

A woman with long brown hair, wearing clear-framed glasses, a dark green scarf, and a beige jacket, is looking down at a black smartphone held in her hands. The background is a blurred city street scene.

The interconnection
between brand and customer.

SHARE OF LIFE®

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& STAN RAPP

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Introduction



Weave your brand into the fabric of your customer's day. That's how you gain Share of Life®.

We are in the midst of a marketing evolution that is moving much faster than most are aware. At one time, marketing was about contact. Then it became about engagement. Now it's about inhabiting your customer's world.

Stan Rapp was the godfather of one-to-one direct marketing. As the co-founder of legendary agency Rapp Collins Worldwide (now RAPP), he practically invented one-to-one direct marketing. Sebastian Jespersen's career developed in the age of engagement. He co-founded the global digital media agency, Vertic. Together they are redefining the way customers are created, nurtured and grown.

**The
interconnection
between brand
and customer is
Share of Life®.**

In order to function in today's marketplace, brands must change their focus from trying to trigger an immediate sale to understanding the consumer's lifestyle and routines. This will not only

change how they market, but how they do business, including what they offer, where they sell and how they deliver. The Share of Life concept presents a new set of imperatives for dealing with this life-changing moment. Embedding your brand into the customer's new mode of existence – what we describe as gaining Share of Life – is the key to success going forward.

Studies indicate that more than half the day is spent in front of a digital device. We live online. At a time when neural networks recognize spoken words better than people do, Gaining Share of Life rethinks the very nature of business activity in an ever-evolving digital frontier.



Traditional thinking gets challenged every 20 years or so. In the 60's we had mass marketing and a struggle for share of mind. The 80's gave us the information revolution and database marketing. At the turn of the century, booming internet usage set the stage for digital marketing. Now, a generation later, life beyond the tipping point requires a different model. The time has arrived for a radical new concept we describe as Share of Life. The new measure of a brand's strength is the share it gets of the customer's attachment to the internet.

The way to win the game is to gain and hold on to consumers who are obsessed with cyber activities. Think of Share of Life as the depth of a brand's multi-screen presence in a person's 24-hour day. The Share of Life doctrine calls for the brand and the consumer to benefit from creating value together online.

Share of Life teaches companies to be so entangled in their customers' lives that the brand rarely comes to mind. Full entanglement occurs when the customer interacts with your brand reflexively without even thinking about it, such as downloading from iTunes or streaming from Netflix or purchasing from Amazon. It's just part of the customer's day. That's Share of Life.

“You want people using your product because it's a part of your life, then they can't stop using it.”

SEAN PARKER,
AMERICAN ENTREPRENEUR AND PHILANTHROPIST

Slavish concentration on the smartphone recasts how companies acquire and retain customers. Far too often, the brand is out of sync with progress in the digital domain. Forrester notes that the fate of individual firms has never been more uncertain. They tell us that the window of opportunity is closing for companies unprepared to think differently. “Market dynamics favor those taking aggressive action and create risk for those who are still holding on to what has worked before,” state the researchers at Forrester. Mere engagement is yesterday's news. The most far-sighted managers find ways to entangle the brand and the user in supportive, ongoing experiences. The greater the Share of Life online, the greater the chance of retaining a customer forever.

Share of Life is more than simply developing a relationship between a brand and a customer. It strives to ensure that such a relationship will last a lifetime. Consider Share of Life as a paradigm shift taking place at the heart of brands within a digital-first age, an evolution from what marketers had traditionally known as ‘one-to-one’ marketing is now moving towards ‘one-with-one.’ Our rapidly changing digital age is constantly reshaping our attitudes toward brands and media, as well as our interactions with the world itself. In the past, products and services relied heavily on mass media, so that a generic message communicated to a wide audience would result in a potential purchase by some within that audience. We're now experiencing a dramatic evolution of how brands and customers interact—more directly and even more intimately. With automation and artificial intelligence reshaping everyday life, consumers expect more from the brand, but they are also willing to do more with the brand. Closing an immediate sale has become secondary to making your product or service an essential part of the consumer's digital existence.



The New Normal

As we recover from the extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic, digital has now become the primary fabric for any kind of intimate relationship between brands and customers. This is a time for brands to innovate and rethink their relationship model within the digital space, where they create meaningful experiences that support their business continuity.

People were already spending more than half their lives online. Retailers were struggling to survive the surge of e-commerce, newspapers were shutting down at an alarming rate and smart startups were upsetting industry after industry. Spending more time at home, we are becoming more dependent on the Internet for our shopping, entertainment, news and social interactions, the

new normal will be the next step in a digital revolution that has been underway for decades.

The need for meaningful change has been trending over the past decade. We have to ask ourselves if the projects and services we are providing truly enrich the lives of customers. The end-user must want to have the brand share in her or his new way of life.

What's critical is how many minutes or hours a day the brand spends making life better for customers online life. The extent of a brand's share in the life of a customer was vital before the Covid-19 crisis erupted and will be even more so when we get back to "normal."



Living Online

“We lived on farms, then we lived in cities and now we’re going to live on the Internet.”

AARON SORKIN,
THE SOCIAL NETWORK, 2010

These were screenwriter Aaron Sorkin's words describing what the founding of Facebook could mean for the way we live as a society. They've grown truer with each passing year, as companies have stepped up their efforts to put their online presence at the forefront of their brand.

People now have more daily experiences online than they do in real life. Instead of speaking to co-workers, we send emails. Rather than paying someone in person, we send it through Venmo. When we book a trip, we use travel sites, not travel agents.

"We increasingly do more of our shopping, more of our dating, more of our friendship-making, more of our learning, more of our news-seeking, more of our communicating and more of our selling goods, services and ideas," said economist and Nobel laureate Milton Friedman as he described our digital reliability across all types of monitors and screens.

Our online world provides a wealth of goods and services, so companies have now begun to strive for excellence in how their products are provided.

Today, the brands that have surpassed all others are those that are digital by nature. Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Google — without question — have all incorporated their brands into the daily routines of their consumers.

Google, as an example, has entrenched its brand into consumer lifestyle by both anticipating and addressing needs even before they're recognized by the people who have them. When Google finally introduces its long-awaited self-driving car, users will immediately understand the benefits of reading, working, or sleeping while commuting in the privacy and home-like

feel of their own vehicle. By inserting itself into a new part of the consumer's life and adding value where it has not been active before, Google will continue to gain greater Share of Life. Google focuses on adding value to things that consumers already want, such as an easier ride to work.

