

“TRYSUMERS”



Introduction

Hate the name, love the trend. TRYSUMERS are transient, experienced consumers who are becoming more daring in how and what they consume, thanks to a myriad of societal and technological changes. Here's our stab at defining the phenomenon:

*TRYSUMERS: “Freed from the shackles of convention and scarcity, immune to most advertising, and enjoying full access to information, reviews, and navigation, experienced consumers are trying out new appliances, new services, new flavors, new authors, new destinations, new artists, new outfits, new relationships, new *anything* with post mass-market gusto.”*

To get you going, here's a list of observations on what's encouraging a growing number of consumers to morph into TRYSUMERS:

- Living in a world of abundance means there's loads to try out, and it doesn't hurt that millions of members of [GENERATION C\(ONTENT\)](#) are adding to the pile of unique, original niche content and products. **Niche of course being the new mass**, as consumer societies are now about standing out, not conformity. Which in turn means **an encouragement to explore one's often broader-than-assumed taste**



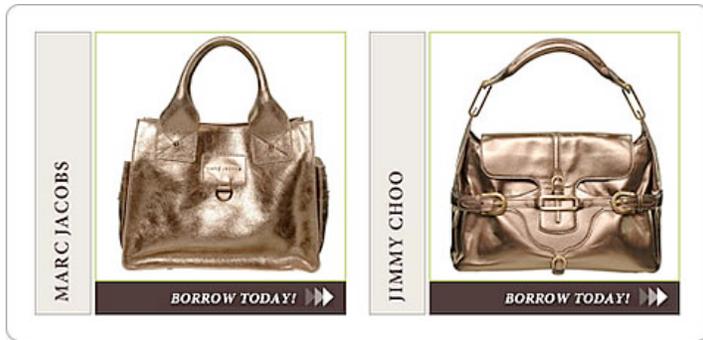
- As saturated, experienced consumers can draw on plenty of past experiences, and know that many more experiences will follow, it's **easier to cope with possible disappointment stemming from trying out the unknown**. For example, a weekend spoilt by bad weather is more acceptable knowing another three or four are planned for the rest of the year.



- Not only are more consumers making more money than ever before, lots of **products and experiences have actually become cheap as hell**. From TVs (the price of televisions has fallen, on average, by 9 percent each year since 1998, according to U.S. Labor Department data) to low fare flights. It's never been more affordable for consumers to try out new products, or to travel and try out new destinations and experiences.



- **Navigation is the new laissez faire**. Let's stick with travel for a moment: it's less risky to try out new destinations, paths, routes, and neighborhoods when equipped with a Garmin or TomTom device. From 2005 to 2006, sales of personal navigation devices (PNDs) in Europe and the US have doubled to 10 million units, and with the online world and GPS slowly converging, anywhere/anytime navigation will eventually be a given for adventurous TRYSUMERS. You figure out the ramifications for the world of leisure, but may we humbly suggest that 'off the beaten path' will never be the same?



• And how about the growing infrastructure of services that let **TRANSUMERS rent instead of buy**? From handbag subscriptions to super car sharing, a myriad of schemes make it possible for consumers to try out and sample (luxury) goodies, while spending just a fraction of ownership costs.

Consider this statement by fellow trend watcher Kristina Dryza: *"Trying new things is the decadent alternative to ownership and permanency. Nothing is stopping you. Experiment. We're obsessed with new experiences, especially those 'first time' ones. Our senses have been dulled – things have become too easy and boring. We're always asking, 'What's new?' 'What's fresh?' First experiences often have self-transformation elements – try truffles for the first time and experience a new taste sensation; try the first truffles of the season and have the connoisseur experience."*

Latest spotting in this field: British **Fractional Life**, which offers consumers an extensive overview of companies that offer asset sharing schemes. The website's categories read like a summary of life's spendy pleasures: from fine wines and racehorses to classic cars and helicopters, all of which are available in shares or time-slots. Find plenty more TRYSUMER meets TRANSUMER examples in our **TRANSUMER** briefing.



• **Quality is hygiene these days:** even TV sets and irons from obscure brands found at Wal-Mart work flawlessly. Another incentive to try out the unknown. And yes, to be less brand-loyal. A telling finding: only 26 percent of digital camera buyers say they would purchase the same camera brand in the future -- down from 35 percent in 2005, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2006 Digital Camera Satisfaction Study.

