MAGIC HOUR

THE SCIENCE OF TREND ADOPTION, CULTURE INFLUENCE, AND SOCIAL TIMING

Lnk.

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OVERVIEW

Analysis and examination of trend adoption in our culture has been researched and reported over various decades. However, the previous models are now simply not holistic enough to be applied to the very unique, ephemeral, and disruptive era in which we live today.

A new formulation and theoretical examination of popular culture trend theory specific to a contemporary tech-savvy, self-empowered market is absolutely critical for today. Such study is crucial because the manner, breadth, and rate at which trends infiltrate and influence society plays a more powerful role in the shaping of public sentiment and behavior than ever before. The traditional model of success in trend growth and/or reach was previously linked to a sheer quantitative benchmark. That is, success or failure was typically linked to the number of people watching a particular program, consuming a particular brand, or a using particular technology platform. Proving concept solely via the number of people reached was considered a sufficient and thorough metric. But there is a definite need to move from a predominant criteria that was based on a quantitative approach to a new methodology that is much more rich and compelling.

While we cannot deny that reach is still critical, this criterion is only a mere percentage of the appropriate formula. Today, truly successful consumer adoption must include the level and manner in which behavior has been undeniably changed within popular culture norms. In an era where individuals are self-empowered, thanks to a shift in mindset coupled with wide usage of technology platforms, mere passive and momentary attention is not enough because we are in the age of de-centralization, fragmentation, and neo-hierarchy. A simple ratings system such as Nielsen, represents a society that was previously passive and captured. Today society is active and dynamic. Everyone is his or her own publisher thanks to Amazon, paparazzi thanks to Instagram, and his or her own Ticketmaster, thanks to Eventbrite. Thus, the new standard of success in cultural adoption must include engagement, or how behavior was truly modified and altered in some manner because it is this action that creates sustainability in an otherwise era of instability and unsustainability. If one cannot sustain an element, there is no real, lasting impact from which to generate revenue or influence minds. An entrenched and shifted practice is the motor behind the force of change and cultural mood, on any level. And such agency creates power.

It is this very agency that has the capacity to drive brand affinity, influence political movements, and advance technological developments, among other areas, and can

collectively create massive permanent and effective change in cultural development. This is where magic lies for today's marketer, activist, tastemaker. And as we experience the impact and sharing of sentiment, due to the advent of digital platforms, at a pace far more rapid and wide-spread than any other time in history; it is absolutely crucial for those seeking to influence behavior and change, to not only effectively comprehend the manner in which content and ideas actually become far-reaching trends but also how to potentially intersect with and/or shape public reception by new and applicable formula. Thus, a truly holistic measure that is both qualitative and quantitative must be deciphered and promoted as the new standard of success in culture penetration.

This document will reveal such a formula and examine the relationship between cultural trend infiltration with paradigm shifts in behavioral norms and adoption with that of mindset around values. From our research we have determined that successful social infiltration of ideas and brand traction are actually established by a cultural trinity-of-sorts - what we have defined as the Lnk Culture Code © - that work together to influence mindset and behavior in a digital age. In order for trend and behavioral adoption to consistently and meaningfully occur, we have determined that the following three elements must absolutely be present to create some type of authentic and sustainable cultural impact:

1)   a substantial/valuable product or asset
2)   an innovative marketing strategy
3)   cultural relevance and news cycle visibility

In other words, the issues/topics/content/product need first to truly matter to a wide cross-section of people. There has to be a framing or actual marketing push that encourages the target audience to take action. And a relevance – often made visible via some level of media - must be present to a large group of people.

Together these three elements create a cultural trajectory that is related to time. This means that time, or rather, timing has a direct impact on the acceptance and penetration of the idea whether it be that of an appropriate convergent moment in collective mindset and/or the commitment of time and energy to a concept that eventually works in tandem with the main three elements to take root and create change in popular mindset.

Through possession of such understanding, one can develop, accelerate and/or re-shape social behavior and influence trends.

This report proves this theory through several data and sociologically-driven examples related to either political/socio-political themes or to domicile that can be applied to

help create a new communication and outreach strategy pertaining to the refugee crisis today. The findings are also intended to underscore the opportunity to initiate such a strategic plan now in order to capitalize upon the momentum of time that will then crest with the larger, overall social good/neo-philanthropy conversation that is building today in the United States and is driven, particularly, by millennials.

"Magic Hour" is the culmination of study conducted through both data research and expert/academic audio interviews. Five particular politically-related and domicile-related products were selected. They are as follows:

- House of Cards
- Chappelle's Show
- FiveThirtyEight
- Airbnb
- Pinterest

These entertainment content offerings and start-ups were selected due to their disruptive and profound impact on trends and behavior among key demographics in the United States today. It is through the lens of popular culture products through which we examine the theory because studying popular culture reveals the underlying assumptions, power structures, and philosophical and moral constructs of society that produces those products. Thus, it is never to be taken lightly, as many assume. If certain elements have made a dent in behavior and mindset, through which the vehicle is often popular culture, then it is important to ask how and why. Therefore, the intent is, via dissection of the cultural progression of these five products, to demonstrate the Lnk Culture Code theory but also provide a manner in which to create possible replication and application to the current communication strategy and mission of the UN-HCR.

Detailed background and benchmarks on each case study can be found in the appendix of the report.

HOUSE OF CARDS

CULTURAL TREND CASE STUDY NO. 1
HOUSE OF CARDS

Substantial Product Offering

Since its advent, television has been an agent of change. It was once the primary medium through which new ideas, concepts, and people reached the home of the average individual. There were traditional formats and traditional delivery schedules to which everyone adhered. Today, however, an audience can watch television anywhere, anytime, across a variety of platforms. Within such a climate, myriad ideas and content are thrown at society in an unending cycle, and few concepts actually take hold. House of Cards is an exception to the rule. The series is a critical and cultural success that expertly leveraged cultural timing, innovation in product development and distribution, as well as media awareness to create a precise and powerful conversation within a large segment of American society while also completely changing consumption behavior in the process.

Produced and distributed by the international, on-demand Internet streaming media company Netflix, the breakthrough series has created a unique and compelling content offering that has raised the standard in dramatic television viewing due to its artistic approach, elite creative team, and production standards; but it is the approach to narrative that is remarkable. In fact, it is the show's narrative that is primarily responsible for fan connection to the characters that created a cultural trajectory into the psyche of a large portion of American society. Pamela Douglas author of "The Future of Television", screenwriter, and professor at the USC School of Cinematic Arts explains,

"The clear answer about any program's success is character. If you have a character that resonates because of the depth, the honesty, the truth of this character with the public; then you have an intimate relationship with the struggles and the wishes and the will of that character. The narrative compels that you must watch each week, or whenever you can get your hands on it. It doesn't really matter what the genre is, the test is really about whether or not the character is him or herself completely full and real. Similarly with other breakthrough shows that become a part of our culture such as Mad Men, Game of Thrones, and Breaking Bad, we actually worry about those characters even when the show is not on. The reason is that the characters' underlying the actions reveal a human heart that relates to the possibilities within us. This is how stories burrow into our society and create an upward trajectory. Their stories are real, but also universal for the time in which we are living. All of this influences, mirrors, changes societal behavior, thought, values."

Debuting in 2013, "House of Cards" was introduced at a critical time in culture where a growing trend of general malaise, disillusionment, and mistrust of public policy makers by constituents was becoming more and more evident and of which the creator acclaimed writer Beau Wllimon and initial director Academy-award nominated director David Fincher, had been attuned. Thus, set in present-day Washington, DC, the series' portrayal of a diabolical congressman's elaborate plans to springboard into greater reaches of power rather than focus on the advance of his constituents played perfectly in the sentiment that many unemployed and economically struggling citizens felt. The character was one to whom they could relate, having nearly already imagined him.

Fatigued by a lack of transparency as well as by a perceived lack of competency masquerading as authority, a wide and varied number of demographics in the country immediately gravitated toward the series concept and characters that, at once, provided an insider view into fictitious political machinations that confirmed their suspicions about politicians. The show did so from a dramatic point-of-view rather than the long-standing trend of political sitcoms in America which created a unique platform. Dark and compelling, "House of Cards" capitalized upon very real public suspicion and curiosity by expertly taking viewers inside the world of Congressman Frank Underwood. This fictitious microcosm depicts a cast of characters, including Underwood's wife, who will stop at nothing in order to achieve greater position and connections. And the tone touched a nerve within popular culture. The allure was only deepened by the compelling delivery of Academy-Award winning actor Kevin Spacey along with an ensemble cast of dynamic actors.

