

Communications Business Solutions

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Better decisions for individuals

By Dr. Franziska Frank, Affiliated Program Director at ESMT Berlin –
The European School of Management and Technology

As humans we believe that we are rational and good at making decisions. And then it turns out that we make mistakes by the hour.

Page 7



Those small objects that brighten the lives of businessmen and businesswomen

Video conferences are not the only thing in the lives of businessmen and businesswomen. Oftentimes they also have to "hit the road" and travel physically to meet important appointments.

Page 11



Meeting the Requirements of Collaborative Work Effectively

Today we live in a world where it's all about investing in collaborative work. Investing in communication is essential.

Page 5



What is Collaboration, and Should You Care?

By Andrew W.Davis
Senior Analyst & Partner Wainhouse Research
In recent times, we've seen more than one seismic shift in the conferencing and collaboration space.

Page 3



The ideal kiosk for ultra-thin screens

Page 14



Bringing together dispersed teams

The image of the « modern » office has changed drastically over the last decade. The Internet, the Cloud, smartphones and teleworking have brought about a major transformation and forced us to find new ways of working together as members of a workforce.

Page 4



Digital signage: the trump card for hotels and conference centers

Page 13



Digital signage and millennials

Page 12

A business lives and dies with its customers

When a business is born, the customers are the only important thing. Within them, the business will never get off the ground.

There is a lot to be learnt from profitable small businesses.

The sale should only be a start

The very first thing to properly understand is that customers want their problems solved quickly, with certain slight differences.

For example, people are prepared to wait a day to receive a response by email, but the response needs to be faster in social networks, which are more reactive and can punish you at lightning speed.

Afterwards, the customer requires constant attention. It is a mistake to imagine that the relationship comes to an end with a sales agreement: to keep the customer engaged, the sale should only be a start. This customer must be given support! Example: the Weekdone company markets tools for scheduling weekly tasks. This firm spends a lot of time not only on the sales process but also on training and providing help to its customers. And a company director (SnapShot) has recognized that what led his company to choose Weekdone was "the extremely helpful customer service department, which was always available to answer questions".



You are "in the trenches", alongside the customer

You have a lot of options for gleaning the opinions of your customers and it would be criminal not to use them. Telephone contacts, surveys, and forms for feedback - all these practices are aimed at letting your customers know that you are alongside them "in the trenches" and trying to understand their needs.

Because understanding a customer's needs means that you are ready to talk with him. The customer

must know that he is speaking to a real person. Creating blogs and establishing a presence on Facebook or Twitter pay dividends for the brand image and the building of customer relationships, especially if you ALSO provide information there that is not necessarily directly related to your product but is interesting and useful in adjacent fields.

It must be understood that a business lives and dies with its customers. You can market the best product in the world but if the public does not need it the whole exercise will be pointless.

You may be ahead of your time, but that will get you nowhere if you do not clearly explain the product and succeed in engaging potential customers.



The meeting rooms of the future

The meetings industry is changing rapidly. Planners must continually evaluate all the elements making up the "meeting experience" to ensure that they put in place the most advantageous environments.

With a view to improving collaboration and the exchange of ideas as well as strengthening relations between the participants.

IACC examined this issue by conducting an extensive survey among global leaders in varying fields that included meeting room design, audiovisual technology, the hotel business and universities, as well as among meeting managers.

Access to interactive technologies? Indispensable!

Research partners and current funders include entities like Meeting Professionals International (MPI), Development Councilors International, Showgizmo, Corbin Ball Associates, Sli-do, Warwick Conferences, MGSM Executive Hotel & Conference Center and PSAV.

The results show that 75% of meeting planners believe their role now involves more "experience creation" than

two years ago.

More than 80% of respondents say that access to interactive technologies (such as collaborative communication platforms and tools to encourage participation) will be significantly greater in the coming years.

A good 47% of respondents feel that the importance of having a flexible meeting area is greater than a few years ago.

While, at the present time, it is the flexibility of the meeting area that is the most important element of the meeting venue, followed by access

to interactive technology, it is this latter aspect that is expected to take precedence in the coming years.

Sights set on maximum productivity

Basically there are several necessary constants for a successful meeting: the broadband Internet connection that is considered "critical" for meetings, good acoustics and appropriate lighting.

Some distinct trends, however, are perceptible, and one of these is the need for more creative and less traditional options - a development of major importance. And just as important is the presence of truly operational state-of-the-art technology, including the introduction of beacons allowing traffic to be tracked, as well as videoconferencing facilities.

This dependence on technology is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. This means that the solutions that need to be found for meeting rooms of the future must be aimed at achieving maximum productivity through greater collaboration and increased productivity.



What is Collaboration, and Should You Care?

By Andrew W. Davis

Senior Analyst & Partner Wainhouse Research

In recent times, we've seen more than one seismic shift in the conferencing and collaboration space. Years ago we spoke of video conferencing and audio conferencing, and this later morphed to "unified communications" as Microsoft and Cisco fought to expand their customer base and applications prowess.

About 2-3 years ago, Microsoft tried to make "unified collaboration" an industry term and while not successful at this marketing thrust, indeed made "unified communications" seem out-dated.

We now seem to be entering a new phase which for lack of a more descriptive word, I'll call "collaboration." The word itself, unfortunately is an overused term applied to a wide variety of enterprise technologies and solutions. I'll get to this subject later.

My proof point is punctuated by this list of recent announcements. Start-up Cereno has introduced software that turns any touch surface into an interactive display that emulates the experience of a natural meeting. Multiple documents can be open and visible, and passed across the local or remote meeting room table.

Cisco's Spark Board combines ideation and brainstorming capabilities for both local and remote meetings via a touch display that also manages to serve as a very capable video conferencing system. Spark Board also integrates seamlessly into the Spark cloud world of messaging, team collab-

oration spaces, persistence, and even email.

Microsoft Surface Hub, more than a year old, is a multifunctional, multi-touch electronic whiteboard combo solution positioned by the company as a team collaboration device for meeting rooms.

