

NON OBVIOUS

15 Surprising New Trends
Changing How We Buy,
Sell or Believe Anything

WITH NEW TRENDS FOR

2012

A yellow balloon is positioned above the year '2012', with its string tied to a silver light bulb base. The light bulb base is positioned directly below the '0' of '2012'. The entire design is set against a white background with a thick orange border.

ROHIT BHARGAVA

Best-selling author of *Likeonomics*



ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION:

THE BACKSTORY



This is the 2nd Annual Edition of my Trend series curated a year of research and interviews to help CMOs, brand managers, business owners and entrepreneurs to see around the corner into the trends shaping how we buy, sell or believe anything in the coming year.

In this report, you'll see the top trends for 2012 – as well as some reference to earlier reports. If you'd like to read and download any reports from previous years, visit www.nonobvious.com.



Rohit Bhargava

Trend Curator + Keynote Speaker

Nice Guy



Introduction

“The most reliable way to anticipate the future is to understand the present.”

- John Naisbitt, Author of *Megatrends* (1982)

This is not a presentation about where the world will be in ten years. It is a curated look at some of the biggest trends that matter for business globally and will grow in the coming year. As a marketer and author, the types of yearly trend predictions that I love to read are those which explain the world through business ... so that's what I have tried to do here. I hope you enjoy these trends and find them useful! Please visit www.nonobvious.com.

Why Do These Trends Matter?

Every trend noted in this presentation is supported by real life examples. In many cases, I have spent months reading about people and businesses that describe the trend and considering whether it is a trend at all. The 15 selected and included in this presentation are the ones that made the cut and have momentum to actually matter in 2012.

What Is Different This Year?

Last year, I focused solely on marketing and social media. This year, the lens is bigger – to include trends from business that will effect the world beyond just marketing.

5 Reasons Trend Predictions Fall Short

There are lots of trend reports published around the beginning of the year. Some are great and some aren't. Here are a few of the common reasons trend predictions don't work or fall short (and pitfalls I tried to avoid):

1. **Too Obvious** – Great trend predictions usually dig deeper.
2. **Tunnel Vision** – Big trends reflect on society, not just a niche area.
3. **No Proof** – Trends should have real proof happening right now.
4. **Lack Of Time** – Hastily written blog posts only scratch the surface.
5. **Self Serving** – Trends with a personal agenda feel contrived.

To download this presentation (and more exclusive content), visit the full site at www.nonobvious.com

The 15 Trends At A Glance

1. **Corporate Humanism** – Companies find their humanity.
2. **Ethnomimicry** – Business looks to ethnography for inspiration.
3. **Social Loneliness** – Despite online friends, loneliness grows.
4. **Pointillist Filmmaking** – New form of collaborative filmmaking.
5. **Measuring Life** – Every aspect of life is measured/analyzed.
6. **Co-Curation** – Curation grows more collaborative.
7. **Charitable Engagement** – Charities try to engage AND fundraise.
8. **Medici Marketing** – Multi-disciplinary marketing explodes.
9. **Digital Afterlife** – Digital tools simplify honoring loved ones.
10. **Real Time Logistics** – Real time info helps improve supply chain.
11. **Social Artivism** – Using art for activism gets social.
12. **Civic Engagement 2.0** – New sites increase civic engagement.
13. **Tagging Reality** – Real objects & images unlock virtual content.
14. **ChangeSourcing** – Crowdsourcing enables social change.
15. **Retail Theater** – In-store experience drives loyalty & purchase.

