

TOP 5 TREND WATCHING TIPS

TIP 1

Know *why* you're tracking trends



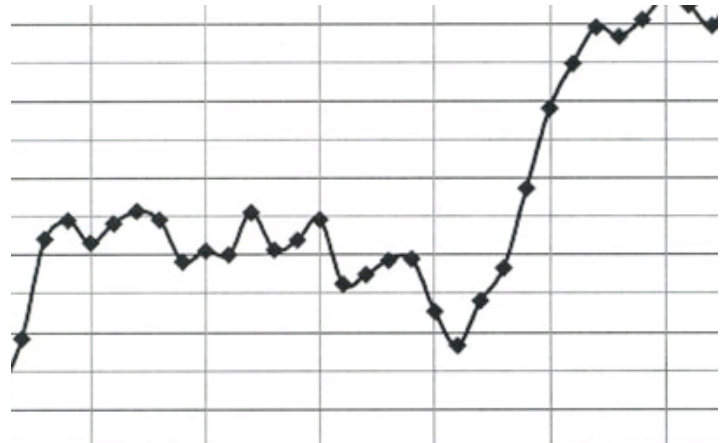
Trend spotting can be fun. Makes you feel in the *now* and in the *know*. But that alone is not necessarily going to make you or your company more money. The way we see it, in a nutshell, is that tracking consumer trends is one way (and there are many ways!) to gain inspiration, helping you dream up profitable new goods, services and experiences for (and [with](#)) your customers. **So trend watching should ultimately lead to profitable innovation.**

Trend spotting as a profession has radically changed over the last five years or so. In a world that's now fully connected, where thousands of smart professionals and amateurs are not only spotting, observing, thinking and innovating, but also putting their findings online for all to see, deliciously valuable resources are up for grabs.

Sure, this avalanche of trends, insights and [new business ideas](#) may cause information overload, but there is definitely an exciting *innovation* overload, too. The only thing that separates YOU—passionate CEO, marketer, entrepreneur—from being in the know is the time devoted to absorbing these sources, if not adding to them yourself. **The world truly is your oyster.** And yet, when we ask professionals if and how they spot trends and, more importantly, how they apply those trends to their own brands, we're told they're still having a hard time getting a handle on the basics.

So let's quickly look at some definitions, misconceptions and practicalities before moving on to other tips:

What is a trend?



How about: “A statistically significant change in performance of measured data which is unlikely to be due to a random variation in the process.” That won't get the creative juices going. So consider the following definition, which we came up with years ago and which still holds pretty well:

A manifestation of something that has unlocked or newly serviced an existing (and hardly ever changing) consumer need,* desire, want, or value.

At the core of this statement is the assumption that human beings, and thus consumers, don't change that much. Their deep needs remain the same, yet can be unlocked or newly serviced. The ‘unlockers’ can be anything from changes in societal norms and values, to a breakthrough in technology, to a rise in prosperity.

Example? One of the core human needs is to be in control, or at least to have the illusion of being in control. No wonder then, that the online world is so addictive. After all, it firmly puts the individual in the driver's seat.

Just give it a try: apply the above definition to your daily spottings and observations of how consumers behave, and how that behaviour is forever changing, and you will find that many seemingly unconnected business success stories will start to make sense. Successful innovations often satisfy existing, dormant needs in new and attractive ways.

* P.S. Need to brush up on your knowledge of human needs? Re-reading [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#) never hurts.

Common misperceptions

It's hard to find two people who share the same language when it comes to trend watching. Here are a few common misperceptions. Not complete by far, so add your own:



● **Predicting next year's colours.** Trend watching is about more than spotting the next colour, fabric or hot designer. Sure, black may be back, and miniskirts may re-conquer the catwalks in 2009, but the consumer arena is infinitely more complicated than that. In other words, fashion in all its variety, excitement, and pioneering business models is just another part of the world of consumer trends. In no way does it define consumer trends.

● **Gazing into a crystal ball.** Trend watching isn't about 'hard-core' futurism, either. Better leave gazing into a crystal ball, predicting what's going to happen 15 to 20 years from now, to futurists and scenario planning departments. Trend watching is about observing and understanding what's already happening, the major *and* the minor, the mainstream and the fringe. In our case in the consumer and business arena.



