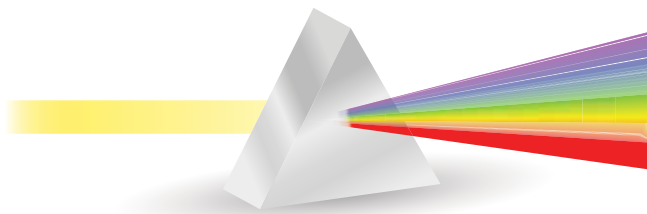


Creating far more powerful brands and messages by understanding the belief systems that underlie all decision-making

Introducing Prism - measuring people's worldview



Neil Higgs  
Chief Innovation Partner,  
TNS South Africa

Marketers are adept at understanding their particular category. They usually have a fair understanding (albeit sometimes quite spotty) of how their customers live and they understand that brands carry non-category emotional benefits such as aspiration (think any brand where badging is important) and pride (say, producing a home-baked item).

But there is something missing.

David Jones, former CEO of Havas, talks of the need to stop marketing to consumers: instead, one needs to “matter to people”. Two top Unilever marketers (Keith Weed and Stan Sthanunathan) understand that they must talk “to real people” to understand them “in the round, what they do and why” and how brands could play a role in their wider lives. They make the point that people consume brands for “maybe two or three hours a day – the balance of the time, you’re living as human beings”.

Eminent marketer Seth Goldin is more specific:

*“Tell me what your ideal customer believes, at the most emotional and primordial level, and then you can tell me the story you’ll craft and live and deliver that engages with that belief.”*

He adds:

*“It’s our worldview (the way we acted and believed and judged before we encountered you and your story) (the narrative we tell ourselves about who you are and what you do) that drives human behaviour.”*



# So what is worldview?

People start life with a set of “givens” (where and to whom they are born, the belief structures into which they are born and the life circumstances of their parents) from which choices are made – *for* them, initially, and *by* them later – leading to various outcomes. People assess these outcomes and a cycle of continuous modification of how they feel about the world – their worldview – occurs. This becomes the unconscious background to how they manage their lives.

The experience of a communication (or a brand persona) is filtered through the buffer of a person’s worldview making that person’s interpretation of the message or brand potentially different from another’s. Similarly, a behavioural impulse, say, to buy a brand arises – or does not arise – as a result of that particular interpretation. Achievement of this impulse and how it is achieved is again filtered through the lens of that person’s worldview.

For example: if a healthy lifestyle is not in someone’s worldview, messages on nutrition, healthy eating, keeping fit, exercise and food labelling will be paid scant regard. If a person feels that fate controls lives, attitudes to hard work, illness and medications, bringing up children, responding to calls to care for the environment, “green” products and running finances will be different from those who believe otherwise. If one believes in living for the present, long-term financial planning probably is not an issue. Tapping into people’s fundamental

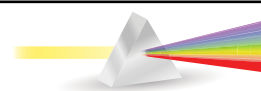
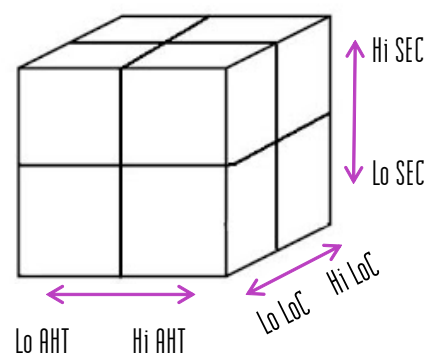
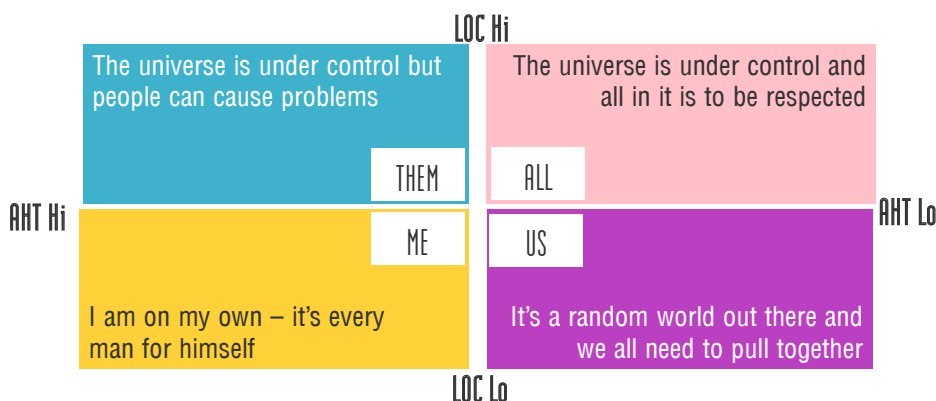
belief systems enables marketers to design brands and messages that resonate best with people’s lives.