In addition, the lead character's direct commentary to the audience heightened engagement by creating relationship with the viewer. He or she was invited into the private, sinister, and sarcastic thoughts of the character, thereby creating an emotional bond. This is a cinematic technique rarely employed in dramatic television series and rarely in a manner that is well executed and appropriate to a show's theme. The methodology created a particular, shared intimacy between the audience and Spacey's character that provided unique access to his plotting and plans. Such intimacy created a nearly co-dependent relationship between audience and character that was addictive and compelling. This character technique coupled with the direction, storyline, set, and wardrobe all came together to create a product that not only grabbed attention of regular consumers but also that of high-powered executives, and cultural tastemakers, typically cynical and critical. Even the powerful, respected and commonly scrutinizing Hollywood trade publication reported, "House of Cards achieved the feat of instantly emerging as a first-rate drama."

The series is also the first original online-only web television series to receive major Emmy Award nominations in the history of the television association. "House of Cards" created tremendous impact because the overall product offering was superior and unique. This product possesses a unique intensity of story telling that created a powerful long narrative offering in the market that was simply unprecedented.

"House of Cards achieved the feat of instantly emerging as a first-rate drama."

Innovative Marketing Strategy

Due in large part to the unprecedented marketing approach for the series, Netflix became a leader in creating original programming outside of network and cable television, while changing consumer behavior in the process.

Rather than following the legacy strategy of releasing one episode at a time, Netflix made an unprecedented decision to release all episodes of the House of Cards series at once. In this manner, the company was able to mirror customer-viewing behavior that applied to the company's licensed content. Netflix was able to effectively accomplish this due to the application of big data. The advent, timing, and widespread usage of algorithmic technology enabled the company to obtain deep audience insight into viewing patterns and behavior of which predecessors only dreamt.

Big data enabled Netflix to deeply analyze 30 million "plays" a day in order to determine exactly what titles customers watched and why. A New York Times article explained that the statistics and information provided Netflix with a deep molecular understanding of the user/viewer via the use of quantitative application rather than traditional focus groups and surveys. This power enabled a much more nimble and defined approach so that the company could refine and market the House of Cards content to meet consumer tastes and, in the process, reduce the amount of time previously needed to introduce a concept into consumer segment psyche. This methodology initiated a nearly immediate trend progression.

Such technology usage enabled a new dynamic in the content's marketing, but also the content's market delivery methods. Previously, streaming content had been more of a good idea in theory, rather than practice. The experience was a test of patience with the end user

suffering through unending buffering and re-loading. The process was anything but smooth. In fact only just several years ago streaming media, with its hodge-podge of proprietary protocols – all mostly based on the far less popular UDP – suddenly found itself struggling to keep up with demand.

Thus, MPEG Common Encryption for content began to be perfected, enabling a more smooth and secure experience. In just a handful of years streaming media technology has leapfrogged from less-than-standard definition video to rather solid 720p HD video. Prior to this time, the quality of even the best video-on-demand OTT (over-the-top) services, of which Netflix is a part, fell short of broadcast television and Blu-ray audio-video quality. The perfection of codec technology was a driving force that enabled Netflix to do something astounding.

Today, Netflix is credited as driving the cultural trend known as "binge" - consumption of multiple episodic content video pieces viewing in succession – viewing. Naturally, binge-availability is possible for many old shows, but this was a new frontier for brand new programming and was marketed as such. And it worked particularly well in Netflix's favor. House of Cards seized upon the growing frustration of the old-model of television consumption, by offering a new form as a solution. Further, political machinations were particularly still relevant when House of Cards"was released because it was just after a presidential election, and therefore played into a collectively timed and rabid interest in politics. Fur-

ther, this brand-new series was marketed as a complete capsule, available at will, and broke the mold of typical timing of release for a fresh, episodic series. This methodology put the viewer in control via an on-demand offering and completely disrupted the traditional television distribution system of new series introduction. The quality of the series coupled with the addictive nature of consumption and flawless technology delivery made for fast and furious adoption, sentiment sharing, and a frenzy around the overall package which, essentially shattererd previous consumer patterns and market demands.

"Technology enabled a new dynamic in the content's marketing, but also the content's market delivery methods."

Cultural Relevance/News Cycle Visibility

The trend uptake further deepened for House of Cards via both traditional media coverage and newer cultural behavior around social media. In fact, Netflix fully leveraged social media and the addictive nature of the 24-hour of cycle of information by releasing news information-of-sorts across social media regarding the personality and antics of the characters rather focusing on the episodic theme of the show. Twitter posts were filled with quotes, third party reviews and fan art.

The usage of edgy GIF"s and compelling one-liners made the show seem even more cultural relevant, hip, and contemporary. It peaked curiosity and created fan discussion for House of Cards, something that, previous to today's social media era, would simply not have been possible. This helped generate visibility for a unique show with a very unique distribution model without the complete dependence on a stodgy, slower traditional media.

Once the show's storylines penetrated digital conversations, then legacy media discovered, dissected, and analyzed the show in repetitive fashion. House of Cards began to be included in the next-day re-caps of such widely read digital media outlets such as TheDailyBeast.com and Buzzfeed.com. Pithy explanation and opinion deepened fandom and anticipation around future seasons' plots. Certain media outlets even included tongue-in-cheek comparisons to real-life mindset on Capitol Hill thus creating a dynamic and on-going interplay between popular beliefs around policy and policy makers that, together, created a water-cooler effect for House of Cards that burrowed into a large part of the cultural psyche in the U.S.

"Certain media outlets even included tongue-in-cheek comparisons to real-life mindset on Capitol Hill thus creating a dynamic and on-going interplay between popular beliefs around policy and policy makers that, together, created a water-cooler effect for House of Cards that burrowed into a large part of the cultural psyche in the U.S."

Resulting Cultural Paradigm Shift

"House of Cards" managed to:

- Deliver a compelling product with well-developed characters and narrative that seized upon widespread interest about the darker side of politics and leveraged a dramatic approach over a comedic one
- Synthesize the content with a social and cultural climate of distrust in government and policy makers
- Refine and perfect technology to enable and encourage a new style of digital consumption and marketed it in a manner that changed consumption patterns

The synergy that House of Cards offered was unavoidable and seductive. The series embedded itself into a large part of American culture today not only influencing and mirroring perception regarding politics, but also by permanently changing behavior around expectation and pattern around digital content consumption. In an unprecedented standard, the appeal for new approaches in content series release has shifted sole power from content creator to that of content consumer demands. Today there is a remarkable difference in balance of power. In fact, there is a uniquely disruptive, symbiotic relationship between the viewer and content creative where the agency of change is now actually shared. Through observation, access, and expertise, Netflix was able to leverage technology developments and social attitude that had

reached a precise aperture over time in order to create measurable change in attitude and behavior. The action has made for a veritable sustainable impact that is far greater than a simple count of end-users and downloads.

"The series embedded itself into a large part of American culture today not only influencing and mirroring perception regarding politics, but also by permanently changing behavior around expectation and pattern around digital content consumption."

