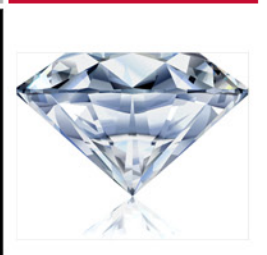
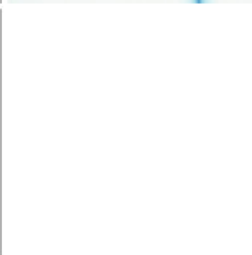
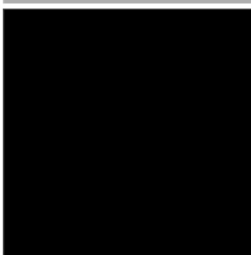
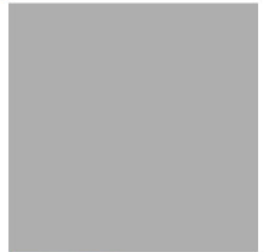
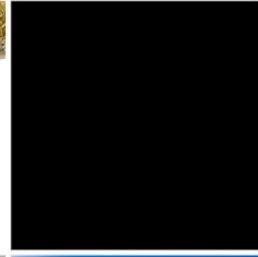


What's in store for 2012?

Creating and managing brand value™

Interbrand



What's in store for 2012?

Airlines

Poised to build deeper relationships with consumers via mobile technology and social networks

By Stuart Green

High oil prices (again), natural disasters in Japan, political unrest in the Middle East and North Africa, price sensitivity, and low aircraft utilization in the U.S. and Europe. Against a backdrop of an estimated 78% decline in 2011 profits versus those in 2010, there appears to be a few bright spots for the airlines industry in 2012.

The Asia Pacific carriers are expected to be the most profitable, even though profits will have declined from a year ago. The region continues to experience a boom in aviation due to rapid economic expansion in China and India. It is estimated that, within 20 years, one-third of all air traffic will be from Asia Pacific. This sharp increase will stem from the sheer size of the emerging middle classes in this region. India, for example, experienced an increase from 11.7 million in 2003 to 51.6 million air passengers in 2010. In general, growth and development is taking place on all fronts across Asia, from legacy carriers to low cost carriers, and there is even media buzz about the emergence of "pure premium" carriers.

In the Middle East, Dubai has aggressive plans to host the largest airport in the world. Airlines in the United Arab Emirates have recently become the best clients for aerospace manufacturers – recently placing an \$18 billion order for Boeing 777 aircrafts to expand its fleet.

Latin America is the only region to have generated a third consecutive year of profitability. The boost in traffic can be

attributed to innovative business models, good growth and trade links within Latin America, the U.S. and Asia Pacific.

In the U.S., the airline industry is down 41% from last year as shares of 15 major airlines dropped by almost 10%. American Airlines was the worst hit, with shares plummeting in reaction to its recent filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Factors contributing to the distressed industry within this region include a slowing economy, high fuel and ticketing prices, old and less fuel-efficient aircraft, as well as low demand for travel to and from the lucrative Japanese market.

The sovereign debt crisis, increased taxes on passengers, and a price-sensitive market made for a challenging 2011 for the European airline industry. It is expected that profits will be just \$500 million, down from \$1.9 billion in 2010, with most of the year's profit coming from more resilient long-haul markets.

Continuing trends

Rising fuel prices remain one of the major challenges facing the industry. Globally, airlines are struggling to cope, and are generally unable to pass these costs onto the consumer, especially in price-sensitive markets. Fuel now accounts for approximately 30% of an airline's cost base. On a more positive note, this trend is helping to impel the airline manufacturers to create more fuel-efficient aircrafts.

Demanding customers have more and more choice thanks to deregulation, improved technologies, and the emergence of new business models. Due to growth in emerging markets, global air traffic will continue to increase over the next few decades, with Airbus predicting a doubling of passengers over the next 20 years alone. This translates

into more choice for customers, and more brands from which to choose.

Going green will remain an important initiative as airlines face stricter emission and noise regulations – and as governments around the world become more concerned with the implications of air travel to the global ecosystem. Australia was one of the first countries to implement a carbon emissions tax, and the EU plans to follow suit with a similar program in 2012.

Digital platforms will become the norm as airlines across the globe use mobile applications and social media to advertise, engage consumers, build customer databases, and sell travel deals/fares. Increasingly, IT budgets will be spent on mobile solutions as airlines seek to take advantage of convergences between mobile technology and social networks to foster deeper and more responsive interaction with customers.

Automotive

Slower growth, but renewed vigor and innovative technologies

By Michel Gabriel

Growth, stagnation, or stabilization—how will the auto industry evolve in 2012? The unabated global demand for cars speaks in favor of stabilization. In 2011, 65.4 million vehicles were sold worldwide, and that number could grow to 68 million next year, a gain of 4%. But this projection carries a major caveat: financial markets must stabilize. Even in late 2011, the outlook for the European markets was not exactly promising, as the debt crisis continued to erode consumer confidence. Will this mean

that stagnation is a more likely scenario for 2012?

First, the good news: The auto industry is approaching the new year with perceptibly fresh vigor. Major German and American automakers, as well as the Korean Hyundai Group, were the big winners in 2011 car sales, clearly consolidating their world market positions with double-digit gains. Conversely, Japanese makers posted average sales losses of 11 %.

High and low performers

Looking at profits, automakers around the world performed well with an average EBIT margin of 5.1%. German companies were the most profitable, with a record average return of 9.9%. BMW tops that list with 13.2%. The only other automaker on par was Hyundai, with an EBIT margin of 9.5%. Lagging far behind, American companies averaged 6.1%, and Japanese attained an average of 2.8%.

Slower growth in 2012

The global automotive economy is expected to cloud over in the year ahead. Against the backdrop of the still smoldering government debt crises, the European auto market is expected to shrink by about 2% in 2012. Many projections suggest low single-digit growth rates for the U.S. (+2%) and China (+4%), though China is viewed as a growth engine and future center of gravity of the entire industry. Slight demand increases are also forecast for Russia, India, and Brazil. A distinctive rebound of +23% is anticipated in the Japanese market, which suffered a great deal in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami catastrophe in March 2011.

