

Breaking The Brand To Stop The Demand

by Lynn Johnson

What do you do when despite spending tens of millions of dollars and your very best efforts, the rhino is inching ever closer to extinction both in the wild and as a species? Are you prepared to question your assumptions, values and beliefs to try a different strategy or do you remain wedded to strategies that reaffirm your identity, but don't save the rhino? Whilst most people would claim to be able to shift to a new strategy when presented with this choice, in reality this rarely happens.

In relation to the rhino poaching crisis, we are now at this juncture. The strategies deployed in the last five years have not stopped the poaching. Demand for rhino horn continues to escalate. A rethink is required and that means a lot of people and organisations heavily invested in the current way of doing things need to decide

that saving the rhino is more important than saving their belief system.

A way of looking at the rhino problem differently is presented in this article. The strategy outlined has been proven and will cost significantly less than the current measures. Will the conservation industry support the switch in strategy or prefer to preside over the demise of one of the iconic species it has pushed so hard in the public eye?

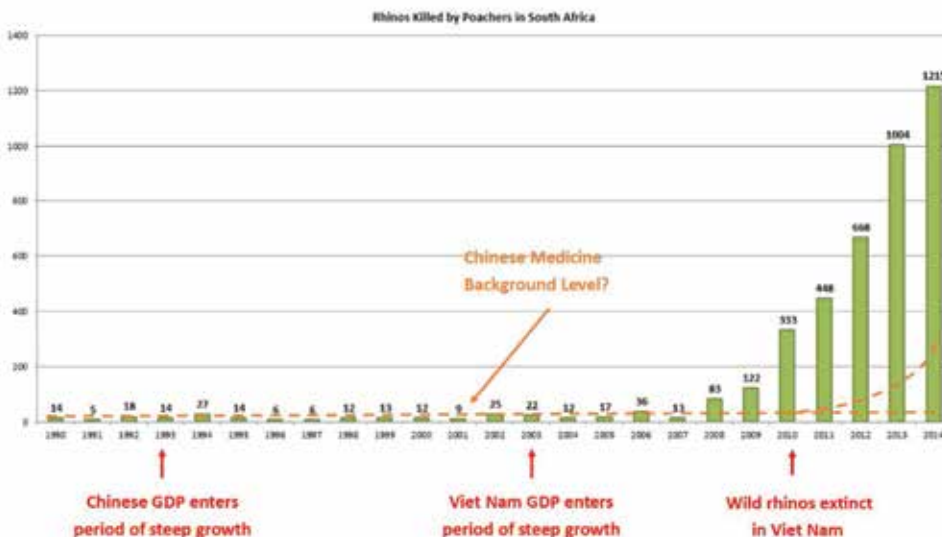
The Problem

The latest escalation in rhino poaching is a recent phenomenon, poaching in South Africa had been very low for over 15 years prior to the exponential rise that started in 2007 and continues to date (see graph). Even though China entered a period of

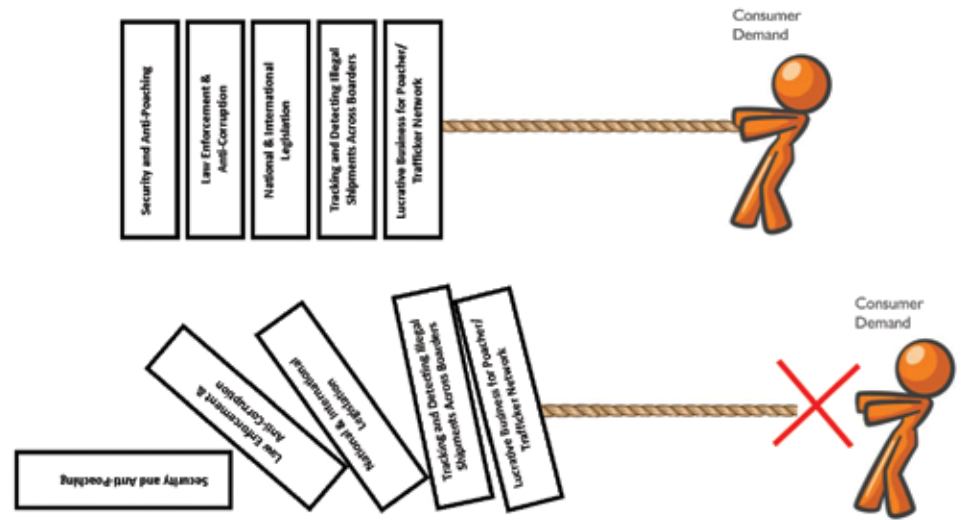
steep economic growth from the early nineties, nothing happened in relation to rhino poaching levels. In contrast, the escalation is closely correlated with Viet Nam entering a period of rapid economic growth and seemingly in parallel with a rumour, started in Viet Nam around 2005, that rhino horn had cured cancer in a former politician. The politician was not named, nor were there any details on the cancer that was supposedly cured (www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/nov/25/cure-cancer-rhino-horn-vietnam).

