

BIG STORY

How we shop, live and look

From the Olympics to Brexit, onesies to unicorns and courgetti to all things fermented, a lot can change in five years. **Becky Waller-Davies** examines John Lewis' *Retail Report*

Back in 2013, John Lewis began looking at how the nation shops, lives and looks in its annual *Retail Report*.

Consumer behaviour is an immediate indicator of a nation's mindset and this year, while it's clear that the hang-over of the recession that was still present in 2013 is behind us, consumer behaviour is beginning to shift fundamentally once again as we enter a new age of political and economic uncertainty.

How we shop

With socioeconomic anxiety beginning to bite once more, John Lewis points to the resurgence of the lipstick effect – shoppers treating themselves to affordable pick-me-ups – while consumers are still limiting larger purchases to well-thought-out investment buys.

This need for a quick boost didn't stop at the beauty counter, however. 2017 was also the year of the kitsch inflatable as tropical standbys such as flamingos, watermelons and pineapples took centre stage: the search term 'inflatable' shot up 99% on johnlewis.com while 'unicorn' rose 70% and 'mermaid' climbed 22%.

Many of those searching for exotic inflatables would have been millennials, whose impact is being felt more keenly than ever.

The current vogue for experiential shopping, especially popular with the embattled department store sector, is partly driven by the generation, who are seen to value

experiences over material goods more than their predecessors.

John Lewis found that millennials were twice as likely to get a beauty treatment or use their phones to research products while shopping and three times as likely to combine shopping with another leisure activity.

How we live

Our homes are becoming ever more important, with consumers just as likely to Instagram a new sofa as a new outfit. Velvet and millennial pink were key interiors trends, with sales of bed linen in the colour of the year rising 28%. At a higher price point, John Lewis' connected home sales shot up 160% with connected ovens, fridges, washing machines and even blinds now controllable from smartphones.

Elsewhere on the technology front, sales of wireless and hidden technology rose as wireless headphones and computer accessories shot up 250% and 43% respectively, while products such as Dyson's cordless vacuums and Sonos speakers featured high on customers' wish lists.

And as consumers stay health-conscious while trying to tighten their belts, sales of lunch boxes, thermal mugs and water bottles all shot up, rising 80%, 15% and 50% respectively.

How we look

Millennial pink of course had an impact on clothing this year with its popularity peaking

28%
The rise in sales of bed linen in millennial pink

2017



1 million
products stocked by
John Lewis



64%
of website visits come
from smartphone/tablet

in June – men's pink t-shirt sales shot up 74%, while pink women's jackets were up 55%.

Gingham and off-the-shoulder tops and dresses were major spring/summer trends, with gingham peaking in April and off-the-shoulder looks in July.

In beauty, the lipstick effect led to a 35% rise in luxury fragrances, while sheet masks went mainstream as plane-bound celebrities and models began tweeting their #sheetmaskselfies. **RW**

John Lewis points to the resurgence of the lipstick effect – shoppers treating themselves to affordable pick-me-ups

For more infographics featuring findings from John Lewis' report, go to Retail-Week.com/JL-Retail-Report



2013



746,000

products stocked by John Lewis



42%

of website visits came from smartphone/tablet

2017



53%

of online orders use click-and-collect



135

connected home products on offer

2013



40%

of online orders used click-and-collect

3

connected home products on offer

Looking ahead to 2018



THE RISE OF VOICE

We'll see voice-activated assistants become even more common, with the Sonos smart speaker coming soon



CAFFEINE CLUB

Coffee machines are now able to get to know their owner's preferences for flavour, strength and temperature



WILD PRINTS

2018 will see snakes, monkeys, toucans and other tropical animals feature heavily on fabrics, walls and furnishings



JAPLANNING

Next year inspiration will come from Japan, a country that has mastered the art of beautifully designed, minimalist living



QUIRKY SHIRTS

There will be brighter colours and quirky prints in menswear, with a predicted growth in "conversational" shirts of 30%



LIP DIPTYCH

John Lewis saw strong sales of blue lipsticks this year, but next year we'll see two-tone lips: with the brave sporting clashing colours