



**Sex toys**

Sales of the rubber stuff are up 240% since the start of the economic slowdown. So that explains why no one's coming out.



**Sausages**

Sales are sizzling as cash-strapped carnivores downgrade from steaks to the humble banger.

**Human vending machines**

As KitKat's 'Work Like A Machine' campaign takes to the streets of London



**Hula-hooping**

According to enthusiasts, hooping burns as many as 100cals every 10 minutes, boosts your mood and your sex life, provides spiritual enlightenment and, apparently, can even be used to promote world peace.

**Cadbury's eyebrows ad**

Dividing the nation. (We LOVE it.)



**Harem pants**

The fashion world is laughing at you behind your back (fat). Don't do it!

**Limmy light**

Glasgow's finest comedy sensation doesn't really translate to the 10pm Beeb slot. For Limmy gold, check out [www.limmy.com](http://www.limmy.com)



**Playboy**

It's looking like the party is nearly over for Hugh as the company reports a steep quarterly loss and even Lady Gaga declines to pose for the cover.

**Michael Byers, Planner/Buyer**, delineates the benefits of mobile marketing in 2009...

2009 is undoubtedly going to be a make-or-break year for some industries. The automotive industry is already showing signs of strain and it was with heavy hearts that we bid farewell to good old Woolie's (so good we never went there).

It doesn't have to be all doom and gloom, however. If past recessions have taught us anything, it's that there are gains to be made during bad times as well as good. Against all the odds, Renault Clio, Nescafe and Barclaycard all managed to raise their currency during the last downturn.

Most companies are all too aware, however, that these gains don't come without some risk and innovation along the way. Enter mobile advertising. It is comparatively cheap, easy to produce and, best of all in these straitened times, more measurable than most other channels. The challenge is simply turning advertisers into believers... so here goes!

Mobile's greatest strengths are also its greatest weakness – variety and innovation. With so many options, one of the biggest hurdles is knowing where to start.

The options vary from the classic KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) approach to dazzlingly complex media firsts (and the PR and bragging rights that follow). In the current climate, I recommend the KISS method – tried and tested and accountable. At this stage forget complex QR (Quick Response) codes and minimal reach iPhone applications - SMART phone penetration represents only 13% of UK handsets.

Instead, think 'On Portal' with a presence on the phone's unique mobile site or 'Off Portal' with a banner advert with a click-to-call or click-for-more-information mechanism. Other options include integrated promotions through other media channels, with text-to-win, viral messages and voting via shortcode - as used by Walkers Crisps in their new 'Do Us a Flavour, Pick a Winner' campaign.

With companies like Google continuing to pour money into mobile solutions, as shown by the rollout of their search engine embedded on mobile websites and investment in the Latitude mapping system, the

rest of us won't be far behind.

**Nikki Gilmour, Communications Strategist**, has scoured the web to provide you with the skinny on the top consumer trends to watch out for in 2009...

## 1. The New Thrift

This trend reared its head towards the end of 2008 and isn't going to disappear anytime soon. Never have boardgames, camping or bringing a packed lunch to work been so acceptable. Clothes-swapping or '[swishing](#)' parties have become de rigeur among female friends. It's a rejection of the 'spend spend spend' culture of the '90s and early-mid noughties and a nod towards a simpler, some would say better, way of living.

Poster-children: [Tom and Barbara Good](#)

Essential reading: '[The Thrift Book: Live Well and Spend less](#) by India Knight

## 2. Let's Get Serious

The need to be in the know has shot up the consumer agenda. Oh-so-serious titles like the FT and The Economist are reporting increases in circulation. Sales of non-fiction books are also on the up, as are viewing figures for documentaries. That's not to say that the frivolous has been rejected altogether; it remains an important escape hatch from the economic misery, but there is more of a balance than in recent years.

Poster-children: [Robert Preston](#), [Martin Lewis](#)

Essential reading: The FT and The Economist, of course

## 3. Vicarious consumption

Obsessive curtain-twitching on how other folk are spending their money. This trend already drives most of the 'lifestyle' programming on the box, but looks set to increase even more as the economy shudders to a halt. A classic British response to an economic crisis. It doesn't matter how badly off you are, as long as your neighbours are worse off.

Poster-children: your next-door neighbour, [Hyacinth Bucket](#)

c.f. the runaway success of sites like UpMyStreet and [www.moneysupermarket.com](#)

## 4. Green upmanship

While it hasn't fallen off the consumer agenda altogether, all things green are definitely taking a bit more of a back seat. Sales of eco-products took a nosedive in Q4 of last year, for example. One thing's for sure though - those who continue to embrace it will do so in a v competitive way. Think ostentatious use of reusable cotton bags, making a big show of buying organic for dinner parties, etc. As one commentator says: "Our way of saving the planet just wouldn't be British without the irritating class snobbery dimension."

Poster-children: David Cameron, anyone still sporting an 'I'm Not A Plastic Bag'

Essential reading: '[Crap at the Environment](#)' by Mark Watson

### Four ways to spend your time or money this month:

•**Obama sushi.** Rivals have been trying to find something fishy about Obama for a while now, but we're not this is what they had in mind!



•**The Hand Bra.** A handy piece of lingerie that ensures your lady bits are always in a warm, comfortable embrace! Available from Amazon for £1.99.



•**The Maths clock.** Ever wondered why Einstein always kept immaculate time? The maths clock. A must-have for aspiring rocket scientists everywhere!



•**Howies' Hand-me-downs.** The Cardigan Bay-based eco-clothing company has given the birdie to fast fashion and launched a range of jackets and bags that have been specifically designed to last for more than ten years. The line includes a £125 satchel crafted from heavy waxed canvas, die-cut leather, and rust-proof aluminium zips and hardware. Available from [www.howies.co.uk](#)

