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Trends 2021

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Sumario

- Marketing decisions will rely on analytics, exponentially more so than last year.
- Brands have to transition from market leadership to social leadership.
- In 2021, we will go from influencer marketing to ambassador marketing.
- Digital transformation as a concept is outdated and superseded.
- Native programmatic advertising enhances engagement, a real added value for the customer to generate relationships with potential users and customers.
- The oversight of lobbies is again part of the political debate in Spain.
- There will be a gradual advancement in storytelling and ways of using multi-support content from a 360 perspective.
- Companies that commit the sin of greenwashing will face serious communication cri-ses.

Introducción

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. Over this past year, we have learned many things and with so many possible paths to take that will define our new everyday activity, we find that purpose and data will be more present than ever. These are two drivers that will define the style of corporate and brand communication, and they will be essential to ensuring that brands and companies are positioned in the consumer's mind as expected.

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

While 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 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.

According to a study conducted by Deloitte with more than 2,400 consumers, 79% of respondents remembered brands that responded positively to the health crisis by helping society, which improved the reputation of these companies. Beyond their purpose, companies have to constantly remember to act in keeping with their corporate ethics, doing what they really preach. Any deviation could directly cause consumers to lose confidence and, in the worst case scenario, lead to an unprecedented reputation crisis for the brand. This is because consumer permeability has never been so high, or as demanding.

Beyond communicating to position and sell their products or services, 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. Communication will be a key driver if purpose is to contribute to corporate reputation.

2

Data, data and more data

Marketing decisions will rely on analytics, exponentially more so than last year. 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.

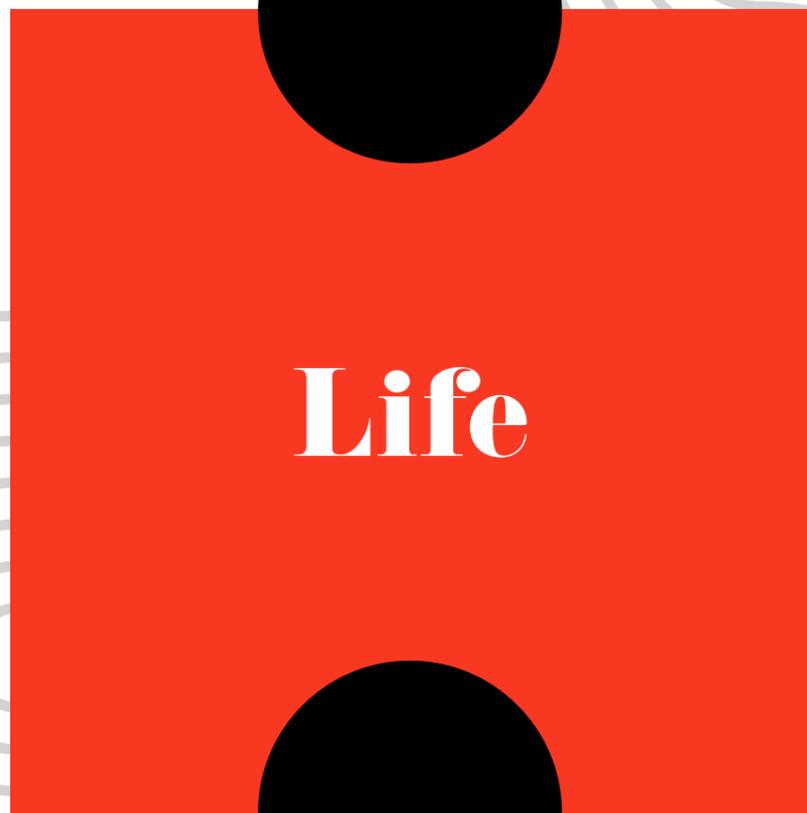
Some examples: advanced analytical tools like Google Tag Manager and platforms for displaying data, solutions from location analytics, microsegmentation by interests to promote content, AI algorithms to optimise lead generation... Companies that do not incorporate this type of technology will lose data intelligence in their marketing activities, and will thus be less competitive.

Grow by cutting costs, leaving behind intuition to make decisions based on certainties, reducing risk. This is even more relevant in an era of uncertainty like the one we are now in, where consumption patterns are changing. Right now, the *data-centric* strategy is more necessary than ever to establish an emotional, personalised and human connection with each user, and this requires data.

