

CHAPTER 1

The Media That Matters

The basic premise of this book is that media rules!

What exactly does that mean? Well, for starters, we believe that *media* is the information, the experiences, and all the stuff that we consume and share every day. In this sense, media is not one format more than any other. It's not the technology that delivers these things. It is the content. Media is virtually anything that we create, consume, and share in our daily lives. It might be something that you wear; it might be something that you hear; it might be something you create on a computer, or just scribble on the back of a napkin; it might be something that your audience creates on their cell phone or with a can of spray paint on the wall of a building. All these things and more are media. It's content. It's the stuff people experience. It's not a technology. It's the substance, not how it is delivered or received. And when you look at the way media is now being pushed into and embraced by the mainstream and influencing how people spend their time, money and energy, it is evidence that media rules!

Organizations, in how they operate and communicate, are confused and in some cases struggling in the wake of massive technological advancements and societal change. But there is a path to success. If organizations adopt and communicate a mediacentric strategy, they will not only survive but thrive. If they look for new ways of operating, new models to better serve their audience and live up to the full potential that technology provides in terms of delivering information, experiences, and stuff, they will distinguish themselves and the audience will follow.

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Why? Audiences do not rely on a single source for information, experience, or stuff; they don't get their news from one place, buy their clothes from only one store, watch the same television show, or participate in the same activity, day after day. Technology allows each member of the audience the opportunity to find their own personal connection to something. The days of mass audience communications are over. You have to do more than just create a niche or come up with creative ways to repackage all the same things you offered in the past. All organizations, regardless of their makeup, format, focus, or function, have many of the same opportunities and face many of the same challenges now. In fact, they are your competitors, whether it's for funding or the next big idea. And, they stand between you and your communication goal, adding another voice to the mix when you know that the most limited resource your audience has is attention. It's a new ball game, a new playing field.

Organizations typically focus on the delivery mechanism and on the product they are going to produce, instead of their goals – the reason they went into operation in the first place. They are focused on that press release, or that game, or that clothing line, or that text message when they should be focused on the message they are trying to communicate, their look, or the outcome they want after someone reads their message. *Media* refers to all of the things that represent the individual's relationship with whatever that product or deliverable is—the whole of what you need to understand—and not just what you can hold in your hand or count against your bottom line.

As long as organizations focus either on the distribution mechanism or on the product, they're missing a core element, which is media. And when organizations focus on the information, the experiences, and the stuff, they succeed. If you really nail the information, the experiences, and the stuff, then everything else is going to fall into place. You will have an audience—maybe not the entire world, but a loyal, dedicated audience that is going to find what you do compelling and important. You will be able to monetize what you create. You will be able to tap into the community to help carry forward your message on its own through buzz and word of mouth. You will meet your communications and business objectives, plain and simple.

Think about how you are preparing your media—your organization's messaging, your next event, your Web site or advertising. Ask

yourself, are we doing what it really takes to provide the best information, experiences, and stuff? Or are we focused on the distribution? Are we focused on the cost? Are we trying to tell our audience how to act, or integrating what we do into their lives in a meaningful way? Put your focus on creating and distributing the best possible media for your organization and your audience—the information, the experiences, and the stuff that will resonate and add value, meet (if not exceed) audience expectations, and have an impact on the environment in which that media lives and is received. When you do that, the other measures of success, things like audience loyalty, awareness and buzz, revenue and profit, will fall into place.

What does all of this mean for how organizations currently manage and market themselves? What does it mean to the audience we are all trying to reach? It means you have to do things differently.

Technology Facilitates the Transfer of Experience

When you listen to people talk about trends for the future of business, or education, or just the future in general, you hear a lot about technology. Scientists and researchers are always thinking about what the next big (or small) technology will be, what it will do, and how it will change the world. Companies race to be the one to market the next killer application or super device. They talk about microprocessors and fuel cells. They develop virtual worlds and complex simulations of real-life situations. They fuss over how to make palm-size communication devices so small that they aren't even the size of your palm anymore. They invent \$100 laptops with indestructible cases and make batteries that run on solar power so they can be used in a rainforest if needed. It seems like technology is often the main focus of new product development for many businesses—technology and non-technology alike.