Competitive pressure on the rise

Market trends will favor automakers such as General Motors, Volkswagen, and Hyundai, all of which already occupy strong positions in core auto markets (i.e. the BRIC

countries and the U.S.). The large Japanese automakers, headed up mainly by Toyota, will spare no effort to regain lost market share. In light of meager global demand growth, these factors will amplify competitive pressures and decrease profitability within the industry. In particular, predatory pricing will escalate, imposing considerable cost and margin pressure on automakers that dominate the European market (Renault, PSA, Opel).

Technology and mobility trends

Emerging technology trends, such as lightweight construction and innovative alloys, will continue to unfold in 2012 – and they will bring about reduced fuel consumption and other operational advantages. Players such as BMW and Audi have been advancing these angles for several years. Automakers will likely pursue raw material sourcing and prefabrication techniques because of the global shortage of know-how and production capacities. Strategic supplier relationships, therefore, will present a distinctly important advantage.

The deployment of in-car assistant systems will continue to enhance the value of premium and mid-range models. With the adoption of automatic parking assistance, blind-spot avoidance, land-departure warnings, and the like, passenger cars will move ever closer to partially autonomous driving.

Innovative mobility concepts are also advancing, with offerings such as the “Car2Go” by Daimler, the “Mu” by Peugeot, and the “Quicar” by Volkswagen. The impetus behind these concepts is the change in mobility needs of young urban consumers. In the urban hubs of saturated markets, car ownership is no longer a priority; the emphasis has shifted to highly efficient mobility. In many car-congested metropolitan areas, this is an approach that

can meaningfully refine the concept of mobility, as evidenced by Zipcar.

Given the trends outlined above, brand strength and performance will become all the more important as automotive consumers become increasingly influenced by digital media. This presents a host of new opportunities for automobile brands. They will be called upon to systematically align their brand touchpoints with the specific brand experience and product benefits. Undoubtedly, 2012 will be a call to action for the entire automotive industry.

Business Services

The year of the business service brand

By Josh Feldmeth

Markets are quickly transforming and organizations of all kinds must change to keep pace. Banks are learning new regulation. Tech players are racing to deliver software in the cloud. CPG companies are reengineering consumer paths to purchase in the post-digital age. Manufacturers wrestle with soaring material costs; airlines labor and oil hedging. Energy companies must learn to market themselves better. Creative companies can't find enough talent. And just about everyone has an IT issue to sort out. And who is waiting, ready to help? Business services providers.

The business of business service will matter more in 2012 than ever before. But there is real concern that business services brands, long underappreciated by their owners, may not be up to the task. Here's what to expect in 2012.

“Many of the big players made significant deals over the past few years, and now is the time to prove that they made the right calls.”

- Josh Feldmeth on the Business Services sector

Making good on the strategic rationale of the deal

Many of the big players made significant deals over the past few years, and now is the time to prove that they made the right calls. Brands like Cisco, Xerox, Towers Watson, Aon, and others will work hard in 2012 to ensure that delivery lives up to the original promise of the new business model. Most have good strategies and brand assets in place. The winners will be those that leverage employee behavior to create a new customer experience.

Outsource anything

The forces reshaping global markets—resource scarcity, risk, rising regulation, debt crisis, etc.—demand that companies develop radically new capabilities. Energy companies must become marketers, and marketers must become more like actuaries. Actuaries need the soft skills of bank relationship managers. The bankers need to start acting like retailers, and the retailers need to act a lot more like Amazon.

Or perhaps they don't. Expect a new wave of outsourcing in 2012 as companies, struggling to define and perfect their evolving core capabilities, look to business services brands to shoulder more of the load. IT and BPO is already there. HR, Finance, Marketing, and Legal will increasingly follow suit. It's good news for the business services community, especially for those that can nimbly adjust their offers and value propositions to match.

Capability is the new capability

What happens when you mix aging populations in the industrial West and Japan, expanded output in Asia and Brazil, and the industrial transformation that is the digital revolution?

In 2012, we will witness professional services firms extending their offering to include capability delivery—teaching the client to fish rather than hauling it in for them. Pure plays, like Brand Learning, the UK company that delivers marketing capability, and commercially savvy in-company executive education programs from the likes of IMD, Duke Corporate Education, and INSEAD will intensify the competitive field.

IP Advantage

Pop quiz: Can you name the big four global accounting firms? Bonus points: Name the unique selling proposition of each? This particular stumper gets to the bane of the services existence—differentiation. We know how they got there: years of brand neglect, strong partner fiefdoms, and the fallacy of the low role of brand in B2B business. There are exceptions—Accenture's sustained marketing investment and McKinsey's rigorous culture cultivation have both produced distinctive brands—but it's a common problem that plagues more than just the big four.

Many business services firms will not grow their marketing budgets in 2012, but will combat their differentiation problem through a more affordable and comfortable brand asset instead: intellectual property. Good IP is a smart solution. It is, by definition, differentiated and marginally cost-free. Expect to see more selective, high-end client conferences and integrated digital distribution.

The rise of brand voice

Digital has fundamentally changed the way brands are exchanged. That's not news. What will be news is the level of investment business services will make in brand voice in 2012. Word-of-mouth and colleague recommendation has always been the key driver in the space, which the social marketing paradigm has only accentuated. Brand voice will eclipse visual design as the key element through which services brands are experienced. Winners in 2012 will be those that define their brand voice and put the training and standards in place to ensure their armies of consultants, accountants, and advisors use it.

Consumer Packaged Goods

Redefining the value proposition for CPG brands

By Dyfed "Fred" Richards & Ted Monnin

The value proposition for consumer packaged goods (CPG) brands has shifted, and both brands and retailers must take note. Brand value is being squeezed from all sides: SKU proliferation is cannibalizing market share;

online retailers are dramatically expanding the consideration set; and private label products are competing for every penny that apprehensive consumers are willing to part with in today's sputtering economy. The race to the bottom has begun, with mid-tier and even upper-tier CPG brands vying for space on the lower shelves in an effort to connect with savvy, cost-conscious consumers. The traditional "good, better, best" brand model may be doomed, as increasingly informed consumers seek a "best, best, best" model. Shoppers strive to balance features and benefits against transparent pricing, enabling them to feel that their brand purchases are value-based choices instead of compromises.

A revolutionized consumer experience

Bolstered by shoppers' unfettered online access to products, information, and social networks, consumerism is redefining the value proposition for CPG brands. Concurrently, inflationary pressures are eroding the power of large retailers to limit brand offerings and force pricing controls. What's more, lifestyle changes and technology advances are transforming the entire consumer shopping experience. The days of meandering up and down the grocery aisles for weekly commodity items will likely become a thing of the past. Also, the consideration set has changed. While traditional brick-and-mortar stores—hobbled by square footage restrictions—typically offer a narrow selection of brands in any given category, online retailers can sell a virtually limitless array. Granted, the large chains are not going anywhere soon; however, a global shift is taking place in the mindset of consumers, complete with a growing intolerance for the "same old, same old."

