

THE FUTURE OF PURPOSE

Three trends fueling the search for a more ethical and sustainable consumerism!

We're not here to *persuade* you. You already get it.

Along with rising numbers of consumers around the world, you know the shift to a more ethical, sustainable consumerism is the coming trend of all trends. And that you need to be a part of what's ahead.

At TrendWatching we've been tracking this shift forever. So why are we highlighting it now?

Because we're at a crucial inflection point in the journey. Awareness of the damaging planetary and social impacts of much consumerism has never been higher – driven in part by charismatic leaders (respect, Greta!) and powerful global movements for change. One glimpse of that shift in attitudes? In the UK, **23% consider the environment and climate change one of the most important issues facing the UK** – the highest levels seen in 30 years. (Ipsos MORI, February 2020)

Meanwhile, even legacy players admit it's time for radical action. Microsoft has announced **plans to be carbon negative by 2030**. Jeff Bezos just pledged **USD 30 billion for climate change** (but what about paying your tax, Jeff?). The World Economic Forum says **businesses must serve society and the planet, not just shareholders**.

This revolution is needed. It's right. The opportunities are *huge*. Trends can be your fuel.

A long time coming...

Sure, we can rewind the clock and take a trend-journey through the evolution of this moment.

Remember back when eco-consumption was a niche status play for affluent consumers who dreamed of owning – or went out and bought! – a Tesla

Model S. Or back when Patagonia helped redefine the quest for a more socially responsible business by telling readers of the *New York Times* 'Do Not Buy This Jacket'. Recall the emergence of a new **search for a GUILT-FREE CONSUMPTION**.

Fast-forward to 2020, and purposeful consumption is more available, affordable and just plain *better* than ever. That means it's becoming less a matter of status for those who opt in, and more a matter of *shame* for those who don't.

But this report isn't about the deep shifts that brought us to this place. Instead, we're here to share three actionable trends that you can apply now. They are drawn from our full report on The Future of Purpose – featuring *five* trends, trend evolution timelines and additional innovation examples – that we've just published inside our **Premium Service**.

1. SUSTAINABILITY AS A SERVICE

Consumers embrace services that allow them to track and reduce their planetary impact.

2. OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS

In 2020, smart brands open source their most purposeful work.

3. CODE BREAKERS

Consumers look to brands to break their brand or industry code in the name of ethics or sustainability.

As always, each of these trends is illustrated by innovation examples that are already reshaping the expectations of your customers.

And on that, one last word before we dive in. In 2020, every business – even the most virtuous – needs to change. When we highlight the innovation examples below, we're NOT saying the businesses behind them are perfect. Or that these examples absolve them from the need to change further.

What we ARE saying is that these examples represent steps – sometimes tiny ones – in the right direction. And that when consumers see them, they'll start to change what they expect from *you*.

And that's how the momentous change that's coming will happen. One step at a time. So let's go.

SUSTAINABILITY AS A SERVICE

In 2020, consumers will embrace services that empower them to track and reduce their planetary impact.

A decade and more of *on-demand* and *everything as a service* has reshaped expectations around convenience.

Now, millions of consumers are bringing those expectations to their personal quest for a more sustainable consumption.

In 2020, those consumers will embrace new tools, platforms and ongoing services that facilitate their mission to reduce their own negative environmental impacts.

The rise of SUSTAINABILITY AS A SERVICE is about the convergence of an ultra-convenience mindset with other powerful trends: think emerging expectations for rolling, iterative personalization, and the epic trend that is the circular economy.

Let's dive deeper...

Subscription mindset. Subscriptions have become a part of daily life for millions. But the *expectations* those services have fueled – for convenience and *everything as a service* – have become part of life, too. And now, consumers are bringing that mindset to their personal quest for sustainability.

Relevance as a service. First, online data-fueled personalization and the mainstreaming of connected objects that can upgrade and iterate pushed consumers to expect new kinds of personalization and relevance. Now, those expectations are merging with the *everything as a service* mindset to fuel new expectations of constant, ultra-convenient, rolling personalization: **relevance as a service**. Next? Consumers will bring expectations of relevance as a service to their quest to minimize their environmental footprint.