● **Declaring the pizza cone an emerging consumer trend.** We still get asked a million times about how to distinguish between trends and fads. A pizza cone is a fun product, but it won't dramatically change the consumer arena. At most, it's yet another manifestation that consumers want convenience no matter what. The latter is the trend. The product isn't.



● **Applying all trends to all people.** Don't fall for this one. One massive mistake both trend spotters and brands make all the time, is to assume or pretend that a certain consumer trend will affect or be embraced by ALL consumers. No. Remember, in life and in trends: beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The above HSBC ad illustrates it well. Whatever catches your fancy while spotting and tracking trends, please remember that not everything applies to everyone, and that virtually every trend has its anti-trend.

Furthermore, the new doesn't always kill the old. E-commerce may be booming, but real world retail is far from dead. Has the latter changed? Sure. But take one look at excited shoppers and [TRYSUMERS](#) spending hours in Apple's flagship store in New

York and it becomes clear that both online and offline retail have many years of innovation and opportunity ahead of them. In trends, always try to figure out what the 'AND' is, not just the 'OR', and your trend (and opportunity) spotting skills will improve immensely.



● **Those who watch trends have to possess some rare kind of intuition.** Not true. This isn't brain surgery, nor is it rocket science. Observing the world around you, with an open mind, is something many professionals have unlearned, but not something they aren't born with. If you want to spot trends, you can. Which brings us to Tip 2:

TIP 2

Have a point of view



Now that we've covered the *why* of spotting trends, it's time for Tip 2: **Make sure you acquire a point of view about the world around you. The more trends you spot and track, and the more skilled you are at putting these trends into context, the more guidance you'll have. When you have a broad point of view, even tiny observations start to make sense.**

Example? How many marketers do you know who could give you an articulate answer if asked about, let's say, the Future of Marketing? How many business execs do you know who are capable of explaining the main ten, or five, or even three consumer trends shaping not only their own industry but the entire business arena? And how many CEOs can comfortably lay out a kick-ass plan of attack based on their understanding of the New Consumer? (No, Steve Jobs doesn't count! ;-)

To stick with consumer trends: the point of view you want to develop could be summed up by a succinct answer to the question: **"What is the short-term future of consumerism?"** Now, where to begin so that in a few weeks time, your answer will blow away your colleagues?



Don't hide: an open mind is a joy forever

Mindset

Crucial to broadening your point of view: **be curious and be open minded**. Not an easy thing to do. We're all set in our own ways, we all have our strict beliefs about what is right and what is wrong. However, closely observing instead of judging the world around you is tantamount to success. Ask yourself 'why' whenever you notice something new, instead of immediately looking for shortcomings.

Also realize that you are not necessarily your customer: your professional interests should be broader than your personal interests. *You* may not be excited by something new, but others are. Ask yourself why *they* are excited and which existing need has apparently been unlocked.

In other words, think and act like an entrepreneurial journalist. How?

- Look **cross-industry**. Sticking with your own industry will not only severely limit your sources of inspiration, but will also make you miss important **changes in consumer expectations**. Every industry has its own 'innovation competence', whether it's fashion leading the NO-FRILLS CHIC trend, the food and beverage sector leading the SNACK CULTURE trend, or hotels and restaurants dictating the ACCE\$\$ IS THE NEW LUXURY trend. The innovations they're bringing to market not only excite consumers, they also shape their expectations. In other words, consumers will come to expect *other* industries to also start offering them the benefits of NO-FRILLS CHIC, of more choice in smaller doses, of luxury as a transforming experience. And they don't care if you're in real estate, financial services or telecom. Last but not least, if you're obsessed with what your competition is doing, you will always end up copying them. To become a trend *setter*, you need to look where your competition isn't.

- Think like a (paranoid) CEO, even if you don't get paid like one. Stop being 'just' a specialist and aim to become a generalist. Yes, we all need to be a specialist in something. However, we also

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need to be **generalists**, to understand the big picture and how we and our companies and products fit in.

- You don't have to like every trend**. You are in this for your customers. Who may have different needs and desires than you do. Never dismiss anything too quickly. Just because YOU would never use a certain innovation, doesn't mean others (your customers included) won't buy it either. Many of today's success stories, from the camera phone to the Airbus 380, were dismissed and ridiculed from the day they were imagined, announced or conceived.

