



The CoCreative Consumer

What's this?

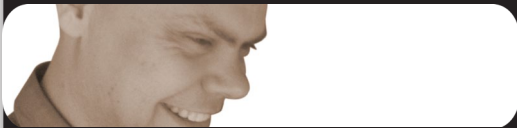
On a daily basis I am a communications nerd, whose greatest pleasure is to search for patterns in the world around me. When I'm not helping customers in creating universes, I philosophize about design of communication, user interfaces, media, customer service, trends in society and things like that

The thoughts on these pages - and of the other PDF's I've published - are a summary of my observations. But they can't, like myself, be put in boxes or categorized: maybe they are sort of a pop-semi-scientific-theoretical-practical-none-or-the-other-literature. Maybe it's a contribution to scientific research? Maybe it's an inspiration to You that work in PR, webdesign, sociology, communication or something else? Maybe it's merely a reinventing of the wheel and worth nothing?

At least it's a little piece of me, and if You can use it for anything, it's Yours!

Love

Mikkel



All thoughts, concepts, texts, graphics, layout, editing, (poor) translating, distributing and coffee drinking by Mikkel.

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Information overload

Download the other of my PDF's.



The fragmented world

Businesses once had the control: they would develop a product which they advertised, then waited for people to buy it. Besides the necessary means of communication to make a sale, the businesses didn't interact much with its surroundings. The economist Milton Friedman nailed this way of thinking with the words: "*The business of business is business*", an expression of a business being a closed and independent entity.

In the previous 30 years, it's however been discovered that many things influence the business, and that it may even influence its surroundings back. Now the talk is of "The Corporate Citizen", an expression of the business being a part of, and being responsible to, the surrounding society and that it therefore must behave ethically correct.

This pattern of thinking originates back in the 1960's growing ideology of holism: that everything is connected. It began in the spiritual awakening in the western world, but spread into more tangible areas like politics and consumer behavior. This was the beginning of a long term trend towards less faith in authorities, which reflected in many different areas of the societies, and culminated in the "fragmented world" as we know it today.

From the beginning of this change in paradigm, it certainly wasn't all businesses that welcomed it: instead, an industry of consultants and writers began to advise the businesses to direct and control the slowly increasing loss of authority and the accompanying criticism. Companies understood that many factors could influence them, and they invented concepts such as "image" in order to control it. Thus they ran against the wind and fought the change, by hiring spokespersons and Public Relations directors to handle communications and image, but most of all to erect a breakwater against the criticism of outsiders. Business realized that boundaries disappeared, but reacted by re-erecting them. Even today we have not seen the climax of this peculiar contradiction in business communication.

1) Businesses today are keenly aware that there is little distinction between itself, its customers, its employees, the surrounding society and many other factors. They use concepts such as Auto-communication, Integrated Communication, Corporate Social Responsibility, or ethical accounting - they're all expressions of this holism. From Milton Friedman's "*The Business of Business is Business*", the "business" of a company today is almost everything. Therefore there's been an enor-

mous increase in the amount of communication which the business must relate to, both that from its surroundings but also that which it transmits. (and emits)

2) Businesses struggles to control their image (and with how to do it), their products and the amounts of communication. The term "fragmented communication" is used about a business that is unable to coordinate its communication, mostly outwardly. The ideal is controlling employees and departments so only the information which the management has green-lighted, gets out. The problem is however that control is practically impossible - the technology is too advanced and the respect for authorities is too low.

So an increase in the amount of communication has happened - and since the businesses desire to control and direct communication, there is so much more to monitor and control. The desire to control an increasing amount of information, results in the need to become "omnicommunicative": watch and communicate about almost everything. The more omnicommunicative a business becomes, the more there is to monitor and control - and a negative spiral has begun. I wrote a bit about this in the PDF "Information overload"

3) There's also been a dramatic increase in the amount of criticism of and animosity towards businesses. As mentioned above (and in IDmag1), the mix of the technological democratization and a lower faith in authorities, has made it prevalent to manipulate with a company's products, or scrutinize its communications and internal conditions. More important - the perpetrators and critics could be employees, customers, competitors or complete outsiders.

