

Trend Watch 2019 - Part 1

Issued by [ATKASA - Digital Agency](#)

24 Jan 2019

As is our custom at ATKASA at the start of a new year, we like to review the trends that are predicted to inform not only our cultural and social paradigms, but also those that will influence our interpretation of design, web design and the colour palettes forecast for 2019.

From a cultural perspective, according to Dion Chang, a leading South African futurist, we are very likely to see the rise and rise of plant-based diets. He further foresees the increasing popularity of gluten-free, sugar-free, lactose-free and sodium-free foods that will become more readily available. It is indeed already apparent that food retailers, especially the likes of Woolworths, have heeded the call from consumers for more organic foods. Given the predicted exponential uptake of organic and wholefoods, what remains to be seen is whether the prohibitive costs of these foods will in fact decrease. Pricing is especially relevant in the South African context, given that a large majority of our population simply do not have the means to afford organic and wholefoods. We certainly hope that as volume and consumption increase, so too conversely will prices decrease.

From a social point of view, Chang foresees the rise in social activism that took flight in earnest last year. We need only remember Colin Kaepernick "taking a knee" in protest against racial injustice provoked an outcry both for and against his stand. Nike was one of the forward-thinking brands to recognise the rising trend, and quickly appointed Kaepernick the poster boy of their latest "Just Do It" campaign. From a local perspective, recall the outrage caused by the two young learners at Herzlia school in Cape Town, who also took a knee to object to the Israeli treatment of Palestinians during the playing of the Israeli national anthem. Rightly or wrongly, social activism is going nowhere in the foreseeable future.

Lastly, Chang has spoken of an age where business will continue to reward, and punish, consumers for good and "bad" behaviour as it relates to their brand. A recent example of this, is Discovery Health's Vitality programme that encourages their members to attend the gym regularly and are rewarded with loyalty programme points accordingly. However, Vitality quickly realised members were not necessarily engaging in physical activity at the gym but merely swiping their access cards and swiftly leaving. Vitality plans to monitor members' activity at the gym and ensure it is in fact legitimate and only thereafter award points. Just how Vitality envisages enforcing this remains to be seen, however suffice it to say, consumers have been vocal in their condemnation of the "Big Brother" attitude of Vitality.

"As an agency that prides itself on being ahead of the curve, we continue to follow global trends and how these trends influence the work we do for our clients, as custodians of their brands, to ensure they remain relevant and informed. Forewarned is forearmed," concludes ATKASA Managing Director, Leon Marinus.

Part Two of our Trend Watch for 2019 will continue next week, where we will focus on the rising design trends likely to take shape this year.

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