

## Looking Ahead: The Best of 2012 Trends



**January 2012:** Typing *Trends for 2011* into Google on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 gave us around 46 million results but typing *Trends for 2012* on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 gave us around 808 million! Clearly there are a growing number of diverse opinions on what's in store – particularly in a year where we face increasing uncertainty over everything from the geopolitical world order (with changes due in many leading nations) to the economy (recession or not? global or not?) to consumer behavior (to buy or not to buy?). The problem is there are so many forecasts and opinions out there that it is tough to sort the noise from the merely interesting to the extremely important.

So, as last year, we thought we would give you a brief overview of where you can find some of the more interesting and important trend forecasts and ideas for 2012. As always, bear in mind that in a world as uncertain as ours such forecasts are not meant to be accurate. Treat them as directional and informed opinions on potential opportunities and challenges that can offer new perspectives to supplement your own thinking on what might be possible, feasible and desirable. And look at both sides of the arguments – as uncertainty grows, so does the diversity of opinion! Don't forget to look at top trends outside your own industry or market space – these may well cross over sooner than you think! We will pick up on many of these trends in our next GT briefings along with examples of how they are being – or could be – translated into action.

### Global Trends/Macro Trends

- **10 Key Trends to Watch In 2012!** No apologies for suggesting you take a look back at the trends we highlighted in our November GT Briefing – these will likely be relevant well beyond 2012 but you are likely to see them in increasing action over the next year. Check out BRIC & beyond rising: Markets, competitors, mindsets and systems, Beyond the Gang of 4: The fight for controlling the interface, The democratization of everything: Facing the tensions of globalization and fragmentation and more [here](#).
- **Bain & Company's Great Eight:** Bain & Company has identified eight trillion-dollar macro trends that are at work in the global economy and have the potential to touch many corners of the globe. These eight macro trends focus on what's behind shifts in technology, economy, consumption, human capital, investment and implications for the business world. Find out more [here](#).
- **Topics for the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum:** The theme for Davos 2012 is The Great Transformation: Shaping New Models, which the forum suggests: "Is to ensure that leaders exercise their responsibilities – jointly, boldly and strategically – to improve the state of the world for future generations." Topics include: 1. Growth and Employment

Models; 2. Leadership and Innovation Models; 3. Sustainability and Resource Models; 4. Social and Technological Models. For the executive summary click [here](#).

- **The Economist – The World in 2012:** The Economist has been producing The World in.... for 26 years, and this year's collection of predictions, opinions and ideas is as always an interesting mix. From commentaries on the fights going in the technology landscape and who is winning, the future of the Eurozone and how to save it, to a world economy struggling to get on its feet again, to the world of Facebook going public while walking the tightrope of privacy, to what will happen one year after the Arab uprisings. Well worth browsing [here](#).
- **Booz & Company – Industry Perspectives 2012:** Booz & Company has released its Industry Perspectives for 2012 written by the leadership of their industry practices. The papers explore 12 industries, identifying industry-wide trends and key decisions leaders need to make in 2012 as well as the capabilities companies need to build in order to be successful in this challenging global economic environment. Read more [here](#).
- **CNBC – Predictions 2012:** CNBC's special report is a great mix of industries, investments and issues together with predictions from the CNBC's Fab Five on the Big Picture. For more CNBC predictions click [here](#).
- **Foreign Policy:** The world's top Global Thinkers have been asked by Foreign Policy about everything from how Barack Obama's really doing on the economy to what the biggest threats to global stability are in a year of revolutions. It is excellent collection of what Nobel winners, paradigm-shattering authors, and leaders from around the world have to say about the past turbulent year and what's in store for the next. For more visit [here](#).
- **Monocle:** Amongst the usual eclectic mix of forecasts on global affairs, tourism, culture and design, Monocle offers its second annual index of the leading 30 *soft power* nations – who's got power through a range of soft attributes from a reputation for design to culture to business assets to green credentials – as opposed to military and industrial might. Everyone wants it, some have it and many more are figuring out how to develop and use it – well worth a look [here](#) to see how your country and the countries you are operating in stack up. (Note subscription required or buy the hard copy).

