

l'œil

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in depth study of new
consumption trends

by L'Observatoire Cetelem

www.observatoirecetelem.com

The brands that develop the strongest relationships are also those that know how to bring their customers together



While healthy promises are gradually gaining territory in our plates, very few have penetrated the world of beauty. The crossover is only just beginning...

www.mavendrive.com/#!

Seen in the United States

This summer, General Motors launched a program inspired by the Airbnb model that allows owners of the brand's vehicles to rent them out when they are not using them. Individuals connect via the manufacturer's digital platform, dubbed Maven, which lists all the vehicles available. Once they have agreed terms, the individuals don't necessarily have to meet, because the latest vehicles can be opened and started using a smartphone. The Maven platform already offered various mobility services in major North American cities, including the ability to rent cars parked in dedicated spaces via a smartphone app. However, up until now, these vehicles remained the property of General Motors and renting cars to other private individuals was not an option.

What to think of it?

Like all car makers, General Motors is attempting to change its status from that of a manufacturer to that of a "mobility provider". This allows the firm to highlight its sense of environmental responsibility and respond to the fact that young consumers have less of a desire to own a vehicle than in the past, while also **building a new type of relationship with them**. Indeed, while sharing a car may be a good way of discovering a new model and learning about the latest innovations, it also allows users to **come into contact with other owners of the brand's vehicles** and thus benefit from their opinions and experiences. Not to mention that it brings the brand and its various propositions **into people's conversations**, and is far more effective in doing so than advertising via traditional media, for instance. We are now entering the era of brand sharing.

Crossing over from the virtual to the physical world: a mixture of opportunism and pragmatism

In the past, brands were somewhat reluctant to enter new segments. Today, they are constantly on the lookout for new battlegrounds that will strengthen their overall offering.

Seen in Paris

Birchbox, a website that has built its reputation on the sale of beauty box subscriptions, recently opened a hair salon in Paris, above the physical store it launched just over a year ago to enable consumers to discover and try out its products. Offering an "express haircut" or an "in-depth diagnostic" is another way for the brand to strengthen ties with customers, while also prompting them to discover and rediscover what it has to offer, given that you need to visit its website to arrange an appointment.

What to think of it?

Birchbox's approach to developing its business is the perfect illustration of the path new brands must follow. Created intuitively or inspired by an initiative spotted elsewhere, these brands begin life on the web, where they can start to tackle the realities of the market and initiate a buzz. They then open premises that are part showroom, part point of sale, and which are designed to embody their philosophy and to enable their customers to meet up. Finally, they launch a spin-off business that allows them both to highlight their expertise and to expand their initial offering. This was the path taken by Birchbox, which **embarked upon a side project born out of pragmatism and opportunism** that relied on a step-by-step approach in which each step went in a new direction, shifting the business from box subscriptions to hairdressing, even if the salon is geared primarily towards **strengthening the firm's relationship with customers and adding credibility to a complementary product range**, rather than boosting turnover. Traditional brands would do well to draw inspiration from this rationale, **given that they often seem trapped in their history, their image and even their line of business**.



Can new behaviours last without being tied to a concept?

The best way of ensuring that new behaviours stand the test of time may be to link them to a trend. This gives them added purpose and allows benefits to be reaped in terms of sales.

Seen on the web

Following in the footsteps of Hygge, the winter phenomenon from northern Europe where cosy up at home becomes a veritable lifestyle choice involving scented candles, dimmed lights and decorative animal skins (it is also an opportunity for certain brands to remind us of the attractiveness of their offering), here comes the summer trend of Plogging, another concept from the Nordic countries and a contraction of *plocka upp* ("to pick up" in Swedish) and "jogging". It can be summed up as running with short strides and collecting the litter you encounter on your route. You couldn't make it up...



What to think of it?

We live in an era of vaguely defined and exotic-sounding concept words. Words that define new behaviours that reflect a desire to break from the day-to-day routine and see life differently. It is no longer enough to simply want to do something specific or focus on particular values. Today, the ensuing behaviour also needs to be **perceived as the external sign of a trend** devised both **to attract and unite people, while also translating into a "product universe"**. Commercial preoccupations are never too far away from the latest altruistic aspirations. Thus, Plogging is all about **healthy bodies in healthy surroundings**, a form of "green running" that is very much of its time, **combining fun** (inevitably, given the levity inherent to social media interaction), **community-mindedness and environmental sensibility**, which is essential to any collective action in this day and age. It is also illustrative of the desire of an increasing number of individuals to show that they care about nature without necessarily becoming activists. For Plogging to truly stick in people's minds, all that remains is for the pastime to spawn its own specific products: Gloves? Bags? T-shirts? Apps? Guides?

Could all-powerful signs give way to more discrete cues?

How can companies surprise new customers while giving existing ones the feeling of being acknowledged?

Seen pretty much everywhere

It was recently announced that, to develop its Kyriad brand internationally, the Louvre Hotels group intended to offer frozen yoghurt for breakfast, a bar specializing in international beers and memory foam pillows. Other hotel chains are developing their own perfume lines, cosmetics (organic and eco-friendly) and scented candles, so that customers can continue to enjoy the sensations they experienced during their stay. And how about the idea of leaving customers a handwritten thank you note with every delivery, as exemplified by Frichti, a website offering pre-cooked meals? Not to mention the popular water bottles that have allowed Uber to stand out from traditional taxi services.

What to think of it?

