



currents in consumer **behavior** **2025**

introduction

currents in consumer behavior

Dive into the cultural currents influencing our everyday lives and informing how consumers shop and interact with brands.

Leveraging data and insights to help inspire package design considerations, this report aims to demystify complex topics and inspire brands in the CPG, Health & Beauty, and Alcohol & Spirits industries to consider who their audience is, what their pain points are, and how you can get your products into their shopping cart.

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front-of-pack label laws

We are less than a year away from Canada's front-of-pack nutrition label requirements coming into effect, and some brands have already started to introduce the mandated nutrition symbol for products that are high in sodium, sugars and/or saturated fats. With the FDA recently proposing a similar rule for front-of-pack labeling in the US, it is only a matter of time before brands on both sides of the border are required to update their current packaging.

front-of-pack label laws

consumer
packaged
goods

what you should know

North America is finally catching up with the rest of the world when it comes to helping consumers easily understand what is in the food products they are purchasing. Not only will it help them make more informed choices, it will also increase trust and transparency between brand and consumer – something that is more important than ever.

- A study conducted by McKinsey & Company found that “consumers are confused about what food is healthy and sustainable...[they] are frustrated because retailers and food producers aren’t keeping up with their quest for conscious eating.”
- According to BMC Public Health, “FOP labeling has been shown to increase consumers’ awareness of the nutritional value of foods and nudge consumers towards healthier decisions.”

key packaging considerations

While some brands may consider re-formulating their products to avoid having to feature a front-of-label nutrition warning, others will need to adapt their packaging design to the loss of precious real estate on pack.

- There is no denying that FOP nutrition labels take away from package artwork and marketing claims, meaning that careful consideration should be given to what information is most important to consumers and how design can convey things like taste and quality in as clear a way as possible.
- For brands that do not require FOP labels, leaning into the health benefits of their products will remain a key differentiator. According to a 2024 study conducted by the International Food Information Council (IFIC), “foods labelled as natural, organic, healthy or no-artificial ingredients/colors are top in-store safety signals” for consumers.

consumer packaged goods

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shrinkflation induced skepticism

The concept of shrinkflation (the practice of reducing the quantity or size of a product while keeping the price the same) is not a new one, but it is hard to ignore the growing concern and conversation among consumers about the price of groceries and trying to find the best bang for their buck.



shrinkflation induced skepticism

consumer packaged goods

what you should know

With food prices in Canada estimated to increase by 3-5% in 2025 and by about 2% in the US, consumers will continue to be conscious about what they are buying and will try to find the best value for their budget.

- LendingTree found that about one-third of grocery items have shrunk in size or serving since the pandemic. According to their research, 71% of consumers have noticed instances of brands using shrinkflation and 66% of those individuals have since boycotted that specific product.
- In NielsenIQ's Consumer Outlook: Guide to 2025, 65% of those surveyed say they are "switching to buy more large, bulk pack sizes of their products of choice," highlighting that consumers are willing to spend more upfront if it means longer-term savings.

key packaging considerations

Consumers hate to feel misled, and there have been countless examples of brands facing backlash for trying to subtly change their packaging without acknowledging the change in size. If you must reduce the quantity, finding other positive product attributes to embrace and highlight on your packaging can still help with purchase intent.

- Some countries are starting to take action against shrinkflation. Similar to FOP Nutrition Label laws, the CBC reports that "Hungary and South Korea will soon join Brazil in mandating companies note on packaging when they shrink a product. France is aiming to follow suit."
- Giving consumers options with different product sizes and formats can help satisfy their needs. As Keurig Dr. Pepper's CEO Robert Gamgort points out, "Consumers remain responsive to high-quality innovation and activation, but price and package architecture is another increasingly important dimension, including smaller pack sizes that hit key price points and multi-packs that offer value and convenience."

consumer packaged goods

currents in consumer behavior



food to look and feel your best

From mobile health apps and wearables to AI recommendations, from protein-rich diets to weight loss injections, there is no shortage of ways in which consumers are looking to increase their health and wellness while still being able to enjoy the foods they love.

food to look and feel your best

consumer packaged goods

what you should know

The ever-increasing interest in personal health is leading to food innovations, new product launches and challenger brands stepping up to fill voids in the market.