Today's consumers question brand actions and value

The worldwide economic downturn, exacerbated by governmental ineffectiveness and corporate misdeeds, has shaken consumer trust in large institutions, including those companies that manufacture and sell national brands. People from all walks of life, cultures, and backgrounds are asking questions—real and valid questions—about the companies,

stores, and brands they patronize: "How are my favorite brands conducting themselves in the marketplace? Where are they sourcing raw materials? How socially and environmentally responsible are they?" Brand behavior will be held accountable, and consumers will vote with their wallets.

In addition, brand value and selection are facing scrutiny like never before. Consumers are more likely to choose, and subsequently remain loyal to, brands whose packaging provides both clarity and substance at shelf. There will be no more battling claims messages, overstated facts and figures, marketing jargon, or hollow slogans. At the end of the day, the true value of a brand has to win out on-pack, in the store, and in consumers' lives.

A new spin on brand value

CPG could learn a lesson from the automotive industry where some atypical brand names are redefining the idea of "value." Ford is capturing market share with the value-based Fiesta and Focus models – both of which offer quality construction and high-tech features typically reserved for higher-ticket models. Relatively new brands Hyundai and Kia are attracting consumers with well-designed, smartly priced products that prove inexpensive cars can be both practical and fun.

The game has changed. Today's consumers want brands that not only understand and meet their needs, but also validate their purchase decisions. CPG brands will have to rethink their value propositions if they hope

to stay relevant in this consumer-centric marketplace. Could it be an ideal time to launch a new era in CPG branding?

Digital Helping consumers make everyday choices in the face of big data

By Robin Rusch

"It's not the customer's job to know what he wants." So said Steve Jobs. Yet, the last decade has demanded exactly this from the consumer. Content and product overload burden the consumer, paralyze the act of decision-making, and devalue the product. Delivery options based on data mining through consumer behavior patterns serve to narrow, rather than broaden, the consumer's exposure.

As consumers, we have always benefitted from assistance when making decisions. Whether from a brand owner, a product dealer, or a content editor—someone out there curates a selection of options, and depending on service level, is on hand to guide us. Successful brand owners and businesses built their reputations by offering inside knowledge.

Aggregators reduce decision burden, but limit choices

The rise of aggregators over the last decade — businesses built around collecting existing content or products and offering them cheaply or freely en masse — redefines the way we make choices and eliminates the role of curators. Google offers up endless results at the click of a mouse and Yelp locates

businesses based on proximity. Amazon delivers any product imaginable, generally at the lowest price.

The benefit of aggregators is that they reduce data overload by using behavioral tracking and relational sorting ("if you liked this, you may also like that"). Google narrows our search options based on popularity of choices overall and your own choice history as evidenced by past clickthroughs. Netflix awarded a \$1 million prize in 2009 to the team that improved its recommendation algorithm "to connect people to the movies they love" (a conundrum referred to as the Napoleon Dynamite effect). These entities take into account not only past actions, but also mine social network behavior to intuit our preferences, thus narrowing our choices by presenting selections likely to appeal to us.

If you already know what you want, or you want what you've always had, you're in luck. But what happens when we only get what we expect and know, again and again? These systems don't broaden our exposure to the new or unknown. In fact, our worldview, our general openness, and our proximity to new ideas narrow against our own limitations every time we make a choice on an aggregator. Those wishing to expand their tastes or knowledge must either assume the burden of becoming expert, or seek a curator to sort and advise for them.

Aggregators pose another threat by driving down value and, in some cases, cutting out the brand or producer altogether.

"The game has changed. Today's consumers want brands that not only understand and meet their needs, but also validate their purchase decisions."

- Dyfed "Fred" Richards & Ted Monnin on the Consumer Packaged Goods sector

This is starkly evident in publishing, where readers skirt paywalls by finding free published material or simply avail themselves of alternatives (e.g., opinion blogs replace journalism). But it also stands true for items sold through aggregators like Amazon, where manufacturers sell their products below or near cost – threatening sustainability and, typically, the brand promise. Sometimes, the mega-retailer eventually does away with the brand altogether and offers a house brand instead. For 15 years, Amazon provided a cheap, well-stocked alternative to the brick-and-mortar bookstore. Last fall, they replaced the need for publishers with CreateSpace. It enables one to use free tools to self-publish and distribute books.

All this would seem to benefit the consumer. Choice, control and low cost are concepts we're programmed to value. If Amazon can offer great publishing, why would we object? But is Amazon offering great publishing? Can it be trusted to help me choose the perfect omelet skillet, the right memory chip, and a good read by a new author? No, and it doesn't offer to; it merely sorts options by what I, or other people like me, chose in the past.

Brands will benefit by informing consumer choice

For all those consumers who care only whether something is cheap, there are others overwhelmed by choice, those without the time or interest in becoming an expert in every decision, and those who truly wish to be delighted by new discoveries. As we enter 2012, the need for brands, curators, editors, and trendsetters to inform and expose choice to the customer is crucial. Their value will be welcomed for lessening the burden of decision-making, simplifying our lives, and, at the same time, broadening our input and experiences beyond our own limitations.

Energy Progress and positive change on the horizon

By Tom Zara

On December 11, 2011, a small but

significant step was taken in Durban, South Africa at the 2011 United Nations Climate Change Conference – one that recasts the way the energy sector will progress in the next decade. It's important to take a quick look back to better appreciate the consequence of 193 nations contentiously deliberating the corrective course for climate change.

The year 2011 was unkind to Earth and its inhabitants. Natural disasters, profound weather changes, elevated price of fossil fuels, unprecedented drought and shortages of food/water shortages, and a depressed global economy would make one highly discouraged and disheartened about the future. Yet year-end predictions provide an opportunity to consider the resourcefulness of human ingenuity to make positive change a reality.

A future deal and a new fund

The 2011 United Nations Climate Change Conference was held from late November into early December. In the final hours, delegates agreed to a legally binding deal comprising all countries, which will be prepared by 2015, and become effective in 2020. Progress was also made regarding the creation of a Green Climate Fund, for which a management framework was adopted. The fund's goal is to invest \$100 billion per year to help poor countries combat the impact of climate change. This significant infusion of focused capital creates a funded incentive for energy innovation. The opportunity to invent and install low-cost energy sources for developing nations is now available to motivated entrepreneurs, not just established energy companies.

