

# Which trends offer opportunities or pose threats on the European home decoration and home textiles market?

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**Millennials** are quickly becoming the main consumer group in Europe. As such, they strongly influence home decoration and home textile (HDHT) brands and their strategies in the market. Millennials value sustainability, and so they want brands to actively try to make the world a better place through social and environmental responsibility. The following trends are heavily influenced by this new mentality or a reaction to it, especially from the **baby boomer** generation. These trends have intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## 1. Overview of themes and trends

This overview illustrates how drivers of global themes influence consumer trends. The resulting market trends show the effect on the demand for HDHT products.

DRIVER	MEGATREND	CONSUMER TREND	MARKET TREND
Social	Rapid urbanisation	Shared living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convenience, multipurpose</li><li>• Differentiation, eclecticism, personal taste and style</li></ul>

Social, environmental, demographical	Wellness	In search of mental and physical wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themes: spa and yoga, garden and balcony, celebration, master chef, sleeping, decorating, decluttering</li> <li>• Natural materials and styles</li> </ul>
Environmental and social	Sustainability	Less wasteful consumption, more fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reuse, recycling and upcycling</li> <li>• Equality in production and trade</li> <li>• Respect for culture</li> </ul>
Environmental, social, economic	Sustainability and the <a href="#">circular economy</a>	Contributing to a better world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New, more circular and fair business models</li> </ul>
Social and demographical	Millennial style	Trend-followers and rebels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-market or alternative</li> </ul>
Social	Playfulness	Consumers looking for an opportunity to play, to imagine, escape, explore, create and connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playful styles and playful interaction</li> </ul>
Social and political	Home sweet home	Disconnection, cocooning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nostalgic, luxury marketing</li> </ul>
Political	Changing supply chains	Scarcity, price increases and the political correctness of certain sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing distribution policies to secure supplies and prevent shocks to the supply chain</li> </ul>

These trends can be grouped together under the following eight global and consumer themes and trends:

- Shared living
- Wellness
- Sustainability

- New circular business models
- Millennial style
- Playfulness
- Home sweet home
- Changing supply chains

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine continue to affect the HDHT market. Uncertainty and increasing prices lead consumers to avoid buying items that they do not urgently 'need'. In March 2022, [European consumer confidence fell](#) again due to the situation in Ukraine. Consumers' desire to make big purchases also fell. At the same time, increased time spent at home stimulates their desire to invest in the decoration (and functionality) of both their indoor and outdoor living spaces.

Although the exact longer-term effects on the market are hard to predict, what is clear is that the pandemic has intensified existing trends in HDHT. This is discussed further per trend below.

### Tips:

See our study on the [European demand for HDHT](#) for concrete trade figures and how the pandemic seems to have affected HDHT imports in 2020/2021.

Check [CBI News & Stories](#) for the latest news in the sector, including our article about how [increasing prices are affecting the HDHT market](#). To stay informed, [sign up for our newsletter](#).

For more information on the impact of the pandemic, see our study on [how to respond to COVID-19 in the HDHT sector](#). This includes actions you can take to make your business successful in the long term.

## 2. Shared living

Rapid urbanisation and increasing housing prices are driving consumers into new forms of shared living, often with multiple generations together. Homes are adapted or designed to hold shared and private spaces, each decorated differently. This creates new directions in the development and consumption of HDHT products.

Furniture and accessories for shared living spaces should be more flexible. Product values related to convenience and multipurpose are more important. Such values are mostly found in the middle and lower ends of the market.

In their private spaces, consumers find it especially important to show their own style. This adds importance to values related to differentiation, eclecticism, personal taste and style. These values are mainly related to the mid-high to premium ends of the market.

### Forecast

The COVID-19 pandemic has made people spend more time at home in sometimes cramped spaces, especially during lockdown. This requires clever and flexible solutions to maximise the use of space, especially in shared living situations.

Figure 1: [Umage – Flexible, flat-pack furniture](#)

Source: [Umage @ YouTube](#)

Consumers are also increasingly working from home. Working from home further adds to the required multifunctionality of their living space. As [many people want to continue working from home after the pandemic](#), the need for flexibility could be a longer-lasting trend. In the Netherlands for example, [43% of the working population had invested in HDHT products for their home office](#) by June 2021. Up to 44% of remote workers planned to make further home improvements.

