

AS THE WORLD CHURNS

FROM TRANSPARENT DESIGN TO THE RISE OF SUPERHERO FANTASIES – HERE ARE 26 TRENDS THAT WILL SHAPE HOW WE LIVE, WORK, PLAY AND DO BUSINESS IN THE YEAR AHEAD

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How do you top the year of the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, the explosion of location-based digital applications and the emergence of cyber-addiction? In 2012, the one sure thing is that consumer trends will come and go fast. The world's population is growing quickly in some parts and ageing rapidly in others. Meanwhile, Apple, Facebook, Google and Amazon slug it out for the future of the innovation economy. What does it all mean? Our panel of leading global trendspotters outlines the themes they believe will shape the near future.

SOCIAL CLIMBING

THE MIGHTY AND THE TINY: With the era of entitlement nearing its end and social media continuing to connect us, more movements will be hatched. People are speaking out loudly and clearly, with great aplomb. **Marian Salzman (MS)**

RE-ENGINEERING RANDOMNESS: Watch for random, real-time video chat platforms, where strangers will be "smashed" together. **Ann Mack (AM)**



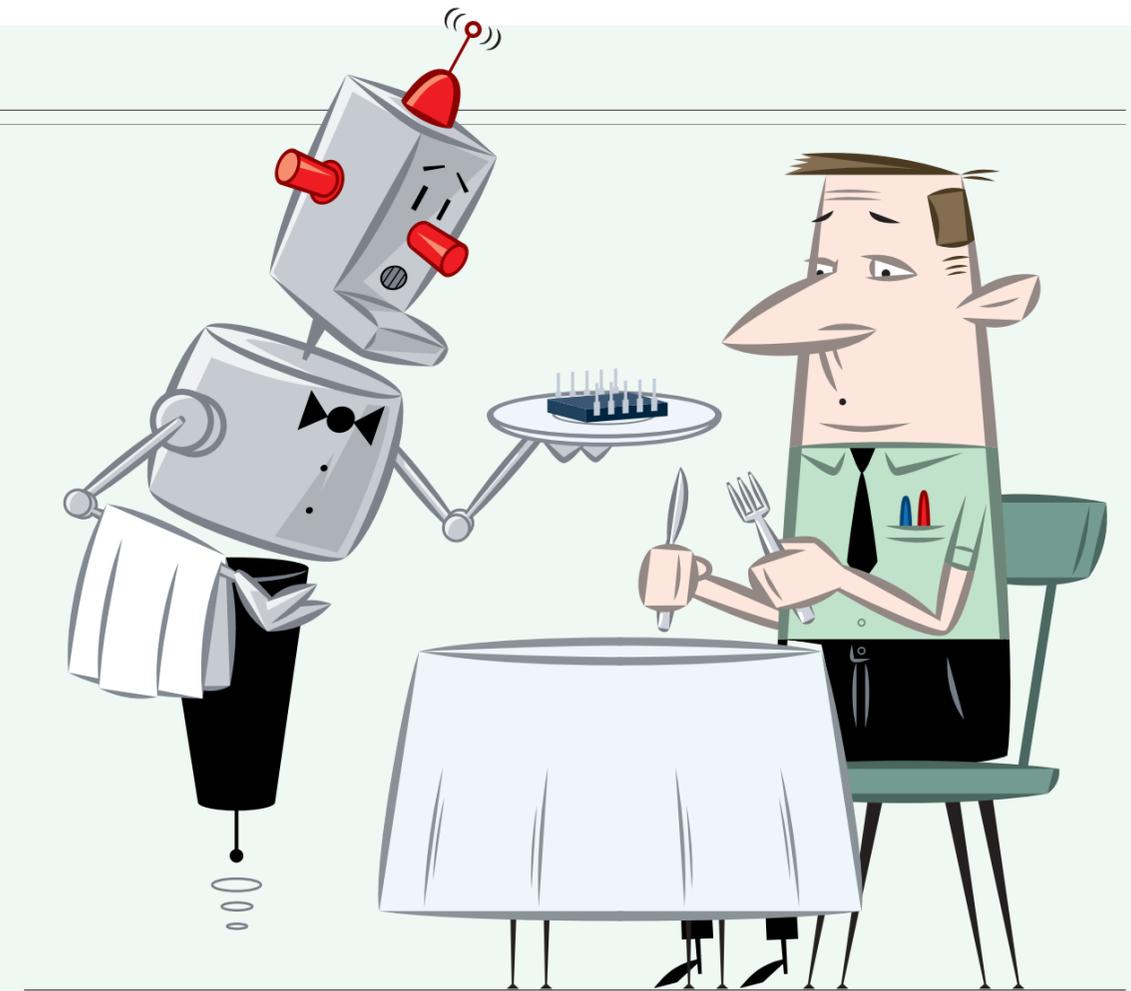
TRENDSPOTTERS

Marian Salzman, chief executive Euro RSCG Worldwide PR, North America

New York-based Salzman is one of the world's best-known trendspotters. Her team recently produced its largest ever in-depth report, covering advertising, home furnishings, men, lifestage marketing and politics. "The best way to serve [our clients] most effectively is by anticipating the density and velocity of the changes on the near horizon," Salzman says. (MS)

Ann Mack, director of trendspotting, JWT, New York

Mack oversees the forecasting of trends for the fourth-largest advertising agency in the world, helping brands turn shifts in the Zeitgeist into opportunities for growth. Recently, she led the relaunch of JWTIntelligence.com and the development of JWT's AnxietyIndex.com, which is designed to help brands navigate consumer anxiety. (AM)



Jeremy Gutsche, chief Trend Hunter, TrendHunter.com

