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Hello, how can I help you?

Erm, since when did chatbots become brand gatekeepers?!

And what the hell is an 'AI influencer'?

Oh, and how did Alastair Campbell survive at the top?

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President

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Chief executive

Alastair McCapra

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by Think, Capital House,
25 Chapel Street,
London NW1 5DH
Tel: +44 (0)20 3771 7200
Email: influence@
thinkpublishing.co.uk

THINK EDITORIAL TEAM**Content director**

Matthew Rock

Editor

Gabrielle Lane (gaby.lane@
thinkpublishing.co.uk)

Senior designer

Sophia Haines

Chief sub-editor

Charles Kloet

Deputy managing director

Jackie Scully

Publishing director

Ian McAuliffe

**ADVERTISING
AND PARTNERSHIPS****Mel Michael**

+44 (0)20 3771 7204

mel.michael@

thinkpublishing.co.uk

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Think

WELCOME

The authenticity conundrum



Two of the
standout
stories of
the summer
haven't
concerned
government departments or
big brands, nor even anything
that could be deemed a
comms strategy. Yet both have
had a profound effect on the
reputations of those involved.

In June, the world was
gripped by the story of 12 boys
and their football coach who
were trapped in a flooded cave
in Thailand. The rescue effort
was global news and involved
an international team – one of
whom tragically lost his life.

This should be a feel-good
story: the world's experts coming together to
save the lives of 13 people. Yet, when one of the
divers made some unkind comments about the
experimental submarine that Elon Musk had sent
to Thailand, the Tesla and SpaceX founder quickly
took to Twitter to insult the expert in question.

Weeks of uplifting coverage were destroyed in a
moment. Musk should frame the expression 'Tweet
in haste, repent at leisure' and keep it on his desk.

Many people have called for Musk to have
media-response training. But that's beside the
point. Anyone who follows his tweets knows this
is not unusual behaviour. It is his authentic voice.

Musk's behaviour couldn't be in greater contrast
to Gareth Southgate's. The England manager led his



“

Elon Musk should
frame the words
'Tweet in haste,
repent at leisure'

team to the semi-finals in
pursuit of the glorious failure
England fans crave. In doing
so he was always respectful
to the opposition, the officials,
the fans, the hosts and even
the hosts' mums. Everyone.
Southgate won the nation's
heart – and positive headlines
– by being a down-to-earth,
old-fashioned type. He's so
uninterested in attention that
he didn't even tweet.

When communicators
seek authenticity, they want
what Southgate offers. But the
growing number of business
people taking to social media
to express what they feel *right
now* must make them wish
they could apply a little polish.

Southgate's charm even led to a Twitter hashtag,
#GarethSouthgateWould, with people imagining
the nice things he would do. It's pretty funny and
shows the goodwill he earned.

One thing I'm sure the England manager would
do is donate either money or PR time to iprovision.
The CIPR charity does amazing work for people in
our industry facing hardship. To find out how you
can help, go to cipr.co.uk/iprovision

ROB SMITH Editor, *Influence*

WHAT'S BEEN SAID ON TWITTER?

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Fascinating @InfluencePRMag
article on audience profiling,
including @gretchenrubin's
Four Tendencies. Took a punt
at my type and the quiz proved
what I suspected #PR #comms
#LoveAQuiz
@kerrylynnepyke

Loving the #Isistagram article
in @CIPR_UK #Influence
magazine – a fascinating
analysis of the potential
terror of social media and
the PR industry when in the
wrong hands
@mixtureofmolly

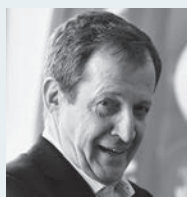
Cool cover for this month's
@InfluencePRMag and some
fascinating insight on
@Mattel's @Barbie strategy
going forward. Thanks
@AnnaDotHart for an
interesting read #Barbie
@rhona_deb

This beauty got to Australia
finally! Can't wait to read it!
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MAG IN A MINUTE

INFLUENCE / Q3 2018 / issue 11 / cipr.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS



ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

P57

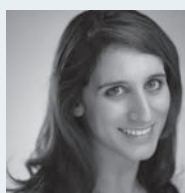
Alastair Campbell learned a lot from his breakdown. It's essential to 'get good out of bad'. We all have setbacks but it's about how you deal with them. We must develop ways of coping with life and work



RUTH SUNDERLAND

P18

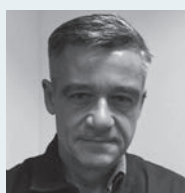
Should PR firms now operate like management consultancies?



CLAIRE COLEMAN

P22

What's more universal and iconic than red lipstick?



CHARLIE BECKETT

P7

'Trust' looks different for each organisation. It's not a blanket term

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Would you work with an AI influencer? Or a chatbot?

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THE SMALL PRINT

Glamour magazine has adopted a radical multiplatform approach, slashing the number of its print issues and pushing its social media presence. PRs must be flexible about how to contribute

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BE AFRAID

The reason we have a 'trust crisis' is because 'trust' means something different to every organisation. Know what it means for yours



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Veganism generates four times as much social media conversation as vegetarianism. Instagram is the most used channel, but YouTube works too, says Crimson Hexagon



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"PR IS BROKEN AND WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN"

The departure of Sir Martin Sorrell from WPP has left insiders asking what's next for the PR industry. Expect angst – and debate



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READ THEIR LIPS

When promoting a lipstick, focus on shade in Europe, Western ambassadors in Asia, ethics in Australasia and stylish packaging in America. Brand values should differ by market



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THIS CAMPAIGN IS GREAT

Britain is GREAT is an economic campaign to bring investment and spend to the UK, supported by 96% of Foreign Office posts and 600 private-sector firms



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INFLUENCERS ARE FAKE

You don't need to be real to have influence. Lil Miquela proves that computer-generated social media stars can be just as effective brand ambassadors as humans

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COVER STORY CHATBOT CHITCHAT

Chatbots have become brand gatekeepers: there are 100,000 chatbots on Facebook alone. These automated assistants never go to sleep and can handle simple requests from consumers. They offer a memorable, interactive experience, not just one-way communication, and they keep the target audience coming back



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PR DOESN'T VALUE IDEAS

Industry practitioners say PR firms need to value their creativity more. They should charge for the time taken to generate ideas, as well as for campaign execution

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HUNTING FOR PR

Pokémon Go, *Resident Evil* and Anya Hindmarch are among the brands that have stirred interest and gained headlines with treasure hunt-style experiences



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WHAT MAGGIE DID FOR PR

Former IPR president Margaret Nally was a true pioneer in the PR industry, emphasising best practice, professional development and internationalisation



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DO IT BETTER

- + Alastair Campbell shares his lessons in resilience
- + Seven tips for repitching
- + Don't let unconscious bias derail your hiring process
- + How internal comms teams can own company culture

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THE BACK STORY

In an era of endless online ratings and reviews, does anyone really believe scores and endorsements any more? Could they even damage your credibility?



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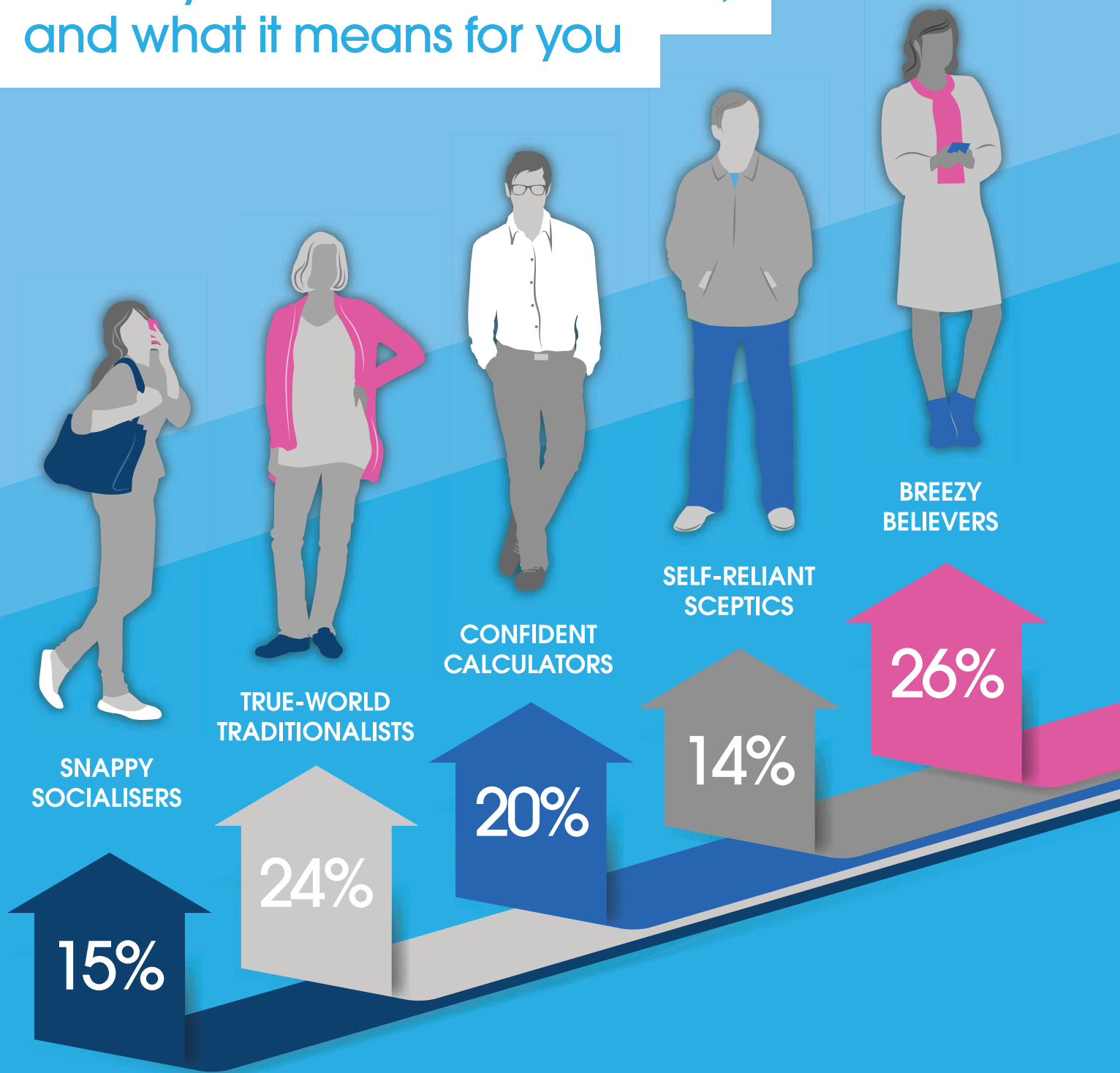
Mistrust

BY CHARLIE BECKETT. ILLUSTRATION BY EOIN RYAN

Public cynicism is the biggest challenge for those in the information business. But there are ways to rebuild trust in what you do...



Find out how five tribes are changing the way Britain communicates, and what it means for you



Read more at opinium.co.uk/tribes
and find your tribe at opinium.co.uk/quiz

T

rust is a bit like happiness. We all agree it's a good thing and we all want it. But we rarely sit down and think

about what it actually means. We talk naturally about trusting friends or lovers, but when it comes to business we get lost in surveys, slogans and wishful non-thinking.

The concept of trust is so important that it is one of the three pillars for the LSE Truth, Trust and Technology Commission, which is investigating the crisis in public information in the UK. After six months of work on this subject (on top of a decade spent researching the ethics and economy of journalism), I am more convinced than ever that trust is central to understanding how we deal with fake news, disinformation, and the confusion and damage being done by recent media trends.

Take Facebook. Most of the people who will read this are on Facebook. They generally find it amusing, stimulating and even productive. We 'like' it a lot. Yet, whenever I ask, people tell me they don't trust Facebook. It's a bit like our relationship with the banks after the financial crisis of 2008. Then, few people would have said they trusted banks, yet we continued to turn to them for important services such as mortgages or withdrawing our hard-earned cash from ATMs.

The growing mistrust of the big technology platforms is partly down to recent scandals, such as Cambridge Analytica, but also a sense that Mark Zuckerberg's massively successful network is a place where our privacy is at risk and where we don't really understand what is going on. We feel we are being lured in with kittens and news of our friends' children and then being deluged with creepy personalised advertising from businesses that increasingly rely on these networks to market or communicate.

LOOK INTO MY EYES

So what can you do as an organisation or individual to retain and rebuild trust?

First, be afraid. We all know about the reputational risks of social media – how an ill-judged tweet can attract



“

Be yourself.
All the evidence is
that people lose trust
when someone is
pretending to
be something
they are not –
especially online

an online lynch mob, and how trolls can roam across your carefully crafted campaign. It pays to keep a watchful eye on your digital presence in the same way as you would hire a security guard to patrol your premises. It's all too easy for you or your business to become collateral damage on networks that, users feel, have turned into febrile soups of anger, confusion and manipulation.

Second, stop being defensive. Be yourself. All the evidence is that people lose trust when someone is pretending to be something they are not – especially online. The potential for fakery is now so huge that authenticity is at a premium. Social media is social. It is a relationship – and relationships should involve

emotions such as empathy and humour, as well as accuracy, reliability and honesty.

In practical terms, your first step is to decide what your business means by 'trust'. (If you are a dodgy organisation, then it really doesn't matter: communications will never heal the rift between the message and the reality.) If you do want to be trusted, then define the values that you are going to put into action. Do they include honesty? Transparency? Openness? Accountability? Have you put in place systems to make that happen and ensured they are effective? Do you audit those systems and their impact both internally and externally?

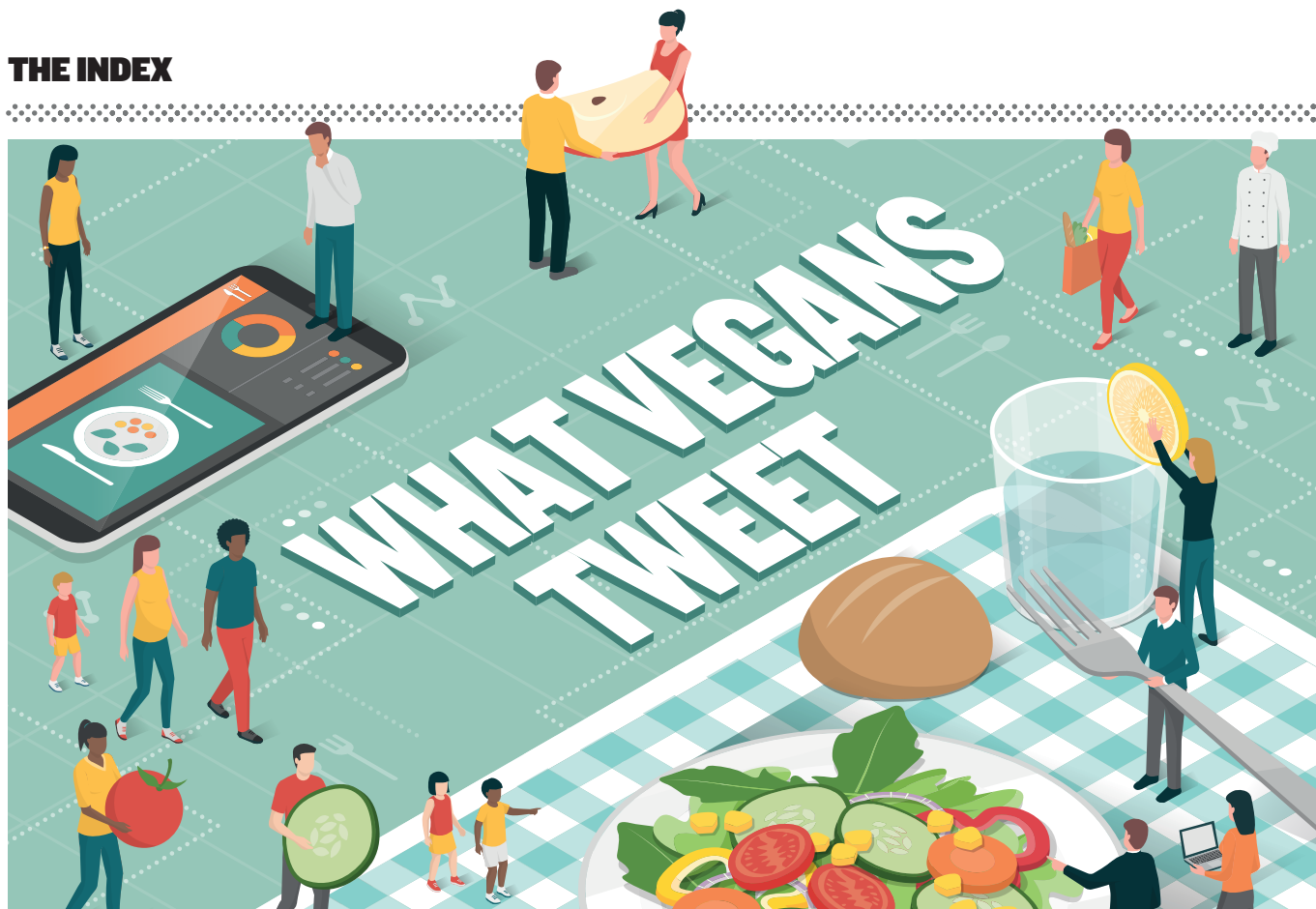
And ask yourself: what is 'trust' for your service or product? As with the banks, it might well be delivering your services in an efficient, timely way. If your product is influence and knowledge, then trust might be about getting people's attention and telling them something meaningful that is relevant, useful and interesting. In that case, you should be listening a lot more before you speak. Have you got systems in place to do that and to analyse the data or responses you get?

