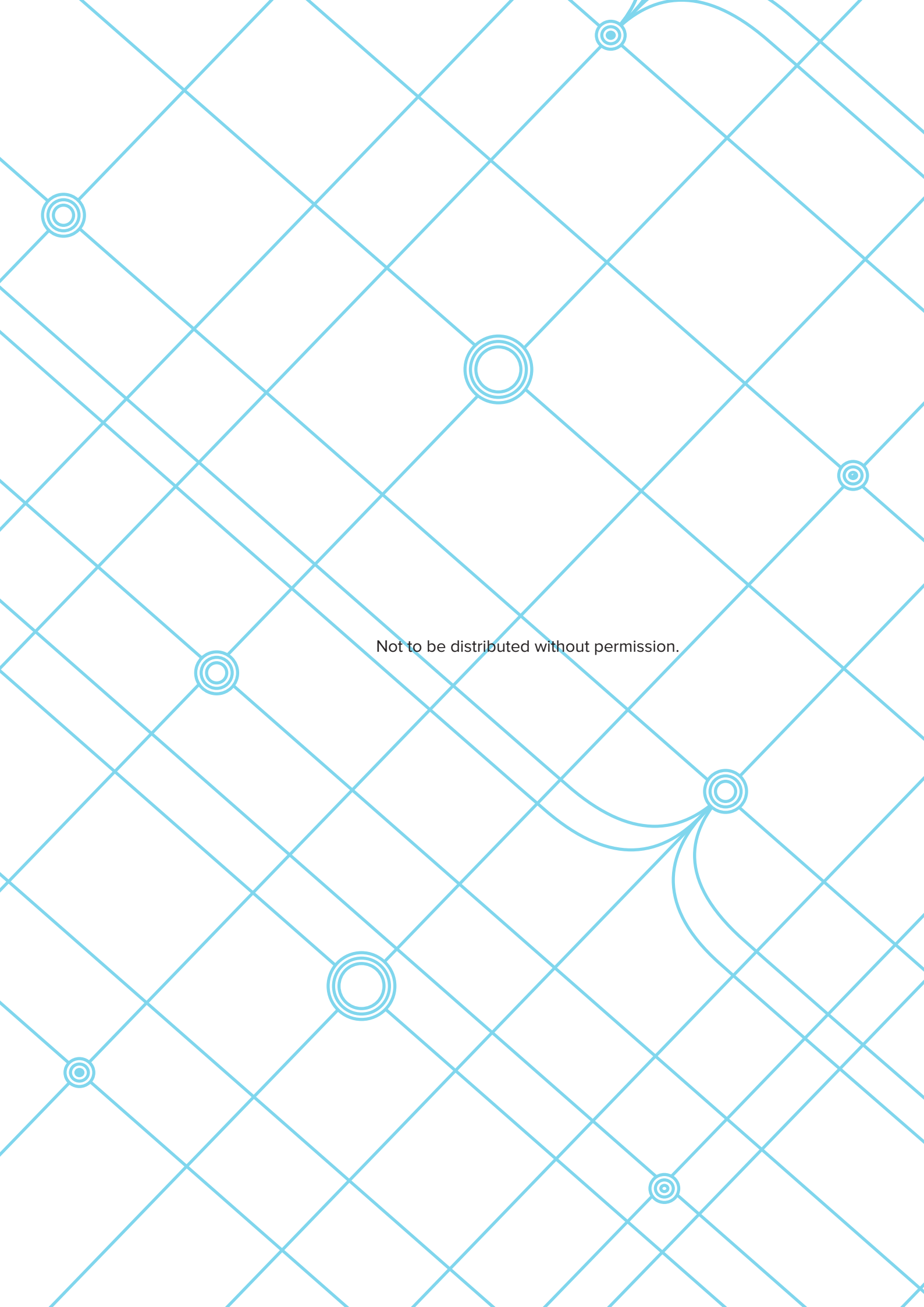


Top 10 Global Consumer Trends for 2016

Daphne Kasriel-Alexander





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TOP 10 GLOBAL CONSUMER TRENDS FOR 2016

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INTRODUCTION



Consumption in 2016 is an interesting blend of established and new trends with countertrends, which are challenging ways of living and buying. Global instability, “greenwashing”—insincere brand displays of concern for the environment—and financial hardship have more people becoming “changemakers” in an effort to create a better world. As digital life retains its grip, and more shop for greater control of their lives through smart devices, a growing band of consumers—led by parents and health experts—are signposting the downsides and urging more analogue time.

Consumers are challenging gender stereotypes and the consumption that shapes them too, while “agnostic shoppers” disregard loyalty to labels, “perfect produce” and best-before dates, as they search for innovative routes to value. Creative, single spenders are fusing the consumption of luxury with counterculture. Health consciousness has millions more wanting to eat greener, healthier and more local food, with fast food chains starting to respond. The fascination with mental wellbeing reveals consumers are looking beyond physical fitness in striving for optimal health. We’re also defying the clock by challenging ageing and outsourcing more of our lives to buy time itself.

Which consumer trends will reign around the world in 2016?

Agnostic shoppers

Greener food

Buying time

Mental wellbeing

Challenging ageing

Over-connected consumers

Changemakers

Shopping for control

Gender blurring

Spending singles

AGNOSTIC SHOPPERS



Source: iStock

Agnostic consumers are the epitome of today's contradictory shopper. Emboldened by a post-recessionary, hyper-informed, savvy-shopping zeal, with multiple opportunities to compare prices at their disposal, they are less bothered about labels and recognised products. These consumers flit between shops and products in their search for value and novelty, presenting a challenge for brands who want to connect with them or inspire their loyalty. Value for agnostic consumers doesn't always mean cheap price—although these consumers are on the lookout for bargains as well as quality—and new goods and services. Agnostic consumers are torn between wanting to be thrifty, while enjoying spending on products which inspire them. They love finding quality in unknown, unadvertised brands, although their liking for discounts isn't total love. Consumers living in shakier BRIC and other economies are displaying new coping strategies, all involving the tightening of purse strings and a “party's over” mentality.

Drawn to innovation around value

Agnostic consumers are intrigued by innovation around value—ideas that play with, even challenge their perception of it. The interest in funding start-ups that bring inventions to life or backing entrepreneurs, adventurers, creatives and students with dreams, is part of this drive.

Brands are emerging to address consumers' quest for value. Feelter is launching as an algorithm service to tempt online shoppers to buy immediately, and curb their need to do more research and open more tabs. By bringing information to the shopper sourced from social networks, and saving time, it creates what developer, Smadar Landau, calls a "virtual concierge". More marketing experts are offering brands insight into adding value for their potential customers. Innate Motion, for instance, boasts that it designs "brands with purpose"; this creative company grasps that when a brand taps into the consumer desire to contribute and belong to something bigger, in addition to offering a product or service, it can build stronger connections with people sharing this vision and enrich the value of its offer. Another type of innovation around the concept of value is the sustained attempt to teach tomorrow's consumers thrift skills. The "My First Ringgit Workshop", run by the Education and Research Association for Consumers Malaysia, visits preschools to discuss spending strategies.

Outlet shops and websites retain their allure for consumers. According to Gonzalo Senra, of global commercial real estate services firm CBRE, outlets attract those who appreciate buying more sophisticated goods at a discount, rather than cheaper products. New real world and online retail chains, such as "Approved Food", a UK brand selling expired food, pinpoint value by stressing that food past its "best before" date is still fit for consumption. They report thriving sales and stress how their low prices free up money for other spending.

Geolocation on smartphones continues to develop as a "discovery service", informing passing consumers about offers in shops and restaurants in the vicinity. For those who consider peer opinions when shopping, websites such as Net-a-porter offer maps showing the location of their clients and the products purchased in real time.

Buying pre-loved things continues to be perceived as innovative, adding value to used items that encompass sustainability, style and affordability. Firms such as Apple and Best Buy pay with cash, credit or discounts for used products, boosting sales of new ones. In Argentina, Te Lo Vendo sends "used-goods specialists" to the vendor's home to take care of the entire selling process, leading to a slogan of "sell without doing anything". Countries such as the USA and Chile already have legislation in place to grant warranties for those who purchase used goods.

The sustained appeal of thrifty shopping

Consumers struggling financially will clearly put cost first, restricting purchases, shopping at several supermarkets for low prices and avoiding impulse buying. This money-saving buying strategy has been seen in Greece, for instance, but middle class shoppers globally also enjoy being frugal.

“The consumer has been permanently conditioned to expect significant discounts,” PriceWaterhouseCoopers told Reuters in October, after responses to its pre-Christmas survey indicated a sustained keenness for deals.



Source: iStock

Managing Director of New Zealand chain

Countdown, Dave Chambers sees a major shift in local grocery shopping habits: “Today, every New Zealander is looking for food at bargain prices, regardless of their income”. Consumers in countries at varying levels of economic health continue to enjoy bargain hunting. UK shoppers spend twice as long scouring supermarket aisles as they did ten years ago, because they want to find the best deals, according to research by the University of Stirling Management School, as reported by Daily Mail Online in October 2015. In an August 2015 article entitled “Japanese men embrace inner cheapskate in booming discount retailers”, Kazuya Kido, president of budget chain CanDo, which has 900 branches, told the Financial Times that better quality ties, socks and stationery have drawn more businessmen into CanDo shops.

Discount love is not total love

While the market share of discounters in Western European countries, such as Germany, remains strong, growth seems to be slowing as shoppers are increasingly demanding a greater choice of food products, including premium perishables. In response, both the discounters and the mid-market supermarket chains have upscaled their offerings. German consumers “want sustainability, they want organic, they want the best quality and still at a reasonable price”, the CEO of Rewe, a mid-market chain, told Reuters.

With giant pre-Christmas spending spree days now established, brands have to contend with subsequent consumer discount fatigue. But there are negative consequences for consumers. In Chile, where people usually get into debt during the holidays, Publimetro.cl published “Six keys to reaching Christmas with healthy finances”, recommending budgeting before going shopping and avoiding “ant spending”—the act of piling up expenses by constantly buying very cheap products.

