

JWT

THE FUTURE 100: TRENDS AND CHANGE
TO WATCH IN 2015

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The Future 100: Trends and Change to Watch in 2015

by JWTIntelligence

2015 is nearly here, and there is a tidal wave of change on the horizon. At JWTIntelligence, we're all about change—what's new, what's next and, more important, what it means. What does change say about consumers, their outlooks today and their evolving behaviors and aspirations?

Aside from the fact that we're living increasingly digital lives, the smartphone is perhaps the biggest single influence on consumer change. It has shifted from being a communication device to a pocket portal to the world: a way to share, search the streetscape, pay for items, document vacations—and the rise of the Internet of Things means it's set to become our “life remote control,” used for everything from regulating our home's heating to watering our plants. Within decades, in many parts of the world, there will be few who remember life without mobile phones. Ericsson forecasts that by 2020, 90% of the world's population over age 6 will have a mobile phone, while substantial ongoing price drops mean that eventually most of the world will have access to a web-enabled phone (Ericsson reports that around 65% of all mobile phones sold in Q3 2014 were smartphones).

The ubiquity of the web has accelerated the pace of trends, the spread of information and the sophistication of consumers, who are increasingly confident and expect brands to work around them rather than dictate to them. Other consumer expectations are also shifting in this new landscape, under influences as diverse as the vast range of information available on the Internet, globalization, environmental change and difficult economic times. As a given, not a bonus, brands are expected to deliver experiences, be hyper-transparent and achieve sustainability. They're expected to produce beautifully designed products and environments. And they are also increasingly expected to be societal leaders, benefactors, innovators and philanthropists.

As life expectancy increases, health is becoming the watchword for all consumers, from Millennials to Baby Boomers. Consumers are investing heavily in fitness and nutrition, and seeing their bodies as an ecosystem where beauty, diet, mental health and fitness are interlinked. All this, and much more, lies ahead.

So what's next for 2015?

JWTIntelligence has rounded up 100 trends and changes, some big, some small, all worth noting, to watch in the coming year.



Lucie Greene, Worldwide Director,
JWTIntelligence

Culture

**Symbiotic celebrity brand tie-ups,
Save Our Subcultures (the new
rallying cry from Gen Y), new
feminism and design for all.**

Megalopolises

China, home to the world's second-largest rural population, is expected to add close to 300 million more urbanites by 2030, when Shanghai and Beijing will likely account for two of the world's top five mega-cities, according to new U.N. research. "We are observing one of the most significant economic transformations the world has seen: 21st-century China is urbanizing on a scale 100 times that seen in 19th-century Britain and at 10 times the speed," notes a McKinsey paper on cities and luxury markets.

Why it's interesting:

China's wealth will be concentrated in these urban areas. Over the next decade, McKinsey expects Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Chongqing and Shenzhen, in addition to Hong Kong, to join the list of top luxury cities.



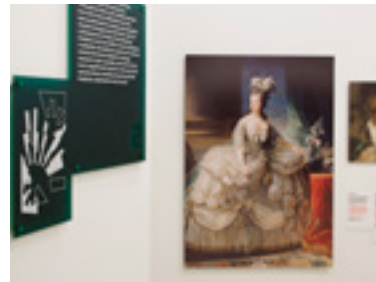
Burberry flagship store at Kerry Centre, Shanghai, 2014.

New Feminism

Feminism is being rebooted for the digital era, across all generations, with a newly collaborative, open and empowered spirit. Feminist rhetoric is also occupying the center of popular discourse. Examples are multiple and include Sarah Silverman's viral video about the pay gap in the U.S.; toy manufacturer GoldieBlox championing girl coders; Disney's Frozen co-opting parents with its female-friendship narrative rather than the traditional prince-rescues-princess theme; and Emma Watson speaking at the U.N., imploring more men to become feminists. The growing crop of female empowerment conferences ranges from Cosmopolitan's Fun Fearless Life to National Journal's Women 2020 to Arianna Huffington's Thrive and Tina Brown's Women in the World.

Why it's interesting:

There's a fundamental shift. Feminism today is less politicized and more about community, empowerment and confidence than antagonism. It's also multigenerational and powered by social media.



Women Fashion Power at Design Museum.
Credit: Photos by Mirren Rosie.



The Illusion of Light by Doug Wheeler at Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2014.

Credit: Photo by Fulvio Orsenigo © 2014 Doug Wheeler; courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London.



Mortal Beings

When artist Doug Wheeler created an illusion of infinite white space inspired by his vision of the afterlife, at Palazzo Grassi in Venice, he pointed to a rising fixation. Consumers, mindful of their life, health and ultimate fate, are starting to focus on their mortality more and more. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art recently launched an exhibition of mourning attire. Dezeen, the popular design blog, recently charted the world's most avant-garde funeral architecture.

Why it's interesting:

Consumers—mindful of extended lifespans, many living in an increasingly agnostic society—are starting to contemplate their mortality and the afterlife more seriously, linked, perhaps, to the cult of health.

Connected Kids

Three-quarters of American children under 8 have access to a smartphone or tablet, according to Common Sense Media. A poll of U.K. parents conducted by Vodafone found that 93% allow children to use their smartphone and tablets. Kids are more connected digitally than ever, and new toys and services are rising to satisfy their hunger for technology. LittleBits, for example, which makes DIY electronics kits, has introduced a platform that allows kids to connect household objects to the Internet (harnessing the rise of the Internet of Things).

Why it's interesting:

Children under 10 are more technically advanced even than their teenage siblings. Their familiarity with technology, and their expectations of it, go far beyond that of previous generations.

LittleBits by Ayah Bdeir:
Remote Pet Feeder, Arduino Coding Kit.



Teetotal Millennials

Millennials are drinking less than older generations and embracing healthy lifestyles and fitness. According to Channel 4, one in four young British people (aged 16-30) say they do not drink alcohol, compared with just one in seven older people (aged 60 and over). Reflecting this, a new range of platforms is offering alcohol-free hedonism, such as Redemption, a new alcohol-free bar in London, and yoga raves.

Why it's interesting:

The face of youth is changing as Millennials become more aware of their health and longevity, and fitness and health are being rebranded in hip, sociable ways.



Redemption Bar, London.



Retooling for an Aging Population

Companies are quickly retooling for a rapidly aging workforce. Recognizing that older workers have different needs, skills and challenges, employers are changing their educational curricula or adding new features to their factory floors. In Germany, BMW has installed adjustable chairs and special tools to cater to older workers. In the U.S., CVS has a “Snowbird” program that migrates older workers from Northern states to warmer states during the winter.

Why it’s interesting:

As our attitude toward age changes, there is rising appreciation of the strength and tenacity of older workers. Companies have been strongly focused on Millennials up to now—but watch out for more recognition of the powerful benefits of a mature workforce.

2015: The Year of the Sequel

As movie theater attendance slides, studios are returning to old favorites, reimagined classics and sequels to attract audiences. In 2015, Twentieth Century Fox is releasing Taken 3—more kidnappings out there, it seems—as well as The Fantastic Four. We’re due the fourth Jurassic Park from Universal Studios. Walt Disney Studios is releasing Marvel’s Avengers: Age of Ultron, as well as a souped-up 2015 version of Cinderella, starring Helena Bonham Carter and Cate Blanchett. From Paramount Pictures, expect the sixth Paranormal Activity. Lionsgate will release the final Hunger Games and second Divergent.

Why it’s interesting:

Aside from studios playing it safe, on the consumer front, this could be an indication that tumultuous times of global protest and economic stagnation are lending familiar classics greater appeal. The other common thread is fantasy: Are consumers seeking escapism as a result of austerity fatigue?

Bacteria Chic

Bacteria is undergoing an image overhaul in food, beauty and luxury as more consumers see the benefits of growable products and as experiments in this field become more creative. For the Festival of Imagination at Selfridges, the retailer collaborated with creative studio super/collider and Suzanne Lee of Biocouture on a series of workshops called “Growing the Future.” Biocouture, a London company, experiments with living organisms such as yeast, fungi and algae to grow garments. And as part of the Central Saint Martins art school exhibit at the London Design Festival, Zuzana Gombosova showcased Invisible Resources, an exploration of the potential of lab-grown materials.

Why it's interesting:

Bacteria previously suffered from the “yuck factor” but is now attracting interest from creatives and innovators for its various properties, including the potential for growable products.



Biocouture by Suzanne Lee.
BioSkirt-2 Credit: Photography
by House of Radon.

Universal Intelligent Design

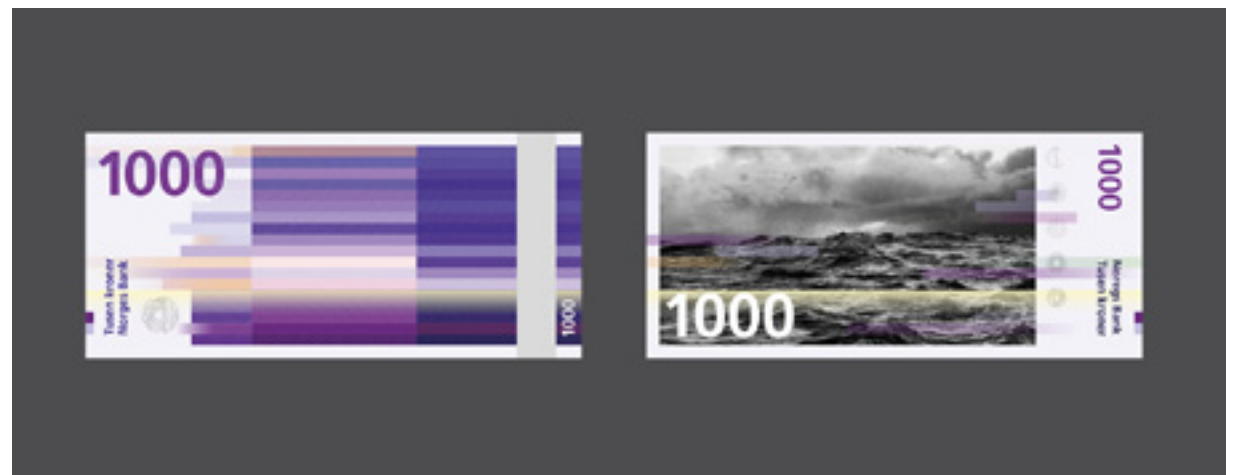
Call it the “Pinterest phenomenon”—consumers with open access to sophisticated lifestyle press and blogs are increasingly expecting intelligent design, even from entry-level products, functional products and mass-market services. On cue, sectors from mass-market food retailers to pharmacies to budget hotels are being reimagined with new looks. Consider Radisson Blu’s collaboration with avant-garde designer Jaime Hayon or the McDonald’s partnership with Patrick Norguet. Even Lowes Foods supermarkets have been overhauled, by design agency The Variable, to suit the upscale design sensibility of Millennials. Norway’s passports have been updated by the Neue Design Studio in Oslo and now feature chic graphics, while Stanley’s, a pharmacy in New York, is reimagining how the drugstore should look.

Why it’s interesting:

Like ethical behavior and sustainability, consumers increasingly take good design as a given, particularly Millennials.

Norwegian passport design by Neue, Oslo.

Norwegian bank note design by Snøhetta, Oslo.



Womenomics: New Definitions of Power

As women rise in businesses across the world, so too a new definition of power and success—along female lines—is set to evolve. Arianna Huffington highlights this in her 2014 book *Thrive*, in which she discusses the Third Metric, an increasing sense that balance, well-being and effectiveness are just as important definers of success as money.

Explains Pattie Sellers, Fortune senior editor-at-large and executive director of the Fortune Most Powerful Women Summit: “Women think about power much more horizontally, and men think about power vertically—this is a stereotype, but I’ve asked hundreds of powerful women and dozens and dozens of powerful men, ‘How do you define power?’ And women almost inevitably define it in some kind of horizontal way. Often, they use the words ‘influence’ and ‘impact.’ And men tend to talk about either getting people to do things they don’t want to do or achieving something in terms of success, or a level of success.”



Why it's interesting:

Books such as *The Athena Doctrine: How Women (and the Men Who Think Like Them) Will Rule the Future*, by John Gerzema and Michael D'Antonio, and statistics about women's education and economic influence, paint a future of rising female influence. Will traditional business structures and reward systems need to evolve?

Lean In Circle.
Sheryl Sandberg.

Experiential Public Spaces

Creatives are helping us explore the outside world with new multisensory experiences that augment nature and public spaces. Moment Factory's Foresta Lumina in Quebec's Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook turned a nighttime trail into an immersive experience that included mythical creatures, illuminated trees and a soundtrack. Living Symphonies, a project staged at Thetford Forest in the U.K., created music out of real-time recordings from the forest, which played through speakers placed around the area. A Dutch artist has created a solar-powered bike trail that looks like Van Gogh's "The Starry Night" after dark. And activewear brand Lucy installed a Light Forest in Boston, with 10,000 solar-powered lights and a soundtrack to match.

Why it's interesting:

Increasingly, the streetscape is becoming a rich palette not only for interactive retail and location-sensitive games but experiences too. Clever brands such as Lucy use wonder and experience—and offer a public service—to integrate themselves into consumers' everyday activities.



Foresta Lumina by Moment Factory, Canada.

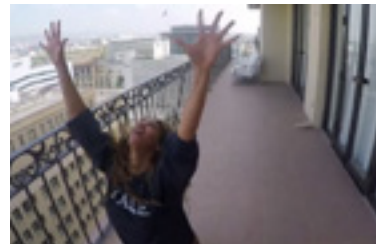
Living Symphonies.

Real Aspirations

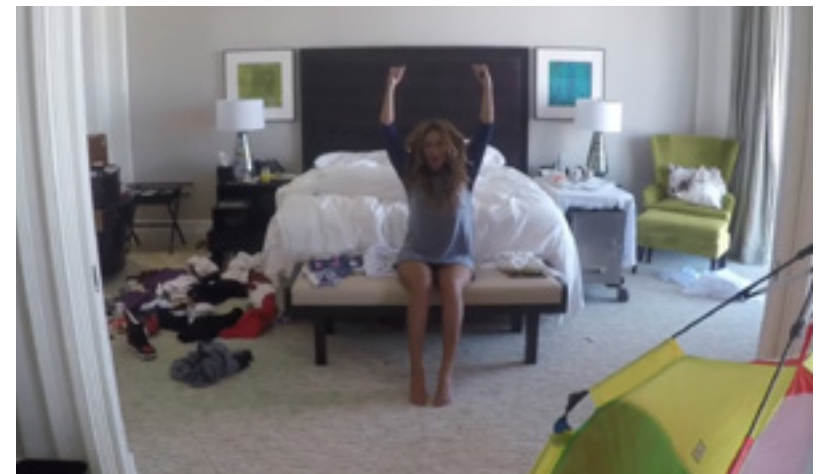
Beyoncé's recent "homemade" music video responds to a telling twist in our visual culture. The global pop sensation released her single "7/11" with a YouTube video that could easily have been produced by a fan, from a hotel room in Las Vegas. While elements of wardrobe and choreography were, of course, carefully orchestrated, Beyoncé appears makeup-free, in scenes played out in the bathroom, a messy bedroom and on a balcony, using a mounted camera. As more entertainment becomes grassroots and more celebrities and influencers are initially seen on YouTube, Tumblr and Instagram, so too our visual language is changing to one where the candid and the real become the ideal. Already celebrities such as Reese Witherspoon, Kate Hudson and Gwyneth Paltrow are communicating via social media with seemingly unretouched images.

Why it's interesting:

This is worth noting when considering Millennials in particular. "The Tumblr-generation muse is no longer a flawlessly airbrushed A-lister flashing her pearly whites on the cover of the September Issue while dripping in borrowed diamonds," writes Jane Helpen, editor at Smashbox Studios and Nasty Gal, in i-D. "Today's of-the-moment model has dark circles under her eyes, she's makeup-free, she's gap-toothed, gangly, and uninterested in being edited into submission."



"7/11" by Beyoncé, 2014.



Avant-Garde Dance Vanguard

Nike x Pedro Lourenço collection.

Avant-Garde Dance Vanguard

Musicians, brands and tech giants are using dance in new, artistic, conceptual and creative ways to create viral media. FKA Twigs' new collaboration with Google Glass accompanies a reimagined score of her songs "Video Girl" and "Glass & Patron," which feature the artist acting out a contemporary dance. Sia's video for "Chandelier" features dancer Maddie Ziegler. The Nowness, owned by LVMH, recently teamed with dancers from London's Sadler's Wells to create a shoppable film, *Mine*, directed by Luke White and Remi Weekes, with items by La Perla, Kenzo and Louis Vuitton. Benjamin Millepied's L.A. Dance Project turned the Ace Hotel in downtown Los Angeles into a multistory stage, creating a dance love letter to the city. Abteen Bagheri, creator of music videos for A\$AP Rocky and Blood Orange, collaborated with Nike Women, Pedro Lourenço and the Nowness to create a dance video set in Morocco's Atlas Mountains to showcase a new sports collection. The list goes on.

