Design Research

Design Research is one of the key Corporate programs carried out by Philips Design, providing new insights and territory for intellectual engagement and creating knowledge, competences and capabilities. Design Research consists of researching, experimenting with and developing new insights and methodologies, according to scientific principles, to create distinctive design services with a competitive advantage.

The Design Research program recognizes that design needs to change if it is to further enrich and interpret our cultures. It needs to respond to a new world, new economies, to the emerging needs of and expectations of people who want to participate and engage in transformational experiences. It needs to drive and build on the cultural qualities of this world, exploiting intelligent adaptive technologies in relevant ways.

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From new awareness to digital relationships

Trends and Tools to envision the next possible evolution of communication

By Marco Bevolo, Design Director, Philips Design

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Abstract

The paper documents the results of a dedicated work package from Philips Design's "Understanding Digital Experience" design research program. A multidisciplinary team of designers and socio-cultural researchers at Philips Design worked together with media and strategic planners of Wieden & Kennedy of Amsterdam, one of the leading agencies in the creative industry, to envision future developments in digital experiences that might lead towards new ways of reaching people in order to create awareness, deliver messages and to manage dialogue. Fifty subsequent interviews and sessions were performed with cutting edge thinkers and opinion leaders in the field, to validate the initial project conclusions. A number of tools were created to support the trend exploration.

About Philips Design

Philips Design is a global community of professionals, focused on delivering competitive value to its clients through design. It strives for innovation in both its design services and in the solutions it offers. At its core is a multidisciplinary team of researchers and designers which, over the past ten years, has been addressing how design can best serve people's current and future values & needs. It continuously develops and experiments with the latest methods in design research.

Introduction

During the last decade, explorations and studies into fields of research where human needs and technology roadmaps meet, have increasingly detected steady trends towards personal customization, channel hyper-fragmentation, and the rising demand for co-creative participation.

These trends are now resulting in a media change of unprecedented size. The challenge is simple: mass media are less and less effective in reaching people and triggering their attention. In the future world that thought leaders envision, pervasive, seamless and anticipatory high tech product systems and digital interfaces become focus access points to both content and transactions. This new media landscape will determine the end of the mass media paradigm. The question is: what will be the impact on entertainment industries and practices, brand planning, and marketing communication?

Some analysts have focused their work on understanding the wider context of this situation:

1 At the end of 2004, correspondent Douglas Rushkoff of PBS "Frontline" engaged in a thorough reportage, broadcast on cable TV and narrowcast on line under the title "The Persuaders". This was a critical review of the current crisis of classic marketing communication models, a crisis starting from and resulting in "clutter", the media equivalent of uncommunicative noise.

2 The issue of clutter is obviously not new: in their 2000 "Simplicity Marketing", Steven M Cristol and Peter Sealey identified in the convergence of combined messaging on mass media and personal digital media the cause of a clutter effect, and of the rising difficulty to reach people with any message.

3 How could brands reach people again? According to Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi and author, only a limited number of "brands" enjoy the status of being true "lovemarks", cultural references capable to cut across the clutter and reach the heart of people: examples mentioned included Apple, Italy and Nelson Mandela.

4 For the rest of the world, clutter rules over marketing efforts, and traditional media

might simply fail in channelling messages effectively: a more "ideological" crisis of brand credibility is now aligned with the pivotal change occurring in the media paradigm, almost as a "perfect storm".

The research into the complexity of this domain demands a multidisciplinary, multilateral research approach, with some key reference starting points:

1 The main challenge for the mass media and mass marketing industries was, is and will be to reach people in meaningful ways: people understanding and anticipation of human needs is therefore key.

2 The main driver disrupting the mass media paradigm is the evolution of media themselves from top down, one-to-many channels (eg, broadcast TV) into participative digital platforms (eg, weblogs): understanding new technology solutions is therefore key.

3 The main complexity of the mass media industry is its wide scope, from entertainment broadcasting to information publishing, and its highly volatile dynamics in terms of trends: the ability to gather and synthesize such massively multidisciplinary input is therefore key.

Philips Design carried out a number of activities aimed at gaining a better understanding of the dynamics behind and within the pivotal change from mass media to digital platforms. Hypothesis were generated, tested and validated in a dialogue with the best minds of the media and communication industries.

This paper offers a concise review of trends in the media and marketing communication industries. The key focus is on highlights of research conclusions, and description of a set of actionable tools to support project delivery for customer activities and further design research prototyping. Rather than claiming to have found all the answers, this paper aims to illustrate a selection of trends and tools to navigate this fast pace changing domain, enabling future explorations and experiments to further investigate and explore the crucial issues at stake.

Background

According to Rosser Reeves, founder of Ted Bates & Co and author of a 1950s pivotal book on the subject, the purpose of mass communication is simply to put an actionable message into as many minds as possible, activating a purchasing transaction. How can brands achieve such outcome? The answer seems to have already been clear for decades:

The time has come when advertising has in some hands reached the status of a science. It is based on fixed principles and is reasonably exact. The causes and effects have been analysed until they are well understood. The correct methods of procedure have been proved and established. We know what is most effective and we act on basic laws.
(Claude Hopkins, Scientific Advertising 1922)

An engineering approach to mass communication seemed to be the key to Reeves' successful marketing campaigns. This belief was however not to last longer than half a decade. In the early 1960's, Bill Bernbach, founder of DDB, stated:

There are a lot of technicians in advertising… They know all the rules. They can tell you that people in an ad will get you greater readership. They can tell you that a sentence should always be this short or that long. They can tell you that body copy should be broken up for easier and more inviting reading. They are the scientists of advertising. But there's one little rub. Advertising is fundamentally persuasion, and persuasion happens to be not a a science, but an art.
(Bill Bernbach, around 1965)

Even further, the very essence of performance measurement appeared to be challenged in those relatively early days of media industry development:

From New York to Los Angeles, researchers in television advertising are daily exacting "attitude change" or "persuasion" scores from captive audiences, these scores based on a more or less explicit model of communication effectiveness. Unfortunately the model in use is the familiar one that assumes high involvement… what has been left out is the development of a low involvement model and the pre-test measures based on such model.
(Herb Krugman, 1965)

A lively debate stretching from the 1960's to the very end of the Millennium did however not prevent mass advertising successfully becoming one of the pillars of contemporary culture. That is until mass media was challenged by the birth of a new generation of communication platforms: converging digital media, capable of delivering real time, highly customizable personal experiences.

