

@edwardboches

Wednesday, October 2, 13

Greetings. I'm flattered and honored to address this group.

You are no doubt here because you're eager to enter a career you've been preparing for for years. You've learned PR theory, strategy, tools and tactics and acquired skills that include everything from writing to storytelling to media relations and social media.

All that's great. But I'd like to suggest the three most important qualities you should bring to the profession are these.

Courage Creativity Collaboration

We'll get to them in a few minutes.



ad guy



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I am what you might call an ad guy. As in "what the hell is an ad guy doing speaking at a PR conference?"

Despite having started my career in journalism, then moving on to public relations, because I spent most of my time as a copywriter and creative director, I'm labeled an ad guy. Just like you'll soon be called a PR guy, woman, or worse.

We work in an industry -- communications -- that loves its labels and prefers to keep them intact.

I'd rather be called a communicator for the digital age. But that title doesn't exist yet.

Unfortunately, these designations -- ad guy, PR guy, social media guru -- perpetuate differences and silos that are a hindrance to our ability to generate great ideas that resonate in the market.

And they're everywhere.



"We tell a real story.

Advertising just hits

the high spots."

Dan Edelman

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Dan Edelman, founder of a PR agency I hold in high esteem, up until his last days, would talk about how advertising merely hits the high spots, declaring it takes PR to tell the deep story.



Can the PR industry avoid death by #digital?

Tom Liacas — August 30, 2013 — 3 Comments

In the past two years, I have seen at least four 100K+ online reputation projects go to pure play digital agencies. By virtue of their approach and subject matter (issue management and public affairs campaigns) these should have gone to PR agencies. So what happened? If you work in PR, or know someone who does, then take note of this wake up call. The growing market for online reputation services is a threat for the PR industry. The irony of this is that, while the lines between marketing and PR have always been blurred, reputation is one area where PR companies should be shining.

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Digital agencies have, in recent years, been fond of condemning PR shops, arguing that PR doesn't understand the digital landscape.



The so-called social media gurus love reminding ad agencies how they don't get social media and the new way of engaging.

Why Digital Agencies Aren't Ready to Lead

They Lack the Balance of Exploration and Exploitation

By: Ana Andjelic

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Any conversation about digital marketing these days includes at least one mention that traditional agencies just "don't get it." While this may be correct, what's equally true is that digital agencies are not ready to take the lead.

Look at the typical digital agency. It excels in exploring new horizons. It supports a flat and loose organizational structure in which a developer has access to the CEO. And it makes sure everyone's opinion is heard. It's one big crazy family.

Digital agencies are having a ton of fun experimenting with ideas, technologies and strategies to find new alternatives superior to obsolete ways of doing marketing. That's what they do best.

The problem is, this is the only thing they are doing.

When they are asked to actually follow through on their ideas, they often come up short. It is because they don't know the business of marketing (or want to know it, for that matter), and they rarely have the organizational structure or past practices to guide them.

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And, of course, traditional ad agencies, self-proclaimed purveyors of the big idea, target pure play digital shops for not understanding branding.



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that social media doesn't work." S

This is not a new phenomenon. Ag back as 1877 when James Walter

renamed it the James Walter Thor

Today, agencies come in all shapes

much of their work, to small and r such as Omnicom Group, WPP Gro

They Lack the Balance of Exploration and Exploitation

agency. Then when the agency do By: Ana Andjelic Published: November 03, 2009

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But this way of thinking is getting old. And we should run from it as quickly as possible.

