

**Trending 2026**

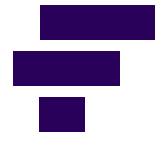
# **The Adaptation Advantage**

Adjusting to the constant pulse  
of crisis and polarization

**Report Preview**







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# A note from our CEO

“

2025 has been a year of magnitude. Entire countries and beloved brands under cyber-attack. Powerful people contradicted and canceled. Free speech championed and censored all at once.

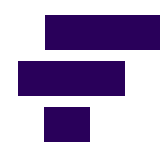
The meaning of democracy is being called into question, while the definition of “politically correct” is up for grabs as values shift. And intensifying polarization may be ripping apart our very ability to connect or form intimate bonds.

This is our guide to where to meet the human amid all the change, chaos and unpredictability. May you approach the year ahead with an adaptable mindset as contradictory behaviors and counter trends take hold, old norms become new again, and commercial opportunities emerge in unexpected places.”

Meabh Quoirin







# Welcome to The Adaptation Advantage

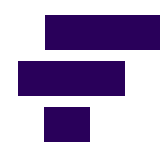
**Same old chaos, new consumer behaviors.** Just like last year and the year before that, 2026 is again beset by geopolitical unrest, economic turmoil and societal polarization. This time, though, crisis-fatigued consumers are settling into a rhythm of tactical adaptation. They're learning to live with the ambient uncertainty, and they're resorting to wide-ranging strategies to see them through.

**We're witnessing a shake-up of identities, priorities, beliefs and spending behaviors, creating tension among consumers.** The consumer landscape is now defined by contradiction. For every person who subscribes to an attitude, there's another who sees the world in a wholly different way and adjusts their behavior to match that reality. Four key opportunity spaces have emerged in this landscape, demanding fresh adaptation and innovation from consumers and brands alike.

**Brands must adapt to this new reality, leaning into the consumer behaviors that most align with business objectives and values.** This excerpt from our Trending 2026 report highlights four key opportunity spaces for the year ahead, with a deep dive into **Cognitive Crossroads** and an overview of three others. The full report, available exclusively to clients, provides detailed analysis and strategic steps for navigating 2026. [Contact us](#) to become a client and access the complete report.





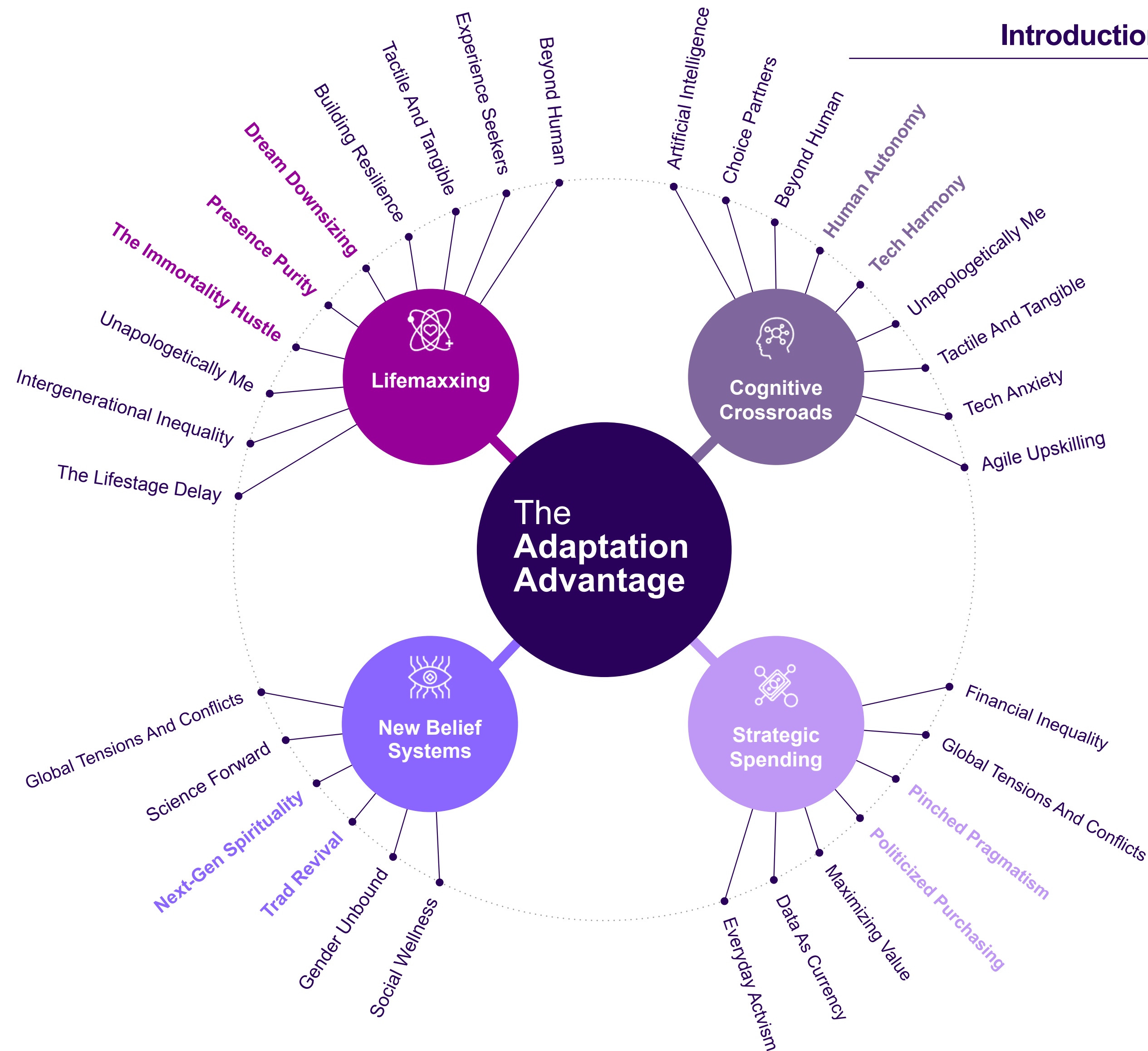


# Our methodology

The **Trending 2026** report was built by synthesizing quantitative and qualitative data from a diverse range of sources including:

- Our proprietary consumer research spanning 27 markets and 26,000 consumers
- 4,000 daily commercial signals including press releases, patents and news articles
- Qualitative insights from our London Gen Z focus group to provide on-the-ground perspective on emerging cultural shifts
- Continuous scanning of case studies and weak signals
- Monitoring of social media posts and **Google Trends** search data
- Economic data and forecasts from **Oxford Economics**
- Expert analysis from our global team

Some of visuals in this report were created by our partner design agency and generated using the text-to-image AI program **Midjourney**.



In the framework above, new opportunity spaces and energized consumer behaviors for 2026 are in color. The trends and drivers giving them momentum are in dark purple.





# Making the most of this report

The goal of our annual Trending project is to identify and articulate the mood of the year, so brands like yours are better prepared to align with culture and resonate with the consumer mindset. Think of it as a strategic compass to help you:

➤ Focus your yearly planning cycle

➤ Embed data-backed foresight into your decision-making

➤ Spark creative ideas across campaign and product development







# Turning awareness into action

## Follow-up actions for you

While this report offers a robust overview of the consumer in 2026, the real value comes from applying these insights to your specific needs and challenges.

To help you get started, we've included two new additions:

### 1 Strategic actions

Alongside each opportunity area, you'll find a set of practical steps for translating big-picture shifts into brand actions. These are anchored in the day-to-day reality of business operations – from brand positioning to internal team alignment. Use these to guide your thinking around what to prioritize, who to involve and how to mitigate risk.

### 2 Activation scorecard

Work with us to complete an activation scorecard bespoke to your brand – a springboard for identifying which opportunity spaces and consumer behaviors are most relevant to your brand and customers. Click [here](#) to jump to the end of the report and access the scorecard. Reach out to your account manager for more tailored guidance on how to use it.





# Cognitive Crossroads

Consumers are navigating the evolving tensions between human agency and technological partnership







# Cognitive Crossroads

Advances in widely accessible AI are reshaping how connected consumers think, work and make everyday decisions. Routine activities that once demanded deep focus – from writing and planning to problem-solving and product discovery – can now be effortlessly delegated to intelligent systems. The result is a growing blurring between human judgment and machine input, and a rising tension between mental autonomy and algorithmic assistance. As these forces accelerate in 2026 and beyond, consumers will increasingly find themselves at a cognitive crossroads.

**The most energized consumer behaviors within this opportunity space are:**

## Tech Harmony

Leveraging AI as a partner to stay competitive and streamline everyday life

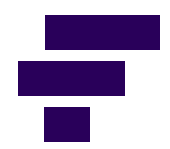


## Human Autonomy

Valuing human mastery and originality in a world of shortcuts and tech-overreliance







# Trends and drivers in play

**Agile Upskilling:** The drive to futureproof careers fuels interest in AI capabilities, alongside a strong demand for softer skills that reinforce human mastery.

**Tech Anxiety:** Concerns about the impact of digital engagement on wellbeing push consumers to seek healthier, more balanced relationships with technology.

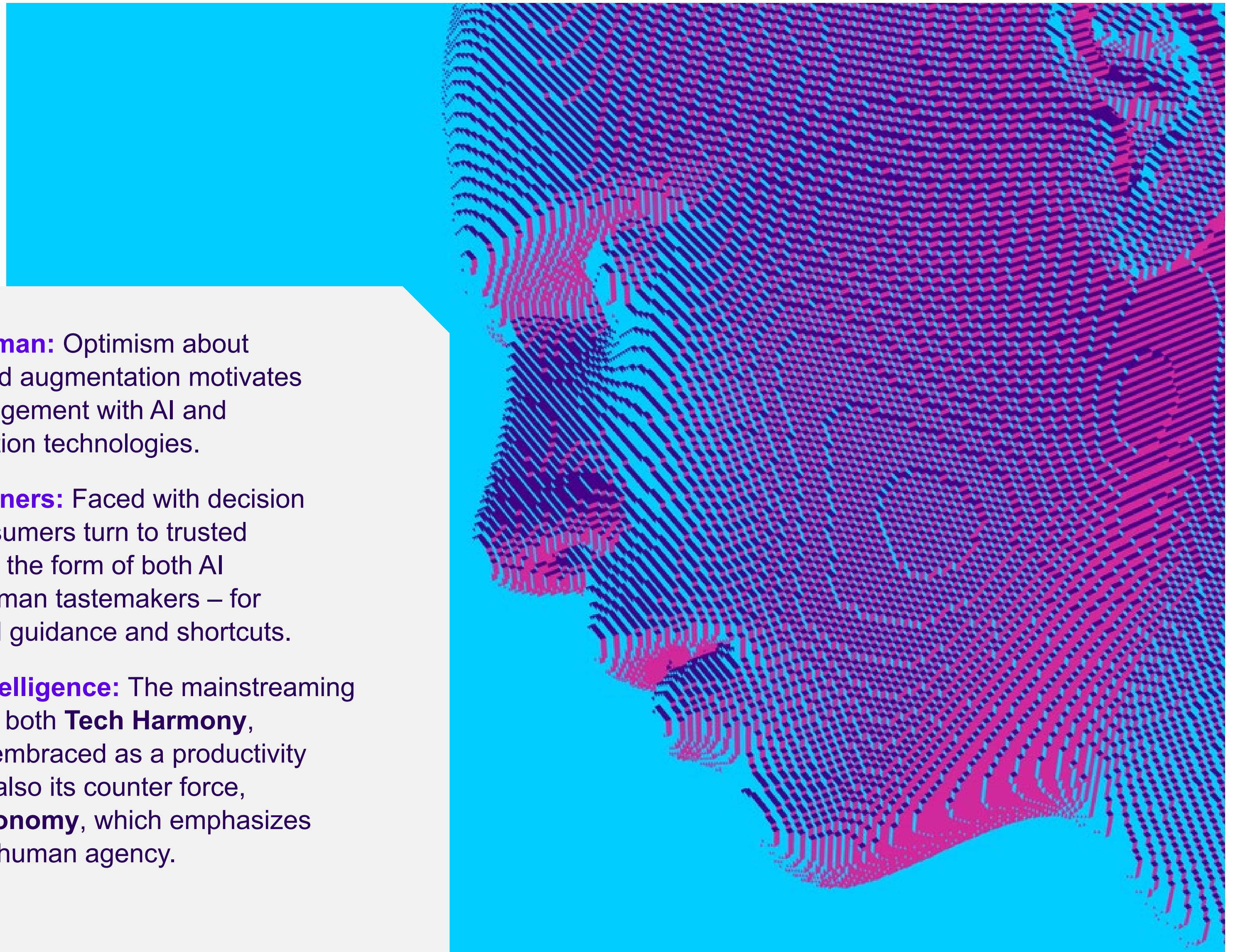
**Unapologetically Me:** Celebrating individuality and imperfection, this trend fuels resistance to algorithmic sameness and strengthens the pull toward **Human Autonomy**.

**Tactile and Tangible:** A revival of hands-on hobbies reflects consumers' desire for analog, human-powered skills.

**Beyond Human:** Optimism about tech-powered augmentation motivates deeper engagement with AI and next-generation technologies.

**Choice Partners:** Faced with decision fatigue, consumers turn to trusted partners – in the form of both AI tools and human tastemakers – for personalized guidance and shortcuts.

**Artificial Intelligence:** The mainstreaming of AI powers both **Tech Harmony**, where AI is embraced as a productivity partner, but also its counter force, **Human Autonomy**, which emphasizes the value of human agency.







# Tech Harmony

Leveraging AI as a partner to stay competitive and streamline everyday life

**Consumers are setting aside concerns about AI to integrate tools into their everyday lives.** While worries about AI's occasional glitches, its voracious appetite for natural resources, and its impact on human intelligence will persist into 2026, many consumers will sideline fears and prioritize utility over caution. With **ChatGPT** now ranking among the top 5 most visited websites in the world, AI has quickly moved from fringe novelty to mainstream necessity – an indispensable co-pilot for work, play and problem-solving.