Gutsche founded his Toronto-based company in 2005. Today it is the world's largest and most frequently updated database of new business ideas, harnessing the collective insight of 80,000 trend hunters and the patterns that emerge from 700,000,000 views of data. The website is targeted at entrepreneurs, journalists, marketers, designers and the curious, and has a front page that includes unique and random ideas. TrendHunter also works with clients such as Microsoft, eBay, Google and Pepsi, to identify patterns that could have an impact on their products. (JG)

KEY(BOARD) INDICATORS: The almighty keyboard is now the ultimate mediator and communicator. Skype, internet television sites such as Hulu.com and music-sharing sites such as Spotify and the new rara.com (which is available in Australia), will continue to change the way we interpret "place". (MS)

LIFE AMONG THE CLOUDS: Cloud computing will be the most talked-about tech trend. People will share more than ever, playing music and accessing information from anywhere. The biggest player will be the mobile phone. (MS)

PROFILING: Social networking has become a culture in and of itself. Social media users are being separated into stereotypical groups. We'll see more catty categorising and archetype parodies. **Jeremy Gutsche (JG)**

SCREENED INTERACTIONS: From outdoor ads to menus to walls, everything's becoming a screen. Look for bus stops with touch screens featuring interactive games. (AM)

CONSUMER POWER

GOOD CONSUMPTION IN A SLOW ECONOMY: It's no longer enough for brands to just provide. We want to know how they provide, why they provide and what they stand for when doing so. Welcome to the new "value". (MS)

RETOOLING FOR THE NEW NORMAL: More brands offer accessible products and services for the growing developed-world demographic of the have-nots. Look for US manufacturers selling chewing gum in five-stick packs for 50¢ and British universities offering reduced fees to students who forgo amenities such as the library and sport. (AM)

VIRTUAL FASHION: Consumers are beginning to demand social media in everything they do. Apparel brands are taking note and cleverly integrating sites like Twitter and Facebook into their products. Twitter high tops and ID necklaces will feed the hype. (JG)

DIGITAL EATING: Interactivity becomes essential to dining out. Apps and digital devices are linked with menus and wait staff, adding a modern touch and enhancing brand loyalty. Watch for robot-run restaurants and internet martini bars. (JG)

