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Unleash the future

The current environment. Chaos,
complexity and the end of certainty

The **Yellow** Papers Series

Introduction

Temporal discourse with regard to branding becomes more and more prominent in organisations. From the 1980s onward management came to realise that the principal assets of a company were in fact its brands (Kapferer, 2001; Davis, 2002). Branding had since then a glorious time. Companies have operated opportunistically in the boom years of the 1990s and this led to a proliferation of brands within companies (Petromilli, Morrisson & Million, 2002). Economic developments have led to reconsideration of branding strategies. Intense competition, emerging markets, brand extensions and acquisitions have left companies with a confusion of brands to manage (Laforet & Saunders, 1999). These bloated portfolios of brands needed rationalisation and discipline was created by creating brand architectures (Aaker, 2004). Brand portfolio management has the objective to create a logical set of brand, where each brand has its clear defined role and minimal overlap exists (Pierce & Moukanas, 2002).

Brands are removed from the portfolio and the remaining brands are repositioned for their new, most of the times, more comprehensive role. Those remaining brands have to be revitalized and leveraged in new markets and products.

This puts great stress on the brands in this stage of their development. And the promise of the brand is most often not achieved. The discourse on this is very much time oriented. The brand has a history that has to be taken into account. Many times it is merged with other brands (rebranding of disappearing brands to the surviving brand) and their history has to be taken into account, too. On the other hand the discussion focuses on the future and what the brand should stand for, the positioning, the identity and the future products and services that it labels.

The main question in this stage is "What is keeping the brand from becoming the brand it wants to be?" It seems companies are on a leash and can't break free and become what they want to be.

Why can't the brand make the most of the opportunities that are out there? These leashes can be of many kinds. Companies are inextricably caught in a web of relationships with all things (Holbrook, 2003).

Whatever is perceived as the issue, whatever the leash is, it is rooted in the way we think or do now. Inspired by gestalt-psychology, we believe that either we are held back by strong beliefs and routines we have developed from past experience, or we don't actually know what we want to become in the future or have no clue how to get there. Based on the Robert & de Raaf (2003) model for organisational change, we have developed a Gestalt therapy model that guides us through an analysis of what is leashing the brand and helps us maximising the brand's potential.



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The current environment. Chaos, complexity and the end of certainty

The current marketing environment seems to become more complex over time, up to a point where it feels chaotic. In marketing this results in, for example, extremely short lead times for new product development, very short life cycles of new products, failure rates of new products up to 90% in some markets, hyper competition, competition from unexpected directions, etcetera. Today's business environment is very complex and dynamic. As Holbrook (2003) states:

"Clearly, a business firm constitutes an obvious case of a dynamic open complex adaptive system (DOCAS) composed of interacting parts that respond to a dynamically changing market environment so as to survive by adapting in ways that attain some sort of ecological niche. (page 39)"

Regarding the business environment as a dynamic open complex adaptive system leads to a new outlook on strategy and marketing. Because of their complex inter-relationships including feedback and adaptive behaviour, DOCAS are characterised by non-linearity.

This results in highly unpredictable outcomes with sensitive dependence on initial conditions (SDIC): small differences in the initial condition produce major differences over time.

Up to now marketing science has taken natural sciences as its model, with Newtonian physics and dynamics as a prime example. This classical scientific approach favours order, stability and predictability (Prigogine, 1996). Typically, it means searching for laws that predict the outcome and processes that are reversible. This has an ideological origin, the search for ideal knowledge, pure, objective and complete. This kind of thinking has brought us the paradox of time. Processes are predictable and reversible in nature, which leads to symmetry in time. There is no place for past and future in these laws. Even up to now many scientists believe that time is only a phenomenological construct (like Barbour in *The end of time*, 1999).

However, other more elegant solutions to the paradox of time and the challenges of quantum physics have been developed. Especially, the ideas of Nobel price winner Ilya Prigogine in his book *The End of Certainty* give us inspiration and insights of how sciences of nature, economics and humanity can come together.