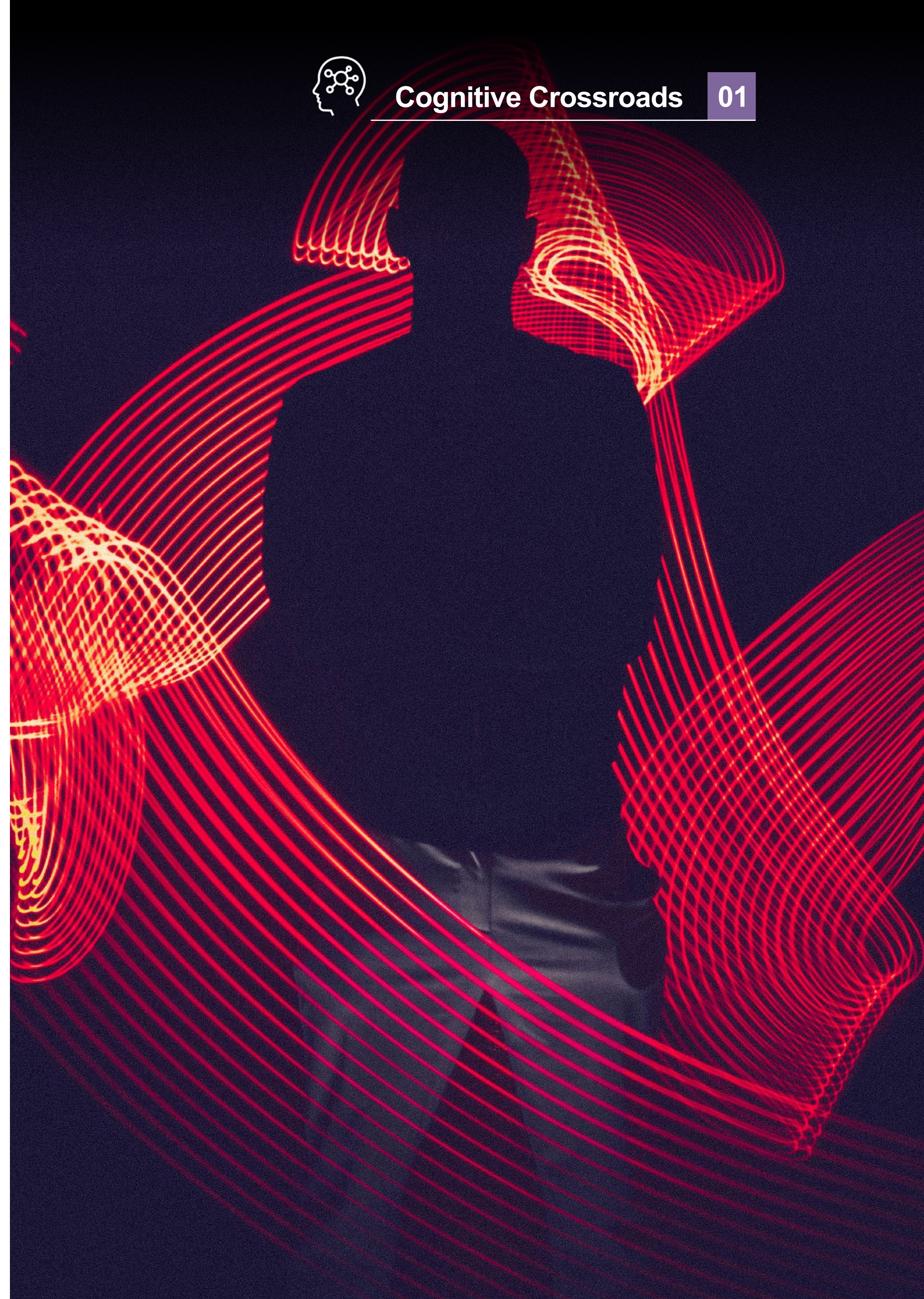






**AI offers what feels like an instant advantage – a cheat code for modern life.** Consumers are using it to complete complex work and school tasks, seek tailored advice and even navigate interpersonal relationships. In a world that feels relentlessly fast-paced and persistently precarious, the promise of an always-on thinking partner – friend, even – is proving irresistible. In this context, calls to moderate general tech usage, including AI, may be increasingly ignored, with disengagement seen as a competitive disadvantage. Meanwhile, influential techno-optimist movements like the **Rationalists** continue to promote AI as a force for good – provided guardrails are in place.

**New AI devices and services will increase momentum in 2026.** The big tech companies have poured billions into AI development, and it is firmly in their interest to drive mass adoption to recoup those investments. Expect aggressive rollouts, from **OpenAI's** anticipated launch of an AI-powered device to dating platforms' launch of AI "wingmen". We can also expect "multimodal" AI interfaces that integrate seamlessly across devices and can handle all manner of inputs, embedding smart assistance into more moments of life and disrupting longstanding pathways to discovery and purchase. As with past platform shifts, consumer expectations will rise in step; just as **Amazon** set the benchmark for customer service, **ChatGPT** and its peers are setting the standard for intuitive, reliable AI engagement – a bar that brands will be expected to match.

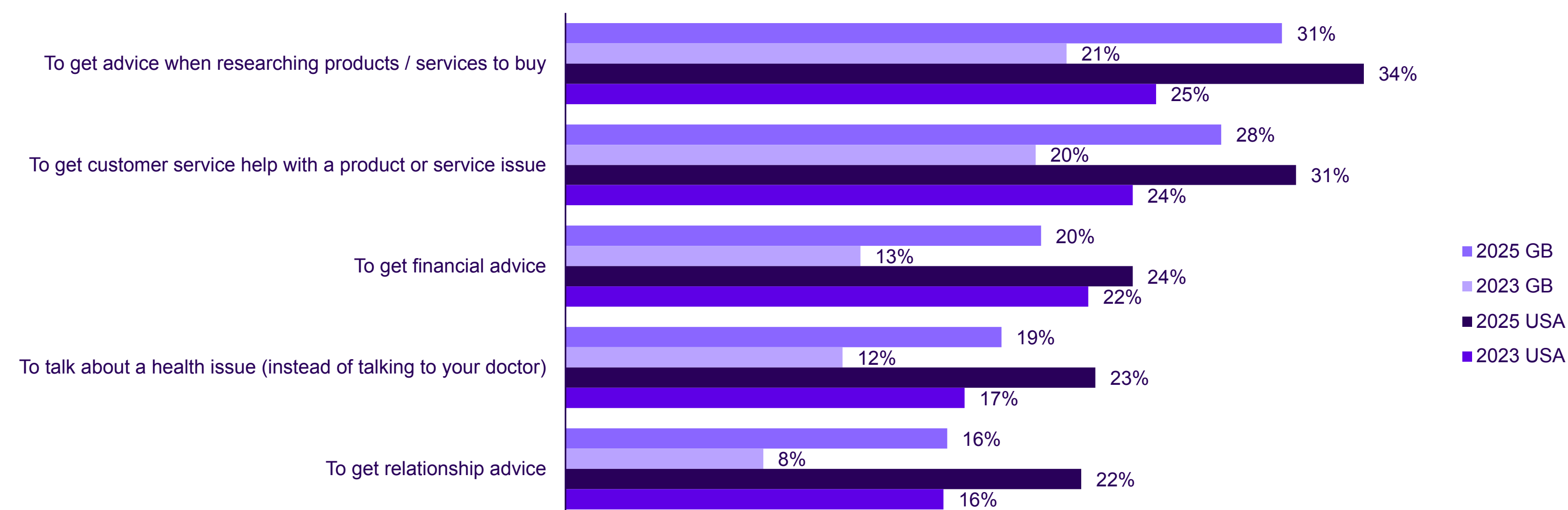






## Comfort with AI is on the rise, but still limited

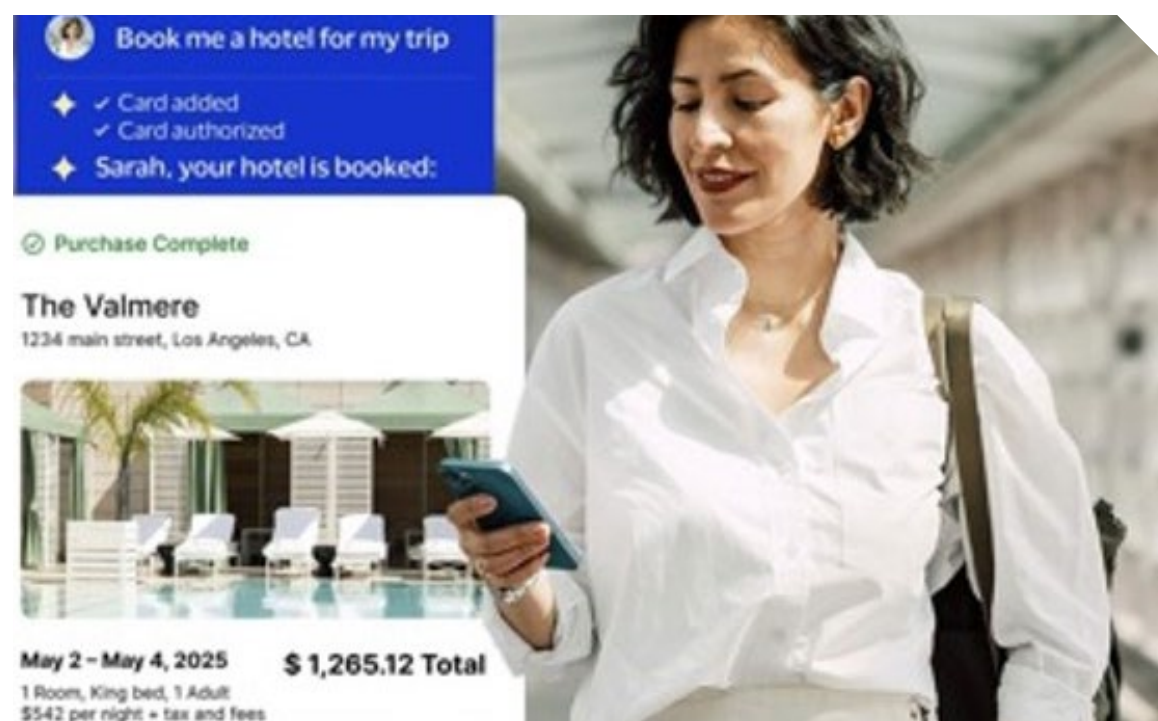
% of consumers saying they would be comfortable using AI chat services in selected contexts



Source: Foresight Factory | GB and USA, 2025



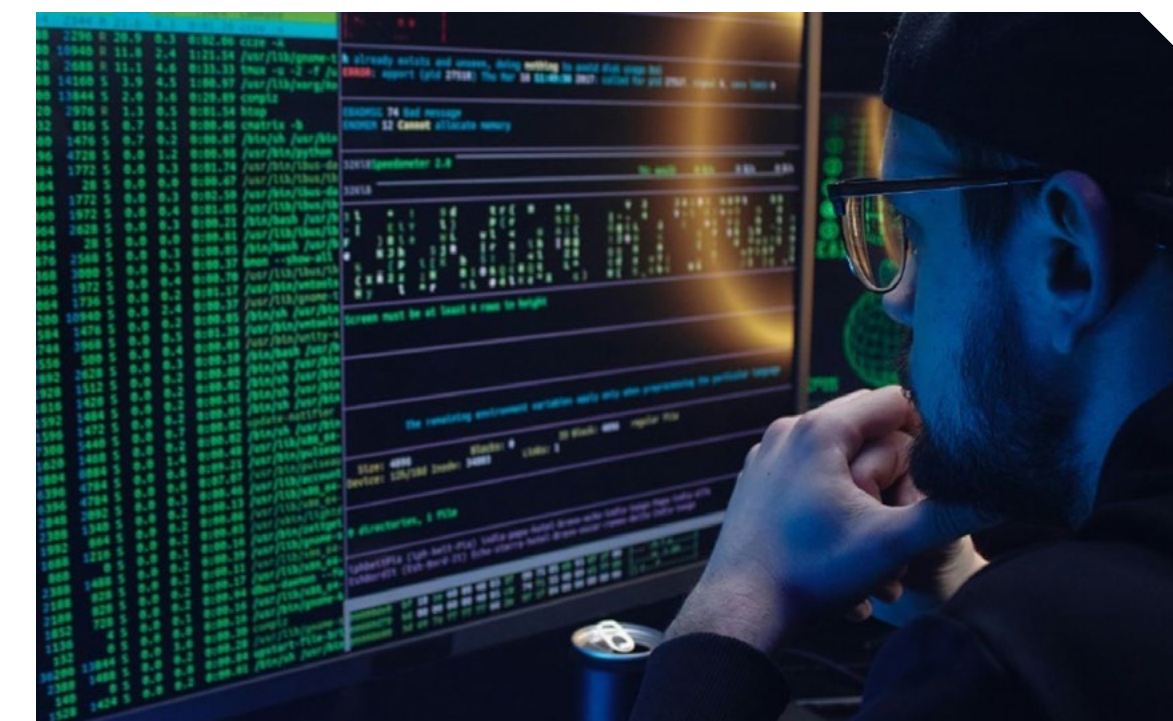
# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



**Visa's Intelligent Commerce** initiative is building systems that enable AI agents to handle purchases, with or without customer involvement.

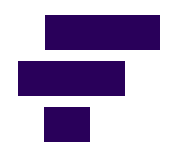


**Tainá** is an AI assistant created to preserve knowledge about Indigenous communities in Brazil – showing how AI could become a vital cultural gatekeeper.

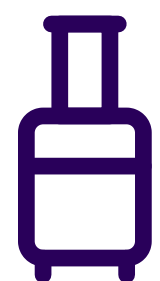


“Vibecoding”, made possible through AI, is democratizing the world of coding, allowing anyone to create their own apps without any background or expertise.





## How to adapt to Tech Harmony

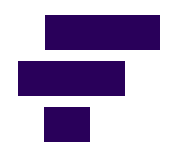


### Travel

- **Opportunity: Position AI as an invisible concierge.** Explore how AI can support across the entire traveler journey – from recommending trips, simplifying visas and paperwork and providing real-time translation and safety updates.
- **Watchout: Be careful not to strip away serendipity.** Over-optimization risks erasing the spontaneity and cultural connection that can make travel experiences especially memorable. Consider how to balance optimization with intentional friction points that encourage curiosity and self-directed choice.





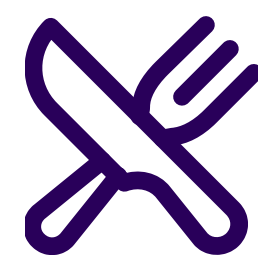


## How to adapt to Tech Harmony



### Automotive and Mobility

- **Opportunity: Position in-car AI as a trusted co-pilot.** From predictive maintenance to real-time route coaching or even AI-powered personas for long drives, automotive brands can reframe AI as not just a gimmick but a safety, convenience and companion feature.
- **Watchout: Live up to your AI-related claims.** Glitches, connectivity issues or poor AI decision-making in a high-stakes activity like driving could quickly erode trust. Human override options and clarity on which actions are best left to manual activation will be essential.



### Food and Beverage

- **Opportunity: Integrate your offering into foodies' AI-powered decision making.** As consumers use AI for ingredient advice and meal planning, embed your products, occasions or services into these models. Experiment with AI-driven recipes, nutrition guidance and tailored meal planning to position AI as a partner that makes better food choices easier and more accessible.
- **Watchout: Don't let AI-generated content leave the kitchen under-seasoned.** "AI-made" food and recipe content may raise doubts unless paired with clear sourcing and strong quality and safety assurances. Differentiate by positioning yourself as a trusted source of food-related content, even when created by in-house AI.

### Other sectors impacted:

Banking  
Consumer Tech  
Health and Wellness  
Hospitality and Events  
Media  
Retail

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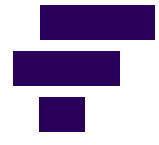
# Human Autonomy

Valuing human mastery and originality in a world of shortcuts and tech-dependence

**AI's benefits are clear, but so are the risks.** Studies warn of the “cognitive cost” of AI reliance and the anxiety that can emerge when frequent users feel unable to function without it. Meanwhile, high-profile missteps in business, education and law – such as fabricated case law or over-engineered, misleading imagery – show the pitfalls of uncritical use. Concerns over outsourcing mental labor now sit alongside broader anxieties over AI's role in employment disruption, geopolitical tensions and environmental strain.







