

## **New tools and scenes for the media play**

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Every revolution claims to create a new world. The past drops into the darkness of an uncivilized time. The same happens in the actual debates about social media. The fascination of technological innovations is clouding the view for the basics of content and communications that are the drivers of media marketing. Media have always been social media. Communication is socialising and every generation uses the tools and platforms of their time. The intentions are part of the human condition. Technology extends the reach of our communication space to satisfy the curiosity and need to shape our identities and communities through storytelling.

In the end, it has always been about power, love, money and happiness ... the dramas of the human media play.

Swiss newspapers care from the very beginning about the activation and integration of readers' wisdom and opinions. The *Tages-Anzeiger* launched the first issue with the slogan "From everybody for everybody." The *Landbote* presented himself as a wanderer who wanted to make lots of friends and share stories with them. The *Beobachter* started with organising a consumer community who shared critical observations of products and services. Potential buyers were asked in the *Schweizer Familie* if it was worthy to buy a specific petrol oven. The radio organised life events, call-ins and music chosen by the listeners. The television organised a vote by asking the audience to switch off and on electronic devices. Creativity in finding ways to communicate with the audience has been impressive. Not to forget the classic tool of writing letters to the editor and call services for the public. Today in the newsroom editors check the comments on the websites and social media. They also discussed the phone calls and letters from the public received previously.

From the beginning newspapers, magazines, television and radio motivated the audience to become a part of a media brand community. This happened on all levels; content, comments, recommendations, discussions, services, events and conventions. To achieve success in media marketing, you must build a strong relationship with communication partners. The audience are not just users, but part of a virtual space of a community. That is and has been the only way to monetise the media industry. The media business model consists in the conversion of community members into costumers who are ready to pay for editorial services and in selling advertisement to an attentive public. For the

analysis of the shifts in media relations to its audience or readers, we must distinguish between the technical impacts, the stories the media brands share and last but not least, the business models.

Digital media offers new tools and scenes for the media theater. The pace of technical innovation profoundly does shake media decision makers. Technological change comes with structural and cultural change. The ongoing financial crises and the uncertain economic outlook, forces the media industry to invest carefully. Therefore most of the Swiss editors, who work in small markets with limited resources, do not jump into the new social media world. They cannot afford to invest in editorial staff playing with digital tools just for fun. The return on investments must be guaranteed in a rather short time. The Swiss media therefore engage with caution in social and digital media.

Step by step, the Swiss media establish communication platforms on digital media. Legacy media should carefully build on their traditional strengths in orchestrating communities and respectfully integrate new communication platforms. It's worth sticking to a brand identity and not compromise it for short-term actions as fashion victims do. Audience interactivity and participation are part of the success of print, television and radio in the analogical century and it will be for the wise brands in the digital century (suggestion 'digital age').

The Swiss media are very strong in community building. In the industry it is crucial keeping an eye on every touch point with the audience; first the reader/listener, the viewer, then the target group for commercials, the client for a single copy or subscriber and the buyer of specific services and products. Community building crosses the borders of editorial content. Engagement means always making an investment that requires a pay back sooner or later.

The year 2012 began with a scandal in Switzerland. Philipp Hildebrand, chairman of the Swiss National Bank, had quit and his wife invested in 500 000 US Dollars and sold them almost two months later with a profit of SFr. 60 000. The SNB, a few days before, had fixed a higher exchange rate. Right wing politicians and journalists revealed the transaction. The judgment of Hildebrand's acts had been therefore strongly politicised. The *Tages-Anzeiger*, Zurich's renowned newspaper, asked the readers on the online platform, that if Hildebrand had no other choice then should he step down? 17082 users voted yes and 6416 had opposed.

[http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/dossiers/schweiz/dossier2.html?dossier\\_id=1217](http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/dossiers/schweiz/dossier2.html?dossier_id=1217).

This is a very high participation rate on a journalistic survey in Switzerland (it's not scientific research). The opinion expressed does not take on the view of most commentators and decision makers. In this case, interactivity with the audience pointed out a different attitude towards the scandal from the media and politics where comments had varied a lot. The NZZ, the second Zurich based newspaper, added a twitter stream on live reporting on their online site, but they didn't keep it for too long because the quality of the comments was very low.

Switzerland has a strong tradition of a direct democracy. Recent surveys show that most of Swiss citizens do not engage in political debates on social platforms. Not everybody wants to communicate in public. Most people prefer sharing information, opinions and feelings in a private context. Digital media substitutes former communication tolls like phones, letters and meetings. Editorial media is only a small part of the consumption in the digital world. From strong media brands, most people expect the same as they would from a successful theater production, with a gripping play, convincing actors, astonishing scenes and sensitive sounds. Sitting in the chairs the audience wants to be seduced, served, and respected. They comment by applauding and discuss the presentation elsewhere.