Nike x Pedro Lourenço collection.



Why it's interesting:

Brands have relied on music and comedy for viral content. Now dance, especially dance from the high-culture world, is being employed as a new shareable medium.

Broadcast Gaming

Yes, it's an actual thing. Twitch, a destination for the live broadcast of consumer video gaming, has 55 million unique visitors and a million participating broadcasters. Amazon bought it this year for \$970 million.

Why it's interesting:

Increasingly, all entertainment, from books to music to video to advertising and content, is becoming grassroots-led and putting consumers center stage.

Backstage Celebrities

First came the stylists. Now every fashion and beauty industry expert behind the scenes, from makeup and hair artists to store architects, is being feted with books and exhibitions. Beauty retailer Space NK held an exhibition this fall dedicated to the legacy of late makeup artist Kevyn Aucoin. Meanwhile, luxury store architect Peter Marino (who has designed stores for Christian Dior, Louis Vuitton and Chanel) was celebrated in an exhibit during Design Miami 2014. Next stop the florists?

Why it's interesting:

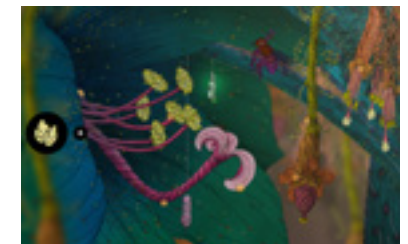
Social media is increasing awareness among consumers of not only their favorite fashion designers but also the plethora of other creative talents behind the scenes.

Intellectual, Artistic Gaming

Alongside Broadcast Gaming, we're seeing an emerging new wave of intellectual, artistic and poetic video games. These focus on learning, self-actualizing and experience over punching out soldiers or whizzing past a virtual finishing line. Nothing of This Is Ours by Alex Myers, for example, is an experiential art piece-meets-installation of "infinite, surrealistic worlds with creatures." Morphopolis is a poetic hand-animated game involving exploration of a surreal insect world and metamorphosis. The developers behind Morphopolis have also come up with Calvin Noir, which features beautifully rendered 1930s architecture in monochrome and puzzles linked by a noir-esque narrative. Land's End is a new virtual reality computer game with dreamy landscapes and architectural puzzles, created by digital agency UsTwo for the Samsung Gear VR headset.

Why it's interesting:

Gaming is evolving in many directions for new audiences—women, for example, now make up nearly half of gamers (and slightly more in the U.K. at 52%). Gaming mechanics are also being applied to everything from music videos to retail.

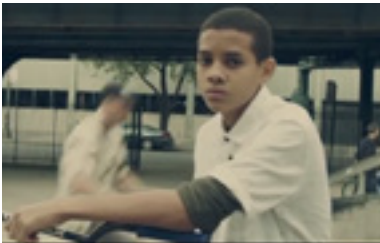


Calvin Noir by Micro Macro Games, release date 2015.

Morphopolis by Micro Macro Games, 2013.



The Bronx BMX Crew
by Marc Jacobs and i-D, 2014.



Why it's interesting:

Social media has sped up the rate of trend and niche discovery, and its path to mass exposure, but some celebrities and brands are doing this too fast, and in an inauthentic way, creating a backlash among connected, sophisticated Millennials, who view it as opportunistic. There's an opportunity for brands to connect with real subcultures, but they must tread a careful path or risk looking cynical.

Save Our Subcultures

It started, perhaps, when Vice staff writer Clive Martin wrote a story headlined “Stop F*cking With Our Youth Subcultures.” While Tumblr, social networks and blogs have spread information and inspiration and created communities of teens, they’ve also sped up the pace of discovery and mass co-option of niche urban styles—but there are signs of a move against this. Martin’s article pointed out Rihanna’s adoption of ghetto gothic, Katy Perry’s adoption of seapunk and Harry Styles’ emulation of East London style. Shortly after, The Guardian ran a fashion headline “Chola Style—the latest cultural appropriation fashion crime?,” a think piece on Rihanna, Selena Gomez and FK Twigs’ embrace of Mexican-American gang style.

Sensing a change in mood, fashion brands have made moves to connect with real subcultures. Marc Jacobs has collaborated with i-D to create Tribes, a three-part documentary video series profiling American subcultures. “Combining fashion with documentary storytelling, each of the three videos explores a different subculture that represents rebellion and self-expression,” i-D said. Nicola Formichetti’s fall 2014 collection for Diesel is inspired by subcultures, with Tumblr stars and Instagram influencers featured in the campaign, shot by Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin. Cool things really happen working this way, says Formichetti: “I wanted to tap into that and see the real thing again.”

Digital High Culture

Digital Revolution at the Barbican, London, 2014 Umbrellium's
Assemblance. © Matthew G Lloyd/Getty Images

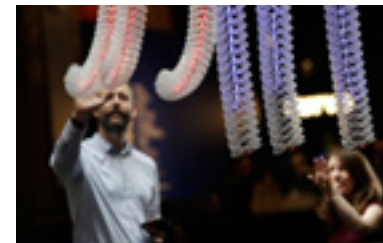
Digital High Culture

High culture is going digital—using digital platforms, beacon technology and social media to connect to new audiences. Consider the rise of live-streamed operas and theater in the U.K. The Nether, a play in London, was promoted by an interactive game/experience. The Rubens House museum in Antwerp is using Estimote beacons to augment the exhibition and make it more interactive. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the largest art museum in the western U.S., has teamed with Snapchat to promote its exhibits. Google Art Project, which allows Internet users to view exhibits, has partnered with artist Kara Walker and Creative Time; Walker's "A Subtlety" installation can be seen all over the world, with 360-degree views.

At the same time, high culture is examining technological capabilities as part of the works themselves: Consider "Digital Revolution," an immersive exhibition of art, design, film, music and video games, staged at the Barbican Centre in London.

Digital Revolution at the Barbican, London, 2014.

Credits: Chris Milk, "The Treachery of Sanctuary," State of Play © Matthew G Lloyd/Getty Images. Minimaforms' Petting Zoo ©Matthew G Lloyd/Getty Images. Umbrellium's Assemblance © Matthew G Lloyd/Getty Images.



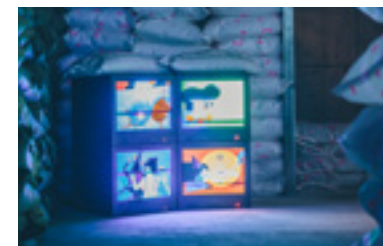
Why it's interesting:

Live streaming and digital technology are opening up high art to mass audiences in new ways. Meanwhile, major art institutions are increasingly examining digital culture and its impact.

Experiences Go Dark

As experientialism hits the mainstream, consumers are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Experience is now a given in stores and hospitality spaces, and brands are having to work harder than ever to wow customers, wrapping in theater, avant-garde art, gastronomy and synesthesia. The latest wave? Dark, dystopian and sometimes uncomfortable experiences. Wolvesmouth, the hot invite-only supper club originally based in Los Angeles, plays to the dark side, dressing dishes like roadkill. Apocalypse Postponed, the Hong Kong art bar created by Nadim Abbas in collaboration with Absolut, is a cyberpunk concrete bunker with wall-to-wall sandbags and metal-framed windows—a perfect backdrop for the challenging performances staged there.

Then there's the rising thread of immersive "escape game" experiences. Escape the Room is an interactive event staged in New York. Guests are expected to figure out how to literally escape the room by finding hidden objects, answering clues and solving puzzles in 60 minutes—the final countdown inevitably ending in panic. Similar games are popping up around the world. In Los Angeles, "The Purge: Breakout" was an immersive game experience staged for the launch of the film *The Purge: Anarchy*. "It's Purge Night, and your group is being held captive by a demented torturer ... with only 30 minutes before the start of *The Purge*. Trapped ..." reads the promotion, with a tagline: "Can you survive the night?"



Apocalypse Postponed by Nadim Abbas for Absolut, 2014.

Why it's interesting:

Not only do consumers want an experience that's immersive and inspiring, they're increasingly open to being tested and taken out of their comfort zone, for added bragging rights.

Celebrity Business Partners

Celebrities are moving beyond merely fronting brands to acting as business partners, collaborating on creative, appearing in campaigns, plugging products in social media, and getting a greater cut of the profit as a result. Diageo has launched Haig Club, a single-grain Scotch whisky, in partnership with David Beckham and British entrepreneur Simon Fuller; they're all working together to develop the brand, its strategy and positioning. Beckham appears in ad campaigns and also fronts the whisky's responsible-drinking program. Beyoncé and Topshop have formed a 50-50 joint venture, athletic streetwear brand Parkwood Topshop Athletic Ltd., set for launch in 2015 (Beyoncé's 19 million Instagram followers will no doubt help promote it).

Why it's interesting:

As more celebrities launch their own lifestyle brands (see Gwyneth Paltrow and Blake Lively, among others), they're finding direct ways to monetize their influence. Collaborating with brands in a business partnership also means the double halo effect of joint social media buzz and promotion.

Mipsters

There's a redefinition of femininity among young Muslim women. The hijabistas, hijabsters, mipsters or mipsterz (that's Muslim + hipsters) are connected, entrepreneurial, fashion-conscious and increasingly visible in pop culture, from Adidas campaigns to Madonna videos. Yunalis Mat Zara'ai, a Muslim pop singer and songwriter from Malaysia, has appeared on The Tonight Show presenting this new iteration of Islam. The New York Times is inviting stylish Muslim girls to post pictures of themselves in hijabs to Instagram. Mexico-based design agency Anagrama has created hip branding for turban maker T4Turban, while photographer Hassan Hajjaj has launched a blog about hip Moroccan Islamic biker women.

Why it's interesting:

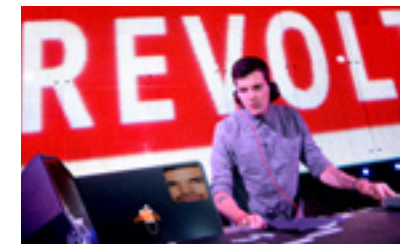
As new Islamic-centric markets, from the Middle East to Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, become more influential, marketers are taking notice of the digitally connected, stylish, entrepreneurial new stance among young Muslim women.

Celebrities As Thought Leaders

Channeling the appetite for live events, as well as their own influence, celebrities are expanding their brands into thought-leadership conferences. There was Oprah's "The Life You Want Weekend" tour, launched this year, held in Miami, Houston, Newark and Seattle, complete with "reinvention tents," head massages, inspirational talks and appearances from Oprah herself, Elizabeth Gilbert and Mark Nepo. P. Diddy's new Revolt is a music convergence "where technology meets influencers, music executives, entrepreneurs, songwriters, designers, producers, bloggers, students, brand managers, marketing executives, publicists, music artists, and more," or so the website says. "It is the must-attend, one-of-a-kind forum designed to help guests do one thing: understand and navigate the evolution of the music business." Expect Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop Summit next.

Why it's interesting:

There is increasing mass awareness of thought leadership and growing consumer interest in it, alongside an appetite for live events. Many celebrities already reinvent themselves as lifestyle brands, and this is yet another way to extend and monetize their influence.



Revolt TV by P. Diddy.

Beauty

Hot ingredients charcoal and kale, South Korean innovation and beauty for the rising cohort of over-50 consumers.

Charcoal

There's a rising reverence for minerals in beauty, largely centered on charcoal—inspired by the ingestible-health trend. Juice brands such as Juice Served Here and Juice Generation are using it as an ingredient. According to Juice Generation, charcoal helps trap chemicals and stop them from being absorbed into the skin. Leaves of Trees, launched this year, is a beauty brand offering charcoal anise soap. Expect more.

Why it's interesting:

Minerals, both ingestible and applied externally, are becoming a key selling point for health and beauty.



Charcoal anise soap by Leaves of Trees.
Charcoal lemonade by Juice Served Here.

Kale and the Superfood Beauty Wave

Beauty is co-opting the superfood phenomenon, most recently tapping the properties of kale. Nails Inc. has introduced the NailKale range of nail polishes, packed with the antioxidant superfood to “nurture nails.” Éminence Organics has launched Éminence Citrus & Kale Potent C+E Serum, which contains kale, broccoli, sprouts and spinach to “restore youthful radiance.” Then there’s Nourish Advanced Cellular Skin Perfection, which is selling kale-based cleansers and anti-aging hand creams. The trend sits within a wider trend where the worlds of beauty, superfoods and cold-pressed juices are converging.

Elle Macpherson’s Super Elixir is a beauty superfood powder supplement that contains 45 key ingredients, including bioavailable alkalizing supergreens, Chinese herbs, digestive enzymes and members of the maitake mushroom family. Juice Generation has launched Beauty Bombs, a range of three beauty juices: Activated Lemonade, Activated Protein and Activated Greens, which feature charcoal as well as two shots called Le Détox and Pure Earth. The Body Deli, based in California, makes products using raw superfoods such as acai berries. Skin Nutrition, showcased at Cosmoprof 2014, is a line of beauty “smoothies” featuring raw, cold-pressed ingredients.



Beauty Bombs by Juice Generation.
NailKale by Nails Inc.

Why it’s interesting:

Consumers are increasingly understanding health, beauty and well-being as one 360-degree system and are seeing the potential in ingestible supplements. “Superfoods and cold-pressed juices have become such a phenomenon among consumers, who see feeling good as key to looking good—these new ranges tap into that, with extra ingredients aimed specifically at enhancing skin health and radiance,” says Bella Blissett, beauty consultant and columnist for the U.K.’s Mail on Sunday.



IOPE Air Cushion
Compact BB cream, South Korea.

Why it's interesting:

Ready access to the Internet and social media means that not only are trends spreading faster but new centers of influence are emerging. In beauty, these new influences are increasingly coming from the East.

South Korean Beauty

The axis of influence has changed in the beauty world, and South Korea is becoming increasingly relevant. Following the BB cream phenomenon—which spurred a whole category of alphabetical additions: CC, DD and the rest—the global appetite for South Korean beauty is rising. According to Statistics Korea, the country's beauty exports hit a record \$1.04 billion in 2013, and the Seoul International Cosmetics & Beauty Expo cited an annual growth rate of 26%.

U.S. and European retailers are taking note. Urban Outfitters became the biggest American stockist of Korean beauty brands in 2014. Refinery29 recently hired a South Korean beauty correspondent, Joyce Kong, to chart the trend for readers. “The South Korean beauty market is increasingly influential, in part because the government has invested in R&D. Manufacturers are also highly responsive to trends,” says Florence Bernardin, founder of Information & Inspiration, a Paris-based consultancy specializing in Asian beauty trends. Bernardin says trends to watch include bubbling beauty products that use carbonic acid, fermented skin care products, and sheets and body masks loaded with skin care properties.

Anna-Marie Solowij, beauty consultant and founder of U.K. retailer BeautyMART, says, “The latest Korean beauty trend product is the cushion, a creamy combination of moisturizer, foundation and sunscreen in a compact. The cushion formula has all the benefits of a BB cream—skin care ingredients, tint and sunscreen—but without the opacity and weight of a BB.”

Digital Habits and Stress

The impact of stressful jobs and heavy use of technology is a growing concern. According to research by YSL Beauté, spending a lot of time checking your mobile or staring at a laptop or iPad screen is causing premature aging. The brand uses the phrase “tech neck” to describe the necklace-like creases caused by checking a smartphone 150 times a day, which is, apparently, the average. “A rising number of products are being introduced to firm the jawline and smooth the neck,” says Anna-Marie Solowij, beauty expert and founder of U.K. retailer BeautyMART. Avon’s Anew Clinical Infinite Lift Targeted Contouring Serum is one example.

In the broader sense, women are starting to make the connection between work stress and visible aging. The Daily Mail ran the hyperbolic headline “Stressed-out women are losing hair in their 20s,” citing research by L’Oréal connecting hair loss to stress—a sixth of women said they had experienced hair loss by age 30, and three-quarters blamed the condition of their hair on stress. One in five high-earning men and women blamed work stress for hair thinning, compared to just one in 10 low earners.



Avon's Anew Clinical Infinite Lift Targeted Contouring Serum.

Why it's interesting:

Research has shown that Millennials are more stressed than any other generation and are trying to manage the visible manifestations. They're also making the connection between stress and visible aging.

