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The best new business ideas we covered in 2006

Over the past few weeks, we've picked our favorites from the new business ideas we covered in 2006. Not because we're particularly fond of reminiscing, but because we're convinced these innovative concepts still offer plenty of opportunities for entrepreneurs seeking to start something new in 2007. They're ready for regional or international adaptation, expansion, partnering, investments or cooperation, so get going!

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[January 05, 2007](#)

Retail



Top 10 retail ideas in 2006

For all you retail buffs: 10 of the most innovative retail concepts we covered last year, both offline and online, and from across the world. (This is the last post in our series of top business ideas of 2006.)

1. [A deal a day](#): What's the ultimate in curated consumption? Limiting your customer's choice to one product a day. Add a pinch of eBay-style excitement and bargain hunting, and you end up with Woot! ("one day, one deal") and iBood. Woot founder Matt Rutledge came up with the concept back in 2004, as an internet offshoot for his Dallas wholesale business. Since then, Woot's combination of great deals, highly novel approach and irreverent attitude have created a huge following. Thousands of regular buyers and visitors perch in front of their computers before midnight every day, hitting the refresh button to be the first [More »](#)
2. [Luxury convenience store](#): Demonstrating yet again that everything can be upgraded, London's Harrods recently opened a luxury convenience store across the street from its famous Food Halls. Dubbed Harrods 102, the new store brings luxury and convenience together in a one-stop concept. Besides selling groceries and wine, Harrods 102 also houses a Yo! Sushi bar, a Krispy Kreme stand, florist, pharmacist, dry cleaning service, and oxygen bar. "These additional retail and service offers put Harrods closer to their customers' everyday needs and delivers a new emotional relationship," says Stephen Cribbett of Landini Associates, which designed both the store and its brand identity. [More »](#)
3. [Dock and shop](#): The iFood terminal at Nordiska Kompaniet's food hall lets customers hook up their iPod and download audio recipes. The process is described in five simple steps (we couldn't resist including the Swedish original): 1) Docka - Plug in, 2) Ladda ner - Download, 3) Handla - Purchase, 4) Lyssna - Listen, and 5) Laga - Cook. After choosing from a wide range of recipes and downloading audio instructions to their iPod or other mp3 player, shoppers can purchase all necessary items from a colour-coded deli area. iFood is an exclusive cooperation between Nordiska Kompaniet/NK, an upmarket Stockholm warehouse with [More »](#)
4. [Mastic fantastic](#): There's a new premium commodity in town, and its name is mastiha. Those of you with no ties to the Eastern Mediterranean or the Middle-East are forgiven for not knowing exactly what mastiha, or mastic gum, is. It's a product of the mastic tree, which is mainly cultivated on Chios, a Greek island in the Aegean Sea. Small cuts are made in the bark of the tree, the sap seeps out and congeals into 'tears' of resin, which are harvested and cleaned by hand. The resinous result has been popular and highly valued in the region for thousands of [More »](#)
5. [Shop-in-a-box](#): The latest in the world of pop-up retail? From Singapore comes the Venue VBOX, a portable store in a shipping container, which can be set-up temporarily. Any place. Any time. The VBOX enables a brand or company to follow an event they wish to align their brand with, or pop up where consumers least expect it. Tag along with a photography exhibition or set up shop temporarily at a large sporting event. Brands can even showcase items that consumers may not otherwise be able to purchase elsewhere: just fill the VBOX with one-offs or special editions and you'll pull [More »](#)
6. [Convenient for women](#): Combining what our sister site trendwatching.com calls 'Forever Trends' (as in trends that will remain trends forever), Japanese convenience store Happily exclusively targets women. The thinking behind this concept? Convenience in a time-compressed world is priceless, and products specifically tailored to, oh, half of the earth's population, make sense. In Happily's own words, the stores are 'of, for and by women'. The first outlet, located in Tokyo's Toranomon business district, offers cosmetics and nutritional

supplements. Only 20 percent of the products are the same as those at conventional am/pm outlets. Clerks are all women, except at night. To enable [More »](#)

7. [Ranking Ranqueen](#): We don't mind spelling it out again: in an age of abundance, curators rule! Riding the CURATED CONSUMPTION trend in all its glory is Japanese Ranking Ranqueen, a Tokyo chain selling only the top 3, 5 or 10 items in a bewildering range of categories. Rankings are based on sales data from big Tokyo department stores and independent research. Think best-selling lists for bath powder. Tooth picks. Pasta sauce. Cell phones. And so on. Rankings are updated every week, mercilessly replacing the out of favor with the Next Big Thing. There are eight Ranking Ranqueen stores in total: five [More »](#)

8. [Quick delivery e-commerce](#): In the San Francisco Bay area and Atlanta, two e-commerce companies are betting on the appeal of almost-instant delivery. Back in the '90s, Kozmo offered speedy delivery of anything an urban dweller might want or need fast, without leaving their home or office. Pack of diapers or a bag of Cheetos - everything was delivered under an hour. No delivery fee, and no minimum order amount. Although they turned a profit in New York, Kozmo expanded to other cities too quickly, infamously burned through USD 280 million in venture capital, and went bust in 2001. Kozmo's former CTO went [More »](#)

9. [Brave new retail world](#): Yet another fashion/lifestyle brand has discovered the promise of virtual worlds and virtual retail, in this case dressing virtual inhabitants: American Apparel (the sweat-shop free apparel phenomenon) will open its virtual doors tomorrow (Saturday, 17 June 2006). The store, set on a private island within Second Life, was designed by Aimee Weber, a Second Life resident and designer, in conjunction with American Apparel's own architect. The store will sell 20 familiar American Apparel items for avatars, including the women's jersey polo dress. The company will charge a token sum of about USD 1 per item. It's (surprisingly!) the first [More »](#)

10. [Sexy supermarkets in the Alps](#): MPreis, a chain of supermarkets in western Austria, bills itself as "The Seriously Sexy Supermarket". The company's stores literally stand out because of their unusual and progressive architecture. MPreis has been commissioning up and coming architects for the last fifteen years, encouraging them to design buildings that make the most of their settings in the Tyrolean Alps. Which is in stark contrast to most chain retailers, who find a formula and repeat it, regardless of location. A keen eye for aesthetics continues inside the stores, which feature sleek café's and carefully chosen materials. And the experience goes beyond design [More »](#)

Sexy supermarkets in the Alps

May 09, 2006

Retail 



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A keen eye for aesthetics continues inside the stores, which feature sleek café's and carefully chosen materials. And the experience goes beyond design – MPreis also understands the value of storytelling, emphasizing that the company is family-owned, and was founded by an entrepreneurial woman (Frau Therese M \ddot{u} lk) in the 1920s.

Surprisingly, price levels at MPreis aren't higher than at competing supermarkets in the region. Although award-winning design comes at a slightly higher cost than generic structures, the buildings look more expensive than they are.

The key of the matter is that everything can be upgraded, and creating a richer customer experience doesn't necessarily require raising prices (see [no-frills chic](#) for more examples). Plenty of opportunities for big-box retailers across the world to become patrons of good architecture and bold design!

Spotted by: Martina Meng