Top 18 Trends

Uncover 2020’s biggest trends and how you can get ahead of the curve for the next 3-5 years.

TRENDHUNTER
CREATE THE FUTURE
At the core of Trend Hunter’s research is a proprietary framework of 6 Patterns of Opportunity and 18 Megatrends. This framework decodes the chaos to make sense of emerging trends and insights. More importantly, it helps us to understand why trends resonate with consumers and what might be next.

The 6 Patterns of Opportunity are repeatable shortcuts that can be used to find innovative ideas, while our Megatrend Matrix acts as a guide to understanding consumer behaviors that are unchanging—just applied in different ways over time.

Although this report is titled Top 18 Trends for 2020, its implications go much further into the future. Each top trend has been paired to an overarching Megatrend, a broader Insight and a Workshop Question to help you brainstorm for success in the next 3-5 years.

Get ready to Create the Future.

& Eighteen Megatrends
Acceleration
1. Perfecting One Thing
2. Aspirational Icon
3. Exaggerated Feature
4. Reimagined Solution

Prosumerism
The need to have their voice heard has consumers creating media and accumulating expertise independently.

Catalyzation
Brands have taken a role of accelerating the personal development of consumers.

AI
Evolving technologies—from AI to blockchain—act as a catalyst for the betterment of the human race.

Curation
Hyper-targeted offerings, services, subscriptions and recommendations to simplify lives with better things.

Instant Entrepreneurship
New services satisfy the consumer desire to “be your own boss” and conceptualize, fund, launch and market ideas at the click of a button.

Simplicity
In a cluttered world, simplicity stands out, resulting in focused business models, streamlined UX and simplistic thinking.

Multisensation
Passive media consumption is no longer enough in the digital age, making for more immersive entertainment.

Convergence
1. Combining + Layering
2. Adding Value
3. Co-Branding + Aligning
4. Physical + Digital

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Co-Creation
Companies work with consumers to collaborate on better, more consumer-centric products and services.

Hybridization
Lines are blurring as business models, products and services merge to create new, unique concepts to break the mould.

Reduction
1. Specialization
2. Fewer Layers + Efficiency
3. Crowdsourcing
4. Subscription

Cyclicality
1. Retro + Nostalgia
2. Generational
3. Economic + Seasonal
4. Repetitive Cycles

Naturality
Consumption guilt causes consumers to seek products conducive to environmental, spiritual, or physical purity.

Redirection
1. Refocusing
2. Reversing
3. Surprising
4. Gamifying

Nostalgia
Sentimentality fuels a desire to bring the past into the present, especially with respect to one’s formative years.

Youthfulness
The world is becoming more playful, redefining what it means to grow old, be young, or assign to any specific age or generation.

Tribalism
The need to belong results in allegiant groups formed around causes, common interests, or brand fandom.

Experience
Social media creates an attention economy where material goods are less valuable than shareable memories.

Authenticity
Social media and resistance to traditional advertising have created a desire for authenticity and reality.

Many-to-Many
The power within a given industry lies in an interdependent relationship between consumer and brand.
Inclusive Design

Inclusive design is prioritized for kids in school

**Trend:** Inclusionary design in the school system is no longer exclusive to those with physical disabilities. Businesses and institutions are now focusing on creating spaces for children that accommodate a wide range of mental and physical health-related needs. Whether prioritizing ergonomic classroom desks or ensuring comfortable learning environments for refugee children, this shift toward all-encompassing inclusion in school design indicates that designers and institutions are increasingly recognizing how children’s environments can impact their schooling.

**Insight:** The increased focus on inclusive design by architects and school systems comes in response to discourse identifying the conditions that are most conducive to young people obtaining an exceptional education. These spaces cater to the modern parent’s desire for well-rounded and personalized learning experiences for their children, with businesses now meeting some of these needs by prioritizing inclusion that encompasses diversity, disabilities, and other physical or psychological needs.

