

BEST
BRANDS
CLUB

BOOK THREE

Edited by Giampaolo Colletti

T H E N E W
E S P E R A N T O

MARKETING ACROSS GENERATIONS FOR
THE NEW GENERATIONS OF MARKETING

EDITED BY GIAMPAOLO COLLETTI

BEYOND PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

BEYOND STEREOTYPES.

BEYOND PAST DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETS.

BEYOND SOCIAL MEDIA AND GLOSSY DISPLAYS.

BEYOND SLOGANS AND PRECONCEPTIONS.

GO BEYOND.

IT'S TIME TO BE BRAVE.

Dynamism, Curiosity, and Effectiveness in Brand Longevity

A positive dynamism has persisted in recent years among companies that invest in communication. We can even argue that we have forgotten the absurd stagnation of the 2020 pandemic. Investments continue to grow, with increasingly cross-media and sophisticated communication strategies being implemented. Assistance from artificial intelligence to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of advertising campaigns is becoming commonplace. Additionally, there is growing interest in generative AI and exploring its potential to revolutionise the usual processes of production and delivery of creativity.

Alongside traditional media, which are inevitably shifting towards rapid digitalisation and digital platforms (including video, social media, and search engines), “branded content”, “influencer marketing” and “live communication” strategies enable corporate communication to explore virtually limitless creative possibilities without constraints.

The continuous changes in the scenario have now become habits in the advertising market, but the principles of good communication remain firm: strategies that always revolve around real people, continuous curiosity for innovation, uncompromising responsibility, the certainty of transparency, and the necessary measurement of effectiveness. Another aspect that has emerged in recent years is the importance of consist-



ency in advertising communication. Despite the global pandemic crisis, economic slowdown, and consumption contraction, brands have consistently communicated, effectively serving a countercyclical role in the economy—an unprecedented trend in recent times.

It's not just a factor with positive economic returns, but a true cultural awareness of the role of communication in corporate strategies for brand equity protection.

Consistency in communication today can be said to be part of good communication. The consistency of good communication is the best strategy for maintaining and regenerating the delicate and powerful image connected to a brand.

UPA considers it beneficial to reward such winning strategies, making them models to follow, and supporting Best Brands over a number of years. Ranking market value, more communication and more consumer choices, this tends to highlight the best values of a brand and their enduring vitality.

LORENZO SASSOLI DE BIANCHI
Chairman, UPA

“Being a Best Brand means not stopping in front of superficial distinctions and unnecessary barriers.”

The journey of a Best Brand balances tradition and transgression: a voyage enriched by the inseparable baggage of experiences and knowledge, driven by the relentless desire to explore and regenerate. Today, more than ever, this journey calls for agility and the skill to navigate through intertwining worlds, cultures, and diverse values. Words, symbols, styles, and sounds form the new intergenerational Esperanto: a language that speaks to everyone, one that only the leading brands learn quickly and, above all, contribute to defining. A Best Brand knows how to evolve and remain a stable reference point despite the increasing fluidity of the context because it is able to connect with everyone and include each one while respecting their uniqueness. Book Three is a testament for those embarking on this extraordinary journey.

GIOVANNI GHELARDI

CEO, Serviceplan Group Italia - House of Communication



“Breaking stereotypes: generations are not homogeneous groups, but intersect and influence each other.”

Book Three documents the visions and strategies of the elite of business excellence: those Best Brands we recognise and love for being our trusted partners in the turbulence we are going through. The speed of techno-cultural change arouses new desires and needs. “Can you simplify and improve the quality of my life? Who reassures me about the promises you make?” It is up to the Best Brands to respond to these requests and try to understand the sentiment of generational cohorts, who may sometimes identify through language and means that emerge in the space of a morning. GfK research encourages the breaking of stereotypes. Generations are not homogeneous groups, but are porous and mutually influence each other. Therefore, new languages and means, new purposes and strategies will be needed. With the awareness that we are transitioning from Me Culture to Digital Generational.

ENZO FRASIO

Managing Partner, NIQ/GfK Italy



The idea that we think or behave differently because we belong to this or that age group is erroneous. There are events that influence who each of us is much more than our date of birth.



PILITA CLARK
Financial Times

Beyond Apparent Differences, There's a World That Unites Us



Beware of stereotypes. This is easier said than done, as these preconceptions are notoriously hard to eliminate. However, a recurring theme in all the stories within Book Three, dedicated to the new era of marketing professionals, is the necessity to transcend preconceived notions. This current era provides us with extraordinary tales that are interconnected. Consider the example of Taiwan couple Hsu Sho-Er and Chang Wan-Ji, aged 84 and 83, who run a small laundry business together. They have gained significant online popularity, particularly on Instagram and TikTok, and captivated thousands of young followers with an innovative project which, inspired by their grandson, involves them wearing the many items of clothing forgotten by customers over the years.

This initiative not only adds a playful element but also promotes ongoing intergenerational dialogue, now more significant than ever. As Nicola Palmarini, director of the UK's National Innovation Centre for Ageing, stated in an interview with Sole24Ore, "Never before have five generations found themselves sharing the same workspace or voting for the same politicians. In addition, with the rise of Generation Alpha, we must deal with the notion of generational fluidity". Ultimately, as a demographically diverse generation, we have never been so closely connected yet so far

apart: it's time to move beyond age-defined clusters to what is becoming an Esperanto of generations. The Best Brands are acutely aware of this shift. They have courageously opted to leave behind outdated past targets and adopt new intergenerational strategies, facilitating communication, dialogue and growth among different age groups. This shift is reshaping strategies and inevitably influencing marketing and communication campaigns. Therefore, the Best Brands are adopting narratives that fluidly span across generations. They are creating a framework that steers clear of cramming advertisements with the usual displays of diversity or fostering interactions where the elderly strive to mimic or adapt to the young. What insights, then, can marketing offer to the upcoming generations of marketing professionals?

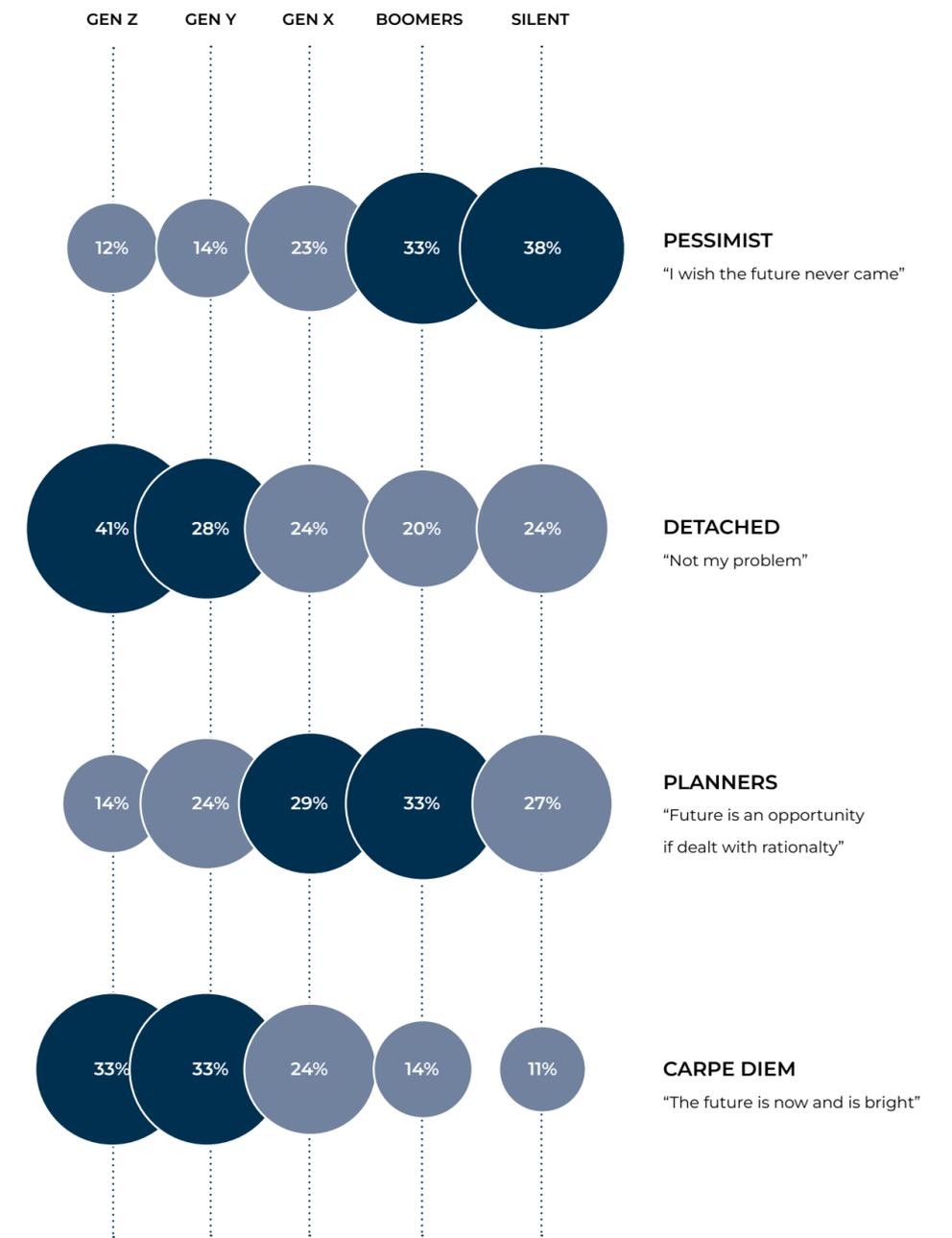
Book Three presents a kaleidoscope of Best Brand actions and narratives, with a multi-generational context applied to a variety of content and a transformation of channels in a multigenerational context. The challenge is to dialogue with everyone and exclude no one. After all, beyond the apparent age differences, there's a world that unites us.

GIAMPAOLO COLLETTI
Journalist and Author

GfK's Future Map identifies four sociological communities that depict consumers' varied attitudes and expectations towards the future. These have been identified as Carpe Diem, Planners, Detached, and Pessimists based on individual approaches to life and level of self-awareness and world awareness, as well as individual openness to opportunities and change.

While age influences one's outlook on the future, there isn't a perfect correspondence between generations and the communities on the map. Within each generation, we find varying degrees of all attitudes. Generational portraits risk perpetuating stereotypes. Generations are not homogeneous groups; values, beliefs, desires, and needs evolve within them. There are other determining variables beyond age, such as knowledge, financial availability, and so on.