Nureva Span uses one or more short-span projectors to create a virtual canvas that is projected onto a wall and accessible from personal devices. This is a cloud-based system that takes legacy tools like sticky notes, sketches, and flip charts and transforms them into digital versions that can be manipulated by local and remote participants.

Not particularly new, but very much in the news are persistent collaboration spaces from the likes of Glip, Hipchat, Slack, Cisco Spark, and Microsoft Teams. While these apps all support a range of communications from messaging to video conferencing to screen sharing and file storage, true collaboration applications are different. True collaboration is really about simultaneous and interactive working together – brainstorming is the penultimate example.

The term 'collaboration' in the enterprise sense is hopelessly overused. We need a new moniker for applications that describe working together in the physical and virtual world. I'm thinking maybe "congruity" might fit the bill – congruent communications anyone? "Synchronis" seems too technical or even weird, while "accordant communications" implies we all agree.



Andrew W. Davis

Others have stated that "collaboration" solutions can be mapped against an "ideation" feature/function spectrum. "Ideation" has a nice ring to it; we can say ideation solutions but we can't or shouldn't say "ideated communications." Whatever the term, ideation is going to be an important element for some jobs in some companies. Whether ideation solutions will appeal to the typical knowledge worker or department manager remains to be seen. And whether the solution set can be cost-justified in a mainstream business environment will require further investigation. Today, most of the products seem too expensive. But for product designers and distributed engineering and marketing teams, ideation tools can provide quick and valuable benefits. Custom-

ers need to understand what their true needs might be. The temptation to "throw out" the conferencing and collaboration products and services they have deployed in favor of the latest "collaboration" solutions is unlikely to be a strategy for success.



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Bringing together dispersed teams

The image of the « modern » office has changed drastically over the last decade. The Internet, the Cloud, smartphones and teleworking have brought about a major transformation and forced us to find new ways of working together as members of a workforce.

The digital revolution is extending the work hours of staff, but IT departments must deal with new challenges, including the marrying of technologies, urgent timelines and the maintenance of security.

Unifying the dispersed workforce

It has become more important than ever to have good resources in order to function efficiently.

Workforces are dispersing: according to the labor statistics office, 35% of the members of the liberal professions and those in professional occupations do all or part of their work at home and around 4 million workers work at home at least half of the time.

These persons all carry around a connected device with them and expect to be able to work from any location. But this does not mean that they want to work alone or in isolation – team connectivity is a crucial issue for them.

It is thus a question of literally unifying the dispersed workforce. There are different methods.... For the end user, finding a collaboration tool that can be integrated into the IT depart-

ment's technical platform is not the primary focus – he merely wants to find a solution that works.

This becomes complicated when several departments install different computer programs to meet their various needs.

It is necessary to combat this situation and balance the demands of management, security and reliability with the functionalities sought by users.

And priority must be given to ease of use. An example to be followed: the user must enter a user name and a password and then click on a name or meeting room.

And that's all: from this moment on, every collaborator can access (or host) a meeting on his computer or phone.

Avoiding the snowball effect

End users tend to amass a large number of different tools to satisfy their communication needs. If you are not careful, the IT department will be overburdened with the task of managing all these different tools with different standards and will edge away from the efficiency of a sin-

gle collaboration system across the company. A unified solution must be found before this snowball effect sets in! Standards must be established and a functioning tool found in advance.

This will be a unified solution that will take charge of audio, web and video conferencing, text chatting and the ability to record and share meetings.

Cloud-based video conferencing has become an extremely important method of communication, to the extent that certain companies have gone so far as to scrap their old office phones.

Video conferencing offers easy connectivity and makes meetings more effective.

This solution resolves the collaboration problem. In a recent survey, 76% of respondents said they use video-enabled collaboration to work remotely and 75% of these individuals claimed to have increased their productivity and achieved a better work-life balance.

Today this type of collaboration is possible anywhere and on any device (computer, laptop, smartphone, office or meeting room).



The indispensable tools for huddle rooms

Small meeting rooms, which are called « huddle rooms » in North America, are ideal tools for effective collaboration.

Enterprises of all sizes and across all industries have jumped at the opportunity: these rooms are so practical for collaboration within small teams!

On top of that, they are inexpensive to equip and require a minimum amount of space. As against other rooms, they also seem to inspire the most creativity and productivity.

Furnishing, display, whiteboard

First of all, regarding the furniture, your choice will be in line with your corporate culture, but of course you will be able to personalize it in different ways. You must simply keep in mind that the limited floor space enables you to make original choices at little expense (the company's entire premises do not need to be renovated). The typical huddle room accommodates one work table and 4 or 5 chairs. This is the basis.

The display... It is indispensable for sharing information. You will lean towards a flat screen that is generously dimensioned but suited to the size of the huddle room, which means that you will opt for a screen measuring between 42 and 50 inches. If it is mounted on the wall, you are advised to make sure that it is situated at eye level, especially if a "light" videoconferencing

system equipped with a camera is added to it. The whiteboard may be traditional or interactive. It must be possible to draw and write on it for the purpose of explaining concepts and ideas. It is a little like a parking area where ideas and priorities are noted down. In the case of a traditional whiteboard, it will be sufficient to take a few pictures after the meeting to keep a record of what was written there.

Acoustics, light and video-enabled collaboration

The acoustics must be given special attention and disturbing echoing effects avoided. We should remember that there are easy ways of substantially improving the acoustics, and that good acoustics result in more sustained attention and heightened involvement.

Light is important too. Ideally, you should (if possible) opt for natural lighting. As a way of managing it, also provide for venetian blinds, as direct sunlight severely impedes viewing. In the case of artificial light, provide for a rheostat.

