

Where my ideas come from continued

a day. I don't necessarily work my way through a list. Each website I visit has a niche, such as advertising, marketing ideas, cars. A few of my favourites are www.ffffound.com; www.springwise.com; and www.adsoftheworld.com. I also flick through magazines, books, and travel to find inspiration. I live in New York for six months, then Sydney for six months.

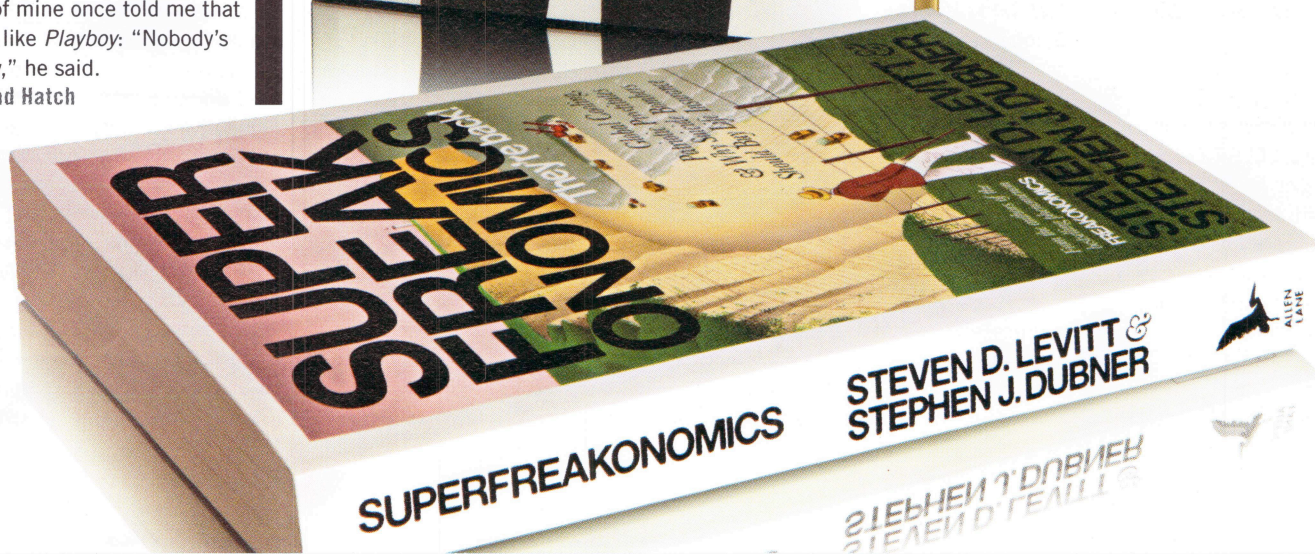
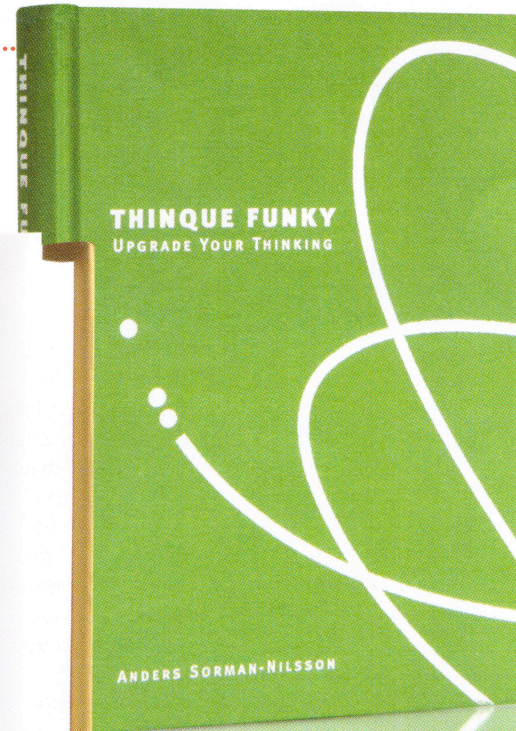
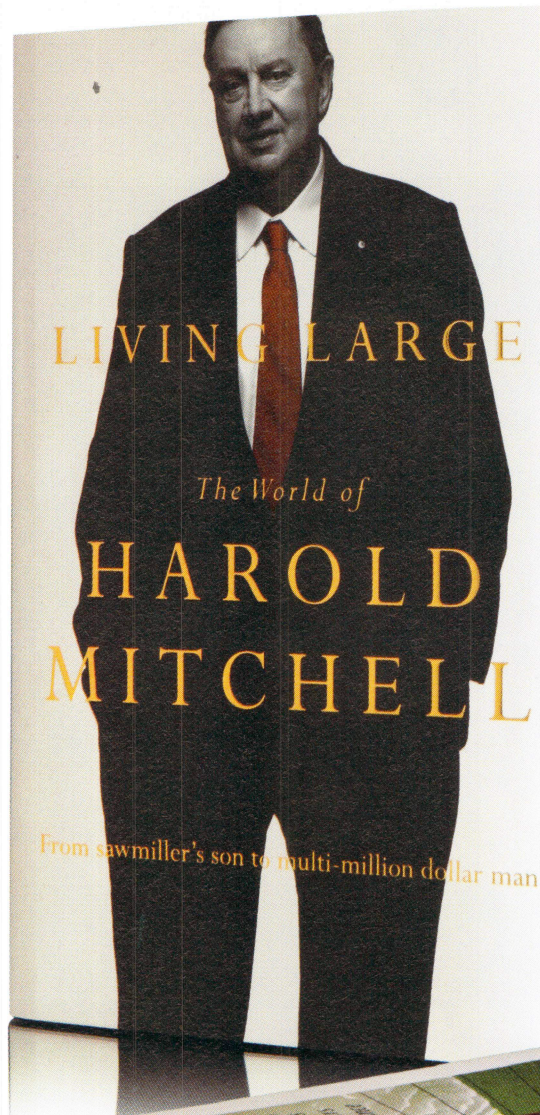
It can take some people weeks or years to come up with just one concept, whereas it can take me a few days, maybe just a few hours. I don't know how inspiration happens, but it comes easier for me now than it did five years ago. Maybe it is because I've seen so much content on a daily basis and that I'm constantly inspired by incredible things. When you are in that space you can't help but start creating yourself.

