TREND DIGEST DOWNLOAD FOR FREE

FMCG Gurus'

# TOP TEN TRENDS FOR 2026

Your map to consumer behavior in the year ahead.

Featuring our iconic Trend Wheel: A visual snapshot of all the trends and their subtrends.

FMCG GURUS
Consumer Experts, Insight Driven

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# Top Ten Trends for 2026:
## Navigating a world in transition

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As 2026 approaches, consumers are adapting to a world of shifting expectations. Confidence mixes with caution, progress with practicality, and enjoyment with a sense of control. The focus is not on starting over, but on finding stability. Consumers are learning to live with complexity, redefining what value, wellness, and enjoyment mean in an ever-shifting global context.

Across food, beverage, and nutrition, the boundaries between physical, emotional, and digital wellbeing continue to blur.

Science and technology are reshaping expectations, empowering individuals to personalize their choices with unprecedented precision.

Yet, amid these advancements, a return to authenticity, simplicity, and trust is emerging. Consumers are demanding proof over promise and results that feel both tangible and transparent.

Our ten trends capture the key forces shaping global consumer behaviour in 2026.

Together, they reveal a world where health, taste, and responsibility converge, not as competing priorities, but as interconnected drivers of everyday life. For brands, this represents both challenge and opportunity: to meet consumers where they are, to earn trust through transparency, and to inspire confidence in a world that remains, by design, in motion.

YOUR TREND JOURNEY STARTS HERE...


Interview

## 2026 TREND WATCH

**Benjamin Campaniello**

Content & Data Analyst at FMCG Gurus

### WHAT ARE YOUR PREDICTIONS FOR 2026?

*"In 2026, consumers will continue to navigate a world defined by contrast, balancing optimism with uncertainty, indulgence with intention, and convenience with authenticity. Value is no longer just about price; it is about tangible benefits, ethical alignment, and emotional satisfaction. Consumers are seeking brands that help them make sense of complexity, offering transparency, proof, and a sense of shared purpose. For food, beverage, and nutrition manufacturers, the focus will shift toward supporting holistic wellbeing, providing products that blend enjoyment, health, and ethical consideration in ways that feel meaningful and attainable."*

### WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST FOCUSES IN 2026?

*"There are three key areas of focus for the year ahead: trust and transparency, mood and indulgence, and convenience reimagined. Consumers are demanding proof over promise, expecting brands to demonstrate integrity through clear sourcing, science-backed claims, and visible impact. Emotional wellbeing and escapism remain critical, with products expected to enhance mood, provide comfort, and help people reprioritize amidst busy lives. Finally, convenience continues to be a premium, but it must be coupled with health, simplicity, and ease of use. Brands that integrate these elements while maintaining taste, quality, and authenticity will be best placed to resonate with consumers in 2026."*



### WHAT ARE FMCG GURUS FOCUSING ON WITH THEIR CLIENTS?

*"At FMCG Gurus, we are supporting clients in understanding the complex, evolving landscape of consumer needs. Our focus is on translating trends into actionable insights that combine health, enjoyment, and responsibility. We help brands anticipate how developments such as GLP-1 innovations, personalized nutrition, and mood-oriented products are reshaping expectations. This includes understanding the growing demand for transparency, proof, and purpose, alongside products that are easy to use, scientifically credible, and emotionally satisfying. By combining these insights with tailored strategy recommendations, we guide clients to connect meaningfully with consumers while balancing opportunity with integrity."*

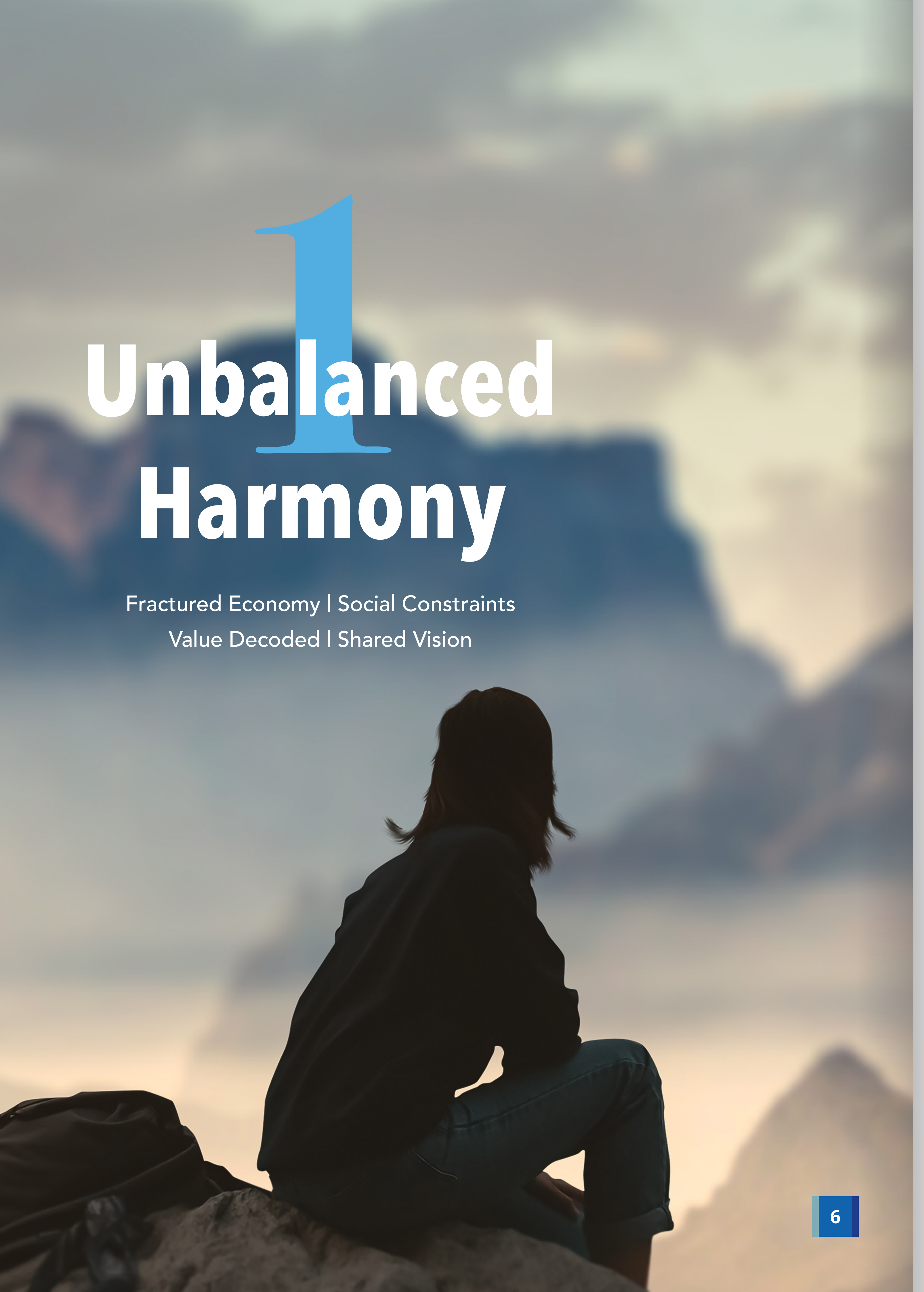
> **"Brands that combine taste, simplicity, and transparency with tangible wellness benefits will be the ones that earn trust and resonate most with consumers in 2026."**
>
> Benjamin Campaniello, Content & Data Analyst at FMCG Gurus

### WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO HAPPEN OVER THE NEXT 6 MONTHS?

*"In the next six months, we expect several trends to accelerate. Appetite management and wellness innovations driven by GLP-1 medication and related solutions will continue to grow, with consumers seeking support for side-effects, recovery, and balanced nutrition.*

*Mood-enhancing and comfort-driven products will remain key, as busy lifestyles create demand for accessible indulgence that reduces stress and encourages wellbeing. Convenience will continue to dominate, but with a focus on simplicity, personalization, and functional benefit.*

*Across food, beverage, and nutrition, brands will need to demonstrate authenticity, provide evidence-based solutions, and elevate taste experiences to meet evolving consumer expectations."*



# 1 Unbalanced Harmony

Fractured Economy | Social Constraints
Value Decoded | Shared Vision



## Unbalanced Harmony

This trend reflects the tension consumers feel between optimism and uncertainty in a world marked by geopolitical instability, social pressures, and shifting values.

