

Conclusion: Unlocking the Early Adopter (2007–2017)

Finally, we reach the end of the line whereby $A + M = EA$. The New Consciousness Consumer (the NCC) was born out of that union in the cool cycle (2007–2017). This new Early Adopter has superseded the New Premium Consumer (the NPC), who reigned in the previous cool cycle.

The Teens: The New Consciousness Consumer (the NCC)

Founded upon belief in the "triple bottom line" (redefined)

Values

profit
community
environment

Aesthetic

beauty in decay

Expression

consciousness rising



new collective
consciousness based on
wellbeing of individuals
and the planet

Vocabulary

maker; tinkerer; hacker; creator

Diffusion Platforms

COLLABORATIVE LIFESTYLE ENVIRONMENTS

mutually supportive, trust-based, tech enabled communities

RECLAIMED URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

urban spaces with rural feel pioneering more efficient use of resources

Communication Tactics

INTELLECTUALISM
(talks, Q&As, debates, how to)
"HACKED" COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

SOCIAL ACTIVISM
socialising while supporting causes through meaningful actions (not just "donations")



Sign of the times diffusion platform: Shoreditch House, part of Soho House Group

If the 1990s cool cycle was the era of the anti-consumer, the noughties that of the alternative consumer, the teens will be marked by the corporate citizen. No longer citizen versus consumer, the new age acknowledges the interdependent dynamic between the two. At the same time, the big issues that are facing us (as people) and the planet (as a whole) cannot be addressed by governments without corporations also being involved. While this new cool decade has been somewhat experimental in terms of finding new ways forward, the commonality between all Innovators was that the 1% versus the 99% economy is simply not a sustainable foundation for the future of either the 99% of people or the planet that we all share.

Through the lens of the cool cycles of reinvention, the three core values from the previous cool cycle, which were shared between Alphas and Mavericks, evolved into a new set of interlocked values, which were, in turn, the foundation of the new ideology.

This new ideology is based on a new definition of the “triple bottom line”. This expression was routinely used by the community of makers in Detroit but it spoke to all Innovators of this generation. The “triple bottom line” revolves around three core values: profit, community, environment. It is about a desire to make success not just for yourself but also to give something back to your local community. The new ideology was also powered by the spirit of openness and collaboration, which was enabled by the new generation of technology based on Open Source Software (OSS). Local altruism could thus be replicated globally. Openness and collaboration became the leitmotiv in this cool cycle.

People power was first reclaimed by militant activist groups. Alphas and Mavericks have reinterpreted this renewed feeling of civic engagement in a more entrepreneurial fashion. It’s a mix of egalitarian legacy of party people and party politics. We dubbed it “corporate citizenship”, following the Maverick makers in Detroit. Corporate citizenship involves generating economic value while at the same time creating value for society.

The new aesthetic sensibility is beauty in decay. Waste is no longer rubbish. It is a valuable material to be reused, repurposed and ultimately reincarnated as something else. By the same token, the new communication tactics reflected a more sombre mood, in the aftermath of the major recession that inaugurated the new cool cycle. People started to take matters into their own hands, looking for solutions to

societal problems. The new communication tactics come in the guise of intellectualism (debating issues that matter) and activism (doing something about it). In this context, “hacking the system” and other forms of open calls became a way to foster collaborative engagement between producers and hosts. All of this added a tangible note of social consciousness to socialising.

Alpha Trend Setters, who are more arty, express the new values and overarching ideology through their artistic interventions (applied arts, exhibition openings, club nights, catwalks, street markets and other forms of social gatherings). Taste Makers, who are more business savvy, reflect those same values in their communication tactics and immersive experiences as well as their business ethos.

The sign of the times diffusion platform (the SOTT), the diffusion platform par excellence and uncontested Taste Maker, is the embodiment of the new ideology and aesthetic sensibilities. With the SOTT’s seal of approval, the new Early Adopter is fully formed. By using the latest cutting-edge communication technologies and online tools, Taste Makers commercialise the ideology. The Influencer, who subscribes to this ideology, will ensure that the interlocked values that are underpinning it are spread outwards, towards the Early Majority.

Tech entrepreneurs, who espoused ideas of shared economies, have contributed towards decentralising the process of consumption. Social entrepreneurs, who are neither businesses nor charities but hybrid entities, have sown the seeds of generating revenues combined with the pursuit of social goals. Collectively, their innovative businesses blend traditional capitalism with solutions that address the long term needs of our planet.

The closure of colette (the SOTT platform of the previous cool cycle) in 2017 (the 7th year itch) perfectly fitted into the first-to-know framework. It symbolically marked the handing over of the cool baton from the New Premium Consumer (artisan) to the New Consciousness Consumer (maker). And, yet I had no way of knowing that they were going to close down, although I was friends with the team. What happened instead was that I started to frequent colette less often than I did during the zeitgeist years until I reached the point when I travelled to Paris without paying a visit at all. Among Alphas, things fizzle out. Intuitively, you just know. This is why sixth sense, haphazardness, element of surprise were, all, instrumental in shaping the elements of the new cycle.

To me, another great symbolic indicator that the ideological shift took place is that another zeitgeist shaper, often dubbed in the press as the “king of nightlife” in Paris, Lio (Lionel) Bensemoun had also moved on in the same direction. Lio, like the colette posse, is featured in *The First to Know*. The parties, spearheaded by Lio, which we did together among friends became the cool marketing tool par excellence of the previous cool cycle, the shaping up of which I describe in the book. From cool, Lio became a purveyor of cool. And, it was fun for a while to be on the guest list of lavish, brand-sponsored parties but after a while, it was no longer interesting. For Lio, it became a job. For me, the punters attending such parties had no relevance. For a few years, Lio and I lost touch. I was aware of what he was up to through getting occasional emails but we recently reconnected by actually meeting up in Paris in September 2018, when this piece was already written – this is the last section that I added as it vindicates the model.

Lio went through a process of rethinking what he wanted to do. His new venture is the embodiment of the new values and the new ideology, based on a renewed notion of citizenship. Lio has not turned into an urban farmer, although his new concept is more akin to La REcyclerie, in terms of values and aesthetic sensibilities, than his fashionable party joints and private members’ bars (including the much hyped Le Baron). After a few pop ups to experiment with the new concept, an ephemeral venue called Le Consulat was opened in the summer of 2018 in a neglected urban space behind the train station Montparnasse. Being an Opinion Former in our model, the Cool Hunters and all fashionable media reported about Lio’s new venue with gusto.

Le Consulat bears all the hallmarks of what cool is for this new cycle: from green spaces within the venue to high awareness about rubbish disposal through to hosting talks and debates. There was, of course, a bar and canteen. The tables could be used to work outside the eating times. The venue is multifunctional. When I visited, a number of environmental campaigners were preparing for a big climate march, which took place on 8th September 2018 and got considerable news media coverage. At the same time, the trendy magazine Purple (from the previous cool cycle) was doing a photo shoot. Art and music events were taking place every night. There was no guest list to attend. Guest lists are passé. Walls were full of anti-establishment slogans, such as “read Karl Marx”, “ça va disrupter” (a call for disorder), “my