**In the next 3-5 years:** How could your brand take a holistic approach to inclusive design?
Deepfake Production

"Deepfake" technology is used for a range of causes

**Trend:** "Deepfake" technology, a machine-learning technique that superimposes smart technology to people’s images to create highly realistic—but fake—videos, is being used to produce content by brands as well as those aiming to bring awareness to its potential, realities, and dangers. With fear growing about how this technology will continue to impact social and political issues, exposing these possibilities incites consumers to be more critical of what they see online.

**Insight:** As consumers become more concerned about how to discern what’s real and what’s fake online, creative endeavors that educate instead of sensationalizing are allowing them to be more informed and empowered in how they engage with content. In an era where digital exploitation, "fake news" and misinformation are already rampant, deepfake techniques have the potential to accelerate these issues. However, with brands creating more constructive campaigns, it’s clear that the technology can also make an impact in industries related to everything from marketing to art.

**In the next 3-5 years:** How could your company ensure that it’s leaving a positive and accurate brand imprint online?
Micro-Learning

Brands offer micro-learning options for consumers looking to expand their skills

**Trend:** Brands are creating micro-learning solutions for consumers who are looking to add value to their personal and professional development in a way that seamlessly fits into their lifestyles. Whether for training purposes or to offer general educational content, these micro-learning platforms allow for quick and engaging forms of education in the digital space.

**Insight:** With shortened attention spans and busy personal and work lives, consumers are now accustomed to news and information coming to them in the form of short soundbites and articles. Micro-learning platforms are a reaction to this shift. The adoption of these shortened educational solutions comes as time-strapped consumers who are regularly balancing several responsibilities seek out low-commitment forms of professional development.

**In the next 3-5 years:** How could your brand empower its employees or customers with micro-learning platforms?

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**Livestream Instructor Coding Classes**

- 'everLive' Creates an Immersive Online Way to Learn to Code

**Remote Work Discovery Platforms**

- 'Remotewise' Offers Education and Opportunities for Professionals

**Continuous Professional Development Platforms**

- 'Vectorly' Integrates Learning into Daily Workflow

**Online Video-Learning Initiatives**

- YouTube is Creating Anti-Distraction Educational Playlists

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7 Featured | 59 Examples | 31,009 Total Clicks
Referential Luxury

Fashion goes beyond retro-kitsch, appealing to nostalgic Gen X insiders

Trend: With endless Instagram feeds and Tumblr accounts dedicated to retro fashion, throwback aesthetics are assumed to target Millennials. However, a more nuanced approach to old-school revival is rising in popularity: archival re-releases, the popularity of which hinges on the audience’s ability to recognize references from the 90s and early 2000s.

Insight: The time period referenced by this approach to nostalgia indicates an attempt to appeal to young Gen Xers who have insider knowledge of fads from this bygone era. This is because the notoriously difficult-to-target generation is more inclined to react to familiarity. References to their own lived experiences take this to the extreme, while also acknowledging that “cool” does not belong to the youth consumer, but to the generation who initiated the trends that are only now being revived through social media.

In the next 3-5 years: What is one cyclical fad from the early 2000s that your brand could leverage through marketing?
Milk-Made

Clothing made from milk aims to mitigate global textile waste

Trend: Small emerging fashion brands are aiming to counter some of the damage done by fast fashion with textiles made from the various properties of milk. These more sustainable clothing options are touted as being friendlier to the environment due to their reuse of milk waste or their biodegradable nature, while simultaneously being higher in quality.

Insight: With consumers becoming more aware and active in their concerns for the environment, they're slowly changing their purchase decisions in order to lessen their ecological impact. Milk-made fashion is one way that brands in the fashion industry are responding to eco-conscious consumers. By upcycling milk waste in this way, small brands are setting a precedent for what the future of the fashion industry should look like as climate change becomes a growing concern.

In the next 3-5 years: In what way could your brand help mitigate global environmental issues?
Youthfulness

Boomerlennials

*Boomers’ appetite for experience and story-based brands comes to the forefront*

**Trend:** Despite stereotypes, Boomers and Millennials have a lot in common. Both generations have a large representation in North America, making them popular targets for marketers. As well, there are parallels between the social media and hippie movements—a tendency toward activism (albeit in different forms), and a focus on interpersonal relationships. With this in mind, Boomers will begin gravitating toward products typically associated with the Millennial demographic.

