

l'œil

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in depth study of new
consumption trends

by L'Observatoire Cetelem

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Low prices, promotions and exclusive offers are not the only ways of restoring people's urge to consume

Faced with a degree of weariness towards consumption and the endless cycle of sales, there is another way of reinvigorating shopping's appeal...

www.lacartefrancaise.fr

Seen in France

Launched late last year in time for the holiday season, La Carte Française is the first gift card intended exclusively for French-made products. This prepaid card can be credited with a minimum amount of €25 (and up to €150) and allows the holder to purchase products from more than eighty French brands, either online or in stores. It works with all the same terminals as standard payment methods, does not require a PIN number and is contactless compatible. Every French manufacturing sector is represented and the card can be used both with established brands and those seeking to make a name for themselves.



What to think of it?

Although seemingly trivial, La Carte Française perfectly illustrates how firms need to present their offers today if they are to attract consumers who have adopted a wait-and-see attitude: through **promises that are both themed and in some way engaged in a particular issue**. The thematic approach allows brands to show their character, stand apart and draw attention. Engagement in issues allows them to meet the expectations of consumers who are ever keener to **express their citizenship through their purchases**. This combination of themes and engagement could help to breath new life into traditional sales periods that now struggle to attract customers, while the growing success of Black Friday, which once again broke records this year despite a somewhat hostile climate, is impossible to ignore. **Although this particular sales drive is (as yet) unrelated to any form of engagement, it is already perceived as following a theme** by consumers who see it as a **good opportunity to buy electronic equipment**, a type of expense that dominates the range of purchases made at this time of year.

(Read more on:

<https://observatoirecetelem.com/loeil>)

After accessible luxury, here comes the era of luxury that can be accessed in new ways

Luxury brands are coming up with a host of new ways of accessing their offerings. Perfumes and cosmetics no longer suffice. Today, the focus is on special editions, pop-up stores, re-issues, rental and... vintage, a market that is now being coveted from all quarters.

www.jmweston.com/manufacture/weston-vintage

Seen in Paris

Shoe manufacturer Weston recently announced that it would be opening a new department, dubbed Weston Vintage, in three of its stores. It will offer old models that have been restored by the brand. Essentially, the stores will offer customers the chance to drop off their old pairs of shoes (any one of nine emblematic models) to have them assessed. They then receive a gift voucher. The launch is planned for 14 January. Thinking along the same lines, Cartier recently announced its desire to enable customers to sell their old watches back to the company, thus allowing them to acquire models from more recent collections. According to a survey by the Boston Consulting Group, 57% of buyers of second-hand luxury items have subsequently opted for new products or would consider doing so.



What to think of it?

Luxury brands will not be able to escape the shift towards a circular economy, which is attracting more and more consumers and gradually influencing all sectors. On closer inspection, **the approach could actually benefit them hugely**, because it raises the appeal of their old models (which are often the most emblematic) in the eyes of new audiences, which can only boost their profile **and therefore their desirability**. This might attract younger customers (although not exclusively) who are tempted by luxury products but put off by the prices, or those who see this kind of proposition as being more responsible, since it revolves around the circulation of goods rather than encouraging the constant accumulation of new products. It can also help to enhance **brand legacy, particularly through the notion of handing something down to a new generation**, which is much more authentic and effective than overly polished advertising campaigns and storytelling approaches. The appearance of second-hand offerings in luxury stores goes against the current trend of having as many things happening in shops as possible, in the hope of making a splash (exhibitions, concerts, events, etc.), **because the focus here is the product and nothing but the product**. At times, it seemed as though we had lost sight of the latter's importance.

When the hotel and fashion sectors come together, both can find reasons to be cheerful

While experts might say that food has taken over from fashion when it comes to consumer preoccupations and buying habits, fashion brands look set to fight back by working with hotels.

Seen in Spain, Germany, Italy and (very) soon in France.

