



THE ***SOCIAL AGE***
OF DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has been a C-suite obsession for two decades and it's back in the spotlight due to COVID-19. It represents a means of survival for some companies, and a competitive advantage for others.

Nearly 60% of businesses have accelerated their digital transformation efforts in the last 12 months.¹ Two-thirds pushed through digital initiatives that had previously met internal resistance.

Heavier digital investors have been twice as likely to report outsized financial performance as other companies. These leaders are now growing revenues at five times the rate of laggard businesses.²

THE *SOCIAL AGE* OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Social media has fundamentally rewired and re-engineered our digital experience. The steep adoption curve and speed of evolution – heavily influenced by the pandemic – has big implications for companies looking to fast track their digital development.

Today's brands have entered the ***Social Age*** of digital transformation: shifting digital transformation's focus from engineering to communications.

Welcome to the human side of digital transformation.

These leaders are now growing revenues at five times the rate of laggard businesses.

DEFINING THE *SOCIAL AGE*

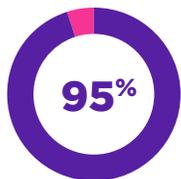
What do we mean by the *Social Age* and what challenges and opportunities does it create for today's brands?



DEFINING THE SOCIAL AGE

UBIQUITY

We're moving faster than ever toward universal adoption of social media across the world with over half a billion people joining a social platform in the last year.



95% of the world's working-age internet users are now active on social each month.³

UBIQUITY ●

CONSOLIDATION ○

FRAGMENTATION ○

CREATIVITY ○

ATTENTION ○

CULTURE ○



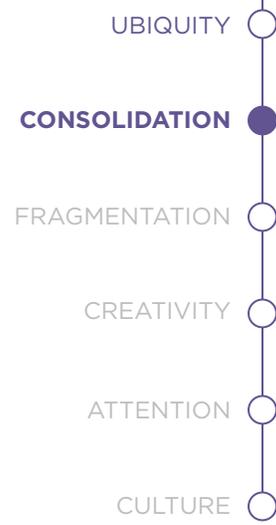
DEFINING THE SOCIAL AGE

CONSOLIDATION

Among the platform giants, the global lockdown accelerated adoption and usage:

- » **Twitter recorded 20% YOY growth.**⁴
- » **WhatsApp saw a 40% increase in usage.**⁵
- » **Pinterest's userbase grew 40%.**
- » **Snapchat saw a 50% uptick in video calls.**⁶
- » **YouTube's traffic went up 15% on average.**⁷

Today, only three of the top 10 global platforms have fewer than one billion users.



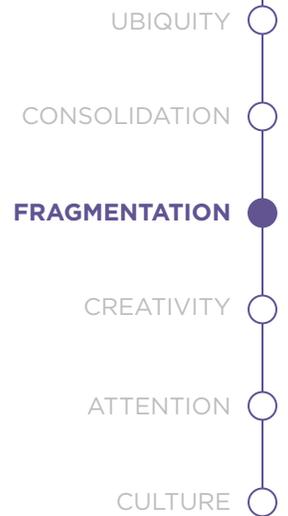


DEFINING THE SOCIAL AGE

FRAGMENTATION

Newer platforms experienced a pandemic-powered explosion in popularity and adoption. TikTok, which has only been available worldwide since 2018, amassed 315 million downloads in Q1 2020,⁸ making it the most downloaded mobile app in any quarter ever.

Time will tell if newer platforms like Clubhouse, Caffeine, Signal, MeWe, or Discord could reach critical mass. But it's possible there will be another billion-user platform to emerge in the next three years that doesn't exist today.



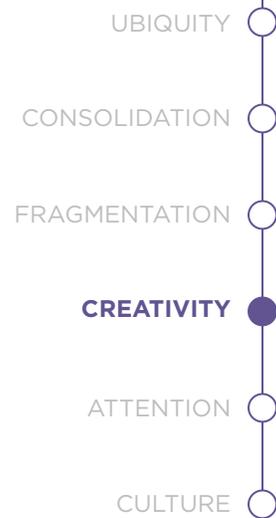


DEFINING THE SOCIAL AGE

CREATIVITY

Just as the blogosphere democratized the printing press for the digital age back in the early 2000s, so too have recent social technologies democratized digital creative. Rich media production capabilities exist in billions of people's back pockets in cell phone form.

