



SKYPE HYPE, GREEN CULTURE LEAD THE 'IT' PARADE OF 2007

By HOLLY M. SANDERS

No one jumps on a fad faster than Madison Avenue.

Doritos, Chevrolet and the NFL announced "real people" would create their Super Bowl spots. Ford rode the popularity of *American Idol* by signing winner Taylor Hicks. Gap had style icon Audrey Hepburn dancing to AC/DC to bring back skinny jeans.

As advertisers try to figure out what's in store for 2007, a number of prognosticators are peddling the lists of trends and predictions.

Ad agency **JWT**'s chief trendspotter **Marian Salzman** has several buzzwords on her new year watchlist.

She believes "alpha moms" (strong, multitasking women), "kidults" (adults who refuse to grow up) and "brand sluts" (non-committal consumers) will catch on next year.

Salzman also tries to keep her finger on the pulse of pop culture. She predicts *Dreamgirls* actress Jennifer Hudson, Ohio State basketball phenom Greg Oden and British bad-girl singer Amy Winehouse will make the "it" lists.

Faith Popcorn, who has made a living as a "futurist," has a bold list of predictions for marketers looking to seize on the next big trend.

After several materialistic decades, she believes people will be much more concerned about the consequences of their consumption.

Before they open their wallets, consumers will want to know the "life story" of a product, including where it was made, how far it traveled and where it will wind up: a landfill or a recycling plant.

She envisions socially responsible brands that make a buck while helping people out. "Communities are revived by Target daycare, Starbucks learning centers and Avis transportation services for the elderly," she said.

Meanwhile, marketing-strategy firm Foghound expects virtual worlds such as Second Life will boom, while people will tire of reading so many blogs.

Of course, these predictions could be wrong—consider Foghound's performance last year. The company gave itself an "A" for predicting the popularity of podcasts, but a "C" in betting against user-generated media.