

2026 TrendKey®

SAMPLE REPORT

US Edition | Sample of the full 162-slide report

September 2026

NIQ Consumer Life Roper Reports® US

NielsenIQ

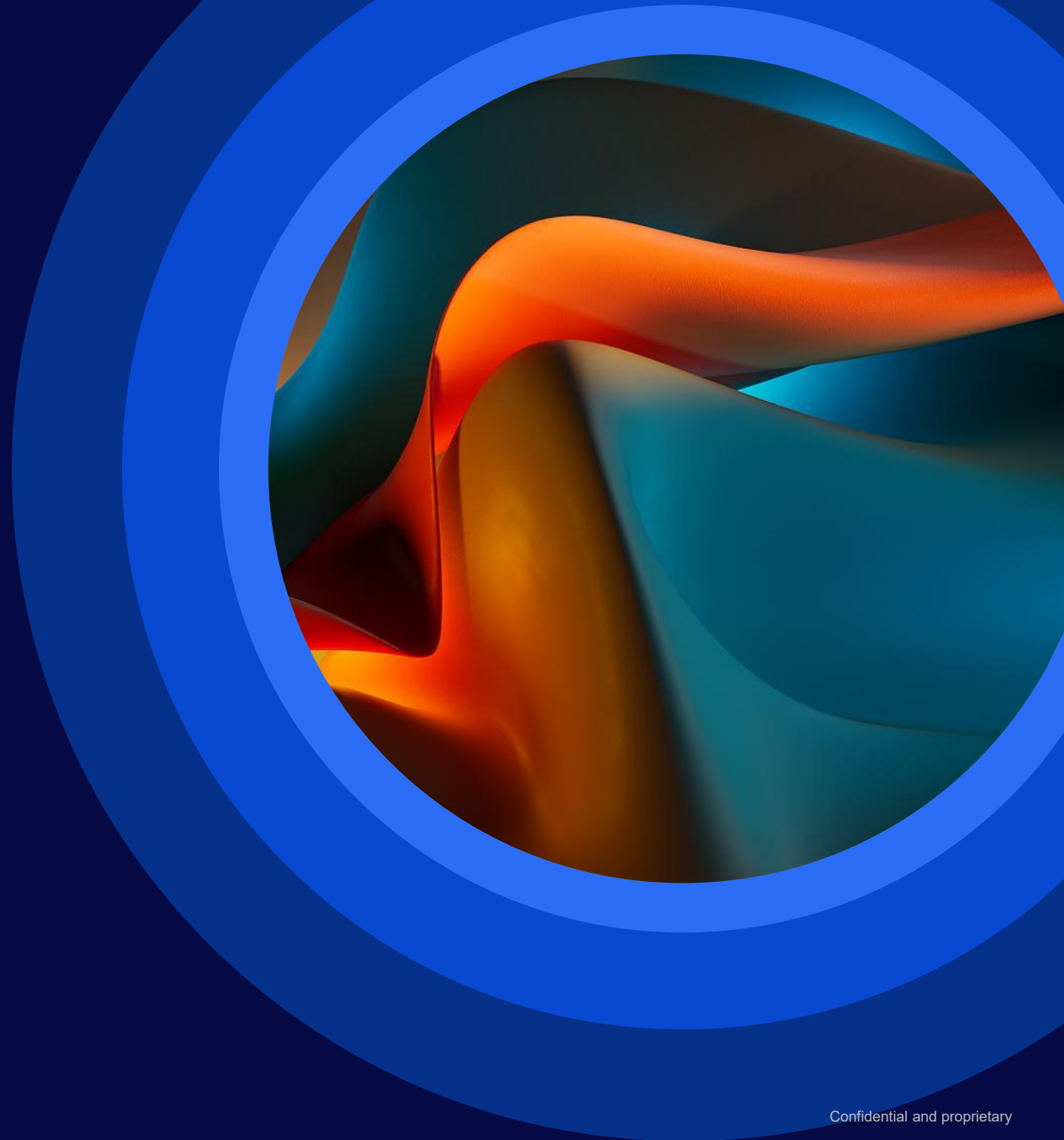


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What’s covered in this report

Nine macro trends, 27 sub-trends and 18 external forces — built on the 2026 NIQ Consumer Life US and Global studies

INTRODUCTION	NINE MACRO TRENDS	EXTERNAL FORCES (STEEP)	APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY
Why TrendKey® How a trends framework fuels next-stage thinking and future planning The power of trends Six business contexts where trends work hardest — from innovation to internal alignment Analysis framework How external forces, macro trends and sub-trends relate to one another Navigating the report Interactive contents and section-level jump points	• Experience above All • In the Know • Belonging • Seeking Safety • Eco-Conscience • Discerning Consumption • Frictionless Living • Sense of Wellbeing • All about Me Every trend section contains – Trend narrative in the consumer’s own voice – Trend indicators and strength, US vs. Global – Three sub-trends with supporting data – Market manifestations and examples – Full demographic profile of the trend	Social Population shifts · Changing households · Global migration · Urbanization · Education · Health challenges Technological Access · Automation/AI · Innovation · Risks Economic Globalization · Economic shifts · Income distribution Ecological Climate change · Resource scarcity Political Tensions & conflicts · Government regulations · Changing political landscape	US study at-a-glance Target group, sampling method and fieldwork dates Global study at-a-glance Coverage across the Consumer Life Global survey Fieldwork dates by country Wave timing for every market in the Global study Definitions Generations, income bands and reporting conventions used throughout

This sample shows one complete macro trend — “Experience above All” — in full. The other eight are covered at the same depth in the 162-slide report. Data values are masked in this sample.

What business questions does this report help you answer?

TrendKey® is built for teams across every sector — the trends are consumer-level, not category-specific

STRATEGY & PLANNING

“Which consumer shifts are durable enough to plan three to five years against?”

“Which external forces will reshape my category, and how fast?”

INNOVATION & PRODUCT

“What does “innovation” actually mean to consumers right now?”

“Where are unmet needs emerging that my pipeline does not yet address?”

BRAND & MARKETING

“Which cultural narratives can my brand credibly join?”

“How do motivations differ by generation, income and life stage?”

INSIGHTS & RESEARCH

“What hypotheses should my next primary study test?”

“How does my category sit against the wider consumer context?”

COMMERCIAL & CATEGORY GROWTH

“Where is value migrating — trading up, trading down or switching?”

“Which audiences are driving that movement?”

ORGANISATION & ALIGNMENT

“How do I get cross-functional teams working from one view of the consumer?”

