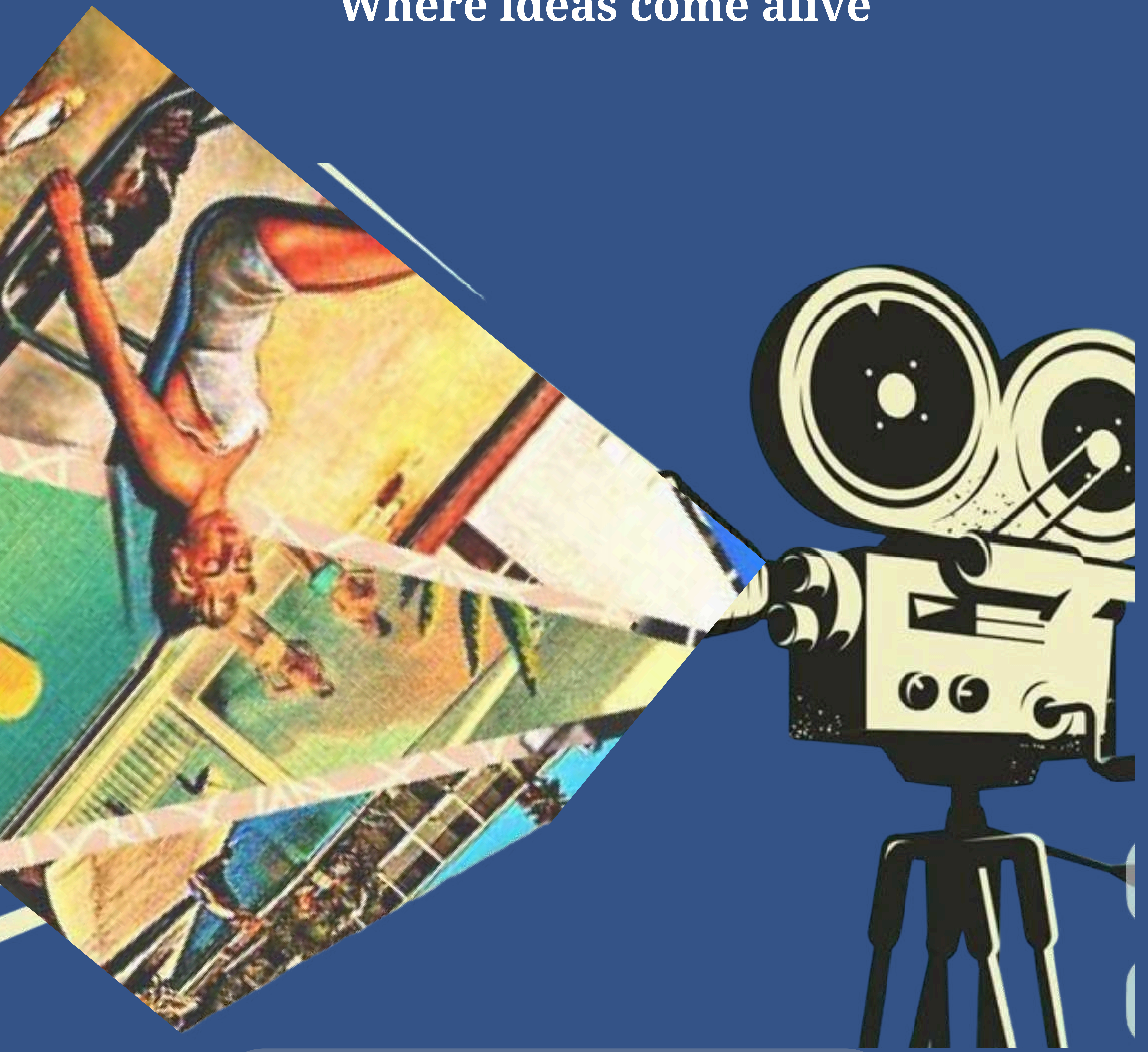
S.P MANDALI'S weschool Welingkar Education

YEAR 2025 | ISSUE 161

samvad

MEDIA LENS

Where ideas come alive



WeChat

Manisha Jiwani

Assistant Manager, Corporate Communications, Dream Sports

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

It gives me great pride to introduce SAMVAD's edition every month. Our SAMVAD team's efforts seem to be paying off, and our readers seem to be hooked onto our magazine. At WeSchool, we try to acquire as much knowledge as possible and share it with everyone.

Prof. Dr. Uday Salunkhe
Group Director

In the journey of 2025, I sincerely hope that SAMVAD will reach new heights with the unmatched enthusiasm and talent of the entire team.

Here at WeSchool, we believe in the concept of AAA: Acquire Apply and Assimilate. The knowledge you have acquired over the last couple of months will be applied somewhere down the line. When you carry out a process repeatedly, it becomes ingrained in you and eventually tends to come out effortlessly. This is when you have assimilated all the knowledge that you have gathered.

At WeSchool, we aspire to be the best and unique, and we expect nothing but the extraordinary from all those who join our college. From the point of view of our magazine, we look forward to having more readers and having more contributions from our new readers.

SAMVAD is a platform to share and acquire knowledge and develop ourselves into integrative managers. Our earnest desire is to disseminate our knowledge and experience with not only WeSchool students but also the society at large.

Prof. Dr. Uday Salunkhe,
Group Director

ABOUT US

OUR VISION

"To nurture thought leaders and practitioners through inventive education."

CORE VALUES

Breakthrough Thinking and Breakthrough Execution
Result Oriented, Process Driven Work Ethic
We Link and Care
Passion

"The illiterate of this century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." -Alvin Toffler.

At WeSchool, we are deeply inspired by the words of this great American writer and futurist. Undoubtedly, being convinced of the need for a radical change in management education, we decided to tread the path that led to the corporate revolution.

Emerging unarticulated needs and realities require a new approach in both thought and action. Cross-disciplinary learning, discovering, scrutinizing, prototyping, learning to create and destroy the mind's eye needs to be nurtured differently.

WeSchool has chosen the 'design thinking' approach towards management education. All our efforts and manifestations, as a result, stem from the integration of design thinking into management education. We dream of creating an environment conducive to experiential learning.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the **161st Issue of Samvad!**

SAMVAD is a platform for “Inspiring Futuristic Ideas”, we constantly strive to provide thought-provoking articles that add value to your management education.

We have an audacious goal of becoming one of the most coveted business magazines for B-school students as well as industry experts across the country. To help this dream become a reality, we invite articles from all management domains, giving a holistic view and bridging the gap between industry veterans and students through our WeChat section.

In this special issue of SAMVAD, we turn our focus to the dynamic and influential theme of ‘Media Lens’, featuring an exclusive interaction with **Manisha Jiwani**, who shares invaluable perspectives on how media continues to shape narratives, public opinion, and business ecosystems in today’s hyperconnected world. This issue brings forward the conversations that matter—about the power, responsibility, and evolution of media in an era defined by information overload and digital disruption.

Every headline, broadcast, and social media post does more than just inform—it frames perspectives, influences policy, and drives collective action. The media is no longer a passive messenger; it has become a powerful stakeholder in shaping economies, democracies, and even corporate strategies. In times of rapid technological advancement and rising concerns over misinformation, the way we consume and interpret media has never been more significant.

In this edition, we delve into the transformational role of media—from traditional print and television to the digital-first platforms redefining engagement. We examine the impact of social media on brand building, political campaigns, and grassroots activism, while also addressing the ethical dilemmas of fake news, bias, and responsible journalism.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Through thoughtful analysis and expert viewpoints, we highlight how media acts both as a mirror of society and as an architect of change.

As students, professionals, and citizens of a knowledge-driven economy, developing a critical media literacy equips us to differentiate fact from noise, and empowers us to use media as a tool for learning, advocacy, and leadership. With a mix of insightful articles, interviews, and creative infographics, this edition of SAMVAD seeks to offer readers a holistic view of the media landscape—through the very lens that influences the way we see our world.

A heartfelt thanks to the editorial team, faculty mentors, and contributors who have shaped this issue with dedication and clarity.

We hope you have a great time reading SAMVAD!
Let’s read, share and grow together!

Best Regards,
Team Samvad

Index

Pg. No.

Manisha Jiwani

Assistant Manager | Corporate Communications, Dream Sports

PGDM, Media and Entertainment, Batch: 2016 - 2018

You've spent over 7 years helping brands tell their stories. In a world where people scroll so fast, how do you create a message that actually gets noticed and feels real?

I believe this has multiple layers — it's about finding the right time, platform, format, audience pulse, and aligning with external trends. For example, if you promote a product or service when there's little market appetite, it won't get the response you expect. Similarly, using the wrong channel to reach your target audience will cause you to miss the mark .

However, when you align the message with the right people, at the right time, through the right platform, the results can be far more impactful. Equally important is building a genuine connection with your audience —understanding their needs and positioning your product or service in a way that feels relevant and beneficial, not only to them but to the society as a whole.

In an era of fast-paced digital media and viral content, how important do you think it is to maintain truth and honesty in communication, and how can professionals ensure it while staying competitive?

As rightly mentioned, today's world and generation is deeply immersed — or might I say hooked, on digital media and viral content. But it's equally important to remember that with this growing dependence comes the question: how real or truthful is this content? While digital media is fast and real-time, it can also be easily misused to create false narratives or spread fake news.

Honesty and transparency remain key pillars of communication, and regardless of external influences or the ever-increasing dominance of digital platforms, I believe they will always stand the test of time.

WeChat

With so many platforms around—Instagram, LinkedIn, news websites—how do you choose the right one to speak to your audience? And do things like press releases still matter today?

Over time, traditional media has evolved significantly, and journalism today is very different from what it once was. The type of content consumed across platforms has also changed dramatically in recent years driven by changing audience behaviours and digital advancements. Each platform now holds its own unique relevance.

For instance, if you want to highlight something with strong visual appeal, Instagram would be the ideal choice. To engage business stakeholders or attract potential employees where the tone is more professional, LinkedIn works best. But if you're launching a product, announcing a merger or acquisition, or sharing a brand's future roadmap, nothing beats the credibility of a traditional newspaper (yes, people still read them!) or a trusted news website carrying authentic stories - and this is where a well-written press release plays a vital role, ensuring your news is clear, accurate, and more likely to gain coverage across multiple channels and regions.

What's the biggest misconception about working in media and communications?

One of the biggest misconceptions about working in media and communications is that public relations is just like advertising — that it's paid and you can simply push out any message you want. In reality, communications is non-paid and organic. It relies on creative storytelling and crafting honest, compelling narratives to genuinely engage the media.

Another common misconception is that communications is only about drafting and sending press releases. What often goes unseen is the work that happens beyond that — ensuring the right narrative goes out at the right time, keeping messages and values consistent across all channels, aligning both internal and external teams and managing sensitive situations promptly and with care.

For students who want to get into branding, media, or communication—what's one simple habit or mind-set you think they should start building today?

I believe it's important to evolve with the times. As I mentioned earlier, things aren't the same as they were even five or two years ago. The rise of AI is a perfect example. You need to stay on top of the latest developments because the world is moving fast, and it's imperative to keep pace. If you can't run alongside it, at least walk, because if you stop, it's easy to get left behind.

Equally important, especially in the media and communications industry, is to start building meaningful relationships early on—with the media as well as with other stakeholders. It's often said this industry is a small world, and the connections you form today can prove invaluable later, whether you're switching jobs or even moving across sectors. Every relationship matters, so it's important not just to build them, but to nurture and sustain them over time.

Leadership role in handling Leadership role in Misinformation and Media-led crisis

Winner

Ananya Mishra
Galgotias College of Engineering and Technology
MBA(2025-2027)
General Management

THE TRUTH TRAP: HOW LEADERS SURVIVE MISINFORMATION IN A MEDIA- OBSESSED WORLD

It did not start with a scandal, it started with a screenshot.One image, cropped, misleading- Posted at 2:17 AM by an anonymous account with 300 followers. By 9:00 AM, it had 2 million views.
The company's name was trending. Accusations were flying, employees were panicking, customers were angry and the CEO who had not even had her morning coffee was already in a crisis meeting.
She looked at the screen, then at her team. Legal, HR, Communications. Everyone was silent.
Then she said, "We didn't do what they're saying. But if we don't act fast, it won't matter."
That's how misinformation works. It doesn't wait for the truth. It builds its own.

