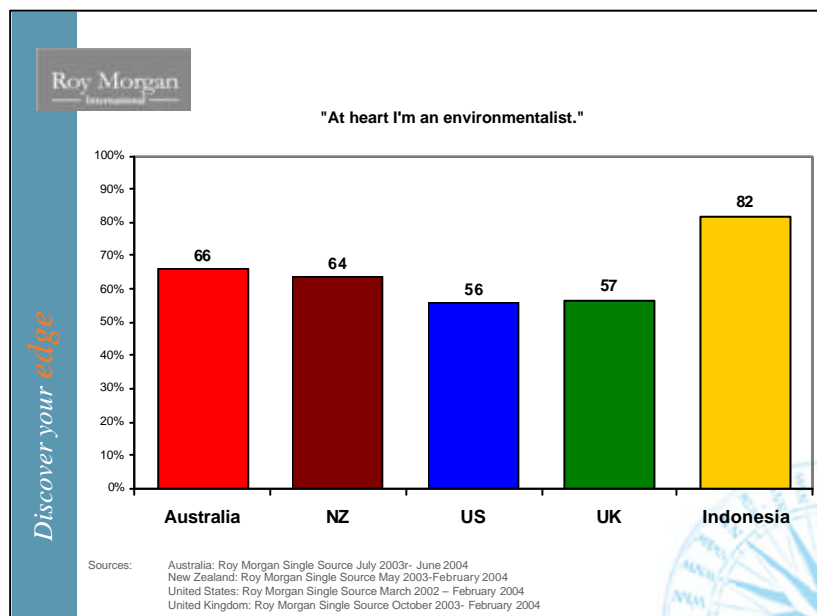
The data reported in this paper is based on surveying cross-sections of the population aged 14 years and over:

- In Australia: 24,785 interviews July 2003 - June 2004
- In NZ: 12,585 interviews August 2003 – July 2004
- In USA: 3,275 interviews March 2003 – February 2004
- In Indonesia: 6,654 interviews March 2004 – December 2004
- In UK: 1,570 interviews October 2003 – February 2004

And while substantial majorities of people in all countries agree “*I try to recycle everything I can*” (Australians 84%, Americans 65%, UK 68% and NZ 76%), most felt that “*environmentally friendly products are overpriced*”, (Australians 65%, Americans 65%, the UK 76% and NZ 68%). Interestingly in Indonesia less than half (42%) considered “*environmentally friendly products are overpriced*”.

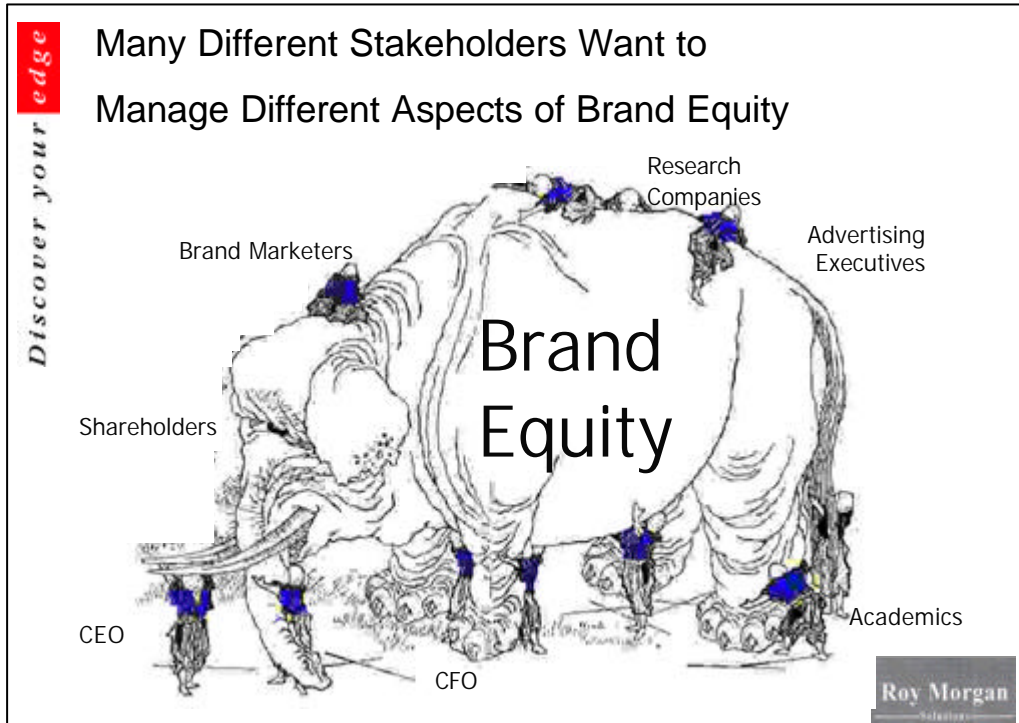


The majority even consider themselves ‘an environmentalist’ at heart. Australians, at (66%) and New Zealanders, at 64% were more likely to consider themselves “*an environmentalist at heart*”, than Americans at 56% and those from the UK (57%). While 64% of New Zealanders consider themselves ‘environmentalists’, Indonesia again stood out with over 80% agreeing with the view.