But let's come back to videoconferencing. Today, video collaboration no longer requires major investments. Nevertheless, with regard to the quality of solutions introduced into huddle rooms you need to be just as demanding as for the quality of traditional rooms. One click calling must be the rule, as well as ease of use. Af-



ter all, if people meet in a small room this does not mean that they should detect a difference of some kind with regard to their video experience.

Meeting the Requirements of Collaborative Work Effectively

Today we live in a world where it's all about investing in collaborative work. Investing in communication is essential.

At the same time, responsiveness has become critical to allowing companies to stand out, make the difference and satisfy their customers.

Just get to work!

The available collaboration solutions must be assessed according to the criteria of speed, creativity and ease of use.

It must be possible to collaborate with people who are present as well as with employees who are in another location, without wasting time travelling.

By the same token, the user is not at all compelled to "understand" how the technical systems used work. All they need to do is get to work: Press a button and be in communication instantly.

Finally, it must also be capable of automatically storing the result of a brainstorming session and sharing it with the right persons.

Mondopad by InFocus meets these demanding specifications. It is, in fact, an "all-in" collaboration system (very large, 70- or 80-inch!) with a high-resolution touchscreen (HD or 4K!) allowing it to be used in "white-

board" mode, for videoconferencing, data sharing and... much more!

Everything is clear, easy and very powerful!

Data sharing and video calls are achieved in an extremely easy and clear manner.

Using the tablet is extremely easy; you note, annotate, display documents, presentations, images, spreadsheets, and then store these notes as images which can be sent by e-mail or via the Mondopad. The device has a com-

plete set of digital markers, shapes, digital lines and colors.

You can bring your personal equipment (PC, Mac, tablet or smartphone) and connect it in order to share with any device. With the personal equipment it is also possible to make a video call on the Mondopad! Additionally, you can view up to 4 Airplay or Chrome broadcasts simultaneously!

The videoconferencing functions are rich: You bring the people together (up to 25) instantly. The interlocutors in other locations can connect using their own equipment (PC, Mac, tablet or smartphone) or another Mondopad. They can see the faces and the content broadcast "side by side" with the dual videoconferencing.

The camera is integrated (panorama, tilt and zoom), the microphones eliminate echo and noise, and the sound is perfectly restored.



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IMEX 2017 – More Purposeful Meetings and delivering a better event experience

“The strong level of business conducted from 16 till 18 May 2017 in Frankfurt was evidence of the wholesale resilience and positive outlook of the market in what are challenging times all over the globe”

“Our intention was to create a truly democratic pre-show education event – with something for everyone regardless of whether they speak German or English or come as an exhibitor, hosted buyer or visitor.” This unilateral approach has gone down really well, with several people saying they plan to send their whole teams to the show a day earlier next year to take advantage of EduMonday, a full day of learning opportunities providing insights into event design, future trends and hot new technologies, commented Ray Bloom, Chairman of the IMEX Group.

The Politicians Forum generates keen debate

This Forum which took place at the Hotel Villa Kennedy on May 15, saw engaging discussion around the role that meetings and events can play in a world where globalisation, free trade, free movement and social order is undergoing critical change.

The programme provided an extensive insight into the benefits that the meetings industry



Greg Clark

can bring, in addition to the opportunity to debate and share best practice. Penilla Gunther, a Member of Parliament from Sweden said ; « This event can make a very valuable contribution to developing understanding between politicians and this industry especially when everyone interacts in the sessions ».

This Forum has made an important contribution to achieving the growing appreciation, among politicians, of the wide ranging economic, social and education benefits that can be gained by investing in conferences and meetings said Ray Bloom.

Everything begins with a meeting

Professor Greg Clark CBE, a world expert in the emerging sphere of the science of cities and their role in economic development, delivered the keynote at the opening ceremony. Greg Clark who works with around 100 of World’s cities, helping them develop the strategies they need to deliver long-term economic



Ray Bloom: Chairman of the Imex Group

development, said it was a fascinating period in the history of the city.

We are in the middle of a century of change, and this middle segment of the next 33 years really matters. The decisions we make now on issues such as infrastructure, trade, population movements, and dealing with climate change, will set the pattern that will endure for the next 100 to 200 years.

He said that the role of the meetings industry was crucial in advancing these areas, yet it remained « almost invisible to many policy makers. It does not appear in economic development strategies as much as it should. An industry that brings large numbers of elite decision makers to cities should be acknowledged more. »

Advising on closing what he called the ‘partnership gap », between cities and the meeting industry. Clark said that the successful cities of the future



Left: Christopher Imbsen: Deputy Regional Director for Europe (UNWTO) United Nations World Tourism Organization Right: Ray Bloom

would be those who best solved these issues and who made meetings a component of the way ahead. « Without meetings to think about the issues we face, we would not know where to start. Everything begins with a meeting, » he said.



Better decisions for individuals

By Dr. Franziska Frank, Affiliated Program Director at ESMT Berlin –

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As humans we believe that we are rational and good at making decisions. And then it turns out that we make mistakes by the hour.

Let us look at two examples:

Imagine your negotiation partner puts down a number first. Then, statistically, you are already lost. You will end up conceding more of the pie that you are negotiating about than if you had put down the number first.

Now look at this situation: If someone tells you “that you are losing x € revenue every month while you have not bought Y” you are up to 40 % more likely to run out and get this Y, than if that person had said “once you buy Y you will gain x € revenue every month.”

Why on earth do both of these things happen? It all has to do with our brain and the way it processes information. On the one hand, the brain tries to save energy – so if someone offers up a number in a negotiation, it is much easier and more efficient in the brains’ terms to swallow the anchor hook, line and sinker.

On the other hand, research also indicates that

losses are experienced in our amygdala, the part of our brain that gives off emotional distress signals and deals with fears. So no wonder we rather fight against potential losses than embrace gains.

So what can be done to improve our decision making?

Firstly, you need to become aware that these irritating mental presets (called biases) exist in dozen shapes and forms. Secondly, use conscious reflection in the moment of decision making. How does that work?

