



Introduction



elcome to the McCann Truth Central's annual trend report:
LOOK AHEAD 2014.

In our report, we look at the emerging patterns that are set to shape consumers' heart and minds and consequently, the landscape of brands and advertising in the year ahead.

In this issue, the central theme that runs through our 2014 trends revolves around a newfound drive to find meaning in life as we make our way through the digital madness and intense daily grind. Perhaps this phenomenon is inevitable – a natural backlash to the dehumanizing forces that seem to threaten to take over the world. Whatever the reason, people are seeking for ways to make their lives feel worthwhile, to feel engaged and appreciated in their role as unique individuals in the world.

Moving forward, this impending force will spill over to affect both their digital lives and physical environments. If past desires were characterized by features that were simple 'bigger, faster, stronger, more', expectations of the future will be driven by the question "is this for me?" and "what do I really want?". In a nutshell, the differentiator in branding and communications will center on a profound understanding of the targets' needs that go beyond the functional to touch upon the core essence of their identities.

As always, the momentum will be driven by innovations in the realm of digital and tech. However, its force and direction will be tempered by an overarching need arising in consumers to utilize these developments to better understand themselves and bring fulfillment to their lives.

Regardless of industry or product category, we believe these shifts represent an exciting brand new world that opens up a wealth of opportunities for brands to bring consumer engagement to the next level.

Mega Trends

In this section, the MEGA-TRENDS outline five major shifts bubbling beneath the surface that underpin the changes that lie ahead:

Insightful TECHNOLOGY

Technology that helps us better understand who we are, will drive a revolution in how we live and inspire hopes for a better future.

COLLECTIVE WISDOM

Networked intelligence through digital connectivity has rewired consumers' psyches, raising the bar in terms of their expectations.

Urban Pride

A growing sense of identity tied to their local communities fuels urbanites' desire to improve poor environments and beautify urban grounds.

The trend for transparency is now amplified even further,

Radical Honesty

evolving into bold expressions of truth that deliver immediate 'wow' effect.

Purposeful Movement

CONSUMERS' ACTIONS AND AMBITIONS ARE BEING ANCHORED TO STRONG PERSONAL VALUES THAT BORDER ON THE SPIRITUAL AND SOUL LIFTING.

BIG DATA Wonderland

CONSUMER TRENDS #1

In this era, we are what we do. And everything we do has become data. Where we went for lunch, the website we used for restaurant reviews, who we had lunch with, what we ordered, what we thought about it – every minute detail of our activities can be tracked and documented in digital bits and bytes. Now more than ever, with the monumental surge in the connected-ness of the virtual and physical, coupled with the proliferation of ‘sensor-ed’ people and things – our lives in more and more aspects are becoming digitized and seamlessly intertwined.

As technology advances in leaps and bounds, it’s now possible for that vast amount of data floating in cyberspace to be aggregated, curated and analyzed more rapidly than ever. We finally have the tools to decipher and uncover hidden patterns buried beneath exabytes of data created every single day – debunking myths to reveal gems of truth that help predict future trends and potentially completely reengineer the way we live. They don’t call it ‘Big Data’ for no reason.

By robustly profiling each consumer through their use of digital channels, ‘Big Data’ holds profound potential for brands. It can let us see our consumers as individuals and talk to them as such. It can subconsciously help consumers make decisions. It can shine light on what it is that consumers really want, perhaps even before consumers know it themselves, inspiring meaningful ways for brands to add value to consumers’ lives.

CONSUMER TRENDS

In CONSUMER TRENDS, we’ve identified ten key aspects by which the MEGA-TRENDS will come to life in the year upcoming and