1. Corporate Humanism

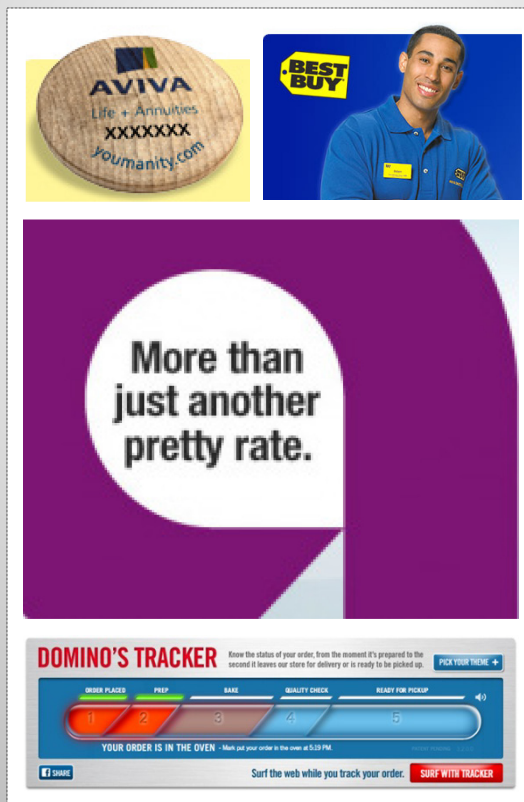


RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #1: Corporate Humanism – Companies find more ways to avoid being faceless and find their humanity.

SUMMARY

People buy from people. Thanks to the growth of social media and a shifting philosophy across marketing organizations, corporate humanism is “going viral” with more brands focused on **creating fundamentally more human businesses through everything from using social networking to better employee engagement and empowerment**.

In 2012, more brands will focus on creating policies and practices that demonstrate more humanity, encouraging employees to more publicly represent their companies, spending more time listening and reacting to customers, and even reshaping their business models.



EXAMPLES:

Aviva, Ally, Dominos, Best Buy

Aviva: With a mission to “put the humanity back into life insurance” – the world’s 6th largest life insurer promotes “Youmanity” by encouraging people to spread kindness.

Best Buy: As one of the most active brands with social media and training, Best Buy has pioneered a new model of retail where employees become more deeply trusted brand stewards, and consumers respond.

AllyBank: Launched in a time of unfair bank fees, Ally creates fairer banking by avoiding legalese and using straightforward talk.

Domino's: Not only did Domino's admit their pizza was bad and reinvent the recipe last year, they also introduced tools like the real time tracker to reinforce that real people are making your pizza (and working quickly).

2. Ethnomimicry



RT @rohitbhargava – 2012 Trend #2: Ethnomimicry – Human behavior and social interaction inspires new tools and products that fit our lives.

SUMMARY

In 1941, Swiss engineer George de Mestral removed burrs from his dog and was inspired by that natural design to create Velcro. It is still one of the most popular examples of the power of biomimicry – a discipline of science that uses the natural world to inspire new scientific innovation.

In 2011, more businesses started using human social interactions to inspire similar breakthroughs. **Ethnographic analysis of how people interact in the real world is leading to new social tools or products which mimic human behaviour.**

Microsoft's Kinetic gaming device is one popular example of a new crop of products and tools that learn from how we behave and interact to fit more seamlessly into the fabric of our lives.



EXAMPLE:

Google+

With a stated goal of using human behaviour to inspire a more intuitive social network, Google Plus has continued to grow – and break new ground with everything from their circles interface to the hotly debated policy of requiring people to use their real names for accounts.



EXAMPLE:

Emotion Lighting

When designer Andrew Williams sees a mimosa plant close in response to a touch – he sees inspiration. That led him to design emotion: “a lighting concept that appeals to human senses.” His emotion lamp reacts to you, lighting and moving based on the change in current triggered by touch.

3. Social Loneliness



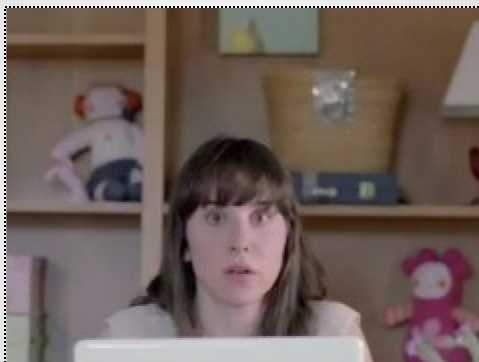
RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #3: Social Loneliness – Despite online social connections, people often feel a real world sense of loneliness.

SUMMARY

A groundbreaking study from Duke University in 2009 found that 25% of all people said they have no one with whom they would discuss important matters – 3x as high as the number was in 1985. The discomfoting truth is, **social media may not be making us more social at all.**

More pop culture references are starting to point to this increasingly individual lifestyle we are all heading towards and in 2012 this social loneliness will lead to opportunities for companies who can create solutions to help people connect online and offline.

