

Development & Energy... (Sec. C)

Q&A w/Asa Shapiro



Asa Shapiro works at the Israeli Petroleum Group as a Culture Engineer, but used to be employed by the ad agency Adler Chomski & Warshavsky of Grey Group Israel. Recently, Shapiro answered a few questions Israeli i.d.e.a.s. posed to him concerning perceptions of his country globally and its ability to market itself in the global economy.

Israeli i.d.e.a.s.: Please describe your responsibilities in your current position as a culture engineer for the Israeli Petroleum Group.

Asa Shapiro: I am a strategic planner for IPG and my responsibilities include strategic creative and brand consulting for clients from all spectra of the industry. In the agency my most important role is to put the consumer in the minds of all people involved in the advertising projects we do for our clients. I make sure we touch the consumers with the right message at the right time to be most effective with our campaigns.

Ii: Before working at “IPG”, you were employed at an ad agency (Adler Chomski & Warshavsky) in Jerusalem. What kind of projects did you work on and help create?

AS: I worked on many clients from Microsoft’s launch of windows 7 to GAP launch in Israel and NGN launch by bezeq and many others.

Ii: What are some of the differences about advertising/marketing in Israel as opposed to other countries that you may have observed during your interactions with others throughout the world?

AS: Israelis are very similar to those in the rest of the world. We are working on the highest levels, and the work that comes from Israel is considered cutting edge.

Ii: As someone who lives and works in Israel, what do you think of Americans’ perceptions of your country?

AS: That it is a desert with terrorists and all kinds of religious lunatics.

Ii: What are your opinions of the news coverage about Israel that America and the rest of the world sees?

AS: I think TV land portrays it in simplistic terms, while in all reality the conflict is complicated. It cannot really, and we shouldn’t expect it to, be representative in a way that will encompass all of its layers. With that being said, it is not a fair coverage by any means because usually there is a tendency to over-simplify.

There are also biases to the coverage from a journalistic perspective. The pictures being shown are usually suggesting we (Jews) are the aggressors because you are more likely to

see pictures of tanks and soldiers than of the terrorists. Moreover, I think the media does not accurately reflect what terrorist leaders say publicly on Arab stations. That is also a big problem and causes further misrepresentation of the conflict.

Ii: Israel has more start-up companies per capita than any other nation in the world. How aware are you, and others you work with, of the innovative business climate in your country?

AS: For us, it is all just a part of the Israeli ethos – we are a small, but very smart country.

Ii: What are some of the companies, inventions or new technologies that you know of that are getting coverage in the national media?

AS: Mostly Better Place by (Founder, CEO) Shai Agassi. All other companies are talked about only when they are sold to companies overseas.

Ii: Are you familiar with the nation's electric car grid being launched this year or Jerusalem's new light rail system? If so, what are your thoughts about the two new transportation projects taking place in your country?

AS: It is interesting and hopefully we can help the world become less dependant on oil.

Ii: Why do you think Israel is such a hotbed for innovation and investors?

AS: It is because we have nothing but brain power here. We must use it if we want to win in the global market.

Ii: If you had to persuade a venture capitalist looking to invest in an Israeli company, what would be your biggest selling point to him or her?

AS: It is a place full of people with big brains, big guts and entrepreneurial spirit.

Ii: How would you state Israel's ideal and accurate brand image in just a sentence or two?

AS: "Brainland."

Ii: Will Americans become more aware of Israel's strides in research, technology and business by seeing commercials or more news coverage on those subjects in the near future?

AS: Not until we finish with the conflict.

The Israel Petroleum Group's mission is to discover large, commercially viable oil and natural gas fields in Israel, substantiated through the incorporation and analysis of all available scientific data.