## The Subtrends

### Fractured Economy

This subtrend highlights how financial caution and aspirational spending coexist, shaping a market that balances necessity with indulgence.

### Social constraints

Amid global uncertainty and heightened social expectations, consumers are navigating pressures around inclusion, lifestyle norms, and cultural behaviors.

### Value decoded

Consumers are decoding what "value" truly means, seeking products and experiences that deliver measurable benefits, emotional satisfaction, and ethical alignment.

### Shared vision

Consumers are gravitating toward brands, communities, and initiatives that foster collective purpose.

# Consumers feel they are living through an era of uncertainty

Many express concern over issues that seem beyond their control. This growing unease is having a clear impact on attitudes, behaviors, and purchasing decisions.

**32%**

**Of global consumers feel worried about global conflict/risk of war. 2024 (EMO174)**

**29%**

**Of global consumers feel worried about politics in their home country. 2024 (EMO174)**

Consumers feel they are living through an era of uncertainty, concerned about issues beyond their control. This sense of instability is shaping attitudes, behaviours, and purchasing decisions. Over the past year, there has been a noticeable shift towards more conservative and ethnocentric mindsets. Many believe multiculturalism and progressive values have gone too far, influencing their identity and way of life. Concerns around migration, terrorism, global economic security, and government trust have intensified. Combined with ongoing financial pressures, this has left many feeling disillusioned and distrustful, fuelling a culture of blame. As a result, values such as tradition, nationalism, and scepticism of institutions are gaining ground, trends that will directly impact the food and drink industry. A key theme throughout this report is consumers' search for certainty in uncertain times. Feelings of confusion and frustration are driving people towards brands and products they know and trust, often those that evoke nostalgia for simpler, more stable periods (even if those memories are idealized). This desire for familiarity is shaping flavor preferences, product choices, and perceptions of marketing. Ultimately, consumers are becoming more value-driven and selective. Brands must ensure their products and messages help ease the pressures of modern life, not add to them.



# Many consumers continue to live month to month, with limited financial confidence

This is a reality that shapes not only shopping habits but overall outlook on life.

Since the start of this decade, uncertainty around the global economy and the threat of recession have dominated discussion. Meanwhile, price inflation remains a major challenge for the food and drink industry, driven by resource scarcity and supply chain disruption. Many consumers have adopted a recessionary mindset when shopping, regardless of macroeconomic indicators such as GDP growth.

## Managing pressure & changing behaviors:

FMCG Gurus' research shows slight improvement in financial sentiment over the past few years, with more households reporting adequate savings and fewer expressing concern about rising costs. While positive, this does not indicate renewed confidence. Instead, consumers feel better equipped to manage financial pressures, adapting by being less brand loyal, more open to private label, down-trading where possible, and actively seeking promotions.

Consumers are also prioritizing essentials and delaying discretionary purchases until value is perceived.

## Skepticism shapes attitudes

A lack of financial confidence impacts more than spending. People struggling with day-to-day finances tend to become distrustful of corporations, particularly those seen as profiting amid consumer hardship. This fuels greater scrutiny and demand for authenticity and transparency from brands.

**32%**

Of global consumers feel that their household has adequate savings. **This presents a 5% increase since 2022.** 2025 (FS893)

**60%**

Of global consumers consumers are concerned about rising costs in the country that they live. 2025 (FS257)

# The GLP-1 Effect

2

New Normal | Appetite Reinvented
Impulse vs Intent | Natural Lens



## The GLP-1 Effect

Captures the redefining of appetite, weight management, and wellness in light of emerging scientific developments, including the impact of GLP-1 medication and related innovations.

## The Subtrends

### New normal

What was once experimental is becoming mainstream, reshaping attitudes toward food, self-care, and proactive health strategies.

### Appetite reinvented

Balancing enjoyment and nutrition, with interest in satiety-enhancing ingredients, mindful portions, and science-led solutions that help them manage appetite without sacrificing taste.

### Impulse vs intent

Consumers are navigating their impulses through tools, technology, and nutritional guidance, striving for informed choices that align with both immediate enjoyment and long-term wellness goals.

### Natural lens

Amid increasing reliance on medical innovations, there is simultaneous demand for natural options. Consumers are seeking solutions that feel authentic and accessible.

# Consumers seek weight management solutions

Awareness and usage of GLP-1 medications is increasing, particularly among younger adults.

Despite growing awareness around health and wellness, obesity rates continue to rise globally. Traditional diets, often associated with restriction and short-term results, frequently fail to deliver lasting change. This ongoing challenge highlights the need for more sustainable, holistic, and long-term approaches to weight management and overall wellbeing.

## The GLP-1 approach

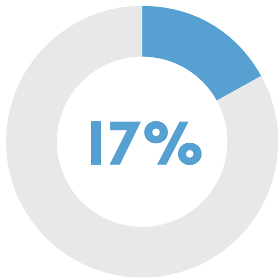
FMCG Gurus' research shows 17% of consumers are currently using it, often obtained privately rather than through healthcare professionals.

## Polarized attitudes

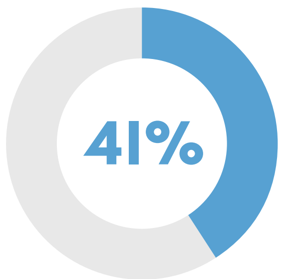
Consumer opinions are divided: some see it as effective for obesity and lifestyle issues, while others raise concerns over safety, testing, and potential misuse, particularly among image-conscious younger users.

## Effectiveness and market uncertainty

Many users report extreme side-effects and make limited lifestyle changes, which undermines perceived effectiveness. The long-term trajectory of the GLP-1 market remains uncertain.




Of global consumers say they are **currently using GLP-1 drugs such Ozempic or Wegovy.** 2025 (WLM982)




Of global GLP-1 medication users are **worried about future research** being published around **safety**. 2025 (WLM985)



# New opportunities in the food and drink sector are emerging due to GLP-1 medication use

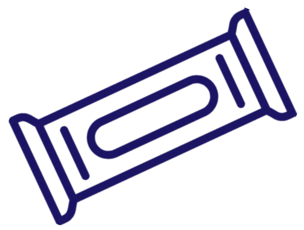
These products can be categorized as either natural alternatives to the medication or as supportive products that complement its use.

As GLP-1 medication usage increases, two related markets are emerging: products that support medication use and those that assist consumers after discontinuation. Side effects can be significant, including nausea and muscle loss, while stopping medication may lead to weight regain. This is driving demand for nutrient-rich products - high in protein, fiber, and other beneficial ingredients - impacting categories such as snacks and drinks and encouraging better-for-you alternatives.