Challenge

As monitored by major technology trend analysts, digital technologies enabling the customization of entertainment in time and place are arriving at a faster pace than ever: DVR (TiVo), EchoStar Dishplayers, Replay TVs and other technologies disrupting the mass media paradigm will reach a US penetration of more than 40% in the next five years. This is rapidly changing the domestic landscape (well beyond the "war for the living room ownership" engaged by technology consumer companies), and the very nature of how people experience content. The question is, what is the impact on the advertising industry? A number of quotes extracted from desk research findings offer a first assessment:

The advertising industry is passing through one of the most disorienting periods in its history. This is due to a combination of long-term changes, such as the growing technology of media, and the arrival of new technologies. Consumers have become better informed than ever before, with the result that some of the traditional methods of advertising and marketing simply no longer work.
The Future of Advertising, Special Report, The Economist, June 2004

Global ad spending plunged 7% to USD 440 billion in 2001. The agencies laid off 40.000 employees – 19% of their workforce. There was virtually no growth in ad spending over the next two years. Bernstein Research, a Wall Street firm that tracks the stock market, estimates that spending rose by only 2,8% in 2003. Things are expected to get better this year, but Bernstein says that 2004 may be the fourth year in a row when advertising company stocks underperform the S&P 500, a first for Madison Avenue.
Devin Leonard, Fortune Magazine, July 2004

Ad Age Editor Scott Donaton and Ad Age Editor in Chief, this week, write dueling columns on where advertising is headed. Crain claims the expansion of advertising into channels beyond the traditional and the expected is a dangerous path for marketers to take. Following that is Donaton's excited embrace of new marketing platforms such as VOD, Podcasting (that's one word, Scott), video games and IM and acknowledged decline of mass media.
(Posted on www.adrants.com, on March 14, 2005)

How deep is this crisis? It seems the origin of the impasse is much deeper and much more complex, and aims straight at the core paradigms of mass media-based marketing, the very essence of its power to attract audiences through entertainment:

Media buyers talk tough leading into the upfront and don't rush to make buys. That's right, this year they wait a few weeks before paying exorbitant prices for network TV. Question: can "Joey" replace "Friends", top "Survivor" and maintain NBC's Thursday night dominance? Answer: nobody cares.
Scott Donaton, Adage.com, September 2004

In parallel – and perhaps as a consequence – of such macro-changes in the media infrastructure context, Joe Cappo's 2003 "The Future of Advertising" described the marketing communication industry as going through structural restructuring, consolidation and streamlining, with a process lasting throughout the last decade. This led to an advertising market highly clustered around four major worldwide holding companies: Omnicom, Interpublic, WPP, Publicis, with minor networks like Havas Advertising struggling to survive, and rare exceptions of independent agencies maintaining their leading status on basis of quality of content, like Wieden + Kennedy.

Macro-economic industry processes somehow reflect the unease of a creative culture hit by the relatively fast loss of relevance, of which the best synthesis is the title of 2002 best seller by Al and Laura Ries, "The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR". Or, as formulated by former Coca Cola CMO and author, Sergio Zyman:

Part of the reason advertising as we know it today is dead is that the rules of the marketplace and the rules of business have changed… Advertisers and their agencies keep on using the same methods that they have used for decades, and they are pouring money down the drain.
(Sergio Zyman, Creative Review, August 2004)

One should not however oversimplify the issues at hand. It should not be assumed that mass media, mass marketing and advertising concluded their cycle of cultural existence. On the contrary:

Consumer products company Unilever has announced it is to step up its advertising and promotional spending after a period of poor sales… In a joint statement, group chairmen Anthony Burgmans and Niall FitzGerald said: "Top line growth is key to long term sustainable value creation and here the recent performance is unacceptable. We are determined to put this right and we are therefore moving forward with the simplification of our operations and, most importantly, increasing our investment behind our brands.
(Source: www.mad.co.uk, September 2004)

Even further, mass media based communications are credited as being one of the key assets of one of the best practices of brand building of the high tech industry in the last decade:

In the late 1990's, Samsung launched a global advertising campaign that showed the Asian giant routinely pulling off great feats of engineering and design. Samsung convinced consumers that it competed equally with leaders such as Nokia and Sony. As a result, it reversed perceptions that it was a down-market brand and became known as a leading edge technology provider.
(D.B.Holt, J.A.Quelch and E.Taylor, Financial Times, August 2004)

The overall picture is more complex than ever, with contradictions and fads challenging the researcher to assess overall tested and validated directions. It is therefore necessary to:

- identify the paradigm changes that will impact this domain over time;
- analyze developments in media and marketing by looking into both industry and culture trends;
- develop design tools that will enable to translate trend insights into repeatable project success.

The focus is on successfully complementing the classic tools and approach to analyze marketing communication efforts in their challenge to reach people.

Research scope: the media paradigm shift

The underlying paradigm shift from top down, mass media channeled communication to bottom-up, co-created narratives spontaneously generated within cultural ecologies can be described as follows.

Step 1: The Mass Media Paradigm

In the classic marketing paradigm, "one-to-mass" messaging is deployed in unidirectional fashion. Feedback from audience is gained through measurement of the size of the targeted audience itself (eg, percentage of overall audience):

Campaign messaging
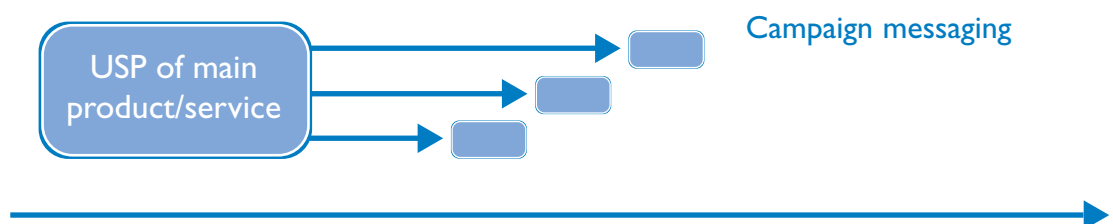
USP of main product/service

Figure 1: The "mass media – mass marketing" paradigm

The viewpoints of the audience and general market, as well as cultural and societal trends are incorporated in the messaging through market research that supports the communication brief and are eventually tested through focus groups or equivalent concept testing during the production of campaigns.

