

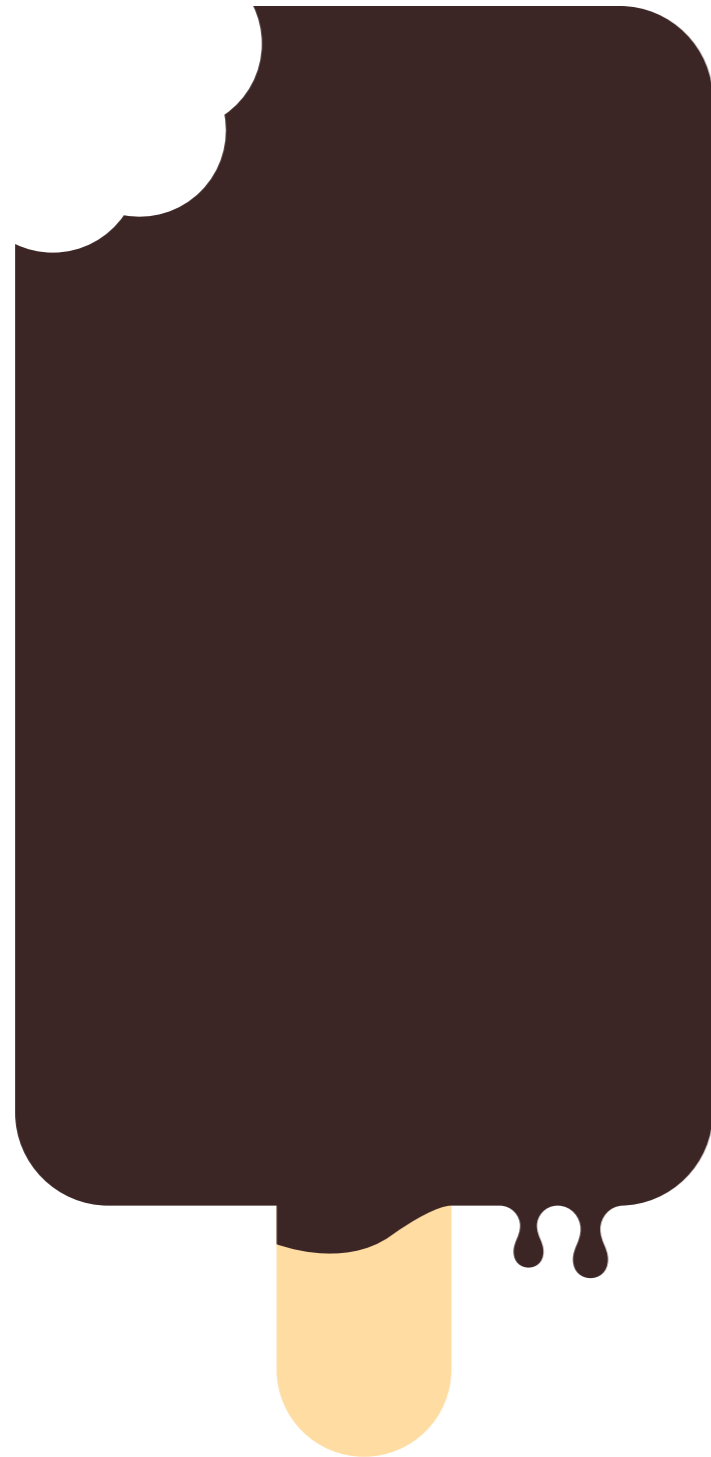
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**il bollettino**

Generali Group Magazine since 1893

Number 2 – Series 13 – August 2015

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SIMPLER, SMARTER

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# Simpler, Smarter



by Simone Bemporad  
Head of Group Communications  
and Public Affairs  
Editor in chief

The May 27 launch of the Generali Strategy to become Europe's leading insurance retailer has set in motion a transformation for all of us who contribute to this great Company. From now on we have a unique opportunity to get personally involved in a cause that will not only make our distinctive Lion the emblem of our success, but will also give us opportunities to enhance our own skills, business acumen and finally, our professional future. The communication cascade that began across our entire Group on May 28 is helping to share the message of this new historic phase at Generali. By now the content is known, and in this issue of *il bollettino* we will emphasize the key messages. Now is the time to transform our resolve into deeds.

Today, customers stay connected no matter where they are and becoming a customer-centric company is at the core of our Strategy. This edition's theme is *Simpler and Smarter*, focusing on the new positioning of our brand which through technological innovations will empower today's consumers to connect with us easily and quickly, and to be reached anytime, anywhere.

The ability to access on-the-go services is vitally important and while customers may buy an ice-cream on the beach, they will also do their virtual shopping there.

Generali is putting in place changes that will allow us to understand better and adapt to the fast-evolving needs and habits of today's customers.

You'll read about our ambition to become Europe's leading insurance retailer with a letter from Mario Greco and an introduction to the strategy by the Head of Group Strategy, Giovanni Giuliani. Our message is clear: we are in a new era, requiring a change in our way of working and in how we serve customers. We are literally putting customers at the very center of all we do.

Group CFO Alberto Minali outlines the importance of customer-centricity in attaining our business goals. We have to start with the client and focus on creating real solutions to generate long-lasting relationships with all our stakeholders. We must be ready to seize opportunities to add real value, to innovate, and to lead the industry in customer service.

You'll find also a summary of Generali's Integrated Report,

launched as part of the IIRC – a global coalition aiming to promote value creation. Generali joined in 2011, and is now one of the leaders of the Insurance Network, capturing and communicating our value-creation process to the industry and the world.

Value creation for our customer starts with us, the people of Generali. It looks at how we provide best-in-class service, anticipating and fulfilling future market needs based on consumers' growing freedom to purchase in whatever way they choose.

# Whats next?



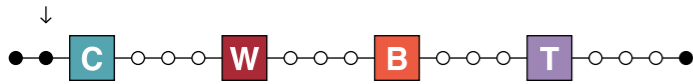
GIULIANO KOREN

*by Mario Greco  
Generali Group  
Chief Executive Officer*

Launching a new strategy is a rare and critical event for any company and Generali had the chance to do so during the first months of 2015. Last year we emerged successfully from a financial turnaround phase 12 months ahead of plan. This turnaround established a robust financial foundation with operational discipline embedded into our business, improved levels of profitability, a restored capital position and debt levels brought under control. To build on this, it was clear that we had an opportunity to define our ambition and objective for the next phase. So the question was: what next for Generali? To answer this we recruited a team of ~40 colleagues from across the Group, who could help us explore the future challenges and opportunities and set our new strategic path. We chose deliberately to develop the strategy ourselves, leveraging only our own resources as we understood that internal participation, knowledge and ownership would be critical to make the strategy ours and best suited for our business. The team, Leave Your Mark, steered by our Group strategy team together with senior leadership, dedicated six months to this task.

It was both hard and exciting work with a final clear conclusion that Generali's strategy should be 'to become the leading insurance retailer in Europe'. We want to be considered as a hungry, lean and agile operator with a simple and smart approach, and we want to become first choice for customers. This strategy builds on our considerable strengths: one of the largest customer franchises in the world; with a strong set of distribution partnerships, with agency networks giving us one of the most powerful physical networks, and among the biggest direct players; with deep knowledge of product design, customer data and information, and profound expertise of our markets; with the necessary scale and critical mass in our operating platforms, and often with a leading market position in many of the markets where we operate.

The positioning and promise that we make to our customers is a fundamental part of defining who we are and how we will be distinctive. We analyzed our market and competitive brand positioning and identified a clear opportunity for Generali to position its brand to both meet the needs



of customers and to fill an empty space in the market not occupied by our competitors. To do this meant delivering a strategy that was both ‘simple and smart’ for our customers, distributors and colleagues. A set of important strategic drivers has been identified to deploy our strategy and deliver on this ambition.

First, we need to accept that we are experiencing a customer revolution that will bring profound changes. Customers are more demanding, sophisticated and are challenging traditional insurance approaches. Therefore it is important for us to ‘think customer’ and center our attention to enhance the experience that a customer has each and every time there is an interaction and contact. Second, we need to support our agents who are the lifeblood of our sales and distribution system and the face of Generali to our customers day in and day out. We will look to extend agents’ capabilities and to link and integrate them into the multi-channel environment so that they get a better understanding of the activities and interactions of their clients which can help improve their sales effectiveness and efficiency.

Third, our strategy must, of course, go beyond pure policy and simple coverage. In fact, we are committed to evolving our portfolio so that it includes not only stand-alone products but also real, intrinsically intelligent solutions. How? By listening to those in need and going beyond the bounds of pure business. It is through a clear and authentic connection to individuals and the communities in which they live and work that we can offer solutions having a greater and more helpful impact on their lives. Indeed as one of our values, we see ourselves living the community.

In this respect the principles of connectivity, simplicity, flexibility and proactive protection will be key ingredients in delivering high quality real-time services to clients leveraging on the huge amount of information and data available. This can be used to prevent loss, reward good behavior, extend the scope of services and raise the frequency of interaction that customers have with Generali.

Fourth, a ‘smarter and simpler’ client experience requires the ability to execute in an efficient and flexible way. We have to become more agile

and efficient internally and this is also needed to generate gains and savings to fund the new technologies and capabilities required to get closer to our customers, such as data analytics, leading capabilities and systems, digitalization of the customer experience.

Innovation will pay an important role in our strategy, and partnering with other innovative players can further broaden our perspective. We are funding several startups to help develop improved and innovative frontline services to customers and multiple pilots have been launched already in this direction.

Finally, our colleagues will be the best advocates of our increased focus on clients and distributors, and the best evidence of our new business model becoming a reality. We will therefore ensure a cultural and mind-set shift and we will adopt a high performance culture and attract new talent. We need to build new skills, get new training, and get closer to the sharp end of the customer experience. We will move quickly and it will be nothing less than a truly collective effort: all of 77,000 of us leading the charge.

As for financial targets, we need to reduce the cost of generating new business year-on-year, product by product. We are moving in the right direction and the beauty of this journey is the progress we make every day but we also need to distinguish long-term from short-term.

Our journey to retail leadership is a long and tough one: this is a multi-year journey and it will extend beyond 2018.

We have to make this transformation happen for our clients, our shareholders, our employees and for the communities we live in.

We, Generali.

# Community first

Distinguishing an organization from the competition is a big challenge, but successfully doing so brings benefits for the business, its employees and its customers. The marketplace has changed radically and a large established organization with a long history must adapt in order to stay relevant.

In this issue *il bollettino* examines Customer Centricity through a broad lens, focusing on the expanding and shifting role customers play in business in general. Senior managers from OpenKnowledge capture this complexity in their article on the digitally-empowered customer. They point out that the massive adoption of digital technology and media has created well informed customers searching for brand partners with whom they share common values.

In covering the sales experience of women consumers, Bridget Brennan also explores customer-driven complexity. As the author of *Why She Buys*, Ms. Brennan reveals the motivations behind an increasingly important and rapidly growing sector of the marketplace.

The customer-centric business model is not new. Henry Ford rose to fame and fortune on it more than a hundred years ago, writes Kristina Tool as she outlines shifting mindsets towards customer centricity. Better understanding of the customer's point of view and increasing the quality of customer interactions are key to meeting new market demands.

Generali Group's strategy centers on knowing our customers better than anyone else and as a consequence,

consistently delivering a seamless 'Simpler, Smarter' experience. Understanding our customers' needs, desires and frustrations allows Generali to provide customer solutions that delight clients and engender loyalty.

*by Isabelle Conner  
Group Chief Marketing Officer*

PHOTO: DAVID LIVINGSTON / GETTY IMAGES

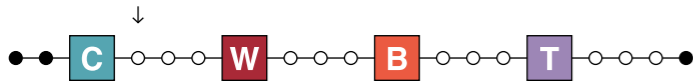


# Embracing Customer Centricity

A simpler, smarter customer experience based on understanding the customer's perspective to better meet their needs and provide solutions using today's technology.

by Kristina Tool

An employee, right, hands a customer personalised cardboard coffee cups inside a Starbucks Corp. coffee shop in London, U.K., 2014. The famous coffeehouse chain based in Seattle, Washington decided to start writing names by hand on the cup, enabeling a stronger connection with the customer as the barista will probably learn the name of regular customers



**'If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own' — Henry Ford**

Henry Ford and his son Edsel with the first Ford car of 1896 and the ten millionth Ford Model T (Tin Lizzy) of 1924

ULLSTEIN BILD / GETTY IMAGES

Customer centricity is getting a lot of attention today; however, it is not a new concept. Henry Ford founded Ford Motor Company in 1903, changing the world forever with his ability to fulfil the need of providing reliable personal transportation for his customers. At that time 'horseless

Ford sparked his own revolution by understanding where his customers faced problems and then providing a solution. 'Don't find fault, find a remedy' is another quip that sums up his views. A customer-centric business model is not a new concept: Ford combined an

points, they started to lose the connection with the outside, and to the very people they want to sell to.

This internal view is no longer sustainable, not for a business that wants to profit and grow. The alarm bells are now sounding and those who don't hit the snooze button are making the shift from the inside to the outside, from the complex to the simple. Customers have gained power and businesses which want to keep their customers need to start courting them, understanding their customers' perspective to better meet their needs and start improving lives for those on the inside and outside.

customer's point of view and the quality of the interactions their customers experience over time and across different channels. Thanks to technology and the use of social media, customers have much more power than in the past. They are able to look beyond company marketing materials and learn what actions are behind promises companies make. Customers then share their own experiences and provide feedback in very public forums enabling others to learn if their experience was positive or negative and influencing behaviors of countless others as reviews and comments are shared across social media for all the world to see.

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### Find the problem, then provide the solution

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carriages' were something only the wealthy few could afford to own. Ford describes his objective to 'build a motor car for the great multitude. It will be so low in price that no man will be unable to own one.' Over a century ago he had devised his own simpler smarter customer experience, focusing on finding solutions with the aid of that period's latest technology, the moving assembly line, to produce dependable and affordable autos for all.

understanding of providing attainable solutions to customer problems a hundred years ago, but many organizations have since moved the customer down on their list of priorities.

Businesses have shifted their focus to the inside, getting caught up in departments, fragmented divisions and numeric targets. In this look to the inside and to targets that seemed to be only numbers on a spreadsheet and not the actual individuals behind the percentage

### TODAY'S CONTEXT

Successful organizations today have already made the shift to focusing on the client. With the recognition that product focus is no longer enough, businesses are working to better understand their

### WHAT IS DRIVING THE SHIFT TO CUSTOMER CENTRICITY?

The necessity for businesses to become more customer-centric arises from a number of factors. From globalization to advances in technology, we have evolved



## FROM THE AGE OF MANUFACTURING TO THE AGE OF THE CUSTOMER



globalization has opened new markets for businesses it has also opened new options for customers. Customers seeking a service or product no longer have to limit themselves geographically. Customers today literally have a world of choice open to them; this means those who want the customer have to raise their game, possibly competing with an international field of competitors. Geographic proximity no longer makes the local vendor the default choice.

With globalization it is also important to keep in mind how to adapt to local expectations (and of course the complication of regulations and laws). A global audience has global tastes and a one-size-fits-all product is even less likely to be appealing to those who have different needs based on their location and culture. Understanding communication, customs and the language in different regions is essential to being more customer-centric.

A warning tale from the legends of blunders made when crossing borders follows. Gerber, the American baby products company, famous for its beautiful 'Gerber baby' label on jars of pureed carrots and peas, used the same label when they started selling baby food in Africa. The company then learned that in some African nations, it was the norm to put an image of what's inside for consumers who cannot read. One can

imagine that sales were less than robust until a more suitable label for the local market was substituted. The story is confirmed by some but refuted by others, but whether true or only an urban legend, it serves as a reminder to understand the context you are selling in and who you are selling to.

### The Pendulum Swings

We have now entered the Age of the Customer. The Age of the Customer indicates the shift in power from a seller-controlled market place to one where the buyer has much more influence in the relationship. As the graphic illustrates, the first part of the 1900s was considered the Age of Manufacturing, where mass production allowed the population to have an increased choice of products available at prices more reasonable than custom-made one-of-a-kind items. As technology and logistics improved, business moved into the Age of Distribution. The Internet and personal computers made access to information free and easy and set the stage for customer empowerment. This Age of Information and the technology that enabled it has ushered us into where we are today: the Age of the Customer. While customers are already actively leveraging their new power, many businesses have yet to catch up and

Market research agency Forrester has declared that we have entered the Age of the Customer and in order to succeed in this period, businesses need to become customer obsessed. 'In a world where empowered customers are disrupting every industry [...], the only sustainable competitive advantage is knowledge and engagement with customers.' – Source: Forrester Research Inc.

from the Age of Manufacturing to the Age of the Customer. These changes in the external environment require businesses to adjust internally to adapt to market demands.

### Globalization

Globalization has opened up many new opportunities for businesses to serve those who are in different parts of the world. Technology has shrunk the globe so that we can easily connect with those who are physically far away. While

are still operating with an old mindset for conditions which no longer exist. Successful companies in the Age of the Customer have put their customers at the center of all they do, creating customer delight. Companies such as Apple and Facebook consider how each interaction with their customers is a positive experience, contributing to creating an entire customer journey that makes their customers happy.

