



# ALPHAS



**ALPHAS**

Style leaders, ahead of the curve, who are the first to know

Alphas drive the messenger continuum. Theirs is the relevant word of mouth. They operate according to the tacit rules of cool's self-conscious elitism, which we have outlined in the "cool" section earlier on. Hierarchies of distinction are built according to who's the first to know while the worthiness of messages is evaluated according to who told you the news.

We'll divide the Alpha types between Alpha Trend Setters, of which there are three main categories, and Taste Makers, of which there are various sub-types. Alpha Trend Setters create as well as put a seal of approval on new ideas (because not all new ideas are cool – that currency needs to be earned!). Taste Makers are purveyors of cool. Their role is to translate the cool new ideas to make them palatable for the Early Adopter.

**ALPHA**

- understands the cool ideology of authenticity
- the first to know
- drives messenger continuum
- forms alternative identity in reaction to the macro climate
- influencer, who influences influencers

# The Messenger Continuum

So far, we have established that small groups of people influence the majority in stages of adopters, which is how new ideas spread from Innovators towards the mainstream to reach the “tipping point”. Who tells everyone? Salesmen. Who told the Salesman? The Connector. Who told the Connector? The Maven. Who told the Maven? Let me tell you.

To understand who’s influencing the Influencer, as it were, we’ll break down the Innovator into categories inventors and plot them on a continuum, which we’ll position before the Early Adopter and the other successive categories of adopters on the innovations diffusion model. In other words, we’ll be looking into what Malcolm Gladwell characterised at various points in his book as the “cool versions of Mavens” or “fashion Mavens”, the ones whose “weird” idiosyncratic ideas become mainstream.

Just like with Everett Rogers’ innovations diffusion model whereby new ideas associated with Innovators spread to the Early Adopter, who first buys into them, and then towards the mass market, there are also various players whose role is to spread these new ideas outwardly before they even reach the Early Adopter.

The-first-to-know messenger continuum shows how the word of mouth first gets spread in stages among Alpha Trend Setters, who are at the embryo of a new “cool” movement. New ideas take shape through exchange among these similarly minded individuals to begin with. The Taste Makers pick up on it and further spread it. At the end of the continuum, there will also be Cool Hunters and Mavens.