Now more than ever, turning data into knowledge is a challenge for companies. According to recent studies, the companies that are best prepared to analyse their data boost their revenue by up to 23%, their operational efficiency by an average of 21%, and customer satisfaction and loyalty by 17.3% in EMEA.

With the advent of DMP (Data Management Platform) technologies, advertisers and publishers can access other data sources and generate sales or exchange agreements for second-party data, complementing the first party. We are also starting to glimpse and generalise models of collaborative data that involve the exchange of audiences between companies from different sectors, but that can have synergies in their targets.

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; we have replaced physical contact with friends with gatherings on Duo, Zoom and 200 other video conferencing platforms, and we have been more present and aware than ever on social media.

However, 2020 launched a trend that will grow considerably in 2021. We are talking about the presence of brands on leading eSports platforms such as Fortnite, Discord and Twitch. Based on the data processed by the latter, Twitch receives 17.5 million visitors a day and has an average audience of more than 1.5 million viewers. These are overwhelming numbers that 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. These platforms, despite not being new, have so far been very timidly adopted by otherwise daring brands such as Gillette, Milka or OnePlus, and, in the current context, are bound to remain important throughout this year.

Life



From influencer marketing to ambassador marketing

The quarantine exponentially increased consumption on social media, which directly affected how brands use influencers. According to an analysis by the specialised agency SamyRoad, 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. Specifically, between 5% and 30% during the health crisis, engaging more closely with their followers and improving the visibility level of the published content.

Despite the voices that predicted a fall in this method of communication, especially as a result of the requirement imposed in the United States to identify content as advertising when it involved an investment by a brand, the fact is that the business model, far from suffering, is now stronger after COVID-19.

However, some things have changed during this time and they will probably become more obvious over the next year.

Quality is now more important than quantity. It is not as relevant if you have a community of 500,000 followers; if your engagement figure is not good, the investment will not be profitable.

Microinfluencers, who are more specialised, with smaller communities but with considerable credibility, seem to be skewing the statistics and are asserting themselves as a major resource for brands.

And perhaps most importantly, the strategy of rotating influences has stopped working, since this gives rise to doubts with the consumer and leads to a poor response. 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 your engagement figure is not good, the investment will not be profitable



Street marketing is “reinvented” to be Covid-free

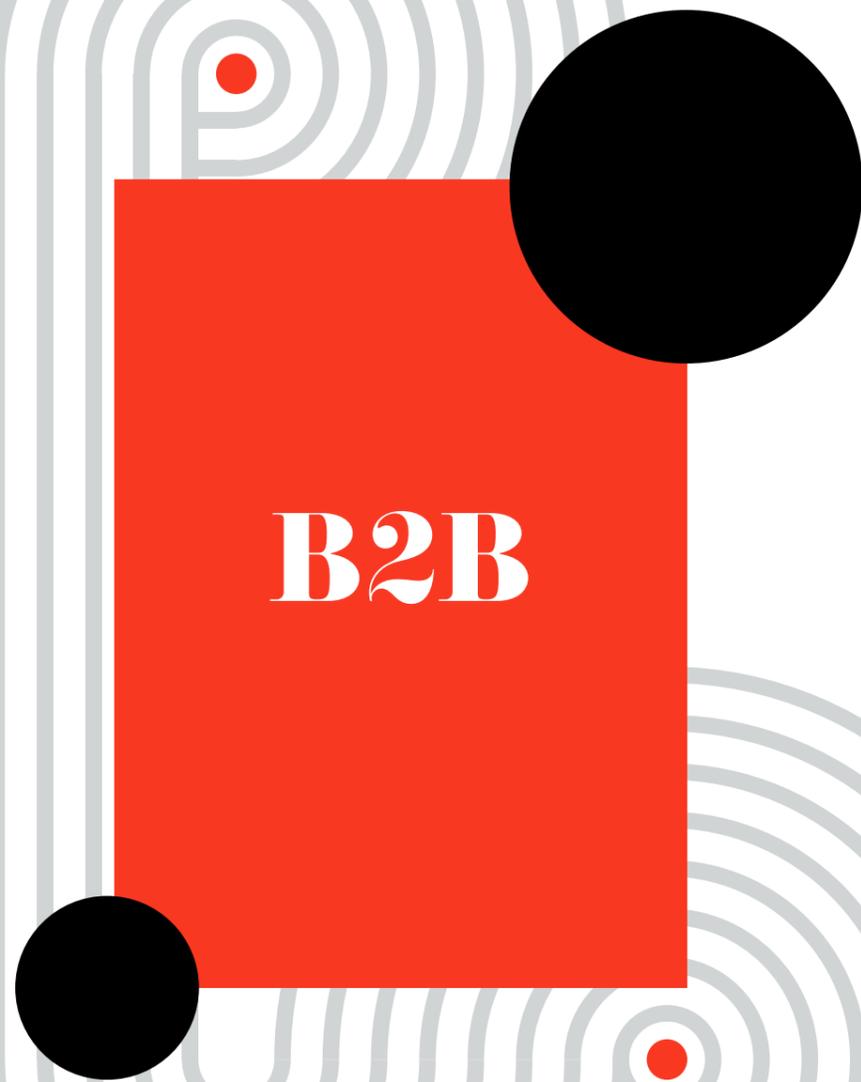
The pandemic has made creativity take on new formulas and forced us all to reinvent ourselves. Just when we thought we had seen it all in the subject of street marketing, we are again surprised by actions that seem taken from the past and that are back stronger than ever to set social media on fire and achieve qualitative impacts in the mass media.