**If you want the customer then raise your game**

In the past, companies had more power to control their message and dictate terms. The rise of social media has allowed customers to obtain information, share experiences and increase their purchasing options, shifting the balance of power to customers who are no longer just passive purchasers. Customers have more options and are making more demands, ultimately seeking a smooth, easy experience across all touch points. Whether dealing with an agent in person, a service representative on the phone or filing claims through their smartphone, insurance customers expect their experience to be easy and pain-free. Those who experience frustration,

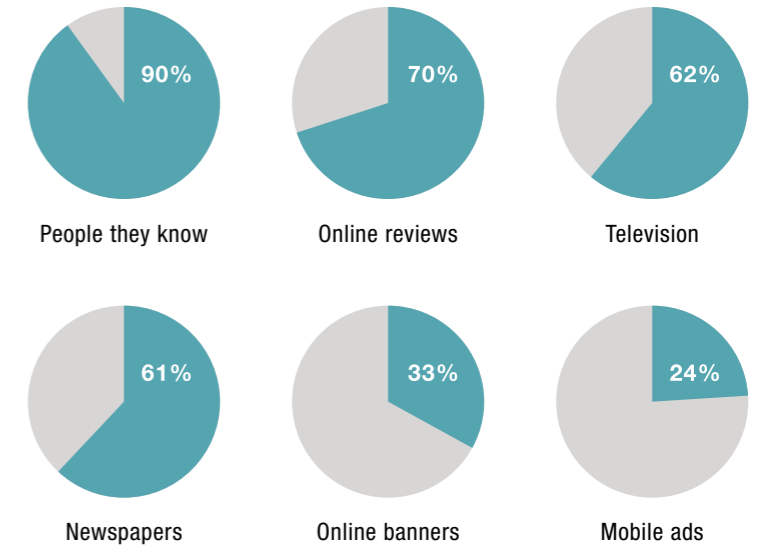
moving across channels or not finding solutions to their problems are likely to choose to do business elsewhere. The European insurance industry average churn rate is 20 percent. A figure that is indicative of many dissatisfied people, but one that also represents a big opportunity for an organization that is able to recapture those they have lost.

**Technology, social media, big data**

The rise of the customer has been made possible by technology, and while technology certainly has given customers far more power, it is a tool that can also be used by customer-centric organizations to learn about what their customers want. Many organizations have started to collect and accumulate data on their customers, and those companies who are most successful in meeting customer needs are not stopping at collection only. They are carefully analyzing what is been gathered and funneling insights back into actions that create better and more personalized client experiences. Data end destination is not a pie chart, it needs to be studied and produce actions that can help an organization better serve their customer. On the customer side, the use of technology helps in research, making comparisons and testing out the responsiveness of service and product sellers. Those companies who do not

**CUSTOMER TRUST ON DIFFERENT SOURCES**

The 2009 Nielsen survey, the largest of its kind, asked 25,000 internet consumers in 50 countries if they had any degree of trust on 16 different sources of advertisement. Six of the most relevant results are shown here



pass the test risk the wrath of a customer scorned. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have become fertile grounds for venting frustrations or unfortunately less commonly, sharing what goes well. While word of mouth was always a factor in acquiring or losing business, the Internet has made word of mouth exponentially more powerful. A survey by Convergys Group found that one bad tweet can cost a business 30 customers. Negative reviews online are also giving rise to a the growing problem of silent attrition, in which customers leave or choose not to do business with a company offering no explanation and never even giving a company a chance to rectify the situation.

The methods of letting customers know you exist and influencing their purchase decisions are also changing as we enter a more customer-centric context. Traditional forms of advertising have been losing ground to opinions posted online. Who do

you trust? People are much more likely to follow a recommendation from someone they know or an opinion posted by another consumer online. A 2009 Nielsen survey polled over 25,000 internet consumers in 50 countries. The survey found that 90 percent trust recommendations from people they know with 70 percent trusting online opinions. Compare this with trusting newspaper ads at 61 percent and online banner ads at 33 percent and we see that the consumer's voice has overtaken the company's voice in terms of purchasing influence.

With traditional advertising and forms of marketing losing their potency, wooing and keeping customers has to come from serving them. A business that makes a customer happy will not only keep the customer but may even create a loyal brand advocate, one that is less price sensitive and is able to influence others to choose that company.

## CURRENT CHALLENGES TO BECOMING A MORE CUSTOMER-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION

Many companies have established a goal to focus on customer centricity, but in the eyes of their customers they continue to fall short. This could be due to not having a clear understanding of where they are in terms of meeting customer expectations. Meeting customer expectations requires zooming out to view the big picture of the customer journey and then zooming back in to examine the details of the steps that make up the journey. The steps themselves and the transitions between them are often points of frustration. A customer's opinion of a business is not limited to the product it sells alone, but rather is formed by the entire experience that customer has with the business.

Alternatively, a business might recognize they are not where they want to be yet, since making a change on a large scale takes time and commitment. For established organizations it can be complicated to extricate themselves from old siloed, fragmented ways of working in favor of new collaborative and open approaches that provide the customer with the desired clear and consistent interactions.

Two women sit at a reception desk, wearing headsets and connecting customer calls at the Western Electric company offices

### Big companies and the big picture

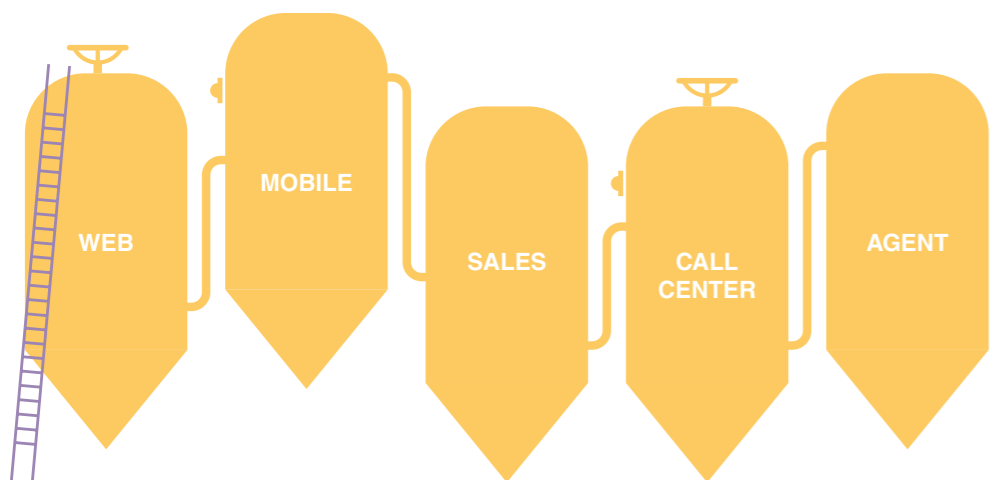
Being big and established provides a company with many advantages, but size and age can also provide a false sense of security and even the largest of companies that don't pay attention to the customer revolution will have a limited future. On the plus side, large companies who get it right are in a better position to meet their customers' needs on a scale that smaller ones cannot.

The big and historic companies can be missing out on the opportunity to transform into a truly customer-centric organization because they are attached to their longstanding way of thinking. This old school mentality includes a perspective that is focused more on products than solutions, seeking to perfect a 'product' (even in a business that sells services) and neglecting the experience that surrounds the product.

A product sold to a consumer, whether it is a car or an insurance policy, exists within a larger journey of services and experience. This journey includes discovering the product exists, obtaining needed information for comparisons, deciding to make a purchase and finally



PHOTO: HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES



How is your company structured? How well does information flow between channels and departments?

what happens after the purchase in using the product and the decision to repurchase. Seeing the big picture of the customer journey and all of the steps it comprises must be examined to create true customer centricity.

To be a successful customer-centric organization all internal decisions and actions should be examined in terms of

another department and on the customer at another point in his journey. To solve these issues, the mindset needs to shift from the inside to the outside. Customer-centric organizations need to ensure that actions taken inside the business are strongly and positively linked to meet the needs of the customer on the outside.

8 percent of customers thought so.

What is causing this gap in perception? Customer frustrations range from poor communications to feeling as if they are not having their individual needs met. Generali's own market research reveals that insurance customers in particular feel that the industry uses too much jargon, does not make it clear what policies do and do not cover, and that overall these companies communicate in a way that is complex and difficult to understand. As if that were not enough bad news, there is the belief that the industry is slow and inflexible, cold and distant, and does not take into account individual needs. These frustrations are hardly a recipe for creating customer delight.

**Silos belong to a farm**

Large businesses are organized into departments based on functions or

channels: Sales and Marketing, Human Resources, Communications, Web, Mobile, etc. These departments tend to operate in separate silos with transparency and communications between them limited. Each silo contains valuable resources and data that compose a piece of the puzzle that makes up the organization and contributes to the customer's experience with that company.

The view from the inside out is quite different from the outside in. Inside of the company, the perspective of those is generally limited to the silo they work within, but customers view their interaction with the company from another perspective, and if the silos are too separated, they are forced to jump through hoops and bounce from touch point to touch point to get what they are seeking. This results in lost time, inconsistent and conflicting information and a frustrating experience.

Customers want easy access to assistance and to have consistent and seamless experiences, regardless of the touch point. The flow of information and internal processes must be designed to support this. It's important to understand how customers move back and forth across channels and that they are doing so by their choice, not because they can't find an answer or were told to go elsewhere and then left to find their own way. Customers left to find their

**Meeting customer expectations requires zooming out to view the big picture and then zooming back**

how they ultimately affect the customer along each step of the journey. Too often plans are short-term and short-sighted, focusing on short-term profits and departmental goals. Problems also occur when decisions are made in isolation, without working to consider the ripple effect that a choice in one has on

**Perception gap and frustrations**

There remains a large disconnect between what businesses think they are providing and what customers are experiencing. A Bain & Company survey found that 80 percent of companies think they are providing a 'superior experience' but only

own way can easily find their way to the competition rather than back to you, it is therefore important to identify and remove these barriers to keep them from going elsewhere.

### HAPPIER CUSTOMERS MEAN MORE PROFIT AND SECURE EMPLOYEES

Setting the goal of transforming a business requires a well-designed strategy and commitment from all levels to succeed. Change can be challenging and not without discomfort, however it brings rewards too. The benefits of successfully creating a customer-centric

practices which brought it success in the past, but are no longer relevant in today's customer-empowered market. The starting point for transformation is to raise awareness of what customer centricity is about and then develop an action plan to achieve the benefits it provides. The culture of the Company should be one that supports connection not only with the customers but with others inside, so that they can collaborate to best provide what's needed to the customer. Openness and transparency between divisions and departments sets the stage for the customer to experience a more consistent, simpler journey. Generali has

### Who 'drives' the decision? Ask Henry Ford

organization are clear for the business: happier customers lead to more profits. But what about for all of those who must do the work to transform? It turns out employees not only benefit from working for a company with a more secure future, but they tend to be happier themselves.

started to make this shift as evidenced by a new customer-centric strategy and implementing the use of the Net Promoter System that provides a score to measure how customers feel about their experience with the Company.

#### From awareness to action

Organizations seeking to shift mindsets on the inside, to better understand their customers on the outside, start first by creating a common vision and increasing

### THE SECRET? KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER!

Generali, as a 184-year-old brand, has the challenge of shedding old

Google has invented the self-driving car, which allows people who have difficult driving (for example the elderly or the blind) to maintain their independence



SMOOTHGROOVER22

awareness among all on what that vision means. As awareness is increased and comprehension of the vision is aligned, a company must continually work to understand and meet the needs of their customers, diligently acting to remove pain points and empowering its employees to create opportunities for delight. As noted, with the increased power and options available to customers, the way to succeed and keep customers happy is to understand what they want and provide it.

#### Openness and transparency

With the challenges created by size and silos, customer-centric strategies must allow for the exchange of data and information among departments. Customers experience frustrations when different channels provide inconsistent

information or they are unable to have issues quickly resolved. As illustrated in the example provided by Maersk's cross-functional teams and Ambassadors, internal collaboration is an essential component in supporting customer-centric processes.

#### Measuring progress

Any strategies, processes and decisions need always to be measured as to how they will affect the customer, in order to understand if they are effective and gauge progress. The use of the NPS provides a way for companies to get feedback on how they are doing. Customers are asked to rate their interaction with a company by providing a numeric response on a scale from zero to ten to a question such as: 'How likely is it that you would recommend our



### Kristina Tool

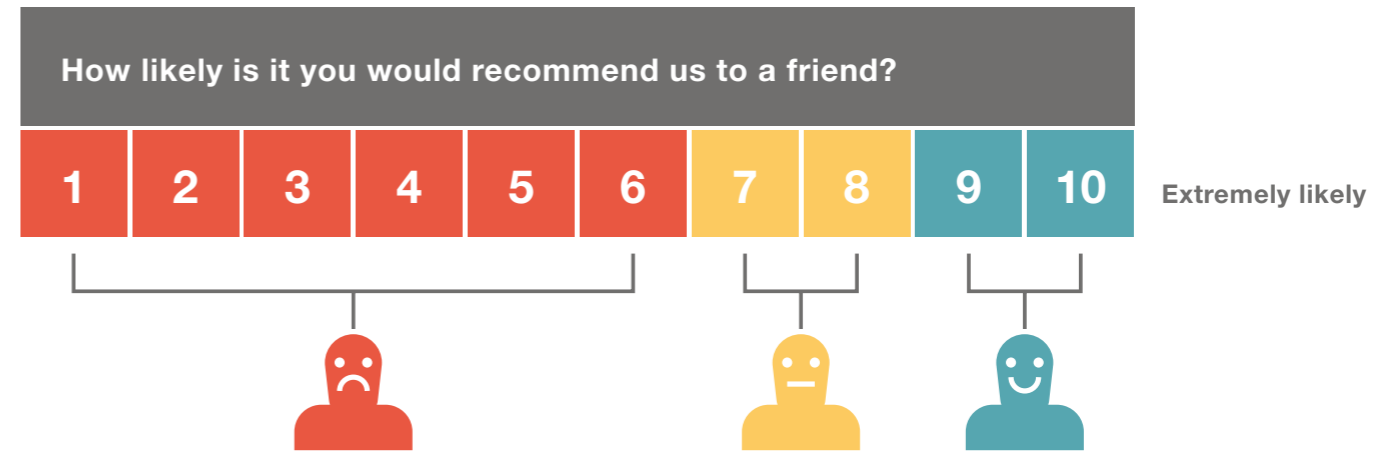
Kristina Tool is a design strategist and service designer, helping organizations to innovate processes, services and experiences. Applying design thinking principles to create a customer-centered approach, she helps businesses gain insights on their customers' needs and desires in order to guide strategy and operations. She has worked on projects in the USA, Europe and the Middle East and collaborates with multidisciplinary teams to build successful customer experiences.

NPS helps companies gather feedback on how they're doing



company to a friend, colleague or family member?' The people who respond are divided into three categories. The Detractors are those who are unhappy with their experience, giving a score from zero to six. They have the highest churn rates and generate bad PR for the company through complaints. On the opposite end of the scale are the Promoters. These are happy customers, giving a score of nine or ten. Promoters account for more than 80 percent of a company's referral business. In between Detractors and Promoters are the Passives, who give a score of seven or eight. They are satisfied but could easily switch to the competition and have a referral or repurchase rate of as much as 50 percent less than Promoters. The total score for a given company is determined by subtracting the amount of Detractors from the amount of Promoters.

Businesses with a goal of becoming customer-centric organizations can start



with increasing awareness on what it means to be customer-centric along with the benefits provided by such a strategy. The creation of an open, action-oriented environment, with an eye on how decisions ultimately influence the customer experience, is essential. Finally it is important to understand what works and what does not, a system like the NPS allows a company to monitor the effectiveness of its interactions and understand where changes need to be made.

### SUMMARY

Being part of the change into a customer-centric organization can provide rewards for a company, its customers and employees. Customers are the ultimate determiners of the bottom line. Realizing that the customer should be the driver for decisions (pun intended) is something Henry Ford

understood and companies who are building sustainable success are doing now.

Challenges faced by organizations today include both the exterior business and internal cultural environment. Successful businesses need to take into consideration the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization, increasing demands from customers and how technology is being used by their clients. Then they must examine their internal structure to ensure that it is equipped to understand and serve the needs of their customers.

By shifting mindsets to create a customer-centric organization, Generali, its employees and customers can be part of a positive and integrated experience that will bring benefits to everyone involved.

## BEST PRACTICES



WOLFGANG

Maersk has been the world's largest container ship operator since 1996. Based in Copenhagen, it has offices and subsidiaries in more than 135 countries and around 89,000 employees

It is not easy to change long-entrenched habits, but it can bring great rewards for those businesses who acknowledge that the world is changing rapidly and that they need to keep current in order to keep customers. Proof it is possible to do so can be found in the businesses who worked hard to bring customer service as primary focus to all levels of their company. Procter & Gamble and Maersk are two such companies that have demonstrated that large multinationals can lead the way in the customer centricity movement, rather than remain dinosaurs.

### Procter & Gamble

A.G. Lafley, CEO of Procter & Gamble, noted that large, mature companies encounter challenges of market saturation and find it hard to continually develop new offerings that are successful. In 2000, the consumer products giant was experiencing a commercial success rate of only 15 to 20 percent. This translated into a return on investment on only one out of every six new products developed (in line with the industry average). P&G made a switch to focus more on the customer and then more than doubled its success rate to over 50 and 60 percent. A company known for innovation, P&G recognized that in order to innovate successful new products it had to start understanding its customers and serve them better. P&G instituted the mission of 'The consumer is boss.'

