

# Future Consumer

*Executive summary*

# 2025

**Future Consumer is WGSN's flagship forecast, read by thousands of industry insiders each year.**

**The following four consumer profiles will drive your business in 2025**

## Let's meet them

# FC25

Consumer profile

# 01 The New Nihilists

*They're opting out of the world's turmoil, but these consumers haven't given up caring – they're just finding new meaning and happiness outside the mainstream*

Defining qualities

Contemplative

Non-conformist

Alternative thinkers

Seeking meaning

**How do you make sense of a world that's mired in uncertainty? For The New Nihilists, the answer is that you don't.**

They are overwhelmed by global problems and they have lost faith in the ability of governments or institutions to fix them, so they are seeking solace by stepping back from the world. It's not that they have given up caring – they are simply finding that caring less is an effective coping mechanism. And while nihilism is typically seen as a negative sentiment (file it next to cynicism and pessimism), The New Nihilists are discovering that relinquishing responsibility can be a source of joy, giving them the freedom to live by their own rules, envision new realities, and set their own metrics of success and happiness outside of societal expectations. This is where you'll find the outsiders, the independent thinkers, the rule-breakers and the navel-gazers.

**What they need:** New Nihilists gravitate towards speculative ideas and creative genres that are outside the mainstream, whether it's regenerative capitalism, chaos culture, hopepunk fiction (dystopian themes with optimistic outcomes), or gaming and psychedelics as a form of therapy. To reach them, you need to show that you are on their level.

**Find them:** going goblin mode while reading Wendy Syfret's 2021 book *The Sunny Nihilist: A Declaration of the Pleasure of Pointlessness*.

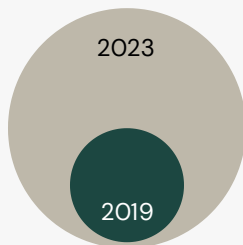
# What's driving The New Nihilists?

## Online communities

Subreddit community members

**r/nihilism**

**130,000**



31,000

**r/misanthropy**  
87,000+

**r/nihilistmemes**  
26,000+

**r/positivenihilism**  
1,200+

## Inflation concerns

**57.3%**

feel overwhelmed by the cost-of-living crisis.

WGSN Insight survey

## Disillusionment

**55%**

of global Millennials in their mid-30s are dissatisfied with democracy – significantly more than Gen X or Baby Boomers felt at similar ages.

University of Cambridge and the HUMAN Surveys Project, Youth and Satisfaction With Democracy (data collected between 1973 and 2020)



of young people (16-25) say they feel sad, anxious, powerless, helpless and guilty about climate change. Over 45% also say their feelings about climate change negatively affect their daily life and functioning.

Young People's Voices on Climate Anxiety, Government Betrayal and Moral Injury



## Next steps

**Honesty, authenticity** and **humour** will be the best ways to gain the trust of The New Nihilists, who don't want to feel like they are being sold to. Our experts can help you win over this tricky demographic.

[Contact us to discover more.](#)

Consumer profile

# 02 The Reductionists

*After embracing digital convenience and remote living during the pandemic, these consumers are looking to re-establish IRL connections and communities with a more human touch*

Defining qualities

Busy

Values-driven

Community-focused

Seeking connection

**In a world that's in thrall to everything bigger, better and faster, The Reductionists are trying to shrink their interactions to a more human scale.**

After flocking to home deliveries and subscription services during the pandemic, they now find that they are interacting with screens more than people, so they are looking to rebuild their IRL connections and their sense of community. The Reductionists are drawn to the tangible over the digital, and they have a heightened awareness of their impact on the world. They believe that economic growth should be a means to support people and the planet, not the other way round, and they shop with these values in mind. They still want their time-saving conveniences and efficiencies, but they need these things to be sustainable and ethical, powered by fairly paid workers and business models that give back more than they take.

**What they need:** Reductionists prioritise kindness and integrity. If they see something wrong, they do something right, and they will expect the same from you. They are more driven by the virtues of other-care rather than self-care (a Psychological Bulletin review of more than 200 global studies found that prosocial behaviours such as altruism result in better mental and physical health).

**Find them:** supporting ethical businesses such as vacation rental platform Fairbnb, which directs half of every commission fee to local community projects, or Delivery Co-Op in the US, which charges customers a monthly membership fee so it can provide drivers with fair wages and benefits.