New Wave Boomer Beauty

This year, Estée Lauder bought Olio Lusso, the skin care line founded by 66-year-old model Linda Rodin, tapping the ultimate poster girl for the emerging “amortal” view of age. Fifty-plus, 60-plus and 70-plus consumers are rebelling against traditional age stereotypes, continuing to work and remaining active consumers. Rodin launched her brand when she was nearly 60, and its USP is that it naturally enhances you to be the best you can be. Expect more brands to tap a celebratory approach to age to reach this audience. Rising life expectancy and larger numbers of vibrant 60-plus and 70-plus consumers mean innovative brands will also start to evolve tailored skin care solutions for older skin.

The global population is aging at an unprecedented rate thanks to factors that include falling birth rates and longer life spans. The World Health Organization estimates that by 2050, people aged 65 and over will outnumber children aged 14 and under for the first time. The U.S. is forecast to see a 70% rise in people aged 50 and up between 2000 and 2030, when one in three Americans will likely be in this demographic. The U.S. government’s Consumer Expenditure Survey also estimates that Boomers already outspend other generations by approximately \$400 billion a year on consumer goods and services.



Rodin by Linda Rodin.



Why it’s interesting:

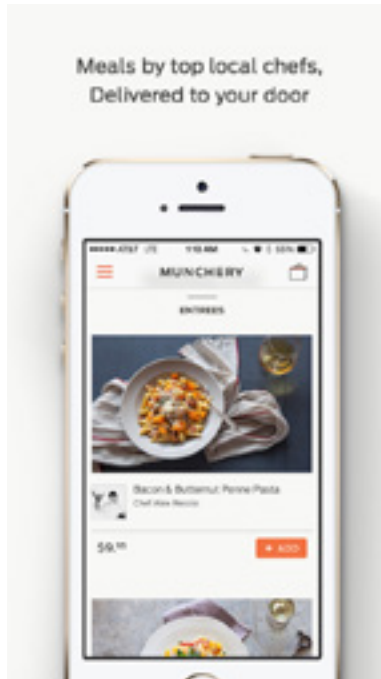
Fifty-plus consumers control as much as 50% of premium beauty categories, yet for years they’ve been presented with marketing images of 20-something models. Clever brands will target them without patronizing them.



Brands

Third Way commerce, do brands and the me brands that let consumers take center stage as micropreneur stewards.

Our/Vodka by Pernod Ricard.



1-for-1: Third Way Commerce

Charity and profitability have traditionally been viewed as mutually exclusive, but a new wave of business models is establishing a “third way” that combines social good with sales and marketing—and it’s proving popular with ethically minded Millennials. Toms popularized one-for-one (buy one, give one), a great example of this new mode, and has expanded from shoes to eyewear to an entire marketplace in the past year. Founder Blake Mycoskie describes one-for-one as a “movement”: something bigger than commerce that will transform one category after another. Coffee is Mycoskie’s most recent addition—each bag sold provides a week of water to people in need. In using philanthropy as the lead, Toms is also driving sales; the brand is valued at \$625 million. More companies are starting to employ its model. San Francisco-based food delivery company Munchery, for instance, donates a meal for every meal bought, and Warby Parker has used a donation model with eyewear.

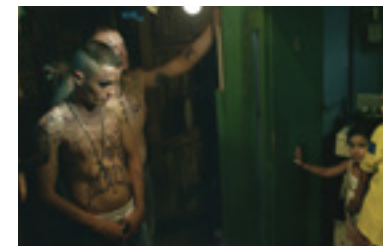
Why it’s interesting:

Consumers, particularly Millennials, are increasingly discriminating between brands by looking for ethical behavior and sustainability. They are also looking for brands and companies with clear values.

Do Brands

A growing number of brands are focusing on doing rather than talking as a marketing platform, using activism, innovation and philanthropy projects to connect with consumers and inspire marketing content. Kenco, for instance, sources its coffee from some of the most beautiful countries in the world, but many have a strong gang culture. In a campaign executed by JWT London, Kenco has embarked on a yearlong training scheme for at-risk people working in coffee farming—advertising showcases the project, not the coffee. Toms does not advertise but rather takes a group of customers each year on a “giving trip,” during which they hand over the donated pair of glasses or shoes to the person in need. Customers, who become lifelong “super fans,” share videos of the trip online.

Patagonia has launched several innovative sustainability initiatives. In 2014, it created an eco-friendly wetsuit with manufacturer Yulex. Rather than lock Yulex into a lengthy exclusive contract, Patagonia signed the company for just a year, inviting competitors to work with the new material to drive down its price. Patagonia has also announced it is using tax credits to invest \$13 million in the construction of solar panels on 1,000 homes in surf haven Hawaii, where utilities are very expensive, joining forces with a local solar company and a Hawaiian bank to do so.



Kenco's Coffee vs. Gangs.



Why it's interesting:

Rather than focus their efforts on self-serving content, brands are increasingly using innovation and social initiatives with genuine merit to tell their stories, and allowing social media to do the rest.

Me Brands



Our/Vodka by Pernod Ricard.

Me Brands

A clutch of new platforms invites consumers to create personalized and local “brands” in their own image—recognizing the sharing economy’s growing desire for personalization, collaboration and consumer entrepreneurship.

Pernod Ricard’s Our/Vodka invites customers to create their own local version of its brand in a business partnership. Our/Vodka micro-distilleries in Berlin and Detroit, among other cities, were opened in partnership with local stakeholders, who receive 20% of the profit in exchange for investing their time and managing the distillery as well as marketing and events. Pernod Ricard invested the capital and supplied a global recipe, which is adjusted to include local ingredients. In Glasgow, the new boutique brewery Drygate invites consumers to create their own beer “brand,” complete with personal labeling. In May 2014, Tumblr updated its iOS app, allowing users to customize the look and design of their blog from within the app for the first time; they can also change colors, fonts, pictures and much more. The total number of unique iterations possible is now 3.3 billion, one for every Internet user in the world.



Our/Vodka by Pernod Ricard.



Why it’s interesting:

Consumers, particularly Millennials, are increasingly starting to think of themselves as brands, curating their online image and monetizing it through social media clout, micro-retail platforms and YouTube. They’re also using new platforms to become micro-entrepreneurs. This is a way for brands to connect with this spirit and empower it.

Food & Drink

Enjoy haute vegan, eat from tin cans, sip on matcha—or try a cup of bone broth.

Food 2.0 Startups

Faux meat isn't new, but a crop of food-science startups have drawn venture-capital attention by taking innovative approaches to the concept. Beyond Meat produces a fake chicken that has fooled some experts, as well as a "beef crumble" made with pea protein. The company's backers include Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers (KPCB). Impossible Foods, backed by \$75 million in VC funding, makes veggie burgers using what it calls "plant blood," a liquid that causes the patties to sizzle like beef burgers. Then there's Modern Meadow, a startup making meat from animal skin cells that recently collected \$10 million in funding.

VCs are also backing Hampton Creek Foods, which produces the eggless Just Mayo and vegan cookies. San Francisco chef James Corwell has invented a process that transforms tomatoes into a substance that mimics tuna. His tomato sushi is available at several California grocers, and a Kickstarter campaign to expand the operation was successful.



Why it's interesting:

More consumers are conscious not only of their food's nutritional value but also its carbon footprint. This will make them more open-minded about alternatives.

Just Mayo by Hampton Creek.
Beyond Meat by Ethan Brown
and Brent Taylor.

Cold-Pressed Everything

First came juices, then came beauty products and now we have nut milk.

“Cold pressed” is becoming a byword for purity and quality. Alt.Milk, a cold-pressed, sleekly branded almond milk, is the latest example, introduced to London by high-end department store Fortnum & Mason.

Why it's interesting:

Cold-pressed and unprocessed foods are increasingly becoming fetishized by consumers.



Alt.Milk, U.K.



Tin Can Upgrade

The humble tin can is being reinvented as a sleek food-packaging device for gourmet stores and restaurants alike. Hong Kong gallery and dining space The Popsy Room, in Sheung Wan's Upper Lascar Row, offers synesthetic menus that include avant-garde food presented in tins. Argentine branding agency Empatía has created cool tin-can packaging for Swedish seafood company Swish. Tincan in London's Soho, a pop-up restaurant by architects AL_A, serves gourmet canned food from around the world.



Why it's interesting:

Consumers are embracing an ironic, high-low attitude toward food. Meanwhile, creatives are redefining lowbrow foods with gourmet twists.

Guilt-Free To-Go

Healthy, ethical fast food will gain momentum in 2015 as a raft of virtuous brands appropriates junk style for the Millennial generation. Roy Choi and Daniel Patterson's eagerly anticipated fast-food concept Loco'l is set to open in San Francisco and Los Angeles next year. Pitched at the same price point as other national fast-food chains, Loco'l will serve carefully sourced, seasonal food for under \$6. In the U.K., O-food has a similar mission, aiming "to make the humble everyday meal a true joy for your taste buds even when time is short." After running a successful pop-up in London's Shoreditch, the company is understood to be eyeing a permanent location.

Why it's interesting:

Loco'l is another example of how ethical businesses are being rebranded in an aspirational, hip way for younger audiences.

Liquor Mashups

While 2014 was the year of hybrid foods, 2015 is the year of new alcoholic mashups as distillers and blenders take their core spirits and age them in barrels previously used for other spirits or wines. Jim Beam Kentucky Dram, described as a "premium Bourbon infused with Highland Scotch whisky," will launch into travel retail in June 2015. It follows hybrid launches such as Grey Goose VX, which marries the brand's vodka with a hint of cognac, and Espolòn Añejo, an añejo tequila aged in bourbon barrels.

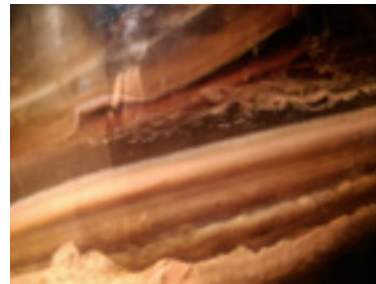
Why it's interesting:

These mashups play into the hands of adventure-seeking Millennials, who are drawn to new flavors and experiences in the beverage market.



Ferment Fervor

As interest grows in sour over sweet in food and drink, more fermented products will find their way onto menus and shelves. London's Rawduck restaurant is making all its own ferments, pickles and drinking vinegars, and elsewhere in the city, Blanch & Shock Food Design is trying out flavored vinegars such as smoked beer and celery. Chefs Nick Balla and Cortney Burns of San Francisco's Bar Tartine are experimenting with holding vegetables at certain temperatures as if they were dry-aging meat, says Michael Harlan Turkell, host of "The Food Seen" on Heritage Radio Network: "It's developing flavor in a way we haven't experienced in a restaurant setting before."



Why it's interesting:

Why it's interesting: As consumers become more sophisticated and confident in their understanding of food, they're adopting new, niche and experimental cuisines at a quicker rate.

Bar Tartine by Nicolaus Balla.

Credit: Photography by Chad Robertson.

Blanch & Shock Food Design, London.

Credit: Smoked porter vinegar by Blanch & Shock Design, London. Sloe vinegar by Blanch & Shock Design, London.

Hipster Matcha

The Japanese powdered green tea is becoming the new uber-health drink among hipsters. MatchaBar just launched in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, furnished with the usual hipster accoutrements: industrial stools, polished concrete surfaces, plants, etc. Expect more to come.

Why it's interesting:

Health and health foods are being reimagined by creative brands for a savvy Millennial audience.



MatchaBar, New York.

Credit: Photography NickyDigital.com.



Bomb Shots Reloaded

A shot and a beer, once considered a dive-bar order, is getting a high-end twist. Bartenders are moving beyond traditional serves—a lighter-style beer and shot of whiskey on the side, or the infamous boilermaker, where the shot is dropped into the beer—to pair high-end single-malt Scotch or local liqueurs with big, bold ales. Prepare for more elevated combinations as bartenders look to offer more personalized serves. “We’re trying to introduce it to a new kind of client: one that has discerning taste and now can elevate their drinking experience by trying different options,” says Adam Wilson, bar and beverage consultant at Modern Beverage Merchants.

Why it’s interesting:

In the same way that junk food has gone gourmet, creatives in the food industry are playing with high-low combinations to reinvent dishes and cocktails in fun ways.

Wine to Go

Alternatives to glass wine bottles will grow in popularity as consumers look for more convenient options—particularly for cheaper variants—when they’re outdoors or on the go. U.K. retailers have already launched bigger pouch formats to add value, but Tim Wilson, managing director of the Wilson Drinks Report, points to supply chain savings, environmental benefits and health as key drivers that could see smaller-serve Tetra Pak cartons of wine take off in the future. “Typically, you’re looking at a 75 cL glass bottle,” he says, “but that can be too much for a one- or two-person household, so there’s a massive opportunity for smaller-serve cartons.”

Why it’s interesting:

Consumers are becoming increasingly open to the repackaging of goods that have historically relied on glass to communicate quality and luxury—particularly if it adds convenience, lowers cost and helps the environment.

Bone Broth: The Hot New Beverage

“Bone broth is the often-forgotten superfood that forms the basis of nearly all our soups and stews. It’s nourishing, simple, cheap and makes everything taste amazing.”

—Jasmine Hemsley, of Hemsley+Hemsley, in U.S. Vogue

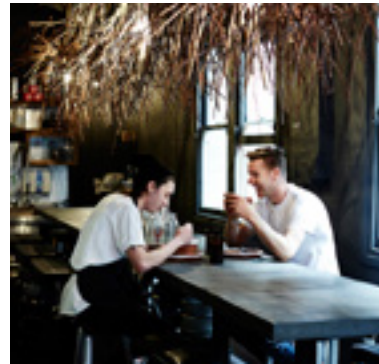
Silo by Joost.

Credit: Photography by Sean Fennessy.

Bone Broth: The Hot New Beverage

Blame it on the Paleo thing—meat and meat-associated products have become fetishized. The next stage? Broth as the hot Paleo drink of choice. Jasmine and Melissa Hemsley of Hemsley + Hemsley in East London have a cult following, and their book, *The Art of Eating Well*, has been translated into three languages. Their mantra, they tell *U.S. Vogue*, is “Boil your bones.” “Bone broth is the often-forgotten superfood that forms the basis of nearly all our soups and stews. It’s nourishing, simple, cheap and makes everything taste amazing,” says Jasmine Hemsley. The duo highlight the nutritional value of broth, which is rich in Omega 3, 6 and 9, as well as minerals.

In New York, Brodo, a broth takeout, has introduced grass-fed beef broth infused with ginger to the East Village. See also Sally Fallon Morell’s book, *Nourishing Broth: An Old-Fashioned Remedy for the Modern World*. New York-based skin care expert Julia March recently highlighted the beauty benefits of sipping bone broth every day.



Why it’s interesting:

It’s another sign of consumers’ culinary sophistication and daring, showing intelligent foodie-ism has become mainstream, and also reflects the growing influence of Paleo diets.

Silo by Joost.

Credit: Photography by Sean Fennessy.

Brodo by Marco Canora, NYC, 2014.

Haute Vegan

In response to a rising interest in meat alternatives and vegan/vegetarian food, especially among Millennials, a wave of hip restaurant concepts have appeared that depart from the earnest or hippie vibe associated with meat-free dining. This new crop offers slick branding, a youthful look and a gourmet sensibility. Till the Cows Come Home is a cool “vegetarian slow food” café housed in a shipping container in a trendy Berlin neighborhood. M.O.B., which started in Brooklyn and has expanded to Paris, comes from the founder of the Mama Shelter hotels and features bold branding, a clean industrial feel and a sense of humor. Jugofresh in Miami serves gourmet vegan food and cold-pressed juice; at the Wynwood branch, patrons listen to blasting hip-hop and sit in reclaimed church pews.

Veganism and vegetarianism are on the rise, so expect more of this. Three out of 10 respondents in a 2014 Datamonitor study across 24 countries said they are actively trying to limit their daily meat intake. “Flexitarian” eating—a mostly vegetarian diet—is becoming more common, as is the concept of cutting out meat one day a week, as suggested by the Meatless Monday and Meat Free Monday campaigns, while Mark Bittman’s “Vegan Before 6:00” idea advocates a vegan diet until 6 p.m.



Till the Cows Come Home
by Natalie Viaux, Berlin.



Why it's interesting:

Healthy and responsible eating has moved from the marginal to the mass, and healthy foods are being repositioned as aspirational. Brands that do not update their design could lose out—veganism is on the rise.