We're in the midst of a rich content revolution. In 2020, people created **2.5 quintillion (18 zeros!) bytes of data each day.**⁹





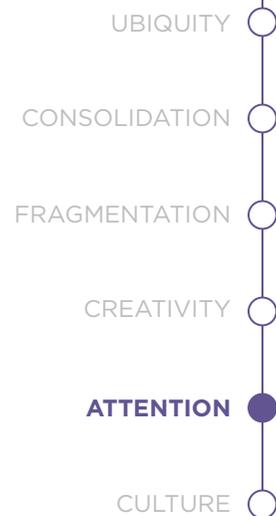
DEFINING THE SOCIAL AGE

ATTENTION

Infinite scrolling news feeds, short-form posts, and even shorter-form reaction media (including comments, likes, dislikes, loves, and emojis) have supercharged the **Social Age** customer's ability to sift, sort, and process information.

Attention has never been such a hard-earned commodity. Since 2000, the average person's attention span has contracted 25% from 12 to only eight seconds.¹⁰

What's more, this share of attention is being spread over more social platforms than ever before. The average number of social media accounts held has risen 75% since 2014 from 4.1 to 8.4 worldwide. Gen Z and Millennials hold more than 10 social accounts each.¹¹



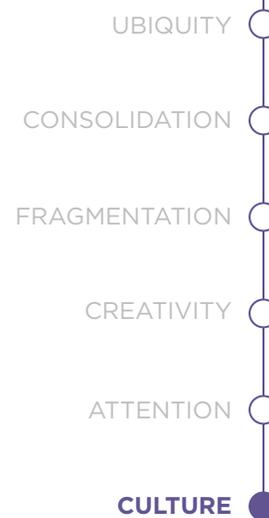
DEFINING THE SOCIAL AGE

CULTURE

Social's participatory infrastructure has provided a global platform for the dissemination of opinion. This has promoted progressive attitudes to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and encouraged greater openness around values.

This is placing new demands and new expectations on today's brands. While 68% of people now believe brands should be clear about their values, more than twice the amount of millennials than boomers believe brands should be speaking out on issues that reflect their values.¹²

Four out of five also agree brands have a role to play in connecting people of varying backgrounds, interests and beliefs.¹³





THE TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE

Today's companies are competing for the hearts and minds of a new generation of customers. They not only need to navigate the dizzying complexity of the social space but also harness it to create more human connections, display more human values, show greater cultural relevance, and make a more positive cultural impact.

Achieving success requires more than prioritizing social as a media channel. The true goal is to embed social first principles into the fabric of the business and into the heart of the brand. This is an ever-changing undertaking, requiring a continuous cycle of adaption and evolution.

Achieving success requires doing more than prioritizing social as a media channel.

SOCIAL AGE BRANDS

While most brands are now investing in social on some level, **Social Age** brands are further along on the maturity curve. They prioritise integrated, data-driven social strategies, embed the right teams and capabilities – internally and with partners – and leverage the right workflows and tools to manage and measure.

1000heads has defined five principles that guide the communications strategies of the leading **Social Age** brands. It's important to remember that not all brands showcased embody every principle – although each one is a worthy ambition.

*1000heads has defined five principles that guide the communications strategies of the leading **Social Age** brands.*



LISTENING-LED



PEOPLE-POWERED



CULTURE CONNECTED



HYPER-PERSONAL



IN THE MOMENT

1. LISTENING-LED



The art of being a good talker is knowing when to listen. **Social Age** brands are intimately attuned to the conversations that matter most and are experts in turning insight into action.