## What's driving **The Reductionists?**

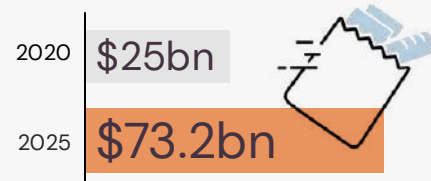
Rejecting over-consumption

60%

Estimated rise in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 resulting from global textiles production.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Convenience



Projected revenue of the global last-mile food and grocery delivery market.

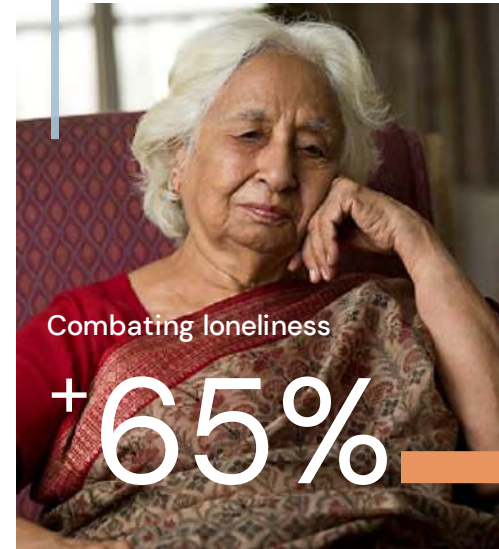
Statista

Supporting local

64%

of our respondents said they have bought more locally since the onset of the pandemic as a way to support their community.

WGSN Insight survey



of elderly people in India feel lonely because they think young people spend too much time on mobile phones and other tech.

PAN Healthcare, Liberty in Life of Older People



## Next steps

The Reductionists crave **connection**, whether it's through a human touch in your service or an emotional touch in your **storytelling**. They also need to know that your **values** align with theirs. WGSN has the intel on which strategies will work best.

[Contact us to discover more.](#)

Consumer profile

# 03 The Time Keepers

*For these memory-makers, time is the most valuable resource, and they want to do more than just spend it – they want to invest it in things that will make their lives richer*

Defining qualities

Discerning

Epicurean

Age-agnostic

Seeking enrichment

**The Time Keepers are rallying against social media snippet culture by investing their minutes and hours in things that add value to their world.**

Their focus is on creating a richer life through daily rituals and meaningful experiences. They refuse to be harried by time, believing that schedules should fit around people (not people around schedules), and they refuse to be defined by it, gravitating towards intergenerational friendships that are based on shared interests rather than age. They also understand the monetary value of time: they're willing to spend on things that give them more of it, but if you want their time (or worse, if you waste it), expect to pay. Quality will always beat quantity for these consumers, and they're more interested in acquiring lasting memories than material possessions, mindful of the wise words of former US president Abraham Lincoln: "The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time."

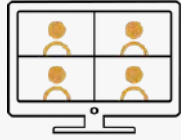
**What they need:** these consumers need services that free up their time, and rental or fractional ownership models that free them from full-time commitments. In Japan, Not a Hotel provides access to luxury homes-away-from-home through a subscription service, and in Canada and the US, Apple Maps has partnered with car-park reservation app SpotHero to make it quicker and easier for drivers to find free spaces.

**Find them:** enjoying slow cooking, long-form reading or an adventurous outing on that extra day off from their four-day work week.

# What's driving The Time Keepers?

## Search for work-life balance

252%



more time was spent in weekly Microsoft Teams meetings in 2022 compared with 2020.

Microsoft Work Trend Index Annual Report

## Desire for inclusivity

58.6%

of Gen X and Boomer consumers say they don't see their age group represented at scale in fashion marketing.

WGSN Insight survey

## Intergenerational friendships

37%

of adults in the US have a close friend who is at least 15 years older or younger than they are, and 20% of close intergenerational friendships have lasted for more than 20 years.

AARP

## Ageing better



One in six

people in the world will be over the age of 65 by 2050 (up from one in 11 in 2019).

United Nations World Population Prospects



Wellness

79%

say wellness is important, and 42% consider it a top priority.