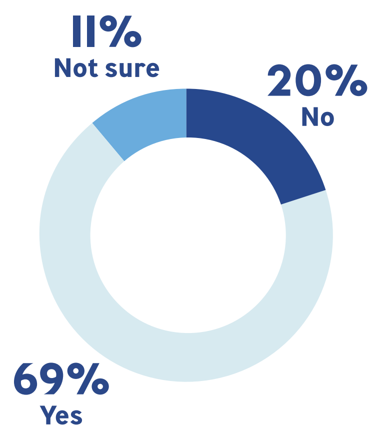
While opinions on GLP-1 medication remain divided, consumers respond more positively to foods and drinks that naturally stimulate GLP-1 hormones. These products are seen as safer, healthier, and more transparent, even if results are slower than injections. Their popularity is expected to grow over the next decade, particularly if access to GLP-1 medication becomes more restricted due to health or ethical concerns.

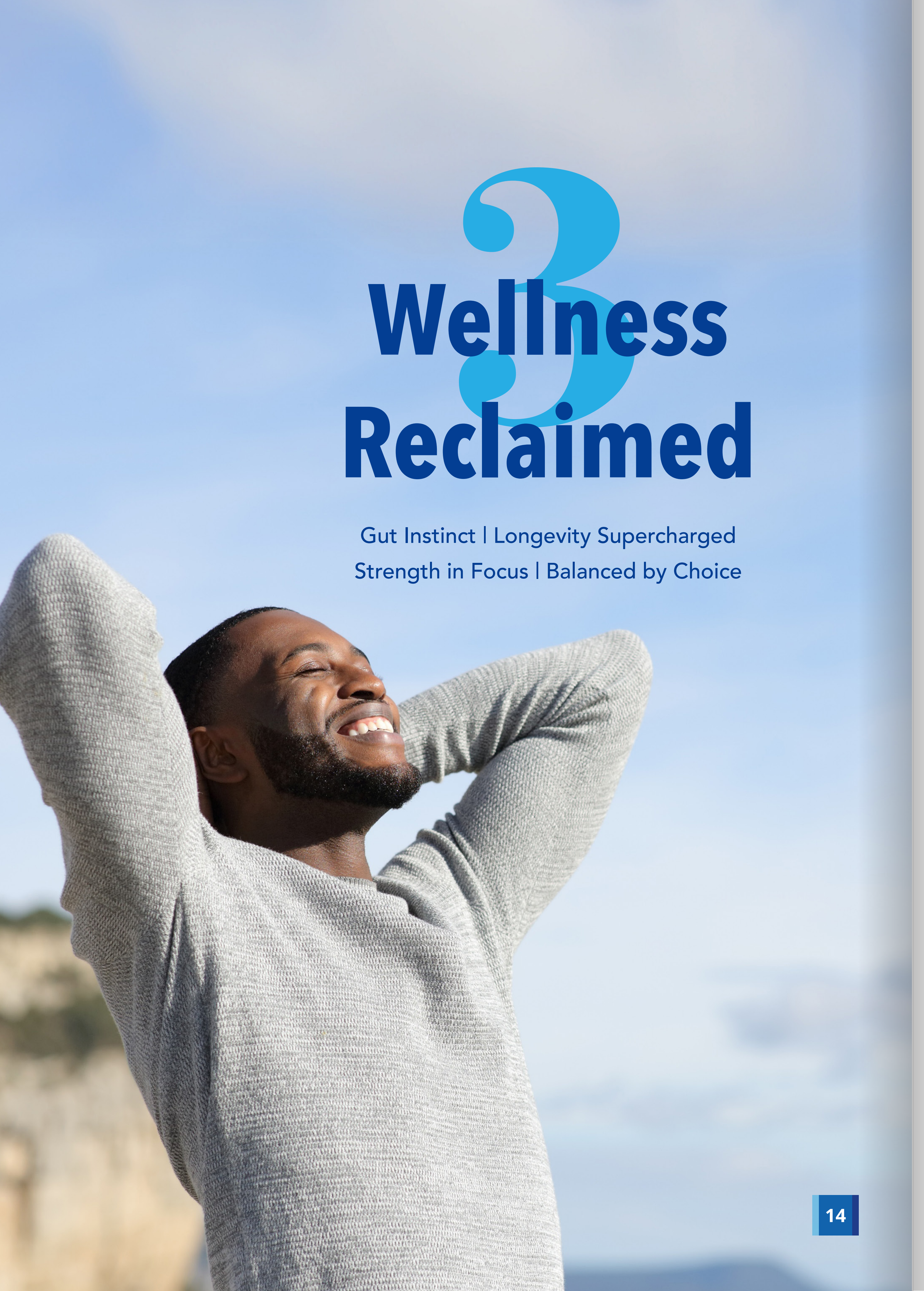
**44%**

Of global consumers prefer **high protein/ low sugar alternative snacks.** 2025 (SNA028)



**Would you be interested in buying a food or beverage that stimulates your GLP-1 hormones in a natural way? 2025 (WLM681)**
Global





# 3 Wellness Reclaimed

Gut Instinct | Longevity Supercharged
Strength in Focus | Balanced by Choice



## Wellness Reclaimed

This trend reflects the continued emphasis on holistic health and wellbeing as consumers navigate a complex world of lifestyle, nutrition, and mental health.

## The Subtrends

### Gut instinct

Gut health remains as one of the foundations of overall well-being. Interest in fermented foods, probiotics, and fibre-rich ingredients continues to rise.

### Longevity supercharged

Health is not about quick fixes but long-term resilience. From mobility and brain health to energy and immunity, consumers are prioritizing daily routines that extend quality of life.

### Strength in focus

Mental and physical strength are now viewed as interconnected. Consumers are embracing products that enhance clarity and cognition, alongside physical performance.

### Balanced by choice

Consumers are crafting flexible wellness frameworks that adapt to mood, schedule, and circumstance. Balance is no longer accidental, it is actively chosen.

# Consumers are focusing on diet and lifestyle improvements to maintain health and fitness throughout life

Emotional wellbeing is considered as equally important to physical health.

**60%**

Of active nutrition consumers have tried to adopt a more long-term approach to health in the last two years. 2025 (AN358)

**54%**

Of active nutrition consumers have attempted to improve their diet in the last two years. 2025 (AN358)

FMCG Gurus' research highlights that consumers recognize the impact of modern lifestyles, such as inactivity, technology reliance, and frequent indulgence, on health. Emotional wellbeing is seen as equally important, with poor sleep, low energy, and mood affecting long-term health.

Consumers seeking lifestyle improvements want to experience benefits quickly, so functional products must deliver perceivable and measurable results. At the same time, people are adopting a back-to-basics approach, understanding that sleep, exercise, and diet remain foundational. This drives demand for everyday food and drink products perceived as natural, nutritious, affordable, and trustworthy. Products that help overcome barriers such as cost, time pressures, and stress are particularly valued.

**45%**

Of global consumers say they worry about their physical health. 2025 (EMO174)

**44%**

Of global consumers say they worry about their emotional health. 2025 (EMO174)



# Consumers remain proactive about their health but perceive increasing barriers to healthy living

Many feel overwhelmed, acknowledging that these challenges directly affect their ability to maintain health routines.

Cost is widely viewed as a key barrier to healthy living, with rising food and drink prices forcing consumers to make trade-offs. Despite industry efforts, healthy eating is still perceived as expensive, meaning price increases may push many toward less healthy alternatives.

Real or perceived, consumers continue to feel time-pressured, trying to fit numerous activities into their day. This busyness and the difficulty of disconnecting from daily obligations, is seen as hindering healthy eating, making structured diets, nutritional tracking, and reliance on convenience foods more common.

