SEARCH

SOCIAL

™

The Road to

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

In January of this year, we introduced the concept of Infinite Optimization™ to describe Kenshoo's unique approach to the intersection of marketing and technology.

Coming up with the vision was simple.

Executing it was not.

Join me for the journey....

IN PART 1,

I'll discuss the vision behind this heady concept and why it works well to describe the needs of today's marketer. I'll also play out a few examples of how Infinite Optimization works from a consumer and marketer standpoint.

IN PART 2,

I'll share how we wrapped the Kenshoo solution set around this construct as a way to differentiate in a crowded marketplace and position our clients for ongoing success. Specifically, I'll focus on what Infinite Optimization means in the context of Kenshoo's product offering and the problems it solves for our clients.

IN PART 3,

I'll re-trace the process we went through to create the infinity loop graphic and some of the alternate versions we came up with along the way. You'll see how we updated the individual components of our solution to be more in line with our latest brand persona and identity guidelines.

IN PART 4,

I'll talk about what we're doing with the Infinite Optimization theme going forward as it relates to Kenshoo product development and marketing. We'll explore how our Infinite Optimization is powered by Infinite Innovation and how we make the message more personal for employees, clients, partners, and prospects.
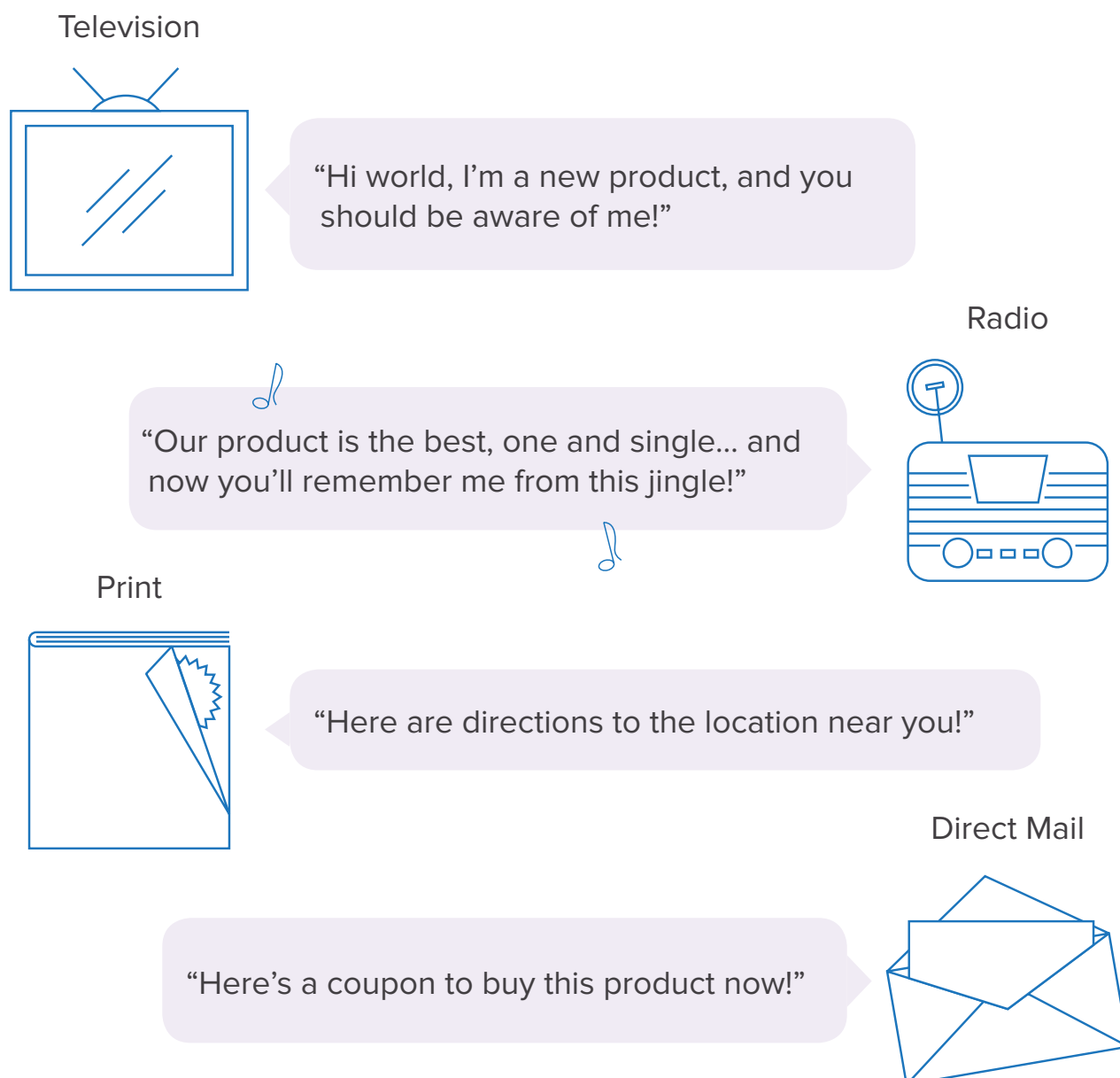
Now, buckle up and enjoy the ride!

