

The speed of culture is moving faster than our sun.

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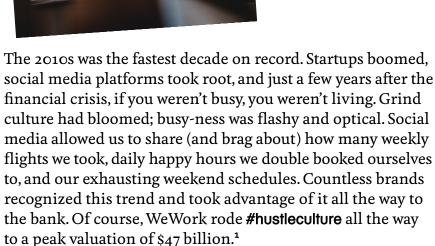


INTRODUCTION

The world used to operate on the assumption that the busier you are, the more imp_{Or}



n t y o u a

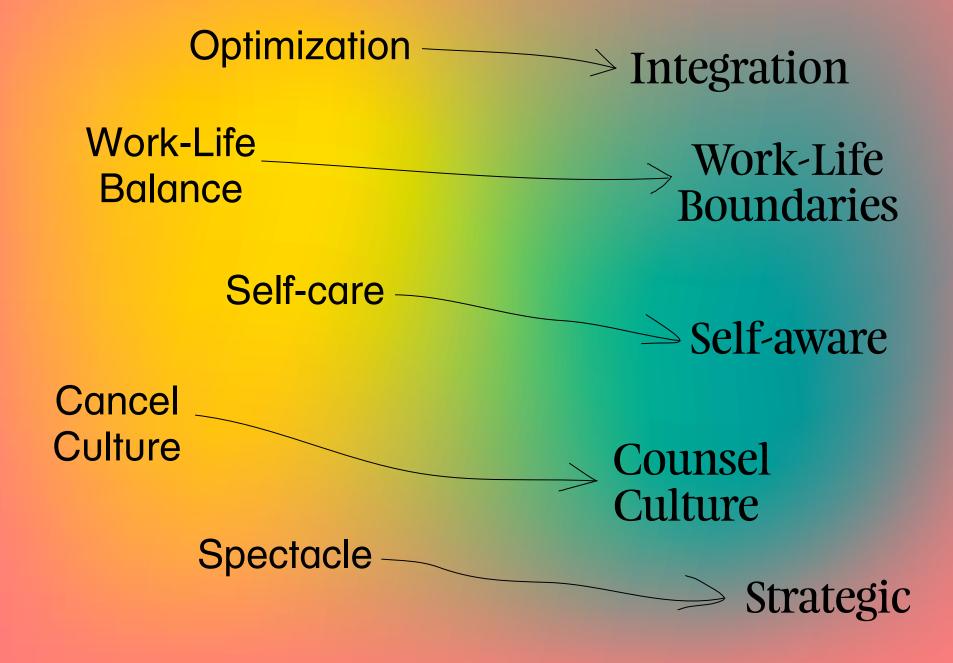




Then 2020 happened. Australia burned, it felt like wwiII was imminent, and then Covid-19 hit. Amid all this chaos, the rat race was paused, and many of us have used that idle time for reflection and introspection: revisiting life goals, revising old habits, renewing relationships, and embracing "slow living"—whether by choice or by consequence. Personal progress, at your own pace and on your own terms, has become the new paradigm. To be conspicuously busy today is to show you are behind the times.

Welcome to culture in chaos.

