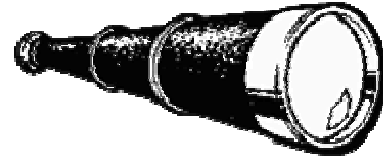




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FutureScoping:



emerging trends, new
ideas and general thought
stimulation

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For more information and other new
ideas visit www.futurescoping.com

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From: 

EXTREME STUNTS

A stunt in which £20,000 of petrol was given away in north London to promote a computer game has been criticised as "irresponsible and dangerous". Traffic was gridlocked outside the Last Stop garage in Finsbury Park as drivers queued for £40-worth of free fuel each. A local MP said: "Whilst a lucky few might have got free petrol, hundreds of residents have faced misery". The stunt was by Electronic Arts, to promote the Mercenaries 2: World in Flames game. Security staff brought in to control the traffic and deal with rowdy customers had to calm down one resident who waited 10 minutes to get out of his driveway. Another angry resident said the stunt was "totally irresponsible". But customers filling up for nothing were very happy: "This is a genius idea, whoever thought of this should be promoted".

Thought: if you're doing a stunt make it newsworthy.

From: 

BEAUTY FOR MEN

Double edge razors, cut throat razors, three blades, four blades, shaving brushes ... male personal care can be a complicated maze. As more gents jump on the beauty bandwagon, embracing their full grooming potential, they are turning to online information centres and male beauty blogs to help them look their best. The Grooming Guys use a tongue-in-cheek tone to promote grooming as a full on lifestyle. First time users are encouraged to check out the Grooming Lounge Bill of Rights to learn about every man's right to look "extremely handsome." Whilst GroomingHealth.com features the A to Z's of men's personal care: from skin, sex and shaving to anti-aging and staying fit. And MenEssentials.com shares thoughts and tips divided both by category (sun, health, skin, etc.) and by age (20somethings to 60+).

Thought: look for trends crossing demographics.

PET TIME-SHARING

Like a loving aunt or part-time nanny may know, taking care of the kids is a treat — when it's for a few hours. And the same goes for pets. Which may be why the hospitality industry is now offering guests a rather unique amenity: pet leasing. At select Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, for instance, guests can "rent" dogs for several hours. Dogs even have their own email addresses so their part-time parents can keep in touch post-vacation.

Thought: let people experience all the fun but none of the hassle.

RED WINE WITH NO HANGOVER

Consumers know there's more to food and drink than just feeling full. With health and functionality as top concerns, consumers are turning to consumables that help keep their bodies running at peak performance. But though red wine may cause a healthy buzz, the hangover is not good. That's where Embodi comes in. The juice drink promises all the health benefits of red wine in a booze-free format. Embodi works because it's made from the same raw ingredients as its boozy cousin: grape juice and red wine grape pomace extract, which comes from the skins, seeds and stems of grapes. Unlike wine, though, Embodi isn't fermented, meaning no alcohol. Like red wine though, Embodi claims to increase longevity, improve cardiovascular protection and decrease cancer risks. How? It's chock full of polyphenols, resveratrol and antioxidants, the naturally occurring ingredients that give wine its superpowers.

Thought: remove the negative consequences.

MEN IN TIGHTS

Unisex dressing? Been there. Guyliner? Done that. Mirdles? Covered it. But did you see this one coming: mantyhose. That's right — pantyhose for men. Project e-MANcipate is pushing to make it socially acceptable for men to wear pantyhose as an everyday clothing item. The group's website provides a community for mantyhose donners. It lists "tips for new wearers" and reviews of products from mantyhose makers like Collanto, Gerbe and Comfilon. Whether they're for support, aesthetics or just fun, mantyhose sales are booming. So it really does seem that fashion's gender lines

don't really apply anymore, especially as consumers forgo trends to find their own style. Anything goes in today's fashion space — the more individually tailored, the better.

Thought: what's the 'cross dressing' equivalent in your market?

From:



WEEKNIGHT CLUBBING

Nightclubs may operate seven days a week in many cities, but working professionals who partake in their late-night offerings outside of the weekend tend to regret it the next day. With such schedule-bound people in mind, Toronto's Gladstone Hotel recently launched an earlier alternative that still lets revellers get to bed on time. The Gladstone's Granny Boots series of dance parties take place each Wednesday night beginning at 7:30 and ending promptly at 10—"so you can go home, watch 'Law and Order' until 11 pm and get to bed," as the hotel puts it. The events are held in the Gladstone's Melody Bar, which is already famous for weekend karaoke nights, and feature different performances and livingroom DJs each week. Plus admission is free.