**Insight:** Because the aging Boomer demographic will have free time and resources in retirement, they’ll acquire the freedom to reconnect with old tendencies from their youth. These broader tendencies mirror what is observed with the Millennial demographic, and the modern ways in which they’re manifested mimic Millennial methods in more literal ways.

**In the next 3-5 years:** What is one tactic you’ve seen or used to target Millennials that would suit your ageing customer well?
Genderless K-Pop

K-Pop drives the post-demographic development of genderless beauty

Trend: By reflecting the post-demographic beauty aesthetic often present in K-Pop, partnerships between K-Pop bands and beauty brands present an opportunity for individual expression to the masses of youth. Originating in South Korea, K-Pop is a style of Korean pop music that reflects modern beauty ideals of that culture, as well as its musical tastes. These ideals often sit in contrast to ideas of attractiveness in other countries—for example, K-Pop spotlights a polished masculinity that is very different from what’s seen in North America’s common portrayal of maleness.

Insight: The mass appeal of this movement is heavily dependent on Generation Z, as this youth generation is more open-minded and individualistic than generations past. Generation Z is more open-minded because they grew up using the Internet, giving them exposure to many different cultures and opinions during their developmental stages. Access to social media has also given this generation a unique perspective on identity and emphasis on uniqueness that impacts their view of beauty as a concept, and as an industry.

In the next 3-5 years: What is one international trend you could leverage?

- K-Pop Skincare Lines
  - Korean Boyband BTS Launched Their Own Skincare Collection
  - Boy Band Face Masks
    - It’s Skin Thailand Created a Restorative Mask Collection Inspired by GOT7
  - Collaborative K-Pop Cosmetics
    - Tonymoly Launched K-Beauty Lip Tints with Monsta X

- K-Pop Acne Treatments
  - The Branded BTS Skincare Products Tackle Blemishes

5 Featured | 39 Examples | 51,166 Total Clicks
Gamified Stay

Hotel brands incorporate elements of gamification in their accommodations.

**Trend:** Hotels are prioritizing gamification in many forms—whether that’s in the theme of the rooms they offer, in their loyalty programs, or in additional elements they offer throughout their customers’ journeys. By gamifying the standard hotel experience, brands are prioritizing playful brand-customer interactions that offer a point of distinction from competitors.

**Insight:** This shift in the hospitality space comes as the hotel industry is required to compete with the ever-expanding homestay industry. As more consumers now become globally influenced, seeking out the authentic local experiences that come with homestay services, gamified hotel packages that focus on “play” are revamping the hospitality space for consumers who would still consider novelty travel experiences over cultural ones.

**In the next 3-5 years:** How could your brand incorporate gamification into its product/service?
Rewarded Action

Brands are requiring customers to participate in tasks before they are rewarded

**Trend:** Brands are encouraging consumers to participate in various tasks and experiences before they are granted access to the products and services being featured. This type of action diverts the consumer’s attention from being “sold to,” to being interacted with. Furthermore, it highlights a shift toward the “attention economy,” wherein experience is as valuable as money.

**Insight:** This idea of experience-as-currency is directly linked to the evolution of social media, and the subsequent redefinition of “value.” Regular social media users view every “like” on a post as a prize or currency exchange. A piece of their life and the things they experience—be it a photo of themselves on Instagram, or a status post about their day on Facebook—is given in exchange for approval. This focus on how the intangible is starting to impact consumers’ view of value beyond social media, and into their real lives.

**In the next 3-5 years:** How could your brand better utilize the attention economy?
Branded Podcasting

Brands are venturing into the world of podcasting for consumer engagement.

Trend: As podcasts become a more popular form of media, brands are creating their own branded podcasts to further connect with consumers. Since podcasts typically have a niche focus or theme, they offer more targeted platforms that speak directly to smaller groups of potential or loyal customers. These podcasts can be observed in a range of industries that include everything from alcohol to interior design.

