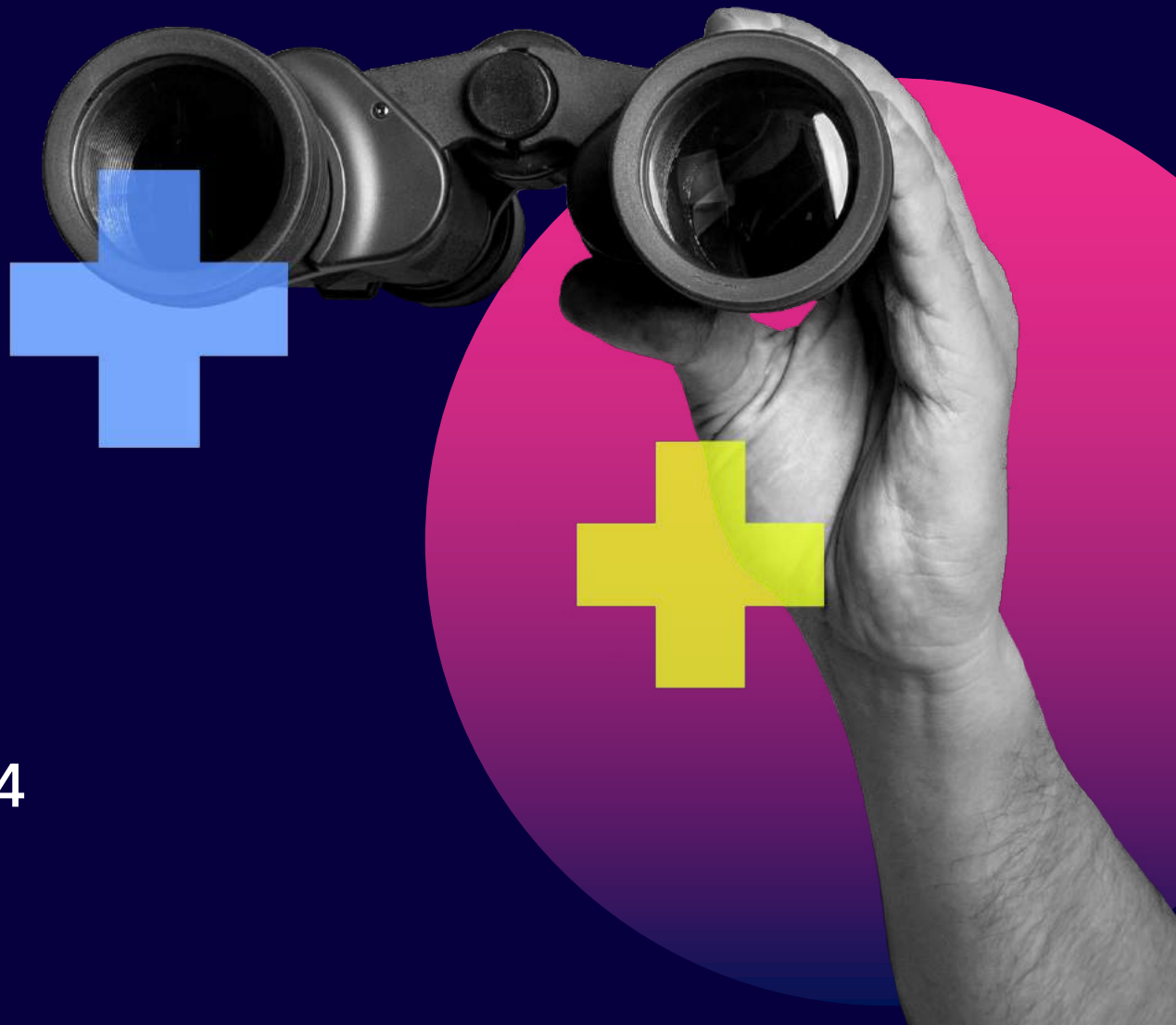


TOP TRENDS

2024 *Pulse Check*



JULY 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	03
Cultural Shifts	04
Showcased Trends	05
Culture Quotient SM	06
Our Approach	31

TRENDS:

“Untact”	09
Rescue Tech	12
Extreme Expressions	16
Financial Frontiers	19
Apocalypse Proofing	23
Retrofitting	26

Introduction

In today's dynamic marketplace, cultural alignment is a **powerful driver of brand success**. With 63% of people more likely to buy a product if the brand is part of cultural trends they care about — and companies that are believed to be culturally relevant being **twice as likely** to have loyal customers — it's clear that cultural relevance is not just a preference but a priority.*

Culture is constantly evolving and shaping people's tensions and motivations, which is why we provide a yearly Pulse Check on our trend library to ensure they reflect these changes. As we reach the midpoint of 2024, understanding these cultural shifts is more crucial than ever. This year will be pivotal. Our divided nation faces a new presidential election as swirling chaos raises the volume of consequential problems and extremism, driving the need for greater comfort and control. People are turning to technology and personal expression with a curious, even playful resolve to address their concerns.

In this report, we've audited our library of 63 trends to spotlight **six** that are evolving most significantly. Some emerged during the pandemic, driven by the necessity for safety and public health, and have since become ingrained in daily life. Others are long-standing trends influenced by new generations and advancing technologies.

By examining these evolving trends, filtered through our new Culture QuotientSM, we aim to provide brands with fresh, relevance-building ideas to navigate this ever-changing landscape.



Key Forces Steering Cultural Shifts

We anticipate the topics below will affect people's attitudes and behaviors as we close out the second half of 2024. This is the context in which our trends are taking place and finding form.

01

Wicked Problems

In an increasingly complex and polarized world, the challenges we face — climate change, economic inequality, health care — are becoming harder to solve, and finding a solution to one problem often creates an entirely new set of problems. This leads people to not only seek innovative solutions but to long for a time when these concerns didn't feel so overwhelming.

02

Seeking Control

Our 2023 New Codes of Luxury report taught us that comfort tops people's ideas of personal luxury. One way people find comfort is through establishing a sense of control over their lives. Having agency over customizing your digital transactions, the familiarity found in nostalgia, or the narrowed focus on niche communities that make people feel seen and understood all contribute to having a sense of control in what feels like an out-of-control world.

