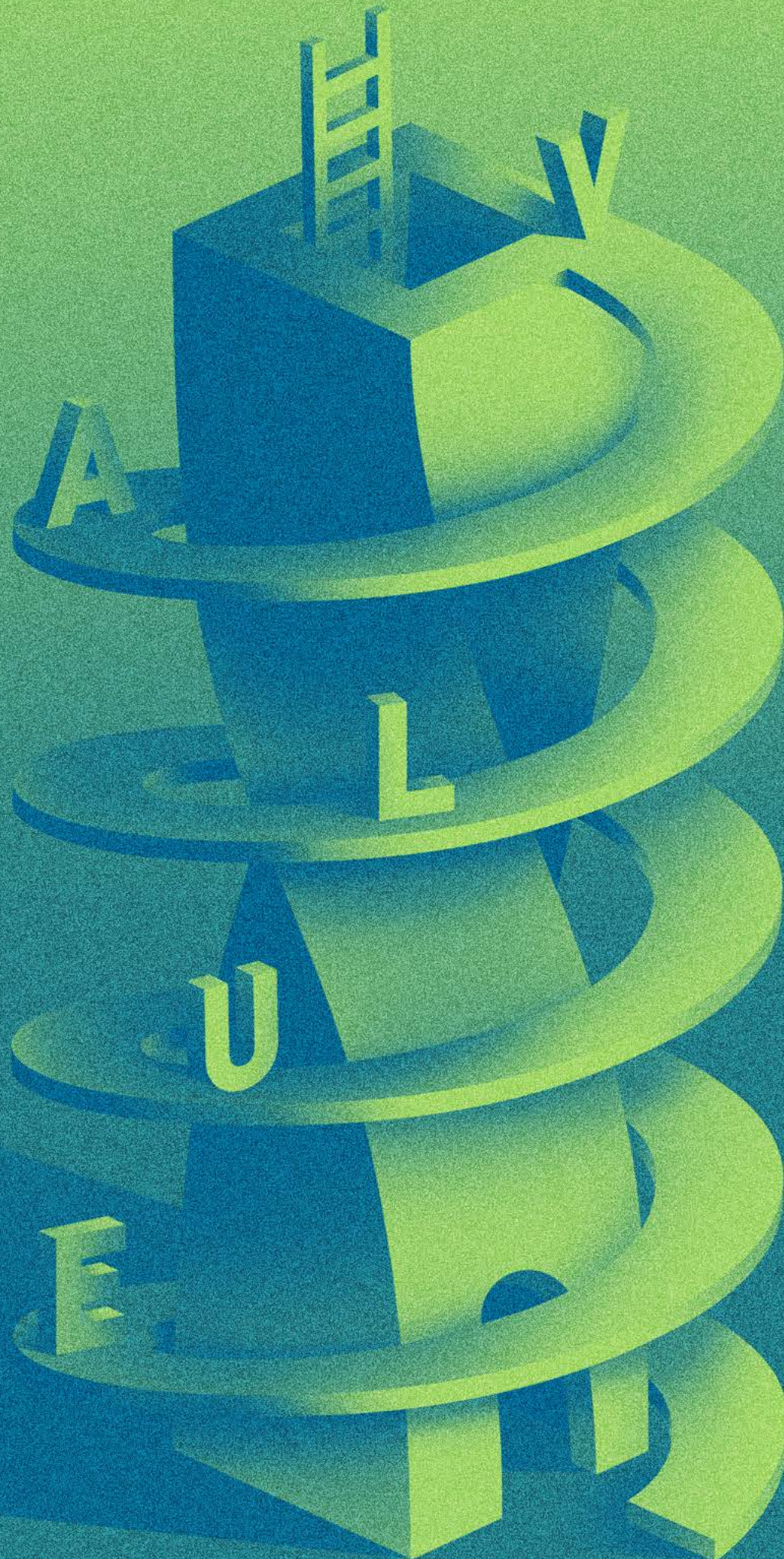# the SoDA REPORT

1H 2014 | Digital Marketing Outlook

Tony Quin

Intro

If this is the first time you are reading an issue of *The SoDA Report*, welcome. If you are a returning reader, you know you are in store for some of the smartest thinking in the digital world.

In our last edition of *The SoDA Report*, I shared our delight that viewership had risen to over 150,000. It seems, however, that my celebration was a bit premature. For 2013 as a whole, *The SoDA Report* clocked in over 250,000 readers. Without a doubt that makes this Report one of the most widely read digital trend publications in the world.

SoDA is in its seventh year and is made up of over 75 members companies, in 26 countries with 200 offices worldwide. Originally our invitation-only organization was made up of digital marketing agencies and premier digital production companies. Over time, however, as the digital world evolved, so has our membership to include companies in digital product design and other related disciplines. As a result we struggle with the literal meaning of our name (Society of Digital Agencies) since we are no longer made up of just digital agencies. We still go by SoDA despite the fact that the only part of our name that isn't fluid is that we are a "Society".

One other thing that hasn't changed is getting into SoDA. It is not easy. Only 11% of agencies that are considered are invited to become a member. It's a rigorous process. A member must nominate candidate companies. Regional membership committees then

review their work and culture. Those that pass go on to be reviewed by the board, which presents its recommendations to a vote of the entire membership. Members can strike any company that they do not believe meets SoDA standards. This commitment to excellence has produced a remarkable peer group and an organization different to any other in the digital world.

At the core of what makes us different is that SoDA members share a belief that we gain more by collaborating than by operating in isolation. In the process, we have developed a culture where we compete based on the quality of our ideas rather than the mechanics of our businesses.

In 2014 SoDA continues to grow especially outside of the U.S. We have expanded our presence at major industry events such as SXSW and Cannes and continue to grow our benchmarking studies and peer collaboration groups. In the coming months we are evolving our Mentoring program, continuing our Digital Marketing Roundtables, many of which are available to the public, and introducing the SoDA Resource Marketplace. All is all it's going to be busy year.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *The SoDA Report* and share it with your colleagues. Also take the time to explore our website www.sodaspeaks.com, where you can also sign up for our mailing list and keep informed about upcoming SoDA events.

Best wishes,

Tony Quin
Chairman of the Board, SoDA
CEO, IQ Agency

Chris Buettner

Foreward

Welcome to the first edition of *The SoDA Report* for 2014. We're proud of the tremendous growth of our organization and this publication over the past year. The biannual publication – released in April and November each year – saw its readership grow exponentially in 2013 to over 250,000 views, up 265% from 2012.

In this edition of *The SoDA Report*, we explore the concept of *value*. We place the human at the heart of this issue and explore themes around value systems, value creation and value delivery from a wide variety of perspectives.

How are agencies, production companies, brands and technologies creating and delivering value, or even giving rise to entirely new value systems? We dive into all of these questions throughout the editorial sections and via our annual Digital Marketing Outlook (DMO) research study.

A special thank you to Econsultancy, our research partner for the 2014 DMO research study, and to our extremely talented and dedicated Editors from around the globe. We also want to thank Barcelona-based SoDA member Vasava for designing this year's cover. They have created a beautiful visual metaphor to show that there is always more than one path to create value for consumers, clients and society as a whole. And while the more circuitous route may appear to be more complex, it can also be an infinitely more interesting and ultimately fruitful journey. We hope you enjoy this

issue and, as always, we welcome your feedback, ideas and contributions for future editions.

Best wishes,

Chris Buettner
Managing Editor and Executive Director, SoDA

The SoDA Report Team & Partners

Content Development

Chris Buettner
Managing Editor of The SoDA Report,
SoDA Executive Director

After a career on the digital agency and publisher side that spanned 15+ years, Chris Buettner now serves as Managing Editor of *The SoDA Report*. He is also the Executive Director of SoDA where he is charged with developing and executing the organization's overall strategic vision and growth plan. And with roots in journalism, education and the international non-profit world, the transition to lead SoDA has been a welcome opportunity to combine many of his talents and passions. After living in Brazil and Colombia for years, Chris is also fluent in Spanish and Portuguese and is an enthusiastic supporter of SoDA's initiatives to increase its footprint in Latin America and around the world. Chris lives in Atlanta with his wife and two daughters.

Editorial Team

Steve Graves, Advocacy
Senior Planner, DARE Digital

Since being the first kid on his block with access to the Internet in the early 90s, Steve has spent more time than he'd care to admit online. Admittedly, he's obsessed with all things digital which helps explain his eclectic CV. From a web designer specializing in UX to starting (then selling) his own SEO marketing

agency, he has spent more than a decade working in digital in some form or another. As Senior Planner at DARE, Steve works out of Vancouver, Los Angeles, and New York with globally recognized brands to ensure whatever they do in digital delivers.

Sean MacPhedran, Industry Insider
Group Planning Director, Fuel

Sean is Group Planning Director at Fuel (based in Ottawa, Canada), where he currently works with clients including McDonald's Europe, Nokia, Mattel and Lucasfilm. He specializes in youth marketing, entertainment & game development, and the incorporation of pirates into advertising campaigns for brands ranging from Jeep to Family Guy. Outside of Fuel, he is a co-founder of the Ottawa International Game Conference, managed the category-free Tomorrow Awards and spent a good deal of time in the Mojave Desert launching people into space at the X PRIZE Foundation. They all came back alive.

Jean-Pascal Mathieu, People Power
Chief Innovation Officer, Nurun

As the chief innovation officer and director of the Nurun Lab, Jean-Pascal Mathieu is always looking for new digital solutions to solve consumer problems. Previously the vice president of strategy, Jean-Pascal has contributed to the design of new service offerings and has ensured the diffusion of innovative technological expertise throughout the company. A keen observer of the evolution of interactivity, he is a frequent contributor to industry publications.

Zachary Jean Paradis, Tech Talk
Director Innovation Strategy, SapientNitro

Zachary Jean Paradis is an innovation strategist, professor and author obsessed with transforming lives through customer experience. He works at SapientNitro, teaches at the Institute of Design and lives in Chicago. Zachary works with companies to become successful innovators by utilizing "experience thinking" as a strategic asset manifested in better offerings, flexible process, and open culture. He works with start-ups and Fortune 1000 companies as diverse as Chrysler Auto Group to Target, Hyatt Hotels to John Deere, M&S to McLaren, and SAP to Yahoo! evolving service and product experiences across digital and physical channels.

Mark Pollard, Modern Marketer
VP Brand Strategy, Big Spaceship

Mark is a brand planner who grew up digital. He built his first website in 1997 then published the first full-color hip hop magazine in the Southern Hemisphere, while working in dotcoms, digital agencies and advertising agencies. He is featured in the AdNews Top 40 under 40, and won a Gold Account Planning Group (APG) award for his McDonald's 'Name It Burger' strategy. A NSW Government initiative listed him as one of Sydney's Top 100 Creative Catalysts. Mark is VP of Brand Strategy at Big Spaceship in New York City.

Kate Richling, SoDA Showcases
VP of Marketing, Phenomblue

As Phenomblue's Vice President of Marketing, Kate Richling oversees the agency's marketing and social media outreach, as well as its inbound marketing efforts. Previously, Richling worked in public relations,

creating and executing strategies for institutes of higher education and Blue Cross and Blue Shield, as well as providing social media counsel to various non-profit organizations. While at The Field Museum, Richling pitched and received media attention from national outlets including Good Morning America and the Chicago Tribune.

Jennifer Tucker, Continuity Editor
Strategy Director, Deepend

"Good strategy is all about having the guts to ask 'Why? Why are we doing this? Why does it matter to our business? Why does it matter to our clients?'. Great strategy is all about being able to answer those questions and many more."

As Strategy Director for award-winning digital agency Deepend, Jen uses her 10+ years of experience in transforming high profile brands and organisation from traditional communication to digital platforms and helping them bridge the gap between creating something which is innovative and engaging but delivers results.

Along with her 10+ years experience on both client and agency side, Jen also holds a BA and Masters degree in Strategic Communication from the University of Sydney.

Research Insights Team

Kaitlin Gasenica
Strategist, Manager of Insights, Blitz

Kaitlin is a Strategist at BLITZ Agency in Santa Monica, California. She has been working in the digital agency world since graduating from UCLA. At Blitz, she conducts and analyzes primary and secondary research around consumer behavior, perceptions, industry categories, brands and cultures.

David Jones
Digital Analyst, Strategist, Reactive

David Jones is a Digital Analyst and Strategist at Reactive. He works across a wide range of clients, including internationally-recognized brands, tier-one clients in Australia and e-commerce businesses.

He deviated from a career in digital media when, in 2006, he went to law school. A research thesis and Masters Degree in Law focused on the use of technology in Courts resulted in a pupillage at a Chambers in London.

Since joining Reactive in 2011, David has become the agency's lead Analyst and Strategist. He is also editor of digmedialaw.com - a blog about legal issues affecting digital agencies and online publishers.

Tim Richards
EVP Strategy, Blitz

Tim is a creative strategist in love with interactive storytelling that makes us better humans. He has worked with some of the world's most talented digital strategists and creatives in the world while at Razorfish, Sapient, and even his own consultancy. Today, Tim

leads Strategy and User Experience at BLITZ, an integrated digital agency. That's from 9AM to 5PM, of course. From 9PM to 5AM, he's a very active musician and producer – and loves living near the beach with his amazing wife and 3 incredible boys.

Mia Umanos
Sr. Digital Marketing Strategist, Digitaria

Mia Umanos is the Director of Analytics at Digitaria. In this role, she guides the measurement program for Intel's global digital marketing. She has worked in the agency environment for 10 years, elevating the collective intelligence of clients, planners, designers, experience architects, and developers through data. Her measurement methods continue to advance the field of digital analytics.

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Table of Contents

Digital
Marketing Outlook
—

The SoDA Report 2014

Chris Buettner

SoDA Executive Director and Managing Editor of The SoDA Report

After a career on the digital agency and publisher side that spanned 15+ years, Chris Buettner now serves as Managing Editor of The SoDA Report. He is also the Executive Director at SoDA where he is charged with developing and executing the orginazation's overall strategic vision and growth plan.

The results of SoDA's 2014-2015 Digital Marketing Outlook (DMO) Survey have been tallied. The response to this year's survey was tremendous. The share of client-side survey respondents grew considerably this past year and now – for the first time – is essentially on par with the percentage of agency / production company respondents.

Clients (including both B2C and B2B executives with responsibilities for digital) accounted for 42% of the total respondent base (up 7% from 2013), while agency and production company respondents constituted 43% of the overall sample.

While maintaining several of our survey questions to facilitate a longitudinal analysis of trends in the industry, *The SoDA Report*'s Editorial Team – in collaboration with our research partner Econsultancy – also introduced a number of new questions around how clients are evolving and what they value most in their agency relationships.

Digital expertise on the client side has continued to grow for a number of reasons, including:

• A wave of new talent at both blue-chip and challenger brands around the globe
• The development of more elaborate client-side teams with direct responsibilities for digital
• The hiring of former digital agency professionals
• The embedding of agency partners within internal client teams to build stronger digital expertise
• Quite simply – due to the fact that digital is now infused in all aspects of marketing and the customer experience

Clients are keenly aware that – from strategy to customer experience to reputation management – their success is intricately tied to their ability to create engaging and meaningful experiences across whatever platforms make the most sense for their brand. An ever-increasing number of those platforms are now rooted in technology. As one of our Research Editors, Tim Richards from Blitz, underscores – there is a massive gap between what technology can do and what we are doing with technology to provide real business and consumer value. With value serving as our core theme for the 2014 edition of *The SoDA Report*, we'll explore this gap throughout this section and the rest of the publication.

We'll also explore other quite fascinating gaps that surfaced in our 2014 study in the opinions and beliefs expressed by agency and client-side respondents on a whole host of issues, including:

- What clients actually want and value in their agency relationships
- Why clients terminate agencies
- The level of sophistication on the client side in specific digital disciplines
- The ability of digitally-focused agencies to lead
- The degree to which client organizations are transforming themselves in response to the ubiquity of digital in the customer experience

Any way you slice the data, clients are doing more digital in-house than ever before. For the agency and production company community, that fact should only prove alarming if you are not growing and evolving as a company. Above all else, clients are looking for three things in their agency partnerships:

1) Marketing creativity

2) Product / service innovation

3) Expertise in emerging trends and opportunities, particularly given the importance they ascribe to being perceived as early adopters to bolster their overall brand position.

Agencies and production companies who are able to deliver on this trinity of client needs will grow and prosper throughout 2014 and beyond. Those who are not will face a decidedly less rosy future.

Conducted by Econsultancy, SoDA's 2014 Digital Marketing Outlook Study had 736 respondents. Over 82% of respondents were key decision makers and influencers (C-Level, Senior Executives, VPs and Directors) with annual marketing budgets ranging from US$5M to over US$100M.

The respondent base for our DMO survey has also become increasingly global. The percentage of respondents based in North America fell dramatically this year, from 50% in 2013 to 36% in 2014. Respondents from Europe accounted for 22% of the overall sample, while the share of APAC respondents grew considerably and now accounts for 21% of the total. The multinational cross-section of respondents was in line with 2013, with one in ten indicating that no single continent accounted for a majority of their business revenue.

I want to thank Stefan Tornquist (VP, Research – US) at Econsultancy for his tireless efforts on this research project for the third consecutive year, as well as our Research Insights Team comprised of SoDA members from Blitz (Tim Richards and Kaitlin Gasenica), Digitaria (Mia Umanos) and Reactive (David Jones).

About Econsultancy

Econsultancy is proud to be SoDA's research partner on this publication for the third consecutive year. Econsultancy's mission is to help our customers achieve excellence in digital business, marketing and ecommerce through research, training and events. Founded in 1999, Econsultancy is used by more than 600,000 professionals every month, and has offices in New York, London and Singapore.

Our subscribers have access to research, market data, best practice guides, case studies and elearning – all focused on helping individuals and enterprises get better at digital.

The subscription offering is supported by digital transformation services which include capability programs, training courses, skills assessments and audits. We train and develop thousands of professionals each year in addition to hosting events and networking opportunities that bring the Econsultancy community together around the world. Subscribe to Econsultancy today to accelerate your journey to digital excellence.

Call us to find out more:

New York: +1 212 971 0630
London: +44 207 269 1450
Singapore: +65 6809 2088

Key Insight:
2014 survey respondents were senior-level, equally divided between clients and agencies, and more international than ever before.

Respondent Overview
Organization Type

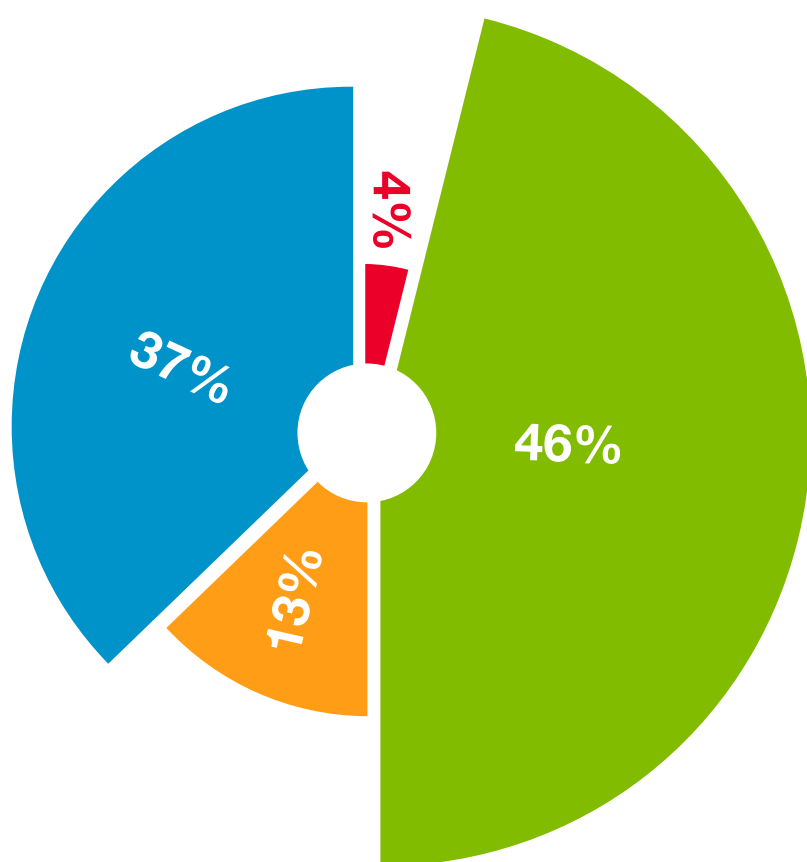| Organization Type	
Consumer brand (B2C) marketing	22%
Corporate brand (B2B) marketing	19.7%
Agency	39%
Digital production studio	3.8%
Consultant / Supplier / Third party serving the digital marketing industry	5.3%
Other digital marketing professional	10.2%

Q. Which of the following best describes the organization you work for?

The share of client-side respondents actively involved in digital marketing grew considerably this past year and now – for the first time – is essentially on par with the percentage of agency and production company respondents (i.e., Clients – 42% of sample; Agencies / Prodcos – 43% of sample).

Respondent Overview

Consumer Marketers by Category

Consumer Packaged Goods
Services
OEM
Other (please specify)

Q. Which of the following best describes your category of consumer brand marketing?

In line with global economic trends where growth is largely being underpinned by the expansion of the service economy, the percentage of client-side survey respondents in the service sector this year grew considerably. Admittedly, the pool of client-side respondents to SoDA's survey may be more sophisticated than the general population of brand marketers. Brands – particularly those in the service sector – are facing increasingly demanding consumers and must provide seamless service experiences or risk losing market share. Use of digital platforms to find out what consumers of services (and goods) want and how to deliver against those needs in smart, convenient ways is now an established trend that bodes well for forward-thinking companies of all stripes in our industry (agencies, production companies, software developers, customer experience specialists, etc.).

Respondent Overview

Job Title

| Title	
C-level executive (e.g., CMO)	30%
Vice president (including SVP & EVP) of marketing	11%
Vice president (including SVP & EVP) of channel (e.g., social media, mobile, email)	6%
Vice president (including SVP & EVP) of technology	6%
Director of marketing	13%
Director of channel	4%
Director of technology	13%
Other	17%

Q. Which of the following best describes your title?

Over 82% of respondents were key decision makers and influencers (C-Level, Senior Executives, VPs and Directors) with annual marketing budgets ranging from US$5M to over US$100M.

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Respondent Overview

Geographic Region

1.9%

11.5%

20.8%

22.1%

36.4%

7.3%
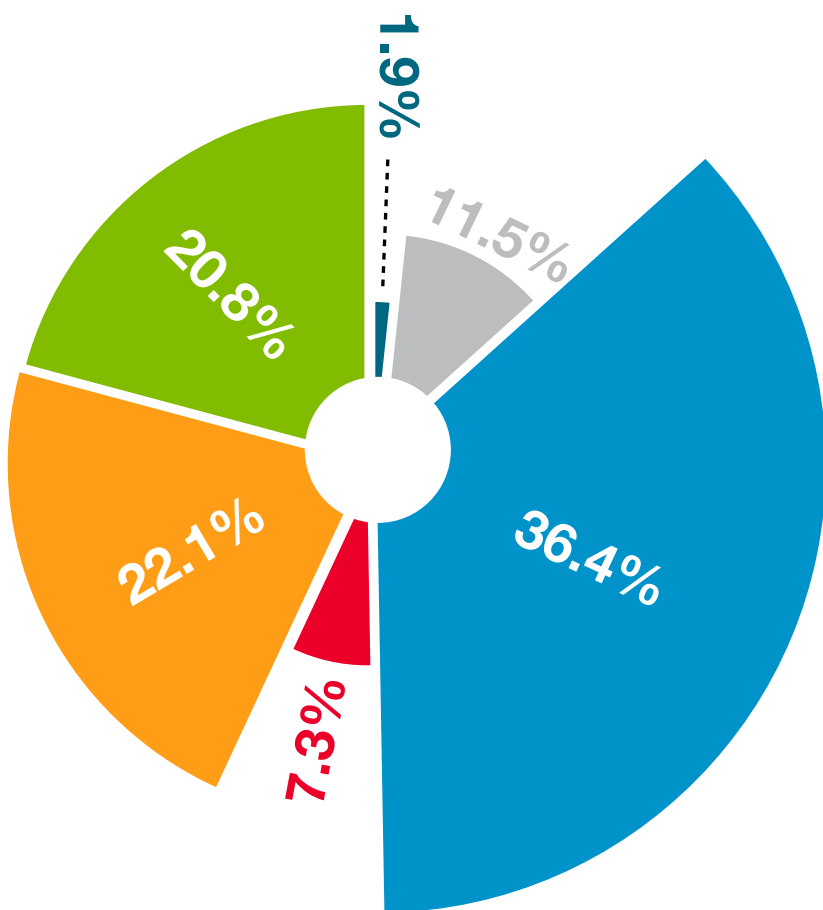
North America
Europe
APAC
South America
Africa
Less than half our revenues
come from any one continent

Q. From which region do the
majority of your business
revenues come?

While **North American
respondents** are still the single
largest contingent of DMO Survey
respondents, their share of the
overall respondent base has fallen
dramatically in the past two years,
from 60% in 2012 to 36% in 2014.
Respondents from Europe accounted
for 22% of the overall sample in 2014,
while the share of APAC respondents
grew considerably and now accounts
for 21% of the total. The multinational
cross-section of respondents for 2014
is in line with last year's study, with
one in ten indicating that no single
continent accounted for a majority of
their business revenue.

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Key Insight:
A growing share of clients are working with small rosters of highly specialized digital shops.

Agency Ecosystems in 2014

Q. How many agencies touch digital marketing efforts at your company?

Number of Agencies	
Zero	**13%**
One	**23%**
Two	**26%**
Three	**17%**
Four	**9%**
Five	**5%**
Six	**1%**
Seven	**1%**
Eight	**1%**
Nine	**0%**
Ten or More	**4%**

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What Types of Digital Shops are Clients Hiring?

Assignment Structure

We rely on one or more full-service digital agencies to handle our digital marketing assignments	**16%**
We maintain a roster of highly specialized digital agencies (search, mobile, social, etc.)	**29%**
We maintain a mix of full-service and highly specialized digital agencies	**23%**
We work with a lead agency that handles all digital and traditional assignments	**11%**
Doesn't apply	**21%**

Q. How do you structure your digital marketing assignments between agencies?

Most marketers are working with only a handful of agencies, with over 85% of brands using four or fewer agencies on digital marketing initiatives. This has remained largely consistent over the past few years in our annual study. In fact, the 2014 result is identical to 2013 (i.e., 88% of clients indicated they have four or fewer agencies on their roster in both years).

While the overall number of agencies on client rosters continues to be relatively small, the types of digital shops on those rosters is diverse. Over half (52%) of client-side respondents in this year's study indicated that they plan on having an agency roster that includes highly specialized digital shops (i.e., 29% *highly specialized agencies* + 23% *mix of full-service and highly specialized agencies*).

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The number of marketers working with zero agencies has risen, again indicating that more and more of the responsibility for digital marketing efforts is resting with brands. While this trend is no doubt a cause for concern (particularly for digital shops who are not evolving their business model to include new offerings and sources of revenue), we're not yet seeing it translate into noticeable changes in the budgets that clients are allocating for the companies that touch their digital initiatives.
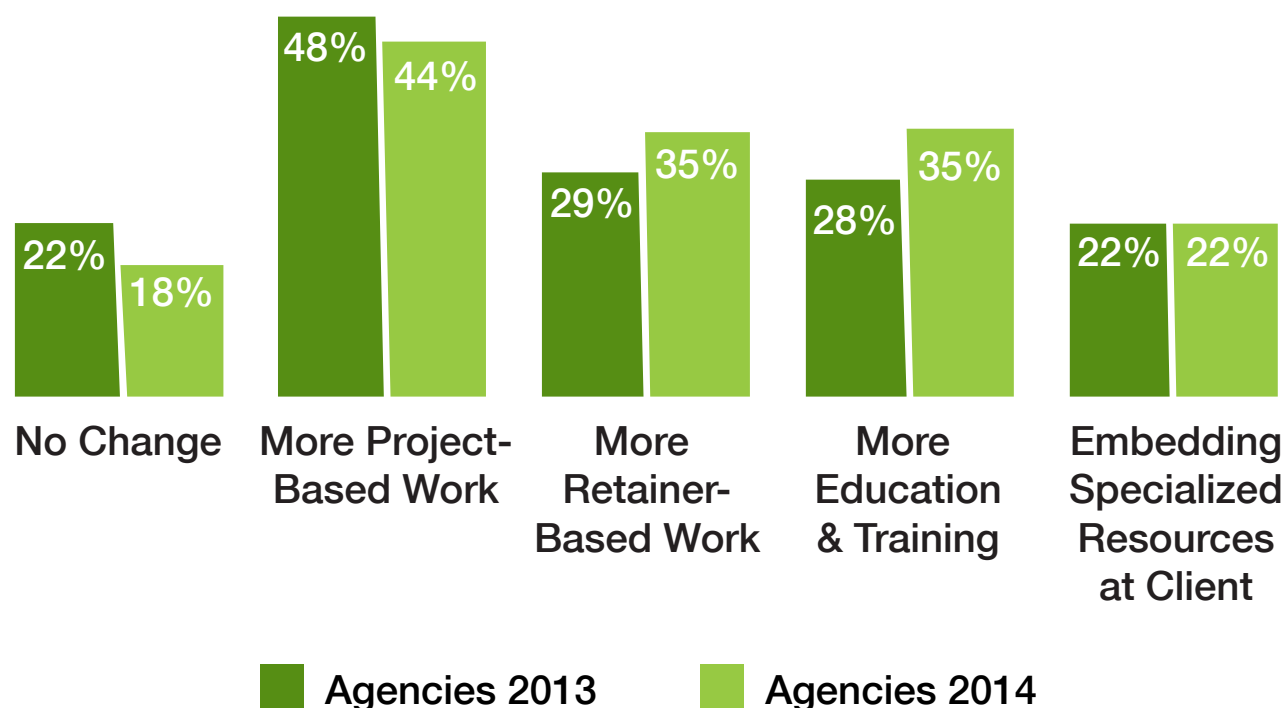
(See chart on the next page on projected agency investments by clients)

Key Insight:
Digital shops are reporting a significant jump in retainer-based work as well as client education and training services.

The Changing Nature of Client Engagements

	No Change	More Project-Based Work	More Retainer-Based Work	More Education & Training	Embedding Specialized Resources at Client
Agencies 2013	22%	48%	29%	28%	22%
Agencies 2014	18%	44%	35%	35%	22%

Q. (Posed to agencies) How have your engagement models with clients changed over the last year? (select all that apply)

Key Insight: Unlike previous DMO studies where the share of project-based work grew year in and year out, this year there was a **21% increase in agencies reporting more retainer-based work.** The share of respondents indicating they were seeing more project-based work actually fell four percentage points. Arguably, this is due to an increase in the types of highly specialized digital services clients are investing in that require a longer-term engagement (i.e., data/analytics and ongoing user experience work stemming from the ever-increasing

constellation of connected devices).

One of the most significant changes in the past 12 months has been the increase in the percentage of agencies providing education and training services to clients who have developed internal teams to handle digital production and maintenance. That figure rose a whopping 25% in relative terms, from 28% of respondents in 2013 to 35% in 2014.

As clients continue to learn more from digital shops, companies in our industry must continue to innovate to stay ahead of the game. It is clear that a large percentage of companies are heeding this call to action in 2014 as evidenced by the dramatic increase in the percentage of agencies and prodcos with active innovation labs and product incubators.

Digital Shops Need to Improve Estimation Skills

6.09

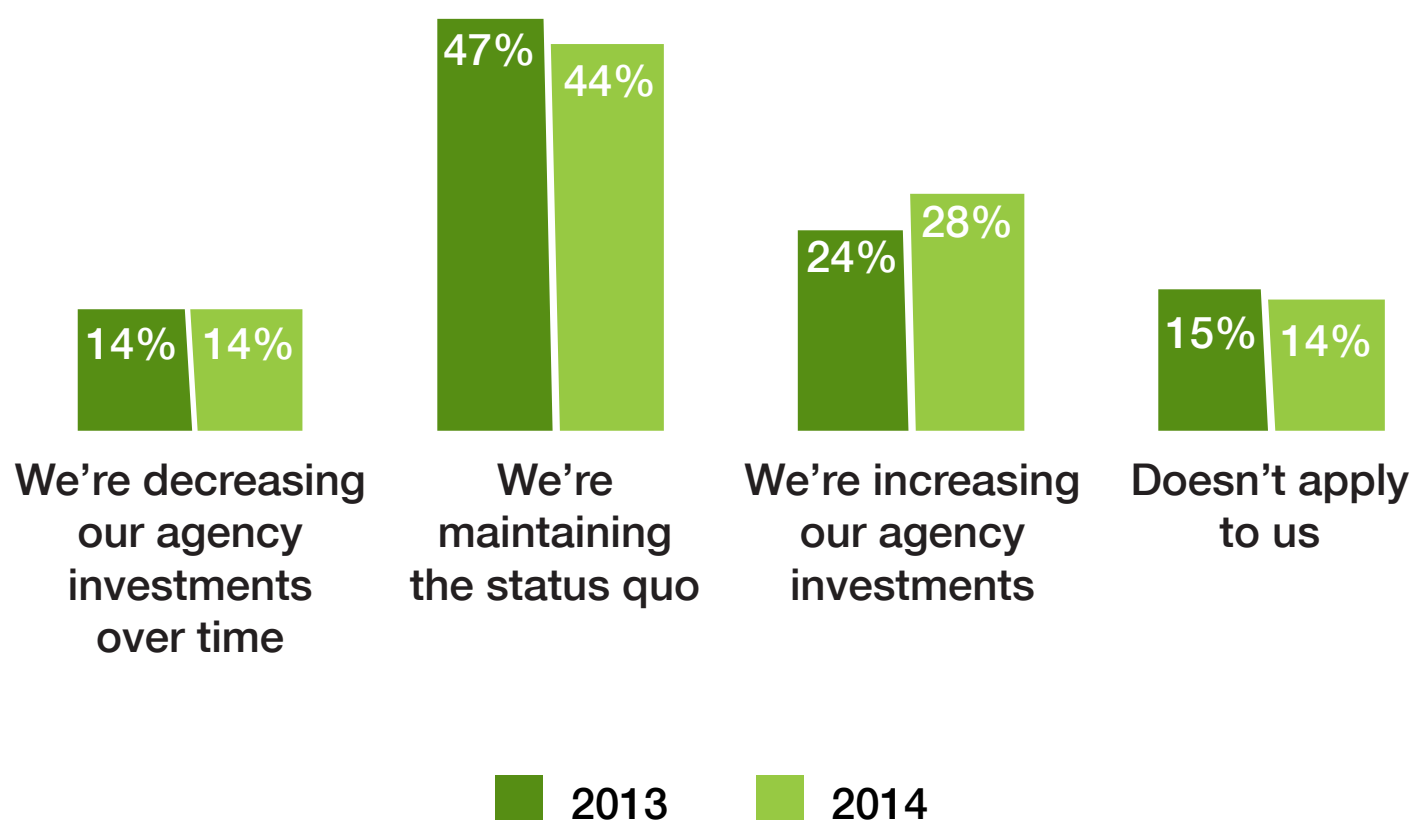0   5   10
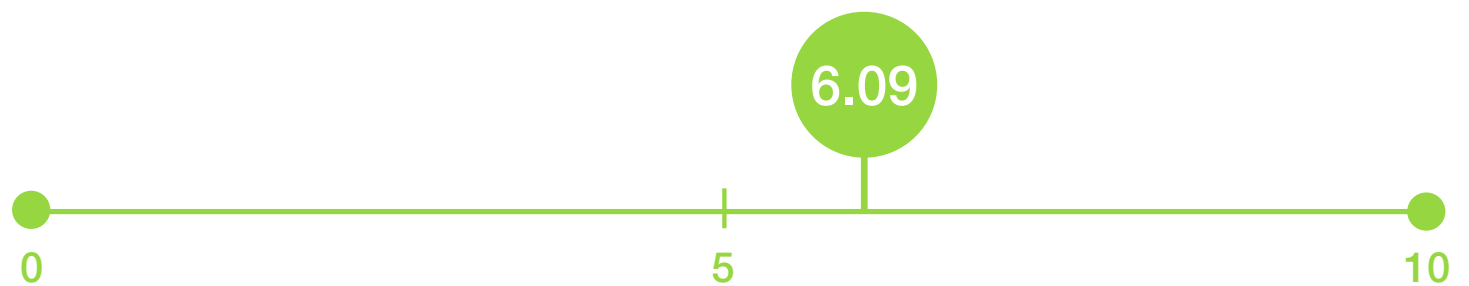
When asked to rank their organization from 0 to 10 on their ability to accurately estimate project costs, agencies left themselves quite a bit of room for improvement in 2014. The average for all agency and prodco respondents was just 6.09, indicating that most digital shops continue to struggle with estimation – a core business requirement that wields a tremendous impact on their overall financial and organizational success.

