

[LAB TEST]

“BUY BRACELETS” *By Julie Bick*

Lance Armstrong’s yellow LIVE-STRONG bracelets have raised more than \$30 million to fight cancer since May 2004. They’ve also set off a thriving aftermarket—and a host of silicone wannabes.



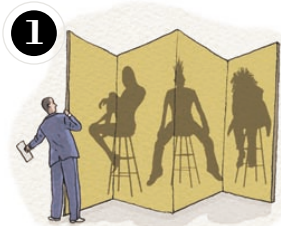
Message ▶	VICTORY STARTS HERE	1200 (the daily U.S. death toll from tobacco products)	BEAT BULLYING	SUPPORT OUR TROOPS	KEEP DOCTORS IN ILLINOIS	BALLER, TEAM, RESPECT, others
Cause ▶	Women’s cancer research and prevention	Smoking cessation	Bully cessation	Entertaining soldiers overseas	Medical malpractice reform	For-profit
Creator ▶	Athena Partners	Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids	British government	USO (via 7-Eleven stores)	Doctors in Illinois (funded by Pfizer)	Nike
Color ▶	Pink	Red	Turquoise	Camouflage green	Neon green	Various
Price ▶	\$1	\$1	Free	\$2.99	10 cents	\$5 for three
Number sold ▶	190,000	60,000	1,000,000	621,300	Nearly 100,000	Company won’t disclose
Remarks ▶	Athena has donated two times more from band sales than from proceeds of its actual product, bottled water.	Wear your band on April 13, “Kick Butts” day.	Sold out, so you’ll either have to find one on eBay or beat someone up.	Raising hackles because they’re made in China, which in 2001 held a U.S. military aircraft crew hostage.	Least likely to be put in a birthday party goodie bag.	Nike says these bands existed before the Lance craze, but they’ve sure surfed the wave.

[5 THINGS]

Smart Risks

By Jennifer Vilaga

Some people have all the luck. Or do they? Eleanor C. Shapiro and Howard H. Stevenson, authors of *Make Your Own Luck: 12 Practical Steps to Taking Smarter Risks* (Portfolio, May 2005), think there’s something else going on. “Humans crave predictability,” says Stevenson, a professor of entrepreneurial studies at Harvard Business School. “But in reality, every decision is a bet. The question is, how can you make better bets?” Luck, after all, is just a matter of odds, and improving yours comes down to “predictive intelligence”—the ability to act in the face of uncertainty. Here’s how to look like one lucky SOB.



1 CHECK YOUR REARVIEW MIRROR. Hindsight is 20/20, so determine your goal first, then think backward. The key is to prioritize, while minimizing the number of bets you’ll make. “Think of *The Dating Game*,” says Stevenson. “You can’t check out all the possibilities. If you like rugged outdoor types, you don’t join the chess club.”



2 MAKE YOUR BETS SERVE YOUR GOALS. In the summer of 2002, Procter & Gamble had committed itself to building customer loyalty. So when Kimberly-Clark raised diaper prices, P&G answered by slashing prices of its own brand by 15%. P&G suffered five months of profit loss before winning increases in market share and bottom-line numbers.

LOOK FOR BLIND SPOTS. Make a few small bets on the unknown. At Microsoft in the early 1990s, the Internet represented a “rat hole” that risked draining resources for uncertain reward. A side bet to develop a browser saved it from dropping further behind.



4 RELIEVE YOUR “I” STRAIN. That’s “I” as in, “I can do it all.” Find ways to share your risk with others. Before it became a cable staple, the Weather Channel depended on cable systems’ buy-in. It offered a low five-cent-per-subscriber fee to lower the risk.



5 KNOW WHEN TO PLACE A NEW BET. Many believe that entrepreneurship is all about single-minded focus. But “the ones who succeed,” says Stevenson, “are the ones who say, ‘I’m stymied, but I see an opening here. How do I go from here?’” Exhibit A: Intel. In the 1980s, it saw that its core DRAM business was becoming commoditized. It had to exit the market—and invest in integrated circuits—to keep its industry lead.