Most Hyped Trends
Top consumer trends
Your single source on the trends that everyone is talking about

Every year, corporate strategists spend one-quarter of their team’s time and one-quarter of a million dollars on trend sensing.

Gartner has taken this work off your plate.
The No. 1 imperative for corporate strategists is to keep the organization ahead of emerging trends.

Most of the time when a company loses value it's because of external market disruption — or rather, a lack of awareness and the absence of a mitigation strategy on the part of the corporate strategist.

As a result, the average corporate strategist spends 26% of their team's time and $220,000 of the annual budget on investigating emerging trends.

But no amount of time or money spent will ever be enough: No corporate strategist can read everything, and what's more, the volume of information available creates a confusing environment with potential misinformation.

Gartner can help you reduce the time spent scanning sources to identify trends generating the most buzz. Our artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities enable us to quickly scan more than 100 publications respected by strategy leaders to identify the most frequently mentioned emerging trends.

Gartner’s approach yields a precise, quantified view of the top trends.
Most Hyped Consumer Trends 2019

Personalization and changing consumer behaviors
**Personalization:** Customers today demand the hyperpersonalization of everything. Personalization occurs when a company pre-emptively anticipates customer needs and provides highly customized offerings based on a deep understanding of customer preference, structured and unstructured customer data, and conversations from all channels.

The growing demand to own and experience things that are unique initiated the personalization trend many years ago. Since then, personalization has expanded to include experience personalization, including content optimization online and in apps, communication or other personalized services.

**Changing consumer behaviors:** Today’s consumers have more choices, richer resources and greater demands than in the past. They are well informed, in-touch and expect to be understood and appealed to in their full complexity. Consumer behavior is changing in numerous ways, but the following trends have received the greatest coverage in business literature: free delivery, mobile shopping, mobile payments, immediate value and consumer data.
Personalization

Advanced marketing capabilities help satisfy consumer demand for unique products and experiences.
Customers today demand the hyperpersonalization of everything. **Personalization occurs when a company pre-emptively anticipates customer needs and provides highly customized offerings** based on a deep understanding of customer preference, structured and unstructured customer data, and conversations from all channels.

**The growing demand to own and experience things that are unique initiated the personalization trend** many years ago. Since then, personalization has expanded to include experience personalization, including content optimization online and in apps, communication or other personalized services.

When shoppers purchase tangible products, they want those items to tell a story, fit into their lifestyle, or be unique. Giving shoppers the opportunity to build and personalize products not only fulfills those expectations but also makes shopping itself more exciting.

As brands and consumers alike increasingly embrace personalization, one-to-one marketing that engages individual consumers based on their unique interests and preferences is on the rise. As the chart on the right shows, to create a more personalized experience, most businesses are investing in developing advanced marketing capabilities, such as custom user interfaces and individualized recommendations and offers.

Organizations are also offering consumers the opportunity to design unique products, from advanced made-to-order creations to simpler customization options such as consumer-choice bundling. Organizations are investing in creating a 360-degree view of the customer and creating distribution channels that enable faster, more efficient delivery of personalized products and experiences.
Changing consumer behaviors

Businesses are investing in capabilities that tease out what makes today's empowered consumers tick
Today’s consumers have more choices, richer resources and greater demands than in the past. They are well informed, in-touch and expect to be understood and appealed to in their full complexity. Consumer behavior is changing in numerous ways, but the following trends have received the greatest coverage in business literature: free delivery, mobile shopping, mobile payments, immediate value and consumer data.

Together, these changing consumer behaviors have led to a **rise in consumers who know their commercial value and make holistic, value-based judgments** about what to buy and where to shop.

To stay relevant in light of these trends, organizations are spending more time with **focus groups** and testing ideas on key audiences to tease out the nuances of consumer behavior.

Companies are now designing **digital user interfaces** keeping mobile devices in mind as the primary interface and even enabling consumers to take advantage of in-store offers on their mobile devices using location beacons and QR codes.

They have also increased efforts to improve their **supply chains and distribution channels** for faster and lower-cost delivery.
Caution: disruption ahead

Get smart on the opportunities and threats that will arise from 6 other consumer trends
1. **Rise in experiential purchasing**

Consumers have shifted from purchasing things to purchasing experiences. As shopping becomes commoditized and the competitive gaps in price and selection shrink, consumers are being driven more by the brand experience than anything else.