Once the number is dumped into your lap, tell yourself to stop. Then use your brain to come up with reasons for why the number is wrong. This costs mental energy but allows you to neutralize the anchor.

Or if you are worried that your amygdala is making you a victim, consciously change the wording towards gains and see if your keenness to buy Y does

not abate.

The clue for better decision making therefore, lies in not allowing our brain to decide “by itself” but by actively harnessing its power.

Dr. Franziska Frank teaches decision making, negotiations and what everyone needs to know about their brain at different business schools and companies.

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Dr Franziska Frank

Make your event a smash hit by livestreaming it!

The least one can say is that live streaming draws a crowd! Every day, 600,000 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube. Carrying out live transmissions has never been easier! Hence the question: why not make use of live streaming for your company events?

Remember that live streaming enables you to broadcast an event in real time and this can be done in a variety of very simple ways. It’s an excellent tool for increasing participation.

For promoting a modern, innovative and appealing image

With live streaming the size of the audience is unlimited, as it no longer depends on the number of persons who are actually physically present.

This technology is accessible to everyone. For a start, it is an ideal solution for enabling mobile workers to participate in an event, especially as they can view, upon request, a replay in the form of a video after the event has aired. It is therefore very useful for countering time differences and full schedules.

In contrast to participants who are actually physically present at the event and necessitate expenditures on transportation, room rental, and the provision of food and beverages, live streaming attracts an additional audience who cost nothing, apart from the costs associated with implementation of the necessary technol-

ogies.

Live streaming also fits in with current trends, and the Y and Z generations already use it in their private spheres. Integrating it into corporate communications projects a modern and innovative image of the company that also enhances its appeal to young talents seeking a



dynamic workplace in line with their expectations.

The audience’s engagement is increased, especially if remote persons are allowed to participate by means of a text chat and by asking questions. Online polls can also be conducted to canvass opinions and give cybernauts

the sense of being involved. It then becomes a very enriching activity.

From sneakers to a flight from Istanbul to New York

Many events are ideally suited for live streaming.

It can be used to promote the launching of a new product or service, as Adidas did in Russia during the summer of 2016 to promote the launching of its latest sneaker design. It hid 82 pairs of new shoes all over Moscow and allowed those who found them to keep them.

Live streaming can also be used to reveal « what goes on behind the scenes » of an event. An example that was highly successful: Turkish Airlines invited cybernauts to follow all the stages of a flight between Istanbul and New York that was broadcast live, from the preparation of the aircraft through to its landing, and including boarding, organization during the flight, and the services of the cabin crew.

It is also possible to showcase one’s know-how via live streaming. This may concern the functioning of a device or how some repair is to be performed, and be intended to instruct users faced with the same problem, or to demonstrate one’s expertise.

The Association World Congress has revealed a streamed approach to content and sessions.

The congress which has taking place on May 2nd to 4th in Vienna was organized by Damian Hutt, Executive Director of the Association of Association Executives which has created a rich programme of content that addresses the wide variety of interests and experience levels of attendees.

Over the three days, a wide range of learning formats has ensured many valuable opportunities to discuss and debate the ideas that they have shared and explored the challenges that they face in an association.

With discussions over breakfast, practical workshops, association success stories, expert briefings and extensive networking opportunities, as well as dedicated meetings for association leaders, medical associations and aspiring leaders, the Congress has offered a unique opportunity for associations to come together, to explore the issues that have made a difference to their organisations now and in the future.

Keynote speakers have opened the programme each day and have explored a range of strategic issues including: how associations can thrive in a current era of disruption; the power of tribal marketing and how associations can harness it to truly engage their members and the importance of thinking and leading globally in the current climate.

Executive Heads, CEO's and Department Heads from leading international associations have shared their expertise and experience to think differently about a range of vital issues.

The explosion of Video – Defining a strategy fit for this must-have content

The Congress and Research have showed that video content now accounts for 90 % of website traffic and how you can develop video content that is relevant to members and delivered to them in a way they will find useful and accessible. Video content as a marketing tool to reach new audiences and engage more effectively with existing members.

Video and TV channels have changed the way and associations have to communicate with



key audiences and have to explore how they can implement their own video and TV content strategy.

This Congress has provided value-added information and see below what delegates have said:



This was a congress about “not business-as-usual” – You have learned a lot, meet new people and partners, and leave with many new ideas that are directly applicable as an association's leader.

Bertrand Audoin, Executive Head of Association, International Association of Providers of AIDS care. I have now attended this event for the last few years and recommend it to Executive Directors as the “must-attend” event to hear the latest thinking and opportunity to network with peers from international associations.

Dr John Hooper, Chief Executive, Chartered Association of Building Engineers.

The Congress format is dynamic, well thought through and conducive to best practice sharing.

Jessica Mathieu, Congress and Events, Union for International Cancer Control

The Association of Association Executives assists association employees in improving their skills, competences & careers, and enhancing the effectiveness and value of their organisations.

She is also the largest community of association executives in Europe and in the UK, an has members in Africa, India, Asia and the Middle East. Members are from professional, scientific, learned, business and consumer-facing, associations, societies, federations, councils, chambers and other membership organisations, in all sectors.

For more information:
www.associationexecutives.org



Leadership in a Globalizing World

By *Cynthia Cherrey*

President & CEO, International Leadership Association

Leaders today face an ever more interdependent and demanding globalizing world in which we need a better way of understanding leadership and its meaning for the 21st century.

In the 20th century we had increasingly complicated problems; in the 21st century we have increasingly complex systems that amplify those complicated problems. Leading is exponentially more difficult and challenging than it was in the past.

Leadership today exists in a knowledge-based and interdependent world where success is determined by your connectedness. Success in an interdependent world is dependent upon a person's ability to develop and maintain relationships that cross borders and to see connections throughout the whole system—it requires a systems perspective.

A systems perspective of leadership involves perceiving the concerted effort of the many people who work together at different places and at different levels in the system, or the organization.. Within the context of that leadership ecosystem, leaders must be comfortable crossing boundaries, both physical and virtual, simultaneously, in multiple dimensions.