PART 1: THE VISION

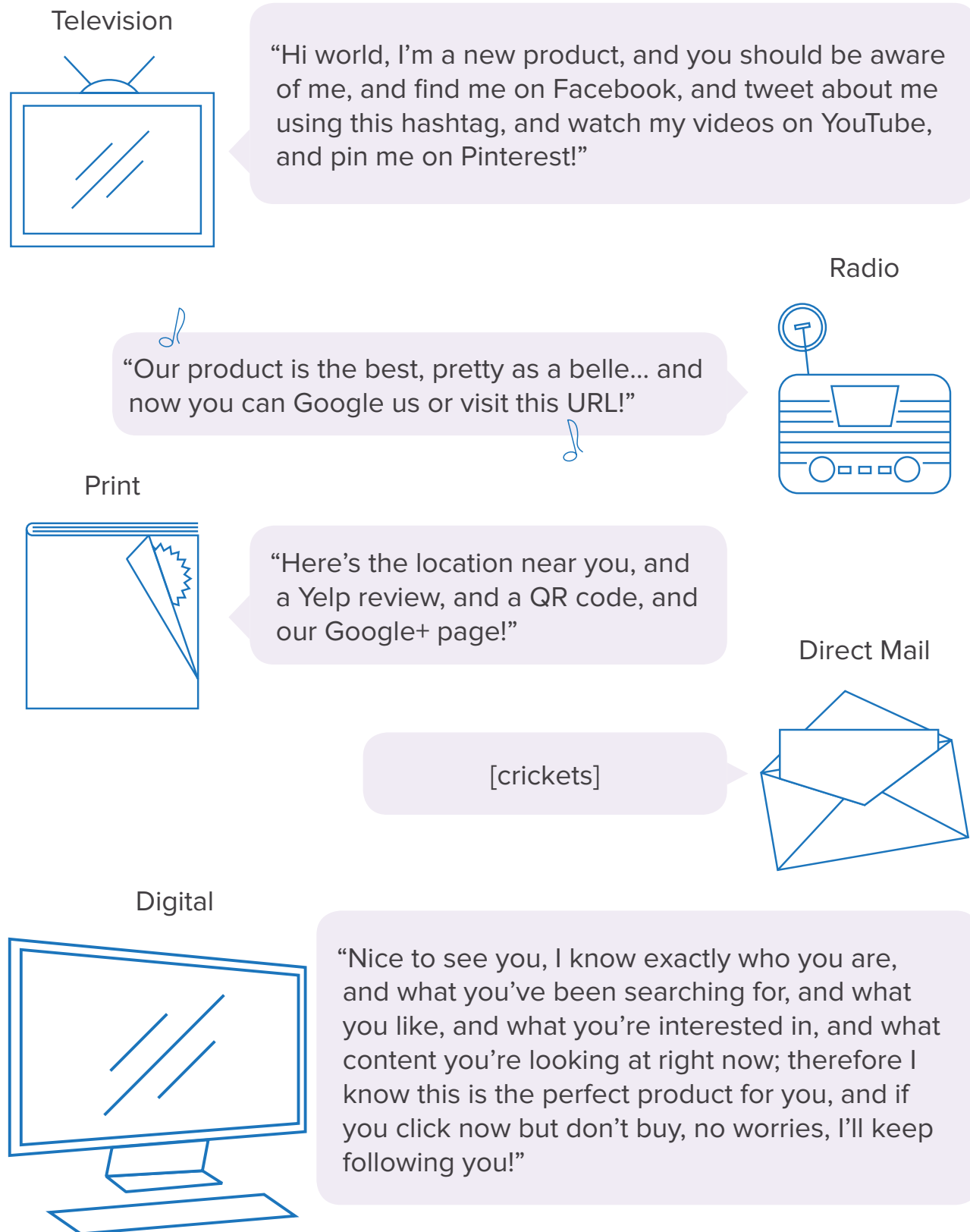We've all known for some time that the marketing purchase funnel is dead.