- So instead of dismissing, **ask questions**. Non stop. Why is something happening? Why was it introduced? Why do consumers like it? Or why do they hate it? Look beyond the sources that appeal to your personal tastes. Read a random magazine every week (buy one you would normally never read), or visit a random blog, written for and by people whose passions don't match your own.

- Try stuff out**. The proof of the pudding is always in the eating.

- Get rid of taboos, prejudices, dogmatism, negativity**. All of this will block your ability to pick up new ideas, to understand your customers, and will thus cost you money. (And it make you a less pleasant person, too.)

TIP 3

Weave your web of resources



Establish your 'virtual research command center'

Stop bitching about information overload and instead celebrate the incredible wealth of trend resources at your fingertips, many of them free or dirt cheap! Surely there's never been a more exciting time for eager trend watchers to be in business, soaking up the insights, the spottings, the reports, the live dispatches from the global consumer arena ;-)

Alerts

From	Subject
Google Alerts	Google Alert - "first in the world"
Google Alerts	Google Alert - springwise
Google Alerts	Google Alert - trendwatching

Google Alert - "first in the world"

Google Alerts [googlealerts-noreply@google.com]

[Case Western floats the idea of windmills on Lake Erie](#)

By Steve Huyser-Honig

The turbines would be the **first in the world** to be situated over fresh water. Meanwhile, across Lake Erie, the Canadian National Post reports that enthusiasm for wind energy is cooling. Canada has 77 wind farms, but that number is ...

[Great Lakes For All - http://www.greatlakesforall.com/](http://www.greatlakesforall.com/)

["Carbone" neutral. Italian islands want to make history by going ...](#)

By Chris

"It would be the first oil-free national park in Europe and perhaps the **first in the world**," he said. The archipelago, which includes Elba and Montecristo is an area of great natural beauty and the residents are extremely passionate ...

[Environmentalgraffiti.com - http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com](http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com)

We love our Google Alerts!

Here's our checklist of where to spot **changes in consumer behaviour, new trendsetting products or just super-smart thinking** on where our societies are headed at large.

- Papers, websites, mags, blogs, books, news, newsletters¹
- Alerts²
- TV, movies, radio
- Seminars, fairs, trade shows
- Customers, clients, colleagues, friends, family
- Eavesdropping, chat rooms, conversations
- In-house Trend Group
- Dedicated [spotters network](#)
- Other trend firms, thinkers (philosophers, architects, sociologists, management gurus)
- Advertising at large
- Competitors
- [Street life, travel](#)³
- Friends, colleagues, family
- Ready made [trend reports](#)
- Consultants, researchers, experts
- Universities
- Shops, museums, hotels, airports
- Catalogues
- Trade shows
- Start ups
- Customized trend tours⁴

1. In the near future, probably January 2008, we'll add a full blown 'resource center' to these pages, with titles and links to every magazine and blog we regularly track. For now, some quick thoughts on blogs (which we are most often asked about): to find blogs on any topic, industry or trend, just use blog search engines like [Technorati](#) and [Google Blog Search](#). To really start weaving, get [Google Reader](#), [Bloglines](#) or any other [RSS aggregator](#) and amass feeds from every source you want to track.

2. Other ways to let information come to you are [Google Alerts](#) and [Technorati Mini](#). Enter search phrases like 'consumer trends' or 'world's first' or a specific trend name. A ready-to-use flow of trend goodness will come your way.

3. As consumers around the world pro-actively post, stream if not lead parts of their lives online, you (and your trend team) can now vicariously live amongst them, at home, at work, out on the streets. From reading minute-by-minute online diaries or watching live webcam feeds, to diving into tens of millions of tagged pictures uploaded by Flickr-fueled members of GENERATION C in Sweden, Singapore, Sri Lanka and dozens of other countries. More on that in our [Virtual Anthropology briefing](#).

4. Here are some facilitators of trend tours: [Bespoke Tokyo](#) (Tokyo), [Jean Snow](#) (Tokyo), [Mirror Mirror](#) (NYC, London, Paris), [Cscout](#) (NYC, London, Tokyo, Beijing; [video report by CNN](#) on Cscout Tokyo trend tour), [Cscout NYC Executive Trend Tour](#), [W.ingResearch](#) (Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong).