Downturns boosting savvy, local shopping

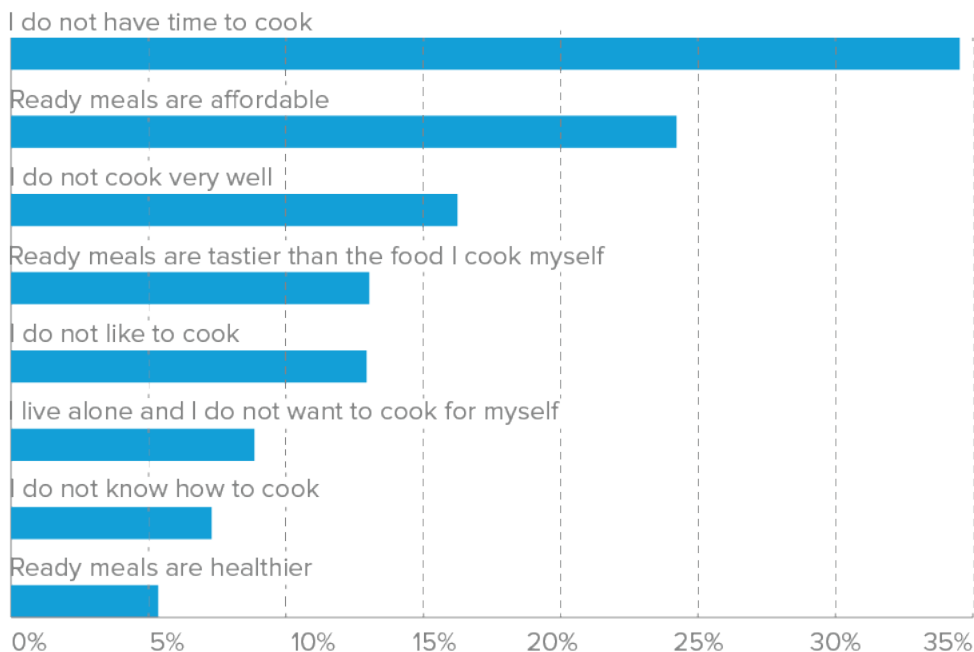
In Argentina, according to Patricia Sosa of market-research firm CCR, with inflation spiralling, consumers “supervise, control, compare and punish retailers”, keeping a close eye on price fluctuations. Moreover, many refuse to buy full-priced products, whether they are white goods or travel packages. Consumers make full use of their negotiating power and boldly “flaunt their sheer disloyalty to channels, flags and even brands,” she adds. Speaking to Venezuelan daily El Mundo, Yamlusi Agostini of fashion company In Moda notes that Venezuelans are shifting from mainly buying foreign clothing brands to choosing local designs. Chinese shoppers are beginning to grow more accepting of cheaper goods that offer quality, despite a long-running national obsession with designer brands, according to internet retailer Biyao. Today, the Brazilian consumer’s “taste for top-of-the-line goods has been checked by economic reality”, the Financial Times newspaper asserts, adding that premiumisation is now “under relentless pressure”.

BUYING TIME



In 2016, saving time is often about new attempts to buy time, beyond convenience. Consumers are more willing to outsource aspects of their lives. Many perceive time as the key luxury. UK retailers expected that over the 2015 festive season, around one third of UK households would rely on readymade food options to save time and stress in the kitchen. A winter 2015 survey from digital marketing agency VML Qias found 70% of affluent Indians aged 18-35 agree that luxury related to how much free time one enjoyed, rather than an individual's purchasing power. This compared with 68% of respondents in South Korea and 59% in China. Saving time is still a key driver behind the continued rise of the consumer preference for local shopping as well as online shopping, with buying suggestions linked to previous online searches a more embedded feature.

Reasons for Eating Ready Meals

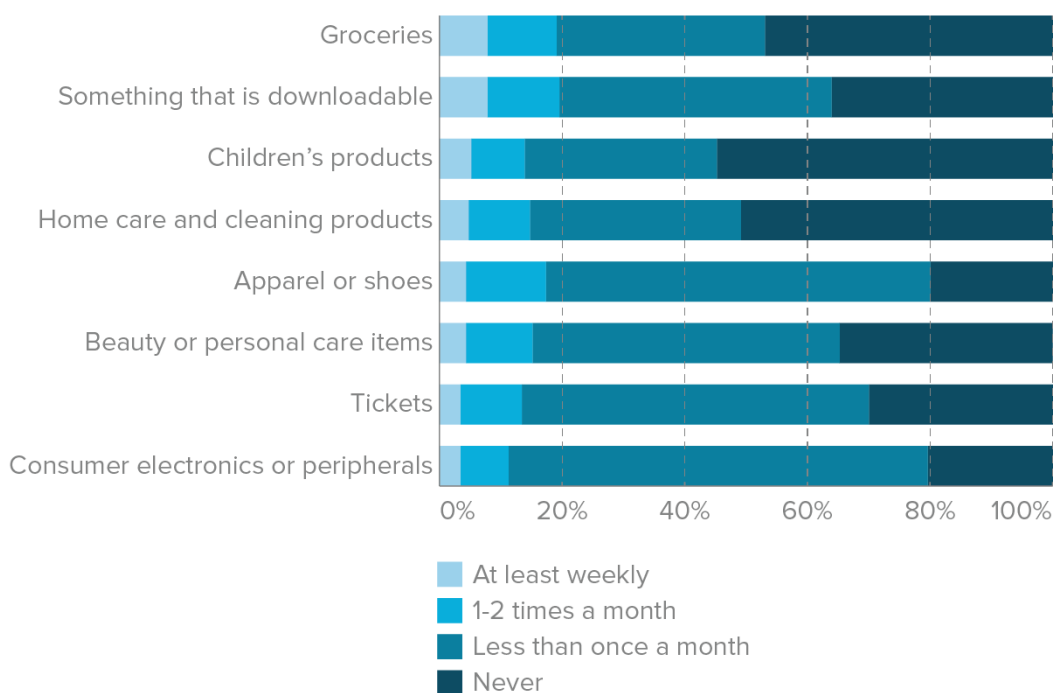


Source: Euromonitor International Global Consumer Trends online survey, 2015

New time-saving solutions for time-poor urbanites

“Daycation” deals from hotels and spas sell travellers access to a room or resort amenities such as pools on a shorter-term basis. The app and website, HotelsByDay, lists US hotel rooms available for a day at below overnight rates. A daytime stay at the Flatiron Hotel in New York is pitched to travellers wishing to feel refreshed, business people who want to work in a more relaxed space and residents of a broader area coming into the city centre to shop. “Pedestrian fast lanes” are being trialled to help buyers buy time when shopping in real-world shops. In the UK, an Argos chain store piloted new pavement markings outside its shop in the Liverpool One shopping complex after nearly 50% of UK consumers polled identified the slow pace of high streets as their biggest shopping gripe.

Frequency of Online Purchases



Source: Euromonitor International Global Consumer Trends online survey, 2015

Scores of consumers are fans of digital timesaving devices in the home, such as robot vacuum cleaners. Combined food preparation and cooking devices that perform without human intervention are also in demand, despite the high cost, with users claiming a reduced need to buy processed food and prepared meals. Discussing the Bimby, a “robot chef” that’s a hit in Italy and Portugal, the Wall Street Journal described it as “a multitasker that outsells high-end iPads and is more popular on Facebook than the country’s best-known rock band”.

Services prioritising time saving are thriving for urban workers. “Clients have absolute control over their wash and their waiting time”, Minh Hien of laundry Cong Cong in Vietnam told website Tuoi Tre News. So-called life-arrangers are an emerging trend in main Argentinean city hubs, collecting children from school and dealing with home renovation. More time-poor consumers in India are turning to apps to find people to do their household chores. Debadutta Upadhyaya, co-founder of Timesaverz, told website Quartz: “I started this company because it was a need for working mothers. We now have more than 5,000 users in Mumbai and Bengaluru”. In the US, Amazon recently added one-hour restaurant food delivery to its Prime Now membership in 20 cities. In Venezuela, new app service Sincola helps customers avoid queues by allocating them queue numbers and queue status updates via SMS.

Athleisure: Always workout-ready

More people are living their daily lives, apparently workout-ready. The trend for active wear has jogged outside the gym to claim its place as a more prominent part of people’s wardrobes and a parallel rise in retail floor space. As consumers put fitness on a pedestal, commentators observe, workout gear becomes equated with style, communicating to everyone that wearers consider health and wellness to be a key part of their lives. This clothing and footwear is worn on the streets, in restaurants, when shopping, at social occasions and on the catwalk (Spring / Summer 2016 collections from Chloe and Valentino feature tracksuits). It can also be seen on the way to and at work, sparing workers the need to carry extra gym outfits to the office and driving a trend for high-end gym wear.

Real-time customer service

Customers often require urgent customer service out of office hours, so more brands are responding to queries via Twitter. Published in November 2015, the 2015 U.S. Retail Multichannel Customer Experience Study—surveying 500 US companies and 1,000 customers—found that companies only responded to 20% of customer questions posed on Twitter. However, the same study found that 85% of customers expected a tweeted response within an hour, when it actually takes retailers an average of 31 hours to respond. In the same month, Forbes announced that the list of companies with 24/7 Twitter Support includes: United, FitBit, Amazon, UPS, Netflix and BestBuy.

More travelling consumers are turning to Twitter to post real-time queries and deliver a type of public nudge if improvements are needed. Delta increased its social media team by 30% in 2015 to respond to the circa 3,000 daily tweets the airline receives. Morgan Johnston, a social media strategist at JetBlue Airways, says, “We’ve seen a rise in our customer satisfaction because we can get ahead of it before they go home for the day and start stewing about it.”



We’ve seen a rise in our customer satisfaction because we can get ahead of it before they go home for the day and start stewing about it.



Morgan Johnston

Social Media Strategist, JetBlue Airways

Selling sleep

The idea of sleep as something for sale is becoming more apparent, as time-pressed, digitally active consumers eat into their nightly slumber. Health professionals claim that consumers need to stop regarding sleep as a lifestyle choice and instead respect it as they do diet and exercise. Meanwhile, travel-sleep combinations are taking off, as the travel and hotel industries woo weary, on-the-move consumers with the promise of enhanced sleep. Consumers’ busy lifestyles and today’s greater understanding that sleep enhances lives, health and weight loss, see more brands responding. Products include “Night Milk” from German company Milchkristalle from cows milked at night, containing more sleep hormone, melatonin.

CHALLENGING AGEING



The future for many world regions is greyer, but old age as we know it is being challenged. In 2016, we can talk of a mature lifestyle as more people are living a busier, more satisfying and extended “third age”, starting after middle age—anywhere from 55-65. Post-middle-age consumers are more energetic, work more, enjoy maintaining good physical health and pay attention to mental wellbeing, and are able to lead fuller lives as consumers too, although mature consumers are a diverse segment and conditions for seniors vary between and within countries.

A splintered segment of post-middle age consumers

Mature consumers are a huge market. According to Euromonitor International data, the global population aged 65+ is forecast to grow to 626 million in 2016 out of a total global population of 7.3 billion. They may retire early from salaried jobs and become entrepreneurs; others earn from hobby-related activities, cease working or need / wish to extend their work lives. Spending power may vary, but these consumers remain a key and growing consumer segment, opening up many opportunities for manufacturers and retailers. Marketing strategies include charging lower prices to retirees—already implemented by tourism hubs, cinemas, clubs and even supermarkets.

626 mn

Forecast growth in global
population aged 65+ in 2016

Hiroyuki Murata, Founder of Tohoku University’s Smart Ageing Research Center, thinks that understanding the mentality of older consumers is more important than functionality when marketing products to them. Mentioning the Raku Raku phone, designed for elderly users by Japan’s leading mobile operator NTT DoCoMo, Murata emphasises that the designers focused on larger features but failed to anticipate that some seniors would feel it made them look clumsy.