A 2012 report by TRAFFIC and other research shows that rhino poaching is driven by exponential growth in demand primarily from Viet Nam. We cannot successfully address the rhino poaching crisis without understanding the nature of the demand. Viet Nam is a fast-growing market for luxury goods and brands. A growing group of newly wealthy Vietnamese is highly aspirational and status conscious. For this group, rhino horn has become a status symbol. Only the truly wealthy can afford genuine rhino horn, which sells at up to USD \$65,000/kg. TRAFFIC and other research estimates that more than 90% of what is sold as rhino horn in Viet Nam is fake.

Supply of genuine horn cannot keep up with rising demand, so prices continue to rise. Rising prices have now turned rhino horn into an investment, a store of value. This is an extremely dangerous development, as from the investment perspective extinction of the species in the wild is a positive, because it means prices cannot fall.



As a result of the exponential rise in poaching, international awareness of the problem has reached a tipping point. Large funds have now been donated to military-style protection measures, massive awareness raising campaigns have been launched, law enforcement is being stepped up and education campaigns have been launched in Viet Nam. We are now at a point where many conservancies run 24/7 armed guard protection for each and every one of their rhinos and where the South African government has started to translocate rhinos from Kruger National Park to more secure locations. In addition, many conservancies and parks have used dehorning as a strategy to deter poaching. None of these measures have been able to significantly affect the poaching rates.



Going After The Users Not Only The Poachers

Whilst stepping up security is necessary, anti-poaching measures are recurring, huge expenses given the vast land areas to protect. Even protecting 100-150 rhinos in a small conservancy costs of the order of USD \$2 million per year.

In addition, law enforcement cannot resolve the crisis. The rhino horn supply chain is complex, dominated by criminal syndicates and awash with money. This is not surprising and mirrors other illegal wildlife products and the situation with illicit drugs such as cocaine. Any good that is of such high value on a per-gram basis will attract a continuous stream of willing poachers, traders, middlemen and smugglers hoping to become rich or simply escape poverty for a few years.

Because the amounts of money being made are so high it would be unreasonable to expect that the smugglers are quietly going to give in to high-tech anti-poaching measures such as drones and 24/7 armed patrols that have already been rolled out. From our perspective, this spending needs to be augmented urgently with targeted demand-reduction measures that will address the exponential increase in demand coming out of Viet Nam. If demand can be reduced or even halted, the supply chain collapses instantly, as it relies on the end-users being willing to pay ever-escalating prices.

We know from the TRAFFIC research and our own research that the users of genuine rhino horn constitute an ideal target group for a behaviour-change campaign:

- 1. Concentrated in Specific Locations:** they live and work mainly in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City
- 2. Homogenous in Socio-Economic Composition:** newly wealthy, high-status Vietnamese businessmen and government officials, mostly men in their 40s plus
- 3. Reachable Through Advertising:** the primary users can be reached through advertising in selected locations and publications
- 4. Non-Addictive Product:** consumption of rhino horn does not cause addiction as in the case of illicit drugs
- 5. Clear Reason for Consumption:** the primary reason to consume rhino horn is to attain and maintain status within the peer group via giving it as a gift and use in the so-called 'Millionaires Detox Drink'; any alleged health benefits are a secondary consideration
- 6. Only two potential factors to Stop Using Rhino Horn:**
 - ▶ Impact on personal health/wellbeing – creating Fear/Uncertainty/Doubt campaign as pilot based on rhino horn being poisoned.
 - ▶ Impact on personal status – if the peer group or a higher status group were to reject rhino horn, the desired status gain would not eventuate and usage would decline

