

Bungy jumping Tall Poppies

Hector Brimson - April 2001

“We need more strivers, innovators Brimson”, they say. “Get the country growing.”

“True, very true” Brimson mumbles into the sherry.

“It will”, I quietly caution, “involve having Tall Poppies around the place “

“Bigger flowers, Hector”, they sigh, “Are a bit of a problem.

At that I ponder on the weeds raised high and the greatly neglected in the land and pause to wonder.

There’s one tall poppy that Brimson would like to see Knighted, raised to a peerage.

Hoisted high and paraded throughout the land.. The brilliant marketeer, A J Hackett, populariser of bungie jumping.

Consider the preposterous nature of his product.

Pay money to drop hundreds of metres high with a cord tied to your legs.

Think of the courage needed to get to market.

Will the cords be strong enough?

How do you get them down.

Will the first ten customers die before you can get the technology right?

How do you get people to pay you money for this?

Selling a new product in an existing market is hard, but achievable. Creating a new market for a new product that no one has heard of before is extremely difficult.

How on earth do you sell this idea?.

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Do you put an ad in the paper “Plummet through space with an elastic cord on your ankles?”

The capstone on AJ’s brilliance was how he launched it.

He could have invited New Zealand’s media to a viaduct near Taumaranui

There might have been a small story.

“Crazy man leaps off bridge with cord tied to his legs”.

End of story.

End of A J Hacket’s dream. But he didn’t.

He went to Paris.

He jumped off the Eifel Tower

. And got sensationally arrested.

Every paper in the world carried that story - with pictures. “Madman dives off the Eifel tower”.

But what clever madness.

A J Hackett put the final seal on New Zealand’s prime position as the Adventure Tourism country of the world.

Oh it helps that because of the ACC scheme we don’t have the insurance issues that kill it dead in other countries.

But it’s one thing to have a product and another to let people worldwide know you have it.

Hackett delivers what the modern adventure tourist wants.

The experience, the brag rights the amazing five minutes of total unusuality.

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He professionalised a safe thrill and gave the customers a few minutes they would not forget.

And of course the pictures, the video and the plaque at an extra few dollars of course.

If Brimson wanted to galvanise a group of students.

To plant the seed that enterprise and daring has rewards he'd send Hackett to every school in the country.

To illustrate the message that if you want to create jobs its not done by taking taxpayers money and wasting it in government programs.

“Start a business, create some wealth, pay some tax, satisfy a need, provide a service, get people their needs and wishes and give work to those that want it.”

And hope some of the Tall Poppy magic rubs off.

Hector Brimson