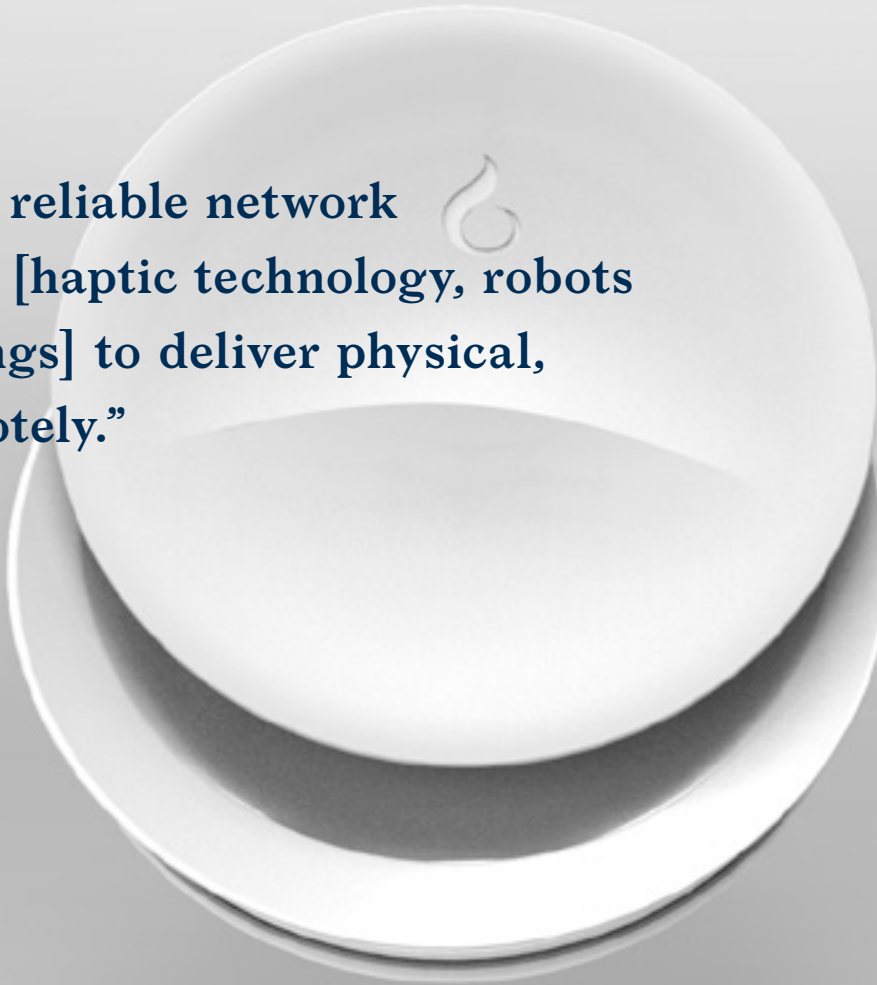


Innovation

The tactile Internet, the long near revolution, in-house innovation units, aging—Silicon Valley's new target—and looming moral questions for tech giants.

The Tactile Internet

“Sufficiently responsive, reliable network connectivity will enable [haptic technology, robots and the Internet of Things] to deliver physical, tactile experiences remotely.”



—Mischa Dohler, head of the Centre for Telecommunications Research and professor of wireless communications at King's College London

Aging: Silicon Valley's Next Frontier

"We could be doing a lot more in the fight against aging," PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel said at the 2014 Web Summit in Dublin during his interview with Financial Times editor Caroline Daniel, pointing to a rising theme in Silicon Valley. "It's a problem that could be slowed. We could figure out what causes it, how to reverse it. Almost every disease in the world is linked to aging: We have a one in a thousand chance of getting cancer in the next year at age 30, and a 1 in 10 chance at age 80. Almost everything is like that."

Tech giants are exploring ways to tackle age. Google is backing Calico, a biotech company focused on health and well-being, particularly in relation to aging and associated diseases. Explained Google CEO Larry Page: "Illness and aging affect all our families. With some longer term, 'moonshot' thinking around health care and biotechnology, I believe we can improve millions of lives." In September 2014, the company announced a new facility to research diseases that often affect the elderly, such as neurodegeneration and cancer. Watch this space.

Why it's interesting:

It marks the latest direction in Silicon Valley's rhetoric of solving world problems. Will the techies enable us to live forever? And should they even try?

The Tactile Internet

Haptic technology, robots and the Internet of Things will lead to the age of the Tactile Internet, argue Mischa Dohler, head of the Centre for Telecommunications Research and professor of wireless communications at King's College London, and Gerhard Fettweis, a professor of mobile communications at Technische Universität Dresden. They refer to the Tactile Internet as a "true paradigm shift" and write: "Sufficiently responsive, reliable network connectivity will enable it to deliver physical, tactile experiences remotely. ... It will be able to interconnect with the traditional wired Internet, the mobile Internet and the Internet of Things—thereby forming an Internet of entirely new dimensions and capabilities." According to the professors, for example, this could have great impact on medical care, with diagnoses and treatment delivered remotely.

Why it's interesting:

While this is still at the very early stages, innovators are playing with haptic technology, wrapping in Internet connectivity with physical action.

The Long Near Game



The Interval.

The Long Near Game

Companies and brands, particularly the behemoths, are taking a dualistic approach to future-proofing by looking at both the long- and short-term games. They're introducing innovation units to remain nimble, agile and in touch with change—everyone from Target and Coca-Cola to Levi's and Marks & Spencer has introduced in-house labs and innovation units to keep abreast of new technology and test new concepts.

Coupled with this, many are setting up long-view projects to analyze how macro shifts in the economy and consumer trends will affect them. Amazon's Jeff Bezos is a famous advocate of long-term strategizing, defending Amazon's lack of profit and reinvestment as key to capturing a greater part of the future of commerce. San Francisco's The Long Now Foundation recently launched The Interval, a bar dedicated to discussing the future and what it will mean. Meanwhile, many businesses are embarking on research projects that focus on the world in 2020. London-based trends consultancy The Future Laboratory has dubbed it the Age of the Long Near.



The Interval, San Francisco.



Why it's interesting:

More companies appear to be taking not just a near-term but also a macro view of future business, which could have long-term implications for business models. When short-term gains are sacrificed in the interest of 50-year plans, how will publicly traded companies adjust?

3D Printing Grows Up

While consumer 3D printers have been getting more affordable, and some toy and jewelry companies are selling 3D-printed products, we've yet to see consumer-facing 3D printing reach critical mass. Pundits and futurists, meanwhile, continue to raise concerns over intellectual property and quality control. This is set to change in 2015, says Sophie Hackford, director of Wired Consulting: "I'm watching a raft of service providers appearing that will make it real for business." These include authentication companies such as Authentise, which helps 3D designers optimize their designs and protect and stream design files to print to ensure quality control; Medical Modeling, which manufactures anatomical implants; and Etsy, which is now providing wholesale services for the micro-businesses of the maker movement.

Why it's interesting:

3D printing, while heavily publicized, has not yet been embraced by the mass or consumer markets. New services that help regulate some of the contentious issues around 3D printing could drive wider adoption.



Foodini by Natural Machines, Spain.



Growing Pains: Silicon Valley's Moral Dilemma

There will be moral, political and public relations battles ahead as the public and governments cast a more critical eye over the behavior of Silicon Valley companies. And as their exploration continues and advances race ahead, lawmakers will work harder to keep up and establish regulation of new business models, modes of trade and legal loopholes.

Silicon Valley may claim to be “making the world a better place,” but the past year has seen a rising tide of criticism. Facebook was hit with a backlash after manipulating the news feeds of nearly 700,000 users to see how that would affect their emotions. Uber's reported attempts to aggressively sabotage rival Lyft were documented in the press, and CEO and founder Travis Kalanick infamously suggested digging up dirt on critical journalists.

Meanwhile, as our digital footprints continue to grow, our awareness of the companies holding our data is also growing.

Why it's interesting:

The past decade has been defined by the exponential rise of tech giants, and the pool is still growing, as businesses from Airbnb to Uber spring ahead. But in some instances, this growth has accelerated ahead of developing a responsible corporate culture. As these companies reach critical mass, consumers will put more pressure on them to conform to standards expected of corporations in traditional sectors and to build clear cultural codes.

Banking the Unbanked

After digitizing all payments, the next frontier in banking is the global unbanked and underbanked population. In October, Bill Gates spoke about the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's goal for those who lack effective banking: “to help people in the world's poorest regions improve their lives and build sustainable futures by connecting them with digitally based financial tools and services.” Venture capitalists and corporations like American Express have also been exploring initiatives to bank the unbanked. American Express sponsored a documentary, *Spent: Looking for Change*, that focuses on the 70 million Americans locked out of traditional financial options.

Arjan Schütte, founder and managing partner of Core Innovation Capital, told Bloomberg Businessweek that as many as 1 in 3 Americans are un- or underbanked, and spend disproportionately on emergency financial services as a result. “It's a mass-market problem and opportunity,” he said. “The un- and underbanked generate a trillion dollars in income. They are spending \$100 billion in financial services. There's an opportunity to make money as well as change people's lives. Historically, people addressing the un- or underbanked have fit into two buckets: They're either in the missionary camp or the mercenary camp. We're in the visionary camp. There is a third way.”

Why it's interesting:

The worlds of philanthropy and commercialism are increasingly merging.

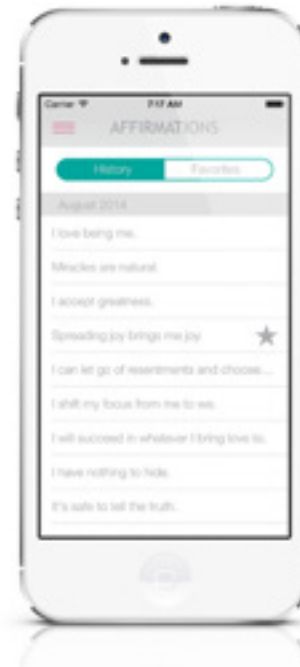
Lifestyle

New surf, adventurism, the "now" age
and mindfulness in business.

The ‘Now’ Age

Call it hippie-dom for the social media age—or a call for higher meaning in an increasingly agnostic society. Spiritualism is gaining mainstream awareness, and new platforms, stores, brands and publications are reinterpreting it for young, hip Millennial audiences. Examples include Gabrielle Bernstein’s Spirit Junkie (which has exploded into a culture of self-improving memes) and the SoulCycle phenomenon, which aligns spiritualism with fitness. Recent research by Pew shows that a fifth of consumers globally are not religiously affiliated, yet 37% consider themselves spiritual. Deepak Chopra’s newest book, *The Future of God*, aims to be “a practical approach to spirituality for our times.”

Retail is catching on too: Celestine Eleven, a new concept store in groovy East London, claims to “redefine luxury” with jewelry, clothing and apothecary goods that are intellectually, spiritually and aesthetically uplifting. Sunday Times columnist Ruby Warrington has launched *The Numinous*, a popular content platform featuring fashion and beauty alongside astro and tarot sections, with updates on the “Now” Age.



Spirit Junkie by Gabrielle Bernstein.

Why it’s interesting:

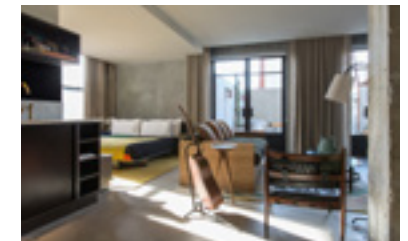
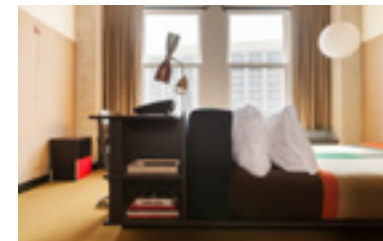
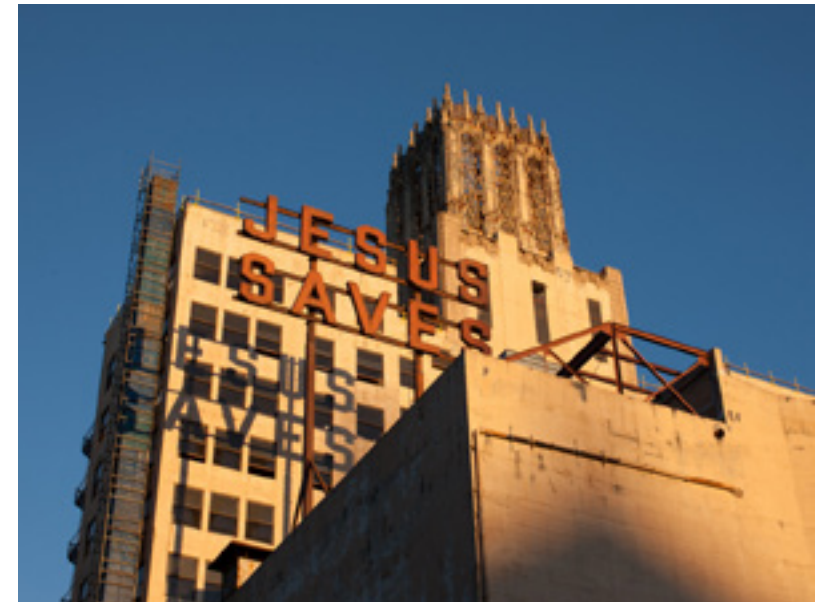
Consumers are seeking meaning but are looking beyond traditional channels to find it. Spiritualism is being adopted by new younger audiences—prompting a wave of retail, media and product concepts that are presenting the movement in a cool way.

Los Angeles' New Image

Long associated with entertainment, Los Angeles is reinventing itself as a fashion, tech and innovation hub. It's telling, perhaps, that Ace Hotel launched its most recent iteration in downtown L.A. Meanwhile the city is rapidly becoming a fashion hub, with Moschino's Jeremy Scott, Saint Laurent's Hedi Slimane and hip Parisian concept store L'Eclaireur all opening there. Downtown L.A. has emerged as the hub of this activity: Pershing Square has been made over, and hip fashion brand Acne launched its largest store ever in the area. New fashion and retail tech startups abound, and the general tech scene is rising. Disney purchased Maker Studios for \$950 million, Facebook bought Oculus VR for \$2 billion, and Apple recently bought Beats for \$3.2 billion. Hot companies including Dollar Shave Club, Snapchat, Nasty Gal and Tinder are based there.

Why it's interesting:

The axis of influence is shifting, more generally, from the traditional capitals.



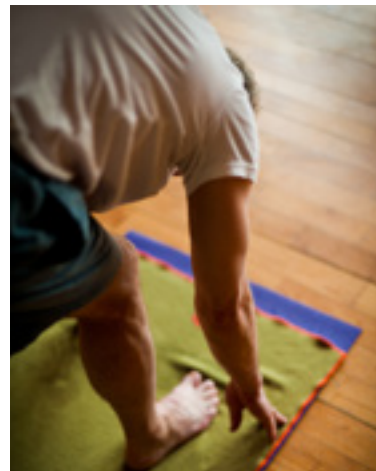
Ace Hotel Downtown LA.





Brogawear Arrives

Trend pieces have spotlighted “broga,” the rise in men taking up yoga, for a while—now big business is finally taking note. Lululemon is about to open its first men’s yogawear store, in Manhattan. Lululemon Athletica invented the premium women’s yoga and activewear category, which is now booming with new players. If its broga line is as successful, expect more to follow.



Why it’s interesting:

Consumers of both sexes are spending on wellness. As of 2013, the wellness industry, encapsulating spas, yoga and complementary therapies, is worth \$3.4 trillion and growing, according to SRI International.

Broga class. Credit: Eli Dagostino.
Lululemon Athletica, Toronto.

Adventurist Impulse

Following the boom in activewear, a new clutch of hipster-friendly brands is championing adventurism and outdoor pursuits. Jordan Hufnagel and James Crowe from Portland, Ore., co-founded West America, a line of outdoor adventure staples, packaged on a sleek website with inspirational travel content. Urban Outfitters has launched Without Walls, a line of clothing targeting adventure-hungry Millennials. Some ranges are aimed at adventurist women, like Bowndling, a new boutique line of British-made adventure gear founded by Collyn Ahart that combines high-tech functionality with beautiful design.

Expect more of this as adventure travel grows—adventure tourism is one of the fastest-growing travel segments in the world, hitting a global value of \$263 billion in 2013, according to TTG Asia. It has increased 195% from 2011, says the recent UNWTO Global Report on Adventure Tourism.



Bowndling by Collyn Ahart, London, 2014.