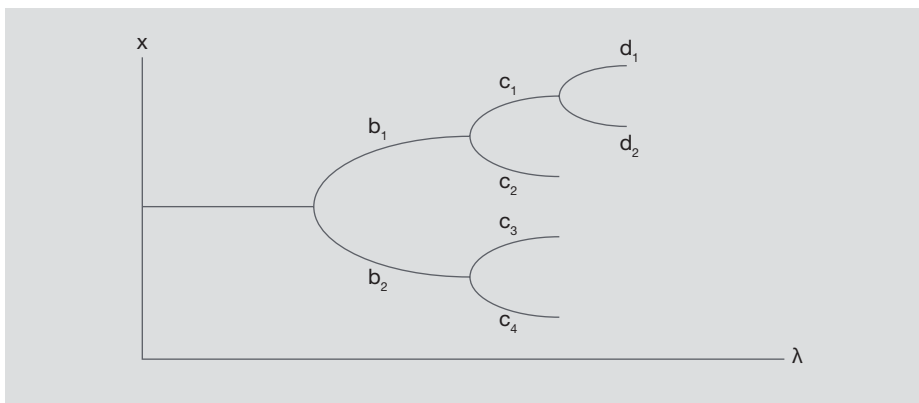
It gives us a different kind of science in which there is room for human creativity, as a unique expression of a fundamental characteristic of all levels of nature. Whitehead (1995) sees creativity as a cosmological category, as the ultimate principle behind everything new. This new scientific world is characterized by choice, intent and evolution over time.

In this point of view there is a limited amount of situations, close to equilibrium, where the classical laws do apply and are universal, however they become specific when further away from equilibrium. As matter moves further from equilibrium we see irreversible processes: new characteristics are developed. Prigogine uses the metaphor that in equilibrium matter is blind, far from equilibrium it starts to see. Matter becomes sensitive to itself and its environment. This is closely related to the dissipation that is connected to irreversible processes. Far from equilibrium the system chooses one of the possibilities to function. The successive choices can be seen as bifurcations.

In Figure 1 we see successive bifurcations in a non-equilibrium system. There is both deterministic behaviour (between bifurcation points) and probabilistic behaviour (the bifurcation points). If we imagine a system that moves away from equilibrium as in figure 1, the evolution of the system has an historical element. If, for example, we perceive the system in state d_2 , it implicitly means, that it has been in state b_1 and c_1 .

Prigogine relates this to processes of self-organisation. Even if we know the initial state of the system, and the processes and conditions within the system, we cannot predict which regime of activities the system is going to choose. The introduction of probabilities and statistics in natural sciences offers a solution for the problems of quantum physics and helps to understand dissipative, chaotic processes in nature. And it gives us back time in natural sciences. We move from a science of laws and certainties, to a science of possibilities and opportunities.

Fig 1 **Successive bifurcations in a non-equilibrium system**



Biebracher, Nicolis and Schuster in their address to the European Communities (1995) phrase it beautifully:

“The maintenance of organisation in nature is not-and can not be-achieved by central management; order can only be maintained by self-organisation. Self-organizing systems allow adaptation to the prevailing environment, i.e., they react to changes in the environment with a thermodynamic response which makes the systems extraordinarily flexible and robust against perturbations from outside conditions. We want to point out the superiority of self-organizing systems over conventional human technology which carefully avoids complexity and hierarchically manages nearly all technical processes.”

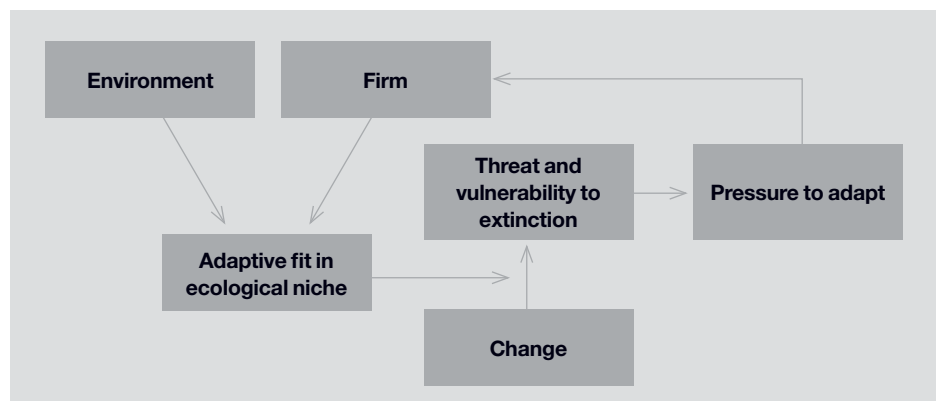
Prigogine (1996) states that this notion has far reaching consequences and that the concept of bifurcations and self-organisation can help to understand innovation, renewal and diversification in other areas than physics and chemistry. This concept can as easily be applied to biology, sociology and economics.

