



# GOOD BRANDS REPORT 2009



in association with

**thepurplelist**



psfk

innovation • inspiration • creativity • design • trends

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# INTRODUCTION

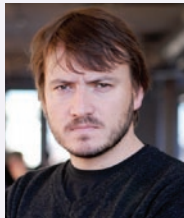
## INTRODUCTION

The Good Brands Report of 2009 is a celebration of leadership during this challenging year.

Those who made it onto the list are businesses from which we should learn. They are not just the well-known brands of the day, but also companies that lead by example in innovation, environmental consciousness, and social policy.

We started our search for the Good Brands of 2009 by looking at the companies we were writing about on PSFK.com over the course of this year. Then we asked a panel of cross-industry global experts from the Purple List to tell us which of 40 common brands on PSFK were considered 'Good'.

We hope the learnings from this report, and the companies contained within, inspire you to make things better.



Piers Fawkes  
Founder  
PSFK & The Purple List

PSFK: [www.psfk.com](http://www.psfk.com)  
Purple List: [www.purplelist.com](http://www.purplelist.com)

### HOW WE RANKED THE GOOD BRANDS

The Good Brands Report survey consisted of three questions on how well the brands were perceived in given categories—innovation, environment and community. The participants then rated each brand, which were presented in a randomized order, on a scale from 1 to 10. 1 being "Not at all," 5 "OK" and 10 "Outstanding."

#### WE ASKED

##### Innovation:

How well does this brand consistently innovate?

##### Environmental Responsibility:

How well does this brand make environmental considerations around the production and distribution methods it uses to get a product or service to market and the reuse & recycling after consumption?

##### Social Collaboration:

How well does the brand provide a positive and beneficial experience to all those it touches from production to consumption, providing society as a whole with an improved experience?



## TOP 10 BRANDS

GOOGLE

APPLE

ZIPCAR

GOOD  
MAGAZINE

AMAZON

FACEBOOK

VIRGIN

TWITTER

IKEA

SKYPE

## KEY FINDINGS

There are a number of common traits shared by the Good Brands. The list below provides some insight into what makes these brands special.

- **Utility**—Aim to enhance your usefulness for the consumer. In doing so, look not only at your product or service, but also the eco-system that surrounds it.
- **Experimentation**—Constant innovation is the essential element of growth. Continually push the boundaries of your offering and create ancillary products.
- **Design**—Premium aesthetics coupled with consistent delivery wins every time. A premium experience can be applied to any product or service, no matter where it sits on the price spectrum. Make your audience feel valued, encouraging them to include you as part of their identity.
- **Community and listening**—Create a sense of community for your customers. Actively engage them and listen to what they have to say. They are the best source of guidance for improved service.
- **Change the model**—Look at your consumers' eco-system of needs and change your business model to suit them.
- **Beyond the 30 second ad**—Of the top 100 largest advertising spenders in 2008, none of them made it onto this list. Instead of spending money on advertising, leverage the existing community that's involved with your brand to promote your products and services.
- **Environmental Priorities**—Brands in the lower half of the list lose points for prizing innovation over environmental responsibility. Integrate sustainable practices wherever you can in your brand's eco-system.

# #1 GOOGLE

GOOD  
BRANDS  
REPORT  
2009

INNOVATION

9.11

RESPONSIBILITY

7.19

COMMUNITY

8.30

TOTAL

8.20

Google has become a way of life. For many people it's the beginning, middle and end of the web experience. They are the provider of a vast array of services that enable work, play, learning and more. Google's ability to promote innovation among its staff means that it has a constant flow of new ideas.

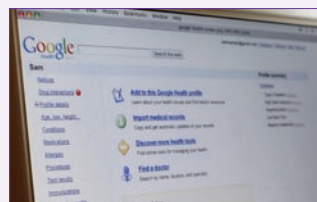
Accessibility and usefulness define this brand. This, coupled with the negligible cost of distribution through the web, allows them to expand into areas including health, telecom, software, news, and advertising. The list goes on and on...



