

TRE

ND R

IDE

2015

TRENDREDE 2015

Colofon

Composers of the Trend Speech 2015:

Christine Boland, christineboland.nl

Tony Bosma, extendlimits.nl, @tonybosma

Marcel Bullinga, futurecheck.nl, @futurecheck

Goos Eilander, trendbox.nl, @gooseilander

Tom Kniesmeijer, kniesmeijer.nl, @tomkniesmeijer

Richard Lamb, trendwatcher.com, @richardlamb

Norbert Mirani, sanoma.com, @norbertmirani

Carl Rohde, scienceofthetime.com, @carlrohde

Hilde Roothart, trendslator.nl, @trendslator

Farid Tabarki, studiozeitgeist.eu, @studiozeitgeist

Caroline van Beekhoff, carolinevanbeekhoff.nl, @cvanbeekhoff

Ronald van den Hoff, society30.com, @rvandenhoff

Marie-Lou Witmer, ml.witmer@witmer.nl, @marielouwitmer

This year, Kees Schreuders, ods.nl, contributed – a lot – as ghost writer

The Trend Speech would not have been written without the generous contribution of the following people and companies:

The graphic design was created by Theo Nijse, theonijse.com

The venue, the technique and everything else that added so much to our comfort there was taken care of by Seats2meet.com. The people there are indispensable!

The livestream was taken care of by Powerfield Media, powerfieldmedia.com

The site was designed and implemented by Mindz.com

The printing of TrendRede 2015 was sponsored by Stichting Society30.

The PR around TrendRede 2015 was taken care of by Lewis PR, lewispr.nl

Trendwatcher Sylvie Dieteren was, just like last year, responsible for the English translation of this Trend Speech.

This is the fifth Trend Speech.

Go to trendrede.nl for blogs and additional info.

You can download all Trend Speeches for free. Of course.

For more information about the Trend Speech, contact initiator Tom Kniesmeijer or send an email to info@trendrede.nl

TREND SPEECH 2015 **With this trend speech our first lustrum is an accomplished fact.**

For 5 years we have been signaling milestones and new perspectives and we have also tried to connect them to create a signpost that shows our country the direction the near future will take.

The previous Trend Speech ended with the following observation: everyone is connected with everyone and all connections form and give meaning to the ecosphere in which we move around. Those who look thoroughly see a strongly woven fabric, that thanks to the many cross connections possesses a strong and inventive capacity. Thus we pave the way for not only a fresh look at today's problems but especially for tomorrow's chances.

This year the key question is whether this woven fabric has sufficient strength and resilience to give the transition critical mass. Have the innovators been able to pierce the current structures, to create openings in the old systems? Will the reservoirs of innovation that we discussed last year really flow into society?

We think they will. It is quite obvious that there are several sub movements with different interests. Who believes in and embraces what change, differs per area of interest. We don't know yet how it will all add up. What we do signal are the tendencies and the patterns.

*“If you do not
think about the future,
you cannot have one.”*

John Galsworthy, English writer (1867 – 1933)

The ‘meanwhileness’

The transition from an obsolete system to a necessary new system has an intermediate stage. The old slowly fades away whereas the new has not reached its full strength yet. It is the stage in which the innovation power experiences substantial resistance because the establishment defends its territory. The innovation movement, which started enthusiastically, becomes more circumspect. The steps forward become smaller and more considerate. The delay gives us time to discover the grammar for the new ‘thinking and doing’. However, this year we conclude: There is no stopping now. In the meanwhileness, the Netherlands has developed a strong flock of smart system piercers – and through the holes of the old many small revolutions flow into our society.

Freed from security

Bewilderment and compassion are the two dominant emotions when we look at the world affairs that reach us through the media. Things that we initially saw from a safe distance are suddenly entering our own small circle. The truth seems to be no more than an opinion that people all over the world vivaciously preach. It is not quite clear how cause and effect will relate to one another. What is obvious though is that we can no longer close our eyes to the fact that everything is connected and that our role within the bigger picture will be modest. The only security that we have is insecurity. In this period of ‘meanwhileness’ there is room and time for differentiation, doubt, astonishment and changeableness. The ‘Veerstichting’ even took ‘freed from security’ as theme for its annual symposium.