McKinsey & Company



## Next steps

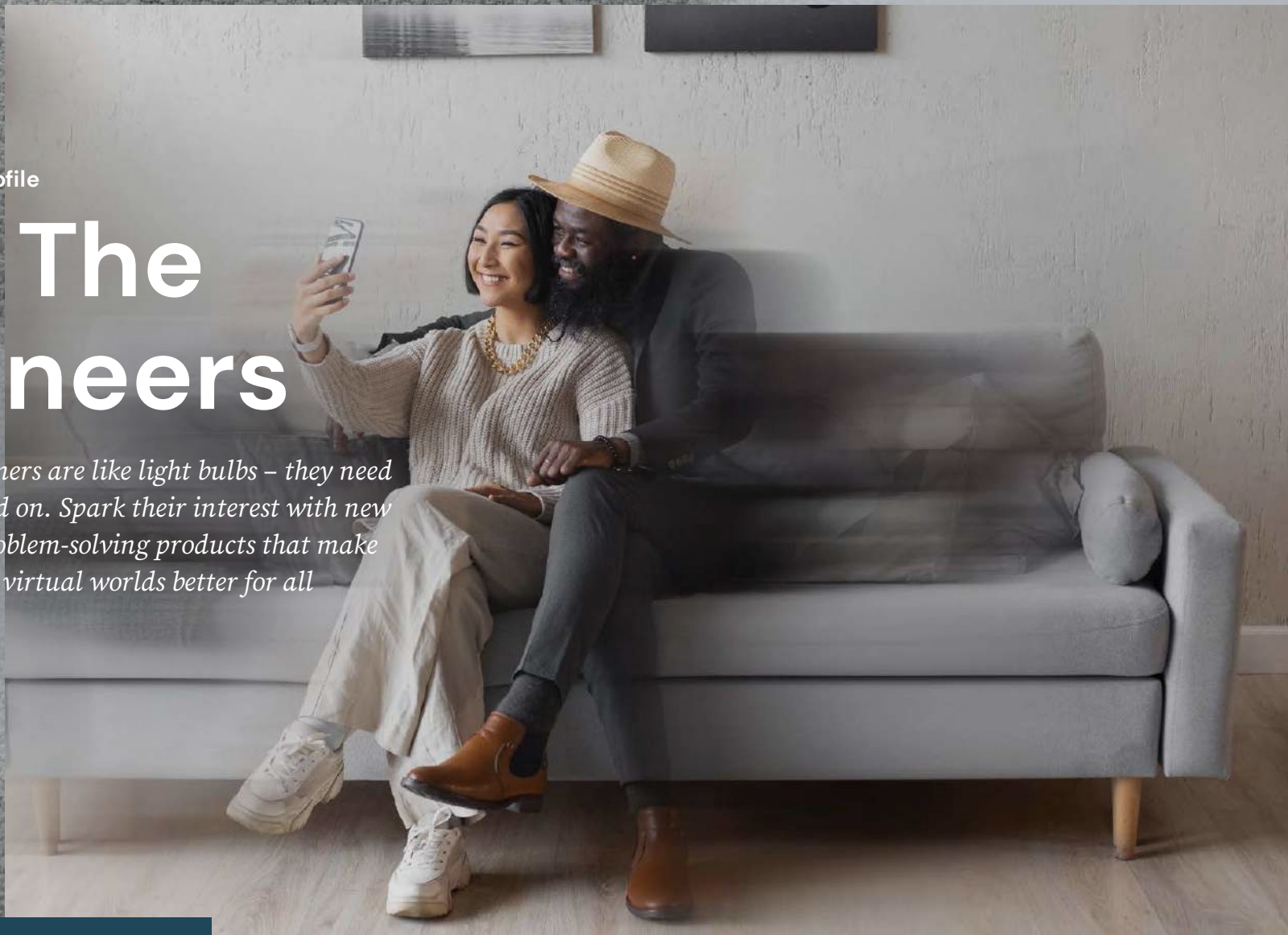
The Time Keepers want the **freedom** and **flexibility** to live their best lives, and they're drawn to things that will **add value** to their world. WGSN knows the products, services and strategies that will appeal to these discerning consumers.

