

Fashion & Luxury Intelligence Report

Isrid



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Fashion & Luxury Industry Outlook



Fashion & luxury industry outlook

From chaos a new world will come.

It's difficult not to see striking parallels to our modern world with last century.

The 1920s began in chaos. Cataclysmic disruption resulting from the first world war and the Spanish flu shuttered businesses and provoked xenophobia. Technological marvels like the radio, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, moving assembly line and electronic power transmission generated new growth, even as the wealth gap widened. The sheer scale of change, and the great uncertainty that came with it, produced two factions: those who wanted to reverse time and return the world to normal, and those who embraced the chaos, faced forward, and got busy building the future.

Now, more than ever, your organization should examine the potential near and long-term impact of tech trends. Make time for creative exploration. From chaos, a new world will come.

Note: Distracted from Amy Webbs's introduction of the Tech Trends Report 2021.

Industry leaders say two things will matter most: technology and talent.

Digital fatigue.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world, and its effects will last. Just ask anyone — consumers worldwide are experiencing digital fatigue from so much screen time during the pandemic. One of the changes and developments I see and feel are business and start-up opportunities linked to the physical, to being outside, out in the country, farming and do-it-yourself. There's also the appreciation and revival of 'face-to-face' board games. Chess has been on the rise since the start of the corona crisis, but with the release of the Netflix series 'The Queen's Gambit' at the end of last year, the turnover from chessboards was reported five times higher in 2020 compared to the previous years.

In regards of this trend, there's an interesting fashion and luxury outlook on the rise. It will become a luxury to connect in a physical way, or to receive non-digital messages and surprises. This longing can set an interesting angle for companies

in regards to inspiring and communicating with employees, customers and clients. In the 'Business Strategy' section of this report, I feature content about the return of physical marketing and trans-media storytelling.



Fashion & luxury industry outlook

It's all about preparation, not prediction



The Future Today Institute

In March I attended the online program of SXSW. The South by Southwest Conference & Festivals celebrate the convergence of the interactive, film, and music industries. This prestigious annual festival celebrates all that is innovative in the technology world, fostering creative and professional growth. One of my favorite key-note speakers is Amy Webb. She's an American futurist, author and founder and CEO of the Future Today Institute. Each year her institute issues a free downloadable Tech Trends report. In her presentation, Amy listed 3 key findings that I am happy to share with you.

1. The You of Things (YoT)

YoT developed from the idea that your body is part of a network. Like 'The Internet of Things' it is an umbrella for developments, but more intimate. This is about things you will be wearing. For example, the beginning of the end of cell phones. We are transitioning away from that. We will either wear or embed. Smart glasses are on the rise and stay tuned for rollable phones with rolling screens and flexible sensors and displays.

2. New Realities.

This is where we live in a mixed reality world mixed with YoT. Digital Fashion is a new reality. For Another interesting development is 'Assistive Reality. This uses digital elements to help you get through the physical world. For example how to use sounds. Or in which gaming will be a cure for healing (ADHD) So games on prescription. Another interesting new reality is Diminished Reality: This takes away stimuli. It changes sounds, or changes how you sense. For example a sight cancelling window. Or entire buildings that will be dumping noise. You can take things away of your view. This is part of " The cancel culture" (Please remember this trend!)

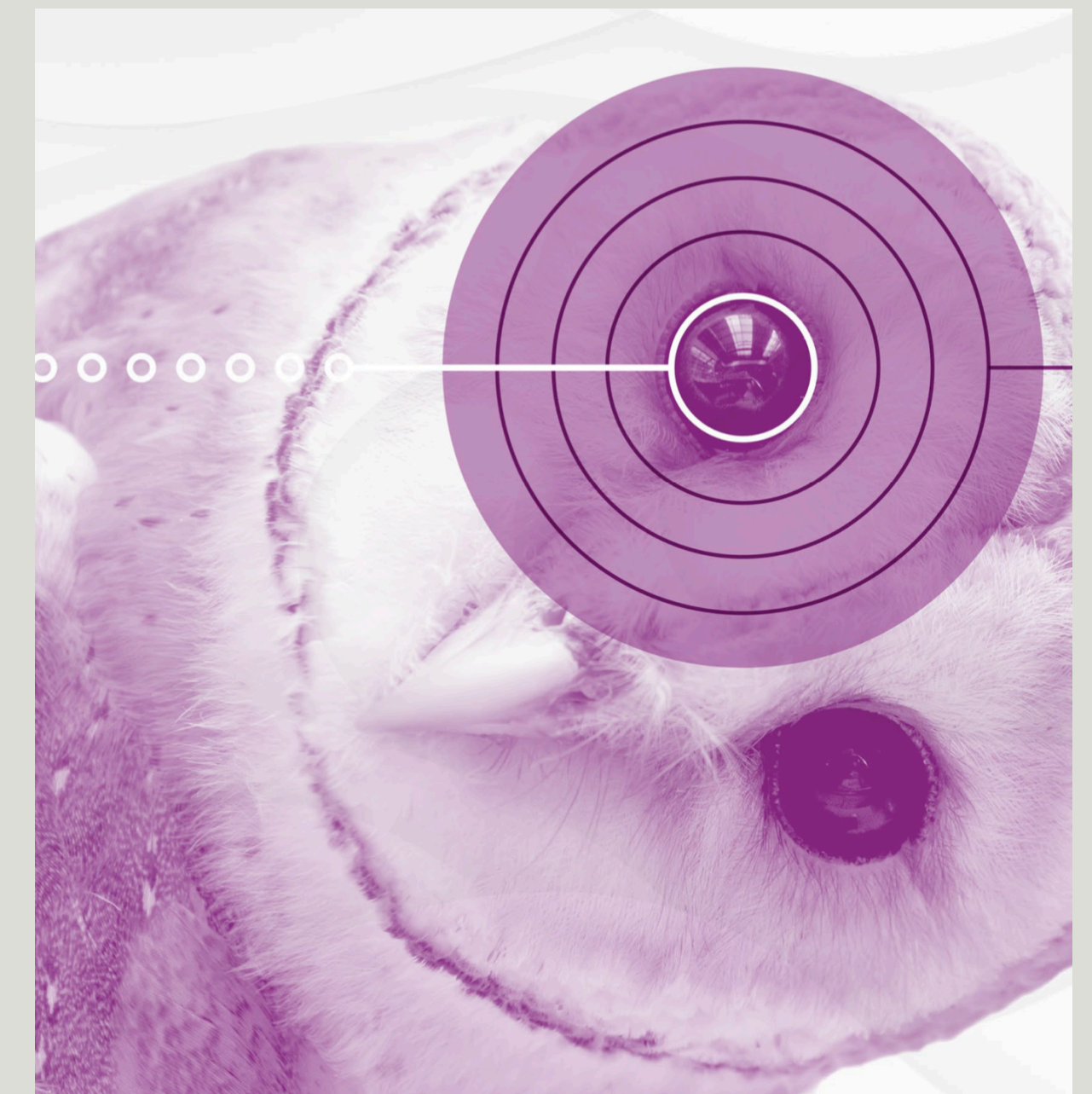
Last but not least: Voice clones. This could reincarnate dead people and bring them alive, so they can talk with you. In future we will have digital synthetic persons that we can talk to. Now just ask yourself (or in your next team meeting) the question: How does mixed reality change your value chain???

