



heads *up*

the
group
of
authors

The Frame

The World is a Gallery

We kindly present

Better content

Our vision is a world full of shared knowledge and collaboration. A world in which information is freely available, accessible and understandable for everyone.

We want people to see the full picture without being forced to dive deeply. This is why we create knowledge that touches the mind as well as the eye – because only in combination do we grasp the whole.

The Group of Authors

knowledge workers with passion for enlightenment



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SCALABLE FRAME FUNCTIONS

Product communication is one of the most important tasks for economically sustainable company success. Therefore, a well thought-through distribution strategy must be holistic and contain optimised print publishing processes, too.



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MESSAGE IN A FRAME



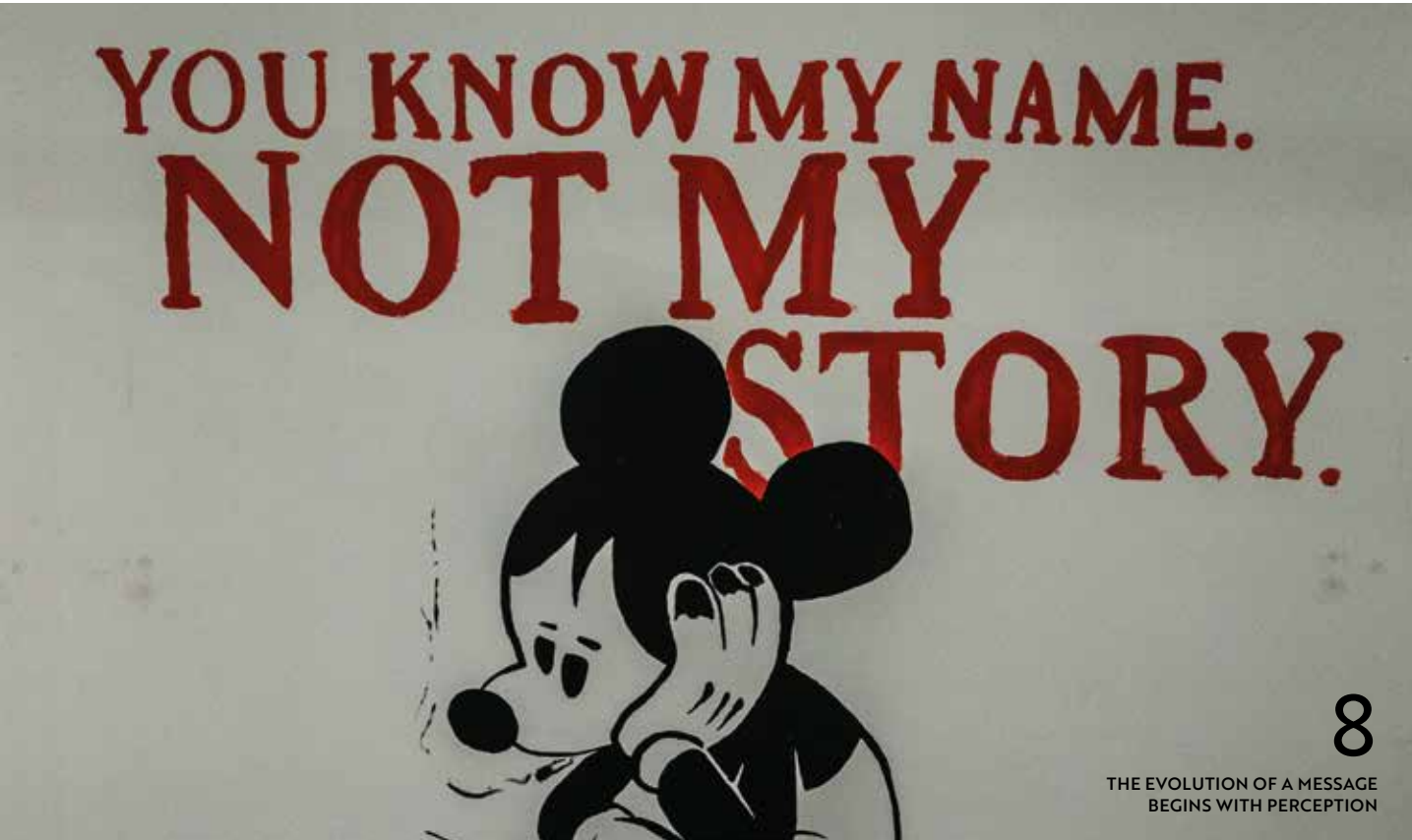
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ALEXANDER DRESSLER
Managing Director
of InBetween



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THE EVOLUTION OF A MESSAGE
BEGINS WITH PERCEPTION

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The value lies in the eye of the beholder

Thesis/Antithesis

Publishing systems transform raw product information into touching messages, wrapped in visual stories.