The New York Times  Guardian TIME DIE ZEIT

One more recommendation: not only will you find dozens of trends in our [database](#), we have also collected more than 200 [articles about our trends](#), as featured in publications like the Guardian and Time Magazine. The articles are a great source for gleaning additional insights and examples found by trend-savvy journalists.

TIP 4

Fine-tune your trend framework

INK PROFITS TRANSUM
FEMALE FEVERGENE
STILL) MADE HERE INFOCUS
TRANSPARENCY TYRANNY
FOLUST CROWD CLOUT
STATUS SKILLSTRYSUMERS
OUNIVERSAL BRANDIN
VINY INNOVATION OVERLOA
GENERATION C(ASH)

Understanding trends

So you have opened your mind, you have woven your web of resources, and you're jotting down as many trends and trend manifestations as you can. Now what? How to make sense of all of this material, and especially the impact and context of various trends? What works for us is to have a Trend Framework: basically a long list of all the trends we've spotted over the years.

There's a bit more to it, of course. *trendwatching.com* may be all about consumer trends, but that leaves two other main trend categories unaddressed. In general, switched-on companies and individuals track at least three trend levels:

Macro, consumer and industry trends

- 1 Macro trends** — the STEEP approach below is a good start if you want to categorize macro trends:
 - Social
 - Technological
 - Economic
 - Environmental
 - Political
- 2 Consumer trends**
- 3 Industry trends**

Most management consulting firms will be able to help you with macro trends. For a DIY approach, check out the STEEP section on [MindTools](#). And as far as industry trends are concerned, you no doubt already have someone tracking those within your organization (you?), whether it's in the form of competitive analysis, clippings from trade magazines or industry reports from market research firms.

Needless to say, all three levels of trends constantly converge, impacting each other, if not overlapping. Just remember that industry trends, which firms are so keen on understanding, are **at the mercy of macro and consumer trends**, not the other way round. We could go on about this for another 300 pages but we won't. There's enough material to be found online for those of you who want to become macro-trend watchers. Meanwhile, let's return to building your CONSUMER Trend Framework.

The easiest way to start building your own Trend Framework is to copy consumer trends from existing trend curators. You can find our free trends at www.trendwatching.com/trends, and our not-free but not-breaking-the-bank-either **2008 Trend Report** at www.trendwatching.com/trendreport. Then add your own findings. Your framework will expand quickly, meaning fewer surprises every time you spot something of interest: the bigger the framework, the easier it is to categorize your findings.

Context

Recurring question: how do all of the trends in your Trend Framework relate to one another? What's the context? We normally find that consumer trends can be grouped by the core need they newly address or unlock (see our definition at the beginning of this document), but that won't show you how certain individual trends are connected. A hands-on, if time consuming, approach to finding the connections: construct a matrix featuring all the trends you track, both vertically and horizontally, and do a trend-by-trend 'relationship check'.

You will be able to see and figure out how our **CUSTOMER MADE** trend links to **GENERATION CASH** (if you want to co-create with clever consumers, you will have to pay up), or how **TRANSPARENCY TYRANNY** links to **HYGIENIA** (no, we're not going to explain every single trend-match ;-).

Looking for connections also emphasizes that this is trend *tracking* as much as it is trend *spotting*. Trends evolve, new insights and examples will emerge... Only by tending to your framework, keeping it fresh and up to date, will you be able to maintain an overview.

Last but not least, by keeping a complete-as-humanly-doable Trend Framework, the majority of your observations will easily fit with one of the existing trends. Which means that if a handful of www.trendwatching.com

them don't, you may be onto something genuinely new. **So the more trends you track, the easier it will be to spot a truly new trend.**

Naming

"It's a stupid name, but a pointed observatic

A quick thought on *naming* trends: we feel it's crucial to describe trends as imaginatively as possible. Sure, we regularly take flak about our names (TRYVERTISING anyone?), but here's why we do it:

- **Arouse curiosity.** Strange names invoke interest, make people sit up and listen, make them want to know more. A well-chosen name radiates the promise of a story, of something important. And if that name is unlike anything else (even if it's stupid unlike anything else), who can resist the desire to find out and not miss out?
- **Create a common language.** You will find that groups and teams will rally behind a named concept more easily than behind something generic. Trend names often tell a story. Speaking a common language saves team members heaps of time—they're able to refer to a project or trend name and instantly be on the same page.
- **Coin, own and track.** Coming up with an as yet unknown name means it's easier to coin something. Now coining isn't about ownership, or claiming you're the first one to come up with an idea: everything is already out there anyway. But it's convenient to coin a new name, because you get to (temporarily) lead the discussion. It also facilitates tracking: googling your unique trend name will instantly lead you to other experts' take on 'your' trend. Which often means more insights, more examples. [Tracking TRY-SUMERS](#) for example is a breeze; tracking a statement like 'consumers are more interested in trying out new goods before they buy, due to 13 socio-economic factors,' isn't.

