

Topic: Trends agencies and partners
Working Group: WFA Insight Forum
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INTRODUCTION

A member of the **WFA Insight Forum** requested information from the WFA network to gather perspectives from other WFA peers on **agencies or partners that cover trends**. Members were asked:

Could you please recommend an agency that covers trends: political, social, economic, environmental, technological drivers as well as consumer trends, shopper trends, media trends, and food from a global perspective? Why would you recommend them?


The question was posed to a representative sample of WFA members with expertise in Insights, and **16** of them provided the below feedback. **The full responses can be found at the end of the document.**

CONSOLIDATED FEEDBACK

WFA members have mixed experiences when it comes to collaborating with trends partners. The list of recommended partners includes a wide range of companies, from **traditional research companies** (Kantar being mentioned by 6 members and Ipsos by 5), to **consultancy companies** (Accenture), **creative and communication strategists** (such as Contagious or Edelman), to **specialised trends partners - globally** (such as Mintel), or **more geographically focused** (such as Cherry Blossoms in China or Cassandra in US and UK), or working on **specific audiences** (for example yPulse or Voxburner focusing on youth segments). Some of our members point there is no partner who could cover a diverse spectrum of trends, it depends from case to case.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED TRENDS PARTNERS

Recommended partners	Coverage	Recommended expertise
 Accenture	Global	Strategy and consultancy
 Black Swan	Global (nik.pearmine@blackswan.com)	Foresight predictions based on advanced social listening, AI and machine learning; Ad-hoc trends; Product innovation; Strategy and consultancy.
 Canvas 8	Global	Strategic consumer insights
 Cassandra	US and UK only	Real time trend spotting.
 Cherry Blossoms	Based in HK, covers China (Contact: Laurence Lim Dally - Founder & Managing director)	Strong understanding of Chinese consumers and culture (with expertise in luxury area)
 Contagious	Global	Creative and strategic intelligence
 CrowdDNA	Global	Cultural insights and strategy consultancy.
 Discover.ai	Global	Emerging topics or specialized areas.
 Ebco	Based in Austin, US (info@theebco.com)	Trends and innovation.
 Edelman	Global	Edelman Trust barometer - able to combine survey data on societal interest with social listening data; Strong in digital analytics capabilities.
 Euromonitor	Global	General market research; Category growth trends based on secondary research.

	Foresight Factory	Global	Off-the-shelf trends; Consumer trends, ad-hoc and syndicated; Innovation case studies.
	Forrester	Global	Custom research; Consultancy and strategy.
	Frontierview	Global	Syndicated trends; Market intelligence and trends; Custom research.
	Gartner	Global	Custom research, tools and benchmarks; Consultancy and strategy.
	GfK	Global	GfK Roper and Trendwatching; General market research.
	GWI	Global	Customer research and trends.
	Ipsos	Global	General market & opinion research; Public affairs syndicated reports; Bespoke trends; IPSOS Trends and Futures for socio-economic context and cultural/ societal trends.
	LSN Global	Global	Trends signals.
	Kantar	Global	General market research; Digital analytics (especially search analytics); Consolidated learning across social listening, opinion research and digital; Bespoke trends (Kantar Futures); Syndicated reports (Global Monitor).
	Mintel	Global	Trends signals.
	NextAtlas	Offices in: Torino (info@nextatlas.com) London (mario.coletti@icoolhunt.com)	Social and cultural trends; Social listening; Big data predictive analysis.
	Nielsen	Global	General market research; Audience measurement; Media planning.
	Sigwatch	Headquartered in London, UK with an office in Germany and partners in the U.S. and Canada.	NGO campaigning insights & analysis; can serve as a pre-cursor to societal macro changes
	Sparks & Honey	Headquartered in New York, US	Cultural intelligence company; Cultural trends; Product innovation; Business consultancy.
	Synthesio	Global	AI-enabled consumer intelligence; Social listening; AI topic modelling capability; Digital surveys and audience analysis.
	TrendHunter	Global	Trends; Ideation capabilities; Custom research.
	Voxburner	Global	Expertise in Youth Trends.
	WGSN	Global	Consumer, lifestyle and product design trends; Fashion and design trends.
	yPulse	Primarily UK and US focused, expanding to Western Europe	Millennial and Gen Z focused trends.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

Recommended agencies/ partners that cover trends (political, social, economic, environmental, technological, consumer trends etc.) from a global perspective. Why would you recommend them?

Respondent 1: Two names come across my mind... **Euromonitor** covers various industries, segments and provides category growth trends based on secondary research and industry expertise which might be useful. **NextAtlas** covers social & cultural trends with predictive capabilities which can be quite interesting too. You have mentioned food in your lines below and they have been exploring trends on this industry quite a lot.

Respondent 2: In the past we have worked with **CrowdDNA** to uncover consumer trends related for travel specifically. We have very positive experiences with them, they are thorough, collaborative, and still price-competitive for the work they deliver.

Respondent 3: **TrendHunter** (I haven't worked with them yet) seems to have a robust trends database with actionable consulting and ideation capabilities. I am likely to work with **TrendHunter** this year.

Euromonitor is basic and straightforward, analyst driven. And another one I've spoken with recently is **Ebco**.

Respondent 4: Multiple here... **Nielsen, Ipsos, Kantar** - As they are global MR agencies and cater to many clients across industries and Government too.

Respondent 5: I would suggest **Kantar** as an agency that can handle these requests.

Respondent 6: Here are a few general recommendations:

Off-the-shelf trends: **Foresight Factory, Canvas 8**

Bespoke trends: **Ipsos, Kantar**

Trends signals: **Trendhunter, Mintel**

Respondent 7: We recommend: **Forrester, Gartner, ISN Global, WGSN, Mintel, Contagious**. Reasons "why": high credibility, global coverage, digital platform, local accounts/ services.

