



Innovation and Blurring Sectors: Where Will You Blur the Lines in 2019?

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My prediction for 2019: the blurring of sectors will gain steam. We'll see more sectors colliding and combining to create something bigger and more impactful than each could do on its own. Think co-working spaces meet retail, art meets yoga, burgers meet shoes. In fact, as I write this, I sit at WeWork with a live Christmas retail marketplace happening around me, representing the coming together of two concepts in a not-so-obvious way.

This trend is not totally new. But as competition for the consumer's attention increases, and the demand for convenience becomes ever more intense, we're seeing more blurred lines than ever. Here are a few from 2018 that have set the bar for 2019:



• **Shoes meet shakes.** In May, the New Zealand-based footwear-maker Allbirds released a \$100 limited-edition sneaker at one Manhattan location of the fast-food chain Shake Shack. It came with three sets of special laces, and a special milkshake. As Allbirds put it, "Burgers and shoes, together at last. For one day only, Allbirds set up shop at the original Shake Shack in Madison Square Park to offer an art installation and pretty sweet deal: one-of-a-kind Shake Shack Tree Runners, a custom limited-edition lace kit, and a Hokey Pokey milkshake, inspired by the flavors of New Zealand."

• **The convenience store meets coworking.** Flexible meeting and workspace provider Convene recently entered a strategic partnership with New Stand, the New York-based tech-driven convenience store chain, to bring retail into the coworking space. New Stand's 100-square foot stores will stock an array of products, including office supplies, health and beauty products, and electronics, and will have self-checkout systems.

More broadly speaking, the number of businesses that have evolved into part-time coworking spaces is staggering. From restaurants to retail storefronts to music studios to athletic clubs, everyone is vying for a piece of the coworking pie. At retail properties alone, coworking spaces are predicted to grow by a rate of 25 percent annually through 2023, according to a report from Jones Lang LaSalle.

• **Meditation meets art museums.** 2018 headlines have been peppered with stories of fitness, yoga, and meditation classes being offered in art museums. From New York City's Brooklyn Museum to the Museum of Modern Art to San Diego's Museum of Man, the trend gained steam from coast to coast. While pundits may question what this might be doing to the traditions of viewing art, it delivers an innovative and unique experience for the consumer.

How can you leverage the blurring of sectors? Consider the following:

1. What are the sectors adjacent (or not!) to your industry that could be a match made in heaven? Hint: Look at sectors where your consumer or target consumer is spending time.
2. Within these sectors, who are the companies that share a common thread with yours – whether it be values, purpose, target audience or DNA? At first glance, who would have thought shoes and burgers would go together? However, upon further study, both Allbirds and Shake Shack share similar values, starting with making “better things in a better way.”

Remember, sometimes in uncommon places rest the most common of things.

Where will you blur the lines in 2019?