

Me in Mind

The new core decision-making drivers in an era of endless choice



Our innate biology is ill-suited for the scale of information and connection in today's world. **We're all running on outdated software in an upgraded reality.** Beyond a mere societal observation, it's a mismatch that's costing your business.

To understand the impact on your organization, **KPMG Ignition conducted a global survey of over 4,000 consumers** that revealed the **new core drivers** behind why people buy and what it means for how people live, work, and trust.

From Access to Overload

The defining challenge of modern life isn't access, it's authentication. Unlimited information and endless choices, combined with a diminished ability to tell the good from the bad, is an equation for overwhelm and distrust.

Ignition's global survey reveals a stark reality:

52% 

of respondents feel inundated by information, and

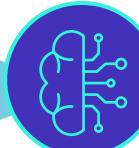
66% 

believe that many people make decisions based on incorrect data.

This crisis of credibility stems from a complex mix of factors, from shifting media landscapes to the rise of AI-generated content, each chipping away at our ability to discern truth. The result? People are seeking escape hatches to make decisions more quickly.

Ancient Brain

To escape the paralysis of choice, people create mental shortcuts. They're outsourcing their trust to inner circles and AI, taking on greater risk or settling for "good enough" to make decisions easier.



From the Crowd to the Curated

AI has turbocharged distrust:

Globally,

67% 

of consumers question whether online reviews or recommendations are written by AI.

In an echo of the pre-digital era, recommendations from friends and family (our "inner circle") have once again become the most persuasive driver of purchasing decisions.

Across regions,

60-80% 

of survey respondents agree recommendations from their inner circle are the primary driver behind their purchases.

Modern World

In an age of connection, where credibility is a scarce commodity, your audience's circle of trust is smaller than ever. Simply adding more noise is a failing strategy. The challenge lies in building trust in every interaction.

From a Buy to a Belief

Even as people retreat to their “inner circles,” they remain acutely aware that they are living in a social fishbowl. They draw a line between themselves and the collective:

70% assert that *other people* place unwarranted trust in online reviews for products and services, and that influencers significantly affect people’s decisions, implicitly positioning themselves as more discerning. They also ascribe deeper meaning to transactions, with

63% believing a person’s character can be **judged by their purchases**. At the same time, they believe themselves to be pragmatic actors.

More than

77% agree that price is a key driver in purchasing decisions, and

Over

68% admit they have changed their decision to buy a product because a similar one was available sooner.

What emerges is a nuanced picture: consumers are paying close attention to others and judge those actions, while at the same time believing they are immune from the influence of the crowd.

But that's not the case. When we perceive we are being watched, and therefore judged, we alter our behavior.

Those who agreed that people judge others for their purchases are:

1. More likely to stop buying from a company after seeing negative news about its business practices and,
2. More likely to say their family and friends notice their purchases.

The constant scrutiny unconsciously transforms every purchase from a private transaction into a public declaration of who we aspire to be.

The impact of living in a fishbowl matters more than we realize. If you think your customer only cares about price, quality, and convenience, you're missing half the story.

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The Rise of the New Decision-Making Factors

Price, quality, and convenience are still an important part of the equation, but new dynamics are emerging that intersect with the traditional drivers and enhance the picture. Our data surfaced key decision-making drivers that include:



Informed Choice: How much a person pays attention to what they are buying, from impulsive actions to carefully researched decisions



Social Influence: The impact of others on a decision, from independence to a strong reliance on an outside opinion



Perceived Impact of Technology: The perception of technology’s role in shaping shopping habits from minimal to transformative



Information Skepticism: The level of trust consumers have toward information, from distrust and overwhelm to complete confidence



Price Sensitivity: The importance placed on price as a primary motivation for purchase

People are changing. The target moves. The question is: will you?

KPMG Ignition is here to help.



Learn more about working with KPMG Ignition and access insights to transform your organization and industry.

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