Trust is defined by academics in many different ways. It can be 'thin' or 'thick'. It can be personal or institutional. It can be idealised or instrumental. It can be related to your identity or your experience. It can be instinctive or learned. Mostly we trust what is familiar. Sometimes we have to trust something new or someone we don't know. 'Trust me, we can do this' are difficult words to say and to believe.

In the end, my advice is to try this experiment: every time you want to use the word 'trust', try thinking of another word that describes what you really mean. If you then understand better what makes up trust for you, perhaps your staff and your customers will have real reasons to trust in you and what you do.

Charlie Beckett is a media professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, where he leads the LSE Truth, Trust and Technology Commission, which will report this autumn. He is also a director of the thinktank Polis

THE INDEX



SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF VEGANISM HAS TRANSFORMED IN VOLUME AND SENTIMENT IN RECENT YEARS. HERE, ANALYTICS FIRM CRIMSON HEXAGON CRUNCHES THE CUCUMBERS – SORRY, NUMBERS

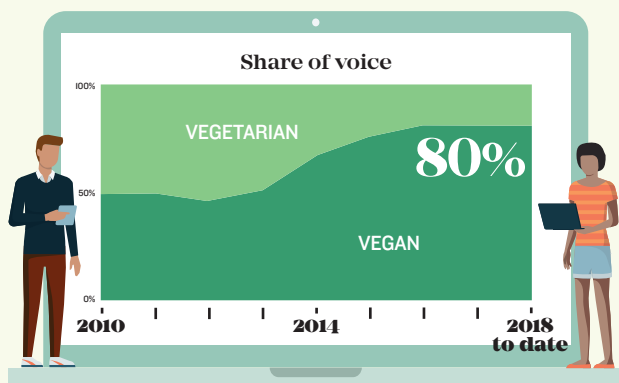
The method

Social media analytics firm Crimson Hexagon created a monitor to assess use of vegan words between 2010 and 2018 across social media networks, including Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, Instagram and Tumblr.

1

SHARE OF VOICE: VEGANISM VERSUS VEGETARIANISM

In 2010, vegetarian and vegan lifestyles had an equal share of voice online. However, coverage of veganism took off in 2013, and soon overtook the online vegetarian conversation.



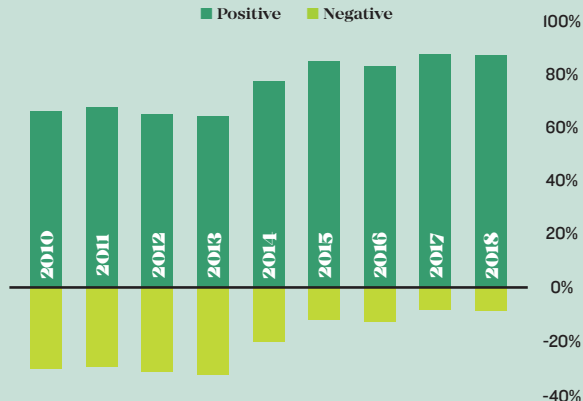
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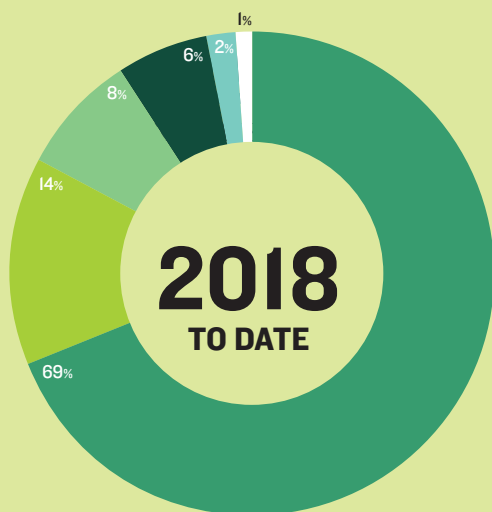
THE SENTIMENT

Coverage of veganism has grown in positivity too: the diet became more widely accepted and met with less cynicism around 2014.

Vegan sentiment trend

■ Positive ■ Negative





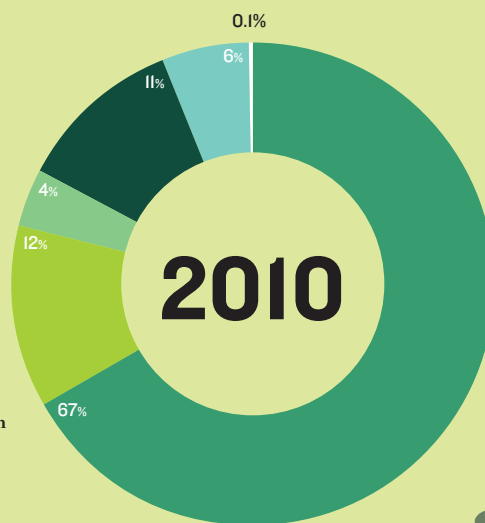
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THE THEMES

Want to engage? The hot topic on social media is home-made vegan meals. Veganism is now seen less as a weight-loss mechanism and more as a holistic lifestyle change.

Vegan discussion topics

- Homemade recipes
- Raw vegan
- Animal cruelty
- Restaurants
- Lose weight
- Lifestyle change



4

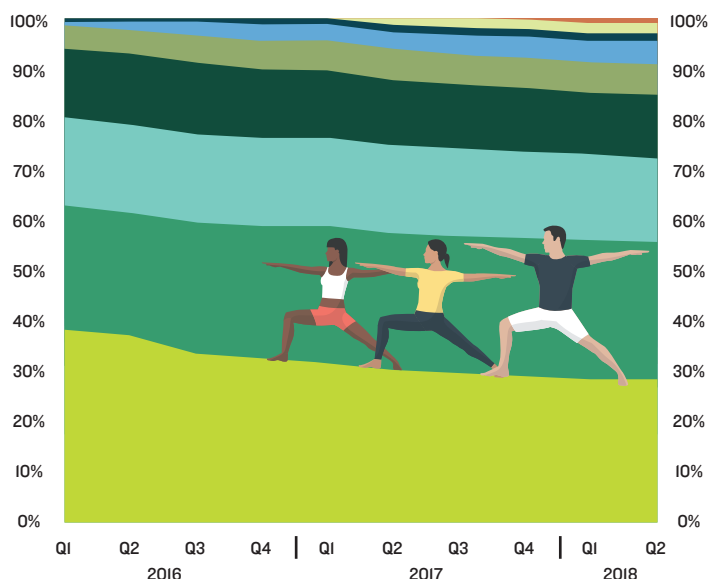
HASHTAGS

Hashtags at the ready. In 2018, we're just as likely to tag our vegan Instagram posts with '#food' as we are '#fitness'.

The phrase '#foodporn' has been used more than 97 billion times in the past two years. The words '#healthy' and '#fitness' predictably rank highly, but '#plantbased' has been used more than six billion times too.

Vegan Instagram hashtags: share of voice

- #food
- #fitness
- #foodporn
- #healthy
- #vegan
- #healthyfood
- #plantbased
- #vegetarian
- #veganfood



5

THE CHANNEL

Instagram is booming, but YouTube is also a popular hub for vegan content. In 2012, there were around 16,000 mentions of 'vegan' on YouTube. By 2016, this figure had risen to 220,000. So far this year, 72,000 videos have been tagged 'vegan'.

72k
- 2018 -

150k
- 2017 -

220k
- 2016 -

37k
- 2014 -

110k
- 2015 -

21k
- 2013 -

16k
- 2012 -



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INSIDE STORY



THIS ISSUE

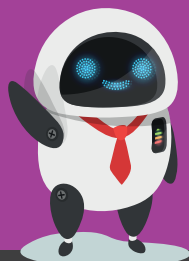
WHY TOMMY HILFIGER AND OTHER BRANDS ARE USING CHATBOTS + BUILD YOUR OWN

Hello, how can I help you?

What is a chatbot?

And why do I need one?

Glad you asked. Let me explain...



BY CHARLES ORTON-JONES AND GABRIELLE LANE



INSIDE STORY



Get out the custard creams and read this...

“

What's the name of your friendship group? It could be the name of your group chat or your friends' nicknames..."

"Wine Club"

"On to the next one! Why are these girls so special to you? They..."

"... always have my back"

"Sounds like you're one lucky lady.

Which emoji do you send to your friends the most?"

"Dancing lady"

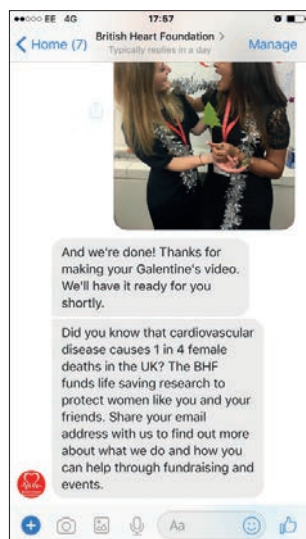
"Great. Do you want to upload a photo to appear in your video?"

"Yes, please!"

And, hey presto, a personalised video was created for these ladies who party together. The questioner, of course, was a chatbot. The chatbot was scripted by the British Heart Foundation, to celebrate 'Galentine's Day' – the friendly, not frisky, alternative to Valentine's Day.

Amy Dicketts at the British Heart Foundation came up with the idea of a chatbot on Facebook to attract attention. "The chatbot was targeted at millennial women to promote themes around heart disease. Cardiovascular disease causes one death in four among females in the UK: we wanted to engage our audience in a way that was informal and fun, but informative too."

The chatbot was easy to create – even the personalised video bit. Each snippet of conversation was written in advance. "The chatbot was pre-programmed," says Dicketts. "To get the tone right we presented the questions to a focus group. We included any that got the group laughing so that they would keep watching until the end, where we introduced brand messaging – in this case, statistics." And the response? More than 1,600 engagements. The budget, including



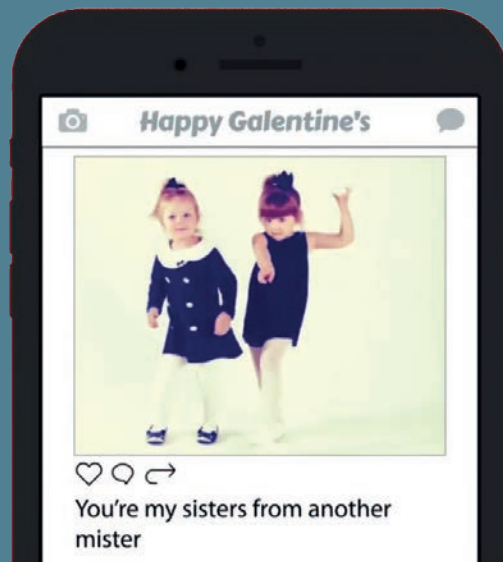
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Facebook has revealed that there are 100,000 chatbots on its platform, with two billion messages sent a month

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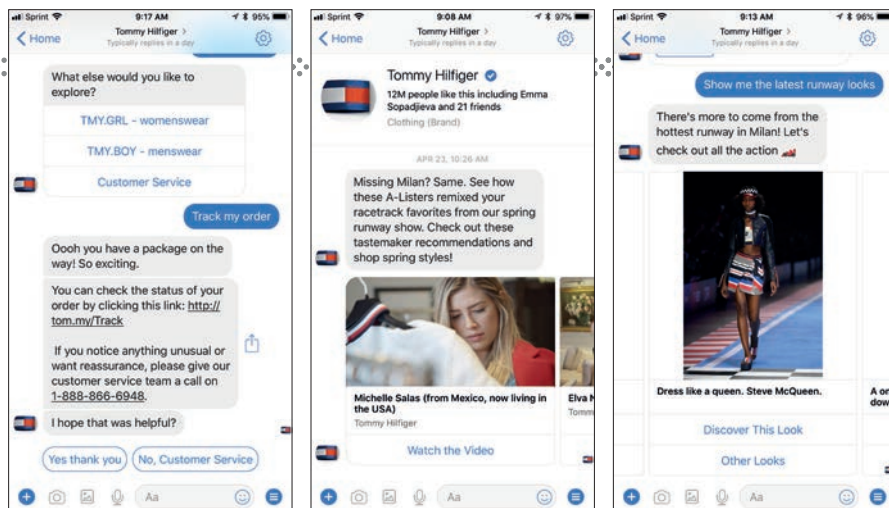
We wanted to engage our audience in a way that was informal and fun, but informative too

BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION



advertising on Instagram and Facebook Messenger, came to £20,000. Not a bad return for an experiment.

This sort of strategy is booming in PR. Chatbots are becoming a mainstream communications channel. Banks use chatbots to handle customer enquiries. Travel agents use chatbots to handle booking queries. And fashion brands use them to strike up conversation. In 2016, Tommy Hilfiger launched a chatbot called TMY.GRL to create a buzz around a tie-in with model Gigi Hadid. Users told the bot their product preferences and could ask questions about the new line. In the words of Puneet Mehta, founder and CEO of msg.ai, the AI platform for 'conversational commerce' that built the chatbot: "Tommy Hilfiger wanted to use a memorable, interactive experience instead of just one-way communication, to keep customers coming back."



CHATBOTS ARE SO HOT RIGHT NOW, RECKONS TOMMY HILFIGER

Since then, Facebook has revealed that there are 100,000 chatbots on its platform, with two billion messages sent a month. So what are the rules of engagement?

THE PURPOSE

Let's start with why you'd want a chatbot. Forrester, a technology consultancy, published a useful report

listing the basic reasons. In a nutshell, these automated assistants never go to sleep and can handle simple requests that consumers might not want to bother a human with. Some of us actually prefer talking to a chatbot – especially when our questions are embarrassing. A chatbot can also be faster to respond than a human: contextual matching means a chatbot can search for an

answer from the vast amount of information available to it, like a search engine.

This actually humanises PR efforts, insists Mehta: "Consumers now expect instant, personalised interactions at whatever brand touchpoint – voice, messaging, email and websites. Chatbots allow one-to-one conversations with consumers, building a relationship based on preferences and previous experience with the brand."

THE TECHNICAL BIT

So how do you develop a really great chatbot? First up, it's vital to split the industry in two. There are basic bots and brainier ones equipped with artificial intelligence.

All the responses of basic chatbots are written by a human. Users follow a preset path, with A, B or C outcomes at each stage. Conversations are short. The brand is in total control.

Then there are AI chatbots. These high-IQ silicon brainboxes grab the headlines, but are much harder to control and deploy. Microsoft launched a Twitter chatbot called Tay in 2016, which became an evil, 'Hitler did nothing wrong', 'Bush did 9/11' swearbot within 24 hours (to the horror of its makers).

This early snafu isn't holding back developers. Their goal is to pass the Turing test, with humans unsure whether they are conversing with man or machine. A leading AI engine is Amelia, by IPsoft, a versatile bot with a spooky, human-like face displayed on a screen. SEB, a Swedish bank, deployed Amelia to handle customer →



Blockbuster bots

Msg.ai named one of its most successful chatbots 'Slappy' after the snarky lead character from the *Goosebumps* movie (left). The Sony Pictures PR team wanted the chatbot to answer fans' questions about the film, tell jokes and sell tickets. The chatbot was powered by AI – and so engaging that the average conversation was over 10 minutes long.



Chatbots can be playful...

... but misplaced humour is a big no-no

The people-powered chatbot

The Energy Institute, a membership body for the energy sector, delivers advice via what appears to be a chatbot on its website. But “it’s not a chatbot”, says Nick Turton, external affairs director. “It’s got real people answering all the questions.”

A small team of librarians are notified when there’s an enquiry, and one of them types out the answers. “We get about 20 a week. At the end of each day, we close down the service.”

Why did the Energy Institute make the move? “We want to increase meaningful engagement. With our way, a brief enquiry can lead to much more. We can put people in touch with an industry expert or provide other resources. Our ‘chatbox’ makes us accessible and lets us communicate directly with our members.”



enquiries. Her ability to detect the underlying intent of a customer’s query recently hit 85%, says SEB – with zero swearing (all profanity is blocked).

Most businesses will opt for a basic chatbot. The content will depend on your objective. For pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim, the aim was to get the public to seek advice about asthma. “Why a chatbot?” asks Catherine Keddie, managing director of health at PR agency Cohn & Wolfe. “To navigate dark social channels where people are spending private time online, and to encourage those with asthma symptoms to seek professional help rather than ignore their symptoms.” The chatbot, called Tabatha, talks to users about symptoms.

Tabatha provides a few great lessons. First, she immediately makes it clear that she’s an automated service: “I’m Tabatha, the ‘Think. Act. Breathe.’ chatbot. I’m not a doctor.”

Second, confidentiality is confirmed, and it’s clear the interaction will be brief: “I’m going to ask you a few questions – I promise I won’t keep you long, and your personal information won’t be captured or shared.”

Finally, her advice is available to download as a PDF or image. This makes it easy for users to take action after the chat ends. The chat is a

productive interaction, not a gimmick, and reinforces the purpose and value of the host brand.

