



CONTAGIOUS

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Editorial / Last year *Contagious* identified an emerging trend that we labelled 'Projects Not Campaigns'. We declared that hermetically sealed ad campaigns were in terminal decline. The new advertising model is not 360, it's 365. This means thinking editorially, reacting in real time, engaging in reciprocal conversations and distributing generous amounts of both mass and niche content. Thinking of a brand's marketing activity as a project rather than an 'execution' means shifting a mindset that's been around since the 1960s. But the rewards are obvious. Marketing becomes something that sells opportunities, not merely a blatant opportunity to sell. This is fundamental stuff and it's interesting to observe the trend being recognised by marketers as big as GE. In our case study on the \$150bn brand's Healthymagination platform (p. 66) the global director of marketing communications Linda Boff states: 'You need to be out there with a commitment, not just a campaign... to be meaningfully engaged with an audience. You can't hang out a sign and take it away.' This is echoed on page 22 by Frank Rose, author of *The Art of Immersion*. He quotes PR specialist Billee Howard, who believes: 'You can't rely on ads. A brand becomes relevant by infusing itself directly into the culture.' Evidence of the 'Projects Not Campaigns' movement can be found on this issue's

DVD. My favourite is Foot Locker's Sneakerpedia initiative, stewarded by SapienNitro. This is a forensically-detailed wiki for and by sneaker obsessives, where the brand leans out of the frame yet is all the more visible by doing so. In a similar vein, The Brewer's Nose app by Droga5 for Tasmania's Cascade Brewery features tasting notes on 500 beers and rewards users for logging their own experiences. Look out also for Coca-Cola's Expedition 206 – a year-long project that saw three 'happiness ambassadors' visit the 206 countries that Coke is sold in, with a mission to document interpretations of happiness.

Elsewhere, we look at a new breed of 'oxpecker' companies whose business models rely entirely on meeting the consumer at famous web locations (p.38). Firing a warning shot across the social media goldrush, however, is *Contagious*' US editor Nick Parish. On page 24 he argues that brands neglecting their own spaces in favour of Facebook are a weak signal that things have gone too far. Reactions from marketers mirror consumer reaction, he says. Each is realising that Facebook's monetisation of information they formerly controlled is the social network's ultimate goal. Brands need to understand the maxim 'if you aren't paying for the product, you are the product' / Paul Kemp-Robertson / Editorial Director /

MOBILE

Cascade / The Brewer's Nose

The ultimate app for beer aficionados



Tasmanian-based **Cascade Brewery** has launched an iPhone app featuring tasting notes on over 500 beers. **The Brewer's Nose** has been created for the **CUB**-owned brewer by **Droga5** in Sydney and includes tasting notes, 30+ video documentaries on different beer styles, and My Beer Log a monitor of sampled drinks. Users are also rewarded for expanding their beer horizons. More social drinkers can use the Drinking Mates feature to locate their friends, with info pulled in from GPS and Facebook Connect. In its first week, Brewer's Nose made **Apple's** Top 25 of free lifestyle apps and, despite being downloaded 5,399 times in three months, has consistently held onto its four star rating.

www.cascadebreweryco.com.au

The Kraken / Simulation App for Nautical Manoeuvring

Dark rum brand **The Kraken** is challenging drinkers to brave the dangers of the high seas with a free-to-download mobile app game where users must deliver a shipment of the precious spirit. Taking a thoroughly tongue-in-cheek approach, using 'state of the art 19th century technology' and featuring 'actual distress cries of fallen seamen' users must avoid the mythical sea creature, using the phone's accelerometer to guide their vessel across the sea. Illustrated in 19th century hand drawn line style, three different death scenarios await unfortunate players, with a virtual glass of dark rum for those wily enough to make it through. The app was developed by **Dead As We Know It**, New York. www.krakenrum.com

Angry Birds / Super Bowl Secret Level

A 30-second **Super Bowl** spot for the **Fox** animated film *Rio* featured an embedded code directing **Angry Birds** players to a special level in the mobile game. The spot was produced in-house by Fox and was subsequently released on YouTube, where it's since attracted 1.2 million views. Angry Birds obsessives who complete the secret level will be entered into a draw where they can win a trip to the film premiere in Rio. <http://bit.ly/Rovio>

