

NEXTATLAS TREND REPORT | THE BIG PICTURE ON SUSTAINABILITY

# In the Post-Global Economy, Is Sustainability Still Essential?

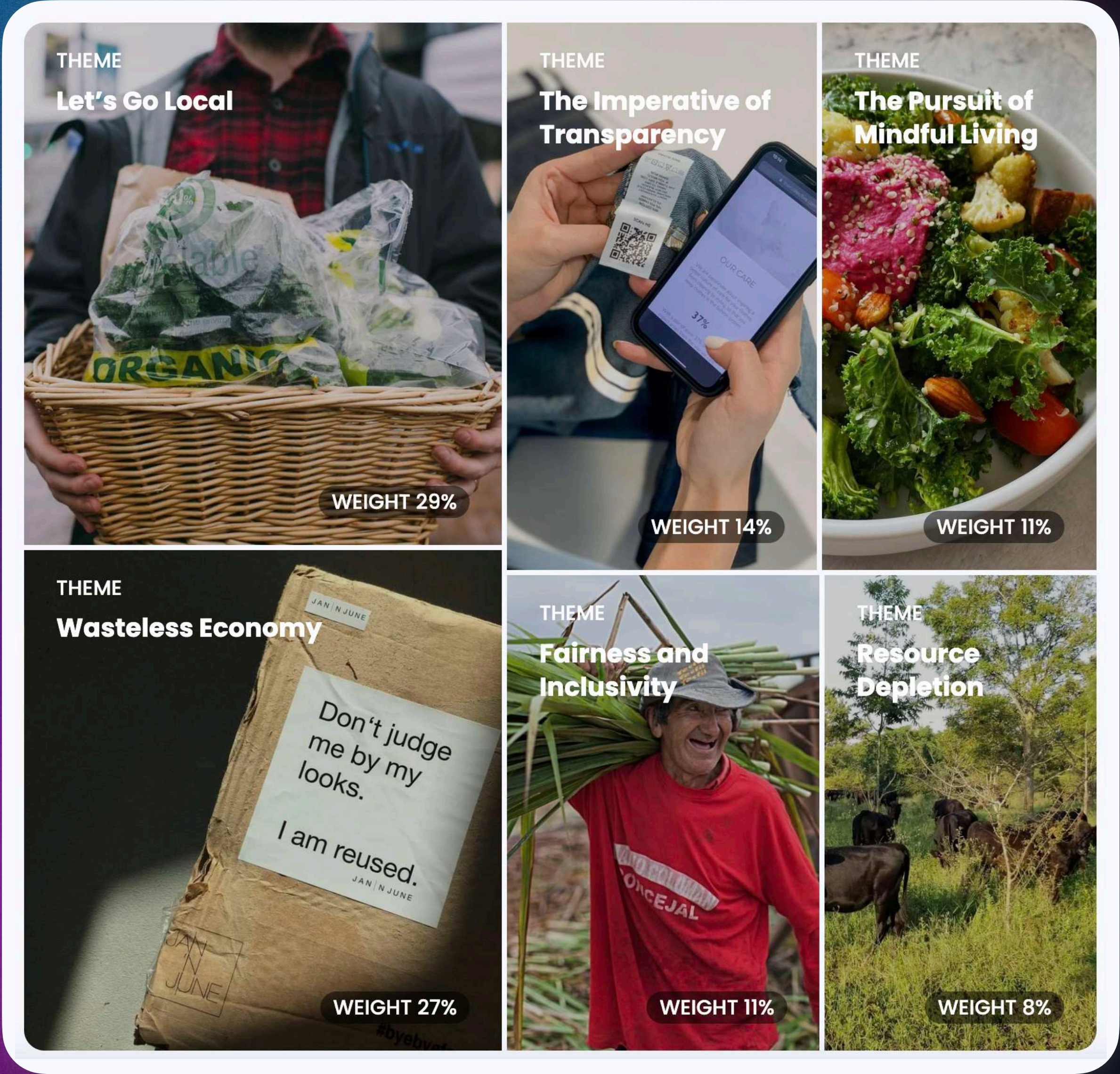




# Nextatlas' Big Picture: Your Guide to Macrotrends and Meaningful Societal Changes

The Big Picture is your go-to hub for understanding the macro-trends shaping our world. Built to help you navigate complex macro-phenomena that seem too big to understand, concepts like sustainability, mental health, and parenting, it distills vast amounts of data into clear, actionable trends and insights.

By cutting through the noise, The Big Picture makes it easy to grasp the giant forces driving societal change, all in one place on the Nextatlas platform.