### Consumer Trends

- **Trendwatching's 12 Crucial Consumer Trends for 2012:** Another great round-up of key consumer trends to watch for the year ahead and most probably beyond, with excellent examples to generate inspiration and innovation. Among the trends: red carpet, dealer-chic, cash-less, more-ism and flawsome. Click [here](#) for this must-read briefing.
- **JWT 10 trends for 2012:** While the full report is only available for purchase, JWT has done a executive summary slideshow to reveal its 10 key trends for 2012, which include: Live a little, the rise of shared value, screened interactions, celebrating aging. Check out the slideshow [here](#), along with the [Slideshare](#) presentation of 100 Things to Watch.
- **Trend Hunter:** Consumer trend site, Trend Hunter, has also summarized their top 20 (world, consumer, business, pop culture, eco, fashion, marketing, technology, social media, business, lifestyle, art & design) trends for 2012 in a free sample report. These include: Pop culture vacation, virtual fashion, social fitness, lesscapism, ecoducation, digital decor and social profiling. See the free sample report [here](#).

### Economic Trends

- **IMF:** The IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO) offers the IMF staff's analysis and projections of economic developments globally, in major regions and by levels of country development, as well as for individual countries. It covers major economic policy issues plus prospects. The last full version was September 2011, for which click [here](#). In addition, there are more frequent updates of economic growth forecasts and opinion, and the latest Year in review:

In his four hard truths blog (click [here](#)) Chief Economist Olivier Blanchard suggests that the economy in many advanced economies is at a standstill, with troubles in Europe having repercussions across the globe – there is hope for recovery but achieving it will be much harder than at the start of 2011.

- **World Bank:** The World Bank published its World Economic Prospects 2011 in June 2011 (click [here](#)), suggesting that as developing countries reach full capacity, growth will slow from 7.3 percent in 2010 to around 6.3 percent each year from 2011-2013. High-income countries will see growth slow from 2.7 percent in 2010 to 2.2 percent in 2011 before picking up to 2.7 percent and 2.6 percent in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The [Global Economic Monitor](#) offers monthly and weekly updates on economic conditions.
- **Major banks' economic outlooks:** The major commercial and investment banks offer their forecasts for economic prospects in 2012, with a common theme of a slow recovery. A useful summary of Goldman Sachs predictions can be found [here](#) while Morgan Stanley's forecast can be found at [2012 Outlook](#) – suggesting policy decisions will make or break economic recovery.
- **Credit Suisse:** Credit Suisse predicts “ While the monetary environment should remain supportive for global housing markets in 2012, valuations in some markets appear stretched. US housing demand should continue to stabilize and in Asia Pacific commercial real estate will likely offer better value than the housing market. For more about how global residential real estate could fare in the next year visit [this link](#).

### Financial Markets Trends

- **CNNMoney – Where to invest in 2012:** Investing in financial markets, whether equities, bonds or commodities is tougher than ever in the post-crisis world of uncertainty and volatility. CNNMoney offers some ideas on where they see opportunities for 2012 [here](#).
- **Deutsche Bank via FT:** According to FT there is one emerging market strategist forecast for 2012 that stands out. It is Deutsche Bank's John-Paul Smith and he is painting a quite bearish picture for 2012. For more visit [here](#).
- **FT:** The FT offers a range of market views for 2012, with industry experts giving their forecasts for the merger and acquisitions market in 2012 [here](#) (note registration may be required); Matthew Vincent suggesting that investment managers might see income and growth opportunities emerging in next year ([here](#)); and Tanya Powley suggesting UK house prices will be falling in 2012 ([here](#)).
- **WSJ MarketWatch:** WSJ's MarketWatch covers seven scenarios that Bank of America Merrill Lynch analysts say investors might see in 2012, and what do about them. Among the scenarios you will find: Social unrest rises, China's economy makes a 'hard landing, Greek debt woes spread and market leadership narrows. For more visit [here](#).
- **CNBC:** Due to the financial crisis many companies have postponed going public in 2011 and are waiting for 2012. Currently there are more than 200 companies in the pipeline including companies like Facebook, Yelp and Zynga. As the IPO market is highly uncertain the success of an IPO, according to analysts, will depend on the health of the global economy and broader markets. For more click [here](#).