“What framework can I share with partners and customers?”

Relevant across sectors — CPG and FMCG, retail, technology, automotive, financial services, health and pharmaceutical, travel and leisure, media and entertainment.

Sample excerpt — 2026 TrendKey®, NIQ Consumer Life Roper Reports® US, September 2026

Analysis framework

External forces provide the context in which people live their lives. We have identified nine macro trends that describe how people react to those forces, as well as sub-trends that relate to each major trend. This report covers all three areas.

EXTERNAL FORCES (STEEP)

These are social, technological, economic, ecological, and political shifts that are beyond the control of individuals, but are the root causes of consumer change, driving macro trends and sub-trends.

MACRO TRENDS

Consumer attitudes and behaviors shaped by external forces, representing genuine, long-term shifts in consumer wants and needs. Macro trends may be shaped by multiple external forces.

SUB-TRENDS

These are specific aspects of macro trends that may be shorter-term and more focused in nature. Note that the sub-trends in this report are not comprehensive, merely illustrative.

Lean into the future with nine macro trends





**Experience
above All**



I crave experiences of all kinds that appeal to all of my senses. I'm interested in many different things and have a big-picture view of how life should be lived, especially when it comes to *doing* rather than *having*. I'm adventurous, too, and always on the lookout for something new and fun.

Life is an amazing
experience, and I want
to make the most of it.

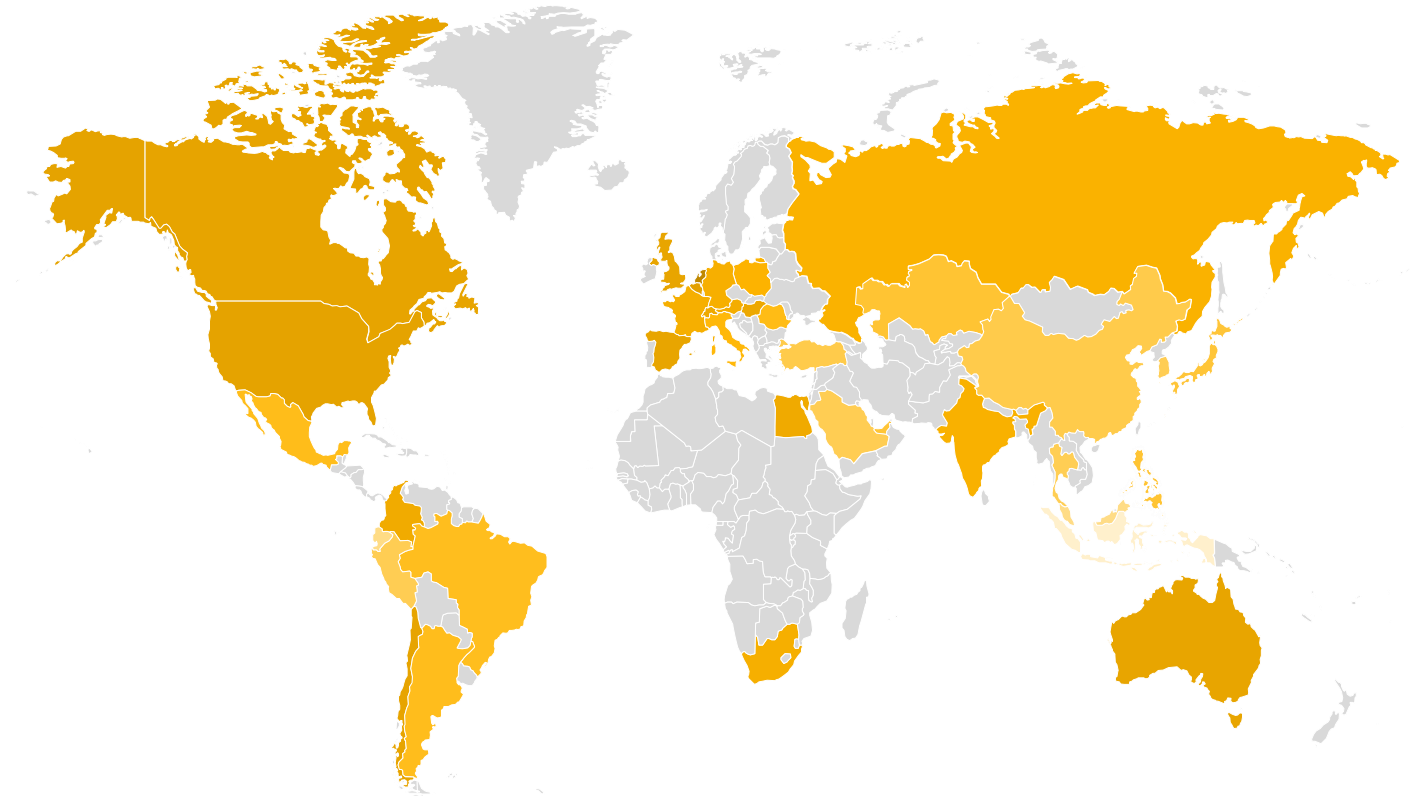
Experience above All

Trend indicators:

- “Experiences are more important than possessions”
- “I would rather have more time than more money”
- “The look, feel, and smell of a product is very important to me”

External forces behind this trend:

-  **Social**
Global migration
-  **Technological**
Access
-  **Economic**
Income distribution



% of consumers 15+ who strongly relate to the trend



NIQ Consumer Life 2026, EJM1 (Global = 39 countries)

Experience above All | Three sub-trends



I. Doing, not having

Many prioritize experiences over possessions.



II. Engaging all senses

Increasingly, consumers demand a sensorial experience for everyday products.



III. The real world

The rise of the digital lifestyle only underscores the value of real-world experiences.

Experience above All I. Doing, not having

In a world of uncertainty, many seek joy and escape through experiences rather than material things.