Google's Share of Life crosses multiple activities or areas of a customer's life. Google, of course, is more than a search engine; the company now produces phones and cars, while helping us navigate with Google Maps and connecting us through Gmail and features like Google docs and spreadsheets. Through basic need-filling and smart planning, there is seldom a 24-hour period where someone does not check their email, use Google Maps or perform a Google search. That's significant Share of Life.





The Fabulous Five

Jespersen and Rapp first conceived of “entanglement” by watching the evolution of Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Google, the “Fabulous Five” of transformational companies. Consumers immediately recognized their extraordinary usefulness and willingly incorporated these brands into many aspects of their daily lives. The Fabulous Five set a new standard for how brands could use an “entangled marketing”

model to effectively serve their consumers’ needs for a lifetime - literally. They saw that most brands were simply attempting to sell products, goods, and services that were not needed by those looking to buy.

However, evolutionary change often has unexpected consequences. Facebook was founded on the mantra “Move Fast and

“We are moving from the Information Age to the Age of Entanglement.”

STAN RAPP,
AUTHOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF RAPP AGENCY

Break Things". They've positioned themselves from the beginning as a One-with-One platform seeking an ever-increasing Share of Life. Users bought into Facebook as a way to deepen and expand their connections with other people. The recent exposure of their many data privacy issues demonstrates that they're also the most advanced and sophisticated One-to-One direct marketing model out there. Headlines that call out yet another lapse in their stewardship of personal information erode public trust. Jespersen and Rapp feel that Facebook must slow down and fix what's broken in order to regain their customer's confidence and maintain a position as a Fabulous Five league player.

Meanwhile, Amazon's evolution underscores the importance of a relevant business-to-consumer relationship. The company has morphed from its beginnings as an online bookstore to a global marketplace and an original content distributor. Amazon has reached a point where customers are not only looking at what it sells but what it creates.

Companies have tried for years to reach consumers through traditional methods such as television, print, and radio advertising. They focused on showcasing product features in an attempt to induce a sale. It worked for a while. This arms-length relationship is now a thing of the past.

The digital transformation provides marketers and professionals with endless quantities of insightful data on how we live our



lives. It has engendered a closer relationship between brands and consumers. We are moving from the Information Age to the Age of Entanglement.

Amazon is expanding its role in people's lives. Order anything online from diapers to diamonds, consume video entertainment, follow fashion trends, be a gamer, read e-books, get help from a personal digital assistant, and shop at newfangled grocery stores without cashiers.

There are so many more innovations in the works. The brand's Share of Life is about to go up another notch. The recent acquisition of PillPack, an online pharmacy, takes Amazon into health care. Brick and mortar pharmacies have reason to be nervous about their soon-to-be competitor.

We see the business press agog with talk of Amazon's global dominance and awe-inspiring growth. But the commentators are missing what is at the heart of the tech giant's brand supremacy.

Amazon wants to be part of our **every waking moment**



No other business can match the extent of Amazon's Share of Life as it plays out in the digital realm.

The battle for Share of Life never lets up. Hardly a month goes by without a member of the Fabulous Five moving into the domain of one of the other digital movers and shakers.

When Amazon introduced the Echo with the instantly popular

Alexa digital assistant, Google followed swiftly with its own smart speaker with the Google Assistant. Apple took to beefing up what Siri can do for you. Only time will tell who wins a place in your life as the most trusted electronic concierge.

The brand and customer have an opportunity to become an entangled pair as a result of this digital empowerment. It's a concept that allows both an individual and a brand to build on



what the individual wants. Smart marketers embrace it. It goes past engaging customers to nurturing a lifelong relationship through meaningful Share of Life.

But this new paradigm is not limited to how the Fabulous Five achieved their dominance. The Share of Life ecosystem can also be seen at such notable startups as Harry's, DietBet, Tasting Table, Warby Parker, BarkBox and Casper. In a single decade they turned the tables on frontrunners in industry after industry.

There is more than one way to measure Share of Life with your customers. Arriving at a truly entangled relationship takes place both horizontally and vertically. The difference lies in whether interaction with the user's internet-focused life happens across a number of different activities or is limited to a singular interest.

Google's horizontal Share of Life online extends across countless facets of an individual's life. You can roam the internet with Google Search, entertain yourself with YouTube, navigate the

world with Google Maps, learn a language with Google Translate, or power your phone with Android Apps. The list goes on.

Vertical Share of Life seeks to deepen the brand's support of a person's particular passion. DietBet dives into every aspect of weight loss. Tasting Table appreciates your love of wine. Gaining Share of Life vertically often is about Share-of-Passion.

What about your brand? Does a vertical or horizontal mindset work best? Will it be an all-encompassing plunge into an individual's life or dedication to a single aspect?

A new era demands a new set of priorities. Done properly, the brand's Share of Life or Share-of-Passion can be expanded indefinitely. What follows is an understanding of the process.

How well you apply the attributes of the Share of Life creed can be critical to success in the digital age. We'll show how both B2C and B2B companies cash in on this game-changing doctrine.

The 3 Pillars of Share of Life®



Begin the journey to a lifelong relationship between your brand and your customer. Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Google are constantly moving deeper into our daily lives. Let's take a quick look at the necessary elements to growing a greater Share of Life.

Achieve Zero Degrees of Separation

One element of the journey is to achieve Zero Degrees of Separation by closing the gap between brand and consumer.

Simple demographics are no longer enough in today's complex marketing environment. Market researchers and consumer experts are now delivering more than just numbers. They are analyzing giant data sets to provide information that can be acted upon by all divisions of a company that work with customers and prospects, including behavior patterns, product usage and trend forecasting. They are leveraging Artificial Intelligence

and Machine Learning in order to provide critical insights and opportunities.

The brands that are winning are those that achieve zero degrees of separation with a customer by essentially incorporating the brand into the person's lifestyle and daily routine without being perceived as intrusive.

Marketers need to seek more granular insights into the needs and pains of their consumers to close the gap from arms-length to zero degrees. Doing so will uncover new areas where brand messaging can yield a higher degree of resonance.



From One-to-One to One-with-One

The 'One-to-One' direct marketing strategy has evolved into the 'One-with-One' entangled marketing relationship

The word "to" implied that there had to be opposing sides. There are no need for opponents in marketing. When a brand and a customer become friends, the relationship takes off, and will often endure to the satisfaction of both. The brand's insights into the customer's desires fuel this evolution. A "data companionship" with both the consumer and the brand only serves to strengthen the relationship and keep it relevant over time.