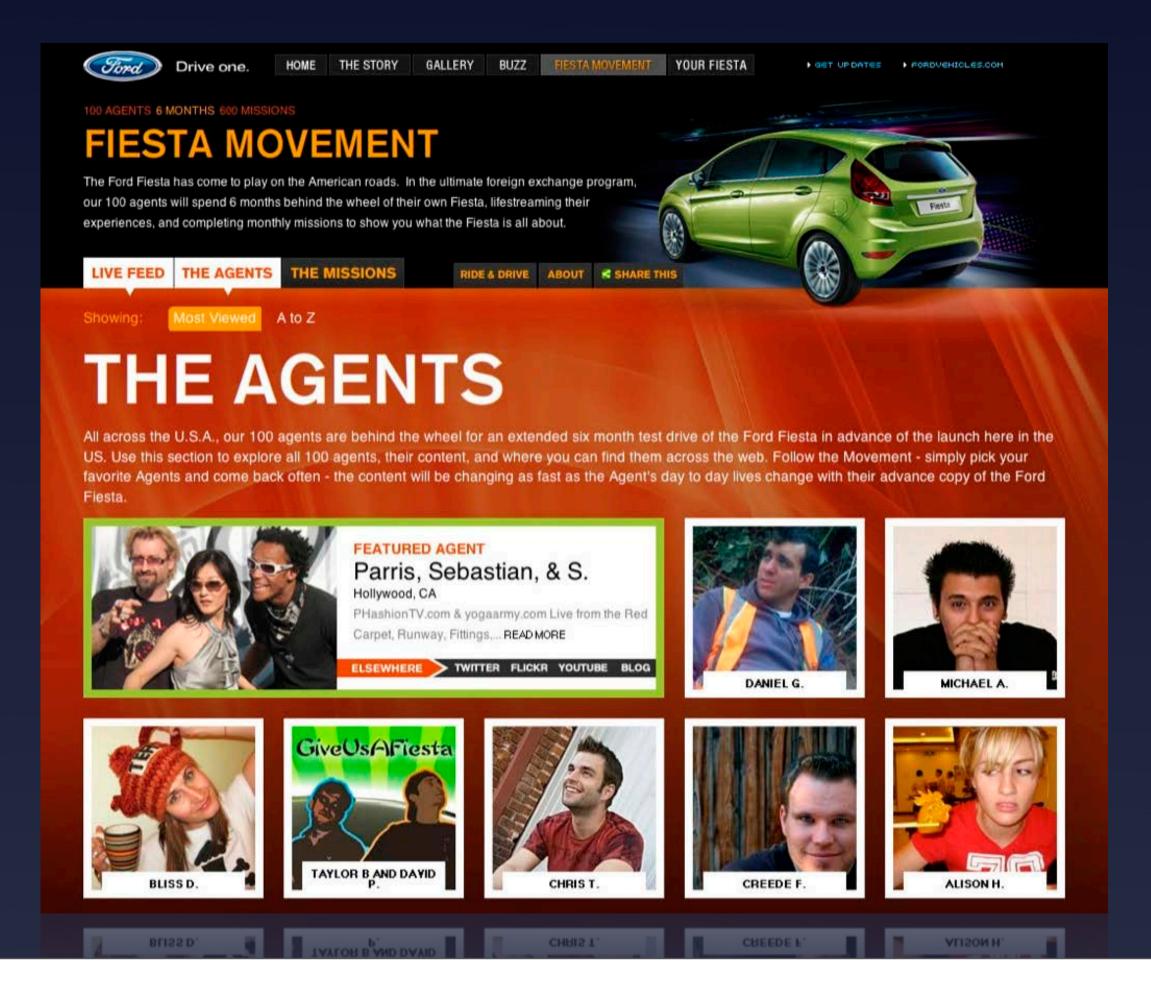
Because there's a new kind of communication idea emerging. One that doesn't want to be confined by silos, determined by labels, or narrowed in scope by divisions.

Instead these new ideas, big and small, build trust, enhance reputation, tell stories, involve users, generate press coverage and effect change by blurring lines and breaking down walls. Or simply disregarding them.

They could be called PR ideas but often don't rely on media relations nor were they created by PR agencies. They could be called advertising ideas, but the best often had little paid media and defied traditional definitions of what advertising is.

