

## **The Promise of a New Social Platform – by David Landa**

Social media and massive change really do go together – you didn't have to work at a digital agency to see that in action throughout the Arab Spring uprisings this year.

At Free Association, it was really amazing for us to experience the power of social media as it sparked revolution. Protests and civil resistance were everywhere in that corner of the world, and Facebook was famously a central player in how people galvanized and organized. It was world-changing, and it happened right before our eyes.

The new site we just launched, Millennium Promise, allows us to build on this phenomenon and keep spreading that idea.

### **Re-Branding Change**

Whether the job is for a major corporation or a not-for-profit, the common thread with any Free Association project is that we get inside their business model: What makes them tick? How do they think about themselves? And how do their audiences actually think about them?

Millennium Promise, a UN-led global partnership founded in 2000 with the goal of reducing extreme poverty worldwide by 2015, came to us as they underwent a fundamental organizational shift and rebrand. They wanted to go from being seen as a scientifically-centered organization to something more public-facing, talking in a tone that everyday people can understand.

Our challenge: to take a group of economists, scientists and politicians, and lead them to a digital place that had simple, punchy messages, and wasn't overly scientific and unapproachable. Visitors to their site had to understand that they do and what they're about, expressed in ways that would make Millennium Promise approachable to the target audience and make them want to act.

Our central idea for repositioning the brand was to transform the word "Promise" from an obligation to something else – the promise of the future. Now the goal of taking Africa out of poverty sees "promise" as an affirming statement. This is promise, unleashed.

### **"Promise" -- a Digital Concept**

The site is designed to show what "promise" looks like: life, vibrancy, the joy of success, green. What it connects the visitor to is MyPromise, a social platform which recognizes and mobilizes the promise that each socially-connected person has online.

There's no such thing as a "little action" online: Each one of us has the potential to reach thousands of people with a simple Tweet and FB share. Every action online can start a huge revolution.

We intentionally designed the Action Center at MyPromise to have no hierarchy, because everything there is important. Users can do whatever has meaning to them – make a

donation, contact a politician, participate in an event. They can do what's convenient, because it's all really big.

### **Tracking Your Impact**

The MyPromise platform goes beyond providing action items with a powerful new tool: the ability to measure your impact. Once an account has been created, MyPromise users who link up their Facebook and Twitter accounts learn their digital reach.

How does that happen? Free Association created an algorithm that calculates the potential of your social network by looking at the number of Facebook friends and Twitter followers you have, then applies the probability that your friends will share their messages.

For example, my reach turns out to be 448 people. Using MyPromise, I shared content four items and generated 142 visits back to MyPromise.

What's your digital potential? Creating a MyPromise account is a compelling way to discover that for yourself.

### **It Adds Up**

Millennium Promise was an amazing project for Free Association to be involved in. We really got to spread our wings, from messaging to branding, and brought an entirely new social platform to fruition.

The goal is for people to use MyPromise, and see that they can be agents of change. "Small things" such as a Tweet or a share will have real impact. Hopefully, if we're all encouraged to do these small but meaningful things every day, the world can become a more promising place.