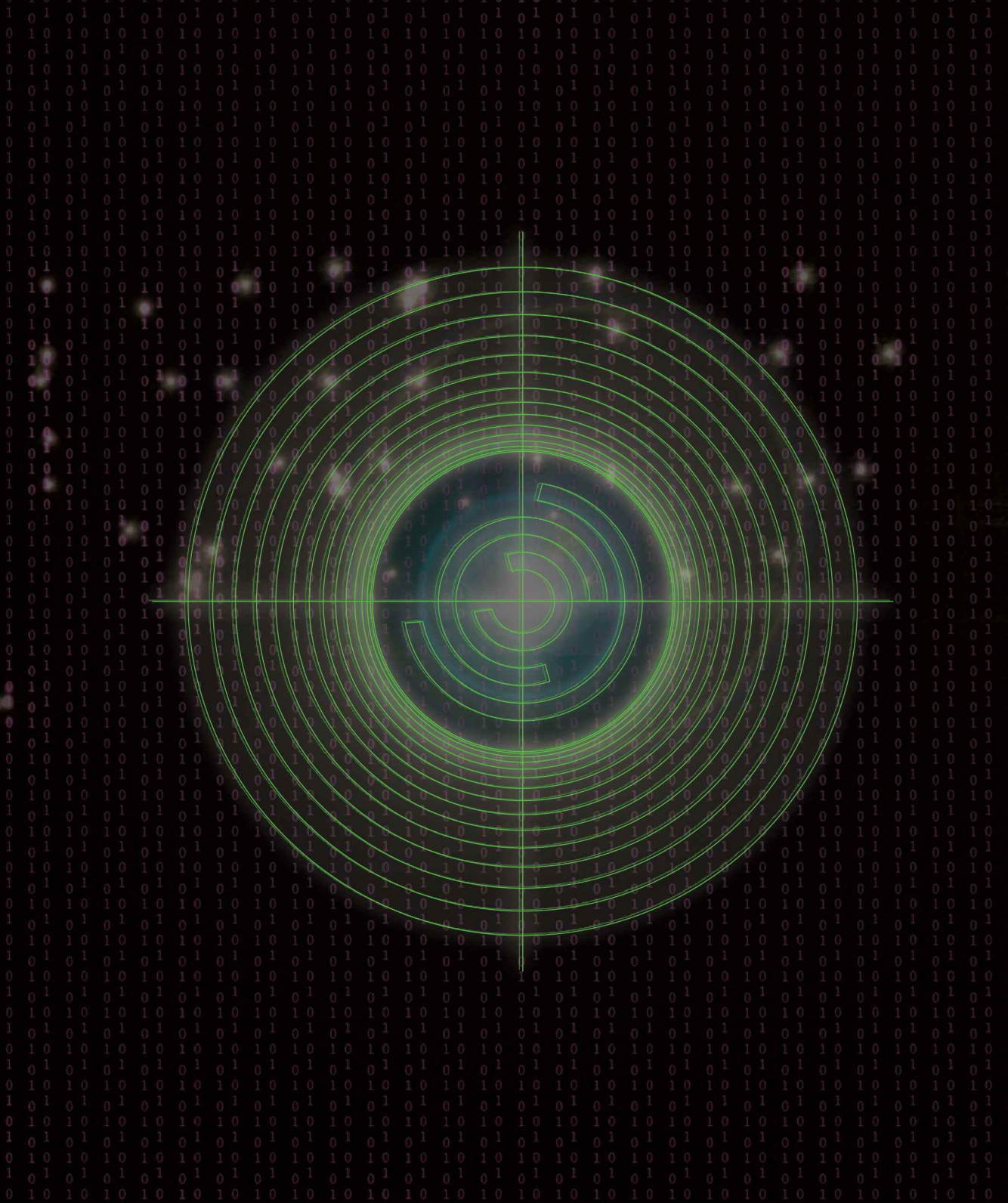
SCREENS on Steroids

CONSUMER TRENDS #2

To match consumer appetite for the 'next big thing', electronic brands are churning out new screen technology as rapidly as ever. It is getting near impossible to track the next wave of smartphone, connected TV's, all-encompassing game consoles and entertainment hubs, wearable technology, 3D, touchscreens, motion sensors, voice control, and more.

Every launch of 'game-changing' innovation arrives with more human-centric and responsive design, as big players vie for the coveted position in commanding a new standard protocol and attempt to revolutionize screen culture. With evolving consumer expectations, screens now have to be smart, connected and completely immersive – enough so to be able to satiate consumer escapist desires and their fear-of-missing-out on hot content and social connections.

Meanwhile, multi-screen culture has taken root deep in modern consciousness as more and more screens seamlessly co-exist and connect to cater to every aspect of life. People will grow to expect the same across all screens as they unify to deliver a total media experience – all screens must be able to satisfy consumers' need for access, multitasking, and connectivity in integrated simplicity. Serving as open pathways into consumer lives at all times, branded content is more vital than ever as the vehicle for brands to engage and interact with consumers every step in the consumer journey.



