CURRENCIES OF CHANGE

Why customers will expect good behavior to be more than just its own reward.
In 2015, brands who really have a HUMAN side must realize that a million-and-one faux-HUMAN social media voices and brand-vanity ‘experiences’ will never be enough: it’s time for real action.

66% of consumers feel that their relationships with brands are ‘one sided’, with them as the sole contributors and brands as the sole beneficiaries (Edelman, October 2014).

One way that smart brands will take action when it comes to customers’ quest for personal enhancement in 2015? By taking the (ever-more widely adopted) smartphones and wearable devices*, and deploying them to offer more personal, innovative, fun, timely, targeted and ultimately relevant rewards in order to help people achieve their goals.

* Of course, like any trend that caters to such a basic human need, tech-driven innovations aren’t the only solution. Check out some of the low-tech innovations below too.
Digital self-tracking promised to be a self-improvement revolution.

Now, the results are in, and they tell a more nuanced story. It’s true that the uptake of self-tracking has been impressive. For example, 21% of US adults already owned a wearable device (PWC, October 2014), while an online global study of 24,000 consumers in 24 countries found that 8% owned a wearable fitness monitor, 7% a smartwatch, and 6% a wearable health device. 40%, 41% and 39% respectively plan to buy one in the next five years (Accenture, January 2015).

But despite this, evidence shows that self-tracking alone is not an effective long-term motivator for most users.
A third of US consumers who have owned an activity tracker stopped using it within six months.

ENDEAVOUR PARTNERS, JULY 2014
Disappointment with the Quantified Self movement doesn’t change the fact that self-improvement is one of the deepest-rooted imperatives in human nature. What’s more, it’s a fundamental driver of behavior inside the modern consumer arena, where people strive to present an interesting – and aspirational – face to the world.

We know in materially affluent societies, where basic needs are easily met, human motivation quickly shifts away from what I have to who I am. The result is a never-ending quest for personal enhancement that can play out across countless axes: health, formal education, informal skills and knowledge, creativity, ethics, values and many more.

The problem? Other, self-sabotaging impulses and faults that are just as much a part of human nature: lack of motivation, poor time management, loss of focus, and yes, plain old laziness (hey, we’re all guilty ;)

Yet the tension between ‘who I am’ and ‘who I would like to be’ remains.

And the desire for self-improvement is only getting stronger in more affluent (and self-obsessed?!) societies.
In a survey of US consumers, 89% said taking personal responsibility for health is the best way to stay healthy. Meanwhile, 91% admitted to ‘snacking all day on candy, ice-cream and chips’.

NIELSEN, JANUARY 2015
The solution?
Combine new technologies with a deep understanding of human behavior and resolve this tension with compelling rewards that help customers become the people they want to be.
37% of Millennials would be strongly motivated to use a wearable device if it ‘rewarded those who frequently use it with loyalty points’; a figure that rises to 52% if the rewards were monetary.

PWC, OCTOBER 2014
“Brand rewards would work for me because I’d end up telling my friends about the brand and the incentives they were offering, and that would make me feel more obliged to succeed. Any brand that could help me reach my personal goals would become a loved brand for me!”

PASCAL PERROCHON - STRATEGIC PLANNER / FRANCE
“A financial incentive from a brand I love would make me more motivated to stick to a new habit. I think the most effective incentives would be simple; anything too complex and I might give up. But an effective scheme would really show that the brand cares about their customers.”

leticia tanaka - fashion college professor / brazil
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CHANGING THE SELF

See how these brands and businesses are incentivizing change that improves individual wellbeing.
Oscar Insurance

Insurance company rewards consumers for walking
FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING THE SELF

Tencent and Razer

In-game rewards awarded for real-world exercise
FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING THE SELF

Weight Watchers

Campaign offers reduced fees to members who hit weight loss target
FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING THE SELF

SBT

Vending machine swaps cigarettes for leisure experiences
CHANGING FOR SOCIETY

See how these brands are incentivizing consumers who want to be better members of society.

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FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING FOR SOCIETY

Fitbit and Feeding America

Consumers burn calories to give food
FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING FOR SOCIETY

Prince Albert Police Service

Canadian police partner with local businesses to reward civic-minded behavior
FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING FOR SOCIETY

MaximusLife
Online platform for goal tracking syncs with charitable organizations

Your Life. Your Goals. +1
CHANGING FOR THE PLANET

See how these brands are incentivizing consumers who want to live more sustainably.
FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING FOR THE PLANET

Changers CO2
App rewards users who travel sustainably
FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING FOR THE PLANET

Seda
Brazilian haircare brand exchanges shampoo bottles for cellphone credit

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FEATURED INNOVATIONS: CHANGING FOR THE PLANET

McDonald’s
Stockholm citizens pay for burgers using cans

Price List:
10 cans = Hamburger
10 cans = Cheeseburger
40 cans = Big Mac®

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Want to supercharge customer self-improvement?
Apply this trend AND look beyond it!
Time to mint your own CURRENCY OF CHANGE?

Want to apply this trend? Ask: what forms of CHANGE are important to our customers but overlooked by other brands? What is the most compelling currency to offer (rewards, discounts, hard cash)?
Low cost, high reward?

Yes, this trend is being driven by new technologies that enable rewards to be ever more personal and relevant to customers’ aspirations for change. But CURRENCIES OF CHANGE don’t have to be tech-driven or expensive. Check out the creative, low-cost way that McDonald’s showed customers they cared about trash too. Can you come up with a sub-$100 CURRENCIES OF CHANGE initiative?
Apply some **SYMPATHETIC PRICING**

Turn flexible pricing into a lever that supercharges customer self-improvement by offering purposeful discounts that support a shared value. During the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Dutch airline Corendon offered cheap flights to Russia for gay rights activists.
Help your customers develop some **INSTANT SKILLS**

Meaningful self-improvement is at the heart of the CURRENCIES OF CHANGE trend. But customers will also embrace innovations that empower them to produce GREAT results with close to ZERO effort. Hey, everyone wants a shortcut sometimes...
And if all else fails...

Forget incentivizing and find innovative ways to PUNISH customers for bad behavior. The Pavlok wristband, funded on Kickstarter in October 2014, gives a small electric shock when a user fails to meet a personal goal. Whatever works ;)}
If you have any comments, suggestions or questions then please do let us know. Just email:

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