Gone are the days when consumers moved neatly through the process of awareness to consideration to intent to sale. And gone are the days of one-way push communication from brands to their audience.

In today's always-on world, brands and consumers are engaged in continual two-way dialogue across myriad channels and devices. And the relationship and advocacy goes well beyond the sale.

As such, in the old world, media planning was easy (well, easier) as brands simply mapped each channel to the appropriate phase in the funnel and delivered generic messaging:

Television

"Hi world, I'm a new product, and you should be aware of me!"

Radio

"Our product is the best, one and single... and now you'll remember me from this jingle!"

Print

"Here are directions to the location near you!"

Direct Mail

"Here's a coupon to buy this product now!"

In today's world, it goes a little something more like this:

Television

"Hi world, I'm a new product, and you should be aware of me, and find me on Facebook, and tweet about me using this hashtag, and watch my videos on YouTube, and pin me on Pinterest!"

Radio

"Our product is the best, pretty as a belle... and now you can Google us or visit this URL!"

Print

"Here's the location near you, and a Yelp review, and a QR code, and our Google+ page!"

Direct Mail

[crickets]

Digital

"Nice to see you, I know exactly who you are, and what you've been searching for, and what you like, and what you're interested in, and what content you're looking at right now; therefore I know this is the perfect product for you, and if you click now but don't buy, no worries, I'll keep following you!"

Accordingly, the job of a media planner has never been harder. In fact, it's so hard that it's become multiple jobs.
We have buyers, traffickers, analysts, oh my!

And that's just paid media. Today's marketing departments now include roles for owned media, organic optimization, and content marketing on top of the traditional creative and PR roles that have carried over from the old world.

More than anything, the difference between the old media world and the new can be described as a shift from static planning to dynamic activation.

The old world was rife with three martini lunches and insertion orders. Today's world requires triple-shot espressos and real-time bidding.

Today's world demands careful calculation, constant concatenation, and continual calibration.

Today's world requires Infinite Optimization.

PART 2: THE CONSTRUCT

The story of Kenshoo is essentially that of a company that listens to its customers and builds to their specifications.

We're fortunate to work with the most sophisticated advertisers and agencies in the world. By tailoring technology solutions to the problems they're facing, we're able to create innovative products that drive tangible results for all our clients.

Here are the most prevalent pain points we've heard from our clients over the years and how Kenshoo, and specifically Infinite Optimization, addresses them.

Challenge #1

How do I connect with my customers?

In this world of small screens and even smaller attention-spans, marketers struggle with identifying their best customers and delivering brand messages that truly resonate.

Solution: **Closed Loop Targeting**

Through Kenshoo Search and Kenshoo Social, marketers can discover and reach their best customers at the most critical apertures — when they're searching and when they're socializing.

There's a reason that search and social command 70% of online media budgets. They're the best channels to drive interaction and capture intent — aka the 70% of the path-to-purchase that matter most.

At Kenshoo, we're proud to be the undisputed leader in search and social. Per the most recent Forrester Wave: Bid Management Software Providers Q4, 2012, Kenshoo was named "The Only Leader" in SEM technology.

And Kenshoo is the only company in the world designated as a Facebook Strategic Preferred Marketing Developer with native access to the Facebook Exchange and Twitter Ads API, so we've got serious social cred.

Throw in Kenshoo Local, the only SEM technology platform that provides capabilities for companies to build, manage, and distribute individual place pages across thousands of local networks, and marketers can truly close the loop between online and offline channels.

Challenge #2

How do I streamline workflow and scale my campaigns?

With more channels, publishers, partners, and systems than ever before, there are too many variables in play for a mere mortal marketer to manage.