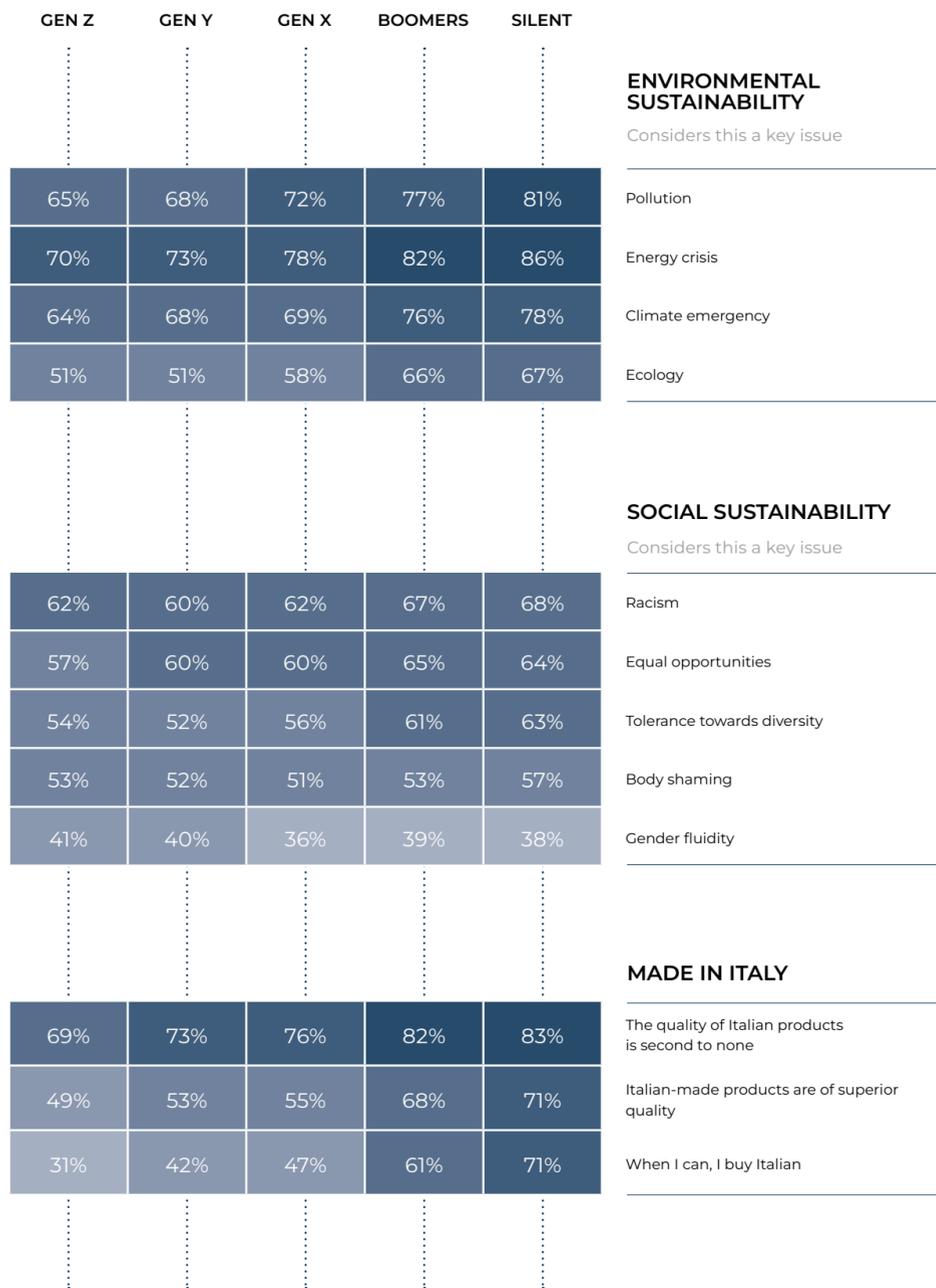
Data Source: GfK Sinottica® 2023
Percentage Values by Generations



CfK's research encourages breaking free from stereotypes: generations are open to mutual influences and share values and awareness much more than one might imagine...

A shared sentiment among different generations is evident, for example, on issues related to environmental and social sustainability. Pollution, energy crises, climate emergencies, and ecology are deemed fundamental by the majority of individuals regardless of their age. The same applies to social issues, from racism to equal opportunities, from body shaming to gender fluidity.

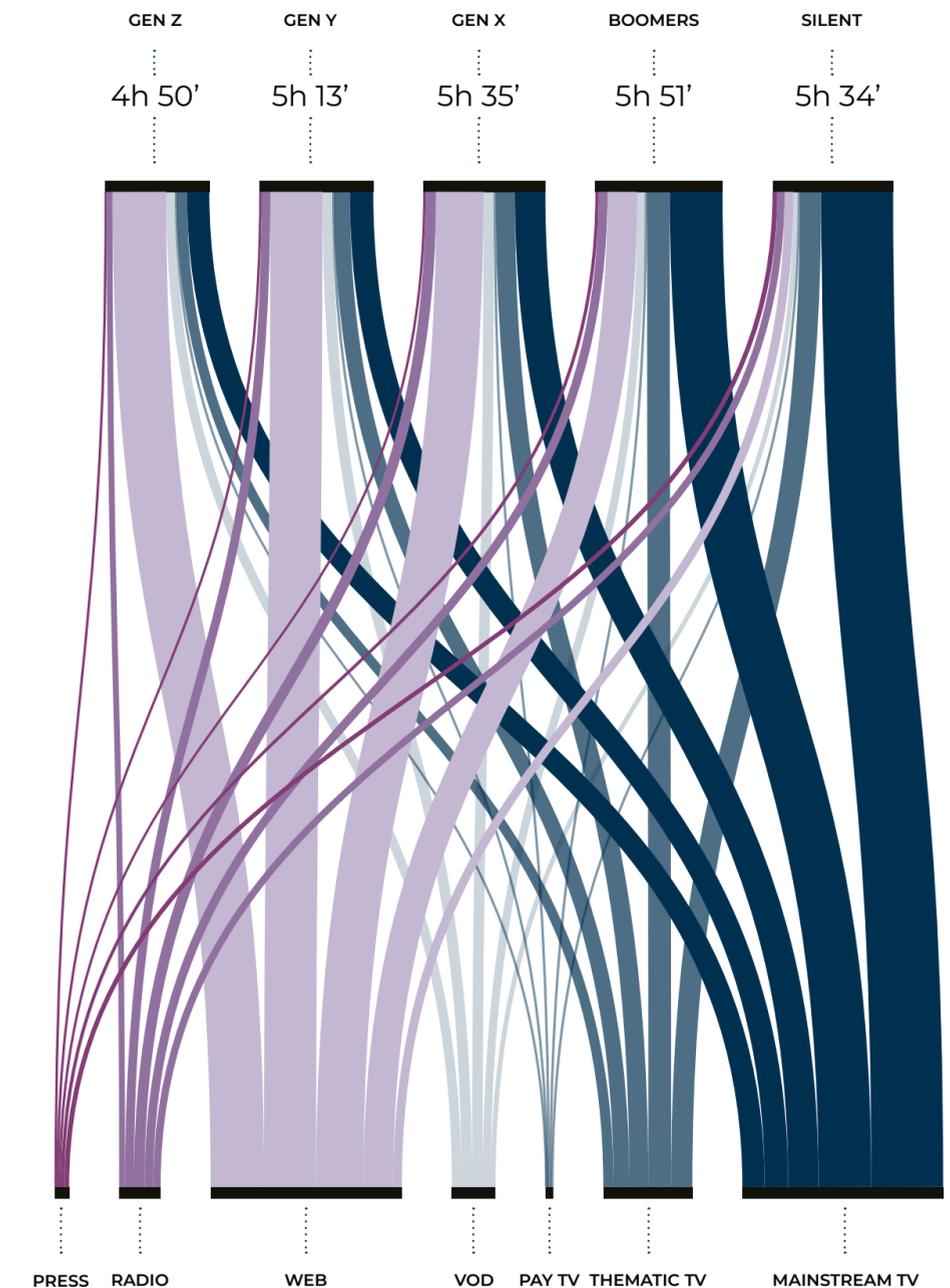
However, there are also different attitudes, such as the attitude to Italian-made products, with older generations having stronger feelings about the superior quality of these and the need to protect them.



Data Source: GfK Sinottica® 2023
Percentage Values by Generations

It's crucial to debunk certain myths about media consumption when discussing generations, as highlighted by Sinottica's examination of cross-media behaviour.

While it's true that digital media consumption is particularly significant among younger generations, time each day is also spent on all other media. Terrestrial TV still plays a noticeable role in the media diet of Generation Z and Millennials. The same applies to older generations. In general, the time spent on media is similar across generations.



Data Source: GfK Sinottica® 2023
Percentage Values by Generations



Amazon, the ‘everything store’ that sees every customer as unique in the world. «To be data-driven we must be customer-obsessed»



ALESSANDRO CHIARMASSO
Country Lead Corporate Communication
for Amazon in Italy

This story starts with an unmatched obsession. An obsession that has become an icon of excellence. An obsession that has transitioned a Best Brand online, a brand that was created in the US and quickly became a household name around the world, including in Italy. An obsession with the most precious thing a company can acknowledge it possesses: the customer. “We always see our customers as guests invited to a party, and we are the hosts. The job is to improve every aspect of that experience every day. The best customer service happens when the customer doesn’t need to call you, doesn’t need to speak to you.” This was stated by Jeff Bezos, the father of contemporary e-commerce giant Amazon. A story that is also redemption, because that desire to succeed fuels passions and gives meaning to life. The company, founded in the summer of 1994, tapped into the combination that tied the growth of the network with direct consumer participation through comments on purchase choices. “The first principle that has always and will always be part of Amazon’s DNA is customer obsession: our commitment to being the most customer-centric company in the world. It’s a principle so true that it’s even more relevant today in the time of challenges

posed by climate change, economic conditions, or technological innovations. Over time, we’ve increasingly understood that this obsession embraces not just primary needs, but also prospective ones: ensuring that every innovation we design generates long-term benefits for our customers, our employees, and the communities we operate in through the impact we can have in the world,” says Alessandro Chiarmasso, Country Lead Corporate Communication for Amazon in Italy. Thus, the focus on the customer in developing services based on generative AI is reflected in protecting the human factor, which should always have the final word in the decision-making process. But also, the development of logistics services on behalf of the customer involves protecting the environment they live in. “That’s why we use 100% recyclable bags and boxes for deliveries across the European distribution network and are working to power 100% of operations from renewable sources by 2025. Today, we already deliver over 145 million packages in Europe and the United States using over 9,000 electric vehicles in our delivery partners’ global fleet,” says Chiarmasso. From vision to strategy, from concrete actions to narratives that embody this journey. Multigenerational attention comes

out on content, is tailored on platforms in a consistent manner and told with engaging formats. “Multigenerational attention is primarily a matter of content rather than medium. In the digital context, of course each generation seeks to self-determine its identity through its own space, language, and channel, but, as has already happened with the major social networks, the curiosity for compelling content has the power to capture other generations as well and leads to a balancing of users,” says Chiarmasso. Thus in Amazon’s pandemic Christmas commercial, a Gen Z dancer is helped to perform her recital by her younger sister and older neighbours thanks partly to some simple products bought on Amazon. Another commercial, set in Japan, shows a grandson helping his Silent Generation grandmother relive the thrill of the motorcycle rides she used to enjoy with her husband. Finally, in the most recent Christmas commercial, a baby boomer helps her peers see that age has no limits as they once again experience the thrill of sledging, while Generation Alpha children look on in awe.