The interspace

The real pioneers have no doubts and see this period in time as a fertile soil for experiments, often encouraged by the access opportunities the digital world offers them. The holes that have been forced into the old system can be seen as ‘inter-space’, with opportunities and chances for entrepreneurs. Empty offices are confiscated by smaller work communities, temporary pop up stores or cooperating neighborhood communities. This renewal movement manifests itself as a large collection of intertwined small-scale initiatives. Eventually only a few will survive, but together they clearly indicate a direction towards innovation.

From dreaming to doing

Whether it is about economy (Thomas Piketty), industry (Ricardo Semler) or agriculture (Joel Salatin), pioneers and icons of a new Zeitgeist are everywhere and they know how to catch attention. Things are moving fast, now. Examples of

startups we mentioned earlier in one of our Trend Speeches are now considered disruptive leading players. They are beyond dreaming. They act. They give direction to the undercurrent. They shape a reality without obsolete principles and ideas.

AirBnB and Couchsurfing are now the largest hotel chains in the world but they don't possess any hotels. Food Take away from Home (Thuisafgehaald) is the largest supplier of meals in the Netherlands but doesn't possess a single restaurant. Every sector will be influenced by this development. Yet the business model behind these platforms is in principle part of the 'meanwhileness', They have been traditionally financed and have shareholders who focus on dividend and not on ideology. The number of participants turns the platform into a success but when going public the users don't play along. Facebook is a perfect example of this. More and more, platform users will object and protest. The real platforms of a new era have a cooperative base. DAOs arise: Decentralized Anonymous Organizations, in which money and social capital are kept in balance. They work with cryptovaluta, sharing economy, and crowdfunding. Patterns and systems that we have taken for granted for so many years are suddenly under discussion. In 2010, after the first Trend Speech, we could still sense a reluctant attitude. Now the direction of the development is acknowledged and recognized by companies as well as public authorities. Sustainability, holism, individual autonomy, connectivity, sharing significance, circular thinking and doing have already proven their connection power in this 'meanwhileness'.

Conscious incompetence

This year we do sense an eagerness to do things differently, even within the more traditional community players. The observation that we've become stuck in our efficiency rules and accountability reports are widely shared. We are looking for a way out from a stalemate. The desire for safety and control is quickly becoming a snake that bites it's own tail. We find out that we confine the others, our progress and ourselves more and more. What we notice is a restless way of discovering, a search for the cracks in all closed systems. But the moment we find the opening, doubt strikes us. Do we really dare to continue and leave the old behind us? We call this stage 'conscious incompetence'. We know things need to be done differently but we don't know yet what the right alternative will be. Often the needle falls back into its old groove. The good news is that as a community we have made progress, perhaps hesitantly and full of doubt about the steps to be taken, but with a certainty that what we had is now standing in our way.

Meaningless progress

The transformation comes with a lively discussion about the variables that define our truths. What is the relevance of economics, for example? We are so focused on financial growth that it has become a goal in itself. This way progress loses its human component. If we educate children to only gather truth from known facts and figures we disconnect them from their natural curiosity and capacity for innovation. If we keep on expressing everything in money then we ignore a booming alternative economy, in which we generously lend, share and barter. Economics based on possession, status and power thus becomes a science of the past, a study that focuses on meaningless progress. Life has already moved on to a new eco-sphere, in which faith in personal professional power replaces the saying: gaining

FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK FEEDBACK

knowledge through measuring. The abrasive action between a sluggish flow on the surface of macro systems and a sparkling current down below, full of new thinking and doing, characterizes the 'meanwhileness'. We don't need to make much effort to see the discord, if we look at the conflicts that are currently in the news.