Keddie advises: “The most successful chatbots are the ones with a clear and uncomplicated strategy that meets the needs of the specific audience group and the issue you are trying to overcome.”



The most successful chatbots are the ones with a clear strategy that meets the needs of your specific audience and the issue you are trying to overcome

THE PERSONALITY

Chatbots can also express your brand personality. Domino’s Pizza takes orders via a chatbot called Dom. He’s a witty, expressive so-and-so. This reflects that fact that version 1.0 was built to entertain customers. Co-creator of Dom, Adam Wright, managing partner of comms agency Iris Worldwide, says: “The task we set for Dom was to keep people updated on where their pizza

was and to keep them entertained while they waited. He would tell jokes and play GIFs. We learned what worked and what didn’t. It wasn’t until later that Dom became a fully fledged chatbot.”

Wisecracks may not work for everyone. Wright says: “Humour works in this context but I don’t want jokes when I’m dealing with parking fines.”

THE MEASUREMENT

You don’t have to bombard your chatbot with inappropriate requests in order to check its reputational risk profile or viability. Standard measures of success include its number of engagements, returning users and conversation length. Those in the know also recommend looking at the helpful interactions it has; if you’ve invested in big-money AI, the chatbot should be learning what consumers want – and think – about your brand over time. That information is gold dust: Gartner predicts that by 2021 more than half of enterprises will spend more on bots than traditional mobile.

Dicketts at the British Heart Foundation would try the same again: “We were very lucky that our senior stakeholders were willing to [try to make] a chatbot work for a cold audience. It was a new way of working for us and we were able to learn a lot from it.”

GET STARTED BUILD YOUR BOT

The services that allow technophobes to build their own bot

BY DAVE HOWELL

The basic: Botsify

botsify.com \$50/month

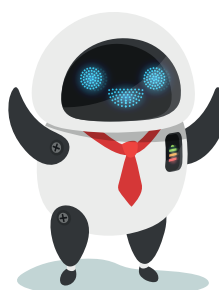
If you're looking for a basic bot builder to get started, this is a great choice. Designed for Facebook Messenger chatbots, Botsify is a fast and efficient platform. WordPress users will be attracted to the RSS feed integration. The user interface is intuitive, but you'll need to look for third-party analytics to accompany this bot builder.



The free: Chatfuel

chatfuel.com Free (with branding);
Chatfuel PRO: \$15/month

One of the first chatbot-creation tools, Chatfuel is highly popular, as you don't need to have any coding skills to create a fully functional bot. Admittedly, the free version offers limited features. It also bears Chatfuel's branding, which will push most users towards the PRO upgrade. Full support for all the leading social networks and great analytics make Chatfuel an ideal bot-creation tool. If you need more advanced features, you'll have to get your hands dirty with some coding and, of course, stump up.



The easy: ManyChat

manychat.com \$15/month

If you're looking for an intuitive drag-and-drop interface for bot creation, look no further. ManyChat allows you to create a bot in just two minutes via its well-designed interface. You can drop in widgets to quickly build your bot too – perfect for beginners. The marketing tools are a real bonus as well. If you're focusing on Facebook Messenger, ManyChat is the perfect companion.



The social: Flow XO

flowxo.com \$19/month

Integration with a wide range of social networks, including YouTube and Instagram, is the major attraction of this bot builder, coupled with a user interface that's very easy to understand. With over 100 integrated services, and templates to get you started, Flow XO could be your one-stop shop for chatbots.



EXTRAS

The planning tool

Take your time to think through why you are creating your bot and what you hope to achieve. It is vital to understand how your bot integrates with a campaign, and to have robust metrics and analytics to help you understand how your bot connects with its audience.

Tools such as Chat Mapper, Walkie and Twine enable you to create conversation paths visually before building your bot.

The comparison tool

ChatBottle is a great resource for tracking how your bots rank in comparison to others, as it lists more than 1,000 creations, including those made for brands such as Burberry. The best way to navigate the platform is using a category search, which could be useful for PR professionals who are managing different bots for various campaigns with specific goals. You can also buy templated bots through the ChatBottle website.

**PR IS
BROKEN
AND WILL
NEVER
BE THE
SAME
AGAIN**

The biggest PR agencies are merging. Sir Martin Sorrell has been ousted from WPP. Management consultants are circling the industry. Is it the end of the road for PR's old business model?

BY RUTH SUNDERLAND



n the middle of the roaring 1980s a new phenomenon burst into life, along with puffball skirts, Beaujolais nouveau and

brick-sized mobile phones.

That phenomenon was WPP, the advertising and PR colossus created in 1985 by **Sir Martin Sorrell**.

Sorrell's emergence shook up the whole marketing and PR industry – and his exit earlier this year from the firm he created coincided with another seismic shift.

MEGA MERGERS

Shortly before his departure, two WPP agencies, Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe, embarked on a merger to create a new top-three operator. That prompted inevitable questions about whether there'd be further industry consolidation.

The upheaval at WPP is significant in itself, but it's also an indicator of wider change in an industry that's already been disrupted by digital and social forces.

Thrown into sharp relief by Sorrell's departure, the public relations industry is at a pivotal moment. Generational change is under way and PR professionals are asking themselves hard, existential questions: what will the industry look like in the coming years? Will there be

more consolidation? More fragmentation? Both? What will PR be?

The dethroning of Sorrell has certainly reverberated across the industry. As the lynchpin of the WPP empire, he was always a buyer-builder, rather than a seller of businesses – so what will happen now?

"With Sorrell going, one interesting question is what will happen to the structure of WPP," says Ian Whittaker, head of European media research at Liberum Capital. "The company has been firm in saying that it is not breaking up, but it could sell off some of the assets."

Other analysts have speculated that WPP might slim down its suite of PR firms. Mark Read, installed as co-chief operating officer after Sorrell's exit while WPP hunted for a chief executive, has poured cold water on talk of a break-up.

"We don't believe this makes sense. In a world where clients need faster, more agile, integrated solutions, we need to get closer together, not further apart," Read has said.

Others reckon the old model that Sorrell embodied no longer works.

"Sorrell built WPP and I admire him enormously, but the coagulation of PR and traditional adland has come unstuck," says Iain Anderson, executive chairman and co-founder of Cicero Group.

"As the *Mad Men* world has become less profitable, the big conglomerates

have asked more and more of their corporate communications arms. It's broken and will never be the same again."

Many people have predicted further consolidation in the wake of the Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe merger. Organic growth has become harder to achieve and the share prices of the big holding companies, including WPP, have been under pressure. Cost-cutting is the name of the game.

Andrew Grant, founder of Tulchan Communications, says the merger of Cohn & Wolfe and Burson-Marsteller (where he worked earlier in his career) makes enormous sense: "There is huge value in crunching them together and taking costs out. The agency model is about to run out of road. Fees and retainers have not gone up. This is why there will be more mergers in the industry."

TIME TO BE A MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT?

There's another big question thrown up by the tough, post-digital climate: whether PR firms should be attempting to add value by basing their offer more firmly on data, evidence and research.

"Top-tier consultancies now operate with the rigour of management consultants," says Anderson. "Without evidence and data you are nothing."





But can PRs really emulate management consultants – and, even if they can, should they?

Lines are certainly blurring in both directions, with the likes of Accenture acquiring PR assets, and PR agencies taking on consultancy roles – for instance, Omnicom’s Ketchum Change division merged with executive management consultancy group Daggerwing Group in late 2016. As marketing, technology, communications and strategy become more interconnected, it’s a trend that’s surely going to continue.

Raise this topic and PR folk soon start talking about Teneo Blue Rubicon, which was born in the US but has become a major force in the UK over the past couple of years, selling itself on its strategic approach – “the global CEO advisory firm”.

“Everyone is looking at them,” says one highly placed figure. “The management consultancy-style PRs are making waves with a new generation of corporate executives, but it’s not happening everywhere or as quickly

“
The industry
needs more
diversity if it is to
advise on changing
social attitudes

as some might think. Never underestimate the conservatism, with a small ‘c’, of the British boardroom.”

Others view the fusion of PR and management consultancy with scepticism.

Sorrell himself has previously said that management consultancy is very different from what WPP does. “Traditionally, those [management] consultants have worked with chief information officers or chief technology officers on the left brain; we’ve tended to work with chief marketing officers on the right brain,” he said at the end of 2017.

In a similar vein, Tulchan’s Grant says: “Management consultants are about data, analysis and process. They strip the economic model down to pieces and come up with an evidential, fact-based strategy.

“That’s great, but that is not what we do. We help articulate and support the huge change that businesses need to navigate. How a company talks about itself – how it communicates – is massively important.”

NEW BEHAVIOURS NEEDED

An intriguing thought comes from one executive who has just started a new agency. “The industry doesn’t so much need to look to management consultants as to behavioural anthropologists, who would have insights on how technological and cultural change affect people’s attitudes and actions,” he says.

Tony Langham, who co-founded Lansons in 1989, is about to publish a timely book: *Reputation Management: The Future of Corporate Communications and Public Relations*. The practice of PR, he believes, is transforming not only because of the data and social media



'Sorrell' seems to be the hardest word for WPP

“

Being more like management consultants is not the answer. We have to shift to a model of radical honesty and transparency or we will become dinosaurs

revolutions, but also because of changing social attitudes.

“There is less deference to experts, less respect for authority and more whistleblowing,” he says. “Across the political spectrum, people are less tolerant of things like bullying, racism, sexual harassment and discrimination, and the gender pay gap. The PR industry needs more diversity at the top if it is to reflect and advise on these changes.”

The belief that public relations needs more transparency and diversity is shared by Robert Phillips, self-styled industry iconoclast and co-founder of Jericho Chambers.

“PR is an industry with diminishing power and decreasing relevance, but trying desperately to maintain influence and revenues – hence the mergers,” he says. “One reason the industry is struggling is the horrible lack of diversity. There are far too few women and minorities at the top levels.

“And data is going to massacre us. Micro-targeting means companies can talk directly to consumers and other

audiences, so the 20th-century practice of PR is being blown apart.

“Mergers such as Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe make sense in terms of a more cost-efficient 20th-century product, but they are not the answer to what PR should be in the 21st.

“Being more like management consultants is not the answer either. We have to shift to a model of radical honesty and transparency or we will become dinosaurs. We need to say the uncomfortable, embarrassing things to clients that are otherwise known as ‘the truth.’”

SHIFT + FOCUS

What does all this mean for those currently trying to chart a course through the profession?

Iain Anderson says “PR is at the boardroom table like never before”, but it is about reducing reputational risk rather than creating growth. Those who will succeed in future are people who find ways to turn “PR from a risk mitigator to an opportunity creator”.

The industry is certainly braced for transformation. Some 70% of PR professionals believe it will change significantly over the next five years, according to the 2018 *Global Communications Report* by the University of Southern California’s Center for Public Relations and the Holmes Report. But only 36% of in-house professionals and 61% of agency executives believe their companies are ready to adapt.

There’s a consensus on the biggest drivers of change: a shifting media landscape, new technology, greater access to data and disruption to business models.

Tony Langham argues that, although what PR firms do “is very different from the past, the skills are the same. It’s still about creative spark, strategic thinking, media relations, knowledge of how government works – you just have to be ready to shift focus”.

One thing seems clear in this shifting landscape: while the world is highly unpredictable, the need for companies to respond and communicate with their stakeholders has never been greater.

There are almost as many views on the way forward as there are PR people – but, as the saying goes, change is opportunity.

Ruth Sunderland is City editor of The Mail on Sunday



LIPSE



One product, four markets: red lipstick might be worn the world over, but comms campaigns differ wildly by territory

BY CLAIRE COLEMAN

“
Global brand values
must be balanced
against what motivates
consumers locally



We hear over and over again how the world is becoming a global marketplace, how the most profitable brands are international, and how success lies in developing a product that's as likely to be purchased in Sydney as in Stockholm. It's that sort of universality that drives the hugely lucrative beauty industry, a global market that's recently been valued at around \$465bn annually. In many ways, it's little wonder. After all, what's more universal and iconic than red lipstick?

But, while women across the world wear red lipstick, that doesn't mean brands can take a one-size-fits-all

approach to communications. Global brand values and consistency of messaging need to be balanced against what motivates consumers locally.

"Lifestyles differ, cultures differ and media channels differ, as does the way the consumer interacts with their peer group or is influenced to shop. Until you have a deep and authentic understanding of that, you can't create a successful PR campaign," says Lauren Stevenson, who previously worked on campaigns for Dolce & Gabbana Beauty and now runs communications consultancy Aisle 8.

We consulted market analysts and key opinion leaders to work out how a red lipstick should be promoted in four very different parts of the world.



Claire Coleman is an award-winning journalist covering the business and science of beauty

Review

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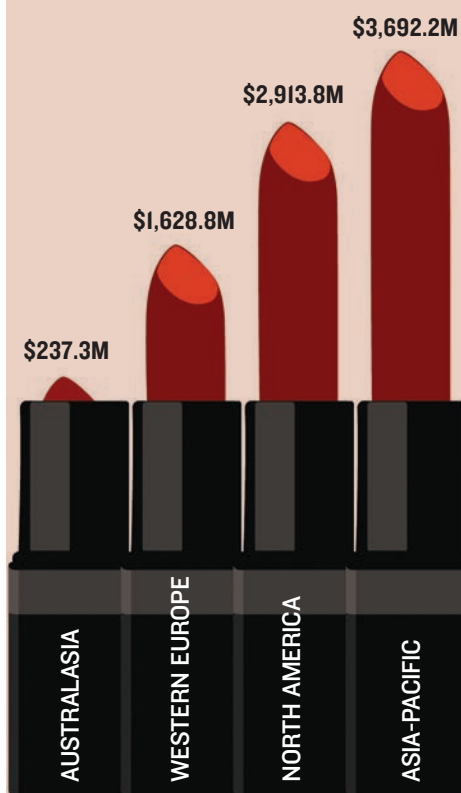


Richard Walker
Iceland Foods
Group

#CIPRConf18



VALUE OF THE LIPSTICK MARKET AROUND THE WORLD IN 2017



EUROPE

"When you're talking about what's driving the purchase of a red lipstick, in Europe, I think, as with all colour cosmetics, it always comes down to shade," says Nicola Moulton, former beauty director at British *Vogue* and now creative director at global creative agencies group Seen. "Benefits such as sun protection and anti-ageing are nice to have but they don't drive the decision-making process."

Her assertion is backed up by Mintel research from 2016 that showed that, when it came to products such as eye shadow and lipstick, colour was the single biggest deciding factor for 58% of British women, ranking above even price.

Moulton points out that the obsession with shade in Europe might be because consumers here often have a pinky base to their complexions, making it hard to find a red that works for them. "That's a constant complaint," she says. "So a PR campaign that simplifies that decision-making process appeals over here." And it's true that the success of lipsticks such as Mac's Ruby Woo, Nars' Jungle Red and Lipstick Queen's Medieval are down to the fact they're universally flattering.

Interestingly, Mintel found that, in countries such as Spain and Italy, where

skin tones are often less pink, concerns about shade are less important.

Moulton believes Europeans tend to be less on board with high-maintenance make-up too. "Lip gloss was always much more of a European trend, as we tend not to want the commitment that red lipstick requires," she says. So claims around long wear times and non-smudginess would do well here.

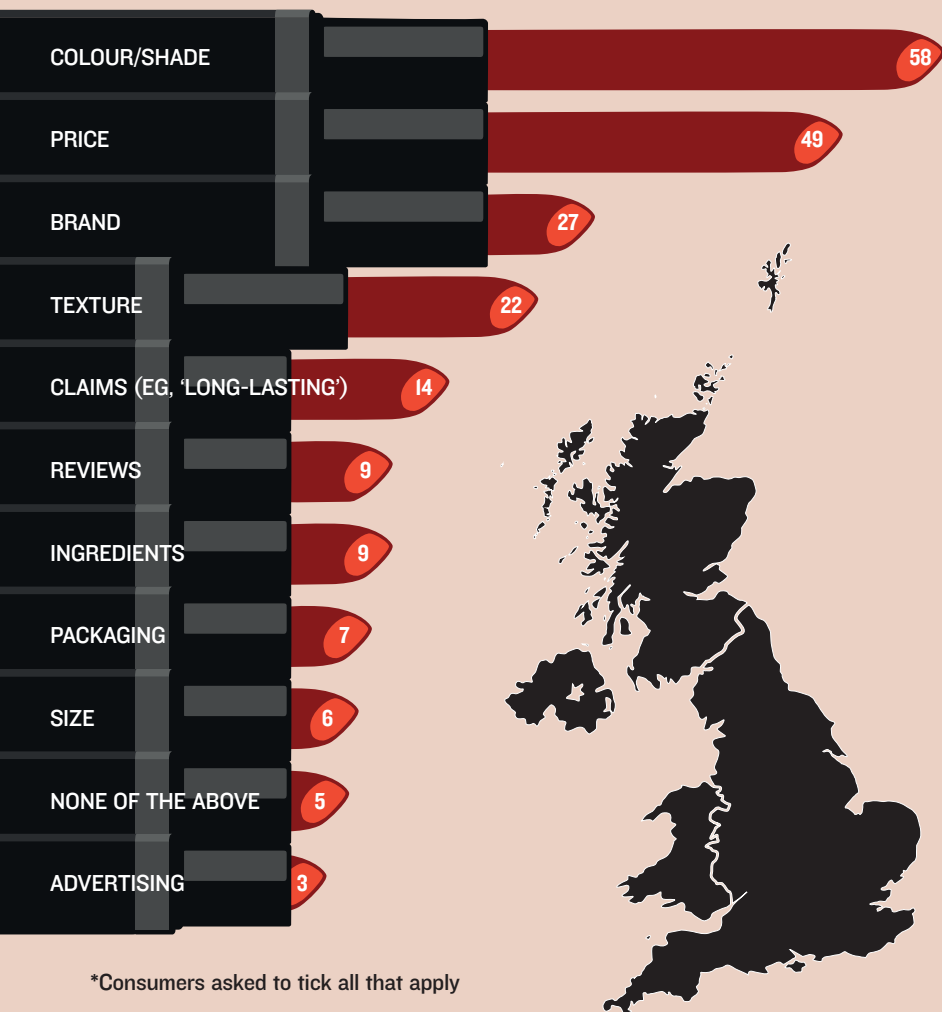
Moulton points out that the beauty business has been democratised, which means consumers are less concerned about whether a product is from Christian Louboutin or Topshop – "with fashion, it's about mixing investment pieces with throwaway boredom relievers" – and more concerned about whether the brand's values reflect theirs – "people don't want to use products that don't have a point of view; they want to buy into an opinion on beauty".