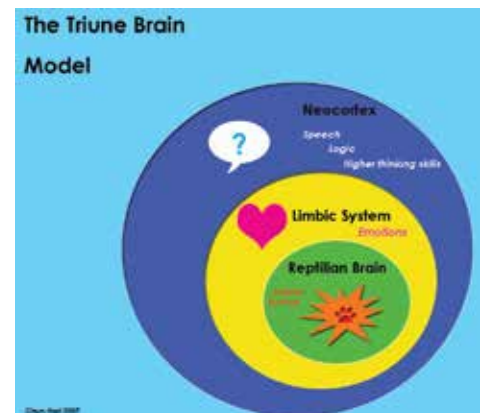
From a behaviour change perspective this situation is close to an ideal scenario. It mirrors the anti-fur trade campaigns of the 80s very closely, including the motivation to consume (status gain). We know from the anti-fur ads that they were

successful in reaching the target group and changing the behaviour, so we know that similar results are achievable for rhino horn. Obviously, the target group is quite different in our case and the advertising needs to take those differences into account.

Creating Behaviour Change

For behaviour change messages to be effective with the actual user they need to elicit an immediate emotional response in the person; to do this they are generally controversial. In parallel they need to get the target's attention by providing a link to their identity; this is about people like me. A perfect example of this is the anti-fur campaign of the 1980s by Lynx (now Respect For Animals). These campaigns were accused of being sexist, which they are not. They simply target the people wearing fur coats and, in the main, they are women.

Marketing and advertising agencies have accumulated a massive amount of knowledge on how to influence consumer behaviour. The basic model being used



Turquoise	Holistic	Collective individualism; Cosmic Spirituality; Earth Changes
Yellow	Integral	Natural Systems; Self-principle; Multiple Realities; Knowledge
Green	Consensus	Egalitarian; Feelings; Sharing; Caring; Community
Orange	Strategic	Materialistic; Consumerism; Image; Status; Growth; Winners and Losers
Blue	Authority	Meaning; Discipline; Traditions; Morality; Rules; Live for Later; Saints and Sinners
Red	Egocentric	Gratification; Glitz; Conquest; Action; Impulsive; Lives for Now; Heroes and Victims
Purple	Animastic	Rites; Rituals; Taboos; Superstitions; Tribes; Folk Ways and Lore
Beige	Instinctive	Food; Water; Procreation; Warmth; Protection; Stay Alive

target group, we need to look at values development and behaviour change.

Behaviour Change Model and Campaign Design

As individuals we are not fixed in our nature, we evolve and adapt to different life circumstances. Spiral Dynamics is one of the models used to describe this evolution. This model is the most applicable to the situation involving the users of rhino horn, as it is sensitive to both the reason to consume (status) and the underlying cultural drivers. It can further describe why the demand has exploded in response to recent economic growth.

to influence purchasing decisions is the triune brain model (see image).

What advertisers have learned is that the way we rationalise our decisions does not reflect how we actually make them. Whilst we would like to believe that our rational brain is in charge, the neocortex mostly just rationalises decisions already made by the reptilian and limbic system. Because these drivers remain unconscious, they can be skillfully exploited in marketing and advertising.

The same model can be used to get people to buy less, not just more. In the case of rhino horn, the limbic brain is driving the purchasing – status anxiety and conforming to group expectations are both emotional decisions made by the limbic system.

The society in Viet Nam is in transition from a Confucian/Communist to a Capitalist system, yet remains different from Western

Capitalism. It is even more male-dominated, but not as individualistic. Identity is more dependent on belonging to social groups and one can't lose face by standing against the group. In addition, there is no or very little cultural affinity with animals.

