



The Power of Babble Clarity in a mass of communications

Ken Markham and Anthony White, partners in brand consultancy, Global Brand Strategies, have perfected their views on the media clutter that overloads our brains and how best avoid communication confusion

Remember the days of Radio and TV when you had no more than 2 stations to choose from. Life for business people was easy. Then came The Internet to increase our communication possibilities. But that was followed a plethora of other communication 'opportunities' and we now seem to be drowning in a mire of new technology that should be aiding not confusing our consumer contact strategy.

Ken Markman and Anthony White bring a fresh approach to what they see as communication babble and offer solutions to the new media world.

Cameron Crowe's screenplay opens up with a tracking shot revealing...

The blue marble as seen from space.

We hear Tom Cruise, as the calm voice of Jerry Maguire, talking just to us.

JERRY'S VOICE

Alright so this is the world and
there are five billion people on
it. When I was a kid there were
three. It's hard to keep up.

Wow! Even Jerry with the gift of gab, doing deals on his cell phone, has a hard time keeping up.

Imagine what it's like if you're not Tom Cruise?

Technology is partly to blame because it's so seductive while at the same time dismissive; offering us

endless platforms for expression and an abundance of choice for consumption. In the end it's doing all of us a disservice. The effects diffuse our ability to adjust, adapt or respond to our world in meaningful ways.

It's culture-numbing.

'The fact that some choice is good doesn't necessarily mean that more choice is better,' writes Barry Schwartz in his book *'The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less.'* Schwartz explains that 'As a culture, we are enamored by freedom, self-determination, and variety, and we are reluctant to give up any of our options. But clinging tenaciously to all the choices available to us contribute to bad decisions, to anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction.'

Technology as personal expression

If technology is alienating us from our social landscape, might the re-connecting links be words expressing it?

Searching for meaning, sifting through the rubble of intent versus impact is a full time job. Who has time for that?

Interestingly, as a matter of either self-preservation or self-interest, we appear to be evolving to another social and interactive touch-point: Moving from 'wanting experiences' as things to 'needing to express them' in words.

Words connect us to the tribe, validate our belonging and as importantly, become our signature; cues for acceptance, proving to others a kind of knowing. They say, 'Hey, I'm clued in.' (Whether we actually are or not doesn't really seem to matter).

Expression of every kind, including voice, email or text messages has become the most rapid-fire, intrusive and ubiquitous form of connectivity, community, cultural-currency and social etiquette. (Why else would blogs resonate with such meaningful bravado and self-importance?)

But there's way too much to know and never enough time to say it. How can we possibly keep up? It's simply paralyzing!

Dictionary meanings mean nothing

How do we reverse Schwartz's 'more is less' proposition? If the technology choices equal the number of words

used to explain them, could we adopt an abridged language that works as verbal shorthand? In this way, we wouldn't have to really know what we're saying we would just have to express it.

Given that in our age of self-expression it's more about the message and less about the meaning (or the media) anyway, what's really needed for those whose lives or careers are one long pitch meeting and a relentless series of high concepts, is an endless scroll of sound bites.

That said, what you need is:

A Guide on How to Sound like an Expert (a.k.a., A 'Baffle them with Babble Encyclopedia').

And from that guide, here are the 'Best-10 Babble Picks.' Use them in any order you see fit. Put them to good use the next time you take that meeting. And you too will instantly sound like the expert. Friends and co-workers alike will marvel at your command of complex ideas, capricious changes in technology and your mastery of the nuances and subtleties of the challenging consumer marketplace.

Babble Me This!

1. Media a la Carte

It's literally a virtual cornucopia of content; pulled (not pushed) from a plethora of media providers, via a

vast array of media platforms.

Usage: 'Well, of course the world is going Media a la Carte; the only real obstacle may be the expense'

2. Consumer-centric Media

It's the prevailing belief that the

consumer is at the center of the media universe; CPM now means 'consumer pulled media': where, when and how messages and brands are consumed.