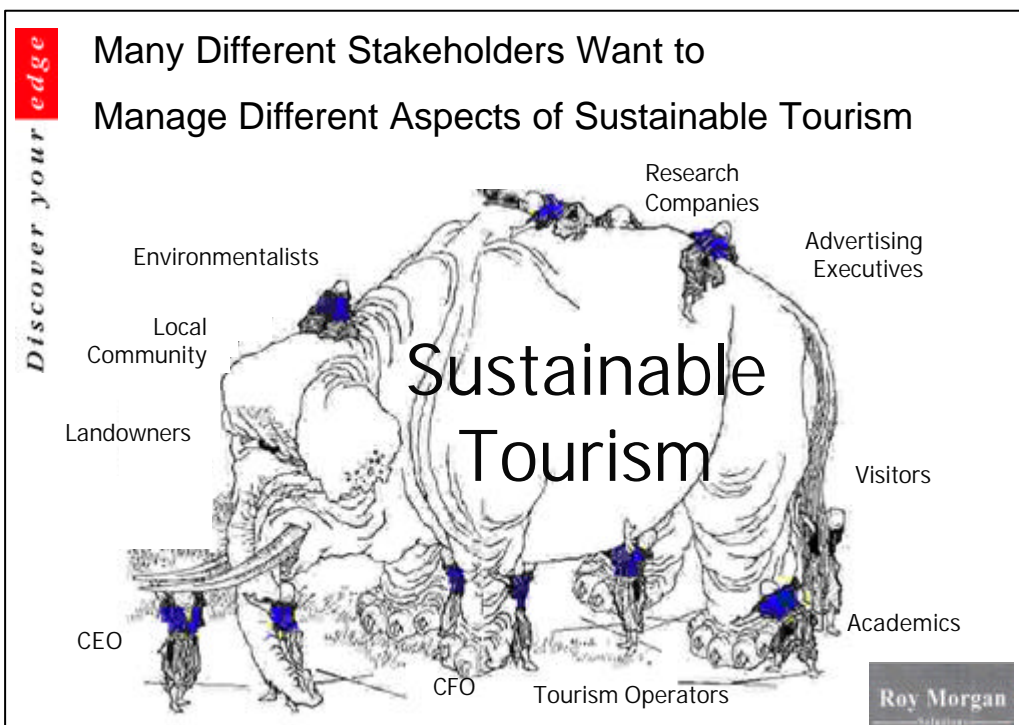


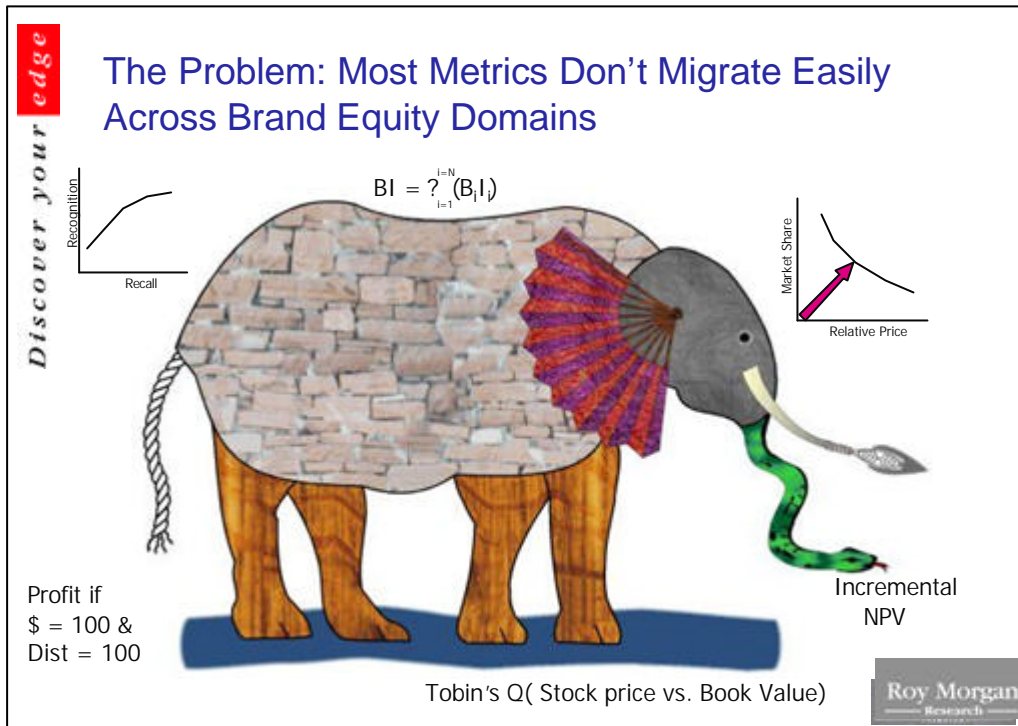
But what does this well of environmental goodwill mean for sustainable tourism? Perhaps, more to the point, what does ‘sustainable tourism’ mean? What does ‘brand strength’ mean?

Josh McQueen (previous Global Director of Brand Equity for Roy Morgan Research) when he talked about the concept of brand equity – likened it to the blind men and the elephant. Each blind man touching a different part of the elephant had a different idea of what the elephant was – and they were all ‘right’ – in a way.



The concept of ‘sustainable tourism’ is just like ‘brand value’. Clearly the conservationists have a very different view than the tourism operator or the shareholder (and very different measures of success). The real problem is that the ‘metrics’ do not migrate easily across the different views.



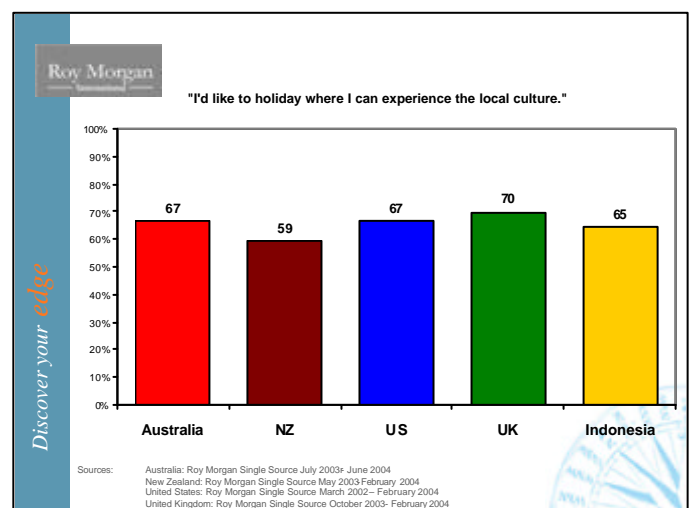
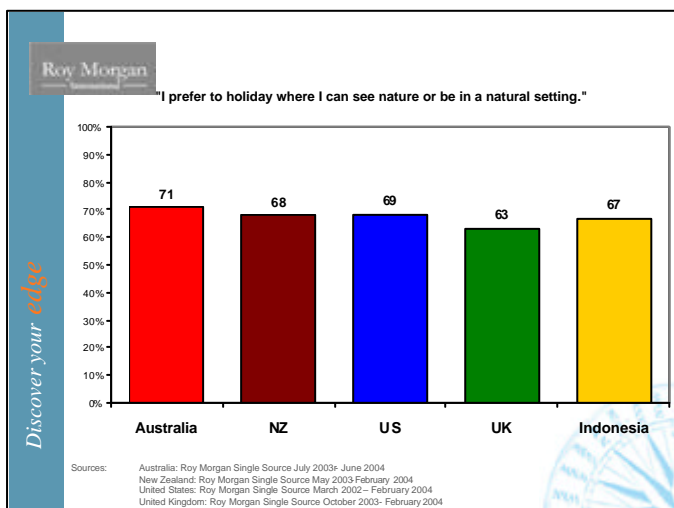


At the simplest level if we work with the view that **Tourism** is potentially a country's most valuable "New Age" export industry; and **Sustainability** is about ensuring the export is an ever 'renewed' resource, we have some commonality, and probably, agreement.