**A cultural backlash is taking shape, championing human agency and originality.** Online, new slang like “slopper” mocks those seen as overly reliant on AI, while some identify as “AI vegans,” rejecting algorithmic assistance altogether. Meanwhile, ads promoting AI features are often ridiculed for portraying people as automatons unable to think for themselves. Effort and imperfection are gaining new currency as proof of something authentically human in an era of machine-polished output, and tactile experiences requiring self-directed focus and initiative – from calligraphy to live-action theatre to elaborate home-cooking – are enjoying renewed appeal.

**Human agency will remain non-negotiable.** We don’t foresee a wholesale rejection of AI – just as years of **Tech Anxiety** have not halted the spread of digital tools – but rather a demand for a world where people retain control and practice the qualities that set them apart from machines. Brands that champion these traits – curiosity, creativity, autonomy – and that embed human touch into their offerings and engagement strategies, will likely stand out in the AI era.

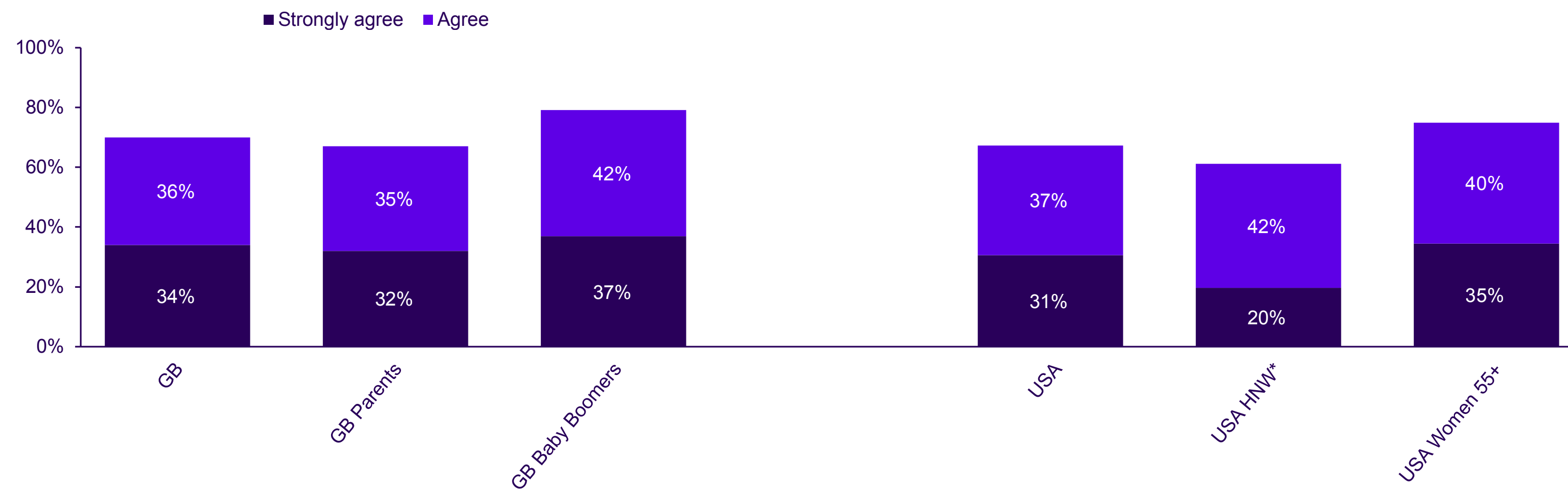






## Many are concerned about the future intellectual cost of heavily relying on AI

% who agree that heavy reliance on AI will make future generations less intellectually capable



Source: Foresight Factory | GB and USA, 2025 \*Sample below 100







# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



**Etsy** is on a mission to **Keep Commerce Human**, “despite an industry-wide move toward commoditization and soulless goods”.

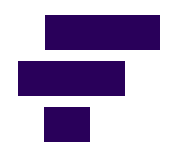


Leading the anti-AI charge are “AI vegans” – those avoiding AI to protect their cognitive autonomy, while also citing environmental and ethical concerns.



Slow, cozy hobbies like knitting, baking and journaling are on the rise, helping consumers acquire new human skills and detox from tech.





## How to adapt to Human Autonomy



### Fashion

- **Opportunity: Showcase craft, imperfection and limited-edition “maker” collections.** Lean into the appeal of human-made by highlighting artisanship and originality in collections, ambassador campaigns and collaborations. Complement this with human-led in-store experiences where skilled assistants can make considered recommendations while also empowering shoppers to follow their own sense of style.
- **Watchout: Don’t confuse artisanal with exclusive or unattainable.** While consumers appreciate craftsmanship, they can be alienated by high prices or a sense of elitism. The challenge is to make the beauty of human-made products feel accessible and relatable, not just a luxury for a select few. The balance lies in celebrating the maker’s skill without creating a barrier to entry for the consumer.







## Banking

- **Opportunity: Position financial literacy and decision-making as empowering acts.** Offer tools that teach customers to master their finances – for instance, via budgeting gamification, what-if scenario visualizations, skill-building workshops, transparent investment platforms – so they feel in charge, not dependent on opaque algorithms. Also highlight how financial know-how can be the strongest defense against scams and fraud.
- **Watchout: Encourage self-discovery and give people a sense of control, but don't withdraw support.** Always position yourself as a reliable backstop, ready to guide customers toward the right tools or professional advice when needed.



## Retail

- **Opportunity: Elevate your staff.** Instead of seeing employees as mere transaction facilitators, position them as experts, curators and artisans. Train them to offer personalized, knowledgeable recommendations that an algorithm can't replicate. This could be a bookseller who knows your tastes and suggests a hidden gem, or a clothing store associate who can curate a complete look for you.
- **Watchout: Don't hide behind fake personas.** Customers will see through a company that uses a person's name or face but still relies on a fundamentally impersonal, AI-driven process. For example, a chatbot that pretends to be a human but provides generic, scripted responses will only frustrate customers and damage trust.

### Other sectors impacted:

Automotive and Mobility  
Beauty and Personal Care  
Food and Beverage  
Health and Wellness  
Hospitality and Events  
Housing and the Home  
Media  
Travel

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## Applying Cognitive Crossroads to your brand: **3 strategic actions**

### **Pinpoint your audience's position on the AI-human spectrum.**

Use internal data and external signals to map where your current and future audiences sit on the adoption curve – from full AI integration to human-led, or a balance of both. Layer in forward-looking scenarios to consider how potential audience or contextual shifts could influence future brand positioning, product roadmaps and broader customer engagement strategies.

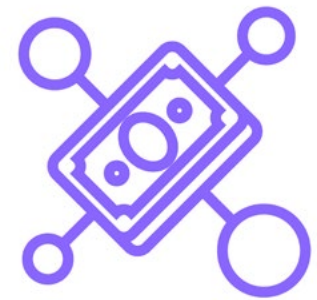
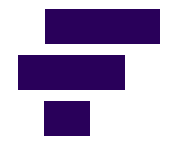
### **Define your brand's unique human and AI value.**

Decide which experiences, processes and touchpoints should be powered by AI for speed and precision, and which should be deliberately human-led to build emotional connection, showcase human creativity and craftsmanship, or foster an empowering sense of agency among customers. Use your brand mission, feasibility considerations and audience insights as a guide, and treat your human-AI mix as a key differentiator in the evolving AI era.

### **Align teams and protect against AI-related brand risks.**

Identify the functions most affected by shifting AI-human dynamics – with CX, marcoms and NPD chief among them – and ensure the right teams collaborate to deliver a consistent, cohesive experience for customers. Also, consider whether your internal culture reflects your external promises: a brand celebrating human ingenuity and originality, for instance, could risk reputational damage if it minimizes human input behind the scenes.





# Strategic Spending

Consumers are being highly intentional with how they spend and where they focus their attention







# Strategic Spending

Consumers are weighing up every purchase and brand interaction, focusing on what matters most to them – whether that's value (price and utility) or values (ideology and political affiliation) – or a blend of both. As economic uncertainty and geopolitical conflicts continue to impact daily life in 2026, consumers will remain vigilant, carefully assessing their spending through the lens of the categories, occasions and issues most relevant to them in the moment.

**The most energized consumer behaviors within this opportunity space are:**

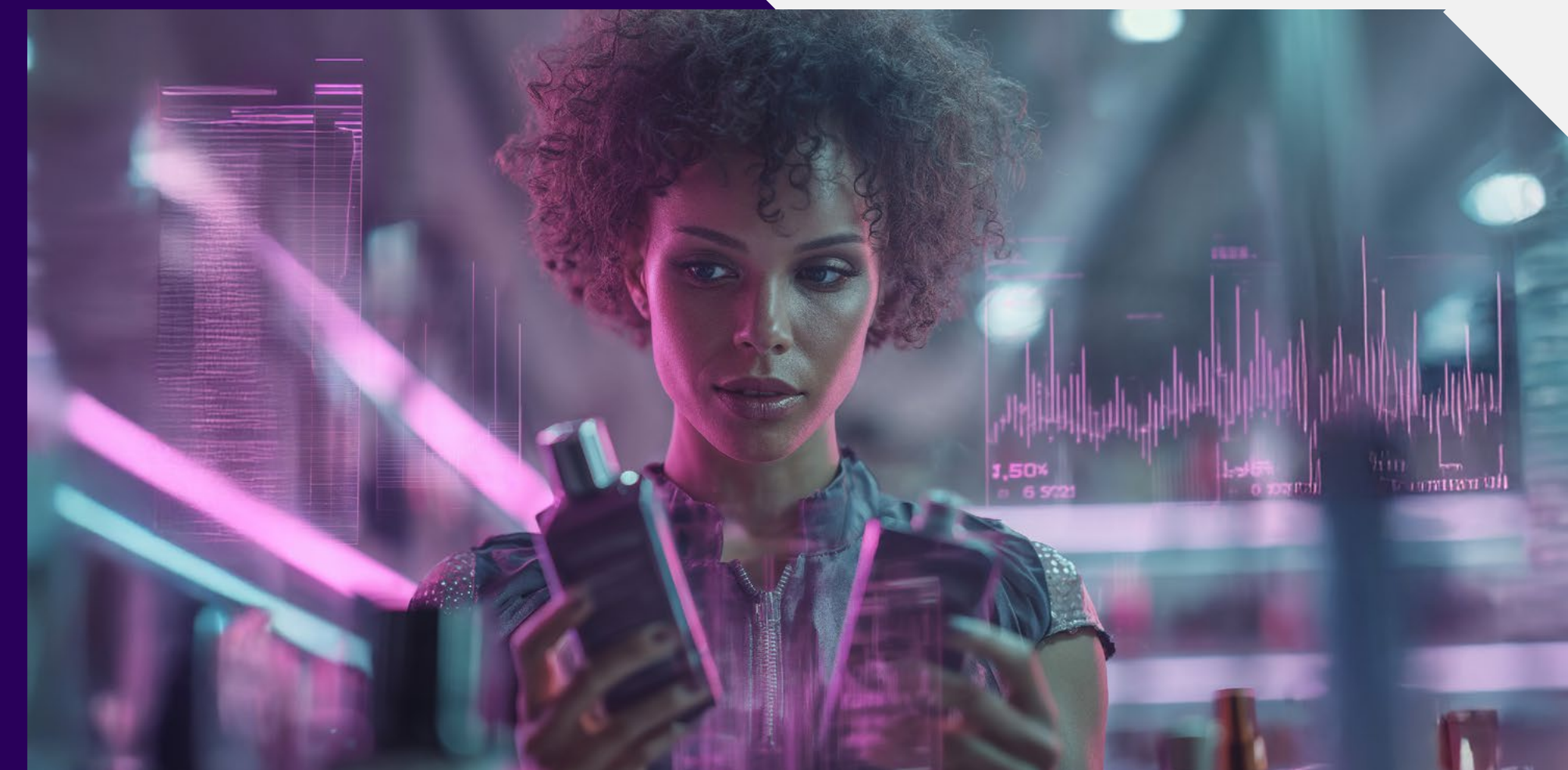
## Politicized Purchasing

Using spending power as a strategic tool for reinforcing personal beliefs

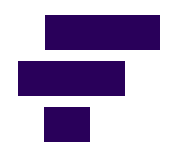


## Pinched Pragmatism

Prioritizing personal comfort, cost and convenience over ideology







# Trends and drivers in play

## Global Tensions and Conflicts:

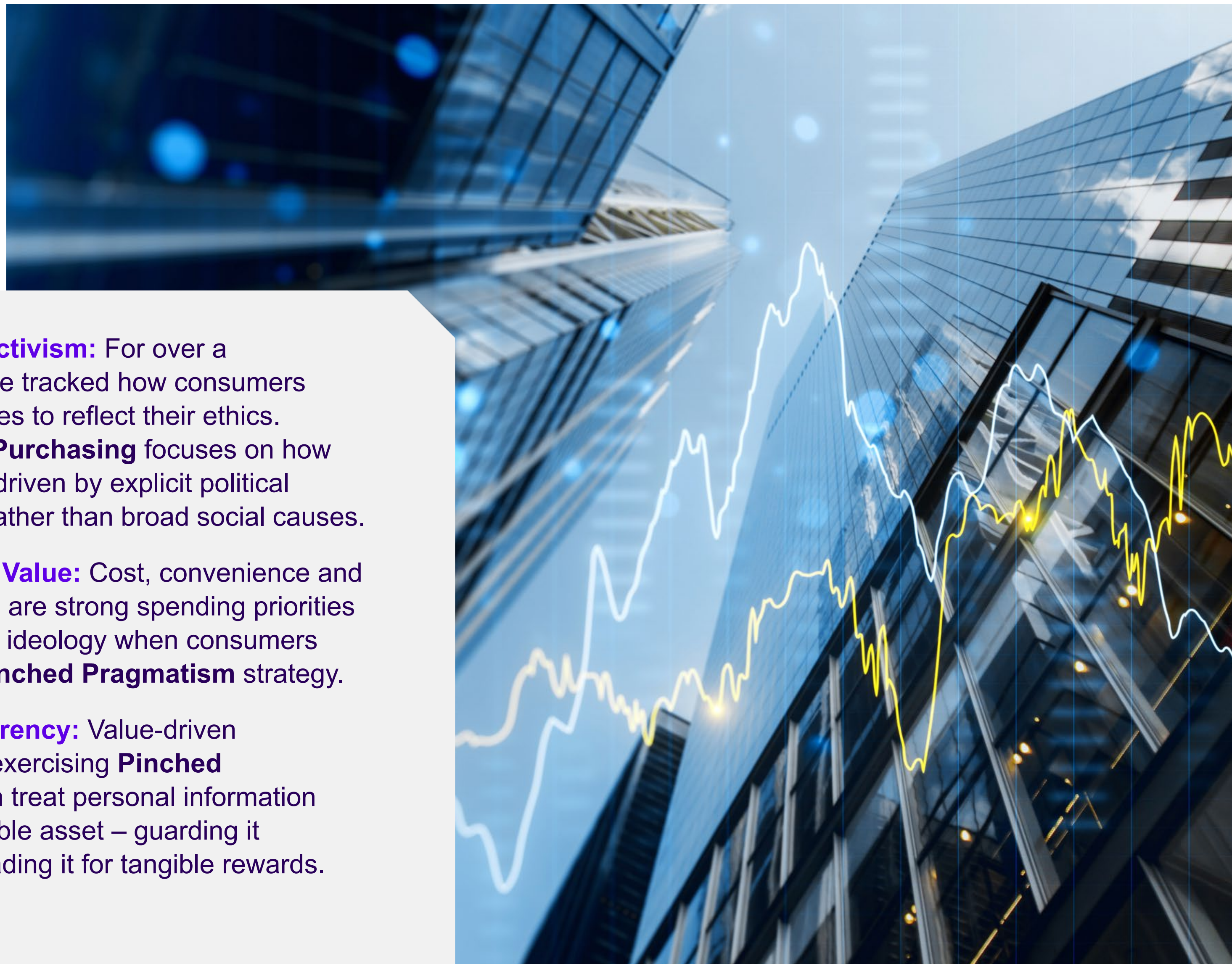
Ongoing geopolitical unrest is a driver behind **Politicized Purchasing**, turning even previously low-stakes decisions into political statements.