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2014 Budget Outlook

Key Insight:
The economic recovery in certain regions of the world (namely North America) has not yet translated into higher projected spending on digital shops in 2014.

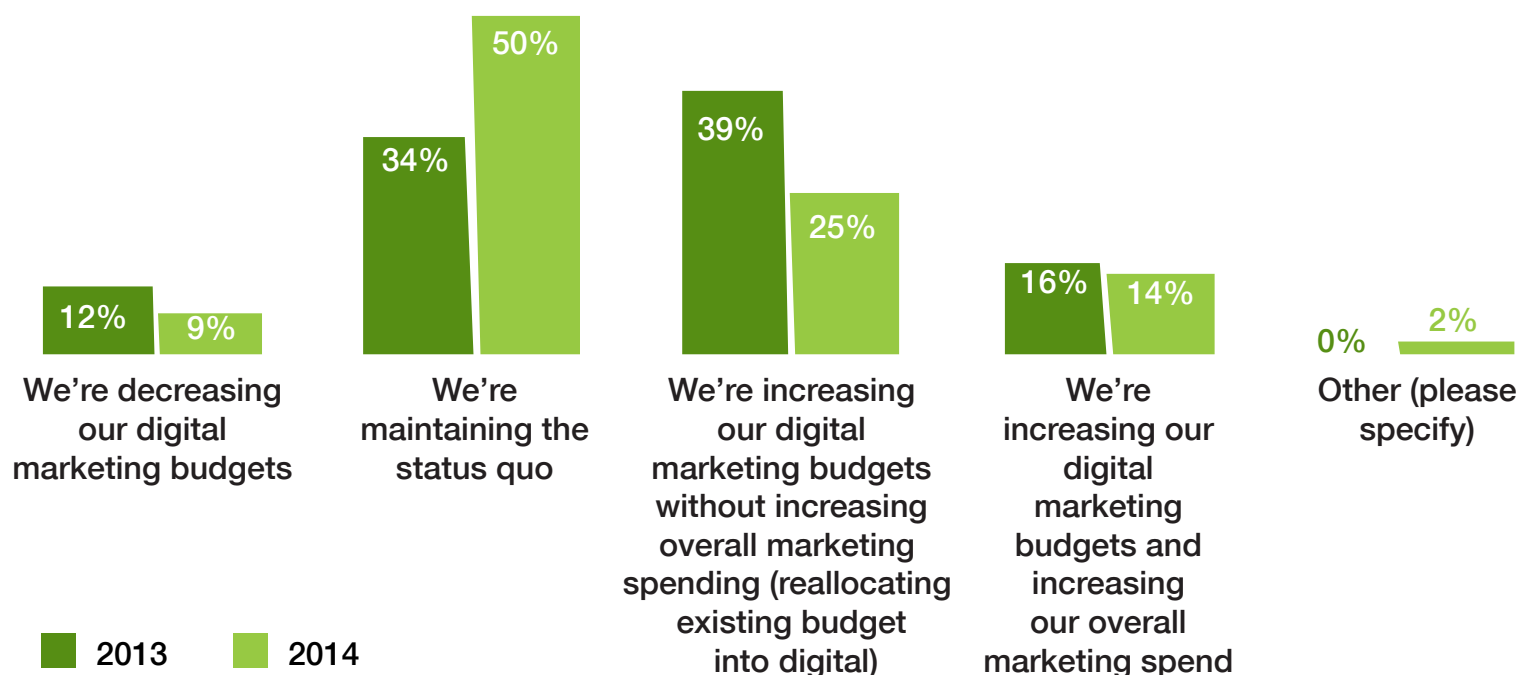**Client Spending on Digital Shops Remains Stable**

	We're decreasing our agency investments over time	We're maintaining the status quo	We're increasing our agency investments	Doesn't apply to us
2013	14%	47%	24%	15%
2014	14%	44%	28%	14%

■ 2013   ■ 2014

Q. Which of the following best describes your organization's approach to managing and executing digital marketing with agency partners?

72% of client respondents indicated they are either maintaining or increasing agency investments in 2014. Meanwhile the percentage of respondents decreasing agency investments has remained stable YOY (i.e. 14% in the '13 DMO Study <u>and</u> 14% in the '14 DMO Study).

The economic recovery in certain regions of the world (namely North America) has not yet translated into higher projected spending on digital shops in 2014 – at least as evidenced in this year's survey findings. There are a number of likely reasons for this:

- With SoDA's growing international presence, the percentage of survey respondents in North America (where the economic recovery has been strongest) shrank considerably (i.e., from 50% in 2013 to 36% in 2014).

- Brands in North America – and elsewhere – are still maintaining historically high levels of cash reserves. Many analysts believe this is due to the fact that they do not have sufficient visibility or confidence in future growth. As a result, they have not started spending at a sufficiently robust level to generate larger budgets for digital initiatives.

- Client organizations are doing more in house. More than 1 in 4 client-side survey respondents answered either "we're decreasing agency investments" or "doesn't apply to us." Clients with *zero* agencies on their roster would fall into the latter category. Digital shops who fail to understand this trend or take it seriously by exploring new offerings and sources of revenue will likely find themselves in serious trouble in the medium term.

Growth of Campaign Spending on Digital Slows

- 12% (2013) / 9% (2014) — We're decreasing our digital marketing budgets
- 34% (2013) / 50% (2014) — We're maintaining the status quo
- 39% (2013) / 25% (2014) — We're increasing our digital marketing budgets without increasing overall marketing spending (reallocating existing budget into digital)
- 16% (2013) / 14% (2014) — We're increasing our digital marketing budgets and increasing our overall marketing spend
- 0% (2013) / 2% (2014) — Other (please specify)

2013 | **2014**

Q. Which of the following best describes your organization's projected budget for digital marketing initiatives in 2014?

In last year's DMO study, a large cross-section of client respondents indicated they were increasing their spending on digital marketing initiatives (including paid digital media). That trend has slowed considerably in 2014, with a much higher percentage (as noted in the graph above) indicating they are maintaining the status quo. In 2014, over 50% of client respondents indicated they would be maintaining their current levels of campaign spending, up a full sixteen percentage points from 2013 (+39% in relative terms). Clients are likely holding tight to current plans, waiting to see if last year's digitally-focused initiatives yield the positive impact anticipated during the 1st half of 2014.
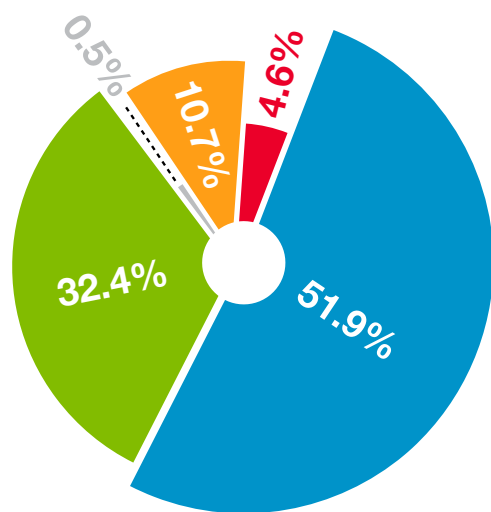
Similarly, the percentage of client-side respondents who indicated they plan to increase digital marketing budgets in 2014 (either through reallocation of budget toward digital or by increasing marketing budgets overall) fell sixteen percentage points (from 55% in 2013 to 39% in 2014).

In short, this year we see that the pendulum has stopped in the middle with relatively small "cost of living" increases in marketing spends overall.

Key Insight:

Many companies in SoDA and across the industry – including software development shops, experience design consultancies and analytics firms – are increasingly tapping into budgets outside of marketing departments. Spending on data and mobile predominate in this area.

Budgets for Digital Initiatives Outside the Marketing Realm

Q. Which of the following best describes your organization's projected budget for other digital initiatives that are not directly marketing related (e.g. digital products, IT/development, customer insights/analytics, intranets and other internal applications)?

0.5%
10.7%
4.6%
32.4%
51.9%

We're maintaining the status quo
We're increasing these budgets
We're decreasing these budgets
Doesn't apply / Don't know
Other (please specify)

A first-time question in SoDA's annual DMO Survey, we found that **one in three clients were increasing digital budgets** in areas outside of pure marketing efforts. This includes digital products, IT/development, customer insights and analytics,

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intranets and other internal applications.

Those increasing budgets in this area are 20% more likely to classify themselves as "sophisticated" or "very sophisticated" with respect to digital and are 40% more likely to be increasing their agency investments overall.

Clearly, increasing levels of digital sophistication on the client side (and increased "in-housing" of some digital work by clients) does not have to translate into diminished revenue potential for digital agencies. From the survey's open-ended responses, the bulk of increased spending in this area is focused on data, mobile and product innovation.

Creating digital products and helping clients mine the avalanche of data generated by their digital platforms in order to identify valuable customer insights represent real and considerable business opportunities for companies in our industry.

The Rise of Innovation Labs

Key Insight:
Full-service agencies and digital shops are investing in innovation efforts like never before. Seeking to carve out a bright future for themselves and to counteract a trend toward the commoditization of digital work product, the percentage of agencies with innovation labs or product incubators rose nearly 30% in 2014 (vs. the results of SoDA's 2013 DMO Survey).
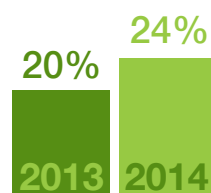
Innovation Labs Continue to Proliferate in 2014

39%   50%

2013   2014
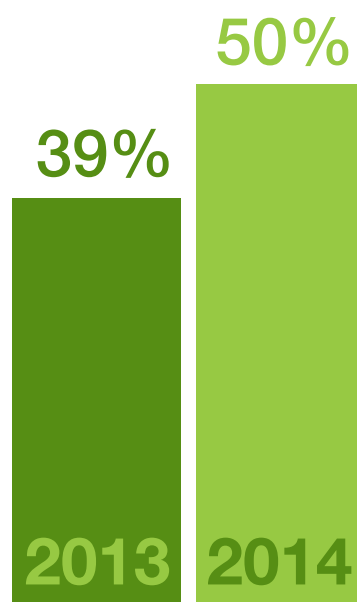
Percentage of Agencies with Innovation
Labs or Product Incubators

Q. Do you have an innovation lab /product incubator within your agency or production company?

The Value of Innovation Labs

Funding / Company Spin-off

20% **2013**
24% **2014**

Resulted in company spin-off,
VC investment or significant funding

Talent Retention

47% **2013**
49% **2014**

Resulted in stronger retention of talent -
happier, more engaged staff

New Business

46% **2013**
52% **2014**
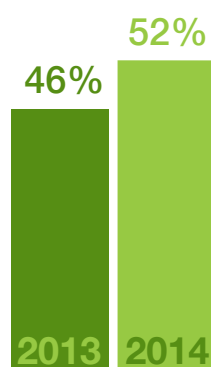
Directly contributed to new
business development wins

Too Early to Tell

24% **2013**
31% **2014**
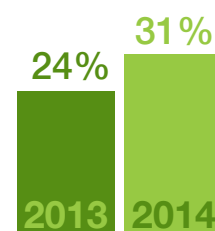
Too early to tell the real benefits engendered by
our innovation lab / product incubator

Q. What benefits has your innovation lab / product incubator produced? (Check all that apply)

The percentage of full-service agencies, digital agencies and production companies with innovation labs or product incubators has soared in 2014, growing 28% in comparison to SoDA's 2013 DMO Study. Fifty percent (50%) of agency respondents indicated they now have an innovation lab or product incubator, up from 39% in the 2013 study.

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The value generated by these efforts is well documented in the charts above:

- Incremental funding, VC investment or company spin-offs
- Happier, more engaged staff
- New business wins

Given that the percentage of agencies with innovation labs expanded by almost one-third in the 2014 study, it's not surprising that a slightly higher percentage of respondents indicated it was "too early to tell" the real benefits engendered by their efforts in this area. Despite the ambiguity for many shops surrounding the ROI question, it's clear that there are a variety of factors contributing to the innovation lab trend.

- Agencies and production companies are seeking new sources of revenue to ensure their long-term survival
- Provides a hedge against the "in-housing" of digital work on the client side and the commoditization of digital
- Clients are asking for it, and value such efforts highly. Clients ranked Product / Service Innovation as a close 2nd in terms of the factors they value in their agency relationships.

Digital shops who have practicing incubator labs may be the best prepared to evolve with the growing digital intelligence of clients. They say the incubators provide tangible value in the form of:

- Talent retention: trending upward (+4% over last year)
- New business wins from the incubator (+13% over last year)
- Client prioritization of product innovation as a key factor in evaluating agency relationships (again, clients ranked it a close 2nd behind "marketing creativity")

The Outlook for Agencies

Agencies and Clients Chime In

The "AOR" is Disappearing
(% of respondents who agree)
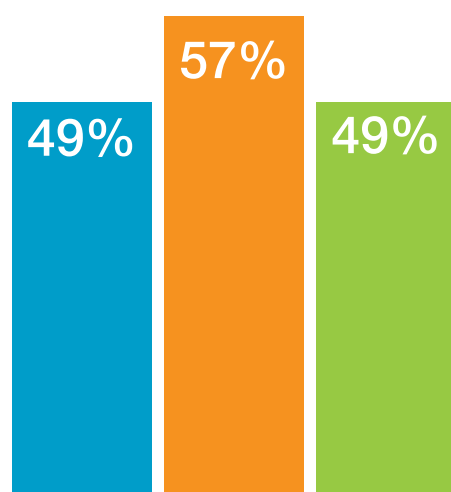
49%
57%
49%

Agencies 2013
Agencies 2014
Clients 2014

Q. Thinking about the advertising industry broadly, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Posed to agencies) The "Agency of Record" is disappearing for most types of clients.

(Posed to clients) The "Agency of Record" is disappearing as our standard practice of agency engagement.

In the 2014 study, we see a large increase (+17%) in the number of agency respondents pointing to the demise of the standard "Agency of Record" relationship with clients. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of agency respondents indicated they believe AOR relationships are disappearing.

For the first time, we also posed this question to client-side respondents to get their take. Interestingly, clients were decidedly less pessimistic about the future of AOR relationships. While a large percentage of clients (i.e., 49%) indicated they thought the AOR relationship was on the way out, it was a substantially lower percentage than on the agency side.

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Digital Shops Emerging as Leaders on Agency Rosters
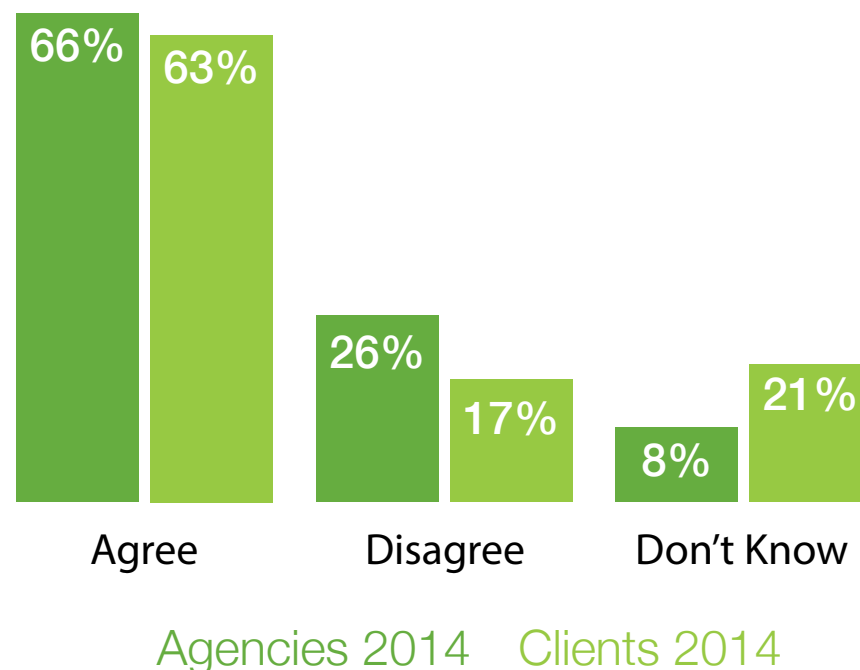
66% 63% — Agree
26% 17% — Disagree
8% 21% — Don't Know
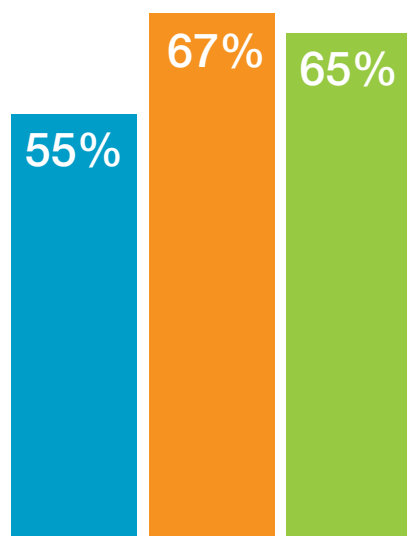
Agencies 2014   Clients 2014

Q. Thinking about the advertising industry broadly, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Posed to agencies and clients) Digital agencies are increasingly likely to emerge as "leaders" among the various agency partners.

The percentage of clients and agencies who thought digital shops were now more likely to emerge as "leaders" among the clients' various agency partners was almost identical in SoDA's 2014 DMO Survey (i.e., roughly two-thirds of all client and agency respondents). Interestingly, far fewer clients (as compared to agency respondents) indicated that they did not think digital shops are ready to lead (Clients 17%; Agencies 26%).

There was a much larger cross-section of client respondents who simply didn't know at this juncture. Arguably, this client vs. agency discrepancy (i.e., 21% of clients indicating "Don't Know" vs. only 8% of agency respondents) may have a lot to do with lingering uncertainties around the dramatic transformations taking place (or needed in the near future) on the client side. How those transformations will impact clients' agency ecosystems remains largely unknown.

Clients Moving Toward Specialized Digital Shops
(% of respondents who agree)

55%
67%
65%

Agencies 2013
Agencies 2014
Clients 2014

Q. Thinking about the advertising industry broadly, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Posed to agencies) As clients become more digitally sophisticated internally, they're more likely to use agencies for specialty work than as broad, full-service digital partners.

(Posed to clients) As we become more digitally sophisticated internally, we're more likely to use agencies for specialty work than as broad, full-service digital partners.

In our 2014 study, the percentage of agency respondents who asserted that clients were moving toward more specialized digital agencies as they became more digitally savvy internally grew to 67% (+22% in relative terms). Client respondents agreed.

Last year, we identified a trend toward clients innovating "out of house" and maintaining their digital experiences in-house, and suggested that the trend would become even more pronounced through 2013 and into this year. We believe the survey response above (with both clients and agencies indicating a move toward more specialized work and away from broad, full-service assignments with clients) supports that assertion.

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Product Creation Increasingly Important for Digital Shops
(% of respondents who agree)
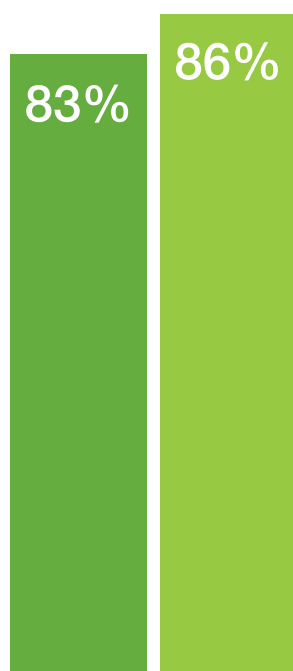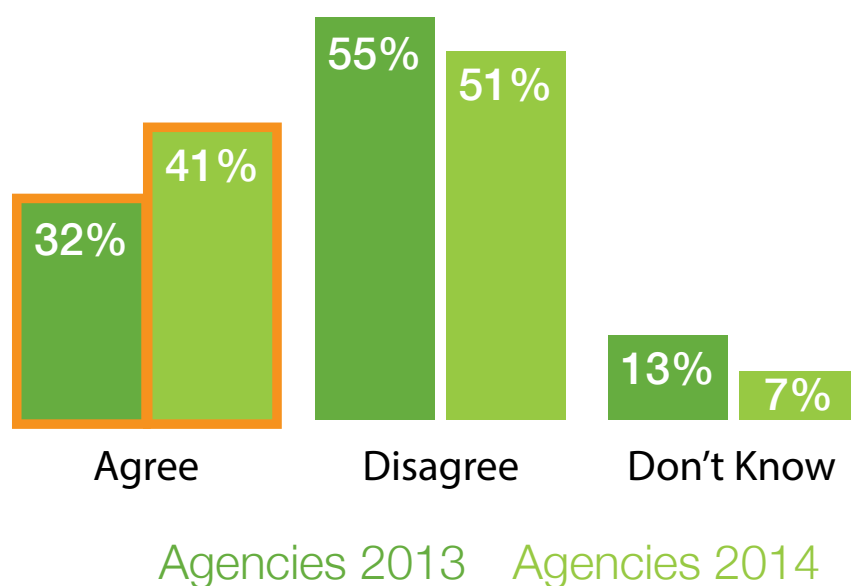
83% 86%

Agencies 2013
Agencies 2014

Q. Thinking about the advertising industry broadly, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Posed to agencies) The best route to growth is to make products – to be able to create unique, effective experiences and tools for consumers and brands.

Digital agencies and production companies are increasingly looking toward product and platform creation as the best route to future growth. 86% of survey respondents indicated that the best route to growth was to make products, up from 83% in 2013. We believe forward-looking agencies and prodcos will continue to move in this direction, creating unique and effective products for consumers and brands in order to ensure a bright future for their companies.

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Commoditization and Off-Shoring Rising as Key Agency Issues

Commoditization as Issue
(% of respondents who agree)

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Agencies 2013	32%	55%	13%
Agencies 2014	41%	51%	7%

Agencies 2013   Agencies 2014

Q. Thinking about the advertising industry broadly, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Posed to agencies) The rapid commoditization of digital work product is a serious problem for my company.

Near-Shoring / Off-Shoring as Issue
(% of respondents who agree)
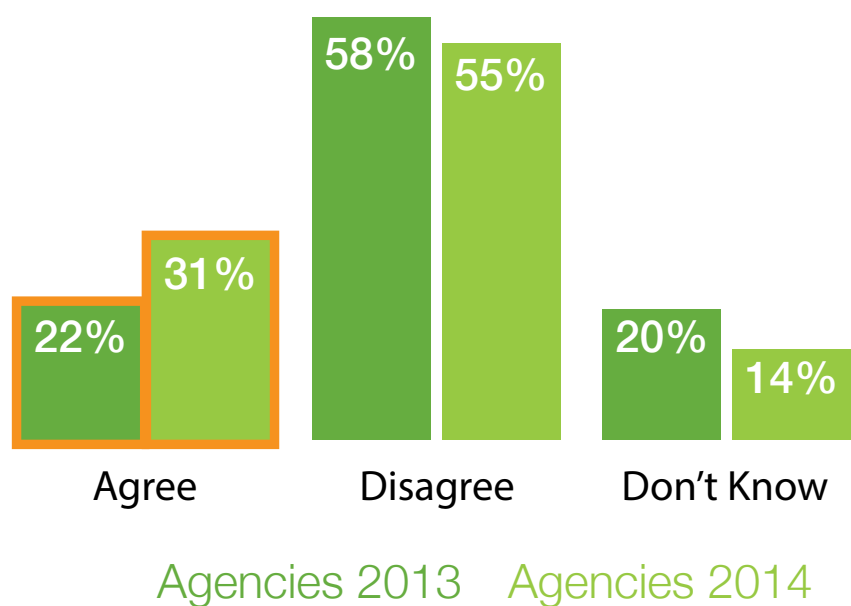
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Agencies 2013	22%	58%	20%
Agencies 2014	31%	55%	14%

Agencies 2013   Agencies 2014

Q. Thinking about the advertising industry broadly, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Posed to agencies) Near-shoring or off-shoring is wielding a significant impact on my business.

The rapid commoditization of digital work product and near-shoring/off-shoring are two related issues that are causing concern for a growing percentage leaders in our industry. The number of agency leaders identifying commoditization as a serious problem jumped nine percentage points (+28% in relative terms), as did the number who believe near-shoring and off-shoring of digital work was a growing concern (from 22% in 2013 to 31% in 2014; +41% in relative terms).

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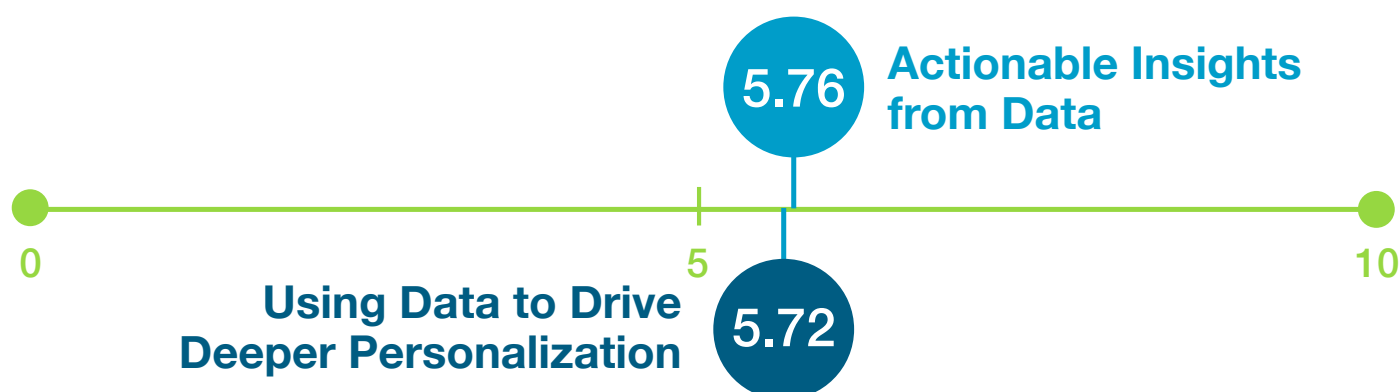Achieve Digital Excellence™

Agencies Admit They Need to Improve their Measurement / Analytics Prowess

Agency respondents were decidedly humble (or refreshingly honest) when asked to rank their organization from 0 to 10 on their ability to:
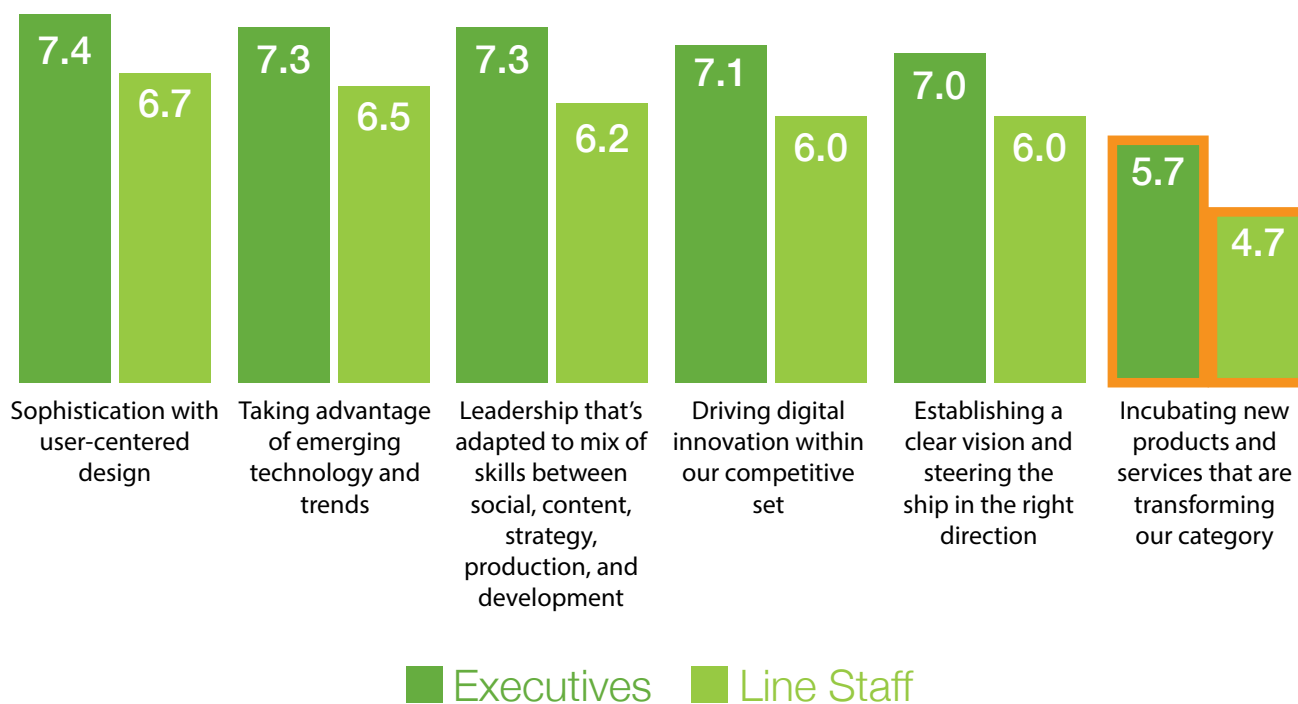
1) Identify actionable insights from increasing volumes of data (Avg. of 5.76)

2) Use a variety of data inputs to drive deep levels of personalization (Avg. of 5.72)

While clients also indicated that Analytics was an internal area where they needed to make major progress, it's clear that many digital agencies also need to beef up their analytics capabilities in order to re-align to the needs of clients in this area.

Admittedly, deep personalization and gleaning insights from ever increasing volumes of data constitute a new frontier for most marketers and digital shops.

5.76 **Actionable Insights from Data**

0   5   10

Using Data to Drive Deeper Personalization 5.72

Agency Staff Evaluate their Leadership

	Sophistication with user-centered design	Taking advantage of emerging technology and trends	Leadership that's adapted to mix of skills between social, content, strategy, production, and development	Driving digital innovation within our competitive set	Establishing a clear vision and steering the ship in the right direction	Incubating new products and services that are transforming our category
Executives	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.0	5.7
Line Staff	6.7	6.5	6.2	6.0	6.0	4.7

■ Executives   ■ Line Staff

Q. On a scale of 0-10, indicate the degree to which the leadership at your company establishes a clear vision and steers the ship in the right direction in the following areas.

We asked agency executive and line staff on the agency side to evaluate their company's leadership in a variety of areas. Not surprisingly, agency execs consistently ranked themselves higher than did the line staff at their companies. However, the discrepancies were not overly dramatic. Given the strong focus on innovation labs and product incubators in this year's survey (with 50% of agencies now purporting to have an active innovation lab), it is interesting to note that incubating new products and services gets the lowest rating from both execs and line staff at agencies.

That finding should raise a red flag that agencies need to step up in this area, given that product/service innovation is one of the top two most valued areas of agency expertise by clients in this year's study. It could arguably be that the incubator initiatives are still too new on the agency side for executives or line staff to say definitively that there is "a clear vision" and that "the ship is moving in the right direction."

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Staff Training
Senior Management and Line Staff Don't See Eye-to-Eye on Education Initiatives

Q. Do you offer current and/or emerging technology training to your staff? (posed to agency respondents – all roles)

The 2014 DMO survey revealed a major discrepancy between what line staff and execs say in terms of the training opportunities offered internally. Senior Management seems to believe they offer more than they do, or at least line staff doesn't know/take advantage:

Type of Staff Education	Senior Management (% agree)	Line Staff (% agree)
Yes - team roundtables	62%	42% (-32% in relation to Sr. Mgt.)
Yes - conferences	56%	42% (-25% in relation to Sr. Mgt.)
Yes - formal technology training	29%	20% (-31% in relation to Sr. Mgt.)
Webinars	34%	23% (-32% in relation to Sr. Mgt.)
We do not currently provide any training to our staff	14%	20% (+43% in relation to Sr. Mgt.)

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Modern Marketers

Clients Self-Assess their Digital Sophistication

Key Insight:
Marketers and agencies disagree on level of digital marketing sophistication on client side.