Why it's interesting:

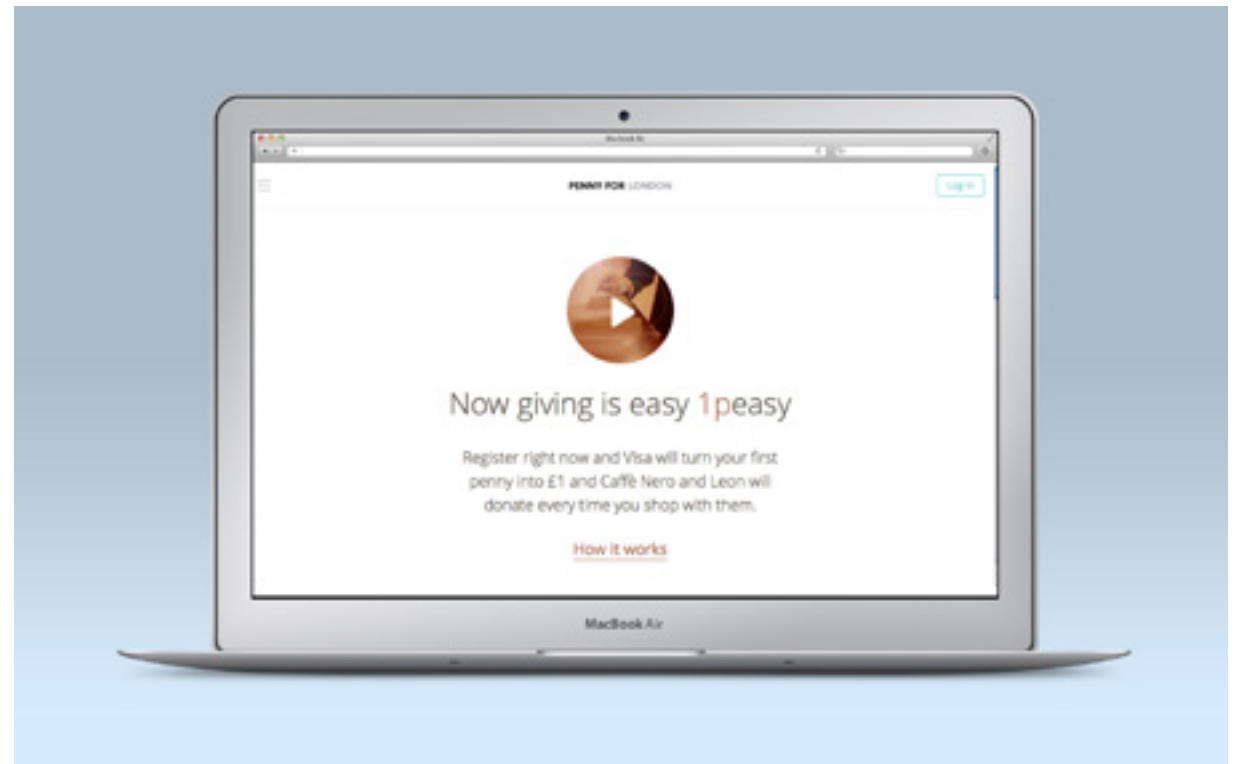
Consumers across the board are starting to prioritize experiences—from travel to food to exploration—over “stuff.” Smart brands are connecting their products to such experiences.

Incremental Savings and Donations

Incremental savings and donations are on the rise, powered by new mobile payments and banking apps. Penny for London, a new charity platform, encourages commuters to use contactless payment across the Oyster subway transportation network to donate a small amount to charity every time they make a journey. Using Visa or MasterCard, they can give between a penny and 10 pence per journey, up to a maximum of 99 pence each month. More banking apps are also allowing customers to make small incidental savings. In the U.K., Nationwide and Lloyds have both introduced impulse-based incremental automated savings systems.

Why it's interesting:

Research into Millennials' financial habits shows they are not effective savers. This is an opportunity to facilitate better financial management.



Penny for London.

Sports Brands: New Niche

Niche, beautifully branded premium brands are creating waves in the sports apparel industry by focusing on one sport only, developing genuine expertise and connecting to enthusiast audiences through cleverly executed social media and community platforms. This started with Rapha, the premium cycle brand, and was followed in the past year by adventurer line Bowndling, founded by advertising strategist Collyn Ahart, surf label Finisterre, U.S. surf line Saturdays and Tracksmith, the new running venture by Rapha co-founder Luke Scheybeler. Rather than attempt to be the master of all categories, as many traditional global sports groups have done in the past decade, these brands proudly focus on just one, producing premium, high-tech goods with a refined design aesthetic and using social media and content to build cult followings among fans. Some are not sold in stores but are available only via the brand's website, allowing products to be wrapped in storytelling and not diluted by second-party retail.

Why it's interesting:

As more consumers prioritize sport, and spend heavily on sporting apparel, they're increasingly willing to invest in premium goods. They're also taking sports more seriously, meaning that expertise and aligning with professional standards is a big selling point. Specializing gives brands authenticity. Moving beyond conventional sports aesthetics of basic graphics and Lycra toward more sophisticated branding also sits well with a more refined audience.



CWS by Finisterre.

Credit: Photography by David Gray.

Rapha. Credit: Photography by Jake Stangel and Rapha.



Surf Renaissance

“The laid-back Californian lifestyle is changing business culture. In big business, deals are done over a round of golf. In Silicon Valley, deals are done over adventure activities.”

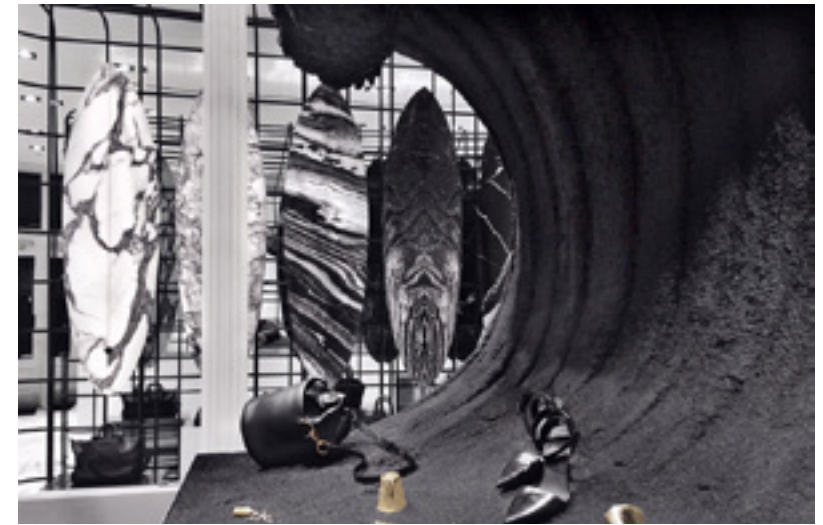
—Google industry head Fintan Gillespie, founder of the Surf Summit.

Cage Installation by Alexander Wang
and Haydenshapes, 2014.

Surf Renaissance

After a downturn in the late 2000s due to the decline of Aussie surf giants, surfing is enjoying a renaissance as the ultimate mind-body pursuit for Silicon Valley CEOs, hip urban professionals and anyone seeking to unplug and be at one with the elements. “The laid-back Californian lifestyle is changing business culture. In big business, deals are done over a round of golf. In Silicon Valley, deals are done over adventure activities,” says Google industry head Fintan Gillespie, who in 2014 founded the Surf Summit, a sister event to the Web Summit in Dublin. The Surf Summit attracted groups of entrepreneurs, investors and professional surfers, who were taken to Ireland for a weekend of surf sessions, discussions and networking designed to drive creative thought.

The surf look is also being overhauled, as seen in the recent Chanel No. 5 ad by Baz Luhrmann that features a surfing Gisele Bündchen, and niche luxury surf and lifestyle brands such as Finisterre and Saturdays. Brands such as Patagonia are also using high-profile innovation in sustainability as a PR platform—Patagonia recently introduced a sustainable alternative to neoprene wetsuits using a new fiber from Yulex. The traditional hot spots are also being rethought, as exploratory surf tourism shifts to new frontiers such as Ireland, Iceland, Norway and Alaska.



Why it's interesting:

The image change is less interesting than the appeal of surf to those in business—it's becoming seen as a mind-body activity, a way to connect to the elements, almost a form of active meditation.

*Cage Installation by Alexander Wang
and Haydenshapes, 2014.*

Helicopter Parenting Crashes

There's a rising realization that parents have gone too far in shielding and coddling kids—and leaving little time for themselves. “Somehow, as we’ve learned to treat children as people with desires and rights of their own, we’ve stopped treating ourselves and one another as such,” writes Heather Havrilesky in her New York Times op-ed “Our ‘Mommy’ Problem.” This thread is appearing in other parenting discourse. Today show contributor Amy McCready’s book *If I Have to Tell You One More Time* promotes an anti-helicopter approach: “For kids who are developmentally ready, the long-term benefits of implementing a ‘no rescue’ policy are responsibility and accountability.”

Why it’s interesting:

This is the latest thread in a growing trend. Daisy Waugh’s book *I Don’t Know Why She Bothers*, written in response to Allison Pearson’s popular *I Don’t Know How She Does It*, helped to start the trend. New discourse around parenthood is increasingly parent-first, less reverent and idealizing of children, and firmly anti-coddling.

Mindfulness in Business

Meditation and mindfulness are getting mass appreciation for benefits not just in well-being but also in work success—and being embraced by young urban audiences from Silicon Valley to Manhattan. Arianna Huffington’s *Thrive* further established the links between meditation and effectiveness at work. Next stop: *Unplug*, a new meditation studio in Los Angeles by Glamour editor Suze Yalof Schwartz, which is pitched as the “Drybar of meditation.” *Unplug* features sleek, minimalist white interiors, mood lighting and a selection of chic lifestyle goods for sale. The Path, launched by Dina Kaplan, is an invitation-only meditation studio in New York that has emerged as a downtown hub where technology and fashion entrepreneurs relax and network. Kaplan recently wrote an op-ed for Medium, “The Cult of Busy,” calling for workspace effectiveness rather than engaging in endless tasks. “Busy should be a confession, not a brag,” she wrote. “Spend time setting up processes that make sense, rather than simply working more.” Kaplan also recommended meditation. Expect more of this.

Why it’s interesting:

Thanks in part to Silicon Valley buy-in, mindfulness is increasingly being embraced en masse and recognized for its benefits not just to well-being but also to career progression and workplace effectiveness.

Luxury

**High-net-worth Athenas, share-con
luxury and luxury e-commerce—the
new emerging market to watch.**

"Traveling Around the World with Selma" by Michael Kors using WeChat, 2014.

Womenomic Luxury

Women are an increasingly dominant economic force—and all sectors, luxury brands and male-dominated categories in particular, will have to adapt their tactics to reach the rising female audience. The Boston Consulting Group projects that women will control 75% of discretionary spending around the world by 2028. Nielsen estimates that by then, women will collectively out-earn men in the U.S. More immediately, BCG expects women's global income to reach \$18 trillion by 2018, up from \$13 trillion in 2013. In developing nations, earned income among women has been growing at a rate of 8.1%, compared with 5.8% for men, according to Deloitte's Gender Dividend report. In China, for instance, women's average contribution to household income has more than doubled since 1980, reaching 50% in 2014.

Gucci has already launched the Chime for Change, a female empowerment platform, while Hermès recently hosted a fashion show dedicated to the power of women and Tory Burch has established a platform for female entrepreneurs.



Tory Burch flagship store at
Kerry Centre, Shanghai, 2014.
Credit: Kerry Centre Interior.



Why it's interesting:

As more women hit the affluent, high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth brackets, luxury brands that traditionally have catered to men will have to find new voices, products and approaches to speak to a growing category of sophisticated, affluent women.



A Place Called Home by Airbnb at the London Design Festival, 2014.

Share-Con Luxury

The sharing economy is growing up, formalizing services and aligning with upscale brands and big business. Airbnb is expanding its brand beyond the digital world, launching a glossy coffee-table magazine, Pineapple, in 2014 and collaborating with the London Design Festival on an interiors exhibit. Airbnb has also partnered with Concur, a company specializing in business travel and expense management. Uber also has signed a partnership deal with Concur, making it easy for employers to pay for rides that employees take.

Why it's interesting:

More businesses are embracing "lean startup" culture and are therefore taking affordable sharing economy platforms such as Uber more seriously. As Airbnb users top 10 million, the company is moving away from its couch-surfing roots and evolving into a credible hospitality service that consumers rich and poor, Millennial and Boomer, are embracing.

E-Commerce, the Assumed but Not Leveraged Frontier

We may think that everyone and everything is online, if not mobile-optimized, but there's one sector that definitely is not—the luxury sector. Net-a-Porter, MatchesFashion.com and Saks Fifth Avenue are successful online outlets, but 40% of luxury brands are still not on the web, according to Bain & Company. E-commerce has been described as “the next China” for the luxury industry as sales slow down—and has the potential to add about \$43 billion in sales through 2020, forecasts Exane BNP Paribas analyst Luca Solca.

Why it's interesting:

Strange to think, in a world where we can now purchase with a thumbprint, that luxury has not joined the digital revolution wholeheartedly. According to the Luxury Institute, luxury consumers are far from averse to mobile spending; 72% say there is no upper limit to what they'd spend on an app. While exclusivity certainly adds to luxury's allure, are luxury brands missing a trick?



Luxury fashion retailer and e-tailer MatchesFashion.com

American Masstige Luxury Rising

As the Chinese and Asian market for uber-luxury slows, analysts are pointing to another lucrative market in these regions: masstige. American contemporary brands are big in the U.S. but underexposed in China compared with brands such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci, and are poised for expansion, their popularity also driven by visas that allow Chinese citizens to shop in the U.S. Coach is recruiting Chinese-speaking staff for its American stores, to capitalize on this. Both Coach and Michael Kors are using Chinese social networking apps such as WeChat and expanding in China; Coach has reported an increase of 10% in comparable sales in China in some instances, while Kate Spade saw comparable sales from its China joint venture rise 28% in 2014.

Why it's interesting:

American contemporary luxury brands are well-distributed in the U.S., but in markets like China they are still perceived as relatively exotic, in contrast to the blue-chip European brands, which have been present for years. Will European luxury brands need to rethink their strategy to capture this new mood?

"Traveling Around the World with Selma"
by Michael Kors using WeChat, 2014.



Retail

**BuzzFeed commerce, category collapse,
mass boutique—plus Amazon's very
first store!**

Fragrance Lab by Campaign and The Future Laboratory for Selfridges. Credit: Hufton+Crow.

Mass Market Art-tail

Luxury brands have long fostered close ties with the art world, but now mass-market brands are also seeking the cool points generated by aligning with cutting-edge creatives. Gap teamed with Frieze in London and New York to create concept stores with themed products, and H&M collaborated with Jeff Koons in 2014.

Why it's interesting:

Fast-fashion brands can no longer rely on simply being stylish and cheap; they now have to be smart too, reflecting a general rise in consumer sophistication and expectations from brands.

H&M collaboration with
Jeff Koons, NYC, 2014.



Amazon Store

Amazon has signed the lease on its first physical store in New York City, a 470,000-square-foot space near Herald Square—are we ready for the Amazon mega-store to be imagined as a physical space?

Why it's interesting:

A slew of online retailers have opened physical spaces, so Amazon is late to the game in launching a brick-and-mortar presence. Its move is telling, though: While consumers increasingly shop online and via mobile, they also seek compelling in-store experiences.

Mass Boutique

Mass-market global brands are creating hip boutique sub-brands to appeal to discerning Millennials. PepsiCo has launched “craft soda” Caleb’s Kola, made with cane sugar and kola nuts. Lidl, after a marketing stunt in which it presented its food at a gourmet farmers market, launched a pop-up restaurant, Deluxe, in the groovy east London neighborhood Shoreditch. Fruit of the Loom, the T-shirt brand that was a huge seller in the 1980s, recently created the separately branded premium line Seek No Further. Starbucks is introducing a higher-end chain, Starbucks Reserve Roastery and Tasting Room. And Cinnabon’s Bon Bake Shop, a new concept in Houston, sells smaller rolls with more flavor twists.

Why it's interesting:

Consumers are increasingly seeking niche, independent brands with artisan credentials and slick branding.



Why it's interesting:

Perhaps this trend says something about customization. Customers have been given access to millions of options and color combinations, but while they may not know what to choose or may not even like what they're creating, they still want the personalization option. The techniques detailed above are a fresh way to reinstate brand authority while making the consumer the center of the show. They're also a great engagement platform.