“The first principle that makes up our DNA has always been and will always be customer obsession. Multigenerational attention is primarily a matter of content rather than medium”

IS THERE A COMMON THREAD THAT TIES THESE CAMPAIGNS TOGETHER?

Firstly, it must be noted that content is central, and our history has shown us that at any latitude and for any age, across different shopping experiences, customers are interested in fulfilling three needs: a wide selection, low prices, and fast shipping. For this reason, our campaigns feature protagonists of diverse ages, backgrounds, and origins, united by the search for the best shopping experience and by those foundational values that bridge generations and act as global identifying themes.

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU MAINTAIN WITH YOUR AUDIENCES TODAY?

Customers are involved in a unique experience that seeks not only to satisfy them but also to develop with them, and for them, a direct listening relationship. Jeff Bezos stated that: “If your customer base ages with you, you will eventually become obsolete or irrelevant. You must constantly understand who your new customers are and what you are doing to stay young.” We do this through product reviews, comments on our social media channels, feedback received from our customer service; or through dialogue and collaboration with institutions, the media, and intermediary social bodies in the areas where we operate and where our employees and our customers live.

HOW ARE COMPETENCIES IN MARKETING CHANGING AT WORK?

From my experience as a communicator, I observe two necessary factors today for any professionalism in marketing and communication: the need for a data-driven approach and to constantly keep up with new technologies. For example, I’m thinking about the need for skills in prompt engineering or knowledge of the dynamics of communication channels and the most innovative social media to connect with and listen to the public. To do all this, technical and vertical specialisation needs to be accompanied by a more holistic vision that embraces marketing, communication, business,

social trends, and politics. An overarching vision that allows us to make connections and evaluate responsibilities and the impact of the decisions we make. But there’s more.

TELL US...

The final necessary ingredient is empathy: putting oneself in the customers’ shoes, understanding their needs, and listening attentively to their feedback. To be data-driven, one must first be customer-obsessed.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD

Trust. A word that is more relevant today than ever: it means relating to others with attention, sincerity, and respect. Earning trust is one of our leadership principles.

“Customers are engaged in an experience aimed at developing a direct listening relationship. Empathy is the essential ingredient: to truly understand customers and to be data-driven, you first have to be customer-obsessed”

Amazon.com is an American e-commerce company headquartered in Seattle. Over the years, it has become the largest Internet company in the world. Since 2010, Amazon has created 18,000 permanent jobs in Italy, spread across 60 facilities including logistic centres, corporate offices, data centres, and customer service centres. In 2022, the company’s total revenues in Italy amounted to over 9.4 billion euros, with investments of 4.3 billion euros and a total tax contribution (sum of direct and indirect taxes) of over 1.147 billion euros. Internationally, the financial results for the year 2023 showed a 12% increase in net sales, totaling \$574.8 billion. Worldwide, Amazon now employs over 1.5 million people and continues to invest in providing industry-leading salaries and benefits.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The first lesson is tied to **customer trust**, which is everything because it fuels reputation, takes time to build, and can be quickly lost. Being the most customer-centric company in the world involves listening and humility to reflect and learn from mistakes. At the same time, it requires sensitivity towards the communities in which our customers and employees live. To do all this, — and this is the second lesson — we must not limit ourselves, but **think big and aim for innovation**, leveraging possibilities, scalability, and the tools at our disposal. Generating a positive impact in our communities requires long-term goals and continuous attempts. For innovation, **speed** is essential: speed is life. Quick and reversible decisions are needed, with an alternative in mind. 'Be stubborn about the long-term vision but flexible when it comes to the detail' is a Jeff Bezos mantra».



Dash, a family brand for all generations.
«A startup at heart but with the resources of a global company. We're moving from mass communication to precision communication.»



ALBERTO AMATI
Brand Director Dash

When you are part of a family, you know everything. That is, you live and share the everyday occurrences that nestle into daily life. Family members provide help, lend an ear, offer comfort, and give support. They may occasionally tell you off or give advice. But what happens when being part of a family extends to a global Best Brand that goes back hundreds of years? We're about to tell a story that showcases this closeness to the customer, coupled with the ability to provide timely answers to everyday questions—an ambition achieved with extreme dedication, involving consistency, quality products and services, and genuine relationships. This narrative underscores the strength of Procter & Gamble (P&G), a global giant whose products are used by nearly five billion people worldwide. In Italy, P&G owns a substantial portfolio of quality brands, including Dash, Fairy, Lenor, Mr. Clean, Swiffer, Viakal, AZ, Kukident, Oral B, Olaz, Pantene, Head & Shoulders, Gillette, Venus, Braun, encompassing a familiar sphere that touches everyone. The company operates in 70 countries with headquarters in Cincinnati, United States, and has been present in Italy since 1956. Alberto Amati, Brand Director of Fabric Care at P&G,

explains, "The mission of P&G and Dash is to strive to improve people's quality of life, today and for future generations. Since its founding in 1837, our business has evolved significantly, yet our foundational values of integrity, leadership, ownership, and a passion for winning remain unchanged." The company's advertising, known for iconic slogans and memorable campaigns, continues to resonate across generations. For example, the pristine whiteness of sheets in the sun and viral campaigns featuring celebrities like Paolo Ferrari and Enrico Brignano highlight changing laundry needs across different demographics. "Dash has grown alongside families and has responded to societal shifts through continuous product and communication innovations, ensuring the best laundry experience," states Amati. Media campaigns are supported by plans that make it possible to reach a vast audience through various channels, from traditional TV to digital platforms like YouTube and social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, with strategies tailored not only to generational but also situational targets. Amati adds, "We continually seek creative ways to overhaul every aspect and area of our business: we're a startup at heart



with the resources of a global organisation.. We're transforming how we communicate from mass outreach to precise, individual engagement, adapting our strategies to maximise impact and efficiency. This approach, which we call 'mass precision marketing', shifts from broad demographic targets to finely tuned smart targets. The future, especially in a multigenerational setting, will increasingly rely on sophisticated data analysis to effectively and efficiently reach our desired audiences." This commitment to innovation and precision marks P&G's strategy in responding to the evolving needs of consumers worldwide.

“ In the new multigenerational context, advanced data analysis will become increasingly strategic. We call this “mass precision marketing”: we are shifting from broad and generic demographic targets to smart targets ”

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU MAINTAIN WITH YOUR AUDIENCES TODAY?

Despite the profound changes over the decades, Dash has always remained "part of the family": a brand name you can rely on in the home and one that consistently innovates and provides exceptional-performance products by continuing to listen to the needs of society and our consumers.

COMMERCIAL COMMITMENT AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT: CAN THEY BE COMBINED?

Absolutely, yes. Dash is a laundry care product so it's sure to be something all families can rely on in their day-to-day life. However, we believe Dash's role does not stop there: due to the attachment of Italian families to our brand, we feel the responsibility to engage in issues that are consistent with our values. Since 1987, Dash has been the first commercial brand to promote "cause-related marketing" projects to support impoverished and struggling communities.

WHAT KIND OF POSITIONING DO YOU HAVE?

With our communication, we aim to contribute to the creation of a world free from prejudice and accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities, and we are committed to protecting the environment we live in. In March last year, Dash introduced new packaging for Dash Pods, the first cardboard packaging redesigned to be accessible to everyone, except children. This new package has significant benefits in terms of inclusion. For the first time in Italy, a laundry detergent features a tactile washing machine-shaped marker and a QR Code to scan with the Navilens Go App to help people with visual disabilities recognise the product and access information.

HOW ARE THE PROFILES OF THOSE WORKING IN MARKETING CHANGING?

I believe that marketing evolves in step with the times. The skills required to work in this field have radically changed over the last ten years and will change again in the next ten. It's crucial that marketers continue to develop their skill set to remain agile and support businesses in adapting to changes over time. The key is never to stop learning.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW?

Consumer-inspired innovation with co-creation actions. We are moving from campaigns developed solely with the agency to campaigns also designed through specific qualitative research with consumers based on insights and co-creation. Today, we work with agencies on a variety of messages for different needs and types of customers: we no longer just produce one advertisement that adapts to other touchpoints, but create many formats for different channels. It's an extraordinary journey into a future that is already here.

“ We embrace all generations and we are a brand that people trust ”

Last year, P&G recorded a net revenue of \$82 billion, marking a 2% increase on the previous year. Organic sales, which exclude the impact of currency fluctuations and acquisitions and divestitures, rose by 7%. For the fiscal year 2024, P&G anticipates overall sales growth of between 3% and 4% compared to the previous year. Regarding employees, P&G has over 100,000 employees globally. Sustainability, both environmental and social, is part of our DNA. We believe that every company, organisation, and consumer has a duty to do their part. That's why, with Dash, we support communication campaigns on the importance of washing at low temperatures and using short cycles in washing machines. Not everyone knows this, but in the life cycle analysis of washing machine laundry detergents, the one aspect that has the greatest environmental impact is washing mode: lowering the washing temperature from 60 to 30 degrees can save up to 60% of electricity.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The three key words that the new generations at work will need to embrace are **brand value, innovation, and sustainability**. Consumers want brands that can create value and use their voice to trigger positive change. That's why, as Dash, we will continue to build a trustful relationship with our consumers, engaging with them through our products and our communication campaigns. Last but not least, sustainability. Beyond the primary needs related to the use of our products, demands for environmental sustainability and social responsibility have strongly emerged. These two values guide and will increasingly guide the innovation of Dash products and our actions, and they influence the choices of new generations, not only in terms of consumption, but also in their professional and personal life».





