

Rip it up

and start again.



# Everything is possible



## Any business can change the world.

If we business people do not believe that, what are we thinking? In 2014, so many will be looking back at what went wrong. Who among us would rather be looking ahead to what will be right in 2114?

Change is possible; the future isn't written - if we want to, we can rip it up and start again.

Since 1996, Forster has set out to amplify the power of the change makers in business and society. Today, we're keen to do even more of it, more often with more change makers.



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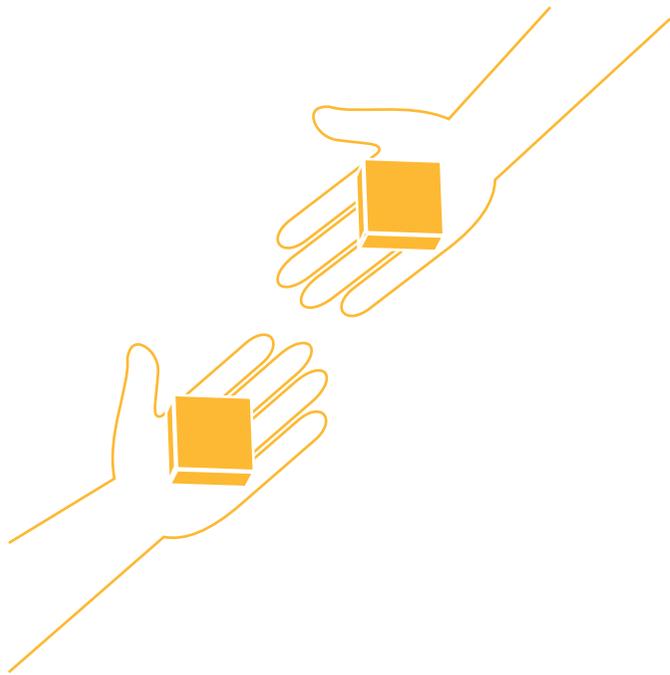
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# Consumption Own less, share more



**It's the human dilemma. If we don't keep growing our economies, our societies will break up and chaos will ensue. If we do keep growing at the rate we are, the planet we call our home will make life unliveable for human beings. What's the answer? It's certainly neither the one nor the other.**

As ever, the way forward lies with changing our 'mindset' - thinking not just about what we consume and how much of it, but how we consume it.

So much of the world economy is based on 'ownership' - from land and property to cars and clothes. Capitalism is based on the accumulation of wealth, which buys comfort and convenience. But why does this comfort and convenience have to be 'owned'? Does it mean the end of capitalism if we changed our 'mindset' to renting, leasing, sharing or swapping goods and services?

That ownership spiral came to a painful halt in 2008, causing consumers across all socio economic groups to change their consumption behaviour, reduce or postpone their spending. People made more use of the internet to compare and select the best offers, often compromising on quality to reduce their spending.

While levels of financially-based fears are decreasing and consumer confidence recovering, the recession-hardy are embracing a new norm, continuing to embrace this behaviour. Many have been pleasantly surprised by what they have found on their way down the 'frugal ladder'. People have found new ways and will continue to do so. Let's not assume things will ever get back to 'normal'!

## **Forster insight**

We are all exhorted to buy less, not more. But the companies who are changing our behaviour on consumption are those who are helping us to think differently, and they are enjoying the business benefit as a result.

How are you enjoying the 'sharing economy'?

# Consumption Ripping it up...

**Compare and Share** is the first aggregator of the sharing economy – listing rides offered across all car sharing services so that consumers can choose the cheapest price.

**The Food Swap Network** organizes food events where members of a community share home grown, home-made or foraged food. No money changes hands, food is the only currency. **Foodtrade** is the new ‘LinkedIn for local food’ site that connects people who want to sell and buy locally produced food. Saving money, helping make connections, cutting out the middleman.

**Zopa** the peer-to-peer lending company, stepped away from trying to get traditional banks to do what they’re supposed to do, and re-thought the practical necessity for individuals and small businesses to get the loans they need to keep their and our economy ticking over.

**Street Bank** is the largest neighbourhood sharing website of its kind and it’s providing families with a simple way to save. The result? Less waste, less clutter and access to £1,000s worth of things and skills locally. It is growing rapidly, with over 22 thousand members to date across the UK. In London, the average Streetbank member has over £7,000 worth of things available to them at no cost and within a mile of their home.