In the long term, this trend will become even more important as urbanisation grows and hybrid working becomes the norm. Because of this, urban consumers will be looking for suitable solutions.

### **Example company:**

[Vivere](#) is an Indonesian furniture company and lifestyle brand focused on contemporary designs, using clean lines with a modern touch. They offer various products that fit in with the trend of shared living and flexibility, including side tables, poufs, stools and modular sofas, as well as adjustable home office furniture. Vivere's hiCraft Rattan collection showcases Indonesia's well-known renewable material, combining modern manufacturing and design techniques with the weaving skills of local Indonesian craftspeople.

## **Opportunities**

This trend offers opportunities for products / product groups that:

- can be used around the house, such as [occasional furniture](#)
- are lightweight, collapsible, flat pack and can be easily stored
- are multipurpose, such as cookware that also presents well on the table
- consist of items with components that can be rearranged according to use or taste, or several style options

to cater to individual preferences

Because shared living creates demand for both volume (shared spaces) and value offers (private spaces), there are opportunities across the market – ranging from low- to high-end segments.

## Threats

Products with values related to convenience and functionality are often in price-sensitive segments. This means you can expect price pressure and high-volume requirements.

### Tips:

You can choose to control your costs and improve productivity to compete in the shared decoration segment. Or, you can develop high-level design for private quarters. Focus on only one of these choices, as the choices require quite different marketing mixes.

Study good practices from players such as [IKEA](#) and [Habitat](#). These companies offer collections based on functional design for large segments of the (lower-)middle markets. For the higher-end markets, look at distributors with an identity-driven assortment. Examples are [Pols Potten](#) (home decoration), [Iittala](#) (tableware) and [Le Jacquard Français](#) (home textiles).

Use sources such as home magazines, industry portals, trade fairs and our [HDHT market intelligence](#) to stay informed. Financial consulting firms and institutions like the World Bank often publish megatrend analyses, including how they influence work and living. These analyses are good sources of information on market projections. For example, Peter Fisk has compiled an overview of [Megatrends for 2020-2030](#).

## 3. Wellness

The search for health and happiness has become an important focus across generations. Many millennials live under stress from peer pressure on social media and the difficulty of finding an urban home. Older generations worry about job security, retirement and loneliness. The climate crisis is now a major concern for all generations.

The consumer response to the wellness trend has two sides. Firstly, there is a need to develop the mind. Consumers want to be more connected to ‘the self’ and to gain new skills and knowledge. Secondly, there is a need to care for the body. Consumers want to lead a more active, less stressful and more sustainable lifestyle.

This translates into several important market trends in HDHT, based on the following themes:

- spa – creating a spa experience at home (for example with bathroom accessories)
- yoga – focusing on spirituality (for example with yoga kits)
- sleep – sleeping better (for example with bedding and bedroom accessories)
- garden – feeling closer to nature and relaxing outdoors in an active or passive way
- master chef – cooking and dining together to practise new cooking skills and connect with each other
- celebration – participating in private and public celebrations (such as birthdays or Christmas)
- decorating or decluttering – creating space in your mind by creating space in the home (for example with storage products). Or, surrounding yourself with things you love but do not really ‘need’ (such as decorative accessories) as part of the Home Sweet Home trend
- cultural products and stories – being open to new stories to get knowledge and experiences, thus liking products with a clear place of origin (for example with a clear link to a culture). This form of ‘mental travel’ extends to actual travel and accessories

Figure 2: [Meraki](#) - making a spa experience at home

Source: [Meraki @ Instagram](#)

The home is closely connected to mental health. In a recent Life at Home survey, [40% of respondents who felt more positive towards their home also experienced a positive impact on their mental health](#). Many associate clean, organised spaces with a greater feeling of calm. Sleeping and relaxing (for example, by reading) are the most important ways for a feeling of wellbeing at home.

Figure 3: [URBANARA](#) - Ethically produced bed textiles of natural materials

Source: [URBANARA @ YouTube](#)

## Forecast

Urbanisation, increasing internet coverage and ageing western populations are long-term drivers of the wellness trend that will keep growing. Interestingly, [wellness is an essential element of any brand's strategy](#) for 73% of consumers. As [the COVID-19 pandemic has made consumers more acutely aware of the importance of both their mental and physical wellness](#), this trend is accelerated further in the short term.