Black Eyed Peas / Will.i.apps

Dropping users into the heart of a banging party, Will.i.am's innovative iPhone app for Black Eyed Peas' single *The Time* lets mobile users move their phone 360 degrees to explore the action. One of the niftiest music apps we've seen here at *Contagious*, users can also pose with the band in a 3D photo-shoot direct from their phone. There's also a smart piece of Augmented Reality: point your phone at the cover of BEP's new album, *The Beginning*, and a band member pops up in 3D with a speech bubble containing their latest tweet. Will.i.apps costs \$2.99 from iTunes and was set up with **Edo Segal** of New York-based **Futurity Ventures**. www.willapps.com

O₂, QB, Amobee / Free Wi-Fi

Branded hotspots offer a way to connect



With the increasing adoption of mobile browsing, free Wi-Fi has become a service provided by a number of brands recently. Mobile operator **O₂** will expand its Wi-Fi services across the UK in the next two years to incorporate an additional 13,000 hotspots. The brand already provides free Wi-Fi for premium subscribers as a bolt-on service but, by 2013, it will offer free access to all users who opt in, regardless of what network provider they normally use. In return, users must provide O₂ with their phone number, enabling the network to access the phone's MAC code, allowing instant access at all future Wi-Fi spots and track their location. By opting in, users also accept that they will receive ad messages delivered by SMS or MMS. Meanwhile, Cambodian mobile carrier **QB**, through **OgilvyAction** Cambodia in Phnom Penh, launched Wi-Fi enabled tuk-tuks to reinforce its positioning as being at the forefront of high-speed mobile internet provision. Fifteen modified tuk-tuks roamed the capital, attended events and provided mobile internet access, as well as doubling up as mobile retail outlets for the brand. Finally, an innovation that could be beneficial for brands which grace billboards comes from **Amobee Media Systems**, which has united traditional outdoor media with Wi-Fi capability. The company has installed Wi-Fi and Bluetooth transmitters in hundreds of out-of-home ad sites around the world; consumers can switch on Wi-Fi or Bluetooth to interact with the site, typically to download an app or other content, without incurring data charges and with the added benefit of a faster network for larger file sizes. www.o2.co.uk www.qbmore.com www.amobee.com

ONLINE /

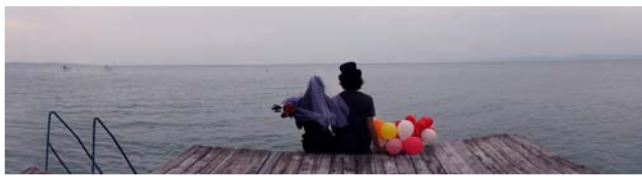
Bouygues Telecom / Flashback Book

Who said print was dead? **Bouygues Telecom** tasked **DDB Paris** to come up with an idea to launch its Facebook platform. The agency created an app that collated Facebook profiles for printing in an actual book. Facebook ads encouraged people to participate in the creation of their books and receive a printed copy of their statuses and photos. Up to 10 friends could be selected to add into the book. After only two days, DDB Paris received 15,000 fans and the limited edition run of 1,000 books was gone in just one hour.

www.facebook.com/bouyguetelecom

Sony / Panoramic Story

Show-stopping product demonstration



Reinforcing Sony's **Make.Believe** proposition, **Panoramic Story**, through Paris-based **RAPP**, aims to show the creative potential of the compact digital Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX5V camera. Recalling **Sagami** condoms' award-winning effort **Love Distance** (see Most Contagious 2009), Panoramic Story tells the tale of two photographers, Lucie and Simon, who are en route to their reunion. The pair crossed seven countries and snapped a total of 6,381 panoramic shots, of which 70 have been selected for a gallery website. www.panoramic-story.fr

The French Ministry of Health / Attraction

In a second campaign by DDB Paris, the agency worked alongside **The French Ministry of Health** to raise awareness about tobacco companies manipulating young people. As Japanese animation is popular in France, the agency created **Attraction**, an interactive anime that speaks to the target audience in a familiar voice. To meet the expectations of teens who grew up with anime, the agency worked with **Koki Morimoto**, director of *The Animatrix* and animation director on anime classic, *Akira*. Over 400,000 unique visitors spent an average of ten minutes on the experience. www.attraction-lemanga.fr