**Financial Inequality:** The economic insecurity described in this driver is relevant to both behaviors: **Pinched Pragmatism** sees consumers prioritizing survival in reaction to rising living costs, while **Politicized Purchasing** is in many ways a privilege for those who can afford to let values drive decisions.

**Everyday Activism:** For over a decade we've tracked how consumers use purchases to reflect their ethics. **Politicized Purchasing** focuses on how spending is driven by explicit political affiliations, rather than broad social causes.

**Maximizing Value:** Cost, convenience and overall value are strong spending priorities that override ideology when consumers adopt the **Pinched Pragmatism** strategy.

**Data as Currency:** Value-driven consumers exercising **Pinched Pragmatism** treat personal information as a negotiable asset – guarding it closely or trading it for tangible rewards.







# Politicized Purchasing

Using spending power as a strategic tool for reinforcing personal beliefs

Even the smallest everyday decisions are now loaded with meaning. Consumers are curating their lives to reflect their worldview – from the cars they drive to the events they attend. In 2026, new election cycles and geoeconomics will add to a charged environment where behaviors and consumption choices become key means of signaling allegiance and identity. Brands including **Zara**, **Nestle** and **Reebok** have experienced boycotts because of connections to Israel. **Boycott USA 2026** is calling for football fans to skip the **FIFA World Cup** in the US because of **President Trump's** “alarming authoritarian” policies on trade and immigration. The subreddit **r/BoycottUnitedStates**, founded in February 2025, has more than 49K members.







**Consumers are funneling their money and attention into causes they deem worthy.** While thousands of users have migrated away from **X** since **Elon Musk** took over, many remain loyal due to his stance on free speech. “Buycotting” – the intentional purchase of products that “do good” – is empowering consumers to support causes they care about. And the “sit with me” movement on **TikTok** invites users to raise money or awareness purely by watching other people’s videos, allowing them to use their digital attention to declare allegiance.

**The activist mindset, once associated with progressives, now spans the full political spectrum.** The anti-woke movement has entered the mainstream, with topics like climate change, DEI and vaccine safety increasingly polarized flashpoints. Brands navigating this charged landscape are either choosing more values-neutral positioning, maintaining but downplaying their involvement in such areas – for example through greenhushing – or doubling down on the causes they align with.

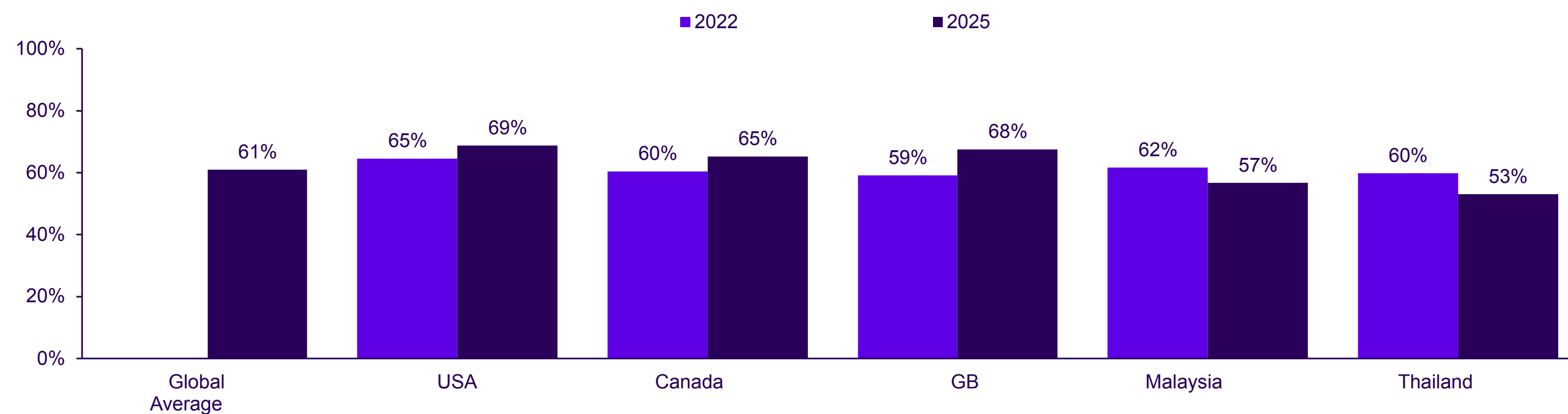






## Most consumers want their purchases to match their principles

% who have a strong or moderate need to buy from brands and companies that reflect their personal values | Adjusted data



Source: Foresight Factory | Base: 657-3777 online respondents per country aged 16-64, 2025







# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



Cosmetics retailer **Lush** closed all of its UK stores for one day to protest the situation in Gaza, with estimated losses of £300,000.

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# Pinched Pragmatism

Prioritizing personal comfort, cost and convenience over ideology

Across many choices, consumers consider their own immediate needs above the needs of society. With 2026 marked by AI-driven labor displacement and economic uncertainty, products, experiences and platforms that can prove their monetary value are increasingly appealing. Brands built around low-cost offerings like **Shein** and **Temu** continue to grow, even as their environmental and ethical downsides become more apparent. As new innovations like AI-powered shopping tools and investing apps empower consumers to more efficiently find better deals, optimize purchases and achieve their financial goals, many are unapologetically putting personal survival and self-interest first — even if this sidelines collective progress.







**Consumers are becoming savvy to money-grabbing tactics.** And they're pushing back against brands that build planned obsolescence into products or use social pressure to encourage consumption. The **Stop Killing Games** movement is on a mission to prevent video games publishers from discontinuing titles after gamers have already spent precious time and money on them. And on **TikTok**, people are rejecting the wellness fads and viral products that vie for their attention, labeling them "propaganda I'm not falling for". Examples range from lip filler to fashion trends and "the wedding industrial complex".

**Function is prized more highly than flashiness.** Expensive bells and whistles are no match for durability when consumers take up a pragmatic mindset. **Slate Auto** is appealing to this sentiment with its "radically simple" modular EV truck, with manual controls and basic functionality and the option to upgrade if and when customers want to. At under \$20,000, the car is aimed at consumers who've been priced out of the electric revolution. Deliveries begin in late 2026.

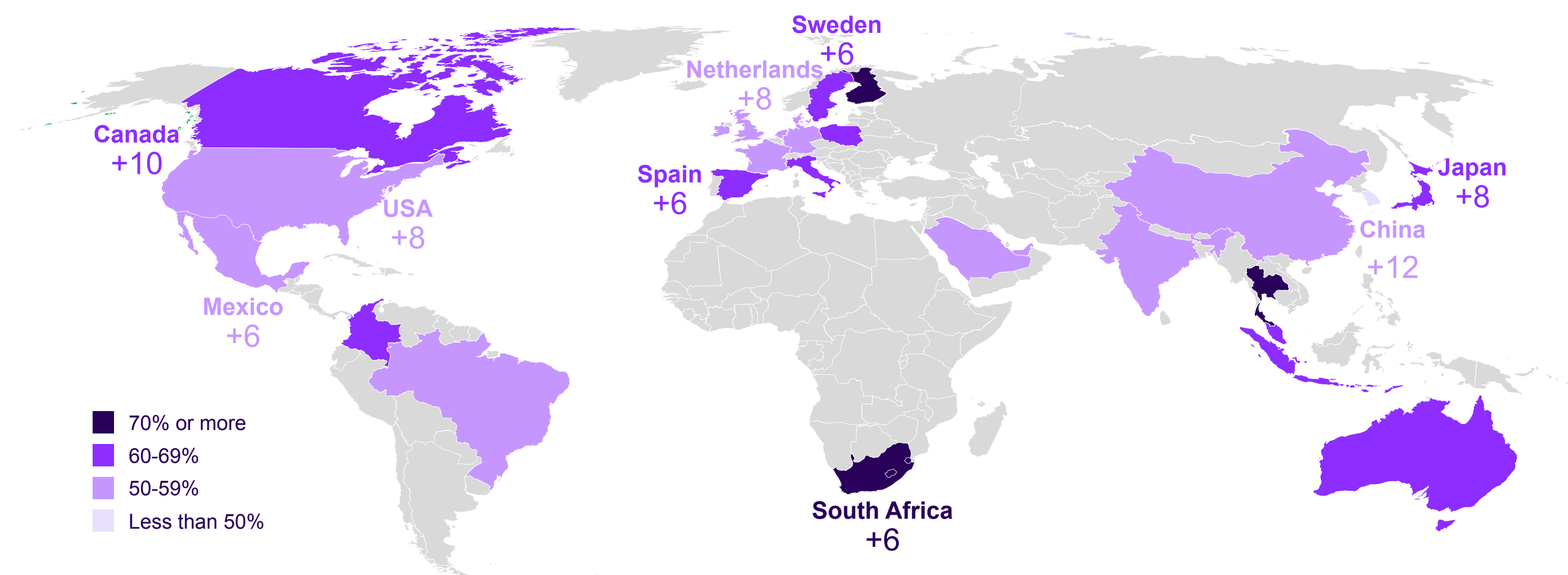






## Across key markets, growing proportions worry about their financial future

Feeling at personal risk of financial hardship in the next five years (percentage-point increase between 2024 and 2025)



Source: Foresight Factory | Base: 681-3881 online respondents per country aged 16-64, 2025







# Explore more cultural and commercial signals

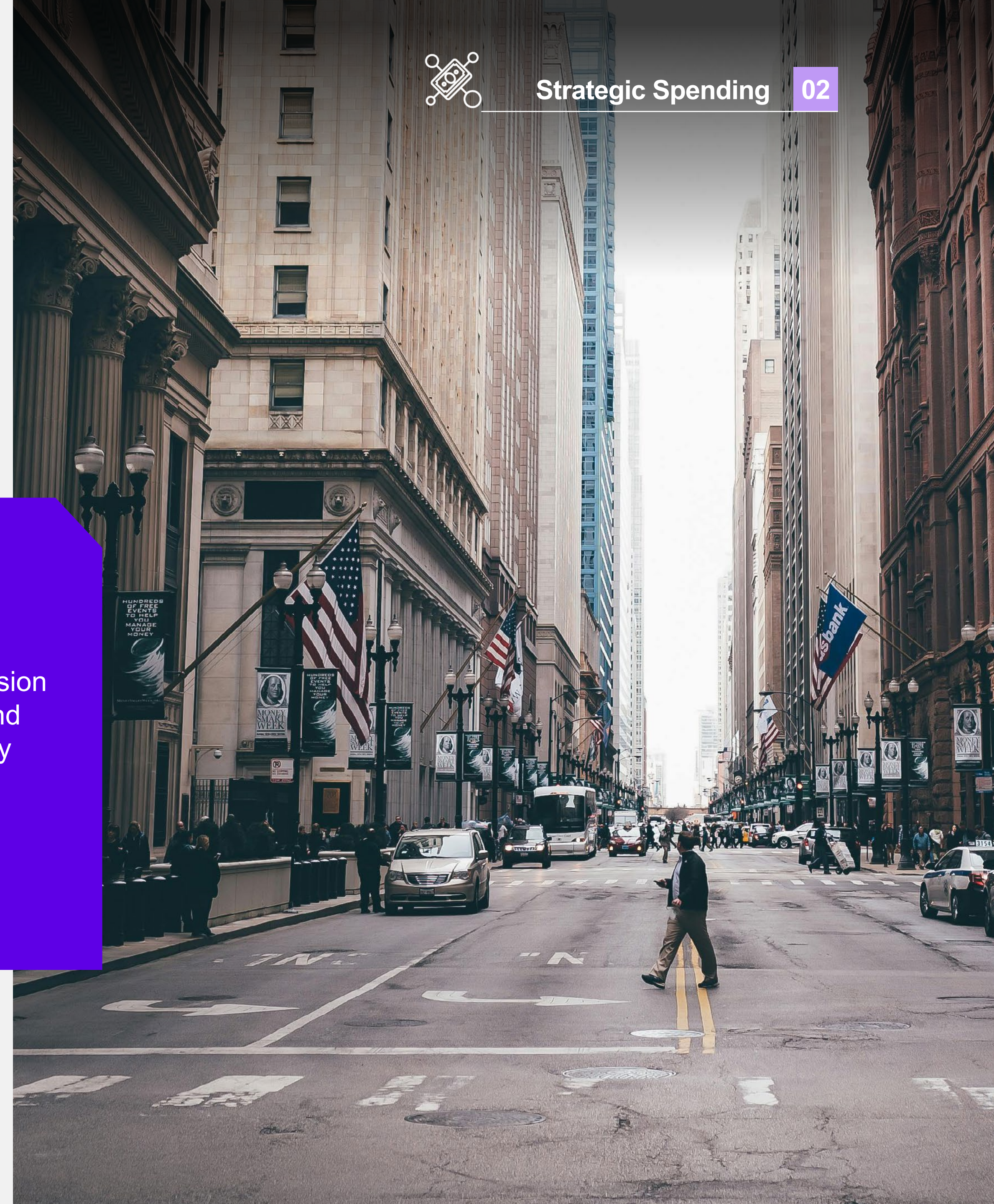


**Slate's** customizable truck comes with basic functionality and the option to upgrade, targeting consumers who've been priced out of the electric revolution.