Consumers face daily concerns that often feel beyond their control, increasing stress and lowering mood. This can lead to using food and drink as a coping mechanism, with less attention paid to nutritional content, making comfort eating and drinking potentially harmful to health.

**62%**

of active nutrition consumers feel **financial costs** are a challenge to leading a healthy lifestyle. 2025 (AN314)

**35%**

of active nutrition consumers say **time scarcity** means they often turn to **convenience food**, which is a challenge to leading a healthy lifestyle. 2025 (AN314)

# 4
# Proof Over Promise

Supply Strain | Nourish from Within
Simple Labels | No to UPF



## Proof Over Promise

This trend reflects a growing demand for transparency, credibility, and measurable results in the health and nutrition space.

## The Subtrends

### Supply strain

Consumers are aware of global pressure on supply chains, prompting concerns around quality, authenticity, and consistency.

### Nourish from within

Rather than chasing trends or quick fixes, the focus is on ingredients, nutrient diversity, and a diet that promotes long-term vitality from the inside out.

### Simple labels

Simplicity is seen as a sign of honesty. Complex formulations are no longer impressive unless every component has purpose and proof.

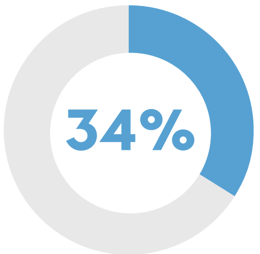
### No to UPF

Ultra-processed foods face scrutiny, with consumers re-evaluating what they consider "convenient" versus "compromised".

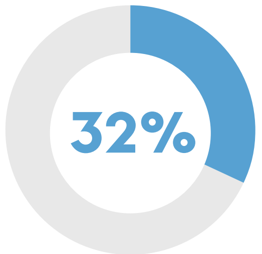
# Consumers are concerned about food shortages and expect the issue to grow over the next decade

They want brands to show responsibility and transparency throughout the supply chain.

Food safety and security are top priorities for consumers, both for health and availability. Consumers recognize that supply chains are already disrupted and will face greater strain over the coming decades due to population growth, environmental pressures, and shifting dietary habits. These challenges are driving price increases, use of alternative ingredients, and changes in production methods.




Of global consumers are **concerned about food shortages.** 2024 (SU589)




Of global consumers think food brands are **misleading about how products are processed.** 2025 (UPF532)

## Consumer expectations for solutions

Consumers want to avoid these costs being passed on to them and are open to alternative ingredients if they are natural, preserve taste, and support sustainable solutions, such as protein hybrids, upcycled ingredients, and environmentally-friendly farming. However, there is concern that some adjustments to processing and formulations may compromise health as supply chains become more strained.



# Consumers are concerned about ultra-processed foods

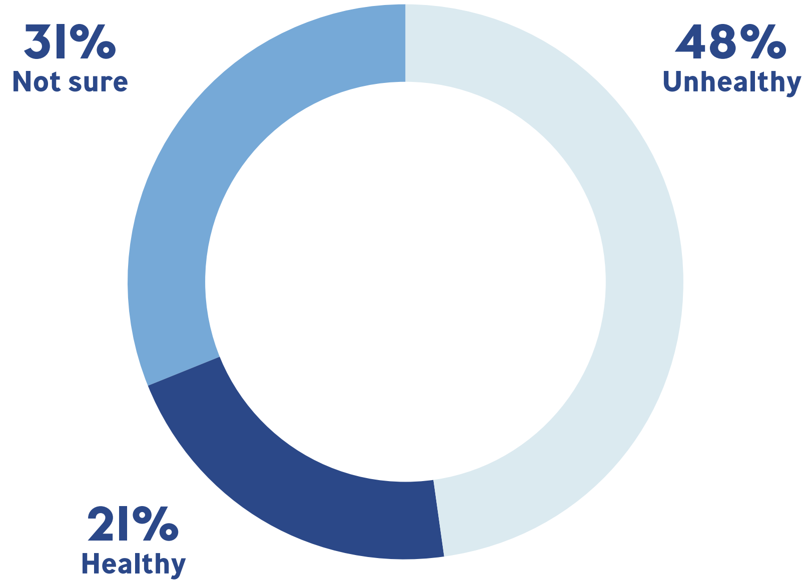
Many associate UPFs with a range of health issues beyond just rising obesity rates.

Growing scrutiny of food and drink processing has raised awareness of ultra-processing, which consumers view negatively due to its links with various health concerns. While many may not fully understand the specifics, they associate ultra-processing with artificial ingredients, chemical additives, and other practices perceived to be potentially harmful to long-term health. This growing awareness has fueled broader conversations about diet quality and the role of processed foods in modern lifestyles.

## Consumer behavior and industry response

Consumers acknowledge barriers, such as affordability, convenience, and taste, that prevent them from completely avoiding ultra-processed foods, but many are actively seeking to moderate their intake where possible. Associations with ultra-processing are also prompting people to reassess product categories once considered healthy, such as certain snack foods or ready meals. As attention on processing grows, the industry will need to address misinformation, promote a more balanced understanding of ultra-processing, and provide greater transparency around food processing methods, safety protocols, and the nutritional impact of different techniques.

**How healthy do you feel ultra processed (UPF) food and drink is? 2025 (UPF039)**
Global




# 5 Tempted by Taste

Comfort Recrafted | Meaningful Connections
At-Home Memories | Power of Taste



## Tempted by Taste

Taste remains the ultimate decision-maker in the consumer experience. Health, sustainability, and functionality must coexist with enjoyment, nostalgia, and emotional reward.

## The Subtrends

### Comfort recrafted

Familiar favorites are being reinvented with premium ingredients and functional benefits. Consumers are seeking reassurance through taste - comfort food without compromise.

### Meaningful connections

Flavor is linked with togetherness. Sharing food is seen as a form of bonding, with consumers using taste experiences to create rituals, traditions, and emotional anchors with others.

### At-home memories

Dining-in has evolved into an occasion, not a fallback. Consumers are recreating restaurant-quality flavors at home to turn daily meals into memorable moments.

### Power of taste

Strong flavor experiences can boost mood, evoke memories, or deliver motivation. Consumers are actively seeking intensity, contrast, and creativity to elevate everyday consumption into emotional expression.

# Consumers are looking for indulgent moments to boost their mood

Many consumers turn to food and drink as a break from daily pressures and stress but do not want to experience feelings of guilt when doing so.

## Managing daily uncertainties

Consumers are navigating daily uncertainties and often feel many of their worries are beyond their control. This can lead them to turn to food and drink for comfort and stress relief, either alone or with loved ones, as a way to step back from pressures and refocus on what matters.

## Moments of escapism and guilt-free indulgence

For these occasions, consumers seek products that provide escapism and enhance mood rather than simply fit into a busy lifestyle. They value indulgence that feels guilt-free, whether in terms of cost or health impact.

## Opportunities for brands

Brands targeting these moments should emphasize affordable indulgence, offering small luxuries that compensate for cutting back on bigger expenses, and permissible indulgence, with products perceived as better-for-you through clean-label ingredients, reduced calories, or other health-conscious benefits.

**68%**

Of global consumers turn to snacks for comfort eating purposes. 2025 (SNA819)

**52%**

Of global consumers who turn to snacks for comfort purposes at least some of the time do so because products help them relax and unwind. 2025 (SNA373)



# Consumers are likely to choose more premium at-home treats to offset reduced spending on eating out

Promoting the idea of affordable indulgence will be crucial for the industry.

## Financial pressures & lifestyle adjustments

Consumers remain cautious about their finances, often living month-to-month with limited savings and worrying that rising prices or changes in circumstances will hit them hard. Many are cutting back on non-essential products and activities to stretch their budgets.

