# *Generation 404*
## *will change the*   » *business of the future*
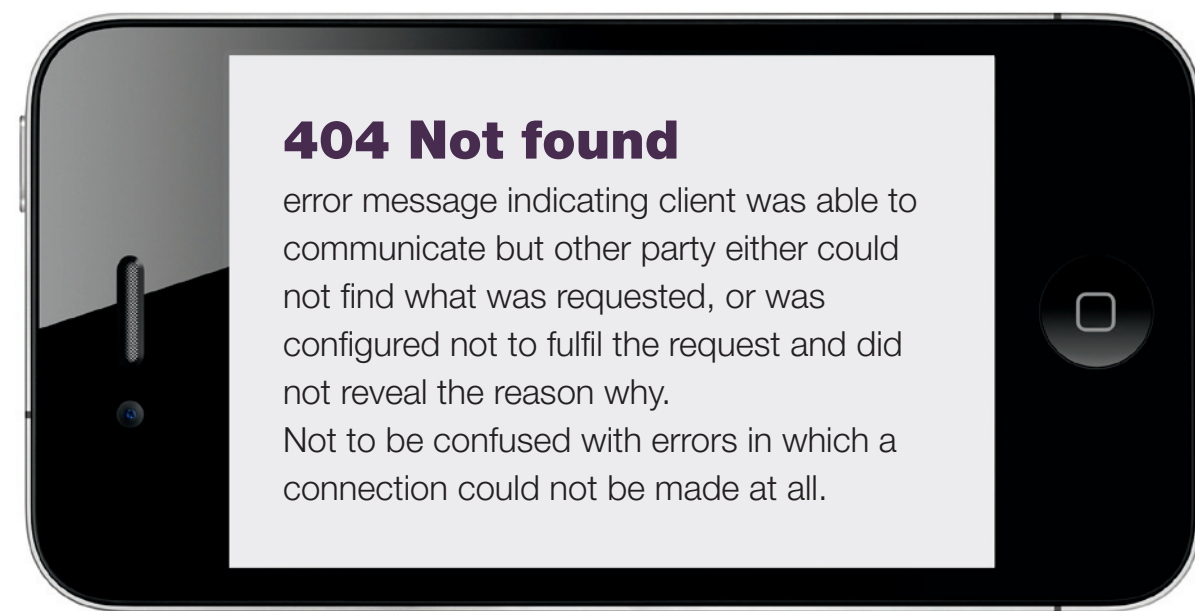
*Generation 404 is a generation that experiences creative freedom. The 404s don't easily get suffocated by dos and don'ts from the Before Google generations. They are too individually educated to listen to collective approaches.*
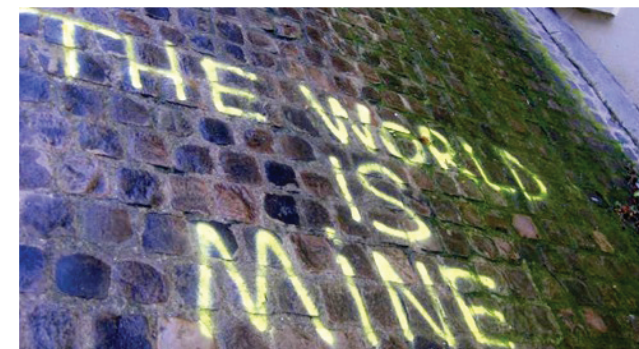*Generation 404's DNA is characterised by a cocktail of the concepts "multi", "sharing" and "open" – and that will change the future.*

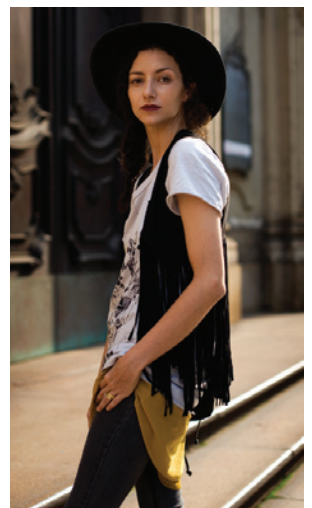*Text and photoes by Kirsten van Dam and Sam Colijn, Out Of Office*

### 404 Not found

error message indicating client was able to communicate but other party either could not find what was requested, or was configured not to fulfil the request and did not reveal the reason why.
Not to be confused with errors in which a connection could not be made at all.

