

Upshot's

# 10 TRENDS FOR 2011



# FORWARD THINKING



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Welcome to Upshot's 2011 trends report! With everything the new year's throwing at you, you'll need a trusty guide to take you on a tour of the top trends for the forthcoming months. Lucky for you, you've got **The Source**, the Market Intelligence team at **Upshot**. This (super)group continually **monitors marketplace and cultural trends** in order to **provide actionable insights** for Upshot's clients and colleagues. You may be familiar with The Source's greatest hits thanks to [theawesomeblog.net](http://theawesomeblog.net), their central repository for analyzing **marketing innovations**, demystifying **emerging technologies**, and monitoring **sociocultural trends**. In fact, the blog is where we'll be tracking the growth and evolution of these trends throughout the year.

But before we get carried away, we want to provide a quick reminder about what a trend is (and isn't). Behaviors may change quickly, but the trends shared below are the products of **long-term shifts in values and attitudes**. They're not appearing out of thin air on January 1st, just as the gems we unearthed in previous years aren't going to disappear as December comes to a close. Not surprisingly, you'll find that many of our 2011 trends are logical evolutions, mash-ups, or tweakings of **our 2010 trends**—in fact, if you're paying attention, you might even catch an old trend popping up for a second go-round.

Finally, we'll remind you that this isn't an exhaustive list of everything that we're expecting to happen in 2011. Rather, these are diverse thought-starters that apply to just about any brand or industry. The goal is to guide you to create marketing that remains on the cutting edge—or, better yet, redefines that edge—throughout the course of the year.



TWEET  
THIS NOW

# MEET SOURCERANK

## SIZED RIGHT SOURCE RANK 82

Consumers are making a big deal about smaller solutions. Ideas about everything from convenience to curation to

### BACKGROUND EXAMPLES IMPLICATIONS



Over the past few years, we've seen a resurgence of "small" as a backlash to the absurdly big symbols of excess and waste, like last decade's gas-guzzling Hummers and sprawling suburban palaces that now seem so silly in retrospect. Some folks have cut back citing environmental concerns, while other consumers were responding to more immediate economic needs—after all, filling up that Hummer and heating that McMansion aren't doing your wallet or the Earth any favors. But now, those two sentiments are increasingly interwoven. As a result, the scope of "small" is getting huge. It's become less about asceticism as a provocative statement and more about **right-sizing being the logical, ideal solution** for consumers' everyday needs. Even when it comes to ideas about indulgence, **"sophisticated simplicity"** is increasingly replacing traditional notions of flashy, glitzy luxury. "Keep it simple, stupid" has never looked so smart.



→ **Small at retail means more targeted, curated, and personalized merchandising strategies.** Nike's **smaller shops** ensure that each location is laser-focused on the needs of the surrounding community, such as the female-skewed, running-oriented store in Palo Alto, CA. Of course, this supplements the **more obvious benefits of smaller retail footprints**: more convenience for the shopper and more efficient use of space for the retailer.

→ **Small at home means manageable, comfortably affordable, and livable spaces** that are appropriate for consumers' needs. This shrinkage also trickles down to preferences for **smaller packaging, smaller (and more versatile) products, and smaller quantities of "stuff"** in general. The latter explains the rise of **shared ownership systems**, which enable consumers to rent what they don't need (and don't have room) to own. Zipcar is the poster child, but renting home improvement equipment at Home Depot or borrowing just about anything via **Share Some Sugar** are other desirable alternatives for the "small-minded" shopper.



"Small" has grown to mean so much more than the opposite of "big." Small has become the common thread driving ideas about consumption, necessity, space, and choice. Today's small means **targeted, intimate, multifunctional solutions** that are "big enough," rather than being bombastic and clumsy; consider how "substantial snacking" is replacing enormous, exhausting meals. The growing scope of small might seem overwhelming to a marketer at first glance, but the upside of this downsize is a robust range of opportunities to bring small to life. Regardless of whether your brand offers goods or services, the solution to this small dilemma is **creating more curated, differentiated, and unique experiences**, rather than just more "stuff."

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The biggest change you'll notice in this year's trend forecast is the introduction of our vigorous, rigorous **SourceRank system**, which assigns each trend an initial score on a scale of 1 to 100.

