

January, 2021

Trends 2021

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Introduction

For the fifth year running, Evercom's Top Trends in Communication and Marketing 2021 report analyses the trends for the new year.

This is a year of hope. If we look back, despite the very serious social and economic circumstances, the year 2020 was a time of great creativity for the communication and marketing industry: a huge challenge with the responsibility of forging long-distance ties.

We start 2021 by putting on the table those trends that will inspire our activity over the next 12 months. Two trends will encompass all the others:

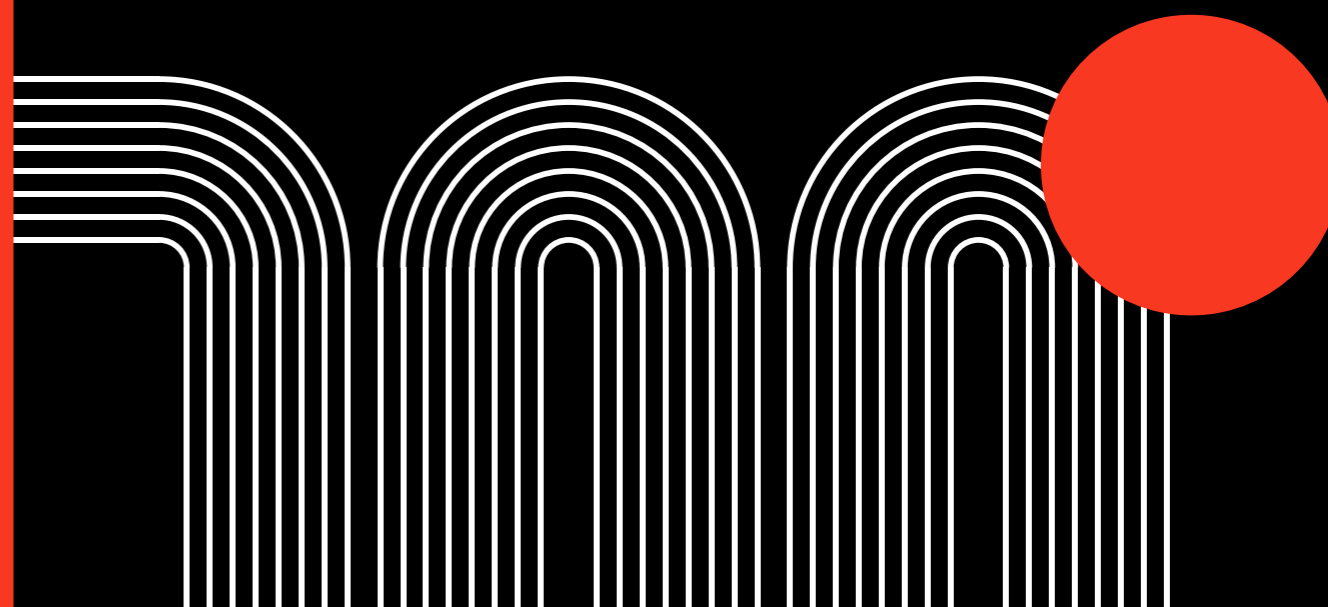
The year 2020 was a time of great creativity for the communication and marketing industry: a huge challenge with the responsibility of forging long-distance ties.



1 Consolidation of communication with a purpose

At the start of 2020, we talked about the importance of purpose as the transformative concept behind the marketing and communication strategies of companies. In 2021, we will see that COVID-19 has only served to enhance the importance of an organisation's reason for being. Many companies have already taken decisive steps in this direction over the past year; however, not all have managed to convey credibility to consumers at this time of unprecedented change.

Beyond their purpose, companies must constantly act in keeping with their corporate ethics, doing what they really preach. Brands must play a social role through their business activity; they must transition from market leadership to social leadership. In this regard, communication will be the link or liaison of the purpose that must ensure consistency between it and the reality perceived by stakeholders.