In the early 2000s Lafley was in charge of a worldwide workforce of more than 100,000 people.

'We had a corporate mission to meaningfully improve the everyday lives of the customers we served. If 15 seconds with a deodorant or two minutes with a disposable diaper have made a small part of your life a little bit better, then we've made a difference.

But we hadn't explicitly or inspirationally enrolled enough of our 100,000-plus people around the world in our mission; it was neither fully embraced by employees nor fully leveraged by the company's leadership. Our innovation efforts suffered accordingly.

So we expanded our mission to include the idea that 'the consumer is boss.' In other words, the people who buy and use P&G products are valued not just for their money, but as a rich source of information and direction. If we can develop better ways of learning from them — by listening to them, observing them in their daily lives, and even living with them — then our mission is more likely to succeed. 'The consumer is boss' became far more than a slogan to us. It was a clear, simple, and inclusive cultural priority for both our employees and our external stakeholders, such as suppliers and retail partners.'

— *The Game-Changer: How You Can Drive Revenue and Profit Growth with Innovation*, by A.G. Lafley and Ram Charan. Crown Business, 2008

'The consumer is boss' concept put P&G's customers at the center, starting with knowing their customers better. P&G was able to cultivate a

customer-centric environment which supported the development of products that better met their customers' needs and enabled employees to serve them better, ultimately leading to increased success in the marketplace.

### Maersk

Another company that benefited from a big turnaround by focusing on customers is international shipping giant Maersk. Headquartered in Copenhagen, the company has more than 89,000 employees and activities in over 135 countries. Maersk incorporated the use of the Net Promoter System (NPS) to measure the success of their new customer focus strategy. The results are impressive: the company saw a 40 point improvement in their NPS, going from -10 to +30 (see more below on NPS).

The multinational was in a difficult period, facing the challenges imposed by globalization and a hard financial crisis. Competition was increasing and shipping companies were starting to compete on price alone. Not wanting to win the race to the bottom by being the lowest bidder, Maersk opted to position itself as a premium brand. To set itself apart, the company decided to focus on customer experience. They began their work by understanding their customers, observing and experiencing their customers' journeys and identifying pain points. In studying the entire experience they too identified a need to be simpler and smarter. Maersk found that its customers were experiencing frustrations in getting their problems easily solved.

The company came to understand that their perspective was too internally focused; they were not fully grasping what their customers were experiencing and what frustrations were occurring across their interactions with the business. By shifting mindsets to put themselves in their customers' shoes, they learned how they could reduce the pain points. One outcome was the decision to be more proactive in notifying their customers about delayed shipping schedules, rather than waiting for their customers to notice and contact them to inquire where their container was. In taking this initiative and providing them with options, customers felt that Maersk cared about their business.

One of the obstacles to better serving their client base was an internal structure that was too divided. To break down the barriers created by internal silos, the company created cross-functional teams worldwide. They also created Ambassadors who would lobby for the customer perspective on these teams. Training for front-line employees was increased along with programs for Ambassadors, resulting in increased customer experience awareness and better informed employees. The end result of better serving Maersk's customers was more orders: a 4 point increase in NPS resulted in a 1 percent increase in cargo volume.

Those industries that decide to focus on the customer by understanding their overall journey are able to identify where problems are occurring and can then take the needed internal adjustments, so that externally customers have a better experience.

**Europ Assistance**

Europ Assistance was founded with the purpose of meeting a need that no other company had effectively addressed before: helping out those encountering difficult situations when traveling. Generali recognized the value of this offering, becoming Europ Assistance's first shareholder in 1963.

Europ Assistance's mission states: 'To assist customers in all circumstances of life, in everyday life and in emergency situations, providing prevention, protection and assistance in the areas of mobility – Travel and Auto – and in those of Health and Home & Family.' It is a focus built from their founding innovation, yet one that gives them the freedom to adapt to meeting the needs of today's customers. For an organization to succeed at being customer-centric, it must have the flexibility and agility to adapt to everchanging customer needs. Europ Assistance's underlying values enable it to continue to ask questions about what problems their customers are facing today, so that they can better provide them with solutions.

Companies that innovate early in their existence often remain too attached to their original concept, risking stagnation and allowing newer companies and their customers to benefit from innovation. Customer-centric organizations need to be acutely aware of how the economy and culture shift, and how these changes affect what their customers need. Successful customer-centric businesses are also able to provide innovative and

relevant solutions rather than merely 'repackaging' old products.

Europ Assistance has found the sweet spot in its original goal of serving those in need and applying it to their customers, keeping in mind the difficulties they face in today's context. One such example is the recognition of the risks that the digital world now contains. Certainly the rise of technology has offered the population many conveniences, but it also has brought with it the risk of identity theft. Storing our personal information in the cloud allows us the convenience of remote access, but also exposes our precious data to hackers who now no longer need to be physically near us to take what is ours. The need to protect individuals from this type of modern theft resulted in the development of an identity theft insurance program, protecting customers and resolving problems such as stolen bank card numbers and identity documents.

The identity theft insurance program is just one of the many initiatives developed based on providing help to clients in moments of need. Europ Assistance's approach is working. The company currently provides services to more than 300 million people in 33 countries. The new tagline, 'You live we care,' underlies their focus on helping out their customers as they go about their everyday lives.

The world is fast moving; Europ Assistance adapts its services to take care of its customers and protect them across the world







PHOTO: DAN KITWOOD / GETTY IMAGES

# Branded communities

Branded communities provide a fertile and favorable context for the rise and empowerment of consumers who are now considered direct ‘agents’ of their own consumption and company partners by co-creating value.

by OpenKnowledge

The scooter in 1960s Britain was a fashion statement and the often heavily customized bikes, usually an Italian Vespa or Lambretta, became synonymous with the Mod scene. Riders participate in the ‘Ride Out’ which brings the Isle of Wight International Scooter Rally to a close on August 25, 2013 in Ryde, England

## ACTORS AND PLAYERS ON THE MARKETING STAGE

Do you remember the marketing crisis that happened at the beginning of the 21st century? It was a period of strong uncertainty: marketers and communication professionals had trouble understanding customers, who had radically changed in just a few years. The massive adoption of digital media, the diffusion of disruptive technologies – think of iPhones – and social paradigms created a new, empowered, and at first sight unmanageable consumer, referred to in different ways by observers and researchers as ‘consumer-producers,’ ‘consum’actor,’ ‘prosumer,’ ‘post-consumer’ to mention but a few.

Multi-tasking and creative, communitarian and experience-oriented, socially-devoted and digitally-empowered consumers are now both actors and players in their dialogue with brands. They love to play, both physically and digitally, with the product/service offering. Often they play inside the ad hoc locations that companies have made available to them.

Furthermore, the female economy is on the rise. In a 2009 article,<sup>1</sup> *Harvard Business Review* suggested that women are driving the world economy and represent a growth market bigger than China and India combined.

In today’s challenging scenario, which new role do brands and companies need to take in order to keep on creating value through marketing and communication activities?

## INTERNATIONAL STRANGERS WITH SHARED VALUES

A general answer to the question is both conceptually hard and innovative. The new corporate aim is no longer to ‘market to’ consumers, but to ‘market with’ consumers. Value co-creation has become a strategic imperative for almost every company, while the least risky result for enterprises not considering consumers as needful market partners is probably brand hijacking. Following the ‘market with’ approach, consumption experience becomes an integration between the resources put in place by companies and those put in place by the consumer, in order to co-create and co-extract value.

Nowadays consumers may be considered as direct ‘agents’ of their own consumption. Through their power, they have also dramatically changed the dynamics both outside and inside the company.

On the one hand, the whole market has become an enormous, worldwide forum where people actively struggle in creating and competing for value.

The challenge becomes understanding how to capture this precious value. Think about Airbnb, Tripadvisor and Trivago: online platforms able to connect unknown people from all over the world and let them exchange insights through a peer-to-peer approach.

On the other hand, corporations need to become virtual platforms, where users meet together and live extraordinary, vivid and shareable experiences. The

## WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD BRAND ENJOYMENT

This rising communal approach to consumption is not automatic, nor to be taken for granted. Digital and social platforms may become effective ‘arenas’ to let brands and people work together in a flexible and dematerialized way, but online user-generated contributions are driven by three main factors:

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### Brands belong to their ‘daily users’ and not to the companies that legally own them

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enterprise becomes ‘extended’ – as supported by a network of suppliers and partners – while brands belong to their ‘daily users,’ and not to the companies that legally own them. An example is LEGO Group, the Danish manufacturing company that has optimized its business model by co-designing innovative products with advocates and clients through digital and social media.

Brand management is transforming into brand *community* management, as branded communities provide a fertile and favorable context for the rise and empowerment of consumer-producers, who thus can become company partners by co-creating value.

**Intrinsic enjoyment:** as social beings, we love to meet and interact with other people, both offline and online.

**Self-promotion:** if leveraged in the right way, digital and social platforms can become powerful tools for personal branding. Prestige, status, reputation – terms known as symbolic capital – may be cumulated through an active participation in 2.0 brand communities.

**Change perceptions:** people go online to make (and see) things happen.

On the other hand, one of the main advantages of web 2.0 is to show

feedbacks in real-time and with a transparent many-to-many approach. Information access has become a commodity!

Besides the push effect of digital and social media, companies have to carefully design the community experience, through ‘infotainment’ dynamics and by balancing the creation of business value with the range of benefits participants can obtain. Well-designed and -managed brand communities stress the ‘community spirit’, better known as ‘linking value’. The linking value is directly correlated with the ability of brands, products and services to construct, develop, enrich and maintain interpersonal links among consumers. Think about the ability of brands like Nutella, Harley-Davidson and Nike to transform themselves into emotional ‘bridges’ for people from all over the world who use them to better

of their users, who share contents (quotes, photos, videos) from their own personal experiences, thus connecting with their ‘friendbase.’

### OPEN SOURCE BRANDS BASED ON INTERACTION

Enabled by digital and social media, lots of brands are currently opening themselves to consumers’ suggestions, insights, passions and ideas by creating and managing large and small communities. This is the best way to become Open – or Open Source (OS) – Brands.

OS Brands’ offerings are mainly produced by community members both for their own benefit and for the use of other people. These dynamics enrich the traditional brand image by also identifying and incorporating the ethos of stakeholders involved. High-tech corporations like Google, Cisco,

Six girls with six identical pink hats at Covent Garden, London 2009



by some of the major brands worldwide, able to focus on corporate social responsibility through storytelling. As written in the Who We Are section:

‘Collectively tells stories about a world we want to live in.

Imagine if cities were built for people, not cars. We worked to live, not lived to work. Our food made us both happy and healthy, and the stuff we bought looked good and did good at the same time. We believe in a world where this kind of life is normal – the ‘new normal.’ Collectively uncovers and celebrates the people and ideas that are making a better world a reality everyday, so they can inspire us to start making change happen now.’

In this scenario, it becomes very difficult to separate brands from

products, products from producers, and producers from customers. By opening their boundaries, brands become cult-symbolic entities belonging to consumers. The final result is a ‘mix and match’ where interconnections, integrations and links become more important and more strategic than the ability of corporations to unilaterally define their image, competitive positioning and organizational evolution.

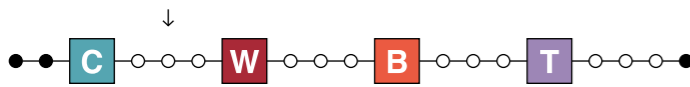
### THE ENGAGED WORKFORCE BOOSTS BRAND VALUE

Often, corporations look for brand advocates and ambassadors outside their boundaries, to achieve a ‘consumer-centric’ point of view. If the importance of customers’ roles in a company or brand life cycle is clear, what about employees?

### Employees are one of the biggest marketing assets that a brand can have

know each other and to share their deepest passions. Other great examples come from social networks. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are brands built exclusively on the interests and passions

Microsoft, Tesla and Intel have already embraced the road to OS Brands. Another interesting business case study comes from Collectively,<sup>2</sup> an innovative project co-designed and co-managed



Employees are one of the biggest marketing assets that a brand can have. They can constitute an important source of value creation, the first community to activate and to leverage. They can behave as a brand's biggest advocates, but they are often an untapped territory.

an Employee Advocacy Program called 'Social Circle' involving their social media savvy staff to actively promote the company through the use of their own social network accounts. As a large percentage of the staff within the organization was already active on social

ability to design and manage online and branded places where consumers can interact both with each other and with corporations will become a strategic skill for marketers and business professionals because collaborative consumption has definitively gone mainstream.

Not taking into account the challenge of leveraging collaborative dynamics can cause serious issues for brands.

Firstly, if not properly engaged, consumers quickly get bored. Building a brand community or any other look-alike virtual spaces without concentrating on collaborative dynamics and human interactions does not bode well for the success of the project. Secondly, community members may get frustrated. They feel exploited by organizations for not being rewarded while generating business value. This scenario could bring to a tipping point, where the same users rebel against brands and companies, or even create direct competitors. For example, ex-Warhammer fans created the game confrontation, and a group of Liverpool FC supporters organized and now run a new, separate football club – AFC Liverpool.

Finally, if people feel a lack of spaces dedicated to a specific topic, they sometimes choose to open them by themselves. An example is the international community of Couchsurfers. By the way, social platforms like LinkedIn

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### The ability to design and manage online and branded places will become a strategic skill

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Talking about 'employee advocacy' within a digital perspective, the term is used to describe the exposure that employees generate for brands using their own online assets like email, chat, forums, social network profiles, discussion boards and more. The success of this paradigm has underlined the birth and diffusion of social marketing platforms that leverage the potential reach of individual employees and company partners by creating a network of people that share, tweet, and post company-created messages and contents. GaggleAMP<sup>3</sup> is currently one of the best known providers.

Sharing a company's values, vision and mission, employees can thus take care of its reputation on a daily basis. In 2009 AT&T, one of the world's leading telecommunication companies, launched

media with circles of friends or followers, the potential for AT&T to reach thousands of people outside the company was huge, as well as the possibility of personalizing the brand with the voice of employees, as opposed to company-dependent channels.

### CONCLUSIONS: MANAGING THE COLLABORATIVE CHALLENGE

So, do you remember the marketing crisis that happened at the beginning of the 21st century? If so, welcome to the new Era of digitally-empowered collaborative consumption.

People increasingly tend to replicate their offline communitarian habits online, playing with companies in a personalized (and often unpredictable) way. The

### FURTHER READING

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**Alberto Maestri**

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**Ilaria Baietti**

Master's Degree in Economics, PhD in Business Administration. She has been involved in the digital communication world for twenty years, first as a Professor at SDA Bocconi, then obtaining field experience at Virgilio and Alice-Telecom Italia. In recent years she has managed digital marketing strategic projects for large corporations operating in different industries. Her focus of interest is social, digital and multi-channel strategies, digital marketing and social CRM.



**Giuseppe Genelletti**

Senior executive with a rich international experience and a deep knowledge of innovation and communication issues. He has spent more than 25 years working in the US and Europe, engaging in corporate change programs, leadership and organizational renewal and running marketing, communication and innovation teams in a large multinational environment. He graduated at Università Bocconi in Milan and holds an MBA from Insead. He is passionate about cycling and mindfulness.



**OpenKnowledge**

With headquarters in Milan and branches in London and Sydney, OpenKnowledge is an international consultancy firm specialized in Social & Digital Transformation.

The company focuses on 2.0 digital tools, seeking to improve internal collaboration, communication and client relationships, product and process innovation.

OpenKnowledge assists companies and people to enter the new digital paradigm, both internally and with the market, by integrating consultancy and change management, technology implementation, communication and creative competencies.

and Facebook – which allow new ad hoc group-communities to open with ease – can make the task simpler.

In the banking and insurance industry, the challenge is often to find the right balance between new, open markets and the management of effective interactions on social and digital media. For example, a recent i-Com study dedicated to the insurance sector pointed out how social media are still perceived as ‘risky places’. Enabling virtual interactive platforms means also increasing the exposure to reputation management issues. Furthermore, the focus of corporate communication is usually linked to services and high-level values, while people and consumers experience behaviors. In order to build and manage long-lasting relationships through the web, Marketing Magazine<sup>4</sup> underlines how banks and assurance corporations must exhibit at least the following five drivers in interacting through digital and social media: Transparency, by providing the audience with every useful and relevant information, taking into account privacy issues and criticalities; Trustworthiness, by positioning the company as a reliable ‘life companion’; Respect, by considering people’s ethics, needs and idiosyncrasies; Honesty, by acting against corporate or short-term interests on the customers’ behalf if necessary; Sharing, by highlighting a

common set of principles and working with users to reach them together.

