

WE DON'T CARE

by Gerald Celente
Director

Focus group studies, market research, and common sense tell us that stressed-out and splintered American families are in desperate need of caring and compassion at every level of social interaction.

At a time when the safety nets are fraying, the pressures to succeed are building, and the reality that you have to make it on your own is sinking in as never before, people are vulnerable to those messages and signs that promise an open heart and a helping hand.

This knowledge has not been lost on marketers of every stripe. "We Care," has become a cliché, yet another advertising slogan for consumers to screen out and shrug



off. From financial service institutions to the most mundane of consumer products, the claim is made that buying into the brand will bring you the emotional satisfaction that someone, somewhere, has your best interests in mind. Marketers have stretched the concept so far as to profess that a deep personal bond – resulting from using their products – will unite both advertiser and consumer in a happy union of mutual benefit.

Politicians may achieve success by reading polls, making the appropriate promises, and never fulfilling them once elected. But consumers, unlike once-a-year voters, will not return to the checkout counter if the "We Care" slogan is not matched by "We Care" products and services.

Marketers risk eliciting the same degree of disgust that attaches to unfulfilled political promises. Stop the "We Care" unless you really have a demonstrable track record of social responsibility and uncompromising product and service integrity.

OFF THE TREND LINE

WIRED AND OUT OF TOUCH

Contrary to the illusion that the wired world has brought about a creative and informed society, there is a hidden cost to the 24/7/360 connection. The excesses of the new electronic medium that cause people to be endlessly available and constantly communicating are sapping creativity and stifling imagination.

With mouths continuously moving, the mouse continuously clicking, and the mind constantly engaged in doing business, the terminally wired have lost those moments of contemplation so necessary to creative development.

If the focus is on communication, it is most likely coming at the expense of contemplation and reflection. To track trends effectively, to see the future forming, it is necessary to spend countless quiet hours reading information from a variety of sources, and assessing the implications of events and actions. To profit from trends, it's necessary to develop strategies appropriate to the movements identified and analyzed. This process cannot be maximized under the pressures of the interruptions of an on-line, on-call, on-demand atmosphere.

But the way of the wired won't give way. In fact, as technology continues to develop, there will be greater intrusions and a further erosion of private time and creative space. Those intent upon being trend-focussed, must recognize that choices need to be made.

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