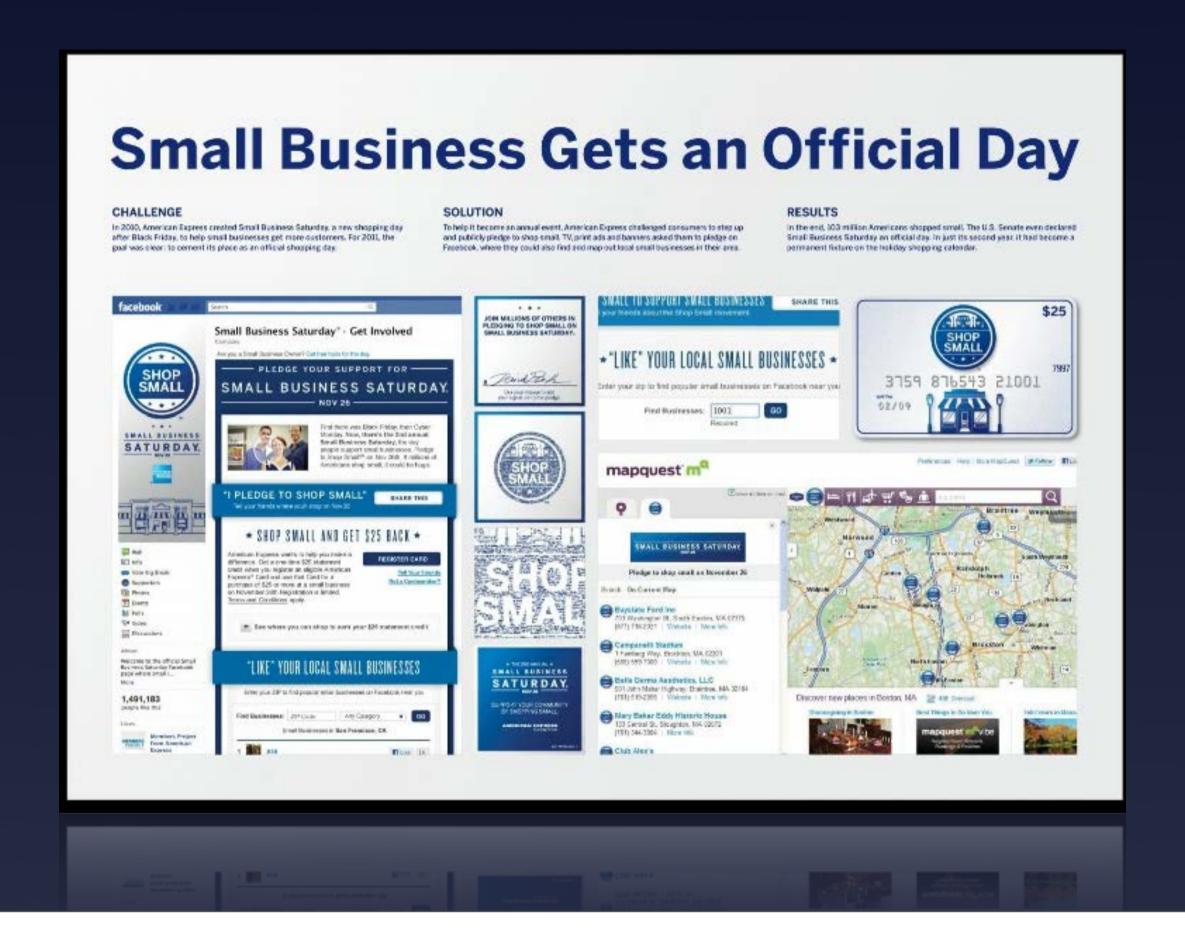
The fact is, we don't need to categorize them. Certainly our consumers and users don't see a need.

Let's quickly look at a few.



In 2009, we saw the Ford Fiesta movement. A brilliant PR social campaign to launch the Fiesta by giving one to 100 socially savvy content creators. Ford hands over its product and its content and in turn receives hundreds of stories, millions of views, thousands of new customers, and valuable learning about a generation it hopes to win over.

There's plenty of press coverage. But it came by doing something rather than contriving a news story about a new car.

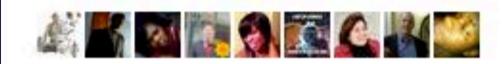


In 2010, American Express launched Small Business Saturday. Amex supports small business. Implores consumers to do the same. And creates actual motivations to do so. Incenting you to check in on FourSquare for a discount, it promoted the venue, rewarded you for shopping there and enticed you to use the card.



Today, support small businesses in your community by shopping at your favorite local stores. #SmallBusinessSaturday

Retweeted by Firebringer27 and 100+ others





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Sure the program had PR and advertising elements, but it was less a communication effort and more akin to a movement that managed to involve multiple constituencies.



In 2011, Pepsi and its collective agencies -- digital, PR, advertising -- gave us Pepsi Refresh. A novel idea that brought the soft drink giant's brand position to life in the form of cause related marketing. One part social media, one part PR, one part digital, one part advertising, one part crowdsourcing. It may not have sold as many cans of Pepsi as traditional advertising, but it told a different story and elevated the brand's image and reputation.





More recently we've seen the lines between advertising and PR disappear entirely. With efforts like IBM's native advertising partnership with Huffington Post. IBM creates content that's actually useful and educational -- a form that's more reminiscent of PR than advertising -- but one that pays for a distribution channel.

There are no hard sells. No promotions. Simply objective content that positions IBM as a thought leader. This is one of the few brands that understands channels and content are different than networks and interactions. And realizes that today all brands have to become media companies.

