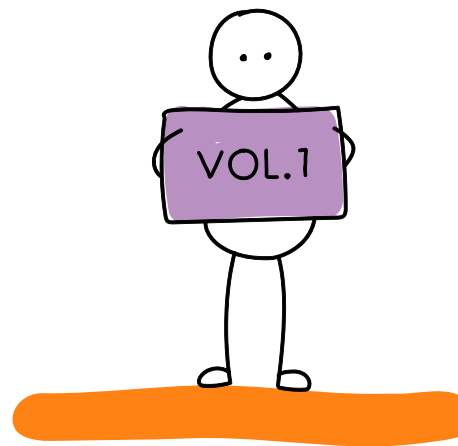


RULES OF TRANSFORMATION



HELLO!



Welcome to the (hopefully) first volume of our Rules of Transformation comics. This is a collection of the first 25 that we've both made and published.

SO MANY RULES!

Because we hate to be boring, we wanted something a little different from all the regular blablabla that you see online. And since a picture tells a 1,000 words, why not do something a little fun and creative?



RULE 01



CHANGE IS A DECISION, NOT A TECHNOLOGY

ED: The first rule has to be something big and grand, of course. And the one overlapping aspect of any transformation project is that it's not really about the technology. Ultimately, technology is something that helps someone, somewhere, do something better. So it's really about enabling people.

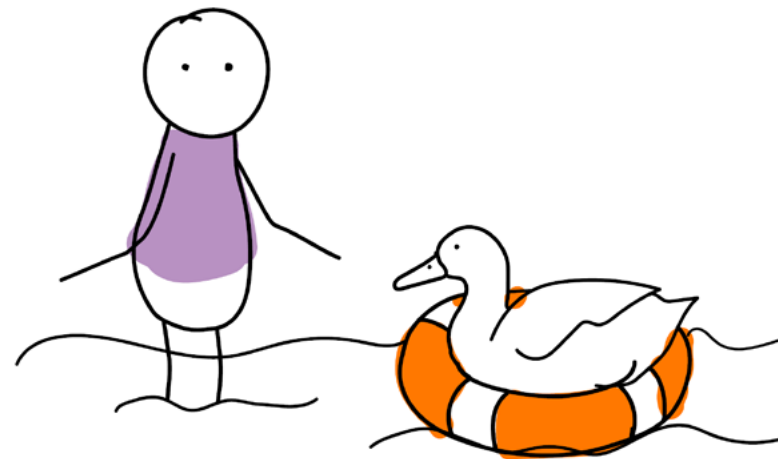
MIKA: The idea for the drawing came from Ed. We both thought the company's update installing itself on the computer was a fun way to introduce the reader to the comic world.

ED: Back in school - my school, at least - we had an expression about "left handed dog biscuits". Nope, I don't know why.

But the general idea and concept always stuck with me. Things can sound innovative, but ultimately aren't doing anything helpful.

MIKA: This was about showing a situation that made no sense. Apart from the duck using a swim ring, going into the water in a t-shirt is also pointless, of course.

RULE 02



IF IT'S NOT SOLVING PROBLEMS, IS IT ACTUALLY INNOVATION?

RULE 03



SERIOUSLY, JUST MAKE THAT BACKUP

MIKA: According to research, up to 80% of IT workers are cat fans.

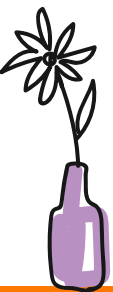
ED: For this one, our original idea was perhaps a little risqué... but then again, isn't good humor always pushing the envelope a little? It's also, whether we want to admit or not, a real thing that can happen. Get those backups in the cloud, people!

But just to secure our own asses... we did also produce a "safe" variant as well. But we have our favorite version!

RULE 03



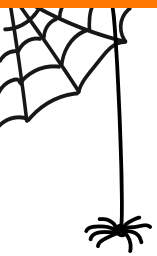
SERIOUSLY, JUST MAKE THAT BACKUP



ED: The biggest thing I learned creating this one is that not everyone has seen Field of Dreams and therefore doesn't get the "if you build it, they will come" reference.

But we did it anyway. Perhaps because it sounds good, or I'm a little biased, or just to see if anyone else has seen that movie I can't be the only one!

Previous designs had a stronger baseball theme but we cut that back, as we wanted the idea to still stick without requiring that level of knowledge.



RULE 04



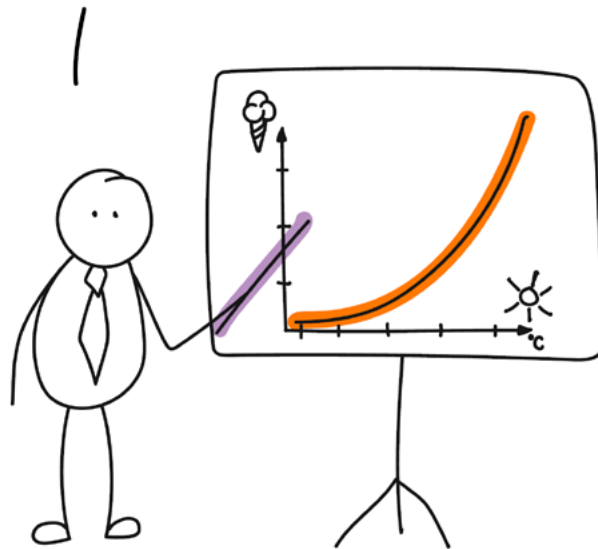
BUILD IT - THEN MARKET IT - AND THEY WILL COME

MIKA: I didn't watch "Field of Dreams" either.

