

RIP IT UP START AGAIN

27th January 2017

Meet the most disruptive and interesting new start-ups at this informal series of breakfast talks brought to you by Honey at Shoreditch House.

Rip It Up Start Again is a space to share clearly distinct and simplistic stories from entrepreneurs who are disrupting existing business models. This month we hear from two start-ups that were formed off the back of an insight, which drives home a need that was not previously being delivered against.

This series is presented by Honey, a creative consultancy who partner with companies to help transform the way people think, feel and behave in order to build loyalty and drive commercial growth.



ROB PREVETT *at* **D/SRUPTION**

“The Internet of Things (IoT) is growing at a breathtaking pace. The current prediction is that by 2025, around 80 billion ‘smart objects’ will be online, turning physical items into opportunities to gather real time data”

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What did he speak about?

Disruption. Rob shared his early experiences with technology in the retail sector and the realisation that there is limited information on the start-ups transforming our economy. In 2015, he launched the magazine D/sruption and a series of events to help businesses make sense of our changing world.

What's the backstory?

Technology is disrupting every industry and leaders are struggling to anticipate the impact this will have on their businesses. But to predict what the future might look like and to survive this technological revolution, we must start by defining what disruption is.

Rob identified five pillars of disruption: Emerging technology, the Internet of Things, Innovative business models, Advanced Robotics, and Virtual Reality & Augmented Reality & AI.

3D printing now looks set to fundamentally change retail and manufacturing industries. Today it's possible for aspiring fashion designers to create a pair of shoes on an iPad, send them to the Amazon 3D print store, receive a prototype days later, then list the product on Amazon Marketplace to receive a commission every time someone downloads them. Rob realised that businesses need to know more about the start-ups changing our future.



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What is he doing about it?


Discussing new technology and its wider impact on the economy through articles, dinners, round-table events and (by the end of 2017) conferences. Rob spoke about the emerging technology that he believes will have the biggest impact in the short-term – The Internet of Things. This is growing at an incredible rate and is already turning physical objects into data-driven objects, providing real-time insights on things like usage and location.

It is the chatbot economy (which Rob predicts will be the most disruptive since the smartphone) that was the main focus of interest.

Chatbots send more than just text – they are able to interact in real time to improve customer experience and deliver better search results. For instance, Google currently allows a fairly limited search criteria if you are researching your next holiday, but chatbots can comprehend multiple search criteria and replicate the experience of speaking to a knowledgeable travel agent.

Imagine a chatbot that has the ability to alert you when your boiler is about to malfunction. You could ask the chatbot to find local plumbers in the area. The chatbot responds that there are three within a five-mile radius, but one of them doesn't have the best reputation. In other words, it understands conversations in context with your life and has the ability to connect with other apps like Google Maps, Calendar and Uber to perform automated tasks that make your life easier.

Amazon Echo, the voice-controlled smart speaker, is already in widespread use. At the moment chatbots use an augmented decision tree based on your responses (if this, then that), but over time you will get further down that tree before speaking to a human. This same technology could be used to allow consumers to interact with adverts in real-time or even to remotely diagnose medical problems with a percentage of accuracy to reduce strain on the healthcare system.



“The chatbot economy will be the most disruptive since the smartphone”

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Next Steps ...

D/sruption magazine has 20,000 subscribers and a team of over 50 experts who write about disruption, innovation and digital transformation. Rob is helping business leaders to be more aware of the risks and opportunities presented by emerging technology and is launching a series of conferences later this year.

www.disruptionhub.com

Top Q&A's

When are we going to see coding and AI being taught in schools?

There are steps being taken, like Raspberry Pi and the \$5 computer that are making computing more accessible. Ultimately it comes down to the government to make those changes, so I think we will have to wait a few more years before we see these skills entering the classroom.

Should people fear AI?

Technology will have a huge impact on jobs over the coming years. I don't think it will take our jobs as such, but it will change them. A robot or AI will be able to do the menial tasks and allow humans to do the most creative work.

What's the future of retail for the next generation?

Retail has undergone amazing change over the last 15 years. Everything in retail seems to end up back at Amazon at the moment. They are testing Amazon GO in the US and most retailers have a store of some kind on Amazon.



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DANIELE FIANDACA *at* TOKEN MAN

"A McKinsey study into why diversity matters looked at 1,000 of the top companies in the UK and assessed their performance against gender and ethnicity on their board. They found that gender diverse companies perform 35% better than average and ethnically diverse companies perform 35% better."