Outdoor marketing using adverts has been one of the most widely used tools by powerful brands to make their products or services visible, but until now, save for anyone who happened to pass through the area, it has not aroused any expectations in particular, or done anything to shake up the mass media.

However, once more, in this business that is marketing and communication, we can never say that we've seen it all, and just a few weeks ago we saw giant tarps from brands like Netflix, El Pozo and even Joan Laporta, as he seeks a return to the presidency of FC Barcelona, take up entire buildings as part of a strategy to grab headlines, comments on social media and endless praise from specialists and consumers.

It is clear that sampling is in free fall due to the health situation we are experiencing, but also that brands and street marketing have managed to reinvent themselves to adapt to the situation and make old disruptive street initiatives new again in a Covid-free model.

Life



B2B

The end of the digital transformation

It's over. Anyone who talks about digitisation and nothing else is losing out. 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 mature in this area, and will thus make them more impervious to all the trite talk of digitization.

At the same time, the market offers the opportunity to stand out by adding sophistication and a pinch of complexity to communication message; this maturity also means that companies will be open to taking more advanced steps that perhaps they felt unprepared to take earlier.

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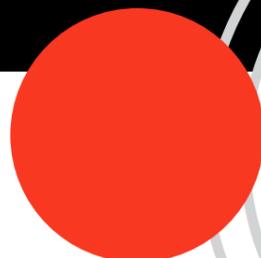


B2B

Nostalgia marketing

If all goes well, 2021 will allow us to get back into some of the experiences we lost in 2020. Seeing others in person, ending a meeting with a handshake, or seeing one another at a professional fair. When these things happen again, they will have a special meaning.

Playing with emotions and memories of the past to draw attention is known as nostalgia marketing, which will gain new traction this year. It gives B2B companies the opportunity to break new creative ground, which may be very fruitful, especially in industries where creativity is often lacking, and where small gestures are often very welcome.



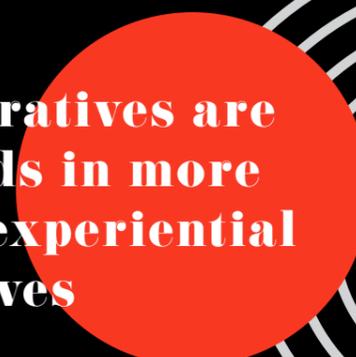
B2B

Towards new B2B storytelling

CSR by itself is no longer sufficient. The pandemic has endangered essential aspects of our well-being that we took for granted, but which we now realize are fragile, exposed, vulnerable. Companies that stick to commercial storytelling tied to occasional corporate social responsibility initiatives are coming up short. 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, now more than ever, 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, B2B companies will have to increasingly become part of their customers' ecosystem and contribute in their role as partners to achieving their customer's purpose.

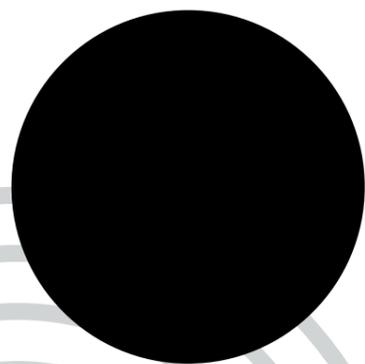
New brand narratives are making inroads in more emotional and experiential objectives



Life beyond LinkedIn

LinkedIn will remain a key social network for professional and corporate environments. The tools of this social network have been enhanced to provide training, live discussions, networking forums, or to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and corporate news to members of the organisation.