Well, it shouldn't be. Technology is just methods for delivering media—a tool that can be used to create or share information, develop and manage experiences, or interact with stuff. Technology is a tool to help people communicate and to learn. Technology helps to pass data from one source to the next. Technology provides context and connection to people on opposite sites of the globe, in different languages. Technology is valuable, necessary, and provides tremendous benefits. But how people use technology is more important than what the technology itself provides. You couldn't communicate like we do today without technology. But technology

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wouldn't have much of a purpose if we didn't want, and need, to have something to share, something to say.

And because all of the technologies are converging, blurring and synergizing from the users perspective, organizations need to focus on the user's entire experience rather than optimizing the performance of a particular channel. Messages delivered over a TV set will soon take the form of games that were formerly the province of desktop computers; billboards will "work" with mobile phones; books will be re-written in real-time so one reader's experience will contribute to the next reader's experience. There are no discreet channels in the eyes of the user, so there can't be discreet channels from the communication perspective either.

Everybody uses technology in a slightly different way, and understanding how people use technology must dictate how we, as organizations and individuals, operate and manage. How people create, consume, and share information should dictate how you prepare and distribute content, both in terms of format—written, audio, video, three-dimensional, and beyond—and what that content should be. If you think about how people use technology, you will realize very quickly that there is no single technology that they use and no single way they use all the technologies they have available to them.

Consider how a typical millennial (a mid-twenty-something person) living in a city stays informed during the day. Throughout the day, she tunes in to commercial and public radio, watches television, browses through magazines or newspapers, checks her e-mail, logs on to a social network, Twitters or Pownces (or both!) and makes calls or sends text messages through her mobile phone. Beyond that she probably shops, eats, works or goes to school, and hangs out with friends. At every turn she is surrounded by media—she is wearing and carrying stuff, information is flowing in and out, sounds and signals are creating her experiences.

Now consider how a typical parent (a mid-forties-something person for the purpose of this example) living in a suburb stays informed during the day. Throughout the day, she tunes in to commercial and public radio, watches television, browses through magazines or newspapers, checks her e-mail, logs on to a social network and makes calls or sends text messages through her mobile phone. Beyond that she probably shops, eats, works, takes her kids to school, and hangs out with her spouse, and maybe friends. At every turn she is surrounded

by media—she is wearing and carrying stuff, information is flowing in and out, scents and sounds are creating her experiences. But, her media experience is very different than that of the millennial, or even that of another mid-forty-something parent.

Their differences in their activities seem minimal, but the impact in terms of communication is very significant.

Your media environment each day is different from the ones just described as well. There are some overlaps, but each person is unique and so is his/her interaction with media and technology. It varies by age, gender, and income. Geography impacts what technologies are available and what media is relevant and interesting to someone. And the designation of someone's behavior being "typical" or "average" can always be debated. What is certain is that you can't say that a particular piece of technology or content at a particular time is the way you can reach your target audience. There is no single place that people now look, online or off-line, for content. There is no single source that people view as credible or all-informed.

To this end, Mark Lukasiewicz, the vice president of Digital Media at NBC News explained one of the challenges that his news division faces when reaching out to one of their key target audiences:

We had a group of researchers in and one of our executives asked, "Where do young women go to get their news?" And the answer was: They don't really go anywhere. They expect that if the news is important to them, it'll find them.

That is a crucial insight to me, because what it's saying is: In my parent's generation, informing yourself was an act of volition. You *went*. You went to buy a newspaper, you went to a television and turned it on, you turned on a radio at an appointed time. That was a choice you had to make.

Increasingly, people expect that through the variety of connections they have in their life, whether it's their social networking apparatus, their e-mail, their cell phone, things that are important to them in the world will find them. They don't need to make an appointment to go find information. Some people still do it, but it's not necessary anymore in the way that it might have been to a large population 20 years ago.

So that changes the exercise for us, in that I think we do have to recognize that our storytelling is much more 24/7 than

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it used to be, that our storytelling and our delivery of news does not always exist in a linear context within a program that has a beginning and a middle and an end. It comes in pieces, and so we have to make sure our journalism is self-contained for those kinds of platforms, and that we need to push it out—all the platforms on which people are accessing information.

Lukasiewicz's job is to create news, to inform and educate about the current happenings of the world and what they mean to his audience. His team has more ways to collect and create the news because of technology now available to them, but that is balanced by a greater challenge in getting that audience to engage and participate as well. The good news is, technology is redefining the ways in which, really, anything is possible. The bad news is, technology is redefining the way in which, really, anything is possible.