True, value-generating collaborative marketing means approaching consumers’ minds and hearts. The road to prosumer empowerment is just at its beginning. So, accept the challenge and embrace the Social Revolution! #CommunityFirst

<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2009/09/the-female-economy>

<sup>2</sup> <https://collectively.org>

<sup>3</sup> <https://gaggleamp.com>

<sup>4</sup> [www.marketingmagazine.co.uk/article/1340404/trust-me-im-banker](http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk/article/1340404/trust-me-im-banker)

## SIX KEY FEMALE CONSUMER SEGMENTS



### Fast-Tracker

24% of population  
34% of earned income  
– Economic and educational elite  
– Seeks adventure and learning

Subsegments:

#### Striving for achievement

15% of population  
19% of earned income  
– Job and recognition are priorities

#### Independent women

9% of population  
15% of earned income  
– Works the most and prizes autonomy



### Managing of her own

10% of population  
9% of earned income  
– Single again, divorced or widowed  
– Seeks ways to form connections



### Pressure Cooker

22% of population  
23% of earned income  
– Married with children  
– Feels ignored and stereotyped

Subsegments:

#### Successful multitasker

10% of population  
14% of earned income  
– Feels in control

#### Struggling for stability

12% of population  
9% of earned income  
– Constantly battles chaos



### Fulfilled empty nester

15% of population  
16% of earned income  
– Largely ignored by marketers  
– Concerned about health and aging gracefully  
– Focused on travel, exercise and leisure



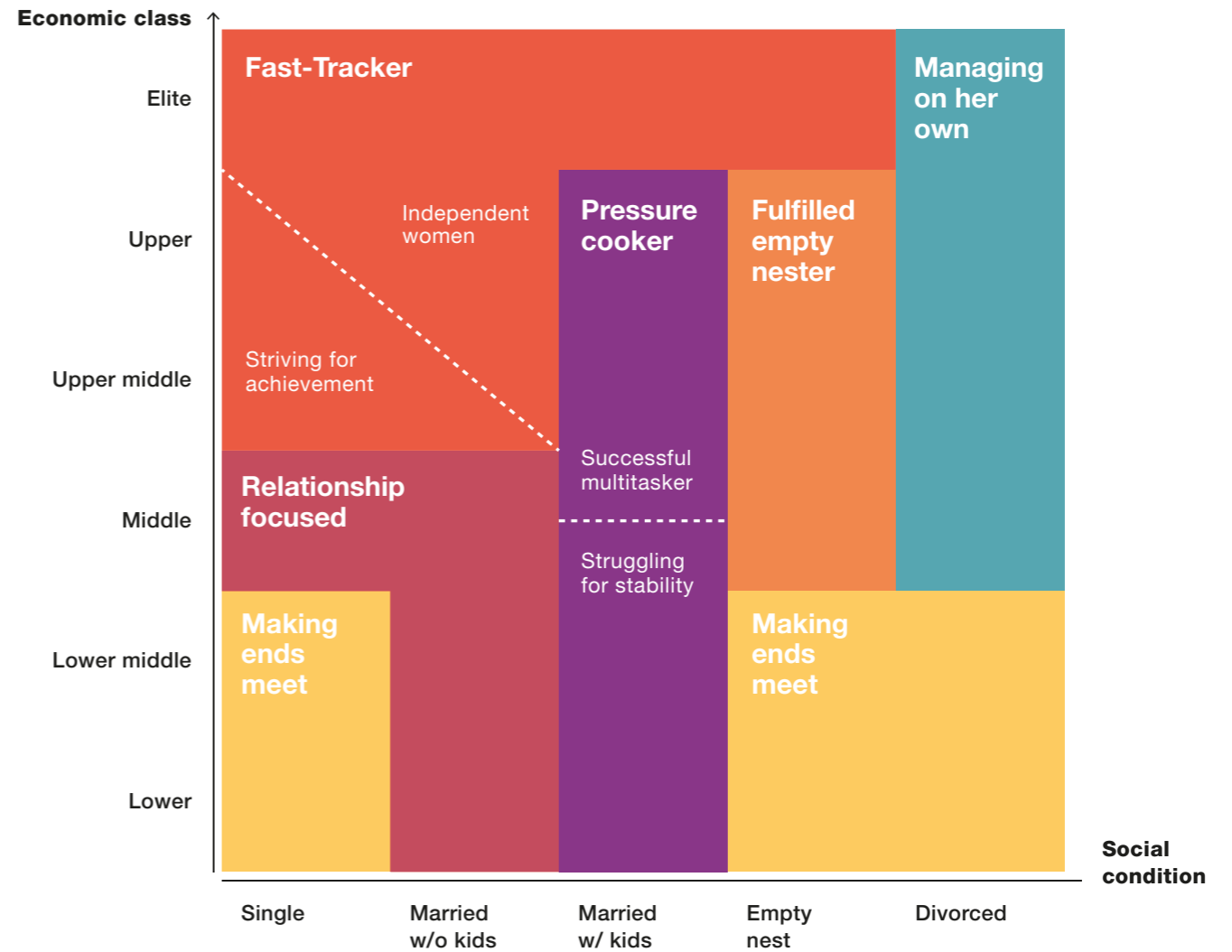
### Relationship Focused

16% of population  
13% of earned income  
– Content and optimistic  
– Isn't pressed for time  
– Has ample discretionary income  
– Focuses on experiences, not products



### Making ends meet

12% of population  
5% of earned income  
– No money for beauty or exercise  
– Majority lack college education  
– Seeks credit, value and small luxuries



Social condition



Women shop in one of the street markets in Brick Lane, London 2011

## Think pink, make the sale!

Men and women make sales decisions based on widely different factors. Understanding those differences and delivering a superior sales experience will guarantee that your female customers will keep coming back.

*by Bridget Brennan, author of 'Why She Buys'*

Do men and women buy things in the same way? Not according to Bridget Brennan. In her book *Why She Buys*. Brennan writes that women evaluate the salesperson as much as the product. They want to buy from someone they can trust. Men might go for product specs; women factor in the needs of family and friends. Men think in terms of performance; women focus real-life practical benefits. Women also want to know their business is appreciated. Understanding those differences and delivering a superior sales experience will guarantee that your female customers will keep coming back.

### HOW TO DELIVER A GREAT SALES EXPERIENCE TO WOMEN CONSUMERS

No matter how much research a woman has conducted online, or how many times she's seen an ad, the critical purchasing moment often comes down to that 'last three feet of the sale.' This is when she's standing on the sales floor, talking directly to a salesperson, hands on hips, deciding whether to buy. At this juncture, all bets are off. It's here, in this moment, that mistakes are frequently



made and sales are lost – often because women have different expectations of the sales process than men do. Whatever you're selling, the gender of the person you're selling it to can make a difference in how your pitch is received. Most sales coaches and training programs overlook the simple question of whether the buyer is a man or a woman. Gender is central to a person's identity and life experience, and it impacts perceptions of everything from body language to vocabulary use. Sales is simply a form of communication, after all, and communication is where men's and women's styles can differ most. In our sales training programs at Female Factor, we work with companies on how to optimize the customer experience for women buyers. Here are some key insights to keep in mind, from my book, *Why She Buys*.

#### Women are often evaluating the salesperson as much as the product

Selling a product is one thing; selling yourself is quite another. Selling to women successfully requires both. This is especially true in high stakes, big ticket sales situations. The higher the price, the more she has at stake, and consequently women want to buy from someone they feel they can trust. During the consideration process, women will often fast forward to a worst case scenario of something going wrong after the sale, and they'll try to imagine whether they could count on the salesperson if it does. They are often willing to pay more for better service and the peace of mind that comes from it. A bad sales experience can kill a woman's intention to buy, no matter how much she wants the product.

#### Women factor in the needs of people who aren't there

When women shop, they often evaluate how their purchases may impact the people they care about most. They automatically factor in the needs and opinions of these family members, friends and colleagues, even when



#### Bridget Brennan

Pioneer in marketing and selling to women, she is the author of the acclaimed book *Why She Buys: The New Strategy for Reaching the World's Most Powerful Consumers*. She is the founder and CEO of the strategic consultancy Female Factor. She has served as instructor at Northwestern University's Medill School, and as guest lecturer at the Kellogg School of Management. She is a member of the Forbes Executive Women's Advisory Board, founder of the Marketing to Moms Coalition, member of the Economic Club of Chicago and the Network of Executive Women.

Bridget is based in Chicago, the headquarters of Female Factor.





they are the sole decision maker in a transaction. It's important to address these absent influencers during the sales process, by asking your prospect if there are other people who will be using the product or involved with it in some way. By doing so, you may be able to surface unspoken barriers to the sale.

**Product benefits are more powerful than specs alone**

Every industry has its own acronyms and lingo. You may sell your product every day of your working life, but your customer may buy it once every ten years (or less!). It's hard to keep the perspective of an outsider, which is why focusing on the real life, practical benefits of your product is so important. Challenge yourself to match at least

one benefit with every product spec you mention. For example, instead of saying only, 'This side-by-side refrigerator/freezer is 30 cubic feet,' it's more powerful to say, 'This side-by-side refrigerator/freezer is 30 cubic feet, which means it can hold up to ten frozen pizzas.'

**Appreciation goes a long way**

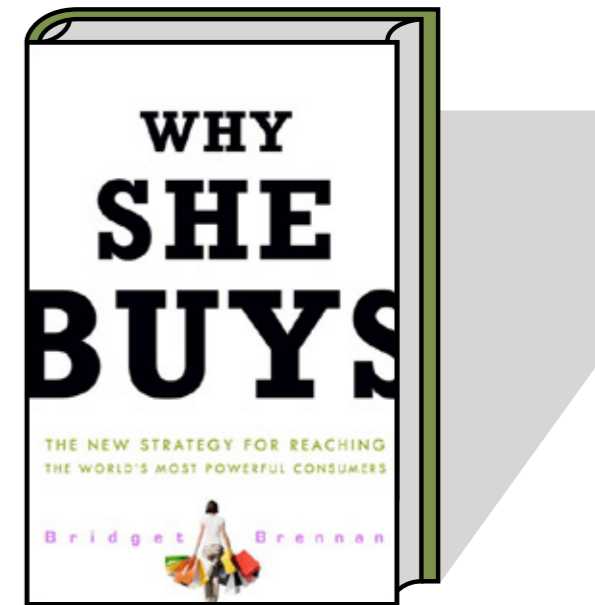
A sale should be looked at as the beginning of a customer relationship, not the end. Women want to know their business is appreciated when they spend money with you. What are you doing to actively demonstrate appreciation for your customers' business? Whether it's a personal thank you note, discounts on a future purchase, a free gift, an invitation to a VIP event or some other thoughtful

expression of gratitude, these gestures work to build a relationship that goes beyond the sale and may make your customer feel motivated to recommend you to others.

No matter what your industry, at the end of the day you're really only selling one thing, and that's help. Delivering a superior sales experience can mean all the difference between why someone buys and why she doesn't.

Article originally published on Forbes.com

The cover of Brennan's *Why She Buys*, a compendium of business strategies to attract the world's 'most powerful consumers'



# We, Generali

Here at Generali, we know that people are the most powerful asset we have. Ultimately, the success of our new business strategy relies on us: our culture, our capabilities, our behavior and our engagement.

This is why, in order to enable our transformation, Generali's People strategy is based on four key pillars: a mindset shift towards a simpler, smarter approach; a stronger engagement of our people through empowerment, recognition, energy and listening; a focus on the development of our leaders and talents; a solid investment in building new capabilities.

Our engagement journey has started from listening to our people. All of us have been invited to have our say through the first Generali Global Engagement Survey. It is the

start of an exciting path we will walk together to make Generali an even better place to work. It will lay the foundations for the changes that really matter to us and to the future of our Group, supporting the success of a new strategic chapter.

Engagement cannot happen without enabling and empowering our people to make a difference. The futurist Anne Lise Kjaer recently spoke to the Generali Leave Your Mark team, emphasizing the importance of enabling our people by giving them ownership. As she says, 'The passion and commitment that empowerment creates shine out in every interaction with customers and set the organization apart.'

Turning Generali into a customer-centric organization requires a mindset shift from all of us. It's not just about

serving our clients; it's about acting as Client Heroes, becoming at the same time our Company's happiest customers. What better advert could our organization have than its own employees as its ambassadors?

*by Giacomo Silvestri  
Head of Group Organization  
& Change Management*



PHOTO: ROMEO GAGLIARDI / GETTY IMAGES

A policeman pushes a three-wheeled public commuter vehicle known as a 'bajaj' on a road submerged by floodwaters outside the presidential palace in Jakarta – February 9, 2015. Torrential monsoon rains have flooded many sections of the Indonesian capital causing heavy traffic and leaving some commuters stranded

## Becoming Heroes

Insurance companies can make a true difference in the lives of their customers. This can make those working on the inside helping to resolve problems for those on the outside, happier.

*by Kristina Tool and Claudia Barnaba*



## EMPLOYEES HAVE TRULY VALUABLE INSIGHTS AND KNOWLEDGE

While transforming a business into a truly customer-centric organization requires an effort to break out of old habits, all of that work brings about numerous benefits. The business itself will see increased profits thanks to increased customer retention rates. Customer-centric businesses attract more satisfied customers who are less price sensitive, purchase more and spread the word about their positive experience. And it is not the corporate entity alone that reaps the benefits, employees gain opportunities provided by growth and increased profit. Employees also see an added benefit of increased happiness through assisting others. In addition, employees who understand that a company is truly customer-centric may decide to be customers themselves.

Those inside have first-hand knowledge of what their customers are experiencing. Employees are in the position to know what's going on 'behind the scenes' giving them insights that influence if they should not only work for a business, but purchase from that business too. As an organization shifts to becoming more customer-centric, the employees who are part of the transformation may decide to become

a customer themselves, and in doing so build empathy for other customers. If those who work for the company are not a customer, the business should be asking 'What's missing? Why are those who know the product best purchasing from competitors and what can we be doing to attract our own employees?'

A large multinational has the potential to find customers in those who are working there, along with an enormous resource in gathering information on what is working for the customers and what is not. Tapping into employee knowledge and experience can help an organization better serve its external customers and create new customers from the inside.

### Helping someone else makes you happier yourself

A customer-centric organization puts itself ahead of the pack, attracting more customers and more profits. It is only common sense that if a company treats its customers well, they will want to continue the relationship. It also seems obvious that causing problems for people making interactions difficult will have these customers looking for an easier way to have their needs

met. It is the simplest of concepts, yet somehow this idea has been lost in the complications of meeting the countless (and often conflicting) demands that a large business imposes

### Helping others gives more meaning to one's work

on its employees. Organizations need to find a way to return the focus back to the customer. They need to create an environment that supports employees to develop a mindset that always asks, 'Is what I am doing good for the customers or not? Is it helping them, is it meeting their needs?'

'There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.' — Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, the world's largest company as measured by revenues.

The benefits of building a customer-centric organization for its customers and even the company itself are clear, but what about the individual employees charged with working in a customer-centric environment? It turns out that

the very act of helping their customers can make employees happier. Generali's vision touches upon taking care of their customers' well-being.

'The Group vision and mission place the focus on clients: all the activities are aimed to proactively take care of people's future and lives through insurance, knowing that their lives can be improved by ensuring well-being, safety, consulting and services.'

Insurance companies are in the somewhat delicate position of selling something that people hope they never need to make use of. When the time comes that customers are making a claim, it is a moment which can range from a bad day due to a small fender bender or to a life changing circumstance, such as flood, fire, or death of a loved one. How an insurance company responds at these vulnerable and challenging moments that we face in life makes a difference. Is the insurance company employee on the side of the customer, showing empathy and working to resolve a problem in a difficult moment or is the employee adding to the problem? Those employees who are able to help their customers not only make the customers happier, but make themselves happier too.

There are a number of studies that explain through science what most of us

already understand: helping someone else makes yourself happier too. For those who are curious about the evidence, one such study was performed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Demography of Health and Aging, which examined the relationship between altruism in the workplace and happiness. The conclusion? 'Our findings make a simple but profound point about altruism: helping others makes us happier.' It's not just a fleeting moment of joy either, even 30 years later in a follow up survey, those who had helped others were happier with their lives.

We spend a lot of time at work. Employees who are happier and more engaged in their work provide a better experience for clients, creating a virtuous cycle: generating happier customers results in happier employees. In a 2010 study entitled 'Research in Organizational Behavior,' Brent D. Rosso, PhD, and his colleagues found that finding meaning in one's work can increase motivation, engagement, empowerment, career development, job satisfaction, individual performance and personal fulfillment. It also decreases absenteeism and stress.

Another study on thriving at work shows similar findings. Gretchen Spreitzer, a professor at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business,

coauthored the paper 'Thriving at Work: Toward Its Measurement, Construct Validation, and Theoretical Refinement' published in the Journal of Organizational Behavior, which concluded, 'When individuals engage their work in a way that helps others, learn new things, and find meaning in their work, they report higher levels of thriving.'

Insurance companies have an opportunity to provide real meaning and make a true difference in the lives of their customers. In turn, this can make those working on the inside helping to resolve problems for those on the outside, happier.

**THRESIA TITILYAN UISAN AND MICHIKITA WALAKANDOUW CAROLINE — INDONESIA**

Thresia Titilany Uisan (Titi) and Michikita Walakandouw Caroline are Generali agents working in Manado, Indonesia. Edy Tuhirman and Wianto Chen are respectively Generali Indonesia's CEO and CAO. Different roles, but the same strong sense of responsibility towards the Community they live in, which they fully demonstrated in the most unfortunate event that afflicted Indonesia early last year. On January 15, 2014, flash floods and landslides hit Manado, causing severe damage to buildings and

infrastructure and leaving thousands of people in need of aid and assistance. Despite being impacted themselves, Titi and Michikita were among the first to return the call for assistance and offered their help by gathering funds, giving out mattresses, food and ensuring that aid was properly distributed. Michikita even opened her office as a refugee camp, as it was higher up and therefore safer.