Intel / The Chase

Intel gave a sneak peek into the high performance of its new Intel **Core i5** processor with **The Chase**, a two-minute, white-knuckle ride film directed by **Smith & Foulkes** through **Nexus** in London. The heart-stopping action follows a heroine being chased by thugs across multiple screens: Facebook, Google Earth, YouTube Google Street View and **Grand Theft Auto**, to name but a few. **Venables Bell & Partners** in San Francisco was responsible for the clever product demonstration, which launched online and ran in the Intel booth throughout the **Consumer Electronics Show** in Las Vegas. www.thechasefilm.com

Nike / Run FWD

Nike+ shines in most social running campaign to date



For **Nike**, **Wieden+Kennedy**, Tokyo created **Run FWD**, a global campaign inspired by the ancient **Japanese** sport of *Ekiden*. This is a popular winter relay race whereby teams run long distances before handing over a ceremonial sash or *tasuki* to subsequent runners. Once registered online, users could either start a new team or be invited onto a team by other players. The previous runner in the chain appoints the next and so on. Runners can be anywhere in the world so long as the *tasuki* can be passed between friends and strangers. Each time a team member is nominated, they receive a personalised video with the details of each member that has run before them. To up the pressure, runners had just 72 hours to complete their section of the race and could track their team's performance on **Google Maps**. In just one month, 1,300 teams with more than 3,900 runners had joined from 140 cities.

<http://nikerunfwd.jp>

Nike / The Black Mamba

Bryant? Or Black Mamba?



Kobe Bryant, **Kanye West**, **Bruce Willis** and **Danny Trejo** starred in a film called **The Black Mamba** which aimed to bring to life Bryant's alter ego as a 'deadly force' and reinforce his reputation as a 'protector' of basketball. Trailers could be viewed and downloaded prior to the film's online debut. The production followed a Twitter-based campaign developed by **R/GA** in New York which responded whenever Tweets about Kobe went into overdrive. The site transformed into a Black Mamba experience for six hours during which time users could access exclusive Kobe content and win limited edition sneakers. A great example of a transmedia strategy in play. www.nikebasketball.com

Into the Jaws of the Leviathan / Is a giant lurking below your brand's fishing hole? Yes, says *Contagious* North American editor Nick Parish, who argues that brands steering everything social through Facebook will do themselves more harm than good /

In mid-February, IBM's latest game-playing supercomputer, Watson, faced two human champions in their collective specialty: *Jeopardy*. Like its predecessor, Deep Blue, which bested chessmaster Garry Kasparov in the late '90s, the matchup drew distinctions between cold, technical intellect and human creativity. Kasparov exploited inefficiencies in Deep Blue to create opportunities, but was overwhelmed as the machine's human handlers updated it. *Jeopardy* champion Ken Jennings met a similar fate; despite one or two glaring flubs, the machine crushed Jennings and another former *Jeopardy* champ over a three-day series. Facebook amassing unprecedented volumes of data and knowledge leaves brands in a similar eroding position.

As the platform matures, major questions arise. How big will Facebook get? What data should brands be feeding it about their customers? How is it helping brands? At what point does it stop helping? Reactions from marketers and publishers partly mirror consumer reaction; each realising that Facebook's monetisation of information they formerly controlled is the social network's ultimate goal. People and companies are beginning to understand the maxim 'if you aren't paying for the product, you are the product.' Like Silicon Valley, which has begun to view Facebook as a 'frenemy', marketers are stumbling into potential conflicts and acting with appropriate caution. Having pushed to secure a place on the platform, brands find themselves with followers to keep and apps to maintain, but a cloudy endgame.

Shakedown street

Facebook's inflated \$50bn valuation is derived partially from its potential to do all the things we initially hoped the internet would do to make money, but in one place: virtual currency control and commerce, advertising and entertainment, contact and communication. Advertising-wise, that's the promise of both serving ads to users and having an intimate portrait of them to make those ads better.

But let's focus on consumer information, forever dear to brands. Active marketers expend major amounts of effort and resources to tease out patterns of intent, action and interaction from people. Given Facebook's massive corpus of data, and top resources available to understand it, the company is on track to develop a flabbergasting portrait of transactional human behaviour. Should brands, major contributors to this pool, be somehow credited or cut in to the deal? It's time for powerful players to ask 'What do we get?', both of themselves and their corporate partners.