03

Embracing Extremes

Our polarized political climate has conditioned us to embrace extremes as the new normal. But as we soothe ourselves with constant content streams and scrolling, the experience of simultaneously taking in everything and nothing can quickly become monotonous. To puncture through this haze, we're seeing new forms of expressions that demand attention, ranging from the absurd to the unhinged. Whether you're doubled over with laughter or reeling from shock, extreme expressions get people to sit up and take notice.

What You'll See In This Report

Our robust framework of trends helps us understand and identify the things we see happening in culture. We define trends as long-term cultural shifts that impact society and identify signals within those trends as fast-moving cultural manifestations.

Below are the **six** trends showcased in this report. Since culture is dynamic and constantly shifting, some signals are currently resonating more strongly while others have recessed or evolved. Consider this a snapshot of what will impact the remainder of 2024.

Apocalypse Proofing
An accumulation of damaging practices around the globe has left many feeling a dire need to repair destruction and prevent further harm.

Retrofitting
Whether straight up or with a twist, people are adopting traditional activities, styles, stories, and icons for modern times.

Rescue Tech
With unprecedented concern for the future, advancements in tech have shown promising possibilities to resolve some of the world's greatest perils.

"Untact"
A future with zero human interaction is being forged. Everyday occasions are getting reimaged for a digital-first experience.

Extreme Expressions
Polarizing expressions, from chaotic and unhinged to fully stripped of any pretense at all, are in — expect to see more people rebelling against living in the middle-ground.

Financial Frontiers
Tech advancements coupled with human ingenuity signal new systems of creating, exchanging, and securing wealth are on the horizon.

MEDIA + EXPERIENCES
"I want"

IDENTITY
"I am"

HUMANITY
"We share"

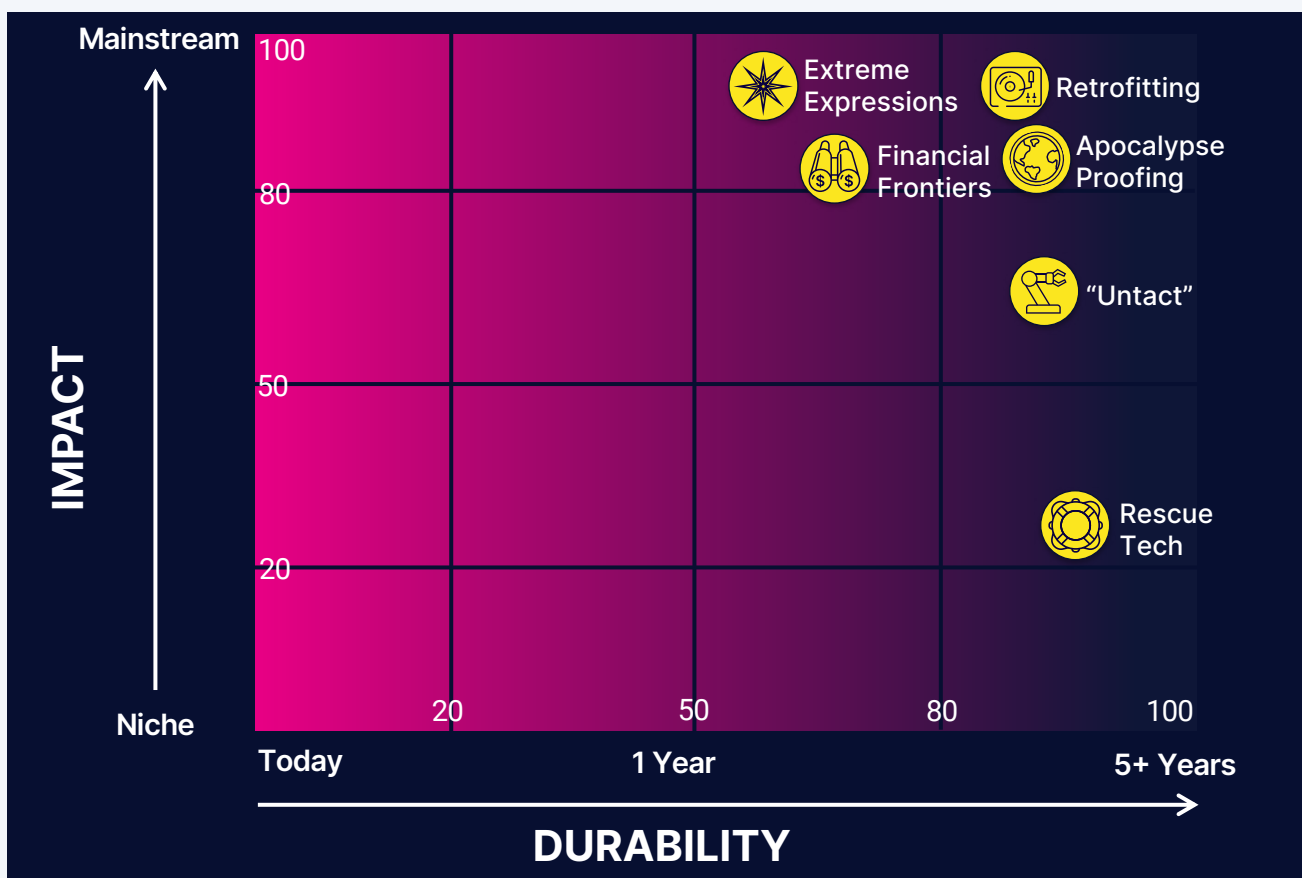
IDEOLOGY
"I believe"

CREATIVITY
"I make"

The Culture QuotientSM

Culture is messy and highly qualitative. Smart brands know that cultural relevance is the key to business success but are challenged by gauging cultural trends with clarity. Horizon's Culture QuotientSM aims to cut through the noise and quantify culture to help brands strategically determine which trends they should adopt based on their business objectives. This way, brands can get ahead and actively create culture, rather than simply join in on it.

The Culture QuotientSM algorithm measures cultural trends on two dimensions: The **Impact Score** measures the size of a given trend in terms of how many people it's relevant to, while the **Durability Score** gives us a sense of how long a trend will be relevant, allowing us to separate the flashy, fast-culture moments from longer-term cultural movements.



Some trends, like **Extreme Expressions** and **Financial Frontiers**, are impacting broader audiences but have a shorter-term lifespan in their current state, while others like **Retrofitting** and **Apocalypse Proofing** are more durable and better suited for longer-term cultural planning across marketing levels.