I want to launch an ideas agency because more and more [companies] want to get into the experimental space, looking for a bit of attention and to be seen doing something different. At the end of the day it is the idea or concept that they want, no matter whether or not it is perfectly commercially workable. Unfortunately, a lot of the people at the top [of traditional advertising firms] are quite old school. It always helps if they can see examples of concepts.

People who contact me to consult want something that is desirable, cool and that is going to sell. I've seen so many cool things that if a brand comes to me and asks how to do things differently I've amassed visual examples of things to show them that have worked. I've been collating visuals over the last five years and put them in folders (retail, pool, offices, luxury, eco, neon, lighting, kids, gyms, guerrilla marketing, events, colour, cars, buildings, art) on my [computer] desktop – hundreds and hundreds of visuals to be inspired by. A friend of mine once told me that Cool Hunter was a lot like *Playboy*: "Nobody's reading it for the copy," he said. Bill Tikos spoke to Brad Hatch

BOOK REVIEWS by Mike Hanley

- Buy it, read it
- If you are interested
- If you must



• **LIVING LARGE**

The World of Harold Mitchell
Melbourne University Press, \$49.99

Readability ●●●
Usefulness ●●●

PICKING AROUND at the local Scout Hall is a book, published in 1932, titled *How to Run a Troop*. Torn, well humbled and faded, its back-cover blurb reads: "There's only one way to run a troop – the right way." Ah, for the old certainties.

Like the scout leaders of old, Harold Mitchell, of Mitchell Communication Group, holds firm to some simple principles that have guided him throughout his journey from sawmiller's son to the country's largest media buyer, employing 500 people and turning

over \$1.2 billion a year: talk straight, be trustworthy, work hard.

He writes like he talks: straight. The result is a compellingly easy-to-read autobiography that contains priceless business and personal advice. This is a man who realised at age 23 he was an alcoholic, gave it up and never drank again. A man who pretty much single-handedly restructured the Australian advertising industry in the mid-1970s by starting the country's first media buying agency and staring down the fury of the industry establishment.

