

# Abnormal (brand) psychology 101

 By [Matt Rose](#)

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Imagine a car manufacturer brand that made 'no bones' about how it's going to try greedily to do the absolute bare minimum when it comes to carbon emissions tax so that it could maximise the consumer's saving.

Imagine a fast-food chain that claimed that 'morbid obesity' is but a small price to pay for how flippin' tasty its new Whopper is.

Internationally, Skittles are positioned as self-centered and psychotic. Diesel's latest tagline is ["be stupid"](#). AnimalPak supplements reek of obsession and loneliness, and Bentley embraces its position as supremely arrogant.

These ideas are appealing for the same reasons that The Joker is arguably more intriguing than Batman and why Lex Luther is more resourceful and imaginative than Clark Kent.

## Local examples

Recently, Cadbury's Bournville Delightfully Dark has been [flirting with the dark side](#) of the moon in its latest relaunch campaign, linking the not-too-bitter, not-too-sweet nature of Bournville chocolate, with the delightful exposure of [women's not-so-wholesome fantasies](#).

Digitally speaking, the Internet is a virtual cesspool of dark brand inspiration, so one need not struggle for inspiration.

\*rubs hands together\*

Sloggi's new campaign idea is ["feeling good's official underwear"](#); it's admirable the way it has owned an emotion.

But brands that dare to tap into harsher emotions may rise above the clutter to even greater effect. Negative emotions are so underused in advertising. Here are some ideas for some 'unconventional' brand personalities:

- Pious
- Masochistic
- Insecure
- Clumsy
- Stubborn
- Sexist/Elitist

- Aggressive
- Fearful

### **The official brand of [insert emotion]**

The norm is employing glossy positivity to stimulate first-level, trivial and fluffy emotion from consumers. A more honest approach is to embrace a downbeat tone, which flies in the face of superficiality, reaffirming the truth that people's feelings and personalities in real life are a confusing mess of ups and downs. This blends into one enjoyable and more meaningful concept.

Nowadays, brands can embrace their shadows. Shadows are qualities deemed undesirable and thus are usually repressed, by brands and by people.

But if brands could tap into this resource, they would allow consumers to express and normalise the negative feelings they all have, and thus build much stronger relationships with them.

To create stronger, more, believable brands, we must also learn to incorporate the darker spectrums sometimes.

### **Resolving contradiction**

Great brands resolve contradictions. Omo washing powder makes dirt a good thing. And Apple makes computers and technology more human. Here's a call for stronger contradictions and more honest/holistic brand identities.

## **ABOUT MATT ROSE**

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