> THE ANATOMY OF A TREND

The

> THE TREND FORECASTER'S TOOLKIT

Trend

> INTUITIVE FORECASTING

Forecaster's

> NETWORK FORECASTING

Handbook

> CULTURAL TRIANGULATION

Martin Raymond

> SCENARIO PLANNING

The Trend Forecaster's *Handbook*

Martin Raymond

常州大学图书馆
藏书章

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Contents

>4 *Foreword*

>6 *Timeline*

>10 *Chapter One* The Anatomy of a Trend

>32 *Chapter Two* The Trend Forecaster's Toolkit

>66 *Chapter Three* Intuitive Forecasting

>92 *Chapter Four* Network Forecasting

>118 *Chapter Five* Cultural Triangulation

>146 *Chapter Six* Scenario Planning

>170 *Chapter Seven* Insight, Strategy, and Innovation

>204 *Notes*

>206 *Glossary*

>209 *Index*

>212 *Picture Credits*

>216 *Acknowledgments*

Related study material is available on the Laurence King website at www.laurenceking.com

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>206 *Glossary*

>209 *Index*

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Foreword

THERE IS A SAYING among trend forecasters; those who can't do, and those who can, forecast. Working with clients on a global basis, I am aware of this again and again. Always concerned about the here and now, they forever fail to see the new and next. They "do" without thinking, and what thinking they do is done without imagination. Part of the forecaster's job is to challenge this process, and the job of this book is to provide you with the tools, techniques, and methodologies to become the kind of forecaster that makes these challenges profitable, innovative, and professionally accurate.

Yes accurate! If a company hires you, invests in you, and asks you to identify the next social, cultural, ethical, or environmental trend that is set to impact on consumer behavior, they'll expect you to get it right – especially if they are expected to commit a sizable chunk of their annual budgets to finance the recommendations you have made.

Forecasting can therefore leave little to chance, and the skills used by the forecaster leave little room to be questioned, challenged, or brought into doubt. They must be transparent, measurable, robust, and above all provable. This book has been written to provide you with such collateral. It also provides you with a range of approaches that can be amplified or dampened down depending on the industry you are eventually employed in, or the lifestyle sectors within these industries you are asked to focus your efforts on. All trends can be predicted; all shifts in the culture anticipated and accounted for – as long as you understand what trends are, where to look for them, what to look for when you are looking for them, and how to read or "braille" them when you actually find them!

All of this is explained in the opening chapters alongside the hidden and scientifically-proven laws and principals that govern the spread of trends throughout our culture. In the later chapters you are introduced to the people who create, mitigate, and drive these trends – our Innovators and Early Adopters, as well as the groups that make them popular – "social tribes" that forecasters refer to as the Early and Late Majorities.

Once these groups have been defined and understood, it is at once easier to appreciate the methods used by forecasters to identify, analyze, and determine the impact of trends on a local, national, and global basis. The many disciplines a forecaster calls upon in their day-to-day activities are also identified and explored – strategic intuition, neuro-psychology, memetics, behavioral economics, complexity theory, and even scenario planning, network science, and ethnography.

All are complex areas of study in their own right – but in this book they are all explained in a way that hopefully makes them intelligible to the student who needs to understand the sometimes invisible (and traditionally difficult to explain) talents many forecasters have, or learn to develop, without realizing they are indeed skills that can be quantified, honed, learned, and passed on in the first place! Techniques designed to sharpen your ability to imagine, dream, and envision are also discussed – again these are skills most of us have, but tend to put aside when we work in more corporate and commercial environments.

As we shall see, however, these tools – and they are tools – are every bit as important as the ones traditionally used to measure a person's tastes or to pin down their views – focus groups, quantitative surveys, depth interviews, and so on – all covered in these pages. However, while these activities can be used to determine a percentage shift in people's taste, or their views on a particular product, they are less useful in telling us what these tastes look, feel, sound, or smell like. Or for that matter, if the product itself is likely to go viral – the forecaster's term for a product, idea, or service that is likely to kick-start a trend.

This can only be done by fieldwork, social observation, exercising empathy, or utilizing your imagination, or even a daydream, to envision future scenarios. All these skills are addressed, and the many ways to deploy them unpacked. In the end, however, good trend forecasting comes down to three things: practice, perseverance, and the patience to follow through on a clearly-mapped-out set of methodologies. Forecasting, as you will see, isn't about guesswork or inspirational "flashes," but rather it is about applying quantitative and qualitative skills in a way that allows you to identify new and emerging shifts in the culture as they happen, and then to map and forward project these shifts in a way that makes them visible and transparent to less observant people.