They will investigate the company and its products, spread stories and find secrets which the company would rather not have published. A bit will be false rumors, but most will be the accounts of frustrated customers about bad service and products, publishing of confidential notes or rumors conveyed by employees. The newest official statements will be compared to earlier ones, the personal lives - past and present - of key officials will be googled, press announcements will be commented out of proportion, rumors will arise out of thin air and for a short moment be regarded as truth.

There's so much of this criticism, that control is impossible - it doesn't even make sense to talk about "fragmented communication" (nor "integrated") any longer. We have to talk about the "fragment-

ed world" or society, which is the new condition that everyone must work within: a uncontrollable world where everyone that has an opinion of the company, also is a part of it. Attempts to direct and influence this fragmented world, for instance through PR-people, will fare badly - one can not control a fundamentally uncontrollable world - at least not without losing ethical capital. The internet contains plenty of examples of businesses that has attempted to edit, direct, correct and manipulate the communication that concerns them. The consequences has only been negative attention and a reduction of their ethical capital in the eyes of their customers and other parties. By trying to protect their reputation, they've hurt it.

Living in chaos

The point is that every mistake the business commits, and every injustice that random interested parties claim or believe to have been committed, will be published. Therefore the business can not wait for the criticism to arise and grow, but it must seek out the criticism, in order to answer and deal with it before it grows too big. This is not meant to suppress or manipulate the criticism, but to recognize "just" criticism, explain the business' dispositions and choices, kill false rumors and generally engage in a dialogue. The result of such a behavior will be a better image, deeper contact to customers, interests and the business' surrounding world, which is vital to running a business the next many years.

Pirate copying will be an condition of existence that can not be avoided either - the clever business will even draw lessons from the pirates or at least accept them as a permanent existence. In its essence, piracy means that products and public relations materials will be copied and/or used in other ways then the business had intended. In one end of the scale it means that a logo or product photos is used by third parties, for example for presentations, ads or on webshops - and often distorted to bad quality or with inappropriate colors. If anything good can be said of this, it would be that the "perpetrators" do it to celebrate your business or to facilitate sales of your products. In the other end of the scale, it means that the (copy-) protection of technological or software products is bypassed, and that they perhaps are then modified to the benefit of the consumer.

Modification of physical objects soon becomes, with the advent of the 3D-printer, so accessible that unhappy or curious consumers will disassem-

Continues on page 4

HOLISTIC COMMUNICATION THEORY: MIKKEL'S DIAMOND IDmag as an example

The development towards the fragmented world, is also seen in the newest theories about analyzing and planning communication. Previously people used the so-called modernistic view: that a Text can find its target group precisely, or that one can analyze an organization by the Texts it transmits or emits, if one follows a number of certain and chronological steps of analysis. (a "Text" with capital initial, is in this sense any form of communication, but typical it's advertisements, brochures or webpages. A Text can both contain text, (words and sentences), pictures and diagrams - or just one of those.) The advantage in this cookie-cutter approach is that it is easy to use and doesn't require independent thinking - the disadvantage is that it's difficult to adjust to the exact situation or Text.

The last few years, communication theory has turned towards the so-called postmodern view: that Texts are created and analyzed from tools made ad-hoc for the situation. The advantage is then a great flexibility in each case, but on the other hand it requires a communications planner with great survey skills and an asserted approach.

At the universities (at least here in Denmark, Europe, where I'm from) the holistic and postmodern view of communication is pervasive. Analysis and planning is no longer a set of structured rules grounded in theory, but rather one great check list, which one can cherry-pick in or add new items to, as one desires. The postmodern view of communication is basically that everything can and should be interpreted and adjusted to the individual situation: that one makes one's own rules.

A postmodern approach is however quite difficult to use in reality, especially when it's used in the field for a client. Businesses are often very systematized, and bosses aren't always great at thinking out of the box - therefore a more logical approach can be necessary.

A practical communications model

I have therefore made a communications view which I call structured postmodernism. The idea is that while the flexibility of the postmodernity is attained, a seemingly chronological approach is used which resembles "real-life" practice. Below I will go through a structured postmodern

model that I made, which is a revision of a purely postmodern model. ("The Diamond", made by Smedegaard & Andersen, my former teachers at University of Southern Denmark - unfortunately it will not be available in English)

You can use the model, Mikkel's Diamond, as an inspiration to produce or analyze various Texts. A model for communications planning is very necessary when several people are cooperating on a Text or a campaign, but even when working alone, a written model is good for keeping a bird's eye view of the many elements. Especially the first part of Mikkel's Diamond is also good for analyzing a business' or a company's strengths and surroundings - a form of advanced SWOT-analysis. Mikkel's Diamond can both be used chronologically or in random sequence - and it can and should be changed and adjusted at any time, since it's this flexibility that is its greatest advantage.