The next circular economy. We've all been tracking the evolution of the circular economy *forever*. But now, amid rising awareness of the damaging impacts of traditional consumption, the circular economy is racing towards the mainstream. Expect a new generation of solutions that combine its traditional virtues – value, and the reduction of waste – with *everything as a service* level of convenience. Yes, that means circular economy solutions that deliver SUSTAINABILITY AS A SERVICE.

Featured Innovations



INTREPID & GENERATION NOW – Subscription services let users offset carbon footprint

SAAS can mean subscription services that help build a cleaner world.

January 2020 saw Australia-based travel company **Intrepid Travel** partner with climate charity Offset Earth to provide a monthly carbon offset subscription service. Subscriptions start at at USD 6.50 per month, and see Offset Earth plant trees to offset carbon emissions.

scribers receive a monthly report detailing their bon impact. Similarly, **Generation Now** is a subscription service that funds carbon offset projects, luding reforestation projects in Madagascar and zambique.

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LOOP – Zero-waste delivery service for household goods

New circular economy innovations are a key part of this trend...

Nestlé, PepsiCo, Proctor & Gamble, Unilever and other household goods giants have partnered on a new zero-waste e-commerce platform called **Loop**. Consumers buy products in reusable containers through the Loop platform. Ordered items are delivered to the door, and empty containers are collected and sent for sterilization, before being refilled. After successful pilots in New York and Paris in Q2 2019, the scheme will soon roll out to California as well as the UK, Canada, Germany, and Japan.

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This trend exists at the intersection of two powerful human needs. First, the need for convenience: make my life easy! Second, the need to live a life of positive impact – to minimize the harm and maximize the good that you do in the world.

So first ask yourself: what information, content, or physical product could you turn into an ongoing service in a way that reduces the damaging impacts of your offering, or empowers consumers to make more sustainable choices?

Remember, the offering that you deliver as a service can take many forms. It could be information, as with Enfuce app that allows users to track the carbon impact of their purchases. It could be charitable giving, as with Generation Now's carbon offset subscription. Or it could take a physical form, as with Loop's new sustainable home delivery play.

Also, personalization is a powerful dimension here. Think about this trend in the context of rising expectations for *relevance as a service* that we first flagged via the **METAMORPHIC DESIGN** trend. That means personalized information or offerings that empower consumers to track and reduce their individual impact.

Innovate effectively at the intersection of these two human needs –

convenience and positive impact – and the results can be *powerful*. For you, those you serve, and the wider world. Get going!

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OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS

A bold new frontier for purpose: time to innovate, solve and open source!

Okay, so your brand is innovating in pursuit of positive change (and if that's not true, then a deep conversation is needed, *fast*).

But consumers increasingly understand that no single organization can solve our toughest shared challenges alone. New and innovative forms of collaboration are needed.

Meanwhile, they're not rushing to congratulate you on your purposeful innovation efforts; they expect that as standard: 74% of consumers believe that CEOs should take the lead on change rather than waiting for governments to impose it – up 9 percentage points from 2018 (Edelman, January 2020).

That's why consumers will embrace brands that innovate to solve shared social and environmental challenges, and then OPEN SOURCE those innovations.

In 2020, the brands that truly care won't make a beeline for the patent office. They'll share. That means they'll hand over their innovations, knowledge, tips

and tricks to everyone who could use them for the greater good: businesses, nonprofits, governmental organizations. Even direct competitors: see how sneaker brand Allbirds [sent Amazon some pointed advice on how to make its Allbirds knockoffs more sustainable](#).

Since we first spotted this trend in 2018 the forces driving it have only become more powerful...

Show and tell. The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer found that consumers don't consider any major institutions worldwide (governments, NGOs, businesses, or the media) to be both ethical and competent at the same time. Being ultra-transparent about your operations can help fill that trust gap. For instance, [93% of US consumers](#) would be happy to see journalists share their reporting research and directly answer readers' questions.