Enjoying Life

Doing things because I like them

#XX personal value in America on a list of 57 measured,
#XX among Asian Americans, #XX among Gen Z

“ **XX%** of American consumers agree
Experiences are more important than possessions,”

making it the #XX life attitude in America on a list of 43 consistently measured attitudes, unchanged since 2021;
#XX among Millennials



XX% of American consumers would like to
travel abroad frequently for pleasure,

making it the #XX aspiration on a list of 21 measured, ranging from **having a beautifully decorated home (XX%)** to **owning an expensive boat (XX%)**

Trend in the marketplace



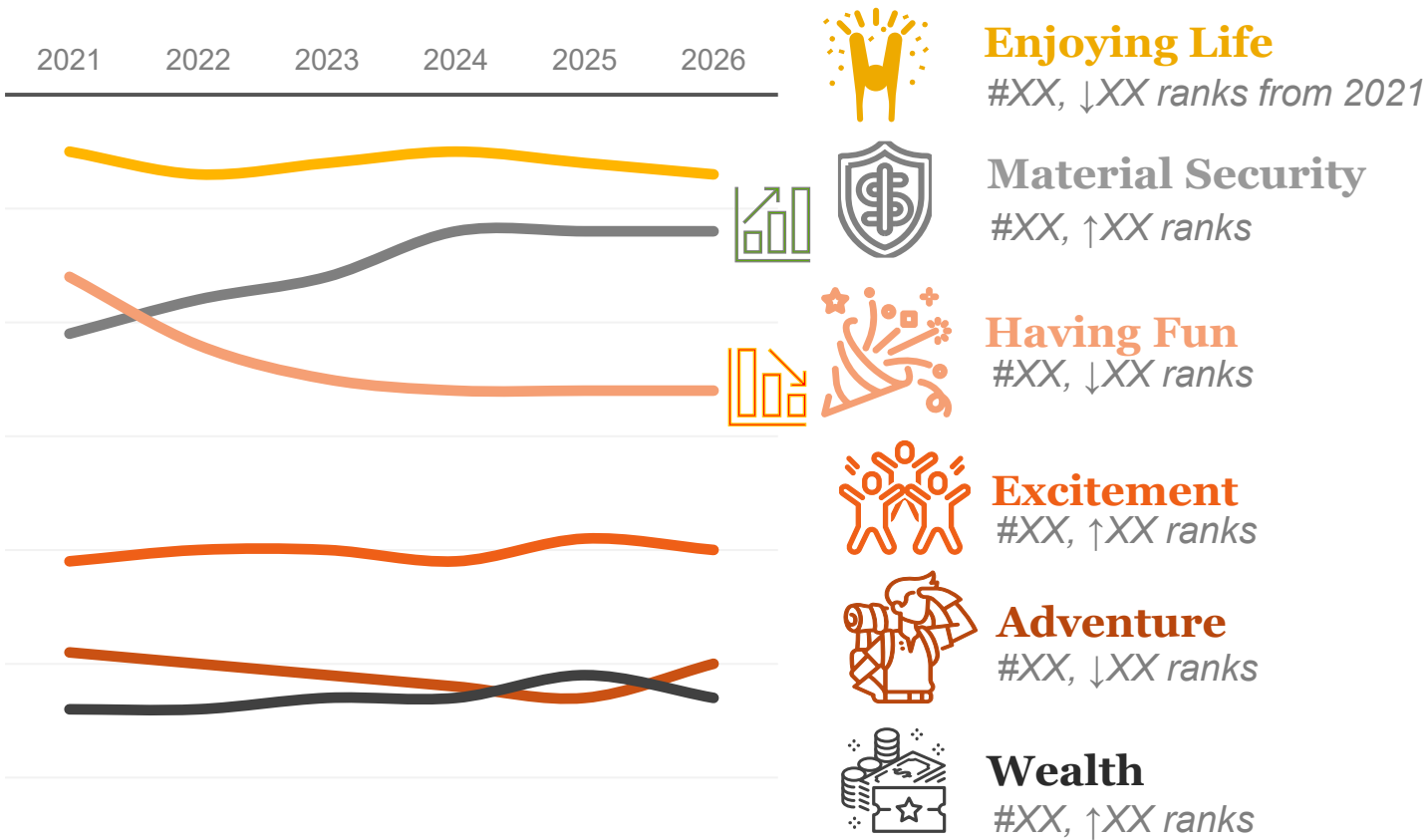
Streaming in Real Life

Netflix launched the first two Netflix Houses in late 2025 in the US. Permanent experiential destinations where fans can physically step into worlds inspired by shows like Stranger Things, Wednesday, and Squid Game. Through immersive attractions, themed dining, and interactive challenges, Netflix extends entertainment beyond screen viewing into memorable real-world experiences.

Joy over adventure at a time of instability

While *Material Security* has overtaken *Having Fun* as a core value, *Enjoying Life* remains a higher priority, and *Wealth* continues to rank near the bottom

Rank of personal value on a list of 57 measured



Americans lean into experiences at home

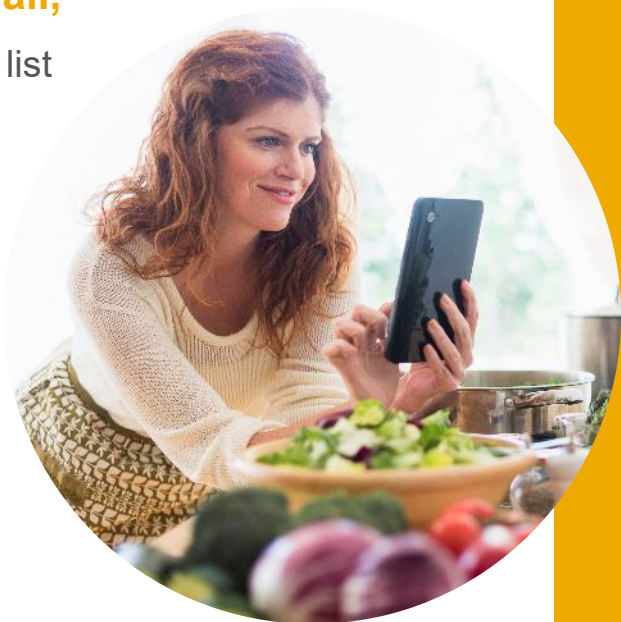
Americans enjoy leisure at home and spend more time there

More time spent at home: In 2003, the average American spent XX hours per day at home, according to the American Time Use Survey data. By 2024, that rose to XX hours, with the pandemic only accelerating the climb.