4%

8%

6%

27%

26%

29%
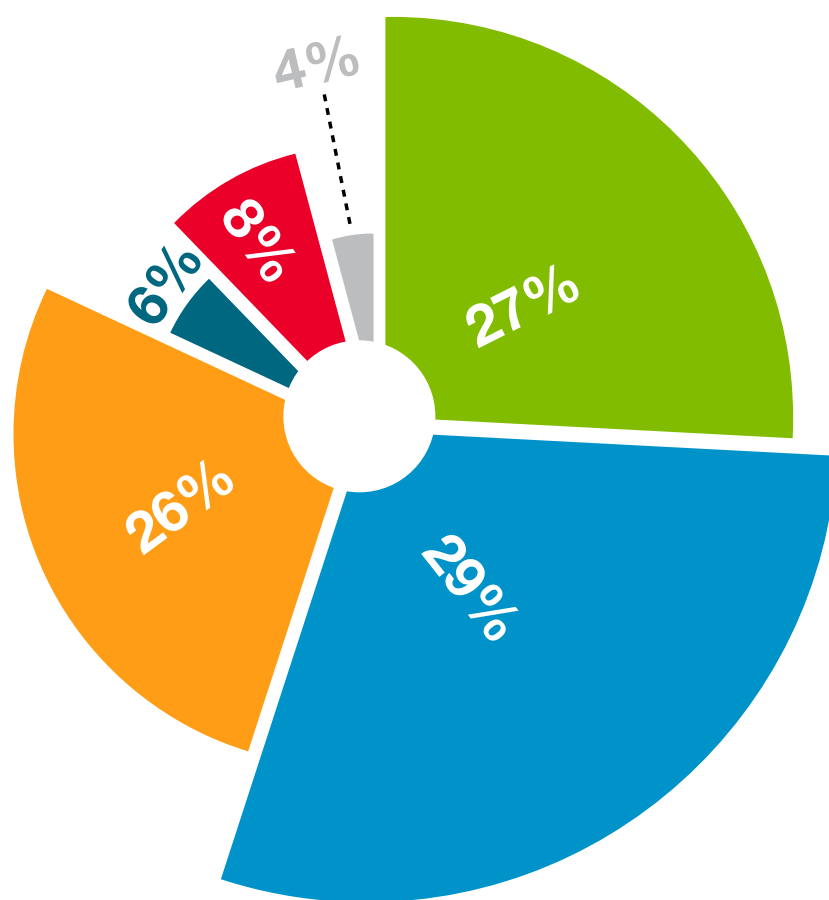
Very sophisticated
Somewhat sophisticated
About average
Somewhat unsophisticated
Very unsophisticated
No opinion

Q. How would you describe the digital marketing sophistication of your organization? (posed to client-side respondents)

55% of marketers describe their organization as "sophisticated" or "very sophisticated" in digital marketing. Similarly, just under half of marketers consider their organizations "ahead of the curve" or "state of the art" in most areas of digital fluency - including topics like **Responsive Design, Social Media, Integrated Experience Design, Mobile, and Data-driven Optimization.**

When we look at this self-assessment on a YOY basis, the figures are fairly consistent (54% indicating "Very or Somewhat Sophisticated" in 2013 vs. 55% in 2014). With the incredibly rapid

pace at which the industry is evolving, this result points to one of two possible scenarios:

1) Client-side organizations are keeping pace with the changes taking place in our industry or

2) They're not keeping pace, but think they are.

We do believe an increasing share of client organizations are keeping pace with major industry trends. However, agency respondents in the '14 DMO Study do not necessarily concur. Agency respondents said a whopping 50% of their clients need to undergo a major overhaul or transformation in the next 12-24 months in response to the rise of digital. So, whether it's already happened – or will happen in the near future – we believe increasing digital acumen on the client side is a trend that will become more pronounced and pervasive this year and into 2015.

How we defined the categories:

Very sophisticated = *We have a highly advanced model that is creating the future of marketing and digital experiences today. We are passionate about understanding our customers and we build digital products and experiences that are decidedly innovative.*

Somewhat sophisticated = *We are highly focused on digital innovation to drive differentiation around customer experience, but lack a long-term strategy.*

About average = *We tend to be conservative and consensus driven, which makes us a bit slower than others to put the latest digital trends and innovations into practice. We do value digital and are building our skills.*

Somewhat unsophisticated = *We are executing campaigns but haven't really integrated digital into our marketing ecosystem in a strategic or holistic way.*
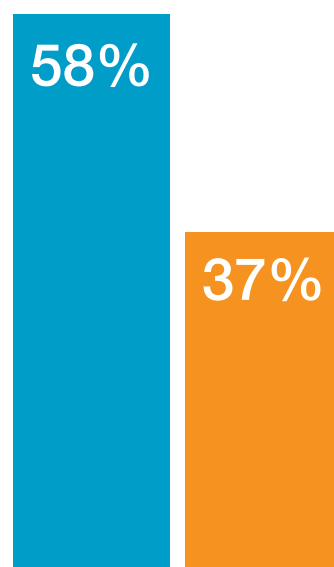
Very unsophisticated = *We're still working with the basics of digital and know we have a long way to go.*

Key Insight:
Marketers and agencies don't see eye-to-eye on degree to which client organizations are evolving in response to the rise of digital.

Divergent POVs on Level of Transformation Taking Place at Client Organizations

58%

37%

Clients' Self-Assessment
Assessment of Clients

Note: Percentages include "some change" or
"significant change" in response to the rise of digital.

Q. Thinking about today, please indicate the level to which your organization has completed or begun a "transformation" – a major overhaul in response to the rise of digital.

Brands and agencies in the 2014 DMO survey don't agree on the extent to which client organizations are transforming themselves. These divergent points are quite possibly tied to perceptions of what constitutes "significant change." One could argue that agencies - particularly small-to-medium sized shops – are more readily able to transform and reinvent themselves at a rapid pace. As a result, they may not recognize client-side transformations to the same extent as an brand marketing exec who has a direct understanding of the Herculean effort it takes to make change at a large client organization.

Key Insight:
As client organizations assert their increasing digital marketing sophistication, they're taking more digital projects in-house.

The "In-Housing" Trend Continues on the Client Side

Q. What digital services, if any, do you now handle in-house that were previously handled by external agencies?

A sampling of the responses:

- *"All digital services now handled in-house"*
- *"Analytics, SEO, development"*
- *"Community management, site maintenance"*
- *"Email marketing"*
- *"Paid search"*
- *"Plan to move most things in-house over next three years"*
- *"SEM"*
- *"Social media"*
- *"Software development"*
- *"Mobile marketing"*
- *"We handle all digital services in house, aside from our SEO efforts"*
- *"Website, search and social"*
- *"Everything!"*
- *"We only outsource eCommerce and mobile/responsive development"*
- *"Content creation and video production"*
- *"All functions are now in-house"*

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Key Insight:
Fewer and fewer clients believe they're "behind" or "hopeless" in key digital practice areas.

Learning Curve on Client Side is Flattening

Q. Where is your organization on the learning curve for the following areas? (posed to clients)

2014 shows continued growth in marketers' ability to plan and execute in digital - a trend we expect to see continue. Across the board, the percentage of clients who affirmed they were "Ahead of the Curve" or "State of the Art" in areas such as Responsive Design, Mobile and Analytics rose in 2014 vis-à-vis last year's study.

And not surprisingly, the percentage who said they were "Behind the Times" or "Hopeless" in those areas declined significantly. The only exception was in the area of Social Media where a slightly higher percentage of respondents indicated they were "State of the Art / Ahead of Curve" in the 2013 study.

With digital becoming an increasingly intimate brand interface, we expect to see this trend accelerate as more and more clients transform their organizations, building increasingly sophisticated internal teams to handle the new norm of always-on marketing.
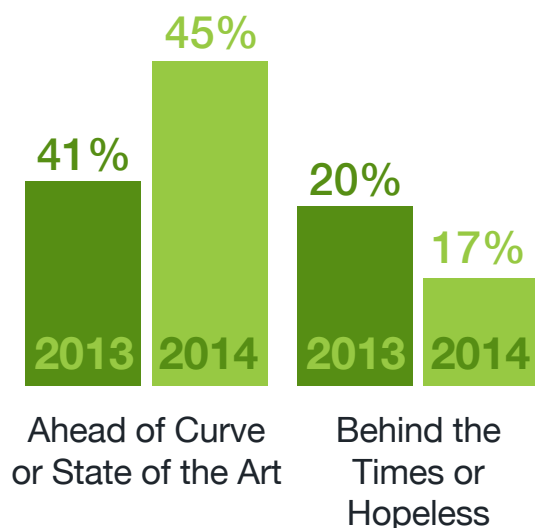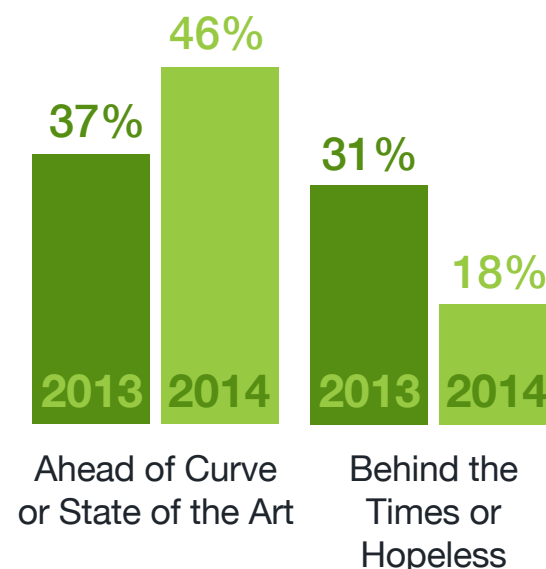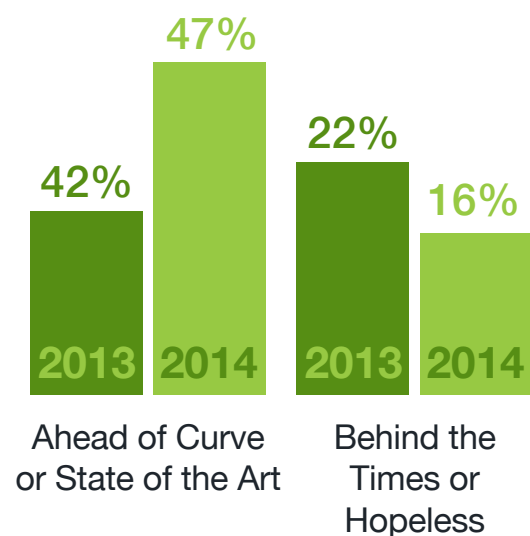
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Responsive Design

44%
40%
27%
15%

2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014

Ahead of Curve or State of the Art | Behind the Times or Hopeless

Social Media

52%
48%
15%
12%

2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014

Ahead of Curve or State of the Art | Behind the Times or Hopeless

Integrated Experience Design

45%
41%
20%
17%

2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014

Ahead of Curve or State of the Art | Behind the Times or Hopeless

Mobile

46%
37%
31%
18%

2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014

Ahead of Curve or State of the Art | Behind the Times or Hopeless

Data-Driven Optimization

47%
42%
22%
16%

2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014

Ahead of Curve or State of the Art | Behind the Times or Hopeless

■ Clients 2013
■ Clients 2014

(graphs not to scale)

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What Clients Want

2014 SoDA survey reveals significant discrepancies in client and agency perceptions of what's important to clients.

As a new addition to the 2014 DMO Survey, we asked both clients and agencies to rank the areas of expertise they believe to be most valuable for client organizations. **Here's what they said:**

Clients   Agencies

Clients	Agencies
1. Marketing Creativity	1. Marketing Creativity
2. Product / Service Innovation	2. Expertise in Emerging Trends / Ops
3. Expertise in Emerging Trends / Ops	3. Customer-Centered Marketing
4. Process / Project Management	4. Product / Service Innovation
5. Customer-Centered Marketing	5. Process / Project Management
6. Market / Marketing Research	6. Measurement / Analytics Capabilities
7. Measurement / Analytics Capabilities	7. Market / Marketing Research

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Q. What do your clients value most in their relationship with your organization?

Q. What do you most value in your primary agency relationships?

Please rank the following areas of expertise by dragging them to the shaded space on the right.

Clients clearly prize two things above all others in their agency relationships: creativity and product/service innovation (within the margin of error they actually score the same]. What's interesting is that agencies put product/service innovation down at #4 in their rankings for what clients prize (and a distant #4 at that). They're also considerably off in where they rank customer-centric marketing – it's #3 in the eyes of the agencies, but a distant 5th for clients.

Clients Want to be Perceived by Customers as "Early Adopters"

Key to our brand position	25.8%
Important to our brand position	43.7%
Not important to our brand position	22.1%
Contrary to our brand position	1.9%
No opinion / Don't know	6.6%

Q. How much value do you attach to being seen as an early adopter by your customers?

Nearly 70% of clients believe that being seen as an early adopter is key or important to their brand position. This illustrates that even for non-tech brands being seen as having your finger "on the pulse" adds brand value. Thus, it's not surprising that "Expertise in Emerging Trends & Opportunities" ranked in the top three priorities for clients when asked what agency skillsets were most valuable to them.

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Clients Think Agencies are Pretty Good at Identifying Trends

Excellent	**21.2%**
Good	**39.6%**
Average	**24.4%**
Below Average	**3.2%**
Poor	**1.4%**
No opinion / Not applicable	**10.1%**

Q. How good is your primary digital agency at evaluating digital trends for practical uses?

Over 60% of clients felt that their digital agency was excellent or good at evaluating digital trends for practical use. Less than 5% of clients felt that their digital agency was below average at evaluating digital trends for practical use.

Identifying and evaluating trends for use by clients is likely to emerge as a significant revenue opportunity for companies in our industry. This finding begs the question as to why just under one third of agency respondents (29.4%) don't offer any training to their clients whatsoever on current or emerging trends and technologies. It's **clearly a missed opportunity** given that clients are clamoring for it.

Why Clients Leave

In the 2014 DMO Survey, SoDA also asked agencies and client-side respondents their opinion on why clients terminate agency partnerships. The findings show further disconnects between what agency leadership believes and what clients actually say.

Clients

1. **Needs Outgrew Agency's Ability to Deliver** — 27%
2. **New Management at Organization** — 25%
3. **Unhappy with Strategy** — 11%
4. **Cost Overruns** — 10%
5. **Unhappy with Creative** — 8%
6. **Understaffing / Inexperience on Agency Side** — 6%
6. **Unhappy with Project or Account Management** — 6%

Agencies

1. **New Management at Client** — 39%
2. **Cost Overruns** — 13%
3. **Unhappy with Project or Account Management** — 11%
4. **Needs Outgrew Agency's Ability to Deliver** — 7%
5. **Unhappy with Strategy** — 6%
6. **Unhappy with Creative** — 5%
7. **Understaffing / Inexperience on Agency Side** — 3%

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Q. (Posed to clients) Thinking about your most recent experience with terminating an agency, why did that relationship end?

Q. (Posed to agencies) Thinking about your most recent experience being terminated by a client, why did that relationship end?

The results above highlight a <u>major</u> discrepancy in why agency partnerships are terminated by clients (according to clients themselves) and why agencies believe those partnerships are ended.

Far and away, the number one reason indicated by clients was that they had outgrown the agency's ability to deliver against their needs (27%). Agency respondents ranked this a very distant 4th (with that response garnering a mere 7% of the total agency response; *-74% in relative terms when compared to clients*). The specific service area clients cited the most as being the cause of the termination was dissatisfaction with the strategy (11%); something which far fewer agencies saw as the root cause of the problem.

Agencies, for their part, overwhelmingly pointed to new management on the client side as the number one reason (39%; *+56% in relative terms compared to clients*).

This year's DMO Survey points to the need on the side of agencies for a more sober analysis of why clients leave, including a more robust gap analysis to identify and remedy those areas where clients believe they have outgrown agencies' ability to deliver.

While management changes on the client side are indeed a significant reason for terminating agency relationships (one in four client respondents indicated this was the case), it is not as significant a factor as agencies believe it to be. That discrepancy is even more pronounced when we segment agency respondents into two categories: senior management and line staff. Senior management placed even more emphasis on changes in client management as the top reason clients leave (44%), while line staff were more likely to point to cost overruns (15%), unhappiness with creative (10%) and strategy (8%).

In short, there appears to be a broken loop where senior management believe (or are told) that it's a new management issue when there were genuine issues in the service relationship.

Talent Gaps on the Client Side

Key Insight:

The majority of agency respondents identified gaps on the client side for all digital practices. Fifty percent (50%) or more of respondents identified gaps in Paid, Earned and Owned Media strategy and execution, as well as UX and product innovation. User experience was identified as the biggest shortfall on the client side, with 77% of agency respondents identifying it as a weakness (i.e., 51% said it was a major gap and 26% said it was a minor gap).

User Experience Identified as Biggest Gap	Major gap in talent (very weak)	Minor gap in talent (weak)	No gap in talent (strong)	Not applicable / Don't know
Paid channel expertise / strategy (PPC, display video, TV, etc.)	28.2%	37.9%	12.6%	21.3%
Paid channel execution	22.8%	33.9%	18.7%	24.6%
Earned media expertise / strategy (social, WOM, etc.)	31.3%	40.4%	15.1%	13.3%
Earned media execution (community management, blogger outreach, etc.)	34.5%	36.8%	14.0%	14.6%
Owned media expertise / strategy (sites, mobile sites, mobile apps, social brand channels)	23.8%	43.6%	19.2%	13.4%
Owned media execution (and maintenance)	20.5%	47.4%	17.0%	15.2%
User Experience	50.6%	25.6%	16.9%	7.0%
Product / service innovation	38.6%	29.8%	19.9%	11.7%
Brand monitoring and management	19.1%	35.8%	31.2%	13.9%

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Q. Where are the most significant gaps in talent on the client side with respect to digital marketing?

It's clear that the demand for digital marketing talent has outrun the supply. This suggests that – despite the fact that clients are bringing more digital services in-house – their companies will still require continued support from agencies to bring the most digitally-advanced and audience-relevant experiences to consumers.

Of those that identified gaps, most indicated that the gaps were minor. When we look at the results on a YOY basis, it's clear that the gap is closing and client-side marketers are becoming more digitally savvy. Agencies may seize this opportunity to add value by raising the level of digital marketing intelligence through client education. Doing so may open doors to advance our progress toward more integrated experiences through wearables and the Internet of Things.

UX, in particular, has been identified as a major gap by respondents, (51%). The magnitude of this gap in comparison to the other areas is significant.

Implication: UX is a field that is still in evolution. Over the years, the field of UX has birthed different types of designers – defined by some cocktail of information architecture, usability and/or website testing experts. It is no surprise that a loose interpretation of the role may lead to more dissatisfaction with the deliverables or client-clarity on the topic. We believe this major gap will close as the profession matures and clients gain education on what UX is.

Brand monitoring was the least weak client side capability with 31% respondents indicating no talent gap at all.

Implication: Brand monitoring typically provides unstructured data, and this is most similar to the types of data marketers traditionally studied, (i.e. ethnographic studies, focus groups, etc.) This may be why client-side talent has a natural proclivity toward this capability.

Key Insight:
Most agency respondents in 2014 still see training as being part of a project rather than as a service in itself.

Client Education

Line Staff and Senior Leadership Disagree on What's Taking Place

Type of Client Education	Senior Management (% agree)	Line Staff (% agree)
We develop and deliver **educational content** on a number of subjects as part of offering.	39%	26% **(-33%** in relation to Sr. Mgt.)
We offer **thought leadership, research and analysis** as part of our planning or client service offering.	66%	46% **(-30%** in relation to Sr. Mgt.)
We create **"play books" and other guidelines** that help our clients effectively operate the campaigns, content, and platforms we create.	32%	23% **(-28%** in relation to Sr. Mgt.)
We offer educational or training services **only when clients ask** for briefings on a topic, or help building a capability in-house.	43%	42% **(on par** with Sr. Mgt.)
We **do not actively educate our clients** or help them build internal capabilities in digital.	14%	22% **(+57%** in relation to Sr. Mgt.)

Q. How is your agency helping clients become more "digital" or fluent in digital leadership? Please check all that apply.

Surprisingly, over half of agencies either provide no active education to clients or only do so when they are asked by the client in the context of a

particular project (14.3% plus 41.6%).

Approximately one third of agencies, however, do provide educational services to their clients as part of their standard offering, up from 28% in the 2013 DMO study.

On the client education front, there is a significant discrepancy between what line staff and execs believe is taking place.

Transformative Trends & Technology

We asked agency respondents what key emerging trend or technology will be transformative for digital shops and clients in the coming years. The large volume of qualitative answers they provided have one main underlying theme: How will we use data in order to do one of three things:

1. Create consumer-relevant and potentially automated content.

2. Provide meaningful multi-device experiences. Although there is great anticipation for the "Internet of Things" where everything from our fridge to our shoes will be connected devices, there isn't a strong consensus on how brands will be able to leverage this trend in meaningful ways with consumers outside of categories such as health and fitness.

3. Respond to the growing abandon of a desktop/laptop experience and make mobile more relevant/responsive to the customer journey.

Industry Insider

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Section Preface
The Importance of Listening
Digital Isn't Dead. It's Iterative.
Constants and Change in Digital Marketing

Sean MacPhedran

Industry Insider Section Editor

Group Planning Director, Fuel

Welcome to Spring of 2014. Thirty years after Orwell's vision of constant surveillance ought to have passed, the mass consciousness has opened its eyes to the fact that the digital tools we take for granted each day are monitoring our every smartphone conversation, Skype chat, Like and hashtag.

But the constant erosion of privacy that social media has brought into our lives, especially for Millennials, seems to make this a moot point. To the rising generation, privacy is not very relevant. Besides, we always knew that James Bond could tap any phone.

We marketers reap the *value* of this openness of information as much as governments. In this section of the Industry Insider, a conversation with author and cultural anthropologist Dr. Grant McCracken explores the potential trap that such data provides, with insights on how marketers can avoid the disastrous results MacNamara saw when he mistook data for knowledge. Rather, McCracken encourages us to be humble listeners, and to forget the biases of our own lives to understand those of others.

The black and white logic we must avoid is hammered home by Joe Olsen, CEO of Phenomblue, who pushes forward a new definition for digital that remains fuzzy in its ability to constantly iterate and evolve.

To close us out, the ruggedly handsome Forest Taylor from Digitaria opens up a dialogue with three luminaries from Propaganda3, 1010 Collective and Instrument about the constant change present in the industry – and the few rocks available that we can always stand upon.

What are the best practices in creating value that we discover in this issue? As much as we desire and are drawn towards the hard numbers that digital is able to deliver, this is the language of machines. A Punch Card can never replace a punch drunk Creative Director high on an idea. A media consumption profile can never tell you why a daughter cries watching an old AT&T commercial. And past data will never show us the open road that lies ahead.

The value in our industry remains, and will always remain, the most intangible of human elements that defy any attempt to impose quantification. The best way to create value is for us to keep reading between the lines, failing big with crazy ideas – and ignoring those who mistake data sets for crystal balls.

Hope you enjoy.

Interview with Grant McCracken

The Importance of Listening

Trained as an anthropologist (Ph.D. University of Chicago), Grant has studied American culture and business for 25 years. He has been featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show, worked for organizations including Timberland, New York Historical Society, Diageo, IKEA, Sesame Street, Nike, and Kimberly Clark, and has taught at the University of Cambridge, MIT, and the Harvard Business School. His most recent books include Culturematic and Chief Culture Officer.

Interview conducted by Sean MacPhedran, Industry Insider Section Editor and Group Planning Director at Fuel.

In 2006, I was lucky enough to meet Dr. Grant McCracken by accident in the lobby of the (long vanished) Future Marketing Summit in New York. Of all the thinkers in the room, including a talk by Alex Bogusky on Brand Terrorism that I'll never forget, a 5 minute conversation with Grant is what stuck with me the most. You will rarely meet anyone who is such a font of insight into the ebbs and flows of culture and the context of brands in human life. Due to word length limitations we've had to remove probably a university course worth of ideas from our interview, but fear not dear reader - you can (and should!) follow Grant to learn more about his books and speaking events at cultureby.com.

MACPHEDRAN: *How do you convince your client of the value of research - ethnography in particular?*

MCCRACKEN: The most general proposition on behalf of ethnography is simply that, whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, we end up the captives of our own corporate culture. I did a lot of work for Coca-Cola some years ago and would come back to

Toronto after a couple of weeks there, and Coke would feel like the inevitable choice. I would see a kid ordering a Pepsi and it would seem like an impossible choice for me. My world was now "Coca-Cola World."

Ethnography works like a helicopter. It lifts you up out of your own sense of the world and the brand, and drops you into the world of the consumer, so that you can see them and yourself as they do.

MACPHEDRAN: *What's the most interesting trend that you've seen emerging over the past year in your work?*

MCCRACKEN: The American Experiment is just changing at light speed. There is some sense that everything is changing, because this has gone from being an expansionary economy to a contracting economy. And that does powerful things to the American sense of initiative and optimism. Some of the painful opposition that's going on in political circles where you've got people hollowing out the middle and driving one another to the far left or the far right, that's partly a reflection of the fact that the American experiment is no longer as generous. And now people are fighting over it.

The new generation of Millennials are now coming up and making their way in the world. That's extremely interesting to watch unfold as they decide how they want to craft their careers and their public and private lives in the face of job insecurity, and the difficulty of creating a career.

They would say, "My parents cared about having a connection to a big corporation, that was their security, and I don't expect ever to have that, and that's perfectly OK. I have a social network thanks to Facebook and Instagram, and that group of people is my security. That is the thing that secures me in the world and opens up

> *" I think what we're going to see is this regime of big data where managers make decisions based on these beautiful and illuminating data sets. "*

opportunity."

MACPHEDRAN: *What brands are good at discovering the value in the large amounts of information we are collecting today?*

MCCRACKEN: Netflix has done a great job. I'm impressed with how intelligently they're figuring out what's happening in culture now. They've got data.

Do you remember that moment when GM discovered that they were making more money by loaning money to people to buy their cars than they were making from actually selling their cars? They were acting like a bank and there was more money in that than manufacturing cars. Something like that is going on now in some of the new media plays.

MACPHEDRAN: *Are there any risks in becoming too data driven?*

MCCRACKEN: I think what we're going to see is this regime of big data where managers make decisions based on these beautiful and illuminating data sets. But that scares me because it puts us back into the post World War II Era where we have guys like MacNamara saying "Give me the data and I will give you the managerial thing to do." And that was tested – that's one of the reasons that he thought he could win the Vietnam War, and he totally didn't. The data was very good, but it didn't tell them anything about the Vietnamese. It goes back to the helicopter notion. He really had no idea using the data at hand who he was dealing with.

MACPHEDRAN: *How would you draw the link between cultural understanding and brand value?*

MCCRACKEN: Talking about meaning and value in the same sentence. In the same active analysis.

When we're talking to the consumer about how they define themselves in their homes and their families and their preferences. They're almost always talking about meanings. Specific cultural meanings. "I like the way this perfume makes me feel," or "I like the person I become in this videogame." At some point those meanings get turned into value. The brands that capture the meanings that matter are actually monetizing the meaning.

If they do it well, they find a way to connect with cultural meaning that turns into economic value. It actually becomes part of the value of the brand. Literally, this brand is the share price. In the case of Coca-Cola, Nike or Google – we can say that some part of this value comes from the brand, and some part of its value comes from the meanings that are captured and mobilized by the marketers.

Joe Olsen, President & CEO, Phenomblue

Digital Isn't Dead. It's Iterative.

Joe Olsen is the President and CEO of Phenomblue, an industry-leading brand experience agency. He co-founded the agency in 2004, which has offices in Omaha, NE, and Los Angeles, CA and is a SoDA board member. Phenomblue has been featured in USA Today, Ad Age, the New York Times, Fast Company, Inspired Magazine and received recognition from the Webby Awards, the CLIO Awards, SXSW Interactive Awards and the Favorite Website Awards.

PHENOMBLUE®

It wasn't more than a couple of years ago that I wrote "digital" as we knew it was dead. Dramatic as the title was (and still is), it didn't take away from the cold hard reality that we have labeled so many things in our industry "digital" that the term itself was now meaningless. And "digital" isn't the only one; in fact there are lots of similar terms and catchphrases that have gone the way of pop culture lexicon, having lost their inherent meaning. Today these terms, though once very descriptive, now require some form of additional context to provide any true value in their use.

Entrepreneur. Another term that means nothing in the modern age without context. When I was young (and mind you, I'm only 34-years-old) "entrepreneur" was a badge of merit. Calling yourself that (or better yet, being referred to it by others) meant that you created a life for yourself and your family from scratch. You created wealth in monetary fashion or lore. In any case, you were someone to be considered, even admired, by the general public. You were a successful businessperson. Enter today, where we call anyone with a Federal ID an 'entrepreneur' and dropping the F-bomb more than once in a presentation is enough to get you a cover story in the Huffington Post or Mashable. Today you have to add context to give meaning to a word that was once a simple description of a life inspired by many and revered by some.

So it's no longer sufficient to be described as an "entrepreneur," rather we want our peers to say "He's a successful entrepreneur." And yet each time I hear it, I cringe. It bothers me because it's a term I once felt passionate for. It defined the very reason I went to the office in the morning and stayed through the night. It was something I wanted so badly because I knew that it bucked the trend. Being an entrepreneur meant I was different.

Digital was different.

Today we live in a world where digital means nothing. Anyone who builds a website (which is easier to build than a Facebook page these days) is digital. Do you buy digital media? You are digital. Do you manage social media? Create communities? What about video? Do you create it and upload it to YouTube? Wait a minute? Have you made an app? What about an installation that uses a computer and some form of interactive infographic? Wow! You are digital. Everyone is digital because nearly everything is digital. Yes! Digital won, right?

Oops. So what's to become of all of us, the "digital" agencies? What do you do when your identity is hijacked by pop culture? You rebrand of course! This is a "marketing" marketplace. Some of us became "interactive." Others became "technology-first" or "experience" agencies (....guilty). A few of us just kept marching on as production companies embracing the maker movement, creating new technologies or finding cost-effective ways to subcontract to other firms. Last, but not least, some took hard earned money off the table and sold to holding companies and agency conglomerates sensing the "end was near." But that didn't stop the marketplace either, did it? The people still demand digital. I hear it every day. In fact, I often find myself in this conversation...

> Them: "What does Phenomblue do?"
>
> Me: "We are a brand experience agency. We use technology to connect people and brands."
>
> Them: "So...that means what exactly?"
>
> Me: "Basically...we are a digital agency."
>
> Them: "Oh, right. I get it."

Several months ago I was at a conference and this question came up again: "What is digital?" I forbade my usual tirade on "digital is dead" and contemplated the question and thought about how Phenomblue goes about business. I thought about my SoDA peers and how they "do what they do." I considered the methodologies and the trial and error. I thought about the prototyping and the incessant tweaking of beta 1, 2, 3. Then it dawned on me. Digital is iterative. Traditional is fixed.

That's what our clients have been talking about all along. They needed a digital agency because they wanted to innovate and innovation is iteration. I started

processing agencies in my head and categorizing them as digital or traditional and all of a sudden a line that seemed to blur infinitely looked razor sharp. I thought about the world we live in, and what we do as consumers using technology to interact with everything and everyone and it clicked. We live in an iterative world and that requires sustainable adaptability. It requires digital. Digital is not dead, it's iterative – a continuous evolution.

Why are digital agencies starting to get everything as opposed to just the "tech stuff"? Branding. Positioning. Business strategy. Full on creative. Because we are iterative by nature. In a world where every market on the planet is seeing unprecedented competition, where pop culture changes at an exponentially faster rate year over year and where technologies rise to power more rapidly than the public can keep up, we're forced to move first and iterate.

Digital is iterative and it's everywhere.

An interview conducted by Forest Taylor with John Kreicbergs, General Manager at Propaganda3 in Kansas City, Tina Glengary, Director of Strategy at Instrument in Portland and Glendon Scott, Partner and Creative/Content Director at 1010 Collective in Las Vegas.

Constants and Change in Digital Marketing

Forest Taylor is a digital strategist at Digitaria in San Diego. Prior to that, he was a social strategist at Martin Williams, where he worked on everything from soybeans to Halloween masks. In his spare time he comes up with great ideas and forgets to write them down.

digitaria

When we talk about digital marketing, we often find ourselves telling the same story: One that starts and ends with change. I had questions about the notion of change and constants in advertising, particularly digital advertising, where white rabbits are plentiful and most seem to be heading somewhere magical. So, I sat down with three thought leaders in our industry to get their take on constants and change in digital marketing.

TAYLOR: *What has remained constant through digitally driven change?*

KREICBERGS: Advertising at its best (think classic Coke, Volvo, Alka Seltzer) is a story. It's always been a story, and it will always be a story. The old guys, who we refer to as "traditional" advertisers, knew this, and I worry that we're forgetting what they know.

GLENGARY: We're still figuring out how to reach out to specific audiences and engage them on digital channels. The primary difference lies in how we, as a society, continue to change and grow our use of digital media. Engagement, or the attempt to engage (with each

John Kreicbergs is General Manager at Propaganda3, an interactive development and design shop in Kansas City. Prior to joining P3, John spent time at Meers Advertising, Bernstein-Rein, VML and Barkley.

Tina Glengary is the Director of Strategy at Instrument in Portland. Before joining Instrument, Tina worked in San Francisco at Odopod and Office, and in New York City at Big Spaceship.

other), is the constant.

SCOTT: Ultimately, no matter the platform, when it comes to advertising I agree that it's about the story. The environment changes, "where" and "how" aren't constant, but at the end of the day, you're still asking yourself: "How are we going to connect given the platform and the budget?"

TAYLOR: *What do you rely on to navigate this change?*

KREICBERGS: In any type of marketing, there are two main things at play. There's the business strategy and there's the story we tell to accomplish it. The first is the primary navigation tool, and the second has more to do with how we navigate.

Guys like David Ogilvy got this. They knew their primary job was to advance the business, and that advertising was a means to this end. While the new school can teach a lot to the old school, the new school also has a lot to learn. It's about the business, and then it's about the story.

GLENGARY: The consumer is the common well. What do they do, think, like, etc.? What's the insight in the brand story or in how that consumer uses digital media? How do these things spark our concept?

When I'm discussing digitally driven change, I acknowledge the consumer and that we need to give back, not just ask for things. And giving back doesn't mean coupons, it means determining the bite-sized pieces of entertainment or utility that we can provide.

SCOTT: For us (1010 Collective), one of the biggest questions asked during the process is, "Why would the customer take the next step with this brand? Why would they make a purchase? What will their reason be for connecting with the brand (purchase or beyond)?" We

Glendon Scott is a Partner and Creative/Content Director at 1010 Collective, a digital agency based in Las Vegas. Before co-founding 1010, Glendon worked at Barkley in Kansas City and R&R Partners in Las Vegas.

try to get down to the core business problem, identify the core solution, and try not to add more than we have to along the way.

