



# THIS IS BRAND CAMERON'S **LAST** CHANCE.

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This is Brand Cameron's last chance. He must find an idea to anchor his political brand, or he is lost. Since his rise to the Tory leadership, we have never known what Brand Cameron really stands for. Political brands are built around a strong personality, a clear position and a simple narrative. Dave may have an affable personality, but his position has never been understood. In the past, this was an adroit way to build complex coalitions. During the last election, he de-toxified the Tories whilst keeping the right of his party in check. As Prime Minister, he has papered over the cracks with his easy charm and wit. But events, dear boy, have caught up with him, exposing a brand that's long on style, short on substance.

# PHONE HACKING, GLOBAL DEBT AND LONDON RIOTS

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A battery of scandal – phone hacking, global debt and the London riots – has not only tested his leadership, but shows why image is never enough. Brand Cameron has not only struggled to define events, but events have defined it. Last month we were presented with the image of a courageous reformer, rolling up his sleeves to mend Broken Britain. The Coulson Affair turned him into Cameron of Chippen Norton: a member of a remote and entitled set, unconcerned with the everyday realities of the British people (especially the ‘Squeezed Middle’). His image suffered another setback when he was seen practicing his backhand whilst London burned. Now Tuscany is a memory, Cameron wants to be seen as the courageous reformer again, mending our sick society. But will this stick with a cynical and jaded electorate?

# ORGANISING IDEA THAT SHAPES HIS PREMIERSHIP

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This question goes to the heart of the problem with Brand Cameron: there is no convincing Organising Idea that shapes his premiership; or creates a credible narrative. Margaret Thatcher believed in individual liberty and economic self-creation: she built a three term coalition by allowing people to buy their own homes; and share in the spoils of privatisation. Tony Blair believed in the “Third Way”, resolving the conflict between the market and social justice. But what does Brand Cameron, the heir to Blair, believe in? He remains a brand with an oppositional narrative – the quest to mend Broken Britain - but no idea how he can make it happen. He is a little like an alluring luxury or fashion brand, who promise much, but in the end leave you feeling rather empty. (During the last election Saatchi & Saatchi ran focus groups, where we explored how people saw Cameron. Respondents created mood boards filled with pictures of expensive watches, handbags and shoes.)

# ONE SOCIETY

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At the moment Cameron is an empty political brand. Empty brands are defined by absence, by what they are not. He almost won an election by not being Gordon Brown. He is not a Thatcherite. He is not a traditional Tory. He is not a believer in the active State. He will not interfere in our lives. He is cutting away the State, but we do not know what will replace it. He promises change, but we're not sure what we are changing to. The Big Society was a meant to answer these questions, but it's not clear what it is and how it worked. Even before the riots a YouGov Poll said 62% of people did not understand it very well, or at all; and only 9% of people said it would work. Now a firestorm of looting has turned the Big Society to ash. The electorate felt real fear in their living rooms: they want real and practical help from the State.

# THE CHANCE FOR BRAND CAMERON TO FILL THE VOID

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Crisis, though, brings opportunity. This could be a defining moment for Brand Cameron. He has a chance to move beyond personality politics, into something more substantial. At the moment, he is jumping on a law and order agenda. Beyond these tactics, he must look to the future. He should start by dumping the Big Society – and start championing the One Society. The inquiries around phone hacking and the riots give him the perfect platform to ask us how do we create One Society? How do we renew the bonds of trust that bind us? How do we foster a new culture of ethics and responsibility? What is acceptable behaviour and what is not? How do we heal the divisions and schisms that mean so many of us live together, but alone? People, like never before, feel an absence of society. This is the chance for Brand Cameron to fill the void.