

Nobody's Perfect!

Last weekend I was lucky enough to be up at the Hunter Valley. I usually take a visit to the wine capital of New South Wales once a year with a group of friends to celebrate the up and coming football season.

On the recommendation of a friend who's a bit of a wine buff, I visited Bimbagen Estate (one of the nicer wineries up in the wine region) on the way out of the Hunter.

The plan was to sign up to the membership program which provides you with a taster pack of 6 bottles every 6 months for a cost of \$100 per taster pack, so that's

around \$17 a bottle...and not bad wines apparently. So I was keen to sign up.

I entered the busy wine tasting area and approached the counter. A young gentleman behind the counter who seemed to know what he was talking about attended to me. Next to him, I found our later, was the 'Cellar Door' Manager.

As the young gentlemen was explaining things to me, he left a few important pieces of information out of his explanation, and the 'Cellar Door' Manager was kind enough to fill in the blanks as he explained.

I had a couple of questions of my own, which he seemed a little vague on, but yet again, the Manager was on to the response like Brendan Fevola on a camera phone, and gave me the answers I was after.

As I paid for my

membership, the Manager took over the process, explaining further things about the Estate as well as value adds you receive as a member...free wine tasting rooms if I bring a group along, a complimentary Signature bottle if I recommend a friend to be a member, prime position for concerts held on the Estate, and the list goes on. Happy with my 6 bottles, she also included a Signature bottle as part of the taster pack. So I walked away with 6 bottles, full of information on the Estate and a pleasant experience along the way. Impressed. Tremendously.

When I arrived home from my two-hour drive,

I settled in on the couch. Not a regular viewer of 60 Minutes, I tuned in by accident to find the introduction of a segment profile on Tony Abbott...an inside look at the Contender to Kevin Rudd in this years election.

I remember when Mr Abbott was a guest lecturer in a Politics subject at Macquarie University in my first year 13 years ago. Back then he was parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. How things have changed. He had a little more hair back then.

As Liz Hayes puts it, some people think of Tony as a 'right wing religious throwback to a by-gone era'. So was this episode the beginning of Tony Abbot's Marketing Campaign for this year's election? It started with a backyard pool shot of him and his daughters, then hard at it on the BBQ, followed by a dinner table shot with his 3 daughters, his lovely wife and their dog Maisey.

Ironically, while at the table with his female packed household, there was speculation during the interview by Liz that Mr Abbott is not seen favourable by women. Then, 2 days later, Mr Abbott awards 6 months parental leave. He announced parental leave of 26 weeks, with an annual levy to \$2.7 billion of the universal parental leave scheme.

Changing perceptions, possibly. Did it work? Well, it's part of his greater plan to be elected. I have no doubt that all great political campaign managers are great strategists and marketers. They know their clients' strengths and weaknesses, and plan accordingly.

And what type of respectable marketing advisor would I be if I didn't comment on the recent management of Lara Bingle. Max Marskon may have had his own name thrown around in the past fortnight, but he's client has suffered. In all of this, Lara could have been played the victim, but instead, she chose to press the collect button instead of retreating and playing the innocent card. Making a buck from her 'pain' doesn't place her in good light. The play should have been to put her on the first plane to New Zealand to be next to her soon to be husband. Choose your cricket analogy here, but Lara's reputation has certainly now been hit for six.

So in one day, I am impressed with 2 elements of marketing communication that have been done well. Meanwhile, a week of nonsense by another. What did we learn? The good ones; Both subtle and clear. A direct message. True to what they stand for. Very factual. No bells and whistles. That's what made them so effective. The bad one...well, nobody's perfect...but don't hide it...or pocket from it!

Where's my bottle opener?

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A quick one on...making amends

- When you know you've made a mistake, best to face it front on, admit your faults and move on.
- Everyone is human and makes mistakes, so it's best to acknowledge them when you have, people respect you more for that.

- Admit your faults and work on them. It's difficult to change perceptions, but you can try over time if the message is targeted and consistent.
- Great example of leading political strategists can be seen in a

movie called Spinning Boris. In 1996, three U.S Republican campaign operatives take a top-secret job assisting Boris Yeltsin's re-election when he's way down on approval. It's all about polling, focus groups, messages and spin.