

Blog 8 | The Company We Keep

DUE MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 11:59 PM

Background

In class, we watched the case study of Intermarché's Les Fruits et Légumes Moches (Inglorious Fruits and Vegetables) campaign to reduce food waste by buying the imperfect and uncalibrated produce its growers usually throw away, and selling them at 30% off. This included creating a range of new products like soups and fruit juices to show they are just as good as the ones made from more 'perfect' produce.

Not only did the initiative help raise awareness about the issue by reaching millions socially and through the media who picked up the story, but Intermarché also had a 24% rise in store traffic at a time when they and others are facing increasing competition from the German discounters Aldi and Lidl.

A key to the success of *Inglorious Fruits and Vegetables* was understanding culture – political and social. This requires looking deep into what motivates people to do what they do and their needs. This type of information is called Thick Data. Thick Data is gained through qualitative research methods, such as ethnography, and is becoming used as the lens for analyzing Big Data. As Christian Madsbjerg, co-author of the Harvard Business Review 'Moment of Clarity' book explains, the marriage of Thick and Big Data is unlikely to be happy one because they come from very different positions philosophically and methodologically. But the marriage will be essential because, "if you assume that your customers are fully aware of their needs and intentions, you will continue launching products that lack interest or excitement".

That said we will still need social listening to play an increasingly role in research and innovation, but what we are beginning to see is how it can shape the initial assumptions or hunches about where to find those hidden truths within the 'Thick Data'. This will help brands create more imaginative products that consumers not only want, but will also talk about.

Studying social media trends is a great place to begin looking for Thick Data. This week's Blog as you to reflect on your own social behavior (Part 1) and then to look at trend and tweet watching sites for a look at what is new now and think about what you think might be next.

PART 1

1. Make a list of all the formal and informal groups that you belong to.
2. Which ones are most important to you? Reflect on why you believe this is.
3. How long have you belonged to these groups? If they are formal groups, what was the process of joining?

PART 2

1. Using a website like *Trendhunter* (<https://www.trendhunter.com>) and *Tweetreach* (<https://tweetreach.com>), take note of popular trends over the course of a week.
2. Why do you think these trends and tweets are so popular?
3. What ones are you particularly interested in and why?