

Future Consumer 2028

WGSN

WGSN ensures the world's leading
brands create the exact products that
tomorrow's consumers will buy

The Restorers





The next era of consumer behaviour will be shaped less by demographics and more by emotion. As change and uncertainty become the defining conditions of everyday life, understanding how people feel will become as important as understanding how they spend. Through WGSN's Future Consumer framework and proprietary Emotional Trajectory Index, we decode the emotions shaping behaviour – giving brands the foresight to design products, experiences and strategies for what people will need next.

Clare Varga, VP of Content, WGSN

Introduction

By **Clare Varga**, VP of Content, WGSN

There's no such thing as a 'typical' consumer anymore. By 2028, identity will be increasingly fluid, shaped less by age, income or geography and more by beliefs, emotions and values. Fragmentation is fundamentally rewiring how consumers spend, signal status and seek connection. In this landscape, brands cannot rely on static demographics or short-term trend cycles. They need enduring insight.



WGSN's Future Consumer 2028 forecast provides a strategic compass

In a world defined by constant disruption, shifting behaviours can feel difficult to decode. Yet beneath the noise, core human values remain far more stable than they appear, creating an opportunity for businesses to build with greater confidence.

WGSN's Future Consumer 2028 forecast provides a strategic compass. Built on WGSN's proprietary STEPIC methodology – analysing shifts across Society, Technology, Environment, Politics, Industry and Creativity – it identifies four enduring, IP-owned personas: The Restorers, The Ascendants, The Keepers and The Challengers. These evolving archetypes are grounded in long-term values and behaviours, decoding what people will buy, believe and belong to next.

This white paper focuses exclusively on one of these personas: The Restorers.

In an era defined by overstimulation, uncertainty and acceleration, The Restorers are reclaiming balance. They are responding to climate anxiety, digital saturation, political tension and cultural noise not with withdrawal, but with intention. For them, resilience is emotional as much as practical. Status is expressed through wellbeing and discernment. Connection is found in tactility, stillness and spaces that restore rather than rush.

To discover all four consumer personas and the six emotions set to define 2028, **request a demo with a WGSN expert.**

The WGSN Methodology

Macro Trends

WGSN's global macro trends are the foundation of all our forecasts. They are derived from a rigorous process of data consultation and triangulation.

Data Sources: We consult **2,800 third-party global data sources**.

Source Types: Institutional, NGO and media sources.

Process: Data from these disparate sources is **triangulated** to deliver overarching global macro trends and signals that underpin all WGSN forecasts.

Consumer Behaviour and Lifestyle Trends

Our long-term consumer forecasts are powered by a unique, proprietary framework designed to capture the complexity of evolving consumer landscapes.

Framework: WGSN uses its **proprietary trademarked framework, STEPIC**.

Data Blend: STEPIC utilizes a unique blend of **quant and qualitative data points** across its six pillars.

Output: This framework delivers our industry-agnostic **long-term consumer forecasts**.

Product Forecasts

Product forecasts are generated through the blending of five key proprietary data feeds and validated by our expert team to ensure high accuracy and market relevance.

Proprietary Data Feeds

Social: Unique social signal map tracking of 100k+ posts per month across multiple social media platforms.

Sentiment: Bespoke consumer surveys and a 30m+ consumer clickstream panel.

Search: 5+ years of data across digital marketplaces, social and search engines merged into unique Search Index.

Shelf: 300m+ SKUs tracked daily for 10k+ brands across 200+ retailers globally.

Shows: Tagging with proprietary taxonomy of 5m+ catwalk, tradeshow and street style images from 25 years.

Macro Trends

+

Consumer Behaviour and Lifestyle Trends

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Product Forecasts

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Accuracy and Validation

Algorithm Evaluation:

Our data scientists constantly evaluate our algorithms to tailor for each industry we serve and different market timelines.

