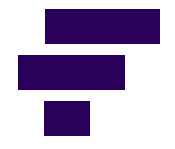




The Era of Initiative

Trending 2025

REPORT PREVIEW



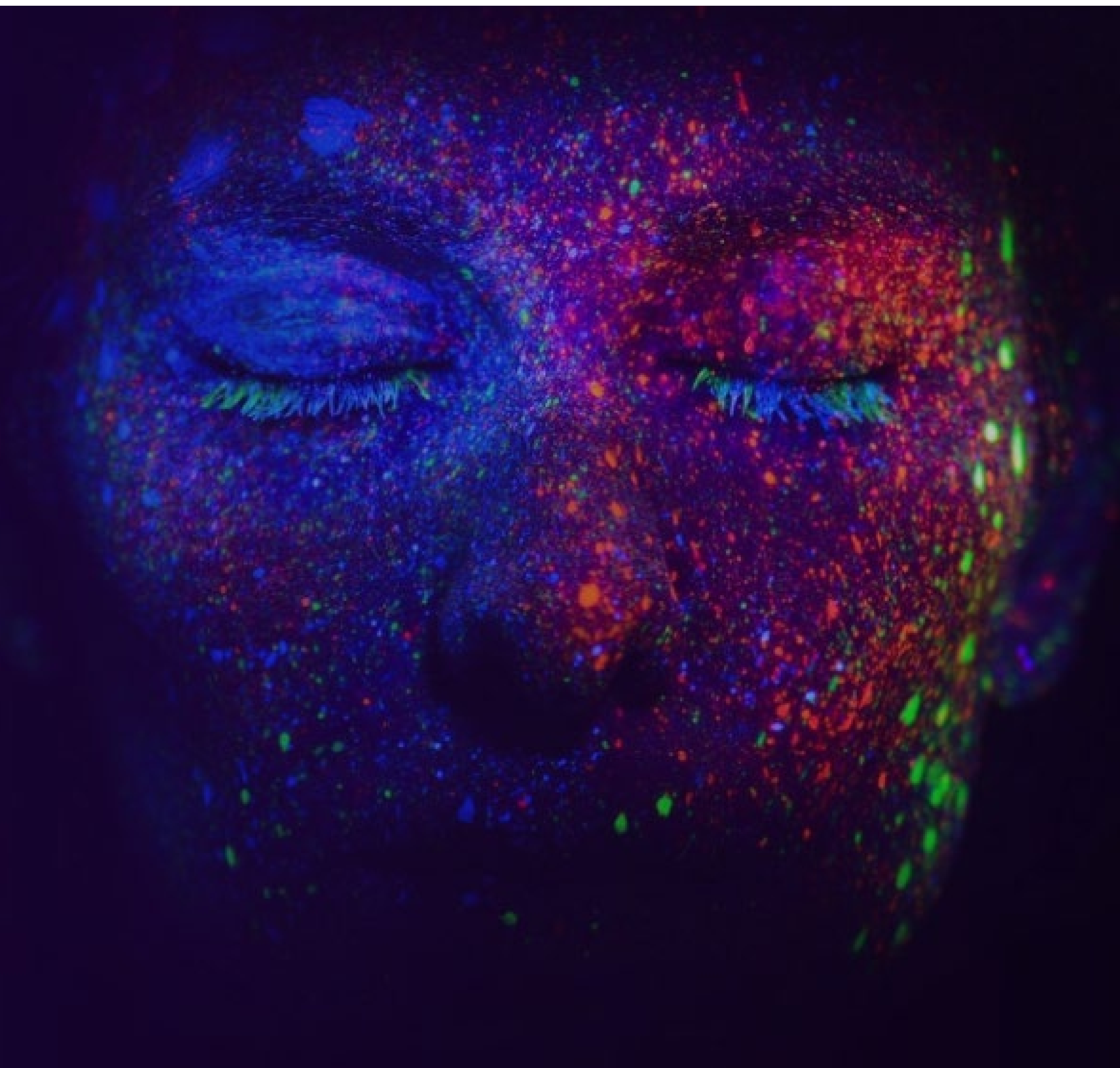
Welcome to the Era of Initiative

2025 will be beset by significant global challenges, but consumers will respond with creativity and resilience. Amid ongoing geopolitical tensions, economic pressures and environmental challenges, consumers may feel beleaguered, but they are determined to find a way forward. Rather than being victimized by change and modern-day frustrations, they will use their initiative to uncover new opportunities and rethink the norms that no longer serve them.

Consumers will blend trends and leverage tools and techniques from various sources to take control of life in innovative ways. They will draw inspiration from both past and present, as well as from peers and brands, to safeguard their finances, find new sources of status, make their everyday feel more connected and engaging, and more. And with the prospect of more favorable economic conditions in the year ahead, consumers' resolve to live life on their terms will only strengthen.

What follows is a summary of our Trending 2025 report, which highlights six key opportunity areas for the year ahead. In this summary, we'll dive deep into Escape the Algorithm and provide an overview of three other critical areas. The full report, available exclusively to clients, offers a detailed analysis of all six opportunities and the strategic steps needed to navigate 2025 successfully. To unlock the full report and gain access to [**Collision**](#), [**talk to us**](#) about becoming a client.





Contents

The six opportunity areas for the year ahead

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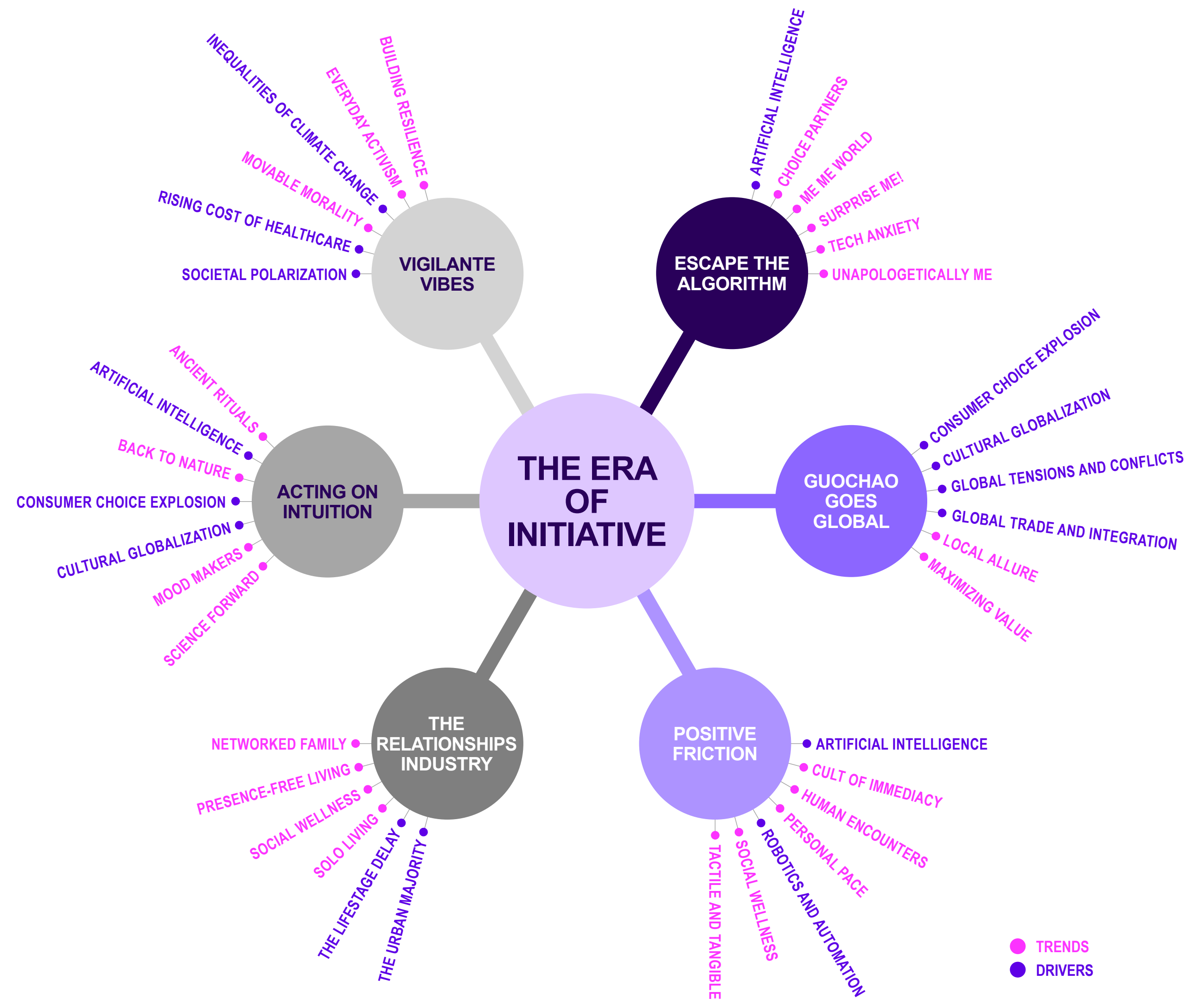
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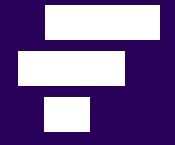
Our methodology

The **Trending 2025** report results from the fusion of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data sources, synthesized using **analysis powered by humans and AI**. These sources include:

- **Exclusive consumer data** spanning 27 markets and 46,000 consumers
- **4,000 daily commercial signals** including press releases, patents and more
- Continuous scanning and evaluation of relevant **case studies and weak signals**
- Monitoring and analysis of **social media posts** and **Google Trends search data**
- Economic data and forecasts from trusted sources
- Analysis by our **global team** representing 12 nationalities and 27 languages

One innovation this year is the inclusion of **quantified trajectories** for each of the opportunity areas identified. To create these, we first collected relevant consumer conversations on social media and Google Trends search data between January 2021 and August 2024. We then used a forecasting technique that accounts for trends and seasonality to **predict monthly future volumes** over the next 18 months and **project a smart curve** to 2028.





