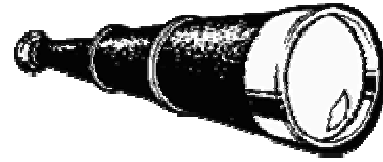




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FutureScoping:



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: 

BAD BOSS DAMAGE

Inconsiderate bosses not only make work stressful, they may also increase the risk of heart disease for employees. A Swedish team found a strong link between poor leadership and the risk of serious heart disease and heart attacks among more than 3,000 employed men. And the effect may be cumulative - the risk went up the longer an employee worked for the same company. Experts said that feeling undervalued and unsupported at work can cause stress, fostering unhealthy behaviours, such as smoking, that can lead to heart disease. Unfair bosses can also drive up employees' blood pressure, again increasing risk.

Thought: give good leadership.

From: 

COOK YOUR OWN

She's allergic to gluten, he's on a diet ... guests' dietary restrictions can make it hard for hosts to create a dinner menu. But a new Electrolux concept, by designer Chris Fox, may overcome this: it lets guests cook their own meals. The adaptable cooking plates have surfaces for boiling, stir-frying or grilling food. The plates connect to form a functional tabletop that can wind around the surface of the table. Each modular plate has a heating coil, and plates can be stacked and stored in a special carrier and their ceramic surfaces removed for easy clean-up.

Thought: cater to an audience of one.

GET PHARMA-CISING

It's my body and I'll exercise if I want to — or not. From over-the-counter fix-ups and non-invasive cosmetic surgery to extreme fitness mashups, everybody has a choice. The emphasis is on results, and less on the particulars of how one got there. So, what happens to diet pills when they grow up? They become fitness pills. Researchers at the Salk Institute in San Diego have discovered two new drugs — AICAR and GW1516 — that mimic the effects of physical exercise. Lab tests successfully fooled mice muscles into burning fat, using energy more effectively and boosting endurance. Human translation: those who remain sedentary will potentially reap the same benefits as those who exercise. Too good to be true? The drugs are still in testing and presently only available in experimental formats.

Thought: provide extreme shortcuts.

THE MILKMAN COMETH

Milk home delivery is no longer a nostalgic notion: across the US, dairies are creating or expanding their drop-off services as people sign up in greater numbers. With the cost of milk skyrocketing, the delivery surcharge becomes less significant when weighed against the convenience. After all, foodies (and choosy kids!) appreciate the better taste, freshness, and higher quality of milk from smaller local dairies, and are willing to pay for it. Whilst busy families will gladly pay to avoid one more trip to the store as they desperately seek down time.

Thought: give your delivery the personal touch.

VERTICAL FARMS

Innovative ways to provide nutritious food to the people who need it most benefits the whole community. Which is why the Urban Farming Food Chain project makes so much sense. In dense city neighbourhoods, the UFFC constructs vertical gardens for inner-city communities. The green walls don't just provide a calming connection to nature, they produce edible fruits and vegetables — fresh and free nourishment in food deserts. And such community food gardens nourish the neighbourhoods in more than one way: by working together to tend and harvest crops, residents create stronger connections with each other.

Thought: get people working together.

From:



TEEN DRIVER SAFETY

Teen drivers are more likely to speed and less likely to wear seat belts, causing parents no end of concern. Now auto giant Ford is adding some control options to give parents peace of mind. Their new MyKey system allows parents to limit speed and audio volume, improve safety-belt usage and provide early low-fuel warnings on the cars their teens drive. Using the vehicle message centre, which updates Ford's SecuriLock passive anti-theft system, parents begin by programming the transponder chip on their teen's key. When that key is inserted into the ignition, the system then identifies the MyKey code and enables a wide range of safety focused driving modes.

Thought: offer programmable solutions.

RFID CONNECTIONS

The online and offline worlds are becoming increasingly interconnected. And now, a new venture from Alcatel-Lucent is using a version of RFID to give consumers the ability to make such connections for themselves. Tikitag uses short-range, high-frequency RFID to connect everyday items to online content or applications. To tap the connection, users of the technology need only touch a compatible device such as a cell phone to an item tagged with a corresponding sticker. Parents, for example, can use tikitag to link their toddler's teddy bear to an online story about that same bear; museum visitors can wave an enabled mobile phone at a painting to call up the painter's Wikipedia profile. In a business/logistics setting, meanwhile, a cleaning company could use tikitag to record that a room has been successfully cleaned by touching an enabled mobile phone to a tikitag-linked sticker that has been placed in the room. The technology needed for Tikitag to work is already built into several cell phones from Nokia and others, and a starter kit, available from Amazon and elsewhere.

