



TRENDWATCHING.COM

## Some of this might just work...

TRENDWATCHING.COM relentlessly scans the globe for the most promising economic, demographic and behavioural trends. None of the red skirts are the new blue skirts for the Summer of 2003, but broad developments applicable to many business disciplines. We hope to inspire you to come up with new ideas, concepts and services. For more info about us and what we offer, please check out [www.trendwatching.com](http://www.trendwatching.com).

Now, continue reading this newsletter, and you'll be able to quip: "I knew it was a good idea all along!"

## "GRAVANITY"

As Warhol predicted with "15 minutes of fame", hundreds of millions of individuals are craving immortality, or at least some public attention. Whether it's blogging, participating in Big Brother, having a character in a novel named after you, or adorning your car with personalized license plates, the masses want their names out there. This is where graffiti meets vanity to form **GRAVANITY**: an entire industry catering to the obsession of ordinary citizens wanting to leave something behind in print, audio or imagery, preferably in the public domain. Consider it a 21st century version of university libraries and hospital wings being named after the rich ruling classes.

**GRAVANITY** offers a host of opportunities for entrepreneurs willing to (re)name their goods and services, however small, on behalf of eager customers. TRENDWATCHING.COM predicts museums selling sponsorships of even the smallest works of arts (or just the frames!), theatres offering **GRAVANITY** space on each seat, real estate developers auctioning off the rights to have apartment buildings and lobbies adorned with the names of middle-class families, and Domino's introducing pizzas named after cash-rich, attention-poor pizza lovers who will reveal their favourite toppings to the world. If it can have a name attached to or printed on it, it WILL sell!

## "PROSPERITY DENIAL"

Phenomenon describing the unfounded resistance to spending money on minor indulgences, even though one's personal wealth and prosperity allow for it. While actual purchasing power has increased immensely over the last 50 years, deep, almost generational convictions remain about exuberant versus responsible behaviour. **PROSPERITY DENIAL** applies to small luxuries such as gourmet coffees on-the-go, taking a taxi when it's pouring down, purchasing premium seats for a classical concert, or buying the entire work of a new favourite writer.

To do the math: the cost of a cup of excellent coffee, at 3 USD/Euro, represents roughly 0.0048% of median US annual income. Sipping a latte once a week then represents 0.25% on a yearly basis. Which leaves 99.75% for other necessities. Median income in Western Europe is a bit lower, but still high enough to disregard dents in disposable income when occasionally choosing a taxi over getting wet and miserable.

Therefore, marketers of minor indulgences should work on a change in attitude to make sufferers of **PROSPERITY DENIAL** understand that to treat oneself now and then is neither a sin nor a recipe for bankruptcy. Perhaps this is even more relevant during economic down-turns, when life's little luxuries provide considerable comfort at a negligible cost. If a behavioural move away from **PROSPERITY DENIAL** succeeds (never easy!), then the way is paved for introducing more Snobmodities (discussed later in this newsletter). May TRENDWATCHING.COM humbly suggest: ENJOY!

## "MASSCLUSIVITY"

The popularity of Royal-Class airport lounges and invitation-only Centurion credit cards are just two examples of modern man's immense need for respect and privilege. The more access consumers have to outstanding quality goods and

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## WHO IS IT FOR?

Marketers, analysts, heads of start-ups, management consultants, budding and serial entrepreneurs, students, researchers, VCs, journalists, business development directors, fellow trend watchers, or anyone else interested in staying on top of the latest trends.

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services (the DVD player in your living room probably doesn't differ too much from the one Queen Elizabeth's grandchildren use to watch Lord of the Rings), the more they want exclusivity and status of a different order. The kind that visibly sets you apart from the masses and gives you access to privileges most others won't get.

This 'exclusivity for the masses', or **MASSCLUSIVITY**, can be an instant add-on and revenue booster for many services in the public domain. **MASSCLUSIVITY** is NOT about exclusively opening up Harrods or Macy's late Sunday night for a Hollywood super-celeb looking for a last-minute party dress, but rather about setting up special in-store coffee lounges or luxurious fitting rooms for members only. Respect and privilege are scarce nowadays. Reason enough to add them to your offerings.

## "JINGLE CASTING"

Remember the 80s when brands like Nike and Lacoste introduced the brilliant idea (for them) of making customers pay to display their logos? Ever since, human branding has seen extremes like tattooed logos on body parts, and brand icons shaved onto heads. Now, with the current wildfire-like spread of mobile/cell phones, expect audio to be added to people's branding expressions.

Enter **JINGLE CASTING**. New generation phones sport features like 16-voice Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) synthesizers, meaning, in plain English, that jingles and ring tones are reproduced with previously unattainable sound quality. So what's to stop corporations and organizations from persuading consumers to download their company jingles, commercials or political cries for change?

Using cell phones to broadcast commercials, tunes and jingles could well be the next big thing in the multi-billion euro ring tone industry. TRENDWATCHING.COM can't wait to hear Always Coca-Cola! being **JINGLE CAST** from a million handhelds, handies, cell-phones, mobiles, and keitais ;-)

## "SNOBMODDITY"

Describes the phenomenon of turning completely mundane commodities into chic, popular luxury items or goods, offering consumers a bewildering number of varieties of what were once invisible parts of daily life. Witness a recent Forbes article about Salt Chic (Forbes, October 28, 2002) featuring Californian restaurant chefs using 20 varieties of gourmet sodium chloride, with a certain Japanese sea salt costing 45 USD per kilo.

So 50 different kinds of pepper or one hundred kinds of sugar cannot be far behind. Far fetched? Other commodities became **SNOBMODDITIES** a long time ago (bread, water, chocolate), so it is a sure bet that more unexpected commodities will become specialty goods one day or another, however unlikely it may seem at inception. In that sense, **SNOBMODDITIES** more than fit Arthur C. Clarke's theory about the three periods that new ideas pass through:

1. It can't be done.
2. It probably can be done, but it's not worth doing.
3. I knew it was a good idea all along!

Opportunities aplenty: there is hardly any commodity which can NOT be turned into a **SNOBMODDITY** or specialty good. By adding variety, choice and/or a brand (with a certain promise), margins can only go up. How to find the next **SNOBMODDITIES**? Study commodity success cases such as lettuce (which now mainly comes pre-washed, pre-cut, and prepackaged, in a few dozen varieties, as strategy guru Gary Hamel pointed out in 1999), daily bread (Portuguese flat bread with Moroccan dates, anyone?) and the lowly coffee bean (Double Shot, Half Decaf, Skinny Iced White Chocolate Mocha to go)!

Not to be outdone, TRENDWATCHING.COM boldly predicts that you will one day insist on having Saharan desert sand in your children's sand box, and Saharan desert sand only ;-)

## "BEING SPACES"

With face-to-face communication being rapidly replaced by email and chat, goods and services being purchased online, and big city apartments shrinking year by year, urban dwellers are trading their lonely, cramped living rooms for the real-life buzz of **BEING SPACES**: commercial living-room-like settings, where catering and

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entertainment aren't just the main attraction, but are there to facilitate small office/living room activities like watching a movie, reading a book, meeting friends and colleagues, or doing your admin.

Starbucks is a great example on a global scale, while many companies in Japan, China and South-Korea offer deluxe gaming and manga-reading facilities, as well as semi-private DVD booths.

**BEING SPACES** charge us for eating, drinking, playing, listening, surfing, working, or meeting, just as we would at home or in the office, while successfully reintegrating us into city life.

## What the future will bring...

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