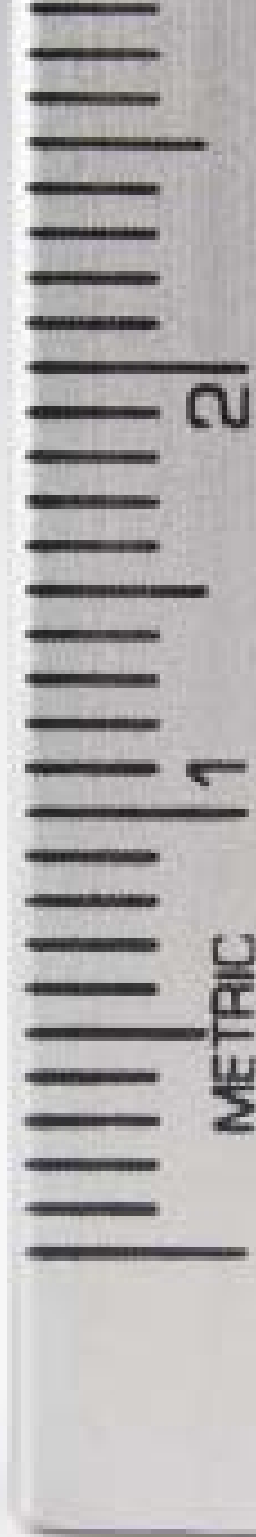
Why quantify such quality qualitative work? For one, adding a concrete value allows us to make **meaningful comparisons** between trends; for instance, it's much clearer for us to say "Upshot's Number One!" than "Upshot's Really Great," right?

But, we've also stacked the scorecard to ensure that we're accounting for various elements of a **trend's breadth and momentum**. ([Click here](#) if you'd like a more detailed look behind the curtain at our trend-scoring process.)

Finally, monitoring how the SourceRank changes over the course of the year will allow us to more **accurately illustrate the arc of each trend**. As a rule of thumb, if a trend starts in the 80+ range, it's already pretty well-ingrained among a wide range of consumers and industries. Trends in the 80s should continue to rise into the 90s over the course of the year, then hold steady from there on out (because, again, we're talking trends, not fads). On the other hand (or thumb?), a trend in the 50–60 range is only just starting to stick its nose into the fray. We'll consider it a win if these trends jump into the high 70s or 80s by the year's end—getting up into the 90s is probably still a year or two out. If you were the gambling type, these would be the trends with potentially big payoffs, especially if you acted on them before they hit your competitors' radars.

But enough background—let's get to the good stuff. Meet your trends for 2011!

# SIZED RIGHT



# SIZED RIGHT (SOURCE RANK 82)

Consumers are making a big deal about smaller solutions, and it's influencing ideas about everything from convenience to curation to consumption.

## BACKGROUND



Over the past few years, we've seen a resurgence of "small" as a backlash to the absurdly big symbols of excess and waste, like last decade's gas-guzzling Hummers and sprawling suburban palaces that now seem so silly in retrospect. Some folks cut back citing environmental concerns, while other consumers were responding to more immediate economic needs—after all, filling up that Hummer and heating that McMansion aren't doing your wallet or the Earth any favors. But now, those two sentiments are increasingly interwoven. As a result, the scope of small is getting *huge*. It's become less about asceticism as a provocative statement and more about **right-sizing being the logical, ideal solution** for consumers' everyday needs. Even when it comes to ideas about indulgence, "**sophisticated simplicity**" is increasingly replacing traditional notions of flashy, glitzy luxury. "Keep it simple, stupid" has never looked so smart.

## EXAMPLES



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## IMPLICATIONS



"Small" has grown to mean so much more than the opposite of "big." Small has become the common thread driving ideas about consumption, necessity, space, and choice. Today's small means **targeted, intimate, multifunctional solutions** that are "big enough," rather than being bombastic and clumsy; consider how "substantial snacking" is replacing enormous, exhausting meals. The growing scope of small might seem overwhelming to a marketer at first glance, but the upside of this downsize is a robust range of opportunities to bring small to life. Regardless of whether your brand offers goods or services, the solution to this small dilemma is **creating more curated, differentiated, and unique experiences**, rather than just more "stuff."

# GAME ON!



# GAME ON! (SOURCE RANK 85)

Brands are discovering the significant motivational power of gaming mechanisms, and consumers are happily playing along.