When we enter the scope of human sciences, specifically marketing and organisational science, we know that this is in no way a static and predictable world. As stated earlier, the current business environment seems far from equilibrium and can be seen as dynamic open complex adaptive systems. In this world we discover fluctuations, bifurcations and instabilities wherever we go, as is the case in nature. But how does this process of self-organisation work in marketing and organisations?

The end of planning and control

This brings us to an ecological perspective of companies. The ecological perspective emphasises that the ultimate goal of the company is survival. This is obtained via adaptation within an ecosystem that consists of a complex confluence of threats and opportunities (Holbrook, 2003). This process brings forth the paradox of success. The more success your company experiences today – that is, the better it fits with the relevant environmental pressures - the more vulnerable it becomes to extinction resulting from changes in the environment (Holbrook, 2003). This leads to the idea that organizations come to their highest functioning on the edge of chaos (Pascale, Millemann & Gioja, 2000). This view of dynamics is consistent with the view of a company as a DOCAS.

Fig 2 The ecological perspective and the paradox of success (Holbrook, 2003)



It is interesting to see that this view of organisations is the same as Jung's view on the psychological development of a human being, or individuation (Van Eenwyk, 1997). Jung discerned two concurrently operating types of processes. On the one hand cyclical processes, which Van Eenwyk (1997) calls synchronic aspect of individuation. They constantly repeat themselves through the establishment of tension of opposites, their resolution, and the subsequent appearance of new tensions between the resolution and new possibilities. This clearly resembles above ecological view of companies.

There are also other processes, which are developmental. They build upon synchronic dynamics and move through time. Van Eenwyk (1997) calls them diachronic aspects of individuation, for they begin somewhere and end up somewhere else, for instance, from less highly differentiated to more highly differentiated.

This aspect of development is still missing in the ecological perspective of the firm. It is one thing to have a notion that the company needs to go in a new direction. It is quite another to have a sense of what that direction is.

According to Jung, in the case of individuation, archetypes influence our perceptions and experiences, they command our attention and influence our orientation. So archetypes do not only play a role in the synchronic processes, but also in the development of structures in the psyche.

“Like magnets whose fields are invisible until they take shape in a substance that reveals their character, archetypes arrange psychic energy into patterns through which their character becomes discernible (Van Eenwyk, 1997).”

The idea that the psyche is bipolar, that energy is generated by tensions of opposites, and that there is an ongoing oscillation, between actuality and potential, shows an interesting parallel between Jung's meta-psychology and chaos theory (Van Eenwyk, 1997). This parallel is of course the ecological perspective, with its tension and solution dynamics. But what is the parallel with the diachronic processes? Here there seems to be a resemblance with the concept of the strange attractor. Complex or chaotic systems never retrace the same path, but they do settle down into recognizable patterns. Although the behaviour is very complex and essentially unpredictable, there is clearly a visible pattern. It seems that there is something magical that creates order out of chaos. Like archetypes create structure in the psyche.

What could be the strange attractor, the archetype, in the dynamics of the adaptive behaviour in a business firm? Clearly the behaviour is not planned and controlled like it was generally thought in classical strategy thinking. Neither is it ad-hoc decision making without any pattern. The materialization of patterns in decision-making of an organisation is generally referred to as emergent strategy.

Interesting in this case, without ever having the intention to, is the research of *Collins and Porras* (Build to Last, ...and Good to Great, ...). Their findings may point in the direction of what this strange attractor might be. They did a five-year research study to find out what made the difference between modest to good performing companies and great performing companies. They did pair wise comparisons to see what made the difference. One of their findings was that those great companies were very focussed on what they did. They called this the Hedgehog Concept. This comes from Isaiah Berlin's essay, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*. The idea is that 'the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing' (Collins, 2001:90.) Therefore, the average companies are foxes; they try many things becoming 'scattered, diffused, and inconsistent' (Collins, 2001:92.) The hedgehog concept is composed of three circles, which are questions that if answered will give you the single guiding hedgehog principle by which you can run your business. These questions are:

1. What are you deeply passionate about?
2. What you can be the best in the world at?
3. What drives your economic engine? *Collins, 2001:96*

Fig 3 Three circles of the hedgehog concept (Collins, 2002)



This focus formed a system with clear constraints that allows people both freedom and responsibility within that system. It allows those great companies to manage the system not the people. It results in self-disciplined people who will go to extreme lengths to fulfil their responsibilities (Collins, 2001: 124). Not that those great companies didn't experience times of difficulty, the difference was that they always seemed to find a successful resolution. These results clearly bear a resemblance to DOCAS with some sort of strange attractor. One additional interesting finding was that there was no evidence that the good to great companies spent more time on strategy than their normal peer companies.