Critical reflection

Many companies and their employees conclude that they have lost track of their essence and are wandering in a world that is primarily colored by external expectations and responsibility. Everyone does what either their manager, the shareholder or the provider of subsidies expects them to do, based on protocol, not what one thinks is the right thing to do. Until everyone is stuck. The current 'meanwhileness' forces individuals as well as organizations to focus on what they are actually doing, who they are and why. As mentioned before we see more often that organizations are prepared to develop a strategy focused on the future in order to make progress. But the search for innovation comes with unrest. More often than not complications arise when companies focus on 'self-starting professionalism' without a focus on overall meaning. To give independence without changing the existing control systems doesn't work, but leads to stress, frustration and resistance. For some of us, future perspectives tend to go in the direction of the meaningless. The number of Dutch people who consider themselves lonely has doubled to 14% of the population in three years' time. With young people between 16 and 24 this is 25%. They have a job that they don't like but they are not capable of changing it. They have fewer friends and are actively searching for new contacts on the Internet, and realize that this is not working. They see relevancy change but cannot place themselves within this change. Many young people have no idea who they should be. Finding meaning in the 'meanwhileness' can thus result in embracing extreme ideals.

The new thinking and doing asks for reflection and a sense of reality. The idea that old powers and structures will disappear out of their own accord is naive. A transformation has been made visible by traditional powers momentarily entering all terrains of new initiatives. Banks are heavily participating in crowd funding, for example. The success of the new world must not be judged by its scale but by its direction. We certainly don't want to call the new optimism unrealistic. But the 'meanwhileness' also asks for reflection and vigilance. When the vigilant eye meets the innovative insight, then the connection shapes an enormous synergetic potential.

Changing minds and mending ways: the Netherlands has- cautiously- embraced innovation. We are busy preparing action. The direction is not quite clear for everyone and there is a lot of insecurity and frustration in this 'meanwhileness'. Many of the old systems are rapidly losing their relevance and meaning. People criticize the emptiness of protocols and standardizations that don't fit in with personal relevance. What we see developing is the hunt for new meaning. The coming years we are going to reassess, update and feed our essence as a human being and as an organization, with dynamic content. There where the old falls apart, ' the new' is being built.

“The life of a human being, the freedom of a human being only have meaning as long as their values are not confined.”

Jules Romains, French poet and writer 1885-1972

Reconstruction of Significance

Those who want to build need bricks. If we want to make the old systems superfluous, then we need to pile new bricks, and connect them in unexpected ways. The past 5 years we have described how collectivities tend towards the old fashioned and how citizens, consumers and employees assume the initiative role. The social midfield is shrinking. The basic building brick for the future is the individual, the individual that connects itself in a different, more dynamic and multi-dimensional way. Self-regulating cross connections build themselves up and point towards new methods of working, of citizenship, of life. The individual demands more than respect and self-development: the individual wants to add real and personal meaning to life.

This day and age is an important turning point in time. We tear down old walls, select the most relevant bricks from the ruins and build new patterns. We forecast the reconstruction of significance.

The DNA for the new era

In 2010 we wrote that The Maslow pyramid needs to be extended. The highest level will be: having a sense of meaning. Significance is the DNA for a new era. We want to know what the relevance is of what we do within the context, the bigger entity. The context becomes important, as we can only be significant in relation to others. We move from two-dimensional monetary value towards three-dimensional human value. Fitting in this trend is the newly started discussion on providing citizens with a basic income. Instead of a financial contribution to gross domestic product, status moves towards the personal relevance in the context of work, life and citizenship. We close the gap between prosperity and well being by expressing a rich life in terms of significance and connection, instead of expressing it in money. Real wealth is about realizing your hidden talents and being able to follow your personal drive without reservation.

The other in the others

The consequence of this reconstructing of significance is a reshuffle of interests and priorities. We need a holistic view, to move beyond the demands of the moment and take into consideration our own position within the bigger context. For now, it is not about the speed of the movement but about the direction that we take. Organizations focus on their specific contribution to the sector, the added value

within society. The individual employee demands the space to research his own deviation of the average, in relation to his significance. The biggest challenge - and potential - for the coming years lies in the realization that we work with people who are not copies of ourselves. And never will be. Philosopher Trudy Dehue, in her book *Better People*, makes a plea against standardization and for diversity. We need the other in the others in order to move forward.