## BACKGROUND



The concept of “inserting gaming in everyday life” might lead to a lot of eye-rolling in the boardroom, but mock it at your own risk. At their core, gaming mechanisms use **fun, rewarding incentives to motivate behavior**. You know, like the kind of things we’ve been doing for forever with loyalty cards, rewards programs, Weight Watchers points, and the like. When you put it that way, you’re suddenly talking about innovative and effective ways to engage consumers and impact their behavior. Moreover, these systems aren’t about persuading a single decision; rather, they are inherently built to **encourage long-term behavioral patterns** thanks to a system of cumulative rewards and recognition. Now that we have the technological infrastructure for gaming systems to work on a grander (and infinitely **more social**) scale, as well as a codified understanding of which strategies best motivate behavior, the game is most definitely on.

## EXAMPLES

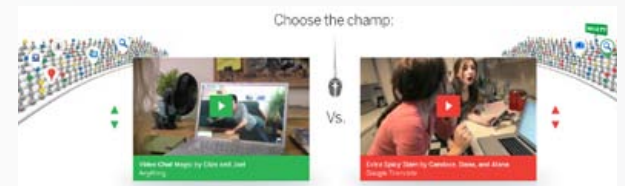


→ Even the most mundane activities can be turned into fun experiences for consumers when gaming mechanics (**feedback, recognition, goals, community, and urgency**) are applied. This works for just about anything, whether it’s **recycling, adding to a savings account, teaching children about advertising, living healthier, finding parking spots, taking cancer medications, running, or even... flushing toilets?** Yep, we mean anything.

→ **Promotions** are no exception. Uniqlo has mastered this strategy, turning everything from **word-of-mouth campaigns to display ads** into games for their shoppers. At what point **will retailers start using gaming mechanisms** to reward consumers for attending a sampling event or visiting a less popular section of the store? After all, the CPGs they sell are **already in on the game**.

→ Brands are increasingly taking this trend literally: Redken created **their own video game** where users try their hand at running a salon, while General Mills’ **Cascadian Farm integrated with Farmville** in order to offer organic virtual crops.

## IMPLICATIONS



We can throw around gaming terminology and strategic recommendations all day long, but we’re really talking about **brands turning mundane experiences into fun, social interactions**. This is summed up perfectly by the mission behind **Google’s Demo Slam**: “Technology is awesome. Learning about it isn’t.” Marketers need to examine the most unpleasant tasks or elements associated with their own brand experiences, and, at the very least, **provide “delighters”** that lighten the impact of these low points (think Twitter’s “fail whale”). And now that we’ve got a clear blueprint for bringing gaming into everyday life, we’re expecting to see a barrage of badges, competitions, point systems, and more in the coming year. In fact, we’re hoping that the proliferation of turn-key gaming mechanisms won’t take this trend too far.

# DRIVEN BY DATA



# DRIVEN BY DATA (SOURCE RANK 81)

The future of show-not-tell marketing is using clever, compellingly-curated data to enable new experiences, solutions, and opportunities.

## BACKGROUND



Bing's positioning as a "decision engine" hasn't toppled Google's search supremacy, but it did unearth a compelling point. We are now creating immense amounts of extremely valuable, real-time data about almost every element of our lives. But without **proper curation and presentation**, this information ends up deteriorating into overwhelming, useless noise, and remains essentially invisible. At the same time, the **Ubiquitous Connoisseurs** from our 2010 Trends are demanding proof in numbers, while the rise of **Down-to-Earth-ism** (also from our 2010 Trends) uncovered the call for real, measurable solutions to everyday problems. The good news: Driven by Data solves this equation. There's an enormous opportunity here for brands to **organize, apply, compare, and communicate data in useful, actionable, and life-enhancing formats**. If you can imagine an application for a particular type of information, the data's there to make it work.

## EXAMPLES



→ Some brands are applying curated **data as their marketing campaigns**, such as OkCupid mining their users' data to produce **extremely PR-able reports on dating trends**. Others are using **data curation as their product**, like the way Flipboard turns your overwhelming social stream into a placid, personalized landscape.

→ Call it Taylorism 2.0 (or don't): a slew of apps and services can monitor your movements, health conditions, emotions, and uh, **bedroom escapades**, while analyzing this information to improve your, uh, **performance and wellness**. For instance, **Shopwell** does more than just help you eat better; the site creates an individualized "nutrition label" that clearly displays which foods are most appropriate for your individual health.

→ Who says the jocks and mathletes can't play together? **Nokia teamed with Burton snowboards** to provide riders with detailed information about their tricks and maneuvers (there's also an element of **Game On!** in there), while **Adidas' miCoach** system offers a reassuring "coach" to keep users at the proper pace.

