

WORDS | EMMA BROCKES

In the graveyard of inventions that never quite worked, there is a small, strange section devoted to language. For every buzzword that flies, according to Marian Salzman, a million sink like a stone. She should know. Salzman, an advertising executive-turned-PR who popularised the term metrosexual, laughs at the words she thought would take off and which sound completely absurd. In the 1990s, when women reached the boardroom in increasing numbers, she had high hopes for the F.O. She valiantly drops the term Chindia to describe the rise of Chinese and Indian interests, as if it's currency. And, as the conservative grass-roots Tea Party movement in the US gains traction, she hopes the left will come up with something groovy to mobilise young activists in response, something like Java Patrol. Salzman looks sheepish. There is nothing so tragic as a buzzword that no-one's picked up.

Salzman is president of the public relations firm Euro RSCG. In her Manhattan office, she juggles PR clients with a campaign to get young people out to vote and her own private work for the Democrats. She handled the press for Wyclef Jean's recent abortive bid to be president of Haiti, "a baptism of fire", she says, as it was her first political campaign. "Other people start by doing a little Congress person. Wyclef, a client, rang and said he was going to run for president. My reaction was, "You are kidding me? Dude, you're doing what?" Then when it became real, it was total immersion. My life is never normal."

When not running PR campaigns for musician-turned-politicians, Salzman is best known for her trend-spotting. The woman once christened the "Mystic Meg of the business world" by the British tabloids doesn't read palms, tea leaves or tarot cards. Nor has she relied on the supernatural to become one of the world's top business and cultural trend forecasters. She predicted the real-estate meltdown long before 2008 – and, gauging the general mood of the forced return to community values because of the gloomy economic climate, she soon dreamt up concepts like "local is the new global". "I'm an information seeker", she explains.

By this she means simplifying reams of information to a point of view.

Her talent is spotting trends before they go mainstream. And when she speaks, others increasingly listen. Salzman is an attractive 51-year-old blonde who has become a

# MYSTIC MARIAN

AUTHOR AND GLOBAL TREND-SPOTTER MARIAN SALZMAN HAS THE KNACK OF PREDICTING HOW WE WILL LIVE AND WORK IN THE FUTURE