The Darwin of data

The interconnectivity of data, people and systems provides us with cars that drive themselves, intelligent clothes and connected pets. The algorithms in our surroundings know more about us than we do ourselves. With their knowledge they improve our lives. And that is why we, without hesitation, want access to a nice app, even in exchange for the most personal information. Somewhere however, in that dataflow full of reviews, photos, and needs, co-listeners hide themselves. Our employer, a store chain, the insurance company. There comes a time when the insured who switches off his health app will be sued for hiding information. Algorithms have already taken over many intellectual tasks, from basic accountancy and jurisdiction to administrative work and parts of journalism. Algorithms are designed in our culture but develop themselves further within their own inherent nature. Software as an autonomous life form is only at the start of its evolution. The discovery towards a better version of ourselves is more tangible and closer than ever. The question is: what is the better version of ourselves? A world in which we apparently don't have manifest needs because the software has already filled them in, before we even can put them into words? A new meaning of disablement will arise in the future: not adapting technology to upgrade your natural body. The biggest challenge for the future is to provide technological expansion and human progress with a common interest and thus synthesis.

From teacher to Direction Motivator

Our learning curve is still based on an educational system whose starting point is exams and achievement and not direction and meaning. But the resistance towards 'examinism' grows. There is a discussion about VMBO: why do we force pupils to learn the theory – which they can't grasp – whereas at the same time they can show their excellent craftsmanship in practice? And why is it not possible for the highly gifted children who get crushed by the wheels of the school system to develop themselves outside the system? Education is ready for a revolution. Interactive digital techniques will partly take over the work of the teacher but never the teacher himself. He will be more important than ever. The teacher becomes a 'Direction Motivator': the one who tries to expose fields of meaning within the pupils who enter his path and knows how to provide them with suitable learning material, not necessarily within the 4 walls of a school.

The reconstruction of markets

Companies also face a revolution of meaning. Much inflated value is leaking out of the market. Marketing tricks don't work anymore. Complete sectors, such as the distributive trades, face difficult times because we can act, produce and communicate peer to peer, real time. The long tail is winning because shelf space offered by the Internet is endless. Newcomers reject thinking in terms of traditional efficiency, in which production methods respect shareholders needs before end user needs. They consider the essential contribution of all resource material against the end

product, and in respect to social significance eliminate dead weight, pollution and waste as much as possible. New joint ventures emerge, in which parties that traditionally follow each other in the production chain, now try to fulfill their social significance together. For example large builders find themselves at the table with technologists, water and energy providers but also psychologists, sociologists and future inhabitants, to decide which building bricks to use for new neighborhoods. It seems an investment at first but it appears to have repaid itself by a new relevance for the new era.

The ingredients are important

When we talk about ingredients for a new era we cannot ignore the role of food. We now only bother ourselves with calories and sugars without realizing how many essential nutrients in our food already have been replaced with artificial ingredients and flavorings. A lot of food has lost its intrinsic significance. A contra movement under the name of 'ingredients matter' makes surprising new choices. The women behind 'Kromkommer' ('crookcumber') take care of disapproved vegetables and make soup of these vegetables that would otherwise be withdrawn from the market. The soup works two ways: it soothes the stomach as well as the mind. The idea for Doctor's Orders originated from frustration by two men who, on the supermarket shelves, saw only snacks that used loads of sugar to glue together not so healthy ingredients, and decided to keep on experimenting with the right, body conscious ingredients till they really came up with a nutritious snack.

Swarming citizens

A political system that again and again focuses on small and short-term effects without regularly zooming out to see the bigger cycle and its own role therein loses territory. The new human being wants a government that doesn't direct but facilitates and dares to connect with the combined strength of connected individuals. That government redefines its own task: defining and guarding the framework in fields such as safety, infrastructure, water and energy. Other topics will either be dealt with by multinationals and multinational institutions or will be passed on to cities, neighborhoods and other connected communities. For example, when citizens take of preventing burglaries in their surroundings, the results are better. A practical starting point is to organize solutions on the level at which the problem occurs. By linking their personal expertise in an alliance of equally minded people, individuals flock together with a clear and temporary goal. The connectivity and the strength and agility, together with the amount to which one's own interests overlap with the group interests, determine the success of the flock.