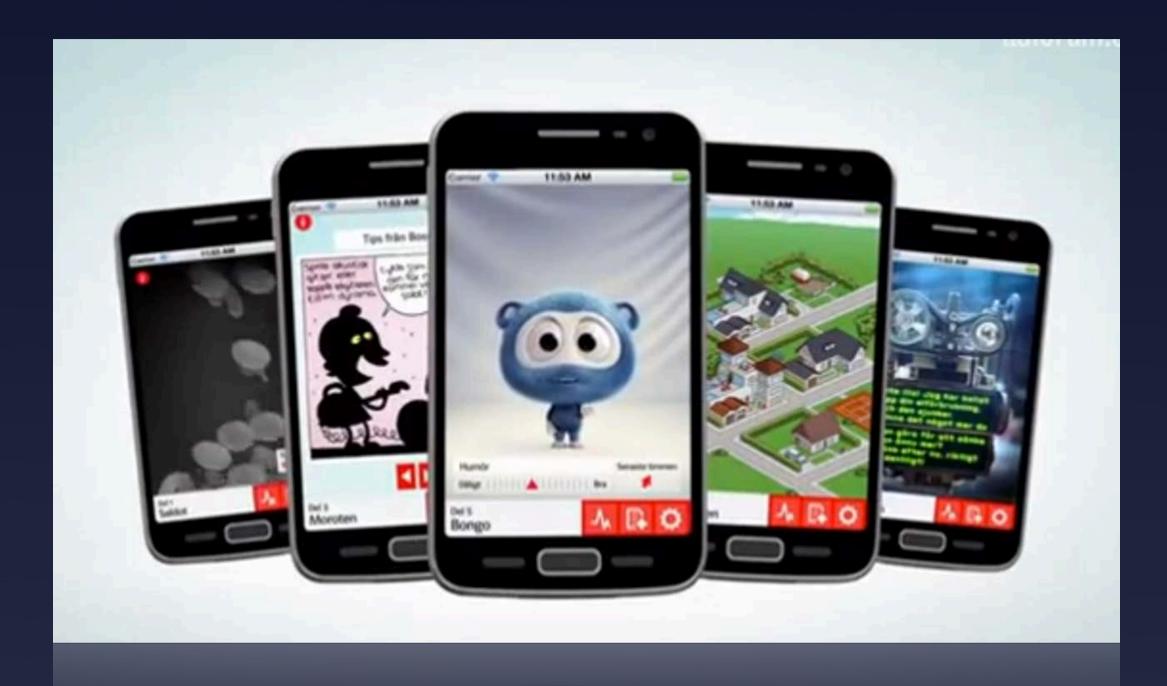


And then there's this. Dumb Ways to Die. Winner of Best PR idea of 2012 at Cannes Creativity Festival. It does exactly what PR is supposed to do: drive, start and amplify conversations through earned media. But instead of a press release it relied on incredibly creative content that entertained, engaged, and got shared because it tapped into a genuine human insight, rather than convey a corporate message. And by understanding the use of media from YouTube to Twitter to iTunes.



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My personal favorite idea this year was from Sweden, for E.ON, a large energy supplier. Called Energi-Spar, it was a comprehensive program to reduce energy consumption via an app given to 10,000 users that let them track consumption, compare themselves to others, and learn to reduce their footprint.



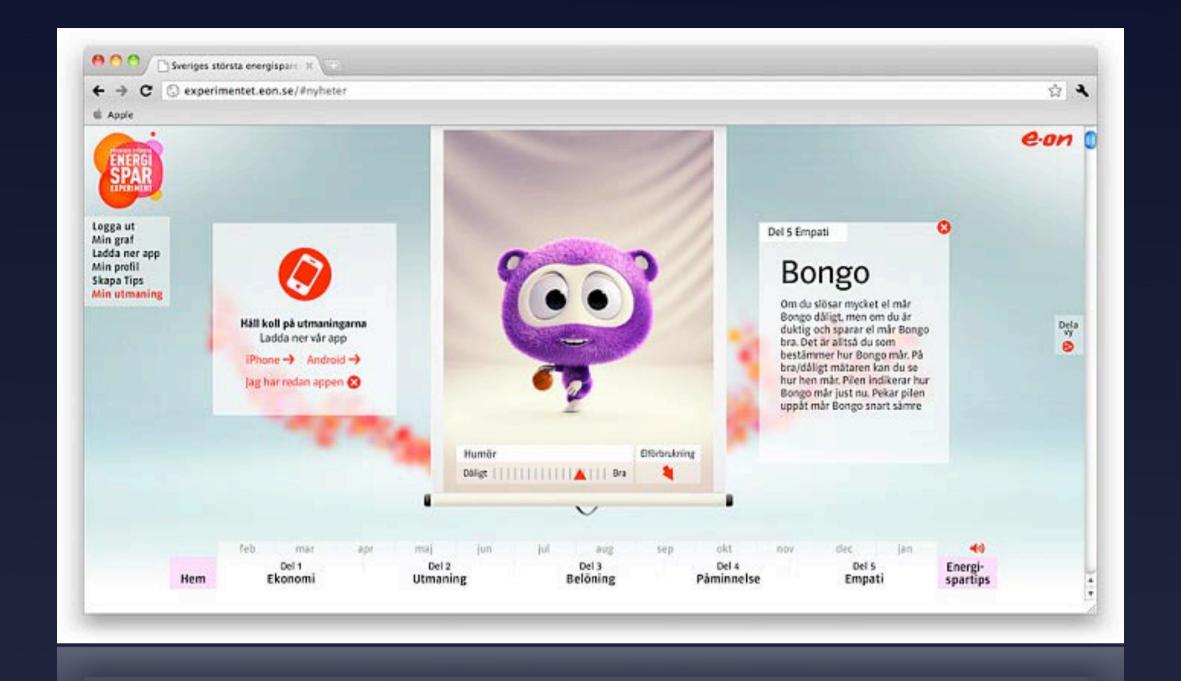
Money spent in real time, virtual battle among participations, mean coach to spur you on, cute tamagotchi that died