Although the purchasing power of Latin American retirees pales in comparison to their North American counterparts, they too are now enjoying leisure trips and a rise in their consumption of cultural goods, food and healthcare services as more receive pensions. China Daily newspaper reported that senior Chinese tourists who joined “elderly-friendly” packaged tours were critical of poor food quality and long road trips, with most willing to pay more for a better experience.

A distinct mature lifestyle trend sees older people relocating to make their money go further. Some older, affluent Indians are abandoning the custom of multi-generational households and moving to retirement villages. 69-year-old Usha Mantri surprised her family and friends when she told news agency AFP she sought “Full freedom to my child, and I want full freedom for myself”.

Energised ageing

Senior consumers can’t always be counted on as childminders as they are increasingly active, with packed schedules. Aging baby boomers with generous private or state pensions are also more able to enjoy the mature lifestyle, relishing varied social and cultural pursuits, such as national and international travel. For those of more limited means, travel means a less expensive care or retirement home abroad and more of the home comforts than they can afford in their native lands. The grey pound is fuelling a growth in the UK travel and tourism industry, according to a summer 2015 report in the Guardian newspaper. The over-50s now account for the majority of the UK’s spending on travel and tourism, including weekend “staycations” and cruise holidays.



Source: iStock

Advanced style

“Advanced Style” is a glossy book featuring glamorous mature consumers photographer Ari Seth Cohen noticed on the world’s “sidewalk catwalks”. Based on his blog, it salutes their confidence, beauty and style. It is hard not to notice that mature female models are now staring at us on Instagram, in magazines and in a slew of recent high profile ad campaigns, including esteemed writer Joan Didion (80) in Céline ads. H&M’s premium “& Other Stories” brand chose several creative “inspirational” older women to front its December 2015 party wear campaign. Not just the latest expression of the fashion industry’s need to shock, these faces reflect broader cultural trends, including the growing recognition of an ageing world. By using these mature models, brands are saluting the ageless aspirations of baby boomers. Luxury brands in particular are aware that many boomers, the oldest now hitting traditional retirement age, are also quite well off, so the demographic more likely to buy luxury products now sees itself reflected in luxury ads. Many of these older models are famous for their creative achievements too. To be cool today, you need character honed from life experience. These “mature movement” models represent female empowerment and the idea that you don’t have to become invisible as you age.

Digital inclusion

Millions of seniors are comfortable with technology, most often using it as a tool to keep in touch with family and friends and to monitor health. Jorge Luis Falcón, head of a health care centre in Buenos Aires, told local paper La Nación that a high percentage of middle class seniors use social networks. Madhuri Eunni, CEO of smart kitchen product company SKE Labs, stresses that the best technology creates a good intuitive experience: “An 80-year-old guy looks at a smartphone now and thinks that’s the natural way to talk to and keep in touch with his grandchildren,” she told Digital Trends.



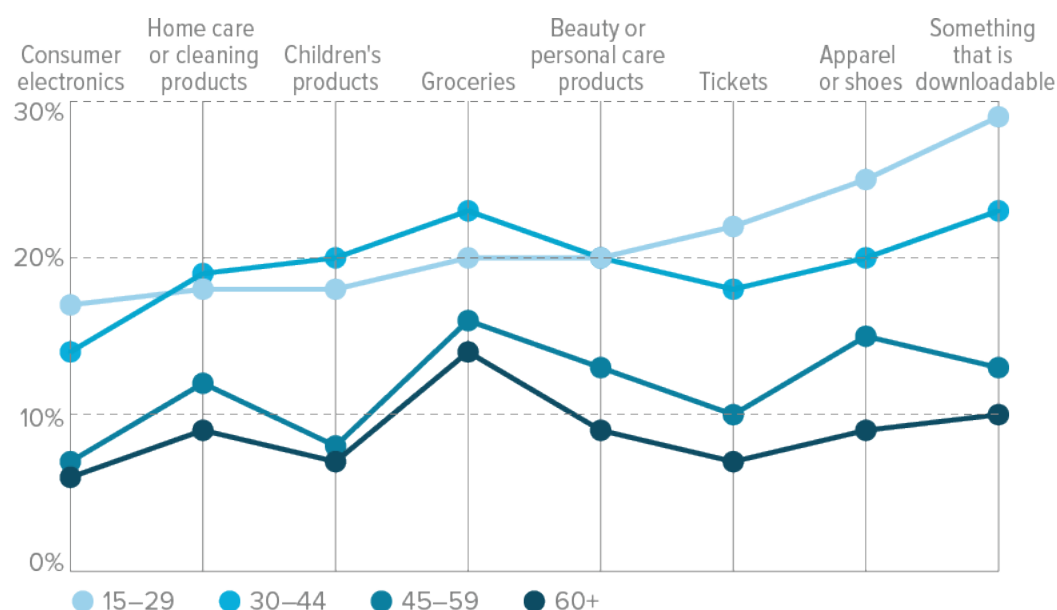
An 80-year-old guy looks at a smartphone now and thinks that’s the natural way to talk to and keep in touch with his grandchildren.



Madhuri Eunni
CEO, SKE Labs

Specialist website SeniorCareCorner.com, a resource for US family caregivers, says that seniors also see social networks as a way to obtain discounts on their purchases. Games and other computer programmes are also regarded as “mental gymnasiums” to keep minds sharp. More than a third of over-65s use technology to monitor wellbeing, according to the UK Digital Health Report from video consultation service PushDoctor.co.uk, reported the Daily Mail in October.

Online Purchases by Age



Source: Euromonitor International Global Consumer Trends online survey, 2015

New developments aimed at enriching and aiding the lives of older consumers will turn many into early adopters. Robots and even small drones for the home, designed to aid elderly consumers, are likely to prove particularly popular as they prolong independence. A new multilingual AI caregiver in the form of the first commercially available “emotional” robot, Pepper, is priced at US\$1,600. It is designed to read moods, recognize tones of voice and facial expressions. All 1,000 units were sold in just under a minute at its recent Japan launch.

CHANGEMAKERS



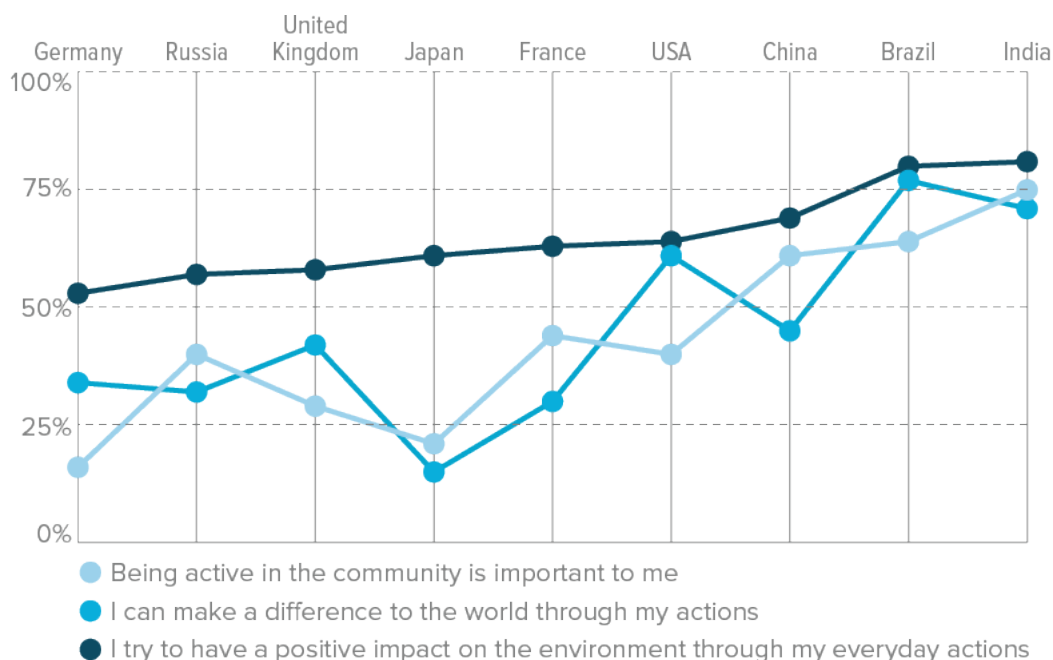
In 2016, trying to change things for the better is becoming a more mainstream priority. Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, and his wife, Dr. Priscilla Chan, underlined this with their pledge to donate most of their wealth to improve lives in an open letter to their newborn. Living in a conflict-ridden world, not just billionaires, multinationals, journalists and models, but individual consumers too want to enrich lives and preserve the earth's natural resources. Younger consumers in particular are seen as being at the helm of a crusade to embrace social causes. Consumer expectations regarding corporate environmental issues are growing; Millennials especially, with recent greenwashing scandals in mind, want brands they buy to behave responsibly.

Embracing social causes

Speaking of younger Millennials, aged circa 12-25, innovation analyst Jeremy Finch wrote on the Co.Exist site that they have “the weight of saving the world and fixing our past mistakes on their small shoulders”. Young entrepreneurs are building change into their business plans. An October T Magazine article is entitled, “Five Visionary Tech Entrepreneurs Who Are Changing the World”. These are all blurring the lines between big business and social impact and set on putting social good at the core of the for-profit companies they are creating. These socially motivated businesspeople also have a healthy disrespect for boundaries between business, government and NGOs. Author Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen notes that they are united in wanting to do more than acquire material riches and measure success by their ability to transform the lives of others. Their question is not “What do I want to be when I grow up?” but “How will the world be different because I lived in it?”

Their question is not “What do I want to be when I grow up?” but “How will the world be different because I lived in it?”

Personal Traits and Values, by Country



Source: Euromonitor International Global Consumer Trends online survey, 2015

Global examples abound. News agency AFP recently reported on a new website to help migrants find accommodation in the Netherlands, billed by some as “Airbnb for refugees”. Alongside the proliferating number of “deal days” in the run up to the festive season is “#GivingTuesday”, a global day dedicated to giving back in the form of time, resources and talents. The Earth Statement is moving those who care about climate change to “Save the World. Take a Selfie” and share to show their support. On Change.org, over 100 million people in 196 countries are starting campaigns, mobilising supporters and working with decision makers to drive solutions. TIME Magazine describes it as a “spectacular demonstration of the way ordinary folks can now mobilize extraordinary support for their causes”.

Interesting campaigns originating among thought leaders themselves point to the importance of social causes and active citizenship that cares. “Solutions journalism” is an approach to news reporting, focussing on the responses to social issues as well as the problems themselves to encourage more effective citizenship. Among public debate influencers stressing the value of positive change stories is Arianna Huffington of the Huffington Post and her current “what’s working” editorial initiative. She believes readers crave constructive, optimistic stories about people and communities doing amazing things. Perhaps changemakers will spur more “copycat solutions” and scale up these solutions, she suggests.