From midnight post to morning panic: the anatomy of a viral misinformation event.
Source: MIT Media Lab

Source: Created by Microsoft Copilot
This flowchart illustrates the rapid escalation of misinformation, from a misleading post to widespread panic within hours.

The Age of Instant Judgment
We live in a world where perception spreads faster than facts. A single tweet can destroy a reputation. A viral video can rewrite a company's story.

And once the internet decides what it believes, facts become background noise. This is not just a media problem, it's a leadership problem.

Because when the storm hits, people don't look for statements. They look for someone to trust.

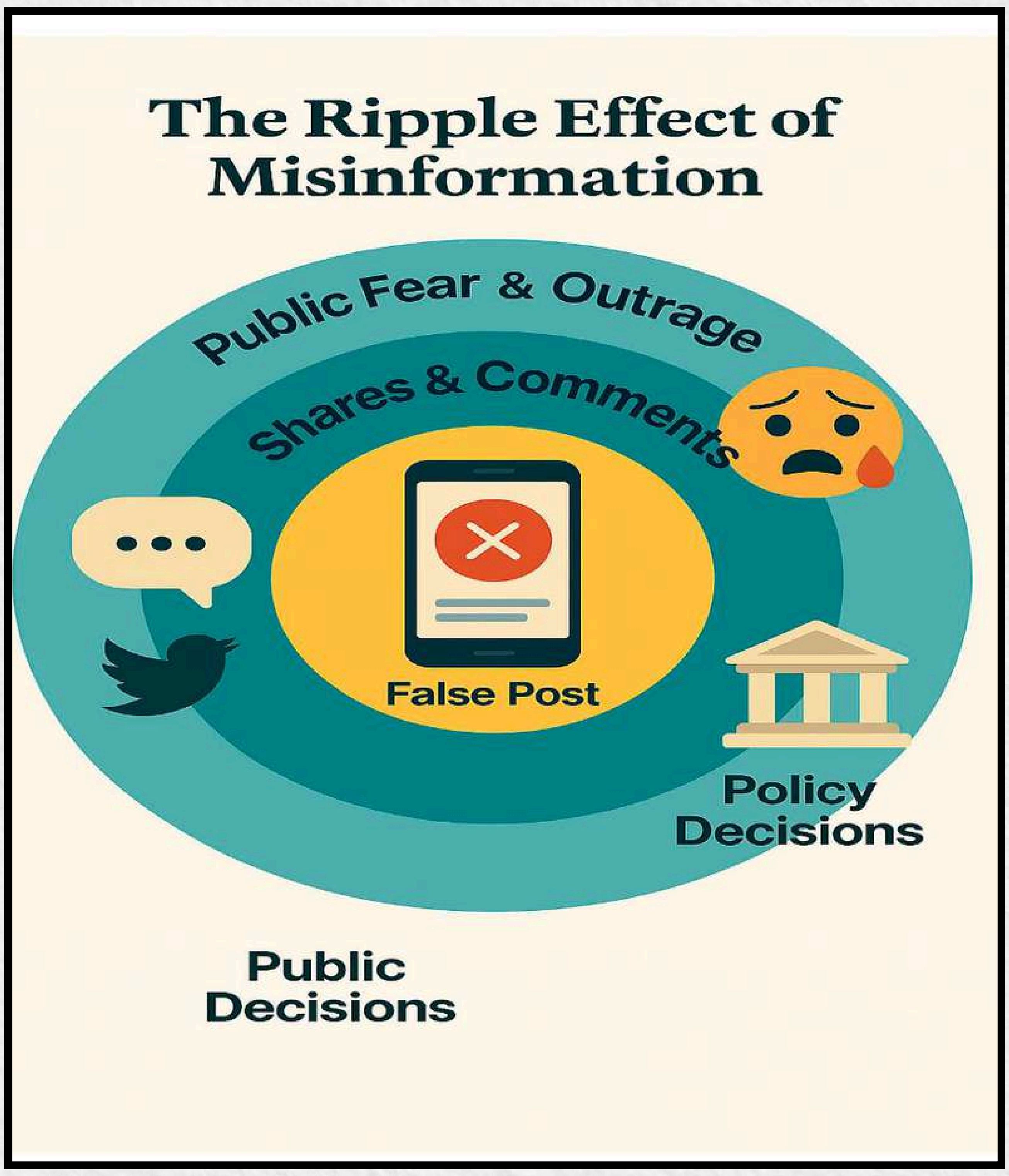
Illustration 1: Trust in Information Sources (Edelman Trust Barometer 2023)

A chart showing trust levels across sources:

SOURCE	TRUST LEVEL (%)
Employer	67%
Traditional Media	50%
Government	42%
Social- Media	37%

Source: Edelman Trust Barometer

Insight: People trust their employers more than media or government, making leadership communication critical during crises.



Source: Created by Microsoft Copilot

This domino-style infographic shows how digital misinformation can escalate from a single tweet to systemic consequences.

What Real Leadership Looks Like

In a media-led crisis, the worst thing a leader can do is hide. Silence is interpreted as guilt, delay is seen as weakness and spin? That's just fuel for the fire.

Here's what strong leadership looks like when misinformation strikes:

- **Speak early, even if it's not perfect**

"We're aware of what's being said. We are investigating. We'll share more soon." That's enough to show presence.

- **Be human, not robotic**

People don't want polished statements. They want real voices. A leader who says, "I understand how this looks, and I care deeply about getting it right," earns respect.

- **Own what's yours, clarify what's not**

If a mistake happened, admit it. If the story is false, explain it clearly. Don't dodge, don't deflect.

- **Act fast, but think clearly**

Don't rush into damage control. Take a breath, understand the situation, then respond with truth and empathy.

Illustration 2: Crisis Response Window- Impact of Response Time

Time after Crisis	Negative Sentiment (%)	Misinformation spread (%
0-2 hours	30%	20%
2-6 hours	55%	45%
6-12 hours	70%	65%
12+ hours	85%	80%

Source: MIT study on Misinformation, Science 2018

Because in the end, people don't remember what you said. They remember how you made them feel.

Empathy doesn't mean agreeing with every criticism. It means acknowledging how people feel and showing that you care enough to respond.

A leader who says, "We understand your concerns. We're here to listen and act," builds trust. Not just externally, but internally and trust is what keeps a company standing when the headlines get harsh.

Let's be honest, people can tell when they're being managed. They don't want vague apologies or corporate jargon, they want clarity.If something went wrong, say so. If you're still figuring it out, say that too. If you don't have all the answers yet, admit it.Transparency doesn't mean weakness, it means credibility and credibility is what keeps a company standing when the headlines get harsh.

The Moment That Changed Everything

Two weeks after the crisis began, the investigation was complete.

The screenshot was fake, the accusations were false, but the damage was real.

Employees had felt unsafe, customers had lost trust. The silence in those first few hours had created a vacuum and the internet filled it with its own version of the truth.

The CEO did not release a statement. She didn't hold a press conference.

She walked into the company's cafeteria, where the team usually gathered for chai and casual chats. She stood on a chair. No mic, No script.

She said:"**We weren't guilty of what we were accused of. But we were guilty of not listening sooner. That's on me."**

Then she announced new feedback channels, anonymous reporting tools, and monthly open forums. Not because the internet demanded it, but because her team deserved it.

Source: Microsoft Copilot

This image captures the stillness after a storm, where one leader's vulnerability began to mend what misinformation had torn apart.The video of her speech was recorded by an intern. It wasn't edited, it wasn't branded, it was raw.And it went viral-not because it was dramatic but because it was real.

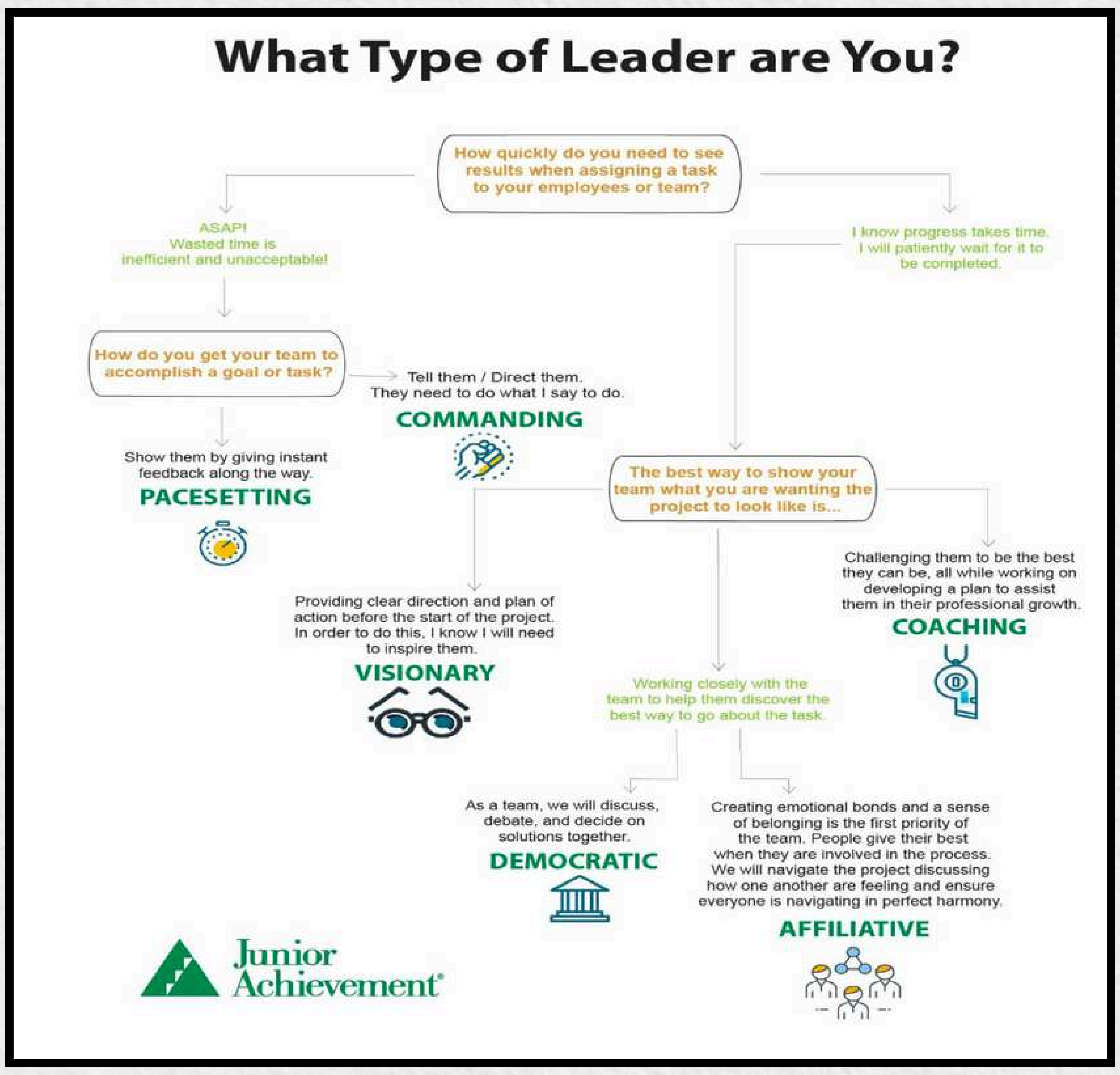
Three months later, the anonymous account that posted the original screenshot was traced. It wasn't a competitor, it wasn't a disgruntled employee.It was an AI bot, part of a misinformation campaign targeting companies with strong ESG reputations. **The goal?** To create chaos, erode trust, and manipulate public opinion.

