



2021

Global Consumer Trends



The now, next, and
future global consumer

Editors' Note:

How consumers are responding and changing now and what that will mean for the future.

As experts in what consumers want and why, Mintel is uniquely suited to predict the future of consumer behaviour and what that means for brands. Last year, we released our [Global Consumer Trends 2030](#), developed as a living, growing prediction model that will adapt with the unforeseen. The model supports the fluid acceleration or deceleration of the trends according to the reality of individual markets, allowing us to not only be more adaptive and reactive to change but to continue to allow us and our clients to focus on the futures we (humanity) want to invent – or avoid.

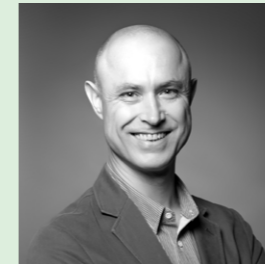
Our new 2021 forecasts remain embedded within our system of Mintel's 7 Trend Drivers and their supporting pillars. They also take into account the changes that have been

accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic – subtle yet profound shifts in consumer thinking and responses from brands – and attempt to encapsulate the better future that consumers, globally, aspire to and towards which brands can build their own strategic visions.

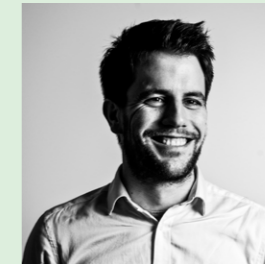
This year's consumer trend analysis, insights, and recommendations are centred around the 'now' (the next 12 months), the 'next' (18+ months), and the 'future' (5+ years) of consumer behaviour. In the pages that follow, we're sharing a snapshot of our 'now' research. Mintel clients have access to the full content on [clients.mintel.com](#). If you're not a Mintel client but are interested to know more, please get in touch at [mintel.com](#).



Gabrielle Lieberman
Director of Mintel Trends and Social Media Research, Americas



Matthew Crabbe
Director of Mintel Trends, APAC



Simon Moriarty
Director of Mintel Trends, EMEA



Helen Fricker
Trends Manger, EMEA



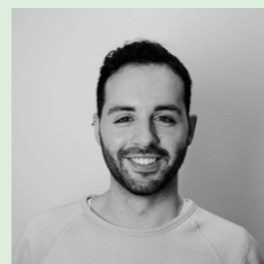
Elysha Young
Trends Manger, APAC



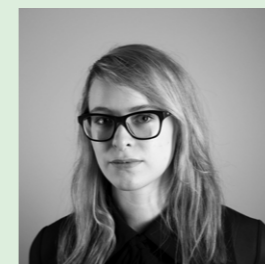
Diana Kelter
Senior Trends Analyst, North America



Alex Milinazzo
Trends Analyst



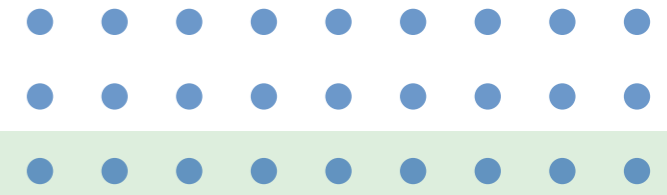
Borja Valladolid
Trends Analyst



Liisa Kontas
Trends Analyst, Nordic



Melanie Nambiar
Trends Analyst



Contents

2



Health Undefined

An awareness of wellbeing is at the forefront of consumers' minds, but a playbook doesn't exist. Brands have a responsibility and an opportunity to set new rules.

7



Collective Empowerment

Consumers around the world are making their voices heard loud and clear in the push for equity, agency, and rights.

18



Coming Together

Consumers are coming together in like-minded communities in order to connect with and support each other, driven by the impact of the global pandemic.

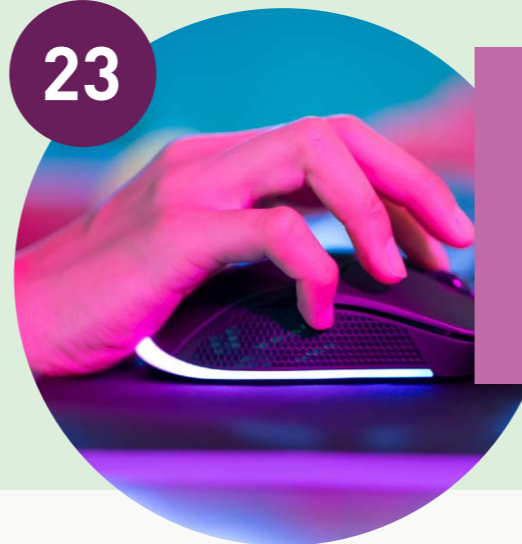
12



Priority Shift

Consumers are seeking a return to the essentials, with a focus on flexible possessions and a reframing of what ownership actually means.

23



Virtual Lives

Physical separation due to the pandemic, increased need for escapism, and improved technology are driving consumers towards digital experiences.

28



Sustainable Spaces

COVID-19 has subtly but significantly shifted consumer awareness of our relationship with the spaces in which we live, accelerating demand for sustainability.

33



Digital Dilemmas

While there are many benefits to a more digitally connected life, concerns about its negative impacts are putting consumers in a predicament.

WELLBEING

Seeking physical and mental wellness.

RIGHTS

Feeling respected, protected, and supported.

VALUE

Finding tangible and measurable benefits from investments.

IDENTITY

Understanding and expressing oneself and one's place in society.

EXPERIENCES

Seeking and discovering stimulation.

SURROUNDINGS

Feeling connected to the external environment.

TECHNOLOGY

Finding solutions through technology in the physical and digital worlds.

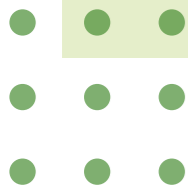
WELLBEING

Health Undefined

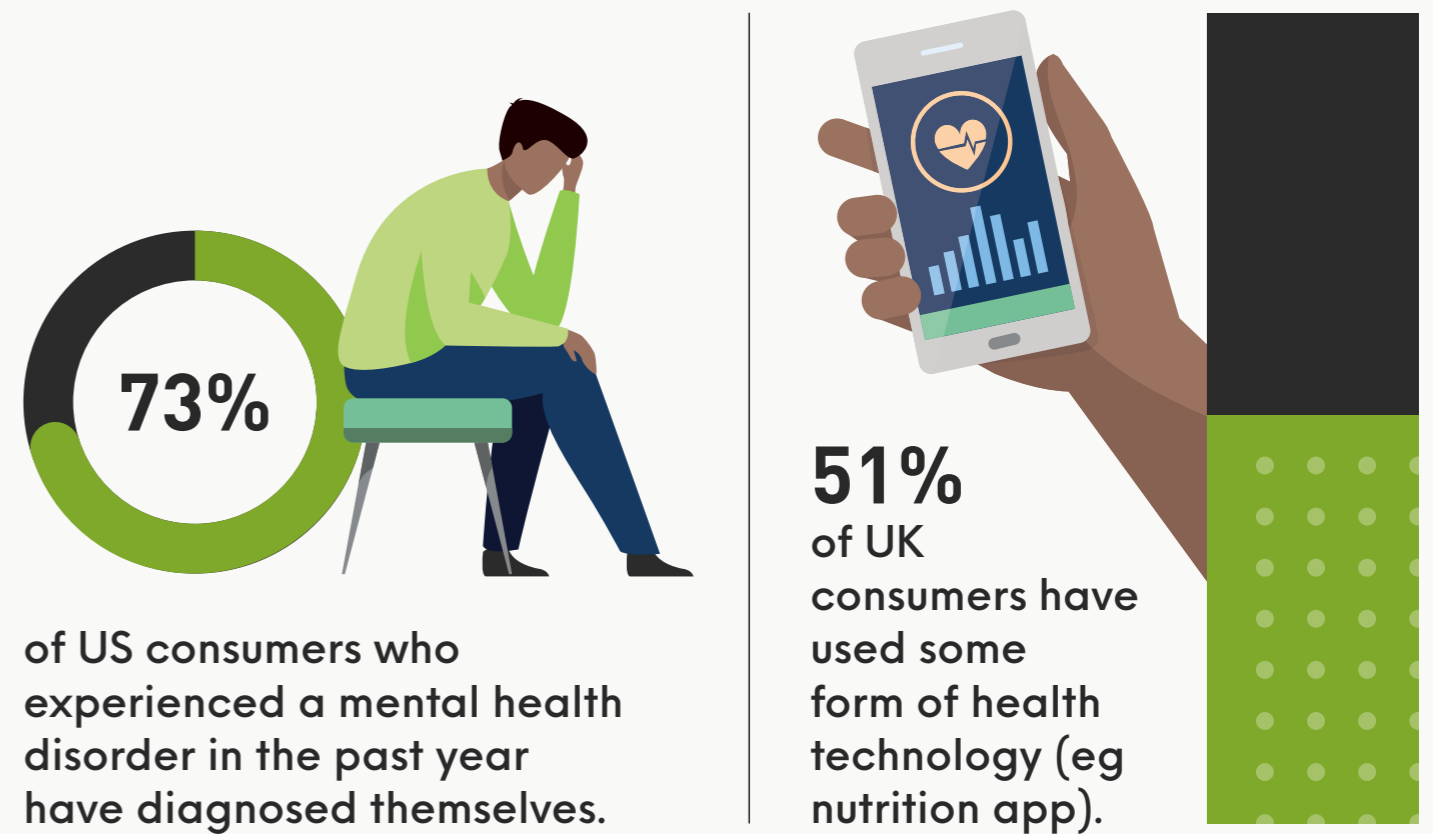
An awareness of wellbeing is at the forefront of consumers' minds, but a playbook doesn't exist. Brands have a responsibility and an opportunity to set new rules.



