# Eco-branding. A revolution in the new media age

Herlander Dias*

**Resumo:** O mundo está a mudar a uma grande velocidade, ao mesmo tempo que os recentes média chegam às casas dos consumidores e das empresas. As novas marcas estão a ocupar o lugar de outras marcas mais importantes, visto que as suas antecessoras eram grandes demais para gerir. As mais novas são atraentes, inteligentes e funcionam melhor. Esta é a era das marcas Web 2.0.

O que agora o consumidor pretende são produtos a baixo custo e entretenimento "hiperdistribuído". As corporações multinacionais não vendem produtos; em vez disso, gerem marcas. Em relação aos seguidores de marcas, estes passaram a seguir marcas sociais. Cada nova tendência parece ser obrigatoriamente seguida, e quantos mais poderes são atribuídos aos consumidores, mais a sua dependência na *web* aumenta.

Há uma transferência e uma mudança rápida nos acontecimentos actuais; dos velhos média para os recentes assistimos ao aparecimento de novos tipos de audiências mais preocupadas com marcas ecológicas, sustentabilidade e empenhadas numa "revolução verde". As "hipermarcas" do nosso tempo querem construir um planeta verde mesmo que exista um contexto de crise. Embora pareça não ser este o momento certo para tal, não deixa, porém, de ser o momento exacto para instituir ecomarcas. Esta é a era dos novos média.

**Palavras-chave:** crise, hiperconsumo, marcas *web* 2.0, *eco-branding*, *eco-labels*.

## 1. Crisis context

Before we start discussing how Eco-branding types came up we have to better understand contemporary crisis context. Such moment favours both new trends and problems. A modern problem as pollution itself demands fast and global solutions. This is the revolution we are witnessing, and it blossoms right on the new media age. Unlike

* Ph.D. Student, Assistant Professor UBI – University of Beira Interior (helias@sapo.pt).

other crisis this particular one forced the consumer to understand his own. In this way, he would not die if he were to try low-cost products. Buying the cheaper product did not kill the consumer. It just made him used to it. This consumer we're refering to is actually a user, since in his common office or home he uses digital gear. Thus, this is a citizen of today's demands. He is challenged by media, brands and new patterns of behavior all the time. Technology and fashion partake the pace of trends. Timing is demanding these days. The rhythm of "change" embraces us. Some call it the rhythm of life, while others simply entitle it as "modern living". Today's modern consumer is particularly fond of technology. At the same time he is the same citizen noticing the new world of brands, he is the very same person standing amidst the crisis whirl too. Despite being the target of Web 2.0 brands, this consumer is called "average citizen" or "average consumer" as well. In the end, the awkward thing is that "the" greatest message ever-designed does not reach this person. He remains blind and receiving no message. Another question we ask is: "Where exactly are the so-called 'new consumers'"? They are all around us. We are those consumers, we who consume. If the new consumers are those who in fact purchase the new global and Web 2.0 brands, in that case we are those consumers. As Paul Magill, an IBM VIP responsible believes, we are refusing the brand's "non-commercial authenticity" (2003: 4). The author believes in a crisis of branding and new solutions are requested. "Based on the brand-consumer dialectic, a new equilibrium will emerge for a period" (*Idem, Ibidem*, 2003: 6).

A major feature of new consumers' behavior is that the online-offline and night-day time divisions are rendered useless. Such classifications do not explain what truly is going on. Current advancements have led people's routines to be modified. Modification has been embraced on a systematic manner, rather than on an exceptional one. Thus is the case of all day-long and all night-long programming versus "prime-time" scheduling (Pesce, 2007; Lipovetsky, 2010). A question one should ask is hence what exactly is "prime time" in today's jargon? And the answer is yet to be responded. The reason is today's brand culture transformed our everyday life routines; we do not rely on media programming and live TV. Pesce (2007) advances that in his report 3% of TV contents were downloaded online. He suggests TV turned history. So does IBM Global Business Services by reinforcing that idea:"Today is the beginning of 'the end of TV as we know it' and the future will only favor those who prepare now. Here, we enumerate six priority actions (...): Segment, Innovate, Experiment, Mobilize, Open and Reorganize" (IBM, 2006: 1). So the facts are we, as the new consumers, undoubtedly do not have our life changed to welcome media programming. A more recent study, from Maria João Taborda (2010) mentions TV content and film content viewing experience across different screens and platforms. As for Portugal, for instance, Taborda highlights the main target audience ages between 15 and 24 years old, a relatively closer demography to what Pesce presents in his earlier data. Taborda also says that 15,1% watches films on computers or downloads them. Despite reporting to 2009 data, the report points the overall audience, both female and male, of 37,4% of people seeing films online or via computer.

