

MARKETING

Sustainability, wellness driving social conversations in 2018

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Wellness is one of the top trends across categories today. Image courtesy of Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group

By SARAH JONES

Consumers' shared desire to incorporate healthfulness and eco-friendliness into their lives is evidenced in the topics they talk about on social media, with subjects such as clean beauty and freeganism rising in popularity this past year.

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According to data from the 2019 Topics & Trends Report from Facebook, conversations surrounding sustainable fashion have grown more than three times over in 2018, while detoxification as a term has risen 7.6 times. As marketers prepare to launch campaigns in 2019, Facebook sees these trends as indicators of what will soon reach popularity.

"In terms of sustainability, we're seeing the rise of the conscious consumer, with people considering the greater environmental, ecological and social impact of their purchase decisions and trying to drive change through their wallets," said Ann Mack, director of insights marketing at **Facebook**, New York. "As such, we saw growing conversation topics tied to everyday eco-products, durable goods and sustainable fashion.

"When it comes to wellness, people are starting to make the distinction between health and wellness," she said. "If you're healthy, you're not sick. If you're well, you're glowing.

"And increasingly, people are aspiring for wellness and are acting accordingly whether by eating functional foods that boost immunity or decrease inflammation, taking part in outdoor activities, detoxing or just practicing self-care."

Conscious consumption

One of the top trends in beauty found on Facebook this year was K-beauty and Asian skincare, including products such as tea tree oil and sunscreen containing titanium dioxide. In recent years, South Korean beauty trends have been taking the global skincare and cosmetic industry by storm as the Asian nation's demand for innovative solutions impacts product development ([see story](#)).

Beauty is also going green with consumers talking about microplastics and plastic pollution, showing their interest

in environmentally-friendly cosmetics. Microbeads were recently banned in the United Kingdom, and a number of beauty companies have taken measures to eliminate the small plastic pieces from their products.

Consumers also showed concern about phthalates, a potentially harmful chemical used to make plastic more flexible.

Consumers are additionally seeking out ways to make their fashion greener, with topics such as durable goods and sustainable fashion popping this past year. Newly released search data from Pinterest also found that interest in sustainable fashion has grown 34 percent year-over-year.



Consumers are seeking out sustainable fashion. Image credit: Stella McCartney

Per Pinterest, searches for men's vintage timepieces almost doubled in the past year, indicative of the rise of the secondhand market and the circular economy.

Beyond beauty and fashion, an eco-friendly approach is becoming popular for everyday items. Straws saw a bump in conversation on Facebook following bans of plastic straws in a number of cities.

"We're seeing an emphasis on people searching for sustainable and eco-friendly ideas across multiple categories including travel, food, parenting and style," said Larkin Brown, [Pinterest](#) researcher, in-house stylist and resident trend expert. "In particular we are seeing a rise in interest for recycled materials, which is becoming a growing trend in not only fashion, but travel and beauty among others.

"We are even seeing a rise in searches for 'zero waste travel' in the travel category as people look to pack lighter and use less waste while on the road," she said. "In parenting, we are seeing spikes in toy sharing subscriptions.

"In the food category, 'oat milk' is a plant-based dairy alternative and more environmentally friendly in comparison to regular milk. On the style front, we are seeing rising interest in rentable looks and recycled or organic materials."

Along with sustainable goals, consumers are seeking out wellness and health. From conversations about alternatives to wheat flour to discussions of turmeric and kimchi, Facebook users are interested in what they put in their bodies.

Detoxification and self care have been mentioned more this year, as consumers aspire towards greater wellbeing.



Wellness and fitness are high priority for consumers. Image credit: Regent Seven Seas Cruises

Wellness also extends to the mind and work, as consumers tap into affirmations or the practice of Wu Wei for productivity and distressing. Mentions of Wu Wei, the idea of working when energized and resting or doing less

challenging tasks when energy levels are lower, have grown 2.4 times in a year.

Luxury marketing's shift toward millennials, as well as ethical and sustainable living, is creating a space for high-end wellness brands and experiences to flourish.

Speaking at Luxury FirstLook 2018: Exclusivity Redefined, an analyst from Euromonitor spoke about the ways that the luxury industry has sought to monetize health and fitness as well as the factors that have shaped the market's reception to those efforts. A common theme was that experiential luxury has led more consumers to value luxury brands that can make them healthier and happier ([see story](#)).

"One development that was surprising across categories was the rise of the super-conscious consumer," Facebook's Ms. Mack said. "Whether its gaming, travel, food or beauty consumers today want to get into the nitty-gritty of the details behind the product.

"They are passionate about products and want to know every detail before purchasing," she said. "Gamers, for instance, want their virtual worlds to feel realistic and are keen on understanding the behind-the-scenes making of those virtual worlds.

"And when it comes to beauty, people are talking about highly specific and natural ingredients and treatments."

Great outdoors

Outside of wellness and sustainability, consumers are showing lifestyle preferences taken from nature.

Following periods of minimalism, maximalism is back as consumers talked about zebra and snakeskin prints. Another growing fashion interest is African prints, which saw a 229 percent bump in searches on Pinterest.



Animal prints are gaining momentum. Image credit: Roberto Cavalli

"The trends unveil what people are dreaming about trying in the new year, what they share in common, from everyday inspiration to bigger moments in the calendar," Pinterest's Ms. Brown said. "For style, we recognize that

people will continue to search for popular trends such as animal print. However rather than it just being fashion orientated, we will also see this transcend into other areas including home dcor and accessories."

The platform found that searches for zero-waste travel grew 74 percent year-over-year.

Per Facebook, there has also been a 3.8 percent rise in discussions of glamping, a trend already embraced by the luxury tourism industry.

As the affinity for experiential and culturally authentic travel grows, hotel brands and affluents alike are changing the high-end hospitality sector through an embrace of the luxury tent industry.

In the age of social media, where a multitude of consumers compete to post the most unique travel experiences, affluent adventure seekers are looking for one-of-a-kind trips that luxury camping can fulfill. Brands such as Abercrombie & Kent, Rosewood Hotels & Resorts and Collective Retreats are embracing this new trend that goes beyond the popularized term "glamping," but instead allows affluents to have deeply authentic experiences without missing out on luxury amenities ([see story](#)).

"By understanding which topics are seeing growth on Facebook, marketers can better anticipate potential shifts in the world around us, including the foods people eat, the products they buy, the media they consume and more," Ms. Mack said. "And using these insights, marketers can create campaigns for the coming year that reflect or take advantage of these consumer shifts.

"Additionally, I would encourage marketers to explore all of the developments spotlighted in our report not just the ones in the category that's relevant to their line of business," she said. "True inspiration and innovation happen when you bring the outside in when you go beyond brand, category and consumer conventions.

"For instance, what can a travel marketer learn from developments in beauty or commerce? Understanding trends across categories can lead to even more creative and insightful campaigns."