[Contact us to discover more.](#)

Consumer profile

# 04 The Pioneers

*These consumers are like light bulbs – they need to be switched on. Spark their interest with new ideas and problem-solving products that make physical and virtual worlds better for all*



Defining qualities

Entrepreneurial

Mercurial

Risk-takers

Seeking inspiration

**The Pioneers are movers, shakers and opportunity-makers who thrive on change and new ideas.**

They live with one foot in the physical world and one foot in the digital, and they are determined to bridge the gap between the two. This is where you'll find the future thinkers, technologists and urban planners who are building new worlds, whether it be better-functioning urban places (think smart cities and inclusive transit systems) or safer metaverse spaces. Pioneers are the type to create a successful online presence and then leverage it to open a physical store, or vice versa. Whatever their area of expertise, they like to be leaders, and they are driven by a need to make an impact. They will be attracted to products and services that inspire them and enable them to move freely between different worlds, whether that's different locations as digital nomads, or different platforms in the virtual realm.

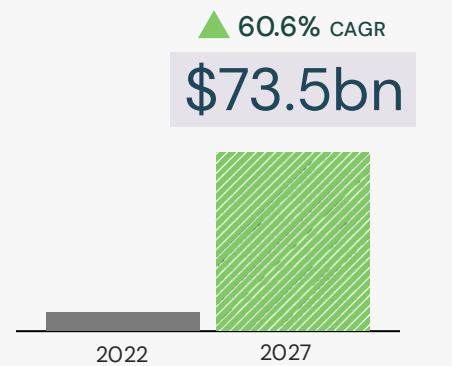
**What they need:** Pioneers need solutions that improve the world, whether that's universal designs that can be used by people of all ages and abilities, or more personalised products and services that will be loved for longer and wasted less. These curious consumers are equally comfortable in physical and digital worlds – for them, the purpose is more important than the platform.

**Find them:** combining leisure activities with serious intent, such as decentralised social media (DeSo) networks that redirect control back to content creators, or digital twins and avatars that can solve real-world problems through virtual simulations, or on-the-ground initiatives such as Repair Together, which stages 'clean-up raves' in Ukraine to restore war-ravaged locations.



# What's driving The Pioneers?

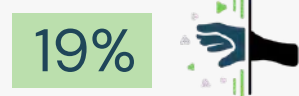
## Digital twin technology



Projected value of the global market for digital twins by 2027.

### Markets and Markets

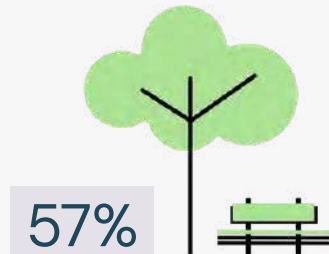
## Metaverse opportunities



have purchased virtual goods such as in-game skins or digital fashion items.

WGSN Insight survey

## Building better spaces



of people across eight European cities want to **replace parking spaces with more greenery.**

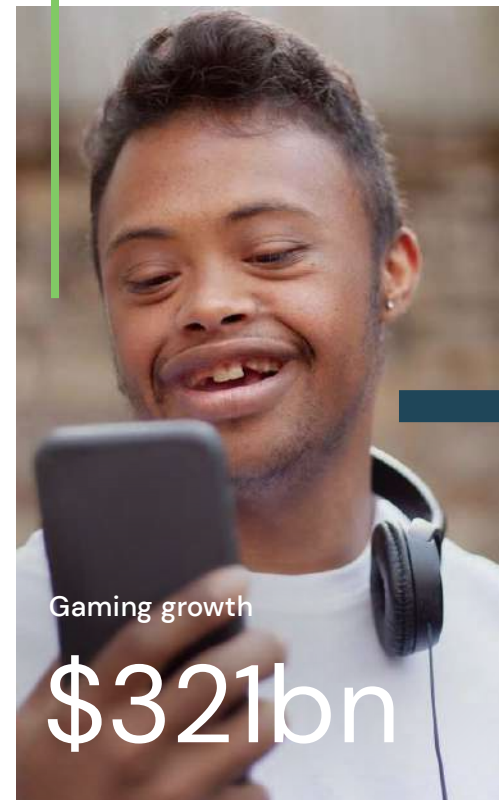
**32%**

want more places to rest.

**28%**

want wider sidewalks.

Ipsos survey for Lynk & Co



Gaming growth

**\$321bn**

Projected global revenue for video games in 2026, rising at a CAGR of 8.4%.

PwC, Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2022–2026



## Next steps

The Pioneers will be **inspired** by new ideas and **smart designs**, and anything that seamlessly **connects their physical and virtual worlds**. WGSN's insight can show you how to ignite their interest.