What did he speak about?

Gender and unconscious bias. As the Co-founder of Token Man, Daniele is tackling sexism and raising awareness of inequality by interviewing CEOs about issues of diversity in the workplace. Men need to be part of this discussion to make change happen.

What's the backstory?

In 2008, Daniele was running Creative Social and hosting events around the world for creative directors. There was an event in Florence where one of the team members took a group photograph of the attendees. The image was used by Creative Social to promote their events, but people remarked on the fact that there was only one woman in the photo. In many ways, this image summarises the creative industry. Until five years ago, only three percent of creative directors in the US were female. Now in the UK, the figure is still only 14%.

As a result of these conversations, Daniele met with SheSays, a creative network for women, and went to a dinner to recruit more women for his events. That evening there were twelve women around the table and Daniele was the only man. He described the feeling of being a minority – how he had no affinity with the conversation and was even cut off mid-sentence. When he was asked a question and all listened he found himself lacking in coherence which was not normal. The experience made Daniele realise what it must feel like for women who work in a space dominated by men.

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What's he doing about it?

Daniele wanted to help male CEOs understand what he had experienced. He met with Emma Perkins (company?) and asked her about the issues around gender diversity. At one point the subject of maternity leave came up. Daniele, forgetting himself, mentioned that people often forget that women make the choice to take nine months' maternity leave. Emma replied, "You assume that's a choice".

Emma joined Daniele in setting up Token Man, an initiative to give men a better understanding of the challenges women face in the creative industry. Token Man has now interviewed fifteen male CEOs about the issues that surround gender diversity in an attempt to motivate them to take action within their organisations.

So what are the key issues? Daniele described them as unconscious bias (which can be assessed using the Harvest Gender Career Test), parental leave (only 2% of parents in the advertising industry took shared parental leave last year and it is still widely assumed that women should stay at home to avoid childcare costs), the gender pay gap, and budgets (many businesses claim that gender equality is a top priority, yet they don't assign any budget towards improving the situation).

But the biggest challenge is the attitude of men. Men don't tend to think about gender because they have never had to. As Hana Tanimura from Google says: "I want a world where little girls don't have to think about gender in the same way my brother has never had to think about gender."

No minority in history has ever affected change without the majority's support, and in many industries men are still the majority. If change is going to happen then men need to serve as champions and advocates of gender equality.

"Only 2% of parents in the advertising industry took shared parental leave last year"

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Next Steps ...

The Token Man interviews with male CEOs have received over 25,000 views and they often lead to real change. In several cases, women received immediate pay increases or promotions to the board shortly after the interview. Daniele is also writing a book called Us about gender diversity.

www.tokenman.org

Top Q&A's

You said you used to hire people who were similar to you. Can we somehow encourage people to identify with others on an emotional level

The first thing we need to do is understand the meaning of unconscious bias, most male CEOs don't know what this is. This can be shaped by how you were brought up. For example, if your mother was at home then you might think of women as staying at home. It's hard to change emotional bias, but I have changed mine over the last two years. You can't just talk about it, you have to put processes in place.

Why are we focused on women going back to work? What's wrong with staying at home to look after the kids?

We're looking at equality and that means having the choice to make those decisions. Because of biases, it's assumed that the mother takes the role and responsibility of childcare. For a lot of women that choice is forced on them. All we are talking about is people having equal choices. At the moment, that choice isn't equal.

Is there a potential problem with gender inequality with regards to AI?

Retail has undergone amazing change over the last 15 years. Now people can buy things using Amazon Echo, or press a button next to their washing machine to order more washing powder. VR will fundamentally change the retail environment, so you could be at home and at the same time walk around a virtual store and buy things. Everything in retail seems to end up back at Amazon at the moment. They are testing Amazon GO in the US and most retailers have a store of some kind on Amazon. The future of retail will be unrecognizable in 10 to 15 years time.

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SIMON STRONG *at* **DOWNLOAD LEARNING**

“The printing press made the process of education faster. Then the internet came along and made it quicker again and gave us the ability to distribute learning even further. But we haven't got better at teaching in 2,000 years.”



What did he speak about?

Education. The fundamental way we teach has been the same for thousands of years. It goes something like this: “I know something that you don't. I'm going to talk at you. Then the magic happens and one day you know it.” Simon spoke about how about he started Download Learning to offer a new way of teaching - one that is already significantly outperforming traditional methods.