RULE 05



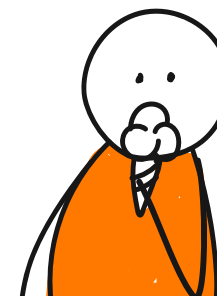
AS YOU CAN SEE, ICE CREAM SALES
ARE HEATING UP THE PLANET.



WHEN DATA CORRELATES, MAKE SURE CAUSE & EFFECT
ARE THE RIGHT WAY AROUND

ED: This was actually one of the very first comics we designed. It's also something born out of our direct experience. Spurious correlations are well known in the data world – two trends that look connected might have little in common at all – but we wanted to strip this down to the basics.

Cause and effect are some of the most basic data principles, so what happens when we get them mixed up? Sure, the computer can plot the graph and identify when two metrics are related but, without direct testing, it's up to human common sense to figure out which one influences the other.



ED: Here's something we all do, but rarely admit! When talking about omnichannel - and mobile commerce especially - we never really say "look, people spend a lot of their time in the bathroom and they're not taking their laptops in there".

Well, we dare to say it. We dare to dream!

On a personal note, I'd wager not many people can claim they've put such a graphic on a company LinkedIn profile and gotten away with it! I'm proud - and relieved! - to say that Unity Group is a very understanding company and open to new ideas. But I still consider it something of a personal achievement!

MIKA: I'm still hoping to achieve more.

RULE 06

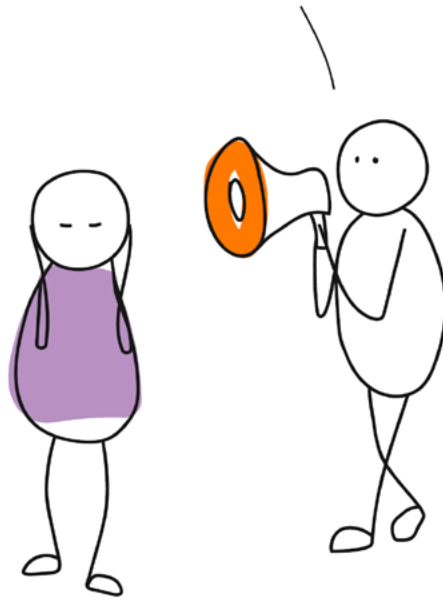


THE DEVICE AT HAND IS THE DEVICE THAT MATTERS

RULE 07



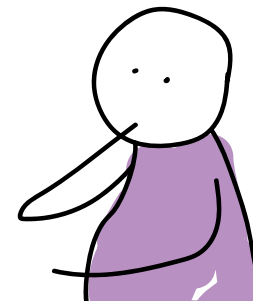
STUFF. BUY IT



"WE SELL STUFF TO PEOPLE" IS NOT A STRATEGY

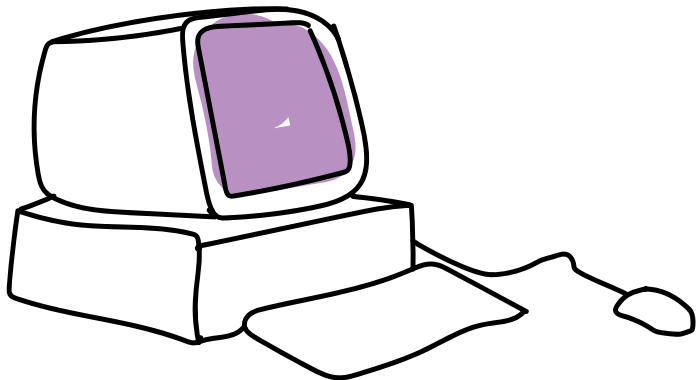
ED: When it comes to memes, we treat them the same was as movie callbacks. If you haven't seen what it's referring to or otherwise drawing from, then you should still be able to enjoy it. That's our prime directive: does the message still work if you don't have insider knowledge from the original reference?

Again, I think this one works really well. But of course I'm very biased! Working in marketing, we know that such a direct approach only works in certain situations. And our business is not one of them!



ED: This one goes beyond transformation and technologies. It's just as important to show the impact of technological choices.

People love to share bad experiences in more detail. But a good experience is "okay" "fine" or even just "not bad". We tend to share less details when happy compared to when we're angry.



RULE 08



Alfred

GOOD SHOP. WILL RETURN



Mr. Green

STUPID UNABLE TO
RENDER EMBEDDED
OBJECT: FILE (£@# SHOP)
NOT FOUND. THE BUTTON
DOESN'T WORK AND...!!!!

SATISFIED CUSTOMERS REMEMBER.
UNSATISFIED CUSTOMERS TALK

RULE 09



90% RATINGS IS GOOD. 100% IS SUSPICIOUS

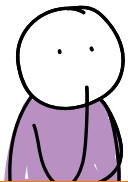
ED: On a similar note... if bad reviews speak louder than good ones, then the really good ones simply look suspicious.

We've all been there. Young companies with nothing but glowing 5-star reviews? Maybe it's just a brilliant company, or maybe all the lower scores got deleted ;)

(Also, at Unity Group that's why we prefer to put you in touch with our other clients, to hear the good words for yourself!)



MIKA: There were many other proposals for this comic. None of them seemed applicable to me.