TOP TRENDS



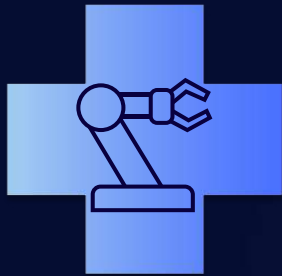
We're providing a snapshot of six key trends driving the second half of 2024, along with powerful brand ideas to ignite inspiration for the remainder of the year.

To learn more about how to apply any trend to your brand, get in touch with us at askwhy@horizonmedia.com for a customized application and consulting.

Niche + Emerging Mainstream Trends With Long-Term Staying Power

The trends in this section are impacting smaller audiences that have the capacity to grow, while slow cultural drivers are signaling a potential for long-term endurance.





"UNTACT"

The Culture Shift:

While these technologies were already commonplace in countries like China and South Korea, "Untact" took shape after the pandemic catapulted the global adoption of contactless payment, delivery, and communication solutions.

Today, "Untact" is evolving from pandemic necessity to everyday reality. eMarketer projects 91.3M virtual reality users by 2028 (+19% from 2024), and in April, Walmart began selling physical goods on Roblox. People and brands are navigating the next generation of "Untact" through new intersections of experience where contactless tech's convenience meets play. Individuals are embracing the immersive and seamless nature of innovations that transform the everyday into something extraordinary.



IMPACT: Emerging Mainstream
DURABILITY: 5+ years

What's Happening:

- Apple Vision Pro reportedly sold 200,000 units immediately following their pre-sale in January, approximately 3X more than initial estimates.
- PacSun's in-game and real-life marketing success, shown by their 2023 bathing suit drop with its digital twin, is leading to in-game ads in their Roblox game "PacSun LA Tycoon" after 11 million first-year visits.

Why it Matters:

We are at a pivotal moment where contactless innovations are evolving from a need to a want. This shift presents a unique opportunity for brands to engage with consumers in innovative ways, leveraging the familiarity of contactless tech while adding layers of entertainment and interaction. Embracing this trend can help brands stay relevant, foster deeper connections, and create memorable experiences in an increasingly contactless world.



1 in 3

US adults say that contactless payments have become so routine, they rarely use their physical credit cards anymore.*



43% 18-34



42% Multicultural

“UNTACT”

A future with zero human interaction is being forged. Everyday occasions such as shopping, dining, health checkups, and entertainment are getting reimagined for a digital-first experience.

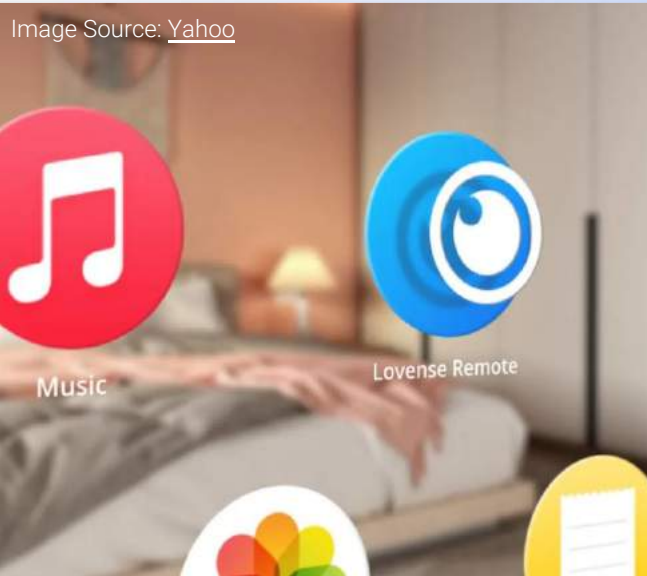
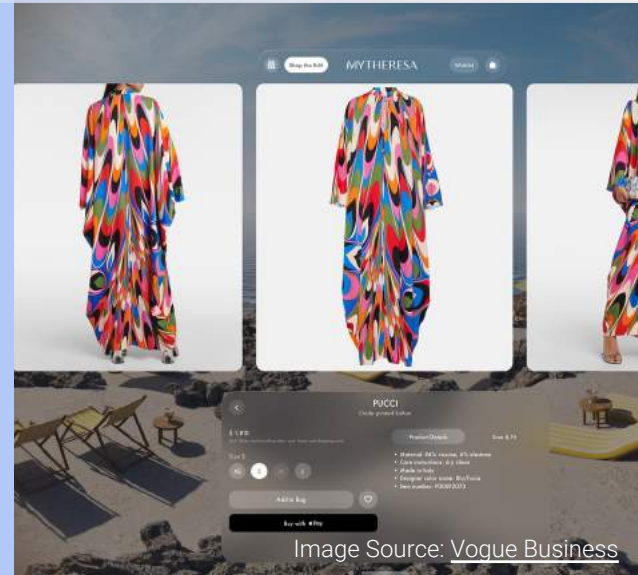


Autonomous Tourism

Driverless cars, still relatively novel for the average passenger, are becoming a tourism hotspot. With Waymo One's self-driving cars only available in select cities like San Francisco, Phoenix and Los Angeles, visitors are seeking them out as a “must-do” during their stays.

V-Commerce

Brands like Mytheresa, J.Crew and Elf Cosmetics have teamed up with the tech company Obsess to develop virtual stores accessible via the Apple Vision Pro headset. These virtual shopping destinations, using 3D environments like beachside in Capri or Paris at night, enable e-commerce brands to replicate and enhance the immersive experience of in-person browsing and buying for remote shoppers.



Spatial Computing X Sexual Wellness

Advances in spatial computing are merging digital and physical realities. Apple Vision Pro is collaborating with sexual wellness brand Lovense to "redefine long-distance relationships" through its remote app, enabling partners to use hand gestures to control toys long-distance for one another.

“UNTACT”: BRAND INSPIRATION



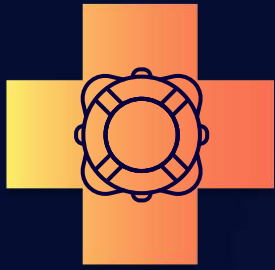
TRAVEL

T-Commerce Excursions

Inspired by retail brands like Walmart and PacSun, travel brands can seamlessly integrate their tourism marketing within virtual gaming worlds to sell real-life excursions, flights and stays. Imagine an in-game experience on Roblox that transports young explorers to different destinations, where users can gain Robux rewards that convert into airline or hotel points when they complete a set of virtual challenges, like cleaning up trash on beaches, visiting hotel concierge stations, or completing various virtual tours.