Kirsten van Dam

Sam Colijn

## About Out of Office

Out Of Office is a small, but global, creative business where the original and unique happening feeds imagination, ideas and services for all walks of life. Out Of Office breathes in a multi dimensional and flexible environment, collaborates with all sorts of people and is free from hierarchies and bureaucracy. We recognise our creativity is limited but we understand the strength of sharing knowledge in return.
Out Of Office is inspired to bridge the gap between Generation 404 and the Before Google Generations.
Kirsten van Dam and Sam Colijn from Amsterdam are the founders of Out of Office.

> **"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."**
>
> Albert Einstein

Organizations are increasingly out of touch with the emerging creative economy. This disconnection we have chosen to call 'a 404'.

404 or Not Found error message is a HTTP standard response code indicating that the client was able to communicate with the server but the server could not understand what was requested.

To remain relevant for corporate clients there is a need for a fix to their 404's with the creative minds defining the marketplace of tomorrow. Out Of Office recognizes the cultural barriers between generations and understands that a successful future is about engaging in all.

**Out Of Office, a work philosophy…**

Being Out Of Office makes it easy to take full advantage of our inspired moments. Being Out Of Office means connecting with people - and this is how we drive our economy and our (future) consumers. Being Out Of Office is where you really sense what the needs of today's consumers are really about, and they tell you how to respond accordingly. The main focus for Out Of Office is about refilling a creative consumer insight 24/7. If we suddenly get a big idea, we hop over to the nearest public library or coffee shop. Pull out our laptops, log on to Internet and get busy

*14-årige Tavi Gevinson fra Chicago er blevet verdenskendt for sin blog om mode og er ifølge sig selv bare "en lille 13-årig nørd, som sidder indenfor hele dagen i mærkelige jakker og kønne hatte".*

## *Generation 404 characteristics **versus** Generation Before Google characteristics*

| **Generation 404** | **Generation Before Google** |
|---|---|
| Younger than Jesus | Older than Jesus |
| Entrepreneurial | Employee |
| Open network | Closed network |
| Flat communication | Hierarchy |
| Flexibility | Bureaucracy |
| Serendipity | Routine |
| Multi disciplinary | Focused |
| Passion driven | Revenue driven |
| Trial | error | Risk aversion |
| Embracing knowledge | Maintaining stability |
| Visual thinking | Text driven |
| Co-mingle | Protectionism |
| Positive | Cynical |
| Digital IQ | Offline IQ |
| Empowered women | IT-girls |
| Post Google populism | Intellectualism |

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producing. Seamless. Effortless. No fuss. For every type of industry your motor should be inspiration. Only Inspiration precedes the desire to create, not the other way around.

**Content is King**

Out Of Office recognises that the accelerating chaos our world is in today increases the necessity to accept that the old ways of looking at the world and categorising it is dying. How eager and open are you to new imaginations and applying your business strategy accordingly? Are you just waiting for a miracle to happen, and keep on doing the same thing until you become a boiled frog?

The next generations' business leaders are facing profound challenges and many are brought on by innovation itself. If we want to be able to afford groceries in years to come, we recommend listening closely to the former (i.e. experts and their experiences from the past) avoid the latter (i.e. the ideas and views of experts that are irrelevant in our world today and tomorrow) and connect with the real freaks and visionaries of today and tomorrow. Out Of Office aim to give insight in who these next generations' "visionaries and freaks" are and not least what and who is influencing them visibly or invisibly, online, offline or inline!