NO PRICE TAG

CONSUMER TRENDS #3

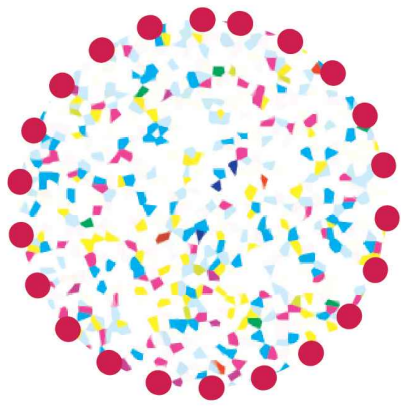
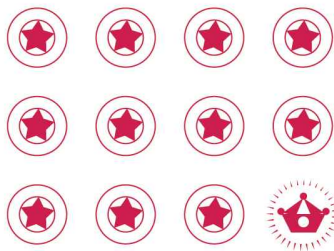
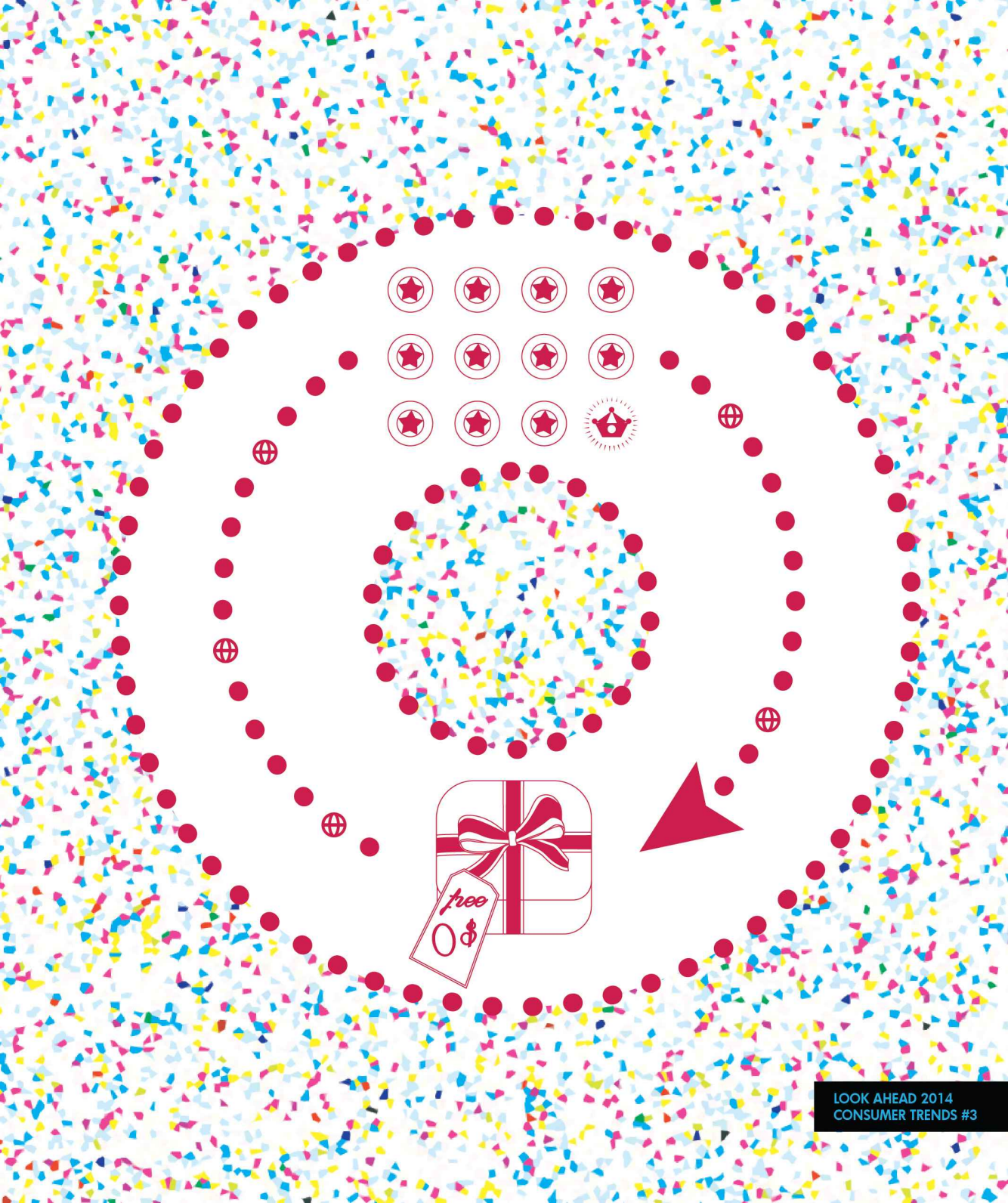
Over the years, the face of money has transformed drastically. We are seeing money in its traditional form - cash – being replaced by alternative forms and numbers on screens. But that's only the beginning of the transformation; the evolution of money will push forward.