TNS South Africa has developed a set of measures to understand these fundamental belief systems. It contains three orthogonal spectra that are scored from zero to 100:

1. Attitudes to humanity (AHT) – attitudes to old and young people, to human dignity, human rights and discrimination, to sex, the biosphere, the role of women, to authority, to people being seen as good or bad, to morals, integrity and honesty and time orientation. Essentially, it measures caring or being concerned about others as against it being more about self.
2. Locus of control (LoC) – attitudes as to how the universe arose and the existence or not of a concept of a Supreme Being and that being’s involvement in the universe, spirituality, what causes illness, belief or not in evolution and in the credibility of science, attitudes to nature and nurture, fate and how one influences one’s own future.
3. Secular (SEC) – longer term thinking and goals as opposed to being more satisfied with one’s life and, at the extreme, living for the present – it is a long- vs short-term orientation in one’s life.

Plotting these as a Boston Grid or as a cube yields a basic partition into four broad groups or a richer set of eight groups (see diagrams below).

## Looking at the basic four-group solution, who ARE these people?



ALL (31%) – This group has an egalitarian outlook encompassing respect for people's dignity, human rights and people's time. Discrimination is anathema and they are the least likely to feel that winning at all costs is a life orientation. They have the most enlightened views on gender roles and believe the most in integrity, honesty and the importance of hard work, as well as the importance of rules and structure. They believe in planning for the future, caring for the environment (highest of all the groups), having a fit and healthy lifestyle and having longer term goals.

They have the highest belief in one God who made the universe and that the universe is not here by chance. They have the lowest belief in many gods and they have the lowest level of belief in evolution (19%). They believe in life after death. They are the second most likely to become involved in societal or community issues and they are not at all negative about old people – just the reverse. They are by far the most independent group. They are also the most likely to say that sex is something to enjoy and not just to have children.

US (34%) – This group is not as egalitarian as the ALL group but they are still concerned about issues such as no discrimination, the need to honour old people and the past and the need not to be late so as not to waste people's time. This group is the most likely to take up societal and community issues, are the least concerned about their personal space, and the second most likely to care for the environment. However, they care much less about integrity and honesty than the ALL group, sharing the lowest response with the ME group although they do believe in hard work bringing success. They are also strong believers in structure and rules and

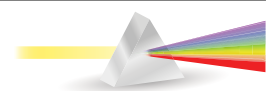
planning for the future but have the lowest concern about eating properly and having a healthy lifestyle at 38%. They are the least likely to see sex as something to enjoy but have a higher-than-average response to *Sex is spiritual* (33%). Whilst this group is much more likely than the ALL group to believe in many gods (30%), they are the least likely to feel that these gods affect nature and our lives or that there is any Supreme Being interacting with the world or us. They are the second most likely to believe in evolution at 38% and the least likely to feel that religion helps one to understand the meaning of life.

THEM (11%) – This group shares the highest response with the ME group on views such as old people are a burden or a handicap and young people are impulsive and unreliable. They are the least likely group to take up societal and community issues, believing that this just brings trouble, also being quite likely to feel that people are basically unkind and dishonest. They are the second most likely to feel that discrimination against others is sometimes justified (37%) and share the most conservative views on the relative roles of men and women. They are also the second most likely to feel that sex is just to make children but half of them do say that sex is also to enjoy. They are likely to

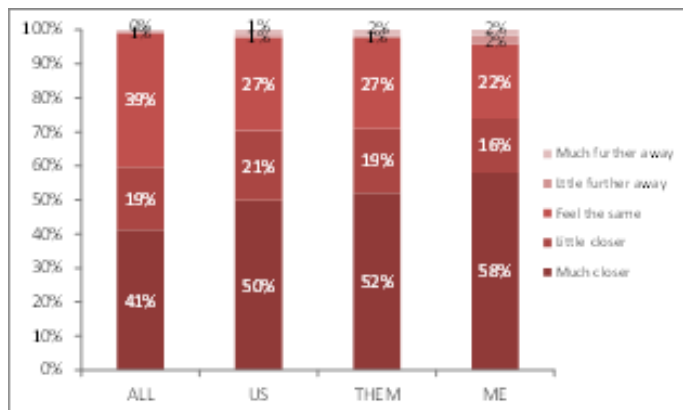
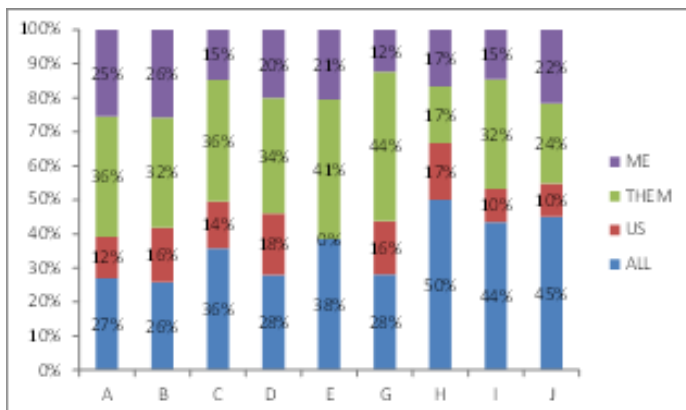
say that they live for the present. They have the lowest belief in hard work, and the lowest interest in caring for the environment. They are the most likely to feel there are too many rules. They have the highest response to the statement *It is important to win at all costs*. They have the strongest belief in science but their views on the spirit world are very different from other groups. They are the most likely to feel that spirits or a Supreme Being have a direct effect on us and the world and that fate determines one's successes and failures. They are also the most likely to feel that illness can have supernatural causes. They do feel that God made the universe.