The Frame

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The World is a Gallery

Making yourself heard in a world that is becoming increasingly louder, more colourful and fragmented is one of the greatest challenges companies currently face. Add to this the fact that audience requirements continue to grow both in terms of the type of communication as well as the contents that are communicated. Transparency and sustainability are topics that can no longer be ignored. Authentically incorporating them into brand and product communication is no mean feat and requires tact as well as a cross-channel strategy.

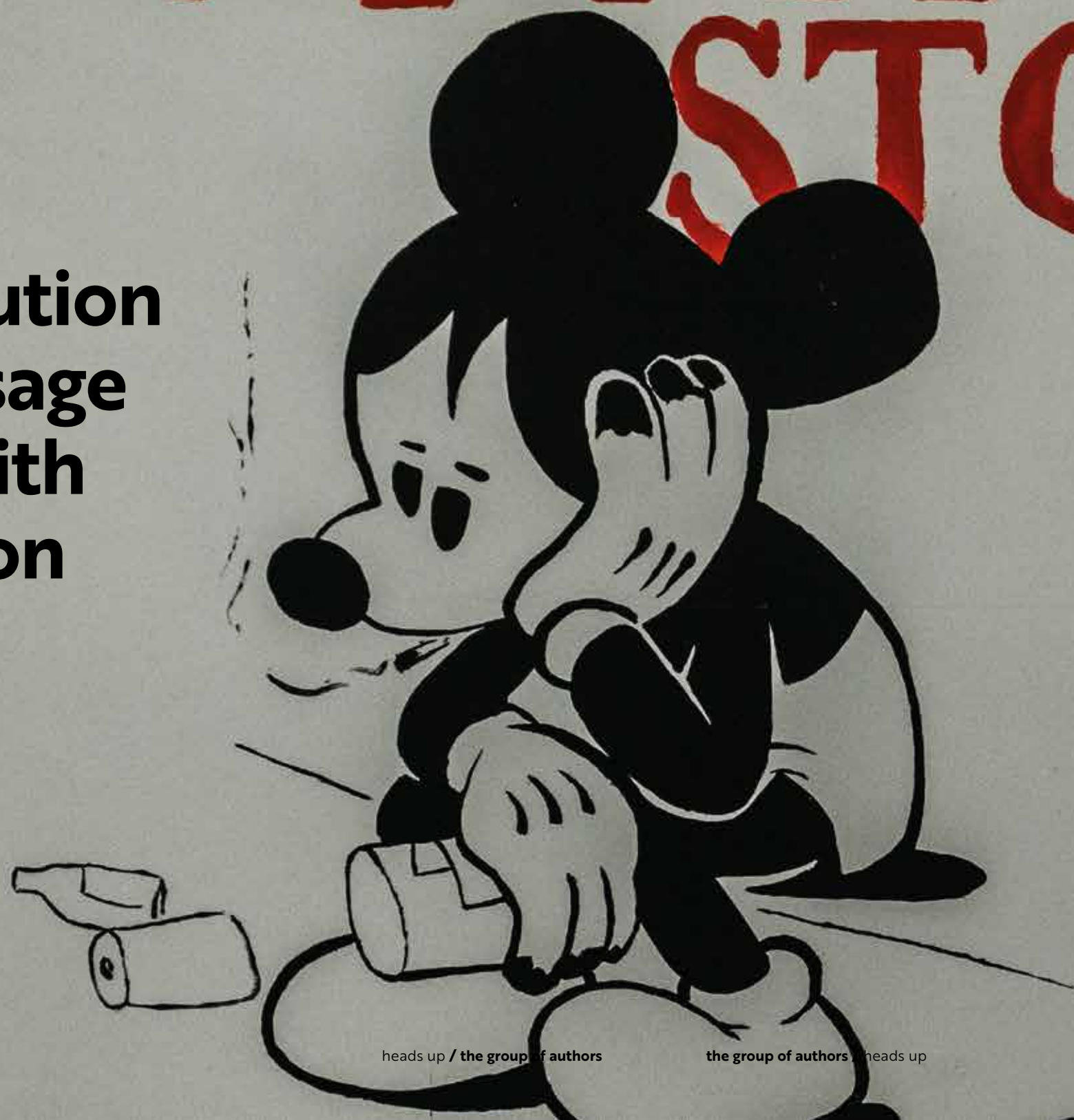
On the one hand, the implementation requires available, up-to-date and complete content elements such as product data, images and videos, which solutions such as Product Information and Digital Asset Management systems are responsible for. On the other hand, however, it also requires sophisticated information distribution comprising all channels and target groups relevant to the company while planning and documenting the content export. This can be taken on by a variety of solutions and tools that support marketing, ranging from content management systems for the website to tools such as Hootsuite that take care of planning social media activities.

