

Robin Hood Foundation Hero Award

ACNielsen has given business the facts to make the right decisions, says Jude Mannion.

Deciding this year's Robin Hood Awards winner was tough. It's as if this country is waking out of a long sleep, rubbing its eyes and seeing for the first time what connecting to consumers through values might look like.

This year Robin Hood's shortlist included quite exceptional people who run businesses.

And one thing they all had in common? They have all been humbled by how much they learned from their non-profit partners when they listened to their stories and learnt how best to help and share their skills.

The behaviour of this year's winning team will influence the entire business and non-profit sector in New Zealand.

With its groundbreaking "Good for life" survey the ACNielsen team became the first internationally to uncover not just intention but actual consumer behaviour related to cause-related marketing. The findings? That 62% of New Zealanders 15 and over bought a product or service because of its association with a charity or worthy cause.

Even more significantly for New Zealand businesses, 57% said they would buy products or services which were more expensive than similar products if they were made by a company linked with a charity.

This groundbreaking research brings home the message that consumers do 'give a damn' about what values brands stand for. It's the difference between knowing a brand and choosing to be its friend.

By covering the real costs of conducting this research, ACNielsen has made a clear social stand and a lasting donation right across the business and

non-profit sector of this country.

Businesses and non-profits that want to find out more about what will motivate their consumers now have a pool of research on which to build.

We now have the learning to validate that standing for a social value is good for business, good for shareholder value and absolutely measurable.

Our society is about to witness a sea-change in how brands talk. What companies own in the social landscape is one of the most powerful competitive points of difference they'll ever possess.

Be prepared to see, hear, and hold new types of brand language that reflect this. Will brands be more human, personal, caring about others, reflecting the corporate soul? Definitely.

US-based global commentator and speaker on social responsibility Dr Ri-

chard Steckel believes a tipping point is occurring in New Zealand where a rapid rise in awareness of a business' social responsibility portfolio is occurring.

"New Zealand has a unique capacity to wait, watch the world, then take an idea and do it better than it's been done before," he says. "Corporate and social return will integrate business units like nothing else has ever managed to do. It will reshape the landscape of how business talks to its customers."

In a country where one in three children is growing up in poverty, one in five is identified as at risk, and one in every seven homes harbours domestic violence, we need our heroes. We need all of them.

Jude Mannion is ceo of the Robin Hood Foundation.
Ph: 0-9-373 3158 or 021-434 464.

Heroes

The Robin Hood Foundation Hero Award celebrates inspirational marketing leadership in building innovative partnerships between business and non-profit organisations. This year's finalists were:

The Sovereign team 'Adventurers' who infected their organisation with their social partner's stories about giving school leavers with no hopes for their future a belief in themselves.

The Vodafone team 'Listeners' who backed the call to action from the callcentre for staff to join in the head-shaving event for the Leukaemia and Blood Foundation. They raised over \$50,000 in a single day.

The Warehouse team 'Innovators' who created a collaboration where there wasn't one in the literacy sector. Collectively they stand for an issue – often a hidden problem – that affects one in four of us. Imagine never being able to read a bus timetable or help your kids with their homework.

The Elizabeth Arden team 'Influencers' who stepped out of their comfort zone and took on the less fashionable, non-profit partner, BodySafe. Together they worked on educating young women on how not to become one of the 'one-in-ten' abused statistics and made a measurable difference.

The New Pages team 'Action' who worked with a non-profit partner to provide counselling non-