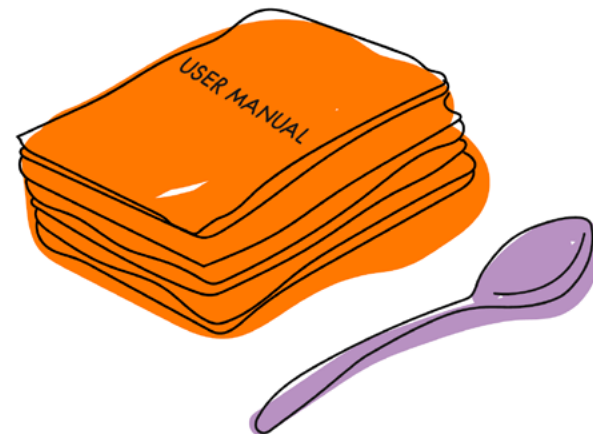


ED: This was one of those comics that was easy to write, but very difficult to visualize.

We spent a lot of time trying to find the right imagery to get the point across easily. We thought about complex machinery for a simple concept, but ultimately we decided that a large user manual would get the idea across better.

Then we tried to think of something that should be simple, like spoons. They don't come with instructions because... well come on!

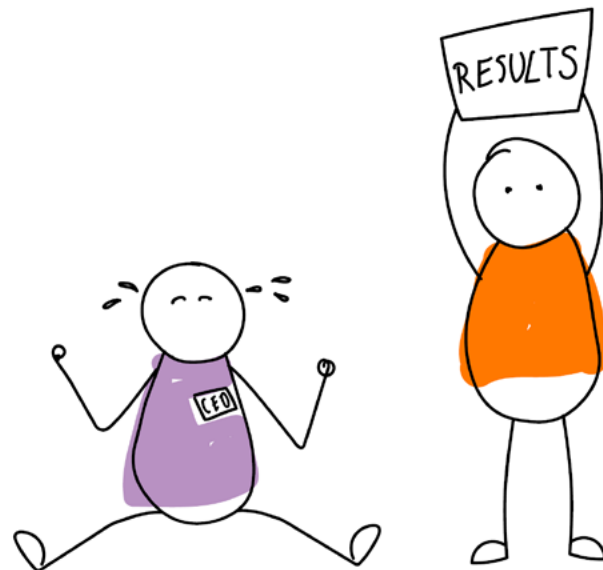
RULE 10



COMPLICATED TO DEVELOP IS FINE. COMPLICATED TO USE IS NOT



RULE 11



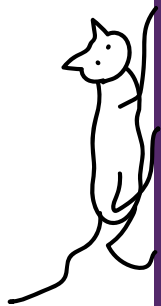
OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS NEEDS AN OBJECTIVE RESPONSE

ED: We're very familiar with data - but we're also familiar with handling data. While data is objective, people have emotions and personal attachments. So even if all the data says something didn't work, somebody has to pull the short straw and tell the boss....

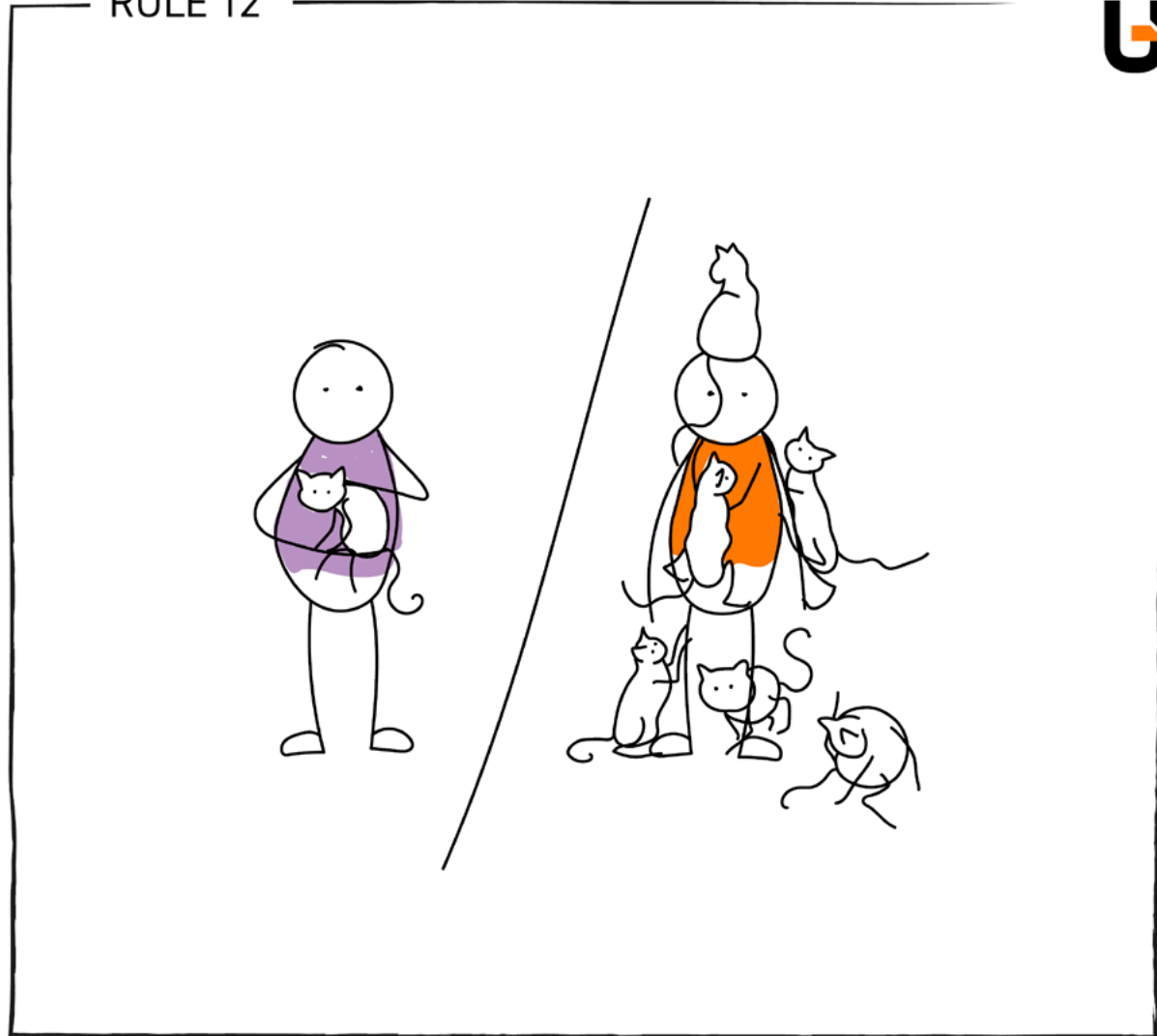
People often forget that data is part of a scientific process. And a key principle there is the cycle of hypothesising, testing, repeat. Even "failed" tests are seen as leading one step closer to the truth. It's the same in business.. you're narrowing down options to find the most successful. That means finding the ones that don't work, too.