Do contextualise the launch of a lipstick within the broader cultural framework. Beauty journalism in Europe is a very mature market, so editors these days want to be able to talk about beauty products as part of bigger trends in music, art and society.

Don't worry about offering consumers in-store makeovers. Only 4% of UK consumers said that this prompted a purchase, according to Mintel.



SELLING POINTS FOR LIPSTICK IN THE UK (%)*



ASIA

According to Laurie Du, Mintel's senior beauty analyst, 95% of urban Chinese women have used lipstick or lip gloss in the past six months, and it's likely that women in other parts of the continent are similarly engaged.

However, Kathy Phillips, who was international beauty director of Condé Nast Asia for 13 years, says the motivations of Asian women differ.

"For Chinese women, wearing make-up is a sign of showing respect to others," says Du, while Phillips says that in Korea "it's all about being beautiful and ultimately finding a husband". Similarly, Phillips points out that, while "the Chinese and Koreans both adore celebrities, and are both influenced by Korean pop stars, the Japanese tend to revere Western talent above indigenous talent, seeing them as more sophisticated" – worth bearing in mind when considering product spokespeople.

Claire Goodwin, a PR consultant who has held global roles with Trish McEvoy and Jo Malone, says that this admiration extends to a love of British brands, "so strategies should play on British heritage".

Du says that, because some regions "don't have enough retailing outlets to see and try products", consumers rely heavily



AMERICA

As in Europe, the culture around red lipstick in America is, says Sara Spruch-Feiner, a beauty writer and consultant based in New York, "a show of confidence – an instant way to switch from day to night". But new products have a lot to contend with.

"The US beauty market is so bafflingly oversaturated that there's a lot of pressure on brands to stand out," says Spruch-Feiner. "That means a good product won't get noticed unless the packaging is 'shareable' [on social media], and also that the PR side of things is always going one better, whether it's sending customised pyjamas with a

night cream, or creating Instagrammable events with their own hashtag."

When it comes to what consumers are looking for in their products, Mintel found that 48% of US women felt lip products should be moisturising, while longevity was also prized (47%) over brand (33%). However, Lauren Goodsitt, global beauty and personal care analyst at Mintel, flags growing concern about the safety of beauty products, specifically lip products.

"Thirty-four per cent of US consumers believe ingredients in personal care products can be absorbed into the bloodstream," she says. "So it's crucial that brands promote the safety of their products and address any potentially

harmful ingredients. Brands need to clearly communicate how they are protecting consumers."

Spruch-Feiner concurs, saying that the lack of government regulation on ingredients in the US has made consumers wary.

Do consider special promotions. Mintel found that 25% of American consumers said a sale or special offer prompted their most recent make-up purchase.

Don't discount the importance of celebrity appeal. "You only need to look at the numbers that Kylie [Jenner] and Kim [Kardashian] are shifting to see that," says Spruch-Feiner.

on what she calls “blog-ebrities”, with 41% of Chinese women saying these opinion leaders have a strong influence on their make-up purchase decisions; they should be key targets for a PR campaign.

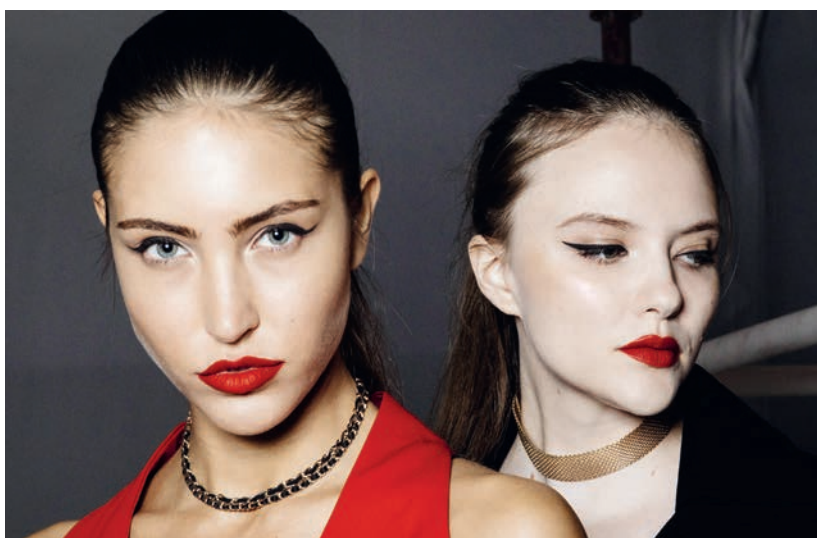
Here, more than anywhere else, consumers are open to trying something new, which is why attractive packaging is, as Phillips says, “a huge selling point”.

However, she also points out that a red lipstick could be a hard mass-market sell here. In Japan it is “redolent of geishas, and you don’t often see people wearing it. Asian cultures are more about the collective than the individual so there is no instinctive desire to stand out”.

Camilla Bradley, global head of PR at Charlotte Tilbury, says promotion should reflect local trends: “One of our bestsellers in Asia is our Walk of Shame lipstick because it gives a similar effect to red bean paste, a current trend in China.”

Do try product placement in popular dramas and movies. Laurie Du says that in Asia this has a major role to play in contributing to buzz.

Don’t worry about ‘long-lasting’ claims. According to Louise Scott, Avon’s chief scientific officer, Asian women often remove lipstick before eating, so focus on the immediate look and feel of a product.



GETTY



AUSTRALASIA

“Australasians are extremely socially conscious, but don’t like to compromise on product quality or efficacy,” says Lucille Gosford of Sydney-based branding consultancy Generation Alliance. “So any new product needs to be transparent on ingredients and the manufacturing process.”

Kelsey Ferencak, former beauty editor of *OK!* magazine in Australia, agrees. “A lot of consumers are leaning towards all-natural products with no ‘nasty’ ingredients,” she says.

And, unsurprisingly given the location, SPF is, according to Sophie Haslett, a freelance journalist who has worked

in London and Sydney, an “obsession – especially after a study last year showed that Australian women are aging up to 20 years sooner than their northern hemisphere counterparts”.

Gosford believes social conscience also has a role to play in product launches, saying that media events that incorporate “a charity element or ‘giving back’ often gain traction”. And she points out that – perhaps due to the continent’s scattered population, which inevitably depends hugely on digital information – bloggers and vloggers have a “strong influence” on consumers’ purchasing decisions. In her experience, “more spend goes

towards social or influencer marketing” than traditional media.

But that doesn’t necessarily mean consumers are purchasing online. Gosford also points out that, when it comes to shopping, “boutique retail experiences appeal”, so megabrands might want to consider creating a pop-up shop as part of any launch activity.

Do use home-grown influencers. “Women like Pia Miller [once on *Home and Away*] are huge sellers,” says Haslett.

Don’t worry about the fashion side of things. “I don’t think the average consumer even looks at a runway show,” says Ferencak.

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ANATOMY OF A CAMPAIGN

This campaign is...

Scientists in Bolivia demonstrate
British prowess in the field, by, erm...
jumping on top of large letters



Born in the depths of austerity, the GREAT Britain campaign has survived successive governments and referendums. Can it now lead Britain's soft-power drive post-Brexit?

BY STUART ROCK



ANATOMY OF A CAMPAIGN

GETTY



The GREAT campaign has received backing from Britain's great, good and in retrospect not very good at all, including Patrick Stewart, David Cameron, Prince Harry and Major Tim Peake, who, on the Queen's birthday, absolutely nailed patriotism



Throughout Whitehall and in Downing Street, and across British embassies and high commissions, there was one big head-scratcher in 2011: how to take advantage of the 2012 opportunity?

The London Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee appeared to present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Up to four billion people would be watching events in the UK.

It may have looked like an open goal but it most certainly wasn't.

The summer of 2011 had been tarnished by images of riots. And George Osborne's austerity drive had kicked off, so the Treasury was not in the mood to entertain large-scale expenditure. There were concerns about the impact of the Olympics too; a dip in tourism was a well-known effect of holding the Games.

And how would this 'once in a lifetime' moment be communicated?

In heading up international trade missions, the prime minister had already seen how a crowd of different government departments and quasi-governmental organisations jostled and pitched their particular messages about Britain. This was reflected in a flotilla of plans being put forward for 2012. They had to be unified.

A campaign was needed. But use of the Olympic brand was out of the question. Maybe what was required, mused Steve Hilton, David Cameron's adviser at the time, was something like the 'I ♥ NY' slogan, which could bring many strands together. The advertising agency Mother was called in. So, too, was Conrad Bird, a former international brand-building executive then serving in the Foreign Office.

Together, the brand gurus looked at the efforts of other countries that had hosted major sporting events. Germany had run a campaign that combined tourism and investment messages in the year around the World Cup. Canada had

done something similar when hosting the Winter Olympics. Other nations had run longer-lasting campaigns to promote tourism. No country had devised a long-running campaign to communicate numerous messages.

The approach eventually adopted was lifted from the classic corporate marketing playbook. Target audiences were identified. The aim: to understand the right audiences and target them in the right way with the right messages to change their behaviour. The focus was to be on four areas: trade, investment, tourism and education.

Take an ultra-high-net-worth Chinese entrepreneur, say: the campaign would want them to send their children to the UK, and then – as a tourist and a parent – to fly back and visit them regularly. They would also be a target for investing in the UK and as a potential purchaser of UK goods and services. Why not use one brand to reach such people?

It was a leap of faith to replace a number of separate campaigns with



a single one. There were no previous metrics or exemplars to draw on. Nobody could say if the outcomes of a unified campaign would be better than the outcomes of, say, separate VisitBritain or British Council campaigns.

MAKING BRITAIN GREAT AGAIN

'Britain is **GREAT**' was announced by David Cameron in New York in late 2011; the creative debut was made in early 2012. "This campaign is simple," said the then PM. "There are so many great things about Britain and we want to send out the message loud and proud that this is a great place to do business, to invest, to study and to visit."

While the campaign used the Union Jack, this was emphatically not a nation-branding exercise; it was an economic programme designed to bring jobs and wealth to Britain, a campaign on behalf of Britain. And that mantra has never changed, says Conrad Bird, the director and ultimate brand guardian of the **GREAT** Britain campaign.

There were critics. "I would certainly be cautious before putting money into a campaign like this because it could be interpreted as bragging," marketing commentator Patrick Barwise told the *Daily Mail*. *Monocle*, that watchful arbiter of style and soft power, deemed it "inane" and "sounding a bit desperate".

The campaign also had to combat a variety of negative stereotypes around the world. When shown an image of Bodiam Castle, Brazilian focus groups deemed the blue skies fake, as the "sun

never shines in the UK". Chinese entrepreneurs saw the UK as a heritage backwater, thick with fog and full of men in bowler hats.

Some did indeed consider the campaign boastful. Wasn't it just saying Britain is great? Bird had to reiterate his message: the campaign communicated that Britain has great features (culture, creativity, technology, countryside and so on) that would entice the audience to come here.

The **GREAT** team knew instinctively that getting behind a single strong brand was a good thing. The important time was when that instinct began to turn into data. Through overseas research panels, the team began to see differences between those who had and hadn't come into contact with the campaign. There was, for example, an uptick in the levels of active consideration about visiting Britain. This crucial measurement is under constant watch. "Divide our target audiences into two cohorts: those who have come into contact with the brand and those who have not, and whether they are investors, CEOs, potential students or visitors. The difference between the two cohorts in our key markets will be anywhere between 10 and 18 points," says Bird.

If year one was a leap of faith, born out of the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee, the real challenge was to continue to make the case for the campaign. When, after 18 months, Bird's team went to the Treasury, their pitch was not framed in terms of comms, branding or reputation, but measurable results. "The campaign would never have survived unless we'd been able to deliver measurable results year after year," he says. "The money we're given is taxpayer money that could pay for police or hospitals, so we have to be very serious about how we invest it. We must steward it into more money for the country."

Over the years, Bird has had to make several cases for the continued funding of **GREAT**. In 2015, the National Audit Office praised the campaign as "meeting good practice from a brand communication perspective". A second, unpublished audit has recently been conducted.

In the run-up to the 2016 Spending Review, the campaign's annual budget



MEASURING GREATNESS

Conrad Bird, the director of the GREAT campaign, always aspired to move from a discussion about expenditure to one about the scale of investment. He insists that, today, the Treasury sees GREAT as an investment, not a cost – “a campaign that pays Britain back”.

Although GREAT is not a brand that can be sold, the campaign team pays scrupulous attention to valuing it, says Bird. “Private-sector companies know the value of their brands. The government needs to know the value of its own brands in order to have mature conversations with private-sector partners. And it is important to remind ourselves that this is worth money and therefore worth protecting, and an asset to be used well.”

So is the campaign delivering a GREAT return on investment? You decide...

1 The GREAT campaign is used by 96% of Foreign Office posts – in 144 countries around the world – as well as 20 other government departments and organisations. It is governed by a cross-government ministerial board, chaired by the secretary of state for international trade. A central, eight-strong team, based in the Department for International Trade, is headed by Bird.

2 More than 600 private-sector businesses and high-profile individuals back the GREAT campaign with joint funding, sponsored activity or in-kind support. To date, some £125m of value in cash and kind has been generated.

3 The campaign’s focus is on key markets – China, India, Brazil, the US, the Gulf states, France, Germany, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and “emerging Europe”, which are where it funds activities. However, its presence is worldwide.

4 On average, 120 to 140 GREAT-branded events are held each month around the world. So, in a typical month, you

might find ‘Science is GREAT’ in Brazil, ‘Food is GREAT’ in Asia-Pacific, and ‘Creativity is GREAT’ at the Oscars, while the campaign is also supporting robotics in Taiwan and appearing on the salt flats of Bolivia.

5 Very few initiatives are funded directly by the campaign. There’s a challenge fund, for which any Foreign Office post can apply as long as it can demonstrate a 20 to 25:1 return. It’s a high bar, reflecting Bird’s fierce focus on the campaign’s RoI.

6 One area for careful analysis is ‘additionality’ – how much additional revenue GREAT has generated for Britain, and when and where. For example, an inward investment decision may be five years in the making – how much of that can be ascribed to GREAT? Bird says the team are “terribly cautious” and GREAT does not try to grab other people’s business. “Calculating additionality is hard to do but we are always seeking to use the best practice measurement methodologies to achieve it,” he says. At present, he adds, the total additional revenue generated by the campaign is £3.4bn, with a further £3.3bn in the pipeline still being validated.

More celebrities! This time it’s His Royal Highness Aston Martin, that William fella, and an inert waxwork of David Beckham, which, really, is just as good as the real thing. It’s all enough to make you spontaneously leap into the air



GETTY

was raised to £60m and extended by four years. In return, GREAT has to generate £8bn (see the box on the left).

Public relations is “a very rich part of the mix”, says Bird. “We use PR assets to influence our audiences. When combined with advertising and digital campaigns, it’s very powerful.”

He warms to the theme. Aston Martin made a special GREAT model. En route to the GREAT Festival of Creativity in Shanghai, the car stopped in Tokyo, where Prince William disembarked from a GREAT-branded plane and stepped into it, captured by the local press. Aston Martin sales in Japan doubled in the next quarter. “That’s a win, win, win, and I get very excited about that,” says Bird.

The campaign is also strikingly visual. “Government can sometimes overuse words and underuse visuals,” says Bird. “GREAT is very visual and proudly reclaims the Union Jack.”

The success of GREAT is all about the power of a brand as “an organising thought”, he says. “At the back of my



mind was the idea you could build a proper, sustainable brand – not just for two years but for five or 20 – which navigates people clearly, wins respect and pulls together a whole effort.”

WILL BREXIT BE GREAT ?

The Britain in which **GREAT** was conceived seems a distant country. Since then, there have been referendums on Scottish independence and on leaving the EU, a new prime minister and two general elections.

The data on effectiveness that Bird assiduously gathers has meant that this government campaign has managed to last through three parliaments and two prime ministers. “We have had a whole new group of ministers who were unfamiliar with the brand but who wholeheartedly support it. They get the fact that you have to stay with it,” he says.