"Good to great companies paid scant attention to managing change, motivating people, or creating alignment. Under the right conditions, the problems of commitment, alignment, motivation and change largely melt away" (Collins, 2001:9).

In this sense we might see the research of Collins and Porras as indirect proof that indeed in organisational processes, self-organisation is superior to a planning and control approach.

Role of the brand in organisations

Collins and Porras never use the term brand in their book. However, anybody familiar with branding literature will see the resemblance between the hedgehog concept and current concepts of branding. Add to this their finding that those great companies were also characterised by strong core values and a clear core purpose and there is a striking similarity with the concept of a brand. For instance, this is how DDB defines a brand.

DDB Brand Foundations®

Strategic competitiveness (synchronic)

1. Where do I come from?
2. What do I do best?
3. What makes me different?
4. Who am I for?

Emotional Inspiration (diachronic)

5. What am I like as a person?
6. What do I fight for?
7. What do I value?
8. Strategic concept

The idea of Brand Foundations is that the brand interviews itself, to discover its essence.

Generally, today's brand theorists view the brand not just as a main asset of the company, but also as a primary source of direction to the company. It is what Kunde (2003) in his book *Unique Now or Never* sees as the most effective role a brand can play, brand religion. As opposed to when the brand is no more than a label to a product, a collection of attributes and benefits. When the brand is described and posed as source of energy (inspiration) and direction, when it gets this role, the brand becomes the strange attractor, the archetype of the organisation.

Need for new organizational model for self-organization

Inspired by developments in natural sciences, chaos and complexity theory, we have looked at a new perspective of organizational processes, with the ecological view of markets and organizational dynamics. This showed great resemblance with synchronic processes that are described by Jung's psychotherapy, the oscillation between tension and resolution, actual and potential. This is one of two organizing processes in the human psyche. The diachronic process of a development over time to a higher order of functioning is not yet present in the current analogy of chaos / complexity theory and organizational theory. This diachronic process of Jung, is connected to the concept of a strange attractor in chaos theory, a force in nature that brings pattern in complex and chaotic systems. Research of Collins and Porras brought us to the idea that the concept of a brand might be used as the strange attractor in self-organizing processes in business firms. The question then now is, what does this process of self-organization within a business firm look like? It is a process of adaptive change, with both synchronic and diachronic aspects. But it is not a change process in the classical sense of the word. Organizational change in this view is not a stepwise implementation, it is a continuous and vision-governed adaptation to external changes and emerging conditions (Styhre, 2002). From this point of view, change is disruptive, fluid and fluxing. In the traditional view of change there is a linear understanding of time. Organizational change theories are often still modeled on the 'unfreeze – change – refreeze' scheme suggested by Kurt Lewin (Collins, 1998). Time in change should be represented not as a movement from now to the future, with an desired end-state, but as a continuous non-linear movement to the past, the present and the future (Robert & de Raaf, 2003). Time in our point of view is a continuous flow of visiting and revisiting the past and the future in order to initiate change in the present time.

As it is not a planning and control type of process, we still would like to stimulate self-organization in the business firm, and thus manage the system (not the people). Therefore we propose to stimulate a continuous discourse in a business firm. A discourse is the means to create a system where people have freedom, but within a clear focus that directs and restrains behaviour. As the synchronic and diachronic already suggested is time an essential element in this discourse. Because we find inspiration in Jungs meta-psychotherapy, we looked for inspiration in methods and techniques that are used in psychotherapy, to form a way to structure the discourse in organizations.

A model for a temporal brand discourse for self-organisation

To some people in an organization the need for change may be apparent, but it is common that a lot, if not most people in organizations are anxious, sceptical, reluctant or resisting when it comes to change. Even if they might agree on the problem analysis and express willingness (synchronic), people in organizations tend to resist the actual solution (diachronic). A lot of great restructuring plans actually fail in execution because of resistance (open or silent) in the organization. In our view there is little – if any – correlation between the quality of the plan and the chance of acceptance or success. The chance of success depends largely on motivating people in organizations for change; on overcoming resistance, generating support and cooperation. Our hypothesis is that a change strategy which is 70% right, but fully implemented leads to better results than a strategy which is 100% right, but only 70% implemented. The resistance / motivation issue therefore is crucial. It is also a very difficult issue to resolve.