Under Armour is betting on the notion that the right hardware, combined with large datasets enhanced by machine learning and powerful motivational tools can enhance their customers' lives and the company's bottom line. Under Armour sells athletic gear. They provide an app free of charge called Record that customers can use to track their daily fitness routines and goals. User data gleaned from the app is used to develop precise recommendations for individual consumers. They are creating products and services with the consumer, not just for the consumer. The company can spot trends as they unfold and respond to market demands in real time. By becoming entangled in their lives, they've proven that everyday athletes want to know more about the brand as well as do more with it.

In today's world, there must be a stickiness in the brand-to-consumer relationship. They cannot be on opposing sides.

A great example is the company's new effort called Make Athletes Better. The brand has launched a new line of clothing that literally turns human performance into big data. In fact, Under Armour is no longer just a manufacturer of high-quality sporting clothes, but has transformed into a high-tech fitness partner enhancing your life and workout experiences.

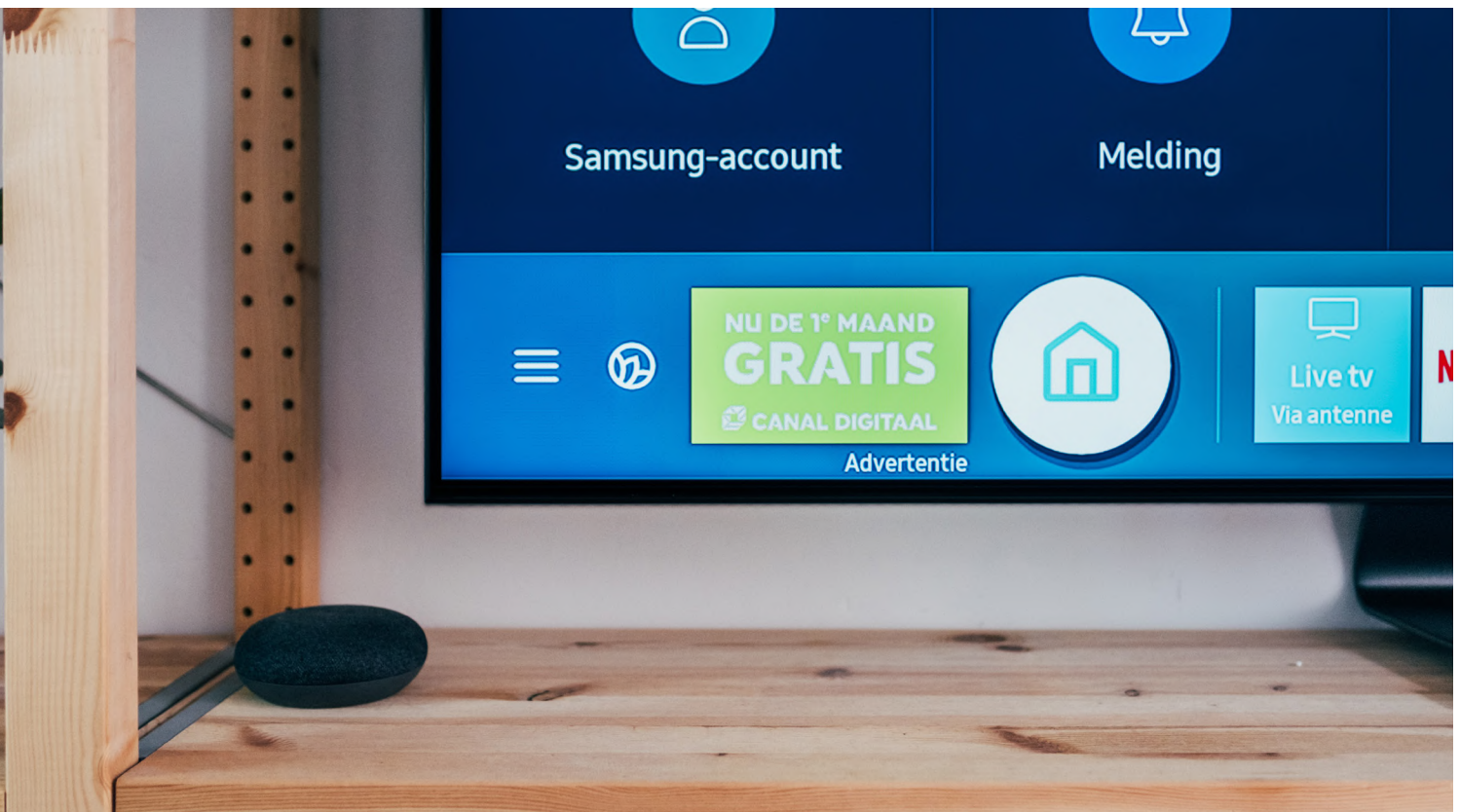
Live Entanglement

The third element needed to gain Share of Life is for brand and customer to become an entangled pair, a term Jespersen and Rapp borrowed from the world of quantum mechanics. In other words, whatever affects one, affects the other. Both the brand and customer emerge as winners in the relationship.

In 'One-to-One' marketing, brands and customers had separate definitions of success, where brands would get paid and customers would get a product. This antiquated definition of marketing is no longer the goal of the relationship. Instead, both sides are interested in gaining value and satisfaction, so that brands are rewarded with higher levels of customer loyalty while customers are provided with excellent goods and services.

The more you entangle people through rewarding, value-adding experiences, the greater share you will receive of that person's life.

This entanglement will only create further growth for a brand as it evolves into other aspects of a customer's daily existence. Just like the five digital leaders we've cited, a company should not stop at filling one need, but should look to fill other needs that a person may have on a routine basis. When a brand can take part in solving persistent problems of a customer, the entanglement only becomes stronger and has the potential to go on for future generations. Insights from a New York Times study on internet usage reveal that people wanted to do more than just connect through messaging and text. They needed to see one another to gain a real sense of belonging. What was formerly considered intrusive are becoming a better way to get things done on the Internet and the number of moments in the day where consumers and brands entangled in new experiences are steadily increasing.



The **Entangled** Brand

Since 2010, we have witnessed brand equity being created and destroyed at an unprecedented rate. Technology companies have risen, while traditional PCG brands and industrial companies have relatively declined. In 2020 Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook are the top 5 most valuable brands according to Forbes and Acoustic. Four of these make the list for the top 5 most valuable companies (market cap), with Facebook just missing out at number 6.