Solution: **Universal Integration**

The Kenshoo Universal Platform provides a central place for marketers to integrate all their channels and systems for automated workflow and holistic campaign measurement.

Kenshoo has completed integrations with more than 100 3rd-parties across Search, Social, Local, Display, Affiliate, Mobile, Comparison Shopping, and Retargeting so that we can serve as a marketer's true North for tracking and data analysis.

On top of all the various marketing channels, we also hook in with our clients' internal systems to automate and improve campaign relevancy and performance. This includes synchronizing inventory and other dynamic variables, supporting Product Listing Ads, and tying in with call-tracking systems.

In terms of workflow, Kenshoo empowers marketers with innovative tools to accomplish tasks that used to take hours or days within seconds and minutes. Examples here include a desktop application that enables cutting and pasting of campaigns across engines, functionality to quickly find, adjust, and schedule any element of any campaign, and campaign template libraries so marketers never need to start from scratch.

How do our clients feel about these benefits? This Ode to Kenshoo from our friends at Chacka Marketing about sums it up.

Challenge #3

Where should I allocate my spend?

Not all interactions are created equal and, when managing multi-channel campaigns, it can be difficult for marketers to know which ads are really moving the needle against bespoke business goals.

Solution: **Dynamic Attribution**

Kenshoo SmartPath allows marketers to map all touch-points along the path-to-conversion and bid to the true value of each interaction.

Whether it's paid, owned, or earned media, Kenshoo can track it, determine how much influence it had on driving conversions, and automatically inform Kenshoo's bidding systems how much each ad is actually worth.

By looking at each conversion event uniquely and assigning credit to each ad based on causality, synergy and loyalty, the algorithms that power Kenshoo SmartPath deliver unprecedented accuracy.

The result is a clear view into performance by placement and channel along with actionable budget allocation recommendations.

Challenge #4

How do I find new ways to optimize my campaigns?

No matter how hard marketers try to stay on top of their programs, there are always changes in the marketplace – eg, new formats, new platforms, new competitors -- that necessitate new optimization techniques or else campaign performance plateaus.

Solution: **Infinite Optimization**

Kenshoo provides all the essential ingredients for operating in an endlessly evolving landscape and effectively achieving marketing objectives.

At our core are 3 components that make us better positioned than anyone else in the market to deliver on the promise of Infinite Optimization – Adaptive Technology, Tailored Algorithms, and Unmatched Scale.

- Adaptive Technology – flexible infrastructure wrapping itself around each client to deliver peak relevancy

- Tailored Algorithms – proprietary models constantly recalibrating to meet defined goals

- Unmatched Scale – sustainable platform featuring intelligent automation to drive maximum performance

Add it all up and results are quite remarkable.

PART 3: THE VISUAL

Now that you understand what happens under the hood of Infinite Optimization, let's explore the creative design process and how we landed on the infinity loop we've all come to know and love.

(You do know it and love it, right?!?)

The goal was to create a visual representation of the Kenshoo product offering. As a starting point, we blew up the old marketecture graphic we used to describe the Kenshoo solution, which had affectionately become known internally as the nuclear shelter:

The Old

As you can tell, this graphic did not do our product suite justice in terms of displaying our offering or portraying the value to our clients.

So we tasked Margo Kahnrose, our infinitely talented director of brand management, with creating a new visual that would better tell the Kenshoo story.

For a while, we had been toying with a planetary theme that played nicely into our Universal Platform positioning. So our first stab at reimagining our layout centered around orbs and rings.

Here's the full slideshow buildup:

SlideShare ▶ The Kenshoo Story - Original Version
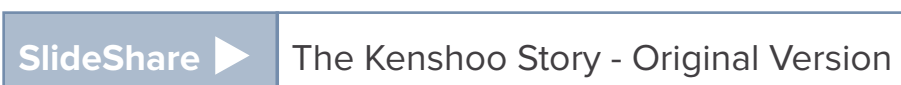
And here's where the marketecture resolved. The version below listed out each of the search and social channels we address:

The New

And this version displayed the channels and systems integrated through the Universal Platform:

From there, we experimented a bit with shapes, font, and gradients to make the key elements pop off the page a bit more. Below is where we landed:

V2

After shopping this around internally, we got some really good feedback from our sales team. This depiction put too much emphasis on the platform and not enough on the individual products.