What has happened to the information, experiences, and stuff that we already have? They have lost their way. They have begun to change. Right now it is pretty chaotic; lots of new things are being tried and lots of lessons are being learned. Keep reading and you'll see how.

Advertising is Broken ... But on the Mend

Organizations have used advertising for as long as we can remember to drive interest in whatever they do—a new product, a special service, an issue they find important, or law that they want passed. In the past, and still today for the most part, much of that advertising is done through print and television. Television, and television programming for that matter, was created to provide a mechanism for distributing sponsor ads. Millions upon millions of dollars are spent on 30-second ads, 30-minute infomercials, circulars, inserts, and displays. More recently, the focus has shifted toward online advertising, and some of those millions of dollars have been put toward banner ads and search terms. No matter the medium, however, the vast majority of that money is wasted.

Why? One reason is that most people don't spend their time looking for advertisements. They look for shows to laugh or cry at, magazines and newspapers to inform them, search results that direct them to a piece of information or an answer to a question. Another reason is that a lot of the advertising we see today simply

isn't that good. People in the advertising industry would probably dispute that characterization, but when audiences are skipping more than half of commercials, that speaks volumes. Even if people were looking for an ad, what they find wouldn't be all that worth their effort.

Organizations have a job to do, and part of that job is to get the attention of the people they need to buy their product, endorse their idea, commit to their event, or take action in some way. Advertising has been seen throughout its history as an easy way to try to do that. You have a captive audience, waiting desperately to see what will come next in their favorite show or progressing page by page through a publication in search of the continuation of their article, why not force a pitch on them. But the comfort of knowing you have the space to advertise often seems to invite a mediocre response from the advertiser. The creativity, the story, the images of many ads simply fail to connect with the audience it is intended to reach. The client and agency feel good, because they can count the number of impressions they delivered and the number of references to their brand they put out there. But if the ad fails to be compelling, simply doesn't work—and increasingly technology allows people to create a personalized media environment for themselves, with the trend seeming to suggest that commercial advertisements are not going to be a big part of that media environment—then we have to try something different.

There is plenty of blame to go around. But instead of picking on anyone in particular, let's look ahead and consider an alternative. Put the people who know the most about how to communicate about an organization, and the people who know best what types of information, experiences, and stuff a target audience wants, together to solve this information problem. That is almost certainly you and your colleagues from whatever organization you represent. It probably includes the audience itself. And we suggest you also involve the people who produce the venues and tools that people use to create, consume, and share information—the networks, the portals, the blogs, the cell phones, the operating systems, the producers.

As people who work for agencies, and often contribute to advertising, it is blasphemy to suggest that the role the agency has played as middle-person may no longer be of great value. But as consumers of media, as customers ourselves, that seems like the best route to explore.

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Organizations should be putting their heads together with their customers and partners to figure out how to provide a meaningful experience that benefits all involved. Make sure you understand why and how your audience uses technology and then start trying to align your communications effort. If the audience is telling us that 30-second commercials are not working, stop producing them and find another way. If so much printer advertising is required to turn a profit that the actual content of a newspaper or magazine is diminished to the point nobody wants to read it any longer, we are headed in the wrong direction. And if organizations don't think they can tell their story effectively through a standard banner advertisement online, then figure out what kind of format you need and make it compelling. Maybe you see the suggestion as radical and scary. Maybe you see this change of thinking as relatively simple. It is probably a little of both.

What are some of the things being tried? Brands are integrating their presence onto billboards, bus ads and sponsored buildings—in video games and virtual worlds instead of the real world (or at very least in addition to the real world). Advertisers are creating immersive experiences on the Web, in addition to showing ads during a television show. And they are putting products into real situations (e.g. when you get thirsty like an athlete, you think to drink Gatorade or when you see Friends sit down for a cold soda it's a Diet Coke instead of some fictional brand), but not forcing the issue on consumers. We know that people who are watching the big game or playing the video games are likely to see the ads, but the ads aren't disrupting the experience in any major way. This invites their audience to experience more than just what they can cram into 30 seconds that is squeezed between two segments of a broadcast. And just wait, because now mobile devices are extending the participation and interaction with ads after their production and distribution regardless of form.