However, B2B brands must dare to explore other, less competitive, social platforms, spaces, channels and formats. Audio, for example, is booming in multiple formats (podcasts, audiobooks, audioblogs, etc.), and this is expected to continue in 2021. And so is video format on platforms such as YouTube, which features increasingly technical content. Sponsored 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.



B2B

Divisions

Inbound Marketing



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 company to generate long-term relationships with potential users and customers. Programmatic native advertising ultimately improves the performance of campaigns for advertisers.

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Inbound Marketing

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, according to Salesforce data:

- Savings of 12.2% on marketing costs due to the automation of tasks and campaigns.
- 27% increase in the volume of leads.
- Over 30% increase in conversions.
- Improved marketing ROI by 25%.
- Up to 70% increase in CTR due to content customisation.
- Optimises the work of the sales team: it boosts their productivity by 14.5%, since the lead is more mature thanks to lead scoring.

Divisions

Government Agencies

Government Agencies

The resumption of policies after the pandemic

With 2020 behind us, where legislative activity was marked by initiatives launched to alleviate the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, the Spanish Government is expected to resume and advance its political agenda in 2021.

Following the extensions of the last budget passed by the government of Mariano Ra-joy, the new national budget approved for 2021 will provide a basis for giving a boost to the measures defined in the Coalition Agreement signed between PSOE and the Uni-das Podemos party at the start of the legislative term.

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 pro-cesses that are implemented in 2021.

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.

The European Commission, under the leadership of Ursula von der Leyen, is already fully operational. Its work programme for 2021 includes six major priorities with which the Commission intends to transition "from strategy to results": the European Green Deal; a Europe adapted to the digital age; an economy at the service of people; a stronger Europe in the world; promotion of our European way of life; and a new boost to European democracy.

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.

Government Agencies

The creation of a lobbyist register by the National Commission of Markets and Competition (CNMC) was the first step towards providing transparency to this professional activity

Regulating lobbyists, again the subject of political debate

The oversight of lobbies is again part of the political debate in Spain. The creation of a lobbyist register by the National Commission of Markets and Competition (CNMC) was the first step towards providing transparency to this professional activity, with some regional governments, like Madrid and Catalonia, following suit and setting up their own registers.

However, this practice is still unregulated at the national level, although new legislation could soon be introduced in this regard. 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 proposed measures seek to ensure that the work done by lobbyists "is duly transparent and regulated" and that there are "clear guidelines on how lobbyists should act in their relationship with politicians", something that has historically also been demanded by companies and associations in the sector for years.

Government Agencies

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 Citizens, as predicted by the polls (which went from winning the last election to losing over half of its seats), the recovery of the Popular Party in Catalonia (which doubled its results) and the appearance of VOX in the Catalan Parliament, the main development in this election cycle.

