



Is the Next Big Thing already here?

TECHNOLOGY APPLE VS SAMSUNG: FRENEMIES AT THE GATE

It's one thing to be a culturally vibrant brand in one part of the world. It's another to radiate that vibrancy at high amplitude across the world. It means the brand has not only tapped into global shifts in values and attitudes, but also expressed itself and engaged people in ways that resonate culturally on a local level.

As the world shrinks and our connectivity to one another grows, brands need to stay true to their roots, and do so in ways that are Visionary, Inspiring, Bold and Exciting, regardless of where they play.

In 2012, the battle between Apple and Samsung took place on a global stage, both inside and outside of courtrooms. What makes this turf fight particularly interesting is the dependency these two titans have on one another. After all, Samsung is Apple's biggest parts supplier, yet its fiercest competitor in the smartphone market. By year's end, Apple was victorious on the legal front, but Samsung won on the main stage, with consumers. Apple was the world's No1 company by market value, but Samsung was the world's largest technology company by sales.

This same, "Yes, but..." phenomenon is also reflected in the brands' cultural vibrancy. Apple's global VIBE is stronger overall, but Samsung's VIBE – just behind Apple's – is more stable across countries. Apple's VIBE is being pulled into the stratosphere by the devotion it has earned in the USA, Western Europe and Australia. It's a bumpier road for the brand in Asia, and more tempered in Brazil too.

GLOBAL V I B E



GLOBAL V I B E CONSISTENCY





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V I B E BY COUNTRY



Apple has, in effect, more distortion in its VIBE, spiking higher and lower across the globe in how Visionary, Inspiring, Bold and Exciting it is seen. Samsung's VIBE has more similarity across components as well as across countries.

What is particularly intriguing and positive for Samsung is that while Apple is more strongly felt to be Visionary, Bold and Exciting, the brands are viewed equally as Inspiring (Is a brand I'm proud to be associated with, I'd follow into a totally different category, Is committed to making the world a better place) – i.e., the dimension that most directly speaks to consumers' personal connection to the brand. Of note, Apple has witnessed a slight drop in its VIBE in the USA, where we've been measuring the phenomenon for a few years. This loss of 'Cultural Traction™' (the change in VIBE over time) is primarily driven by a drop in Inspiring.

INSPIRING (USA)

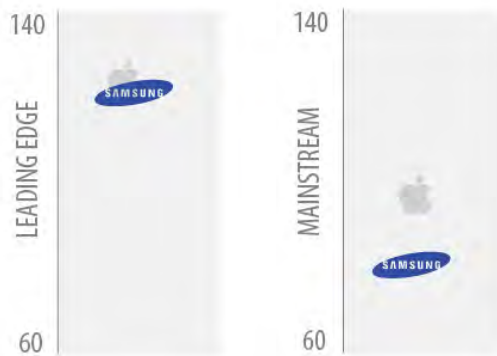


As well, Leading Edge consumers are picking up on Samsung's VIBE way ahead of everyone else, foreshadowing a further tightening of the race as the brand mainstreams.



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LEADING EDGE vs MAINSTREAM



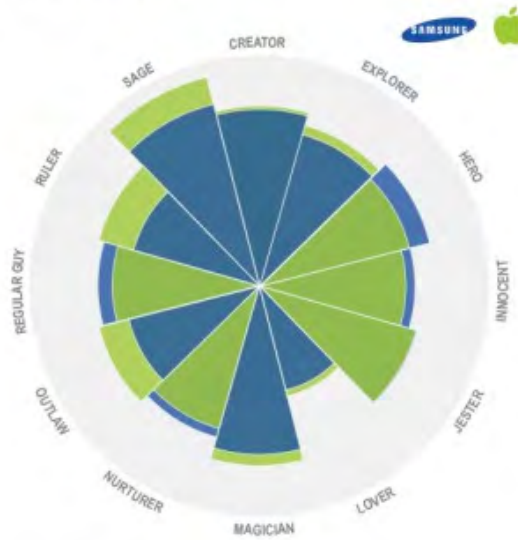
It's hard to believe, but it was just a few short years ago (or, yesterday in Technology time) when people felt overwhelmed by tech gadgets and digital means of being 'friends.' Today, most people feel in control of and happily addicted to them, because they've found ways of adapting. What's now becoming increasingly important is a more human connection – not just between people, but between people and their machinery. It looks like Samsung has figured that out: take their pop-up shops known as "Pins" where the product experience is a communal and entertaining one, or the marketing campaign behind the Galaxy smartphone, positioning the device as "designed for humans" and technology that "goes beyond smart and fulfills your needs by thinking as you think, acting as you act." It's almost so seamlessly integrated it feels natural, in an emergent way, rather than an extraneous, disconnected device. Christine Cho, director of Samsung Mobile Communications' global sales and marketing team, told Marketing Week, "We are using the emotional connection [for the first time in our marketing] to truly demonstrate how this phone can help you get the best out of life."