Thought: internet enable your product.

CRAFT BLUEPRINTS

Tapping into the make-it-yourself trend, London-based SomeRightsReserved offers a range of downloadable blueprints for objects that consumers can build, adapt and personalise. Products on offer include everything from cardboard Tetris furniture to children's mittens. Some can be created using hand-cutting and home-printing, others may require laser cutting or rapid prototyping. Prices range from free to £10, and physical objects tend to rely on affordable everyday materials such as cardboard, acrylics and fluorescent tubing. The estimated costs for materials are displayed before the purchase is made. The concept should benefit designers who have more ideas than they know what to do with, providing them with a way to profit from these without stressful investment in production runs, with the site acting as a live test before signing a run off.

Thought: extend the life of your intellectual properties.

POP MEDICINE

It's a tragic fact of life today that one in five African children die before their fifth birthday from simple causes like dehydration from diarrhoea. Basic medicines could save lives, yet no means has been found to make them readily available. A new grassroots project, however, aims to tap into the formidable distribution network of none other than Coca-Cola to get life-saving medicines to the children who need them. The ColaLife project aims to distribute oral rehydration salts and educational materials to people in developing countries through a partnership with Coca-Cola by which its distributors carry medicine in addition to soft drinks.

Thought: use unexpected distribution channels.

RUNNING FOR CHARITY

Races have long been used as a way to raise money for charity, but opportunities to participate in such fundraising efforts are few and far between. Now a new site dedicated to combining exercise and charity aims to help consumers get corporate sponsorship for their everyday exercise activities. Plus 3 Network lets consumers turn every step, turn of the pedal or stroke in the pool into a fundraising effort for the cause of their choice. Consumers sign up and choose the cause they'd like to support. Plus 3 then matches them with a corporate sponsor willing to make donations for each mile of exercise activity logged. Consumers then simply record their walking, running, biking or swimming activities on Plus 3. Corporate sponsors donate up to \$0.2 per mile, with GPS data earning three times as many rewards as those entered by hand. Social networking features allow users to form groups and add friends for joint activities.

Thought: monitorise your actions.

From:  **GIZMODO**
THE GADGETS WEBSITE

CINEMA FOR GROWN UPS

During the summer, Canada's Cineplex chain allowed people to play games on giant 50-foot displays. Now in the UK, and on a smaller scale, Soho's Rex Cinema+ Bar is focusing on Wii, allowing visitors to play football, boxing, tennis, snowboarding or bowling on their 24x8 foot HD screen. It offers a fun way to work out, that swiftly moves on to talk of the cocktail menu in its 1930s style lounge bar and filling your face with delicious cuisine. Assuming you are knackered from swinging virtual bats around and whatnot, you can also relax and watch a sports-themed movie with titles like Raging Bull, Escape to Victory and Happy Gilmore.

Thought: find tangential ways to make many from your product functionality.

NIKE VISION

Nike has a new concept design, with safety as the main motivation. The Nike 'Hindsight' glasses are initially being aimed at cyclists and use specially designed Fresnel lenses to help improve peripheral vision. They allegedly increase your field of view by 25 degrees and are intended to help spot danger such as oncoming cars or other cyclists. For safety purposes this should be quite sufficient and would offer the added bonus of reducing the extent to which you'd have to turn your head to catch a quick glimpse of your surroundings. It's another one of those 'if it can save lives it's gotta be worth it' inventions so don't be surprised to see this appealing to serious cyclists in the near future, not to mention other sports such as skiing and snowboarding.

Thought: extend the senses.

FRUSTRATION FREE PACKAGING

As fans of all things technological agree, the plastic clamshell packaging that encases the likes of memory cards and other small devices is a thing to be hated. It's bullet-proof, seemingly inches thick and involves you covering yourself in body armour before attacking it with a pair of razor-sharp scissors and hoping that either these or the lethal shards of resulting plastic don't cause serious injury. Well thankfully it seems as though the guy who came up with this heinous invention won't be getting any richer, following news from Amazon that it's starting a new initiative to produce 'frustration-free packaging' that's easy to open and free from excess materials. It'll feature recyclable boxes and will be rolled out in the US first, with the UK expected to start benefiting from early next year. Memory cards are apparently the first to go and will now ship in recyclable cardboard envelopes which use less materials and are far lighter.

Thought: what frustrates your customers.