We are no longer tuned to that "reality". It works the other way. Media contents are hypercasted and target our minds as long as we spent time with them (Pesce, 2007; IBM, 2009). Stream contents are ok, Live TV is off. The trend spreads in your network something really worth spreading. Thanks to all these little changes a major change took place as brands are not "buyable", they're a long-term legacy. People are branded, which means brands are acquiring people, not otherwise. Due to these mutations in market-client procedures, one believes brands are not into selling, marketing or branding. Brands are into "brand management" (Martins, 2006). Corporations and enterprises of the new age are managing people as brand followers. "The winning approach was to portray the brand not as an imposed cultural authority, but as an offered cultural resource", and this is something Magill underscores when speaking of the evolution of brands in the 20th century (2003: 3).

If once there were logotype followers then, today there are logo tribes and social brands instead. It is a quite different world. Brand and people endorse the idea of "consumer empowerment". Vodafone says: "Power to you". Take for instance, even in this in-crisis context, Web users, which are mostly young boys or adults, age ranging from 18 to 25 years old. The days of old "beard-geeks" of the info-age are gone. Long live the porcelain-white aesthetic of mighty brands as Google or Apple. The latter fit a new drawer: non-crisis brands. Profits increase easily and on geometric proportion. No more yuppies or hippies. It's the age of "Webbers". Everyone is a "Webber". Stay online. Live online. Love online. But new mottos like "Make love not CO2", featured in the advertising campaign of RenovaGreen, stand beyond the message of a totally recycled product (Gisela Gonçalves, s.d.).

Society's habits in the urban realm keep upgrading. Media hardware, IT equipment is accessible. Yet "We need 'social' approaches in addition to engineering ones when it comes to managing human and brand capital effectively" (Magill, 2003: p.1). Media is not a niche market. It spreads all over social frame as an unstoppable and desirable disease, instead. Niches are on the go. They are cool and hunted. Ask "Cool Hunters" about it. All that is labelled as "cool" is interesting before the eyes of branders and advertisers, but mostly to the younger crowds. The ones we are looking for possess the right profile. Usually they are males ranging between 18 to 25 years old (considering Mark Pesce's report of 2007 about the past year of 2006). Was not this the demography we were looking for? Yes, they were, and they are not standing in front of the TV. Nobody needs to be near a television box anymore. Screens are all-around us. Thanks to screens, desktops and notebooks, netbooks, smartphones and TiVos the Web has 270 000 online consumers, a most desirable segment of middle-high class young audience. Before such developments, authors Lipovetsky & Serroy rather call it a "universal society of consumers" (2010: 40, translation is ours). Thanks to the World Wide Web, consumption increases across the globe. Lipovetsky on his own prefers to state "I Shop, Therefore I am". Existence defined by consumption sounds like a post-marxist maxim about the so-called "consumption society". French thinkers, left-wingers and Situationist pranksters may find the subject delightful, but society, market and trade have always been about consumption.

Advertising was the missing piece, which became adjacent to the assembly line in the post-World War Two agenda. It seems unquestionable that we are seeing a major wave of shifting events. A "quick shift" (Marc-André Bernard *et al.*, 2009) is unfolding, and with it a transition from old to new media takes place. Along with consumers' choices new kinds of audiences step in. According to Saul Berman *et al.* (2009), in a report made for IBM Global Business Services named *Beyond Advertising: Choosing a Strategic Path to The Digital Consumer*, now there are three groups of audiences increasing: the first one is the "Massive Passives", the 65% of people enjoying media in a traditional way, thinks each media has its own specific functions, and this audience likes standing in front of TV (*Idem, Ibidem*: 3). On a second level there is the "Gadgetiers" (*Idem, Ibidem*: 4), fitting in 10% of people who are fond of technology and have evolved from the behavior of the "Massive Passives". For these people, watching Web sites and using multifunctional devices simplifies and enriches their lives; ultimately we have the "Kool Kids" with 20% (*Idem, Ibidem*: 6) of under 24 years old, who have their lives shaped by technology rather than technology shaped by their lives (Marc-André Bernard *et al.*, October, 27th, 2009; Sundberg, 2011). It may be also understood as a different phenomenon, a process of technology stealing their infancy stage, because kids enjoy constant connection to their favorite devices. A most relevant item surely is that these kids prefer to have an "ultimate device". As they see it on the Web, whenever they want, however they want, in whatever device they are pleased (desktop, mobile, etc.), they must have it. Kool Kids and Gadgetiers are really fond of machines and media-driven audiences, yet for different purposes. The first ones like entertainment, whereas the second ones may use media more as a tool for working. Kool Kids are into a new trend which is widespread these days: Web downloads. Regardless of what is the subject they still prefer downloading it. They are benefiting from a new distribution technology available, it's a fact. Basically, the place where we watch TV has changed. A profusion of places and media emerged and changed the profile of audiences, as Pesce pointed back in 2007.