Essity, the courage that guides marketing decisions. Because beyond preconceptions, there's a world to discover. «This is how we challenge taboos and prejudices»



ALESSANDRO BONACINA
Commercial Director Essity

They tread on paths less travelled, embark on new and uncharted routes, somehow outpacing the times. These are the pioneers, a generation of Best Brands that manage to arrive first and make a significant difference in the market. But it's not just about the wow effect. Their narratives inspire wonder but are backed by concrete actions, a conscious vision, and attentive listening. Perhaps this is indeed the winning recipe for pioneers, those innovators who push beyond: attentive listening. This entails sensing the market, anticipating needs, and decoding precursor languages that later become common jargon. But there's more to it than just spontaneity. You don't just improvise. Everything is built over time, step by step, listening after listening. Thus, it requires both vertical and horizontal skills, extreme dedication, courage to spare, and a team that can give their all and make a significant difference. Even the brilliant dramatist and master of the realist novel, Honoré de Balzac, believed: "Courage cannot be faked; it is a virtue that escapes hypocrisy." This courage calls for authenticity and is a vital ingredient in the story of Essity, a giant specialised in hygiene and health, headquartered in

Stockholm, Sweden. Marketing its products in about 150 countries, this global leader in hygiene and health is dedicated to improving people's lives through products and services that focus increasingly on individual well-being. The portfolio includes a variety of solutions that have become part of our daily lives such as tissues, baby diapers, feminine hygiene, incontinence products, compression therapy, orthopedics, and wound care. "Our purpose is to break down barriers to people's well-being. The element of breaking taboos pervades the storytelling of all Essity brands not just in tone, but also in the topics addressed. More disruptively with Nuvenia campaigns, or to stimulate conversation about menopause with TENA, or to raise awareness about kindness with Tempo. At Essity, we break down barriers that hinder well-being by challenging taboos and prejudices to help create a more inclusive society," states Alessandro Bonacina, Commercial Director at Essity. A strong positioning that stems from the distinctiveness of the offer. Ultimately, this is one of the keys to success in contemporary marketing. "All our brands have a very strong and recognisable identity, capturing attention

right from the positioning. Our brands are “top of mind”: consumers know them and remember them and each has a clear narrative cut and a unique tone of voice,” specifies Bonacina. But in this journey that particularly concerns innovative brands, success is measured by what endures over time versus what evolves. This is a crucial passage of awareness. For Essity, some aspects have remained unchanged over time, while others have evolved in the marketing strategy. “We remain loyal to our vision and positioning, continuing to build and strengthen our brand equity consistently over time. What continuously evolves is how we reach our consumers: we must be exactly where our target is and speak to them effectively. In recent years, the Nuvenia brand has committed to breaking down taboos related to menstruation and the V-zone so we can create a world where women+ feel free to live the life they want. From 2019 to today, the way we have activated this commitment has changed, but the Nuvenia brand is extremely recognisable and distinctive, as is its commitment to breaking down taboos,” says Bonacina.

“ At Essity,
we break down
barriers that hinder
well-being
to help create
a more inclusive
society ”

ALESSANDRO, HOW DO YOU ADDRESS THE NEW MULTIGENERATIONAL CONTEXT?

Our campaigns come to life across multiple channels—TV, connected TV, online, social media—to not only reach our buying target but also current users who will be future purchasers, such as Generation Z. The content is tailored to perform well on each channel, offering an optimal experience.

CAN YOU SHARE A COUPLE OF CAMPAIGNS THAT EXEMPLIFY THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CUSTOMER?

The Tempo “Tearful Tales” campaign comes to mind, aimed at dismantling the stigma taught from a young age that men should not cry. The communication was directed at parents and children, and generally adults who have experienced similar situations and now have the opportunity to break the taboo. Another example is the TENA #LastMenopauseAlone campaign, created to stimulate inter-generational conversation on the subject, freeing it from negative stereotypes associated with this life stage.

HOW DO YOU ENGAGE WITH YOUR AUDIENCES ACROSS DIFFERENT GENERATIONS TODAY?

First off, Tempo is inherently a multigenerational brand. It was created to meet the needs of everyone, at any stage of life, aiming to be a brand you can rely on in the everyday situations we face. Our goal is to be present in every phase of a person's life, from birth to old age, offering products that adapt to everyone's needs and communicating a consistent, unified message. With Nuvenia and TENA, our campaigns encourage women of different generations to discuss menstruation and menopause topics, aiming to break down barriers and make women feel less alone.

WHAT CHANNELS AND NARRATIVE FORMATS ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN TODAY?

We primarily develop video content with various durations and narrative structures depending on the delivery context. Video assets

allow us to present the brand in an immediate and engaging way and follow the growing demand for dynamic content. Content creation considers the users' attention level, which varies depending on the context and platform where we communicate.

HOW ARE SKILLS—AND THEREFORE PROFESSIONAL ROLES—IN MARKETING CHANGING?

The fluidity of the macro-economic context and the flexibility with which companies adapt to follow market evolution make the ability to evolve in learning new skills and adapting to changes the essential competence for a marketer. While digital skills might have been the obvious answer to this question some time ago, recent months have shown that problem-solving and business development capabilities are also required to succeed in an often unpredictable market. In short, it's more about being a versatile manager than a function specialist.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD?

In one word? No doubt about it: reinvented.

“ Adapting to changes
swiftly is crucial. It's
important to be a
multifaceted manager
rather than a specialist in
a specific function ”

From Sweden to the rest of the world and for a diverse range of consumers, Essity is a global leader in the hygiene and health sectors, committed to improving people's lives through products and services that focus increasingly on individual well-being. The company markets its products in about 150 countries worldwide through leading global brands such as TENA and Tork, as well as other established brands like Tempo, Nuvenia, Demak'up, Actimove, JOBST, Knix, Leukoplast, Libero, Libresse, Lotus, Modibodi, Saba, TOM Organic, Vinda, and Zewa. Essity employs approximately 48,000 people and in 2022 reported consolidated revenue of about 156 billion SEK, equivalent to 14 billion euros. The Swedish company is listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange. Essity has always been dedicated to breaking down barriers to well-being and aims to contribute to a more inclusive, sustainable, and circular society.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The first lesson is **distinctiveness**», responds Alessandro Bonacina, Commercial Director at Essity. «The constant changes characterising society impact the attitudes of consumers, who are increasingly disoriented and in search of brands with which they can identify and trust. Standing out and thus occupying a clear position in the minds of consumers is essential for ensuring growth. Next is **attention**. In a context of proliferating brands, campaigns, messages, and mediums, capturing consumer attention is a key element that determines success or failure. It must be at the core of communication plans and must be measured with advanced tools. Finally, **technological impact** becomes relevant. It represents an evolution destined to transform our society, marketing, and communication. It's crucial to fully understand its effectiveness and envision its implementation,» asserts Bonacina.



nutella®

Ferrero: the winning formula from Alba to the entire world. «Consistency in consumer relations is vital. And transparency at all times.»



Valeria always leads the way. This was repeated like a mantra by Michele Ferrero, the architect of the exponential growth in international markets that made Ferrero a global brand. It all started when Pietro Ferrero and Piera Cillario opened a pastry shop in Via Berthollet in the centre of Turin. Later, when World War II broke out, Ferrero returned to the town of Alba in 1942 and opened a pastry shop in Via Rattazzi, where the extraordinary adventure began. However, it was Michele, at only 32 years old and after the death of his parents, who took over the reins of the company with tenacity, vision, awareness, and courage, led by Valeria, as he would say. For him, Valeria represents the true CEO, the consumer who is the compass guiding their actions, much like the stereotypical Italian housewife as portrayed on TV. “At the core of Ferrero’s DNA are some fundamental pillars: the product, the consumer, quality, and innovation. These are the basic ingredients of Ferrero’s success story and have always been part of the broader concept of social and environmental sustainability, a field in which the Ferrero family has been a pioneer. These values have deep roots in the territory where everything started and have been projected beyond geographical and category boundaries. Ferrero’s storytelling always features the product as the

protagonist and stems from the desire to act and think differently from what already exists. Only in this way can we interpret consumers and their needs to create successful products. A bond of transparency and trust that pushes us not to compromise on quality,” says Ferrero. Roots anchored to their own land and the ambition to serve every corner of the world. Ultimately, this is the recipe for success of those Best Brands that are global, operating in the tradition of those places that saw their inception and that have entered the collective imagination. Yet, there is also the capacity to aim high. “Nutella and Ferrero have always believed in changing by preserving, that is, in the ability to evolve while protecting and leveraging one’s roots. In times of great instability, emotionality, and paradigm shifts, it is even more important to be authentic and be able to understand context, new habits and behaviours in order to offer consumers a solid narrative on values and represent a reference, without ignoring the difficulties of the moment,” Ferrero specifies. This means listening to the market and those who inhabit it daily. Thus, at Ferrero, all marketing strategies come from a deep understanding of the consumer through market research, point-of-sale interviews, and social listening. Indeed, this is a valuable connection that makes it possible

to anticipate needs and test the potential of new ideas. Thus, the consumer and product become central, and only a thorough understanding of both allows the company to gain a competitive advantage and make a difference. A path that keeps something unchanged over time and evolves in parallel. "Nutella's strategy is focused on breakfast, which has always been the brand's consumption moment of choice. Over the years, the brand has evolved from the iconic spread to new categories with the goal of increasing penetration and satisfying consumer demands: from the launch of Nutella B-Ready to Nutella Biscuits to the recent entry into the Frozen world with Nutella Croissant. At the same time, the goal is to maintain and fuel a "love brand" that's hugely popular in Italy, through unique and impactful branding activities capable of creating a strong emotional bond and closeness with the brand."

“ The challenge lies in conveying a message that is both coherent and relevant to consumers, which must not become diluted across different platforms. It's like a mosaic made up of many pieces ”

HOW IS MULTIGENERATIONAL ATTENTION REFLECTED IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS?

First, let's set the stage. We're not talking about a radical transformation of narrative in terms of content, as we already engage with a multigenerational audience, but rather about accelerating already embarked upon paths in terms of relationship building. To be relevant and communicate in an intergenerational language, it's essential to start with brand values, which must guide every activity, whether in innovation, communication, point of sale, or other areas. This historical moment is perhaps the most interesting for marketers because it offers a plethora of tools, and storytelling is that is enriched with an infinity of touchpoints, each with its own language and specific target.

HOW DO YOU COHERENTLY MAINTAIN THIS COMPLEXITY?

That's where the challenge lies: in articulating a message that is coherent and relevant to consumers and that does not get diluted across different platforms. It's like a mosaic made of many pieces, conveying a specific image. An interesting activity in this regard was the "Words" campaign. Nutella identified 21 words, each beginning with a different letter of the alphabet, that make life more beautiful and turn even the simplest moments into special ones: Creativity, Dreams, Happiness, Wonder... The brand made its iconic jar star of the show in a campaign that leveraged various but coherent touchpoints: from in-store promotions to a podcast, from collaboration with Treccani to digital communication. Consumers could choose the word that best represented them and be an active part in an increasingly strong and emotional relationship with the brand.

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU MAINTAIN WITH YOUR AUDIENCES TODAY?