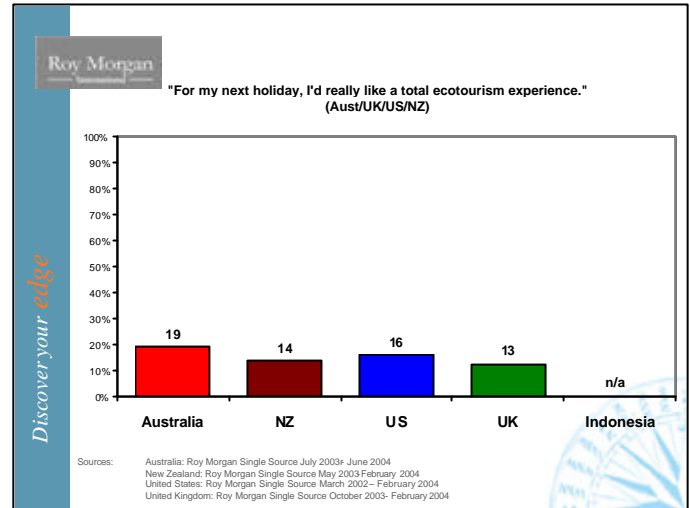
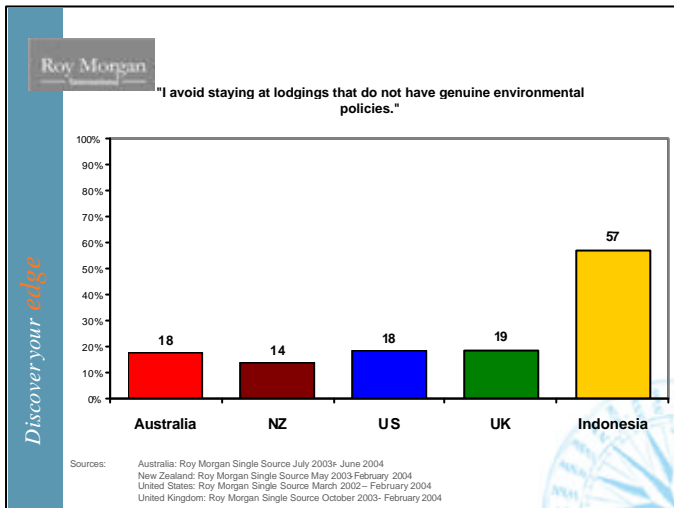
So the next question is, how do we put this into practice? How do we engage the relevant stakeholders? It is not simply an economic (cost benefit) equation as the benefits and the costs are dependent on the customers' perception – the value (if any) they place on sustainability and all it entails and means. And that (ie sustainability and all it means) of course is still in creation – as the elephant showed, it means many things to many people, and the final 'persona' is still to be created.

There is strong support for the 'softer' elements of the ecotourism experience, and this is relatively consistent across markets.

A majority in all countries say, "I prefer to holiday where I can see nature or be in a natural setting" and "I'd like to holiday where I can experience the local culture".



However, when asked about very specific ecotourism experiences the interest drops. We see that less than one in five Australians (18%), Americans (18%), Brits (19%) and New Zealanders (14%) “*avoid staying at accommodations that do not have genuine environmental policies.*” And similar proportions are seeking a “*total ecotourism experience*” for their next holiday. Almost 20% of Australians agreed that “*for my next holiday, I’d really like a total ecotourism experience*”, 16% in the US and 14% in New Zealand – the UK was the lowest with 13% seeking a total ecotourism experience on their next holiday.



This conundrum is not unique to the tourism field. Indeed, it is probably more often than not the case with most issues. For instance, the majority of Australians support the Government doing something about health and education – overwhelming support!

But few support specifics like reducing class sizes in primary schools, paying teachers more, paying nurses more, introducing more doctors from overseas, etc. In general, a specific policy will only ‘resonate’ with a few. Why is this?

Our work understanding peoples’ values and the ‘windows’ through which they view the world provide much of the answer.

The Roy Morgan Values Segments<sup>1</sup> are 10 distinctive mindsets based on people’s pattern of responses to six dimensions.

There are four psychological dimensions:

- Individualism**            “I” vs “We”  
How much control we have over our lives
- Life Satisfaction**        Levels of satisfaction with life  
How content we are with our lot
- Conservatism**            Traditional vs progressive social attitudes  
Are we modern or old fashioned in our views
- Innovation**                Attraction to new things and ideas  
Risk adverse or attracted to new things, early adopters

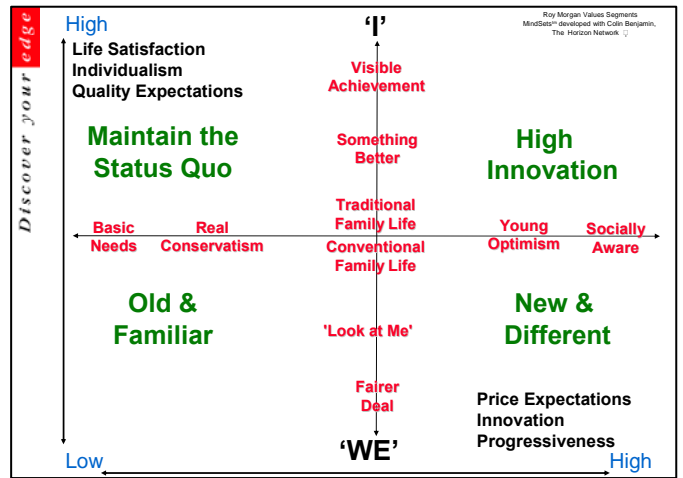
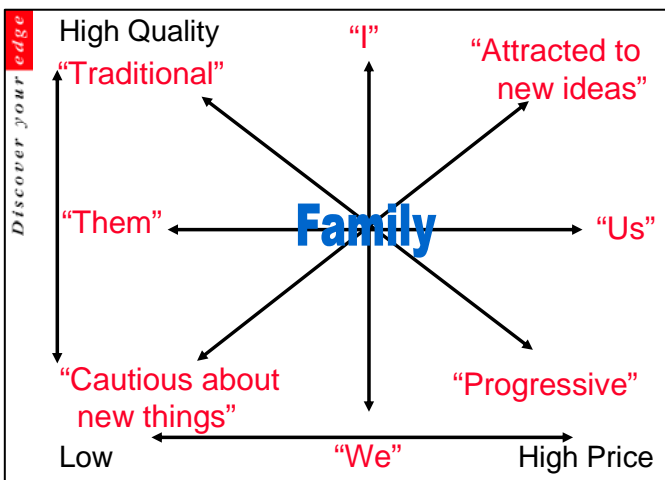
<sup>1</sup> Developed in conjunction with Colin Benjamin of The Horizons Network.

