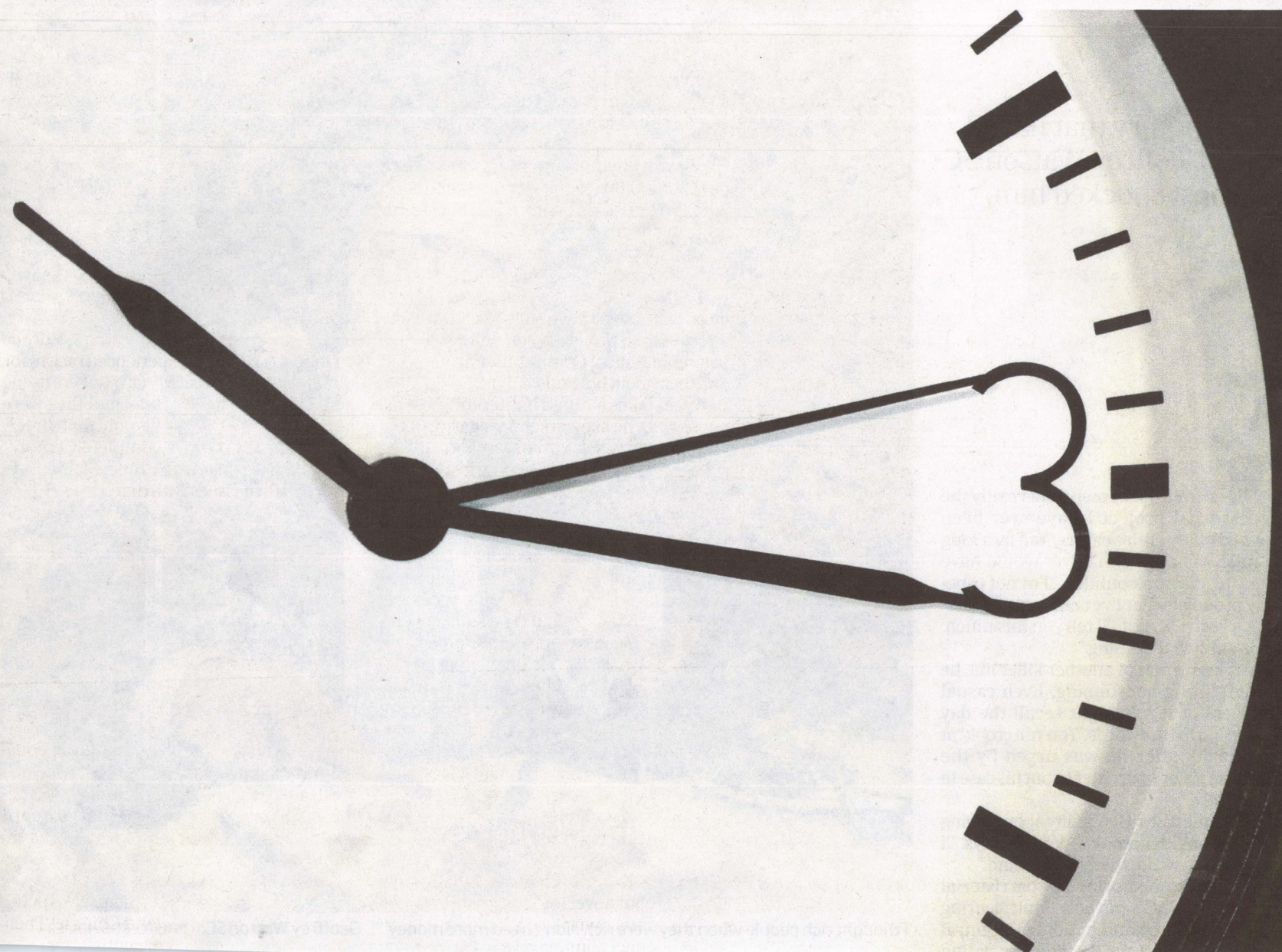


# MY ANALOGUE HEART

**Ideas** As business is discovering, digital appeals to minds, analogue to emotions, writes **Anders Sorman-Nilsson**.



- National farmers' markets listings in the US increased from 2863 in 2000 to 7864 in 2012.