Let's start by saying that Ferrero always moves from the product: Nutella has been a part of almost every Italian's life since 1964. It has crossed generations by leveraging a very strong emotional relationship. In these sixty years. Many innovations have been launched over the last sixty years and these have really ramped up in recent

years as strongly desired by Executive Chairman Giovanni Ferrero. This has allowed the relationship between Nutella and the consumer to evolve: Nutella can now be consumed outside the home and consumers have been attracted from other categories. In terms of communication, the message of positivity, good mood, and sharing has always been at the centre of our narrative.

HOW ARE MARKETING SKILLS CHANGING?

In a constantly evolving context with fluid boundaries, it is crucial to enrich one's skills by broadening one's horizons. Opening up to dialogue, exchange, and cross-pollination both inside and outside the company is essential. Marketers cannot only be experts in shares, numbers, and communication but must broaden their interests to multiple fields and have a multidisciplinary approach to society.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW?

In one word, "Brand Trust." Marketing means nurturing and developing a relationship of trust and respect between the brand, the consumer, and stakeholders.

“ Throughout the past sixty years, Nutella has transcended generations by fostering a deeply emotional bond ”

Ferrero is the third largest group globally in the chocolate confectionery market, with a turnover of 17 billion euros. The giant has been at the top of reputational rankings for years, both in the food sector and in the overall ranking compiled by The RepTrak Company. In 2023, Ferrero in Italy not only secured the first place as the Best Reputation Company but also ranked first as the Best ESG Company, an index measuring the perception of companies most committed to sustainability. Led by Giovanni Ferrero, the third generation of the founding family, the group employs over 47,000 people in 55 countries and operates 37 production facilities worldwide. Additionally, Ferrero Hazelnut Company, an internal division of the group, includes 4 farms and 7 processing plants around the world, encompassing the entire hazelnut supply chain. Ferrero's products and brands, present and sold in over 170 countries, have become part of the collective memory. Ferrero's workforce in Italy, including all companies, exceeds 7,000 employees. Ferrero operates in Italy with 6 production sites: Alba, Pozzuolo Martesana, Balvano, Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi, Caivano, and Castel d'Ario. The Ferrero Foundation is also based and active in Alba.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«Learning and innovation are driven by **curiosity**. Without curiosity, there is no desire to understand one's consumer or the drive to find innovative solutions. In a context like communication, which changes very quickly, being open and evaluating new solutions helps to keep pace with the times. Then there is **consistency**: each brand and each story, to be credible and relevant, must be consistent with its own history, that of the company, and the people who work there. In the development of articulated Power Brands, it is crucial that each product line is consistent with the brand's DNA and at the same time has a clear and unique point of difference. And finally, there's **empathy**: trying to understand the perspective of consumers, of different targets, is essential to connect with them and create an emotional bond that transcends generations,» states Ferrero.

nutella®



YEARS OF SMILES



JBL, technology and connection: this is why it's a whole new tune with the customer. «This is how we turned our passion for sound quality into an endless concert»



ALBERTO PETRONI
Marketing Manager
JVCKenwood Italia

“Every instrument is easy to play. The secret lies in pressing the right key at the right moment, and the instrument will play itself.” Johann Sebastian Bach, the German composer and musician, often repeated this as a mantra. But this golden rule from the eighteenth century still applies even today and, if you think about it, is the key to unlocking the doors of contemporary marketing. Because it takes consistency, as well as competence. Because the right key at the right moment can stir very special chords. The perfect symphony comes into play when all the instruments are tuned and when they play in unison, led by the mastery and passion of a skilled conductor. So, in telling our new Best brands story, we had to start with a concerto worth listening to, recording and admiring, and a conductor who tunes all instruments together perfectly, creating compelling sound solutions. To achieve this, of course, everything relies on competence, training, and hours and hours of rehearsal practice. But there's also room for brilliant intuitions, creative flair, and the ability to make a difference. Passion for sound quality and technological innovation in the audio sector. All this—we'll discover in the following lines—is JBL, for decades a Harman brand that has helped shape the

best moments of people's lives by celebrating the intersection of music, lifestyle, gaming, and sports. This is a Best Brand pioneer in the audio industry thanks to the work—defined as mastery a few lines above—of passionate and talented engineers and designers from every corner of the world. “At JBL, we've maintained a constant dedication to creating extraordinary sound experiences through advanced engineering and relentless research. But to these two aspects, we add a meticulous attention to design in a broad sense, so to aesthetics, but also to usability, build quality, and durability. Thus, sound quality, technology, and design have always been the pillars of each of our products and are the foundation of our global success,” says Alberto Petroni, Marketing Manager of JVCKENWOOD Italy, distributor of the JBL brand in Italy. The storytelling reflects these pillars, emphasising the fusion of aesthetics and technology. “That's why we tell stories that go well beyond mere production of speakers and headphones. We focus on the emotions conveyed by music and on transforming everyday moments into extraordinary experiences through sound. What has remained unchanged over the years is our commitment to excellence. Sound quality remains at the core of our

mission, and our reputation as a leader in audio is steadfast. At the same time, we have evolved to meet the changing needs of the market and consumers. We have embraced new technologies: from the integration of wireless features to the creation of smart speakers. In a digital era, and thus in a historical moment where artificial intelligence is rapidly changing the balance, we have expanded our range of products to meet the demands of an increasingly connected and demanding audience,” says Petroni. Continuous innovation and the ability to adapt to market needs are easy to say but harder to do. Yet it's as if there were a tacit pact between customers and the company. Since its founding in the distant 1946, the DNA of JBL—short for James Bullough Lansing—has been intrinsically linked to these two factors. The research is expressed in the 300 patents held: from VGC transducers to the Slip Stream low-frequency port, from Progressive Transition waveguides to the Plus One woofer-cone technology.

“ We tell stories that transcend mere production of speakers and headphones. We focus on the emotions of music and transforming everyday moments into extraordinary experiences ”

LET'S START WITH THE PRODUCTS...

Our range is diverse and targets a broad audience. Our core business is driven by products aimed at new generations—from Gen Z to Alpha—but we also manage products for a more mature audience with higher positioning, as well as solutions for business users and semi-professional operators.

WHAT HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED OVER TIME AND HOW HAVE YOU EVOLVED?

The reference to the superior quality of our products has always been a staple in our marketing strategies, but in recent years, the focus has shifted to the individual, their uniqueness and their sense of expression.

ARE YOU MULTIGENERATIONAL?

Yes. We have embraced this multigenerational approach in marketing, striving to reach audiences of various ages through diverse platforms and formats. Our campaigns span digital platforms like social media, YouTube, Spotify, and other online channels including branded worlds on Roblox, capitalising on the digital consumption habits of different generations.

HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCES?

Regardless of the target demographic or the medium used, our communication is always authentic and centres on emotions, a sense of expression, and sharing moments. These emotionally tied aspects transcend any demographic classification. The same things can make you smile or cry at 18 and at 60.

IS THERE A PRODUCT THAT EMBODIES THIS CROSS-GENERATIONAL APPEAL?

With our latest line of Authentics smart speakers, we have gone further, creating a product line that appeals both to new generations and a more mature target. We succeeded by identifying design elements referenced by both generations, such as nods to retro pop culture, which are iconic for younger consumers and spark fond memories for those who grew up with it.

HOW DO YOU REACH MULTIGENERATIONAL AUDIENCES?

To reach a broader audience, we also invest in more traditional formats such as specialised and trade press, thus maintaining broad demographic coverage. Hence, one brand, but different products communicated through different means to different targets.

WHAT IS YOUR DISTINCTIVE ELEMENT?

Any marketing strategy we undertake still refers to our three pillars: superior sound quality, technological innovation, and appealing design. The ability to evoke emotions is the key element of every marketing strategy we deploy.

HOW ARE MARKETING SKILLS CHANGING?

The proliferation of mediums and technologies in communication and relationships requires constant adaptation and the ability to stay continually updated. There has definitely been a shift from needing vertical skills to preferring a much more horizontal vision, with the inevitable need to rely generally on external agencies specialised in various fields.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD.

Definitely *change...* and I'd add *rapid*.

“Regardless of the target and medium, our communication is authentic and focuses on emotions, expression, and sharing moments. ”

Harman employs 33,400 people worldwide and is headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut, USA. In 2023, the revenue of Harman's lifestyle division exceeded \$4 billion. For over 75 years, Harman brand JBL has enhanced the finest moments in people's lives by celebrating the intersection of music, lifestyle, gaming, and sports. JBL enhances the listening experience with superior audio quality and product design that encourages individuality and self-expression. With unmatched professional credentials and industry-leading innovations, JBL is a pioneer in the audio industry, thanks to passionate and talented engineers and designers globally. JBL Pro Sound is the leading technology that enriches culture through pop events and partnerships with the world's top talents in music, sports, and esports. Additionally, JBL is the fastest-growing brand globally in the earbuds sector.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The first of the three lessons that new generations at work will need to embrace is the call to **be good listeners** and ready to recognise market signals. This leads to my second personal lesson: **being open to change** and experimentation. Lastly, lesson three: **be critical and analytical**. In a world that evolves very rapidly, it is not uncommon to encounter false trends and dead ends. We must always get to the essence of things and ask ourselves if there is a real need and usefulness for the activities we want to undertake. In short, let's learn to make sense of things.»





LEGO constructions, the wonderful tale that has captured the hearts of both adults and children. «We sell stories, not bricks. And these stories are told in a thousand ways and contexts»



DAVIDE CAJANI
Head of Marketing
LEGO Italia

Time takes time. Without haste, but with consistency or, as it's called today, resilience. Building timeless masterpieces takes time. Step by step, brick by brick, and even piece by piece, colourful and open to the world. Essentially, the story you're about to read embodies this idea of perseverance because nothing is impossible if you truly believe. But let's start with the places, which often shape ideas and therefore people. Forget about high-tech metropolitan areas and futuristic landscapes. The authentic future often hides in unimaginable places and is enriched by the excellence generated by talents and ideas. We are in Billund, a small town of fewer than seven thousand people in southwest Denmark. Here lies LEGO's headquarters and, with this being a family passion, it is the same town where the company was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Kristiansen. We often say that the strength of Best Brands lies in their ability to capitalise on the past to be even stronger in the future. The workshop where the brick revolution began is still there and houses archives where every set ever made can be found. The company has been passed from father to son and is now owned by Thomas Kirk Kristiansen, the great-grandson of the founder. Its DNA is in its

name: LEGO is an abbreviation of the two words "leg godt" ("play well" in Danish). Today, LEGO products are sold in more than 120 countries, and over 27,000 people work to achieve their ambition: to let all the children of the world know about "Learning Through Play". Being close to children and also engaging adults, in joyful times and more complex ones, which is exactly what happened during the pandemic. That's what happened even during the pandemic emergency. "We'd need an actual time machine to get us through this difficult period. In the meantime, I thought of making a cool mini steampunk version", says Nathan Stewart, a huge Lego fan from the UK whose creation was eventually produced by the Danish company itself. Nathan's colourful "Steampunk Time Machine" world, created during the LEGO World Builder beta test, also includes a character called Suzy, and the company initiative means fans can contribute to creating worlds and characters from scratch. Users propose the ideas, which are uploaded with concept art, videos, and descriptions. This isn't the first commitment on this front: LEGO, in collaboration with the Unity graphics engine, has also launched a platform that allows anyone to create their own video game without having

to write a single line of code. Just follow a tutorial to assemble virtual bricks and build a personalised environment. Ultimately, today's world is different with so many options for the young that in order to win the game you need to get actively involved. The future thus increasingly passes through these broad and cross-sector collaborations, carried forward by brands that successfully pursue a new relationship with end consumers. Co-creation therefore becomes a must because new solutions are born from the involvement of the community. After all, the Best Brand today belongs to everyone. This is what marketing guru Seth Godin had long hoped for: most organisations spend their time selling to an indistinct crowd, while the most astute companies gather and engage real tribes. For the LEGO Group, there is an essential element: it does not just sell bricks, but stories. With the opportunity to tell these stories in various ways and contexts. "Our brand lives in an ecosystem of very different platforms: we try to communicate with our consumers using all possible channels," shares Davide Cajani, Head of Marketing at LEGO Italy.