Distribution of the top sustainability trends on the Nextatlas platform, July 2025



# What If the Next Eco-Crisis Isn't Climate, But Resource Access?

We are entering a new historical phase, marked by profound **geopolitical, economic, and cultural shifts**. The globalised model that has defined the last few decades, based on open markets, international interconnection, and fluid trade, is now showing clear signs of strain. A new logic is emerging, rooted in protectionism and national self-reliance. **Countries are reassessing priorities, strengthening internal supply chains, and seeking new forms of economic autonomy.**

This reversal is impacting every level of the system, not just trade rules. The flow of resources, from energy to raw materials, from consumer goods to essential services, is being redefined. **Economic tensions, exacerbated by trade wars and escalating tariffs, are producing tangible effects on everyday life, directly impacting prices, product availability, and global trust.**







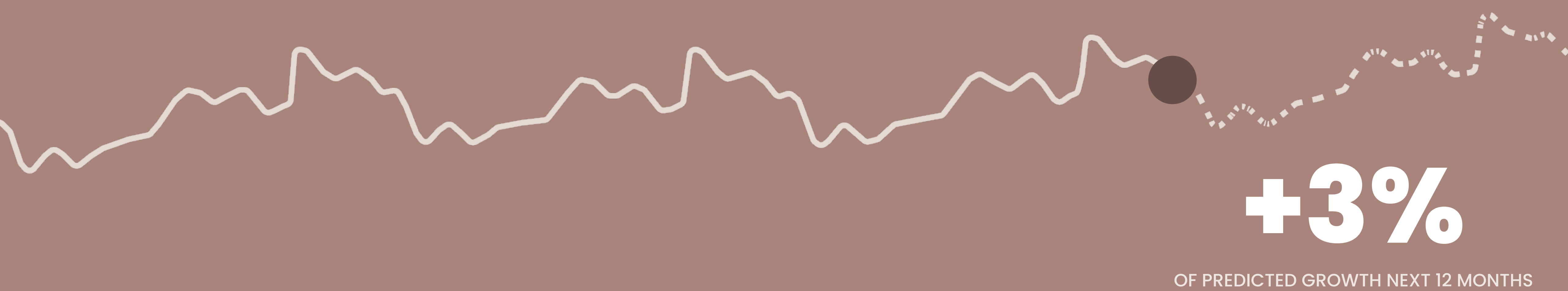
Within this new context, consumer behaviour is evolving. **Price increases are triggering a new kind of eco-awareness:** people are asking more questions about where products come from, what they're truly worth, and how they're made. What was once invisible, such as the origin of materials, labour conditions, and global logistics, is now emerging at the forefront of public discourse. **The act of consumption is becoming more informed, more critical, and increasingly political.**

This maelstrom has led to a transformation of the very concept of sustainability. Trend analysis conducted by Nextatlas using our Big Picture framework reveals a shift in focus: **while interest in climate and individual eco-behaviour is declining, there's a clear rise in conversations around collective responsibility, supply chains, and systemic transparency.** Where environmental risk was once seen as the greatest threat, today, economic instability and access to resources dominate consumer concerns, giving sustainability a different and new urgency.

In this report, we explore two key trends that reflect this turning point: Wasteless Economy and The Imperative of Transparency.

# Price increases are triggering a new kind of eco-awareness





# Wasteless Economy

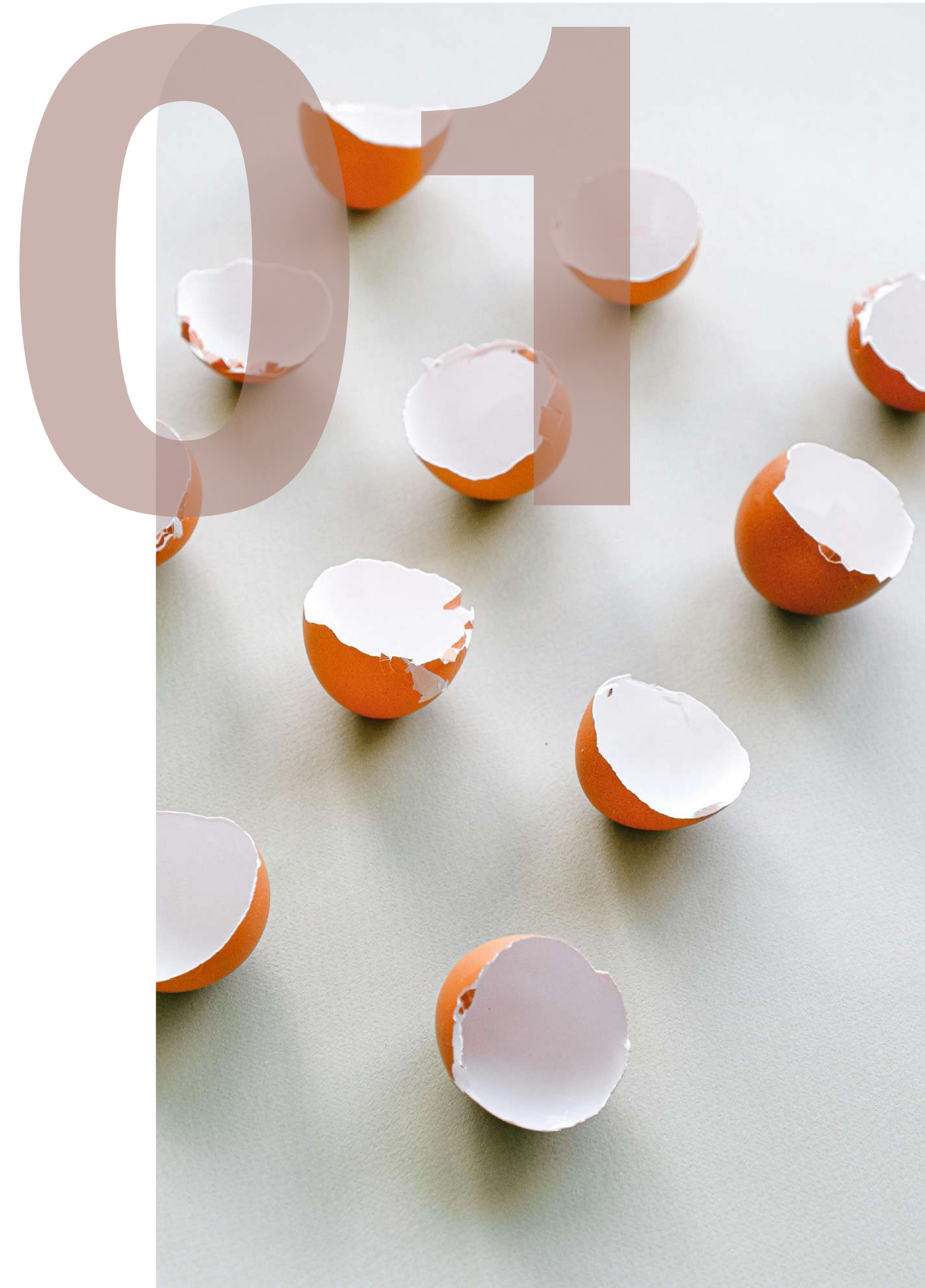
Is the Age of Blind Consumption Over?