Expand Campaign in Channels that Blend Gaming and Real Worlds:

- To highlight the seamless relationship between travel, gaming and real-life adventure, partner with popular gamers and travel influencers to compete head-to-head on various travel challenges, live-streamed on Twitch and YouTube.
- Integrate Roblox in hotel partner rooms and allow people to earn real-time rewards like room and spa services to deepen customer loyalty.



RESCUE TECH

The Culture Shift:

In the face of existential threats, humanity increasingly turns to technology for salvation, relying on its capacity to deliver innovative solutions to pressing challenges.

Since 2022, Rescue Tech has cataloged technology's pivotal role in addressing society's most critical issues. Rapid vaccine deployment during COVID-19, FDA-approved diagnostic VR games like EndeavorRX, and lab-grown meats emerged as crucial humanitarian and environmental solutions.

Now, optimism about technology's potential is growing, raising the question: will it evolve fast enough to surpass looming crises? Recent signs point to the affirmative. AI adoption is surging, bioengineering has produced an obesity cure, and tech advancements are empowering experts across fields.



IMPACT: Niche
DURABILITY: 5+ years

What's Happening:

- GLP-1 agonist "miracle" drugs are surging in popularity for Type 2 diabetes, weight loss and other conditions, with 56% of US adults reporting some level of interest.**
- In October 2023, President Biden emphasized AI's healthcare potential in a landmark Executive Order, leading to 28 providers and payers committing to responsible AI deployment.



59%

Of US adults expect AI technology to rapidly improve the quality of healthcare within the next five years.*

Why it Matters:

Now is the time to get into the Rescue Tech market. By investing in and promoting technological advancements that address environmental, health, and societal challenges, brands can position themselves as leaders in resilience and sustainability, enhancing their reputation while contributing to global efforts in crisis mitigation.



69% Multicultural



65% 18-49

*Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse. Survey Fielded 6/24/24 – 7/1/24; n=1,000;

**Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse. Survey Fielded 4/1/24 – 4/8/24; n=1,003

RESCUE TECH

With unprecedented concern for the future, advancements in technology have shown promising possibilities to resolve some of the world's greatest perils.



Image Source: [Stat News via Cedars-Sinai](#)

Immersive Therapy

Ceders-Sinai's Xaia, or eXtended Reality Artificially Intelligent Ally, is a trained virtual therapist available on the Apple Vision Pro. Not only does the avatar offer personalized support for depression, anxiety or even divorce, but it remembers all conversations and can augment virtual experiences, like offering forest scenes for meditation.

Virtual Pain-Killers

VR technologies are now being leveraged for pain relief efforts. Smileyscope is a VR device that was recently FDA-cleared to help children relax in immersive, serene scenes while getting shots, IVs, or blood draws. Similarly, RelieVRx is a VR solution authorized by the FDA to treat chronic pain by immersing patients in mindful, ease-inducing environments.



Image Source: [Smileyscope](#)



Image Source: [New York Times via Amanda Cotton](#)

AI-to-Animal Translation

The humanization of high-risk species can help boost conservation interest. As a result, AI models are working to highlight interspecies connections by decoding the sounds of vulnerable or endangered animals, like whales and elephants, for a deeper emotional understanding. In a June publication in Nature Ecology & Evolution, researchers revealed that elephants have names for one another.

RESCUE TECH: BRAND INSPIRATION



BIG BOX

Thrive Together

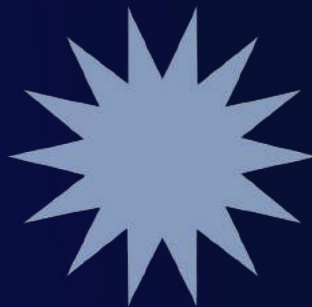
A big box retailer is probably responsible for selling several of the 21 smart devices people now have in their homes. The omnipresence of these retailers gives them the scale and name recognition to have a significant impact in this space. A brand can create a program promoting smart products that are certified to improve health outcomes — like air purifiers, fitness equipment, or wearables — along with emerging health tech like VR headsets.

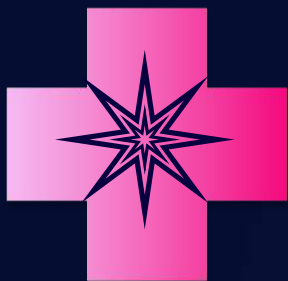
Get Personal at Scale:

- Host a series of health tech round-table podcasts that bring together product makers, retail sales associates, end users, and caregivers to discuss their product experiences and perspectives. Promote the series on social and invite listeners to submit questions ahead of time for the guests to answer on air.
- Use social channels to share stories of personal health triumphs and transformations – personal testimonials that can both inspire and motivate skeptics to take control of their own health journey. Promote product giveaways on social to capture new entries and shopper information and send them to retail to redeem.

Mainstream Trends With Multi-Year Relevance

The following trends have demonstrated widespread impact and have the potential to evolve over the coming years. These trends are ideal for annual planning.





EXTREME EXPRESSIONS

The Culture Shift:

Extreme Expressions emerged from the recent shift toward increasingly personalized web experiences, where niche feeds have become the norm. Wacky, unnerving content like [Duolingo's unhinged TikTok presence](#) punctured post-pandemic malaise and signaled a new era of social media playfulness.

Now, we're seeing Extreme Expressions break through on-screen content into real-world experiences. To stand out, individuals and brands are embracing the power of unhinged behavior and experiences to leave a lasting impression. Brands should adapt by utilizing the creatively unconventional to connect with audiences seeking novelty.



IMPACT: Mainstream
DURABILITY: 2+ years

What's Happening:

- Unhinged marketing wins. According to [YouGov](#), purchase consideration for Liquid Death has tripled since 2022. The canned water brand is known for its wild stunts, from creating a limited edition "enema kit" with Blink-182 star Travis Barker to giving away a [fighter jet](#) in mockery of Pepsi's failed 1996 promise.

Why it Matters:

Weirdness, fringe, and shock value are a new IRL frontier for brands. Hyper-personalized social media feeds and non-stop streams of information have fragmented culture, making the experience of novelty more crucial than ever. Brands should think about all real-world executions as a chance for earned media — the wackier the better — in today's made-for-social world.



77%

Of US adults find brands that incorporate humor and absurdity in their marketing more relatable and likeable.*



81% 18-34

EXTREME EXPRESSIONS

Polarizing expressions, from chaotic and unhinged to fully stripped of any pretense at all, are in — expect to see more people (and brands) rebelling against living in the middle-ground via wacky content, self-expression and experiences.