Sure, it has to be pretty, it has to be funny, has to have that extra little spin that makes the user pay attention, but we try not to overthink this stuff. It's not always as easy as "here's this thing, buy it," but we try not to let things get too complicated for no reason.

TAYLOR: *What constants should we take with us?*

KREICBERGS: I think the art of persuasion, advertising's primary export, is sometimes lost. We tend to get too obsessed with the middle metrics - take for instance that same article that runs in AdAge every year about measuring social media - and it's easy to lose the big metric, the business metric. That's what we need to keep with us at all times.

It seems like for the last 20 or so years, advertising has let itself off the hook for being a step or two away from sales. Digital has brought that reality back, smack dab into advertising's face. In a lot of ways, the biggest friction between digital and traditional isn't the difference in tools, it's the reintroduction of accountability.

GLENGARY: It all comes down to the creative brief, right? What are the goals, who is the audience and what is the insight? I think the brief will continue to evolve and will always provide guidance for clients and creative teams.

SCOTT: The pace of change in digital is a lot faster, but the shifts are subtle. You're still trying to get people to do something, and if it's not clear or compelling for them to do so, then they won't. We have to remember that it's still about being in the right place, at the right time. As a group of people, we're still just trying to make

"In a lot of ways, the biggest friction between digital and traditional isn't in the difference in tools, it's the reintroduction of accountability."
— John Kreicbergs

decisions easier for people and make things easier for them to find and act on.

The great thing about digital is that everything is more measurable. You can see the research coming in and say, "let's work towards that goal," and you can see the results of your actions. It's easier to report back to the client. Digital is unique in this way. It puts the business back into the creative process.

Modern Marketers

Mark Pollard

VP Brand Strategy

Big Spaceship

Our industry is rapidly changing. Less than a decade ago we would typically see that digital projects were often an appendage to a company – a thing that came together and then dangled out in the ether. But this is no longer, no matter what type of industry you are in. Even if your digital project isn't your organization's core business, its creation alone can quickly highlight the need for organizational and business model change.

In fact, the over-riding theme of the contributions from all five of our marketing thinkers this issue is that in order to create more value for a business, a digital initiative might be the thing that catalyzes a broader change and gets the business to focus on how it can create more value for consumers.

Charlie Treadwell (now director of social marketing at Symantec) in an interview with Jon Lewis (VP of Social Media at LaneTerralever) discusses how Cisco galvanized company focus on their social media success. They did this by creating value for internal stakeholders through data, part of which involved visualizing the social conversation around topical events such as earnings calls.

With so much of the media industry still focusing painfully on impressions and clicks (oh, and slideshows), Bob Dominguez from The FADER suggests media owners would do better to focus on purpose, an approach that has helped his company to think bigger.

For his part, Dean Flynn from IE Agency argues that the store of the future isn't simply about digitizing transactions; it's about better service and how technology will help or hinder.

It's a theme Angela Graham from NRMA also picks up on. Create value by asking, by making content, and by changing the business. And Jeremy Brook looks at how Heineken has focused on creating value without losing sight of the beer in the bottle.

Sandy Fleischer from Pound & Grain believes marketers can mine Minecraft for ideas on how to create value for consumers. He points to the way Minecraft teaches its community to make parody videos featuring Minecraft as an example.

The era of brochureware has lapsed, gimmicks might still stick every now and again but the need for marketers to create value beyond their products is here to stay.

Interview with Charlie Treadwell, Director of Social Marketing at Symantec

Unequivocal Proof That B2B Leads in Proving the Value of Social

Interview conducted by Jon Lewis, Vice President of Social Media at SoDA member agency *LaneTerralever*.

Charlie Treadwell is the Director of Social Marketing at Symantec, a Fortune 500 computer security company. Prior

Many marketers face the challenge of proving the true value of social media to people outside the marketing department, particularly those in senior organizational roles. People know that it is important, but they don't always understand how social media affects them and their business. Director of Social Marketing at Symantec, Charlie Treadwell has faced the same challenges. In this interview, he shares how he used data visualization and evidence of its business impact to demonstrate the importance of social media to his entire organization. This is one strategy he believes B2B marketers can teach their B2C counterparts.

LEWIS: *What are some of the challenges you've run into when trying to prove the value of social media in a B2B organization?*

TREADWELL: We were always having trouble getting in front of our CEO or the head of sales at Cisco to really show the value of social. They would all say, "Yeah, I know it's important so just keep doing what you guys

are doing." But, they would have no clue what we were doing.

So, we wanted to do something like Dell and Gatorade did with their [social media listening center](). There is just something about actually having a command center or listening center that gets the attention of your executives. We put six 50-inch plasma screens in our executive briefing center and in front of the offices of our CMO and CEO and started pumping relevant social conversations and mentions of Cisco products and technology into them. For example, if there was an earnings call that day, we could actually customize the topic profiles and push in what analysts were saying in real-time about the earnings call. That way our executives could actually see instant feedback from people they knew.

We got attention at a level that we had never had before. All of a sudden, we had people like the CEO saying, "What else can you show me?" That was huge for us. It was all because we were able to **visualize the social conversation and make it meaningful to them.**

LEWIS: *What role do you think data has in the future of social media marketing?*

TREADWELL: When you break down social media to what it is at its core you realize it's **ultimately people engaging with people.** Those engagements produce a large set of data for marketers. Being able to interpret, process and blend that data with other data sets, like your booking, sales, web traffic and demographic data, is where you start to see the largest opportunities.

It's critical to make those opportunities available and that requires bringing different parts of your business together and blending data in different systems. Once you get that far, the key is to be able to process it in real time and visualize it in a way that someone can make

sense of it. That is a big challenge for a lot of people. You need people that can not only process the data, but can then communicate what it means in a way that people can take it and do something with it quickly.

LEWIS: *What is the biggest misconception about social media in the B2B space?*

TREADWELL: While we spend a lot of time talking about things like big data, the thing that people forget is whether it's B2B or B2C, at the end of the day, ***you're still speaking to real people.*** Whether it is an influencer or decision maker on the business side, you can still have that person fall in love with and bond with your brand the way they do with Nike or Pepsi. In B2B it doesn't always have to be "cold" business content. Instead, you should aim to create fun and engaging content that strikes an emotional chord with the consumer. That way, when you have an offer that is more business-related, a potential customer will be much more likely to think of your company.

One of the interesting things about my new role at Symantec is we have a consumer brand and an enterprise brand. We get to blend many of those different opportunities and learnings across both sides of the organization.

LEWIS: *What are some of the most important things you think B2C marketers could learn from their B2B counterparts?*

TREADWELL: I recently sat down and had coffee with the VP of Marketing at one of the biggest consumer brands in the world. I asked her what they were doing and she flat out said, "You guys are three years ahead of us." I think that speaks to our ability as B2B marketers to make the business case and get people together across different departments and business units. In

more traditional organizations it would be difficult for a member of the marketing team to make a suggestion to the product team. They typically wouldn't have the clout to engage with them, but I think social has changed that to a degree.

While I was at Cisco, we were able to pull cross-functional groups together to come up with different ways to improve the business. We used a program that we referred to as AIMs (Actionable Internet Messages) that broke conversations down across the business and helped show the value to each part of the organization. Another big challenge for the consumer side of things is how they use analytics. I think businesses have no shortage of MBAs and statisticians. The key is leveraging them in the right way.

LEWIS: *Since you've worked with a number of top agencies I'm curious if you have any advice for all the agencies out there.*

TREADWELL: As I mentioned earlier I think you've seen a struggle with analytics specifically on the B2C side of things, which has triggered a response from agencies. Now, most agencies I've talked to are building out some sort of an analytics practice, yet everyone I've talked to has said it is really hard to find talent. There is such demand for that expertise and a huge shortage of people coming out of college with that kind of education. You don't see a lot of kids coming out of high school saying "I want to be a data scientist" but it's a huge job that most agencies need serious help with.

Bob Dominguez, Strategic Marketing & Design, The FADER

For Marketers in Publishing – How to Make a Lasting Impression

Bob Dominguez is an embracer of the responsibility that comes that comes with being at the center of a Venn Diagram focused on the modern advertising age and iconic hip hop pioneers "A Tribe Called Quest." Bob fulfills this duty by working in strategy and design at The FADER, where he helps put the pieces together to make culturally driven content that consumers actually care about. He resides in New York where he can most commonly be seen at a show, or at La Colombe café chatting with whomever will listen.

"Clicks" and "unique visitors" – both lovely traditional ways to earn a brand's business on the web. Yet after they see your expertly crafted Excel sheet with your hard-earned numbers, then what? Well, if your publication's main digital content goals focus on clicks, then there isn't really much of a story to tell, inevitably leaving you with not much but a pretty Excel spreadsheet. That, by all measures, is a bummer. So how can you find ways to preserve your content and make the impression last?

1. Be married to your mission statement, not a platform.

There will be a new platform that is probably going to come out tomorrow, and everyone in your company is going to scramble to figure out how to apply it to the brand. There are going to be arguments, chaotic "all hands on deck" meetings, and by the time the mob finally decides on something, it will be too late. Chances are you're just going to go with what is deemed a "best practice" because it's already six months old. One thing that has kept The FADER consistent through this process of change is to always filter everything through our mission statement first. FADER is focused on being the voice of emerging music which ensures that we are consistent in terms of who we are as we push the brand to experiential, mobile and digital.

2. Trying to become everything for everyone means you're everything for no one.

As a content curator there are going to be topics that will pop up that you know will elevate traffic and chatter. You can probably pick and choose from a pile of trending topics every day that will wield a huge impact on your numbers short term, but what does that have to do with your brand? The more you dilute the content, the more your brand suffers. What picture does that paint of your audience? Once you make a change to an "all for everyone" publication, you are nothing to anyone. And when advertisers ask why your audience is unique to target, you're left with very little to point to.

3. Content is king, but context isn't far behind.

As soon as our writers finish up an interview, the question we always ask ourselves is: how are we going to present this on a multitude of platforms? We do this by playing to each platform's strengths, all to give the content its due in a way the audience can digest. We

would not be doing a feature piece the justice it deserves by having it all displayed through Tumblr, competing with a thousand cheeseburger GIFs above and below it. Instead, we may offer a photo from the piece with a link to our site. Why compete with cheeseburgers and cats when we can pull you away? It helps to keep the consumer's habits in mind when you're on a given platform. You spent a ton of time and effort on your killer content, and it deserves to be shown in the best possible way to spur engagement.

4. Why should your brand care?

Your brand's digital content is competing with a plethora of noise online, and if your content doesn't come through as clear and cohesive, you will just become part of the noise. We all get caught up with what we think a click or impression will do, but we should put equal attention into making a good impression while we have it.

Dean Flynn, GM – Retail, IE

The Store of the Future: It's About Personalized Service, Not Just Technology

Dean is the GM of Retail at IE Agency, which works for Movember, Nike, Sportsgirl and Betts. With a focus on the use of Magento Enterprise, they conduct complex ERP integration projects and deliver leading design and UX across mobile, tablet, desktop and interactive in-store installations.

The "store of the future" abounds in headlines as the solution for struggling retailers to turn around their fortunes and keep up with changing customer expectations. However, if your "store of the future" is made up of a few TVs with TVC's running, this isn't going to cut the mustard. However, what will is the intelligent use of technology to solve business problems. eCommerce is succeeding where traditional retailers have failed, delivering what the customer always wanted: service. Nailing in-store customer service through the use of technology is the key to delivering a successful shopping experience - and it's not as hard as

you may think.

Imagine a store where you enter and are welcomed by name, your personal preferences are known, and - once you've completed a purchase - the store will arrange for it to be delivered to your home at a convenient time. Sound like a high street retailer of old... or perhaps a modern online store? Both would be true, but it's rare to get this level of personalized service in a modern-day, in-store shopping experience.

It is not all doom and gloom for in-store retail. For a multitude of reasons, brick & mortar retail won't die out entirely because of the onslaught of online retailers. A recent Accenture report highlighted that 65% of US customers planned to research online, but would go into a physical store to make their purchase over the 2013 holiday season[1]. To capitalize on this customer decision journey, we need to look to the technology driving eCommerce and deliver this level of personalized service within physical stores.

eCommerce has evolved our concept of best practices for a retail shopping experience. Personalization has emerged, including customer greetings (e.g. Hi Dean) and individualized product recommendations based on products being browsed together with data from a customer's CRM profile. You can harness the same CRM information that drives your online store to deliver in-store personalization.

The changes you should make start at the point your customer is researching on your eCommerce site. You can simplify your customer's decision journey by providing the ability to check the in-store stock level for their desired product on the product detail page, thus ensuring a clear pathway to the store. Also keep in mind that 78% of customers have researched a product on their smartphone[2] which means customer

> *"Harness the same CRM information that drives your online store to deliver in-store personalization."*

product research isn't limited to desktop browsing. They may well be giving you the information you need to better service them in multiple ways. This could be while they're browsing your site, on their way to your store, actually in your store, or better yet, in one of your competitors' stores.

Now that you have them in the right store, you can ensure your staff is empowered to better service the customer by putting profile information into the palm of your shop assistant's hand. A simple mobile site on touch devices can allow your staff to tap into the wealth of information that the customer has already provided. This allows sales assistants to guide the customer to the products they desire, and use the same intelligence powering product recommendations online to recommend cross- and up-sell options. Reviewing the customers' online wish lists, last abandoned cart, and previous purchases are now options in order to deliver an exceptional tailored service. Adding to this the emergence of Blue Tooth Low Energy enabled smartphones and beacons can provide your staff with the ability to identify who customers are when they enter your stores, greet them by name, and cut down on unnecessary explanations.

Once you have achieved the above, you can start to feed intelligence from the in-store interaction with your customers. Particular likes and dislikes due to personal customer circumstances could be a focus (e.g. brand or fit preference) to further tailor their CRM and benefit the long-term relationship with that customer, allowing you to deliver increasingly personalized recommendations in the future.

This is just the beginning of the store of the future - delivering the service of the past through the power of your online store. The potential is very exciting and - if harnessed intelligently - the future of in-store retail is bright.

[1] *65% of U.S. shoppers will browse online and buy in store over the holidays http://www. internetretailer.com/2013/10/07/ shoppers-will-browse-online-and- buy-store-over-holidays*
[2] *Google Our Mobile Planet http:// services.google.com/fh/files/misc/ omp-2013-au-en.pdf*

Angela Graham, Group Social Media Manager, NRMA Motoring & Services

Understand, Help, and Respond – Creating Real Value for Customers

Angela is the Group Social Media Manager at NRMA Motoring & Services, Australia's largest membership organization. Prior to NRMA, Angela worked in a number of leading agencies providing social media advice to a broad range of clients.

Value can only be created when you know what value means to your customers and when you're prepared to change the way you do things to deliver it.

Having worked in agencies across many, many different brands, and now working for a membership organization, I've seen value mean many different things.

For some companies, value means sales and for some of their customers, value means cheap deals. Value today is shifting and knowledge has become value.

Value Through Insights

To know what "value" means for your customers, your first step is to look at the insights.

> *1. Check out your site analytics, see what pages they're visiting and which pages they're spending the most time on*

> *2. Get a social listening tool to help you listen to what they're talking about online*

> *3. If you have a social media presence, look at what content is resonating most*

> *4. Find out what they're asking about, complaining about or praising you for through your other feedback channels*

> *5. Ask your customers what value means to them*

When armed with knowledge about your customers, you should start to get a pretty good understanding about what your audience is interested in. And when you know what they are interested in, you can begin to deliver true value.

Value Through Content

When you do the above, no doubt you'll see that genuine, helpful, relevant content will be pretty high on the list.

To improve your content and deliver greater value to your customers:

> *1. Put yourself in the shoes of your customer*

> *2. Find your niche and share your knowledge*

> *3. Remove the sales pitch*

> *4. Ignore your KPIs*

Good deals might get you some quick wins, but

authentic content will keep bringing customers back and will have more impact on sales in the long-term.

Value Through Change

Changing the way you do business as a result of customer feedback can seem impossible to many companies. With so many processes in place, flexibility can be a nightmare.

To provide real value, you need to not only listen to your customers but you need to act too:

> *1. Start with what customers are complaining about most and work on solutions*

> *2. Consider crowd sourcing when developing new products or services*

> *3. Communicate with customers to let them know of your changes*

Once customers see that you are willing to change based on their feedback, you are creating a two-way relationship which will drive long-term value, and help you remain competitive.

Jeremy Brook, Global Lead – Digital Strategy, Heineken

Transforming Digital: Value Creation with a 140 Year-Old Brand

Jeremy Brook joined Heineken in 2011 and leads the development of Heineken's media innovation and digital strategy. He is responsible for the development of new capabilities and ways of working, and creating new opportunities to drive the digital and media innovation agenda. He is charged with infusing state-of-the-art media principles, processes and best practices across Heineken's paid, owned and earned efforts, both at the global and local level. Jeremy is committed to brands in a digital age. He passionately believes that being creatively and commercially focused can be the same thing.

When tasked with a digital transformation role on a global brand or portfolio, it's mostly because the writing is on the wall: transform to a digitally-empowered, consumer-led brand or die. They mention those that failed: the record stores, the travel agents. Blackberry even. It might seem like I am the last in the queue, but here is why digital transformation affects us all.

When I meet peers at industry events for the first time, conversation almost always starts the same.

"Did you say you work at Heineken?" they ask.

"Yes..." I say.

"You're safe then," they respond.

(Often with a look of envy or confusion).

And that's because consumers won't be downloading their next beer from an app store. And so the argument goes; the beverage category is ostensibly well protected from digital transformation even when compared to other consumer goods. That's because the product experience is very physical and while some consumers will increasingly shop online, the decision-making process and behaviors are not as involved as, say, baby products, coconut water or shaving gel.

But after three years of digital transformation, I have learned that even beer brands have a clear challenge: how do you stay progressive when you have a product that is 140 years old? This challenge is the reason I have a job. The recipe and ingredients (of just water, hops and barley) cannot change, but our brand building behavior must. By creating additional value for our consumers, digital is an enabler that helps us transform the contribution that marketing generates. Here are three lessons I have learned so far:

1. The strongest opponents to change are your greatest asset.

It's getting harder for non-digital brands. Most people accept that digitally-enabled consumers increasingly use their digital and virtual brand experiences to assess the overall brand value. Your strongest opponents are those that recognize this and rightly fear that you could promote a culture of tricks and gadgets that divert attention away from your core mission.

When I started at Heineken, I was reminded that the biggest role for marketing was to "stay about beer." By spending time turning potential critics into advocates,

"By creating additional value for our consumers, digital is an enabler that helps us transform the contribution that marketing generates."

I learned not only where this drive came from, but also where the "watch outs" are.

For example, when the Heineken Ignite Bottle project was kicked off, the brief started with the goal of creating a product experience in clubs that would make the brand the most desirable in an environment usually dominated by cocktails. The result was the world's first interactive bottle using features from mobile devices like Bluetooth, LEDs and an accelerometer. And then we asked ourselves, how can this enhance the consumer experience? The result was a connected device that reacts and celebrates with you, your friends and the music around you. It could have been an easy mistake to think mobile-first and end up with an app instead.

2. Engaged consumers are the holy grail – strive for it but don't expect it.

When consumers participate in marketing activity, many of us (yep, me too) consider these people "engaged." However, the numbers people in the room remind us that we sell millions of our products every day and those interactions with the product far outweigh any "engaged fan count." But you have to balance the two. Triggering consumers to want to be part of a bigger whole is probably one of the simplest truths of our category. When we do so with intuitive and rewarding content, we trigger participation in many different forms. The fact that only a small percentage is deeply engaged doesn't mean that their involvement is not valuable.

For example, the recent Heineken Dropped campaign featured only a handful of fans and consumers, but by championing (and, yes, engaging) the few, over 37 million participated in the watching, sharing and endorsement of the content. One piece of content, called Departure Roulette, dared JFK Airport travelers to push a red button, ditch their plans and immediately

fly to randomly selected exotic locales. For the follow-up, we made surprise visits to people who had tweeted during the earlier campaign—and called their bluff as to whether or not they would push the button. These two films alone have been seen by over 8 million people.

3. Ask yourself: How will your digital transformation benefit people and culture?

Closeness with our consumers is arguably the easiest way to value digital transformation. However, the effect that has on our internal team and collaboration is just as important.

And because Heineken believes that a world that is full of possibilities is one where people get more out of life, we need brand builders who are open to a digital world of possibilities (like bottles that connect with the music or engaged fans willing to travel to Cambodia at moment's notice). Open Your World is not so much a tagline as a rallying cry for us to behave differently.

Sandy Fleischer, Managing Partner, Pound & Grain

Watch Out for That Creeper: What Minecraft Teaches Us About Marketing

Sandy Fleischer is 17-year veteran of the digital marketing space, and currently Managing Partner at Pound & Grain, a creative agency built for digital culture. Sandy currently sits on the board of Overinteractive Media Inc, a social media gaming company, and DigiBC, a non-profit organization with a mission to promote, support and accelerate the growth, competitiveness and sustainability of British Columbia's digital media and wireless industry. In another life, Sandy is known as DJ Pescatore and on a good day, he can juggle four tennis balls.

POUND&GRAIN
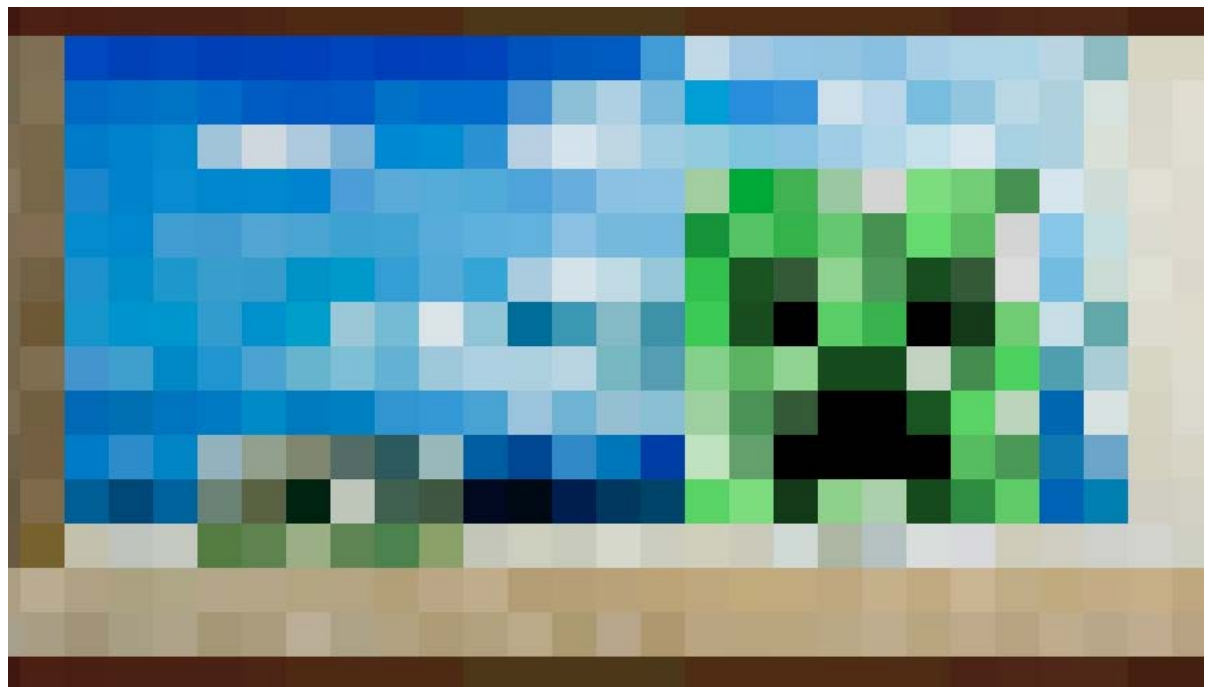
Minecraft has enjoyed runaway growth and success over the last couple of years, but if you don't have kids, it's probably completely under your radar. Learn how Minecraft's quirky, retro-looking, and unstructured gameplay, social dynamics, and meteoric rise to popularity can teach you about the new and emerging rules of marketing.

Minecraft is unflinching in its view that the game is simply "about breaking and placing blocks." Seems simple enough, and there aren't really many rules. To understand what it's all about, a helpful shortcut is to think of it as the game that Lego should have, but sadly

didn't, create.

In-game activities include building, exploring, gathering, crafting, fighting the occasional monster, and for the non-vegetarians punching the odd chicken, pig, or cow. The idea is to conduct these activities to ensure that your physiological needs are met, and that you are safe from harm. Once you've got that down, you can move up Maslow's pyramid to enjoy socialization, limitless creativity, and unlimited grunting.

The hallmark design feature of the game is its decidedly retro commodore 64 world. Its various landscapes, creatures, and structures are all cut from the same low-res block factory that gives the game that quirky, nostalgic aesthetic.

But make no mistake, in four short years Minecraft has sold over 33 million copies, influenced post scarcity economics theory, laid a claim to potentially transform education as we know it and even helped a class of 4th graders stay in touch with a deported child.

But what does any of this have to do with marketing? To answer that question, let's explore five ways Minecraft can teach us about marketing.

1. The rise of fan marketing

As Joe Pullizzi points out, the most recent Minecon (the Minecraft conference of over 7,500 fans, duh!) has sessions on building your own YouTube channel, developing a musical parody in Minecraft and tips on how to grow your community.

In other words, while Grand Theft Auto spent $120 million on marketing its latest release, Minecraft fans are being taught how to create and market promotional content themselves. One modern day Socrates is

Minecraft YouTuber, [SkydoesMinecraft.](#) His nearly 7 million strong YouTube army, almost as big as Justin Bieber's, means his daily videos enjoy a lot of views; 1,419,734,267 to be precise.

No wonder there was a session on creating musical parodies. Think of any popular song, and there will be a Minecraft parody of it. They are the perfect combination of lyrics and game footage typically capturing some mundane aspect of Minecraft that only the players could possibly care about. Searching "minecraft parody" in YouTube yields almost 4 million videos. [This Usher parody](#) is at 121 million views and counting (yup, 121 million) and is my son's favorite. He accounts for probably 1,000 of those views.

Try to translate that into a TV ad buy. In today's world, savvy marketers are focused on content marketing. This, in and of itself, is a big opportunity that many are only beginning to take advantage of. Minecraft shows us that you can level up exponentially by giving your customer the tools and knowledge required so they can create and publish content that promotes your product, and to ensure you can align your product's needs with their own. The trick is, ensuring that it's something they'd actually want to do.

2. Disruption comes in unique ways

Minecraft is plain and utilitarian in nature. When you talk about how it works, it doesn't sound very exciting or cutting edge. We've built our devices for HD and Retina displays for which Minecraft has no need. While most games are focused on leaping over the [uncanny valley](#) with true as life graphics and game play, the only thing sexy about this game is whatever exists in the player's mind. Another "zag" is that the game argues against gamification. Yes, there are some real high level objectives, but the game is not about leveling up, which makes its rise all the more staggering.

The pixels are fat and blocky and players communicate via an old-fashioned command line interface. Taking a cue from coding culture, commands are prefaced by a '/'. Minecraft teaches us that it's okay to go against the grain - to counter-intuitively be disruptive by being less advanced. It also gives us license to avoid what is "tried and true."

3. Open beats closed

Unlike the closed systems of many games, Minecraft is completely open and extensible. People can freely run their own Minecraft servers and there are thousands and thousands of them. I had to stretch the bounds of my own code and IT knowledge to set one up. With a codebase completely open, many enthusiasts create their own mods and custom plugins, adding any features and functionality they want or like. Fans are also free to create their own texture packs (what the various worlds look and sound like) and skins (what your avatar looks like).

Branding experts have long told the world that brand isn't what the company or agency says it is, but as Marty Neumeier notes in the Brand Gap, "a brand is a gut feeling about a product, service, or organization." Minecraft has taken this idea of "Minecraft isn't what we say Minecraft is, but what our community says it is" to a new level - a decentralized brand model where marketing, code, and enjoyment are all left to the users.

4. Play anywhere

Once you've got something, make sure it works on and is optimized for multiple channels. Minecraft works on desktops (windows, Mac, and Linux), iOS, Android, and Xbox. Each platform has slightly different game play, emphasizing the features, and taking into account the audience of that platform. For example, the Xbox version offers split screen game play, so two players can

play simultaneously. Minecraft also recently announced that it would begin to offer built-in streaming of gameplay via Twitch. While this is not unique to Minecraft, it's a big deal, allowing anyone to broadcast his or her Minecraft games live over the Internet.

Yes, they want to share their gaming with each other. While console games are played by more than one person on the same screen, Minecraft is the future of community gaming. Make your content available on as many channels as you can, as long as your target audience is there. And think about who they are and how they behave on that channel.

5. Many ways of being right

While much of this article talks about how simple Minecraft can be, it can also be deceptively complex. Many players interact with it on a basic level; growing food and building simple structures. Others go much deeper, down other unique paths. For example, you can mine something called redstone, which conducts electricity and can be used to build basic and complex circuits. Using this, players have built everything from clocks, to calculators, to fully functioning 16 bit virtual computers.

All of this comes from the game's inherent lack of rules and structure. There is no right way to accomplish a given task. Rather, the whole point is to be about what you need to do to accomplish a goal. In a world where you can do things many different ways, it doesn't have to be the best way; it just has to get done. Said like a true software developer. This allows for different user groups, tastes, and preferences allowing your audience to go as deep with your brand as they want.

There are lots of articles out there about how Minecraft has become successful despite its complete disregard for marketing. This isn't the lesson I take from the game

and its quick rise. Minecraft is just a great example of the new way to market and create a community. Marketers should keep watching closely, lest they become the creeper or the unwitting chicken that gets punched in the face.

Tech Talk

Zachary Paradis

Director Innovation Strategy

SapientNitro

[1]*Consumer Electronics Show, held each year in Las Vegas, is the single biggest event of its kind with over 150,000 attendees and as many product announcements.*

Imagine Everything is a Computer

It is hard to believe that we're just five years from 2019, the year Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner" was set in a dystopian Los Angeles. Futurists like to point to the film as realistic versions of the future, but if so, where are our replicants (organic robots) and spinners (flying cars)?! The reality is that while radically different, our future is going to feel a lot more familiar than we might expect.

The intent of "Tech Talk" is to "future gaze on the technology developments and trends impacting the industry." As I was immersed in this recently at CES[1], I couldn't help but think everything seems the same – but just more connected. Perhaps that's because we're in a transitional period. We've had this radical wave of change, on the back of the iPhone and Android, enabling mobility like never before. Mobility has been the largest force of the last decade and it is obvious – we see people desperately attached to their handheld supercomputers every-waking-second.

As we move into an era where we extend connection to our social environments, other products and even further into ourselves – known broadly as the "Internet of Things" – the evidence may be subtler. While everything, environment and person will gain the power of computing and connection, we won't necessarily interact as directly as we have with computers or mobile devices. It's possible that as everything becomes a computer, we actually reduce the number of touch points with which we interact. Imagine using what you already have – like the mobile device already in your pocket – to control all manner of thermostats, lights, displays, or transactions within a store. In this context,

people may gain even more control over what, with whom and how they interact - yet the world may not look overtly different.

"Tech Talk" will introduce ways in which technology enables more effective and meaningful connections between brands and people – it is a story of continued, but evolutionary, change. The section begins with Made by Many's Gavin Becker, proclaiming 2014 as the "Year of the Connected Device" and predicting the most important related trends for the coming year. Next up is Bas Muller from MediaMonks, providing a deep dive on the explosive (more than one billion users!) growth of mobile messaging apps. Christian Cantrell from Adobe then does a deep dive on a specific technology–CSS Shapes–which offers enormous potential to increase the quality of web-based content. SoDA's Chairman, Tony Quin, cautions that we not ignore the value in "small data" and the analysts that make meaning in a rush to go BIG (data). Tech Talk concludes with an interview with Sheldon Monteiro, CIO of SapientNitro, in which he shares his thoughts on the last year in technology, his company's inventive "CMTOu" program and advice for 2014.

As marketers, it is becoming clearer each day that connecting people is going to mean more than using technology to optimize communications via known channels. We are going to have to embed ourselves in their day-to-day stories, providing value and justifying our reason to be embedded in their devices and their homes. This movement will force the industry to embrace subtly and a more interdisciplinary approach than ever before, fostering willingness for people to engage with us.

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Living

MARTHA STEWART

31
fun ideas for
Halloween

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GEOGRAPHIC

125TH ANNIVERSARY
THE PHOTOGRAPHY ISSUE

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Grilled Glazed
Chicken Breasts

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Esquire
WEEKLY

MAN AT HIS BEST, EVERY WEEK

FEATURING:
"I BROKE THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE"
THE ESQUIRE SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL
PIERCE ON THE EDWARD
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Gavin Becker, Made by Many

The Year of the Connected Device

Gavin is Managing Partner of Made by Many in New York.

MADE BY MANY

As a digital production studio focused on innovation, we're constantly grappling with the challenge presented by the evolving mix of device, software and platform – a trifecta of design in the current age. We rely on the magic that happens when physical product designers, hardware engineers, mobile application designers, backend API developers, and business strategists come together, bringing wildly different skills and perspectives to enable wholly fresh takes on completely new and digital products.

From where we at Made by Many sit, 2014 will be the year of the connected device – a precursor to the "Internet of Things" – where our smartphones act as tissue for the skeleton of hardware that's connecting our lives. Here are a few of the related trends we're seeing at the frontier of digital product design:

Useful augmented reality

The proliferation of Bluetooth LE and Apple's iBeacon protocol is helping to lay the foundation for precise, portable, standardized infrastructure with endless possibilities – be it retail, events, or in the home.

Previously, augmenting our reality involved changing our perspective based on screens held up to our faces and hackneyed interfaces revealing little more than points of interest. Now, it's less about the screen and more about what our devices know - about us, our location, and our collective behavior. This is further evidence of the promise embedded within the bundle of sensors and software – smartphones – we always carry in our pockets. These devices simultaneously provide contextually useful (augmented) information, function and entertainment, while also giving us a glimpse into the coming "Internet of Things" - where everything around us is contextually aware.

Function in, gimmick out

Up to now, wearable technology has done a great job recording the mundane data in our lives - counting our steps, cataloguing our locations, tracking our REM sleep, and so on – but not much else. Now, we're at the beginning of a new era where next generation connected devices actually enhance our abilities to sleep like Withing's Aura, learn to code like Made by Many's Hackaball and navigate new territory like Recon Instruments' Snow2 goggles. In other words, actual value that's both intelligent, meaningful and puts us at the center of - rather than us as a byproduct of - the data we create.