There are also two market place dimensions:

**Quality** how high or low are the expectations of quality

**Price** willingness to pay high or low prices per unit

By plotting the six dimensions with the concept of 'Family' at the centre, you see how a shift towards a certain dimension or a combination of dimensions defines an individual as being responsive to a certain combination of price and quality at times of making purchase decisions.



The Values Cross plots the Roy Morgan Values Segments<sup>2</sup> according to each Segment's responses to these dimensions.



<sup>2</sup> Developed in conjunction with Colin Benjamin of The Horizons Network.



We therefore have a map (see below) – a map with which to understand different people and ways of thinking. For instance, if we consider the concept of technology:

- For the older “Basic Needs” segment, the concept of technology means medical technology, health monitoring and maintenance, security systems, and person-to-person contact;
- For the young carefree “Look At Me” segment, technology means entertainment, sound systems, leisure, and on-line games;
- For the disenfranchised “A Fairer Deal” segment technology means robotics, and fear of technology taking over jobs and controlling our lives.

If we consider the issue of politics for the two up-market segments:

- For the “Visible Achievement” segment, business is key, Government is too slow for the real world;
- For the “Socially Aware” segment, too much power is concentrated in the hands of large companies, global politics are of relevance.

<b>Australasia 2000</b>		<b>Roy Morgan Values Segments</b> (developed in conjunction with Colin Benjamin of The Horizons Network)								
	Basic Needs	A Fairer Deal	Traditional Family Life	Conventional Family Life	Look At Me	Something Better	Real Conservatism	Young Optimism	Visible Achievement	Socially Aware
<b>S</b> <i>social</i>	Ageing/ Illness/Care	Segmentation of lifestyles but increased awareness of gap between rich & poor	Increasing longevity and search for meaning	Educational concerns for their children	Credit access and alcohol/drug escapism increase crime rates at juvenile level	Reduced life satisfaction and increased family demands	Feelings of isolation and insecurity	Internationalised aspirations and religious orientation plus expressive action	Orientation to high degrees of turbulence “See you in Sydney for the Olympics”	Commitment to wide variety of social issues especially the environment
<b>T</b> <i>Tech nology</i>	Medical Technology	Robotics	Health/leisure integration	Home technology, sophistication	Entertainment/ leisure systems	CAD/CAM Systems	Technological changes are seen as too much too fast and of doubtful value	Information technology and new generation systems	Management decisions support systems	Global intelligence access and integrated orgware
<b>E</b> <i>Econo- mics</i>	Increasing anxiety over social security and transfer payment changes	Improved economic situation through tax, wage deals and productivity gains	Increasing conversion of home equity into cash flow and reinvestment in lifestyle and equities	Two income plus households will rise dramatically. Consumption will focus on price and quality leaders plus feeling of control	High level of commitment to on-job training and promotion opportunities, provided open to the peer group	Strong shift to incentive/reward systems and performance recognition	Increasing investment in property and franked dividend oriented companies	Career focus and willingness to defer consumption for long term benefit	Increased self-employment and entrepreneurial activity plus strong export orientation	Public sector focus on service delivering lead to greater devolution of economic activity through privatisation
<b>P</b> <i>politics</i>	Increasing power as ageing issues become the prime focus of the middle income family	Reduced power of traditional organisations to mobilise an automatised work force	The most rapidly growing force for conservatism and social control issues with strong pressure for government regulation and national security	Taxation levels and house disposable income will shape the direction of all major parties	The big losers in the ageing debate. Personal freedom and rights of the individual will emerge as issues	Freedom and control of big business, freedom to hire/fire will produce organisational tensions	As with TFL, these will be a strong push for greater political powers and law and order sanctions	Increasing emergence of single issue and specialist political concerns that express personal politics against party machines	Corporate power politics will be more significant than electoral concerns. Parliament will decline as a focus for national debate	Issue and media related political concerns will create short term constituencies and network issues

