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Interview Best of Brand Research 2022

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Interview about the webinar Best of Brand Research Day1, Part 2

**"Brands are, like so many parts
of society, under intense pressure
to change."**

Stefan Schönherr, eye square

Julia Saswito, aimpower

Natalia Ponomareva, Brandwatch

Sebastian Schmidt & Uta Hümer, SKOPOS RESEARCH

In the second part of the Best of Brand Research interview (Day 1), the interviewees from the institutes reveal which brands they personally find particularly exciting. They also talked to us about which trends in brand research they think will be incredibly important in the coming years.

Brands are, like so many areas of society, in a state of flux. Which brand would you like to do research on, some day and why?

Stefan Schönherr: Brands that are currently undergoing a change or are the focus of attention because they touch on a social issue, for example, are always exciting. Against this background, I would find it interesting to investigate the image of Deutsche Bahn. On the one hand, DB is the hope for significantly lower-emission transport, but at the same time there are many challenges in daily business and, in addition to classic brand communication, millions of customers who use the "railroad product" intensively on a quasi-daily basis and share their experiences with the public.

Natalia Ponomareva: I find KoRo very exciting. The online grocery store addresses current consumer trends, such as the issue of sustainability with less packaging, as many products are offered as bulk packs, or a variety of products that enrich or simplify the vegan diet. I also like the brand's social commitment, e.g., after Corona's break, their Women's Run took place again in Berlin to raise awareness for women suffering from cancer and to collect donations.

Sebastian Schmidt: Since I spent/had to spend more time in German forests and on mountains due to the pandemic, outdoor brands would appeal to me personally. Partly high willingness to pay, credible conveyance of sustainability, motives like escapism, action orientation etc. There's a lot you can do there. Researching for Patagonia would be exciting on many levels.

Uta Hümer: Ben & Jerry's. Simply because we love ice cream and sweets, and they always do well at SKOPOS. That's why we chose this very brand for our BrandTrack in-house study. We are happy to present the results to interested parties in our demo dashboard.

Julia Saswito: Personally, I find new, direct-to-consumer brands in the areas of fashion and food, very exciting and also the way they grow quickly with initially often small budgets, but high creativity and relevance. And because they have not yet been researched so extensively, and somehow out of self-interest, I would also like to look at B2B brands of service providers, such as technology service providers - what relevance does the brand have here, to consumers' decision - making process, and how can the emotional component, which in my view, is also highly relevant to this decision, be brought in, more strongly?

Which brand continues to inspire yourself?

Stefan Schönherr: For me, the Coca-Cola story is still one of the most fascinating proofs of the power that brands, and their campaigns can develop. The Christmas campaign was developed from the idea of selling more of the cool refreshing drink in winter. And the result - even today - Santa Claus, who travels all over the world in Coca-Cola's brand colors, and more Coke is sold at Christmas than on the hottest summer days.

Uta Hümer: IKEA. That's where I completely fit the female stereotype. I just like shopping there. But seriously: Cool design, affordable prices, always in tune with the times. Sustainability was also an issue at IKEA early on. Almost everyone has a bit of IKEA at home. And then the Mafo colleagues at IKEA are also just insanely nice.

Julia Saswito: Patagonia - I think it's great and exemplary how the brand and the company prove that environmental activism and business success can be mutually beneficial. And also, that the credibility of such an orientation lies primarily in action and not just in communication.

In your opinion, which trend will also increase its importance in brand research in the coming years?

Stefan Schönherr: Brands, like so many areas of society, are under strong pressure to change. Brands today must contend with the fact that their target groups are increasingly difficult to reach through the media - keyword fragmented media use and perception. At the same time, there are new players and business models everywhere - entire industries are currently changing in the

direction of digital services and ecosystems. Against this backdrop, brands must once again increasingly explain what their raison d'être, their purpose, their USP is.

So, on the one hand, it will once again be more about content and the social discourse and how brands fit in and position themselves there (strategic consulting). On the other hand, it will be about how the brand messages, once developed, best reach the consumer (communication and advertising research).

