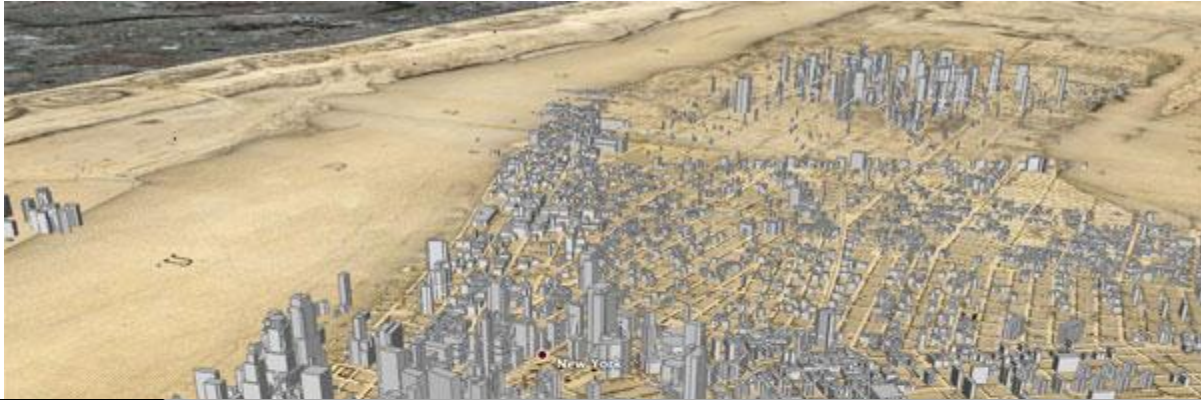


THE FRONTIER LAB
manifest marketing



OCCUPY
WALL STREET

SHORT-SELLING AMERICA



DECEMBER 2011 | Marketing Research Report by Anne Sorock

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, months after the first Occupy Wall Street protests began, everyone from political commentators and academics to everyday Americans is still struggling to make sense of the movement. For those who promote freedom, in particular, there have been two ways of understanding the protesters: (1) vilify or ridicule their message, or (2) embrace the anti-collusion rhetoric and rally around common ground.

While the Occupy protesters' definition of success remains hazy—for now—and it remains even less clear what their future behavior may be, what is clear is that they have succeeded in one respect: getting the attention of the nation. There is an opportunity to apply marketing-research science to this political enigma, and in doing so resolve much of the debate over who the Occupy protesters are, what they want, and how we should interact with them. The Frontier Lab's Means-End Value Chain research finds the real insights that make this understanding possible.

The research reveals two segments of Occupy protesters, divided not along demographics but along their deeper reasons for supporting the protests. These two segments, the Communitarians and the Professionals, support the Occupy solution because it satisfies six core values—many which flow from a decrease in individual responsibility and a focus on present-day satisfaction. The Professionals come together with the Communitarians, capitalizing on the latter's lack of meaning, purpose, and community in their lives, in order to achieve self-centered ends.

Key insights from the report:

- The Communitarians' deep-values set includes Community, Purpose, and Security
- The Professionals' deep-values set includes Prestige, Validation, and Control
- The promise and responsibility of 'The American Dream' do not overlap with either values set
- The most viable segment for conversion to other political movements are the Communitarians, because a sense of Community, Purpose, and Security can be more easily replicated

Neither segment seeks to build a strong and free America for future generations; in fact, the Occupy path directly opposes fundamental American values of freedom, equality of opportunity, and individual responsibility. While their rhetoric might decry crony capitalism or bank bailouts, their values reveal self-centered and fear-based motivations.

OWS protesters' values form a new way of understanding the movement beyond the traditional Left-Right dimension. When understood in this way, it is clear that similarities drawn between everyday Americans' desire for fiscal responsibility and Occupy's signage are solely surface-level and hollow. As we begin to track the rise of the third dimension in Occupy and across the political landscape, it reveals the true frontier of the battle for America. Those who would market American freedom to this disinterested and differently motivated audience fail to realize that Occupy wins when America loses. They are "going short" on America.