Wellbeing encompasses the most fundamental basic needs, and the way consumers process decisions for their wellbeing is both direct and indirect. The holistic nature of wellbeing ensures it has a consistent place in brand messaging; it's just a matter of brands determining where they fit into the narrative. For example, 'self-care' can be so broad that it can apply to any decision, whereas functional ingredients are designed with a clear and direct purpose.



THE PANDEMIC HAS PROPELLED CONSUMERS TOWARDS AN EVEN GREATER SENSE OF WELLBEING, CHALLENGING THE NOTION OF HEALTHY LIVING TODAY, AND IN THE FUTURE.



59%
of Chinese adults say that exercising has become a higher priority for them since the COVID-19 outbreak.



Base: 1,388 US internet users aged 18+ who have experienced a mental health disorder in the year ending May 2020; 1,200 Chinese internet users aged 18-59; 1,982 UK internet users aged 16+
Source: Mintel Reports US; Mintel Reports China; Mintel Reports UK

What's happening now

Consumers are in search of a wellbeing experience through an entirely new lens, seeking total integration into nearly all aspects of their lives. This new outlook is built around a sense of uncertainty as to when life will translate back into more balanced routines, and this is driving demand for comfort and structure.

As brands aim to set a new tone and new structures, an opportunity exists to return to a mindset where being active

and taking mental breaks feels more like a curious adventure and playtime rather than hard work. For children, every new experience is unknowingly an education, and adults lose that mindset. The opportunity for brands isn't simply to sell a wellbeing product or service to consumers, but rather to remind them of the value in their own internal curiosity and the power of trying something new.

Consumers are in search of a wellbeing experience through an entirely new lens, driving demand for comfort and structure.

How the Health Undefined trend will play out

Just as kids learn to express and deal with emotions, adults need a new framework for processing emotions and mental health concerns. The stage of simply openly talking about mental health is expanding into creation of an actual structure for talking about it, and brands have the opportunity to lead that conversation.

Globally, the pandemic has put health at the forefront of consumers' daily lives. As consumers move forward beyond the pandemic, they will experience a new type of gratitude for what it means to have a healthy body. Brands can lead with that note of positivity and gratitude and shift the conversation away from aesthetics and body image.

Wellbeing has traditionally focused on the 'why' factor or a tangible end goal. The end goal for working out once revolved solely around weight loss. Now, the desire for working out is multifaceted. This means that brands need to focus on their own 'why' in order to fully support consumers in new ways.

Innovative brands

Brands around the world are providing a new framework for thinking about health.

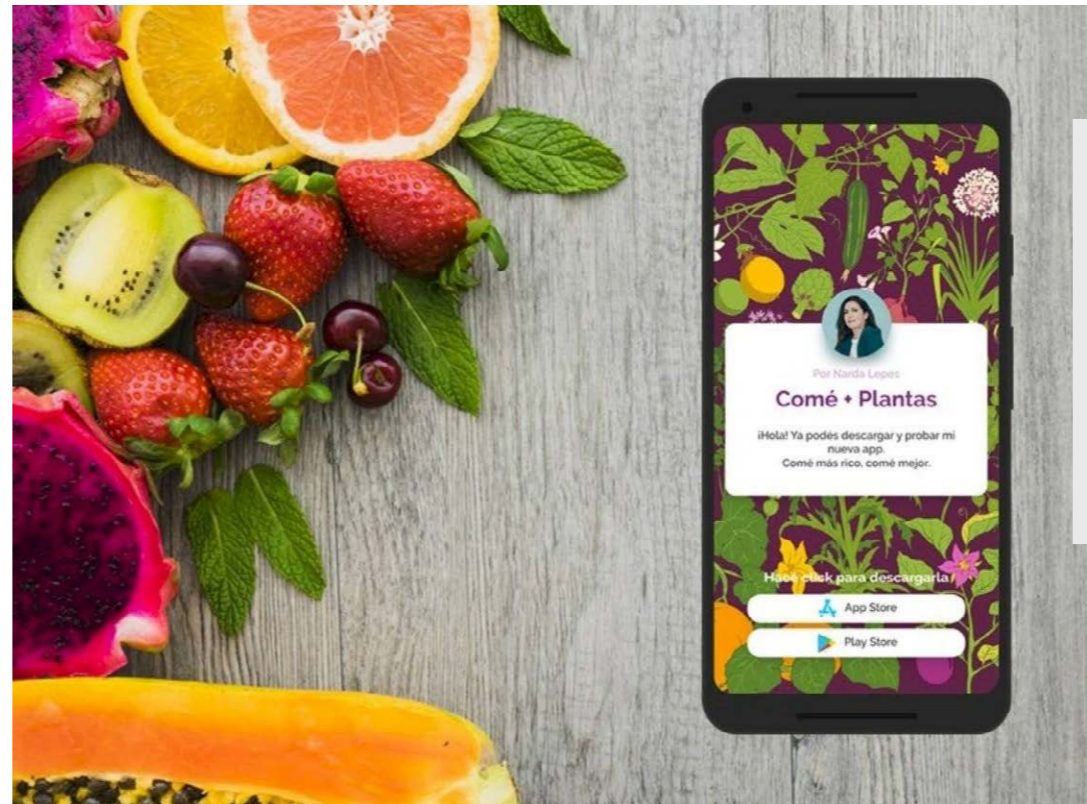


Source: thenorthface.com

An outdoor reset (US)
The North Face's new campaign encourages consumers to 'reset' their lives through exploration, and the company is dedicating \$7 million to initiatives to make the outdoors more inclusive.



Source: forbes.com



Eat your veggies (Argentina)

Argentinian chef Narda Lepes has partnered with Microsoft and local start-up Shifta to create Comé + Plantas (Eat More Vegetables), an app designed to provide useful information about vegetables and promote healthy eating practices.

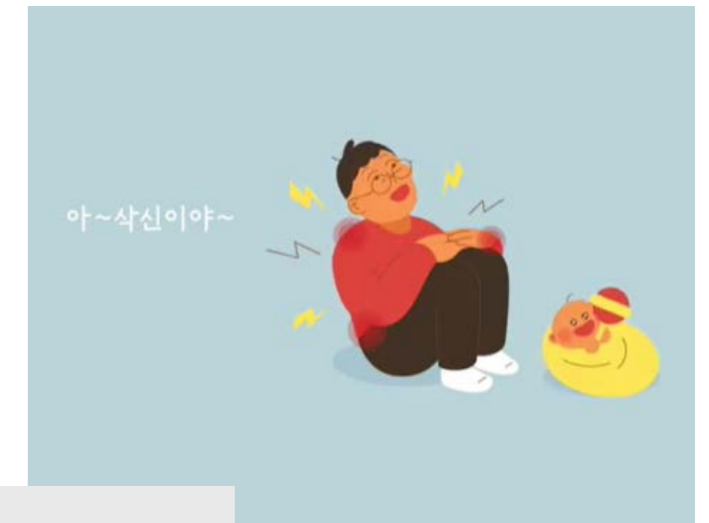
Source: metroworldnews.com



Painfully funny (South Korea)

Ketotop, a brand of over-the-counter pain relief patches, has created cartoons that explain conditions such as 'binge-watching pain' and 'new dad pain.'

Source: @ketotop.pain.expert via Instagram



4 key opportunities for brands to leverage in 2021

Change the rules

Broader health motivations put the consumer in control of their own personal 'why' versus relying on legacy motivators. Brands are left with an opportunity to serve as a resource that enables consumers to start a new journey.