Escape the Algorithm

Reclaiming the thrill of discovery
and curation





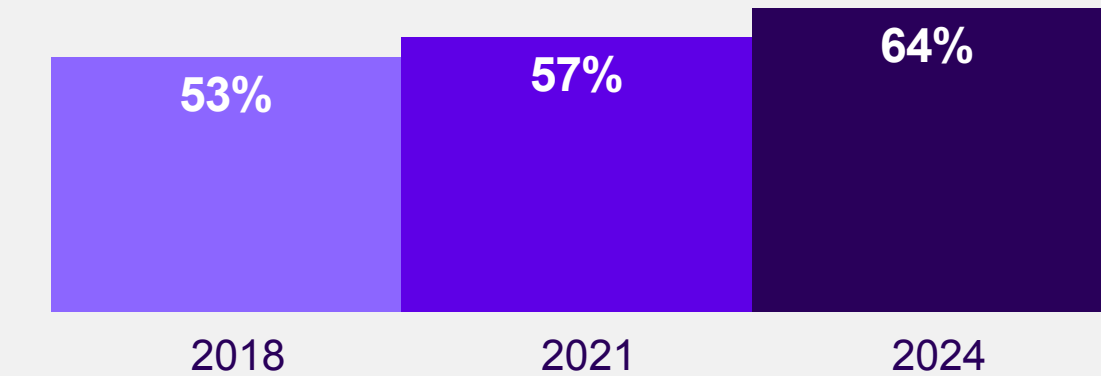
What you need to know

Consumers want to break free from the monotony of over-programmed lives. The ability of an algorithm to curate personalized content was once its most distinctive feature. Now, its ubiquity contributes to a feeling of soullessness and blanding of content. The once fun internet is inundated with “slops” – spam content that screams of mediocrity. The advancement of AI further contributes to this, with much AI-generated content lacking in originality and producing oddly similar outputs.

And from the clothes they wear to the music they listen to, people are becoming weary of the often impersonal mechanisms that shape their choices. In travel too, a monotony is setting in with overcrowded cultural experiences driven by social media virality. Employers too complain of a certain homogeneity in job applications, with no candidates standing out due to a reliance on Generative AI for cover letters and resumes. All this has led to the realization that ultra-optimization risks resulting in a homogenization of culture.

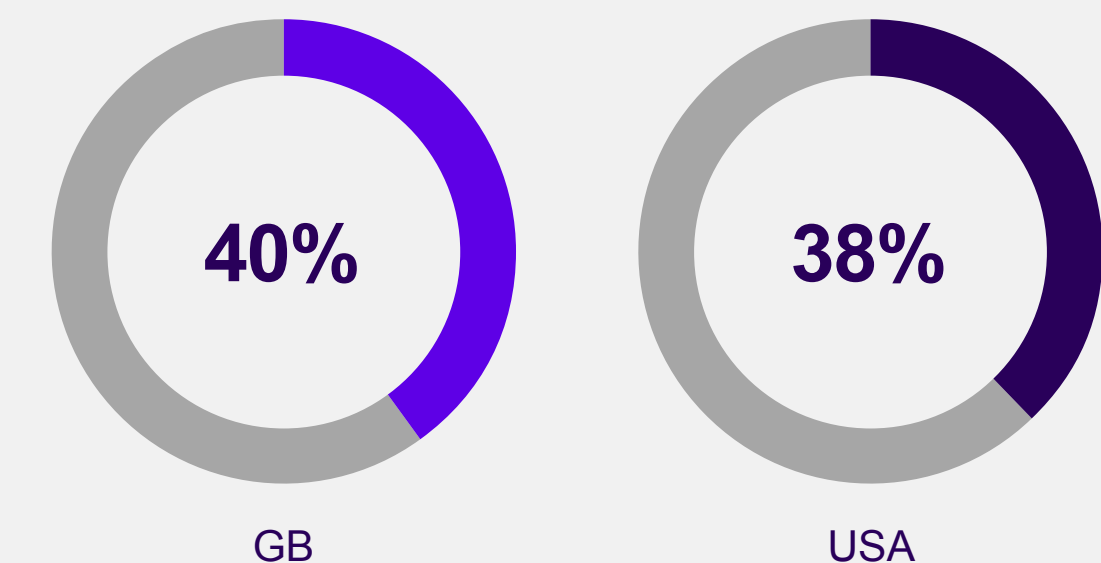
Weariness with social media is setting in

% who agree people should limit the amount of time they spend on social media

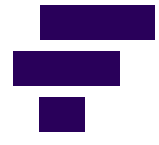


Source: Foresight Factory, 22-country average, 2024

% of people who think the quality of content on social media has worsened over the past five years

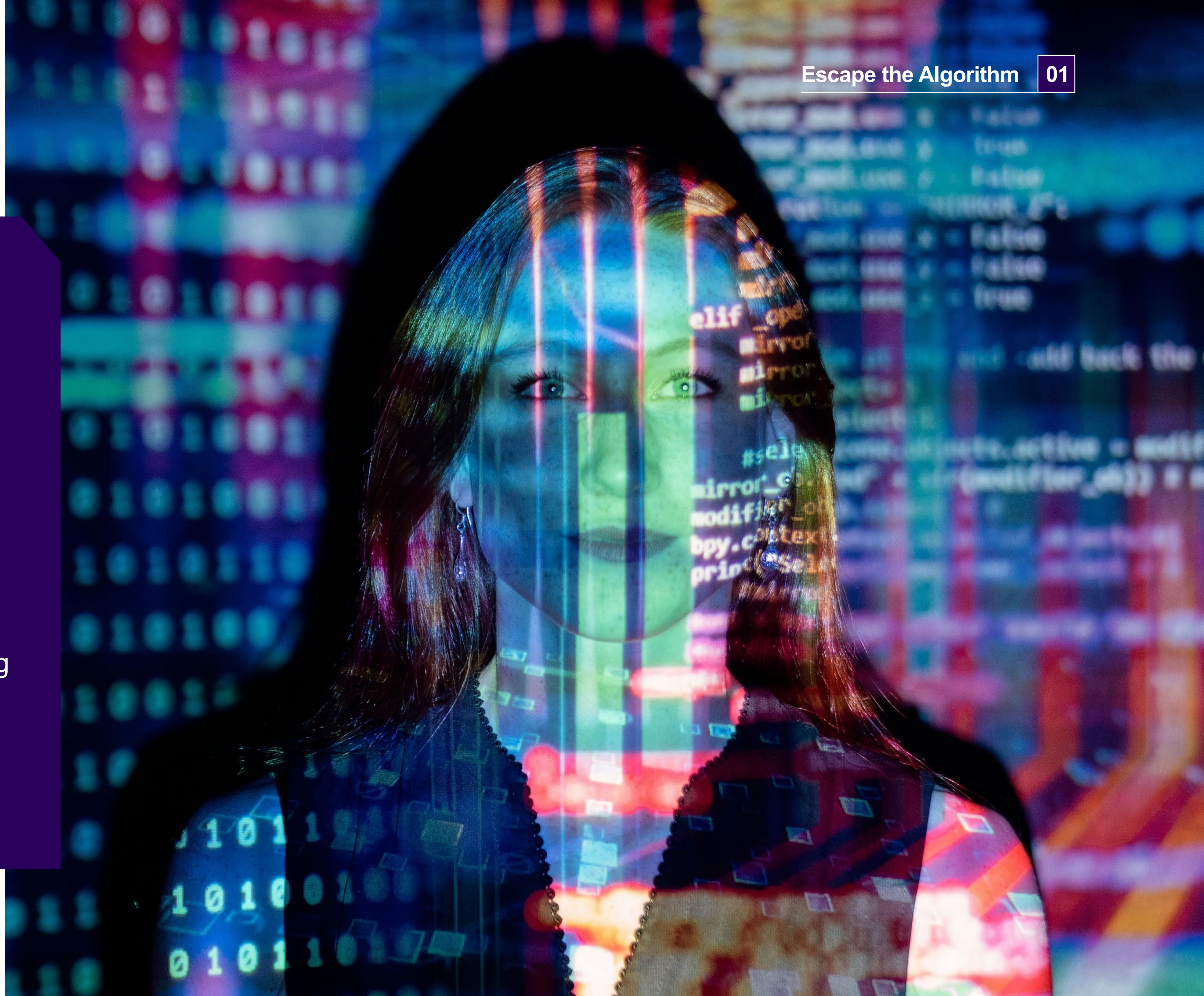


Source: Foresight Factory, GB/USA, 2024



We are being **programmed**. We are being programmed based on what we say we're interested in, and we're told through these **discovery mechanisms** what is interesting – and as we engage and interact with this content, the **algorithm** continues to build more and more of this **bias**. Because people have become so **dependent on it**, it's actually changing and impacting the **agency** and **free will** we have.”

Jack Dorsey, co-founder and former CEO of Twitter (now X)