- 1. LISTENING-LED ●
- 2. HYPER-PERSONAL ○
- 3. PEOPLE-POWERED ○
- 4. IN THE MOMENT ○
- 5. CULTURE CONNECTED ○



LISTENING-LED EXAMPLE

GOOGLE*

Collaborating with fans to help build the future

Google leverages insights from its digital advocacy and influencer programs to transform the way the brand creates products. Ongoing collaboration and research with social superfans feed directly through to product teams in order to aid future product development.

The benefits go beyond intel. Social fans and advocates are far more likely to help amplify new releases having been brought into the design process early.

Social listening insights focusing on diverse audiences are also informing the way Google creates go-to-market programs for new features. One notable example is Real Tone,¹⁴ a feature that improves the Pixel phone's camera and imagery experiences for people of color.

1. LISTENING-LED ●

2. HYPER-PERSONAL ○

3. PEOPLE-POWERED ○

4. IN THE MOMENT ○

5. CULTURE CONNECTED ○

Ongoing collaboration and research with their social superfans feeds directly through to product teams in order to aid future product development.

*Google is a 1000heads client partner.



LISTENING-LED *EXAMPLE*

DIAGEO*

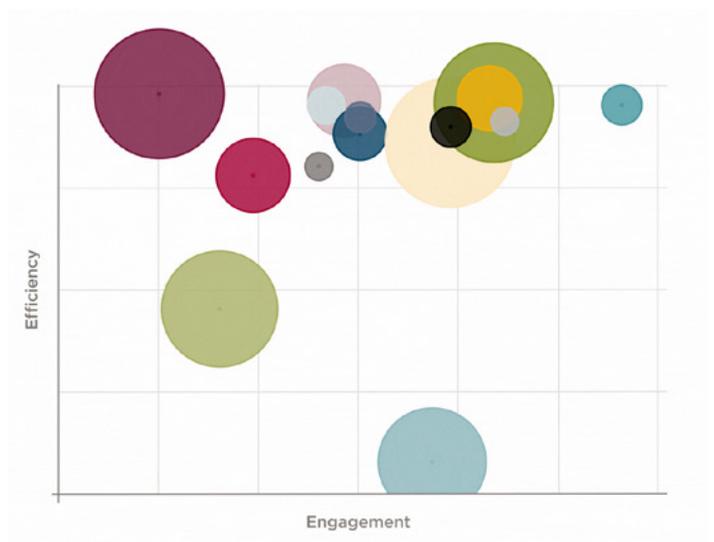
Scaling a consistent approach to social ROI

Diageo’s Culture and Entertainment team have successfully embedded and scaled social measurement across the enterprise. The cloud-based application called ICE (Intelligence for Culture & Entertainment) and its measurement frameworks bring visibility, consistency, and credibility to earned media measurement across Diageo’s brands and feed consistent data to econometrics and ROI measurement.

ICE has evaluated over 20 brands across 20 international markets, with a combined C&E investment of £25.9M, with more being added to the platform every quarter. Along with standard social metrics, the platform also houses Diageo’s hero social metric called ‘Brand Fame’ which translates the brand’s wider marketing mission (that of building ‘famous brands’) into social signals.

This effective measurement of ‘Brand Fame’ via social data allows Diageo’s digital marketing teams to measure each brand more meaningfully (and consistently) in social against the wider brand objectives, and optimize future activity.

- 1. LISTENING-LED ●
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*Diageo is a 1000heads client partner.

2. HYPER-PERSONAL



Social Age brands are simply great at that personal touch – either managing to operationalize and scale personalized experiences or benefit from the conversational halo effect that targeted surprise and delight experiences can deliver.