The realm of digital payment is extremely dynamic, with players big and small competing to innovate, simplify, and ultimately revolutionize the 'way we pay' – how we handle transactions of currency value.

Disillusioned by the present volatile economy, people are seeking for new meaning of value beyond the conventional confines of cash. On the radical end of the spectrum, we see a foray into creation of 'alternative digital currency', completely independent from any central authority. On the other hand, closer to consumers, we see a growing acceptance of 'alternative consumer-created value', taking on similar characteristics of money.

Value and sometimes monetization are being given to what was once completely intangible and ephemeral – from physical to social media activities and from skills sets to conceptual ideas.

Ultimately, every interaction has become an exchange of value, one way or another, allowing interactions between consumer and brand to go beyond the surface to become deeper and more multi-faceted than ever before.



THE INTERPLAY of Time

CONSUMER TRENDS #4

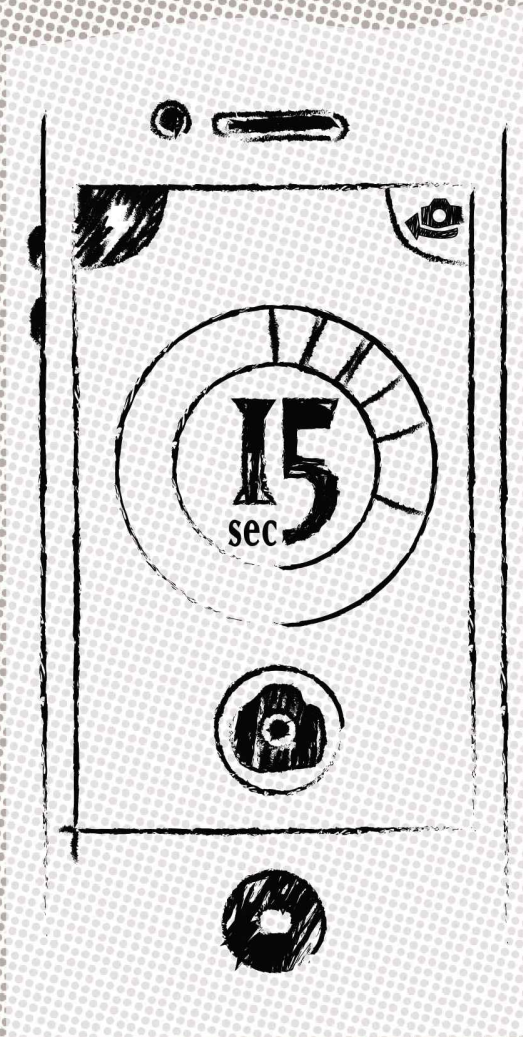
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Time,
as we know it, is taking on a
new meaning. Immersed in digitiza-
tion, consumers are re-imagining the context
of time, as they grow increasingly aware of a
deepening reliance on connected technology and an
ever-changing nature of time perceptions.

Our sense of time has been transformed and redefined by the
fleeting culture we live in: 'appear then disappear', 'new then
old', 'on then off', 'what's hot then what's not', 'save then delete',
'private then public', 'forever then ephemeral' – all of which can be
switched in a short window of time. The pace of change is
relentless, and so too are consumer expectations of what to come
next.

Forging the way into the future, brands need to tap into 'the
moment' – with the right message at the right time with
the right context. The quality of media
experience is relying, not solely on unique
storytelling alone, but also on the
creative interplay of time.