A shared responsibility toward global energy policy

The UN Conference is significant in identifying the shortcomings of the Kyoto Protocol, the international treaty adopted in 1997 in an effort to stabilize climate change (the U.S. is one of the only countries not to have ratified it). Many are optimistic that a broader constituent of developing nations, such as India and China, as well the industrialized nations of North America and Europe, will adhere to reductions of

greenhouse gases (GHGs). A more inclusive shared responsibility toward global energy policy is a crucial element in finding effective and equitable means to reduce GHGs while fostering economic and political stability. The probability of disruption to the Kyoto Protocol is unfortunately real.

As we look to 2012, there will continue to be storm clouds on the horizon and we must stay vigilant to ensure that meaningful progress in energy policy is achieved in the months and years ahead.

Fast Developing Markets Should we call them just "Developing Markets" now?

By Alejandro (Alex) Pinedo

We knew it was bound to happen. The global crisis, now re-branded "the Eurozone crisis," has finally worked its way into even the largest fast developing markets (FDMs) around the world, bringing with it telltale signs of slower growth.

"Slowdown" has quickly become the catchword that best describes the economic situation in fast developing markets — or at least in most of them. China is "slowing quickly," according to Thomson Reuters sources, and is reviewing GDP growth expectations, which still remain above 8% for 2012. Brazil is expected to finish 2011 with growth of only 3.2%. For 2012, growth estimates have also been cut in half, from 7% down to 3.5%. According to Lloyds Bank analysts, the crisis in Europe was the main factor for these reviews. Similar situations are playing out in India, South Africa, and other traditional fast-developing markets around the world.

But slowing is not synonymous with stopping. In fact, reduced growth could give these countries the chance to reorganize and make necessary infrastructure adjustments, enabling them to continue their desired (and expected) development in a more sustainable way.

Larger countries such as the BRICs (an aging acronym, by the way) have internal

markets that give them sufficient support to withstand external instability. But, even at home, the need to setup and invest in the right infrastructure to support growth is a clear necessity.

As wealth increases in these markets, we will see a predictable economic upward shift among social classes, gaining more access to education, jobs, and better living conditions. Such shifts have also changed the way brands approach these new consumer groups, from micro credit lines and retail financial products being offered by banks to new consumer products using innovative packaging solutions to creative logistics solutions that are able to reach vast territories with economic feasibility.

Though some aspects of economic expansion are predictable, consumers in today's fast-developing markets are distinctly different from those of other eras: they can leverage instantaneous, widely accessible information and communication platforms.

So, what happens when you combine newly acquired buying power with broad access to information in a world that conveys a permanent sense of urgency?

One result is an immediate and increased level of desire. Consumers from emerging classes in fast developing markets are targeting their spending power toward items at the top of their wish lists, such as indulgence travel to foreign destinations and ownership of luxury branded goods. Luxury

goods stores and premium hotels in popular destinations like Paris, Rome, and New York have hired or trained staff members to speak Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, and other languages to cater to these avid consumers.

Customers who are highly informed are also highly demanding. Access to vast online information about products and brands, including reviews and personal experience stories, has fueled higher standards of quality in today's consumers.

As wealthier consumers from fast developing markets travel the world and gain access to the premium goods they have always wanted, brands continue to play an even greater role. In these situations, brand name is often the most important driver of choice.

As we head into another exciting and challenging year—in which the only true certainty is change—fast developing markets will need to determine how to best absorb and respond to the impacts of the economic instability in the U.S. and Europe. While this will be a challenge, it also represents an incredible opportunity for these developing countries to make necessary adjustments that will ensure that growth continues at a sustainable pace for many years.

Financial Services **A world of challenges sets an uncertain stage**

By Carola Jain

The 2012 outlook for the financial services

sector seems rather bleak. A number of factors -- ranging from economical and political shifts to general questions about the role of financial institutions -- have changed the landscape considerably and continue to create significant uncertainty in the industry.

Increased regulation across all markets is making it harder for banks to generate profits and extend sufficient credit into the system. Banks are confronted with the need to raise huge amounts of funds in 2012 to comply with new rules, which will be a difficult task in the current environment.

The changed economical and geopolitical environment has also been extremely challenging for the financial services sector. "Business as usual" no longer exists. The ongoing Eurozone crisis is adding tremendous stress to the financial system. Markets that were once considered stable are no longer safe bets. China and Russia are facing political transitions and the Middle East is experiencing enormous political and social changes. Considering this picture of global instability, it is understandable that investors are rather risk-averse -- or will be heading into 2012.

The events of the past few years have certainly added to the seemingly universal public relations problem that banks are experiencing. By and large, the public still blames banks for taking the world to the brink of economic meltdown -- and the financial services sector, as a whole, has not been able to rebound. People want to see that banks have a positive impact on the

“Reduced growth could give these countries the chance to reorganize and make necessary infrastructure adjustments, enabling them to continue their desired (and expected) development in a more sustainable way.”

- Alejandro (Alex) Pinedo on the Fast Developing Markets sector

economy, not a destabilizing or destructive one. In order to overcome this loss of trust, banks will have to actively prove that they are “adding value to society.” If not, initiatives like Occupy Wall Street may regain momentum.

So, which brands in the financial services sector are well positioned for 2012? From our perspective, it is those banks that are well capitalized and able to comply with the new requirements, yet still have sufficient scale to take advantage of opportunities as they emerge. Not an easy combination. JPMorgan Chase is certainly well positioned, as is Goldman Sachs. With so many European banks struggling, it remains to be seen which banks will emerge as leaders in the year ahead.

Food & Beverage

Selling optimism and accessibility will drive growth

By Bill Chidley

As political and financial chaos seemingly become the status quo, leading food and beverage brands will seek growth and differentiation through the coming year by projecting a sense of optimism and purpose in mature markets while simultaneously focusing on gaining distribution in fast developing markets.

Optimism must be coupled with a sense of purpose

The notion of optimism in brand building is certainly not new. Take, for example, the slogan used by the UK's Orange telecommunications to capture share in the 90s: “The future's bright, the future's Orange”. Today, pure optimism is not enough. This upbeat stance must include consumers in the dialog and ultimately allow them to participate in something fulfilling. Food and beverage brand marketers are betting that a sense of purpose will drive strong connections with existing loyalists and new users through social media and other earned media strategies. The creation of sharable content that ties back to a brand's equity and assets – while demonstrating social responsibility – is a

powerful and efficient way of building and managing a brand.