## IMPLICATIONS



Consumers are hungry for data that can improve their lives. Marketers, take this opportunity to satiate them by **delivering the right information in a visually compelling, clear manner**. When complex or counterintuitive insights are **communicated simply, playfully, and unobtrusively**, you end up with clever innovations like a scale that **tells you what to eat** rather than what you weigh. Speaking of "personal" information, 10% of Americans are using smartphones to **manage their health**, while over 3 million users have documented their spending habits on Mint.com. There's even a budding **Data Donorship** movement, in which people give up their personal data to help research that benefits humanity. And you wonder why we've been so enamored with **how marketers will handle privacy?** We firmly believe the tradeoff will work if brands **deliver immense value in exchange for consumers' personal data** (and obviously, get serious about security).

# FIND YOUR PLACE



# FIND YOUR PLACE (SOURCE RANK 63)

Real-time location data provides a world of new opportunities for brands to delight consumers with enticing occasion-based marketing.

## BACKGROUND    E X A M P L E S    I M P L I C A T I O N S



Yes, of course we're suggesting that the foursquares, Gowallas, Facebook Places, Shopicks, and 7,000 other location-based social networks will continue to grow as more advertisers jump on board. But let's keep the badge talk confined to our **Game On!** trend and focus instead on what it means for your brand to be tied to a physical place. We've always known that different environments require unique marketing approaches; you need separate strategies for selling Corona at the supermarket and at a sports bar, after all. But now, consumers are providing rich, real-time data about where they are, who they're with, when they're there, whether they've been there before, and what they're doing while they're there (especially if they scan a barcode in the process). Marketers have an unprecedented opportunity for **hyper-targeted, hyper-relevant, occasion-based marketing**, as long as they don't get lost in the clutter.



- Most location data can be shared via APIs. As we mentioned in **Driven by Data**, any relevant application can be built into a (branded) smartphone app or mobile site. Windows Live provides **their foursquare friends** with alerts when they check in near a photogenic spot, while **the New York Daily News** lets their followers know if there's an archived photo that matches their current location.
- AOL and Yahoo! both redesigned their homepages for hyperlocal relevance, providing more valuable content for users (such as **local Groupons**) and better targeting for advertisers. In-store, **checkout TV screens are filtering content** to highlight local trending topics and popular items by store.
- Google's mobile grasp isn't just confined to Android phones. Anyone who runs a Google search on the mobile web will be directed to "Google Places" in their vicinity, where they can find **mobile coupons, recommendations from friends**, and reviews. What, you thought your consumers were ending up on your mobile site?



Considering all the effort we put into understanding our consumers—their attitudes, their demographic profiles, and more—how could you pass up the increasingly specific data these same people are providing about their real-time location? **Location is context**, and if consumers are sharing this information, it's because they expect you to provide **relevant, personalized, and emotionally-resonant** content in return. And don't assume you have to take "place" so seriously. Have some fun with it, like **these bands that created location-dependent music videos**, or the filmmakers who created the location-dependent film *Murder on Beacon Hill*. The latter plays out via an iPhone app so that viewers can experience the movie while walking through specific parts of the Beacon Hill neighborhood. (Lest you think this was dismissed as a gimmick, it became **the first app to be accepted into a major film festival**.)

# DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERGENCE



# DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERGENCE

(SOURCE RANK 86)

Growing gaps between demographic groups will require inclusive strategic ideas, implemented with laser-targeted precision.

## BACKGROUND



Last year, the unprecedented rise of nontraditional households prompted our **Radical Demography** trend, which focused on populations that are often overlooked by marketers. But now, more familiar demographic groups are undergoing their own surprising transitions. These shifts are all defined by **drastic bifurcations**, including increasing income gaps between the rich and poor, accelerating age distinctions between seniors and the mass of Millennials coming of age, diverging **differences in well-being** between married couples and unmarried people, and even growing inequality among immigrant populations. Together, these shifts are forcing us to **re-examine demographic populations that we thought we knew, and generating conflicting priorities** for marketers to address. In order to avoid schizophrenic messaging, yet still remain inclusive, marketers will need to balance broadly encompassing approaches with precise executions.