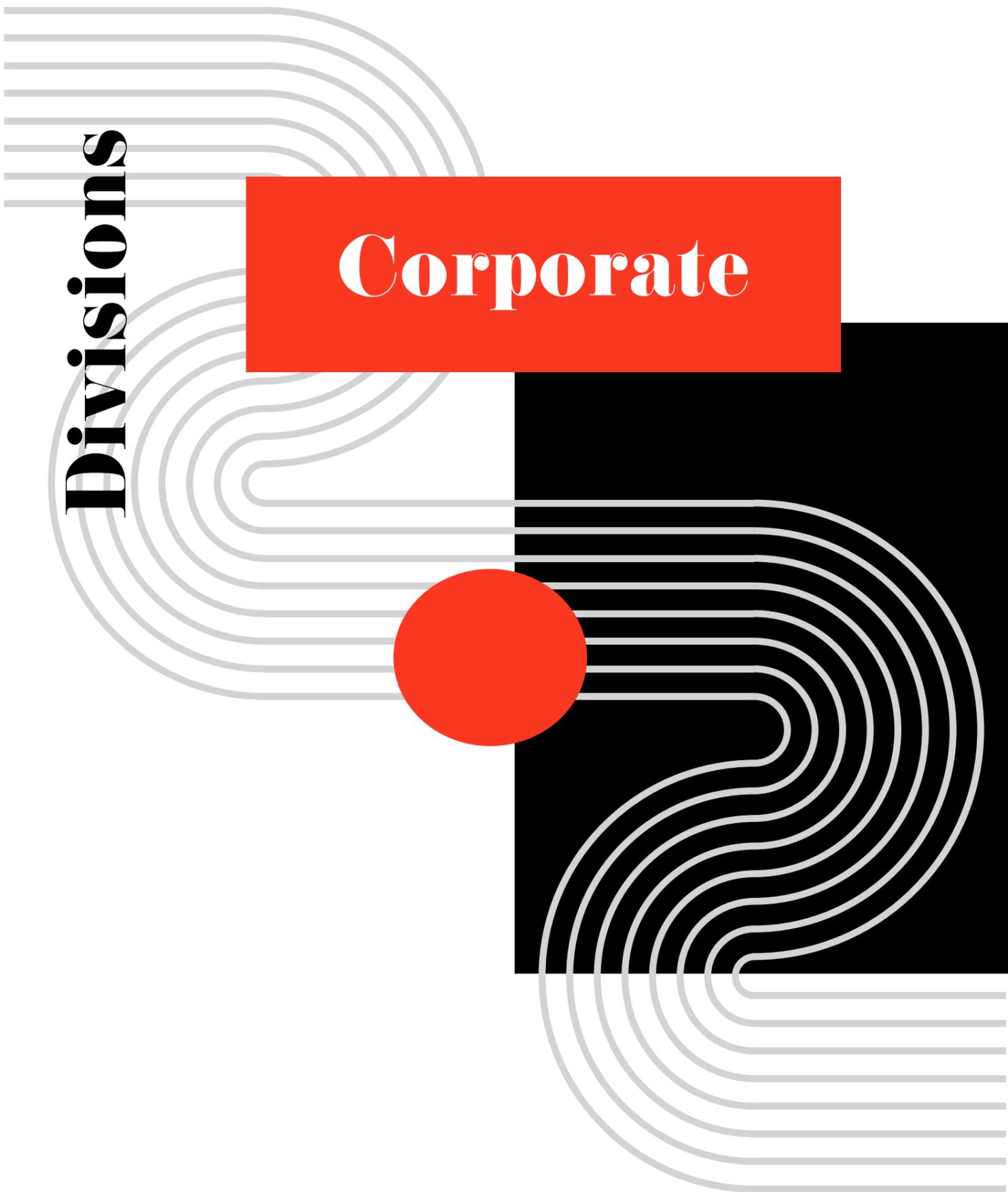
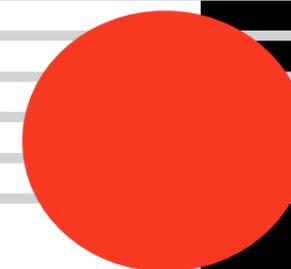
The results of these elections will undoubtedly set the strategy that political parties will follow nationally in 2021, depending on whether they are strengthened or weakened after these elections.

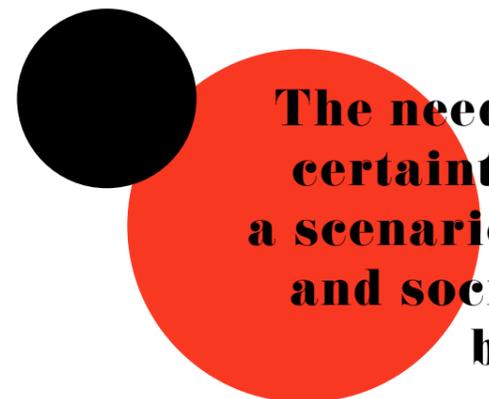
Catalonia's regional elections are once again influencing the national political agenda

Government Agencies

Divisions

Corporate





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

Corporate

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, where platforms have transferred the entire ecosystem of team relationships and exchanges to the digital realm. 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.

Communication and talent

The fight for talent will also play out through communication. Strategies to retain and commit those who are already part of the organisation; and outward to recruit new talent as needed. Despite high unemployment rates, many organisations in this market 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 offers spaces for professional and personal development, will define the messaging aimed at the talent.



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, whether these be clients, institutions, regulators, civil society, employees, etc., 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 internal owned media, in combination with paid and earned media. The goal is to project a new, adapted and coherent narrative that is solid and inspirational by using integrated communications for a new post-Covid phase.