It is not uncommon for the audience to create better ads. Do you remember the video that a fan created after Tiger Woods holed out a chip at the Masters in 2005? In real time, the ball rolled toward the hole and paused on the lip, long enough to reveal the Nike swoosh in full view of the television audience. Within hours, it was on the Web as a free ad for Nike, Just Do It tagline and inspirational music setting the right one. That was created by a guy in his living room with a basic editing setup on his computer and seen by far more people

than watched the original telecast. Meanwhile, CurrentTV, the television network that Al Gore founded, has made consumer generated advertising (and content) a staple of its programming—not by giving up creative control, but by supporting people who are not parts of agencies or organizations already but who have a perspective and know how to convey it. Companies like Sony, L’Oreal and Toyota were the first to experiment with this and find success—both in audience engagement and across the advertising industry.

Those are just a few examples, a handful of the new models being explored by marketers. The message is clear: the world is changing so try something different.

There Are All Types of Blogs

There is a perception in our society today that blogs represent one thing—one format, one type of voice. The stereotype, of course, is that all bloggers sit around in their pajamas and try to cut down the establishment. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every blog is unique. At last check, Technorati was tracking between 70 and 75 million blogs worldwide. More than 120,000 new blogs are created every day. There are individual blogs, community blogs, blogs that just feature pictures, and blogs that are only updated by mobile phone. Don’t forget CEO blogs, some more engaging and authentic than others, blogs that offer an inside view of a non-profit organization or reveal and support plans for advocacy. The number one language in the blogosphere is Japanese—39 percent of blogs are written in Japanese at last check. And the range of topics, depth, and expertise now available is staggering.

Brian worked while at Mindshare on a client, the Children’s Health Environmental Coalition, (CHEC) that launched a blog while its Web site was being redesigned. The blog, called “90 Tips for 90 Days,” took all the content the organization had accumulated on its Web site over the previous few years and redistributed it in 90 individual parcels, one delivered daily. At the end of the three months, the site stopped updating and the new Web site was ready to launch. That doesn’t sound like every other blog you read about in the news or subscribe to in your aggregator, does it? And that’s exactly the point. Even in that brief time, CHEC was able to grow its audience, attract attention from celebrities and the media, and provide a wealth of valuable information to its readers. Their success

wasn't because they launched a blog, it was because of how they used it—in their case to repurpose interesting content that their audience wanted, but didn't have access to previously in a format that aligned with their needs and interests.

So forget what you have heard about blogs or think about blogs. Blogging is easy. Blogging software looks and works like the word processing software that we all use every day. It requires no knowledge of hypertext markup language (HTML) code. Once you have typed your blog post or entry, it takes a mere one or two more clicks of your mouse to publish your words onto the Web for all the world to see. Blogging has taken online communication out of the hands of the IT experts of the world and placed it in the hands of anyone with an Internet connection. You should not launch a blog, however, simply to make your content more available or to prove that you can. Like any other communication opportunity, you should look at blogging as an opportunity to add something interesting, or relevant, or timely to the discussion with your audience. And if you can't, then there are plenty of other ways to add your voice that may be more appropriate.

Everything Is Social

Online social networks are huge. The audience for social networks numbers in the tens of millions and growing. People talk about MySpace and Facebook, the big players, but there are thousands of successful niche social networks that are relevant to particular communities. There are social networks for moms, businesspeople, crafters, and communities around all different languages and cultures, sports fans and pet enthusiasts, car nuts and do-it-yourselfers.

You might not think of it this way, but Amazon.com is one of the most influential social networks in the world. They figured out long before anyone else that customers were more likely to buy a book that everyone said was good over a book that everyone said was terrible. So Amazon institutionalized rating systems and comment areas to help convey those opinions to audiences.

The concept of those rating systems and community voices has a broad reach. SixDegrees.org is a social giving site, where people come and decide, based on the recommendations from the community, to what organization(s) they should donate. And that same concept has been applied to everything from stocks to shopping to medical

choices to the delivery of individual grants to school teachers. All of this is driven by social interaction, networking, and the power of people communicating with each other—facilitated by technology and the Web. All of it is reputation driven.

Phones Are for More than Calling

If you have a cell phone, and most people do these days, you probably use it for calling. But there is so much more that this one piece of technology can do. Worldwide, and increasingly in the United States, text messaging is the dominant feature that people use on their mobile phone, carrying on 140-character conversations back and forth billions of times in a year. In the coming years, the number of people surfing for information through a mobile version of the World Wide Web is growing rapidly.