Instead of providing direction and control, leaders increasingly influence through meaning making, bringing disparate parts of the system into meaningful contact with each other, and providing a compelling narrative. The “Lone Leader at the Top” approach no longer works because the system is so complex that any one person at any level can have tremendous influence on the system through feedback loops and other recursive aspects of complexity.



Using a systemic perspective framework, two of the key leadership capacities for the 21st century are global acuity and complexipacity. Global acuity is understanding experiences and insights of working and leading in a global society. Many of us know this is important, but it is hard work to develop a global understanding. We need to find ways to continue to learn, to expand our understanding of others and ways to influence individuals and organizations that are unlike ourselves. While we may be more



connected, that does not mean we are better versed in the diversity of the world. While technological interconnectivity may make the world appear more flat, it is actually still quite bumpy in that people around the world work in very different ways.

Complexipacity is the ability to understand and address today's complex systems and problems by seeing and making connections. Complexipacity requires seeing how the individual connects to the organization; how the organization connects with other organizations; how the organization is located in a region within a country and so on. Boundaries are permeable; connections are interconnected. The local context is part of a larger context; every system impacts a larger system.

Leadership for a globalizing world facilitates the following:

Selecting and cultivating talent that embraces diverse cultures and viewpoints.
Engaging members in meaningful work.

Facilitating a strong bond to the organization's purpose and to each other's work.

Keeping the common core purpose at the forefront.

A willingness to embrace ideas and people who are different from each other and may even contradict one another's viewpoints. It is at the nexus of these

differences—at these intersections—that creativity often emerges

Developing the leadership capacity of all—creating a leaderful organization.

Leadership in a globalizing world starts with thinking about the world through a different lens. It is important for our future to address and solve the complex complicated problems of today.

As Einstein once said, “The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.” I would humbly add to that quote the following: Nor can these problems be solved with the same leadership perspective we had at the time we created them.

It is imperative that we expand how we think about and practice leadership in this global society not only to survive, but to thrive.

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A very pleasant surprise!

IFA 2017 will be held in the Berlin Messe Expocenter from 1 to 6 September, for the general public.

We attended the “pre-IFA” press conference, which took place from 20 to 23 April in Lisbon.

The panoply of connected things

Dr. Christian Göke, the CEO of Messe Berlin, said that he believed that the consumer electronics and household appliances markets were converging and the boundaries between the digital and physical worlds were about to disappear. And he mentioned flagship areas such as health, well-being, mobile devices, the Internet of Things, drones, enhanced and virtual reality, and the smart car and home - a full and, for that matter, quite heterogeneous program.

Jürgen Boyny, from GFK Retail & Technology, stated that “the smartphone connects all areas of daily life, from the television in the living room through to the washing machine, the coffee machine and the bathroom”. He was referring to the Internet of Things, which always causes much spilled ink... and of which little remains after the buzz has ceased.

Those were the clearest statements.

In practice, we have noted a major innovation that concerns, for a change, the television set market.

The Frame – a groundbreaker

This innovation is extremely interesting. As we know, a television set, after having been switched off, in a dining room as in a meeting room, is truly far from being an attractive object. Of course, today’s models are very large and ultra-flat and can be mounted on the wall, but they form a black, totally commonplace rectangle. It is on this point that Samsung has intervened.

With its new « The Frame » models, the large, black, commonplace rectangle is transformed into a real picture frame where any view or photo (like a real picture) can be displayed! The Frame is attached to the wall and needs a space of only 5 mm between the wall and itself. It has an interchangeable wooden frame that comes in several colors (black, white, light or dark wood grain). The screen, for its part, adapts to the ambient light via a sensor in order to increase or decrease the brightness of the displayed art piece and eliminate the TV effect. No cable is visible underneath the television set. This is because an invisible optical cable is used.

A studio stand, matching the frame, is available if you prefer to place the screen on a piece of furniture. In addition to any personal images, The Frame has a rich gallery comprising several hundred artworks in different categories (architecture, drawings, landscape) and, as already mentioned, accommodates all the photos taken of your family, vacation or... whatever you desire!

At present, The Frame is available in 55 and 65-inch versions.

Needless to say, the result of transforming a TV into an art piece is to altogether revamp the look of a living room and AT LAST showcase the television set... as it no longer resembles a television set at all.

Samsung’s slogan is one of the most daring: « Picture quality discussion will become obsolete ». And indeed, it is time to move on to something other than “pixel counting” and considering one shade of black to be blacker than another! Is 4K better than



Dr Christian Göke

HD? Yes, but in terms of performance certainly inferior to 8L, which itself is inferior to the future 16K! We bet that we will soon buy television sets that come with a magnifying glass so we can convince ourselves that we have made the right choice!



Samsung



Samsung



Those small objects that brighten the lives of businessmen and businesswomen

Video conferences are not the only thing in the lives of businessmen and businesswomen. Oftentimes they also have to “hit the road” and travel physically to meet important appointments.

Some very useful accessories are available that make travelling and hotel stays a lot easier. It would be a great shame to do without them!

It should be noted that certain suitcases are actually “smart” and feature a compartment to accommodate a notebook and several other items of digital equipment (including a smartphone, iPhone, iPad or tablet) while having a... battery that enables you to recharge your devices! An “app” (available on both iOS and Android) allows the suitcase to be locked automatically as soon as you move away a little.

The suitcase also indicates its weight on your smartphone, allowing you to avoid exceeding the base allowance. In the (rather unlikely) event that you lose it, it can be located anywhere in the world, again via your smartphone. Businessmen and businesswomen wishing to

avoid using hotel ironing services can opt for non-iron shirts, blouses and dresses, which can be put on immediately after being washed.

As regards suits, you should preferably choose those made from polyester, which has less of a tendency to wrinkle when the suit is folded in a suitcase.