The moment for small donors

Late last year, Yahoo! News ran a feature entitled, “How to change the world with \$10”. It highlighted how more consumers are giving small donations directly to causes they care about via crowdfunding online, bypassing big charities and changing the culture of giving—a trend that includes more than a touch of anti-corporate sentiment. “Crowdfunding is a kind of democratization of giving,” says Jacob Harold, president of GuideStar, an information hub for the non-profit sector. Facebook has just unveiled a new fundraiser feature on its social media platform; it allows users viewing non-profit pages to add these campaigns to their own timelines and promote the causes they care about the most.

Momastery blogger, Doyle Melton, has spoken of her joy when several projects for women at risk received substantial sums from small donations capped at US\$25 per donor. “The world is good”, she wrote on Momastery the next day. “People care... We are not alone. We are part of something bigger than ourselves”. Kevin Conroy, chief product officer for GlobalGiving, an older crowdfunding site, talks of a shift in the philanthropic landscape from the guilt-led pulling on donor heartstrings in the 1980s and 1990s to the current landscape, which sees donors as informed partners in making change. Last autumn, the Obama administration coordinated a Kickstarter fundraising campaign for Syrian refugees. Looking forward, crowdfunding experts envision a future in which beneficiaries will be able to make instant requests and give instant feedback to donors, enabled by mobile technology.



Source: iStock

Models care

Far from being voiceless mannequins, many of today's models reflect the values of Millennials, who have embraced social causes, alongside social media and signal that activism is in vogue. Over the summer, for instance, Cara Delevingne and Behati Prinsloo, herself from Namibia, expressed their opposition to the killing of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe as paid-for "sport". Other models are engaging with issues like racial equality and LGBT rights. "Social media have given models a platform they didn't have before," says Sara Ziff, the founder of the Model Alliance, a non-profit group seen as a catalyst for this latest wave of social engagement. "Our customers expect social commentary", Paula Schneider, the new CEO of American Apparel, told Marie Claire magazine. Staff at high-profile modelling and celebrity agencies nurture social awareness among their clients. "We ask [our models] to look at current events and not focus all the attention on what shoes they're going to walk in next season", says Vicky Yang, marketing coordinator of Society Management which represents Kendall Jenner.

A reduced emphasis on acquisition

Led by younger Millennials, consumers are generally less wedded to the ownership of consumer goods and instead are comfortable renting or sharing them, as the success of the "sharing economy" continues to demonstrate. Post-mortems on a more subdued Black Friday in late November 2015 attributed a slower shopping day to more than just online competition or the greater love for experiences. The notion that consumers are bargain-saturated and crave the immaterial surfaced. It didn't go unnoticed that for over a year, writer Marie Kondo's guide to decluttering one's life took the top slot on the New York Times bestseller list. Car-free is an option for more, as Millennials in particular are less enamoured with driving and more open to greener alternative means of transport. Smartphones have displaced cars as the consumer good that young adults regard as essential to their sense of freedom.

Shops targeting trend-aware consumers continue to focus on creating a lifestyle and less on products alone. Blake Mycoskie, founder of shoe company Toms, wants his shops to be meeting and information hubs, where things are happening and products are grouped almost as an afterthought. "I do think it's a competitive advantage if you make a great product and have a larger purpose that people can be a part of", Mycoskie told journalist Steven Kurutz last November.

GENDER BLURRING



For many consumers, the quietly confident smile of Caitlyn Jenner—formerly Bruce—on the June cover of *Vanity Fair*, signalled the “coming out” of an acceptance of gender fluidity. High profile transgender people are leading a more general social rejection of prescribed gender roles, challenging typical gender tags, clothing, toys and labels. Even the new Pirelli Calendar is taking 2016 in a new direction by featuring women for their accomplishments, not their naked form, which *Playboy* will also leave behind in March 2016. For Marco Tronchetti Provera, Pirelli CEO, this change is about how the calendar “reflects contemporary society”. In some respects, gender fluidity in terms of consumption is already here. Alongside the more obvious tech devices and androgynous fashion, there is a shift in the classification of some toys to blur gender lines and the way they are displayed by more retailers, although campaigners, including many parents, are pressing for more.

Even the new Pirelli Calendar is taking 2016 in a new direction by featuring women for their accomplishments, not their naked form, which *Playboy* will also leave behind in March 2016.

Gender-nonconformists, not tomboys

Jennifer Baumgardner, the publisher of the Feminist Press recently told US journalist Marisa Meltzer: “Tomboy doesn’t feel present tense to me at all. It feels retro, this affirmative way of talking about a girl who likes boy things, as if boy things were better”. For many, using the word Tomboy at all suggests there’s a regular way to be a girl (“girly”), and this is another way to be a girl.

This is the view of Melissa Atkins Wardy, author of “Redefining Girly: How Parents Can Fight the Stereotyping and Sexualizing of Girlhood, From Birth to Tween”. Here too, the examples set by celebrities and their offspring have spurred public discussion. Jaden Smith and Lily-Rose Depp are regarded as celebrity offspring expressing fluid gender identities. Tabloid-style headlines such as “Controversial Shiloh Jolie-Pitt Chops Off Her Hair Amid Report Brad And Angelina Are Helping Her Gender Transition—See The Photos!” keep a discussion of the expression of gender in the public domain.



Source: iStock

Branded “gender expansive” goods and new shop layouts

Retailers and manufacturers are creating gender-neutral labels. For the first time last October, the Disney Store labelled all Halloween costumes “for kids”, also switching to generic tags on backpacks and lunchboxes. Amazon no longer uses gender-based categories for children’s toys. British toy kit company, Airfix, is planning a range of models to also appeal to girls aspiring to be scientists. “What we’re seeing is that there are different play patterns that appeal to different kids, and gender lines are not necessarily what drives that,” said the global chief merchandising officer of Toys “R” Us to the New York Times in October. According to Jim Silver of toy review website TimetoPlaymag.com: “The industry’s learned that you shouldn’t be labeling for a specific gender. There are so many girls who want to be Iron Man and Captain America, and boys who want to play with Easy-Bake”.

Last autumn, Gap announced its collaboration with Ellen DeGeneres's new lifestyle brand, ED, on a range for GapKids. This line includes graphic T-Shirts with empowering quotes. According to Grace Wong, a Gap marketing executive, this range "celebrates girls being exactly who they are; strong and confident; fun and fabulous; weird and wonderful; pink, blue or green; in jeans, a dress or anything in between". This new acceptance of gender fluidity is apparent in store layouts. The second-largest US discount retailer, Target, has decided not to divide signs by gender in departments like toys, home and entertainment.

Parents and critics of gender stereotyping more vocal

Arguably, the most significant shifts in gender categorising are taking place in products for children. This stems from a growing recognition of the role that traditional toys, clothes and costumes have played in reinforcing gender stereotyping. Experts have linked these differences to later gender disparities with career choices and the extent to which men play an active role in child rearing. Many parents are using blogs and social media to air their negative views about retailers' overly girly offerings, or to draw attention to their children defying gender norms. Recently, a Virginia father, Paul Henson, was praised online for his Facebook post about his 3-year-old son, determined to dress as Elsa from Disney's "Frozen" for Halloween. A group of girls in Northern California are campaigning to join the Boy Scouts. So-called "sheroes", heroines for girls, are changing, and we see icons like Katniss Everdeen, the huntress and survivor of the "Hunger Games" trilogy. The toy industry has rushed to update itself with weaponry toys for girls. Most are pink, however, and have non-progressive names such as "the Heartbreaker". Sharon Lamb, child psychologist at the University of Massachusetts, is critical of the "stereotyped girlifying" of them. "Why can't they be rebels and have to be re-BELLES? [a Nerf gun toy aimed at girls]".



Source: iStock

Androgynous style

Androgynous style has had numerous fashion moments, but fashion commentators observe that we are now in an upswing. These include Lizzie Garrett Mettler, author of “Tomboy Style,” mentioning the recent surge of the boyfriend jean. Meryl Streep, for instance, chose androgynous glamour as she was awarded top prize at the latest BAFTA Britannia Awards. In fashion, designers from Marc Jacobs to Hermès are blending feminine and masculine clothes. The popularity of sportswear and genderless offerings from companies like North Face and Converse has also helped spread unisex design. Wearable technology, like smartwatches and activity monitors, have been relatively gender-neutral.

GREENER FOOD

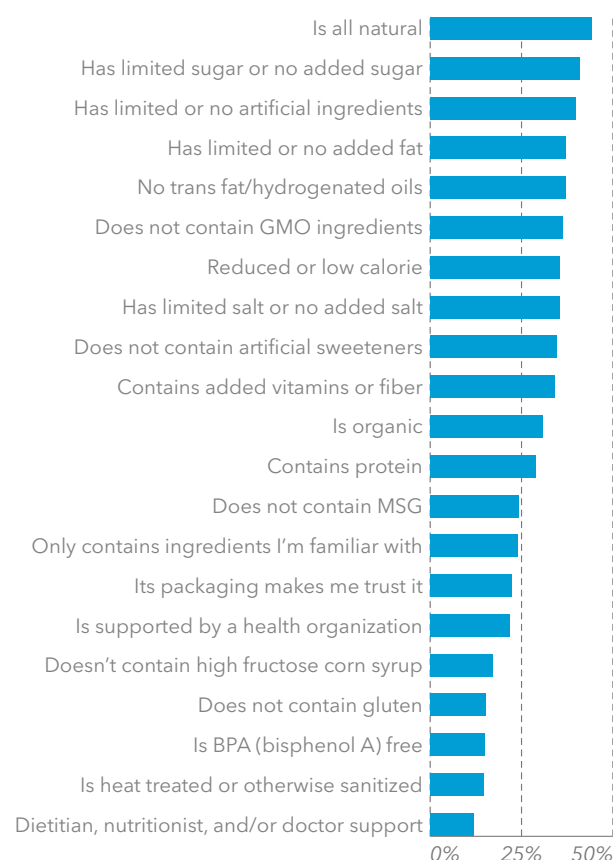
Datagraphic | Greener Food



Preferred Food Attributes and Ingredients

What Attributes Concern the Population

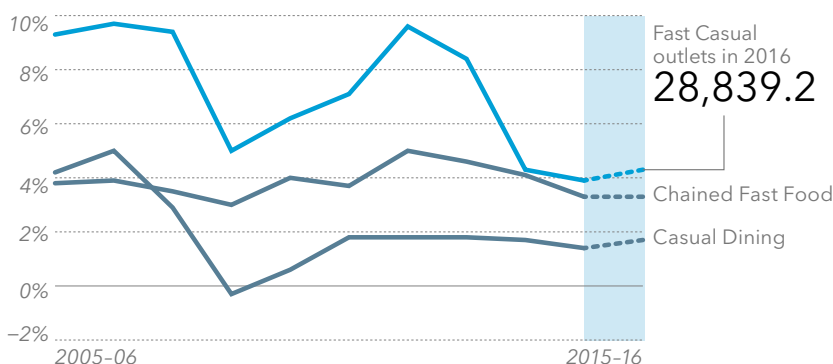
% of global respondents who look for selected attributes, 2015



