

12 CRUCIAL CONSUMER TRENDS FOR 2012



Introduction | In 2012, much as in previous years, some brands may be staring into the abyss, while others will do exuberantly well. And while we can't offer any help to defaulting nations or bankrupt companies, **we do believe that there are more opportunities than ever for creative brands and entrepreneurs to deliver on changing consumer needs.** From Canada to Korea. Hence this overview of 12 must-know consumer trends (in **random order**) for you to run with in the next 12 months. Onwards and upwards:

1. RED CARPET

In 2012, businesses around the world will shower Chinese customers and visitors with even more tailored services and perks, and in general, lavish attention and respect.



China is the new emperor, and outpaced companies, flailing nations and even broke monetary unions are looking to the Chinese to bail them out. No wonder red carpets are being rolled out wherever Chinese politicians and CEOs currently set foot. In 2012's global *consumption* arena we see a similar picture: **department stores, airlines, hotels, theme parks and museums, if not entire cities, around the world are going out of their way to shower Chinese customers with tailored services and perks, and in general, lavish them with attention and respect.**

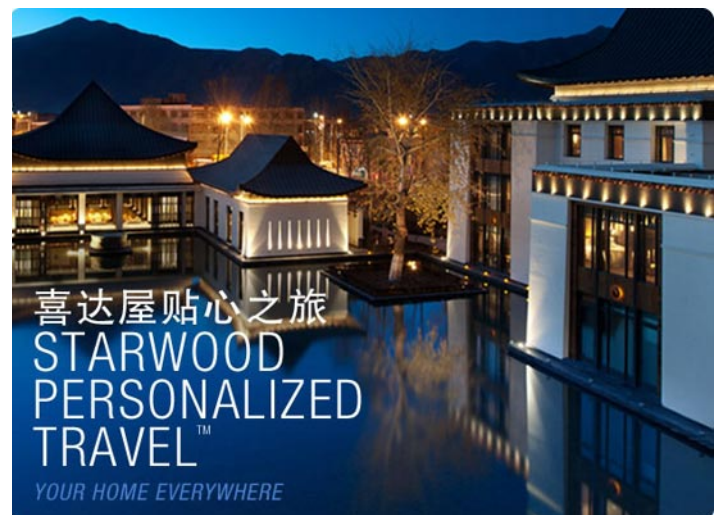
Some stats:

- Chinese residents made over 30 million overseas trips in the first half of 2011 alone, up 20% since 2010. For comparison, US citizens made only 37 million outbound air travel trips during the whole of 2010 (Source: China Ministry of Public Security, July 2011; Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, September 2011).
- And that's just the beginning: The World Tourism Organization has estimated that the total number of outbound tourists from China will reach 100 million by 2020.

Count on Indians and Brazilians to be on the receiving end of the RED (OR ORANGE OR GREEN) CARPET trend too. Some examples:



- In July 2011, Hilton Hotels Worldwide created a service targeting Chinese travelers. Called "[Hilton Huanying](#)" (Mandarin for "welcome"), the program is available at 30 Hilton hotels across the world, and offers tailored assistance for Chinese guests, including check-in in their native language and in-room facilities such as Chinese tea and television channels, as well as slippers and a welcome letter in Mandarin. There's also a breakfast buffet available, with congee, dim sum and fried noodles on the menu.



- Starwood Hotels is rolling out a similar service in 2012, called the [Starwood Personalized Travel program](#).



- In London, department store [Harrods](#) employs 70 Mandarin-speaking members of staff. It has also installed 75 dedicated China UnionPay points. In a similar vein, Parisian department store [Printemps](#) has a special entrance for Chinese tour groups and Chinese store maps.
- Australia has committed USD 30 million over three years to market the country as a luxury destination for wealthy Chinese tourists. The [Australian tourism board](#) has taken its marketing campaign to 13 cities in the mainland so far, with hopes of expanding to more than 30 cities by 2020.

2. DIY HEALTH

DIY goes 'good for you' in 2012: novel apps and devices will increasingly let consumers discreetly track and manage their health by themselves.



The Do It Yourself trend is not going to slow down in 2012. Now, there are two kinds of DIY: the kind (most!) consumers hate and the kind they love. For 2012, the latter category will show endless innovation driven by, what else, technology, which in turn feeds off a never-ending desire among consumers to be in control. And while innovative DIY spottings keep pouring in (check out true DIY luggage check-in at [Amsterdam Schiphol Airport](#)), for this 2012 overview we're focusing on DIY and health, as countless new apps and devices are actively targeting consumers keen on preventing, examining, improving, monitoring and managing their health. In fact, Apple's App Store currently offers 9,000 mobile health apps (including nearly 1,500 cardio fitness apps, over 1,300 diet apps, over 1,000 stress and relaxation apps, and over 650 women's health apps) and by mid-2012, this number is expected reach 13,000 (Source: MobiHealthNews, September 2011).

