

**mtm**

# 12 Trends of 2023



# Foreword



This report is a guide to the emerging trends to look out for in 2023, curated by the Cultural Insights & Trends team at global research agency MTM.

We've selected one trend for each month of the year, taking inspiration from the events that will make up 2023, from Valentine's Day and Halloween to the Women's World Cup and Black Friday. We'll cover themes from relationships to religion, mental health to travel, each approached with an eye on how it relates to the key client sectors we work with at MTM: media, technology and entertainment. We'll consider how the featured trends are driven or impacted by the macro cultural and social shifts that are shaping today's landscape, from economic crisis to political instability, eco-anxiety and more.

This is not your standard end-of-year trends piece that will be outdated within months: instead, we see this as a living report that will grow as the year progresses and reactively respond to cultural developments. Throughout 2023, we'll revisit each of the monthly trends and produce new, up-to-the-minute insights to guide your strategy and thinking.

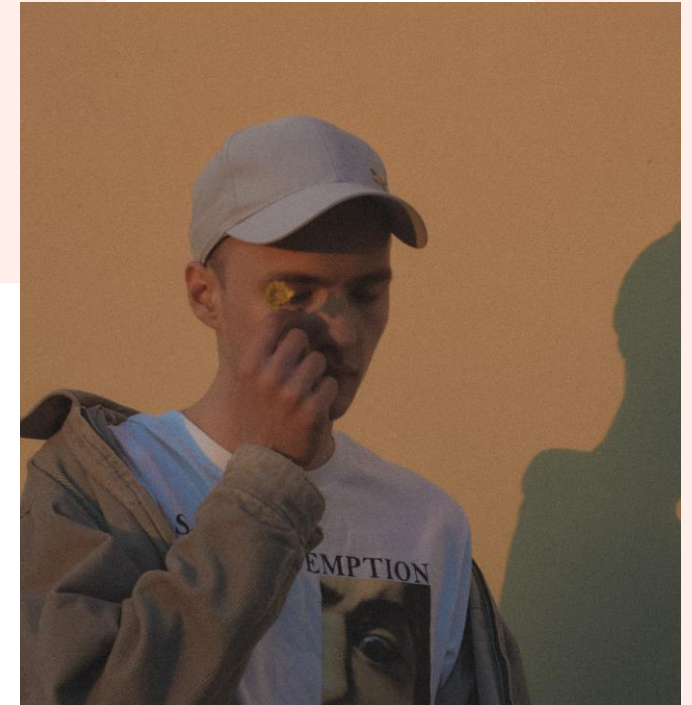
# Cultural Insights & Trends at MTM

## How we define Cultural Insights & Trends

- We explore the societal shifts and external forces that shape the way people think, act and feel
- The aim is to connect clients with the right insights and trends for their business and help them decide what to do and when

## Our philosophy:

- It's not our role to dictate trends, but instead to share what's really going on
- We have a responsibility to reflect and be inclusive of the full population in our research
- We check ourselves and challenge our own received knowledge
- We're neither pretentious or fluffy
- We're not afraid to delve into challenging topics and uncover uncomfortable truths





# 12 Trends of 2023



## January

*New Year*  
New year, old me



## February

*Valentine's Day*  
Cost of loving crisis



## March

*International Women's Day*  
Femtech futures



## April

*Ramadan & Eid*  
The Muslim consumer



## May

*Mental Health Awareness Week*  
Mental health communities



## June

*Pride Month*  
Queer gaming



## July

*Women's World Cup*  
Female football icons



## August

*Summer holidays*  
Railway revival



## September

*Back to school*  
Edutainment



## October

*Halloween*  
Horror hysteria



## November


*Black Friday*  
Conscious consumerism



## December

*Festive season*  
Chosen family

# New year, old me


January 

'Happy New Year' is about to take on a new meaning as we see a shift in what pursuing happiness looks like. From the rise of 'break culture' (the antidote to hustle culture) and anti-aesthetic wellness, to the adoption of 'goblin mode', there's increased focus on authenticity and realness in the wellness space. This has changed New Year's resolutions as we know them. With only 3 in 10 people keeping their resolutions in 2021, a new twist in the old tradition might just be what this new year needs.

