

The discipline of brand building

 By [Dr Carla Enslin](#)

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It may not have been that obvious to begin with, but now it seems inescapable fact: the discipline of brand building is establishing itself solidly and firmly. Over the last decade, companies have increasingly incorporated brand strategies and invested resources in establishing and sustaining brand identities.

They have become more mindful of the architecture of product lines and geographies and have begun to exploit the synergies between their physical and virtual contact strategies.

As a result, we have seen the rise of titles such as brand manager, brand ambassador and chief brand officer. And it is no longer remarkable to encounter CEOs that exhibit genuine concern with the reputation of their companies and the brand strategies directed towards implementing and upholding their core values.

Becoming more mindful of brand building principles

Equally noteworthy, perhaps, is the notion that various societal and political systems are driving their brand building efforts with similar discipline and vision. Cities, countries and societal movements are becoming more mindful of the principles of brand building, both in terms of building uniquely differentiated identities and towards forming meaningful, long-term relationships with their stakeholders.

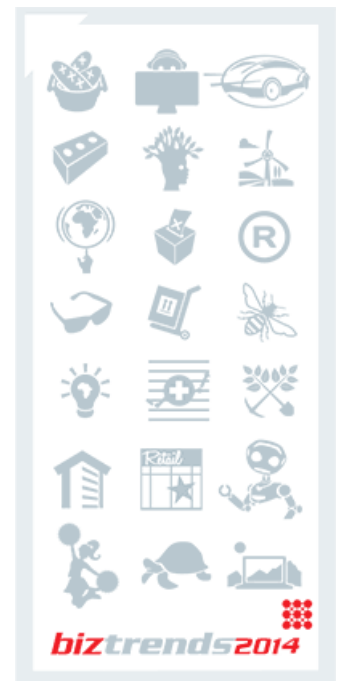
Case in point: South Africa will host the World Design Capital this year and its host city, Cape Town, will be using every opportunity to position the city and the country as a showcase for design that answers the imperative of social upliftment where it is needed the most, while driving innovation across economic and cultural channels.

A critical call for 2014

The increasing direction towards a stronger brand building orientation in all commercial and social spheres serves to reinforce a central principle and a critical call for 2014. It can be said that the primary goal of brand building is to add unique value to people's lives. This is achieved when brands serve a purpose, and when they hold genuine meaning for the people that they serve. This is a premise that applies to a commercial brand as much as a social brand.

This year, South Africa enters an election year with the powerful mandate to serve and uphold the legacy of the first democratically elected president of our country, Nelson Mandela.

May we experience a 2014 where political brand building goals are upheld: Let every political party present its clear and unique manifesto to the electorate. Let every party closely interrogate their founding principles and how they can continue to matter to their followers. Let all consider with integrity how their movements can deliver on promises made. And may leaders and political parties serve our young democracy with the inclusivity and magnanimity of spirit that our country should be known for.



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ABOUT DR CARLA ENSLIN

Dr Carla Enslin is one of the founding members of Vega School of Brand Leadership. She is Academic Head at The Independent Institute of Education's Vega School of Brand Leadership, a Teaching Fellow at UCT's Graduate School of Business, and deputy chair of the Brand Council of South Africa (BCSA).
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