To be motivated for change, people need to:

- Understand and accept there is a problem / a need for change
- Feel they are part of the problem and the solution
- Have a view of the desired future of the organization
- Understand and accept the proposed way to get there

When it comes to overcoming resistance and motivating people to change, there is an interesting parallel with *psychotherapy*. Psychotherapists are experts in dealing with resistance and lack of motivation. An organization in trouble is in many ways similar to a troubled individual. In psychotherapy, therapists are often confronted with a strong need to change on one hand, and strong resistance to change on the other hand. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) seems especially relevant to us, for two reasons. CBT is currently the most widely used form of psychotherapy. The superior success rate of CBT over other forms of psychotherapy (and pharmaceutical treatments) for many kinds of disorders has been amply demonstrated in scientific research. The second reason is that the theory behind CBT seems applicable in organizational change as well. The theory is that distorted thinking and dysfunctional schemes lead to emotional and behavioural problems. The essence of CBT is that these dysfunctional schemes, irrational beliefs and thinking errors are identified and challenged in therapy (synchronic), and consequently replaced by more functional and balanced thinking and behaviour (diachronic).

This principle can also be applied to organisations. Fixed beliefs like ‘that will never work’ or ‘our people are not up to it’ are often a central and powerful part of the resistance to change. These beliefs should be identified, challenged and changed (Beck & Emery, 1985; Wells, 1997). This ought to be done in a careful and objective way. The CBT principle of ‘collaborative empiricism’ implies that client and therapist approach the cognitions of the client as scientifically as possible. The distorted cognitions are treated as hypotheses. Consequently, evidence for and against these cognitions is meticulously collected and real experiments are conducted to see if the hypothesis holds or that an alternative cognition is more appropriate.

When we apply this method to organizational change, it means that consultant and client together seriously investigate the resistance to find out how much truth is in it. In general, this will lead to radical adjustment of these cognitions, but sometimes what appears to be 'just resistance' can actually be based on true obstacles. Collaborative empiricism will tell which cognitions actually hold and which need to be replaced with more balanced and accurate cognitions.

Another principle of psychotherapy is also interesting for adaptive change and self-organisation. The idea of therapy is not that the therapist tells the client how to solve his or her problems. The ideal situation is that the therapist helps the patient to 'cure' himself or herself. Patients who have learned to heal themselves are better in applying their newly acquired insights in coping with new situations, whereas patients who have only learned specific answers to specific problems often experience serious problems coping with new situations, which results in relapse (Beck e.a., 1979). Often the so-called Socratic dialogue is used: by asking the right questions, the therapist helps the patient to develop his own thinking, bringing him to discover by himself what needs to be discovered (Beck & Emery, 1985; Padesky, 1993).

Both the principle of self help and the technique of the Socratic Dialogue can be applied to organisational change. Instead of telling employees that change is necessary and presenting a plan for change, employees can be helped to discover a lot of this for themselves.

The major advantages of this way of working are clear. First, the resistance in the organization, and the people who show this resistance, are taken very seriously. In our experience this is rarely the case in the current daily practice of organizational change. Second, all parties are working together as a team. Third, those who resist can actually influence and improve the initial plan, if a part of their resistance is demonstrated to be valid. Instead of being treated like a hurdle, these people become part of the solution. Their 'fingerprints' will be all over the plan, which is a very radical departure from the situation where a plan is forced upon the organization.