During the Reconstruction of Significance we experiment with weeding the soil, to see that what newly blossoms can be seen as a sensitive and strong harmonization of meaning, involvement and sustainable thinking and doing. The focus is on the potential of introverts, weirdoes and other non-averages. There is eye and room for topics such as empathy, inspiration and passion where until recently mainly ratio and knowledge were leading. Although there is one condition: as an individual we must not isolate ourselves, but stay connected. This way we can see and develop our own significance within the bigger picture. The assignment for the future is constant reflection on our position within the context, in combination with an appreciation of our personal potential.

*“We can direct humanity
into a better direction,
if we cooperate.
We can create a new
religion which brings
us all together.”*

Wubbo Ockels, physicist, cosmonaut (1946 – 2014)

Orchestration of the Non-Average

When we forecast a Reconstruction of Significance, one can wonder how this will express itself in the dynamics of society. In this third part we describe how we, as non-average people, orchestrate the future, how we can make dualities blend together in order to create newly effective frameworks and more flexible cycles of decision.

We find our unique significance within the field of social cooperation. No one thinks of himself as average anymore. We cherish the uniqueness in ourselves. That is the reason that standardization, which is a confinement of our uniqueness, fits us less and less. We have become a society of non-average people. We zoom in on our unique significance within the social context and zoom out till we have found the bigger picture. Exchanging significance with one another and sharing a common goal leads to exponential change.

Assertive consumers

In the past Trend Speeches, we have regularly concluded that the focus of society is shifting towards the smallest entity, the individual. Citizens want to take the lead and the government decentralizes even in places we don't want to have that responsibility. What arises is the emancipation of the individual within networks of decision making, production and acting. We judge our own part and leeway within society on its merits and don't accept a passive position somewhere in the production chain of goods and services anymore. By the sheer act of consuming we bear responsibility, and with this an interest. Therefore, we tend to become more active and assertive towards shareholders value and management systems.

Chain crunchers

In the first Trend Speech we already gave an example of a complex financial decision cycle: an employee puts his pension contribution in a collective pension fund. The pension fund in its turn carries the money towards a hedge fund. The hedge fund buys the company of the employee. The employee thus indirectly finances his own resignation or his colleague's. The transparency of these – sometimes even perverse – chain principles grows. We see the rise of a 'chain cruncher'. He knows how to

break open the old power system and actively orchestrates the parts that make up the cycle. He tries to get rid of false notes or forces them to strike a clearer tone. A smart reader of the paper ‘NRC Handelsblad’ calculated that the readers could buy the newspaper if they each would lay an equivalent of their annual subscription on the table. This way they would prevent another investment fund from buying the paper – with all its consequences for its freedom of press. It is to be expected that more consumers and citizens will discover their power and will be willing to play the part of chain cruncher. Among individual consumers, employers and citizens so called transmitters arise: technological solutions that connect and exchange information between like-minded individuals. This way critical mass can be reached and action can be taken quickly. That could be via a simple ‘like’, a cooperative bid on your own factory or the start up of crowdsuing.nl. The early transmitters, such as Avaaz or SumOfUs have been discussed in previous Trend Speeches. In a couple of years they are everywhere around us, the swarms of connected individuals that sting existing unjust systems until they resign or concede.

Harmonization of incitements

The harmonization of different driving forces of the people with whom we work and live becomes an important condition to get anything done. The realization that we each have differences in driving forces, makes it necessary to synchronize the significance each individual has for the other. Linear thinking does no longer lead to success, just like top down thinking and strict and worked-out strategies. We were molded to become someone by school and upbringing, to obtain a place within the system. The new basic assumption is that we already are somebody, and that what we are gives us significance. And the total is better off when everyone does the work that best suits his incitements. Organic processes and social rituals are the idiom for the upcoming years. In order to grow, personally as well as collectively, we need the essential other in the others. If we don’t develop new social rituals, then we cannot reach each other in our own strength and will ineffectively be pointing and yelling at the others. It is the Orchestration of the Non-average that shapes our future.