Step 2: The Postmodern paradigm

Since the 1980s, postmodernism has implied the erosion of existing theoretical and aesthetic paradigms, redefining the intrinsic distribution of value in cultural genres, eg advertising vs. art. At the same time, the marketing mix was affected by Kotler's disruption of the paradigms, which until then had been considered the reference for brand marketers. In particular, as articulated by Schultz & Schultz (2003):

- the product related "P" is affected by oversupply and hyper-segmentation;
- the retail related "P" is affected by the re-balanced negotiating power between manufacturing companies and their brands, and retail brands with their own white label products;
- the diffusion of new formats (eg, VHS) affects the effectiveness of mass target audience aggregations.

This structural crisis in the marketing paradigm meets the technology development roadmaps of mobile communication and media devices, and is happening in parallel with the convergence of different categories of consumer electronics – gaming consoles, wireless routers, PC and related accessories – towards the living room.

Step 3: The "Digital Future" paradigm

As mentioned above, brand building through mass media is not expected to fade away during the next decade. It will however become increasingly complemented by communication initiatives that respond to the new social circulation of meaning on parallel and/or alternative platforms. While mass media will continue to be eroded in their centrality to society, networks of contributors to cultural narratives will play a part in the development of highly democratized, co-creative digital platforms:
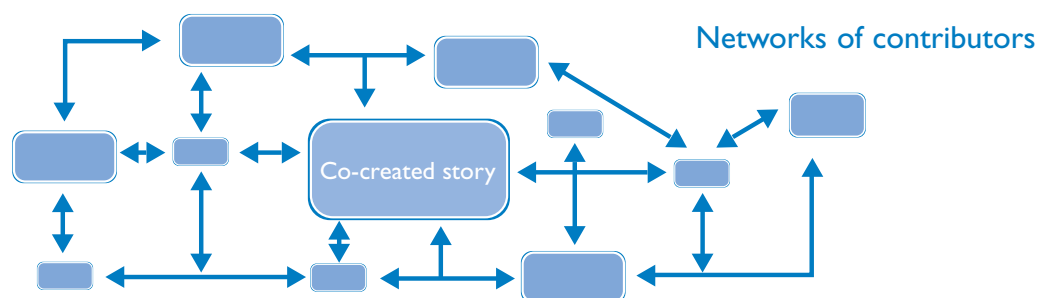

Networks of contributors

Co-created story

Figure 2: The Digital Future paradigm

At the end of an ideal roadmap that brings trend extrapolation to its extreme conclusions, pushing messages top down will become virtually impossible, due to the plain end of mass media. Capturing cultural storytelling as it happens on the personalized information and communication platforms that seamlessly stretch across people's life will be the challenge. This will be hard due to the speed of the diffusion of content among participants to the countless "smart mobs", which will represent the fragmented aggregation of what used to the "one-to-many" audience.

Research approach

Experience Model

A model of interactions between brands and people through constituencies and channels useful to frame this context is the "Experience Model" introduced by Philips Design in its research paper "Putting the customer first" (2004):
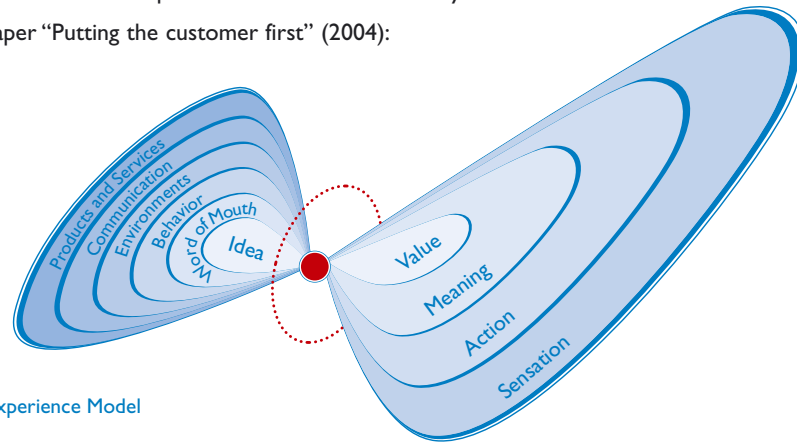

Figure 3: Experience Model

The Experience Model challenges the notion of brand building through mass media by expanding the classic definition of "positioning" into "zone of potential", ultimately displaying the new reality of digital media. It leads to an immediate continuity of time and effect between once separated poles: brand and people, entrepreneurial idea and customer sensations, buzz in society and meaning in people minds.

CultureScan

The CultureScan research approach is extensively described in Philips Design's ESOMAR John & Mary Goodyear Award nominated paper "From Aesthetic Trends to New Value Signs" (2005). The purpose of this proprietary methodology is to scan cultural manifestations at regional level, identify aesthetic and cultural trends at global level and articulate aesthetic directions for design. Besides scanning books and publications, a multidisciplinary panel of industry experts was involved in the research workflow. Depending on efficient and effective availability of experts, sessions were held in the form of mini-workshops, person-to-person live interviews or teleconference. (For a complete list of the experts involved in the study, please refer to the credit list at the end of this paper. The following sub-sections provide an overview of industry sector monitored).

Trend directions

Trends were scanned, identified and clustered in three main directions, then subdivided into three more specific articulations:

Advertiser entertainment:

Brand Placement, Format Crossover, Content Continuity;

Contextual immersion:

Environmental Immersion, Digital Connections, Digital Interactions;

Transformation engines:

Democratizing Information, Small Shop Renaissance, Transformational Platforms.