In chasing frivolous tokens of esteem, namely Likes, brands have traded away data sovereignty and are leaking an extraordinary amount of information. One high priest of content for a major cable TV network told me his company shuns the Like button on its stories. 'Why would we want Facebook knowing more about our audience than we do?' he asks. The quandary comes when the network's stories get six times more action on the social network than they do at the home site. Users are happy with the Facebook experience, so brands need

to have a presence there, but with the goal of taking the best mechanics and interface elements and appropriating them for brand-owned platforms. When we talk about brands becoming like publishers, it's not just in the content. Methods of interacting with customers and understanding how audiences move around what you're publishing matter as much as interesting text and vivid photos. Brands effectively neglecting their own spaces for Facebook are a weak signal things have gone too far – it's what hindsight will point to as a strange choice. Why didn't all companies build their own Facebooks to interact with each other when they had a chance?

Reclamation projects

Contagious' advice? There are still ways to recapture enthusiasm. Never be satisfied with the consumer pathway ending at Facebook; always try to move the interaction along, developing creative content to prod users to where you want them. There are no blockbuster examples, but American fast food brand Jack in the Box was on the right track with its contest to 'Be a Rich Fan'. It added a nickel to a virtual jar whenever someone clicked Like on its page. The brand took basic demographic info (name, zip code, email, phone and birthday) in exchange for eligibility to win the cash. This wasn't enough. Everything needs to push for more data. Drive registration. Introduce advanced design and engagement to CRM (see *New Dogs, Old Tricks* from *Contagious* 25 for essential reading on social CRM). Take responsibility, and

learn by trying different interfaces and content, seeing what works. Paying for Facebook exposure is problematic too. Reports from Webtrends and comScore attest to the bad performance of Facebook ads, the former detailing how the average click-through rate was half the industry standard. Users clearly aren't there to click ads, as they would be marginally more likely to after a search. So despite inexpensive inventory, it's doubly foolish to advertise to drive traffic to a Like. Meanwhile, it's nearly impossible to take seriously the values some have tried to place on a robust presence. A product called the 'Social Page Evaluator' created by Vitruve put the average annual earned media value of a fan of McDonald's at \$259.82, based on Likes. But one look at the Wall comments these valuable fans are contributing and you see a puerile serving of complaints, spam and nonsense.

What is the solution? It's certainly not universal. Way back at 50 million users, Mark Zuckerberg said, 'We're going to help your brands become part of the daily conversations that are happening...through these connections. Nothing interests a person more than recommendation from a trusted friend.' While attempts at the former produced below average results, the latter is as true as ever. Brands should work toward making things worthy of earning attention and creating referrals. People energised by content should be pointed to friendly communities. The end result should never only be a Like. Capture the compulsion Facebook has bred. Reappropriate mechanics ideas from Zynga if you must. Apply the things you've learned about your fans and networks to all sides of your brand, and pull CRM juice from happy visitors. Creative, ground-breaking ideas will always push themselves through the social web, but in terms of everyday maintenance, make sure you understand what data goes to you and what's turning blue. ■■■



Illustration: David Procter /
www.david-procter.co.uk

Wildfire / Design



3 /

1 / Yota / Yota Space, St Petersburg
 Yota Space was a high profile interactive art festival to position Russian telecoms brand Yota at the cutting edge of contemporary creativity. Participants read like a who's who of interactive artists: Brian Eno rubbed shoulders with onedotzero, United Visual Artists, Musion and Chris Levine, while Russia was represented by Videofabrika and AV:in. <http://space.yota.ru/en>

2 / Portable Buildings / Jägnefält Milton, Stockholm
 Swedish architecture firm Jägnefält Milton used rail tracks as the base for new, portable buildings in a design competition for the Norwegian city of Åndalsnes. The structure could be rolled back and forth in accordance with changing seasons and situations. www.jagnefaltmilton.com

3 / Marina Bay Sands / Singapore Artscience Museum
 Next to vice, virtue: Singapore's Marina Bay Sands Casino and Resort has opened the eco-friendly Artscience Museum, a 21 gallery, 4,800 square metre space designed by architect Moshie Safadie. The building's lotus leaf-inspired, upturned curves collect light and rainwater, the latter to feed the gallery's fountain and restroom facilities. <http://bit.ly/ArtScience>