Consumption items as books, motion pictures, travelling experiences are just a part of the boom of products which were augmenting their revenues thanks to online shopping. The end of economical protectionism was followed by a brand revolution. As always, before a new boom in consumption there is a breakdown. Restoring confidence, expanding trade, market evolution and commodities export increase are part of nowadays political agenda on a global level. Let's not forget that people do not take for granted promises underlined and kept in commercial outdoors. Products once were the most important thing next to the brand. Things changed and now above all we buy the brand in a different manifestation. We prefer experiences rather than consuming goods, commodities. An anonymous post in UOL (2010) denounced a survey conducted by Cornell University in New York, and there was a highlight in how holidays were more gratifying and pleasant than material purchase. Another post from a user named "Tatiana" dating from 2010 said about the same study that money spent on experiences was a first choice when compared to consumer goods. While the first option generated pleasure and memories, the second would rely on competition among people

in the way products would be shown. And right now, the Web 2.0 experience has been proved to be the next stage before Web 3.0 is fully available.

## 2. Brands 2.0

Whenever new tools appear our society changes. Now the new *modus operandi* brought altogether by new media and modified social habits have produced new consequences. Amidst the maelstrom of novelties, and not always they are positive, one must notice that new usage and practices come up. Speaking about Brand 2.0 means that advertising has changed, brands have evolved, and advertising is converting to a set of many different tools at advertisers' disposal. What matters now is to understand how advertising reinvents itself.

Audiences are not in front of the TV set anymore. The Web is where they "are". According to Diana Allison (2011) and her statements on Information Week, based on Royal Pingdom's report ("Internet 2010 in Numbers", January 12th, 2011), in last year there were 1.97 billion Internet users worldwide until June, whereas in Europe the numbers increased from 418 to 475.1 million users alone, North-Americans online are 266.2 million and about 825.1 million users in Asia. Amazing numbers as these have a history. People began using computers, then networks. World Wide Web appeared in 1994. Multi-User Displays became quite common ground for everyone. All users used to know at least ICQ instant messaging and Yahoo! chat-rooms. Microsoft's MSN Messenger became a global tool for conversation and work as a telespace medium inside the Web. Over the last 15 years the Web became a pool of sub-brands as Skype, Google Maps, Google Buzz!, Gmail, Facebook, Bing, QZone, Torrentz, and DivX. It's a never-ending world of brands inside a brand: The Web. North-American former military network structure meets European CERN communication protocols for scientific data exchange.

On a global consumption perspective we have to mention brands as Classmates.com (1996), CouchSurfing and MySpace (both in 2003). In the very same time brands like Tribe.net, Last.fm, Hi5 and LinkedIn showed up on the Web-scene. And 2010 was the year of Sony's Web TV, Google TV, Apple's iPad and HP ePrint brands to make a stand. HP ePrint pioneered the concept of "Touch The Web. Print it". Much as the slogan presents, the idea of any gadget printing something only via online, with no strings attached is very revolutionary. They call it "ePrint Center", and the copy states: "Imagine. Click. Create" and "See All The Amazing Things People Are Doing". In itself, HP's new trend setting service is about "print on the go" from our smartphone wherever life and business take us. New enterprise-mobile-printing service lets us email print jobs directly to our printer. This is not all the breakthrough of brands 2.0, because Apple TV tried to bring together both the Web and television and failed. It's just an output of iTunes multimedia items to watch-listen on the TV. Sony's Web TV puts the computer in the TV along with a Web connection. It's TV de-computerized, simplified. Google TV goes further, turns the TV set into a Web-screen, a search engine with a branded-icon-menu identical to the one iPhone has by default, a "videographic mosaic" (an expression from Arlindo Machado, 1991).