Other positive implications for consumers tracking their own state of health include less necessity for potentially intrusive and embarrassing trips to the doctor, or for those that do **need** medical attention and supervision, a much more convenient and accessible way for their doctor to keep a remote eye on any troublesome conditions or changes.

Some further stats: research company [Technavio](#) predicts that the global mobile health applications market will reach USD 4.1 billion by 2014, up from USD 1.7 billion in 2010. So, what can you do to make life easier, if not healthier for your customers in 2012? Some examples to get you going:



- Released in November 2011, [Jawbone's Up](#) is a wristband personal tracking device that tracks a user's moving, eating and sleeping patterns. The device syncs with an iPhone app, and users can set the device to vibrate when they have been inactive for a period, compete against friends and even earn real life rewards for completing activity challenges.



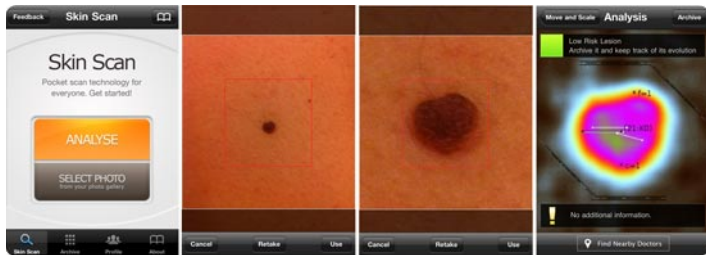
- [Pain Free Back](#), an interactive back pain relief product, lets users enter specific data as they're taken on a guided discovery about their back pain. Exercise solutions are offered afterwards.



- The [Play It Down](#) app enables users to test their hearing. The app offers several interactive features including 'The Ear Knob' that lets friends compare who can hear the highest frequencies, and 'The Volume Zone' which measures sound volume in decibels.
- The [Digifit Ecosystem](#) is a suite of Apple apps designed for those with an active lifestyle. It can record heart rate, pace, speed and power. Data can also be uploaded to and managed via training sites such as Training Peaks and New Leaf.



- **Withings' Blood Pressure Monitor** plugs into an iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch and takes the user's blood pressure. Data can be sent directly to a doctor or published (confidentially) on the Web.



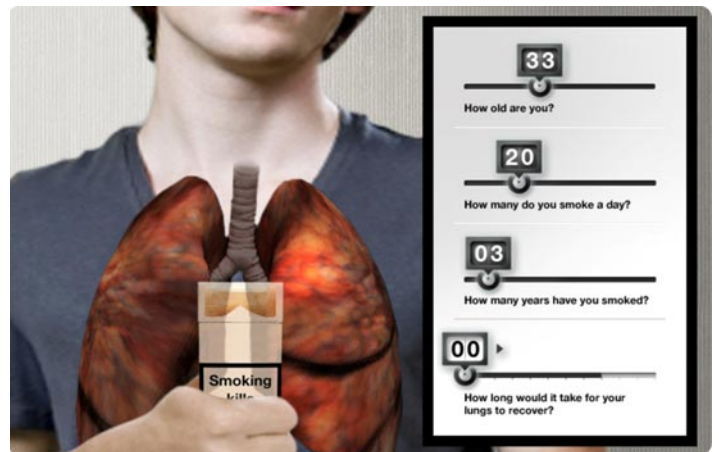
- **Skin Scan** is an app which allows users to scan and monitor moles over time, with the aim of preventing malignant skin cancers. The app tells users if a visit to their doctor or dermatologist is advisable.



- **Lifelens** has created a smartphone app to diagnose malaria. The app can analyze a magnified image of a drop of blood (captured via a simple finger prick) and identify malarial parasites.



- October 2011 saw US automotive company **Ford** demonstrate three apps offering **in-car health monitoring**. The sample apps use Ford's SYNC Applink software to enable drivers to access certain mobile health apps while driving to keep track of chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma and hay fever.