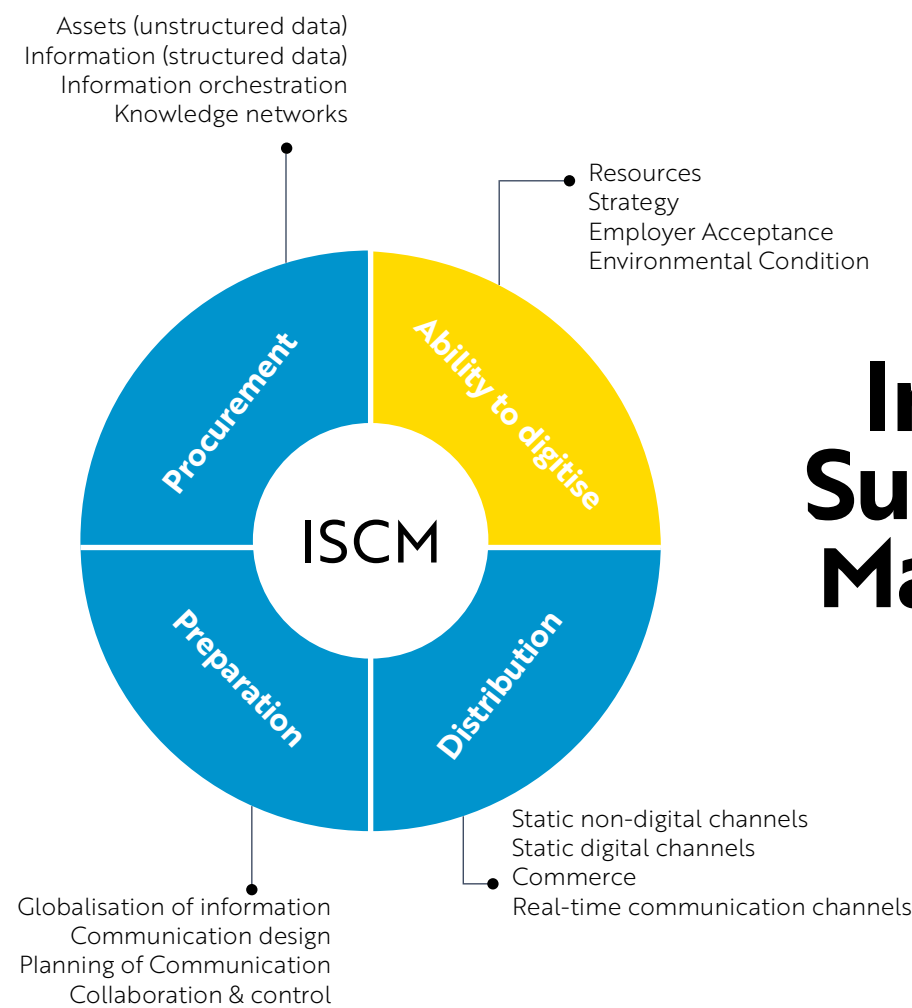
For many industries, publications such as data sheets, price lists as well as online and print catalogues continue to be key means of communication, particularly in the B2B environment, which is why these publishing processes must be an integral component of a well-thought-out distribution strategy. After all, their task is to turn granular data into intelligible messages and therefore the actual product communication.