Usage: 'Consumer communities control context (and content): It's NOT about who creates it, but about who has the control to ignore it'

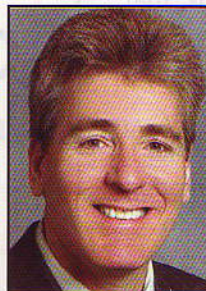
3. IP-delivered Media

Media provided by any number of Internet service providers (i.e., media essentially delivered via PC, not TV, Radio, Print, or bike messenger!).

Usage: 'If you really need to touch your consumer it will be through IP media...

4. Media Silos

Back in the day when ABC, NHK, ZDF and the BBC (just 'BBC,' no 1 or 2) were television, when there were only one or two major city papers per metropolitan area, and only a handful of cable networks that constituted cable TV!



Anthony White



Ken Markman

'As a culture, we are enamored of freedom, self-determination, and variety, and we are reluctant to give up any of our options. But clinging tenaciously to all the choices available to us contribute to bad decisions, to anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction.'



Our Opinion. By Markham & White

Usage: 'That's so media silo(ed) thinking—we're talking scattering this audience experience across all media simultaneously. Just think, that kid will be interacting with a hundred thousand of his closest alien friends on-line, while simultaneously watching the property on TV, while he and his space-command comrades change the direction of the action.'

5. The Long Tail

The phrase was coined by Chris Anderson (Wired magazine, October 2004) where he described the effects of the 'long tail' (whereby products that are in low demand or have low sales volume can collectively make up a market share that rivals or exceeds the relatively few bestsellers or blockbusters, if the distribution channel is large enough).

6. Blog

On a given web site, where a journal resides and diary-esque entries are made (creating a 'web-log') by a myriad of willing writers, commentators, reactors and posters (and some posers) for every and all imaginable topic. Whereas blogs are primarily textual, some are centered on photographs (photoblog), videos (vlog), or audio (podcasting).

Usage: 'We'll just get on the blog and lead the discussion to the product.'

Caution: Proceed with extreme care if you hear that one!

7. IPTV

Internet Protocol Television, a technology platform that delivers broadcast-quality video and new integrated TV services over

New Strategies, New Media

The Top 10

- 1 Media a la Carte
- 2 Consumer-centric Media
- 3 IP-delivered Media
- 4 Media Silos
- 5 The Long Tail
- 6 Blog
- 7 IPTV
- 8 Podcasting
- 9 Mobile Entertainment
- 10 Viewer Generated Content

broadband networks. This platform can include picture-in-picture (PIP), video on demand (VOD), and digital video recorder (DVR) services and functionality.

Usage: 'So I'm thinking, why lock the brand up in a linear service deal when IPTV is there for the having!'

(IPTV will soon become the moniker for Intellectual Property Television... or Brand driven programming. We're almost there (with 'Branded Content')!)

8. Podcasting

Formed by a smash-up of Pod ala 'iPod,' the portable media device, and broadcasting. Distributing multimedia, such as audio or video programs, over the Internet for playback on mobile devices and personal computers. Like 'radio,' podcast can be used to describe the method of delivery and/or the content delivered.

Usage: 'Every other week we'll be producing and podcasting a new twenty-two minute episode to be pulled RSS (Really Simple Syndication via the Internet) by our audience beginning Monday... and we don't

need a green light from a single studio suit!'

9. Mobile Entertainment

Anytime, anywhere, on-the-go entertainment available via cell phones, PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), iPods, and PSPs (Sony's PlayStation Portable). These devices (and others) are making it possible to never (in time perhaps impossible to ever) leave home without access to entertainment.

Usage: 'I'm not producing that trailer for the big screen; it's all about mobile entertainment!'

Note: You must add extended sigh for appropriate punctuation when in conversation with one or more senior marketing types.

(Mobile once meant a cellular phone device, but the meaning now returns to its rooted meaning: being on the move – with the power of truly putting your brand in the hand of the consumer!)

10. Viewer Generated Content

Entertainment content written, produced, and posted directly on the web for all to hear, see, consume, be motivated (or disgusted) by, by the very consumer/viewer for whom we once produced entertainment content and marketing messages to hear, see, consume, be motivated (or disgusted) by.

Usage: 'Why bother learning any of those words and phrases in Markman and White's article?; It'll all be viewer generated content before long anyway!'

('You lost me at 'Hello'.')

Yea, Tom you're right...it is hard to keep up. □