Fifteen years ago, Spanish footwear brand Camper opened its first hotel in Barcelona, followed by another in Berlin. Describing it as a trailblazer would be an understatement. Indeed, in Italy hotels run by Armani, Bulgari, Ferragamo, Fendi and Benetton have been part of the landscape for several years now. In France, Zadig & Voltaire will be soon be opening its first hotel on Rue Saint-Honoré in Paris, while we recently learned that the founder of Bensimon is also keen to launch an establishment that can embody the spirit of his eponymous brand, which was born in the fashion world, but has since migrated towards interior design. Hotels designed by fashion labels appear to have a bright future ahead of them.



What to think of it?

In a world dominated by image, it is no surprise that more and more fashion brands are keen to open hotels, which offer them the ultimate canvas on which to express their identity afresh, to cast it in a more tangible and human light, while showcasing new facets of their personality and offering new experiences to their customers. They promise epicurean experiences blending fashion, culture and the art of living, not to mention gastronomy and self-care. Because what fashion brands see in hotels is a new type of distribution channel, “retail laboratories” that allow them to test their customers’ reactions to new offers or services before launching them on wider markets. This new trend of opening hotels also caters for the expectations of consumers, who today are driven more by the quest for extraordinary experiences (to generate memories and create a buzz on social media) than by the idea of accumulating clothes, bags or shoes. **While clothes point to a lifestyle, hotels are all about the art of living.** Visual signs are no longer as effective a source of recognition as the sharing of values, be they ethical or aesthetic, which over time has led the fashion world to focus as much on experiences as it does on status. This is undoubtedly the future of fashion.

Retailers must not only reinvent their offer, but also their presence.

Having played around with locations, could the pop-up stores of tomorrow revolve around the seasons? A new type of alliance is coming...

Seen in Paris and Cagnes-sur-Mer

Last October, French brand Pyrenex, which makes down jackets, was given space in the two Havaianas Brazilian flip-flop stores in Paris and Cagnes-sur-Mer. It will be vacating the premises in early March, when the warm weather returns. That is the point at which a selection of Pyrenex stores will, in turn, welcome in the Brazilian brand’s flip-flops, if the partnership continues. Are we entering the era of seasonal pop-up stores?



What to think of it?

In trying to cater for consumers who are hungry for the unexpected, but who feel that they have seen and know everything, retail cannot be accused of failing to explore all manner of new formats. There was the initial wave of pop-up stores, which became increasingly numerous and were often set up in vacant premises. Then there were stores shared by brands whose markets were completely unrelated. For instance, in Paris you can find Fnac and Uniqlo at the same address on Rue de Rennes, as well as Pierre Hermé and L’Occitane en Provence at 86 Avenue des Champs Élysées. More recently, we have discovered a new generation of shop-in-shops, including an initiative by shoe brand Le Soulor, which found its way into an estate agency in Biarritz (see L’Œil from October 2019), and another launched by Hema, which took up residency at Franprix (see L’Œil from December 2019). Now we have seasonal pop-up stores, where a brand that is subject to seasonal variations sets up shop in another brand’s stores for just a few months. **Winter vs. summer.** Although this type of synergy is not exactly commonplace it does make sense. The objective pursued here is less about saving on rent than it is about getting people talking about the brand by demonstrating its agility and its ability to reinvent its market’s codes. Proof, if ever it were needed, that retail is now very much about experiences and that store chains are aspiring to become “omni-retailers” who are everywhere and especially where you least expect them. It is easy to imagine soup brands moving into ice cream parlours, or even swimwear brands setting up in ski shops.



Word of the month

Solastalgia: a neologism derived from the terms “solace” and “algia” (meaning “pain”). The concept was developed by Glenn Albrecht, an Australian environmental philosopher, to describe the existential distress brought about by environmental change, which is causing an increasing amount of anxiety.