HYPER-PERSONAL EXAMPLE

PELOTON*

Personal workouts become sharable stories

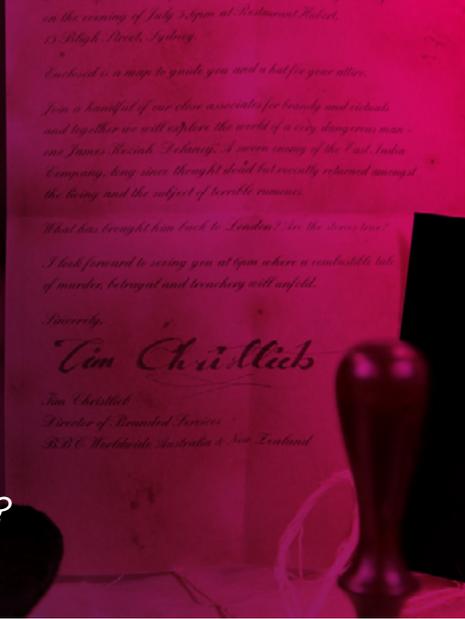
Peloton's integration with Instagram empowers its user base to share their personal workouts more creatively with their followers. Peloton's Instagram Story sharing feature allows users to upload an image or video with an auto-generated stats bar displaying key metrics from their most recent workout.

This can then be shared by any of Peloton's 4.2M users after any of their 98 million quarterly workouts straight from the Peloton app.

1. LISTENING-LED
- 2. HYPER-PERSONAL**
3. PEOPLE-POWERED
4. IN THE MOMENT
5. CULTURE CONNECTED



WHAT'S YOUR HAT SIZE?



1. LISTENING-LED

2. HYPER-PERSONAL

3. PEOPLE-POWERED

4. IN THE MOMENT

5. CULTURE CONNECTED

HYPER-PERSONAL EXAMPLE

BBC AUSTRALIA*

The hyper-personal halo effect.

Rather than simply create teaser trailers and run ads, BBC Australia went hyper-personal to launch Tom Hardy's period drama, *Taboo*, in market — launching the show exclusively via social influencers.

The BBC took local TV social influencers deep into the story with bespoke asset packs, hidden maps, and a secret premiere screening in a forgotten underground theatre in Sydney.

Influencer outreach intriguingly asked influencers one unusual question: "What's your hat size?" The BBC followed up a week later with a special wax-sealed box packed with

pages from an old newspaper with articles featuring *Taboo*'s main characters and plot backstories. The main asset was an exquisitely crafted, period-correct top hat personalized with each influencer's name and initials. Under the brim was hidden a map with directions for a private screening experience in Sydney.

The BBC relied on deep personalization to drive participation and engagement among the right tastemakers in the TV drama social conversation — who in turn took their own communities along on the journey. All this helped ensure the show's domestic premiere delivered outsized viewing stats.

*The BBC is a 1000heads client partner.



3. PEOPLE-POWERED



Social Age brands let others do the talking for them. They're able to grow authentic communities, turn customers into advocates, and leverage the power of digital influence in genuine ways.

PEOPLE-POWERED EXAMPLE

GOPRO

Storytelling through the customer lens

GoPro has turned its biggest fans and users into storytellers, giving them a platform to reach millions. Its model is designed around collating and curating user generated content from across the globe, from both regular users and sponsored athletes.

The content is distributed as widely as possible, utilizing its significant social following, mobile apps, and email base. GoPro naturally eschews product and promotional content, instead focusing on people-powered content that entertains and excites.

1. LISTENING-LED
2. HYPER-PERSONAL
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4. IN THE MOMENT
5. CULTURE CONNECTED



PEOPLE-POWERED EXAMPLE

WELLA PASSIONISTAS*

Passionista-sourced content now drives 23% of all Wella's global social content.

1. LISTENING-LED
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3. PEOPLE-POWERED
4. IN THE MOMENT
5. CULTURE CONNECTED

Building an advocate-powered content strategy

Wella used to take a traditional approach to studio-based content creation, which had long lead times and often missed trends happening at the speed of social. Wella's digital team realized this was costly and lacking in speed and innovation.

To answer the challenge, Wella's developed an industry-leading global advocacy program. The Wella Passionistas spans 10 markets and is designed to connect Wella with user generated content and stylistic innovation produced on the salon floor in real-time.

The strategy is rooted in value exchange and co-creation, and has transformed Wella's approach to digital content production. Trend-rich, hyper-relevant Passionista-sourced content now drives 23% of all Wella's global social content, and user-generated content accounts for 40%.

