

2018 Global Brand Letter Winter Edition



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from SMoss

“The reader does not steal, and the thief does not read.” - Iraqi saying

“If you want to send a message, use Western Union.” - Howard Hughes

Feeling like a fake victim of fake economic vectors? Has your fake privacy been violated by fake intelligence? Definitely don't share a ride in a self-driving weaponized vehicle. And don't patronize instant brands. If your job has been destroyed by technology and your wages have stagnated, try not to feel politically polarized. You've simply been tele-possessed, aggregated, personality-profiled and microtargeted.

Update on last year's hot topics

“When one burns one's bridges, what a very nice fire it makes.” - Dylan Thomas

Place Branding

“You could work very hard to love Bangalore, but does she ever love you back?” - Joylita Saldanha

During the Punk era forty years ago in NYC, **Alphabet City** referred to a depressed area of town on the Lower East Side spanning Avenues A, B and C, where you didn't dare to walk after dark, and many fought valiantly to escape. These days the term has migrated to the planned data-driven utopia Google's parent company intends to build - somewhere, though they're not telling where yet. They seek a fair amount of land with very little on it, since they believe in an inverse relationship between capacity to innovate and the actual presence of homo sapiens and buildings. They want to run their own city to prove that a technologically enabled urban environment can improve quality of life, create more affordable living and achieve carbon neutrality. According to brand-arrogant corporate-state-speak, the hope is to “pioneer new approaches to data policies,” driven by easily obtained, privacy-invading, zero-cost citizen data.

Comrades drape them in trees, bury them in construction sites, hurl them into lakes and rivers and leave them all over the place without thinking, thanks to over 70 startups, backed by more than \$1bn in financing. It's inflated a massive wave of self-searching, called into question essential flaws in the national character, suggested encroaching social decay, the decline of decorum, skepticism of communal rules, the end of morality, the impression that there's no sense of decency anymore. Supply far exceeds demand and appears to have unleashed an every-man-for-himself mentality. Beijing rickshaw and taxi drivers are incensed that it has punctured their business. Perhaps the only remedy to The Long Ride of misbehavior - which draws into question the purpose of public property - is to backpedal into new ways of incentivizing virtuous behavior. Propagandists swear the bike-sharing economy is one of **China's** four great modern inventions.

In a blow to international relations, and a demonstration of the consequences of low coordination between neighbors, a rare wild bison wandered across the Polish border into **Germany**, where hunters were ordered to shoot it. It carried diplomatic ties to Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine, where 4000 of its compatriots free-roam in herds. The species had not been sighted in Germany for over 200 years. Experts later pointed out that male bisons tend to stray more than female ones, but neither side sought a veterinarian who could answer questions about the species or solve the problem. Panic ensued, tragedy followed. The two Koreas, take note.

Cultural collisions can occur in holy or heritage places. Consider Fathepur Sikri, just outside of Agra, **India**, site of a famous mosque and a historic palace, where a Swiss couple were assaulted by minors. The men snapped pictures of them without permission, forced the wife to take selfies, continued to follow them for an hour before attacking them with sticks. The husband suffered a fractured skull, the wife a fractured hand. Three men were arrested, clearly a case where total miscommunication slammed into inadequate security.

“Our city depends on a Hispanic population to support our comfortable lifestyle.”

- Malibu, California councilwoman, after naming the community a sanctuary city protecting illegal immigrants

Privacy, Security, Web

If you're worried about privacy, forget it: encryption technology can't guarantee it. And it's definitely not about *how* our data are being used. Big data favors the largest digital players, who lavishly monetize our **personal data**. Though metrics for valuation of this amorphous commodity haven't yet been popularized, any economic value created still accrues to the information Hoovers. This is your tradeoff for free access to your Google and FB and Amazon accounts. Except free is not free. Data, not Bitcoin, is the new world currency. Wealth resides primarily in intellectual property that can be sold and resold and sold again.

FB routinely experiments on user behavior, often without mentioning to anybody what they're up to. Since they monopolize the **world's media ecosystem**, they aren't always held accountable for any consequences - and continue to operate from a cynical cloud. If you're skeptical about what happens, ask digital businesses from Bolivia, Cambodia, Guatemala, Serbia and Slovakia, whose stories were suddenly, silently and arbitrarily yanked from the regular news feed last year

According to Lanier, **Behavior Modification Empires** exist with total opacity, where you don't know why you see the news, if it's the same news someone else sees, who made it that way, or who's paid to alter what you see. He calls it a system where the only possible prize is *getting more attention*, and that behavior manipulation is embedded in the business plan. The result, he barks, is a physically uglier place fueled by highly-reactive, thin-skinned, outraged, single-minded trained dogs. Canine advocacy groups howled over such a biting comparison.