Also consider the small inflatable and ultra-portable pillows, which prove to be indispensable during long flights or when one is suffering badly from a lack of sleep.

Also available are memory foam neck rests, which are inevitably bulkier. You can also download an “app” for the translation of texts into the language of the country to which you are travelling.

For example, Google Translate enables translation of texts you write, sentences you read or even written texts that you photograph.

The app also allows you to read the completed translation and it enables real conversations to be conducted between two persons speaking different languages. It is very useful and costs nothing in Eu-

rope, following the end of roaming (as the app needs an Internet connection).

Another example of basic but indispensable technology that the traveler needs is a universal adapter, which saves you having to buy a special adapter at each new destination.

And you must check the power, voltage and frequency of the equipment in order to ensure good compatibility.

As today’s smartphones are used intensively, you also need to have a small back-up battery, which enables you to reinvigorate the machine in the afternoon, for example.

To return to the topic of USB memory sticks for a moment, it should be pointed out that, even if Internet connections are available, certain work that can be done when you are travelling is too “heavy” to be exported immediately

on a Dropbox on leaving the hotel, for example. Simply leaving it on the hard drive of your

notebook involves a high degree of risk. There is nothing like a “mirror copy”. Given the current low price of (even high-end) USB sticks, it is certainly no luxury to use one of them! The same thing can be said of portable hard drives, of course.

You can also turn to power packs, those back-up mini-batteries, to ensure increased autonomy for smartphones and tablets.

And let us also not forget the cases and sleeves for carrying and protecting smartphones. Each individual will make his or her own choice, the waist pack often proving to be the most practical solution (it does not hamper movements or weigh down the body, and it eliminates the risk of loss), provided it holds the device firmly in place.



Great news: content remains king

If you are interested in digital signage, you have no doubt already heard the catchword “Content is king”, which means that content supersedes any other consideration.

The phrase is a little tiring, perhaps, for those who have heard it an endless number of times, but it is precisely because of its veracity that industry professionals keep repeating it to us.

“It all depends....”

Let’s not forget that content is simply.... what people receive as information! The type of player used is of little concern to them and nor do they care much about the brand of your monitors or the software doing the processing.... In practice, they enjoy the content, all the content and nothing but the content.

One further reason to ask some rather.... naive questions: do you retain the same content for weeks, even months? Do you use bullets? Is your content displayed slowly enough to be read and quickly enough to attract attention? Is your content in phase with your brand identity? Of course, you will answer pertinently: “It all depends”.

Well then, is your digital sign located at a transit, sales or waiting point? Because this changes everything, obviously. At a transit point you will have very little time to attract the attention of passersby. In this situation you will need to

be as concise and daring as possible, as the average “stay” time in front of this type of sign does not exceed two seconds, which is very little time to imprint something onto the minds of passersby.

The type of audience also plays a role!

If your digital sign is located at a point of sale there is no need to be in such a great hurry, but you must keep in mind that the audience is present here for a specific purpose and not to view your messages. You must concentrate on transmitting content that is immediately relevant and that highlights the opportunities available at that very instant (e.g. sale at a neigh-



boring location).

Of course, the waiting point, for its part, offers you a “captive” audience. This audience seek distraction in anything that comes before their eyes. In this situation, therefore, longer messages are largely allowed. Provided, however, the sign succeeds in prevailing over the smartphones, which generally absorb all the attention of their owners. That is the reason why you are advised to mix the messages (fun facts, advertisements and important information) in a dynamic way, so as to retain people’s attention and not bore them.

But it all depends on the type of audience as well. Age, for example, is an important factor. If a certain weekday corresponds to a price reduction granted to senior citizens, the messages of your digital signage should not focus on the involvement of social media, as you will have very little chance of engaging your customers in this way.

Also consider the specific messages to be transmitted if, for example, your audience is composed of businessmen or holiday-makers....

Because it is also the people’s state of mind that largely determines content. Are they in buying, navigation or entertainment mode?

Digital signage and millennials

Digital signage is most definitely one of the most thriving industries! According to Markets and Markets (a research firm), it has notched up a growth of 62% in seven years!

Of course, the reason for this is simple. Digital signage is hugely cost effective.

Creating a “micro-moment of influence”

There is no more effective way of maximizing the customer experience, especially when this involves “millennial” consumers who love interactions based on technology.

In fact, for this age group it is a question of creating a “micro-moment of influence” that will help them decide what is to be bought.

A “micro-moment” is when you make use of

a peripheral (usually a smartphone, nowadays) to learn something, do something, discover something, view something or buy something.

During these moments, consumer expectations are greater than ever. Millennials have been educated to expect that brands provide immediately and precisely what we are seeking. They want these things “right away”.



Finding the right personalization

It is important, therefore, that the brands and trade names be ready when these “micro-moments” occur - with the right style, the right content, the right products and the right personalization. For example, by means of the interaction between a beacon and a mobile applica-

tion, businesses can succeed in transmitting ultra-personalized information, based on what they have just learnt about the visitor. It is also possible to use, by displaying them on digital signage screens, the opinions and buying recommendations that users have left in the social networks, for example.

If a consumer hesitates to buy a product, knowing all the good points that the buyers see in the item may make all the difference and lead to a “motivated” purchase. Information on the brand and the company’s values concerning its position on environmental issues as well as social investments can be proudly displayed on digital signs.



Digital signage: the trump card for hotels and conference centers

Hotels and conference centers can use digital signage to maximize the advantages they provide to their customers.

Profitability within less than a year!

Although the cost of a digital signage system may seem to be significant, when you analyze the return on investment you realize that it is a profitable investment, with a break-even point that is reached within a short space of time (increasingly, this is estimated at 12 months or even less)!

Here are a few points that are worth considering.....

The revenues deriving from the promotion of your various in-house services and facilities that is carried out using digital signage. This may concern the promotion of your spa, your bar or your restaurants. Digital signage will enable you to ensure that your audience is fully informed about what you have to offer and that this information reaches them at the right place and at the right moment.