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It even incorporated real time learning to make the program more effective. What will motivate you to conserve: money saved, how you compare to your neighbors, or the threat of a cute Tamagotchi dying if you don't cut back. Effective? It reduced energy consumption among users by a whopping 12%.



Ideas like that don't even need media relations, the press comes to you.

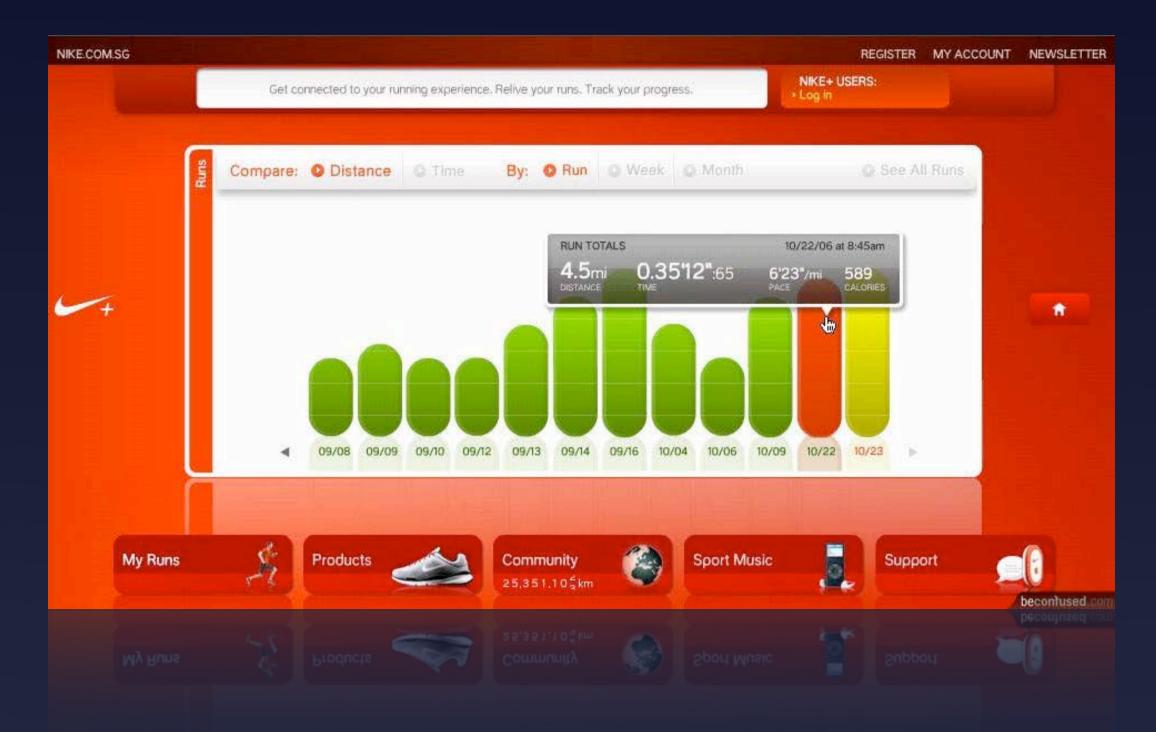


"Where there's energy information, utility, community, there's energy savings."

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Sum up Energi-Spar and it looks like this.

"Where there's energy information, utility and community, there's energy savings."