PARADIGM SHIFTS



Instant gratification

Efficiency as currency

Always available, always on

Striving for perfection

Work harder, buy more

Success-oriented

Going out



Self-reflection

Values in action

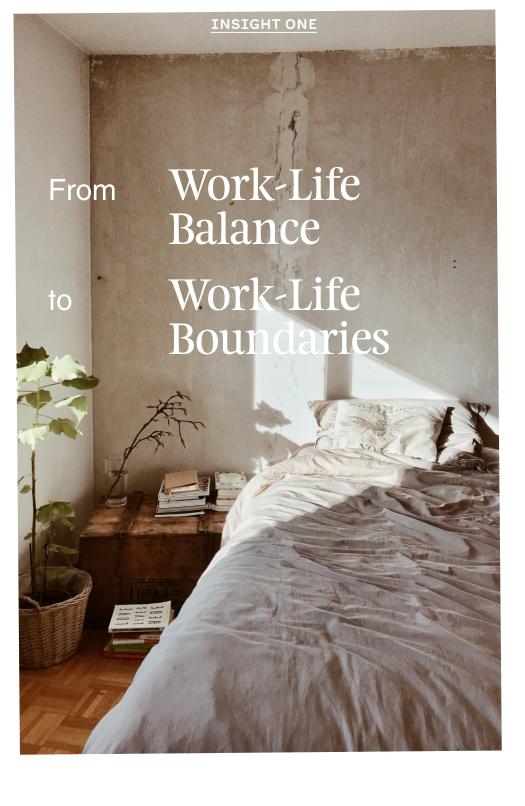
Space for silence

Progress over productivity

Appreciate what you have

Skills-oriented

Going within



Work-life balance was a myth, anyway.

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As work and life have collapsed into the same space (namely, our living rooms), personalized boundaries are the new balance. Individuals have adopted new rituals to divide work



and play, screen time and "me" time, and have prioritized **personal autonomy** over professional acceleration. (And this isn't changing back anytime soon: A survey of hiring managers by the global freelancing platform Upwork found that one-fifth of the workforce could be entirely remote after the pandemic.)²

With more idle time, urban dwellers continue to adopt a "new domesticity": soothing-but-useful, analog activities like pickling, knitting, baking from scratch, family crafts, and avocado

dye. There was an 80% increase in google searches for 'diy' as

compared to last year, proving that people are hungry for these kinds of hands-on activities.³ These subtle acts of creativity not only provide a means to cope, but offer a feeling of self-sufficiency in times of scarcity.

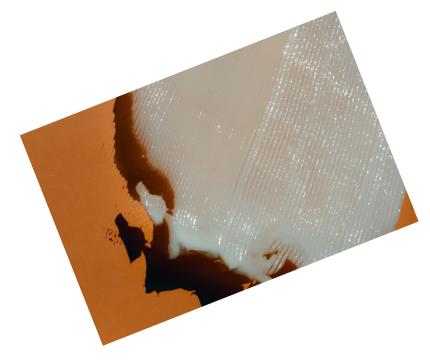


6am NOW **BEFORE** Wake up 6am to the sun Wake up, hit rising, go back snooze. Repeat to sleep until 7:30 am three times. 8:30 am 7am 7am. Make pour 8:30 am Drive to gym, half-listen to Shower at the over coffee at Tell yourself The Daily sped up to 1.5x avm and straight to stop reading home, read the (Annoying, but efficient). the news, take the to the office. news. Consider dog for a quick organizing walk with your bookshelves by 9 am First meeting of the 9am color. partner. day, ate a granola First call bar on the way in of the day, 1pm the door, was meh. still in PJs How is it from waist 10 am down. Ipm? Cook 4pm breakfast and Last meetina do dishes. Search of the day just 11am for puzzles on wrapped, try to Three Amazon. get some work hours devoted done. to deep work or cold emails at the kitchen 6pm Starving. Order table. 2pm Caviar so that it Lunchtime **TAKEAWAY** and call Mom arrives at home (or college ex if the same time Now that we've developed 4pm you're single). you do. new routines, our adherence What is to it, or ignorance of it is a direct time? 5pm product of our moods. As daily Wrap last 7pm Pat self on back for life blends into one huge screenmeeting of the amazing Caviar skills. day, get lost in fest, brands must innovate to eat dinner scrolling Tik Tok before offer healthy boundaries and 8pm 7pm it's banned. Force Instagram. Dinner with rituals for their customers to your partner. Set vourself out appreciate. candles for a of post-dinner mq8 Twitter binge mood change. Prep for early and draw a meetings 9 pm bath. in AM while Put on a true half-watching crime doc to Netflix. remind yourself 11pm Finally get in bed, it could be 12_{am} need to be up by 6am worse! In bed tomorrow. 12am NOTE: Eliminate alone doomscrolling, Must stop scrolling don't need to be time and productivity Instagram. up until 10am if you have kids. Time to sleep.

tomorrow.