It is about projecting a new, coherent, solid and inspiring narrative, based on an integrated communication for a new post-covid era

Corporate



Transmedia corporate strategies

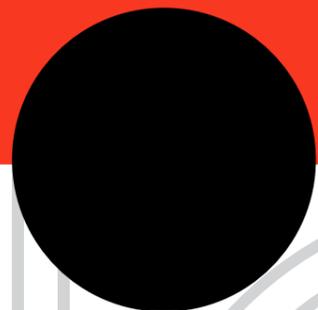
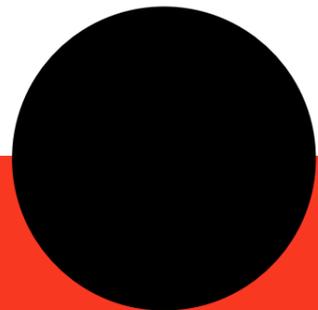
Also in the field of corporate communication, there will be a gradual advancement in storytelling and ways of using multi-support content from a 360 perspective. Companies that, beyond selling products or services, want to inspire, establish relationships and expand the contact, relationship and communication 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 transition from linear to matrix models. New disruptive agents are appearing, new emerging voices, new protagonists who gain space in the economy and society and who directly or indirectly impact an organisation's business and activity. Combined, innovative and intelligent communication and corporate relations strategies will be increasingly necessary to ensure an optimal presence on this new stage.

Corporate

Barcelona



Divisions

Merging marketing and communication

Marketing and corporate communication will hardly go their separate ways over the next few years. These two tools are increasingly destined to walk together. PR and marketing initiatives are becoming inseparable in driving the success of any company's business objectives. Beyond the commercial vision of marketing is positioning, and beyond the key sales messages is the communication of corporate experiences and values.

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.

Barcelona

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, having a global mindset and approach while being able to identify with the culture, ideals and needs of local audiences, will be an essential feature of regional communications as we start this new year.

This "glocality" will remain relevant, as it entails an approach that preserves the es-sence of the company or brand while at the same time helping it to be perceived by local audiences as something that is tangible and close. Regional communication will have to rely on proximity, on the ties it can generate and on the customisation of mes-sages based on geography if it is to be effective and powerful.

Barcelona

Regional communication will have to rely on proximity, on the ties it can generate and on the customisation of messages

Divisions

Financial

Communication and marketing for the financial sector

The Covid-19 crisis has forced those trends that were already evident in early 2020 to come to the forefront in 2021. And, as we have seen in other sectors of specialisation, relying on technology plays a key role, both for the development of 360 strategies and for the scope of any type of situation. But just as important is the story of the company.

In the financial sector, in addition to some of the tendencies mentioned for other sectors, the keys to 2021 can be summarised in two aspects: **an increased reliance on ESG (environmental (E), social (S) and corporate governance criteria) and more attention to the development of appealing and valuable content**, both for the media and for the end consumer of information, through the constant search for new formats and the exploration of new media. Investing to develop digital content strategies will gain even more relevance.

How to stand out? When there is information overload, creating an impact requires focusing on creativity while constantly respecting the company's mission and vision and its contribution to society.

When there is information overload, creating an impact requires focusing on creativity

Financial

Financial

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, including leading global players, to achieving compliance with the 2030 Agenda is unstoppable, as this is not an option and there is an increasing amount of legislation driving toward this goal. 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.

Having said that, the saturation of "sustainable" content is leading to some rejection, meaning that the use of new formats and media must incorporate creativity if they are to stand out, not only for the quality of the data they provide, but also for the fresh and original approach used to transmit information while maintaining rigour at all times.

The media, consumers and customers in general will ruthlessly judge the actions of companies, and their communication and sustainability departments will play a key role in this regard. Companies that commit the sin of greenwashing will face serious communication crises.

Format sophistication

Companies in the sector are investing in audiovisual technology and leveraging their work spaces, where they have more free space available - as a result of the arrival of teleworking - to set up their own recording studios. A monthly newsletter, whether for their employees or internal public, or for their customers or external public, is no longer enough. Companies need content - whether visual, audiovisual, written or interactive - that is high-quality and appealing, and a data-driven segmentation strategy.

This will also result in huge investment in technology to reform what has become their flagship store: the website. Just as the past saw the revolution and modernisation of bank offices, so the websites of financial and investment firms will be transformed, with improved apps, virtual reality and investment in the user experience in order to make it so personalized and digital that the customer's need for face-to-face contact will be minimal and basically driven solely by legal requirements. The usability of their apps will be almost as relevant as the fees and the products offered. The line between traditional and native digital entities is getting blurred.