Catching the eye

In a survey conducted on behalf of Métro on a sample of 10,000 people in 10 countries, **21% of respondents said they would not go to a restaurant if they could not consult the menu on its website** and 15% declared that they avoid establishments that do not have an online reservation system.

In 1975, **6.6% of employees in France worked part-time**. In 2018, the proportion was 18.9%, or 4.4 million people. Part-time roles are chiefly held by women, foreigners, young people and those with the fewest qualifications (source: INSEE).



A glance in the rear-view mirror

In June 2010, L'Œil reported on a small-scale initiative that was already harnessing people's desire to treat consumption in a circular way, rather than as a means of accumulation. It remains extremely relevant today.

Neutrality

The facts

In this era of “smart spending”, an analysis of the transactions that take place on eBay has revealed the existence of a new form of consumption: “neutral shopping”, which involves making purchases on the web worth the same amount as the sales you make. Indeed, in 2009 more than 15,000 French eBay users were able to consume without spending a euro. And since clothes and fashion accessories account for the majority of this type of shopping, eBay has come up with the “Commando Wardrobe Challenge”, where seven fashion-loving bloggers are each asked to recruit one of their readers for a wardrobe update that will not cost them a penny.

The analysis

In a way, eBay is not just a buy and sell platform, but a bona fide observatory of consumer trends. Thus, the emergence of the “neutral shopping” phenomenon is indicative of how consumption is changing. On the one hand, this is an evolution rooted in common sense, one that translates into less accumulation and a greater focus on product use and circulation. On the other hand, it stems from a desire to act more responsibly, because by “neutralising” our consumption we are also helping to limit its impact on the environment. Does non-use have tradeable value and can refraining from making purchases be an example of environmental activism?

Summing Up

Mail order company Blancheporte recently teamed up with the production workshop of the Plateau Fertile creative cluster in Roubaix to give unsold linen a second commercial life. It will be transformed into a line of bags and luggage accessories manufactured in limited runs.

In Belgium, every Thursday has been designated as vegetarian day in Carrefour stores, as part of the Act for Food programme. On those days, customers can enjoy a 20% discount on vegetarian alternatives. "Veggie Thursdays" are organised in conjunction with EVA (Alternative Vegetarian Ethics) and supported by the Flemish government.

The Rebel Whopper is the name Burger King has given to its first vegetarian burger, which it has launched in 25 countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. 100% Whopper, 0% Beef...



Amazon recently announced its intention to launch a chain of supermarkets in 2020. The first is set to open in Los Angeles. The chain will operate alongside the more upmarket Whole Foods, which Amazon took over in 2017.

Since last month, U supermarkets in France have been having quiet hours every Tuesday between 1.30 pm and 3.30 pm, during which both the music and lights are turned down.

Jardiland recently embraced the Too Good To Go app to sell plants that are nearing the end of their cycle at reduced prices. Around a hundred stores are already offering this service.

www.jardiland.com/conseils-idees/too-good-to-go/



With the "Comfort" option, Uber customers can ask their driver not to talk during their journey.

In Belgium, the Decathlon store that will soon be opening its doors in the centre of Mechelen will trial a sustainable solution for last-mile transport, with employees delivering online orders using an electric delivery trike.

Carrefour recently acquired Dejbox, which specialises in the delivery of lunches to offices. This confirms the great potential the market sees in food delivery and the Business to Employee (BtoE) segment.

Intermarché recently launched Franco-Score, special labelling that allows consumers to know what proportion of the raw materials contained in the products they buy are from France.



Carrefour is currently in advanced talks to house Fnac/Darty stores within its hypermarkets. Around thirty of these shop-in-shops are set to open by 2021. However, the project remains subject to the approval of the competition authorities.

Marks & Spencer has installed vertical farms in seven of its London stores. Connected mini-greenhouses are used to grow fresh herbs, including mint, parsley and coriander, which customers can buy as they would at the market.



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

OO 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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