



# University of HUDDERSFIELD

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The power of the forecaster: An exploration into the value of trend forecasting for the survival of SME's in the creative industry

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# Art Design Architecture Huddersfield

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The power of the forecaster: An exploration into the value of trend forecasting for the survival of SME's in the creative industry

# Background: trend forecasting



- **Growing resource**
- **Used in a diverse range of businesses (creative industries)**
- **Focus on interior sector (hard and soft materials)**
- **Understand the significance of trend research**
- **Recognise mechanisms for support**
- **SME are vital to the future of innovation & development**
- **“Design” is what links creativity and innovation**

## Aim

- **Explore mechanisms to support emerging innovation through trend forecasting with interior SME**  
(current practice, value, impact)

# Forecasting Process & Presentation



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Scarlet **OPUS**  
TOMORROW TODAY



# Research Design



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## Theoretical perspective

- Interpretivism
- Inductive approach – construct knowledge
- Ethnography strategies – culture within SME

## Mixed data collection techniques

- Literature review
- Workshops & exhibitions (interviews, observational diary)
- Mini case studies (lit review, interviews, observation)

# Triangulation



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## Objective 1a: Creative Industries

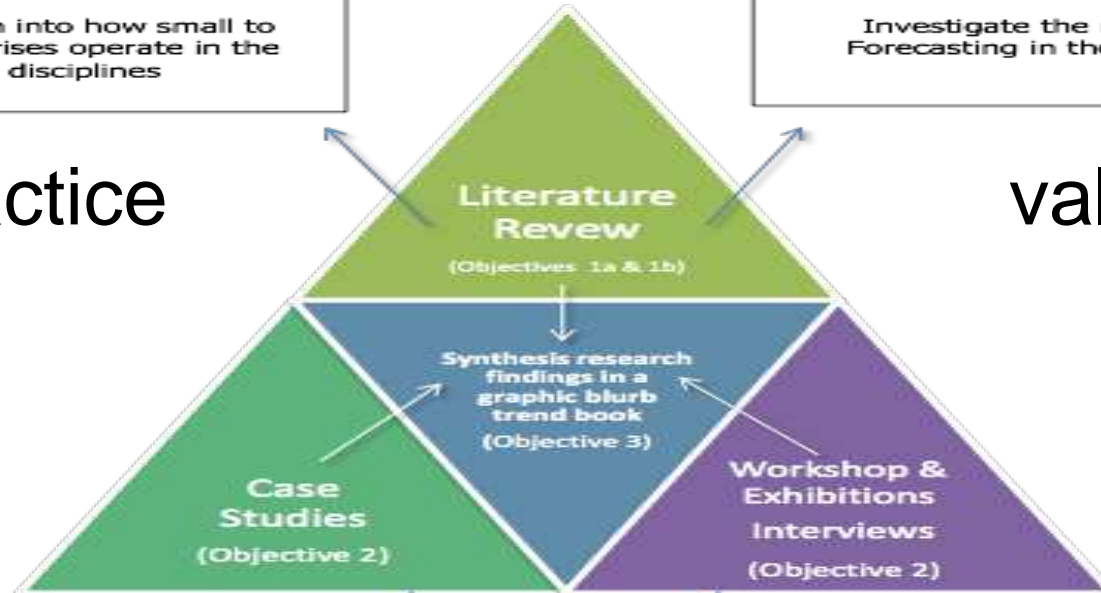
An investigation into how small to medium enterprises operate in the creative disciplines

## Objective 1b: Trend Forecasting

Investigate the role of Trend Forecasting in these disciplines

current practice

value



## Objective 2:

Analyse the impact of Trend Research within the Creative Industry.

## Empirical Data:

- Observations
- Case Studies
- Interviews
- Exhibitions
- Workshops

Impact

# Workshops and exhibitions



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- UK flooring show
- The international surface event (USA)

## Key themes (observation, interviews, workshops)

- SME – presentation appeared dated
- Many had limited understanding of trend
- Limited understanding of value of trend researcher
- Companies with trend, got a lot more media attention
- Not all SME realised the value of forecasting – in terms of merchandising, motivation consumers, increased sales.