When it kicked off, the nerve centre of the **GREAT** campaign was 10 Downing Street. Today the campaign is governed

by a cross-government ministerial board, chaired by the secretary of state for international trade. A central, eight-strong team, based in the Department for International Trade (DIT), is headed by Bird. “DIT is a comfortable place for the **GREAT** brand to be,” says Bird, “and we still use the convening power of Number 10.”

And, when it comes to Brexit, Bird says that **GREAT** must maintain its focus on its key audiences. “We had to look at every one of our campaigns and test whether the proposition was still current and relevant. We dialled up on inward investment, as this focused on the great foreign direct investment opportunities available in the UK. We dialled up activities in countries such as Canada and Australia. The brand provides continuity in a time of change. It has been a strong flag for business to join. So **GREAT** has not been dented by Brexit but we have to work much harder and we face more challenges, so our tactics are changing to meet them.

“We will be more active in Europe as we’ve got a big job to do to remind the people of Europe – and these are big markets – that we have an enormous amount in common going forward, and that our connections go beyond politics.”

Other areas where we can expect to see more **GREAT** activity range from export finance (via UK Export Finance) to attracting students from India to adding new government departments to the campaign. A recent recruit is the Ministry of Justice, which is promoting British expertise in legal services.

So there are a lot of drums left to bang. Stepping briskly (as a regular marathon runner should) through the corridors of the mighty Foreign Office building where he is based, Bird strikes an ebullient note. “One of Britain’s favourite words may be ‘sorry’ but **GREAT** is all about confidence. We can’t apologise our way to international success.”

*Stuart Rock was founding editor-in-chief of the Business is **GREAT** campaign*



Artificial Influencer

More reliable, more on-message and perfect in every way – virtual personalities prove you don't need to be real to have influence

BY SCOTT GUTHRIE

M

iquela Sousa is a Brazilian-American fashion influencer and music artist from Downey, California.

Better known as Lil Miquela, she has acquired 1.3 million Instagram followers organically since starting out two years ago. In that time she's modelled clothes for brands including Prada, Chanel, Diesel and Moncler. She has released a Spotify top 10 track and launched her own clothing range. She's appeared on magazine covers for *Highsnobiety* and *King Kong*. This year she went to Coachella and watched Beyoncé.

Like many successful Instagram fashion influencers, Lil Miquela is in high demand among brands that want to pay for access to her audience. But, unlike almost all other successful Instagram fashion influencers, Lil Miquela doesn't exist. She is computer-generated: an avatar influencer.

M@RCH ØF THE AVATAR\$

Lil Miquela is the best known of a wave of new virtual influencers. Others include Shudu, Bermuda and blawko22.

Are these fake influencers as influential as their human counterparts? Investors in the company behind Lil Miquela think so. Sequoia Capital, BoxGroup, SV Angel and others recently ploughed \$6m of funding into Brud, the Los Angeles-based startup that specialises in "robotics, artificial intelligence and their applications to media businesses".

These investors see the potential for computer-generated creations to become mainstream influencers. And Lil Miquela provides proof of concept.

There's a precedent too. Avatars are not new within the creative industries. In music, for instance, Damon Albarn created the virtual band Gorillaz in 1998. Hatsune Miku, a singing Japanese hologram, was released more than a decade ago, in 2007. After Miku came Aimi Eguchi, a convincingly

human-like CGI composite of several members of Tokyo's female pop supergroup AKB48.

ALL TH3 FASH!ON

The fashion vertical is, perhaps, the natural space for these CGI influencers to inhabit. They'll always look Insta-immaculate – there's no need for these CGI models to undergo perpetual dieting, gruelling beauty regimes or cosmetic surgery.

Avatar influencers help with the influencer activation process, too. Influencer marketing effort is often front-loaded. It takes time – and therefore money – to identify the most appropriate influencer for your brand. But brands that work with avatar influencers can save themselves the effort, time and cost involved in carefully identifying and vetting influencers, nor need they fret that a CGI influencer will produce a controversial video that will tarnish their brand by association.



Don't waste time on influencers

Bot or not?

Our in-house research team verify every single entry in our Influencer Database, so you know you're building real relationships with real people.

Keep it real.

Stop wasting time. Get communicating.

vuelio.com



Lil Miquela sporting various high-end clobber. Shame they didn't run spellcheck



Avatar influencers can also be placed in any context and dressed in any sponsoring fashion house's garb. They will always turn up on time to the creative shoot, too.

TH3 SECRETS ØF SUCCE\$\$

But what makes Lil Miquela in particular so successful? Her power as an Instagram influencer seems to lie in her rounded 'personality' and her relationship with her followers.

Lil Miquela is more than a clothes horse. She shares stories of British schoolboys helping to avert a suicide attempt. She writes letters to US Congress in support of the transgender community and builds awareness among her followers of the 1.4 million transgender people living in the US. The URL in her Instagram bio links to Black Girls Code, a charity that aims to increase diversity in the digital space.

Such elements are expertly curated to reflect what it means to be human: a set of values and ethics overlay the commercial imperative of brand sponsorship.

“

Lil Miquela's power as an Instagram influencer lies in her rounded 'personality'

Compare Lil Miquela to real-life British teenager Leo Mandella, known as Gully Guy Leo, for instance. He's brilliant at what he does. And what he does is streetwear. His 690,000 or so Instagram followers aren't specifically interested in him as a personality. They do, however, want to see his vast collection of hyped clothes. So, in a certain sense, Lil Miquela is more 'real' than many human Instagram influencers.

TH3 RE@L DEAL

Lil Miquela's 'reality' is something that her creators are keen to stress.

"I keep getting asked if I'm real or fake," said Lil Miquela in a rare 2017 telephone 'interview' with YouTube personality Shane Dawson (who he was actually speaking to is a mystery). "But I'm really here; I'm really talking to you. I'm really DMing people. I'm just trying to make some great art and make the world hurt less... Can you name one person on Instagram who doesn't edit their photos?"

And, in response to her thoughts on virtual celebrities in a BBC interview conducted via email, Lil Miquela said: "I think most of the celebrities in popular culture are virtual! It's been disheartening to watch misinformation and memes warp our democracy, but I think that speaks to the power of 'virtual'. Eventually, 'virtual' shapes our reality and I think that's why I'm so passionate about using virtual spaces like Instagram to push for positive change."

But some, like Richard Wong, believe these CGI influencers undermine existing models of promotion. In fact, Wong, in his *Adweek* article 'Virtual influencers lead to virtual





Lil Miquela will either intrigue you or finally convince you that humanity is doomed



“
An *Adweek* article claims that artificial personalities pose a huge risk to the future of culture and media

inauthenticity’, claims that artificial personalities pose a huge risk to the future of culture and media.

Wong cites three reasons:

CGI influencers create unrealistic expectations about what beauty, style and culture look like; companies running internet personalities are driven exclusively by profit; and virtual influencers lack authenticity – how can an avatar influencer try on a Prada outfit?

None of these concerns appear to be negatively affecting the stellar growth of influencer marketing, though. Brands currently spend around \$1bn a year on Instagram influencers. And, according to CampaignDeus, an independent influencer benchmarking company, 35.5% of all posts on the platform sit within the fashion vertical, making it the most popular subject segment by far.

FAKING IT AUTHENTICALLY

Advocates of virtual influencers might argue that the fashion industry has a long history of manipulating images to make models seem perfect anyway. And, in 2018, what does 'authenticity' really mean?

As social beings, humans have always sought to connect with like-minded people. Social media has just scaled this, making our networks global, constant – and more competitive.

In a bid to become ever more popular, we create content designed for instant gratification: content to be shared and 'liked', not pondered. We have learned to use lens filters and editing apps. Our Instagram feeds have been professionalised. If we fail to get sufficient engagement in the first half an hour, we remove the post. We agonise over creating the perfectly crafted caption and selecting the most suitable hashtags.

From this viewpoint, Lil Miquela and her like are far more than just mannequins for fashion houses. They are a mirror reflecting today's society and encouraging us to question what it means to be human in a digital world.

Instagram images have become so common that we no longer see them for the hyper-reality they represent. But CGI influencers jolt us out of our blind spot.

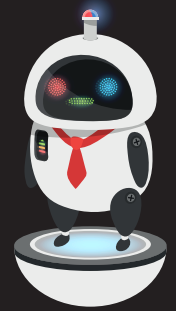
YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCER

So is Lil Miquela performance art? The latest manifestation of broken social media? A PR stunt? A machine for making money out of the influencer marketing boom?

She is, of course, a little of each. But she's also an influencer in the truest sense. After all, real influence is the ability to change behaviours. And, increasingly, digital influence is about how you trade the currency of a specific audience's attention. Lil Miquela is doing both.

Former digital director of influencer relations at Ketchum, Scott Guthrie now advises brands, agencies and platforms on influencer marketing. He is an adviser to CampaignDeus

You don't get these problems with chatbots...



How to make sure your followers are real even if your influencer isn't

In January, *The New York Times* ran an exposé on social media accounts that used fake followers to exaggerate their influence or popularity. Fake followers – whether bots or bought – are irrelevant to brands. They have no affinity with products or services, so they are unable to shift the needle on sales. Here are six signs of fake followers and fake engagement.

#1

SPIKES IN FOLLOWER NUMBERS

Building a social media following organically is an incremental process. Your following grows as people discover the content you're publishing, sharing and commenting on. Someone who has paid for fake followers is likely to have sudden spikes in follower counts.

#2

INACTIVE FOLLOWERS

Click through to a handful of followers on the account. Do they have fully completed bios? Do they have lots of followers? Are they posting much content? This will suggest whether they're real or not.

#3

LOW ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

Engagement rates differ from platform to platform. Get to know the specific engagement rates for your sector. Does influencer content fall inside or outside the parameters?

#4

HIGH ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

Not all comments, 'likes' and shares are equal. Check whether the comments are meaningful and specific to the particular post, or generic comments like 'Cool' or 'Love it'. The latter might suggest collusion via an 'Instapod' (a group of users who endorse each other) or a bot.

#5

EQUAL 'FOLLOWER' AND 'FOLLOWING' NUMBERS

Some users game social media platforms by artificially inflating their follower numbers using the follow-back technique (following as many people as possible in the hope of being followed back).

#6

FOLLOWERS IN SURPRISING COUNTRIES

Check the location of followers. If the influencer is best known in the UK, it might be surprising to find they have a sizeable following in other countries.

Your magazine is now

LOADING

...



Print editions slashed and social media followers maxed, the multiplatform reinvention of *Glamour* reflects the state of the digital media industry

BY ARLO DERVISH

A

t the turn of the century, *Glamour* took the UK magazine market by storm, its groundbreaking 'handbag size'

proving a hit with young women, who made it one of the nation's bestselling titles. Just shy of two decades later, the digital revolution has seen the smartphone become the handbag-friendly media format of choice for the new generation of millennial women, prompting *Glamour* to sound the retreat from print publishing in October 2017 in search of a mobile-first, social-first future.

The decision to stop publishing monthly in favour of a glitzy six-monthly magazine is symbolic of the issues facing the wider consumer magazine market, which are also affecting

comms professionals seeking editorial coverage for their brands.

Many mighty titles have already ceased regular publication in print or have embarked on a digital-only path in recent years, including most recently *NME*, which followed once-household names such as *Loaded*, *Maxim*, *FHM*, *The Face*, *Sugar*, *Bliss*, *Nuts* and *Arena*.

PROACTIVE REINVENTION

While most of these magazines were shut when their print fans had already defected to other online media equivalents, the news of the reinvention of *Glamour*, the 10th-best-selling paid-for magazine in the UK, provides a shocking reminder of the scale and speed of the shift to digital media that is being forced on publishers and PRs.

"We are seeing the death of magazines. The overall influence of the industry is

undoubtedly disappearing," says Douglas McCabe, chief executive of research firm Enders Analysis. "Not every magazine will close but there will be a smaller future for a much smaller group of magazines. Dozens, or maybe even hundreds, of titles will disappear."

Back in 2000, the start of the internet era and a year before *Glamour* launched in the UK, total sales of the top 100 actively purchased magazines in the UK – those bought from shops or subscribed to – were 30.8 million. That figure plummeted to 23.8 million in 2010 and 13.9 million in 2017, according to official measurement body ABC.

A MILLENNIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Glamour first signalled its intention to adopt a multiplatform approach in late 2016, when it ditched its famous handbag size. It recognised that, in a digital age, →

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We are seeing the death of magazines. The overall influence of the industry is undoubtedly disappearing



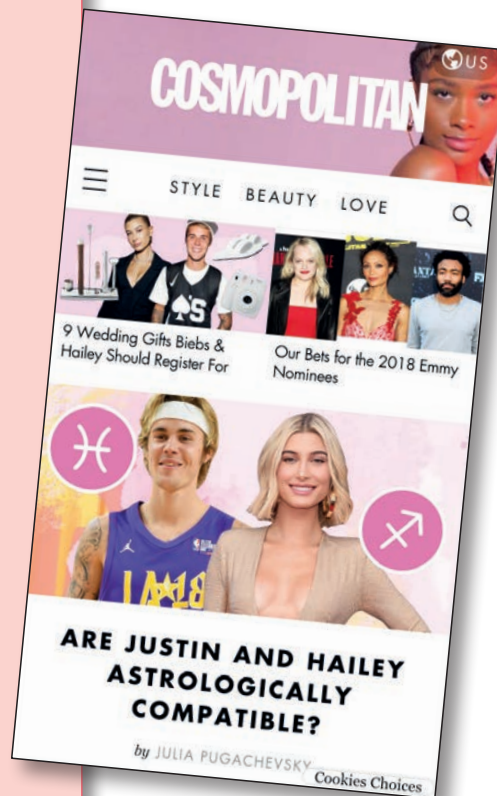
Cosmopolitan: a 'Snapchat brand'



James Wildman, CEO of Hearst Magazines UK, describes *Cosmopolitan*, the UK's seventh-bestselling title, as the publisher's "Snapchat brand". "The *Cosmopolitan* audience is millennial," he says. "We have one million millennial girls on Snapchat a week."

When delivering content, *Cosmopolitan* adopts different approaches by platform, a strategy PR pros would do well to take note of when thinking about target audiences for clients. And, while Wildman says all platforms are important, *Cosmopolitan* is the only Hearst title to earn more from digital than print.

As for the future, Wildman has a perhaps prophetic tale about a focus group of young readers: "Two of the girls didn't even know *Cosmopolitan* was a magazine. Amazing."



print magazines had to be a luxurious and indulgent part of a brand. Magazines no longer go in handbags; readers 'snack' on the go digitally, publisher Condé Nast acknowledged. The strategy of introducing a larger format, aping stablemates *Vanity Fair* and *Wired*, only lasted a year. This latest shake-up will see 10 of 12 print editions canned entirely.

Albert Read, managing director of Condé Nast Britain, has said the reduced print strategy will make *Glamour* the "ultimate beauty bible and style guide for the coming season". Now digitally led, it is seeking a "faster, more focused, multiplatform relationship" with fans, through a "new mix of digital, social, video, live and print".

Condé Nast is focusing on mobile, as 70% of *Glamour*'s digital readership comes from mobile devices. The brand says that it has 2.6 million monthly unique

users of glamourmagazine.co.uk, and a wider social media reach of five million people. The new strategy also focuses on experiential projects and events, such as the Glamour Beauty Festival.

REVENUE GENERATION

Certainly, events and licensing are becoming increasingly important to publishers: Hearst, publisher of *Good Housekeeping* and *Cosmopolitan*, licenses the magazine brands *House Beautiful* to DFS for sofa ranges, *Men's Health* to Argos for its premium gym range and *Country Living* to two hotels in Bath and Harrogate.

This is because traditional print ad revenues are under extreme pressure, falling from almost £500m in 2011 to a forecasted £223m at the end of 2019. Digital display ad revenue from magazine websites is growing, but not fast enough to bridge the gap. Total revenue will grow

from £67m in 2011 to an expected £127m in 2019, according to WPP's GroupM.

"While we have seen a decline in traditional print over the past decade, what we haven't seen is a decline in the appetite for interesting content," says Adam Clyne, former digital chief at Weber Shandwick EMEA and a senior executive at LADbible, who now runs social media consultancy Coolr. "YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter have all opened the door to a new world for publishers and creators."

COMMS TALENT NEEDED

PRs must think flexibly about how they contribute to the new media landscape.

"A strong comms professional must be as fluent in social media and social publishing as they are in TV and print," says Clyne. "They need to have as good a Rolodex of social influencers as they do of magazine editors. And they need

to be able to read data and analytics as well as they can write a press release.”

However, it is important to note that the online revolution is affecting different sectors of the magazine market in different ways: the same digital playbook won't suit all publishers or PR professionals.

THE LUXURY SECTOR

Luxury magazines, such as *Vogue*, whose print advertising is often considered a key part of the editorial content, remain in fine fettle. Many have increased sales, despite the overall malaise affecting most of the industry, and specialist titles with hardcore fans could remain almost totally print-focused for decades to come.

The December 2017 issue of British *Vogue*, the debut of new editor Edward Enninful, prompted a sales rise of 40% compared with a regular month (up to 190,000). Ad revenue for the title was up almost 30% year on year, and it had the most ad pages in a December issue in a decade.