2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026

# Wasteless Economy

People are moving away from excess toward a Wasteless Economy, where buying less becomes an intentional, aspirational choice.

In this new context, **value is redefined by longevity, utility, and purpose.** The Wasteless Economy is not about simply rejecting consumption, but about recalibrating needs, where careful selection, durability, and circular practices outweigh constant acquisition.





# Wasteless Economy:

## The Data Behind It & Takeaways

**01** Amid persistent inflation and renewed tariffs on consumer goods, households tighten their belts and are naturally drawn to buying less, buying smarter, and investing in lasting value. Consumers have been pushed to prioritise essentials, durability, and utility over volume or trend. This aligns naturally with sustainability values: avoiding overconsumption, minimising waste, and focusing on quality.

**02** Companies are feeling the squeeze of both rising operational costs and evolving regulations. Businesses are pivoting toward circular models, designing for durability, repairability, and reuse, not for sustainability branding, but as a smart financial strategy. Circular design reduces exposure to volatile supply chains and tariff-prone imports, while reinforcing consumer loyalty through accountability.

**03** Environmental goals around circularity are economic lifelines in an era of resource scarcity and climate disruption. Circular systems reduce reliance on raw materials and fossil fuels, which are increasingly costly and geopolitically unstable. In a world where global shocks are the norm, circularity offers both cost savings and supply chain resilience.