3. Synthetic Biology

The year 2020 resulted in a new world disorder. YoT and mixed reality shifted the power balance: A drone that says: "Wear your moth mask". Or

camera's that could detect if you have a fever . New digital ID systems are coming. One trend that will emerge is: Not to check where you are going, but using censored data to create digital vaccine passports. The era of synthetic biology is here. Writing a new code for life. In the future we are self healing humans. For example to overwrite your bodies natural response. A printer for DNA or we can have printers on mars so we do not have to move stuff there but print it there.

[Download the FTI Tech Trends Report 2021](#)



Fashion & luxury industry outlook

Future Scenarios for talent and recruitment.

Tactical decisions must fit into an organization's strategy. Lots of teams get stuck cycling between strategy and tactics, and that makes their organizations vulnerable to disruption. Digitalization and future scenarios should have a human and mind-set focus. Certainly in the Fashion and Luxury industry, also talent recruiters need to be strongly aware of and researching the business models and organization of teams. Matching talent to future strategy, advising leaders on their organization charts and upcoming needed skill and mindsets is key. Also, both companies and recruiters need to move from a transactional 'fee for filling a role' to a 'relationship first' approach. For companies wanting to follow up on the 'Deeper partnership' theme, it would be next level to choose a recruitment partner that is looking at 'revenue' in a different way, who is contributing to and interacting with that exact same community you want to be connected with as a company.

Need help with strategizing your future roadmap?

[Visit Isrid Academy](#)

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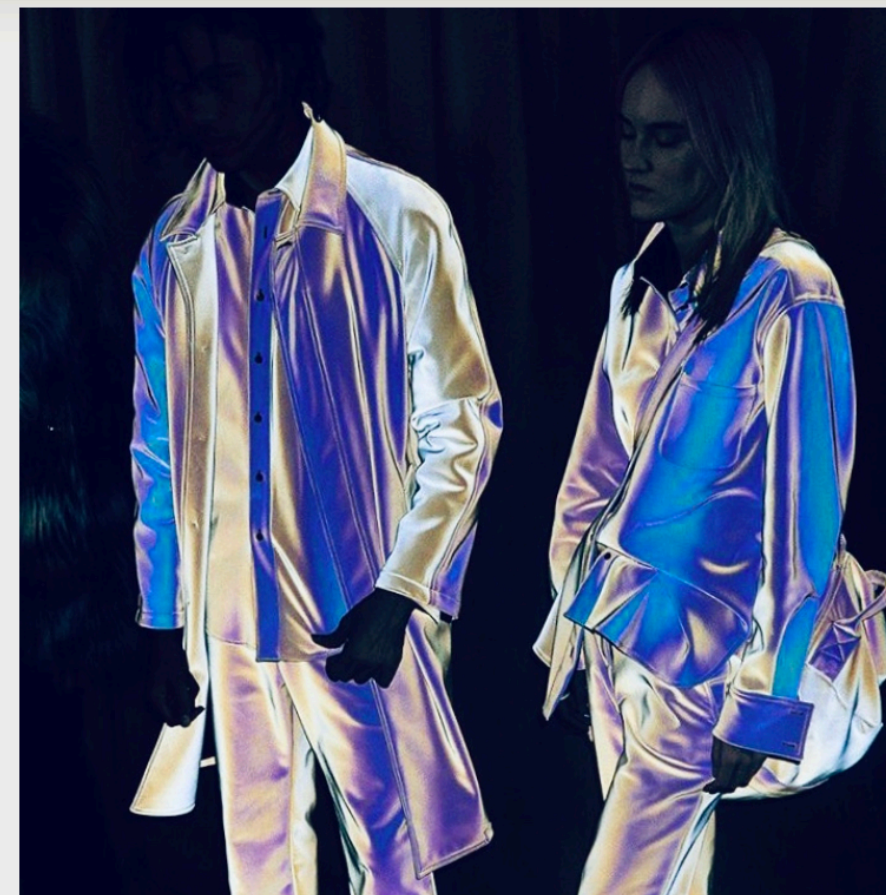
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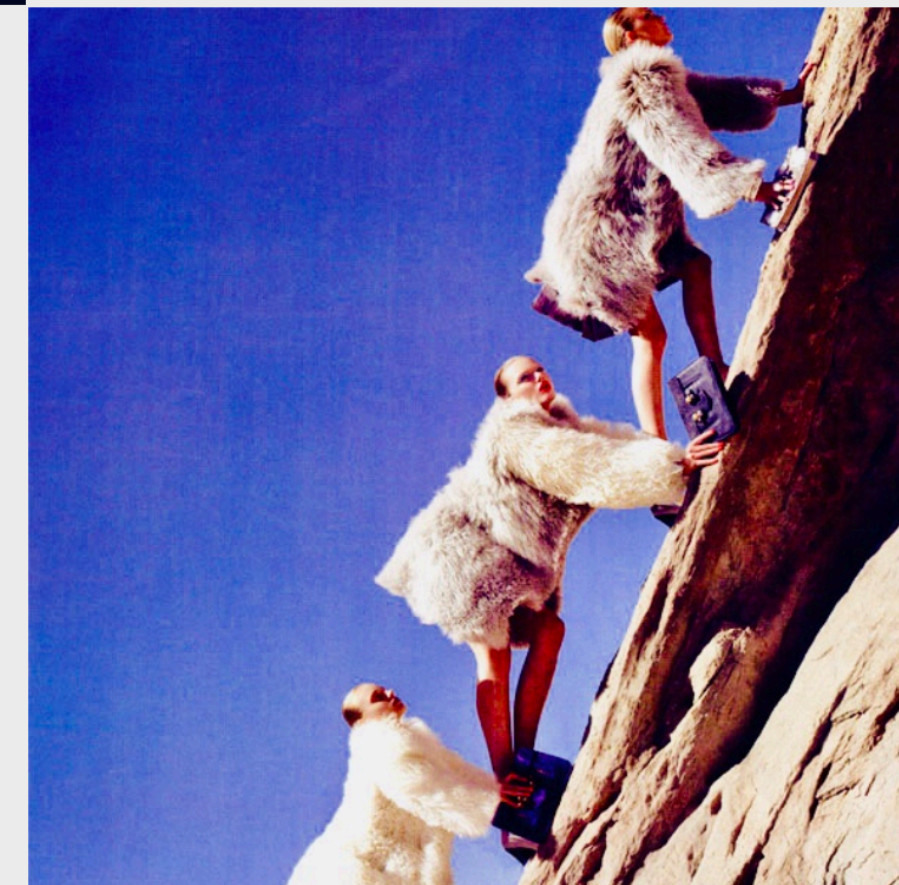
What's happening in the fashion and luxury business? What will happen in five years from now?
Are your people ready for the future?