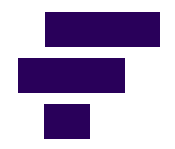


What you need to know

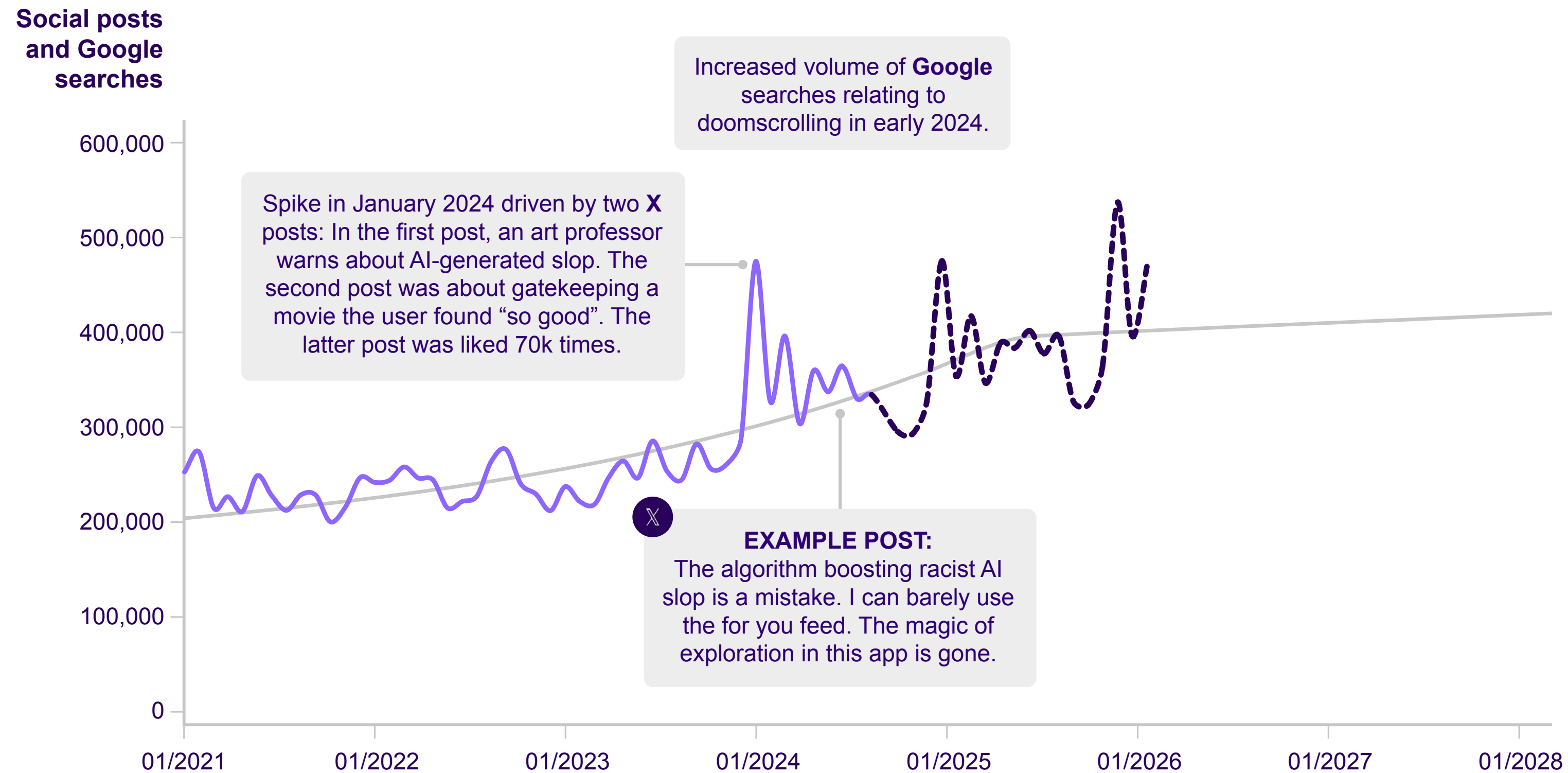
Gatekeepers and curators, this is your moment. In a bid to defy sameness, consumers are participating in subcultures that allow for unique expression and randomness. Cultural curators and their “human” recommendations will prove their worth against AI and algorithms, especially as the mainstream loses its power to impress and the hunt for hidden gems gets fiercer. Gatekeeping, once seen as a negative force, will take on more significance.

Brands will compete to be gatekeepers of the off-grid, offering exclusive, invite-only experiences that can't be easily accessed or replicated. In 2025, the allure of anti-algo culture – resisting the homogenizing influence of algorithms and AI-generated content – will grow stronger, especially as concerns about enshittification, a word coined to describe the gradual decline in quality of culture and content, becomes more apparent.





Evolution of Escape the Algorithm



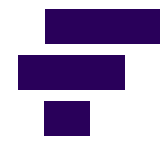
Source: Foresight Factory Prediction

+ 8%

predicted growth in 2025

Beyond 2025, the desire for more authentic and organic interactions with culture and content will become a top priority. As AI integration continues, consumers will take initiative to find joy in discovery outside the algorithm. This will also be accompanied by an active rejection of platforms that rely on soulless algorithms.

Unlock quantified trend predictions
Get accurate long-term trend forecasts with defined upper and lower limits, so you can plan your strategy with confidence. Ready to stay ahead? [Contact us today.](#)



Drivers and trends in play

The desire to be **Unapologetically Me** is a major driver of anti-algo culture, particularly when the mainstream is characterized by algorithm-inspired sameness. Overwhelmed by information overload (something that will likely continue as **Artificial Intelligence** becomes more pervasive online), **Tech Anxiety** is kicking in and consumers are beginning to tire of predictable content – especially as the output is generally derivative, less remarkable or, in some cases, not useful at all.

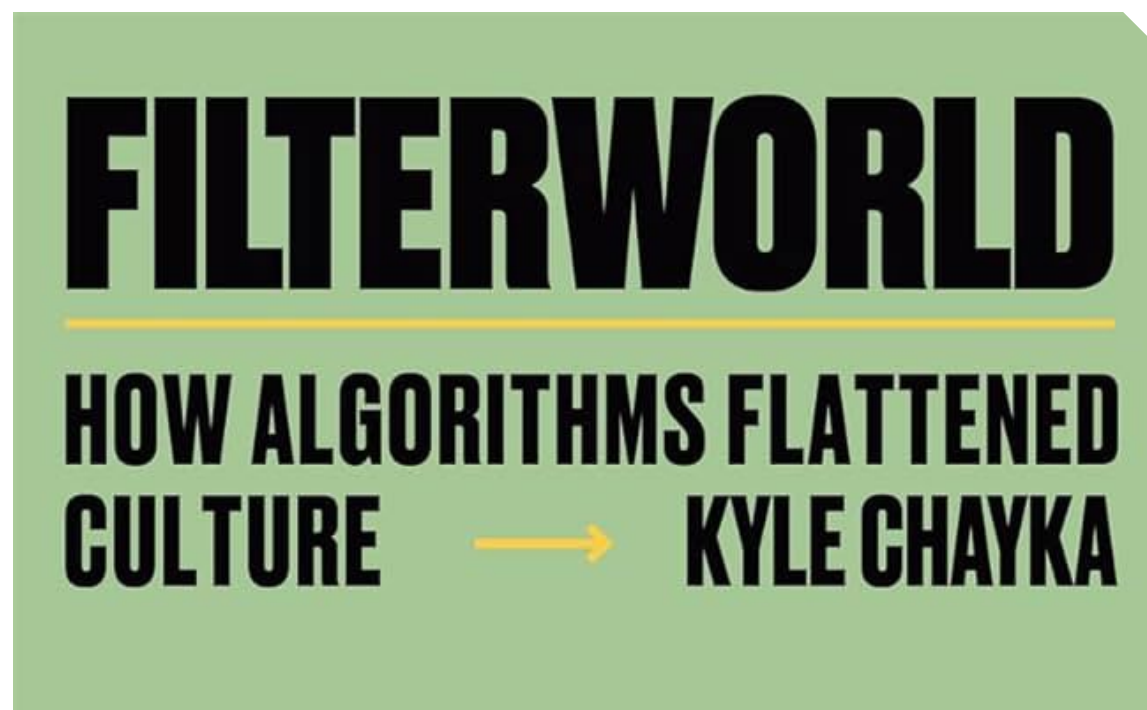
While still keen on a **Me Me World**, consumers look for human-led rather than algorithmic personalization. A **Surprise Me!** approach to culture is also taking hold, as consumers seek serendipity. Another relevant trend here is **Choice Partners**, which describes how people are turning to in-the-know gatekeepers for unique recommendations.





Commercial activity and emerging signals

As the impact of impersonal algorithms on culture becomes more apparent, these examples highlight what steps may be taken to counteract this homogenizing force – be it through a conscious human-first approach, an increase in algorithm-free online spaces or media-led educational measures.



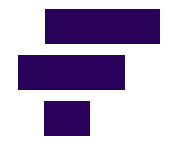
The book **Filterworld: How Algorithms Flattened Culture** by **Kyle Chayka** examines the soulless sameness caused by AI



NoPlace is a social media app that eschews algorithms in favor of real connections with friends



Social media virality has led some in-person events to be canceled due to overcrowding



Strategic imperatives

Be a tastemaker brand

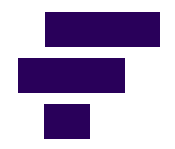
As consumers tire of generic recommendations, how can your brand revive value in the art of curation? Connect consumers to niche subcultures that speak to them. Highlight the expertise and human touch behind your endeavor, showcasing the passion and knowledge that go into curating these experiences. And to help consumers escape the average, your brand must break free from algorithmic conformity, too.

Leverage friction and gatekeeping to make participation in culture exciting

The internet's culture of instant gratification has led to a saturation of content that often feels bland and fleeting. Your brand can counteract this by creating moments of anticipation – whether through slower, more thoughtful content creation, limited releases or exclusive access to certain experiences. This can create a sense of excitement, making interactions more memorable and valued.

Facilitate organic discovery

Instead of pushing content that the algorithm suggests, empower your consumers to explore on their own terms and build their own personal tastes. Create spaces or tools where they can discover products, content or experiences based on their interests, and not just what's trending or viral. This not only personalizes their experience but also creates a sense of agency and excitement in their journey with your brand.



Sector actions:



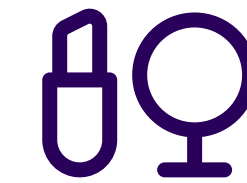
Alcohol

Curate exclusive, craftsmanship-focused experiences around alcohol. There's an opportunity here for brands to curate exclusive, limited-edition experiences centered around alcohol and drinking. For instance, you could host tasting clubs that bring rare and unique flavors to the fore. The social aspect of clubs can be positioned as a break from constant digital distractions. Bringing unique and eclectic flavors to consumers and helping them meet other like-minded people results in an experience that cannot be replicated online. By doing so, your brand can help consumers escape the algorithm and establish personal tastes.



Travel

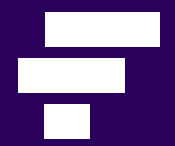
Provide curated local guides. In 2025, a weariness with mass-visited experiences driven by social media virality will feed a craving for off-grid experiences and low-key alternatives that haven't yet appeared on "Top 10" lists. How can your brand satiate this need for people-free solitude? Develop detailed, off-the-beaten-path guides that spotlight local hidden gems, unique cultural experiences and authentic dining options. Consider collaborating with local experts or residents to provide insider knowledge that goes beyond typical tourist attractions. Human gatekeepers are also relevant here – appearing on a trusted gatekeepers' recommendations list could boost your under-the-radar experience.