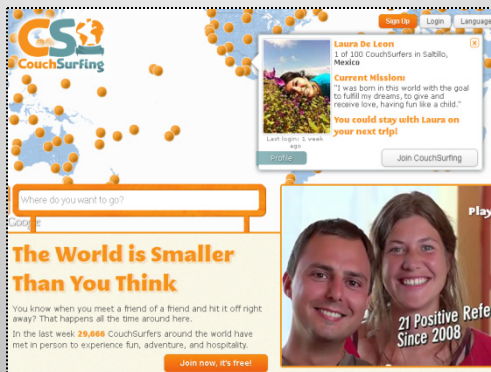
Ultimately **the best solution is to focus on the quality of friendships instead of the quantity** – making the real cure to social loneliness clear: you need to get to know people beyond their last tweet.



EXAMPLE:

Toyota Venza: *This Is Living*

In a set of popular ads for their new car, Toyota parodies overconnected youth who rely on social media for friendships and contrasts them with the older generation who rely on real life friends instead. The main message: you don't need social media to have a social life.



EXAMPLE:

Couchsurfing.com

What if you had a friend in every city around the world? That is the mission behind this wildly popular site that lets travelers find a local to show them around a new city, and put them up on their couch. Using social tools to enable real life meetings, with safety features built in will continue to rise.

4. Pointillist Filmmaking



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #4: Pointillist Filmmaking – Stories of humanity are told through curated collections of very short film clips.

SUMMARY

If you have heard of Pointillism, you would probably know it as a painting technique popularized in 1886 by Georges Seurat where painters use millions of small dots to create a larger image.

The idea behind pointillism also describes a **growing movement in film to bring together a large number of short clips to tell a broader story**. Recent examples have included marketing campaigns for products or social cause related efforts that solicit video entries from around the world and then edit them together to tell a story.

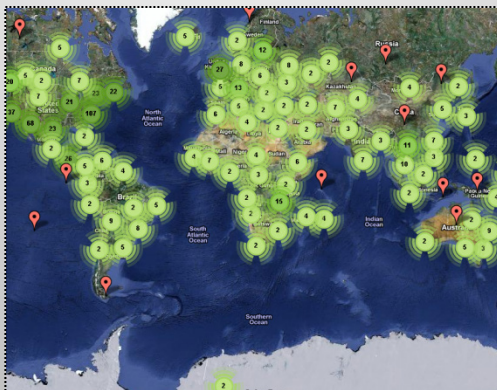
As film editing becomes easier, in 2012 look for more organizations to use this method to increase consumer engagement and tell big stories without big budgets.



EXAMPLE:

Mont Blanc – The Beauty of a Second

To celebrate the 190th anniversary of the invention of the chronograph, Mont Blanc solicited 1 second films from around the world and aggregated them together to tell a story about the beauty of human experience.



EXAMPLE:

One Day On Earth

Inspired by their success in 2010, on 11.11.11 this project challenged people around the world to submit a film they created on that date, and people from hundreds of countries participated. The resulting footage is being compiled into the ultimate time capsule to tell a story of what the world was doing that day.

5. Measuring Life



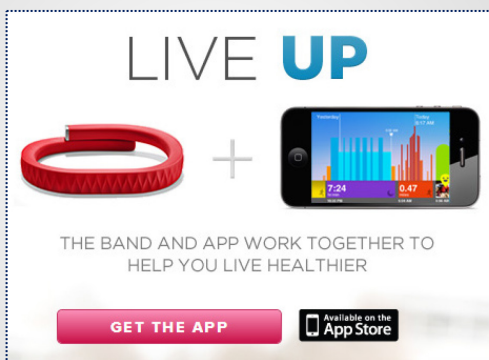
RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #5: Measuring Life – Tracking tools offer individualized data to monitor and measure all areas of your life.

SUMMARY

Data has always been an important component of research or how companies plan for the future of their business. **In 2012, all sorts of analytics will be an even bigger part of how each of us measure and manage our lives on a daily basis as well .**

As data visualization (a 2011 trend) continues to grow, making sense of data is finally becoming as easy as it is to collect that data in the first place. That is leading to new innovative products like the ZEO sleep manager which allows you to track your sleep patterns and graph the data.