LIVE A LITTLE: Faced with constant reminders about what to do and what not to do, and fatigued from austerity, consumers will look to live a little without giving up a lot: indulging in sinful things and splurging on treats. (AM)

AUGMENTED REALITY: This will stand out as a marketing tactic, as the increase in tablets and smartphones will make it easier for marketers to grab your attention with virtual worlds layered over the top of reality. You can virtually "try on" fake shoes in NYC Converse shops and last summer there was a virtual airwalks store that you could see only on your

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phone. Watch for fitting room simulators; virtual make-up mirrors and virtual interior design. (JG)

SHARED VALUE: A concept that reflects the growing belief that generating a profit and achieving social progress are not mutually exclusive goals. By reconsidering products and target demographics, forging partnerships with local groups and improving productivity, companies can become a force for positive change while enhancing their long-term competitiveness. (AM)

FOOD AS THE NEW ECO-ISSUE: As more regions battle with food shortages and/or surging costs, smarter food systems will join the stable of green "best practices". One example: expect to be offered free samples of sustainable species of fish at your supermarket. (AM)

CULTURE SHOCKED

A GREYER SHADE OF GREY. True, it's been a bleak year for many but dingy colours aren't just a metaphor for the times – the world really is going grey. Some countries' citizens are getting older in record numbers. (MS)

GREY IS GOOD: As the world's population becomes older than it's ever been and life expectancy rises, we'll see "old age" being radically redefined. People are adopting a more positive view of ageing. (AM)

MARRIAGE OPTIONAL: A growing number of women are taking a life route that doesn't include marriage as an essential checkpoint. Both in the West and in the East, "happily ever after" is being redefined as maintaining a household of one, cohabiting or single motherhood. (AM)

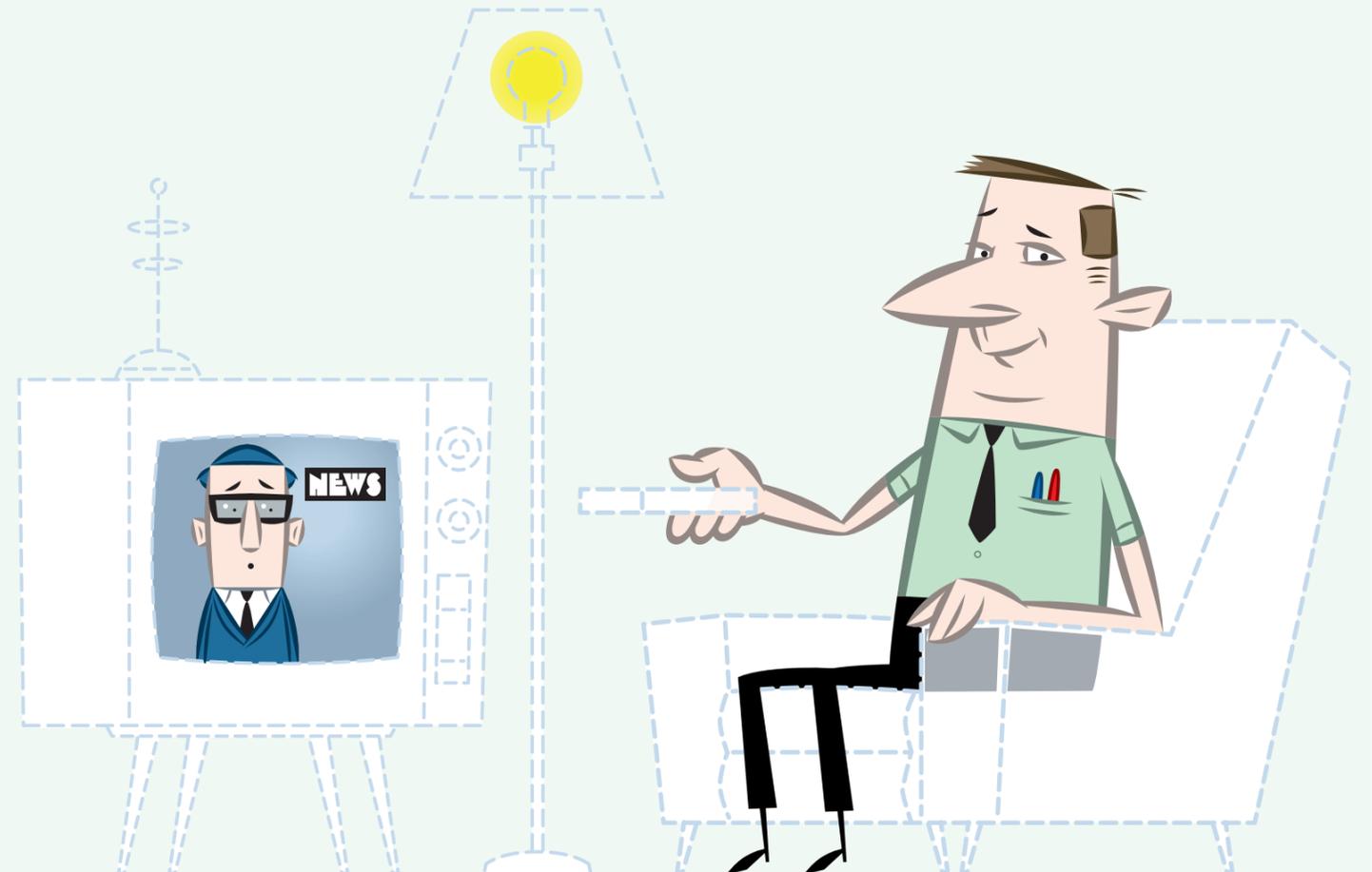
AGE OF COLLABORATION: The era of "me" is giving way to the era of "we". Collaborative software will be huge, and the ability to work anywhere, any time, will require online connections. (MS)