**Love Home Swap** allows people to holiday abroad for free if you destination matches with another user who wants to visit the place you live – and is prepared to stay in your home.

**ParkOnMyDrive** and **ParkAtMyHouse** allow home owners to rent out a parking space on their driveway. If the drive is near a station or bus stop, owners can earn as much as £14 per day.

When it comes to changing consumption patterns, our client, **Forum for the Future** is rightly talking about the ‘net positive’ concept of sustainability. How do we rebuild the value of natural capital? Just cutting carbon emissions won’t do it. Zero waste won’t even do it. Enhancing biodiversity would do it, re-establishing eco-systems, too, switching the supply of commodities to allow the non-renewable resources not to disappear completely – whatever it takes to put something back. Economically, socially and environmentally, we must begin to reverse the damage done, create a ‘net positive’ effect through our behaviour and impact.

**Patagonia**, the clothing manufacturer and retailer, uses technology not for the sake of inventing new products but to replace old, polluting and inefficient products and methods with cleaner, simpler and more appropriate ones. Every part of every garment it makes can now be recycled.

# Ageing Choose your identity



**‘What do you want to be when you get old, mum?’ Good question. But one that will face more and more individuals in an increasingly elderly population wondering what to do after 60. Projections suggest that by 2025, people over the age of 60 will outnumber those under 25 for the first time in history.**

You’ve had your children, worked through your adult life, you’re relatively healthy and energetic and have plenty of life left in you. But nobody prepared you for this – for the fact that, funds permitting, you could do whatever you want to do in a way you never could before.

We need to move from a culture that regards old age as inherently undesirable. Older people continue to be ignored or

portrayed negatively. While racism, sexism and homophobia are now largely deemed unacceptable, casual ageism often goes unchallenged. We want to transform society’s relationship to old age and invigorate the atmosphere of later life.

## **Forster insight**

We should no longer define age through the prism of work. The arbitrary divide between work and retirement acts as a separating wedge. So, how about retiring the word ‘retirement’? Literally, it means ‘withdrawing from active life’ when in reality we know that for many people it is the start of something new. Ageist attitudes continue to deprive older people of the opportunity to contribute to their communities.

# Ageing Ripping it up...

**Demos** research shows that pioneering models of consciously 'sociable housing' - such as cohousing and **Homeshare** can encourage more social mixing between different age groups. They are in their infancy in this country but they would appeal to many older people.

Forster is helping older people's charity, **Independent Age**, to market their help and advice services to people keen to make the most of their lives post-retirement, while also helping them plan for any changes or challenges they might face in the future.

In 2013, we partnered with **United for All Ages** and **The Times** to hold a series of debates on intergenerational issues, focused around health, work and housing. One of the biggest areas for development that came out of the debates was the need to incubate more interdependent

living between generations, and we are actively looking for opportunities to bring this concept to life.

**The Amazings** is an innovative organisation working to help improve the quality of life for older adults in the UK and pass on their hard-earned knowledge to the next generation. This is a movement of passionate and able-bodied 50+ adults who pass on their skills and make money by running online how-to classes. Its success proves that connection between young and old can be fun, social and empowering.

**Really Useful Stuff** is a new initiative with a passion for inclusive design, selling a host of well-designed products that make living well a little easier. It can be really hard to find stylish mobility aids. They shouldn't be stuck with something dull, clunky, noisy and grey.

**Omhu Walking Canes** are brilliantly designed and look really vibrant and stylish. Built to last a lifetime, they weigh 14 ounces and can support up to 300 pounds.

# Leisure Play for your life

**Poked, prodded, pushed and measured like never before, UK children are the unhappiest among the top 21 richest nations, according to a recent UNICEF report.**

Adults resonate with staying young and energetic, remaining in touch with the 'child inside'. When being imaginative, we are urged to be 'childlike'. Most adults today know what it means to be 'childlike'. But will our future adults, the children of today, understand what being 'childlike' means?

Our children aged 5 - 16 spend 2.5 hours every day watching TV and 1.7 hours every day online. Natural England research shows that fewer than 25% of children use their local 'patch of nature' compared to over 50% of their parents.

All children and young people need to play. It is a physiological, psychological and social necessity. Unrestricted play helps children understand and deal better with risk. It helps them become responsible adults who use the power of play throughout their lives.

## Forster insight

Play is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities. It is as important to mental/physical health as getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising. Play connects us to others; is an antidote to loneliness, anxiety, depression; makes us happy; helps develop/improve our social skills; teaches co-operation with others.