Thought: offer a 'lite' alternative.

CUSTOMER DIRECTED GIVING

When corporations donate to charity, it's often far-flung global causes that benefit. That's still entirely commendable, of course, but Waitrose recently launched a locally focused giving program that enlists customers' help in focusing on issues closer to home. It's Community Matters program assigns each store £1,000 month to donate among three local organisations. Customers are then offered a token each time they shop that can be inserted in any of three Perspex tubes—one for each of the selected charitable groups. At the end of the month, the pile of tokens donated to each organisation is weighed and the beneficiaries receive a corresponding proportion of the cash.

Thought: involve your customers in company decisions.

WORKING UP ELECTRICITY

The Green Microgym is a 2,800-sq-ft neighbourhood gym that generates a significant portion of its own electricity through the sweat-producing efforts of its members. Fully equipped with cardio equipment, weights and a room for yoga/stretching, movement and core training, The Green Microgym uses a combination of solar and pedal electricity for a chunk of its energy needs. Solar panels atop the site generate almost 3 kilowatts of electricity, while the gym's Team Dynamo and Spin Bikes can collectively generate up to 750 watts. The Green Microgym also aims to use less resources than the average health club. Its SportsArt EcoPowr Treadmills, for example, use 30 percent less electricity than others, and the facility features EnergyStar-rated (and member-controlled) ceiling fans, compact fluorescent lights, lower-energy LCD TVs and double-flush toilets. It also avoids the need for large water heaters by not offering showers.

Thought: collect your potential energy.

SNEAKER SKINS

UK-based Sneakart offers users the opportunity to customize their sneakers via Sneakskin, a super-thin, flexible, durable and waterproof graphic film that can be applied to white, light-coloured and metallic shoes. Printed with non-toxic ink, Sneakskin is 100 percent PVC-free and can be peeled off and replaced at will. It's available either in sheets of individual stickers or in 22-by-29-cm sheets of patterns that the user can cut to fit the areas to be covered; either way, one or two sheets is typically enough to customize one pair of shoes. Sneakart offers a wide variety of patterns and designs, at around £5 per sheet. And users can also create their own artwork and upload it to the site. The motivation to go public is considerable: each time a public design is purchased, Sneakart credits the designer's account with 10 percent of the sale price, available either as a credit toward further Sneakart purchases or via direct payment. Sneakskin peels easily off its backing paper for application, and sticks on shoes with regular daily wear for a few months. Sneakart donates 10p from every order it receives to Street Kids International.

Thought: provide the tools for customisation.

KNOW YOUR SHEEP

New Zealand merino wool clothing company Icebreaker allows customers to trace each garment they buy back to the sheep stations where the merino fibre was grown. Back in 1997 Icebreaker started buying its merino wool direct from growers. And beginning last month, it included an internal label bearing a unique 'Baacode' number. Customers can

enter this on the Icebreaker website and trace the wool in their garment through to its origins on the Southern Alps of New Zealand. Through photos and video, customers can see the living conditions of the particular animals that produced their wool, meet the high country farmers who run the sheep stations, and follow the production process to the factories that knit, dye, finish, cut, manufacture and ship the garments.

Thought: sustainability needs transparency through the whole business.

DISTILLING THE FACTS

Eager to keep up with the ever-increasing number of international fashion and style titles but pressed for time? Then check out Distill, a new bimonthly magazine that brings together the best content from lesser-known style mags from around the world, enhanced by commentary from renowned creative figures. Launched in September 2008 by London-based publisher Craft, Distill is priced at £4.50 and claims to be the first global fashion digest, with each issue featuring shows, new trends, book reviews and critiques.

Thought: take the best of what others offer.

From:  **GIZMODO**
THE GADGETS WEBSITE

PACK YOUR BAG

There are good packaging ideas and bad packaging ideas, but this new method from HP is a great packaging idea. Their Pavilion dv692 systems will sit on the shelf in their own recycled material messenger bags, stabilized and protected with internal air bubbles. This alternative to huge boxes shoved full of styrofoam has reduced HP's individual consumer packaging by an outrageous 97%. And since three of these messenger bags can fit in one larger shipping box, HP's shipping supply line sees a wider packaging reduction of 65%.



Thought: reduce your brand footprint.