Similar products and services help you track your own health, measure your social influence, not to mention set goals.



EXAMPLE:

Jawbone UP Wristband

Popular bluetooth headset maker Jawbone branched out this past year with the release of their new wristband which helps monitor your daily activity, meals and sleep patterns. The coming year will likely see more data-enabled personal life management gadgets.



EXAMPLE:

Klout

Ever since Technorati was assigning a number ranking for each blogger, people in an online social context have hungered for the validation of ratings. Klout continues to grow as an example of a social media ranking tool, offering an instant metric on personal influence.

6. Co-Curation



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #6: Co-Curation – Curation gets more collaborative as amateurs & experts combine forces to curate information.

SUMMARY

Curation has been the buzzword in media and marketing for several years, but now a new collaborative form of curation is emerging. In 2012, curation will extend beyond a few passionate individuals scouring the web to organize content.

Co-curation will bring a group dynamic to the power of curating the best of the web – so more people share their experiences and expertise together.

This will result in a new class of content online which may sit between a Wikipedia entry and an authoritative article on a topic. Co-curated information may easily start to become the defacto source on a wide range of topics, because multiple groups are adding their unique points of view to bring together every angle of an issue.



EXAMPLE:

Storyful

Founded with the mission of helping to create “cooperative, socially useful journalism” – Storyful has rewritten the rules around journalism by allowing readers to co-curate content along with journalists to add a real and authentic dimension to all types of stories.



EXAMPLE:

Futurity

The world’s universities are accumulating and publishing research at rapid rate, but making sense of it all is tough. Futurity is a site that aggregates highlights of research from universities around the world and uses peer review to distill the information. The result is a uniquely practical site making dense research more accessible and ultimately useful.

7. Charitable Engagement



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #7: Charitable Engagement - Charities combine fundraising with engagement to inspire loyalty among supporters.

SUMMARY

One of the biggest debates in the nonprofit sector recently has been about the rise in “slacktivism” where charities were so focused on one-button single-text message donations that they were encouraging a sort of disengaged participation from large numbers of people.

In 2012, more charitable organizations will be rethinking the focus on quick donations and actively promote *participation* through gaming and behavioural principles for engagement.

As a result, people will start to make deeper commitments of time & passion to charities beyond donations. From attending real life activities to leveraging their online social networks, this will lead to more engaged public participation.



EXAMPLE:

WaterForward.org

The innovative idea behind this campaign from Charity Water uses social influence to encourage people to “pay it forward” with donations on behalf of their friends. You need an invite to participate, and contributors are featured in a book and encouraged to involve their friends.



EXAMPLE:

Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution

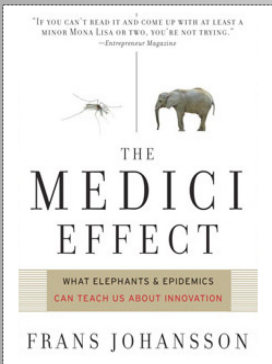
Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver spent most of 2011 promoting healthier school lunches – and making political enemies. His Food Revolution is breaking new ground by using a combination of reality show style entertainment, gaming, online engagement and political activism to reinvent our kids health at schools.

8. Medici Marketing



RT @rohitbhargava – 2012 Trend #8: Medici Marketing – Thinking from multiple disciplines is combined to make marketing more engaging, creative or useful.

SUMMARY



Back in 2006, a consultant named Frans Johansson wrote a book about the *intersection* of culture, industries & expertise – called the Medici Effect, after a family in Florence who funded creators from different disciplines and fostered the Renaissance.

In 2012, **marketing will be influenced by more thinking from philosophy, journalism, design, science and other industries to create a “Medici Effect” across the practice of communications.** More people with nontraditional backgrounds will contribute to making marketing more useful, innovative, creative or valuable.

**Disclosure – Intel is a client of my employer, Ogilvy*



EXAMPLE:

The Creators Project*

A partnership between Intel and Vice, this program celebrated artists who use digital technology to create engaging visual art from a huge digital stage at the Coachella music festival to sculptures, films, panels and live discussions – all culminating in a 3-day exposition in Beijing.