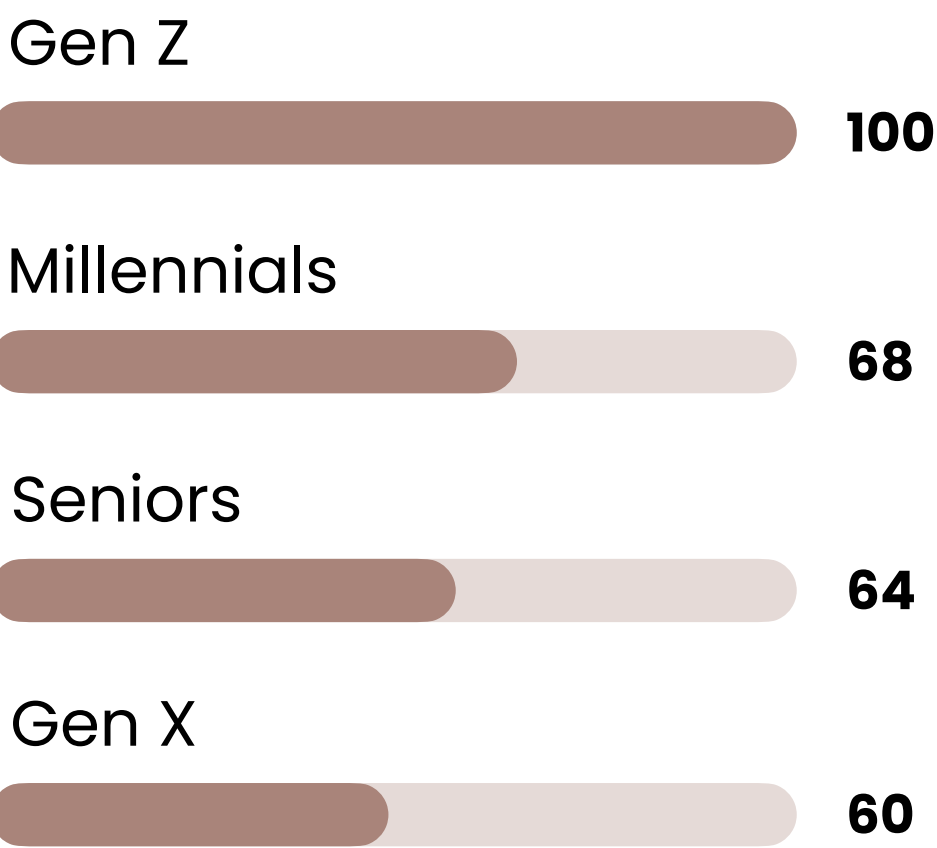
### CONCEPTS & TAGS

- Deinfluencing
- Anti Consumption
- Economic Diversification
- Waste of Money

### TOP INDUSTRIES

- Food & Beverage
- Fashion & Accessories
- Retail

### DEMOGRAPHICS





The New York Times

SHOP TALK

## As Recession Fears Rise, ‘No Buy’ Takes On New Urgency

The uncertainty surrounding President Trump’s tariffs has invigorated an underconsumption movement that took off early this year on TikTok and other platforms.

▶ Listen to this article • 3:59 min [Learn more](#)



WASTELESS ECONOMY: CASE STUDY

# No Buy 2025: A Shift Toward Mindful Spending

An emerging force in the Waistless Economy is No Buy 2025, a viral movement encouraging consumers to rethink unnecessary spending amid rising tariffs and recession fears. Gaining momentum on TikTok and other platforms, the trend promotes mindful consumption over impulse buying, challenging traditional retail habits. Participants create “no buy” lists, unsubscribe from marketing emails, and block ads to reduce temptation, embracing a year or more of selective purchasing. Rather than a complete halt to shopping, No Buy 2025 urges prioritisation of essentials and investment in quality over quantity. As economic pressures mount, the movement reflects a broader shift toward intentional living, where value, necessity, and sustainability increasingly define modern consumer behaviour, and where brands must realign to stay relevant.



Credits: Mondelez International



WASTELESS ECONOMY: CASE STUDY

# Portioning for the Planet and the Pocket

Amid inflation and shifting consumer priorities, food giants like PepsiCo and Mondelez International are adapting to a new era of intentional consumption by offering smaller, lower-priced product formats. These “right-sized” packs, under \$1 in some cases, acknowledge that many shoppers are buying less by necessity, prioritising essentials over indulgence. But rather than pushing volume, these brands are designing to meet consumers where they are: with affordable, portion-conscious options that reduce waste and align with tighter budgets. This is not just a pricing tactic; it’s a recalibration of value, where utility, moderation, and accessibility replace excess. PepsiCo and Mondelez are redefining abundance by designing with restraint, supporting underconsumption, minimising surplus, and extending product accessibility.



# Wasteless Economy: Actionable Insights for the Top Industries

## FOOD & BEVERAGE

Food and beverage companies must rethink abundance and surplus. As consumers seek simplicity and authenticity, brands must design with precision, eliminating waste at every step, from sourcing to packaging. Longevity, seasonality, and resourcefulness are emerging as new markers of value in an increasingly strained global system.

## FASHION & ACCESSORIES

Fashion must break its dependence on constant newness and fast cycles. Consumers now prioritise durability, transparency, and the story behind what they wear. Garments built for repetition, modular designs, and services like resale, repair, and rental, must move from niche offerings to central pillars of brand identity.

## RETAIL

Retailers can no longer sell limitless choice without consequence. They are challenged to curate more intentional ecosystems, where access, care, reuse, and longevity are part of the purchase journey. Stores must evolve into platforms that champion fewer, better, longer-lasting goods, turning shopping from an act of accumulation into an investment in value.







+2%

OF PREDICTED GROWTH NEXT 12 MONTHS

# The Imperative of Transparency

Can We Afford to Ignore Where Things Come From?

2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026



# The Imperative of Transparency

Beyond product labels and corporate statements, people demand clear, honest, and accessible language. They want to understand not just what a brand offers, but how it operates and impacts society and, thus, the environment.