OBJECTIVES

The Frontier Lab's research goals are to distill the Occupy Wall Street protesters' attachment to their movement from a scientific standpoint—not only to lend a fresh take on a hotly debated topic, but also to provide a starting point for those who would seek to communicate with, or steer others away from, the ideas and ideals of the occupiers of America's Zuccotti parks.

To achieve these objectives, this report seeks to address the following questions:

- Who are the Occupy protesters and what do they want?
- What can we predict about their future behavior?
- How should those who seek to promote freedom interact with their ideas and their ideals?

Just as a marketer would seek to understand the deep values his customers associate with a product, so too can we view the political landscape as a marketplace—in this case for ideas, rather than for goods.

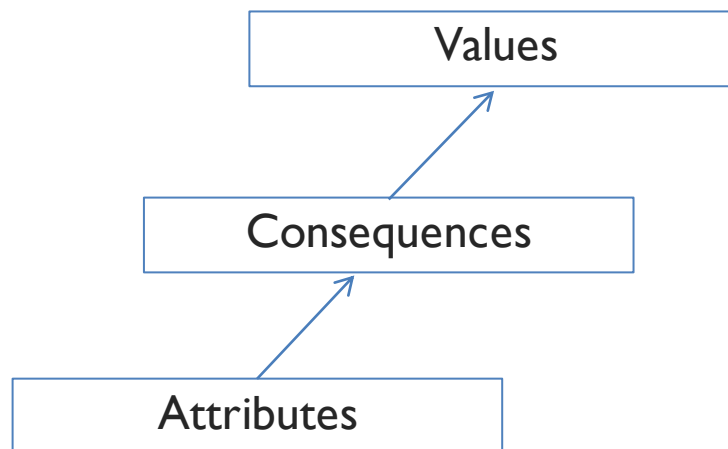
METHODOLOGY

When you ask someone why they use a particular brand of toothpaste, they might say “because I like the flavor,” “it was on sale,” or “I don’t know, I’ve always used it.” These are ATTRIBUTES—the first level of digging deep into why a person decides to buy a product.

It’s easy to craft an advertising campaign based on these attributes, or to market one brand of toothpaste on having an even “mintier” flavor than the next, but if you do so you are missing a crucial element of understanding consumer behavior—and crafting an impactful marketing campaign. A company will sell more toothpaste if it appeals to their customers’ confidence, than if they advertise mint flavor.

Through a process of insights-derivation, The Frontier Lab is able to apply this product marketing approach to trends and topics in American culture. In the case of the toothpaste, a marketing researcher might determine that the consequence of mint-flavored toothpaste is fresh breath. And, after further investigation, that fresh breath instills confidence in social situations. The difference between the customer’s preference for mint and what that means about his confidence is crucial to understanding the customer. The result is a mental map of a toothpaste brand champion, with values that allow a marketer to understand exactly *what is going through one target-segment’s minds*.

The Frontier Lab applied this process, successfully employed many times over in commercial applications, to the Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Chicago protesters. Through a series of fifteen in-depth interviews with the most passionate subjects, each lasting up to sixty minutes, researchers mapped the connections participants had with the protests. As Jonathan Gutman (“Laddering Theory, Method, Analysis and Interpretation”), found in his research (“Means-End Theory,” 1982), by understanding the value associations high-intensity consumers make with products, you can translate these insights to other, less involved, customers. Research subjects, by necessity of this scientific approach, were chosen based on their extremely high level of intensity in supporting the Occupy protests and were spread across varying geographical protests in order to ensure the validity of the results.



WHO ARE THE OCCUPY PROTESTERS?

The results of the research with subjects both in Zuccotti Park, New York City, and Occupy Chicago revealed two segments that, while unified by a central goal, each exhibited distinct values.

SEGMENT 1: COMMUNITARIANS

The first segment, the “Communitarians,” was made up of young protesters, almost all in their twenties, who together provided the numbers and the vocal power for much of the protest activities. Their principle motivation was present-day concerns for individuals.

Their deep values were “Community,” “Security,” and “Purpose,” which contribute to a segment motivated by present-day concerns for their individual selves. Communitarians found substantial personal reward in attaching deep ethical, almost religious-like meaning to their presence at Occupy and to their role in achieving “social justice.” In other words, while “social justice” is the attribute of their presence at Occupy, it was not the ends, but rather a means to an inflated sense of self and purpose in their own lives. Their concerns were based on their own individual needs, interests, and fears—not for the needs, interests, and fears of a larger community or future generation.