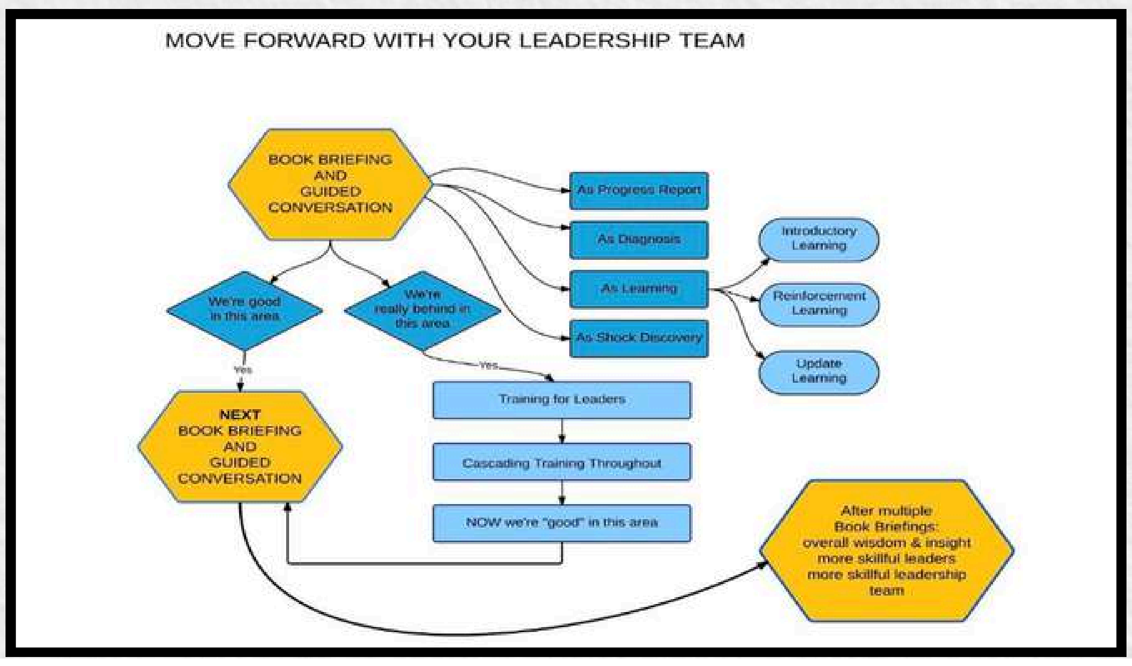
The company had been chosen at random.The CEO stood in front of her team again. This time, she said:

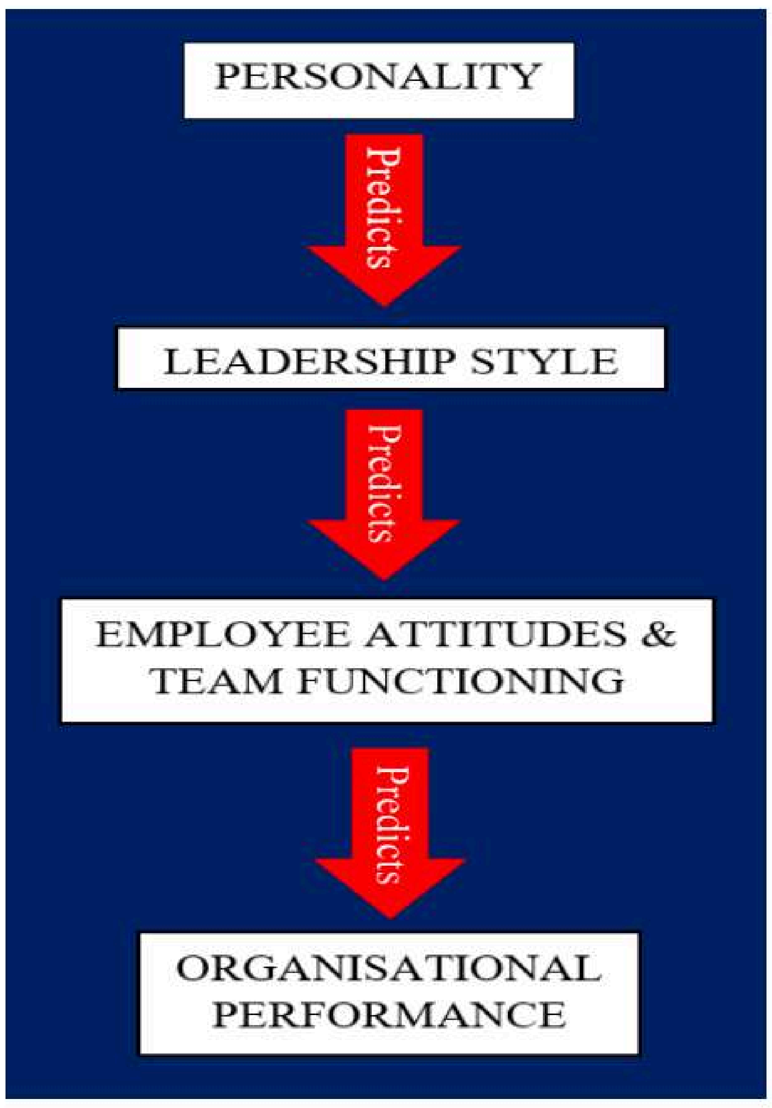
"We were attacked by something that wasn't even human. But what saved us... was being human."

And that's the truth.

In a world full of noise, algorithms, and viral outrage, the only thing that cuts through is authenticity.







Source: Microsoft Copilot

Flowchart: How Personality Shapes Organisational Performance

This diagram maps the predictive chain from individual personality traits to leadership style, team dynamics, and ultimately, the success of an organisation.

A Poem for the Moment:

"<u>When the truth is tangled in digital threads,And silence screams louder than words ever said, Let leaders rise not with perfect reply,But with eyes that listen and hearts that try."</u>

Final Scene: The Spotlight Fades

Imagine this.

The screen fades to black. No dramatic music. Just a quiet message:

"In the age of misinformation, the loudest thing a leader can do... is listen."

Then, a second line appears:

"And the bravest thing? To speak before the silence becomes the story." And finally, a quote appears, one that sums it all up:**"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you you made them feel."**

— Maya Angelou

That's how the story ends, not with applause, but with a lesson.

Because leadership today is not about being perfect, it's about being present. And sometimes, showing up with truth is the most powerful thing you can do.

Source: Microsoft Copilot

A visual reflection on leadership, truth, and the courage to listen before the sile speaks louder than words.

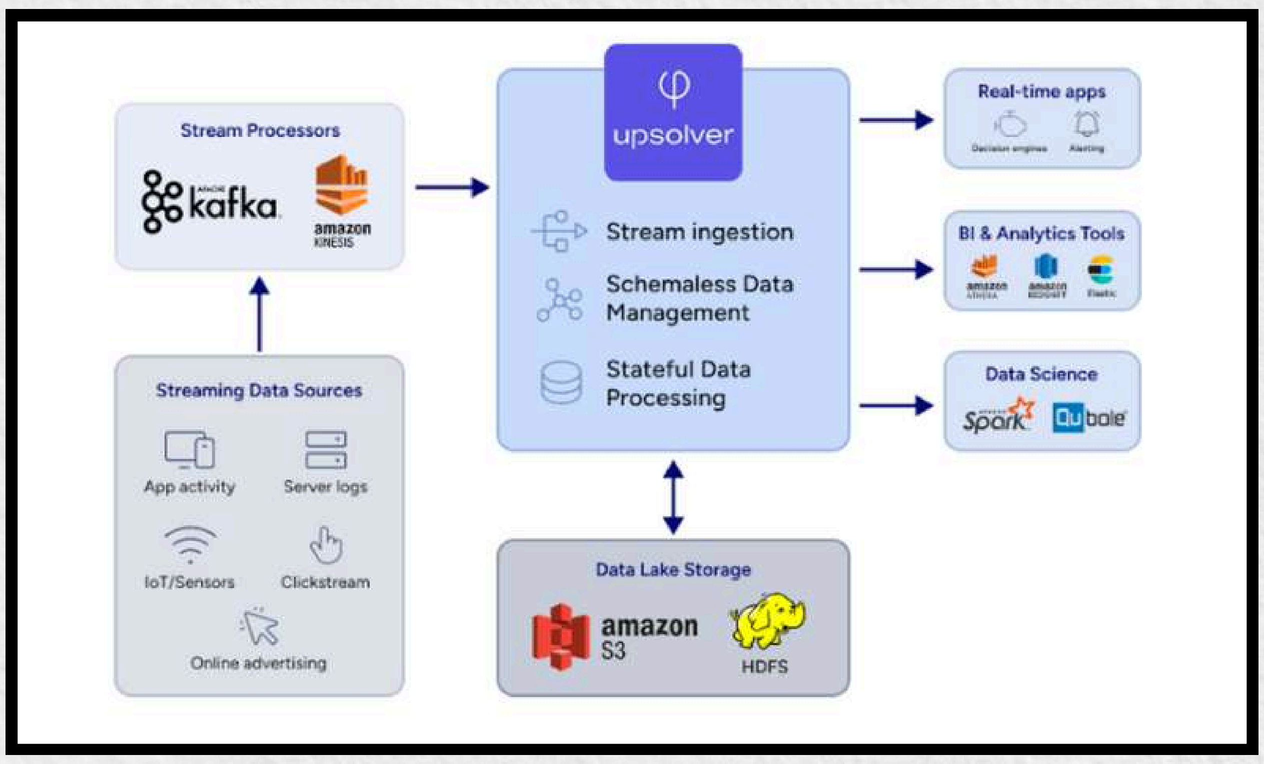
From Tweets to Truckloads: How Real-Time Analytics Turns Social Buzz into Operational Power

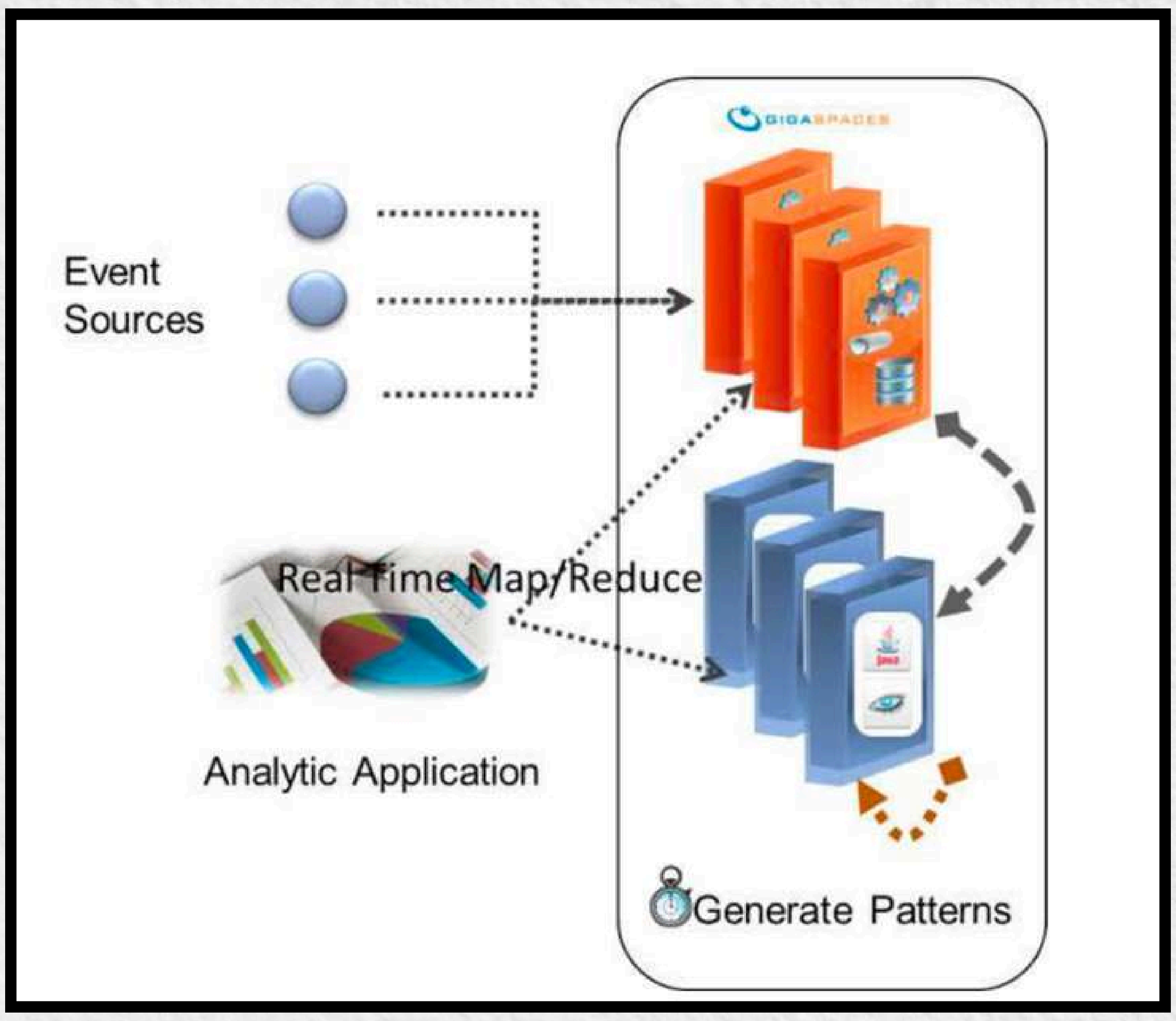
Runner Up

Ruby Yadav
IMS ENGINEERING COLLEGE Ghaziabad.
MBA Finance and operations
2024-2026

