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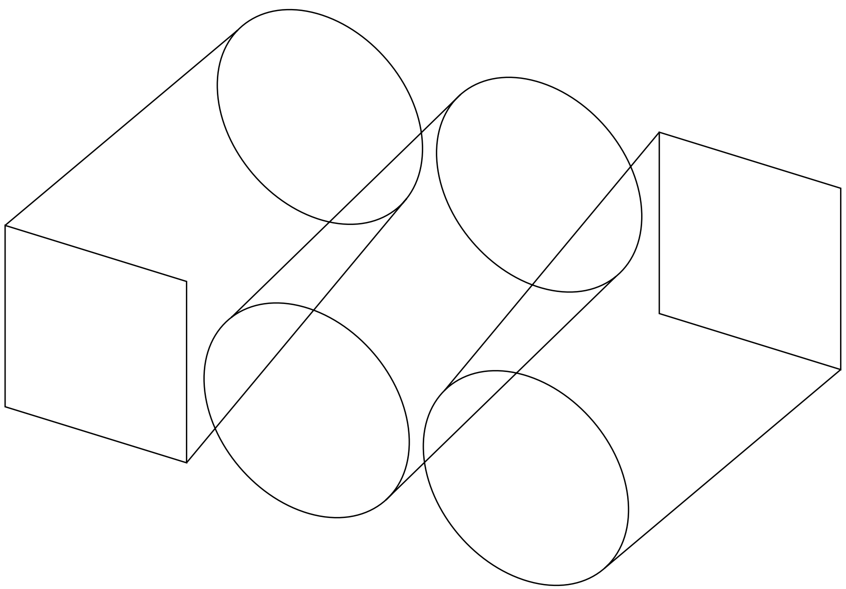

Interbrand Creating and managing brand value™

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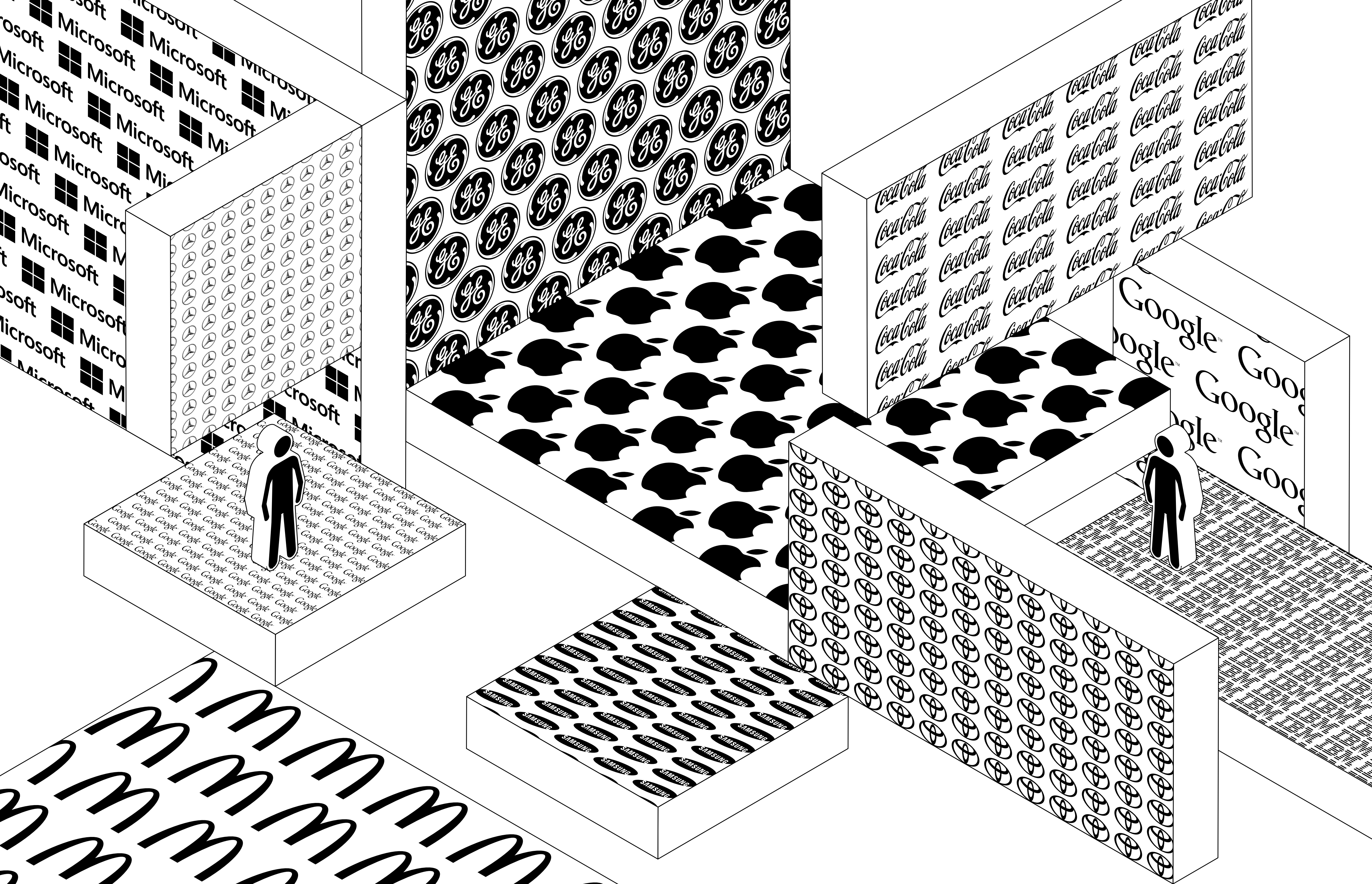
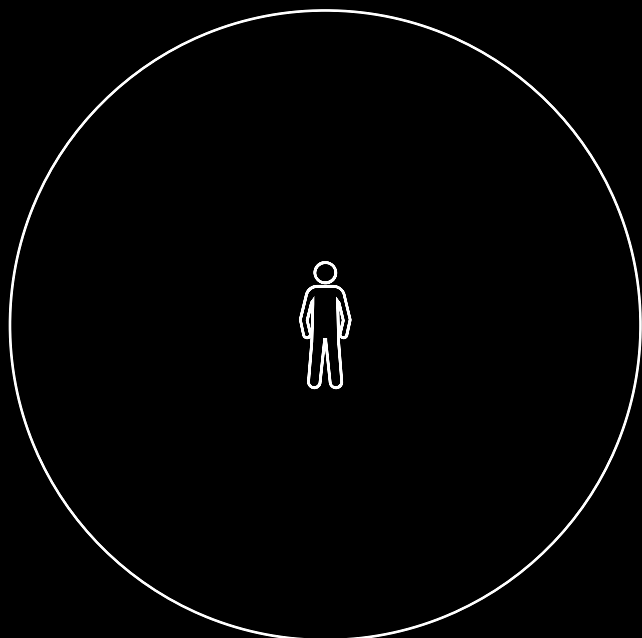
AGE OF YOU

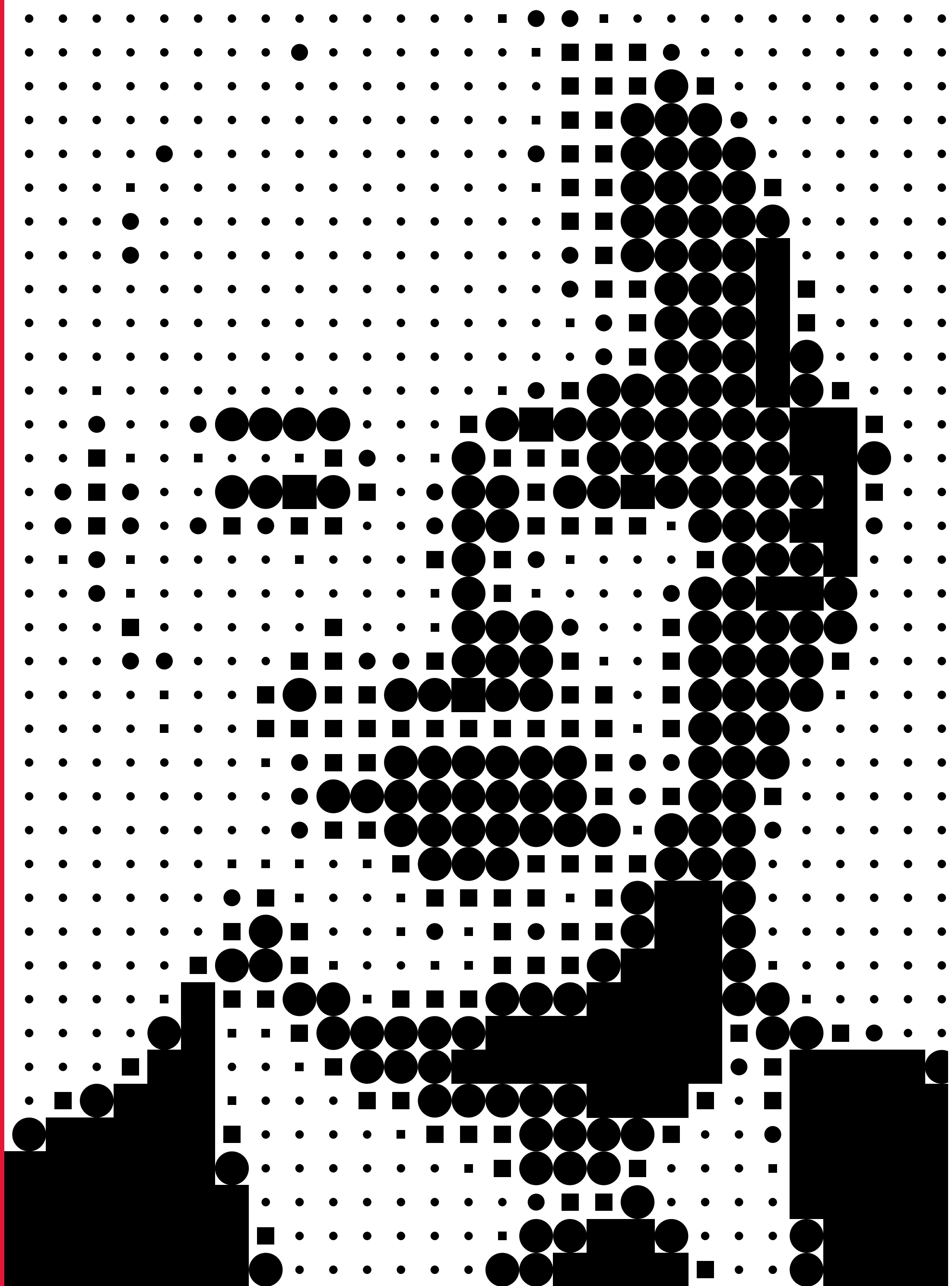

Microsoft
Google
Coca-Cola
SAMSUNG

YOU

Jez Frampton
Global CEO, Interbrand



The future of business is personal



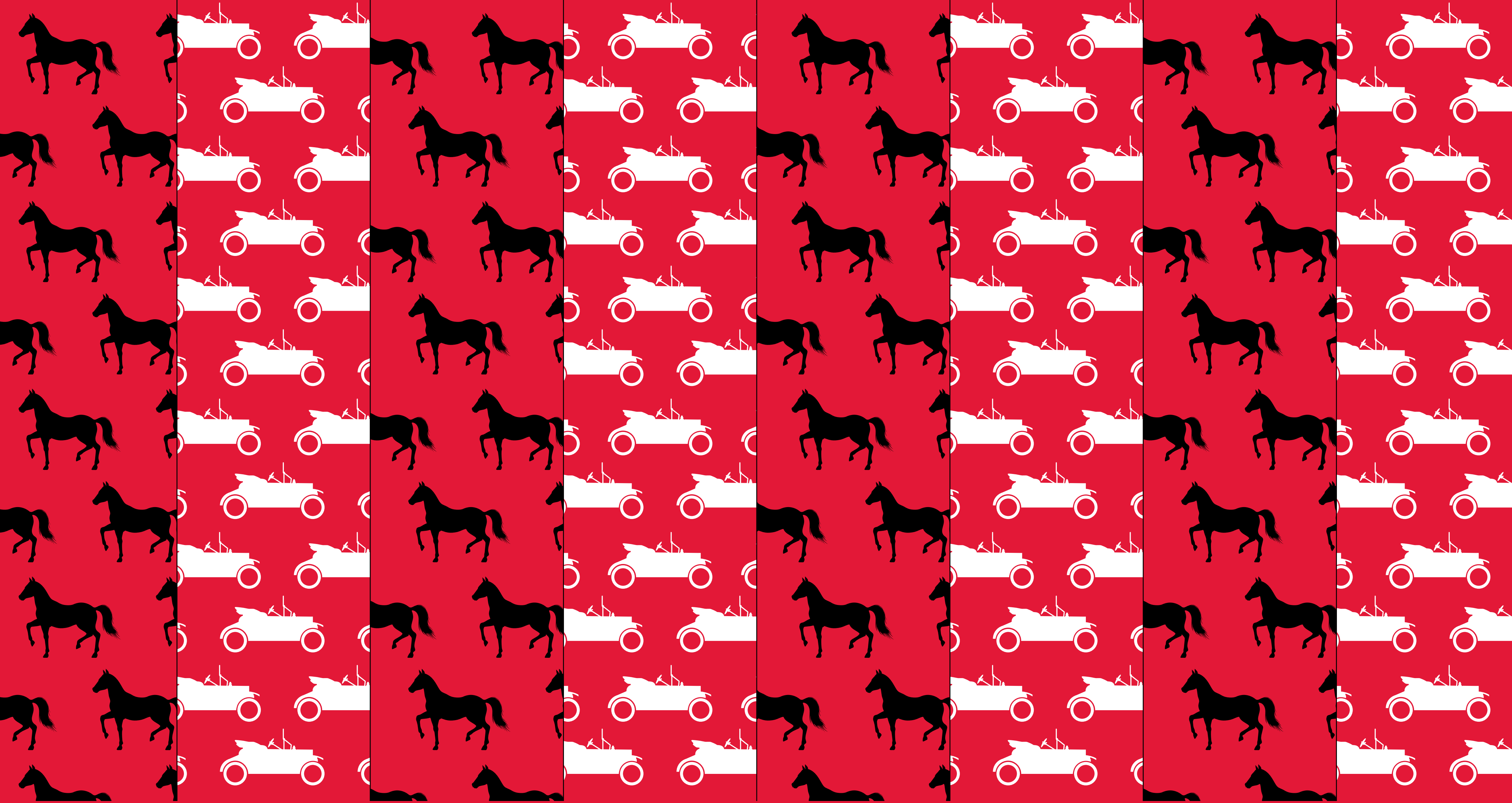
It's sometimes hard to appreciate the power of a historical moment. An era isn't always defined by one seismic event, but sometimes by a thousand little tremors shaking – and reshaping – the world.

We are living in such a moment, quite literally on the cusp of a new age. As futurist David Brin theorized in late 2013, each century effectively begins in its 14th year. However dominant influences and technology from the previous century appear to be, new elements come to the fore and shift the mood. The arc of the rising century becomes perceptible. If that is so, then 2014 is no ordinary year.

For those of us in business, it may well be a pivot point – a time to pause, connect the dots, gain a broader view, and align our visions and our plans with the unstoppable currents carrying us forward.

But what are those currents? Which great advances and ideas have already set the future of business in motion? That is what we are going to explore in this 2014 edition of Best Global Brands.

But, first, we need to understand the nature of the moment we sit in as well as the history that has brought us to where we are now.



In this transitional space, a period when horses and cars coexisted on city streets, a torch was passed. The long agrarian epoch that had defined and governed human life for so long was coming to a close, and a completely new chapter in human experience was about to begin.

Horses and cars

In the early 20th century, life was changing at a pace never-before seen. From the introduction of electricity, indoor plumbing, and refrigeration to washing machines, telephones, and life-saving medical breakthroughs, modern progress was raising the standard of living on all fronts. And then there was the development that turbocharged modern civilization's ascent: the automobile.

For thousands of years, the most efficient mode of transportation usually involved a horse. By revolutionizing mobility, the car made things possible that simply weren't possible before. People now had more freedom to choose where they could live, where they could work, who and what they saw – and how often. It ignited a desire to travel, to explore. The car moved us collectively from a limited, static state of being to a more dynamic, expansive one. It catalyzed an evolutionary leap.