Oh, and just *how* do we come up with our names? Early on, we were inspired by [Faith Popcorn's](#) approach: mix and match two or three words that define the trend, creating **a new word that preferably hasn't been used by anyone else** (a quick Google search will usually reveal just how unique a made-up word is). When studying the trend of affordable luxury, key words that jumped out at us were 'masses' and 'exclusivity', which then led to MASS-CLUSIVITY. And when looking at the trend of consumers making the most of price comparison and other consumers' product recommendations, we worked with keywords (and synonyms!) like transparency, power, nakedness, and tyranny (for merchants), which resulted in TRANSPARENCY TYRANNY. So don't be shy, and go all out when naming your own trends.

TIP 5

Embed and apply



One day, this could be you ;-)

Next: start your own Trend Group

That's right: every company should have its own Trend Group. Even if that 'group' is just you. The Trend Group is not some multi-million dollar/euro/pound affair. It doesn't have to employ a dozen staff (though that would be nice ;-). It's more a state of mind. It can be low-cost, unauthorized and grass roots if need be. **Don't wait for permission**, make the Trend Group a fait accompli.

Then tackle the support issue. Without backing from at least one senior member of the management team, your Trend Group may steadily grow, but results—innovations, that is— won't make it off the drawing board.



We know, we know: it isn't always easy to get everyone excited about the latest trends...

How to get senior backing

Consider this (if you're not the CEO):

- Sometimes, it's a **language and perception** issue. The word 'trends' may still evoke images of flamboyant fashion designers caressing delicate fabrics, or crazed teens in Japanese parks dressed in full Louis XIV garb. So try talking about the Future of Business, instead. Or the Future of Consumerism. Or Drivers of Change. Or Patterns. Or Currents. (From Ian David, McKinsey & Company: "Companies that ride the currents succeed; those that swim against them usually struggle. Identifying these currents and developing strategies to navigate them is vital.")
- Make sure the trends you're trying to explain are not just about YOU or your ideas and scenarios. **Don't make it a one (wo)man show**. Everyone hates that, mainly for competitive reasons. Instead, be the messenger, the humble reporter. Show real-world examples of how other firms are already cashing in on a specific trend. Point out what respected brands are doing, including as many direct competitors as possible. (Even though we've argued against too much industry focus in Tip 2 when it comes to *your* mindset, showing what the competition is doing is great wake-up call material). So... never let it be just about you. In fact, if you can appeal to the dreams and desires of the others (read: anything that includes more money, more prestige, more status ;-), the more support you'll get.
- Don't present them, but do **have numbers ready** at all times. In the end, we don't believe trend watching is about numbers, but sometimes you need to give your audience what they want, to overcome resistance.
- **Make it visual**. Pictures. Videos.

Or, better yet: **let people try stuff out**. Conceptualize and demonstrate. If you're raving about new products, let people fiddle with them. Or taste them. Or sit in them. Sure, it will take you more time to prepare, but we never said trend watching is for the lazy, did we? For more tips on presenting, check out [Presentation Zen](#).