- Americans spend nearly as much on snow sports (\$US53 billion, \$57.7 billion) as they do on internet access (\$US54 billion).

So it was that in June 2012, I jumped on my bike and rode up to the Surry Hills farmers' market. It wasn't so much that I needed anything in particular, but I wanted to escape the urban feel of my apartment, and bypass the food duopoly where I conveniently access supply-chain-optimised and mass-produced fast-moving consumer goods most of the time.

For three hours every Saturday in this spot on Taylor Square, rural meets urban. When you pass through the busy lanes and feel the herbs grown in the Blue Mountains slip between your fingers, when you speak to John who roasts and grinds the coffee beans, and then makes you a handcrafted espresso with a personal history, or when you're given a family insight into the origins of a rye bread recipe, you realise that business can still be local.

The feeling during this shopping experience was different. This time it wasn't about efficiency and speed.

When my family spends time together at Christmas, visits to the supermarket tend to be about digital lists on iPhones, and time-critical missions of hunting and gathering. It's about speed.

And it's the opposite of what food should be about – enjoyment, connection, sharing, caring, slower vibes, personal conversations, savouring, lingering, siestas.

The farmers' market slowed things down for me. I had a chance to connect. A chance to buy things that weren't on a digital list, and to go with my gut instinct – literally.





We crave the connection of a digital Christmas greeting, says Anders Sorman-Nilsson, but forget the analogue people sitting next to us.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

**O**ur emotional hearts are in a constant battle with our rational minds. We buy on emotion. And then we post-rationalise the decision, to make ourselves right.

In other words, if we connect to something with our hearts, we want it and, often, we buy it.

Occasionally (sometimes by procurement's force), we also run the decision past rational filters in our minds. This is why love brands, or "lovemarks", have to win both the hearts and minds of their clients, so that when we are about to make a decision to part with dollars, we feel good about it and can intelligently rationalise our decision to ourselves and others.

Increasingly, the latter process is one that takes place digitally. We browse, compare, download, flick through charts, get digitally educated about specs, and we punch data into Excel spreadsheets, often before we decide to have a face-to-face conversation with an analogue human being.

Our rational minds have gone digital, but our emotional hearts have remained analogue. It's absolutely critical for business survival today to win the analogue, emotional hearts and the digital, rational minds of your clients and prospects.

Think about the analogue environment for a moment. Do you remember your first digital download? Let me remind you, it was probably an illegal act. But there's no shame if you don't remember it. Most likely, it was a fleeting moment in time.

Now contrast that with this. Do you remember the first record, tape or CD you ever got given or bought? I can vividly recall running around at our modest summer house on Ingarö Island outside Stockholm for an entire summer in 1987 singing *The Final Countdown* by Europe. And I didn't speak a single word of English. Nobody really remembers their first digital download, but vinyl is forever. I still have the record. The computer on which I first downloaded from Napster has long been digitally discarded. No wonder analogue vinyl sales are on the rise around the world.

My iPhone, iPad and Macbook Air – even my kitchen stove – give me a more accurate

digital indication of true time than my analogue Swiss Movado watch that I inherited from my grandfather Per.

I regularly have to take this watch in to get it fixed, and have to manually wind it up so that it will keep going. But I do this gladly, and with love. Perhaps not surprisingly, this 70-year-old piece was designed by a company with the motto of "The art of time". Notice it is not the science of time. The language is precise, the watch is not. My analogue watch contrasts sharply with digital clocks that actually know the accurate time. But I keep wearing Per's Movado. Why do I keep wearing it? Is it just an expensive piece of man jewellery? No. We all want a little piece of magic ticking away on our arm.

