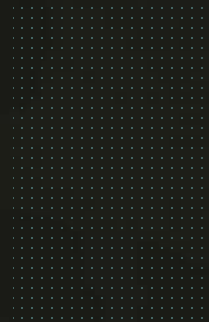





SECRETS & LIES

UNCOVERING THE
UNDERBELLY OF
AUSTRALIA



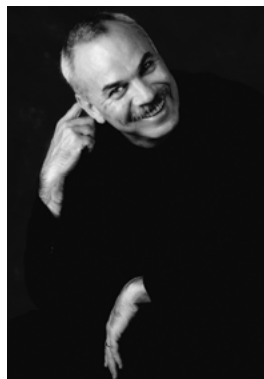


SECRETS & LIES IS ONE OF THE FIRST STUDIES
OF ITS KIND IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.
IT MEASURES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT
WE TELL OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER VERSUS
WHAT WE REALLY THINK AND DO. WHAT ARE OUR
SECRETS AND WHAT ARE THE LIES? THE PUBLIC
VALUES REPORTED.

THE PRIVATE TRUTHS
HIDDEN.



WELCOME TO SECRETS & LIES



John Steedman
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN MEDIA
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

As the largest communications business in Australia and New Zealand, it's imperative that WPP AUNZ knows more about Australians and New Zealanders than anyone else. Data-driven insight is the lifeblood of our business. It informs and sharpens creativity.

Without it we can't build creative and memorable campaigns that shape opinions and shift behaviour on everything from how to vote, what to eat or drive, where to play, how to spend and save.

And although the millions of data points at our disposal are essential, it's what we do with them that counts. Data doesn't make the world go around. Data in itself never sold or created anything. We need to go deeper if we're to truly understand what really makes Aussies and New Zealanders tick as consumers, voters, parents, carers and influencers. This is how we provide real value to our clients.

Secrets & Lies is based on comprehensive research conducted by WPP AUNZ agencies Colmar Brunton and AMR. This includes in-depth interviews and a survey of more than 4,000 Australian and New Zealand consumers (2,500 and 1,500 respectively).

This document covers the Australian elements of this ambitious study and paints an illuminating picture of our nation. And while the secrets and lies are fascinating, we had to put the work in context. Why do we keep secrets and tell lies? What does this say about us and how do marketers make sense of it? We know you're grappling with ever-increasing complexity that makes it difficult to win the attention of distracted and fragmented audiences. We wanted to help you understand their underlying drivers and how this impacts behaviour.

To add even more rigour, we partnered with one of the region's most respected anthropologists to help us understand the research. What are the drivers for this behaviour and how much is it steeped in our survival? This further work inspired three new plays for marketers that challenge some of the accepted norms of how we reach, portray and resonate with our audiences. There's plenty of magic in the cracks and opportunity for marketers to embrace their audiences' inherent contradictions.

In the pages that follow, we'll show you why the colour lies in the fringes. Why there's power in being alone and why the idea of singular brand truth may be dead in a world of complex nuance. Lying, as we've discovered, is ingrained in human behaviour. The brands and organisations that understand and accept this uncomfortable truth will be better placed to win. Those that continue to fight against it based on accepted norms will increasingly appeal to nobody.



“

MAN IS NOT
WHAT HE THINKS
HE IS; HE IS
WHAT HE HIDES.

André Malraux

French novelist, art theorist and
Minister of Cultural Affairs

About Michael Henderson

Michael Henderson is a leading anthropologist, born in the UK, raised in Africa, educated in New Zealand, and works around the world studying human behaviour and motivation.

Anthropologists study culture and the various symbols, rituals, norms artefacts and ceremonies that combine in a unique manner to structure and activate the culture in daily life.

For the past 35 years Michael has immersed himself in studying what makes people tick and how is this influenced by the culture in which people have been born or chosen.

Michael is the author of eight books on culture, values, performance, human meaning and motivation.

FOREWORD

MICHAEL HENDERSON | ANTHROPOLOGIST

Secrets and lies. If we take André Malraux's view of humanity as a starting point, this report opens the door to some intriguing conversations and startling insights. Your next marketing campaign might look very different if it's built on the premise that your audience is hiding something.

This idea that people are what they hide offers a powerful glimpse into human nature. In this context it's no surprise that the English word 'person' comes from the Greek 'prosopon' meaning mask.

More specifically, 'prosopon' refers to the masks that actors wore in Greek tragedies. These helped audiences to quickly identify characteristics and determine motivations.

We all wear masks in our daily lives to portray certain characteristics to those around us. We wear a suit to look professional or jeans and a black t-shirt to signify creativity. We drive a particular type of car to let people know that we're wealthy, safety conscious or environmentally responsible.

