

Taking the hocus-pocus out of trendspotting

New book describes how sociology can be used to predict trends

Trends are about changes in style and taste. These changes take place on a regular basis and yet the trend process is not really well understood. However, because trends are a social process trends can be understood. In his book *Anatomy of a Trend*, Henrik Vejlgaard introduces trend sociology as a specific field of study in understanding the who, where, and why of the trend process. His point is if you understand the trend process you can better predict changes in style and taste. Therefore, he has now written the first book in English about the trend process based specifically on trend sociology.

Most people can describe what the word is about – something new or “hot.” Often people will also point out that a trend is something “airy” or “mysterious” or something that is “completely unpredictable.” But these perceptions are not true. It is important to be aware because trends are a social process trends can be understood. Vejlgaard points out that trends only happen because there are people involved. Changes in style and taste do not just happen “out of the blue”. Only human beings can create changes in style and taste. And to the extent that we can understand human being’s behaviour we can understand how changes in style and taste come about.

By studying and analyzing past trends, Henrik Vejlgaard reveals that there are predictable patterns in every trend. After having analyzed past trends related to many different kinds of style and taste (from clothing to food) the conclusion is that a trend is most likely go mainstream if the following conditions are met:

- The new trend has started as a reaction to what is mainstream
- Different kinds of trendsetters adopt the trend
- A high number of trendsetters adopt the trend
- The trend first emerges in a major city that is know to have many trendsetters
- The trend quickly spread to other cities that are known to have many trendsetters
- There is ongoing product and/or design development early in the trend process
- The products or style can be imitated or copied
- Many of the trendsetters’ media feature the trend in articles
- There is a connection between Hollywood movies and the trend.

The early start of the trend process is worth paying attention to, too. Most trendsetters are found in groups like artists, designers, gay men, the young, celebrities, and wealthy people. It is when members of each of these groups mingle, observe and copy each other that a new trend takes off.

Henrik Vejlgaard, M.A., M.Sc., is a pioneer in trend sociology, the study of the trend process. *Anatomy of a Trend* will be published in October 2007 by McGraw-Hill.

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