Beauty and Personal Care

Promote appropriate beauty routines rather than the latest fads. The **SkinTok** algorithm can amplify viral skincare trends, making certain products and routines seem like absolute essentials. While this can introduce people to new ideas, it also creates a culture where consumers feel under constant pressure to buy and try the latest must-haves, which may not be suitable for all skin types or budgets and can lead to misuse or overuse of products. Encourage consumers to push away from algorithmic influence and instead encourage them to focus on building a skincare routine based on their specific needs rather than what's trending.

Get in touch with us and become a client today to gain exclusive access to the full Trending 2025 report on **Collision**. Discover in-depth scenario analysis, strategic imperatives, and sector-specific insights tailored for every business.



Guochao Goes Global

Forging new consumption pathways

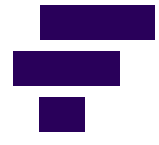




What you need to know

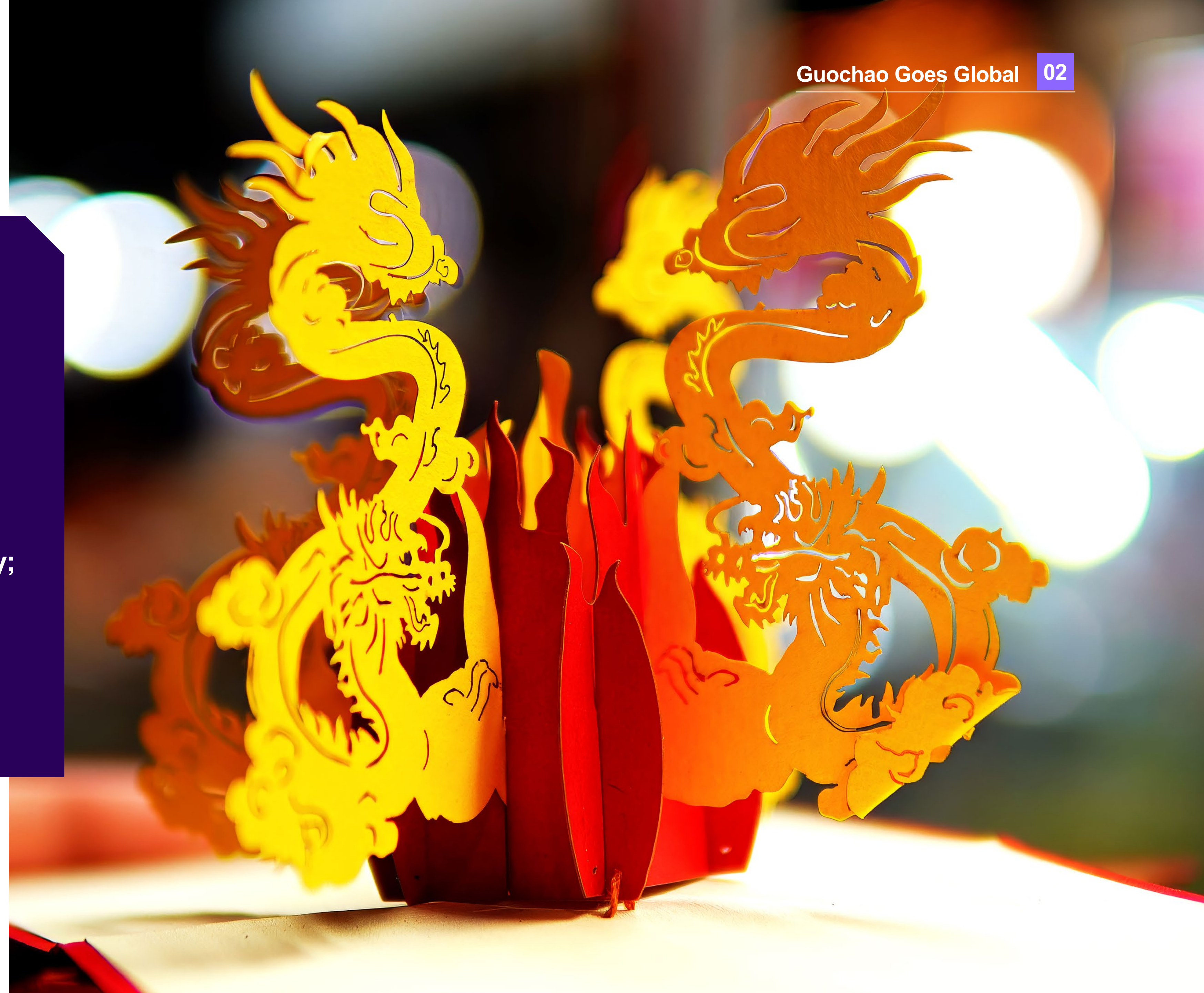
Consumers are increasingly turning to Chinese brands. The term guochao or “national wave” is used to describe the popularity of indigenous brands among Chinese consumers. Recent years have seen Chinese brands such as **Shein** and **Temu** become more popular internationally, and **BYD** vies with **Tesla** to be the biggest EV maker in the world. This is despite attempts by governments in the US, Canada and EU to impose tariffs on Chinese-made goods. At the same time, Chinese culture more broadly is becoming increasingly popular, with the wider celebration of Lunar New Year and the embrace of Chinese fashion and C-beauty.





In the future, we look forward to more Chinese brands standing out in the international market with distinctive and characteristic appearances. At that time, brands might not need to emphasize ‘Chinese culture’ labels deliberately; their existence will inherently embody Chinese culture.”

Eric Wang, CEO of Yingfan Technology and founder of CBNData





What you need to know

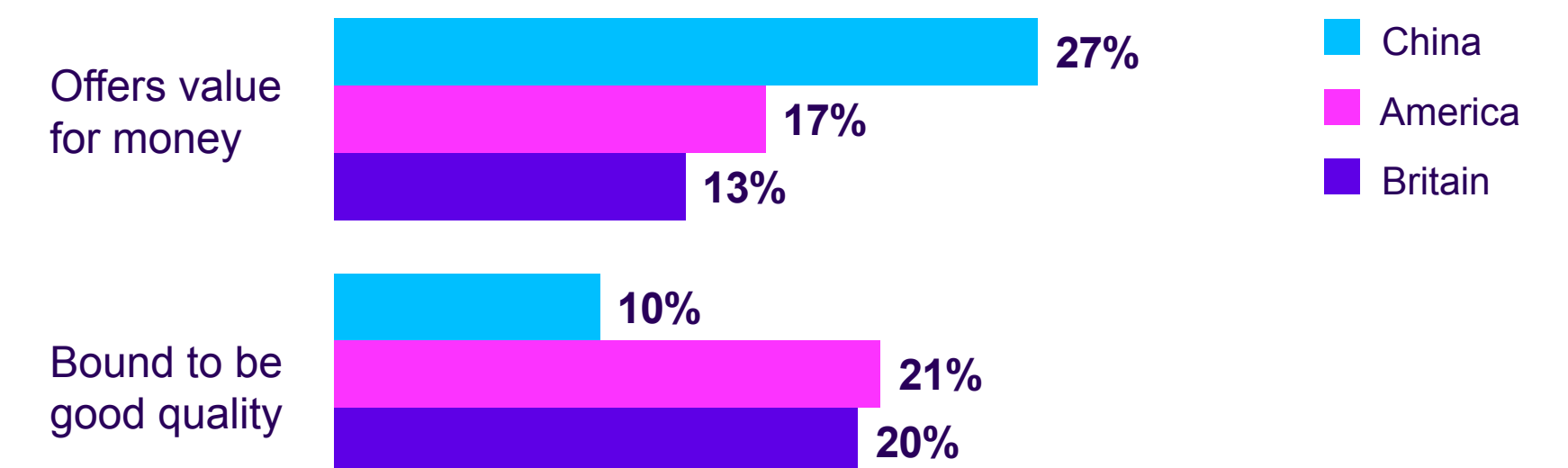
Views on Chinese brands are growing more positive. While still lagging behind their US- and British-made counterparts on many metrics, Chinese-made products are increasingly seen by consumers as offering good quality, in addition to the value for money they were already known for. Strikingly, among younger Americans, attitudes to Chinese goods have improved while the phrase “Made in America” is increasingly seen as irrelevant.

In 2025, many consumers around the world will take the initiative to set geopolitical concerns to one side and embrace Chinese brands and products in the interests of making their money go further.

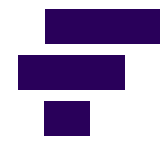


While quality concerns remain, attitudes to Chinese-made products are improving, notably among younger Americans

% of global consumers who associate the following features with products made in...



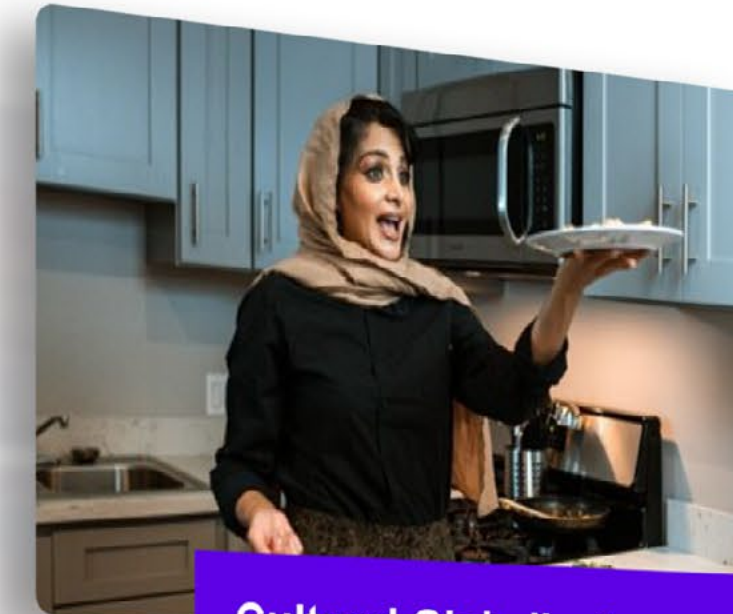
Source: Foresight Factory, nine-country average, 16+, 2024



Drivers and trends in play

On the one hand, we see a **Consumer Choice Explosion**, with shoppers around the world able to take advantage of new brands and channels that offer game-changing pricing levels with acceptable quality. Set against this is the potential for **Global Trade and Integration** to be impacted by **Global Tensions and Conflict** – such as tariff wars between the US and China. Ongoing **Cultural Globalization** means that consumers around the world will be more aware of Chinese lifestyles and culture.