Accuracy:

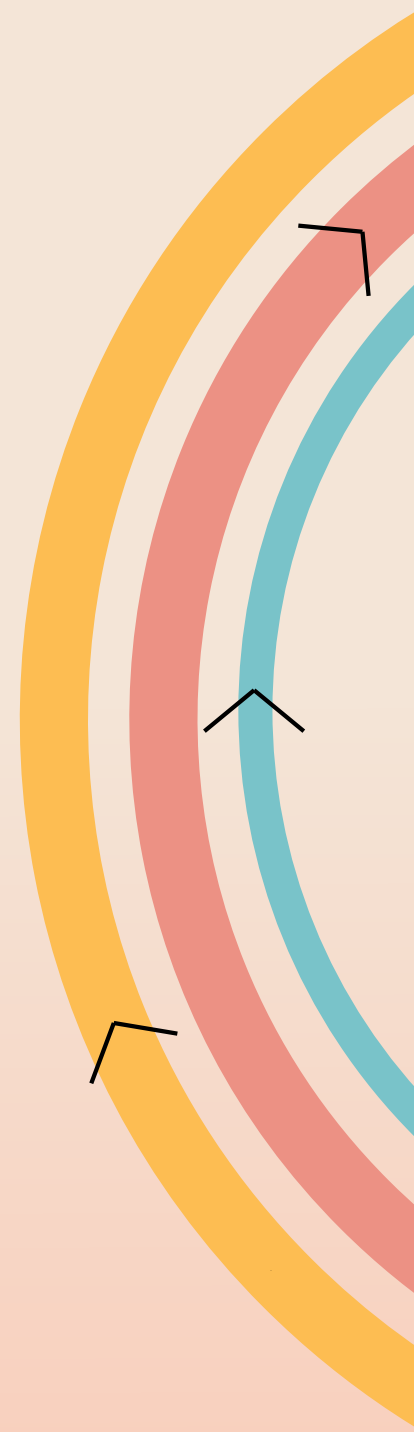
This process delivers **93% accuracy** across the specific TrendCurve forecasts.

Expert Review:

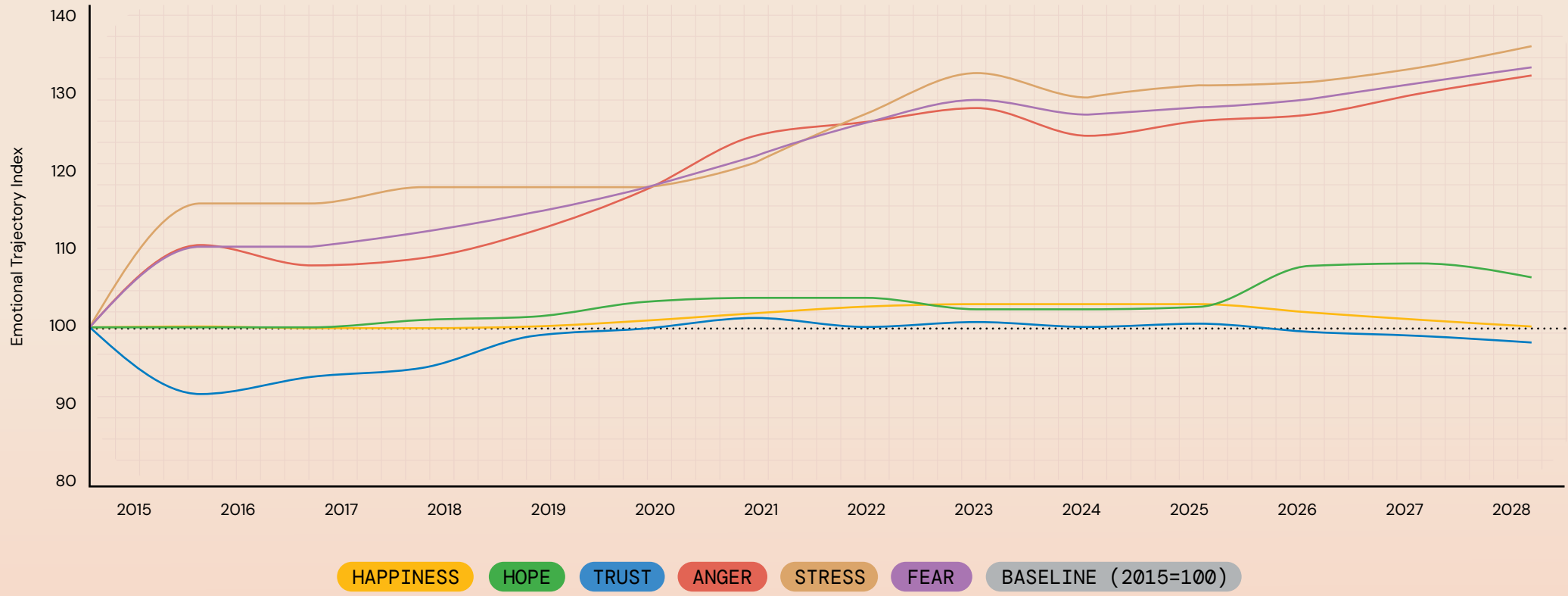
We use an **'analyst in the loop' system** to sense-check these forecasts.

