

TREND: The experience brand

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- Lucie Greene, worldwide director of JWTIntelligence

From 'Me' brands, to category collapse in the retail sector, mindful business and new definitions of power; and design-led experiential public spaces, JWTIntelligence has produced a superlative vision of current consumer culture and expectations in 2015.

The dominant theme is what brands can do for consumers, in terms of experience and purpose, not advertising. Consumers have hacked into brand culture and made it their own. The shift towards personalisation and craft and artisanal food, remembered skills and a caring culture, makes the influence of the individual within a broader community very powerful.

JWTIntelligence this year launched ['The Future 100: Trends and Change to Watch in 2015'](#), with original insights on 100 cultural shifts expected in the year to come.

As industry trends such as 'brand storytelling' and 'content marketing' feed into and reflect consumer experiences with brands, much of JWTIntelligence's 100 trends break down those cultural shifts and provide fascinating examples of consumer and brand collaboration and brands and technology partnering to provide ultimate consumer experiences.



Source: JWT.com

According to JWTIntelligence, the 2015 report is an "evolution of JWTIntelligence's flagship '100 Things to Watch'... connecting the dots between the 'what' and the 'why', by including a 'Why it's interesting' analysis with each item." The full list of categories covered in the report includes: culture, beauty, brands, food and drink, innovation, lifestyle, luxury, retail, sustainability and technology.

Reports like this one are critical for brands to understand change, when "instantly accessible information, globalisation and social media have accelerated the pace of trends exponentially," said Lucie Greene, worldwide director of JWTIntelligence, when the report launched shortly before Christmas 2014.

"The ubiquity of the web has accelerated the pace of trends, the spread of information and the sophistication of consumers, who are increasingly confident and expect brands to work around them rather than dictate to them. Other consumer expectations are also shifting in this new landscape, under influences as diverse as the vast range of information available on the internet, globalisation, environmental change and difficult economic times. As a given, not a bonus, brands are expected to deliver experiences, be hyper-transparent and achieve sustainability. They're expected to produce beautifully designed products and environments. And they are also increasingly expected to be societal leaders, benefactors, innovators and philanthropists."

Brand trends

On **Brands**, 'Do' brands; 'Me' brands and 'Third-Way Commerce' allow consumers to take centre stage. Third-Way Commerce is a movement started by [Toms](#) that "combines social good with sales and marketing and includes the entire marketplace, whereby you 'buy one/give one away' and includes everything from meals to a week of water for the needy. "Consumers, particularly Millennials, are increasingly discriminating between brands by looking for ethical behaviour and sustainability. They are also looking for brands and companies with clear values," reports JWTIntelligence.

'Do' brands are those which focus on 'doing' rather than 'talking' as a marketing platform, "using activism, innovation and philanthropy projects to connect with consumers and inspire marketing content". Example: [Kenco](#) sources coffee from areas where unfortunately there is strong gang culture, hence Kenco offers training programmes for those at-risk who work in coffee farming'. Their advertising showcases the project, not their coffee.

Then, 'Me' brands are where consumers are invited to create local brands in their own image - part of the sharing economy and an increasing desire for "personalisation, collaboration and consumer entrepreneurship". [Pernod Ricard Our/Vodka campaign](#) invited their customers to create their own local version of the brand in a business partnership. The end result was Our/Vodka micro-distilleries in various cities around the world, like Berlin and Detroit. "Local stakeholders receive 20% of the profit in exchange for investing their time and managing the distillery as well as marketing and events. Pernod Ricard invested the capital and supplied a global recipe, which is adjusted to include local ingredients," writes JWTIntelligence.



Source: [JWT.com](#)

Retail trends

The focus on **retail** prophesises category collapse and the mass boutique - plus Amazon's very first offline bricks and mortar store - it has signed the lease on premises in New York. JWTIntelligence says it is interesting because Amazon is the latest in a slew of online retailers opening up physical stores: "while consumers increasingly shop online and via mobile, they also seek compelling in-store experiences.

Technology is a gem, with ethical smartphones, clever fabrics, cognitive technology - and going invisible online - off the

grid, so to speak.

JWT Future 100

These are the additional highlights from JWTIntelligence:

- In its **Culture** section, the report spotlights the rise of the 'Mipsters' (Muslim + hipster) and the growing number of Teetotal Millennials. It also looks at Experiential Public Spaces-the transformation of public spaces via creative immersive projects-and Experiences Going Dark, the advent of unsettling experiences as entertainment.
- **Beauty** trends include South Korean Beauty: a look at how the axis of influence is changing in the beauty world as the global appetite for South Korean products grows.
- The **Food and Drink** section includes Cold-Pressed Everything (consumers are increasingly fetishising cold-pressed and unprocessed foods); Guilt-Free To-Go (healthy, ethical fast food will gain momentum as a raft of virtuous brands appropriate junk style for the Millennial generation); and Haute Vegan (a new wave of hip restaurant concepts departs from the hippie vibe associated with meat-free dining).
- In **Innovation**, the report notes the rise of the Tactile Internet as innovators play with haptic technology, wrapping in digital connectivity with physical action, among other trends. And in Lifestyle, the report examines the rise of new centres of influence (for instance, Los Angeles is reinventing itself as a fashion, tech and innovation hub) and the new Adventurist Impulse, as well as the crash in Helicopter Parenting.
- The Future 100 also looks to the worlds of **Luxury and Retail**, where the sharing economy is increasingly aligning with business and luxury, Amazon is launching its first store, and retail experiences are channelling BuzzFeed surveys.

A word of warning from the team at JWTIntelligence: "Social media has sped up the rate of trend and niche discovery, and its path to mass exposure, but some celebrities and brands are doing this too fast, and in an inauthentic way, creating a backlash among connected, sophisticated Millennials, who view it as opportunistic. There's an opportunity for brands to connect with real subcultures, but they must tread a careful path or risk looking cynical."

Source: JWTIntelligence. [Download](#) the full report '[The Future 100: Trends and Change to Watch in 2015](#)'.

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