ROUND TABLE OCTOBER 2005

PRE-SUMMARY TOP 5 TRENDS

1: INTUITIVE INTELLIGENCE




Intuitive Intelligence is based on the idea that softer values are becoming part of modern life and decision making, in the board room and out. We want products that reflect both our human rational and emotional thinking and needs. Brands should value our sensuality, our intuition and our logic. An example of design that has successfully balanced emotional intelligence and intellect is the MRI Scanner from Philips. The soft empathetic design manages to help take the fear away. It is often the minor touches that have a major effect, such an example is Virgin's Business Class. Instead of the usual static blanket they provide their flyers with a duvet! They both do the same job but the experience that they give is totally different. This is intuitive intelligence.

What is driving this trend? The need for emotion, human experience and empathy…combined with rational logic.

Score 12 points

2: FEMALE MEGA-INFLUENCE




Female Mega-Influence is so called because it depicts the idea that women are having a greater influence than ever on our business environment, both by being present in management and as powerful consumers. Female values and presence are gaining importance and will play a leading role in society, economy and politics. Brands, suppliers and retailers should take feminine logic into account and revise their design and communication strategies accordingly. And we don’t mean pink and fluffy!

Is this trend the cause or the consequence of the empowerment of “intuitive intelligence” mentioned above. The more influential women are the more effective “feminine” values, such as intuition, are. The question is how far will this female influence go and what if any affect will it have on men?

Score 8 points

3: ANCHORING



Consumers were likened to a ship; drifting off shore, looking back at the stable nostalgic land of ‘what was’ and heading for a future none of us can be certain of. We, like the boat are floating on the swell and often feel the need to anchor, to shore up – a time to think. In this respect we want brands to respond to our search for long lasting values and balance by valuing family and community life, rescuing meaningful skills and ideals. We find comfort in the conformity of tradition. We need guidelines and limits. This is not tradition as we know it but a pause for thought before we look forward and move on.

This trend was discussed as most relevant for the mature economy but will also see the same needs arising in the developing world?

Score 7 points. Related trend: Neo Tradition (3 points)

4: NEW CONSUMER NEW SUPPLIER

We want brands to make responsible decisions to accompany the globalization of commerce and consumption.

Today, 80% of the planet (the bottom of the pyramid) are manufacturing products for the western (20%) economy and yet still living in poverty. This divide is changing fast. By exploiting, in the best sense of the word, the developing world we are enabling them to profit from globalisation, as new suppliers, who will then become the new consumers. This will bring people’s lifestyles closer together. This is a mutually beneficial cycle that will bring an awareness to us all, the globe is going to get smaller and smaller, a place where it will be essential to understand each other. The new consumers are not going to consume what we dictate, they will be creating their an era for themselves, that is very exciting.

“80% of the world are potential suppliers / consumers - lets violently agree on that!”

Score 7 points. Related trend: Sharing Lifestyles (6 points)

5: PERSONAL SUSTAINABILITY

We have no choice. It is sustainability or chaos. We demand brands to fulfil their obligations but also to think more creatively about how to connect us personally to this universal challenge and put sustainable attitudes high on everyone's agenda. It would be naive to think that people are choosing sustainable products for anything other than selfish reasons. No matter what happens in the next 5 years sustainability will become part of every day life. Today personal sustainability it is a lifestyle choice, tomorrow it will be an obligation.

The sustainable option makes you feel good as a consumer but should we have to pay a premium for it? This is the challenge for business.

Score 5 points. Related trend: Positive consumption (7 points)

CALCULATION

Calculating the actual score has its limits. We made the choice to reflect the actual score on a “As is” basis without adding the points obtained by different related trends. In effect, merging trends can be simple - for instance Neo Tradition is clearly related to Anchoring - but may create sometimes some confusion and lead to subtle, yet important, differences. This is the case with the trends Female Mega-Influence and Intuitive Intelligence, which are similar but are saying acutely different things.

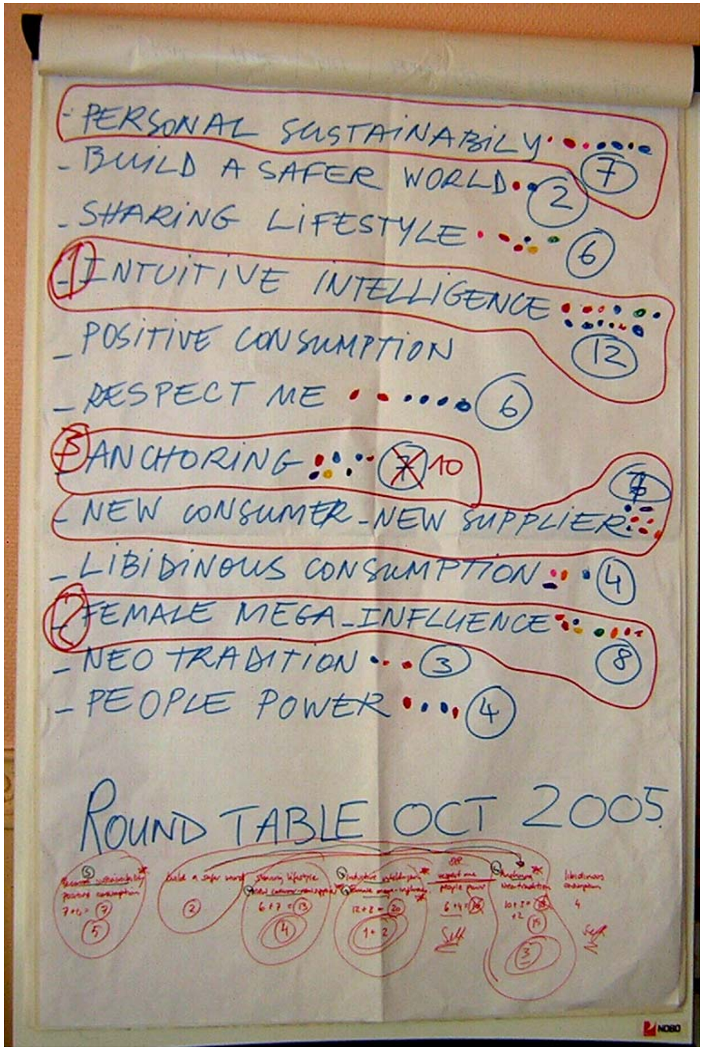
The rank of the winning trend may vary depending upon the combination that you will adopt; but the message within the ranking we have completed here, is in essence stable.

& THE OTHER TRENDS

Respect me (6 points) and People Power (4 points) express the shift of power from the brand to the consumer: Consumers demand that brands respect their preferences without dictating their views – Show them respect! People Power is about expressing their voices and choices as an individual or as a community movement thanks to information technology and the Internet.

Libidinous consumption (4 points) emphasises the foundations of consumption: libido as a source of vitality, energy and desire is necessary to maintain the motivation of the consumers. Thinking with gut instinct.

Build a safer world (2 points) we are living in a safer world than ever but we perceive it as unsafe and unpredictable. Brands should explore more positive ways to increase our feeling of safety and security.



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