

## 2018 Ford Trends Report Underscores How Consumers and Brands Are Pushing Through in Uncertain, Interesting Times

- 2018 Looking Further with Ford Trends Report highlights how global societal changes are impacting new consumer behaviors and attitudes; shifts toward activism, compassion and self-expression will shape the new year
- Sixth annual report shows that while two-thirds of adults globally say they are overwhelmed by changes taking place around them, three-quarters believe they can influence positive change; nearly half say they expect brands to take a stand on social issues
- Consumers are focused on world suffering, the widening gap between rich and poor, and emotional well-being, and while many express skepticism about artificial intelligence, more are hopeful about the future of autonomous vehicles

**NEW YORK, Dec. 6, 2017** – People feel increasingly polarized by unrest, upheaval and other changes taking place in the world, and more than 60 percent of adults globally say they feel overwhelmed by things happening around them. Ford’s 2018 Looking Further with Ford Trends Report examines not only the issues dividing the world, but also the coping mechanisms that are emerging as a result.

“We’re clearly living in interesting times,” said Sheryl Connelly, Ford global consumer trends and futuring manager. “Shifting global priorities, rampant political upheaval, and a spotlight on social inequity have upended the status quo and left many disoriented. But out of the chaos and conflict, a new energy and creativity is motivating people like never before. From compassion and guilt to heightened activism, most adults believe their actions have the power to influence positive change.”

As societies cope with the rising demands of urbanization, serious threats to the environment and economic instability, Ford continues its work as a trusted mobility company developing smart transportation solutions for all. Amid concern for world suffering, a widening gap between rich and poor, and worries that artificial intelligence will do more harm than good, Ford remains committed to the belief that freedom of movement drives human progress—and is designing sustainable, meaningful technologies to help make people’s lives better.

Each year, the company focuses on global trends to understand how consumers are changing, and how companies must respond.

Key insights from Ford’s sixth annual report include:

- 39 percent of adults say they do not mind sharing their personal information with companies, but 60 percent say they are frustrated by how much of their information has become public
- 76 percent of adults around the world say they find it creepy when companies know too much about them

- 52 percent of adults say they believe artificial intelligence will do more harm than good, but 61 percent say they are hopeful about a future of autonomous vehicles
- 68 percent of adults say they are overwhelmed by suffering in the world today, and 51 percent say they feel guilty for not doing more to make the world better
- 81 percent of adults say they are concerned about the widening gap between the rich and the poor
- 73 percent of adults say they should take better care of their emotional well-being
- 54 percent of adults globally say they feel more stressed out than they did a year ago, and among 18- to 29-year-olds, that number is even higher, at 65 percent

### **What all this means for 2018 and beyond**

This report serves as a blueprint for understanding how key trends are expected to influence consumers and brands in 2018 and beyond. Ford has identified and explored these 10 trends:

1. **The Edge of Reason:** Global upheaval is evident in everything from politics to pop culture, and people are responding to these changes in polarized fashion. As divisiveness grows, a sense of being overwhelmed intensifies. Consumers are hungry for inventive ways to cope and adapt.
2. **The Activist Awakening:** This culture of polarization means consumers are being jolted out of complacency. Conventional wisdom and expectations are being toppled as individuals debate the change we need.
3. **Minding the Gap:** Worldwide, the spotlight is on inequality. Activists and entrepreneurs are experimenting with new ways to improve access to quality education, increase productive employment, close wage gaps, and provide everyone with affordable access to basic living standards and infrastructure.
4. **The Compassionate Conscience:** With an omnipresent news cycle, we are more aware than ever of the challenges consumers face around the world. People are becoming more reflective of their roles in society and more focused on how they can be more engaged.
5. **Mending the Mind:** Consumers and institutions are realizing that you cannot have a healthy body unless you have a healthy mind. As such, mental health and well-being are moving to the forefront for individuals, governments and companies to address.
6. **Retail Therapy:** Many consumers are on an endless hunt for something new and different – seeking material goods or experiences that bring happiness. As services aiming to provide efficiency experiences proliferate, consumers now find they can buy the one thing that was never for sale – time.
7. **Helplessly Exposed:** Big Data claims to be able to interpret our behaviors, which in theory should help consumers. But with Big Data can come Big Bias, and once personal information is relinquished, all consumers can do is hope companies use it responsibly.
8. **Technology's Tipping Point:** Virtual reality, artificial intelligence and autonomous technology – long far-fetched notions – are now being incorporated into our daily lives. Worldwide, humans are wondering what the onslaught of intelligent technology will mean for society.
9. **Singled Out:** Are marriage and parenthood still the desired norms for happy living? Couples today – with more choices and longer life spans to consider – are rethinking commitment and fulfillment.
10. **Big Plans for Big Cities:** By 2050, nearly 75 percent of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas. To capitalize on the full potential of cities – ensuring they are happy and healthy places in which to thrive – we must smartly plan for transportation, employment, housing, wellness initiatives and an infrastructure that can accommodate booming populations.

## **Building a smarter future**

With an astounding 87 percent of consumers agreeing cities need better transportation options, Ford is uniquely positioned to provide meaningful solutions for consumers everywhere. As connected, sustainable and autonomous technologies rapidly transform transportation, Ford is committed driving progress that consumers can trust.

“In today’s fast-moving world, consumers have less patience for the frivolous, and they demand greater emphasis on what’s meaningful and impactful,” said Connelly. “This ethos is reflected in the work we do at Ford, and our relentless focus on providing trustworthy solutions that make consumers’ lives better.”

For the full Looking Further with Ford 2018 Trends Report, please visit [www.fordtrends.com](http://www.fordtrends.com).

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## **About Ford Motor Company**

*Ford Motor Company is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan. The company designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs, electrified vehicles and Lincoln luxury vehicles, provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company and is pursuing leadership positions in electrification, autonomous vehicles and mobility solutions. Ford employs approximately 203,000 people worldwide. For more information regarding Ford, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company, please visit [www.corporate.ford.com](http://www.corporate.ford.com).*

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