Fixing this imbalance was important because we don't actually sell the Kenshoo Universal Platform. Rather, the platform powers our search and social solutions which are the systems our clients license and use to optimize their programs.

Around this time, we also began toying with the idea of rebranding Kenshoo Enterprise.

As Kenshoo Local expanded to incorporate management and syndication of page place listings through the CityGrid network, we felt it was important to break Kenshoo Local out of our "Search Solutions" and give it an identity of its own.

That left Kenshoo Enterprise as our sole dedicated SEM solution, so we decided to just call it was it is – Kenshoo Search.

We also wanted to reframe our marketecture around the key client issues we're solving. Our original story was too Kenshoo-centric. We needed to tell the story of Kenshoo through our clients' eyes.

The purchase funnel is dead! Today's path-to-purchase is long and winding and doesn't stop with the sale... it continues over the course of a lifetime customer relationship. In fact, you might say it's infinite.

This version linked via SlideShare below was our attempt to put Kenshoo's solution in the context of today's marketing landscape and this is where the idea of the infinity loop first took hold.

SlideShare ▶	Kenshoo Infinity Loop - Original Version

Below you can see the final frame which presents a much more simplified version of the Kenshoo product suite, albeit slightly incomplete. (We couldn't figure out where to put local!)

V3

We took our work-in-progress to Yoav, our CEO, and his first reaction was that he liked the direction and client-centric focus. He pushed us to be more creative, though. He felt the story and graphic were too literal.

Yoav wanted to see us visually convey the fluidity of our platform and the magic that happens at the intersection of search and social.

So Margo and I went back to the drawing board… and the space theme. In our minds, we could picture the infinity loop swirling around the search and social planets and we were intrigued by the potential "milky way" created by the collision.

This is what we came up with:

SlideShare ▶	The Kenshoo Story - Second Version
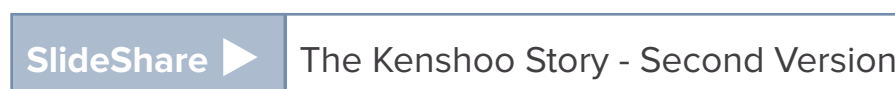
We tinkered with the last frame quite a bit and eventually landed on this version as the final resolve:

V4

This graphic definitely felt more fluid and open. We also liked how the painterly strokes tied into the Forrester Wave, which we were still riding.

After showing it to Yoav again, we knew we were close but not quite there. It was still too literal. It still felt like something that had been done before.

More than anything, Yoav felt like the shape was too solid and rigid, which was in contrast to our agility and flexibility. It was out of sync with the continual disruption that we pride ourselves on at Kenshoo.

After looking at the loop for another minute, he asked, "Margo, do you paint?"

The answer was yes. In fact, here's a picture of Margo painting a picture at the Chicago office holiday outing a few months prior.

Yoav suggested we put down the mouse and pick up a paint brush.

So we started with a blank canvas.

We revisited the story. (Let's start from the beginning.)

We incorporated our mission. (Star Wars, anyone?)

We introduced SmartPath. (A little purple for the pallete.)

We worked Local into the final frame. (Closest to Earth, of course.)

And we removed the channel logos. (Kenshoo is the name people should remember, right?)

And we colored outside the lines...

SlideShare ▶ The Kenshoo Story - Third Version

V5

The final rendering of the loop closely resembles what we use today:

In later iterations, we removed Local (it's a different dimension than search/social and just looked like an after-thought down there at the bottom) and brought more color to the intersection (weaving in some Kenshoo Local and SmartPath colors):

We liked how the Rorscach-esque color splatter in the middle emphasized that the whole is truly more than the sum of its parts. When search and social come together, we can do some truly remarkable things such as retargeting people on social networks with bespoke messaging based on what they've searched for. Behold truly Closed-loop Targeting!

Then we created a version that includes all 4 product logos and the channels and systems we integrate into our platform to help demonstrate Universal Integration and Dynamic Attribution across all touch-points.

So now you're in the loop with the evolution of the loop. What's next?

PART 4: THE PROMISE

Infinite Optimization is not just a tagline. It's not a new buzzword we're hoping catches on. It's a promise. To our clients. And to ourselves.