Coded origins. In tech, code-sharing between companies and individual developers alike has become mainstream. In fact, [80% of the world's smartphones](#) run on open-source software. But this standard practice is no longer confined to platforms like GitHub. All kinds of brands are tapping into mounting expectations – for organizations to exhibit greater transparency, collaboration, and social responsibility – by adopting OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS.

Two way street. It's not just about sharing your own solutions; it's about using – and improving on – those of others. Groups that choose to use open-access tools save themselves resources, valuable time and endless head-scratching in the quest to do good. See how [Los Angeles adopted Code for America's tool](#) to automatically expunge low-level marijuana convictions from 66,000 criminal records, changing 66,000 lives in the process.

atured Innovations



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI – Finland makes AI course freely available

Your organization already has knowledge others need. Why not OPEN SOURCE it?

BREWDOG – Craft beer brand makes recipes public

OPEN SOURCE your processes and knowledge, and you can take the lead in transforming eco-standards in your industry.

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In December 2019, Finland ended its tenure of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union by announcing that an online course about AI created by the **University of Helsinki** and Finland-based tech company Reaktor would be made freely available to all EU citizens from 2020. Available in all official EU languages, the Elements of AI course is intended to equip people with digital skills, increase practical understanding of AI, and give a boost to the digital leadership of Europe.

In February 2020 craft beer brand **BrewDog announced** **six initiatives** intended to make the company more ethical and sustainable. Among them are plans to make public everything the company knows about beer, including recipes, brewing standards, and sustainability and accountability reports. BrewDog say they hope that sharing this information with competitors will help the entire industry move towards more sustainable practices.

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OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS isn't just a trend for the coming year. It's a long-term approach to innovation and impact your brand can plan a multi-decade purpose strategy around.

The first step? Ask yourself: what unique expertise, people and resources do we have that positions us to solve a tough shared social or eco challenge?

There's no denying the power of giving open access to an innovation that could transform the sustainability profile of your industry: see how Arçelik went public with the design of their new eco-washing machine. But going OPEN SOURCE with less tangible assets - including a code of ethics or industry manifesto - can be a powerful play, too. Either way, you'll do real good in the world *and* win kudos from consumers for making a genuine commitment to positive change.

Expect to be called out if your OPEN SOURCE SOLUTION is open in name only. Tesla's Patent Pledge, released in 2014, makes Tesla patents available for other companies to use, but only under **strict terms**.

We know that sharing your IP - even with competitors - does not come naturally. But we're in a new world now. This is a chance to do good, and shine. Seize it!



2020 TREND EVENTS

Join our upcoming Amsterdam trend event to explore - and apply! - 10 consumer trends driving the meteoric rise of purposeful consumerism.

Super Early Bird tickets available now!

[Join us in Amsterdam »](#)

CODE BREAKERS

In 2020, enlightened brands rewrite their industry code in the name of purpose.

Yes, rising numbers of consumers want to – and know they must – play their part in building a more ethical and sustainable world. But they also know that individual behavior change won't be enough. System-wide change is needed.

One glimpse of that belief? In the UK, only 6% of people think primary responsibility for a more ethical, sustainable consumerism lies with consumers themselves – against 51% who think that primary responsibility lies with businesses (Ipsos MORI, June 2019).

The challenge for brands is clear: enact deep-running change that rewrites the rules of legacy consumerism.

That's why in 2020, consumers will embrace businesses that BREAK the CODE of the brand DNA or their entire industry in the name of a more ethical or sustainable consumerism.

Think a superband that doesn't tour, a fashion magazine with no photoshoots, or an airline that tells passengers to fly less (see innovation examples below).

Yes, this is a highly actionable trend, and a tactical chance to prove to consumers that you really get the scale of the challenge ahead. But it's being driven by deep shifts in the nature of status, innovation and transparency...