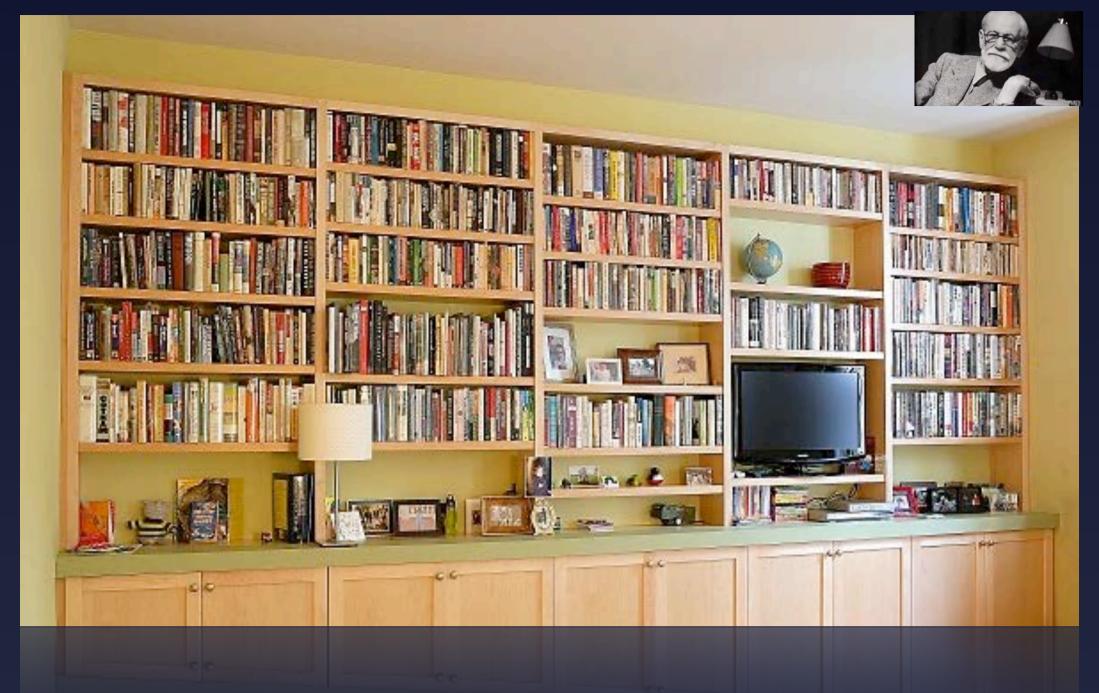


"Where there's a community of runners, there will be running shoes."

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Familiar? Not unlike Nike Plus.

"Where there's a community of runners there will be running shoes."



"Where there are bookshelves there will be books."

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Or the original way of thinking like this, from none other than Mr. Bernays.

"Where there are bookshelves there will be books."

Gee. Maybe all of these ideas are PR ideas.

If we rethink a narrow definition of PR.



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Yes, PR is still about reputation, trust and storytelling.

press release > programs

control > inspire

communicating > demonstrating

medium > process

media relations > t-shaped

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But like all of the communication industries, it has to accelerate its evolution.

From writing press releases to conceiving programs.

From controlling the message to inspiring others to share in the voice.

From communicating and telling to demonstrating and proving.

From thinking medium to thinking process.

And from mastering media relations to becoming a T-shaped person.

Today and from now on, the best PR ideas will be a blend of everything. Content, story, social, digital, utility.



Yes, you will need to master a specific skill or two on the vertical axis. But you need to have a perspective, understanding and appreciation for the entire team and process by being able to work along the horizontal axis as well.

COURAGE COLLABORATION CREATIVITY







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And that brings us back to what it takes. Courage, Creativity, Collaboration.



safe is risky
avoid getting comfortable
never fear being a beginner

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The people who are failing now are failing because they've lost the courage to learn new technologies and platforms. To untether themselves from their corner offices. They spend too much time preserving the past as part of a misguided view that it would be a mistake to be a newbie or show their lack of command of emerging media. I've witnessed this over and over in both advertising and PR.

A 40 year old director is afraid to know less about some new technology than a 22 year rookie. And so he dismisses its importance. Don't let that happen to you.

More often than not safe is risky. If you want to stay relevant, avoid getting comfortable with what you know. And never be afraid of being a beginner again. As Dan Wieden, the brains behind Just Do It likes to say, "Walk in stupid every day."



use the right side of your brain make friends and play discover your inner child

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Second, develop your creative muscle. Everyone has one. But too often we let it atrophy. In an age when attention is the new scarcity, creativity -- the magic ingredient in the best ideas -- is the greatest asset you will ever have.