This is also a man who woke up one morning in 1990 \$32 million in debt, who was saved from bankruptcy by the relationships he'd built over previous decades

– in this case, with Kerry Packer – and through focused hard work over the ensuing decade.

No one-shot pony, at the end of the '90s, Mitchell spotted the digital media revolution, put together a digital agency in a matter of months, and floated it before the dotcom wave came crashing down, boosting his family fortune by \$189 million overnight and enriching many big-end-of-town associates and clients of his at the same time. Not bad for a backwoods boy from the bush whose alcoholic mother left him at age 15.

Harold Mitchell's rules:

- 1 Concentrate on things you know and things you're good at.
- 2 Don't try to do things you can't do.
- 3 Start at the bottom.
- 4 Don't be in a big hurry.

• **SUPERFREAKONOMICS**

Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner
Allen Lane, \$32.95

Readability ●●
Usefulness ●●

THE SELF-DESCRIBED jokers are back with more freakish observations that make the dismal science a lot more fun – and confronting.

In their latest book, a sequel to the international bestseller

Freakonomics, rogue Harvard economist Steven Levitt and *New York Times* journalist Stephen Dubner have again amassed copious amounts of hard data to show how real people respond to real-world incentives.

The data Levitt and Dubner have collected allow them to give us meaningful insights into an unusually diverse range of situations and the choices people make. Or to express it

more correctly, their book is a collection of stories that illustrate the economic approach: "How people make decisions and how they change their minds; how they choose someone to love and marry, someone perhaps to hate and even kill; whether coming upon a pile of money, they will steal it, leave it alone, or even add to it."

They tell us with their trademark mix of levity and rigour why suicide

- 5 Be a good listener – Kerry Packer was the best listener I've ever known.
- 6 Don't get into battles you can't win.
- 7 Beware of people with big egos.
- 8 Don't expose yourself financially.
- 9 Make plans, short and long term.
- 10 Be a team.
- 11 Be able to make quick decisions.
- 12 Work twice as hard as your staff and competitors.
- 13 Create a difference, and therefore an advantage.
- 14 Have a settled private life.
- 15 Don't let little things become big things. Say thank you.
- 16 If you fail, don't give up.
- 17 Don't let money run your life.
- 18 Move on when you've done your job.

bombers should buy life insurance, why a street prostitute in Chicago is more likely to have sex with a cop than to be arrested by one, and why scarecrows work on people, too.

Some of their conclusions will challenge: The US war on drugs, they argue, has been ineffective because locking up suppliers drives prices higher. Much better to punish buyers, they say. **David Coe**

• **THINQUE FUNKY: UPGRADE YOUR THINKING**

Anders Sorman-Nilsson
Thinque Publishing, \$50

Readability ●●
Usefulness ●●

THE WORLD has changed, and your thinking needs to change with it. So says self-styled futurist, writer, and consultant Anders Sorman-Nilsson in this self-published, high-quality "manifesto" and workbook for those who are struggling to get to grips with all this connectivity, 3.0, iPhone, Facebook, globalisation, shifting paradigm nonsense that is going on.

Things change so quickly, and the Swedish-born, Sydney-based former lawyer Sorman-Nilsson says that change doesn't care much if you like it or not. So really, you don't have a choice. If you and your organisation are going to survive in this new world, you need to have the courage to break out of the old ways of doing things.

To help you do this, the book presents a new approach to thinking based on 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0, paralleling the development of the internet.

In its initial incarnation, 1.0, the internet was a series of

linked static documents. We are now deep in the era of 2.0, in which the value of a website, such as Facebook or Google, is proportionate to the number of people using it, as each user contributes to its richness.

In the 3.0 era, into which we are rapidly heading, the sites themselves will scour the web for information that they can combine into new and useful forms. Your thinking needs to do the same.

This metaphor runs throughout the chapters of the book, which explore diverse themes, from the design of business through to the perception of sexuality and the pursuit of happiness and self-actualisation.

Each chapter has an executive summary at the beginning that lets you know what you're in for, a list of sources, case studies and design inspiration.

The writing is not as breathless as many works of the genre, but the whole package is let down by the design of the book itself. Although a hefty, satisfying product, the choice of font (courier) and the uninspired layout are brave choices that just didn't work and contradict the design ethic that underlies the message. What a shame.