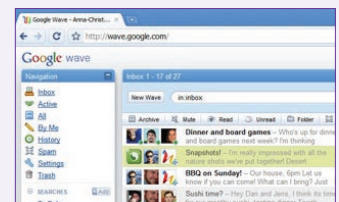
Google Voice changes the telecommunications market



Google Chrome OS will challenge Microsoft's dominance



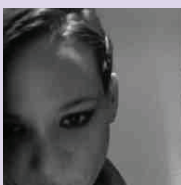
Google Health alters the way we monitor our health



Google Wave could change how we collaborate in real time

## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Experiment rapidly,  
embrace failure.**



"I think the fact that we forget Google is a search engine is evidence in itself that this is a service that has extended itself to be known as a brand, as well as a verb...perhaps not recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary, but a verb for searching online all the same. Nice."

Ruby Pseudo, Youth Expert, London  
<http://purplelist.com/members/rubypseudo>



"It challenges the ways we thought we could communicate, seek, and share information with every other citizen on Earth. Google might be as revolutionary as Gutenberg's printing machine in the Middle Ages."

Roland-Philippe Kretzschmar,  
Advertising & Branding Expert, Stockholm  
<http://purplelist.com/members/rpkretzschmar>

# #2 APPLE

INNOVATION

**9.20**

RESPONSIBILITY

**6.34**

COMMUNITY

**8.06**

TOTAL

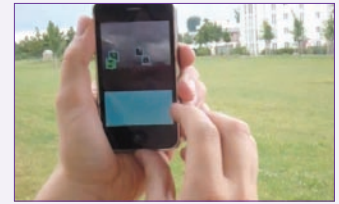
**7.87**

Apple stands apart from the competition, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to delivering outstanding experiences through their hardware and software products, as well as their marketing and retail operations. Their focus on delivering convenience, connectivity and simplicity through design is indicative of their shift from a company traditionally serving the creative professional to one that makes products and services for all.

Apple's iPhone has become a genuinely disruptive piece of technology, causing a number of players in the consumer electronics market to contemplate their relevance and gaming companies to re-evaluate their platforms.



Applications change the way we use mobile phones



Location based services bring the web to the world



Video content on iPhone changes the dynamics of entertainment



Customer service at the Genius Bar exceeds expectations

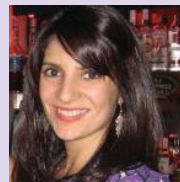
## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Every aspect of your brand should be as good as your product.**



“Apple provides its consumers a community-like atmosphere through their stores and the experience in them. Consumers always feel like they are supported. Every experience I have had at a Genius Bar (worldwide) has been an extremely positive one and has strengthened my loyalty to the brand.”

Jason Ford, TV, Film & Music Expert, Toronto  
<http://purplelist.com/members/jasonford>



“I love Apple design. I admire their constant focus on usability and innovation. They are always seeking to make things better...”

Paloma M. Vazquez, Food&Drink Expert, Miami  
<http://purplelist.com/members/pmvazquez>

# #3 ZIPCAR

INNOVATION

**6.32**

RESPONSIBILITY

**8.20**

COMMUNITY

**8.00**

TOTAL

**7.75**

By being intimately in-tune with societal change, the micro-rental company has broken down an established market, recreating it in a way that wins over customers with surprise and happiness.

Zipcar continues to encourage a societal shift from product ownership to service rental. Customer retention is accomplished through innovation, including mobile phone applications and the development of a fleet of electric vehicles.

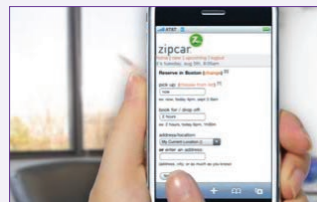
It's less about evolving the rental car market and more about changing consumer's perception of car ownership and use.