There's a unique excitement in witnessing the internet come to life. You hit refresh on your feed, and suddenly your go-to snack is all over the place — in memes, reels, and tweets. Just ten minutes later, you're suddenly in the mood for it. By the time you access your food delivery app, there's a banner yelling, "Now Available Again!" This isn't mere coincidence. This is real-time analytics subtly influencing our everyday choices.

In our highly interconnected society, the most significant market indicators aren't hidden in quarterly statements — they're flashing before our eyes in real time. Likes, hashtags, emojis, and criticisms are directing how businesses sell products, determine pricing, and craft marketing strategies.The most intelligent operations teams have figured out how to convert these digital whispers into actionable steps, often within an hour. And those who excel at it? They don't merely respond to the market — they lead the way.





Why Real-Time Analytics Has Become Essential for Operations

According to a recent Deloitte 2025 report, the era of static reporting has come to an end. In various sectors such as retail, manufacturing, and energy, continuous data flows are taking the place of occasional data snapshots.

This shift isn't just about adopting new technology — it's a matter of survival

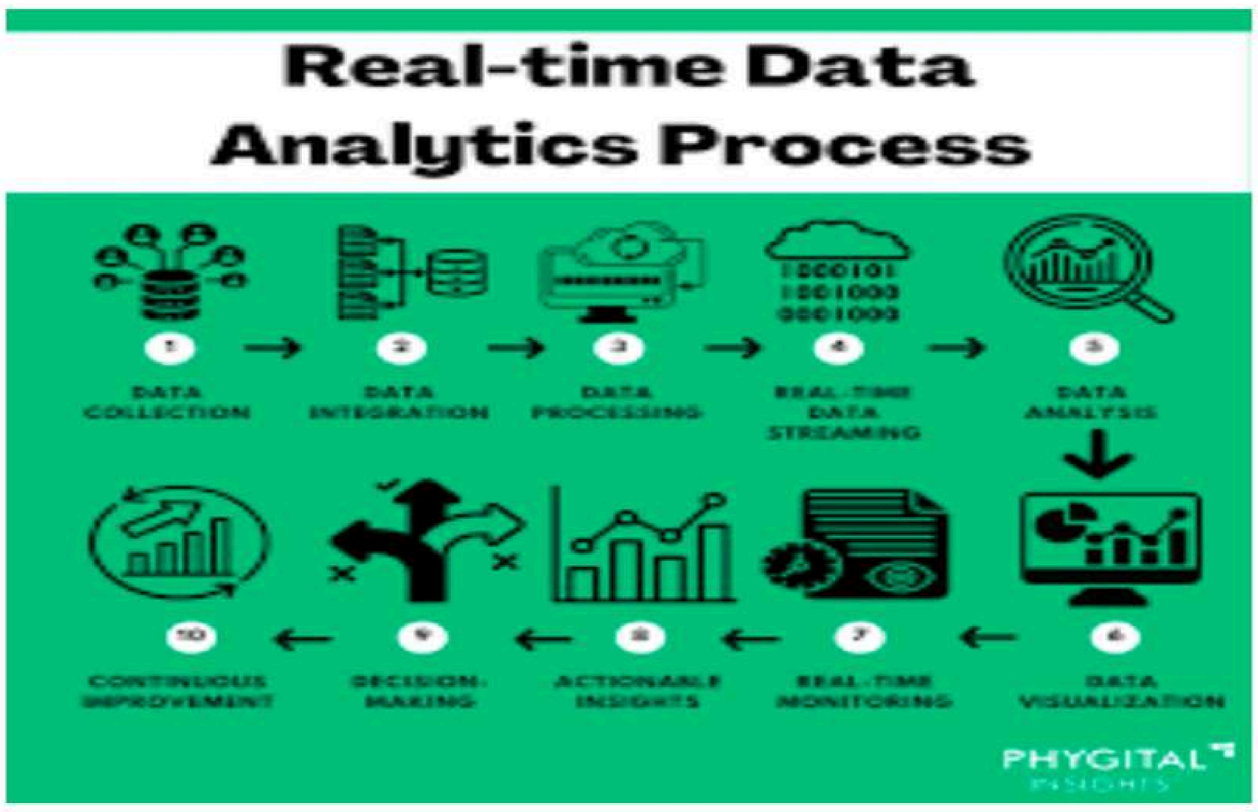


Image source- Phygital Insights

The benefits for operations are undeniable:

Inventory flexibility: Reroute products to high-demand areas before supplies run out.

Adaptive pricing: Modify prices within hours to maximize profits or sell off slow-moving items.

Minimizing waste: Synchronize production with demand increases to prevent overstock.

Building customer trust: Address public complaints swiftly to prevent escalation.From a financial perspective, this leads to two significant results:

Increased revenue generation — by capitalizing on viral trends immediately.Reduced cost framework — by eliminating unnecessary holding and markdown expenses.It resembles Just-in-Time inventory, driven by emotional signals from millions of consumers.

When Sentiment Influences Stock Movement: Actual Examples

1. Zomato's Swift Menu Change (India, 2023)

A trending Instagram video featuring a local dish caused a 280% increase in search inquiries. Zomato's partnered restaurants incorporated the dish within hours, resulting in a 32% rise in local orders in just two days.

2. Nike's Limited Edition Surge (Global, 2022)

A celebrity showcased a new sneaker design in public. Within 12 hours, Nike relocated stock to areas where demand surged. The entire release sold out within 36 hours.

3.Domino's Cheese Comeback (India, 2024) Negative discussions regarding a cheese shortage circulated quickly. Domino's redirected supply to locations with higher demand, initiating a comeback campaign that increased sales by 15% within a week.

4.Tesla's Cold Weather Solution Global, 2021 Complaints on Twitter about battery performance in cold temperatures gained traction. Tesla implemented a software update in just 48 hours, reducing service complaints by 22%. From Screen to Shelf: The Everyday ImpactMany of us engage with this without realizing it: That trending coffee flavor at your coffee shop? Restocked overnight due to TikTok excitement.

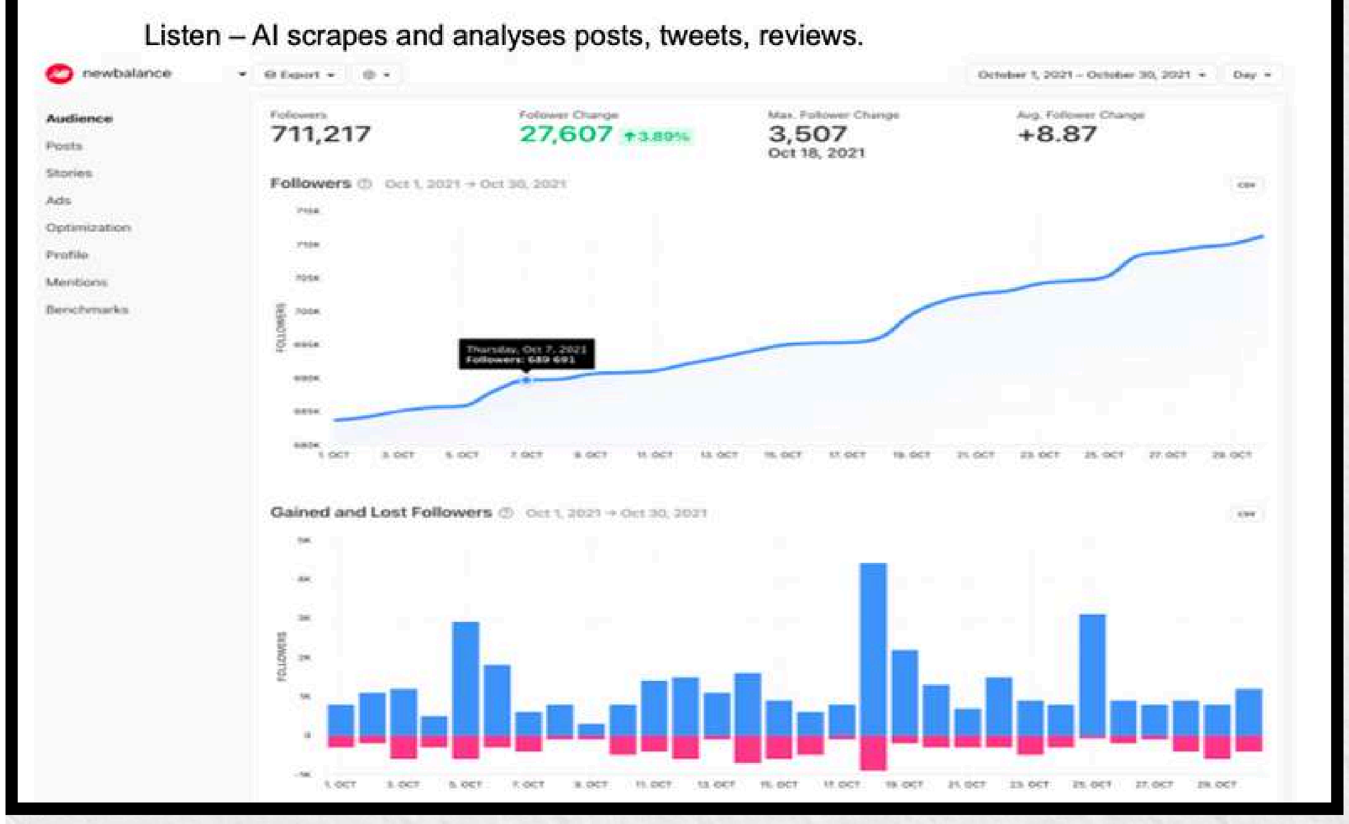
The flash sale on your shopping platform? Initiated by a sudden rise in Google searches.

The burger you enjoy? Supply trucks were informed before you even noticed.

Operations teams are now as much social monitors as they are supply chain organizers.

