

THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MAGAZINE

FALL EDITION 2020 - No. 5

OneShot

Influence



Think Human

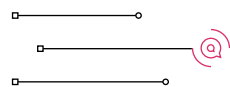


Olivier Duha
Co-founder



Frederic Jousset
Co-founder

What have you learned from the crisis?



When we ask this question to brands that we trust, we always get the same answer; paradoxically, social distancing has strengthened social bonds. At the heart of this new dynamic, digital relationships have exploded and digital technology has played a very significant role. We have seen, for example, complete strangers making wildly hilarious videos, which have been shared thousands of times more than those of well-known comedians. This is why, at OneShot, we have chosen to take a look at the links between influence and new social relationships and to reposition them in a new paradigm that incorporates 'double listening'. Brands have to listen, with empathy and benevolence, and ensure they are listened to, through the means of a carefully-selected influencer. Welcome to the digital era; the one of new opinion leaders!

OneShot by Webhelp

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10,000 subscribers, no more

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A WORD

KOL

Key opinion leaders. They don't influence; they persuade. Inspired and inspiring, they are well aware of the value of their own 'brand'. Your brand may work for them... or it may not. To them, selectivity is proof of authenticity. Stationed on the front line, at the top of their digital perch, they are the warrior monks of their community. Recognized by their audience, they possess a form of expertise. Do not try to seduce them or 'buy' them. First build a bond of trust. Then propose a collaboration.

A NUMBER

10,000

subscribers, no more

It is their greatest strength; with fewer than 10,000 subscribers, nano-influencers are not stars... therefore, they can be trusted. Compared to the stars, and even micro-influencers, with communities of between 10,000 and 100,000 members, they boast far superior rates of engagement and conversation, often twice as high. The perfect balance; a handful of stars and a range of micro and nano-influencers. Less visible - more passionate and authentic, the small and strong ones are not too expensive. And they are listened to very attentively.

> 1 million

> 100,000

MEGA-INFLUENCER

MACRO-INFLUENCER

MICRO-INFLUENCER

NANO-INFLUENCER

THREE OPINIONS

INFLUENCE

HOW CAN YOU GET YOUR MESSAGES ACROSS?

Short term. The health and economic crisis is forcing us to focus on the immediate future. It is essential. However, brands mustn't lose sight of other changes in society. During these highly unusual times, we have found it necessary to take a step back, to take note of the new powers and the new influences that are redesigning our societies and markets – forces that are now ingrained, profound and tectonic... Because new benchmarks are required if brands want to know 'where they are speaking from', so that they can form a harmonious dialogue with their customers – in the midst of a confidence crisis. We recommend you discover some of these keys to interpretation and action. Applicable to short and medium terms, they are based on the works of Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms.

These analyses indirectly create understanding of how influencers on social media have become essential for conveying your messages, as confirmed by the three experts who are here to share their experiences.



Launched in 2018, the book *New Power*, by Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms, proposed new keys to interpretation and action in this century of hyper-connection(1). Their analyses cover the success of platforms such as Facebook and Uber, but also the unexpected success of Obama, Trump or movements such as Occupy, #MeToo or #BlackLivesMatter. Thanks to their evaluation grid, they show the emergence of new values, on the one hand, and of new powers, on the other. These are in contrast with the old values and the old powers, respectively. This sounds complicated, but this new baseline is very fruitful. Notably, it allows for a clarification of the success of influencer marketing and responsible marketing. Because, as Jeremy Heimans said in 2018; "Like it or not, the old world isn't coming back".

Old power. No business will survive if it is purely based on old power values: formal and centralised governance, a secretive mindset, the elitism of experts, etc. This is a stern warning from Heimans and Timms. To them, the best example would be Apple! An old-style organisation that bases itself on old values... even though the Californian company presents a completely different image and enjoys indisputable success. To Heimans and Timms, structures of this type are fortified castles that concentrate and aggressively defend their powers. More globally, on a societal level, a change in attitude has appeared; people no longer trust authority, the bedrock of old powers. They want to act, to participate and to learn.

New power. To Heimans and Timms, the values linked to the new powers are in the realms of leaderless structures, the participative enthusiasm of amateurs, crowdsourcing and complete transparency.