Primary Field
Secondary Field
Tertiary Field

Text Genre
Text Design
Text Language

Execution
Evaluation

The Field deals with what we already know, the existing. It's divided in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary, according to what's closest to the transmitter of the communication in the current case. The Field is about mapping the situation in which the Text is produced, and this part can be used to map out one self and one's surrounding world, a kind of SWOT. Then comes the Text, which deals with what we will create, the not yet existing. It is divided in Genre, Design and Language, and deals with the Text's actual design and content. Last comes the practical realization: the execution and evaluation: how is the Text produced and distributed and how does one investigate whether it is a success? Below I explain each part - note that it's merely examples and not a complete list:

Primary Field - this covers transmitter or sender, communications planner, competitors, customers, recipients, target groups and other

near interests as well as the interpersonal relationships between them. It also covers their resources (economy, knowledge, labor, abilities, etc), existing market conditions, intentions and ideologies.

Secondary Field - this covers the product which the communication is about. Both the physical characteristics like abilities, market shares and sales numbers, as well as the metaphysical like the notions that the target group or the surrounding world has about it, as well as the larger context in which the product belongs.

Tertiary Field - this covers societal changes, ethical problems, judicial conditions, or markets in a target context.

(It's important to remember that what in one case belongs to the tertiary Field, may in another belong to the secondary or tertiary Field - always use your reason and judgement)

Text Genre - a genre is a certain combination of expressions: a certain phrasing, layout, visual feature. Well known genres are "brochure", "testimonial", "newspaper ad", or "obituary".

Text Design - the design is the visual realization: where are elements placed, what colors are used, what elements are most noticeable/salient?

Text Language - the language is the textual expression, words and sentences: personal or impersonal language? Use of Irony? Dynamic or static language? Pathos, ethos or logos?

(It's important to remember that often the Text's Genre, Design and Language are closely related - but certainly not always. For example when a media resembles another, this is called re-mediation)

Execution - this covers the realization: project planning, media and distribution channel, campaign period and resources for distribution. (money, manpower, knowledge, accommodation)

Evaluation - This covers any kind of test, both before and after the launch. Before, the planner investigates whether his/her presumptions about the target group is correct. After, he/she investigates whether the Text or campaign had the desired effect, in order to plan the next one.

To make this theory easier to understand, I will now briefly analyze this PDF according to Mikkel's Diamond. A real analysis will be much more thorough than this one is.

Primary Field - transmitter and producer is Mikkel as individual. Likely no competitors due to the uniqueness of the Text. Target Group: people ". that work in PR, webdesign, sociology, communication.." The complexity of the Text indicates the members of the target group to be good readers and intellectually resourceful. Distribution shows the target group to already find the subjects of the Text interesting.

Secondary Field - Text subjects are quite complex but (therefore?) of great value and interest to the target group. Subjects are very current for the producers location, secondarily to the western world in general.

Tertiary Field - method of distribution is slowly getting mainstream, judicial safety however non-existing. (though copying of the Text is even encouraged)

Text Genre - bit hard to define, almost a brochure. Large element of information.

Text Design - 4-columned for easy reading, catchy front, bit desperate use of colors as to brighten the walls of text.

Text Language - somewhat long sentences, many claims. Often dynamic and forward language with equal pathos and logos.

Execution - layout as a brochure, Danish and English language versions, published electronically as PDF-files. Distributed as free downloads from Producers website. Featured in certain target group websites.

Evaluation - pretest of the Text by qualitative interviews of 15 random persons. Post-test by statistics of download of the PDF.

PS. if you analyze "IDmag 1 - Information Overload" you'll see a difference in the Text.

ble the business' products, copy the parts and build a modified version. First they'll be based on plastics but later also of metal and wood, and all sorts of mechanical or static objects could be altered: the user will simply either insert the object in, or download a schematics to, a copy machine which then produces a physical copy. Already the internet contains many guides to "do it yourself in your VERY own way" of adjusting or using products in alternative ways - for example Ikea-furniture.