Four exact concepts are key-features in today's brand assault and communication trend setting, and they are all hardware dependent: "Interaction", "Progression", "Immediacy" and "Added-Value". No brands work alone these days and products require association among themselves, as media. A new level of the "system of objects" once claimed to exist on a mass-society level by Jean Baudrillard sets on. It's of no good use if a brand or a product series are not evolving. Just selling the same thing over and over again proves to be useless. As long as consumers need answers, the brand has to respond. Call centers, customer support technicians and online ventures provide consumer-user feedback on a good-to-know basis. More than before, every item sold and announced must have something more, an added feature, it has to worth more than its predecessor and its rivals must be outperformed.

So what is really going on? Concepts that once belonged to piracy software communities are being appropriated by corporate branding. "Olá", an ice cream brand says "Share happiness". Another brand, Nestlé, says: "A Little Bit to Share" to subtitle the cereal drinks from sub-brand "Pensal". The "sharing" concept, which is a most "googled" word these days, comes in fact from software logic, such as BITorrent, eMule, Kazaa, Direct Connect, DC++ and many others. Social media of our time are also branding the feature of "sharing", just as YouTube, Facebook and LikedIn. Mark Pesce's research pointed the concept of "sharing" as most valuable. In short, what is going on a trend term regarding brands is that today "we do not speak to consumers. Instead, we speak among them, with them". So, it's a pretty changed scenario for advertisers and consumers. There is no fence, just a legal border. Communication works both ways. A reason why it is a different world on the consumption aspect is because advertisers are not selling things to the same crowds. There is a new crowd on the block and it is a young one. Young audiences are very savvy. Kids get what they want (Mark Pesce, 2007). No permission is requested. Parents say "permission not allowed", yet kids always find a way into something. It is called "learning". We taught them with 65 years of television and 14 years of Web. It is a massive array of data. Some call it "data-overload". Nevertheless, younger audiences find "on-demand" content as the reality. To sit and turn on the box and enjoying images was the main custom. That's why it was all about the narrative of the box itself. Contemporary consumers are separated from the programming and the "younger audiences are technically savvy" (Mark Pesce, *Ibidem*) as we have seen.

Many things are new. "Change" is the core-concept here. Even a word as "viewer" seems to become extinct. We are more users than viewers, and we are more players than users. Consumers, let's say, expect no breaks, they expect a "continuous experience", streamed contents, but ads eventually may be inside. Several formulas have been tested: skipping commercials, product-placement avoids ads-skipping, TV still remains fan of the 30 second commercial, the Web provides series of ads and user-generated content, yet there's a new secret. The secret is to embedding advertising in the media stream and everybody gets happy. Broadcaster gets happy because it prevents channel flipping. Again, Mark Pesce was pioneer is mentioning the strategy.

Academical duo Lipovetsky & Serroy endorses how "(...) information technologies, culture industries, brands and capitalism itself build a culture of their own" (*op.*

*cit*.: 15, translation is ours). Merging IT gear with brands is establishing the realm of Brands 2.0, a world in which new forms of communication are introduced, new manners of branding ideas. Trademarks, patents pending, logotypes, corporate identity, are all legacies left to rethink and recollect. New titans are on the scene this time, Google, Facebook, YouTube, Apple, Amazon, and a few others stand as the next media titans as Vogelstein (2010) affirms. Channels and media used to be friends. Now, channels have multiplied on TV and in the Web. Aggregating audiences and advertisers is present time's role of channels. Google TV, for instance, works as an "entertainment hub" (Web + TV) with bookmarks and online clients as Netflix, a video-streamed video-on-demand brand. Even the main menu of Google TV performs as a TV version of an iPhone screen interface. Web browsing, uploading photos, Google Maps, chat, Facebook, Mail, are all part of the deal. In the age of Brands 2.0 the Web is being "televisionized" and TV is being "Webbized".