But did people at the time perceive it that way? When the car emerged, were they aware of its profound implications for society? Probably not. If they weren't, it was because the transformation, though rapid from a historical standpoint, was gradual – and the new, for a time, still mingled with the old. Yet, among the most perceptive, there was surely a moment, a "horses and cars" moment, when the trajectory of the future and magnitude of the oncoming cultural shift became evident.

In this transitional space, a period when horses and cars coexisted on city streets, a torch was passed. The long agrarian epoch that had defined and governed human life for so long was coming to a close, and a completely new chapter in human experience was about to begin.

The shifting of the ages

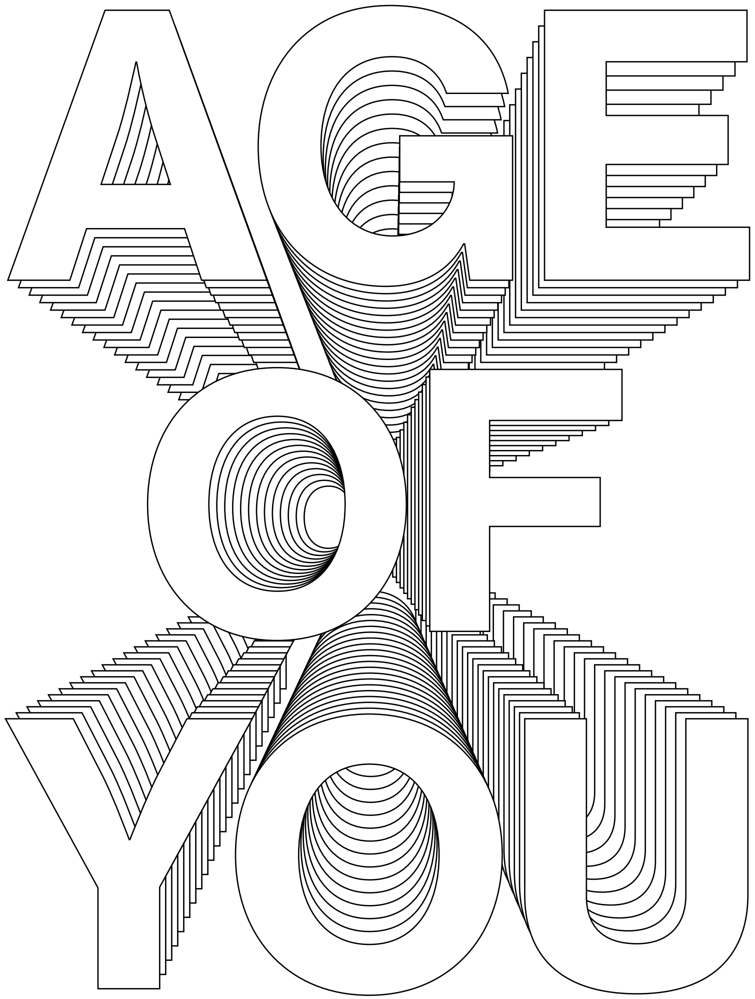
Given the rapidity and immensity of the changes we've witnessed since the dawn of industrialization – and the degree to which these changes altered the way we began to live and do business at various points – our modern era can be divided into distinct periods of time marked by distinguishing features and events. Through the lens of branding, we at Interbrand have determined four ages that have defined and reshaped business: the Age of Identity, the Age of Value, the Age of Experience, and the forthcoming Age of You.

Many of us in business know that the term "branding" referred originally to a crude mark of ownership, literally burned into the hides of cattle. While this is an interesting bit of trivia, it also gives us some perspective and helps us realize just how far the art and science of branding has come and how sophisticated it has grown.

In the post–World War II era, this mark of ownership evolved into a powerful symbol of differentiation and identification in the period we refer to as the Age of Identity. Mass communication media like TV, radio, and widely circulated print material that characterized this age elevated the status and significance of brands among both consumers and business owners. Here is where a relationship was cemented, trust was built, and a symbiotic evolutionary process began to accelerate. In the Age of Value, beginning in the late 1980s, quantifying the intangible aspects of branding proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that brands had concrete value – and that leading companies needed to take these business assets seriously.

As products and services multiplied exponentially and businesses gained a deeper appreciation of the role brands play in delivering satisfying and differentiated experiences to consumers, a new age – the Age of Experience – was under way. But coinciding with these deeper realizations about the importance of experience was the emergence of a phenomenon that would change the world forever: the internet. Benefitting immensely from the rise of digital and, later, mobile technology, savvy brands like Apple grew stronger and new category-killers like Google, Amazon, and Facebook soon reset customer expectations and significantly raised the bar for brand experiences.

Today, the multiplication of channels has pushed brands to strive for greater levels of clarity and consistency across touchpoints and necessitated the creation of ecosystems of integrated products, services, information, and entertainment: both physical and digital. And, due to another game-changer – social media – consumers are more empowered than ever before, more influential than ever before, and expect seamless interactions, responsiveness, 24/7 accessibility, customization options, and high levels of personalization. In a sense, they increasingly expect brands to *know* them.



The Age of You

As digital technology continues to weave its way into every aspect of our lives, and more of who we are is captured on servers and hard drives, the Age of Experience is giving way to a new era – one of ubiquitous computing. The shift in this direction is observable nearly everywhere and virtually unstoppable. In fact, we have reached a "horses and cars" moment of our own. Think, for instance, of people casually reading in a train or in a café these days. Some are reading books and magazines, and a growing number are engaging with a device – smartphones, tablets, laptops, and e-readers. The significance of this is greater than it appears.

The nearly 600-year-old innovation that kicked off the original information age, the printing press – widely regarded as one of the most influential events in human history – has surely passed its peak, and is swiftly being replaced by text via digital interface. In the way that the automobile effectively ended the long agrarian period and ushered in the comforts, conveniences, and wonders of modernity, digital technology is ending the long reign of the book as a repository of knowledge and ushering in a world of extreme speed and efficiency, instant access, interconnectedness, intelligent machines, vast data sets, and powerful algorithms.

Like the printing press in its day, digital technology is revolutionizing the way we live and process information, impacting modes of production, improving traditional work processes, and increasing the demand for more devices that can do more things for us. And the key to getting our devices to do more for us is our data.

Now that the world is filling with devices, and more people own not only one, but several (including wearables), the world is quietly being filled with something else: sensors. As ecosystems become more fully integrated, these sensors (on our bodies, in our homes, and in our devices) will be able talk to each other in new ways. Already, our devices can check our pulses, count the calories we have burned, and calculate how close we are to our personalized fitness goals; they can save energy in our homes by controlling thermostats and lighting; they allow us to pay our bills and remind us when payments are coming up; they can track where we go and make recommendations based on where we are; and they keep us connected to everyone and everything we care about most.

All this activity, of course, generates massive amounts of data, which, if analyzed properly, can reveal the insight brands need in order to understand who customers really are and what they really need. As more of us come online as data repositories, machines get smarter, and all devices are working in concert, supply chains will reorganize around individuals. Ecosystems will become "Mecosystems" – ecosystems that revolve around and cater to you.

From the way we manage our personal brands and share pieces of ourselves through various social media platforms to the increasingly personalized world of commerce – which uses purchase histories and location-based services to tailor products, events, services, and offers to whoever we are, wherever we are – our data is creating value for ourselves, for brands, and for the system at large every second of every day.

Brands that seek to lead in the Age of You, ruled by Mecosystems, will have to recognize the human in the data, uncover genuine insights, and create a truly personalized and curated experience.

To put it simply, the future of business is personal.

Jez Frampton
Global CEO,
Interbrand

Jeff Bezos
CEO, Amazon

"What's dangerous, is not to evolve."

“Branding” began as a mark of ownership, trust, and quality, and evolved into a more sophisticated symbol of differentiation and identification in the post–World War II era. As commerce became global and markets became saturated with products and services, the need to differentiate increased, as did the need to help customers identify and choose. Companies adopted slogans and mascots, built a presence on radio and television, and, by the 1970s and ’80s, manufacturers fully recognized the way in which consumers developed relationships with their brands – and how they could infuse them with a clear proposition, values, and special qualities to broaden their appeal. In the Age of Identity, the purpose of a brand was to serve as a market positioning identifier, setting businesses and individual products apart from the crowd, both visually and verbally. These foundational characteristics of a great brand are still valid today, but the world became more demanding.

Identity

In 1988, Interbrand undertook the first Brand Valuation, and the Age of Value was born. Companies began to view brands as valuable business assets that contribute significantly to financial performance – driving choice, securing loyalty, and affording the owner a premium. Slowly, the language of "cost" relating to marketing expenditure became the language of "investment." Alongside this, came an increasing recognition that brands were not built simply through communications, but through a combination of business activities covering products and services, environments, culture, and communication – all of which created the total brand perception held by customers and employees alike. The growing wealth of data led to a more sophisticated approach to brand management, tied to economic value, and ultimately the creation of a growth agenda based upon a robust and strategic methodology. No longer an afterthought or a responsibility relegated to the marketing department, brand strategy became not only intertwined with business strategy – it became business strategy brought to life.

Value

With the recognition of brands as valuable, strategic assets, came a deeper appreciation of the role brands play in delivering satisfying and differentiated experiences to consumers. Benefitting immensely from the rise of digital and mobile technology, category-killing brands like Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple have reset customer expectations and significantly raised the bar for brand experiences. Interactions are seamless, contextually relevant, and increasingly based around creating an ecosystem of integrated products, services, information, and entertainment: both physical and digital.

In this information-saturated age, it's no longer enough to have big data. These vast data sets must be mined for big insight, big empathy, big intuition, and big dialogue. The frequency of and immense opportunities for communication require higher degrees of internal clarity and commitment to the brand to ensure consistency across organizations and enable speed to market. Further, the customer – empowered by social media in the Age of Experience – now has more control than ever. In this world of two-way conversations, advocacy, influence, and engagement are the new rules for brand building.

Experience

Pay

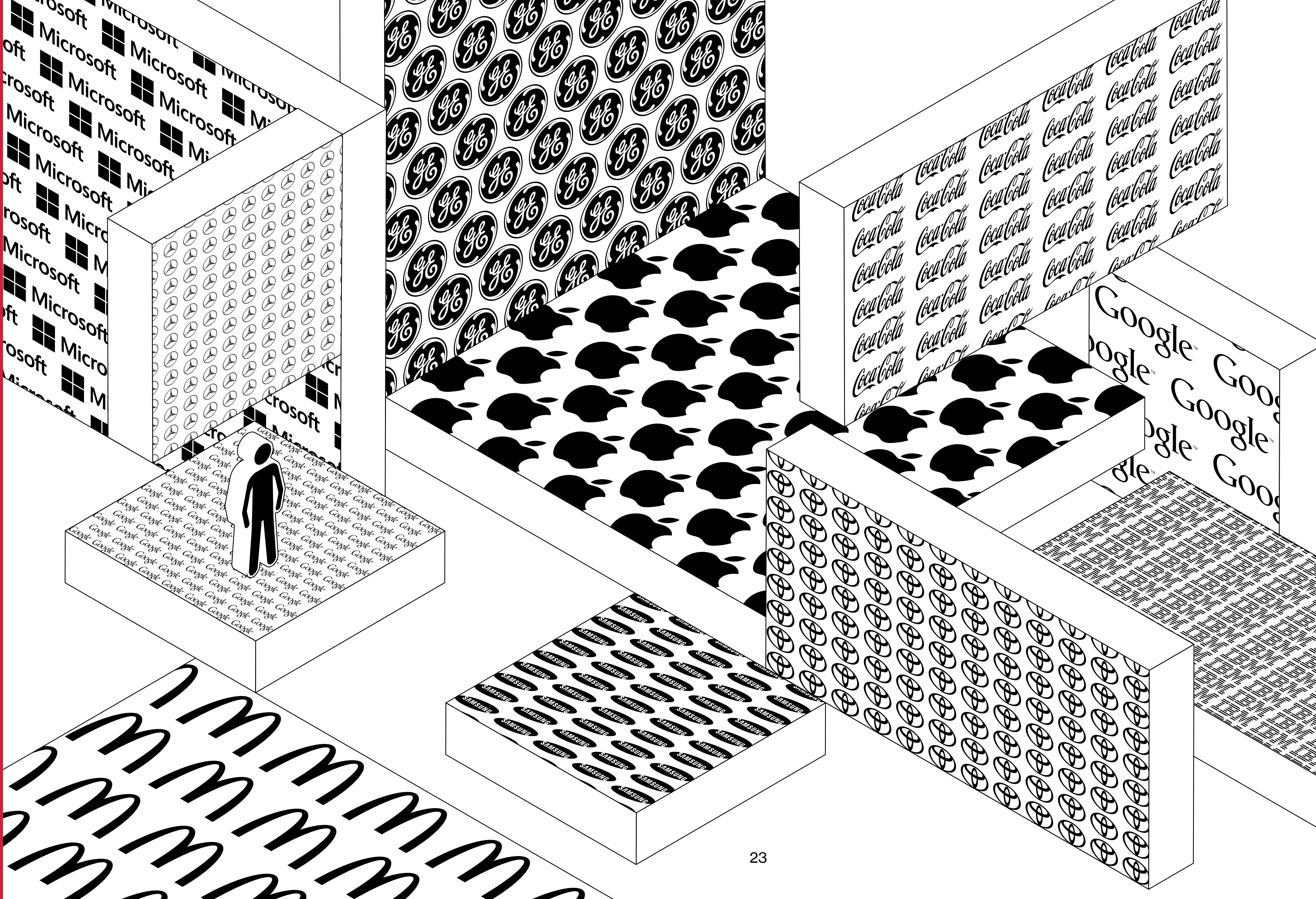
Google now

KINECT

As digital technology continues to weave its way into every aspect of our lives, and more of who we are is captured on servers and hard drives, the Age of Experience is giving way to a new era – one of ubiquitous computing. When ecosystems are fully integrated and sensors (on our bodies, in our homes, and in our devices) can talk to each other in new ways, supply chains will reorganize around individuals and ecosystems will become Mecosystems. Connecting businesses to people – and people to each other – brands will then serve as enablers of both business and personal value creation.

From the way we manage our personal brands and share pieces of ourselves through various social media platforms to the increasingly personalized world of commerce – which uses purchase histories and location-based services to tailor products, events, services, and offers to whoever we are, wherever we are – our data selves are known, communicating, and growing every day. Brands that seek to lead in the Age of You will have to recognize the human in the data, uncover genuine insights, and create a truly personalized and curated experience – an ecosystem to satisfy the Mecosystem.