Edy and Wianto did not live in Manado but went straight to the city after the disaster to give direct aid, showing deep empathy and concern to their employees

Generali agent Thresia Titilany Uisan (right) gathered funds and facilitated aid distribution to help flood victims

Indonesian search and rescue members helping residents after a flood hit Manado, the capital city of the North Sulawesi province of Indonesia. At least 13 people were killed after overnight flash floods and landslides hit Indonesia's Sulawesi island, an official said on January 16



YUDI NAKKA/AFP / GETTY IMAGES

and to all flood victims. Their efforts were noticed locally and Generali's support was deeply appreciated, as one of the Manado victims working for Generali likes to point out: 'We lost everything in the blink of an eye, but Generali made us feel supported in the most difficult time, and it really meant a lot to us.'

### LAURA CRAHAN — IRELAND

Laura Crahan is a Senior Administrator with Generali International, working in the Client Services Team based in Ireland. The company is a specialist arm of the

wider Generali Group and provides insurance-based investment solutions to a global audience, including both international expatriates and certain local resident populations. The company has its head office in Guernsey and, in addition, it is also an authorised insurer in both Hong Kong and Singapore.

As part of her daily job, Laura is in very close contact with clients and is fully aware – like everyone in the team – that identifying their individual expectations and offering tailored services are key to obtaining customer satisfaction. 'At Generali – as Laura likes

to point out – we are here to look after our clients and ensure that we adapt our style to meet clients' specific needs, as everyone is different.'

One of Laura's oldest and most cherished clients, Mrs. Kathleen Hill, is a living example of how dedication, commitment and an open mindset can really make the difference in earning customers' trust and loyalty. A 92-year-old, savvy expatriate investor, Mrs. Hill has been living in the Southern Hemisphere for many years and took out her first investment plan with Generali International in October 1991.

Both her age and location have, of course, impacted on the way her business is conducted but Laura and the team have always gone the extra mile, ensuring that Mrs. Hill receives exactly the service she likes. Laura explains, 'While technology has dramatically changed the pace and manner of communications, it is important that we are flexible in our approach, accommodating clients like Mrs. Hill who prefer a more traditional, hands-on approach to their dealings with Generali International. Over the years we have built up a very close relationship with Mrs. Hill and it is with great pride that we administer her investments. In fact, when her requests come through it creates excitement within the team.'

Mrs. Hill herself comments: 'Over the years, I have built up a very strong relationship with Laura and the team in Generali; the level of service and care they provide me with is exceptional. In fact, in many ways we have become friends... Long may it continue.'



WILLIAM MURPHY (INFOMATIQUE)



Cobh dominates Cork Harbour, Ireland, one of the largest natural harbours in the world. This colourful town has experienced invasion, emigration, transportation and a wealth of maritime adventure. On the shoreline, a statue commemorates Annie Moore, the first immigrant to disembark at Ellis Island

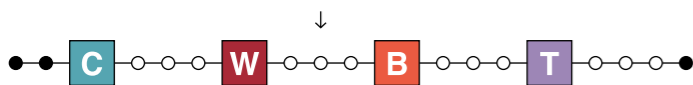
From left to right: Laura Crahan, Claire Duffy, Linda Carr and Mary McGrath

# Forecasting future trends

*INTERVIEW WITH ANNE LISE KJAER*

*by Nicolas Kiss*





**'To put yourself in the customer's shoes you need to create a comprehensive brand value universe'  
—Anne Lise Kjaer**

Anne Lise Kjaer is a futurist who founded her own trends forecasting consultancy, Kjaer Global. Through publications, lectures and presentations she helps international organizations create clarity out of complexity when it comes to navigating the future. In late April, at the

picture and then connecting the dots) and this is how I map and navigate the complexity of our fast-forward world. Many companies have plenty of data, but they need help connecting the 'dots' to understand the trends and influences impacting them.

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**They need to understand the fine balance between  
People, Planet, Purpose and Profit**

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Copernico Business Incubator in Milan, she held an inspiring keynote in front of the Generali Leave Your Mark team to support them in the strategy creation process.

**Anne Lise, you are a futurist. What exactly does it mean? How did you become a futurist?**

I help organizations navigate the road ahead by giving them the toolkit they need to create intelligent strategies – a roadmap to the future.

My background is in design and design thinking (looking at the bigger

**The future is often associated with technological development. What is your definition of the future?**

Let me try to sum up my view with an insight I shared with the Generali Leave Your Mark team: 'The future is not just somewhere we go, we create the future.' In other words, we all actively shape our world of tomorrow through choices we make today.

The future encompasses so much: how we organize society, spend our time, consume and husband resources. Technology is important – and a good

marker for future lifestyles – but its direction is influenced by our choices.

**How do you identify future trends? Do you use a crystal ball?**

Absolutely no crystal balls! At Kjaer Global, we have anthropologists, sociologists, designers and other subject experts on our team and we constantly monitor changes and new developments in the multitude of areas that affect how our world is evolving.

We collate and plot information onto a Trend Atlas and then project what the short to mid-term might bring in any given sphere. It's complex work, but my most recent book, *The Trend Management Toolkit – A practical Guide to the Future*, is a great handbook to get you started on understanding the practical aspects of trend mapping.

**Companies that go through the process of creating a new strategy strive to identify upcoming challenges and opportunities. What are the keys to ensure that all factors likely to impact the business landscape are considered?**

Crucially, they need to understand the fine balance between People, Planet, Purpose and Profit – and to my mind a very effective tool for that is the Trend Atlas. It acts as a compass, ensuring we adopt a multidimensional perspective,

consider both risks and opportunities and make the connections that underpin intelligent future planning.

**Let's take a closer look at the customers who lie at the heart of the insurance business. Today they have more power and freedom than ever to choose products or services. What can we expect customers of the future, especially Millennials, to base their decisions on? How will companies have to change their approach to cover these customers' needs and gain their trust and loyalty?**

In one word: S-I-M-P-L-I-C-I-T-Y. All brands need to address two fundamental questions: why they exist and why people will choose to engage with and invest in their business.

Many companies will need a whole new mindset. This begins by 'looking from the outside in' – in other words, standing back and considering every level of your operation from the perspective of a customer, or potential customer.

As I have already said in my book, experiences that provide involvement, inspiration and knowledge will be essential in any successful 21st century brand fabric. To put yourself in the customer's shoes you need to create a comprehensive brand value universe. Your product or service must satisfy material, ethical and value principles



and, more than that, when customers ask themselves: ‘How does this product make me feel?’ the answer is a positive. In short, your product or service must live up to all their expectations and make them feel good about themselves.

Millennials in particular expect clarity in all dealings with organizations, not just as customers but as employees (by 2020, they will form half the workforce globally). Over a third of Millennials believe the core goal of business should be ‘improving society,’ so it will become essential for companies to adopt what I call the ‘4P’ approach – that is, People, Planet, Purpose and then Profit. Purpose is the key to ensuring all other goals are met.

**Talking about people, is it realistic to envision that in a couple of years people will work from home, have more personal time and will still be creating great value for their customer? What are the framework conditions that would trigger such a shift within a company?**

John Maynard Keynes believed that by 2030 we would be working a 15-hour week because people would have enough to lead the ‘good life’ – a prediction that seems unlikely today. But companies have to rebalance the working world

We see that many leading organizations are already moving in the right direction, with hot-desking, time out for innovation and remote working. There are huge benefits, not least in attracting and retaining a wider pool of talent. Millennials will have a huge impact on the pace of change because they will look to work for organizations that enable their personal development and quality of life goals.

**You put a lot of emphasis on ‘Purpose’ as an essential driver both on individual and corporate level. First, let me ask you why do you, Anne Lise, get up in the morning?**

Because I love life and what I do; every day is a new opportunity to make a difference. People are key: the people I work with, my clients, my family and my friends. I’ve learned that inspiring others is contagious and leaves you empowered and inspired yourself.

**On a business level, could you explain how purpose-driven leadership can be a crucial differentiating factor for a company to successfully reach customers as well as attract and retain talented employees?**

Purpose is central to the 4P approach, as I’ve already briefly described; it is crucial not only as a differentiator, but

also as a means of ensuring everyone understands and shares your goals. Purposeful leaders empower people and give them ownership; the passion and commitment this creates shines out in every interaction with customers and sets the organization apart as an authentic brand. Authenticity is crucial to 21st-century brand fabric – and can’t be faked.

## A DEDICATED GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

In 2004, Anne Lise received the honorary title of Copenhagen Goodwill Ambassador, a mandate that enables her to share the Nordic Model with the world.

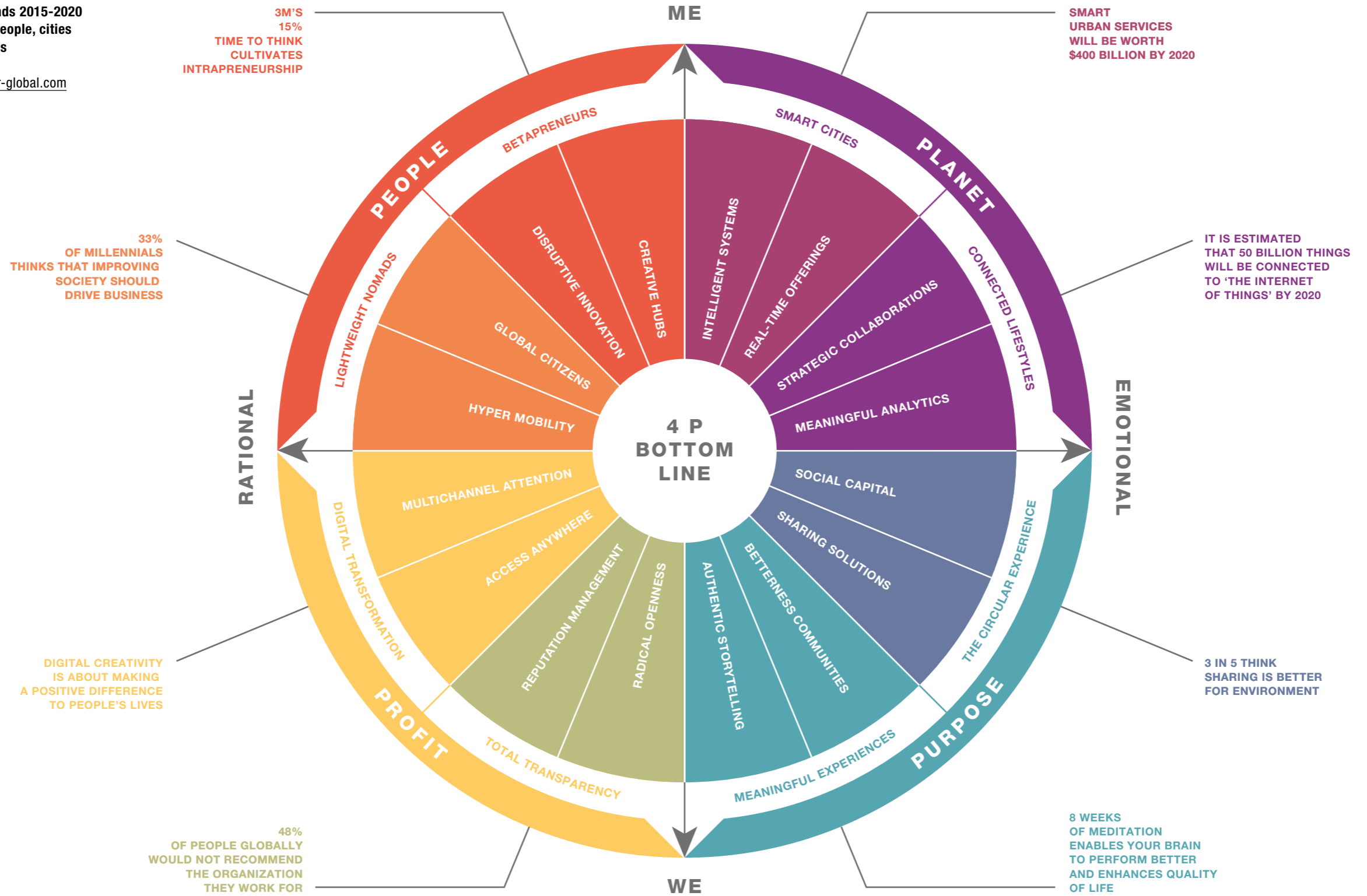
‘My role is to represent and spread the word about a great world city I know very well. Goodwill Ambassadors reside abroad but follow Denmark closely. Through our extensive networks we promote Copenhagen to foster its international growth. Thanks to various projects we have been able to attract conferences, companies, talents and establish strategic partnerships with international players. I’m a motivated Ambassador because I fall in love with Copenhagen each time I return. It represents a harmonious way of life in which mindfulness, people, purpose, authenticity and quality of life are central. To me, it gives a glimpse of what our global future could – and should – be all about.’



HELENE SANDBERG

**8 Key trends 2015-2020**  
shaping people, cities  
& business

[www.kjaer-global.com](http://www.kjaer-global.com)





7 January 2012, Stade Ernest-Wallon. Match between: Stade toulousain — Lyon olympique universitaire

# Building a Culture of Engagement

An engaged employee blends job satisfaction with organizational commitment, involvement and feelings of empowerment. They make themselves and the company successful by going the extra mile.

by Karin Arzt

Employee engagement is a strategic approach aimed at ensuring that people are committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to actively participate in the company's mission, and therefore willing and proud to contribute to its strategy execution and success.

The more engaged you are, the more you enjoy your job and believe in your organization, the bigger effort you'll make to do your best. Engaged employees both give and get. Their mindset is not simply to make themselves successful by doing their jobs, but to make themselves and the company successful by going the extra mile.

In the past, employee engagement simply meant job satisfaction and commitment. But today, it means more than that. These days, engagement means truly connecting hearts and minds. This comprises three levels of commitment: 'rational,' what you think about your job and the company you work for; 'emotional,' how you feel about your job and the company you work for; and 'motivational,' how willing you are to go the extra mile.

These three elements are all part of the engagement story. Each of them triggers and reinforces one another. Engaged organizations (and individuals) have strong and authentic values, behaving with trust and fairness based

on mutual respect, where two-way promises and commitments – between employers and people – are understood and fulfilled.

An engaged employee experiences a blend of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, involvement and feelings of empowerment.

Engagement is a two-way process: organizations and managers work to engage the employee, who in turn has a choice about the level of participation to offer the employer. Each reinforces the other.

Two things are sure about engagement: it is measurable and it can be correlated with business performance. Most importantly, employers can do a great deal to impact on people's level of dedication. That is what makes it so important as a strategic approach for business success.

### ENGAGED EMPLOYEES PROVIDE A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A high level of involvement among employees is a win-win situation. It makes a company a fulfilling place to work for the employee, and it leads to better business performance for the employer.

Employee engagement also has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and retention. Engaged employees

At the Facebook headquarters' entrance at 1 Hacker Way, Menlo Park, California, sits a big 'like' sign – currently Facebook's most famous icon – symbol of positivity and engagement.

The power of the 'like' phenomenon has been deeply studied in digital marketing, being also described as a 'multiplier effect'



promote their company effectively. They provide a better customer experience and therefore create customer loyalty. They nurture customers who buy more, stay longer and recommend the company to their friends. And therefore contribute to increasing operating margins.

### WE AT GENERALI TAKE THIS TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Our people are our brand. As a Group, Generali has gone through significant changes in the last three years. The new chapter of the Strategy, launched at the end of May, requires that we are all involved and engaged in this transformative journey, and participation helps sustain this journey and the strategy execution.

Generali is committed to supporting engagement as an ongoing strategic approach and creating a culture of involvement, where leaders and managers

play a key role in empowering, energizing and listening to their people while employees are essential to the Company's success and can make a difference.

Today more than ever, it is crucial that we can say what we think. In alignment with our values, Generali launched the first Global Engagement Survey in June 2015, so that employees could all have their say about what it's like to work for the Company. By listening to Generali people, the Survey is a tool to measure engagement, identify strengths and uncover opportunities. The aim is indeed to measure engagement within Generali in order to make it an even better place to work and help create and develop a culture of involvement that will continue in the long term.

The Survey will help the Company's leaders and managers identify priorities and build action plans to gather the momentum needed to fulfil our vision and strategy now and sustain them long into the future.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

In June 2015, 71,000 people from 42 countries took part in Generali's first Global Engagement Survey 'Have Your Say.' They answered 80 questions, developed by Towers Watson in consultation with senior leaders, managers and focus groups across the Generali world.

Permanent employees (and fixed-term staff in some countries) received an invitation email to take part in the online survey, available in 29 languages.

Participation in 'Have Your Say' was voluntary; it was an opportunity for all of us to express personal opinions on Generali as an organization and our job in particular.

The survey is entirely confidential. We use an independent consulting firm (Towers Watson) to manage the survey and analyze results, which will make it impossible for Generali to trace back answers to individual employees.

Individual responses will not be tracked nor reported and results analyses will be conducted at an aggregated level. Global results will be communicated to all employees by the end of September, while local results will start to be communicated in October by regional entities.

This is the start of a longer process, which will include identifying, fine tuning and finalizing priorities; designing, communicating and implementing action plans; and monitoring progress at both global and local levels.