Fast Casual Outpacing Fast Food and Casual Dining

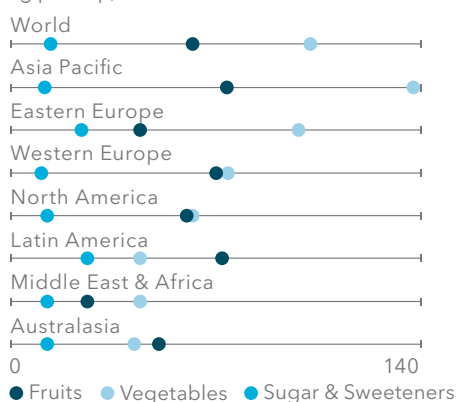
Fast Casual Outlets Feature More Natural Food Than Typical Fast Food Ones

global, year-on-year growth, number of outlets, 2005/06-2015/16



Fruits and Vegetables vs Sugar

Total Volume by Region
kg per cap, 2016



ORGANIC PACKAGED FOOD, 2016

\$32,153mn

global retail value RSP, US\$, constant 2015 prices

ORGANIC BEVERAGES, 2016

\$3,972.7mn

global retail value RSP, US\$, constant 2015 prices

*Note: The "Preferred Food Attributes and Ingredients" chart uses Euromonitor International Global Consumer Trends online survey; 2015

Source: Euromonitor International

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In 2016, more of us will be eating greener. More people will care about cutting down on food waste in and beyond the home, try harder to avoid unhealthy food and overeating and be keener on more natural, local and seasonal food. More of us will consider cheaper food past its best before date and shop in retail chains selling it. And even fast food is getting greener. Part of the picture is the growing consumer acceptance of “non-perfect” produce, consumer interest in transparency throughout the production process and an accompanying story that makes them feel good about their consumption choices too. Food giant Nestlé is quoted in German newspaper Welt am Sonntag as predicting that eating will carry an ideological charge similar to belonging to a political party or a football club. There’s even a new pathology, “Orthorexia nervosa”, an abnormal urge to eat healthily, correctly and ethically.

Orthorexia nervosa

An abnormal urge to eat healthily, correctly and ethically

Enough with food waste!

The sustainability-led International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) claims that half the world’s food is thrown away. Social media is buzzing with consumer discussion and new initiatives indicate global distaste for food waste. “Supply Change” held a forum in winter 2015 to encourage more production of sustainable produce. Another global event targeting food waste was the six-month long Expo, held in Milan until October 2015. There, almost 21 million visitors saw the motto of “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life” come to life in elements like The Ambrosian Refectory, a pop-up dining hall creating haute cuisine meals for the needy from surplus from the estimated 400 tons of food arriving at the culinary fair daily. Last year, the French National Assembly voted to pass a law compelling supermarkets to give waste food to charity or be used as animal feed. In 2016, Morrisons will become the first UK supermarket chain to donate unsold food from its 500 stores to soup kitchens according to the Daily Mail, in an article seeing 1.6 thousand shares within hours. There’s also a Save Food Cut Waste movement in Singapore. Globally, moves tackling food waste are super creative. In Germany, “Disco Soup” invites locals to chop vegetables destined for disposal while listening to music.

Greater consumer familiarity with “ugly” produce is driving more supermarkets to sell it. Maxi stores in Canada, with their 30% cheaper “Naturally Imperfect” brand, is just one of many. Dutch campaign, Kromkommer, works to halt the disposal of produce with atypical looks and get them onto supermarket shelves. A Kickstarter campaign has enabled them to sell “three wonky vegetable soups”, now available at 50 stores.

Locavorism: Enjoying local, traditional fare

A key aspect of green food is eating locally-grown food, including, in a more limited way, the fruits of urban gardening projects. By doing so, consumers are prioritising locally grown, seasonal food for environmental, thrift, freshness and health reasons. Shopping nearer home in smaller retail formats, such as convenience stores and smaller branches of supermarkets, and buying street food are both sustained trends. Farmers' markets, often selling organic fare, epitomise this local trend and are now a global phenomenon. These include Beijing's Organic Farmer's Market, Lahore's Khalis Food and Haryali markets, whose Facebook pages are liked by some 14,000 people, and the Mawasim Organic Market in Abu Dhabi's World Trade Center Mall, which opened in June 2015. According to official statistics, 300,000 Argentinean consumers purchase directly from farms.



Source: iStock

Locavores are also well served by boxed organic deliveries of seasonal produce. While expensive, Jakub Karpiel, who delivers local produce to consumers in Krakow, Poland, says consumers are increasingly “willing to pay a premium for goods that haven’t been doused in chemicals, frozen, and shipped across the sea”. Healthy meals services are also thriving. In the US, The Purple Carrot serves vegan fare, but is also aimed at “flexitarians”, meat eaters that just want to eat more plants. Australians are buying less meat but more quality beef. “Australian consumers will support local brands with a strong ethical story, particularly around the care of animals”, Lisa Sharp of Meat and Livestock Australia told website Queensland Country Life. Online help for locavores is plentiful too. For instance, the local foods wheel has a strapline of “learn what’s in season where you live”. Alessandro Lattuada, CEO of new Italian “food experience store” Bottigha, opening in London in 2016, told Euromonitor International that the brand will offer “a galaxy of cheeses in which you can taste the herbs of the mountains where the animals graze”.

Safer, faster food

The Food and Drug Administration in the US is holding a referendum on what the term “natural” signifies. It is accepting comments until February 2016, because surveys and consumer petitions to the FDA show that most consumers are confused about what natural means and bewildered by an “ethical labelling fog”. Even discounters are responding to the health trend with a growing choice of organic and vegan products. Familiar brands too are responding to calls for safer food. Campbell is rethinking its soup recipes to suit changing customer tastes that have led to a decline in sales. “Today, we’re talking about our food—as in what’s in it, where it comes from and what impact it has on the environment”, rather than sales volumes, Campbell CEO, Denise Morrison, told the New York Times in November 2015.

Meanwhile fast-food operators are responding to demands from customers who want healthier options, such as antibiotic-free meat. McDonald’s, the largest fast food chain in the world, is pledging that chicken served in its US restaurants will be free of antibiotics used in humans within two years, amid customer perceptions that its food is unhealthy. Major US meat producer, Perdue, has a “No Antibiotics Ever” chicken range.



Chains from Taco Bell to Pizza Hut are throwing out the additives and embracing the natural ingredients.



TIME Magazine

Danny Meyer, founder of New York-based burger chain Shake Shack said in an interview with Entrepreneur magazine: “Customers are demanding new food culture in a bid to be healthier and live a better lifestyle”. “Chains from Taco Bell to Pizza Hut are throwing out the additives and embracing the natural ingredients”, reported TIME magazine in May. Many consumers want more than hamburgers and chips. Young Americans are likely to meet friends at other fast food restaurants like Chipotle, which is part of a new segment of “fast-casual” restaurants, positioned between fast food and casual dining and promising more natural ingredients.

MENTAL WELLBEING



The fascination with promoting the wellness of their inner selves shows that consumers are looking beyond physical health. The pursuit of mindfulness is apparent in bestseller lists, in app choices and holiday options and even the yoga pants fashion staple. The trend for looking workout-ready beyond the gym echoes the consumer embrace of a holistic attitude towards optimal physical and mental health.

The pursuit of mindfulness is apparent in bestseller lists, in app choices and holiday options and even the yoga pants fashion staple.

Persuaded by claims of stress reduction and increased mental clarity, mindfulness has been keenly adopted by major companies like Google and Apple. There is also a greater awareness of the minds of others, evident in diverse trends such as crowdsourced therapy and more sophisticated emoji.

Consumption is not just about things

The interest in mental wellbeing is part of a sustained broader rejection of consumption as merely the acquisition of more products. Dr. Teresa Belton, author of “Happier People Healthier Planet: How putting wellbeing first would help sustain life on earth”, advocates the benefits of non-material things like decluttering. This chimes with other writers, such as James Wallman in “Stuffocation: Living More With Less”. This interest in striving for mental wellness is also a response to pressured lives. It includes a tinge of nostalgia and offers a way for workaholics to pause. An awareness of the need to disconnect from things digital is clearly part of this consumer interest. Arianna Huffington of the Huffington Post lectures on her transformation from fast-lane addict to evangelist for reflection, sleep and digital detoxing. London’s Barbican arts centre recently hosted the world premiere of Rolf Hind’s *Lost in Thought*, a “mindfulness opera” incorporating meditation and yoga.

Being, not being burnt out

“There’s an altogether more challenging class to enrol yourself in now—and it doesn’t include weights, circuits or treadmills.... Welcome instead to the capital’s [London’s] latest class, Drop-in Silence, where you’ll find stillness, peace and quiet”. This article introduction, from Katy Young, Beauty Director, writing in the UK’s Telegraph, reflects the interest in serenity, often the antithesis of sporty action.

The global “fad” of colouring books and self-help style books on mindfulness aimed at adults, with millions sold, is also driven by the quest for calm and focus as an antidote to daily stress and difficulties with work / life balance. On Amazon’s list of bestselling books for 2015, “Coloring Books for Adults: An Adult Coloring Book Featuring Patterns that Promote Relaxation and Serenity”, came third. Even the Ordnance Survey mapping organisation has just released a set of UK city maps, which can be downloaded and coloured in.



Source: iStock

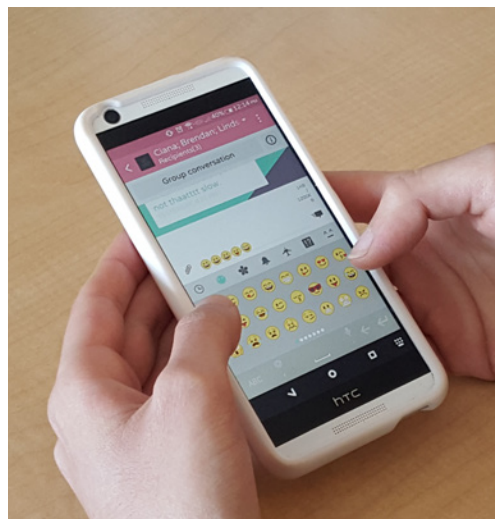
Yoga is enjoying a global moment. Last summer, some 16,000 Dubai residents took part in a local celebration of the first ever United Nations International Day of Yoga, an event to be commemorated on June the 21st each year, paying tribute to yoga’s holistic benefits. More airports have been meeting the craving of health-conscious consumers for a tranquil space in which they can unwind to help calm flight-related anxiety. Sixty of the UK’s high-security prisoners are to be taught meditation and yoga to control their emotions in new “mindfulness” courses. Even inward-looking, meditative wellness offerings need balance. The Wanderlust festival at Turtle Bay Resort in Hawaii offers yoga by day and partying at night. More consumers swear by meditation apps, while others find catharsis in live-action games involving puzzle-solving challenges. Even a snowboarding game app, Alto Adventure, has been praised for its calming influence.

