

Ford releases 7th Annual Trends Report

Self-driving cars are a hot topic today, but if you had to choose, would you rather your children ride in an autonomous vehicle or drive with a stranger? You may be surprised to learn that 67% of adults would opt for the self-driving car.



That insight is one of many revealed in the 2019 Looking Further with Ford Trend Report. The report takes a deep look into the drivers of behavioural change, specifically uncovering the dynamic relationships consumers have with the shifting landscape of technology.

Change is not always easy, particularly when it is driven by forces beyond our control. In a global survey of 14 countries, Ford's research revealed that 87% of adults believe technology is the biggest driver of change. And while 79% of adults maintain that technology is a force for good, there are large segments of the population that have significant concerns. Some are afraid of artificial intelligence (AI). Others fear the impact of technology on our emotional wellbeing.

"Individually and collectively, these behavioural changes can take us from feeling helpless to feeling empowered, and unleash a world of wonder, hope and progress," says Kuda Takura, smart mobility specialist at Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa.

"At Ford, we are deeply focused on human-centric design and are committed to finding mobility solutions that help improve the lives of consumers and their communities. In the context of change, we have to protect what we consider most valuable - having a trusted relationship with our customers. So, we are always deliberate and thoughtful about how we navigate change."

Key insights from Ford's 7th annual Trends Report:

- Almost half of people around the world believe that fear drives change
- Seven in 10 say that they are energised by change
- 87% agree that technology is the biggest driver of today's change
- Eight in 10 citizens believe that technology is a force for good
- 45% of adults globally report that they envy people who can disconnect from their devices
- Seven out of 10 consumers agree that we should have a mandatory time-out from our devices

7 Trends for 2019

The Tech Divide

Technology has a profound impact on how we connect with and see the world - more than ever before. Yet there's an underlying tension between those who have access and believe it's a force for good and those who don't have access.

At Ford, technology is used to help make mobility smarter, safer, and more convenient for people around the world. The company is deliberate about the technology used and educating consumers on how to use technology smartly, thoughtfully, and in ways that add value to their lives.

In some American cities, Ford leverages the work of the City Solutions team, which works with cities to understand their physical and cultural infrastructure and find solutions to help residents move more freely.

Digital Detox

Despite being tethered to our devices, trends show that many are increasingly aware of - and alarmed by - their device dependency, and seeking ways to hold themselves accountable for the time they spend online.

Ford has studied the effects of high-performance race-car driving on the brain. The company is applying data uncovered in its research of these "buzz moments" - the thrills that play a vital role in overall wellness - to better understand how to improve drivers' experience and mindset behind the wheel.

Reclaiming Control

In a world where control feels so out of grasp for many, consumers are looking for ways to reclaim agency over their lives, where self-improvement is paramount. As part of Ford's human-centred design process, empathy research is conducted to understand people's needs and habits - including university professors, tri-athletes, and everyday citizens.

The company uses this research to develop vehicles and technology, like Ford Co-Pilot 360T, which is designed to help relieve some of the burdensome tasks of driving, and give the driver confidence in their vehicle's ability to adapt and handle stressful road scenarios.

Many Faces of Me

With social media playing such a large part in consumers' lives, today many portray various personas - from who they are in real life, to how they depict themselves online, which ultimately impacts what they buy, wear, and drive, as well as their technology choices.

Ford understands that a vehicle is a reflection of a driver's sense of self and, as such, the vehicles are designed to speak to an individual's needs, while reinforcing and projecting who they are. The all-new 2019 Ford Ranger gives drivers the manoeuvrability of a mid-size truck to commute to work in the city, and also the ruggedness and capability to explore their adventurous side on the weekend.

Life's Work

How we perceive work has changed, with many global citizens now working to live, not living to work. Companies are responding in kind, with benefits, sabbaticals, and extended leave being offered, as well as opportunities for mental enrichment and more.

Ford believes that talent is strengthened when people are encouraged to experience the world around them, and give back to the community. The company's 30 under 30 programme allows young employees to take paid time away from their jobs to learn about philanthropic organisations, and strategise ways to connect them to future donors and volunteers, helping them to make an impact on their communities.

Eco-Momentum

While changing lifelong habits can be hard, consumers overwhelmingly agree that environmental progress will depend on changes in human behaviour, and many look for guidance on how and where to improve their environmental footprint.

Sustainable practices are critical to the health of the environment, and Ford is focused on reducing emissions from their vehicles by doing their share to deliver on CO2 reductions, consistent with the Paris Climate Accord. They have already charted their course for the future, to invest in 16 fully electric vehicles within a global portfolio of 40 electrified vehicles, through 2022.

Easy Street

The mobility journey isn't as simple as going from point A to B; it's about what we do with our time along the way. We spend more time in our cars than we receive vacation time, so the ability to get things done while on the road could change the commute experience as we know it.

Ford believes that self-driving vehicles will reduce society's pain points, and expand access to transportation and goods delivery. The automaker is working with other companies to understand how goods delivery through the use of self-driving vehicles can be improved.

An example of this is a pilot programme Ford is conducting with Walmart and Postmates, exploring how self-driving vehicles can complement Walmart's home-delivery offerings.

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