- US-based ad agency SapienNitro launched an augmented reality (AR) app called **Lungs** in July 2011 to show smokers the damage caused by cigarettes. Users can control settings to reflect their own experience based on factors such as their age and how many cigarettes they smoke each day; these all impact on both the visual representation and 'time taken for lungs to recover' statistic.
- And there's more, more, more: In October 2011, **AT&T** announced it will begin selling clothes embedded with health monitors, able to track the wearer's vital signs (including heart rate and body temperature) and upload them to a dedicated website. And nonprofit the **X Prize Foundation** is co-sponsoring a USD 10 million award for the best mobile device allowing consumers to diagnose their own diseases.

3. DEALER-CHIC

For consumers, securing the best deals is fast becoming a way of life, if not a source of pride and status.



Image courtesy of [thinkvox](#)

Deal hunting has become an integral part of daily life for millions of consumers. Yes, there are many new and innovative ways in which brands are using promotions and offers, but consumer attitudes to discounts and deals are what's really changing.

Obviously, consumers have always loved getting good deals or exclusive rewards, but rather than having to hide one's haggling, securing the best deal is now accepted, if not admired by one's fellow consumers. In fact, it's now about more than just saving money: it's the thrill, the pursuit, the control, and the perceived smartness, and thus a source of status too. Just three reasons why DEALER-CHIC is set to get bigger and bigger in 2012:

- **MORE FOR LESS:** While many people in developed economies may have less money to spend right now, consumers everywhere will forever look to experience more.
- **THE MEDIUM IS THE MOTIVATION:** Consumers are now being alerted to, using, reusing and sharing offers and deals via new (and therefore infinitely more exciting and attractive) technologies.
- **BEST OF THE BEST:** With instant mobile or online access to not only deals but reviews as well, consumers can now be confident they're getting the best price for the best product or service.

And next? An even bigger 'deal ecosystem', more personalization, more loyalty schemes, more pressure on brands to deliver deal-immune brilliance as an integral part of everything they sell and promote. Some examples:

- In September 2011, The [National Louis University in Chicago](#) became the first educational establishment in the world to sell a course on a daily deal site.



- [Notikum](#) is a real-time, location-based app for Singaporeans which enables users to find deals near them, organized into categories of "Shop", "Eat" and "Play".



- Brazilian [Daitan](#) (a dealership selling used Honda cars) gave customers the opportunity to propose prices for cars on a "Faça sua Oferta" ("Make your offer") page.
- American Express [Link-Like-Love](#) social commerce program gives AMEX cardholders relevant deals and experiences based on their likes, interests and social connections on Facebook.

We actually have plenty more on DEALER-CHIC for you: read our recent, [dedicated Trend Briefing](#) on this topic.

4. ECO-CYCOLOGY

Next for recycling? Brands taking back *all* of their products (and recycling them responsibly and innovatively).



While in times of recession, economic interests tend to overrule eco-causes, the quest for a more sustainable lifestyle will remain a most pressing issue for years to come. We picked one 'green' trend (out of many) for this 2012 list: the phenomenon of brands helping consumers recycle by **taking back all old items** from customers, and then **actually doing something constructive with them**.

Because, as our recent Trend Briefing on **RECOMMERCE** introduced, consumers are increasingly aware not only of the financial value in their past purchases, but the material and ecological value of 'stuff' as well. Insert your own eco or generous angle [here]. We have dubbed this all-encompassing recycling on steroids 'ECO-CYCOLOGY'. Sometimes prompted by new legislation*, sometimes by brands seeing the light (yes, it happens), these programs leave consumers no excuse to not recycle in 2012.

* *ECO-CYCOLOGY* mentality is more than a just brand-led phenomenon; realizing its importance, various cities or states in US (San Diego, Seattle and San Francisco to name a few) have enacted their own mandatory recycling laws. Likewise, The European Parliament has voted for tougher regulations on the disposal of electronic trash, requiring each country to collect 4 kilos of e-waste per citizen by 2012, and to process 85% of all its electronic waste by 2016.

Examples:



- As part of US outdoor brand Patagonia's **Common Threads Initiative**, any item bought from Patagonia that has reached the end of its 'life' can be returned for recycling into new fiber or fabric. The company claims to have so far taken back 45 tons of clothing for recycling and made 34 tons into new clothes.
- Nike's **Reuse-A-Shoe scheme** collects and recycles worn-out Nike shoes, as well as scraps from the shoe manufacturing process. The old shoes are sliced, separated and ground up into a material called Nike Grind, which is then used in creating athletic and playground surfaces, as well as a variety of Nike products.
- French beauty brand Garnier began partnering with US based environmental charity Terracycle in April 2011 to host the **Personal Care and Beauty Brigade** program. Offering free collection and recycling of *all* personal care and beauty related products, the brigade traveled between US cities, where attendees could recycle beauty packaging (and be awarded points or money). The waste packaging is then used to make playground equipment across the US. Filled bags could also be sent via UPS for free, with Garnier meeting all costs.
- Dell runs **Dell Reconnect** in partnership with Goodwill Industries. The scheme allows users to take their electrical equipment, from any brand, to one of Goodwill's 2,200+ participating locations in the United States or Canada, where it will then be refurbished or recycled.