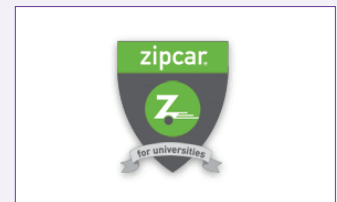
Zipcar introduces electric vehicles



FastFleet created for government departments



Zipcar's mobile app makes access quick and immediate



Zipcar delivers services to different consumer types

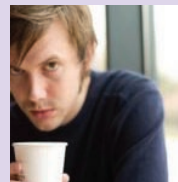
## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Stop selling products,  
start selling services.**



“Zipcar takes care of everything. There is a sense of ease when dealing with the brand. Like your endearing camp counselor, they have thought of everything before hand. Comfortable. Happy.”

Katie Sherman,  
Media & Publishing Expert, Brooklyn  
<http://purplelist.com/members/katiesherman>



“Any brand that challenges us to question our use of a product as widespread as the car is doing us good. Particularly, if it can help contribute to a solution rather than just advocate against it.”

Damon Garrett, Electronics Expert, Singapore  
<http://purplelist.com/members/damongarrett>

# #4 GOOD MAGAZINE

GOOD  
BRANDS  
REPORT  
2009

INNOVATION

7.23

RESPONSIBILITY

7.51

COMMUNITY

8.16

TOTAL

7.63

GOOD Magazine represents the new face of publishing. Its business is not about making a magazine, or even a website—it's about galvanizing a community that shares common interests and values. With its knack for being able to present complex issues through simple, engaging design, it can share ideas through its readers to expand its mission (and brand) beyond its immediate base.

In addition, GOOD Magazine is not afraid of the brand relationship and works with partners to create branded content that benefits the reader, the advertisers and the business.



Pay as you wish increases subscriptions



Clarifies complex information through infographics



Promotes sustainable initiatives



Partners with brands to share ideas

## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Set the agenda and let your customers spread the conversation.**



“I find what GOOD Magazine has to say very stimulating and interesting, especially from the point of view of celebrating the good things that go on in the world. It doesn't preach—it informs.”

Anjali Ramachandran,  
Advertising & Branding Expert, London  
<http://purplelist.com/members/anjali28>



“The magazine and website not only deliver outstanding information, but do so with impactful, innovative, and beautiful design. They address tough issues in a truly thoughtful manner and their overall business approach aligns perfectly with the product they deliver.”

Angel Ciangi,  
Advertising & Branding Expert, San Francisco  
<http://purplelist.com/members/aciangi>

# #5 AMAZON

INNOVATION  
**7.33**

RESPONSIBILITY  
**6.29**

COMMUNITY  
**7.44**

TOTAL  
**7.02**

Whether reinventing how we read books via the Kindle, offering businesses digital and logistical infrastructure solutions, or introducing environmentally friendly packaging, the tech giant seems to constantly be trying to improve and extend its offering.

The company continues to re-evaluate its business, innovating based off its strengths, and finding new ways to generate revenue from every part of the business—all while providing its users with an enhanced experience.

The company's success is due in large part to an excellent understanding of its customers, a strong sense of community, and a successful push towards serving an "eco-system of needs."



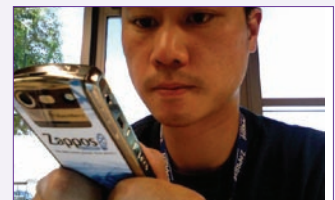
Easy to open packages improves customer experience



Amazon's A3 is the engine behind thousands of businesses



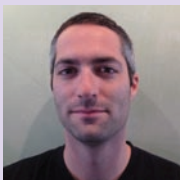
Digitizing books changes the way we read



Zappos extends Amazon's range and community base

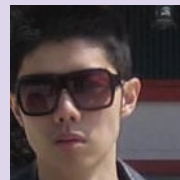
## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Identify parts of your business that could be offered as additional services.**



**"The leader in 'Long Tail' retailing. Provides one of the best examples of how to execute online retailing to a mass audience."**

Jeff Weiner, Trends Expert, New York  
<http://purplelist.com/members/jeffatpsfk>



**"First, they made retail goods available and affordable for the world. Now, they're doing the same thing with services and technology...a true catalyst of globalization."**

Jason Castillo Tan, Design Expert, Manila  
<http://purplelist.com/members/jasontan>

# #6 FACEBOOK

INNOVATION  
**7.39**

RESPONSIBILITY  
**5.61**

COMMUNITY  
**8.04**

TOTAL  
**7.01**

Facebook connected the world and brought the vastness of our digital lives into a manageable series of friend updates. Designed as an open-platform, the service can be adapted with third party applications that help people play, work, learn and share.

