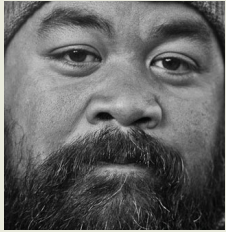


# OUT OF CONTEXT | KURT GRAY

## Trending for one...

Peace  
On Earth,  
Goodwill  
Towards Men



Although business has been through a rough time in American culture recently, it can still be a force for positive change in the community. Just don't overthink it.

The Levitation Project's Nico Nolan demonstrates an idea that deserves support and imitation.

<http://shred.thelevitationproject.com/2011/12/merry-christmas/>

"What we find is that it is not so much the death of the trend as it is the birth of trend independence. In this Brave New Fashion World, the only trend allegiance required is the one you conjure yourself." – MAGIC Fashion Alert

Trending is a subtle blend of art, commerce and science. Creative teams take the time to consult media and clip the relevant imagery, while sales looks at statistics and winnows out data that shows promise for their product. At its most basic, trending is simply a connect-the-dots exercise in commonality.

I believe the invisible background in trend research, the dark matter if you will, is the expectation for a cultural wind to blow one way, i.e. for the consumers to pretty much all experience the same day to day reality. The idea of 'lifestyle' describes an environment where the participants can all be influenced routinely.

However, our culture has fewer and fewer common touch points;

from retail to religion we've broken into ever smaller and more specific groups. We no longer watch the same TV shows, listen to the same music or read the same magazines. Choice is now the most common thread in our lives. We chose our tribe through postings and chat, and find real validation in a virtual world as the current Instagram age puts us at the center of our own digital universe. In short, we've gone from we to me.

I've seen a term describing this - epistemic closure, or when one's media, social interactions, news, entertainment, and consumption all reflect and refer to an unchecked principle or belief. We used to call it being a climbing bum, but the term trend independent will do.

The question is, how does this change apparel? How can globally sourced and mass produced apparel satisfy all those individuals?

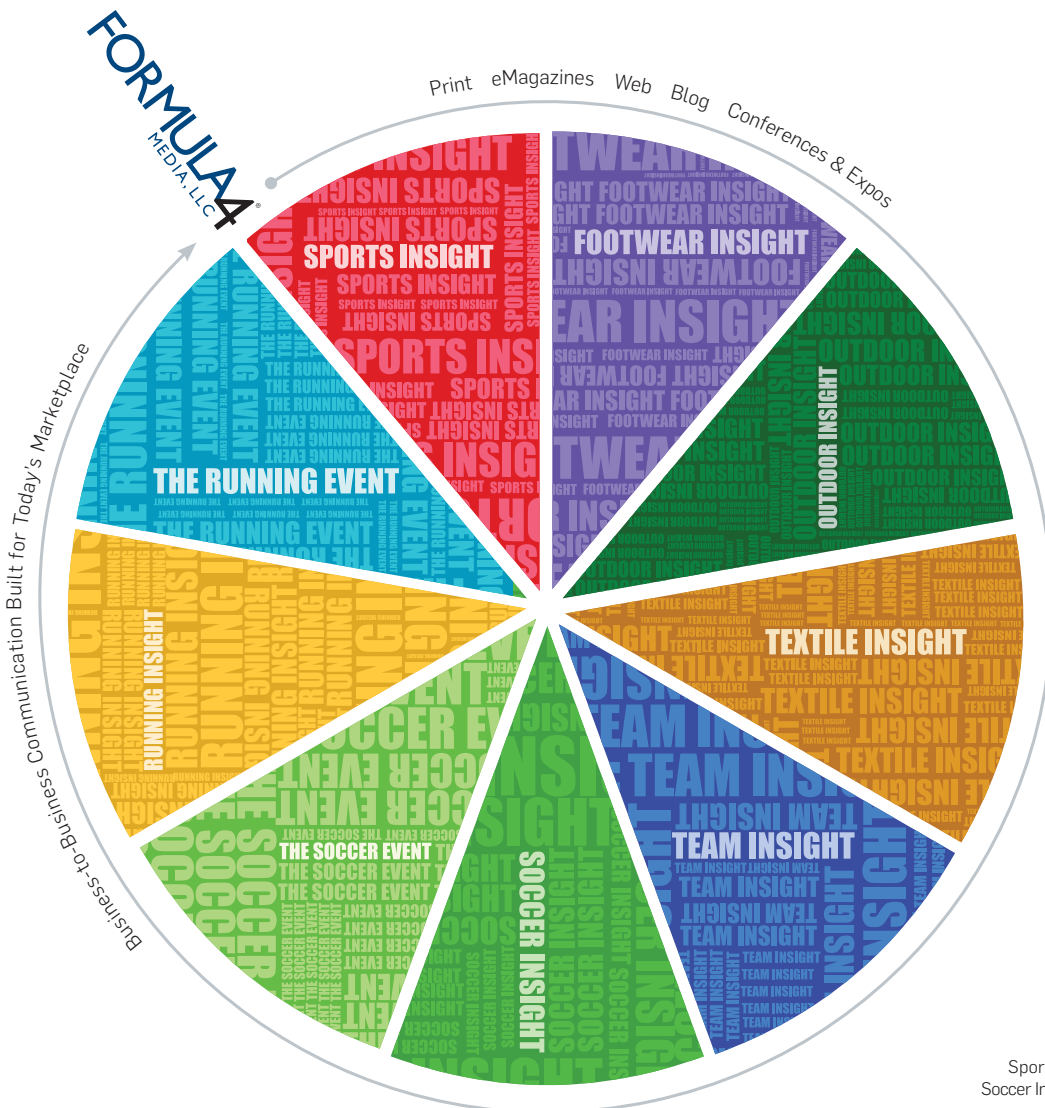
I think we are already seeing the answers emerge and while the shift to a more ethnocentric consumer culture has made for big changes, it has also

spawned a great deal of innovation.

Brands and retailers are trying to shorten their lead times while building more specialized and targeted collections. Small scale brick and mortar merchants, often run by enthusiasts, use pre-selection and convenience to compete with the big box retailers down the street. Meanwhile, those big retailers have figured out that they can sell almost anything they want from their website and use their stores as drop boxes. The list goes on and on, from eco-products to Made-in-the-USA, the market is responding with more products that show personality and intent.

Trending's not gone. The commonality is still there and the connect-the-dots exercise continues to work, but the dots are no longer in the obvious large groups as they were before, but rather, they now lie along the slender threads that connect individuals through their chosen social networks and avocations. Information is the currency that has made this happen, I suppose that's natural as it joins time and money as coin of the realm.

Photo: Andrew Miller



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