

# UK CHANGING LIVES

Half-day conference, 16th December 2008

2008/2009

Altitude SW1, 29th Floor, Millbank Tower, 21 - 24 Millbank, SW1P 4QP, London



## Charts of Fire: Illuminating Downturn Drive (and all its hidden possibilities).

First session:  
9.15am – 1.00pm

Repeat session:  
1.30pm – 5.00pm

We are living through exceptional times. In response to these and to numerous inquiries we have received from clients, **we are, exceptionally, bringing forward our Changing Lives Conference previously scheduled for February 2009.**

Conventional forecasting is feeling pretty concussed at the moment.

We have not had a recession since Bryan Adams was top of the charts and Leeds United won the last ever First Division title.

That last recession predated the *Internet, New Labour, speed dating, mass multi-channel TV, the Maternity Leave Directive, Big Brother, Cool Britannia and the Spice Girls, Enron, Channel Five, social networking, civil partnerships, mobile telecommunications, Alexander McQueen and Stella McCartney, CSR, Kyoto Protocol and Stern Report, Primark and TK Maxx, Brokeback Mountain and Vagina Monologues, cut price air travel, amazon.com, the knowledge economy...*

Consumers (and them that would sell them things) have passed a lot of water under the bridges of affluence since the early 1990s. But now, the smooth flow of established trends (social, cultural, commercial) is facing a unique disruption. This is no time for (sore) heads in the sand or the casual re-warming of old forecasters' greatest hits. We need that new, the on-the-money narrative.

So, there has to be an immediate bringing-to-focus of the market intelligence that matters most – plus fresh-from-the-oven speculations about how brands can prosper

in completely re-upholstered times. For millions of people alive today, the word *depression* has never had an economic dimension to its meaning. Some of the best corporate strategists have never had to walk down our darkened drive. Some brands were not even born when John Major was PM and have themselves come to power during that swell of uninterrupted affluence. We all know the market-story has changed. The question is what name to give it and how to understand its rules.

For that reason, we are offering our Clients this pre-Christmas special.

We have prepared a programme of four special sessions, all of which will be fed by **our very latest proprietary survey data (from the Changing Lives questionnaire) as gathered in November 2008.** Details of each session's content can be found below.

We know this is no time to sit around and wait for perfectly matured ideas to form. Our clients want strategic guidance now - not an academic symposium after the storms have passed. This is our motive and our goal.

As you will perhaps be aware, this is only one of the many initiatives we are taking in response to these exceptional times. Please see our website for more details.

And do please book your **Charts of Fire** place(s) right away.

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- › **8.30am/1.00pm:**  
Registration and welcoming coffee
- › **9.15am/1.30pm: Chair's Introduction**  
**Barry Clark, Account Director, Future Foundation**
- › **9.30am/1.45pm: The Unpredictable Economy = The Unpredictable Consumer?**  
**James Murphy, Editorial Director, nVision**

Recession-bearing winds are blasting down the mall. The debate is now only about how bitter they will actually be. What do we now know about the inevitable condition of our major macro-economic variables in 2009?

As we distil the latest facts-and-figures about the economy, do we have the right set of assumptions in place about the likely reactions of consumers? Can we see new options and new attitudes forming? We can assume that some consumers, for instance, will not want to act like *victims* of dramatically altered economic prospects and will cling to their premium pleasures and treats. So how will the mass of consumers' own *crunched* expectations interact with macro reality and create fresh opportunities for brands across different sectors? Are consumers so much more versatile, ready to cope with change, than they were in the early 1990s?

- › **10.00am/2.15pm: Towards Cyber-Volatility or The Crunch-Proof Net?**  
**Meabh Quoirin, Client Director, Future Foundation**

Online shopping, the spread of social networks, the appeal of new platforms, ever more versatile communications... Are all these features (and the habits they stimulate among consumers) actually immune to credit crunch blues? Is our troubled economy *troubled enough* to impact on the take-up of service innovation in new tech sectors and online delivery mechanisms?

Meanwhile, is the consumer ineluctably driven towards relentless price-comparison, no matter what companies do to entice them elsewhere? Must new times mean greater consumer *maximising* ("I must get the price-quality I want") at the cost of the drift towards *satisfying* ("I will be content if it's good enough") which has been such a salient feature of recent marketplace behaviour?

- › **10.30am/2.45pm: Coffee Break**
- › **11.00am/3.15pm: Re-Constituting Intimacies – is the consumer my (basically) optimistic friend or a money-saving, risk-evading bore?**  
**Joe Staton, Planning Director, Future Foundation**

There can be little doubt that holding consumer affinity – when household bills make even the well-off screech, inflation is torrid and unemployment has risen from the grave – is the market strategist's issue for at least the remainder of this decade. How to re-invigorate trust and loyalty and create a sense of we-are-all-in-it-together solidarity between brands and their fans?



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Is there no antidote-recipe for an intensified addiction to permanently low prices which so much forecasting commentary is expecting? Some might think that new product development might have to be delayed in the same way that many consumers might be deferring holiday plans or replacing their durables on a longer cycle. What kind of optimised communications dialogue would such a turn of events now imply?

> **11.30am/3.45pm: Social Responsible Consumption – Evergreen or Eminently Shrinkable?**  
**Christophe Jouan, Managing Director, Future Foundation**

Market regulation in the name of eco-ethics has been a defining feature of the age. And many consumers have let their aspiration to be good citizens influence so many of their daily choices. (We have regularly measured such phenomena over the years in, for example, nVision's "Assault on Pleasure" Key Trend). But is the dislocation between green *attitude* and green *behaviour* bound to widen now? Or will consumers simply be unwilling to shed their better instincts, habits, demands?

And in what other ways could this story break? Will price pressure and environmental sensitivity actually *combine* to prevail on millions to prune consumption, deny themselves luxuries, insist that companies do more (while they do less)?

Is climate change going to survive as a priority agenda through 2009 and beyond? Does continued investment in CSR seem like good brand-building insurance, now more than ever?

## Booking Details

- **UK nVision subscribers** have a number of inclusive places to the conference (subject to availability) or you can purchase extra places at the discounted rate of £395 + VAT per delegate.
- For **non-UK nVision subscribers** the standard cost is £600 + VAT per delegate.
- Please note there are limited places to this conference - payment needs to be received before your place can be confirmed. Pay online by credit card and receive a **further 10% discount** on the total booking price.
- **Note: We are planning to re-run these sessions in early January 2009 if you are unable to attend or if we are overbooked on the day.**
- **To book** your place, please visit [www.futurefoundation.net/events/view](http://www.futurefoundation.net/events/view) or contact **Josie Watson** on [josiew@futurefoundation.net](mailto:josiew@futurefoundation.net) or telephone +44 (0) 20 3042 4726

## Booking Terms and Conditions

All prices exclude VAT and include full delegate materials. The Future Foundation reserves the right to make any alternations to the programme that may be necessary. If you pay by cheque, please make payable to 'Experian Ltd'. Cancellation: No refunds will be given for cancellations made less than 30 days in advance of the conference. Cancellations made 30 days or more before the conference will be given a 50% refund. Delegates may be substituted at any time. While we make every effort to ensure that the conference finishes at the stated time, we advise delegates to allow 20 minutes leeway for a possible late finish when planning travel arrangements.