## EXAMPLES



- We've known that **the American population will grow older** in the coming years, and that **marketers need to address the needs** of this population. But we haven't given as much consideration to how the priorities and preferences accompanying this "Silver Tsunami" will often be in direct opposition to the rising influence of the Millennials. Will retailers offer new store formats that accommodate the needs of older consumers? Will technology companies design products that also capture the rising adoption among senior citizens?
- Immigrants tend to be treated as a homogeneous group, but their varying origins aren't the only things that distinguish these individuals. Contrary to common assumptions, the majority of immigrants in major US metropolitan areas are employed in **white-collar, high-paid, high-skilled occupations**. Does your brand's messaging reflect this reality, or are you focusing exclusively on the struggles of assimilation?

## IMPLICATIONS



It's not like one-size-fits-all marketing was ever a good idea. But now, marketers will need to be even smarter about crafting overarching messages that can be tweaked and targeted to **populations that often have contradictory needs, interests, and desires**. And while Radical Demography warned marketers to prepare for the significant long-term shifts on the horizon, **Demographic Divergence is here, right now**. If marketers find themselves facing contradictory priorities among their various target consumers, they might be forced to make some tough decisions. But if we're really clever, we may discover new opportunities to reconcile the needs of these distinct populations.

# FUTURE FEAR



# FUTURE FEAR (SOURCE RANK 85)

As Americans begin to temper their eternal optimism about the future, marketers must be there to offer reassurance.

## BACKGROUND



Americans have often fluctuated in their views about the world around them, but these shifts were always grounded in a fundamental belief that, in the future, things will get better. That's why it's particularly startling to see **a decline in Americans' long-term optimism**, and a pervasive, unwavering distrust of government and business institutions (for a number of reasons spelled out [here](#) and [here](#)). The fact that the recession ended and "**no one noticed**" suggests a **remarkably ingrained skepticism and cynicism** that may be around for the long term. Ultimately, Americans are struggling with the growing realization that our primacy and global supremacy may be finite. It's not because the country's going to hell in a handbasket, but because, *dude*, that's what happens as globalization "flattens" the world around us. But this natural progression isn't providing much reassurance for consumers, so guess who needs to take on that responsibility? Marketers.

## EXAMPLES

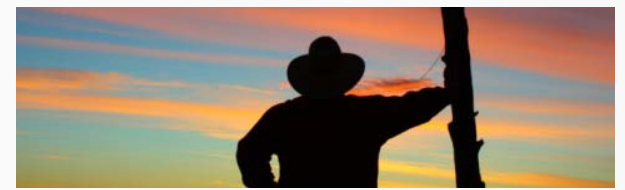


→ Some analysts have been borrowing from "VUCA" analysis to help identify elements of **volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity**. We like **Denise Caron's clever response** to this strategy: flip VUCA on its head, with a focus on **vision, understanding, clarity, and agility**. Hyundai's extremely successful (and widely copied) **Buyer Protection Program** was an innovative example of responding with clarity and agility to a sharp increase in consumer uncertainty.

→ They're not as fun as get-rich-quick schemes, but after years of financial market volatility, consumers are becoming more responsive to **messaging that focuses on money management and long-term savings**. The Vanguard Group's "**Vanguarding**" campaign explicitly talks about pursuing slow, responsible investment as opposed to chasing success.

→ Don't forget that **humor is a fantastic weapon for disarming consumers' worst fears**. Allstate's hilarious "**Mayhem**" campaign addresses catastrophic incidents in a deadpan tone, with an overarching message of reassurance.

## IMPLICATIONS



This is a tricky one. Marketers have to acknowledge that these consumer sentiments are real, while **avoiding explicitly hopeless, cynical, or angry tones** in your messaging. After all, we marketers provide solutions and products that are intended to resolve consumers' needs—why else would they be buying? Responding to Future Fear is a matter of strategy and recognizing the way these pervasive sentiments are affecting different groups in distinct ways (consistent with our **Demographic Divergence trend**). Carefully analyzing these scenarios will uncover opportunities to offer marketing solutions. This could mean providing explicit assurance (like Hyundai), or it could mean messaging to the pervasive belief that rugged individualism, personal control, and self-reliance are the most valuable traits for surviving the modern environment. Still, the savviest marketers will find opportunities to **channel this rage into productive solutions**, like...

# CAUSE WITH EFFECT



# CAUSE WITH EFFECT (SOURCE RANK 69)

With a possible “cause bubble” threatening the legitimacy of cause marketing, it’s time for brands to make a more significant impact.