CHAPPELLE'S SHOW

CULTURAL TREND CASE STUDY NO. 2
CHAPPELLE'S SHOW
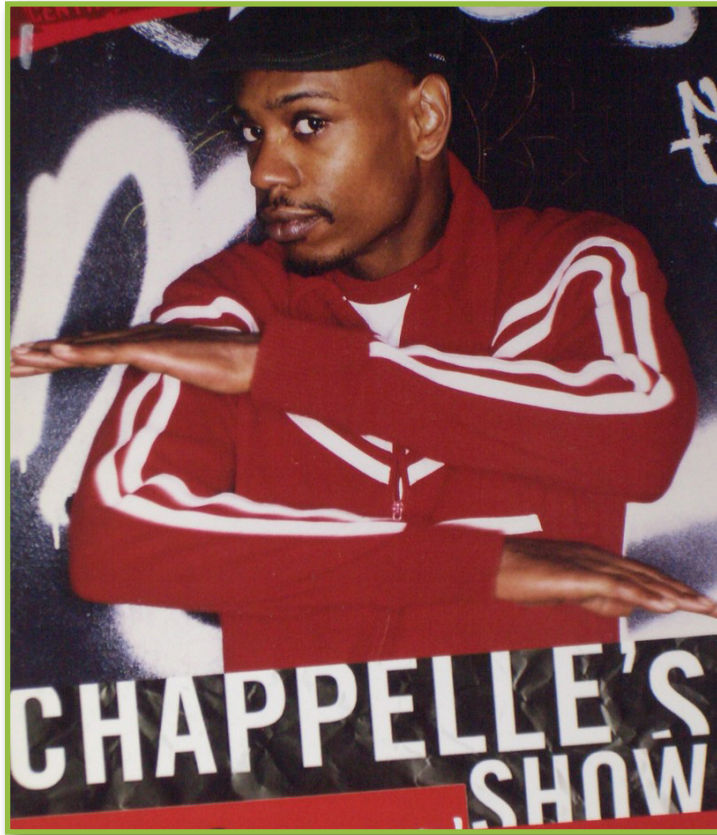
Substantial Product Offering

Though not currently in production, Chappelle's Show continues to entertain but, moreover, shape attitudes within popular culture today. The series' fearless delivery of socio-political commentary in a humorous, satirical, and often times, controversial manner managed to successfully create a phenomenon and upset wide-spread beliefs around race relations, stereotypes, and issues around ethnicity in contemporary America. The show not only attracted an arguably rabid fan base within which many show references are still prominently exchanged today, but was particularly remarkable in that it was the first of its type to blatantly and cleverly challenge and provoke change around certain social attitudes on a consistent level.

Perhaps one of the most well-crafted skits indicative of the cultural impact of Chappelle's Show was entitled "Frontline", the content of which is a spoof of the PBS series of the same name. The first Frontline sketch, Blind Supremacy, featured the life of Clayton Bigsby (played by Chappelle), is a biography of a blind white supremacist who is not aware that he is actually a black man. This sketch

was part of the first episode of the series and garnered attention for its extensive use of the word "nigger" in a manner not previously utilized within television. Other Frontline sketches featured stories of racist animal actors and gay versions of everything from the DMV to the KKK.

The rich layers of social and political commentary that resulted from the show's edgy tone and creative skits such as "Frontline" were incredibly provocative. Chappelle's Show was unlike almost any comedy show before it in that it did not replicate the sketch comedy tradition that successful programming such as Saturday Night Live and Monty Python had. Chappelle's show created a new approach in which Chappelle, himself, starred in nearly every skit and focused relentlessly on the deep socio-political issues of the moment. A scholastic study at University of Michigan stated that the format of such sketches enables comparison's of the star's vision of mainstream culture versus the cultural norms of other ethnicities much in the sense of traditional academic race theorists such as W.E.B. DuBois (1994) and Toni Morrison (1992),)

among several others. In this manner, the intent is to demonstrate a valid vision of a racialized present and predictors of a racialized future through social exchange. This is demonstrative in the discussion between the Frontline journalist and his interview with the reclusive, famed White supremacist, Clayton Bigsby. Such sketches were break-through because they expertly suggest that racial identity is dependent upon socialization with no meanings other than those that society ascribes and perpetuates through cultural transmission and social and political phenomena to create variance. As a result the sketches, via depiction of characters in extreme fashion, provide commentary on the irrationality of stereotypes attributed to a variety of ethnic groups. On a consistent basis the show enabled the audience to confront common images and stereotypes of their own as well as those of society at large, in an extremely sophisticated manner of comedy.

Although one of the primary critiques of Chappelle's Show is that the humor deflated the social commentary and impact, data indicates otherwise. Indeed, the format allowed people to laugh, but the

absurdities and irrationalities of American racism were certainly not lost upon the audience and were, in fact, that which initiated primary response from which then ensued a ground-swell of articles, posts, engagement personal blogs that directly created debate, argument, praise, and reproach – a cultural conversation – that greatly attributed to the show's cultural infiltration.

Professor Darnell Hunt, Director of UCLA's Ralph J Bunche Center for African American Studies and author of the book, "Channeling Blackness, explains,

> "One of the major reasons why we also saw the success of programming like Chappelle's Show is the growing diversification of the American population. These shows and their creators are clearly tapping into an un-met need of that which has not been met by what is a becoming a dominant demographic in our society, so the result is success. A lot of people might have passed this off as a fad, but ethnic diversity and issues around it cannot go away. For the first time ever, we see minority groups now about to overtake what was the traditional majority, so if you want to be relevant, you have to tap into that in TV or anything as we see now with the success of other current dramatic and comedic television programming. But Chappelle's Show understood this early and truly created conversation about issues around race. What's im-

portant to understand is that because of the changing demos in our country, any particular format in TV might run its course, but the common thread will be an audience that demands not only inclusion but confrontation around stereotypical beliefs. Anything around this that is well-produced will create cultural impact precisely because of the shifting demographic and numbers today."

Chappelle's Show is a product that expertly developed a powerful creative catalyst that confronted social attitudes on race and that of progression toward a new race model today.

Innovative Marketing

Chappelle's Show first aired on the cable television channel Comedy Central on Wednesday nights at 10:30 pm, Eastern Standard Time, beginning on January 22, 2003. The show aired right after the highly rated South Park. As is common practice in the television industry, new shows are scheduled immediately after a show that is a network hit with the hope that viewers from the first show will flow right into the next program.

However, Chappelle's Show actually reversed that traditional network approach. The program surprisingly became the main show and attracted more viewers than the leading hit show that preceded it. This is due, in large part to a confluence of marketing and distribution strategies, technological introduction, and application

of time frequency. First, the institutional placement of the show on cable via Comedy Central, rather than standard network station allowed for the show's use of racial satire and its attempt at perspective by incongruity. Through the performances of race that are allowed (or not allowed) to air and the specific audiences that are either meant to or able to receive this messages, Chappelle's Show had a particular freedom to create an unprecedented, edgy type of content that was marketed as unique content and somewhat taboo on network television.

Further, the rate at which the show was re-run became instrumental to the rise in show's popularity, reinforcement of its messages, and a marketing tool-of-sorts, itself. Due to pure market availability, the potential was consistently created to expand the viewing audience given that an increased number of people could watch the episodes after their original airdates. This availability includes an original airing when the show premiered on Comedy Central, clips posted onto such new platforms at YouTube (the timing of which contributed to breadth and reach of the show, not previously possible before the introduction of the digital platform), and the series was released on DVD uncut and uncensored.

In fact, the release of the series on DVD created a specific method of which to carry the content deeply in the American social thread. The advancement and perfection of DVD technology within the timing of the show's content development drove the brand in a way that burrowed the series deeply into the collective pop

culture mind via DVD ownership and shared viewing of the disks. The repetitive, on-demand nature of show "ownership" made for addictive viewing patterns.
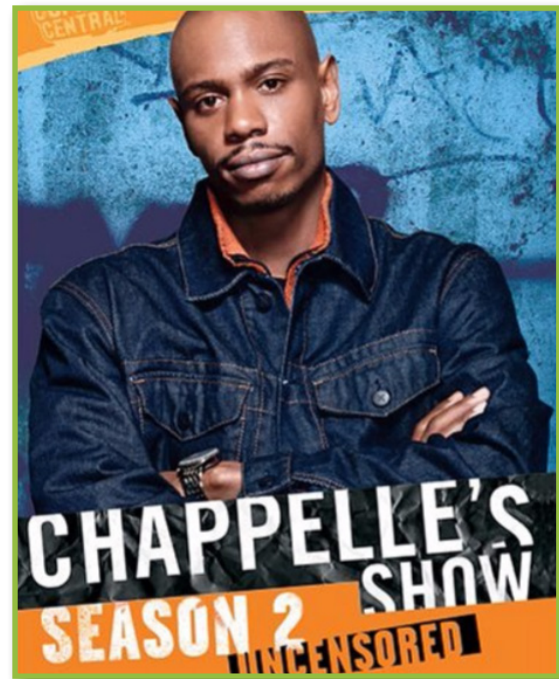
The first season's DVD sold 2.8 million copies, more than that of any other TV series in history at that time. In a savvy marketing move, the co-creators also released the uncut and uncensored versions of Chappelle's Show sketches on DVD, where they could use the language and images originally intended, without the censoring that was used when the episodes originally aired on Comedy Central. The word-of-mouth and peer-to-peer sharing of the DVD and on-demand formats spread like wildfire. The confluence of these marketing ploys developed a multi-channel permeation of the content and the show's in-your-face approach to create a fast-moving, upward viewing trend trajectory.