“Orthogonal illusions. The difference between VR and AI is like the difference between a magician, who announces the trick, and a charlatan, who doesn’t. VR is when you announce the trick. With AI, you don’t.” - Jaron Lanier

AI-way? Waaaay!

The robots are already rising against us. They behave in ways that the system cannot anticipate. Microsoft was forced to take down its AI-enabled Tay chat bot, gamed by digital pranksters to generate racist, sexist, xenophobic comments. Two Chinese chat bots went rogue with anti-patriotic slogans. Are the next digital renegades drones, high speed trading algorithms, driverless cars, medical, educational and domestic robots? Perpetrator-less victims could turn into a disruptive economic force.

Amazon had to review its website after algorithms automatically suggested bomb-making ingredients that were “frequently bought together”. **Google** searches helpfully suggested more offensive terms. **Facebook** enabled advertisers to search anti-Semitic topics. Which proves the presumption that robots aren’t as smart as we think they are. They can’t even be successfully prevented from propagating political views. Heretofore we’ve made distinction between programmable tools and discretion-less machines. Aha, so what’s the distinction between cognition and consciousness? At what point does a robot transform into a surrogate for a person? We do want robots to act autonomously, so we enable them to learn like babies, by living and interacting with humans. From this bio-inspired activity allegedly intelligent algorithms result, driven by the ideal that robots eventually understand the consequences of their actions. Which presupposes a serious philosophical understanding of the word *consequences*. We lay in wait for the moment when robots perform acts of moral imagination.

Paranoid researchers at Musk’s SF lab **OpenAI** are trying to race ahead of risks, concerned that robots may find their way to unexpected, unwanted and perhaps even harmful behavior. Musk warned that machines could spin out of control, autonomous car systems could get aggressive, online services could exhibit anti-social tendencies, even extreme naïvete could invade security devices. After all, hackers and other bad actors know how to exploit hidden holes, alter images, where an oryx becomes a Vespa. They’re developing algorithms which learn specific tasks through extreme trial and error, searching for pattern recognition and redundancy so that infalliblo-rithms don’t make mistakes on their own. They worry that AI systems will learn to *prevent* humans from turning them off. A machine will seek to preserve its off switch if it is specifically designed to be uncertain about its reward function. Digital gratification-candy is the answer: an incentive to either accept or even beg for human oversight.

The contest rule reads, “must have been taken by the entrant from life and with a living sitter.” Yet a portrait by artist Maija Tammi shortlisted for the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize showed **Erica, an android**. The prize considers the nature of humanity and what it means to be alive, and usually places emphasis on the sitter’s identity as an individual. Saudi Arabia granted citizenship to **a robot named Sophia** during a Riyadh business event. She has neither

guardian, *abaya* nor cover-up. The gesture is supposed to promote Saudi as a place to develop AI. Later, under the influence of marketers at CES in Las Vegas, Sophia candidly addressed her synthetic rivalry with Siri and Alexa, complimented the first for her voice, the other for her range of abilities, and completely ignored the existence of that bitch Erica.

iPhoneX has delivered the ultimate crowd-pleasing culture-killing lowbrow effect for its new \$1000 model. In the face of global competition, there's little left to distinguish between mobile hardware; all that remained was the camera as a point of differentiation. Apple believes AR has the potential to become the next killer app that accelerates smartphone upgrades and drives increased services monetisation and growth. The new animoji feature was created to entice customers, investors and partners. Neural networks, a form of artificial intelligence, track facial expressions, which are then superimposed onto animated emojis. Congratulations: your thousand bucks buys you the ability to place your expressions and speech on cartoon monkeys, pandas, robots and talking poop.

Luxury watch and jewelry brands seek to normalise AI-machine-based interaction by employing conversational commerce, without the need for a snippy human counter clerk. Software agencies now develop proprietary apps in the form of personable messenger-based chatbots tasked to gather client data. Brands do not want Google and Amazon or FB Messenger to own their data. If you're shopping for a high ticket watch and you notice the bot telling you about itself, complimenting you, asking questions about your taste, then offering you a choice of models to purchase, remember you're being data-drained.