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DAILY DOSE of Empathy

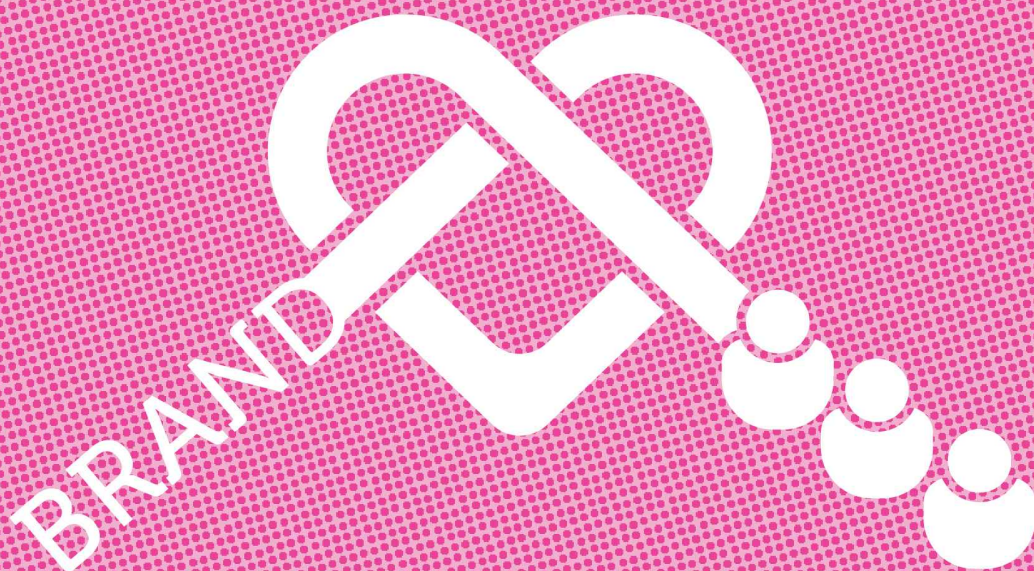
CONSUMER TRENDS #5



Living at breakneck speed, urbanites the world over are experiencing the unyielding pressures of soulless big city life – systematically rushed and over-stimulated, ruled by routine, with near lethal stress-levels and deprived of any relief.

City dwellers are yearning for a respite from it all, kindling a desire to make urban grounds humane again – to feel some empathy from their surroundings. The smallest drop of kindness that shows an understanding of the people's urban pain points, can create a transformative and humanizing impact.

This gaping hole of discontent in urban living holds an opportunity for brands to provide counter-measures to the daily drain, making positive impact on urban life. As providers of value and solutions, the act of compassion can come in the form of urban-centric utility, serenity, and exploration. Each of the countless facets of metropolitan life, from the mundane to the artistic and cultural, holds potential in serving as meaningful connecting points that can elevate the brand to a whole new level of affinity.



QUANTIFIED Soul

CONSUMER TRENDS #6

As they become increasingly exposed the world outside their own, more and more consumers are becoming more introspective, embracing self-discovery and self-reflection. Though the innate drive for self-improvement may have long resided deep within the human psyche, only recently has it reached the forefront of the modern consciousness.

Initially limited to the scope of physical well-being, self-betterment has now broadened to include the spiritual, taking on a more holistic view. With various reports of scientifically proven benefits and the endorsement of famous celebrities, spiritual enrichment, previously renegaded to the outposts of new-age hippie subculture, has become mainstream.

Consequently, the 'quantified self' has extended from physical applications to that for the heart and soul, while serving the same practical functions of facilitating execution and making the effects of individual efforts more tangible. Features might include translating conceptual teachings into simple bite-sized tasks, utilizing the multi-sensored capabilities of the digital devices to track progress, and enabling morale support by linking up with fellow travelers on the path. Through 'quantified soul', brands can offer a new dimension of life coaching and become a guiding force on a deeper level in consumer lives.



THE 'SHOW-NOT-TELL' Spectacle

CONSUMER TRENDS #7

Today's consumers have the world at their disposal. With an array of choices catering to every facet of their cluttered lives, the only thing that they seem to have less of is attention. All the hard-sell, blatant commercial ploys that modern advertising are bombarding consumers with on daily basis are now skipped over, undermining the interest consumers have for brands, day by day.

Simply 'telling' consumers something has become, in most cases, completely useless. Armed with prevalent connection to social networks and information, the modern generation are often viewed as 'looking to their peers', rather than experts, for advice. However, the new digital mindset is ultimately to 'choose for themselves'. The wealth of information and viewpoints that modern consumers have access to only serves to support their decision, rather than being told what to believe.

Whether trying to convince consumers on their superiority or relevance, brands must effectively 'show' consumers - letting them see, try, feel and finally judge for themselves what to believe. To command precious attention and confidence from modern consumers, today's messages and executions must demonstrate the truth in new ways to cut through, communicate, and convince.