2

Data, data and more data

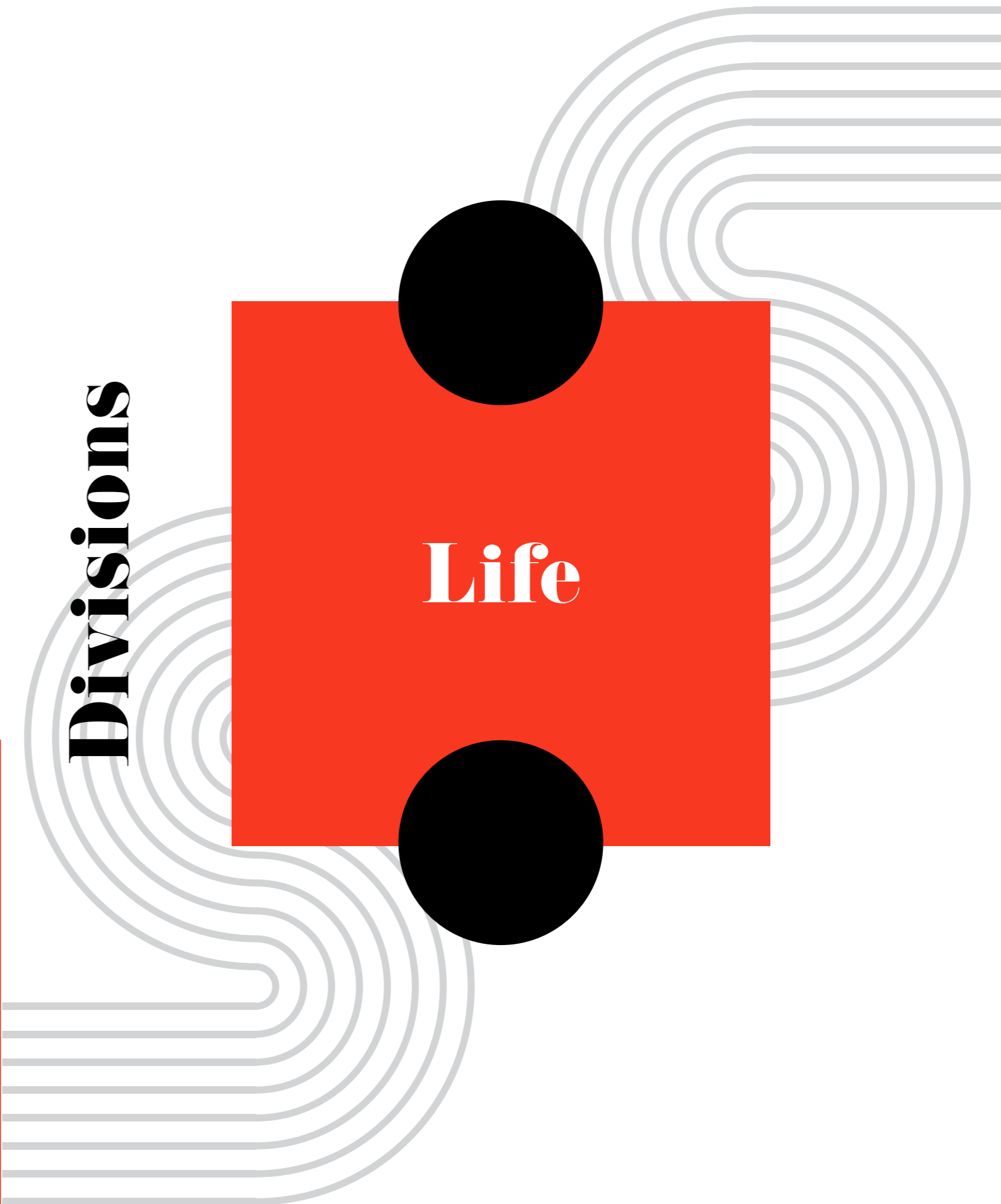
Marketing decisions will rely on analytics. The steering of actions towards digital channels, forced by the interruption of physical events, has helped to open our eyes to those companies that have not yet committed to the online universe, and it has also boosted know-how in terms of measurement and activation.

Because of this, companies that do not incorporate this type of technology will lose data intelligence on their marketing activities, and will thus be less competitive. In an era of uncertainty such as this, a data-centric strategy is even more relevant to establish an emotional and personal connection to each user through data, thus reducing costs and risks.



Divisions

Life



Beyond social media

2020 was a boon year for all things digital. We were able to adapt face-to-face events to streaming formats; the year also saw the start of a trend that will only grow stronger in 2021, which is the presence of brands on flagship eSports platforms such as Twitch, which receives 17.5 million visitors a day and has an average audience of over 1.5 million viewers. These figures must force brands to rethink their strategy and create specific actions to position themselves with users who are eager to consume content through these platforms.