This means that you can adapt your messages in a targeted manner and advertise a "happy hour" at the end of working meetings, or highlight your different breakfast menus in the morning, at the time your guests are leaving their rooms.

These will be extremely effective advertising messages, as they address what can be considered "immediate needs".... they come just at the right moment!

You can also consider the revenues from the promotion of outside services, of companies other than yours. This involves selling advertising time on your digital signage. It is of great in-



terest for businesses in the neighborhood, as hotels and conference centers capture a specific audience who are ready to spend money for what they think is worthwhile, whether it be outside restaurants, entertainment, points of interest, or shops of all kinds.

Presenting your facility as a modern product!

The maintaining (in the broadest sense of the term) of conference rooms is greatly facilitated by the use of digital signage. It reduces general personnel costs and the production costs associated with the printing of paper. Digital signage can be integrated into event management systems and enables you to ensure that all rooms are updated in due time.

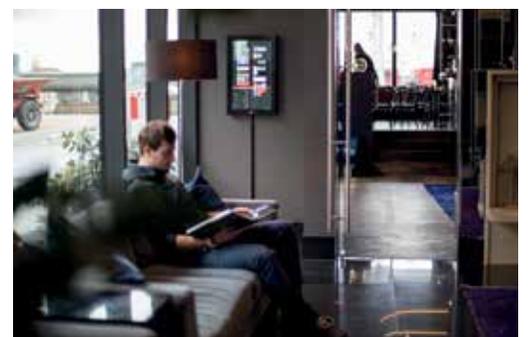
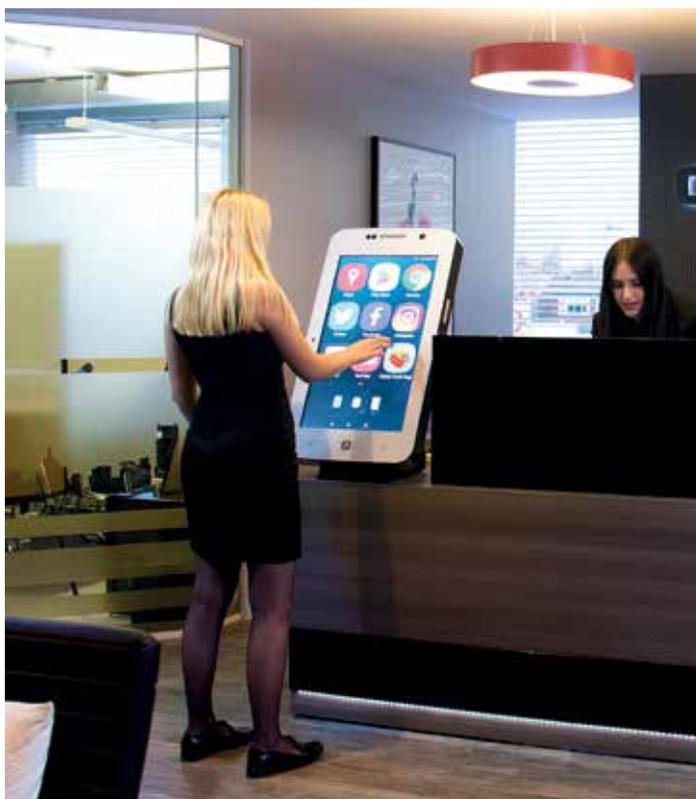
Even reception and janitorial services are impacted by digital signage! As we know, the cost of customer services in hotels and conference centers is high. Helping customers find their meeting rooms is time-consuming and digital signage is obviously able to provide clear information (in real time) concerning the different locations. Furthermore, interactive kiosks can highlight local attractions, weather forecasts, flight information, and even print boarding



cards. All these possibilities improve the customer experience and also reduce general personnel costs considerably.

And then there is the emotional impact associated with actually using digital signage. When you use it an image of sophistication and quality pervades the way your customers view your facility.

Digital signage improves the customer experience but it also enables you to present your hotel as a product that is modern and at the cutting edge of technology. It should be added that a digital signage system lasts between 4 and 8 years and requires very little maintenance. Finally, it can be continually adapted to meet your needs.



All praise to kiosks!

By definition, a kiosk is a small autonomous unit that performs specific tasks, usually without the involvement of personnel. It is generally intended to provide information to the persons who use it.

Kiosks are often quite small and mobile and they help consumers obtain information.

They are placed at strategic points where experience has shown that it is important to pro-



vide for a "presence", without this necessitating the deployment of personnel.

Versatile and moveable

They can consist simply of an information center stocked with brochures and leaflets, or be more sophisticated and rely on information technology for the dissemination (or collection) of information. Increasingly, they are equipped with a computer and a touch screen enabling users to find the information they require.

The consumer can also enter his personal in-

formation if he agrees to being contacted directly at a later point in time.

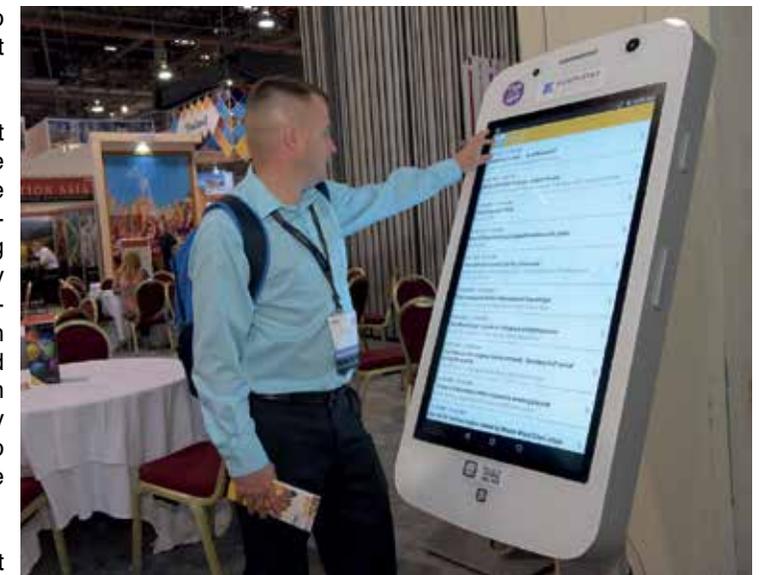
Even though they do not interact with the user like a salesperson, kiosks are extremely effective because, besides providing precise information, they can be installed practically anywhere and remain there for the required length of time. They can be moved around easily and handled by only two persons, or even a single person.