In an increasingly informed and sceptical market, opacity breeds mistrust, while **transparency builds brand credibility and long-term loyalty.**





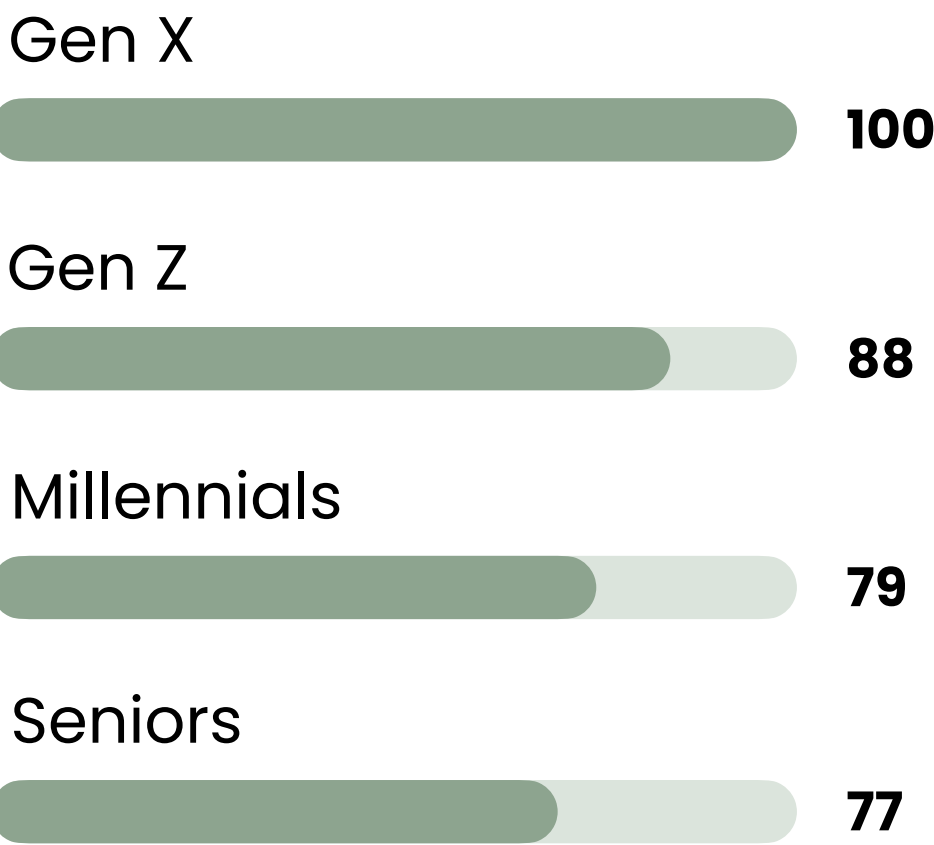
# The Imperative of Transparency: The Data Behind It & Takeaways

**01**  
Sustainability used to be symbolised by green logos or “eco-friendly” labels. Today, consumers want to know what the materials are and their carbon impact. Without clear, accessible answers, brands face accusations of greenwashing. Transparency is now the evidence layer of sustainability; it gives people the means to judge ethical alignment, not just accept corporate messaging.

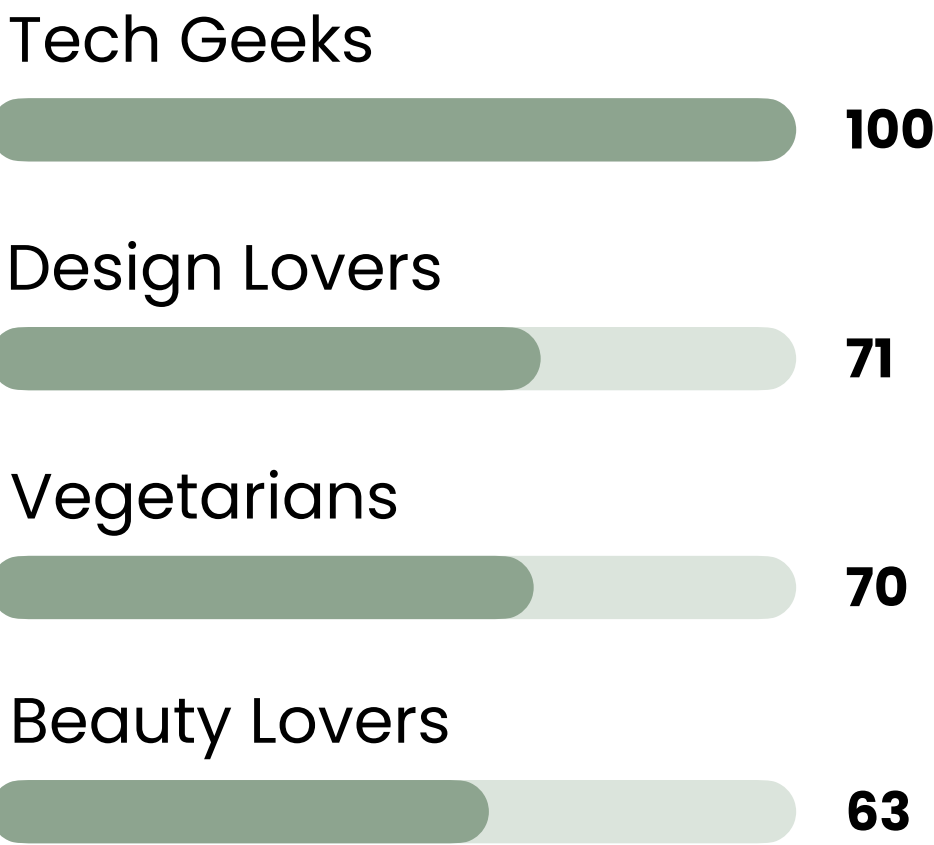
**02**  
The modern sustainability conversation is about systems, and transparency is the only way to surface those systems for scrutiny (systemic issues like fair labour conditions, low-emission sourcing, and material circularity). Transparency connects sustainability to economic justice, worker rights, and accountability, making the act of purchasing inherently political and values-based.