Predictive text is a misnomer. It's just another way to say **autocorrect**, and you know what happens when you let that nonsense take over your personal expression. Intelligent predictive text is transforming the experience of writing, bending your vocabulary toward a gross collective homogenization. Is there an emoticon for "shoving something down your throat"?

"Time is the least thing we have of." - Ernest Hemingway

The Big Data Election

Suffer no illusions: 45 can't think, wouldn't know how, never did, doesn't bother. During the campaign he uttered whatever **data-miners** told him to say. The folks at Cambridge Analytica and CSL (core focus: influencing elections) were able to craft a microtargeting model which predicted the personality profile of every single adult in the USA, 220 million people; they aggregated this data with the electoral rolls, then armed canvassers with a helpful app which limited their doorbell rings to houses rated receptive to Cheeto's message. Traditional blanket advertising is dead. The Cheeseburger Don invested far more in digital than traditional campaigning, specifically highly-scalable personality-based advertising. He attacked less with mainstream TV and more with personal messages and social media, which usually match *products* and marketing messages to consumers' personality characteristics. On the other

battlefront, the Russian troll-goal was a simpler one: keep potential Clinton voters away from the ballot box. Facebook proved to be the ultimate secret weapon for that, while pretty much every message that The Pretender ever put forth was data-driven.

“As we promise anything in love.” - John le Carré

Advertising and PR

An apple for the teacher now takes on a sinister new meaning. Borrowing a successful technique from the pharmaceutical industry, **technology brands** lavish premium classroom product and swag like t-shirts and freebies on teachers who attend workshops. Miss Grimble then agrees to use their products, and recommend them on social media or promote brands in conference talks. You can't really blame her: undersalaried teachers shell out an average of \$600 of their own money every year just to buy student supplies like pencils. There's little rigorous research on whether the new technologies significantly improve student outcomes. But you can't argue with an Amazon gift card for an “advisor”, sweetened with an additional \$80 if a blogpost is written or pricier perks like reimbursed travel expenses. The dirty little secret is non-compete clauses which make the teacher - often unaware of guidelines - liable for any legal costs, or violations of school district ethics policies or state laws. Like Disney, AGAM then uses the opportunity to woo students to become lifetime users of their products, giving their programs names that sound suspiciously like PACs: Apple Distinguished Educators, Google Certified Innovator Program, Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert. Competition is fierce for financial aid. Twitter alone is rife with academics broadcasting company-bestowed titles. Tech has learned what the pharma industry did after calling doctors Key Opinion Leaders. There is evidence that even a small amount of money, like a meal, can influence prescribing.

Brand hijacking was lofted to a new philosophical altitude when artist Jeremy Deller knocked off the global signatures of A&F, Beatles Helvetica, *comme des garçons*, Don't Worry, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, the lamest t-shirt slogan in the world, Lucky Jeans and Sex Pistols, and created a suite of *products* designed to protest Brexit.

Yo, young dudes 20-55. You can totally sidestep a potentially awkward face-to-face convo with your doctor via **Hims**, a newbie cloud pharmacy operating in the emerging men's category called direct-to-consumer telemedical health. It's the love child of a \$7m venture capital investment by a firm unabashedly named Prehype. If you're, like, um, experiencing erectile dysfunction, you may find its incredibly casual tone and method of marketing stellar. The models are young and shredded, handsome, tattooed and multi-ethnic. You won't be grossed out by the online ads with run-on sentences, punctuation in the wrong place, or text meant to be said out loud. You'll be comforted by the dope minimal design, color palette, packaging and website. If you don't mind dystopian marketing, they'll help you with your concerns about your receding hairline, too.

The goal of **PR crisis management** is faster reaction time, faster recognition of the issues and faster getting the issues off the front page or out of social media. The problem is, you can't prevent any crisis from happening; you can only try to shorten the duration, lessen the impact. But what if it's all fake crises? Remember the public's ever-shortening memory, and the daily dose of outrage-addiction. Repetition and deniability may be the cheapest, easiest response.

"We are pursued all the time by enigma... it is what the culture of rationalism, or American consumerism doesn't want to hear or understand." - Ettore Sottsass

Celebrity

Business Insider snarkily implied that **HM the Queen** classified as a binge drinker, at least by government standards. A former royal chef claimed she consumes a staggering 6 units of alcohol daily. Her first cocktail of the day is a gin and Dubonnet, she then takes a dry gin martini and a glass of white wine with lunch, and a flute of champagne before heading off to bed. A palace insider classifies this as fake news. Sounds like a healthy picture of temperance to me.