### Technology Trends

- **Gartner Strategic Technologies:** Gartner defines a strategic technology as one with the potential to make a significant impact on the enterprise in the next three years. It may be an existing or emerging technology that will potentially impact an organization's long-term plans, programs and initiatives. Among the top 10 Strategic Technologies they identify are: Media tablets and beyond, internet of things, big data and extreme low-energy servers. Find out more [here](#).

- **Booz Allen:** Booz Allen predicts that cyber security threats will make 2012 a pivotal year for banks and investment firms as they try to stay ahead of the IT security curve. Among the trends are increased cyber threats to senior executives, the impact of organized crime and mobile device security. Threats can have a trickle-down effect on every part of a financial services organization, with reputational and financial impacts that present a huge risk to any organization. For more on financial services cyber security treats visit [here](#).
- **Imperva:** According to Imperva security has evolved dramatically from just one year ago. For instance “hacktivism” is now a household term, partly due to groups like Anonymous. Cyber security remains one of the most dynamic and fluid disciplines worldwide and among Imperva’s nine trends you will find: Security (Finally) Trumps Compliance, NoSQL = No Security?, HTML 5 Goes Live and SSL Gets Hit in the Crossfire. For more click [here](#).
- **IBM:** The IBM 2011 Tech Trends Report is designed to provide a glimpse into what IT tools will become critical for businesses to adopt and the skills IT professionals will need to stay ahead in order to drive success and help build a smarter planet. It reveals 12 tech trends for 2012 while focusing on four key areas: Business analytics, mobile, cloud and social business. Download the report [here](#).
- **Intel:** From big data to the “gamification” and “screenification” of everything, to security breaches in the cloud, Intel and industry leaders and technologists look at what trends will make headlines in 2012 and imagine the future of technology. For more visit [here](#).
- **Wired:** In its 25 Big Ideas for 2012, Wired highlights a range of advances, ideas and innovations, mainly technology based, which will have an impact over the next year and beyond, from wireless mind control to 3D surfaces and robo writers – and of course, social design, the next big idea from Facebook. The one we particularly like of course is the idea that companies are starting to think more long-term – time to take a leaf out of the book of Softbank, IBM and Unilever... See more on the big ideas [here](#).

## Social Media Trends

- **Mashable via Social Commerce Today:** At the recent Media Summit in New York City, Mashable founder and CEO Pete Cashmore outlined some of the bigger social media trends he thought could be looming around the corner for 2012. Click [here](#) and you will find a summery of his 8 need-to-know digital media trends, and 3 ‘megatrends’ for 2012 plus a half-hour video for more information.
- **Business2Community:** Business2Community has gather 38 experts’ predictions of The Future of Social Media in 2012. To see all 38 predictions visit [here](#).
- **Huffington Post:** Huffington Post’s Beverly Macy suggests “Companies that learn how to master the power of real-time social media will end up the winners in 2012. Companies that don’t, won’t. It’s really that simple”. Her 4 Social Enterprise Trends in 2012 are: 1. The power of real-time – harnessing chaos; 2. The global social brain – it’s everywhere and it’s getting really smart; 3. Content curation and discovery – just give me what’s important and let me find what I need; 4. Social media education – the enterprise goes to school. To learn more about these trends visit [here](#).
- **Social Media Today:** Social Media has gathered 5 must-reads links related to 2012 social media predictions that you shouldn’t miss. For more click [here](#).
- **Millward Brown:** Brand research consultancy Millward Brown has identified 12 digital trends for next year. Among the predictions you will find are: Gamification unlocked: big brands become more playful; “virtual togetherness”: TV and social media fuels an explosion in tools and technologies for interaction and research; and online advertising: real-time decision-making takes center stage. To read all the top 2012 digital trends click [here](#).
- **Social media on the HBR blog:** An interesting post on the HBR blog by David Armano of Edelman Digital outlines 6 social media trends to look out for in 2012, including: Convergence emergence; the cult of influence and gamification nation. For more click [here](#).