**03**  
In a saturated market, people want to spend in ways that reflect their values, especially climate resilience, equity, and integrity. Transparency empowers that alignment by making choices visible. This supports a growing values-driven economy, where consumers act as watchdogs and advocates. It also explains why sustainability still matters, even during economic downturns.

## DEMOGRAPHICS



## INTERESTS & LIFESTYLES



## CONCEPTS & TAGS

- Ethical Way
- Salary Transparency
- Ethical Choices
- Less Affordable





Credits: REUTERS/Johanna Geron



## THE IMPERATIVE OF TRANSPARENCY: CASE STUDY

# France Makes Transparency a Legal Obligation

France's new legislation targeting ultra-fast fashion companies like Shein and Temu is a clear example of the Imperative of Transparency trend in action. The law introduces mandatory eco-scores, an environmental tax on low-performing garments, and a ban on advertising fast fashion, pushing brands to disclose carbon emissions, resource use, and supply chain impact. By penalizing opacity and overproduction, the law forces companies to embed transparency into their operations, transforming sustainability from a marketing narrative into a regulated requirement. It empowers consumers to make informed, values-driven choices and repositions fashion consumption as a political act. This shift reflects a broader demand for verifiable data and traceable sourcing, reinforcing the idea that brands must not only claim ethical practices but prove them.



Credits: Nobody's Child



THE IMPERATIVE OF TRANSPARENCY: CASE STUDY

# Nobody's Child Embraces Radical Traceability via DPPs

Nobody's Child, a UK womenswear brand, has pioneered the early adoption of Digital Product Passports (DPPs), set to roll out across its full range by Autumn/Winter 2025. These scannable QR codes provide detailed insights into each garment's supply chain, carbon and water footprint, and care options, meeting growing consumer demand for verifiable sustainability and aligning with incoming EU regulations. By pushing traceability to Tier 5, including raw material origins, the brand strengthens ethical oversight and sets more accurate sustainability goals. Despite technical challenges, the phased approach and supplier collaboration have proven key. This case highlights how transparency is shifting from a marketing claim to a systemic tool for accountability, customer trust, and regulatory readiness.



# The Imperative of Transparency: Actionable Insights for the Top Industries

## FASHION & ACCESSORIES

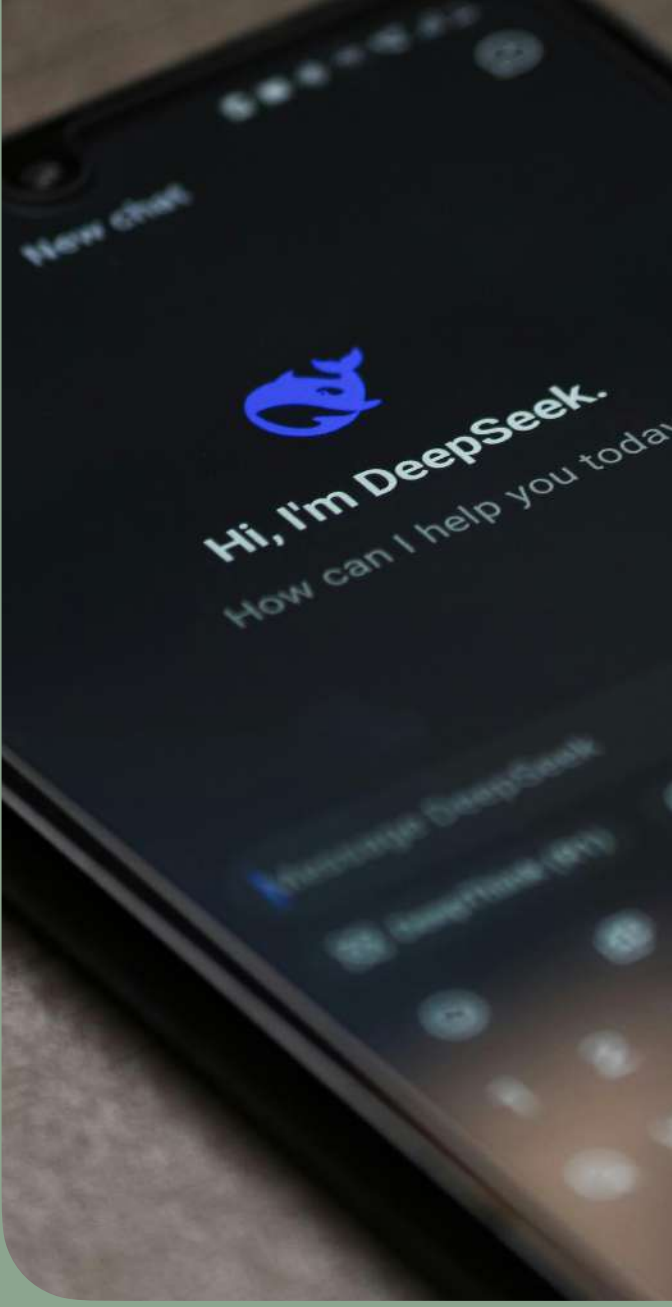
In the fashion sector, transparency now extends beyond fabric composition to the entire supply and value chain: raw material sourcing, ethical labour practices, environmental impact of production, supply chain traceability, and the authenticity of sustainability claims. Consumers expect full visibility into how garments are made, from farm harvest to final stitch.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology companies must move beyond passive compliance and embrace a proactive transparency strategy. This entails disclosing detailed supply chain structures, publishing social and environmental audit results, articulating responsible sourcing policies, and communicating product lifecycle impacts as part of a broader trust-building agenda.