BuzzFeed Retail

The new iteration of bespoke in retail experiences occupies BuzzFeed survey territory ("What NYC neighborhood should I actually live in?"). Using a seemingly abstract series of questions, retailers are selecting the perfect product for consumers, who engage in an immersive journey as they progress from abstract questionnaire to object selection.

Selfridges, Campaign Design and The Future Laboratory collaborated on Fragrance Lab, an in-store project that took customers through a series of stages—selecting objects, answering personality questions and visiting several sensory rooms—before their ideal fragrance was presented to them. Interestingly, customers paid a ticket price for the experience and the scent was included, rather than the price being attached to the scent. (Participants were presented with their prescribed scent at the end and could opt in or out as they wished.)



NYCxDDesign collaborated with Bentley in a similar New York pop-up project that was designed to make the personalization of Bentley cars more accessible and experiential. Customers were invited to engage in an interactive process, selecting the colors and finishes ideal for them. The process included a "mood station" where people were asked to gauge their response to a series of images; this was then interpreted for paint-color preferences and presented back to participants in a visual display.

Fragrance Lab by Campaign and
The Future Laboratory for Selfridges.
Credit: Hufton+Crow.

Shoptainment

Internet-enabled televisions, Internet-first networks like Netflix and Amazon, and the migration of both commerce and content to mobile platforms will help drive a merger of shopping and entertainment. Shoppable videos are the first wave and getting more sophisticated—for instance, Mr Porter's suave "The Gentleman's Wager," produced with Johnnie Walker Blue Label, which stars Jude Law and Giancarlo Giannini. Online retailer Ssense features music videos on its site, with links below to shop the menswear and/or womenswear featured.

Why it's interesting:

Entertainment, retail, gaming, content and advertising are continuing to converge as entertainment becomes internet-first (and therefore more easily connected to commerce.) With Amazon producing original entertainment series, will shopping its shows be the next addition?



Johnnie Walker Blue Label
presents Jude Law in
"The Gentleman's Wager."

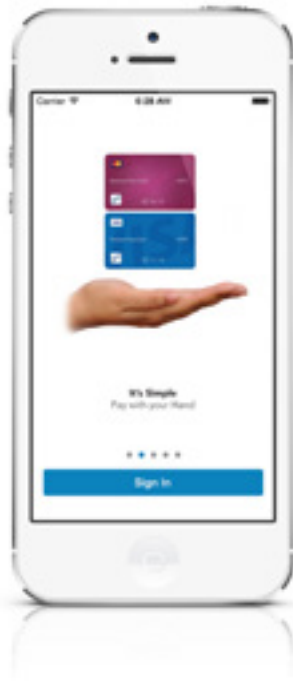
Physical Payments

To improve security, businesses are starting to adopt systems that identify and authenticate people from physical or behavioral characteristics: iris scans, digital fingerprints, voice prints, vein or facial maps, and so on. The method is also more convenient for users than typing passwords, although privacy will be a concern for some.

Fingerprint recognition, the most widely used biometric system thus far, will become increasingly common now that it's baked in to Apple's Pay system. The Samsung Galaxy S5 enables fingerprint payment via PayPal's app; PayPal has started experimenting with facial recognition; and Biyo, a new payment technology, reads the vein pattern in your palm. It is expected that there will be 471 million global biometric smartphone users by 2017, up from 43 million in 2013.

Why it's interesting:

Technology is evolving, making traditional forms of payment obsolete. Soon, our physical selves will be all we need to complete transactions.



Biyo payment app.

24/7: Unlimited Hours

“Because you don’t go to Zappos.com at 3 a.m. and they say, ‘We’re closed.’”

—OrderWithMe CEO Jonathan Jenkins

The Blanket Wrap by Kit and Ace.



24/7: Unlimited Hours

Zappos and OrderWithMe set up a 24/7 pop-up this holiday season in a 20,000-square-foot retail space in Las Vegas. OrderWithMe CEO Jonathan Jenkins explained the long hours by noting, “You don’t go to Zappos.com at 3 a.m. and they say, ‘We’re closed.’” As the world becomes more global, more businesses become global operations and Internet connectivity proliferates, we’re waving goodbye to working-hours conventions, expecting to shop 24/7—but also being expected to work 24/7.

Bloomberg Businessweek journalist Brad Stone highlighted the impact of 24/7 global companies on work in the article “Work-Life Balance and the New Night Shift,” citing late-night working hours as a direct result of communicating with multiple businesses in multiple time zones.

Why it’s interesting:

Globalization and the Internet are collapsing the traditional boundaries that once kept retail and working hours in check.



Zappos' pop-up store in collaboration with OrderWithMe, Las Vegas, 2014.



Seasonless, Gender Neutral, Unbranded

A combination of climate change, social media, gender equality, brand fatigue and global travel are starting to erode longstanding boundaries and constructs in fashion. Brands are rethinking the traditional seasonal drops of winter and summer fashion. Sneakerboy, a sneaker store in Melbourne, is seasonless, reasoning that tourists from any number of markets and climates come to the store regardless of Australian seasons. Tamara Mellon, Stefano Pilati (for Agnona) and Donna Karan have launched seasonless concepts recently, and affordable, seasonless luxury basics are appearing from Tomas Maier, the new Kit and Ace and Everlane, among others.

Meanwhile, Acne founder Jonny Johansson has spoken of increasing gender blur, or neutrality, in contemporary fashion. Hip streetwear brand Hood By Air is gender neutral. Miuccia Prada has also talked about the rise of genderless fashion: “More and more, it feels instinctively right to translate the same idea for both genders.”

Why it's interesting:

Globalization is blurring weather-related seasons, and there's a sense of confident hyper-individualism among consumers, who are increasingly reluctant to follow either trends or seasons—they want to dress for themselves and expect brands to work outward from this.



Tomas Maier Spring/Summer 2015 menswear, photography by David Schulze. Kit and Ace.

Alibaba and Amazon Swap Territories

Two Internet giants are rapidly expanding into each other's home turfs. Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba is staking its claim in the U.S., staging an IPO in September (the biggest in Wall Street history at \$21.8 billion) and has started selling to Americans through mobile boutique app 11 Main. Meanwhile, a group of U.S. retailers including Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's and Neiman Marcus has started using Alipay, Alibaba's payment service. Amazon is expanding in China, where Amazon China enables consumers to buy American goods, and staged a two-day campaign to introduce the Black Friday sales frenzy to China.

Why it's interesting:

Two juggernauts, each with deep take-up in their own territory, are moving into the other's grounds. The issue, of course, will be whether Alibaba can win American trust and whether the Chinese will migrate to Amazon's offer. Will they also need to differentiate their offers?

Celebrating Singles

Singles' Day is shaping up as a global shopping phenomenon. It began as a novelty in China to mark the supposed loneliest day of the year (Nov. 11, as 11/11 stacks up to a pile of ones) and has become the largest online shopping day in the world after being appropriated by Alibaba, the largest e-retailer in China—even trumping Black Friday. In 2014 Alibaba made \$1 billion in the first 17 minutes of Singles' Day.

Now the concept is expanding globally. Alibaba's CEO believes Singles' Day deals will reach consumers in 220 countries in the next year, and if global shifts are anything to go by, he's probably right. Single living is certainly a global trend. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the proportion of single-person households in the U.S. alone increased from 17% to 27.5% between 1970 and 2012.

Why it's interesting:

Globalization means that from Black Friday to Singles' Day, "shopping holidays" are quickly being introduced to new markets. Although the U.K. doesn't celebrate Thanksgiving, shoppers there embraced Black Friday with enthusiasm in 2014.

Concept Cohort

Established retailers and brands are tapping the glamour of the concept store format to impress savvy, global-shopping Millennials with local, artisanal, curated and niche products. Pop-In @ Nordstrom is a series of themed pop-ups curated by Olivia Kim, director of creative projects and former vice president of creative at Opening Ceremony. Lord & Taylor's Birdcage, in its New York store, is a concept shop-in-shop selling carefully curated pieces from New York-based creatives. Diesel's 101, a pop-up boutique in Brooklyn, sells carefully curated goods including pieces from Brooklyn Candle Studio, T-shirts by photographers Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, and nail polish by Deborah Lippmann.

Why it's interesting:

Concept store formats cater to the consumer desire for curation, as well as the sense of "magazine format" in retail, where formats are regularly switched, updated and refreshed.

Eyewear Temples

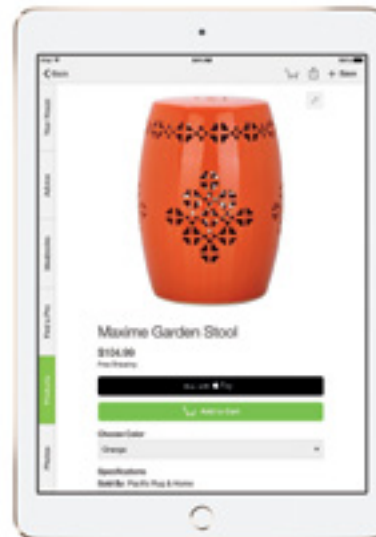
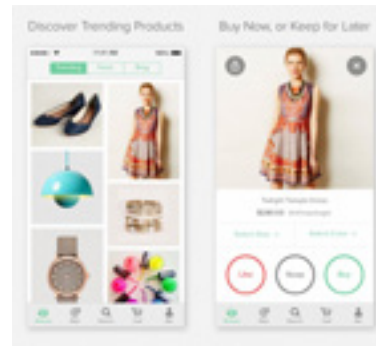
Luxury brands are enhancing their entry-point categories; Burberry, Dior and Chanel all recently launched beauty and fragrance "temples" that emphasize their product offer, and incorporate luxurious interiors and digital technology. The next phase? Eyewear. In a telling move, luxury group Kering has bought back its eyewear licences. Next stop, perhaps, luxury eyewear flagships akin to those of Warby Parker.

Why it's interesting:

Having focused on hard luxury, many luxury brands are zeroing in on their aspirational entry-point categories, celebrating them in theatrical flagships.

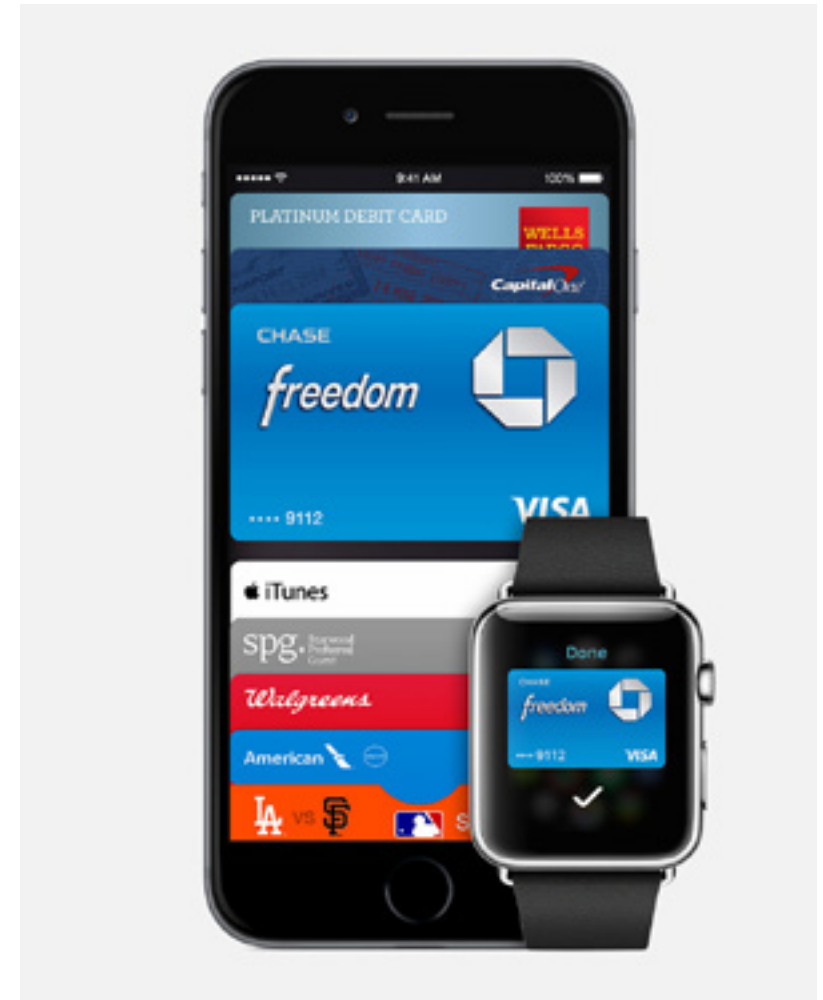
Consolidation Apps

A new wave of app platforms offers streamlined, consolidated ways to store bank cards and shop efficiently. Lyst's universal shopping cart allows consumers to shop from multiple online retailers and pay in a single transaction. Apple Pay and Coin let customers digitally store their cards, loyalty points and coupons in one place.



Why it's interesting:

More retailers and brands are embracing e- and m-commerce, but this means the number of apps in consumers' lives has exploded. In the future, consumers will look for one-stop shops.



Apple Pay.

Sustainability

**Washing without water, recycling chic,
two-wheeled travel and making scraps
delicious.**



WaterLess campaign by Levi's.

Cleaning Up Washing Practice

Levi's CEO Chip Bergh says he doesn't wash his jeans—and that you shouldn't either. Bumble and Bumble founder Michael Gordon launched a detergent-free hair care line, Purely Perfect, that doesn't foam, and compares washing hair in the conventional way with throwing a cashmere sweater in the washing machine: "I honestly think in five years people are going to go, 'Oh God, remember when we used to wash our hair with shampoo?'" he told Wired. Responding to drought, the California Energy Commission is supporting CO₂ Nexus' development of a water-free washing machine that uses carbon dioxide to clean garments.

Why it's interesting:

As sustainability becomes a priority for consumers, and they become more informed about chemicals in products, they are scrutinizing regular cleansing products and water-based washing, and making the connection between garment laundering and water waste.

Cleaning Up Washing Practice

“I honestly think in five years people are going to go, ‘Oh God, remember when we used to wash our hair with shampoo?’”

—Michael Gordon, Purely Perfect, Wired

Patagonia Truth to Materials.

Credit: Jeff Johnson.

Recycling Reinvented

Recycled fabrics and clothing are being reclaimed by innovative brands as cool. Denim brand G-Star has introduced RAW for the Oceans, a collection made from recycled plastic. Faherty, the cool surf line based in California, creates shorts made from recycled plastic. Patagonia's new Truth to Materials range is made entirely from reclaimed or alternatively sourced fabrics, including cutting-room scraps that would otherwise have ended up in landfills. And Freitag, a clothing company based in Zürich, has created a chic biodegradable-textile brand.

Why it's interesting:

Reuse has become aspirational, and brands are using innovative recycling strategies as a marketing platform.

Patagonia Truth to Materials.

Credit: Jeff Johnson.

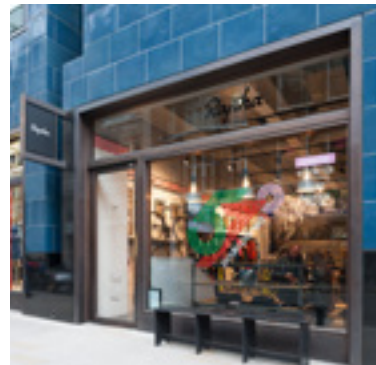


Cycle-First Cities

A cycle revolution is occurring as more cities take up bike-share schemes and construct cycleways. From China to India to Los Angeles, sales of premium bicycles and accessories are growing, and environments from cafés to workspaces are being designed around the bike. In Europe, bike unit sales are now outstripping those of cars. Cycle commuters in the U.K. increased by 17% from 2001–2011, census data shows. London's Barclays cycle-hire program continues to expand—there's been a staggering 155% increase in cycling to work in inner London in the past decade. In the car-centric U.S., there are now bike-sharing programs in 36 cities, including Chicago, Minneapolis and San Francisco. Since 2007, there have been 23 million cycle-share rides in the U.S.

Consumers are starting to splurge on luxury bicycles and gear, and taking part in triathlons and cycling challenges. Halfords, the U.K.'s largest cycling retailer, reported sales of £939.7 million for the year to March 2014, an increase of 7.9%—attributed largely to the appetite for premium cycles. Premium cult cycle brand Rapha, which sells upscale cycle wear and accessories and even runs Rapha cycling holidays, saw its revenue increase 56% last year to £28 million.