## Seeking small indulgences

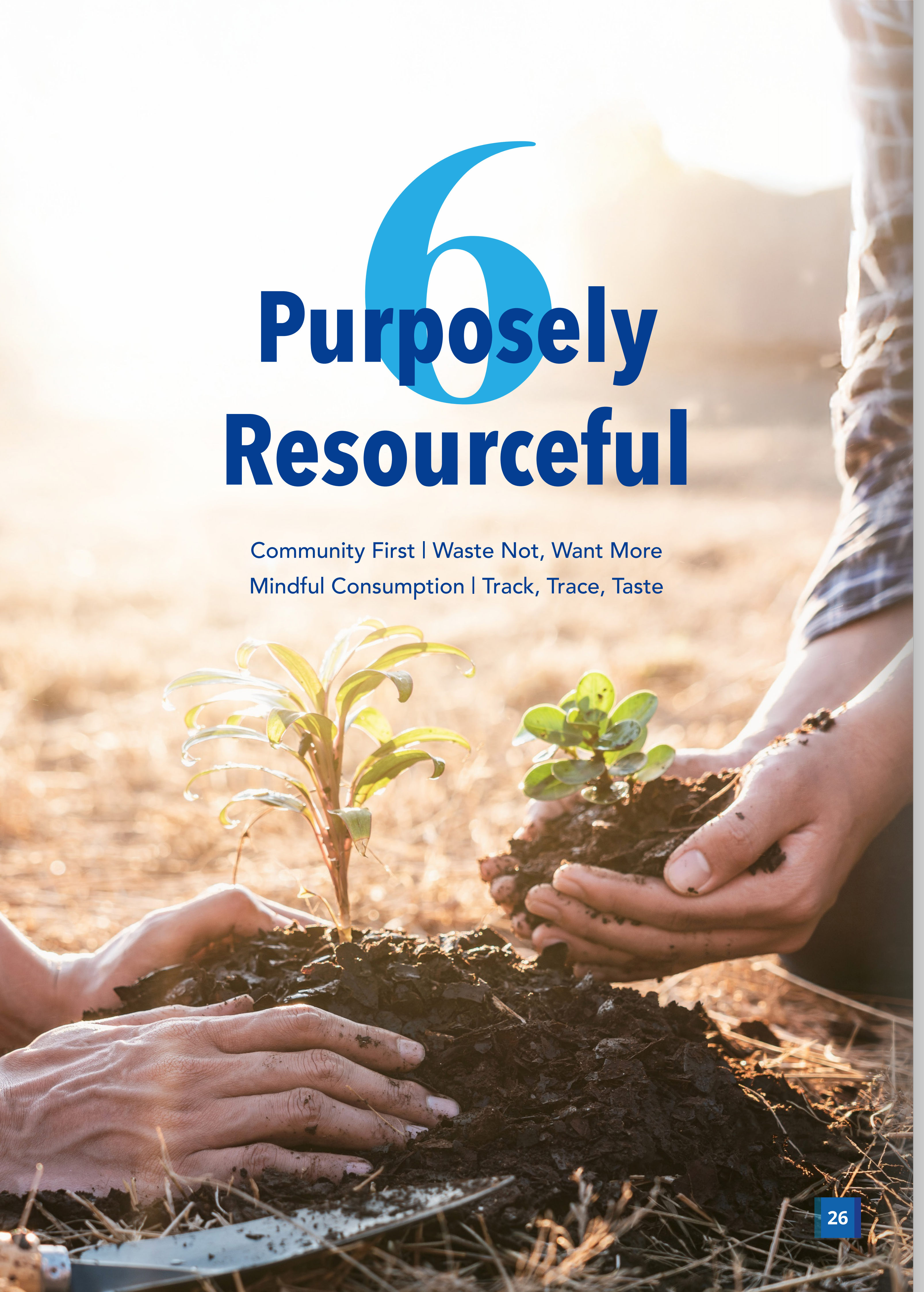
Despite this caution, consumers value self-indulgence and resist compromise. Years of budgeting have also led some to experience "austerity fatigue," prompting them to seek small treats and trade up on products. FMCG Gurus research shows around one third have reduced foodservice spending, while 39% are choosing more premium snacks at home. This creates an opportunity for brands to deliver affordable indulgence, offering foodservice-quality taste and sensory appeal at retail prices.

**32%**

Of global consumers say they will seek out more **premium snacks to compensate for reduced spending** in other areas. 2025 (SNA837)

**40%**

Of global consumers say they have **reduced spending in the foodservice channel** in the last six months. 2025 (FS444)



# 6 Purposely Resourceful

Community First | Waste Not, Want More
Mindful Consumption | Track, Trace, Taste



## Purposely Resourceful

This trend reflects a growing consumer desire to act responsibly without sacrificing convenience or enjoyment.

## The Subtrends

### Community first

Consumers are aligning with local networks, mutual support systems, and neighbourhood-based initiatives. Collaboration is becoming a key driver of responsible consumption and resilience.

### Waste not, want more

Resourcefulness is now considered a virtue, not a compromise. Consumers value solutions that prove sustainability.

### Mindful consumption

This subtrend highlights a shift from impulse buying to thoughtful selection, where buying less, but better, is the new luxury.

### Track, trace, taste

Transparency is moving beyond storytelling to measurable proof. Consumers want to know where ingredients came from and how they were produced.

# Consumers are becoming more resourceful and mindful

Many are avoiding excess and linking this to health and sustainability benefits. They want their eating and drinking habits to reflect a responsible, minimalist approach.

## Resourcefulness as a form of responsibility

As trust in big businesses declines, many consumers view corporate practices as excessive and wasteful, particularly around resource use. People feel that much food and drink waste stems from greed or a lack of accountability, leading resourcefulness to become a form of self-expression and social responsibility.

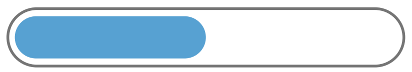
FMCG Gurus' research shows that six in ten consumers have adjusted their diets in recent years to live more sustainably, with little variation across age groups. While trends such as flexitarianism attract attention, most consumers adopt a simpler approach, buying only the fresh food they need and reducing processed food consumption. This not only supports personal health but also helps minimize food waste and its environmental impact.

**59%**

Of global consumers say they have **changed their diet** in the last two years to **lead a more environmentally friendly lifestyle**. (SU860)

**What changes have you made? 2024 (SU463)**

**43%**



Made greater attempts to reduce food waste

**29%**

Reduced/eliminated eating meat



# Consumers increasingly want to know where their products come from

Transparency is viewed as a sign of authenticity and value. It reassures them that brands act responsibly and prioritize their wellbeing.

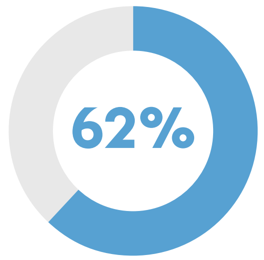
## Transparency and trust in product origins

As noted earlier, many are skeptical of food and drink companies' production practices, suspecting that cost-cutting measures can compromise health and quality. Combined with growing ethnocentric attitudes, this is driving greater attention to product origin and ingredient sourcing.

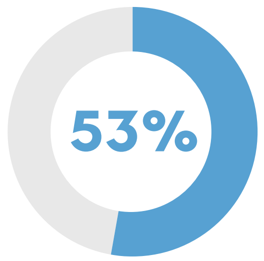
While perceptions of "local" or "artisan" can vary, consumers still want to understand the story behind what they buy, who made it, where it came from, and how it was produced. Trust is strengthened when brands offer full transparency, such as identifying the specific region or farm of origin.