In a 2021 Young Living survey, [48% of respondents stated they were making wellness and self-care a top priority](#). 53% have developed new wellness habits during the pandemic, including at-home spa experiences. 36% want to maintain these new habits. This is reflected in a 2022 GWI survey, in which [two-thirds of consumers are more aware of the importance to look after their physical and mental health](#) than they were before the pandemic.

### Example company

Turkish manufacturer [Lalay](#) offers a variety of handloomed home textiles, including peshtemal (hammam)

towels and bathrobes. Lalay is a women-led social responsibility project. They produce items based on Anatolian culture and craftsmanship. Their peshtemals and bathrobes come in 100% cotton and in cotton blends with bamboo or linen. Handknotted fringes are optional. The range includes various handprinted fabrics. These are also used to create throws and cushion covers in the same style.

## Opportunities

This trend offers opportunities for products-/product groups that:

- are related to the various aspects of wellness, such as [garden furniture](#), spa and yoga items ([soap](#), [hammam towels](#)), [easy chairs](#), luxury [bed textiles](#) and [travel products](#)
- include natural raw materials or natural colours
- are related to leisure, hobby, sports, [toys](#) and games
- appeal to the new 'young old' consumer, as the relatively wealthy older generation is fitter than ever
- represent more affordable concepts, in addition to those for the premium consumer

Figure 4: [CBI webinar on wellness in HDHT](#)

## Threats

- Western society is fast adopting spa and yoga practices and turning them into lifestyle choices. This increases competition for traditionally leading Asian businesses. European manufacturers are already taking the lead in new, tech-based solutions for monitoring and improving mental and physical health.
- The wellness category is becoming more important. Its fast segmenting into volume (lower-end) and value (higher-end) markets may put pressure on prices.

### Tips:

Explore natural and sustainable materials, to combine two main trends. Be aware that natural materials are not automatically renewable, non-polluting or socially responsible.

Add a touch of your own culture to the leisure and wellness items you offer. This helps you

differentiate in a more and more competitive market.

Study good practices. For example, [The Body Shop](#) put together body care and ethical trading. Turkish spa brand [Hamam](#) offers a natural – almost spiritual – look in textiles.

Offer complete wellness sets, including textile and hardware options. Retailers in particular will appreciate such a complete, one-stop-shopping opportunity in wellness.

Add a gifting element to your wellness range.

## 4. Sustainability: social and environmental responsibility

Rather than consuming less, people want to consume better. Many millennials are committed to creating a better world, and baby boomers increasingly want to contribute. This creates a sense of urgency and consumer power that will reshape the HDHT industry. In response, solutions are expected first and foremost from consumers and the industry. As people are becoming more aware of the long-term impact of their consumption, they are trying to produce less waste and pay more attention to fairness and ethics.

Companies are held accountable for the way they deal with both the environment and their workers. Replacing plastic with (renewable!) natural materials is a common way to make products more sustainable. For some products, sustainability is stimulated by the [European ban on single-use plastics](#). European consumers increasingly demand that makers have equal opportunities, receive a meaningful income, and work under decent conditions. Child labour is unacceptable.

Concepts related to recycling and upcycling are very welcome in the market. Experimenting with alternative materials is a huge trend, especially for home textiles.

This goes in three directions:

- consumer and industrial waste is turned into new raw materials or end products. Examples include furniture from ocean plastics or denim waste
- leftovers from agriculture are used. Examples include yarns from orange or pineapple peels
- bioengineering helps reduce the use of polluting or scarce resources. Examples include dyes from bacteria

Figure 5: [reCharkha – Handwoven bag made from upcycled plastic](#)

Source: [reCharkha @ Instagram](#)

With globalisation comes a greater mix of cultural expressions in HDHT. Consumers are opening up to colours and patterns that are 'foreign'. Designers are, often unknowingly, using patterns from cultures other than their own. At the same time, there is discussion about to what degree this 'borrowing' from another culture is appropriate.

### Forecast

Millennials are the main force in the market for the coming decades. Millennials have a sense of urgency and activism, and they believe that they can influence things through their buying behaviour. Millennial (and [Gen Z](#)) consumers want to buy from companies that contribute to a better world. This makes sustainability a long-term trend that will become more and more central to the HDHT industry.