Brands with a traditional marketing model focusing on engagement have not been able to keep up with the technology companies. Whereas the ones that have rocketed up the charts are entangling, a constant process of sustaining a meaningful two-way relationship with people. These brands are the ones

that have managed to embrace technology as a part of ongoing efforts to understand and create deeper relationships with their customers. What technology has brought to light is that many brands established before the digital age are now scrambling to meet customers' needs and expectations, but that doesn't have to be a death knell.

The technology companies have understood the power of digital technologies to drive superior customer experiences by organizing their business models around a digital platform to create a seamless delivery model. Many technology companies are now such an integral part of everyday life that it may seem difficult to picture a time before them.

Rethink Branding: Let's Talk About Entanglement

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a change in customer behavior. No matter whether we are acting as consumers, making purchases on behalf of families and ourselves, or representatives of companies, making or influencing purchase decisions for the companies we work for, we have all accelerated our digital adaptation and consequently changed our habits. Despite the digital development that has transformed how business is conducted, many organizations' approach to branding has remained the same.

Many traditional brands are still investing most of their marketing efforts in promoting themselves. This is non advertising airing TV commercials or buying display ad placements that focus on self-promotion rather than crafting the customer experience. Brands do not operate in a vacuum. They live in a space that is consistently defined and redefined by their relationship with people. And this relationship is not quantified by a straightforward count of brand-people interactions — because, in many cases, that's just a click. The real unit of measurement we should be looking at is the count of meaningful interactions between the brand and its people.

Brands are created through digital interactions

Technology has given brands a global platform and the ability to interact with people at scale. It has fundamentally changed how people get information, communicate and engage with one another - it has changed the relationship between brands and people.

With all these digital interactions, brands have more information about people. However, data in itself is not worth much — especially if it's primarily used to harass people and intrude upon their online experience. What we need to understand is that the old adage, "information is power," is no longer the singular truth. Information is power only when it is interpreted and used to understand people to the ends of establishing a closer relationship with them. Through this understanding, brands have the potential and capability to create something magical and accessible.

We are starting to develop feelings

Nearly every brand today is trying to connect with their customers on an emotional level. This is being executed on many different levels with different methods, using everything from storytelling to ongoing, daily, and meaningful interactions. Some brands are starting to make use of neuroscience to understand the kind of relationship that they have with the customer, and evidence is starting to emerge that deep brand-customer emotions are not different from the emotions we associate with human beings. For most people, feelings or emotions are considered something sentimental felt internally in response to occurrences in their environment. Such reactions are generally fluid and intangible.

For brands, this reality opens a new world, but it also carries great responsibility. Business leaders must change their mindset and, instead of focusing on short-term financial gain, prioritize building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships.

Not Just Time; Meaningful Time

The Share of Life® concept - the deep digital interconnectivity between brand and customer on a day-to-day, minute-to-minute basis—hardly needs explanation anymore. We see it clearly woven into the fabric of our lives as we stay connected on Facebook and Instagram, shop for groceries and household goods on Instacart and Amazon, conduct business on products built by Microsoft and Google, and entertain ourselves on Netflix and YouTube.

How many minutes or hours do you actually spend each day with these companies? When you start to think about the time, it adds up quickly. RescueTime conducted a study in May 2020, evaluating the data of 14,000 users in terms of screen time. The daily average came out at 6 hours and 54 minutes a day. More importantly, our attitude towards constant connectivity has changed in short order over the last years. In the past, we might have bemoaned all that wasted time spent on screens. Now we see the value in that time and in the brands responsible for it.

Tech reporter Nellie Bowles, who for years has covered the dangers of too much screen time, wrote in the New York Times

this March that she has “thrown off the shackles of screen-time guilt” and embraced the positives it brings to her life:

The screen is my only contact with my parents, whom I miss but can't visit because I don't want to accidentally kill them with the virus. It brings me into happy hours with my high school friends and gives me photos of people cooking on Facebook. Was there a time I thought Facebook was bad? An artery of dangerous propaganda flooding the country's body politic? Maybe. I can't remember. That was a different time.

The Share of Life® Opportunity

We have developed deep relationships with certain brands, which have become increasingly important to us in recent years— for many, it is a relationship that has accelerated under the global COVID-19 pandemic. If they disappeared tomorrow, we would miss them in the same way that we would grieve the end of a close friendship or romantic relationship.

This growing body of research supports what we already knew: consumers have formed relationships with certain brands. Not merely transactional relationships, but connected, meaningful relationships. Brands make it possible for us to meet our needs and desires, to work, buy, play, and connect in ways that add value to our days. If the essential brands in our lives vanished tomorrow, we would be devastated and mourn the loss in the same way we would for a loved one.

Some may say it's concerning how dependent we are on companies, and it's fair to debate the best way to approach the boundaries we should set as individuals and as a society. But on the other hand, we are also extremely dependent on our governments—for everything from public safety to infrastructure. Depending on where in the world you live, you may have more confidence in these companies than in your own government to act in your best interests.

Brands that value this connection have a remarkable opportunity to achieve an entangled relationship with their customers. They can become an indispensable part of their customers' daily lives, without being intrusive, but only if they take the time to cultivate the intimacy and respect of a long-term relationship. Full entanglement occurs when the customer interacts with your brand reflexively without even thinking about it, such as downloading from iTunes or streaming from Netflix or purchasing from Amazon. It's just part of the customer's day.



My dear Google

Imagine you woke up tomorrow to find out that Google shut down, how would you feel? If Amazon stopped delivering packages, or if Apple were to close its doors, what emotions would that evoke? Without Google, you would instantly experience a vacuum in your access to information — whether directions, news, or finding out where to get the nearest COVID-19 test. “I’ll just google it” would be meaningless. What about losing the convenience of Amazon with its one-stop-for-all shopping? From feelings of irritation to genuine loss to perhaps even sadness, you would respond to losing a partner — a partner with whom you shared your life. Several studies have over the years analyzed and tried to prove that brands and products create the same response from the Limbic cortex and hypothalamus as humans or pets do.

Martin Lindstrom's published a New York Times op-ed back in 2011.

Lindstrom and his team used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) machines to study subjects' brain activity to judge whether iPhones are addictive in the same way that

alcohol or drugs are. They exposed subjects separately to audio and to video of a ringing and vibrating iPhone. Lindstrom wrote of the results:

But most striking of all was the flurry of activation in the insular cortex of the brain, which is associated with feelings of love and compassion. The subjects' brains responded to the sound of their phones as they would respond to the presence or proximity of a girlfriend, boyfriend or family member.

In short, the subjects didn't demonstrate the classic brain-based signs of addiction. Instead, they loved their iPhones.