This will increasingly involve the extensive spectrum of methods from research - the brand of the future wants to understand itself and its consumers well at all levels. This means understanding not only rational attitudes and requirements, but also feelings and desires, as well as attention windows and processing modes.

Natalia Ponomareva: always Understanding the needs and behavior of consumers and integrating the voice of the customer centrally into the company and all business decisions will become increasingly important for the success of brands in the future. The pandemic has shown that brands need to adapt quickly to changes in order not to be left behind by the competition. In addition, a brand's position on ethical, socio-political, and environmental issues is playing an increasingly important role in brand loyalty. Today, no company can avoid the topic of sustainability and, due to the climate crisis, this factor will play an increasingly important role in purchasing decisions in the future.

The combination of different data sources will become more important in market research, to obtain as holistic a picture as possible of the consumer: inside and the brand perception. Here it is also important that silos are broken down in the company and that the insights from research are available throughout the company to be able to make better data-driven business decisions.

Ute Hümer & Sebastian Schmidt: Overall, we see that the topic of brands is becoming increasingly important for companies - which is why we are generally pleased that the importance of brand research is rising. Regarding the approach, we presented for quantitative tracking of brand performance, we note that this is only the tip of the iceberg. More and more frequently, we are asked by brand management what to do with all the data that offers insights in isolation but would be worth even more in the big picture. In addition to survey data from brand tracking, this also includes sales figures and, depending on the industry, explanatory variables on weather, inflation, or pandemic events, as well as technical measurements of digital touchpoints.

Making all this data available in a consolidated and structured form in marketing dashboards is a strong growth area for us. In addition to the pure visualization of data, the "real" analysis based on this aggregated data will become even more important for us. Finding patterns across all these data points and being able to explain them in a meaningful way is one of the key strengths of SKOPOS GROUP. This is exactly where we bundle our competencies.

Julia Saswito: On the one hand, of course, there is the trend towards using artificial intelligence and automation to become faster, but also to get better and deeper insights into consumer needs. On the other hand, I see a strong need to make creativity and its contribution to overall success objectively measurable - without being restrictive, but rather relieving the burden by avoiding overly subjective discussions and acting based on data and, in the best case, having inspiring insights that lead to better and more exciting advertising.

Stefan Schönherr
Vice Director Brand & Media

eye square



Stefan Schönherr has been working as a brand and media specialist in the Brand & Media Experience unit at eye square since 2007, has headed this unit since 2013 and has been a partner of eye square in the position of Vice President Brand & Media and Partner since 2018.

He holds a degree in psychology with a focus on media consulting, advertising impact and media reception.

Julia Saswito
aimpower



Julia Saswito is a digital pioneer and specialist for customer experience and brand management at aimpower. After successfully building up one of the leading digital agencies in Germany and her time as Partner and Global Practice Lead for "Digital Experience" at the international Reply Group, she moved to the AI start-up aimpower in April 2021.

She helps to shape the still young AI scene as Head of Marketing & Strategy and works on novel solutions for brand management and effectiveness measurement.

Natalja Ponomareva Brandwatch



Natalia Ponomareva is Enterprise Sales Executive, DACH at Brandwatch. After her studies at the University of Vienna, she gained experience in international business.

Since 2020 she is based in the UK and delegates from there first at OpenText and now at Brandwatch the happenings in the DACH region.

Sebastian Schmidt SKOPOS ELEMENTS



Sebastian Schmidt is Managing Director at SKOPOS ELEMENTS, the experts for statistics, data analysis, data visualization and software development. He is responsible for the area of customer analytics and reporting. His focus is the combination of market research with data science methods.

With more than 10 years of research experience, he knows about the special requirements that market researchers have for data, methods, and result reports.

Uta Hümer SKOPOS RESEARCH



Uta Hümer is Research Director at SKOPOS RESEARCH. She started in market research at Ipsos in 2005. Three years later, she moved to SKOPOS, where she has been part of the management team of SKOPOS RESEARCH, the unit for traditional market research, since 2017.

Her current focus is on the development and marketing of tools and the support of clients primarily from the retail and FMCG sectors.