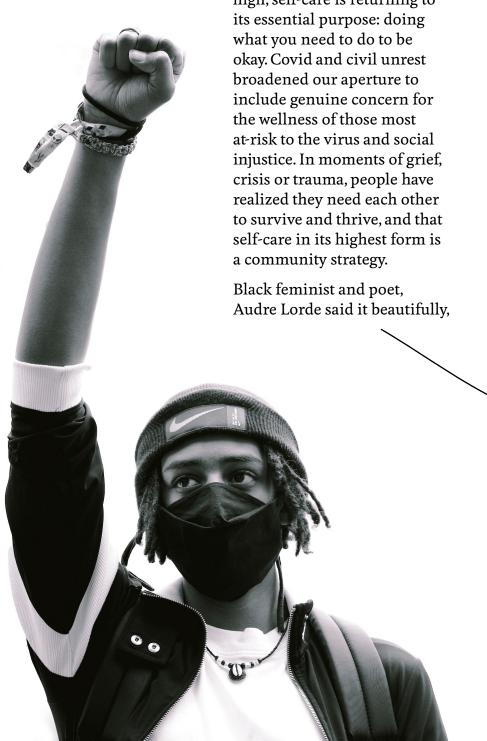
INSIGHT ONE





Over the years, the phenomenon of self-care has morphed into **self-discipline** for the 2%: committing to ten-step skincare routines, juicing celery to maximize energy, food-restricting our way into "well-being", and purchasing vagina candles. Even if you didn't subscribe to Goop, the notion of self-care at least nudged the rest of us into putting our phones down, staying present, and getting more sleep. Although seemingly beneficial, the end goal of our self-care rituals was ultimately part of a vicious cycle: to become more high-functioning and productive. Like its cousin 'work-life balance', the self-care movement was inseparably tied to our own **personal optimization**,

our own **personal optimization** often disguised in zen packaging.



INSIGHT TWO

With anxiety at an all-time high, self-care is returning to its essential purpose: doing what you need to do to be okay. Covid and civil unrest broadened our aperture to include genuine concern for the wellness of those most at-risk to the virus and social injustice. In moments of grief, crisis or trauma, people have realized they need each other to survive and thrive, and that self-care in its highest form is a community strategy.

Black feminist and poet,
Audre Lorde said it beautifully,

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

TAKEAWAY: Self-care and care for the community have become interconnected. Businesses should acknowledge and support the micro-communities their consumers belong to. Pride and Black History Month are not enough.

From Cancel Culture

to Counsel Culture

Cancel culture isn't working.

In theory, 'cancelling' is supposed to hold people accountable for problematic behavior. In practice, this rarely happens. Catalyzed by movements like Sharon Chuter's Pull Up For Change, Aurora James' Fifteen Percent Pledge and The Black in Fashion Council, we're witnessing an evolution towards counsel culture, where people are creating space for forgiveness, normalizing change of mind, and enacting new paradigms.

Individuals are seeing themselves, public figures, and brands as human, capable of mistake and atonement. This is so much so, that even the call-out queens themselves, @dietprada, were called out. The crux of counsel culture is responding to mistakes not for optics, but to recognize and repair harm caused. Brands that show compassion, prioritizing pain over privilege, will be leaders in a time where truth creates trust.

TAKEAWAY: With consumers smart to virtuesignalling, gone are the days of cutting corners or spinning facts. Corporations big and small are expected to rebuild trust through genuine empathy backed by timely action.

COMPANY VS. BRAND

Traditionally we've thought of these things as separate. We've approached growing our companies separately from growing our brands.



A system of measurable decisions:

Supply chain
Company culture
Employee diversity
Carbon footprint
Shareholders



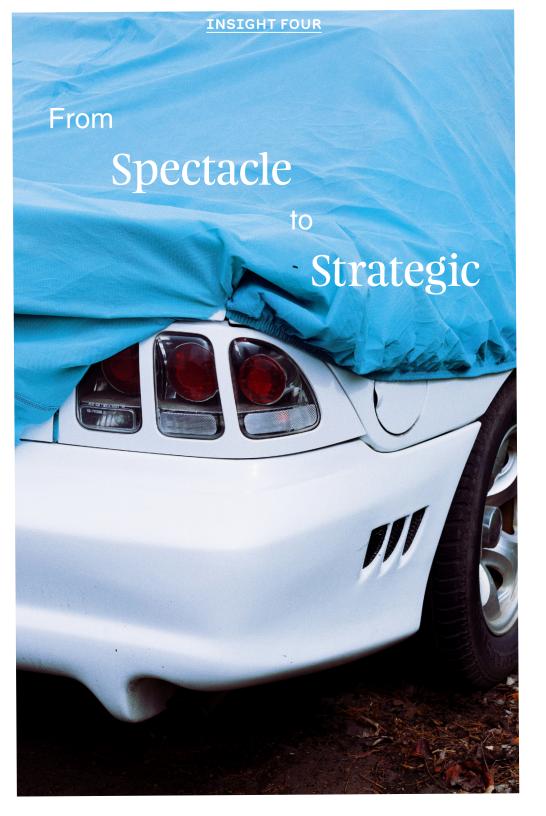
A collection of intangible concepts:

Emotion
Image
Stories
Desires
Truths



A brand is the public
face of a company, and what
is a company but a group of people?
The way a product or service is perceived is
no longer separate from the way the company
that produced it operates. In an age of
accountability, a company and brand must
move in lockstep. There's no way
around this.





Our relationship to consumption, celebrity, and society is changing.

In The Society of the Spectacle, a 1967 work of philosophy, critical theorist Guy Debord describes the influence of ads on social life as, "the decline of being into having, and having into merely appearing." If he were to see us pre-pandemic, Debord would no doubt find the rise of social media as his Black Mirror finale, considering much of our waking time was devoted to documenting our every moment, spilling our feelings on Facebook, and buying the latest gadget. In order to keep up, consumption became status and culture felt like homework.

As the events of 2020 stacked up, we started to unsubscribe from mass culture and societal expectations. Without the pressure to be "seen" and the future in flux, those who need to or can afford to are cutting the cord to make their own calculated life decisions: exiting big cities, taking gap years, moving in with family, and opting for a nomadic existence. Social distancing requires us all to be more strategic with our futures.

TAKEAWAY: With celebrities fading and leadership waning, we are learning to rely on ourselves. Brands—and who they associate with—need to come from a place of credibility. Influence now is smart and truthful.





NEW MINDSET	MEANING	BRAND APPLICATION
Integration	Values + Actions	Champion progress, not perfection
Work-Life Boundaries	Intention + Rituals	Add value, not annoyance
Self-Aware	Self + Community	Be thoughtful, not transactional
Counsel Culture	Expectations + Reality	Normalize evolution, not ego
Strategic	Instincts + Lifestyle	Offer inspiration, not aspiration

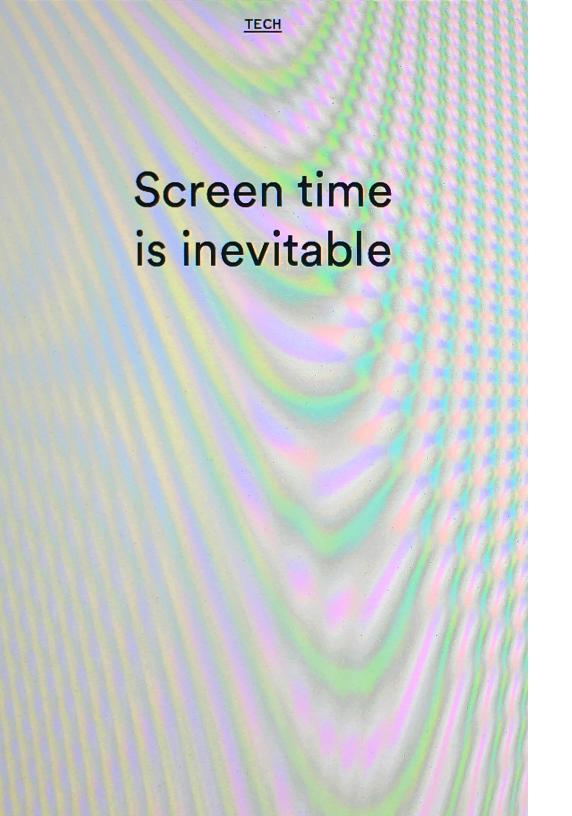
(You might want to screenshot this.)

If humans are evolving, how are industries?