Balance comfort with action

Consumers will go between days of feeling motivated and days of simply taking in their surroundings. Brands can serve as an inspiration for both, especially as consumers search for validation in their decisions.

Mental health support

The collective impact the pandemic is having on mental health is gradually changing the narrative. Brands can partner with healthcare experts to design a new framework for mental health conversations as a way to be that source of encouragement.

Reimagine spaces

Nature is a blank canvas that can inspire consumers in a manner that a prescribed service or product can't accomplish. Brands must think about how they can provide support as much as they think about offering guidance through a defined narrative.

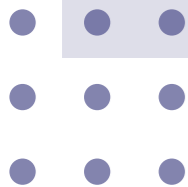


RIGHTS

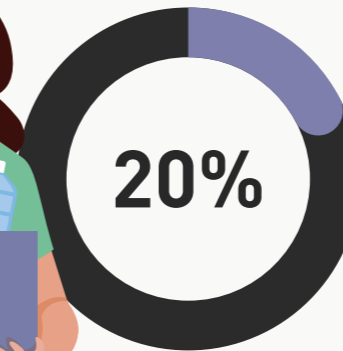
Collective Empowerment

Consumers around the world are making their voices heard loud and clear in the push for equity, agency, and rights.

Upset about the lack of data privacy and security, speed of government responsiveness, and trust in brands, consumers are speaking up. They are using technology, especially social media, to form their own virtual communities around ideas and issues they are passionate about, including across borders. These consumer voices aren't always negative. They want to support causes and brands they believe in and activism is on the rise.



THE CONSCIOUS CONSUMER IS EVALUATING MORE CLOSELY THE BRANDS FROM WHICH THEY SHOP, EXPANDING THE DEFINITION OF WHAT AN ETHICAL COMPANY ENTAILS AND DEMANDING THEIR VOICE BE HEARD.



of UK consumers say they often shop with a retailer that supports a cause they believe in; 6% do so always.



47%
of Brazilian consumers agree that they are prepared to boycott companies who behave unethically.

72%
of US consumers agree that they are concerned about corporations abusing technology.



What's happening now

The collective mentality of the pandemic motivated a community-focused consumer mindset – even in traditionally individualistic cultures – that has put mutual support and advocacy at the forefront of various consumer behaviours. The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the Global Climate Strike show how people are gathering to clamour for positive change, both in society and to protect the planet for future generations. There is an opportunity for brands to take a lead in addressing these issues, and they may risk being seen as a hindrance if they fail to do so.

In a world forced to go digital, the reliance of global social movements on digital platforms accentuated – in some new and uncomfortable ways – the extent to which technology can be used unethically. This has raised consumer concerns and demands for more equitable access to digital tools and literacy alongside more ethical tech usage standards. Brands are, therefore, in a unique position of power to be a guiding source of influence – if led with trust and transparency.

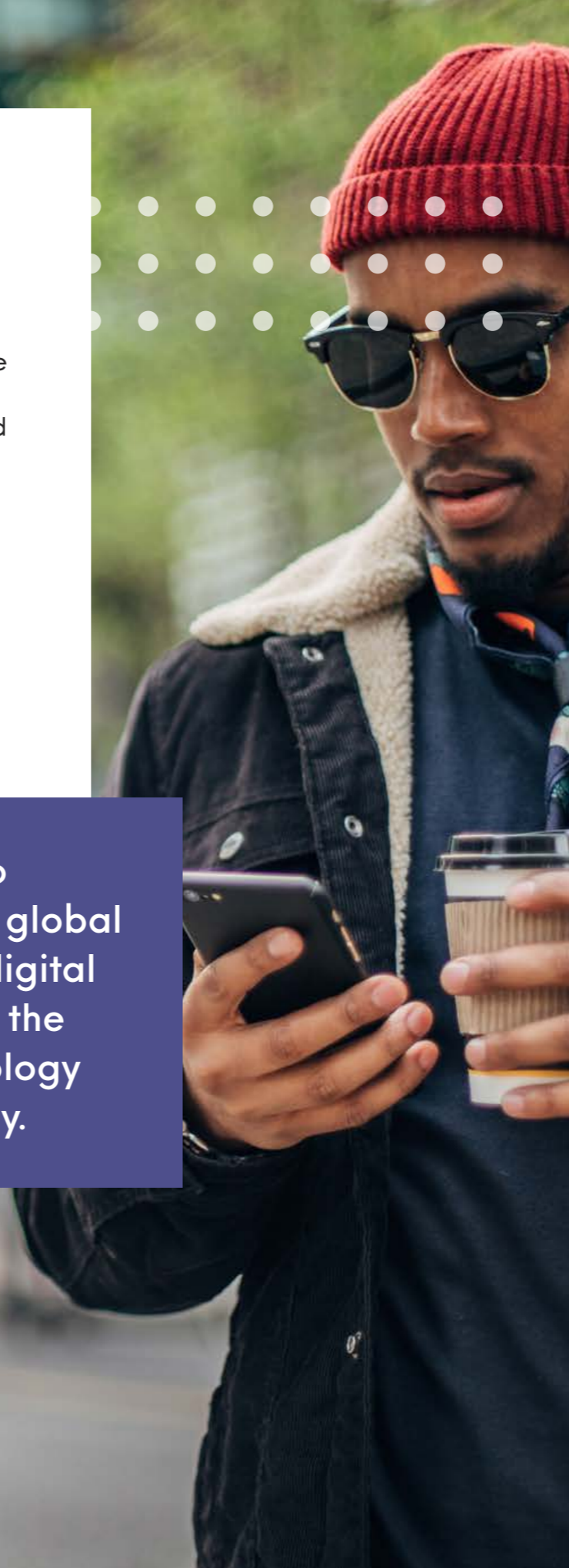
In a world forced to go digital, the reliance of global social movements on digital platforms accentuates the extent to which technology can be used unethically.

How the Collective Empowerment trend will play out

Young, tech-savvy consumers will continue to lead global social movements. Their ability to use tech to rally around causes provides an opportunity for brands to better read consumers' moods and begin to develop ways of responding in their messaging and actions.

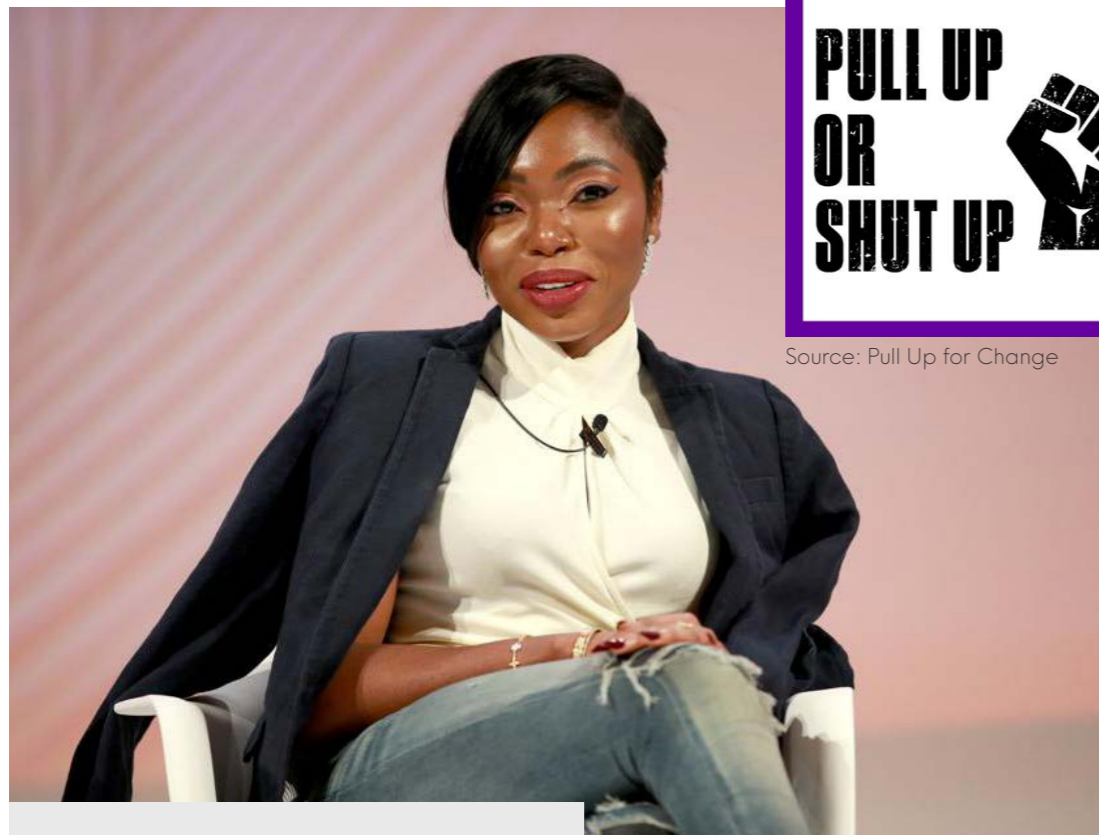
There is an increased amount of power and pressure being built through consumer-employee solidarity and fellow brands calling each other to action. Brands being under pressure is not a new phenomenon, but the scale and depth of pressure currently experienced are unprecedented, challenging brands to be even clearer in their values and brand positioning.