## ADVERTISING & BRANDING

For brands and agencies, the imperative is shifting from image construction to the cultivation of trust. This requires a reevaluation of authenticity metrics and a transition from value-based messaging to evidence-driven narratives grounded in data, real stakeholder voices, operational transparency, and measurable progress.





# Unconverging consumer trends with AI-powered foresight

## The Nextatlas method

### Reliability of Sources

Regular reviews of analysed platforms ensure balanced sources and regulatory compliance.



### Harnessing Anticipation

Cross-industry analysis of 300K+ global early adopters to detect weak signals of change.

300K+  
Early Adopters

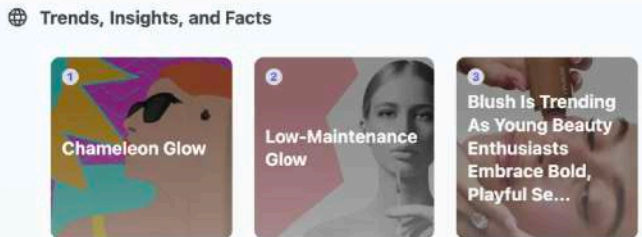
40+ Countries (at global level) 15+ Analyzed Languages

### Real-Time Understanding

Emerging trends are tracked with weekly updates, supported by three years of historical data and 12-month forecasts with 95% accuracy.

What's trending in beauty?

In 2024, the beauty industry is experiencing an exciting transformation driven by innovation, personalization, and simplicity. Here are some of the standout trends reshaping the landscape:

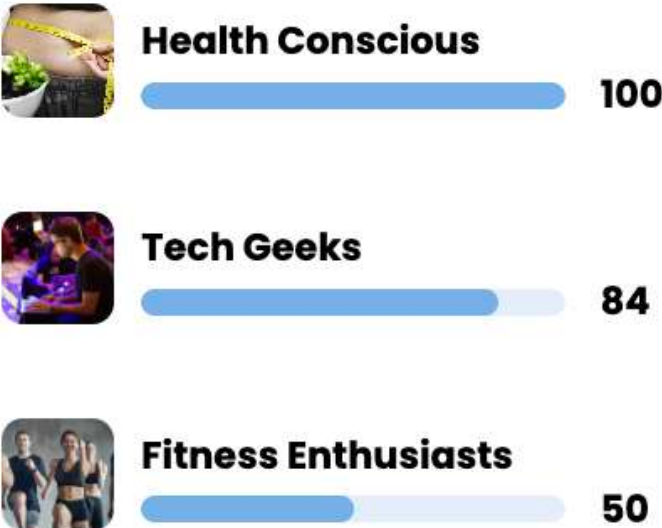


### Data-Driven Strategy

Each phenomenon is backed by up-to-date metrics (e.g., timeline, top targets, top places, key occasions, etc.).

