

Brand relevance and the printing press

 By [Lisa Basson](#)

18 Feb 2014

The printing press was a milestone in the era of communication. Its capabilities and mass proliferation are what ushered in the age of 'mass communication'. Ideas could be spread, conventions challenged and knowledge shared.

What this did to society was unparalleled, and resulted in the church no longer being a dominant global power. People could challenge previously unquestioned interpretations of the bible as a result of being able to access and interpret these texts without the aid of a priest.



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Providing more opportunities

The advent and mass proliferation of the internet is the same in terms of its significance in the modern world and in particular the resulting implications for communications.

The internet provides many opportunities for thought development, collaboration and leadership. No longer are we tied to the borders of our nations and no longer are communities central to one specific geographical location. "Facebook is the largest nation in the world, composed of a trillion thumb-size countries" (Y&R: 2013).

So the question may arise, what happens when Facebook and Twitter are no longer the dominant global forces in social media, how are we as communication professionals going to be ready to communicate to proliferated communities and digital nations?

Change is constant

Both digital and marketing executives sit in a state of complacency believing the only relevant digital communication channels include: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Sound Cloud and Vine.

Yes, the digital communication fundamentals can be applied to any channel, but how are we as professionals monitoring the environment in order to prepare ourselves and our teams to excel; in an environment where change is constant and communities mutate and proliferate at a rate of knots?

Do we rely solely on well positioned content or do we start to make predictions and be proactive in terms of our communication and business cycles going forward? The prevalent threat of wildcard innovations and discoveries that result in disruptive technology, which in turn transform entire industries cannot be ignored.

Social consciousness

However and perhaps this is just my opinion, the key to sustainability and associated success in this relational economy is tied directly to three key words: brand, social consciousness and collaboration.

As regardless of platform or content, if brands and/or industries are seen collaborating towards more global and socially prevalent issues and the solution thereof, the brand transcends a mere identification and quality association tool. It starts to stand for something more, which can withstand technological innovations and changes in communication tools. This is due to the creation of a deeper relationship with consumers, which in turn allows for flexibility and creativity.

It's not a territory that is the sole province of an industry or specific brand; it is open to all brands and all communications,

and in much the same way that the printing press changed the nature of communications, so too will social consciousness and collaboration, these are in effect what will lay the foundation for communication drivers into the future.

ABOUT LISA BASSON

When she is not busy hoarding books, drinking coffee or running in the park, you might find her working on brand and/or digital strategy at Base 2. (www.basetwo.co.za)

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