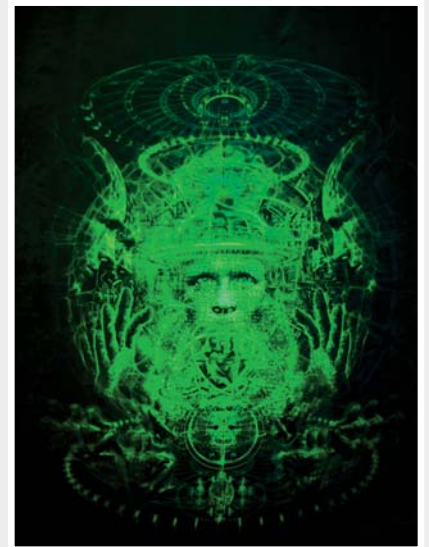
4 / True Grit / Mean Business
 UK artist and graphic novelist Chris Wildgoose designed a stunning comic to supplement the Coen Brothers' latest masterpiece *True Grit*. It is viewable online via Graphic.ly and will be available on Kindle and Apple's iBooks. <http://bit.ly/TrueGritDime>



2 /



5 /



1 /



4 /



1 /



6 /

5 / San José International Airport / eCloud
 eCloud is a dynamic data sculpture that physically depicts weather conditions around the world through a cloud-like mass of polycarbonate. It was created by a crack team consisting of Google Creative Labs' Aaron Koblin, NASA's visual strategist Dan Goods and UeBERSEE designer Nik Hafermaas. www.ecloudproject.com

6 / The Ice Book
 The Ice Book is a miniature theatre filled with tiny houses and even tinier people created using paper cutting, film, animation and projection to tell the story of a princess in love. The production was created by British husband and wife team Davy and Kristen McGuire. The pair are currently touring the UK presenting their avant-garde theatre in intimate settings, with a limit of 12 audience members per show. www.theicebook.com

7 / Volkswagen / Formula XL1
 German auto giant VW stunned crowds at the Qatar Motor Show in January by whipping the covers off the world's most fuel-efficient hybrid car – the Formula XL1. The sleek new concept coupe uses a small diesel engine and electric motor to consume just 0.9 litres of fuel per 100km – enabling it to achieve the equivalent of 260mpg. <http://bit.ly/i2TvoP>



7 /

Wildfire / Virtue /

GREENPEACE / A NEW WARRIOR

Greenpeace is retiring the infamous Rainbow Warrior ship but building work for a suitable replacement is well underway in a German shipyard. An immersive site lets you view the process live through a webcam, explore 3D renderings and individual decks of the new vessel. The funding approach is novel – rather than just asking for money it is encouraging visitors to buy specific equipment, such as wetsuits or scuba equipment. The missing items are scattered around the 3D model, showing what has been brought and what is still needed. All the names of the contributors are visualised in a beautiful 3D rendering, that will form the shape of the ship as more equipment is bought. These kind folk will receive a certificate and have their names on a dedication wall in the finished vessel.

<http://anewwarrior.greenpeace.org>

VESTAS / WINDMADE

Droga5, New York, Danish wind turbine manufacturer Vestas and the Global Wind Energy Council have launched WindMade, a trustmark meant to convey the provenance of goods manufactured using wind power. Making its formal debut during the World Economic Forum in Davos in February, partners include the World Wildlife Fund, the Lego Group and the UN Global Compact, with verification and data provided by PricewaterhouseCoopers and Bloomberg, respectively. Bloomberg will help maintain a ranking of companies based on the amount of renewable resources they use to create their products, while Vestas and Droga will create several outdoor installations to illustrate the amount of water that goes into producing various household items, linking wind-based power to a reduction in water wastage.

www.windmade.org

ONE TONNE LIFE /

The plucky Lindells family from Sweden has been chosen to participate in the One Tonne Life project – an experiment to see whether it's possible to live within the limit of one tonne of carbon dioxide emissions per person per year. Their task has been made a little easier thanks to a selection of project partners including house builder A-hus which has provided a solar panel-clad dwelling designed by architect Gert Wingårdh. Engineering giant Siemens is looking after the family's energy-efficient electronic appliances and Swedish energy company Vattenfall is managing their renewable electricity supply. Part of this will be used to charge an all-electric Volvo C30 built specifically for the project. www.onetonnelife.com