What follows is our take on the future of

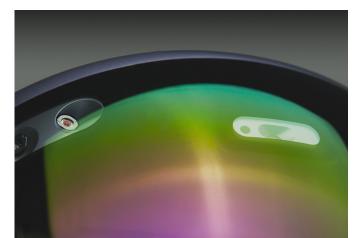






Covid-19 has accelerated the growth of the tech industry, and with it, our love-hate relationship to technology. Record numbers of Americans are working from home, which was made possible only by the very recent and massive adoption of cloud-based enterprise systems across all industries. These same technologies allowed us to lessen interruption in the educational system, with more than a billion students learning remotely across the world during the lockdowns, as well as in the healthcare system, with the democratization of remote medical consultations. Reliable internet is more essential than ever.

Screen time has a new value as it becomes the primary way we connect with the friends and family we can't see in person. We all witnessed the dramatic growth in video conferencing by way of weddings, funerals, and cybersex. Zoom grew so ubiquitous that it's stock is up nearly 250% this year. And, while we can't date as we're used to, Tinder and Hinge have seen huge spikes in users during coronavirus lockdowns (and now people are FaceTiming each other before meeting in person).



QUARANTINE SCHEDULE

[Sleep]
Small screen
Medium screen
Medium screen
Medium screen
Small screen
Medium screen
Medium screen
Medium screen
Big screen
Big screen
Big screen
Small screen

[Sleep]



In our new world, it turns out that screen time is unavoidable. As much as we gripe about misinformation, addiction, filter bubbling, cybercrime and Zoom fatigue, tech allows us to continue to work, learn, socialize, get medical care, and to shop for virtually anything. Our smartphones are portals to an outside world and serve as our only tools for human connection and life admin. Any attempt at reversing our reliance on technology is impractical and unlikely.

Beyond the screen, a growing desire for automatization and digitization of goods, services and interpersonal interactions in an increasingly "contact-free" world suggests a bright future for "the **Internet of Things**" (**IoT**). Broadly defined as physical objects with Internet connectivity (things like networked light bulbs, baby monitors, smart cars, Fitbits and Nest thermostats) the Internet of Things turns physical information into useful, digital data. And in the medical industry, IoT is saving lives, allowing public health workers and doctors to monitor patients under quarantine, even using robots to deliver drugs without risking contact.⁷

In 2018, IoT was made up of of 23 billion connected devices. By 2025, this number could jump to 75 billion.8

PROJECTION

While screen time is inevitable,
balance will be critical. With that, the
future of tech will depend on connectivity and
humanization. Our homes and cities will be smarter, using
data, AI, 5G, and cloud computing to simplify our lives in
ways that will become intuitive and almost imperceptible.
Mark Weiser, Chief Technologist at Xerox PARC in the 1990s,
articulated a powerful vision for technology when he said,
"The most profound technologies are those that
disappear. They weave themselves into the
fabric of everyday life until they are
indistinguishable from it."