Representing the new generations' values of prioritising their mental health, a new opportunity arises in which focusing on more introspective resolutions is the best way to protect ourselves from the disappointment of unaccomplished goals. With publications such as Vogue and ELLE highlighting more accessible and alternative wellness methods, mindful eating and emphasis on mental wellbeing are just a few practices that focus on the individual and create an inclusive space for everyone to have a truly Happy New Year.



# Cost of loving crisis

February 

Sure, J.Lo might have once sang ‘Love Don’t Cost a Thing’; but dating today absolutely does. Whether it’s tension in your long-term relationship or ‘cash-candid dating,’ the cost of living crisis is undoubtedly causing a crisis in our love lives..

A recent survey by Stowe Family Law revealed that 66.5% of people claimed they fear the cost-of-living crisis will negatively impact their relationship in the future. And it's not just established couples that are feeling the financial strain — 22% of Millennials are going into debt from dating as everything gets more expensive - from date night outfits and flowers to fancy restaurants and pricey attractions..

However, there are potentially some silver linings to the economic hardships we've found ourselves in. One of which is the newfound acceptability of raising the topic of money and savings in relationships. Whether it's a first date or further down the line – talking about money situations and long-term fiscal priorities is no longer perceived as a taboo in the language of love.





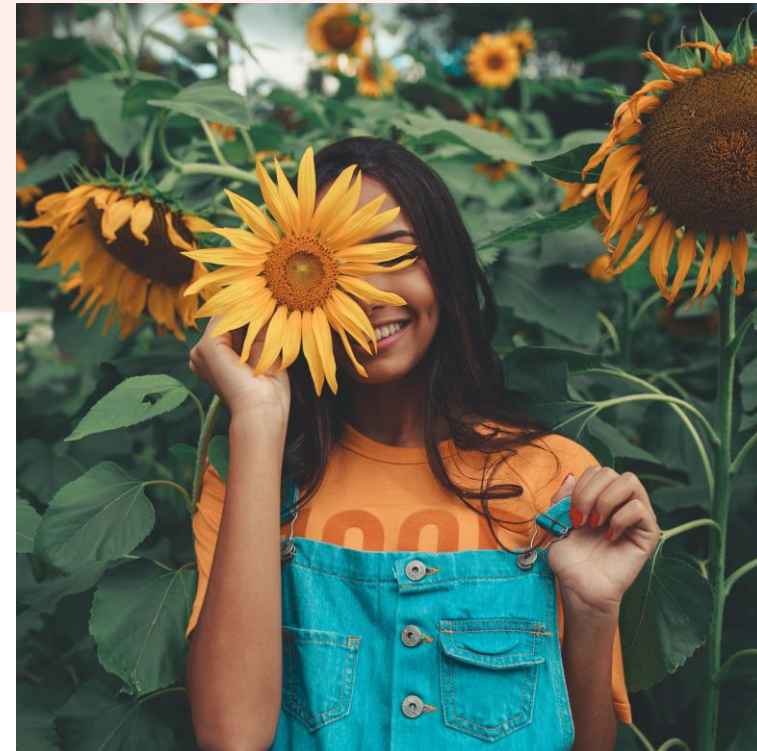
# Femtech futures

March



2022 was a dark year for the rights of women and trans people in the US and UK. The overturning of Roe vs. Wade by the US Supreme Court in June turned the clock back to 1973 for abortion rights, and in the UK, a ban on conversion therapy excluded trans people. As these groups fear for their medical rights and access to care, emerging technology can provide a safer space for consultation, support, and even treatment.

Out of this need emerges the rise of techceuticals, tools like virtual clinics and VR prescription services that provide particular benefit to marginalised groups. Happiness House is an upcoming free mental health resource in the metaverse, that will offer peer support and professional therapy, learning games, crisis resources, and mindfulness techniques. XRHealth gamifies therapy using a VR headset, providing patients with personalised treatment in real-time. Moving wellness towards these spaces could be crucial for allowing women and trans people privacy and safety in a more anonymised and discrete setting, giving them greater agency to seek treatment for their concerns.