The result in relation to rhino horn is entirely predictable:

1. Conservation messages are ignored if they are empathy or higher values-based
2. Law enforcement messages are largely ignored (75% of population fully aware of penalties)
3. Can't go via wives/children – lack status to influence husband/parents

To understand why the conservation industry remains wedded to using empathy and higher values in its approach to education and demand reduction despite what is actually going to work for the

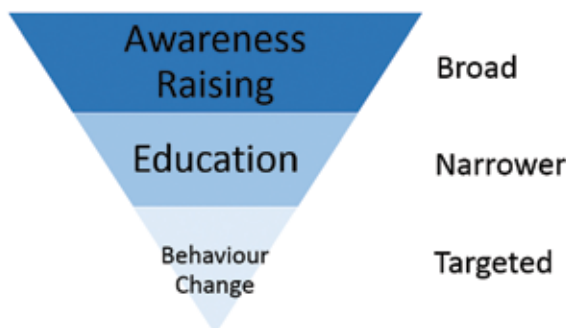
According to developers of Spiral Dynamics, Graves, Beck and Cowan, our core values progress and regress over time depending upon the life circumstances we find ourselves in. The research undertaken over many years has uncovered that this model works on the individual level and also on the level of a group or even whole societies; it also established that this model is independent of culture, which led them to believe that it is associated with the 'deep structure' of our consciousness.

Spiral Dynamics Levels

The diagram shows different value levels. Each colour corresponds to a values level. The diagram should be interpreted as 'transcend and include', meaning that as a person gains access to the next level, they don't lose access to the values of the previous levels.

Within the model, individuals (and cultures) do not fall clearly in any single category (colour). Each person embodies a mixture of the value patterns.

Behaviour Change



Advertising Campaign:
Pilot RhiNo 'Is it worth the risk?'
Launched 16 September 2014

In the Western world it is estimated that about 50% of society has evolved primarily to ORANGE, 25% primarily to GREEN and 20% primarily to BLUE. Similarly it is estimated that less than 1% of the world's population is primarily in YELLOW or TURQUOISE.

Application of Spiral Dynamics to Conservation

From the above descriptions of the values levels we see that conservation is firmly rooted in Green. The conservation movement coincided with the large-scale emergence of the GREEN values level in the 1960s. Yet at the same time the dominant move in values at the global scale today is from Blue to Orange, not from Orange to Green. The big transitions in countries like China, India and Viet Nam are all evolving from BLUE (Confucian/Communism or caste system) to ORANGE (Capitalism). This needs to be taken into account when addressing conservation and illegal wildlife trade issues in those countries.

The main emotion the conservation movement aims to elicit is empathy. This explains why most campaigns use iconic animals, because an empathetic response is anticipated. Yet the Orange and Blue value systems place humans above all other species on the planet. This is reflected clearly in charitable giving in OECD countries, with the fast majority of funds donated going to human causes.

The result of being stuck in a narrow focus on your own values system means that most conservationists can't relate to the motivation of users (ORANGE) or poachers (RED, BEIGE). In addition, the egalitarian nature of GREEN means they are not prepared to single out the primary users for fear of being seen as racist; political correctness emerged with GREEN. Finally, the large conservation organisations are not prepared to engage in strategies that may alienate their support and donor base. The result of these factors in combination is that money is spent in line with values and belief systems of the conservation industry, not in ways that would be effective in changing user behaviour.



The rhino horn you give to sick, aging parents or as a health supplement for your children could poison them.

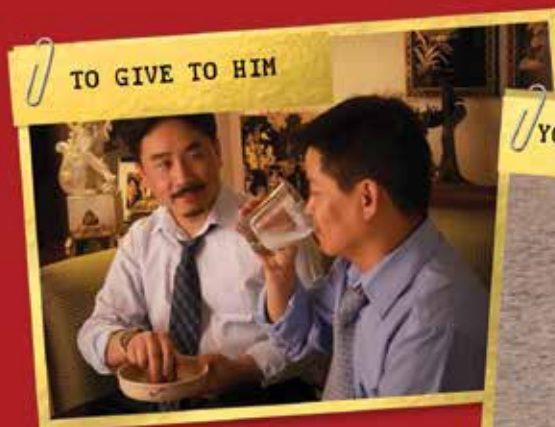
In both Africa and Asia they are serious about protecting rhinoceroses from extinction so their horns are being infused with toxins while on the live animal.