Analysis:

Our **250+ industry experts** layer recommendations and analysis to make these forecasts actionable and nuanced for different job roles and markets.



The WGSN Emotional Trajectory Index 2028



The WGSN Emotional Trajectory Index tracks how global emotions are shifting and what this means for brands through to 2028. Spanning 150+ countries, it combines quantitative data from the World Happiness Report, Edelman Trust Barometer and Gallup Global Emotions with WGSN's proprietary Macro Forecast intelligence to map emotional change over time.

The index measures six core emotions – happiness, trust, hope, anger, stress and fear – analysing their trajectories against historical patterns and triangulating them with thousands of foresight signals captured by WGSN's global network of experts. This blend of data and cultural insight ensures both statistical rigour and emotional intelligence.

Since 2015, stress, fear and anger have surged, while happiness and trust have plateaued. Hope is the only emotion showing consistent growth, signalling emerging resilience as consumers seek balance, meaning and connection in an increasingly volatile world.

The Restorers

Calm and sensory-aware, The Restorers are reclaiming balance and authenticity in a world that feels accelerated and overstimulated. Their attention will be won by brands that slow time, honour craft, and restore a sense of presence.

The Restorers are on a mission to recharge their batteries and reclaim their peace and balance in a world that won't switch off. They are redefining what it means to live well and flourish by stepping back from the pressures of performance, and stepping into the pleasures of simple living, mindful rituals and richer, deeper connections with people and the planet. Their consumption is both emotional and ethical: they buy less but better, support local economies and choose brands that respect their pace and boundaries. They are drawn to tangible, tactile products and experiences that bear the mark of the maker more than the machine. These consumers are not anti-tech; rather, they prefer human-focused tech that supports their quest for peace, stillness and a better quality of life – one that feels whole, not full.

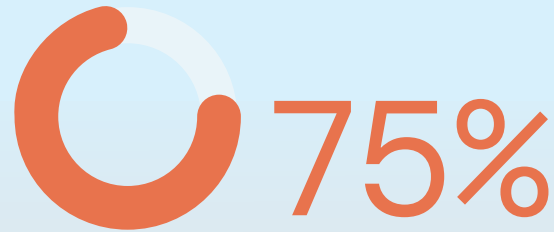
WGSN's Future Consumer framework is unique to WGSN alone, designed to help businesses move from observation to action. By decoding the enduring beliefs behind consumer behaviour, we equip brands to innovate with precision, localise with meaning and plan with foresight.

In a fragmented future, agility and empathy will determine whether brands shape change or are shaped by it. The Restorers offer a clear opportunity: design for emotional restoration, build for resilience, and create experiences that return value to people's lives, not just take their attention.



Proof Points

LATAM consumers who would prefer to buy from local brands, as long as quality and price hold up



Trust grows at a local level. In addition to [Bain & Company's](#) LATAM data, the [2025 Edelman Trust Barometer](#) found that **trust in brands with a domestic HQ outpaced foreign counterparts by an average of 15 points globally**

Young people who would prefer to grow up in a world without the internet



In a UK survey of 1,293 people aged 16 to 21 by the [BSI](#) (British Standards Institution), **50% said a social media curfew would improve their lives**, and 68% said they felt worse about themselves after spending time online



of US Gen Z report feeling "almost always stressed," significantly higher than other generations ([McKinsey](#))

7 Million

Around 7 million UK adults are now living below the "happiness poverty line," with wellbeing declining year-on-year ([World Wellbeing Movement](#))



The Restorers

Strategies

Design for quietude:

Create stillness via simplicity and sensory reduction, offering designs that champion visual silence, honest materials and mindfulness.

Enable sensorial resetting:

For The Restorers, touch is their technology for regulating the nervous system, so put it at the forefront of your design mission.

Show the human touch:

Highlight imperfections as signs of honesty in an automated world.