Unconsumed Status. Status has always been a key driver of consumption behaviors. But via rising awareness of social and environmental damages, the

nature of consumer status is changing radically. That means rising numbers fulfilling their status quest by seeking out new brands and new modes of consumption that reimagine, or even invert, old attitudes and priorities.

Clean Slate Mindset. Today, purpose-driven insurgents can become mega-brands that shake the mainstream faster than ever. Tesla is rewriting the rules of automotive; Impossible Burger those of meat. That's driving expectations across all industries that legacy codes can and must be rewritten in the name of a better consumerism.

Glass Box World. A connected world is a more transparent world. And in that world, *your internal culture becomes a key part of your public-facing brand*. The key implication here? Consumers will look to brands to reimagine key aspects of their legacy internal culture in order to move towards more ethical or sustainable ways of working.

Featured Innovations



COLDPLAY – Band refuses to tour due to environmental impact

Being a CODE BREAKER can mean disrupting a core part of your offering in the name of sustainability...

November 2019 saw UK-based rock music band Coldplay announce they would not tour their new album, Everyday Life, due to environmental concerns. Instead, Coldplay live streamed two 30-minute concerts on YouTube from Amman, Jordan, at sunrise and sunset. A week after their broadcast, the concerts had been viewed more than 15 million times. In addition, the band played a gig at London's Natural History Museum; proceeds went to an environmental law nonprofit.

VOGUE ITALIA – Fashion magazine publishes edition with no photoshoots

A fashion magazine has to feature fashion

photoshoots...or does it?

The January 2020 issue of *Vogue Italia* didn't feature any photoshoots. Instead, editor-in-chief Emanuele Farneti commissioned eight artists to create illustrated covers depicting models wearing outfits from fashion house Gucci. It is the first time in the magazine's 55-year history that it has featured no fashion photography. The move was a bid to highlight the environmental impact of fashion photoshoots, which often require air travel. The money saved was donated to the restoration of the flooddamaged Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice.

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The central principle when it comes to applying this trend? It's about taking an honest look in the mirror.

Start by taking this challenge back to your team: which core brand or industry CODE that we abide by is supporting an unsustainable or unethical practice that we could change?

If you want to go all out on this trend, start with a workshop session that brings colleagues together to clarify the core tenets that guide everything you do. Get ready to dig deep! It's likely that those principles will be so deeply ingrained that articulating them won't be easy – just like the idea that a globally successful band should tour, or that a fashion magazine should have fashion photoshoots in it.

Identifying those principles – and then taking action on those that hinder a more sustainable and ethical future – will empower you to make the kind of systemic change we all know is needed.

Not only that, it means a chance to become an example to others around you: to forge the CODE your industry follows in the future.

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GET GOING!

Three trends reshaping the future of purpose. Three opportunities to do good in the world – and prove to consumers that you get it 🚀

This moment should be the beginning of a journey, not the end of one. Now is the time to act.

If you a lone operator or a super-nimble startup: get to work! Absorb these trends, apply, innovate, partner if necessary – and make change happen.

For others: we know the journey may not be so fast. If you're inside a big brand, the first step can be to start a movement for change inside your organization. Use this report as fuel. Take it back to your team – and your higher-ups – and challenge them: how do we respond to rising expectations that brands do more than only make a profit?

For those of you who want to take this further – we'll see you at our [upcoming event on The Future of Purpose](#). You'll hear more about these trends – plus an additional five! – and then get to work in an interactive









Trend-Driven Innovation workshop, to turn them into powerful new ideas for *your* organization.

Meanwhile, be sure to check out our sister company [Business of Purpose](#), where you can join a global community of purpose-driven professionals, and find resources to supercharge your journey.

Purpose is truly the coming trend of all trends. And this is the decade to make it happen. To all those who are, or will be, part of that story: we salute you!

IT TAKES A TEAM

This Trend Briefing has many hands on it. A huge thanks to the team that pulled this together with such positivity and enthusiasm, especially: Vicky Kim and Nikki Ritmeijer (for design!), and also Maxwell Luthy, Vicki Loomes, Henry Mason and Lisa Feierstein. THANK YOU!

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