ED: We spent a lot of time trying to think of a good visual here. The original idea was inspired by our conversations on integration layers versus older point to point systems. The latter does not scale well when additional points are added. Each new node adds exponentially new layers.

So, what can get out of hand and is popular on the internet? The answer is obviously cats :)



RULE 12

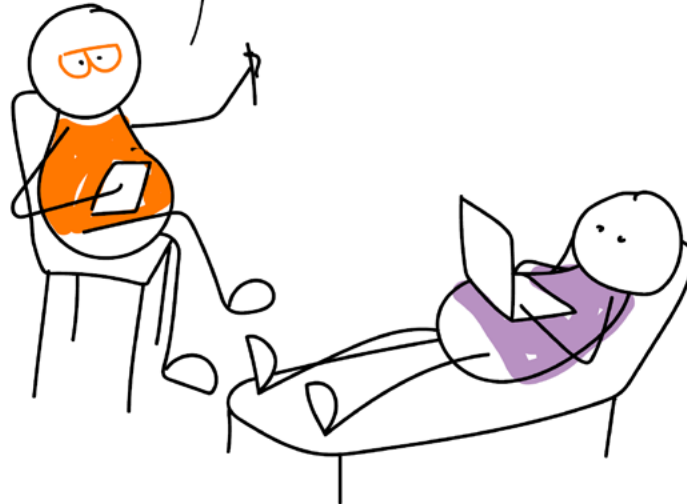


NOT EVERYTHING SCALES WELL

RULE 13



AND THEN CLICK
THE OTHER BUTTON...



TECH SUPPORT AND THERAPY SHOULD BE EASIER
TO TELL APART

MIKA: A therapist for badly designed UX is something that should be included in even basic design proposal packages.

ED: This is one of the comics I'm the most proud of, simply because the idea was finalized very quickly. We've all encountered something confusing, whether it's poorly designed UX, a customer service panel 5 pages deep into a website, or just trying to get through a robotic call center.

Once we had the rule, the visual idea more or less wrote itself! Despite being the "Unlucky 13" comic, this was actually a breeze!

ED: At least in marketing, we have the likes of “account based marketing” “customer centric marketing” and a bunch of other trends that basically state that you’re selling to somebody in that company.

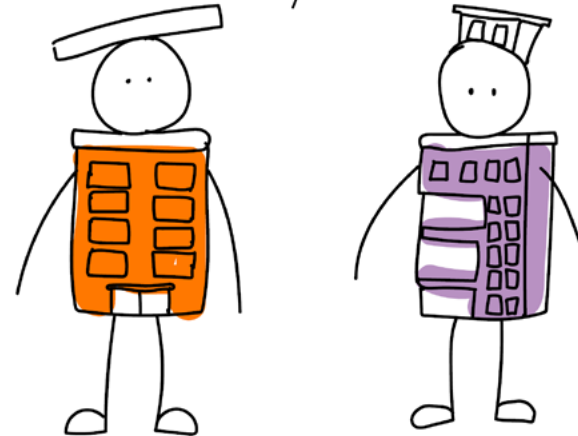
In other words, you are always dealing with another person.

It’s not about what the company wants. Companies can’t speak. It’s all about what specific people in that company want. Different technologies solve different needs... and those needs belong to different people.

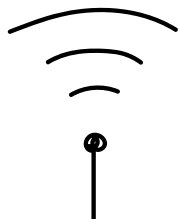
RULE 14



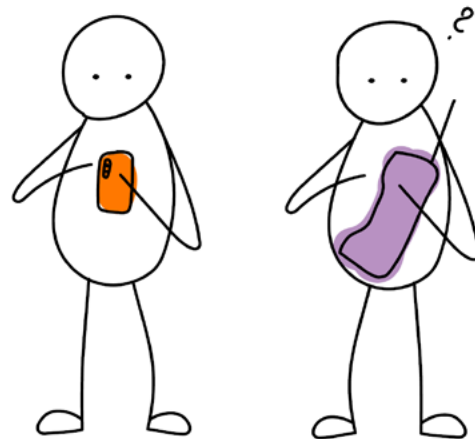
I AM A BUSINESS



B2B IS JUST PERSON-TO-PERSON IN DISGUISE



RULE 15



GREAT TECHNOLOGY IS INVISIBLE.
BAD TECHNOLOGY IS OBVIOUS

ED: Slow loading times, error messages, the famous blue screen of death... bad technology sticks out like a sore thumb. Yet, when it works, you don't notice a thing...