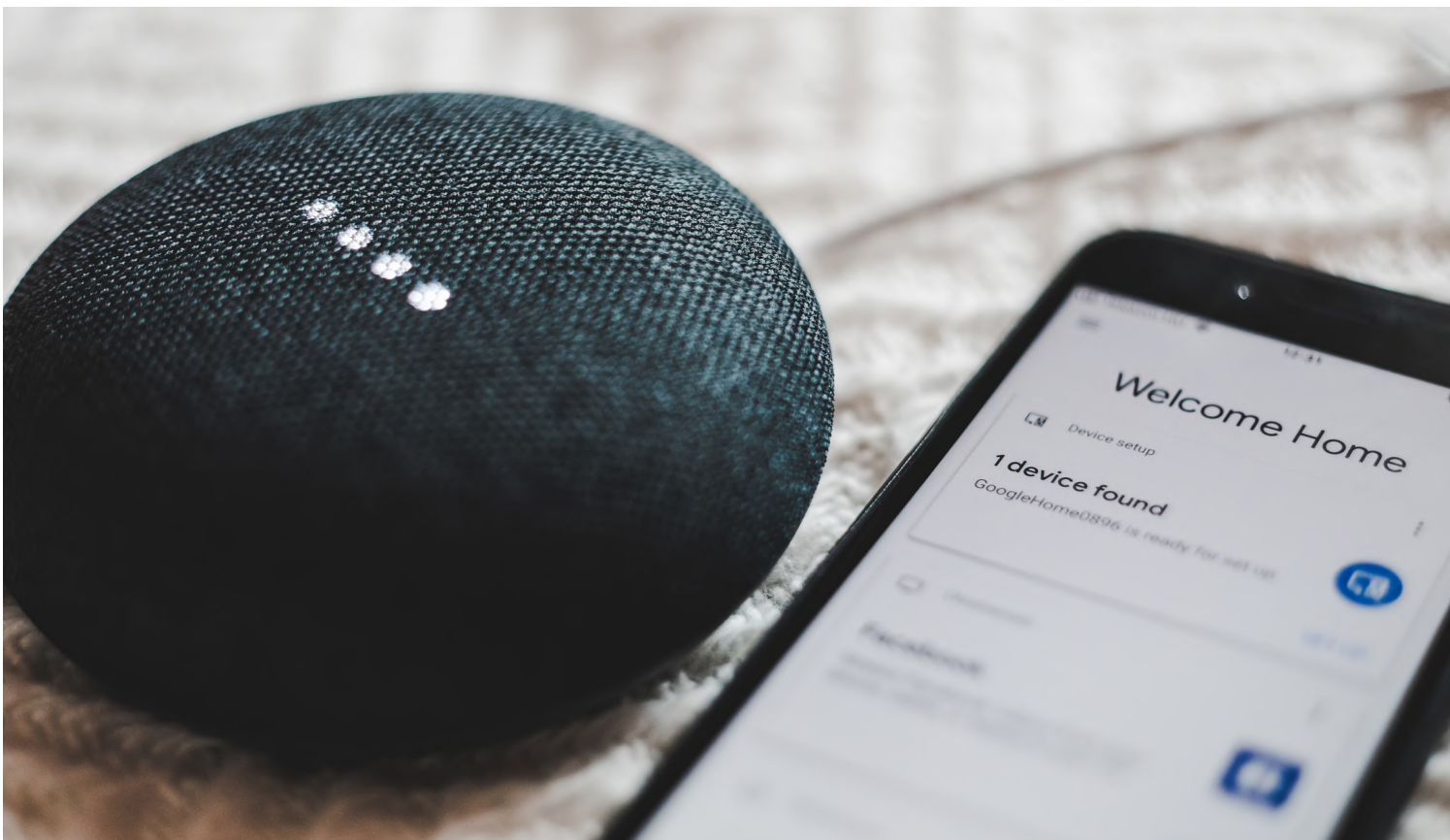
According to a 2019 Harvard Business Review article on the field of neuromarketing, which uses tools like brain scanning, eye tracking and facial coding to gain insights into consumer preferences, decisions and behaviors: "the science has advanced rapidly in the past five years and has begun to validate some of the audacious 'mind-reading' claims of Lindstrom and neuromarketing's other early proponents."

Brands & Consumers Are in a Relationship, it's time for businesses to grasp this reality.

Business leaders must change the mentality that customer relationship management means, "How can I sell people more at every interaction?" They would not try to sell something to a close friend or family member every time they talked, and they shouldn't treat their customers this way either.

Brands that achieve Share of Life® will learn to ask instead, "How can we serve this customer in the best possible way, so we can continue deepening our connection—together?"

An essential shift is taking place in the evolution of brands within a digital-first age. Brands can become authentically entangled in the lives of their customers by providing daily value, which only leads to greater Share of Life, or that unbreakable bond between brand and consumer. There is no greater aspiration in marketing, nor any better means of achieving it.



The Share of Life **C:R:E:E:D**



When it comes to applying Share of Life doctrine, the leading trailblazers are Amazon, Microsoft and Apple. It may well be one of the reasons these three titans were first in the world to hit a valuation of one trillion dollars.

Forrester recently published a research report titled What to Learn From Apple's Coming Brawl with Amazon. It highlights what matters now. "The entangled digital customer relationship will define the future of marketing" writes principal analyst James McQuivey. "A new metric, Share of Life, goes far beyond the Share-of-Wallet or even Share-of-Mind metrics. The most powerful brands of the future will measure what percent of the minutes of your day they can meaningfully support."

Whether your brand is operating vertically or horizontally, there is a simple yet impactful framework that can be used to put the Share of Life concept into practice, which we call the Share of Life CREED

- Commitment
- Reinforcement
- Empowerment
- Excitement
- Development

C

Ongoing
Commitment

R

Nonstop
Reinforcement

E

Digital
Empowerment

E

Trailblazing
Excitement

D

Constant
Development

Ongoing Commitment

Commitments come in many forms and include both existing customers and prospects and can be categorized by type, such as intellectual commitments and opt-ins, financial and transactional commitments or strategic partnership commitments. After defining and mapping customer commitments, there is a need to plan how to create mutually beneficial relationships with strategically important commitments. Start by giving something back to customers and prospects who have shown a commitment. This will move relationships from a single commitment to an ongoing commitment. To accomplish this, the company needs to engage in meaningful, relevant communications and interactions that are based on data and insights.

"Buy and say good bye" was the operational model in the analog past. Digital tools make it easier than ever for brands to get consumers to "Buy and Stay" now. The strongest commitment you can get upfront is the sign-up for a subscription.