Trend number 1: Advertiser entertainment

The objective of the marketer is to deliver communication messaging in ways alternative to traditional interruption-based advertising. Solutions range from displaying products in cultural narratives to experimenting with redefining old formats or creating new formats.

Subtrend: Brand Placement

Definition: The objective of the brand marketer is to position the proposition, without intermission, in the a given narrative flow of content, experienced by the audience as entertainment and/or information.

Manifestations: Manifestations include conventional cases of product placement in blockbusters such as Lexus, Bulgari, Guinness and AMEX in Steven Spielberg's "Minority Report". A tool to measure the ability of brands to become part of culture was defined by Lucian James of Agenda Inc., formerly at Planet24, the 1990's groundbreaking TV production venture:

American Brandstand is based entirely on Billboard's Hot 100 singles list…
By unpacking the lyrics to every hit and tracking them for shout-outs to particular products, Brandstand measures how many mentions are given to specific brands…
And while that hardly counts like cold cash… it means something money can't buy: your brand matters in a crucial taste-shaping area.
(From an article about Lucian James in Carlos, Virgin Atlantic First Class Magazine, Spring 2004)

References: Madison & Vine newsletter
(adage_madisonandvine@adm.cheetahmail.com)

Subtrend: Format Crossover

Definition: The objective of the brand marketer is to generate new formats for mass media to be experienced as original, entertaining and actionable in connecting with the audience.

Manifestations: Assessed by Freemantlemedia VP M. Dieperink as the cash cow of the media industry, Advertiser Funded Programming is the entertainment version of "advertorials". Both display commercial information within the format of mass media. This trend sub-cluster also stretches to include new advertising archetypes like Wieden + Kennedy's documentary about Lance Armstrong for Nike, "The Road to Paris. A completely new business model for advertising agencies was herewith successfully tested, leading to the next sub-cluster, "Content Continuity".

References: http://www.adfundedcontent.com/dayone/index.asp

Subtrend: Content Continuity

Definition: The objective of the brand marketer is to generate and distribute original content expressing the same aesthetic, conceptual and production values of actual entertainment, in order to ensure maximum cultural continuity at the level of fruition.

Manifestation: One example of this sub-direction is the Diesel "Dreams" campaign, with a number of leading clip directors invited to freely express their creativity about dreams and dreaming in a number of totally unbranded movies that were distributed on line and through viral marketing. At a less extreme level, several brands engage in the narrowcasting of web based content at the highest qualitative levels, such as the earlier films by Fallon for BMW: Fuel Europe serials for Volvo, under creative direction of Lorenzo De Rita, or Superman and Jerry Seinfeld short sit com's for AMEX. At level of agency philosophy, the ambition to reverse the marketing paradigm of "interruption push" was made into a company challenge by Bob Jeffrey, Worldwide CEO at JWT, with the public release of a major 2005 manifesto aiming to reposition this WPP network on the market:

"We passionately believe advertising has a future but only if we stop interrupting what people are interested in, BE what people are interested in.
(Source: www.jwt.com)

References: www.dieseldreams.com; www.jwt.com

Trend number 2: contextual immersion

The objective of the marketer is to position the brand proposition within highly immersive analogue and digital environments.

Subtrend: Environmental Immersions

Definition: The objective of the brand marketer is to engage audiences through immersion into physical environments that have been flexibly designed in the cultural context. The specific architectural and logistic qualities of the environment generate buzz, replacing conventional marketing communication techniques.

Manifestations: With year-on-year growth of 58%, Urban Outfitters enjoys the status of leading US fashion and lifestyle retailer. The marketing communication philosophy of Urban Outfitters is: retail follows context, no advertising. Anthropologie follows the same principles – highly contextual retail design solutions, total flexibility to adapt interior materials, color system scheme and other brand elements to the natural setting, and no classic mass media communication.

A parallel approach is displayed through "Pop up Shops". Validated as trendsetting by fashion guru Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garcons, the "Pop up Shop" format is a highly viral principle: mostly set in an unadorned part of town, a retail point pops up, offering discounted goods and limited editions of attractively exclusive brands. The retail presence becomes a social performance, attracting early adopters though buzz. No advertising investment is involved.

At a less disruptive level, digital display solutions are already altering the retail semiotic sphere. On the one hand, as practiced by SVT of Amsterdam for leading retailers and banks under the creative direction of Michel van Tongeren, digital posters are capable to entice visitors of retail spaces with micro-movements over time, creating a highly appealing effect. On the other hand, the proliferation of department store TV's, with dedicated digital channels on every floor has transformed retailers in media owners, offering narrowcast time to brands. In-Store TV, the real buzz in the marketing communication industry in Summer 2004, was taken so seriously that Saatchi started a parallel network, Saatchi & Saatchi X, specialized in just this new medium.

References: www.pompeiad.com; www.gdruk.com; www.trendwatching.com; www.aka.tv

Subtrend: Digital Interactions
Definition: The objective of the brand marketer is to deliver the brand narrative through new digital platforms in the mobile domain, re-formatting the media experience through new interactions both between device and device, and between users and devices.
Manifestations: Sean Dromgoole, CEO of gaming research company Some Research, identified what he defined as the "emotising" opportunity. By "emotising", Dromgoole is talking about the opportunity to insert brand messaging in the natural flow of digital gaming messages contextually delivering the brand proposition to highly engaged audiences. The relevance of gaming as a new context of marketing is validated by Nielsen's step to make its value measurable:

Nielsen Interactive Entertainment announced in April 2004 that it is working on a "people meter" for games. By the end of the year, it will gauge how many people are playing a game, how long they play, which ads they see, and how long they see them. Measured media is going to lend credibility to the videogame space and will lead to greater cost effectiveness when buying game ads compared with other forms of media.
(Geoff Keighley, Business 2.0, September 2004)

Such immersion into a virtual world can rely on massively pervasive mobile gaming as the platform to stretch new communication opportunities "on the move". The mobile device can also interact with the classic TV, as pioneered in Finland by MTV3 in partnership with Fun2Phone, provider of solutions for TV interactive gaming through mobile phone.