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## Applying Strategic Spending to your brand: **Strategic action**

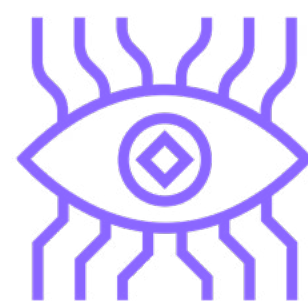
### **Identify the moments and occasions when your audience is most motivated by cause or cost.**

Analyze purchase patterns and other behavioral data to understand the tipping points that drive your customers to swing either way. At the same time, it's important to recognize that there are consumers who sit in the messier middle ground, demanding products that deliver on all fronts. For this segment, motivations may be more complex, blending ethical considerations and value expectations. By tracking how and when these flex, you can tailor your offerings accordingly, making sure you deliver the right message, product or price at the right time.

### **Activate key strategic actions for your brand**

Talk to us about scheduling a tailored workshop where we can help you turn inspiration into concrete action. Fine-tune your 2026 annual planning and longer-term strategic priorities. [Get in touch](#)





# New Belief Systems

Consumers are reviving tradition and reimagining faith in a world of uncertainty







# New Belief Systems

Faced with ongoing economic and geopolitical disruption, cultural fragmentation and institutional decline, consumers are constructing new belief systems – or returning to old ones. As institutional anchors like the government and media lose credibility, people are searching for emotional structure and a sense of belonging. In 2026, a cultural shift is underway: people are swapping surface-level engagement for deeper commitments to practices and communities that provide real meaning.

**The most energized consumer behaviors within this opportunity space are:**

## Next-gen Spirituality

Turning to sacred signals and cosmic guidance for grounding and connection



## Trad Revival

Finding stability and belonging through traditional frameworks and values







# Trends and drivers in play

## Global Tensions and Conflicts:

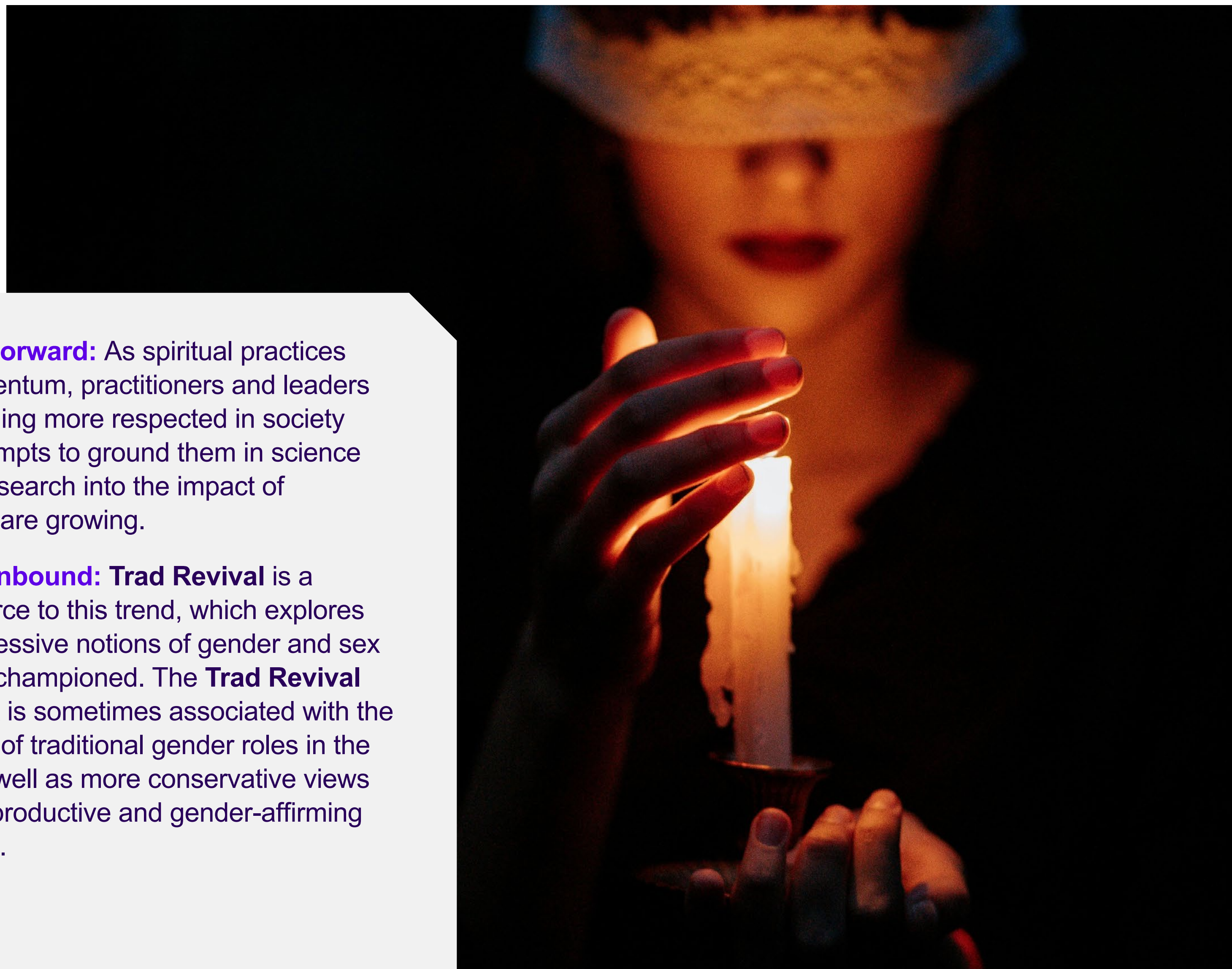
Consumers' search for meaning is in part driven by the distress and uncertainty generated by this driver.

**Social Wellness:** This trend underscores the importance of positive social connections to overall wellbeing, something spiritual and religious communities can provide.

**Ancient Rituals:** A trend we have been tracking since 2018, this describes how consumers are looking to the ancient past for modern-day guidance.

**Science Forward:** As spiritual practices gain momentum, practitioners and leaders are becoming more respected in society – and attempts to ground them in science through research into the impact of spirituality are growing.

**Gender Unbound: Trad Revival** is a counter force to this trend, which explores how progressive notions of gender and sex are being championed. The **Trad Revival** movement is sometimes associated with the promotion of traditional gender roles in the home, as well as more conservative views around reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare.







# Next-gen Spirituality

Turning to sacred signals and cosmic guidance for grounding and connection

In 2026, spirituality is evolving, in some cases becoming more mainstream and functional. To navigate uncertainty, more consumers are placing their trust in spiritual and mystical guidance for practical decision-making. This shift is being reflected in commercial offerings: for example, **Etsy Witches** cast spells to help people reach their goals, while the **Marriott Hotel** created an astrological guide to help consumers select a destination based on their zodiac sign.

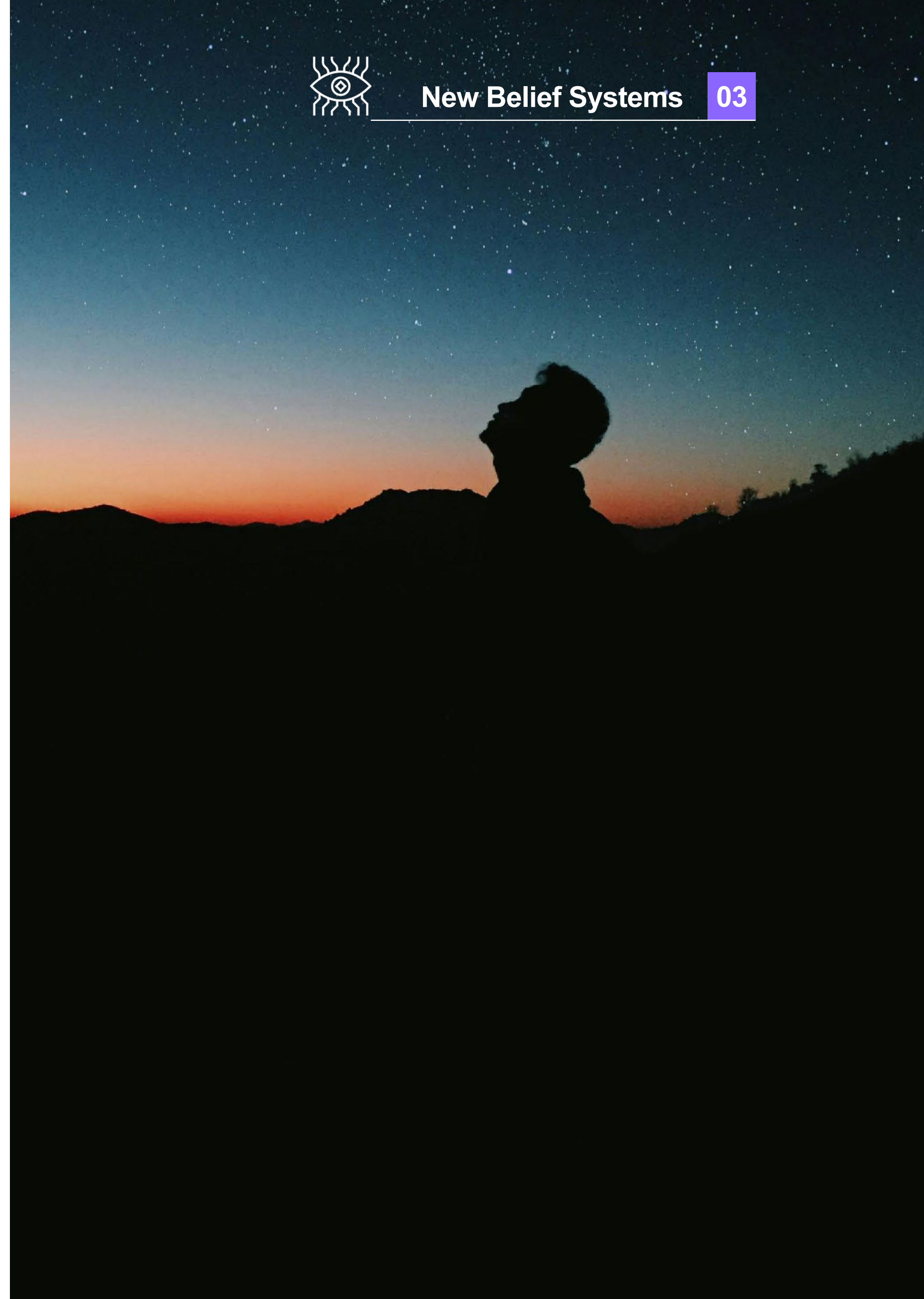






A variety of spiritual experiences and practices are helping consumers from all walks of life heal, connect and have fun. Dark retreats, which are rooted in Tibetan Buddhism and other traditions, are finding new appeal among wealthy entrepreneurs and those in the tech sector in Western markets. Monasteries are filling up as vows of silence become a popular wellness endeavor. Psychedelic travel experiences are also on the rise, and fortune telling bars such as **One As All** are opening across China, offering fortune-telling services in exchange for drinks purchases.

Technology is becoming increasingly intertwined with spirituality – for better or worse. India's **AstroTalk** astrology platform is in talks to raise up to \$100 million to become India's next unicorn, and planning an IPO in early 2026. Multiple AI tools that mimic spiritual or religious leaders are launching – including **AI Rabbi**, **Jesus AI** and **Rgyan Bodhi** – sparking curiosity as well as concern about the risks of misinformation and manipulation. Consumers are also using ChatGPT and other AI tools in a more self-guided way to meet their spiritual needs, for example for tarot readings or personalized horoscopes.

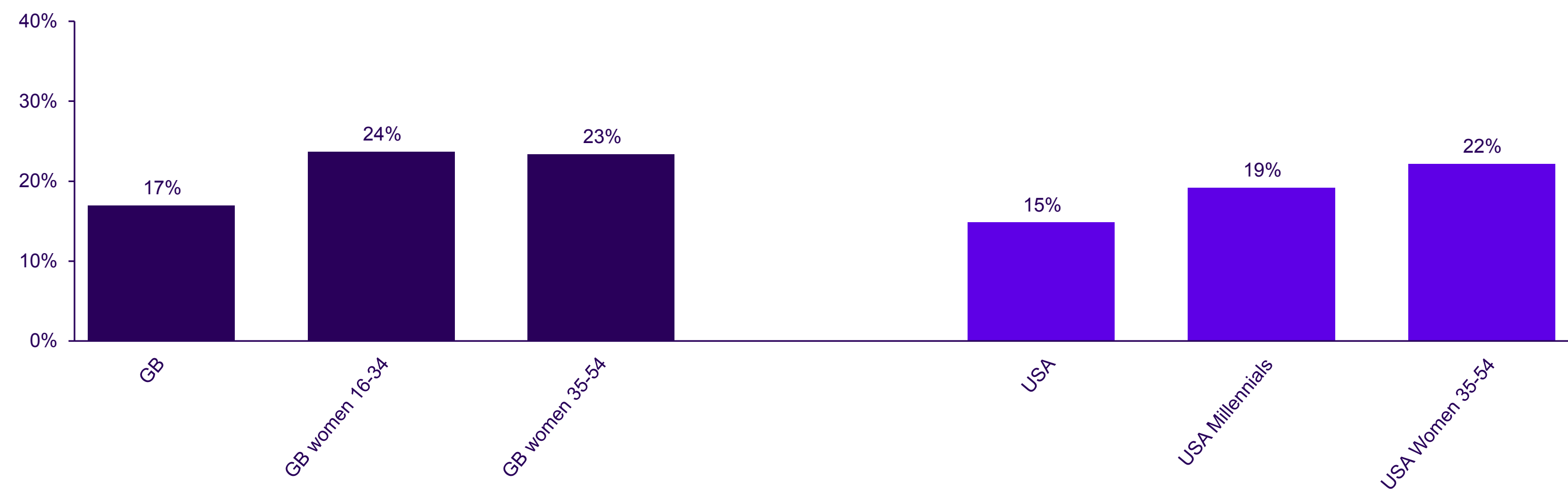






## The definition of spirituality is expanding, and decoupling from religion

% who do not directly identify with a religion but do spiritual activities such as meditating or energy healing

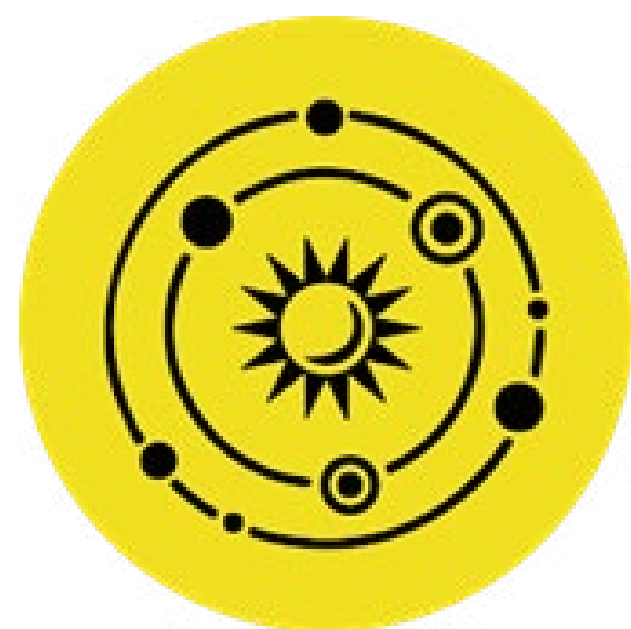


Source: Foresight Factory | GB and USA, 2025





# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



India's **AstroTalk** astrology platform is in talks to raise up to \$100 million to become India's next unicorn and is planning an IPO in early 2026.