Consumers will increasingly demand larger-scale changes that serve to inhibit future mistakes and force brands to really stand by their values. In doing so, brands will be able to be more upfront when they make mistakes and bring consumers along on the journey to create systems that prevent them from happening again.



Innovative brands

Consumers around the globe are demanding recognition of ongoing inequities and injustices and targeting powerful entities to instigate systemic change.



Source: Pull Up for Change



Source: Getty Images

Pull Up or Shut Up (US)

Sharon Chuter, founder and CEO of UOMA Beauty, launched the #PullUpOrShutUp campaign on Instagram, which demands companies release their internal diversity statistics – specifically the number of Black employees.

Respect Handbook (Peru)

The Peruvian government launched #ReflexionemosJuntos, a campaign to raise awareness among the population about racist expressions and ideas that should not be normalised.

Source: @mercado_negro via Twitter



Pride House Tokyo (Japan)

Japan welcomed its first permanent LGBTQ+ centre in Tokyo, which provides support, information, and counselling for sexual minorities residing in the city.

Source: @pridehousetokyo via Instagram

4 key opportunities for brands to leverage in 2021

Localise impact

Consumers more saliently see and understand the essential needs of their immediate physical community, and they are seeking brands that leverage resources to offer positive impacts readily felt on local and regional scales.

Interrogate the role of technology

Digital capabilities will continue to be crucial in the amplification of grassroots movements and the functioning of society. However, consumers are wary of surveillance technologies and unsound data collection, raising awareness about 'ethical' tech.

More than a donation

While donations can be a part of brand initiatives, they are not an end solution. When issues are brought to the surface, consumers are demanding multifaceted actions that publicly address brands' shortcomings, committing to tangible change.

Teamwork makes the dream work

Brands and organisations are not only collaborating on solutions but also entering into pledges that hold each other mutually accountable. Strategic partnerships help brands feel more confident, softening the risk of acting alone.



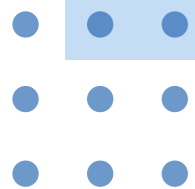
VALUE

Priority Shift

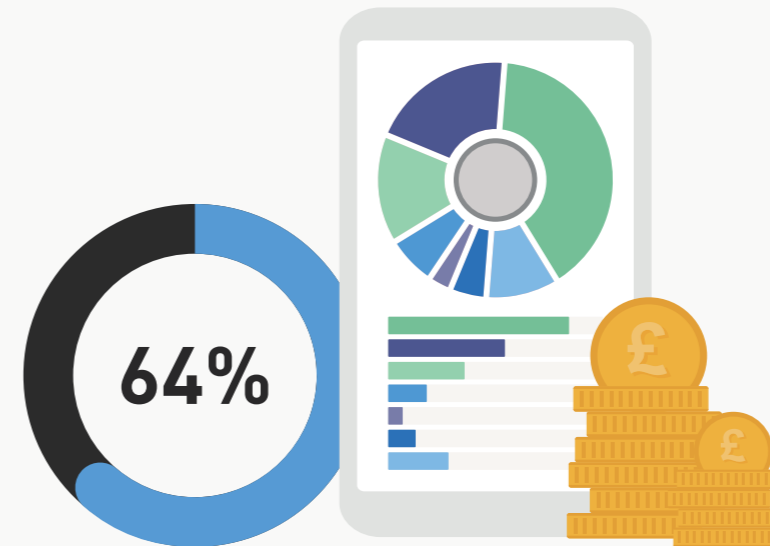
Consumers are seeking a return to the essentials, with a focus on flexible possessions and a reframing of what ownership actually means.

Consumers are looking for tangible and measurable benefits from the things in which they invest. The pandemic shifted consumer perception of value towards minimal consumption that emphasises affordability, convenience, and protection. Consumers are also redefining value through a results-driven lens, seeking durability, flexibility of use, and efficacy.

Nonetheless, while consumers value their daily essentials, they still seek simple pleasures in splurges that elevate their everyday – they just might need a little extra nudge from brands to allow themselves to feel comfortable with these mini indulgences.



AMID CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY, CONSUMERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THEIR LIFESTYLE, AND BRANDS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CONSUMER SPENDING.



64%
of UK consumers have a budget they try to stick to.

52%
of US adults are worried about how COVID-19 is impacting their lifestyle.



82%
of Chinese consumers think it's worth paying more for products of a higher quality.

What's happening now

Globally, as consumers are facing economic uncertainty and/or contradictory feelings of vulnerability and resilience, they are taking a step back and re-evaluating what's important to them. They are embracing a scarcity mindset that makes them

monitor their spending more closely and avoid excess consumption. In this search for things that matter to them, consumers are seeking not just affordability and convenience but also safety, protection, and durability of goods.

In the search for things that matter, consumers are seeking not just affordability and convenience, but also safety, protection, and durability of goods.

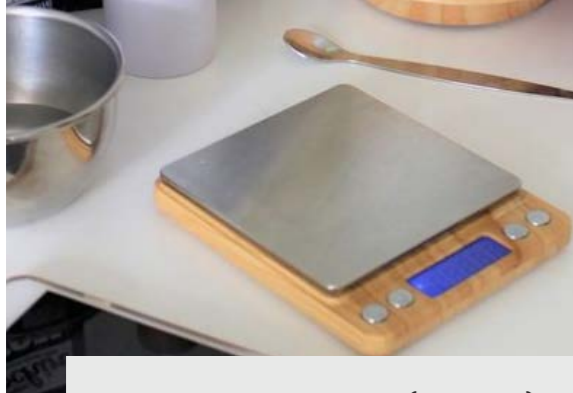
How the Priority Shift trend will play out

While initially driven by necessity rather than choice, a scarcity mindset has boosted consumers' skills of self-sufficiency, resulting in a greater sense of pride. The pandemic has changed the pace of life, and consumers are being faced with a new set of challenges in managing their everyday lives. Cashier-less stores, self-checkouts, home delivery, and consolidated shopping trips will become the norm.

Consumers will continue to cut down on non-essential goods and services. At a time of continued economic uncertainty, brands must communicate and deliver tangible benefits that make products indispensable.

Innovative brands

Brands help consumers manage basic, everyday needs in a simple way.



DIY BPC (France)
BeautyMix is a robot that allows consumers to mix and make their own cosmetics and cleaning products.
Source: @monbeautymix via Instagram



Free Rice ATM (Vietnam)
An entrepreneur has developed a 'Rice ATM' to dispense free rice to the poor and unemployed during COVID-19.

Source: Hoang Tuan Anh

DIY (With Help) (US)
HGTV launched a new show called Design at Your Door, which, due to social distancing requirements, digitally connects HGTV experts with home DIYers.

Source: hgtv.com



4 key opportunities for brands to leverage in 2021

Prove it

Brands need to prove that they offer good value and tangible results. Consumers may find it hard to spend on things they learned to live without during lockdown, so brands must now over-communicate tangible benefits.

Support consumers in need

The pandemic has left many people feeling vulnerable, and brands have a unique opportunity to offer protection and support. Brands should take advantage of this opportunity to become agents of positive change.

Resilience can be rewarding

The pandemic reintroduced the notion of resilience to many consumers, and as it turns out, many have found this resilience rewarding. Find ways to continue this momentum by offering tools and resources to support these newfound talents.

Convenience redefined

Consumers are seeking solutions that last longer and save time and effort. Convenience will come from solutions that offer protection, save time, and decrease stress.

MINTEL

Mintel Trends

Understand what's new and next in consumer behaviour.

