

## RESEARCH

# HNWIs redefining status to prioritize knowledge over possessions: report

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*Perceptions of true wealth and success are changing among the elite. Image courtesy of Team One*

By ZACH JAMES

The affluent class is shifting its perspective on personal success, according to the latest findings from Publicis Groupe's Team One.

The report details how a growing number of high-net-worth individuals believe that status is gained by being knowledgeable and respected, rather than by net worth. With 88 percent of the demographic taking on their mindset, the shift could have sizable implications in the luxury space, as high-end experiences gain more perceived value than material possessions to the influential consumer group.

"This isn't a trend it's a complete reconstruction of how success is defined by the world's most affluent and influential consumers," said Mark Miller, chief strategy officer at Team One, in a statement.

"Despite increasingly uncertain times and a world where borders seem to matter more than ever, the Global Affluent Collective remains united by values that are stronger than the geographical boundaries that divide them," Mr. Miller said. "The most provocative finding is how they've moved beyond asking 'What do I own?' to 'Who am I becoming?'"

"This transformation demands an entirely new approach from premium brands."

The findings within the **2025 Global Affluent Collective** report, titled "Worth Beyond Wealth," are based upon a survey of 4,200 HNWI's across 22 countries and five global regions, each respondent falls within the top 10 percent of annual household income for their respective locality. It also includes analysis driven by year-round qualitative exchanges with members of its Global Affluent Collective.

## Self-inflection point

With this shift towards immaterial possessions, knowledge is becoming a currency all in its own.

HNWIs are now fully focused on their futures and improving themselves to better adapt to worldwide, uncontrollable macroeconomic uncertainty, with the enhancement of personal wisdom being something within the group's grasp. Of those surveyed, 95 percent viewed learning as "the ultimate luxury," while the same percentage are passionate about exploring themselves and various aspects of life.



*More than two-thirds, 64 percent, of affluent individuals are now measuring their lives based on milestones and achievements, rather than wealth accumulated. Image courtesy of Team One*

The luxury space could see great change from this shift, as worth is now being defined by personal growth, with the mentality said to have changed from “Will this appreciate financially?” to “Will this appreciate me personally?”

High-net-worth individuals are now moving toward “high-life-worth,” which is instead measured by human connections, emotional fulfillment, impacting others positively and exploring themselves by learning from other areas of life.

“What we’re witnessing is the emergence of a parallel economy of worth, operating alongside traditional financial markets,” said Tahni Candelaria, director of cultural anthropology at Team One, in a statement.

“Luxury is no longer only about having exceptional things it’s about integrating excellence with impact,” Ms. Candelaria said. “The best premium brands won’t just sell luxury they’ll help architect high-worth lives.”

### **On the move**

Prestige brands could be left out in the cold as their core consumer base shifts their needs away from material goods and possessions.

While other analysts have proposed several strategy shifts for maisons to take advantage of ([see story](#)), especially as perceived higher value alternatives surge in popularity while financial uncertainty reigns ([see story](#)). Despite this, the travel space is well-positioned for further growth as customer demand moves toward the experiential.



*Classic luxury status symbols are being rejected by HNWIs, with 65 percent of those surveyed preferring to live in the moment. Image courtesy of Team One*

Travel and leisure are viewed as “the ultimate investment” in personal worth, with 68 percent of respondents planning to heavily increase their spending in the sector. The affluent class plans to maintain their global perspective, contributing to the revival of the fine dining and wine segment around the world ([see story](#)).

While the aspirations to visit regions around the world remains strong, the quickly shifting realities of geopolitics and government policy are pushing many to forgo trips abroad and instead explore domestic locales ([see story](#)).

Wellness is also spotlighted as an area of opportunity for luxury, with more than half of those surveyed planning to spend on holistic spa experiences while on vacation. The demand is pushing many hoteliers and resorts to change their programming to accommodate the growing trend ([see story](#)).

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