## Spot the signals that shape demand

Collision illuminates the cultural narratives and identity shifts driving tomorrow's consumers so your strategy is rooted in relevance, not just data.

[Contact us today](#)







# Trad Revival

Finding stability and belonging through traditional frameworks and values

A growing number of consumers, particularly younger men, are embracing traditional structures such as religion and the nuclear family. These offer meaning and belonging in a global context marked by social anxiety, instability and isolation. Online communities like the “manosphere” and **#Tradwife** influencers are gaining loyalty and launching commercial ventures, promoting traditional gender roles and lifestyles. Some brands are adjusting their public positioning to align with the shifting political climate and consumer sentiment, for instance by scaling back DEI policies and sustainability goals.







**This movement is unfolding alongside – and in some cases driven by – a broader ideological and cultural shift to the right.** In Japan, younger voters gravitated towards new nationalist parties in elections during summer 2025. In the USA, UK and South Korea, voting data shows young men increasingly favoring conservative candidates, underscoring a gender divide among Gen Z. Right-leaning creators dominate long-form online media in the US, with nine of the top ten ideologically aligned shows leaning conservative and attracting a combined 197 million followers.

**Religious participation is also rising in several regions.** In the UK, church attendance among 18-24s has reportedly quadrupled since 2018, while baptisms in France are at a 20-year high. In China, temple visits have surged amidst high youth unemployment. Brands like **Byble** are redesigning religious experiences for new audiences. And religion isn't just experiencing revival – in some contexts, it's being used as cultural authentication for political positions and a vehicle for sharing traditional values with new audiences.

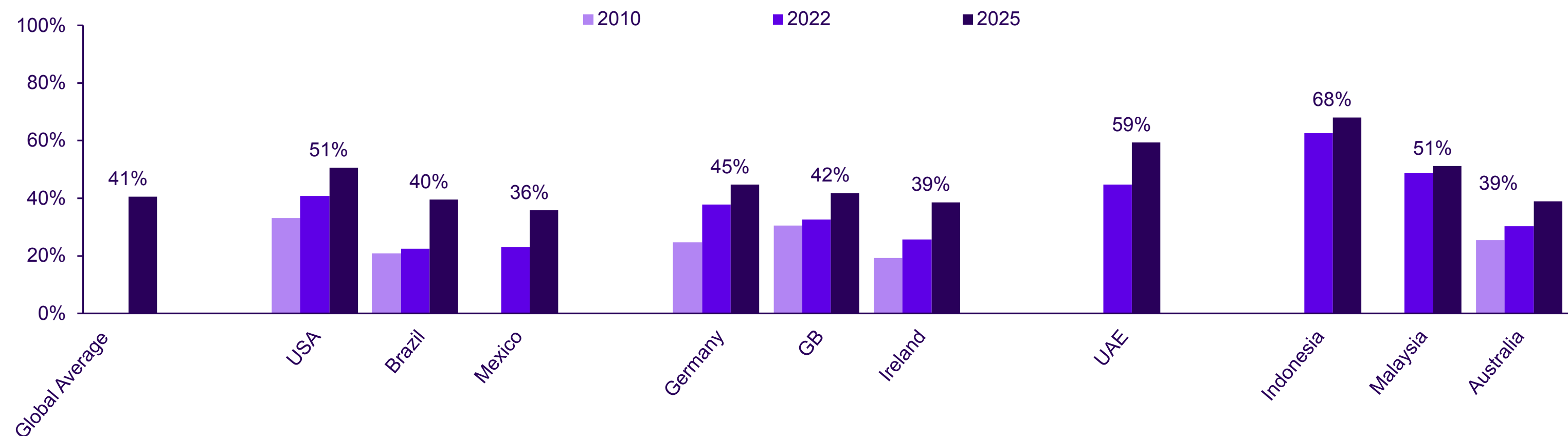






## Men across markets increasingly believe in traditional gender roles in the home

% of men who agree that in the home, the man should be primarily responsible for earning a good living for the family and the woman should raise the children/take care of the house | Adjusted data



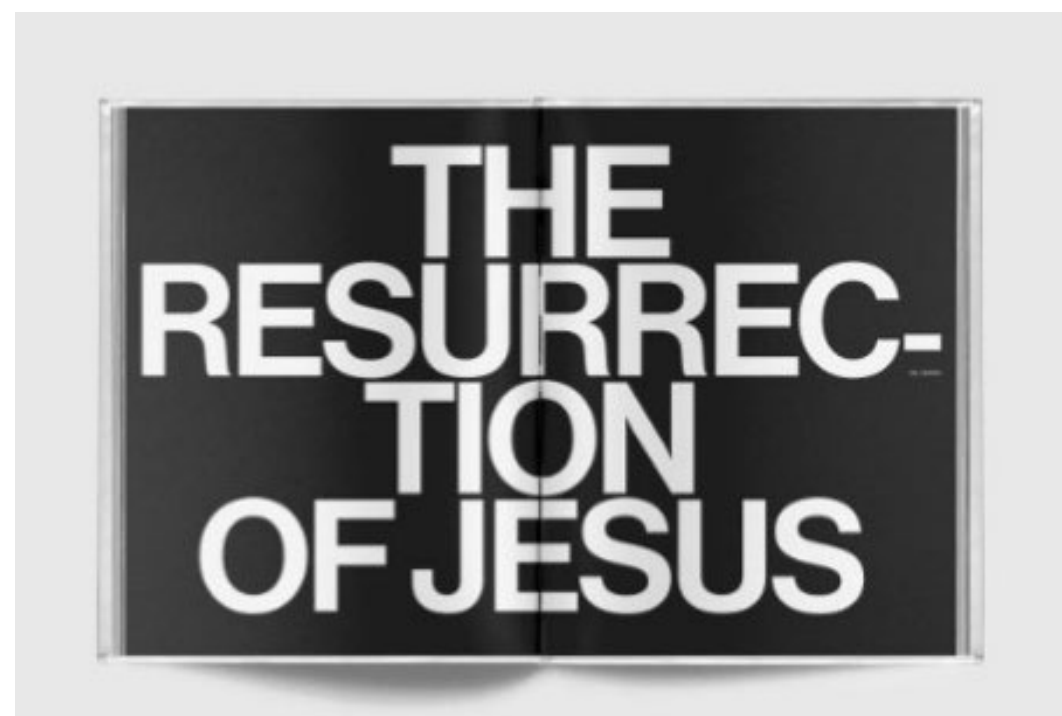
Source: Foresight Factory | Base: Men among 666-3821 online respondents per country aged 16-64, 2025







# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



**Byble** – “Begin Your Bible Learning Experience” – is a visually reimagined Bible that is geared for a new generation of believers.

## Find growth opportunities before your competitors do

Distinguish signal from noise with foresight that uncovers whitespace opportunities and mitigates risk. We deliver clear assessments, prioritized roadmaps and activation pathways so you can invest confidently, innovate strategically and build a growth plan with clear ROI.

**Talk to us**







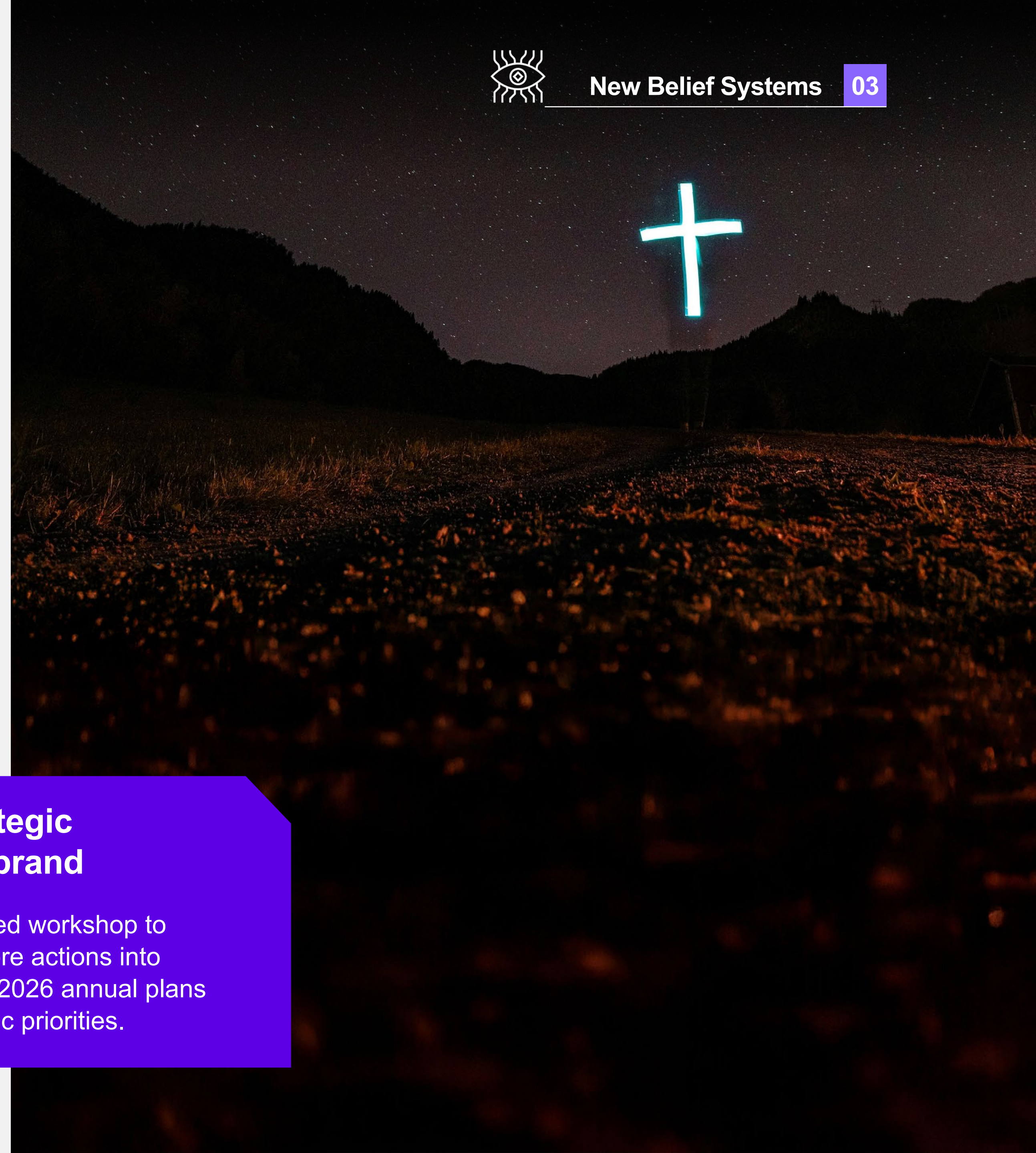
## Applying New Belief Systems to your brand: **Strategic action**

### **Define your brand's core belief philosophy and how to participate in consumers' spiritual journeys.**

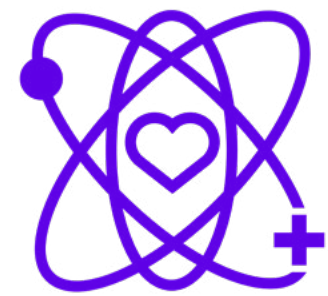
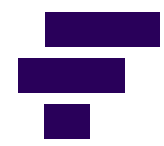
Identify the values and beliefs that differentiate your brand from competitors, and audit how this lens runs through your products, services and internal culture. Align marketing, product development and comms teams around your brand's operating philosophy to respond cohesively to cultural shifts. And as consumers build spiritual and religious rituals into their everyday lives, consider how to adapt this philosophy to echo the language of these rituals and frameworks, serving up offerings that connect to and support these practices.

### **Activate key strategic actions for your brand**

Talk to us about a tailored workshop to translate and unlock more actions into concrete steps for your 2026 annual plans and longer-term strategic priorities.







# Lifemaxxing

Consumers are redefining what it means to live life to the fullest as they face an unpredictable future







# Lifemaxxing

As traditional life paths feel increasingly out of reach or irrelevant, consumers are taking back control by redefining what it means to live a meaningful life. They're abandoning rigid life milestones in favor of more achievable, self-defined goals; swapping online performance culture with presence, connection and emotional fulfilment; and experimenting with radical self-optimization. In 2026, this cultural adaptation will further heighten, and consumers will continue to find creative solutions to help live a fulfilling life.

**The most energized consumer behaviors within this opportunity space are:**

## Dream Downsizing

Reorienting life goals by embracing lo-fi aspirations and flexible lifestyles



## Presence Purity

Replacing performance culture with genuine, sensory experiences

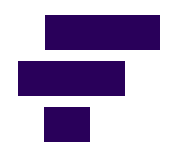


## The Immortality Hustle

Pursuing longevity and defying death through biohacking, optimization and legacy-building







# Trends and drivers in play

**Intergenerational Inequality:** Economic imbalance is pushing younger consumers to move away from traditional milestones like home ownership, energizing **Dream Downsizing** behavior.

**The Lifestage Delay:** As key milestones like home ownership or retirement are postponed – whether through choice or economic constraint – consumers are recalibrating what success looks like.

**Beyond Human:** Enhancing physical and cognitive capability through tech and supplements is central to the quest for longevity.

**Experience Seekers:** In a cultural landscape that feels performative, consumers are choosing to live and experience moments deeply.

**Tactile and Tangible:** A turn toward sensory-rich, hands-on experiences that satisfy the need for real connection beyond curated online personas.

**Building Resilience:** Proactively planning for an uncertain world by adapting life milestones is a reflection of this trend.

**Unapologetically Me:** A celebration of individuality, where people reject performative culture in favor of showing up authentically, is the key driving factor of **Presence Purity**.







# Dream Downsizing

Reorienting life goals by embracing lo-fi aspirations and flexible lifestyles

**Consumers are reframing success to match reality rather than ideals.** Traditional life milestones are increasingly seen as unattainable – due to economic pressures and geopolitical uncertainty – or simply undesirable. Many young adults are living with their parents longer rather than prioritizing home ownership, as high costs make buying a home an unreachable goal. Similarly, traditional family planning is changing: many consumers are delaying parenthood due to affordability and career considerations, while an increasing number are opting out of parenthood altogether due to environmental concerns and shifting societal attitudes.







**Different audiences have different barriers to reaching their life goals.** Our research identifies Gen X as the cohort that's most financially at-risk: indeed, they are delaying retirement and buying smaller homes to cope, while also navigating gray divorce. Millennials are experimenting with mini-retirements and the FIRE movement, trading traditional security for flexibility and autonomy. Some Gen Z consumers lean into immediacy for emotional gratification, using BNPL to fund travel and experiences despite rising debt, while others are “soft saving” for the future. Baby Boomers are reassessing their retirement plans as economic turbulence erodes financial buffers.

