

HUNTER: CONSUMER PULSE CHECK

At HUNTER, we are #AlwaysHunting for insights and inspiration that helps us earn the attention of the consumers who matter most to our clients. HUNTER: Insights accomplishes this by keeping our fingers on the pulse of the consumer and the ever-changing cultural and communications landscape. Here's a summary of our latest consumer trends to help you supercharge your communication plans and programs.

MELTDOWN MITIGATION



Prolonged uncertainty and feeling out-of-control have increasingly led to heightened emotional outbursts in both children and adults. While psychologists acknowledge that expressing emotions freely through "adult tantrums" can offer therapeutic relief, such reactive behaviors often strain personal and professional relationships.

Embracing the [Slow Living trend](#) provides an alternative approach to coping. This mindset encourages individuals to intentionally create moments of calm and reflection in their daily routines, reducing emotional intensity and promoting balance. Simple practices such as taking mindful micro-breaks between tasks, engaging in purposeful breathing, or planning mental transitions allow individuals to reset and self-soothe. By prioritizing these proactive strategies, people can navigate stress more effectively, fostering resilience, and avoiding emotional breakdowns.

Takeaway: Brands and marketers can help take the edge off by positioning products and services as solutions that help shoulder the load to create space or offer relief through escape

THE STRONG, NOT-SO-SILENT TYPE

Shifting demographics and social norms has prompted society to reassess gender identity and, in turn, expand the definition of the "traditional" male. However, this progressive evolution has now sparked a powerful backlash—unexpectedly led by younger men, who, according to a [Glocalities survey](#), are the only demographic group in the U.S. to have moved more conservative over the past decade.

These men—often characterized as embracing traditional masculine ideals such as ambition, self-reliance and resilience—[feel increasingly alienated](#) by a society that seems to be leaving them behind. Manifesting HUNTER's 2024 trend [Quest for Community](#), media (with Fox News as the #1 cable news network), influencers (such as Joe Rogan, whose podcast has nearly 19 million subscribers), and political figures (like Donald Trump, who won 50% of the popular vote) have given a voice and a home to this group that seeks to reassert their place in modern culture.

Takeaway: As the pendulum between progressive and conservative values moderates, our 2024 trend [Walk the Line](#) will no doubt retain relevance. Brands should continue to thoughtfully consider how and when engage to with identity narratives.





'TIS THE SEASON FOR SLOW SHOPPING

Our 2024 “[Budgeting Wars](#)” trend is feeling festive! As the holiday shopping season unfolds, consumers are battling between overspending and intentional spending, driven by a mix of stress, emotional shopping, and a heightened sense of mindfulness. Trends like "doom spending" and "revenge shopping" are still prevalent, but a new behavior, "sleep spending," is gaining traction, with consumers shopping online during sleepless nights to unwind or relieve stress.

Additionally, alongside the more traditional holiday impulse-driven shopping behavior, there's a growing trend of "slow shopping," where nearly 3 in 4 consumers are taking a more deliberate approach to their holiday purchases. This means they are carefully considering the necessity and value of each item before buying, with a third of Millennials and nearly half of Gen Z planning to save more this year than last. This mindful shopping trend reflects a shift toward "underconsumption," with consumers becoming more thoughtful about what they buy and opting for experiences or homemade gifts over traditional retail items. In fact, many are embracing the idea of making gifts or focusing on more meaningful, less materialistic presents.

Takeaway: Consumers are eager to indulge in spontaneous purchases, but they are also more cautious and value-driven than ever. Offering sales, promotions, and emphasizing the long-term value of products can tap into both the impulsive and mindful sides of shoppers.

MASS X-ODUS = SOCIAL MEDIA FRAGMENTATION

In the weeks following the presidential election, [X saw the largest user exodus](#) since Elon Musk's takeover, which was already losing an average of 14% of its users monthly. While some are deleting and spending more time on other popular platforms, many X users are replacing with Jack Dorsey's Bluesky or Meta's Threads. This includes news outlets and celebrities from The Guardian and Don Lemon to Lizzo and Barbra Streisand who are joining Bluesky as an X replacement.

As we saw in HUNTER's 2024 trend [Quest for Community](#), people are searching for more meaningful connection online through like-minded communities. As some social media users find that their values are increasingly misaligned with those of X, they are seeking new online spaces to call home. But the fact they are not all migrating to the same place, and instead smaller and more unique spaces, pushes us into an era of social media fragmentation.

Takeaway: Fragmentation is happening all over media as we see users increasingly curate their content intake with several niche creators, like podcasts and Substack's, rather than larger outlets. Brands and marketers will need to recognize this new era and understand that a "Jack-of-all-trades" marketing approach may not be the right method. Rather, brands should expand into more spaces by better understanding their consumer target behavior, doubling down on their expertise, and those who represent their expertise, to build credibility.