Build meaning locally:

The Restorers find richness in proximity, connection and ritual, so reach them via products and experiences that are local and shared.

Flourishing

Understanding The Restorers means understanding the emotional forces shaping 2028. Fragmented identities are redefining belonging. AI and creator tools are enabling people to design and redesign how they show up. Climate disruption is turning resilience into both an identity and a survival strategy. Political polarisation is strengthening value-led communities, while trust in industry now depends on transparency and lived ethics. Creativity is shifting from escapism to agency and joy.

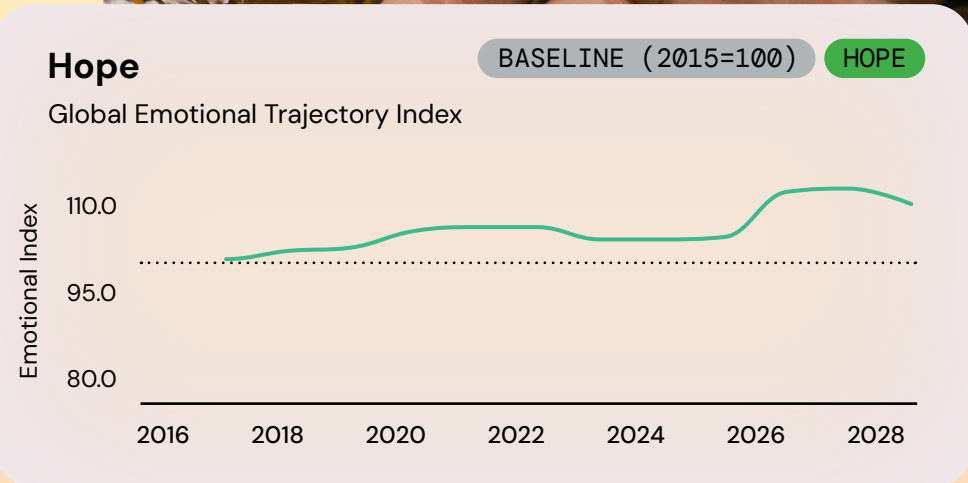
The Restorers sit at the intersection of these shifts. Guided by balance, care, intentionality and integrity, they seek sensory tranquillity in a hyper-digital world. They prioritise care-led innovation over excess, and favour more tactile and meaningful experiences.



Flourishing

Flourishing is most closely aligned with The Restorers, who pursue growth and optimism through small, meaningful actions and community support. As hope becomes an increasingly vital emotion, success will be found in what feels personal, practical and possible. Flourishing reframes achievement as an internal mindset rather than an external metric – a glass-half-full acceptance of progress, however imperfect.

Research reinforces this shift. A 2024 [PwC study](#) found that 28% of employees who set modest short-term goals were more likely to achieve broader performance targets and report greater happiness at work. Gallup's five-year [Global Flourishing Study](#) similarly found that regular participation in group activities improves life satisfaction. In a world of chronic uncertainty, brands that champion incremental wins, social wellbeing and steady progress will enable consumers to thrive, not just survive, and build resilience and long-term growth in the process.



8.47
Indonesia

8.19
Mexico

8.11
Philippines

Highest scores in the Global Flourishing Study, 2022-2024

Gallup's [Global Flourishing Study](#) found **the wealth of a nation does not correlate with its level of flourishing**, with the top three scores being middle-income countries, while high-income countries such as the US (7.18), UK (6.88) and Japan (5.93) scored markedly lower



Flourishing

Strategies

Make abstract goals feel personal, possible and enjoyable:

Help people break big challenges into small steps, and make the process fun through gamified formats. Embed 'purpose pathways' into products and services to clearly link daily actions with their larger impact.

Shift marketing from aspiration to affirmation:

Rebalance aspirational marketing with more relatable messages that acknowledge challenges – and the steps to overcome them – as essential building blocks of progress.

Cultivate communities for personal growth:

Create spaces where people can connect around shared goals, as turning customers into cheerleaders for each other's growth multiplies hope and happiness.

Provide continuity and long-term support:

Create products and experiences that evolve with customers over time, offering consistent support at every step of their journey. Prioritise multi-generational designs that meet the needs of all age groups.

Fashion

What will The Restorers expect from fashion brands?