In order to implement the new power platforms and tools, numerous roles must be filled, from scientists to community organisers. They are capable of conceiving and feeding mass participative movements that are open, with little structure, but intelligently organised in order to stay true to their principles. A typical example? TED Talks. Their founder does not run the network of TEDsters, he only manages it, openly and flexibly. The result; locally, TEDsters have created over 20,000 TEDx events. New powers are based on decentralised networks, where everyone is a leader, without one dominant figure. In this model, the meritocratic elite is outranked by collective intelligence.

New organisations.

Do we have to discard the old power values and replace them with those of the new ones? Not at all, answer Heimans and Timms: you will always need both. The key is to learn how and when to use one over the other. The Guardian newspaper would be an example of an old-style power structure that has succeeded in integrating new values, such as transparency and membership. As for Facebook and Uber, these would be 'connector' type organisations, which utilise the new power models but base themselves on old values. Only structures such as those of AirBnB, Etsy, LinkedIn, Wikipedia or the #BlackLivesMatter movement would be worthy representatives of these new organisations, based on new powers and new values. Heimans and Timms recommend that brands question their current organisation and that of their competitors, both today and in five years.

Neutrality = complicity.

"There is no neutrality in combatting racism. The opposite of 'racist' isn't 'not racist.' It is 'antiracist.'"; this quote from Ibram X. Kendi resounded around the world. In the face of one of the biggest challenges of the century, neutrality represents a form of complicity. After the death of George Floyd, brands such as Adidas, Nike, Reebok and New Balance have left their neutrality behind them, as have Louis Vuitton and Glossier. Fnac Darty group is fighting

against programmed obsolescence in support of the environment. The increasing power of responsible and pro-active marketing is no longer a simple trend or stance. Your clients want to know what you are fighting against.

Influencer marketing.

Influencer marketing, targets influential individuals or groups, rather than a large target audience. And it pays off: three quarters of brands have had positive feedback on this method, and 1 dollar of investment returns an average of \$5.20(2). Failures can often be explained by a mismatch between brands and their chosen influencers. In fact, no fewer than 61% of marketers admit they find it difficult to find influencers that are appropriate for a campaign (Mediakix, 2019). Hard work here is potentially rewarding, as 49% of consumers consider the opinions of influencers on social media in order to make their purchasing decisions.

Digital management.

It has been proved the world over; teleworking works. Experts on the subject are not surprised, they have supported this model for many years. On the other hand, some middle managers are disappointed to see that the foundations of their power have crumbled: command and control is finally seen as archaic, a hindrance to employee and company performance(3). The benefits of teleworking – which should not be confused with working from home: more collaboration, empowerment and autonomy for the collaborators, happier digital natives, a possible reduction in the company's carbon footprint, reduced costs for premises, etc. All that is left is to organise digital management, that is collaborative and participative management, and to find a balance between remote and on-site work.

(1) <https://hbr.org/2014/12/understanding-new-power>

(2) Étude « The Influencer Marketing Hub », Viral Nation, NeoReach (2019).

(3) « Le management est-il mort? L'avenir des "RH" à l'ère du télétravail », <https://jean-jaures.org/nos-productions/le-management-est-il-mort-l-avenir-des-rh-a-l-ere-du-teletravail> (Is management dead? The future of "HR" in the era of teleworking.)



Hervé Rigault

General Manager for France
at Netino by Webhelp

The notion of a key opinion leader is coming back into fashion. Previously, this role was held by journalists, speakers, analysts, etc. Yet, on the one hand, journalists no longer have the time to do research and, on the other, many experts lack neutrality. This is because influencers have learned to establish themselves with solid audiences, mainly thanks to blogs and curation, but also thanks to social media. This phenomenon is seen in both B2C and B2B. LinkedIn's recent and considerable development, for example, is a result of its transformation: this social network has become a very influential social media platform. So it is no longer enough to be an expert to become an influencer; you have to have a vision, a certain talent for expression, a taste for sharing, a dynamic network, etc. Brands can profit from it, through attentive listening.





Jérémy

Rodney

Head of Digital Content & Social Media at Bouygues Telecom

At Bouygues Telecom, influencer marketing started in 2013, with 4G. We had to spread the word about its high data speeds, relying on the power of recommendations from a few influencers. First we targeted gamers, big bandwidth consumers and their subscribers. Today, the use of influencers is ingrained in our media campaigns. We don't use nano-influencers, they are too complex to manage with our services and products. When we have a reach objective, we look for macro-influencers. And to find more engagement, and coproduce original content, we work more and more with middle or micro-influencers. Adults, parents, seniors, etc. All age ranges are represented; the palette of influencers has become very large and diverse.