Behind the scenes, Wella Passionistas' closed Facebook Group helps creators with tips and tricks to master new platforms and formats - ensuring the network is dialled into all the latest social content trends to compliment the community's natural knowledge of hair trends.

*Wella is a 1000heads client partner.

4. IN THE MOMENT



In the **Social Age**, brands who master speed and agility in communication stand out in the newsfeed.

For bigger brands, hierarchies of approvals and control loops - often put in place to protect - can have a negative impact by rendering social communications untimely and unimaginative.

Social Age brands develop an ability to react as culture and conversation shift in real time, and are first to capitalize on new trends and technologies as they emerge.

Moving communications into the fast lane of the social superhighway is as much about systems and processes as it is about attitude.

1. LISTENING-LED
2. HYPER-PERSONAL
3. PEOPLE-POWERED
- 4. IN THE MOMENT**
5. CULTURE CONNECTED

IN THE MOMENT *EXAMPLE*

NETFLIX*

Omnipresent in internet culture

Netflix is in an exciting position. While the company is in the business of content, with incredible original and licensed materials, its social team is hyper-attuned to a very broad audience and has developed an instinctive understanding of ‘internet culture’ that’s among the best in the business.

The foundation of this success is an ability to react quickly and in a timely manner, often in a humorous way that makes for exciting social-first moments.

In fall 2021, “Squid Game” blew up on social and became the company’s biggest release ever. Netflix was omnipresent in the conversation, being quick to share clever community reaction posts and fuel the chatter via community participation activations at the height of the buzz.

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- 4. IN THE MOMENT**
5. CULTURE CONNECTED

The foundation of their success is an ability to react quickly and in a timely manner.

*Netflix is a 1000heads client.



IN THE MOMENT *EXAMPLE*

VANS

Embracing new social technologies

Vans World in Roblox is the brand's first metaverse experiment and speaks to its ambition to embrace new social technologies as they develop.

Inside Vans World, Roblox's 46 million daily active users can create custom shoes, shop for new products, and learn new tricks alongside friends.

The plan is for Vans World to be a permanent space in the metaverse, adding additional features and functionality over time. The Vans team sees it as a long-term brand building play in a space where its customers of the future spend time.

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5. CULTURE CONNECTED

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5. CULTURE CONNECTED



Social Age brands strive to be culturally connected and take time to understand the cultures and sub-cultures inhabited by their customers.

These brands demonstrate an ability to understand and engage with different customer constituencies as peers rather than institutions, and in ways that are authentic and empathetic.

1. LISTENING-LED

2. HYPER-PERSONAL

3. PEOPLE-POWERED

4. IN THE MOMENT

5. CULTURE CONNECTED



CULTURE CONNECTED EXAMPLE

TIMBERLAND*

Walking the digital neighborhood

Timberland's social strategy focuses on being where the culture leaders are and being an unintrusive part of grassroots moments as they happen.

To facilitate this, Timberland built a 'neighborhood dashboard': a suite of tools and workflows for levelled-up social listening. It provides ongoing analysis of emerging topics of discussion across sub-cultures like sneakerheads, hip-hop fans, and climate optimists.

The combination of smart listening technology and detailed insights helps the Timberland team identify emerging trends within sub-cultures and spot opportunities to participate. This allows the brand to do spontaneous things like join the virtual crowd at a recent impromptu NYC livestream rap battle - soliciting positive surprise from fan with comments like "Timberland is here? No way!"

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*Timberland is a 1000heads client partner.

TAKEAWAYS

Social media is the most sophisticated conversation technology the world has ever known. In evolutionary terms, it has more fundamentally in common with the invention of the telephone than the television.

Thinking about social media as a direct descendent of the telephone rather than the television creates pause for thought about how best to approach as a communications tool.