“ We live
in an ecosystem
of different platforms
and communicate
using all possible
channels ”

EVERYTHING STARTS FROM PLAY AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN...

We have always regarded children as our reference model and believe they deserve only the best. Since the foundation of the LEGO Group, the goal has always been to offer fun play experiences with quality products. Our basic philosophy is one of learning and development through play. The LEGO System in Play allows us to provide children with constantly new play experiences that can help them approach problem-solving, discover the world, and be creative.

WHAT ARE YOUR FOUNDING VALUES?

They are imagination, creativity, fun, learning, care, and quality: they are important to us because they define us as a company and guide us towards our ambition to help future generations build a better world.

YOU MENTIONED DIFFERENT AND INTERCONNECTED PLATFORMS BEFORE...

We engage in dialogue across a variety of channels: from more traditional ones driven by media investments to owned channels—stores, newspapers, apps—as well as events and PR activations. Last year, we launched a campaign called "The Superpower of Play," in response to the findings of global research indicating that children worldwide are spending less time playing compared to the past; we wanted to inspire families to rediscover the importance of playtime.

SO TODAY, WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH YOUR AUDIENCES?

The relationship is built by communicating relevant content in relevant contexts. That's why we have a very precise approach to our target audience, creating campaigns not only based on age groups but also targeting passion points, focusing on the interests of our consumers.

HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME GENERATIONAL BOUNDARIES?

We have a diversified strategy for both our consumers and shoppers, meaning the buyers of our products. LEGO by its nature is a brand that bridges different generations: today's children's bricks are perfectly compatible with those used by their parents when they were children themselves! That's why LEGO naturally builds a virtual bridge between different generations, where each brick represents a timeless emotion.

HOW ARE MARKETING SKILLS CHANGING?

In the LEGO Group, we talk about an ecosystem, so a world of channels to engage with our consumers. Skills must have and will need to have two dimensions: vertical so we have technical experts, and then horizontal so we can connect the dots and engage with all departments for a holistic view. That's why I believe attitude always makes the difference. Marketing is a key function for companies when it decides to put the end consumer at the centre. But there's more. Today's more evolved marketing is able to collaborate horizontally and support all internal departments.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD?

For me, it's holistic.

“ We build a bridge
between generations:
each brick represents a
timeless emotion. ”

The LEGO Group is a family-owned company founded in 1932. Its headquarters is located in Billund, in southwest Denmark, in the same town where this enterprise was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Kristiansen. His original workshop still exists today and houses the archives where all sets ever produced can be found. The company is now owned by Thomas Kirk Kristiansen, the founder's great-grandson. The name LEGO is an abbreviation of the Danish words "leg godt," which mean "play well." The products are sold in more than 120 countries worldwide, and there are over 27,000 people working to achieve the ambition of introducing Learning Through Play to all children around the world. LEGO has created toy lines inspired by feature films such as Harry Potter, Indiana Jones, Batman, Star Wars and Pirates of the Caribbean. The LEGO Group has also developed theme parks based on its toys: the first Legoland was opened in Billund in 1968. This was followed by others in Europe, the United States, and Japan.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The first keyword for future marketing professionals is **simplicity**. Simple is not easy: one must strive for linear thinking and bring simplicity into campaign activation and the way one communicates with the end consumer. The second keyword is **consistency**: in a rapidly evolving context with a proliferation of touchpoints and channels, consistency is one of the key aspects in maintaining brand identity. Consistency is expressed in strategy and execution. Then there's visual consistency and consistency over time. Only in this way can a brand be built on a solid foundation. **Collaboration** is also crucial: marketing is a central function that must be able to collaborate and communicate with all departments. For marketers, emotional intelligence is important to be able to have a holistic approach with different functions and departments within the company».





Mattel, the healthy obsession with play that breaks stereotypes. «We tell stories. Everyone should find a toy that represents them»



ANDREA ZIELLA
Chief Executive Officer
Mattel Italia

One are the dolls of yesteryear, replaced by something that attempts to address contemporary challenges. Because dolls—and toys in general—today reflect the complexity of this time. For example, when Barbie was released in cinemas last year, quickly becoming a record-breaking success, a new imperfect and passionate Barbie was seen exiled from the iconic Barbie land to a more authentic real-world setting. Accustomed as she has been to her perfect life, things get more complicated when she encounters the hectic lifestyle of California. Thus, decades-old axioms are overturned, and the doll—and indeed the brand—sacrifices itself on the altar of a more factual, authentic, and empathetic marketing, showcasing the strengths and weaknesses, passions, and obsessions of the connected consumer. We find ourselves in the world of passions. After all, being imperfect and engaging allows us to be closer to consumers, away from the stereotypes of the past. This is the passion economy, as Forbes entitled it in a dossier that rewrites the rules of engagement for an audience seeking authenticity, and it crosses all age groups. It is also the end of the apathetic consumer according to Adam Davidson, creator of the

highly-followed podcast Planet Money and author of the bestseller “The Passion Economy”. Davidson observes how the 20th-century economy focused on mass production of goods, while the new economy is centred on individuals' passions. “For a long time, the safest and most profitable strategy was to be as similar as possible to others. Now the focus is on being oneself, accentuating the differences,” wrote Davidson. Here's the point. Rethinking products, listening to ourselves to truly be ourselves. It seems easy, but it's actually quite difficult. Yet if there's one thing that distinguishes the Best Brands, it's the ability to surprise us, often giving us the most precious thing: customer centrality, this time in plural. This is what happens at Mattel, the international toy giant and leader in one of the most comprehensive catalogues for children and their families. At Mattel, innovative products and experiences are created—and often co-created—to inspire, entertain, and accompany development through play. Moreover, consumers are engaged through the portfolio of iconic brands. Among these are Barbie, Hot Wheels, Fisher-Price, American Girl, Thomas & Friends, UNO, Masters of the Universe, Monster High, and MEGA. “Our offerings

include films and television content, gaming and digital experiences, music, and live events. We operate with 35 locations, and our products are available in over 150 countries, in collaboration with leading retail and e-commerce companies worldwide. Since its foundation in 1945, Mattel is proud to be a trusted partner in exploring the wonder of childhood and enabling children to develop and reach their full potential," says Andrea Ziella, CEO and Sales Director of Mattel and Mattel Creations Lead for the EMEA region. With the company since 2012, Ziella has held the position of Head of Marketing & Digital over the last four years. Thus, the strategy is implemented across multiple digital platforms, diverse yet linked by a coherent vision. "We have embarked on a true digital transformation, leveraging multiple assets—website, database, advertising platforms, social media, apps, e-commerce—and creating an increasing amount of content for our consumers, diversified by target and the platforms used. We believe that a careful combination of paid, owned, and earned media is one of the best practices in digital marketing to push the company towards an approach that truly puts the user at the centre," says Ziella.

“ We have started a digital transformation with an increased number of content offerings for our consumers. ”

WHAT IS THE DNA OF YOUR COMPANY?

Mattel's mission has always been to be a catalyst for change and have a positive impact on children's growth. Our goal is to offer a more organic and engaging customer experience, becoming a partner for parents through our products, licenses, and experiences. Today, we can say that there is no single way to classify us. Mattel is a toy company, a media agency, an entertainment company.

WHAT HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED AND HOW HAVE YOU EVOLVED OVER TIME?

Our long-term strategy aims to evolve from being toy manufacturers to a franchise company based on the strength of our brands. This vision is exciting because it offers us more business challenges, more opportunities to seize, and more sectors to operate in.

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH YOUR AUDIENCES TODAY?

We want to tell stories, and we want everyone to find a toy that represents them. This is the direction: stereotypes need to be overcome. The lack of representation of certain categories of people is not just an individual problem but a concern that involves us as a society. A doll with Down syndrome, a hearing aid, or vitiligo is the simplest and most effective way to teach children empathy, diversity, and inclusion, themes that are close to our hearts at Mattel.

CAN YOU GIVE US AN INSIGHT INTO YOUR STRATEGY?

Well, I can only mention the recent Barbie movie, which has become a global cultural phenomenon, the culmination of an almost decade-long journey we have undertaken to recontextualise Barbie for the next generation. Since 1959 Barbie has been synonymous with empowerment and today we believe that through her ability to inspire, Barbie can give a voice to those who are voiceless and power to those who have none. Barbie was included in Forbes' Most Powerful Women for 2023.

USER-CENTRICITY FOR YOU ALSO IMPLIES CO-CREATION. HOW DOES IT WORK?

Mattel has always sought to reinvent and change each day. That's why we developed Mattel Creations, the new direct-to-consumer platform that allows designers and artists to come into contact with our iconic brands and transform them into artwork, collector's pieces or NFTs. It is a place where toys become art.

HOW ARE MARKETING SKILLS CHANGING?

Marketing professions have changed a lot over time, making room for more technical and increasingly specialised (yet at the same time also versatile) figures. It is one of the most varied and multifaceted professional spheres, where creativity and analytical skills, project management, and pricing policies, social media and traditional media, Excel sheets, and presentations all blend together. Companies are hubs where professionals come together to combine their skills, and as theorised by Peter Senge, I believe that organisations need to be true learning communities to be successful, especially now where we have a blend of digital natives and digital immigrants.

WHAT'S THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD?

No doubt. Multidimensional.