Sara Maggioni, *Head of Womenswear, WGSN Fashion:*

“As technological acceleration reshapes the industry, The Restorers will look to fashion brands that slow the pace while embracing progress with intention. They will value innovation that improves fit, reduces waste, enables personalisation and builds transparency – yet designs and approaches that remain distinctly human will matter most.

“Their wardrobes will be edited and purposeful: buying less but better, prioritising durability, repairability and pieces that gain character over time. But in an oversaturated market, timelessness alone will not suffice – only brands that demonstrate provenance and long-term value will earn their trust. Fashion must feel grounding, not performative.

“With logging off increasingly becoming the ultimate luxury, they will also gravitate towards collections that prioritise restoration and low-pressure joy. Tactile fabrics, natural fibres, softened silhouettes and artisanal finishes will bring sensorial comfort, while nuanced nostalgia and subtle signs of imperfection signal authenticity and care.

“Above all for this cohort, fashion must restore energy rather than extract it – returning a sense of balance, comfort and quiet confidence in place of noise and excess.”



Beauty

What will The Restorers expect from beauty brands?



Sienna Piccioni, *Director, WGSN Beauty*:

“The Restorers use beauty and wellness to regulate their nervous systems and carve out pockets of quiet in a world that won’t switch off. They turn to neurocosmetics, sensorial formulations and tactile habits that ground the mind and body. Haptic-led packaging and more deliberate routines help them recentre.

“Their care routines prioritise simple pleasures over outcomes. Products applied with intention and layered scent rituals become mindful practices. They seek formulations anchored in tranquillity, natural ingredients, soft textures and visual stillness. ‘Anti-noisy’ beauty and wellness tech that supports stillness, not stimulation, will strengthen their trust. Brands must engineer peace to meet this consumer’s needs.

“The Restorers value craft and provenance. They will favour beauty brands that demonstrate care through the use of durable materials, local sourcing and low-impact processes, aligning with their desire for a more intentional, conscious way of living.”



Food & Drink

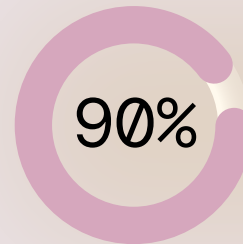
What will The Restorers expect from food and drink brands?



Jennifer Creevy, *Director, WGSN Food & Drink:*

“The Restorers are on a mission to reclaim their energy and optimism through mindful pleasure, restorative rest, intentional joy and nourishing, deep connections. They’re redefining wellness and creating new self-care moments, from innovative hydration rituals to intimate home hosting occasions that prioritise indulgence and time with loved ones. They will seek products capable of flexing in response to mood, need or moment. This could range from drink packs with graduating ABV levels or sips designed to support outcomes like stress relief, to snacks or meals that dip into a range of emerging lifestyle occasions or needs (think daytime raves, new wind-down routines or at-home date nights).

“Connection is key for Restorers, and they will look for brands and products that reinvent sharing in playful ways, helping them nurture offline, real-world experiences, whether for family, friends or communities they have met online.”



Percentage of US Gen Z respondents who enjoy communal tables

Communal dining is on the rise, particularly among Gen Z. **63% of respondents feel that communal tables are great for meeting new people**, with half saying they’ve had interesting conversations with someone they otherwise wouldn’t have spoken to while dining with strangers (Resy, survey of 1,000 US adults)