Now car brands are tapping in to cycle culture: Toyota recently released a luxury million-yen (\$10,000) bicycle under its Lexus brand. Trendy bicycle workshop cafés are emerging—Rapha Cycle Clubs feature cafés, and Look Mum No Hands is a bike workshop and café in East London. Companies are also incorporating bicycle culture into the design of offices. Stockholm courier service Ryska Posten's offices, designed by architecture studio Vida, resemble a city's streets, with each meeting room separated by a bike path; staff are encouraged to cycle through the premises.



Why it's interesting:

Many young urbanites are choosing not to buy expensive, polluting cars and instead simply rent them as needed, so a power shift from car to bicycle is emerging. Cycling is also becoming part of city culture—not just a means of getting from A to B but also a social pursuit and a leisure and holiday activity.

Rapha Cycle Club, London.

Circular Hospitality

A rising crop of hospitality brands is rebranding reuse and waste-saving as hip. Renewable resources company Naturabioamat and Vera Wiedermann Designstudio created the Biomat pop-up restaurant for Vienna's 2013 Design Week. Diners brought in bags of compostable material, and each kilo gained them a discount of €1. Nonprofits Rub & Stub in Copenhagen and Skipchen in Bristol both cook with donated surplus food. The Salvage Supperclub, which offered meals made from "unsaleable" food in Brooklyn during summer 2014, seated diners in a Dumpster.

Brothl in Melbourne offers nutritious broth made from bones discarded by top restaurants. Brothl launched as Silo by Joost and is run by sustainability enthusiast Joost Bakker, who designs his restaurants "back to front," thinking first of waste and working backward. Bakker has also helped open a Silo zero-waste restaurant in Brighton, England; among other initiatives, the restaurant takes its deliveries in reusable vessels and recycles all scraps in a compost machine. "Doggie bags" were hardly known in France until recently, but now the French government has launched a campaign to raise awareness of the environmental impact of food waste—diners can request a sleekly designed "gourmet bag" to carry their leftovers home.



The Real Junk Food Project.



Why it's interesting:

Consumers are more aware than ever of the food chain and its impact on the environment, and are starting to adjust their habits. Smart hospitality brands are making reuse not only palatable but aspirational.

Travel

**Low-cost long haul, local networking,
thought leadership getaways and
wellness tourism.**

The Perfectionists' Café at Heathrow by Heston Blumenthal.

Low-Cost Long Haul

Low-cost airlines are poised to expand into the long-haul travel space. Scoot, part of Singapore Airlines, offers affordable flights between Singapore and Tianjin in northern China. Norwegian Air Shuttle, a no-frills European airline, has started flying to Thailand, and Wow Air, an Icelandic airline, is starting routes from London to Boston via Reykjavik.

Why it's interesting:

Consumers are increasingly shopping for adaptable, high-low travel solutions.

Wellness Tourism

“You begin the day with homemade pumpkin seed, walnut and blueberry muesli bars, then head out to cycle with new friends on quiet country roads, breezes cooling you under the warm, bright sun. The colors of the canyons change, like an all encompassing kaleidoscope, as you ride on.” Such is the enticing vision laid out by the new TerraVelo Tours. Wellness tourism is on the rise—the Global Wellness Tourism Congress says wellness travel is already a \$439 billion market and predicts growth of 55% by 2017. In France, Le Nuage, a hip luxury wellness spa by Philippe Starck, opened this year in Montpellier, offering health, fitness and relaxation facilities.

Why it's interesting:

Wellness is being repackaged in a hip new way for both Millennials and Boomers, who are prioritizing health and well-being as a key part of their lifestyle and leisure pursuits.



Dubai Design District (D3).
Credit: D3.

Dubai Resurgence

Dubai is already established as a luxury shopping hub, and now it's gaining an avant-garde edge, thanks to the new Dubai Design District. The District covers up to 25 million square feet and features a design school, concept stores, boutique hotels, showrooms and residences. "People are hungry to know more about our culture, about Dubai," Amina Al Rustamani, group chief executive officer of Tecom Investments, which is spearheading the project, told Women's Wear Daily. "The project is to nurture local talent and hopefully have the next global brand come out of Dubai. ... This city is full of secret talents." Chanel, recognizing that Dubai is now a top-ranked destination for tourists and that the city represents 30% of the Middle Eastern luxury market, according to Bain & Company, recently staged a fashion show there. Next stop: a new wave of luxury hotels. Rosewood, St. Regis, W Hotel, a Palazzo Versace and The Langham are all slated to open in 2015.

Why it's interesting:

Dubai has long been a shopping hub for luxury consumers, and it's increasingly becoming a hub for Chinese consumers too. It's also becoming a mature luxury market and, as such, switching from bling to art and cultural projects.

Travel Connections

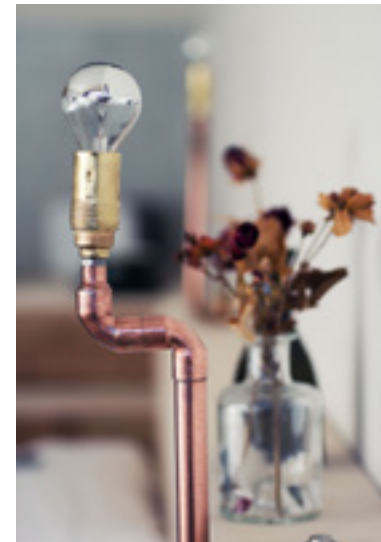
A new wave of travel services is connecting consumers to local people, social networks and influencers at their destination. Plus One in Berlin, now My Plus One, was a forerunner, offering guests the chance to connect with local experts to discover bars and stores and get the insider perspective. The Ace Hotel in Shoreditch, London, has started monthly cycle tours led by artists and influencers, to enhance the local flavor. Hallo Hello, a pop-up restaurant in Copenhagen Airport, offered diners the chance to meet other socially minded travelers over dinner, and Six Degrees, a social networking platform launched by Marriott Hotels that includes mobile apps and an “interactive table,” similarly connects like-minded guests.

Why it's interesting:

More travelers are seeking both authenticity and social networking from their journeys.



My Plus One, Berlin.



Airport Art— and More

Airports are becoming venues for art, gastronomy and wonder as global consumer travel continues to grow. Moment Factory, the digital creative collective, has created an interactive digital art wall at Los Angeles Airport. Avant-garde chef Heston Blumenthal has launched the Perfectionists' Café, a chic eatery, at London's Heathrow.

Airports are also becoming architectural monuments: Mexico City is set to quadruple the number of passengers flying in each year to 120 million by 2050 with a new \$8.5 billion airport designed by British architect Norman Foster and Mexico's Fernando Romero. The airport's lightweight, X-shaped shell will be more environmentally friendly than conventional airport buildings.

Why it's interesting:

More consumers are embracing global travel, making airports a key hub not only for retail but for lifestyle and leisure.



The Perfectionists' Café at Heathrow by Heston Blumenthal.

Tech-Free Travel



Forest Retreat by Uhlik Architekti,
Bohemia, 2014.

Tech-Free Travel

As more consumers seek to manage their relationship with technology and take time out from constant torrents of emails, hospitality spaces are facilitating tech-free time and offering space for contemplation. A new Westin package for its Hilton Head Island property in South Carolina invites guests to surrender mobile devices and car keys at check-in and enjoy exploring with an “unplugged survival kit” that includes maps of the island. The increasingly popular Burning Man festival in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert, where cell service is at a minimum and mobile phone usage is frowned upon, is often viewed as an escape from technology—and society at large. Bucato restaurant in Los Angeles has banned mobile phone use, aiming to prevent what it has termed “gastro ADD.” Trendy new Parisian bar L’Isolé (“Isolated”) has a no-Facebook, no-Twitter policy and purposely refrains from providing Wi-Fi. Other eateries, including the August First café in Vermont, are similarly cutting off Wi-Fi and banning laptops to create a more Central Perk-type atmosphere.

Creatives are also playing with the notion of isolation and tech-free time. Social Pool, a pool/sculpture created by Alfredo Barsuglia in the Southern California desert, is “a complex replica of the contradictions and ideology of contemporary society, where remoteness from others and quietude are luxuries for the ever-communicating city-dweller.” Forest Retreat by Uhlik Architekti is a similarly remote cabin in rural Bohemia, designed for a client looking for a quiet escape from his hectic lifestyle in Prague.

Some de-teching proponents are also moving against the practice of constantly sharing while on vacation. 99 Days of Freedom, by Dutch creative agency Just, calls on people to replace their Facebook profile picture with a “time-off” image, write one last status update saying they won’t be back for a while, and then log out for 99 days—and share how they spend the time freed up by the experiment.

Why it’s interesting:

This isn’t about looking backward—people aren’t closing their cellphone accounts anytime soon. But they are seeking greater control over their technology habits. They’re also focusing on tech-free time as a means to truly relax, truly connect and enjoy meaningful experiences.



Forest Retreat by Uhlik Architekti, Bohemia, 2014.



Curiosity Retreat by John Hendricks, Colorado.



Thought Leadership Tourism

Curiosity Retreats, a program created by Discovery Communications founder John Hendricks and hosted at his western Colorado luxury resort, Gateway Canyons, is one of the first examples of a new travel opportunity for hospitality giants: thought leadership getaways. The five-night retreats offer small groups of guests the chance to learn about technology, science, the human spirit and civilization through lectures while hobnobbing with global thought leaders such as Deepak Chopra, Vint Cerf, chef Rick Moonen and violinist Charles Yang.

Why it's interesting:

As thought leadership and innovation receive mass interest not just in business but also in the consumer press, we'll look to tourism and vacations to stimulate our minds, awareness and abilities.

Technology

Ethical smartphones, cloud-run businesses, going invisible, Oculus Rift communications, clever fabrics, cognitive technology, serendipitous algorithms—and more...

Ethical Smartphones

Last year's launch of Fairphone, an ethically sourced and produced mobile phone, put a spotlight on the raw materials in our digital devices. The Dutch company, currently taking orders for a second batch of 35,000 phones, ensures that minerals come from conflict-free areas so they're not helping to fund armed groups. And Intel is showcasing its commitment to using conflict-free minerals in its microprocessors, in a two-minute spot and on its website. CEO Brian Krzanich also spoke on the topic at 2014's Consumer Electronics Show.

Why it's interesting:

Expect more tech companies to start improving their track record on how their products are made.



Credit: Fairphone.



Peer-to-Peer Payments

Disruption in the payments sphere is opening the way for social media brands to act as intermediaries between consumers and their money, as we noted in our report on payments and currency. Facebook is said to be planning a P2P payments feature for Messenger, South Korea's KakaoTalk announced a PayPal-like service, and Line is creating a mobile service that will let users make online and offline purchases. Snapchat is partnering with Square to enable payments between users, as explained in an energetic retro musical number delivered by video. After users (U.S. and 18-plus only) enter bank card information, they simply send a cash amount within a text.

Why it's interesting:

While Snapchat's recent data breaches through a third-party site may give some users pause, the P2P payments space is a smart place to be, as young consumers get accustomed to services like Venmo that make it easy and even fun to pay friends.

Xiaomi

Xiaomi, which we included on our 100 Things to Watch in 2014 list, is now the world's third-largest smartphone maker, according to IDC's Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker. The young company has seen triple-digit year-over-year growth in smartphone shipments, according to IDC, surging ahead of both LG and Lenovo. Often described as the "Apple of China," Xiaomi released its first phone just three years ago; its latest, Mi4, is an iPhone clone that runs on a modified version of Android. The company is expanding beyond China into India and Singapore, and planning to enter a slew of other growth markets, including Russia, Turkey, Brazil and Mexico. It's also getting into the content game and smart-home products.

Why it's interesting:

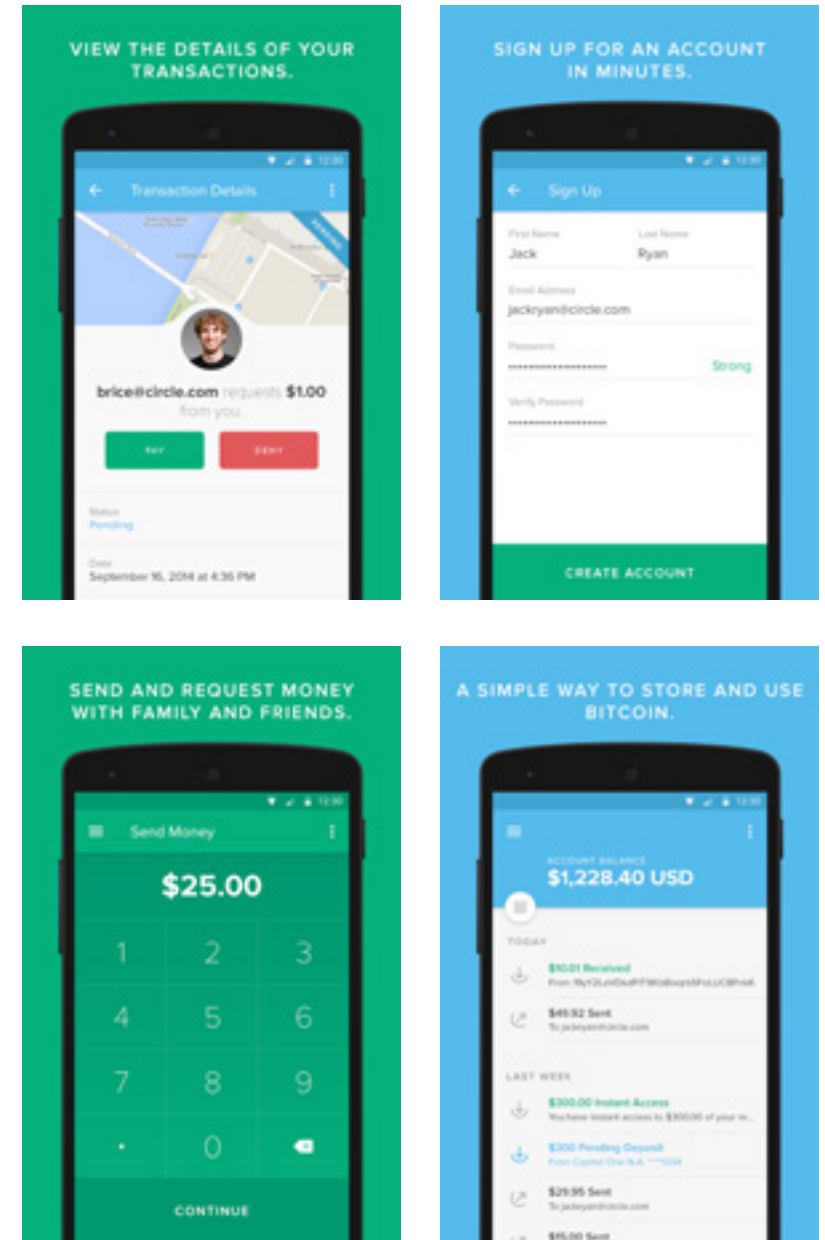
From luxury to technology, BRIC and emerging-market brands are increasingly hitting the global stage.

Palatable Cryptocurrency

In late September, the startup Circle launched a web app that effectively functions as a bitcoin bank. Using a debit card or bank account, users transfer funds to Circle, which converts the money to bitcoin at no fee. Circle also insures this money at no cost. The company aims to make bitcoin more accessible via consumer-friendly design and is aiming to take on traditional banks and companies like PayPal. Next up: Android and iOS Circle apps.

Why it's interesting:

Circle co-founder Jeremy Allaire gave a keynote speech at the Inside Bitcoins conference in April, citing the need for a “killer app” to bring bitcoin into the mainstream. Now Circle seems to be taking the lead, and others are sure to follow.



Circle.



SKRWT app.



Why it's interesting:

More than ever, the latest smartphones are allowing consumers to become content creators, and generators of entertainment and high-quality visual media. And with their increased technical capabilities, they are taking over from traditional products such as SLR cameras.

Professional Content Creation Goes Mobile

Advances in smartphone cameras and the proliferation of mobile editing and recording apps are turning the mobile device into a portable studio capable of professional-standard results. Photographers and videographers can capture images and sound on the go, and edit and upload them without setting foot in an editing suite. Amateurs can also produce high-quality footage, which is opening the gates to more “citizen journalism” and crowdsourced content.

Apps such as Snapseed, TouchRetouch and SKRWT, for instance, allow users to enhance and transform their photos in ways that are often on par with desktop applications. Cortex Camera lets photographers achieve high-quality images in low light. For video editing, there's Magisto, Animoto, VidTrim and JumpCam. Magisto's CamCrew technology, for instance, optimizes for the important characters the user is filming and provides real-time feedback on video lighting, framing and stability.