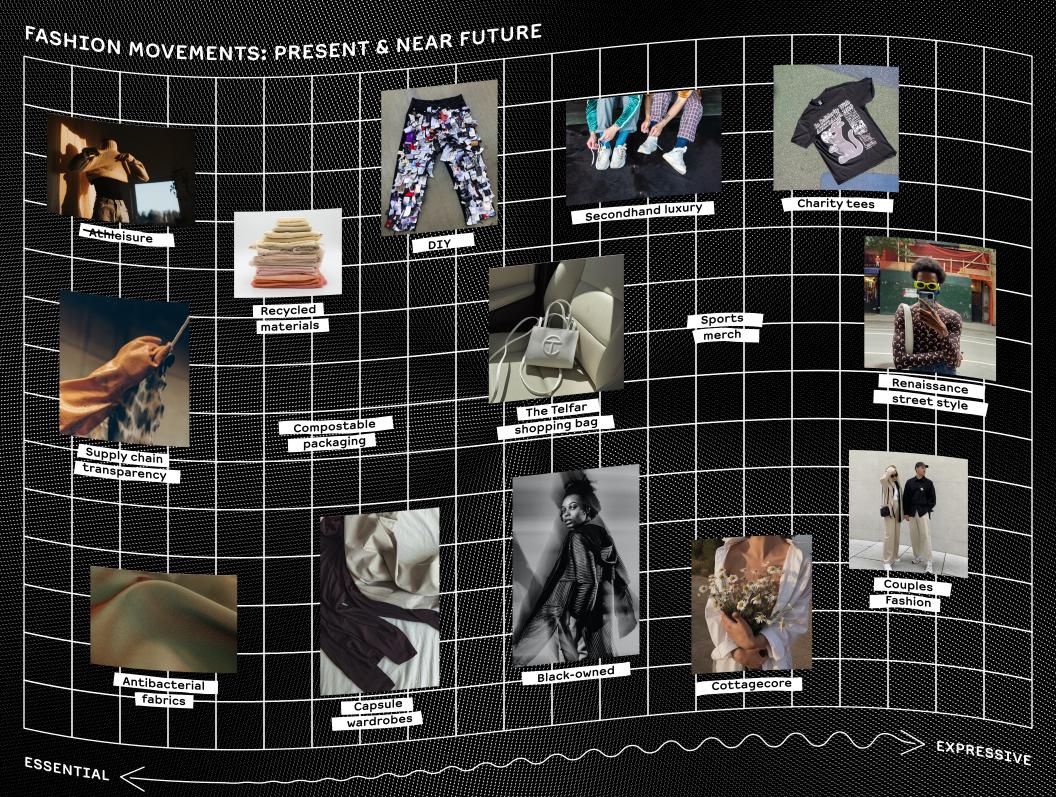


Consumer concern over a brand's environmental impact is growing exponentially, with no sign of slowing down. Over a third of responders in a Boston Consulting Group survey reported they'd switched brands for environmental reasons. Less wasteful models of production, such as offering pre-order (cutting excess inventory), are contributing to the re-design of the fashion industry.





The future of luxury will be centered around craftsmanship, where made-to-last pieces of timeless quality feel like secure investments for consumers. This approach favors a philosophy of collecting rather than accumulating, spurring interest in archival fashion and covetable vintage. By buying less, shopping resale, and prioritizing a brand's values, consumers are ushering in the era of an aesthetic of ethics.





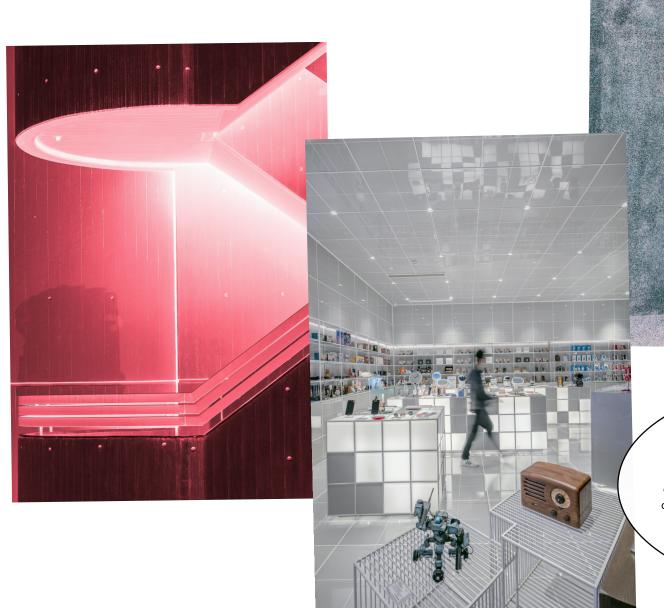
In 2019, Americans spent \$602 billion on online shopping. They also spent \$3.1 trillion in traditional retail stores. So while ecomm has continued to grow at exponential rates, last year it was still just a small slice (14.9%) of the pie. ¹⁵ In the first half of 2020, it has jumped to 18% due to the pandemic keeping people out of physical stores. ¹⁶ But that doesn't spell doom for physical retail. It just means that physical retail needs to evolve to meet the new habits of consumers in a post-pandemic world... but what does that mean?