We've all kept secrets. We've all told lies. But just how common is this behaviour? What do the people around us lie about? What secrets do they keep and why? This report gets below the surface of our society. It shines an informative light on two intriguing cultural tendencies worthy of your investigation as a marketer: the tendency of humans to keep secrets and tell lies.





SECRETS
& LIES

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH HEADLINES

1. 50 SHADES OF AUTHENTIC
2. CONDITIONAL KINDNESS
3. CONFIDENT MUCH?
4. PARTY FOR ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE SECRETS & LIES WE TELL OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER

We Australians have always prided ourselves on being a down-to-earth bunch.

Honest, decent, kind and generous.

Not prone to hyperbole and immune to hot air.

For decades we've marketed ourselves to the world as straight-up, straight-talking and fair dinkum.

But the one national characteristic we seem to hold onto the most is that we're a truthful nation.

What you see is what you get.

We don't keep dark secrets. We don't lie. We don't bury the truth.

Turns out, we do. And some of these lies are whoppers.

Despite being fond of saying what you see is what you get, we're full of contradictions and inconsistencies. There's a fluidity to our behaviours and stated values, with increasing polarity between what we project to the world and what we think and do.

But perhaps these flaws and foibles make our fellow humans all the more interesting.

Maybe it's in the cracks of human behaviour that we can all find a way to connect.

This report illuminates some of these cracks. The chinks that often lie beneath the glossy, over-curated exterior of the lives people show the world.

There's plenty of magic in the cracks and opportunity for marketers to embrace their audiences' inherent contradictions.

So what are the headlines of this ground-breaking study?

WE
LIE
A LOT

WE LIE TO
OURSELVES
AND
EACH OTHER

WE LIE
ABOUT
MONEY

WE LIE
ABOUT
FAMILY

WE LIE
ABOUT
OUR
HAPPINESS...

... AND WHETHER
WE'RE
(GENUINELY)
HAPPY
FOR OTHERS

50 SHADES OF AUTHENTIC

Authenticity has long been a non-negotiable for Aussies. We pride ourselves on being genuine and projecting

a consistent face to the world. We say what we mean and mean what we say.

This is supported by the research findings, which show that 81% of us highly value the notion of living an authentic life.

And yet we often don't. We're guilty of duplicity about who we are and what we're really thinking or doing:



49%

of us admit to **misrepresenting ourselves**



52%

of us have **lied at work**



70%

of us **regularly tell white lies** to protect someone's feelings



63%

of us have **made up an excuse** to cancel a social arrangement



27%

of us have **lied about our whereabouts** to family or friends



29%

have **done something illegal**



27%

will stay in a relationship even if it **doesn't make them happy**

PART
1
RESEARCH

18-24 year olds value authenticity less than other age groups (76% vs 81%) and show greater consideration of how they're perceived by others. There's a greater focus on building a social media profile and achieving tangible signs of success – having the latest technology, driving an expensive car and earning a high income. This suggests authenticity is losing some of its currency in an increasingly manufactured world of news.

There are also differences between men and women in terms of showing their authentic selves. The research reveals that:

- Women are more likely to show their real selves to children, parents and friends than men
- Men are more likely to show their real selves to colleagues, neighbours and even their barista than women

But maybe we need to be a little less rigid about what it means to be authentic and accept the many shades of our identity. We typically don't present just one face to the world – sometimes we're heroes and sometimes we're villains. And most of the time we're just making lots of small pivots to better navigate our way through each day.



**I TELL EVERYONE I LOVE BEING A MOM
BUT I RESENT MY THREE DAUGHTERS AND
THE LIFE I GAVE UP TO HAVE THEM.**

**TIMES ARE DIFFERENT NOW, THERE ARE
DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS PLACED ON
CHILDREN, YOUNG ADULTS AND EVEN
YOUNG WOMEN, THEY CAN BE FREE TO
PURSUE WHAT THEY LOVE AND NOT HAVE
ALL THESE OTHER EXPECTATIONS PLACED
ON THEM. IF I COULD GO BACK AND DO
THINGS DIFFERENTLY, I WOULD HAVE
MORE COURAGE TO DO THAT MYSELF. I
WOULD PUT MY NEEDS FIRST MORE, AND
THINK MORE ABOUT WHAT I WANT OUT
OF LIFE RATHER THAN WHAT MY PARENTS
WANTED FOR ME, AND WHAT MY FAMILY
NEEDS FROM ME. HOPEFULLY NOW I
GET TO PURSUE SOMETHING FOR ME,
MAYBE WRITING.**

48yr old woman, Sydney





I LIE TO MYSELF ABOUT MY ALCOHOL/SEX ISSUES.