## BACKGROUND



Is it just us, or does it seem that every marketer has a cause platform now? (Nope, *it's not just us.*) Can you even identify the pet causes of your favorite brands? Don't get us wrong: it's great to see so many brands giving back, and doing *something* is certainly better than nothing. But the rush to tack a cause onto every campaign under the sun seems suspiciously familiar—a lot like the rush to halfheartedly embrace “green” causes over the past few years, actually. With brands creating entire campaigns just to highlight drop-in-the-bucket donations, it sure seems like we're heading for a parallel backlash against “causewashing.” But we can avoid that whole boondoggle if **brands commit to making a legitimate impact.**

## EXAMPLES



→ This is a direct descendant from last year's **Home-town's Heroism**, and no one nailed that trend harder on the head than **Levi's efforts to revive the town of Braddock**. In a perfect example of depth over breadth, the campaign made an enormous impact among a small group of working class residents. And even though most folks won't feel the direct effects of the campaign, consumers know authenticity when they see it.

→ The charitable impact of Pepsi's Refresh project speaks for itself, although onlookers are still debating whether it sold any soda. Here's an interesting twist: **Refresh gave Pepsi's bottlers** an enormous advantage, since the impacts were most noticeable at the local level.

→ Eventually, we expect brands to shift from cause campaigns to **purpose-driven initiatives** that become part of the company's DNA. Dollar General's long-time commitment to literacy has been both impactful (**contributing \$25 million in grants**) and authentic (the company's founder was illiterate).

## IMPLICATIONS



Except for a handful of brands that are truly on a mission, marketers that claim to be saving the world are bound to disappoint (recalling our **Down-to-Earth-ism** trend from 2010). We're not surprised to see Roper spotting signs of “**green fatigue**,” and we expect that the parallel “cause bubble” is about to burst. Consumers will instead demand cause marketing that is **consistent, impactful, and brand-right**; in a fortunate coincidence, all of this will lead to more strategically sound—and thus, more engaging—marketing anyway. Figure out what your brand really stands for, and then determine what cause ladders up to that broader mission. And by the way, pay attention to **Future Fear** if you're looking for a cause roadmap. For instance, the widespread fear about America's declining educational systems makes a **strong case for supporting educational causes.**

# WAR ON WHINERS



# WAR ON WHINERS (SOURCE RANK 71)

Now that consumers have found their voices, self-assured brands will learn when to react, when to ignore, and when to respond with their own two cents.

## BACKGROUND



After identifying **Consumer Controlled Conversations** as a trend for 2010, we've kept a close eye on how different brands are responding to the cacophony of consumer opinions that have been amplified by social media. With **Gap scrambling to scrap their new logo**, and **Tropicana ditching their packaging design**, and **Sun Chips dumping their eco-friendly packaging material**, it's clear that the uncertainties driving **Future Fear** are being taken out on brands in the present. But do you really think brands are going to keep caving to consumer complaints? When JetBlue flight attendant Steven Slater went off on a tirade after one too many cranky customers, the general response was... well, everyone kind of understood the motivation, even if the actual outburst was inappropriate. We might not see a Tea Party-style backlash bursting out of the boardroom, but we do expect **more self-assured brands to start speaking up and fighting back**.

## EXAMPLES



→ IKEA had a Gap-like decision to make after **the design community freaked out** about the font of their new logo. Wonder why you never heard about it? No one else cared, so IKEA explained their decision and stuck by it (and no, they didn't go out of business). On the other hand, when Southwest Airlines kicked Kevin Smith off a plane because his weight posed a "safety hazard," **Smith wielded his social media presence** like a light saber and created a PR nightmare for the airline.

→ Despite claims about the democratizing nature of the internet, brands are starting to understand what analysts already know: **the web is not equal**. Services like **Klout** are building an objective, uniform system for measuring online influence (which supports **Driven by Data**, of course), giving brands the tools they'll need in order to determine which complaints to acknowledge and which to ignore.

## IMPLICATIONS



Look, the customer can't always be right, because "the customer" is actually a conglomeration of millions of diverse, contradictory views. Someone will *always* be unhappy about something your brand has done. There are legitimate complaints: we understand why people might be a tad peeved at BP these days. But getting worked into a tizzy over logos? About packaging? Most brands can't get away with their **CEOs shooting off snarky emails** when faced with inevitable consumer backlashes, but we expect more marketers to start executing **rational, premeditated, and appropriate responses**. If the issue is insignificant, or the rumblings are from an inconsequential population, **don't overreact**. Be confident enough to ignore the noise, or at least temper the flames with a consoling gesture. And if the conversation does require a response, **humor goes a long way**. In Canada, Sun Chips responded to the bag debacle by **distributing free earplugs**, much to the delight of their consumers.

