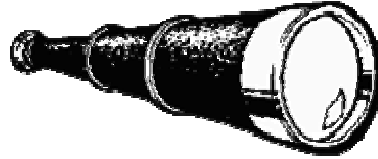


(emdor: © <http://www.flickr.com/photos/emdor/>)

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:



WOMB WITH A VIEW

It's going gaga in Florida, as young families throw baby showers that go just that little bit further. Businesses are offering at-home, non-diagnostic ultrasounds along with a full menu of additional services, including DVD photo discs set to music, belly casts, massage and henna tattoos. You can even go to their own facilities where there's humongous flat-screens in private viewing rooms and Internet accessibility — allowing faraway friends and family to join the party and enjoy the view. Because, while some might consider an ultrasound party a bit intrusive, others wonder, "why wait until baby is born to start the celebration?".

Thought: use medical or other 'industrial' tech to upgrade your experience.

From:



CAREER SAMPLING

When it comes to choosing a career path, it's one thing to think about the job from the outside, but quite another to experience it day to day. Which is why UK-based Figuring Out has decided to offer a combination of career coaching and trial work experience to help job seekers make tough decisions. From the team behind Striding Out, a support network for entrepreneurs, Figuring Out aims to help people at all stages of their work life figure out what they want for their next career move. The coaching part of Figuring Out's service focuses on clarifying career goals, mastering interview techniques and learning new job search strategies, among other objectives. The work experience portion of Figuring Out's services, however, is where clients can begin testing out their options. Tapping into its Striding Out network of businesses, Figuring Out identifies and connects clients with flexible, part-time work placement opportunities that can provide the right type of work experience for their needs. The work experience service is charged at an additional fee, depending on the range and type of placements required. The result, however, is a realistic, hands-on feel for what each career possibility would really be like.

Thought: help people make difficult decisions.

MASS PAPPING

Being photographed by the paparazzi was once an (often dubious) honour bestowed only on the rich and famous, but now a number of new services is bringing the possibility to all of us. Upon request, New York-based Methodlazz will send an anonymous photographer to surreptitiously capture select moments of your life, immortalising them with a portfolio of professionally produced photos. To arrange the service, just provide a photograph ahead of time along with your daily schedule and any specific mood or theme. Methodlazz's photographer will then show up at random during the day and take photographs as you walk through the streets or go about your daily business, without posing or artifice. For customers, the final result is a new perspective on how they appear to others as well as tangible documentation of how they lived their lives at that point in time—in short, the ultimate in ego stroking.

Thought: give an experience of how the other half live.

SHOE ART

Toronto-based design firm Ndeur is offering the ultimate in customized, hand-painted shoes. Unlike similar 'custom' offerings by the likes of Nike and Converse, with their limited set of choices in style and colour, Ndeur decorates vintage shoes with unique designs and patterns in oil-based paint. More than 50 standard designs are available from the company, founded by Parisian artist Mathieu Missiaen. Alternatively, customers can also ask Missiaen to paint what he likes. Ndeur's shoes are available through retailers around the world as well as Etsy, the online marketplace for handmade goods. And each pair comes in its own box with a card of authenticity bearing the artist's signature.



Thought: there's nothing like customization to make consumers feel unique.

VIRTUAL VAULTS

Wells Fargo's vSafe is a secure online location where customers can upload and store copies of everything from the deeds to their homes to precious family photos. Reported fees of \$14.95 for 6 gigabytes might seem high when you consider that webmail accounts like Gmail and Yahoo offer multiple gigabytes of storage space at no cost. But Wells Fargo adds layers of security and throws in a dedicated phone help line. Plus it provides a single, central location for an individual's or family important documents. Wells Fargo claims it is the first large financial services company to offer virtual storage of vital documents.

Thought: help bring fragmented lives together.

TRY WITH MOTHER

Put yourself in your consumer's shoes: walking down the supermarket aisles, kids screaming, time is tight and you've got a long list to get through—is it any wonder you just stick to buying the same things week after week? Now imagine instead that you've had a chance to sample some of the new products out there in a relaxed setting, without any pressure to buy. Chances are, you'll make some new finds that will improve your weekly menu. Australian company Word of Mouth does just this. The company is paid by participating companies to stimulate conversations about their brands and systematically collect feedback once consumers have tried their products. It makes presentations by invitation into established social and community groups—churches, school committees, etc.—with information about new products on the supermarket shelves. The presentations are given at no charge, and participants get a chance to try the products out themselves in a relaxed environment. Afterwards, Word of Mouth follows up with a survey to collect their feedback. It also invites participants to continue the conversation online by joining the Word of Mouth Club. The result? Word of Mouth meets and stimulates product conversation among more than 200,000 Australian women each year; since the October launch of its Word of Mouth Club, more than 20,000 members have joined.