From influencer marketing to ambassador marketing

The quarantine has exponentially increased consumption on social media, which has directly affected how brands use influencers. According to a SamyRoad analysis, more than half of content creators have seen improvements in their profiles in terms of both the number of followers and the level of engagement. Similarly, quality is now more important than quantity and microinfluencers, who are more specialised, with smaller communities but with considerable credibility, are asserting themselves as a major resource for brands.

Lastly, 2021 will see a shift from influencer marketing to ambassador marketing, turning content creators into long-term travel companions to generate more credibility for the brand.

Life



If all goes well, 2021 will allow us to get back into some of the experiences we lost in 2020

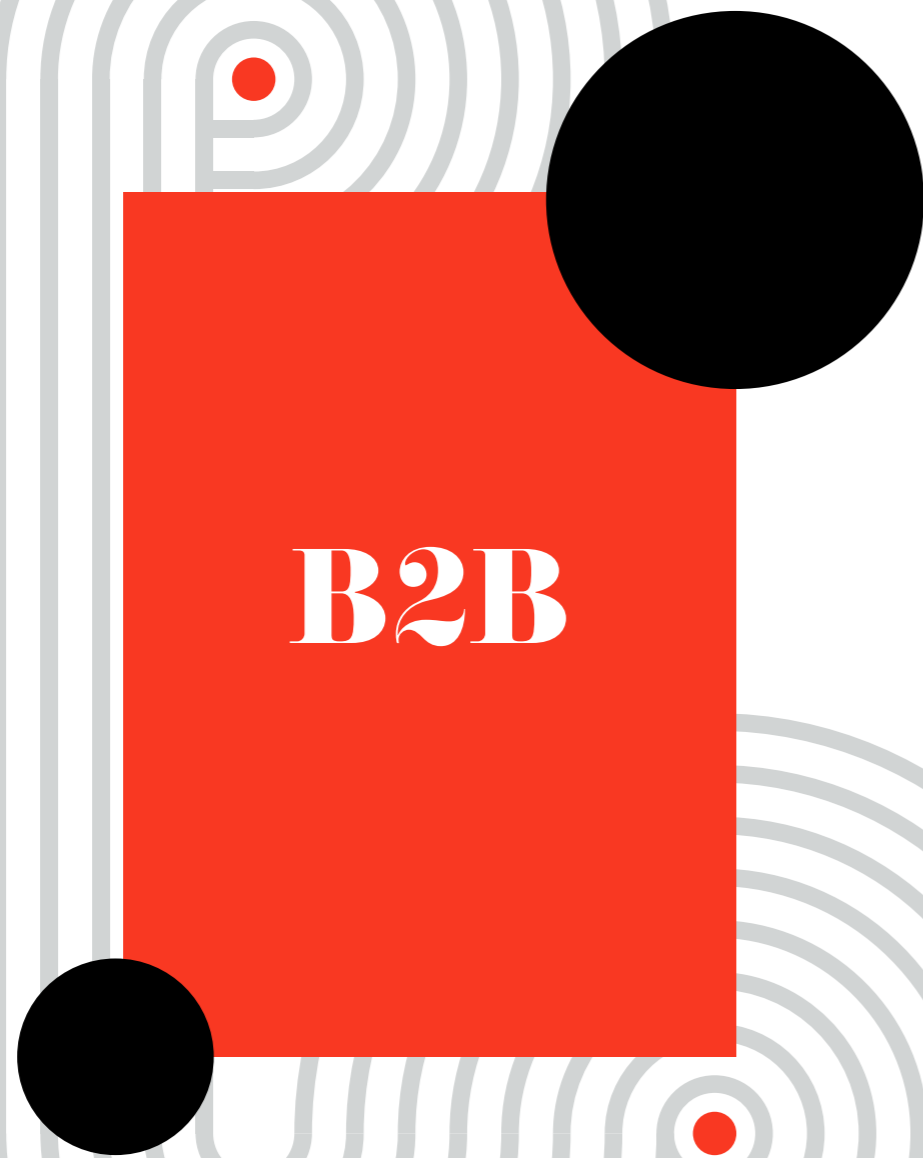
Street marketing is “reinvented” to be Covid-free

In 2021, we will again be surprised by actions that seem taken from the past and that are back stronger than ever to set social media on fire and achieve qualitative impacts in the mass media.