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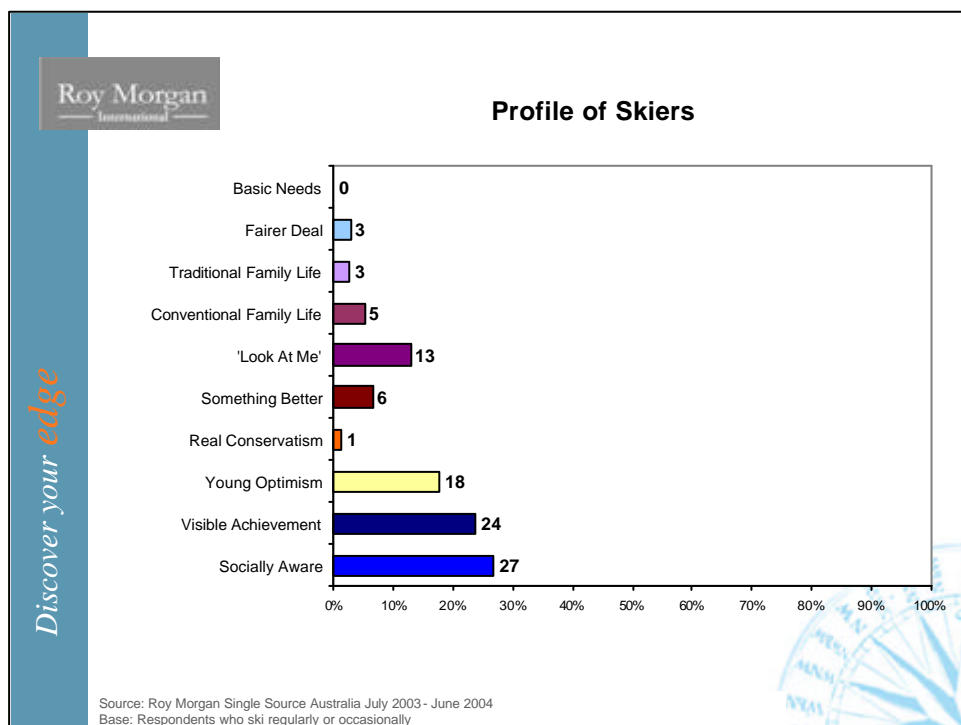
Australasia 2010		Roy Morgan Values Segments (developed in conjunction with Colin Benjamin of The Horizons Network)									
<b>S</b> social	Basic Needs Super annuation, insurance policy failures and public health and community safety concerns	A Fairer Deal Social equality. Access to Education. Control over immigration and population expansion	Traditional Family Life Safety Peace Law and Order Deceit Self-Respect - oriented care for elderly Lifelong Education	Conventional Family Life Greater security of Employment Affordable Health Housing and Education, Personal Safety, More Entertainment	Look At Me An end to boredom and "schooling" more personal freedom. Greater range of "new" and "exciting" experiences	Something Better Conspicuous consumption. Material focus soft on social justice, liberal isolation. Arrogance, better than others. Disharmony, racial tensions	Real Conservatism Fear of reduction of barriers. Fear of loss of any control. Maintenance of social stratification as "natural order". Have/Have Not conflict is productive	Young Optimism Safeguard opportunities for self-expression or personal quest. More emphasis on spiritual values. Independence. Choice in their lives	Visible Achievement Speed of change. Working too hard. Indifference to social issues like Aboriginality and gender. Multicareer windows. Lifestyle impact of global business. Manage social issues, not solve	Socially Aware True multiculturalism. Frustration with yesterday and today's solution. Greater community ather than business orientation. Greater equity and anti-poverty concerns	
<b>T</b> Technology	Person to person contact technologies, health monitoring and maintenance technologies and security systems	Fear of technology taking over jobs and controlling our lives. Access to technology. Better sports coverage. Technology doing menial work/dudgery	User supportive and friendly, not designed to trick people. Home delivered. Minimise fuss. Low charge.	Better home appliances and cars. Use of technology in leisure. Faster cheaper transport.	Better sound systems. Virtual reality. Faster cars Free to go where want to go Online access to games and infomatics	Opportunity to make money, get ahead consumer goods lifestyle and entertainment. Improved productivity. Winners and losers/ Capital and Labour	Technology for its own sake has no value. Technology requires evaluation. Only use is to increase comfort and income. Agent of change shouldn't provide the agenda	Mastery of technology essential to control their involvement with society at large and opportunities for earning a living	Business opportunities they represent. Global business. Privacy, security, time. Scepticism about speed of intro. Australia may be left out.	Smart medical solutions. Ownership of implementation of technological solutions. Technology = innovative solutions and expanded creativity supports	
<b>E</b> Economics	"Silver hair power" focussing on income security and short term community jobs that maintain self-respect	Maintaining a small population to achieve "Australian Dream" "Eat the rich" Provide for the aged	Family needs focus. System doesn't reward bludgers. User pays for everything above the basics	Stable economic conditions. Low prices and taxation. Greater choice in consumables	Everyone has a job and a car. Money for leisure. No menial jobs	Free markets. Survival of the fittest. Reduced redistribution of income. More entrepreneurial support	Asset protection is essential for economic stability. Protection of personal wealth. Fair days work fair days pay	Self-focussed. Rewards for merit and hard work. The successful will prosper, the others go under. Competence is everything	Travel infrastructure. More entrepreneurial. International will prosper, or small. Our people can't keep up. Not jobs for all Triad trade blocs	Tendency to cash out. Remove the "hour glass" structure. Learning and earning for everyone. Sustainable environment and controls	
<b>P</b> politics	"Grey Power" voting block of babyboomers restructures the political scene by electing networks of minority interests	Provision of medical services and education. Maintain separate entity from rest of world. Give everyone a say through computer polling	Politicians who tell the truth. Parties that represent conservative values. "Fear" driven vision of seeking greater security	Stability, minimal change. Reduction of influence of politicians. Indifference to claims for diversity of representatives	Ability to influence local politics and greater freedom from the "Geriatrics" running the country	Leave me alone to get on with it "Not in my backyard" Class differences. Winners and Losers OK. Support for powerful leaders	Valueless Government should be entrusted to the few that we can influence. Increased impact of networking	Social order and regulation to preserve gains and protect territory. Strong, clean, non-interventionist politics. Somewhat naive.	Business is key disinterested politically. Government is too slow for real world. Increasing Asian influence in all political decisions	Too much power in the hands of large business. Greater participation. Pluralism. Global politics. Global issues and local service systems management	

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This tells us that despite 'latent environmental interest' an ecotourism 'badge' will not necessarily sell to **everyone** at any price.