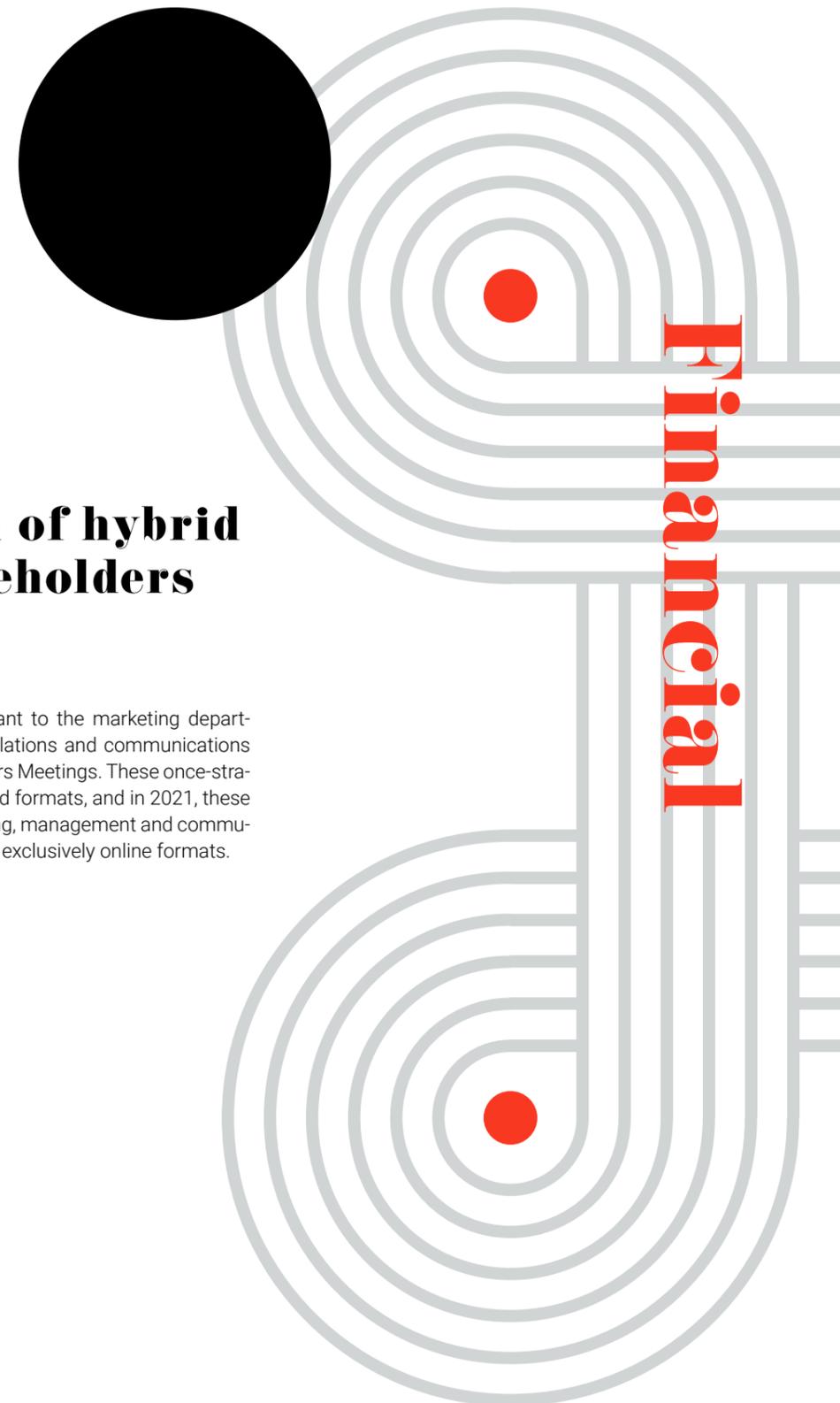
Financial

The websites of financial and investment firms will be transformed, with improved apps, virtual reality and investment in the user experience

Consolidation of hybrid General Shareholders Meetings

Another important point, not as relevant to the marketing department as to the company's investor relations and communications department, will be General Shareholders Meetings. These once-strategic gatherings have now also changed formats, and in 2021, these meetings will require even more planning, management and communication, as they transition to hybrid or exclusively online formats.

Financial



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