This is evidenced in the way people personify the two brands, as well. Both Apple and Samsung are predominantly seen as a Sage/Magician – using technology to transform the world. But there are traits that also differentiate the two. Apple possesses shades of the Ruler, reflecting not only its historical leadership and dominance as global tech darling, but also an icier side of the brand reflected in Steve Jobs and the devices' pristinely elegant design. In contrast, Samsung is rounded out by a much softer, embracing side – that of the Regular Guy, Nurturer and Innocent. The Hero to Apple's Outlaw.



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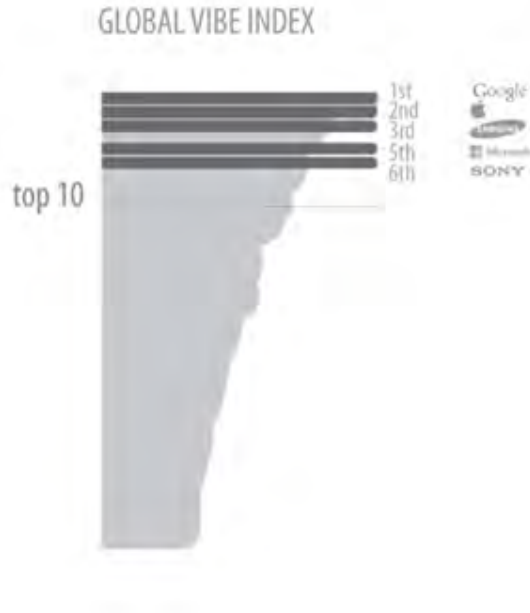
BRAND ARCHETYPE



Apple continues to lead the way among hardware brands but its position is under threat and never more so, than by the rise and rise of Samsung.

Top ranking technology brands are uniformly high for Excitement because innovation makes or breaks this category.

In a digital world, consumers have become conditioned to expect not just upgrades but the next revolutionary capability. All tech brand strategies must be framed around "shaking things up" and "constantly saying and doing new things" – components of VIBE Excitement.



For 30 years, Apple set the pace for cool, creative technology. It made life on Planet Earth work better and Apple users feel one step ahead.

When Apple launched its "1984" commercial and subsequent "here's to the crazy ones/think different campaign," it ushered in Macintosh as rebel, pioneer, and challenger. Apple's products were truly disruptive in both form and function.

Its marketing strategy evolved to portray the brand inventing the future – again and again.

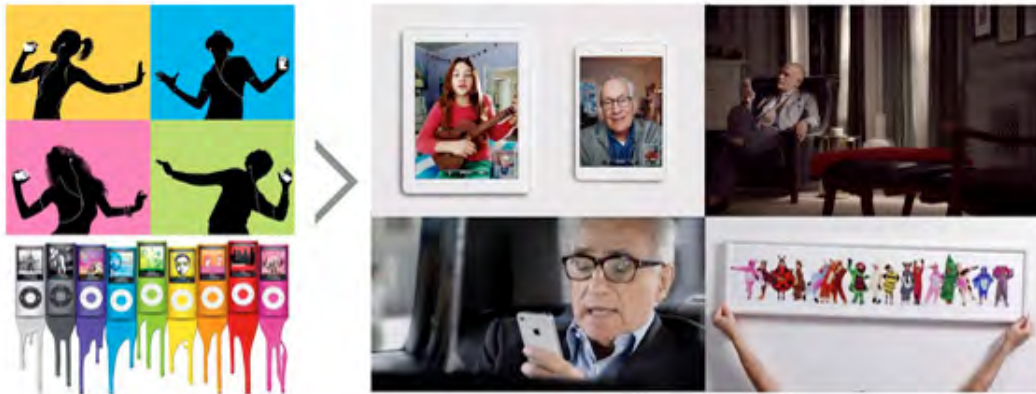
For this reason, Apple's primary archetype has been Sage-Creator.