The important thing to understand in doing so is that this is not just about the message. Modern publishing solutions go much further than this, as they develop easy-to-interpret contents and place them in a design frame for various target groups and communication media. This frame fulfils various purposes: it supports the contents of the message with visual elements and helps the audience intuitively understand the message. At the same time, it also attracts attention, which is of tremendous importance, especially in a fiercely contested market. Ultimately, this frame helps reinforce the company's brand identity.

YOU KNOW MY NAME.
NOT MY
STORY.

**The evolution
of a message
begins with
perception**





Information Supply Chain Management

Information Supply Chain Management describes the digital value chain from the procurement of data to preparation and distribution. Digitalisation projects can be derived from a company's ISCM.

As the digital mirror image of the classic supply chain in logistics, the information supply chain describes a chain of connected software solutions while comprising all relevant data on products and services. The information supply chain therefore represents the entire digital supply chain of this data, from its acquisition and collection to its preparation, processing and distribution. Information Supply Chain Management (ISCM) describes the strategic configuration of this digital supply chain and therefore the choice of the right systems, suppliers and partner firms that play an important role in the

implementation of the information supply chain, and therefore in the implementation of digitalisation projects.

Data acquisition involves assets such as documents, objects or media, as well as information that presents a structure through the attributes and values that can be assigned to it. The acquisition level also defines rules for this information, and developed systems even contain knowledge networks that describe the intelligent interaction of these rules, and therefore the company's IP.

Processing data involves making information available on a global scale, during which multilingualism, local rules and cultural factors play a part. Communication design is also embedded in this. This is where content templates are created which can be filled with information. The areas of collaboration and control are crucial to defining processes at the data processing stage, as this is where workflow management and communication are planned. Data distribution describes various types of channels, most of which are now digital and whose reaction times to customer contact range from very low to real time. The company-specific system land-

scape is located on the technology side of things, the gaps in which result in digitalisation projects, and therefore new system requirements. The ability to digitalise furthermore describes the company's crucial requirements to be able to successfully implement a digitalisation project. This includes the resources available as well as a lived digital strategy in addition to employees' acceptance of digital changes. Environmental conditions that cannot be influenced by the company itself are of course also a key aspect of the viability of digitalisation projects.

Organisational incorporation as a significant success factor

Companies have to be aware of the overall ISCM challenge. This also includes the task of securing the smooth interaction of the numerous individual systems. The ability to connect is accordingly an essential factor for success that needs to be guaranteed with the help of ISCM. Connecting the individual software markets to one functioning ISCM total system landscape calls for experience mixed with technical expertise during the introduction and connection of the required software solutions. It also involves numerous people spread throughout the company, who are expected to work together in an effective manner.

Alongside ensuring the quality, up-to-dateness, security, and data protection, the management of the Information Supply Chain also guarantees the consistent digital and central storage of data in suitable systems. Ensuring the smooth exchange of data between all systems involved and an imperatively high process quality are also among the main tasks of Information Supply Chain Management. As a result, accepted forms of cooperation and solutions for controlling respective processes are required. Major changes always go hand in hand with more comprehensive ISCM projects, which is why we speak of

digital transformation. The internal effort associated with the topics of digitalisation is often underestimated by companies. Awareness for long-term projects equipped with funds and resources in specialist departments is often insufficient. Digitalisation in the sense of ISCM has to be positioned at C-level due to its holistic view and financial and resource-devouring dimension. Correlative new positions such as Chief Digital Officer are only just being created. It is vital that this settlement takes place in a cross-departmental manner while being integrated and coordinated. The 2017 EDEN study (The Group of Analysts 09/2017) however has shown that this recommended procedure is only being carried out by approximately a quarter of all companies. There is significant demand for action for the remaining three quarters. Furthermore, the lack of connected coordination partially leads to considerable time expenditure for the companies. Which is why a permanent area of responsibility has to be introduced for the management of the Information Supply Chain in the company during the project introduction phase of ISCM technologies. A responsible team therefore has to be set up.

The value lies in the eye of the beholder

The Information Supply Chain therefore describes value creation through internal data processes. There is a whole series of information processes that are key to this within the communication context. Subsequent distribution channels and their requirements must be considered as early on as during the creation of the product information. Significant value only ensues when the data comes together to form a meaningful message that can be interpreted by a relevant audience. The meaning of the message itself may exist much earlier; however, it only attains its value the moment it is perceived and comprehended before ideally leading to desirable actions such as a decision to purchase.