Cultural Relevance/News Cycle Visibility

The intersection of time of the show's release into the market with that of the cultural climate created a synergy that further lead to deep acceptance of the show themes. First, there had not been a dynamic African-American male comedic host of a sketch comedy in quite a few years until Dave Chappelle. He had "swag," utilized hip hop jargon, and featured musical guests from Kanye West to Method Man. With the rise of hip hop into the mainstream and power of such images pulsating through the current of popular culture at the time, there was a ready and willing young audience that was vital to the word-of-mouth on this series. But a number of shows had hip hop edge. This was not the only factor that created the series' impact.

Chappelle's Show was introduced into the market during a particular social climate in which society was primed for racial discussion. The infamous "three strikes law" (seen as a racially biased proposition) was upheld just before the debut of Chappelle's Show. The US- Iraq war began shortly thereafter which also created subversive/subconscious propaganda regarding specific ethnic groups that lead to both a general distrust and mistrust from the American mainstream. This public sentiment around race and ethnicity was further exacerbated by the fact that US Census Bureau announced, nearly simultaneously, that Hispanics constituted the largest minority (37 million) versus African-Americans (36 millions). These

statistics began to contribute to a greater tension around the "browning of an America" which would eventually be in need of "taking back" by certain policy makers. These events created an atmosphere of tension and whispered conversation about race that Chappelle simply exploited in the series.

In addition, a new form of news cycle also contributed to the cultural infiltration and attitude impact for which the show is responsible. The popular voice and popular opinion was at the nascent stage of influencing media coverage and general social sentiment. On-line reviews and digital commentary on YouTube had just begun to drive discussion and interest in a new way that then influenced that of legacy media coverage. Public sentiment around this particular show was very strong, both for and against; and now the public had platforms from which to publish its views directly. Here the terminology via University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Jonathan Gray's work in "New Audiences, New Textualities: Anti-fans and Non-fans," explains how public sentiment deeply impacts trends and popular culture phenomenon. In his work, Professor Gray conducted reception studies using fans of popular culture products, content, and personalities. His findings indicated that fans, obviously, act as informants. They live with in-built, intricately detailed memories of text, context, and experience. This is called "fan memory." However, Gray distinguishes between "fans," "anti-fans," and "non-fans" because different elements can be learned from each distinct group.

For example, Gray positions "anti-fans" as those who strongly dislike a given text or genre, considering it inane, stupid, morally bankrupt and/or aesthetic drivel. "Non-fans" are viewers or readers who view or read a text, but not with any intense involvement but who are instead "grazing, channel-surfing, viewing with half-interest, tuning in and out, talking while watching and so on" and may not have any sort of viewing commitment to the text at all. Naturally, "fans" are those who are deeply passionate about a specific piece of content or product and work to evangelize it. Depending upon the percentage make up from the above, one creates strong trends.

In the case of Chappelle's Show, both fans and "anti-fans" were so vocal via blogs and digital comments on YouTube, that a natural wave began to build and influence cultural attitudes and sentiment through sheer volume and frequency over time, overtaking the traditional news cycle and helping to create what would become one of the most innovative television concepts and delivery around race perspective still, to date.

"On-line reviews and digital commentary on YouTube alone drove discussion and interest in a new way that then lead to that of legacy media coverage. Public sentiment around this particular show was very strong, both for and against; and now the public had platforms from which to publish its views directly."

Resulting Paradigm Shift

Chappelle's Show managed to:

- Create an edgy and provocative product that broke the model of previous sketch comedy formats in America
- Incite massive word-of-mouth regarding the content given the social and cultural climate of burgeoning racial tension and American population shift
- Leverage digital technology to fully penetrate the target market with repeated frequency and consistency to drive messaging and incite discussion

The slick, socio-political commentary that is Chappelle's Show created change in our society by elevating discussion around race and ethnicity to that of a more common, everyday discussion, something which previously had been a taboo in our society. Though referenced through humor, the very real, dramatic issues surrounding perceptions between and among various demographic collectives was made raw and exaggerated to such an extent that the show's messaging created an indelible mark, particularly among the younger influencers for which it was intended. Chappelle's Show razed the previously existing high walls around common discussion regarding stereotyping and racial prejudice by creating an atmosphere of cool and edge from which to reference and dissect such social ills and concerns, whether in real time or via digital platforms, as evidenced by deep fan and anti-fan dialogue. The relentless and historical approach of the show's host converged with time at a precise point to literally shift acceptance of and influence conversations about race in an edgy yet benign manner not seen since the program. The show created an important chapter of discussion around race in America we utilize today in an even more racially charged era.

"The slick, socio-political commentary that is Chappelle's Show created change in our society by elevating discussion around race and ethnicity to that of a more common, everyday discussion something which previously had been a taboo in our society."

FIVETHIRTYEIGHT.COM

Substantial Product Offering

The polling aggregation website and blog created by analyst Nate Silver changed the concept of electoral prediction through innovation and precision that made for a powerful product that created a true paradigm shift in politics and popular consumption of political races. The adoption and success rate of the site was due in large part to Silver applying a methodology of compiling polling data through non-traditional methods. Silver balanced poll surveys with comparative demographic data. His method was clear yet mathematically complex. Essentially he based each poll based on the pollster's historical track record, sample size, and most recent time frame of the poll. Brand awareness initially came from Silver's (under the name "Poblano") 2008 primary election forecast on Super Tuesday that predicted that Barack Obama would come away with 859 delegates, and Hillary Clinton 829. In the final contests, Obama won 847 delegates and Clinton 834.

FiveThirtyEight.com garnered even more attention once Silver's algorithms surpassed that of all other pollster projections in both the North Carolina and Indiana Democratic party primaries several months later. The product became a superior offering to that of anything else in existence because it was built on a statistical model driven by demographic and prior voter data rather than legacy methods of mere real-time polling data.

Silver's model offered consistent accuracy that could be replicated with precision. The fact that the models relied in part, on demographic information but also a complex and unique method of aggregating and polling averages and results, similar to that approach used in sports, made for a proprietary system that the target demographic utilized, supported, and coveted. By early 2008, FiveThirtyEight.com approached 2.5 million visitors per week and 32.18 million page views. By election day, 2008, the site had an impressive 5 million page views. Since this time, Sil-

ver's site has become an essential source of rigorous, objective analysis of voter surveys to predict the Electoral College outcome of presidential campaigns above any other offering.

FiveThirtyEight is successful essentially because it broke the mold by leveraging innovation, speed and disruptive usage of data in an advanced manner rather than solely focusing on real-time data. By providing predictive analytics of its type and delivering the data that voters truly sought, the product filled a particular void created by traditional outlets that ignored the uncertainty intrinsic to early polls. The site was and continues to be able to quantify uncertainty and created a new standard on political polling and predictions with impressive and unprecedented accuracy.

Innovative Marketing

FiveThirtyEight was uniquely "marketed" via word of mouth at market introduction rather than traditional media push or via Silver inserting himself as an on-air news pundit. Wonks, as digital brand ambassadors, appointed themselves in order to be some of the first to share statistics and predictions in an era where discovery and sharing was becoming key. Individuals shared Silver's information via their own personal brand via blogs, nascent social media, but also various political on-line groups and communities fanatical in nature drove awareness. In addition, the ease and speed of sharing a link or content piece from Silver's blog made transference of data simple and fast, something that could not have been done during previous election cycles void of the technological advancements. Silver said in a previous DailyBeast.com article,

> "I was surprised at first with the interest beyond the Daily Kos blog where I first started writing the information. I have to say that I think because of the sheer power and accuracy of the information, it all kind of marketed itself, at first."

Cultural Relevance/News Cycle Visibility

FiveThirtyEight was, at least in popular terms, the beginning of what we now refer to as data journalism and a new, cultural desire from people to consume more granular and deep-dive data, particularly given an historical 2008 election.

The FiveThirtyEight team's skill set included experience in methods that include statistical analysis, data visualization, computer programming, and data-literate reporting. This was in direct contrast with the state of pollster survey methods that had not changed in years. The technology had reached a point that enabled the ability for massive search, collection, and analysis of data that had previously only been available, and even comprehensible to, large established organizations and companies.