Nobody does better than Amazon with its Prime program to create ongoing commitment by enthusiastic users. The revolutionary approach was launched in 2005. Subscribers got free two-day shipping for their e-commerce orders at an annual charge. The program has evolved to include a dazzling array of added benefits enjoyed by a hundred million members.

With Prime, you keep getting more - and paying more. What Amazon gets is a gold-plated ongoing commitment with an annual fee paid in advance. The faithful consumer and the e-commerce giant share a deeply entwined existence.

But even the smallest brands have much to learn from how this e-commerce behemoth and other pacesetters add to their



Patagonia commits to take back from customers anything they ever made, that in the "Reduce, Repair, Reuse, Recycle" mantra

Share of Life. Ask yourself: "In what way might I convert these insights into a lasting relationship with my users."

Yet, a subscription model is not always enough. It will remain a share of wallet not a Share of Life if not done properly. Early adopter Birchbox fell into this trap. It believed that a financial commitment from their customer every month was enough. It wasn't. It was easy for competitor Ipsy to outperform Birchbox by simply focusing on empowering their existing customers through a beauty community. Instead of chasing new customers, you must create marketing programs that retain and empower existing customers for a successful subscription strategy. Doing so helps generate word-of-mouth through customer satisfaction, which in turn will attract new customers.

Non-Stop Reinforcement

The second Share of Life credo is nonstop reinforcement. Consciously reinforce the strength of your customer's commitment to your brand. Bolster whatever first attracted the consumer to your offering with a burst of beneficial surprises online. It's critical to make the customer feel special and to build trust by always listening.

Looking at today's business scene, we found a contender that outdoes even the mighty Amazon in boosting Share of Life with nonstop reinforcement of what brand and user do together – the New York Times.

With a record number of subscribers, the focus shifted to reinforcing the value of a subscription. Romancing the reader began with a massive giveaway of the remarkable cardboard VR headset created by Google. This unexpected bonus for more than a million print subscribers arrived along with the Sunday paper. People loved it. Then, a few months later, the headset giveaway was mailed to 300,000 digital-only subscribers. Readers became viewers of VR films produced by Times journalists. The first documentary "published" was about three children set adrift by war. Since then more than 20 VR films have been created.

All of the above adds up to unrelenting reinforcement of the Share of Life enjoyed by NY Times with subscribers. This nonstop reinforcement makes subscribers feel like privileged members of an exclusive club. For the Times, it creates a Share of Life with subscribers that goes well beyond reading the daily paper.

After all, when is the last time your brand sent a meaningful thank you to your best customers?



How often do you reinforce the bond with your users? Without nonstop special treatment you may see your Share of Life with users slip away.

Ben Cotton, the paper's Executive Director of Retention and Customer Experience talks about his winning strategy in an online NiemanLab interview. Cotton commented, "My team believes that by investing in the subscribers we have, and making their experience better and better, we'll be able to help all parts of the business. By reinforcing that they're getting things that no one else is getting we think we'll be able to convince them to keep paying and to boost our subscription business."

In May 2020, The New York Times Company announced that it had surpassed 6 million subscribers. Nonstop reinforcement created by Cotton's team is going to boost Share of Life far into the future - while other papers are likely to watch their Share of Life with readers diminish.

Digital Empowerment



The new digital life of customers provides the brand an opportunity to attain zero degrees of separation through data and insights and by doing so understand what's important for the customer. Empower the internet-focused customer with rewarding and enlightening online experiences that leverage data and insights, so they can do more with the brand's product or services.

Our choice for No. 1 champion in digital empowerment to shake up a sluggish category is John Hancock. The insurer began changing how life insurance is viewed with the launch of the John Hancock Vitality program in 2015. Adding years to their consumer's life became the new mantra for selling a policy.

The big breakthrough came when the insurance innovator made a startling announcement: "You can earn an Apple Watch for only \$25 when you become a John Hancock Vitality member."

Make the \$25 first payment. Next, walk, run, bike, swim or do your exercises with the support of the watch designed to improve your health every day. The Vitality Points you earn serve as monthly payments for the watch.

About half of the Vitality members end up paying \$0 each month. Once Vitality members began relying on feedback from their devices, their step count on average increased by 2,000 steps a day. Research indicates a 20 percent gain in other physical activity as well.



Digital empowerment provided by the Vitality program plays a vital role in reaching the member's fitness goals. According to Tal Gilbert, CEO Vitality Group USA, the device inspires member activity across all customer profiles. "We know that active people are likely to live longer – it's great to be able to help them do just that."

From the point-of-view of the insurance company, the longer a person lives, the longer premiums are collected. The greater the number of payments, the greater the profitability of the policy. Another plus for John Hancock is the likelihood of satisfied members of the Vitality program dipping into other financial products. From the insured person's point-of-view, there is better health, longer lifespan and lower cost for insurance. Both sides win with digital empowerment.

Added Share of Life leads to added Share-of-Market.

John Hancock and the Vitality program member are an "entangled twosome" in a mutually rewarding, lifetime relationship. To highlight an even deeper entanglement, notice how the fitness devices also become more entangled in one's life. It's a symbiotic relationship between brands.

How might you empower the buyer of your product or service? Who might you partner with to tap into the most potent digital technology out there for inventing a never-seen-before experience?



Trailblazing **Excitement**

The excitement that first surrounded a breakthrough product or service may be long gone. So, what do you do to keep your Share of Life with customers from drifting away due to the mind-boggling distractions of the Internet? Automated communication will not create the sufficient excitement to build a bond that keeps customers coming back. The answer is obvious. Bring about tribalizing excitement.

But most companies rarely do it. Only the Fabulous Five do so to perfection. Can anything equal the hoopla surrounding release of the latest iPhone? Or the excitement of a wildly trending video on Google's YouTube? Or the anticipation of Amazon opening brick and mortar stores that look like your online shopping cart?

Sophisticated technology and insights will help brands understand how they can authentically add value to what is deemed important in their customers' professional lives.

A simpler way of adding value and excitement is through providing thought leadership in a compelling format that leverages new ways of interactive communication. It can provide the needed customer excitement that will forge entanglement because the brand feels right and does right by the consumer.

Ongoing Development



The fifth and final tenet of the Share of Life CREED is Major development. Nothing remains the same for very long in the digital economy.

Customers' needs and expectations are constantly evolving. To maintain a meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship between brand and customer, companies and their brands must keep pace with this change through the adoption of an 'Ongoing Development' mindset.

