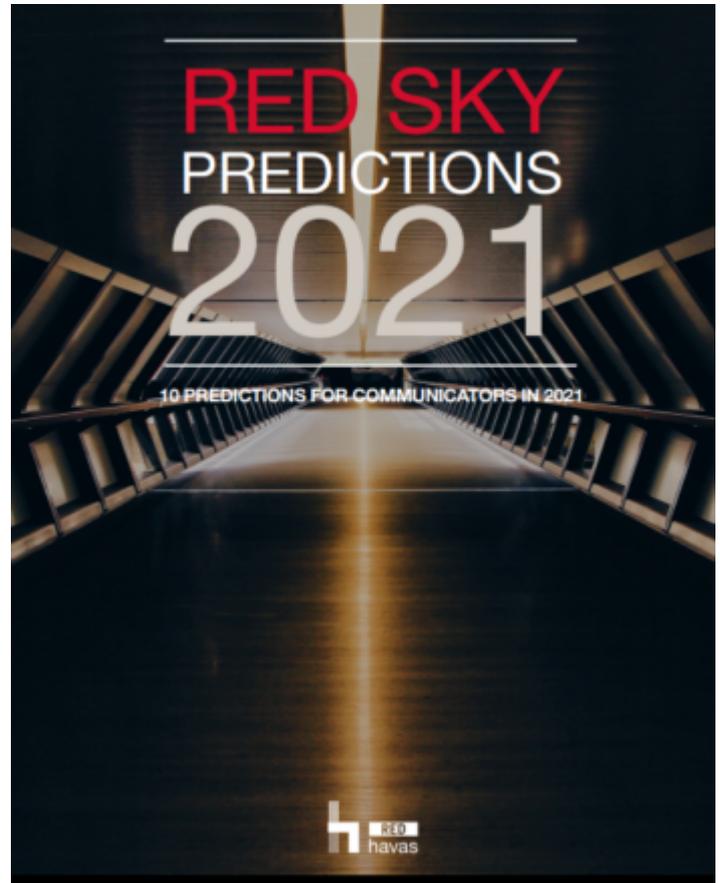


10 Predictions for Communicators in 2021

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Even as many of us stayed home, life did not stand still this past year. Across industries, the pandemic accelerated change to light speed. Many of the trends our agency forecast in previous editions of our annual Red Sky Predictions report were sent freewheeling into fruition. Digital and **social media**, healthcare and technology, the workplace and travel—each was disrupted to the core, bringing a whole mess of challenges, opportunities and imperatives to communicators' doorsteps.

In planning for our 2021 report, Red Havas thought leaders from around the world examined our takeaways from the year we

surrendered to the present instead of trying to control the future. This past year helped us all to see more clearly what's possible, what's vulnerable, what can't wait a day longer, and what we all stand to lose, as individuals and professionals.

In the wake of the most unpredictable year in modern history, we've pulled 10 predictions that will give shape to communicators' new normal. These offer only a taste; the predictions can be explored in full in the 2021 Red Sky Predictions report [here](#).

1. Contactless communications

Expect the future to remain “phyrtual”—a blend of physical and ever-more-satisfying virtual. Once COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to the masses, we'll get to cherry-pick the things we liked about the lockdown life—i.e., the ease of virtual baby showers or the perks of our work-from-home arrangement—while we give the others a big kiss goodbye.

2. The comeback of community

Pre-pandemic, social media had evolved into a place to primarily consume often meaningless content and hash out political differences, playing a sad and decisive role in the polarized nature of society. Now, in spite of concerns about the implications on free speech, social has made a return to its original purpose—human connection—and will enjoy a new golden age of conversation and community-building.

3. In comes the vaccinflencer

“Get out the vaccine” is the new “Get out the vote” for influencers, as they're being called upon to help lead society to the other side of a global healthcare crisis. Much like influencers were a force for good in the early days of the pandemic—encouraging people to stay home, wash their hands and thank healthcare workers—“vaccinflencers” will be expected to

demonstrate continued safe behaviors, spread public health information and encourage mass vaccination. Elsewise, they'll be held accountable.

4. Short form, long form, new form

As the "traditional" rules of content creation lose relevance due to new and disruptive formats, marketers around the globe will go from prioritizing content length and duration to thinking with end goal and experience in mind. Their focus will turn to how they can frame content to fit different channels and formats without being beholden to the supposed limitations of each. What we should be exploring instead are new forms of content such as playable content, tappable content, scrollable content, audible content and shoppable content. In December, for example, Walmart piloted in-app, livestreaming shopping on TikTok.

5. The 5G factor

A disruptive leap beyond 4G, 5G will transform the digital experiences that marketers can create in the virtual world. Merging the realities of physical and virtual, 5G-enabled mobile technology will enable marketers to create live, lifelike, immersive experiences of concerts, sports events and much more.

6. The rise of the empowered employee

Employees have recognized the power of their voice—internally and externally—rebalancing the "employment contract" in a time when public expectations and scrutiny of corporate behavior has never been higher. This is ushering in what stands to be the most sought after type of influencer—employees, whose EGC (employee-generated content) gives brands the kind of behind-the-scenes cred that consumers can trust.

7. Mental muscle matters

Now that behavioral health is part of the mainstream

conversation and the global marketplace, companies will take more responsibility for helping their employees nurture it. Both the media and shareholders will be watching closely because a more than ever a healthy workforce is an effective workforce. Look for more media interest and scrutiny, preventive mental fitness and health initiatives, employee engagement programs and personalized technology solutions.

8. Travel light, travel right

Travelers will place greater importance on booking vacations that bring their family together safely. When they do go farther afield, they will choose opportunities to repair, replenish and regenerate local communities and natural environments in the places they visit.

9. Brand experience becomes sense-ational

2021 is the year when experiential comes to its senses—delivering on the promise of activations that embrace the best of the physical and digital worlds to touch more of the senses at once. While voice will continue to explode, smell and taste will become even more prevalent given touch is a sense that will still be limited for the foreseeable future.

10. The genomics generation

Breakthroughs in genomics will allow billions of people to live longer and healthier lives. Beyond pure pharma and healthcare companies, genomics will move into sports and nutrition, food and drink, skincare, activewear and beyond. Investors who understand its power on both personalized medicine and consumer health could well make a fortune in the coming years, as marketers become savvy about how to elevate the conversation to media and brands.

This year's **Red Sky Predictions report** is intended to be a playbook for communicators and marketers who need help making sense of the lessons the pandemic has taught us so far.

Even as we continue to face some harrowing unknowns, the lessons we've learned have fortified us and future generations. The brave pivots of individuals, organizations, industries and governments around the globe have shown us that agility and resilience are the insurance we need to press forward, that nothing matters if we don't have our health—and one another.