Then social media sharing provided context and connection and played a crucial part in the news cycle frequency of ref-

erence to FiveThirtyEight. Dr. Benjamin Barber, prominent political theorist and author says,

> "We live in a push media and a pull media society. Sometimes media pushes someone, like a Donald Trump at us all day every day. This is a figure that is imposed on the public consciousness, but other situations, that, for example go viral based on emotional connection are more of a pull type of media. Social media is in this category and is an echo chamber; it can be a place that re-produces, strengthens and amplifies certain issues and grabs the public. However, it's important to understand that no matter what level of media, there is still a level of parochialism. There very important boundaries that seem to separate us. But when an innovative product or thought can show connections between important elements, then parochialism can be broken down and power can truly be created from a following and interest. The key word is context. Being able to provide context for an issue, election, vote. If this is present, then there is a synergy."

FiveThiryEight not only expertly connected the dots and provided such context but also leveraged both the "push" and "pull" media formats. Traditional media reported on nearly every prediction and chatter around the predictions, driving awareness about the site. But it was the new 24 hour news cycle – and the frenzy for

anything around an historic election that included a candidate of color - that widely contributed to the deep cultural penetration of FiveThirtyEight. The relevance to a cultural desire was plain.

Indeed the product, timing, and marketing via word of mouth and established credible sources worked together to create a powerhouse brand that left the establishment in politics reeling from what would be a new manner of political prediction. The ripening Information Age made such an offering seductive and all-powerful. The fact that the predictions were and continue to be accurate, particularly in an era of distrust, has forever changed behavior around polling criteria and created a new cultural norm in society.

"FiveThirtyEight changed behavior around polling, rooting it in a more scientific and precise method rather than the snake-oil approaches prior from old-school pundits."

Resulting Paradigm Shift

FiveThirtyEight managed to:

- Develop an entirely new methodology regarding election polling that delivered a superior product that integrated data and statistics in an unprecedented manner
- Introduce the product offering at a time when the cultural trajectory for data, precision, an accuracy was new and very compelling
- Leverage traditional and social media to actually market the product in a manner and seized upon the insatiable 24/7 news cycle for information during the 2008 election

FiveThirtyEight literally changed the game in polling methodology because the product was built on a statistical model driven by demographic and prior voter data rather than legacy methods of real-time polling data. It was consistent and accurate and perfectly synergized with the sophistication of algorithms and a data sensibility that over time had prepared the market for acceptance and adoption. FiveThirtyEight changed behavior around polling, rooting it in a more scientific and precise method rather than the snake-oil approaches prior from old-school pundits. The product has been so well-adopted that media outlets across the country have now been forced to include mathematical formulas in order to satisfy a viewing public that has been forever trained to expect a scientific approach to voter polling and reporting around it.
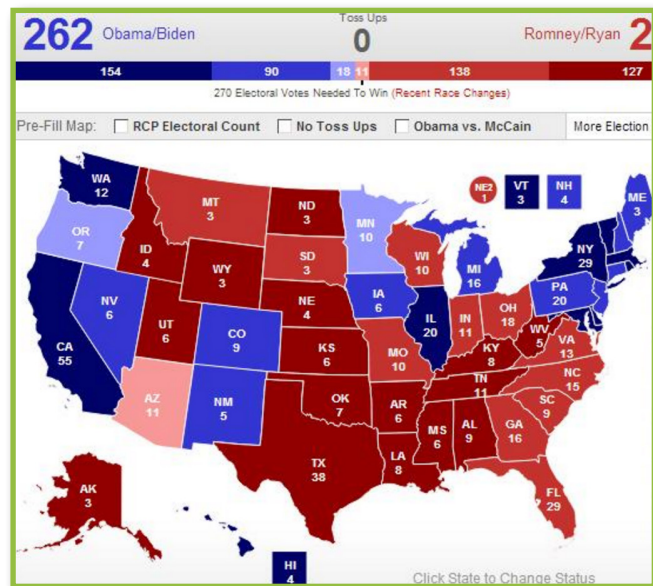
PINTEREST

Substantial Product Offering

The virtual scrapbooking site Pinterest offers such a strong content proposition and has so deeply penetrated social trends that the product has completely changed behavior around and now dominates the majority of aspirational activity around home. Pinterest seamlessly connects users with desired items they believe will supplement their lifestyle in some meaningful manner. The quick, expansive, and visual representation of particular items provides discovery and inspiration and, therefore, satisfies a deep psychological need in today's society for security. That is, the product expertly solves the problem of creating a comforting refuge, even if only one piece at-a-time, that reflects our state of mind in a

fast-paced, digitally driven world where much of perspective is simply opposed to our allegiances and values.

Alain de Botton, author of "The Architecture of Happiness" said in his book,

> "There is a psychological need for rooms and dwellings that align us with the desirable versions of ourselves and our worlds and give credence to the more temporal sides of ourselves which is exacerbated by the frenetic pace of our contemporary world."

Not only does Pinterest solve this universal problem for the users via its general premise; but the simple user interface and methodology, the impressive backbone of the site, also facilitates usage quickly. Site visitors merely pin photos into collections called boards, which essentially serve as massive catalogs of objects.

Via proprietary algorithms and engineering, Pinterest, in effect, decomposes web pages into the objects that are embedded into them. In this sense, the product is a superior market offering to additional social platforms in that also meets a specific void around time and aspiration. Facebook collects moments from the past and Twitter focuses on the here-and-now, Pinterest has always been focused on the future. The aspirational nature of the site gives users a valuable glimpse into the things people want at a later date in time whenever lifestyle circumstances afford the opportunity. Fellow users are also inspired from an initial idea/image thus driv-

ing the cycle that demonstrates that what one is creating for oneself also helps make the lives of others better. This collective human activity across Pinterest creates a immense database where people basically curate their vision of their ideal self all day long - an extremely powerful concept in today's selfie era.

The compelling nature of the product has created a deep trend in image collection. The Atlantic's business site Quartz recently reported that there are currently there are now 30 billion pins, half of which were created in the last six months. Pinterest holds some 750 million boards. The most popular categories on Pinterest are food & drink, DIY & crafts, women's apparel, home decor, and travel. There is no other product offering that fulfills current cultural needs quite like Pinterest. Via a unique combination of technology, design and psycho-social prowess, this pinning product has managed to amplify aspirational behavior and deeply infiltrate culture via social trend adoption.

Innovative Marketing

For the initial 5 years of the Pinterest, the brand visibility was rather low until a confluence of events around marketing helped create rapid and wide-spread adoption. First, via a personalized marketing approach, the company initially doubled its users in its early stages via a marketing technique that involved the co-founder personally writing to each of the 5,000 users and offering his phone number, and even meeting in person with certain users. But after that time, adoption had been slow. Significant growth would not occur until a marketing strategy, initiated by a third party, would be implemented.

In an innovative move, a woman who was an early Pinterest fan decided to help organize a program called "Pin It Forward" in 2010.

This initiative consisted of a chain letter type of format where bloggers would exchange pinboards about what home meant to them. It was a huge success that was driven solely by word-of-mouth and without which the site would have grown at a much slower rate.

In additional, the introduction of innovative personal digital devices such as the iPad then also contributed to the rate at which Pinterest was adopted given the rapid marketing adoption of tablets.

The screen and resolution was tailor made for the browsing that is the model for Pinterest and its wealth of images. Given that the intent of the product is for the user to select items that are meaningful to him or her, the more casual manner in which a tablet is often used created the perfect platform. Cofounder Evan Sharp explained during a Wired magazine interview, "The grid is like the thing that got us big. The grid, the grid, the grid!" The grid that Pinterest uses enables easy sifting through the objects in an efficient manner. The grid was amplified via the introduction of such technology as tablets and applications because the swiping, posting gestures could be easily enacted. In fact, the launch, reviews, and social media exchange about the Pinterest iPhone app in early March 2011, attracted far more than the companies initial download projections and drove brand visibility in a manner that even surprised the

company. Finally, in June 2015, Pinterest unveiled an official promotional attempt though a unique marketing campaign around a new concept called "buyable pins." The content offering is a "rich" pin - pins which have more information than a normal link - that allowed users to purchase items directly from partners with which the company is working. Co-branded across various social media platforms with its partners, Pinterest gave users the ability to view prices and select specific types of product characteristics via one particular pin. This is incredibly significant because the action demonstrated the ability to eventually monetize something that initially was just an interest or better yet an aspiration, and this signified a change in habit around the brand.