References: www.fun2phone.com; www.ydreams.com

Subtrend: Digital Connections

Definition: The objective of the brand marketer is to position actionable links in digital environments (search engines, websites, weblogs), as appropriate to enable potential customers to reach commercial propositions and brand environments in one click.

Manifestations: Summer 2004 saw the deployment of major strategic moves from Internet players in search of revenue streams. AOL purchased advertising.com with the objective of acquiring critical intelligence and capability to operate in this context. Google launched its AdSense service, an innovative solution enabling micro-marketing revenues for webmasters with focused audiences. Acting on a more integrated scale, MSN launched a visionary project, "Creative Connections":

The MSN network of Internet services today announced a creative marriage of several top minds in advertising and high-profile brands as part of the ongoing Creative Connection Program from MSN. The Creative Connection Program is designed to help traditional advertisers push the envelope of online marketing creative on some of the Internet's most desirable advertising space. As part of the MSN® program, three award-winning creative directors selected an existing client with whom they would attempt to test the limits of online advertising *(Source: MSN Public Relations)*

The main challenge for a player like MSN is to motivate a paradigmatic change in the mindset and practices of the creative industry, which are still based on the commission fee business model of classic mass media advertising. The deployment of a "future visionary" project with high public relations return seems to be an indicator of MSN's drive to break through the conventions of marketing as we know it.

References: www.advertising.com; www.google.com/adsense

Trend number 3: transformation engines

Once upon a time, the digital revolution was delivered as a tale of revolutionary societal development, liberating creativity energy and entrepreneurial talent in what was called "the new economy". Although the tale took a different turn, to a certain extent the dream became true: new forms of relationship between content and audience are here to stay and to further evolve, allowing people to develop through a deep transformational process that might appear to combine challenge and fun in new, unprecedented opportunities for self expression.

Subtrend: Democratizing Information

Definition: The challenge for the brand marketer is to achieve positive exposure and stimulate positive buzz within and through informal digital channels and/or bottom up media aggregations.

Manifestations: The universally acknowledged source of this phenomenon are the blogs. As published by Steven Hall on one of the leading creative industry blogs, these new media new channels engage precious audiences:

"BlogAds Founder Henry Copeland has published the firm's second blog readership study. The results align closely with last years. Highlights include:

- 75% are over 30
- 75% are men
- 43% have HHI over $90K
- Most, 14%, are employed in education
- 71% have signed a petition
- 66% have contacted a politician
- 50% (highest of any media) rank blogs tops in usefulness for news and opinion

It's an actively involved, upscale, intelligent audience. Readers of blogs also read Atlantic Monthly, The Economist, The New Yorker, National Geographic, The Nation and The Wall Street journal.
(Steven Hall, www.adrants.com, 2005/03/14)

This peculiar audience, filled with both opinion leading individuals and highly inclusive communities, real time, lively exchange of opinions determines genuine, spontaneous, on-going brand exposure at level of awareness and assessment.

In parallel, from the same source, a clear statement of concern was released about the mushrooming of fake blogs architected by marketers wanting to connect to the genuine nature of this phenomenon:

In a horrifically depressing statement, blog monitoring firm Technorati CEO David Sifry points to the growing number of fake blogs launched simply to take advantage of a weblog's ability to trick search engines into ranking web pages higher than they normally would be in search results. Steve Rubel points out it's simple human nature. Once some idiot realizes he can hack something to his benefit, he will do so. Rubel suggests it will mostly be up to search engines themselves to find a way to eradicate this problem.
(Steven Hall, www.adrants.com, 2005/03/14)

Will blogs ultimately replace press as reference for information standards? This seems highly unlikely to a number of experts in the interview panel. However, this constant crossover of formats and even different branches of the media industry (from journalism to marketing) is likely to lead to a redefinition of the fundamental rules of brand planning.

References: www.adrants.com

Subtrend: Small Shop Renaissance

Definition: Individual and micro-sized creative agent rely on diffused technology enabling them to pursue commercial exploitation of their talent with unprecedented reach.

Manifestations: In the process of connecting individual talent to commercial opportunities in the marketing industry, platforms like Creative Commons create the opportunity for unknown authors to distribute their content (eg, music) online for free, activating commercial options when feasible. A Digital Rights Management system for open source publishing, Creative Commons enables authors and marketers to meet and engage from discovery to closed deal, with simple rules.

References: www.515.it; www.creativecommons.org

Subtrend: Transformational Platforms

Definition: The objective of the brand marketer is to act as facilitator, creating enabling conditions for self-actualization and personal growth.

Manifestations: Three best practices are associated with this cluster: Amazon, eBay and Google. One key feature appears to be the ability of the brand narrative to be constantly deployed and delivered at every touch-point and moment of contact, with service as a key focus and no apparent need of marketing efforts. The user is empowered to "own" the communication channels by means of constant feedback to other users and to the brand itself.

References: reviews per article (user involvement) and "Where is my stuff?" service function (brand dialogue touch-point).

From trends to tools

To enable the further development of new solutions and concepts beyond the plain analysis of trends, the creative capabilities of design research are required. The link between research insights and potential project delivery is achieved through a toolset capable of capturing the essence of trend analysis and translating it into enabling conditions for successful, repeatable, multidisciplinary concept generation. Four new experience design tools were created and validated to achieve such a goal.

Tool number 1: Transformational Communication Roadmap

Designed to provide a common ground for multidisciplinary teams, the roadmap articulates five potential stages in the quality and cultural value of the experience of brand communication campaigns and manifestations, with increasing relevance for both societies and individuals:
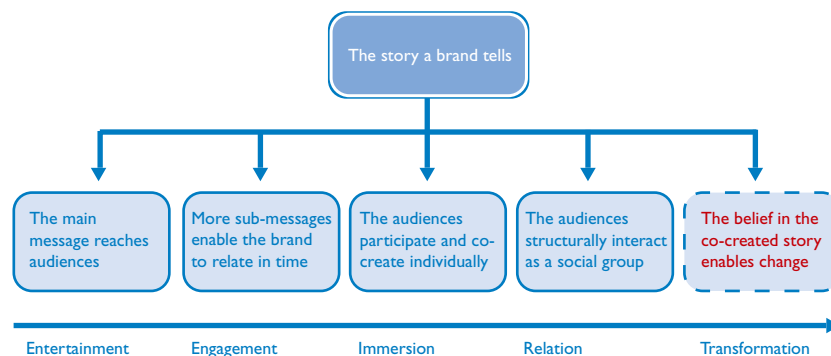

Figure 4: Transformational Communication Roadmap

The five constituencies of this roadmap are defined as follows:

- Entertainment: the key message reaches the final audience inducing a positive perception of the brand by means of excellent content and the aesthetic value of the experience.