The task of creating effective communication with product data is now more challenging than ever. More and more channels ranging from websites to online marketplaces, social media and printed products such as brochures and catalogues require consistent brand language. Growing complexity requires a sophisticated distribution strategy, which must comprise all channels with their specific requirements, each responsibility and a kind of editorial plan that puts the communication into a timeline.

The necessary product data must be complete, up to date and accurate in order to enable the neat implementation of such a distribution strategy. Marketing, customer service and sales staff must be

able to rely on the quality of the information at all times, which is ensured by data management systems such as Product Information Management systems. With their data model, they are able to offer product data in such a manner that it meets the quality requirements of the respective recipient. The requirements in terms of the form, depth and breadth of information often vary greatly, which makes the task of communicating even more complex.

A powerful database is therefore an absolute must-have – however, it is no longer an enabler of successful communication. As-is product data may fulfil specific information requirements, but it will not attract the attention of the target audience in its own right. A message must attain a certain degree of appeal in order to stand out from the competition. A nice design, effective imagery, a consistent visual frame – these are ultimately the communication elements that transfer the message into the audience's awareness.

The true art therefore lies in the final stretch into the target group's understanding and sense of need. This is precisely what publishing systems have specialised in, offering those in charge of communication the right tools to not only implement their design ideas but also automate them and therefore make the entire information distribution process more efficient.



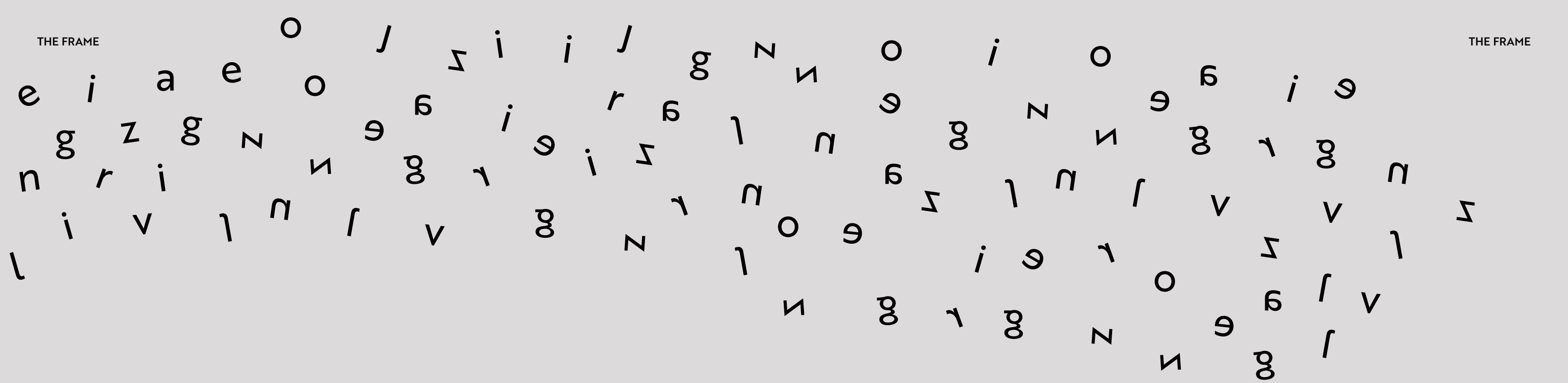
**Real truth evolves
from interpreting a
message.**

**The truth lies in
information only.**

*Publishing systems scale
beautifully designed
product communication.*

The Frame





Alphabet of data

Basic structure of communication

Data on its own does not have any organisation system. To give it a structure, there are different data management systems such as PIM, ERP or CRM, depending on the respective domain. A PIM system, for example, stores information about the products of a company using a certain structure.

Hence, PIM systems tend to produce a vast amount of structured letters out of cryptic characters. In their own right, these characters do not have any meaning – only when reasonably combined do they carry an intent and a purpose.

PIM systems create structured data out of chaos. Based on the stock of letters, an alphabet is evolving – however, there is still no way to derive meaning from it at this point in time.

r	v	o	e	a	l	n	p	u	t	r	s	x	f
r	v	o	e	a	l	n	p	u	t	r	s	x	f
r	v	o	e	a	l	n	p	u	t	r	s	x	f
r	v	o	e	a	l	n	p	u	t	r	s	x	f

How data becomes communication

Language is the communication of mankind and publishing systems create the correlating alphabet to enable companies use language for their communication that inspires potential customers.