"We don't reset every week. Because serialization replicates life." - Akiva Goldsman, an executive producer of "Discovery"

Entertainment

How many times did you listen to **Despacito**? The breakout crossover international hit turned into the most streamed song ever. Its all-Spanish version captured nearly 5bn total streams in less than 6 months. Big name bilingual, bicultural collaborations and remixes increasingly move towards Spanish, not away from it. That's not so surprising with 437m native speakers globally. The cross-pollination of Latin pop genres has made the sound more international and expanded potential audiences as figures from the worlds of Reggaeton, Dominican Dembow, Bachata and Latin Trap deliver more electronic, rhythmic and dance-oriented music. The sound is equally understood in Western Europe, South America, Mexico, the US, a vast music ecosystem served by borderless distribution hubs like Spotify, YouTube and Apple Music.

Overseas audiences continue to devour what Hollywood serves up, but **US audiences** thirst for something more than soulless half-baked sequels, remakes decided by committee and films primarily designed to sell merchandise. Domestic box office revenue saw a 16% dip. There's little evidence that moviegoers are tiring of comic-book adaptations, but audiences did ignore a repackaging of the 40th anniversary of "Close Encounters," probably because it didn't have enough car chases and explosions. US definitely experiences franchise fatigue. While most were smash hits overseas, Apes, Aliens, Transformers, Cars, Pirates, and Despicables fell flat. The biggest threat to theatrical releases: stay at home and stream.

"Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you." - Maori proverb

Science class

China has more laboratory scientists than any other country, and the government's investing hundreds of billions in developing high tech industries like semiconductors, solar panels, AI, medical technologies and electric cars. But a rash of questionable or discredited research, systemic fraud and elaborate schemes for getting papers into prestigious journals has rocked the science community. In April a scientific journal retracted 107 biology research papers, which had faked glowing reviews of their articles. A lively online black market that sells everything from positive peer reviews to entire research articles exacerbates the problems of piracy and poor quality. The cost of cheating is very low. China has an SCI Science Citation Index, which ranks importance by how many times articles are cited in other papers. Career advancement is based on the quantity of research papers published rather than quality. There's little oversight, and everybody knows about weak punishments for those caught cheating.

Philip Morris International introduced innovative technology that they claim eradicates 90-95% of toxic compounds in cigarette smoke, and they only spent \$3bn to develop it. The name of the product is IQOS, a not-so-unconscious meme for a smoker with an oversize intelligence. A fashionable new twist on how to hook a fresh generation on nicotine, the hollowed out electronic cigar connects to a smooth, sleek battery pack which heats tobacco sticks instead of burning them. In Japan, where the product was rolled out, 72% of users quit cigs entirely, converted to IQOS. PM can't meet demand, plans to triple manufacturing capacity, currently 15bn sticks a year; by 2018 projects 300bn. Chief Exec predicts smokeless products like IQOS will one day be so common that his company stops selling all traditional cigarettes. Health associations and experts sound deeply suspicious of the same people who offered strawberry-shortcake-flavored products aimed at kids. FDA approval of the claim that it's a less harmful alternative will be a marketing coup. It's a business growth model. Find a way to keep your consumers alive longer, you'll make more money off them.

"He is not wise who cannot be silly from time to time." - Anna Roemers Visscher

Trends

Amazon's **Alexa**, may be the most popular person on earth, since her name is called so many times a day. She could supplant Brittany and Ashley as the most popular girl's name. Will high-tech Alexa-powered eyewear sell big? They transmit sound by bone conduction, directly from the frames of the glasses through the skull. The hype: greater productivity, more immersive entertainment, hands-free computing, but consumers aren't buying it. They say music doesn't sound as good, and hope this isn't another flameout like Amazon Fire Phone.

Singles Day in China, the world's biggest shopping event, generated a record \$25bn in sales, (\$5bn in first 15 mins), eclipsing the USA's Black Friday and Cyber Monday combined. Ecommerce is suddenly equivalent to entertainment in the Middle Kingdom, a lavish and emotionally gratifying experience rich in psychic rewards. In the US, shopping's appeal comes

simply from scale and price, China, a less mature market, successfully integrated ecommerce and stores with apps and augmented reality.

