

Connected brands thrive in 2024: Key findings from VML's *Future 100* report

VML's tenth edition of *The Future 100: 2024* launched today, revealing 100 trends set to shape consumer spending over the next year.



Image supplied. VML launches the tenth edition of 'The Future 100: 2024' today

One insight from the report is that as humanity undergoes a paradigm shift with identity at its heart, advances in technology are ushering in a new reality and prompting people to question what it means to be human.

The report finds that consumers are in their Slow Living era, known as 'The Great Deceleration', slowing down their lifestyles and opting for a mindful approach to the year ahead.

What's more, in a post-Covid world that is being shaped by a bewildering amount of technology, people are craving authentic human connection more than ever before.



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Danette Breitenbach 17 Jan 2024



Connected brands are thriving

In this new paradigm, the most successful and fastest-growing brands are connected brands, as people seek emotional engagement with the brands they buy from.

Data collected exclusively for *The Future 100: 2024* reveals that 79% of people believe ‘the role of a brand has changed over the past five years.

The top three roles of brands are to:

- Make the world a better place (40%)
- Improve people’s health and well-being (38%)
- Create a more positive and helpful future’ (32%).

“As 2024 unfolds, an intentional slow-down shifts the pace for people and businesses after years of rapid acceleration,” say Emma Chiu and Marie Stafford, co-authors and Global Intelligence Directors at VML.

“Community and connection at scale are essential to 2024, with 67% of people agreeing that community is more important than one individual, and 76% believe that technology helps bring people together,” they explain.

They add, “With most consumers looking for surprise, mystery, awe, and wonder in their lives, new experiences that engage a wide spectrum of emotions are in demand. A profound and enriching year awaits!”



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Matthew van der Valk 12 Jan 2024



Relevant to SA

Human connection and belonging are themes that are especially relevant to the South African context, as VML South Africa’s Parusha Partab notes.

"The *Future 100* is one of our most anticipated reports, and this year is no exception. It illuminates a profound truth that resonates deeply with us here in South Africa – the universal human yearning for connection and community, echoing our local ethos of Ubuntu."

She continues by saying, “In the realm of branding, the concept of connected brands has ascended to unprecedented importance. In the wake of the pandemic, technology has been thrust into the spotlight.

“Yet, this report serves as a timely reminder that technology is merely an instrument. We can't forget that our consumers are real people, with real feelings, needs, and problems."



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10 Jan 2024



World’s first virtual futurist

This year marks the 10th year of the *Future 100* report.

To celebrate this milestone and bring the report to life, VML has launched F.L.I.C (Future. Learning. Interactive. Connected.), a fully interactive AI avatar that can answer real-time questions about the report.

Using Epic Metahuman, VML created a photo-realistic face for F.L.I.C and chose longstanding technology partner Odyssey to stream this Unreal Engine 5 based-app to users.

The proprietary technology, which is exclusive to Odyssey, creates photo-realistic, virtual personifications to give a face to AI, and allows clients to access and interact with F.L.I.C directly through their web browser. F.L.I.C will be live on 6 February 2024.

The *Future 100* covers 10 sectors including Culture, Technology, Travel & Hospitality, Brands & Marketing, Food & Drink, Beauty, Retail, Luxury, Health, and Innovation.

Also included for the 10th anniversary is original consumer data from surveys in nine different countries, and interviews with experts across various fields to give their takes on the past decade and what to look out for in 2024.

Download the report [here](#).

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