Figure 6: [West Elm – Fair trade handmade woollen rug](#)



Source: [West Elm @ YouTube](#)

The [European Green Deal](#) will further stimulate this trend, as the European Union strives to become climate neutral by 2050. The Commission has agreed to a [Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence](#). This Directive requires companies to identify, avoid and fix any (potential) negative effects on human rights and the environment throughout their value chain. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are not included in the proposal. But, larger European buyers will have to apply due diligence to their suppliers (you) as well.

### European Green Deal proposals

In March 2022, the European Commission presented a package of [Green Deal proposals](#) to make sustainable products the norm and boost Europe's resource independence. It includes proposals for a [Regulation on Ecodesign for Sustainable Products](#) and a [Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles](#).

The Commission also proposed amendments to the [Consumer Rights Directive](#) and the [Unfair Commercial Practices Directive](#) in support of the Green Deal. These should ensure that consumers can make informed and environment-friendly purchases.

Stay up to date on developments via the [timeline of the circular economy action plan](#).

According to the World Economic Forum, [86% of people want significant change to make the world fairer and more sustainable after COVID-19](#). Interestingly, most consumers (particularly the younger generations) seem to think that [the COVID-19 crisis has made it more important that both consumers and companies improve their sustainability](#). Most of the people who started making more environmentally-friendly choices at the beginning of the pandemic were [still doing so a year on](#).

In a 2021 GlobeScan survey, [73% of respondents want to reduce their personal effect on the environment by a large amount](#) - more than the 64% in 2019. A healthy 57% of respondents were willing to pay a premium for

socially/environmentally responsible products and brands – also up a lot from 50%. In contrast, according to a 2022 Deloitte survey [34% of British adults stopped buying some brands or products because of ethical or sustainability-related concerns](#). This was a 21% increase compared to 2021.

### Example company

**Maroma** is a Fair Trade Guaranteed producer of a range of wellness-related items. These include home fragrances, soap and candles. Most of their employees are women. They mainly use recyclable and preferably locally sourced (renewable) natural materials for their products and packaging. Maroma is based in Auroville (India). This is a community “dedicated to human unity and the advancement of society in a fair and non-sectarian fashion”. Their principles of being Earth Friendly, Vegan, Natural, Toxin Free and Cruelty Free reflect their sustainable values.

This growing importance of sustainability in HDHT is reflected in a Maison et Objet survey, in which [62% of HDHT retailers have noticed growing interest from their customers in ethical products](#). They said that:

- 92% of their customers think natural materials are (very) important
- 77% value socially responsible production methods
- 71% care about recyclable/recycled materials

Figure 7: Popularity of ethical products among clients of HDHT retailers



Source: [Maison et Objet barometer – Issue 1](#)

### Opportunities

- Recycling/upcycling materials from local consumption/production provides you with a major opportunity. Waste or offcut materials from industry are often readily available and relatively inexpensive. The market is ready for such concepts.
- As the market for recycled products grows, it also becomes more segmented. You can create concepts for the lower-end volume market, focus on a mid-market, or go high end. Price and value differ for each segment.
- Consumers are interested in the story of your value chain. Not just to make sure that materials are really recycled, but mostly because it is fun to know that an item used to be part of a billboard, office furniture, or second-hand clothing, for example. This makes good storytelling very important.
- Adopting fair trade or other forms of social and/or environmental certification can add value and credibility to your concept. Even without certification, traceability of your raw materials adds value.
- Positive gender values can make you stand out in the market.
- Using your cultural heritage to introduce new patterns and colours to the buyer and consumer makes your products unique. You can mix these designs with elements of western or global culture.

Figure 8: [CBI webinar on sustainability in the European HDHT market](#)

## Threats

- Western designers are also creating concepts based on recycling and upcycling. This means that design expectations are quite high, and that competition comes from European designers too.
- Professional buyers and western consumers are adopting a 'don't tell me, show me' attitude. They want proof of your social and environmental sustainability claims. Make sure you communicate well and honestly, and consider certification where available.
- In the long term, the European trend of buying local ('Made in Europe') to reduce environmental impact may become a threat to you. Also see the trend of changing global supply chains.
- Sustainable products do not automatically have a higher price. Consumers consider saving the planet a primary responsibility of the industry. Design value is what positively influences price.