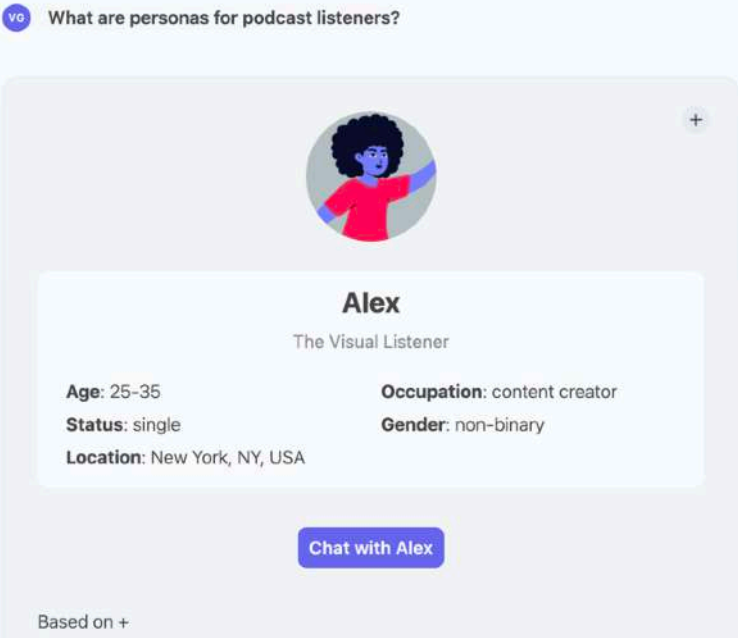


### Targets



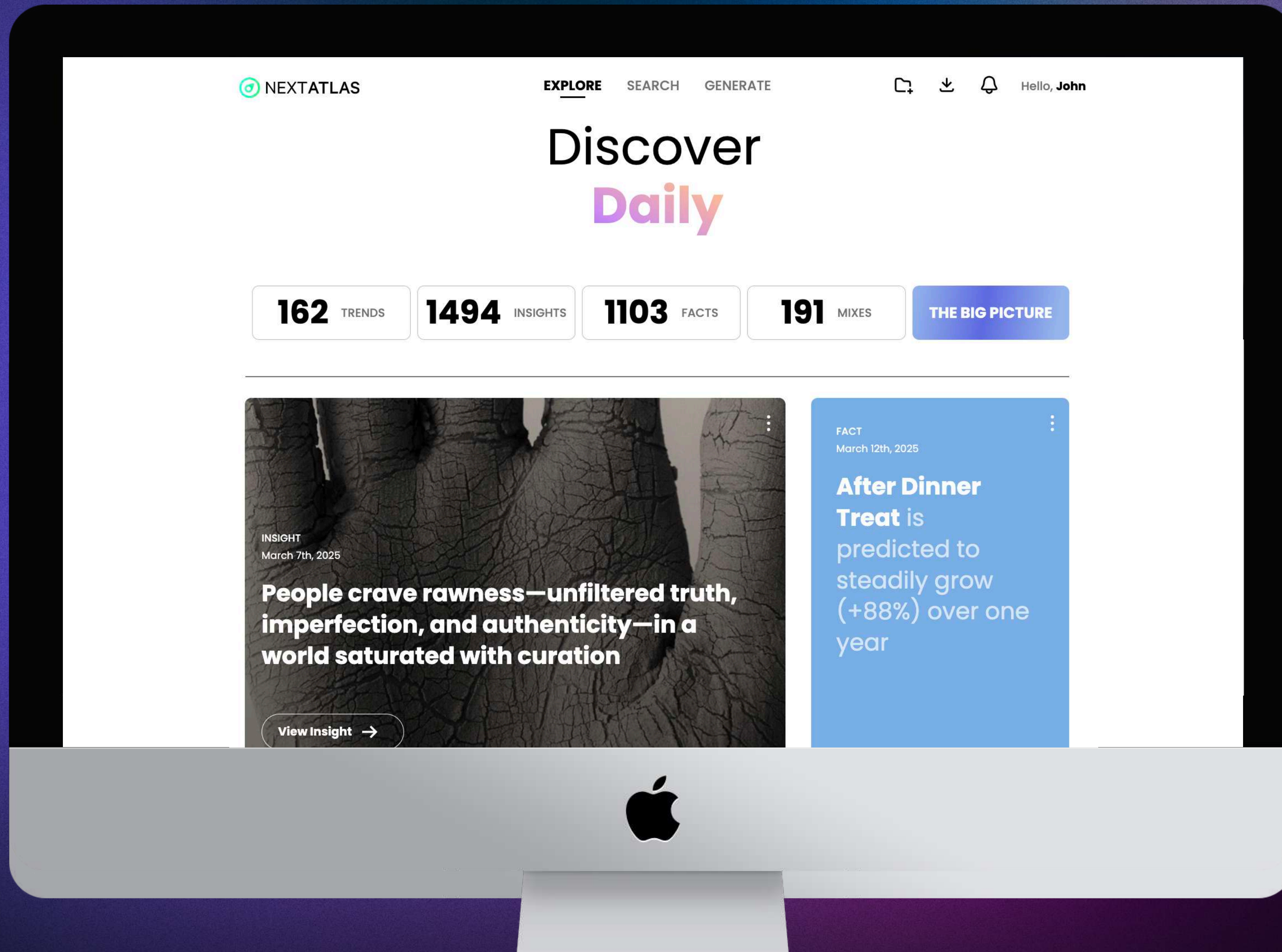
### Turning Data into Content

AI agents in Generate Suite transform data into actionable content and custom formats.





# Nextatlas, a Strategic Asset for AI-driven Foresight



300K+ Industry Specific Innovators

700+ Detected Trends

200+ New Weak Signals/Month

Generate Suite's Agents:

- ◉ Chat
- ◉ Persona Generator
- ◉ Subculture Scout
- ◉ Innovation Tracker
- ◉ Sentiment Pulse
- ◉ Sustainability Scout





# Want to discover The Big Picture on Sustainability? Get a Demo

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