Facebook listens closely to their users when building new services—even working with them in the case of expansion and translation.



Works with audience to build and translate its service



Users galvanize for causes



Becomes a platform for running business or design projects



Payments will change the way we transact with each other

## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Create the playground and let your customers define your offering.**



“Facebook developed a social network that is highly attuned to their users, allowing humans to interact and conceive of their relationships with others in ways that didn’t previously exist. It’s the way an entire generation keeps track of itself.”

Sam Biddle,  
Web & Technology Expert, Washington D.C.  
<http://purplelist.com/members/sambiddle>



“Facebook constantly alters the way in which people communicate, as well as reconnecting old relationships and developing new ones. It’s the 21st century innovation that will rival the telephone.”

Simon Kenworthy-Dell,  
Advertising & Branding Expert, Brisbane  
<http://purplelist.com/members/simon>

# #7 VIRGIN

INNOVATION

**7.90**

RESPONSIBILITY

**5.75**

COMMUNITY

**7.14**

TOTAL

**6.93**

The Virgin Group continues to make headlines, bringing its fun and irreverent personality to new and old business segments alike. Exemplified by its recently launched Virgin America airline, Virgin has listened to consumers, identified problems easily fixed, and executed in flawless fashion. Small conveniences, such as in-flight internet connectivity, a newly designed in-flight entertainment system, and a new food service model has made the airline a top pick for fliers.



In-flight entertainment remains best in class



Virgin Galactic sets space travel agenda



WiFi on Virgin America changes the way we work



Pre-paid Broadband2Go changes where we work

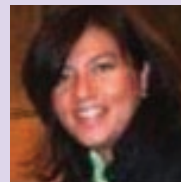
## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Think big, think small. Amaze customers with your audacity, please them with your attention to detail.**



“When you see the Virgin name on something, you know it will be a pleasant experience.”

Mike Maddaloni,  
Web & Technology Expert, Chicago  
<http://purplelist.com/members/thehotiron>



“It’s not only about making money taking people from one place to another, but doing it responsibly. The Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards is proof that Virgin embraces this idea.”

Gaby Arriaga, Innovation Expert, Mexico City  
<http://purplelist.com/members/gabysun>

# #8 TWITTER

INNOVATION

**7.18**

RESPONSIBILITY

**4.94**

COMMUNITY

**7.70**

TOTAL

**6.80**

Twitter has built an unprecedented platform for direct communications. It has given both businesses and individuals a simple way to directly connect with other members of the Twitter community. It's a flexible technology that can morph into new iterations at the same pace as peoples' changing needs. The service has proven to be a game-changer, acting as a hyper-relevant conduit of information for what's happening now, especially in the field of journalism.



Breaking news from users



Traffic updates from DIY Traffic



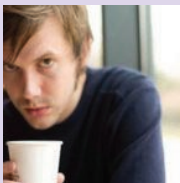
Monitors electric usage at home



Automated machines embroider Twitter updates

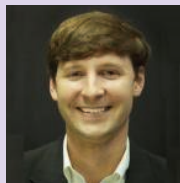
## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Stay flexible, allow your audience to dictate how your products or services are used.**



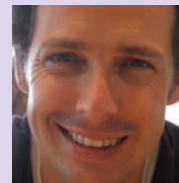
"It's a fascinating example of being single-minded and yet extremely complex. Twitter never tried too hard to explain to anyone what the service was, or how it could be useful—it let its users make up their own minds and affect the product in the process."

