

Our vision of the global market place

In today's fast-paced, individualized yet globalized, tech-connected and therefore ever-changing world, the **disruption** in the who's, the what's, the how's and the why's of the relationship between consumers and brands is shifting gear and raising speed. **Complexity** of Market and Marketing at its fullest.

How can companies keep on profiling, tracking and **connecting** with consumers while being confronted with all time high **competitiveness**, all time low budgets, and volatile consumers who feel **empowered** by technology -don't come too close!- and won't hesitate to use the fast-forward or defriend button? How long can some of the so-called in-your-face-marketing approaches still last?

How can consumers still find the **solutions** they are looking for, when tons of consumer brand reviews from both haters and lovers going into the extreme are being put in the digital spotlights, when almost **unlimited** product and services from across the world are being brought to us by drones in the not so far future. No wonder consumers might feel somewhat **confused** from time to time when feeling commercially overwhelmed, therefore looking very forward for technology that allows them to skip ads, which may have guided them, ... whilst also patiently awaiting the very-soon-to-be-enforced-new-and-strict European privacy law?

Due to a **complex** and **globalized** market place, there is a need for a pretty frequent or even **continuous** exchange of information and feedback and interdependent guidance-seeking and presenting between consumers and brands for the complexity to settle down.

Now, exchanging information and presenting and seeking guidance feedback might sound like a good old common practice, but one should bear in mind that the Rules of Consumer Engagement are changing rapidly since the **Consumer Democracy** is aiming high.

More and more even very good attempts to overcome the **complexity** using well-established market research methods and principles are missing out the same **disruption** that is taking place too in the very market research landscape itself, resulting in a strong risk to get poor consumer data, weak insights and wrong conclusions.

At first sight, even some of the newest, most sophisticated and **tech-driven** market research approaches that are adding tons and tons of behavioral data to get a better view on consumers may end up in an army of Trojan Horses - although they are considered to be very promising, not at least within the research industry itself.

The Internet of Things, advanced operational CRM instruments, and even as well as market research enabled satellites can empower companies to virtually watch and observe consumers from many angles ... just like good old **Big Brother** is still striving for. Next step is turning all that big data into smart data, in a way to better "target" the consumer, thereby hoping to detect how a **consumer** feels, what he wants, how he perceives the world and how he expects brands to reach out and connect to him. Therefore, some even wonder why we should keep on surveying and asking consumers what they want, when some fancy marketing dashboards can easily **predict** the next move, how a consumer will react, what a consumer really wants simply by observing **behavioral data**.

Other attempts to get a better grip on the **disruption** markets and their consumer prescribe to **intensify** market research by and asking a broad range of (assumed) target groups what they want, how they feel, when they want something, how a product or a brand should reinvent itself, etc etc. Respondents are kept motivated through an **ever-increasing** set of incentives as a reward for them to be so kind to provide the info. Next Market Specialists, Researchers and Senior Consultants are in charge to analyse that huge pile of data. At last, a detailed research reports can be presented before being directly translated into marketing plans. This way, complexity is reduced and the "**consumer challenge**" seems to be in control. Despite the fact that it may come at a high price, and it most probably still will be considered as quite an investment that hopefully brings more profit soon.

In neither of these cases and standard approaches, however, one may seriously question, and rightly so, how long that those will stand **Consumer Democracy principles**, which are necessary to understand and how a consumer can kept really motivated to share all of his ideas, how he wants to provide in-depth feedback, how he can even be **positively engaged** to provide insights. The key question is: if the markets are changing as they are and as the market research industry is observing too, then why shouldn't market research be adjusted too? At least one should ask how a consumer, as a respondent hereby representing other **consumers**, can be motivated intrinsically, be turned into a participant, a partner in the discussion, so that more and more honest feedback is most happily provided to companies.

For all these reasons, iVOX strongly believes that as long as **communication channels** are open, consumers and companies are getting equal, and market research can become more fun, more popular, more **media-minded**, more consumer driven, and more relevant for marketing and PR and that's why iVOX isn't just a market research agency.

Our metaphorical and visionary story

Once upon a time there was a guy, named Guy -just to keep the story a simple one to remember. Next to being a **divorced father of 5 children**, Guy also was a very **busy international business guy** and very often away from home and his lovely kids who he loved so much. Since Guy also happened to be a caring father -or at least he had very good intentions for being one- he kind of felt sorry for his kids, because he didn't have the time to spend so much time with them, so he could feel and better understand them, so he could be there for them since as they were becoming youngsters exploring that **big big world** and for sure he was dedicated to make sure he did something to make that happen. After yet another series of quite some long and intense business trips Guy comes home, gets excited and happy to finally touch base again with Donald, Danny, David, Daisy and Diane. "Party-time, I'm ho-o-ome!", Guy shouts loudly in an nice attempt to get them stop Skyping, stop texting, stop playing online games with virtual friends all over the world to **save the planet**.

Even Daisy heard her father's familiar's voice although she was enjoying some sunshine while reading an awesome thriller. Once the crowd gathered around **the kitchen table**, Guy started of with showcasing some of **the fancy presents** he usually brought home. "Great dad, thanks, much appreciated, really. I hope your business were great wherever it was this time and wherever these come from. China? right?". "Taiwan in fact, but that's not important at all". "How are you doing guys?", "How's school?" "Danny, How's your friend Kimberly doing these days, she's alright? I saw some pictures on Facebook. Looked awful, that accident", "By the way, Donald, your new profile looks on Facebook, I must admit, you look cool. right on". ...

He went on like this for some time, made sure he **visibly listened carefully**. The party ended somewhat abruptly after some time because Donald, Daisy and David were expected on another party, they just couldn't skip since they had promised so to quite some of their best friends. Diane had to study unfortunately and left the party too. Danny couldn't wait to start playing the game he just received from his dad. "Sure, sure, go ahead, enjoy it, Guy shouted when Danny was upstairs already". Guy was exhausted and decided to go to bed soon. After all, it had been quite a journey. He was too exhausted to notice he actually felt a little sad and disappointed. He somewhat still has a feeling a does not yet managed to **connect with them** yet nor did they to him, he thought. **Why so?**