Sixty of the UK’s high-security prisoners are to be taught meditation and yoga to control their emotions in new “mindfulness” courses.

Awareness of others

Vloggers and bloggers are obvious drivers of curiosity about other people, and perhaps the compulsive disclosure of teens, as well as the less filtered nature of reality shows, are part of this trend. Pamela Druckerman, in a “You Is the New Me” New York Times piece, sees awareness of other minds everywhere: “Business consultants preach the benefits of ‘mindfulness,’ which includes awareness of other people. Scientists are testing its health benefits. Some schools now teach empathy alongside reading and math.”

“Neuromarketing”, the controversial technique of using brain imaging and facial coding to gauge often unwitting consumer responses to products and political candidates, is part of this too. Panoply is an academic-led, peer-to-peer platform offering crowdsourced therapy. It works by teaching users to look at their problematic situation through the eyes of the “crowd” for an alternative perspective. The appearance of more complex emoji (pictorial emoticons) is part of this appreciation of emotional states, seen in the new Introji app from Californian artist Rebecca Lynch.



Source: Euromonitor International

A mindfulness backlash?

There has been some talk of a mindfulness backlash. Journalist Anna Hart, for instance, writing in the UK's Telegraph newspaper, believes that seeing mindfulness as a cure-all for stress, anxiety, depression, anger and overeating is suspect. “‘Mindful’ has become one of those magic marketing words like ‘natural’, ‘artisan’ or ‘wedding’ that allow the vendor to crank up the price,” she says. Hart admits to failing with meditation apps and wellness retreats, finding that dreams and to-do lists fill her mind when she tries to zone out. She finds the present “[a] lonely time for dropouts like me, when my friends are Headspacing happily... [on the way] to work, celebrities rave about meditation in interviews, and mindfulness-based training is being rolled out in offices, schools and the emergency services”.

OVER-CONNECTED CONSUMERS

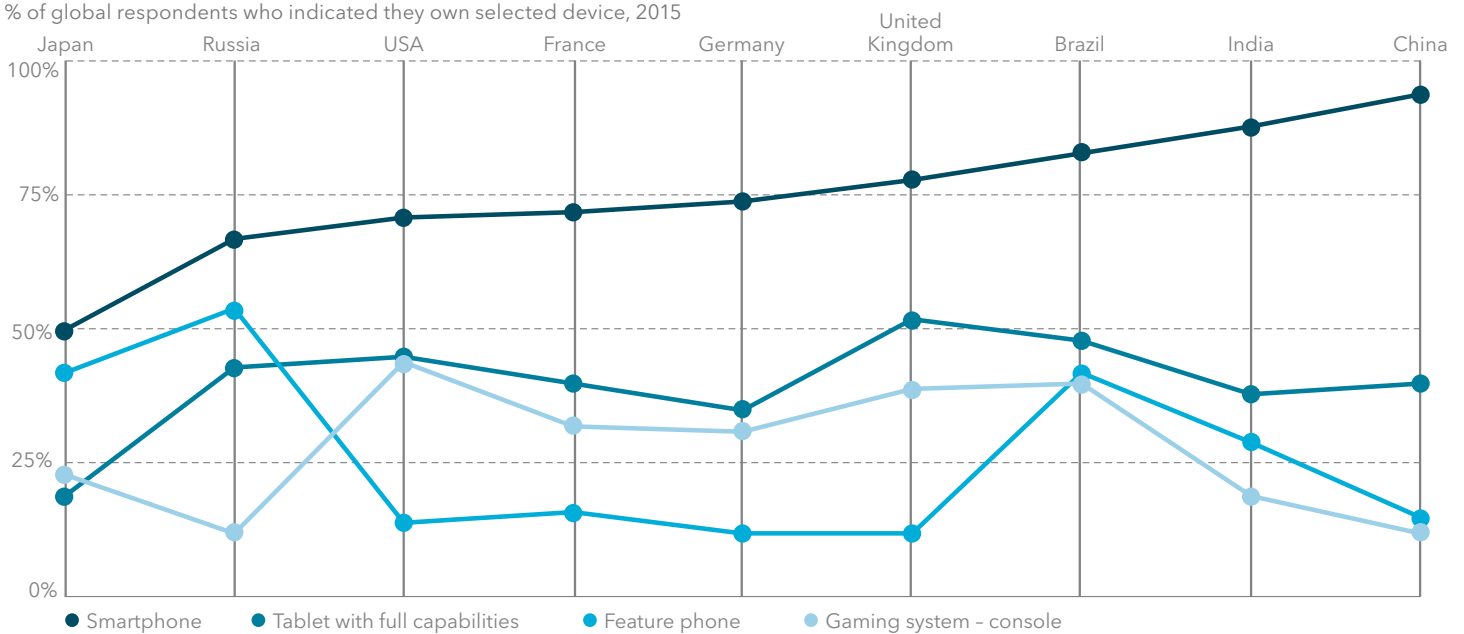
Datagraphic | Over-connected Consumers

DATAGRAPHIC LIFESTYLES Over-connected Consumers

Selected Device Access

by Country

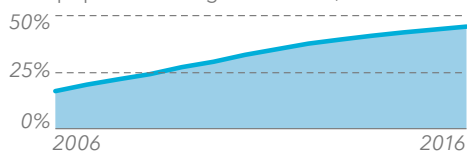
% of global respondents who indicated they own selected device, 2015



Internet Usage Continues to Grow

Global Outlook

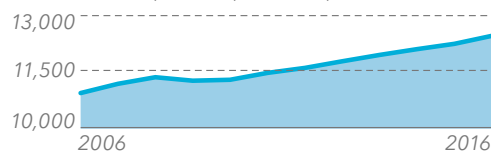
% of population using the internet, 2006-2016



Store-based Retailing Still Popular

Despite Increased Global Internet Usage

retail value RSP, US\$ bn, constant, 2006-2016



SPA RETAIL VALUE RSP, US\$ BN, 2016

\$63.7bn

spas are among 'unconnected' activities with a 'leave your device' at the door ethos, enjoying growing consumer appeal around the world

Note: "Selected Device Access" chart is using data from the Euromonitor International Global Consumer Trends online survey; 2015

Source: Euromonitor International

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Now that near to half of the world's population has internet access—internet users are forecast to hit three billion in 2016 according to Euromonitor International forecasts—more consumers are dwelling on the flipside of digital life. While more people are keen to see artificial intelligence technologies incorporated into smart products, the physical and emotional health hazards of non-stop device use and the impact on children and teenagers are all under review. Some seek to reclaim offline living in a bid to restore calm and are worried that they are even outsourcing their memories to digital devices. Consumer expectations around the word “smart” are huge.

However, even experts with smart product brands, such as Peter Taylor, global head of product management at electric cooking pot brand WeMo, told Digital Trends in November that these are not the same as US\$700 worth of iPhone technology, and connectivity is an extra feature, not the central one.

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Mobile love rules, but it can be toxic

Smartphones accompany consumers literally everywhere. A seven-country online smartphone habits survey of over 7,000 people from Motorola, released in July, found that sleeping with your phone and taking it with you when you shower is commonplace.

60% of participants from the US, UK, Brazil, China, Spain, Mexico and India said they slept holding their handsets. 79% felt bothered that their devices interrupted them at inopportune moments.

Smartphones are now mainstream payment tools.

According to Euromonitor International's

Hyperconnectivity survey, involving over 8,000

online consumers aged 15-65+ in 16 major markets in 2014, 45% of internet-connected consumers have tried in-store mobile payments at least once. The tentacles of this accessory are apparent in an ever broadening adaptation of non-tech products.

Backpacks, for instance, are being rethought, as students go back to school with gadgets. JanSport has created a wrap-style pouch for cords and adapters, which it calls a Digital Burrito.

45%

of internet-connected consumers have tried in-store mobile payments at least once

A US study, published online in October 2015 by Delaware County Community College, highlights that compulsive texting is a problem among teenagers. The study of over 400 older school pupils found that many teenage texters shared characteristics with compulsive gamblers. Among girls, compulsive texting is usually associated with lower academic performance. Smartphone addiction appears to be a global challenge. London's Catio Nightingale Hospital treats addictions with an online test assessing whether a person's relationship with technology is problematic. Almost 20% of Taiwanese teens are at risk of smartphone addiction, according to an August 2015 survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, up from 15.4% a year ago. This has promoted policy that will train 60% of teachers to identify device addiction. "You cannot go anywhere in Kuwait without seeing people stuck to their mobile phones", complains Sahar Moussa in the Kuwait Times. A rising number of public swimming pools across Sweden are banning all mobile devices in a bid to make inattentive parents protect their children from accidents.

Vampire kids

In what's being called a "Vampire Kids" phenomenon, children and teenagers are using devices into the night, which is eating into their sleep, health and academic achievement. Numerous studies document the detrimental consequences of night-time digital addiction on general wellbeing, including sleep, focus, behaviour and outlook. Stanford Medicine News Center even refers to teen sleep deprivation as an epidemic. In the UK, two-thirds of secondary school pupils take connected gadgets to bed, according to the UK tech promotion charity Techknowledge for Schools.



Source: iStock

Danah Boyd, author of "It's Complicated: The Social Lives Of Networked Teens", says young people would rather be chronically tired and hide internet use from their parents than give up what they regard as "me time" late at night; new research confirms this. For instance, a study of secondary schoolchildren by the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods from September 2015, found that 20% "wake almost every night to use social media". Parents are also stressed when they retrieve devices their offspring need for study, blogging on how mobile technology competes and wins against their treasured moments with their kids and the fallout in terms of fatigue, lack of concentration and depression that late night device use brings.

More health downsides to digital life

More risks associated with device use are emerging. A new study from Queensland's James Cook University suggests that technology is "speeding up our sense of time". Dr. Aoife McLoughlin, a psychologist behind the study, cautions how this augments stress, and represents a scientific reason to take a break from connectivity. Time pressure, she notes too, has also been linked to heart disease and depression.

That tablets and mobiles keep us potentially updatable on important social news all the time is something that experts like Dr. David Strayer, a professor of cognition and neural science at the University of Utah, are quick to point out. As social organisms, we are programmed to find social information compelling, while sounds and flashing lights tap into our threat detection system. The two together are a distracting mix. This is damaging our ability to focus on complex tasks, something specialists are particularly concerned can affect youth under 20. In a recent posting on TechCrunch, authors Ximena Vengoechea, a design researcher at Twitter, and Nir Eyal, who researches habit-forming products, call today's beeps, rings, flags and pings the "Pavlovian bell of the 21st century", getting us to check our tech incessantly. A mid-2015 survey from Telefónica reveals that around a third of Spaniards suffer from "techno-stress" and are at risk of developing eye conditions, anxiety, high-blood pressure and insomnia as a result of extended screen time. Setting out to combat such "digital illnesses", a new government scheme, Desconnect@, encourages responsible mobile device use.