YOU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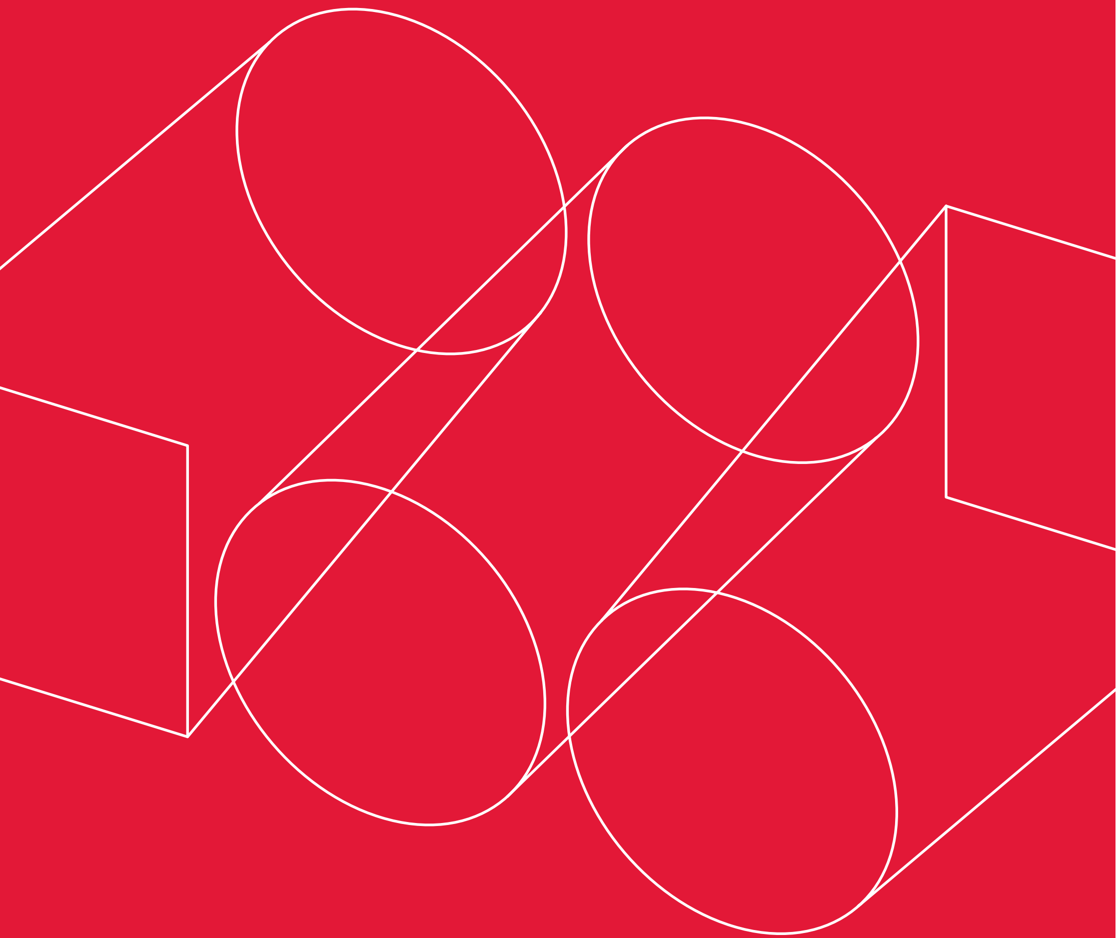


01	+21%	118,863 $m
02	+15%	107,439 $m
03	+3%	81,563 $m
04	-8%	72,244 $m
05	+3%	61,154 $m
06	-3%	45,480 $m
07	+15%	45,462 $m
08	+20%	42,392 $m
09	+1%	42,254 $m
10	+8%	34,338 $m
11	+7%	34,214 $m
12	-8%	34,153 $m
13	+14%	32,223 $m
14	+6%	30,936 $m
15	+25%	29,478 $m
16	+8%	25,980 $m
17	-8%	23,758 $m
18	-9%	22,845 $m
19	-9%	22,552 $m
20	+17%	21,673 $m

01 Apple
05 Microsoft
09 McDonald's
13 Disney
17 HP

02 Google
06 GE
10 Mercedes-Benz
14 Cisco
18 Gillette

03 Coca-Cola
07 Samsung
11 BMW
15 Amazon
19 Louis Vuitton

04 IBM
08 Toyota
12 Intel
16 Oracle
20 Honda

21 +16% 21,083 $m	22 +16% 19,875 $m	23 +11% 19,510 $m	24 +7% 19,119 $m
25 +4% 17,340 $m	26 +15% 15,885 $m	27 +5% 14,470 $m	28 +9% 14,358 $m
29 +86% 14,349 $m	30 +8% 14,078 $m	31 +23% 13,716 $m	32 +4% 13,442 $m
33 +8% 13,142 $m	34 +3% 13,024 $m	35 +9% 12,456 $m	36 +12% 12,126 $m
37 +6% 11,702 $m	38 +7% 11,406 $m	39 +18% 10,876 $m	40 +16% 10,409 $m

41 +2% 10,385 $m	42 +5% 10,264 $m	43 +3% 10,162 $m	44 +4% 9,882 $m
45 +27% 9,831 $m	46 +18% 8,977 $m	47 +3% 8,758 $m	48 +10% 8,737 $m
49 +2% 8,672 $m	50 +5% 8,215 $m	51 +3% 8,205 $m	52 -3% 8,133 $m
53 +14% 8,120 $m	54 +6% 8,000 $m	55 +15% 7,702 $m	56 +23% 7,623 $m
57 -8% 7,472 $m	58 +8% 7,449 $m	59 -2% 7,378 $m	60 +11% 7,171 $m

21 H&M
25 SAP
29 Facebook
33 HSBC
37 Canon

22 Nike
26 IKEA
30 Pampers
34 Budweiser
38 Nescafé

23 American Express
27 UPS
31 Volkswagen
35 J.P. Morgan
39 Ford

24 Pepsi
28 eBay
32 Kellogg's
36 Zara
40 Hyundai

41 Gucci
45 Audi
49 Siemens
53 AXA
57 Thomson Reuters

42 Philips
46 Hermès
50 Colgate
54 Nestlé
58 Cartier

43 L'Oréal
47 Goldman Sachs
51 Danone
55 Allianz
59 adidas

44 Accenture
48 Citi
52 Sony
56 Nissan
60 Porsche

61	**-4%**	6,812 $m
62	**-2%**	6,641 $m
63	**+11%**	6,334 $m
64	**+8%**	6,303 $m
65	**+14%**	6,288 $m
66	**+14%**	6,177 $m
67	**+7%**	6,143 $m
68	**-2%**	6,059 $m
69	**+10%**	5,998 $m
70	**+7%**	5,977 $m
71	**+9%**	5,936 $m
72	**-3%**	5,646 $m
73	**+8%**	5,594 $m
74	**+15%**	5,396 $m
75	**+16%**	5,382 $m
76	**+22%**	5,382 $m
77	**+9%**	5,333 $m
78	**+9%**	5,194 $m
79	**+5%**	5,124 $m
80	**+2%**	5,102 $m
81	**New**	5,084 $m
82	**+10%**	5,036 $m
83	**+9%**	4,979 $m
84	**+6%**	4,935 $m
85	**+5%**	4,884 $m
86	**+2%**	4,842 $m
87	**+13%**	4,772 $m
88	**+13%**	4,758 $m
89	**+5%**	4,643 $m
90	**+8%**	4,609 $m
91	**New**	4,473 $m
92	**New**	4,414 $m
93	**+3%**	4,387 $m
94	**New**	4,313 $m
95	**-3%**	4,221 $m
96	**-2%**	4,196 $m
97	**New**	4,143 $m
98	**-44%**	4,138 $m
99	**+5%**	4,122 $m
100	**-33%**	4,103 $m

61 Caterpillar
65 Shell
69 Visa
73 Burberry
77 Adobe

62 Xerox
66 3M
70 Prada
74 Kia
78 Johnson & Johnson

63 Morgan Stanley
67 Discovery
71 Tiffany & Co.
75 Santander
79 John Deere

64 Panasonic
68 KFC
72 Sprite
76 Starbucks
80 MTV

81 DHL
85 Jack Daniel's
89 Kleenex
93 Corona
97 Hugo Boss

82 Chevrolet
86 Johnnie Walker
90 Smirnoff
94 Huawei
98 Nokia

83 Ralph Lauren
87 Harley-Davidson
91 Land Rover
95 Heineken
99 Gap

84 Duracell
88 MasterCard
92 FedEx
96 Pizza Hut
100 Nintendo

01

+21% 118,863 $m

Apple

On September 9, 2014, Tim Cook held up a wallet and said, "Our ambition is to replace this." A bold statement to be sure – but we'd expect nothing less from Apple, #1 on the Best Global Brands list for the second year in a row. Referring to Apple Pay, a new mobile payments platform that enables consumers to pay for items with Apple devices, Cook signaled that Steve Jobs's 2001 vision of Apple becoming the "digital hub" of its consumers' lives (Macworld Expo 2001) has finally been fulfilled.

In what CNNMoney.com called "one of the most ambitious product launches in its history," Apple unveiled not only Apple Pay, but also the long-anticipated Apple Watch, a wearable device that combines health and fitness monitoring with mobile computer capabilities, and two new iPhones that are faster and smarter than previous versions and feature larger screens. The iPhone 6 Plus, which embraces the larger-form factors, could pose a serious challenge to Samsung's GALAXY Note. Though iPhone sales were up prior to the new product launch, particularly in China where China Mobile is now signed as a carrier, the iPhone 6 Plus may further assist penetration in Asian markets where larger-screened devices are preferred. While, in North America, Apple has reached a truce over patents and market share with competitor Samsung (still #1 in smartphone-market sales volumes), more globally relevant offerings could help Apple capture new markets and take the lead in smartphone sales worldwide.

Not only is Apple using devices to broaden its penetration, it's also credibly extending into new spaces. With the unveiling of Apple Watch – reportedly more capable than any other smartwatch on the market, not least of all in terms of advanced health monitoring – Apple's future will rely heavily on its ability to partner effectively with healthcare companies. CarPlay, giving drivers access to their iPhone's best features in the car, has brought the brand into the automotive space. HomeKit, providing seamless integration between accessories, promises to make our homes smarter. Apple Pay certainly has the potential to become the most powerful payment platform around. And the brand's recent collaboration with IBM – to make big data and analytics more mobile and bring business apps to the iPhone and iPad – will strengthen its presence and reach in the enterprise space.

Clearly, Apple's ambitions are formidable, which is why it's been diligently acquiring the talent needed to achieve those ambitions. From hiring a TAG Heuer sales director and a Nike digital marketing director to Angela Ahrendts (former Burberry CEO), Paul Deneve (former Yves Saint Laurent CEO), Jay Blahnik (Nike's FuelBand developer), and now Marc Newson (joining Jony Ive as senior vice president of design), all signs point to big things on the horizon.

Though the spotlight may remain on the new products for some time, the real breakthrough is the way all of Apple's products – and thousands more from other developers, manufacturers, and services – now work together. As *Wired* put it, the new Apple ecosystem has turned our world into one "huge ubiquitous computer . . . all around us, all the time." From taking your pulse and making purchases to controlling devices in your home, Apple's supreme goal is to make everything in your life work better. With sensors everywhere and the brand's consumer interactions deepening every day, it's safe to say that Apple is not only "back," but also boldly paving the way to the Age of You.

+15% 107,439 $m

Google

Google is aggressively pursuing a broad market agenda and, as it continues to grow beyond the billion users it currently serves, its strong brand position seems secure. Though still largely known as the search company that defined its category, the brand continues to invest generously in R&D and advance disruptive (or theoretically disruptive) technology. In an interview with *Wired*, Google CEO and founder, Larry Page, said he "expects his employees to create products and services that are 10 times better than the competition." This ambitious ideal pushes employees to pursue achievements comparable to putting a man on the moon – goals known inside Google as "moonshots." Recent moonshots include self-driving cars; Project Loon, a global network of high-altitude balloons that provides Internet access to people in remote areas; and an investment in Calico, a biotech company aiming to slow human aging and tackle age-related diseases. In the words of Page, "If you're not doing some things that are crazy, then you're doing the wrong things." But not all moonshots have been well received. In a study from market research firm Toluna, 72 percent of respondents said they would not wear Google Glass, owing to privacy and safety concerns. And in Matt Honan's *Wired* article, "I, Glasshole: My Year With Google Glass," he gives Glass mixed reviews, rather than an enthusiastic endorsement. Still, despite some negative sentiment, Google remains focused on seamlessly integrating its current products and services to strengthen its ubiquitous position as the world's leading enabler of personalized information solutions. Google understands the profound responsibility that comes with the collection of personal information and is actively working to limit the ability of the secretive PRISM program to spy on citizens' communications. Google's recent acquisitions and investments outline the company's ambition.
A close examination of the USD $17 billion Google has spent over the last two years on U.S. acquisitions alone shows that Google is pushing boldly into robotics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, connected devices, and wearable devices, as well as bolstering and extending its current technologies with significant enhancements. While these acquisitions may seem diverse, Google ultimately seeks to gather more information about consumers so that it can deliver more personalized experiences. And with its extensive reach in search, advertising, Android devices, apps, and Google+, not to mention the original search engine, Google certainly has the capabilities and resources to deliver on its vision.

03

Coca-Cola

+3% 81,563 $m

Coca-Cola, the world's largest nonalcoholic beverage producer, slipped from #1 to #3 in last year's Best Global Brands ranking. Though it's holding steady in this year's ranking, its future brand strength is now perched at the nexus of challenge and opportunity. The 128-year-old soft drink giant continues to evolve as markets have changed and, through innovation, is staying ahead of trends. It is seeing growth in emerging markets, but is currently experiencing troubled waters in North American market share.

To satisfy increasingly health-conscious consumers, the brand launched Coca-Cola Life, the first version of its classic soft drink to be sweetened naturally with stevia, in Argentina and Chile in 2013. (Coca-Cola Life launched in the U.S. and U.K. markets in 2014.) Recent acquisitions show that Coca-Cola is still very much on the ball, catching the coconut-water trend, with ZICO; the fast-developing in-home brewing market, with 10 percent of Keurig Green Mountain, Inc.; and the fast-growing caffeinated beverage market, with 17 percent of Monster Beverage Corp. Equally responsive to consumer concerns about sustainability, Coca-Cola plans to use its PlantBottle technology in all its bottles by 2020; has partnered with brands like Nike, P&G, and Heinz to accelerate the development of products made from plants; and is now breaking new ground with Ford by applying PlantBottle technology to automotive interiors.

"Happiness in a bottle" still retains universal recognition, which was most evident during Coca-Cola's successful 2014 FIFA World Cup campaign. From unveiling its photomosaic "The Happiness Flag" at the start of the games to launching event-themed music and moving spots across platforms in hundreds of markets, Coca-Cola showed how it effortlessly connects emotionally, both locally and globally.

Coca-Cola's global "Share a Coke" campaign, now in version 2.0, taps into self-expression and storytelling, and deepens its connection with individual consumers – particularly Millennials. By placing popular first names and colloquial nicknames on its cans and bottles, "Share a Coke" seeks to get on a first-name basis with younger consumers and use social media to amplify real moments shared by fans. A testament to Coca-Cola's ability to create experiences that unify and engage people across social, cultural, and geographical divides, the brand has increased sales volume by two percent, Facebook followers by 25 million, and servings to 1.9 billion per day – despite less than optimal economic environments.

The opportunity lies in continuing to strengthen connections with Millennials and addressing trends such as the shift away from sweet, carbonated beverages to high-energy and health-conscious ones, especially in North America and Western Europe. Having already made clear headway into the personal lives of consumers, perhaps the key to future success lies in figuring out the nature of the Coca-Cola Mecosystem and unlocking the full potential promised by the Age of You.

-8% 72,244 $m

IBM

This year marks a turning point in IBM's history. With year-over-year declines in both revenue and operating pretax income, IBM is shifting from its five-year-old Smarter Planet strategy and moving forward with a stronger focus on big data/analytics, cloud computing, and systems of engagement. However, with many of its competitors focused on the same areas, IBM will have to determine how to leverage its brand to differentiate for the future. The beauty of Smarter Planet was that it not only defined and elucidated IBM's strategic road map, but also provided a perfect platform for innovation, culture, experience, and communications – the essence of a great brand positioning.

A partnership with Apple was announced in mid-July 2014 and will bring together IBM's analytics and enterprise-scale computing with the elegant user experience of Apple products to deliver a new level of value (and, potentially, an exciting new approach to technology) for businesses. The alliance will bring businesses the devices, services, security, and integration they need to exploit the full potential of mobile. While Apple will benefit from increased penetration into corporations, for IBM's part, gaining access to popular devices will give it the leverage it needs to compete with rival companies offering similar services. If the partnership blossoms, the input of billions of data points from iOS devices could greatly enrich IBM's analytics.

Continuing to drive innovation, IBM invested USD $3.1 billion in 10 acquisitions, USD $3.8 billion in net capital expenditures, and USD $6.2 billion in R&D. At this level of commitment, it's no surprise that the company earned the most U.S. patents for the 21st straight year. In early 2014, for example, IBM formed the IBM Watson Group to solve the most formidable challenge the information economy has created: how to make decisions based on all the data that exists. In light of the growing importance of big data, and the coming age of artificial intelligence, it's a wise R&D objective.

With this clear eye to the future, the company also unveiled TrueNorth in 2014, a brain-inspired "neurosynaptic" computer chip that can be used in conjunction with other cognitive computing technologies to create systems that learn, reason, and help humans make better decisions. Given its potential to fundamentally change computing and transform science, government, business, and society, this technology may be the basis of another turning point for one of the world's most ingenious and authentic brands.