Our job is never done. The results can always improve. We can and must do better. All the time. To infinity. And beyond!

Kenshoo's mission is to empower every marketer in the world with technology to build brands and generate demand across all media. To achieve this, we need to continually find ways to capitalize on emerging market trends and create new technology solutions.

To do this, we need Infinite Innovation.

Innovation

Kenshoo has a long history of first-to-market innovation and, with our roots in the Israeli hi-tech community, we have a strong heritage and culture of innovation.

Bottom line, innovation is not just one of our core values... it's our core DNA.

So, how do we go about innovating?

At Kenshoo, innovation is not any one person's job. It's everyone's job.

That said, we do have one person who serves as our innovation leader aka instigator. Her name is Danny Lev and she's shared some thoughts on the topic of innovation on our blog.

Danny is part of the Kenshoo Labs team which focuses on incubating new ideas through the proof-of-concept phase before turning them over to the tech team when they are ready to be productized.

Where do those new ideas come from?

Often times, they come from the Kenshoo Innovation Community. This is an internal portal where a wide range of ideas (679 to date!) are harvested from the intellectual curiosity of our staff and our clients. Within the portal, Kenshoo'ers comment and vote on each idea with the most relevant ones moving forward.

As we build the framework for Infinite Optimization across all media, there are some key areas ripe for exploration and disruption (aka innovation). I won't get into them in a public forum but, rest assured, the Kenshoo product roadmap is aligned with our mission and will deliver on the true promise of Infinite Optimization.

Meanwhile, we're continuing to expand the Infinite Optimization theme throughout our marketing activity.
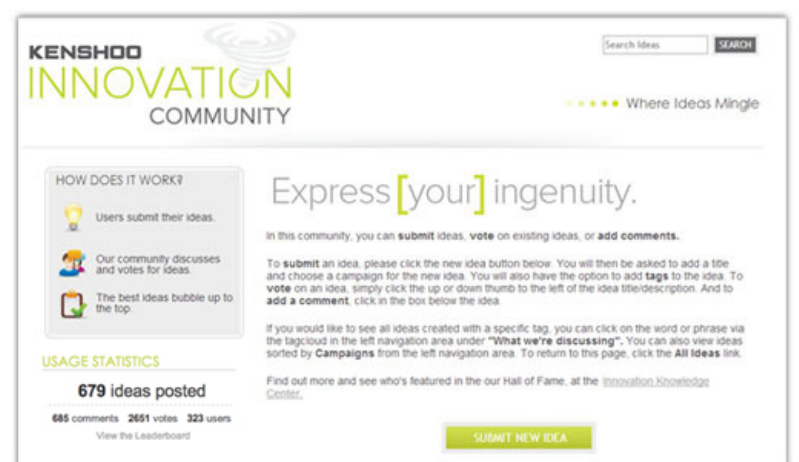
Marketing

We first introduced Infinite Optimization at our UK Agency Summit in January. (Of course, it was Infinite Optimisation for the British crowd.)

We got a great response from our clients and it was fun to see them talk about what Infinite Optimisation means to them:

YouTube ▶	Kenshoo Delivers Infinite Optimisation

In March, we updated Kenshoo.com to put Infinite Optimization front and center with the line, "We deliver unparalleled results by empowering sophisticated marketers with cutting-edge technology."

We also began to expand on the infinity concept and loop shape, thinking of it more as a palette upon which we can paint a portrait of our promise.

Here's some pretty prose to that effect written by Margo:

"Superior research and engineering combined with a creative/innovative attitude puts Kenshoo squarely at the intersection of art and science — and at the helm of each. Kenshoo is future-focused; our clients are exploring new frontiers with infinite momentum. The possibilities are endless.

The infinity loop is represented artistically to demonstrate the harmony and synchronicity between various aspects of our offerings, and the 'artisans' behind them.

The graphic can house correlative pairs and symbolize the fluidity of motion and continual improvement between them, i.e. Marketers & Technology, Goals & Results, Brands & Consumers, Local & Global, Intent & Interaction, Search & Social, etc."
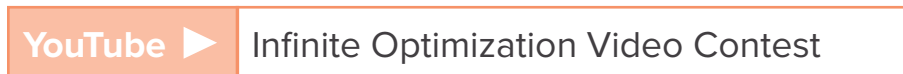
Persona

The next step was to make the promise of Infinite Optimization more personal.