- More protein, please – In Whole Foods Top 10 Food and Beverage Trends for 2025, they note that “consumers are looking to incorporate more protein in their diet beyond traditional powders and bars, with an emphasis on ramping up protein consumption at meal times and with ‘whole food’ snacking,” something that is backed up by recent Statista data that suggests “the worldwide market for protein ingredients is set to grow to over 47.4 billion U.S. dollars by 2032, increasing massively from the 2021 figure of about 26 billion U.S. dollars.”
- Along with protein-rich diets, consumers will still be placing convenience as a priority. Conagra’s Future of Frozen Food report points to “modern health” as their number one trend to watch out for, as more options become available and benefits such as portion control and cost savings stay top of mind.

key packaging considerations

With 67% of consumers willing to spend more on foods and beverages that promote health and wellness, and 75% wanting to see clear labelling on food products indicating their health benefits, there is a clear opportunity for brands to lean into their packaging to help attract consumers and increase purchase intent.

- Communicating key reasons to believe and health callouts both through visual and written cues on pack is essential in attracting health-conscious consumers. Incorporating relevant colors, fonts and imagery that relate back to health, wellness and nature still goes a long way.
- Along with consumers being hyper-aware of what they are putting into their body and the ingredients that a product may contain, they are also focused on how these products relate back to the planet. Both through sustainable production processes and packaging, it is not enough to say on pack that your brand cares about the planet – your packaging should also reflect this.

health & beauty

2.1

ai influenced

2.2

skinplicity

2.3

stress relief & relaxation

AI-generated influencers, chatbots, virtual try-on technology and showrooms...it is no secret that artificial intelligence is taking over the health and beauty industry, and it is reshaping the way in which consumers engage with brands, learn about products and decide what they do and don't like.

ai influenced

health & beauty

what you should know

Love it or hate it, AI isn't going anywhere. On the positive side, consumers can get hyper-personalized recommendations, improved customer service and streamlined shopping experiences. On the downside, there are concerns about privacy, unrealistic beauty standards and an erosion of human-to-human interaction.

- According to McKinsey, the global beauty industry is expected to see AI-driven tools influence up to 70% of customer interactions by 2027.
- The global virtual influencer market size was estimated at USD 6.06 billion in 2024 and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 40.8% from 2025 to 2030.

key packaging considerations

In-store or online, it is important for a brand's packaging to feel cohesive and consistent with its marketing efforts and overall brand DNA. If you are embracing AI and looking to the future with how you can improve your target consumers' shopping journey, key consideration should also be given to packaging design.

- Realistic and visually appealing 3D renderings of a brand's packaging design are getting their time in the spotlight with innovations like Amazon's Virtual Holiday Shop, where consumers can experience an immersive shopping experience from the comfort of their home. Through breakthroughs like this, standing out on a shelf doesn't just mean physical shelves anymore.
- While the consumer-facing side of AI is rightly getting a lot of attention, on the backend, artificial intelligence can help brands and designers with mood boards, initial concepts and curated package renderings that can streamline workflow and spark creativity.

health & beauty

currents in consumer behavior



skinplicity

Some consumers may love their step-by-step skincare routines, but many are looking for simpler, streamlined regimens that deliver the same results. Whether it is multi-functional products or natural and cleaner ingredients, both women and men are embracing a less is more attitude to the number of products they use and what those products are made from.

skinplicity

health & beauty

what you should know

Efficacy, transparency and price point are key drivers for shoppers as they look at which products are right for them. Brands like The Ordinary have spearheaded this minimalist approach in everything from their ingredients to their packaging to their store designs.

- The growing clean beauty market is being driven by consumer demand for natural, organic and sustainable ingredients. In fact, 65% of consumers are seeking clean ingredients, with over 50% of Gen Z saying that they closely scrutinize product compositions.
- According to Mintel, 33% of male skincare buyers claim that multi-purpose products affect their shopping decisions, highlighting a desire for uncomplicated and potentially cost-saving products.

key packaging considerations

With nearly one-third of beauty products in the US labeled as clean, it is worth noting that different brands (and consumers) may have different definitions of what “clean” means. This has caused some skepticism among shoppers and a need for great clarity on packaging about a product’s key features and benefits.