Last year, Apple partnered with Burberry on a video of the label's fall runway show in London, shot with iPhone 5s cameras. The camera is expected to get better yet: The iPhone due out in 2015 is rumored to bring “the biggest camera jump ever,” according to Apple commentator John Gruber, who says the phone could reach DSLR quality by incorporating a two-lens system. And OmniVision, which supplies camera components for handset makers including Motorola, has said it's producing a 23.8-megapixel sensor for smartphones (by contrast, Samsung's Galaxy S5 has a 16-megapixel sensor).

Prosthetics, Performance Enhancers, Exoskeletons and Smart Fabrics

“These will outsmart wearables,” says Sophie Hackford, director of Wired Consulting. While consumer-facing wearable technology has focused largely on bracelets that monitor health and fitness, a wave of innovation is occurring in fabrication itself. Ralph Lauren, one of the early major brands to explore this, introduced a Polo Tech smart shirt in 2014 that monitors heart rate and breathing and delivers the data to a smartphone in real time. Elsewhere, fabrics are being developed that can be grown, can correct the air around us, can promote well-being and can also control our movements.

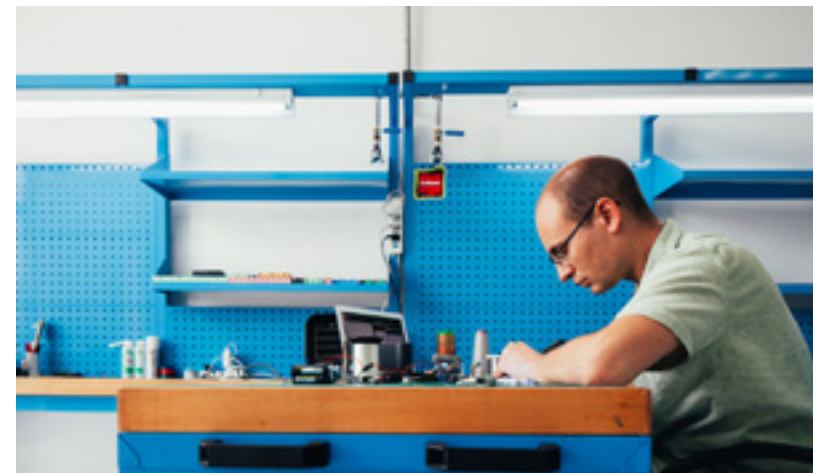
The BB.Suit 0.2, introduced at Beijing Design Week 2014, has an integrated air quality sensor and can purify surrounding air using cold plasma technology. Vasper, using technology designed for American astronauts, uses a compression system to make the body believe a 20-minute workout has lasted for three hours. Brendan Iribe, co-founder and CEO of Oculus, which produces the Oculus Rift virtual reality platform, told crowds at Web Summit 2014 in Dublin that the company is experimenting with clever fabrication and suiting to enhance “the sensation you get with the sense of presence when visually you feel like you’re there—it’s an incredibly powerful component.” Watch for Oculus Rift playsuits.

Why it’s interesting:

Mobile really is just the start. Increasingly, smart connectivity will be integrated into the fabric of our clothes, while the properties of fabric and wearables will go beyond monitoring us to enhancing and “super-humanizing” us.



BB.Suit 0.2, Netherlands.



Premium Invisibility

Our digital footprint continues to grow and will only get bigger as the Internet of Things connects some 30 billion devices to the web (as predicted by EMC). With that, consumers are becoming more aware of their privacy. There's a growing expectation that web users have the right to a clean slate. The European Court of Justice ruled in May 2014 that Google must honor requests for links no longer relevant to the public interest to be deleted. Google had received over half a million requests for link removal by November. This has paved the way for similar initiatives elsewhere. South Korea is looking into legislation that would help citizens remove personal online information. A California law aimed at helping minors wipe their slate clean goes into effect in January.

Meanwhile, a growing number of companies help people clean up their online image or erase an online footprint altogether, including Reputation.com, MyLife and Abine's DeleteMe. In South Korea, these companies are known as "digital laundry" services, and The Wall Street Journal reports that a crop of such businesses are popping up.

Why it's interesting:

Consumers are increasingly putting a premium on managing not only their digital footprint but their reputation. Will digital invisibility become a new luxury product?

Death of the Cookie?

Erik Johnson, managing director of Facebook's Atlas, claims the cookie—the traditional method of tracking consumers' paths to purchase and responses to ads—is over. Discussing Atlas, Facebook's new analytics program, at the Web Summit in Dublin, Johnson said 40% of transactions begin on one device and end on another, which makes the cookie concept redundant for understanding success of advertising and affiliated retail. Atlas joins the dots between all channels: mobile, tablet and desktop, with Facebook extending its reach beyond its own platform to connect in-store purchases with Facebook profiles.

Why it's interesting:

Consumers are multiscreening, hopping between one channel and another, making it more challenging to track responses and ad effectiveness.

Celebrating Serendipity

“If you’re only presenting people with suggestions based on their past behaviors, that becomes a narrowing field. There has to be serendipitous discovery.”

—Matt Rhodes, director of digital strategy at FreshMinds



Celebrating Serendipity

Big Data is enabling extreme personalization and also predictive marketing and retail. Alongside that, there's a rising focus on the importance of serendipitous discovery and the power of serendipity and chance discovery in innovation. "If you're only presenting people with suggestions based on their past behaviors, that becomes a narrowing field," explains Matt Rhodes, digital strategy expert and director at FreshMinds consultancy. "There has to be serendipitous discovery." Chris Morton, CEO of curated shopping platform Lyst, championed the same sentiment in a recent Financial Times interview: "A fashion purchase should never be exclusively search-based—there also has to be an element of serendipity for the shopping experience to really resonate." Skype co-founder Janus Friis is going down this route with Random, an app that combines a predictive engine to pull out what the reader wants, alongside random suggestions that may or may not be of interest.

On a loftier scale, Nicholas Carr, author of *The Glass Cage*, questions the dominance of automation, prediction and algorithms, arguing that total automation stifles innovation. "As original responses become rarer, the predictions become predictions based on earlier predictions," writes Carr. "Where does the algorithm end and the self begin?" Meanwhile, Spotify is celebrating serendipity with its new artist-in-residence program—Serendipity. In a platform conceived by Brooklyn artist Kyle McDonald, the company created the online Serendipity map, which cleverly shows when two people around the world are playing the same song at exactly the same time.



Why it's interesting:

There's a tension between the convenience and opportunity offered by predictive retail and advertising, and the rising recognition of the importance of randomness, chance and surprise. Innovators and technologists will increasingly focus on incorporating chance discovery to complement prediction and automation.

Cognitive Technology

Systems that learn over time to predict and intuit human desires are being integrated into consumer devices. With the advent of intelligent personal assistants like Apple's Siri, Microsoft's Cortana and Google Now, we're moving toward a future in which mobile devices harness AI and the rich data contained in a phone—calendar, search history, payment history and social media activity—to anticipate their owners' needs.

Viv Labs, whose founders helped create Siri, are working on an advanced digital assistant “who knows what you want before you ask for it,” according to Wired. Viv Labs is hoping to see this technology integrated into other devices and tools, from TVs to cars to apps. Speech-recognition firm Nuance is focusing on Project Wintermute, a similar technology. And Amazon's Echo device, introduced in late 2014, is a self-learning digital assistant in the form of a speaker for the home that tunes in whenever the user addresses it. It can play music or take instruction from the user (for example, it can add items to a to-do list). Google Now is an intelligent personal assistant that uses a natural language user interface to answer

questions, make recommendations and perform actions by delegating requests to a set of web services. Google Now can do anything from acting as an intuitive wallpaper picker to organizing your day. It also brings you information when you want it.

Cone, introduced in 2014, is a speaker that “learns what, when, and how you like to listen to music. Turn it on and it automatically plays what you'll love.” The first product from the startup Aether, the stylish Wi-Fi-connected speaker plays music from the streaming service Rdio and tracks from the user's Apple devices. Pressing a button on Cone lets you verbally request a track or artist, but the idea is that it requires little user intervention, even self-adjusting volume based on learned preferences. Prizm, which recently conducted a successful Kickstarter campaign, is a similar product from a French company that works with multiple music services. The speaker can also adapt based on who is in the room (as long as people have the companion app on their phones), finding music that it predicts everyone will like.



Prizm.

Why it's interesting:

True artificial intelligence is a long way off, but technology is increasingly becoming capable of learning from its interactions with us and presenting intuitive services. Brands must be wary though—anything too clever risks stepping into “uncanny valley” territory.

Mobile Everything Portals

As Internet of Things products for the home come to market, consumers will control household appliances via their smartphones—making the phone the “everything hub” of the future. The app for the Nest thermostat lets users change the temperature and set schedules, and the Philips Hue lighting system’s app allows users to adjust the color and brightness of the bulbs. Through Logitech’s Harmony Home Control, users can control any integrated connected lights, locks, blinds, thermostats, sensors or home entertainment devices through the corresponding app. “The more we use our mobile phone to control thermostats, enable connectivity in our car and to act as barcodes to get on the train to work, the more it becomes integral to our lives. The phone is bound to become the remote control,” says Paul Berney, co-founder and managing partner at mCordis.

Why it’s interesting:

The mobile phone is increasingly becoming our portal to the world, the channel through which we shop, share, search and direct. As the Internet of Things connects our mobile phones to more and more objects, our phones will know us better than anybody. Who will own that data?

Nest, USA.



Affordable, Aspirational Smartphone: Obi

John Sculley, ex-CEO of Apple, is launching an affordable phone brand starting in emerging markets, aimed at young people with a sophisticated design sensibility. He has enlisted Robert Brunner, former director of industrial design at Apple and chief designer behind Beats Electronics, among others, to launch the Obi Mobiles project. Obi phones, priced between \$70 and \$200, are aimed at tweens and young Millennials in emerging markets. Mobile prices are falling, and the new area of competition is the lower end of the market. According to research firm IDC, which pitched this as a rising trend for 2015, the average price of a smartphone fell from \$335 in 2013 to \$314 in 2014. The average selling price of the iPhone was \$652 in 2011 and \$607 in 2013. Affordable internet-first phone brand Xiaomi is the world's fastest-growing phone-maker.

Why it's interesting:

Affordable smartphones are nothing new, but the key shift is that affordable is becoming aspirational—and Sculley is introducing a design ethos to lower-end products. JWTIntelligence has been monitoring Millennials' increasingly sophisticated expectations of design. By presenting an affordable brand as hip, and sleekly designed too, Obi is positioning itself well.

Businesses Look to the Cloud

Cloud businesses are set to be big in 2015 as more major companies, organizations, brands and consumers outsource their IT to the cloud. For new companies, access to this ready infrastructure will make it easier to launch businesses and jump off from a higher level. Amazon Web Services, Amazon's cloud-based computing services platform, is growing twice as fast as the rest of Amazon and generating as much as \$5 billion annually, with major companies and brands using it. Google, Microsoft and Cisco are all expanding their cloud services. "All business should be on the cloud," says Sophie Hackford, director of Wired Consulting. "And thinking and acting like a cloud company."

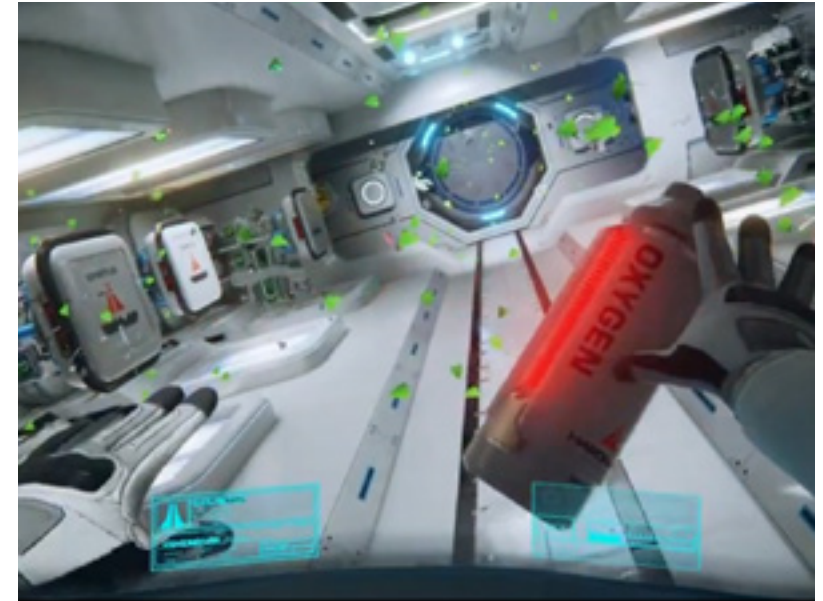
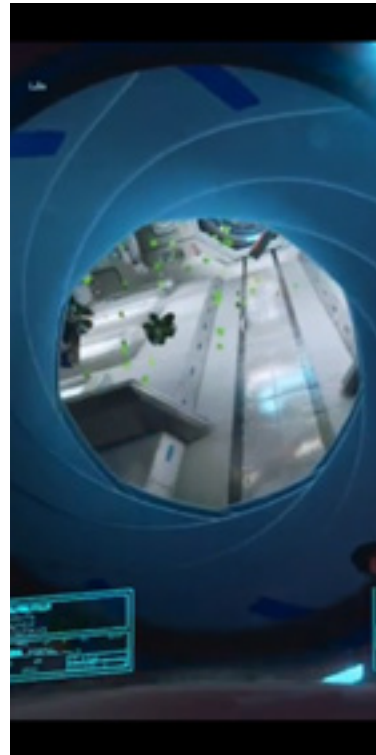
Why it's interesting:

From governmental bodies to consumers to brands, we're increasingly moving from the idea of needing to own technology to the idea of technology as a service. As Hackford points out, it's like the move "from ownership to renting."

Oculus Rift: The New Skype?

Oculus Rift CEO Brendan Iribe recently said that in the long term, the most exciting thing about his company's virtual reality headset is its potential to revolutionize communications, just as email and telephones did. He envisions people wearing headsets to feel as though they're in the same room with others around the world in real time—3D phone virtual reality/augmented reality communication, in other words.

“Face-to-face communication where we can hopefully put on a pair of sunglasses or ski goggles and have a conversation but be in different places in the world—just think how big of an impact that is,” said Iribe. “Most people travel and get in airplanes and cars to go have face-to-face communications. If you could throw on a pair of sunglasses and have that same conversation with people around the world ... that's transformative. When you think about the big new medias that have transformed the world, it's communications—the telephone, the Internet and personal computers. This is an application that could appeal to billions of people.”



Adrift game for Oculus Rift, release 2015.



Why it's interesting:

Pundits have speculated on the future of Oculus Rift and its potential to revolutionize gaming, retail and entertainment. Communications is a new avenue.

Tech-tacular

Big Data and technology loom ever larger in consumer consciousness, and artists, retailers, advertisers and brands are seeking to illuminate the creative potential of technology with interactive, inspiring, spectacular displays of tech virtuosity. Consider Nike's "House of Mamba" LED interactive basketball court, which features responsive, lit-up data that tracks players as they move. Universal Everything has created the largest LED screen in the world, in New York's Times Square, to showcase inspiring advertising. In Montreal, the Quartier des Spectacles introduced an interactive digital exhibit, including an illuminated wheat field and robot-populated video games, on 100-foot screens. Fashion brand Diesel has collaborated with German artist Andreas Fischer to create a "living" digital exhibit that responds to Twitter posts in an installation. Google's Creative Lab made Unnumbered Sparks, an interactive digital sculpture in Vancouver: A shimmering, glowing cloud that changes in response to nearby smartphones.



Nike Rise by AKQA for Nike, 2014.

Why it's interesting:

As Big Data grows, particularly with the Internet of Things, the convenience of technology platforms will increasingly be coupled with distrust. Installations and platforms that display tech as wondrous, inspiring and intimate will help win consumers over.



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J. Walter Thompson, the world's best-known marketing communications brand, has been inventing pioneering ideas for the past 150 years. Headquartered in New York, JWT is a true global network with more than 200 offices in over 90 countries, employing nearly 10,000 marketing professionals. JWT consistently ranks among the top agency networks in the world and continues a dominant presence in the industry by staying on the leading edge—from hiring the industry's first female copywriter to developing award-winning branded content today.

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JWTIntelligence is a center for provocative thinking that focuses on identifying shifts in the global zeitgeist. Its aim is to bring the outside in—to help inspire ideas beyond brand, category and consumer conventions—and to identify emerging opportunities so they can be leveraged for business gain. As a part of JWT, the world's best-known marketing communications brand, JWTIntelligence has conducted trends research and analysis across categories and geographies for the past decade.

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