Amidst Unprecedented Change and Uncertainty, Ford Trend Report Has Consumers at a Crossroads, Reassessing World

- Ford releases newest findings in its fifth annual trend report, exploring societal shifts expected to influence consumers and brands in what is shaping up to be the most dynamic time in the transportation business
- Report reveals consumers are rethinking and assessing their priorities; shifts uncovered in how they define prosperity, value material possessions and use their time
- At a time in which truthfulness tends to be subjective, two-thirds of adults say it never has been harder to find fact-based information, while just 55 percent say what they put on social media is what they really think
- An abundance of choice matched with uncertainty in the marketplace is bringing about a reluctance to commit – giving rise to a “sampling society” that prioritizes trying over buying

2017 Ford Trends at a Glance (PDF)

2017 Looking Further with Ford Trend Report (PDF)

Trend Icons (ZIP)

NEW YORK, Dec. 7, 2016 – On the leading edge of what is shaping up to be perhaps the most dynamic time in the transportation business, consumers find themselves at a crossroads. Change is the only constant, as the world seems to be in a perpetual state of flux. With truth and accountability front and center, most consumers concur it has never been more difficult to find accurate and reliable information. As such, consumers are rethinking priorities and changing how they define prosperity, value material possessions and use their time.

In the Looking Further with Ford 2017 trend report, Ford Motor Company draws upon the societal shifts taking place beyond the auto industry to inform and drive its business. Insights gleaned from technological, economic, environmental and political arenas allow experts at the company to explore how trust, relationships, technology and innovation can be leveraged to create meaningful vehicles and services that add value to consumers.

Sheryl Connelly, Ford global trend and futuring manager, says there is no escaping the fact that disruption is now the status quo. “What’s fascinating,” she says, “is how Ford is adapting and innovating – offering customers and society at large tangible ways to improve their mobility needs and ultimately, their daily way of life.”

Key consumer findings

As the pace and scale of change increase in unprecedented ways, consumers are reassessing their values, attitudes, behaviors and priorities – placing greater accountability on brands to be transparent and truthful, and to act in the best interest of both individuals and society overall. Key findings from this year’s report include:

- With a heightened focus on truth and transparency, roughly two-thirds of adults worldwide say it has never been more difficult to find information that is objective. As information can be contradictory, consumers are confronted with a decide’s dilemma – and ultimately, end up conflicted by the choices they make
- Establishing relationships built on trust never has been more daunting – making trust the most precious of assets
- Consumers increasingly are holding themselves – and others – accountable for making the right decisions for society at large
- Globally, consumers are finding more joy in less, and taking advantage of access-over-ownership service models
- An abundance of choice in the marketplace is impacting attitudes toward commitment
• In an on-demand world, patience has become less of a virtue; there now are more ways to rationalize how we spend our time – rather than declaring it “wasted”

Looking back and leaning forward
This anniversary edition of Ford’s annual trend report highlights three trends from the past that continue to shape behaviors today, while establishing seven up-and-coming trends for the future.

Revisiting Relevant Trends

• Trust Is the New Black (2013): Where truth was once held to be indisputable, it increasingly tends to be heavily influenced by perception – and reinforced by like-minded viewpoints
• The Female Frontier (2014): Profiles of women have reached new prominence, with demographic shifts changing household and work dynamics; together, women and men continue to redefine roles and responsibilities
• Sustainability Blues (2014): From devastating floods, debilitating droughts, water contamination and disputes, concern for the world’s most precious resource continues to grow, with consumers increasingly mindful of their water footprint

Rethinking Micro Trends

• The Good Life 2.0: Bigger isn’t always better, and ownership does not equate with happiness. Consumers are finding joy in less, where “good” encompasses not just possessions, but also experiences and values
• Time Well Spent: In an on-demand world, punctuality is a dying art and procrastination can be a strength. Conventional ideas about time – and the rules that go with it – often are discarded
• Decider’s Dilemma: With the internet, consumers face an abundance of choice – impacting their attitudes toward commitment. Products and services are adapting to accommodate a “sampling society” that prioritizes trying over buying
• Tech Spiral: Is technology improving our way of life, or eroding it? In many ways, tech has made life more convenient and efficient, yet consumers are beginning to grapple with its downside – from lower attention spans and retention capacities to allowing their gadgets to do their thinking for them
• Championing Change: For decades, the buck was passed between individuals and institutions. Now, who really has the greatest opportunity – and influence – to make a difference?
• The Parent Trap: It used to be there was only one way to raise a child. Now, as parenting styles proliferate, so does judgment – yet parents are more open and forthcoming about their struggles, looking to their peers for empathy and advice
• Community Ties: Today, community takes on various forms, shapes and sizes as citizens, educators, economic leaders and governments act in concerted, coordinated ways to build societies that give members purpose and hope

Insights that drive positive change

As Ford expands to be both an auto and mobility company, it remains committed to changing the way the world moves – just as it has for more than 100 years. As it does, the company remains focused on creating ways to make people’s lives better –whether they choose to own a car or not.

Connelly says that over the five years Ford has published its annual collection of micro-trends, important shifts have kept moving the needle toward the positive. “We’re inspired by the creativity and enterprising spirit driving innovation in the marketplace,” she says. “It gives us hope for what the future holds.”

For more on the Looking Further with Ford 2017 trend report, please visit www.fordtrends.com.

About Ford Motor Company
Ford Motor Company is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan. The company designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs, electrified vehicles and Lincoln luxury vehicles, provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company and is pursuing leadership positions in electrification, autonomous vehicles and mobility solutions. Ford employs approximately 190,000 people worldwide. For more information regarding Ford, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company, please visit corporate.ford.com.