I'VE LIED TO OTHERS ABOUT MY BACKGROUND.

I'M LIVING WITH A MAN I DON'T LOVE ANYMORE.

*I TRIED TO ADHERE TO A PARTNER'S WAY OF LIFE
AND EXPECTATIONS.*

I'M HIV POSITIVE AND MY PARTNER DOESN'T KNOW.

*I HAVE A PRIVATE BANK ACCOUNT THAT MY WIFE DOESN'T
KNOW ABOUT. AND I USE IT TO BUY COCAINE.*

I WISH I'D NEVER HAD KIDS

*I SAID I WAS SICK SO I DIDN'T HAVE TO GO TO MY
FRIEND'S EVENT BECAUSE I WAS TOO TIRED AND
COULDN'T BE BOTHERED.*

*I DIDN'T WANT TO MEET UP WITH THE OTHER PEOPLE, SO I
SAID THAT I FORGOT ABOUT A PRIOR ENGAGEMENT.*

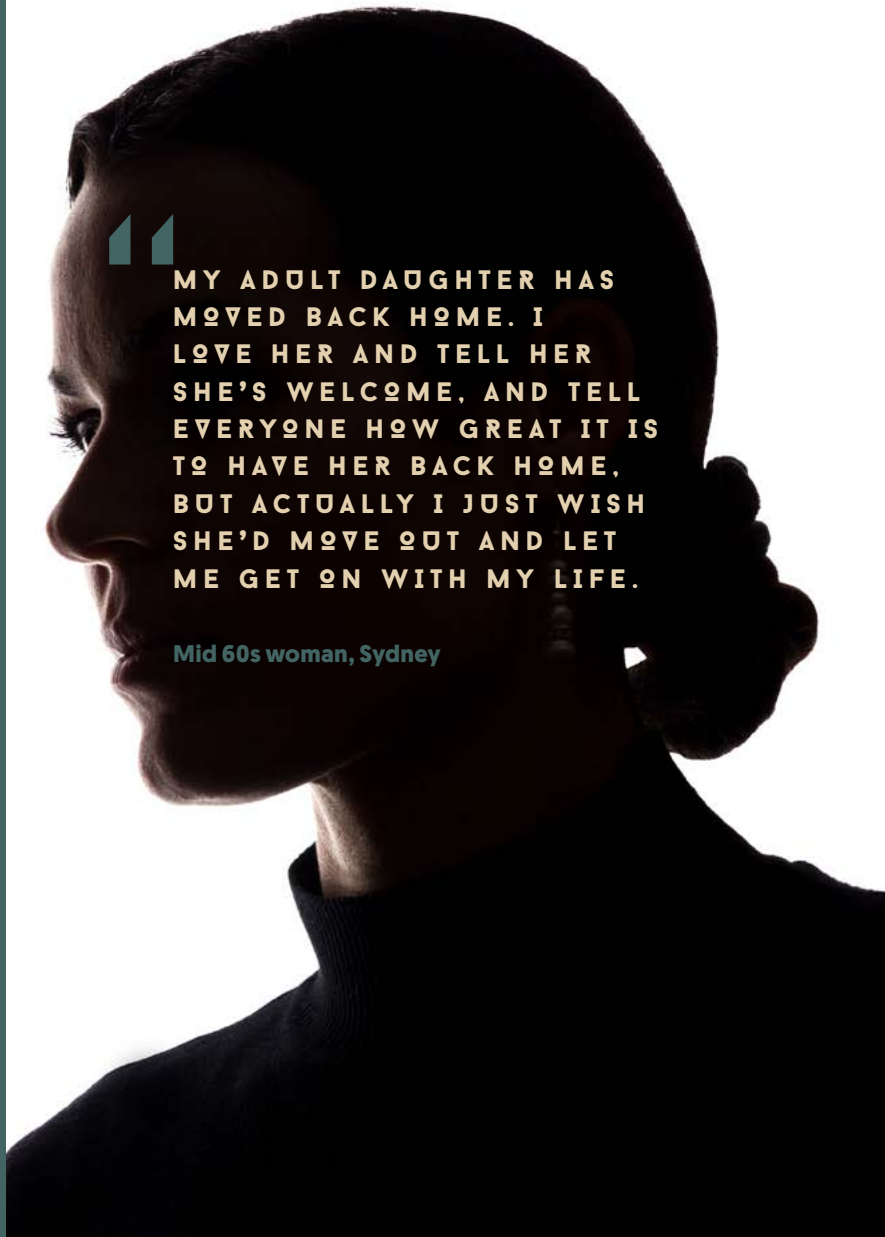
*I CHAT MORE ABOUT LIFE TO THE COFFEE GUY IN THE
MORNING THAN I DO TO MY WIFE.*

**GUYS AT THE GOLF CLUB KNOW I VOTED NO ON SAME
SEX MARRIAGE, BUT I TOLD MY SONS I VOTED YES.**



**MY ADULT DAUGHTER HAS
MOVED BACK HOME. I
LOVE HER AND TELL HER
SHE'S WELCOME, AND TELL
EVERYONE HOW GREAT IT IS
TO HAVE HER BACK HOME,
BUT ACTUALLY I JUST WISH
SHE'D MOVE OUT AND LET
ME GET ON WITH MY LIFE.**