**“An enlightening experience, this is the first time I have heard of using trends in this way and the services available”**

# UK Flooring Show TISE East (USA)



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## Future Surfaces



Flooring Show 2014

## Adams Carpet



## Plantation Rug



Trend Merchandising  
Workshop TISE East



# Interviews



- **Surface designer**
- **Craft maker**
- **Trend forecaster**

## Key themes

- **Tended to use WGSN**
- **Did not always follow seasonal trends**
- **Needed a uniqueness to brand**
- **Stronger focus on materials and technology trends rather than colour and pattern**
- **Strong focus on lifestyle relevant to consumer habits**
- **SME – partnership and trust built up over time, important to differentiate brand from mainstream**

# Interviews



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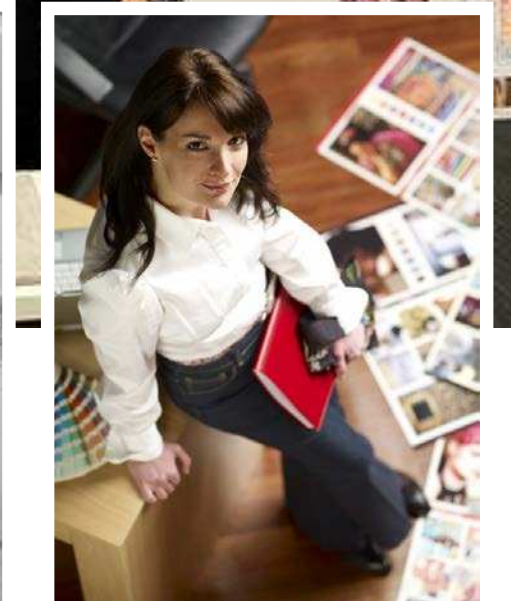
Surface Design Show



Olly Mason - Craft



Stephanie Tudor - Designer



Victoria Redshaw -  
Trend Forecaster

# Case studies



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## 6 SME - Carpet / ceramic / homeware

- 4 companies did use trend forecasters

### Key themes

- Lakeland worked with trend forecasters £50m to £200m (colour forecasting)
- Daedalian glass – working with trend last 2 years (lifestyle and social media and pinterest – lead industry)
- British ceramic tiles – own trend team – core business (Lookbook on internet)
- Le Creuset – working with trend last 2 years (preferred working with Scarlet Opus than WGSN seasonal reports – product)
- Westex carpets (100 shades of cream range – no link to fashion forecasters)
- Rotherhams – interesting to explore trend to assist with marketing their product globally.

# Case studies - Example Trend Reports



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## LAKELAND



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british ceramic tile

# LOOK BOOK

by british ceramic tile

For all things inspirational; check the texture, home interiors and fashion, get ideas and inspiration on what look you prefer and how to achieve it, view real life case studies from people who've had success with tiles, and you can read our brilliant blog.

The Trend Edit | **Get the Look** | The Blog | Real Homes

BLOG

## LE CREUSET®



COLOUR & STYLING



# Case studies - Trend Brochure/Social Media



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ULTIMA TWIST COLLECTION  
Available in 8 Qualities and 120 Colours. Made from 80% wool and 20% nylon

**WESTEX**  
FINEST QUALITY CARPETS

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GLASS DESIGN

TWEETS 310 FOLLOWING 64 FOLLOWERS 95 FAVORITES 43 LISTS 8

Daedalian Glass  
Glass design, manufacture and installation - architectural, artistic and innovative glass. Since 1996.  
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Daedalian Glass @DaedalianGlass Mar 5  
Thursday #inspiration #metal combined with #glass

Who to follow: Dev Real Ale Fest, Abu Dhabi Art, The Master's Craft, etc.

**J. ROTHERHAM**  
— EST. 1927 —

**J. ROTHERHAM**  
— EST. 1927 —

LUXURY WORKTOP  
TREND FORECAST



## MATERIALS, TEXTURES & EFFECTS

The key to successfully achieving this trend's look lies in strong contrast between smooth, beautifully engineered materials and our irregular textures.

Materials are increasingly solid, heavy and opaque, lending choices signs of their architectural inspiration via both simple block geometric shapes and sleek, organic, curved forms.

White marble and Corian® whisper tones of grey granite, and gritty concrete reinforce this trend, giving it its strength and durability. These qualities are played off against foxy colour-tinted and cloudy semi-transparent glass and resin which softens these masses into harmonious surfaces.

The bold and confident mixing of these materials across room schemes, creates a balanced harmony of solidity and transparency, robustness and delicacy, business and artistry.



Visiting Colours Hidden Door Colours

White Quartz	Black Marble		
Green Quartz	White Marble		
Green Quartz	Black Marble		

# Findings



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(current practice, value, impact)

- Less flooring companies engage with trend forecasters and other sectors.
- If they do use trend research this is not demonstrated to their customer
- SME flooring sector tend to be profit driven
- Cultural resistance to pay for external trend information
- Difference between trend reporting and forecasting
- Lots of information online (general reports differentiate)
- Role of trend forecaster – specific to business needs
- Lot more interest in materials and technology
- Marketing information and social media

# Conclusion



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- The research facilitated new ways to tailor trend to specific needs of company – social media (Pinterest)
- Strong relationship was required (SME) – change culture
- Trend forecasting package – (aesthetic design) brand awareness, market orientation, merchandising, exhibition design, social media.
- Workshops made biggest impact for SME, customers liked blog approach and links with social media.

Any  
Questions  
?

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