"While price and picture quality remain strong purchase motivators, competitive parity is making product features, functions and brand reputation less important to consumers," said Steve

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Kirkeby, executive director of telecommunications and technology research at J.D. Power and Associates. "In a market where there is increasing product parity, listening and effectively responding to the voice of the customer is crucial to manufacturers in providing products that will improve satisfaction and solidify loyalty."



• **TRANSPARENCY TYRANNY** is another engine behind the ascent of TRYSUMERS. **Reviews on anything, anytime diminish the risk of disappointment, of buying a lemon**, and will empower and entice consumers to explore the Long Tail with confidence. (Ha, and you thought the Long Tail had disappeared into 2006's chronicles.)

Expect reviews and inside info to become even hotter than they already are: with 1+ billion consumers now online, the army of reviewers is endless. (Just consider that travel review site **TripAdvisor.com** already has more than 20 million visitors each month, 4.3 million registered users, and 7+million reviews and opinions, covering 23,000 cities, 175,000 hotels, not to mention 460,000 traveler photos covering 35,000 hotels). Expect reviews to increasingly become multimedia, real-time, more trusted, and—thanks to sophisticated profile matching—more accurate, too.



• More on avoiding possible disappointment when trying out the 'new': **a global C2C infrastructure is now in place, from eBay to classifieds, enabling (or even encouraging) TRYSUMERS to quickly dispose of what's no longer needed.** From Daniel Nissanoff, author of FutureShop: "An interesting phenomenon that somebody shared with me was that, as eBay began to grow, people began to buy musical instruments, especially guitars, much more frequently, because they weren't as worried about taking up the wrong instrument or buying the wrong instrument and getting stuck with it. The auction culture is beginning to empower the consumer to reach because they can afford better items since they're not paying the whole ticket for them. They know there's going to be residual value at the end of the day and they're willing to take more chances because they know there's an exit if they made a mistake." (Source: Daniel Nissanoff interviewed by Tom Peters.)



- Since advertising is as trusted (or appreciated) as a certain president with two more years to go, performance is once again becoming increasingly relevant. (Forrester reports that only 13% of US consumers admit that they buy products because of their ads, and a paltry 6% believe that companies generally tell the truth in ads.) So **trying out and sampling may well become the new advertising.**

Two years ago, we dubbed this growing trend **TRYVERTISING**: *"There's not even a 'relationship' anymore; there's a cold, calculating, experienced, and demanding consumer, and there are humble companies. So introducing yourself and your products by letting people experience and try them out first, is a very civilized and effective way to show some respect."*

Not surprisingly, an entire TRYVERTISING infrastructure—from 30 second samples on iTunes to firms specializing in relevant product placement—is now in place, enabling consumers to try before they buy.

Here's a list of (mostly recent) TRYVERTISING spottings that deserve attention if not copying, er....creative replication:



- **Nike Trial Vans** are currently touring the UK/Ireland, France, Italy and Spain, stocking 1,000 pairs of shoes. It's a free trial, no strings attached. To deliver on the crucial element of TRYVERTISING, total relevance of placement, the vans will pop up in places where people actually run. From athletic events to well-known running spots.

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- TRYVERTISING and real world product placements work particularly well in **environments of 'voluntarily captive audiences'** like waiting areas, business lounges, and work spaces. So if hotels, airports, offices, even cruise ships (easyCruise anyone?) are serving as try-before-you-buy alternatives to advertising, who's going to intermediate between venues and manufacturers, brokering placements and audiences? One interesting example in this still pretty uncrowded field is **Brand Connections**, peddling an organized approach to in-hut, in-room product placement of samples, everywhere from Carnival Cruise Lines to Las Vegas and South Beach hotels, all targeted at vacationers.

In their own words: "Give your target audience your product sample when they are most likely to try it, and associate unforgettable memories with the experience. Your target consumer is greeted with your product sample on the first day of their vacation. At a time when they are without their 'stuff' from home and will have up to 7 days to form a new habit with your brand." Absolut is already a client, as are Colgate-Palmolive, Kraft Foods and Unilever Group. Planes, trains and rental cars to follow?

- And as everything is being upgraded, **Premier Bags** is going after the niche of strategic product placement, targeting affluent, luxury-minded men and women. Think goodie bags that are filled exclusively with luxury samples (from Prada perfume to Ghirardelli chocolates) and valuable gift certificates, placed in First and Business Class cabins on Continental Airlines (US domestic flights). Premier Bags are hand-delivered by First Class crew members on flights to Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and Seattle.