[Contact us to discover more.](#)

# Four strategies for success

## 01 Take the pressure off in a polycrisis

It's critical that you provide relief for consumers as they grapple with the pressures of inflation, recession, climate change and geopolitical instability. Identify how your brand can offer a sense of calm, escapism or even humour, and provide products and services that will make life easier and more affordable.

## 02 Build connections and communities

Make the world feel smaller and friendlier by embedding a human touch into your products and services, and by ensuring that your business makes a positive impact in the world. Treating people and the planet with kindness and respect is the best way for your brand to build a lasting, loyal community.

## 03 Offer quality over quantity

We are oversaturated with choice, even as it becomes clear that our world cannot sustain our demand for its resources. To stand out, you need to offer something better, not just something more, and you need to be clear with consumers about how your products and services will add value and enrichment to their lives.

## 04 Help people switch modes

We're all living fragmented lives, switching between work and home modes, or physical and digital worlds. As hybrid lifestyles continue and the metaverse develops, it will be imperative to help people to switch between these different versions of themselves, and also help them ring-fence their privacy and personal space in a world with fewer boundaries.

# Research matrix

## 01 The New Nihilists

**The Lancet Planetary Health:** Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey

**University of Cambridge:** Faith in democracy: Millennials are the most disillusioned generation 'in living memory'

**El País:** Why Brazil's first-time voters are backing Lula

**Wendy Syfret:** The Sunny Nihilist: A Declaration of the Pleasure of Pointlessness

**Reddit:** r/nihilism online community

**WGSN:** Cost of living: consumer emotional states

## 03 The Time Keepers

**United Nations World Population Prospects:** One in six people in the world will be over the age of 65 by 2050

**Microsoft Work Trend Index Annual Report:** Great expectations: making hybrid work work

**McKinsey & Company:** Feeling good: the future of the \$1.5tn wellness market

**AARP (US):** The positive impact of intergenerational friendships

**Wallpaper\*:** Japan's newest hospitality offering is Not A Hotel

**TechCrunch:** Apple Maps teams up with parking app SpotHero to give users access to 8K parking options

**WGSN:** Gen X and Boomers: fashion retail habits

## 02 The Reductionists

**Psychological Bulletin:** Rewards of kindness? A meta-analysis of the link between prosociality and wellbeing

**Mint (India):** Over 65% of elderly feel lonely amid rising adoption of tech among youth

**UN Framework Convention on Climate Change:** Fashion industry, UN pursue climate action for sustainable development

**Statista:** Revenue of the last-mile food and grocery delivery market worldwide in 2020 and 2025

**Delivery Co-op:** First-of-its-kind employee- and restaurant-owned food delivery company

**Fairbnb:** 50% of commission from every booking goes to a community project in the place you visit

**WGSN:** Post-pandemic sustainable behaviours

## 04 The Pioneers

**PwC:** Perspectives from the Global Entertainment & Media Outlook 2022-2026

**McKinsey & Company:** Value creation in the metaverse

**Markets and Markets:** Digital twin market: global forecast to 2027

**Lynk & Co:** Cities reimaged

**Repair Together:** Restoring communities suffering from the Russian occupation

**WGSN podcast:** What will we and our avatars be wearing in the future?

**WGSN:** Emerging concept: decentralised social media

# About us

At WGSN, we decode the signals of change that are influencing future consumer behaviour, so you can be prepared for tomorrow.

Providing a sense of focus among ongoing change, WGSN enables you to identify opportunities to engage with your consumers by providing a deep understanding of their behaviours and lifestyles, as well as the market and socio-cultural global shifts that will impact and disrupt your industry.

We connect the dots between data and culture across technology, marketing, design, retail and business strategy to give you a clear picture of what will be relevant and where to go next.

Through our expert Mindset consultancy, we help you focus on where your business can play to win.

Whether you want to reach new consumers and markets, or understand how to win in a disruptive landscape, or make sense of the metaverse for your business, our consultants help you stay relevant by offering tailored strategies and ongoing advice and support.

## Future Consumer in numbers

2 years ahead of market

8th annual edition

4 consumer profiles

25 years' trend forecasting experience

4 consumer sentiments

11,000+ industry leaders reading Future Consumer each year

6 weeks' intensive research

*This paper is a summary of WGSN's Future Consumer 2025 forecast. Subscribers can read the full report at [WGSN](#).*

→ [Find out more about how we can help you.](#)

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