Taking a digital break

In a recent book, “How to be Parisian Wherever You Are”, Sophie Mas et al writes about the thrill of switching off mobiles and being anonymous and uncontactable in a chapter called “Off the Radar”. Lee

Kynaston, in a late November 2015 article in the UK Telegraph, “How to be an ‘Analogue Man’”, celebrates things unconnected, bookmarking high-end pens and other analogue delights: “Every day, we are reminded how wonderful it is to live in a digital age: how convenient it is to shop by app, how great it is to access banking online and how smartphones have transformed, well, everything. And

yet, if this contactless, paperless world in which we live is so amazing, how come an increasing number of us (me included) are seeking refuge in a decidedly more ‘analogue’ existence?” Similarly, US design and tech journalist, Rob Walker, diagnoses a case of analogue fever in our digital culture. Rising sales of antennas, the increased number of US physical book shops in 2015 and a dip in E-book sales are part of his proof portfolio. Deposed of their status as mass goods, these analogue items have re-emerged as luxury goods.



[If] this contactless, paperless world in which we live is so amazing, how come an increasing number of us (me included) are seeking refuge in a decidedly more ‘analogue’ existence?



Lee Kynaston

“How to be an ‘Analogue Man’”, UK Telegraph

Antidotes, offered to help consumers cope with the focus-draining effects of too much tech time and irritants like adverts on apps and websites, include spending more time in nature, meditation and enforcing better control over our digital updates. An app called Osss, popular in Chile, claims to be for “a community of people who seek to disconnect in order to connect.” Before turning off their phones, app users inform others they are about to have a “spiritual moment”. Kickstarter star, the noPhone, is a fake handset designed to wean people off their tech addiction. Originally created as a spoof, the handset’s popularity means a real version can be bought online. User reviews are predictably blissful: “Now I can eat food without taking photos of it. Thanks NoPhone”, writes Andrea J.

SHOPPING FOR CONTROL

Datagraphic | Shopping for Control

Shopping for Control

Introduction to Trend

Fear-inducing personal security and financial worries as well as unsettling global events and diminished trust in brands and institutions, are driving consumer interest in buying for control. Keen to feel safer and protected alongside smart devices, the broad range of goods and services that consumers spend on includes organic food, financial services, sun protection, security agents and air purifiers.

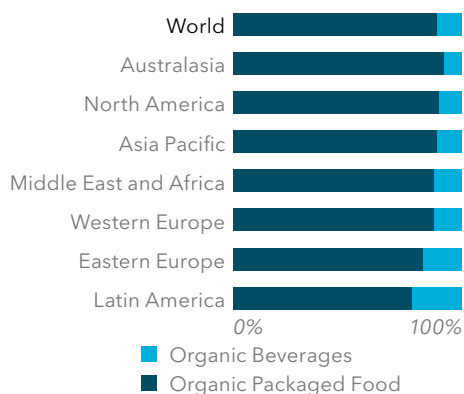
HEALTH AND WELLNESS ORGANIC, 2016

\$36,125.7mn

global retail value RSP, US\$ mn,
constant 2015 prices

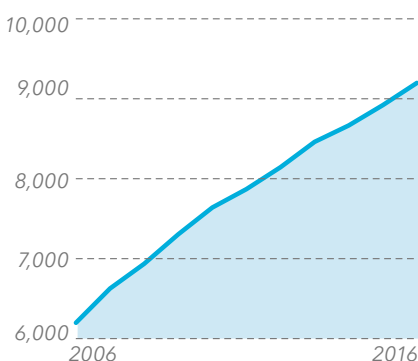
Organic Packaged Food and Beverages

Share of Organic Category
% share, constant 2015 prices, 2016



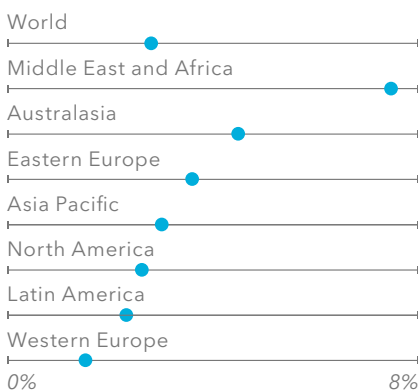
Sun Protection

Consumers Spending to Avoid UV Rays
global retail value RSP, US\$ mn, 2006-2016



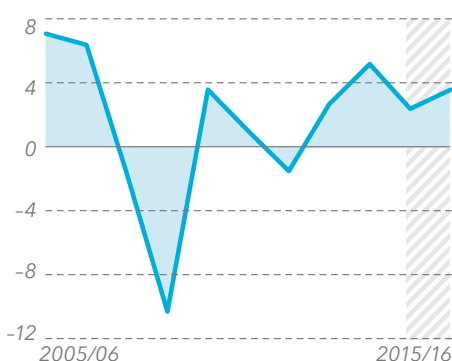
Air Purifiers

Global and Regional Growth
retail volume '000 units, % growth, 2015-16



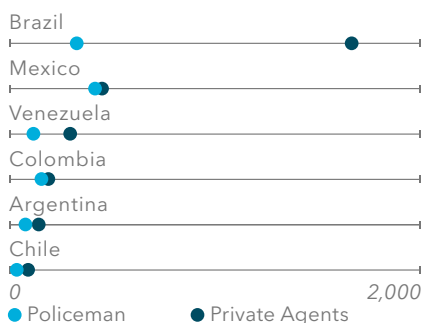
Post-recession Spending on Financial Advice

Looking Up for 2016
global y-o-y % growth, 2005/06-2015/16



Public and Private Security Agents

in Selected Latin American Countries
'000 of agents, 2012



*Note: Data in the chart above is sourced from José Gabriel Paz/Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Source: Euromonitor International

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A backdrop of unsettling world events, personal security worries and financial stress are catalysing a sense of fear in consumers, driving a quest for greater control. This wish to buy control is leading to a lifestyle that extends the idea of gated communities, as consumers feel they can't count on former certainties. Consumers in developed countries and more emerging economies had generally assumed that they had ticked the boxes of basic needs; the loss of trust in institutions and social fragmentation, as well as global terrorism and instability, have eroded that feeling. Insecurity is influencing many buying decisions and disparate consumer behaviour including “helicopter parenting”, the interest in smart homes, safe holidays and even “invisible boyfriends or girlfriends”—user-designed believable social partners who text users back.

Worry driving helicopter parenting and gated community living

In Latin American nations, it is common for parents to install tracking systems on their children's phones and other goods, but this harnessing of tech gadgets to extend control is a global phenomenon. In some Copenhagen childcare facilities, webcams allow parents to monitor their children from the office. Mattel's new “Hello Barbie” records conversations addressed to the doll by a child and transmits them to a cloud server. US Journalists have been reporting on an intensifying trend in which parents employ investigators to follow their nannies. “With the use of nanny cams—and the knowledge of their existence ... what's going on outside the home may be most telling”, believes Christine Irwin, moderator of popular New York parenting Facebook page UES Mamas.

An emerging group of parents however, believe that developing more resilient kids entails letting them live on a longer leash; Free-Range Kids is one online forum for this segment. Its aim is to fight “the belief that our children are in constant danger from creeps, kidnapping, germs, grades, flashers, frustration, failure, baby snatchers, bugs, bullies, men, sleepovers and / or the perils of a non-organic grape”. A recent post examines the sense of disconnect between the adventure in children's books and the reality of over-controlled kids' lives today.

Gated communities come in all shapes and sizes and are typically found in countries with high crime rates, such as Kenya and South Africa. Many of these communities have their own shopping centres, common areas, hospitals, schools, office buildings and churches. In London, many traditional mews streets are being turned into closed-off security zones.

Smart living for reduced vulnerability

Arguably, the underlying driver of smart homes is the consumer need for security and control. A recent ad for ADT Security expresses this desire well: “It’s 2015. You should be able to arm your home from anywhere... Now you can check on the status of your security as easily as you check your email or texts”. On-the-go consumers can now pre-order carry-on bags controlled by smartphone—with a Bluetooth-enabled lock and GPS tracking. Bluesmart bills itself as “the world’s first smart luggage” that is “empowering travellers”. The array of smart things remains vulnerable,



Source: iStock

however, as they can be hacked. Zeynep Tufekci, among the top 100 tech influencers on Twitter, and assistant professor at the UNC School of Information and Library Science, discussed with Wired how a smart safe can be hacked and emptied with a single USB stick. Last summer at Def Con, the annual information security conference, researchers set up an Internet of Things village to show how they could hack everyday objects like baby monitors, security cameras and thermostats.

Buying control

Shopping habits are driven by many emotions, including fear. In countries like South Africa and Mexico, the continuing need for personal and home security feeds a burgeoning security market. But brands across all sectors are seeking to return a sense of control to consumers, recognising the need to rebuild trust by emphasising factors such as food safety, protection of privacy and a green and ethical pedigree for their products. Widely reported instances of greenwashing by brands—the recent Volkswagen clean energy scandal being a well-reported example—as well as various food safety scandals—several involving tainted dairy products in the Asia Pacific region—have seen consumers warm to sustainable and organic products and services. They feel more in control when they buy green, and this is a trend that will continue. Euromonitor International forecasts that real sales of organic dairy products in the Asia Pacific region will reach US\$2.1 billion in 2016, a rise of 18.4% on 2015 sales.

US\$2.1 bn

Forecasted sales of organic dairy products in Asia Pacific in 2016

The need to be in control and be safe is affecting consumers' choice of shopping environment. Buying online from the comfort of our home cocoons or in other spaces we visit is clearly an option that continues to appeal more everywhere. Euromonitor International forecasts that globally, consumers will spend US\$1,152 billion online in 2016 in real terms, a rise of 16.3% on 2015 online sales. In countries such as Kenya, where online scams are rife, online shoppers often prefer to pay for their goods via cash on delivery. One Nigerian consumer writing on African tech forum radar.techcabal.com, revealed that he trusts online payment platforms, but has no faith in internet stores to deliver as promised.

US\$1,152 bn
Forecasted online consumer spending in real terms in 2016

In the US, the wish for control over the way our lives appear to others is popularising a service called Invisible Boyfriend, where a stranger sends voice and text messages pretending to be a real boyfriend or girlfriend, paid for with a monthly fee. The wish for self-control is also continuing to spur consumer openness to taking medication to boost work performance, reduce anxiety or enhance mood.