## Mobile Trends

- **Gartner:** Gartner has identified what it believes will be the most important consumer mobile applications in 2012. Focusing on high-end devices with an average selling price of more than US\$300, analysts have identified the top 10 cutting-edge technologies and trends for 2012. As mobile applications will be a highly competitive marketplace, Gartner expects brand companies to increasingly shift their marketing budget to the mobile channel and experiment with cutting-edge apps to capture marketing and sales opportunities. Among the trends you will find location-based services (LBS), mobile commerce and payment, context-aware services. Find out more about the 2012 mobile application trends [here](#).
- **Redengine:** The mobile world is growing by leaps and bounds with new technologies, new apps, and new networks being built daily. With so much going on, there's no telling what 2012 will bring us. From Redengine 12 Mobile trends to Watch in 2012 [here](#).
- **360i:** In 2012 and beyond 360i, a digital agency specializing in search engine marketing, social media, mobile marketing and web design and development, expects to see mobile social trends like: Social fashion; tag, you're it; interactive TV; and putting ME in RecomMEndation, geo-gaming and near field community. For more information click [here](#).
- **LookOut via ReadWriteWeb:** Your smartphone knows where you are, has access to your email, appointments, phone contacts, and is part of the way you surf the web, make purchases, access your bank account. It has very little security or privacy built into it and therefore smartphones are increasingly becoming targets for malicious hackers. From mobile security firm Lookout six [predictions](#) for the trends of mobile malware in 2012.

## Design & Fashion Trends

- **Suite101:** What is set to be *in* in 2012 in terms of color trends? It looks like 2012 will bring us rosy pink, zesty tangerine, warm yellow, sweet lilac and maritime blue. For more, visit [here](#).
- **Buildipedia.com:** Some green home design trends in 2012 have evolved out of economic necessity while others exist because of technological advancements. In the coming year you will see trends driven by energy-saving thinking. For more on green home design trends visit [here](#).
- **HubPages:** And what do the interior designers say will be the highlight of decorating in 2012? It looks like the main trend for 2012 is Ecological. Recyclable materials are in along with natural colors such as yellow, green and pink. For more interior design trends go [here](#).
- **The Boston Design Center:** The Boston Design Center has released the hot trends they are expecting for 2012, with the main trends are purple and green colors, intricate patterns and rich, simple and rustic style: For more information click [here](#).
- **Europa Regina:** And if you want to know even more about what will be trendy in the fashion, interior design, color and decorations arena visit [here](#).

## Health & Wellness Trends

- **American Council on Exercise (ACE):** Among key findings suggested by more than 1,500 experts ACE trends for 2012 uncover an encouraging shift in the public's understanding of the gravity of the American obesity epidemic as well as a growing trend towards traditional fitness programs with overall life coaching for improved total health. Also technology starts to play a role in complementing in-person fitness services by providing additional motivational support. Access to fitness services and education will continue to expand in local communities, with a continued interest in boot camp-style workouts, unique activity options like Zumba, TRX Suspension and interval training. For more visit [here](#).
- **American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM):** A worldwide survey among 2,620 certified health and fitness professionals shows more people are turning to experienced fitness pros

and fitness programs. The survey predicts the top 20 worldwide fitness trends for 2012. Among the top 3 you will find: 1. Educated and experienced fitness professionals; 2. Strength training; 3. Fitness programs for older adults. For more visit [here](#).

- **The Food Channel:** The Top 10 food trends show that, as we head into 2012, people want to get back to the “real taste” and use what’s healthy for the body. In 2012, the consumer is all about buying supplies that are really hard to get, social cooking is growing and everyone can show their talents on YouTube. Among the favorite food trends you will find: 1. Black market food; 2. Inconspicuous consumption; 3. Social media. For more on these trends visit [here](#).
- **Restaurant Hospitality:** Baum+Whiteman International who create high-profile restaurants for clients around the world expect more global tastes to be one of the big trends in 2012. Edgier global fusion cooking, beer gardens and more creative comfort foods are among the trends that can be expected to take off in the coming year. For more visit [here](#).