CREATABLES /

Gothenburg-based design collective Creatables designs and sells cute, covetable products like magazine racks and coat hooks from the waste other industrial processes leave behind. The brand's network of engineers and designers negotiates with factories to purchase surplus materials and then upcycles these leftovers into desirable consumer products. This waste-not-want-not approach is driven by a desire to make better use of the earth's rapidly depleting natural resources, and encourage a more sustainable approach to manufacturing. www.creatables.se

LG / THINQ

Connecting appliances all over the home, LG's THINQ programme digitally links devices to make chores easier and more eco-friendly. Showcased at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the Korean company's ovens download recipes, for example, syncing temperature settings to the dish, and alert users' phones when a dish is cooked. A robotic vacuum autonomously cleans the house, providing an in-home spy cam to boot.

<http://bit.ly/gViALd>



A NEW WARRIOR /



ONE TONNE LIFE /



CREATABLES /

THE MIX FACTOR



CASE STUDY / SMIRNOFF / NIGHTLIFE EXCHANGE PROJECT / THE MIX FACTOR /
THE BRAND THAT'S ALWAYS READY FOR A PARTY, SMIRNOFF HAS USED FACEBOOK TO ATTRACT A TWO MILLION-STRONG CROWD OF LIKE-MINDED FOLK ACROSS THE GLOBE. IN 2010, IT WENT A STAGE FURTHER. IT ASKED ITS FACEBOOK FANS FOR IDEAS FOR UNFORGETTABLE NIGHTS OUT. THE RESULT WAS THE NIGHTLIFE EXCHANGE PROJECT: 14 EVENTS ALL HOSTED ON 27 NOVEMBER 2010. THIS YEAR, IT HAS BOOSTED ITS DIGITAL SPEND BY 115% TO IMPROVE THAT EXPERIENCE FOR 2011. WHETHER IT'S IN A COCKTAIL SHAKER, A NIGHTCLUB OR ONLINE, SMIRNOFF IS SURE TO BE MIXING IT UP / **BY LUCY AITKEN /**

If you weren't at one of Smirnoff's ravishing Nightlife Exchange Project parties, then where the bloody hell were you?' delicately asked Australian blog Lost At E Minor following Smirnoff's global event on 27 November 2010. Some 18,000 party-goers attended 14 nights dotted across the globe, inspired by 33,000 user-generated suggestions for an unforgettable night out in their country. Those suggestions were subsequently packed up in a crate and exported to a twin city for the night. A taste of the evening's festivities? Freestyle footballers and samba drummers infused Sydney with a Brazilian carnival atmosphere; electro star Peaches teamed up with South African group Gazelle to perform a track specifically co-written for the Berlin event; Miami swapped with London for the night; while Dublin's pub culture took to the streets of Buenos Aires.

This was an ambitious undertaking, demanding military precision and phenomenal behind-the-scenes communication on the part of Smirnoff's agencies. The reward for the vodka brand came in the few days following the event, when a flood of compliments on blogs and social media – and particularly Facebook – would have made even the most experienced party host squeal with joy. Here's a typical selection: 'Best night of my life!!', 'Awesome night... just wanted to party through till next weekend.' And 'Well done Smirnoff!'

Well done Smirnoff indeed. As brand managers are beginning to realise, it's tough to be chatty on social networks and persuade people to engage with your brand without coming across as creepy or try-hard. But Smirnoff and its two million helpers across its Facebook pages embody the participation and the seamless flipping between virtual and real world environments that so many brands seek to engender. Happily for Smirnoff, its target market is only too eager to get involved and be a stakeholder in co-creating colossal nights out.

From Moscow to Mule

Pyotr Smirnov founded his vodka distillery in Moscow in the 1860s. Today, parent brand Diageo claims Smirnoff is the world's leading premium spirit, selling ten bottles every second or 24.5 million nine-litre cases every year, the majority to the US. In the UK, its most recent on-trade market share, according to AC Nielsen, is 63.7%, while off-trade is 36%. Yet off-trade is proportionally a much larger market, making its overall British market share just under 40%. It has successfully extended its brand into flavoured and ready-to-drink variants, including Smirnoff Mule and Smirnoff Ice.