- Engagement: the brand manages to involve audiences through multiple channels with differentiated messaging, leveraging the cultural value of its storytelling.

- Immersion: the brand achieves an interactive dialogue with the audience, managing feedback loops through digital platforms.

- Relation: the brand acts as open platform, resulting in the facilitation of co-created communities of individuals contributing to the brand storytelling in a structural, dialogical fashion, over time.

- Transformation: the belief generated around the brand storytelling is embedded in relevant cultural narratives, shared visions and new ideologies, triggering and supporting personal and social change.

Tool number 2: Communication Framework Tool

This tool offers to strategists and creative teams the necessary framework and milestones to structure experience-based communication campaigns focused on three crucial steps:

- triggering the interest of an audience, creating necessary awareness;
- delivering a message that reaches the audience with a core narrative structure, embodying the brand;
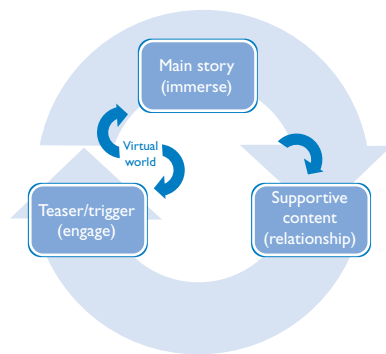- nurturing and growing the acquired potential dialogue over time.

Figure 5: Communication Framework

From the audience's viewpoint, these steps look at communication through the synthesis of its ultimate DNA, distilled as follows:

Engage: how the interest of the audience is activated and their attention attracted

Emerge: how the core promise is delivered to the audience

Relate: how the dialogue is extended and expanded in time, resulting in long term relationships

Tool number 3: Communication Format

This tool aims to manage design challenges by offering to creative teams, media planners and communication specialists a shared reference format for campaign planning and design strategy alike:

A number of reference parameters are defined below, structuring the assets on which brand planners and marketing strategists rely to generate competitive campaigns:
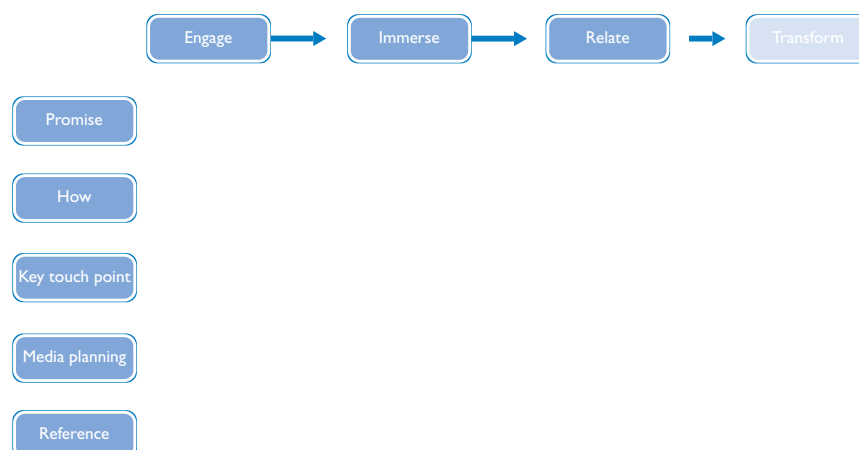

Figure 6: Communication Format Tool

- Promise (What): the essence of what is promised, the articulation of what will be delivered to the audience through the relationship ('what's in it for me');

- Communication Mechanism (How): the style and tone of voice with which the promise is communicated to entice the audience;

- Key touch-point (Where): the concrete channels and constituencies (virtual or physical media, including behaviors): where all communication actions will take place to reach the end audience;

- Media planning (When): the articulated succession in time of media, venues and channels functional to support and expand the delivery of the message by hosting the key touch-point;

- References (Who did it before): any relevant example from current best practices.

Tool number 4: Communication Matrix

The objective of this tool is to evaluate the feasibility of generated concepts in the review phases of projects for both media planning and experience design. Concepts are evaluated across two axis:

- "Cultural Acceptance" is the parameter by which a concept is evaluated against people trend insights indicating whether such concept would conform to present and future social norms and cultural conventions;

- "Technological Feasibility" is the parameter by which a concept is evaluated against technological roadmaps indicating the expected availability of the necessary technical solutions underpinning concrete execution.

The Communication Matrix enables efficient and effective evaluation of the concepts as generated during workshop sessions and can be deployed accordingly in projects of both experience and communication design.
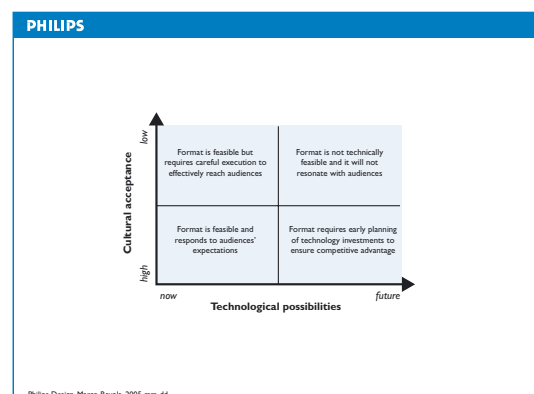

Figure 2: The Digital Future paradigm

In summary, the combined set of four tools, as described above, enable the following steps in project analysis activities:

- Translation of the general outcome of trend analysis and/or concept generation into a synthetic format able to provide multidisciplinary teams with a common ground as reference to generate and maintain a shared vision across the project (Transformational Communication Roadmap).