To begin, we equipped everyone at Kenshoo with email signatures and business cards that included a fill-in-the-blank to show what motivates us.

We also had a video contest to see what fuels Infinite Optimization for each of us:

YouTube ▶ Infinite Optimization Video Contest

We took the brush strokes that represent the infinity loop and swathed them across our collateral and social media profiles.

We also added painterly touches to our print adverts:

More recently, we've installed scribble walls in offices for people to share daily doses of inspiration:

And we had famous Israeli artist, Rami Meiri, hold workshops with our team to create works of art modeled off our core values.

Art

The latest Infinite Optimization offshoot is a media campaign we're running in digital and print. (Other channels and formats coming soon!)

Here we're applying the art and science theme a bit more literally…

Digital marketing is an art and a science.

The key to success is striking the right balance.

Our clients are talented artisans that thrive on insight and clarity.

Kenshoo'ers are crafty scientists building the elite tools of the trade.

The result is that each artist can unleash his/her talent to achieve full potential and create ROI masterpieces.

Here's an ad we ran in the Digital Marketing Depot Guide to PPC Campaign Management Tools:

And here's something we ran on InsideFacebook.com and AllFacebook.com.

Live

Well, folks, it's been an incredible journey...

Forget the 8 months we've spent at Kenshoo bringing this idea to life, can you believe we made it through more than 4,500 words here?!?

I haven't written this much in one place since my book. Well, maybe an RFP response. :)

So where do we go from here?

From a product standpoint, we're committed to Infinite Innovation to offer opportunities for our committed clients to perpetually perform.

From a marketing standpoint, we plan to infuse more art into the mix and find new engaging ways to help our clients and the community at large wrap their arms around this concept and make it their own.

Indeed, at the K8 Summit, Kenshoo clients and partners from around the world gathered in Sausalito, California to participate in a day of interaction and innovation. For a recap of the event, you can read a post on the Kenshoo blog by Lindsay Kleinick, our events manager.

One of the highlights of the day was the Kenshoo Ecosystem Challenge. This two-hour activity took place during the afternoon and gave attendees a chance to explore the beautiful resort grounds at Cavallo Point while engaging with various Kenshoo partners to learn how they support holistic digital marketing programs.

To help teams navigate the scavenger hunt, we armed each team with an iPad mini and a cool app designed by Mint Chip. The app guided participants through 16 checkpoints and provided information about each Kenshoo partner and the value they add to our ecosystem. (Yes, there was a quiz at the end!)


One of the stations was led by famous Israeli Artist, Rami Meiri. Rami asked our clients to dig deep and add to the canvas a portrayal of their inspiration. From travel to nature, we got some great contributions and the final result was truly a masterpiece.