Image Source: [Hot Ones](#)

Hot Sauce Shenanigans

Dubbed the greatest (and possibly wildest) installment yet, Conan O'Brien made a memorably chaotic appearance on the iconic Hot Ones interview series in April to promote his new travel show, *Conan O'Brien Must Go*. At one point, the comedian can be seen drooling while rubbing the show's most potent sauce onto his skin, unafraid to go bold for big laughs.

Iconic Stays

Beginning this year, Airbnb's Icons feature will allow fans of all kinds to crash in legendary stays at little to no cost. Inspired by the film *Up*, people can stay in a house dangling from a crane tethered to thousands of balloons. Prince fans can stay in the "Purple Rain House" and hear exclusive, unreleased tracks.



Image Source: [Airbnb](#)

CONGRATS TO JONATHAN H.

**STUFF FROM ALL THE ADS IS ON
ITS WAY TO SAN ANTONIO, TX.**



DOORDASH-ALL-THE-ADS.COM



Image Source: [X](#)

Extreme Promo Codes

Despite the whopping cost of \$7 million for a :30 spot, advertising during the Super Bowl can be a chaotic battle to remain memorable. To stand out, DoorDash went to the extreme with their 2024 ad, which featured the longest promo code ever seen. Viewers who snagged the nearly 100-line code had the chance to win prizes from other Super Bowl advertisers, including a \$50K down payment on a home and a BMW i5.

EXTREME EXPRESSIONS: BRAND INSPIRATION



FINSERV

Gladiator Style Student-Loan Slaughter

In a time of heightened economic uncertainty, financial services companies can feel like the Debbie Downer of industries. To inject some wackiness into this critical sector and shatter some stress surrounding student loans, create an audacious stunt that captures attention and earns new customers. Imagine a gladiator-style event where personified versions of student loans are dramatically "slaughtered" in a grand arena, like the Las Vegas Sphere. This event could not only highlight the potential for greater returns from early stock market investments but also provide an engaging, memorable experience for young adults.

Transform an Ancient Spectacle to a Modern Financial Renaissance:

- Livestream the marathon event on platforms like Twitch, TikTok, and YouTube to maximize reach and engagement.
- Encourage viewers to sign up for accounts during the livestream. The more signups generated, the more prizes are awarded, such as contributions toward paying off student loans for new customers.



FINANCIAL FRONTIERS

The Culture Shift:

Amid the economic uncertainty of 2023, younger generations began exploring non-traditional spending strategies like Buy-Now-Pay-Later — a market now worth over \$500 billion — and alternative wealth-building methods like fractional housing investments, meme stocks, and crypto. This once small, experimental trend is rapidly gaining momentum in culture beyond a risk-averse few.

Today, alternative wealth-building is quickly evolving as creator marketplaces gain legitimacy and adopt the language and legal protections of conventional businesses. Traditional investing groups like hedge funds have regrouped after the 2021 meme stock upheaval and pandemic-instigated cryptocurrency bull runs and are now entering the alternative investment space with better preparation for volatility.



IMPACT: Emerging Mainstream
DURABILITY: 2.5+ years

What's Happening:

- Creators had a seat at the 2024 Cannes Lions Festival with a dedicated, first-of-its-kind "LIONS Creators" program.
- 94% of Millennial and Gen Z investors are interested in collecting valuable items like watches, rare cars, and sneakers. These young investors typically balance their portfolios evenly among stocks, bonds, alternatives, and crypto. (Bank of America Private Bank Study of Wealthy Americans, 2024)



65%

Of US adults consider the creator marketplace a legitimate industry and career path.*



75% 18-34



74% Multicultural

Why it Matters:

As technologies advance and traditional institutions continue to buy in, alternative wealth-building is approaching mainstream. Brands must adapt to these changes as marketplace pressures like rising housing costs and increased personal debt continue to challenge consumers' financial stability and drive the demand for innovative financial strategies.

FINANCIAL FRONTIERS

While threats of inflation and financial uncertainty loom, tech advancements coupled with human ingenuity signal new systems of creating, exchanging, and securing wealth are on the horizon.



Image Source: [Instagram](#)

Influencers' Rights

Hawaiian longboarder, influencer and two-time world champ Kelia Moniz shared a [heartfelt video](#) explaining her departure from Roxy after 17 years. When Authentic Brands acquired Roxy, the new parent company canceled her existing contract and offered a renewal that came with a 90% pay cut. Her emotional message took a stance against corporate greed at the expense of young talent.

Crypto E.T.F.s

Decentralized, alternative portfolio building like cryptocurrency trading is getting a "traditional" makeover. In March, Bitcoin experienced nearly a 5X increase from its November 2022 low. The surge was driven by the [seven billion dollars](#) investors poured into the cryptocurrency market as new financial technologies began enabling exchange-traded funds (E.T.F.s) containing Bitcoin, with Ether availability on the horizon.



Image Source: [New York Times](#)



Image Source: [Reddit](#)

Underdog Trading

Finance's "little guy" hero narrative persists, highlighted in Sony's 2023 release of [Dumb Money](#), which romanticizes the 2021 GameStop surge driven by a niche online community. Meme stocks have continued to gain traction: Keith Gill, a key player in the original GameStop surge, resurfaced in June to inspire another GameStop [blastoff](#), which has had ripple effects on other popular meme stocks like AMC Entertainment.

FINANCIAL FRONTIERS: BRAND INSPIRATION



QSR

Meme Stock Menu

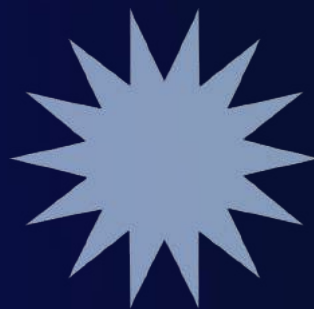
A QSR brand can also host an online stock market simulation game where customers can “invest” in different menu items and track their fluctuating values daily, just like real stocks. Users can earn “coins” for daily engagement in the app or through purchases at the restaurant. Those with the best “portfolio” at the end of the promotional period can win prizes, free meals, or exclusive discounts.