GECKO ADHESIVE

Biomimetics experts have recently made progress on an interesting development that could have invaluable application in the not too distant future. If you're not down with the intricacies of a gecko's foot, the summary is this: the lizard can skit around so freely, with apparent contempt for the forces of gravity, because of its nanohair toes. The ingenious design allows it to maintain a grip on even a smooth glass surface, with the microscopic nature of the hairs enabling them to 'hook' into just about anything. The other reason these are so effective, and the central problem for replicating them in a lab, is the way the hairs manage to shed dirt and other contaminants it may have picked up while scampering about. Recent developments centre on a material that adheres to surfaces in a similar way but does not collect dirt particles. Dubbed 'Gecko adhesive', we're not quite at the stage where functioning Spiderman suits and paper-thin bullet-proof vests have become a reality, but perfecting the technology will almost certainly make them possible.

Thought: borrow from nature.

REAL WORLD VIDEO GAMING

Sky Challenge is working on a new sport that will mix real life planes with computer obstacles and competitors. Players at home will be able to compete with real life pilots, flying through a virtual obstacle course that is overlaid on top of real world terrain. The real world pilots would also be able to see their virtual challengers and the computer generated obstacles. Sky Challenge hopes to make this a world-wide event, where anyone could compete from home via their computers. Although, these kind of games bring up questions of how to navigate in these augmented spaces. How will people in the real spaces discern what's what?

Thought: marry virtual and reality.

From:  **Economist.com**

ON YOUR BIKE

These are tough times for carmakers, many of which are labouring under high oil prices, slowing demand and financial weakness. For makers of human-powered, two-wheeled vehicles, by contrast, business is booming. Giant Manufacturing, the world's largest bicycle-maker, sold a record 460,000 in one month recently, and is heading for its

best year ever. Such is the demand for bikes that shortages were reported in New York earlier this year. After a slow 2006, sales took off last year in Europe and America as fuel prices shot up. And suddenly a bicycle seems like the remedy for many modern ills, from petrol prices to pollution and obesity.

Thought: go old school to solve modern problems.

From: 

UNDERGROUND FURNITURE

Transport for London has launched a range of furniture upholstered in its iconic public transport fabrics, and are expected to do well in the home and hotel markets. Fabric left over from the furniture pieces will be used by handbag designer Matt Fothergill to create bags, doorstops and other small items. Classic woollen moquette fabric designs from the 1930s, 1950s and 1970s are to go back into production at a mill firm in Yorkshire. The range will also use off-cuts from the new Overground and Tramlink fabrics designed this year by Wallace Sewell.

Thought: exploit your brand equities.

From: 

CREATIVE NOVELTY

Discoveries by neuroscientists studying the brain say that novel experiences are key in increasing brain power and creativity. When the brain experiences, or imagines a familiar situation, it already has a shortcut to understanding - it's got that categorized in a neat little mental box. Novelty, new experiences and stretches of the imagination keep the mind limber, and more creative. Most corporate off-sites, for example, are ineffective idea generators, because they're scheduled rather than organic; the brain has time to predict the future, which means the potential novelty will be diminished. New insights come from new people and new environments — any circumstance in which the brain has a hard time predicting what will happen next. Fortunately, the networks that govern both perception and imagination can be reprogrammed. By deploying your attention differently, the frontal cortex, which contains rules for decision making, can reconfigure neural networks so that you can see things that you didn't see before. You need a novel stimulus — either a new piece of information or an unfamiliar environment — to jolt attentional systems awake..

Thought: the more radical the change, the greater the likelihood of fresh insights.

From: 

TV COMMENTARY

MTV is launching a new social game called Backchannel. It's a kind of competitive chat, meant to be played while watching episodes of The Hills. Players can type in short, witty comments about the drama unfolding on screen. If others like your blurbs, they can click on it, which will give you more points. So even if you don't particularly enjoy The Hills, this game makes it good fun, the extra layer of real time interaction turning potentially boring TV into a competition that rivets your attention.

Thought: add extra layers of interaction.

FRESH BOTTLED TAP WATER

Tap'd NY is a bottled water company who's motto is "Truth In Hydration". As an alternative to hyped-up H2O from the other side of the planet, Tap'd has bottled filtered New York City tap water to sell locally. Finding the wasteful practice of importing water from distant lands ludicrous, the company has created a product that helps raise awareness and provides a more sustainable bottled water option. As they say: "we don't travel the world from Fiji to France seeking water or offer the usual bottled water gimmicks. We offer an honest and local alternative to thirsty New Yorkers, giving them a smarter choice: to drink their own (award winning) water".