Types of communication

Depending on the situation and target group, different communication carriers are used. This includes catalogues, price lists and websites, but print PDFs, brochures, labels and sales presentations are also important communication carriers of many enterprises.

A common language

To successfully transform characters into meaningful communication, essential output formats need to be supported – HTML 5 for websites, InDesign for catalogues and print PDFs. The sources of the characters can be numerous, too, and differ in terms of their data models. For communication purposes, it should not matter where the product data is stored – be that in PIM, CRM or ERP systems. Hence, publishing systems should integrate with all of them.

For internationally operating companies, a multilingual use of product data is also an important topic. In this respect, flexibility and speed are essential for an efficient go-to-market.

Message in a frame

Publishing systems allow for phrasing messages on the basis of structured data – no matter which source the data comes from or in which channels or formats it is supposed to be published. While it is important that messages can be interpreted and understood, it is just as essential that they are presented in a way that makes people notice them in the first place. For this, messages get individual frames that set the stage and are tailored to the customer.

beautiful

*A message evolves only when **words** are formed out of individual characters of the alphabet. Only then are meaningful connections made that can be interpreted and understood.*



***Publishing systems** provide the perfect frame for your product communication – because in the end, decisions are made in the eye of the beholder.*

Scalable Frame Functions

Not all companies have the same requirements for their framed messages, which is why the first step should always be to take a precise look at existing communication processes. Then there's also the consideration of to what extent the corporate strategy will influence the channels and means of communication. The aim may be to explore new markets, publish the printed catalogue in three additional languages or adopt an entirely new product range. These aspects allow the company's publishing system requirements to be determined. Solutions that are expandable depending on the company's development and communication strategy are ideal and ensure optimum support in the long term.

Effortless Publishing

The main advantages of publishing systems can already be achieved with basic functions. By automatically exporting data in predefined layouts, marketing staff can save a significant amount of time and move publication planning into a quiet period of the distribution cycle ahead of time. Furthermore, publications that have previously been created can be updated quickly, easily and reliably, such as data sheets, catalogues, price lists, brochures, tablet publications, sales presentations and business reports as well as labels and signs. Companies that offer their products in various countries can additionally tailor their catalogues and product data sheets to specific markets by adapting languages, currencies or entire product ranges accordingly.



As diverse as the output formats are, the source systems from which the necessary data is pulled can be just as different. ERP or databases – during the publishing process, relevant metadata is added to product information and images which are exported according to specialist formatting rules. If a product information system serves as a data source, then the right data structures are also stored and can be used for export purposes.

There are also many possible output formats. Web or print PDFs, interactive or printed catalogues, even HTML 5 – publishing systems should cover all relevant formats for maximum flexibility, including MS Office products such as Excel, Word and PowerPoint. Many companies work with these programs on a daily basis, creating their business reports in Word and corporate presentations in PowerPoint. Publishing systems can thereby support not only marketing departments but all departments across companies while automating internal processes, thereby making them more efficient. The time saved in doing so can then be spent on more important creative or strategic tasks.

Frame Editing

Companies with high visual requirements are not solely concerned with the automated export of product data, as the focus is often more on the frame itself. In this case, adaptations to the layout and design should be just as flexible. Integrating the publishing system into InDesign creates excellent opportunities to adjust the layout and, if in doubt, carry out last-minute changes until the final version.

Creative managers thereby have full control over product communication at all times, allowing them to rely on the data contained in the document to be up to date. The smart combination of product data, layout elements and editorial content opens up endless opportunities to create and redesign advertising again and again with maximum efficiency.

A whole series of different departments as well as external users such as agencies and freelancers are often involved in content planning and creation

processes. A transparent overview of all publications and the option to work on one and the same document across departments and companies is therefore one of the core requirements of all content creation tools. Publishing systems make no exception, as this too requires all those involved to be able to comment and make changes in accordance with their roles and permissions. At the same time, there must also be comprehensive monitoring that keeps a reliable eye on every process, task, workflow and responsibility. This allows companies to efficiently shape their publication processes while keeping a constant overview of the status of various advertising, catalogues and other information carriers.





Frame Intelligence

Things get especially interesting when the frame is no longer merely used as a target channel, instead allowing a bidirectional data flow. In scenarios such as this, product texts can be directly adapted in In-Design, for instance. Amended information is automatically relayed to the product information system where it is immediately available.