Find out more: [mintel.com/trends](https://www.mintel.com/trends)

WHAT IT IS

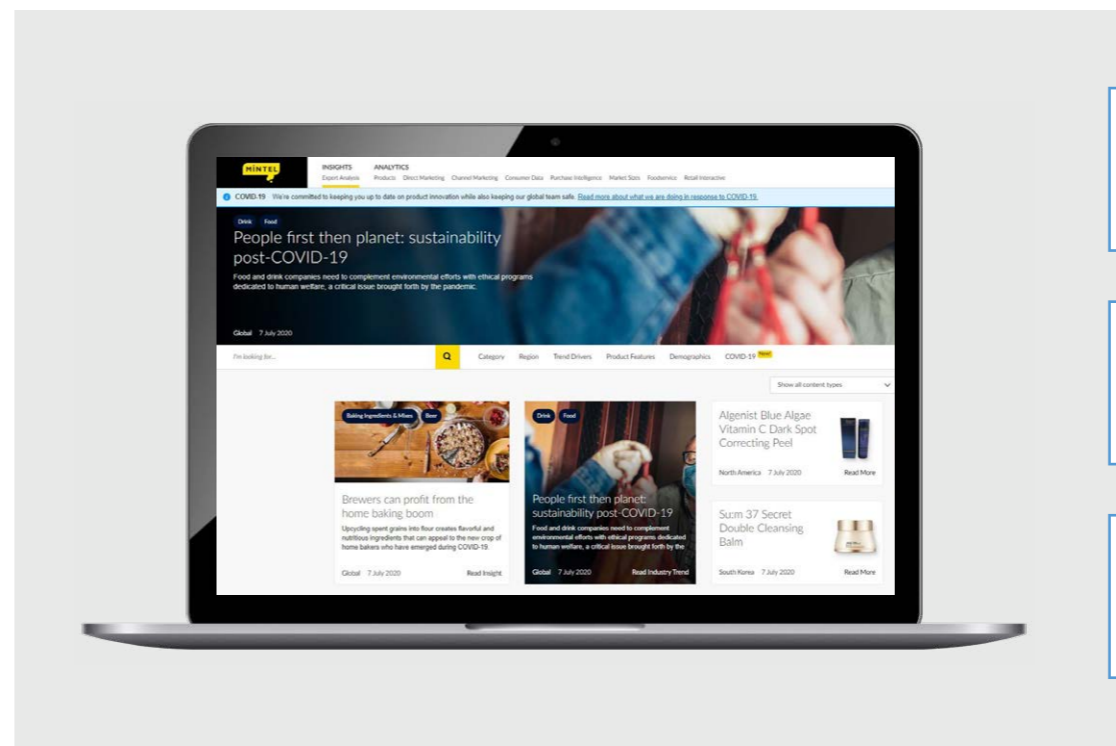
Identify the biggest trends worth paying attention to and dive deep into how brands can benefit.

WHAT IT COVERS

Each trend is backed by observations, statistics and consumer data, examples of how leading brands are already responding and context to understand your market across different demographics and sectors.

HOW IT HELPS

- 01** Inform creative thinking throughout your organisation.
- 02** Future-proof your business by aligning with the changing consumer landscape.
- 03** Understand the macro shifts in society and their implications.



300 observations every month

15 sectors

14 demographic groups





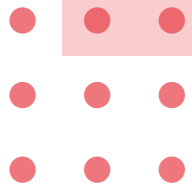
IDENTITY

Coming Together

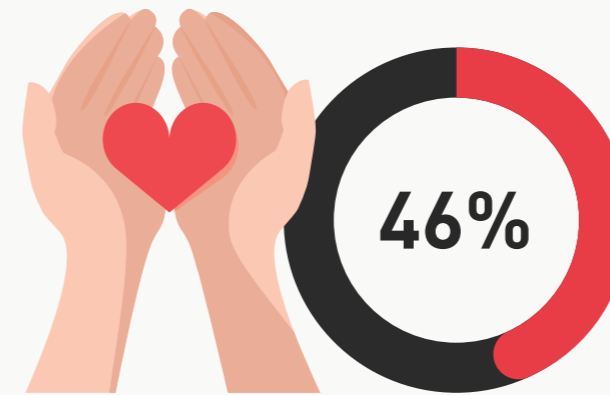
Consumers are coming together in like-minded communities in order to connect with and support each other, driven by the impact of the global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on feelings of belonging and togetherness, as well as isolation and loneliness, pushing consumers to unite in order to lend a helping hand and support each other during such unconventional times. These communities are overcoming any social differences with connection as a common purpose, looking to have a positive impact and consequently evoke feelings of solidarity and unity.

The Mintel Trend Driver 'Identity' explores how consumer behaviour is shaped by their different and fluid identities, beliefs, and lifestyles. Consumers are driven by the desire for belonging, looking to be part of a group with a common interest or purpose. Social distancing measures have intensified feelings of social isolation and the need for local, national, and even online communities.



CONSUMERS ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY AND MUTUAL SUPPORT – FEELINGS THAT STRENGTHENED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC.



of US consumers feel giving back/helping others is one of the top five values most Americans live their lives by.

41%
of UK consumers say they feel more connected to their neighbours due to COVID-19.



80%
of Chinese consumers say it is important for them to feel part of a community.

What's happening now

COVID-19 revitalised the concept of community, with consumers craving human connection and interactions more than ever. With large numbers of the world's population forced to stay indoors and observe social distancing measures, this highlighted the importance of unity as a means of supporting one another. We are seeing communities come together to celebrate key workers, donate to those

in need, and help struggling industries and small businesses. A widespread understanding that community and belonging are critical to combat loneliness is pushing many to create like-minded communities themselves, whether in their surrounding areas or online. This will offer brands the chance to celebrate consumer identities and offer novel ways to support each other.

A widespread understanding that community and belonging are critical to combat loneliness is pushing many to create like-minded communities.

How the Coming Together trend will play out

The pandemic has had a global impact, and while different countries and different consumer groups have been affected in different ways, there is a significant impact on our sense of community and togetherness. This is pushing consumers to want to cooperate and help each other to push through adversity.

A rise in feelings of loneliness and social isolation pushed many consumers to find new ways to connect with each other. This provides opportunities for brands across markets to offer support, connection, and guidance, as there is a need to create more initiatives that focus on improving mental health.

The cancellation of social gatherings opens endless possibilities for online and digital communication. The long-term impact of this shift is that we will see innovation across online and digital communication continue at pace to cater to changing consumer expectations.

Innovative brands

Communities and brands are coming together with initiatives that promote togetherness.

Everything Will Be Alright (Argentina)
 Todo va a estar bien is an artisan beer created by eight independent brewers in collaboration, aiming to boost optimism in Argentina during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: pintaencasa.com.ar



Buy Australian now

Support Aussie Makers



By Australians, for Australians (Australia)

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, Australians say they now have a higher preference for Australian-made products.

Source: @australianmadecampaign via Instagram

HELLO! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

.....

I live locally at

.....

My phone number is

.....

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call | <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent supplies |

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep.

#ViralKindness

#ViralKindness (UK)

A lady in Cornwall created a postcard campaign to offer support for those self-isolating during the pandemic.

Source: Becky Wass via Facebook

4 key opportunities for brands to leverage in 2021

The need for engagement

Developing digital strategies is key to engaging with consumers and helping them stay connected when physical interactions are not possible. This engagement is essential to form emotional bonds with brands and reaffirm consumer identities.

Celebrate your audiences

Promoting feelings of belonging and unity can help brands connect with consumer identities, elevating the value and image of the brand. Celebrate consumer heritage, values, and lifestyles to foster connection to a community.

Offer a helping hand

With cooperation and support being a common consumer goal, it is essential to offer them a platform to help each other. Allowing consumers to donate to a cause by making a purchase fulfils this desire and allows for brand–charity partnerships.

A more personal digital approach

Although digital connection is now embraced by both brands and consumers, personalised services and consumer–brand relationships should not be extinguished.



EXPERIENCES

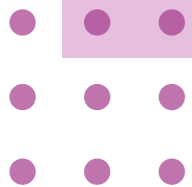
Virtual Lives

Physical separation due to the pandemic, increased need for escapism, and improved technology are driving consumers towards digital experiences.

While the demand for stimulation is not new, the role it plays in consumer decision-making is evolving. No longer should 'the experiential' be diminished as a mere marketing tool or a fad; instead, consumers are experiencing powerful emotional connections to brands that are creating a point of differentiation.

Technology has made experiences available to the masses while simultaneously creating a counter-demand for offline interaction with brands. Both act as a means for consumers to feel like they are stepping out of their comfort zones.

People are challenging themselves in more demanding ways than ever before, while others seek thrills in the 'nothing experience' and recognise the importance of shutting down, switching off, or simply not doing anything at all.