# LIFE IN THE OOC



# LIFE IN THE OOC (SOURCE RANK 80)

Online-Offline Convergence—a.k.a. The OOC—is no longer on the horizon; we're living in it.

## BACKGROUND      EXAMPLES      IMPLICATIONS



You might be thinking that this sounds suspiciously like our **Online-Offline Convergence trend** from 2008. Bonus points for paying attention! In 2008, we pointed to an emerging trend where early adopters were **supplementing their offline lives** with the enormous amount of content available online. At the time, it was a leading-edge proposition: if your brand wanted to be an innovator, or if you wanted to connect with the cutting-edge consumer, joining The OOC was your ticket to the party. Now? **Online-Offline Convergence is an entrenched, mass phenomenon**, impacting middle-aged moms in Missouri as much as savvy San Franciscan startup speculators. And with **smartphones becoming the majority of mobile handsets** in the US (and **making steady gains on PCs**) this trend continues to gain momentum.



→ Consumers—being **Driven by Data**—have created detailed online profiles of their preferences, purchases, personal relationships, and past behaviors. In case you haven't noticed, **Facebook is hoping to harness this information** for marketers who want to influence consumers' real-world decisions. Think a **Facebook phone** might be the missing link?

→ Roper argues that almost a third of the US population devotes an **"extreme"** amount of time to finding the best values. Where exactly do you think they're looking—in catalogs? **They're going online**, of course! Across all demographic groups, they're using the (mobile) web for researching, finding deals, or making purchases—often, right from the store aisle.

→ Best Buy has certainly bought in to this trend. **We previously commended them** for using QR codes to provide comprehensive product information at shelf, and now their Twitter-enabled **Twelforce is being expanded** to be able to answer questions posed anywhere on the web.



This isn't about making your campaigns live in both the online and offline worlds; rather, it's realizing that **this distinction is now irrelevant**. Younger "digital natives" have never known a world that wasn't augmented with ubiquitous information, while older consumers are never turning back after they acquire first smartphones. At the moment your consumer is holding your product, are you sure they aren't getting a **CheapTweet**, or consulting a **comparison-shopping app**, or engaging with thousands of other services that will direct them to your competitors' products? It's an all-out war for your consumer's attention, and considering that **less than 5% (!) of U.S. retailers have mobile websites**, they'd better get their butts on the battlefield. The good news: The OOC gives retailers an alternative to creating adaptable and customizable (read: expensive!) floorplans. **Overlaying a mobile "layer" on the brick-and-mortar experience** gives shoppers incentives (both virtual and physical) to stay in the store.

# PRIMITIVE SIMPLICITY



# PRIMITIVE SIMPLICITY (SOURCE RANK 56)

What was once a vague preference for simplicity has now (d)evolved, with consumers increasingly believing that our sophisticated society creates more problems than solutions.

## BACKGROUND



There's a nascent sentiment that modern **science** sometimes overshoots the needs of consumers and generates its own set of problems and unintended consequences. With stories about **cave-men invading the Upper East Side** and Malibu-based CEOs who **reject showers, shampoo, and deodorant**, are we all reverting back to a pre-historic state? Err, not exactly. But these extreme examples indicate a **budding affinity for pre-civilized technologies and lifestyles**. When combined with the suspicions driving **Future Fear**, the result is a growing consumer sentiment that these ancient approaches may be better for our health and wellness. Considering that the last few years have brought us an increasing arc towards **simplicity, slow living, and less clutter**, this shouldn't be all that surprising.

## EXAMPLES



→ As fears about Frankenfoods become ever more pervasive, the enlightened approach to food cultivation is to go primitive. **23 million Americans grew their own food** last year, while others are learning to **eat in rhythm with the seasons**.

→ Barefoot runners might seem like the punchline to an Ultimate Frisbee joke, but it's no laughing matter to the folks at Nike. With more runners finding that barefoot running leads to a litany of health benefits (including **better posture and less impact** on ankles and knees), Nike has responded by creating the stripped-down "Free" shoe to mimic the shoeless experience.

→ "Health and wellness" used to be a lot more fun when we were younger; it was just a bunch of dancing, running, climbing, and playing. Fortunately, we're starting to see **exercise programs that embrace these baser instincts**. The same goes for eating, where there's a **retreat away from restraint** in favor of **balanced tradeoffs between temperance and indulgence**.