Mid 60s woman, Sydney



CONDITIONAL KINDNESS

PART 2 RESEARCH

Of all the traits at the core of being human, kindness is universal and timeless.

It's the one value that's immune from politics, popular culture and technological advancement in this increasingly complex world in which we all live.

As a society, and in the research, we name kindness as the most important value on the values smorgasbord. Nothing else [it seems] is more important than kindness.

Whether you're 18 or 80. Male or female.

It's how we believe a civilised society should operate.

It's how we raise our children to behave.

It's how we judge our friends.

It's how we like to see ourselves.

Kindness costs nothing.

It's easy to execute and it cuts through every creed, colour and culture.

And every single Australian can practice it without formal education.

It's easier to speak of kindness in the abstract but it suffers collateral damage in the rough and tumble of daily life.

The research reveals that:

- Almost half of all Australians have deliberately gone out of their way to say something cruel to someone that they absolutely knew would hurt their feelings.
- Another 40% say that when they've been wronged, rather than forgive and forget they try to get even.



22%
of Australians admit to
hurting someone physically
or emotionally



38%
have taken advantage
of someone



54%
have been jealous of the
good fortune of others



8%
of us have regularly trolled
someone online

While many of these are still in the minority, the scale and pervasiveness of unkind behaviours strikes us as surprising in a society that claims kindness as its most important value.

“

I COULD HAVE USED MY TIME TO HELP SOMEONE BUT INSTEAD I CHOSE TO GO SHOPPING.

I SOMETIMES DON'T HAVE TIME FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT ME A LOT.

SOMETIMES I'M SPITEFUL AND MEAN TOWARDS THE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE WHEN I'M TIRED, STRESSED OR UPSET.

ON THE OUTSIDE I SMILE AND SAY: “WOW THAT'S GREAT.” ON THE INSIDE I THINK: “BITCH.”

I DIDN'T WANT TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THEIR DRAMA AND HAVE TO LISTEN AND SUPPORT THEM.

I'VE BEEN RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT AN APOLOGY FOR A WRONGDOING.

I'VE SPOKEN RUDELY AND SAID HURTFUL THINGS JUST BECAUSE I DIDN'T GET MY WAY, OR I DIDN'T LIKE SOMETHING.

CONFIDENT MUCH?

Despite what we see through the curated montage of their selfies and social media, there's an emerging crisis of confidence amongst our under 35s who represent about six million of our total population.

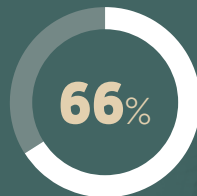
Never before has a generation had so much power and choice.

They can craft their own lives, reject norms or stereotypes and march to the beat of their own drum.

They are free to take full charge of their careers and relationships like no generation before them.

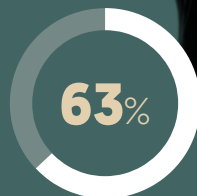
Yet something altogether unexpected is going on underneath the surface.

Are we seeing an emerging Tissue-Paper Generation?



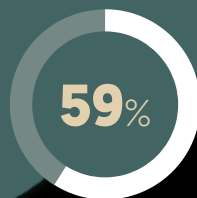
gives up regularly because they **think they have too little ability.**

They have a fragility that preceding generations simply didn't exhibit.



say it's hard for them to get on with their jobs **without huge amounts of continuous encouragement.**

They need constant reassurance and affirmation. They need to hear that they have talent and are worthy.



feel resentment if they don't get their way every time.

Compromise is wholly unfamiliar.

“

MY BOSS THINKS I'M
NEGATIVE BECAUSE I LIKE
TO PLAY DEVIL'S ADVOCATE.
I QUESTION THINGS AND
GIVE FEEDBACK THAT'S A
BIT CONFRONTATIONAL. I
INTERRUPT HER AND TELL
HER TO STOP.

Mid 40s woman, Dubbo

“

I'VE STARTED NEW THINGS
MORE OFTEN THAN I CARE
TO THINK ABOUT.

*SOMETIMES I SELF-
SABOTAGE MYSELF, SAYING:
"I CAN'T DO IT."*

I STILL DON'T REALLY KNOW
WHO I AM, OR WHAT MY
SKILLS AND TALENTS ARE.