Perhaps the best example of this optimistic sense of purpose is the current Arctic Home campaign from Coca-Cola. The concept builds awareness around the loss of polar bear habitat through limited-time packaging design and in-store displays. These items drive consumers online to learn how to get involved and make a difference. Sharable digital content allows people to scale the story through Facebook and Twitter to build a movement. The cause is noble, relevant, and provides a plausible way to intervene on behalf of the endangered bears, all while linking to Coke's historical association with polar bears as a seasonal brand campaign. The polar bear began as a way for the brand to entertain us, but now serves as both a visual asset of the Coca-Cola product, as well as an icon for the brand's social responsibility efforts.

Fast developing markets will drive growth

While building social currency and starting movements are effective ways to address the business challenges of developed markets, the biggest growth for global food and beverage brands will continue to come from fast developing markets. PepsiCo's CEO has stated that these markets will account for at least half of PepsiCo's sales in the next five years. To that end, Pepsi is reinventing its bottling alliances in China to gain more distribution. Coke plans to invest \$2 billion in India alone to expand its presence. Yum! Brands (the parent company of KFC, Pizza Hut, and Taco Bell, among others), is also seeing the majority of growth outside developed markets, having recently signed a deal with China's Sinopec to open units in potentially thousands of gas stations. Yum! is also acquiring and inventing new restaurant concepts, specifically to meet the opportunities in China.

Innovative brand extensions create new opportunities

Sales for restaurant brands in mature markets should be propped up by lower fuel prices, which will free up more disposable income for dining out. The rising cost of commodities and consumer pressure for “value” pricing, however, will erode profit. As

average transactions get lower, McDonald's, Starbucks, and other major chains will continue to innovate by developing new reasons to visit. The successful rollout of McCafé gives McDonald's the platform to deliver new beverage-driven occasions, but also creates the challenge of innovating appealing seasonal beverages and seasonally themed packaging to maintain momentum. Starbucks, having dropped “coffee” from its identity, will look to offer premium fruit beverages and more food choices to their loyalists in order to remain the category leader.

Lastly, this is an Olympic year and the London Games should prove to be a new high-water mark for integrated marketing and brand building. McDonald's and Coke, both perennial World Olympic partners, can be expected to bring their brands to life in innovative, entertaining, and sharable ways to the world audience. A year from now, we should all be referencing these Olympic games as the year that finally brought the integration of global brand building and local brand activation, linked to incredible social media strategy.

Healthcare

Will healthcare be the new “green”?

By Wes Wilkes

In 2012, we will see three notable trends transpire within the healthcare sector. These trends include: an evolving brand model and expanded offerings; the increasing role played by medical devices and technologies; and the entrance of out-of-category companies into the healthcare space.

Healthy shift: Evolving models for brands and products

Traditionally, large-scale pharmaceutical companies employed a “holding company” approach with their product brands, in which the corporate brand was not promoted to the providers or the consumers. Separating the healthcare manufacturer from the product brands was a form of risk mitigation—reducing the impact of adverse events and product recalls. Nevertheless, with the proliferation

of media, very little protection is ultimately offered.

This older brand model worked because most companies had a small set of products that fundamentally targeted different consumers. Now, however, most of the key players have a plethora of products that target similar therapeutic areas and similar consumers. Such organizations are now realizing that, in leveraging their corporate brands, they not only improve efficiencies, but also succeed in differentiating their product brands. The result is greater differentiation, competitive advantage, and increased revenue.

High levels of M&A activity is another factor that has forced traditional pharmaceutical companies to rethink business models and expand what they ultimately offer to the marketplace. These companies are no longer solely focused on selling pharmaceutical compounds, but have broadened into wellness and other areas. Many are venturing into end-consumer markets, fast developing markets, branded generics, and even animal health. Such moves indicate that these organizations are also revamping the fleeting small-molecule blockbuster model of the past.

The increasing role of medical diagnostics, devices, and technologies: Is hardware the new "pill" for improved outcomes?

Gone are the days when doctors and patients relied solely on pharmaceutical treatments for conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and neurological diseases. Companies that produce medical diagnostics, devices and technologies are

transforming diseases -- making them more manageable.

Such players are also rethinking the role that brand plays in building relationships with key consumers. Just like traditional pharmaceutical companies, they are realizing the economic and operational benefits of building a strong corporate umbrella brand.

These companies can certainly drive product purchase premium and preference. Once they truly start to shift their promotional and brand models, we expect patients to become increasingly involved and engaged in the decisions around their overall treatment.

New entrants to healthcare: Is healthcare the new "green"?

Another notable trend is the accelerated rate at which companies that once offered only consumer brands are jumping into the healthcare space.

There are, of course, natural revenue streams that can be seized by applying a company's core competencies in the healthcare sector. Many of these "new entrants," however, quickly face a relatively steep learning curve. Entering the highly complex and highly regulated healthcare marketplace requires them to build strong brand relationships with both providers and consumers in an entirely new way.

As companies such as Bosch and Philips enter the healthcare space, they are realizing the important intangible benefits to be gained by creating a healthcare offering within their existing portfolios. These expansions are emerging as an important new trend when it comes to corporate image and corporate

citizenship. This shift is not only driven by a new social awareness and consciousness of health, but also by an urgent need for business growth and diversification. We have no doubt that this will be a prevalent trend in 2012, which raises the question: Is healthcare the new "green"?

Hospitality

A shift toward value

By Jonathan Chajet

The hospitality industry will continue to move forward cautiously in 2012, focusing on pockets of growth and making measured investments to reinforce guest loyalty and enhance differentiation.

Flight to value

One clear outcome of the global recession has been a distinct shift toward value. Not simply a money-saving tactic, consumers are trading down to reflect a new view of their world: frugality is beautiful. From choosing to drive rather than fly, saving the weekend getaway for truly celebration-worthy events, or simply cutting corners to meet tighter budgets, value for money is essential at all price points. For hoteliers, this means higher guest expectations. Flawless execution of the basics is a must. Sustainability-friendly practices are not just about being green, but adopting a "waste not, want not" philosophy.