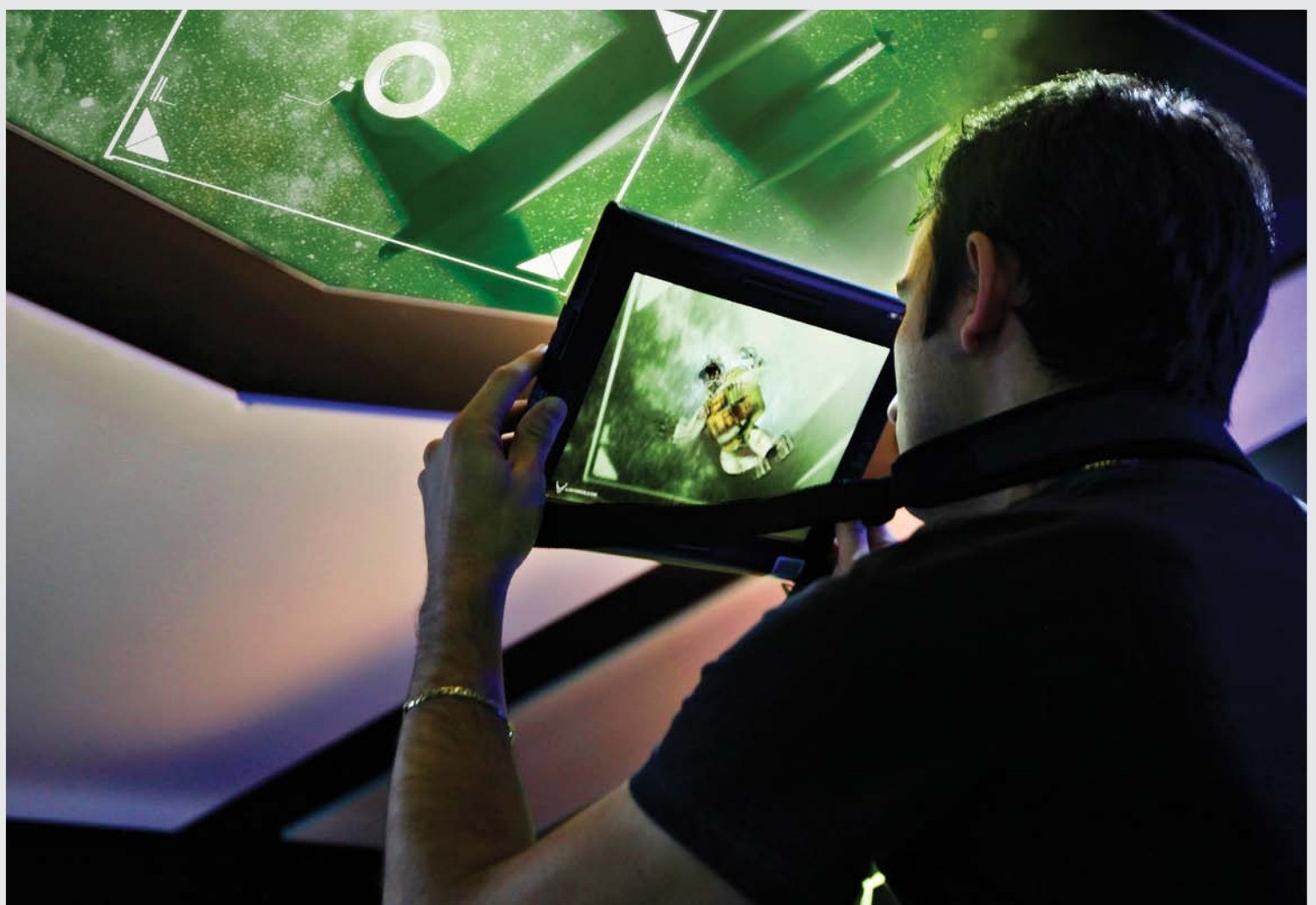
In 2010, the consultancy Intangible Business named Smirnoff the world's leading alcoholic drinks brand in terms of financial contribution and consumer perception. Yet the report warned that the brand faces some stiff competition from both premium and more affordable



Total Immersion / The AR bandwagon is currently heaving, but can you really blame those who have chosen not to jump on but rather to wait and see which brave and rich new territories it rolls into?

