

The traditional media frog and the content monster

 By [Travis Bussiahn](#)

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I'm convinced this is the year where it all finally comes together for business and content in South Africa. The year where the blank bored-room stares are replaced with twinkling eyes. The year where this 'Aha' business moment arrives in executive droves: "There's real people out there at the other end of our marketing efforts and we need to contribute to their lives with our content."

Years spent preaching to the marketing masses like a prophet predicting a significant coming are going to come to fruition. Finally it's here. These real people at the end of our efforts, our customers or audiences, are alive and like any good marriage we should be listening to our significant other with detail and giving them what they need to flourish in our presence.



Making new waves

These real people are not just the 'views' under our video. They are not just the 'Likes' or the retweets. They are not the clicks or the bounce rates. They are not the simple take-what-they're-given consumers of our preconception who will accept any half baked shlock we throw at them on whatever platform we pay to reach them from. They are individuals like you and me and like you and me they make choices. Now that they've tasted genuine choice at a digital level they'll never accept anything less again.

There's no excuse, with the power available at our fingertips through digital for us to do anything less as marketers, but our traditional thinking is helping to stifle it.

Sometimes I feel we're like the frog that's been put in a bowl for three days with a lid above it. The frog could jump out of the bowl but the lid, which is lower than the rim of the bowl, impedes it. The frog jumps against the lid until conditioned by it. Once the lid is removed, the frog is capable of technically jumping out of the bowl but continues to jump as high as the lid was.

The lid is traditional media. To a large degree, with all the ability digital offers to profile and gather data to better serve how we innovate in a human-centric way, we are still jumping at the same level by throwing a traditional mentality at it.

The latent potential for us to be discovering as much as we can about the people we serve with our products and services thus tailor making our offerings to suit them is available to us right now. Today.

So how do you leverage this digital ability effectively? This blue ocean of excitement and promise. How do you lift the lid and jump higher in this new terrain?

In-house content

I think businesses will really benefit from purposing themselves to create their own content. That is to tell their own stories either through a dedicated internal unit or to commit one or two employees to find a strategic partner in this space that works at a deeper level with them to do so.

Should a creative agency with no strategic understanding of your business really be allowed to tell your stories simply because they can design or film or write? Have you allowed creativity funnelled purely to market facing facades (as opposed to strategic or operational creativity) build chasms between what your business really is and what it claims to be?

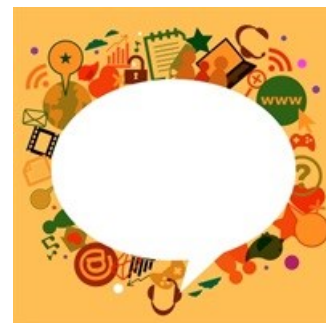
This type of traditional brand thinking only leads to consumer disappointment or mistrust.

Does a bunch of people waving flares and sparklers on a beach while stunt planes fly above really inspire me to believe in that mobile operator when their calls drop perpetually for my clients and family members? No. Their on screen proposal and their service offering are miles apart, but both contribute to personal disconnect and a swiftly cancelled contract.

The amount of money spent on creating and placing that single traditional advert could have been used to generate qualified leads (stimulate new business), make solid connections with existing customers (retention based content strategy) and transform staff into empowered brand advocates. ([video is the new document](#)).

The content monster

You hear it all the time, I'm sure: it's time to change the way you plan, produce, manage and use content inside and outside of your business. But how do you practice this instead of just reading and repeating it without any on-the-ground traction? "Well, sparky, you gotta feed the the content monster in the barn, there's just no two ways about it."



The content monster is a picky food critic with an enormous appetite. It demands both quality and quantity which are both key in this new media space. It requires a reconsideration at how big budgets are purposed. Could we have used the 250k we just blew on a single 30 second advert and the 1,5 million we spent placing it in a more engaging way? Could we have published that content on multiple platforms while carrying a single thread? Could our videos be infographics, our infographics whitepapers, those whitepapers a series of snapchat posts that become tweets and can they all carry the distinctive connective psychology required for each iteration? Yes! Every niche and channel relevant to you can be covered.