Additionally, clear ingredient lists, free-from claims, and the absence of harmful chemicals enhance credibility. In contrast, extended or opaque supply chains can undermine trust, with consumers fearing these products may harm both their health and local producers.

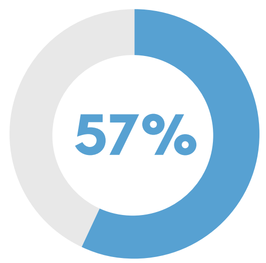
**Typically, how influential are these claims when choosing what food and drink to buy? 2025 (CN602) Global**



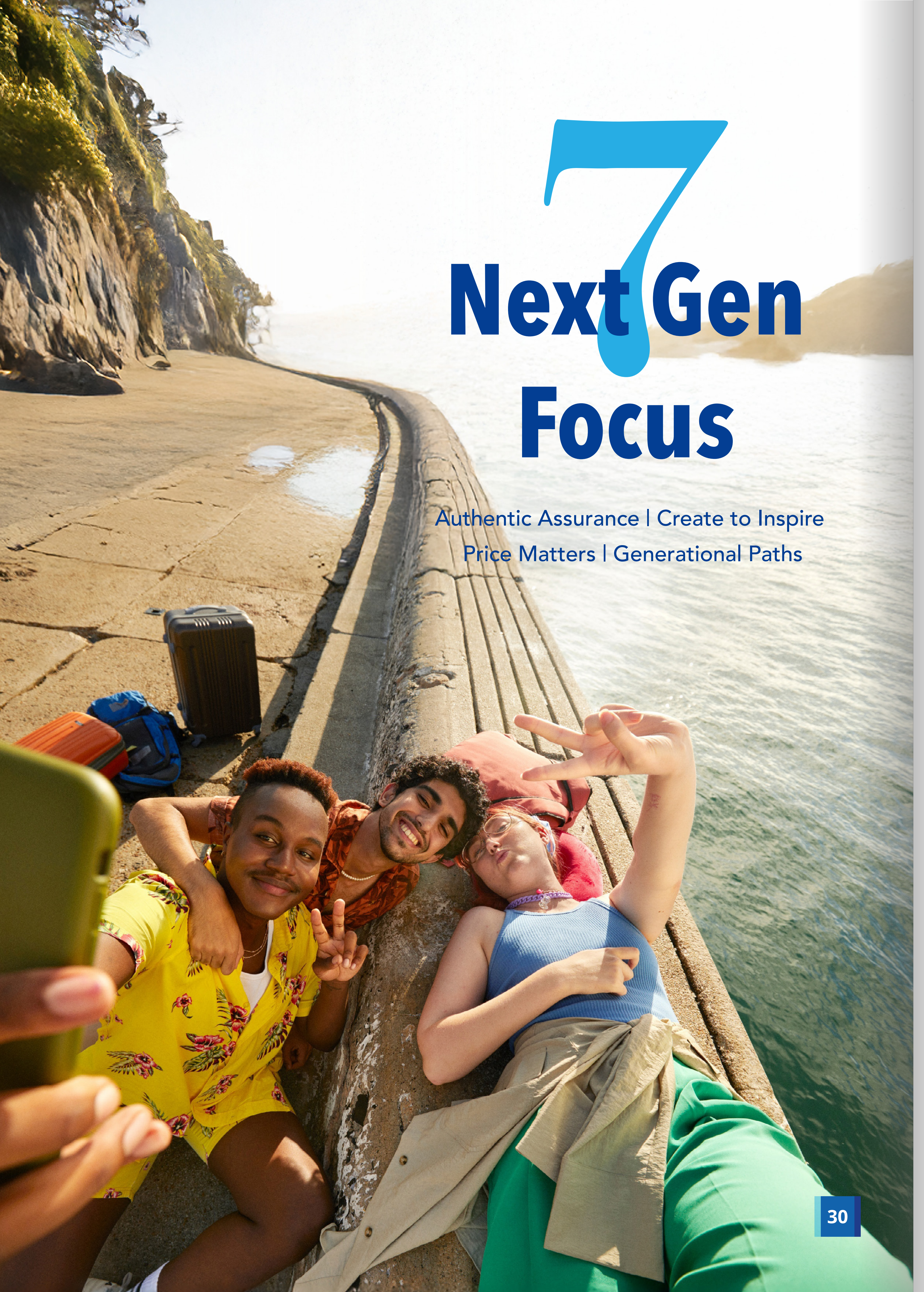

Product contains recognized ingredients




Product is traceable/ ingredients can be sourced




Product/ingredient is transparent in origin



# 7 Next Gen Focus

Authentic Assurance | Create to Inspire
Price Matters | Generational Paths



## Next Gen Focus

This trend recognises the influence of a rapidly evolving digital-native mindset on how consumers discover, evaluate, and personalise their food and nutrition choices.

## The Subtrends

### Taste.GPT

Consumers are turning to digital tools to explore, personalize, and optimize their food choices.

### Collective intelligence

Consumers are turning to shared reviews and social platforms experimentation to validate choices. Food forums and TikTok trends are now key drivers of interest.

### <Nutrition-as-Code>

Consumers are expecting nutrition to be tailored through real-time data. DNA-driven recommendations and adaptive supplement plans reflect a growing belief that wellness should be as responsive as software.

### Tailor my choice

Consumers want to tweak, build, and optimize products around their unique lifestyle, goals, and identity.

# Consumers are seeking real-time, tailored solutions to support their individual health goals

Many feel that wellness products currently on the market are too generic and fail to meet their specific nutritional or lifestyle needs.

## Personalization and real-time wellness solutions

This perception is especially strong among younger consumers, who are accustomed to using technology and apps to receive instant, personalized recommendations across all areas of life.

**The proportion of consumers who say that they monitor their diets via mobile apps. 2024 (PSN096)**
Global

**30%**
Generation Z

**27%**
Millennials

**25%**
Generation X

**9%**
Baby Boomers

The rise of advanced technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, is expected to reshape the health and wellness landscape. Consumers will demand greater personalization, from products that adapt to their individual needs to tools that allow them to track and measure progress in real-time. These developments will enhance perceptions of effectiveness and encourage willingness to pay a premium. However, issues surrounding data privacy, information accuracy, and ethical use of technology will remain key considerations for consumers and brands alike.



# The influence of social media and online personalities will lead to food and drink fads emerging more frequently

This trend will be especially prevalent among younger consumers, who often use such choices as a means of self-expression.

## The growing influence of technology & social media

Beyond health, technology and the internet are increasingly shaping flavor preferences and product appeal. Social media influencers, in particular, have the power to transform once-niche products into viral sensations almost overnight.

## The power of influencers in shaping demand

While the duration of consumer interest in these fads, and their willingness to pay a premium, can vary, it's clear that social media now plays a greater role than ever in influencing product visibility and purchase decisions. As a result, influencer marketing has become a powerful tool for driving demand and supporting dynamic pricing strategies.

## Emerging fads driven by online trends

In the coming years, new food and drink fads will continue to emerge directly from social media trends and influencer activity. These trends are especially likely to attract younger consumers who engage with brands online and are drawn to limited-edition products that represent style, exclusivity, and self-expression.

**63%**

Of global consumers say they **follow food and drink brands via social media channels** such as Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok. 2025 (EC447)

**64%**

Of global consumers like **limited edition flavors because it's exciting** to try new flavors. 2025 (FCT854)

# 8 Inflation Fallout

Reward vs Worth | Self-Centric Shift
Premium Experience | Redefining Quality



## Inflation Fallout

This trend reflects the evolving relationship between consumers and spending in the wake of prolonged economic uncertainty.