This is what *The Trend Forecaster's Handbook* has been designed to do: to open your eyes, sharpen your senses, hone your cognitive and cultural skills, and also to remind you that there is one command that underpins and drives all forecasters – *sapere aude* (dare to know). It is an old phrase from an ancient language, but one that becomes more relevant and important in a world where there is so much to know, where any decision to reject knowledge must be robustly challenged – and in the final analysis, this is what good forecasting teaches you; to dare, to know, to challenge, and to use what you have learned to dare and challenge others.

Martin Raymond
October 2009

Timeline

This timeline charts the types of products, services, trends, and even ways of living that seem likely to become mainstays of our culture over the next two decades.

2011

2015

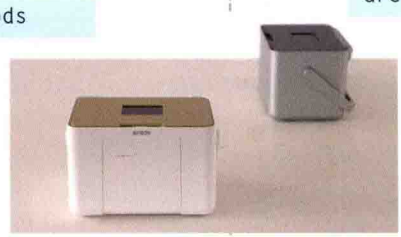
"Nano" car revolution

Le Labo multi-use retail

"Medi-beauty"

"Fruitelligent" foods

Green Depot recycling



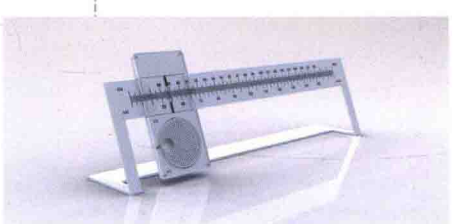
QR codes

"Homedulgent" delivery

Epson PictureMate printer

Tomy/Zink Camera/Printer

The School of Life



Aivan slide radio

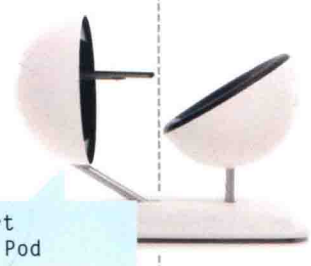
2016

2020

"Bleisure" furniture

Philips' X-halo
breath thermometer

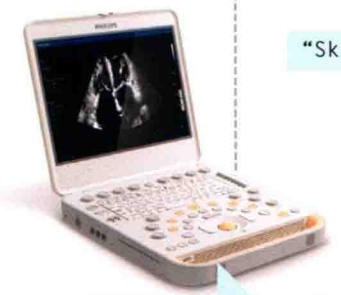
Muve Gruve
inactivity
monitor



Globus Artifort
Mobile Office Pod

"Kaleido multi-tec"

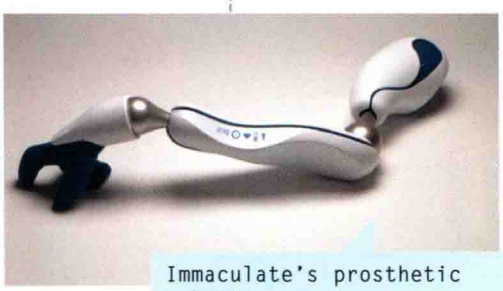
The luxury vending machine



Ultrasound home diagnostics

"Skingestibles"

Music, dance, and clock
with World Uniqlock



Immaculate's prosthetic
robotic arm

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2021

2025

Desktop Factory
3D printer

Yopodesign
Tramspiral tram

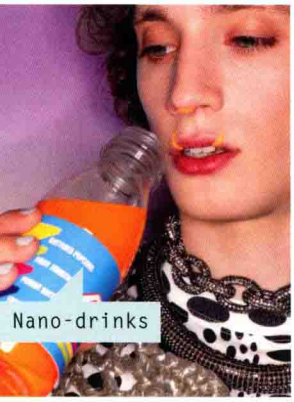
Philips' Flavor Strips

Brandt Aion kitchen
and herb garden

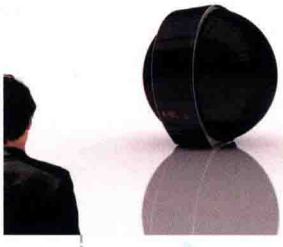
Philips' LivingColor
projector

Food grown in transit

Jenny Lundgren's
sustainable mineral water

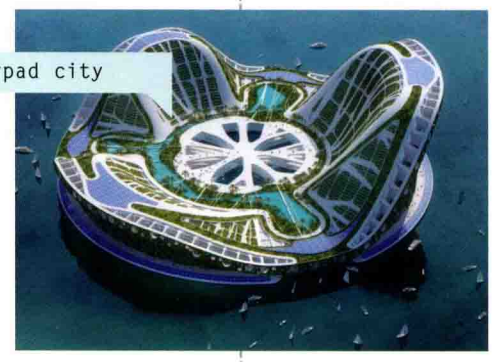


Nano-drinks



Immersive Cocoon

Mac Funamizu's handheld
city scanner



Lilypad city

The "Medi-home"