- Back on terra firma, Turkish diaper brand **Evy Baby** is reaching out to parents by placing changing rooms in shopping malls. The diaper manufacturer has already installed 22 Bebe-kEvy's in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, Adana and Mersin, and is planning to get to 100 in 2009. Each clean and cheerful room has a changing table and comfortable chairs for nursing. And, of course, samples of Evy Baby's products.



- More on sanitary stops meeting **TRANSUMERS, POP-UP RETAIL, BRAND SPACES** and **TRYSUMERS: Charmin restrooms**. From 20 November 2006 to 1 January 2007, Procter and Gamble's bathroom tissue brand operated a 20-stall restroom in the heart of Times Square at 1540 Broadway, between 45th and 46th Streets, calling the service 'Charmin's holiday gift to New York'. The facilities offered clean, deluxe bathrooms, baby changing stations, stroller parking, seating areas, and of course lots of luxury toilet paper. Cleanliness was guaranteed by the presence of one bathroom attendant for every two stalls, cleaning after each use. Close to 430,000 people made use of the service. See NY1's [brief video of the space](#).



- Experience stores, make way for try-out stores: Apple's retail stores**, with their elaborate try-out facilities, saw record sales during the last quarter of 2006, posting revenues of USD 1.1

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billion. The company opened five new stores during the quarter, for a total of 170 retail stores. Almost 28 million TRYSUMERS visited the Apple stores in those 3 months, which works out to 13,000 customers per store each week (source: macNN). Time to add a bit of performance-testing to your own stores or outlets?

The list of TRYSUMER observations goes on:



- As all things digital and virtual are so much easier to sample, TRYSUMERS and the online space are a match made in

heaven. Expect a renewed interest in lifelike avatars, which can try out and try on anything on behalf of their real world alter-egos. Companies like [My Virtual Model](#) (which already partners with Sears, Land's End, H&M, Speedo and Adidas), and [Gizmoz](#), a Flash-based 3D avatar product made from a single picture of a person plus their recorded voice. The company calls it 'bringing Pixar to the people'. (Source: Techcrunch.)

The TRYSUMER pay-off? According to My Virtual Model, shoppers using their solutions spend more, buy more and return far fewer items—resulting in higher sales and reduced shipping and handling costs.

Next will be 3D versions of the real world instead of just real people, turning *everything* into a TRYSUMER playground. Do keep an eye on [Google SketchUp](#), or better, help consumers and/or brands set up 3D versions of their homes, offices, gardens, cars and more, then let them try out new interiors, accessories, decorations, and so on.

I am/We are a
Couple (man and woman) ▼

seeking a
Group (men and/or women) ▼

between the ages of
23 and 45

Looking for...

- Bondage & Discipline
- Cross-Dressing
- Miscellaneous Fetishes
- Exhibition/Voyeurism
- Sadism & Masochism
- Other "Alternative" Activities

• When looking at society as a whole, not just consumption, the TRYSUMER trend yields more fun observations. How about TRYSEXUALS? From [match.com](#) to [AdultFriendFinder](#) (24 million 'active' members worldwide), **dozens of mega-dating sites offer both extensive 'try before you buy / rate before you date' and casual encounters** for those who want to try out as many other people as possible. Which leads us to fear of commitment among TRYSUMERS, but we'll leave that for a future update of this trend. The same goes for assuming (i.e. trying out) multiple identities in virtual worlds. Or an entire generation of gamers growing up with the belief that you can try, try and try again until you find a solution and succeed (and in games, there always IS a solution). But we're digressing.

Opportunities

So... Not every consumer is going to be a TRYSUMER. And not every TRYSUMER will be trying out new things all of the time. The inevitable counter trend (in this case: choice fatigue and lack of time) will see to that. But it's a safe bet that more consumers will venture off the beaten track in 2007, in 2008, in 2009 and beyond.

Which creates **excellent opportunities for niche-players and nimble Big Brands to introduce more daring and more unusual goods, services and experiences.**

Or to initiate more TRYVERTISING campaigns. (By the way, who's going to set up the first dedicated TRYVERTISING agency?)

Or to figure out which other product categories lend themselves to new-style rental concepts.

Or to introduce virtual versions of real-world products for avatars to try out.

Or to dive into the still wide-open market for intelligent review sites, opinion and rating sites. Surely books and hotels aren't the only products worth reviewing on a mass scale?

Time to try out some new brainstorming techniques and get going?

Need even more input and inspiration?
trendwatching.com's 2008 Trend Report
covers 12 themes, 24 trends
& over 200 examples.

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