### Tips:

Actively promote your products' environmental and social sustainability. This will help you stand out from your competitors. Use your website, social media and trade fair participation to tell your story.

Take advantage of low-cost waste materials for recycling and upcycling. Negotiate well with suppliers, such as clothing manufacturers or advertising companies. Explain the cost-benefit of you taking their garbage (free of charge). Set up an effective supply chain to collect and process the materials. Any cost saved here, will multiply in your price to the end consumer.

Be bold. Counter your cultural traditions if they do not give equal opportunities for all. The consumer will reward you.

Study good practices of innovators in sustainability like [It's About RoMi](#) and their sustainable brand Good & Mojo (lighting), [Green Pan](#) (cookware) and [Mifuko](#) (fair trade lifestyle products). For inspiration and examples of innovative new materials, see heimtextil's [Future Materials Library](#).

For more information, see our special study on [sustainability in HDHT](#), as well as our webinars on [sustainability in the European HDHT market](#) and [the sustainable transition in apparel and home textiles](#). Also see our study on [buyer requirements](#) for sustainability initiatives and certification schemes.

## 5. New circular business models

The sustainability trend is a key driver of new circular business models. These focus on extending the lifecycle of HDHT products.

A typical product lifecycle consists of:

- material sourcing and selection
- production
- transport
- consumer use
- end-of-life

True circularity aims to regenerate end-of-life materials into a new material and process. SMEs in developing countries usually do not have much control over the process. Because of this lack of control, a full circular process is generally not (yet) feasible. At the same time, there is much innovation in the HDHT industry aimed at achieving this. Recycling, upcycling and experimenting with alternative materials are popular ways to move towards circularity, as mentioned.

Figure 9: [WYE - Recyclable furniture made from upcycled by-products of industrial wood processing](#)

Source: [WYE @ Instagram](#)

Another related way is through retail concepts such as sharing, leasing and buy-backs. These business models minimise the impact of their products on the environment by keeping them in use for as long as possible. They also provide flexibility and make products available to consumers with smaller budgets.

This combination makes these concepts more popular among younger generations. These consumers are environmentally conscious and value sharing over owning. They also generally have less disposable income than baby boomers. The flexibility these concepts offer is ideal for younger consumers as well. It makes it easier for them to adapt to events in their lives such as moving to another house (often a rented home) and starting a family. Another option is to follow the latest influencer trends in home decor.

An example of a company that is rolling out such new business models is [IKEA](#). The company strives to make its product range 100% circular by 2030. It focuses on products that can be repaired and reused again and again, before being recycled or remanufactured. Besides offering spare parts and releasing disassembly instructions for various products, IKEA has launched buy-back (and reselling) programmes in several countries. The company has also been piloting leasing/rental concepts among students and businesses customers.

Figure 10: [IKEA - Why the future of furniture is circular](#)

Source: [IKEA @ YouTube](#)

In addition to large retail chains like IKEA and [John Lewis](#) experimenting with circular business models, companies are emerging with these concepts at their core. For example, [Selency](#) is an online marketplace for used home furnishings. Similarly, [Harth](#) allows its users to buy, sell and rent new, pre-loved and vintage design. [Yourse](#) focuses on making designer furniture available to a wider public via leasing, with the option to buy. [Fat Llama](#) is a peer-to-peer rental platform that also offers home and garden products.

## Forecast

With the growing importance of sustainability and millennials, the popularity of these circular business models is set to increase. In a study among customers of Germany's Connox, [48% indicated they might rent furniture in the future](#). A full 98% had never done so before, often simply because customers had not thought of it yet. This is in line with a study for the European Commission, posing that [increasing consumer awareness of second-hand, renting/leasing and repair markets enhances engagement in the circular economy](#).

As circular concepts are becoming more and more common, consumer awareness is growing. In a recent IKEA and GlobeScan survey for example, [62% of respondents said they always or mostly try to repair their household items before buying replacements](#). Meanwhile, 72% agreed that we all should consume less to avoid the worst parts of climate change. This total suggests that circular concepts are bound to flourish in the coming years.