# Leisure Ripping it up...

Supported by **London Play**, 'play streets' are being trialled in 2013 by a number of London boroughs. Other areas trialling play streets include Swansea - where it will cost £5k to close off a street for play.

**Lilian Baylis Technology School** runs a school-based physical activity programme for 1,200 children aged 7 to 12 across nine local schools, including 12 hours per week of physical activity with a cross-cultural curriculum in school PE, after school clubs, access to community sports sessions, and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) sessions in schools.

**Play England** has been awarded £500,000 for the Exploring Nature Play project, which is helping children to explore and become more aware of nature around them and the opportunities for play and enjoyment that it provides. The grant is from **Natural England's Access to Nature programme** - part of the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces initiative.

If 80% of children are disconnected from nature, something is wrong. Let's not turn our children into glassy-eyed techie zombies.

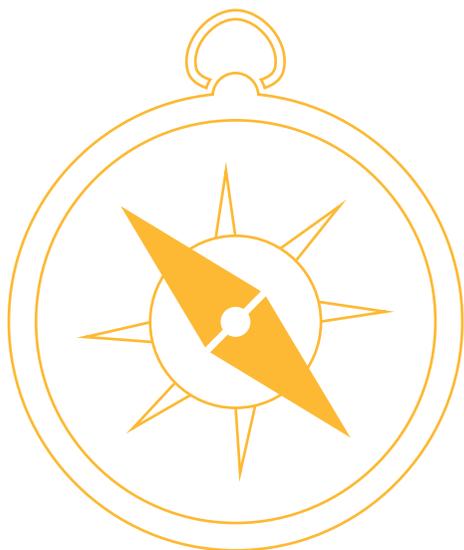
Re-wild them! We can do it.

**National Trust** and the **RSPB** are doing it together through the Wild Network.

If it means 're-branding nature', as **Project Wild Thing** is doing, then so be it.

Our client, **PACEY** (Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years), believes government needs to do more to promote child-led as well as adult-led play. The tools and expertise for this are already in the sector - this isn't about needing more money. It's about communicating the importance of play via policy, best practice sharing, qualifications and training. For a child to be considered school ready, they feel that cognitive and academic skills such as reading and writing are not as important as children being confident, independent and curious.

# Work Show up on purpose



**Fewer of us seem to be able to find meaning in life today. With so many choices to do/be/buy, finding a purpose in life has become a challenge. This rise in individualism means a decline in the commitment to the 'common good'. How can we reconnect with our communities and common objectives?**

Some businesses are waking up to the fact that the future of profit is purpose. Not just in the message they put out to customers and external stakeholders, but in the way they treat the staff that make it all happen.

Everyone seems to be working so hard these days. Employees are increasingly asking why. They want to see that their job has a purpose. Sure they sell stuff, make a profit, get a salary but, with new business models and structures constantly coming into play, they want to know they're also making a clear difference too.

Marketing is no longer about communicating function benefits. Canny businesses are moving beyond seeing people as a pair of smelly feet that need to be deodorised, to focusing on serving real people with real lives. Companies are waking up to the knowledge that they must show how they provide wider benefits to society rather than simply

how their products or services work. Most organisations are finding that it's time to reframe the message, positioning themselves as a vital, even celebratory part of the community not apart from it. At the heart of this approach sits employees. How comfortable will the business be in playing a more activist role, sharing a social goal as clear and neon lit as its profitable objective? It's a great question.

## **Forster insight**

In the workplace, businesses are being compelled to articulate what they stand for and demonstrate a real commitment to real action that measurably improves the lives of their employees, as well as those of their customers and wider community. Your employees do need a reason to show up, beyond the pay check. Companies that develop a social goal, actively sharing their brand's core values and mission, are providing their employees with real purpose.

# Work Ripping it up...

**Dulux's** Let's Colour initiative sees volunteers from its workforce use donated Dulux paint to improve run-down public spaces. It has donated more than 500k litres of paint through the scheme, which have been used in projects ranging from brightening up favelas in Brazil to more than 300 community projects in the UK. Does this help to project Dulux as a socially valuable brand? Yes. Does it help to foster deeper engagement with customers and staff? Most certainly.

We are working with Business In the Community's **Workwell** campaign a coalition of businesses committed to improving levels of understanding of the role of workplace wellness. Marks and Spencer [www.planAhealth.com](http://www.planAhealth.com) won the Bupa Workwell Award 2013, designed to recognise companies that can demonstrate a holistic and integrated approach to improving, maximising and publicly reporting the engagement and wellbeing of employees.