Outdoor marketing through adverts has been one of the most widely used tools by powerful brands to make their products or services visible, but until now it has not aroused any expectations in particular, or done anything to shake up the mass media. However, just a few weeks ago we saw giant tarps from brands like Netflix, and even (former FC Barcelona president) Joan Laporta, taking up entire buildings as part of a strategy to grab headlines, comments on social media and endless praise from specialists and consumers.

Life





B2B

The end of the digital transformation

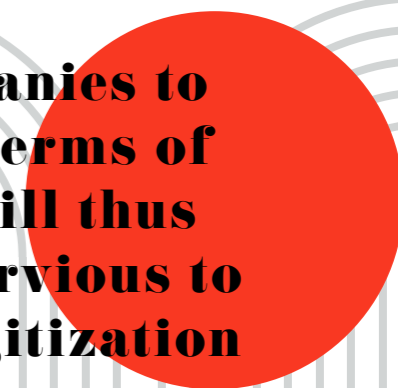
Digital transformation as a concept is outdated and superseded. Speaking about digital transformation will not help to convince or make any difference to all those who have been talking about it for ages. Although much remains to be done beyond teleworking, the digital onslaught that companies had to stage in 2020 has made them feel more digitally mature, and will thus make them more impervious to all the trite talk of digitization.

At the same time, the market is making it possible to stand out by adding sophistication and a pinch of complexity to communication messages, with the aim of allowing those who previously felt unprepared to take more advanced steps.

Nostalgia marketing

If all goes well, 2021 will allow us to get back into some of the experiences we lost in 2020. Playing with emotions and memories of the past to draw attention is known as nostalgia marketing, which will gain new strength this year. It gives B2B companies the opportunity to break new creative ground, which may be very fruitful, and where small gestures are often very welcome.

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Towards new B2B storytelling

CSR by itself is no longer sufficient. Everything we have gone through has led professionals to wonder what role they play in society and what role they want to play, meaning companies must not only ask themselves this question, but also answer it.

In B2B environments, new brand narratives are making inroads in more emotional and experiential objectives. No longer are products and solutions based solely on rational and technical arguments. In fact, these companies will have to increasingly become part of their customers' ecosystem and contribute in their role as partners to achieving their customer's purpose.

Life beyond LinkedIn

LinkedIn will remain a key social network for professional and corporate environments. However, B2B brands must dare to explore other, less competitive, social platforms, spaces, channels and formats. Audio, for example, is booming in multiple formats, and this is expected to continue in 2021. And so is video format on platforms such as YouTube, which features increasingly technical content. Brand content formats will continue to dominate where the quality and depth of the materials remain essential to drawing attention and positioning the brand as an expert.

New brand narratives are making inroads in more emotional and experiential objectives

B2B

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Inbound Marketing

Programmatic native advertising

This is the evolution of traditional programmatic advertising focused on banners. For many, it is the future of digital advertising. Programmatic native advertising is the automatic purchase and sale of native advertising locations, incorporating them into the news feeds of various websites and integrating them into the content in a much more natural and user-friendly way. This is quite the evolution since while traditional programmatic ensures visibility, native programmatic seeks engagement, a real added value for the customer to generate long-term relationships with potential users and customers.

Marketing Automation

It is estimated that the marketing automation industry will be worth 7.63 billion dollars in 2025. This rising trend allows improving the performance ratios of marketing campaigns in different aspects and stages, and yields savings in marketing costs, increased volume of leads and conversions, and improves the ROI on marketing and CTR.

Inbound Marketing

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Divisions

Government Agencies

The resumption of policies after the pandemic

The Spanish Government is expected to resume and promote its political agenda in 2021. The new national budget will provide a basis for giving a boost to the measures defined in the Coalition Agreement signed between PSOE and the Unidas Podemos party. In this regard, the monitoring and tracking of regulatory and parliamentary activity will be essential for companies to learn about and be able to partake in the regulatory processes that are implemented in 2021.

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Proximity to decision centres

Companies are aware of the importance and need of anticipating the regulatory processes and policies that are implemented by large decision centres, such as Brussels, and are increasingly aware that public affairs influence their bottom line.

They must thus exert their influence from the initial moment when a new law is first conceived and at all levels of the Community, national, regional and even local governments.