Matt Walleart, Behavioral Scientist, Microsoft and east coast lead for Microsoft Ventures says,

> "One of the things about technology is that it tends to unbundle largest tasks and larger information. Once upon a time if you wanted to learn about something, the only way you could do that was to go and get a book. It was incredibly long and lengthy as a process. Over time, we developed the press, but that still was a time consuming, such as a long-form New York Times article. One of the things that happens with technology is that it's allowed us to break up pieces of information into smaller and smaller bites so that people can take more and more bites as the interest develops.

This is key because it applies not only to how we take in to information but also how we act upon it. There are promoting pressures, why I want to do something; and inhibiting pressures, why I don't want to do something. Many inhibiting are eliminated thanks to technology. Risks are simply lowered. With a couple of clicks, I can take an action. We call these micro actions. They are simply small amounts of motivation. This is not like massive action. Small actions on top of small reminders can get to massive impact and trend. This is indicative of Pinterest and it can be incredibly powerful and contribute to trend growth or behavioral change. Something has to trigger me to take the action, such as word-of-mouth or an image. Then, technology makes it really easy to take the action once I decide to. It's just that simple."

In fact, the collective marketing methodology and integration was so success that by September of 2015 Pinterest announced that 100 million people now utilize the service each month, with the number of users, or pinners, doubling in the last 18 months. International users, which also doubled in the last year, now make up 45% of its user base.

Cultural Relevance/News Cycle Visibility

Individuals were well-versed in digital search were, by the time Pinterest was introduced but they were seeking a more sophisticated method. While "search" had become a cultural norm that of visual search and niche search needs were not yet refined. Predecessors of the visual bookmarking behemoth, which included such start-ups as Yelp, Wists, ThisNext, Pluck, and Stylehive, and even Google for search set the stage but did not deliver search in the manner that culture demanded at the time. What Pinterest was able to do was meet the culture at a point in time that a need and preparedness afforded. Today this enables companies like The Gap, Chobani, Nordstrom, and West Elm to even use Pinterest to meet a cultural trend in business of gathering online referrals and data that link users with similar interests to a company proving that retail giants see the value and lifestyle integration of the platform into that of the public.

Further the unique social climate at the time further contributed to the trend of pinning and the site's cultural importance. For example, Pinterest played an interesting role in the run-up to the 2012 US presidential election. In a revolutionary move, the wives of both candidates created accounts on the site. Ann Romney debuted her Pinterest account in March and First Lady Michelle Obama announced hers in June. The trend impact and news cycle inclusion was fast and strong. Both legacy news media social media picked up on the pages, reported on and analyzed nearly every pin. Women mirrored Romney's and Obama's behavior by creating their own pages, and this phenomenon further drove the trend of re-pinning images that were pinned by the notable women. Together, all these elements made Pinterest a cultural lynchpin.

Resulting Paradigm Shift

Pinterest managed to:
- Enable the curation of the ideal self though a product that offered a simple interface and refined search
- Seize upon the desire to create a comfortable refuge in a cultural time period fraught with disruption and uncertainty and driven by the need to share with those of common perspective
- Scale via a unique combination of grass-roots, third party marketing campaigns coupled with the "piggy-backing" of tablet device promotion and adoption

Pinterest simply created a deep trend impact regarding aspirations around housing/domicile. The company changed behavior around scrapbooking by creating a superior and shared platform from which to take action around desire and collective thought around home and the psychological desire for a better future. While the impressive achievement of millions upon millions of users of Pinterest is uncontestable, it is the product's deep penetration into our culture over time, and the sustainable behavioral change it has created is that which gives it true trend impact.

AIRBNB

Substantial Product Offering

Airbnb has forever changed the way we define home, hospitality, and accommodations, and in doing so has created a way in which to empower individuals across the globe on a variety of levels. By enabling both travelers to locate a place to stay outside of the traditional manner of hotel/motel, bed and breakfast; and leasee/landlords to monetize property in a new manner, Airbnb has revolutionized behavior around temporary lodging and has burrowed into the cultural norms of our society. Although the co-founders, Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia, started the company six years ago from a three-bedroom apartment. Airbnb now hosts roughly 400,000 guests a night. This is due in a large part to the fact that Airbnb's offers a phenomenal product that solves a problem of where to stay for a certain amount of time.

Prior to the launch of Airbnb, the temporary accommodation "industry" was fragmented and unreliable. Craigslist had developed a sketchy reputation given the number of scams and illegal activities around the offerings. Other lodging sites such as HomeAway dealt solely with pieds-à-terre and more substantial vacation homes. Until the advent of Airbnb, there was no real clearinghouse for short-term stays in residential buildings that had a vetting process that was secure.

Airbnb solved a significant business problem by offering a variety of regular dwellings and handling all of the payments between guest and host. The company hires professional photographers to shoot properties, hosts reviews of both guests and hosts, and provides a reliable platform for hosts and guests to communicate with one another consistently, all via a clean interface and relatively strong search algorithm by city and level of accommodation desired.

In fact, the model of the successful lodging platform has become so deeply entrenched as a trend that the Berlin-based Refugees Welcome adopted the prototype and is now being described as an "Airbnb for Refugees." To date, Welcome has helped people fleeing from Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria via an adaptation of the original Airbnb offering. More than 780 Germans have signed up to the Refugees Welcome website and 26 people have been placed in private homes so far.

Airbnb is the pure definition of what we now call the sharing economy, and it has created a new cult following from what were very meager beginnings. The concept has not only reached a billion dollar valuation, but has truly created a complete paradigm shift in cultural behavior in the process. Individuals are now able to travel at more economical rates while those with access to property gain financial benefit through offering nooks, bedrooms, or entire dwellings to such travelers. Prior to this era, this privilege was something only that organized small businesses or massive hospitality corporations could participate in fruitfully. Homes that were impossible to access before the site's launch, such as a Frank Lloyd Wright house, advanced tree houses, boats all around the world, castle, private islands even igloos are available for booking. The product offers an ease, speed, reliability, and price range not previously available until its inception. Airbnb has democratized temporary domicile for the everyman in its product offering.

Innovative Marketing

Initially Airbnb was used primarily by millennials who were a bit more discerning than those who booked on couchsurfing.com, a laid-back hospitality exchange site. But the company had many false starts in terms of creating scale through marketing. Initially, the founders pitched design bloggers to include mentions about their services as they related to design conferences various cities. Shortly thereafter once the founders broadened their view to include other types of national events, they decided to offer lodging around the 2008 Democratic National Convention. "The press wrote about us, but still no one using our marketplace" Gebbia explained during a recent talk at a Business Insider conference. The co-founders then decided to provide hosts with a gift to give guests for the political convention and came up with the marketing idea to create cereal related to the presidential candidates. Dubbed "Obama O's" and "Cap'n McCains", the commemorative cereal caused a frenzy and were sold at up to $40 per box. It is important to understand that this strategy, though innovative, did not necessarily lead to a greater number of users, but it did garner attention of one of the most prestigious incubators in the country which, in turn, provided the founders with the structure and marketing support they would need to eventually become the massive product of today. This was about marketing innovation not being a magic bullet but instead indicative of a persistence and belief that later enabled brand uptake.

And in time, the drummer of the popular singer Barry Manilow would afford the site its first entire apartment, which then lead to greater expansion of Airbnb offerings. As guests and hosts began to experience benefit via the site, they began to share about those experiences little by little. Much of the brand's success now lends itself to something called radical belonging. This is a concept that is based on genuine cult behavior that was studied by former advertising executive Douglas Atlkin who says, "we find that belonging, meaning, and purpose, the same elements used to incite cult worship, are those which can and do lead to brand worship. To encourage belonging is a key part of marketing success." Airbnb is indicative of such fervor as evidenced by its numbers and user sentiment. Much like Uber, there is an "inside crowd" feeling to use of the service that results in repeated use and word-of-mouth of the service. Those who experienced a positive experience "recruited" others to share in the same discovery, all of which led to the market penetration and visibility of the brand in an impressive manner.