**Forster** has been following a positive walk/life balance agenda since inception in 1996. Our biennial independent **stakeholder impact audit** demonstrates that our family-friendly policies have helped our business, delivering excellent staff morale, better customer service and low staff turnover. **Forster WELL** is the employee engagement programme which incentivises staff to earn stamps across five areas: physical exercise, nutrition, culture, social engagement, community support plus three 'free' stamps for extra challenges. As a reward for completing a card's stamps, within a financial quarter, employees receive an extra hour off work or a £25 voucher of their choice.

**Innocent** work to help keep older people warm and healthy during winter. People are invited to knit a hat, Innocent drinks wear them, and 25p of every drink sold goes to **Age UK**. Over 600,000 hats have been knitted as part of the Big Knit campaign. And for non-knitters, simply

create and share an online virtual hat and raise funds for Age UK's **Spread the Warmth** campaign.

**Macmillan** and **Boots** are working together to give those currently living with cancer, and their family and friends, the information and support they need. They are bringing information about living with cancer to the UK's local high streets, regional communities and online. Boots staff are fully engaged with the issue and are campaigning, volunteering and fundraising.

Not one of the usual suspects for a charity of the year partnership, our client **Carers Trust** convinced employees of **The Co-Operative Group** to offer support and raise awareness about the challenges faced by young adult carers. Of the 6 million unpaid carers in the UK, around 500,000 of them are aged between 14-25. About £4 million has been raised for the cause in the past ten months.

# Planet Respect your home

**Most of our biggest challenges are by-products of progress. Now, after 300 years of unstinted industrial and economic progress, there is no bigger challenge than ensuring the sustainability of the place we all call home.**

Yet mainstream society is becoming more and more disconnected from a healthy relationship with the fauna and flora that make this planet habitable and sustainable for every living thing on it.

Climate change is finally being formally accepted when it's almost too late. Our relationship with animals on so many fronts is changing at bewildering speed, particularly in the increasing divisions between our relationships with animals as pets, those we use as a source of food, clothing and other products and the animals who form part of the wider environment around us. What unites these different areas is the increasingly view

of animals as commodities, consumer products and units of production. Politicians talk only of a 'race for survival, a race for growth...' All races end, with one winner and many losers. Solutions for humanity cannot come at the destruction of the diverse eco-system on which everything depends. This is not a political statement - it's a planetary manifesto.

## Forster insight

Discussions about our relationship with the planet are more polarised than ever - it's badgers versus cows, GM crops versus starvation, nuclear power versus power cuts. From health to energy and employment to food, it's time to support the organisations who collaborate to find global solutions for every living thing to co-habit more successfully - with respect, compassion and good health in mind.



# Planet Ripping it up...

The **RSPCA** continues to show the world that ending cruelty, alleviating suffering and promoting kindness to animals is a hallmark of a caring society. We work with them on a range of animal welfare campaigns, from encouraging consumers to switch to higher welfare sausages and bacon, to encouraging people to adopt the Staffordshire bull terriers that are constantly taken into their animal shelters.

**Cape Farewell** pioneers the cultural response to climate change, leading a series of expeditions into the Arctic that combine science, art and education to challenge, provoke and inspire audiences to think differently about our relationship with each other and the natural systems we inhabit.

Sir David Attenborough said: 'If we and the rest of the back-boned animals were to disappear overnight, the rest of the world would get on pretty well. But if the invertebrates were to disappear, the

world's ecosystems would collapse.' Join **Buglife** - they are working to save the small things that run the planet.

**Neals Yard Remedies**, **Garden Organic**, **Friends of the Earth** and the **Soil Association** are all running important campaigns to help save the bee.

**Ben & Jerry's** are working with WSPA and Compassion in World Farming to improve the lives of the EU's 23 million dairy cows. The Supporting Better Dairy campaign is calling for a European Directive for dairy cow welfare.

# Forster Communications

**Forster** is the social change PR agency, specialising in consumer marketing, reputation management, positioning and messaging, creative development, building partnerships and media relations.

We have worked with clients at the forefront of social change for some two decades. Together, we seek to devise and implement solutions that protect and improve lives.

Now owned and run by our employees, we work for clients who want to create positive social change - whether charities, social enterprises, start-ups or corporates - helping them **build brands with social purpose.**

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