5. CASH-LESS

Why a cashless future is (almost) here, and why it will be about convenience *and* an entire new eco-system of payments, rewards and offers.



Sure, the cashless society has been popping-up in every trend list since 2005. And while 2012 (again) is not going to be the year that consumers **en masse** will forego coins and notes and just swipe their smartphones, it *is* going to be the year that major players like Google and MasterCard will actively roll out their cashless initiatives* around the world. For consumers, the initial lure will be convenience, but eventually mobile payments will create an entirely new data-driven eco-system of rewards, purchase history, deals and so on.

** Many of these initiatives incorporate NFC (Near Field Communication), which allows for encrypted data exchange between two devices in close proximity ("near field") to each other. For instance: a reader located next to a retail cash register. Shoppers who have their credit card information stored in their NFC smartphones can pay for purchases by waving their smartphones near or tapping them on the reader, rather than using an actual credit card.*

Just a few of the CASH-LESS initiatives to keep an eye on in 2012:

- In October 2011, Google's free, NFC-enabled mobile payment system [Google Wallet](#) became operational at a selection of retail chains across the US. Licensing [MasterCard's PayPass](#) technology, shoppers simply tap their mobile device on special terminals at points-of-sale to pay instantly. In participating stores, they can also redeem special coupons, participate in sales promotions or gain loyalty points, simply by choosing to pay with Google Wallet.
- In June 2011, US online [payments processor PayPal](#) demonstrated a mobile payments application for Android devices. Users install the app and activate the PayPal widget, and can then request to send or receive funds from another individual with a smartphone and PayPal account. Using NFC, the two users can then hold their devices together in order to instantly transfer funds.



- [Square](#) is an electronic payments service which enables users to accept credit card payments by using a card-reading portable device connected to their iPhone, iPad or Android device. Both the Square card-reader and app are free, although there is a 2.75% charge for each payment made. Once the system has been set up, users can accept payments immediately. In November 2011, Richard Branson and Visa [became investors](#) in the venture. In the same month, Square updated the app, allowing for a completely hands-free payment experience by simply [saying your name](#).

- Launched in Sweden in June 2011, [iZettle](#) is a device that enables consumers to accept credit card payments while on the go. The portable chip and pin reader plugs into iPhones or iPads and uses an iZettle app, meaning that card transactions can take place instantly. Bills can also be paid or money transferred using the device. There's a facility to tag transactions with images, notes or location data, which users can post to Facebook and Twitter to share their purchases with friends.



Image courtesy of [antimega](#)

- In November 2011 Deutsche Bahn, Germany's main rail operator, extended its [Touch&Travel](#) service to all its 320 stations. Passengers can either use NFC to pay, or take a photo of a barcode as they enter and exit stations.

6. BOTTOM OF THE URBAN PYRAMID

In 2012, the opportunities to cater to hundreds of millions of low-income urban consumers will be unprecedented.



Driven by extreme urbanization on a global scale that will *not* slow down in 2012, expect more BOTTOM OF THE URBAN PYRAMID (BOUP) consumers than ever (the hundreds of millions of **CITYSUMERS** who don't have middle-class salaries to spend) to demand innovation tailored to their unique circumstances, from health issues to lack of space to the need for durability. And remember, BOUP consumers have materialistic and aesthetic desires too.

Some examples:



- Developed by **NCR**, the Pillar ATM harnesses biometric technologies, making it suitable for use by illiterate and semi-literate populations. The device features a contactless card reader, a biometric fingerprint scanner, fast cash buttons, a dispenser and a receipt printer. Users of the free-standing device can simply place their thumb on the sensor and push the color-coded button for the amount of cash they want to take out. In Q3 2011, NCR began testing five prototype Pillar ATMs in the US, with the aim of launching the device in developing markets.



- **Aakash** is an Android-based, wifi-enabled tablet computer, manufactured in Hyderabad, India as a low-cost but full functioning device. It is expected to be sold for USD 60 in retail stores, and (subsidized by the Government of India) to students for around USD 35.