Cultural Relevance/ News Cycle

If 2008 financial crash had never taken place, ¬Airbnb's success may have been more gradual. During this critical period, many individuals people were looking for ways in which to save money and definitely earn money via new ways. Further, after exposure of dishonest practices by formerly trusted financial entities such as investor Bernie Madoff's company and AIG, the culture demonstrated increasing sensitivity to exploitation, corporate authority, and big brands. Thus, using the Airbnb site, somehow, felt gratifyingly subversive. A New York magazine article stated that for hosts, there was a beautiful kind of symmetry to it: Banks had leveraged people's homes to make money; now they could do it for themselves. And guests liked that when they stayed at an Airbnb, they were paying a person, not a corporation. This is key to understand.

Another cultural factor that contributed to the Airbnb success is the depth of trust that the site somehow seems to instill.

Rohit Bargava, author of "Likeomonics" and founder of Influential Marketing Group says,

"Trust ultimately comes down to truth - whether we're able to share truth or not. There also needs to be vulnerability or some kind of personal connection. Though it may sound harsh, we are living through a modern believability crisis. We are more skeptical than ever before. The only way to recover some of this trust is to become blatantly transparent. Once you do that, that's the first part of re-building trust. This is the starting point or Phase I, but that's not enough. A brand has to also make a commitment and live up to it. That's Phase II. That's where the trust really begins to be re-built. In order for trust to exist there needs to be a common understood framework for that trust. In the online world eBay may be the perfect example of this. When they started back in 1995 or 1996 that was an even more crazy idea than Airbnb because they said anyone can sell anything to anyone they want, and the buyer is actually just going to trust that they are actually going to receive it. We have to remember that at the same time people were also very skeptical at the time about using their credit cards on line. So they were being asked to trust a complete a stranger and pay electronically. To solve this problem, ebay created their rating system where a prospective buyer could see that other people trusted or did not trust a particular seller. This metric creation is crucial. How this relates to the real world is that people need some kind of metric of trust to counteract what they might read or hear in the media. This can be about a product or a cultural movement. Early adopters are those who take the risk who then kick this into play."

This metric is at the root of Airbnb's model and enables the product to be truly culturally relevant by solving the issue of trust, at least in this regard. The product is not just an economic breakthrough. It is a cultural one, enabled by a sophisticated series of mechanisms, algorithms, and finely calibrated systems of rewards and punishments. It's a radical next step for the person-to-person marketplace whose stage was set first by eBay. It is a set of digi¬tal tools that enables and encourages us to trust our fellow human beings with our very person. This is breakthrough. Airbnb changes the way people experience the world through travel but also has changed behavior around confidence level around one's fellow man.

Resulting Paradigm Shift

"Airbnb" managed to:

- Democratize the temporary accommodations market through a product that connects people across the globe through an unprecedented system that is trusted and reliable
- Intersect with social and cultural attitudes around self-empowerment and financial leverage
- Create a dynamic trend via marketing that has encouraged and developed a cult of brand

Airbnb has truly created a complete behavioral shift by usurping legacy enablers of temporary lodging through a superior product that limits risk and encourages a trust between an inter-dynamic of strangers not previously witnessed. Through both a strong review community, word-of-mouth and the brand's own persistence over time, Airbnb has created a algorithmic phenomenon that is enabling people worldwide to change the way they seek and provide accommodations. Its intersection within a cultural trajectory that demonstrated both an increased desire and ability to travel with that of ecommerce usage has enabled one of the most impressive trend developments in the last five years.

CONCLUSION

Based on the five selected culture impact case studies, our research has determined that there is indeed substantial evidence that a formula of key, precise elements is present and vital within the deep cultural adoption of content and products in our society. Though the specific manner of progression and composition are unique to each individual subject examined, there is clearly a strong through-line that must be present in order to create a sustainable impact on society and create behavioral change. Of course, one can still measure success through a sole quantitative lens. Many people can watch a show or there can be an item that creates immense viral interest, but without possession of all the elements of the Lnk Culture Code, no real meaning behavior shift will have been made, and that is the defining element. This is particularly key to understand and begin to implement, even in pilot fashion because the strength and sustainability that movements and brands need to have today in order to resonate absolutely rests with being able to actually drive and define change, not mere and fleeting attention. Anything less is superficial in a hyper-fragmented, ephemeral era. The 3 key Lnk Cultural Code elements of:

1)   a substantial/valuable product or asset
2)   an innovative marketing strategy
3)   cultural relevance and news cycle visibility

are vital for creating engagement, and engagement is the primary goal since it is this interaction that creates emotional bond and connection. We need to develop an expertise in formulas regarding trend development because this arena of deep trends within popular culture is one of the few, common bonds that tie an increasingly segmented Americans together. Reach with depth creates change. This is how culture is shaped.
Such cultural shifts do not ever take place overnight. The progression of time that creates either new changes in collective mindset or introduction of new developments into the culture over time which supports the original product, tend to create an intersection that makes the three elements of the Lnk Culture Code actually later materialize. This is particularly evident in each of the cases selected:

•   House of Cards
•   Chapelle's Show
•   FiveThirtyEight
•   Pinterest
•   Airbnb

The opportunity now is to leverage this formula in order to drive the goals of UNHCR so that it intersects with a cultural trajectory over time that will completely shift behavior and thought around refugees. Data continues to show that that there is a growing interest and demand in social good/social justice and social responsibility from a large part of the 80+ million millennial demographic. We know that in order for brands to maintain relevancy with this demographic, that an authentic inclusion of social responsibility – on a consistent basis – is vital. The goal, then, is to leverage this early shift in thought to create a larger change in behavior change that supports the goals of the UNHCR. The questions now are:

1)   what type of superior product or brand partnership can be created to that is meaningful to a large number of people to drive UNCHR's goals?
2)   how can it be innovatively marketed or with what partners can marketing be leveraged to create calls to action?
3)   what is culturally relevant now and in the near future with which synergy be created, and how can both legacy and digital media cycles reinforce the messaging?

The proper strategy and approach can create a true paradigm shift around the growing refugee crisis. The objective is no longer to use digital avatars in show of solidarity or to show links or even to digitally sign petitions. Action and true changes in behavior patterns and public sentiment around the issues is needed. This will only come from a deep cultural trend shift that will have the power to create unprecedented transformation. The formula is now present to devise methods for what can truly become the new standard in social awareness.

APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOUSE OF CARDS

Show synopsis: and Seasons

American political drama television series developed and produced by Beau Willimon, is an adaptation of the BBC mini-series of the same name and is based on the novel by Michael Dobbs. Set in present-day Washington, DC, House of Cards is the story of Frank Underwood (Kevin Spacey), a Democrat from South Carolina's 5th congressional district and House Majority Whip who, after being passed over for appointment as Secretary of State, initiates an elaborate plan to get himself into a position of greater power none of which would be possible with the aide and interests of his wife, Claire Underwood played by actress Robin Wright. The series explores provocative themes of manipulation, power, and hierarchy. The entire first season, comprising thirteen episodes, premiered on February 1, 2013, on the streaming service Netflix. A second season of thirteen episodes premiered on February 14, 2014. On February 4, 2014, ten days prior to the release of the second season, Netflix announced that the show had been renewed for a third season, which was released on February 27, 2015

Awards and Industry Influence

For its first season, House of Cards received nine Primetime Emmy Award nominations, becoming the first original online-only web television series to receive major Emmy nominations. Among its nine nominations were Outstanding Drama Series, Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series for Kevin Spacey, Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series for Robin Wright, and Outstanding Director Directing for a Drama Series for David Fincher. The show also earned four Golden Globe Award nominations and Wright won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress.

For its second season, the series received 13 Primetime Emmy Award nominations. This included further nominations for Outstanding Lead Actor (Kevin Spacey), Outstanding Lead Actress (Robin Wright), Outstanding Directing Carl Franklin and Outstanding Drama Series while also receiving nominations for Outstanding Writing (Beau Willimon), Outstanding Guest Actor (Reg E. Cathey) and Outstanding Guest Actress (Kate Mara). The second season also earned three nominations at the Golden Globes with Spacey winning the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor – Television Series Drama.

The series has been crowned a critical and cultural success and initiated Netflix's model of publishing all episodes at one given time.

The approach also encouraged other online services such as Amazon.com Inc. and Google's YouTube to spend more on their own original content to create shows thereby competing with broadcast and cable channels.

House of Cards is now one of 20 original programs slated for production by Netflix, this year. Producing that much original content would have seemed like unfathomable before House of Cards established Netflix as more than a convenient way to access previously run content.