Isrid Business Collection provides a range of courses and programs to raise the bar in the industry and to keep you ahead of the trends, rather than following them.



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How to keep up with the constantly shifting and emerging technology trends that impact your job or company. Here's your solution. Every quarter: **The Fashion & Luxury Intelligence Report**. Curated by Isrid, with the latest existing business trends, fashion-tech innovation and marketing intelligence.



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Are you looking to achieve professional growth and sustainable success?

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Business strategy



Business strategy

Return to physical marketing.

A recent article by [Vogue Business](#) said that luxury brands are leaning into traditional analogue marketing as a way to cut through the noise online and connect with consumers at home. We see a rise of brands betting on traditional forms of analogue marketing, such as direct mail and branded books, to diversify from digital advertising channels, where recent privacy changes make it more difficult for brands to reach customers.

Last year taught us the importance of technology, but there's still definitely a need for physical

As online spaces are now “flooded” with content, it's tougher to stand out without investing in paid marketing, says Adam Alter, professor of marketing at New York University's Stern School of Business. Ownership plays a key role in the creative industries, and consumers today may see print as a luxury, says Clinehens, customer experience strategy director for Havas' global network. The

goal is not to send direct advertising out to everybody, but to craft relationships with customers. For some of them, if they open a Chanel book and get a glossy, beautiful experience, it's something they can collect and keep, and in that sense it almost becomes an extension of retail and the brand's storytelling.

Digital is so fast that we were missing the ability to talk about our brand, what we care about and what we stand for. This is why I do believe in the opportunity, relevance and let's not forget: creative pleasure, to think about creating magazines again, or brand books or a monthly paper. Of course tracking a sale is a challenge in analogue advertising. I love the idea and solution of designer label Mansur Gavriel, who has a promo code embedded in its book that acts as a “welcome offer” for new customers but also so the brand can track purchases.

Inspiration: Decoded marketing campaign Jay-Z.

In a highly fragmented media market, more and more brands are turning to the art of **transmedia storytelling** to turn online interaction into offline action. For those of you that aren't familiar with the term, trans media storytelling is the “technique of telling stories across multiple platforms and

formats.” Can you move beyond the blog, Twitter, or Facebook to tell your story? The marketing campaign for Jay Z's book Decoded was running in 2010/2011 but again in this year, pops up as an interesting case study for trans media storytelling. This was a unique marketing plan that combined traditional billboard advertising, social media, mobile applications, and an interactive game where users could enter to win prizes, such as concert tickets or Jay-Z memorabilia. Each page of the autobiography was enlarged and physically placed in prominent locations throughout New York City.

[Check the Decode physical meets e-marketing concept of Jay-Z's book.](#)



Business strategy

Isrid appointed as a member of The Luxury Institute New York.

At the beginning of this year 2021, I was appointed as a member and contributor of the expert network by The Luxury Institute, based in New York. Today, the institute is the world's most trusted research, training, and elite business and personal data technology solutions partner for luxury and premium goods and services brands. With the largest global network of luxury executives and experts, Luxury Institute has the ability to provide its clients with high-performance, leading-edge solutions developed by the best, most successful minds in the industry. Over the last 18 years, Luxury Institute has served over 1,100 luxury and premium goods and services brands.

The latest white paper by The Luxury Institute defined 3 new rules for reinventing your business model to drive customer-centricity and I am happy to share a summery of these in my report:

Rule 1. From Broken Corporate Functions to Agile Customer-Centric Teams

Luxury brands are organizationally broken, literally. Despite all the post-pandemic seamless customer experience claims, at their core, luxury brands are broken up into departments and functions fit for the factories of the industrial era. All the relevant data that resides in the enterprise is disconnected and uncoordinated. New technology such as customer data platforms and customer engagement venues will be a complete waste without an organizational reconfiguration that matches the power of new digital assets to drive customer-centricity. Luxury Institute has recommended that a highly skilled and emotionally intelligent leader be put in charge of all the customer-facing people, technologies and touch points. Experts with different skills such as data management, insight generation, creativity, design, offer and content development, production, supply chain, etc. must organize into customer segment-specific high-performance teams, instead of siloed departmental hierarchies.

Rule 2. From Multi-Party Sourced Data to Direct-from-the-Customer Data

Today, luxury brands need to have an honest dialogue with their customers about data sharing, and adopt transparent, legal, ethical, secure, private, fair value processes. Brand leaders may not be aware they are ignoring two of the most critical issues of our digital era, personal data rights and human data dignity, even as they, and their loved ones, continue to lose their privacy and