**Welcome Generation 404**

If there ever was a time to rip up the rulebooks and start over again, it is now.
Generation 404 has been doing so for a while. Instead of shouting about fears and how business is falling (in numbers), Generation 404 has "nothing to loose". It's a generation who is younger than Jesus and who has been raised in a time when the economy was blossoming. Generation 404 has experienced '"Low Physical and "Mental Barriers" because of European integration & ICT developments and has a more global mindset

than previous generations. As a result, they are a happy and confident generation. It's a generation that experiences creative freedom and don't easily get suffocated by do's and don'ts from the Before Google generations. They are too individually educated to listen to collective approaches. With their desire to create and the technical gear (hard & software) available, they are starting their own little businesses – especially if they can't find their creative freedom within the existing corporations. They find it very difficult to change decision-making processes regarding products and services – especially seeing that the top decisions makers today aren't changing?

One way of cutting through the bureaucracy is to break the old "rules of engagement". Piracy is part of their daily playground – for them it's about replacing inefficient or even corrupt systems. Piracy is a way of getting things done and striving for more.

For Generation 404 digital is no longer something new, it's a given. This creates a gap between the perception of technology in the heads of this generation and their client's perception that digital is a specific discipline. Generation 404 no longer differentiate between "online" and "offline". They connect and engage via their own unique 'Inline' vertical network structures to all their communities. These communities are a foundation for basically everything in life: Friendship, information and business.

**The DNA of Generation 404**

Generation 404's DNA is characterised by a cocktail of "multi", "sharing" and "open".

**Multi** – tasking, using multiple applications, navigating in multi dimensional atmospheres, and believe it or not feel somehow responsible on multiple levels (being the best designer, mother, friend, lover, etc.).

**"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, or the most intelligent, but rather the one most adaptable to change."**

Charles Darwin

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**Sharing** – knowledge, resources, data, disc space, content and it's for real! You won't find symbols as for instance a pictogram showing that photography is prohibited. Neither do they care about whose stealing who's content – as long as you credit the original creator. Heads up for copy left - a licence to inform people how they can reuse and share your creative works. Adios copy right.

**Open** – in the sense of open end transparent networks, open source software that permits users to study, change and improve the software. Open attitudes about capturing imagination on the future meaning and purpose of for instance sustainability, innovation and creativity, but also on future products in housing, clothing, food and interiors. Open dialogues about defining the context in which these products will create meaning.

All in all, Generation 404 is a generation of creative entrepreneurs, 'who walk the talk' and who are more determined than ever to make something amazing happen on their own terms. The businesses that can respond to them and will survive in the long run are those who want to.

**What does this all mean?**

How will Generation 404 influence your business?

If change is moderate, urgency becomes less apparent. Before we know it, we're cooked. Engage your business with Generation 404 and we are not talking overnight!

Beware of the Boiled Frog Syndrome indicating a frog slowly being boiled alive. The premise is that if a frog is placed in boiling water, it will jump out, but if it is placed in cold water that is slowly heated, it will not perceive the danger and will be cooked to death. The anecdote is a metaphor for the inability of people to react to significant changes that occur gradually.                    ⌑

*The "reversed 'c' in a full circle" is the copyleft symbol. It is the copyright symbol mirrored. Unlike the copyright symbol, it has no legal meaning.*

**Copyleft is a play on the word copyright to describe the practice of using copyright law. Copyleft is a general method for making a program (or other work) free**, *and requiring all modified and extended versions of the program to be free as well. The GNU General Public License, originally written by Richard Stallman, was the first copyleft license to see extensive use, and continues to dominate the licensing of copylefted software. Creative Commons, a non-profit organization founded by Lawrence Lessig, provides a similar license called Share-Alike.*

**Key Trend research resources**

*Dialogues with many generation 404-ers (like the initiators of Jimmy The Man Tours)*

*Interview with Joop Hazenberg: A generation 404 Dutch Politician*

*Insights from Cartoonist Hugh Macleod from blog: gapingvoid.com*