**Dream Downsizing doesn't mean giving up – it's about reorienting.** Alternatives like buying homes with friends or siblings and homesteading are gaining traction, with platforms such as **CoBuy** helping make collective ownership possible. Many adults are embracing “kidulting” as a form of comfort amid rising uncertainty, through nostalgic escapes like gaming, **Labubus** and adult **LEGO** sets. Meanwhile, while some choose to remain child-free, governments are concerned about declining fertility rates and are introducing incentives – Türkiye, for example, has declared 2026-2035 the Decade of Family and Population.

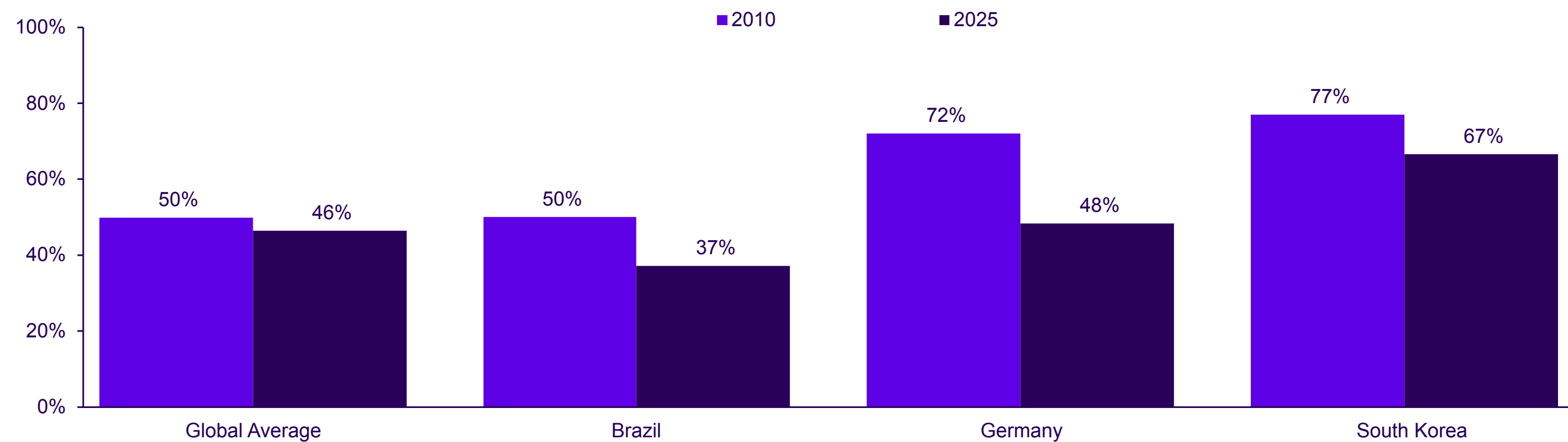




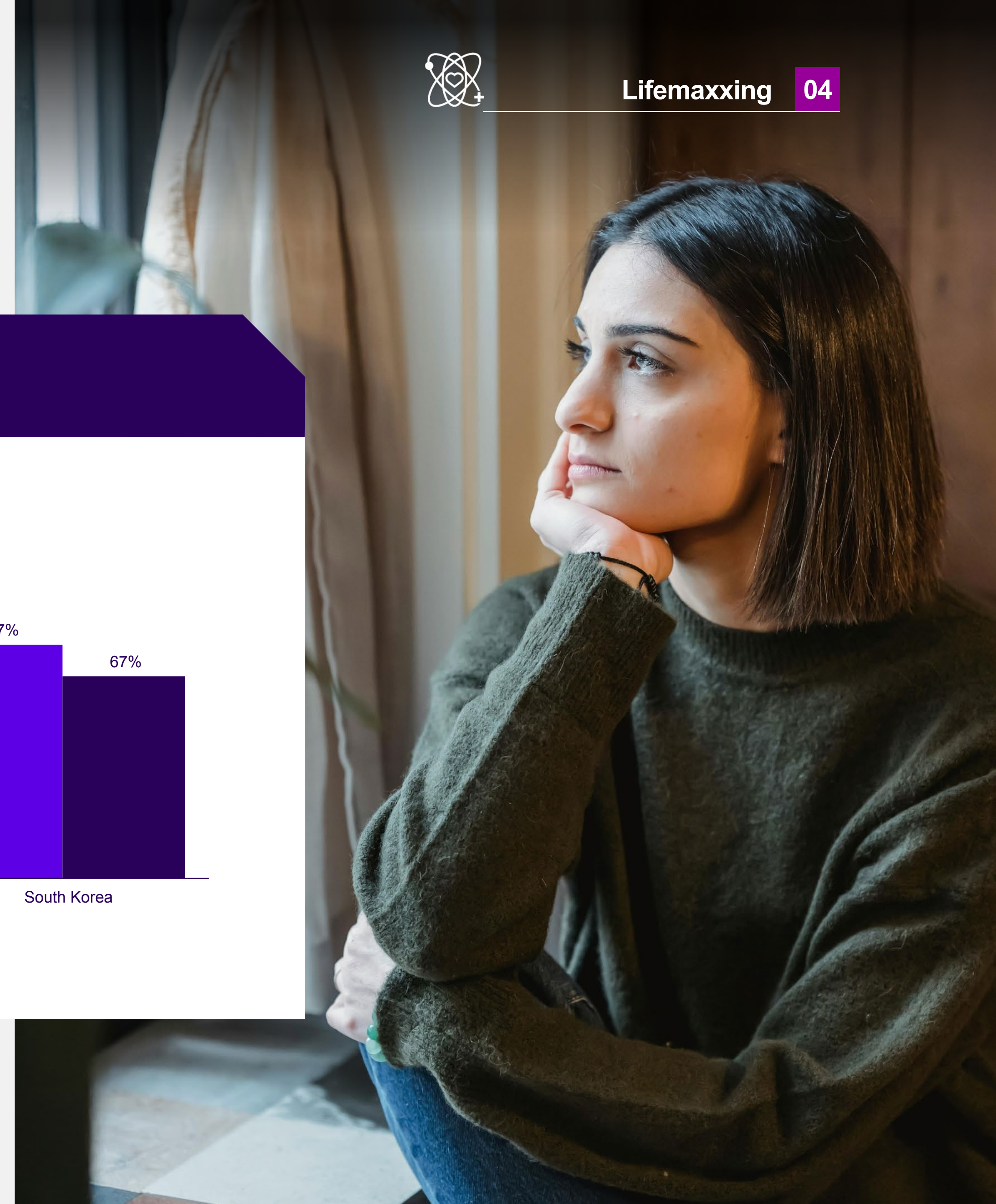


## Optimism about the prospects of future generations is fading in some markets

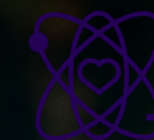
% who agree that children these days will enjoy significantly greater prosperity in their lives than they have enjoyed so far | Adjusted data



Source: Foresight Factory | Base: 965-2003 online respondents per country aged 16+, 2025







# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



**NatWest** launched its **Family-Backed Mortgage** financial product to make home ownership easier for first-time buyers struggling to get onto the property ladder.

## Unlock the full Trending 2026 report

Become a client today to unlock the complete Trending 2026 foresight report on Collision, featuring even more strategic actions, global consumer data and sector-specific opportunities and watchouts across each opportunity space.

[Talk to us](#)







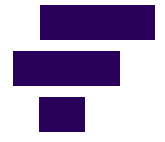
# Presence Purity

Replacing performance culture with genuine, sensory experiences

**Performance culture has created a deficiency of intimacy and joy.** From chasing social media perfection to following a wellness culture characterized by the rise of aesthetic and pharmaceutical interventions such as injectables and weight-loss drugs, consumers spend significant time and energy curating their lives and bodies. Yet the paradox is clear: despite polished appearances curated *for others*; intimacy, play and connection *with others* are at an all-time low. For instance, botox has been criticized for “killing eroticism” by reducing facial expressiveness, while self-care provides justification for flaking on friends. The result is a cultural landscape that feels performative rather than communal.







**Cringe is being reformulated as cool.**

Out of the fear of being labeled “cringe” or being filmed and shared online, consumers have been hesitant to dance, sing or participate in playful moments in public. Now, consumers are reclaiming awkward, playful and vulnerable moments, signaling a desire to live fully rather than perform for others. Influencer-turned pop star **Addison Rae** champions authenticity over perfection, inspiring a mindset that “everything you want is on the other side of cringe”.

**Demand for experiences that urge presence and full sensory engagement is growing.** Consumers are seeking sensations that make them feel alive – from the rising popularity of spicy foods to phone-free clubs. This heightened desire to feel is expanding across all senses: sound, touch, taste and even smell are being used to anchor people in the moment, making experiences more visceral. For example, both **Wolf Alice** and **Sabrina Carpenter** invited fans to phone-free listening sessions for their most recent album launches, transforming what could be a solitary digital stream into a fully immersive, sensory event. And to help fill the IRL socializing gap, adult summer camps are emerging, offering everything from phone-free communal reading to playful leisure activities, catered towards grown-ups.

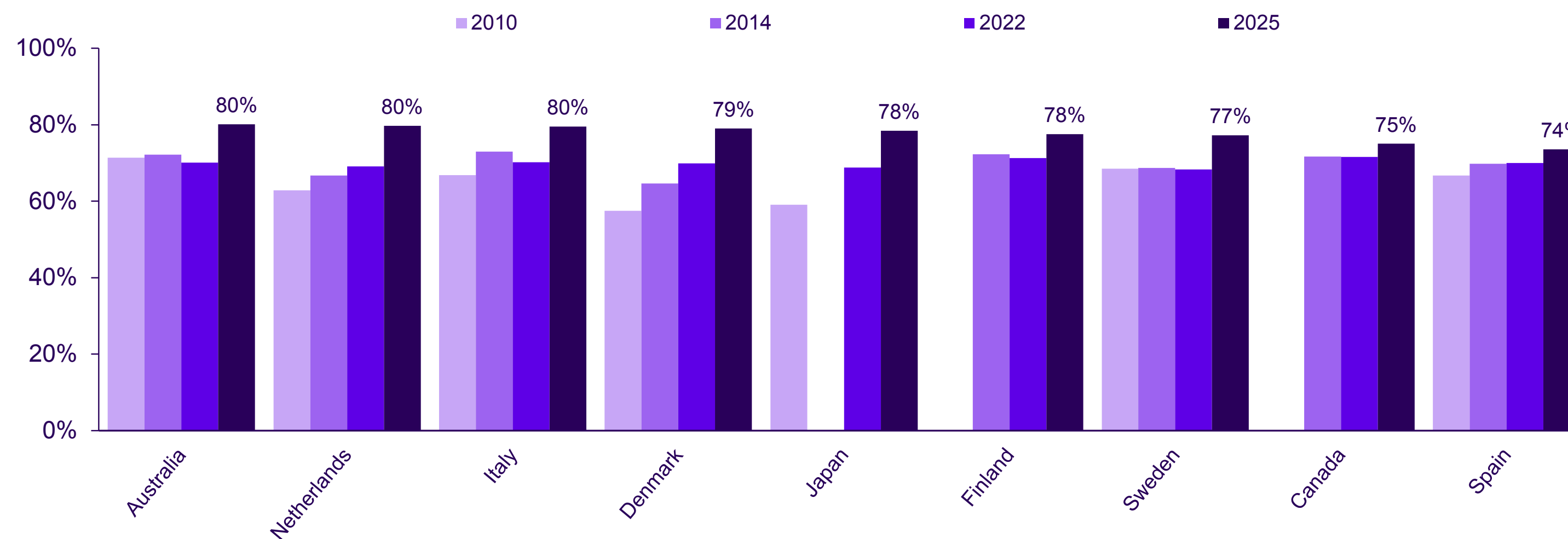






## Happiness is perceived as being eroded under modern pressures

% who agree that the stresses of modern life mean that people are less happy than they used to be | Adjusted data



Source: Foresight Factory | Base: 658-3823 online respondents per country aged 16-64, 2025





# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



Adding sensory immersion to movie-watching, **Sony Pictures** launched a set of fragrances that correspond to key moments in **I Know What You Did Last Summer**.

## Anticipate change with a signal model

Monitor 60–80 curated signals across PESTLE themes to identify external risks and emerging opportunities ahead of time.

Talk to us about creating a bespoke signal model for your organization







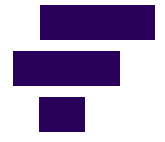
# The Immortality Hustle

Pursuing longevity and defying death through biohacking, optimization, and legacy-building

The pursuit of longevity is evolving into a philosophy of life. **Bryan Johnson**, the tech entrepreneur behind the Don't Die movement, has predicted that longevity will become the fastest growing ideology. Indeed, longevity-focused co-living spaces such as **Aevitas House** – offering cold plunges, biohacking workshops and genetic data-driven personalization – are emerging, while the **Roundtable of Longevity Clinics** explores the fusion of AI and longevity, ultrasound wearables for depression and sober anti-aging raves. Meanwhile, lifestyle brand, **Skims** launched collagen-infused shapewear, merging beauty and longevity into everyday fashion.