“I can see a world where *Vogue* is still in print in 10 years, but there won't be

“

A strong comms professional must be as fluent in social media and social publishing as they are in TV and print. They need to have as good a Rolodex of social influencers as they do of magazine editors

1,500 titles alongside it on the shelves at WHSmith,” says McCabe. “Luxury magazines and specialist magazines will survive. Everything between will probably disappear.”

DIGITAL DARING

While the results of *Glamour's* transformation are yet to be revealed, other magazine publishers continue to struggle in determining the best strategy to cater to digital audiences. Bauer Media, publisher of titles including *Empire*, *Take a Break* and *Grazia*, decided to chase digital readers by eschewing its established magazine brands. The publisher's big digital-only hope, *The Debrief*, populated by *Grazia* talent and targeting millennial women, was recently shut after four years with an admission that there was “no viable future for the brand”. Bauer, too, will need to try something new.

“It is about how to turn famous brands into profit,” says James Wildman, chief executive of Hearst Magazines UK. “Magazines have always been influential. It is about trust and reach. The future is multiplatform.”



Come on, Edward Enninful – *vogue*. Let your body move to the music, etc, etc



“PRs don’t value ideas highly enough.”

Discuss

At an *Influence* roundtable, eight PR professionals took a stand against giving ideas away for free

BY ROB SMITH. PHOTOGRAPHY BY LOUISE HAYWOOD-SCHIEFER



GETTY

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“As a creative your ideas are your strongest

form of currency. You have to protect your ability to create at all costs. Try to avoid any contractual situation where you are held back from your ideas,” he wrote.

The rapper’s tweets may frequently be mocked, but he’s not alone in thinking that those in the creative industries are being shortchanged.

In May, experts gathered at CIPR’s headquarters in Holborn to formally acknowledge the difficulty of establishing the value of ideas.

COMMERCIALISING CREATIVITY

A bold statement opened the *Influence* roundtable: “Public relations practitioners don’t value ideas highly enough.” It came from CIPR CEO Alastair McCapra, who set the issue in the context of social trends. “All of the government’s economic strategies are grounded in creativity – there is recognition within high-level policy thinking that creativity is essential – yet we have

THE PANEL



Alastair McCapra

Chief executive, CIPR



Maxine Horn

Chief executive, Creative Barcode



Johnny Pitt

Founder, Launch



Barbara Watson

Director, Launch



Magnus Boyd

Partner, Schillings



Bieneosa Ebite

Deputy head of corporate communications, Centrica



Tina Coates

Director of communication, Metro Bank



Rachael Clamp

Head of marketing for public services, defence and security, PA Consulting



not worked out what to do about that in commercial terms.”

In 2018, financial rewards for PR work still come upon activation – and there is growing discontent among practitioners that idea generation is not rewarded. To say it irks Johnny Pitt, the founder of creative agency Launch, would be an understatement: “People want ideas but they are not prepared to pay for the initial investment, even though without a good idea a campaign doesn’t go anywhere.”

A NEW WAY OF WORKING

To address this, Pitt and the team at Launch, along with PR professor Jon White, have produced ‘Creative Value’, a set of guidelines to help both clients and PR professionals manage expectations and fees for the work that goes into each project.

The guidelines include a recommended pitch process called ‘Creative Locks’, ‘Creative Filters’, or scorecards, that help all parties to assess the value of an idea; and ways to keep track of development costs.

Barbara Watson, a director at Launch who worked on the guidelines, explained at the roundtable: “It’s

a good value proposition. It changes the playing field in a positive way. The agencies and creatives put their best work forward because they are being paid to do it.”

The guidelines work for both sides too. “We’ve suggested that, as part of the process, there should be a development fee that is refunded if the project doesn’t meet the creative objectives. So there’s skin in the game for both sides,” added Pitt.

BILL LIKE A LAWYER?

Historically, the abstract nature of creative work has caused a headache for the finance department (and anyone else who likes to know exactly what they’re paying for), as most professions only bill for tangible work.

Magnus Boyd, a partner at law firm Schillings, who specialises in corporate reputation risk and data security, raised a laugh when he admitted his own time is billed in six-minute slots, including phone calls and paperwork. He linked reluctance to pay for ideas to the law: “Intellectual property law recognises that you can’t protect an idea, but only the expression of an idea. It is protected once it is put into a format – that could

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People want ideas
but they are
not prepared
to pay for the initial
investment, even
though without
a good idea a
campaign doesn’t
go anywhere

JOHNNY PITT



be a video, a script or a brilliant model. It's about getting from the abstract to the tangible as quickly as possible."

This means PR teams should use resources efficiently in the planning stages of a pitch. The erroneous expectation that extensive groundwork should be done has come from the advertising industry, which relies on big-value payoffs on completion of a project, explained Maxine Horn, CEO of Creative Barcode, where agencies can register and protect their pitch proposals. "A client company might invite a dozen agencies to pitch for a job worth £25,000 and expect each of those 12 agencies to expend at least £5,000 of time-based fees for a chance to win a low-value account," she said.

PR needs to push for clearer briefs, with higher chances of success and a return on the time invested, agreed the roundtable guests. Practitioners need transparency from potential clients.

"We've been working on streamlining the process," said Bieneosa Ebite, deputy head of corporate communications at Centrica. "We need to hold ourselves accountable in the creative process."

Feedback needs to mean something too, as Horn said: "Agencies put their

heart and soul into the work, and often only get a one-line email, saying: 'Sorry, this time you've been unsuccessful.' That's not feedback and does not respect the value of the time invested."

THE STREAMLINED PITCH

Both Pitt and Watson have seen smart clients reduce the number of firms invited to pitch – and get far better results. Some clients even go so far as to limit the process to three agencies, each getting 20 minutes before the panel; the best idea on the day wins.

But evaluation of work continues to be an issue – both in pitches and in PR in general – which can lead to buy-in problems for in-house teams looking to bring in extra expertise.

It's a problem that Tina Coates, director of communication at Metro Bank, is all too familiar with: "It's an internal challenge, especially in financial services, of persuading other business areas that you have made the difference. We've recently seen an increase in brand awareness – which is a fantastic result given that we have no advertising or sponsorship – but we have to prove to the business the role that comms has played in delivering that. It's not a given.

"In some businesses, there's often a fundamental disbelief that PR makes a difference unless there's a crisis or an issue."

ADVENTUROUS IN THE BOARDROOM

Rachael Clamp, head of marketing for public services, defence and security at PA Consulting, highlighted a conflict, however. The drive towards professionalism and the desire to be better represented in the boardroom may have led to creativity being under-referenced and undervalued by practitioners.

"We've been trying so hard over the past 20 years to get a seat at the boardroom table that we've taken away some of the words like 'creativity', as those can have accountants and the like panicking about how we can quantify and bill for it," she said.

As McCapra concluded, the industry's attitude must be that of creative evangelist: "It can't be that either we are creative or we are in the boardroom. It has to be that, by this creative thinking, we have something meaningful and commercial to contribute to the boardroom."

THE THRILL OF THE HUNT

Remember hunting around for painted eggs in the garden when you were little? Well, now we live in an age when brands make use of cityscapes and technology to create imaginative hunts that your mum and dad could only have dreamed of. Here are five of the best from recent years...

BY ROB SMITH

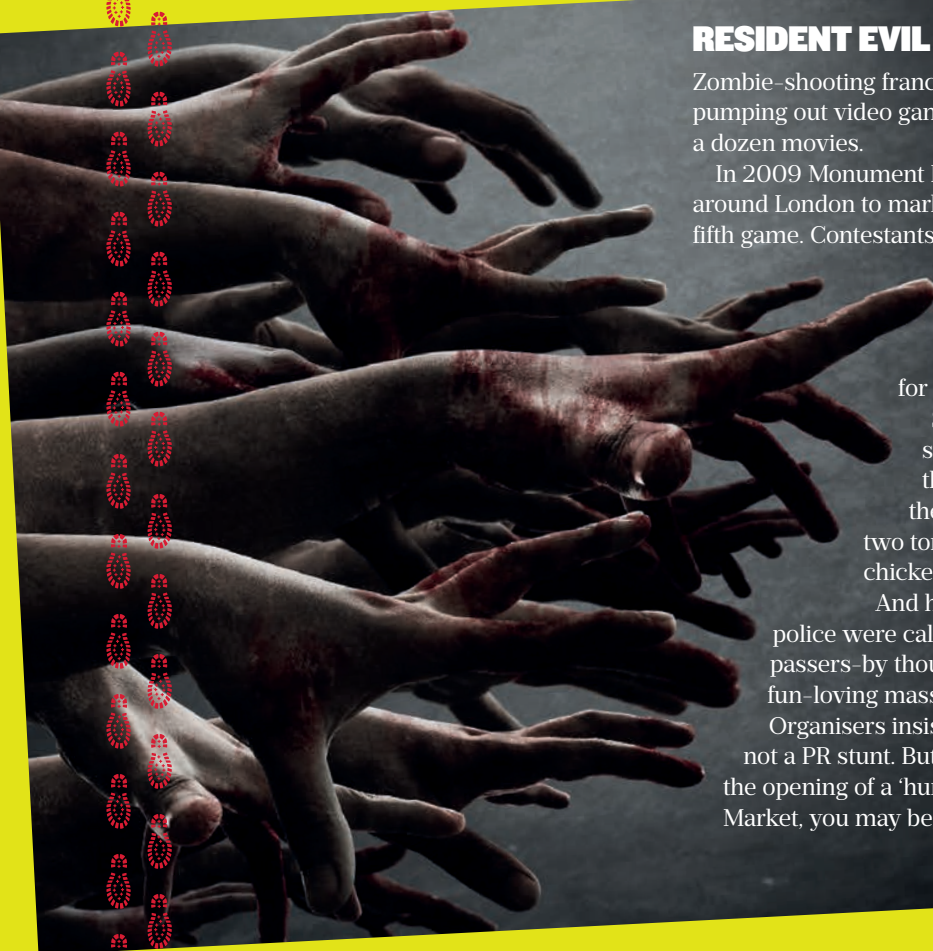
RESIDENT EVIL 5

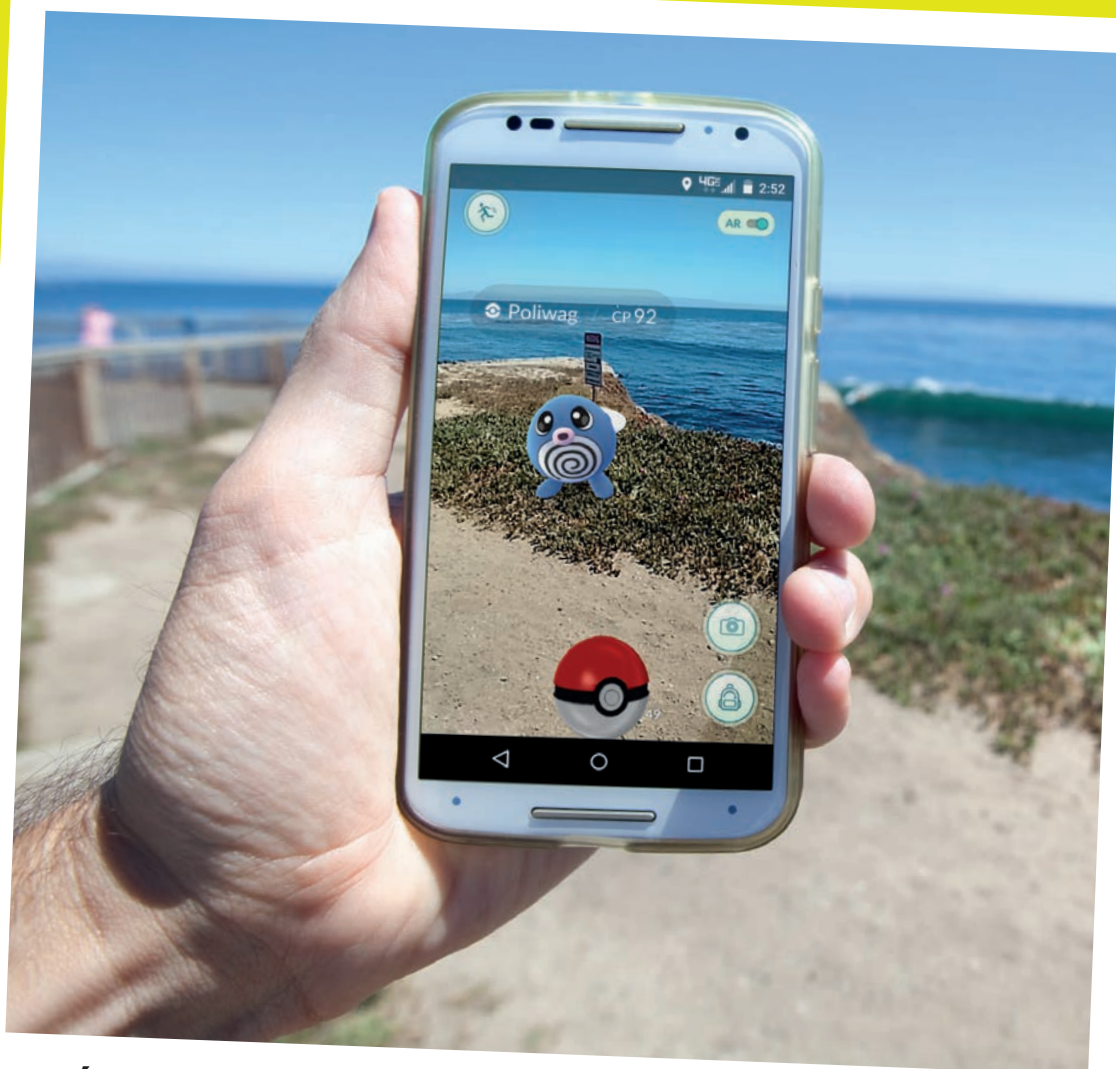
Zombie-shooting franchise *Resident Evil* has been pumping out video games since 1996, and even half a dozen movies.

In 2009 Monument PR set up a treasure hunt around London to mark the release of the franchise's fifth game. Contestants had to find various body parts scattered around town – not real body parts, you understand, but fake ones. The person who found the most won a holiday for two in Africa.

So far, so fun. However, problems started to mount when some of the body parts went missing. Once the contest was over, one head, two torsos and six limbs, all slathered in chicken livers, were still unaccounted for.

And headlines were generated when police were called to the finish line – horrified passers-by thought they were witnessing fun-loving mass murderers in Trafalgar Square. Organisers insisted that the missing limbs were not a PR stunt. But, seeing as *Resident Evil 6* involved the opening of a 'human meat' stall in Smithfield Market, you may beg to differ.





POKÉMON GO

Gotta catch 'em all! Though please don't step in front of a bus while doing so...

Back in 2016 the Pokémon Company gave people the power to hunt its little monsters in the real world using augmented reality and an app on their phone.

At first, this was deemed totally brilliant. Then some of the coverage became less favourable... It didn't take long before people were

bumping into lamp posts, and each other, in search of the elusive critters. *Pokémon Go* was accused of being everything from an instrument of Western espionage (Russia's minister of communications) to a gateway into Satanism (various).

More seriously, numerous deaths were linked to the game, as some players, apparently, were struck by traffic while not paying proper attention to their surroundings.

Media hysteria took hold. The NSPCC, police forces and cybersecurity experts were among the organisations to issue statements calling for users to remain vigilant. The CEO of game maker Niantic reminded players via *The Independent* to "keep your head up".

Pokémon Go has had more than 800 million downloads since 2016 and still has nearly 150 million active users. So drive carefully, folks.



BLOOMINGDALE'S

Also in 2016, one of the most famous department stores in the world got in on the act. Iconic, New York-based Bloomingdale's used Snapchat geofilters to gamify in-store shopping.

Shoppers navigated through exclusive clothing collections and were encouraged to create their own outfits and interact with salespeople. The route revealed location-specific Snapchat filters, which participants used to send selfies to Bloomingdale's to win prizes like gift cards and autumn merchandise.

Jonathan Paul, then operating vice president of social media at Bloomingdale's, told *Luxury Daily* that the brand looked closely at the success of *Pokémon Go* and how it could encourage increased footfall. A dedicated hashtag on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram raised the profile of the hunt.





ANYA HINDMARCH

British heritage is a brand value that sells. And Instagram is the channel of choice for fashionistas. So fashion designer Anya Hindmarch created supersized heart-shaped balloons that would appear at various London landmarks, stay for a day and then disappear off to a new location. First appearing on Valentine's Day 2018, the balloons floated to and from famous sights during London Fashion Week, and followers posted some terrific pictures on Instagram (check out #chubbyhearts).