As consumers new problems appear and require bold answers. Our problem with depth is now pretty real. 3-D cinema, holograms, next-generation motion-sensitive videogames, automobiles with head-up displayed data, such as Peugeot 1005, and "augmented reality" in smartphones as Samsung's modified the border between real and unreal. In response to the new IT gear frenzied brands fight back and make clear that they work as something the user-consumer-player activates. Credit cards are received at home by real mail and need to be activated. Videogame trials are available on PlayStation Network and game-themed magazines. TMN, Optimus and Vodafone, Portuguese mobile communications and wireless Web connection providers offer time to spend or credit to be activated by Web or phone call. Advertising is trapped since it does not stand on the new media position. It outsources those types of works rather than appropriating them. Some of the new trends are about mobile marketing and flash-mobs, crowd-sourcing, digital marketing and viral marketing. Advertising did not adapt to consumers. As a matter of fact, consumers have outrun and outperformed advertising for the last decade. People do not buy what they are told to, but what their friends and relatives speak of.

Trends and fashions don't appear on TV, only after they exist. No previews are allowed. They do not grow there. Both "street" and Web left the advertising speak for itself. Advertisers have preferred to work with themselves, as a separate studio system, apart from production and consumption. After all what does the consumer need advertising for? The only thing he needs is to buy what is best and cheaper. In case we need to know where this "consumer" is heading to we need to think as he does, like George Felton suggests (2006). A consumer needs high-quality and low-cost products. No excessive time is left and he believes in the communities' people whose opinions match his preferences. Today's communities are most established on the Web. Yes, they are focused on interests, common brands, contents and culture, beliefs and life styles. The death of advertising was performed by Brands 2.0 new names. Advertising falls because nobody uses names or logos. People wear prices and fashions.

Besides, new business models appear every time, optimizing data and statistics, believing television is all around us and still stands as the major medium. Yet it is not.

Brands 2.0 are based on social media. Social networks are the new "TV" world, and a new way of life is multimedia-based. Everybody starts to comprehend how the Web is an environment rather than a massive medium with several branches of sub-media. It's not a medium in itself. It is a media-environment. Soon every brand 2.0 will cease to be free. Moreover, there are new brands coming up all the time. "Choice" as the main concept of the "long tail" economy, according to Chris Anderson (2007), is becoming a problem. No one knows exactly what else and whenever to choose anymore. There is too much names and products to do the same things over and over again. It seems sharing, exhibiting and showing on the go are quite global behaviors.

"Engaging" with consumers a safe relationship is pretty common now. It is all about "commitment" between brand and audience. "Interaction" is what keeps consumers tied to brands; brands which listen to people. "Dialog" is the foundation of all mutual respect and community-based societies. Brands are into it, in "Sharing" ideas, counselling, instructions, walktroughs and recipes, tutorials and cheat modes, from cooking to sewing, gaming to ironing. The most relevant thing we share is our world with another. One motto of the new eco-branding revolution is precisely that of "sharing" and protect the world best; how to make the world a better place for us all.

## 3. The new eco-branding

Ugo Vogli (2003) is a firm believer that brands are something bigger, they go beyond commodities, merchandise. Branding and logos are much more than products. Unlike before, brands need today's narratives; identity is much more an added-value than in recent past. Vogli thinks that in our society products "talk". We may call it positioning. Products exhibit consumers' features and vice-versa. It works both ways. Nobody cares about anonymous products, counterfeits, brandless products. A product without brand, logo, has no personality, no author. Brands are authors, creators and work for us as persons, collective ones. In less than a decade, these collective persons, these brands, became "greener".

On the western coast of Scotland there is a new eco-branded place for eco-tourists to visit. It is named "Ecopod" and it is a luxury eco-friendly holiday retreat in the Scottish Highlands. The brand identity focused on the high quality of the experience, a message displayed in its own Web site (2011). Speaking of "green brands" is to talk about the eco-branding trend, which happens to match the same era of new media getting ubiquitous. Phenomena in this moment are world-wide phenomena. This trend began earlier with North-American professional sectors handling industrial waste and toxic residues management. Growing hugely in less than a decade this sector had help from the "former Vice-President of the United States", Al Gore, which introduced the subject of "the need for a green revolution" in his *An Inconvenient Truth* (Paramount, 2006), documentary film. Long-term activist Al Gore shared his concerns in this documentary in which environment-friendly rhetoric was most pushed, regarding the notion of "global warming".