One of the promotional posters of the first Generali Global Engagement Survey. Pictures featuring Generali employees – representing all geographies of the Group – were used throughout the communication campaign



# Business & Strategy

Many companies define a strategy, and then do something else. Only a few execute and deliver what they promised. Just a handful actually do it faster than planned: we did both!

During the 2015 Investor Day held in London on May 27, the new Group strategy was presented to more than 200 people including analysts, investors and reporters, a new strategic cycle written together with more than 300 colleagues in the Group, with the Leave Your Mark team at the core of it.

With discipline, simplicity and focus as distinctive traits of our management style, we want to become the Retail Insurance Leader and deliver a continuous increase in cash and dividends to our shareholders. We aim to be a hungry, lean and agile operator with a simple and smart approach, thereby

becoming first choice for customers.

When we act along these lines, the customer experience throughout the life cycle of the insurance policy will be improved, distributors' capabilities will be extended to produce up-selling and cross-selling opportunities and a completely new insurance offering will be based on simple and smart solutions rather than mere policies.

We are already working in this direction as our recent nomination to 'The 50 smartest companies in the world' list from the prestigious MIT testifies. Read about it in this section.

Also in this section, CFO Alberto Minali's interview highlights upcoming challenges and opportunities for the Group and how customer centricity develops strong relationships

with our stakeholders. Finally we cover our connection with Expo 2015 through our Help Desk, a simple and connected tailored insurance and assistance solution, presented here as a best practice example of the renewed Group's attitude towards customers.

*by Giovanni Giuliani  
Head of Group Strategy  
and Business Development*



PHOTO: GIORGIO CRUZZA / ISTOCK PHOTO

## Leading the Healthy Life

Generali will be the first insurer in Europe to introduce 'wellness insurance,' a completely new concept that will revolutionize the industry by motivating customers to embrace a healthy lifestyle.

*by Giampaolo Meloncelli*

## 50 SMARTEST COMPANIES 2015

### GENERALI AMONG THE 50 SMARTEST COMPANIES IN THE WORLD

Just weeks after the new Group strategy was announced to the financial community in London last May, Generali was designated among the 50 smartest companies in the world by the prestigious *MIT Technology Review*.

This unsolicited nomination also testifies to the complete independence of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), whose mission is to identify companies that create disruptive business models leveraging innovative technologies. Generali is the only

financial institution (and therefore the only insurance company) in the world to be part of this top ranking and the first Italian company ever to be included.

What is more remarkable is that Generali is ahead of many companies

#### Generali nominated by the *MIT Technology Review*

well-known for their technological advancement, like Microsoft or IBM, and others, for their disruptive innovation and fast-growing pace, like Uber.

As Group CEO, Mario Greco, recently stated, 'This prestigious reward demonstrates the ability of an Italian company with strong international drive to innovate and stimulate development inside an extremely competitive environment, such as the technological field. Moreover it confirms the Generali Group's commitment towards a new Simpler, Smarter business model, characterized by an intense use of technology and services based on the customer's needs and experiences, with the aim of turning Generali into the leader of retail insurance in Europe.'

The *MIT Technology Review* particularly appreciated the recently



- Transportation
- Computing & Communications
- Biotech
- Internet & Digital Media
- Energy

Results published by MIT  
July 20, 2015

### MIT TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

**'Leads the global conversation about technologies that matter'**

*MIT Technology Review* is a magazine published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It was founded in 1899 as 'The Technology Review', and was re-launched 1998. In 2011, *Technology Review* received an Utne Reader Independent Press Award for Best Science/Technology Coverage. Innovative and digitally oriented global media company, *MIT Technology Review* selects and documents the most important 'technological' innovations in the world, analysing their impact on the daily life of people.



## VITALITY

With approximately 6 million members worldwide, Vitality is the world's largest scientific, incentive-based wellness solution for individuals and corporations. The program is being launched in cooperation with Discovery, a South African based group, which is known to be one of the most innovative companies in the insurance industry. The Vitality program started in South Africa and then expanded in the UK, United States, Asia and Australia. It is rapidly becoming the leading global wellness program. Discovery has signed an exclusive agreement with Generali in Continental Europe.



which has invented and successfully launched the Vitality program, whose ultimate goal is helping people to live healthily.

Vitality has already been launched with success in the United Kingdom, the United States, Asia and Australia through partnerships with leading insurers in the local markets.

With this program, Generali will be the first insurer in Europe to introduce 'wellness insurance,' a completely new concept that will revolutionize the industry by motivating customers to embrace a healthy lifestyle and interacting with them in a simpler, smarter and engaging way.

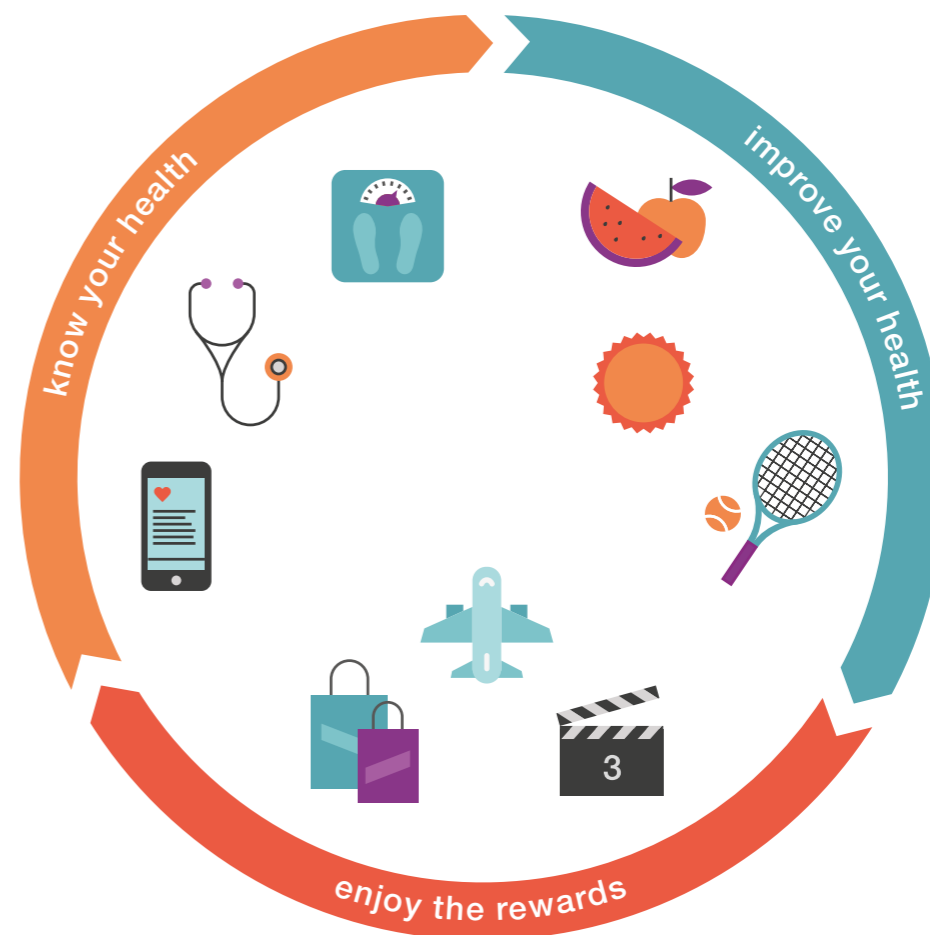
The program is built on a very simple idea: customers who lead a healthier life will feel better and will benefit from lower general healthcare costs, as will society and business.

It is a fact that global healthcare costs are increasing at a faster pace than the inflation rate; it is also a fact that there is an under-consumption of preventive care.

launched Generali-Vitality initiative in the Health and Life area. Generali-Vitality is the first of many innovative initiatives that the Group is developing under the auspices of its new strategic imperatives – all with one common goal: to protect and enhance our customers' lives.

## GENERALI-VITALITY

Generali has signed an exclusive partnership with Discovery, an innovative and fast-growing South African company



Even more revealing are the results from Oxford Health Alliance's Model that highlights the three lifestyle choices ultimately responsible for 50% of deaths worldwide: physical inactivity, poor nutrition and smoking. In other words, if we choose to do more physical activity, to eat better and to stop smoking, we lower our chances of contracting those diseases causing half of the deaths worldwide.

The ultimate goal of the Generali-Vitality program is to motivate our

customers to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Customers will be incentivized through tangible rewards that are designed around 'healthy choices.' Rewards will come in different shapes and sizes, but all of them are designed to help our clients to live better. This program relies on a compelling partner network that combines both well-known, global and local brands.

For example, amongst our many partners we will have gym chains, so that if customers want to go to the



gym but find it too expensive, their subscription will be partially covered. If customers want to exercise outside the gym, we can help them purchase fitness devices from our partners. The same applies to sport equipment and healthy food: we provide options from which customer can pick and choose. As for the challenge of giving up smoking, we want to provide customers with tangible benefits to make this lifestyle choice easier and help them stick to it.

‘The program is really about enabling our customers to live better and to make healthy choices that will create value for them, for the society and for our insurance industry as a whole,’

says Giovanni Giuliani, Group Head of Strategy and Business Development.

Our market research, performed across several countries in Europe, confirms that consumers are thrilled by this innovative approach as it is actively motivates them to lead a better life.

### Scientific studies prove that participation in the Vitality program has positive health effects

Generali-Vitality is the first such program in the insurance industry in Europe and is ultimately designed to increase the take-up of preventive care. Consumers tend

to overestimate their abilities and health status and may not fully understand the true efficacy of different health and wellness approaches. Furthermore, there is still very little sensibility attached to the future rewards of a healthy lifestyle, compared to the costs of preparing for it today. The Generali-Vitality program shows the commitment that the Group is taking to help customers and society overcome these challenges by reducing rising health care costs.

Generali Vitality is currently in the start-up phase and it is led by a cross-functional, highly motivated, talented and entrepreneurial team. For the first time in the history of insurance in Europe, the team is developing a pan-European model that will provide a consistent customer experience across multiple countries. The program will then be tailored to each single market, starting with three and then a rollout to other European markets.

Generali Vitality will be the biggest change in the European insurance market ever. So stay tuned. More is to come – and soon!

### TRUSTED RELATIONSHIP

Our insurance business relies on a trusted relationship between the insurer and the customer. In our Group we know this very well and we strive to further increase this trusted relationship.

We already manage huge amounts of customer data. Just think of all the data we process to pay a health or life-related claim. So, from the very outset, the Group has been very clear about the importance of upholding the strictest levels of data protection in this new and entirely voluntary initiative for consumers.

Country-specific regulations ensure that personal data is protected and furthermore Generali-Vitality will be based on an infrastructure that is fully compliant with prevailing regulatory norms and requirements and in particular, data protection and privacy standards and procedures.

The final word is with our customers. They are in control. They decide whether to participate in any program or not and certainly our aim at Generali is to provide solutions that cover a great many new and growing lifestyle needs. As a result, the Generali portfolio is expanding. Generali-Vitality simply represents a new and innovative solution that sits alongside the existing offer of many well-established and popular products that will continue to serve customers' needs today and in the future.

# Customer Centricity puts our clients first

*INTERVIEW WITH CFO MINALI*

*by Rubens Pauluzzo*

PHOTO: FABRIZIO GIRALDI



**When economies flourish, governments inspire respect among their citizens and enterprises are very popular. However, in times of crisis, corporations and their boards often run the risk of becoming scapegoats. What does it entail to be the CFO of a multinational at a time of economic hardship?**

Being the CFO of a multinational group means steering its diverse identities and working elements, keeping in mind the business requirements that the Group is called to satisfy as a whole. This is also true in times of crisis, which make it imperative to maximize control activities in order to better understand

**your viewpoint on the transformation of the CFO function, from a mostly technical role to that of ‘commercial leader’ and fully-fledged partner of a company?**

The CFO function has evolved remarkably over the last decade. While it used to be mostly a control-focused role, the CFO is now gradually becoming the public face of a company before the markets. Being in regular contact with shareholders, investors, analysts and debt underwriters is now essential, as it is to find an optimum balance of controllership and management duties, in cooperation with the Group’s other business partners.

engines burn too much cash, too much energy, compared to what they generate. We therefore need to take a cultural leap to make our car’s engines more efficient, while explaining the benefits of this transformation to all the Group’s stakeholders.

serving both Retail and Corporate clients, which makes the monitoring of regulatory evolution an extremely complex task. The third element is the change of pace we have initiated to increase the efficiency of our Life and P&C segments, to increase the return for

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**Strategies should not tell us what to do in five years. They evolve with time, just like opportunities**

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**'My energy comes from the passion and curiosity I have for my job'**

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the business’ economic progress within a medium- to long-term strategic vision.

**Today the CFO role is undergoing a constant evolution. While its risk analysis function remains essential for corporations, boards will increasingly rely on it as a source of information on commercial and financial factors influencing their businesses. What is**

**If we took a snapshot of the Generali Group right now, what would it look like?**

Generali is like a car, which has managed to fix its capital issues, that is, the capital that allows it to run on the road. We also have powerful engines, the Life and P&C segments, whose quality overtakes that of our main competitors. However, our

**What could be the next challenges faced by the Group, and which opportunities may arise for the CFO area?**

In my opinion, there will be three main sources of risk and opportunities for insurers in the future. The low interest rates, driven also by the ECB’s quantitative easing, will require us to intervene on insurance products with a more dynamic management of our liabilities. We will need to design more innovative capital management strategies to become more agile and efficient, not only to reduce costs but also to manage capital more effectively. The second risk factor is the hugely complex, fragmented and often conflicting regulatory framework. We operate in 60 countries, both in Life and P&C insurance sectors,

our stakeholders in a sustained way, to increase our appeal in the markets and therefore attract new investments.

**How does Customer Centricity affect the CFO area?**

Customer Centricity means creating a strong and long-lasting relationship with all our stakeholders starting with the client at the center, as no business goal can be pursued if Customer Centricity is not in place. This is feasible only if we know our business in depth and are focused on creating not just mere products for our clients, but real insurance solutions.

**Alberto, you returned to Generali in late 2012 after a first experience in 1991. Meanwhile, the world has**

**84% OF CFOs SAY...**

84% of CFOs say they need more input than ever for improving a company's ability to deliver value to customers. Here are the most important skills they say they will need

This information came from the 6th Annual American Express/CFO Research Global Business and Spending Monitor



You need to keep asking yourself what the future will bring and what means you need for that future to materialize. By constantly focusing on your prospects, you have the chance to seize opportunities on one hand, and to be flexible on the other. In my opinion, strategies should not tell us what to do in five years, as they are partly time-dependent. They evolve with time, just like opportunities. As the future remains unknown, flexibility is an essential characteristic for any strategic planner.

**changed dramatically, and so has the Company. What is the biggest difference you have noticed?**

I think that Generali has made enormous steps forward in terms of its human resources capital. Twenty years ago, the career prospects offered by the Company were very limited, and so was the focus on human resources. Today we put great emphasis on the development of internal talents, a key asset for our future. Another difference consists in the Group structure. We used to be a federation of independent entities, with a somewhat distant holding having a scarcely impactful steering and coordinating role.

Today we are much more cohesive; we have a deeper knowledge of the various entities which make up our Group and are equipped to better support them. We do so trying to find a balance between local entrepreneurship, which must be preserved in order to face market competition, and the rules and processes that the holding must define for the Group as a whole.

**Speaking of this, which type of enterprise is the most effective in your opinion?**

I do not believe in a super-centralized model where the Group's know-how is

concentrated in the hands of the holding – for instance, the Trieste office should not be tasked with establishing car insurance fees for Indonesia. I do believe in a model where the central office and the operating units work together towards the Group's common goals. Laying the foundations for individual fulfilment must begin from everyone's success.

**In your career, you have held several senior manager positions and established your own asset management firm. In your opinion, what are the essential traits of a good strategist?**

**Generali has worked very hard towards Solvency II. But has it managed to keep up with the competition?**

We have done an amazing work. A few years ago we were running late in our schedule, but we have successfully bridged that gap in the past 18 months. We still need to improve in terms of how we apply our model, which will allow us to map the Group and have a better understanding of how the capital is allocated and remunerated, and how we can improve our performance.

**Generali has recently joined the Integrated Reporting framework. Why is it so important, in your view, to communicate the Company's value creation process in a simple and**

**direct way? How can we combine our streamlining efforts with the needs of those strengthening controls on the financial system, especially in terms of risk management?**

Our integrated report has undergone an historic transformation. From a merely technical and not very user-friendly publication, it has evolved into a clear document, easy to read and understand. The way in which we share information with the market is no longer only a matter of form, but also of substance. The integrated report will still contain certain information and satisfy the existing regulatory criteria; however, it should also aim to bring people closer by becoming more open, rather than being a simple collection of data.

**Alberto, you are a man of numbers. Where else do you find the energy to meet the challenges that your role involves?**

I find my energy from the passion towards my job and the curiosity about what I do. Spending time with my family and enjoying simple life pleasures, such as reading and walking, allow me to recharge my batteries.

**Have you ever experienced a tough moment in your career? How did you overcome it?**

The firm I used to run was severely hit when the fund was reduced by more than a half, due to the withdrawal of capital by investors affected by the economic crisis. What followed was a very difficult time. However, I never lost faith and, with the support of my family and of my closer business partners back then, we managed to gather other capitals and to continue our asset management activity. Getting back on track was not easy, but despite the difficulties one should never lose trust in oneself.

