

HANDMADE IS FAVOURITE

Report by Helen Carnac on behalf of Costa Coffee

Background:

Costa is proud of the fact that their highly trained and skilled baristas take part and pride in the making and finishing of coffee bespoke for each customer by hand, unlike some of their competitors who use machines for the entire process.

Independent research late last year proved that seven out of ten coffee lovers preferred Costa's Cappuccino. As part of its ongoing investigation into UK consumers' preferences Costa commissioned the following research and report into the value people place on how items such as food and drink, clothing, and other everyday things are made.

The report analyses and contextualises the results of an online consumer survey questioning over 3,000 people conducted by OnePoll in August 2009.

Key Research Findings:

- Just 10% of people said they'd rather buy machine made items than those handmade by a skilled, experienced person.
- Almost half (46%) of Brits prefer handmade items to machine-made ones because they are unique and have a personal touch
- Over two thirds (60%) of people believe handmade items will be of a higher quality and when it comes to food and drink will taste better.
- A quarter of people said they're willing to pay up to 20% more for products that have been made by hand.
- 60% of respondents appreciate that more time and care is taken over making handmade items.
- In terms of coffee 47% of respondents say it tastes better when prepared by hand, by a skilled barista, compared to just 11% who are happy to settle for machine-produced drinks.

- Over half (51%) of people said they believed consumer goods to generally be of worse quality now compared to the past

Why the interest in the handmade today:

*'...the handcrafted might be promoted as possessing the following attributes...It is 'special' or rare because it is handmade and perhaps customised; sophisticated because the making of the object required skill; it is precious due to materials or time invested in labour; it is expressive - in terms of subject matter, function, traditional or historical reference; and is enduring.'*¹ (Craft within a Consuming Society, Gloria Hickey)

Ideas of the handmade or the bespoke are currently topical in general and specialist media and there has been a growing interest in these areas from the public over the last five years. This, when allied to media stories and features about lifestyle-downsizing, a re-interest in DIY, a new culture of hand making and indeed public interest in smaller scale, local food production, which has been demonstrated by a developing interest in local farmers markets, artisan produced foods, bespoke and handmade gifts, clothing and house-wares - has all made the subject of the crafts and the crafted highly relevant to consumers today.

*'We live in a material world, a world in which objects - including those that are handcrafted - are more than just props. They are heirlooms, momentos, cultural markers and tools of self-expression'*² (Craft within a Consuming Society, Gloria Hickey)

Today's position:

During the current economic downturn we see today's consumer seeking out quality products that are unique and offer a connection to the materials and the processes with which they have been produced. Handmade objects and artisan produced foods traded by their producers offer the consumer an opportunity to engage in a knowledge of the processes of their making, their producer, their provenance and with this comes a real connection to the product - being imbued with the values of this hand-making.

'Early indications from (the) research show that despite difficult trading conditions, craft based businesses at Cockpit are trading well' 3 (Vanessa Swann, Chief Executive of Cockpit Arts for 'Designing the Recession' A Cockpit Arts and Create KX Seminar)

Are consumer identities changing?:

It has generally been argued through critique and modern cultural theory that post-modernist identities have been formed through consumption rather than production. Shopping as making and forming identity. However perhaps now there are more signs that the consumer needs to re-connect with production, to how things are made and are forming new identity by engaging in 'cultural' and 'leisure' activities.

In a recent Guardian article titled *'Museum stores booming as cultural shoppers seek out 'gifts with soul'* John Stachiewicz, chairman of the Association for Cultural Enterprises commented that *"cultural shopping" is (now) part of a broader trend that has seen a larger and larger percentage of household expenditure devoted to leisure activities'* (Zoe Wood, guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 18 August 2009).

This public is eager to seek out lifestyle choices that will connect them to a story, narrative or history with 'soul' - which will be imbued with a sense of place, time, provenance or history. A need to connect to the 'real', a world of making objects and understanding the process of doing so, may also account for an interest in time being spent on making and crafting, and to a new wealth of publications and television productions on subjects which feed these interests.

These include: Kirstie Allsopp's latest production for Channel 4, *Homemade Home*; *Handmade Nation: The Rise of DIY, Art, Craft, and Design* by Faythe Levine and Cortney Heimerl; *Craft, Inc.* by Meg Mateo Iasco; *The Crafter Culture Handbook* by Amy Spencer; *Making Stuff: An Alternative Craft Book* by Ziggy Hanaor and Victoria Woodcock and *ReadyMade: How to Make (Almost) Everything* by Shoshana Berger and Grace Hawthorne.

In turn, this 'leisure' time spent literally making 'things' means that the consumer may develop more interest and engagement in the professional and expert making of handmade items and food and drink, which they can buy into as consumers.

The Craftsman and skill:

In the past year there have been a number of publications on the Crafts released, which have received much media attention. A good example is Richard Sennett's *The Craftsman* where Sennett argues that 'Good work...takes time..' (Sennett suggests that 10,000 hours is a reasonable estimate of the time needed to become a skilled carpenter or musician.) *It also involves contact with material and this physical relationship is, he insists, a necessary part of being human. Craftwork roots us in material reality, teaches us that making errors and overcoming resistance is not only the way to improve but also the way to secure deep inner satisfaction, to earn respect and selfworth*' (Craft works: Laurie Taylor interviews Richard Sennett, The Humanist, April 2008).

So within this current landscape of significant interest in the handmade how does the consumer relate to notions of making in relationship to the shopping experience?

Research Analysis:

The OnePoll research survey about the 'Handmade' confirms this current public interest with over a quarter of all respondents preferring products that have been made with 'skill' and over half of all respondents believing that handmade items are of 'superior quality' to machine made ones.

Almost 50% of respondents prefer handmade items because they are unique and more than 60% of respondents assert that 'more time and care' is taken over making handmade items.

The poll demonstrates, in relation to food and drink that consumers believe that handmade/prepared items will be of a 'higher quality' and will 'taste better' - with over 60% of respondents asserting this view.

In terms of coffee 47% of respondents thought that their coffee would 'taste better' if it was made by hand, by a skilled barista and this supports the assertion that consumers like to know that items that they buy and consume are treated and produced with care.

Costa Coffee

In the case of Costa Coffee the consumer can connect to a sense of history and care in making, of a company that still trades in London, just a few metres away from where they first set up, where trained baristas still take part and pride in the process of making and hand finishing coffee - and in doing so perhaps they become part of the story of those going about their everyday lives.

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