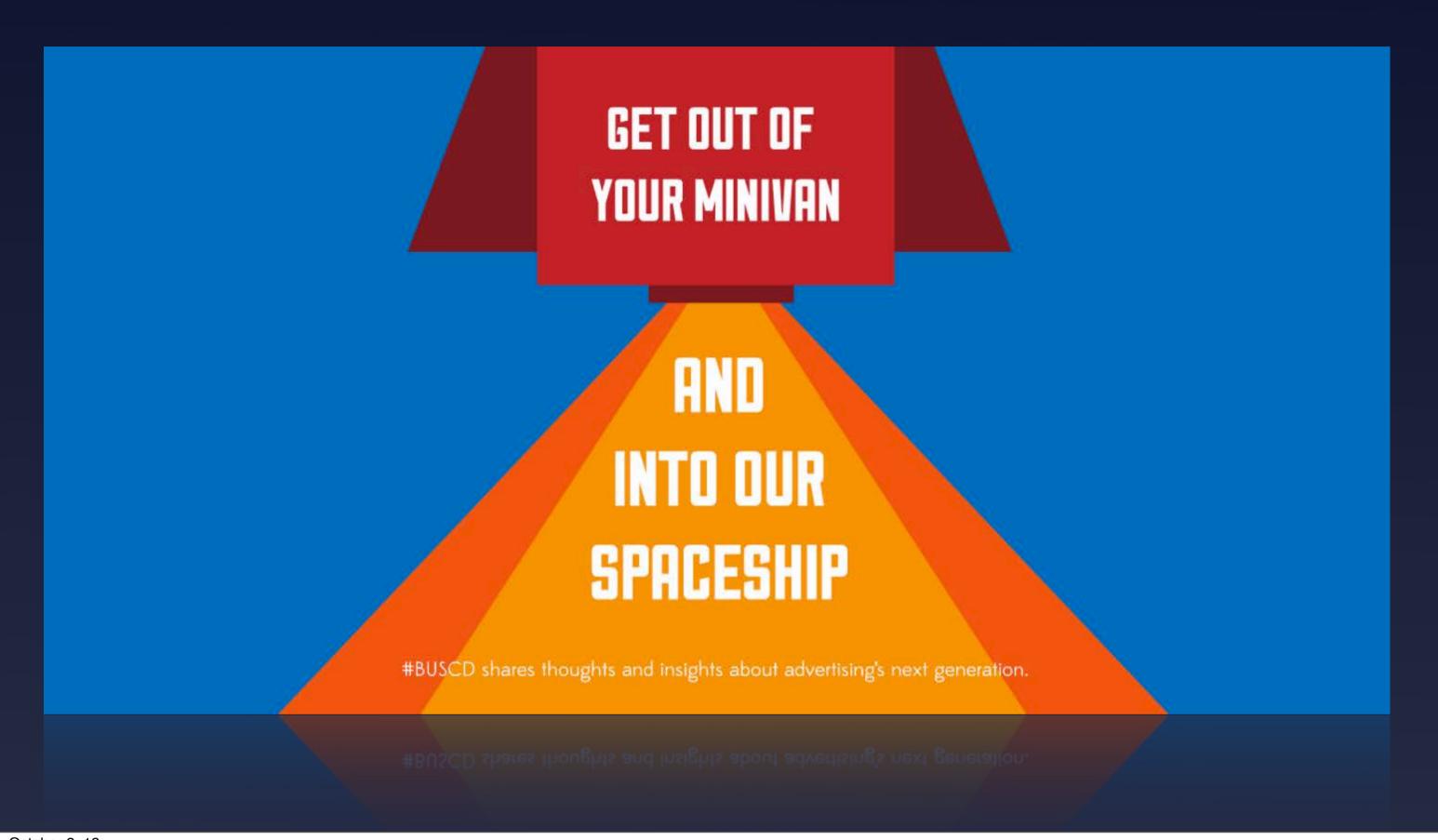
So use the right side of your brain. Make play part of your work. Play leads to friendship and friendship makes it easier to share crazy ideas. Stay hungry and foolish. It worked wonders for Steve Jobs. And it will get you to better PR ideas.