“**XX%** of American consumers agree
My home is a private retreat where I can relax and get away from it all,”

#XX life attitude since 2021 on a list of 43 consistently measured attitudes

“**XX%** agree
I enjoy spending a lot of my free time at home,”
#XX life attitude since 2021

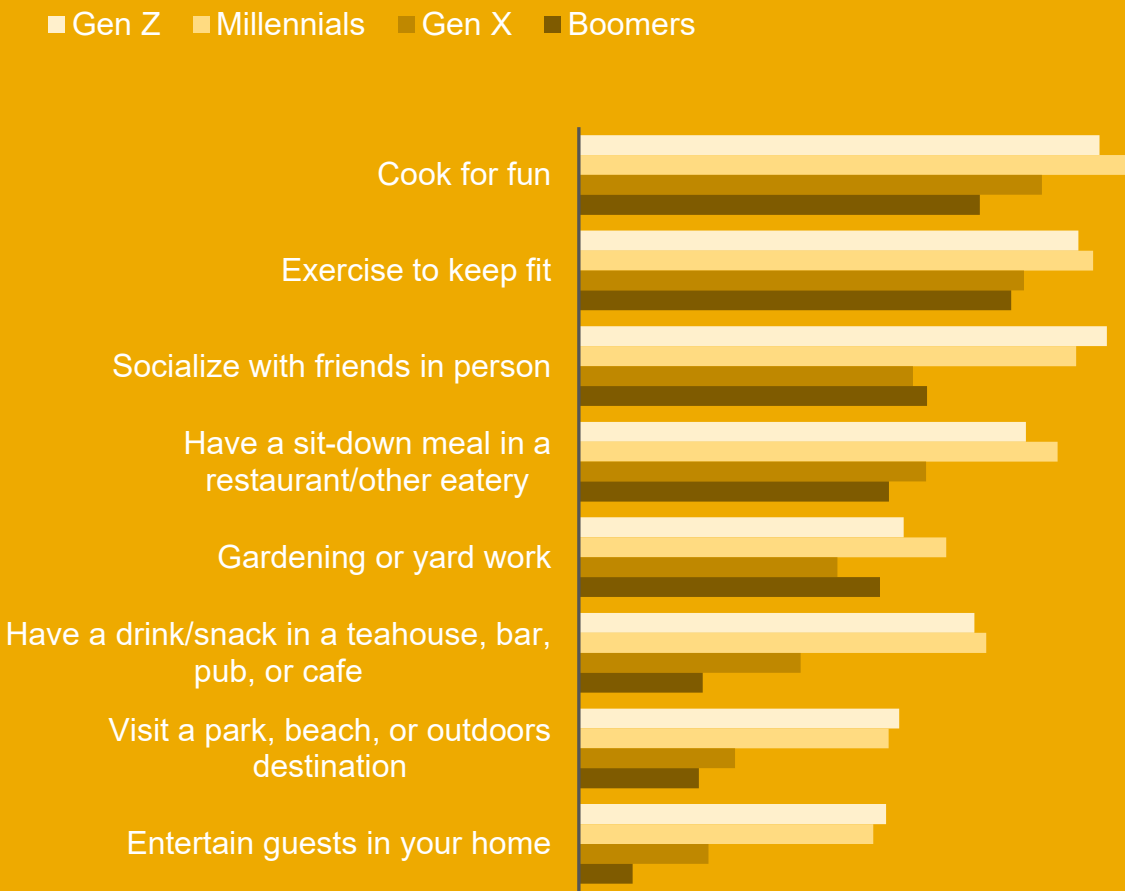


NIQ Consumer Life Global 2026 ATL, B2 (US tiler), [Americans are spending more time at home and alone](#)

Seeking joy in everyday cooking

Leisure cooking is an important part of everyday experience

% of American consumers who do the following at least weekly



Americans, especially younger generations, want to be creative

AI is increasingly seen as an enabler



Creativity

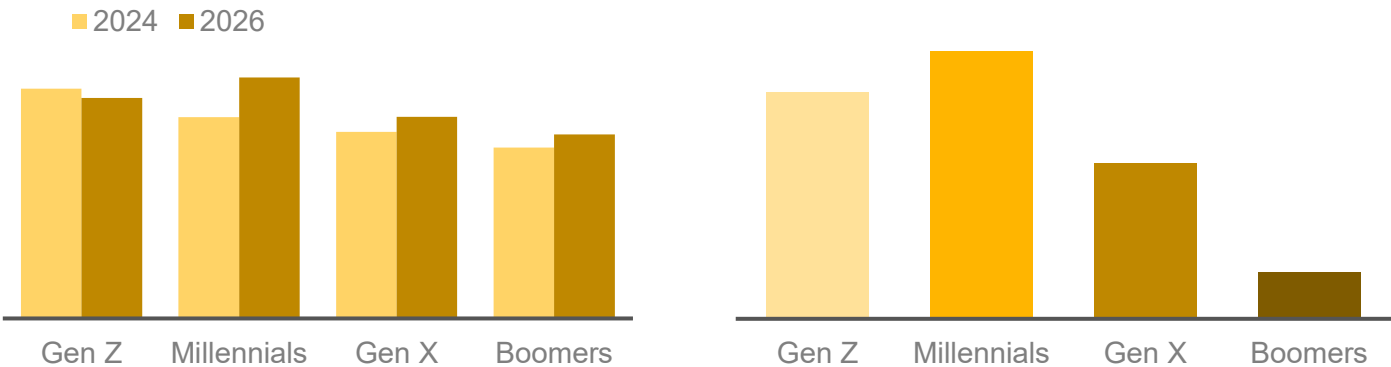
Being creative, imaginative

#XX personal value in America on a list of 57 measured,
#XX among Gen Z,
#XX among Millennials



XX% of Americans agree
AI will allow people to be more creative,”
↑XX pts from 2024

XX% of American AI users* have
used AI to create art or music in the past 6 months



NIQ Consumer Life Global 2026 C1, O32, O44 (US filter), *defined as those who used AI apps or tools in the past 30 days (XX% of American consumers)

Experience above All II. Engaging all senses

Consumers are looking beyond functionality for sensorial experiences in the products they buy.

“**XX%** of American consumers agree
The look, feel, and smell of a product is very important to me,”
making it the #XX life attitude in America on a list of 43 consistently measured attitudes, unchanged from 2021;
#XX among Blacks,
#XX among Millennials and parents with kids under 18, and
#XX among Gen Z, women, and Asian Americans

“**XX%** agree
I am always looking for novelty and fun, even in everyday products,”
making it the #XX life attitude, **↓XX ranks**;
#XX among Blacks,
#XX among Asian Americans, and
#XX among Millennials