Insight: Branded podcasts diversify businesses’ reach by leveraging platforms that are already aligned with consumers’ daily entertainment-based habits—particularly those of younger demographics. The shift towards creating company-specific podcasts comes as Millennial and Gen Z consumers seek out more authentic interactions with the brands they align themselves with. With many people no longer buying into the “one-size-fits-all” approach to campaigning, branded podcasting is able to cement brand loyalty for young consumers who turn to brands that appeal to their specific interests.

In the next 3-5 years: What is one alternative platform that your brand currently isn’t using, but could?
Many-to-Many

P2P Advice

Consumers turn to peer-to-peer networks for advice on various consumer categories

Trend: Looking beyond brand influence, consumers are seeking out input and advice from peer-to-peer networks for more approachable levels of engagement. Popping up not only in fashion but in the cooking and automobile spaces too, P2P networks help create online communities that allow people of various backgrounds and interests to connect and collaborate with others in real-time.

Insight: P2P examples not only speak to the growing power of the consumer, but the increased consumer desire to connect with others in a more authentic way. With consumer trust in brands lessening, having platforms that facilitate conversation and advice among peers offers more certainty for the increasingly skeptical consumer.

In the next 3-5 years: In what way can you adopt a P2P network into your product and service offerings?

Shoppable Style Advice Platforms
H&M Group’s ‘Itspark’ Encourages Idea Exchanges

P2P Travel Nightlife Apps
‘uVibe’ Helps Travelers Pinpoint the Best Spots to Party

P2P Social Shopping Apps
LetsBab Lets Consumers Share and Shop Brands Via Messenger

P2P Home Cooking Platforms
’DishMe’ Connects Home Cooks with Hungry Consumers

4 Featured | 34 Examples | 32,562 Total Clicks
Holographic Assistant

AI-based holographic assistants enhance engagement and customization

**Trend:** Smart assistive technology is now being developed with holographic functions that enhance interactivity between the customer and the product. These holographic assistants can be found in everything from cars to home assistant devices, and offer an element of novelty that most standard smart assistants don’t yet have.

**Insight:** The creation of holographic assistive technology enables consumer engagement due to its novel and future-focused design, while still catering to the consumer preference for personalization that often drives purchase decisions in the digital age. The security concerns that consumers often associate with the ubiquity of smart technology is mitigated with the added element of “humanization” that holographic interfaces add—allowing consumers to better trust this emerging form technology.

**In the next 3-5 years:** Where could your brand employ holographic technology to enhance consumer engagement?
Trend: Brands associated with passive forms of entertainment such as storytelling are incorporating choose-your-own-adventure formats into their offerings in new and innovative ways. Now an option in everything from smart home assistants to streamed movie content, the choose-your-own-adventure option is able to engage by directly involving the customer in how they want to be entertained.

Insight: With consumer attention spans being increasingly limited due to the new ways in which they consume content, this new form of interactive storytelling in contemporary formats is able to maintain customer engagement over an extended period of time. This shift also speaks to the growing desire for immersive experiences over passive viewership—which has now extended into the home.

In the next 3-5 years: How could your brand make its product, service, or campaigns more interactive?
Car-Share Collab
Brands partner with ride-sharing services to enhance customer experiences

Trend: The growth of partnerships between popular ride-share services and seemingly unrelated brands is increasing. These partnerships cross typical categories of business in favor of pairing services by specific consumer habits. Coupling the enhancement of customer experience with much-desired convenience, such partnerships reflect how brands are able to alter business models in order to cement their place in the life of the modern consumer.

Insight: This is one of many examples of what happens when brands successfully implement consumer-centricity. Thinking of customers as people with unique interests and motivations—as opposed to consumer profiles with predictable desires and behaviors—is more important than ever in the social media age. Regular use of social media has consumers more in touch with a sense of identity and uniqueness, creating a desire for more customized, nuanced products and services.