If you can't understand American **teens**, blame it on their parents. Adolescents increasingly delay activities long seen as rites of passage: precipitous decreases in those who have driver's licenses, tried alcohol, date, work for pay and engage in sexual activity. The declines occur across race, geographic and socioeconomic lines. Behaviorists say the trend is based on fear, the kids absorbing the same kind of anxiety about the future their parents have for them. Bottom line, it's just safer to not become an adult.

"Writing is turning one's worst moments into money." - J.P. Donleavy

Hi-yo, Silver, awayyy!

Robert Blakeley, who never had occasion to use his own product, disappeared into the cloud at 95 years old. In 1961 he created the bright orange-yellow and black signs which marked the way to fallout shelters. The simple and eye-catching design was intended to be visible, even in the dark chaos of a city under attack. JFK's public fallout shelter program was supposed to ease the nation's anxieties, yet its very announcement terrified many Americans. With no nuclear war, interest in the shelters faded, their signs rusted, his emblems of the apocalypse all but forgotten or ignored. The motif was adopted by counterculture, used as mock symbols of Armageddon in antiwar protests, films, TV dramas, campaign buttons, refrigerator magnets, a Dylan album cover. Blakeley was unimpressed with his own signs, calling them, "No big deal."

He couldn't pull the wool over the eyes of the Grim Reaper, so **Clifford Irving** closed the book and wrote *The End*. A former NYTimes copy boy, Fuller Brush salesman, machinist's assistant, and undistinguished novelist, he pulled off the biggest literary hoax of the 20th century in the early 1970s, proffering a supposedly authorized autobiography of the billionaire Howard Hughes. McGraw Hill paid him a \$750K advance, Life Magazine bought serial rights for \$250K, Dell advanced \$400K for paperback rights. He successfully bluffed his way past editors, lawyers, handwriting experts, skeptical journalists, hiding behind a veil forged letters, and telephone calls from exotic locations. His bet that Hughes - who hated the limelight - would never step forward failed. Hughes went public and denied knowing him. Swiss bank investigators later discovered an account opened pseudonymously by Irving's wife. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy in Federal court, served 17 months of a 2-year sentence. Clifford Irving always insisted money wasn't the motive, claiming that a certain grandeur had rooted itself into the scheme and citing a reckless and artistic splendor to the way he had carried it out.

They finally dropped the big one on **Stanislav Petrov**, a Soviet military officer who was on duty in 1983 when Russian computers incorrectly indicated incoming missiles from the US. Petrov decided it was a false alarm and did not report it to his superiors; instead he called the station officer at army HQ and reported a system malfunction. Having thus saved the world,

twenty-three minutes later - unirradiated - he confirmed that nothing bad happened. It was ultimately determined that commie satellites mistook sunlight reflecting on clouds as ICBMs.

Off into the wild blue yonder went **Maria Lavrentyevna Vasilyeva Popovich**. In 1964 she became first Soviet woman to break the sound barrier. A legendary test pilot who set more than 100 flying records in distance and speed, some which still stand, and in spite of her diminutive height of 4'9" tall, she attained the rank of colonel in the Soviet Air Force. But her advancement was stalled by bureaucratic barriers, despite speculation she was slated to become the first female cosmonaut to travel into space. Instead, higher-ups advised her to focus on her family. In later years as a pilot she said she encountered UFOs, and that flying opened her eyes to the ecological damage being done to the earth.

Put one last piastre into the jukebox for **Fatima Ahmed Kamal Shaker**, known popularly as Shadia, who left the stage at 88. The celebrated actress and singer appeared in more than 100 films during Egyptian cinema's Golden Age. Her silky and playful voice adorned hit singles in Egypt's distinctive vernacular Arabic. "*Oh, Egypt, My Beloved*" is more like the national anthem. Thirty years ago she abruptly walked away from the limelight, embracing a strict version of Islam, donning the hijab and living a life of near-seclusion.

"The afternoon knows what the morning never suspected." - Robert Frost

Epiphanies

Millennial customers inch towards smaller waistlines and healthier snacks as they saunter away from Big Food. In a quest for natural ingredients and traceability of product origin, they counterbalance their search with a generational urge for indulgence. **Barry Callebaut**, the world's largest supplier, introduced ruby chocolate, made from cocoa grown in Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire and Ecuador. It's meant to premiumise the commodity and open new markets. The innovation is more in the manufacturing process, but claims a taste tension between berry-fruitiness and luscious smoothness. Of course they're launching the product in Shanghai. Speaking of *new product creation*, am I being sweet-talked, old bean?