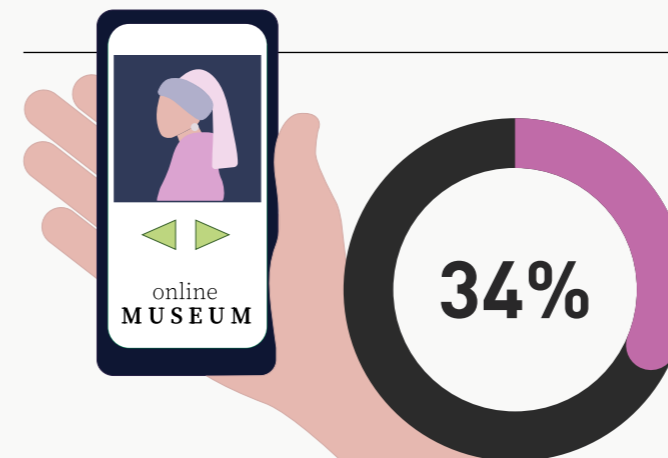


CONSUMERS ARE BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH VARIOUS FORMS OF DIGITAL EXPERIENCES THAT ALLOW THEM TO RELAX, SOCIALISE, LEARN, AND CREATE.



63% of Chinese consumers agree some online entertainment activities (eg fitness, music festival) conducted at home through short video platforms can replace offline activities.

47% of Canadian gamers agree esports is a legitimate professional sport.



of UK consumers who use mobile apps say using an app to experience a virtual exhibition (eg museum, art gallery) appeals to them.

Base: 2,805 Chinese internet users aged 18–49 who used TikTok or Kuaishou in the three months to April 2020; 1,388 Canadian internet users aged 18+ who played or watched video games in the three months ending March 2020; 1,767 UK internet users aged 16+ who use mobile apps
Source: Mintel Reports China; Mintel Reports Canada; Mintel Reports UK

What's happening now

In many regions, the impact of the pandemic and continued innovation in technology has meant that for many people, as experiences continue to change, the role that digital entertainment plays in fostering positivity and connecting people is of particular importance. Approaches to digital entertainment have become more positive and constructive, as

consumers value the potential these have for bringing joy and helping them connect during a challenging time. Consumers are now increasingly living in a digital world, and the trends seen in areas like gaming will have an impact on other consumer and brand interactions, whether in retail, entertainment, or communications.

Consumers are now increasingly living in a digital world, and the trends seen in areas like gaming will have an impact on other consumer and brand interactions, whether in retail, entertainment, or communications.

How the Virtual Lives trend will play out

The pandemic will continue to boost digital experiences, making them the norm for many people regardless of demographic. This will provide opportunities for brands to cater to different types of consumers who are more used to online services and interactions.

Digital events, social media, and communication now play a much bigger role in the social lives of many. As socialising has become a virtual experience for a lot of people, new types of online spaces that are more social, interactive, and engaging will continue to be introduced.

Consumers who have participated in virtual activities and events out of necessity will want space away from the digital events that they have come to rely on. This doesn't mean they will fully abandon the online world, but rather that they will need to find a way to balance the role of digital experiences in their lives.



Innovative brands

Communities and brands are coming together with initiatives that promote togetherness.



Offline VR (China)

iQiyi, one of the top video-streaming websites in China, has launched 'Future Empire', its first VR flagship store in Shanghai to offer offline VR entertainment.

Source: shine.cn

Cross Collection



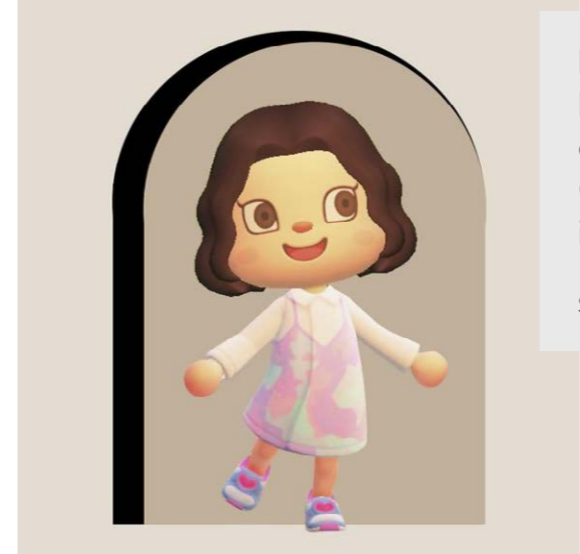
Cross Collection

Cross Collection



Cross Collection

Cross Collection



Cross Collection

Cross Collection



Cross Collection

Fashion Crossing Realities (Brazil)

Brazilian clothing brand Amaro launched a capsule collection inspired by Animal Crossing and took its virtual influencer inside the game to collect references.

Source: @amarocrosscollection via Instagram

Co-op Academy Manchester
@CoopManchester

We hope our new Minecraft version of the academy will be useful for new students to find their way around, and for anyone who wants to take a virtual trip back to school!

manchester.coopacademies.co.uk/stories/take-o...



Open Day in Minecraft (UK)

With open days cancelled due to COVID-19, the headteacher at Co-op Academy Manchester used the game Minecraft to offer new students virtual tours of the school.

Source: @CoopManchester via Twitter

4 key opportunities for brands to leverage in 2021

Get your game on

The fast-growing popularity of gaming and esports offers opportunities for brands from multiple markets, via collaborations to create collectible in-game items, by creating their own games, or by pairing products to go with gaming sessions.

Bring the world to them

Offering digital re-creations of real-world events and natural spaces as safer and more accessible alternatives is a key way to provide collective experiences as well as spaces for relaxing and unwinding.

Create better online spaces

Look towards making existing online brand interaction more experiential and gamified. Creating personalised interactive tools like avatars or using AR will encourage online consumers to spend time experimenting with products before making a purchase.

Online is for everyone

There is a need to make online experiences more diverse and inclusive and appeal to new and existing audiences. Online personalities and influencers will be key in achieving this, as will having a clear understanding of consumers' individual needs.

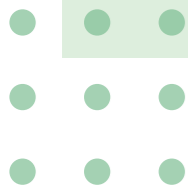


SURROUNDINGS

Sustainable Spaces

COVID-19 has subtly but significantly shifted consumer awareness of our relationship with the spaces in which we live, accelerating demand for sustainability.

The United Nations forecast that the human population will reach 8.5 billion by 2030 is being challenged. Though slower than expected, the growth of more elderly populations will demand changes to how we use our living space. Population stress and a new climate reality will drive politics, societies, science, and economics to innovate how we use our space more ethically. Consumer consciousness of sustainability will evolve beyond recycling and carbon emissions into a more holistic, longer-term view.

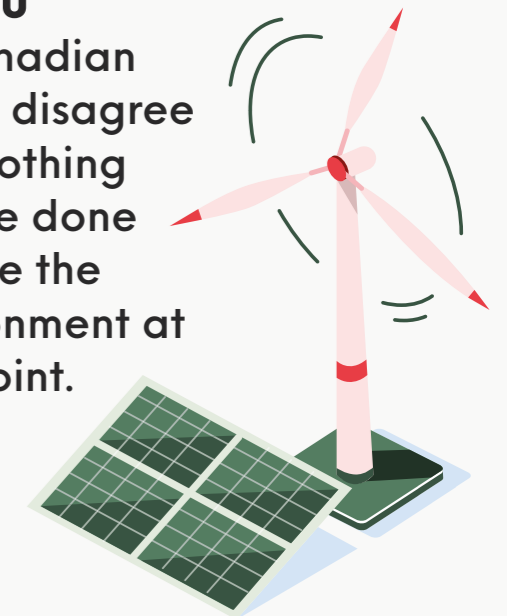


CONSUMERS LOOKED CLOSER TO HOME FOR A SENSE OF CONTROL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND WILL NEXT SEEK OUT LOCAL PRODUCTS, SUPPORT FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES AND ETHICAL BRANDS.



of Americans strongly agree that it's worth making individual sacrifices to protect the health of the greater community.

61% of Canadian adults disagree that nothing can be done to save the environment at this point.



48% of Indian consumers strongly agree that, post COVID-19, they will buy more from local businesses.



Base: 2,000 Canadian internet users aged 18+; 1,000 Indian internet users aged 18+; 1,000 US internet users aged 18+ Source: Mintel Reports Canada; Mintel Global Consumer

What's happening now

Consumers increasingly appreciate that what is good for the group is also good for the individual. COVID-19 has highlighted how just one person's actions can have an outsized impact on their immediate environment.