The Data Pipeline in Action

Image source-Minter.io

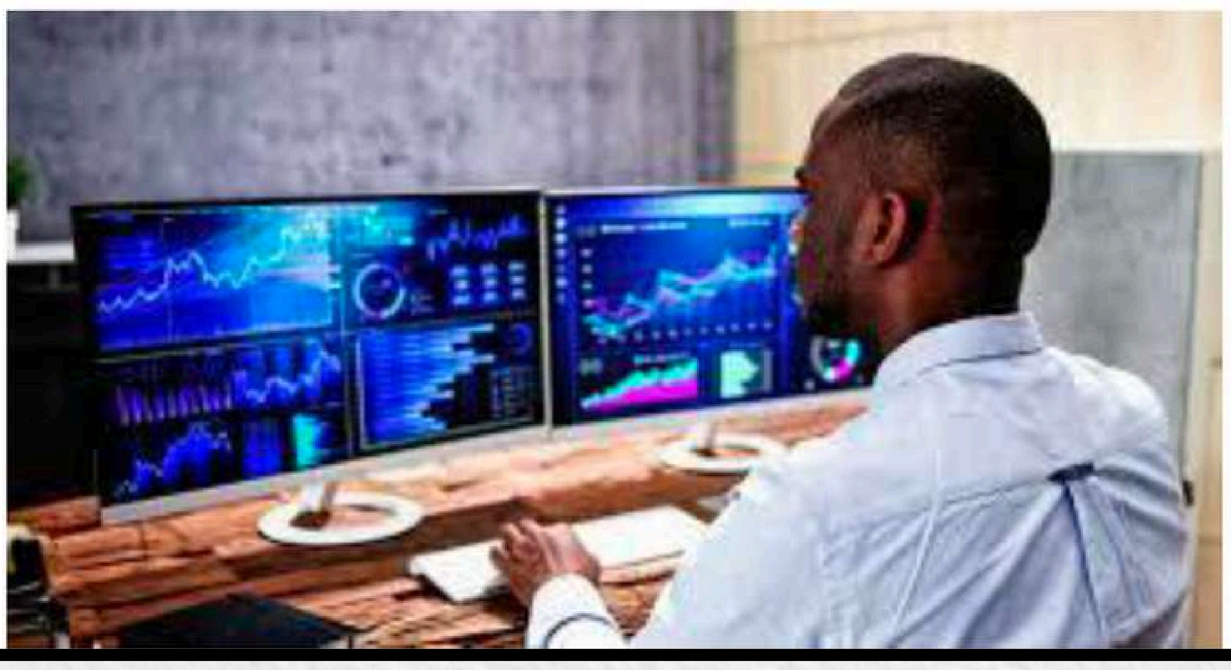


1.Filter – Spam and irrelevant chatter are removed.
2.Map – Trends are geotagged to locations.
3.Act – Logistics and pricing teams mobilise.
4.Measure – Sales and cost impact fed back into models.

Mini Action Plan: Turning Buzz into Business in 48 Hours

Step 1 – Monitor: Set up sentiment tracking tools for key products. Step 2 – Filter: Remove irrelevant noise from data streams.Step 3 – Model: Link demand signals to actual SKUs.Step 4 – Mobilise: Adjust inventory, production, and pricing. Step 5 – Measure: Evaluate results and refine models.

Image source- DASCA certification



Challenges to Maintain Authenticity

Not everything that becomes popular results in financial gain. Businesses encounter: Incorrect indicators (for instance, ironic memes).

The risk of overreacting, which can cause stock discrepancies.

Compliance with privacy regulations regarding data gathering.

The expenses associated with establishing real-time systems.

My Viewpoint: The Intersection of Finance and Operations in Real-Time

I've examined the financial models. I've conducted the case studies. However, my conclusion is straightforward: real-time analytics acts as the link between consumer intent and operational implementation.

Here's why I think it deserves the attention:

1.Increased revenue: According to Deloitte, organizations that implement real-time sentiment monitoring achieve 5–8% greater quarterly revenue growth than those that do not.

2.Expense management: When operations adapt promptly to shifts in demand, inventory waste can decrease by 15–20%.

3. Market advantage: In the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, even a 12- hour quicker response can take advantage of trends ahead of rivals.

4. Yet, beyond the statistics, there's a narrative centered on people. In a landscape where consumer focus lasts about as long as a fleeting hashtag, those who excel are the ones capable of hearing, deciding, and executing — not next week, but immediately.

Final Thoughts: Understanding the Complete Picture

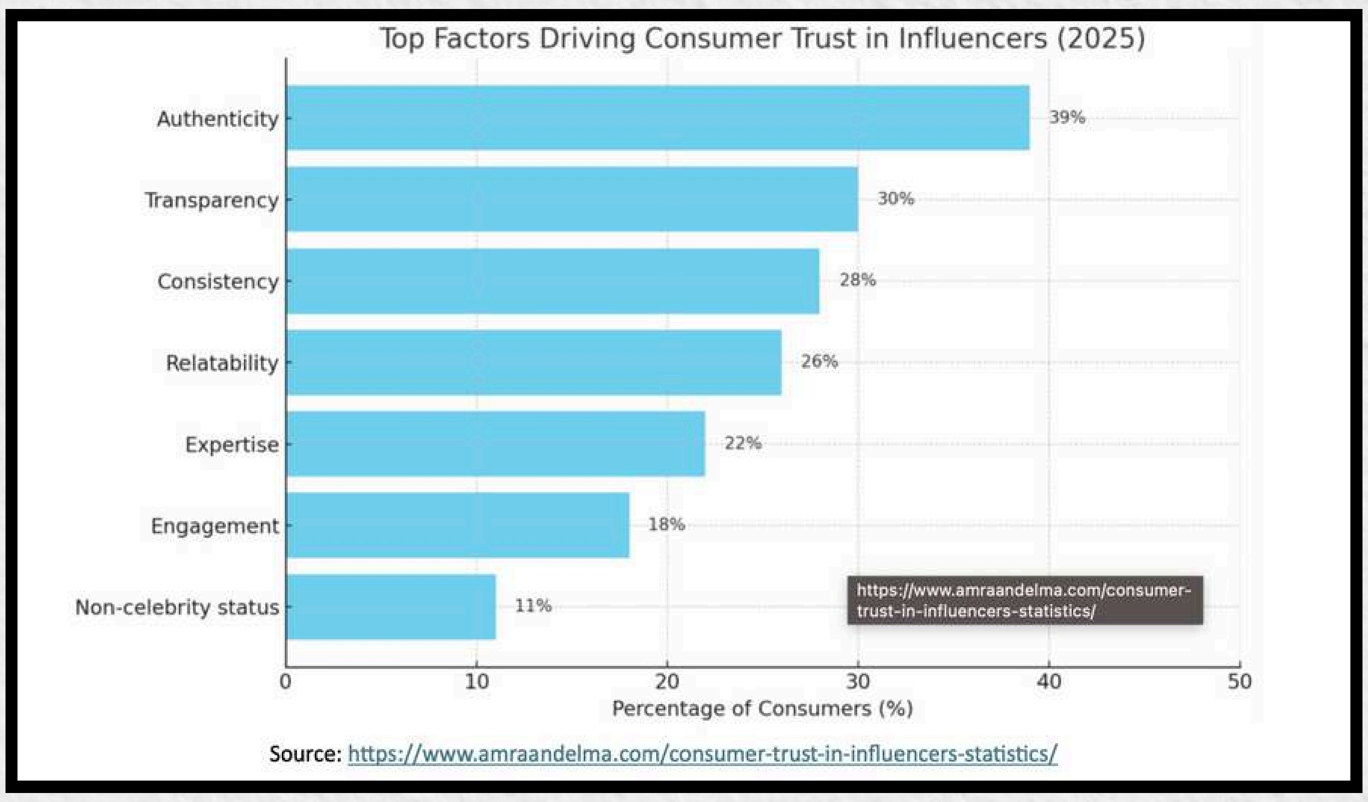
From kitchens in Mumbai crafting a trending snack to global sports brands selling out within hours, real-time analytics has transformed operational strategy. It's a tale of finance aligning with consumer behavior and supply chains adapting to think like social media feeds.For me, it demonstrates that data isn't solely about possession. It's about action. Moving inventory, shifting markets, advancing quicker than anyone else. Ultimately, that's the key competitive advantage — not just in operations, but across the entire business landscape.

From Influencers to Authenticity: Why We've Stopped Believing the Hype

National Finalist

Vidhi Dedhia
Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research
PGDM Media & Entertainment
2025-2027

Influencer marketing has gone from being the "*cool kid*" of advertising to a channel facing serious trust issues. What once felt like a conversation with a friend now feels like an endless sales pitch. This article unpacks why consumers are tuning out influencer content, why authenticity is the new marketing currency, and how brands can survive in a world where "relatable" matters more than "famous."



1. The Social Media Reality Check

Think about your own Instagram or TikTok feed. How often do you scroll past a "morning routine" video where the influencer just happens to use three sponsored products in under 30 seconds? Or a travel vlog where the caption feels more like a press release than a personal story?It's not just you. Consumers everywhere are catching on.

What started as authentic peer recommendations has now morphed into what often feels like scripted advertising. It's no wonder consumers are tuning out. According to **Amra & Elma** (2025)**[1]**, **61% of consumers trust influencers** more than traditional ads—but trust is no longer blind. People are far more selective, with 69% saying they trust product recommendations only from influencers they consider genuine.

This signals a shift: influencer marketing isn't dying, but the definition of "influence" is being rewritten.

2. How We Got Here: The Rise and Saturation

In the mid-2010s, influencer marketing felt fresh. Beauty YouTubers could sell out lipstick lines overnight, and fitness bloggers became brand powerhouses. By 2022, influencer marketing spend reached $16.4 billion (Statista)[2]. Today, it's projected to hit $24 billion in 2025 (Qoruz, 2025)[3].

But growth came with problems:

1.**Fraud:** In 2023, 59.8% of brands reported experiencing influencer fraud (fake followers/engagement).

By 2024, 71.7% of brands were concerned about it.

2.**Over-commercialization:** Feeds turned into endless ads. According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2024)[4], overall Instagram engagement rates dropped from 1.90% in 2022 to 1.59% in 2024.

3.**Misalignment:** Fitness coaches endorsing sugary energy drinks, or eco-influencers promoting fast fashion, broke credibility.The result? What was once "authentic peer recommendation" now feels, for many, like staged advertising.

3. **The Trust Deficit**

Three major reasons explain why trust in influencers is eroding:

a. **Lack of transparency**

Despite regulations, disclosure is inconsistent. In response to scandals like Pandorogate, Italy passed the Ferragni Law (2024)[5], which requires influencers with 1M+ followers to adhere to strict transparency rules to combat false advertising.

b. **Misaligned values**

Consumers expect influencers to "practice what they post." Amra & Elma (2024) found that 63% of consumers were more likely to buy from a trusted influencer—but only when values aligned. Inauthentic partnerships now backfire faster than ever.

c. **Ad fatigue**

Mega-influencers are struggling to maintain engagement. On Instagram in 2024: Nano (1K–10K followers): 1.73% engagement Micro (10K–50K): 0.68%
Mega (>1M): 0.68% (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024) Consumers have learned to polished ads, but they still engage with smaller creators who feel more relatable.

4. **TheMoveTowardAuthenticity**

Marketers are recognizing that reach without trust is worthless. Authenticity-first strategies are taking over:

• **Micro and Nano-Influencers**

Micro-influencers aren't just a trend—they're outperforming across the board. In 2025, brands are working with an average of 30 micro-influencers per campaign, up 36% year over year (Status, 2025)[6]. Their engagement rates? An average of 10.98%, compared to under 1% for many larger creators.

Example: Sugar Cosmetics built its presence by collaborating with hundreds of small beauty influencers across India rather than relying solely on Bollywood stars.

• **User-Generated Content (UGC)**

Consumers trust peers more than ads. Nielsen (2024) reports 92% of people trust peer recommendations over branded messages. That's why UGC-driven campaigns—like Coca-Cola's #ShareACoke—continue to succeed: they shift storytelling back to the community.

• **Employee Advocacy**

Brands like Starbucks and Salesforce have embraced employee advocates. Their content resonates because it feels spontaneous, not staged. Employees aren't "influencers"—but their authenticity is the point.