Its clean designs, simple user interfaces, and uncomplicated marketing also embodied the Innocent archetype.



But with the brand now a birthday list fixture, it seems more comfortable talking to everyone than to the creative pioneers who first made it desirable.

It has intentionally softened its dynamic, youthful, authentically "street" edginess, looking and sounding increasingly family-oriented. It's also been linking itself with established celebrities.



Its signature minimalist identity has been adopted by the entire industry.

Simple, clean design was groundbreaking for tech. But other brands have adopted minimalist design codes (font, packaging, screen designs) and lean device engineering is now the norm.



And Apple has begun to lose its cool... in the courtroom, in the press and latterly, on Main Street.

Steve Jobs' cult stature. He is a heroic figure and was mourned internationally – publically and obsessively with memorials in front of Apple stores.

Corporate giant. Apple has recently been slammed in the press for oppressive overseas factory conditions where its products are built.



Where it once embodied all that was creative and progressive, over time Apple has become the Establishment it set out to over-turn.

When once the Archetypal Creator brand, Apple is now seen in a less positive light. Its growing Autocrat (Ruler) persona has led many of its early followers to start searching for new sources of Inspiration.

BRAND ARCHETYPE - APPLE



And the market has obliged. Technology innovations have been accelerating within the digital space.

Consumers have become accustomed to a flood of innovations that are simplifying, organizing, and enriching their daily lives. It's a taken for granted assumption that "there's an app for that" – or a technology.

Apple no longer universally owns "wow." The field has opened a little wider for competitors to gain foothold.



Samsung is the case in point. #3 in Global VIBE, it has excelled in bringing entirely new innovations to market.

From Samsung's website:

"Innovation is crucial to Samsung's business. As new technologies are being constantly introduced to the market, speed is essential for remaining competitive in today's digital era, and new markets have to be pioneered continuously."

Samsung's aims are ambitious: it wants to be one of the world's top five brands by 2020.

To achieve this, it identifies three equities and areas of focus: creative solutions, new technology, and innovative products.

Recent product launches that have garnered accolades in the trades and among consumers include the Galaxy SIII, Galaxy Camera, Galaxy Note, and Smart TV. Their designs, features, and consumer interfaces are not only novel – they address key aspects of culture that feed a brand's VIBE.



Its product designs reveal a mindfulness of the Cultural Trends which seem to drive a brand's VIBE.

<p>Serious Whimsy</p>	<p>Looking Out For Each Other</p>	<p>Enhanced Experience</p>	<p>Real Frontiers</p>
<p>allshare play Share & Play Together</p>	<p>Social tag</p> <p>Buddy photo share</p>	<p>Direct call</p> <p>Extend your living room</p>	<p>S Beam</p> <p>Intuitive interaction with voice and motion control</p>

Samsung has boldly declared itself “the heir apparent.”

Its high profile, irreverent “Next Big Thing” ad campaigns go head-to-head with Apple – with direct comparisons to product, brand experience, and even target. It ran without balking as iPhone 5 hit the streets.

Samsung paints a picture of Apple as behind in the tech race, less clever and nimble, and not entirely understanding consumers.

It also paints Apple loyalists as blind sheep stuck in a corral even when they realize that there are fresher, greener pastures (with Samsung).

In other campaigns it has positioned itself as the smart, understanding innovator, easing tension between humans and machines.

It expresses this idea in various ways which we can decode. This is a snapshot based on some recent communications only.

Empathic Heroism



We intimately understand who you are as a person. We safeguard what's most important to you and are always there to help you thrive.

Happy Together



Life is more rewarding when shared with those who matter most, and constant connectivity means you'll never have to be alone or miss out.

Easy Carpe Diem



Sparking dynamism and a ready-for-anything attitude so that day to day you live life effortlessly, to the full, and as you wish.

Irreverent Passion



Packaging up passion and belief in the brand so that it's fun, accessible, and refreshing.

And as Apple has lost its footing in the press, Samsung has surged forward.

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By IAN SHERR and EVAN RAMSTAD

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