05

+3% 61,154 $m

Microsoft

Microsoft

2014 has been a year of transformation for Microsoft. Satya Nadella, a longtime expert in the company's cloud computing and search offerings, has taken the helm as CEO and, with the official departure of former CEO Steven Ballmer from Microsoft's board, it appears to be the beginning of a new era. For example, Nadella recently sponsored a weeklong hackathon that enabled employees to work across both businesses and roles to solve problems, and demonstrated Nadella's willingness to evolve Microsoft's culture to meet the demands of the future. In addition to the change in leadership, Microsoft also repositioned from "Windows first" to "cloud and mobile first," marking a departure from the company's legacy strategy in desktop software.

Microsoft has followed through on its vision to deliver cloud- and mobile-related products and services in several ways. Its domination of the enterprise space continues, and Microsoft is working hard to encourage businesses to transition away from Windows XP and upgrade to Windows 8. In the mobile world, the USD $7.1 billion completion of its purchase of Nokia's devices and services division – including the Lumia and Asha brands, 8,500 patents, and 33,000 employees – positions Microsoft well to compete. The integration of its phone, tablet, and desktop interfaces is enabling a more seamless experience for both users and developers across its growing ecosystem, and releasing the market-leading Office suite for the Apple iPad keeps the brand relevant across platforms. Cortana, a personal voice assistant backed by the Bing search engine, accompanies the latest release of Windows Phone 8.1 and is expected to rival Apple's Siri and Google Now.

In further efforts to increase relevance, the company rebranded Windows Azure, its cloud computing enterprise, as Microsoft Azure and made it price competitive with the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud computing platform. In the world of gaming, Microsoft has recently concluded negotiations to acquire the parent company of Minecraft for more than USD $2 billion. The news signals that Microsoft fully realizes how gaming is changing, and intends to be right there with the market.

-3% 45,480 $m

GE

General Electric, a builder of powerful things for powerful customers, is in the process of reinventing itself – and the economics of heavy industry – by pushing its machines into the era of big data. As articulated by Chairman and CEO Jeff Immelt, GE's focus on building mighty machines like jet engines and gas turbine power plants – or "big iron" as the company refers to it – needs to evolve. By putting industrial engineering at the very heart of the business – and infusing its machines with intelligence – Immelt envisions a world enhanced by smarter, ultra-high-performing technology: big iron meets big data.

In its 2013 annual report, GE outlined its goal of streamlining and revitalizing its portfolio to become 70 percent "premier infrastructure company" and 30 percent "valuable specialty finance business." To demonstrate its commitment, GE spun off its retail finance business in early 2014. The divestiture of Synchrony was the first indicator of GE taking steps to secure focus for the business. Further reinforcing its industrials play, GE announced the acquisition of French company Alstom's gas and steam turbine businesses for USD $16.9 billion.

In early September 2014, it was announced that Electrolux would buy GE's appliance business for USD $3.3 billion – another indication that GE is transitioning away from consumer businesses and focusing more intently on industrials. Despite this significant shift, GE's customer relationships remain close and personal. And it's using big data to get even closer, which implies huge opportunities for the brand during the Age of You. Its brand – readily recognized by consumers and a signifier of world-class innovation in industry and tech circles – is something GE continues to leverage to its advantage.

Perhaps Beth Comstock, GE's SVP and CMO, summed up its approach to marketing best in a May 2014 *Ad Age* article: "It's the same if you are targeting consumers directly or businesses. We are all people. . . . Business marketing does not have to be boring marketing. You can't sell anything if you can't tell anything." By producing advertising spots such as "What Would Happen" and "Childlike Imagination," GE has succeeded in bringing its brand strategy – and its vision for the future – to life in creative and thought-provoking ways.

GE now has an opportunity to harness its brand to deliver incremental value to its ecosystem of stakeholders. Already seizing that opportunity, GE is successfully generating global brand awareness and strengthening its relevance in different product markets through its Garages initiative. The Garages global road show, created in collaboration with experiential design studio Sub Rosa and tech partners like Quirky, showcases innovations in manufacturing and offers classes, events, and workshops. Garages is a clear indication to the market and investors that GE is not just imagining what's next, but is actually doing it.

+15% 45,462 $m

Samsung

Samsung, the South Korean high-tech electronics manufacturer, continues its journey to become an increasingly aspirational brand and ranks #7 in this year's Best Global Brands report. The brand continues to focus on "accelerating discoveries and possibilities" by making sustained investments in R&D – in both design and technology. This continuous innovation enables the brand to keep ahead of consumers' relentless demands for next-generation devices – great examples being curved TVs and a new virtual reality headset, both of which provide more immersive viewing experiences. Samsung continues to lead the increasingly competitive global smartphone market by volume and, in 2013, doubled its presence in tablets. Samsung is also starting to set the pace for wearable electronics, the emerging focus for the next wave of tech innovations. As the "Internet of Things" continues to create smart functionality across the multitude of devices that will connect consumers' lives, Samsung's diversity and sustained ability to innovate leave it well poised to fully capitalize on the forthcoming Age of You. The massive expansion of functionality in the Age of You will require technology to communicate across platforms and converge around the needs and desires of consumers. This too will play to Samsung's advantage, increasing the chances that it will catch up to brands, such as Google and Apple, that exemplify platform thinking at scale. In 2013, Samsung tripled its marketing spend to USD $14 billion – more than triple Microsoft and Apple's combined marketing spend last year, not to mention the equivalent of Iceland's GDP. Samsung's marketing prowess was apparent during its successful sponsorship of the 2014 Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Sochi and particularly when the brand took a starring role in the "buzzworthiest" of selfies at the 2014 Oscars.

08

+20% 42,392 $m

Toyota

Toyota is the most valuable automotive brand on this year's Best Global Brands ranking – moving from #10 to #8. Although Toyota was fined USD $1.2 billion by the U.S. Justice Department in March 2014 and recalled nearly 6.4 million vehicles worldwide just a few weeks later, the Japanese automaker met the crisis head on and kept the reputation of its 77-year-old brand intact. This year's increase in sales demonstrates growth not only in the U.S., but also in markets like China and Europe. In an effort to enhance functional integration, Toyota recently announced plans to move 4,000 U.S. employees from California to Texas. While the move will generate significant cash savings, Toyota appears to be more focused on the efficiencies it will bring. Toyota maintains the move will enable its sales, marketing, and manufacturing teams to come together for the first time.

Traditionally perceived as a solid, trustworthy brand that is perhaps better known for its high-quality products than its personality, Toyota's campaigns like "Let's Go Places" and "Go Fun Yourself" are clearly designed to add a more exciting and playful dimension to its communications. Evolving in another area as well, Toyota has come to recognize the potential of the largely untapped female labor force in its country of origin and aims to increase the number of female executives in its ranks. While only 101 women currently sit within 9,500 managerial positions, a recent *Automotive News* article indicates that Toyota is committed to driving that number up to 320 by 2020 and 570 by 2030. In addition to increasing diversity within the company, Toyota is also committed to collaboration – a sign that it is already embracing some of the fundamental principles that will be required of leading brands in the forthcoming Age of You. For example, Toyota has collaborated with German luxury carmaker BMW on projects ranging from fuel cell engineering to electric drivetrains. These collaborative efforts have helped Toyota grapple with increasing technology costs, while also ensuring that the brand remains an environmental steward within the automotive sector (Toyota ranked #2 in Interbrand's 2014 Best Global Green Brands report).

An important step forward, Toyota's "Experience the Future of Mobility" exhibit at the Aspen Ideas Festival showcased its "Car of the Future," the brand's first zero-emission hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicle (FCV). The exhibit also featured a sneak peek at Toyota's Driver Awareness Research Vehicle (DARV 1.5). Using Microsoft's Surface and Kinect, along with custom biometric software, the DARV 1.5 enables the driver, passengers, and the vehicle to work together as a team. It also features technology that automatically enables or disables features depending on who is behind the navigation panel. Toyota is also using the DARV 1.5 to test out new ways for drivers to use wearable devices to control the vehicle's functions. Shortly after the Aspen Ideas Festival, Toyota established the Toyota Mobility Foundation, which the company built to address mobility challenges worldwide. By prioritizing collaboration, enhancing functional integration, investing in mobility, and putting sustainability and innovation at the top of its agenda, Toyota is well positioned to thrive in a changing world.

+1% 42,254 $m

McDonald's

With more than 35,000 locations in over 100 countries, the McDonald's brand serves more than 70 million customers a day. Still the leading global food service retailer, McDonald's is a household name throughout the world. Although its global sales are under pressure, the brand is working hard to respond to consumer demand for healthier, more nutritious meals – and continues to expand globally. Offering healthy alternatives to its classic menu, McDonald's has added smoothies, salads, and fresh fruit. Its Happy Meals are also more nutritious, with 95 percent providing fruits, vegetables, or low-fat dairy options. McDonald's is also addressing consumer concerns about health by including more nutrition information on its packaging. Continuing its strides forward in sustainability as well, the brand has ambitious goals to purchase only verified sustainable beef, coffee, palm oil, and fish by 2020. (It is worth noting that its white fish sources are already 100 percent sustainable.)

High-profile sponsorships for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, backed up by strong games-related promotions, ads, and social media efforts, have helped McDonald's maintain awareness and connect consumers to the brand. For the first time in its history, the brand not only revamped its fries packaging in celebration of the World Cup, but also made the boxes an entry point for an augmented-reality game, accessible via the McDonald's GOL! app. This global marketing push brought positive attention to one of the brand's most popular menu items and showed that the brand knows how to harness shared passion to create engaging and interactive mobile experiences. The success of efforts like this hint at the tremendous opportunity McDonald's has to become essential in the lives of future generations. With Deborah Wahl stepping in to replace Neil Golden as U.S. chief marketer, getting closer to customers and a commitment to evolving the brand already appear to be at the top of McDonald's agenda. Indeed, in what *Adweek* called a "McSoulSearch," the brand is devoting the next 18 months to rebranding itself as "not only a cheap food destination, but an appealing and high-quality one as well." As McDonald's continues to grow, keeping up with the world's demands for healthier food – and following through with its plans to use ethically sourced products – will ensure that it stays profitable as a top fast-food chain.

10

Mercedes-Benz

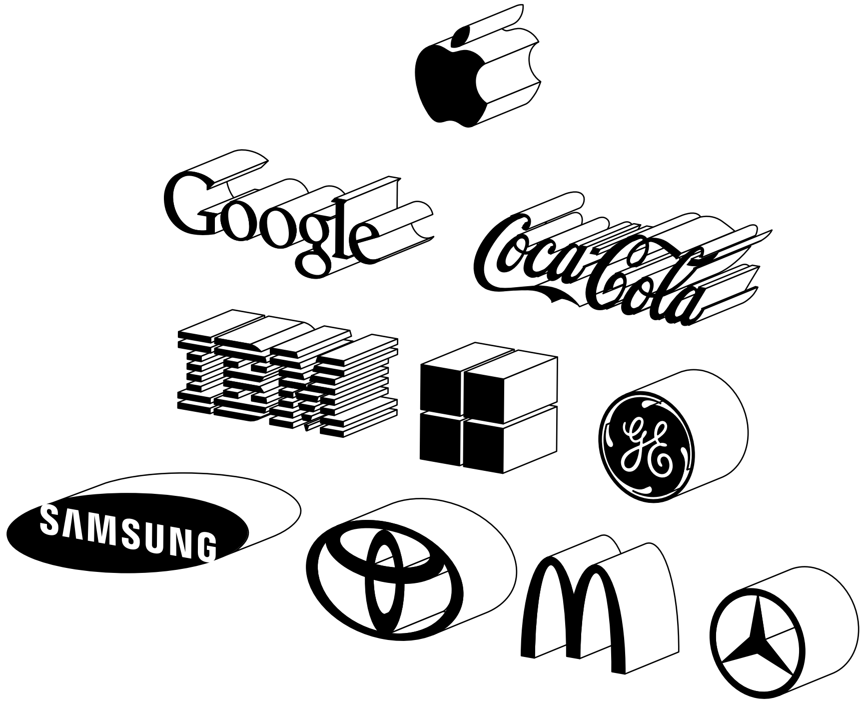
+8% 34,338 $m

Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz, Germany's automotive pioneer, has revitalized itself with new models and fresh expressions of its brand, resulting in a record 14 percent increase in sales. Sales rose 9.5 percent in the U.S. (Mercedes-Benz's largest market), demand has been revived in Europe, and the brand is closing in on competitors in China. Continuing to provide the comfort, performance, and safety consumers have come to expect from the brand, while also offering dramatic styling and innovative new features, it's no wonder Mercedes-Benz's models still captivate. Demand for the flagship luxury S-Class line has surged 60 percent, and its E-Class models, CLA-Class Coupe, and GLA-Class SUV shook up the entry-level luxury market by attracting younger consumers. The timeless appeal of the Mercedes brand, currently summed up by its tagline "The best or nothing," is seductive the world over and appeals to drivers of all ages.
But the brand also owes much of its recent success to continual innovation and its commitment to debuting new products and services. (Mercedes-Benz plans to roll out 30 new models by 2020.) In addition to updating product design, Mercedes has made positive contributions to clean mobility with emissions-reducing technology (BlueTEC) and an intelligent energy management system for hybrid vehicles (Intelligent Hybrid).
The brand has also raised the bar when it comes to delivering premium customer experiences, with its "Mercedes me" campaign. It bundles benefits and services like "Move me," "Connect me," and "Assist me" on one digital platform. This strategic move to create a personalized world around the owner/driver demonstrates that Mercedes understands today's complex experience-based economy and is well positioned to create a Mecosystem around each customer. With a strong customer-experience strategy, a world-leading position, contributions to clean mobility, and innovations like an experimental self-driving car in development, Mercedes-Benz appears to have a clear vision of its future, and is moving purposefully toward it.

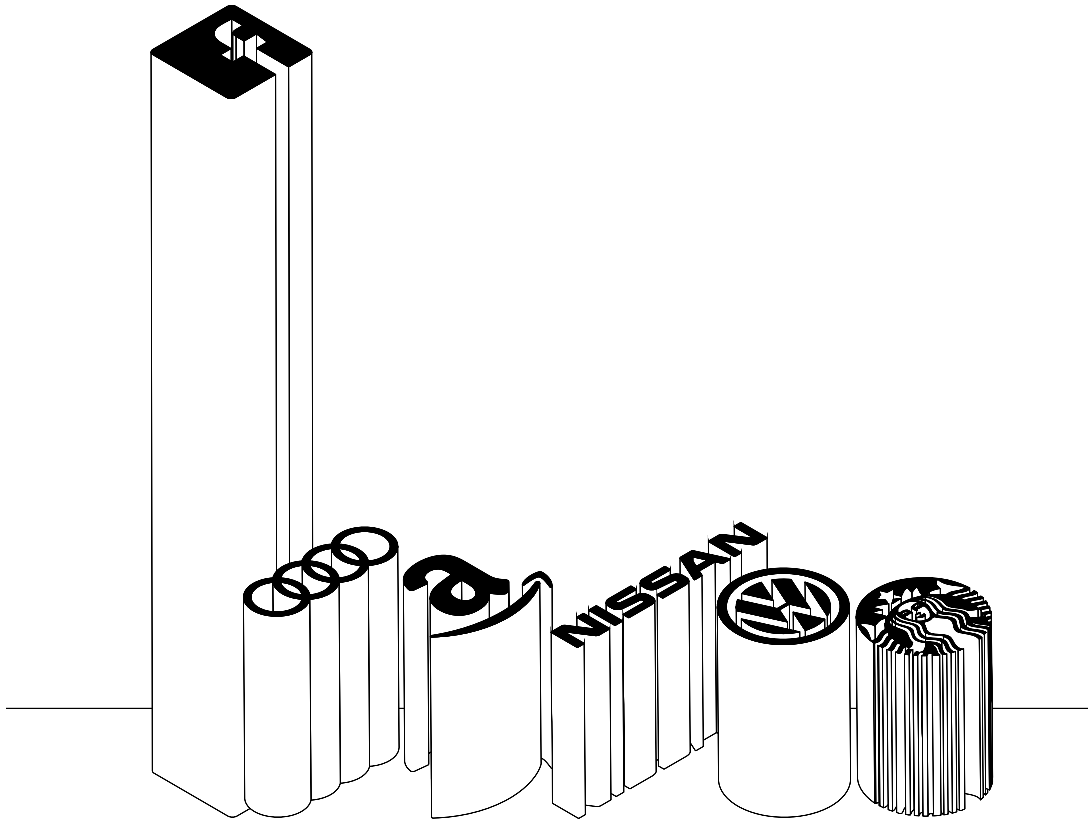
GAFA is an acronym for the brands that exemplify platform thinking at scale: Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple. Though initially rooted in focused lines of business – Amazon's online book fulfillment, for example – they prove that the design of desirable experiences can allow a company to profitably extend across multiple sectors. GAFA brands also share an identifiable trait – a log-in that provides access to a personalized ecosystem of offerings within a single branded space.