So this is, in many ways, similar to Rule 08. People notice negative things more than they do positive things. But that doesn't mean you can stop investing in quality... because then people notice again.

MIKA: Good technology is a lot like good design - it also goes unnoticed ;)

ED: After showing a man on the toilet, we felt like doing something a little more classy and intellectual.

But just like the pop-culture reference in Rule 4, or the meme reference in Rule 7, we needed to make sure the point still got across without any additional knowledge on Plato, Socrates or Greek Philosophy.

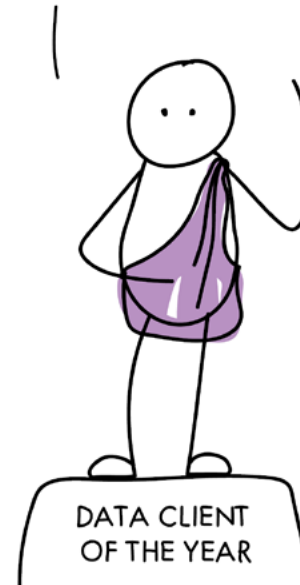
And as someone as smart as you can clearly see, the point is that knowing your limits is better than living in ignorant bliss, as it allows you to move forward and learn new things.



RULE 16



I KNOW THAT
I KNOW NOTHING

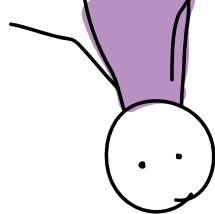


THE FIRST STEP IN DATA SCIENCE IS KNOWING
YOU DON'T KNOW SOMETHING

RULE 17



MOST PRODUCT INFORMATION IS ESSENTIAL TO SOMEONE



ED: The concept here was simple – with Product Information Management, you can easily add and control the info you provide, but what do people need or want to know?

That's easy enough to say, but finding the perfect example, however, was a little trickier. Eventually we settled on spiders because most people don't like them, and "less than 2" doesn't exactly mean zero.

You know... in the same way that your peanuts "might" contain nuts, but the company doesn't want to risk guaranteeing it. If there's a chance something could contain spiders, believe me, I want to know before I buy it!



ED: This one was actually inspired by one of our offices. There's a patch of grass between our Wrocław office and the road that has a path going around it.

Of course, so many people walk in a straight line that the grass has started to fade. In architecture & urban planning, these are called "desire paths". In digital UX, people can't break your website this way, but instead they can give up and go somewhere else. So... better to go with an approach that users expect, right?

RULE 18



GREAT UX NEVER GOES AGAINST INTUITION

RULE 19

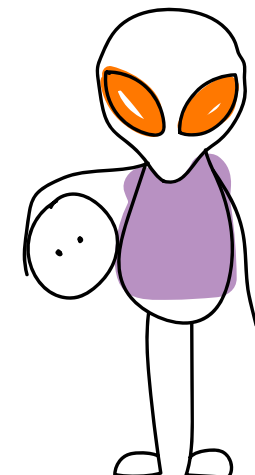


ALL DATA LEADS TO ONE CONCLUSION: HUMANS ARE WEIRD

ED: The text for this one was quite simple, but the visual idea was more tricky. Do we go into some niche area, or do we keep it broad and simple?

Some of our earlier proposals included what we use mobile phones for (i.e – not calling if we can help it) and e-commerce recommendations based on what users buy together.

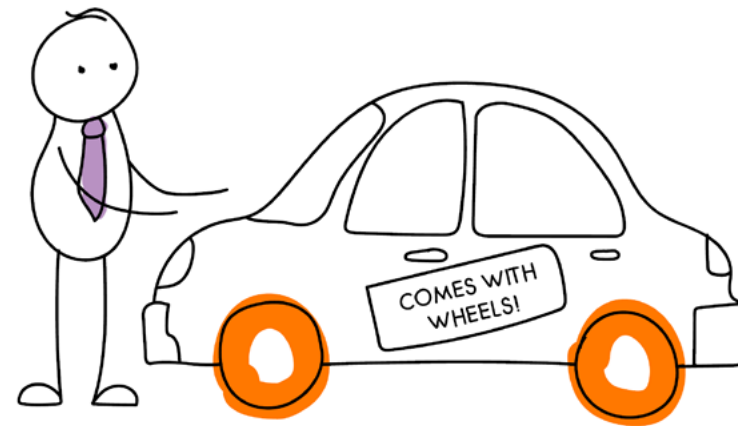
There were a few... inappropriate ideas, so the end result was to keep it simple and let the reader fill in the blanks. And remind them to delete their browser history.



ED: If you can't make fun of yourself, don't make fun of others. So, making fun of marketing was a must here!

There's a (probably) well known adage in marketing that someone buying a shovel doesn't actually want a shovel. They want a hole in the ground. It's obvious to them that a shovel will achieve that. So marketing doesn't go into the specifics of the shovel or attend "Shovel Con" as a gold partner. The product information is still there, sure, but you don't build your marketing or sales pitch around it.

RULE 20



SOME PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE PRODUCT.
OTHERS WORK IN MARKETING



RULE 21



WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, OFFER LEMONS-AS-A-SERVICE

ED: This one is maybe a bit abstract. I wanted to include something about SaaS and, as you can tell, we combined it with the common “when life gives you lemons” idiom.

It’s not exactly wisdom, but it is catchy. It’s both good advice and maybe a cheeky nod to the growing SaaS market - which will only get bigger as we move to composable, nonmonolithic architecture.

... but of course nothing will ever beat the “life gives you lemons” rant from Portal 2.