Jeroen Dijkema

CEC Cluster Lead Europe, Unilever (Rotterdam)

Unilever has a vast galaxy of agribusiness brands of international renown. Some of these brands have strong local ties. On an international or local level, we reach out to influencers with three goals in mind: to develop brand reputation, deliver messages on specific brands and test certain new products. The authenticity of these influencers is a criteria for selection, since our products are built on data that reflects the needs of the consumer, but they are also a societal goal. Mainly on Instagram and Facebook, we reach out to macro or micro-influencers.

SOME INFO

TikTok advances its pawns into Europe

With new offices in Paris and several other capitals, Chinese application TikTok has just opened a security and data protection centre in Dublin. It is evidence of engagement and a serious commitment to reinforce their “policies, technologies and moderation strategies while ensuring that they have adapted to the local culture and context”.

TikTok's short videos last no more than fifteen to sixty seconds and they are optimised for smartphones. This mini-format – perfect for Gen Zs – was immediately populated with quirky, spontaneous videos. At the moment, it is a long way from the slick, polished images of YouTubers, perfectly lit with their Diva Rings. Yes, but TikTok is a resounding success:

- It is the second-most downloaded non-gaming app in the world, just behind WhatsApp;
- French star Léa Elui Ginet has over 10 million followers;
- Engagement rates are significantly higher than those of Instagram – over 8% or 9% for micro-influencers ;
- Almost one third of its global users are over 30 – TikTok is no longer simply the Vine of the Gen Zs!

Recently, we could have discredited TikTok for not having analytical tools, making it difficult to measure the impact of an influencer or a campaign (TikTok Ads). But this data is now available, and third-party tools are starting to appear – Pentos, for example. A ROI-focused dynamic has thus been set into motion. You can do mini-surveys there, and the three main levers of influence and vitality are hashtags, posts and songs. There is one limitation though that may be problematic; text is not clickable, TikTok is a closed environment that you cannot leave (or not yet anyway). However, many of its video memes can immediately be found on YouTube! This notion of memes is central to TikTok, since the format is, to a certain extent, restricted. All the interest – and all the difficulty – lies in

knowing how to exploit them. For example, if you create an audio sequence on TikTok, anyone can film over it, increasing the visibility of your profile.

That is to say, TikTok is not a platform on which debate plays a central role. Text is secondary; the important thing is appearance, attitude, fun and self-derision. Herein lies its relevance – but also a risk – to luxury brands, sport, clothing, fashion accessories, high-tech items, cosmetics, decoration, urban vehicles, travel, food, cultural products, etc. Millions of views can be obtained in a few days on a small budget. So, should we use it, or not? One thing is certain; if your target audience is on TikTok, you should at least take a look at what is happening and analyse its trends! Go and browse this week's hashtags on TikTok ...

Engagement rates on
TikTok are higher than on
Instagram.

“For brands, one of the challenges is understanding TikTok's own culture. It is expressed through memes – effects, dance and songs – whose virality can be explosive.”

Chloé de Mont-Serrat, Senior Director Content Management
& Moderations Services at Webhelp





A DEMO

DARK SOCIAL

You are certainly missing something; two thirds of content shares take place in private channels. Are people talking about your brand or your product? Is your communication having an impact? If, in order to find out, you analyse your social media traffic with Google Analytics, it will probably only show you a fraction of the stats. Yes, it's unfortunate, but it's not a (complete) disaster.

What is it?

Dark social is a sharing space that eludes tracking-standards tools. This content – often copy-pasted links – is shared via SMS, email, private or encrypted messages, etc. That is to say, outside the traditional channels (Twitter, Facebook, a brand's webpage, etc.). This method of sharing is overwhelmingly dominant. For each piece of content (published on a website) shared on social media, there are seven shared in the background via private messages.

Why does it happen?

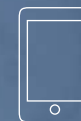
For socionauts, sharing is clearly part of the private sphere; almost 70% of all content sharing takes place in private and the rest on public sharing channels. Because we don't give our best discoveries to just anyone, hence the high informational value of ultra-specific sharing, which also involves seniors more than millennials and Gen Zs. The channels vary, but the rule of thumb, on the other hand, remains firm; only value-added content is shared.

Where do you start?