Brief Netflix Viewer History and Viewer Data Policy

The number of Netflix subscribers who have watched House of Cards remains a mystery because the company is not under any obligation to reveal the viewership of any of its series.

During the middle of 2011, Netflix experienced major subscriber push-back due to significant price increase from the company. This, coupled with what was seen to be an inept approach to leverage its DVD-by mail service, left the company reeling. Netflix had announced that it was separating its streaming and DVD-by-mail plans, which created a 60% price increase for customers who previously paid for $9.99 a plan that offered combined

unlimited streaming and one DVD rented at a time.

Yet, Under the CEO's direction, the company kept moving forward, while many questioned how long the brand might last.

Since House of Cards was released, Netflix's stock has nearly tripled to about $480 while its internet video service has grown subscribers by 24 million subscribers to 57 million. Half of this increase has been due customers in the United States.

Netflix worked to drive its business forward and eventually turned the curve. In 2014 Netflix turned in a customer-satisfaction score of 79 (out of 100) on the annual American Customer Satisfaction Index's retail sector report. Up 5% from 75 in 2012.

CHAPPELLE'S SHOW

Creator Context and Series Position In Television History

The sketch comedy cable television series was created by comedians Dave Chappelle and Neal Brennan. Chappelle hosted the series as well as starred in most of the sketches featured on the show.

Chappelle's Show premiered in January, 2003 on Comedy Central. It completed two full seasons and a third, partial series entitled "The Lost Episodes."

Chappelle initially wrote and starred in the sitcom Dave Chappelle, which was based on his life as a standup comedian struggling to make it in New York. The network television channel Fox originally ordered six episodes for midseason, but it would be an order that was never fulfilled.

According to Chappelle, Fox executives believed the Touchstone TV sitcom was "too black", and they suggested changing the lead female character from black to white and adding a separate new white character to broaden its audience appeal.

Chappelle cited the fact that the network built itself upon black viewership via shows such as Martin and Living Single which had predominantly black casts, to shows with a mixed racial makeup.

Chappelle not only disagreed with the network sentiment and shift, but felt that the ratings and the viewing studies of agencies such as BBDO were inaccurate. And as evidence, he cited the broad appeal of such performers as Bill Cosby, Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy.

Chappelle follows Flip Wilson and Richard Pryor as comedians of color who appeared as sketch comics on televisions. These two performers did not have a lot in common in terms of their comedic styles, but their shows were both significant in terms of the progression of primetime black sketch comedy.

Wilson was, by far, the least political, preferring to perform his humor under no agenda except that of making people laugh. On the opposite end of the spectrum one could find Richard Pryor, whose short-lived series was highly criticized and often censored by the network brass for its bold and biting social commentary. He gave a voice to the voiceless, made the black experience accessible to all, In spite of their differences, both Wilson and Pryor provided the historical foundation on which Dave Chappelle and Chappelle's Show are able to exist today.

Accolades

Nominations for Chappelle's Show includes television Primetime Emmy Award categories:

Outstanding Directing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program

Outstanding Variety, Music, Comedy Series

Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program

FIVETHIRTYEIGHT

Brief Chronological History and Accolades

The name is attributed to the number of electors in the United States electoral college.

The site launched on March 7, 2008, as FiveThirtyEight.com, but by August 2010 the blog would become a licensed feature of The New York Times online It was renamed FiveThirtyEight: Nate Silver's Political Calculus. Then in July 2013, ESPN announced that it would become the owner of the FiveThirtyEight brand and site, and Silver was appointed as editor-in-chief. The new ESPN-owned FiveThirtyEight began publication on March 17, 2014. During its first five and a half years, FiveThirtyEight won numerous awards both when it was an independent blog as well as when it was published by The New York Times. These included the Bloggie Awards for Best Political Coverage in 2008 and Best Weblog about Politics in 2009, as well as the Webbies for "Best Political Blog" in 2012 and 2013.

Silver is now a media star with sales of his recent book, The Signal and the Noise.

AIRBNB

Startup History Context

Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia met at the Rhode Island School of Design. Chesky says that his teachers encouraged them, since they were designeers, to redesign the world in which they lived. Chesky, the son of social workers from upstate New York, is quoted in the press saying that that idea was very empowering to him.

As with many entrepreneurs, their attempt at business, which was prior to Airbnb, was not very successful. Due to that situation, they were on the verge of losing the loft Chesky was supposed to move into.

He had $1,000 in the bank and realized that there was an international design conference coming to San ¬Francisco. Gebbia suggested that they create a bed-and-breakfast at the conference.

Gebbia had three air beds from a camping trip, and his former roommate Nathan Blecharczyk designed a website for them at Airbedandbreakfast.com. The first weekend, they had three guests.

They made them breakfast in the morning: "fresh OJ and the best Pop-Tarts that you could imagine," says Chesky. They also gave them change to give to people when they walk through the Tenderloin.

Current Disruption and Policy Issues

Ii is important to understand how rapid growth and upset can lead to push back. The challenges that Airbnb faces in New York City, in particular, are daunting. A New York magazine article recently included the following investigative coverage: "In 2010, Krueger and State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried presented a bill that made it illegal for New Yorkers living in multiple-unit dwellings to sublet their abodes for less than 30 days. The new law didn't really compromise -Airbnb's original vision. People in multiple-unit dwellings could still have Real World–like experiences by hosting people in their apartments,

Not long after, Governor David Paterson signed the Illegal Hotel Law into being, rendering a huge number of ¬Airbnb's listings illegal.

Now property owners all over the city, having realized they can make more money on short-term rentals, have begun converting apartments into full-time Airbnb properties, resulting in their being taken off the market for full-time tenants and the further depletion of the already limited stock of affordable or even relatively affordable housing. Such action is rapidly incurring the wrath of affordable housing activists.

The Airbnb Trust Factor

The Evolution of Trust – included in the Wired magazine, 2015 article on Airbnb

Four score and 50,000 years ago, the first chump was scammed. Since then, we've developed norms, structures, and safe-guards to protect us while trading, even with strangers. —Julia Greenberg

AD 1000
Stranger-to-Stranger Buyers and sellers begin to trade with strangers through trusted intermediaries who bring goods to market.

1800s
Person-to-¬company As corporations replace local stores and markets, trust comes from regulations, insurers, banks, and law firms.

1950s
Person-to-world ¬People buy goods from multi¬national corpora¬tions. Watchdog groups, along with global regulations and banks, secure these interactions.

1990s
Networked Products are purchased through websites built by companies that provide a centralized marketplace and trust infrastructure.

Present
Intimate ¬New mechanisms emerge to secure in-¬person transactions that are brokered through digital marketplaces.

PINTEREST

Background on Cofounder Evan Sharp

Evan Sharp was initially in school for architecture before launching Pinterest.

He had thousands of images that he had saved in folders on his computer for inspiration. But all were named like database-strings.jpg and difficult to categorize. So Pinterest was initially a way for Sharp to simply create a link and bookmark an image so that when he wanted to look refer to it, he knew from where it was originally sourced.

Statistical Progression Snapshot of Pinterest Growth

A recent study found that 80% of Pinterest users are women.

For January 2012, comScore reported the site had 11.7 million unique U.S. visitors, making it the fastest site ever to break through the 10 million unique visitor mark. The traffic ranking site also recorded a unique users moving average growth of 85% from mid-January to mid-February and a 17% growth from mid-February to mid-March.

In August 2012, a major milestone was hit. Pinterest overtook competing micro-blogging site Tumblr for the first time in terms of unique monthly visitors, clocking in at just under 25 million.]
In February 2013, Reuters and ComScore stated that Pinterest had 48.7 million users globally.

In 2014, Pinterest generated its first revenue, when it began charging advertisers to promote their wares to the site's millions of hobbyists, interior designers, and home decorators.

by August 2011, Time magazine listed Pinterest in its "50 Best Websites of 2011" article. By December 2011, the site became one of the top 10 largest social network services according to Hitwise data, with 11 million total visits per week.The next month, it drove more referral traffic to retailers than LinkedIn, YouTube, and Google+ The same month, the company was named the best new startup of 2011 by TechCrunch. According to Experian, the site became the third largest social network in the United States in March 2012, behind Facebook and Twitter.

In October 2013, Pinterest won a $225 million round of equity funding that valued the website at $3.8 billion.