From:  **Brand Republic**

DEPRESSION CHIC

With pundits predicting the worst downturn "since the 30s," perhaps it was inevitable: The Great Depression is making a cultural comeback. In the US, 20somethings are throwing Depression parties, where clothes are '30s vintage and playlists favour Big Band numbers and Dust Bowl ballads. Depression chic is also hitting the fashion runways: prairie-style cotton-check and hand-spun floral dresses, newsboy caps and suspenders are all showing up. There's also a spurt in demand for Depression-era art and literature. Netflix rentals of The Grapes of Wrath are up. And JK Galbraith's 1955 best-seller, The Great Crash 1929, recently climbed to No. 87 on BarnesandNoble.com's sales rankings, up about 20,000 spots from a year ago. Finally, there's evidence that businesses may be looking to make some hay of their past hard times. Spurred by client requests, The History Factory has just launched a service that may help with that. A typical request: 'Give me an overview of any products we developed during the Depression.'

Thought: what is reassuring in your past.

From:  **1R€D**

ELIMINATE YOUR OFFICE

With the economy in a negative downturn, and precious resources going for record prices, people and businesses are looking for anyway to get ahead (or just stay afloat). One option that creates a winning situation for everyone: get rid of

offices. The overhead costs to maintain a physical office eat away at the bottom line, and many studies have concluded that telecommuters actually get more work done while spending time away from the distraction laden office. That might sound a bit radical to those who swear by the office's supposed benefits, like camaraderie and face-to-face collaboration. But time and again, studies have shown that telecommuters are every bit as engaged as their cubicle-bound brethren — and happier and more productive to boot. Last year, researchers from Penn State analyzed 46 studies of telecommuting conducted over two decades and covering almost 13,000 employees. Their sweeping inquiry concluded that working from home has “favorable effects on perceived autonomy, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, performance, turnover intent, and stress.” The only demonstrable drawback is a slight fraying of the relationships between telecommuters and their colleagues back at headquarters.

Thought: go virtual.

From: 

VIDEO GAME INSURANCE

Allstate insurance is testing out a new program, called InSight, that uses online video game tests to identify safe older drivers. Using simple games that measure brain fitness, the company is hoping that gaming proficiency will indicate aptitude with the same skills in real life. One of the games, *Jewel Diver: Divided Attention* tests subjects ability to track multiple objects at a time. The InSight program plans to offer insurance discounts to drivers over 50 who successfully pass the online tests.

Thought: add a digital spin to create interest.

PRO EXERTAINMENT

Staying focused while working out at the gym can be a big chore. The proliferation of little TV screens at many fitness chains is a testament of the need to occupy the mind while the body is in strenuous motion. Espresso Fitness has developed an interesting exercise bike - video game hybrid that engages your attention with a first person adventure game while you sweat it out. Although using video games to exercise is not a new phenomenon, Espresso's machine marks the incorporation of gaming into professional grade workout gear.

Thought: cater to body and mind.

UNIVERSAL BATTERIES

In what looks to be a promising advancement in battery technology, the National Formosa University in Taiwan has invented the world's first chlorophyll organic battery. Though the specific details are sparse, what is known is that the batteries can be powered by any type of liquid. Just immerse them in a liquid bath and they'll generate power within 10 seconds. It's guessed that they use a process similar to plant photosynthesis. They're cheap too. The downside is that they don't produce as much power as regular batteries (though they can store twice as much), and use liquids, severely limiting where they can be used. Hopefully though, this innovation will lead to practical uses in the future.

Thought: what 'tech' could you borrow from plants.

THE POWER OF FREE

Companies are taking a lesson from the old adage that sometimes it's better to give than to receive. Giveaways, often linked to national events that are themselves already in the public conscious, have begun to generate serious buzz within the online sphere. In fact, the mere mention of one of these limited time offers creates noticeable spikes in the amount of times a participating business' name is searched and that's before any free transaction even takes place. Add in the increased foot traffic as potential customers flock to stores in the hopes of getting a sample of the featured product or service and the incentive to buy additional items rises as well. An equation that makes a great deal of sense for these companies considering the amount of “free” marketing they're receiving for such a small initial outlay.

Thought: 'free' is an unmissable offer.