Trend in the marketplace



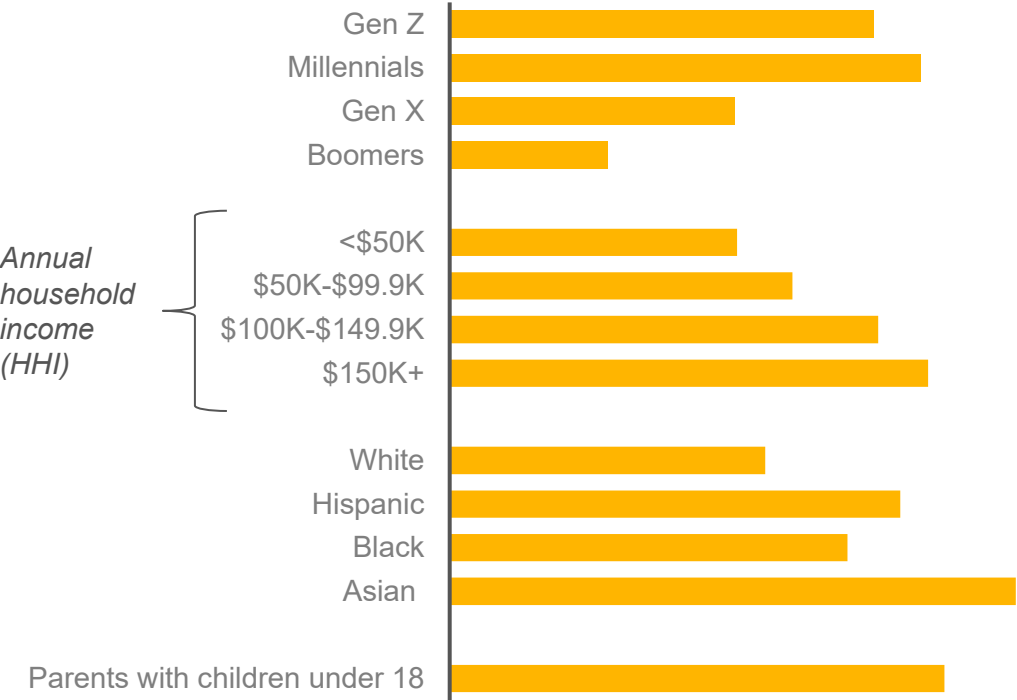
Beauty becomes multi-sensory exploration

British beauty retailer Lush is expanding its experiential retail offerings through fragrance readings, skincare consultations, product-making workshops, spa experiences, and community events. Supported by the new Lush Events platform, which enables customers to discover and book in-store experiences through the app, the brand is transforming beauty shopping into a multi-sensory experience centered on participation, education, and community.

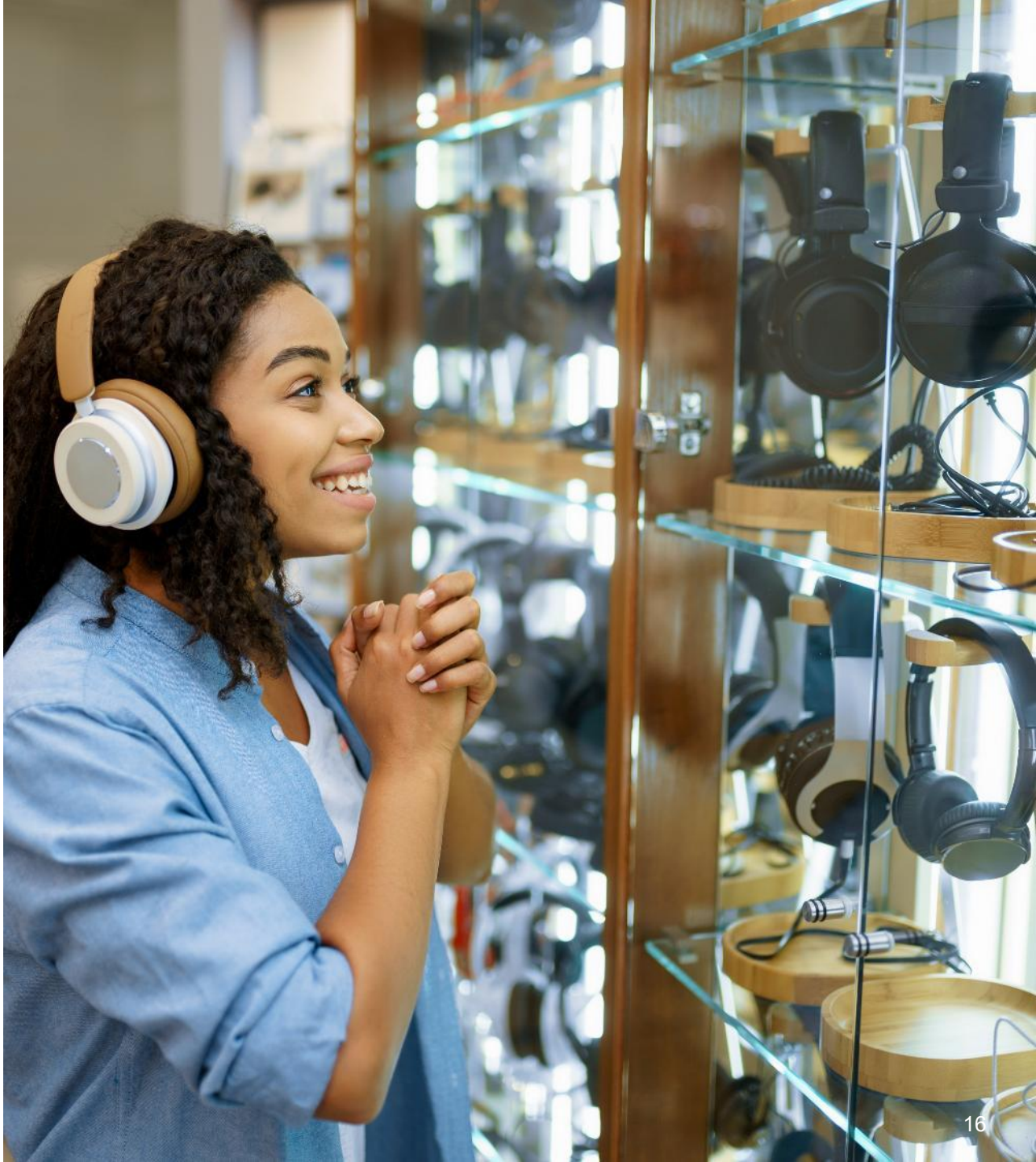
Style matters

Younger generations, higher-income consumers, multi-cultural Americans, and parents are more focused on visual appeal

“ **XX%** of American consumers strongly agree
The look and style of a technology product is very important in deciding which one to buy”