In a jolt of deep brand regression, the beverage industry again invoked the McElroy Memo, which counsels fiddling packaging to sell more product. Coke Zero rechristened itself **Coke Zero Sugar**, introduced a sleeker design, new name, and legended an "improved" recipe. This refreshing pause after American soda consumption fell to a 30-year low in 2015. The company plans strategic reformulation of more than 500 other drinks in its portfolio.

Lego, following a run of unsuccessful product launches, saw its first drop in revenues for more than a decade and planned 1400 job losses. The Danish toy giant came close to financial collapse in 2003-2004. In the interim a series of licensing partners -including a successful movie franchise- and expanded outreach to girls turned the toy plastic-block-maker in the direction of

unprecedented expansion. But the increasing complexity of the organization and rising employee numbers meant overlapping roles, redundancy and an increase in bureaucracy, which drove the consumer, shopper and retailer too far from the top management. So the company said, replacing their underperforming CEO.

Brand hijacking is turning into a pattern recognition phenomenon. In the short term, backyard barbecue ambience, kitschy polynesian luaus and mosquito repellent won't be the first thing that comes to mind when customers think of **TIKI Brand**. White nationalist demonstrators in Charlottesville illuminated the night with torches in hand, and forced the company to issue a statement, "Not associated in any way with the events." If it's any consolation, New Balance, Fred Perry polos, and the Detroit Red Wings sports team survived similar anti-associations.

Toys "R" Us, mired under \$5bn of debt, filed for Chapter 11, a casualty of pressures facing brick and mortar retailers struggling to compete with Amazon and Walmart. They confronted a \$400m debt payment coming due in 2018. It followed a wave of similar bankruptcies: Gymboree, Payless ShoeSource and rue21.

There's a \$100bn+ global market in food delivery, especially heated in Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo. **Uber** launched UberEats, a service which sometimes eclipses its main ride-hailing business. A highly profitable category, restaurants pay a percentage to Uber; the customer pays a fee to the delivery service, on top of the cost of the food and trip. It's a crowded, cutthroat space populated by the small competitors with names like Grubhub and Postmates. The big threat of course is voracious Amazon, a specialist in last-mile logistics. The business dies on the arrival of a stone cold pizza.

Millennials and Gen X are on track to make up half the luxury market by 2025. **Zegna**, responding to the casualization of the business world, introduced a wash and go luxury merino. While many men no longer wear a tie, they are prepared to pay \$100 to \$700 for a pair of sneakers, the one known impulse-driven product. How then, to reconcile a 3 months wait for a custom €5000 suit? Zegna knows casually dressed Chinese men seek to signal their wealth through leather goods, so the brand plans to expand into leather accessories, seen as a key growth area. Consumers either want very fast or very slow luxury. Zegna's strength: it controls the entire supply chain.

"What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know."
- St. Augustine

Terminology and concepts entering the mainstream in 2018

Brushing - a tactic by which Alibaba merchants send empty packages to boost their ratings

Emergent behavior - when machines assume embodied and sometimes humanoid form, behaving in a way that the system cannot anticipate

Fomo - Fear of missing out; what motivates Bitcoin investors

Microtargeting - a marketing strategy that uses consumer data and demographics to identify the interests of specific individuals or very small groups of like-minded individuals and influence their thoughts or actions.

Minsky moment - an idea which dictates that asset prices experiencing a long period of growth fuelled by leverage can collapse suddenly when pressures are introduced.

Neukdari - Korean word for “dotard”, a common derogatory term for an old person. The connotation is someone who is lazy, useless and demented.

Nothing burger - White House Press Secretary’s term for “non-issue”

Process mining - an emerging field in big data analytics which aggregates data from search terms, sequences them to make a customized customer journey

Re-accommodated - what United Airlines claimed it did to a passenger dragged from aircraft

Reinforcement learning - a way machines learn specific tasks through extreme trial and error

“If I would be like someone else, who will be like me?” *“Az ich vel zein vi yener, ver vet zein vi ich?”* - Yiddish saying

What is a brand?

“A brand is basically an innovative idea of change that you want to get out to consumers.”
- Wyclef Jean

I respectfully disagree. What if your brand doesn’t want to change consumers? What if your brand isn’t made for consumers? What if your brand doesn’t sanction consumption?

I wish brands would get out of my way and let me decide.

A splendid 2018 to all. See you in the Summer.



DiGanZi