A Communitarian remarked that, upon waking each morning in the Tent City, he was struck by an overwhelming feeling of being part of a family. When queried about their formal religiosity, this segment indicated that they had grown up in largely non-religious households. One interview subject indicated that while he had grown up in a religious family, he had felt estranged due to his sexual orientation.

The Communitarians may have expressed their satisfaction at being “proactive” to correct injustices, but the value behind this satisfaction is “Security.” Security to Communitarians means reasserting some control over their futures. The rocky job market and economic outlook mean that they feel more adrift and unsure of their life plans, but for them the Occupy protests serve to translate malaise and fear into action, with a result that is both calming and empowering.

The value of “Purpose” initially begins as an appreciation for the media attention and the large numbers of fellow protesters. When probing deeper, however, these attributes eventually coalesce in Communitarians’ minds. Communitarians were adamant that their actions fulfilled an ethical duty to protect others; but when pressed they revealed that it was more so a sense of their own, individual self-worth—not concern for others—that motivated their actions. The Occupy movement, in this way, substitutes for a lack of meaning and purpose in their own lives.

SEGMENT 2: PROFESSIONALS

The interview process revealed that the Professionals are motivated by a wholly separate set of values from Communitarians: “Prestige,” “Validation,” and “Control.” The individuals that make up this segment are interacting with the protests from a semi-professional standpoint: Many claim community action as their career and have been involved with various protests throughout their lifetimes. For them,

the Occupy Protests represent a crowning achievement, where theory and strategy have been merged successfully. They feel validated by the fame and attention that come with the large numbers of sustained attendees at the protests.

The connections between attributes such as “media attention” and the amalgamation of issues represented with “Validation” are due to their direct relationship with success. So long as the movement is successful, the Professionals feel rewarded for their own life choices and sacrifices—and for waiting (in some cases for decades) for a “win.”

Finally, the Professionals’ definition of success is a movement that receives attention and achieves specific political ends. Accomplishing this requires participation of a large number of people. The desired system allows those with experience and connections—the Professionals—to thrive within the Occupy Movement. This segment seeks the success and implementation of systemic changes because they afford Professionals greater “Control” over their lives and the fulfillment of their two other deep values, “Prestige” and “Validation.” While Professionals are motivated differently from Communitarians, there is a vital connection between the two: Professionals are using Communitarians to achieve the goals that will satisfy this second group’s deep-value motivations.

COMMON GROUND

Despite strong differences between the Communitarians’ and the Professionals’ motivations, their deep values do overlap in a crucial aspect. Both segments’ sets of values center around transferring power from the individual to the community. At the same time, their values focus on their own individual fears and desires, rather than on those of others.

Together, the two Occupier segments have succeeded in presenting a unified face to the public by appropriating traditional terms for American values, such as “freedom” and “responsibility,” and subtly redefining them to create a radical revolutionary plan that seeks to destroy those same values. The Professionals understand that words such as “freedom” and “crony capitalism” resonate with mainstream Americans, and have successfully swindled some into believing that they equal their deep-value motivations, which we have seen through the science, is a false interpretation.

Those that would place the Occupy protesters, particularly the Communitarians, on a Left-Right spectrum are attempting to overlay a dimension that simply cannot capture their entire essence. Neither the Communitarians nor the Professionals are driven by political ends alone, and these goals do not resonate at a deep-values level.

It is important to note that in the mental maps of both segments, there was no representation of Marxism, Anarchy, or any other “political justice” outcome at the value level (see appendices). Rather, Occupiers’ reasons for identifying so strongly with the movement relate to achieving power through community and responsibility.

Below is a more detailed spectrum within which the movement can be best understood.

THE FUTURE OF THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

Because the Occupiers' values are less about economics or political mechanics, and more about alleviating the fear of lack of community, prestige, and success, we can expect the Occupy protesters to seek any outlets that alleviate these concerns.