• **Purpose-Led Marketing**

Brands with authentic missions resonate more deeply. Tata Tea's "Jaago Re" campaign or Surf Excel's "Daag Ache Hain" have stood the test of time because

5. Stories of Authentic Marketing Done Right

1.**LEGO Ideas**: A platform where fans submit product concepts. When a fan's design becomes a real product, the authenticity is unbeatable—because the brand didn't create the story, the community did.

2.**Glossier**: Grew by leveraging UGC instead of celebrity endorsements. The brand built a cult following through real women's stories.

3.**Lush Cosmetics**: They walked away from Instagram and Facebook ads entirely in 2021, choosing ethics over reach. That bold stance itself became their marketing.

These brands prove something crucial: people don't want ads. They want stories they can believe in.

6. Lessons for Marketers

Here's the raw truth: audiences don't want to be "sold to" anymore. They want to be part of the story. If you're a marketer, that means:

Stop chasing clout. A million followers don't equal trust. Find voices that resonate, not just reach.

Audit for alignment. Ask: does this influencer actually use our product? Does it fit their lifestyle?

Be radically transparent. Disclose partnerships clearly. Audiences forgive ads— they don't forgive deception.

Build community. The future isn't about broadcasting; it's about engaging. Encourage UGC, reward participation, create shared value.

Stand for something. Consumers are quick to sniff out performative activism. Back your values with real action, not hashtags.

7. Conclusion: Beyond the Hype

Influencer marketing isn't dead—but the version that relied on glossy sponsorships and fake perfection is dying fast. What's replacing it is harder, but also better: authenticity.

In a world where everyone is selling something, trust is the ultimate currency. And trust doesn't come from polished endorsements; it comes from people who are relatable, raw, and real.

The influencers of tomorrow won't be the ones with the biggest followings. They'll be the ones whose voices feel most like your own.

References:-

- *Amra & Elma (2025). https://www.amraandelma.com/consumer-trust-in-influencers-statistics/*
- *https://sproutsocial.com/insights/influencer-marketing-statistics/*
- *https://qoruz.com/blog/data-driven-insights-strategies/*
- *https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/*
- *https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italy-regulator-tightens-rules-influencers-after-ferragni-scandal-2024-01-11/*
- *https://brands.joinstatus.com/micro-influencer-report-2025*
- *https://marketingreport.one/creation/global-influencer-marketing-industry-to-reach-%2424-billion-in-2025-report.html*

Clickbait Economics: Are Media Outlets Fueling Market Volatility?

National Finalist

Aadya Bakshi
Delhi School of Economics
MA Economics

Anshumaan Bhardwaj
IIM Shillong
PGP-MBA

If Irvin Fisher came to life today and saw the world of NFTs, cryptocurrency and collectable consumer items such as the Stanley Cup or the Labubu, he would surelyreconsider the Fisher hypothesis, questioning his entire belief that a consumer *rationally* opts to balance his or her consumption between present and the future. After all, it hasnot been very long since economics finally admitted that people don't just crunchnumbers—they gossip, panic, hope, and cling to stories with all the grace of a dog hasing its tail.

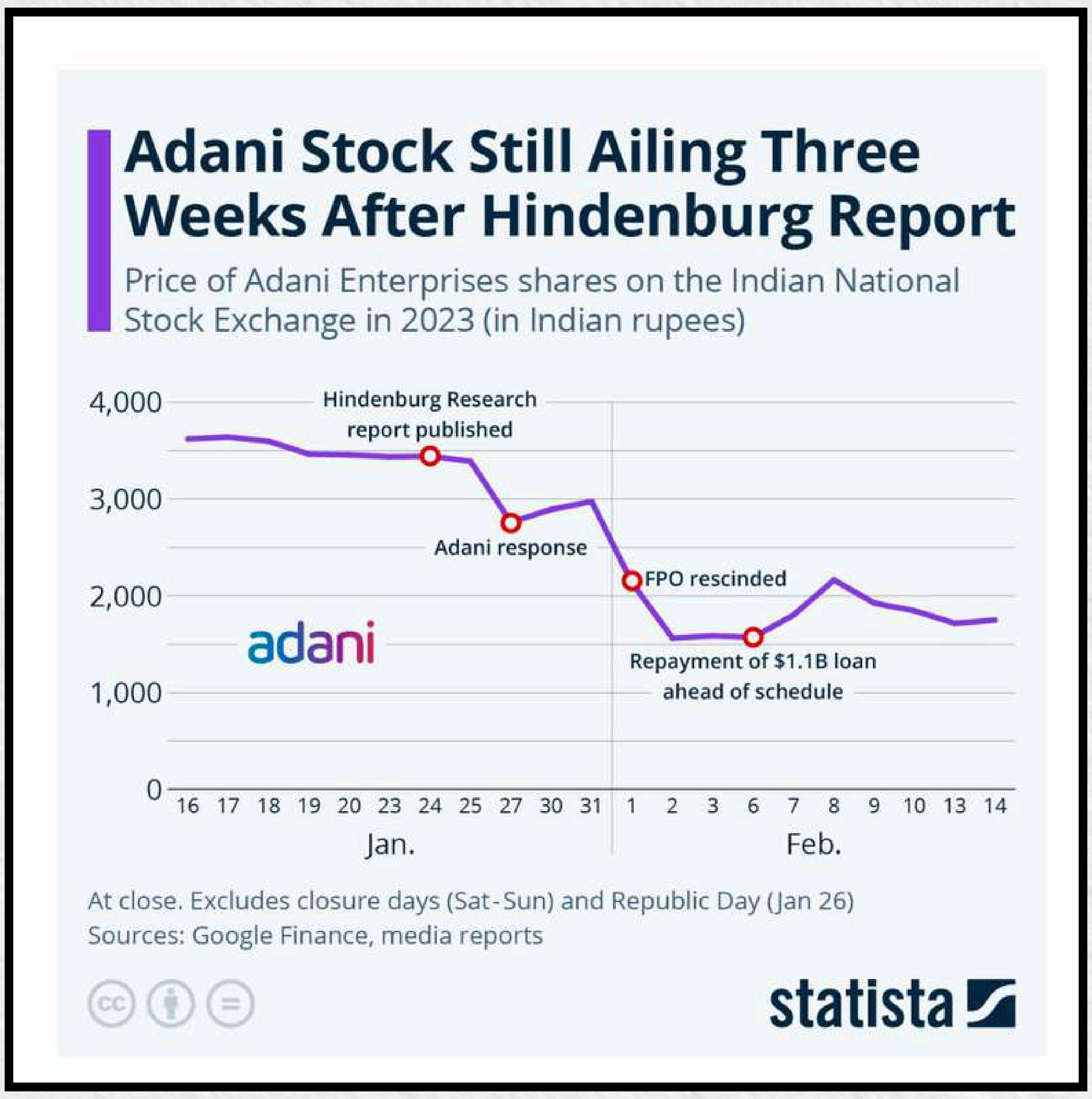
Media outlets fuel shape investor psychology by amplifying fear, greed,or excitement through sensationalised, emotionally charged headlines and stories —clickbait—to grab attention and drive engagement. It was Robert Shiller who pioneeredthe field of "Narrative Economics," a subset of behavioural economics, that talks about how different stories influence economic behaviours.

Wall Street, for a very long time, was living under the illusion that financial markets work exactly according to the economic frameworks that were that were constructed to explain it. In 2013, Shiller was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for demonstrating that the market does not always follow a rational and efficient model. Instead, Shiller advocated a simple theory- it is the animal spirits of investors that govern financial markets. He explains that market volatility is far greater than what traditional finance theories, such as the Efficient Market Hypothesis, would predict. His theory tells us that we think in stories, communicate ideas through stories, and make decisions based on stories. The power of storytelling and the ability to evoke sentiments have been influential since the beginning of human civilisation- weaving ideas, emotions and expectations. Leading to mass mobilisations that have caused empires to fall. It is not surprising that the financial markets do not stay aloof to such sentiments.In their paper titled "CourseThinking and Persuasion," Mullainathan, Schwartzstein and Shleifer study targetedcampaigns of Meryll Lynch. The wealth management firm is known to shape its advertising, aiming to shape investors' sentiment. They switch their advertising strategies through economic cycles, ranging from captions like "Maybe you should grow slowly" during slumps to "be wired, be bullish" at the peak.

Media platforms, both traditional and online, shape narratives quickly, and their coverage can have dramatic short-term effects on stock prices by framing stories in specific ways. It is not surprising to see companies paying news channels to circulate certain information, big bulls concealing information to manipulate pricing, or fininluencers overhyping certain stocks. Even traditional news channels join the bandwagon in reporting about finance, over-exaggerating financial events, leading to the spread of greater fear among Indian investors. Media not only shapes narratives,but also effectively gives rise to herd behaviour, both in investors as well as other media
outlets, who join the race to report on such events, often using unsubstantiated reports.

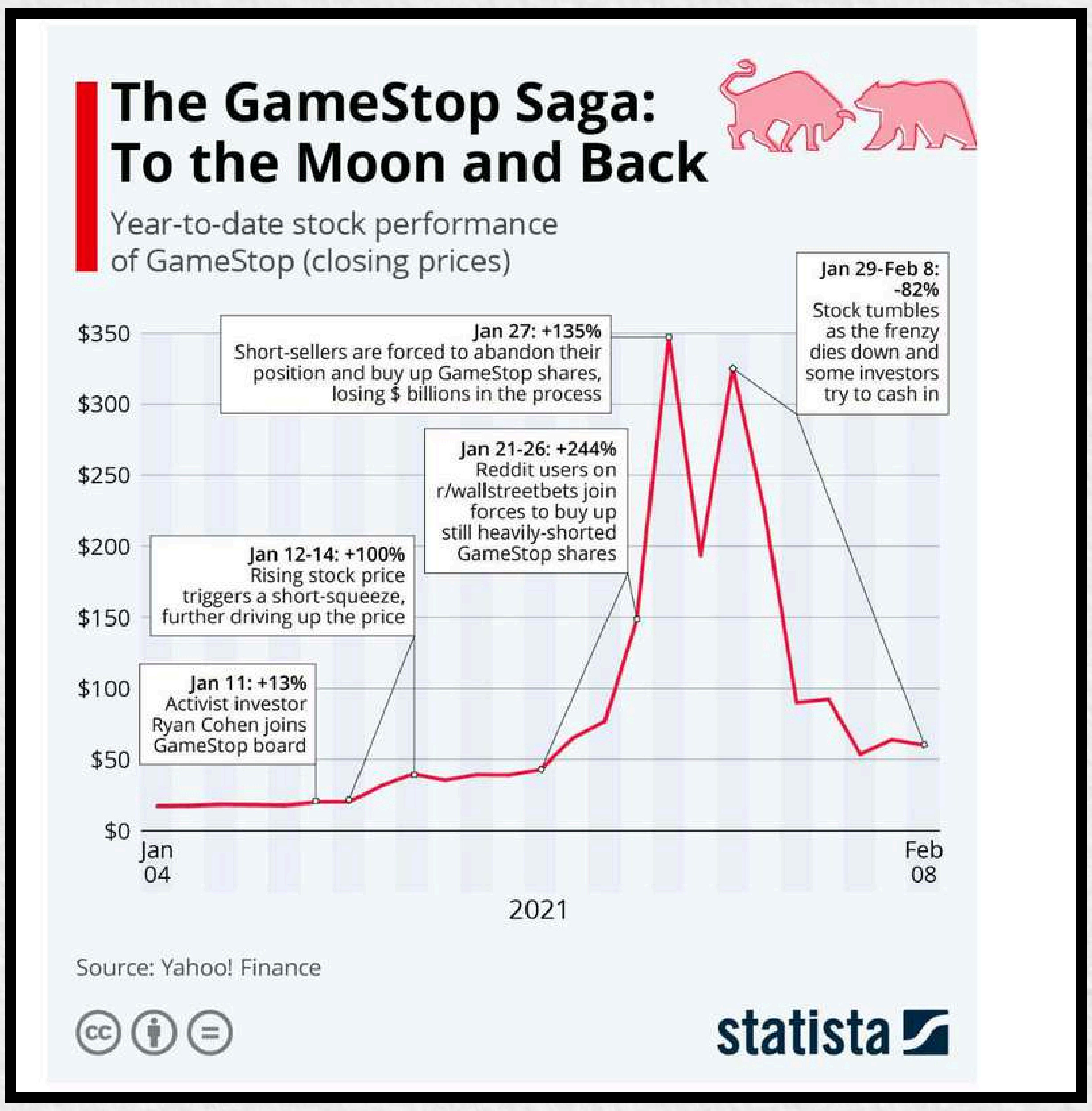
Source: How Media Affects the Share Market and Why?