A report by the Danish institute of local government studies is one of the first empirical studies to show the relationship between eco-labelling and consumer's behaviour. A

news update in Euractive.com (2006) informs us that "The idea behind eco-labels is that consumers should be able to make informed choices and buy more environmentally friendly products. Eco-labelling is a 'market-based instrument' whose primary function is to stimulate the supply and demand of products with a reduced environmental impact". In 2010 this "eco-brand" world full of "eco-labelled" products is now an ever-increasing reality. For instance, in the United States, according to *Insights – Consumer Trends for 2011*, a report made by the Center For Future Studies (2010) reveals that "26% of Internet users purchased vegetable seeds in past year, 19% bought vegetable/flower garden fertilizer and 27% said they like to grow vegetables at home". This shows how in the digital media age the "eco-world" is relevant for consumers and IT users too, despite the world crisis and each nation's carbon footprint (Greendex, 2009). In Web sites as GreenTV (2011) we notice how beyond the "Make Love Not Co2" motto there is another message: "You Control Climate Change", which is now followed by "Turn Down, Switch Off, Recycle. Walk. Change".

In Portugal, in the last quarter of 2010, Prime Minister Engineer José Socrates introduced in a political event of the Socialist Party the motto "Re.New.Able: New Energies. Better Economy" (www.renewable.pt). As the name itself presents, "renewability" is currently a keyword in political speeches. Especially the catch between the three worlds altogether – "renewal" and "new" and "ability" – seemed most bright. None of this, of course, would be possible to happen or to be said if Al Gore would not have brought the "environment" issue into the debate. Small-scale changes in lifestyle are meant to be magnificent on larger scale options. Therefore the conditions to make "eco-branding" emerge are introduced.

Nespresso launched a print campaign, appealling to consumers to "re-cycle" their coffee package metal caps. Nespresso, the espresso coffee brand owned by Nestlé, calls the initiative "Eco-Laboration" (www.ecolaboration.com), calling at the same "eco-labour", and "collaboration". Despite the so-called "eco-fatigue" fact, since everything now is either "gourmet" or "environment-friendly", "green brands" are "in", and it does not seem to stop soon. The advent of new media helps pushing boundaries beyond conservative interests, especially the social networks and mobile media. So far, eco-branding favours the latest manners in communication. For the modern brands people have to be listened, otherwise brands will be lost and condemned among public opinion. Symbolic value is much relevant now. Consumers do not actually drive cars; they use SUVs, drive Toyota Prius models and race on Yamaha's. They are much prouder of driving a Prius. It is like being part of nature, driving silenced vehicles. It does not sound as industrial culture, man-made by-products. We may say that consumers are keen on brands, rather than on products. A product is the end line of a brand, while a brand is a structure, a family thing; it's a wider system, economically and symbolically.

With the new green train of news speeding among us we are changing the things we buy and how many we use at once, the things we really need and the ones which are disposable. News lines in press focus on "Energy Venture", "Sustainability", "Green Business" and other similar concepts. Portuguese "Ponto Verde" ("Eco-Green") initia-

tive promoted the behaviour change in consumers' habits, like in separating trash for better recycling. A "simple mind" is what brands, either federal or private, seek on consumers' attention. Big brands just as IKEA celebrate recycling by telling everybody how important is for them to retrieve outdated printed catalogs. Toy companies apply innovative and eco-friendly materials. Shopping malls make strong appeals to "greener territories". Green Projects Awards grow bigger every year. Suddenly all brands want to be labelled as "green". The Green Savers appear and a massive "Eco-Awareness" effect takes place on the Web. Users of the world pursue the concept of a "happier environment". Who does not want to play with his own children in tomorrows' gardens?

One possible way of defining branding in our eco-changed perspective is to understand brands as an image. Such image shall be consistent, enough to establish a righteous, ethical, sharp, easy to understand, cast image of itself. Put in another way, a brand image must be the perfect-fit self-definition of an institution. Only in this way a brand can become, in the most interesting cases, as Vogli points out, something which not only refers to product but to the brand as well. We should keep in mind again that branding should be consistent. In Lipovetsky & Serroy's view,

> (...) it happens that we went from brand to hyperbrand: the latter imposes itself whenever the 'marketing' work outperforms the production work, when 'branding' prevails over product, when the immaterial dimension contributes more to the brand than the very material fabric of the product. What the hyperconsumer is buying is above all the brand (...). (*ult. op. cit.*: 117, translation is ours)