# The Muslim consumer

April



The Muslim population worldwide is projected to reach 2.2 billion by 2030. This is driving demand for a global Halal market, forecast to be worth \$9.7 trillion by 2025. It encompasses industries including food, beauty, fashion, fintech, travel, entertainment and more.

Gen Z and Millennial Muslim creatives have taken to platforms like TikTok and Instagram to experiment with fashion in a way that is both stylish and in line with their religious practice. Major brands have utilised the holy month of Ramadan to activate campaigns in the sector, such as Bvlgari, Loro Piana, MiuMiu, Cartier and Tiffany & co. Despite the immense growth in this consumer base, Ramadan's global potential has yet to be fully tapped into. Ramadan represents a moment of unity for a culturally and generationally diverse group of people. Cultural moments like Ramadan must be part of brand and content strategy if companies are to keep up with this exciting growth sector.





# Mental health communities

May



One standout trait of Gen Z is their openness about mental health, which is brought to life by their interest in consuming and posting content on this topic on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. As a result, much of their knowledge and understanding of mental health comes from their peers. The benefit of this is that mental health issues are normalised and young people are encouraged to get help, but there are risks of misinformation and inaccurate self-diagnoses.

Responding to the demand for safe spaces to discuss mental health online, [Chill Pill](#) is an anonymous audio app targeted to Gen Z. Celebrities have also stepped in to guide young fans to reputable resources. Megan Thee Stallion [launched](#) the website Bad B\*tches Have Bad Days Too, while Lil Nas X has been [awarded](#) for his contribution to suicide prevention by The Trevor Project.



# Queer gaming

June



As the gaming industry grows, so too does the diversity of gamers. Gaming has always included a strong, if relatively lesser known, queer community. But the gaming world of today is awash with thousands of queer gaming communities, who find each other through platforms like Twitch and Discord. Despite this, there is little representation of diverse genders and sexualities among characters in video games. According to recent [MTM research](#), only 14% of all gamers think LGBTQ+ characters are well represented in games. We also learned that 70% want to be able to choose their character's hairstyle, clothes etc. regardless of gender.

Some games have been applauded for inclusivity. The Sims allows players to choose characters' pronouns and which genders they're attracted to. They've released special items, such as a Pride clothing set. Dragon Age and Mass Effect have led the way for inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters. However, only 20% of LGBTQ+ gamers think representation has improved in recent years, so there's much more work to be done.



# Female football icons

July



The popularity of women's football has boomed since the England team's European Championship success in the summer of 2022 and major TV deals like the [£8m-a-season agreement](#) involving BBC and Sky Sports. An [additional 4 million fans](#) have come to UK women's sport in 2022 alone, and fronting these fandoms is a new generation of athletes, reflective of a more diverse and inclusive audience, and more politically and socially conscious than many of their male counterparts.

England internationals [Beth Mead](#) and [Lotte Wubben-Moy](#) spoke out against Qatar's LGBTQ+ rights record and treatment of migrant workers. Elsewhere, the [US](#) and [Spain](#) squads have staged collective protests against pay and workplace treatment respectively.

The reach of these figures will increasingly span beyond football. Leah Williamson recently agreed a [partnership with Gucci](#), and Lucy Bronze and Karen Carney partnered with Visa on their [Team Talks](#) campaign, paving the way for other women footballers to become iconic household faces, as we look to the World Cup 2023 and beyond.