Invest in the Best:

- Partner with popular creators and influencers to share investment strategies or let users track against them on the stock simulation leaderboard to see if their menu investments out-value the influencers’.
- Create an instant insights engine by offering stock on limited-time offers that allow customers to invest and redeem appreciated stock for coupons, providing valuable product popularity feedback.
- To cement the brand as tech-savvy and future-leaning, the brand can accept crypto payments or partner with a crypto platform for a crypto-based loyalty program, earning brand-specific tokens for making purchases.

High-Impact Trends With Long-Term Staying Power

The following trends reflect behaviors that have cemented them into the zeitgeist.





APOCALYPSE PROOFING

The Culture Shift:

At its inception, Apocalypse Proofing tracked the shift of environmental and humanitarian crises from niche concerns to mainstream priorities propelled by activists like Greta Thunberg and corporate plastic-reducing pledges from brands like Starbucks.

Today, global disaster has become a near-daily occurrence, as the COVID-19 pandemic, recurrent natural disasters and rising temperatures have intensified our concerns. In this climate of urgency (and the seething political divides around these concerns), brands and institutions are intensifying efforts to educate, foster empathy, and address ongoing crises amidst financial challenges and alarming economic disparity.



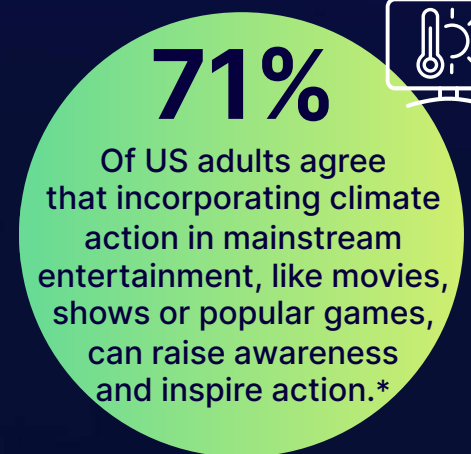
IMPACT: Emerging Mainstream
DURABILITY: 5+ years

What's Happening:

- Climate change is a contagion on the insurance industry. According to a NYT analysis, insurers lost money on homeowner's insurance in 18 states in 2023, up 50% from 2018.
- A Finder survey revealed approximately one-third of US adults identify as "preppers" — a significant increase from just 6% fifteen years ago. (Forbes)
- Climate change storytelling is getting more entertaining. A new version of Settlers of Catan weaves in a climate-action storyline about fossil fuels, Catan: New Energies.

Why it Matters:

Brands must understand the specific challenges their customers face and use their facilities and innovative resources for disaster relief. By becoming "helper brands," they can address needs at industrial, local, and personal levels, effectively supporting their communities.



- ▲ 79% Multicultural
- ▲ 79% 18-34

APOCALYPSE PROOFING

An accumulation of damaging practices around the globe has left many feeling a dire need to repair destruction and prevent further harm.

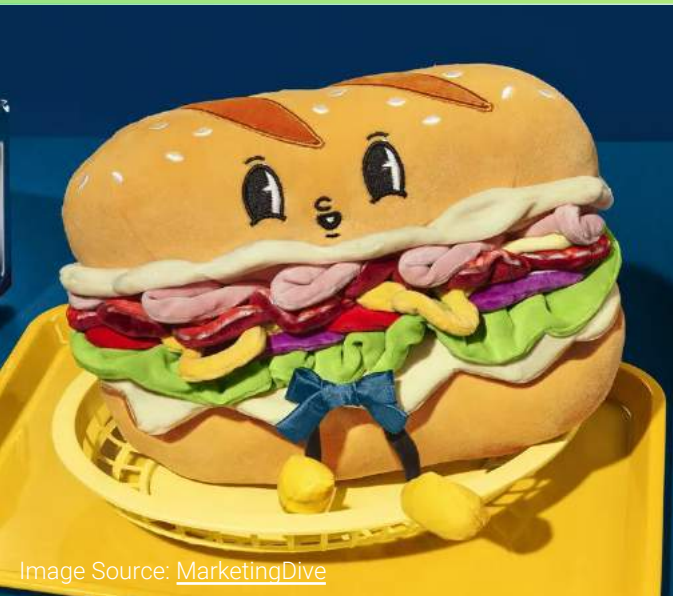


Image Source: [MarketingDive](#)

Save Our Sandwiches

Per Hellmann's brand, 2/3 of Americans prefer mayo in sandwiches, but soil erosion jeopardizes soybean farming. Their SOS campaign, pledging \$30MM over 5 years, urges we [#SaveOurSandwiches](#) through regenerative farming. To foster emotional connection, they offer sandwich plushies for "adoption," akin to saving endangered species.

Climate-Adaptive Wellness

At the 2024 Global Wellness Summit, climate-adaptive wellness was highlighted as the top trend as global temperatures continue to rise, boosting interest in personal cooling products like Chiller Body's [Cooling Hat Inserts](#) and on-the-go personal cooling solutions like the [Arctic Patch](#) by Eztia. As more people continue to become accustomed to heat extremes, cooling tech will become essential for personal and industrial use.

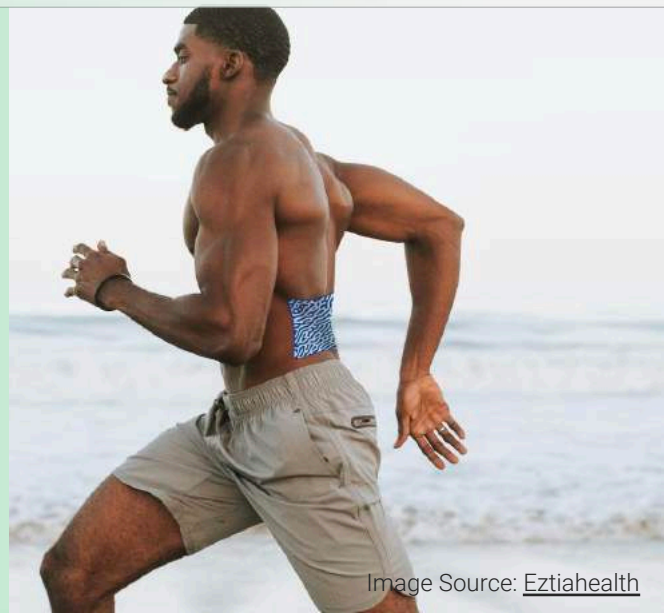


Image Source: [Eztiahealth](#)

The Rising Doomsday Market

Doomsday preparedness has gone mainstream. According to FEMA's [2023 National Disaster Preparedness Survey](#), 57% of adults took three or more doomsday-prepping actions, up from 46% in 2017. Billionaires like Mark Zuckerberg are building [bunkers](#) and Zion Market Research estimates the Global Survival Tools marketplace will [reach \\$2.46B](#) by 2030.