Thought: keep things simple, honest and local.

MODULAR REFRIGERATION

An interesting idea from Electrolux's Design Lab 2008 contest: the flatshare compartmentalized fridge. While the idea is geared towards helping roommates keep track of their own food there are energy saving benefits to it as well, as you can program each compartment to the necessary temperature for the contents inside, so items that don't need temperatures quite as cold can be separated. Also, by having foods in separate compartments, releasing cold air upon opening it will be minimized. Finally, having items more tightly packed together keeps everything colder reducing the amount of energy needed to run the units. And the concept fridge is made of stackable compartments, so consumers can buy and plug in only the amount of space they need. Very cool.



Thought: how could you compartmentalise your offer.

GROCERY FARMERS

Taking to heart concerns shoppers have about where the produce they buy comes from, Simon Richard, produce manager at Bi-Rite in SF's Mission District, decided to start growing produce to sell at the store himself. The homegrown produce has been a big hit with customers at the store. And it has also served as an educational experience for the store staff. Being out in the field and understanding what it's like to farm definitely kicked up confidence levels about explaining to customers where the food came from. By the end of the summer, Bi-Rite's farm had produced more than 3,500 pounds of tomatoes, 500 pounds of eggplant, 400 pounds of peppers and 200 pounds of basil. And Bi-Rite's owner liked the idea so much, they are now looking to develop it further.

Thought: produce your own ingredients.

From: *The New York Times*

SUBLIMINAL PERFORMANCE ENHANCERS

Some months back there was a story suggesting that exposure to the Apple brand enhanced creativity. Apple users rejoiced; everyone else gave a collective "hmph" and shrugged the study off as fluff. But Further research seemed to prove the same point, as well as a larger one: that exposure to brands overall can have a significant effect on our performance in many aspects in life. The Speedo warm up parka was originally designed for Michael Phelps until consumer demand prompted Speedo to manufacture the jacket for purchase. Thousands have already been sold - but unlike the consumer version of its LZR Racer, the parka will not actually make people faster. Or will it? Wear it often enough and, below the level of conscious awareness, what's activated in your mind is Michael Phelps going very fast. And those thoughts can actually kick up your motivation to go faster yourself.

Thought: enhance performance by association.

HOME DOWNSIZING

The Small House Movement is pretty self-explanatory: people are sick of the cost, lifestyle and impact of living in large houses - so some of them are going small. (Real small.) The movement's growing momentum, is helped partly by advocates like Gregory Paul Johnson, a founder of the Small House Society in Iowa City, who took his small house on the road to spread the word. As a consequence, more homeowners are turning to mini-homes as an ethical, and sensible, alternative to traditional home ownership. And one that makes sense given the tightening credit market and high house prices.

Thought: embrace downsizing.

Worth a look:

(A COMPENDIUM OF INTERESTING MISCELLANY TO READ, WATCH AND LISTEN TO)

How little things can be a big deal

- <http://www.latimes.com/news/print/edition/suncommentary/la-oe-kluger3-2008aug03.0.2056015.story>

Why we like to believe neuroscience (even if claims aren't true)

- <http://herd.typepad.com/files/seductive-neuroscience.pdf>

How we can all be brands

- <http://www.slideshare.net/darmano/brand-u0-presentation?src=embed>

How to design social spaces

- <http://www.janchipchase.com/future-social>

Why water is so important to our future

- <http://www.slideshare.net/jbrenman/thirst?type=powerpoint>

The brave new world of digital intimacy

- http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/07/magazine/07awareness-t.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

How the digital space has changed our attitude to strangers, and our trust of them

- <http://www.slideshare.net/mickstravellin/universal-mccanns-when-did-we-start-trusting-strangers-presentation?type=powerpoint>

How to create word of mouse

- <http://www.slideshare.net/Amelia/brands-bloggers-word-of-mouse-presentation?type=powerpoint>

Teen gaming and social interaction

- http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teens_Games_and_Civics_Report_FINAL.pdf

The importance of mobile phones to the urban poor

- http://www.core77.com/blog/technology/mobiles_and_the_urban_poor_11311.asp

How to humanize brands

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjjXevb11Rk>

Oxfam report on the UK and climate change

- http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/climate_change/forecast_tomorrow.html