

Prompt

In 500 words or fewer, please discuss (1) where in *Hit Makers* you see evidence of the themes of leadership style, creative problem solving, and/or issues of identity and how we communicate with the worlds we walk in, (2) how those themes relate to your own personal narrative and professional ambitions, and, therefore, (3) what communication dilemma are you drawn toward and why.

Letter of Intent 2.0

In his book *Hit Makers*, Derek Thompson reasons why movies, books, and items become hits, both locally and globally. Thompson attributes this popularity to the aspect of mixing the familiar with new ideas, yet not all successes can be ascribed to this algorithm.

Geena Davis was an actress and Olympic semifinalist who observed a lack of diversity and strong female characters in children's entertainment. She teamed up with Madeline Di Nonno and in 2009 created the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. The Institute funded a study demonstrating the lack of females in authoritative positions within the entertainment industry (Thompson, 2017, p. 125). Davis recognized a downfall in the entertainment industry and used her name and talents to creatively work towards a solution.

While Davis combatted the problem of gender discrimination in the entertainment industry, Steve Jobs led the technology field with his innovativeness and leadership skills. When Jobs introduced the iPhone in 2007, he presented a device incorporating the familiar features of a touch screen, music player, phone, and internet access in a solitary machine. Although familiar features were present, the iPhone was deemed useless because consumers had these features separately in their iPods and cell phones. Today, the iPhone is the most profitable hardware invention of the last fifty years (Thompson, 2017, p. 232). With a single all-in-one device, Jobs revolutionized a market that was unaware of its shortcomings.

It was the shortcomings of Vinha Da Manta, a hostel at which I worked in Portugal, that led me to problem solve on their behalf. Like most hostels, guests primarily booked through third-party websites where the hostel was advertised solely through pictures. With complete reliance on photos, Vinha Da Manta had trouble roping in guests. In the same way that Davis saw issues in the entertainment industry, I saw issues in the promotion of a hostel unable to reach their full potential. I created a promotional video not only showcasing the hostel, but the surrounding areas. In a few days, this video reached over 1,000 people. Any preconceived notions or gaps left in the minds of potential guests who viewed the photos were soon erased with this video revealing the beauty and tranquility of Vinha Da Manta. The positive reactions and responses towards the video are what I want to elicit with my future work.

Connecting with others in an age where technology is the main channel for communication, is easy in theory. Technology has distanced people from face-to-face contact. While apps such as Bumble and Tinder aim to bond people based on appearances and a short personal synopsis, they allow users to profile and fail to connect people on a more personal level. Much like Vinha Da Manta, people and places are more alluring the more you know about them. I am interested in connecting people through hobbies and similarities rather than looks and a 200-character bio. By connecting people through similarities first, people are able to bond at a deeper level and thus truly connect.