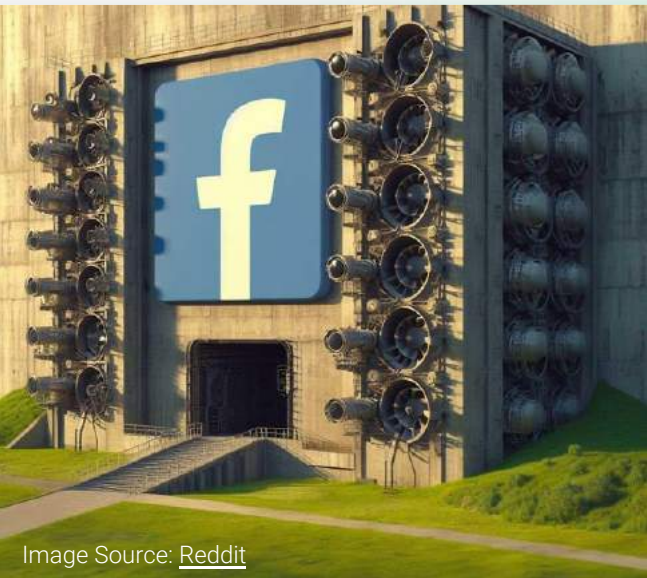
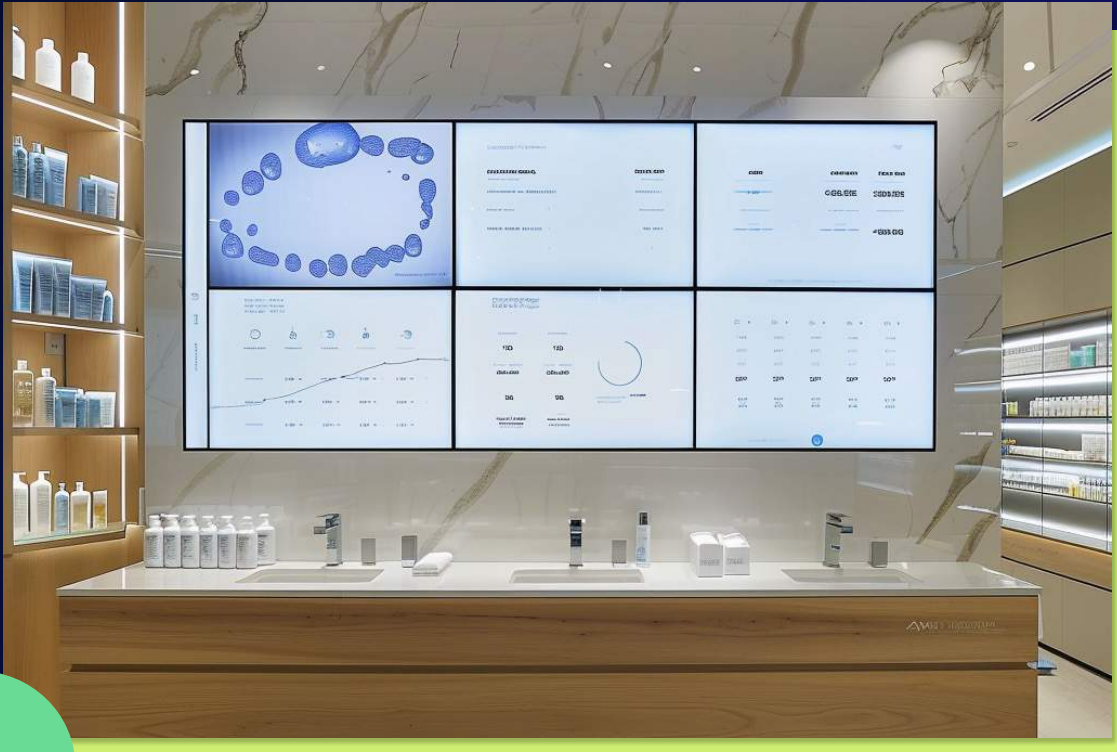


Image Source: [Reddit](#)

APOCALYPSE PROOFING: BRAND INSPIRATION



RETAIL

Eco-Champions: Gamified Green Shopping

Climate action delivered via entertainment can help people lean in and be more receptive to conservation efforts. To deepen customer loyalty and enhance engagement with potential new shoppers, a sustainable retail brand could gamify climate-friendly actions by tying rewards like discounts and notoriety to each purchase. Inspired by brands like [Reformation](#), imagine shoppers receiving instant notifications on their app with how much carbon and water their purchase conserved. Loyal customers will see their contributions grow as they purchase with the brand over time, tying milestones to deeper rewards and discounts.

Encourage Friendly Competition and Multi-player Perks:

- Display a leaderboard in-store, on your website, and on social media so the most loyal and eco-friendly customers can participate in friendly competition IRL and online.
- Make climate efforts feel both individual and collective. The more daily activity a store has, the more it can offer sale events that benefit every shopper. Think: a green stock market where everyone wins; shared responsibility leads to higher shared rewards.

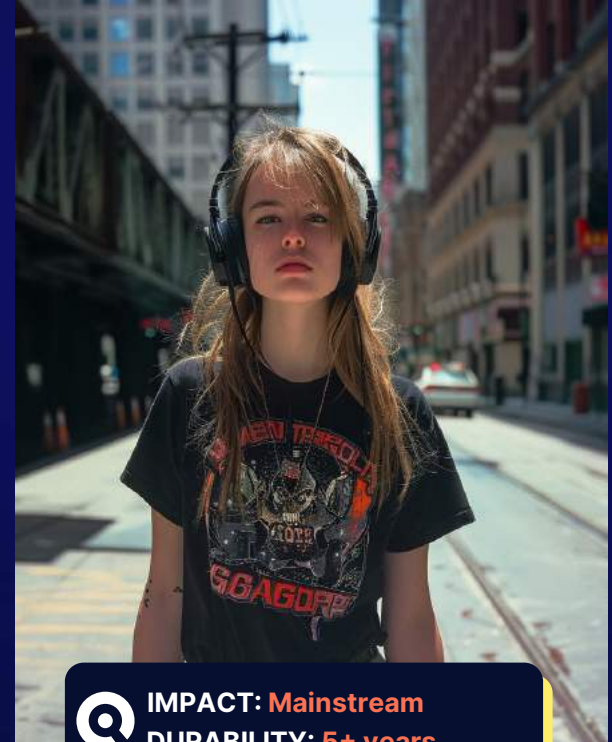


RETROFITTING

The Culture Shift:

Over the past decade, Retrofitting has emerged as a dominant trend as younger generations tap into nostalgia to recreate iconic elements of the past in contemporary contexts. As the world became increasingly digitally dependent, reviving iconic tales like *The Great Gatsby*, physical content formats like vinyl records, and classic cocktails made with spirits like rye and bourbon offered comfort to many.

