BIZCOMMUNITY

# The year of the phoenix

By Joanna Oosthuizen

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Twenty Twelve, year of the dragon, a leap year and the year the world as we know it is meant to end. I believe it will, not in a dooms-day fill-my-bunker-with-canned-food kind of way but in a thinking, progressive, collaborative and connective way. It's a phoenix year, where great ideas and people will rise from the economic ashes and drive informed action.




These are industry trends I think will feature and develop in 2012.

1. **Pure**

   There has been a social, technical and design move towards bold, simple and accountable. All of these qualities develop and enhance the purity of the device, campaign or brand.

   In the fashion world, colour-blocking is a visual expression of this thought.

   Distilled ideas seem simple but they are the result of deep, rich consumer understanding. Brands, companies and technology that are easy to interact with will continue to boom.

2. **Human**

   The essence of humanity is connectivity and interaction; we have seen a trend in the past of companies and brands using TV commercials, newspaper articles and billboards as the only interaction with their consumer, in effect a one-way conversation.

   This will be the year for dialogue, where companies continue to become human. People want to interact with people and companies that understand this will grow in 2012. It is more than social networking: its face-to-face, one-on-one interaction between the consumer and company.

3. **Television**

   Watching content on your computer will rapidly change this year and we will start to welcome this content onto our living rooms.

   Online video is a monster trend this year and yet another technological advance that will rapidly develop and change advertisers thinking and application.

   Channel "Me" will become a reality with Apple TV, Google TV and Boxee.

4. **Gender**

   Exit left manscara and guyliner; enter Bear Grills. Gender and its appearance constantly changes and the emerging trend is fiftiesesque women who are rediscovering cooking and good housekeeping.

   I say fiftiesesque, as this is a choice, rather than a societal expectation.

   Watch the rise and introduction of 'housekeeping' publications. Food and particularly cakes shows have exploded on television, illustrating the trend towards staying at home to cook.

5. **Share**

   Many hands make light work; many minds make a solid idea. In the past great, ideas were held onto and owned but we are moving into a trend where great ideas are shared and become brilliant.

   Sharing encourages multifaceted, robust and market leading ideas that then drive dynamic action. It also kills ego and hedonism, which are fast becoming extinct traits in our socio economic climate.

   It takes courage to share - be brave and set ideas free.

6. **Influence**

   Expanding on the above trend is a sister trend, influence. Differing schools of thought such as environment, philosophy, journalism, science and technology consistently influence advertising.

   Now, more than ever, our marketing ear has to be listening to a multitude of different thought frequencies. I believe this will be a strong trend that will evolve this year, given rapidly developing mobile devices and the urgent need for climate change.

7. **Fluid**

   We all know about social networks and platforms - that's old news - but the dynamic between them? Now that's something worth watching.

   I believe 2012 will be the year that social networks will increasingly drop their fences and information will pass more fluidly between all the platforms.

   The data will be the ship that sails freely through all platforms, allowing the consumer to be the captain that has all access. Let's face it: if they don't, they won't be visiting your waters.

8. **Graphs**

   Statistics and data ensure transparency and accurate reporting. This is imperative and fast becoming robust and accurate due to social digital expansion.

   Our life online has given us all a unique footprint and marketers are feverishly tracking the trail you walk. From this rich data, social graphs are developed. These are reporting gold.

   Social graphs are going to continue to give us insight into consumer habits and opinion. They give us a visual understanding on how to navigate social platforms, so they are only going to get deeper and richer.

9. **Always on**

   Mobility and now the cloud make data and communication available anywhere, anytime, across all touchpoints. This means that business and consumers can communicate any time on any kind of device - this penetration will continue to deepen though out 2012.

   This also builds on the human trend as people are growingly interacting with people. It's the constant open line of communication that makes for a good relationship.

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