“ We want to tell stories, and ensure that everyone can find a toy that reflects them ”

Mattel is an American toy company headquartered in El Segundo, in Los Angeles County, California. It is the second-largest toy company in the world by revenue. It also produces board games and was active in the video game industry in the 1980s, manufacturing consoles and video games. Today, it operates with 35 locations, and its products are available in over 150 countries, in collaboration with major retail and e-commerce companies worldwide. Mattel was founded in 1945 by Elliot Handler and Harold "Matt" Matson, whose combined names gave rise to the brand. Ruth Handler, Elliot's wife, later became Mattel's president. Initially, the company produced picture frames and, to a lesser extent, dollhouse accessories. The latter activity became central until toy production was recognised as the company's main focus. The adult Barbie doll was designed in 1959 following a visit to Europe by Ruth Handler, where she was introduced to the Bild Lilli doll.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«Over time, I've had the opportunity to engage with various professionals, and in my opinion, three key words can best define a person's career path in the professional realm. Firstly, there's **passion**, which is the essential component that guides every action. For us, it's the mantra of what we do in the relationship that drives us towards actively engaged clients. Then there's **resilience**, essential for operating in such a complex and rapidly changing environment. Finally, there's **determination**, which guides our daily actions and the ability to have a medium to long-term vision over time. These are essential elements in everyone's growth and can make a difference today for future professionals working in marketing».





PayPal, the international fintech company that's made it big while remaining fast and agile. «We're not just for the young; we're inherently intergenerational.»



MARIA TERESA MINOTTI
Country Senior Director
PayPal Italia

In a connected world, the greatest revolutions come from the miniaturised screens of smartphones. However, for a consumption habit to become constant and pervasive, it takes time. A lot of time. The next Best Brand story plays precisely on the time factor, interpreting it in multiple ways. There's the ability to be pioneers, venturing into paths yet unexplored; this is the world startup founders of all kinds belong to worldwide. Then there's the need to establish oneself as a habit, surpassing momentary trends and becoming a recurring occurrence. This point is much more delicate because it works on the brand's recognisability, constant trust, delivery of value-added services, and reputational capital. Yet the Best Brand taking centre stage in this story (created in America over twenty years ago and now also operating in Italy and Europe) embodies this dual aspect of time perfectly. It's the international fintech company PayPal, a startup which was created in 1998 to develop security software for portable devices and which began offering online money transfer services in 1999. In 2000, an alliance was formed with X.com founded by Elon Musk, followed by acquisition by eBay and listing on the US stock exchange. Initially

conceived as a payment system to facilitate online money transfers and e-commerce activities, over time—thanks precisely to that time factor—it has evolved to offer a wide range of services enabling online and in-person transactions, even in physical stores. “Our corporate DNA revolves around the security and protection of digital payments. We are globally recognised as the most reliable payment method because we do not share our customers' information and constantly monitor transactions to prevent fraud and scams. This has been true since the beginning and even more so today as we see more people entering the online commerce space, whether they are consumers or businesses. We place particular importance on raising awareness and educating people on how to stay safe and avoid potential risks. After all, our mantra is security and protection: our technology evolves to keep this promise every day,” says Maria Teresa Minotti, Country Senior Director PayPal Italia. Here's where the time factor becomes enabling for all age groups. “We are inherently intergenerational. Of course, the Italian context is still traditional, but the concept of digital has become cross-generational. We're no longer just for the young: think about

how you can make public administration payments or pay utility bills,” says Minotti. The company always aims for an omnichannel approach to campaigns: this way, products meet consumers at various touch-points. “This allows us to have broad outreach and refine the message based on the channel used. One of the best examples of this is the outdoor guerrilla marketing campaign we conducted in the city of Milan, where we were visible to our consumers through artwork in the Navigli area and with 100 Green Graffiti in key points of interest, along with a campaign that also embraced social and digital on our owned media,” Minotti explains. PayPal’s ambition is to become an application used daily by consumers and offer a complete range of products and services to companies looking to enter the digital economy. “We’re developing the next generation of the digital wallet: a multifunctional personalised application to provide customers with the best tool to manage their financial situation,” Minotti concludes.

“We are inherently intergenerational. The concept of digital has now become cross-generational.”

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE?

Our relationship is based on trust and allows us to be intergenerational in multiple use cases, reaching from younger to older generations.

WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE YOU ADOPTED TO OVERCOME GENERATIONAL BARRIERS?

One example that allows us to reach a more mature audience less accustomed to using digital channels is our latest project related to eGovernment, which offers a simple user experience allowing Pago-PA payments to be made directly through the PayPal app from the comfort of one’s own home.

HOW ARE MARKETING SKILLS CHANGING?

I believe the main way skills are changing in the current context is related to the importance of continuous learning and looking outside the company for new ways to excel in marketing. Having a cross-sector and cross-market perspective can really make a difference.

DOES A CROSS-SECTIONAL APPROACH ALLOW YOU TO REACH DIFFERENT AUDIENCES?

Yes, indeed. We need to have a global perspective when implementing strategy and maintain an interfunctional and intergenerational vision: this should also be reflected in managing our people and internal processes. The more we can leverage such skills and different viewpoints, the more we can enrich our messages and our way of spreading the brand and services.

WHAT’S ONE ELEMENT OF YOUR BRAND IDENTITY?

We are at the forefront of the digital payments revolution. In fact, we leverage technology to make financial services and commerce more convenient, beneficial, and secure for millions of consumers and businesses in over 200 markets. Today, consumers are increasingly demanding in terms of the commitment and goals of the companies they interact with. Financial institutions must make a

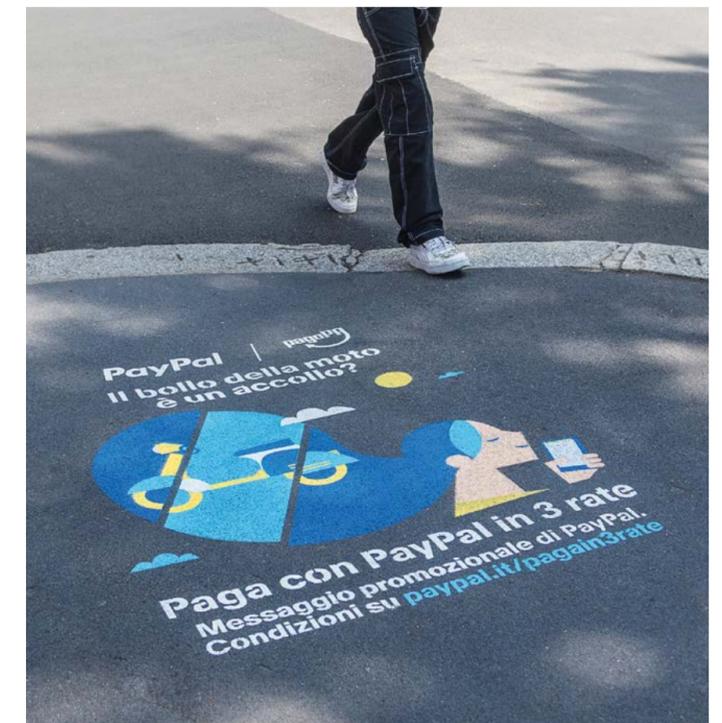
greater effort to ensure they meet the expectations and needs of their customers. We continue to invest in transforming the future of payments, innovating to offer products and solutions, fostering business owner growth, and providing choice to consumers. We offer the flexibility to pay however and whenever one wants, both online and offline.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD?

Innovation. It can mean many different things. Artificial intelligence, data-driven marketing, new channels, and innovative ways of engaging with customers. Offering a seamless experience and letting the product’s excellence speak for the brand should be at the forefront. But I think quickly adapting to change should be the mantra of any marketer, without fear of experimentation.

“We should strive to have a global and cross-functional vision to engage with an intergenerational audience”

PayPal was originally conceived as a digital payment system to facilitate online money transfers and e-commerce activities. However, over time, it has evolved and now offers a wide range of services enabling both online and in-person transactions, even in physical stores. Founded in 1999, just before the turn of the century, this American company is dedicated to providing digital payment and money transfer services via the Internet. By leveraging technology to make financial services and commerce more convenient, advantageous, and secure, the platform allows over 432 million consumers and business owners in more than 200 markets to participate in the global economy and grow. Currently, it serves 120 million businesses and consumers across Europe, including 10 million in Italy.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The three lessons for the next generations working in marketing? The first one is **consistency**. Even when communicating with different generations, it's important that the messages and core values remain the same. We must build lasting relationships with our customers to reinforce the message at every step. Then there's **flexibility**: as times and goals change, we must be able to adapt in how we reach our customers. We work in a fast-paced environment where change is constant: if you don't adapt, you won't keep up with the market and competition. Finally, there's the **centrality of the customer**: listening to and considering their perspective is essential to remaining relevant. After all, the marketing of tomorrow—being where needed—lies in being cross-generational.»





Samsung, the global tech giant that has made the impossible possible by starting from people's lives.

«We embrace all profiles, improving everyday life»



SAMUELA CESATI
Marketing Strategy and
Project Management Lead
Samsung Electronics Italia



FRANCESCO CORDANI
Head of Marcom
Samsung Electronics Italia

There's an acronym that becomes a distinctive element in this story. More than that, it's an identifying code that opens the doors to a relationship with a demographically diverse and emotionally engaged customer base in the quest for quality and technology. This acronym is DWYC. It might not mean much to you, be hard to pronounce and even harder to put into practice, yet it encapsulates the essence of the work of a global tech giant: DWYC stands for Do What You Can't. So aim for the impossible, which becomes possible with perseverance and passion. This can be interpreted in a thousand ways and at Samsung means that "everyone, thanks to Samsung products, is able to achieve increasingly important goals. For us, the consumer remains at the centre of everything we do. Our purpose has remained unchanged because it starts from a strong assumption: if we don't keep the consumer at the centre, we risk developing products irrelevant to the general public," say Francesco Cordani and Samuela Cesati, respectively Director of Communication and Marketing and Head of Corporate Strategy at Samsung. Making the impossible possible, as we said before. Easy to say, harder to do. Yet the ostrich that chooses not

to bury its head in the sand but to try to do something incredible like flying is able to teach us this, and it's the ostrich that the Korean giant chose to take centre stage in a campaign that went viral worldwide. Set in the vast savannahs of Africa, the advert shows us how the bird, with a VR headset on its beak, is able to soar up into the sky, and these emotional images are accompanied by Elton John's Rocket Man as the viewer is told how virtual reality can transform the user experience. Digital technologies can indeed work miracles, but then it's up to each of us to better understand their potential. "Our DNA is strongly represented by innovation, which is never an end in itself. Relevant innovation adds value to people," clarify Cordani and Cesati. But there's more. For a brand that leverages technology becoming usable, accessible, even familiar to the needs of various connected audiences, it's significant to work on creating mechanisms of loyalty—and therefore direct relationships—with audiences. "CRM remains a fundamental asset for Samsung for telling an already loyal user about product news, upgrade opportunities, and introducing them to the benefits offered by our solutions. 'Samsung lovers' represent our audience of choice when it

comes to who we dedicate our attention to. Thanks to the Samsung Members program, we can engage our audiences continuously by adding value. In this case, the goal is to build a relationship with our consumer directly. So, listen to them and act accordingly. This means seriously putting them at the centre of our strategies," say Cordani and Cesati. Easy to say, harder to do because the context has become much more challenging. "The most complex thing today in marketing is related to flexibility and the ability to change direction quickly. Short-term results don't always allow you to build strategies that are by definition medium to long-term. And keeping the bar straight is not always easy. Not much has become simpler unfortunately. There's no doubt that it's easier and faster to have data to analyse. But this also entails the need to always draw useful insights for an action plan. Otherwise, there are just data sitting within the company, with no benefits for the company itself," Cordani and Cesati explain.