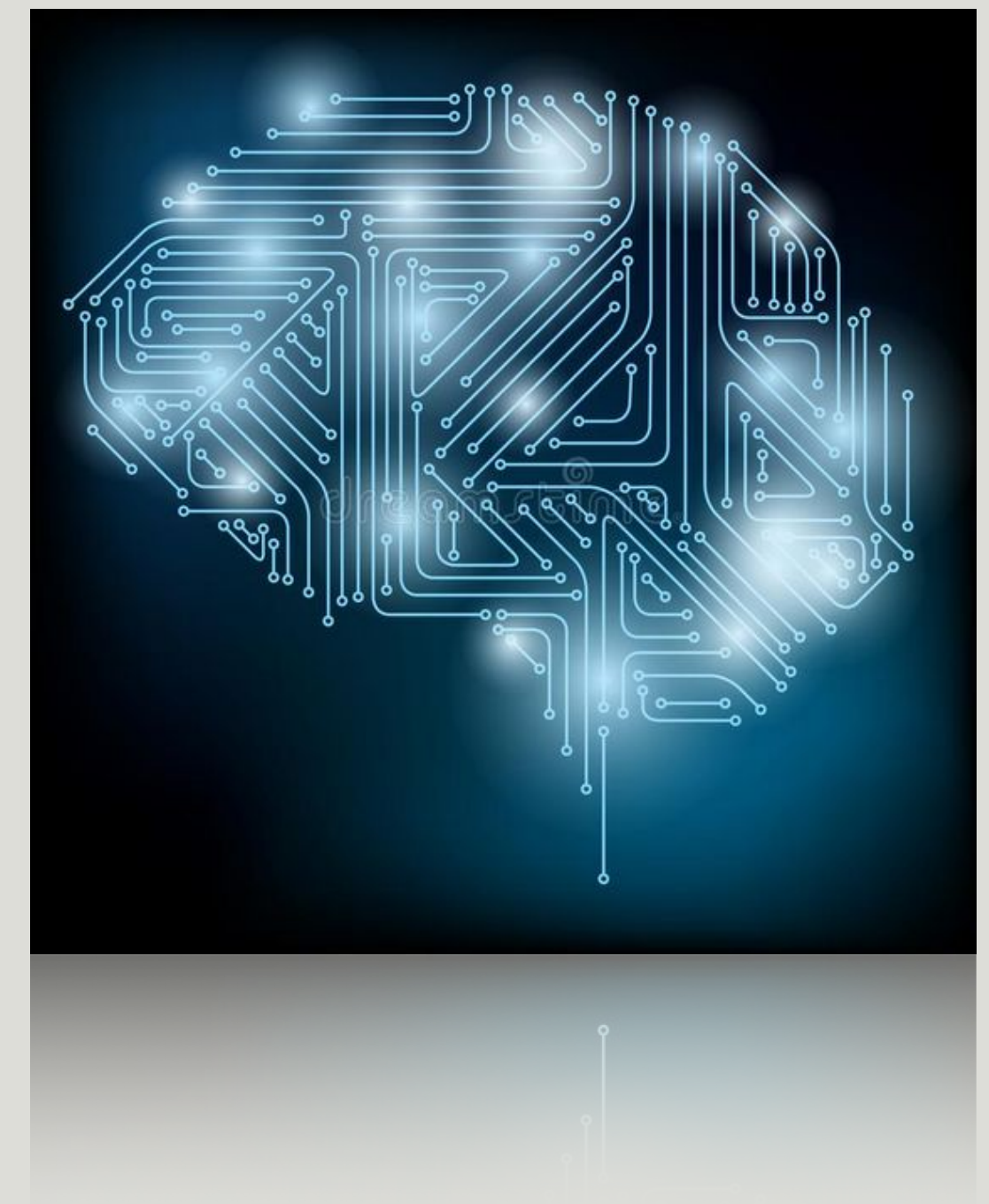
freedom in the process. The solution is for brands to stop going around the world to get next door. Instead, they need to respectfully ask the customer for direct and secure access to their personal data in exchange for rewards and benefits with legal protections. Fortunately, consumers, especially Millennials and GenZ's want to share their data with brands they trust and love.

Rule 3. From Soulless Analytics to Humanistic Insights and Predictions

As rules one and two above take hold, the new luxury business model will redefine the data analyst's role from conducting biased, soulless tasks into insight generation professionals who develop deep domain expertise. When data analysts begin to generate insights that truly serve their customers, they will work as inspired professionals. This will unleash the human personalization revolution and usher a new era of deeper, trusted, more mutually beneficial, emotionally intelligent brand-to-customer relationships.

[Read more about the Luxury Institute](#)

The expertise of emotionally intelligent luxury



Business strategy

Simplification

Fueled largely by Covid-19 changes, fashion is simplifying, both in its styles and in its delivery. Many fashion houses used to create eight collections a year. The result was a crowded fashion show schedule and items showing up in stores months before customers were ready to wear them. The new shift in fashion is to two collections a year, spring/summer and fall/winter. The simplified approach puts customers at the center by creating pieces when people will actually be shopping for them. Simplifying fashion also saves money and the environment. Instead of moving through clothes so quickly and having to produce a new collection, marketing campaign and fashion show every six weeks, simplified collections reduce waste and the amount of clothing produced. Fashion trends themselves will also become more simplified. With many people working from home and social distancing for the foreseeable future, fashion brands have toned down their styling in favor of comfortable loungewear and clothing that works for sleeping and living. Even after the pandemic, clothing will likely stay simple and comfortable.

In every crisis lies great opportunity

Assumptions vs. knowledge

The model on the right is a tool, used by the Future Today Institute to check instinctive biases (Assumptions) vs. Knowledge. It can be used any time an assertion is made to determine whether it's based on fact or feeling. On one end of the spectrum are Assumptions (1), pure hunches that are not supported by any substantial data, and on the other is Knowledge (4), declarations made with ample evidence from multiple sources to back them up.

The scale is a great way to keep sentimental bias from clouding your strategy.