## The Subtrends

### Reward vs worth

Consumers are evaluating purchases through a dual lens of enjoyment and practicality. Items that elevate daily life are deemed "worth it," even amidst ongoing financial considerations.

### Self-centric shift

There is a growing focus on individual priorities, well-being, and lifestyle enjoyment. Consumers are spending intentionally to enhance personal happiness, experiences, and convenience.

### Premium experience

Consumers are willing to invest in products that offer a sensory or experiential upgrade, elevating everyday moments into small luxuries without the guilt of overspending.

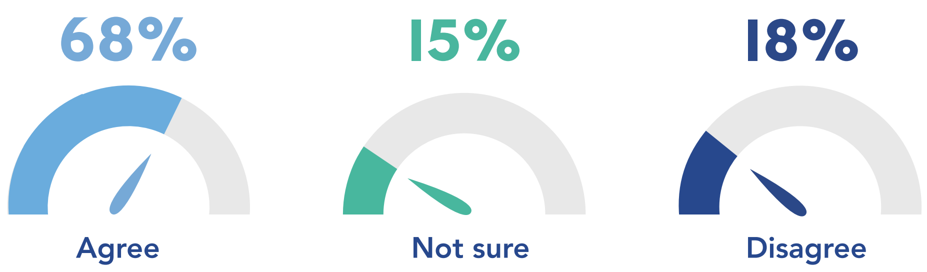
### Redefining quality

Perceptions of value are linked to authenticity and traceability. Consumers are redefining "quality" in tangible, experiential terms.

# The concept of a reward economy will increasingly drive consumption occasions as consumers grow weary of ongoing financial pressures

This trend will particularly resonate with those who are more inclined to treat themselves or trade up to premium options.

**To what extent do you agree with the statement "It is ok to consume an indulgent treat occasionally as part of a healthy diet". 2025 (AN779)**
Global




## The debit and credit approach to eating

As highlighted in Trend 5, "Tempted by Taste," consumers often snack for comfort. They take a "debit-and-credit" approach, believing a generally healthy diet allows occasional indulgence without worrying about nutrition. Regardless of their needs, taste and enjoyment remain top priorities.

## Reward as a driver of purchase decisions

The concept of reward should be leveraged by the industry, tapping into consumers' sense of entitlement, desire for indulgence, and preference for high-quality experiences, even in everyday products. Promoting items that offer something "extra" can drive trade-up behavior, especially among those fatigued by strict budgets or austerity shopping habits.

## Promoting premium experiences without overestimating spend

While willingness to pay more should not be overestimated, emphasizing reward, occasion, and premium experience can encourage consumers to spend slightly more on products that feel special or indulgent.



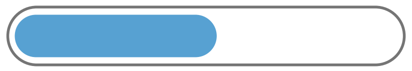
# Although the appeal has dipped, consumers continue to seek experimental flavors that offer a memorable experience, and with rising prices, the focus is on the occasion

Ingredient integrity is central to redefining quality, as consumers want reassurance that ingredients are real, authentic, and trustworthy.

**60%**

**Of global consumers like food and drink products with new and unusual/exotic flavors. 2025 (FCT768)**

**52%**



**Of global consumers think the use of high-quality ingredients makes a foodservice outlet premium. 2025 (FS979)**

## Balancing comfort & exploration

While consumers increasingly favor traditional, comforting flavors in uncertain times, they remain attracted to new and exotic tastes, often as a form of self-expression and to showcase culinary skills. These flavors are most appealing in occasion-driven moments rather than routine consumption.

## Reward, indulgence & premium experience

Brands can capitalize on this by emphasizing reward, indulgence, and premium experiences, highlighting authenticity and conversation-worthy ingredients.

## Ingredient integrity & consumer trust

Premium is defined less by trendiness and more by ingredient integrity, transparency, and ethical sourcing. Demonstrating real, clean, and safe ingredients builds trust, encourages trade-up behavior, and enhances willingness to pay a premium in both retail and out-of-home contexts.

# 9 Powered by Simplicity

Created for Me | Mood on Demand
No Prep, No Problem | Function Meets Emotion




## Powered by Simplicity

This trend highlights the growing consumer desire for products and experiences that are intuitive, effortless, and immediately gratifying.

## The Subtrends

### Created for me

Personalization is now a baseline expectation. Consumers want products, services, and experiences designed around their unique needs and lifestyles.

### Mood on demand

From functional beverages to comfort foods, consumers seek experiences that help manage energy, stress, or relaxation, providing quick, tangible shifts in wellbeing.

### No prep, no problem

Consumers are gravitating toward ready-to-use, easy-to-integrate options, reflecting a desire for streamlined yet satisfying experiences.

### Function meets feeling

Simplicity does not mean compromise. Consumers are seeking products that combine practical benefits with sensory or emotional gratification.

# Convenience is seen as a form of premium in an era of time scarcity

Consumers are seeking quick, hassle-free solutions to simplify their busy lives.

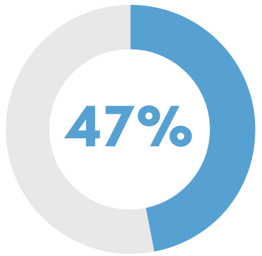
## Feeling time-scarce

Consumers increasingly feel time-scarce as they try to pack as many activities as possible into their day. This pressure can stem from unavoidable aspects of modern life, such as long commutes, extended working hours, and balancing personal and professional commitments. However, time-scarcity can also be self-imposed, for example through excessive use of digital devices. Levels of self-entitlement mean that consumers prefer to spend minimal time on activities they find unenjoyable, including, for some, cooking, and often consider even small time commitments excessive.

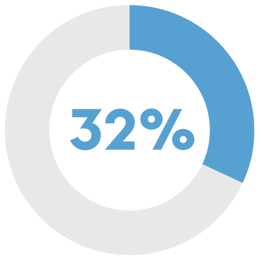
## Convenience as a form of premium

As a result, convenience is now perceived as a form of premium, and consumers are willing to pay extra for hassle-free solutions. This extends across all aspects of life, from cooking and nutrition to health and indulgence. Exposure to growing product choice, apps, and direct-to-consumer channels reinforces the expectation that solutions should be instant. Regardless of a product's primary function, it must be perceived as hassle-free and effortless to integrate into daily routines.

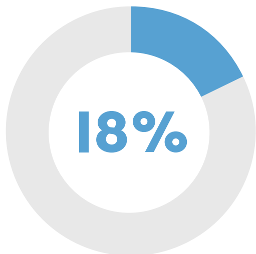
**What challenges do you feel exist when it comes to leading a healthy lifestyle? 2025 (AN314)**
**Global – Active Nutrition consumers**




It is difficult to find time to relax




I do not have enough time to exercise




Cooking takes too much time

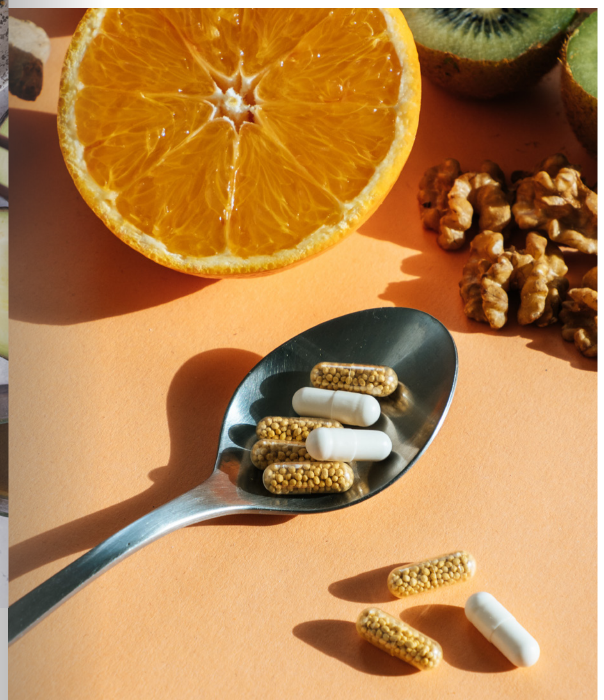


# Ease of use is key for functional foods, supplements, and fortified products, as consumers seek hassle-free solutions that simplify health routines

They value simplicity, aiming to de-clutter, reduce information overload, and focus on what matters most.

