Wildlife Conservation Depends on Human Behaviour Change of Users, Conservationists, Donors

Dr. Lynn Johnson
Founder, Breaking The Brand Project
Managing Director, Leadership Mastery Pty Ltd
One Little Rhinos Story

In all the tragic events Nia’s team has seen regarding rhino poaching, the photograph of this little calf has been one of the most heart wrenching. We have been looking for the story behind the photograph and here it is:

In May 2011 a female rhino was driven over a cliff by a group of poachers using a pack of dogs; her horn was then chopped off and the rhino was partially butchered.

It must have taken the little calf some time (more than a day) to get to its mother at the bottom of the cliff, where it lay next to its dead mother until an anti-poaching unit found them.

We don’t know what happened to the calf, but this photograph keeps us driven.
Why Did The Market For Rhino Horn Change?

- Low levels of poaching in South Africa for over 17 years
- In 1993 China’s GDP enters period of steep growth
- In 2003 Viet Nam enters period of steep growth
- What happened since 2007?
- TRAFFIC 2012 report and other research indicates rhino poaching driven by exponential growth in demand primarily from Viet Nam
WHY?

Demand From Viet Nam Is New

- 70% of the population of Viet Nam is under 35 years.
- Fast growing market for luxury goods and brands.
- Aspirational and status conscious.
- High inequality, small percentage of extremely wealthy.
- **Rhino horn is status symbol.**
- >90% of rhino horn purchased is fake.
- Rising prices turn rhino horn into an investment / store of value.
Why Can’t We Protect Rhinos?

- Kruger NP and Etosha NP are both the size of Israel
- Effective protection on a small reserve costs USD 1-2 million per 100 rhinos per year
- There is a nearly unlimited supply of desperately poor people who can be enlisted as poachers to earn 5x annual salary in 1 night
- The trafficking chain is well established and protected by corruption at all levels in both range and demand countries
What About Law Enforcement?

- Could work, but only by targeting the traffickers via the money trail
- **Cannot work on the ground in range countries** (much bigger issues – murder, rape etc.)
- **Cannot work in destination countries** – consumers are the top 0.01% - immune from law
- No political will to choke the money trail – how to do it is technically quite easy, but hasn’t happened for drugs, arms, human trafficking
The Value Of Wildlife Crime

- Wildlife crime is the 4th largest transnational crime in the world
- It is estimated to be worth US$20 billion
- High-value ‘products’ like rhino horn (~US$65,000/kg) are easy to smuggle
- Low risk of punishment

- Traffickers moving from exploiting interest to manufacturing interest
- This is not Business As Usual, a new/additional strategy is needed
Then What Can We Do?

Best hope is to target the demand - Highest possible return on investment

Understanding consumption motivation and pattern means demand reduction is possible.
What Is Demand Reduction?

- **Pre-requisite:**
  1. Know the users groups
  2. Understand why they consume the product
  3. Find out what would stop them consuming

- **Create undiluted messages that:**
  1. Target the users directly
  2. Speak to them in their language
  3. Cause an emotional response
  4. Trigger a motivation to stop

- **One message only, not cacophony of voices – conservation sector needs to stop competing and start collaborating.**
High Status Males

- Senior Businessmen/Finance Professionals/Government Officials.
- Group values rarity and expense rather than perceived medical properties.
- Acquiring rare produce associated with money, power and skill.
- Rhino horn gift used to demonstrate respect and competence when negotiating deals.
- Gifts used to influence and obtain preferential treatment from those in positions of power.
- Historically people have developed an interdependent self-concept vs. independent self-concept and, as a result, you can’t put personal preferences before group objective – loss of face - peer group pressure

Primary User 1

They stated only 2 motivators to stop using:

- Negative impact on personal status as a result of using/giving rhino horn.
- Negative impact on health from using rhino horn.

“I trust my South African Supply Chain”

Don’t see farmed rhino horn as a substitute product
Affluent Women

• Believe in fever-reducing qualities of rhino horn - in line with use in Chinese/Vietnamese medicine.
• Keep small quantities at home in case child gets a high fever.
• Also buy for aging parents.
• Relatively recent trend.
• Unclear if using fake vs. genuine rhino horn.
• A group heavily influenced by social media.
• Small individual quantities but large group size.
• Interested and aspire to celebrity mothers.
• Again very status conscious and aspirational.

Primary User 2

They stated only one motivator to stop using:

• Negative impact on family health from using rhino horn.

“If my aging parent or parent-in-law asks me to buy rhino horn for them, culturally I can’t say no even if I don’t believe in it.”

“Being able to tell them that the horn is poisoned is the only way I feel I can push back on the request”
Why Do They think Rhino Horn = Status???