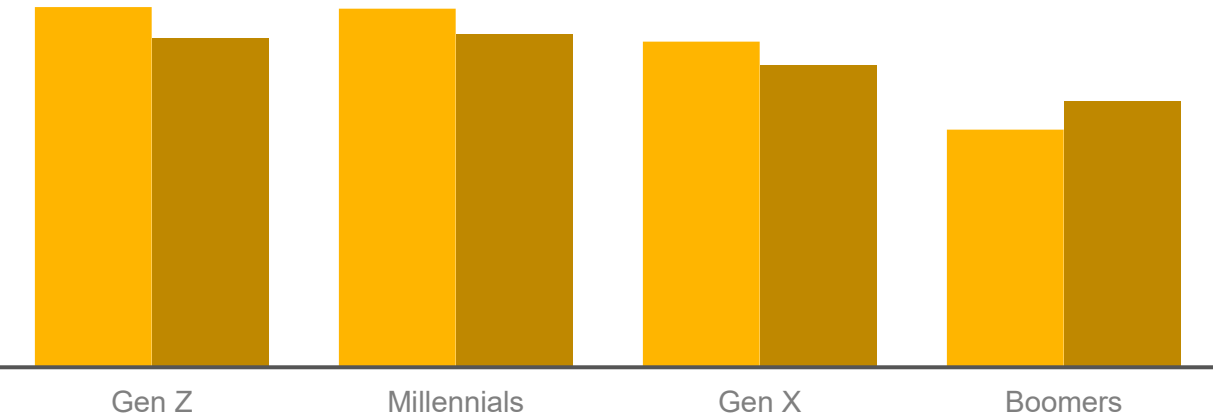
NIQ Consumer Life Global 2026 Q2 (US filter, top 2 boxes on a 1-7 scale)



Awakening the taste buds

Younger generations lead on the demand for bold, international flavors

Specialty Food Association announces **Sensemaxxing** as trend of the year for 2026. “**SenseMaxxing** is an embrace of experiential intensity, where every bite and sip cranks up the volume on sensory saturation. **In the current cultural moment, when technology and AI are encroaching on our personal and professional lives, it’s a reminder of our uniquely human senses — that they are precious, powerful, and worth leaning into. SenseMaxxing says goodbye, boring beige and hello, full-on feeling.**”



NIQ Consumer Life Global 2025 F11 (US filter),
[Specialty Food Association announces SenseMaxxing as a trend of the year](#)



Experience above All III. The real world

The continued rise of digital lifestyles only drives more appreciation for real-world experiences.

“**XX%** of American consumers agree
I feel we have too much technology in our lives”
XX%+ across key consumer segments

“**Only XX%** of American consumers agree
Virtual interactions with people and places can be as good as being there in person,”
making it the #XX life attitude in America on a list of 43 consistently measured attitudes, ↑XX ranks from 2021

XX% of American consumers daydream about
traveling to different places around the world,
making it the #XX daydream on a list of XX measured

Trend in the marketplace



Brick by brick

In June 2025, LEGO launched the first World Play Day. The event transformed public spaces in cities including Boston, Berlin, London, and Shanghai into large-scale interactive play environments inspired by ideas from local children. By turning play into a shared community experience, LEGO encouraged families and communities to connect offline while highlighting the role of play in creativity, learning, and wellbeing.

Travel has emerged as a top passion point and spending priority

High-income Americans lead the way

XX% of American consumers cited **travel for leisure as a part of a “good life,”** making it the #XX element of a good life on a list of 15 consistently measured, **↑XX ranks** from 2022; #XX among those with HHI \$150K+

XX% of American consumers plan to **take a personal vacation in the next six months** XX% among those with HHI \$150K+, XX% HHI \$100K-\$149.9K

XX% of American consumers plan to **spend on vacation/travel in the next 12 months,** making it the #XX spending priority on a list XX measured; XX% and #XX priority among those with HHI \$150K+, XX% and #XX priority HHI \$100K-\$149.9K

NIQ Consumer Life Global 2026 I1, K15 (US filter), NIQ Consumer Life US 2026 T28



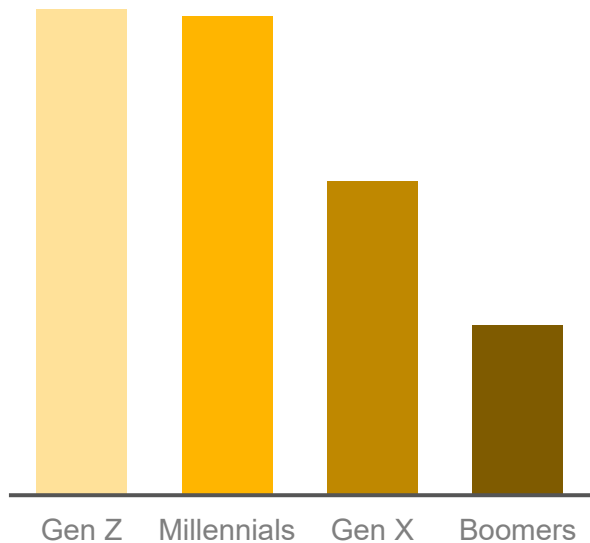
Analogue tech makes a comeback

Digital natives are among the most engaged

Going chronically offline is the latest trend to grip young people, and ironically it's going viral on social media. There's been a surge of TikTok videos of people vowing to delete social media apps in 2026 and engage more with in-person and analog hobbies.

—CNBC, Feb. 2026

XX% of American consumers
bought media products in vintage format (e.g. CD/DVD/vinyl records) in the past few years