Role reversal

The mobile revolution has put a massive emphasis on software over hardware – apps are the "new black." But with new connected devices the opposite may be true – success isn't necessarily software, it's integrated hardware and software – holistic design that's both elegant and functional. One thing's certainly clear: the connected revolution will bring forth a new appreciation for physical design. Case in point: Google – a company that dominates the world of data and software yet has never been known for its design chops – clearly sees more than just potential in its acquisition of Nest. We'll see more of this as companies realize the impact of connected devices in people's lives and their potential to add real value off the back of them.

All told, these are exciting days, what looks to be incremental steps are turning out to be leaps almost without us realizing it – a sure sign of revolution.

If you're still not convinced, spend some time with Wolfram's Connected Device Project to see just how far we've come… and have yet to go.

Bas Muller, Executive Producer, MediaMonks

Over-the-Top: the Mobile Messaging App Explosion

Bas is a seasoned executive digital producer and master of interactive media, who has assumed management positions at a number of acclaimed creative agencies over the last ten years. He now brings the best of digital to Asia with MediaMonks.

MEDIA MONKS
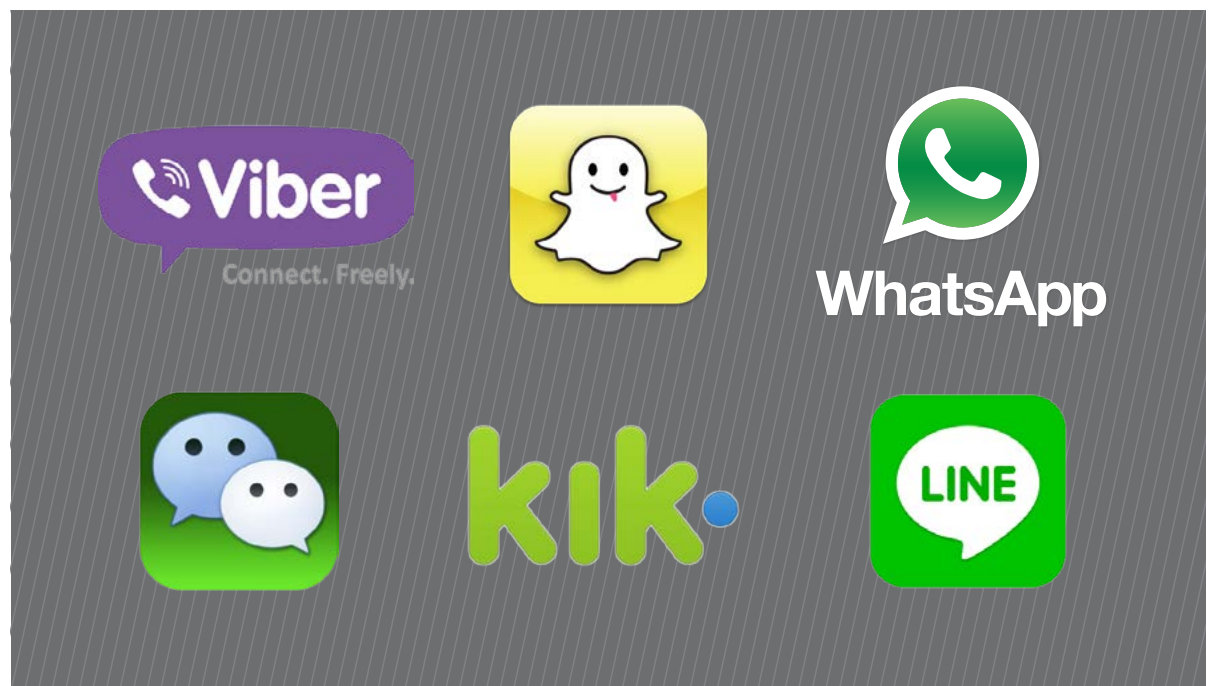
Mobile messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Viber, WeChat, Snapchat and Line - among others - have been capturing the emoji hearts and multimedia minds of more and more smartphone users in recent years, with desktop-inspired social media giants desperately playing catch up. Despite their proliferation, most brands aren't currently trying to get involved. At MediaMonks, we can see why, with current potential for brand engagement on these platforms being labeled as "primitive" at best. Nevertheless, messaging apps aren't going away anytime soon and

Mobile messaging services such as WhatsApp and Line have received some careful consideration at MediaMonks over the last year, due to an uncanny coincidence. As an Amsterdam-based digital production company that has recently opened shop in Asia (Singapore), we have witnessed first-hand the use of "over-the-top" messaging apps overtaking SMS in two countries -- the Netherlands and South Korea. We can say with some certainty that this is a sign of things to come, as this major shift in consumer behavior is likely to snowball globally. But don't take our word for it, as major trend-setting social media giants have provided unquestionable evidence that mobile messaging will play an integral role in their own futures.

Facebook's recent decisions – quite evidently – point in this direction:

- A redesigned mobile app that incorporates phone number-based messaging (no need to be friends on Facebook)

- A failed attempt to compete with Snapchat (Facebook Poke) and a failed US$3 billion attempt to acquire it

- The recent acquisition of WhatsApp for a trivial US$19 billion

However, while the billion+ member service is often considered a frontrunner for all things social, Facebook was late to this particular party: market-leader WhatsApp already had in excess of 450 million active users upon acquisition, while China-based We Chat has 280 million, and Japan's Line is sitting on 300 million registered users with 80% of this figure potentially active. We're seeing explosive growth and there is no

other way to describe it.

So why, to our knowledge, have only a handful of brands actively tested the potential of these services? Unlike desktop-first social media (such as Facebook), the mobile messaging industry is still extremely fragmented. As can be seen above, competition for dominance in this area is still very much alive. Add to that a lack of accompanying analytics or substantial data on mobile messaging users, and targeting your audience accurately is made extremely difficult. What's more, the majority of attempts to monetize through direct advertising and brand content have only allowed for very limited engagement, such as deploying branded digital stickers (large-scale, effusive emoticons) and other simple, customized rich media from "official" brand accounts.

Regardless of these setbacks, advertising and marketing must – as always – follow consumer attention if it wants to stay relevant. Luckily, mobile messaging apps are in their infancy, and people are still shaping their expectations of them. It is therefore in the industry's future that things look most positive. For example, China's WeChat has started to experiment with direct purchases from brands without ever leaving the application, while Canada-based Kik has created an entire app development platform, allowing third-parties to produce all kinds of (HTML5) applications that launch within the mobile-messaging environment itself.

It is with these precursors that we envisage the most exciting opportunities for brands. Such efforts mark an attempt to create mobile messaging ecospheres, where users can access all the services they need from one place. If mobile messaging services manage to take off in this form, it is something which brands must strive to be a part of in order to continue speaking the same language as their audience.

Christian Cantrell, Engineering Manager, Adobe

Breaking out of Boxes with CSS Shapes

*Christian Cantrell is an
Engineering Manager on
the Web Platform team at
Adobe, and a science fiction
writer.*

One of the great promises of technology
has always been that it will deliver increasing
amounts of value over time. Every generation
of devices is expected to be noticeably more
powerful and feature-rich, yet cost about the
same or even less. Whether we're aware of it
or not, those same expectations apply to our
online experiences. Where the convenience of
the web was once enough to drive adoption,
we now expect something much more
subjective from our online content, and in some
ways, much trickier: we want it to be elegant.

As all web designers and developers are painfully aware, HTML was originally intended purely for document markup rather than advanced layout and styling. Over time, each successive version of CSS – and each newly adopted and implemented specification – has given us incrementally more control over our content, and more ways to enhance its presentation. But one thing we've never been able to do is break away from the web's paradigm of boxes. Since the very beginning of web design, browsers have always rendered everything – text, images, video, etc. – as rectangles. Even images with alpha channels (portions of images that appear transparent) are really only rendering illusions; as soon as you try to flow content around them, the effect is spoiled and we see that they are really nothing more than blocks.

CSS Shapes are the first true way for text to break out of boxes on the web.

In general, CSS Shapes refers to the ability to use either predefined shapes (circles or ellipses), or arbitrary custom polygons, to dictate how text wraps. Text can be instructed to either wrap around the outside of a shape, or to remain contained within it. Text can even be instructed to overlap transparent portions of images without having to specify a custom polygon.

Advanced text layout is a typographic technique that we're accustomed to seeing, but until now, almost never on the web. A common use case for this type of formatting is drop caps, as in a project called Forest Giant we did using content provided to us by National Geographic.

CSS Shapes can also be used to integrate text and images in a more interesting way as in the example below from a project called Cupcakes! that we did in partnership with Food Network, featured in the SoDA Showcase section of this edition.

Without CSS Shapes, the text above would have been flush left in a straight vertical line resulting in dead, negative space between Alton Brown's headshot and the margin.

We used CSS Shapes again in the Cupcakes! project for a much more subtle effect: to ensure that the ragged right margin of the recipe would never overlap with the background image of the ingredients, regardless of the user's font size.

CSS Shapes can go much further than just making text look more polished. Shapes can also dramatically increase the production value of content, and enhance the storytelling experience. Below is a screenshot of an adaptation we did of Alice in Wonderland in which we didn't use a single square or rectangular block of text. Instead, the entire story unfolds inside and around the intricate contours of rabbit holes, mushrooms, caterpillars, and, of course, the Cheshire Cat. This would have been previously impossible.
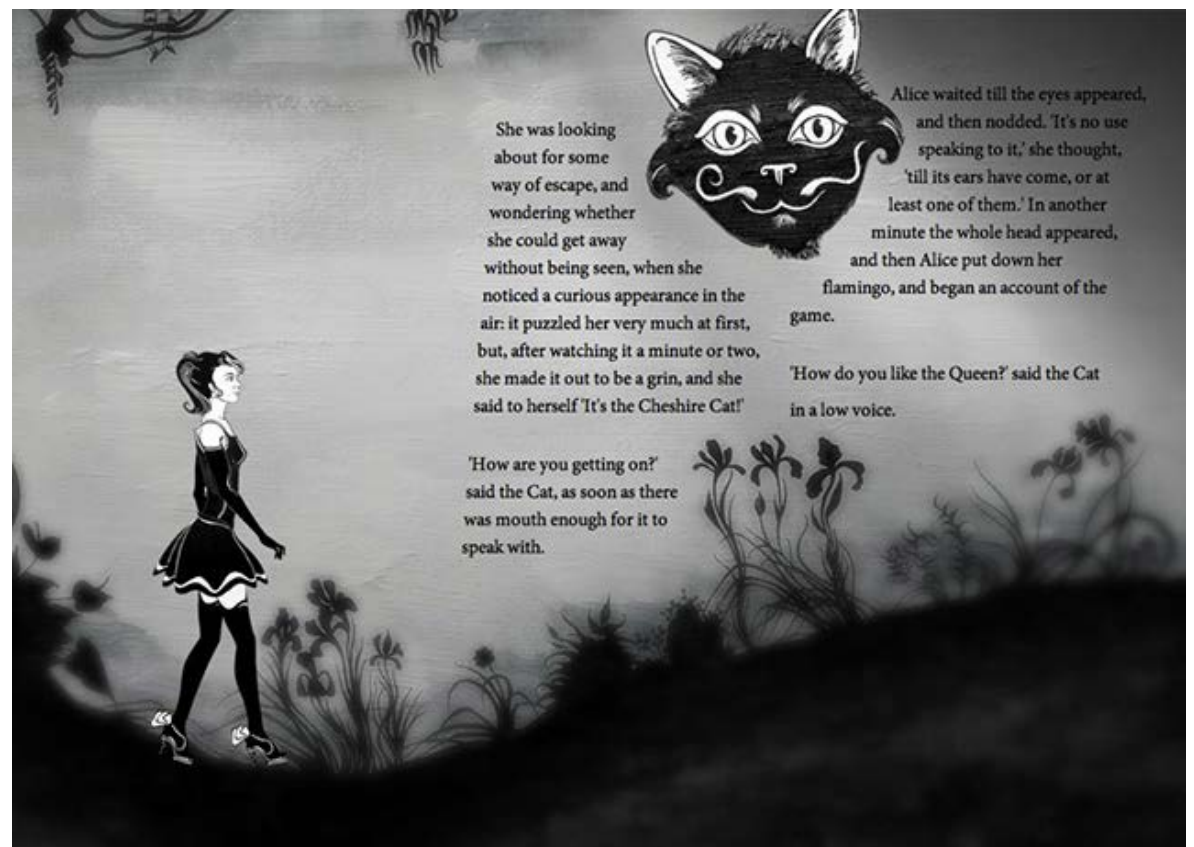
The value of the web as a delivery medium was obvious from the beginning. Improving the production value of web-based content, on the other hand, is an ongoing effort. CSS Shapes is a huge step forward, and the day is rapidly approaching when we won't be able to imagine expressing ourselves on the web without it.

Tony Quin, CEO, IQ Agency and Chairman of the Board, SoDA

Why Small Data Matters

With a background as writer, director and producer of network TV shows and commercials in LA, Tony Quin founded IQ in 1995 as an agency specializing in television. In 1999, IQ began the transformation to a digital agency. Today the agency counts numerous Fortune 100 companies as clients and has won numerous national and international awards. Born and educated in the UK, Tony is a founding member of SoDA and serves as Chairman of the Board. He is also on the board of the School of Communications at Elon University.

It seems no one buys hype faster than purveyors of the hype themselves. Maybe that's why the idea of "Big Data" has become a wildfire burning its way into every crevice of the marketing conversation. However, I'm not sure that many of us know exactly what we are talking about since the term seems to have become a catchall for everything that concerns data.

I think as marketers we love the idea of anything that's "big." Big must be better than small, as even kids know. This only gets stronger when combined with the idea of data. Data denotes hard facts, science and predictability.

None of that "squishy, creative nonsense," but the kind of marketing engineering that corporate mechanics yearn for: a marketing machine with all the risk taken out and replaced by technology.

Ah, if only it were true.

First let's understand what "Big Data" denotes. [Wikipedia](#) says it's a term for a collection of data sets so large and complex that it becomes difficult to process using on-hand database management tools or traditional data processing applications.

Historically, this area has been about the search for insights from huge data sets like credit card purchases. By analyzing tens of millions of transactions, companies could spot trends that might not be apparent by looking at smaller pools of data. For some brands, analyzing all their sales data over time (which are probably pretty big data sets) provides valuable insights. These may be in better ways to segment consumers, spot geographic or cyclical trends, or discover that the best time to sell chocolate in Des Moines is 3pm on Wednesday afternoons.

Of course, sifting through these massive data sets will inevitably reveal some valuable surprises, but I would suggest that the real opportunities for today's marketers are in small data.

Since the digital wave arrived and inundated the marketing world, we have been immersed in data. Not gigantic data sets, but lots of small data sets from websites, email, search, social listening, ad buys, CRM and much more. We use these smaller bits of data to understand how to craft each tactic and how to maximize performance.

Seeing all the data together can illuminate the overall path to purchase and plays an important part in mapping the consumer decision journey. New

> *"Seeing all the data together can illuminate the overall path to purchase and plays an important part in mapping the consumer decision journey."*

software makes pulling all of these disparate sources of data together into one integrated view much easier. However, in my experience, we don't co-mingle these smaller data sets; instead we relate them to one another, which is a very different thing.

The good news is the data processing and analytics software now available for small data is remarkable and getting better by the day. In my own agency, we have analysis tools for social listening, website metrics, search, display ad performance, email, and so on. Each piece of the puzzle is reviewed individually to understand the dynamics of that particular tactic. This is where the analyst comes in.

What we forget is that a program does not produce analysis. "Analytics" programs display metrics but people produce analysis.

Analysts review the data (albeit in forms today that use the increasingly sophisticated data visualization techniques) and find the meaning in it. It's the meaning that adds value. It's how we understand if we have accomplished our goals. It's how we optimize our ad spending, adjust our messaging, redesign our web pages and much more.

Together, all these bits of data fill in the picture of the consumer's behavior piece by piece that adds up to a profile or a persona of our target audience. We find the insights that lead us to new approaches and uncontested territory in the process of relating them together.

In this remarkably busy, complicated marketplace where consumers are touched by a myriad of influences, marketing success doesn't only come from some black box filled with big data, but from the people attending to lots of little black boxes filled with small data, every day.

If you're interested in going deeper on Big Data specifically, take a look at Steve Grave's piece "With Big Data Comes Big Responsibility" in the Advocacy Section of this edition.

The Future: Where Story Meets Technology

SapientNitro's Global CTO, Sheldon Monteiro, stewards the Agency's capabilities to apply technology to craft groundbreaking experiences for today's connected consumer. An 18-year SapientNitro veteran, he is responsible for trend spotting, shaping technical capability development, engineering quality and productivity, community building, and technical thought leadership. Sheldon has worked with leading brands including Target, Sprint, Wells Fargo, Janus Capital Group and Chicago Public Schools to implement large scale, omni-channel digital experience platforms.

SapientNitro wants to redefine the way we connect with each other via storytelling, technology and digital engagement. Sheldon Monterio, SapientNitro's Chief Technology Officer, talks about technology in the year just been and the year ahead and what we can look forward to.

PARADIS: *There were various articles in the press closing out 2013 noting that it was a "terrible year in technology." What are your thoughts about the last year in tech?*

MONTEIRO: Consumer tech evolves in a predictable pattern – component technologies and prototypes, followed by a memorable blockbuster release and finally, maturation. Judged by blockbuster releases, 2013 was a fizzle, but I'm far from disappointed. History has shown that life-changing technology is rarely made in a day or year. Many pieces of the whole, or early prototypes, precede a product that captures mass adoption. For instance, Microsoft brought us a tablet PC in 2001, but it was nine years later that Apple got it right. And anybody who upgraded to the 5th generation iPad Air last year would never consider going back to an

Interview conducted by Zachary Paradis, Director of Innovation Strategy at SapientNitro.

original iPad – it's already slow and antiquated. In 2013, the industry delivered more powerful devices, beautiful screens and better networks, at competitive prices. Terrible? Hardly!

We observed two trends last year –the faster, better, cheaper theme in tablets, smartphones and laptops. And second, we saw a host of promising prototypes that provide a clearer view into future blockbusters. Also exciting was the digitization of physical spaces, advances in machine intelligence, wearables and video technology.

Much of the progress is in what happens behind the screen. A company like Nest (acquired by Google in February 2014 for US$3.2 billion) takes a data stream from sensors and leverages algorithms and machine learning to convert it into real value. There's one point of view that says these improvements in data science are incremental, but we need to get better at this behind the screens technology and processing to create the next generation of products.

In the wearables category, with the adoption of monitors like Fuelband and Fitbit and potential applications of Glass-like products, we have glimpses into the future. The industry needs to focus on products that people actually want to wear. Glass is ambitious but it isn't there yet. It's clear, for example, that fashion needs to be more integrated with how we think about wearables. If we ignore fashion, we're going to see limited adoption.

Other important foundations were laid that average consumers didn't even notice or care about – Apple slipped in iBeacon location based technology, Google delivered real time video collaboration into browsers and the Hadoop Big Data Platform released V2.2 – a huge maturity milestone.

Last, but not least, the maker culture continued

growing. Raspberry Pi has now shipped more than one million units, with an ecosystem much smaller than Arduino, which continues to thrive.

All things considered, 2013 was a solid year, even without blockbusters.

PARADIS: *SapientNitro is investing pretty heavily in the CMTOu program. Describe it and share why you believe it is so important.*

MONTEIRO: Our most talented senior technologists from around the globe are participating in a yearlong executive development program at the intersection of marketing, experience and technology. Designed similar to an executive MBA, the program features a combination of intensives and weekly sessions, working with mentors both inside and outside SapientNitro to improve connectivity in an always-on world. It's grueling, fast paced and an amazing amount of fun. We've partnered with two world-class learning organizations – Hyper Island and Duarte - and have leveraged their expertise in learning design and presentation skills. Additionally, we have brought in talented experts from every discipline at SapientNitro.

There are three key facets to the Chief Marketing Technology Officer University (CMTOu) curriculum. First, expand the breadth in business acumen and technology of the participants. We're exposing brilliant technologists to key thinking in marketing, customer experience, business strategy and a full range of technology, from ad networks to physical computing to enterprise architecture, and more than a dozen topics in between. The cross-discipline structure ensures the group has unmatched ability to consult SapientNitro clients on how technology can enable and transform marketing and business.

We are also focusing on developing their storytelling

skills. This investment will add to our already powerful roster of narrators to communicate a real sense of shared purpose and vision for client campaigns and initiatives. Finally, each individual is asked to pick a "major" and examine selected material at an extremely deep level so the group can provide strategic council on topics collaboratively. The program is not only focused on the individual, but a class of 2013-14 unit, that will work as a globally networked Jedi team to help our clients break boundaries between technology and story.

This is the first time I have seen such an in-depth, extensive program within a company. We believe that to do radically innovative, connected work, we need to build effective bridges so that technologists are going beyond feasibility evaluations to push the bounds of creativity more often.

PARADIS: *What's the biggest technology challenge facing marketing-led organizations in 2014 and 2015, and what advice would you share?*

MONTEIRO: I continue to see evidence of the mantra, "brand is the experience," which isn't new given how long ago Clement first said it. But this idea is transforming into reality at a very deep level. With customers' expectation of simplicity, consistency and continuity in their experience across brand communications, digital and physical connection has become a massive pressure point. Organizations built strictly around marketing and channel-focused management, with technology playing a back office role, will have challenges being successful. Isolated executions must evolve to integrated, trustworthy platforms – developed and implemented with speed and agility. Today, we have the technology, tools and techniques that could make your favorite science fiction author blush with embarrassment, but organizational processes could limit opportunities.

My advice for every company is to foster a new breed of collaboration between CTOs and CIOs working with CMOs, and operations leaders running customer touch points.

People Power

Jean-Pascal Mathieu

Chief Innovation Officer, Nurun

We All Walk a Fine Line

It's a daily struggle for us all to maintain some degree of balance in our professional lives. Between those moments of calm and excitement, between mastering existing tools and discovering something new, or between building a relationship and the adrenaline surge that comes with a pitch, finding—and maintaining—balance is a nearly impossible task. This is especially true in the world of digital agencies where that balance is always shifting—which is precisely why we're in it!

Creating new business models, challenging existing ones or being at the forefront of new digital technologies ... not everyone has this mindset. Regardless, we must be able to remain focused when it counts, even when the beast known as distraction raises its ugly head for the umpteenth time. In his article, "Flow State," Jack Skeels from AgencyAgile explores the precise moment of harmony when we are at our most efficient. Unfortunately, this is a moment that is far too often disturbed by colleagues interrupting at the most inopportune times, right when we are in the middle of something. Digital, for that matter, is a major flow disrupter; it has become an art in itself to stay focused and not succumb to the persistent drone of emails, tweets and the host of other SMS that all vie for our attention.

Having the right staff personalities (i.e. people who are able to maintain balance) is a major issue for all agencies. It's one thing to recruit them, but it's another thing entirely to keep them. This is especially vital when it comes to engineers who are not only looking for challenges worthy of their skill set, but the most

up-to-date when it comes to product development and innovation. Matt Paddock and Brian Walker from Grow explain that the best way to manage these types of personalities is to listen to their expectations.

Good recruits are also those people who know how to embrace a culture of innovation and discovery, which is something that can't be imposed; it takes work to develop. Kristian Kruse from Hyper Island discusses how to effectively educate the next generation of recruits through a transformative approach versus the current transactional model.

The section comes to an end with Grégoire Baret from Nurun asking the million dollar question: What are the respective roles of the agency and the client in the race for digital innovation? Providing strategic value and internalizing this value is a never-ending balancing act in itself.

How are you delivering value to internal and external stakeholders? How are you evolving - or remaining steadfast - to your core business? How are you dealing with issues such as commoditization and externalization? Digital prompts all players to constantly recalibrate their positions...or risk falling off the tight rope.

Jack Skeels, CEO, AgencyAgile

Flow: The Hidden Source of Value in Your Agency

Jack Skeels leads AgencyAgile, the LA-based consultancy that helps agencies achieve better margins, faster delivery and happier clients and teams, using its proprietary Agile values-based methods, tools and training. He previously led SapientNitro's LA office, was a senior analyst at RAND corporation, and ran his first web development project in 1996.

AGENCYagile
Better • Faster • Happier

- FOCUS -

Everyone wins when an agency can deliver better work, faster, at a lower cost. Even brands benefit when their agencies become a high-quality, high-velocity partner. What most don't realize is that the most important "Value Lever" in an agency is often completely mismanaged or not understood at all.

What is this hidden lever? It's called the "Flow State" — that way of working where you're "In the Zone" or "focused." When in the flow state, people not only work faster, but also produce better work, and are happier. It seems like you shouldn't be able to get all three at the same time, but if you master "Flow" in your agency,

you'll see amazing results.

Understanding Flow

Hungarian-born researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi discovered that virtually everyone loves the flow state, and more important, that Flow comes somewhat naturally to all of us.

The Flow State is goal-directed behavior that balances challenge and skill, anxiety and familiarity, and results in "immersive behavior" where time falls away.

So what does this have to do with your agency? People at agencies are different – what Csikszentmihalyi called autotelic personality: they're driven by intrinsically rewarding activity. They like Flow. A lot.

For an autotelic, the experience of designing an awesome campaign is massively rewarding – enough so that they'll put up with all the other craziness.

More important, autotelics want to do exactly what both the agency and brand executives want: spend their whole day producing phenomenal work. The bad news? That doesn't happen a whole lot.

Unchain Your Knowledge Workers

Most knowledge workers spend less than 35% of their time in productive Flow time. We routinely ask our agency clients, "When does most of the work get done here?" The answer uniformly is: "Before or after office hours." Most agencies agree with us that 35% is pretty optimistic.

So what fills that 65%-plus of the agency worker's day? Chaos. We call it "interruptive noise" and it comes from the activity of managing. When people at an agency say that they're more productive "after people go home….", the people that they're referring to are managers, project managers, account people, etc.

In agencies, the largest inhibitor to productive efficiency is the management function.

And that's because one of the characteristics of the Flow State is that it is fragile. A simple interruption of the Flow State typically causes a *15 to 30 minutes loss in productive Flow!* Here's a simple example:

 - Worker: (at their desk/computer, intensely focus on their screen, in Flow)

- Manager: (walks over, taps worker on shoulder), "Hey, can I just get five minutes of your time for you to work on this [other thing]?"

And how many times does this happen in an agency? It happens all day long. Even worse, people get burned out after as few as a dozen of these interruptions and their productivity will never come back that day.

It's the middle tier of an agency that (unknowingly) impedes the effectiveness of the lower tier (workers) – not because they want to, but because the *"normal" way of running an agency does not create Flow for the people who need it most.*

Fixing Flow Boosts Productivity, Results ...and Margin

The good news is that you can fix the Flow problems in your agency. You'll need to change the way you manage your work and your teams - which goes to the core of how you manage. And neither of these is at all easy, but once that happens the results are amazing: *better* quality, *faster* delivery, and *happier* clients and teams. We've seen clients that have gone through our transformation process with *documented velocity improvements upwards of 100%.*

The financial ROI behind improving Flow is compelling as well: helping your workers who are productive 35% of the time (or less) become productive 50% of the time

is like increasing your productive capacity by almost 50% with no cost. As you can imagine, keeping your *autotelics* happy also improves a lot of other stuff, like retention/attrition.

The equivalent change on the top-line revenue would be like raising your billing rates from $140/hour up to $200/hour. Or slashing payroll costs by one third while maintaining your output, quality, and customer and employee satisfaction.

What it Takes to Fix Flow

Fixing your Flow takes time and money and the motivation to commit to 3 months of making changes. You can try some small-move changes pretty easily, or you can take the plunge and re-build the way you manage work and people.

Small moves often are centered on the *mechanics of interruptive noise* – just stopping interruptions. We've seen prospective clients take the idea of Flow and introduce "quiet times" or rules like "don't be distracted."

These small moves can have an impact – and improve the morale of your battered *autotelics* a bit – but they still don't get down to the *root cause* of the noise: most interruptions come from valid business needs. Telling your account folks, producers and leads that they just need to stop asking people things, doesn't really solve the broader problem. So small moves are hard to sustain.

The big move is to actually make Flow the focus of your agency. You'll want to reshape your processes, getting rid of the anti-Flow aspects, and get your whole agency culture aligned on how important Flow is, and how to systematically attack the *core causes of interruptive noise*. Interruptive noise is like a weed with deep roots:

unless you dig out its core, it will grow back.

We've found that once people learn about Flow, they want to take action – the idea has some virality to it. Agencies that achieve a "Flow-based Culture" adopt behaviors that encourage Flow.

Matt Paddock, Director of Engagement and Brian Walker, Technology Director, Grow Interactive

Promoting Choice: How to Leverage Our Strengths to Attract and Retain Creative Engineering Talent

Matt Paddock: Matt is Director of Engagement for Grow, a digital agency based in Norfolk, VA. His background includes experience with recruiting and talent development initiatives in the advertising and technology industry.

Agencies compete in a highly competitive market for talent, but top engineers and developers are especially hard to hire and retain. When the world of software and product development offers increasingly more interesting technical problems and a stable environment, how can agencies position themselves as workplaces-of-choice?

Remember the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books that were wildly popular in the '80s and '90s? They re-imagined storytelling through a series of branching narratives that gave readers choices, changing how plots unfolded and how stories ended. They also stressed

Brian currently serves as Technology Director for Grow, where he is responsible for managing development staff and providing technology leadership as a member of the agency's senior management team.

that the difference between making good or bad choices generally came down to whether the reader had an understanding of each character's motivation. The same insight can lead us to better outcomes for hiring and retaining engineering talent, since an understanding of what motivates employees will help agency leaders make critical staffing choices.

Imagine your business reflected in the eyes of an engineer. The main selling point of agency work is often diversity, since projects–good or bad–eventually give way to brand new projects. On the other side of the equation are companies in the business of making and selling tangible products. Software jobs in these places can take developers deeper into solving hard problems, with longer timelines that may offer more manageable schedules and predictable workloads. Rather than accept what seems like a choice between exciting work and life balance, we should be looking for ways our developers can have both options under one roof.

The first choice is how we match engineering staff to work assignments. Not every client or project is created equal, so we should listen to developers who say they love moving from project to project, and client to client. Listen to developers who complain about not being able to finish what they start or about writing "throwaway code." Managers may view the latter as growing pain for a department or agency, when in reality it may be that the developer is at a crossroads. There are plenty of talented developers who reach points where skipping between projects and technologies feels like boiling the ocean. The converse is an engineer embedded with one client for months or years who is bored, sick of solving the same problems, or just convinced the grass is greener elsewhere. You're better giving this person tough new pitches and prototyping, while rotating in a developer looking for more stability and predictable workflow.

The best way to determine which career choices appeal most to your developers is simply to ask. Back to the Choose Your Own Adventure analogy; talk with your developers in performance reviews and during periodic check-up sessions with managers. Ask them as a group occasionally how they feel about the way project teams are being formed and maintained, instead of relying on habit. It's not always possible or desirable to reorganize teams around one employee, but consider the cost of hiring and training a skilled developer. Also consider the cost of having the wrong people assigned to critical work. Jim Collins stressed in *Good to Great* that placing people in the right role is every bit as important as making the right hiring decisions. With as many as 4-5 jobs available for each qualified developer, we're all better off retaining the great people we have than trying to replace them.

The best news is that systems we create to retain top developers will also serve to attract new and qualified candidates. Employees and potential recruits will appreciate the fact you're making the effort. Developers will recognize that—much like in a *Choose Your Own Adventure* book—you're giving them a chance to try out different paths in search of richer career outcomes.

Kristian Kruse, Global Partnership Manager, Hyper Island

Is Your Company Culture Future Proof?

Kristian Kruse believes in learning as a vehicle to promote company culture, innovation and motivation. Currently acting as Global Partnership Manager at Hyper Island with learning hubs in NYC, Stockholm, Manchester, Karlskrona and Singapore, Kruse works directly with global brands and agencies to set up development programs that maximize learning outcomes. His passion lies in motivational learning, social connection, cultural innovation, creative leadership, amazing coffee, and bike riding. He is based in New York.

Are agencies missing out on talent because they cannot cultivate a culture for learning and growth? Future employees are looking for companies that can help drive their development and keep them motivated. However, it is not all about the companies, but also the individuals needing to take ownership of their growth and development. So how do we educate the future talent?

The world is changing at an exponentially faster rate, especially when we consider how educational programs are being developed and how we learn. Companies need to refocus on values and culture to become learning

organizations where people can explore their passions and talents. We can do this by setting up spaces and supporting the learning journey. The next generation of talent is demanding this of the places they choose to work. Also, the next generation of talent needs to take personal responsibility for their development and learning - identifying and seizing their potential, and ultimately working towards creating better and more compelling work.

As important as individual talent is to being truly creative and innovative (and it is), I would argue that teamwork is an underrated art form. Acknowledging that we are not experts in everything, but rather collaborative team players contributing to the bigger picture should be a very liberating and positive shift in thinking. This shift, however, calls for a change of leadership, moving from transactional to transformational in order to nurture employees and create a truly uplifting culture.

At Hyper Island we support lifelong learning and prepare our students to become real world ready. We use a special and successfully proven methodology where everyone is allowed to be who they are and start the process by working on actual briefs from clients in the industry. We do not have teachers, but rather skilled facilitators. It is not about what skills they learn, but rather enabling their learning by allowing them to identify what competencies are needed to make a project successful. This is a fundamental change from short-term thinking and reactively solving problems, to proactively identifying opportunities and creating long-term value in their work.

For companies to thrive in the world of change and acquire and retain talent, they need to clearly define their purpose. As Sir Ken Robinson states: "…people's increasing dissatisfaction with their professional lives is creating a profoundly dangerous situation – a

"For companies to thrive in the world of change and acquire and retain talent, they need to clearly define their purpose."

disconnected society in which spending the majority of their time slogging through activities that have little meaning for them."

A question that needs to be on your mind more than ever is how do you encourage a culture of learning? There is no silver bullet and it is not meant to be easy, but it will profoundly affect the future trajectory of your organization. Investing in culture and education constitutes a major step forward toward future proofing your business.

Grégoire Baret, EVP – Strategy and Experience Design, Nurun

Where Have All the Experts Gone?

Grégoire brings more than a decade of interactive experience and creative insights to Nurun. As Executive Vice President for the Montréal office, Grégoire provides strategic guidance to clients and leads a talented team of digital professionals. An innovator by nature, Grégoire seeks out new narrative experiences and UI languages when developing innovative digital solutions. Over the course of his career, Grégoire has counseled leading brands such as Levi's, Nike, Nissan, Guerlain, and PlayStation.