Regulating lobbyists, again the subject of political debate

The oversight of lobbies is again part of the political debate in Spain, as this subject is still unregulated at the national level, although new legislation could soon be introduced. The Coalition Agreement signed between PSOE and Unidas Podemos included "the regulation of lobbies to make their political impact transparent, with mandatory and public registration of their interviews and agendas". Furthermore, in November 2020, the Socialist Party filed a Non-Binding Motion to start the process of regulating lobbies, which suggests that more progress will be made in this regard in 2021.

The influence of the Catalonia elections on the national political stage

Catalonia's regional elections are once again influencing the national political agenda. The uncertainty surrounding the health situation is marking this new round of elections in 2021. On a political level, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya's (ERC) support of the national budget for 2021 paves the way for a potential three-party government in the Catalan government, led by ERC in collaboration with PSC and En Comú Podem.

In the constitutionalist block, the keys lie in the catastrophic collapse of Ciudadanos, as predicted by the polls, the recovery of the Popular Party in Catalonia and the appearance of VOX in the Catalan Parliament.

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Divisions

Corporate



Communication and talent

The struggle for talent will also play out through communication, with strategies to re-tain and commit those who are already part of the organisation; and outward to recruit new talent as needed. Despite high unemployment rates, many organisations face the challenge of being able to normalise their activity with stable teams that can generate value. Building a persuasive narrative, portraying the company as a responsible, reliable and sustainable player that thinks about the well-being and quality of life of its people, and that provides spaces for professional and personal development, will define the messaging aimed at the talent.

Corporate culture and internal communication

Companies will rely even more on internal communications to avoid the risk of dissolving the corporate culture and environment following the adoption of teleworking. Moreover, the need to generate trust, certainty and horizons in a scenario of great economic and social instability will be essential to ensuring the cohesion and connection of the human universe that forms part of the company. It is there that internal communication, in its most varied conceptions in terms of content and formats, will play a crucial role.

The need to generate trust, certainty and horizons in a scenario of great economic and social instability will be essential

Corporate



New corporate narrative and content

Time to update narratives. The pandemic has changed scenarios and redefined social, institutional and market priorities. A new story is being created that better defines, to external and internal audiences alike, what the new reality of the company is, what role it wants to play, where it is heading and what its new value proposition is. A new story that must also be made tangible and communicated through owned, paid and earned media.

Transmedia corporate strategies

The field of corporate communication will also see a gradual advancement in storytelling and ways of using multi-support content from a 360 perspective. Companies that, beyond selling products or services, want to inspire, establish relationships and expand the contact, relationship and communication points with their various stakeholders.

Extending relationship and influence maps

We are moving towards relational ecosystems whose actors are increasingly interdependent. Models where value chains in many industries are transitioning from linear to matrix models. New disruptive agents are emerging, budding voices, protagonists who gain space in the economy and society and who directly or indirectly impact an organisation's business and activity.

Corporate



Barcelona

Divisions

Merging marketing and communication

PR and marketing initiatives are becoming inseparable in driving the success of any company's business objectives.

We are moving towards integrating marketing initiatives with a creative and differentiating communication strategy to gain appeal, credibility and conviction among customers, collaborators or influencers.