- Globally many people say they can’t relate to the motivation to consume ‘ground up finger nails’
- Are we so different?
- Why do people believe a Louis Vuitton handbag = status???
  - Fake bag = $200
  - Real bag = $2,000+
- Same bag! Same material!
- Difference: STATUS SYMBOL
- Status symbols are a social agreement, which can be changed as values or even tastes evolve

Can YOU tell the difference?
Influencing Consumption

• Private sector has accumulated massive expertise in influencing consumption – marketing, advertising, social psychology, behavioural economics, neuroscience

• Applies to all goods from fast food to luxury cars

Key strategies that apply to rhino horn are:

1. **Status Anxiety** (peer pressure, keeping up)
2. Fear of death/loss of loved one (miracle cancer cure)
3. Personal **health anxiety** (chi, detox drink)
4. Loss Aversion (investment, store of value)
Conservation Sector Has Been Comfortable With Awareness Raising

**Appeal to Empathy**

**Rational Argument**

**Appeal to Higher Values**

*None of these strategies*

- Get the user’s attention
- Trigger an immediate emotional response in the user
Behaviour Change Messages

• Get the target’s attention by providing a link to their identity (‘this is about people like me’)

• Create an instant emotional response in the recipient

• Negative emotions are experienced 3-4 stronger than positive emotions

• FUD – Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt (Status anxiety, health anxiety)
Using Anxiety Works - Tobacco

Health Anxiety

Status Anxiety
Accepting Discomfort

Conservation sector needs to evolve to accept discomfort in creating and publishing campaigns that target the users and have negative messages.
Great Examples of Behaviour Change Campaigns

- It takes up to 40 dumb animals to make a fur coat.
- But only one to wear it.

- If you don't want millions of animals tortured and killed in leg-hold traps, don't buy a fur coat.

- Rich bitch.
- Poor bitch.

- "A Bird of Prey", Punch, 14th May 1892.
Results Can Happen Quickly

SeaWorld sees profits plunge 84% as customers desert controversial park

Company reports decline in attendance, sales and profits in continuing struggles for park since 2013 film Blackfish claimed it mistreated orca whales

SeaWorld has suffered a 84% collapse in profits as customers have deserted the controversial aquatic theme park company following claims it mistreated orca whales.

The company, which trains dolphins and killer whales to perform tricks in front of stadiums full of spectators, on Thursday reported declines in attendance, sales and profits because of “continued brand challenges”.

From the launch of Blackfish in July 2013, this profit plunge took just two years
Behaviour Change Is Highly Targeted

Basic Test to Differentiate Demand Reduction from Awareness Raising and Education

Awareness Raising

- The campaign targets a broad, general population to make them (more) conscious about the (scale of the) problem

Educates segments of population who don’t currently use rhino horn e.g. children, students or educates general population to highlight limiting belief e.g. like finger nails, no medical benefits

Educates groups that can influence the current users of rhino horn to stop e.g. government officials, traditional Chinese medicine practitioners, police, doctors, judiciary etc.

Educates user demographic group (who may or may not be using rhino horn) in a way that encourages them not to start using or discourages them from starting to use rhino horn.

Elicits emotional response in user demographic group in a way they will challenge/reject the people they know who are using rhino horn (move to action).

Elicits emotional response in the current users groups such that they become conscious about the implications of and opposition to their use of rhino horn.

Elicits emotional response in the current users groups to such a level that it triggers them to stop using rhino horn in a time frame that is useful to save the rhino from extinction in the wild
Awareness Raising Campaigns—Estimated Spend US $10 Million
Education Campaigns—Estimated Spend Less than US$5 Million
Campaigns Challenging Beliefs Current Users—Estimated Spend Less than US$1.5 Million
Campaigns That Have The Potential To Trigger Behaviour Change

Spend less than US$70,000
Collaborating With Social Science

“Sales tricks are what you use to sell something to someone who doesn’t even know they want it.” The Salesman’s Mantra

Let's use these same strategies to stop people buying wildlife ‘products’.

- Conservation is about people’s behaviour, not animals
- Poaching is a social/economic issue
- Conservation science is still too wedded to biology, ecology
- We can only win the war on wildlife trafficking through collaboration with social sciences
- Cultural anthropology, social marketing, behavioural economics, social psychology
Using Behaviour Change Models

• Social Marketing and social psychology have developed numerous models of human behaviour change

• Most conservation agencies remain unaware of these models and go ‘with their gut feeling’

• Most conservation agencies are more concerned about their donors’ responses than campaign effectiveness

• Most ‘measurements’ performed do not measure demand (reduction)
What About Rhinos?

- Basically 2 avenues to target demand:
  1. Health Anxiety – make the product unsafe
  2. Status Anxiety – make the product ‘unsexy, take away its prestige’

- Campaigns should always be created to resonate with the users and based on THEIR values

- Continue protection and law enforcement
- DO NOT legalise trade – creates new demand
- Won’t stop poaching - farmed rhino will not help as it is not seen as a substitute product by the Vietnamese elite who can afford genuine, wild rhino horn
- Similarly, elite don’t see synthetic horn as substitute product
Health Anxiety – Rhino Horn Infusion

- Pharmaceutical industry research - once there is a 1 in 7 chance of a negative reaction to health supplement/medication users stop taking
- Infuse 15% of SA rhinos

Pro-trade lobby undermined this method as it is the only technique that devalues the horn from a user perspective.
BTB Pilot Campaign (Sep 2014): Is it worth the risk?