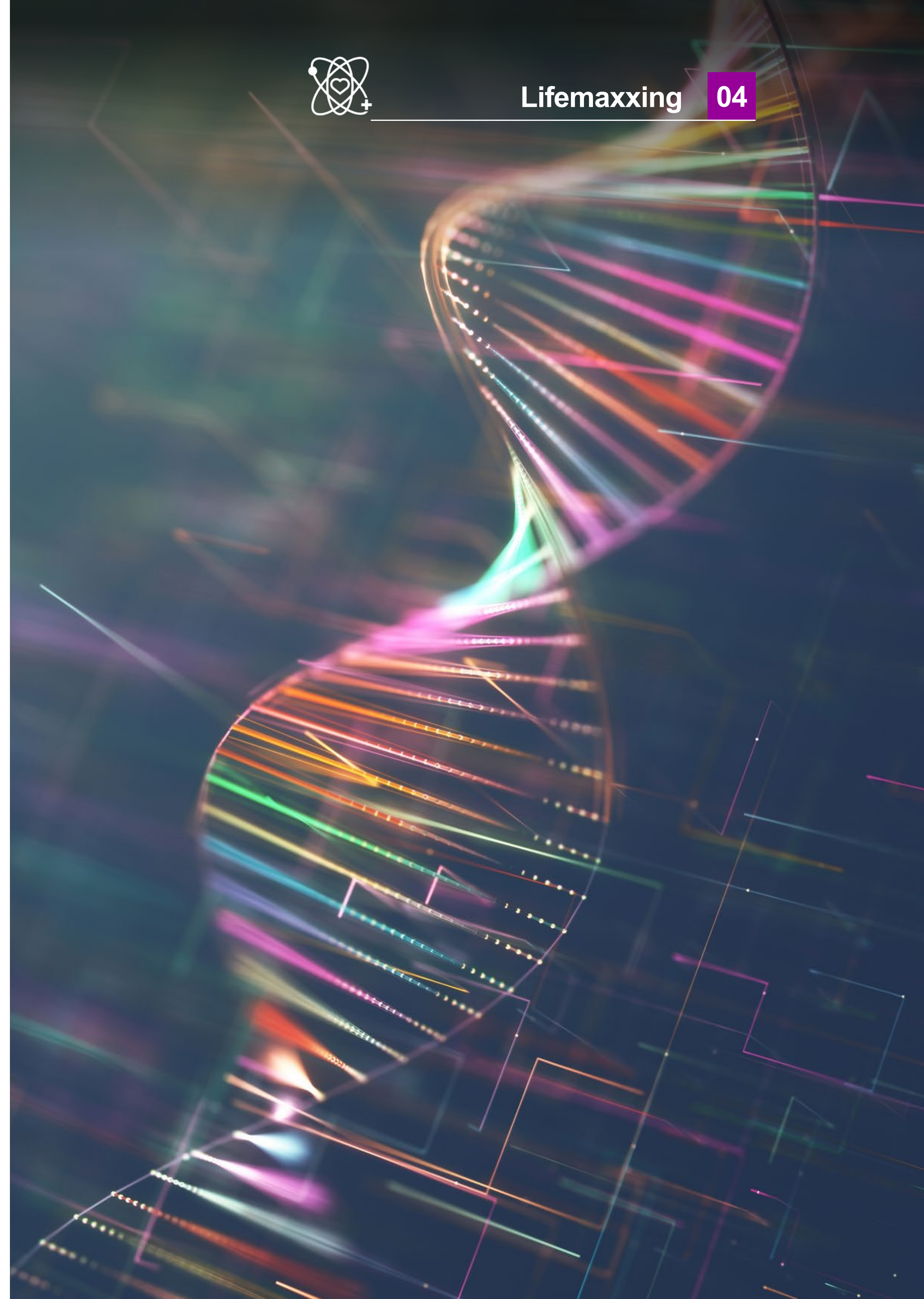






**Beyond the elite and tech-savvy, everyday consumers are also engaging in longevity practices.** Supplements, from nootropics and collagen to vitamins aimed at supporting cellular health, have become mainstream, alongside apps and devices that track biological age, sleep and biomarkers. Personalized quizzes, wellness retreats and medical spas are helping consumers identify small, manageable lifestyle changes to improve healthspan and vitality. This movement is set to gain further momentum as the value of the global longevity market is expected to hit \$64 billion in 2026.

**Digital immortality is the next frontier.** Platforms like **Eternity.ac** and **Rodion Sorokin's** patented **AI Time Capsule** allow people to leave a digital trace and create digital clones that preserve their voice, memory and personality beyond death. Wealth management is adapting too, with consumers prepping for immortality by incorporating estate structures and digital assets into long-term planning. These developments signal that extending life is no longer only about biology – it's a cultural, technological and financial movement redefining what it means to live, age and leave a legacy.

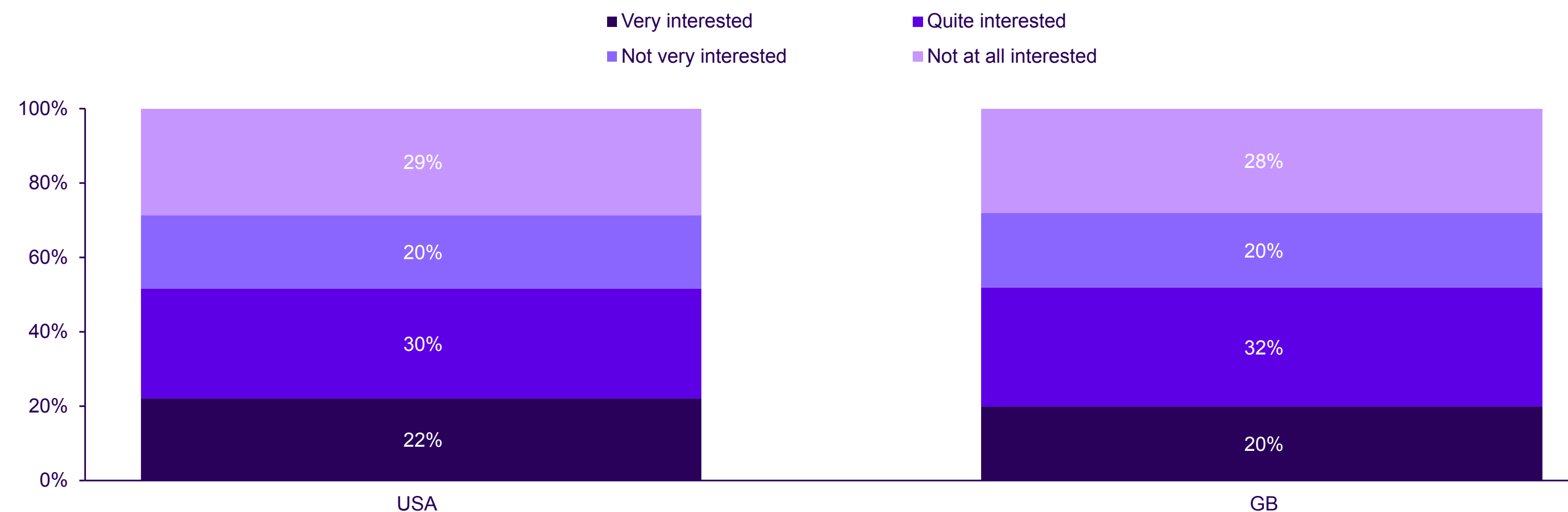




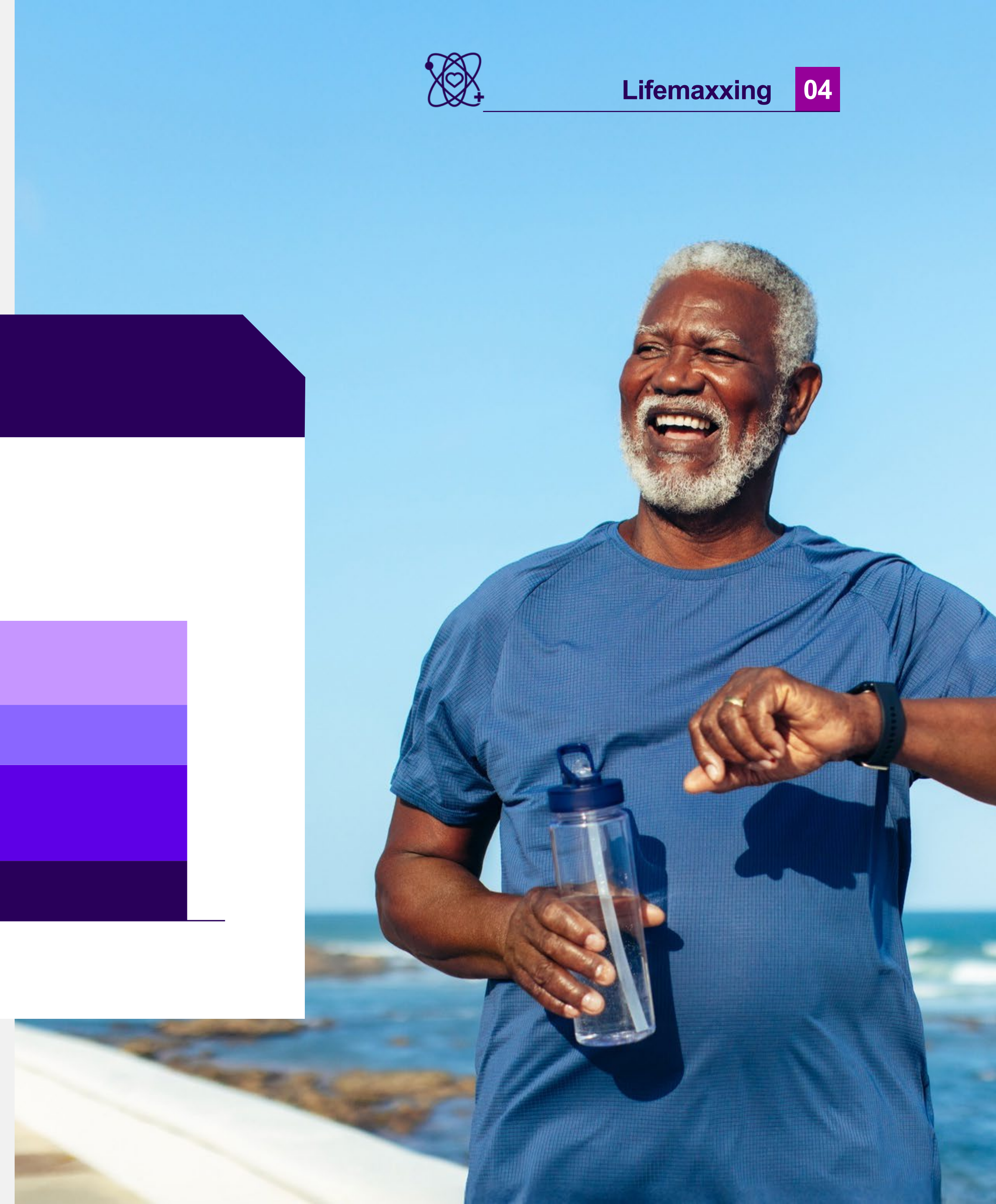


## Personalized advice for slowing aging appeals to half of US and GB consumers

Interest in an app that gives personalized advice on how to slow aging



Source: Foresight Factory | GB and USA, 2025







# Explore more cultural and commercial signals



“Revival trusts” are designed to preserve the assets of people who pass away and then are cryogenically frozen, with the hope of being revived in the future.

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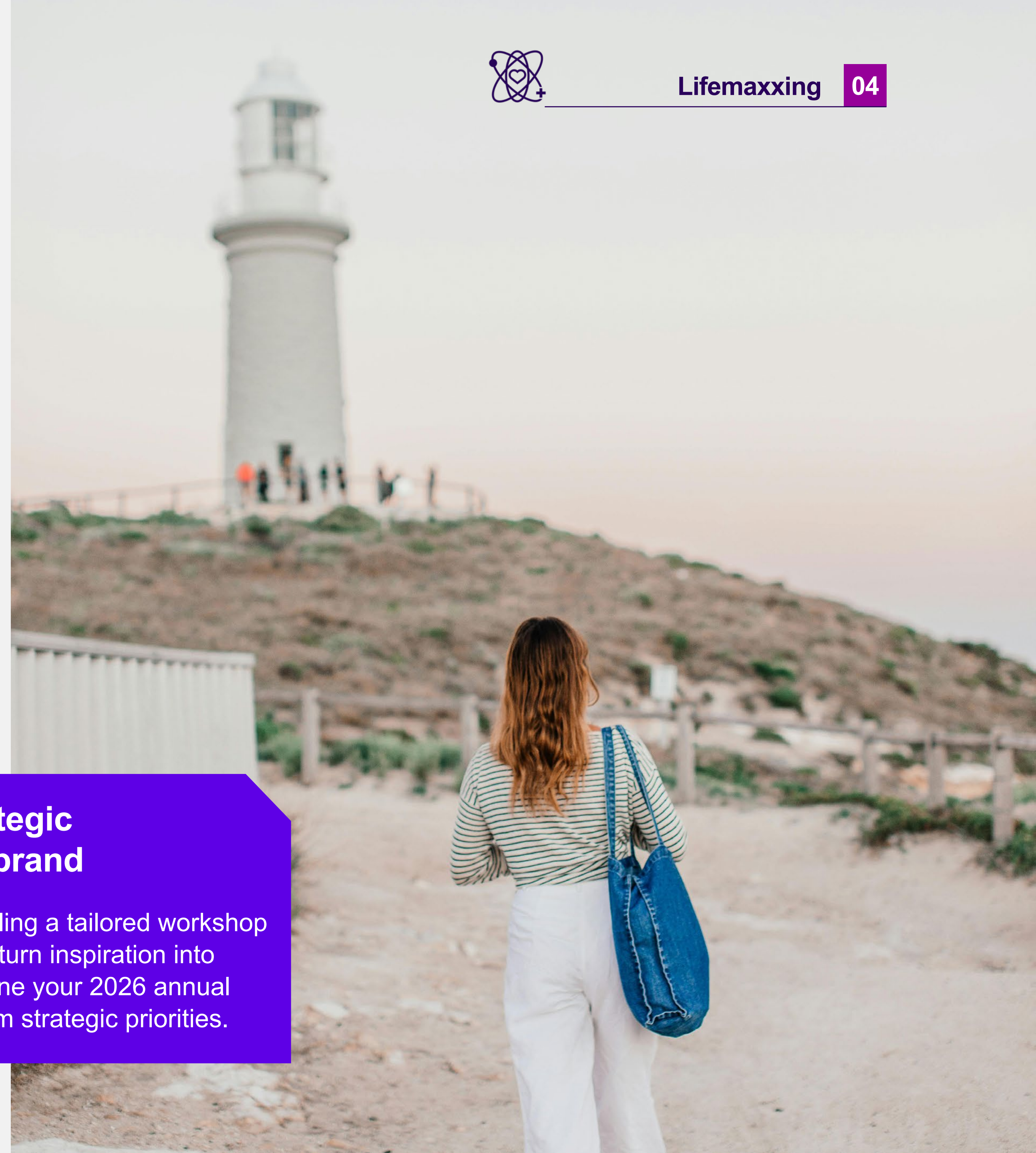
## Applying Lifemaxxing to your brand: **Strategic action**

### Identify your core audiences' definition of a meaningful life.

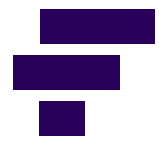
Use behavioral data and social media listening tools to gain deeper insight into their aspirations, and to assess whether they overlap or diverge across generations, or even coexist within the same individual. Then adapt your messaging, products and services to meet consumers where they are in the moment – whether that's rejecting traditional milestones, pushing back against performance culture, or aspiring to live a longer, healthier life.

### Activate key strategic actions for your brand

Talk to us about scheduling a tailored workshop where we can help you turn inspiration into concrete action. Fine-tune your 2026 annual planning and longer-term strategic priorities.







## Get in touch for a tailored workshop or presentation

Trending 2026 activation scorecard			
Opportunity space 1: Cognitive Crossroads			
Consumers are navigating the evolving tensions between human agency and technological partnership			
		Tech Harmony	Human Autonomy
Brand fit	How well does this behavior align with your brand's purpose, values and positioning?	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)
Commercial opportunity	How much potential is there to drive revenue from this behavior in 2026?	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)	1 (Low) (Medium) 3 (High)
Differentiation potential	Could pursuing this behavior make your brand stand out?	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)
Ease of activation	How feasible would it be to respond, given current resources and capabilities?	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)
Customer appeal	How relevant and compelling is this behavior among your target audience?	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)	1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)
TOTAL SCORE		14	8
Related workstreams and initiatives		Next-gen engagement and CX stream	"Human-made" team goals
Which existing initiatives or strategies could this tie into or strengthen?			
Any additional observations or actions to explore further?		Explore regional lens further	Explore the premium connection more

**Action:**  
Explore regional lens further

**Action:**  
Strengthen "human-made" team goals



**Talk to us** about deploying our activation scorecard to test the resilience of your future business plans against these emerging consumer shifts.