EXAMPLE:

Albam Factories Book

Albam is a small British mens clothing brand that decided to partner with team photographer John Spinks to publish an art book all about how their garments are produced. The resulting FACTORIES book is a combination of a catalog and coffee table book printed in Germany to a limited edition of 500 worldwide.

9. Digital Afterlife



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #9: Digital Afterlife – New tools simplify creating memorial sites & managing inevitable red tape when loved ones die.

SUMMARY

When a loved one passes away, what happens to all their digital assets and data? As it turns out, this is a much more complicated (and common) problem than managing a Facebook page.

Over the past year, more companies have started to focus on the digital afterlife, **creating tools, education and services to help people manage all the data that loved ones leave behind after they die.**

In the new year, not only with new startups start to make this space more competitive, we will also see existing social networks like Facebook add features to make those platforms easier to manage in the event of tragedy, and link digital and social tools more closely to real life services such as funerals and memorial funds as well.



EXAMPLE:

1000memories.com

Inspired by the losses of loved ones, 3 ad agency execs created this site to offer an easier way to memorialize those you love. The site has already closed millions in VC funding and is breaking new ground by simplifying a common desire in a time of extreme emotional stress. Look for more services to try and fill this need in 2012.



EXAMPLE:

Aftersteps.com

Focused on the more “logistical” side of death, Aftersteps offers a digital service to handle everything from pre-preparing letters for loved ones (before you pass) to offering tools for those left behind to manage finances, plan funeral services and dozens of other common needs.

10. Real Time Logistics



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #10: Real Time Logistics – Online conversation allows instant logistical & supply chain adjustments for brands.

SUMMARY

The constant battle between matching demand for any product to supply has never been an exact science. Luckily, brands in a wide range of industries are getting better at **using the stream of real time commentary offered by consumers to generate insights which can help with supply chain and logistical planning.**

This is already leading to small changes like opening checkout lines when irate customers tweet about lengthy waits, as well as big changes like more quickly managing inventory to avoid selling out too quickly or overstocking merchandise.

Both are examples of how real time logistics can help businesses of all sizes to eliminate wastage and maximize profits.

**Disclosure – SAP is a client of my employer, Ogilvy.*



EXAMPLE:

Walmart Labs

In May of 2011, Walmart acquired mobile commerce startup Kosmix and charged a team of 70 engineers and researchers with defining the future of mobile and retail. If one of the world's largest retailers can crack this code, the rest of the world will rapidly follow suit.



EXAMPLE:

SAP's Social Supply Chain*

As one of the early pioneers of building social media intelligence into supply chain management, the “world’s leading provider of run-the-business software.” will be a driving force in how the world’s largest brands use conversations in real time to predict not only what consumers want, but also where they want it.

11. Social Activism



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #11: Social Activism – Artists using creativity to comment on activist issues turn to social media to spread their message.

SUMMARY

The concept of “Artivism” as a way to describe the intersection between art and activism has been around for some time to describe things like public art displays with an underlying social message.

In 2011, we started to see this type of Artivism more actively use social media to amplify messages and this trend will continue in 2012 as **more artists see social tools as a way to reach more people with their messages** and create greater social impact from their efforts.

For everything from real life murals shared virally through social media, to entire gatherings dedicated to the topic and then shared online, Artivism goes social.



EXAMPLE:

Artist Film Festival

As this festival moves into its 9th year, it continues to get savvier about integrating social media into the experience to help the activities and films that are promoted be distributed to a wider audience and connect with more people around the world who seek inspiration to do more good.



EXAMPLE:

Estria Foundation: Water Writes

Founded by graffiti art “living legend” Estria Miyashiro, the Water Writes campaign was a mural art project across 10 cities to bring attention to the water crisis. Late in 2011, the campaign sent US artists to Gaza in an effort to use murals to bring attention to the “unnoticed part of the conflict” – water.

12. Civic Engagement 2.0



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #12: Civic Engagement 2.0 – New tools offer citizens that chance to engage easily on civic issues.

SUMMARY

Many cities around the world suffer from an overall lack of engagement of citizens in everyday life. Revolutions are a different matter, but when it comes to the simple daily aspects of what most call “civic duty” – participation is woefully low.