Assumptions vs. Knowledge

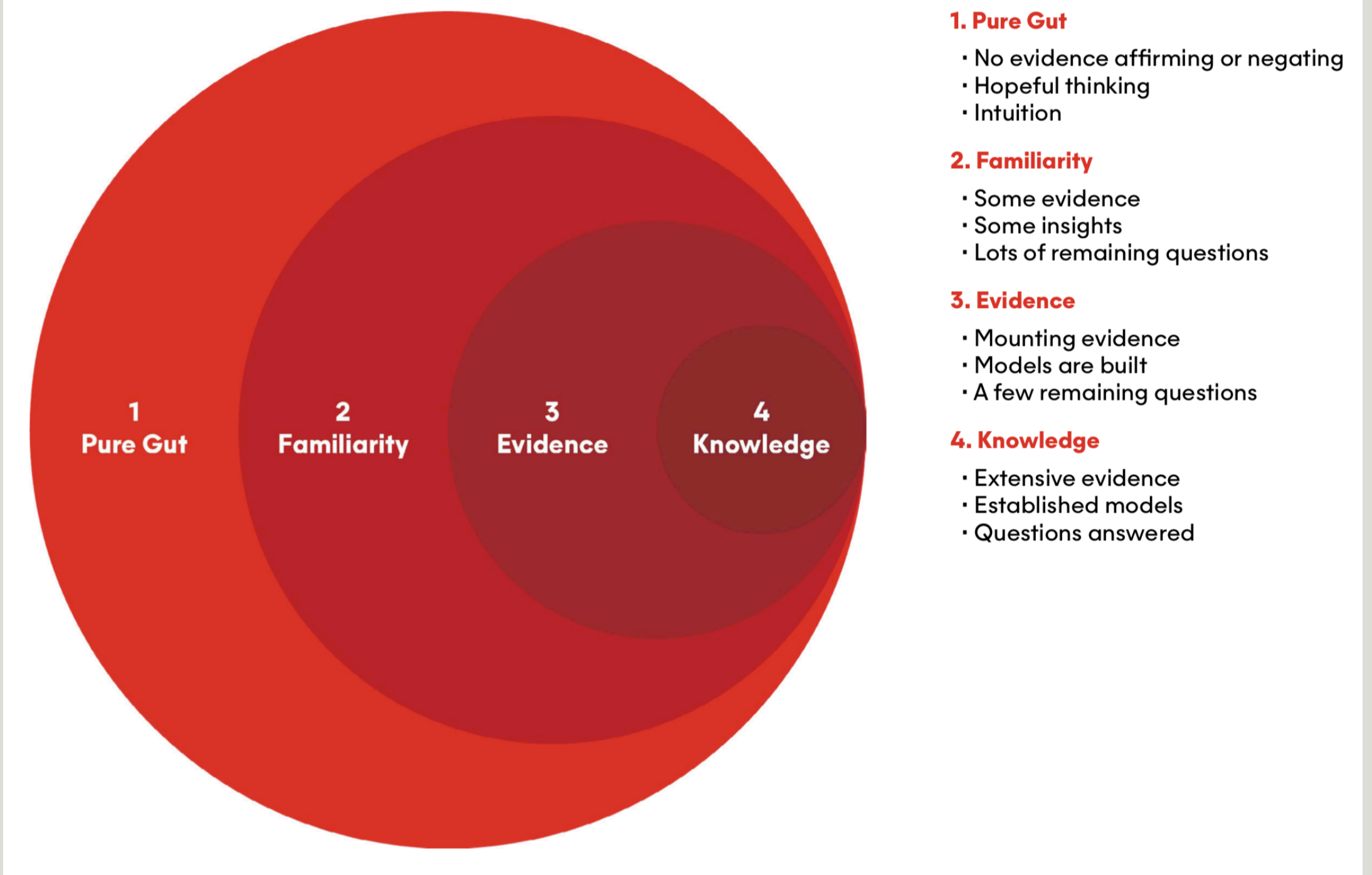


Image by The Future Today Institute

Retail Commerce



Retail Commerce

The future of shopping: technology everywhere.

The retail industry has seen more innovation in the past year than it did in the prior decade. The COVID-19 pandemic has reset the retail game board. The most successful retailers will be those that connect with consumers in new ways by leaning in on their digital, omni channel, and in-store technology ambitions. The seemingly unstoppable rise of e-commerce, sophisticated customer analytics, personalized sounds and smells, digital mannequins that “know” your clothing preferences, automated home delivery—these are just some of the elements that will shape the shopping experience in the coming years.

Last month, March, the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA), with McKinsey published their report ‘Retail Speaks’ in which was researched: What has set the top performers apart? And how can retailers thrive in 2021 and beyond. Their analysis identified seven imperatives that can give retailers the ability to adapt to a changing consumer landscape while pursuing new opportunities.

[Download the full 'Retail Speaks' report here.](#)

Become omni-potent on omni-channel. Consumers will choose retailers based on ease and richness of end-to-end experience

1

Become omnipotent on omnichannel

Consumers will choose retailers based on ease and richness of end-to-end experience

2

This time (and all the time), it's personal

Consumers expect personalized experiences and offers as table stakes; most retailers fall short of these expectations today

3

Turbocharge delivery

As consumer expectations approach same day, stress on supply chain will mount

4

Take a stand or take a seat

Consumers are finally voting with their wallets for sustainability and broader purpose

Investing for growth

5

Recalibrate talent strategies

Winning the war for diverse talent, next-gen skills, and embracing a fluid workplace will give retailers a performance advantage

6

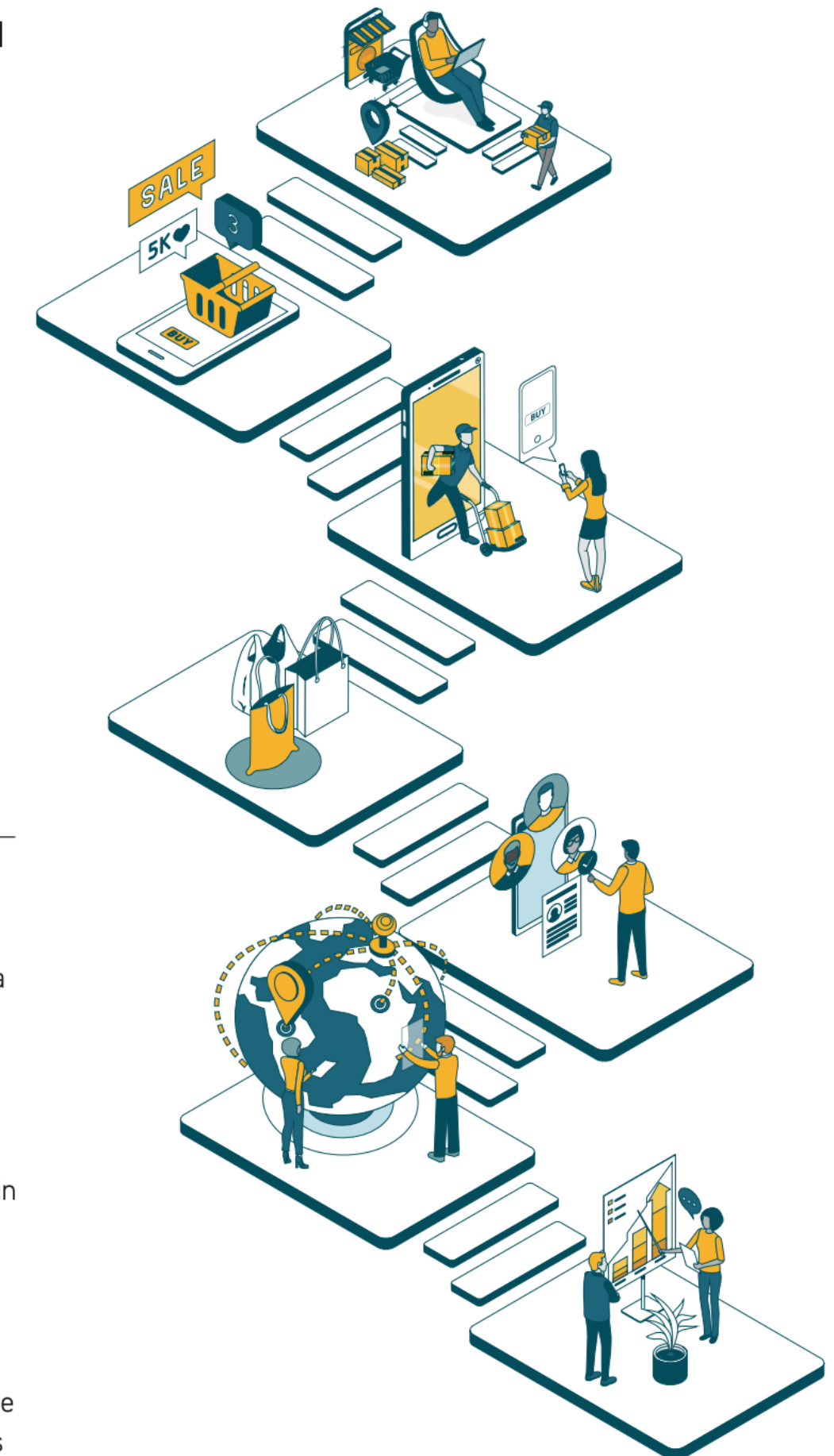
Pursue an eco(system)-friendly strategy

Winners will embrace the networked economy to win consumer mindshare and accelerate capabilities

7

Take productivity from foundational to transformational

Analytics and automation will enable the step change in productivity needed to fund the other imperatives



The 7 imperatives for Retail by RILA and McKinsey

Retail Commerce

The rise of the countryside and suburb.

