

Inspiring Web Days

- by Christer Nilsson
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The web-days in Stockholm



I visited [Stockholm's Webbdagarna](#) (Webb-days) from the 22nd to 23rd March. It is Sweden's leading event and meeting place for anyone working with digital media and digital channels. The conference is organized by Internetworld and gathers some 1600 participants. A major part of the sessions were in English. If you are living in the Nordics and want to follow the digital development and discover new business opportunities, I can recommend a visit to the event. The next conference is held in Malmö on the 17th to 18th May and followed by Gothenburg on the 21st to 22nd September. The next Stockholm event will be held March 21st to 22nd, 2017.

It was overall very professionally organized with many great and inspirational speakers. There are, of course, a lot of topics and information covered during the two days. I can, in this blog, just share a few hopefully inspiring takeaways.

The customer in focus

This year's theme was "the customer in focus"—technology pushes the development, and it is easy to neglect the users. And digitization has given more power to the clients, which today are less loyal, harder to read, and more complex. Although the "customer focus" may seem to be a common theme, it bears repeating, especially in areas of rapid change driven by new digital technology. As told by Steve Jobs:

- Rule 1: The customer is always right.
 - Rule 2: If the customer is ever wrong, reread Rule 1!
- The presentations gave me an update on the progress and pace of change in different business areas. The focus of several presentations was the difficulty to reach the customer when traditional advertising is no longer effective. We all know the forces of change of digitization and its consequences in our private lives, industries and the society at large. Much has changed, and we are facing even bigger accelerating changes!

Cyber philosophy

The keynote speaker on the first day was Alexander Bard, a cyber-philosopher and writer. His latest book "[Syntheism – Creating God in the Internet Age](#)" is well worth reading. Alexander is always interesting to listen to, although I do not agree with everything. He is a fantastic, inspiring communicator and stated, among other things, that:

- There are 40-year-olds who live in the "real" world who have difficulty understanding the "digital" world. For a 20-year-old, the opposite applies. She or he is living in the digital world and finds it difficult to comprehend the real world.
- Many regions around the world have tried to copy Silicon Valley. However, it fails because Silicon Valley is rooted in the hippie culture and its cannabis-smoking motivators.
- Still, our businesses are organized mirroring a military structure. It is based on Napoleon's army, with the general on top and with soldiers reporting to lieutenants and captains. At the bottom of the pyramid, you have the foot soldiers – the food for the guns (Alexander's description). What has happened is that those who are at the bottom of the hierarchy (employees, end-users, customers etc.) can now communicate directly with each other by the means of the internet and digital technology. Result: Increased customer power! And as a consequence, our businesses need to be managed in an entirely different way.
- Online *marketing* is out and has been replaced by online *communication*.

NPS

Caroline Rudbeck, Head of Group Communication at [Dustin Group](#), shared how Dustin is working with NPS (net promoter score). NPS is an accepted method of measuring customer satisfaction by answering the question, "How likely is it that you would recommend the company, product, or service to a friend or colleague?" In a future blog, I will address the NPS method in more detail.

Millennials

An inspiring speaker was [Adam Smiley Poswolsky](#). He believes that millennials (born 1980-2000) are not "The Me, Me, Me Generation" but "The Purpose Generation." He stated that millennials want:

- A sense of meaning in a coaching learning environment.
- Flexibility, with opportunities to work remotely and work-life in balance.
He also defined what meaningful work should be comprised of. It needs to:
 - Reflect who you are and what your interests are.
 - Allow you to share your talents to help others.
 - Provide a community of believers, that will support your dreams.
 - It should be financially viable relative to your desired lifestyle.
 Adam also noted that millennials will change jobs every three years (today we change every five years), and that 65% of our children will end up in jobs that have not yet been invented.

Ad spam

There are many of us who are so tired of all the commercials we are forced to watch – both online and in other media channels. One of the speakers said: “It’s like being forced to eat a bad starter before you can get the delicious main course which you have chosen yourself.”

One consequence of ad spam is that more than half of all young readers online use some form of “ad blocker.” And many of us more traditional media consumers tend to prefer commercial-free TV channels, or we record our popular shows to be able to fast forward through the commercials.

But how should the businesses then be able to reach customers and consumers when they are skipping the commercials? Vigor Sörman, founder and CEO of [Splay](#), showed an example with the blogger Clara Henry and her cooperation with Always. Clara promotes Always tampons in her video blog in an entirely different manner than traditional commercials. Even though the video below is in Swedish, it will give you a sense of an entirely different way of how to communicate with the end-user.

My conclusions

- We know for a fact that our companies and businesses are facing significant changes in several areas. All the speeches at the Webbdagarna event confirmed that statement.
- A main takeaway is the increasing challenge many businesses have to [attract talented](#), young people. Its changes include the business’s real purpose, its organization, and its leadership.
- An unanswered question is: Who is going to finance the production of content in traditional media channels when not commercials are no longer useful? The same applies online. Only 4% of web page visitors click an ad banner. It is evident that the current business models need a revision.
- It, for sure, was two fascinating and inspiring days.