Top 10



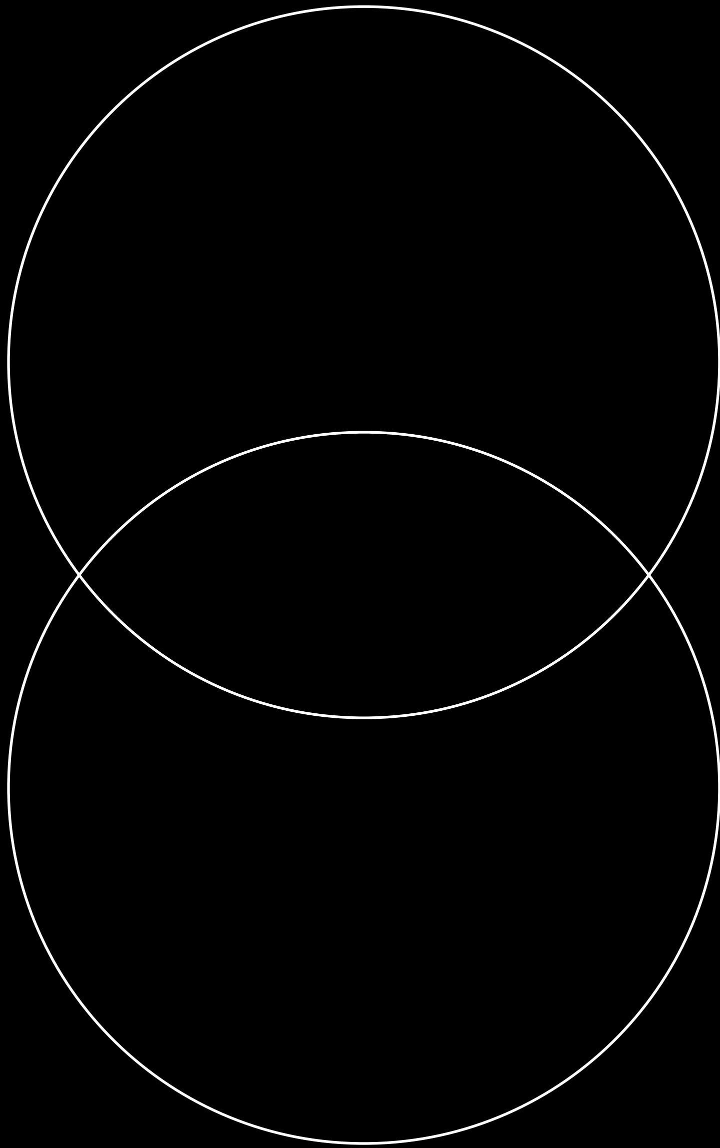
01 Apple **+21%** 118,863 $m
02 Google **+15%** 107,439 $m
03 Coca-Cola **+3%** 81,563 $m
04 IBM **-8%** 72,244 $m
05 Microsoft **+3%** 61,154 $m
06 GE **-3%** 45,480 $m
07 Samsung **+15%** 45,462 $m
08 Toyota **+20%** 42,392 $m
09 McDonald's **+1%** 42,254 $m
10 Mercedes-Benz **+8%** 34,338 $m

Top Risers

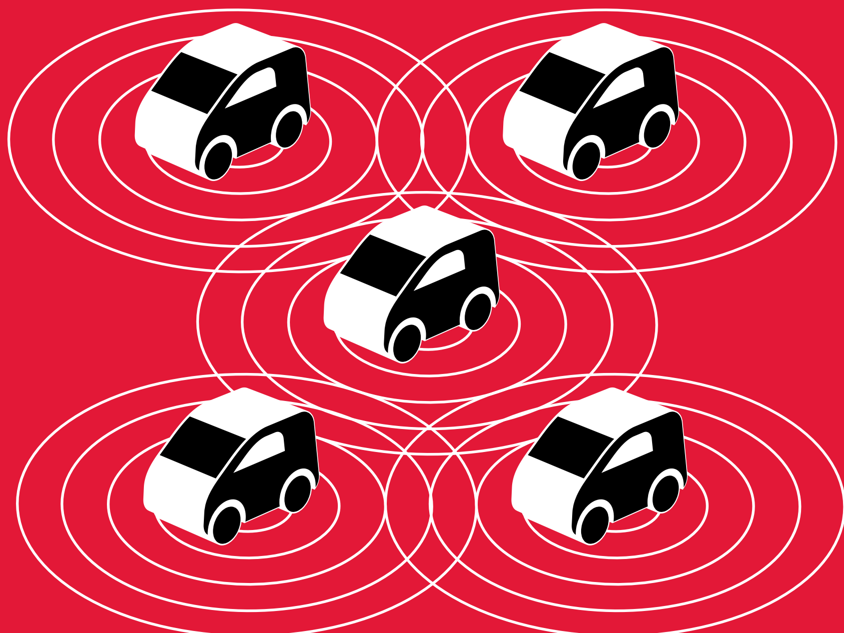


29 Facebook **+86%**
45 Audi **+27%**
15 Amazon **+25%**
56 Nissan **+23%**
31 Volkswagen **+23%**
76 Starbucks **+22%**

81 DHL 5,084 $m
91 Land Rover 4,473 $m
92 FedEx 4,414 $m
94 Huawei 4,313 $m
97 Hugo Boss 4,143 $m



Sector synergies



Rachel Nguyen
Director, Global Upstream Planning,
Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.

“We’re seeing things move away from auto-centric societies to mobility-centric societies.”

By 2016, cars will be smartphones on wheels. Vehicle-to-vehicle connectivity will thwart impending collisions. Phone authentication will unlock your doors and start your engine. Prospective car buyers will soon weigh the vehicle’s technology platform alongside the traditional considerations of form factors, features, and brand reputation.

Astro Teller
Captain of Moonshots, Google X

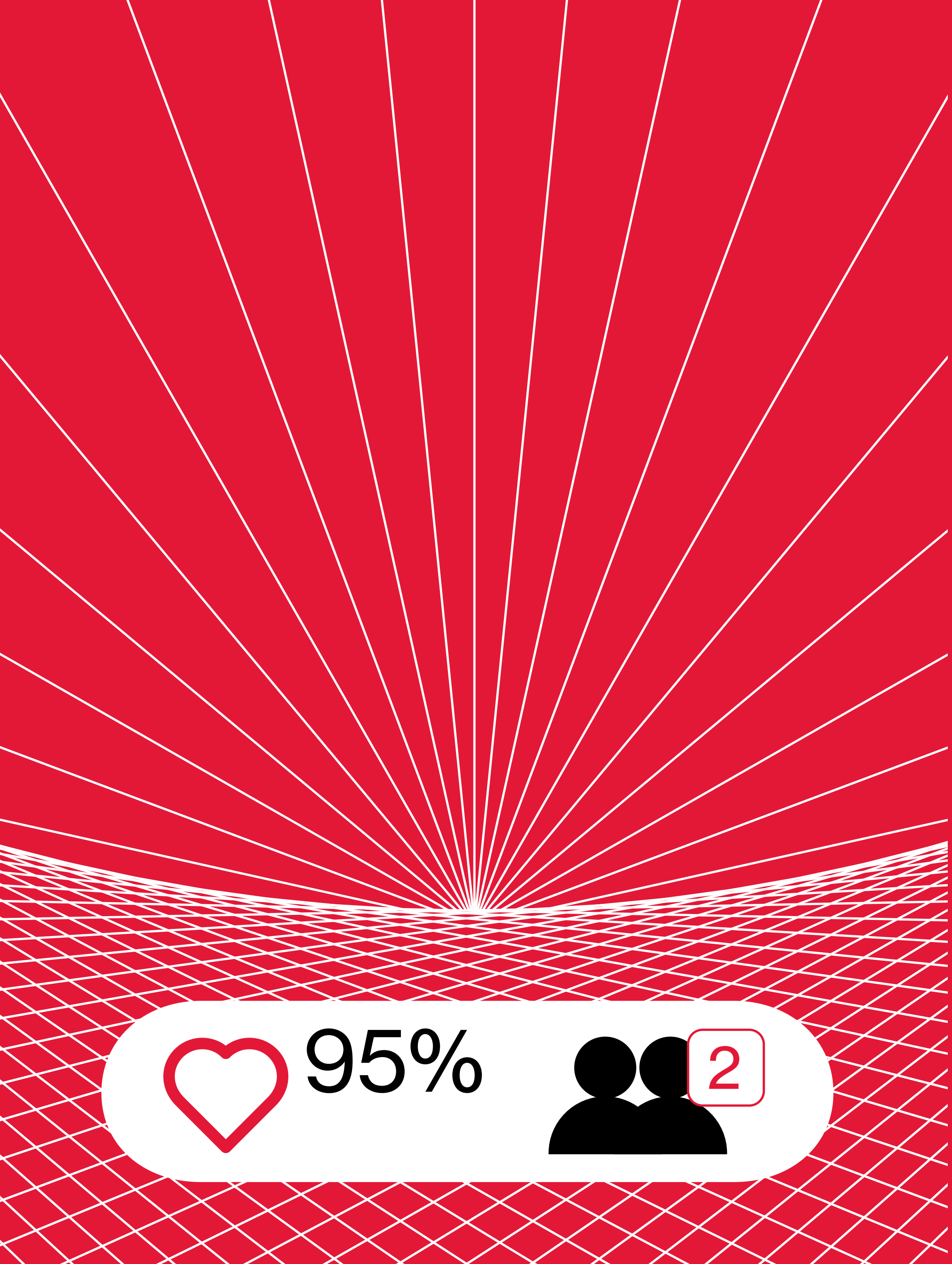
“We’re using the sun-light, we’re using the wind, we’re using all of these things to build this network in the sky.”

As connected living becomes commonplace, brands must meet new demands for staying connected, healthy, and powered. Traditional sectors like aviation will be subsumed by the “end game” sectors of technology, health, and energy. Future booking might, for instance, hinge on inflight Wi-Fi that supports streaming (technology), remote physician care, (health), or in-seat power outlets for charging (energy).

Dave Evans
Chief Futurist, Cisco

“Wearable to Aware-able.”

We may soon carry our doctors in the palm of our hands, or around our wrists, when the accuracy of biometric data improves and network encryption satisfies HIPAA regulations. Providing patients the convenience and comfort of in-home examinations, this profound shift will establish new clinical protocol and digital literacy requirements for medical staff, while freeing physicians from brick-and-mortar costs and routine schedules.



Brendan Iribe
CEO, Oculus VR

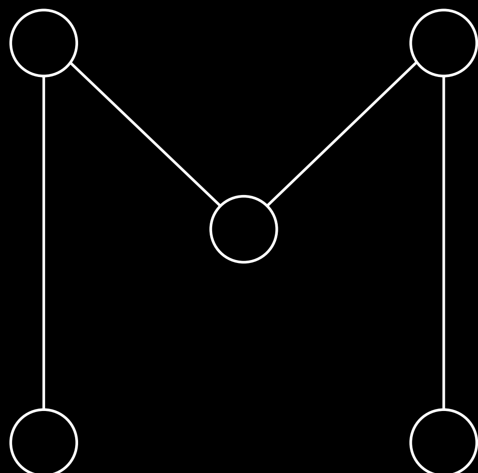
“I’m a strong believer that five to ten years from now, you will truly feel present in these virtual places.”

When your car is comfortably driving itself, what will you be looking at? Though there will always be the unfiltered reality sans technology (the world as it is), we will inevitably be pressured to view everyday reality through a lens of digital augmentation. When showrooming extends beyond display windows to the world around us, virtual reality will provide true escape at a moment’s notice.

Genevieve Bell
Director of User Experience
Research, Intel Labs

"We are reinventing a lot of ideas around security, privacy, safety, love, marriage, kids, god, violence, the nation state, power, justice, money. Everything is up for grabs."

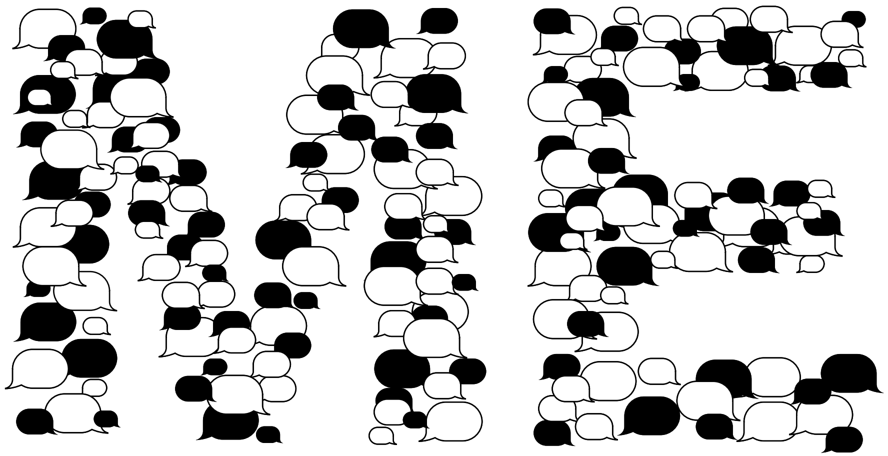
You will become the center of consideration. Revolving around this central user, brands will look to create a string of connected and distinctive memorable moments along a continuum of connected living. They will compete to be your interface of choice, the behind-the-scenes ingredient, or the invisible network that connects it all together.



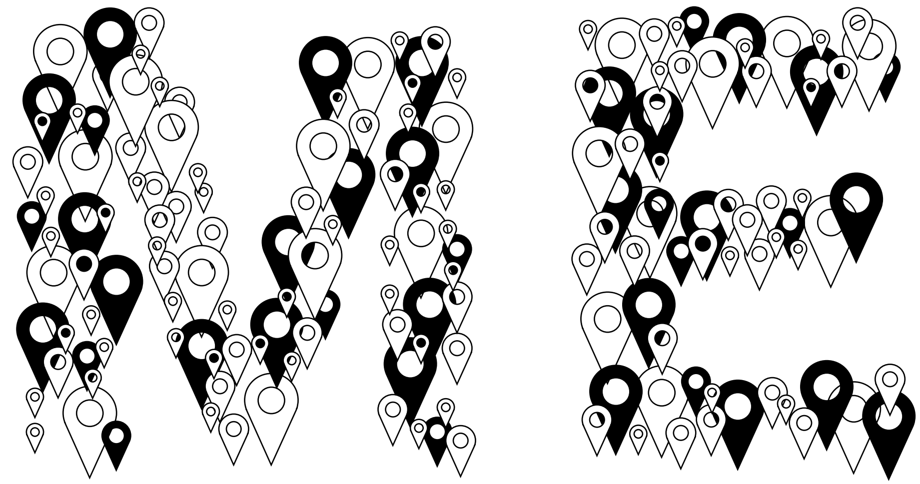
The Mecosystem

In tech terms, an ecosystem is a complex network or interconnected system in which devices interact. The Mecosystem is a refinement and reorientation of this model, putting you at the center and reorganizing integrated experiences around you. Informed by your data, the Mecosystem considers the “real-life” contexts surrounding you and seeks synergies across experiences, ensuring more relevant services and products.

Already working to close the gap between the business and the end user, many brands are grappling with the challenges of integrating disparate products and services and developing experience strategies that truly sync up with our needs and preferences. In the Age of You, the Mecosystem will help calibrate brand experiences that are becoming increasingly social and multi-sensory, including the interfaces we tap and speak to, the hardware that we hold, the software that recognizes us, and the data that helps customize our immediate surroundings. Within the Mecosystem paradigm, you are at the nexus of the system.