A key trend driving consumer behavior here is **Maximizing Value**, as Chinese goods can offer substantial costs savings. This is still significant in an environment of elevated prices where consumers want budgets to stretch as far as possible. While a degree of **Local Allure** may mean some consumers opt for brands and products from their own country or region, Chinese brands may be able to appeal to consumers around the world by rooting their positioning and messaging in local culture.



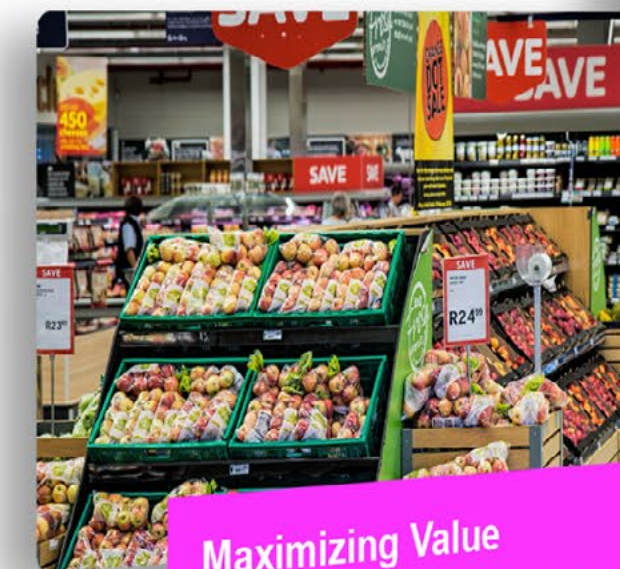
Cultural Globalization



Local Allure



Global Tensions and Conflict



Maximizing Value



Global Trade and Integration



Consumer Choice Explosion



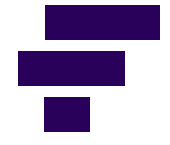
Commercial activity and emerging signals

In addition to Chinese brands becoming more prominent around the world, we see commercial activity in the form of global brands making Chinese goods more widely available. Meanwhile, we see signals of the broader impact that the growing economic and cultural influence of China could have on the wider world.



Chinese tea brand **HEYTEA** opened a pop-up store in Paris during the Olympic Games

Discover the Collision platform – your 360° view of present and future consumers. This self-service, AI-powered platform delivers dynamic consumer insights and foresight, giving you a complete understanding of emerging trends. Ready to stay ahead? Contact us today.

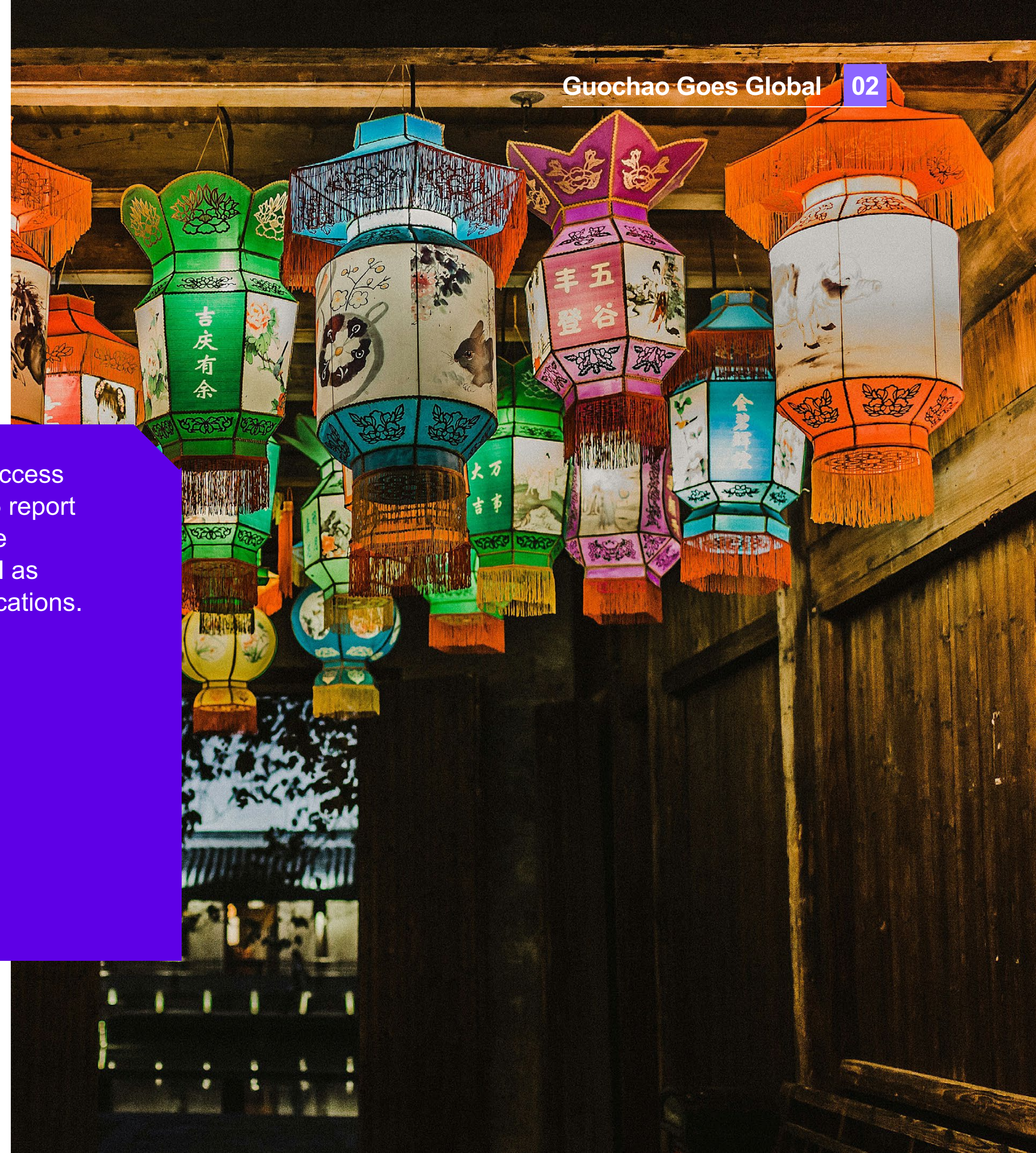


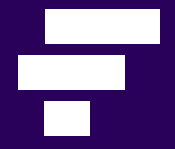
Strategic imperatives

Established brands must react to Chinese competition

The competitive pricing and improved perception of Chinese brands clearly pose a challenge to established players. Each brand must decide how best to react. This may be by stressing quality and value over low price or appealing to national pride. Alternatively, adoption of Chinese manufacturing and cultural trends may be an option.

Become a client today to access the complete Trending 2025 report on Collision, featuring more strategic imperatives as well as predictions and sector implications.





Positive Friction

Embracing slowdown for deeper engagement

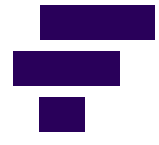




What you need to know

Consumers and brands are realizing that faster services do not necessarily equate to easier or more enjoyable lives. Automation and seamlessness, while seemingly boosting productivity, can sometimes erode human interaction and diminish enjoyment. For many brands, the shift to convenience isn't delivering the desired results. Multiple retailers, for instance, are rolling back self-checkout offerings in favor of human-led experiences that feel more personal and less prone to error – and can also reduce costs and deter crime.





We had relied and started to rely too much this year on self-checkout in our stores... We should be using self-checkout as a secondary checkout vehicle, not a primary.”

Todd Vasos, CEO of Dollar General





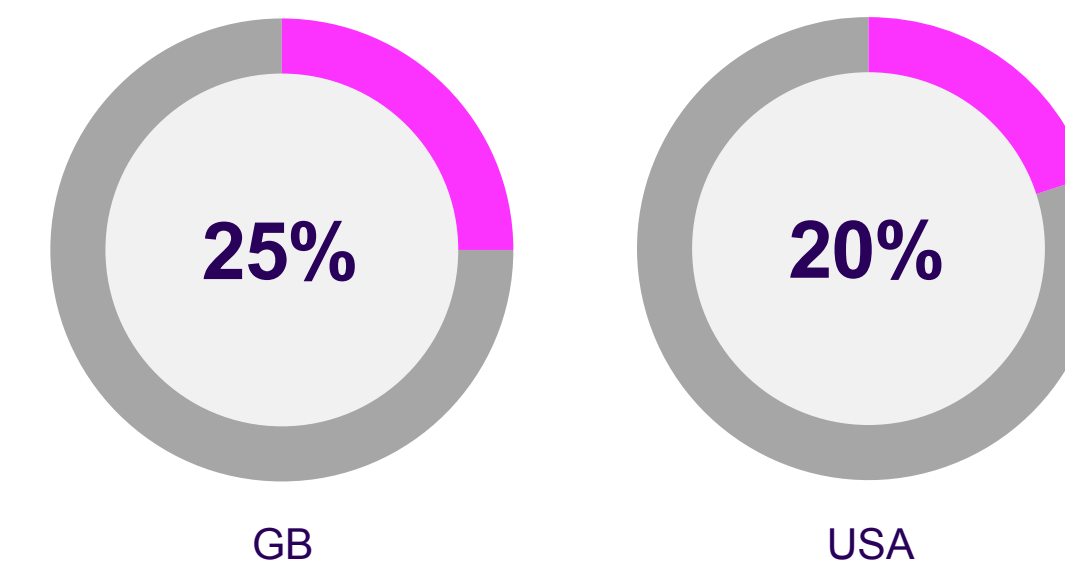
What you need to know

The frictionless nature of modern services can result in a sense of disengagement and a loss of control. This is evident in areas like spending, where one-tap payments can make it difficult to track expenses, or personal data privacy, where auto-login options can make it hard to know who has access to personal details. Meanwhile, resistance to automated offerings like AI assistants is relatively high, demonstrating how many consumers want to retain control over their own decision making.