## Opportunities

- Using pre-/post-consumer and post-industrial waste can reduce material cost.
- Circular business models can open up new markets dominated by millennials and Gen Z.
- Adding sustainable values to your identity allows you to stand out and widen your appeal.
- Teaming up with distributors to create buy-back/reselling and refurbishment programmes facilitates longer-term buyer loyalty.
- Recycled and vintage materials allow you to create a luxury positioning based on a 'limited edition' concept.

## Threats

- Recycled materials may run out. This lack of materials could force you to phase out certain product lines

even if they are in high demand.

- Using recycled materials may create new worries about the precise material content and the relevant legal requirements.
- Big Business usually has more control over the lifecycle, from supply to consumption. This control may be difficult for SMEs to compete with.
- Concepts such as refurbishment and reselling may decrease the need for new production.

### Tips:

If you would like to develop sustainable materials, either invest in developing a new material yourself (in collaboration with others), outsource to specialised material designers/developers, or buy a material that is already available. Important questions are: Is developing new materials part of your core business? Do you have a strong R&D department? Do you assign resources to R&D in a structural way? Does your market demand continuous innovation in the area of materials?

To facilitate a long product lifecycle, you should take circularity into account when designing your products. For example, designs should allow for easy replacement of parts that are prone to wear and tear, and materials should be durable (and preferably recyclable). An interesting example is Occony's new circular [Peak](#) chair, made of recyclable waste materials. All parts and materials can be separated, which allows for reuse, refurbishment and recycling of the chair.

For inspiration and more information on how to design products suitable for new business models, see for example Ikea's [circular product design guide](#).

## 6. Millennial style

Millennials are increasingly influencing many aspects of social and professional life. Marketing has become millennial territory, shaped by social media influencers. This generation brings in new values, such as 'sharing over possessing'. They see their home as the extension of their identity, or at least the personality they want to be. While some conform to the norm and follow trends, a large group of millennials rebels against it and values individuality.

This leads to two opposing forms of expression: following trends or 'rebellious' against them with more individual styles. The millennial consumers that follow trends make safe choices in their interior products, in line with dominant, accepted styles. In this, they reflect the existing value set in HDHT of the mid(-mid) market.

Figure 11: Habitat – Stylish yet affordable tableware

Source: [Habitat @ YouTube](#)

The more 'rebellious' millennials prefer expressive styles in their interior decoration. Segments associated with this group are more niche and more personalised. Where possible and affordable, these segments are linked to value sets related to sustainability and social equality, including diversity. These consumers want their brands to stand for something. This places them in the higher ends of the (mid-)market.

## Forecast

Millennials are becoming the dominant consumers and professional buyers in HDHT, using social media both for projection and for marketing communication. This means that the 'millennial style' will be there to stay for years to come. [The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the importance of sustainability for millennials and Gen Z](#) more so than for older generations, indicating this aspect of millennial style is set to become even more relevant.

## Opportunities

Like the trend, opportunities exist in two areas:

- The need to follow trends feeds the mid-market, which has been under pressure because this market could not offer differentiation. Being a trend-following mid-market consumer has now become desirable again for many.
- In contrast, the more rebellious direction is expressive, individual and colourful. This direction invites an own take on what is beautiful and stylish, also from the maker. This is good for those who already design from a strong sense of individual identity, rather than from trends.

## Threats

Threats also depend on which direction of this trend you cater to:

- Trendy products are often found in price-sensitive segments, in the heart of the middle market. You can expect price pressure and volume requirements in these segments.
- Since the expressive consumer carefully selects what fits in their collection and is quite eclectic in combining items, amounts in this segment can be limited.

## Tips:

Follow trends in colour, as colour is quite vital and differential in both styles. The trend-followers are driven by periodical changes in colour as pushed by the industry, trend forecasters and influencers. Home magazines and trade fairs are usually good sources of information. The 'rebels' are more eclectic and original with their colour palettes, which may be hard to predict. To appeal to them, you should follow your own intuition, culture and impulses — be like them!

Be present online, follow millennial influencers and sell online.

Study good practices of the mid-market brands that cater to the trend-following millennial. Examples are British department store [M&S](#), Dutch brand [VT Wonen](#) and the German glassware brand [Leonardo](#). Alternative brands catering to rebellious millennials are typically smaller, more design-oriented and online. Examples of these are Belgium's [When Objects Work](#), designer brand [PO! Paris](#), and the basketry of [Best Before](#) (France).