all of us are better than one of us seek collisions
become a t-shaped person

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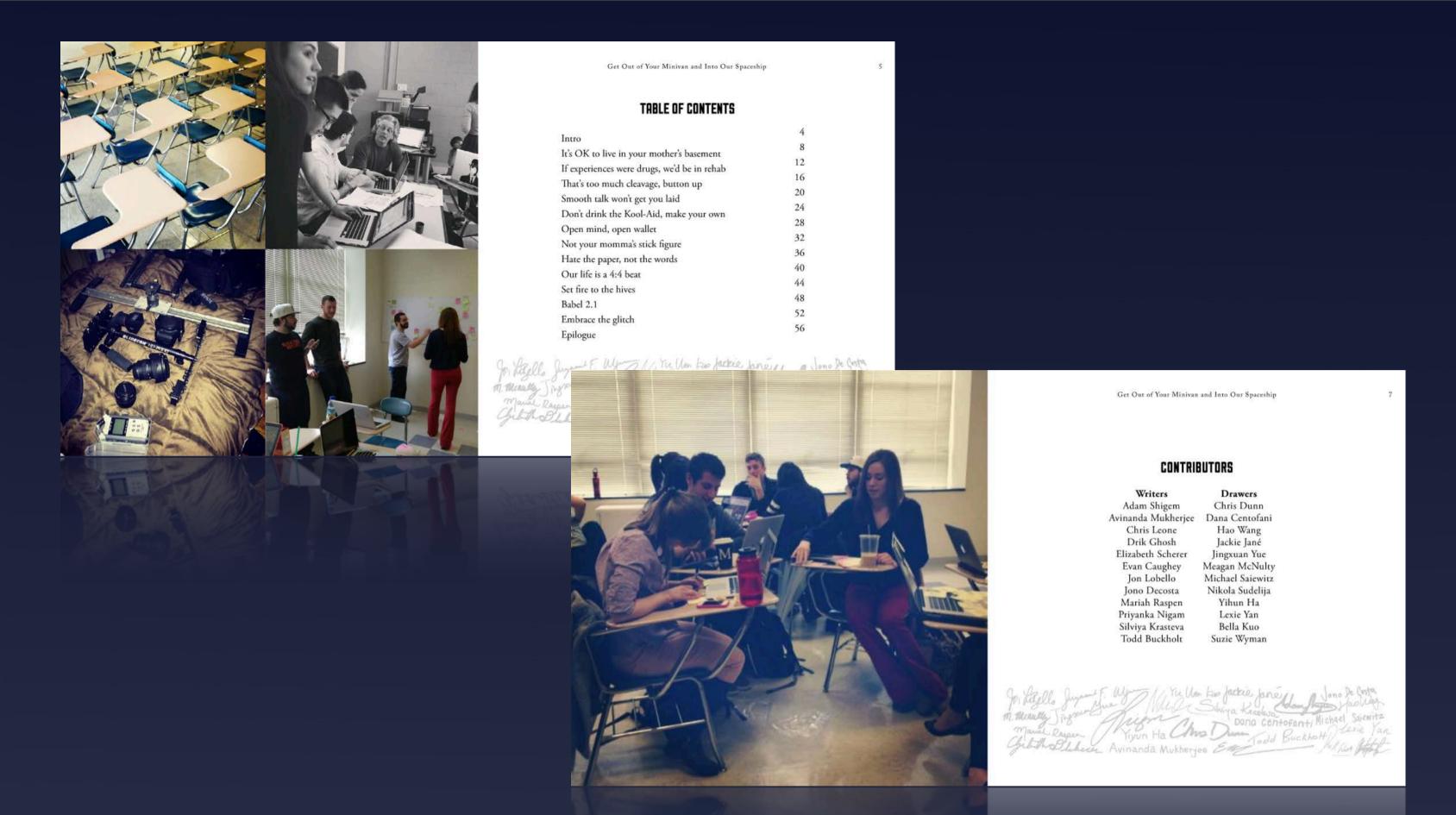
Three, learn to collaborate. Every one of the campaigns I referred to earlier could never be done with less than a full blown integrated team working together. Take a look at the credits on the best modern campaigns. PR, social, content, user experience, developers, media relations, etc. Working together. Remember that none of us are better than all of us. Seek collisions with people, ideas and technology. And become that T-shaped person.



Can you do it? Absolutely. I have proof.

Let me tell you a quick story.

Last spring, a class of mine, conceived, wrote, designed and produced a 68 page e book. In three hours.



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Twenty five students who had never done anything like this before came up with an idea for a book -- how they would change the industry when they got there. They generated 100 plus ideas for chapters. Narrowed it down to 12. Wrote 60 chapter titles. Collectively selected the best.



They divided up into teams to write and design each one. Collaborated in real time using Dropbox and Google docs.

They admitted when one of their peers could do something better and didn't let ego get in the way. They fought for the project rather than for their own individual recognition and succeeded in producing an ebook in three hours. Written, designed, online.

BTW, on Slideshare, the book as well over 14,000 views.



I feel pretty confident saying that if you asked the over 30 or 35 folks in this room if they could conceive, write, design and produce an ebook about their future impact on the industry in three hours and get it online and promoted, the answer would be no. It would probably be "What are you insane? That can't be done."

But with courage, collaboration, creativity, it can be done.



And as with all good, modern ideas, it generates its own media coverage.

it was created quickly
it was a collaborative effort
it's filled with great ideas
it proves rather than tells



courage creativity collaboration

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If you believe that any of the ideas I've shown you are where this business is going, then the future of this business is all about courage, creativity, collaboration. You guys have these qualities. Don't forget to bring them with you. The industry needs them badly. Thanks.