At a time when company offerings are becoming increasingly uniform, retailers are constantly on the lookout for the standout feature that will get them noticed and secure customer loyalty, proof if any that what attracts customers is not so much general promises – marketing's "unique selling propositions" of yesteryear, which were not necessarily credible or tangible – as **the little attentions that give consumers the feeling that they are cared about and belong to a community**. And while these little attentions may appear trivial, they have become essential, because they lead the brands that offer them to be mentioned on social media, thus allowing them to **stand apart in highly competitive markets**. After company logos, which are easily identifiable, visible to all eyes and displayed in every possible form, we are seeing **the emergence of a new generation of signs that are more discrete and less explicit**, as well as being more inventive and capable not only of surprising new customers, but also maintaining the popularity of brands among existing ones. **These "cues", which are designed to be recognized rather than displayed, contribute subtly but effectively to strengthening the customer relationship.**





Word of the month

Finsta: “Fake Instagram”. A second Instagram account, an alternative page aimed at one’s community and created to post more natural photos of oneself, without the sophisticated visual contrivances that have become the norm on social media. This reflects the hunger for greater social authenticity that can be observed among American teenagers.



Catching the eye

Going back to school inevitably means buying school supplies. And although parents have no choice in the matter, a Zoom survey by L’Observatoire Cetelem suggests that **70% of them view this as a way of spending time with their kids.**

(Survey conducted by Harris Interactive from 7 to 9 August on a sample of 1,002 people.)

According to a survey conducted by Research Now on behalf of logistics solutions specialists Neopost Shipping, 86% of consumers believe that delivery charges are too high and 54% prefer to make purchases in physical stores when the cost exceeds a certain threshold. **83% of the French population are keen on free delivery and just 17% are interested primarily in shipping times. The survey also highlights the fact that, nonetheless,** 61% of consumers are prepared to pay more for the convenience of home delivery. (Survey conducted on a sample of 1,000 French customers of 277 e-commerce sites.)



A glance in the rear-view mirror

Eleven years ago, in November 2007, the idea of organising car pooling to make the customer’s journey easier was already burgeoning in the minds of retailers.
Green and sociable

The facts

From September 15 to December 15, 2007, McArthurGlen’s designer outlet in Troyes ran an original carpooling system allowing customers to travel to its store. Potential visitors could sign up via a website created for the purpose, either as a passenger or as a driver. The latter would have the cost of any motorway tolls covered in the event that they carried a passenger. In addition, every person travelling in the car was given a VIP chequebook offering further discounts in stores. The scheme is likely to be repeated when the sales next come around.

The analysis

Both original and easy to implement, McArthurGlen’s initiative illustrates a new path that could be taken by retailers that are eager to innovate: offering customers services that are both green and enjoyable. With its carpooling system, not only is the firm offering another way of reaching its stores that makes it appear both eco-friendly and socially responsible (less pollution, less parking), it is also offering potential customers the chance to have a good time together. Once on board the shared vehicle, McArthurGlen’s customers can get to know each other and share their views on the region, their habits and the retailer itself, as well as discussing the brands it offers and passing on their consumer tips. In addition to being a community-minded initiative, could carpooling become a new way for retailers to build their image?

Summing up

This summer, Century 21 and Airbnb launched a partnership that makes it easier to sublet accommodation in Paris. Subletting via an "Airbnb lease" allows the tenant to receive 70% of the income generated and the landlord 23%. Estate agent Century 21 takes care of administrative formalities and receives the remaining 7%.

 *Veronique B. / Brand, Communication & Advertising*

At Fujifilm's Wonder Photo Shop in New York, you can print photos from your phone instantaneously, customise them in a workshop and access a wide range of photographic services. It also provides ideas for photographic or artistic projects, as well as the expertise and resources needed to carry them out.

<http://wonderphotoshopnyc.com>

Fashion label *agnès b.* has launched an online radio channel to talk with artists and initiate meetings with painters and musicians from different cities and countries.



Having sold a few units of the Seat Mii, Amazon now offers test drives in partnership with Renault. Prime customers in Paris can now have a Renault Koleos, Talisman or Espace delivered to their door, allowing them to try out their chosen model.

BMW will be the first car manufacturer to offer induction battery charging. Motorists will simply need to position their vehicle above a special dock for three and a half hours to fully recharge its batteries.

In the UK this summer, Kyocera printers joined Amazon's Dash Button, which allows ink to be ordered from the website automatically when a cartridge is nearly empty.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPEkVHbWbv0

 *Damien S. / BtoB Marketing*



Recently opened in Roubaix, Plateau Fertile is a new collaborative space that brings together brands, young creatives and major retailers.

<https://fr-fr.facebook.com/plateaufertile>

Etam's Champs-Élysées store is currently trialling a technique to identify customers with an account or a loyalty card the moment they enter a store, rather than when they pass through the tills. Sales assistants can then tell them about the promotional offers and products that might interest them, based on the information they have regarding the items the customer has viewed online previously.

Porsche has set up 50 beehives around its Leipzig factory, with 3 million bees inhabiting the 130 hectare site. The bees have already produced 1.4 tonnes of honey, which is put in jars and sold under the Turbienchen brand. This summer, the manufacturer organised tours of the beehives.



With its 3D Virtual Shopping Tour, American mass retail brand Walmart allows web users to visit a 360° apartment in which they can click on and buy some 70 products. The experience is compatible with web browsers and virtual reality headsets alike. The feature is currently confined to home and decoration products.

<https://news.walmart.com/2018/06/27/walmartcom-to-introduce-new-home-shopping-features-3d-virtual-shopping-tour-and-buy-the-room>



Employees of BNP Paribas Personal Finance help to uncover the micro-facts reported in L'Œil by L'Observatoire Cetelem.

 *means that the fact or the news in brief was spotted by one of them.*

L'Œil de L'Observatoire Cetelem analyses micro-facts on consumption, revealing the emergence of new manners of spending.

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