Mobile phones will be the technical inflection point for deeper experience convergence. The Swiss Army knife-like technical features will allow it to interact with every other technical platform. But it is the mobile phone's inherent convenience, its portability, that makes it so full of potential for the future applications and uses.

People now use their mobile phones for basic things—a check of the weather, a search for directions. Over time, you will see people getting more substantive information, asking questions, not to mention creating and sharing content. Remember the movie *Snakes on a Plane*? The film was promoted by allowing audiences to create personal voice mail messages to be delivered by the film's star, Samuel L. Jackson, in character. The producers of *Lost* offer a game for mobile phone users to try to answer the question the writers have not yet: how to get off the island. And in many major sports facilities you can now use your mobile phone to order food and have it delivered to your seat, or get statistics that are relevant to what your seat gives you a view of more than anything else.

People spend more time each day with their mobile phone on and active than all other media—more than their computer, television, or radio combined. Importantly, they carry a mobile phone with them at all times, so unlike surfing the Web on a computer or watching the television from the living room, they don't have to stay in one place. Mobile redefines the importance of location in how people consume, create and share information. And that

fundamentally changes communication by, and for, organizations today and going forward.

It All Begins with Search

The first thing that the majority of people do when they go online is search. They log on to Google.com or something similar and type in some keywords based on whatever they are looking for.

But *search* isn't really the right way to describe that process. The standard definitions of search suggest that people are looking for something that is missing or lost. But more and more today, we try to find things that we know exist but haven't had the need for previously. Think directions, or the answer to a question. Today we explore the contents of the blogosphere or a certain site with the expectation that the answer is there, waiting to be found. You don't have to search—you can focus on locating exactly what you need. Later in this book we talk about the concept of *findability*, which combines both what information you make available as an organization and how that information is organized, so that it can be relevant to everything else that you are doing and that your audience is looking for.

Audiences are already getting better at modifying how they seek out information online. Traditional search is getting less and less helpful, less and less efficient. The amount of information that now pours into Google and all the other search engines is so vast that even the results that pop up on the first page may not be useful or related to the original query. The searcher has to be knowledgeable in how to best use the system to get what they want or need, an added hassle to someone who simply wants to find a quick piece of information to satisfy their curiosity. Search engines are evolving to be less algorithm-based and more human-generated, more reliant on the people who use them and the contributions they can make. That's why you see Google expanding into every domain of media, even offline. As the search engines change, the information that organizations create and make available will change as well, so that users can find what they need.

Audio and Video Are Awesome

Text is really interesting. We have gotten away with writing things for a very long time, and text will never truly disappear or die out

completely. But audio and video are more compelling, more interesting, more absorbing, and more enjoyable to watch or listen to.

However, not all audio and video are created equal. Look at what happened in the wake of the shootings at Virginia Tech. A student pulled out his cell phone, recorded a video, and sent it to CNN. The video wasn't even very good, mostly a blurry image with the sound of the gunshots in the distance. But when CNN put the video online for people to view, 1.8 million people downloaded it in the first 12 hours it was available. To this point, Andrew Nachison and Dale Peskin, the co-founders of iFOCOS, a think tank that helps citizens and business understand and use expanding media and communications technologies both to innovate in business and to create better-informed global citizens, wrote:

What we experienced about the horrific events on a black day in Blacksburg owes to a savvy, social generation connected emotionally and technologically to its media. Their eyewitness descriptions, photos, video and reporting from a remote, rural Virginia town—one of the world's first connected communities—made a story visceral to the world. The ability to instantly capture and disseminate information at a time when it was most needed, as well as to communicate with each other across time and geography, has not only helped unite a community but has become a real-time example of how personal media empowers and defines communication in today's connected society. Watching events unfold, the shift in the power of media was perceptible. Traditional broadcasters and publishers competently covered the tragic events in Blacksburg. But the story belongs to Virginia Tech students. They were at once reporters, witnesses and subjects of the deadliest shooting in U.S. history. It was like watching a new kind of reality show where the stars used their devices, their social networks, and their wits to survive and to cope.¹

With hundreds of thousands of podcasts and videocasts loaded onto the Internet for free each day, organizations must differentiate themselves and find a way to resonate. There are different formats, depending on what you are trying to communicate. There are different functions, depending on what you want the audience to do when they see your video. There are different ways of telling that story in an audio or video presentation, which you can leverage.