I FEAR BEING REJECTED.

I HAVE SILLY MANAGERS
WHO DON'T SEE THE SKILLS
I HAVE TO OFFER.

*MY BOSS NEEDS TO BE
MORE RECEPTIVE OF
MY MOODS.*

I'D LIKE MORE
RECOGNITION AT WORK.
THEY JUST EXPECT ME TO
GET ON WITH IT.

*I THINK COMPLACENCY
HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST
OBSTACLE TO ACHIEVING
MY GOALS.*

**I JUST MOVED ON WHEN I
GOT BORED WITH A JOB.**

*I HATE THAT MY BROTHER
REFUSES TO SHARE HIS
VEHICLE WHEN I NEED IT,
SO I TAKE IT ANYWAY.*



“

I'M NOT HAPPY
AND REALLY DON'T
KNOW MYSELF OR
WHAT I'M CAPABLE
OF. I WAS NEVER
ENCOURAGED TO
DO SO.

21 year old woman,
regional Victoria



PARTY FOR ONE

We say family and friends is the most important aspect of our life.

We are social animals dependent on each other for nurturing, love and connection.

While these relationships are unquestionably a vital part of our lives, the research uncovers a yearning to pursue our own needs and interests. This includes our guilty pleasures.

We've uncovered a desire to keep something back and hidden from the rest of the world. We're so exposed to so many people so much of the time that keeping up this façade is exhausting. With much now written about the importance of self, maybe people are starting to listen.

While we rate the honesty level in our relationships with our children as high – we also admit that our children are less likely to know the real us.

We admit that we regularly hold back from being honest or saying what we really think in our dealings

with others – with the key reasons being to either protect their feelings, to please the other person or to avoid negative reprisals.

18-24 year olds are least likely to say spouse/partners knows their real self.

“

I ENJOY SHOTTING MYSELF OFF
AND BEING MYSELF. NOW THAT I'VE
RECENTLY BECOME SINGLE, THERE'S
MUM WEEK AND THERE'S SINGLE
WEEK. WHEN I DON'T HAVE THE KIDS
IT'S ABOUT GOING OUT AND HAVING
FUN, GOING DANCING AND EATING THE
TAKEAWAY THAT ONLY I LIKE.

45yr old single mum, Darwin

PART 4 RESEARCH



“

YEAH MAYBE NOT SO MUCH THE PERFECT WIFE OR LIFE, BUT HEY FOUR KIDS WHAT CAN YOU DO? DON'T TELL ANYONE WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON THOUGH AS THEY WILL JUST GOSSIP AND JUDGE AND BE ALL PREACHY. SOMETIMES IT GETS TOO MUCH THOUGH SO I TELL EVERYONE I HAVE A WORK TRIP AND GO AND SPEND A FEW NIGHTS IN A HOTEL SOMEWHERE. THEY ALL THINK I'M OFF LIVING THE HIGH LIFE ON THE CORPORATE ACCOUNT

Mid 40s man, regional Victoria



38%

of people would be willing to sacrifice 20% of time with family for a 20% increase in financial gain*



31%

would take a job that required them to relocate away from all family and friends for two years if it meant they could double their income



20%

have used work as an excuse to avoid time with family



63%

have made up an excuse to cancel on a social arrangement



26%

say having children is not important



73%

would prefer to be single than in a relationship that makes them unhappy

*This increases to 46% if ratio was a 10% trade off

SECRETS & LIES

CHAPTER TWO

MOTIVATIONS AND MEANING

BY MICHAEL HENDERSON,
ANTHROPOLOGIST

Highlighting secrets and lies raises an important question.

Is the presence of secrets and lies in our society an indication of deviant behaviour?

It's easy to jump to the conclusion that secrets and lies are bad, that they're unethical and should be avoided at all times. But the reality is that our intent for keeping a secret or telling a lie places these behaviours in an altogether different context.

Human beings are social animals. We thrive because we belong. This is a lesson learnt in great antiquity by our ancient ancestors. The '*survival of the fittest*' concept was popular for many years but '*survival of the social*' is just as valid.

Socialisation and the curation of culture is a big and complex subject with the need for knowledge at its heart. In order to belong, we need to know. We need to know who belongs and who doesn't. What behaviour is and isn't acceptable? Who can be trusted and who can't? Who has specific skills and in what subjects?

Such knowledge is crucial to the very act of socialisation. It's so important that humans quickly

understood the value of packaging, positioning, editing and withholding knowledge.

Knowing the best fishing spot won the status of being the best fisherman.

Knowing the healing properties of certain herbs bestowed status, power or indebtedness.