We have already learned that the frame is essentially the thing that transports a message into the audience's awareness. Creative workers are familiar with the challenge of reconciling the message itself together with the design. The core message, information or wording often requires adapting to the frame to make the ensuing message harmonious. Changes may occur during this iterative process that can affect the data stored in the product information system. Editing product data within the frame itself may be useful to allow the seamless synchronisation of all central data.

The publishing system can thereby become a key tool for marketing, sales and product management areas. No matter at what end of the information chain the updates occur – from that moment onwards, they apply globally. Everyone at the company is therefore accessing the same version and can rely fully on the information.

Summary

Creating messages that work – this is the main task that every company faces. Depending on the competition and target group, this task can grow to become a difficult challenge requiring multiple iterative cycles to reach the desired effects. The objective of every communication, whether it refers to the company, certain topics, a certain product or services, must be to captivate the audience. Advertising material must be able to attract attention. The eye of the beholder must be occupied long enough to be able to notice, interpret and comprehend the contained message, and therefore the purpose of the communication.

It's tremendously difficult to get the message and frame working in harmony while fulfilling this objective, particularly in larger companies that might even offer their product range in different countries, languages and currencies. Data is ideally stored in a central product information system while creative teams are tasked with developing great layouts for various means of communication. But often these teams are too busy populating their layouts with said product data or checking whether it is up to date to give the completed documents the necessary finish.

Publishing systems take on the automated export of centrally maintained data in layouts designed for communication, and they help those responsible for marketing to increase the efficiency they need to develop effective frames. The time saved in doing so can be spent on creatively optimising layouts, for instance by integrating InDesign into the automated publishing process. This gives members of staff the flexible opportunity to make short-term changes or try out new design forms. Another option includes bidirectional frame intelligence that allows changes to the central product data to be made directly in the layout system and relays these into the product information system.

The topics in the context of digitalisation are changing **dynamically**.

Terms that accurately described the nature of a concept twenty years ago are today diluted at best.

The danger of using diluted terms lies in the potential for inaccuracy, which leaves enormous scope for misinterpretation. This in turn makes a deeper **common understanding** practically impossible.

For discussions about current topics, it is therefore necessary to find contemporary terms that **get to the heart of the matter**.

This is why The Group of Authors introduces the LookUps Library – a continuously growing directory of important terms that shape current discussions about different digital topics.

LookUps LIBRARY

The LookUps Library with all actual terms from this white paper and all other knowledge documents including explanations are available for free at www.tgoa.com.

The LookUps that are used in this white paper are:

- ❶ ISCM, INFORMATION SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT
- ❷ THE FRAME
- ❸ FRAME INTELLIGENCE

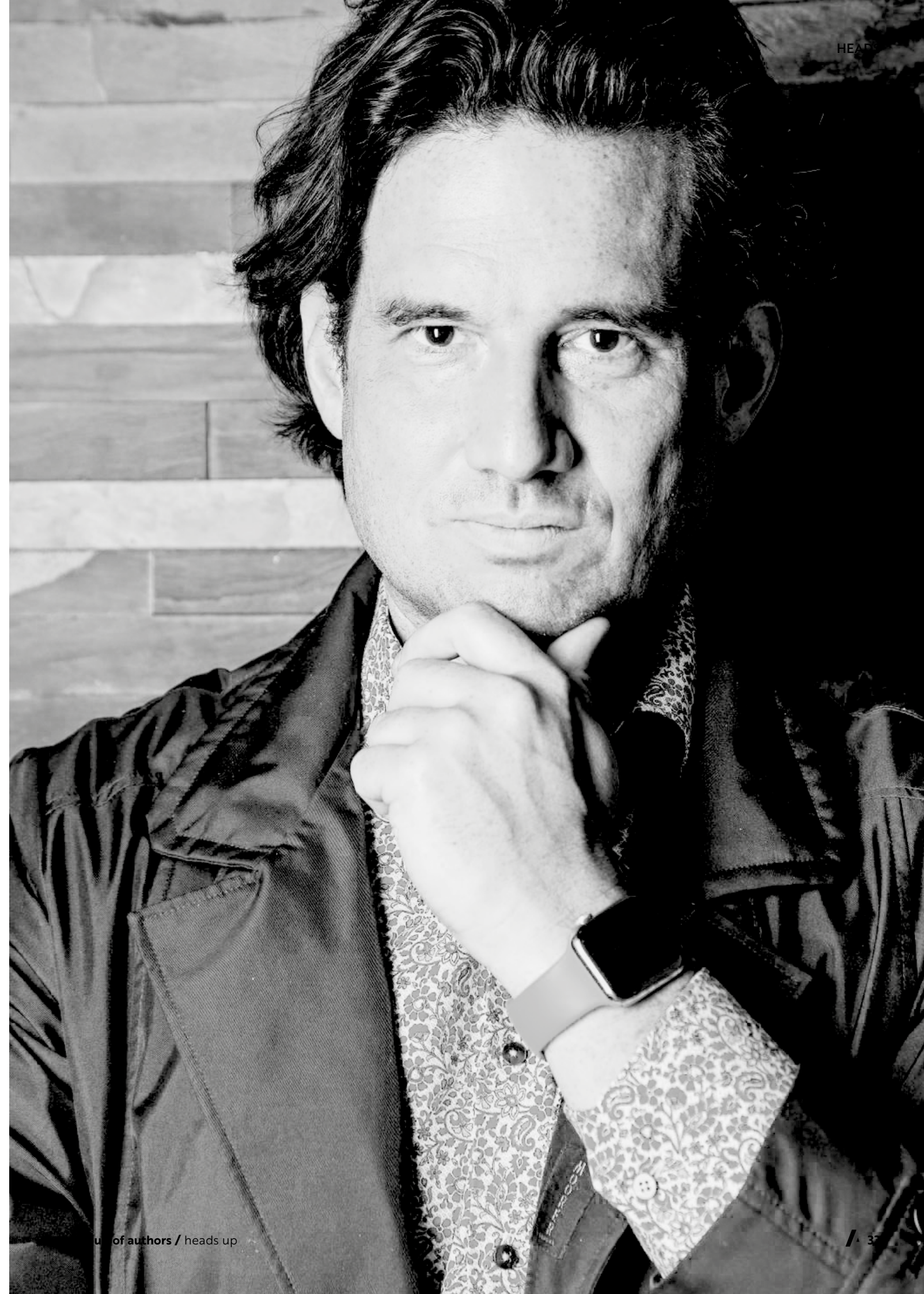
"The Intelligence of Beauty"

What companies need these days is an infrastructure that reliably moves their data from one end of the Information Supply Chain to the other. It all hinges on the final mile, as this is where it shows whether the products are even perceived in the market at all and whether they are understood by the target group. Publishing systems offer an excellent opportunity to transform product information into visually appealing brand messages, thereby placing it in the audience's awareness.

Alexander Dressler is Managing Director at InBetween Deutschland GmbH and InBetween Software Development Pvt. Ltd. in Goa, India. With over 15 years of experience in Product Information Management and Dynamic Publishing, he is now a recognised expert in the market.

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“Room for creativity”

Creative work requires one thing above all: Time – something that marketing teams don’t have all that much of, particularly when a publication deadline is fast approaching. Each process that can be automated therefore not only increases efficiency, it also makes room for design optimisations and new ideas. The entire corporate communications department ultimately benefits from this, and this will also soon be reflected in employee satisfaction – after all, who enjoys looking after correct product data listings?

Carmela Melone is the founder and CEO of The Group of Authors and the co-founder of The Group of Analysts. She has been working as an analyst in various technological areas for over seven years, during which she has authored multiple studies, white papers and specialist contributions on various aspects of digitalisation.

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“Message in a bottle”

The human brain reacts to visual stimuli, harmonious colours and shapes, strong imagery and beauty. The textual implementation of a message follows this initial vanguard and is therefore only perceived once the visual design has managed to capture the attention of the beholder. It also helps the audience to decipher, interpret and comprehend the message more quickly. The frame of the message therefore plays an absolutely essential role in corporate communications, and those who understand this have already made great gains!

Temel Kahyaoglu works in various consultancy positions and has led The Group of Analysts as its founder and CEO since 2010. He invented the term ‘Information Supply Chain Management’ in 2007 and is the intellectual father of the Market Performance Wheels – the most highly respected analyst tool in the DACH region next to Gartner’s Magic Quadrant and the Forrester Wave. He founded four analyst companies with his private equity firm The Grand Orchestra Audience with the aim of increasing transparency in the software market.

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