Post-pandemic, it seems people want to spend less time in major city centers. What does that mean for high-end retail?

A recent article by Vogue Business alerts the industry that this could be 'the year of the suburb'. A significant number of office workers are already gambling that residences further out of towns will suit them better once normality resumes. Real estate agents are surprised at the diversity of places their clients are now happy to consider. These are big investments people are making. They're changing their lifestyles and so am I. Recently, I bought a century old farmhouse out in the countryside of the Netherlands. A place for reflection, growing my own vegetables and creating a meeting place for my friends and business community.

Many Americans have migrated in recent months to smaller cities or the suburbs and we do see this trend here in the Netherlands too. In 2020, more people moved from the Randstad than there. The migration from the Randstad to other regions beyond has been increasing in recent years and is

still growing. Especially couples without children and people over thirty leave the Randstad more often than before. Statistics Netherlands (CBS) reports this on the basis of research.

A new array of bricks-and-mortar opportunities are opening up

There's an opportunity for bigger brands to do something in those areas for a moment of time or permanently, but they should be questioning what can they do that also contributes. Any brand with a retail presence in a city centre is advised to consider carefully the relationship between any new locations and those in the centre. Pauw, a Dutch retailer and a valued client of my agency, is running this 'out in the country' retail business model already for years and with big success. Pauw Boutiques are located in cities as Amsterdam and Maastricht, but also in small country villages across the Netherlands.

The sense among experts is that retail will be boosted in locations with established retail networks, such as secondary cities and affluent outer city districts. This could be a big gap waiting

to be filled. If you're walking down that street in the place that you love, which you've chosen to be home, there's a huge opportunity to build brand loyalty and a massive connection.



Isrid's farmhouse in the province of Drenthe

Retail Commerce

The new trend pipeline.

The secondhand market could be the answer to constant newness....

Depop and TikTok, two platforms largely populated by Gen Z, function as two parts of fashion's new pipeline. As trends take off on TikTok, like cottagecore or a Harry Styles-approved crochet cardigan, they inevitably boom on Depop. Trends cycle quickly, but the future of consumption in a world as created by these platforms is a 'must watch' for brands to rethink their models and look for more sustainable alternatives.

TikTok is a video-sharing social networking service, used to make a variety of short-form videos, from genres like dance, comedy, and education, that have a duration from fifteen seconds to one minute.

Depop is the fashion marketplace app where the next generation come to discover unique items. With a global community buying, selling and connecting to make fashion more inclusive, diverse and less wasteful.

While consumers are shopping a lot online, they're missing the excitement and emotional connection in a physical space.

Farfetch's store of the future

Browns, the Farfetch-owned luxury boutique, will unveil its new flagship in London this month April. The store is betting on connected mirrors, high-touch services and a more interactive space for consumers to play. Farfetch's deal with Alibaba and Richemont late last year cemented its move from a marketplace to a luxury tech provider.

The store, it appears, is far from over. While consumers have gotten used to the convenience of shopping online, they also miss being connected in a physical environment. In its new flagship, Browns wants customers to visit and stay longer. It features over four floors of fashion, accessories, homeware, fragrances, fine jewelry and watches. There is also a restaurant by Native, an outdoor courtyard, a

dedicated area for makeup and styling, and a room with constantly rotating experiences. The store will also host a changing program of experiences aimed at engaging the community (the first line-up includes hypnotherapist Michele Occelli, celebrity nail artist Jenny Longworth and Sang Bleu tattoo artist Delphin Musquet).

The connected mirrors are just one element of the tech in-store. Customers can use Browns' app to book an appointment, search for and add products to their wishlists, which can be shared with a personal shopper. These personal shoppers can also access customers' profiles and see their searches and preferences, and recommend products. Augmented reality virtual try-on tools allow consumers to try on products that may not be in the store. Instead of completing a purchase at a designated checkout point, payments can be made via a link sent to the customer.



Browns London, store of the future

Fashion - Tech Trendy



Fashion - Tech Trendy

Gucci's digital only sneakers.



Gucci sneakers usually retail for well over € 500, but last March the luxury fashion giant has started selling a pair for \$17.99. The catch? They're digital only. Available via in-app purchase from either the Gucci or Wanna AR apps, users can "try on" the sneakers and wear them in other virtual worlds. The shoes are Gucci's "first digital model", but the brand is not new to the world of in-app purchases. The fashion house already sells digital arcade games in its app, and in January began offering AR functionality, allowing customers to virtually try on sneakers and watches.

[More about Gucci's digital fashion](#)

There is definitely a market for digital clothing, but digital makeup is more real and close to us, time-wise

Digital only beauty.

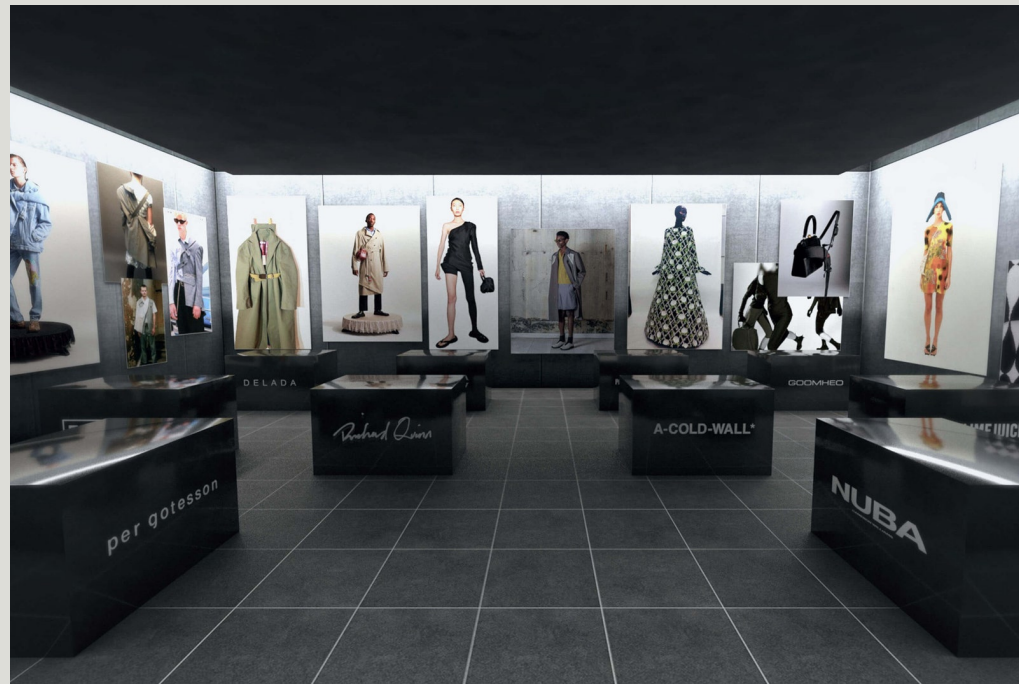
From gaming skins to Zoom make-up....Digital-only beauty products are gaining traction as brands look beyond try-on and experiment with ways to sell to customers in virtual spaces. Recently L'Oréal introduced its first line of virtual-only makeup products, for use on Zoom, Snapchat, Instagram and Google Duo. The digital world is just another world we are discovering and learning to live in. Building and accessorizing your digital avatar is getting more impactful than the physical one.