- Realization of efficient and effective scenario creation workshops by focusing on the key steps necessary to deliver brand narrative over time (Communication Framework).

- Creative direction and review of scenario creation workshops by defining each and every aspect of complex campaigns or multidisciplinary experience solutions, from identified touch-point to tone of voice, through an effective facilitating grid (Communication Format).

- Analysis and positioning of any identified concepts in terms of cultural acceptance and technological feasibility in the overall outcome (Communication Matrix)

Trend conclusions

It is possible to provide a synthesis of conclusions derived from trend research by defining a roadmap from "engagement" (the best marketing communication, participatory of today's popular culture) to "transformation" (the future forms of communication re-defined by digital experience), as follows:

PHILIPS

Transformational communication roadmap

engagement → immersion → relation → transformation

	from	towards
Brand:	product based	storytelling based
Channels:	top down broadcast	interactive network
Mechanism:	push, preach, persuade, seduce	pull, teach, co-creation, transformation of identity
Offer:	consumption	long-term support in lifestyle
Attraction & interaction:	mass mediasegmented message	invited unique participation
Capital commerce:	transaction, economic	culturally specific, tailored meaning
Communication & seduction:	artificial slice of life, idealized and/or homogeneous consumer, customer	co-creative reality, truth delivered and maintained relation heterogeneous people, partner

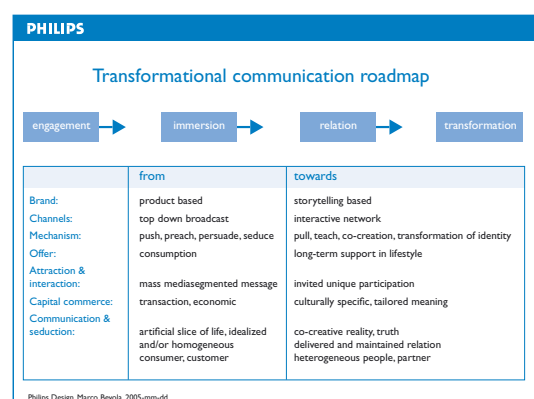Philips Design, Marco Bevola, 2005-mm-dd

Figure 8: Trend Roadmap

Narratives become key in a general development towards more cultural dimensions of brand value, as described by Vincent in his "Legendary Brands" (2002). At the same time, due to media fragmentation, each and every touchpoint should ideally tell the whole story, at each and every contact opportunity, as described in their "Building the Brand-driven Business" (2002). From the point of view of communication strategy assets, three brand constituencies clearly emerge from the analysis as crucial, trend-wise:

Behaviors

As elaborated in Philips Design's paper, "Putting the customer first", (op. cit.) concerning the scope of behavior in the digital experience: the notion of behavior migrates from the characters displayed in marketing manifestations and the lively When digital high tech is involved, one can conclude that UI determines product-based behavioral perceived response of the brand. Difficult navigation will therefore translate into plain rudeness in the perception of the end user.

Services

The challenge to communicate the brand narrative through services was featured in a number of books published between 2002 and 2005, with their main focus on "execution". In particular, the matrix management oriented approach to both brand management (Kotler et al, 2002; Wreden, 2002) and integrated marketing communication (Schultz & Schultz, 2003) elevates the notion of service from mere cost to key post-purchase experiential asset.

Environments

The trend towards environmental solutions used as manifestations for purpose of brand marketing is a consolidated direction, emerging from the 1990's. What seems interesting is the switch towards environmental design for immersive experiences becoming the key feature of the marketing mix. The fact that this direction is utterly promising in terms of future brand marketing investments is confirmed by the efforts of leading design firms such as IDEO to market themselves as partners to architects, as proven by their latest publication, "ExtraSpatial" (2004).

Actionable conclusions: the experience design process

In answer to the challenges posed by the unfolding digital scenarios so far described, the Experience Design process operationally ties into one workflow all necessary assets to create solutions to generate awareness and maintain relationships, from trend analysis to specifications of experience:

General Digital Experience Directions → Specific Connected Customer Experiences → Experience Targets → Product Experience Strategies → Technology Experience Specifications.

Figure 9: The Experience Design Process

Because the key challenge in the post-mass media context is to trigger, activate and maintain relationships in time, engaging people in a long term dialogue, Experience Design appears to offer the appropriate approach and tools to explore the future of mass communication, transaction after transaction, from touch-point to touch-point:

experience over time

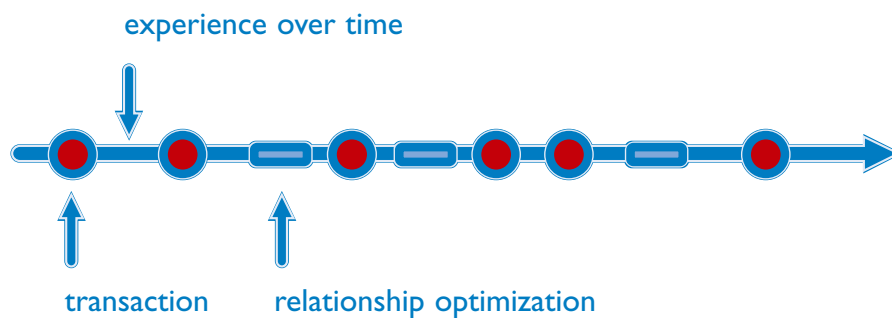transaction   relationship optimization

Figure 10: Experience Design for Relationship Management

Ultimately, through the combined action of multidisciplinary teams, the overall experience strategy – of which communication is one of the delivery pillars – is based on people research unveiling current and latent needs beyond mere target audience segmentation, and then articulating these needs for long term deployment over time, leveraging holistic brand management models such as the "Touchpoint Wheel" (Davis, Dunn, op. cit.).

Thanks to experience design, the problem posed by the dissolution of the current media paradigm becomes first sizeable and manageable, and can then be translated into a true source of new opportunity, in the best spirit of classic marketing communication as we knew it for the last Century.