The analogue watch is also about story. The marketing for these luxury brands picks this up, and encapsulates the communication of timeless (excuse the pun) wisdom. In Patek Philippe's words, "You never truly own a Patek Philippe, you merely look after it for the next generation."

This simple statement, set for an advertisement against a black and white family/son scene in what looks like a wood-panelled office in a Swiss chateau, tells the story of elegance, genes, heritage, timeless quality, curation, sophistication and priceless taste. It sets the watch apart from the idea of ownership and moves it into the space of legacy and guardianship.

Smart move. We wear analogue watches because they connect with our hearts, not our minds. A digital Casio or my iPad could never speak to my heart like my grandfather's Movado does. There is a need for things we don't necessarily and rationally need. Accessory brands thrive on this.

Now, we too must learn from them. Analogue wins hearts. They speak the same language. Digital may rationally be the way to go, but analogue stays in the fight. Digital may democratise, but the analogue still intrigues. Digital is fast, analogue is slow. Digital gives you a snapshot preview, analogue is the film. Digital enables instant access, analogue requires physical effort.

And remember – our rational minds may now be digital, but our somewhat irrational hearts are still analogue.

Ironically, we crave the human connec-

## Do you remember your first digital download? There's no shame if you don't. Most likely, it was a fleeting moment in time.

tion of a digital Christmas SMS, yet sometimes forget about the analogue people we're actually spending Christmas with. Technology has fundamentally shifted our behaviours, and enabled us to text or tweet someone while sitting next to that someone, and we're becoming push notification stimulus addicts.

But simultaneously, we derive increasing value from analogue escapist experiences like the Burning Man art event, yoga, meditation, holidays, religious groups, slow cooking, farmers' markets, and, yes – cross-generational family time.

The more technology changes our communication patterns and our attention spans, the more other things stay the same – things like our need for touch, for timeless patience, for community and for meaning.

As human beings, we're constantly balancing the fast and convenient aspects of the digital world, with the deep and meaningful of the analogue world.

Here are some ways to canvass our digital connectedness:

- In the United Kingdom, Britons spend 128 minutes a day on their smartphones.
- Mobile internet traffic in the UK is projected to increase 40 times by 2016.
- Swedes looked at their smartphones on average 150 times a day in 2011.

But balance this by canvassing analogue escapism:

- Between 2000 and 2011, the total United States private job market shrank by 1.5 per cent, while the American salon and spa job market grew by 18.3 per cent.

**T**oday, people around the world connect by disconnecting. Some turn to meditation, some to downward dog poses, some to extreme sports, some to churches, synagogues, temples and mosques.

Others make pasta from scratch, or make and hang their own chorizo. Some join forces and participate in Tough Mudder events. Others keep bees. Some do bonsai, while others have urban gardens. This is not just about hobbies, it's also about creating mind space away from the 24/7/365 pressures of digital mania.

I was reminded of the value of analogue escape while planning a writing retreat in 2012. As a futurist, I am constantly connected to my devices, and I admit I am often one of the first people on a flight to turn my phone back on to check messages, emails and status updates as soon as we hit the tarmac.

I emailed the landlord of the Injidup Surf Shack on WA's south-west coast that I was about to rent. My question was whether Wi-Fi was available at the house. Kate, the artist slash landlord, responded kindly but firmly. There was no Wi-Fi, there was no TV, there was no DVD player, there was no mobile coverage – that was the point.

Ahaaaa. Solid reminder that sometimes creativity gets boosted by being disconnected from our fast-paced world, and that boredom sometimes equals relaxation and winding down.

We unwind by being unwired. We all need to escape the digital and go analogue from time to time. **W**



*This is an extract from Digilogue: How to Win the Digital Minds and Analogue Hearts of Tomorrow's Customer, excerpted with the permission of the publisher John Wiley & Sons Australia.*

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