- **PepsiCo India** is test-marketing two products: Lehar Gluco Plus, a beverage with electrolytes and glucose, and Lehar Iron Chusti, a fortified iron snack. Both are aimed at consumers at the bottom of the pyramid — in urban (and rural) areas (Source: Economic Times, June 2011).

7. IDLE SOURCING

Expect crowd-based problem solving to fuel endless innovations in 2012, especially as for consumers, contributing will be more effortless than ever.



In 2012, count on the crowdsourcing trend to continue to shake up business processes and spawn endless innovations. After all, being given a chance to contribute, or to be a part of something bigger than themselves, will be forever popular with people.

However the reality is that most consumers- while they might *want* to contribute- find that it's too difficult or too much hassle. Which is why you can expect to see more IDLE SOURCING initiatives in 2012: products and services that make it downright simple (if not effortless) to contribute to anything, from pinpointing roads in need of repairs to finding signs of extraterrestrial life.

Just one development unlocking new possibilities: the ubiquity of always-on, GPS and accelerometer-enabled smartphones in 2012, means that consumers themselves can and will increasingly broadcast data about where and what they are doing (assuming they have agreed to do so of course: don't even get us started on the privacy debate that will continue to rage in the new year).

Two IDLE SOURCING examples that show the way:

- Test launched back in March 2011, the Boston based [Street Bump app](#) takes advantage of the sensors on smartphones to give city officials a real-time map of road conditions. The Android app uses the accelerometers and GPS technology in users' phones to register when and where the user's car has experienced a pothole, which it logs and reports automatically.
- Israeli crowd-sourced traffic navigation app [Waze](#) reached seven million users across 45 countries in October 2011. The app provides free turn-by-turn navigation alongside live information about road conditions, crowdsourced from other users. Users can also sign-in and view their friends' locations.

8. FLAWSOME

Why for 2012's consumers, brands that behave more humanly, including showing their flaws, will be awesome.



Image courtesy of [Russ Frushtick](#)

While many trends are all about the new, it's always worth remembering that success in business in the end is more about being aligned with consumer culture than just being aware of 'new' techniques and technologies.

While 2011 saw new levels of consumer disgust at too many business' self-serving and often downright immoral (if not criminal) actions, stories of businesses doing good (Patagonia! Ben & Jerry's!) remind consumers that personality and profit can be compatible. In fact, in 2012 consumers won't expect brands to be flawless; they will even *embrace* brands that are FLAWSOME*, and at large (or at least somewhat) human. Brands **that are honest about their flaws, that show some empathy, generosity, humility, flexibility, maturity, humor and dare we say it, some character and humanity.**

Now, there are endless powerful and novel strategies that you can use to flaunt your FLAWSOME side, which is why we'll dedicate an entire Trend Briefing to FLAWSOME and HUMAN BRANDS in March 2012. For now, just one nice FLAWSOME example:

- In July 2011, US based fast food retailer [Domino's](#) launched a month-long promotional campaign in New York. Hiring out a huge billboard space in Times Square, the brand live-streamed (good *and* bad) customer feedback given via Twitter onto the digital hoarding.

* Yes, we might have coined our **worst trend name** ever. Although [TRYVERTISING](#) comes close ;-)

9. SCREEN CULTURE

In 2012, 'life' will take place via ever more pervasive, personal, immersive and interactive screens.



SCREEN CULTURE is less of a trend in itself, but more the medium through which so many trends in this Trend Briefing will manifest themselves. 2012 will see three mega-tech currents converge: screens will be (even more): **ubiquitous / mobile / cheap / always on; interactive and intuitive** (via touchscreens, tablets and so on); an **interface to everything and anything that lies beyond the screen** (via the mobile web and, increasingly and finally mainstream in 2012, 'the cloud'). In fact, the future for most devices will be a world where consumers will care less about them and just about the screen, or rather what's being accessed through it.

So whether it's the convergence of 'online' and 'offline' (see OF-F=ON in our recent [RETAIL RENAISSANCE Trend Briefing](#)), consumers tapping into [THE F-FACTOR](#) to discover and decide on new products with the help of their friends, fans and followers, or never ending mega-trends like 'convenience' or [INFOLUST](#), expect all consumer culture to be influenced by and take place in an all-pervasive SCREEN CULTURE.