From: 

IMMUNE REBOOT

For the first time, a drug has successfully reversed nerve and brain damage from multiple sclerosis, trial data suggests. MS disables nerves and brain tissue by attacking the myelin sheaths that otherwise protect them from damage. Alemtuzumab is the first drug that has shown the potential to halt and even reverse these debilitating effects. It is a monoclonal antibody that has been used since the 1980s to treat chronic lymphocytic leukaemia. But in trials with 334 patients in the early stages of multiple sclerosis Alemtuzumab completely outperformed rival drugs, relatively reducing the number of relapses by 78%. It also reduced by 71% the risk of patients developing a disability. Likewise, patients on alemtuzumab scored higher than before the treatment on a standard disability scale.

Thought: the answer is out there somewhere...just keep looking.

From: 

SLACKER PARENTS

We've witnessed the propagation of the creature known as helicopter parents - doting care givers that just can't stay out of their children's business. But what next, assuming this is all part of a logical cycle where the previous generation's faults fuels and defines the current generation's style. Well, to the relief of kids, teachers and potential employers everywhere, the "slacker parent" is on the rise. Parenting is generational. The Boomers (now in their 50s and 60s) were busy blazing trails and making money. So Gen X (now in their 30s and 40s) went a little overboard to make up for the attention they didn't get from parents who were never home (creating a new kind of stress in the process) Now enter Gen Y. The oldest of them are in their late 20s, and are just starting to have children. Like every generation they will aim to do exactly the opposite of what their parents did. And while there are certainly still "Alpha Moms" out there, the women who proudly see themselves as "Slacker Moms" are apparently growing.

Thought: do your consumers just want to chill out a bit?

From: 

THE DAD CAB

All parents know how hectic, time-consuming and frustrating driving kids around can be. Fortunately, a solution has been created in order to help kids appreciate the value of their parent's time, efforts and driving skills: The 'Dad's Cab' is a mock taxi meter that is placed on Dad's dashboard. Every time he drops off a kid at their destination, Dad tosses out a fare card which specifies a task, chore or favour that the child will have to return in exchange for the ride. This way children learn to appreciate their parents' time investment and discover that not everything in life is for free.

Thought: do people appreciate all you do for them?

SECOND HAND SURFING

As belts tighten ever more in a continuously precarious economy, it's fairly certain more and more parents are turning to second-hand sources for children's clothes and other items. While thrift stores tend to be hit-or-miss, and online offerings are often buried within the likes of Craigslist, a new classifieds site for mums promises to aggregate such listings from across the web, making it quicker and easier for parents to find high-quality and low-cost kids' goods. Hand-Me-Downs allows parents to buy, sell, give away or donate new and gently used children's products in a family friendly atmosphere. The site aims to create a one-stop destination for busy mums by pulling together and organizing the best listings from around the web, as well as offering listings posted by its own members.

Thought: second hand is no longer a dirty word.

Worth a look:

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

The nature of beauty

- <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/fashion/09skin.html>

Why fear leads to bad choices

- <http://malabar.livejournal.com/328228.html>

E-consultancy's 2008 Customer Engagement Survey

- <http://www.cscape.com/services/Documents/Customer-Engagement-Survey-2008.pdf>

America and the 'Alpha Mom'

- <http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/10/20/america-and-the-alpha-mom/>

How to build successful businesses by getting people involved

- <http://www.slideshare.net/helgetenno/next-generation-participation-presentation?type=powerpoint>

The Changing Face of Videogamers

- <http://corp.ign.com/articles/920/920555p1.html>

The Rise of the Happiness Brands

- <http://www.slideshare.net/avantgame/the-rise-of-the-happiness-brands-presentation?type=powerpoint>

How can evolution explain both the appeal and recent failings of negative campaigning?

- http://www.seedmagazine.com/news/2008/10/the_double_negative.php?utm_source=seedmag-main&utm_medium=rss

Life in the UK today: The role and citizen impact of Public Service Broadcasting

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/thefuture/pdf/sirc_report.pdf

Barack Obama and social media

- <http://www.slideshare.net/saydownin/obama-social?type=powerpoint>

An open apology from Generation X to Boomers everywhere

- <http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2008/11/07/havrilesky/?source=newsletter>

Why you need a decent product

- <http://www.slideshare.net/tomhimpe/the-conversation-starts-from-within-presentation?type=powerpoint>

Forget influentials, herd-like copying is how brands spread

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

Why the long tail doesn't work

- http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/11/07/long_tail_debunked/

When Technology Fails

- <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1036/when-technology-fails>

Goodness And Happiness - Why Generosity Is The Future Of Marketing Strategy

- <http://www.slideshare.net/neilperkin/goodness-and-happiness-why-generosity-is-the-future-of-marketing-strategy-presentation?type=powerpoint>