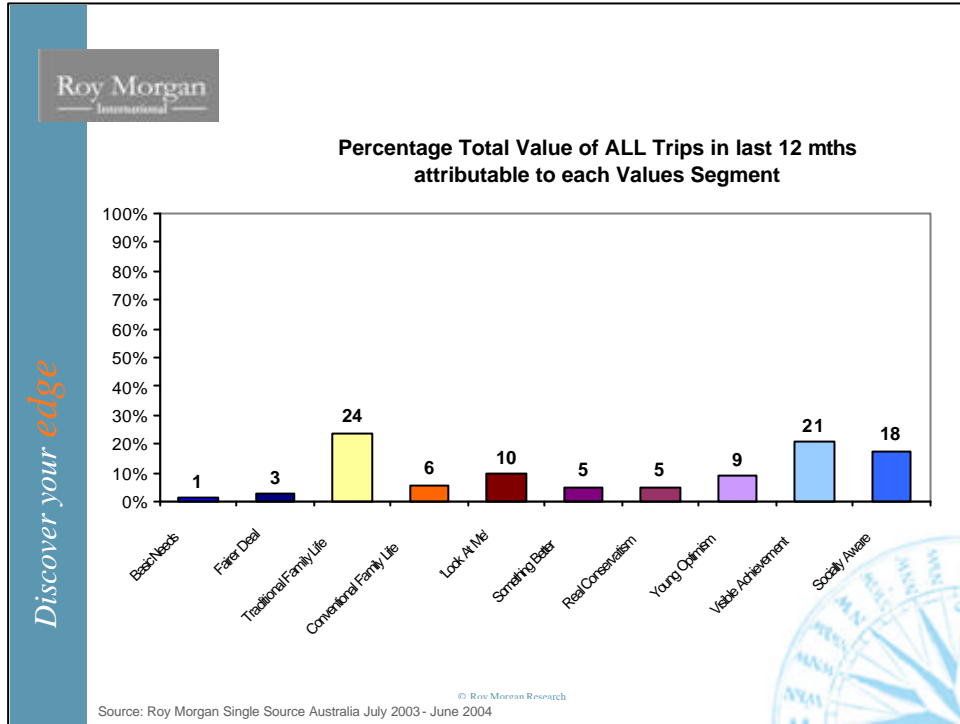
Brand experts warns us that there is "too much emphasis on branding as something that is done to consumers, rather than branding as something consumers do things with", De Chatorney and McDonald.

If we buy the concept that 'a successful brand understands its perception and therefore the people who perceive it' then it is critical to understand the people. Let's look then at the target audience – those who ski.

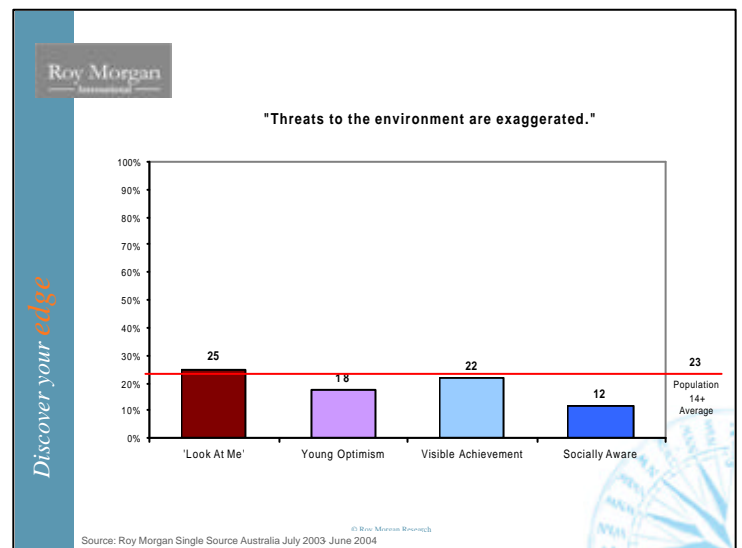
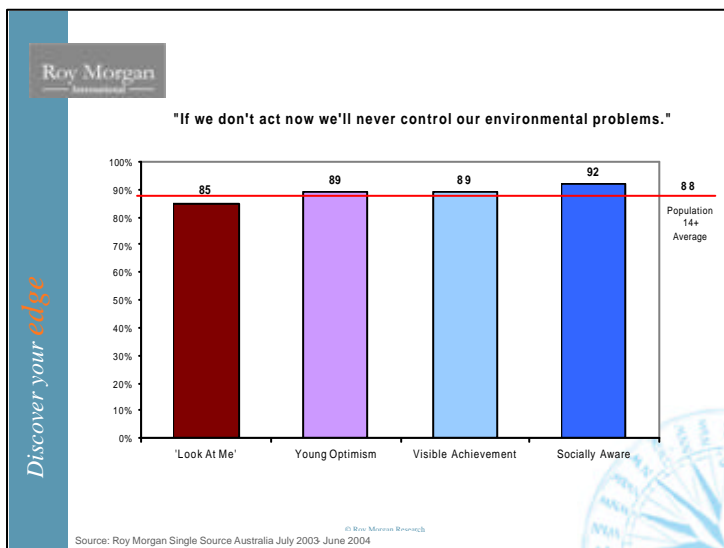