Series of 6 adverts – 3 targets:

• **Businessmen:** - Tarnish the act of giving rhino horn by making the giver and the act look desperate and needy.

• **Businessmen and Mothers:** Instil fear and doubt about the possible risk to their own or child’s health.

• **International Corporations:** To raise fear of reputational risk of staff caught receiving rhino horn as gift.

Advert uses:

• **Rhino horn infusion:**

  Organophosphates: neurotoxin immediate impact nausea and diarrhoea, long term effects central nervous system, effects brain development, long-term low dosage cognitive problems.

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

Cost/Locations:

• 19 adverts over 2 months in business, women’s magazines and two months in Heritage, Vietnamese Airline magazine.

• Commercial rates AU$30,000
BTB Lunar New Year (Jan2015): Will your luck run out?

Series of 4 adverts – 3 targets:

- **Businessmen**: - Tarnish the act of giving rhino horn to business network for LNY.
- **Businessmen and Mothers**: Instil fear and doubt about the possible risk to their own or child’s health

Advert uses:

- Superstition around LNY
- Rhino horn infusion:
  - Organophosphates (neurotoxin - central nervous system, brain development, cognitive problems)
  - Ectoparasiticides (linked to increased risk of certain cancers) and radioactive tracers
- Poachers know but don’t care
- Users can’t dissociate themselves from human toll

Cost/Locations:

- 11 adverts over 5 weeks, leading up to LNY 19th February 2015, in business, women's magazines and one month in Heritage, Vietnamese Airline magazine.
- Commercial rates AU$25,000
BTB (Jan2016): What does a wildlife criminal look like?

2 adverts – 3 targets:

- **Businessmen**: - Tarnish the act of giving rhino horn to business network for LNY.
- **Businessmen and Mothers**: Instil fear and doubt about the possible risk to their own or child’s health
- **International Corporations**: To raise fear of reputational risk of staff caught receiving rhino horn as gift.

Advert uses:

- Vietnam increasingly globalized, signatory to TPP
- More exposure to international business and business leaders, greater scrutiny
- Superstition around LNY
- Users can’t dissociate themselves from rhino poaching crisis

Cost/Locations:

- 12 adverts over 7 weeks and paid editorial in the leading up to LNY 8th February 2016 and beyond, in business, lifestyle (golf) and women’s magazines.
- Commercial rates AU$33,000
Campaign Summary

- A total of AU$85,000 was spent producing/publishing adverts in Vietnamese media.
- Commercial rates had to be paid in all publications.
- For 3 of the 4 months from beginning of November 2014 to the end February 2015 we had full page RhiNo adverts in Heritage Magazine. Vietnam Airlines has about 300 daily flights to 21 destinations domestically and to 28 internationally.
- We know that by placing an advert in the magazine we are targeting some of Viet Nam’s wealthiest citizens and the demographic group that can afford to buy genuine rhino horn.
Campaign Responses

One important experience

In a conversation with one businessman in Hanoi he told me about a friend whose child has cancer. She had bought rhino horn. This businessman had seen the adverts and told her about them. The fear of giving her child poisoned rhino horn meant that when she finished using the piece she had she said she wouldn’t buy any more.

- Great feedback from Viet Nam in relation to messaging, images and approach
- Viet Nam jumps to third top country downloading information from our website
- Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi become second and third cities following us on Facebook
- In TV and newspaper interviews, questions focus on rhino horn poisoning and wanting to know more
- WildAct Vietnam followed up with related campaign and TV interview
- No quantitative research due to lack of funds
This can be Solved if we REALLY want to Solve it.

- Decide between Results vs. Activity
- Decide between what works vs. what I feel OK about - value judgements of conservationists and the donors
- Solving the problem in a sustainable fashion?
  - Hit the users hard with demand reduction messages based on health anxiety and status anxiety
  - Infuse 15% of rhinos in SA, Namibia etc.
  - Educate younger generations in Viet Nam based on higher values (underway)
  - Allow communities around National Parks in South Africa to profit from tourism (in discussion)
  - Force governments/business to collaborate on law enforcement to confiscate the money (hit traffickers) (underway)
What Can You Do?

• Ask Yourself: Can the problem I care about be solved by the free market? Or was it caused by lack of regulation or enforcement in the first place?

• Remember: The free market demands everything is treated as a commodity: people, animals, nature

• Acknowledge this happens because we tolerate it

• Look again at how we deal with an issue like rhino poaching – what assumptions allow this to happen?

• Shift your focus beyond effect (poachers and poaching) to cause (Vietnamese business men)
Summary

- Continuing demand growth makes it impossible to win on the supply side (including trade legalization)
- Demand reduction can work with the right messaging and targeting
- Conservation agencies need to create true demand reduction/ behaviour change campaigns targeting the users
- Conservation agencies distinguish between demand reduction vs. education vs. awareness raising
- Educate conservation, activist and donors that it is not about creating campaigns for them – they may find adverts that work ‘distasteful’

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