

TOP TOPICS

2024

**BVX**

CONSUMER & CATEGORY INSIGHTS SHAPING THE YEAR(S) AHEAD

# TOP TOPICS 2024

Each year society continues to evolve with key themes rising to the top of the collective consciousness. Salient topics such as virtue-signaling skepticism, self-care, lifestyle reinvention, gender roles, and AI have gained prevalence and are likely to influence consumers and impact businesses for the years ahead. Brands that maintain awareness and mindful integration with these cultural conversations will be better equipped to resonate with their audiences.



# TOP TOPICS

1. Cause Reprioritization
2. Focusing Inward & Nearby
3. Lifelong Reinvention
4. Gender in the Spotlight
5. Artificial vs. Authentic Intelligence

## CAUSE REPRIORITIZATION

After years of pushing brands to speak up about social causes, many consumers have become disillusioned with organizations that insert themselves into these conversations and would prefer brands to be a source of unity rather than division. Consumers are detecting virtue signaling and empty statements from a mile away, feeling that organizations should only be highlighting causes that are true to their brand. While consumers still believe causes are important, decision drivers like price and brand quality remain a top priority beyond social stances.

### 8/10

**81%** of Americans agree that “Brands should focus on providing the product/service they are meant to deliver instead of getting involved in social issues.”

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

### 68%

**68%** of consumers believe that when a company speaks out today on social issues, it’s a marketing ploy rather than an authentic opinion.

- THE HARRIS POLL

“Management guru Peter Drucker once observed that the most effective brands are not focused on doing things right but, instead, on doing the right things. When brands are built in this way, purpose doesn’t have to be layered in. Do what you promise—indeed, if you don’t, nothing about purpose will be credible anyway.”

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

### 84%

Over **eight in ten (84%)** Americans agree that companies must have a track record of acting on their values to be taken seriously.

- THE HARRIS POLL

### 63%

**63%** of Americans agree that “Brands celebrating what brings us together and emphasizing our common interest would strengthen the social fabric.”

- EDELMAN

### 72%

While **72%** of Americans think we’re headed for environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly, only 24% of shoppers see sustainability as a crucial factor when making a purchase, compared to 53% who say the same for affordability and 71% for quality.

- IPSOS

## FOCUSING INWARD & NEARBY

After years of pressure to focus on the world and the macro challenges around them, Americans are prioritizing their own well-being first. While on the surface this appears self-serving, it is more aligned with the common flight instruction of “putting on your own oxygen mask before helping others” and includes maintaining real relationships and in-person connections with those closest to them.

# 95%

**95%** of U.S. adults say it's important to engage in self-care activities.

- THE HARRIS POLL

# 85%

**85%** of Americans describe self-care as a necessity, not a luxury.

- AMERICAN EXPRESS TRAVEL

Gen Z's appreciation for sad music is in pursuit of connection. The No. 1 search term globally for Spotify listeners 18-24 is the word “sad.” Meanwhile, recent research found that subjects prefer emotional expression in music vs. technical proficiency as this made people feel more connected to others.

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

# 2/3

**Two-thirds** of Americans engage in self-care by listening to music or watching content (i.e. TV shows and movies), spending time with loved ones, and spending time alone.

- AMERICAN EXPRESS TRAVEL

# 58%

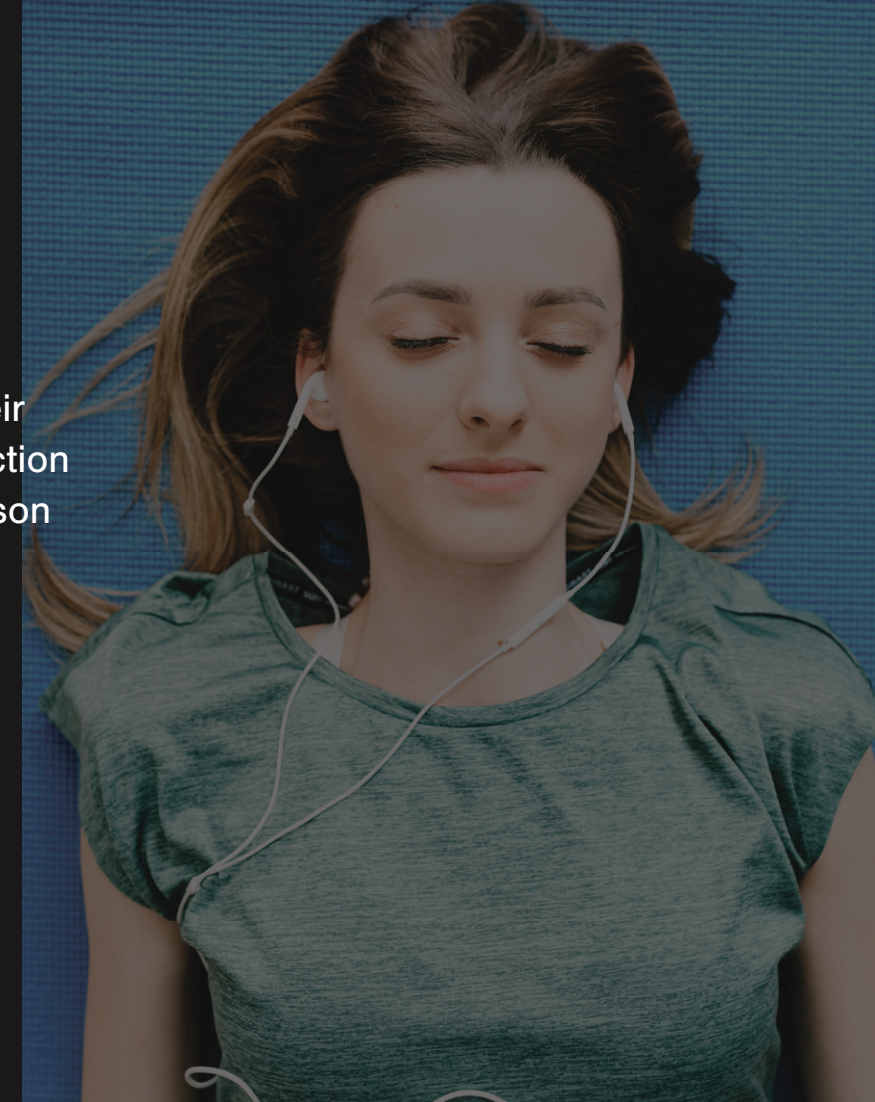
This year's prioritization of self-care has led to more than half (**58%**) of singles surveyed on Bumble reporting being more open about their mental health with friends, family members, and partners.