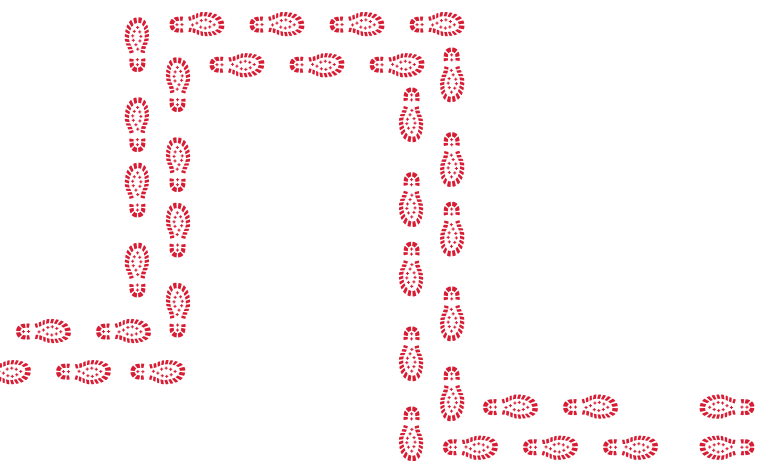


ELEPHANT PARADE

The Asian elephant is in trouble. Its natural habitat has decreased by 95% in the last century and there are fewer than 50,000 of these beautiful creatures left on Earth.

Marc and Mike Spits were inspired to create Elephant Parade after a visit to Thailand. The social enterprise raises awareness and funds for the protection of Asian elephants by hiding painted elephant sculptures around a host city for people to find, admire and buy at an auction. Testament to the power of collaborative PR, well-known figures such as Alice Temperley and Sir Paul Smith lent their support and creative ideas to each of the 260 London-based designs.

During two months of campaign activation, the exhibition mopped up over 500 press articles, and 10 hours of TV and radio airtime, reaching an audience of 25 million people. The auction raised more than £4m.



How *not* to use market research

Good market research makes for attention-grabbing PR.
Just don't make these common mistakes

BY MARK HODSON

T

he public has an apparently insatiable appetite for news

and articles based on market research. Why? Because we evolved as a social species and we like to know how the rest of our peer group are thinking. If we agree with the majority, we get a sense of belonging. If we disagree, we prove our superiority and independence. So, for most people, there's no downside to reading about public opinions.

But, for PRs, there are common pitfalls to avoid when using market research.

DON'T START TOO CLOSE TO THE TOPIC

If you're writing about holidays in the UK, it's tempting to carry out research among people who – duh! – take holidays in the UK. That's probably starting too close to the topic: it's better to sample all UK adults who take holidays. Doing so will enable you to decide how to persuade people who don't holiday in the UK to do so.

Stepping back from the topic often results in broader insights and a more engaging report.

DON'T BE PREDICTABLE

Would you really believe a release that read: "New research from the General Optical Council (GOC) shows that drivers



need to get more frequent eye tests"? Probably not: it is obviously self-serving. When PR surveys set out to prove a predictable point like this, they lose the chance to be attention-grabbing.

A tangential link between your client and the survey topic is often better than a direct link. If the GOC wanted to find out something newsworthy, it could establish why people don't get their eyes tested (for example, some people are too vain to wear glasses, despite knowing they should). Or, for a listicle, the GOC could ascertain the top 10 ways in which people break or lose their glasses (the most common, apparently, is leaving them on the car roof and then driving off).

DON'T SECOND-GUESS THE PUBLIC

Too many PR clients approach market-research agencies with pre-written releases, asking for the figures to prove their point. It's not much more work to

do the research first and then interrogate the data. It's also more honest, and often the public will surprise you and you'll end up with a whole new angle.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE MARKET RESEARCH

There are seven major reasons for using market research as part of a PR exercise:

- To associate your client with a topic or area of expertise.
- To help prove a contentious point.
- To allow a client to comment on a topic without their actually commenting.
- To draw in the reader.
- To add currency to PR – new results generate news, even if the underlying message is timeless.
- To engage the media – PR built around survey results has better uptake.
- To reveal new and interesting facts about the way people think and act.

That last reason is my favourite. It's the one that gets market researchers up in the morning: they want to learn new stuff about people and then tell others about it.

There are an infinite number of issues that we could research, and many of them will result in attention-grabbing press releases. Market research makes for good PR, so give it a go.

Mark Hodson is head of research for OnePoll in Bristol

What Maggie did for PR



No, not *that* one – the other one. Maggie Nally was a pioneering self-starter who brought PR into line with the modern world

BY SCOTT ANTHONY

I

n the words of IPR president Margaret Nally, 1976 marked the maturing of a post-war generation. It was the year PR

“jumped from one era to another”.

Nally’s own career was emblematic of this shift. In her end-of-year address, she emphasised that she had been “the first self-employed, totally individual operator” to take the role. Like British society as a whole, the PR industry was beginning to self-consciously trumpet qualities like individualism, dynamism and the entrepreneurial spirit.

INDUSTRIAL FOCUS

Nally began her career with the advertising agency Auger and Turner, and worked for a further decade at a number of agencies before going freelance in 1965.

A grammar school girl who had been trained in radio technology during the war, what distinguished Nally’s career was her preference for industrial clients at a time when the boom of the early 1960s had pushed PR firms to focus more on salesmanship. Instead, her work for pharmaceutical, financial and technological companies orientated her towards reputation and management, experience that was

to stand her in good stead when the ‘60s boom began to turn to bust.

THE RISE OF INDIVIDUALITY

The growth of individual consultancies like Nally’s reflected a growing crisis of profitability in the UK business world, exacerbated by the oil price shocks of the 1970s. As a result, bespoke projects, campaigns and initiatives came to be valued over the longer-term nurturing of complex social relationships. This was a change that IPR had struggled to adapt to, and that Nally’s presidency was meant to help fix.

What was also striking about Nally’s professional achievement is that she



The Iron Lady
meets self-made
lady Maggie Nally

was a woman, although, in keeping with the cultural politics of the time, she rather played this down; successful women often fought against being separated out from male colleagues.

An Association for Women in Public Relations had been formed in 1962 but it was an elite club and Nally did not join for reasons of class, education and seniority. However, her status was also a consequence of a unique career path: unlike many salaried women in PR, she had not been recruited to specialise in charities, cosmetics or retail. Later in life she wryly noted the anxiety around the lack of male entrants to the industry and the increasing feminisation of the PR profession.

ACADEMIC AMBITIONS

As a successful consultant, Nally was also part of a post-war generation that emphasised research and education. She was part of several important

initiatives to develop and professionalise the industry, such as the courses developed by the Communications, Advertising and Marketing Foundation. In the process, Nally played a small part in the transit of the study of PR into the UK's university sector in the 1990s.

Alongside attempts to standardise good practice in PR came increased internationalisation. British media entrepreneurs such as Nally began to take advantage of opportunities afforded by the re-emergence of powers like Japan, the formation of post-colonial governments, and membership of the EEC. From 1976, Nally held several offices in the now defunct European Confederation of Public Relations.

This self-made and self-improving quality distinguished Nally's career from those of early PR practitioners in Britain, who were overwhelmingly drawn from existing social elites. But Nally's consultancy sparked its own

mini-dynasty. Two of her children enjoyed successful careers in PR, notably establishing the sports sponsorship company West Nally. Her children's careers would later inform Nally's contributions to key texts such as Sam Black's *The Practice of Public Relations*. Her achievements have been further institutionalised by CIPR International's annual Maggie Nally Memorial Lecture.

Scott Anthony is a journalist and historian based at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore

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DO IT BETTER

THIS ISSUE

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESILIENCE
HOW TO REPITCH
CONQUER UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
GROW YOUR COMPANY'S CULTURE



GETTY

Resilience, resilience, resilience

We asked **Alastair Campbell** to talk about resilience at work. This is his unedited personal reflection...





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#CIPRQUALIFIED



I

am not recommending having a psychotic breakdown in a public place. I don't want even my worst enemies to get

arrested for their own safety, locked up in a police cell and released only on the condition they agree to go to hospital. I am not recommending this at all. Because, when it happened to me, it was without doubt the scariest episode of my life.

And yet, although at the time it was the worst thing that had ever happened to me, I now look back on it as one of the best. For it was the key to my resilience.

Those same enemies have devoted a fair amount of print to condemning what they see as my failings. But a lack of resilience is not among them. "Do you ever stop?" I'm asked regularly on social media. No, not often. When my Downing Street diaries were published, a not uncommon reaction was along the lines of: "My God, how on earth did you cope with the workload and the pressure, and keep a diary about it all?"

Well, the diary might be part of the answer. "Think in ink," as Marilyn Monroe used to say. Writing helps me make sense of the world.

But the real answer is that basic resilience – part nature, no doubt, and part nurture, but above all forged in my experience of lows and setbacks.

So one of the acronyms on the postcard I keep on my desk is 'GGOOB' – get good out of bad. Maybe that is the mindset a so-called spin doctor needs. It is certainly the one I developed after my breakdown in 1986. I sorted myself out. Stopped drinking. Started to value more the relationships

“
Although at the time my breakdown was the worst thing that had ever happened to me, I now look back on it as one of the best. For it was the key to my resilience

that really mattered. Started a family. Above all, I had – and continue to use – my breakdown as a yardstick against which to contextualise setbacks and problems in my life.

I still get bad depression from time to time. But, when it strikes, I give it a mark out of 10, set against the breakdown as a nine, and it rarely gets above five or six.

Of course, resilience is not something that can be secured alone. I was lucky with my employers, both in newspapers and in politics, who did not define me by my mental health issues, but saw them as part of the whole person they wanted to have working for them. Having understanding colleagues and staff, and above all a close family, is also essential, especially for someone like me, who finds it hard to hide how I am feeling when I am low and benefits from being open about it.

We all have setbacks. The question is what you do with them. We all develop ways of coping with the pressures of life and work. Exercise is one of mine. So are diet and making sure I get enough sleep. So is music, both listening and playing. So are reading and writing, staying curious and creative, every day. But the breakdown is right up there. I learned so much from it. And I have learned to love it for all the things in my life it has led to since, not least the books I have written and the films

I have made about mental illness, and the work I now do to erase the stigma and taboo that surround it.

Alastair Campbell is an ambassador for the Time to Change mental health campaign. His latest book, Saturday Bloody Saturday, published by Orion, is out now. BBC Two's Horizon will broadcast his new film on depression in the autumn



7 wake-up calls for repitching

BY AMANDA SNOW



IKON IMAGES

Y

ou're an in-house comms manager. You've found a shiny new agency and they've promised you the earth. They absolutely, totally understand where you are coming from and, of course, they really 'get' you. You're both super excited about how good they are going to make you and your organisation look. The new work is going to really stand out and knock the socks off your competitors, and you can't wait to get started.

But six months down the line you're still waiting (with not quite the same

enthusiasm) to get started. The agency is developing bad habits and starting to miss deadlines. The romance is beginning to sour. Or are you just making everything too blinking hard for them?

Let's remind ourselves why we ask agencies to repitch:

- to check you're still getting the best value for money;
- to see what else is happening out there;
- your 'procurement' department made you do it (no matter how many times you muttered "... the price of everything, the value of nothing...");

- to help maintain a professional relationship, with no complacency on the side of either party;
- to give yourself an opportunity to rewrite (or tweak) the ground rules; and/or
- to force yourself out of old habits and look again at your business problems.

All perfectly reasonable but, before you invite in the new agencies and give yourself a mountain of extra work, consider what exactly you want to achieve from the whole repitch exercise. Ask yourself these questions because, if you don't know the answers,



you might not recognise the answer when it does come along:

- What is the end objective?
- What does success look like?
- How will you measure that?
- What gaps are you trying to fill?
- Where do you believe there could be improvements?
- What aspect of the current delivery causes you grief, and how can you make sure this does not continue under the new regime?

If you decide to proceed, here are seven lessons I've learned from more than 25 years as an in-house comms counsel:

1 IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BRIEF

Yes, you need to create a very tight, concise brief. But describing the perfect brief is a whole other article.

2 TRY TO CREATE A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

You need to spend time collecting examples of previous work that you have done and that worked for you. Share these with all the companies on the pitch list. This is particularly important if you have new companies on the list. You want every company to have an equal chance. This is obviously much harder when you have been working with one

of the organisations, but it can also put them at a disadvantage if you're looking for a completely new approach, say.

3 MAKE SURE YOU SELECT THE RIGHT COMPANIES TO GO ON THE PITCH LIST

This is no easy task, but one of the benefits of the whole process is to really have a look at who is out there and what they're doing. Spend time researching the market, networking with peers and finding out who is using whom and why. If you don't get appropriate organisations on the list, then it could be a waste of time. Oh, and don't add an agency just to make up the numbers. Your CEO might – horror of horrors – like them and then you'll have to work with them.

4 DON'T BE TAKEN IN BY HOW MUCH YOU LIKE THE PITCH TEAM

Think of it as having an operation. The doctor's bedside manner might be the finest in the world, but if they're a bit cack-handed with the scalpel... It's skill level and expertise that win the day. So be wary of strangers bearing gifts and steer clear from too much personality and no content.

5 MAYBE PITCH OUT SOME SMALLER PROJECTS FIRST

See how you work together before you 'go large'. A big, time-sensitive project is not the way to get to know a newly appointed agency.

6 A NEW AGENCY DOESN'T AUTOMATICALLY MEAN A SHINY NEW WORLD

Meaningful change is hard and will take time.

7 THE MORE YOU CHALLENGE YOUR EXISTING AGENCY, THE MORE THEY'LL DEMONSTRATE THEIR VALUE

So maybe you don't actually need to repitch that often.

Amanda Snow has more than 25 years' experience of in-house communications, working with many wonderful external PR and comms agencies

Would you hire this man?

Don't let your unconscious biases stop you from hiring talented comms professionals

BY GAVIN ELLWOOD

Bias has its roots in an ancient survival instinct honed by evolution. Without bias, the number of choices we face every day would overwhelm our brains. Bias allows us to navigate through our day more efficiently and live to see another. However, our modern world has evolved faster than our instincts, and today we face more choices and decisions than any of our ancestors did.

An unconscious bias is simply a bias that is outside your control. It manifests itself when your brain makes a quick judgement about people or situations. While unconscious bias can be defined in quite simple terms, it's an enormously complex subject. Each person's unconscious biases are informed by their background, culture and personal experiences. Bias invariably hurts some and helps others, usually unfairly. It is considered by many to be a major force behind a lack of diversity in the modern workplace.

Early in my recruitment career I was heading to a national charity headquartered in north London for a meeting about a new hire they were planning. It was a hot day and the Tube was busy. In a packed carriage I stood opposite an intimidating-looking man; I was pleased when he got off a stop before me. I thought no more about him until he entered my client's reception.

He was dressed and decorated like an aging football hooligan. I wondered what types of thuggery he had been part of during his glory days and what he was

doing there. As I waited, I overheard his conversation with the receptionist. In a shy and apologetic manner, he explained that he didn't have an appointment but wondered if he could see someone.

He had travelled from Newcastle to deliver a cheque to the charity, money that he had raised for the cause. He was invited to take a seat, offered a cup of tea and told that someone would soon be along to see him.

Armed with this new information, I became acutely aware of my assumptions. Had we not been in the same reception area, I would have written him off as an undesirable and banked that experience for future bias use. But, through the information gleaned from earwiggling, I learned he was a compassionate and successful fundraiser.

As a headhunter, I'm paid to judge, compare and advise on people's suitability for a job. So I've had to learn to limit my unconscious biases when I'm conducting interviews. Here are my top four tactics for doing so.

1 UNDERSTAND THAT FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE JUST THAT

Unconscious bias thrives on first impressions. Psychologists (notably Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky) call this 'anchoring', the tendency to rely too heavily on initial information.

Treat interviews, or any encounter with someone new, as a journey of discovery. Learning to work through first, second, third, fourth and fifth impressions is key to assessing and judging someone's ability and suitability for a task.

2 HANDLE CONFIRMATION BIAS

We have a tendency to prioritise information that supports our pre-existing beliefs. In an interview, it's easy to seek out information to support what you think you already know. Instead, use a line of questioning to challenge your own initial view of an interviewee. This incredibly effective tactic can cut out any unfair advantage.

3 STRUCTURE YOUR INTERVIEWS

Unstructured job interviews are bad at predicting how someone will perform in a job. I use two kinds of structured interview: behavioural and situational. Behavioural interviews are based on the idea that past behaviour can predict future action. A typical question might be: "Give me an example of a time when you..." This invites someone to tell a story of how they did something and why.

A situational question presents a job-related task and could start with "How would you handle...". Using the same structure for every candidate will help highlight comparable attributes.

