



2016 is coming to its end and 2017 is emerging on the horizon just behind. Out with the old, in with whatever will be new. Baby New Year is trying on his sash for final alterations as Father Time shuffles to his finish line. I started off the day with an exclamation of “Egads, it’s almost December!” Thanksgiving is already behind us and a plethora of year end events and holidays are ahead. On the business side, we rush to get year-end expense reports turned in, collect – or delay – outstanding accounts receivables, put on holiday and year-end sales and get our financial books in order.

In what passes for our personal lives, everyone is bustling to get holiday gifts bought and wrapped. Parties and gatherings are being planned. Cookies and other taboo delicacies are being made for when the festivities begin. Somewhere in the middle, small businesses are supposed to plan for the coming year. Just finding time to review your 2016 plan can be daunting. It helps to know what has changed in the world that will affect your business in the coming year. Your holiday gift from Maurer Consulting Group is a leg up on that task. This final 2016 issue of ‘Designing Strategies’ includes tips on mega trends and opportunities on the horizon for 2017. Use them in good health.

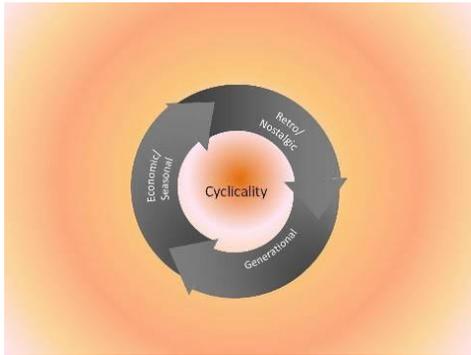
Megatrends for 2017

Trend Hunter identified megatrends for 2017 and six patterns of opportunity in their annual trends report. This year’s report specified the following opportunity concepts:

- Acceleration
- Cyclicity
- Reduction
- Redirection
- Convergence
- Divergence

How Can You Apply Megatrends for 2017?

Now you know what some of the big picture trends are for the near future. What can you do with them that will positively affect your small business in 2017? Consider these tips for some of the opportunity concepts from Trend Hunter. Hopefully, they will get the gears of your brain moving as you plan for the coming year.



Cyclicity

What goes around comes around again, doesn't it? Clothing styles, toys, games, furnishings, hot colors: you name it they have all come around more than a few times. Many Baby Boomers have entered retirement recently. Boomers intend to go kicking and screaming into old age. If there is a way to hold on to our youth, or at least memories of it, we're all for it. I admit it. I have, stashed away in our attic, a pair of hot, rust colored, crushed velvet hip hugger jeans. Add my matching rust corduroy cap and a pair of 'wing-tipped' platform shoes. I'll never wear them again, that's for sure, but they hold a lot of memories of my youth.

Nostalgia can go a long way with customers of all generations. Boomers aren't the only ones trying to slow down time and hold on to their youth. Millennials want to hold on to memories of their own good old days. Popular TV shows for them are in the form of cartoons. Instead of adding a room as a getaway, expensive tree house spaces are being created. Remember the ball pits at kid-focused restaurants? Well, they are back, in adult venues, complete with adult beverages. Adult versions of those summer camps of their youth are popping up. How can you address the desire for nostalgia for your customers?



Redirection

Doing the same things you did before and expecting new outcomes is bad strategy. It's time to consider going in new directions. Refocus your strategies, reverse direction back to something you never gave a fair chance and try it again. Do something entirely new to surprise and please customers. Try adding some level of gamification into doing business with you. Honey Baked Ham Company and other brands have embraced the game strategy on their websites. [Check this blog post](#) from Brogan & Partners on successful companies utilizing gamification to build community.

If this is too much of a leap for your company, think about basic game elements: points (rewards programs), competition ('help us name this new product'), or winning prizes (hold a drawing for a free product or service, or a discount). Redirect your focus and see how it will increase your reach on social media. These kinds of redirection can help your brand stand out among competitors. You can create a community of your customers. If you don't change the focus and direction of your company from time to time, it will stagnate, shrivel up and die.



Convergence

Several people, or companies, coming together from different directions and perspectives, are converging. Think about connecting with another company to align with them for a joint venture opportunity. Add layers to what you already offer. Add value. Amazon does this very well. When you shop their site, every item you look at will include similar or related products that you can also buy. They even add up the prices of those related items. "See, it's not that much more to add these additional items."

If you are in a services industry, team up with a related firm and offer a program from different perspectives. A lawyer, an accountant and a health care professional teamed up to present their perspectives to a target audience of women going through divorce. Legal, financial and stress management are all elements of the divorce process. Three layers plus added value: a win-win for everyone.

Take a few minutes to download the full Trend Hunter report of 2017 Megatrends. The report is free. All you need to do is give them your email address and they will send you a link to the download. You will find it to be a valuable piece of research to review before planning strategy for your small business. If you need help in applying these megatrends and opportunities to your company's plans for 2017, call Terri (330.283.3999) or zip off an email (tlmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com) to arrange an appointment to discuss working together to create your company's focused path to success.

***Wishing you the happiest holiday season
and a successful New Year!***

'*Designing Strategies*' is a complimentary business publication brought to you by Terri L Maurer, FASID, principle of Maurer Consulting Group. Maurer works with small business owners and managers to uncover barriers on their path to growth and success. If you need help getting your company out of a rut and focused on your own vision of success, you can **contact Terri directly by phone** at **330.666.0802** or **by email** at tlmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com Wishing you much success!