Keeping the fishing spot or herbal healing properties secret, and then lying when asked about them, helped maintain a position of influence within the tribe.

Of course, not all secrets and lies are of a Machiavellian or political nature.

We've all kept a secret to protect a birthday surprise or told a lie to save feelings from being hurt.

"YOU WEREN'T THAT BAD."

"THAT CAKE IS DELICIOUS."

"NO, YOU DON'T LOOK FAT IN THOSE PANTS."

HUMANS
QUICKLY
UNDERSTOOD
THE VALUE OF
PACKAGING,
POSITIONING,
EDITING AND
WITHHOLDING
KNOWLEDGE.

On the other hand, many lies are motivated by manipulation rather than empathy. And not all secrets are meant to ensure a child doesn't discover they're getting a puppy for their birthday.

These secrets and lies are a linguistic sleight of hand. The means by which people all around the world hide or present some aspect of themselves from and to others is a fascinating aspect of human culture.

Brands and organisations that understand the role secrets and lies play in life will be able to tap into a dialogue that highlights human empathy and frailties at the same time.

They will get to the very heart of what it means to be a *'person'*. In doing so, they'll discover what masks people need to feel comfortable within themselves and be perceived in a particular way.

Emotions drive behaviours. The more you know about what drives behaviours, the more you can position messages and brands to trigger them.

SECRETS
AND LIES
ARE A
LINGUISTIC
SLEIGHT
OF HAND.



MOTIVATIONS AND MEANING

Secrets and lies are riddled with emotions. Some healthy, some not. Understanding the nuances of this most complex aspect of human communication reveals the most intimate aspects of being human.

People need knowledge to belong to a family, team, group, tribe, organisation or nation. In cultural terms, knowledge falls into three distinct categories – Control, Relate and Develop.*

CONTROL refers to anything that enables or enhances our ability to control our situation or circumstances. This includes food, shelter, performance, quality, finances, health, safety or security.

RELATE is knowing our preferred way of relating to others. This includes family, friendship, caring, listening, trusting and collaborating.

DEVELOP refers to a preferred way of growing. This includes learning, experimenting, discovery, insight, empowerment and influence.

* [Michael Henderson research as published in his book Leading Through Values published by HarperCollins 2006]

From this, there are three primary reasons why people choose to keep secrets and tell lies:

PROTECTION [CONTROL]

People keep secrets to protect themselves or to protect knowledge from falling into the awareness of others. Although this may be driven by a desire for establishing or maintaining some perceived level of safety – such as not letting people know their vulnerabilities, faults, mistakes or weaknesses – people also protect knowledge from being known to others to maintain an element of surprise. For example, knowing about but not revealing the knowledge of a surprise birthday party.

People keep all sorts of secrets and tell all sorts of lies to protect themselves.

“

I'M NOT A CROOK

“

**I DID NOT HAVE A SEXUAL
RELATIONSHIP WITH
THAT WOMAN**

“

OF COURSE SANTA IS REAL!



PRIVACY [RELATE]

People keep secrets and tell lies to maintain a sense of privacy in a social setting. Even something as innocent as being asked how you are by a friend or colleague challenges the sense of privacy. How the person who asks the question is perceived by the person being asked will significantly influence the response.

If the person asking the question is considered an acquaintance but not a friend, then the answer may be secretive or contain a lie: "I'm fine, thanks for asking." On the surface this is a socially acceptable response and yet the person may be suffering severe morning sickness due to a pregnancy they don't wish to reveal. So the short and simple response keeps a secret and tells a lie in order to maintain privacy.

POWER [DEVELOP]


People also keep secrets and tell lies to establish or maintain power. If knowledge is power, the willingness or otherwise to share with others dictates when secrets are kept and lies are told. Even a little white lie or a fib is still a lie.

This is the very essence of governments around the world using secret service agencies to conduct clandestine activities. Likewise, organisations keep intellectual property secret to maintain a powerful competitive advantage.

A teacher maintains the power to educate by keeping exam questions secret or by withholding more advanced levels of learning until the student is better equipped to deal with the newly revealed knowledge.

At a more personal level, people keep secrets and tell lies to develop a sense of power over others. People keep secrets at work to position themselves as informed and influence their career progression. In marriages, one partner might tell lies about shared finances as a means of developing power.

Recalling that the English word 'person' comes from the Greek '*prosopon*' meaning *mask*. Protection, Privacy, and Power are the three masks people use to present themselves to the world in a particular way.



Brands and organisations have an opportunity to understand the context and drivers for secrets and lies and can view positioning, product offering and service delivery through the three filters of Protection, Privacy, and Power. It should offer the opportunity for a powerful recalibration of narrative dialogue and value.