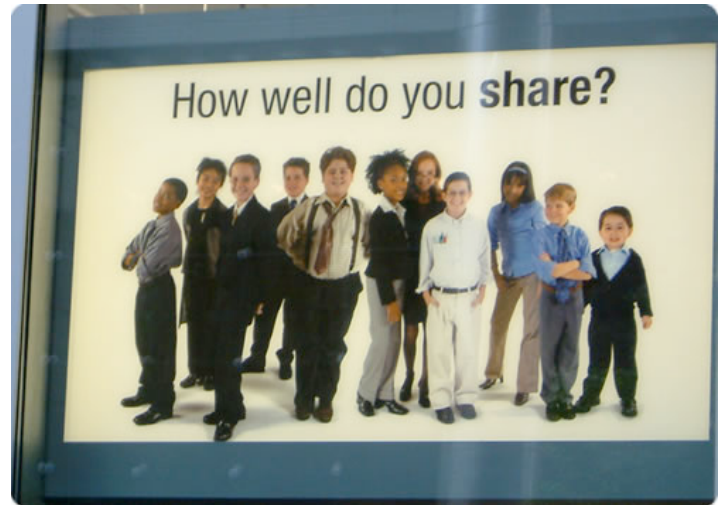
Every Trend Group deserves a network of spotters



Our [spotters](#) are everywhere. Are yours?

Once senior support has been secured, it's time to move on to the fun stuff. Every self-respecting Trend Group will of course want to be able to tap into a network of spotters around the world, one's eyes and ears in the streets of Tokyo, lanes of London, steegjes of Amsterdam, avenues of New York and Paris, avenidas of São Paulo. Too expensive? Hey, if we can do it, so can any other small, mid-sized or big firm. **Take a look at our Springspotter Network**, which rewards spotters with points that can be redeemed for gifts. On the site, you'll find a description of what we do with the network, and how we've been running it for the past five years.

So, **tap into the GLOBAL BRAIN**. Enlist your colleagues, your friends, your family, your fans, your lead users, your mainstream customers, your suppliers, and reward them with presents, your goods or services, credits on your website or something they can put on their resume. Announce and promote your network on your website and in your stores. Oh, and don't you dare complain that this is hard to do if you're with an international firm. Since you have offices and colleagues around the world, your network is already in place and you just need to start exploiting it more effectively.



Last one on the spotters network: **SHARE**. Don't just stuff yourself with the insights and knowledge from the 'crowds', contribute to the collective wisdom, too. If not for altruistic reasons, then for creativity's sake: "If you give away everything you have, you are left with nothing. This forces you to look, to be aware, to replenish." (Paul Arden)

Trend Group's activities



Needless to say, the Trend Group* is an ongoing affair. First and foremost you will have to:

- Weave your Trend Group's web of resources (Tip 3)
- Build your Trend Framework (Tip 4)
- Set up weekly or monthly sessions
- Distribute your findings as widely as possible

About **weekly or monthly sessions**: assemble a motley crew of people who are interested in discussing your group's findings and trends. One easy way to do this is to pick, present, discuss and brainstorm just one trend. Assign one person to do a 20 minute presentation, spend 30 minutes discussing what's driving this trend from a consumer-need perspective. Spend another 30 minutes relating these findings to your industry and brand: what will the impact be? Last but not least, ask all participants to dedicate 30 minutes to coming up with new ideas for your brand.

About **distributing your findings**: for extended intercompany distribution of your work, set up a semi-official Trend Group **web-site or intranet presence**, explaining what you do, which trends you're tracking, including the implications for your product or company. Use a [corporate wiki](#) to invite people to contribute. Send out newsletters, feeds, anything that will get your co-workers hooked on your output. Hell, you can even forward them our monthly Trend Briefings with your group's findings and opinions added to each one.

No time? Be honest: how many meetings can you afford to skip each week? How many hours of mindless television watching can you forego? Spend those hours tracking trends and building your framework instead, and you're already doing more than your competition.

** If you're in a big organization, you will want to figure out the best way to integrate your work with your company's innovation team or strategy department or research desk, as they too will have integrated elements of trend watching into their activities. Here too, if you manage to be a welcome source of much needed insights instead of a threat, you will be able to focus on trends instead of corporate in-fighting.*

Ah, the holy grail of trend spotting. Now that you've honed your trend spotting skills, pimped your Trend Framework, launched your Trend Group and Trend Network, even got your co-workers on board, how the hell do you actually apply your trend findings? How do you turn your insights into innovations? The simple list below is crucial:

Turning trends into innovation

Ask yourself if the trend you're discussing has the potential to

- 1 Influence or shape your company's vision — **Vision**
- 2 Come up with a new business concept, an entirely new venture, a new brand — **New business concepts**
- 3 Add 'something' new for a certain customer segment — **New products, services, experiences**
- 4 Speak the language of those consumers already 'living' the trend: show them you get it, show them you know what they're excited about — **Marketing, advertising, PR**