Respondent 8: Syndicated: **Kantar's Global Monitor, GFK's Roper and Trendwatching, Euromonitor and Frontierview, Ipsos Public Affairs**

Ad hoc: **Sparks & Honey, Black Swan, Kantar Futures**

Respondent 9: We do not work with agencies that cover trends much and when we do so we look at local experts in specific markets such as China. On this very market we came across a company called "**Cherry Blossoms**" recently, based in HK, and they appeared to have a strong understanding of the Chinese customers (especially in the luxury area) taking into account the cultural elements of what resonate with them. Not sure this helps as it is very luxury related...

Respondent 10:

Kantar

- We use their digital analytics expertise. They are very strong with search analytics in particular. They support us with consolidating learning across social listening, search, opinion research into single narratives.
- They have just brought out a macro topic sensing tool that is designed to pick up trends. We saw a demo but haven't tried it.
- We would recommend them, but they are quite pricy.

Accenture

- We use their teams in India for ongoing deliverables or regular reporting. They are very determined and like to take on challenges. They are good at setting up data and tools, but they do need coaching on insights.

Edelman

- It's been while since we used them, but their digital analytics capabilities were quite strong. They also have the Edelman Trust barometer, so they are able to combine survey data on societal interest with listening data.

Synthesio

- One of the market leaders in terms of social listening. They advertise themselves more on the research side as they were bought out by Ipsos a couple years ago. What they have that other tools don't is an AI topic modelling capability. With listening, you normally pre-determine topics and then quantify mentions but with this feature you can input a broad topic query and then the machine learning will inform you what the key topics are.
- We would recommend them as they are very cost effective and have good capabilities.

Sigwatch

- This company specialises in monitoring NGO activity. Where NGOs focus their efforts is usually a precursor to what will happen within society. Something that listening tools can't quite solve. So, a useful data provider.
- I'm not sure of other comparable companies, so worth it.

Ipsos

- We use them for Brand tracking and opinion research. They do regular studies on what interests people in general or what matters to society. Social listening tools can only take you so far with understanding societal interest so combining this data with digital is key for us.

Respondent 11: It really depends on the project, there's no go-to-provider that's best in class in all of these areas, they all excel at different topics or use cases. **Foresight Factory** would be my recommendation if you need to choose one generalist vendor that tends to cover most trends-related business requests. For media & entertainment trends we work with more specialized partners.

Foresight Factory – for consumer trends & innovation case studies; they also have a global syndicated data set (gen pop) and platform (Collision) which helps identify the top priority trends for various groups (by generation, marketing personae, etc.) and territories

yPulse – Millennial and Gen Z focused trends (primarily for the US and the UK, but they have recently expanded their dataset to Western Europe)

Discover.ai – great for custom work in emerging topics or specialized areas

WGSN – I like their reports, but haven't worked with them directly; my colleagues in music value them as they are at the forefront of fashion trends and other aesthetics, therefore perfect for advising their trend-setting music artists

Mintel – I don't work with them on an ongoing basis, but I occasionally download their white papers / free reports on topics such as food

IPSOS Trends and Futures – do a good job at covering broad socio-economic context and cultural/societal trends in their free annual reports, webinars, and podcasts; we've also had Ben Page deliver big picture "state of the nation" sessions for our senior management in the past as he's a very engaging speaker

<https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-trends-2021-aftershocks-and-continuity>

Cassandra – Gen Z and Millennial trends (US and UK only, including trendsetters); great for real time trend spotting (Cassandra Daily newsletter) across a wide range of topics including food, retail, TikTok trends, etc.

GWJ's Blog & Connecting the Dots Report – <https://blog.gwi.com/>; <https://www.gwi.com/connecting-the-dots>

Voxburner – great experts in Youth Trends

Respondent 12: For trends we usually work with **BlackSwan** agency (contact: Nik Pearmine nik.pearmine@blackswan.com) as they are running foresights predictions based on advanced social listening,

leveraging AI and machine learning to codify millions of online conversations and rank them based on a maturity curve. We mainly cover: social, economic, environmental, technological drivers as well as consumer trends, shopper trends (not political/food/media).

Respondent 13: Euromonitor, Kantar MONITOR, Forrester, Mintel Ingredient trends are some resources... all provide useful information across a variety of areas.

Respondent 14: We don't do a lot of trends work therefore I can't answer that question effectively I'm afraid 😊

Respondent 15: Honestly, I haven't really found one that worked well either and I would love to learn more from this. I don't seem to get exactly what I need without really spending a great deal of time briefing them and keeping them up to date on what is happening in my category. This is also my experience beyond my current organisation and applies to many other companies I work with or for.

Respondent 16: I am sorry I only have bad examples, and I wouldn't like to recommend that company. This is an area I am not very happy with. The predicted trends are either too broad, so not tangible, or too specific and thus unreliable.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Here are two recent materials from the Insight Forum:

- Benchmark on [Marketing or Media Mix Models and ROI](#) (January 2022)
- Benchmark on [Share of Voice vs Share of Market](#) (January 2022)

You can find more WFA knowledge on our [Global Knowledge Base](#). You will need to be logged in to download any files. WFA members can click here to register www.wfanet.org/register or contact membership@wfanet.org

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1. Contact WFA team with the specific question you would like peer to peer feedback for
2. WFA will check there are no potential competition compliance issues with the question
3. WFA sends an anonymous question to other **non-competitor** members and collates the feedback
4. The combined results will then be checked by our competition lawyers
5. The consolidated **anonymous** results will be shared with all those who participated in the information exchange

Contact [Ioana Danila](#) for more information.

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