



## Hello, Hello from the North Pole,

A strange year it's proven. Nagging doubts about my core mission in light of recent trends pulled me into a whirlpool of unease akin to being short on milk and a supply of Ms. Claus' mighty fine chocolate chip cookies. My lead Elf the ever-perceptive trendster, knowing my old school style, confided "Boss, you've got looming issues, yes, but they can be dealt with. I'll connect you with a cutting-edge management consulting and public relations firm. They helped correct prevalent discriminatory policies concerning my height-challenged Elven brothers with *Great Success.*"

So I gave it a shot and as certain as Rudolph's nose is red after a night on the town these guys came through. A snazzy management report they produced, eh?

These are basic conclusions contained therein:

- The Pros:**
- ★ Santa's staying power as a cultural icon
  - ★ Santa's folksy genuineness
  - ★ Santa is seen as a fun-loving guy

Executive Summary,  
North Pole Media  
Positioning

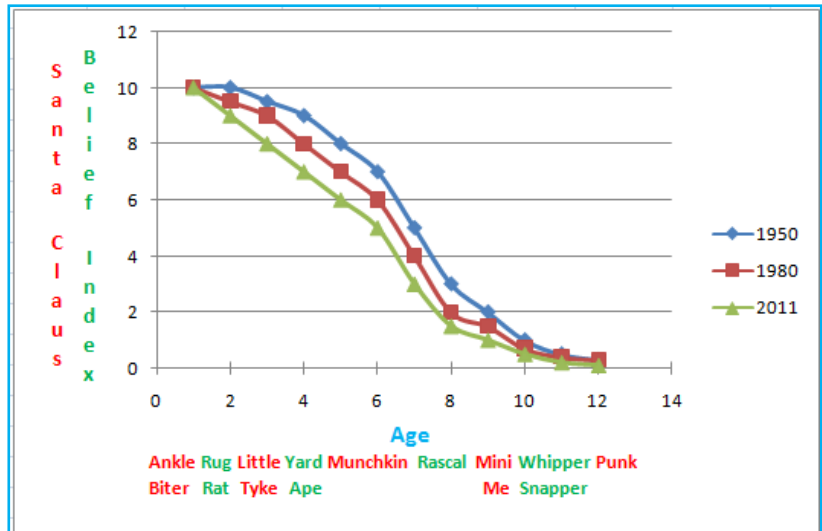


But .... Reading further ...

This graph in the consultant's report is telling and gets to the heart of my concerns. The

**SCATE** metric depicts the increasingly thin ice of waning influence and relevance. Adolescents sooner or later lost the belief I'm even *real* - they think me *fictional*? More disturbing is the loss of existential trust in Santa over the decades to ever younger ages. The worldly-wise demographic of 6-10 year olds is a tough nut to crack these days. Internet-based social networks and pervasive 24/7 media outlets conspire against us. Kids mature and become jaded ever earlier compared to the good old days. A characteristic refrain; "Where's the iPad I wished for? Can't deliver the goods?"

Santa Claus Age-Related Trust Effect (*SCATE*)



Santa's Management  
Consultants

The consultant's presentation analysis was on point. "We have quantified the problems and have specific recommendations. Mr. Claus we strongly encourage you to consider the potential of 3D virtualization and holographics as a solution. Hollywood exploits it fully, you should too. With this technology you can have a large media footprint ... not unlike the Abominable Snowman, ... Yo-Ho-Ho. Key action to take is the saturation of media channels with a full portfolio of your benevolent images, using the complimentary magic of subliminal suggestion. These impressions lead to the recapture of mindshare in critical decision-making demographics, thereby mitigating the loss of adolescent trust in Santa."

"Alternatively, employing conventional methods in the media could lead to pushback from the wise kids, the opinion leaders that drive and form the mindset of their peers." Subliminal suggestion? Mindshare? Decision-making demographics? Say what?

The razzle-dazzle of management consultant double-speak in action. The smooth operators seemed to have zippy come-backs to all of my counterpoints and questions.

OK, ...vague reservations about the ethics of embedding subliminal Santa suggestions across media channels aside, I bought into the whole scheme. Warily I agreed to a full body laser scan to produce my "virtual self". These experts say the virtual images captured can be "repurposed" ubiquitously into the indefinite future for Santa "brand extension".

The beauty of the scheme did not escape me. With a nonstop worldwide workload and the resulting stress I cannot count on retaining my current youthful appearance forever, can I? That virtual model of the big guy is every bit as good a hundred years from now as it is today. Sweet deal!



At first we gained solid traction with Santa awareness and credibility numbers taking a smart leap. It did not take long however before an observant teenager exposed the underhanded nature of our methods. Parents looking askance at the pervasive shenanigans of politicians and other public figures now felt their little floggers had been bamboozled. With my persona tarnished and widespread demands for transparency and the restoration of trust, I put the kibosh on the campaign. Credibility fell even lower than prior depressed baseline benchmarks, with kids across a broad spectrum questioning whether Santa ever existed. **Yeeikes!!**

The angst of a young imp speaks volumes. **Egads**, the embodiment of betrayal with sweet innocence evaporating ... how tragic. The wee ones need trustworthy figures they can count on.

Chastened and repentant I resolved to get back the purity of my down to earth vibe, sans gimmicks. Hey, I'm a traditional guy. The Elves' Gallery in their Schadenfreude declared, "Man Up and tighten your belt!" with a knowing smirk, having seen the Boss take many a slip and stumble in the past.

'Tis time to redouble my focus and commitment without any bellyaching. Getting back to image basics means dispensing with a fav, those chichi triple white mocha frappuccinos with a dash of pixie dust that I confess to having a great affinity for. The alternative is not so bad; fueling up on gallons of Ms. Claus' high octane java, prosaic perhaps but effective during those long crunch-time nights... and carbo-loading on Ms. Claus' scrumptious donuts, trans fats be damned!

Alrighty then, I've learned my lesson. Your belief in me is my bedrock.



*Santa Claus*

*Happy Holidays my friend!*

