**Adieu advertising agency.**

**Hello Creative Connectivity Agency.**

**Vilvoorde, January 29th, 2016 - In the last 10 years Happiness was one of the agencies in the industry that changed the way advertising is crafted. Both in its thinking and in its iconic work. Happiness managed to put Belgium on the global creative map and contributed to the change of the advertising-industry as a whole. How did an independent Belgian agency get there and why is the industry changing towards a Creative Connectivity sector? Let’s look back so we can move forward.**

**2005: Web 2.0**

2005 was a real milestone in the age of advertising. The founders of Happiness, at that time working for a large international network, knew that the time was right for a brand new kind of agency. And so “Happiness” was born. The first agency that aimed to be a “brand” rather than a law firm with the names of the founders in its name. A brand with, as all brands, a real purpose: helping brands spread Happiness. From small contentment to intense joy. Because brands that spread Happiness matter. And brands that matter do better.

Even though Happiness as a name has a kind of lightness in itself, the purpose of the agency had a very rational ambition: creating an economic lever by spreading happiness and positivism. Which was very important for the guidance of the creative work. Work that always has to start from a positive angle to create positive, feel-good vibes around the brand. The Coat of Arms was chosen as logo to add some “weight” to the lightness. The colors white, gold and black would determine the branding. And all Happiness people would drive a white Toyota Hybrid when Toyota chose to go for the vision of Happiness.

Next to that, the founders of Happiness observed that new ways of thinking and new ways of working together with clients would be necessary in the 2.0 era, where the static web evolved to the interactive web. The vision of the founders was clear: the interactive web would change the way advertising works. From “monologue” to “dialogue”. From “entertainment” to “intertainment”. From “media-centric thinking” to “brand- and consumer-centric thinking”, where “everything and everyone is media”.

In 2005 two kind of agencies could be distinguished.

1) The classical creative agencies, almost all organised in 360° silo’s. Silo’s that all had their managing directors and own business responsibilities. And their creative department, with their creative responsibilities. Ego’s and money stood in the way to make the integration really work for clients who asked for a “brand- and consumer-centric thinking”, that would be executed in the most appropriate media, according to the KPI’s.

2) At the other hand of the spectre, there were the internet agencies who started to create websites that looked like brochures online.

Happiness understood that there was a market gap right in the middle. Use the strategic and creative skills of the “creative agencies” and apply them in an “everything is media” philosophy where there are no more walls and where you no longer think media-centric, but web-centric and put technology as an integral part of the creative process.

New functions were invented by Happiness and took over by other agencies such as Concept Providers/R&D and Content Providers. Thinking “concept” first and then adapting the content, depending on the channels chosen to reach the targets was the way to go.

Iconic work was made and worldwide recognised. The first huge “user generated campaign” was created in 2007 (Aygo Cardance Party- Toyota) with more than 2500 videos put online by the people, which was huge and unseen at the time. This campaign won 2 gold lions in Cannes. The first high-tech campaign, Toyota IQ Font, was created and selected as a one of the 150 Game Changers for 60 Years of Cannes. (Taschen —“Game Changers, the evolution of advertising.”)

Campaigns like “Eos Talking Tree”, incorporating social media long before social media were a real topic and “Let it Ring” for Ouders van Verongelukte Kinderen (Parents of Road Victims) were considered as worldwide trendsetting campaigns.

In 2009, after the big social media community successes of ‘Toyota IQ Font’, ‘Let it Ring’ and ‘Talking Tree’, Happiness added “Everyone is Media” to its thinking.

New trends were created with data-driven campaigns like ‘Pimkie Color Forecast’, which was elected by the prestigious Webby Awards as “most innovative retail website” of 2013.

**2015: Web 3.0**

For the next 10 years Happiness – again - is planning to proof its unique responsiveness to change. And this time it will not only be about adapting the thinking and producing iconic work. That will be the Olympic Minimum. This time it will be about re-inventing the category and even the business itself. This time it will be about saying goodbye to the old era of advertising. Both in the work and in the way we work.

By saying bye bye to the advertising agency and hello to the Creative Connectivity Agency, whose role it is to turn big data into big insights. And big insights into big ideas and content that makes the difference for brands. An agency that thinks “consumer journey centric” versus “consumer centric” and generates happy content along the whole consumer journey. Which has all been made possible through the exponential growth of technology and data.

With “creativity” remaining at the core. Because it’s creativity that will make sure that brands will not only pay “Share of Voice” but will also earn “Share of Choice”.

A new kind of agency that will work in a new kind of way.

Where KPI’s and dashboards will be at the core of the whole working-process.

With slow, fast and real-time content that can be adapted here and now if needed.

With Co-Creative Management where the triangle client-agency-consumer will be in constant interaction to get the creative concept and the content first right and then great.

Again, new functions have been introduced by Happiness: “Connectivity Planners” versus “Media-Planners” and “Investigative Creatives” taking care of the fast content. And a whole new Fast & Real-Time Content Department is set up with photographers, writers, designers, editors, directors and other “friends” of Happiness at immediate disposal.

More than ever, the “Undefined Perpetually Mutating Specimen” as Happiness people call themselves will be mutating, but this time at an even more exponential pace.

Happiness-Brussels.com

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**Editorial note (not for publication)**

Images of Happiness can be downloaded via bebble.be

Interviews or questions vragen for Karen Corrigan, CEO and co-founder Happiness? Contact ilse@bebble.be -0476 98 11 55

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