Next year growing usage of a slate of digital networks and tools will **allow people to engage more actively with local government for everything from reporting potholes to offering suggestions for how to improve their community.**

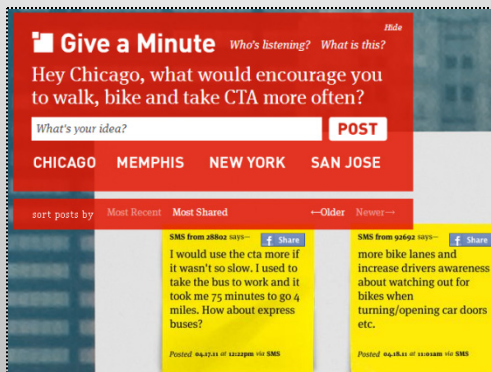
As civic engagement gets easier to do online, more people will participate and all sorts of good things start to happen – like more active citizens, higher voter turnout for local elections & stronger communities.



EXAMPLE:

CitySourced

Find a pothole on your daily commute? What about some graffiti on the sidewalk? Now you can share it instantly with CitySourced, a website and mobile app that lets you identify civic issues affecting safety or the environment and report them to your local city hall for quick resolution.



EXAMPLE:

Give A Minute

If you have ever had an idea that might improve your city but not known where to share it, this is your site. Not only can you proactively share ideas visually, the site also features an extremely useful list of politicians and other influencers who have committed to actively listen and respond on the site.

13. Tagging Reality



RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #13: Tagging Reality – Using still objects in reality, from buildings to images, to unlock virtual interactive content.

SUMMARY

Since the beginning of the web people have used keywords for tagging content so it would be easy to find. The next version of that, so to speak, was when you could use some type of barcode or QR Code as a “tag” to directly navigate to some sort of website.

Better quality cameras on mobile devices now let any object in reality, from a building to a statue, be used as a “tag” to unlock interactive content.

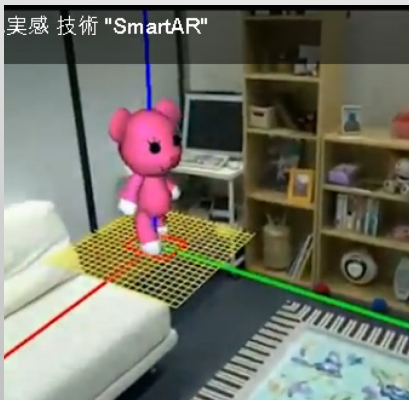
This means that just pointing your mobile device at a building, for example, could unlock a performance, or an image of what that building looked like 100 years ago. When objects in reality can be tagged to offer exclusive content, anything we see can be a delivery device for learning experiences, or entertaining content.



EXAMPLE:

Layar

A technology platform that took off in 2011 was Layar, which allows anyone to add a virtual layer on top of real content – so everyone from retailers to magazine publishers can let their audience use a mobile device to unlock exclusive content, buy directly, or even layer interactive animation on top of real life.



EXAMPLE:

Sony SmartAR

When large electronics manufacturer Sony announced their new Augmented Reality technology in mid-2011, there was immediate buzz in tech circles. This new tech will allow for any object to immediately become a gateway to virtual animation – with the likely side benefit that other brands will be more aggressively launching in this space in 2012.

14. Changesourcing



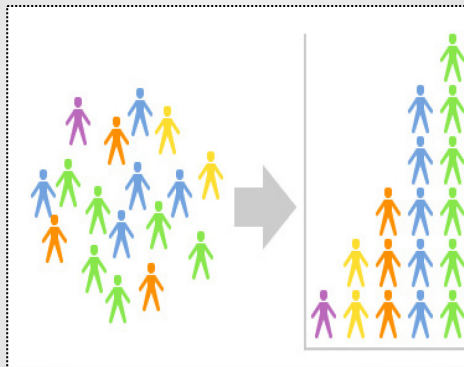
RT @rohitbhargava - 2012 Trend #14: Changesourcing is crowdsourcing evolved, where people collaborate to achieve real change.

SUMMARY

Crowdsourcing has certainly reached a level of maturity and even mainstream approval through the ubiquity of information based services like Wikipedia. The concept is now being expanded beyond the realm of information sharing.