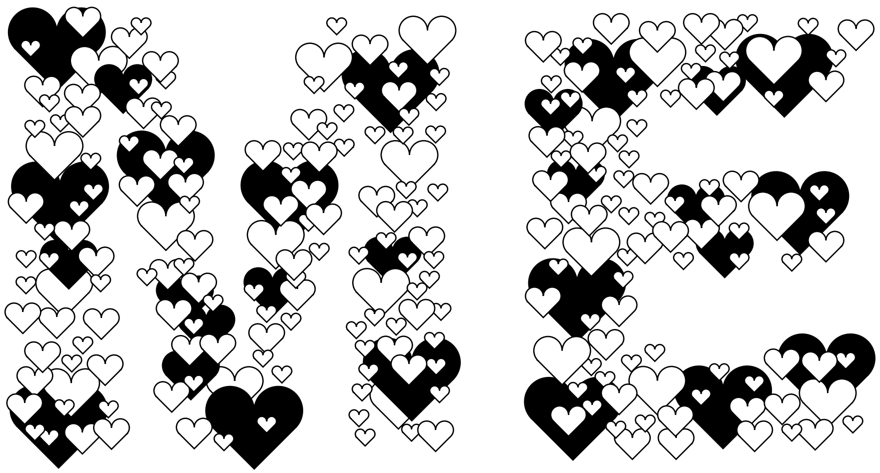


From linking us to new friends on the basis of shared interests to helping us tap into our direct networks for quick, relevant answers, sensing technologies will allow us to harness collective intelligence and make the most of our personal connections.



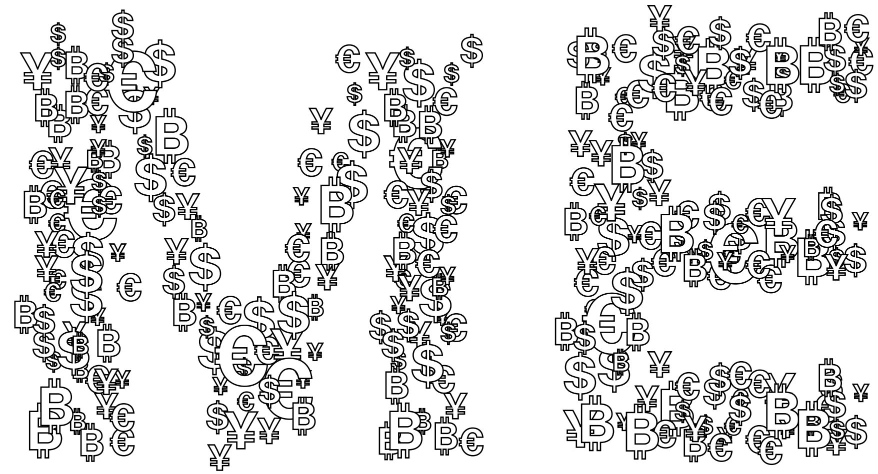
Now that mobile systems can sense their physical environment and adapt their behavior accordingly, content will be increasingly tied to context. Giving new meaning to instant gratification, context-aware technology will help us find what we want – wherever we are, at any time – based on our location and history of activity.

Passion

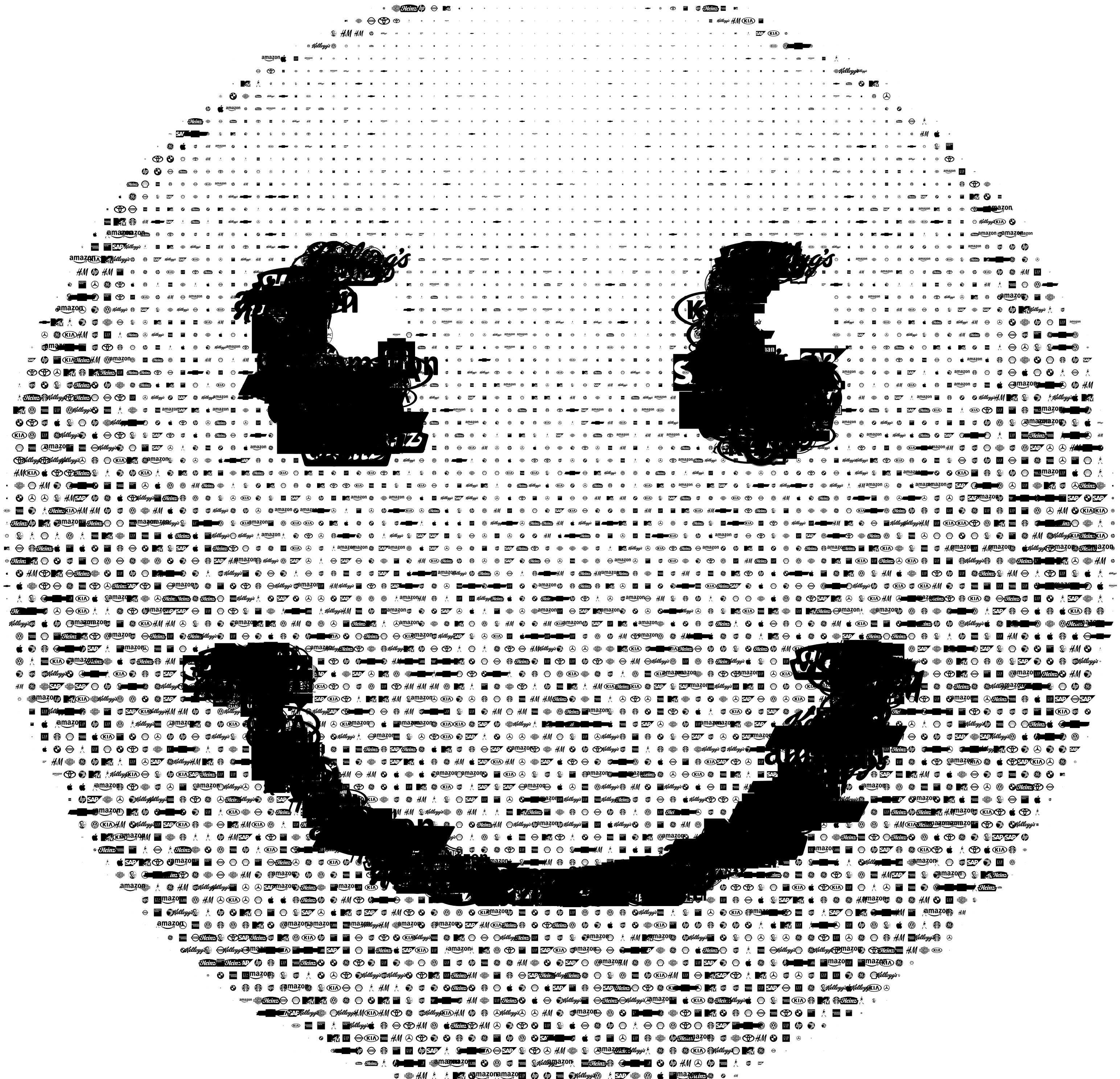


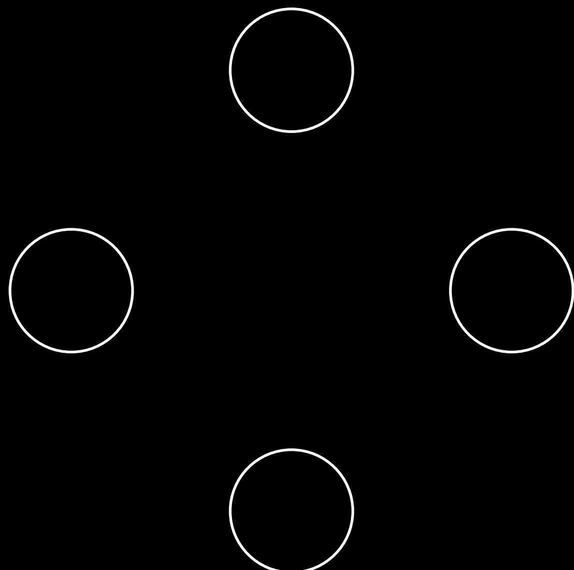
Our hearts – from literal BPMs to the throes of dating – will be worn on our virtual sleeves. Massive datasets about ourselves (AKA the “quantified self”) will become a route to self-discovery, giving us new ways to approach fitness, healthcare, and even romance.

Profit



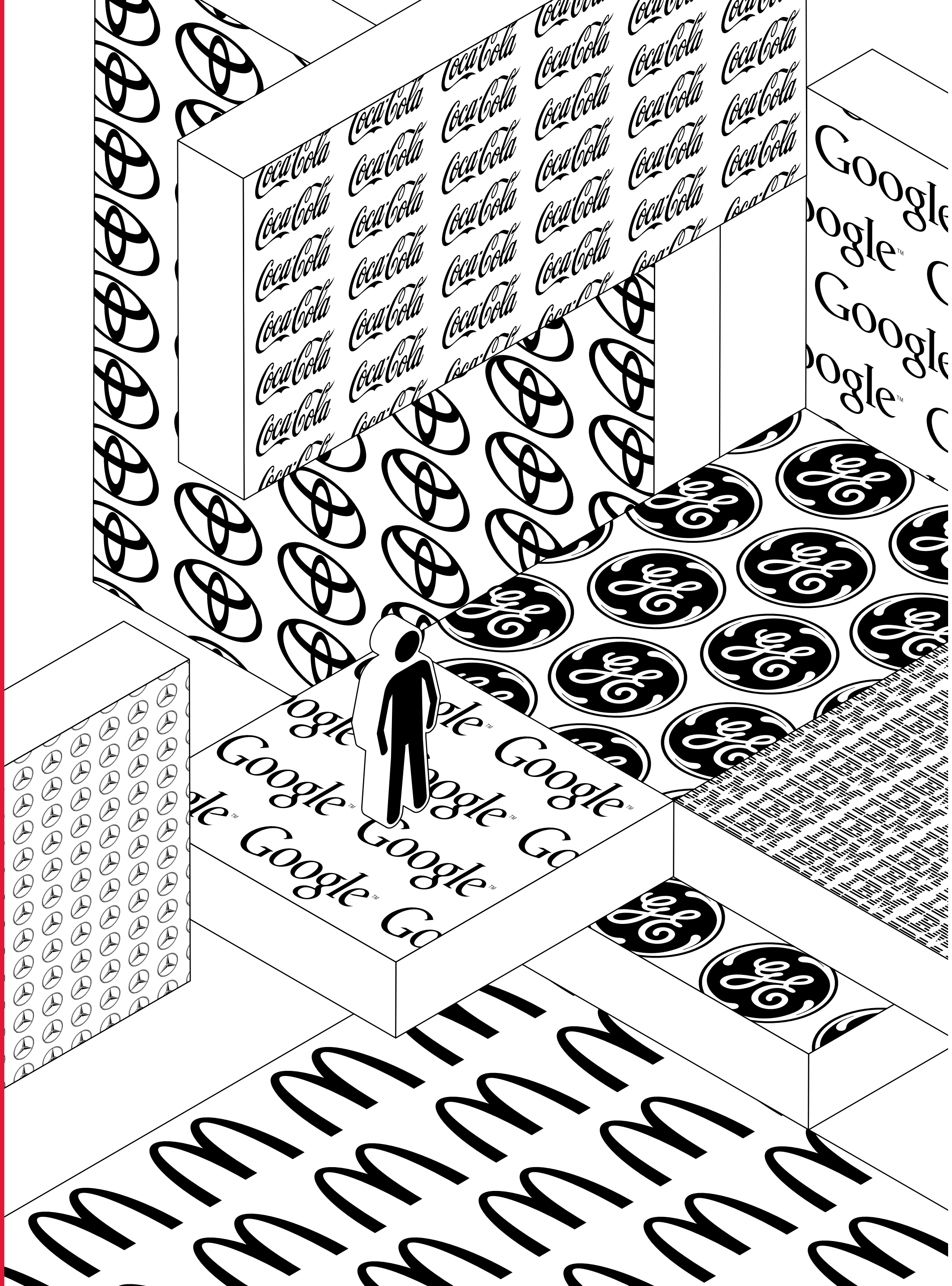
As people reclaim the rights to their personal data assets, and greater transparency becomes de facto for the data economy at large, people will set up personal data stores that could truly unlock the power of the Age of You.





A roundtable with Stuart Green, Asia-Pacific; Simon Bailey, Europe; Josh Feldmeth, North America; and Gonzalo Brujó, Latin America & Iberia

Global roundtable



With the advent of the Age of You and Mecosystems upon us, Interbrand asked its four regional leaders to discuss some of the challenges and opportunities this sea change will bring to brands in each of their respective markets.

From rapid technological advancement to changing customer expectations, there's no denying we've entered a period of accelerating change. What are some of the specific challenges brands in your region are facing during this critical time?

Josh
The biggest challenge is legacy. Legacy systems can be difficult to integrate and can make innovation feel risky. Brands that do not renew fundamental assumptions about their purpose and role in these rapidly changing economies will face the biggest challenges of all.

Another challenge? The unintended consequence of big data is that product companies have to become software/technology companies too. This has caught (and will continue to catch) many off guard.

Nike is a great example of a product company that has met this challenge head on. NIKEiD allows a consumer to personalize his/her performance, fitness routine, and style. Nike has also literally invited everyone into the product design studio. Nike works closely with athletes and consumers to design authentic performance products.

The rapid market capitalization of category disruptors like Airbnb and Uber prove that putting data-enabled consumers at the heart of your business is potentially more valuable than big balance sheet items.

Gonzalo
The challenge for brands in the Latin American and Iberian markets is how to best leverage the data gathered in their systems to best benefit their clients. Simply put, the challenge lies in how to optimize big data rather than simply gathering it.

Expected spending in big data technologies in Latin America in 2014 is USD $820 million, and smartphone penetration is expected to reach 44 percent by 2017. This sets the region up for a high level of hyperconnectivity, but keep in mind that literacy rates are lower in Latin America than they are in Europe and the U.S. Luckily, education is improving as children in the region gain greater access to information.

I suspect the secret lies in going back to the basics – having clear corporate values and being transparent. Brand leaders will need to intelligently simplify their offerings so that consumers not only remember their brands, but also consume them.

Stuart
The biggest challenge across the Asia-Pacific region is that many of the large, established businesses are built around outdated business models – business models that focus on hierarchy and control. This is the antithesis of what is required of brands so that they can flourish in the Age of You.

Furthermore, most brands in the Asia-Pacific region are not harnessing big data in a meaningful way. They are simply capturing it. There's not much evidence of big data being used to drive insight, strategy, and action. Many brands seem more confused, or simply overwhelmed, by the sheer amount of information that is now available to them.

One final point on challenges in the Asia-Pacific region: it's important to remember the "collective you" that exists in Asia. Consumers in this part of the world have a natural tendency to feel more comfortable in groups. Individualism is less pronounced than it is in the West. This presents yet another challenge – but also an opportunity – for brand leaders to consider as they prepare to take on the Age of You.

Simon
Many brands in the European marketplace will continue to be challenged by those brands that disrupt existing business models. A lot of value is often sucked up at the expense of old, consolidated business models. However, trust, data privacy, and improvement of the customer experience represent significant barriers to competition.

I think it may also be challenging for many traditional B2B/heritage/family-owned brands to open up to co-creation, adapt to more individual needs, and to loosen their more conservative internal structures – all critical factors for success in the Age of You.

Finally, brands in the European marketplace still tend to struggle when it comes to aligning customer journeys with remarkable branded customer experiences. Fnac and Darty are two examples of brands that have navigated around this challenge effectively. They have made strong progress on this front by deftly merging their physical and digital retail experiences.

Each region has its own unique ways of conducting business and its own cultural characteristics. Do you think the localization challenges that brands currently deal with will dissipate with the onset of the Age of You? Will national brands become extinct in a way, thanks to Mecosystems?

Josh
This is potentially the most exciting aspect of the Age of You. It will be "boundaryless." Every brand will be discoverable – and every trend will be available to each and every one of us. 3-D printing and sharing economies will collapse supply chains – and we will all be free to build our own, unique world of brands. The combinations will come from around the world. And the diversity will be astounding.

Gonzalo
We are moving toward a seamless world and a total convergence in communications. There will, of course, remain some purely national brands that do not want to open themselves up to other markets, but these are a minority as most recognize the need to globalize.

Stuart
Logically, localization challenges should dissipate. I see a future where brands will need to be far more versatile and possess great flexibility. This will present a huge advantage in Asian markets where tastes and consumer preferences are so different.