With access to more information than ever before, consumers have been demanding greater transparency from the brands they buy from. Armed with a clearer picture of what's behind the curtain, they will scrutinise even more how brands plan to tackle sustainability challenges. Offsetting production processes will no longer be enough: consumers will want brands to be actively part of the solution, not just to clean up after themselves.

As consumers increasingly appreciate the complexity of the issues we face, brands have an opportunity to

proactively innovate products and services that help them deal with the cumulative impact of everyday living. From a focus on localism and supporting communities to nudging consumers towards incrementally better habits that combine to great effect, the range of tactics brands have at their disposal is wide and ever evolving.

Consumers are more aware of how a culture of consumption has impacted the environment and left them disconnected from how and where their purchases are produced. They are looking for brands to offer a better vision of how we reconnect with our spaces and resources in the future.

From a focus on localism to nudging consumers towards incrementally better habits that combine to great effect, the range of tactics brands have at their disposal is wide and ever evolving.



How the Sustainable Spaces trend will play out

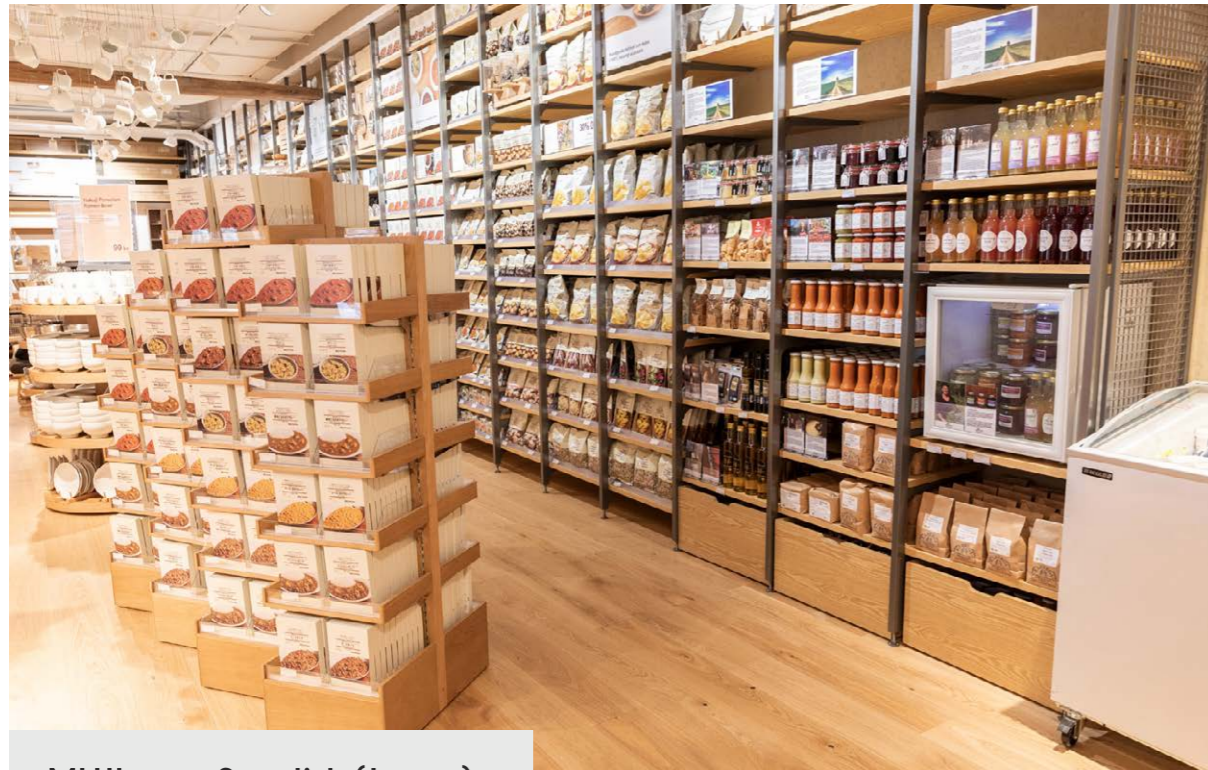
Consumers will look to brands that go beyond carbon neutral, to be proactively carbon neutrality, putting back more than they take out. In the coming months, they will seek brands to that partner in tackling questions about how to make a positive change on the environment and offer a lead on how to make their own lives carbon negative.

A better understanding of how various societal problems (eg health and income equality) intersect is highlighting to consumers how individual acts can have an outsized effect. They will seek brands offering large and small cumulative solutions to big issues on improving living spaces, urban design, energy use, and ease of movement.

Hyperlocalism has come to the forefront as consumers' concept of 'local' has shrunk and they look to support their local communities and economies; local communities will rally to support local businesses. Brands will succeed by becoming partners with consumers' communities rather than simply selling into them.

Innovative brands

Many brands are responding to consumer demand for action on sustainability, improving urban living, and local economy support; those that don't act will find consumers asking what they plan to do.



MUJI goes Swedish (Japan)
Japanese lifestyle chain MUJI is investing in stocking locally produced Swedish food in its central Stockholm store.

Source: muji.com

DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE

For more than 15 years, Walmart has been collaborating with others to drive change across global supply chains. The company's sustainability efforts prioritize people and the planet by aiming to source responsibly, sell sustainable products, protect natural resources and reduce waste and emissions.

- Continuing support of efforts to preserve at least one acre of natural habitat for every acre of land developed by Walmart in the U.S.
- Driving the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices, sustainable fisheries management and forest protection and restoration.
- Investing in and working with suppliers to source from place-based efforts that help preserve natural ecosystems and improve livelihoods.

Walmart is expanding its forests policy by aiming to source palm oil, beef, soy, pulp, paper and timber 100% deforestation-free by 2025.

Nature can provide about one-third of the solution to climate change.

Walmart powers around 29% of its operations with renewable energy.

The company diverts about 80% of waste from its landfills and incineration globally.

Nearly 1.5 million acres of land have been conserved since 2005 in partnership with Acres for America.

Walmart is working with suppliers through its Project Gigaton initiative to avoid a gigaton of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Since 2017, suppliers report a total of 230 million metric tons of avoided emissions.

That's the equivalent of taking over 200 million passenger vehicles off U.S. roads for a year.

SOURCE: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America

Regenerative retailer (US)
Walmart announced goals for its global operations to become regenerative without using carbon offsets.

Source: corporate.walmart.com



Safe air conditions (Chile)
ESE Business School has expanded its air sensitisation facilities to improve the air quality for students.

Source: @eseuandes via Instagram

4 key opportunities for brands to leverage in 2021

Climate positivity

Carbon offsets are no longer enough; consumers will consider the impact of product disposal when making purchase decisions. Brands will respond with products and processes that reduce and remove more greenhouse gas than their companies emit.

'At all costs' costs too much

Growth at all costs is proving both unsustainable and increasingly at odds with what people want from brands. Consumers will shift their support to brands offering both sustainable products and ethical practices.

Unsafe surroundings

As markets reopen, public places like transport, restaurants, and supermarkets will need to prove they are safe. Consumers will look to brands to solve how to make places feel cleaner and safer, such as UV cleaning robots or touch-free interfaces.

Hyperlocal focus

Localisation will gain importance as consumers seek support for their communities from brands that invest in local suppliers or innovators, create training and services to help local communities thrive, or build relationships using local dialects.

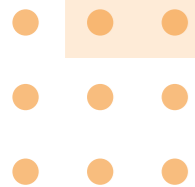
An aerial photograph of a busy city street, overlaid with a glowing digital circuit pattern in shades of orange and yellow. The pattern consists of interconnected lines and nodes, resembling a network or data flow. The street is filled with people walking, and the overall scene is vibrant and modern.