Damon Garrett,  
Electronics Expert, Singapore  
[purplelist.com/members/damongarrett](http://purplelist.com/members/damongarrett)



"Twitter created a simple tool to communicate ideas in real time. By limiting blasts to 30 words, concepts are communicated in almost real time."

Matt Carr,  
Innovation Expert, Knoxville  
<http://purplelist.com/members/mattcarrut>



"Twitter is incredibly plugged-in to the needs of its community and highly responsive to their concerns.

A recent example of them postponing maintenance while the Iran protests were occurring is perfect evidence of a company doing the 'right' thing."

Justin McMurray,  
Web & Technology Expert, London  
<http://purplelist.com/members/juzmcmuz>

# #9 IKEA

INNOVATION  
**7.23**

RESPONSIBILITY  
**6.13**

COMMUNITY  
**6.19**

TOTAL  
**6.75**

Beyond IKEA's continued allegiance to its core premise of offering affordable, well-designed furniture and household goods, they have maintained creative efforts to evolve their marketing and peripheral services around this central hub.

Useful services such as their bike-sharing program in Denmark, car sharing in France and their free water taxi in New York offer innovative ways to help their customers more easily access their stores. By making it as easy as possible to buy their products, IKEA closes the gap between intent and purchasing.



IKEA's Leko car sharing drives brand loyalty



IKEA's daycare helps parents shop



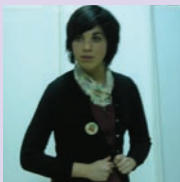
IKEA's water taxi makes going to the shops an experience



IKEA's rental bikes improve the shopping experience

## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Take a wider view of the shopping experience, making each step along the path to purchase simpler and more enjoyable.**



"IKEA has stayed true to their ideals, providing high quality Scandinavian goods at Eastern European prices for over several decades."

Laura Feinstein,  
Media & Publishing Expert, Brooklyn  
<http://purplelist.com/members/laurafeinstein>



"They offer new customer experiences, which help the client to have a good feeling when purchasing. It's also a brand that focuses on the environment by doing small operations which have impact rather than making big communications without effect."

Nicholas Dubost, Trends Expert, Paris  
<http://purplelist.com/members/ndubost>

# #10 SKYPE

INNOVATION

**6.17**

RESPONSIBILITY

**5.05**

COMMUNITY

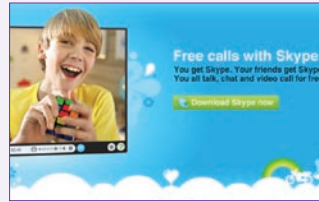
**7.64**

TOTAL

**6.71**

Skype continues to bring the freedom of communication to millions of people around the world. It has leveraged technology to disrupt multiple markets, creating a system that works for all types of users, and connecting people around the world.

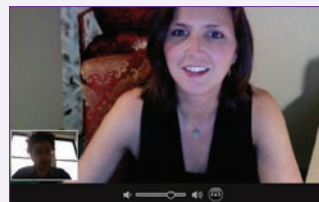
The recent introduction of Skype Mobile should have tremendous implications and could change the way that we see place and geography.



Skype for iPhone means free calls from anywhere with Wi-Fi



Skype headsets provide alternative communication



Skype helps Trunk Club offer personal shopping via the web



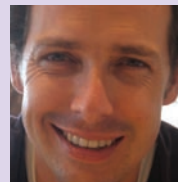
## LESSON FOR BUSINESS

**Reach scale with free products, make money from premium services.**



“Best. Idea. Ever. Free phone connections for everyone (that has a web-connected computer). And they do their thing well.”

Fred Kylander, Design Expert, Stockholm  
<http://purplelist.com/members/fredk>



“Skype stands for something amazing; free communication. This has the potential to create greater social advancement and progress than all the ‘charity’ endeavors put together.”

