

Classroom Projects & Activities: **LIFESTYLE TRENDS**

Objective

To help students understand societal/lifestyle trends and how they affect us as consumers

Suggested for use in the following departments: Home Economics, Social Studies, and Business Education

Materials Needed:

- Copy of Faith Popcorn's book *Lifestyle Trends*
- Access to the Internet
- Current consumer magazines

Warm-Up Exercise :

Warm up: Have students look around the room and note examples of trends, i.e. fashion trends worn by fellow students. **Specific questions:**

- What appear to be the styles, trends, or prevailing looks of what students are wearing today?
- Are there examples of students who go against the trend?
- Why might they choose to do so?

General discussion:

- What defines a trend?
- How are trends researched?
- Who establishes trends?
- Who are the major trendsetters in the American culture?

Project Guidelines

1

Discuss Faith Popcorn's Lifestyle Trends with the focus on five key trends:

- **Cocooning** - Consumers are shielding themselves from the harsh, unpredictable realities of the outside world and retreating into safe, cozy "homelike" environments.
- **Clanning** - Consumers seek the comfort and reinforcement of those who share their values, beliefs, and their interests.
- **Fantasy Adventure** - As an escape from stress and boredom, consumers crave excitement and stimulation in essentially risk-free adventures.
- **Small Indulgences** - Busy, stressed-out consumers seeking quick-hit gratification are rewarding themselves with affordable luxuries.
- **Down Aging** - Nostalgic for the carefree days of childhood, consumers seek the symbols of youth to counterbalance the intensity of their adult lives.

2

Trends can affect everything from fashion design to barbecue grills. The current BBQ trend is extra large stainless - related to the "cocooning" trend, national pride, and family cookouts. Car design has gone retro (PT Cruiser, T-bird, VW Beetle), while only athletic shoes and computers/electronics are trying to look futuristic (Apple). In general, there are trends that tend to permeate all types of design.

3

Break up into groups of 3-4 students and distribute the consumer magazines. Each group should find an example of each of the lifestyle trends outlined by Faith Popcorn and give an explanation of that trend.

4

Students should select a spokesperson from each group to present the findings to the class.

Possible follow up:

Ask students to think about how a company would use the information based upon societal trends as they decide what products to manufacture. How would the knowledge of societal trends affect advertising of that product?