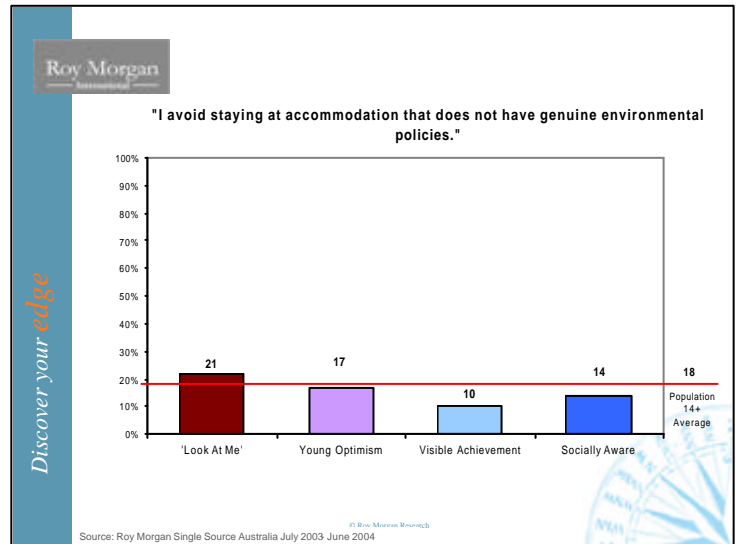
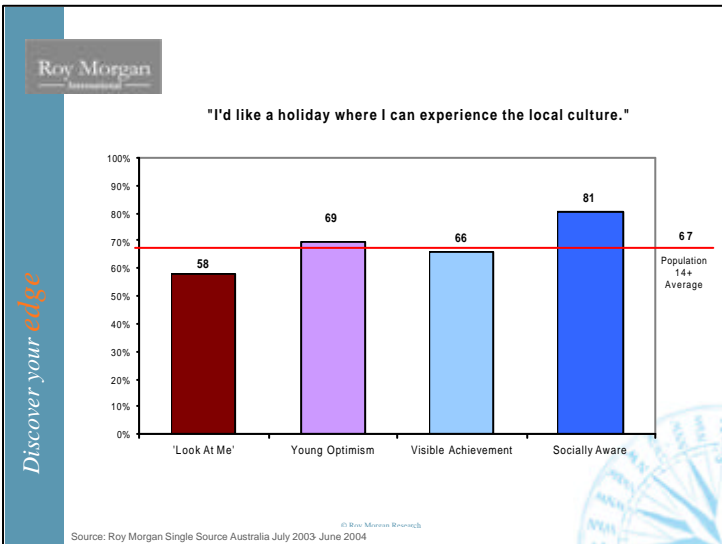
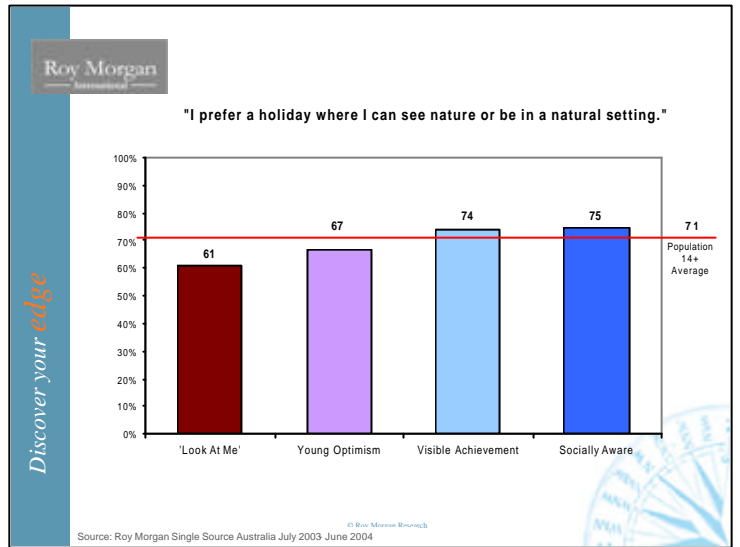
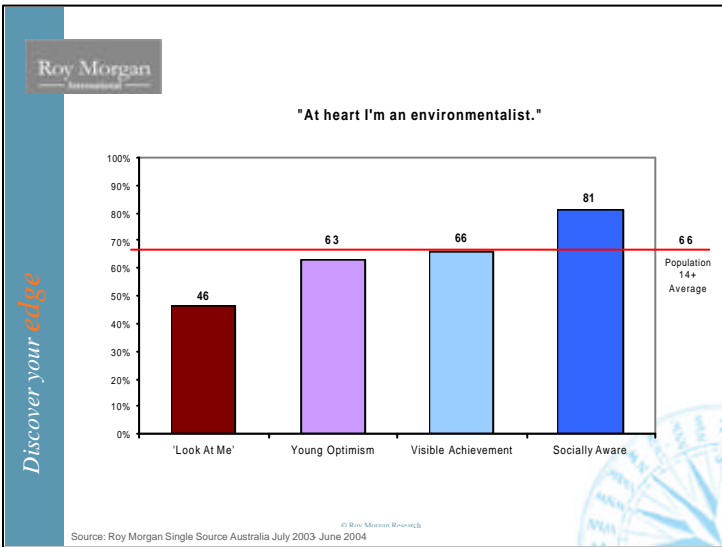
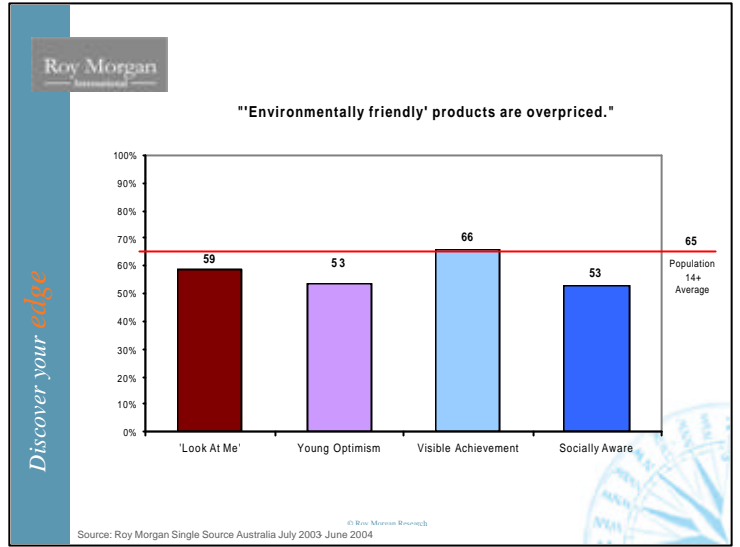
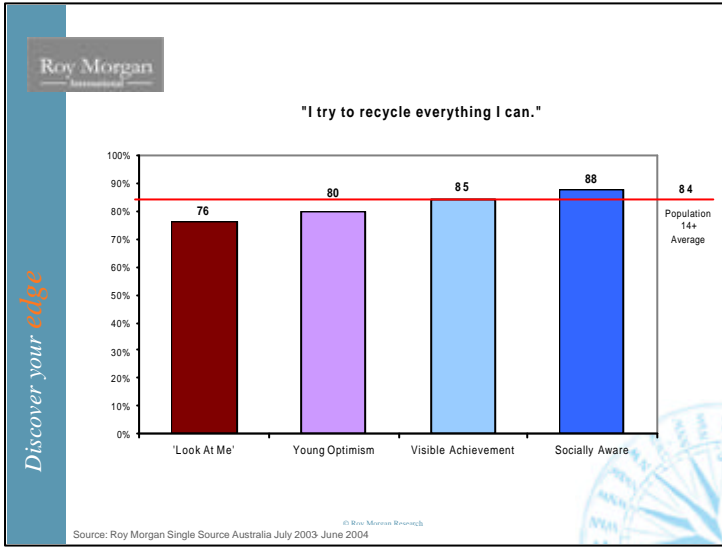