Personalizing my stay

The internet continues to shape travel purchase behavior, with increasing use of digital tools to compare experiences,

“As companies such as Bosch and Philips enter the healthcare space, they are realizing the important intangible benefits to be gained by creating a healthcare offering within their existing portfolios.” - Wes Wilkes on the Healthcare sector

features, and prices. Today's traveler is an informed traveler. Interestingly, online booking sites like Travelocity, Expedia, and Ctrip represent only a small fraction of actual sales, but play a disproportionately large role in shaping price perceptions. As a result, hotel brands are actively participating in travel review sites, with customer service representatives responding directly to customer complaints in travel forums for the entire world to see.

Once a guest reaches the front door, hotels are increasing their emphasis on empowering guests and giving them control and personalization in the experience. Travelers demand excellence. Make my technology work as seamlessly as it does in my home or office. Give me choices in my stay experience. Connect me with the world outside the hotel and make my trip run more smoothly. Help me turn your space into my space.

Fighting homogeneity

At the luxury and near-luxury end of the market, hotel brands seem to be in an arms race over features, creating short-term buzz but long-term risks. To justify their rates, hotel brands are investing heavily in formulaic interior design, celebrity chefs du jour, and lavish rewards programs. Many of these tactics are short-term differentiators, but research reveals that travelers are starting to feel as though everyone looks and sounds the same. This could lead to an apathetic market edging towards commoditization, not unlike the airline industry. The sea of sameness will put the high-

end of the market to the test. Increasingly sophisticated travelers are putting hotel brands under the microscope, demanding exceptionally proactive service to go along with their exceptionally comfortable beds. Those who don't just promise, but actually deliver consistency in their brand experience will have a far easier time finding, attracting, and retaining loyal guests.

The global economic recession has put one destination on the top of every hotel brand's travel wish list: China. As one of the few growth markets in the world today, more and more hotel brands are turning to the Middle Kingdom to add to their bottom line. In fact, it is estimated that Starwood is opening a new property in China every two weeks.

Currently, travel to and within China is booming. But, in the long-term, Chinese consumers will become an increasingly important segment of the international hotel market as well. Overseas travel is frequently cited as a life-long dream for Chinese consumers who now have the means to do so. Hotel brands are building properties in China as fast as they can sign construction contracts in order to generate brand awareness and create preference for the years to come.

Luxury

From the economy of luxury to the luxury of economy

By Manfredi Ricca

As the global outlook shifts back to sluggish growth in western markets and relatively slower growth in some fast developing

countries, the challenge for luxury brands will be to prove that – having been the fastest to restart growth after the 2008–2009 meltdown – they can be resilient in relation to macroeconomic crashes and the swings of economic cycles.

Varying roles for western and fast developing markets

Strong concerns over the weakness and slow growth of the western markets means that those areas will have to be seen as origins rather than destinations in 2012. In other words, regions like Europe and the U.S. will play the role of mature markets that contribute to a luxury brand's presence and relevance, rather than its outright financial success.

On the contrary, some fast developing countries might be experiencing the first noticeable slowdown in momentum for the first time since their designation as the guiding lights of the global economy. Although it is highly unlikely that such speed reduction will affect the most affluent segments of the population in these markets, luxury brands will still need to prove themselves—and demonstrate the extent to which they have become truly indispensable threads in the fabric of these new societies. The stakes are particularly high in a market like China, which sustains the fortunes of many global luxury icons, and where all eyes turn when seeking an engine of growth.

Interestingly, this dual situation may lead global luxury brands to think of their geographies in very much the same way

“The challenge for luxury brands will be to prove that – having been the fastest to restart growth after the 2008-2009 meltdown – they can be resilient in relation to macroeconomic crashes and the swings of economic cycles.” - Manfredi Ricca on the Luxury sector

as they think of their own distribution channel structures. Europe might well be considered the flagship region for these brands, but not necessarily a moneymaking one in the short term. Fast developing countries, on the other hand, may provide access and availability to new customer segments, driving growth and performance. In extremely simplified terms, this duality of models amounts to a delicate balance between the creation of desire and the development of demand.

True luxury defies downturns

The sum of these models can place luxury brands in a unique position in today's global economic landscape. At a point in history when uncertainty is the only certainty and variance is the only average, luxury brands can aspire to become nothing short of commercial securities by acting as powerful risk mitigators. In the wake of the recent crisis, brands that have chosen to reclaim their history and uniqueness have shored formidable assets against any future economic downturn. They have based their brand promises and performance upon drivers of choice that are, by definition, less sensitive to a dampening economic climate.

When we look at the financial landscape, stabilization is what everyone seems to be seeking. A true luxury brand—one whose offer is really about undying currencies such as heritage and excellence—may well be the treasury bond of tomorrow's competitive world, yielding the financial multiples and business continuity that represent the real luxury of today's economy.

Media

Consumers win in 2012

By Cassidy Morgan

Over the last few years, social media has helped fuel important people-led movements. Be it the Arab Spring, various "Occupy" movements, or simply product recommendations, the use of social media has shifted from fun into serious business—in social, political, and economic terms.

Content is being developed at a dizzying pace and consumers are becoming more comfortable relying on information that is not branded except by a user's name or Twitter handle. Traditional media companies are no longer seen as the go-to sources. Instead, the best have embraced the notion of user-generated content to ensure relevance in an increasingly competitive market.

Even media companies that are deeply ingrained in offering sophisticated content to professionals around the world (such as Bloomberg, Thomson Reuters, or LexisNexis) will have to battle consumer-generated information and opinions as businesses cut costs and look for cheaper ways to get to the same information.

As the content side of media has changed, a similar shake-up has happened on the device side. Recent years have seen an incredible proliferation of devices and apps designed for consumers to experience content at home, at work, or on the go. Hardware makers have created distinct ecosystems in an attempt to form lasting relationships with consumers, and the winner is far from certain.

Apple's first-mover success is not guaranteed to last forever, as the company charts a new course without founder Steve Jobs. Google is pushing harder than ever to establish its Android operating system as the leading model for content consumption. Companies like Samsung and Amazon are catching up on the device side. In fact, Samsung became the world's largest seller of smartphones in the fall of 2011. All of these developments put significant pressure on Apple to stay ahead of the game.

All of this turmoil and uncertainty may sound tough for the business, but it's good news for the consumer. As companies clamor for content, they are eager to build a network of consumer reporters around the world to provide a firsthand look – not only at burgeoning revolutions, but also at trends, product reviews, etc. This means that consumers will find themselves in the position to make money by providing this content. Monetizing access to information or creation of content is not a new idea. The scale at which it is now possible via global internet access, however, will create an unprecedented flow of money into consumers' pockets.