And no, there won't be 'screen overload' or 'screen fatigue'. In fact, the [above video](#) is just a taste of things to come for digital natives in 2012 and beyond. Some random signs of the times:



- UK supermarket chain Sainsbury's, in a partnership with television provider Sky, is allowing shoppers to watch key sports events while they shop using in-cart iPad docks and speakers. The [Sky Go trolley](#) comes complete with a tilting iPad holder, speakers and an onboard battery with self-charging solar panel. All sports-minded shoppers need to do is download the Sky Go streaming app onto their tablet and then load it into the shopping cart's dock.



- The European Parliament's ["Parliamentarium"](#) is the largest visitors' center in Europe, and combines interactive multimedia and history in 23 languages to show the daily lives of EU citizens. A 360-degree digital surround screen takes visitors into the heart of European Parliament action, with touch screen applications providing more information about MEPs. One of the Center's unique features is that it caters for all 23 EU official languages using iPod Touch devices, configurable in any language.



- South African mobile telecommunications brand **8ta** installed touch-activated windows in its stores, enabling customers to browse the retailer's catalog throughout the day and night. Using technology from digital media company One Digital Media (also based in South Africa), the store's 'whispering windows' act as speakers, allowing shoppers to hear about products, as well as view them in the storefront. In the retail space, further touchscreens utilized on product display tables and embedded in walls showcase 8ta's products.



- In September 2011, Sichuan hotpot chain **Hao Di Lao** and Chinese technology firm **Huawei** announced a partnership to install telepresence screens in Hao Di Lao's Shanghai and Beijing restaurants. Customers can sit down and share their hotpot meal with family and friends located elsewhere via the screens. Hao Di Lao customers can already use iPads provided on their tables to order food.
- And SCREEN CULTURE examples (will) keep coming. In 2012, keep an eye on the **iPhone5 and iPad3**. And on the **Kindle Fire**. And on the **Aakash** tablet. Large screens will see an overhaul too: from **Apple iTV** and **Samsung's SmartTV**, to a whole host of apps available with **GoogleTV** to **LG's 3D projector** to **Sony's future TV plans**. Oh, and with winter hitting the northern hemisphere soon, expect a comeback of **Muji's** and **Etre's** screen-friendly gloves.

- Looking further ahead, how about the **OmniTouch**, a wearable prototype device (from Microsoft Research Redmond) which transforms any surface into a touchscreen via projection? Or Samsung's **flexible screens** and screen-embedded windows?
- Away from consumer electronics, Adidas and Intel have also showcased a **Virtual Footwear Wall**, enabling shoppers to browse up to 8,000 shoes at once via a touchscreen interface. Yes, SCREEN CULTURE truly is *the culture* ;-)

10. RECOMMERCE

For smart consumers, 'trading in' is the new buying in 2012.



- **Decathlon**, the French sports apparel and equipment store, launched Trocathlon for a week in October 2011. Stores bought back any used equipment in return for coupons valid for six months.

It's never been easier for consumers to unlock the value in past purchases.

Consumers have always resold large, durable goods like cars and houses; but in 2012, **almost anything is ripe for resale, from electronics to clothes, and even experiences.** Novel brand buy-backs, exchange schemes, online platforms and mobile marketplaces offer smart and convenient options for consumers keen to 'trade in to trade up', alleviate financial strains (double dips, anyone?), and/or quell environmental and ethical concerns.

Three drivers behind the RECOMMERCE phenomenon:

- **NEXTISM:** Consumers will forever crave new and exciting experiences promised by the 'next'.
- **STATUSHERE:** The growing status boost that comes from being savvy and shopping (environmentally) responsibly.
- **EXCUSUMPTION:** Cash-strapped, recession-stricken consumers embracing creative solutions to spend less and still enjoy as many experiences and purchases as possible.

A few examples:

- **Amazon Student** released in August 2011, enables students to scan the barcodes of books, DVDs, games or electronics they own, and see the trade-in price. If accepted, a shipping label is generated, and the funds awarded as an Amazon gift card.



- Already featured in ECO-CYCOLOGY, Patagonia's Common Threads Initiative is also an excellent example of RECOMMERCE. The US outdoor gear brand partnered with eBay in September 2011 to launch an **official marketplace** where customers could buy and sell used goods.
- **Levi's Singapore** offered customers SGD 100 when they brought in their old jeans and bought a new pair: a SGD 50 discount and a further SGD 50 in vouchers.
- US-based **DealsGoRound** allows users to resell and buy past Groupon, LivingSocial, and BuyWithMe deals.
- **StubHub**, the secondary ticket marketplace, added mobile ticket functionality to their app in August 2011, meaning that users can resell and buy tickets right at the event, even without access to a printer.