What's the backstory?

Simon explained that modern teaching methods are based on the principle of the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve, which demonstrates a decline of memory retention over time - after 20 minutes you can only recall 60% of the information, then after a month it's down to 20% and so on. This is what the education system fights against, so teachers repeat things over a period of time.

Students spend years learning, then a week before the exam they cram in last minute revision. If they have learnt it, why do they need to cram?

Sir Ken Robinson's 2006 TED talk, 'Do schools kill creativity?' is still the most viewed in TED's history. The pressures on education are now totally different than they were in the past, where the primary function of schools was to produce diplomats, soldier and clerics.

The extraordinary pace of change that we are seeing today can often mean that teachers are out of touch with the latest advances in their subjects. As the Managing Partner of the creative agency Human Zoo, Simon decided to use his strategic skills to develop a platform that aims to rip up 20th century education and start again.

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What's he doing about it?

Simon launched Download Learning, an e-learning start-up built around a new learning methodology. Based on the premise of spaced learning at scale, Download identifies mechanisms that instigate the process of moving information from the short-term to the long-term memory. Rather than making superficial changes to teaching methods, Simon developed this programmed in collaboration with Dr Paul Kelley from Oxford University, who has built on the work of neuroscientists such as Douglas Fields.

Dr Kelley found that to create a memory, there are certain triggers and synapses, with a specific time period in which to code them. This means that the traditional repetition of information does work, but the critical variable is the length of time between each repetition. Early studies with the University of Surrey business school showed that Download Learning significantly outperformed other learning methodologies across a sample of 350 students.

However, where Download Learning differs from the traditional methods of teaching is that the next step is learning how to apply information in context, even to an area that you haven't been taught.

This is where Download Learning is bringing together people from different sectors – helping students to overcome cultural literacy and make information accessible without prior knowledge of the 'language' of that specific subject.

There are simple puzzles that businesses do every day – mechanical tasks that can be optimised. You come up with a solution, then hone it and implement it. Simon calls these 'tame problems'. Then there is the other kind, ominously named 'wicked problems'. These are the ones without a stable problem statement, where the problem itself appears inconsistent or nobody agrees on its definition.

One example of a wicked problem might be knife crime. You could argue that knife crime is down to educational, environmental or even a dietary problem. If you decide it's educational, then you begin looking for an educational solution – but that isn't going to solve knife crime.

“Early studies showed that Downloaded Learning significantly outperformed other learning methodologies”



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Next Steps ...

Primary tests show that Download learners acquired 20% more information than traditional learners, 23% more than directed learners and 36% more than independent learners. Simon is now using the Download method to teach everything from police stop and search law (saving the police a combined 2,000 years of learning) to improving recall from health and safety workshops. Expect to hear more about Download modules in the future.

www.humanzoo.biz

Top Q&A's

Do you have any plans to change the way we measure intelligence?

The problem with education is that it's a paradigm. When I was a kid the teachers were concerned because I drew faces in profile rather than portrait. They thought I was either mentally deficient or see the world differently. I stopped drawing at that point. They should have shown me Picasso or Hieroglyphics. At the moment we don't teach intelligence, we inhibit it.

Can Download be applied to informal learning, such as BBC documentaries?

Yes, the process would still work. The way we run this for the educational audience in a business context is to turn learning into behaviour. We also focus on active recall - so rather than telling them, we ask them a question and then adjust their answer. For example, health and safety is the same for an astronaut as it is for a teacher, but the context is different. This is where we bring it to life. So yes, it's applicable to informal learning.

My company is working on a chatbot at the moment and the coding looks like it's written in Russian. Do you have a Download on coding?

Not yet. We looked at going into education, but the problem is overcoming the fear that we will put them out of work. In the corporate sector they have the budget and see the benefit. We don't think of ourselves as a training company, we are a publishing platform. So we are looking at working with thought leaders to take their knowledge and combine that with our method of teaching. As we grow and scale we will be able to go into different areas.



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Want to find out more?

You can watch the session and listen to our speakers on our YouTube channel, or book your place and meet us in person at the next event.

For advice on how to transform your culture and achieve the commercial goals of your company, please contact lulu@honey.co.uk

If you would like to speak at one of our future events, or want to share your disruptive story, get in touch via www.ripitup.co

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