But this requires focus, planning, heart, creativity and a deep understanding of the audience or target market. Content that connects with human beings in a meaningful and valuable way is the new currency and that comes from knowing these humans intimately. In-house is an important thing to consider when drawing up those budgets a bit later this year.

When it's coupled with clever insights from the data you're gathering from your community then you should be "A for Away." But how do we gather the data in a significant manner to feed our in-house, out-in-the-barn content monster?

This Social Shopping Conversion Platform is Web 3.0

A real world example of this "insight/data/froggy-jump-higher" thinking comes from a particular company that has lifted the lid and decided to end the traditional thinking. They've done so by changing the sales promotions game. They have taken the traditional sales promotion model and tipped it on its head by mixing conversion marketing, gamification and eCommerce into a viral shopping experience that shares content and gathers data for any business that chooses to use it.

It is not a single-minded shopping platform looking to enrich itself like a virtual branded mall but instead looks to put the power of this system into the hands of anyone with a product to sell or a service to offer, regardless of company size.

Finally, the barrier to your clients having a world class shopping experience isn't limited to whether you got on the right shopping platform or not and what's more, the shopping is just one small element of it. This beaut-of-a-platform is actually designed to tell you more and more about your audience/shopper/market so that you can get the aforementioned in-house content division singing like [Susan Boyle](#).

It all starts with three simple words: Engage. Convert. Reward. A 1, 2, 3 they taught me in Milan (where their head development office is based). This team, headed up by Andrea and Stefano is a simply masterful bunch of software guys who, like myself have been beating the same drum since 4 years back when their new media platform came out, way ahead of its time. Now the market is ready for their white label social shopping platform that does all three (engage, convert, reward) through a heady mix that includes content serving, crowd rebating and on-the-fly campaign building capabilities.



The platform recently achieved digital conversion rates of between 16 and 31% for one of Italy's largest banks. Sure the campaign helped them to now know who their site visitors bank with, generating thousands of Facebook 'likes' moving product from Amazon vouchers to tech offers in the process, but more importantly they now know who was on their site. From the mobile operator they're with, to the things they like and now they can continue a more informed conversation with these profiles through any content channel they choose.

I think, that by the end of this year, they may be Italy's largest bank if they continue to convert thousands of anonymous visitors into happy, qualified leads who are engaged by and ultimately rewarded for their participation in making the bank a better one. All through the power of a single platform. This platform is also focused on CSI and with a full section 18A registration behind them to ensure they tick the box of 'purpose' to compliment their 1, 2, 3 proposition.

It feeds into our business vision for this year that came to me when a European client asked me this question over email:

"What media skills do you want the Happy Media Content Agency to SPECIALISE in that you (Giselle, you and the team you build) can bring to the table of a world-changing message and spirit?"

My answer:

"I want us to be exceptional at making innovation (being able to do NEW things in the media space) accessible and easy to implement with a focus on data and insights. We need to be tapping into the audiences we create content and platforms for by harvesting from them what it is they really want in life and then giving it to them - it's imperative that this compliments the content creation process so that we can create engaging offerings. It is an innovations hub that uses insights to create emotional connections with people and puts practical and ongoing implementation at the forefront of progress versus The Big Idea splurge."

Yes, I think this is the year where it all finally comes together. Where human beings meet in the middle of the bridge that connects business with audience with the goal of both being enriched. Now excuse me, I have to go feed a frog to my content monster.

ABOUT TRAVIS BUSSIAHN

Travis Bussiahn is the Executive Creative Director of the Happy Media Video Agency. He solves creative and business problems for both Happy Media and its clients. He understands the importance of emotional connection in content, branded or otherwise and believes in traditional media's ability to be blended with new media to profound and holistic effect. He loves and excels at concept and the art of story. Contact details: website www.happymedia.co.za | Twitter @TravisBussiahn

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