One way to get the ball rolling is to provide short links that are easy to share, attractive and SEO friendly with tools such as Rebrandly (although its scope is limited). Or to use the share buttons on ShareThis. Or specific analytical tools such as GetSocial. How do we see into private emails or encrypted messages such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger? We don't. Above all, keep publishing value-added content and make it easy to share – never mind if you can't get an accurate measure of the impact later on.

How can you make a performance lever?

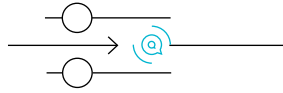
Finance, travel, restaurants... In certain sectors, dark social is the sharing channel of choice. Try to gauge its importance in the sharing habits of your target audience. On this basis, you will possibly rethink your current KPIs, and redefine them. Because dark social is not only the dominant channel on a quantitative level, it also brings you clients and prospective clients who are following the recommendations of a trusted person! And it brings them into the light.



To appease the public, Google has created a dedicated site :
“Bien vivre le digital”.
(Living happily with digital)

It is highly educational and it covers and clarifies sensitive subjects.

A B-CASE



Through its actions, a company can favourably influence a whole ecosystem of companies, perhaps even a whole region. This is demonstrated by Webhelp KYC Services through its participation in the deployment of the platform implemented by Bpifrance, in partnership with regions of France, to support the cash flow of the companies whose activity is impacted by the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 epidemic.

How Webhelp KYC Services participated in securing a platform ...

Key project milestones

📅 **April 3, 2020:** the regions of France seek one solution to be offered to VSEs, artisans and retailers in their territories where activity is affected by the lockdown.

📅 **April 6, 2020:** a crack team is put together at Bpifrance. Goals: to deploy a credit platform for loans granted by Bpifrance in partnership with the regions of France; to bring together accountants in order to have a complete, certified chain of information and, 100% digitally, grant the Bounce Loan ('Prêt Flash Rebond') to eligible companies.

📅 **April 9, 2020:** an ecosystem of expert companies is selected by Bpifrance to set up and operate the loan-application platform. Among them, Webhelp KYC Services is tasked with the automation of the KYC controls, additional human verification and the hotline service.

📅 **April 10, 2020:** the project is given the green light, 50 people are involved, with a deadline of two weeks!

📅 **April 22, 2020:** the first platform is officially launched in the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes region.

📅 **April 29, 2020:** the first payments to VSEs in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region are made in less than seven days. New challenge: to bring in new regional and banking partners.

📅 **May 5, 2020:** the Île-de-France region opens the initiative to its VSEs, retailers and artisans.

... created by Bpifrance to support companies⁽¹⁾

Webhelp KYC Services' response

"We were already partners with Bpifrance, and therefore familiar with their requirements, their working methods and their tools. In the current context, this project is particularly important to us and our teams were highly mobilised to implement it in record time", explains Hervé de Kermadec, founder of Webhelp KYC Services. In two weeks, Webhelp deployed its automatic verification tools and created a team dedicated to additional human checks. The data is entered into the Bpifrance database.

The advantage ...

The onboarding missions entrusted to Webhelp KYC Services included:

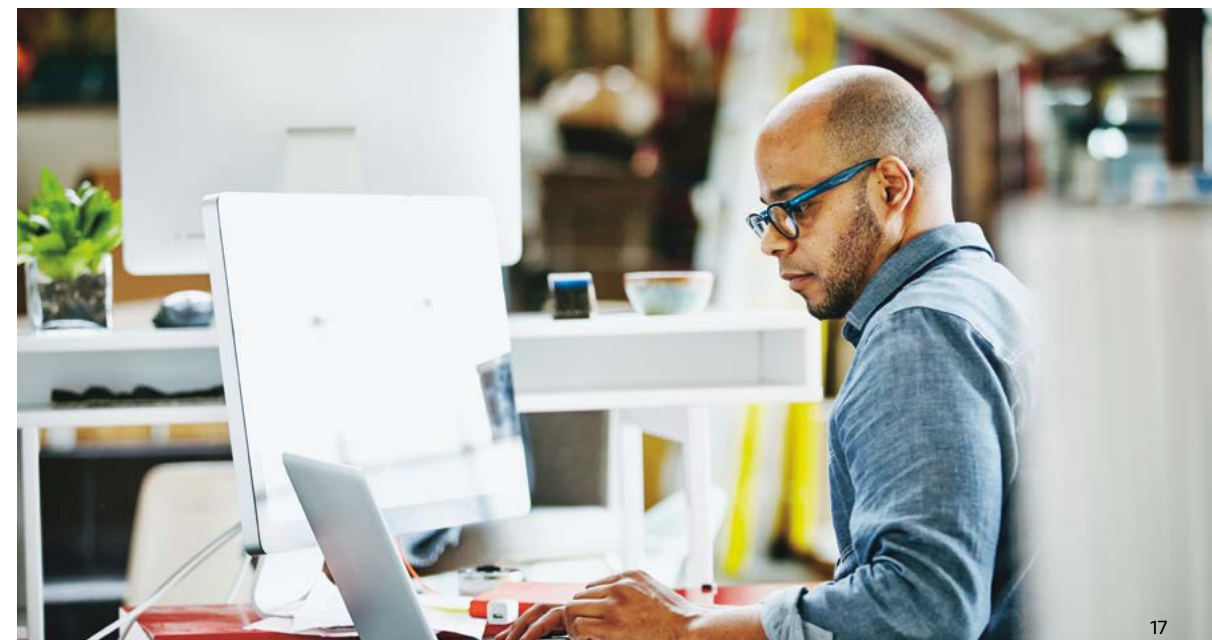
- checking the compliance of the records and verifying the existence of the VSEs;
- identifying the beneficial owners (shareholders owning over 20% of the capital);
- verifying the identities of the beneficial owners (nationality, presence on sanction lists, etc.);
- entering the data into Flaminem and flagging the KYC alerts issued by the software;
- responding to questions from the VSEs (hotline).

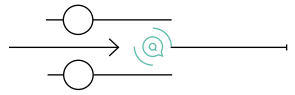


"Bpifrance deployed its online loan-granting platform in less than three weeks. The VSEs in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and the Île-de-France are already making use of it. These efforts will allow our VSEs, artisans and retailers to access thousands of loans".

Matthieu Heslouin,
Chief Digital Officer
Bpifrance

(1) In partnership with the regions of France.





A HASHTAG

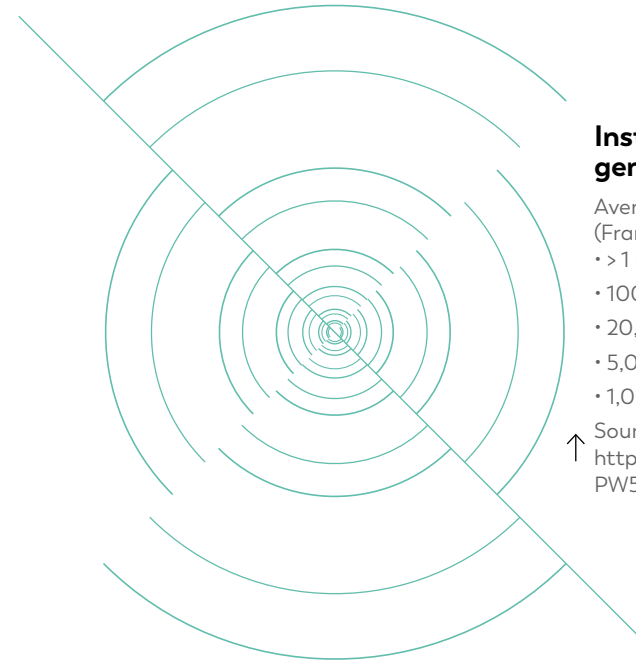
#TrustYourInfluencer



Your brand? Your products? It's the influencers that talk about them best. In any case, they are better understood by your target market. Here are three tips for working well with them.

1. Consider the influencer to be a true partner. Everything starts with a good collaboration with them. A good partnership isn't simply asking an influencer to showcase your product to their followers. This way of looking at it – as forming a human sandwich with the brand – is inefficient, even counter-productive. Today, influencers ask to include the spirit of the brand. Therefore, the influencer should be seen as a consultant for communicating on social media, and not as a simple megaphone. So, the entire challenge is first in identifying which influencers will be the most suitable with respect to the brand's objectives. The error generally lies in always working with the same pool of influencers and reasoning quantitatively based on the number of followers accumulated. It is better to customise together, that is to have a very qualitative and individualised approach based on legitimacy.

2. Let yourself be influenced by your influencers. In general, brands assume a risk when they express themselves on social media. Trolls will find something there to vent about... The goal of collaborating with an influencer is to create a message that will be appreciated by their community – by relying on their legitimacy and expertise. This opens new doors for the brand, and therefore the brand finds new playing fields and new forums in which to express themselves. In a nutshell, influence allows brands to have a voice accepted by a



Instagram is the platform that generates the most engagement.