The return on investment is very rapid, providing the kiosk is properly used.

Kiosks? A real "helping hand"!

At trade fairs and other events, they function as a "helping hand": they attract the public, capture their attention and help you maintain interesting contacts with your customers.

They can be installed singly, without personnel, in shopping malls or other places that you identify as being frequented by your "target". Imagine the cost generated by a permanent human presence!



to be spent on maintenance, but this is essential to ensure that the kiosk continues operating and generating business!



At Digital Signage Summit Europe (#F-530), Peerless-AV is showing its new Indoor Portrait Kiosk for the latest ultra-thin displays and touchscreen panels ranging from 40"-55", and measuring less than 101mm (4") deep.

The Portrait Kiosk features an aesthetically pleasing curved design and is fully customisable for indoor self-service, advertising and wayfinding applications in corporate, retail, QSR, transportation, hospitality settings, and beyond.

Manufactured in the UK, the new Peerless-AV kiosk is offered with reduced shipping and lead times to European customers. Key features of the new Indoor Portrait Kiosk include universal height and depth adjustment for flush display alignment and two whisper-quiet thermostat-controlled cooling fans, which exhaust heat generated from the display and components to maintain an optimal internal temperature.

Peerless-AV
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A small sum needs

From Consultation and design through to delivery

Over the last ten years, Mode-AL has worked with the AV system integrator arm of Sony Europe Limited designing, manufacturing and installing iconic structures which fully showcase the latest in Sony innovation. Projects have ranged from the design and construction of structures that support the deployment of the Sony Ziris canvas, through to Video Conferencing and collaboration systems.

With a reputation for providing bespoke complex systems that seamlessly integrate with technology, Mode-AL will be working with Sony Professional Services Europe as it rolls out the Sony CLEDIS™ (Crystal LED Integrated Structure) display technology across many applications.

Kin Loong Chit, Solution Architect Manager at Sony Professional Solutions Europe says:

“Mode-AL provides a turn-key bespoke solution that complements and enhances the Sony product. From consultation and design through to delivery, the Mode-AL engineers have placed importance on the quality and craftsmanship of each solution. We are therefore delighted to incorporate Mode-AL into this process.”

Client: Diageo / Bacardi
Technology: Hanging display: 12x46" - Bat Wings
Mode-AL designed and manufac-

tured a hanging digital display stand based on the Bacardi bat wings logo for drinks company Diageo/Bacardi comprising two stands which could support twelve 46" monitors. Worldwide support at exhibitions over twelve months was also provided and included erecting and dismantling the display. After

the exhibitions were completed, the stand was then transferred to Diageo's headquarters in Park Royal, West London.

Client: I-Fly skydiving simulator, Dubai
Technology: Free standing LCD 25x47" – Lattice



Mode-AL provided a unique, eye-catching structure for the I-Fly Skydiving fascia located at City Centre, Mirdif, Dubai. The structure was designed to support 25 Sony screens each measuring 46". Here, the unique technical challenge was to provide a large structure of no more than 1500kg including 709kg weight for the screens. Mode-AL worked closely with the building's structural engineers to ensure the display structure's compliance with this pre-determined maximum load.

Mode-AL Display Engineering
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Businessmen, businesswomen? Consumers as well!

In our next issues we are going to offer you information on products intended more specifically for “consumers”.

The focus will be on a selection of products that will be useful to you, both in your professional and in your private life and also when you are travelling.

No one-track thinking!

In fact, we must avoid the sort of one-track thinking that would make us believe that businessmen and businesswomen are only interested in things relating to their business. They are also “consumers” in their private lives, and therefore the distinction has no basis in fact.

We will therefore offer information about cases, bags, chargers, useful accessories, suitcases, anti-theft systems, Wi-Fi solutions, screen filters, tablets and notebooks, USB and phone sticks, and much more.

A small example: the new regulations for certain long-haul flights will require that tablets and notebooks be put in the baggage hold. That is a major reason for making sure they are protected from impact damage and against theft, as they will be out of your control for a lengthy period of time and you want to recover them... and in good condition!

Another example: getting rid of a smartphone addiction while on vacation. Why not opt for a secondary phone that is basic, light and robust, and

that can be operated without surrounding it with a lot of (too much) attention?

Clarifications.... including those on the end of roaming

Of course, we will also provide clarifications on the current situation in one area or another.

A case in point is the end of roaming... where one can – quite easily – fall into a trap.

The rule to be remembered, however, is very simple: a Belgian calling abroad from Belgium always pays for an international call and a Belgian outside Belgium, but in Europe, pays for his calls and SMS messages to any European country the amount of his Belgian flat rate, just like his data (Internet) consumption, which will function as if he were in Belgium. All the quota overruns will be billed on the basis of the prices projected in Belgium. Examples....

You are in Belgium. Sending of SMS messages or phone calls to a Belgium number: Belgian domestic rate; to a non-Belgian European (EU) number or to a non-European number: international rates. You are in the EU (not in Belgium). SMS messages or phone calls to a Belgium number or a non-Belgian European number: Belgian domestic rate. To a number outside the EU: roaming rates. It is accordingly in the best interest of a border

dweller to connect to the network of the neighboring country (member of the EU) to make his international calls, as he will then pay the price of a local call. But let us come back to our new section... All the products presented will be accompanied with practical information enabling you to acquire them, if desired.





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