In the next 3-5 years: What is one brand unrelated to your own that your target consumer uses, and how could you partner with them?
Behavioral Installation

Tech allows artwork to better tap into viewers’ emotional responsiveness

**Trend:** The adoption of emotion-responsive technology in exhibitions is prompting audiences to contribute to the art pieces. Whether incorporating facial-recognition technology or movement and behavioral responsiveness, these installations curate a personalized gallery experience where the artwork mirrors the viewer’s state of mind.

**Insight:** The incorporation of behavior-responsive technology into art installations comes as institutions and artists within this space seek out ways to appeal to Millennial and Gen Z consumers. Since consumers within these demographics respond better to immersive and experiential purchase journeys, responsive art is able to facilitate more intimate interactions and relationships with those who observe it.

**In the next 3-5 years:** What is a behavior-based activity or installation that could benefit your business?

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**Shape-Shifting Robotic Sculptures**
Ozel Office’s Tech Artwork is Tech-Driven and Interactive

**Facial Recognition Tech Installations**
R Luke Dubois & Zach Lieberman’s Piece is Somewhat Dystopian

**EEG-Dependent Art Installations**
David Carson & Thijs Biersteker Produce Interactive Responsive Art

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**Immersive Behavioral Installations**
The Samsung Installation in Milan Depends on the Audience

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4 Featured | 26 Examples | 93,762 Total Clicks
First-Time Empowerment

Brands offer guidance and empowerment through people’s “first times”

**Trend:** Brands are providing accelerated support for individuals who are going through “firsts” that are typically intimidating—a shift seen in everything from menstruation to parenting. By getting more involved in the milestones their customers are likely to experience, these brands are looking to establish customer loyalty.

**Insight:** With some milestones being inevitable for most North American consumers, the direct involvement and guidance of businesses in the various life achievements people face enables trust between the customer and the brand. This shift comes as consumers seek both empowerment and authenticity in the connections they have with the brands they choose to purchase from.

**In the next 3-5 years:** How could your brand support consumers through various milestones?

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**Empowering First Period Kits**
Rael's Box Includes Pads, Period Panties, Acne Patches, Wipes & More

**Proposal Equality Movements**
'Propose Too' Offers Resources for Women Who Want to Propose

**New Mom Care Kits**
Rael Boasts a Curated Collection of Organic and Wellness-Centric Products

**Blog Post-Inspired Fatherhood Books**
'Man vs. Baby' Offers a Comedic Outlook on Real Parenting

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4 Featured | 34 Examples | 37,829 Total Clicks
Brands in the meditation space offer new means of achieving quiet.

**Trend:** Rather than guiding consumers through meditation, some brands are putting their focus on creating or finding environments that are suitable for meditative practices—namely those that prioritize silence. These items include everything from novelty “silent” records to solitary spaces that are incorporated into interior design.

**Insight:** By curating specific instances of peace and quiet for consumers, these brands approach meditation in its most simple form for wellness-minded consumers. As North American consumers look for ways to balance their personal and professional lives, they have become more preoccupied with achieving “mindfulness,” and are willing to experiment with both traditional and non-traditional ways to achieve it.

**In the next 3–5 years:** In what ways could your brand better prioritize wellness for its customers or employees?
Branded Scholarships

*Brands invest in schooling to boost educational awareness*

Trend: As brands become more conscientious of the causes they adhere to, a shift toward more educational endeavors can be observed. Focusing on offering scholarships and educational support, brands in non-traditional spaces like gaming and auto are getting involved to help support those in need of financial aid.

Insight: Beyond building educational awareness, these brands are also showcasing a dedication and commitment to causes that help consumers and their overall growth and development. Their alignment with education-based initiatives comes as young consumers feel more loyalty to brands that cater to the social and political causes that speak to their own lifestyles and needs.

In the next 3-5 years: How can your brand better invest in the development and growth of younger consumers?
Our Future Festival+ program empowers you to run your own turn-key innovation conference, easily and cost-effectively. By combining data-driven keynotes with custom experiences, Future Festival+ brings top trends to life, right where you are. Partner with us to host an event that will wow attendees and help turn inspiration into action.