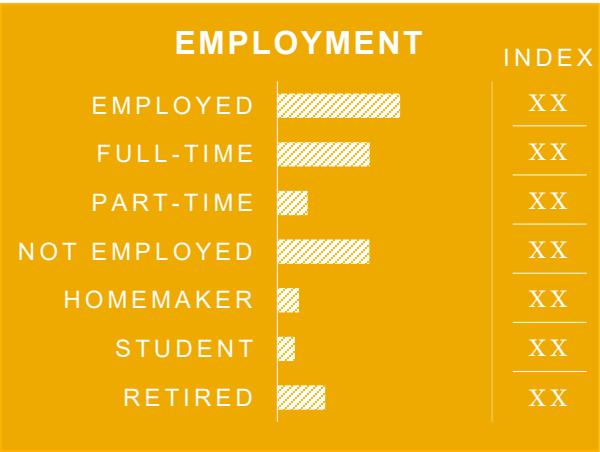
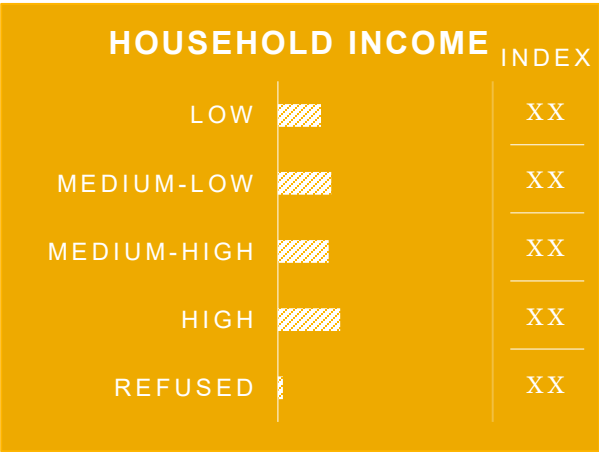
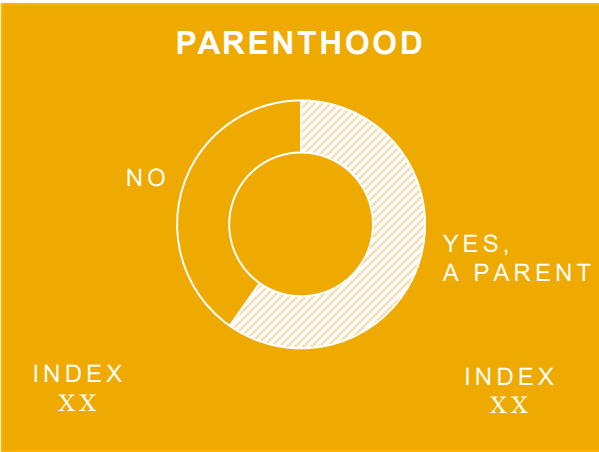
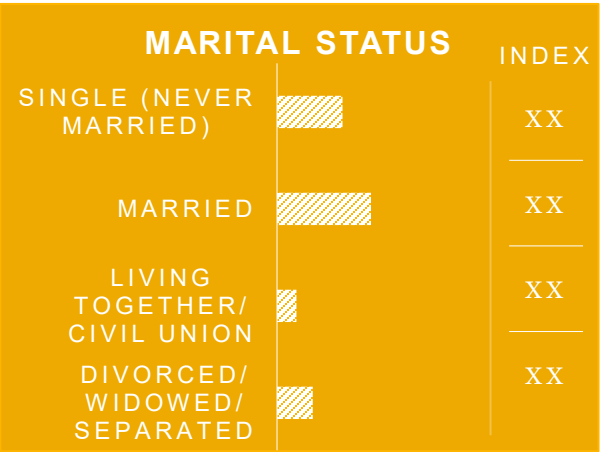
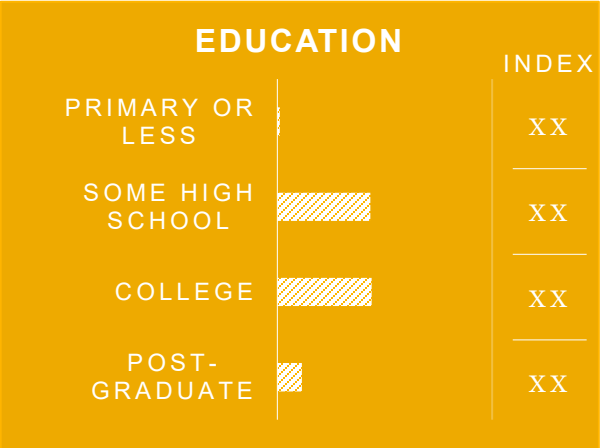
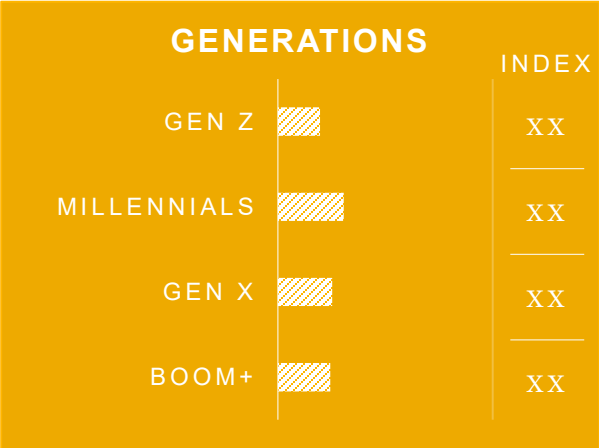
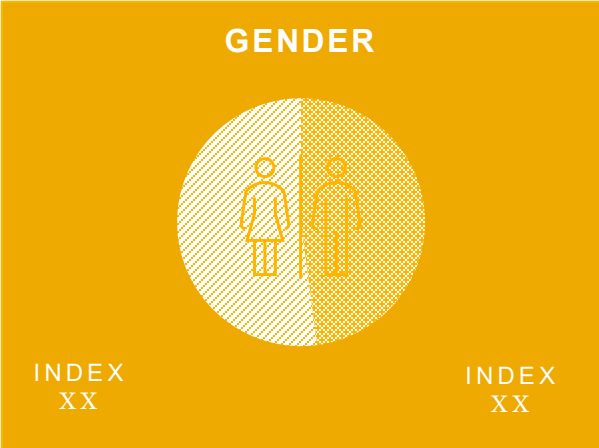
According to a new report from research firm Luminate, XX million CDs were sold in the first half of 2026 in the US, a XX% increase year-over-year. Combined sales of CDs, records, and cassettes increased by XX per cent to approximately XX million units during the first half of the year.

NIQ Consumer Life Global 2026 R19 (US filter), [A 'quiet revolution': Why young people are swapping social media for lunch dates, vinyl records and brick phones](#), [Growth in CD sales outpaces vinyl](#)