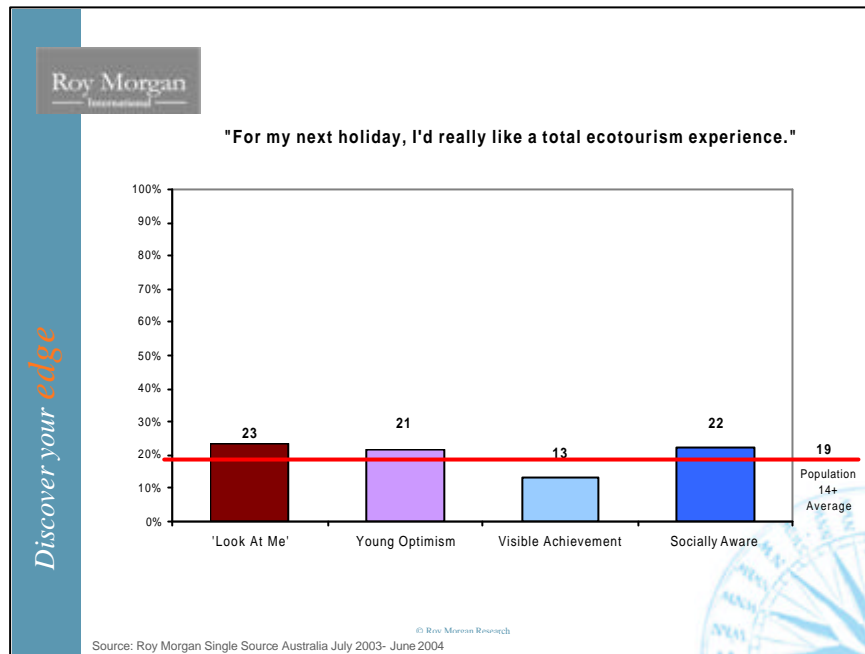
There are two major groups – the young and the affluent. In Roy Morgan Values Segment terms, the four values segments are: ‘Visible achievement’ and ‘Socially aware’ (the affluent); and ‘Look at me’ and ‘Young optimism’ (young). Together these four segments (out of 10) represent almost 60% of tourism dollars and over 80% of skiers.



We already know from the Values analysis that the two affluent segments are not ‘like-minded’, and even the two young segments view the world differently to each other. When it comes to environmental, ecotourism issues the evidence is clear that they have different priorities or strength of feeling. ‘Socially aware’ top the list on almost every point – they are the true ‘natural believers’.







Qualitative research undertaken some years ago into the way different Values Segments relate to energy conservation (a not dissimilar concept to 'sustainable tourism') find:

- the older more conservative segments ('Basic needs', 'Traditional family life' and 'Real conservatism') were willing to 'go without', to curtail their use of energy;
- 'Visible achievement' people held the expectation that they would access whatever power they needed. They would install additional power cables if that was what it took (the assumption being that as long as they paid what it cost they had the right to use what they wanted).
- 'Socially aware' were motivated to "pay more" for energy efficient equipment and engaged with the innovation. The star system was a real motivator.

This relatively 'predictable' but disparate set of responses is likely to be replicated when it comes to 'sustainable tourism'.

On a positive note, we know from our research that many travellers have a high expectation of quality, and that this can be ultimately more important than price. As such the branding of sustainable tourism, ecotourism, or eco certification, if it is associated with quality, has the potential to be valuable. Gordon MacMillan explored this linkage in his paper, "The Brand Strength of Ecotourism and the Consumer Value of Eco-labelling".

However, the specific challenge for the skiing audience is its 'segmented' nature. There is no doubt the right brand, image and message can be created to move any one (or even two) of the segments.

The challenge is to find the solution for the entire market.

There may be a brilliant solution just waiting to be found – a word, an image, a message – that resonates and works for all. Sophisticated research on language and imagery, and relevant motivators, might uncover such a solution.

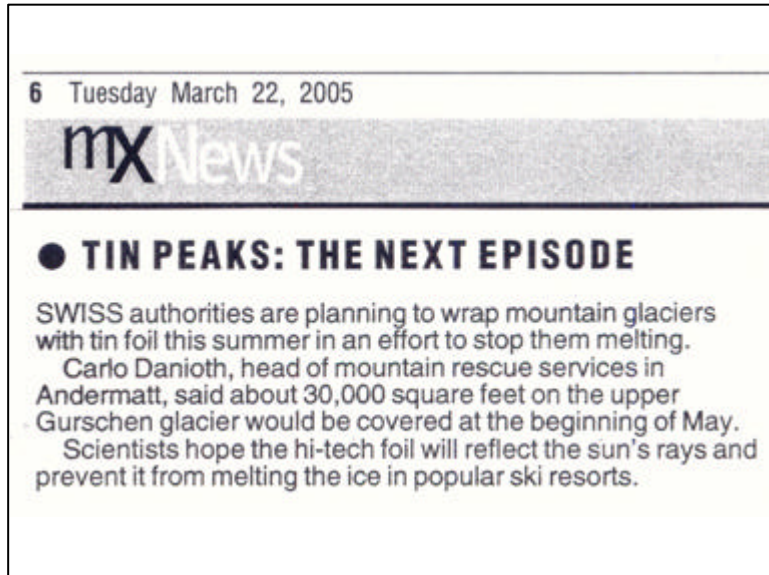
However, even so, the ‘promise’ would need to be able to be **delivered** in a high quality way for all at the same time, ie if the reality of the experience does not live up to the promise, the audience, especially ‘*Visible achievement*’, will be ‘unforgiving’.

Ultimately, the more pragmatic approach may well be to focus on the ‘natural believers’ – the ‘*Socially aware*’ to build the brand, imagery and language to ‘engage’ them fully. At the same time, the operators will have a clear target (incidentally a high value, willing target) upon which to focus.

The acceptance, likelihood of success, and thus, early rewards (longer stays, greater expenditures, involvement outside the season) are more likely. Once this success is embedded, the time would be right for the ‘*Visible achievement*’ challenge. As ‘*Visible achievement*’ love success and to be associated with success, celebrations of ‘eco’ achievement, could form part of the message.

If there is a concern that an overt ‘eco’ message may alienate some, we would offer some comfort – in that our experience suggests that these kinds of messages are generally ‘invisible’ to those for whom they do not matter. The solid consumer support for the environment, across all segments, also means that the likelihood of alienation is low.

I leave you today with an interesting strategy from Switzerland.



Source: MX News March 22, 2005

This may stimulate some creative thinking – even sponsorship opportunities.

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