Leading the convoy by example is software specialist

Total Immersion / **By Will Sansom** /



Let's start with a stat, shall we? It is estimated that by 2012, between 150 and 200 million people worldwide will be using Augmented Reality (AR) applications on mobile devices, compared to just 600,000 in 2010 (Perey Research & Consulting, Montreux). As potentially mind-boggling as this prediction is, there is no doubt that its validity will polarise opinion in much the same way as AR technology itself has so far – particularly in the world of digital marketing where innovation and cold, hard ROI can at times seem unlikely bedfellow.

Indeed, since it first burst forth from our screens in all its angular 3D glory a few years ago, AR has resulted in some of the most ground-breaking and yet simultaneously fruitless digital marketing campaigns to have crossed *Contagious'* radar. Too many, unfortunately, seem to have had AR elements bolted on for sheer novelty rather than for any tangible consumer benefit. James Hilton is co-founder and chief creative officer of global interactive agency, AKQA – itself responsible for some of the more productive applications of AR in marketing. He remains, however, cautious about how and where it should be used.

'There's always a danger of doing something stupid. Mum always said "just because you can, doesn't mean you should." Although it's fair to point out her wisdom wasn't referring to AR, but to my potential premature career as a 15-year-old father. Luckily, back then, I listened. And so, as unwitting adolescents lurch from one ill-conceived (or un-conceived) idea to the next, so too do marketers. At least those who never listened to their mums do. Because whilst something is new and full of possibilities, it doesn't necessarily follow that you should go anywhere near it. Until, that is, it's a natural thing to do. The point is a great idea will find a relevant home without too much effort. Idea first, application second. Am I concerned there aren't that many great applications for AR yet? Not at all, it's just another answer waiting for the right question.

The increase in smartphone and tablet penetration is one reason to have faith in the growth of AR; UK-based Juniper Research has predicted that the number of AR-capable smartphones in the global market will more than double, from 91 million in 2010 to over 197 million in 2012. Furthermore, according to research performed by Gartner, by 2014 30% of mobile subscribers with data plans in mature markets will use AR at least once a week. The reason for this will be the reduction in friction afforded by such devices, with users no longer tied to a desktop PC but plugged into the web via a series of more targeted, location-based applications. For brands

and marketers, however, the challenge will ultimately remain the same – albeit with bigger audiences and higher stakes: how to use AR to meaningfully affect the user-experience in a way which is useful, relevant or entertaining.

D'Fusion line

There are, of course, examples which have defied even the most cynical amongst us (Topp's AR baseball cards which brought each player to life in your hands being a particular *Contagious* favourite) and of these, a surprising number can be credited to software company Total Immersion – widely acknowledged as a world leader in AR solutions.

Founded in Paris in 1999, Total Immersion was the brainchild of Bruno Uzzan, formerly an auditing consultant at Pierre Henri Scacchi & Associates (Price Waterhouse Group), and defence software engineer Valentin Lefevre. It was Uzzan's business vision combined with Lefevre's applied knowledge of digital imaging which provided an appealing prospect for investors, as Total Immersion secured venture rounds in 2001 and again in 2006. Today, the company employs 70 staff across offices in Paris, Los Angeles, London and Hong Kong. As a privately-owned business, Total Immersion does not publish any financial results; however, what they did reveal to *Contagious* was that revenue had increased by 34% from 2009 to 2010. This rapid growth is also evident in the total number of projects undertaken: in 2008 Total Immersion worked on 100 different campaigns; by 2009 this had tripled to over 300 and at present, the company is involved in approximately 600 projects worldwide.

Bruno Uzzan, who acts as CEO, explains how the perception of AR technology has changed in the marketing industry in the past five years. 'As the founder of Total Immersion, I was one of the first individuals to pitch AR into various industries and the reaction was almost always the same: "Wow this is great but we have no idea how we would use it". As a result, we had to spend many years evangelising the technology in what was essentially a non-mature market. However, in 2006 we realised that of all the areas we were looking into, there was by far the strongest interest amongst digital marketers – it was for these people that the concept of merging 3D products into a real environment seemed most appealing.

'In the beginning we had to not just pitch augmented reality, but also to pitch an experience – how AR could be applied to the specific product or brand. Sometimes it's not enough to just go there and show the technology