For more information on market segmentation, see our study on [market channels and segments in HDHT](#).

## 7. Playfulness

Playing is essential to being human. People play to have fun and fulfil our need for optimism, escape and invention. In HDHT, concepts inviting consumers to play are everywhere. Play stimulates social connection, reducing loneliness and isolation. It is a powerful form of escapism – distracting consumers from worries about politics, the environment, trade wars, cybercrime, and more. Millions of consumers are therefore embracing new opportunities and concepts to imagine, escape, explore, create and connect.

Bold products with a touch of humour express this trend. Forms, patterns and colour palettes can edge towards surrealism, or just be decorative. They can also resemble toys for young children, transformed into pieces that appeal to adults too.

Figure 12: MOBJE – rearrangeable fabric vases made with traditional hat-making techniques



Source: [MOBJE @ YouTube](#)

Concepts based on modularity, mixing and matching, constructing and building (as in children's toys) invite the consumer to co-create. This trend has been around for a while, but is now everywhere.

## Forecast

The combination of play being an essential human need and the current crises in our world makes this a trend that is here to stay. As many people continue to worry about the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation (the 'cost-of-living crisis'), they need distraction now perhaps more than ever.

## Opportunities

- This trend invites the use of bold colour, odd shapes, humour, functional products that are figurative, anthropomorphic (human-like) designs, light-heartedness and ironic uses of ethnic traditions. These can be applied in a wide variety of product groups.
- This trend also encourages consumers to practise playful interaction and co-creation, through flexible and customisable concepts.

## Threats

- Humour and light-heartedness are not in everybody's 'design DNA'. These characteristics can become forced or come across as unauthentic when the style is adopted just because it is a trend.
- What is considered funny is personal and/or cultural. Your humour may not match with that of your target market.

### Tips:

Give your own cultural patterns a twist to create the desired effect of playfulness.

Be original and creative to be convincing. For example by using bold colours, odd shapes or humour.

Imagine you are a child yourself when designing for this trend.

Study good practices of brands with a playful style. Examples are [Seletti](#) (home accessories), [Alessi](#)

(kitchenware) and [Jonathan Adler](#) (lifestyle collection).

## 8. Home sweet home

In times of global insecurity, consumers react with a deep appreciation of the comfort and safety of their own home. European consumers are trying to make the home a place where genuine connection takes place with family and friends. They eat and cook together, enjoy entertainment and play, in a return of the 'cocooning' trend.

This trend particularly reflects an older consumer with a relatively high disposable income. Styles related to this trend are luxurious and refer to bygone periods such as art deco and neoclassical. Popular materials are comfortable, heavy textiles, dark wood and lots of metal. Patterns are bold but colours are cosy and warm, including darker, rich reds and purples, sophisticated blues and browns.

Figure 13: John Lewis - Retro revival

Source: [John Lewis @ YouTube](#)

However, Home Sweet Home is also about people (across generations) enjoying each other's company, entertaining each other, cooking and dining, or just relaxing. This aspect of the trend relates to items that create a cosy atmosphere, as well as cookware and dinnerware for 'slow dining'.

### Forecast

This is a more niche trend, mainly represented by a segment of the baby boomer consumer group. Globalisation and social media will make it harder and harder for escapism to survive. However, cocooning will last longer as it is based on deep human needs for connection.

As a result of the pandemic, [people have been spending more time socialising as a family/household and](#)

**cooking.** Many expect this to be a permanent change. Of those who started cooking more at the beginning of the pandemic, **65% were still doing so a year on.** This development is particularly prominent in younger generations, as baby boomers probably already spent more time on these activities before lockdown. Because of this, the 'home sweet home' trend may increase its appeal to younger consumers – and with that its staying power.

## Opportunities

- This trend represents a premium segment, which may offer good margins.
- The style is not trendy and once you get the colours right, they will not change every season.
- The distribution into this segment is often by respectable family businesses, whose marketing reflects values such as loyalty, honesty and fairness.
- Interior decorators carrying this style are found at all major HDHT trade fairs in Europe.