Covid-19 has forced many physical retail locations to become takeout or pickup windows (walk-by, drive-through, bike-up) while the space inside has become offices. Businesses already with a stake in public space (Apple stores, brasseries, taco trucks) will excel. Community space will be prioritized over architectural appeal (experi-

ential). Everyone prefers an outdoor farmers market over a grocery store. As limited customers are allowed inside, we're seeing the retail experience be **streamlined** and spaced out. Attractive features of outdoor retail will be brought indoors. All staff will concierge to facilitate faster transactions, limited interactions, and provide a **personalized** experience.



Pandemic lockdown has also created extreme stir-craziness in the average consumer. In our new world, we need to escape our homes. We need to get outside every so often. While we won't be able to enjoy experiential retail in groups anymore, the need for immersive shopping experiences hasn't gone away. It just needs to be geared toward the individual.



PROJECTION

The future of retail has two poles:
the community space and the experience.
But they both have one thing in common—an emphasis on personal relationships between customer and shopkeeper. In many ways, the future of retail looks a lot like it's old—timey past. Ye Olde Experiential
Retail Shoppe.

RETRICING AND THE RESIDENCE CONTROL OF THE PARTY OF THE P

In 2019, 1.4 billion people travelled internationally.¹⁷ Tourism made up 10 percent of global GDP in 2019 and was worth almost \$9 trillion.¹⁸ Now, Us air traffic is down 95%, hotels are at 29% occupancy, and an estimated 100 million people in the travel industry are out of work.¹⁹

Covid-19 turned traveling on its head. International is out; situations you can fully control are in. In 2020, the summer vacation has become the summer staycation. Instead of flying to resorts, we're taking road trips, going camping, and staying in local Airbnbs.

In fact, lockdown seemed like it spelled doom for Airbnb in early spring—they laid off almost two thousand people and delayed their IPO. But now they're on track to do more business in 2020 than 2019. From May to June, more people booked more nights through Airbnb in the Us than they did in the same period last year, and 60% of those bookings were for trips within 300 miles of the person's home.²⁰ Airbnb's resurgence has been local.



So why is this the summer of staycations, slow and self-sufficient travel? One word: **anxiety**.

In our globalized world, travel is what enabled the spread of the virus. We now all have major travel anxiety. As a result, the present and future of travel looks a lot different than it used to.

"Travel is synonymous with vacations—and that's fine, but somehow I don't see vacationers as the model for post-pandemic travel," says travel writer Rolf Potts. "A constant source of travel headlines in recent years has been tourist overcrowding in places such as Venice and Bali, and I doubt the desire to go to so-called hot spots or top-ten-list destinations will drive the next wave of travel." Perhaps that's why 46 million Americans plan to take an RV trip in the next 12 months, according to research by the RV Industry Association.²¹

Statistics based on Skift Research September 2020 Travel & Adara Hotel Bookings Surveys

PROJECTION

The future of travel prioritizes
customer safety over all else. Global travel
won't return to what it was until travelers can
have confidence in the whole system. Travel
companies, going forward, simply must offer
more choice and control. The new
travel economy is autonomy.



The future of travel is...



All about flexibility

Near-term uncertainty means customers expect the option to easily modify or cancel their plans. There is no brand loyalty in travel anymore. Customers want to be able to have trust and confidence in their plans. In today's world, that means they need the flexibility to change them.

Bubble-centric

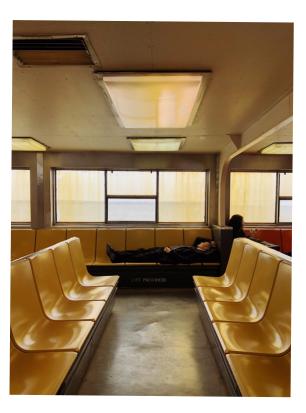
Private travel experiences are on the rise. The new luxury in travel is having more control over spaces and situations. How will we afford private travel? Just like the early days of choosing our 'pods' to socialize with, we will split the costs and logistics of private travel with close friends and family. Less bucket list travel, more bubble travel.



FINAL PROVOCATION

With culture in a continual state of chaos, brands must be brutal in answering, "Am I Valuable?" This sobering question brings a humility that keeps businesses innovating both in tangible and emotional ways.

Your brand, product, service, and marketing should help co-create a world your audience wants to live in. As a customer and human, don't settle for less.



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