Significant proportions of consumers are resistant to AI taking over tasks

% who would be *not at all* willing to allow AI to complete or advise on tasks across eight sectors



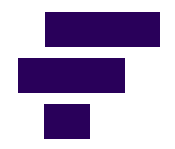
Source: Foresight Factory, GB/USA, 2024



What you need to know

Consumers are adopting activities that require greater intentionality. These provide them with opportunities to pause, reflect and engage more deeply. Whether it's budgeting with cash, choosing thrifting over fast fashion, favoring physical media over convenient digital streams, or joining clubs to meet others instead of relying on dating apps, consumers are challenging the norms of convenience and proactively seeking out ways to make their lives more meaningful and fulfilling. Brands that create opportunities for mindful engagement and intentional pauses in customer journeys will increasingly resonate with this mindset.

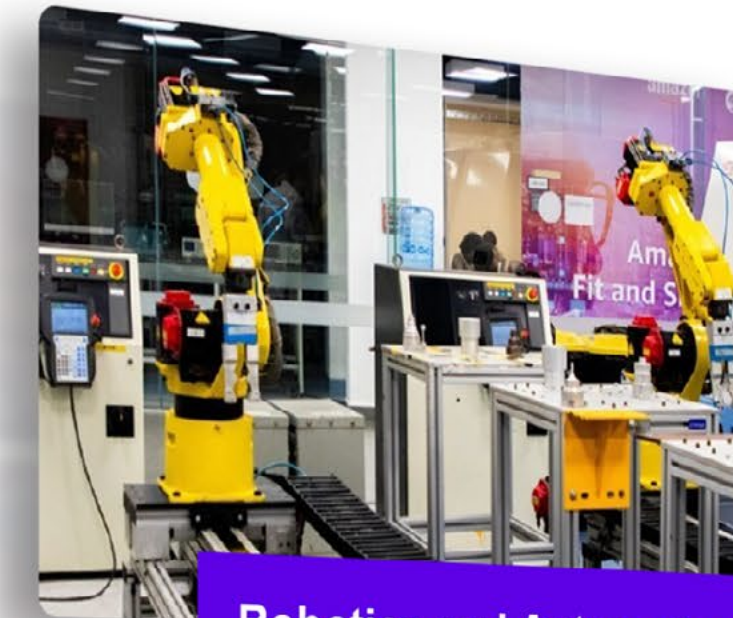




Drivers and trends in play

Artificial Intelligence and Robotics and Automation are increasingly reshaping customer experiences, while the Cult of Immediacy is driving up expectations of speed and efficiency among brands and consumers. But a new realization is emerging – that these advances are not always translating into higher customer satisfaction or cost savings.

Meanwhile, consumers are embracing a more Personal Pace, looking to slow down and engage more meaningfully with the world around them. They are drawn to Tactile and Tangible experiences, as well as Human Encounters and opportunities to enhance their Social Wellness. Brands can integrate these elements into customer journeys and touchpoints, combining convenience with deeper, more fulfilling connections.



Robotics and Automation



Tactile and Tangible



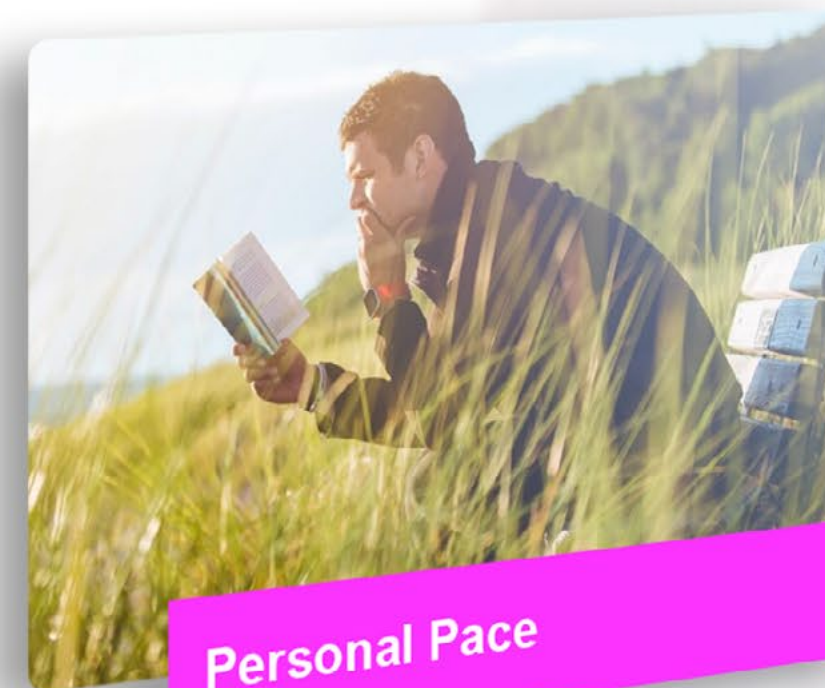
Social Wellness



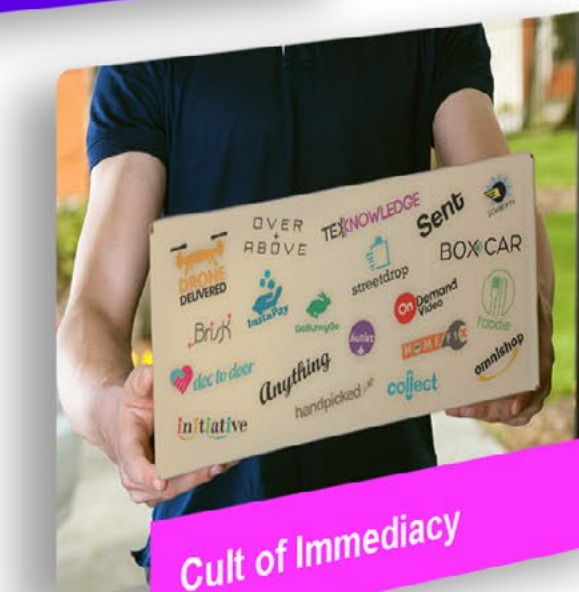
Artificial Intelligence



Human Encounters



Personal Pace

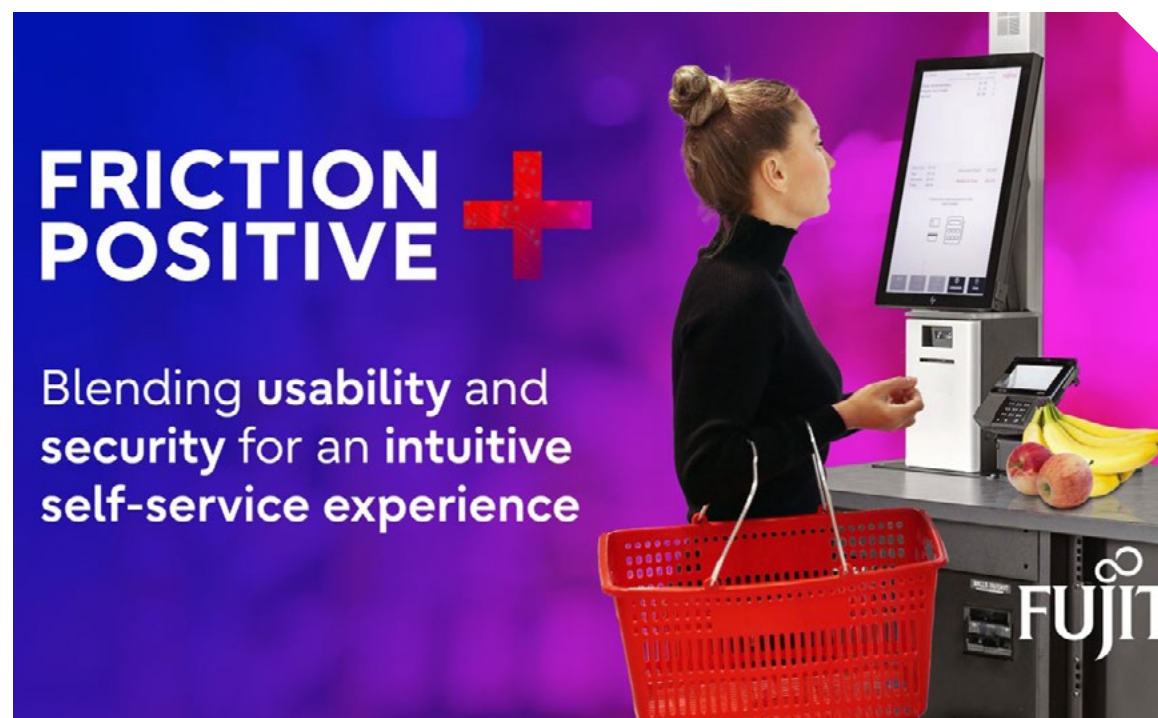


Cult of Immediacy



Commercial activity and emerging signals

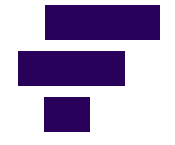
The commercial activity and signals relating to this opportunity space highlight a broader pattern of the pitfalls of convenience-driven processes, products and services being uncovered. We also see examples of consumers adopting slower, more intentional alternatives.



Fujitsu's Friction Positive AI campaign points out that not all friction at checkout is detrimental

Talk to us about **Collision** access now and dive into **Opportunity Scan** – your gateway to market dominance.

As always, our team is ready to help you spot and exploit new whitespace for maximum impact.