Simon
Brands aren't trying to be one thing across the globe anymore. They are less imperialistic and more humble. They are actively seeking to learn across the markets. Understanding how effective the brand is in each of its markets, capturing this knowledge in a common framework, sharing best practices, and collaborating on innovation are key for success.

Stuart Green
CEO, Interbrand
Asia-Pacific

Simon Bailey
CEO, Interbrand
Europe

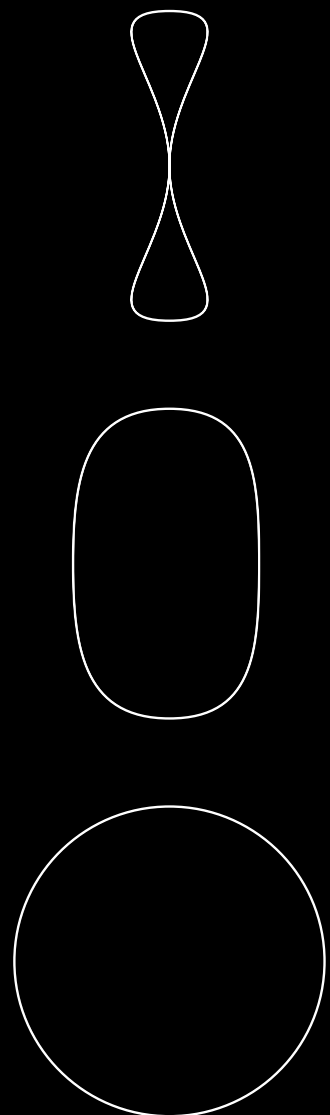
Josh Feldmeth
CEO, Interbrand
North America

Gonzalo Brujó
Chairman, Interbrand
Latin America & Iberia

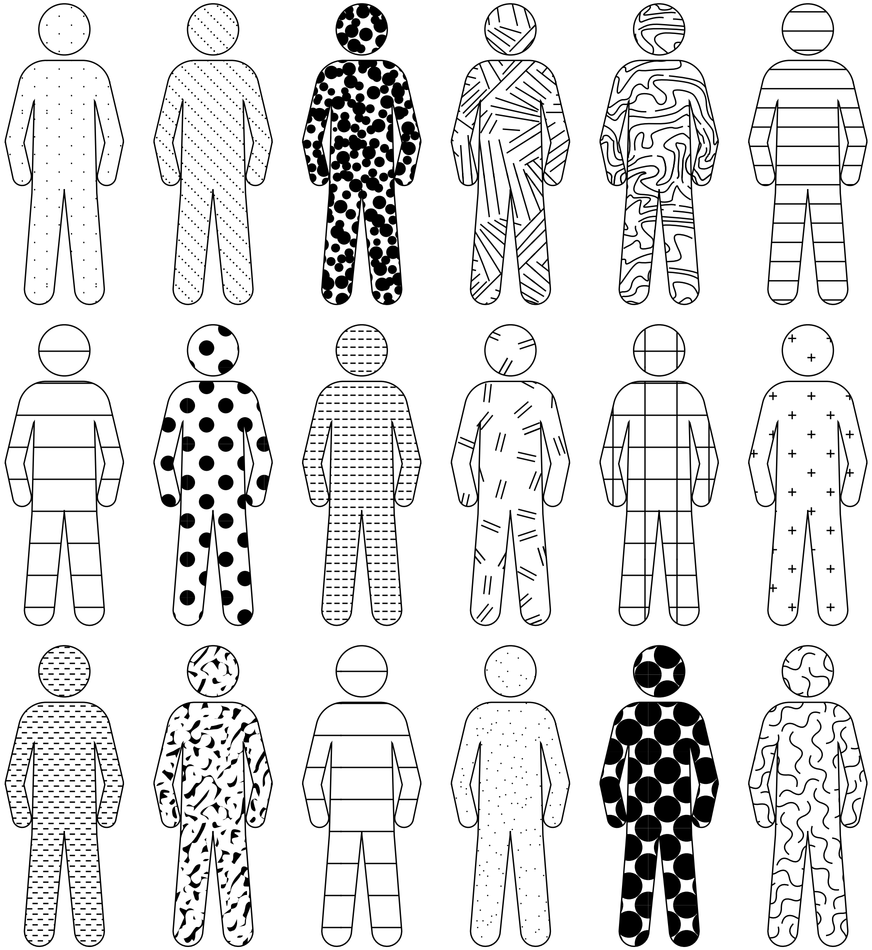
Mark Zuckerberg
CEO, Facebook

"The question isn't, 'What do we want to know about people?,' it's, 'What do people want to tell about themselves?'"

A conversation with
Andy Payne, Global; Chris Campbell,
North America; and Forest Young,
New York



From distortion to cooperation



The Age of You promises to be a real revolution – a world in which everything is connected, preferences are anticipated, experiences can be customized just the way you want them, software transforms our devices so that they understand our personalities and habits – and your personal data becomes the key that unlocks it all.

Brands that are transitioning to this new age will need cutting-edge tools (and thinking) to translate their visions into marketable products and services. But how will they humanize big data and make the Internet of Things truly blossom?

More than simply creating visual language, designers will increasingly be called upon to join up the disjointed, simplify the complex, and enable experiences that are as simple and user-friendly as they are pleasant. In order to imagine and prototype the future, both designers and brand owners will need to squarely confront the challenges of the present – and think more radically about what's next.

An era of distortion

In our current age, the Age of Experience, giant platform-driven brands like Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple have been hugely successful – and they're gathering a lot of potentially useful data – but they also have a distorted portrait of who their users are. They each have a sliver, but not the full picture: Google knows what you search for, Amazon knows what you buy and what kinds of deliveries you prefer, Facebook knows who your friends are and what you "like," and Apple knows how you use your devices and what kind of computing experiences you prefer. So what's wrong with this picture? Well, there is no true data reflection that you can monetize or transact.

Imagine how precisely needs and desires could be anticipated if current data sources expanded and brand ecosystems were "talking" to one another, sharing information? What if, for example, you announced on Facebook that you were traveling to a particular destination and that information was transmitted to Amazon, which could then make a truly timely and relevant recommendation – literally just what you were looking for (i.e., the ultimate travel guide to the region you plan to visit)? The potential for added value is enormous.

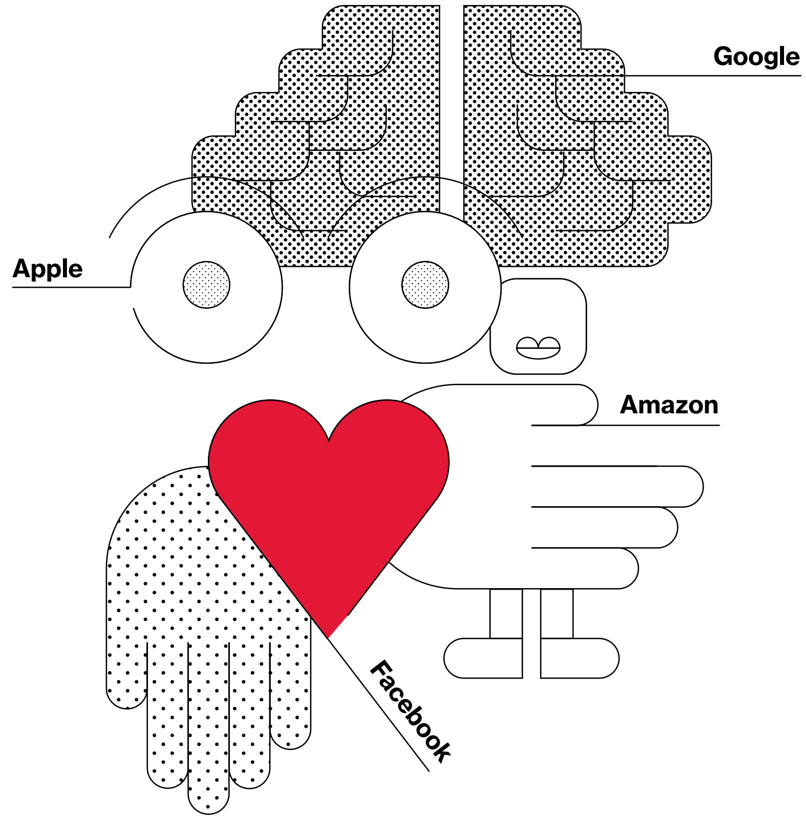
Everything you need – and nothing that you don't

The promise of big data is to enable brands to provide more of what consumers need (even before they know they need it) and, ideally, nothing that they don't.

In a world exploding with choices, often overwhelmingly so, brands can play a vital role in helping consumers overcome "choice paralysis."

In the Age of You, through a combination of curation and modularity, brands can offer enough choices to satisfy consumer needs for variety, but not so many that people get discouraged and abandon their search for a particular product or service. Brands will have to figure out how to break up their offerings in ways that allow consumers to customize, combine, or pick and choose only the elements that they want.

To apply a food service analogy, some consumers will want a prix fixe, some will want a buffet, some will want à la carte, and some will demand a unique, highly curated



"In our current age, the Age of Experience, giant platform-driven brands like Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple have been hugely successful – and they're gathering a lot of potentially useful data – but they also have a distorted portrait of who their users are. They each have a sliver, but not the full picture."

"While there may be a changing definition and understanding of privacy among younger generations, as brands increasingly become entrusted with more sensitive matters – from mobile commerce transactions to healthcare and home security – trust will take on enormous importance."

experience. This puts greater pressure on brands to create continuity in this modular scenario as well as a consistently rich and satisfying experience across the board – otherwise consumers may begin “editing out” the aspects of the journey that aren’t working for them.

The Age of You is about the brand of “you”

From our social media profiles to our purchase histories and web behavior, our data increasingly reflects who we are. And brands, seeing the value in knowing us better, have already begun to tailor their products, events, services, and offers to suit us. Personalization is now an expectation.

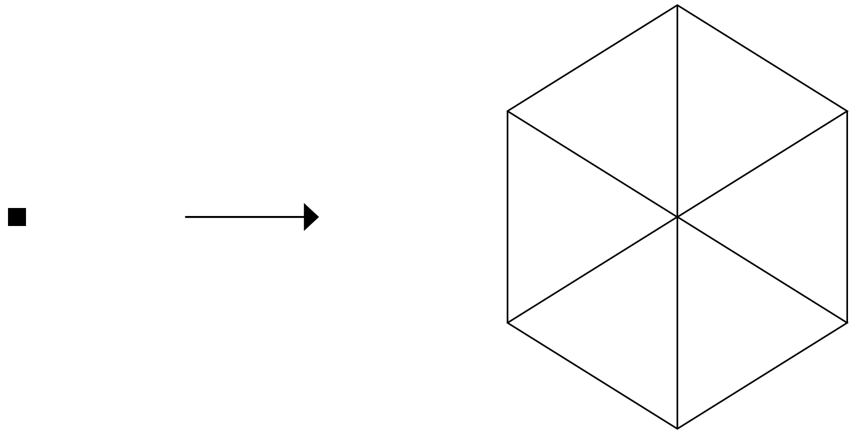
Today’s customers are co-creative – their demands dictate distribution, their voices have more impact than ever, and they expect to be able to connect to any person or company whenever they want. They aren’t just *choosing*. As we enter the Age of You, consumers have evolved into makers, designers, architects, and vocal commentators who expect companies, brands, and experiences to be shaped around them. And consumer data, incidentally, is enabling the transition to a more open, customer-centric paradigm.

In this coming world of connected machines and sensors everywhere, people will also be more connected, supply chains will reorganize around individuals, and ecosystems will become Mecosystems. As a result, rather than telling consumers what they should want, brands will have to *listen* to what consumers need and adapt accordingly. They will have to become more open systems themselves, more modular, and have the ability to interconnect and partner with others.

Already in the midst of this transition, consumers – from bloggers and reviewers to YouTube stars – are aware of the value of their content and, soon, they will recognize the value of their data. We can anticipate people essentially thinking, “I am out there building my own (personal) brand, and I’m important too. I know my data is valuable to others, so I recognize it as a currency. If I’m going to give you my data, what are you going to give me in return?”

Trust before love

To build that data relationship, love for your brand is not enough.



“The liberation of the pixel.”

“The Age of You and the connected systems and technological wonders that will characterize it open up completely new creative possibilities for consumers, designers, and brand owners alike.”

Trust is essential. While there may be a changing definition and understanding of privacy among younger generations, as brands increasingly become entrusted with more sensitive matters – from mobile commerce transactions to healthcare and home security – trust will take on enormous importance.

Google, for example, proved how secure Google Hangouts were when U.S. National Security Agency whistle-blower Edward Snowden participated in a virtual discussion from Russia (where he sought asylum) at the South by Southwest Interactive Festival 2014. By demonstrating its dedication to encryption beyond a shadow of a doubt, Google earned the public's trust and now has license to move into mobile. In order to deepen data relationships and expand successfully into new territory, brands must work toward progressive disclosure (through sharing) and strengthen credibility in areas that matter to consumers.

Under these ultra-secure conditions, brands must also demonstrate greater flexibility, allowing consumers to choose only what is relevant. In the Age of You, clarity of the brand and its role in the world will be key.

Design as a force that connects

Today, users interact with brands across more touchpoints than ever before – and they know more about brands than ever before. So, what role does design play in this new world of big data; open, connected ecosystems; myriad channels; and ever-growing security concerns?

From e-mail and phone support to web and mobile, consumers consider these and other interactions as part of their overall user experience with a brand. For that reason, it has become critical for companies and organizations to offer a seamless experience across channels – and for designers to consider the entire customer journey, not just a single interaction. As we transition from the Age of Experience to the Age of You, and the line between the digital and the physical continues to blur, continuity of experience between channels and devices will be paramount. But the quality of the design language and the richness of the experience are also going to become increasingly important, especially as that experience extends beyond smartphones, tablets, and desktops.

An expanded toolkit

More screens are becoming Internet connected – and now there are also wearables, TVs, watches, next-generation gaming systems, and other devices that require interface design. While the current *responsive* approach to design mainly focuses on how to scale webpages to various screen sizes, what brands really need to consider is how to adapt the overall user experience to each particular device. By understanding how customers are using their devices, brands can create *adaptive* design experiences tailored to each device. Apple, for example, is already moving in this direction. Promoting new products on its website using a nonlinear scrolling feature is one way the brand is inviting users to interact on a deeper level. But can we take interaction even deeper? Can we actually move *beyond the screen itself*?

The liberation of the pixel

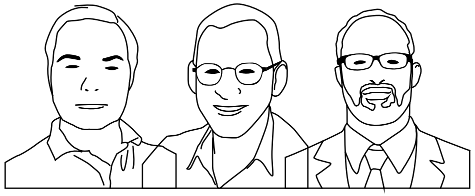
From robotic construction kits with "kinetic memory" to paintbrushes that can be wiped over real-world objects to pick up their color and then paint it back onto a canvas using "digital ink," digital experiences, according to MIT Media Lab's Hiroshi Ishii, are going to move beyond the screen and become truly interactive in the realest sense.

In the March 2013 U.K. edition of *Wired* magazine, Ishii explained the importance of involving the body: "These days computers dominate. Everything is pixels, intangible . . . you can see but you can't touch." Ishii's work aims to bring information up to the "surface of the water," exposing physical embodiments of digital information he refers to as "tangible bits" – an approach he believes will make computation more "legible."

Of course, for designers, a world liberated from the pixel is one that abounds with creative opportunity. Yet, those who are designing for a more realistic, immersive experience will require enhanced sensibility – a kind of sixth sense. Design will be multisensory and could, at that point, shift from hierarchies of size and scale to hierarchies of proximity. Designers won't be creating just a visual sense of your brand – such as information projected and augmented around the user, as depicted in the movie

Minority Report – but also, perhaps, incorporating sonic cues, music, sensations and scents.