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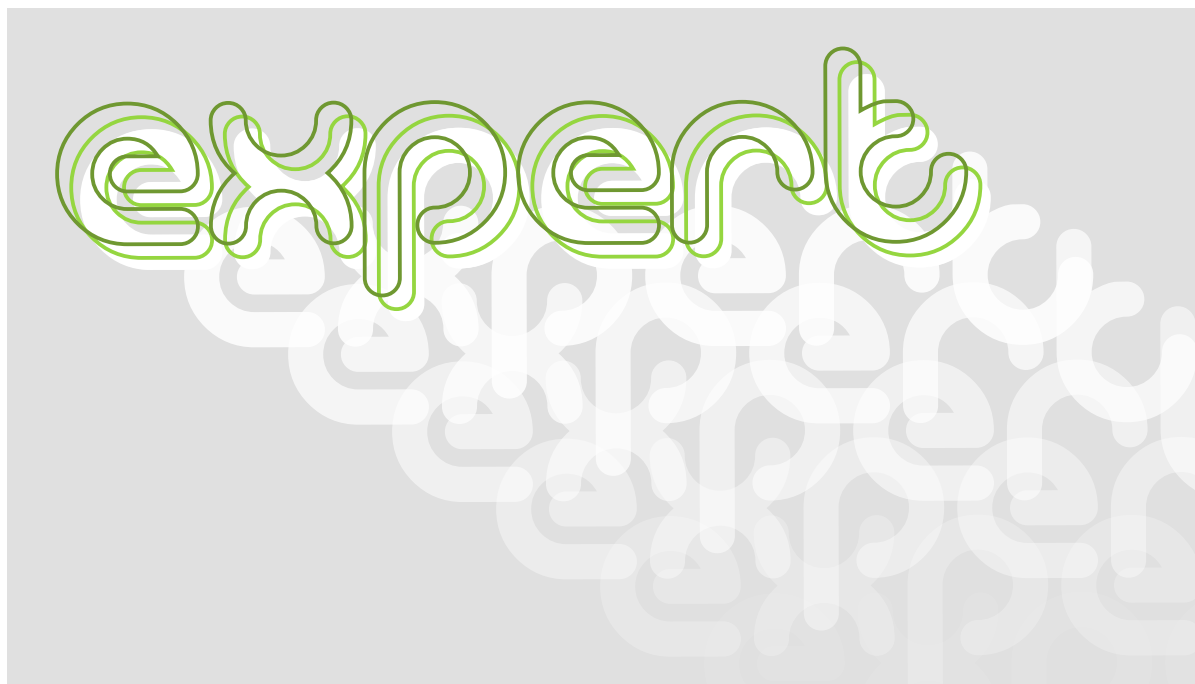
Pure-play agencies have a bad habit of existential reflection. "If I'm an interactive agency, who am I?" They're neither advertising or engineering; neither product or software-oriented. "Am I a communications agency? IT? Design? Do I even know how to define myself without using the word digital?"

The answer usually revolves around expertise. "We're experts. Read: expert in emerging technologies, in consumer behavior, in innovative business models. E-x-p-e-r-t."

In fact, it's the ability to bring together leading experts that makes interactive agencies unique. Experts build

a reputation for themselves, which justifies why we consult them.

The Problem: brands understand all too well that it is in their best interest to integrate such expertise into their operations. Digital has become the link between product, services and sales, and with the emergence of connected objects, it could become a product driver as well. It also encompasses the UX, UI and interaction intelligence—to not get a handle on this knowledge would mean ignoring the very crux of the issue.

The Result: clients compete with agencies to recruit talent—and challenge their very *raison d'être*. Why turn to an agency for innovation, digital design or technological vision when we can do it *in-house*?

To avoid being reduced to a production *commodity business*, the agency has to do a little soul-searching.

- Stop hiding. Because clients often come from the agency world, they are familiar with their models and organization. A healthy relationship comes from transparency, meaning no funny business with profit models, timelines, or production conditions. Say it like it is.

- Humbly accept that the client understands their business challenges better than an agency ever could. It's true. We complete the client; we do not compete with them.

- Position yourself as facilitator. To unclog internal dynamics, to get pertinent parties involved, to unite everyone around a common goal, i.e. a design challenge, a usage issue to resolve or a useful service to offer consumers.

The agency must not "collect the best expertise" but rather "consolidate client expertise." The mission is no longer to *produce* an application or connected object,

but to *stimulate* the client, providing the right direction so that they can fully participate in the design thinking process. In short, the agency should act as an objective and critical warden that understands the internal dynamics of the situation and can manage them to drive the process.

Finally, this implies a change of perspective and willingness to expose the inner workings of the agency. We need to work *with* the client, create *with* the client, and brainstorm *with* the client. Completely disclose the way you work. Not on the side, not as a reaction, but in the moment and on the spot.

Experts who work along these co-creative lines build the future model of agencies. Clients aren't interested in integration or making them into a commodity. This facilitator, this emulator, must provide an external point of view. They are not a producer, stuck in a department, or a distant consultant. To be a gatekeeper and draw out the best of the client, agencies must remain objective, keeping an open mind in all endeavours thus removing any blinders.

Advocacy

The SoDA Report 2014

Steve Graves

Senior Planner, DARE

There's no denying advocacy is a hot topic in digital marketing these days. In the hyper-connected world we now live, its ability to collectively shape and influence people's opinions and behavior has never been greater. But advocacy's power extends well beyond marketing — which is exactly why our industry needs it now more than ever.

We're at a critical stage in digital's evolution. Granted, we're still a few years away from the singularity, but the line between "digital" and the "real world" is blurring fast. Thanks to the shrinking size and growing power of computers, a race is on to digitize everything we can— clothing, appliances, packaging, ourselves … you name it. This coming wave of smart integrated technology, synced with the existing infrastructure of the internet, means our world is set to dramatically change. It is an exciting time indeed—but change is never easy, especially one of this magnitude.

So why does our industry need advocates now more than ever? As creators, working in digital, we've been tasked with shaping and changing how people experience reality. Everything we build, no matter how small, is helping direct our collective future. Assuming our goal is a better, smarter one—passionate, informed advocates championing our cause is key.

The intention here isn't to provide concrete answers. The scope, scale and evolving nature of digital do not allow for them. The purpose here is to encourage conversation by asking big questions. Questions that make us step back and appreciate the ever-increasing role digital plays in our day-to-day, and the huge responsibility it brings to those building it.

This is what I hope you'll get from the Advocacy section. In it we talk to author Bruce Philip about the impact digital has had in empowering consumers through brand accountability. Amer Iqbal speaks to the role of innovation in agencies, and why our industry needs to embrace it with a united front. Leisl Pfeffer looks at how risk management has become an overlooked component of project management, and what's at stake without it. And lastly, I look at the implications that integrated technology and data collection have for society as a whole.

Realizing digital's true potential—and through it a better, smarter future—is impossible without a shared vision. What that vision is, and how we'll get there is still unclear, but what is clear is that getting people excited about digital will get us there a lot faster. And if there's one thing that advocacy has shown itself to be particularly good at, it's that.

Interview with Bruce Philip, founder of Heuristic Branding

A Conversation with "Consumer Republic" Author

Bruce Philip is a principal and founder of Heuristic Branding, a brand strategy consultancy and a thirty-year veteran of consumer branded marketing. Prior to founding Heuristic, Bruce spent 15 years as chair and CEO of GWP Brand Engineering—and earned his ad agency chops as a strategic planner and award-winning creative director. Bruce has authored two books on strategic branding: The Orange Code, the best-selling story of how ING Direct was built, and the National Business Book Award-winning Consumer Republic.

Interview conducted by Steve Graves, Senior Planner at DARE.

Bruce Philip is a firm believer in the power of the consumer. So much so that he wrote what is arguably the modern manifesto on the subject, the award-winning *Consumer Republic*. So what has digital done to empower consumers, and why should we care? Here's what Bruce had to say:

GRAVES: *In your book, Consumer Republic: Using Brands to Get What You Want, Make Corporations Behave, and Maybe Even Save the World, you speak to the idea that consumers are far more empowered than they realize when it comes to exacting real change from companies and their respective brands. Can you elaborate on that?*

PHILIP: To some extent, consumers have always been more empowered than they believed they were. More CEOs than you might think obsess about consumer sentiment and use it to stir things up inside their organizations. But the real game changer has been the web, and specifically of course, social media. These tools let people instantly feed their feelings about brands back into our system of commerce. Those feelings are then turned into corporate performance indicators,

influence brand value, and do it all in full view for the world to see. The potential of this sort of immediate public dialogue has been evidently clear since the web was born. And although we may not yet know what the end-game looks like, that ball today is squarely in the consumer's court.

GRAVES: *What do you see as the dangers for society as a whole if we fail to appreciate the active responsibility we have as consumers?*

PHILIP: Essentially, the less engaged consumers are the less accountable corporations become. It's just that brutally simple. In marketplaces as in democracies, we cannot outsource our consciences; we'll never have governments or corporations more moral than we ourselves are willing to be. We create those institutions by our choices, in one case because we give them power and the other because we give them money. So, if we decide that we are somehow above marketing, then corporations will adapt by competing to make the cheapest product at the detriment of the economy and planet. If we complain publicly but fail to vote with our money, corporations will learn that our complaints don't mean anything, and just stop listening. If we act as though everything we buy is merely a commodity, industries will eventually consolidate and we'll lose the power of choice. It may be more responsibility than we want, but the fact is that the only thing keeping our systems in check is our own engagement in those systems.

GRAVES: *In what ways can digital play a role in promoting this more sustainable approach to consuming?*

PHILIP: In one sense, the digital world is already making its most important contribution by creating commercially valuable ways for consumers and corporations to listen to each other. This has been

> *"In marketplaces as in democracies, we can't outsource our consciences; we'll never have governments or corporations more moral than we ourselves are willing to be."*

revolutionary and given consumers unprecedented agency in capitalism.

I think that the area of ethics in digital marketing needs work. Its earliest practitioners promised us accountability for marketing that was never possible in the age of mass media. Digital marketing would eliminate waste, make things measurable, democratize marketplaces, and hear the consumer in real time. But in the last few years, there have been too many unsettling stories about the way companies collect data, about the reliability of display advertising analytics, about faking consumer endorsements, that kind of thing. Digital marketing is still too young to withstand widespread mistrust. To have a chance at fulfilling its potential, it has to be better than what it's replacing by holding itself to a higher standard. The credulity of the consumer isn't a renewable resource.

GRAVES: *What specifically can we as digital agencies do to help our clients also adopt this thinking? And, what—if anything—is at stake for our industry as a whole if we fail?*

PHILIP: There is a growing body of evidence that consumer trust is actually the foundation of enterprise value. Brands now compete for it the same way they used to compete for fame. I would argue that trust is an annuity; it puts money in the bank. If people believe in what motivates your brand—not based on what you say, but on what they have experienced—they'll come back to you again and again simply because it's in their best interest to do so.

What's at stake if we fail is the sustainability of marketing itself. Today, brands can't survive based only on what their products do. The trust people have in the company that made those products is where the margin is. If we squander that trust, all that's left to manage

is cost. In commodity marketplaces, brands neither have nor create any value. Eventually, I guess, that means we'd all lose our jobs. But what's worse is that consumers would lose choice and with it, their ability to influence capitalism. I can't think of any stakes higher than that.

Amer Iqbal, Head of Strategy, Deepend

The Technology Treadmill: An Agency Framework for Innovation

With nearly 15 years' experience in the digital industry, Amer is a key member of Deepend's senior management team. He holds a degree in Computer Science and an MBA in Marketing and has been engaged by numerous organizations to deliver guest lectures and facilitate workshops on business and marketing strategy. Combining an ongoing passion for digital innovation with strategic consumer insights, Amer has led teams that have attracted several highly regarded industry awards and accolades. Get in touch with Amer on LinkedIn.
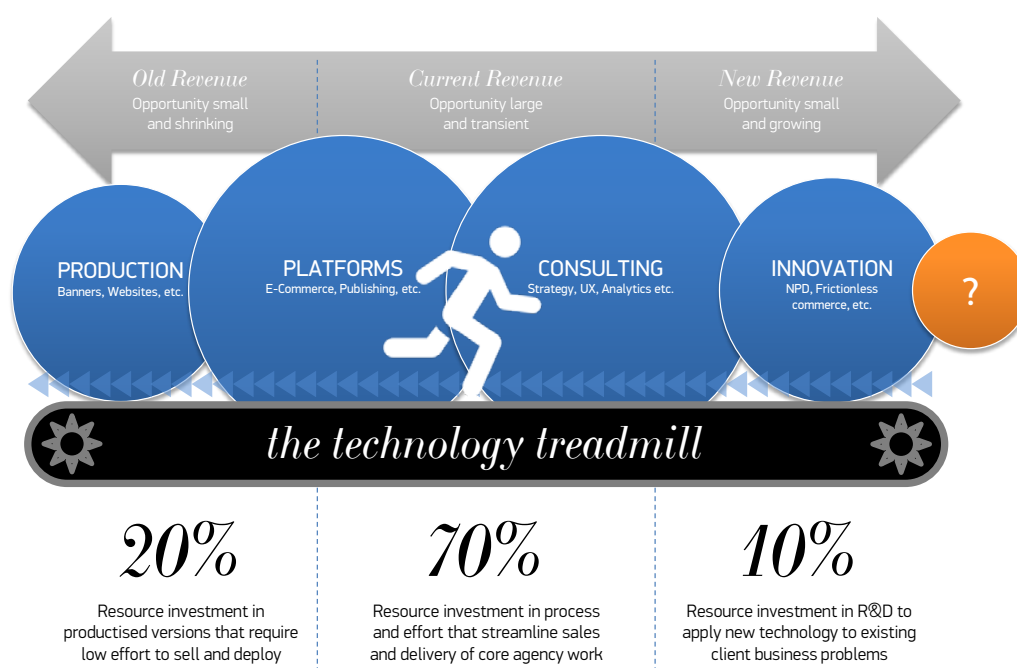
Technology is a strange thing; just when you think you've got it figured out, along comes the next big thing that changes the game. So if we all understand that we're on a treadmill of ever-changing technology, why are digital agencies at a standstill when it comes to "walking the talk" on innovation?

In November 1996, renowned management consultant Richard Rumelt set out to identify the recipe for success for tech companies. Interviewing 26 separate CEOs, they invariably responded that leaders in their industry had succeeded by capitalizing on an external change or "window of opportunity." When he then inquired about their own strategy, he was surprised to discover a lot of

talk about internal processes; none made mention of looking for an external window of opportunity, the very thing they'd identified as the recipe for success in their industry.

Eighteen months later, Rumelt interviewed Steve Jobs and was curious as to what Apple's strategy might be to combat "Wintel's" industry dominance. Jobs simply smiled and said "I am going to wait for the next big thing." [1]

The lesson is clear – innovate or die. Perhaps the clearest cautionary tale comes from the fall of Kodak. Despite inventing the digital camera, they chose not to cannibalize their core film business. Inertia meant it was easier to keep doing what they'd been doing: "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." It was all too easy for Nikon and Canon to jump on the opportunity, ultimately driving Kodak into bankruptcy.

Over a decade later, it seems client organizations are taking heed. An observable growth trend in "Head of Innovation" roles indicates that they see these change agents coming from internal teams rather than an agency partner. While digital agencies may see themselves as the perfect fit to play this role, the fact is that the majority of our collective revenue still comes from traditional marketing services rather than driving change across various aspects and operations of the businesses we partner with.

So why are digital agencies being overlooked in the drive to innovate?

A big part of the problem for digital agencies is that we simply aren't being recognized as a viable option when it comes to acting in a capacity beyond traditional marketing services.

There are obvious benefits in utilizing digital agencies in an innovation capacity – we live and breathe technology

[1] *Reference: Rumelt, R., 2011, Good Strategy Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters, Crown Business, USA*

and are incentivized to source and train the best digital talent in the market. We invest time, effort and resources in finding the next big thing. We intimately understand that technology is not static.

The concept of the "technology treadmill" illustrates that for agencies there will always be new windows of opportunity in technology to chase. Commoditization means that we can't rest on our laurels; agencies are continually being squeezed out of traditional service offerings by low-cost providers, forcing us to look for new revenue opportunities. It's a moving target that is constantly changing. Therefore, rather than asking "what type of innovation should our agency invest in?", we should instead be set up to constantly capture new opportunities as they arise.

Let's be clear though – I personally don't believe we should be trying to invent new technologies, as that is a risky game better left to the startups and Googles of the world. Instead, agencies should be focused on discovering these new technologies and commercializing them by solving our client's business problems across all areas of operation (not just marketing). Think "leading edge," not "bleeding edge."

Working together to get moving on Innovation

The solution won't come from a simplistic call to action like "all digital agencies should innovate." As an industry, we are reliant on client revenues to survive – it's not typical for agencies to operate with large cash reserves to invest in speculative R&D activity. In order for it to work, innovation needs to be a commercially viable proposition.

Rather than trying to define an end solution (which will be quickly outdated), wouldn't it be better to adopt a shared framework that successfully uses existing agency revenue models to incubate new services? If

"The concept of the 'technology treadmill' illustrates that for agencies there will always be new windows of opportunity in technology to chase."

SoDA members were to reinvest a small portion of their "Current Revenue" stream into developing a "New Revenue" stream, it would serve to future-proof these agencies by moving from a shrinking and increasingly commoditized opportunity to one that may be small but is rapidly growing.

A simple example could be ensuring that 1 in every 10 pitches your agency undertakes is for a service offering in which you aren't currently engaged (obviously up skilling to deliver successfully). You would be capturing client budgets that are currently being allocated elsewhere and would be insulated from low-cost suppliers who can deliver "Old Revenue" services cheaper than you. You would no longer see commoditization as a threat but as an opportunity. It's just good business strategy.

The good news is that if the digital industry can work together, we actually create a positive spiral that serves our individual needs while benefiting the collective. If a critical mass of digital agencies could agree to adopt a model like the Technology Treadmill, more agencies would be engaged as an innovation partner, which in turn sets a precedent. A momentum is created in the industry for other agencies to drive this agenda with their own clients. Effectively it would serve to build a collective position of power around this key issue that is threatening the ongoing relevance of our industry.

With clients moving towards hiring internal teams, circumstances are starting to shift away from agencies. We need to fight inertia and step out of our comfort zone or the window of opportunity will pass us by. By working together to deliver innovation, digital agencies can generate increasing value for clients while fostering a sustainable model for our own collective survival. The next big thing is just around the corner – we need to shape up and hop on the technology treadmill.

Liesl Pfeffer, Project Manager, Reactive

Ignoring Risk Management Is the Greatest Risk of All

Liesl is the lead Project Manager at Reactive New York, a full-service digital agency. Her clients come from diverse industries including entertainment, film, retail, staffing and travel. She has been working in digital for seven years, specializing in digital marketing, strategy and communications. Liesl is also a visual artist, drummer and photo-blogger.

reactive

On October 1st of last year, after a long fight to pass the Affordable Care Act, a stomach-wrenching six (6) total Americans were able to sign up for Obamacare as a result of the failed government website. The next day, it "skyrocketed" to 248. What followed was a very public outcry over the website - how could Americans be expected to believe in the ACA if the website didn't even work? It has since come to light that these issues are in part a result of inadequate project management—one that failed to fully appreciate the inherent risk involved with such a massive undertaking.

As anyone working in digital knows, things go wrong. Probably not on the scale of the ACA debacle but nonetheless, unanticipated missteps can feel just as severe when it comes to your agency's reputation and its ability to deliver. Sticking your head in the sand and hoping everything works out perfectly is one option. For the enlightened digital project manager, embracing risk management is probably a better one.

What exactly is risk management? At its most basic level, it identifies and assesses risks, and then sets out a plan to minimize any impact if (and when) something does indeed go wrong. Unfortunately when it comes to digital, applying risk management fundamentals has fallen to the wayside—not that it's anyone's particular fault.

As businesses continue to shift their customer service efforts online, operating web-based transactions and storing information in the cloud, marketing teams have been tasked with managing them, instead of the IT department. The risk management practices stringently applied in IT departments aren't always being carried over to the studies and practices of most marketers. Marketing departments rarely have risk management staff or risk management methodologies that are deeply integrated into their processes.

The good news: essentially all risks across the entire digital landscape can be identified, managed and mitigated through careful planning. We just need to adopt the risk management skills and responsibilities that were previously owned by IT. These include methods like incorporating risk analyses into all decision-making, and practicing methodologies such as the ongoing maintenance of a risk register.

Agencies can learn from enterprise companies who have been taking steps to increase risk management processes continuously and rapidly in recent times.

"Agencies need to give staff the tools required to manage risk effectively and invest in educating them in risk management processes."

Smart organizations have a senior executive role that manages risk, and this risk management function is highly integrated into all decision-making.

In the digital agency scenario, the project manager typically owns the risk management function for project delivery and is consequently the only role with proper training. However, all members of staff have risks to weigh and mitigate, and risk management responsibilities can no longer be relegated to the act of tracking risks in a spreadsheet (although that is an essential part of the process).

Agencies need to give staff the tools required to manage risk effectively and invest in educating them in risk management processes. In turn, rigorous systems and processes need to be introduced and followed. Agency staff needs to outline and implement standard processes that educate the client and provide the client the tools they need to own their client-side risks.

Digital agencies, as a global sector, also have a responsibility to increase our activities that advocate, educate and protect our staff and clients on how to manage risk effectively. Our industry already excels at knowledge sharing. I predict that educating each other on risk management through conferences, articles, meet-ups and other events and communication channels will (and should) become more of a focus in the near future.

Agencies with staff that are adept at risk management will see improvements in quality, efficiency and timeliness of project delivery as well as increased employee retention. Clients who are provided the tools they need to mitigate their own risks will be more satisfied with increased revenue and savings on project costs.

With all the web-based and instantaneous activities

being conducted these days, especially across social media, the reputational risk for our agencies as well as our clients is astronomical. As savvy, innovative marketers, we should be ready to consider risk management both as a service offering and a fully integrated element of our business management approach.

Steve Graves, Senior Planner, DARE Digital

With Big Data Comes Big Responsibility: Wearable Tech and the Future of Big Data

Since being the first kid on his block with access to the Internet in the early 90s, Steve has spent more time than he'd care to admit online. Admittedly, he's obsessed with all things digital which helps explain his eclectic CV. From a web designer specializing in UX to starting (then selling) his own SEO marketing agency, he has spent more than a decade working in digital in some form or another. As Senior Planner at DARE, Steve works out of Vancouver, Los Angeles, and New York with globally recognized brands to ensure whatever they do in digital delivers.

DARE
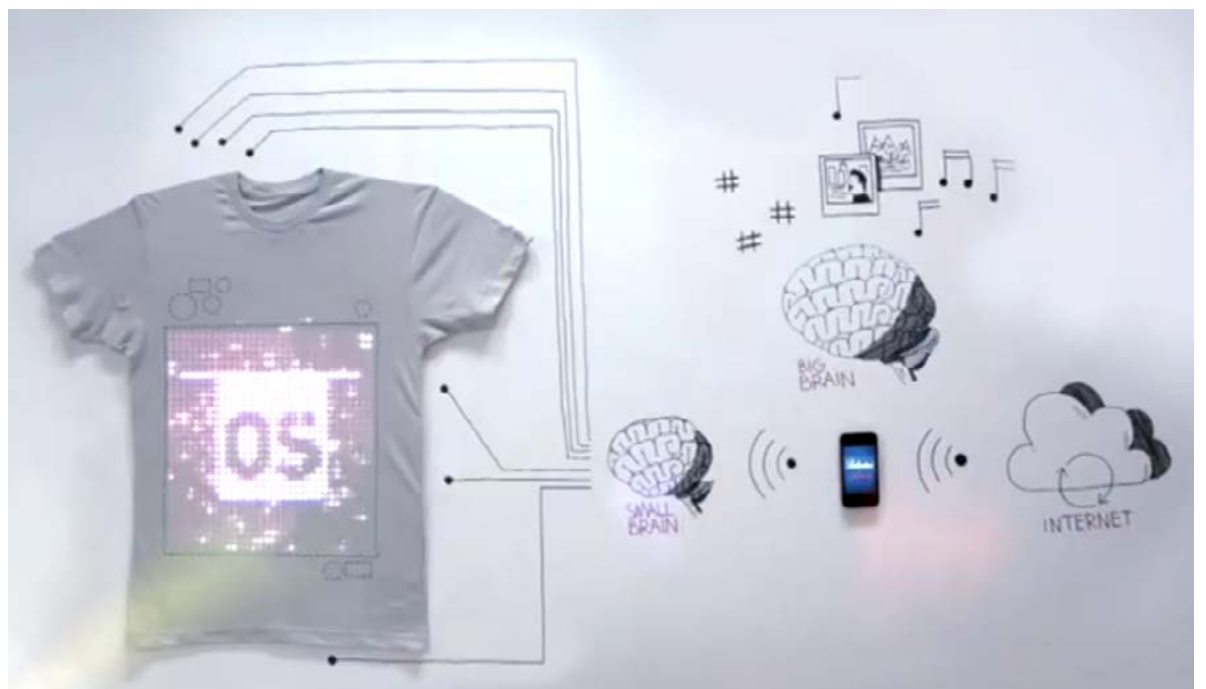
One of the biggest headline grabbers from this year's CES was Intel's Edison computer. As far as technical specs go, it was pretty standard fare—dual-core PC with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities. What made it special was the fact it was the size of an SD card—a fact that captured the imagination of techies the world over.

Along with Edison came Intel's sponsored "Make it Wearable" contest, offering up $1.3 million to developers willing to help establish Edison as the "brains" in the coming onslaught of wearable tech products. Not that you have to wear Edison. Intel also

showcased its "Nursery 2.0" that featured a whole shopping cart worth of Edison embedded products. It included a "smart toy frog" that wirelessly reports an infant's vitals to a parent via an LED coffee cup, while remotely starting a milk warmer at the sound of a crying baby. The fact that it's cute makes it especially interesting considering it represents one of the greatest changes in human history. Welcome to the age of the quantified self—whether we like it or not.

The smaller and more powerful computers get, the more we integrate them into all facets of our lives. And with computers comes data—vast amounts of it being generated by our every action. Up to now, the data we've been most focused on has been happening online. It's where every one of your clicks, page views and bounces is being systematically recorded, measured, and analyzed. All that data analysis has given digital marketers an incredible leg up as it effectively removes the guesswork. But how much "guesswork" can be removed before it's no longer marketing, and more just a fish in a barrel type exercise?

If you're looking for proof, consider Amazon's recent patent that outlined a way to ship your order before you actually make it. What they are calling "anticipatory package shipping" looks at your prior behavior, (searches, prior purchases, wish lists etc.) and identifies patterns. From there they predict the likelihood of you ordering a particular product you've shown interest in, and if that's high enough, start packaging and shipping it before you click the "add to cart" button. For the user, the benefit (assuming it's accurate—and it will be) is less wait time for your item providing happier more satisfied Amazon customers and where there are happy customers, there's profit. Predicting behavior that is fueled by big data is proving itself big business.

Now what would happen if the behaviors we could measure and analyze extended well beyond online?

For example, let's say your LED coffee cup connected to a toy frog that monitored your infant's vital signs, which in turn synced wirelessly with the milk warmer. It doesn't take much imagination to consider the kinds of data that could be theoretically generated as a result. Just the "smart" coffee cup alone could track when and how frequent you drink coffee, how long it takes you to drink a cup, if you use cream and sugar, the type of roast you prefer, how often you wash your cup, what brand of detergent you use when you wash it, etc. The list goes on—and that's just a coffee cup. Marry that with all the other data generated from the coming onslaught of "smart" devices (plus your existing online habits) and you've got yourself some serious data scientist porn.

No question that big data represents one of the biggest game changers in our industry—and arguably for society too. It's already proven itself to be an incredibly effective tool in the advertiser's arsenal allowing us to predict behavior and intercept consumers at their most receptive. But the quality and quantity of data that is going to be generated as a result of the rapid spread of smart tech—and with that, our ability to analyze vast sets of it means we might very well know more about a person than they do about themselves. It's a tremendous power to have over the consumer and one that brings with it the same level of responsibility.

The potential for abuse is significant and there is good reason to believe it will steadily increase alongside innovations in integrated tech. With no compelling historical precedent, it raises complex practical and moral questions that we as digital marketers need to start asking. Ultimately, it's up to society to decide what rules and guidelines it imposes on this emerging industry. But until that happens, just remember what the biggest collector of data (and arguably the world's most powerful company) made their informal corporate motto: "Don't be evil." That should be enough ... let's

hope.

If you agree or disagree, I'd love to hear why. Get in touch at steven.graves@gmail.com.

Related Research Findings from 2014 DMO Survey

It's been said before, but for anyone still wondering, the digital revolution happened. It changed everything. Humans are now connected to a universe of always-on thoughts, ideas and feelings, and we'll never be the same. However, the industry finds itself in the wake of that change. Brands, by and large, have yet to pivot the operations that affect the connected consumer - and it's exactly that kind of wide-reaching change that burdens today's digital marketers and agencies. Here are their top concerns, according to this year's survey.

Digital is serious business.

Digital isn't just marketing - it's not just an extension of a brand in advertising or branding. "Digital" represents the growth and extension of every aspect of a brand - across the entire customer lifecycle, taking shape as digital services, communications, experiences, and communities.

This isn't a clever agency-based point of view. This authentic extension of a brand is an expectation of today's connected consumer. Today, brands don't typically power all of these whole-lifecycle interactions, and so this mindset is causing a major shift inside brands and agencies - and we're not well equipped on either side.

Becoming digitally-native requires true change management inside brands; digital agencies are already feeling the weight of this task on their shoulders. Operating a business in digital - the whole business - needs to become a core business skill; not an edge or emerging trend. In the meantime, agencies and other partners must rise to the challenge to

be whole-business savvy, plan integrated brand behaviors, and patiently support brands in this shift. It's not a project or initiative. It's a change.

Agencies are concerned about training and gaining know-how. This probably means more cross-functional work and training between different parts of a brand who all, separately, have business objectives that need to be supported in digital. In addition, our community needs to take action upstream from our talent pools, to ensure that digital is properly taught, with the same kinds of models and values applied to the space as other, more traditional business education topics. After all, digital isn't separate from traditional business - it has quickly become the new version of traditional business.

Digital Ecosystems Confound All

The current engagement model between brands and digital agencies often assumes that assignments are like mini-funnels of a brand's marketing funnel - and thus, that digital executions are extensions of other, traditional or "above the line" efforts. This assumes that other, traditional briefs, strategies, and metrics have accounted for what the brand needs to do in these other, very intimate, interactive spaces. This year's survey communicated a very different reality, where chartering and measuring impact is an area that needs massive educational support for clients.

Many believe this industry would benefit from a standard playbook, measurement rationale, ROI calculations, and proven connectivity between different territories of the marketing funnel and customer lifecycle. Since digital brands have so many connected touch points, they're not easily understood or planned for. Often, the digital ideas are a media afterthought -- as opposed to making important media and context decisions as part of the strategy process -- where such thinking is really needed.

The true potential impact of digital business and marketing are only just becoming understood -- and the true complexity of the work is often dismissed by more traditional and simplistic message-and-media models. Until digital agencies and marketers can agree on how to communicate the value of digital -- all of digital, and provide a clear vision of how to go to market digitally, the medium will be undervalued.

Technology Is Still a Stumbling Block

There is a massive gap between what technology can do, and what we are doing with technology to provide business value. Brands and agencies report that the technology of a solution is often and mistakenly considered part of the production process -- not the solution design process. Technology stack and platform capabilities clearly define the bounds of what a digital ecosystem can do. Unfortunately, the tech stack conversation and the digital brand initiative conversations are very seldom in-sync.

This year's survey respondents described undue time and scope pressure when saddled with not only executing the creative task -- but, also solving the often far-reaching platform challenges. What results in this style of digital brand planning is a veritable buffet of marketing and e-commerce tech, seldom implemented completely, universally scorned by the business.

The incongruity between digital capabilities and digital agency initiatives grows with each one-off implementation -- since most digital agency and marketing initiatives are often being assigned as a production task, when assigned to a digital agency. Respondents this year described a persistent gap in the level of client understanding around the effort required to plan and execute many digital brand solutions. It's clear that many agencies are shouldering this massive diplomatic task of working between a brand's technology stakeholders and the business functions that use it.

It is already widely believed that CMOs are buying more technology than most CTOs. Are CMOs also staffing up on marketing technologists? Digital agencies are often thought of as competitive to internal technology resources. Regardless of who is owning the stack internally, respondents describe a situation where they are playing counselor between the current capabilities offered by a brand's technologists, and the marketer's hopes and dreams of personalization, nurturing, immersion, adaptability and intelligence.

SoDA Showcases

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The SoDA Report 2014
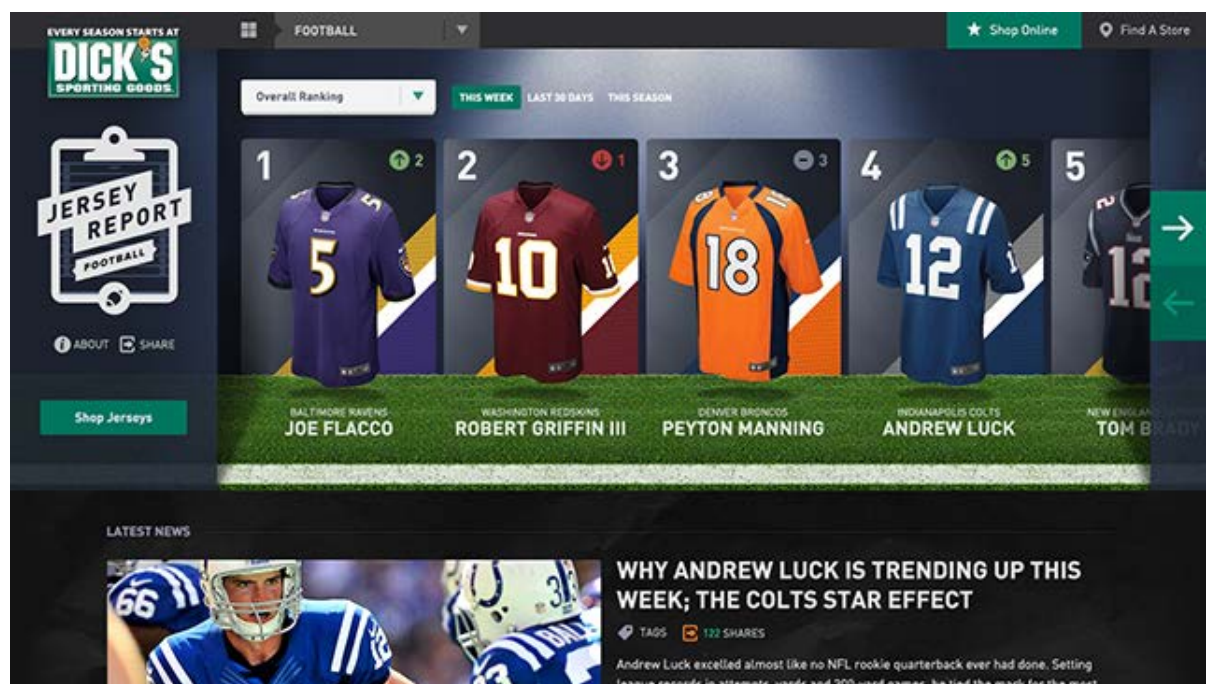
The Jersey Report

viget

CLIENT
Dick's Sporting Goods

MEMBER COMPANY
viget.com

PROJECT
View here

The numbers behind the numbers. Viget teamed up with Dick's Sporting Goods to create The Jersey Report, a fan-centric data visualization site.