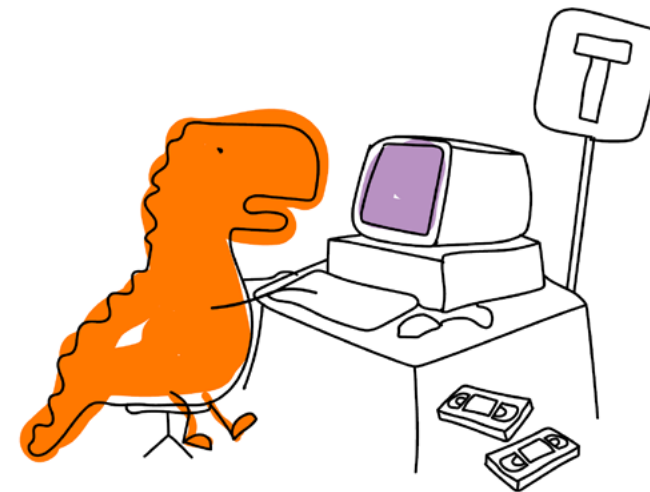
RULE 22



ED: Not every new idea sticks around. VHS won over Betamax, until DVDs came along. And even that's fading into history.

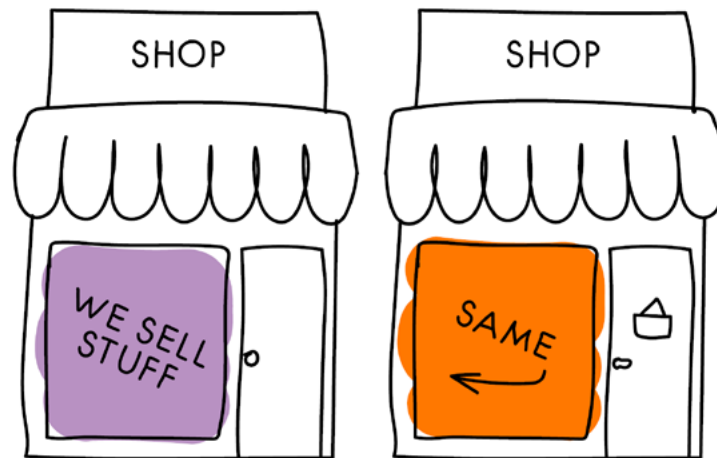
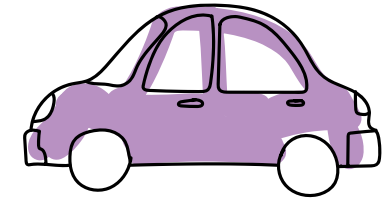
Technologies come and go, so choosing the right options is essential. Today, we're leaning towards modular systems and microservices, so the risk is nowhere near as high as investing in a poorly chosen monolith, but it is still there.

This was a topic that came up a lot during our 25th anniversary in 2022. You might call this rehashing old material, but in marketing we call that "repurposing" so it's fine ;)



INNOVATION AND EVOLUTION BOTH HAVE DEAD ENDS

RULE 23



BENCHMARKS ARE TO BE OVERCOME, NOT COPIED

ED: In both marketing and branding, there's really only two ways to stand out: be different, or be better. Some brands distinguish themselves by higher quality, while others find their own niche or provide products different from the competition. Otherwise, it's a case of diminishing returns.

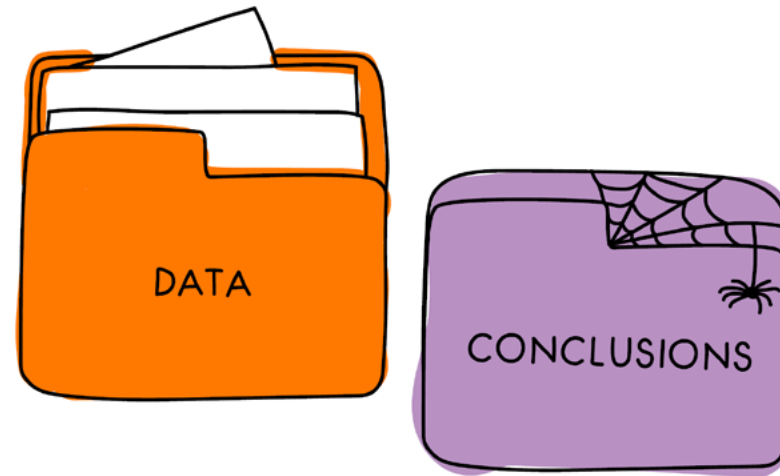
It's really no different in technology either. Yes, we might be a little biased here, but you all know it's still true ;)

ED: Having data and using data are two very different concepts, and we wanted to show that here. You could have volumes of information, but it's all worthless if you don't learn anything from it.

That's actually one of the nuances between data warehouses and data lakes.. what is it you intend to do with the actual data? They both let you build a centralized intelligence solution, but they should still be built around a purpose.

Let's put it another way... what good are answers if you don't have questions?