3 MASKS PEOPLE USE TO PRESENT THEMSELVES TO THE WORLD IN A PARTICULAR WAY.



SECRETS & LIES

CHAPTER THREE


THE IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITIES

SO, WHAT DOES THIS ALL
MEAN FOR THE BRANDS AND
ORGANISATIONS TRYING TO
ENGAGE WITH AUSSIES IN A
WAY THAT RESONATES?



BY ROSE HERCEG,
CHIEF STRATEGY
OFFICER, WPP AUNZ

Rose has built a career as one of Australia's most respected futurists and social forecasters and BRW Magazine named her the number one innovative thinker in the country. As Chief Strategy Officer, Rose consults to WPP AUNZ clients across its 80 operating companies on emerging trends, marketing strategy and innovation.



Historically the 4 Ps have been the foundation of marketing:

PRODUCT

the features, design and function

PRICE

the strategy of pricing

PLACE

the distribution channel

PROMOTION

the entire marketing and advertising campaign

If **Secrets & Lies** has taught us anything, it's that the motivation for our behaviour is driven by **three new Ps that should also be considered.**

PROTECTION

The keeping of secrets and telling of lies to protect ourselves or prevent knowledge from falling into the hands of others.

PRIVACY

The keeping of secrets and telling of lies to maintain a sense of privacy in a social setting.

POWER

The keeping of secrets and telling of lies to create and maintain power.

SECRETS & LIES
HAS UNCOVERED
THREE SEISMIC
SHIFTS IN HOW
WE MIGHT
DO BUSINESS.

THREE LONGSTANDING
MARKETING MYTHS THAT
NEED TO BE DEBUNKED.

THREE NEW PLAYS TO
SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WHEN
UNLEASHING SOMETHING NEW
ONTO THE WORLD STAGE.

1.

SINGLE-MINDED IS SIMPLE-MINDED.

IT'S RIGHT THAT BRANDS HAVE A **SINGLE-MINDED PURPOSE, A VISION AND A MISSION.** THESE MUST BE FIXED AND PERMANENT. PURPOSE, VISION AND MISSION IS THE TRUE NORTH OF ANY BRAND.

But other aspects can change.

Every marketing and communications textbook on the planet preaches the value of a single brand voice. One brand personality. One brand tone. One brand song-sheet from which everyone can sing across borders, cultures and commercial markets.

Is the obsession with consistency forcing every brand to fall into brand blandness?

The most successful brands thrive on conflict and contradiction, even polarity.

They sometimes have multiple personalities. They display nuance with different target audiences. They look at their brand tone of voice and brand personality like a kind of dog whistle. What one generation or target audience hears will never be heard by another.

They're comfortable manipulating their brand tone and personality, exploiting it based on timing, audience, opportunity and media channel. Nothing is set in stone. It's all up for debate. The brand is in a continuous state of evolution and flux.

Fluidity is the defining brand characteristic. Much like people. These behaviours are the future of branding.

MARKETING MYTH 1

**BRANDS MUST BE NEAT AND TIDY,
WITH ONE TONE AND ONE PERSONALITY.
AT ALL TIMES. AND FOR
ALL AUDIENCES.**

NEW PLAY

Polarity and contradiction isn't a vice.

It shows great strength and real guts.

It provides stretch and depth.

There's room for a little Chaos Theory in marketing.



IDEAS

A

What would happen if a world-famous health food brand, known for helping millions of people lose weight and keep it off, introduced a limited edition range of high-fat, high-quality [highly delicious] treats to be eaten only on very special occasions? Because even the strictest eating plan needs an occasional blowout – which is the real trick to keeping people on the straight and narrow. 90% of the eating is healthy. 10% is cheeky. This is polarity in play.

B

What if a straight-laced, conservative underwear manufacturer specialising only in comfortable full-sized underwear for women 65+ were to sell exactly the same range to young women looking for comfortable underwear to double as PJs when sleeping alone? It would need a new personality and tone of voice for this very different target audience.

C

What if the world's least reputable car brand with limited design and quality credentials were to market itself to people who have absolutely no regard for cars but know they need one? The anti-car for drivers who attach absolutely no value or emotion to logos.

2.

THE POWER OF ONE

ONE IS THE LONELIEST
NUMBER?

NOT ANYMORE.

To be alone can be the most freeing experience
in life.

Alone isn't lonely.

When chosen for the right reasons, it's liberating.

It's illuminating.

Because the most important relationship we ever
have is the one we have with ourselves.

Getting this right has a knock-on effect for
everything else in our lives.

Relationships. Family. Friendships. Health.
Happiness. Career.

Doing solo well has never been promoted in
our society.

It's still stigmatised.

It's often ridiculed.