[Read more on digital beauty developments](#)

Ines Alpha has created digital beauty looks in partnership with Pucci, Dior and Allure. Her filters on Snapchat and Instagram are free to use.



Fashion - Tech Trendy



Augmented reality shopping boutique

Once a nice-to-have feature, AR has quickly become an essential technology for retailers to engage consumers and offer interaction and discover. Machine-A, the London-based concept store, is using augmented reality to recreate the in-person experience lost over the past year amid lockdown, as fashion's adoption of AR widens.

To enter the boutique, a QR code scan prompts a digital rendering of a sales floor where customers can explore and view the Autumn/Winter 2021 collections, unfinished pieces and personal messages from the designers sharing their inspiration or personal views on the future of fashion. The QR code will be embedded in fly-posters and billboards across London. The Institute

says the store is a “larger-scale AR experience”, mixing digital content with augmented reality.

[More about Machine-A](#)

Xupermask. The smart mask.

This month, April, Will.i.am and Honeywell introduce the first connected mask. Think sneakers meet smartphones. The story begins with Marc Benioff, the chief executive of the cloud computing company Salesforce, watching the MTV Video Music Awards last summer. He was watching Will.i.am, the rapper, entrepreneur and founding member of the Black Eyed Peas, wearing what appeared to be a cross between a gas mask and an alien space helmet.



Will.i.am in the Xupermask, a project by the musician in partnership with Honeywell.

Fashion - Tech Trendy

The direct To Avatar Economy

The world's next Coco Chanel is probably a 10-year-old girl who is currently designing avatar skins in Roblox. This idea stems from the changing world of fashion and digital identity. For years the fashion cycle has been stuck in a cycle of overproduction and waste. The industry was at a tipping point, pushed over the edge by the global pandemic. But it's given fashion houses and designers a chance to step back, slow down, re-evaluate, and create for the future. Designers are shifting their focus back to creativity with technology at the heart of it. Let's sell creativity, not more clothes.



The World Will Embrace The Metaverse As A Fashion Capital

We need to change the system. Designers, brands, and celebrities alike realize that future consumers are online. They have digital identities in games and virtual hangouts. In order to market to future customers, they need to meet them where they are at - in the metaverse!

[More about how brands can thrive in the direct to avatar economy.](#)

NFT's are a hot item in the recent crypto craze

If you've never heard of NFTs, it's only a matter of time. Whether it's digital sports cards or digital art, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs for short) have been conquering the internet in recent months. In February alone, the total volume in US dollars doubled. What is this digital asset that is often sold

for fortunes on both online niche marketplaces and the world's best-known auction house, Christie's?

What does NFT mean?

An NFT is a non-fungible (non-replaceable) token that exists in the blockchain. Let's start with the token. This is proof of ownership of an asset. A token is a digital asset, stored in the blockchain. Since the blockchain is transparent, anyone can easily see who owns which token. Fungible refers to a good that is easily exchangeable. A euro, for example, is very "fungible". You can give me one euro in exchange for some good and I can then exchange that euro for another product or service.

A non-fungible token is a unique token that cannot be easily exchanged with another token. A very recognizable example are digital artworks. A number of artworks have recently been sold on the blockchain for millions of dollars.

[Read more about NFT's](#)



Sustainability



Sustainability

Mushroom Couture.

Last month, March, Stella McCartney introduced her first garments made of Mylo, the “Leather” alternative grown from mushrooms or more precise: grown from mycelium, the vegetative part of a fungus. Like animal leather, Mylo is vegetable-tanned for a similar look and feel, but unlike polyester-based faux leather, it’s entirely natural and biodegradable.



We’d make significant progress if we just nixed one material: leather - Stella McCartney

Meanwhile in Paris, French luxury house Hermès partnered with biomaterials company MycoWorks to reimagine its Victoria shopper bag, also made from mycelium. The bag will be available from the end of this year and features amber-coloured panels made of mycelium. These sheets are tanned and finished by Hermès tanneries in France, much like real leather, to imitate its look and feel from the wrinkling all the way to the subtle colour gradient.

Read more about this subject in the article: [“Plant based alternatives for leather by Vogue Business”](#)

Exhibit ‘Grow’.

Fruit skin fabric, mushroom ‘leather’, spider-silk, dye made by bacteria and algae; GROW, the new year-long exhibition from the Fashion for Good Museum in Amsterdam explores the biomaterials and cutting-edge innovations that are shaping the sustainable future of fashion. What exactly are biomaterials? How sustainable are they and what makes them different from traditional fibres like cotton and hemp? And does bio always mean better and sustainable? Navigating the many different kinds of sustainable materials can be challenging. For my masterclass on ‘New Fabrics’ I am always researching and informing myself on new material developments. I regret to see that many ‘established’ fashion professionals and brands are not in the know or sketching future scenarios. If this is you, here’s your kick-start!

[Purchase your ticket for the expo Grow here.](#)

Love Fashion from the ground up



Image by Hermès

Sustainability

Interesting brands.

Purpose-led brands attract customers, fulfill employees, and outperform competitors. Purpose is the driving force of a thriving business, and sustainable innovation separates leaders from the pack. Here's Isrid's pick of brands to watch.

Natan



Natan's "Circular" collection is living proof that luxury brands are becoming increasingly creative in their sustainable endeavors to build a sustainable fashion industry. Natan, for example, dove into his previous summer collection to release a circular capsule collection for this summer, in which clothing from last season is reworked into completely new items. A skirt becomes a top, a shirt becomes a dress, a sweater a skirt, a new game of expression, with a good dose of daring as a luxury fashion house.

[More about Natan & Sustainability](#)

More consumers and fashion brands are turning to the concept of “slow fashion” and away from the long and costly manufacturing process.

Francon



Founded in Rotterdam in 2021, Francon is an evolving collaboration between creative director May Kaan and architect Kees Kaan. April 8th I was present at the preview of this womenswear label representing a modern, iterative approach to dressing, inspired by functional archetypes in timeless architecture. Rather than thinking in seasons, Francon is based on the notion of places.

[More about Francon](#)

Brand love and brand loyalty will very much be dependent on the sustainability attributes that a brand builds with its consumers.

Sustainability

My Sereena



Another new brand, yet to be launched in April, is MySerena, a sustainable alternative to sanitary towels. Annemarie Uleman, who I have known and appreciated for 'ages' as a brave female leader for a variety of fashion brands, is the founder and owner of this label. MySereena underwear has a thin 3-layer technology that ensures that you always stay fresh, dry and protected against urine loss, menstruation or when you sweat at the gym.