Justin McMurray,  
Web & Technology Expert, London  
<http://purplelist.com/members/juzmcmuz>

## FROM THE TOP 10 GOOD BRANDS

GOOGLE

**EXPERIMENT RAPIDLY, EMBRACE FAILURE.**

APPLE

**EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR BRAND SHOULD BE AS GOOD AS THE PRODUCT.**

ZIPCAR

**STOP SELLING PRODUCTS, START SELLING SERVICES.**

GOOD MAGAZINE

**SET THE AGENDA AND LET YOUR CUSTOMERS SPREAD THE CONVERSATION.**

AMAZON

**IDENTIFY PARTS OF YOUR BUSINESS THAT COULD BE OFFERED AS ADDITIONAL SERVICES.**

FACEBOOK

**CREATE THE PLAYGROUND AND LET YOUR CUSTOMERS DEFINE YOUR OFFERING.**

VIRGIN

**THINK BIG, THINK SMALL. AMAZE CUSTOMERS WITH YOUR AUDACITY, PLEASE THEM WITH YOUR ATTENTION TO DETAIL.**

TWITTER

**STAY FLEXIBLE, ALLOW YOUR AUDIENCE TO DICTATE HOW YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES ARE USED.**

IKEA

**TAKE A WIDER VIEW OF THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE, MAKING EACH STEP ALONG THE PATH TO PURCHASE SIMPLER AND MORE ENJOYABLE.**

SKYPE

**REACH SCALE WITH FREE PRODUCT, MAKE MONEY FROM PREMIUM SERVICES.**

# TOP LISTINGS

## TOP 25 GOOD BRANDS

Brands determined by an average score across innovation, environmental responsibility, and social collaboration

- |                  |             |                   |                     |                      |
|------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Google        | 6. Facebook | 11. Toyota        | 16. Honda           | 21. New York Times   |
| 2. Apple         | 7. Virgin   | 12. New York City | 17. Huffington Post | 22. American Apparel |
| 3. Zipcar        | 8. Twitter  | 13. Nike          | 18. Nintendo        | 23. Philips          |
| 4. GOOD Magazine | 9. IKEA     | 14. YouTube       | 19. Monocle         | 24. BMW              |
| 5. Amazon        | 10. Skype   | 15. LEGO          | 20. Nokia           | 25. Audi             |

## TOP 10

### INNOVATIVE BRANDS

1. Apple
2. Google
3. Virgin
4. Nintendo
5. Nike
6. Facebook
7. Amazon
8. IKEA
9. GOOD Magazine
10. Twitter

### ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BRANDS

1. Zipcar
2. GOOD Magazine
3. Google
4. Toyota
5. Apple
6. Amazon
7. Honda
8. IKEA
9. New York City
10. American Apparel

### SOCIALLY COLLABORATIVE BRANDS

1. Google
2. GOOD Magazine
3. Facebook
4. Apple
5. Zipcar
6. Twitter
7. Skype
8. Amazon
9. YouTube
10. LEGO

## TOP 3 BRANDS BY SECTOR

**WEB/TECH**  
Google  
Apple  
Nintendo

**AUTOMOTIVE**  
Toyota  
Honda  
BMW

**APPAREL**  
Nike  
American Apparel  
Stella McCartney

**RETAIL**  
Amazon  
IKEA  
Wal-mart

**SOCIAL MEDIA**  
Facebook  
Twitter  
Skype

**MEDIA/PUBLISHING**  
GOOD Magazine  
New York Times  
Monocle

**TRAVEL**  
Zipcar  
Virgin  
NYC

## SELECTION

The Good Brands Report is an indicator of relevance and leadership during 2009. We started our selection process by recording the number of times brands were mentioned in 1,000 of our most recent articles (published between March 2 and July 15, 2009) and then calculated the 40 most common brands. These brands were judged the most relevant in the cultural zeitgeist.

We then took the top 40 relevant brands and removed anomalies such as individuals (for instance, the artists Shepard Fairey and Banksy,) and combined the iPhone and Apple (even though the phone appears regularly enough in content to be considered a brand all by itself).