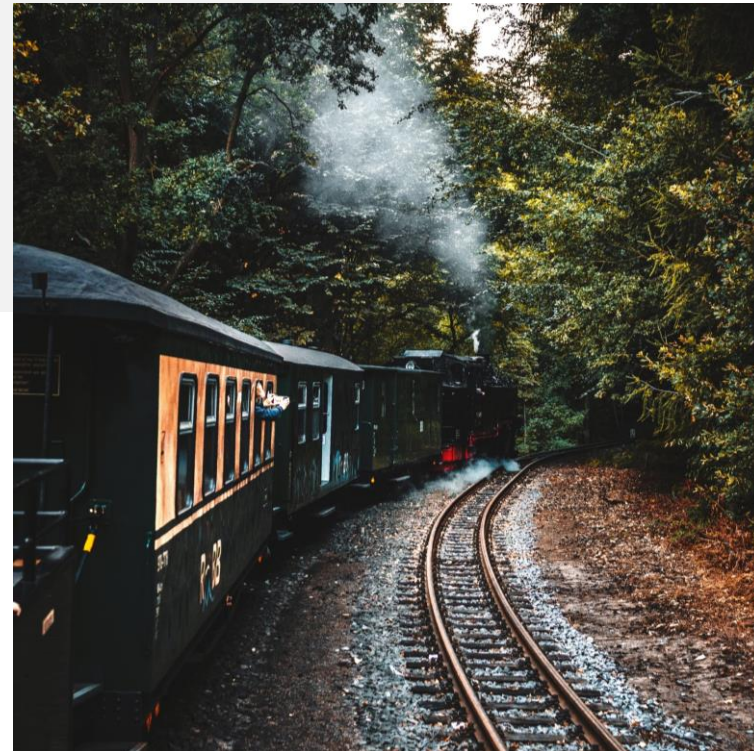
# Railway revival

August



Who remembers *flygskam*? One of the words of the year in 2019, it denotes the shame that the climate movement induces from those who use air travel. The French government took a landmark step in 2022 in banning short-haul domestic flights where an alternative rail journey of sub-2.5 hours is available. Out of this slow, responsible travel movement has emerged a renaissance in the railways across Europe, with tourists embracing the leisurely approach to travel, and often incorporating the journey into the overall holiday experience.

2023 is set to be the breakthrough for the European railway renaissance. New Nightjet sleeper trains from Austria's national railway network, OBB, will deliver newfound comfort and ease to travellers between Austria and Rome, Milan and Venice, expanding across other parts of Europe over the next three years. Those who are uncompromising on luxury can look forward to the Orient Express La Dolce Vita, a new service that will set passengers back around €2,000 per night. Sunseekers and snow-lovers alike can expect more sustainable routes to their favourite destinations, with Sunweb Group and European Sleeper offering direct night trains to summer and winter locations in the south of France and French Alps.