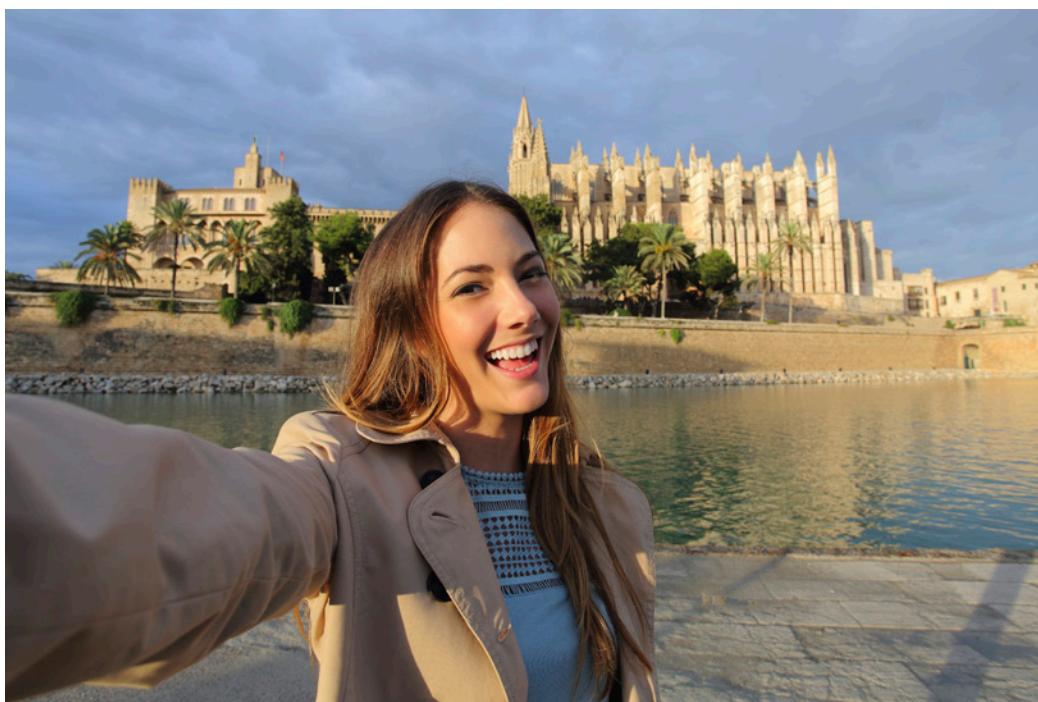
The shifting balance between liberty and security

Freedom and security are two highly regarded values among consumers worldwide. However, they tend to contradict one another: an excess of precautionary measures eats into privacy, as it is hard to ensure security without sharing accurate information. This dilemma has gained greater relevance in the current climate of global terrorism, which has changed the public view of issues such as the importance of privacy. Most see surveillance as a “necessary evil”. Consumer behaviour in markets as disparate as tourism, technology, car manufacturing and healthcare will reflect the changing balance between liberty and security. The debate is central in the online universe, as the internet is the main instrument for compiling data, and because it is reaching more aspects of our lives with the Internet of Things.

SPENDING SINGLES



“The Lobster”, a recent satirical film set in a dystopian future, problematizes single status; but in 2016, the solvent among this group of adults of various ages are enjoying a premium lifestyle. With fewer commitments and more to spend, premium singles are a captive audience for authenticity-led services and products, such as curated subscription boxes and high-end goods promoted via users’ authentic digital snaps. Often, high spenders with more disposable income and child-free or no longer sharing a home with offspring are happy to spend on products and experiences for themselves, such as solo travel, and spend extravagantly on significant kids in their lives, such as nieces and nephews and friends’ children. Some of them are “yuccies”, urban creatives in their 20s and 30s seen as a hybrid of hipsters and yuppies and enjoying a way of life blending counterculture with the consumption of luxury.



Source: iStock

Solo travel

A mid-2015 review of singles' holidays from the UK by Gil Charlton in the UK Telegraph reveals that solo travel is not a niche segment at all. It was estimated that one in three British travellers would set off on a single's holiday in 2015 in search of life-changing experiences or short city breaks and the chance to meet others. This is not surprising, argues Charlton, when circa 25% of adults have never married or are now divorced or widowed. Tour companies organising small-group excursions report a surge in solo travellers—sometimes making up 50% of each group.

Cruise companies are rebranding services to appeal to well-heeled, younger, single travellers, no longer charging single supplements, for instance. Norwegian Cruise Line's newest ship, the Norwegian Escape, has 82 single cabins, plus a dedicated studio lounge where singles can mingle. The new 199-passenger Ocean Endeavour, from polar specialist Quark Expeditions, offers 25 single cabins; in February 2016, the Holland America Line will debut its version. Several major hotel chains are building new speciality chains, known as "lifestyle brands", to appeal to single consumers, and very often the younger, Millennial premium single guest. Moxy Hotels have been called Marriott for Millennials, now opening around the US after a Milan launch and with 100 more planned. The design is sleek and industrial-inspired, but the emphasis is also on comfort and lively common areas. According to Tina Edmundson, the brand's global officer for luxury and lifestyle brands, quoted in the New York Times, their research showed Millennials sidestep hotels that feel corporate, instead seeking shared spaces for work and fun. Other new hotel brands include Hyatt Centric, designed for what Hyatt calls "modern explorers", multigenerational sophisticated travellers who want to connect with local culture.

Wooing consumers who warm to authenticity

Luxury brand strategies for reaching spending singles reveal their need to strike a balance between exclusivity and inclusiveness. When Rihanna wore Dior in an Instagram photo recently, the reach might not have entirely been Dior's consumer base, but she attracts a wide audience, including many single shoppers who like her and are keen and able to self-treat. A good way to woo consumers turned off by traditional advertising is to take advantage of single spenders used to seeing authenticity online and using it to build links, making them feel part of the high-end world. Luxury accessory brand Coach featured user-generated images in a recent footwear campaign. Luxury brand followers have warmed to online extras, such as behind-the-scenes peeks at fashion shows. Digital outreach activities have helped Burberry become linked with innovation.

Child-free spenders

PANKs (Professional Aunt No Kids) and PUNKS too—uncles such as actor Jake Gyllenhaal—are a trending demographic. With more consumers postponing or not having children, there's a growing demographic group comprised of childless people who care about and buy for the kids in their lives. Brands, like Toys “R” Us, Fisher-Price and Mattel have been quick to appreciate the commercial potential here. The International Business Times has called “PANK travel”, aunts holidaying with nieces and nephews, a key travel trend.

SavvyAuntie.com is a website run by Canadian Melanie Notkin. She says that 38% of American women aged between 20 years and 44 years old are childless, and that many of them are eager to help their nieces and nephews get the best out of life by spending money on educational, cultural and playful experiences. These are women who love kids and want to spoil them, but feel like trespassers when visiting the many parenting websites. Naturally, shopping is part of the picture, and these consumers are vocal about brands, often acting as style advisors to the children they adore. Savvy aunts typically have higher discretionary incomes; Notkin calls them secondary caregivers that are primary giftgivers. This rationale is behind campaigns like the annual “Savvy Auntie Coolest Toy Awards”, held strategically near the holiday season. Yen Chan sells premium baby clothes, ideal “PANK-bait”, she believes. A PANK herself, she says, “Well, I don’t have children, I have a disposable income, I love those kids [my nieces and nephews], so why not?”

**Well, I don’t have children,
I have a disposable income, I
love those kids [my nieces and
nephews], so why not?**

Yen Chan

Owner / Creator, I Haven’t the Foggiest

Young urban creatives

The media have already paid homage to “yuccies”; these driven, young, urban creatives are often single with few commitments. Typically under 35, they are super motivated, stylish, steer clear of traditional jobs and gather in creative industries, earning relatively high incomes. They congregate at places like NeueHouse in New York, a shared office space for creative freelancers, describing itself as “a home for the ambitious and the curious” and a hub for art and brand consultants, fashion stylists, start-up specialists and other “solopreneurs”.



Source: iStock Photo

26-year-old writer, David Infante, is one self-proclaimed yuccie who discussed the traits of this Millennial consumer type on the Mashable tech website. Ideas-rich, living in a gentrifying part of a fashionable city, these tech-savvy, entrepreneurial creatives can pursue and profit from their dreams.

Typically well educated, they strive to link creativity to wealth. As Infante explains: “We’re intent on being successful like yuppies and creative like hipsters.

We define ourselves by our purchases, just like both cohorts, sure. But not by price or taste level; we identify by price and taste level: \$80 sweatpants, \$16 six-packs of craft beer... We’re a big part of the reason that 43% of every millennial food dollar is spent

in restaurants, instead of at home... You cross the yuppie’s new money thirst for yachts and recognition with the hipster’s anti-ambition, smoke-laced individualism, sprinkle on a dose of millennial entitlement, and the yuccie is what you get”.

You cross the yuppie’s new money thirst for yachts and recognition with the hipster’s anti-ambition, smoke-laced individualism, sprinkle on a dose of millennial entitlement, and the yuccie is what you get.

David Infante

Writer / Self-proclaimed Yuccie

Sometimes, these premium singles appear more traditional and cautious. The men are typically clean-shaven, for instance, with some comparing them to the Silent Generation born from the mid-1920s to the early 1940s. To reach them, Playboy is set for a more toned down look, as nudity is freely available online and so less of a USP, and the publication is eager to access social media platforms, some with more stringent controls. This new placement has seen its average reader drop to age 30, and web traffic jump 400%. Their target audience is now city-dwelling young men with a job and an interest in visual art.

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Daphne Kasriel-Alexander works as Consumer Trends Consultant with Euromonitor International. She commissions and edits articles on consumer trends, behaviour and aspirations. She also writes Euromonitor's annual Top 10 Global Consumer Trends report and a monthly Digital Life review, offering insights to companies and organisations to help them decode their consumers. Daphne manages a global team of analysts and has given presentations, seminars, and webinars in several countries. In March 2015, she presented a webinar to Proctor & Gamble's Lancy Innovation Center in Geneva. In May 2015, she was invited by the IESE Business School in Barcelona to speak on consumer trends at a joint IESE/Deloitte initiative for thought exchange between academic and business leaders, and policymakers.

Previously she has been a consultant with the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme. She has also developed communications strategies for a number of high profile international organisations, non-profits and think-tanks including the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci programme, Sargent Cancer Care for Children, The Gilo Center for Citizenship, Democracy and Civic Education and the British Council. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Philosophy and Social Sciences from London's City University and a postgraduate Diploma in Community Journalism. Her analysis has been incorporated into the curriculum at universities and business schools including NUS Singapore University, Southwestern University, Texas, the Colombia University program in Athens and City University, London.

Daphne is inspired by making sense of contradictory global consumer and cultural trends such as a desire for luxury and instant gratification alongside a celebration of frugality, sharing and imperfection. Her interest in sustainability and consumer awareness issues sees her actively participating in a number of relevant forums, including urban sustainable lifestyles at UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics in Paris.

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