YouTube ▶ K8 Infinite Optimization Masterpiece

And at dmexco in Cologne, we engaged clients and partners with our Infinite Optimisation stand:
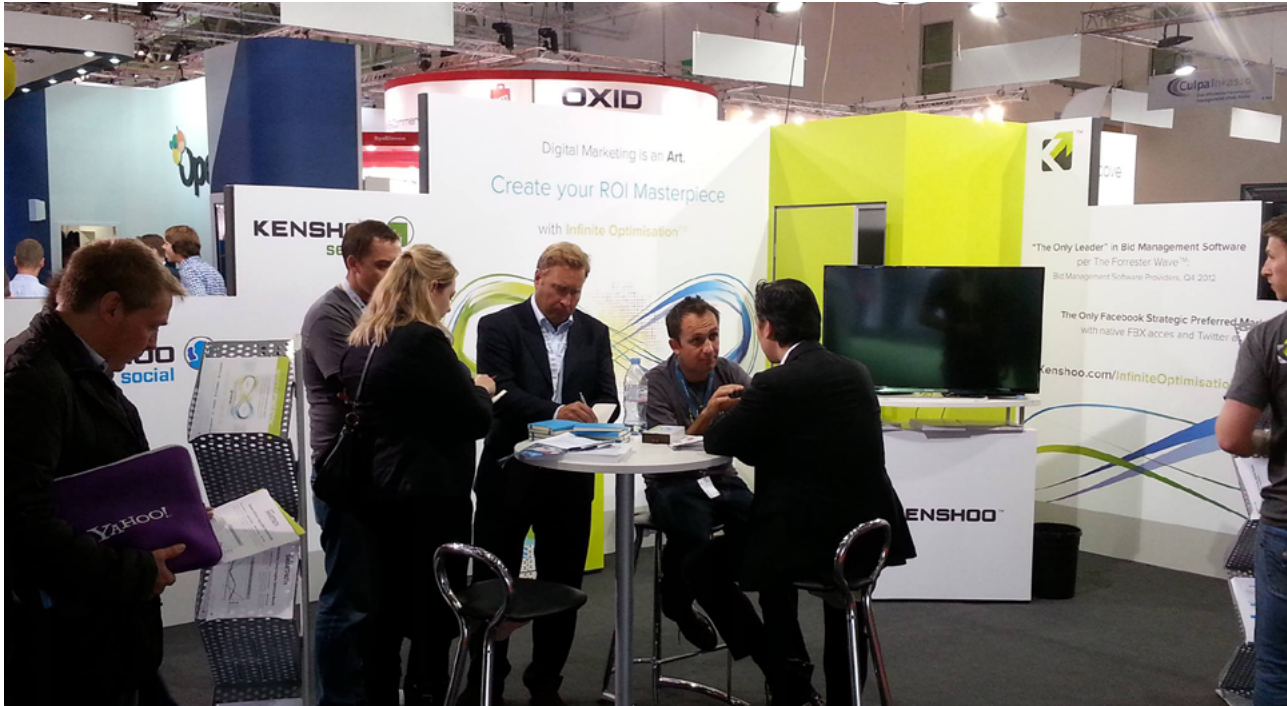
We've got more in store as we carry (and tweak) our message across the globe to a location near year! I hope you enjoyed this inside look at Infinite Optimization and how it came to be.

And I hope you'll hold us to our promise of delivering Infinite Optimization at every turn along the road...

Infinitely yours,

POST SCRIPT:
THE DEFINITION

Hope you enjoyed the road to infinite optimization. What a long, strange trip it's been!

This originally ran as a series on the Kenshoo Blog: In the Loop.

Over the span of 16 posts, I covered infinite optimization theme from every angle and (more appropriately given the infinity loop shape...) curve.

We broke down the executive vision, market challenges, design progression, ad campaigns, and future promise.

Somehow, through it all, I never gave a single, succinct sentence defining Infinite Optimization. Hat tip to my man, Josh, for pointing this out.

Landing on the definition was itself a process of Infinite Optimization. #someta

Here are some of the versions I cycled through...

Infinite Optimization is the solution Kenshoo delivers for building brands and generating demand through digital marketing. (Connects with our mission statement.)

Infinite Optimization is Kenshoo's unique approach to helping advertisers and agencies improve digital marketing performance. (Explains who our clients are and what we help them do at a higher level.)

Infinite Optimization is Kenshoo's unique approach to marketing in the modern era. (A bit more provocative.)

Infinite Optimization is Kenshoo's solution for helping marketers must navigate a complicated web to acquire, retain, and grow customers. (A bit more solutions-focused.)

Here's where I landed...

Infinite Optimization is Kenshoo's solution for continually improving marketing performance. (K.I.S.S.)

I floated the idea out to a few team members who suggested combining a few to really drive the point home.

So I came up with this...

Infinite Optimization is Kenshoo's unique approach to continually improving performance in a complex marketing landscape.

Then Kelly offered up this verbiage she wrote for an upcoming Spredfast blog post...

"From the Kenshoo perspective, this idea of optimizing the entire customer journey and continually refining the process to achieve optimal results is what we call Infinite Optimization -- a true closed-loop experience."

I liked how this version tied in the customer viewpoint and emphasized results.

So I formed this definition...

Infinite Optimization is Kenshoo's solution for marketers to continually improve every step of the customer journey and achieve optimal results.

Then Josh weighed in that Infinite Optimization is really more of an ideal than a solution or approach. He suggested framing it as a shared goal, nay, the shared goal.

So here's what we're going with (for now)...

Infinite Optimization is the shared goal between Kenshoo and our clients to continually improve every step of the customer journey and drive optimal marketing performance.

And the road goes on forever...