We supply our partners with all of the essential components to plan a frictionless event, including our comprehensive Event Guidebook, marketing materials, attendee handouts and more. We also offer a selection of dozens of data-driven presentations and workshops led by our Futurist team, including Trend Hunter CEO and New York Times bestselling author Jeremy Gutsche.

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Trend Hunter’s proprietary methodology provides you with timely, cost-effective custom research so you can find better ideas faster. Your dedicated Trend Hunter Advisor curates reports that showcase the trends and insights that match your objectives, and further support is available through report walkthroughs and facilitated ideation sessions. Get even more from our research with quarterly in-office presentations, interactive workshops and our new Accelerator program. All Advisory packages include tickets to Future Festival.

1. Ignite a Culture of Innovation & Change
2. Inspire New Products, Services & Campaigns
3. Tap into Cultural Shifts & Stay Ahead of the Competition
4. Enhance Consumer Insight & Identify Unmet Needs
5. Connect New Dots & Future-Proof Your Thinking

Contact us at Advisory@TrendHunter.com to learn more.

Custom Trend Reports

Dive into top trends and get inspired with real-world examples, in the next 3-5 years and more.

Sample report topics include:

- Retail Tech
- Purchasing Innovation
- Brand Authenticity
- Social Responsibility
- Consumer Engagement
- Sustainability
- Gender Evolution
- Momentary Marketing
- Maker Culture
- Portable Packaging
- Wearable Tech
- Health Gamification
Keynote Presentations

Bring top trends and insights to life with our Futurist keynote presentations.

Jeremy Gutsche Keynotes
As Trend Hunter’s CEO and a New York Times bestselling author, Jeremy Gutsche’s innovation expertise has made him a world-renowned keynote speaker. His keynotes have inspired audiences at more than 650 live events, and include the following topics:

- Better & Faster
- Disrupt or be Disrupted
- Exploiting Chaos
- How to Win the Future
- Innovation Tactics
- Creating a Culture of Innovation
- Making Messages That Stick
- Making Change Happen

Trend Sessions
Based on Trend Hunter’s proprietary frameworks and insights, each of these presentations explores a key macro trend in depth to socialize trend content in an engaging way. Topics include:

- Health and Wellness
- Brand Love
- New Business Models
- Leisure and Play
- Future Technology
- Work Culture
- Hyper-Convenience
- Inclusivity Marketing
- Generational Trends
- Artificial Intelligence
- Retail Innovation
- & More

Custom Presentations
With the help of our Insights team, these sessions are designed by you and for you. We’ll identify areas of need and topics of interest to create a custom framework that meets your objectives.

Work Sessions & Custom Workshops

Ignite innovation with immersive programming and tactical takeaways.

Work Sessions
Work Sessions are preset, tried-and-tested programs that teach problem-solving methodology through 1.5 to 2 hour simulations.

- **01 Trend Hunting**
  Change the way your team thinks about, applies and predicts trends.

- **02 Adjacent Industry Simulation**
  Break out of old habits by reimagining your world and adapting accordingly.

- **03 Change Deep Dive**
  Identify urgent points of development and spark action within your team.

Custom Workshops
Custom Workshops tackle company-specific issues or objectives with 2 to 6 hours of programming tailored to your needs.

- **01 Prototyping**
  Prototype ideas and productionize creativity using the 6 Patterns of Opportunity.

- **02 Idea Discovery**
  Identify your company’s biggest areas for development and uncover new ideas.

- **03 Making Change Happen**
  Enact major change within your company in the most efficient way possible.

- **04 Infectious Messaging**
  Rethink your value prop and marketing to more effectively speak to consumers.

- **05 Disruption and Adaptation**
  Anticipate upcoming threats to your business and prepare for future success.

- **06 Culture and Change**
  Understand and enhance your company’s culture to fuel innovation.

To learn more, please contact Booking@TrendHunter.com.