

## HP invent a machine inspired by a person

The HP print ad that opens on the first page of the current issue of Brainstorm magazine is a great piece of wordplay.

 By [Richard Clarke](#) 13 Jun 2002

Not a person trying to do a machine's job or a person deferring to a machine, but a machine that fits into the human world.

"Now, a machine inspired by the person who does everything."

The picture shows an employee with one hand on hip and other holding pen to pursed lips and deep in thought. In the foreground are two other employees working at terminals with one on a mobile.

But the focus is on the thinker who is planning strategy and putting the pieces, machines and humans, together to drive the company successfully.

The payoff line makes clear where the dominance lies in the ongoing battle between human and machine.

"Imagine, if only there was a machine in your office that was half as multi-talented as you."

This makes clear that the benchmarks are human and not technology driven. This makes the point that people drive a company not machines.

Machines have to be worked, configured and set up. They also have to be fixed and upgraded. All this is done by humans.

The multi-skilled or multi-talented human is the one pulling the strings.

This ad is a great testament to the human mind and drives home the point that machines are designed ultimately to solve human needs.

What HP is saying is that their machines add to and combine with human employees, they don't replace the human factor.

Far too many IT companies push the technology and/or the machine as a problem solving/collating/storing/integrating solution without focusing on the people that will have to run the systems.

On a philosophical level this ad also taps into the 'struggle' of man versus machine, which is such a popular story in high tech circles.

All round this message really hits the human target and unusually for an IT ad is positive rather than focusing on what's wrong in a potential client's business.

The cynical reader will say that the ad focuses only on printers. These printers scan, copy and send documents digitally but they are still hardly the high end of the tech spectrum. The answer is that HP delivers IT services and solutions right across the spectrum. This ad is only a part of what HP means overall as a

brand.

HP do not simply sell products they deliver services. According to Bronwen Kausch, a financial and business journalist for an IT daily, "They are not selling boxes but rather an ethos that consumers would want to be associated with."

The positioning of HP in this particular ad as a company that places the emphasis on the human that designs and runs the machine really makes me want to be associated with them.

### ABOUT RICHARD CLARKE

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