Ongoing Development infers innovation, the investment in technology and identification of new business models. While there are many technology areas to potentially invest within - IoT, AI, blockchain, machine learning, AR, 5G to name just a few buzzwords du jour - understanding the strategies to leverage them, and the new skill sets required to operate them, will often define their future success.

The strategies and skill sets are fundamental to know how to seamlessly connect the experience layer - which is in essence the value for the customer - and the various backend systems that record those interactions, which is conversely of value for the company. Too often technology is invested in with an 'inside-out' company-centric perspective of its integration - how best to fit it to the systems and technologies that already existing internally - rather than a more 'outside-in' viewpoint that would focus on what drives the best customer experience. The realization for many is that a "platform" needs to be built

that can provide scalable, efficient, and seamless means of delivering a great customer experience, while finely balancing the internal operational efficiency conundrum.

Many technology-empowered companies have long understood the significance of building and marketing products and services based on "platforms". The success rests on two key elements: firstly, that the platform supports their business need, and secondly that the platform enables a new type of business model. These platform-based business models fundamentally change how companies operate by providing an agility with which they are able to innovate and reconfigure themselves to go after new opportunities with shorter time to market and deeper customer insights.

A platform that empowers companies to build a Share of Life with their customers, understands how to facilitate all interactions and experience throughout the customer lifecycle in a coordinated and structured fashion. The technology architecture is thus centered around optimizations, as new and improved technologies become available, for the purposes of further entangling with the customer.

An entangled customer expects a consistent, connected, personalized, efficient, and meaningful experience that is delivered seamlessly across touchpoints. Yet, that requires a 360 degree view of the customer and their behavior across touchpoints, which is notoriously difficult. Only 34 percent of

executives say they have such a single-view-of-the-customer from their aggregated customer data. Siloed data and siloed applications continue to impede business objectives. This has an impact on the customer, as many feel that the brands that should know them, simply don't – even lacking in the most basic areas of customer knowledge, such as purchase history and personal preferences. Most customers expect a Netflix-experience, one where the company or brand understands you and recommends what you likely want or need. This experience takes a connected infrastructure and allows companies to harvest ongoing insights about a customer's behavior to deliver continuous improvement in the relationship. Most companies fall short however as they lack the guiding principles on which to base such a relationship.

Ongoing Development should be guided by the following principles:

Enforce trust: Consumers will only share their lives with companies and brands that they trust. Ensuring protection of user data and abiding with various data compliance laws like GDPR is a minimum – and a legal must – but the most trustworthy companies are those that go beyond the minimum. Providing 'Opt-in' methods, rather than 'Opt-out' ones, for data collection and communication, enables customers to be fully aware and in agreement of their data being used. Full transparency of which data is being collected, how it is being used and why it is of value for the user, is informed.

Ensure a value exchange: Customers expect to enter meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships. Hence, brands must provide something in return for customers providing their data. Companies must develop and deploy technologies that allow for quick and easy ways to entangle and for 1-with-1 interactions with their customers, validating that they have their best interests at heart.

Agility and customer focus: As new technologies and consumer behavior continue to evolve the way that companies do business, they will need to evaluate their genuine points of differentiation and their economic sustainability over time. Acknowledge the fact that customer behavior will continue to change over time and a meaningful relationship with the customer will optimize opportunities throughout their lifecycle.

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"At Tesla, if Elon decides he wants a picture of a bunny rabbit on every gauge for Easter, he can have that done in a couple of hours"

ASHLEE VANCE,
AMERICAN BUSINESS COLUMNIST AND AUTHOR OF
TESLA, SPACEX, AND THE QUEST FOR A FANTASTIC
FUTURE





hours." said Ashlee Vance in his book 'Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future'

Compared to traditional auto makers, Tesla tends to favor speed and agility in all their development and manufacturing endeavors. Resembling more of a tech company, Tesla cars are always 'in record' mode; constantly recording data such as speed, braking, acceleration, short videos from car's external cameras to recognize lane lines traffic signs etc. Tesla uses this information in manufacturing self-driven cars, but it has leveraged it to create a superior dashboard experience for its customers, empowering them with data about their car's performance.

With the Tesla integration users can, with just a few clicks, remotely monitor their car's battery usage and charge details, set up mobile alerts, create trip logs, geofencing, and monitor monthly mileage usage.

Ongoing development will drive the impetus to continually develop and optimize platforms that allow for a meaningful dialogue along the customer journey. Companies that focus on the true value for the customer and how it will support their journeys will have the deciding differentiation.

Any brand, whether it is B2B or B2C, in retail or in oil and gas, is able to apply the CREED framework and is capable of earning Share of Life® with its customers.

Starting points for improvement can be found in the tenets of the Share-of-Life CREED: create ongoing Commitment, create nonstop Reinforcement, create digital Empowerment, create renewed Excitement, and, finally, create major Development. Excelling in as many of these precepts as possible can impact Share-of-Life with customers - the foremost imperative in marketing supremacy.

"We are all now connected by the Internet, like neurons in a giant brain." – Stephen Hawking

In effect, brands and customers are now joining together to provide value to each other. Whether you are a B2C or B2B marketer, the art of your practice has changed for the better. A new era demands a new set of priorities. Done properly, the brand's Share-of-Life or Share-of-Passion can grow indefinitely. Gaining Share-of-Life is a clear pathway for coming out ahead in an Internet-focused society. With customers today being digitally obsessed individuals, marketers and business managers must recast long-held beliefs.



Time Spent with Your Brand: **What Does it Represent?**

According to the website [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com), there are over 10,000 quotes about time from notable people throughout history. While it would be a fun game to see who could cite the greatest number of expressions about time, perhaps ancient wisdom said

it best: "Time waits for no one." While the earliest record of this phrase is dated back to 1225, the effects of COVID-19 in 2020 have certainly unsettled our notions of time and connections in a work-from-home world.

Benjamin Franklin reminds us that "Lost time is never found again," which is perhaps a profound statement about life during the "pause." However, the ancient Greek philosopher Theophrastus, who succeeded Aristotle in 323 B.C. as the head of the Lyceum, stated: "Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend." And today that expression of time is at the heart of the definition of a meaningful brand.