Releasing and copying equals publicity and for small producers it may be the only way ahead: movie producer Eric Wilkinson's "Man From Earth" didn't have many chances before it was copied, uploaded to the internet and mentioned on the pirate-news service ReleaseLog - which regularly links to obscure movies that mainstream media won't touch. Instantly the buzz exploded across the net: it got good remarks from those that downloaded it, and Wilkinson even wrote a thank you note to ReleaseLog who naturally published it as a form of legitimizing piracy. But the method of free releasing has already been used in music: big names such as Prince, Nine Inch Nails and Radiohead can naturally best afford to release free albums, and do so as political or societal statements. But also small artists can to a degree live from distributing parts of their music for free and are angry at the established music industry.

Unleash creativity

Apart from the fact that attempts to control may end with a negative reputation, it also ignores a huge vein of creativity: the business has to realize that it's solution not necessarily is the best. Basically, the historic development has gone from custom-made over mass-produced to customized. The lessened attention to authorities means that consumers to a lesser degree will accept a mass produced product, but desire some from of individualization. On the other hand, other consumers not only want an individual product but rather a creative experience from (de-)constructing the product: the entertainment and challenge from producing new content to the game can be far greater than playing the game itself. Especially within computer games, companies have found that "modability" (modification ability) dramatically increases the consumers' satisfaction, the lifespan of the product and for these reasons slightly increases sales. Around the games, little active communities arises of users producing small programs,

"mods" that can be implemented in the game and thus give it added or new functionality such as new rules or looks. Computer games such as The Sims, Spore, or Little Big Planet which contains various tools for creative expression and/or content creation, find that a group of customers doesn't even play the game itself but rather produce content for it. Others find that the less linear the game is, and the more free choices it offers, the better the customers like it. Bottom line is that the function of the original product which the consumer didn't like, she can now change by implementing a "mod" or following instructions made by other consumers. The business has thus, without further investment, has an unhappy customer turned to a happy one. The more creativity and freedom the product offers, the greater value it'll have - because customers owning the product can produce more content for the product.

Michael Yon is the best PR-worker of the American army, despite his presence is unwanted by some, and the fact that he's not even in the military! US army has for years used "embedded reporters" to achieve a better image: the philosophy is that the closer the journalist is to the action and to the soldiers, the better coverage and sympathy will he convey. Unfortunately the

army is not happy with the reports of most journalists, and most journalists aren't happy with the Iraq/Afghanistan war or the military itself - a really bad match. That's why the former special forces soldier and now self-made journalist Michael Yon is the best asset the army could desire: He's always at the very front line, and has great sympathy for the soldiers and civilians and enjoy their respect. He utilizes his knowledge of the army to get "under the skin" of everyone, and for describing the action - and people involved in it - which is valuable when one needs to find out what's really going on. Among other things, Yon could see how, long before most others could, the center of the war would change from Iraq to Afghanistan. And the army doesn't even pay him to do all this - his readers do.

Neil Gershenfeld is behind FabLabs, which brings semi-advanced tools to local communities and let people experiment and build. At TED06 he told about kids that made better solutions than scientists: how his term "Technology-of-one" or "Personal Fabrication: products for a market of one-person" is not only 1) an extreme way utilization of creativity, 2) an effective form of aid, but also 3) a new way of producing good, and to view a product life cycle.