## IMPLICATIONS



Consumers are now questioning the side effects of even the simplest advances in technology. When these unintended consequences are significant, messaging to product features and technological enhancements is a recipe for extinction. For instance, the aforementioned Malibu CEO isn't crazy—she's one of many consumers who is concerned about retaining the skin's natural oils and germ-killing bacteria. (The **significant growth in dry shampoo sales** is no coincidence.) But before you assume that these neo-primitives are just the latest Luddites, remember that **this trend is facilitated by technology**. Almost **two-thirds of the population** have explored new skills in order to become more self-reliant and gain control over their lives, and they can thank the web for providing advice on creating **DIY wedding photobooths** or buying their **female-focused DIY kits**. If this sentiment is bubbling up amongst your target, can you use your insight and expertise to align with—rather than oppose—this trend?

# BRAND PATRONAGE



# BRAND PATRONAGE (SOURCE RANK 55)

As creative industries collapse, more artists will turn to marketers for innovative, mutually-beneficial promotional partnerships.

## BACKGROUND      EXAMPLES      IMPLICATIONS



*Normally, we'd stop at ten trends, but you're such a trooper for reading all the way to the end. Mind if we reward your efforts with an 11th trend?*

We're not sure if you've noticed, but the music industry is screwed. The publishing industry is reeling. And the resurgence of 3D is only delaying the inevitable crunch that's coming for the film industry. Assuming you haven't been orbiting the Earth for the past decade, this news is about as surprising as Charlie Sheen's latest relapse. With these infrastructures crumbling and creative platforms in flux, more musicians, writers, and other **creative types will be seeking out new sources of revenue and nontraditional partnerships** that allow for innovative, engaging ways to distribute their work. Guess who's especially good at doing that? Marketers! Blasphemous as it may sound, we foresee more creative types and marketers working together in mutually-beneficial partnerships.



→ Readers of [The Awesome Blog](#) know that we've been hinting at this trend all year, long before we heard about agencies working to **promote indie bands** or helping Jay-Z come up with **unique ways to distribute his new book**.

→ Maybe blogger outreach isn't as important as **fan outreach**. [The Underground Book Club](#) identified avid readers of a particular genre who were also heavy social media users, and provided them with exclusive content and engaging experiences leading up to the book's release.

→ Remember when "the reality show channel" was a "music television" channel? (You don't? Oh, kids these days.) Starburst is **reviving MTV's legendary Unplugged series in an online format** as part of their "Juicy Contradiction" campaign. The "contradiction" comes to life when each artist covers a particularly unexpected song, such as [Reba McEntire taking on Beyonce's "If I Were A Boy."](#)



The eternal debate over "selling out" seems a bit outdated when artists are facing threats to their very existence. The once-unthinkable notion of independent artists marketing their work is not just gaining acceptance; it's now a requirement for being able to continue these pursuits. Converse's decision to **open a free, state-of-the-art Brooklyn recording studio** (with engineers!) means that some lucky bands are freed from the outdated infrastructure of the music industry. Meanwhile, these bands and Converse's brand all benefit from sharing exclusive content and behind-the-scenes studio footage with fans. Obviously, there's a fine line between exploitation and a symbiotic relationship for both parties. But **if marketers can relieve the most burdensome obstacles** for forward-thinking artists, and **those artists help brands build an authentic relationship** with creative communities, isn't everybody better off?

# LET'S GET TO WORK



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And that's a wrap! You're now officially on-trend, and everything you do from here on out will automatically be innovative, forward-thinking, and cutting-edge. Congratulations!

Yeah, right. You've taken an important first step by learning about these trends, but that was the easy part. From here, it's crucial to see how these trends play out over the course of the year, and that's why we're here. Stick with us, and we'll help you follow the arc of these trends into the future. **Your best bet is to start reading [theawesomeblog.net](http://theawesomeblog.net), and follow the blog on Twitter ([@upshotblog](https://twitter.com/upshotblog)) to see when new content is a-comin'.** We have hundreds of examples that wouldn't fit into this document, and we'll have multiple hundreds of others that will come up over the course of the year—we can't wait to share them all with you.

But more importantly, trends are essentially useless until they are applied to your specific industry, products, services, and business challenges. **We'd love the opportunity to show you how this works;** after all, that's where these trends really come to life. Don't hesitate to contact The Source—we're as friendly as we are trendy.