Interiors

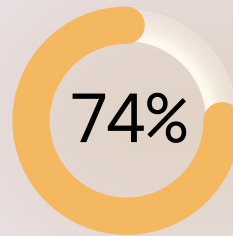
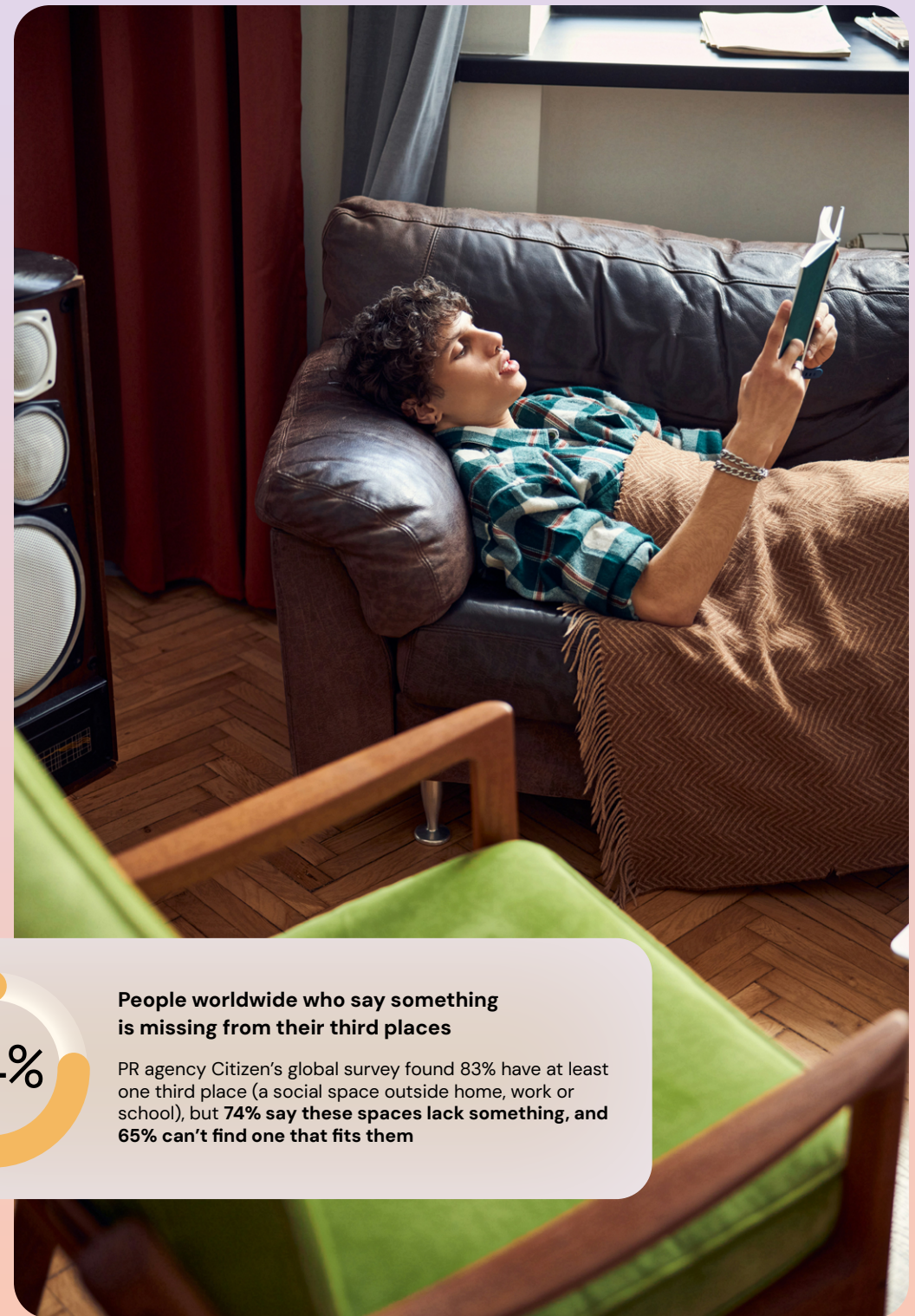
What will The Restorers expect from interiors brands?



Gemma Riberti, *Director, WGSN Interiors:*

“The Restorers are redefining living well through intention. Interiors should be designed for pause, with lounge-led layouts, ritual-focused spaces and peaceful CMF: softened light, blurred finishes and tactile materials that foster quietude. Memory, nostalgia and new spirituality add meaning, while human-centred spaces enhance a serene atmosphere and nourishment rather than noise.

“Sensorial design is essential. Tactile materials and textures, layered fragrances, immersive soundscapes and acoustic innovations enable a sensory reset and emotional balance. When carrying out our proprietary trend surfacing, we noted that topics like ‘space feel’, ‘home feel’ and ‘atmosphere space’ are consistently rising, which highlights the strong focus for consumers on how the space feels beyond how it looks. At the same time, spaces must enable real-world connection: 74% say their third spaces are lacking something, and 65% can’t find one that feels right ([Citizen](#)), signalling demand for more intentional, community-driven environments to complement the role played by the home. For The Restorers, interiors must act as both sanctuary and social glue, helping people reconnect, rebalance and flourish.”