From right to left: Alberto Minali, Mario Greco, Gabriele Galateri di Genola at the 2015 Generali Shareholders' Meeting



**INTEGRATED REPORT**

**Massimo Romano**  
Head of Group Integrated Reporting & CFO Hub



**Integrated Report**



The International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) is a global coalition of regulators, investors, companies, standard setters, and NGOs. Its main aim is to promote value creation as the next step in the evolution of corporate reporting through an Integrated Reporting (IR) framework.

The Integrated Report is a concise overview of organizational strategy, governance, performance, and prospects, set against the context of the external environment, that lead to short-, medium- and long-term value creation.

The IIRC launched its pilot program that brought together approximately 100 companies. Generali joined the network in 2011, publishing its first IR in 2013 and is now one of the leaders of the IR Insurance Network, together with Aegon.

Massimo Romano, Head of Group Integrated Reporting & CFO Hub (GIR), commented: 'IR is radically changing our way of disclosing and reporting performance, recombining social, environmental, and financial disclosures in a single report. With this powerful tool our management can capture the complete picture and communicate our value-creation process over time.'

Following his experience of IR, Massimo is now applying these principles internally to his function, to drive a more transparent communication to his people on value creation, with the additional benefit of improved team engagement. 'The Internal Integrated Report is a smart and simple document that introduces the GIR organization, its strategic targets, and performance.'

It also measures our contribution to the Group's value-creation process in alignment with performance management tools such as the functional balanced scorecard. We are all engaged to deliver these targets and I firmly believe that every function can benefit from this new philosophy,' he continued.

'We really need to think outside traditional silos, and integrated thinking can favor integrated decision-making and actions, can bridge the organization to the capitals it uses or affects, and finally, can improve our personal and professional life,' he concluded.



MILANO 2015

FEEDING THE PLANET  
ENERGY FOR LIFE

## Speeding up customer claims

Generali's Help Desk at Expo 2015 offers customers a simpler and connected tailored insurance and assistance solution.

*by Cristiana Teodori and Sabrina Di Giorgio*



The Generali Group, through Generali Global Corporate & Commercial (GC&C), the unit that develops the Property & Casualty business and insurance services for mid- to large-size businesses and Generali Italia, is the Official Insurance Provider of Expo Milano 2015. Generali Global Corporate and Commercial in Italy won the European tender to cover Property & Casualty and third-party liability during the building phase, throughout the event and for the ten years following the site's construction.

Expo Milano 2015 is a global event, an international platform which is expected to welcome over 20 million visitors. This is why, at the heart of the service that Generali provides to its client Expo 2015, the Help Desk was opened to promptly support visitors, many of whom are foreigners, in case of accident. To ensure an immediate and simple service in case of a claim, Generali Global Corporate & Commercial designed with and for the client a multi-language Help Desk at the Expo combining the synergies of GC&C's operations and claims services teams with Europ Assistance's know-how, expertise and innovative systems in providing care and assistance services. The Help Desk comprises 11 dedicated experts and five team leaders, organized in shifts, fluent in all three official Expo

languages (English, French, and Italian). All the material provided to the visitors is available in the three languages. At least two experts are present every day from 10am to 11pm.

Thanks to the synergy between GC&C and Europ Assistance, Generali is able

Keeping in mind the client's ease and convenience, Generali has proactively created a real-time communication process with Expo Milano 2015 for those cases identified as top priority, besides providing the client with a monthly report with the status of all submitted claims.

### Generali's Expo Milano 2015 Help Desk offers prompt support and real-time assistance to visitors

to assist visitors in real time, swiftly processing and managing big data through an integrated platform.

At the same time, the technical management of claims through dedicated identity codes is heavily focused on ensuring a simpler and smarter claim experience. For all foreign visitors, the goal is to allow them to immediately place their claim during their stay in Italy. The Service Level Agreement foresees that a first feedback will be given three days after the reception of the claim, which shortens to 24 hours for special or protected categories. A real-time payment for certain kind of claims can be provided by the Help Desk. For all the other cases, the claim will be settled within maximum two weeks from the acceptance of the request.

At Expo Milano 2015, the synergy between Generali Global Corporate A& Commercial and Europ Assistance allows Generali to offer its client a simpler and connected tailored insurance and assistance solution.



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Generali Help Desk is located inside the Expo Service Area next to the Italian Pavilion





CLAUDIO SFORZA



CLAUDIO SFORZA

## GENERALI GLOBAL BUSINESS LINES

Global Business Lines is the center of service for the global insurance businesses and international clients. In a connected world, Generali through this unique platform, composed of Europ Assistance, Global Corporate & Commercial (GC&C), Generali Employee Benefits Network (GEB) and Generali Global Health (GGH), wants to serve the specific segment of the global insurance businesses and international clients offering solutions for their complex and demanding insurance and assistance needs. In fact, international clients need specific services and skills, as they cope with a very different complexity of business compared to the Retail segment. For example, GC&C requires highly specialized resources and processes to be able to underwrite specific risks like aviation, marine, large engineering process or serve international Insurance programs. Furthermore, corporate clients need specific services, such as loss prevention or risk engineering, requiring international teams to be coordinated centrally.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT GENERALI PARTICIPATED IN THE UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION HELD IN MILAN IN 1906?

by Luigi Tassone

The 1906 International Exhibition held in Milan was dedicated to transportation and the inauguration of the Simplon Tunnel. The tunnel provided the shortest railway link between Northern and Western Europe.

With its 19,823 meters, the Simplon Tunnel was the longest railway tunnel in the world and it kept that record until 1982. It was a paramount engineering achievement in transportation. Its completion paved the way for two of the key topics discussed during the event: the internationalization of trade and the importance of work safety. The tunneling works were, at that time, amongst the most dangerous. At the same time, it introduced new technologies such as the electrification of the railway system that allowed higher speed.

Generali participated in the 1906 Expo as one of the most mature insurance companies with great expertise in protection against accidents through its subsidiary, Società Anonima Italiana di Assicurazioni contro gli Infortuni (known as Anonima Infortuni), headquartered in Piazza Cordusio in Milan. Generali's Anonima Infortuni was at the forefront of the industry for its technical expertise, international footprint and the ability to identify new risk profiles such as third-party liability deriving from railway transportation.

Know-how, international outlook and innovation characterized Generali's presence at Expo in 1906 just like today, 109 years later.

With over 200 pavilions, the exhibition took place in the current Simplon Park, which takes its name from this very occasion, and in the present City Life space.

[www.expo2015.org/en/explore/exhibition-site/useful-services](http://www.expo2015.org/en/explore/exhibition-site/useful-services)

A table containing statistics on insurance policies and accidents, published by Anonima Infortuni on the occasion of Milan International Exhibition (1906)

– Courtesy of: Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Versamenti OGG001131772

# Twist

**‘Good design is good business,’** said Thomas J. Watson Jr., CEO of IBM. Consequently, since the 1950s he had been investing in design after seeing an Olivetti shop on Fifth Avenue in New York. The sleek designs and colors on display set in a bright and modern environment made a big impression on him and influenced future IBM products.

Design is equally important at Generali. Customers expect a leading brand to provide a seamless experience, and we’re crafting mobile digital tools designed to respond to their needs and empower our distributors.

In this issue we explore our efforts in traditional design too, focusing on ‘Copernico’ – a section of our real estate portfolio and home to a business that’s leading the world in workspace evolution

– proving that office, living and leisure spaces can work together to enhance the way we interact.

Patricia Urquiola carries this theme further in her article on ‘Catching future trends’. What does it feel like to produce something immaterial, like planning an object, a habitat, or a work of architecture? It means improving the quality of everyday items as well as our quality of life and leaving a mark of our times, she writes.

Generali is expanding its support of new design talent in all arenas. We are championing International Talent Support (ITS) – a platform which develops design across the globe. This year participants from the world’s most prestigious fashion, accessories and jewelry schools submitted their work at an ITS flagship

event. The Generali Special Award, won by Argentinian menswear designer Aitor Throup, recognizes his innovative vision and strong technical skills, supporting his business activities with funding and insurance.

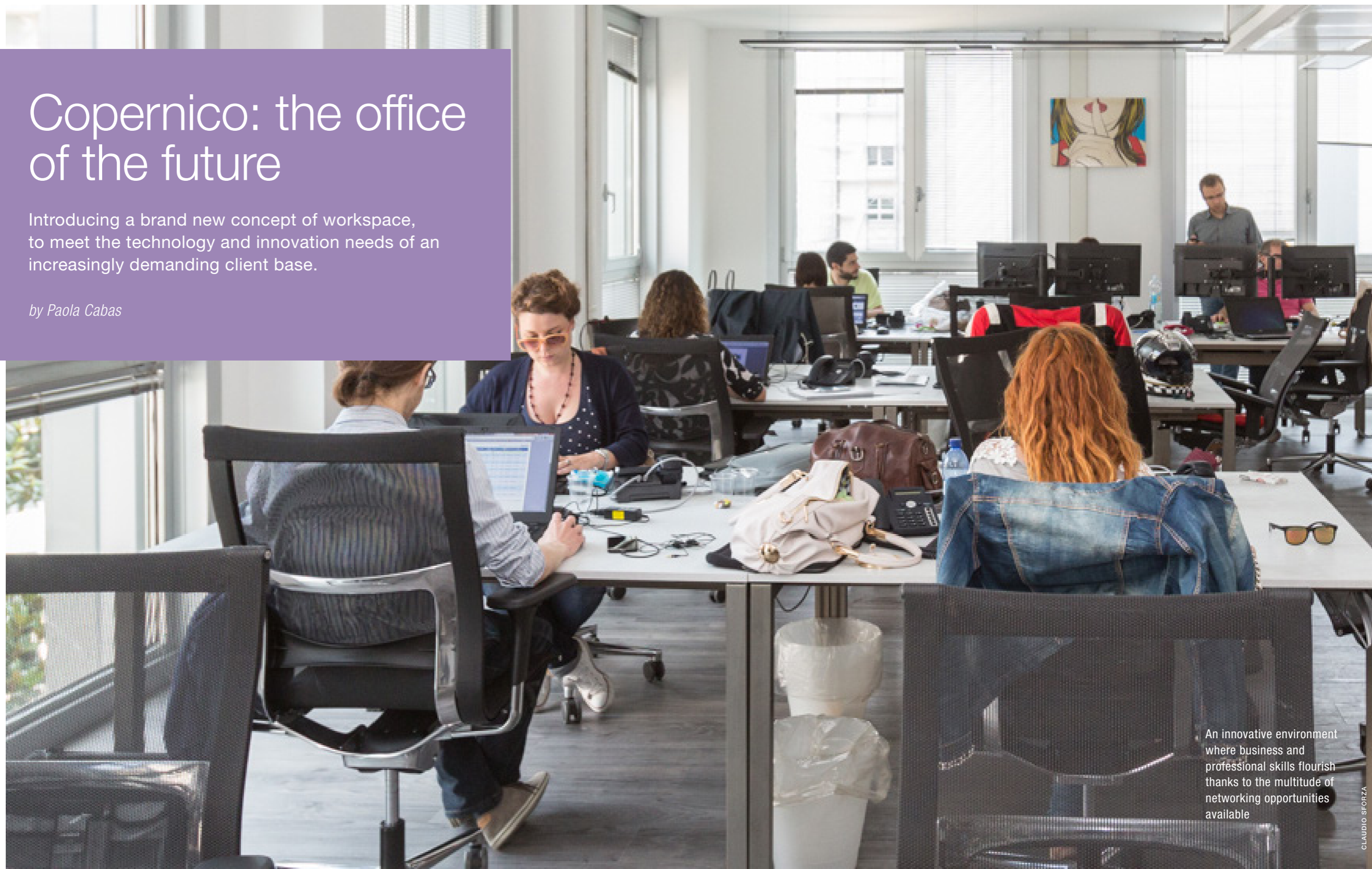
Today, many successful companies are investing in design as an expression of their character, brands and company culture. Great designs – from an engaging digital interface to eye-catching office spaces – facilitate interaction between users, products and services. At their best, great designs generate a wow factor that keeps customers delighted, loyal and coming back for more.

*by Sarah Jane Brady  
Head of Group Employee Communications  
Editorial staff director*

# Copernico: the office of the future

Introducing a brand new concept of workspace, to meet the technology and innovation needs of an increasingly demanding client base.

by Paola Cabas



An innovative environment where business and professional skills flourish thanks to the multitude of networking opportunities available

At Via Copernico 38 in Milan, a new building has opened its doors to innovation and sharing for all those wishing to pool their talents and seekers of that talent alike. Welcome to Copernico, a building which is part of the Generali Group's vast real estate portfolio.

Forget your 'regular' building or office block. Copernico is what is now commonly known as an innovative ecosystem or innovation hub. In essence, it is a space which hosts and promotes employment in a brand new way – an evergreen requirement.

Since February 2015, after a redevelopment phase started last year, the center has been increasingly populated by offices, coworking and lounge areas, meeting and event halls, a café, a gym, a garden, a playground and a theater. Spread across 15,000 square meters of indoor space, a 2000-sqm private garden, and a total of 1500 work stations, Copernico is a one-of-a-kind venue offering an unparalleled range of services.

Copernico is located in the heart of Milan, the city of Expo 2015 and the seat of 533 of the 3711 innovative start-ups included in a census by the Business Register of the Italian Chambers of Commerce.<sup>1</sup> These figures testify to the leadership role of Lombardy's capital city as a driver of innovation in Italy.

Pietro Martani, the founder of Copernico's managing firm Halldis, commented: 'The project, which consists of a business growth and innovation platform for companies and professionals, is our way to contribute to steering Italy's turnaround. Copernico will facilitate the development of relations and interests by supporting exchanges

**15,000 square meters of indoor space,  
promoting employment in a brand new way**

among sponsors, partners and experts, and helping interested companies to innovate and support growth. An example of this is the exchanges taking place between venture capitalists and start-ups, creating fertile ground for reciprocal inspiration.'

Copernico's target customer is a relatively new presence in the job market, and its requirements are often very different from those taken into account in the planning of offices and related services up to a few years ago. Indeed, Copernico represents a groundbreaking way of conceiving the workspace, a place which satisfies the need of flexibility for the markets by offering areas, services and new opportunities for growth to its guests. Both indoor

and outdoor areas have been planned to combine creativity, design and technology into a functional workplace that encourages interpersonal relations and well-being.

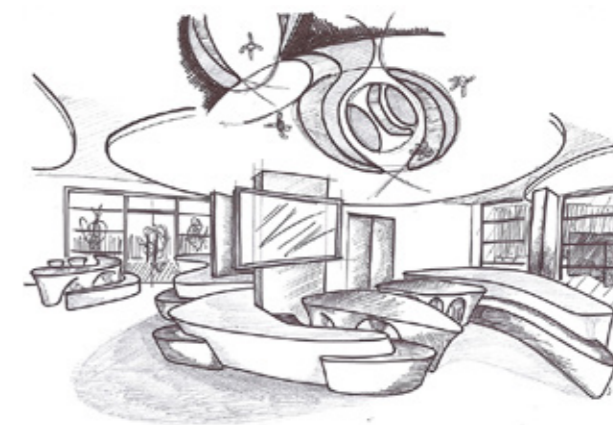
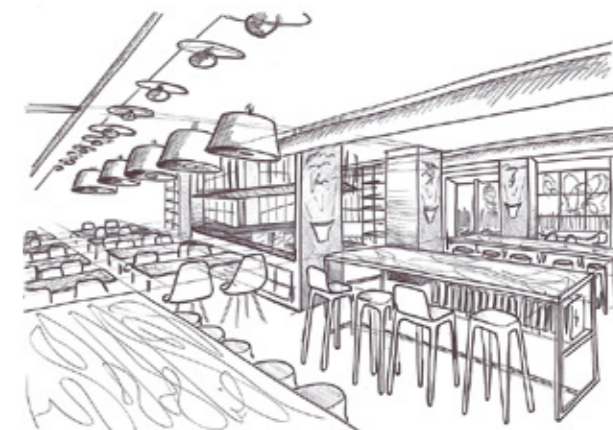
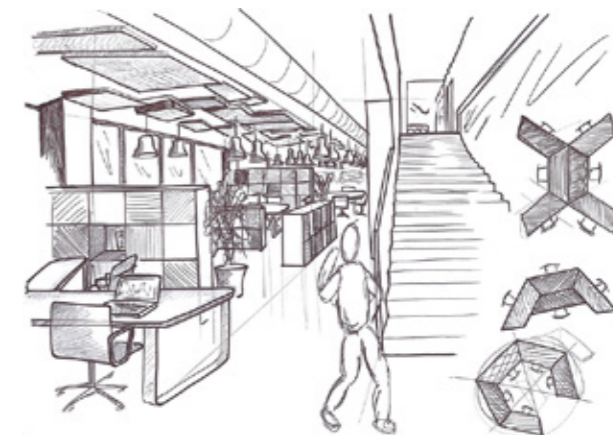
The main focus of the building requalification was the creation of an innovative environment where business and professional skills may flourish

thanks to the multitude of networking opportunities available. Indeed, Copernico is not just a physical space, but also a driving force for growth and an amplifier of contents.