Average engagement rate on Instagram (France):

- > 1 million followers: 1.86%;
- 100,000 to 1 million: 2.19%;
- 20,000 to 100,000: 2.47%;
- 5,000 to 20,000: 3.12%;
- 1,000 to 5,000: 7.21%.

↑ Source: Influence4You HypeAuditor study.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10xvTPGGveVPW5fDmG3wvXEcbK7zEHARf/view>

community, rather than top-down. The influencer knows their community perfectly well: they are the only person who knows whether or not they will be on board. Therefore, it is better to listen to them and trust them! Particularly as many of them are born communicators ...

3. To generate engagement, favour micro-influencers.

On social networks, in order to add a human dimension to the relationship with the brand, it is wise to switch to micro-influencers instead of working with a 'face of the brand'. Admittedly, the latter option is historically ingrained and it allows brand legitimacy to be established. But today, it is engagement that becomes the main challenge – moreover, platforms are constantly improved to favour it. Once you have set yourself a goal for engagement or ROI, it is better to work closely with micro-influencers, who are involved and relevant, even those with 'only' 3,000 to 5,000 followers. Legitimacy is key. A macro-influencer like Bixente Lizarazu, for example, could also be considered a micro-influencer for cycling, which he is a huge fan of!



“Be a fan of your fans by making them heroes of your story.”

Mark Schaefer, author of *Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins*
• <https://medium.com/@markwschaefer>
• Manifeste : <https://businessgrow.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Manifesto.pdf>



@Ludovic Chevallier

Head of Havas Paris Social

AN OFFER

MYSTUDIO FACTORY, a 'digitally responsible' DNA

MyStudioFactory, the Webhelp Group's digital agency, seeks to give its customers' initiatives sense and durable robustness. This commitment, undertaken by their 40 experts, often leads them to question trends and conviction to what is fashionable, in favour of the strategic, technical and economic relevance of a project with a short-term vision. MyStudioFactory's digital know-how lies in customised long-term support, for very strategic pioneering subjects, but also the conception of a customer path and the development of mobile apps and websites. The common factor in these three domains of expertise is to always include high quality standards.

Contributors : Anne-Sophie Goudriaan,
Benjamin Foucaud

1.

A digital-strategy and consultancy-oriented approach

Our expert consultants support MyStudioFactory's customers in the definition of their two, three or four-year digital roadmap. To do so, our teams run brainstorming workshops and focus groups allowing us to also help our customers formalise their needs and identify the major key trends in a sector of activity. These workshops always work on the development of a critical eye for the in-vogue recipes and methodologies, resulting in the creation of a fruitful and pertinent dynamic, with an underlying human dimension.

The advantage... An identified and shared direction and vision, aimed at structuring the actions to follow and bring the internal teams on board.

2.

Realisation of a strategic vision for customer paths and models

MyStudioFactory's digital studio, comprising UX and UI senior designers, tasked with defining effective customer paths that allow end customers to be offered an optimal experience. The conception of an effective digital project is also strongly linked to technological choices. MyStudioFactory boasts a team of architects with a constant eye on innovation, that – based on an analysis of their customer's IT systems – produces recommendations in terms of technical architecture, new technology and language development choices.

The advantage... The opportunity to apply strategic recommendations to tangible animated models, to get teams on board more easily.

3.

The creation of digital products by an inshore-development team

Comprised of around twenty experts, MyStudioFactory's Development Hub boasts two major advantages:

- ▶ highly selective recruitment of sought-after senior professionals;
- ▶ a unique platform, in Paris (Madeleine), favouring continuous knowledge sharing and peer code reviews.

The team develops complete digital applications: desktop sites, mobile apps and connected objects (IOT). MyStudioFactory often recommends the development of functional prototypes in order to facilitate the certifications and support the IT teams that are often faced with overloaded roadmaps.

The advantage... An integrated team of senior developers doing project work on a platform, with a mind to continuous improvement.

4.

End-to-end support

MyStudioFactory's three centres of expertise allow it to manage digital projects in their entirety. We are convinced of the huge advantage of having a sole integrated team over bringing together hybrid teams to successfully complete a project.