Thought: get communities talking about you.

FOOD FOR THE BRAVE

Some foods are not for the faint of heart. And catering to consumers who would like to experience such curiosities first-hand is online purveyor [Edible](#), offering an introduction to delicacies that may shock less adventurous eaters. Giant toasted leaf-cutter ants, mopani worms, reindeer pate and Thai green crocodile curry are among Edible's offerings, along with Lizard Wine, Civet Coffee and Monkey-Picked Tea Wash. In fact, a range of unusual or downright alarming products are available in six categories: Insectivore, Herbs & Spices, Aphrodisiac, Carnivore, Herbivore and Apothecary. Edible provides detailed information about the origin of each product, including species and geographic data, with prices as exclusive as the products themselves.

Thought: as consumers look for the newest, the rarest and superlatives of every kind, take it to the max.

TRAINER VENDING

Onitsuka Tiger, the Japanese sports brand, launched a trainer vending machine on Carnaby Street recently. This isn't an entirely new idea: it's been done in Japan, of course, and Reebok sold shoes from a vendomat back in 2004. But Reebok's machine was a bit of a let-down, with shoes packed into a seemingly standard, drab box. Onitsuka Tiger, on the other hand, put some effort into custom-building their machine, which can sell 24 pairs of shoes at a time, in 6 sizes. Following its London debut, the machine will travel across the UK to bring convenience-buying to the rest of Britain's sneakerheads.

Thought: find fun ways to sell.

SHOPPING NAP

IKEA are offering fatigued shoppers a respite by installing a Sovhotell (sleep hotel) in one of the Stockholm's downtown shopping centres. After checking in at the front desk, guests are asked whether they normally sleep on their stomach, side or back, before getting a pillow to suit their personal sleeping style. In addition to single and double beds, the Sovhotell also features a bridal suite. Guests can then snooze for 15 minutes, helped by eye masks and headphones with soothing soundscapes. According to IKEA, inspiration for the Sovhotell came from Japanese capsule hotels, and from the fact that the shoppers in its own stores are occasionally found napping in the bedroom section.

Thought: look for some unexpected needs it makes sense for you to meet.

EXPRESSO TEA

Lattes and cappuccinos may have achieved near-cult status around much of the world, but health benefits are not typically among their virtues. But now a new contender, fresh out of South Africa, is now proposing a healthy

alternative: espresso made from red tea. Back in 2005, South African Cape farmer and espresso junkie Carl Pretorius walked into his kitchen for a quick fix. Worrying about the caffeine, though, he opened up Rooibos red tea instead and poured it into the handle of his espresso machine. red espresso was born, featuring a strong, slightly nutty flavour and a clean finish. The Rooibos used for red espresso is grown wild and hand-harvested from a single farm at the highest altitudes in South Africa's Cedarberg Mountains. A patented cut and method of preparation give red espresso richer flavour, colour and health properties than regular Rooibos, yet it is still naturally caffeine-free and is claimed to contain five times more antioxidants than green tea—a full 10 times more than regular Rooibos tea itself. Like coffee-based espresso, it can also be made into lattes and cappuccino-style drinks.

Thought: create differentiation by 'exporting' your product to a different market.

From: **GIZMODO**
THE GADGETS WEBSITE

MOBILE WITHDRAWAL

It seems that there's a new problem sweeping the UK: nomophobia. Nomo, short for 'no mobile', is apparently reaching danger levels, with half of us panicking when we can't use our mobile phone. Based on a recent survey of over 2,000 people by the Post Office, it has been estimated that more than 13 million Brits fear being out of mobile phone contact. Some even more than visiting the dentist. We're all familiar with the stressful situations of everyday life such as moving house, break-ups and organising a family Christmas. But being out of mobile contact may be the 21st century's latest contribution to our already hectic lives. Whether you have run out of credit or battery, lose your phone or are in an area with no reception, being phoneless can bring on a panicky symptom in our 24/7 culture.

Thought: what can't your consumer live without?

WALKING ROBOT

Honda Motor has developed a walking assist device that could help the elderly and those with mobility problems to get around a lot easier. Based on technology gleaned from its Asimo humanoid robot, the walking assist device (weighing just 2.8Kg) is designed to be worn with a belt around the hip and thigh and can cope with different body shapes. The belt applies cooperative control based on information obtained from hip angle sensors. The motors provide assistance to the user by lengthening their stride to more than they could normally achieve. It is powered by lithium-ion batteries and is good for 2 hours of use on a full charge.



