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What has been the biggest trend/s in the last decade? Trends themselves have been a big trend of the last ten years! There seems to be a name for every new micro trend from 'masstige' to 'lease living', seriously though we continuously track a number of cultural, economic and technology megatrends, never considering one to be the biggest or most dominant. We are more interested in where and how they fuse and create smaller trends that influence a way a particular group of people think and behave. If I were asked to pick a candidate for one of the biggest in the last decade it would be the ongoing 'Digital Revolution'. It continues to change everything. It has shifted so much power to the individual, changed the way we relate to each other and created endless new social and commercial opportunities.

What will be the biggest trend/s in the next decade? This Digital Revolution will obviously continue to be a dominant trend of the next decade but I think other overarching global trends will be significant, 'Transparency', 'Honesty',

'Generosity' and 'Efficiency', are four examples that will potentially affect every part of our lives in the 'tens and teens'.

What do you think are the main drivers that are currently impacting on future trends?

I think the four trends outlined above are driven by a number of converging influences including recent political and corporate behaviour, the current financial turmoil, fluctuating oil and raw material prices, the shift of production and power to the BRICS and galloping urbanisation.

We have all heard the saying that 'good design is good for business'. Do you agree? Have you noticed with your clients that they are seeing the benefit that good design can bring to their business and do you think that we will see more of this in the future?

Over the last 50 years DCA has consistently seen how good design inspires innovation and fuels business growth. In 2009 our medical team led by our managing director Rob Woolston won the DBA

Design Effectiveness Gold Award, the International Export Award and the overall Grand Prix Award for the Sanofi Aventis SoloSTAR disposable insulin pen. Sanofi Aventis tasked DCA to design an insulin pen that set new usability standards delivering 80 insulin units (30 per cent larger than comparable devices) with a low injection force. In addition, the pen had to have far fewer parts, be assembled by very high-speed automated production, while being extremely robust and highly accurate. DCA delivered a design that achieved this tough brief. The benefit this design has brought to Sanofi Aventis is outstanding - 70 per cent of patients interviewed now prefer the lower injection force of SoloSTAR to competitor products and in 2008 it accounted

for 41 per cent of all growth in the global injectable insulin market.

In another recent example we helped Amanda Scacchetti of Mamas and Papas create Mylo, the new 3in1 baby travel system recently featured in newdesign. We were tasked to design a system that set new standards of comfort for the baby while improving usability for the parent. Just launched, this striking design based on extensive research has had fantastic user feedback and is already becoming a global ambassador for the Mamas and Papas brand. At its recent Cologne launch there was a five-fold increase in visitors to the company's stand immediately opening up six new geographical markets.

■ The Sanofi Aventis SoloSTAR disposable insulin pen.



Mylo - Mamas & Papas 3in1 baby travel system.



Increasingly product and industrial design consultancies are providing their clients with the 'full package' from research, styling, engineering, branding, packaging, POS and so on. Will this be an ongoing trend and do you see the future of the traditional product design consultancy changing in the future?

I see three key drivers that have

influenced product design consultancies to offer more services. Firstly, we are in a sober period where clients more than ever want efficiencies and truly commercially effective output from their product design partners. Consistent effective design comes from long-term partnerships with consultancies that deeply understand their client and their customers from multiple viewpoints. To achieve this we see a lot of

corporate clients consolidating with fewer consultancies that offer more services and flexible resources.

Secondly, there has been a shift from a focus on the product, to a focus on the user experience. This obviously involves integrating more disciplines and services to a traditional product design firm.

Thirdly, product design has crept up the corporate ladder changing the questions we are asked and the tasks we are given. Product design consultancies that work at this level require staff, services and processes that offer broader strategic support for product planning and research, innovation, brand and intellectual property.

What design tools do you think will become more prevalent in years to come?

From drawing board to drawing board in 20 years. I am fascinated how at the start of my career in the early 1990s I saw drawing boards phased out of design studios with computer terminals taking over, now we see them coming back. Workplace ergonomics in the product design studio is

going full circle with tablet PCs and multi touch tables converging into wonderful hardware solutions that finally free designers from two decades of keyboards and mice.

Our design research team are continuing to develop new online tools and methods to fuse rich qualitative data with the scale of traditional quantitative data. Visualisation software is becoming more integrated to CAD enabling more time to be spent on design rather than communication.

'Traditional' prototyping techniques are splitting, one direction becoming faster, cheaper and more desktop, the other fusing with production techniques to provide more material or process accurate parts for better testing and eventually becoming the actual production part itself.

As a footnote, I am also delighted to see an increased prevalence in executive teams using our 'traditional' design tools, processes and user centred approach when searching for new ways of creating value in broader social and business contexts.