REAL-RAW-UNEDITED

CONSUMER TRENDS #8

Beauty is portrayed everywhere – especially in the media. On the screens and the pages of magazines, consumers are surrounded by images of perfection, each clamoring for their attention and adoration. Especially in the digital age, ‘reality’ is malleable and the fantasy of perfection has become supercharged.

As the digital world empowers consumers with more control over their online identity to get closer to their ideal of perfection, it also takes them further from their true self. The rising tension between fantasy and reality, virtual and actual, are weighing on the hearts and minds of people. This strain in the consumer psyche is spurring a movement to get back to the roots and reality, ultimately reevaluating the core essence of their identities and what they aspire to.

As imperfection becomes the new authenticity, brands and the media hold the potential to set new benchmarks for a new, ‘someone-like-me’ type of aspiration. By nurturing this shift in value for genuine self-love, awareness, and discovery, brands have the opportunity to touch the hearts of consumers in more profound ways than ever before.



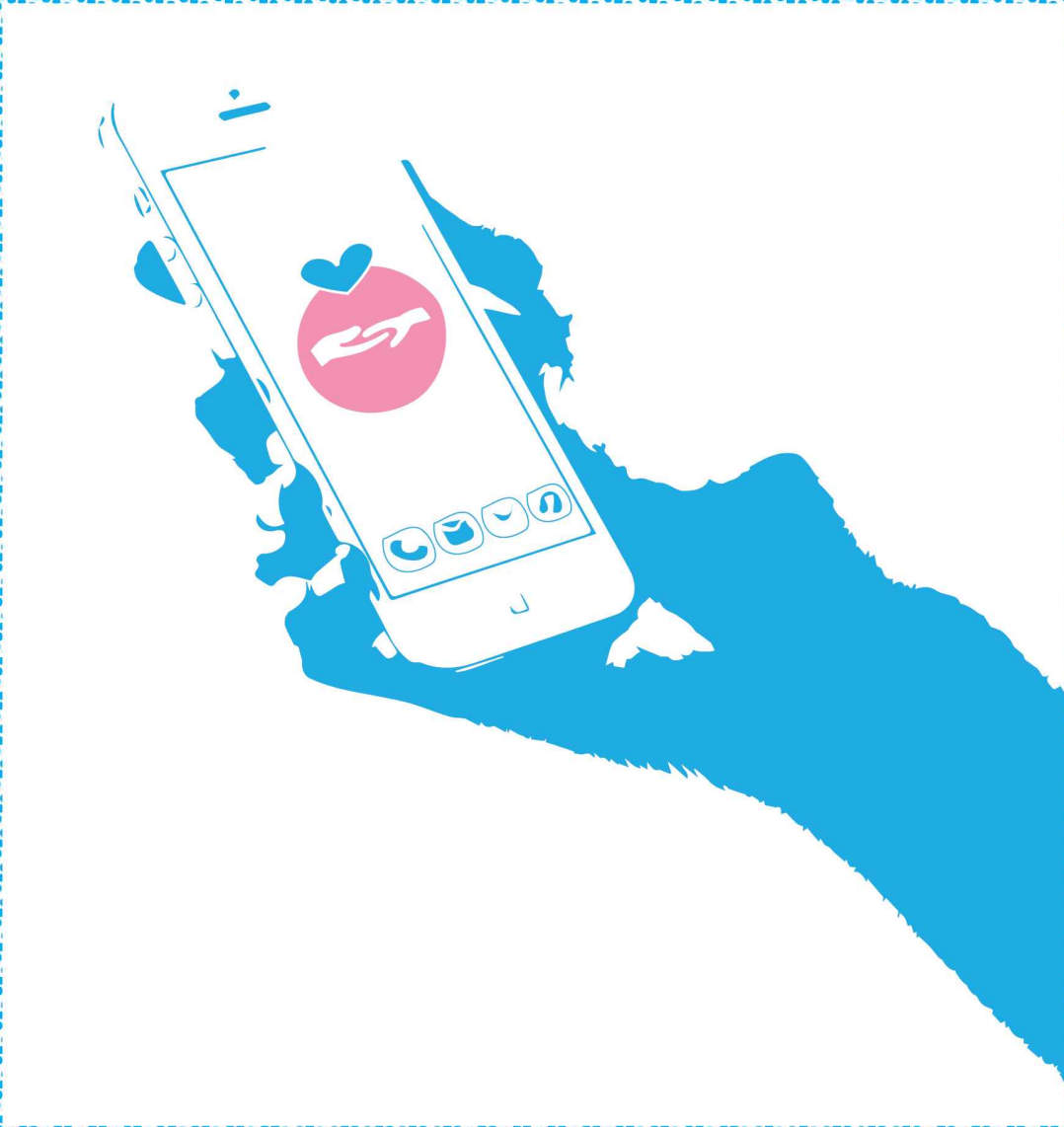
THE UN-SELFIE Era

CONSUMER TRENDS #9

'Selfies' have certainly made their mark in 2013 – a manifestation of a self-indulged ritual, created by the proliferation of Facebook, Instagram, and similar platforms. While consumers may be addicted to the 'Instagram-ability' of things and superficiality of the too-good-to-be-true, they are also starting to question its decency.

Eventually, the shift will be oriented beyond the self towards a socially-minded movement, in bid to develop a meaningful antidote against narcissistic epidemic while tapping into the power of social media for something greater than ourselves.

Many of the latest initiatives by brands and non-profits alike have discovered new ways to harness the potential of digitized reality to generate common good in very tangible ways, giving 'clicktivism' real impact. Be it in the form of micro-funding, raising awareness, or rallying for social-consciousness, brands are now presented with a new way to empower people to make a difference in the cause they care about.