Dick's Sporting Goods (DSG) is one of the world's largest sporting goods retailers, and player jerseys are one of their most popular items. Jersey sales data has become a key point of interest for sports fans, providing insight into which teams are performing well in the eyes of fellow fans.

Viget teamed up with DSG to create The Jersey Report, a beautifully designed, customizable data-visualization site that allows NFL and NHL fans to compare their team favorites with the rest of the league. Bragging rights reign supreme in the world of sports, so the site

The Jersey Report has received positive attention from sports fans and media. It has been featured on fan sites and in a variety of sports business and retail marketing publications. The site is also having a positive impact on jersey sales, showing that the fans truly are the numbers behind the numbers.

needed to be responsive and sharable, and to stay up-to-date on which jerseys are trending throughout the season.

Making complex data sets user-friendly is no easy task, so before Viget launched into design, they considered all the metrics that fans could use to sort their jersey data. Their digital analysts dove into the previous year's data to determine the most effective ways to serve data points to consumers. The development team devised ways to deliver real-time sales data to the site and made it easy to sort and compare. Viget's front-end development team made sure the navigation was polished and leveraged the native functionality of the viewing device.

The result is a variety of dynamic and customizable infographics that make the site compelling for the avid sports fan. The Jersey Report gives fans a new way of following their favorite players and teams, and another venue to express their passion for the game.

Red Bird at Adobe MAX

CLIENT
Adobe

MEMBER COMPANY
vasava.es

VIDEOS
Video 1
Video 2
Video 3

The visual identity of Adobe MAX 2013 took flight with the help of Barcelona-based Vasava.

Adobe MAX has always been about creating new stuff. First, it attracted developers turning crazy ideas into usable technologies. Then Flash stormed onto the scene and the unholy designer-developer union gave us a brave new frontier to explore. Today, as the focus of MAX evolves to attract and inspire the hard-core design community, Adobe's team has refined their mission: Get the creative world pumped, and then explain the tools that can fuel their passion.

In this project, Vasava tried to capture creativity in the shape of a little red bird flying around. It goes wherever the wind blows as a visual metaphor of creativity, but wherever its wings and tail touch the ground, a spark evolves and unfolds. Similar to the spirit of the

Adobe MAX 2013 was held in the Los Angeles Convention Center and Nokia Theatre L.A. LIVE in May 2013. It brought together the top designers and creative minds in the industry to celebrate, explore and shape the future of digital experiences.

conference, visitors attend, are enlightened and leave equipped with new visions and ideas.

ꜱᴛɪᴍᴜʟᴀɴᴛ Halo

CLIENT
Dallas Reunion Tower

MEMBER COMPANY
stimulant.io

PROJECT
View here

An icon of the Dallas skyline since the seventies, Reunion Tower was ready for a refresh. Stimulant partnered with Gensler to create a digitally enhanced, fully interactive environment.

The crown jewel of the 560-foot-tall Reunion Tower is a 360-degree view of Dallas from high above the city. The GeO-Deck is an observation level where visitors get their first taste of the wide expanse of the Texas landscape.

Stimulant designed and developed a reactive and interactive experience for the GeO-Deck called Halo, which is a graceful arc of 15 seamlessly integrated displays linked together to create a massive 60-foot-wide interactive surface. Two Halos on the GeO-Deck allow for up to 30 concurrent users, featuring real-time 3-D generative backgrounds that respond to touch and movement throughout the space. Each Halo supports a

The Reunion Tower draws more than one million visitors each year. Stimulant's installation features thirty 46" multi-touch displays all working together as part of a single array.

variety of apps, interactive 3-D models, photos of Dallas landmarks, zoomable interactive gigapixel photographic panoramas of the various views, control of HD cameras mounted outside the tower for exploring the city in detail, custom-curated maps, a unique presentation about the JFK assassination and an interactive simulation of the tower's famous light shows. Each display is calibrated for its unique position around the circumference of the floor and provides an experience tailored to its particular orientation.

One floor up from the GeO-Deck is Cloud 9, a futuristic bar and lounge serving Texas-themed food and cocktails from Wolfgang Puck. Stimulant's Big Sky is a breathtaking digital installation on the ceiling, combining abstract steel clouds, dynamic LED lighting and 17 HD screens that comprise a massive-scale abstract weather simulation. Each moment is unique and married seamlessly to the architecture and design of the space.

Casse Tête Chinois

CLIENT
STUDIOCANAL

MEMBER COMPANY
soleilnoir.com

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

For the release of the movie *Casse Tête Chinois (Chinese Puzzle)*, the third installment from Cédric Klapisch's saga of films, Soleil Noir collaborated with the main actor and the studio to develop the movie's uniquely Klapisch style website and online presence - only two months before its release. The latest installment of the series follows the main character's life, Xavier, and evolves with him as he turns forty.

The client engaged Soleil Noir to promote the film and create excitement around the new opus by using Klapisch's first two films as a foundation, *L'Auberge Espagnole (Pot Luck)* and *Les Poupées Russes (Russian Dolls)*. They wanted snippets of the film to be highlighted online in addition to encouraging site dissemination and driving fans to the theater to see the

The engagement level surpassed what Soleil Noir expected and an impressive user experience resulted. The website received 100,000 visits in just 6 weeks and garnered recognition with AWWARDS, the FWA (Site of the Day) and with Adobe as a Cutting Edge Project of the Week.

new film.

Soleil Noir needed to quickly develop a strategy targeting two key audiences: those who had seen the first two movies and those who hadn't seen any of them and might be interested in seeing the third.

Collaboratively, Soleil Noir worked with the studio, the movie's director and main actor to tell the story of the new saga and engage the viewer to discover what became of the three others iconic characters and Xavier's "mess."

The solution surrounded a "blank page concept." Website visitors are invited to help Xavier (played by Roman Duris), a successful writer and the protagonist of the trilogy, to overcome writer's block and plot what happens to him since the first installment, *L'Auberge Espagnole*.

Xavier begins to tell his life story, and then the page goes blank. It's the visitor's turn to find a logical continuation by completing the sentence with a keyword related to the trilogy, which will lead to the discovery of snippets from one of the three films, or by putting in a word which has nothing to do with the sentence which will trigger a funny, offbeat sequence from one of the films. Visitors can thus go through a decision tree covering the field of possibilities in the lives of these three characters and discover a few scenes from the latest film.

The omnipresent narrative voice of Romain Duris plunges the viewer into the world of Cédric Klapisch, further enhanced by the original music score and tells the story of the visitor's life by recovering information about him or her on Facebook (where visitors are invited to connect).
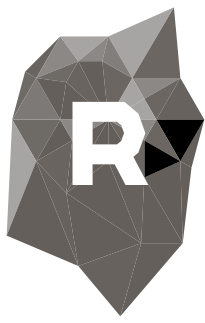
League of Legends

PC gaming has taken the world by storm, and League of Legends, the world's most played video game, is at the forefront of the explosion. Today video gaming has reached a new level of international competition, and eSports have been declared professional sports worldwide. When the pros play, spectators fill stadiums and tune in to watch. In parallel, professional League of Legends tournaments are now so massive that avid fans have cemented them as the most-watched eSport of all time.

After hours of playtime and talking to thousands of gamers across the country, ROKKAN created a fully integrated approach that included branding, digital, print, messaging and public relations for the new AmEx

Grassroots conversations from the gaming community incited a groundswell of press in mainstream outlets, garnering over 78 million impressions in three days. Most importantly, gamers loved it. Reactions from this historically skeptical group were overwhelmingly positive with players signing up by the thousands and actively recommending it to friends and teammates.

Serve League of Legends pre-paid account. The world's card for the gaming lifestyle has one premise at its core: Live Life. Game On. This first-of-its-kind program rewards gamers for simply doing what they already do: playing League of Legends and purchasing the things they already buy.

The AmEx Serve League of Legends account rewards cardholders not with miles or cash back, but with in-game currency, called Riot Points. Spending Riot Points is how players bolster their arsenals with customizations, champions, boosts and more, helping them dominate on the Fields of Justice.

The campaign fully embraced and celebrated the close-knit League of Legends world. Account features were specially designed to help players win and show off gamer solidarity, from free in-game money transfers among teammates, to debit cards detailed with their choice of game characters. Sign-up bonuses were orchestrated to maximize the number of Riot Points cardholders could earn, and recurring bonuses, on top of everyday spending rewards, ensured ongoing value.

ROKKAN supported the launch with targeted press outreach and paid media. News first hit the marketplace through a *New York Times* feature, and quickly spread across the media spectrum, including gaming, business and lifestyle media outlets, forums and reddit. A highly effective banner and video campaign came next, spreading the word and exciting gamers across the country.

Lifesize Messi

To showcase FIFA 14, the most realistic football game ever, Resn created the world's first true-to-life, living avatar in your browser. And not just any great football player … the greatest … Lionel Messi.

Created by Wieden+Kennedy Amsterdam and Resn, Life Size Messi features a true-to-life Messi avatar, LEO, who is aware of and responds to users. LEO knows you're there, looking at you; he follows movements and responds to touch. He is like a real man, just beyond your screen. Intelligent, responsive and alive.

On an Internet dominated by flat, simple and static HTML websites, the likes of avatar LEO has never been seen before, and is only possible with newly developed and utilized technology.

The avatar was created from hundreds of high-resolution photos of the real Messi and EA SPORTS 3D scans, which were then projection mapped over 750 bones to mimic and reflect human actions, compared to the typical 100 used for most 3-D models. These bones, along with a variety of subtle animations blended together, through artificial intelligence mean that LEO's actions change based on how he's treated. This brings a hyper-sense of human realism and aliveness to the experience.

Avatar LEO was conceived in Maya, but bringing him to life in a browser environment called for a custom-built 3-D pipeline that was able to handle 3-D models and animations of unparalleled scale and detail for playback in Adobe Flash.

While the avatar is only interactive on a desktop, a custom-built HTML mobile site utilizes swipe, gyroscope and accelerometer functions to enable users to explore a static, but still life-size version of LEO from head-to-toe via handheld mobile and tablet devices.

Lono

Building innovative products is hard, really hard. Countless agencies have made cool logos for their "Labs" division, but few have succeeded at innovating.

The first team to go through the Rainnovation accelerator, Rain's incubator lab, launched their product last fall. Lono is an easy-to-use, Internet-enabled sprinkler controller which empowers homeowners to control their sprinkler systems with their smartphones. Think Nest for sprinklers.

Fixing a broken sprinkler head can put undue stress on our relationships – all that shouting and running back and forth from the garage. "Is it working? Which zone is on? Turn it off! Turn it off!"

With the Lono, you can turn your sprinklers on and off with your smartphone – whenever, wherever. Anywhere you have an internet connection you can control your

To date, Lono has generated $160K in pre-order sales and engaged with a number of promising investors and strategic partners.

Lono. This saves all those trips back and forth from the garage when adjusting a sprinkler head or fixing a leak. It also allows you to make adjustments even when you are out of town.

The app was designed so that you can quickly get to your zones and turn them on and off, right there on your home screen.

In just a few short months, the team at Rain created four iterations of their hardware/software prototype (each much improved from the previous), launched a successful Kickstarter campaign, connected with hundreds of paying customers and executed a successful marketing message.

Creating a Rabid Army of Local Lovers

POUND&GRAIN

CLIENT
Buy Local. Eat Natural.

MEMBER COMPANY
poundandgrain.com

VIDEO
View here

Pound & Grain was approached by the British Columbia Dairy Association and British Columbia's Agriculture Council to redesign "Buy local. Eat natural." The agency immediately saw the opportunity and capitalized on the local food movement; the potential was endless and the results impressive.

What started as a website redesign and mobile optimization project turned into creating exciting, sharable and mouthwatering content across multiple platforms. This refreshed content hub is now living a healthy, active and responsively designed life. To raise

In just 30 short days, the "We heart local awards" increased followers by 187 percent and reached over 630,000 people across BC who voted over 10,000 times. By fueling an active community on Facebook and Twitter, this is now an active hub where people share local information, post recipes and are more educated about eating local.

awareness, Pound & Grain created a series of short film documentaries online to explore what British Columbia (BC) has to offer from farm to table.

Working with social media partner The Social Agency, Pound & Grain gave this community a voice by creating the "We heart local awards." Through this online event, users could nominate and vote for their favorite local finds in 15 delicious categories, transforming the community into a local loving interactive playground. Due to the success of the "We heart local awards," #weheartlocal is now a full-time program designed to bring together farmers, restaurants, supermarkets, boutique retailers, food trucks and other venders. The program helps encourage consumers to find, sample, enjoy and celebrate local BC food and agriculture products.

To make supporting easy, the project went mobile, ensuring the best of local is always in the hands of users. The iPhone App enables users to find out what's nearby and in season, as well as mouthwatering recipes.

This new informative style put faces to names and reason to action. It has made local knowledge available and interactive, while bridging the gap between intent and accessibility. Farmers now have the support of an army of local loving ambassadors.

Start Your Someday

PHENOMBLUE®

CLIENT
Bellevue University

MEMBER COMPANY
phenomblue.com

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

Founded in 1966, Bellevue University is a private, non-profit, fully-accredited institution that serves more than 16,000 non-traditional students annually on campus and online. Phenomblue's partnership is built on a mutual belief that high-quality education, whether on campus or online, should be available, affordable and fit any lifestyle or background.

Phenomblue's campaign strategy (and the resulting work) centered squarely on why people should "Start Their Someday" at Bellevue University ... today.

Thirty-second commercials and long-form spots work to tell the stories of two characters, Janet and Scott. Crafted for TV, the commercials show the excitement and affirmation in sharing with loved ones their decision

Potential students that have visited the webpage and engaged with the long-form spots are interacting and clicking through at an exceptional rate of more than 40 percent. They are spending four times longer on the page than the run-time of the films themselves; meaning they're accessing more information and interacting with the options longer. The four videos are posted in a showcase on the [Phenomblue website.](#)

to enroll. Beyond the constraints of TV, the long-forms, posted on a Start Your Someday site, further explore their individual paths and how they came to the decision of Bellevue University.

Janet's long-form spot elaborates on how Bellevue University's flexible learning options are both affordable and convenient. With her son growing up and becoming more independent, Janet now has more time to invest in her future and return to school, where she will inspire, and be inspired by, upward-striving adults like herself. In the other spot, the viewer learns more about Scott, who by identifying what he actually wants to do, how he'll afford it, how his credits will transfer and how he'll transform his job into a career, realizes he is ready to start his path to graduation.

Should viewers recognize themselves in the stories, the videos offer interactive calls to action to further explore Bellevue University and see how to take the necessary steps toward enrolling.

From the initial branding work to digital experiences to outdoor signage, radio and print ads, Phenomblue's to Start Their Someday integrated marketing work compels students — emotionally and pragmatically — to start your someday at Bellevue University.

w3haus

"Love Consultancy"

CLIENT
Sonho de Valsa – Mondelez
International

MEMBER COMPANY
w3haus.com.br

PROJECT
View here

A live marketing campaign that helped couples express their love during Valentine's Day in Brazil.

On Valentine's Day (July 12th in Brazil), W3haus created a live marketing campaign for the chocolate brand, Sonho de Valsa, a small bonbon that has been a national icon in Brazil for decades. The "Love Consultancy" was formed from team members of W3Haus to serve as an online resource to help the brand's fans show their love on the most romantic date of the year.

On July 12th, the team monitored Sonho de Valsa fan pages, answering fans in real-time. They answered questions and provided tips on how to best celebrate the special day. Facebook, Vine, Instagram, YouTube,

In less than eight hours, the campaign generated nearly 10,000 personalized interactions and reached 2.7 million people. The campaign was also featured in all major marketing vehicles in Brazil.

Twitter, WhatsApp and Grooveshark were all used to make the campaign successful. This was also the first time WhatsApp was used as a marketing tool in Brazil.

The Sonho de Valsa "Love Consultancy" suggested individualized gifts and fun ideas to surprise loved ones, such as romantic quotes, recipes, painted graffiti art and original songs. Each interaction was focused on helping fans in a highly personalized way.

The New Walmart.ca

nurun

Consumers' decision journeys, from consideration to purchase, are increasingly non-linear and take place across multiple touch points both online and offline. In order to provide time-starved and budget-conscious Canadian families with a faster and more convenient way to browse and shop on their own terms, Walmart Canada is leading a retail transformation to bridge the gap between online, in-store and on-the-go shopping experiences.

The new Walmart.ca is the first responsively designed e-commerce website created for a large Canadian retailer, allowing for consistent and seamless experiences on all connected devices. The new site establishes a cross-channel foundation that facilitates

In an ultra-competitive retail landscape, Walmart required the ability to quickly anticipate and respond to evolving customer needs, bringing new features and technologies to market with minimal time and effort. In the first four weeks following launch, conversion rates increased by 20 percent, mobile orders increased by 98 percent and page load times decreased by 36 percent.

future site growth and increased brand visibility.

Nurun's research revealed that while today's connected shoppers use multiple channels to research products, the store is still king when it comes to closing sales. To enable cross-channel shopping on the site, integrated inventory systems allow shoppers to see which products are in stock online and at the four brick and mortar Walmart stores closest to them. Auto-localization technology helps shoppers easily find information about their local (or preferred) store, including local store hours, flyers and pricing.

A unified cart and checkout provide registered Walmart.ca shoppers with the ability to start a purchase on their desktops and later complete their transactions on mobile or tablet devices, saving time and reducing cart abandonment. A distraction-free, single-screen checkout experience was designed with touch devices in mind, incorporating enhancements such as smart address auto-complete and postal code detection to speed up the online checkout.

Nurun adopted a best-of-breed integration approach, focused on flexibility, extensibility, outstanding performance and ease of use for customers and site administrators. The composition of the technology stack was based on the foundation of Oracle Commerce, including ATG Web Commerce, Oracle Endeca with Experience Manager, Alfresco CMS and the use of a modern web platform from Typesafe, which includes the Play Framework, Akka, and Scala.

MYJIVE

CHOOSE TO EVOLVE

Regal Boats Website

CLIENT
Regal Boats

MEMBER COMPANY
myjive.com

PROJECT
View here

LIVE BY YOUR OWN COMPASS

REGAL

The Journey Starts Here. Regal Boats wanted a new website that would build an inspiring, life-long relationship between its boats and buyers. Myjive couldn't resist collaborating with a brand that shares their core values of forward thinking, innovation, high standards and a bold taste for adventure.

Regal Marine Industries has set world-class standards in the boat making industry for four decades. Myjive's challenge was getting into the minds of both avid and aspiring boaters. Regal Boats needed to reach both loyal customers and prospective ones, so they focused on a near universal motivation in the consumer decision journey in this category: People ultimately buy sport boats and cruisers because they are seeking a unique and exciting leisure/luxury experience.

The brand's core values of quality and innovation are captured in a new website conveying the visceral feeling of being on the water. The audience responded, with visits up 42 percent in 2013, pages views up 78 percent and time spent up nearly 10 percent.

The strategy focused on empowering anyone interested in boating to experience the lifestyle and the product for themselves. With Regal Boats, Myjive sought to immerse audiences in the brand in order to inspire them to live by their own compass.

The website pulls you in with the first image you see. Full-screen photos of boats in motion capture the essence of boating and the thrill of it. A new look for Regal Boats' brand emerged through a digital style guide of new typeface selections and copy, as well as primary and secondary brand colors.

Choosing your boat takes you to individual models on the site, where you can see and fully customize your selection with a myriad of options. Swapping between colors, features and innovations takes seconds.

The design and technology of the website was also transformed. A responsive site lets viewers experience a different feel on desktops and mobile phones. A dynamic CMS also gave Regal an easily manageable system to update almost every component of the website including events and promotions. In addition to the consumer-facing web presence, Myjive created a dealer iPad app to help unify the entire sales experience.

Regal Boats' core values of quality and innovation are captured in a new website conveying the visceral feeling of being on the water. Through meaningful stories and relevant content, audiences are immersed in the experience of owning a beautiful piece of the luxury lifestyle.

MEDIA MONKS

7 Days of Rain

CLIENT
Geox

MEMBER COMPANY
mediamonks.com

VIDEO
View here
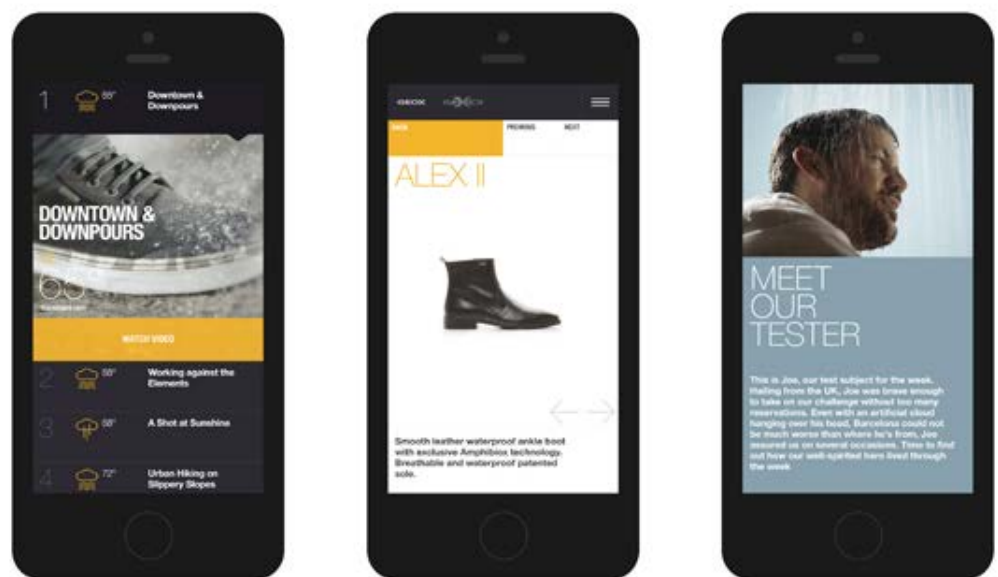
To promote the Geox 2013 Amphibiox urban waterproof shoes collection, MediaMonks made one man live through seven days of non-stop rain in sunny Barcelona.

For the campaign, specially built clouds were developed to keep the test subject, a real person, under constant precipitation, while each day was laid out to replicate real-life events. For example, the test subject acted like a tourist, worked a day job and went out on a date - all in the rain. The experiment was filmed and turned into an interactive 7-episode documentary where the viewer can experience his struggle and see how the shoes held up.

All of MediaMonks' efforts were on behalf of the interactive documentary, which was crafted to allow users to freely navigate through the seven days,

The website had some amazing early results, with over 1 million unique visitors and a 200 percent increase in visits during the initial weeks compared to last year's year's campaign which was also highly successful. Geox Facebook followers also increased by 150,000 in the initial two weeks of the campaign (from 450,000 to 600,000).

experiencing his struggle on their terms. The interactive layer also allows the user to explore how the experiment was made. You can also see 1000fps slow-motion shots of the shoes as well as more detailed information about the Amphibiox technology.

"Enjoy Your Privacy"

CLIENT
Norton Mobile

MEMBER COMPANY
jam3.com

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

In collaboration with Leo Burnett Chicago for their client Norton Mobile, the "Enjoy Your Privacy" campaign was created as a reminder to consumers that no device is safe from digital dangers without the right protection.

Jam3 designed and developed a highly interactive narrative at EnjoyYourPrivacy.com that was created entirely in HTML5. Through Websockets technology, users can sync their mobile devices to the desktop experience and interact with seven fictitious characters, which all have secrets to be discovered. Once users pair their mobile device with the desktop experience, they have the ability to access seven characters' devices as if they were their own, scrolling through photos, text messages, personal emails, bank statements and much more with the objective of learning about the characters'

lives and their hidden secrets.

Through the experience, visitors also learn what can come of lost, stolen or hacked devices and how Norton by Symantec can help prevent people from falling victim to such security breaches. By interacting with the experience, users are actually put into the shoes of a would-be hacker or someone who finds a device without protection.

Norton believes that there still is a place for privacy in this world, and that our privacy is worth protecting.

RoundTrip App

PROJECT
View here

Intuitive Company responds to "how design could make traveling less awful" through the Terminal Velocity series, as part of Fast Company's design blog.

The team at Intuitive Company (IC) focused their brainstorming on information design for this challenge to demonstrate "how design can make traveling less awful." Information design is at the core of what's done at IC, and represented the perfect place to start to envision what an ideal travel app should be.

While the agency's typical design projects are quick, they still last for several weeks, if not months, and undergo multiple iterations. But sometimes solutions are needed even faster. Intuitive Company targeted a two-week timeline to go from nothing to a design concept – basically going 600 mph.

Within hours of the original article going live, Intuitive Company received kudos, interesting leads and company inquiries. Ultimately, a good idea is a good idea.

While many people have used various tools for travel information, apps treat travel as a series of unrelated events (e.g. flight, hotel, weather, etc.). A few apps consolidate this information, but rely on a laundry list of notifications. Nothing in the marketplace really gives the complete picture.

The team desired a single product that could handle just about anything involving a travel itinerary, from packing and checking into flights to returning back home and remembering where the car is parked at the airport. During this process, Rob Tannen drew a simple circle on a whiteboard, and labeled it End-to-End. That sparked the idea of a circular user interface. Even though this is a concept that was born in a period of two weeks, it's the potential of it that's exciting to the team.

Team Members: Rob Tannen, PhD (Director, Design Research & Strategy), Kyle Cook (Interaction Designer), Evan Wendel (User Experience Designer) and Andrew Harvard (User Experience Designer)

New Dimensions for Digital Healthcare

И — *indg.com*

CLIENT
Philips Healthcare

MEMBER COMPANY
indg.com

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

Showcasing radiology equipment weighing over 20 tons at the RSNA event in Chicago is a tough challenge. Philips Healthcare and INDG partnered to crack this nut using digital experiences that let specialists examine the equipment in a different way.

"Transforming care, together" is a key strategic objective for Philips Healthcare, as explained by CEO Deborah DiSanzo at several recent public events. Combining this key objective with innovative 3-D technology, INDG was tasked to create a radically new way to provide in-depth product exploration, enabling digital healthcare experiences.

The RSNA 2013 event in Chicago was the launch pad for this innovation and used to transform the way Philips Healthcare products are showcased. INDG created digital experiences for a selected range of radiology products. Using INDG's 3D master asset approach (more here) enables convincing and highly interactive product experiences across all touch points: at the RSNA event as well as online.

This prevented Philips from having to ship over 100 tons of equipment to its RSNA booth. Meanwhile, clients received even better insights into RSNA products. Through interactive applications and videos, prospects viewed products from all angles, highlighted USPs and learned in more detail how Philips is transforming healthcare.

Philips Healthcare uniquely provided an all-encompassing digital experience, turning it into a clear differentiator on the RSNA show floor. Philips has seen a tremendous increase in booth traffic, resulting in more leads than in previous years.
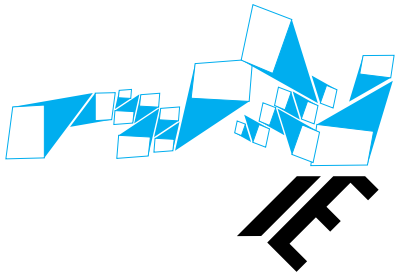
She Runs

CLIENT
Nike

MEMBER COMPANY
ie.com.au

VIDEO
View here
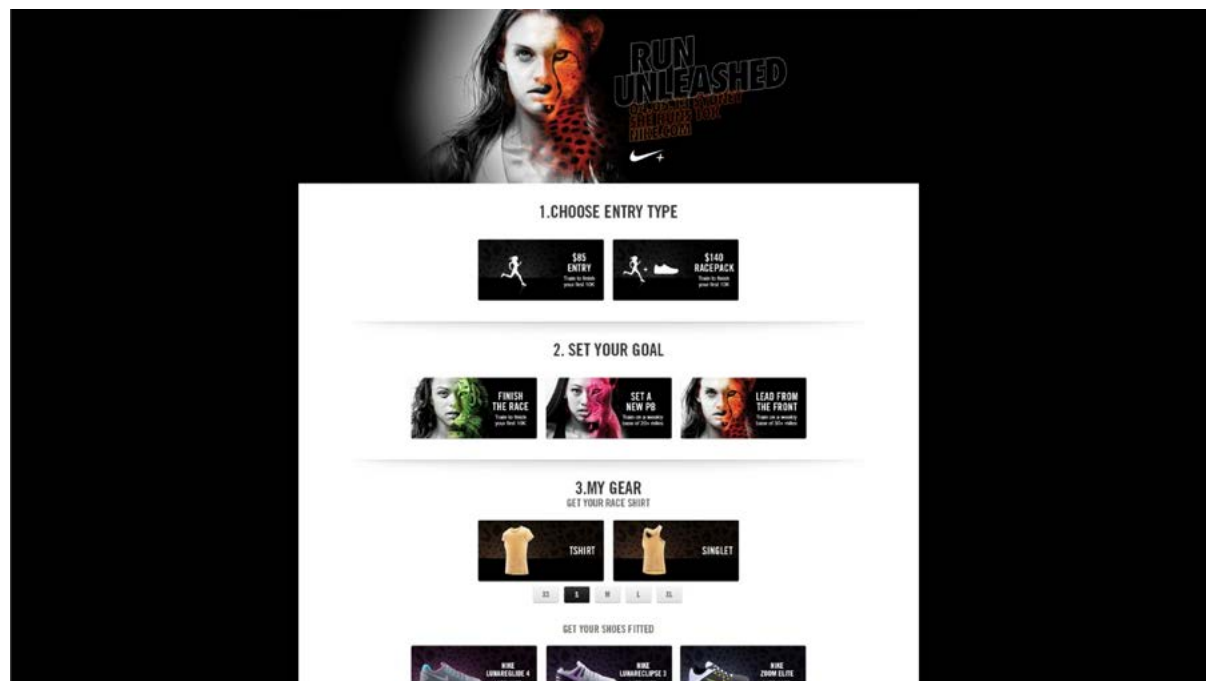
On a Saturday night this past Spring, more than 6,000 women gathered in Australia's most unique and interactive running event, Nike She Runs Sydney 10k. Now in its second year, the race forms part of the global She Runs running series, connecting almost 85,000 women around the world.

IE worked in tandem with Nike and Facebook to create a fully integrated She Runs Nike+ app. The Project "Shipyard" run at Facebook HQ in San Francisco saw IE developers work side-by-side with the Facebook team to create the bespoke app. The solution allowed users to register for the Sydney event and track their subsequent performance with Nike+. The app leverages Magento store functionality and services the She Runs Facebook community with over 85,000 members.

The interactive race day on course technology delivered

the most socially enabled race in Australia. At each race and at certain time markers, individual messages were posted for runners so that their Facebook friends could keep up-to-date on their progress. By linking the race time-keeping system to each runner's Facebook profile, IE was able to bring social engagement, to life around the course.

As each athlete crossed the 1 1/2 mile mark, her Facebook profile picture appeared on an 8-meter screen. At the 5 km mark, athletes had the option of running through "feeling good" or "need support" gates to let their Facebook friends know how they were progressing. At the 4.6 mile mark, the athlete was shown messages of support from friends that had posted in response.

The integration into the race time-keeping system allowed results to be posted on the mobile app instantly. This provided the runner with a sharable moment that they could personalize with a photo taken from their phone and the ability to share it instantly.

Racer Installation

CLIENT
Google

MEMBER COMPANY
heyhush.com

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

At Google I/O, one of the most important developer conferences in the world, Google unveiled a Chrome experiment called Racer. Specifically for the I/O Conference, HUSH designed an expanded Racer experience.

Google Racer is a multi-player, multi-device game that can be played on any series of devices running in the Chrome browser. It's an amazing display of game-changing browser technology. The Google I/O Racer Installation was essentially the game "on steroids" in that it extends the game past the surface of mobile devices and onto a huge, multi-player digital canvas.

Working intimately with Google's Creative Lab, HUSH led the design of the form factor for the game installation and technology systems, developed

Racer was one of the most attended installations at the Google I/O conference. In addition, it has won and been shortlisted for several awards thus far, including Communication Arts Interactive Annual, FWA Site of the Day, Tomorrow Awards and W3 Silver Award.

enhanced visual and motion content, adapted the gameplay for use in this new medium and managed an epic team of developers, technology specialists and fabricators in an incredibly short timeline. Additionally, Google had the famed music composer Giorgio Morodor (of recent Daft Punk album fame) create a custom music track for the game experience (the track is featured in the case study video).