### Retail Trends

- **The Luxury Institute via MarketWire:** According to the Luxury Institute the fundamentals for rapid growth both locally and globally, including China, are waning a bit and brands must now find a way to gain market share. Some of the trends all luxury brands should follow in 2012 are: Less is more again; luxury mobile applications become relevant, but commoditized; the annual luxury brand check-up emerges; and luxury brand strategy becomes institutionalized. Find out more [here](#).
- **Entrepreneur:** If you are looking to start your own business or just revitalize your existing business, Entrepreneur magazine has just revealed next year’s trends, which are worth a read. The picks for the 10 best emerging business sectors that are poised for growth during 2012 include among others: Collaborative commerce, gamification, true mobility, jobs, extreme fitness and customization. For more on emerging business sector trends visit [here](#).
- **Interbrand/Chain Store Age’s State of the Industry Report:** Despite the pressures of austerity, retail is becoming more creative and vibrant, as the concept of a store morphs into a blur of physical and virtual, fluidly adapting to the demands of the mobile global consumer who wants the full experience. The retail sector is changing rapidly driven by new technologies and consumer behaviours – read more about the changes underway [here](#).

### Travel Trends

- **Trip Advisor:** TripAdvisor’s 2012 Travel Trends forecast looks at where US respondents want to go and what they want to do. 90% will take two or more leisure trips in 2012, and 31% plan to use travel apps on their mobile device or smartphone in 2012. With 68% intending to travel internationally, top destinations are Paris, London and Rome. For more click [here](#).
- **Lonely Planet:** So where do we want to spend our vacation in 2012? Lonely Planet has released the top 10 countries for 2012, which include Uganda, Myanmar (Burma), Ukraine and Jordan. For more information click [here](#).
- **Green Traveller:** According to the Green Traveller, “The single most important decision travellers can take to reduce their impact on the environment is to seek alternatives to flying.” The website has predicted five green holiday trends for 2012 including Rail and sail adventures to the Med, hiring a bike for a day, and going on an overland adventure for your gap year or sabbatical. For more travel trends visit [here](#).
- **Condé Nast Traveller:** In their latest magazine, Condé Nast offers its Gold List of 2012, its view on the best hotels in the world, along with the best bargain breaks, diving destinations and more. Worth a look [here](#), once the holidays are over and you are planning the next one.

## Marketing Trends

- **Forbes:** Forbes has suggested 12 brand and marketing trends for 2012 brought to you in two parts. Among the trends you will find: Value is the deal, now entering the statusphere, appvertising, real-time branding and coolsumption. Click for [part 1](#) and [part 2](#).
- **Loyalty360:** The Loyalty360, which is the loyalty marketer's association, suggests 12 key customer loyalty trends for 2012 focusing on customer retention and engagement remaining a top challenge. In today's crowded marketplace, creating loyal, engaged customers is more important – and more challenging – than ever. Trends include: Customer engagement is the journey, loyalty is the destination; marketers will work to glean intelligence from social media feedback; and brands will increasingly use the rich information about customer buying patterns generated via loyalty programs to create more targeted marketing/messaging. For more click [here](#).
- **Mashable digital media and advertising trends:** Mashable believes that the rise of mobile and tablets will have a major impact on media consumption habits next year as digital spreads to new places and enable waves of new opportunities for content creators, marketers and consumers. They suggest five key digital media and advertising trends to watch in 2012: Social curation and mobile will drive growth for media organizations; the impact of the second screen on television; an explosion of content for connected TVs; connectivity in the car makes autos the next great platform; mobile commerce brings it all together. For more information visit [here](#).
- **Small Business Trends:** Small businesses have been struggling during the financial crisis but are getting back on their feet and it is now time to focus on some of the hot internet marketing trends for SMEs to watch over the next 12 months. Small Business Trends suggestions include: SoLoMo, using online reviews as social signals, a move into the cloud, site security and going app crazy. For more on these trends click [here](#).
- **Fourth Source:** Fourth Source has collected opinions from some of the leading experts and practitioners on the hot Search Marketing trends to look out for in 2012. These include: Social search; local search; organic search; and multichannel/universal search. For more on search trends visit [here](#).
- **Madison Avenue's ad trends:** The WSJ has rounded up views on where advertising will be heading in 2012, and with thanks to technology, what's old is new again. At least that's what advertising executives predict for 2012. Ad trends from Madison Avenue include among others: Made by you, Facebook fatigue, foul-mouthed ads and mobile madness. For more click [here](#).

**In February: Look out for trends in action on the fight to own the new consumer.**

***Happy New Year from the GT Team!***