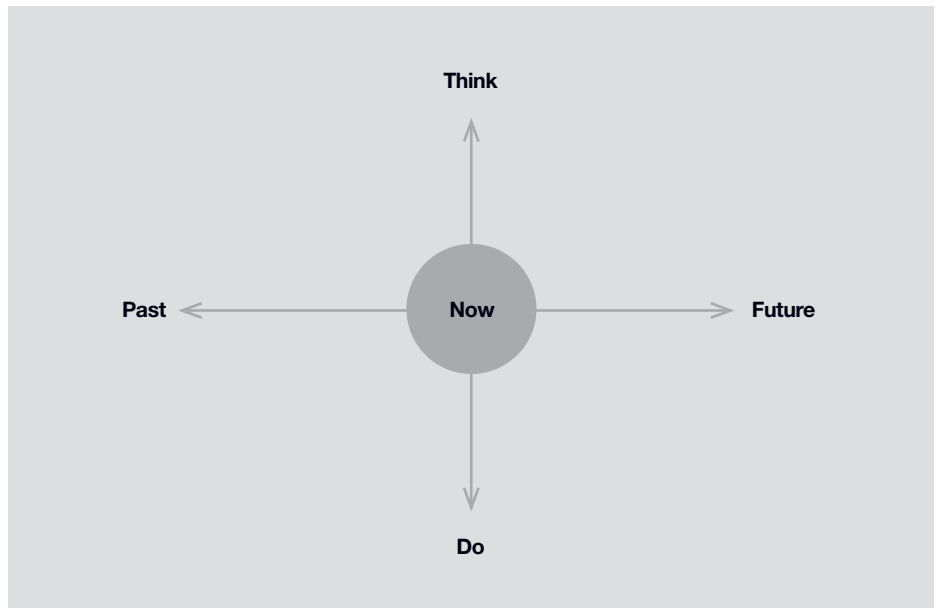
In sum, it is our belief that a fundamental principle of psychotherapy is excellently applicable in organizational change: the collaboration between therapist and patient. In the daily practice of DDB this principle of *collaboration* is called Co Create: client and consultant create solutions together.

In applying these principles in practice, a time perspective is of crucial importance. With the right use of the past perspective, current perspective and future perspective organizations can be brought to embrace change.

Using time perspectives in creating change: steps in discourse

We use the following model to guide us in the discourse:

Fig 4 Change from a future perspective model (Robert & de Raaf, 2003)



The two axes depict two fields of tension in the daily psychological life of people, groups and also organizations. From the centre of the figure, the here and now, to 'past orientation' on the left. The opposite direction we call 'future orientation'. However a firm positioning or anchoring in the here and now is the premier condition for a psychologically healthy way to cope with this field of tension. That is where the discourse starts.

Step 1: building up pressure for change (synchronic)

In the first phase, it is important that people realise the necessity of change. Whatever the plan for change is, it will only be accepted if people feel the need for change. All 3 time perspectives can be used to build this pressure.

- 1. Now:** A detailed analysis of the current situation is made. What is happening in the business at the moment? What is changing? What challenges is the brand facing? Where is new competition coming from? Which strategies in the market are currently working, which are failing? Is the brand losing clients or business? Why, how, to whom?
- 2. Future:** What if recent developments continue at the same pace or even stronger, where will the brand be in a couple of years? Looking at today's threats, what is the brand's Nightmare Future? Imagine we are 10 years from now. Looking back, you write a 'Brand Obituary'. What happened, where did the clients go, why, what did we fail to see or do, where did the brand pass the point of no return? This exercise makes the threats to the brand, which usually are abstract and far away, very vivid and real.
- 3. Past:** Look for striking analogies in the past, not necessarily within the same market but also from brands in other industries or sectors. Analogies that clearly demonstrate how not facing current challenges and threats, how looking the other way, how not being adaptive got great, seemingly untouchable brands into trouble.

What is very interesting in this step is the psychological turnaround of 'stability seekers': those who resist any change and want to preserve the status quo because they fear instability. Often these exercises make them realise that there is more danger of instability in sticking to the status quo. And consequently, that adaptation can secure stability of the organization, both financially and in terms of employment.

Step 2: Where do we want to go? (diachronic)

Now that the necessity for change has been established, it is important to assess the desired future position. To have a visionary perspective on the future is more important than to predict the future. Challenging the current habits and ideas in the organization and giving the brand direction is what it is about: it is not about the closest prediction of the future (Robert & de Raaf, 2003). This means that the time frame of a vision is long term, and not short or medium. It should describe the future world that the company is trying to create and in this sense it is more like storytelling than a statement or a credo (Levin, 2000). A clear perspective on the future adds value by (a) giving direction and (b) positive energy for the change process. It won't be an accurate prediction of the near future. It should be compelling, bold, aspiring and inspiring, yet believable and achievable.

Again the three time perspectives are used for leverage. This is using the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy in a positive way. It is what Ybema (2004) calls managerial nostalgia. We pose that 'the more past oriented, the higher the possibility of resistance to change' and, on the contrary, 'the more future oriented, the lower the resistance to change and the higher the chance of success'.