CoCreation

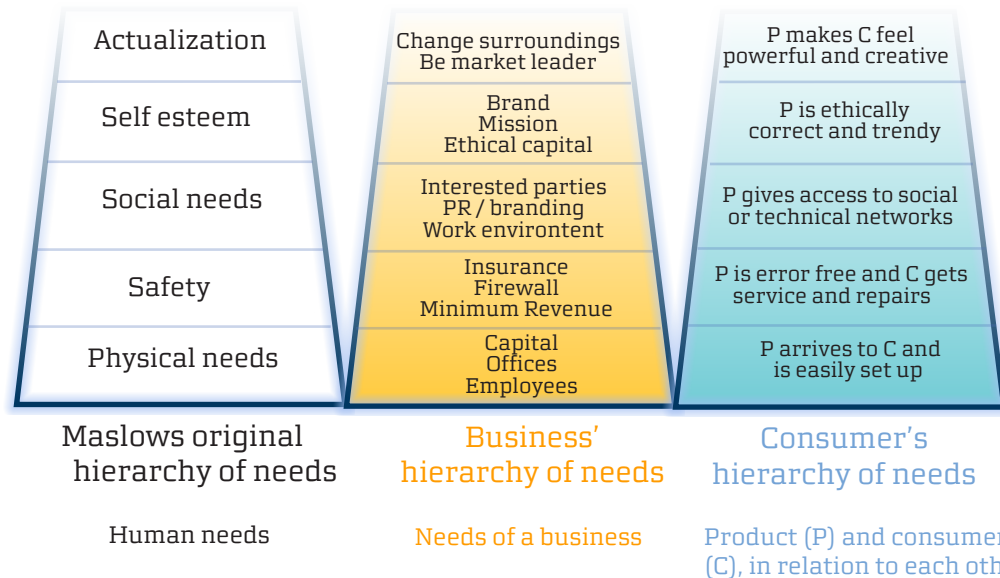
Maslow's for businesses

Psychologist Abraham Maslow devised the human hierarchy of needs: that we need sleep more than friends, and that we can only concentrate on playing music after we've had a bite to eat. The fundamental factor is thus the cumulative amount of resources. On this page is a graphic of three pyramids: first Maslow's original hierarchy of needs, then my interpretation of it for use with businesses, and lastly one for use in relation to products and customers and the relationship between them. As the hierarchy of needs is true for an individual person, it's also true for a business: without tools and employees there's no reason to have a PR-strategy; but the more needs of the hierarchy that are fulfilled, the more successful the business can become. The hierarchy of needs also pertains to customers: they need to receive and be able to use the product, but if there's no possibility of having it repaired, there's less reason to buy it. The more individual needs a product fulfills, and the better it fulfills them, the more reason to buy it. According to Maslow's for businesses there's an increasing element of involvement between the customer and the product she buys: the more it allows her, the more value it has to her. A product should ultimately and preferably fulfill up to and including the top field in the blue pyramid.

Maslow's for businesses, as it's pictured on this page, is fundamentally true, but an important exception is that some products may well fulfill certain fields better than other fields. The more fields of the pyramid a product or service fulfills the more desirable it is to the customer, and the fewer fields the product fulfills the better it has to be in these few fields, in order to be competitive. In reality this shows as branding: a certain angle is given to a product by the producer: one phone has a stylish or weird design, another phone is very easy to use, a third phone has exceptional service and is of a sturdy quality, etc.

Systems and solutions that leave the control to the customer, according to the top field in the hierarchy, are the products that will win. Today it's mostly seen in customization options such as "building" your Toyota, configuring a new Dell-computer, or coloring your Nike shoes via a web interface. Even though the product in itself is not allowing any form of creativity, it may achieve a competitive advantage if it is "attached" such a possibility in a PR or sales situation.

MASLOW'S FOR BUSINESSES



The new ideology

The new age is not as much about technology, but mostly about ideology. Businesses use the new media but doesn't understand their nature - that's also true for the companies I just mentioned above. However, it's especially true for news media: the printed and TV publications dwindle while the online versions struggle to find the correct format and use of the internet - and journalists are secretly bewildered as to what their role is in this new world. The large majority of businesses (and media) doesn't understand the very important fact that consumers expect to be engaged in a different way than 10 years ago, that monologue has been replaced by dialogue and that mass production has been replaced by individualization. And the word dialogue should be understood both in terms of communication, product development and support/service. The businesses that can realize and materialize the new ideology of the CoCreative Consumer, can save lots of money, develop new and better products more efficiently and faster, and make their customers happier. The mantra is no longer that the "customer is king", but rather that the "Fan club is king". The former slogan was about service and therefore re-active, while the current slogan is about product development and therefore pro-active.

From considering technology as developed and delivered from top to bottom, we now need to consider it from bottom and up. From delivering complete products, businesses must now - to a degree - deliver tools. From telling customers what to buy, businesses must now listen for what customers want to buy. From being an arranger of the customers experience, the business must now be an advisor to the customers experience.