Today, we're witnessing the rise of New Nostalgia, where traditional pop culture references lose their original meanings and personal nostalgia is becoming more significant than shared memories. Generation Alpha is redefining older siblings' slang like "preppy," as the internet serves as an endless repository, blending past and present and reintroducing classics such as *Grey's Anatomy* and *Seinfeld* to a new audience.



IMPACT: Mainstream
DURABILITY: 5+ years

What's Happening:

- The Netflix series *One Day*, a reboot of the 2011 film and book adaptation, became the most-viewed series on the app after its launch, with 9.9 million views.
- To pay homage to his music origins, Lil Nas X drops his latest track "Right There" on SoundCloud for a "nostalgic" streaming experience.

Why it Matters:

With unlimited information access at our fingertips spanning past and present, personalized algorithms have blurred time into a continuous "NOW," erasing any traditional timeline of shared reference points. Analog experiences and early digital innovations alike can evoke collective nostalgia, but predicting future trends that resonate widely is challenging. Brands must reimagine how they leverage nostalgia and legacy on an individual level to connect with diverse and fragmented audiences.

47%

Of Gen Zers can't name the decade Nirvana was popular, despite a trend of sporting vintage band tee shirts today.*



RETROFITTING

Whether straight up or with a twist, people are adopting traditional activities, styles, stories, and icons for modern times.



Image Source: [Axios](#)

Modern Vintage Curiosities

Gen Z and Gen Alpha are increasingly becoming fans of vintage cars, influenced by video games like Forza and Gran Turismo. These games allow players to race, modify, and learn about classic cars, fostering a new generation's interest in models from the '80s and '90s.

Rewritten Characters

In January of 2024, Mickey Mouse's Steamboat Willie copyright expired, making the character's likeness available in the public domain for the first time in 95 years. As classic characters are revisited for a new generation, so is on-screen representation. Reprisals like Disney's live-action *The Little Mermaid* with Halle Bailey are recasting and rewriting characters with an eye toward diversity and inclusion.

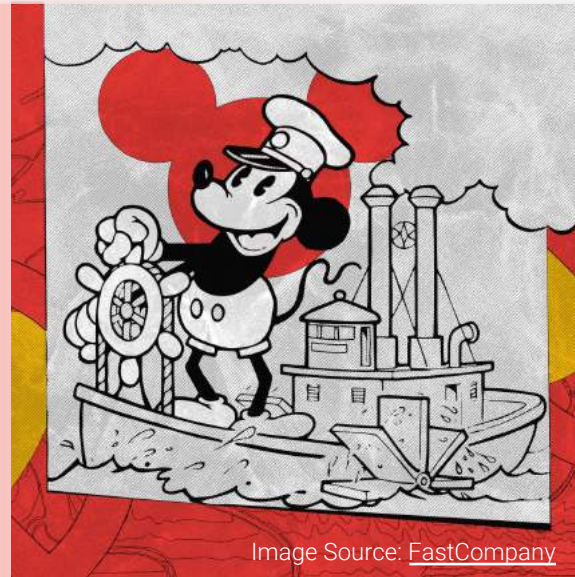


Image Source: [FastCompany](#)



Image Source: [Instagram](#)

Yestertech Appeal

While pixel-perfect AI-generated art has been flooding social feeds and advertisements, many are embracing nostalgic Internet aesthetics like Frutiger Aero that pulls from the lo-fi look of a not-so-distant past. Gen Z artist Chappell Roan showcased this look for the backdrop to her Coachella performance, and the Seattle Mariners energized fans via PowerPoint on a Windows XP display on their jumbotron, both in rebellion against the sophistication of contemporary digital graphics.

RETROFITTING: BRAND INSPIRATION



CPG

New Classics, Resurrected

In today's era of new nostalgia, throwbacks are markers of originality and origins don't matter. CPG brands can take advantage of this by bringing back discontinued brands in their portfolio for a limited-time offer at grocery stores across the country. To drive demand, tap the nostalgia of memory for older shoppers while hitting on the allure of the throwback for young adults.

Encourage (Re)trial with Engaging Throwback Media:

- To drive sales, leverage archived media to stand out and break through against contemporary aesthetics. Think: resurrected original ads on video, radio, and print.
- Provide branded goggles that include nostalgic images and video clips to soothe the minds of younger kids in moments of stress or anxiety.
- While invoking nostalgia through archived ads for older generations, use formats like circulars to create modern versions of classic ads on platforms like TikTok and Instagram to attract younger shoppers.

Want to **dig deeper** for your brand?

WHY can help:

Design **bespoke research** and **unpack culture** for your brand.

Map your **brand values** to **cultural opportunities** with **statical rigor** via our **Culture Quotient** tool.

Host **custom workshops** to help your team spark **culture-forward ideas** and inspire **new ways of thinking**.

Trend Methodology

Identifying Trends: Our Research Approach

Culture is constantly evolving. To uncover shifts and changing patterns, we exercise three modes of investigation:



OBSERVE + CURATE

- Ongoing monitoring of cultural “signals,” or phenomena in culture
- Review public and syndicated data, trades, academic journals, etc.,
- Analyze social conversations and content via Netbase Quid



CLUSTER, DECODE + MEASURE

- Analyze cultural signals to identify themes and patterns
- Form hypotheses around why we are seeing what we’re seeing
- Name and define our most significant findings
- Measure trends using our Culture QuotientSM to understand relevance, adoptability, and longevity



VALIDATE + APPLY

- Conduct bi-annual proprietary study via 1,000+ Finger on the Pulse panelists, nationally representative of age, gender, region, ethnicity, and income across the U.S.
- Apply to different brands or industry verticals

THANK YOU

To learn more about how to apply any trend to your brand, get in touch with us at askwhy@horizonmedia.com for customized application and consulting.