We actually have plenty more on RECOMMERCE for you: read our recent, **dedicated RECOMMERCE Trend Briefing** on this topic »

11. EMERGING MATURIALISM

Why in 2012, experienced, open-minded consumers in traditionally 'conservative' emerging markets will embrace campaigns and products that are frank if not risqué.

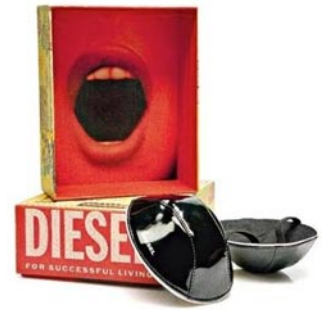


This is what we said about **MATURIALISM** a while ago: “*Thoroughly exposed to (if not participating in) an uncensored, opinionated and raw world (especially online!), experienced consumers no longer tolerate being treated like yesteryear’s easily shocked, inexperienced, middle-of-the-road audiences. Able to handle much more honest conversations, more daring innovations, more quirky flavors, more risqué experiences, these consumers increasingly appreciate brands that push the boundaries.*”

This mainly applied to consumers in mature consumer societies, but in 2012 we will see more and more MATURIALISTIC manifestations in emerging markets too.

Why? For all the many cultural differences that may exist, the global consumer class is remarkably alike in its needs and wants, not to mention **more urban** too (read: more connected, more spontaneous and more try-out-prone). So if you’re a Chinese or Indian or Turkish brand, or you’re a Western brand selling to emerging markets, 2012 is the year that you can push things a bit further.

Examples:



- In 2011, **Diesel India** ran an in-store promotion headlined with the phrase 'Sex sells. Unfortunately we sell jeans' that offered a spoof sex toy to customers spending over USD 150. The leatherette 'Knee J' knee pads came boxed in packaging featuring risqué retro cartoons and the tagline "Knee Jerk Reactions Guaranteed."
- Released in March 2011, Indian personal care brand **Cardiograph Corporation's** hand sanitizer Sanitol's ad campaign shows one man touching another's intimate area and another picking his colleague's nose. The ads hint at the kind of germs that consumers might have on their hands, and proving why they should use sanitizer to keep clean.



- US pharmaceutical brand Johnson & Johnson created an advertising campaign in China during September 2011 to raise awareness about gynecological health. A video commercial advertising a diary purportedly written by “V” (vagina in Chinese) took internet users to a **dedicated microsite** where users could view a fictional online diary written about women's sexual health. The 30-page virtual booklet had articles and information on relationships and sex as well as fashion and friendship.

12. POINT & KNOW

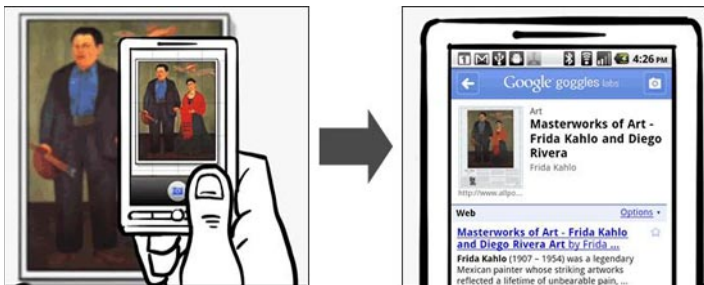
2012 will be about instant *visual* information gratification.



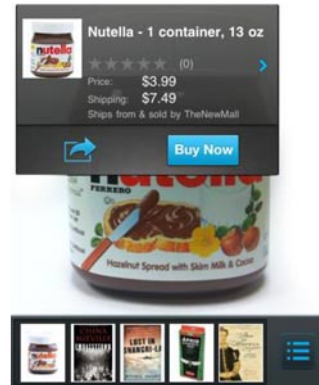
With textual search and textual information now being available to most people most of the time, the race is on to add a (useful) real world element – and by ‘real world’ we mean the world of objects and people.

2012 will see a mix of the known (Apps! Augmented Reality!) and the very known (QR codes!) bringing information about the objects (and even people) that consumers encounter in the real world instantly. And like some other trends, it’s the rise of the (always-in-my-pocket) smartphone that will fuel full-blown POINT & KNOW in the next 12 months. After all, the need and expectation for instant information and instant access to everything one wants to know, is already deeply ingrained in the **SEE-HEAR-BUY** consumer. Use POINT & KNOW in a practical fashion: adding depth of knowledge, communicating stories, origins, price comparisons, reviews, ecommerce and so on, or by all means, just have some fun with it!