This is to say that brands are no longer just that, brands. They are turned into something more virtual and symbolic, in some cases technical and cultural; they have become "hyperbrands". Though, this is not the whole story, because this new brand level changes consumers into "hyperconsumers". Consumers are not making brands. What is happening is the opposite. RICG, service marketing firm that develops and deploys highly personalized, strategic communication programs, states in "Brands Turn to Digital Marketing to Develop Consumer Relationships" (February 23rd, 2011) that a new survey conducted by the Digital Marketing Association indicates brands are improving their relationships with consumers, which two-thirds of marketers said was possible through online advertising initiatives. Take for instance IBM, a conservative IT technology corporation, a bulk of post-World War Two scenario: making "closed logotypes", the same brand image over and over demanded a slipstream effect. Recently their visual brand, untouched for years, faced modification. Breakthrough was achieved. IBM, which stands for "International Business Machines" is following life, flow, nature, the planet. The key-concept is variation. Their target: the hyperconsumer. What has it become into? A hyperbrand, since "variation" is their chosen slogan.

On closer inspection one finds that Javier González Solas (2000) idea of "open" versus "closed logotypes", discussed in *Identidad Visual e Corporativa*, is surpassed easily in IBM re-branding procedure. IBM chose to have a "polymorphic logotype", which Solas defines as logotypes like those of brands which turn change into a permanent law.

In other words, IBM, "Smarter Planet" campaign triggers on several different media, the concept of "variation" under the form of "polymorphic" logos, even in print ads. This means logotypes as MTV's, which are polymorphic by the way, are not specific in audiovisual media as TV or the Web. Again, "variation" is followed in form and content. IBM re-branding project carried away the task of implementing a different logo according to the context of the ad, repositioning it according to issues, such as chemistry, finances, biology, economy, computers, health, etc. A polychromatic code was most successful in underlining the "Living Data Planet" concept and in addressing ecology issues to the audience.

A strategy as bold as this one of IBM was based on the idea that the planet is alive with data. Knowing a planet is as living as a computer was a sub-text. For an "IBMer", as some people say in the ads of "Smart Planet" campaign, all data should be analyzed to make the planet a better place. In Vogli's terms this means IBM's identity is the people's identity, how they comprehend, and render data meaningful to protect and reshape the world. Like Vogli used to say, the construction of a brand is a never-ending establishment. Continuous affirmation of corporate ideals is obligatory in the media world. McDonalds "going green" statements are among this eco-branding trend as a relevant one. Consumers defend that "Green Works" and so the media-environment is all-at-once flooded with pro-environment sentences. Corporate key-speakers now say "Our audience, our environment". On the other hand, the future poses new questions. One is that the "future is free" or at least "low-cost" and "high quality".

Regarding eco-branding sensitive public in Portugal we notice it is about 5% of the population and it keeps growing on a fast rate. It is still a niche market, but not for long. Eventually, it is going to a mainstream one. There is this tendency of having a "greener consumer", who belongs to the young segment. An APEME (2004) study on Portuguese consumers and happiness, shows that the Portuguese enjoy good, new and intense experiences and that 20% is concerned with ecology (*Idem, Ibidem*: 13). Also, in 9% of its analysis, a major part of women aging between 45 and 65 years old are interested in ecology. They're called "modern idealists".

A Portuguese specialist on "green marketing", Teresa Veiga, believes it is only 5% and endorses that the trend is to have a green consumer, a younger person with high education values, above the average income and it is mostly female type (in "Eco-Tendências" in Imagens de Marca[1] [SIC, March 24th, 2009]). A different approach, mentioned by Cardoso & Tavares (2005) is the 4Cs model ("Caracterização Cultural Cruzada do Consumidor"[2]), a study conducted for Young & Rubican which was applied to many countries. Its main concern is the choices the consumer does. Based on the study, three types of consumers are determined, among which stand the "Reformers (22%). Objective: improve the world; drive: social awareness and integrity. (...) They are people aging 30 years old and endowed with high education degree, and with an average or high income. (...) they prefer ecological goods" (in Cardoso & Tavares,

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[1] "Eco-Trends" in *Brand Images,* television channel SIC.

[2] "Characterization of Cross-Cultural Consumer".

2005: 6, translation is ours). Ultimately, if "Eco-Branding" is a revolution in the new media age, like Paul Magill states (2003), we may aspire to: "Construct a bigger eco-system 'machine'" (p. 6).

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