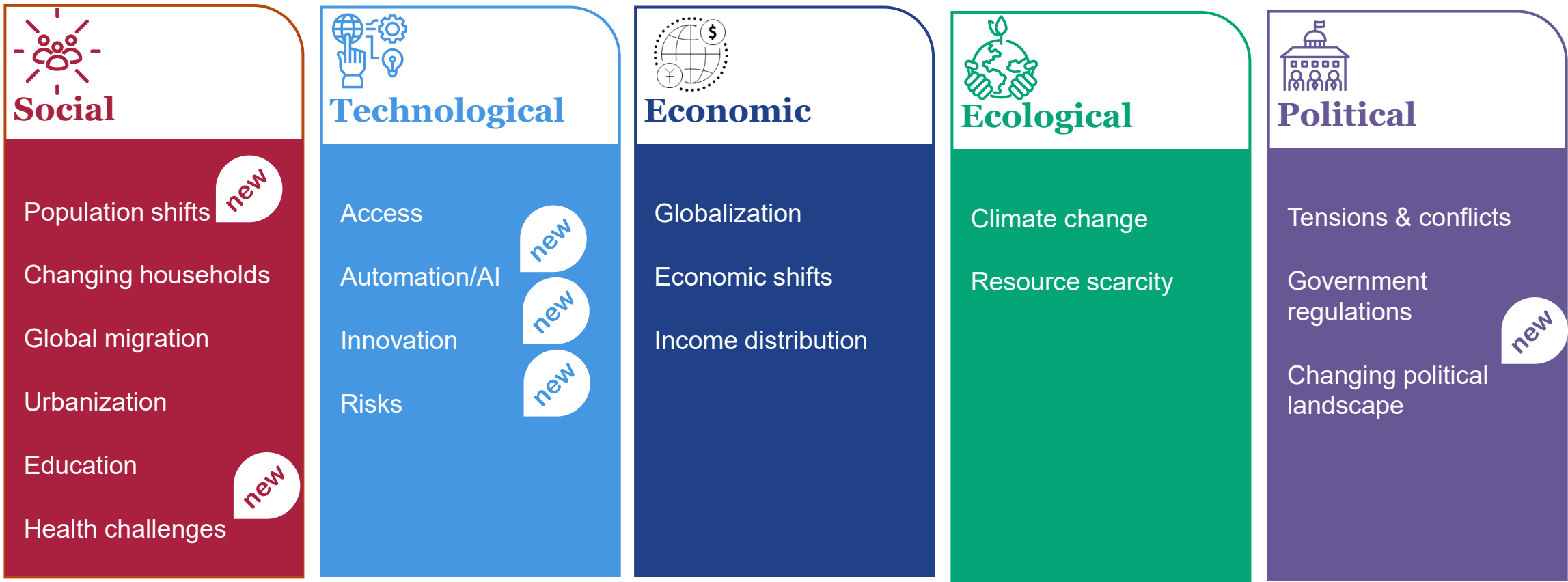
Experience above All | Demographic profile

Demographic characteristics of people who strongly relate to the trend; index refers to how they differ from total population



Five STEEP forces that impact consumer behavior

Social, technological, economic, ecological, and political shifts that are beyond individuals' control, but are root causes of consumer change



A seismic shift in the age structure

An ongoing decline in fertility and an increase in longevity continues to bring sharp changes in the age structure of economies. Globally, the share of population age 60+ is expected to nearly double between 2010 and 2035, accounting for almost one-fifth of the global population. Meanwhile, the share of the youth population continues to drop. **In more developed economies, people age 60+ already outnumber those under 25** (28% vs. 26% of the population in 2026) and will widen the gap in coming years (31% vs. 25% by 2035).

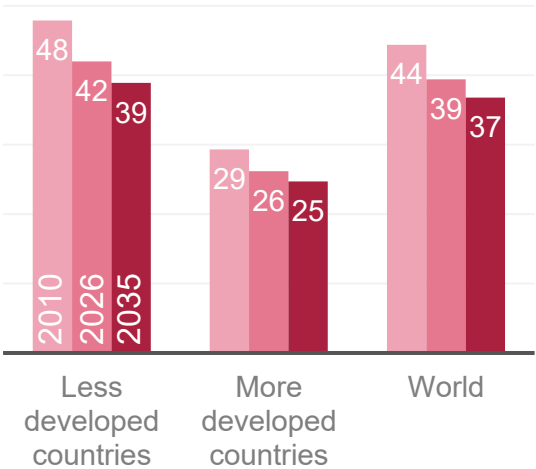
Youth population growth will come from emerging markets

While the population size of youth under 25 is still inching up in less developed markets, it is forecast to continue to decline in more advanced economies.

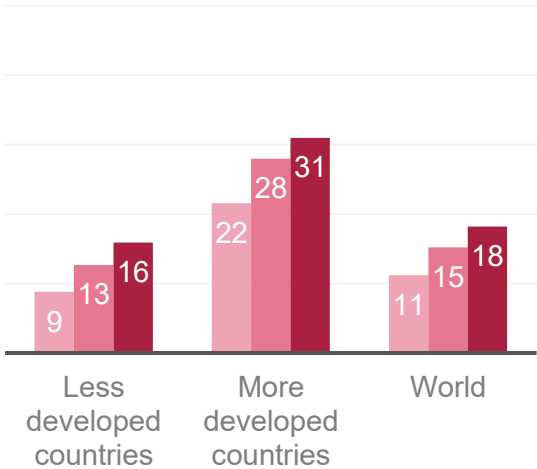
Changes are accelerating in less developed markets

While developed markets lead on population aging, shifts are happening faster in developing countries. The 60+ population is expected to grow by about 36% by 2035 in less developed markets, vs. 11% in more developed ones. Meanwhile, the share of the < 25 population will drop to 39% of the total population, down from 42% in 2026 and nearly half in 2010.

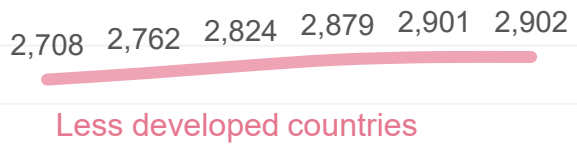
% of population < age 25



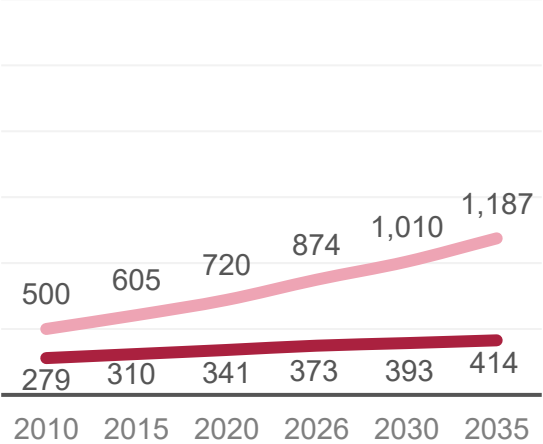
% of population 60+



Population size of those < 25, in millions



Population size of those 60+, in millions



2026 NIQ Consumer Life US study at-a-glance

Nationally representative of the online US population

Fieldwork: January-February 2026



Sample of adults 18 years of age and over in the United States are interviewed for this study using a mix of online consumer panels.



All demographic groups are represented, based on the latest population statistics derived from the United States Census Bureau. Quotas are imposed to ensure representation for each age bracket within gender, education level, as well as income, geographic region, and ethnicity.



Panel blend of online and mobile providers in the US.