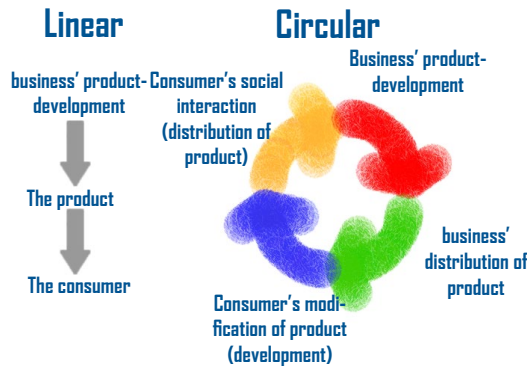
Technology is in some cases the means, but it is never the end - a new and open thought pattern is the goal. This way of thinking implies being able to balance in chaos, not maniacally attempting to regaining control in/of chaos. The business must face that it, and it's products, will be discussed, abused, stolen and criticized. However, this fact can be turned to one's own advantage, amongst other things through utilizing "The CoCreative Consumer".

Business and the new ideology

A completely new product life cycle is arising: previously the product was developed by the business

after research and planning, and was considered and presented as the final result which consumers could buy or leave be. Now the product is a starting point for modifications, which in turn are starting point for social interaction, which in turn are starting point for new products - where after the circle is repeated. (see the graph on this page) What'll happen in reality is that some of the customers that bought the product will modify it and then spread this modified version to friends or other customers, in the forums where they meet. The business will discover these new ways of using the product, and they will build it into new versions of the product. There is therefore synergy between the engaged customers, the CoCreating Consumers, and the business.

From linear to circular product development



It's also important to remember that Pareto's principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, is true for The CoCreative Consumer: 20% of the customers will do 80% of the modifications, and only a handful will create the really great modifications: find them, engage them, involve them and hire them.

Future business models will far more often be based on dialogue and start with the consumer - or more precisely in the product or the business as a social magnet. Kevin Kelly and Seth Godin use the terms True Fans and Tribe Management, while the Danish institute for future science terms it Creative Man. All of those means that businesses no longer mass produce to unknown customers, but instead have a close and symbiotic relationship with the most engaged ones. Far more "open" products will be made that engages the fan club and is designed to make change and modifications possible.

Therefore new business models will arise: such as "ransom"-systems, where the artist only produces next album or writes the next book, when the production costs have been covered by the fans. In reality, the producer and fans thus make a contract in which the consumer to a large degree is determining how the product should be - which in turn is secured a certain circulation. Another kind of business model is that one version of the product is free, while another and typically more advanced version costs money.

The CoCreative Consumer is based on procedurality: that content is created on the fly. Though the expression comes from the software industry, I use procedural creation in the sense that the producer delivers the tools and a frame which the consumer fills with content. Procedural products are thus tools and frames for creativity: a saw is not per se a procedural tool but a pencil or Adobe Photoshop is. Online services such as Ebay, Youtube or Wikipedia are based on this principle.

Access / Hindrance

The degree of modability in the product or of dialogue between business and consumer, will have an increasing impact - consumers simply won't be hindered or interrupted. The consumer's options for dialogue with the business or/and modability of the product will be seen as Access and yield a positive response, while the lack of Access will be regarded as Hindrance: a hostile act towards the consumer which yields a negative response.

Examples of Access can be easy ways of contacting the business download of PR-materials or product-specifications, forums for exchanging views with other customers or possibilities for product modification. Access is about the business handing over control to the customer or basing procedures on that which is best and easiest for the customer. Examples of Hindrance would be redirecting callers between departments, copy protecting software, or demanding unnecessary registration. Hindrance is about the company keeping control or basing procedures on that which is easiest and best for itself.

Access / Hindrance as mathematics

$$(\text{business}) + (\text{customer}) = (\text{result})$$

$$\text{Access: } 0 + 1 = 1$$

$$\text{Hindrance: } 0 + 0 = -1$$

$$\text{Synergy: } 1 + 1 = 3$$

Practical advice

Design to, or with, the fan club

Include the customer in product development - the prize is avoiding features that consumers doesn't want, and instead focusing on features which they crave or even the invention of completely new products and features. The more You listen to consumers, the better a product can be delivered, bad reviews are avoided and you gain great sympathy. Note however that it's important which customers you listen to and how you do it: they have a different agenda than You do, and the amateur-users have different agendas and needs than the professional-users.