## Rising barriers to healthy living

Consumers increasingly feel that barriers to healthy living are growing, prompting more people to turn to nutritional supplements for an extra health boost. Ease of use consistently ranks among the top priorities, emphasizing the importance of convenience in the functional market. This opens opportunities for innovation in product formats that combine functionality with simplicity and ease of consumption.



## Simplicity & emotional wellness

Amid busy, digitally driven lives, consumers face information overload and are seeking to de-clutter and refocus on emotional wellbeing. As a result, they are prioritizing simplicity, nature, meaningful relationships, and everyday moments that enhance happiness and balance.

**36%**

Of global consumers say they have used **nutritional supplements** in the last two years to improve their health. 2024 (NS637)

**43%**

of global consumers say they are **concerned about the amount of time they spend indoors in front of digital devices**. 2024 (IMU670)

# 10 Backed by Evidence

Everyday Rituals | Trusted Nutrition
Efficacy in Action | Ctrl-Alt-Eat



## Backed by Evidence

This trend reflects the rising consumer demand for verifiable, science-driven claims in health, nutrition, and wellness.

## The Subtrends

### Everyday rituals

Consumers are integrating wellness into consistent routines. Products that support daily practices are valued for their reliability and tangible contribution to well-being.

### Trusted nutrition

There is a heightened focus on scientifically validated formulations with consumers gravitating toward brands that demonstrate benefits, sourcing, and research.

### Efficacy in action

Consumers expect functional outcomes. Brands that provide evidence of impact, supported by data or testimonials, foster deeper trust and loyalty.

### Ctrl-Alt-Eat

Consumers are leveraging apps, wearable devices, and AI insights to make smarter choices, connecting evidence to behaviour in real time for personalized nutrition and enhanced control.

# Consumers increasingly seek scientific evidence to support product claims as they become more critical of brand practices and policies

However, this information must be communicated clearly and accessibly to avoid overwhelming them.

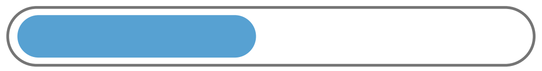
## Growing skepticism toward wellness claims

As trust in food and drink brands remains limited, consumers are often skeptical of wellness claims, viewing them as exaggerated attempts to justify premium pricing or exploit demand for quick health fixes. This skepticism is intensified by wider economic pressures, such as price inflation, and the spread of misleading health information from social media influencers.

## The need for validation and scientific transparency

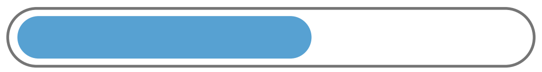
In 2026, growing uncertainty and consumer caution will heighten the demand for validation and credible evidence that brands genuinely prioritize consumer wellbeing. It will no longer be sufficient to display multiple health claims; instead, brands must communicate clear, accessible, and science-backed information on packaging that reassures consumers and substantiates any claims made.

**47%**



**Of global consumers say there is not enough scientific information on product packaging on food, drink, and supplements when it comes to health claims. 2025 (CN200)**

**55%**



**Of global consumers think brands that provide scientific information around health claims are more trustworthy. 2025 (CN200)**




# Validation is essential as consumers grow skeptical of brand practices and policies

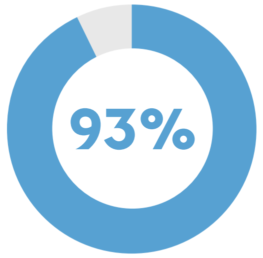
With wellness spending becoming more deliberate, consumers seek credible proof and transparency around health claims and product benefits before making a purchase.

## Spending in the health & wellness market

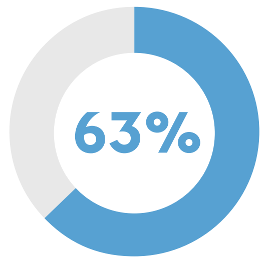
Rising prices and increased scrutiny of health claims mean that spending in the wellness market is becoming more deliberate. Consumers remain willing to spend and trade up but seek reassurance that products are effective, essential, and offer good value for money.

## The role of education & evidence

This is particularly important for consumers committed to improving their health but lacking detailed knowledge of ingredients or products, making it the brand's responsibility to educate, potentially at the point of purchase. In the sports nutrition market, for example, most consumers are casual users who are concerned about rising costs and may cut back on non-essential products. Clear scientific evidence on packaging is therefore crucial for shaping perceptions of efficacy, necessity, and value across all functional markets.




Of global consumers have **purchased a form of sports nutrition product** in the last six months. 2025 (SN188)




Of consumers who purchase sports nutrition products are **concerned that rising prices will impact their sports nutrition purchasing/ consumption habits.** 2025 (SN624)

# Turning insights into action:

## Five steps for brands

In 2026, brands must embrace transparency, authenticity, and care, showing consumers their best interests are central. Trust will be earned through honesty, meaningful engagement, and clear, tangible actions across all touchpoints.

### 1 Trust Starts with Transparency:

Prioritize the need for transparency and demonstrating that you have the best interest of the consumer at heart in an age of distrust.



**Responsibility and impact matter. Supporting local initiatives, health needs, and ethical innovation shows purpose, proving brands can balance opportunity with integrity while delivering tangible, socially meaningful value.**

### 2 Ease the Pressure, Elevate the Mood:

Offer comfort and escapism from moments of daily pressures, focusing on mood enhancement and encouraging consumers to re-prioritize what is important.

### 3 Busy Lives, Simple Solutions:

Recognize that convenience is a premium in an era of busy lives. Also acknowledge rising barriers to health and that "ease of us" and "hassle-free" are important to consumers.

### 4 Think Global, Act Local:

Support local causes and initiatives which consumers feel close to and believe that they can actively monitor and witness any changes/ benefits because of investment.

### 5 Responsible Solutions for Emerging Needs:

Provide solutions to new markets emerging from GLP-1 medication, such as aiding side-effects and recovery after medication, but do not be seen to be promoting irresponsible behavior.

# References

## & further reading


FMCG Gurus - Top Ten Trends for 2026 - Global Report

FMCG Gurus - Indulgence and Innovation in the Foodservice Channel - Global Report - 2025

FMCG Gurus - Functional Ingredients: Unlocking the Future of Wellness - Trend Report 2025

FMCG Gurus - Addressing Ultra-Processing Claims in the Bakery Sector - Trend Report - 2025

FMCG Gurus – Muscle Health & Senior Consumers: Key Trends and Wellness Opportunities – Trend Report 2025

FMCG Gurus - Supplement Formats - Balancing Efficacy and Ease of Use - Trend Report - 2025

FMCG Gurus – Ingredient Integrity & Distrust – Trend Report – 2025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