## Threats

- Margins may be good, but volumes may be relatively small and turnarounds low in a narrow segment like this.
- Quality is key and materials are luxurious, heavy and rich. This level of value is essential to succeed in this market.

### Tips:

Practise other styles as well, as this segment may not be enough for your cashflow. Alternatively, become a specialist and dominate the segment.

Study good practices. For example, [Chehoma](#) offers cute products that create ambiance for the wealthy consumer. [RV Astley's](#) lighting is inspired by art deco. [Eichholtz](#) targets nostalgic baby boomers and [Dialma Brown](#) focuses on nostalgic interiors.

Study the history of interior design, as this trend is firmly based on classical and historical styles. Use home magazines focusing on the baby boomer luxury segment, such as [Architectural Digest](#), [Coveted](#) and [Wonen Landelijke Stijl](#).

Check the websites of the [Maison & Objet](#) and [Ambiente](#) trade fairs to find distributors working with this trend.

The world's supply chains have been under pressure from the trade war between the United States and China, the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters connected to climate change, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Various important goods and services are difficult to find, and prices increased.

Companies have realised that political problems can heavily affect buying and selling in markets. They are trying to make their supply chains less vulnerable through:

- second sourcing – businesses are hiring more suppliers (possibly in different countries). They are moving away from countries where there is political risk.
- vertical integration – importers are taking more control over their supply chain by building up their existing suppliers or by taking over suppliers. Importers also expect these choices to have a positive effect on their profits. Part of the reason is a more including attitude between manufacturer, provider and importer. Each member of the supply chain needs to understand their partner. They must support them in making the chain stronger, so that it stays strong even during difficult times.
- pre-stocking – companies build inventory of (semi-)finished goods, which can be sold if there are new problems.
- reshoring – part of second sourcing can be to find European manufacturers to co-produce part of the existing

collection or replace suppliers in politically risky locations.

- longer lifecycles – when supply chains are fragile, existing offers can also be extended. This can be done by recycling, using sustainable materials, providing repairs, or creating more long-lasting (less trend-driven) collections.

Reshoring may currently be a hot topic, but in practice it often is not that easy. Redesigning supply chains takes time, and effects may be longer-term only. Also, the [value for money of reshored HDHT products is often not as good](#). In the June 2022 Maison et Objet Barometer, [26% of HDHT stakeholders plan to localise part of their production or sourcing, but 22% do not](#).

Figure 14: Obstacles to reshoring for HDHT stakeholders



Source: [Maison et Objet Barometer – Issue 4](#)

The changes in supply chains will create a more secure distribution system for Western European businesses. But changes also make the supply chain more broken into pieces, less productive and more expensive. These costs will be passed on to companies and consumers. The benefits should also be shared, but they may be less clear to the average consumer.

## Forecast

Consumers will get used to items not being available, and to longer waiting times and higher prices. Consumers may buy more quality than quantity (long-lasting rather than fashionable), learn to like a product longer, and/or share and trade items with other consumers. This is in line with the trend of new circular business models. If supply chains are not strong, extending a product's life is a good idea. Think of recycling and repairing.

Consumers will also ask more questions about a product's origin. Who benefitted in making and selling, and what does the brand stand for when it comes to social and environmental values? In June 2022, [88% of décor, design and lifestyle professionals agreed that their clients are more and more concerned about product and raw material origin](#).

## Opportunities

- Importers will look for second sources – especially in Asia – to become less dependent on single sources.
- Importers will welcome suppliers willing and able to think about importers' needs and support them when and where needed. On the other hand, importers will also be more committed to building relationships.
- Businesses with true openness and sustainable practices will have an advantage.

## Threats

- Increasing costs of goods and services may put pressure on your business.
- Some production may be put back on suppliers in Europe.

### Tips:

Increase your service levels to importers. Include efficient local agents, packing and transport services to make it easier and less costly for importers to work with you. You should also be able to put together orders, pre-stock, and offer smaller minimum order amounts.

Give your buyer a reason for choosing your product over the offer from a European manufacturer. Focus on added value such as special techniques, materials, stories and sustainable values.

Communicate clearly before, during and after shipments. This is important to create a good supplier-buyer relationship.

This study was carried out on behalf of CBI by [Globally Cool B.V.](#) in collaboration with GO! GoodOpportunity and Remco Kemper.

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