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 **dba**  
11 wins, 9 years

**honey™**



**innocent**  
little tasty drinks

# *The Road Less Travelled*

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Honey is a brand and communications agency. We deliver brand and design solutions for some of the UK's best known companies. Our 9 Design Effectiveness Awards bear witness to the commercial effectiveness of what we do.

Honey is chosen by our clients because we are:

- Collaborative** Working with our clients to achieve their aims, curious, challenging but supportive
- Commercial** 9 Design Effectiveness Awards prove our commercial understanding and awareness of the reality of sales and marketing
- Connected** Honey is part of a group that includes an innovation business and a sales and distribution business.

## The Road Less Travelled

Why is it that entrepreneurs consistently outperform brand owners? How come people with little to no understanding of the rules of an established market can arrive with products and brand that not only perform better than the established brands but go on to change the rules of that market in fundamental ways?

Once upon a time the PC market was dominated by Microsoft, the recorded music market was dominated by EMI or HMV, the cell phone market was dominated by Nokia and Blackberry. Arguably one entrepreneur captured all three markets or, at the very least perhaps we can agree he changed how these markets operate. I don't even have to tell you his name, you know who it is already.

Another entrepreneur, knowing nothing about the markets, products or technologies of these markets, has made huge strides in revolutionizing the Aerospace, Automotive and Solar power markets in a little more than a decade.

You may not be so familiar with this person, but I am certain you will in the future because he is a 21st Century clone of Howard Hughes - from his controversial approach to taking on the establishment (he is currently suing the US Air force for unfair practices) and his love of Hollywood, having already appeared in cameo roles in three major Hollywood films. I am of course referring to Elon Musk.

Perhaps you feel these entrepreneurs are exceptionally gifted, or exceptionally lucky? Maybe they operate on the grand scale and therefore when successful they have such an impact their results look exceptional. Real day to day brands are less open to disruption? Coffee is ordinary enough, and yet an entrepreneurial approach created Nespresso out of Nestle, Perrier out of a worthy little mineral Spa, Innocent out of a group of amateur smoothie junkie's, Gu Puds out of not much more than an idea and a friendship with a Belgian chocolatier. Is that small enough or day-to-day enough? What about Ben and Jerry's, Dyson, Red Bull, Huffington Post, there isn't space in a short article to list all the brands that originated from entrepreneurs with little or no knowledge of or regards for the market norm.

*"I could either watch  
it happen or be part  
of it."*

- Elon Musk



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## What are they doing right, and how do we apply their thinking?

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In this short series of three articles I am going to look more deeply into the brands built by entrepreneurs and how they achieved breakthrough results.

Along the way we are going to look their methods, language, organization and delivery.

Hang on tight, it's going to be a wild ride!

How do we really understand what entrepreneurs do? Well you could try rocking up to One Infinite Loop, Cupertino and asking to interview the survivors of Steve Jobs reign how he did it, but no one is going to tell you. You can expect the same response from most entrepreneurs. They are either too smart to want to give you the goods or to busy to talk. And it's probably not the right way to answer the question anyway, because most of what you read about entrepreneurs is wrong. It isn't about the power of creative genius- that helps, but its not why these successes arise.

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## *Gosh, that's a bold claim!*

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Well yes it is, but bare with me and I hope to justify it to you.

What we can do, is look at the actions that entrepreneurs take. This are in the public domain and easily verified. We can look at what they do, or don't do, to get some understanding of the differences. That's exactly what we have done, actually it is a study that has been going on for some time, and we are going to share an update of what we have found.

Firstly lets look at what entrepreneurs don't do.



Brands are extraordinary. With just a handful of words a skilled copywriter can conjure a precise message that transports us to a new place full of meaning. With just a fragment of a sentence the right words can invoke entire universes of expectation and reward.

*Think different*  
*Just do it*  
*Because you're worth it*

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## *How deeply into our consciousness does this capability reach?*

If I use just three letters, BMW, I know exactly what is in your head. We share an image of a blue and white roundel, an expectation of performance and power, a collection of surfaces, curves and features that are distinct and owned exclusively by the marque. Even deeper than this, we share a set of emotional associations about those three letters that WBM can never invoke.

As designers we know that just a partial glimpse of a blue and white quadrant has precisely the same powerful effect.

So its not a surprise that, as a profession, we hold a deep regards for icons and language. It's what brands become in the minds of consumers. Symbols to invoke associations, an extraordinarily powerful set of tools, which we can deploy to guide consumers to meet our commercial goals.

But I have never met a consumer. Nor have I met a demographic, or a niche or a category. This seeming lack of a life is neatly balanced by the real world I inhabit which is rich in friends and families and other sorts of warm fuzzy complicated contradictory passionate willful soulful people that fill my life with meaning.

Real people, not abstracted concepts.

In part two I look how this is key to success and how entrepreneurs do things differently.