Make procedural products

Build in a kind of tools, make products that are frames for creativity or allow lots of freedom. The higher on "Maslows' for businesses" the product is, the more value and life span it will have. One of the most procedural products that exist is the pencil.

Connect to many networks

Physical networks can be plugs/sockets or modability: they allow the consumer to adjust the product's function, expand it's connections or work in alternative ways. Social networks can be conveying contact to other consumers or secondarily related groups or networks. Knowledge networks can be a library of schematics, links to relevant encyclopedia resources, or conveying consumers tips on modification.

Hire the The CoCreative Consumer

Arrange "tweak" contests and encourage the alternative uses of Your products, or accept suggestions for new products - and reward the good ones. The idea is to search for opportunities and future employees - it's not a celebration of Your business or Your products, it's a celebration of the consumer/participants and their creativity. The people that "mod" are often long time customers or in related ways interested in Your field, and furthermore technical competent and creative: it's amongst these that the best of Your future employees are to be found. Observe the creativity in the deconstruction and the construction in the deconstruction - and remember the 80/20 rule.

ACCESS / HINDRANCE

The degree of interaction possibility in a product or with a business. The more Access and the less Hindrance, the more sympathy and success.

CIRCULAR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Symbiotic relation between business and consumer regarding new products

COCREATING CONSUMER

Ideology surrounding the dialogue with engaged customers. The closer a product can be developed with the engaged customers, the better.

FRAGMENTED WORLD

Expression of the business' lack of control, not even it's own employees. The fragmented world consists of interested parties that relates to the business and which it must create a good relationship to, in order to survive.

MASLOW'S FOR BUSINESSES

The human hierarchy of needs in relation to products: the more interaction and creativity it allows, the more desirable it will be to the consumer.

MODABILITY

Modification Ability: the customer's possibility to adjust the business' product.

PROCEDURAL PRODUCTS

Tools or frames for creativity and content, which the consumer contributes to or works with.

Embrace the fragmented world

Be close to criticism, seek, engage and listen to those that discuss and use Your products. A new job title could be "information detective", who'd assist Your business in surveying it's surroundings: who mentions it, how and where? The dualistic advantage of being close to the criticism is that you're also close to the ideas.

Give employees free reign in satisfying customers: it will always be cheaper to offer extraordinary service or re-ship a product too many. An angry customer is a dangerous opponent: the media loves a good story and the internet never forgets. When problems are spotted in the horizon, quickly inform as many interested parties as possible. Safety measures rather annoys your customers than actually prevent piracy: it's also proven that great sales are not made by copy protections, but from the product being great.

Be like Lego

After having written the most of this PDF, I had the opportunity to talk to the communications boss of the Danish toy producer about their methods and how Lego views the CoCreating Consumers: I already knew that Lego likely was a relevant example to include, but I was surprised to learn that the company actually is a living example of most of what You've just read in this PDF:

- 1) The Lego brick, as a product, is located at the top field of "Maslow's for businesses", it's an extremely "creative product", and there are many different kinds of blocks, sets and ways to use them - even virtual ones.
- 2) Lego, as a company, has a very close relationship with their customers and put lots of effort into using them as a creative resource.
- 3) 5 years ago, Lego found out that they can no longer control their surroundings, and since then they've worked on adjusting to living in chaos. However, they'd still like to crush the pirates.

Don't be like...

As I make the last touches on this PDF I discover that Spore publisher EA has put a heavy copy protection on the game, and the negative reviews were being deleted from Amazon.co.uk - costumers are furious! The next day it was corrected, but the damage has still been done, It doesn't even matter why/how it happened, it only matters that customers got angry and lost faith in EA and Amazon. First I was happy that my ideas was proven correct, but then i simply turned sad and dumbfounded. My mind began listing similar examples of negligent and stupid behavior by businesses towards consumers - and You might begin to list a few of Your own. Business *technology* has never been more advanced - yet business *behavior* is still in the middle ages. Will they ever learn?

Done

You have now read my introduction to the CoCreative Consumer, and a few of my tools and advice for how utilize Your customers better. You are very welcome to write to me, If You have questions or comments

Love

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