There are three critical questions about time that brands should ask themselves:

1 How much time are your audiences spending with you?

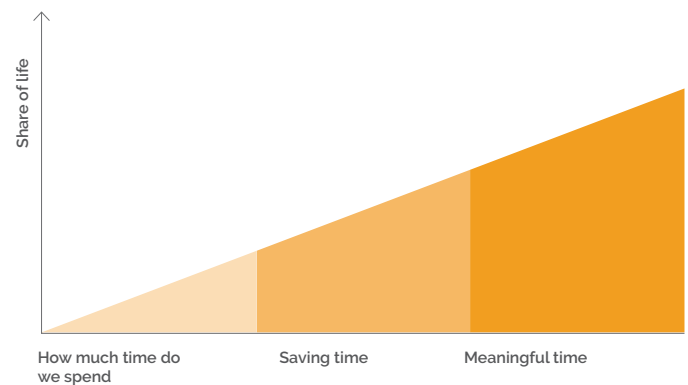
Think of this as a measure of attention that audiences devote to your brand. We see this as the foundation for our concept of a "Share of Life®" mindset which is focused around a "value adding" relationship between the brand and consumer. If little or no time is spent with a brand, there is no potential for achieving any Share of Life®.

2 How much time are you saving them? Is your product or service giving time back to your customer? If time is indeed the most valuable thing a person can spend, then it also means that saving time for your customer is also highly worthy. Think of the many benefits of an exercise product like Peloton in comparison with going to a Fitness Center. The time saved in travel alone might only be 30 min per visit, but with 2 visits per week over a year it accounts to 24 hours. How to even think of doing research without Google? Would I have to go to a library or log on to Lexis/Nexis? It's hard to imagine how much time and life Google has created.



People today are simply attracted to making the most of your time.

3 Is the time spent with your brand considered as meaningful? With a Share of Life® mindset, customers will embrace what brings meaning to their lives and, in doing so, they will work together with the brand for the same future vision. The greater the meaning, the larger the Share of Life®.



Share of Life® is more than simply developing a relationship between a brand and a customer. It strives to ensure that such a relationship will potentially last a lifetime – and is not just linked to a product or service. Consider Share of Life® a paradigm shift taking place at the heart of brands within a digital-first age, moving from what brands had traditionally known as "one-to-one" communication toward a "one-with-one" mentality. We're now experiencing a dramatic evolution of how brands and customers interact – more directly and even more intimately.

With a Share of Life® mindset, your customers will value the time spent with your brand, and as that time grows to be more meaningful, brand and customer will work together toward a lasting future.



What's Next?

The Shared-Life Operating System

The Fab Five behemoths of the Internet – Apple, Amazon, Facebook, Google and Microsoft – personify the awesome power of an intertwined presence in the life of users. They already own an immense part of each person's multi-screen day. But the reach of these giants continues to extend far beyond their core activity, steadily growing Share of Life with consumers.

As the Fab Five continue to innovate and grow with new services and capabilities, they are destined to move into every facet of our electronic existence. They know you better than you know yourself. The more intertwined the relationship, the more lasting and meaningful it will be, and the more difficult to get untangled. What will the future look like?

Futurist Amy Webb, writing for the New York Times, points to where this is taking us: "Sometime in the next decade, all the start-ups and hardware manufacturers and the rest of the A.I. ecosystem will converge around just a few systems. All of us will have to accept a new order and pledge our allegiance to one of a few companies that now act as the operating systems for everyday life."

Our shared life with one Internet titan won't be compatible with another company's huge system. Once data, gadgets,

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appliances, homes, cars, healthcare, entertainment and other components of everyday life are entangled, brand and customer will be locked in an all-inclusive relationship.

Just as you need a shared operating system to power your computer, you'll also need a Shared-Life Operating System to make your entire world function better online. This new kind of operating system dictates how a big tech company interacts with users to:

Organize access to digital products, services and tools with rewarding outcomes for both brand and customer.

Specialize in adding value to specific facets of existence.

Maximize whatever leads to a better life for the greatest number before competition can respond.

The pace of change in the next decade is sure to boggle the mind. The bits in a conventional computer's operating system will be replaced by the qubits in quantum computers running thousands of times faster. Only time will tell which goliath will emerge as the dominant presence in customers' lives.



"the Share of Life Agency"



VERTIC

Born digital.

**Committed
to improving
digital lives.**

In 2002, a group of people came together with a shared belief: Through digital transformation, organizations could form deeper and broader connections with their customers. We defined this as Share of Life®.

That group became Vertic and grew into a global organization, spanning time zones and continents, cultures and languages. Vertic is comprised of committed individuals, working seamlessly together to realize a shared vision for the future.

Today, we no longer go online, we live online. In this new context, Vertic is dedicated to enabling our clients' customers with the best possible digital life.

We create great digital experiences to ensure relevant connections that cut through the clutter of today's world.

By constantly challenging the status quo and refusing mediocrity Vertic is inventing tomorrow's experiences - through more value, more meaning and more purpose to everyone.

Meaningfulness is ingrained in everything we do, from building rewarding relationships with our clients, to coming together globally as one team, to sharing insightful knowledge with

our partners. A Vertic experience is one that is valuable, memorable and impactful.

We achieve meaningfulness through our craftsmanship; always steered by data-driven creativity with one goal: to help companies become influential and value-adding partners in customers' lives.

Author Bios

About Sebastian Jespersen

Jespersen is a respected innovator, a highly regarded strategist, and a pioneering digital whiz. He founded the Vertic digital agency a decade ago. Vertic now has a footprint on three continents and serves some of the world's leading brands including Microsoft, SAP, Dropbox, Goldman Sachs, Eli Lilly, and Merck.

Jespersen has successfully taken a start-up from the early days of the .com era to extraordinary year-on-year growth. He is a digital guru who has sparked platform breakthroughs for LinkedIn and other online pacesetters.

His presence in social media has a widespread following and he is connected to a network of online influentials. Jespersen is the co-author with Stan Rapp of *Release the Power of Entangled Marketing* published by the Internationalist Press.

About Stan Rapp

Rapp is the co-founder of the highly regarded, RAPP agency that grew into a \$600 million global enterprise. His second turn at CEO took McCann Relationship Marketing from \$30 million to over \$200 million in revenue within four years time.

Rapp is the co-author of six books first predicting and then tracking the transition from mass marketing to individualized

marketing. Over 250,000 copies of his MaxiMarketing best-seller were sold in more than a dozen languages. Other titles followed – *The Great Marketing Turnaround*, *Max-e-Marketing in the Net Future*, *Reinventing Interactive and Direct Response*, *Release the Power of Entangled Marketing*, written with Sebastian Jespersen.

He was elected to the Direct Marketing Hall of Fame and was named by *Advertising Age* as one of the 101 stars that shaped the history of advertising in the 20th century. Most recently he was chosen for the 2016 Marketing Legends award by the business school of UT Dallas.