Pioneering Expert Personal Shopping
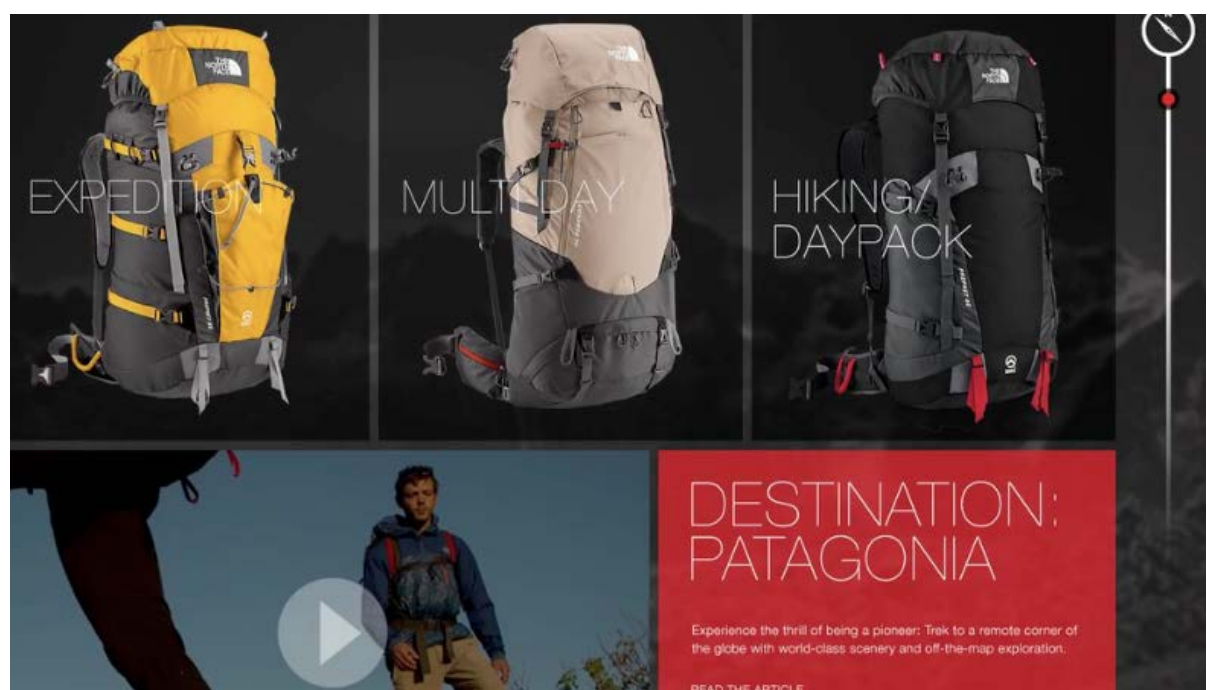
FLUID

With Fluid XPS, Fluid will transform the way people shop online by empowering consumers to direct the conversation with brands through natural language.

A generation since its inception, online retail continues to transform how we shop. Despite industry efforts and advancements in personalized shopping online, eCommerce still lacks the soul of that quintessential in-store experience. With a few questions, knowledgeable store associates build rapport, navigate the conversation and draw insights. Ultimately consumers get what they want, even when they didn't know what questions to ask. By contrast, the current state of online shopping

By empowering consumers to shop as they choose, Fluid XPS$_{SM}$ aims to help retailers foster a consumer-led, non-linear, ubiquitous shopping experience that turns shoppers into buyers.

relies on searches bound by retailer-optimized keywords and limited filtering to fulfill the consumer's request. A good balance of the interplay between customer empowerment and retailer control has been elusive, until now.

Fluid is developing an expert personal shopping app, Fluid XPS$_{SM}$, powered by IBM Watson, to offer consumers natural dialogue-driven assistance to help make smart, satisfying purchases. The app expects to draw information from sources like product catalogs, customer loyalty, sales histories, user reviews, blogs, relevant publications and travel documents in order to give users a highly-unified, enriched and personal shopping experience.

Imagine buying technical gear, like a tent, online today. One would visit a retailer or marketplace website and search for tents by narrowing down factors like size, style and a pre-determined list of features. Compare that to the in-store experience of explaining, "I am taking my family camping in upstate NY in October and I need a tent. What should I consider?" Fluid's app aims to help consumers make this same query online in plain English to identify the perfect tent, as well as unexpected items to complete the experience.

The Digital Hotel Experience Reimagined
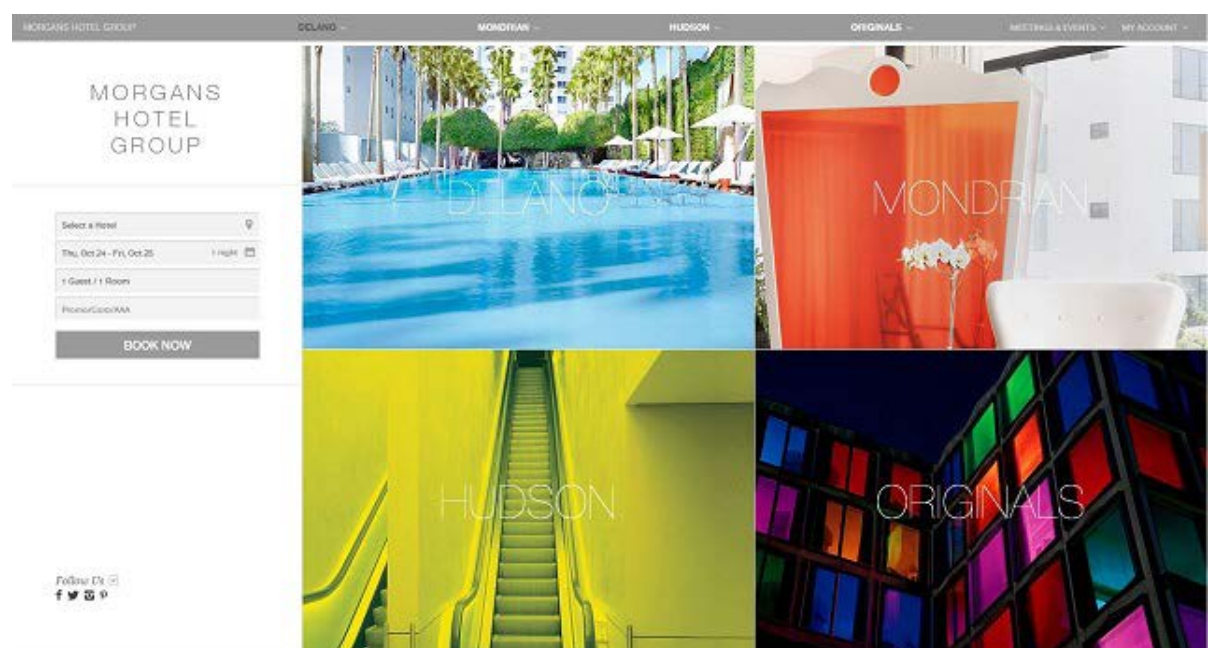
firstborn®

CLIENT
Morgans Hotel Group

MEMBER COMPANY
firstborn.com

PROJECT
View here

The former online presence for Morgans Hotel Group only slightly captured their bold and stylish aesthetic, but harkened back to an earlier time. In need of both a visual and functional makeover, the high-end hotel chain now boasts the crème de la crème of websites, working flawlessly and looking incredible.

When Ian Schrager opened his first hotel in New York City in 1984, the "boutique hotel" was born. Since then, Morgans Hotel Group has grown to 12 properties around the world, each more extraordinary than the last. To accurately build a parallel experience online, Firstborn had to work with over twenty vendors and

As Morgans Hotel Group continues its global expansion, the hub created by Firstborn and the group's overall digital presence will continue to grow, reaching boutique hotel aficionados from around the world.

integrate tens of thousands of pieces of data. The timeline was tight (less than six months), but their team was excited to take on the challenge.

The new Morgans Hotel Group website is now a living hub that showcases its various properties, allows people to book their perfect trip and gives access to the hottest happenings in each city.

Firstborn created everything from the wireframes to the design to the front and back-end development, working closely with partners to develop a seamless booking system and reservation management system. They also created a custom content management tool so the Morgans team could easily update content.

Like Companions

ENERGIZE
AMSTERDAM ✚ SHANGHAI

CLIENT
Samsung GALAXY S4

MEMBER COMPANY
energize.nl

PROJECT
View here

The Samsung GALAXY S4 "Like Companion" allows people to wirelessly connect their screens and speakers to enjoy their favorite content together. A great feature for people who like the same things.

The Samsung GALAXY S4 becomes even more interesting when people around you also have one. Especially if they share your taste in life. So with whom could you best enjoy the Samsung GALAXY S4?

The project was somewhat of an experiment, as the Energize team wondered if "Like Companions" could also become "Life Companions." Or in other words, could Big Data build new friendships? The team was tasked with building awareness for the Samsung GALAXY S4 as a "Life Companion" through a Facebook

18 percent of all visitors were interested in connecting with new people who share their interests. As a result of the campaign, Samsung Mobile's Dutch fan base increased by nearly 50,000 likes, surpassing expectations by more than 30 percent. Samsung Mobile's Netherlands' fan base also increased by 47,000 likes, surpassing expectations.

campaign in order to increase the Dutch fan base.

In order to find out, Energize allowed users to compare their Facebook likes to everyone else's on LikeCompanions.com. There, data and destiny collided as people's social galaxies were visualized and connections were made to friends and strangers alike that share surprisingly similar lives.

By using this site, users were encouraged to discover who shares their life interests and to hopefully make some new friends along the way. Because there's nothing like shared interests to spark new friendships.

DOMANI

Where is Danny Torrance?

CLIENT
Scribner Books

MEMBER COMPANY
domanistudios.com

VIDEO
View here

Anticipating a huge response to *Doctor Sleep*, Stephen King's long-awaited sequel to *The Shining*, Scribner, King's publisher, wanted to ensure that the book got the reception it deserved with King's most devoted fans. Having worked together previously, Scribner enlisted DOMANI to build a digital experience for *Doctor Sleep* that would generate buzz leading up to its release and drive pre-orders of the book.

In framing up the *Doctor Sleep* digital experience, DOMANI looked to help answer the question that any Shining fan has, "Whatever happened to young Danny Torrance?" DOMANI also wanted it done in such a way that brought Danny to life through technology in a fresh new way – one that positioned the desktop browser and

mobile as part of the story.

It was vital that the core of the experience revolve around establishing a personal connection with Danny. With that in mind, DOMANI designed a feature pairing a mobile device with the desktop browser, allowing users to tap "shine" with Danny, influencing the story as it unfolds.

The site also accomplished some things with dual screens that DOMANI had never done before. Drawing a picture on a phone and having it instantly show up on a PC, for example, or bringing code to the surface as a design element and manipulating it along with the natural browser elements like drop-downs and popup windows.

DOMANI worked hard to make sure that the campaign captured the spirit of the novel, while remaining focused on all the mystery and intrigue that await the reader. The DOMANI team clearly had a blast with this one.

digitaria

The Pet POV

CLIENT
Nature's Recipe

MEMBER COMPANY
digitaria.com

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

In an industry saturated by pet food brands, Nature's Recipe sought to bring a fresh perspective to the category. This is life from your pets' perspective.

To celebrate the bond shared between pet and owner, Digitaria created a digitally-driven campaign for natural pet food brand Nature's Recipe, capturing the world as seen through the eyes of a pet.

With the modification of cloud-based camera technology, Nature's Recipe for Moments was created. Using an innovative lightweight collar camera, pet parents are able to capture memorable photos from their pet's point of view and create and edit digital scrapbooks on NaturesRecipeForMoments.com, which can be shared on social media channels using the hashtag #RecipeForMoments. Nature's Recipe for Moments offers pet parents the unique opportunity

Just days into the launch, the site exploded with visitors and received national attention, including coverage in Digiday, Adweek, psfk.com and The New York Times.

to capture life's little moments through their pets' perspectives, one picture at a time.

LAX Digital Installations

CLIENT
Los Angeles Bradley West
International Terminal

MEMBER COMPANY
thisisdk.com

VIDEO
View here

For the epic digital landscape in LAX's new Bradley International Terminal, Digital Kitchen created engaging content at the intersection of sculpture, story and brand.

As the largest public works project in the history of Los Angeles, the Bradley International Terminal now stands as the latest and largest branding opportunity for the city. Digital Kitchen began the project by creating a brand story for the City of LA. The agency expressed LA's heart - not in its landmarks, film business, shopping, beaches or weather - but in its "place of mind."

A fresh perspective toward content was implemented in the public space, building on DK's 15-year legacy of consumer engagement through innovative and emotionally meaningful content. DK took a sculptural

approach to the entire project to create a new narrative with passengers, fitting into the emotional dream-state of world travel.

DK's live action work follows what they term "Ambient Narrative." Using observational, documentary techniques, the work is non-linear, non-jarring, experiential, ambient and sparingly edited. Their CG work acts as calming digital abstract kinetic sculpture, honoring flight and freedom from gravity.

DK concluded that today's travelers are not seeking screened entertainment or spectacle from their facilities while on their journey. Yet, travelers are very open to surprise and delight from new visual languages and experiences.

DEEP FOCUS

75 & Sunny

CLIENT
Lay's

MEMBER COMPANY
deepfocus.net

VIDEO
View here

For the last 75 years, Lay's has been an integral part of summer moments and memories. Lay's wanted to celebrate its 75th birthday in a big way by tapping into the collective nostalgia for summertime. The challenge for Deep Focus was to deliver a socially-focused strategy to bring the brand's summer packaging program, 75 & Sunny, to life while inspiring the audience to converse, co-create and share the brand story.

Deep Focus realized that bags of Lay's aren't simply a part of summertime fun – they're iconic and recognizable brand imagery. They imagined an entire summer's worth of experiences, and handcrafted 75 summer moments out of Lay's packaging. They posted once a day for 75 days to celebrate all the rituals that make summer, summer.

Lay's fans submitted over 3,000 of their own moments with Lay's at the center, earning more than 191 million impressions. The video generated over 1 million YouTube views and the content helped launch Lay's presence on Instagram and Pinterest.

Using their creative newsroom, the Moment Studio, Lay's bags were shaped into a variety of quintessential summer monuments and posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. A conversation was started that inspired fans to post their own summer moments with Lay's at the core.

Then, to celebrate the bittersweet end of the season (and the campaign), Deep Focus compiled their creations into a video to tell the story of a perfect, endless summer day and the lifetime of memories Lay's 75 & Sunny created.

A responsive media strategy utilized page-post amplification within Facebook and promoted posts within Twitter to boost the most beloved posts and increase reach and impact amongst the millennial audience.
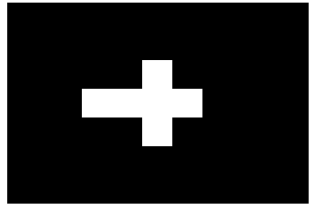
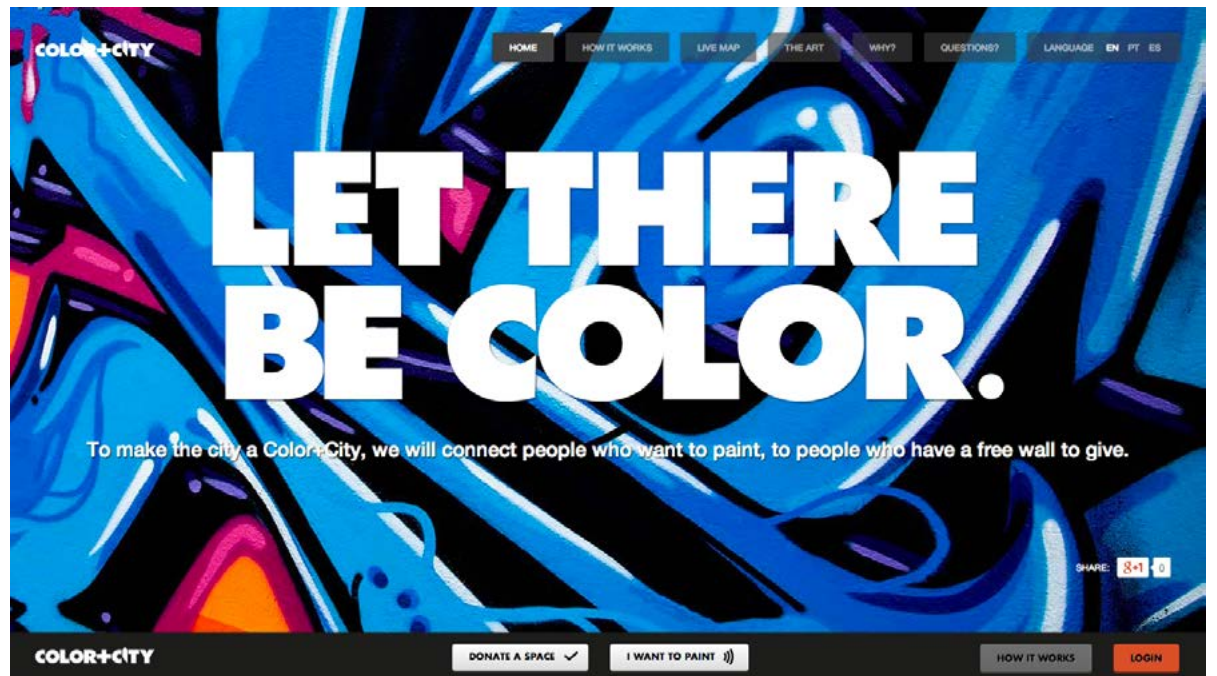# Painting São Paulo

フラグ

cubocc

The Monster Whatever Hotshop

CLIENT
COLOR+CITY

MEMBER COMPANY
cubo.cc

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

Recognized as one of the biggest and greyest cities in the world, São Paulo seemed to be a perfect fit for COLOR+CITY. Brimming with potential "canvases" and artists eager to color the city's walls, the only challenge organizers faced was how to gather artists and identify who had the real estate to spare.

COLOR+CITY is a platform designed to connect those who want to color the city and those who have the resources and space to make it happen. Volunteers donate their walls and other parts of their properties to street artists, designers, kids and anyone else willing to bring color to the urban space.

The idea for COLOR+CITY came from two street art enthusiasts, Gabriel Pinheiro and Victor Garcia. FLAG, a network of disruptive companies, and CUBOCC

In the first month, more than 1,200 walls were donated and more than 300 walls were painted. This initiative also created the biggest public relations boost for Google since it arrived in Brazil with three months of coverage on major television channels, newspapers and radio stations.

embraced the project and presented it to potential partners, including Google Brasil who partnered and enabled the platform via GMaps.

The platform then started to naturally spread and a network of supporters came together through several other agents of the creative economy (companies and people). The network mixes knowledge curators, NGOs, advertising agencies, design studios, art publications, cultural guides, galleries and street artists. Interestingly, however, it is essentially a project that has no owner - arising from the city and ending with the city.

Artists can book space online to turn their artistic vision into a reality while also bringing culture and color to a city in need of vibrancy. Specifically, the volunteer uses COLOR+CITY to donate a wall. The details are confirmed and it is then authorized legally. The wall is then made available to any artist who wants to book and paint it. Once the artist chooses the space, the system puts him or her into contact with the owner of that space to discuss the art project.

São Paulo is just the starting point for this platform. COLOR+CITY was created to be used globally, in any urban center around the world and many countries are already engaging.

CloudRaker

Nina Roy

CLIENT
Natrel

MEMBER COMPANY
cloudraker.com

PROJECT
View here

In spite of being a bit of a Grinch, Nina Roy, a fictional anti-Christmas character, was willing to let milk company Natrel's Facebook fan base convert her into an eggnog lover. Nina took over Natrel's page for a month while fans got creative trying to convince her of the wonderful ways of the 'nog. While it didn't really work out for our Nina (…she still hates the stuff), it sure did for Natrel.

Despite its limited exposure during the year, eggnog represents an incredible opportunity to engage consumers because people who love it, love it a lot, and those who don't… really, really don't.

Nina Roy hates Christmas, but she hates eggnog even more. CloudRaker suspected that Natrel fans would either sympathize with her or try to change her mind so they decided to hand over Natrel's Facebook page to

Reaching more than nine million people, the humorous campaign was deemed a major success and the association between eggnog and Natrel firmly established. The initiative helped increase Natrel's Facebook following by 39 percent and contributed to a 20 percent bump in the number of comments across all social platforms, thereby boosting overall brand health.

Nina for the entire month of December – all with the goal of giving Natrel ownership of the very important seasonal conversation surrounding eggnog.

In order to spark a debate, CloudRaker wanted to attract the attention of diehard eggnog fans and critics alike. To do so, they targeted very active eggnog communities and enlisted them to change Nina's mind with a recipe, tip or general enthusiasm about the seasonal drink.

CloudRaker never expected the level of creativity they witnessed from fans. Their hope was that people would simply share and express their love for eggnog. They knew that diehard fans would be highly engaged and proud to share their stories, but they also assumed some eggnog haters would come to Nina's defense. They were genuinely surprised by the number of poems and heartfelt notes they received for Nina. They even had a guy share his story about a wonderful eggnog facial he received.
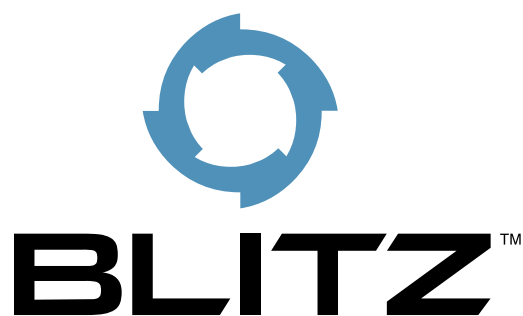
The First Vine Video Baseball Card

MLB The Show is a PlayStation-only title, and the most popular baseball video game. Every year, there's a huge amount of excitement leading up to the game's annual release driving significant sales, but there's a huge amount of excitement leading up to the game's release driving significant sales, but then conversation and subsequent purchases taper off. The charter in 2013 was to keep the momentum going, looking for ways to reinvigorate interest in the title throughout the year. BLITZ was asked to make headway beyond the core gaming audience and ultimately make *MLB The Show* more synonymous with the game of baseball.

Conversations related to MLB The Show accounted for 3.4 percent of all Twitter mentions around baseball's Opening Day, successfully aligning the game with America's favorite pastime. It drove 19.7 million social impressions and increased social engagement from 5,500 interactions in 2012 to 61,000 in 2013.

MLB's opening day is a huge moment for baseball every year. PlayStation came to BLITZ to make their latest installment of *MLB The Show* a key discussion point during that time. With a coinciding game launch, it was an opportunity to use opening day excitement to bring in the broader baseball audience, and to get baseball fans across the Internet excited about a game that is "So Real, It's Unreal."

One of the marquee features of the game - Road To The Show - allows gamers to play out the entire career of a custom-created player. BLITZ identified a list of social influencers in the sports and gaming communities and showed them what it would really be like to be "in the game." Using the game's advanced player personalization functionality, they created mirror images of each influencer, placing them on the field as a star player on their favorite team. With *MLB The Show*'s video capture feature, they produced six-second highlight reels depicting their heroics in an alternate baseball universe.

The videos were then released on Vine, at the time newly released, as recognizably nostalgic baseball cards and delivered to each influencer as an Opening Day surprise.

In the days following, BLITZ connected with writers from digital outlets to promote *The Show*'s innovative launch approach. Focusing on the Vine Baseball Card initiative, they used editorial outreach to reinforce the overarching strategy – bringing the game's unmatched realism to life and putting baseball's biggest fans in the game using up-to-the-minute technology.
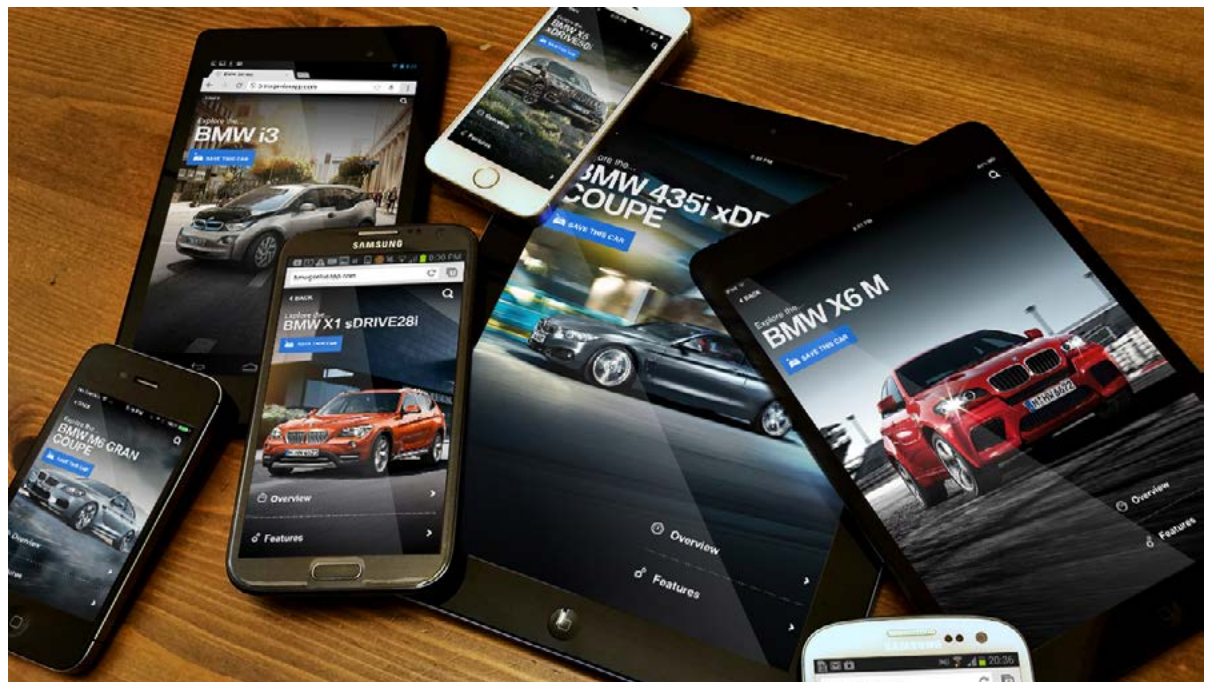
BMW
Genius App

BIG SPACESHIP™

CLIENT
BMW

MEMBER COMPANY
bigspaceship.com

PROJECT
View here

A BMW expert in your pocket. BMW Genius is a mobile web application providing users with an in-depth, personalized demonstration of the technology and features of BMW vehicles.

In a single app, the Big Spaceship team sought to add clarity to both the BMW shopping and ownership experience. Prospective buyers can save cars they are interested in and compare features, while owners can discover additional benefits they may not have known about.

Much more than a digital manual, BMW Genius provides high-resolution images and how-to videos with real people. As a web app, it works seamlessly across iOS and Android operating systems and is easily updatable in real-time without requiring user approval.

The app is transforming the BMW shopping and ownership experience.

The app will also be used as part of a new BMW retail initiative inspired by the Apple Store's Genius Bar. Armed with the app, BMW will staff its dealerships with their own "Geniuses," non-commissioned professionals trained to build excitement about vehicles without the hard sell.
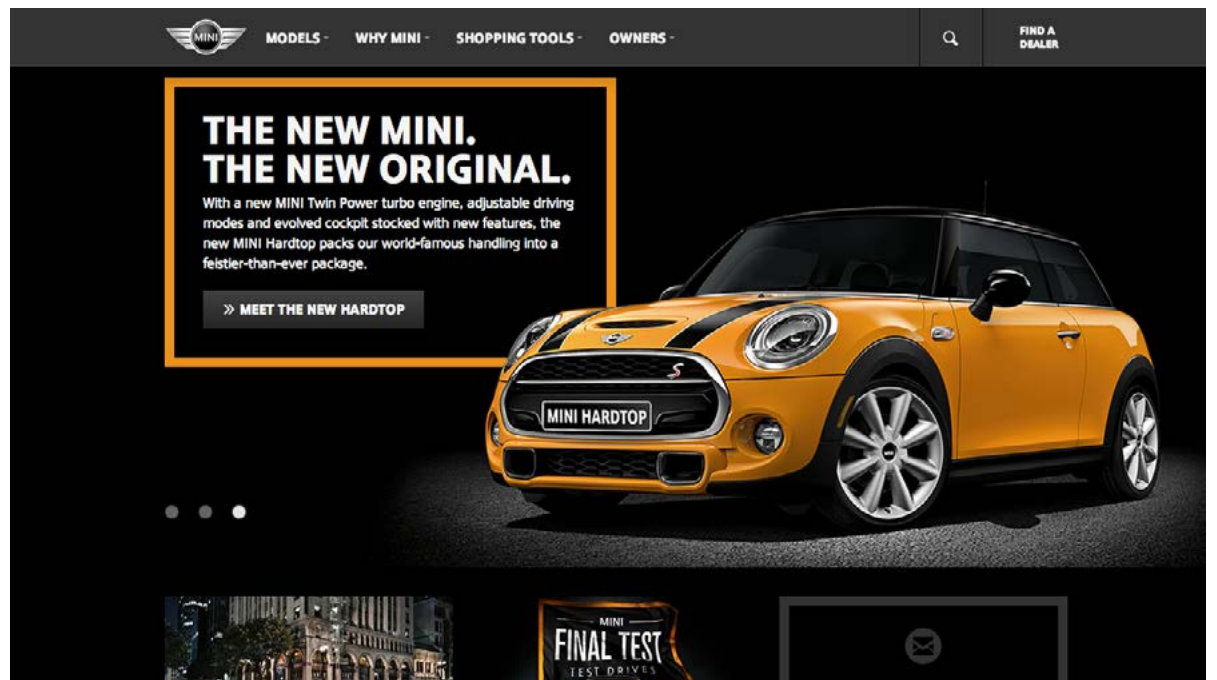
MINIUSA.com

beam

CLIENT
MINI

MEMBER COMPANY
beamland.com

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

MINIUSA's website gets a full responsive, flash-free overhaul.

MINIUSA's previous site was six-years-old and built in Flash, which was not ideal for the realities of modern web users and the vast array of devices and screen sizes now in frequent use. With the goal of creating a simpler, more user-centric experience that also took into account the expanding growth of MINI's product line and the effort required to maintain that information, the site needed a complete overhaul.

From a development standpoint, this meant BEAM needed to employ a robust CMS-like AdobeCQ serving a fully responsive, HTML-based site. From a design perspective, it meant a flatter, more accessible construct with fewer clicks, and more room for robust stories showing how MINIs stack up to the competition and fit into the lives of their passionate owners.

Feedback from MINI fans and general users has surpassed expectations to date, with site visits now lasting 41 percent longer as a result of deeper content engagement.

BEAM looked to find a way to bring MINI's amazingly passionate owners more to the forefront. The new site features a greater mix between official brand photography and authentic owner photography. Armed with this new platform, the brand is poised to better engage diverse audiences and sell MINIs in even smarter and delightfully surprising ways.

@Cafe Social Media Headquarters

World Champion San Francisco Giants deliver a social hit.

The San Francisco Giants wanted to create a social destination for fans. Placed inside its renowned AT&T Park, this physical space, appropriately named @Cafe, had to incite social interaction, participation and conversation amongst local, national and global fans of the franchise. It had to be innately captivating and useful to active social users while intriguing to those unfamiliar with social platforms. While positioning the Giants' organization and ballpark as innovative, it also had to be indicative of a World Champion.

The organization looked to Array Interactive to conceive what they believed would be the destination's anchor,

digital signage and dynamic digital media dedicated to the presentation of cross-platform, social media conversations from the team, fans, players and baseball insiders. This also included a behind-the-scenes look at how the team initiates conversation across social media channels, manages content through social listening and analytics platforms and distributes select posts for display.

A 12'x4' video wall and a number of individual displays were designed by Array Interactive to present real-time social conversations, trending topics and more through four custom social visualizations. Each incorporates thematic Giants imagery and brand elements. A custom moderation engine empowers Giants' staff to review social posts prior to their distribution in the cafe including content from Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and MLBAM player stats.

Make the Web Sweeter

CLIENT
The Food Network

ORGANIZATION SPONSOR
adobe.com

VIDEO
View here

There are two things that almost everyone loves: cupcakes and mobile applications. Food Network combined the two into a beautiful tablet application called Cupcakes! and then challenged Adobe to bring the same rich experience to the web.

There's no question that the internet represents one of the greatest communication revolutions in history. Even at dial-up speeds, being able to exchange information almost instantaneously had an immediate and profound effect on business, culture, and education. But now that multiple tiers of broadband have been burned through – and even ubiquitous high-speed wireless connectivity – more is expected from the web than just communication and access to information. In addition to content, users want powerful functionality; and instead of just

interactions, they want fun and memorable experiences.

The Cupcakes! project Adobe did with Food Network focuses on both. Using some of the latest web design standards like CSS Shapes, CSS Regions, and both Blend Modes and Compositing, the experience is much closer to what you'd expect from a live, interactive cookbook than just a static website. And although the emphasis of the prototype is on high-quality content (recipes and instructions for incredible homemade cupcakes and frosting), the Cupcakes! site is actually an application in disguise.

Each recipe contains a built-in baking timer automatically set for the recipe you're viewing, speech and gesture navigation so you can easily get around the application without touching your laptop with messy hands, and perhaps everyone's favorite feature: a slider for changing the yield of a recipe which automatically updates the quantities of all the ingredients for you.

2Nova Interactive

Interactive LED T-shirt

CLIENT
Intel

MEMBER COMPANY
2nova.ru

PROJECT
View here

VIDEO
View here

This technology-based piece of fashion aims to promote the idea that modern technology is a component of both creative process and its unique result.

This project is a part of the global Intel Ultrabook Brand Ambassadors campaign. The Ambassadors program selects creatively-driven people who are at the forefront of fashion, music or sports. Ambassadors are chosen not only for their creative ability, but because they have a very well connected social footprint. They are given a 30-day challenge to come up with an idea that involves the Ultrabook, helping them create something amazing and unique using their network to drive interest and support. Ideas, thoughts and aspirations get bounced around the network and a central idea is formed.

The campaign received 100,000 actions (likes, comments and YouTube views) and more than 40 million total impressions.

Katya Dobryakova, a young Russian fashion designer, was carefully selected as an Intel Brand Ambassador. Katya designed a t-shirt with an interactive LED board inside. The t-shirt reacted to the Foursquare check-ins of its owner, showing a relevant message depending on each specific location.

2Nova designed a very thin and lightweight LED board with 2000 manually attached LED lights, Bluetooth-module, microcontroller and power supply. The board weighed less than 7 ounces and was unnoticeable inside fabrics. The agency also developed a mobile app that controlled the board and produced a series of short videos about Katya, the inspiration process within Intel lab and the making of this interactive piece of fashion.

The project was successfully executed with the help of Eclipse and Fistashki.

SoDA serves as a network and voice for entrepreneurs and innovators around the globe who are creating the future of marketing and digital experiences.

A Society is Founded

Miami, March 2007: 13 leading digital agency CEOs decided to meet up and have a talk about where our industry was headed. New friends were made, business problems and solutions were shared, and a society was formed. We were on a mission to advance this industry we all felt so passionate about. We made it official at SXSW in March 2008 and welcomed our founding partner, Adobe.

What SoDA is

SoDA is an international association of respected digital marketing leaders and entrepreneurs with a history and a vision for the future of marketing. SoDA remains an extremely selective association of the world's most preeminent companies with digital DNA. Membership includes 80 leading digital agencies and elite production companies with offices in 26 countries on six continents.

SoDA provides leadership, platforms, infrastructure, processes, and products to enable collaboration between members around education, best practices and advocacy. SoDA's Peer Collaboration Group Program, launched in 2011, now includes over 700 thought leaders from member companies sharing knowledge and best practices across 15 different disciplines. Click here to see the SoDA reel.

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