a goldfish to extract real value from my TV licence.

Thank you lain Murray, your article has finally given me the courage to throw out my velcro-knickers, liberate myself from my couch and TV and to get a life. I am now ready to build my dream house, landscape my garden and spend my weekends redecorating my friends’ rooms, after I get back from my solo-around-the-world skateboard tour (terrestrial and satellite networks are currently bidding for the rights)

Who needs TV!

Barbara Urquart
Linthgow
West Lothian

Feline viewing motivates life

Judging by the quality of programmes currently broadcast, one can be forgiven for thinking TV producers have inadvertently based their programme selections on feline viewing data. Sat on my viewing couch over the past few months I too have found myself shrieking, hissing and arching my back before fleeing the room, much to the disgust of my square-eyed canine friend. Perhaps I should buy a gerbil, a hamster and

The fate of our ‘flexible friend’

Hardly a week goes by without some announcement press that Bank X or Insurance Company Y is to invest more in its brand. While we must applaud their pluck, the truth is that developing financial services brands is very difficult and few have succeeded. This makes the fate of poor “Access” all the more difficult to comprehend.

Access was the response by a consortium of leading high street banks to Barclays Bank’s Barclaycard. Access received fairly consistent support over the years (the “flexible friend” theme) and in time acquired that rarest of commodities, a likeable brand personality.

When the banks decided they would do better with their own credit cards, Access was, quite literally, killed off – rounded on, like Caesar, by its former friends.

The tide of public sentiment is running against traditional suppliers of financial services, and how you could do with friendly Access today.

However, even among Caesar’s assassins there were honourable men. In the Access case there is little evidence that the conspirators were motivated by anything but self-interest; they know that, and the public knows it too.

It is hardly surprising then that attempts to create financial services brands are met with healthy scepticism.

Mack Bottle
West Byfleet
Surrey

Set Eurostar on the right track

I was the public affairs director in charge of public relations for European Passenger Services, the UK company that ran Eurostar with SNCF French railways and SNCB Belgian railways prior to the takeover by London Continental Railways.

As a matter of record, the first Eurostar in public service ran in November 1994 and the LCR team, of which Mark Furlong was a part, first arrived in March 1996 and formally took over in June of that year.

I cannot see how Mark can therefore have been “launch marketing director” as described in your recent article.

Andrew Watts
Director
KHWZ
London W1

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