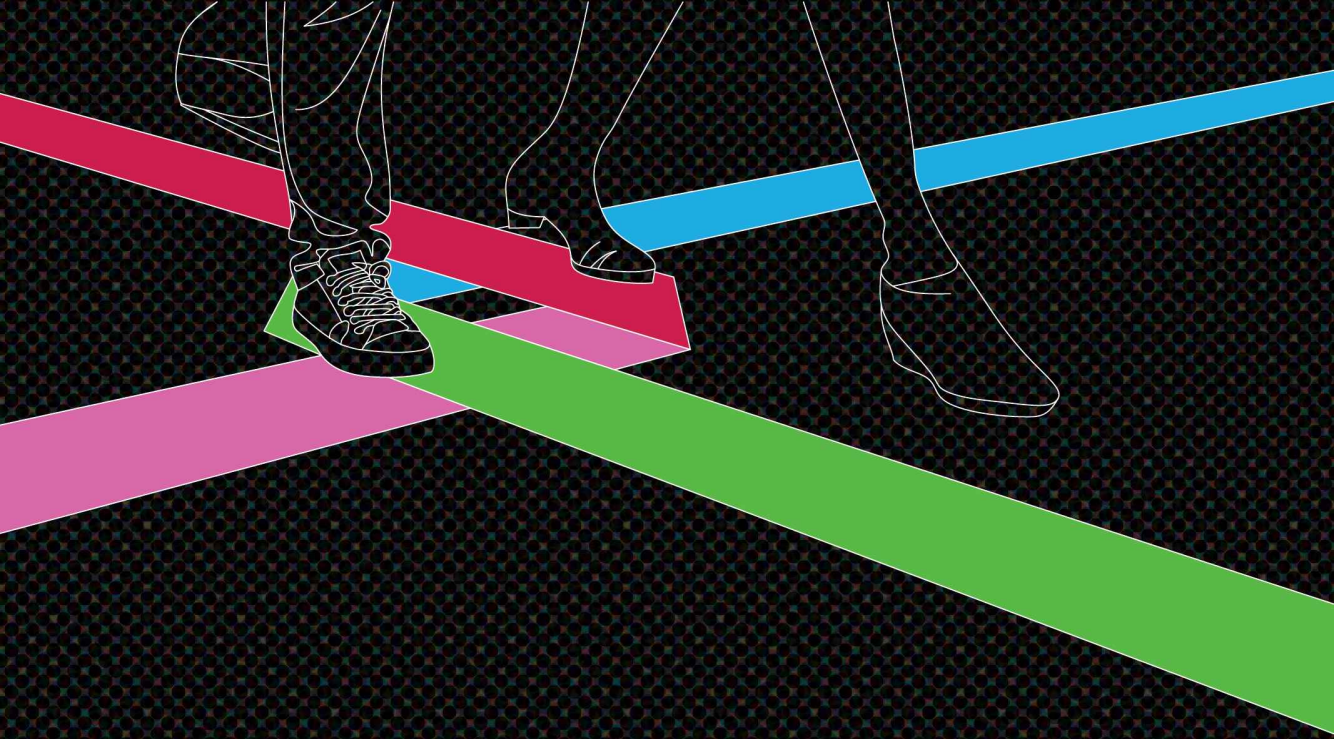
BRAND Manifesto

CONSUMER TRENDS #10

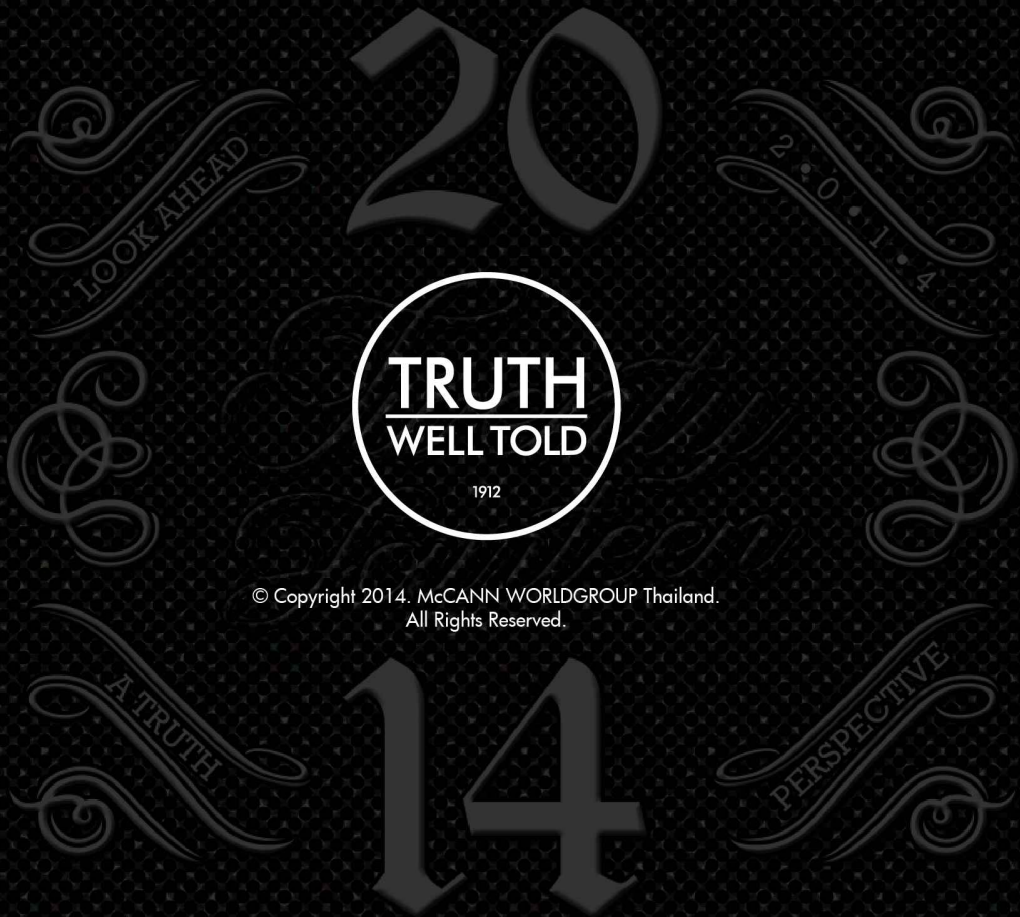
Mission statements, filled with vague aspirations and lofty promises, are a way of the past. Modern day consumers could not care less about messages that do not inspire and storytelling that does not excite.

In the age of radical transparency, consumers are raising their expectations in what they look out for in brand and its footprint in this world. Thus, the brand's purpose has to be the limelight of communication. More and more, brands are going beyond just representing products and services to become enablers of social good, leaving a positive impact on society and on the world.

In this sense, a brand manifesto that is in tune with the brand essence, could help personify a unique set of values and articulate a genuine mindset towards creating a better world. In sync with the growing consumer desire for positivity and purpose, brands are coming up with novel ways to solve real problems through new schemes that generate common good through concrete and material form.



LOOK AHEAD 2014



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Truthcentral.mccann.co.th

VARIDDA VORAAKOM
PRIN THANAPISITIKUL

Chief Innovation Officer
Consumer Insights Manager

varidda.voraakom@mccannwg.com
prin.thanapisitikul@mccannwg.com

+66 818056660
+66 845146544