Proximity, engagement and customisation: pillars of regional communication

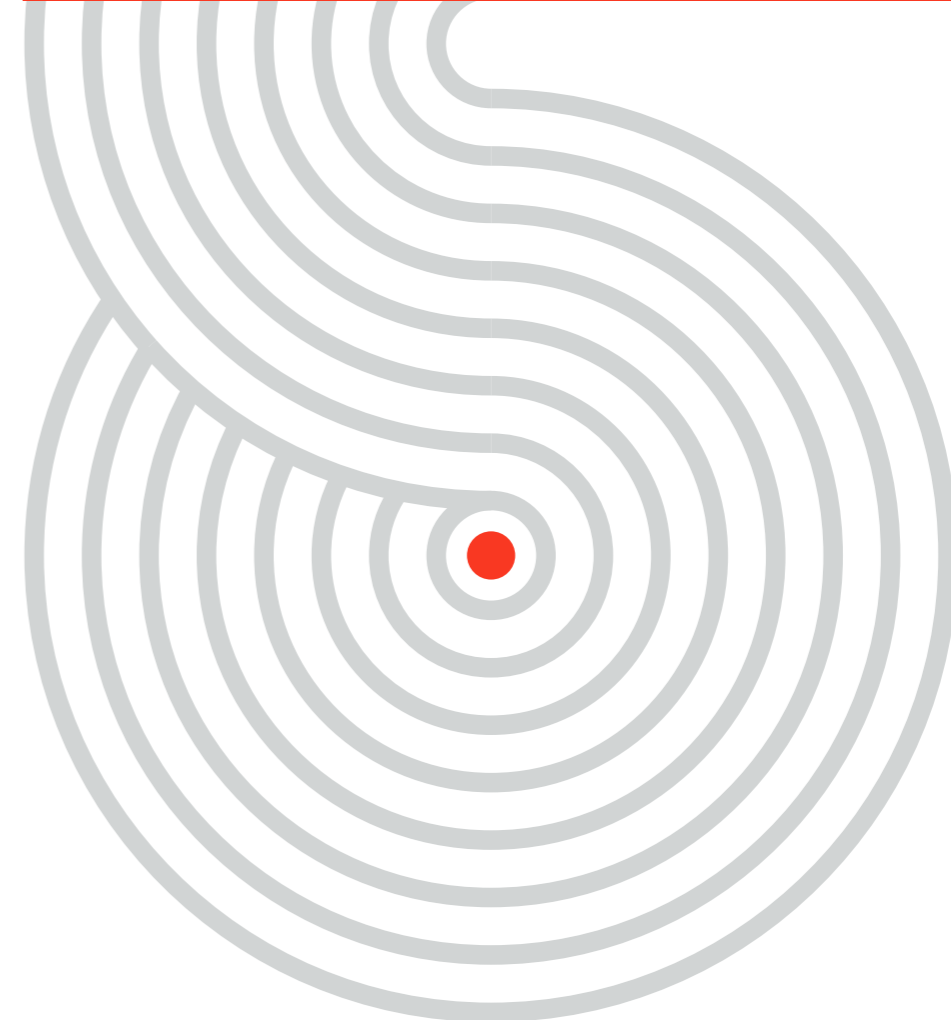
Every communication strategy seeks to generate empathy and affect its audiences. Generate confidence and provide a competitive edge. In this sense, "glocality", a global mindset and approach that also identifies with the culture, ideals and needs of local audiences, will be essential in regional communications. It will help local audiences perceive communications as something tangible and personable. Regional communication will have to rely on the ties it can generate and on locally-adapted messages if it is to be effective and powerful.

Generate confidence and provide a competitive edge

Barcelona

Divisions

Financial



Communication and marketing for the financial sector

The Covid-19 crisis has thrust those trends that were already apparent in early 2020 into the spotlight in 2021. In the financial sector, the keys to 2021 can be summarised in two aspects: an increased reliance on ESG (environmental (E), social (S) and corporate governance (G) criteria) and more attention to the development of ap-pealing and valuable content.

Supremacy of the ESG commitment vs. Greenwashing

The number of companies that provide investment, advisory or management services and endorse the United Nations "Principles for Responsible Investment" is increasing. Similarly, the commitment of large, listed companies to achieving compliance with the 2030 Agenda is unstoppable. It is thus increasingly important to provide rigorous and accurate information on the goals adopted by the company in the areas of corporate governance, the environment and sustainability, and to comply with them. This communication must be applied more creatively to provide a fresh and original approach while maintaining rigour. And this must be done while avoiding greenwashing, which will trigger serious communication crises.

Creativity must be applied in order to stand out for the fresh and original approach while maintaining rigour at all times

Financial

Format sophistication

Companies in the sector are investing in audiovisual technology and making the most of their work spaces. A monthly newsletter is no longer enough; high-quality, attractive content and a data-driven segmentation strategy are required.

This will result in huge investment in technology to reform what has become the flags-hip store: the website, with improved apps, virtual reality and investment in the user experience so that it can be so personalized and digital that the customer's need for face-to-face contact is minimal and basically driven solely by legal requirements.

Consolidation of hybrid General Shareholders Meetings

Another relevant point related to a company's investor relations and communications department will be General Shareholders Meetings. These once-strategic gatherings have now also changed formats, and in 2021 will require even more planning, management and communication, since they will be either hybrid or exclusively online.

Companies need that is high-quality and appealing, and a data-driven segmentation strategy

Financial

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