So: a few hands-on examples from the real world:

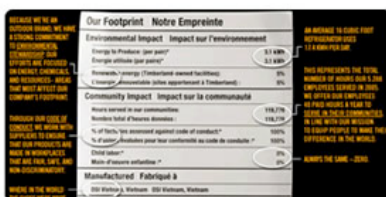
Applying trends



1. Vision

Starbucks founder and chairman Howard Schultz getting nervous about trends like UPGRADE EVERYTHING and the growing appeal of all things authentic and local

(something we highlighted in our [STILL MADE HERE](#) trend), pointing out threats and possible solutions to his CEO in a [memo](#) that's now everywhere.



Truly new products often capitalize on consumer trends.

2. New business concepts

What do you do when you read about a trend like [CROWD CLOUT](#)? Why, you start a new business that capitalizes on the power of grouped consumers, or you set up a new venture that helps consumers list their buying intentions, inviting suppliers to bid for their business. From Finnish [lgglo](#) to Australian [Auto Group Buy](#). And if you're British easyGroup, studying (if not creating) [TRANSUMERS](#), you will continue to spot new sectors that are ripe for commoditization, flexibility and much lower cost structures. Which means that after no-frills airlines, cruises and hotels, you will take on office space, too, introducing [easyOffice](#) for mobile workers. Easy, huh? ;-)



3. New products, services, experiences

This is of course what we (over) feed you with in these monthly trend briefings and our [annual trend reports](#). For an overload of new products, services and experiences, in this case for three specific demographics that are enjoying a boom in purchasing power (and thus constitute a 'trend' of some sorts), check out our [FEMALE FEVER - BOOMING BUSINESS - PINK PROFITS](#) briefing, published in August 2007. Most of the companies and innovators mentioned in this briefing asked themselves how to adapt existing products to make them more appealing to specific audiences.

4. Marketing, advertising, PR

Dole not only rides the organic/eco/[STILL MADE HERE](#) trend by offering [Dole Certified Organic](#) (which we classify as a new product/service. If Dole would *only* sell organic from now on, it would fall under the vision category), but also applies the [INFOLUST](#) trend by incorporating very detailed product information into their marketing and advertising efforts. So what does their trend blend entail? Dole lets consumers 'travel to the origin of each organic product' by typing in a fruit sticker's three-digit Farm Code on a dedicated website. Customers can read background info, view photos of the farm and workers and learn more about the origin of Dole products. Very... zeitgeist.



That's all there is to applying trends. Really ;-)

Now, marketers and entrepreneurs often tell us they use our trends as conversation starters. And while that may sound wishy-washy, if that conversation includes:

- A quick presentation: trend definition, insights and some hands-on **examples** of how other companies and industries already capitalize on these trends...
- A discussion of how the trend may impact **your industry, your business**...
- Any **innovations** you can come up with using the 'apply' checklist above...

...then we're more than happy to serve as a conversation starter!



Secret weapons...

Last but not least, please make sure your ideation and application sessions take place in an inspiring environment. Ditch the depressing windowless conference room. Bring in good wine, good coffee, good food. Don't be too earnest about the quest at hand: it's about coming up with exciting new products and services for your customers, nothing more, nothing less. And have some guts. No guts, no glory!

BONUS TIP

Let others do some of the work for you



Hey, we know. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TIME TO DO ALL OF THIS YOURSELF**. So to clarify: we're not saying you should spend 12 hours a day on trend watching. You just need to do *more* of it than you do now. Which brings us to our bonus tip: let other trendsters do part of the work for you, even if it's just to hit the ground running.

We naturally encourage you to explore trendwatching.com's [Trend Database](#) and [2008 Trend Report](#).

But also spend a few days on trend sites like [PFSK](#), [Springwise](#), [New Business Ideas](#), [Iconoculture](#), [Influx Insights](#), and [Agenda Inc.](#) Sign up for their newsletters and feeds. They *will* yield enough material to start building your Trend Framework.

Happy spotting! We look forward to seeing your findings and innovations in the marketplace.

about trendwatching.com

An independent and opinionated consumer trends firm, relying on a global network of 8,000 [spotters](#), working hard to deliver inspiration and pangs of anxiety to business professionals in 120+ countries worldwide.