

## "HYPERTASKING"



Starbucks 'explains' to customers how to speed up the ordering process!

Consumers love to complain about their busy lives, yet many indicators reveal that they actually enjoy doing everything at the same time, from simultaneously watching TV and surfing the Net, to conducting meetings over the phone while in the bathroom, to having coffees and lunch 'on the go', if not at one's desk.

The concept of 'multitasking' consumers is not new (courtesy of the computer and software industry, who taught consumers how to work simultaneously on five different documents!), however it's now rapidly morphing into something that TRENDWATCHING.COM has dubbed HYPERTASKING: multitasking moving beyond the desktop and ferociously invading all aspects of daily life.

Some recent stats and random spottings that underscore, fuel and facilitate this phenomenon:

- BIGresearch claims 70 percent of media users consume more than one medium at a time. Of those who listen to radio, 53.7 percent are online, 46.9 percent are reading a newspaper and 17.7 percent are watching TV. Of those watching TV, 66.2 percent are online and 74.2 percent are reading a newspaper.
- A well-known, yet still evolving example of people doing everything at the same time, and still keeping control of their work, home, and life: Starbucks' partnership with T-Mobile, offering WiFi hotspots in most of its cafes, thereby enabling HYPERTASKING customers to check email, look up data, meet up with friends, organize a business meeting; all away from the office or cramped living space (see our related trend, BEING SPACES). The same is now happening at WiFi-enabled McDonalds restaurants in the US, UK and Taiwan.

The latest **HYPERTASKING** example at Starbucks? In the US, the company is distributing 'how to order' flyers (see picture above), explaining to customers (well, instructing is more like it), how to order in the most efficient way while customizing their beverages in a bewildering number of ways. Want that to stay or to go?

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• Encouraged, no doubt, by Starbucks' sip-and-go success, Campbell Soup is scoring big time with 'Soup at Hand': sippable, heat-and-go soups. Campbell was inspired by market research from National Eating Trends, indicating that 59 percent of all meals in the US are rushed, 44 percent of women carry lunch to work or school, and 34 percent of lunches are eaten on the run. Soup is consistently a top choice for consumers preparing lunch at home, but falls low on the list for out-of-home lunch choices. So putting one and one together, Campbell saw the opportunity to get consumers to think of soup as a meal solution for many occasions, even on the go, while doing other things. In fact, launched last year with four varieties, sippable Soup at Hand was one of the most successful new product introductions in the company's history.

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- New widescreen 17"-or-more laptop and PC monitors are gaining popularity fast, not just because they're great for DVD watching, but because they enable users to have two windows open side by side. Surf two websites simultaneously, or work on a PowerPoint presentation on the left, while playing a multi-user game on the right... definitely an upgrade of the original 'multitasking' phenomenon!
- And what about cell phones (or mobile phones for Europeans), those ultimate HYPERTASKING tools? With cell phone ownership now approaching 90% of the population in most European countries (which means that only newborns and centenarians are NOT indulging in blabbing and SMS-ing and gaming 24/7 via GSM), consumers are consciously choosing to be able to communicate and interact whenever they want, and above all, to do so while they're grocery shopping at Tesco's, cruising on the I-95 (hands free of course;-), cycling alongside canals, or partying in a Kowloon bar. Living proof that HYPERTASKING is a choice, not a punishment!

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Is this a spanking new trend? No. Did TRENDWATCHING.COM feel an adequate conceptual monicker was missing? Yes. If you're a marketer or a manager, start thinking in HYPERTASKING terms whenever you're trying to dream up new (or adapt existing) products and services to more versatile, on-the-go, in-control consumers busy doing many things at once. Or come up with innovative marketing and advertising campaigns that play to today's multichannel media consumption. Ignore the objections from old school mono-taskers: consumers are voting with their hands and feet in favor of at least having the choice to HYPERTASK when they feel like it. >> Email this trend to a friend.

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