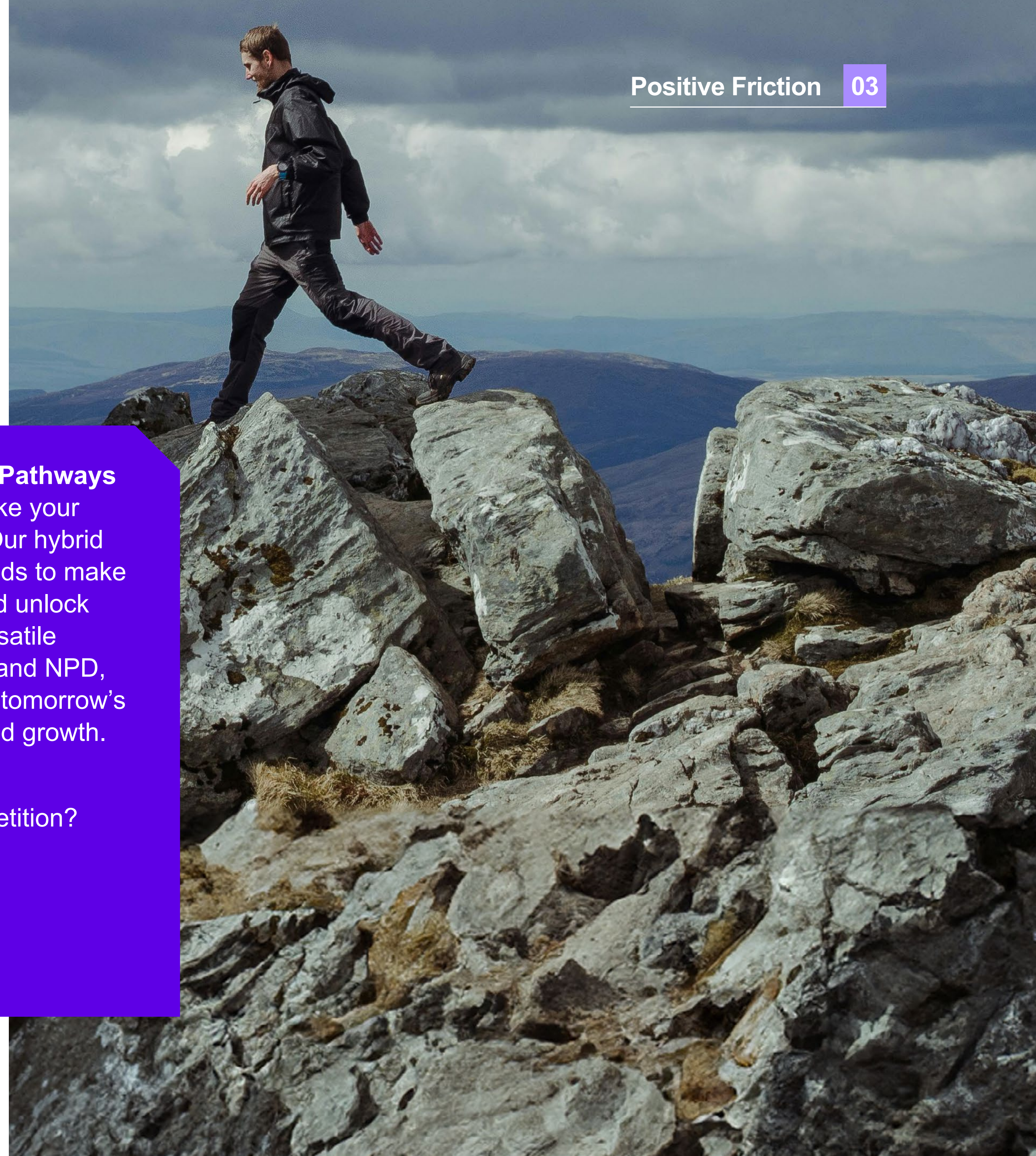
Strategic imperatives

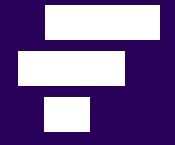
Prepare to put the brakes on

Prioritize mindful, slower approaches to engagement with your brand, products and services. Deliver personalized customer journeys that prioritize exploration and consideration. Design products that encourage careful focus for maximum enjoyment. And ensure you create time and space for customers to raise questions and seek advice.

Talk to us about **Predictive Pathways** for trend frameworks and take your business to the next level. Our hybrid consultancy empowers brands to make consumer-first decisions and unlock long-term opportunities. Versatile across strategy, marketing, and NPD, we align your business with tomorrow's needs, fueling innovation and growth.

Ready to outpace the competition?
Contact us today.





The Relationships Industry

Overcoming disconnection with new bonds





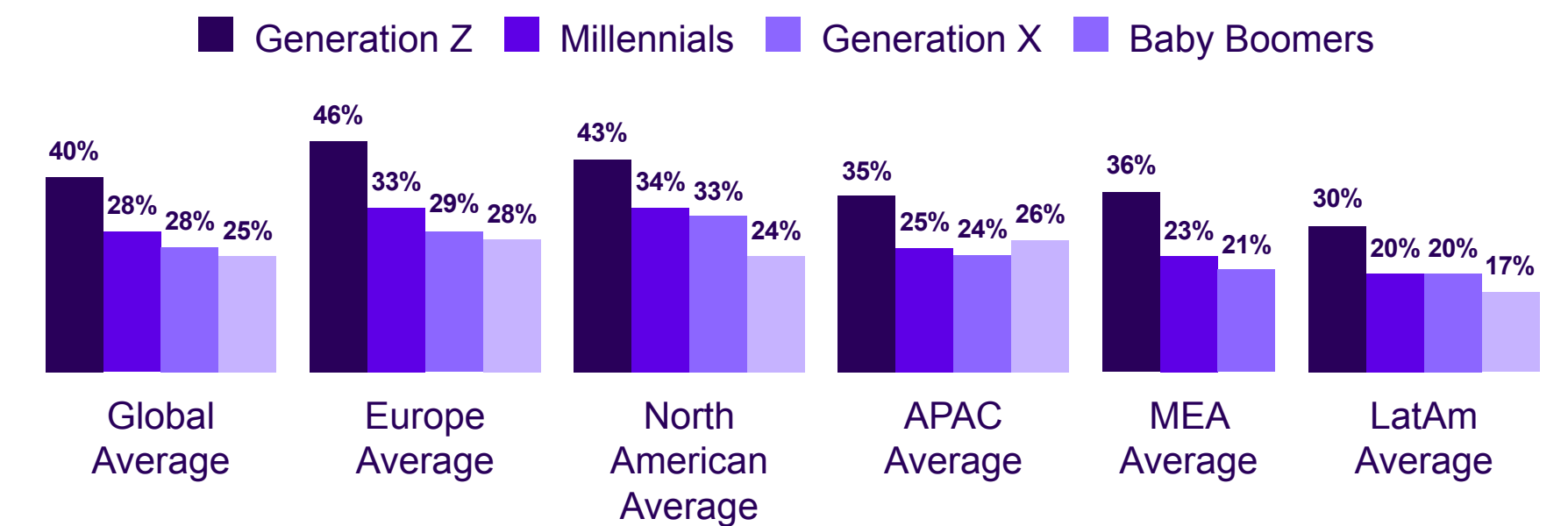
What you need to know

We may live in a hyper-connected world, yet feelings of isolation have become widespread. Whatever the cause – the tilt towards individualism and a culture of self-care and boundary-setting, the shift to remote interaction and work, social polarization – many people feel a sense of disconnection. However, rather than resigning to this reality, consumers are actively seeking ways to nurture existing bonds and forge new ones, even via unconventional means.

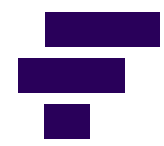


Younger consumers feel especially at risk of loneliness

% who consider loneliness a personal risk over the next 5 years



Source: Foresight Factory, 27-country Global Average/Regional Averages, 16+, 2024



You already see the amount of money people are paying for Tinder Premium or Hinge Premium. People are desperate to find connection. Loneliness will 1,000 percent be a category investors put money into and that companies build. It could be just as big as mental health, if not bigger.”

Natalie Dillon, partner at venture capital firm **Maveron**

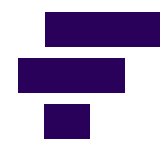




What you need to know

This is leading to the commercialization and professionalization of relationship-building. AI companions can now step in to replicate human relationships, while metaverse experiences offer opportunities for immersive intimacy. In everyday life, we see the rise of boutique gyms and leisure experiences designed to bring people together – whether for romantic or platonic purposes. Even family dynamics are changing: some parents are going as far as paying their children to be full-time, stay-at-home dependents, while couples turn to **Slack** and similar tools to manage and maintain their relationships.





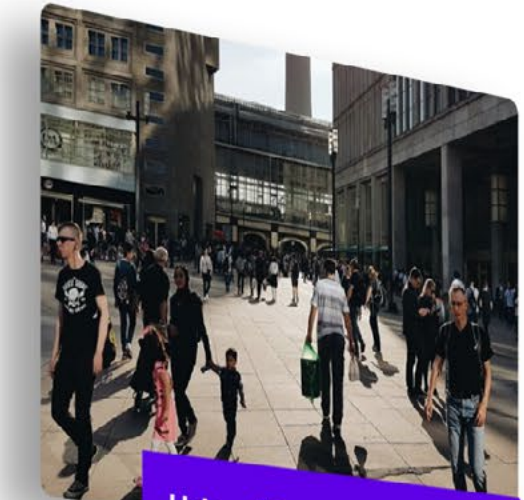
Drivers and trends in play

The **Lifestage Delay** is prompting more individuals to postpone or forgo traditional milestones like marriage and starting a family. This has contributed to a rise in **Solo Living**, with more consumers living alone both earlier and later in life. As societies move towards becoming an **Urban Majority**, many find building close relationships or community more difficult. **Presence-free Living** – where much of our interaction takes place online – can leave connections feeling distant or superficial.

In response to this, consumers are actively seeking out deeper, more meaningful connections. As explored in **Social Wellness**, there is a growing recognition that social connections are not just beneficial but essential to maintaining physical and mental wellbeing. Similarly, as highlighted in **Networked Family**, families are working to forge stronger emotional and financial ties within households and across generations.



Networked Family



Urban Majority



Social Wellness



Solo Living



Presence-free Living



The Lifestage Delay



Commercial activity and emerging signals

We have identified a number of signals relating to the epidemic of loneliness around the world, along with consumers' disillusionment with dating apps and a desire for new ways to meet people for both romantic and platonic relationships. We see brands offering practical ways to help bring people together, either in real-life or virtual settings.