## EXPERTS

We then asked a panel of experts on The Purple List to rate the brands between July 21 and July 27, 2009. Over 100 Purple Listers from 17 markets responded to the survey and ranked the 37 brands presented on Innovation, Environmental Responsibility and Social Collaboration. The average scores gathered gave PSFK a figure to show how 'Good' each brand is in our survey.

## NOMINATE

PSFK recognizes that there are a lot of smaller companies that are every bit as innovative and relevant as the brands listed in this report. For this report, we focused on brands that are regularly written about on PSFK.com. They represent the brands that we consider to be most relevant in the eyes of the consumer, business, and society. However, it is our mission at PSFK to uncover innovation in all its shapes, sizes, and forms.

To that end, we will be running a separate undertaking later this year called the Good Ideas Awards. The Awards will celebrate the best emerging organizations, brands, and people of today. If you believe you know of an innovative company that warrants recognition: visit [www.goodideasawards.com](http://www.goodideasawards.com) to nominate them.

### IMAGE CREDITS:

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p.11 "Monitor electric" by earth2tech.com  
p.12 "IKEA's water taxi" by racked.com

**VERSION:** 1.3

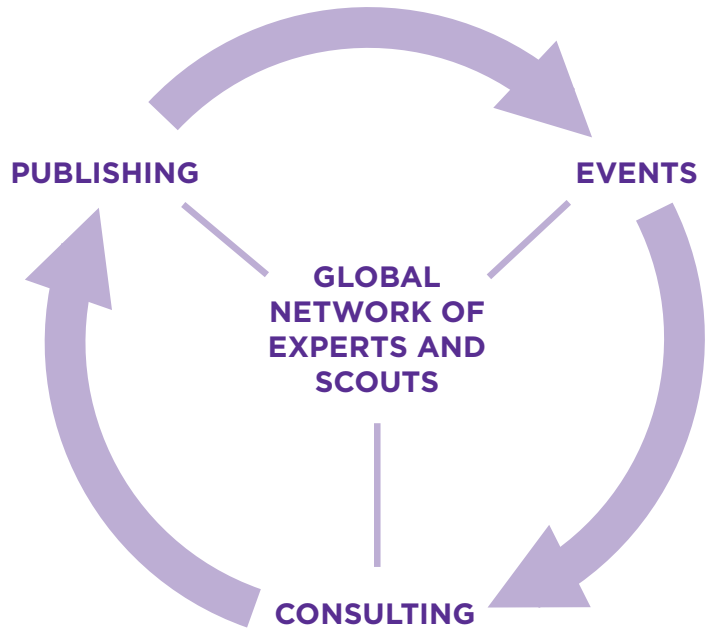
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# ABOUT PSFK

## PSFK

PSFK is a trends research, innovation, and activation company that publishes a daily news site, provides trends research and innovation consultancy and hosts idea-generating events. We aim to inspire our readers, our clients and our guests to make things better—whether that’s better business, better lives or a better world.

[www.psfk.com](http://www.psfk.com)



## THE PURPLE LIST

*Expertise available at anytime, anywhere and on any subject.*

PSFK’s Purple List is a network of experts for hire. The list is comprised of designers, journalists, marketers, and entrepreneurs. The Purple List has been used by journalists to find expert views on new stories; by agencies in search of talent; and by global research consultancies. Plus, PSFK uses the Purple List both as a source of editorial research and opinion on PSFK.com and as a source of paid expertise when performing client work.

[www.purplelist.com](http://www.purplelist.com)



## CONTACT

Piers Fawkes  
CEO & Founder  
[piers@psfk.com](mailto:piers@psfk.com)  
+1 917.595.2227

Jeff Weiner  
Director, Business Development  
[jeff.weiner@psfk.com](mailto:jeff.weiner@psfk.com)  
+1 917.595.3401  
+1 516.359.3453

536 Broadway, 11th Floor  
New York, NY 10012 USA  
[www.psfk.com](http://www.psfk.com)  
[www.purplelist.com](http://www.purplelist.com)