TECHNOLOGY

Digital Dilemmas

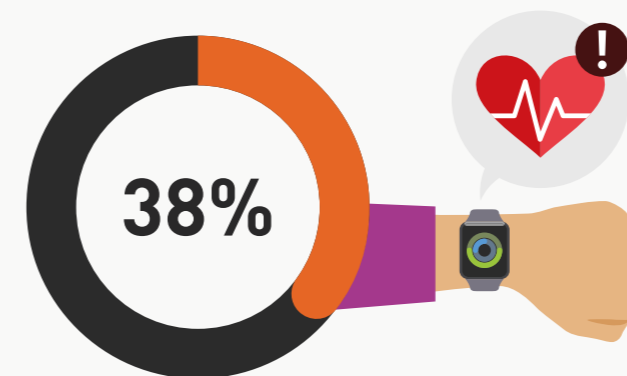
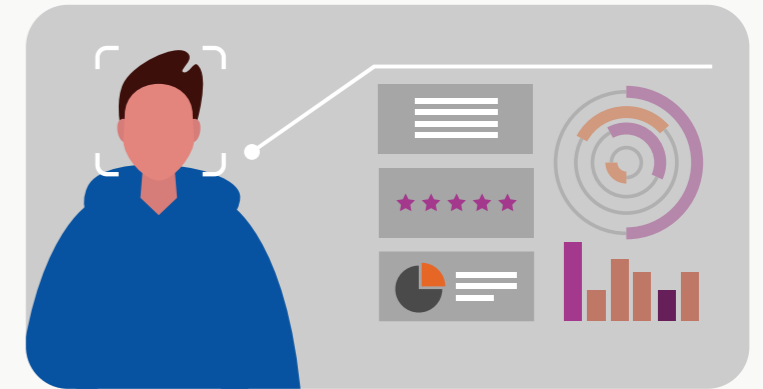
While there are many benefits to a more digitally connected life, concerns about its negative impacts are putting consumers in a predicament.

Technology has played a massive role in offering solutions that provide peace of mind for consumers in uncertain times. We know that technology is meant to improve our lives, and is becoming more integral to everything we do, but it is worth taking a step back to assess how consumers feel about the technology they surround themselves with.



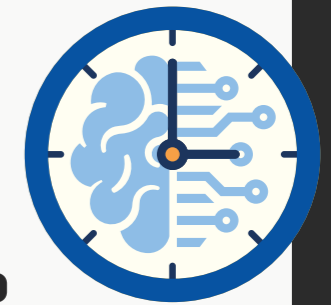
WHILE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS HAVE IMMENSE POTENTIAL TO ENHANCE PEOPLE'S LIVES, WARINESS IS ALSO GROWING AS TECH DEPENDENCY INCREASES.

80%
of Chinese adults say app developers should be transparent about how they monitor and use personal data.



of US adults say they would spend a lot of money on wearable technology that detects potential health issues.

56%
of UK Gen Z consumers say they are concerned about the mental health implications of using technology devices too often.



What's happening now

eCommerce and online transactions have the potential to become, and remain, the norm. Thus brands are encouraged to innovate digital capabilities in anticipation of consumers' needs and, crucially, to expertly bridge the gap between the online and offline worlds to offer a more reliable and consistent experience.

The intersection of technology with the Rights, Surroundings, and Wellbeing Trend Drivers will give way to new innovations that broadly support the wellbeing of consumers as well as their communities.

eCommerce and online transactions have the potential to become, and remain, the norm.

How the Digital Dilemmas trend will play out

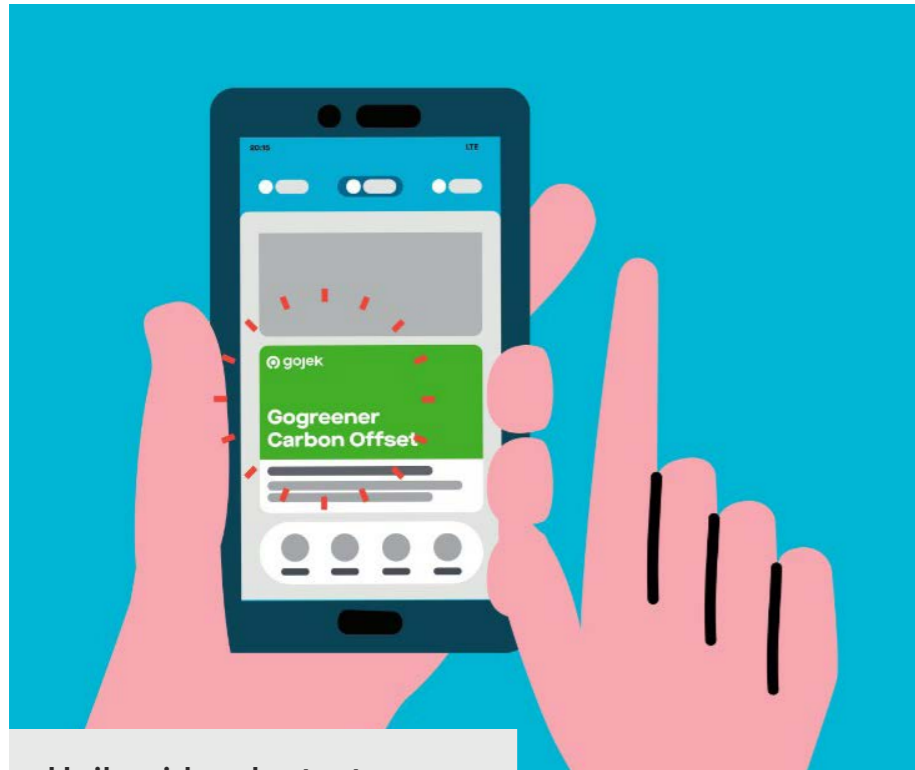
What it means to connect with a brand virtually will evolve. It won't be enough to just be online; rather, brands should consider how to deploy innovative tech to deliver elements of their brand, products and services in ways that add discernible experiential value that can't be obtained through a static product page.

Social and environmental concerns have become central in the public consciousness and will persist well beyond the coming year. Brands will be expected to creatively use digital technologies to make it easier for a broader spectrum of consumers to participate in philanthropic and/or environmentally responsible activities in their own capacity.

The COVID-19 crisis resulted in greater reliance on online and digital technologies. Yet, as tech fatigue ensues, brands and employers will do well to reconsider how to deploy digital tools and tech to improve consumers' and workers' wellbeing. 'Switch-off' policies or the redesigning of tech to aid wellbeing will become a priority.

Innovative brands

New innovations are emerging around digitising the shopping experience, while brands are also experimenting with ways to tackle community issues and alleviate tech dependency.



Hail a ride, plant a tree (Indonesia)

Ride-hailing giant Gojek has launched a new feature that allows users to donate to tree-planting schemes to offset their carbon footprint.

Source: [thejakartapost.com](https://www.thejakartapost.com)



Take a virtual trip to the Store (US)

Short-term retail space company Storefront has partnered with VR and AR platform Obsess to create virtual stores that customers can access using any device to view a 360° rendering of an IRL store, complete with virtual inventory displays.

Source: [thestorefront.com](https://www.thestorefront.com)



The right to sign off (Colombia)

Colombia's Congress has approved the first stage of regulation to protect the rights of workers to technologically disconnect from work.

Source: [colombiareports.com](https://www.colombiareports.com)



Source: [istockphoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com)

4 key opportunities for brands to leverage in 2021

Elevate the online experience

To thrive in an increasingly digital marketplace, brands would do well to consider increasing investment in digital technologies and driving new kinds of online experiences (such as virtual shopping rooms or multisensory experiences) to stand out.

Tech and the broader community

New expectations for ethical action have emerged. It will become critical for brands to leverage their existing infrastructure and technical capabilities to create positive social and environmental impacts and generate goodwill within communities.

Address barriers to adoption

Consumers who lack experience with technology may resist adopting newer technologies. There will be an urgent need for brands to educate these consumers about the benefits and ease of using new technologies in their daily lives.

Digital and mental hygiene

Concerns about digital reliance and mental wellbeing will escalate. Whether helping consumers to unplug briefly or managing their relationship with tech, innovative, pre-emptive solutions that promote mental wellbeing will be highly sought after.

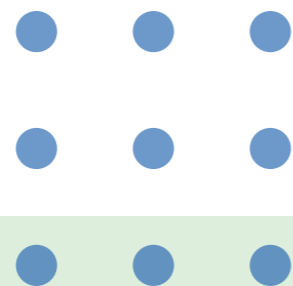
As the experts in what consumers want and why, Mintel is best suited to accurately predict the future of consumer behaviour and what that means for companies and brands.

While thorough, the research and expertise shared here are not exhaustive. If you're curious about what consumers will want over the next 12 months to five years and how your business should plan for the future, we have the answers.

If you're a Mintel client, log in to your account for the full insight and analysis on our 2021 Global Consumer Trends, including what brands must consider when thinking strategically over the next few years.

If you're not a Mintel client, please visit [mintel.com](https://www.mintel.com) and get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

[mintel.com](https://www.mintel.com)





About Mintel

Mintel is the **expert in what consumers want and why.** As the world's leading market intelligence agency, our analysis of consumers, markets, product innovation and competitive landscapes provides a unique perspective on global and local economies. Since 1972, our predictive analytics and expert recommendations have enabled our clients to make better business decisions faster. Our purpose is to help businesses and people grow. To find out how we do that, visit [mintel.com](https://www.mintel.com).