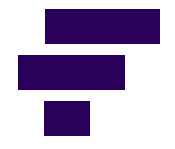


Renault's Relationship Breakdown Cover gives car buyers a full refund if they subsequently divorce

Discover localized foresight with global reach through Collision:

- Compare audiences across diverse markets and countries
- Uncover local nuances, like Gen Z in APAC vs. Baby Boomers in the USA

Ready to unlock powerful audience insights? [Contact us](#) for a [Collision](#) demo or sign up today.



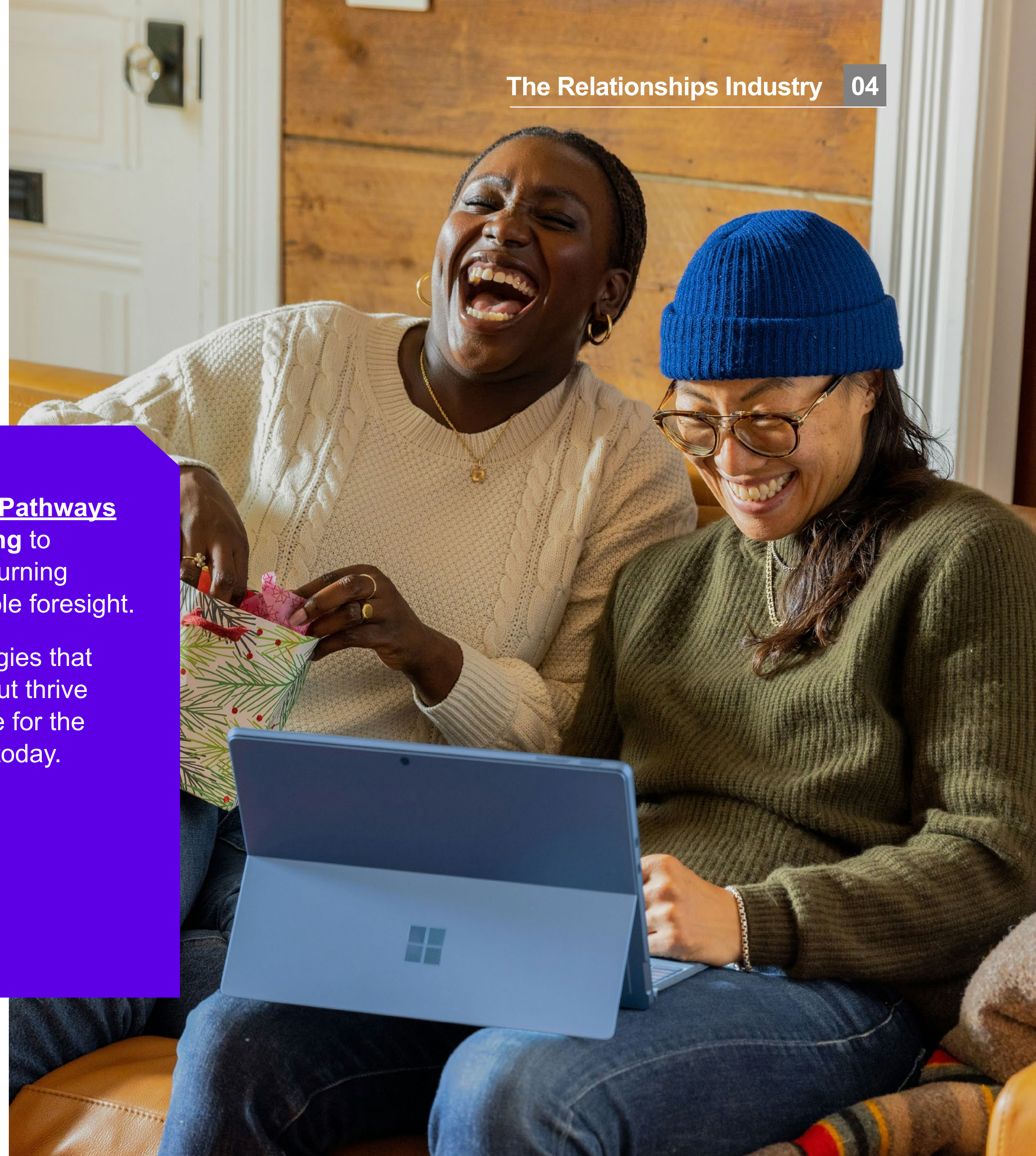
Strategic imperatives

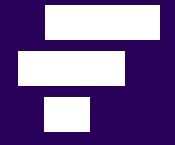
Establish yourself as the go-to partner in relationship building

Consumers are looking for ways to form and strengthen bonds. Capitalize on this demand by offering platforms, products and services that support relationship management in various contexts. For instance, offer immersive digital experiences for maintaining long-distance intimacy, organize real-world events that connect consumers face-to-face and explore platforms that support diverse relationship dynamics.

Transform uncertainty into opportunity with [Predictive Pathways](#) and [Scenarios and Planning](#) to stress-test your strategies, turning long-term risks into actionable foresight.

The result? Proactive strategies that don't just adapt to change but thrive through it. Don't just prepare for the future—own it. [Contact us](#) today.

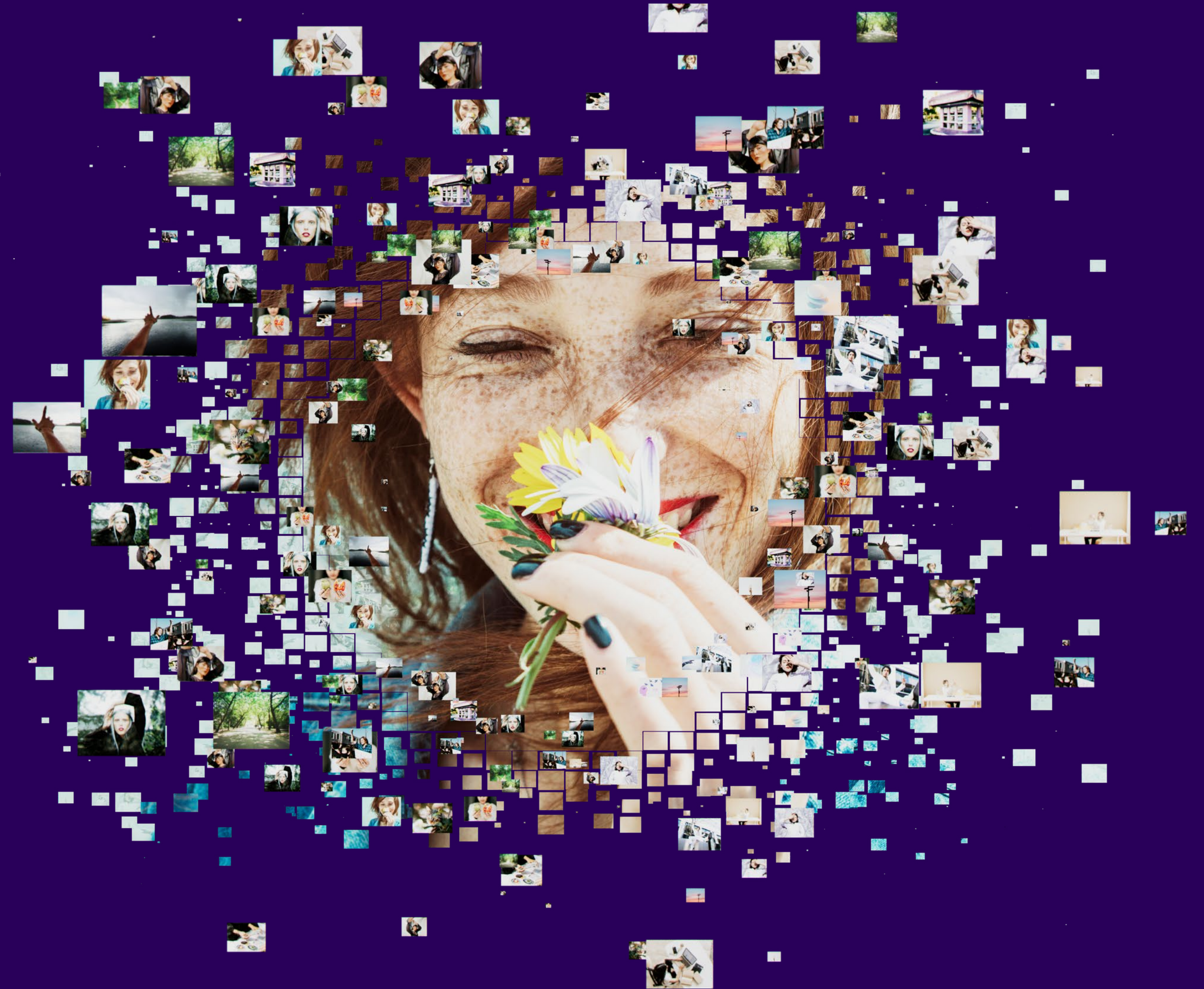


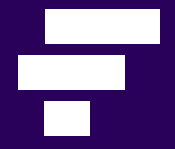


Acting on Intuition

Elevating instinct as ultimate life guide

Why not become a client and unlock this key opportunity from the report? [Talk to us.](#)





Vigilante Vibes

Stepping up where the system falls short

Why not become a client and unlock this key opportunity from the report? [Talk to us.](#)





Find growth with the global leaders in consumer prediction

As trailblazers in strategic foresight, we provide an unparalleled understanding of consumers in context, opening the door to new avenues for growth. Our unique approach revolutionizes how you approach strategy, enabling our clients to leave competitors in the dust.

Discover our three powerful services, designed to give your business an unbeatable advantage, transforming data into foresight and foresight into impactful action:

01 Collision Platform

An AI-powered, self-service powerhouse that delivers real-time consumer insights and foresight, giving you a complete view of current and emerging trends.

02 Predictive Pathways

A groundbreaking hybrid consultancy that merges flexible digital tools with expert human insight, providing you with targeted, forward-looking consumer intelligence for bold decision-making.

03 Foresight Advisory

A full-service strategic partnership that collaborates with C-suite leaders to forge proactive, transformative strategies that conquer future business challenges.

Don't wait for change - drive it. [Reach out to us today](#) and redefine your strategic possibilities.