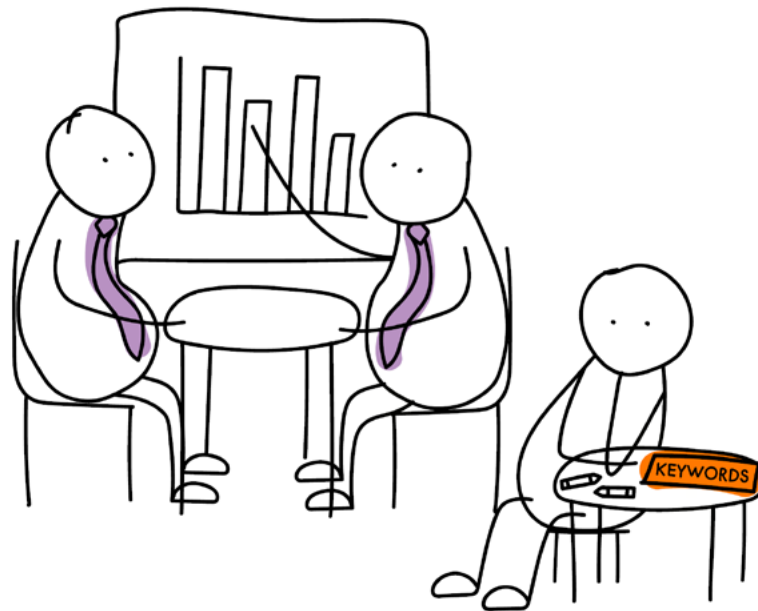
RULE 24



THE DATA YOU USE IS ALWAYS BETTER
THAN THE DATA YOU HAVE



RULE 25



THERE'S A TIME AND A PLACE FOR MARKETING

ED: One more time... let's remind everyone not to take marketing too seriously. As you can see, we don't!

Marketing is an integral part of business, that's true, but it's not the only one. Product research and development, as well as customer intelligence, is equally vital. It's not easy marketing a crappy product!

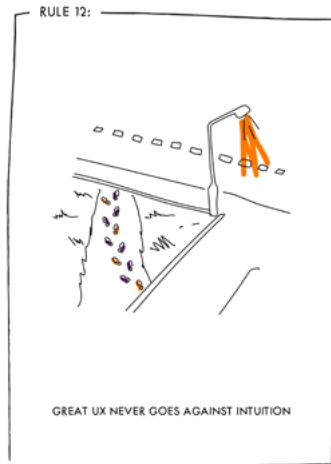
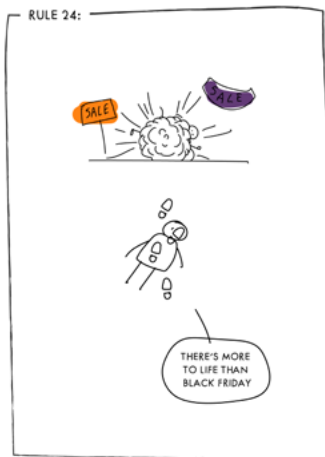
... not that we would know anything about that, of course :)

MIKA: I can confirm. I also know nothing about crappy products.

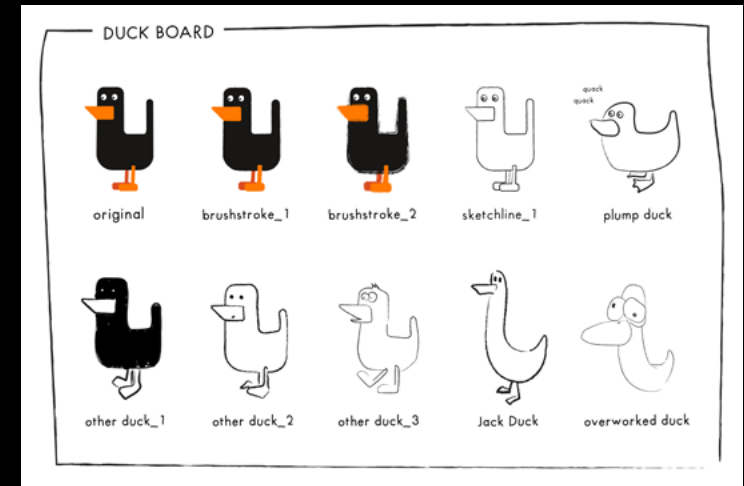
COMIC PROTOTYPES / BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Our comics went through a lengthy design process before we settled on the current style. Take a look at some of the previous designs that we considered.

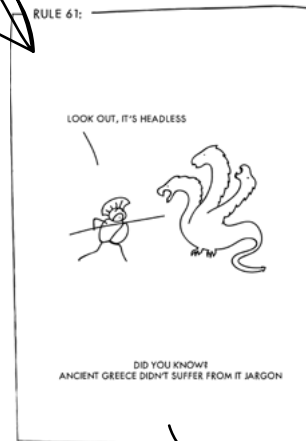




Unity Group signet comic sample;



Unity Group ducks Duffy in unofficial versions;



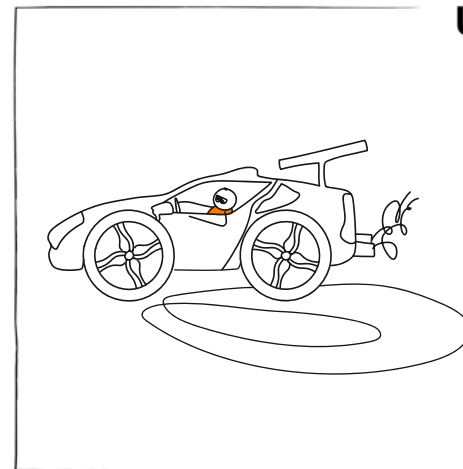
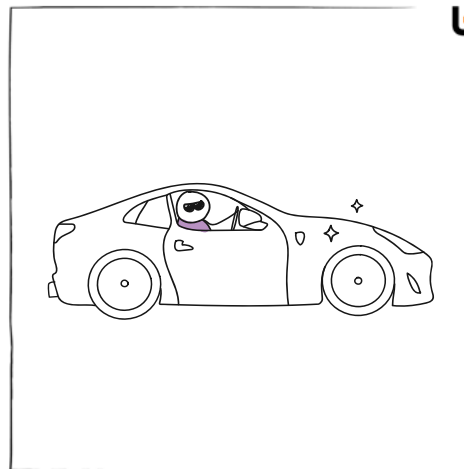
A FINAL WORD ON COMMERCE TRANSFORMATION

Our main specialism at Unity Group is Commerce Transformation – a more refined, results-driven approach to Digital Transformation – and our Rules of Transformation were very much prepared with this in mind.