We take two case studies to further exemplify the impact of media on investor sentiment- Adani v Hidenburg and the effective sentiment that was evoked againstGameStop- leading to its big fall. The Adani case began in January 2023, when Hindenburg Research dropped its now-famous report accusing the conglomerate of "the largest corporate fraud in history." It was a statement designed for headlines, and sure enough, global and Indian media outlets repeated it with relish. The actual issues-high leverage, related-party transactions, and governance opacity-were not new. But the packaging of these concerns in a scandalous, almost cinematic narrative transformed them into a market-moving force. Within weeks, the group's listed firms had lost over $150 billion in market capitalisation. Investors rushed for the exits, fearing that the losses themselves confirmed the fraud. Nobody wanted to be the last one left holding Adani shares when everyone else was selling. What started as a report became a firestorm, destabilising not just one conglomerate but raising uncomfortable questions about India's regulatory credibility. It serves as one of the classic examples of media leading to a bandwagon effect, causing stock prices to crash.



The GameStop saga of 2021 was a different beast but driven by the same animal spirits.

A group of retail investors on Reddit's WallStreetBets forum noticed that hedge funds were aggressively shorting the stock of a rather unremarkable video game retailer. They decided to come to its rescue, with their counter-move was framed less asan investment and more as an uprising: a chance for the "little guy" to strike backagainst Wall Street. The story was irresistible to the media, which quickly recast it as a modern-day small homegrown label versus the big conglomerate drama. Suddenly, everyone from CNBC anchors to taxi drivers seemed to be talking about GameStop.The share price leapt from around $20 to an astonishing $483 before crashing back down. This wasn't about fundamentals; nobody seriously believed GameStop had discovered a secret path to world domination. Keynes' beauty game is one of thee arliest stories young economists discover when studying game theory- people speculating not on what they think is beautiful, but on what others would think would bebeautiful tomorrow. Shiller's (2009) notion of narrative contagion also played out vividly here: the more the story of small investors fighting hedge funds spread, the more people joined in—not to own GameStop's business, but to own a piece of the story itself. The result was part financial bubble, part internet meme, and part cautionary tale about how quickly financial markets can be hijacked by narratives. This was the first instance of predatory trading, described by Brunnermeier and Pedersen.



In the end, what the Adani crisis and the GameStop saga both remind us is that markets are as much about stories as they are about spreadsheets. Shiller's "animal spirits" are not abstractions; they come alive in the headlines, hashtags, and hot takes that shape how investors feel and act. Strip away the jargon and it is simple: confidence is fragile, herds move quickly, and once the media scent a story, the market often runs faster than the facts. The lesson is sobering but also oddly human—finance, for all its formulas, remains vulnerable to drama, rumor, and the occasional viral plot twist.

References

- *TheDecisionLab.(n.d.).RobertShiller–Thinker.RetrievedAugust25,2025, from The Decision Lab website:https://thedecisionlab.com/thinkers/economics/robert-shille*
- *Robert Shiller. The Decision Lab. Retrieved August 19, 2025, from https://thedecisionlab.com/thinkers/economics/robert-shiller*

- *BG. (2025, January 6). How media affects the share market and why? Retrieved August 25, 2025, from Wright Research blog: https://www.wrightresearch.in/blog/how-media-affects-the-share-market-and- why/*
- *Mullainathan,S.,Schwartzstein,J.,&Shleifer,A. (2008).Coarsethinkingand persuasion. Quarterly Journal of Economics, 123(2), 577–619. https://doi.org/10.1162/qjec.2008.123.2.577 (Note: This DOI is illustrative— please verify via journal site.)*
- *Mallesha, L., & Archana, H. N. (2023). Impact of Hindenburg Research Report on the Stock Prices of Adani Group Companies: An Event Study. Asia-Pacific Journal of Management Research and Innovation, 19 (1), 40–46. https://doi.org/10.1177/2319510X231169338*
- *Brunnermeier, M. K., & Pedersen, L. H. (2005, August). Predatory trading. Journal of Finance, LX(4). Retrieved from NYU Stern School of Business website: https://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~lpederse/papers/predatory_trading.pdf*
- *Hasso, T., Müller, D., Pelster, M., & Warkulat, S. (2022). Who participated in the*
- *GameStop frenzy? Evidence from brokerage accounts. Finance ResearchLetters, 45(C). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2021.102140*

When Headlines Shape Supply Chains: The Impact of News Cycles on Inventory Planning and Logistics Strategies

National Finalist

Jitendra Kumar
Indian Maritime University, MBA-ITLM (2024-2026)

Anurag Raj Gupta
IndianMaritime University
M. Tech (2024-2026)

In March 2021, the Ever Given's blockage of the Suez Canal froze 12% of global trade for almost a week, dominating headlines and triggering cascading delays in supply chains (University of Gothenburg, 2025; PMC, 2024). In today's hyperconnected world, such maritime events spread instantly via traditional and social media, influencing operational decisions far before official warnings surface.

For maritime and international logistics, the "media lens" has become an operational variable—shaping inventory planning, route selection, and risk strategy. The rapid dissemination of news means a single viral headline now has the power to reshape demand forecasts, inventory buffers, and shipping schedules within hours.

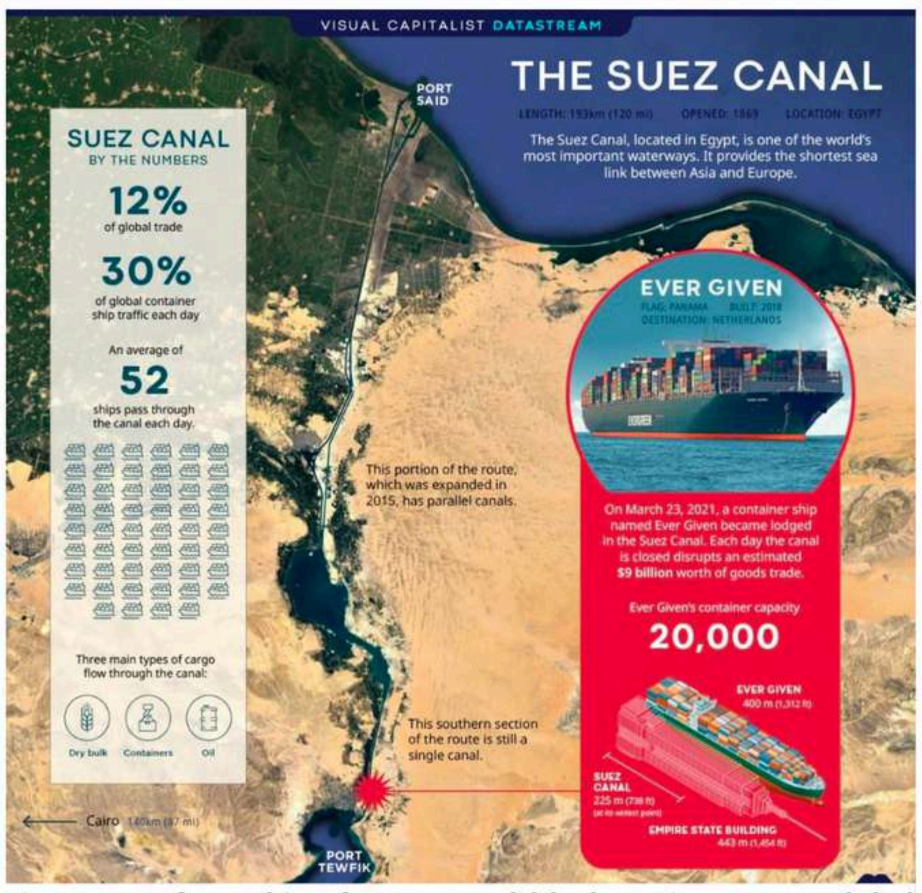


Figure 1: Infographic of Suez Canal blockage impact on global trade (Visual Capitalist, 2021)

Understanding the Media–Operations Link

News cycles can magnify minor incidents into full-blown logistical crises. Social media often outpaces official channels, prompting preemptive rerouting, panic-induced replenishment, or abrupt shipping shifts. In maritime operations—where lead times are lengthy and capacity constraints tight—perception-driven disruptions can quickly translate to real operational upheaval. For instance, viral footage of piracy incidents has prompted companies to divert shipments even when safety had been verified (World Bank, 2024). The faster news travels, the narrower the decision-making window becomes, forcing logistics managers to balance speed with accuracy under pressure.As a result, companies must now embed media-monitoring tools and agile response protocols into their planning systems to avoid overreactions or missed opportunities.

Types of News that Disrupt Logistics

Geopolitical: Wars, sanctions, and piracy threats rapidly shift trade corridors— such as disruptions caused by the Russia–Ukraine conflict, which forced rerouting of grain exports (UNCTAD, 2024).

2.**Economic:** Sudden freight rate hikes, tariff changes, or currency volatility can alter supply chain economics, prompting last-minute inventory reallocations.

3..**Environmental:** Weather events like cyclones and floods can shut down ports temporarily—Cyclone Idai's impact on Beira Port being a notable example.

4.**Industrial/Operational:** Labor strikes, accidents, or blocking incidents—like the Ever Given's grounding—can halt shipping lanes (MatecConf, 2021).

5.**Social Media Viral Trends:** A sudden craze—such as a product going viral on TikTok—can strain logistics systems, leading to urgent air freight and container shortages.

Each category drives operations to react differently—some immediately, others gradually. Recognizing the source and nature of the media event helps tailor more effective logistical responses.

Case Studies: Maritime Impact in Action

• Suez Canal Blockage (2021): The Ever Given obstruction delayed over 400 vessels, impacting automotive, electronics, and retail supply chains globally.

Figure 2: Timeline of vessel congestion and clearance during the Ever Given blockage (SupplyChainDive, 2021)

Maersk Line alone suffered nearly $89 million in losses—$76 million of which was tied up in container inventory—while overall global supply chain disruptions contributed to losses in the tens of billions (University of Gothenburg, 2025; PMC, 2024; Down to Earth, 2025).

- Red Sea Crisis & Rerouting (2023–25): Attacks on vessels in the Red Sea region forced carriers to divert around the Cape of Good Hope, adding 10–14 days to transit times. This detour increased fuel and war-risk costs significantly (IMF, 2024; S&P Global, 2024). In early 2024, Red Sea transit volumes plunged by 50%, with shippers enduring soaring freight rates and insurance premiums (IMF, 2024; Wikipedia Red Sea crisis, 2025).

Figure 3: Map of Houthi activity near the Yemeni coast

- Shanghai-Port Lockdowns(2022): COVID restrictions caused massive container congestion and stalled production in electronics, apparel and automotive sector worldwide—a vivid reminder of how port shutdowns, once trending news, translate into inventory and scheduling chaos.