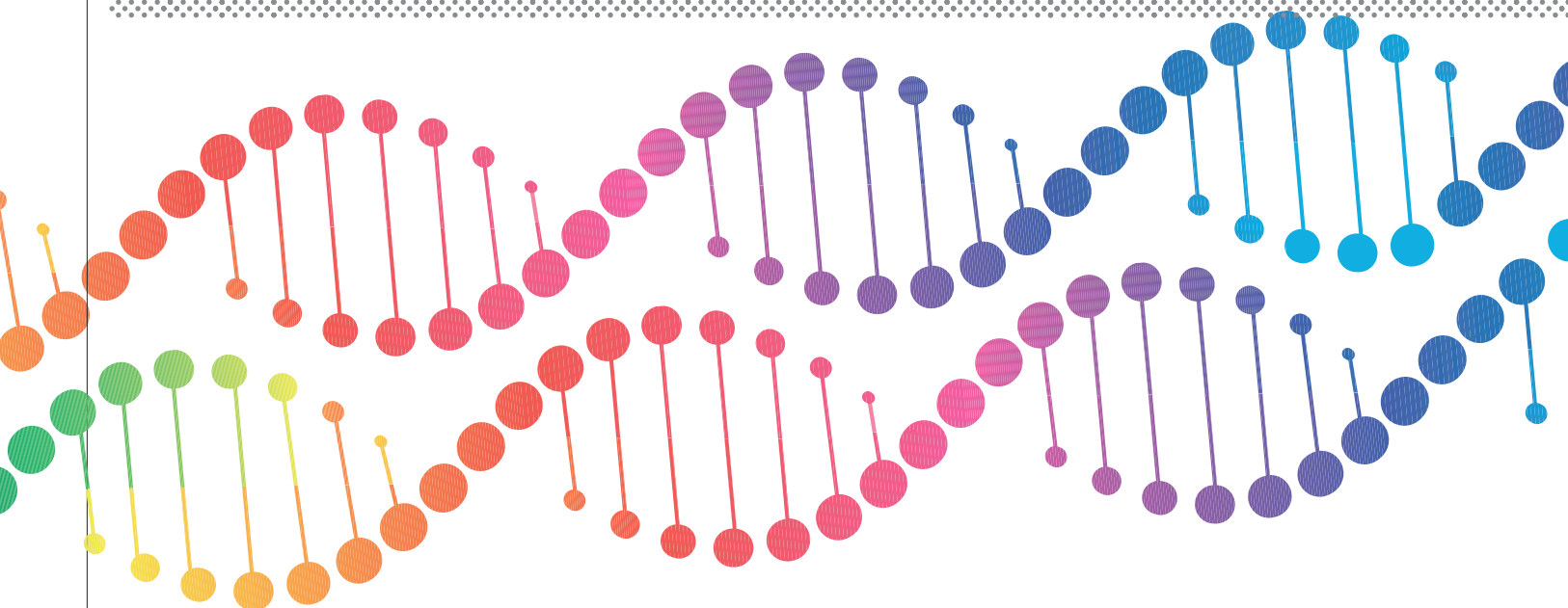
4 RELY ON EVIDENCE, NOT EMOTIONS

As a headhunter, I must reassess my view of a person as I gain more information about them. To reflect on a person without any judgement is an enormously rewarding experience. And it will mean you get to play your part in improving diversity and inclusion in the workplace and society more widely.

Gavin Ellwood is director and founder of Ellwood Atfield, the comms and advocacy headhunter

This man wants to tear your
arms off. Or does he? No.
Who's the monster now, eh?





Grow your culture

What determines how people behave at work? What dictates how they dress, act and perform? And how can you positively influence them?

BY DI BURTON

T

he DNA of any organisation is referred to as its culture. Culture can be defined as a system of shared

values, assumptions and beliefs – ‘the way things are done around here’.

But when things go wrong it's too easy to blame the culture. Who owns it? The age of the charismatic leader and predictable strategies are gone. The senior leadership team, including communications professionals, are pivotal in coordinating cultural messages and behaviours internally and externally. They make the difference between a culture that is constructive and one that is defensive and fragmented.

Johnson and Scholes' ‘cultural web’ model (opposite) offers a useful way of conceptualising the cultural environment of any community. Examination of the cultural web reveals how internal communications professionals already operate in terms of many aspects of this model.

Culture presents internal communications directors with a chance to add value at the top table.

STORIES

Storytelling keeps most of us busy, whether with copywriting or editing. We use language – the cornerstone of culture – to create content and narrative. History and tradition form part of our stories, and we articulate the vision of the organisation. Most importantly, we use emotion to engage employees.

SYMBOLS

An organisation's culture is often difficult to define. Symbolism reduces abstract ideals into things or actions that people can touch and understand – a badge, a corporate colour and an identity. These symbols are designed to bind employees together into one ‘tribe’, creating a sense of belonging.

In daily practice, comms professionals manage photographers, film producers and graphic designers to create artefacts and symbols, logos and annual reports – the visible elements of culture.

RITUALS AND ROUTINES

Rituals are a powerful way in which individuals and groups organise themselves to create stability in an ever-changing world. They point to what is important and valued in an organisation and reinforce the way things are done.

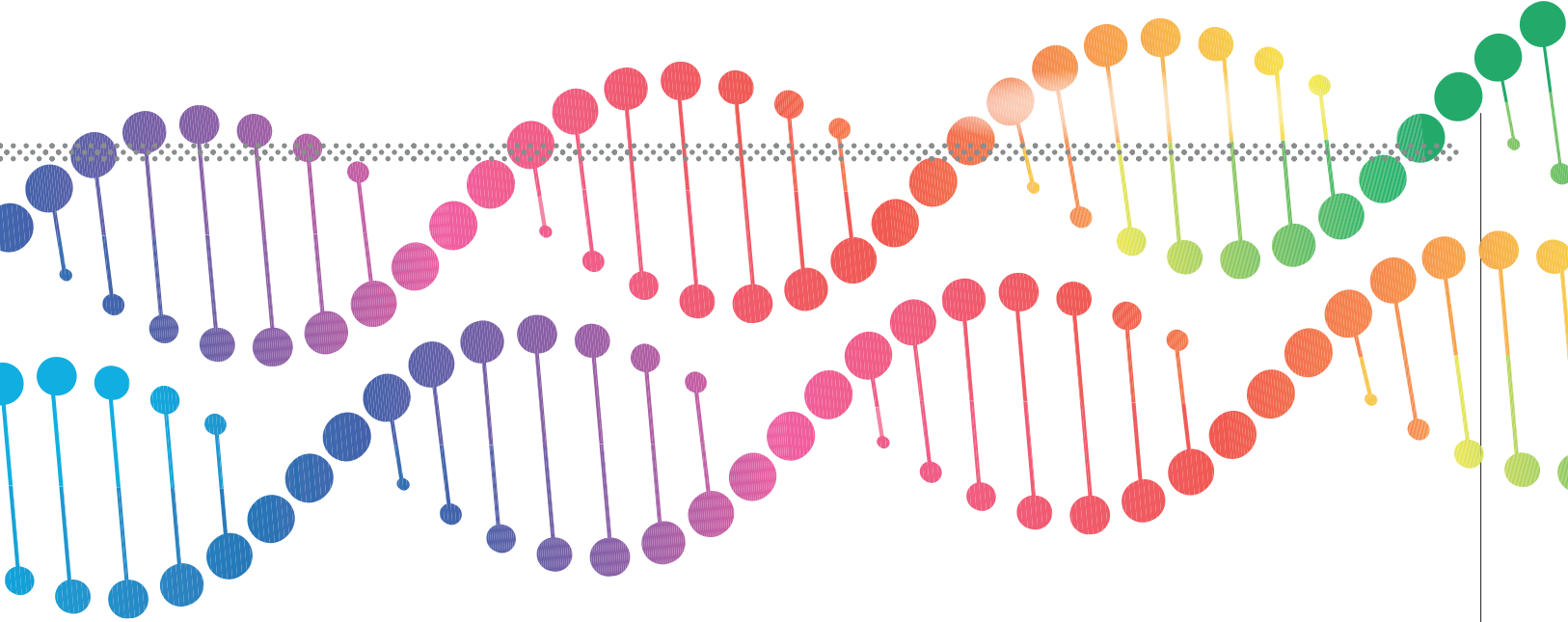
Many PRs work as event managers. It is easier to develop an emotional attachment towards something you can see, hear, smell or touch.

Rites of passage (induction), rites of enhancement (award ceremonies), rites of integration (gatherings of the tribe) and style rites (dress) are also areas where the internal communications practitioner might be involved, but we need to promote our own value so we can be fully recognised as having an essential part to play.

Routines are the ways that things happen and how people behave towards each other.

POWER STRUCTURES

Managerial groups and formal structures emphasise what is important



in an organisation. Behaviours demonstrated by leaders are the single biggest influence on a firm's culture. But who is going to speak truth to power? Write speeches for them? Present evidence to them about why staff are disengaged? PR practitioners can help.

THE ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS

Almost 80% of employees report directly to a line manager.

Internal communications can work with HR on learning and development initiatives for managers. Culture change begins when leaders start to model the behaviour they want the organisation to emulate, and communicate well.

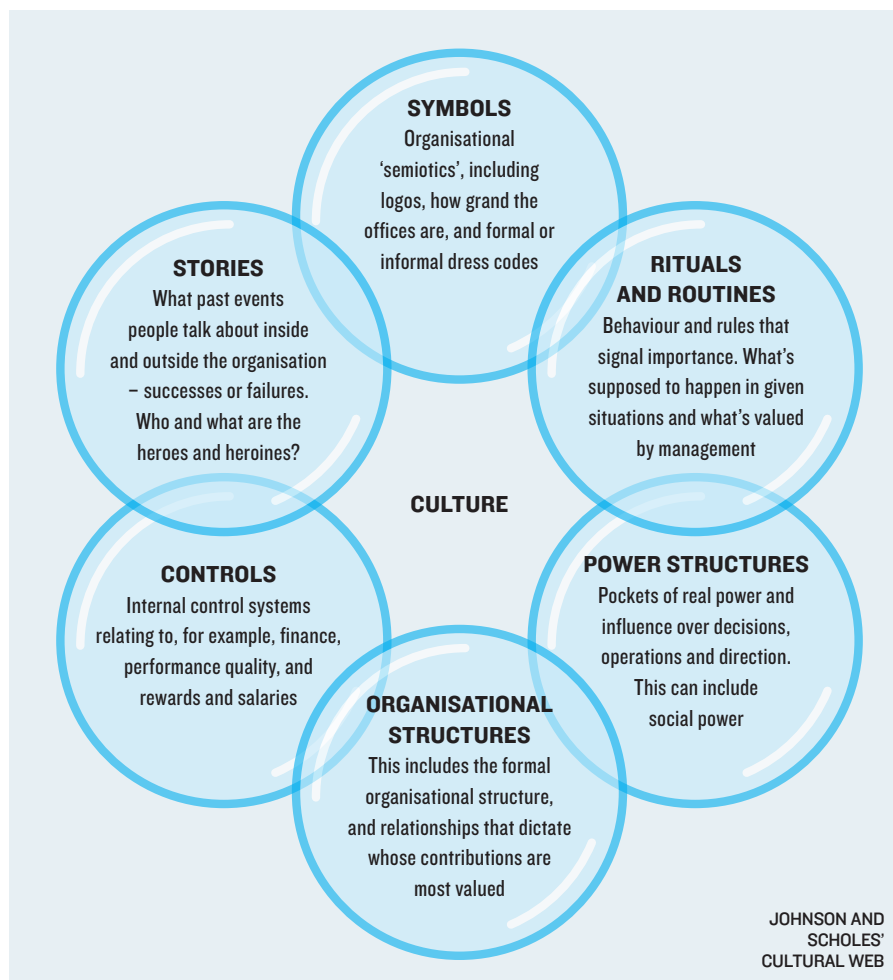
CONTROL SYSTEMS

Measurement and reward systems send a message about where the organisation should focus its attention. If leaders do not see their role as being involved in internal communication, then it's not surprising that communications directors are not at the top table.

TAKE CHARGE OF CULTURE

Communication directors should take responsibility for ensuring that culture binds, rather than fragments, organisations. Internal comms is the glue that holds employees together.

Di Burton is a fellow of CIPR and a chartered fellow of CIPD. She works with leaders on engagement, culture and change communication



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THE BACK STORY

The unbelievable rise of the credibility industry

A

few months ago, I spotted a good article online. It related to something

I was working

on, so I got in touch with the author via LinkedIn. He was very helpful and wrote a follow-up piece for me, which itself went down well.

It was one of those brief, positive, low-friction online relationships that makes you re-appreciate the value of the internet.

Then he asked whether I'd like him to write a LinkedIn recommendation for me.

"Erm, okay," I replied. "Thank you."

What followed was bizarre.

In his recommendation, which ran to a good 350 words, he described me as "an established, multi-award-winning author" and "a role model" in my organisation. I also possess, apparently, the skills to handle "one of the most complex and challenging publishing roles within the professional management sector". I am "indefatigable" in my approach, and my professionalism is "beyond reproach." I'm also "mature"!

Even after a huge night on the tequila, I couldn't have persuaded my mum to be more gushing.

And this was from a bloke I'd never met.

I asked colleagues whether they'd ever received an over-the-top recommendation and, sure enough, they had. Take this ever so slightly creepy poem:

Adam is a top, top man.

Right up there at the top of his game.

If Adam can't do it, no one can.

He really is a fine chap.

Another has received an endorsement for breakdancing (it's still in 'pending' apparently).

There's something weird going on with the whole 'credibility' thing.

Rachel Botsman writes about this in *Who Can You Trust?*, her new book. Her basic point is that we've moved from an age when trust was either local (people you knew) or institutional (people who had qualifications and gongs) to one where trust is 'distributed'. "Distributed trust, enabled



Sharing economy guru Rachel Botsman: can we trust anything she says?

“
I fondly recall a time when real people said genuinely revealing things. My school football report was perfect in its brevity: “Cheerful, but rarely effective”

by new technologies, is rewriting the rules of human relationships.” It returns us, she writes, “to the old village model of trust in one sense, except the community is global in scale”. And it explains why we spend so much time “scoring everything from restaurants to chatbots to Uber drivers”.

This all sounds great, but a lot of the time it's leading to lies and garbage.

I recently received an email from an outfit called 'The Book Creation Process™'. It started badly – “Hey Matthew” – and then got worse: “It's **no longer enough** [their bold] to have

testimonials on your sales pages or a 'presence' on social media,” they told me. No, the competition now is so “insane” that I must acquire enough credibility that “**everybody chooses you automatically**”. I must, they tell me, write a book. And, fortunately, they said, I don't actually have to spend “**hours slaving away at a keyboard**”. Their service can “**transform anyone into an author**”.

You get the **gist**. All around us the era of distributed trust is spawning dubious, effusive and borrowed creds. It's even infecting our children – “We'll write your essay, personal statement and even exam,” the credibility industry proffers.

I get the notion of distributed trust, I really do. I accept that ratings, recommendations and scores can quantify and thus reveal wider market sentiment about a product or a service.

But I also fondly recall a time when real people said genuinely revealing things, and you were invited to listen carefully and make a judgement.

My youngest son's school report came through a couple of months ago. It was totally unintelligible, an opaque mindf**k of “expected standards”, “attainment levels” and cut-and-paste positivity.

When I was his age, my school football report contained four words, perfect in their brevity: “Cheerful, but rarely effective.”

Which report reveals more? You be the judge...



Write Matthew a review that suggests, completely falsely, a long-standing acquaintanceship: @matthewrock

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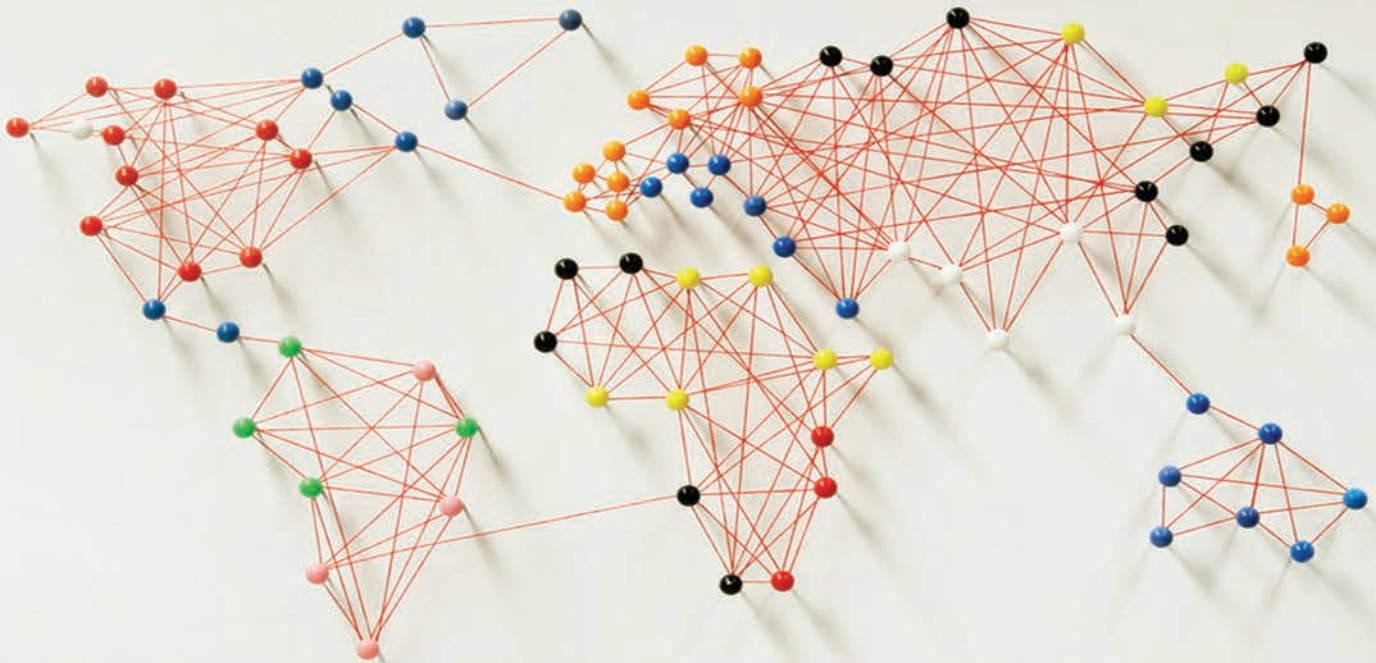
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