And yet there's nothing more satisfying than the SSB
[Secret Single Behaviour] that should be rewarded.

Why is it secret? Why can't we celebrate it?

MARKETING MYTH 2

**FAMILIES AND FRIENDS MUST
BE INTEGRAL TO EVERY SINGLE
LIFE EXPERIENCE.
ONLY SHARED EXPERIENCES
ARE MEANINGFUL.**

NEW PLAY

**Room for great
'solo' moments.**

**Let's allow Aussies
to celebrate the
Power of One.**

**Let's help
businesses create
new revenue
streams for
exactly this kind
of moment.**



IDEAS

A

What would happen if a big Australian bank created an entire campaign around a single person qualifying for a loan to purchase their dream home? No partner, no kids, no dog. The celebration of one of life's greatest achievements done alone. The victory of standing on one's own feet, doing it independently and choosing that dream home without any compromise.

B

What if a travel company or hotel chain stopped charging extra for people travelling alone? Better still, what if the entire travel industry from airline to hotel to guided-touring company created packages for one that were much more exciting than those for built for two or for families?

C

What if stylish, upmarket restaurants right across the world reserved tables for one? Especially on Friday and Saturday nights. What if dining alone in fancy eateries was the New Black in dining?



3.

EXTREME MARKETING

SOCIETY IS CRYING OUT FOR LEADERS, BRANDS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT PLAY IN THE EXTREMES.

Aussies are so worn down by everybody screaming about authenticity that we've somehow lost the grand visions along the way. The desire for authenticity has squeezed the juice out of imagination.

We're craving fantasy and creativity.

Even ordinariness can be presented in a way that brings great joy to the masses.

The worthiness that drips from authenticity has quashed the excitement from many of our leaders, brands and organisations as well as from the products and services they provide.

Imagination isn't a dirty word.

Neither is pleasure.

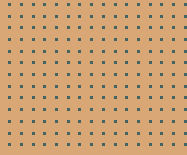
Big dreams should have a place in our society.

That a company dreams about colonising Mars with no practical roadmap is a good thing. So is the idea of overhauling our entire education system so that teachers are the best paid people in our society – even if there's no clear plan to get there yet.

MARKETING MYTH 3

AUTHENTICITY IS THE
GOLD STANDARD.





NEW PLAY

The Big Dream is intoxicating. So is imagination.

A new frontier. A crazy ambition. It's deeply attractive to have one.

Finding colour in the fringes. Taking unashamedly from the extremes.



IDEAS

A

What if a major infrastructure and building construction business decided to blanket the African continent with roads and transport? To give every developing economy access to the big cities and markets. To connect remote villages to all other villages so that the poorest countries of the world had decent roads and highways. Allowing aid workers to get to the people they need to help the most. Removing every dirt track or inaccessible community and replacing it with smooth roads and highways. What an incredible opportunity this would bring to the poorest countries and people in our world.

B

What if a big bank decided to eradicate poverty in Australia by 2040? By providing thousands of interest-free micro-loans to anyone who wanted to open up a small business and pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Or decided to teach every citizen about money and how to save it or build wealth [no matter their income] until every single citizen in Australia became financially literate. An audacious goal that may never be reached but a worthy one for the betterment of all society.

C

What if a supermarket set a goal for zero food wastage in Australia by 2030? Every food product nearing its use-by date would be donated to shelters and to those in need. Every perishable product would be turned into healthy soups and meals to be given away to low-income Australians who run short of food most months of the year. A noble goal. Perhaps impossible but a goal worth pursuing.





ABOUT THIS STUDY

Secrets & Lies is based on comprehensive research commissioned by WPP AUNZ and conducted by two of its specialist research and insights companies: Colmar Brunton and AMR.

The Australian research comprised extended face-to-face interviews with a broad range of consumers. It focused on understanding how people feel about a range of life aspects, how they act and how this interplays with personal, social and national identity. These interviews were conducted during June 2018 across a range of capital city, regional and remote locations.

Based on the outcomes of the initial qualitative phase a questionnaire was developed, with further refinement then made following cognitive testing.

The final stage of fieldwork comprised a national survey of 2,500 Australians aged 18 years and over. The same survey was also conducted with 1,500 New Zealanders. It measured people's attitudes and behaviours regarding a range of personal, social and national identity factors. The survey was conducted online, with fieldwork taking place in July and August 2018. The sample was designed to ensure accurate age, gender and location representation.

SECRETS & LIES

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RING THE BELLS THAT STILL CAN RING

FORGET YOUR PERFECT OFFERING

THERE IS A CRACK, A CRACK IN EVERYTHING

THAT'S HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

LEONARD COHEN
ANTHEM



wpp AU
NZ