Thought: overcome people's limitations for them.

From: **BrandRepublic**

DESIGNER CHARITY

Oxfam is set to open its first fashion boutique under the instruction of former Topshop brand director Jane Shepherdson, in a bid to create a more upmarket image. The shop aims to target a more affluent customer and will be selling a combination of new, remade items from donated pieces and second hand clothes. Further stores are set to roll out across the country in the coming months. In a separate move, Oxfam has collaborated with several designers, including Christopher Kane and Giles Deacon, who have reworked garments to create new pieces, which will be auctioned off on eBay.

Thought: borrow some glamour.

SHARE YOUR BURGER

Burger King is rolling out what it claims to be the first burger made for sharing across its three biggest European territories, in an attempt to take on the pizza market. The 6 Pack comprises one big Aberdeen Angus patty inside six rolls, stuck together to allow consumers to tear off portions. In one pair of rolls the burger is topped with ketchup, the second has a cheese topping, and the third bacon and cheese. The 6 Pack launch comes as Burger King rolls out a number of menu innovations and products intended to shift the brand into the casual-dining arena. Last month it was revealed that it plans to introduce the UK's most expensive burger to push a more premium positioning. The chain will

also launch burgers featuring exotic ingredients such as tiger prawns and guacamole to emulate chains such as TGI Friday's.

Thought: it's good to share.

From:  **JOSH RUBIN: COOL HUNTING**
Stuff from the intersection of design, culture and technology

CHANGING COLOUR BRICK ROAD

Simple, effective and possibly life-saving, France's Eurovia is developing a thermosensitive road varnish that changes colour to indicate freezing and dangerous conditions. Like a Hypercolor t-shirt, the road could turn pink (or any other indicative colour) when surface temperature is below freezing and returning to neutral once it warms back up. Not only a boon to motorists, but it helps out the environment and saves some cash by eliminating unnecessary salting of roads.

Thought: give strong visual cues.

From: 

FLY IN COMFORT

Some refer to it as economy class syndrome. To others it's known as a coach class clot. But whatever you call it, sitting squeezed into an airplane seat until you develop deep vein thrombosis is no way to die. And that's why this strange new seat is worth checking out.

The Cozy Suite is a staggered seat configuration designed to give passengers a better shot at getting some shut-eye during their flight. Delta just put in a big order for the seats, and surprisingly, plans to install them in the often overlooked coach class cabin.

A new airplane seat isn't something you just throw together during a lunch break. And Thompson Solutions, the UK company responsible for the Cozy Suite, spent nearly seven years designing, testing, and refining the product. They started by observing passenger behaviour on both short- and long-haul flights, and came away with two main findings: passengers trying to sleep on long flights tend to position themselves at an angle, and those sitting at the window seat generally seem slightly less miserable because they can rest their head against the wall. With this information Thompson developed and patented the idea of a staggered seat. The finished product, at least on paper, seems great. Because seats aren't lined up in a straight row, each passenger has a place to rest their head. The staggered design also creates a sense of personal space, and gives passengers four inches of additional legroom. It might seem surprising that cash-strapped Delta would be the first customer to order the Cozy Suite, but the seats will provide the airline with competitive advantage in the brutally competitive transatlantic market. And from a business standpoint, the design allows Delta to fit eight seats in a row instead of seven, which means they can wring more revenue out of each flight.



Thought: challenge accepted norms.

From: 

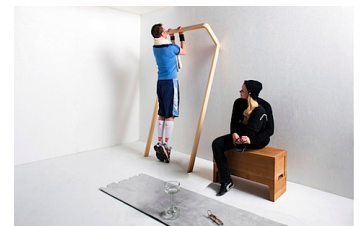
WATCH WHILE YOU SHOP

A new scheme is being trialled by UK supermarket chain Asda and mobile network Orange that allows live streaming of football matches to special shopping trolleys equipped with mobile phones. The scheme promotes Orange's deal to be the first mobile operator to offer live coverage of every Barclays Premier league game, and highlights the strain that Saturday shopping trips can put on a couple with apparently 30% of men interviewed saying they would finish with their partner for forcing them to go shopping over watching their team play.

Thought: what would your consumers rather be doing.