At the same time, consumers will see a continuous wave of innovative consumption models and methods flood the market. Devices will become more user-friendly and customizable, apps will be developed to meet more and more specific consumer needs, and the number of models will continue to explode. Consumers will have more choices than ever before, and those choices will allow them to do more things on their terms than ever before.

“Be it the Arab Spring, various ‘Occupy’ movements, or simply product recommendations, the use of social media has shifted from fun into serious business – in social, political, and economic terms.” – Cassidy Morgan
on the Media sector

Lastly, the content and device war will lead to continued price pressure for media companies and manufacturers alike. To capture consumers and lock them into an ecosystem, companies will be forced to invest significantly, leading to more aggressive price competition amongst the dominant players. In order to ensure that it will not be a race to the bottom, the best and most forward-looking companies will invest in the one thing that will provide long-term differentiation: their brand.

So who wins when it comes to media in 2012? The consumer wins all around: new opportunities to make money through user-generated content, more choice in devices and content, and lower prices for those devices and content.

On the company side, it will be a bruising battle. Look for the premium brands, like Samsung and Apple, to come under pressure over the course of the year as generic substitutes catch up. On the flip side, we can also expect those top names to protect their margins by investing in the uniqueness of their brands. If they do that well, their long-term success is ensured. But, no stumbles allowed—otherwise, the brand owners can watch the decline of their brand play out live online.

Retail

It's about the brand, not about the store

By Bruce Dybvad

In 2011, boundaries continued to blur as resurgent retail inspired the industry with creativity and challenged traditional ways of doing business. As the store evolves into a fluid idea that serves the mobile, global customer in search of new experiences to share, the degree of complexity escalates for retail businesses. Brands are evaluating the role that their stores play and keeping their eyes on digital opportunities.

A coming crisis of relevance?

Is the concept of "store" obsolete? Now that consumers can shop the world anytime from anywhere, the expectation of having every need instantly satisfied is sky-high. Product searches begin "in the cloud," largely unattached to a physical store of any kind.

Shopping is not an isolated event. Like our lives, it now streams simultaneously online, with our thoughts and decisions publicly shared and reviewed by our personal networks.

This new flow of life has led to a different idea of what constitutes a store. People no longer distinguish between physical and virtual channels. Today, a retailer must think of itself as a moveable feast—an engaging entity with values, moods, and emotions, as well as commercial, social, and educational aspects.

For that reason, the idea of leading by brand—the values and meaning that define how a retailer does business—is a highly relevant business model that is stable yet adaptable to these fast-paced times.

Take, for example, the growing trend in online shopping for routine purchases. It challenges the monotonous chore of shopping the "center" of a store and questions the viability of millions of square feet in the grocery category alone. Retailers that fail to understand how this impacts shelves and categories may find their mall-based stores abandoned. In the same way, stores that fail to provide engaging experiences or easier-to-shop layouts may fall out of favor. No company can survive today without a burning desire to engage the customer—nor can it thrive without a strong point of view and passion. Without imagination and innovation, many stores are in danger of becoming rusty relics of the past.

Rethinking size

Last year, big-box vacancies shook retail real estate. Although these retailers won't be disappearing entirely, consumers' desire for easier shopping, inviting environments, and closer locations—not to mention the impact of multichannel shopping—is changing the shape of the store. In the U.S., Walmart, Target, Best Buy, and Gap, among others, have small concepts in the works or are adapting existing formats. Similarly, in Europe, brands like Carrefour continue to move beyond hypermarkets to alternate formats like Carrefour City. However, a smaller footprint is no magic bullet for retail. Stores need to be simultaneously optimized across the dimensions of brand, space, and finance.

Backlash and balance

Last year, the frenzy for apps, augmented realities, and the pressure to jump into social media had retailers madly assembling patchworks of digital tactics while the ground was still shifting. Now that brands have a greater understanding of the landscape through trial, error, and observation, they've gotten past the novelty of digital—such as Macy's short-lived magic fitting-room mirrors—and are concentrating on what's relevant. Many brands now have the self-awareness and confidence to say, "Maybe we don't need to be on Facebook." Surveys suggest that 70% of retailers use social networks for branding and marketing, but only 38% feel they add value and 56% feel it's too early to gauge impact. Of the 30% of retailers that do not use social networking sites, 63% do not plan to start.

Apps have garnered a lot of attention, but despite all their promotion, few retailers have succeeded in developing truly useful offerings that engage consumers on an ongoing basis. Vitamin store GNC created a special feature for its app that reminds customers to take their supplements. Its barcode scanner, regimen reminder, and deal promotions keep customers interacting with the brand. To make the most of the mobile investment, promotion and functionality are key.

Just when you think you have retail all figured out, a wave of change rolls through the industry, upending paradigms and shaking up sleepy companies. According to Gary Hoover, entrepreneur and retail history buff, the single most important thing a retailer can do, even in the era of global retailing, is focus on the people and the merchandise. The basic premise of "right time, right price, and right customer" is timeless. The twist is that today, in the age of omni-channel retailing, it's that much tougher with all the paths available to retailers for delivering value. Great retail brands will activate consumer engagement opportunities to fit customers' wants and needs -- any way and anywhere they like.

For more retail insights, read our complete State of the Industry Report on www.interbranddesignforum.com.

Technology

Tech marches on, led by the consumer

By Nirm Shanhbag

As always, the technology in our lives continues to evolve unimpeded—despite global economic meltdowns, political unrest, and social revolution. The year ahead will find this sector rocketing forward while being buffeted by a number of game-changing trends.

“Cloud” fatigue

While virtualization, software-as-a-service, online storage and backups, and streaming media have been around for a long time, in the last few years, it has all become lumped together via a single term: the cloud. For most in the world of business, the term is hard to pin down, but still something important – something that must be achieved, much like “getting on the internet” was in the late '90s. For consumers, it's equally ill defined. And while the concept of the cloud and the many services that are based on it—from FarmVille to Salesforce.com, Office 365 to Dropbox—are tremendously valuable, the term's overuse and lack of clear definition will leave us searching for a new, more specific description.