Examples:



- **Google Goggles** is a free image recognition app which enables users to search based on photographs taken with a handheld device. By taking pictures of objects, places or product barcodes, users can find out further information.



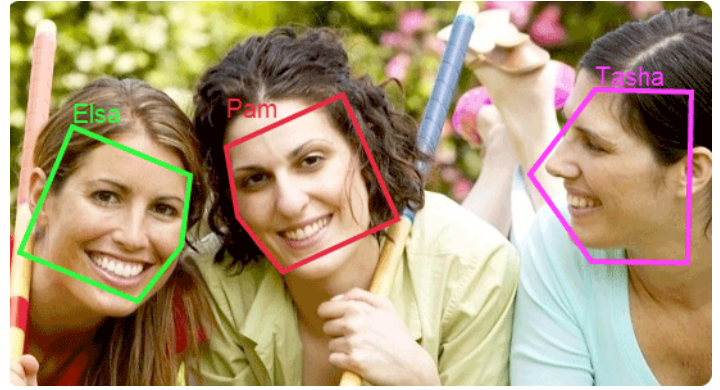
- Released in November 2011, the **Amazon Flow** app enables users to access information about products– and purchase them– using image recognition. In addition to books, music and film, many household products can also be recognized.



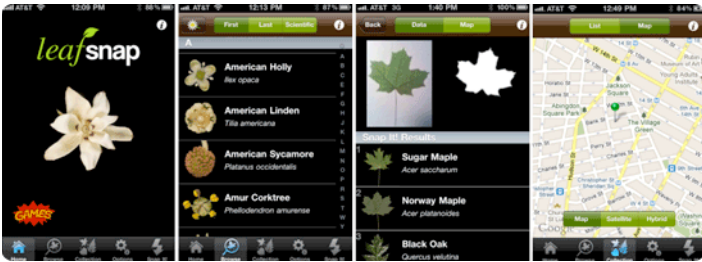
- Oh, and will 2012 finally see the tipping point for QR codes, the granddaddy of POINT & KNOW technologies? They’re everywhere now, and thanks to smartphones, consumers may finally be warming up to them too. In September 2011, **Ralph Lauren** introduced customized QR codes in its stores, featuring the retailer’s signature polo player logo. By scanning them, customers could win tickets to the US Open tennis tournament or purchase products on the Ralph Lauren M-Commerce site. Other luxury brands, like Louis Vuitton, are beautifying their QR codes too. Hey, and once even luxury brands are on the e-bandwagon... ;-)
- In October 2011, **Starbucks** unveiled a QR code promotion designed to educate consumers about its mobile payments app and its coffee.
- Canadian shoe designer **John Fluevog’s** 'Ask Clogs' collection incorporates QR codes into the sole of each shoe. The codes links to a video of that specific item being produced – from the first stages of manufacturing to in-store.



- Open during October 2011, The [eBay Inspiration Shop](#) in New York was the result of a collaboration between marketplace website eBay, US designer Jonathan Adler and a selection of ‘tastemakers’ such as celebrities, editors, bloggers and stylists. The virtual storefront displayed a range of electronic, fashion and automotive products, and to purchase items instantly, shoppers had to download eBay’s mobile application and scan a QR code.



- Created by Carnegie Mellon University, [PittPatt](#) is a facial recognition tool that enables users to find individuals from photographs or videos. The face detection software can locate human faces and match them up with photographs from Facebook and Google Images, identifying individuals in under 60 seconds. PittPatt, still in development, was acquired by Google in July 2011. Scary? Perhaps. Interesting? Definitely.



- [leafsnap](#) is a free app that utilizes visual recognition technology to enable users to identify various species of tree by taking photographs of leaves.
- [WeBIRD](#) allows anyone with a smartphone to record a bird’s call, submit it wirelessly to a server and (after a few seconds) receive a positive ID on the species of bird. WeBIRD hopes to be available to the public in time for the spring migration in 2012.
- Popular mobile music application [Shazam](#) (which offers music recognition software that enables users to identify any track they hear, wherever they are, share it and/or buy it), saw a 100% increase in downloads of the app each week in the twelve months preceding June 2011, with over 125 million users tagging four million songs every day. In September 2011, Shazam also announced that more than USD 100 million was spent each year on digital music via the app. Also check out similar service [Midomi SoundHound](#), which is partnering with Spotify.

13. MORE-ISM

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