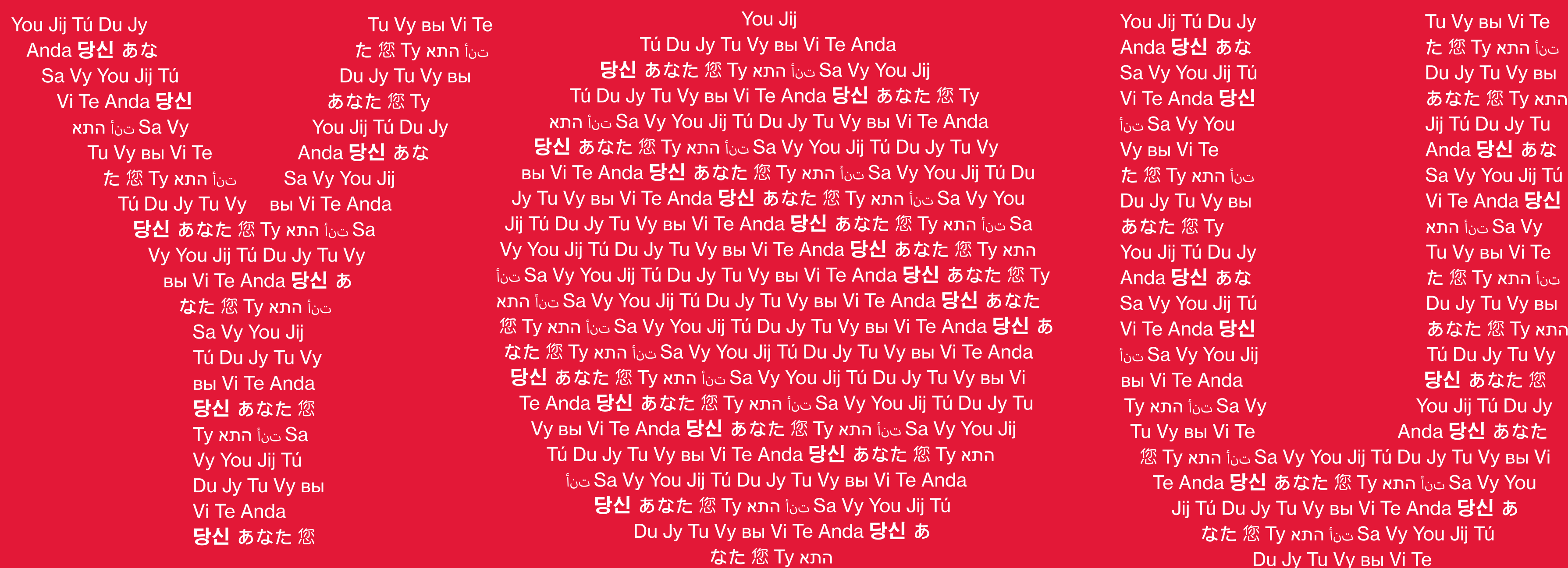
The Age of You and the connected systems and technological wonders that will characterize it open up completely new creative possibilities for consumers, designers, and brand owners alike. While we can only speculate on how all this might evolve, whatever the interface layouts of the future will be, today's designers will be setting the bar – and brands will be benefitting from higher levels of engagement.



This article is based on a conversation with Andy Payne, Interbrand's Global Chief Creative Officer; Chris Campbell, Executive Creative Director, North America; and Forest Young, Creative Director in Interbrand's New York office.

Satya Nadella
CEO, Microsoft

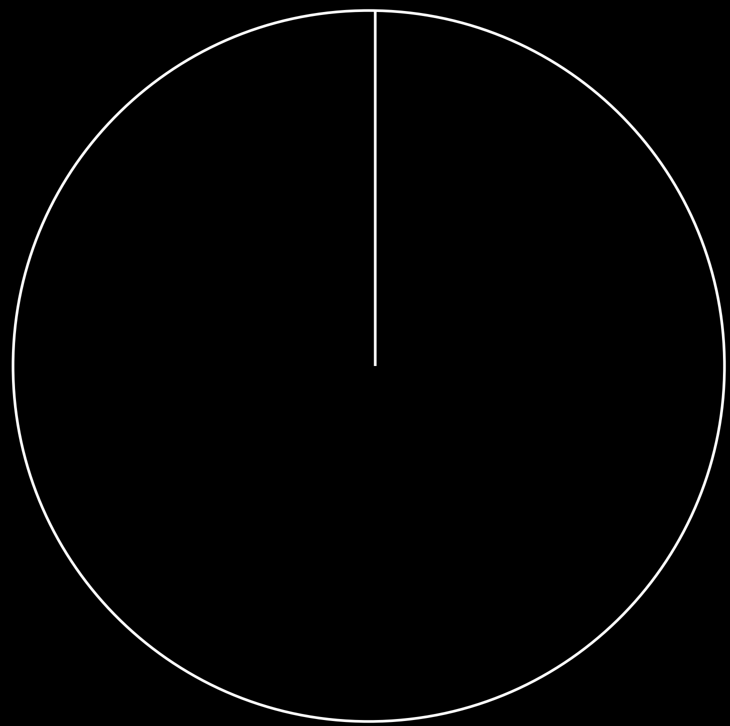
"Businesses and users are going to use technology only if they can trust it."



“As we enter the Age of You, consumers have evolved into makers, designers, architects, and vocal commentators who expect companies, brands, and experiences to be shaped around them.”

Michael Rocha
Global Director, Brand Valuation,
Interbrand

Methodology



Interbrand's brand valuation methodology seeks to provide a rich and insightful analysis of your brand, providing a clear picture of how your brand is contributing to business results today, together with a road map of activities to ensure that it is delivering even more tomorrow.

The brand valuation model also provides a framework within which one-off business case modeling can be conducted to evaluate brand strategy options – such as positioning, architecture, and extension – and make the business case for brand change.

Finally, when Interbrand conducts valuations for financial reasons, we provide strategic branding recommendations, in addition to delivering a rigorously analyzed and defendable valuation number. This delivers value to the business – beyond the knowledge of the valuation amount.

A versatile strategic tool: applications for brand valuation

	Brand Management	Strategy/Business Case Development	Financial
Applications	Brand performance management Brand portfolio management Resource allocation Brand tracking/dashboards Return on Investment analysis Sponsorship evaluations Senior management KPIs	Brand positioning Brand architectures Brand extension Business case for brand investment Co-branding/joint venture analysis	Investor relations Mergers & acquisitions Licensing/royalty rate setting Tax planning/transfer pricing Balance sheet valuations
Typical Frequency	Recurring	One-off	One-off
Primary Objective	Ongoing brand management leading to insights and recommendations to grow brand value	Business case connecting brand change/investment to projected financial results	A robust value with supporting analysis

To find out more about how Interbrand's brand valuation service could help you maximize the impact of your brand on business results, please refer to the Applications section of this report online at **bestglobalbrands.com**.

Best Global Brands Criteria for Inclusion

To be included in Best Global Brands, a brand must be truly global, having successfully transcended geographic and cultural boundaries. It will have expanded across the established economic centers of the world and have entered the major markets of the future. In measurable terms, this requires that:

- At least 30 percent of revenue must come from outside the brand's home region.

- It must have a significant presence in Asia, Europe, and North America, as well as broad geographic coverage in emerging markets.

- There must be sufficient publicly available data on the brand's financial performance.

- Economic profit must be expected to be positive over the longer term, delivering a return above the brand's cost of capital.

- The brand must have a public profile and awareness across the major economies of the world.

These requirements – that a brand be global, visible, and relatively transparent with financial results – lead to the exclusion of some well-known brands that might otherwise be expected to appear in the ranking.

To find out more about Interbrand's methodology, please refer to the Methodology and Brand Strength sections of this report online at **bestglobalbrands.com**.

Having pioneered brand valuation in 1988, we have a deep understanding of the impact of strong brands on the key stakeholder groups that influence the performance of your business, namely (current and prospective) customers, employees, and investors. Strong brands influence customer choice and create loyalty; attract, retain, and motivate talent; and lower the cost of financing, and our brand valuation methodology has been specifically designed to take all of these factors into account.

A strategic tool for ongoing brand management, valuation brings together market, brand, competitor, and financial data into a single framework within which the performance of the brand can be assessed, areas for improvement identified, and the financial impact of investing in the brand quantified.

Interbrand was the first company to have its methodology certified as compliant with the requirements of ISO 10668 (requirements for monetary brand valuation) and has played a key role in the development of the standard itself.

There are three key components in all of our valuations: an analysis of the financial performance of the branded products or services, of the role the brand plays in purchase decisions, and of the brand's competitive strength.

Financial analysis

This measures the overall financial return to an organization's investors, or its "economic profit." Economic profit is the after-tax operating profit of the brand minus a charge for the capital used to generate the brand's revenue and margins.

Role of Brand

Role of Brand measures the portion of the purchase decision attributable to the brand, as opposed to other factors (for example, purchase drivers like price, convenience, or product features). The Role of Brand Index (RBI) quantifies this as a percentage. RBI determinations for Best Global Brands derive, depending on the brand, from one of three methods: primary research, a review of historical roles of brands for companies in that industry, or expert panel assessment.

Brand Strength

Brand Strength measures the ability of the brand to create loyalty and, therefore, sustainable demand and profit into the future. Brand Strength analysis is based on an evaluation across 10 factors that Interbrand believes make a strong brand. Performance on these factors is judged relative to other brands in the industry and relative to other world-class brands. The Brand Strength analysis delivers an insightful snapshot of the strengths and weaknesses of the brand and is used to generate a road map of activity to enhance the strength and value of the brand in the future.

We believe that a robust brand valuation requires a holistic assessment that incorporates a wide range of information sources.

In addition to our extensive desk research, expert panel assessment, and benchmarks from primary research for client projects, the following data feeds are incorporated into our valuation models:

Financial data

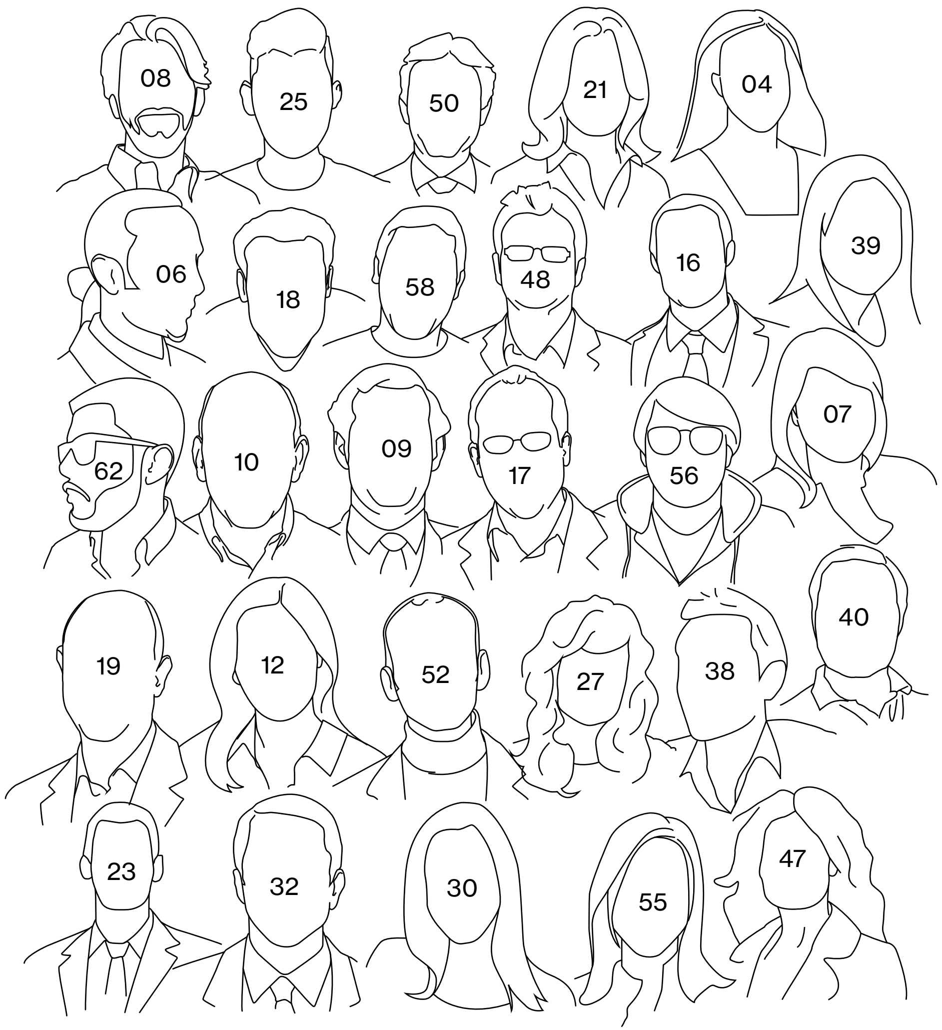
THOMSON REUTERS

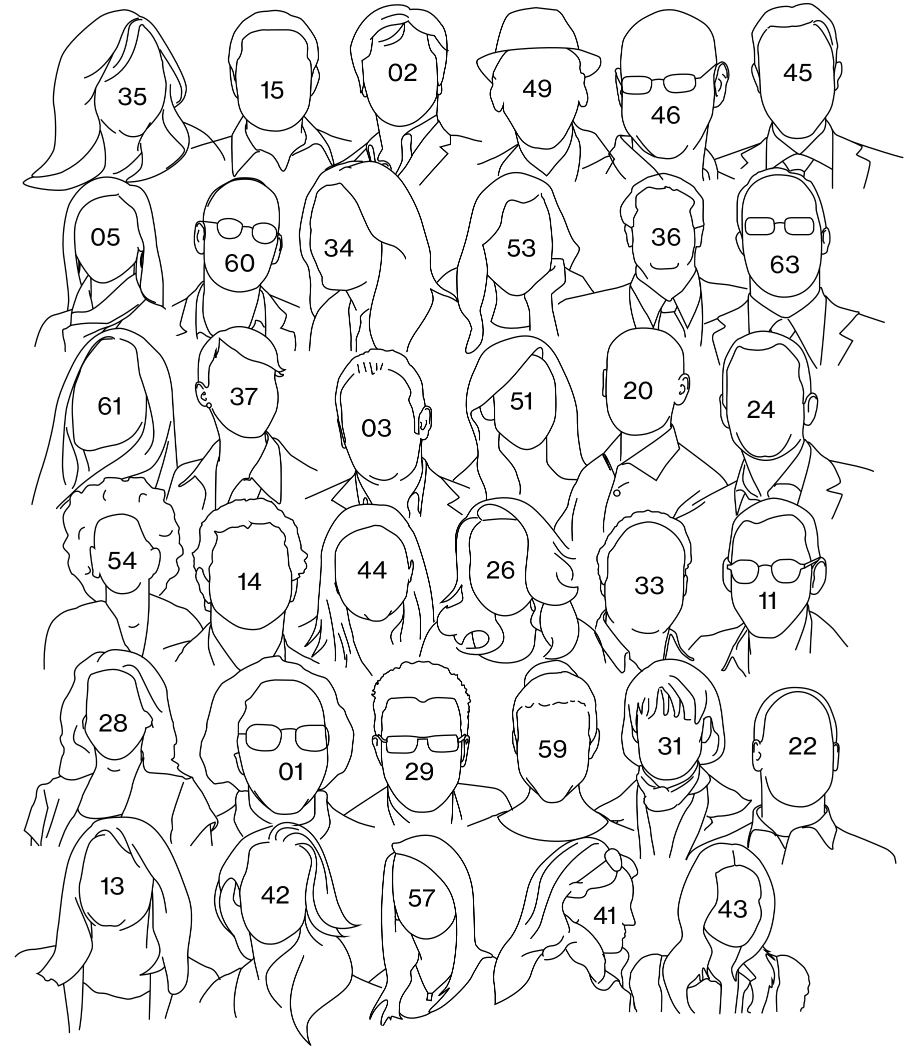
Consumer goods data

DATAMONITOR

Social media signal

Contributors





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18 John Fennessy
19 Jez Frampton
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21 Kelly Gall
22 Mark Garland
23 Stuart Green
24 Graham Hales
25 Joseph Han
26 Megan Harsh
27 Chesley Hicks
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32 Tim Loftus
33 Andrew Martschenko
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35 Sarah McLaughlin
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47 Rebecca Robins
48 Michael Rocha
49 Robert Rosenberg
50 Justus Schneider
51 Smruti Shah
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To see a complete list of the many Interbrand employees who contributed their time, insights, and creativity, please visit bestglobalbrands.com.

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Interbrand is the world's leading brand consultancy, with a network of 31 offices in 27 countries.

Our combination of strategy, creativity, and technology delivers fresh ideas and insights, deep brand intelligence, and compelling customer experiences.

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