

"CURATED CONSUMPTION"



On the one hand, spoilt-for-choice, switched-on, wired-to-the-teeth consumers are more demanding, knowledgeable and in control than ever, wallowing in conspicuous consumption and unrivaled choice, and making or breaking new products and services the moment they hit the shelves.

On the other hand, that same avalanche of choice, the abundance of high quality [MASS CLASS](#) goods, the mind boggling number of variations, brands, flavors, and God knows what, is driving those very same, often time-starved consumers into the arms of a new breed of 'curators' and editors, who pre-select for them what to buy, what to experience, what to what to wear, what to read, what to drink and so on. (**Curator** *n.* He or she who manages or oversees a museum collection or a library.)

So make way for the emerging trend of **CURATED CONSUMPTION**: millions of consumers following and obeying the new curators of style, of taste, of eruditeness, in an ever growing number of B2C industries (Martha and home decorating was really just the beginning ;-). And it's not just one way: in this uber-connected world, the new curators enjoy unprecedented access to broadcasting and publishing channels to reach their audience, from their own blogs to niche TV channels.

CURATED CONSUMPTION is behind magazines morphing into catalogues, which then morph into eclectic stores, it's behind DJs, restaurant critics, opinionated bloggers, and rap stars giving consumers access to their playlists, their cribs, their top 10 lists. And let's not forget celeb designers cooperating with retail chains, hand-picking NO FRILLS CHIC collections; Amazon reviewers; gay lifestyle gurus; and self-help TV personalities. The new Gods of **CURATED CONSUMPTION** are amongst us! ;-)



It also explains why shops increasingly look like museums, art

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galleries, and antique stores: consumers these days may end up in someone's loft, apartment or office when looking for something with a seal of approval, but also something with soul, with character, with stories attached to an edited-down, manageable number of choices. Which is of course why **CURATED CONSUMPTION** fits so well with other current key business and marketing concepts like 'story telling', 'character', 'authenticity' and 'discovery'.

Some wise words from Ron Pompei, founder of [PompeiAD](#), who inspired TRENDWATCHING.COM to start tracking this trend: "We're reaching out to the members of the creative class, the fastest-growing segment of our society. They value authenticity and self-expression. They invest in things that speak to them emotionally, that have a story behind them. At the same time, though, they still want a brand to edit and curate the world for them, as long as they believe they have the freedom to choose." (Source: Interior Design.)

All in all, consumers are looking for the new masters of consumption and lifestyle, and they're finding them in more (unexpected) places than ever before.

WANT EXAMPLES?

• **Microzine**. As you may recall, our other newsletter -- [Springwise New Business Ideas](#) -- reported on Microzine back in November 2003, when the "monthly men's style magazine meets an in-store shopping experience" had yet to open its Islington, London doors. half a year later, Microzine is in business, fast becoming a poster child for **CURATED CONSUMPTION**. The store's philosophy is summed up by its owner, Christopher Lee: "Everyone's got the same product, and consumers are fed up. They want something exciting and they want it edited down." Which means objects for sale in this living room style store now come with a story attached, explaining why it deserves to be bought. Next time you're in London, make this store a starting point for your **CURATED CONSUMPTION** research!

For more **CURATED CONSUMPTION** retail examples, TRENDWATCHING.COM recommends French lifestyle phenomenon [Colette](#), [Anthropologie](#), [Urban Outfitters](#) and Italian [Corso Como](#) (a Milan based 13,000-square-foot complex, which includes the Galleria Carla Sozzani (a photography and design gallery), a bookstore (design books from all over the world), a boutique for men's and women's clothing and accessories, hard-to-find imports, and must-have luxury goods).



- Magazines have of course always been curators and editors of news and topics considered worth knowing about, but even here things are changing rapidly. So-called magalogues (combinations of shopping catalogues and magazines) like [Lucky](#) (for women), [Cargo](#) (for men) or [Daily Candy](#) (for urbanites) *only* focus on what to buy, what to purchase, what to experience. Oh, and keep an eye out for Condé Nast, who plan to publish a new magalogue called Shelter, dedicated to the Home Haven phenomenon, due to be out in the spring of 2005.

- And what about **CURATED CONSUMPTION** and the Experience Economy? With so many experiences to be had these days, who's going to authoritatively curate them? Expect more books and websites like Patricia Schultz's [1,000 Places To See Before You Die](#), a New York Times bestseller. And count on [Oprah](#) and other life coaches to become ever greater curators of experience must-haves.



such a massive **CURATED CONSUMPTION** force that it warrants its own trend description; we dubbed it **BLING POWER**, and it will be featured in the September or October newsletter!).



OPPORTUNITIES

No, the idea of curators dictating consumers' moves and grooves isn't spanking new. However, the rapidly increasing range and depth of curators across many industries IS. And with mega trends like [ONLINE OXYGEN](#), [GENERATION C](#), and [MASS CLASS](#) all nearing tipping point, **CURATED CONSUMPTION** is firmly positioned to move from niche to mass appeal, with needy audiences, networks and armies of experts now available on a grand scale.

Which means you, as an exec, a marketer, a business professional, need to figure out who out there, amidst the ever growing SEA OF SAMENESS, is telling your (potential) customers what to buy, what to experience, what to drink. Or, if you're an intermediary, how YOU can become the leading curator or editor in your sector, paying much more attention to selection, to story telling, to hiring experts who pre-select your offerings based on taste and experience.

Mind you: **CURATED CONSUMPTION** is NOT the same as straightforward ('paid for') product endorsement or the use of amateur influentials: there's more than a strong whiff of independence and expertise to **CURATED CONSUMPTION**, making this a more serious, and potentially much bigger ballgame. There's also a strong link with one of our other trends, [TWINSUMER](#). So start researching, brain storming, and forging partnerships with Master Curators, even if it's on a micro level. Forget listening, it's time you tell your customers what to do! >> [Email this trend to a friend.](#)

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- The list of new curators and editors goes on and on: bloggers slash cool hunters like [Josh Rubin](#), who gets up to 100,000 visitors a month checking out his carefully curated collection of cool; the Queer Eye team, who, on a global scale, now dictate the 'style' in lifestyle, the rap stars initiating entire new interior design trends by showing off their tasteful selection of furniture, cars and electronics on MTV Cribs (in fact, the 'Bling Bling' factor is becoming [www.trendwatching.com](#)