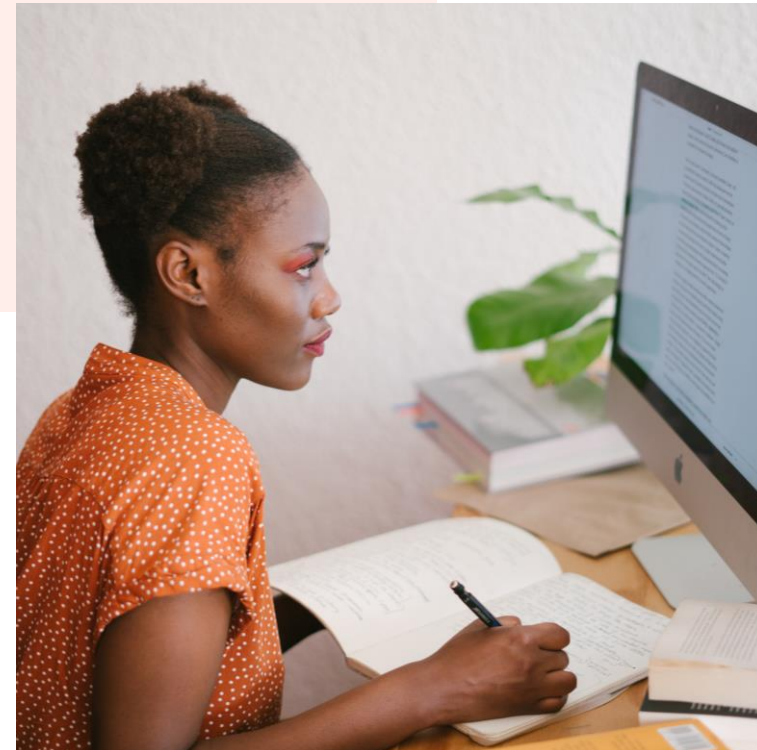
# Eduainment

September



Gen Z is disrupting the traditional route of going to university before entering the workplace, as they find that alternatives such as apprenticeships better fit their goals and ways of learning. Organisations like [Multiverse](#) that offer applied learning appeal to young people with short attention spans, who are impatient to gain real-world, tangible experience. They want to progress quickly in their chosen field in order to secure financial stability, especially after seeing how their parents and older siblings have been affected by economic crises.

In addition to apprenticeships, employees are looking for engaging educational content that makes it fun and easy to learn on the job. This trend is driving the rise of business podcasts like [Young and Profiting with Hala Taha](#), educational content creators like [Ludus](#) (who teaches maths on TikTok), and gamified learning apps like [Mimo](#), which enables you to learn to code in five minutes a day. These examples show a willingness to engage with business or educational content during times like the daily commute or while making dinner, which were previously reserved for entertainment.



# Horror hysteria

October



Tastes in media content ebb and flow as we respond to the shifting external forces affecting our lives. In recent years we've seen a boom in life-affirming, comforting feel-good content as the bleakness of the pandemic took hold. Now, there's a new - and perhaps more surprising - type of content that audiences are craving - horror.

The horror genre's share of the US box office has increased more than fivefold since 2014, overtaking comedy, drama and thrillers. The psychological comfort of watching horror through a screen can be liberating for audiences, and we can anticipate a swathe more content in 2023. Wildly popular production company A24 has leapt into its Gen-Z focused horrors, with MaXXXine and I Saw The TV Glow hotly anticipated for release next year, and Netflix have announced plans for more serial killer shows following the haunting but captivating *Dahmer - Monster*. Horror's creep into high-budget spoken word audio has also been signalled with the launch of Quiet Part Loud, the first fictional audio series from Jordan Peele's Monkeypaw Productions.





# Conscious consumerism

November



Online sales on Black Friday dropped for the first time ever in the US in 2021, suggesting people are starting to question the unbridled consumerism associated with the event. The decline can be attributed to many factors, from the economic climate to consumers' sustainability concerns, and a general fatigue with shopping events. Black Friday has expanded to a month of cyber sales, and there's an increasing number of similar events throughout the year, such as Prime Day and Singles Day. In reaction, this year 86% of UK independent retailers said they wouldn't participate, with some closing online stores for the day or donating profits to charity.

This trend aligns with the rise of conscious consumerism, defined as “deliberately making purchasing decisions that have a positive social, economic, and environmental impact.” We've also seen a rise in slow shopping - taking time to think about purchases - designed to eliminate impulse buys and encourage more intentional spending.



# Chosen family

December



Amid a fading global pandemic that has left a massive impact on our daily lives, people of different backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, and beliefs have come together in their times of need. A term coined by marginalised groups and popularised by the LGBTQIA+ community, a chosen family is the group of people you choose to surround yourself with and that fills in the gap where family might be needed. The concept grew during lockdowns that kept our loved ones away during important dates.

As the end-of-year holidays approach, a change in the usual perception of celebrations is bound to happen, not only for the inclusion of marginalised communities, but also in hopes of a more empathetic approach towards chosen families and the people we chose to spend these special moments with. The Old Gays, a four-member group of 'grandfluencers' on TikTok, promote the chosen family concept as they show their 9.2M followers that as long as they have each other, even if they are not blood related, they are happy and loved.



**mtm**

Thank you

Marina Graham  
Research Director  
[marina.graham@wearemtm.com](mailto:marina.graham@wearemtm.com)

Alex Gibson  
Research Manager  
[alex.gibson@wearemtm.com](mailto:alex.gibson@wearemtm.com)

Jessica Pinkett  
Research Manager  
[jessica.pinkett@wearemtm.com](mailto:jessica.pinkett@wearemtm.com)