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Connecting The Dots: Cultural Insights Lead to Innovation

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Are you getting the most out of your innovation efforts?

Most companies agree that strong consumer and technical insights are the foundation of innovation. So why do the majority of new product launches fail? As an industry, we have to look critically at the processes and techniques used to understand consumer behavior and creatively “connect the dots” to develop great insights that result in innovative new products that truly delight consumers. The job of a competent global trend tracker and product anthropologist is to never assume anything as “a given” and to enter into cultures with no preconceived notions.

When corporations ignore culture (the mentality, emotions and activities that make up the so-called “lifestyle” of every consumer), they place their organizations at risk in the marketplace. Many companies only scratch the surface, spending only a few days in the field and only focusing on the obvious target market.

Developing great insights requires companies go farther than just simply talking to consumers. Great insights have depth and uniqueness that only comes from immersing oneself with consumers for extended periods of time—all the while carefully watching, listening and asking “why.” Great insights require understanding how similar problems are solved by people outside of a target market. And finally, great insights require an expertise in carefully interpreting all this information in a way that makes sense. All this takes creativity, focus and a passion for seeking out novel solutions that may well become the next big idea—your idea!



Global Trend Tracker & Product Anthropologist Marguerite La Corte

Documents

[Menu](#) (PDF 32.0 KB)

[Trend Trek Destinations](#) (PDF 28.4 KB)

A Profile of Global Trend Tracker & Product Anthropologist Marguerite La Corte

Trend Research Reports & Creative Presentations

WHO: Marguerite La Corte (aka The Dot Connector™) is our industry's first Global Trend Tracker combining Product and Cultural Anthropology into her unique methodology. Strong on both the Marketing and R&D side, she travels the world (and the USA!) over 30-45 day periods working for clients to help them identify emerging consumer insights, novel ingredients and unique consumer rituals and products that can translate into innovation for new product development, packaging/design technology, an business opportunities offering meaningful end benefits in the form of proprietary research reports and creative presentations.

She sells her findings to the beauty/personal care, consumer goods, fashion, food & beverage industries. Having spent more than 18 years in the cosmetic/fragrance industry with a proven track record and comprehensive expertise in global marketing and product development, she has created distinguished brands and products within and outside the beauty industry, including: **Le Zink Sun-care, Alberto Culver USA-Tresemmé Hair care, ECHO Mario Valentino Parfum, Helene Curtis Italy Hair Care, Yue Sai Kan Color Cosmetics & Skincare, R.P. Scherer's Truscent™ unit dosage gelatin encapsulated fragrance sampler and Ceramide™ unit dosage skincare capsules, Henri Bendel New York**, to name a few.

In 1994, upon her return to the USA after working abroad in Milan, Italy for six years, Marguerite created International Consulting—a marketing and product development firm. In 2003, her company expanded into developing category exclusive Trend Research Reports for clients within the beauty, fashion, food & beverage and automotive industries. This is the only company worldwide selling proprietary insights with industry vision and true product applicability.

WHAT: *Trend Research Reports + Creative Presentations* are developed on a “category exclusivity” basis for manufacturers and suppliers within any given industry. Some categories sold on an “exclusive” basis prior to the trip include: Bath & Body, Hair Care, Color Cosmetics, Oral Care, Skin Care, Sun Care, etc.

The full [Categories/Sub-categories Menu](#) is available [here](#).

Each trek is a minimum of 30-45 days in the field, 30 days of evaluation of findings/stimuli/ingredients shipped back to USA headquarters and 30 days developing a customized research report based on the clients needs. Overall, this is a 90+ day all inclusive and proprietary project.

Trek Destinations Are Two-fold

1. **CULTURAL INSIGHTS:** For clients looking to penetrate a market, culture or single country with their goods or service and/or are looking to learn consumer insights, uncover channels of distribution, understand retail development, mergers and acquisitions, etc.
2. **INNOVATION INSIGHTS:** For clients who are innovation-driven seeking intelligence into local emerging consumer insights, novel ingredients, and unique rituals and products a particular market provides. This will directly translate into new product development/innovation concepts and ideas for clients outside or within said market. (Note: each category/subcategory is sold to only one (1) client per 30+ day trek).

WHY: In an increasingly competitive environment, global insights are needed to invigorate manufacturers, suppliers and retailers with *new product development concepts, innovation and marketing opportunities* to grow current brands or establishing new brands on the horizon. With so many companies becoming leaner in their marketing/product development and packaging departments, it is imperative manufacturers and suppliers alike address this need by being proactive rather than reactive to the changes occurring within the world's marketplace.

HOW: Unlike other trend consultants, Marguerite offers clients **unique information** that is not syndicated or ever duplicated. And the only way for large corporations to maintain a competitive edge is to obtain **proprietary insights** with applicable information.

Scouring three-five countries or three-five regions within one country over a **30-45 day period**, a trend trek incorporates meeting, interviewing and tapping into local professionals and entrepreneurs across several different industries that pertain to the categories purchased for the trek. These local professionals include: Artists, Architects, Dermatologists, Dentists, Fashion Designers, Herbalists, Home Furnishing Designers, Healing Practitioners, Industrial Designers, Political Figures, Photographers, Stylists, Spiritual Leaders, etc.

Findings and results with real perspective come from creative communities, locals and global relationships that she has cultivated over many years and continue to evolve; from big cities to obscure villages/tribes.

Commencing in 2007, the “treks” have also included Ethnographic Insights when requested by clients, and include staying in the homes of locals in the markets covered. This gives a **direct perspective for consumer behavior as well as local rituals and dietary/novel ingredients utilized**, and is a **truly** authentic tool. In most cases consumers do not tell truthful experiences and usages of products during focus groups, therefore this is an opportunity to gain intelligent insights based on **first hand interaction, when available, to complement traditional research methods**. Few if any trend trackers or ethnographers spend quality time sleeping in the home of strangers with permission to scour through their cupboards/medicine cabinets or interview about personal usage!

Gathering true insights requires being a sponge and absorbing what is going on in a particular environment/market—understanding street trends, political views, target groups buying patterns, advertising styles etc. within each country/culture contributes to seeing the global “big picture” on what new products are needed, desired and used.

Uncovering stimuli/objects within each category/industry, as well as items outside any particular industry that will support the overall vision/forecast, are presented during the a two hour post-trek presentation at the headquarters of the client. After accessing all the above, Marguerite has the keen ability to **uncover common denominators of trends before they even become a trend and are on anyone's radar**.

The turnaround time for the client to receive their customized **Trend Research Reports & Creative Presentations** is 8-10 weeks after returning to the USA. Therefore, this is truly a **90+ day project**— which one should keep in mind when considering the lengthy work needed to gather, receive stimuli back via FedEx, evaluate findings and develop conclusions from the trek.

The Creative Presentation includes: Inspirational Boards™ that support Trend Themes/Directives and a Product Presentation made up of samples and stimuli gathered from the journey to support the data within the written research report. These elements may include products/objects gathered across several industries within and out of the category the client purchased to show evidence of emerging trends.

WHERE: Trek Destinations available upon request:

- [Global Trend Trek Destinations](#), click [here](#)
- Upcoming: Asia, SE Asia, Brazil, India, The Middle East
- USA: Five cities can be covered anytime during the year 'upon request' with a shorter turnaround
- Any combination of destinations can also be customized based on specific needs. Clients who commit early, help determine each destination per trek.

OTHER:

When not on traveling the globe on a trek, Marguerite is available for customized research/innovation projects.

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