It would not be a natural alliance for them to seek more empowerment within our current political system because it is safety they seek, not responsibility. Similarly, they will not find common ground with the Tea Parties, who seek an increase of responsibility. Consequently, Occupiers will be susceptible to any movement or leader that offers to decrease the uncertainty and level of risk in the present-day society.

The values that underlie the Occupiers stand in opposition to the deep-values that have led to America's success in the past. In a sense, the Occupiers "win" when America loses—they are truly going "short" on America.

INTERACTING WITH OCCUPIERS' IDEALS AND IDEAS

Just as a marketer would assess its competition and build a strategy around its customer, those seeking to protect and strengthen the qualities of America that make her free must understand the competitive landscape within which they are fighting for share of mind. A marketer of steaks understands that there are certain markets—and products—that are disastrous to enter and develop. Pushing freedom on the Occupiers is like pushing a medium-rare ribeye steak on a vegan.

There is no way to market American freedom to the Occupy movement simply at the surface level. But there is a way to include them in a broader community of participation. Given their great need for community, it would make sense to stress how important the impact of the young, next generation will be on the future of our country. Also successful would be appeals to their desire to act ethically, so positioning freedom- and free-market-based movements as part of a larger philosophy should resonate with the Communitarians.

Many in the media and political worlds have made inaccurate conclusions about the Occupy movement because their assessments, so far, have been based on the movement's superficial attributes—its signs and its slogans—rather than its participants' values.

By concentrating solely on the surface level pronouncements of the Occupy movement, one can easily be fooled, as the core Occupiers' motivation hinges less on the political ends than on emotional, self-directed fulfillment. The Communitarians and the Professionals are the face of a partnership between the foot soldiers and the operatives of an attempt to change the entire U.S. system of government, rights, and values. It is vital that the public understand the movement's deep motivations so as to avoid conflating signs and slogans with support for traditional American values.

For free-market advocates, it is better to pursue a strategy of increased purchase frequency, greater brand loyalty, and making sure that every meat-eater knows the merits of a steak—or in this case, a free country—in his world. This initial understanding frees up a freedom-marketer to compete to win.

A freedom-marketer will also understand where he is disadvantaged. The Occupy solution has star power and visibility—but has it also saturated its market? And at its most appealing level, the Occupy solution is easy.

This is a marketplace for solutions to America's problems. The Occupy movement presents one "solution," a short-sell on America (it almost recalls the sale of those mortgage-backed securities). They are competing with a tougher but more rewarding solution, one that involves responsibility, care for future generations, and uncertain outcomes.

ABOUT THE FRONTIER LAB

THE FRONTIER LAB was founded to identify THE NEW FRONTIER based on Americans' deepest values that will re-nationalize America and advance republican democracy around the world. With that charge, we support pro-freedom civic and cultural leaders in understanding the political marketplace and more effectively selling their solutions.

To achieve these ends, THE FRONTIER LAB conducts cutting-edge marketing research that maps “political consumer” behaviors and the psychology behind their values and idea affiliations.

Our work includes:

- Publishing groundbreaking research that realigns the current political paradigm system;
- Providing cutting-edge marketing research and turn-key communications directions;
- Identifying opportunities that exist to innovate messaging and packaging strategy;
- Leading educational programs based on deep-values insights derived from our research.

We seek to enable our partners in the fight for America to market to their core audiences -- and to their audience's core -- with the most stirring words, through the most efficient channels, to inspire behavior that achieves both their and their audiences' desired ends.

ANNE SOROCK

Anne is a founder of the research and education nonprofit, The Frontier Lab, which conducts cutting-edge research in the civic, consumer, and political spaces. She pioneered the “deep values” approach to in-depth insights cultivation and market segmentation within this space and has authored several research studies on activism, including a four-part series on the Tea Party movement and a recent examination of how youth relate to President Ronald Reagan's brand.

Anne holds a B.A. in history from the Johns Hopkins University and a M.B.A. from the Johnson School at Cornell University.

APPENDIX I: COMMUNITARIANS' HIERARCHICAL VALUE MAP

Values



Consequences



Attributes



APPENDIX 2: PROFESSIONALS' HIERARCHICAL VALUE MAP

Values

Consequences

Attributes