SPORTS FURNITURE

PostFossil is a collective of Swiss designers who have pooled their talents to examine and re-assess the use of day-to-day objects. With their Sports Furniture concept, they develop



products that are both dual-purpose and stripped down to their bare essentials. Sports Furniture is intended to offer physical fitness at home but the designers hope that their 'furniture collection' easily blends into the living space. The pull-up bar doubles as a clothes hanger, the mat is a rug, the bench is also a side-table. Postfossil looks to enhance personal energy consciousness as we search for a more efficient and healthy way of interacting with our environment. This path is being supported by the design as well as the choice of materials. The forms are reduced and limited to the essential. And the materials are of natural origin and traditional techniques are combined with contemporary design.

Thought: multi-purpose your product.

From: **TIMES ONLINE**

31 HOURS A DAY

You may think 24 hours are not enough in a day - and a new generation of multitaskers would agree with you. Researchers have found that typical middle-class city dwellers now have so many timesaving gadgets that they can cram into 24 hours the same quantity of tasks that a decade ago would have taken 31 hours to complete. For many, the frenzy starts over breakfast, reading e-mails on a hand-held BlackBerry while making toast. It carries on in the car where the driver with a Blue-tooth earpiece holds a conference call while keeping an ear on the radio and checking the sat nav. Work is then a blizzard of e-mails, phone calls and meetings, often happening simultaneously. The most intense period of multitasking, however, is in the evening, according to OTX, an American think tank. According to the study, which questioned 3,000 people, while television remains the main focus of attention in the evening, nearly half the respondents were also using computers and phones to catch up with friends, update their Facebook and MySpace social networks, or download and listen to music. Even eating took second place to internet activities in half the households questioned. The findings make predictions from 30 years ago seem absurd. Then, scientists who first borrowed the word multitasking from computing, warned of "brain overload" and that people would not be able to cope with more than three tasks at once. But it does make you wonder what people were doing in the mid-1990s, when all the devices were far rarer. It must have been a lot quieter. Or maybe they talked to each other in the evenings.

Thought: doing too much? Help people slow down.

BIG BABIES

Ah to go back to the good old days. That is, infancy - when you were carried like Cleopatra everywhere you went, spoon-fed your favourite dishes and presented with an obscene amount of gifts, arranged around you just so. Parents attending the recent Baby Show at Birmingham's NEC could get a babe's eye view of the world by sitting in an oversized bouncy chair or kicking back on a king-sized playmat, complete with dangling toys. Fisher-Price created the adult-sized versions to give parents an insight into their baby's world. "Lights, sounds and actions are not just for show, they play an important part in babies' development and, through giving these items a try themselves, we hope parents will come to understand the importance of these aspects," says Dr Kathleen Alfano of the Fisher-Price Play Lab.

Thought: give adults a really retro experience.



From: COOLBUSINESSIDEAS

GRAPES, VARIOUS

The line between kid and adult beverages began to blur a few years ago, with vintners offering wines in Tetra Paks resembling juice boxes. Now, the confusion goes the other way with First Blush's Cabernet, Merlot and Chardonnay fruit juices. First Blush varietal grape juices are alcohol-free and entirely suitable for kids, with no added sugar or preservatives. Like wine, however, they're also full of polyphenol antioxidants. The drinks are available in upscale grocers, along with delis and select restaurants. Juice is already well-entrenched in the world of snob value. But rather than focusing on organic ingredients, as so many others are currently doing, First Blush takes a different approach with its use of grape varietals. It just goes to show: not only can everything be upgraded, but there's usually more than one way to do so!

Thought: borrow cues from associated but more 'premium' markets.

Worth a look:

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

Some thoughts on insight, how to generate it and how to use it

- <http://www.slideshare.net/mmilan/leading-with-insight?src=embed>

I shop therefore I am...but how much is too much?

- <http://davidreport.com/File/update/333/>

What turns herds around?

- http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/06/weekinreview/06carey.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Make presentations interesting: get random

- http://anguswhines.typepad.com/angus_whines/2008/04/powerpoint.html

Boredom stimulates action(scroll down for video)

- http://interaction08.ixda.org/Molly_Wright_Steenson.php

How are motivations for buying stuff change

- <http://www.conversationagent.com/2008/04/how-are-buying.html>

As people leave TV for interactive media, they free up a lot of time to really get involved

- http://chromainc.typepad.com/chroma_inc/2008/04/cognitive-surpl.html

Malcolm Gladwell asks if big, paradigm shift ideas are really as hard to come by as we think

- http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/05/12/080512fa_fact_gladwell/?currentPage=all

The food we waste

- http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/foodwewaste_fullreport08_05_08.pdf

Can a dead brand live again?

- http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/18/magazine/18rebranding-t.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&oref=slogin