

## REVIEWS

### ***The 2.5%: small group, big influence***

By Lida Hujic

Congratulations for the great book! Very interesting with lots of content! The zoom in on the innovators and early adopters, and the different ways of profiling them is definitely very helpful. I also very much enjoy that you add the references and explain the theory, going beyond the usual marketing/innovation books. Well done! It is very insightful! I'm sure the book will be a success!

#### **Marcelo Amstalden Möller**

Global Director International Brands & Craft Portfolio ·  
**The HEINEKEN Company**

If we want to predict the future with any certainty, the best place to start is to speak with those people for whom the future has already happened, that is the group whom Lida's model describes as Alpha Trend Setters. In an extraordinarily engaging presentation to a mixed audience of qualitative researchers (already a little uncomfortable in the company of the data scientists) and data scientists (a little cynical in the company of qualitative researchers whose papers appeared to contain no data), Lida brought her First to Know Innovation Diffusion model to life in a way which captivated and won over both groups. Lida described how her approach enabled brand owners to identify the small signs of big changes early on which can help them future-proof their businesses. She spoke of the importance of translators in the innovation diffusion process, and Lida's presentation powerfully blended traditional models with her own insights to create an understanding of 'cool' which was both a technical highlight of the FUSION conference and created a real buzz at the event. The fact that Lida is on first-name terms with some of the influencers who inform the coolest people in fashion and culture certainly added to her credibility, and yes, I got a selfie with her!

#### **Peter Nash**

Chair of Programme Committee  
**ESOMAR FUSION Conference**  
Dublin 2018

In a 2006 Guardian article Lida Hujic wrote *"The Shoreditch Twat [satirical fanzine] distinguished between the genuine creatives who were drawn to the area in search of similarly minded people and the fakes - opportunists who wanted to cash in on this creative hub, or faux artistes pretending to be scruffy and yet having loads of money from their parents. If you laughed out loud at the Shoreditch Twat, then you were real. If you laughed out nervously, looking at others' reactions before you could take the joke, then you were a phoney."*

You might be thinking, yeah but everyone knows that, but in 2000, before the Hoxton tourists, beards and Penny Farthings (it's true there is a guy who rides around on a modern day equivalent all the time) appeared Lida already knew.

In 1935 Walter Benjamin penned *"The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"* in which he proposed that the mechanical reproduction of a work of art devalues the aura of the artefact's uniqueness as art. In 1947 Theodor Adorno wrote *"The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception"* and argued that popular culture is akin to a factory producing standardised cultural goods—films, radio programmes, magazines, etc.—that are used to manipulate mass society into passivity.

Drawing on a life in the 2.5%, those who are the first to know, Lida has created a fantastic new analytical narrative. Its wonderful repetition, circular narratives and granular, sometimes gritty, sometimes beautifully stylish examples bring to life and expose how this all works. It de-mystifies the vagaries of hip, 'on fleek' or cutting-edge culture, how it evolves, changes, commercializes and loses its aura as it's commercialised.

Lida reframes economic "Kondratieff Waves" as cultural waves and demonstrates how it all works and in so doing demonstrates quite how right Adorno and Benjamin were, and still are. It is an impressive analysis from the ground up of what is going on in a world most of us only ever see the commercialised version of. The narrative itself uses the waves and deliberative repetition to hammer the point home – it works!

It's a fun and thought-provoking street-level view into the mechanics of the culture industry and well worth the read! Enjoy the waves.

**Dr Nick Baker**

Chief Research Officer, Savanta

**Non-exec Chair of the MARKET RESEARCH SOCIETY**

I did enjoy your book - it was very inspiring! I've finished your book some time ago and wanted to observe whether the trends you mentioned in the book are also found in Japan. I could observe the trends in Japan, too, like the rise of interest in sustainability and urban farming. Sustainability is already found in mainstream media, but some cool media go further, trying to redefine such things as waste. Waste and urban farming are mostly found in 'cool' media, indeed. The book also answered some questions I had a long time, like why the flagship event of Sustainable Brands is held in Detroit.

As a researcher, I was particularly interested in the way your model captures the value shifts and how they shape patterns of behaviour rather than it being mere trend spotting. As such, the model is indeed robust. It can help brands stay innovative and relevant and, of course, cool for those who wish to be so.

I'm still trying to 'translate' cool media, people, etc., into Japanese context, and the process itself is fun. And it's so difficult to find truly cool media and people - mostly they are cool hunters, I think. Your distinction between 'cool' and 'corporate cool' in this context is both original and helpful. Moreover, your categories of innovators and how they spread the relevant word of mouth between them before it even reaches the early adopter on the innovation diffusion continuum is ground breaking. Although most of us (97.5%) have no access to the innovator universe (the 2.5%), your innovator typologies make it possible to clearly demarcate between the different types and not confuse an early adopter for an innovator and, by the same token, the early majority for early adopters. These distinctions are crucial when using research to support innovation or communication strategies.

Are you going to write another book for 2027? If yes, looking forward to it!

**Akiko Hoshi**

Head of Qualitative Research Advancement  
**INTAGE QUALIS (Japan)**

Lida has been an incredible addition to the Soho House family, both as an influential and instrumental part of our community, but also as an events partner. She has curated and conceptualised sell-out events across the houses which members always have a great thing to say about on their way out. She is vivacious, highly intellectual and charismatic. She is passionate about spreading her knowledge and she just knows what she is talking about, and if you go to one of her talks, I don't doubt that you will find you know exactly what I mean.

**India Bailey**

*Formerly* Events Programming Manager, central London  
**SOHO HOUSE GROUP**

The original premise for *The First to Know* was first presented to the **International Journal of Market Research** for blind reviews (Sep 2007 to April 2008), this is what came back:

Review 1: “This has serious implications for marketers . . . It could revolutionize the way that, for instance, the grey market is perceived and targeted. . . . On the level of methodology [it offers] a truly new thought. Its importance stretches beyond the immediate discipline, pushing the boundaries of all research methodologies to include radical processes”.

Review 2: “It’s good to challenge the prevailing notion of ‘cool’ and the emphasis of young people as ‘style leaders’. It’s also interesting to compare the 1990s and the 2000s to show how youth trends have developed and become mainstream [. . .] A worthwhile contribution”.