- 1. Future:** What is the dream for the future? Where do we want the brand be in 10 years time? Here the opposite of the Obituary technique is used. Imagine we are 10 years from now and the brand is celebrating 5 years of market leadership. Write the historical chapter of the celebration book. Looking back, describe how we became market leader, which difficulties we faced and how we overcame them, how we made life hard for competitive brands.
- 2. Now:** one relevant technique is *Brand Aspiration*: which brand, in our market or outside, would we like to be? Why? What has the brand achieved that we are jealous of? Another relevant technique is *Signwatching*: what signs can we identify in the present of emerging future possibilities? At DDB we use SignBank TM, a unique method of using the numerous daily signs of behavioural change to predict the future.
- 3. Past:** Take a good look at the dreams of the brand's founder(s). What were the circumstances in those times, and what dream of the future helped them getting to where we are today? Is that dream still (partially) relevant for the future direction of the brand we are trying to establish? Another interesting technique is Return of the Founder: what if the brand's founder returned today? What would he think and do? Where would he take the brand today?

Step 3: What is keeping the brand from getting there?

Now that it is clear the organization should change and what the desired outcome is, resistance has to be addressed. In this third phase, the CBT techniques described earlier can be successfully applied. Prefixed notions, irrational, dysfunctional beliefs are identified, challenged and replaced.

3.1 Challenging tradition (synchronic)

Brands and brand organizations often have been shaped –unconsciously– around the successes of the past. This is not only true for the structure of the organization, but also for a lot of the “intangibles”. Most of the thinking and behaviour in organizations is probably repetitive and automatic, i.e. a lot of decisions are made unconsciously in exactly the same way as in the past. This can be called Organizational or Brand Nostalgia (Ybema, 2004). Often these routines and traditions are referred to as the culture of the organization. ‘That’s the way we do thing around here’. Organizations leaning on brand success of the past tend to ‘live in the past’ as well. They unconsciously seek confirmation that little has changed in their market. They measure their success with old parameters, old methods and with old clients.

- 1. Past:** Analysis of the history of the brand: how did it start out, what were the circumstances then, what made us great? This will often show that breaking with tradition and continuous adaptation have been crucial for consequent success.
- 2. Now:** How does Organizational or Brand Nostalgia influence current brand management? All automatic, routine thoughts and actions should be identified and challenged based on the analysis of the current situation (Step 1.1).
- 3. Future:** Careful analysis of the relevance of all automatic cognitions and behaviour vs the dreamed future of the brand. Routines that block the view of the future. Routines the organization should stop because they are dysfunctional. New practices that should be adopted, based on the brand core and the dreamed future of the brand.

3.2 Preserving key assets (diachronic)

Some beliefs and behaviours of the organization may be irrational and unjustly block necessary changes. But some others may be completely rational and sound. They should not be lost in the spirit of change. On the contrary, they should be preserved as they are key assets of the organisation and the brand. Possibly they need to be reinterpreted in the light of today.

- 1. Past:** Core values / core competences. What have always been the key strengths of the brand, both technically and in the mind of the clients? Which elements are still relevant today and should be preserved / reinterpreted?
- 2. Now:** who are the brand's top clients, which are the top products, both in terms of revenue and profit? How does this fit with the core competences identified in 3.1 and the dreamed future of the brand? Does this analysis identify an overlooked strength of the brand? Another approach is: what is the key feature of the brand our business is built on? What are the things that, if taken away, would make the brand worthless to the key customers?
- 3. Future:** What is the core purpose of the brand? What does the brand stand for and fight for? In other words: what is the dreamed future for the clients of the brand, what does the brand want to change in the world?

3.3 Brand opportunities

In a lot of cases, the dreamed future of the brand is very far away. In fact, the length of the road towards the future and the difficulties and uncertainties that are to be expected, are in itself a danger to the motivation for change. Even put stronger this future might never become reality. The projected future is also subject of this continuous discourse. Therefore it is necessary to jump-start change in the present. The objective of the projected future is to give energy and direction. Therefore it is important to lower the threshold for action by identifying the first opportunities for the dreamed brand. Results that can be relatively easily obtained. This can be an important first step in the change process itself. If the first steps already provide positive results, all people involved are generally inclined to continue down the path of change (Beck & Emery, 1985; Arntz, 1991).

- 1. Now:** What are the things the brand can easily start doing today? What can be changed tomorrow with relatively small effort, cost and risk?
- 2. Future:** How can we make the future more tangible, how can we bring the future closer? Creating prototypes, conducting live experiments, test markets are all examples of ways to make future opportunities more close, more vivid, more real.
- 3. Past:** What is the innovation history of the company? What can we learn from past innovation successes and failures? What are possible pitfalls and key success factors?