- To help improve consumer trust and stand out from general “clean beauty” claims, looking to industry certifications and relevant badges to include on packaging can foster greater consumer understanding and brand differentiation.
- Sustainable packaging is another important component of the skinplicity movement, and with a reported 70% of the beauty industry’s waste coming from packaging alone, there is still a lot of work to be done. Considering packaging materials, refillable and reusable options for consumers and even in-store recycling programs not only helps with sustainability efforts but also can drive repeat purchases and brand loyalty.

health & beauty

currents in consumer behavior



stress relief & relaxation

There is a lot for consumers to be anxious about these days. There is inflation and the rising cost of living, political unrest, armed conflicts and the warming of the planet, to name a few. Safe to say, most people are looking for ways to relax and unwind.

stress relief & relaxation

health & beauty

what you should know

Consumers want healthy and cost-effective ways to improve their mental and physical wellbeing, and the brands that are able to deliver on those needs are reaping the benefits.

- According to Mintel, 65% of women consumers now actively seek products or services to improve their mental well-being – a sizeable 33% increase from just three years ago.
- 71% of Gen Z'ers say that they would prefer to feel good rather than look good, and while those two things often go hand-in-hand, it emphasizes a desire for a more thoughtful approach to self-care. On TikTok, for example, there are over 4 billion views on “self-care routine” searches, and that number is continually growing.

key packaging considerations

There is no shortage of products that are promoting relaxation, improved moods and better sleep, and as consumers are inundated with claims on the best ingredients and benefits, it is important for brands to educate their audience across all touch points on how their products can help improve their day-to-day life.

- Visuals often speak louder than words, especially on packaging design. Behavioral psychology tells us that cool colors such as blue, green and purple can promote relaxation and focus while sans serif fonts like Open Sans and Verdana are considered more readable for users with cognitive disorders.
- Accessibility in packaging design continues to be an important topic of conversation. From the shape of your packaging to easy-to-open caps and clear labelling and instructions, being thoughtful about every aspect of your packaging can help make your consumers' lives a little easier.

alcohol & spirits

3.1

different generations, different drinking habits

3.2

buying local will be amplified

3.3

what's the occasion?

alcohol & spirits

currents in consumer behavior



different generations, different drinking habits

We've previously written about sober curious consumers and the rise in mindful drinking among younger demographics, but after declines in 2023 and 2024, the global beverage alcohol market is expected to begin its recovery in 2025 and continue to see growth in the coming years. Older consumers are partly to thank for that.

different generations, different drinking habits

alcohol & spirits

what you should know

Shifting social norms, increased focus on health and wellness, and the legalization of cannabis in many parts of North America are just a few of the factors influencing younger generations to drink less.

- The low and no-alcohol drink industry is expected to grow by 25% between 2022 and 2026 and brands are taking notice. For example, Molson Coors is continuing to diversify its portfolio to keep up with shifting consumer behaviors. At the end of 2024, they took a majority stake in the better-for-you energy brand, ZOA, and they also have plans to bring Australian brand, Naked Life Non-Alcoholic Cocktails, to the U.S. in 2025.
- While the percentage of alcohol consumption among those 35 and under has dropped from 72% to 62% in the past two decades, the percentage has actually increased from 49% to 59% for those aged 55 and older, highlighting a significant difference in the habits, priorities and purchase decisions of different generations.

key packaging considerations

Brands need to have a strong understanding of who their specific audience is and how they can leverage design to help attract and retain them. From color and graphics to typography and claims, there are numerous design elements that can allow a brand to stand out on busy shelves and differentiate from competitors.

- Alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of cancer in the U.S. (behind tobacco and obesity), and U.S. Surgeon-General Vivek Murthy believes that alcoholic drinks should carry a warning about cancer risks on their labels. As we are seeing with the Front of Pack Nutritional Label regulations, this could have major ramifications for the packaging and design of alcohol labels.
- In Pentawards 2024/2025 trends report, they point to bold, impactful designs paired with “striking solo visuals designed to captivate and connect” as a way to provide clarity over chaos for consumers. Focusing in on key brand signifiers and being clear and concise in visual and written communications will be vital moving forward.

alcohol & spirits

currents in consumer behavior

buying local will be amplified

With the current on again, off again trade war happening between the United States and Canada, the alcohol and spirits industry is set to be one of the most significantly impacted. We are already seeing many Canadian provinces pulling American alcohol from their shelves, which means that buying local will be a constant conversation in both countries.



buying local will be amplified

alcohol & spirits

what you should know

“Now is the time to choose Canada,” said former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in response to the US tariffs imposed on Canadian imports. With no clear resolution currently in sight, expect a greater desire among consumers to support local and national brands – even after the tariffs are lifted.

- Buying locally became especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many consumers have continued to keep this in mind in the years since. Whether it be the brand’s connection to the community, ease of access and product availability, or reduced environmental impact, it is not just economic and political realities that have consumers thinking local.
- According to a 2024 study conducted by Faire, nearly 75% of Americans stated that the pandemic made them appreciate local brands more than they did before, with 70% of Gen Z and 69% of millennials stating that they are willing to shop locally more often.

key packaging considerations

Emphasizing local roots throughout a brand’s marketing and communications efforts will be crucial in 2025 and packaging design is one of the main touchpoints in which this story can be told.

- Our friends at IMI International point out that “Made in Canada” claims go a long way on packaging – even more than digital ads. In fact, a clearly identifiable “Made in Canada” mark has twice the purchase impact than that of social media ads, with research from January 2025 showing that “200% more Canadians purchased a product/service in the past 12 months because it was made in Canada, compared to those influenced by digital advertising.”
- Despite the fact that consumers are more informed about brands and products that they are supporting, a recent study found that 82% of purchase decisions are still made in-store, meaning that package design and key call-outs are essential in getting your products in a consumer’s basket.

alcohol & spirits

currents in consumer behavior



what's the occasion?

Whether it is a bottle of sparkling wine for a birthday celebration, an RTD canned cocktail for an afternoon in the park, or a favorite beer for watching the game with friends, consumers are being selective about the moments in which they indulge in an alcoholic beverage. The occasion often dictates which drink they choose.

what's the occasion?

alcohol & spirits

what you should know

Consumers are looking for more variety within the alcohol category. While non-alcoholic and low-ABV beverages will continue to grow in popularity, there is also the opportunity for brands to home in on the moments that consumers want to enjoy an alcoholic beverage and find ways to make that occasion more convenient and memorable.

- In a 2024 [report](#) put out by Gallup, they found that 26% of respondents said they only drink alcohol on special occasions. This was the highest percentage point of the options presented (the other options were: every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week, never, and no opinion) and highlights that celebrations and alcohol still go hand in hand.
- In 2025, “expect more innovation driven by different drinking occasions,” [said](#) Sofia Colluci, CMO of Molson Coors. “Whether that’s new pack formats or higher ABV in channels where consumers are craving more flavor,” there is an opportunity to deliver on the evolving wants and needs of consumers in this category.

key packaging considerations

Whether it is drinks on the go in convenient RTD formats or special, limited-edition packaging that is focused on a specific event or holiday, consumers are looking for products that are convenient for the usage occasion but also help celebrate and add some spirit to an experience.

- Premium alcohol and spirits saw a slight decline in sales in 2024, but it doesn’t mean that brands can’t convey luxury or superior taste experiences through packaging design. Premium finishes, label material and references to luxury through font and color can still elicit a sense of distinctiveness without forcing consumers to break the bank.
- Brand collaborations or partnerships with influencers and celebrities add a sense of excitement and intrigue to a product and provide an opportunity to leverage certain equities on pack, helping create a sense of delight and anticipation to trying something new and distinct.

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thanks
for reading

what did we miss?

we would love to hear your thoughts on what this year's top stories will be in the CPG, Health & Beauty, and Alcohol & Spirits industries.

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we look forward to keeping the conversation going!