



THIS MUCH IS TRUE

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Mark: As humankind evolved, a period of magical thinking gave way to one of science. So what era are we in now? Well, I think you could argue we're in one of questions, because the ability to ask questions and get rapid answers is now so normal, it's an expectation.

For brands, the range of customer questions in the number of channels they ask them through is growing constantly. How to answer them - that's a major and growing design challenge. And it's also a critical driver for trust. And it's a future source of competitive edge as well.

So think about it. It's 24 years since Google was founded. How many questions were we asking 25 years ago compared to now. I think far fewer because one of the most profound effects that Google has had has been the way that it's evolved our relationship with questions. The fact that it's so easy and immediate to get answers means we're asking more questions. And now, the heart of questions and answers, you have a transaction of trust. But we know there's a crisis in trust because as we seek information we're increasingly doubting, the answers we find.

Unfortunately, over the last 18 months, trust has been so tested by COVID and the things going around about that. It's created information bankruptcy. The politicization of everything, incidence of inflammatory language, lack of integrity, and misinformation, again, particularly around COVID are accelerating a decline in trust. And you can see this play out daily in the media surrounding the pandemic.

Debates around the safety of vaccines were stoked by people's social media posts about their own weird side effects, which turned out to be kind of mistaken. Some of which were vanishingly rare will just misattributed to the vaccines. Those incidences further this breakdown of trust and information systems. And there are undermining people's trust in brands and the companies behind them. According to Edelman's Trust Barometer just a third of people say they trust the brands they buy from.

So what's happening at a deep level when we're making a brand choice? We're filtering information. That information gives us confidence and then trust. And what's interesting is today we're looking for many new types of information that we weren't before. And rapidly rising ethical concerns and making the process more complex because people want to feel good about what they're purchasing, but the good is against new dimensions like carbon zero driven sustainability, ethics, fair trade. All of this represents a new bundle of promises. My favorite definition of brand is that it's a bundle of promises. It represents a new bundle of promises, some brands.

Now customers expect answers at all points of interaction with the product or service they want to buy. And especially at the point of purchase or consideration. Delivering on customer demands for information is a primary way to show transparency and that builds credibility. So information layers, how they're designed and communicated especially, are increasingly a critical and complex place for a brand owner to build trust.

I've got Nick de La Mare, who leads Fjord North America, joining me right now to talk about what's next. Nick, can you break this down for me from a design perspective?

Nick: Absolutely, absolutely I'm happy to. I tend to think of things in terms of space and time. And then this is similar. There are two types of design limitations that we're talking about. It's limited space for the information layers to inhabit. Um, people have limited attention spans, they're just busy.



So when we think about these layers, there are a couple of ways that we can articulate them. They need to be simple and easy to use. They need to be personalized, so they need to serve the right person at the right time. They need to be transparent of course, and they need to be contextual. Context is king, right? So adapting each layer shape and the amount of information displayed according to the place, the interface, people's ever-changing modes is increasingly important.

Mark: Okay, So I get all of that. What does this do for information design, especially?

Nick: Well, that's a good question. I mean, it pushes things dramatically farther forwards. Content design continues to be incredibly important. A brand's macro purpose needs to be a part of every crumb of content they put out, as what will be needed as consistent and values-based narratives at every level of that of that stack.

Conversation we know is a natural part of the human experience. That's not going to change. Customers don't want a conversation with just anyone, but they'll happily talk to somebody who really knows their stuff and what's best for them in their life situation. As a result, conversational AI needs to evolve both in ambition and sophistication to offer customers the rich in-depth information that they're going to be seeking.

Hybrid interfaces—we've this for a long time— will lead to augment physical objects or the digital layer of information delivered as a sensory experience through smart devices and customized according to customer mode. Conversational AI, as a result, will need to be built into more apps and websites is a voiced layer that will enable the user to get what we consider real-time support and engaging, complimentary multi-modal experiences that deliver layers upon layers of information in a gradual way that guards against overwhelming the person in that moment.

This is also, of course, a loyalty opportunity. Brands can strengthen their relationships by rewarding customers for making more ecologically rewarded responsible purchases, for example. Lastly, proof here is critical. Third party information is key. It allows people to triangulate on that notion of trust, which means really that we need to tighten the linkage between supply chains and the information about them. Granular design decisions will now have even more strategic implications. And as a result, I think the remit of design is where it will become ever more complex and arguably even more exciting.

Mark: Thank you for that. That's great. I've just seen something more clearly because of what you said, Nick, which is that we talked at the top about this being the age of questions. I think as we, weave artificial intelligence into this even more if you think about what AI is, it's like a super enhanced question/answering machine, and that's where a lot of its power comes from. So I really appreciate this. I think what you're saying is the type of information layer required will depend on every customer and type of item, correct?

Nick: Absolutely. Absolutely. It's all contextual.

Mark: And therefore, the better companies become at designing information layers, the more trust they're going to gain. That's not an abstract observation. This directly affects our client's ability to be successful at commerce.

Nick: Absolutely. And to scale for sure.

Mark: Thank you, Nick.

Nick: Thanks Mark.

Mark: Great stuff.

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