OLD COMFORT: With change and uncertainty constant, a return to traditional thinking is the cause of the year ahead. Look for many people to refocus on family, food and simple pleasures. (MS)

DESIGNER FANTASIES

INVISIBLE DESIGN: Transparent home furnishings and the return to simplicity – there's nothing more minimal than a transparent design. Watch out for illusory staircases; mind-boggling invisible bookcases; invisible eco-houses and light switches, and see-through TVs and outdoor seating. (JG)

SUPERHERO REALITY: Children have traditionally looked up to superheroes. Today's adult consumer isn't afraid to carry



on that fascination. Watch for superhero-inspired products such as dating sites, T-shirts, comic book-branded cosmetics, suits based on science fiction characters, and heroic-themed cooking gear and car shoots. (JG)

DIGITAL DECOR: That classic interior design staple, wallpaper, gets a tech overhaul, as LED lights, heat sensitivity and other elements breathe life into traditional decor. Watch for magical morphing decor, social media wallpaper and vivid virtual wallpaper. (JG)

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRITS

GENERATION GO: Out of continued joblessness or discontent springs an unprecedented entrepreneurial mindset among 20-somethings, enabled by technology that obliterates barriers to entry. A so-called lost generation will transform itself into a uniquely resourceful cohort. (AM)

INSTANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Digital business networks will connect to thousands of like-minded people, while prod-

ucts, apps and special services will help aspiring business owners realise their dreams quickly and easily. The era of instant entrepreneurship is here. (JG)

SIMPLE LIFE

UNLABELLING: We're looking for cleaner details, sharper focus and less in-your-face selling. In response, brands turn to extreme minimalism, with simplified logos and packaging design, relying on loyalty and brand recognition to maintain sales and awareness. Expect unbranded coffee logos and minimalist beer bottles and brand makeovers. (JG)

OBJECTIFYING OBJECTS: As solid objects are replaced by their digital and virtual counterparts, records, books, photo albums and even cash become fetishised; people will hanker after the physical and the tactile, often in their old-fashioned forms. (AM) B

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