Working together for years on over a hundred projects leads to far superior agility, productivity, reliability and, in the long run, a high-quality user experience.

The advantage... The creative and operational capacity of an integrated and agile digital agency for made-to-measure solutions.



Anne-Sophie Goudriaan,
General Manager at MyStudioFactory

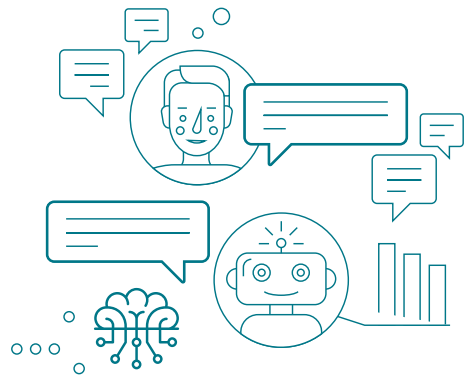
“Improve UX using
social networks ...”

Social networks can collect valuable information for improving the UX, or customer experience, in the broadest sense. This information can be completed with those collected in stores, with reviews left on sites and applications or through beta tests. As part of the creation of a site or an application, we recommend first of all considering the way in which the brand can offer its community of users the chance to express themselves. This is a way of proving that the brand is listening, and that it lays claim to an identity to communicate with its customers. It can, for example, open its roadmap, organise a vote, and thus prioritise the development of new functions.

“... and be pragmatic!”

Sometimes, a brand wants to work as a startup even when it is unusual for it to do so. At MyStudioFactory, the approach is pragmatic. This guiding principle applies, for example, to the design-thinking workshops; the idea is not to mechanically follow the existing theories or roll out any kind of algorithm. Above all, we seek to create a fruitful and pertinent dynamic of production and creation, based on a human dimension. This demands vast experience and a strong ability to adapt to our customers' problems. As for the fact that we have chosen, since our foundation, not to limit ourselves to one sector of activity, this gives the projects a cross-functional vision, based on real usage. Pragmatism!

A MEETING



Conversation 2020 Paris

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

WHAT?

Conversation is the conversational economy's flagship event, on a global level. Organised by iAdvize, it will take place in Paris on 29 September at Station F. The theme this year: "Build the Future of Conversational Experiences". This international event is a chance to see digital pioneers, startupper, and to benefit from the experience acquired by large companies in the domain of customer experience.

WHY?

This event will provide an opportunity to listen to and converse with renowned experts such as Brian Solis (anthropologist, analyst and bestselling author on marketing) and Nathalie Nahai (psychologist specialising in persuasive technology, ethics and online behaviour) as well as numerous specialists in CX methods and tools.

WHO?

All the conversational economy and customer experience professionals are involved. Among the proposed passes, the VIP Pass provides the opportunity to follow the entire event and benefit from a conversational audit of your company. Sounds exciting!

A CONVERSATION

How do
you win
back trust
in the era
of fake
news?

WITH FRANÇOIS-BERNARD HUYGHE,
a specialist in geopolitics, director of research at Iris, expert in influence and disinformation, we take a look at how the social media landscape is overshadowed by scandals. Fake news, fake followers, fake influencers, deep fake, etc. Political currents, companies and simple individuals fight to spread their representation of reality and the courses of action. The craziest points of view - conspiracy theories, flat-earthers, anti-vaxxers, and other trolls - bringing together highly active small communities, whose impact is often destructive. In regard to digital technologies, it brings with it an arsenal of highly sophisticated disinformation that is constantly improving and increasingly easy to access. Is there a place for trust among all this?



Fake news, fake followers, fake influencers, deep fake... How did we end up here? **François-Bernard Huyghe:** These Anglicisms are recent and numerous: I listed 60 in my essay on fake news¹⁾. They can be found in journalism, politics, geopolitics and even in everyday conversation; so they are now part of our reality. Of course, lies and deception go back a long way, but it was in 2016 that the general concern became widespread, with the election of Trump, Brexit, the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal, the Catalonia elections, in Italy, etc. So we have granted great political power to the spreading of fake news – and other ‘alternative facts’ – on social media. To the point that it is a threat to democracies, the media, and ultimately, to trust as a common socio-economic foundation. Thus we have moved into the era of post-truth. And the context of Covid-19 confirms this point of view; WHO even talks of an ‘infodemic’, with harmful consequences.