Within the truth lies the future

Solutions for complex problems often hide in new (unexpectedly relevant) connections in or outside the original network. We find growth between old truths. This leads to renewed interest in that which falls outside or between organization principles. In last year’s Trend Speech we mentioned the Manager Holistics. He is hired to have a bird’s eye view of all activities in the work field and from this holistic view he needs to signal and share possible connections and improvements. An example: a company that asks employees who are on prolonged sick leave to come up with ideas to minimize absence through illness. This way the burned-out employee is no longer the weakest link but the bearer of an interest in the work place. This way the company makes use of the total potential of people by generating solutions on the level at which the problems occur.

Living as a craft

The frames become less strict. We learn that we need to make room for an organic build-up, in which things can shape themselves without strict directions (just like the water control of rivers. We make sure there are buffers, river forelands that are temporarily given back to the river). To succeed we need leeway to dream, try and



fail. The talent and the experience of people should have the chance to develop itself again and again, because we will get better results with it. Not only our work but also our live becomes a craft, in which passion, inspiration and empathy are guidelines.

Letting go of feasibility

We have less control than we wish for. We forecast that we say goodbye to the control illusion and this way we learn to let go. Last year we said: if, as an individual, you cannot make it perfect, we’d better make the best of it collectively. There is not one truth behind which we can and will stand collectively. That is why we move towards a society that connects and organizes itself organically, sustainable and flexible. The human dimensions and scope are the starting point. If we want to create we need to let go of the feasibility study as starting point and to allow things to develop themselves intrinsically.

Realism is holism

When reorganizing the creation processes, it is becomes more obvious that all economic sectors are mutually connected – and dependent. The starting point for holistic thinking is, among other things: the shortage of resources, combined with the realization that a sustainable, reusable society is necessary for the continued existence of humanity. Down to earth new market parties zoom out and subsequently zoom in, which results in practical possibilities to improve our relation with resource materials. The mobile factory of Gerard Steijn manufactures some sort of concrete ‘Lego bricks’, with which people in earthquake areas can click into shape their own new and solid houses. The Urgenda foundation for innovation connects government, companies and citizens with numerous initiatives. Ecosystems will arise which not only focus on financial growth but also on continuity in the broadest sense. More and more we will come to a well-considered balance between the individual and the general interest.

Solving dualities

At some point we mentioned the virtividu in an earlier Trend Speech, an individual who decides to live his life mostly virtually. The term can almost be called old fashioned now, because real life has been infused with a lot of virtual elements (e.g. young people who model their sex lives, based on porn images they have found on the Internet). The coming years we will keep entwining virtual reality and daily reality. And we will come to the conclusion that no single software system, no matter how complex, meets the requirements human communication and cooperation demand. We think it is important to give room to human complexity, also within a virtual environment. To know it will never be perfect, but still to develop the best possible software, based on human significance instead of system efficiency. We observe nature and culture melting together and exchanging significance. We observe reality and virtual reality coming together in a hybrid shape. We observe users who are also owners, designers who produce and outsiders who lead teams. The Reconstruction of Significance allows dualities to change into organic, fluid ecospheres without partition walls.

2015

The future is to non-average people who collectively orchestrate their future. We still have to become used to all the newness around us, are still to discover the beauty of the perspective and to learn to understand the grammar of our new language. Only when we have found new words we will be able to really connect to new content. Detached from the absolute truth we are trying to cast new anchors in human dignity. We are going to zoom in and out this coming year, we will try and let go, will fall and rise again. We declare 2015 to be the year in which we interrogate ourselves about our personal significance.

The questions we dare to formulate set the tone for what we will discover. We think that in the past five years we have heard the beginning of a beautiful future melody.