ME (24%) – This group is the least likely to feel that rules are important and care the least about other people, having a generally cynical view of both young and old people, with 48% feeling that people are basically unkind and dishonest, the highest response to this statement. They care the least about human dignity and are the least concerned about being late. They have the highest "must win at all costs" mentality and are the most likely to say they live for the present. They plan the least. Less than a third are concerned about honesty and integrity and less than a half feel rules are important – the lowest incidence for this

statement. A third believe that sex is a spiritual experience, one of the highest responses, but also at 29% have the strongest belief that sex is to produce children only. This group has the highest belief that there is only a physical world (31%), that the universe is an act of chance (37%) and that there is no God. However, a high proportion (39%) also believes in many gods, the highest of any group. Over a quarter feel that illness can be caused by the supernatural and 37% feel that magic can be used to help or harm people – the highest response. Four in ten believe in evolution.



As the graphs below show for a beverage category, different brands can have very different profiles across the four groups, and they respond differentially to advertising messages (in this case by saying if a message brings them closer to the brand or not). One would need to consider conducting qualitative research amongst the ALL and US groups to establish what about the message does not resonate as well with their belief structures.



The measures have four versions: a long-form "gold standard" of 52 statements on a tick-all-that-applies basis, a shorter-form version that uses either 18 or 12 statements, simple decision trees for each measure each using just three statements, and a decision tree that predicts group membership directly (see next diagram).

						Unique Node Number (UNN)	
Old people are a heavy burden on society.	Yes	A Supreme Being/God/Allah made the universe that we live in	Yes	Them		13	
			No	Me		14	
	No	A Supreme Being/God/Allah made the universe that we live in	Yes	There is only a physical world; there is no such thing as "spirit"	Yes	Me	15
			No		You	16	
			No	It is important to honour old people	Yes	Us	17
					No	Me	18

The four groups show some differences by demographics:

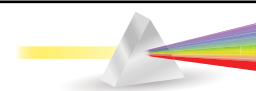
- The ALL group rises with age from 29% to 48%, mostly at the expense of the ME group.
- The ALL group is highest for the poorly educated and well-educated. People with matric or still at university have the lowest incidence – the US group shows the reverse trend.
- There are larger differences by language group. People whose home language is Afrikaans have the highest incidence of the ALL group because coloured people have a very high incidence of this group. English speakers follow. Black language groups all have a much lower incidence of this group, having a higher incidence of the US group. Sepedi/Northern

Sotho groups have the highest incidence of the ME group.

- The ALL group rises with LSM, mostly at the expense of the US group.

We all see the world through differently coloured lenses: lenses that are the unspoken (and usually unarticulated) filter for all signals we receive and for all actions that we take.

Marketers, communicators and policy-makers must consider the worldviews of the people with whom they are in conversation if they are to improve their chances of successful outcomes. Messages that do not tie into a person's basic belief systems lack credibility and relevance in that person's eyes: the message does not get past the lens.



# How does it work?

The appropriate statement set (usually the 12- or 18-statement version with a tick-all-that-applies instruction is added to the questionnaire. The scoring algorithm calculates the segments and these are included in the standard banner of the tables much as any demographic. Where we need to profile brands or specific demographics, these are included as rows in the relevant table. An interpretation of these analyses is provided with specific action points.

## Who should use this?

- 1** Prism offers a deeper look into people's belief structures – this drives how they manage their lives and react to brand and advertising messages.
- 2** So all studies benefit from the simple four-quadrant version – 12 “tick all that applies” questions. Qual and quant – very often qual will arise out of a quant analysis.
- 3** Any study that involves ad evaluation or brand communication.
- 4** Any polsoc study, especially those concerned with policy formation or public announcements (attitudes to smoking/drinking/drive-alive, AIDS, 16 days – any study that might end with or assess some sort of public campaign) as well as attitudes to current “hot” issues.
- 5** Election research, attitudes to service delivery
- 6** Any financial client (SEC, LoC especially) – recommend the cube version
- 7** Any client in the QSR, food or beverage sectors, or any client looking to understand attitudes (or having brands relevant) to health, nutrition, medicine compliance, smoking, alcohol, snacks and treats, work and productivity, kids, luxury goods, status items, attitudes to charities, retail (in terms of how people interact with others).