- BUMBLE

# 42%

**42%** of U.S. consumers say they are focused on improving their spiritual wellness in the next 12 months.

- MINTEL



# LIFELONG REINVENTION

Americans' lives are becoming less linear, as economic disruptions and shifting outlooks change the traditional life pathways. With people living longer, healthier lives, the ability to explore in professional and personal life is more attainable, and the diverse life stages across age groups allow for broader connections.

## 12+

The most recent longitudinal data available finds the average American has **greater than 12** job changes between ages 18-56, with this number likely to continue to increase.

- U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

## 63%

Singles are increasingly open to age diversity in dating as age is no longer a significant factor for **63%** of people, and **59%** of women express a newfound openness to dating someone younger.

- BUMBLE

Pinterest leans into new norms in a spot featuring a young woman being asked typical party questions such as "When are you having kids" or "Are you thinking of buying a house" triggering thought bubbles of her "fur babies" and "wanderlust" Pinterest boards to appear on screen.

- YOUTUBE

## 69%

According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics Study, **69%** of Baby Boomers are already working past 65.

- ESQUIRE

## 43% ↑ 7%

More American couples are choosing not to have children or choosing to have them later in life, according to Census data. As of 2022, **43%** of U.S. households were childless, a **7%** increase from 2012.

- MARKET WATCH

LONGEVITY HAS BECOME A MORE COMMON PURSUIT AS SEEN IN "THE MAN WHO THINKS HE CAN LIVE FOREVER" ARTICLE IN TIME MAGAZINE.

- TIME



# GENDER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Women and girls seem to run the world with recent cultural and economic influence. While Barbie, Taylor, and Beyonce dominated box offices and stages, the smaller screens in people’s homes reflected a dated story proving there is progress yet to be made in perceptions of gender. As Americans explore gender norms, brands can engage in these fluid conversations with mutual respect for their audiences regardless of gender.

“THE YEAR IS 2023, AND GIRLHOOD IS EVERYWHERE. WE HAVE “GIRL DINNER.” WE HAVE “RAT GIRL SUMMER.” TOMATO GIRL. STRAWBERRY GIRL. HOT GIRL WALK. GIRL’S GIRL.”

- AD AGE

\$5B

Barbie made movie history as the first women-directed film to gross over a billion dollars while Taylor Swift’s tour has a projected **\$5 billion** U.S. consumer spending impact.

- NPR & TIME

1/4

Influenced by movies and pop culture conversations around masculinity and gender roles, **1 in 4** men surveyed say they’ve actively changed their behavior in their romantic connections to be more vulnerable with people they’re dating than ever before.

- BUMBLE

13% ↗ 35%

Women now make up **35%** of workers in the United States’ 10 highest-paying occupations – up from 13% in 1980. They have increased their presence in almost all of these occupations, which include physicians, lawyers and pharmacists.

- PEW RESEARCH CENTER

However, in a recently released analysis of advertisements, men were cast in professional roles **73%** more often than women and **30%** more often in leadership roles. Women were cast **46%** more often in domestic roles and approximately **4%** more often in family settings.

- CREATIVE X

7/10

Roughly **7 in 10** Americans from both political parties agree with Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff’s statement: “We’ve kind of confused what it means to be a man, what it means to be masculine. You’ve got this trope out there that you’ve got to be tough and angry and lash out to be strong. It’s just the opposite. ... Strength is how you show your love for people. ... And how you stick up for other people and [push back] against bullies.”

- IPSOS

# ARTIFICIAL VS. AUTHENTIC INTELLIGENCE

Ready or not, AI is advancing across all areas of society. While some sources share optimistic outlooks on the technology's promise, people are still feeling wary. As AI continues to evolve, people will require guardrails and guidelines that help this digital tool be a supplementation to human life rather than a detraction.



## \$2.6-\$4.4

McKinsey estimates that generative AI could contribute between **\$2.6 to \$4.4** trillion to the economy each year.

- MCKINSEY & COMPANY

## 3/4

Three in four Americans across political parties support developing standards, tools, and tests to help ensure AI systems are safe, secure, and trustworthy (**76%**).

- IPSOS

## 64% VS. 36%

Worry about AI trumps wonder by a nearly 2:1 ratio. **64%** say the possibilities that AI presents fill them with worry vs. **36%** who say wonder.

- IPSOS

When asking experts to prioritize just one dimension of AI regulation, "misinformation" was their top concern (**34%**) followed by "national security" (**20%**), while "job protection" (**5%**) and "elections" (**4%**) came last.

- AXIOS

## OVER 6 IN 10

People still generally prefer human-created content to AI-generated including for marketing websites (**62%**), artistic photos (**65%**), journalism articles (**74%**) and illustrations (**74%**).

- IPSOS

## 55% VS. 36%

Just over half of Americans (**55%**) think AI will be another piece of technology among many, while **36%** think AI will fundamentally change American society.

- IPSOS





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