2026

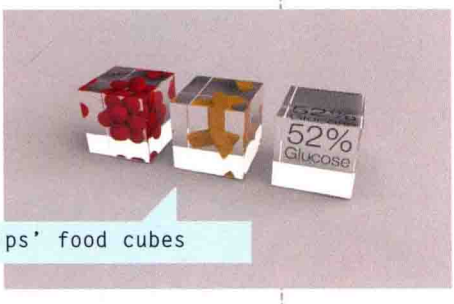
2030

Andrea Nimtschke's Firo cooking tube

Christelle Boule's biodegradable urns

Susana Soares' Bee diagnostics

The Moixa Interface Sphere



Philips' food cubes

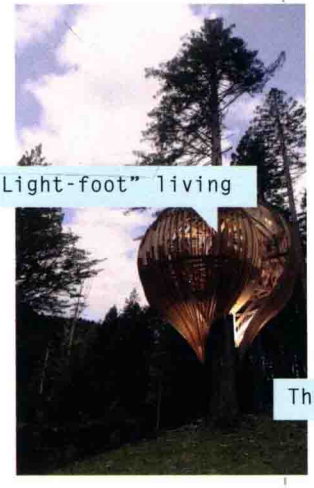
Podle mist sprays

Brittany Bell's "Seed Archive"

IDEO Aquaduct bike

GINA car by BMW

Waterpod floating homes



"Light-foot" living

The Colim Modular Camper

Hydro-Net city

Chapter One
The Anatomy of a Trend

> DEFINITION OF A TREND FORECASTER
> DEFINITION OF A TREND
> MEMES AND TREND VIRUSES
> DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS
> DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION TYPES
> DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION CURVE
> SUMMARY

THE "OCTOPUS" chandelier by Autoban is a fantastical blurring of a chandelier and anglepoise lamp. It is a design that also echoes a trend among designers such as Maarten Baas, Tobias Rockenfeld, and Nacho Carbonell to produce work that resembles phantasmagorical monsters and mechanical creations.

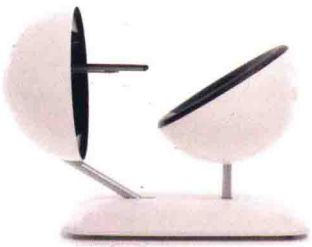
"I'm losing my edge to the Internet seekers who can tell me every member of every good group from 1962 to 1978. I'm losing my edge. To all the kids in Tokyo and Berlin. I'm losing my edge to the art-school Brooklynites in little jackets and borrowed nostalgia for the unremembered eighties."

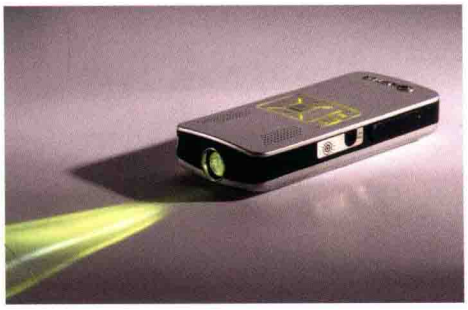
James Murphy, LCD Soundsystem[1]

THE WORDS OF THE LCD Soundsystem song "Losing My Edge" sum up the dilemma faced by all trend forecasters today: the fear that sooner or later, as the lyrics of the song suggest, they will lose their edge. For if trend forecasting is about anything, it is about staying plugged into the new and the next: to those areas of the culture where our "art-school Brooklynites," and their future equivalents, live, flourish, and bring into being a set of lifestyle choices contrary to those that have gone before.

> DEFINITION OF A TREND FORECASTER

By definition and activity, trend forecasters are lifestyle detectives: men and women who spend their time detecting patterns or shifts in attitudes, mindsets, or lifestyle options, that run against current thinking or how people normally behave, live, dress, communicate, and trade. To do this, as we shall see in the





A trend can be an "idea" as well as a set of similar shapes or interrelated objects. Here, a range of different products and locations represent portability, dual functionality, and a sense that work and play spaces are no longer segregated, but interchangeable as people no longer make distinctions between where, how, and when they work. This trend has been dubbed "Bleisure"; a blurring of "business" and "leisure."

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