It doesn't affect the animal, but will bring pain and suffering to anybody who consumes rhino horn. Organophosphates are neurotoxins that will cause nausea and diarrhoea; ectoparasiticides can increase the risk of certain cancers; some horn is also infused with radioactive tracers.

So if you wish to bring good health to your family for the coming year, rhino horn is not the way to do it.



Using rhino horn may cause your luck to run out.



More and more world leaders say that the survival of Africa's wildlife is intrinsically linked to its

Behaviour Change vs. Education vs. Awareness Raising

To turn the current situation with rhino poaching around, a rapid demand reduction strategy is required. When a campaign requires rapid results it must speak to the people causing the problem in a currency they will respond to. The campaigns designed must speak to each specific type of user and not focus on anyone else beyond that user.

Too many current campaigns calling themselves 'behaviour change' should be more accurately classed as education or awareness-raising campaigns. These campaigns tend to highlight the problem of rhino poaching (often but not always assuming an affinity with the animal) or they focus on the fact that rhino horn has no efficacy in treating fevers, cancers, hangovers etc. For example, in recent months we have seen projects targeting primary and secondary school children in Asia being called demand reduction campaigns. They may, through education, ensure that these children don't become the next generation of users in 20 years' time, which is vital, but they are not demand reduction campaigns.

Targeted behaviour change campaigns are constructed on an entirely different premise – they get the user's attention by providing a link to their identity and then create an instant emotional response that is designed to override the gain of consuming the product in question.

Because rhino horn users purchase status and hence make the decision to consume from their limbic brain, any campaign to change their behaviour quickly needs to trigger their reptilian brain – their survival instinct. This can be done in the case of rhino horn by utilising the proven trifecta of generating fear, uncertainty and doubt about the safety of the product being consumed. We will do anything to avoid jeopardising our own health or the health of the important people in our lives.

A New Strategy to Save the Rhino

It is based on these insights and analysis that we created a new strategy to break the demand and save the rhino. All the elements of this strategy exist and have been proven to work. In order to generate fear in the users, we need to make consuming rhino horn potentially hazardous to the user's health. This can be done by using physical horn devaluation – infusing the horn of the live animal with liquid toxins. This process has been used experimentally in South Africa as both a method to protect rhinos from parasites and to deter poaching by adding a dye.

Breaking the Brand has created advertisements to speak to the users and warn them of the potential health dangers associated with consuming poisoned rhino horn. We have run two proof-of-concept campaigns in Viet Nam in late 2014 and early 2015.

If horn infusion is applied to 10-15% of the wild rhino population in Africa and Asia, the probability of consuming poisoned rhino horn will be high enough to create the necessary level of fear and doubt in the users' minds. Combined with targeted advertising in business magazines, newspapers and on TV we can reach the primary users and trigger the necessary emotional response to get them to change their behaviour. Once demand starts to fall, prices will fall very rapidly and the supply chain will collapse. It is only at this point that all the previous investment in security and anti-poaching measures will pay off.



FIRST SHE
KILLED A MOTHER

THEN SHE
POISONED HER SON


It's quite possible that the rhino horn you give to your sick child will poison him.

In both Africa and Asia they are serious about protecting rhinoceroses from extinction. So the horns are being injected with toxins such as organophosphates while on the live animal.

The poachers know this. If they illegally kill the animals and sell the horns to dealers in Viet Nam, they know they will poison anybody who consumes it.

The only way you will know if you have poisoned your child with rhino horn is when they become very sick with nausea and diarrhoea. These toxins can also have long-term effects on the central nervous system and on brain development.

Why take the risk of giving your child poisoned rhino horn?



SO HE CAN GAIN FACE

HE LOSES FACE

Advertising Campaign:
RhiNo 'Will your luck run out?'
Launched 16 January 2015

This strategy has a good chance of working, but runs counter to the belief system of the conservation industry. It not only singles out and directly targets a small group of users, it appears to deliberately try to hurt them. Many conservation groups find this idea challenging. This is curious to say the least, given that arming anti-poaching units means rangers and poachers die in Africa every week. Are rich Vietnamese businesspeople of higher value than poor African rangers? It pays to examine the true consequences of your values and belief system, and not just for the sake of saving the rhino. 🐘