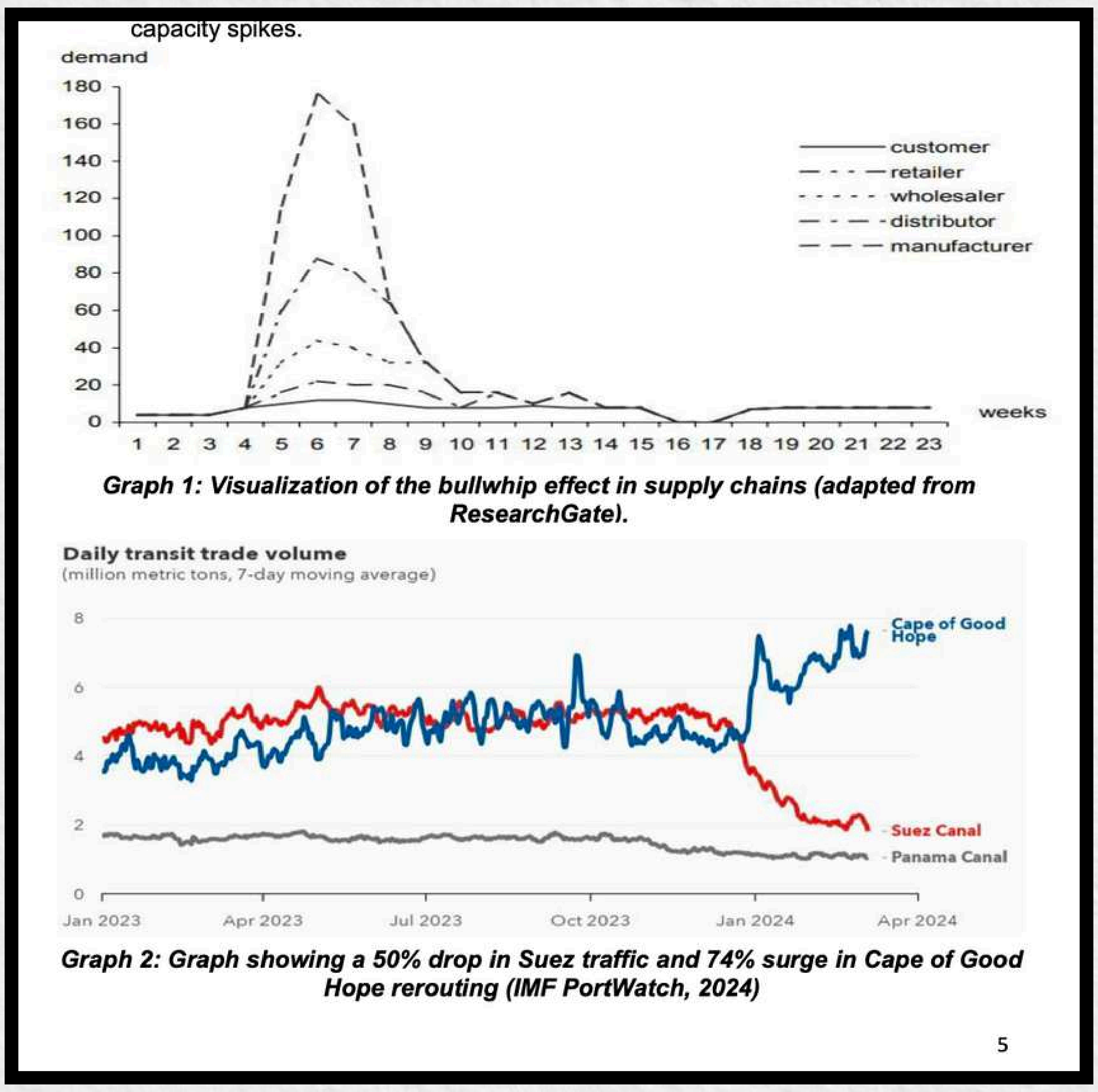
These case studies showcase how rapid media coverage doesn't just broadcast disruption—it triggers it through perception, prompting widespread operational shifts before traditional channels respond.

Operational & Inventory Planning Responses

• **Short-term**: Logistics teams respond with agile measures—rerouting vessels, chartering extra capacity, reprioritizing perishable or urgent cargo, and shifting loads to alternate ports.

• **Medium-term**: Companies revisit safety stock policies to buffer lead-time variability, diversify suppliers, and leverage bonded warehouses to flexibly align inventory with demand shifts.

• **Long-term**: Advanced logistics platforms now integrate real-time news and media feeds into dashboards. Companies use predictive analytics to forecast disruptions and structure contracts with flex clauses for rerouting, delay, or capacity spikes.



Graph 1: Visualization of the bullwhip effect in supply chains (adapted from ResearchGate).

Graph 2: Graph showing a 50% drop in Suez traffic and 74% surge in Cape of Good Hope rerouting (IMF PortWatch, 2024)

Integrating Media Monitoring into Operations

Sophisticated logistics systems now combine AIS vessel tracking with media sentiment analysis. A sudden surge in negative news coverage—such as port unrest or geopolitical volatility—can trigger alerts, enabling preemptive rerouting or stock adjustments. AI-driven models analyze social media trends to forecast demand surges, prompting early reservations of transport capacity. For example, firms detecting viral product interest via social platforms can proactively scale freight bookings before competitors, securing advantageous lead times. Integrating media insights with operational data empowers logistics teams to fine-tune inventory levels and shipping schedules, turning news into actionable intelligence rather than panic.

Recommendations for Maritime Logistics Leaders

- Establish dedicated early-warning teams for monitoring geopolitical, environmental, and viral trends.
- Secure contingency port agreements and alternative routing strategies to bypass evolving hotspots.
- Invest in AI-based sentiment and trend analysis tools to forecast demand shifts and response times.
- Train teams to distinguish

between credible threats and media exaggeration, reducing the risk of unnecessary cost escalation or overreaction.

Conclusion

In a media-drenched world, news is no longer passive background—it directly shapes operational performance. The ability to interpret and act on media signals with speed and precision now rivals weather forecasting in importance for maritime logistics. Organizations that integrate media intelligence into their decision-making frameworks can mitigate delays, control costs, and capture competitive edge. As global communication accelerates, those who embed foresight—seeing news not just as information, but as supply chain signals—will thrive, while others risk being overtaken by volatility they fail to anticipate.

References

- *Down to Earth. (2025). 2021 Suez Canal blockage resulted in $89 million loss to Maersk Line. Retrieved from [source]. Down To Earth*
- *IMF. (2024, March 7). Red Sea Attacks Disrupt Global Trade. Retrieved from [source]. IMF*
- *MatecConf. (2021). Blockage of the Suez Canal: Rethinking of the Global Supply Chain. IERJ. Matec Conferences*
- *PMC (PubMed Central). (2024). Modeling the dynamic impacts of maritime network blockage on global supply chain disruption. Retrieved from [source]. PMC*
- *S&P Global. (2024). Cape of Good Hope reroutes likely to persist well into 2025 as industry adapts. Retrieved from [source]. S&P Global*
- *UNCTAD. (2024). Navigating troubled waters: Impact to global trade of disruption of shipping routes — Red Sea, Black Sea and Panama Canal. UNCTAD Rapid Assessment. UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*
- *University of Gothenburg. (2025, January 22). The cost of the Suez Canal blockage. School of Business, Economics and Law. Göteborgs universitet*
- *World Bank. (2024). The Red Sea shipping crisis and its global repercussions. Retrieved from [source]. World Bank Blogs*
- *Wikipedia. (2025). Red Sea crisis. Retrieved from [source]. Wikipedia*

TEAM SAMVAD

EDITORIAL TEAM


Jeel Jain
Chief Editor


Anjali Jha
Co-Editor

CONTENT CURATORS


Rudhira Patankar
Head


Shraddha Sangol
Deputy Head


Pavni Sharma
Member


Sanal Santhosh
Member

CREATIVE MINDS


Akanksha Tingare
Head


Neeleshwari Singh
Member


Srishti Mishra
Member

PUBLIC RELATIONS PROS


Nidhi
Head

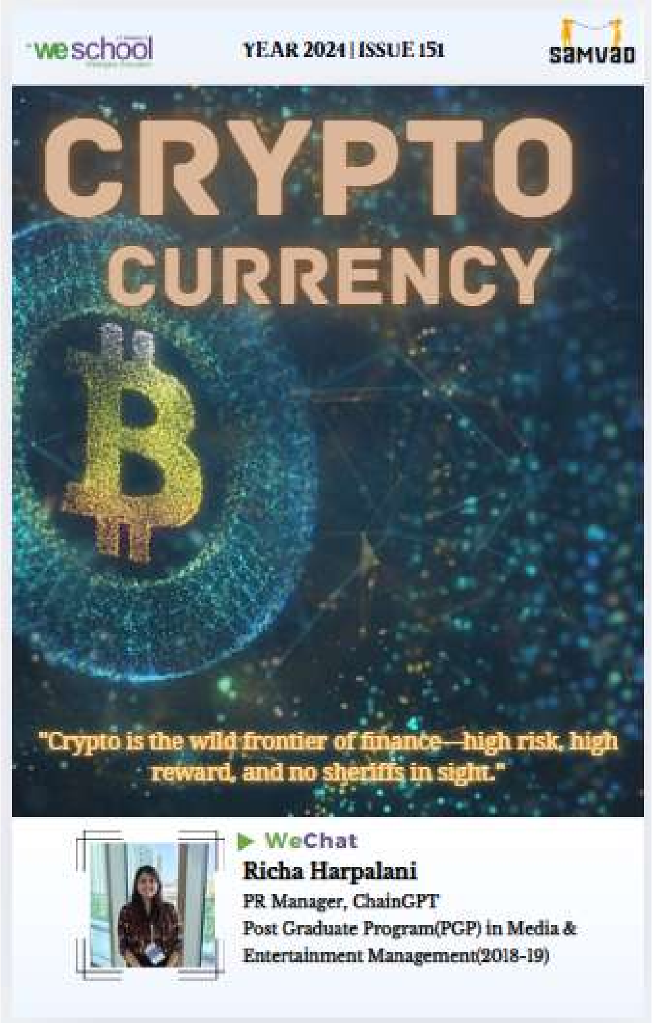

Aditya Todade
Deputy Head

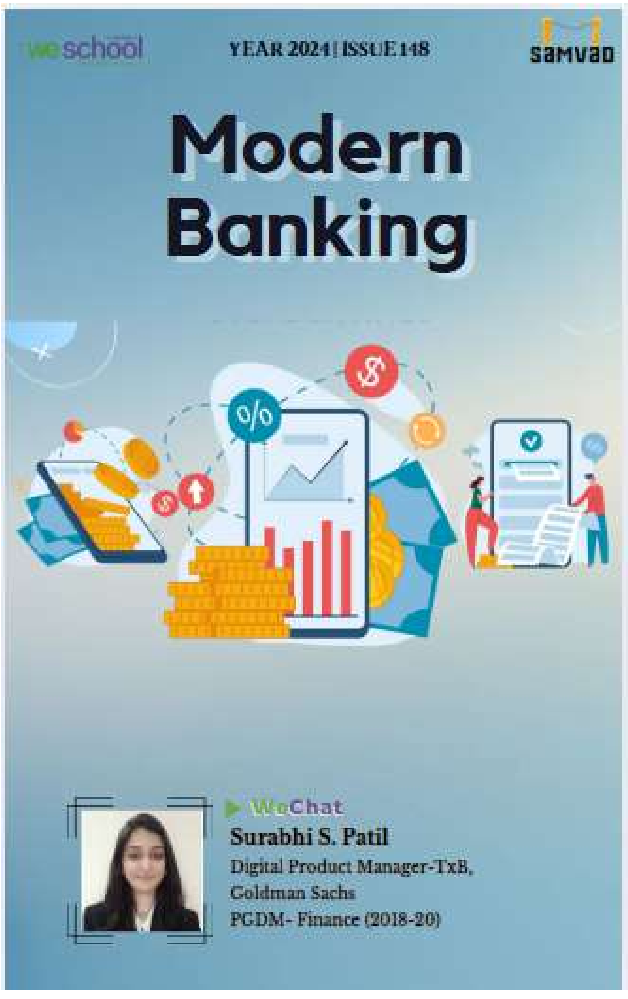
WECHAT MASTERS


Shruti Tawade
Head


Jishnu Dewan
Member

PREVIOUS MAGAZINES





Follow us on

@samvad.weschool

Samvad WeSchool

SamvadWE

@samvad_we

Contact Us: samvad.we@gmail.com