We wanted to show the common sense, practical approach to transformation, rather than the bells and whistles approach that's often shown elsewhere.

Commerce Transformation

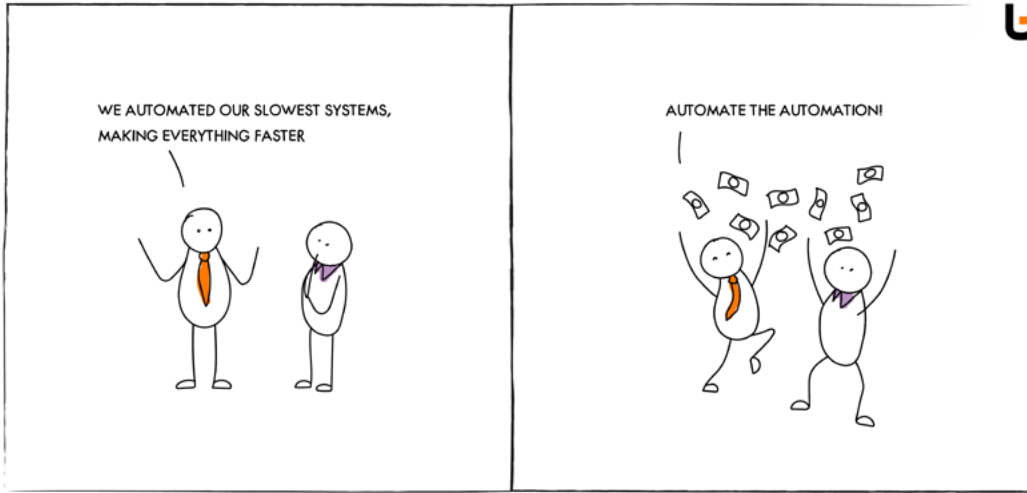
- ✓ Adding technologies to improve internal processes
- ✓ Implementing solutions based around a measurable improvement
- ✓ Being honest when technologies are a bad idea, no matter how much we could profit from it



Digital Transformation

- ✗ Adding digital technologies because "digital"
- ✗ Implementing solutions without necessarily measuring the net benefit
- ✗ Selling the right technologies at the right times for the provider, not the end-user

[OF COURSE, WE MIGHT BE A LITTLE BIASED...]



PICK THE LOGICAL OF TWO CHOICES



TECHNOLOGY CHOICES MATTER



THE DEADLINE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE DESTINATION





Commerce Transformation Days

Did you know we also have our own premier event dedicated to this very topic? Spread across two days and taking place in our hometown of Wrocław, Poland, this is our international space for discussing all things commerce transformation.

So if you like what you've read so far, but want something a little more serious, **come join us!**



2

Days

8th

Edition

20+

Speakers and
Special Guests

30+

Panels and
Workshops

6

Thematic
Tracks

ABOUT UNITY GROUP

Unity Group has been realizing digital commerce transformation solutions < since.1997 > with over 500+ projects completed to date. We offer solutions across 4 key foundations:

Unity Group's interdisciplinary team of experts have worked with leading brands such as: Nestle, McDonald's, SIG, Swiss Re, Credit Agricole, Deutsche Bank, Volkswagen Group, General Motors, OnniBus, GATX, GLS, HP, LPP, RTV Euro AGD and many others. Give us a challenge and we will deliver. **Fully!**

Customer



E-commerce solutions, self-service portals and digital experience platforms to accelerate sales and improve customer engagement.

Data



Business Intelligence and data analytics solutions that drive your company.

Operations



From product information, pricing, inventory and order management to business process digitalization for sustained efficiency.

Core



Robust, scalable and secure IT architecture that powers your business.



ED: Edward Marsh, Inbound & Content Manager at Unity Group.

Master of words, the best guy ever, writer of his own bio... In simple terms, I oversee the development of our website, our blog, case studies and other materials. If you read and/or look at it, there's a good chance me & my team created it. I have over a decade's experience in content marketing, so, at this point, I think I know what I'm doing.

I enjoy humor, creativity and artistic spirits. I also believe it's important to show these human sides in marketing too. So when the bosses aren't looking, I also write comics ;)

(I also have not taken a good photo since the early 2000s. This will not change soon.)

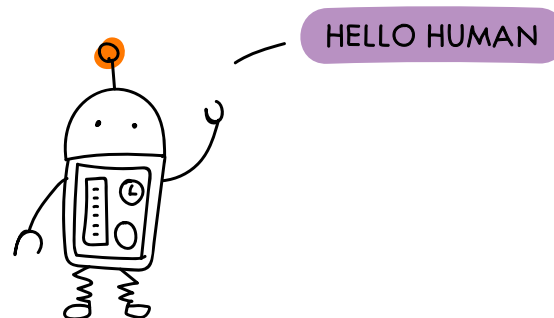


MIKA: Dominika Liter, Graphic Designer, Illustrator at Unity Group.

I create graphic identities, logos, product packaging and promotional materials. I create flyers, posters, books, brochures, catalogs, animations and all informational and advertising materials - both for print and interactive. I have been designing for seven years.

Private: mom of Tymek (4) and dog mom of Raster (9). I have a passion for tattoos and traveling.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



2023