**A VISION BEYOND THE  
WORKSPACE**

As we stroll around these new spaces, we feel compelled to reinterpret the traditional concept of work, conceived as an activity to be performed in a given physical space, be it public or private. The model introduced by Copernico has come to include not only office premises and meeting rooms, but most of all tailor-made spaces and functional solutions purposely designed to maximize

Sketches: Studio DC10



Coffee break at Copernico  
Café

Milan night skyline

CLAUDIO SFORZA

exchange, sharing, networking and business development. This is a new model of workspace centered on the individual, with a strong focus on daily activities, the need of exchange, and the quest for the ideal place where all this can happen.

‘We began from the need of re-thinking workspaces in a new way, putting the individual at the heart of a stimulating and complex environment. Copernico, our point of arrival, enhances the new dynamics of office space usage through friendly and welcoming architectural and design patterns, which simplify the complexities of everyday life and promote dialogue, exchange and sharing – all of which are prerequisites for a vision based on development, growth, ideas and results,’ explains the Studio DC10 Milan team, composed of Marco Vigo, Alessia Garibaldi and Giorgio Piliago, in charge of the architectural planning.

In particular, flexibility, movement and the constant exchanges between

home and office space were the inspiring principles of the project – an approach that we also find in its promoters, to offer an efficient and innovative environment promoting well-being and value creation to all the people who occupy these spaces.

Corporations, start-ups, freelancers, creative professionals, researchers are only some of the guests who have started inhabiting this new home in recent months – which, in an imaginary world without time constraints, would be fit for a talent such as that of Nicolaus Copernicus. We like to imagine him wandering around the park while staring at the sky or, even better, standing on the roof, undisturbed by the chaotic metropolis below, his eyes fixed on the stars above.



FRANCESCO NEGRI

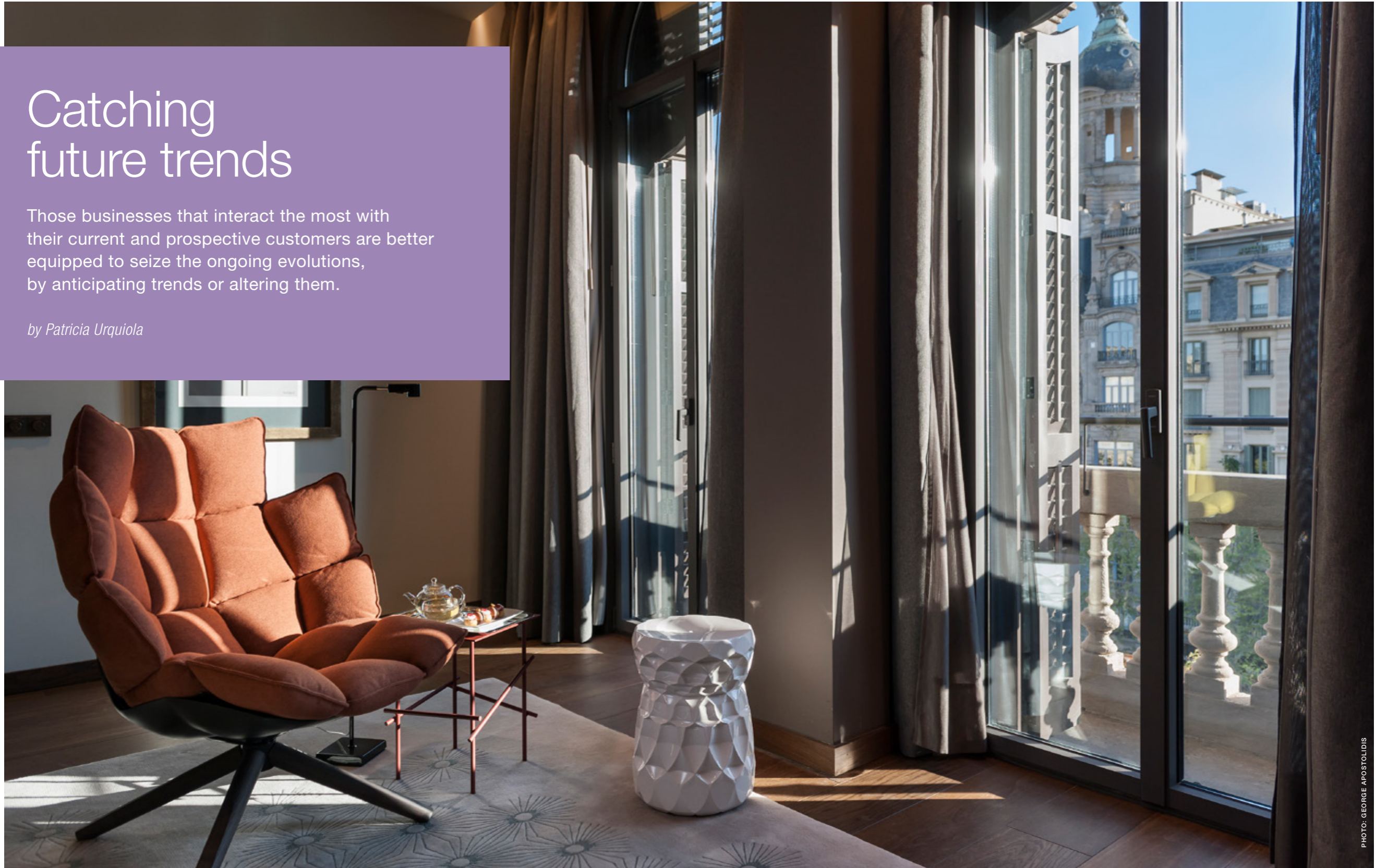
*‘Among the many various literary and artistic pursuits which invigorate men’s minds, the strongest affection and utmost zeal should, I think, promote the studies concerned with the most beautiful objects, most deserving to be known. This is the nature of the discipline which deals with the universe’s divine revolutions, the asters’ motions, sizes, distances, risings and settings, as well as the causes of the other phenomena in the sky, and which, in short, explains its whole appearance. What indeed is more beautiful than heaven, which of course contains all things of beauty?’*

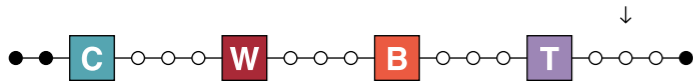
— Nicolaus Copernicus, 1473-1543, De revolutionibus orbium caelestium, Introduction to Book I

# Catching future trends

Those businesses that interact the most with their current and prospective customers are better equipped to seize the ongoing evolutions, by anticipating trends or altering them.

*by Patricia Urquiola*





One of the new suites  
by Patricia Urquiola (2014)  
for the extension of the  
Mandarin Oriental hotel  
in Barcelona, also designed  
by the artist in 2010

Who is my client? The neat separation between customers and industries has faded away, and so has the exclusive division into geographic, historic and cultural categories. Meanwhile, information has become much more accessible, immediate and reliable.

An endless range of choices and

be clearly perceived, regardless of the price of the object in question. I have the privilege of working on projects of different nature and scale across several sectors – from residential to hospitality, retail and office spaces. This helps me to constantly evolve and be exposed to influence from different environments.

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## Acceleration of throughput and distribution forces us to rely on our perception in foreseeing future evolutions

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expectations awaits us and plenty of uncertainty around the corner. We are therefore driven towards credibility, reassurance, some sort of empathy and quality – the kind of quality which does not create division or exclusion but can

Today, decisions are no longer the prerogative of a group of happy few at the top of an organization. Indeed, decisions belong to expanded teams on one hand, and consumers acting individually or in groups on the other. Those businesses

that interact the most with their current and prospective target are better equipped to seize the ongoing evolutions, by anticipating trends or altering them. For any creative worker the most valuable and sought-after skill is the ability to grasp what is going on, to interpret the contemporary world.

The acceleration of throughput and distribution forces us to rely on our perception in foreseeing future evolutions. The average industrial product or architecture project takes three years to be completed, but its desired lifespan in the market ranges from 10 to 20 years.

We must keep an open mind about the future role of society and technology. Change is an ongoing phenomenon and its effect on the surrounding space will require us to adjust to new needs, new behaviors and new habits.

What is the meaning of design? What does it feel like to produce something immaterial, like planning an object, a habitat, or a work of architecture? It means improving the quality of everyday items as well as our quality of life. It means modernizing our behavior, to offer new functions, to rediscover techniques, to leave a mark of our times.

I have designed various types of hotels. An interesting example was the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Barcelona, where we remodeled the brand values, the

stakeholders and the tools to increase their engagement. The winning factor was the choice to integrate the hotel within the city – its genius loci, its history, the movements of its citizens and visitors. A hotel is a microcosm, a tiny city which remains awake 24/7. Its guests may choose their preferred level of sociality, from maximum privacy to various levels of interaction. Its two-fold identity is both visible to the eyes of the users, and invisible – but equally relevant – in terms of services and structures.

Hotel guests increasingly seek a home away from home: an ideal space equipped with innovations not yet available on residential properties, but extremely user-friendly. Not a complex system, but an intuitive and simplified universe where technology is hidden rather than imposed. In every room the level of pollution – either visual, sound, air or light – should be kept to a minimum, while personal belongings and clothes should find their privileged location without being hidden. The average occupancy rate of a room is 1.6 nights, which makes it imperative to offer maximum ease in check-in and check-out procedures. Finally, a great deal of flexibility is required to respond to different categories of clients: leisure travelers, business travelers or, as it often occurs, both.

In the meantime, residential spaces have given up traditional layouts in favor

## Patricia Urquiola

Patricia Urquiola was born in Oviedo (Spain) in 1961. She lives and works in Milan. She attended the University of Architecture at Madrid Polytechnic and Milan Polytechnic, where she graduated in 1989 with Achille Castiglioni.

In 2001 she opened her own studio working on product design, architecture, and installations. Her latest architectural projects include: The Jewellery Museum in Vicenza, Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Barcelona, Das Stue Hotel in Berlin and the Spa of Four Seasons Hotel in Milan; showroom and installations for Gianvito Rossi, BMW, Missoni, Moroso, Molteni, Officine Panerai, H&M, Santoni and the general concept of Pitti Immagine Firenze. She creates design products for the most important Italian and international companies, such as B&B, Boffi Cucine, Moroso, Molteni, Mutina, Kartell, Agape, Rosenthal, Baccarat, Kettal, Kvadrat, Andreu World e Hansgrohe.

Some of her products are exhibited at renowned museums and collections, such as MoMA in New York and the Triennale Museum in Milan. She has won several international prizes and awards and she is an Ambassador for Expo Milano 2015.

of more flexible and personal lifestyles that satisfy real-life functions. We see new space combinations emerging: an example is the kitchen, joined by the dining and living room, which becomes a social space for traditional or extended families. Innovations are quickly transferred from the restaurant industry to household kitchens as they adopt a more and more professional look. At the same time, the bedroom meets the bathroom and changing room forming a single habitat for privacy and personal care.

Professional, open spaces are now adopting a new approach towards the client, and the intimidating separation between service providers and users has finally collapsed. To facilitate communication and waiting, designers plan spaces which remind us of hotel lobbies offering privacy and inclusiveness, rather than formal environments.

In the planning of retail spaces, no matter what the product on sale or location is, the main focus of the client is the shopping experience – the inbound transition from the outside should be driven by attraction without creating intimidation, filters or detachment. Customers should feel at the center of attention, not under observation. They should find their own way into the shop. As in a theater play, they should feel part of the audience as well as actors.

Patricia Urquiola sitting on a prototype, Clarissa Hood, one of her most famous creations



CONGETTA GIANNANGELI

What do all these solutions have in common? Instead of planning static spaces, architects are now called to design dynamic systems which adapt to usage and functions as these evolve. We no longer witness radical and neat transitions between longer eras, but constant improvements to a containing space, a box, which keeps functioning even though all its elements change. We are social creatures in constant evolution, and so too should be our working and living spaces. We should create open interconnections between centralized systems and personal devices, and harmoniously combine functional digital solutions with more conventional analog tools. Because the body's touch, engagement and expression are still a requirement. Because we need new

ergonomic spaces to satisfy both our physical and mental comfort, where the power of ideas, instead of the forces of power, drive communication.

Designing a space today requires a brand new set of skills. Architects need sartorial abilities to create tailor-made environments, interpret contemporary dimensions and anticipate trends. They also require a ready-to-wear vision influenced by costs and time resources, and 'fast fashion' skills to reach out to the widest possible public.

To answer the question, my client will be every member of any society and culture connected to other human beings. He or she will be able to communicate their needs, desires and dreams, and measure and judge the outputs received.



Modular Anatomy represents Aitor Throup's inaugural cooperation with clothing brand Stone Island, launched for the fall-winter 2008 collection. Reinterpreting the traditional down jacket, the project resulted in an innovative methodology of garment construction. In his attempt to question conventional clothing design and in tribute to Stone Island's independent-minded approach, Throup bypassed the standard approaches to pattern-making and sewing, creating exceptionally ergonomic garments



## ITS: How to support international talent

To encourage entrepreneurship Generali patronizes International Talent Support (ITS), the international platform for young designers from all over the world.

by Belkis Ramani

### ENSURING A FUTURE FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION: INTERNATIONAL TALENT SUPPORT

Generali considers entrepreneurship as a social activity that involves discovery and interaction with the communities in which it operates, listening to their needs and sharing their vision for growth, self-improvement and personal fulfillment.

For this reason, Generali patronizes International Talent Support (ITS), the international platform for young designers from all over the world. In particular, our Company will contribute to the 14th edition of ITS and foster future creativity and innovation with the Generali Special Award, consisting of an insurance product to support business activities and a monetary prize.

The theme of ITS 2015 is 'The Future.' Participants from the most prestigious schools of fashion, accessories and jewelry selected worldwide have been invited to submit their best work during the ITS flagship event. The winner of the 2015 prize is Argentinian menswear designer Aitor Throup, who was selected out of the 54 past edition finalists. Aitor stood out for his innovative, experimental vision and his strong technical skills and was able to deliver the best synthesis of entrepreneurship and creativity.

Aitor Throup receives Generali Special Award during the ceremony held at Salone degli Incanti in Trieste.

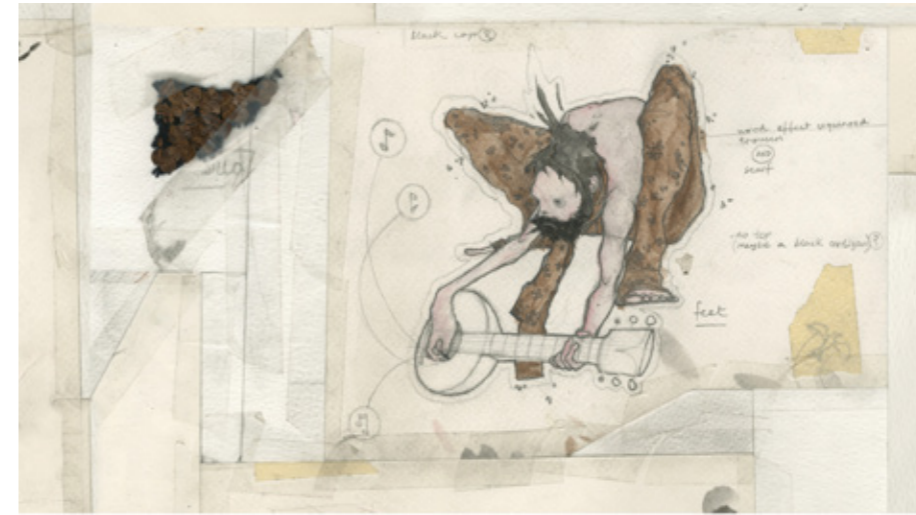
From left: Victoria Cabello, host of the evening; Aitor Throup; Emma Ursich, Head of Group External Communications and Corporate Identity; and Barbara Franchin, ITS Founder and Director.



## Aitor Throup

Born in Buenos Aires in 1980, Aitor Throup moved to England when he was 12 and quickly developed a passion for fashion and drawing. After graduating in 2004, he completed an MA in Fashion Menswear at the Royal College of Art in London. Throup's acclaimed graduate collection (*When Football Hooligans Become Hindu Gods*) featured a diverse selection of influences from generic military garments to Hindu symbolism, coming together through unique transformational product features.

Throup's unique take on the fashion industry – challenging tradition and finding new ways to express his vision – has led to wide critical acclaim, appointing him as one of fashion's most influential people. Throup has worked as an art director and stylist with i-D magazine, Arena Homme+, V-Man, GQ Style and Dazed. Since 2014 Throup has worked as global creative consultant for the brand G-Star RAW.



Two drawings by the artist, 'Mongolia preliminary study' and 'Shiva'



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(p.20) [www.flickr.com/photos/garryknight](http://www.flickr.com/photos/garryknight)

(p.24) [www.flickr.com/photos/garryknight](http://www.flickr.com/photos/garryknight)

(p.31) [www.flickr.com/photos/infomatique/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/infomatique/)

(p.36) [www.commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ST\\_vs\\_LOU\\_-\\_21.jpg](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ST_vs_LOU_-_21.jpg)

(p.37) [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Facebook\\_Headquarters\\_Entrance\\_Sign\\_Menlo\\_Park.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Facebook_Headquarters_Entrance_Sign_Menlo_Park.jpg)

(p.59) [www.flickr.com/photos/francesconegri/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/francesconegri/)