Workplaces of all sizes and shapes will continue to find themselves infiltrated by employees' personal devices, whether it be smartphones, tablets, personal laptops, or external hard drives. The reality is that just as the idea of distinct work/life modes is rapidly disappearing, the same holds true for technology. At the same time, more and more companies are looking to offload IT systems from their balance sheets, both at the enterprise level (see the cloud) and individual user level (mobile phone plans, PC reimbursements, etc). Increasingly, traditional technology brands will need to find ways to connect with individual users on a more personal basis, potentially mixing things up and creating opportunities for those once viewed as being on the periphery of the category.

One word: security

WikiLeaks, credit card hacks, Carrier IQ. As our lives grow ever more digitized, the

importance of computer security will grow in tandem. For companies, adopting stricter, more-encompassing security policies will become a key initiative for IT departments, especially in light of the widening array of devices in use. For consumers, the opportunity of living in the cloud will be tempered by the fear that comes from handing over so much personal and valuable information. This will create an opportunity for innovative brands to stand out by aligning themselves with safety and confidence.

In the past, companies such as Microsoft, Apple, IBM, and Adobe followed a cycle of product refresh that saw a new release of any particular software every two to four years. Things are very different today. While some still follow an expected cadence (fans all over the world know when the next *anything* is coming from Apple), many brands have shifted to more aggressive, fluid approaches. This means that products as varied as tablets, smartphones, and even operating systems are released as updates become available, not just when the calendar dictates it. As a result, consumers find themselves in a constant state of beta testing. By the time a product has all the bugs worked out, it's no longer the latest and greatest. The side effect of this is that brands find they have greater permission to experiment, but are subject to the corresponding expectation that what they deliver is truly relevant and timely. Brands will do well to break away from their historic models and invite consumers to experiment with them.

Good-bye, productivity. Hello, experience.

For the past half a century, the value of technology has been to push the boundaries of productivity. And while business technology is still evaluated against this metric, in the world of consumer technology a tidal shift is underway. In 2012, expect to see people seeking out tech that delivers compelling experiences, not just features and functionality. Take RIM's BlackBerry versus Microsoft's Windows Phone. The former is in a death spiral while the other is a phoenix reborn on account of the singular focus on delivering a clear experience. Brands that deliver on this trend — even those that have fallen from the leaderboards as of late — will find themselves gaining traction amongst

users looking for more than just getting more done.

Telecommunications

More of the Same?

By Kevin Perlmutter

The world of telecommunications is caught between unprecedented advancements and stagnation in relationships with customers. Despite the life-changing impact of what telecoms make possible, customers are increasingly ambivalent or unhappy with their providers. In 2012, telecoms will continue to face infrastructure investment pressures, increased competition, as well as demand for new offerings and better service.

Infrastructure investment pressure

Telecoms are fundamentally making the mobile broadband revolution possible. Meanwhile, there's an ongoing tug-of-war between telecoms and governments to keep networks on the cutting edge in the face of regulations that democratize the results of substantial investments. As the need for speed and coverage grows, governments are falling behind in evolving regulations to best support investments in innovation and infrastructure.

In 2012, this battle will continue. The wave of acquisitions and joint ventures in the quest for 4G LTE mobile broadband spectrum will accelerate. These partnerships will bring together competing telecoms, further integrate sister industries, and look to overcome regulatory hurdles, allowing companies to offer the fastest network speeds while reducing investment and build-out time. Telecoms, in an effort to win over potential partners or overcome government scrutiny, will also work harder to improve their image as customer and community advocates.

Increasing competition and alliances

There will be further convergence of the telecom, consumer electronic, and entertainment industries. Consumers want their lives on-the-go — anytime/anywhere — with intuitive interfaces and seamless integration. This will continue to create

new sets of competitors and multi-brand alliances to integrate technologies. It will become more important that telecoms allow for experimentation and developer input to serve customers with the most innovative technology, points of access, and range of choices.

Another onslaught of competition is coming from non-telecom business combinations. Microsoft, Skype and Nokia, for example, are undoubtedly setting themselves up as new ways for people to connect, potentially with or without a traditional telecom relationship. The Google/Motorola partnership will further propel Google's ability to drive new categories of demand. And retailers like Amazon and Best Buy will continue to set new standards for how people shop for and integrate consumer electronics. Each of these companies is not only expanding its offerings, but also expanding on their opportunities to serve loyal customers.

In 2012, telecoms will not only have to contend with competitors encroaching on their turf from every angle, but with companies that have earned more positive and deeper customer relationships. Look for telecoms to further evolve their business models as they contend with new partners and more demanding customers.

New offerings

Cloud services and mobile payments are moving from the early adopters to the mass market, and both will be increasingly important areas of focus for telecoms. Wirelessly connected devices, from e-readers to remote health-monitoring systems, plus a multitude of remote capabilities in the connected home, will also grow as a percentage of telecoms' revenue.

Business customers are another area of focus for telecoms in the coming year. Wireless technology presents an opportunity to bring new capabilities to businesses. Telecoms will make a bigger push toward equipping these customers with solutions that go beyond basic voice and data – solutions that will enable them to operate more efficiently and better serve their own audiences.

Some telecoms may begin to challenge

the traditional pricing structure. Given the increasing pace of innovation and a constant barrage of advertising for the best products on the market, many people will not want to sign two-year phone contracts that force them to wait for extended periods of time to get the latest technology. Prepaid no-contract wireless will continue to grow in popularity, and people will look to integrated plans for their multiple wireless devices/capabilities.

In 2012, look for telecoms to provide services that touch and integrate more aspects of people's personal and work lives, an expanding array and interconnectedness of offerings, and greater innovation in pricing and plan options.

Evolving customer relationships

The global telecom industry is one in which people are besieged with choices, but few of these choices create true differentiation and loyalty. Telecommunications is one of the few industries epitomized by a multi-year contract, monthly fees, and early termination penalties, topped with a perceived lack of appreciation for customer relationships. Telecoms all around the world are notorious for sub-par customer service, and practices that often make the customer experience cumbersome and frustrating.

In 2012, some telecoms will begin to act upon the opportunity to reframe the customer relationship in ways that drive both demand and loyalty.

Overall, one can most likely expect more of the same from telecoms in the coming year, including rapid innovation and infrastructure deployment, ever-evolving capabilities and offerings, intense competition, and renewed attempts at improving customer relationships. The big question: Will any telecom break from the pack and raise the bar for the whole industry? ■



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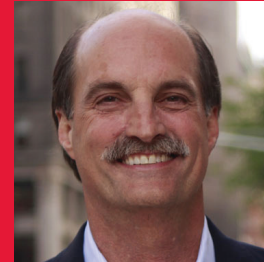
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