

Joyconomy: Elevated expressionism to arm people with hope, joy and happiness for an uncertain year

Issued by [Wunderman Thompson](#)

19 Jan 2023

Wunderman Thompson's annual trend almanack features 100 bitesize predictions that offer a splash of colour, inspiration, and an insightful glimpse into 2023



An unrestrained, impactful, and powerful burst of energy is being injected into the year ahead, arming people with hope, joy, and happiness amid continuing uncertain times, according to 'The Future 100: 2023' from Wunderman Thompson.

The outlook from the 9th edition of the annual essential trend almanac, which offers a snapshot of the most compelling trends to keep on the radar for the year ahead, says that despite the ongoing economic and environmental crises, people are choosing joy.

Coined by Wunderman Thompson Intelligence as the 'Joyconomy', the rise of trends such as 'Elevated Expressionism', 'Feel-Good Feeds', and 'Ageless Play', demonstrates the opportunities for brands who lean into consumers' desire for inspiration and optimism, as people are determined to show resilience, innovation, and joy in the face of continued hardship.

This is particularly true in South Africa, where many are facing challenges, such as the rising cost of living, high unemployment, and inflation levels, loadshedding, political corruption, eroding infrastructure and high crime rates. Yet, despite this, consumer confidence is on the rise, and South Africans are starting the year with optimism and determination, searching for moments of joy in small and sometimes unexpected places.

"South Africans have faced significant stress and pressure in recent years, yet many remain optimistic about the future, which highlights their resilience," said Amy Harper, senior strategist at Wunderman Thompson South Africa. "Brands that tap into this consumer mindset by finding ways to uplift and support them, whilst also communicating in a compassionate and empathetic manner will be able to stay ahead."

THE FUTURE 100



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The unbounded optimism of 2022 shifts to an exuberant desire for joy and play in 2023.

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In addition to the rise of the 'Joyconomy', highlights from the publication include:

- **Culture – indigenous innovation:** Indigenous techniques are forming regenerative approaches to managing the environment. In South Africa, brands such as Robertsons are looking at ways to help consumers make informed food decisions by offering endless information about their eating choices.
- **Tech and metaverse – techcessability:** Companies are redesigning their digital environments for greater accessibility. In South Africa, Cadbury P.S. has focused its communication on helping to end cyberbullying in the digital and physical worlds.
- **Travel and hospitality – temperate travel:** Rising temperatures will prompt travellers to seek cooler destinations. Locally, Gen Zs and Millennials are looking for travel brands that genuinely embrace environmentally responsible practices.

- **Brands and marketing – amplifying diverse creators:** Growing calls for authentic representation in advertising are driving a wave of brand collaborations with marginalised creative talents. There is also pressure on advertising agencies in South Africa by clients to find ways of incorporating AI into marketing communications to meet marketing and business objectives.
- **Food and drink – cell-cultured dishes:** Luxury dining may be the first beneficiary as cell-cultured food moves from the lab to the grocery store. In South Africa, calls for clean label claims in plant-based foods are becoming louder due to concerns over ultra-processing.
- **Beauty – resurrected ingredients:** Brands are bringing back extinct and forgotten sensory ingredients. Clean Beauty used to be all the rage in South Africa; now, consumers are looking at Slow Beauty, where beauty products are made with natural ingredients with recycled or biodegradable packaging sourced from ethical suppliers.
- **Retail and commerce – crisis retail:** As the financial crisis bites, brands are stepping up to help their most vulnerable consumers. This year's social media advertising will use trusted South African influencers, making a notable impact on the spending habits of South Africans who are on platforms, scrolling and looking for items to purchase.
- **Luxury – residence at sea:** The next-gen digital nomad is taking to the sea – in style. South African Millennials and Gen Zs have redefined luxury. For this group, it's not about high-end luxury brands but rather brands expressing their values and identity. Luxury is now a state of mind and not a price point.
- **Health – menopause retreats:** From HRT education to nutritional advice, retreats designed specifically for the menopause journey are on the rise. There is a growing interest in improving everyday health and wellness amongst South Africans through small acts such as walking, mindful drinking, early dinners, and phone-free time.
- **Work – generation flex:** Employee expectations are rising. Despite economic woes, could the balance of power be tipping in their favour? Due to the electricity crisis in South Africa, many employees are returning to work at the office; however, some have become accustomed to life working from home.

“As the world, including South Africa, faces the possibility of a recession, it is crucial for brands to understand the latest consumer trends that will shape spending habits. The Future 100: 2023 provides valuable insights that will assist brands in staying ahead of the curve.” said Parusha Partab, group strategy director of Wunderman Thompson South Africa.

‘The Future 100: 2023’ from Wunderman Thompson’s futurism, research, and innovation unit, Wunderman Thompson Intelligence, is a global report that has been compiled by a leading team of trend analysts, bringing together exclusive expert interviews and proprietary research.

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Cover: Planet City, courtesy of Liam Young

Fonts used: Termina; Helvetica Neue (TT)

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