[More about MySereena](#)

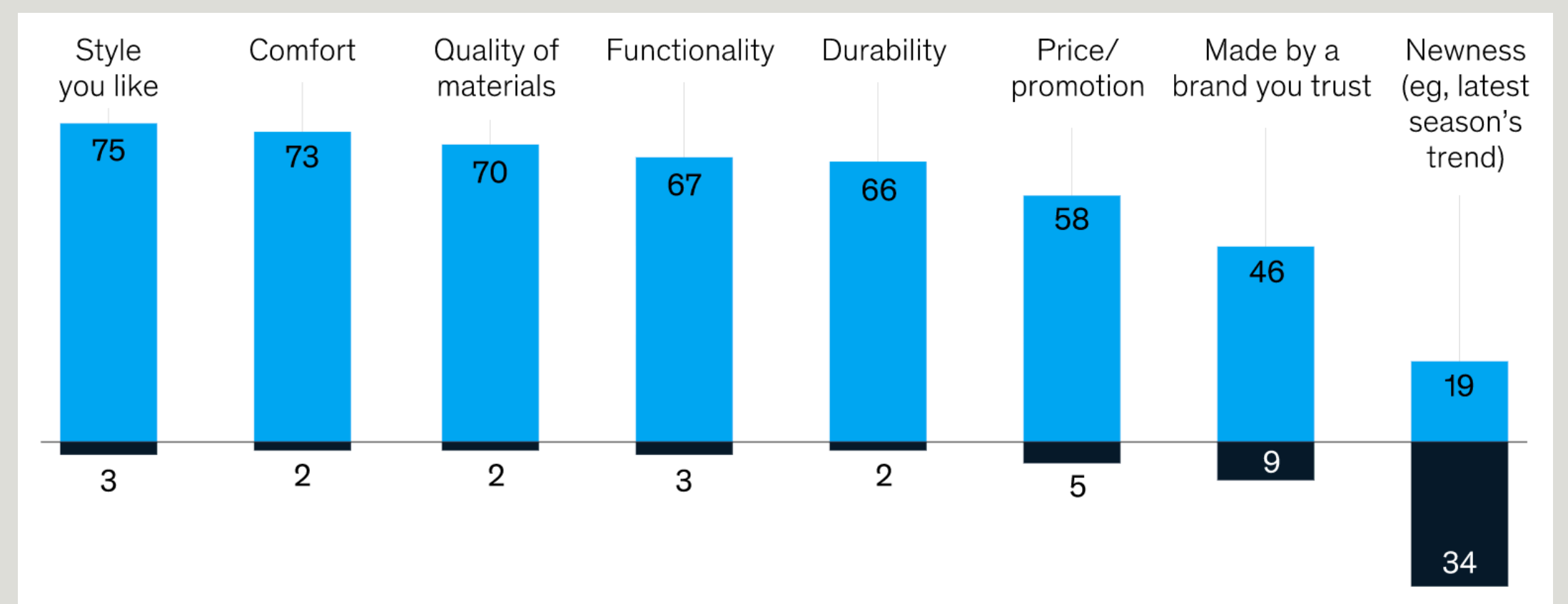
Consumers cite newness as one of the least important attributes when making purchases, indicating a shift in the fashion- cycle mindset

Consumer sentiment on sustainability in fashion

A recent McKinsey report and survey on consumer sentiment on sustainability in fashion showed that, as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, 65 percent of respondents are planning to purchase more durable fashion items, and 71 percent are planning to keep the items they already have for longer. Additionally, 57 percent of respondents are willing to repair items to prolong usage.

[Read the McKinsey survey](#)

Importance of factors when selecting a fashion brand to buy from



Talent & Human Resources



Talent & Human Resources

Elevate your game on next generation talent.

Retailers are short the workforce and capabilities to succeed in the digitaldominated world. To close the skills gap, companies will need to reimagine their strategies for sourcing and deploying talent. Four key themes have emerged:

1. Elevate you game on next generation talent.

Retailers recognize the magnitude of the gap in digital talent and are planning to increase their digital full-time equivalents (FTEs) by more than 50 percent.

Build and sustain a culture that can support in-person and virtual work and evolve to support employees.

2. Acknowledge a more remote world.

The quick move to remote work during the pandemic has greatly expanded the available talent pool for retailers. If proximity is no longer a

prerequisite, they are in a position to upgrade key positions.

3. Embed flexibility into the workforce

Retailers can significantly expand their talent pools for hourly and frontline associates by tapping into on-demand labor models such as the gig economy. An example is IKEA who acquired TaskRabbit, accessing its more than 60,000 independent workers to help customers pick up, assemble, and install IKEA products.

4. Build a diverse workforce

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) looms especially large in the consumer facing retail industry. Missteps at any of its many customer touch points can seriously damage corporate reputation and salesLeading retailers are making commitments to increase workforce diversity and reflect the country's diversity with the products they sell.

"Retail Speaks" By RELA and McKinsey



Talent & Human Resources

The vanishing middle manager and how to train and inspire them to be a coach and mentor.

A podcast featuring talent experts Bryan Hancock and Bill Schaninger caught my attention as it appears that in a faster, leaner and flatter world, we might have to re-think the worth of the middle manager in organizations. Many middle managers still play a vital role in organizations but will that keep stand in a flatter future with changes to the traditional management hierarchy and business needing and wanting to grow towards a flatter, more distributed, more agile organizational structure.

An interesting insight was shared in this podcast. The idea that our middle management is part of the fabric of our leadership pipelines. These roles should be coveted and nurtured and curated, not eliminated. If you want to eliminate something, eliminate tasks—tasks that are administrative or bureaucratic and don't add value. But keep the role and curate it to help develop your next generation of leaders. If you craft middle-management roles the right way, you create opportunities for the people in them to thrive. You also create capacity for them to coach and

mentor diverse people below them, so that the next level can rise as well.

Read more on this subject:
["The vanishing middle manager"](#)

The top soft skills are more human-centric than last year

Redefining the role of HR in 2021.

According to Gartner, one of the top priorities for HR leaders in 2021 is managing change within their organizations. This includes playing a key role in growing their respective businesses while innovating for success. As companies navigate new operational norms and continue to transform in the digital age, the need for HR's expertise and leadership has never been greater. Historically many people have viewed HR as a department focused solely on administrative or risk management tasks. However, last year provided

an excellent opportunity for HR to redefine itself and become front and center in ensuring employee responsiveness in a way that positively impacts morale, engagement, service levels and company performance. As a people-focused department, HR understands how employees view the organization. As such, you are perfectly positioned to act as change agents in implementing business strategy and to create a blueprint for employee engagement and success.

[Read more on this subject by Forbes Human Resources Council](#)

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