People worldwide who say something is missing from their third places

PR agency Citizen’s global survey found 83% have at least one third place (a social space outside home, work or school), but **74% say these spaces lack something, and 65% can’t find one that fits them**

Consumer Tech

What will The Restorers expect from consumer tech brands?

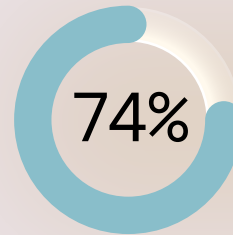


Lisa Yong, Director, WGSN Consumer Tech:

“When it comes to technology, The Restorers want to regain their equilibrium by restoring presence via intentional pursuits. In search of a tech-life balance, they are redefining what it means to live well by stepping back from the pressures of constant optimisation and stepping into the pleasures of more mindful living. They want a calibrated approach to using tech by balancing convenience with more purposeful experiences.

“Digital minimalism must move beyond aesthetics to become structural. This means eliminating interface excess, embedding tools that encourage healthier screen habits, and refining design down to what is truly essential. ‘Slow tech’ and care-led systems create experiences that replenish attention rather than extract it.

“Spanning multiple generations, The Restorers are seeking the modern trifecta of money, meaning and wellbeing. They demand technology that helps them do this, by restoring their equilibrium instead of draining it.”



Percentage of the global workforce comprising Gen Z and Millennials by 2030

Money, meaning and wellbeing are interconnected. These generations of workers are not only seeking jobs but also careers with the right balance, including this ‘trifecta’ (Deloitte/Forrester)

Sports & Outdoor

What will The Restorers expect from sports and outdoor brands?



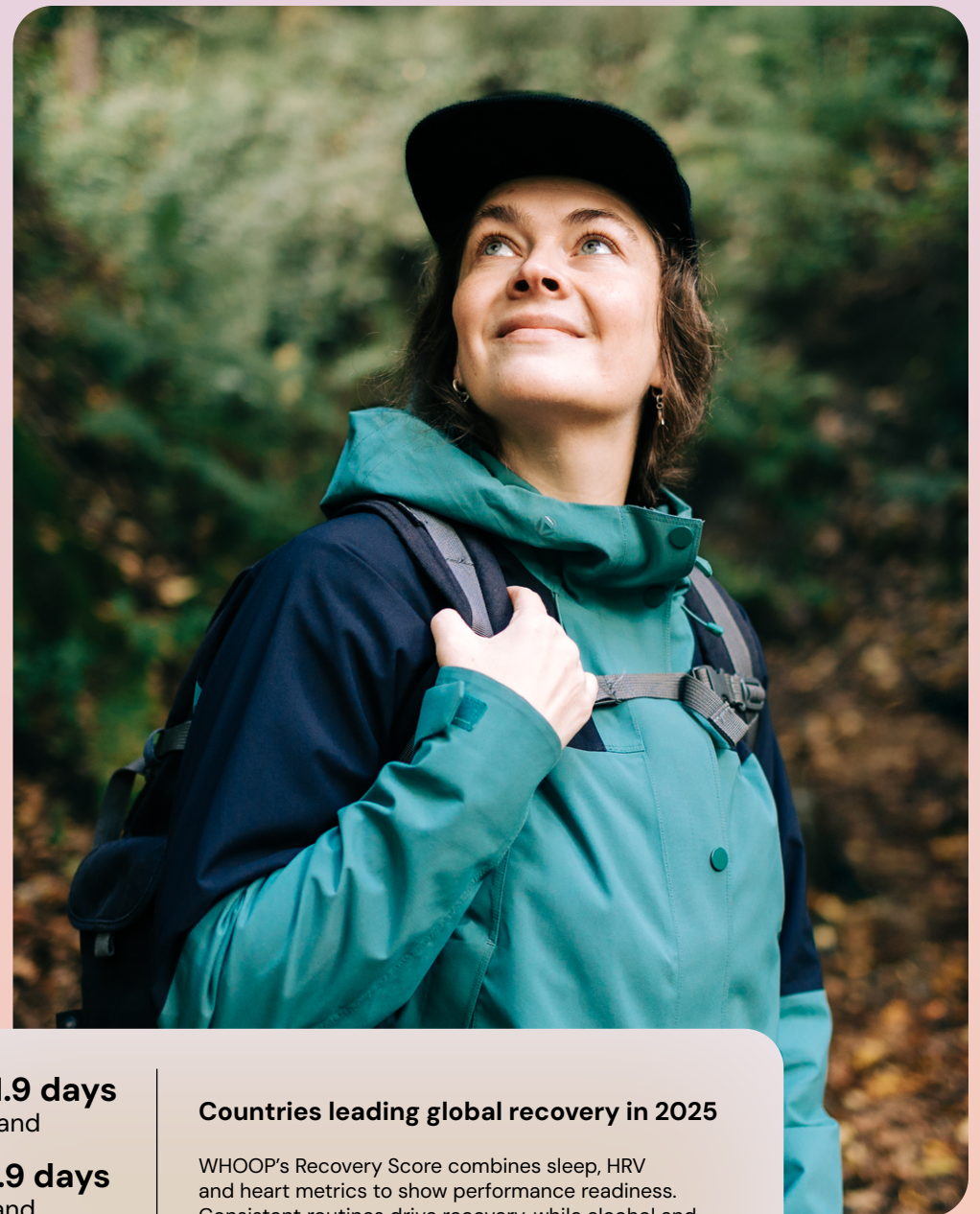
Jon Takao, Director, WGSN Sports & Outdoor:

“In an always-on world, sports and outdoor brands must help The Restorers step away from peak optimisation and move towards a more gentle, sustainable form of living. Energised by sensory-steadying activities such as birding, land snorkelling and forest bathing, they seek clarity through intentional pacing, presence and immersion.

“For Restorers, performance is measured by how movement feels, not how far or fast they go. They invest in fewer, better products – adaptable, tactile and designed to deepen connection with nature. Brands should prioritise tranquillity through simplicity, using honest materials and pared-back forms to create calm.

“Durability, repairability and transparent ethics are essential, with products expected to age well and reflect care and provenance. Technology must remain ambient and human-centred, supporting recovery and intuitive use without intrusion.

“Beyond products, Restorers value local, community-led experiences that foster meaningful connection – from repair workshops to guided immersions. Ultimately, they seek brands that enable them to slow down, restore balance and reconnect, supporting long-term wellbeing.”



101.9 days
Finland

96.9 days
Ireland

95.7 days
Sweden

Countries leading global recovery in 2025

WHOOP's Recovery Score combines sleep, HRV and heart metrics to show performance readiness. Consistent routines drive recovery, while alcohol and stress hinder it. Finland leads globally, proving recovery consistency enables sustainable strain and long-term performance (WHOOP 2025 Year in Review)

Thought Starters



1 Are your consumer segments built for the future or the past?

Traditional demographic segmentation is becoming less useful in a world where identity is fluid, and behaviour is shaped by beliefs, emotions and values. How might your strategy change if you organised around mindsets and motivations rather than age, income or geography?

2 Are you designing products for stimulation when consumers increasingly seek restoration?

For decades, brands have competed by adding more: more features, more content, more noise. But emerging consumers like The Restorers are actively filtering and slowing their worlds. What would innovation look like if it focused on reducing friction, overload and decision fatigue?

3 Are you measuring consumer value in the wrong way?

As consumers prioritise wellbeing, longevity and intentional living, traditional indicators of value – volume, frequency and speed of purchase – may become less relevant. How should brands rethink value creation in a world where people increasingly want to buy less, but better?

4 Are you solving functional needs while missing emotional ones?

Product innovation often focuses on performance, convenience and efficiency, but the next wave of opportunity may lie in helping people feel more restful, connected and in control. How can brands design experiences that support emotional wellbeing, not just functional outcomes?

About WGSN

Holistic consumer foresight for a future-ready roadmap.

WGSN is trusted by the world's most successful brands to deliver consumer intelligence, trend foresight and product direction.

We decode how consumers live, what they value, and how their needs evolve across multiple time horizons to reveal changing purchase motivations, emerging occasions and future demand patterns across fashion, beauty, lifestyle and beyond.

Our comprehensive forecasting powers business strategies, with the executional detail to drive product and go-to-market success. We integrate deep domain knowledge with unmatched proprietary data resources and on-the-ground research so you can eliminate uncertainty: now, next and in the future.

Together, we create tomorrow.

Let's talk. Email contactus@wgsn.com to see how we can future-proof your business today.