People will spend more time listening to a podcast or watching a videocast, if it is compelling, than they are likely to spend reading something.

Everyone Has His Own Channel

For a long time, we've all had a minimal number of dominant media channels for distributing content and information, whether that was news, entertainment, sports, or something else. Now everybody can have his own channel. There are more than 70 million blogs. Hundreds of thousands of videos are created and uploaded every day. The barriers for entry have been lowered and people are flooding in to be a part of the media environment. As people start to get and create more channels, you will see a greater differentiation in the quality. And the way to raise the level of quality is actually to help people create content for their own channels—to mentor and guide them.

This is a role that organizations can play. Recently, a company called EyeSpot partnered with the National Basketball Association to allow fans to create their own videos featuring their favorite dunks or their favorite players, all on the Web, all in a matter of minutes. The key to their success is that they provide all the raw materials and all the editing tools to the audience. Right now, most of the people who are creating their channels are semiprofessionals, people with free time who have editing suites in their homes and have some experience. But we are all creators, and we want to create and projects like this are opening this more exclusive world to a much larger audience.

Games Are for More than Playing

Video games are incredibly innovative and far-reaching, yet we have only scratched the surface in terms of what they can do to support organizations, tell stories, and engage audiences. There are all sorts of games: first-person shooters, casual games, sports and adventure games. There are also serious games and simulations that help people to learn about how the world works or understand important issues. The Army uses games to train soldiers, corporations create simulations to help managers get experience, and games have even become part of the curriculum in some schools, to help kids learn about health and wellness, get exercise, or explore complex math and science topics. These games spawn incredible communities

online and off-line, some for competition, others simply for social interaction. They represent one of the most successful and fastest-growing industries in the world. And there is little to suggest that the growth or level of innovation will slow any time soon.

Everything is Syndicated

You should be pushing your content out to every available venue possible—syndicating everything you can, information, experiences, and stuff, so that people can find it. Everybody needs content, and at any given time there is a lack of really good, compelling content, in any format. But you probably have content. And you don't have enough time, enough people, enough resources, enough energy in the day to tell all of the compelling stories that you have to tell. If you did, there would be a thousand different venues—maybe a million different venues out there would be interested in taking that content.

Create content that is designed to be syndicated, to be absorbed by other venues and promoted widely. Don't just deliver prepackaged stuff. Offer information to people that can be reproduced and redelivered, raw materials that can be molded to match almost any situation. Larry Lessig, a professor of law at Stanford Law School and founder of the School's Center for Internet and Society, explained:

Technology has exploded, meaning a wider range of creative work can be made available because the marginal costs of making that work available fall so dramatically. So anybody can get basically anything they want, and if not now, within five years, electronically or digitally, and stream it to their box, or download it to their computer, and watch it whenever they want.

But, at the same time, digital media is also exploding the opportunity for people to get access to concepts which they have a right not only to consume, but also to remix, and to share their remix with others. So institutions like Wikipedia are not just a resource to be read but also a resource to be revised, and lots of mash-ups that are made available through services like Google Video or BlipTV are resources for people not just to consume but also to add in their own creativity.

That's just a different kind of empowerment because it's inviting not just the consumption, but it's inviting the audience to talk

back, and, ultimately, I think that's going to be the more important transformation in the way that we think about culture.

It's what he calls the shift from a read-only culture to a more vibrant, read-write culture, thanks to technology. That shift has happened and is redefining who we are.

Meaning and Commerce Have Merged as Media

More organizations are beginning to market products and services with an eye toward supporting a cause. The emphasis on simply generating revenue for your organization—and we touch on this later in the book—is no longer enough, so you are seeing a shift. This, in particular, puts an emphasis on the *stuff* that audiences want and merging it with their consumption of information and thirst for experience.

One example: A group called T-post sends out a subscription to a news source that you wear as a shirt. Several times a year you receive an updated shirt with relevant headlines and stories on them—and by wearing it around you help spread the word about an issue and inform people.

Stuff is content too—it's not just information, it's not just video, it's not just audio; it's everything you wear, everything you buy and carry around. People buy things because it says something about them, about their personality. And in doing so, they communicate their beliefs and personality for others to see and be influenced by. People may not do it consciously (though many do), but they accomplish what some marketers spend millions of dollars and years of effort trying to do, simply by getting dressed in the morning.

Putting the Pieces Together

So what are we going to have to deal with?