**Implications and trajectory:** Consumers want convenience, a unique experience and events that offer a compelling reason to stick with a brand. They demand personalization and strong, digitally enabled customer service. Businesses that can consistently deliver these aspects will capture consumer appreciation, trust and loyalty.

2. **Increasing role of social media in purchasing**

Consumers want to know what their peers think. They are rejecting intrusive sales pitches and searching for authenticity, increasingly turning to social media to inform their decisions.

**Implications and trajectory:** This trend changes how brands engage with and advertise to consumers. Businesses focus on creating “Instagrammable content” and encouraging users to join the conversation about products. A large share of advertising budgets have shifted from print and TV to digital media and social advertising.

Mobile advertising will account for 30.5% of global advertising expenditure in 2020, up from 19.2% in 2017.¹

3. **Mobile as the primary virtual touchpoint**

Over the past few years, smartphones have penetrated every corner of the globe, becoming the primary device for many consumers to access the internet, access and pay for services, spend their leisure time and more.

**Implications and trajectory:** Businesses must shift to mobile as the focus of user interface design. Push notifications are a common marketing device, and businesses often tap access permissions to gain insight on consumers, such as their location, preferred device and time spent.

The use of mobile phones for shopping has more than doubled in the past 6 years².

4. **Need for instant gratification**

Over the past few years, e-retailers such as Amazon and Alibaba have raised shoppers’ delivery expectations. Consumers now prize fast, flexible and reliable service — for free. Shoppers care more about delivery method and speed than about who does the actual delivering.
Implications and trajectory: The pressure is on to find ways to manage consumer expectations profitably. Organizations are taking various approaches, from “last mile” partnerships with hyperlocal delivery providers to acquiring logistics providers and even other e-commerce players.

5. Socially conscious customers

Today’s customers are more inclined to buy from companies that use sustainable, ethical and environmentally friendly practices. They also demand more transparency and authenticity from companies.

Implications and trajectory: As a response to conscious consumerism, brands have increased the share of raw materials they use that are renewable and are funding conservation programs. Social media and brand campaigns now reflect what organizations stand for. Many firms have incorporated digital technology, such as smart labels and tags, to increase transparency about the origin of products.

66% of consumers are willing to spend more on a product if it comes from a sustainable brand.

6. Focus on the impact of technology on well-being

Over the past 18 months, a drumbeat of concerns about the personal and societal impacts of technology has emerged. Experts are pointing out the symptoms of “tech addiction,” Silicon Valley is accused of using psychological tools to keep users hooked and a number of former executives of these companies have spoken out on how companies manipulate consumers via technology.

Implications and trajectory: While no direct evidence of the harmful impact of technology exists, consumers are increasingly cautious of how they use it. Research efforts to identify the link between technology and harmful behavior have intensified over the past few months. Lawmakers across the globe are pushing for research into digital overexposure, and countries such as France and South Korea have already enacted laws that limit screen time for employees.

1 Zenith Media, 2 Global Web Index, 3 Nielsen's Global Corporate Sustainability Report
Our priority? Helping you to achieve yours

Gartner Strategy Leadership Council is the definitive research and advisory resource for strategists
Eighty percent of strategy leaders expect significant business model change. But they realize you can’t transform the organization by playing it safe with incremental investments: You need to be bold and test entirely new business models, while also finding ways to reduce the risk that comes with that.

Strategists are under constant pressure to position their organizations to achieve long-term revenue growth. Shortsightedness among business leaders, shrinking strategy budgets and massive macroeconomic shifts make the strategist’s job all the more difficult.

Gartner Strategy Leadership Council supports strategists against key processes including strategic planning, mergers & acquisitions, portfolio management and competitive intelligence.

Our support — which stems from proven approaches used by the world’s leading companies — helps you save time and make better decisions within the strategy function.

"You provide research insights in a synthesized manner that enables us to think, 'What does that mean to our company? How can we take action?' Your research continues to be relevant as our business evolves, and your strategic planning resources have been integral."

*Dick Aubrecht, Vice President of Strategy and Technology, Moog Inc.*
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