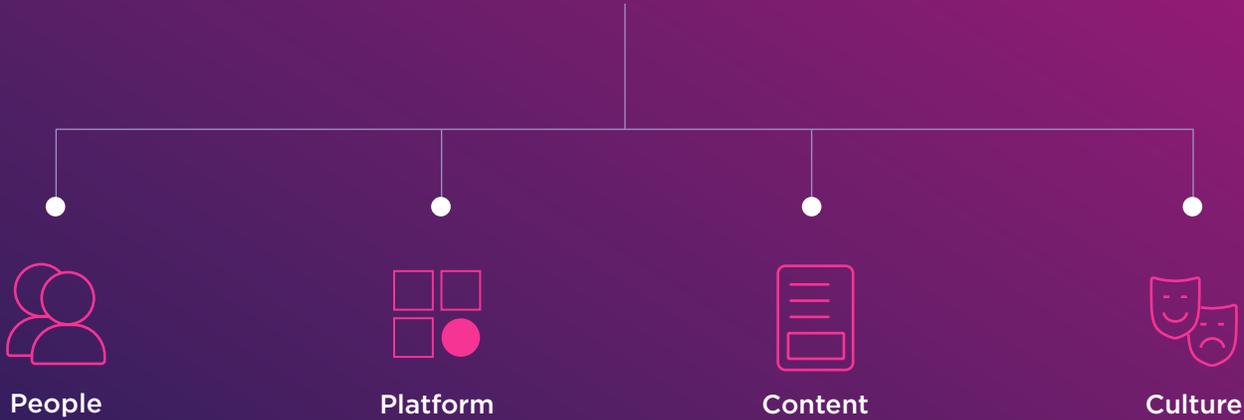
Those who are able to adapt to the speed of evolution in social platforms and technologies, as well as stay attuned to the shifting culture and conversation carried across them, will rise to the top.

TAKEAWAYS

1. LEVERAGE SOCIAL AGE INSIGHTS

Social data provides a truer sense of brand engagement and advocacy than has ever been possible. Yet the deep complexity of the space and ever-evolving forms of expression create constant measurement challenges.

Don't be afraid to think out of the box in order to find new benchmarks to evaluate success rather than simply trying to translate simpler-to-get-at metrics from other channels. Start with a social audit that explores the following four areas.



Take time to better understand the digital neighborhoods that matter to your brand. These include existing communities, brand advocates, detractors, relevant passion groups, and the tiers of influence within each. Go deeper and discover demographic and psychographic data that you can use to inform how, where, and when the brand can engage best.

Regularly audit the social platforms and technologies these different digital neighborhoods are using and discover where they're spending their time. Remember that usage patterns will vary by geography, life stage, and interest and will naturally evolve over time.

Tune into how your target customer both consumes and creates. This includes levelling up on the features and formats being used to facilitate social communications and taking time to understand how they are being used to express opinion and emotion.

Identify relevant macro and micro cultural trends the brand can align with meaningfully and authentically. These moments and movements hold the natural interest of your target customers and act as relationship bridges through establishing common connections.

TAKEAWAYS

2.THINK SOCIAL-FIRST

In the *Social Age*, strategy should start with social rather than use it as a bolt-on amplification channel or an afterthought. Are your communications and campaigns engineered for participation from the ground up? Or are you talking *at* rather than talking *with*?

TAKEAWAYS

3.BUILD A SOCIAL INFRA- STRUCTURE

Social is always-on. Success comes from having processes and systems that support the brand performing live on stage, not just in the studio.

Focus on the operational imperatives required to deliver at the speed of social. Implementation design includes deploying the right technology stack, workflows, governance, teams, and skills.

TAKEAWAYS

4.LIVE IN TOMORROW

Social is an ever-evolving space posing new questions for marketers at every twist and turn. Looking ahead, what will community management mean in the context of the metaverse? How will social media and commerce intersect in the next 18 months? How might Web3 change the way social platforms develop and redefine how we think about data and intellectual property?

Emerging social platforms and technologies will continuously change people's current behaviors, creating the opportunity for brands to find fresh ways to stay visible, distinctive, and memorable. How is your business prepared for change?

ABOUT 1000HEADS

1000heads is a Social Transformation™ company.

We combine expertise in data and analytics, strategy, technology, and creativity to help the world's best businesses build **Social Age** brands.

Spanning six global offices, our clients include Google, Cisco, Snapchat, UNIQLO, United Nations, and Amazon.

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