Media is *globalized*. More and more people are becoming connected to each other through media and all the ways described above. Add to that the vast adoption of mobile phones worldwide, and we find that people who have not had access to information and to the global audience all of a sudden have it. This fundamentally changes the way content is produced and exists online. There are more languages, more customs, and more ideas. There are fewer borders and more voices.

Media is *localized*. All of the information, experiences, and stuff that we create, consume, and share is naturally filtered through someone's individual, personal and local perspective. No matter how much you care about what is happening on the other side of the globe, you are more likely to understand and care about what is happening on your street. That puts a premium on the ability for information to be specific to a local geography or culture, not generalized for an entire population. Technology makes it that much more possible to have an impact on the things that matter to you, and your audience, most – the things they encounter every day.

Media is *nonlinear*. The audience already expects stories to be told in a new, different kind of way. Gone will be the traditional television formats—a 30-minute sitcom with 22 minutes of programming and 8 minutes of ads in between segments. Gone is the concept of a beginning, middle, and end. Welcome a flood of information, to be sorted and organized, absorbed and manipulated however the audience sees fit.

Media is getting *better*. Most of the content on the Internet is low quality. Most of the television we watch on the 500 stations we have available to us leaves something to be desired. But as more and more people are able to create more and more video, the quality is slowly improving. As technology makes it possible for people to produce audio, video, games, and everything else, we will all learn, as a society and a community, how to do it better and more effectively.

Media is *bite-size (or snackable)*. Content has to be consumable or people don't know how to fit it into their day. Either you don't have the time, or you don't make the time. Either way, content has to be consumable in a moment, because there isn't the ability to spend time processing everything we have available to us. People want little tiny pops; they want stories told in a serial format over and over and over again, not all at once when they have to sit there and focus. Media is already being packaged in a way that people can consume, wherever and whenever they are ready, and more and more will follow that path going forward.

Media is becoming *easier to find*. It isn't searched for; it is simply there. You know what you are looking for and our information environment helps you get there. No mystery, no delay.

Media is *open-source*. No single entity is able to control, create, or know everything. We are all about co-creating, Wiki-fying our lives – opening our news, education, entertainment and even

decision making to the will of the masses and the cult of the amateur. Organizations and individuals are consciously deciding to welcome the voices of their community and to reflect their contributions, pushing the quality of the media to a new level in the process.

And finally, media is *transactionalized*. Individual exchanges of value are transactions, but so is every conversation, every e-mail, every experience you have. And the organizations that are responsible for those transactions are increasingly responsible for delivering a high-value experience with every transaction. There are so many options for how you and your audience interact with media that everything you do is important and meaningful. If you don't deliver value, there is someone waiting in the wings who can, and your audience will find them.

Overwhelmed? Scared? Don't be—the reaction you should be having is one of excitement, even anticipation. The organizations that will be successful are the ones that are going to have recognize that media rules. They will, you will, create relevant, compelling, timely, continually updated, bite-size, high quality, information, experiences, and stuff and when people go looking for it, you will be ready. Many organizations are already doing it. You can, too.

The audience is moving in this direction, and organizations must meet them along the way. We wrote this book to help people understand what is happening, how to adapt, and where to meet up with the audience. Being successful will take investment and commitment. Some of what we highlight is not cheap, nor is it easy to do. It certainly can't be done overnight, no matter who you are. But you can start immediately.

Follow the rules we share here. Some of what we have discussed, and will discuss throughout the rest of the book, will seem easy while some things will be more difficult. Try and fail because you are going to learn from it. You won't succeed 100 percent of the time, nobody does, but your mistakes will rarely be fatal and we will all learn from your efforts, as you will from ours. Organizations must invest and commit to operating with media at the center, because your investment and commitment when matched with others will lift us all up. And if you do not—if you choose to ignore this advice and the reality of what is happening all around you in this media environment—you will quickly be surpassed by other organizations and it will be hard to catch up.

As media digitizes, fragments, and moves closer to the audience, the information, experiences, and stuff become more a part

of the audience than a product that is delivered to the audience. The very nature of how we get and share information, experience things, and consume stuff has changed, so naturally the people who create and consume, use, and share that media need to change as well. It is as much about the audience as the organizations trying to reach that audience.

Make no mistake: What we advocate in this book is not always easy. It is not immediate or singular change. It will take time, but the results will be substantial.