The processes, synchronic and diachronic, can be summarized in our model as follows

Fig 5 **Synchronic processes within the discourse**

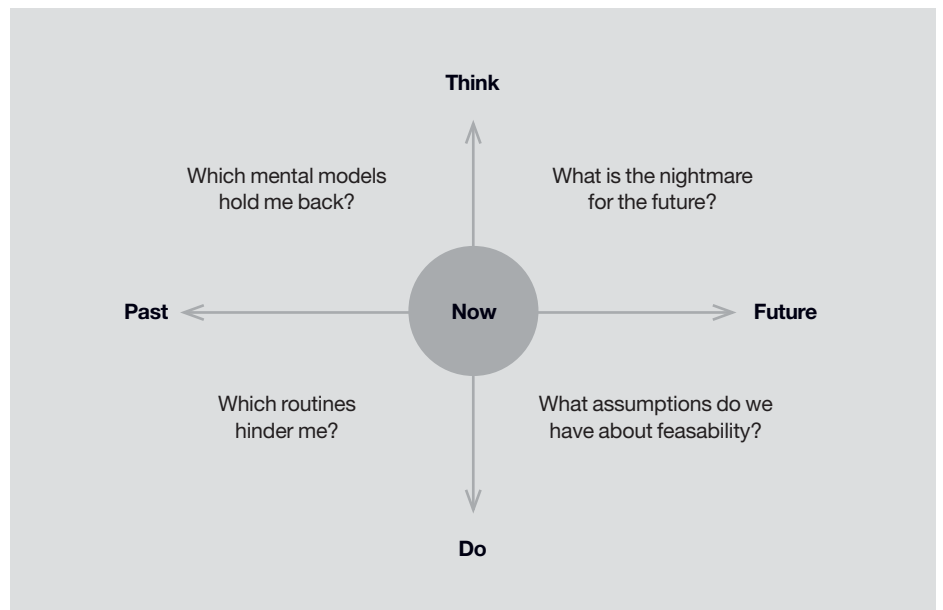


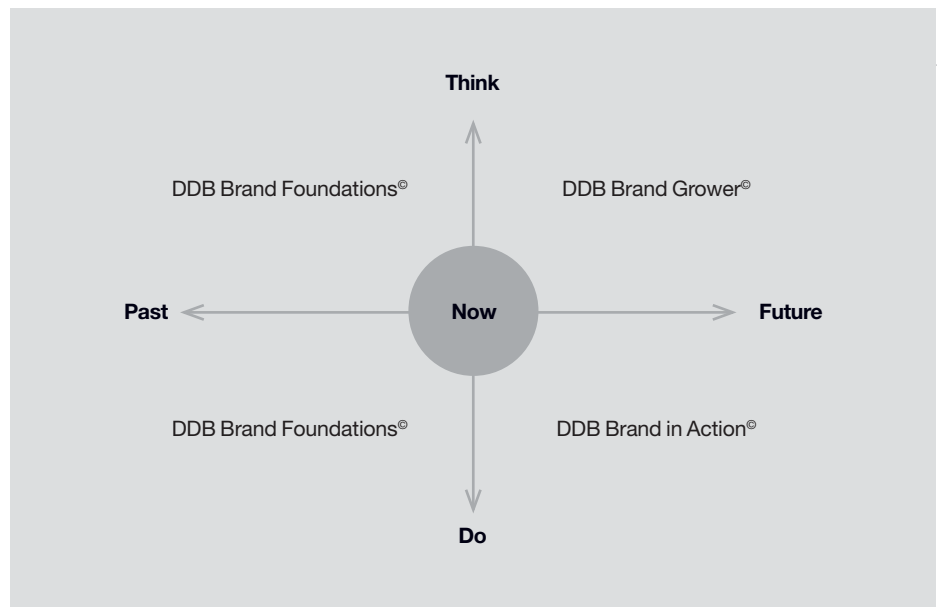
Fig 6 **Diachronic processes within the discourse**



Concluding remarks

In the above we have tried to describe our vision on self-organisation processes in organizations and the role a brand can have as a strange attractor. This vision gives us direction on how to approach issues in clients their organization. Several tools have been developed to help clients in their discourse. This paper aims to underpin this approach with theoretical thinking. We appreciate any feedback on our thinking and look forward to receiving valuable new insights in temporal discourses on brands.

Fig 7 DDB's Playbook for temporal discussions on brands



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