Crowdsourcing itself is evolving beyond information sharing to a point where people can use the collaborative power of a crowd to achieve personal, social or political change - Changesourcing.

This means more than just getting your film idea funded. Changesourcing could lead to unexpected medical breakthroughs, game changing entrepreneurs launching their companies, revolutions overthrowing governments and other big changes which can impact the world we live in.



EXAMPLE:

Self Reported Clinical Trials

In April of 2011, a group of over 500 patients suffering from ALS experimented with an unapproved lithium carbonate treatment – and reported their results through the site PatientsLikeMe.com. It set off a debate on patient empowerment – but look for more examples in 2012 of extreme collaboration like this.



EXAMPLE:

Peerbackers.com

What Kickstarter did for helping get creative efforts funded is the mission behind this startup which is one example of a new slate of companies that Inc Magazine dubbed S2S – startup to startup businesses. With Peerbacker, you can get the idea for your new business funded.

15. Retail Theater



RT @rohitbhargava – 2012 Trend #15: Retail Theater – The physical in-store experience, enhanced by social media, will drive loyalty and purchase.

SUMMARY

The demise of the physical store in favor of the ease of online shopping has been greatly exaggerated. A recent WPP newsletter called experiential retail the new “watchword for the retail industry.” The word “retail-tainment” has been used by some to describe the influx of experiential stores like American Girl Place and Dave & Busters into shopping malls globally.

In 2012, we will see more retail stores create unique experiences that use the principles of theater to engage consumers. The web and social media will help to extend these experiences and the aim will be to drive consumer loyalty and increase frequency of purchasing as well. Retail will become much more about the experience created in store rather than just the availability or price of products.



EXAMPLE:

Puma Creative Factory

At over a dozen locations from Dubai to Prague, Puma has set up public creative workshops to collaborate with local artists and bloggers on new designs. The public is invited to come in and experience the design process for themselves, and become part of the experience online as well.



EXAMPLE:

Villa Sofa

Dutch furniture brand Villa Sofa uses a highly interactive space in their flagship Amsterdam store to help their customers imagine what their own homes could be like with their furniture – and a good amount of creativity as well.



RETROSPECTIVE: How Accurate Were The 2011 Trends?

Last year I produced my first trend report. Here's how those trends fared a year later ... read them at <http://bit.ly/15trends>

TREND	2011 ... A YEAR LATER	
1. Likeonomics	A	This continues to be a big trend, and I signed a deal to write a book on the topic coming out in May 2012!
2. Approachable Celebrity	B	More celebs use social media, but high profile hiccups (Ashton Kutcher), led to muted celeb excitement.
3. Desperate Simplification	A	People continue to long for more simplicity in everything from consumer products to choices for healthcare.
4. Essential Integration	A	The most successful campaigns like Amex's Small Biz Saturday use deep integration across channels.
5. Rise Of Curation	A	Curation is still a hot topic, as more brands invest in creating their own media instead of only buying ads.
6. Visualized Data	A	Data visualization is even more popular as a way to make complex research come to life and be understood.
7. Crowdsourced Innovation	C	Crowdsourcing as a model may have hit a peak, and glut of "share your idea" sites led to some fatigue.
8. Instant PR & Cust Service	A	Customer service and instant PR over social media tools is growing in popularity. I spoke at a conference earlier this year dedicated entirely to this topic with over a dozen big brand participants.
9. App-fication Of The Web	A	There are more apps than ever, Android is growing and tablets are mainstream. Apps are here to stay.
10. Reimagining Charity	A	Nonprofits and CSR programs continue to pioneer new ways to reimagine charity in 2011, this trend continues.
11. Employees As Heroes	B	Employees are still the hero sometimes, but in 2011 brand humanism moved beyond just employees.
12. Locationcasting	C	Broadcasting your location is still a niche activity & hasn't take off in 2011, due to privacy + complexity issues.
13. Brutal Transparency	B	Companies are still seeing the benefit of this transparency, but there were relatively few other big stories.
14. Addictive Randomness	C	Randomness was a great concept, but I didn't see this take off in 2011 as a guiding principle for campaigns.
15. Culting Of Retail	A	Coming off another frenzied Black Friday, retail shopping is now more of a cult than ever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR ...



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