Where is trust in social networks and media? **F.-B.H.:** Trust in social media has flipped; we’ve gone from a concept, or from a meme, “social networks will establish democracy everywhere”, to “social networks are bringing down democracies”. We started with the idea that social networks provided a freedom of speech that would trouble the powers that be – those of governments and brands, in particular. And this would in turn lead to more lucid citizen-consumers, saner politicians and better-quality products and services. Ultimately it is the opposite that has become widespread. In the case of brands, other negative factors also arose, such as Dieselgate, the leak of personal data, its commercial exploitation, the opaque role of artificial intelligence, fake customer reviews, click farms, etc.

What are the consequences of these disinformation practices for the public? **F.-B.H.:** Gafam and social media regularly report on the thousands of harmful messages or fake news that they delete. There is also corrective intervention from fact-checking experts or bodies, such as AFP Fact Check, partly financed by Facebook, whose new role is “to refute anything that did not happen”. However, despite this refutation, those who manipulate opinions are well aware that there

¹⁾ The term fake news, ‘infox’ or ‘fausses nouvelles’ in French, refers to untruthful information that is spread in order to manipulate or mislead the public.

is still some doubt. As Hannah Arendt already said, “When everyone lies to you constantly, the result is not that you believe these lies but no one believes anything anymore... And with such people, you can do whatever you want.” Ultimately, the most serious aspect is not any particular fake news article; it is the torrent of them that has had a toxic impact on our minds. Citizen-consumers find themselves overwhelmed with doubt, with an inability to learn and act, which leads to frustration or even anger. Take a look at the USA, where Trump has attacked Twitter, while the social network was doing its job of moderating; it is like the start of a soap opera about freedom to express anything and everything, in other words, to misinform with impunity.

What kind of influence is legitimate in the eyes of the public? **F.-B.H.:** We have gone from a time when mass media would publish a message in line with that of esteemed opinion leaders, and we have now arrived – through this crisis of general trust – at a strong legitimacy of nano and micro-influencers. Therefore, over prestige and authority, we now prefer proximity; people who talk to me should be people like me. They and I, we should find ourselves on a level playing field. Hence, also, a form of insularity. The citizen-consumer is eventually stuck between individualism and tribalism. Because a tribe is still necessary in order to feel valued within their choices and their identity. Consequently, speeches that often end up getting through are not those of the experts or the established authorities; instead they are the simple opinions or the raw emotions of ‘real’ people.

How can we rebuild trust? **F.-B.H.:** On the part of companies and brands, it seems wiser to establish horizontal and genuine links with consumers, rather than try to create messages that descend towards ‘the old style’. This probably happens through the human dimension, proximity, localness, transparency, proof, the personalisation of relationships, and by approaches that are more micro than macro. But, in a context of economic revival, they will have to ask questions about a shift in production, of real needs versus luxuries and ostentatiousness, of meaning and values, of the company’s social and ecological role, etc. Is it time for certain brands to make an ethical change and to become companies with a mission? It is worth thinking about.



“Over prestige and authority, we now prefer proximity.”

FRANÇOIS-BERNARD HUYGHE

A STORY



Santa Claus, citizen of the new world

Small children are well-aware of it; it's better to send your wish list to Santa Claus than to your own parents. Because this respectable elder has quite an influence on all the populations of the world, and on eight flying reindeer. He even sells fizzy drinks in winter and has been doing so for Coca-Cola since the 1920s. Santa, fake news? A contrivance of brands? Or an influencer who has managed to reinvent himself in each era? Soon, in order to preserve the future of our children, will he have to dress in green?

A PERSPECTIVE

New normal : a position of benevolent and active listening

Will we return to normal? Or to the abnormal, as some people hope or fear? The next few months will be difficult, turbulent, catalysts for pre-existing trends and windows to multiple divisions, that much is certain. There will also be new relationships of trust to forge. In order to rebuild bonds, there is an operational matter: what will be the new 'social distance' between brands and their customers? For once, don't listen too much to the stats and polls. Place your trust in humanity: the evidence tells us that your customers are going to need to be heard, reassured and understood, but also treated with empathy and kindness. To establish this proximity, digital technology will have a role to play – it has proved its ability to maintain professional ties during the crisis. But listening and human speech will be, more than ever, the ideal vehicles for regaining trust. The fundamentals of your brand and your processes deserve to be revisited, with a new eye, in order to make your brand attractive and to improve it, as far as necessary. And we have seen: from humility, in this time of crisis, realistic ambition can be born.

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