“ For us,
the consumer is
at the centre.
If it weren't so,
we would risk
developing irrelevant
products ”

HOW MULTIGENERATIONAL DO YOU FEEL?

We can say right away that for us, being multigenerational is essential (having always been so by definition), while in the past we were Young-Minded Consumers. Our products increasingly embrace diverse target audiences that may differ from each other in backgrounds, experiences, and culture.

WHAT UNITES THEM?

It has to be the benefit that these different targets want to derive from our products. Think about our SmartThings app, which can connect all our devices together. By definition, it applies to different targets, from millennials to Generation Z, and even the Silver Generation, namely those users with silver hair.

WHAT IS THE DISTINCTIVE ELEMENT OF YOUR POSITIONING STRATEGIES RELATED TO MARKETING?

The emphasis placed on incorporating elements of innovation and the centrality of the product as the axis of the narrative. But our strategies always start with putting the consumer at the centre of the story. We don't want to replace them, but we want to support them with increasingly innovative products. Therefore, any strategy must bring, as added value, the story of the unique experience that the target has with our products.

WHAT HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED OVER TIME AND WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Two things have not changed: the centrality of the product and the cross-generational nature of the target. And the two go hand in hand. We have many products that aim to target different audiences. This forces us not only to consider the age of our consumer but also their experiences and needs. Things that can certainly be common to multiple cross-generational targets. Alongside the target, we have the continued centrality of the product, or rather the experience that a target has with a particular product.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COVERED NARRATIVE FORMATS?

Due to our audience's structural heterogeneity, the need is to engage with as many channels as possible, carefully and attentively adapting each content piece to the most appropriate form for each of them. The focus on actively engaging a young target—we call them MZ and they involve the 18-29 age group—and the specificity of some of our products also lead us in the direction of new platforms such as TikTok and Twitch.

HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME GENERATIONAL BOUNDARIES?

We have strongly focused on the use of passion points. This involves providing select content within the same container, but for different targets. Think of the Olympics with 100m sprints and climbing and skateboarding for Generation Z.

HOW ARE MARKETING SKILLS CHANGING?

Less generalists and more specialists, but in a context of evolution even for specialists in the field. For example, communication over time has evolved from long formats to increasingly snackable and vertical content.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD?

Evolution knows no bounds, except in results.

“ What unites the
generations is the benefit
that these different
targets want to derive
from our products. ”

Samsung is a South Korean multinational company founded in March 1938 by Lee Byung-chul in Taegu. Today, it has subsidiaries in 58 countries and multiple affiliated companies. Its entry into the electronics industry occurred in the late 1960s. Since 2017, the brand's value has been ranked as the sixth highest in the world. In Korean Hanja, the word Samsung means “three stars” with the three representing something large, numerous, and powerful. In Italy, the company celebrated its thirtieth anniversary two years ago. Today, it has 456 employees and a turnover of 2.7 billion. Samsung Electronics Italia also includes the Samsung District, a 12,500-square-metre space that is one of seven global design centres.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The 3 lessons learned in the field for the new generations at work have to start from one key concept: **no comfort zone**. Flexibility and sensitivity to change are needed. We must learn to go beyond preconceptions, almost sniffing out what is to come. I'm thinking of the evolutions in retail stores, which allow us to build unique experiences while safeguarding the value of what we do. In this case, listening is pervasive. Then we must learn to go **beyond the data** because it can't tell us the whole story. Business intelligence generates the necessary insights. Data shouldn't just be measured, it needs to also be understood and, depending on how it is analysed, it can tell a story. Finally, there's the **experience**, which is increasingly becoming the new mantra. Being in a space and living that experience. Only then do we move from the product to the relationship».





Xbox, the gaming giant that connects people worldwide.

«We pursue inclusivity and accessibility to generate a positive impact»



CÉDRIC MIMOUNI
Gaming Category Lead
Southwest Europe Microsoft

«Xbox was conceived not just as a console. It is, in the broadest sense, a personal computer, albeit designed to prioritise the needs of gamers. But we would never have created Xbox solely as a gaming console.» These words, chosen by the visionary American entrepreneur Bill Gates in 2007, have gone down in history, revolutionising the world of technology and, by extension, habits, consumption patterns, and awareness. Behind this definition lies the archetype of the Best Brand: representing something much more comprehensive for a consumer who has become a user and, over time, increasingly connected, distracted, demanding, engaged, and knowledgeable in the field of technology. Behind the idea of going beyond lies the desire to offer a service that has added value and the ability to generate trends. The launch took place first in North America, then in Japan, Europe, and Australia. Announced in 2000, Xbox was technically more powerful than its competitors, with an Intel Pentium III processor at 733 MHz, a unit that could be found in a typical PC. At the time, this technological wonder was fascinating due to its size and weight, similar to that of a PC. After all, it was the first console to

have a built-in hard drive. "Microsoft's mission is to enable every user and organisation globally to achieve more. So, if I were to summarise Microsoft's DNA in one word, it would be empowerment. The stories of users who have benefited from technology are a testament to our commitment, which is also reflected through a series of activities and projects in which we are involved firsthand in areas such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainability," says Cédric Mimouni, Gaming Category Lead for the Southwest Europe region at Xbox. Technology, certainly. Plenty of it, distributed over time, space, and among different generations. However, at the centre are people with their dreams often tucked away in a drawer, eager to burst out into the open, living the best experiences. Thus, in storytelling, there is a consistent thread that remains unchanged, albeit evolving over time. "Microsoft's storytelling stands out for its rich blend of innovation, empathy, and global impact. Our stories demonstrate how their innovative and ethical technology enables diverse and inclusive human experiences that have a positive impact on the world around us. Our storytelling has evolved over time, adapting to the changing

landscapes of communication: while maintaining some fundamental principles—because it remains anchored in human experiences—it evolves to meet the needs of the digital age,” Mimouni explains. More than once, this top manager responsible for defining the marketing strategies for the Redmond giant’s flagship console has declared “Play what you want, with whom you want and where you want”. From these words emerges clearly the insight to focus on an integrated ecosystem driven by the passion of the people who experience it in their daily lives, rather than just the gaming machine in the narrow sense.

“Our storytelling demonstrates how innovative and ethical technology allows for diverse and inclusive human experiences that have a positive impact on the world”

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE BIG PICTURE VISION...

Our vision is integrated: we want the player to decide how to approach the game, to decide how, when, and with whom to play, but also on which device. It's our mantra and confirms the intention to fuel something that goes beyond this or that hardware. An ecosystem—that's what it is.

HOW DO YOU PURSUE THIS MULTIGENERATIONAL FOCUS IN YOUR MARKETING CAMPAIGNS?

When everyone plays, we all win: this is Microsoft's philosophy and aims to reach every player on the planet and create shared experiences across generations, geographic areas, and different skills. Some examples of how this philosophy is expressed can be found in the Adaptive Controller, the work of Xbox Generations, and collaboration with the national teams of England and France.

HOW TO OVERCOME GENERATIONAL BOUNDARIES?

At the centre of our relationship with our customers are the principles of inclusivity and accessibility: we are constantly committed to ensuring that gaming is accessible to everyone. Huge product innovations, such as the Adaptive Controller, and ongoing feature innovations, such as sign language integration and audio descriptions, demonstrate this commitment.

FROM PLAYER TO COMMUNITY...

The community is very important to us, and our commitment to listening to it is constant. We actively engage through social media, forums, events, streaming platforms, and content creators, with whom we now regularly collaborate to foster conversation, acquire new Xbox fans, and spread happiness. We celebrated significant milestones like the 20th anniversary in 2021. These moments allow us to reflect on the journey, growth, and impact of the brand.

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

The real paradigm shift is putting the user at the centre of everything we do. When the player is the focal point of a strategic vision, the platform matters less: the console does not represent the only gateway to what we consider to be the world and the gaming industry.

AFTER ALL, WHAT IS GAMING FOR MICROSOFT?

Fundamentally, what is a way to connect people through great experiences, allowing them to play as they want, on the devices they prefer, with the people they desire.

THE MARKETING OF TOMORROW IN ONE WORD?

Inclusive.

“Video games allow people to connect. At the core of our relationship with customers are the principles of inclusivity and accessibility: we are committed to ensuring that gaming is accessible to all.”

It all started with a brilliant intuition from a group of programmers. The first Xbox project was conceived by Kevin Bachus, Ted Hase, Otto Berkes, and Seamus Blackley. Together, they decided to disassemble some laptops, then reassemble the parts to build the very first prototype of a gaming console, namely the Xbox. The idea was to enter the market in a competitive and disruptive way with a console equipped with architecture similar to that of a PC, high flexibility, and computing power superior to what could be found in a PlayStation 2. Then, in January 2001, Bill Gates decided to give a gift to all video game fans. After those years of preparation, Microsoft launched its first console in history, the Xbox. At that time, the console market was completely dominated by major Japanese hardware manufacturers. The Xbox had the benefit of being the first console to integrate a hard disk, which not only completely eliminated the need for memory cards for saving games but also provided access to a whole range of services that were previously impossible to obtain.



3 Keywords for Upcoming Marketing Professionals

«The first keyword is **technology** and I suggest embracing it. The marketing landscape is rapidly evolving, driven by innovations. To grow and establish themselves in the markets consistently and effectively, marketing professionals will need to keep pace with emerging trends such as augmented reality and the metaverse. The second is **customer**, who is central in every decision to be made and in every strategy to be pursued: consistently using a customer-centric approach is the recipe for successfully addressing the challenges of this time. The third is twofold: it's **agility and lifelong learning**. After all, marketing skills become obsolete quickly. That's why future professionals will need to learn to be agile, adapting to new contexts. One must remain curious and explore new interfaces, tools, and platforms.



The Best Support

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