Appendix: list of interviews performed

Research agencies

Carl Rohde, Sign of the Times, Tilburg (NL); DVL Smith, Incepta, (UK); Stoyan Kamburow, TNS Emnid (D); Mary McGuinness, Sputnik, (US); Kristine Oustrup, Style Vision (F); Lucian James, Agenda Inc. (US); Reinier Evers, Trendwatching.com (NL); Shari Swan, Streative (NL); Sean Dromgoole, Some Research (UK); Simon Walker, Human Ecology (UK); Lisa Yong, RedNet (US/CN)

Press, blogs and media

Steve Hall, www.adrants.com,; Peter Kentie, www.hotspot.nl; Inga Clausen, www.ethertalk.org; Jordan McGarry, Shots, EMAP (UK); Josh Quittner, Business 2.0 (US); Rob Beemster, Adformatie, (NL); Liz Bailey, free lance journalist (UK); Thomas Walton, Design Management Review (US); Helena Kontova, Flash Art (I/US); Roger Tredre, wgsn.com (UK)

Entertainment and tv production

Gary Carter, Freemantlemedia (UK); Michiel Dieperink, Freemantlemedia (NL); Alex Mahon, Talkback Thames (UK); Daniela Cattaneo, h films (I); Randy Lippert, Nordisk (DK); John Nolan, Chrysalis (UK); Willem Elzenga, Plinq (NL); Arjan Potsma (NL); Michela Barbiero, SkyTV (I)

Advertising and communication agencies

Jeffre Jackson, Paul Mukherjee, Uli Kurtenbach, Wieden+Kennedy (NL); Alberto Baccari, Baccari Meckler Worldwise (US); Nicolas Delarue, at large (F); Mark van Iterson, Auberon (NL); Waheed Bhatti, DDB (NL); Bert Trik, JWT (NL); Maddalena Zolino, 515 (I); Karin Drakenberg, Strawberryfrog (NL); Michel van Tongeren, SVT (NL); Conn Fishburn, Somi Kim, Ogilvy & Mather BIG LA (US); Marion Schmitt, Thomas Hinkel, Steffen Gentis, Ralf Zilligen, Rolf Zillingen, BBDO Germany, (D); Patrick Leahy, The GEM Group (US)

Design agencies

Ron Pompei, Pompei AD (US); Monique Mulder, MattMo (NL); Hans Wols, Lava (NL); Mat Hunter, IDEO (UK); Machteld Rijnten, Bernhard van Oranje, Clockwork (NL); Frans Joziasse, Tim Selders, Park (D/NL); Ken Okuyama, Pininfarina, (I); Francois Chambard, Scott Elias, EliasArts (US); Thomas Widdershoven, Thonik (NL); Harry Poortman, Dedato (NL)

High tech and digital companies

Ellen Glassman, Chris Gaebler, Denise Lee Yohn, Sony, (US); August de los Reyes, Microsoft (US); Marco Susani, Motorola (US), Frank Bellaisch, Damien Marchi, PushTVi (F); Ralph Cohen, IceMobile, (NL); Kim Lindholm, Fun2Phone (F); Antonio Eduardo Dias, Ines Sousa, Karina Israel, Ydreams, (P); Matt Heiman, Mobix Interactive (UK)

Automotive, FMCG and retail brands

Steven van der Kruit, Firmenich (CH); Loe Limpens, Albert Heijn – Ahold (NL);
Max van Lingen, Mexx (NL); Friso Westenberg, Heineken (NL); Ada van Dijk, ROBECO (NL);
Asa Nordin, Ikea (S); Gianluca Siciliano, Maserati (I); Edith Wassenaar, Lancia (I);
Luca De Meo, FIAT Auto (I); Jason Tian, Volkswagen (CN)

Academic experts

Kay Muehllman, International Institute of Journalism, Donau Universitaet, Krems (A);
Guido Guerzoni, Bocconi (I); Ofer Zellermayer, OAC School (IL); Angelique Westerhof,
Fashion Institute Arnhem (NL); Pasquale Barbella, Universita' di Urbino, Urbino (I);
Abigail Reynolds Chelsea Art Institute (UK), Maureen Thurston, Art Center College
of Design (US)

Design organizations, cultural institutions, experts

Ton van Gool, MU (NL); Angelo Figus, ModeMuseum (B); Peter Kersten, BNO (NL);
Dingeman Kuilman, Premsela (NL); Charles Kriel (UK); Max Bruinsma (NL);
Ninette Murk (B)

Appendix: list of Philips Design credits

Reon Brand, Tammo De Ligny, Annemartine van Kesteren, Thomas Marzano, Kurt Ward,
Low Cheaw Hwei, Werner Satter, Mark Churchman, Gus Rodriguez, Guy Roberts, Ron
Oosterholt, Claudia Lieshout, Ingeborg van Uden, Marko Macura, Brechje Vissers, Stefanie
Un, Ilse van den Hurk, Slava Kozlov, Simona Rocchi, Anton Andrews, Lorna Goulden,
Paul Thursfield, Fiona Rees, Clive van Heerden, Ashok Panwalkar, Francis Chu, Patta
Arkaresvimun, Clive Roux, Josephine Green, Ange Dunselman, Sander van Lankveld,
Annemieke Fröger, Liffy Luxon

Commissioners: Paul Gardien (2005), Kees de Man (2004)
For more information: paul.gardien@philips.com; marco.bevolo@philips.com

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John Wiley & Sons, London

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Wreden N (2002), FusionBranding
Accountability Press, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Author

Marco Bevolo is Design Director at Philips Design. He has worked since 1999 on the set up and launch of Philips Design trend programs investigating culture, aesthetics and design at global and regional level. He works in the areas of communication trends, cultural studies and media relations.

Marco Bevolo has had work published in the Italian "Nuova Enciclopedia della Comunicazione", as well as Research World, Flash Art and Design Management Review. He was interviewed on cultural trends and branding by ViewPoint, Der Spiegel and Marketing Tijdschrift. He lectured at the Temasek Polytechnic of Singapore, at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, and at the University of Leeds. As well as representing Philips Design in relations to major print and broadcast media, he has been regularly invited at ESOMAR, ENG and DMI events. He serves as an advisory board member of the Istituto Internazionale Studi sul Futurismo of Milan.