

3/1/2020

Trends to Watch For

Ellen C. Wells

Trendwatching's Max Luthy explained several consumer trends to a rapt TPIE show audience in January. (How popular was this talk? They doubled the room size over last year and it was still standing room only!) Here are a few of those trends we should keep an eye on and plan our businesses around in the coming years:

Burnout. People worldwide are working harder and longer than ever and are expected to be on-call for work at all times. Even if it's not a requirement for the job, employees go above and beyond no matter what positions they hold. Pile onto this the non-stop life of a family and it's even more tiring. People are burning out. Plants can help.

With all the focus commercially on the effects of CBD, many of the claims promoted in that arena aren't actually proven. BUT! Here's the good news: Plants are proven to be soothing, promote relaxation and simply put people in a good mood (unless you're growing and selling them maybe?). Plants are a cure for burnout. We've got this.

Metamorphic Design. Consumers more and more are expecting companies to be relevant to their needs. And to be relevant, companies need to react to their customers' changing needs. Sometimes on a daily basis. Need an example? Netflix and Spotify, for example, provide movie and music suggestions based on a listener's historical usage. There's a fitness company that provides workouts based on the changes its users experience as they continue to get more fit. Max gave us Brooklyn-based Horti, an indoor plant subscription service, as an example of how this idea can manifest in our industry. Its tagline is "Designed to build your confidence in plant care." They do this by "upleveling" the intricacies of plant care needed by each subsequent plant.

(Has anyone tried the Horti service? Or has anyone tried to offer this type of service? Drop me a line about it at ewells@ballpublishing.com.)

Coming of Age. He indicates that although 70 million Americans will be over the age of 65 by 2030, we as a culture are obsessed by youth. The industries and the companies that can figure out how to serve the aging population will indeed benefit! How about wellness classes? Plant and accessory delivery services? And don't be afraid to use tech with this cohort—folks 50 years old and older will spend billions on tech by 2030, too.

Fantasy IRL. This one is a little out there—and those are Max's own words about it. It's all about integrating fantasy into our real-life world. Max gives the real concert held within the game Fortnite as an example. Another is a product called Lua, which is a plant in a pot that, using sensors, triggers 15 different animated emotions, indicating to the owner if it needs more or less water and so on. **GP**