



The New Affordability Mindset



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Intro

Toward a new affordability mindset

Still Showing Up for a Deal

- **Shoppers increasingly used AI tools to hunt for the best deals.**
- **Holiday sales rose 3.9% year over year.**
- **Black Friday hit a new online spending record at \$11.8B.**



- Yet, consumer sentiment remains fragile, shaped by a persistent sense of unease about what lies ahead.

THEME:

Squeezed household budgets

UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:

Protecting family stability

KEY INSIGHT:

US consumers say household finances feel strained by inflation and rising living costs, so they cut discretionary spending and try to make savings stretch.



"I'm cutting extras so rent and groceries still fit. Feels like every dollar has to work harder."



Why is spending steady despite uncertainty?

Our approach and methodology

Predictive anthropology

Predictive anthropology

Decoding the evolving culture of affordability

What we analyze

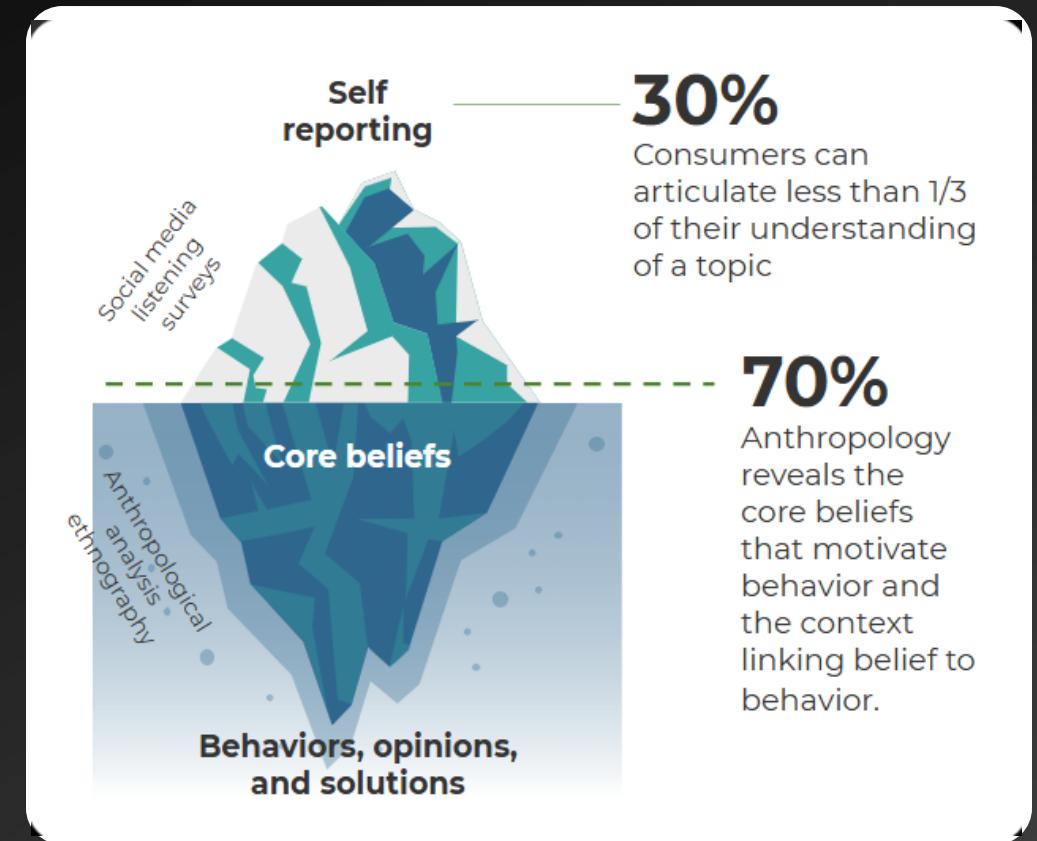
- Millions of long-form consumer conversations, in context

What they reveal

- Emerging cultural shifts
- The deeper meanings shaping behavior

Why it matters

- Strategies aligned with core beliefs
- Better timing, stronger loyalty, long-term growth



Deep dive into the new affordability mindset

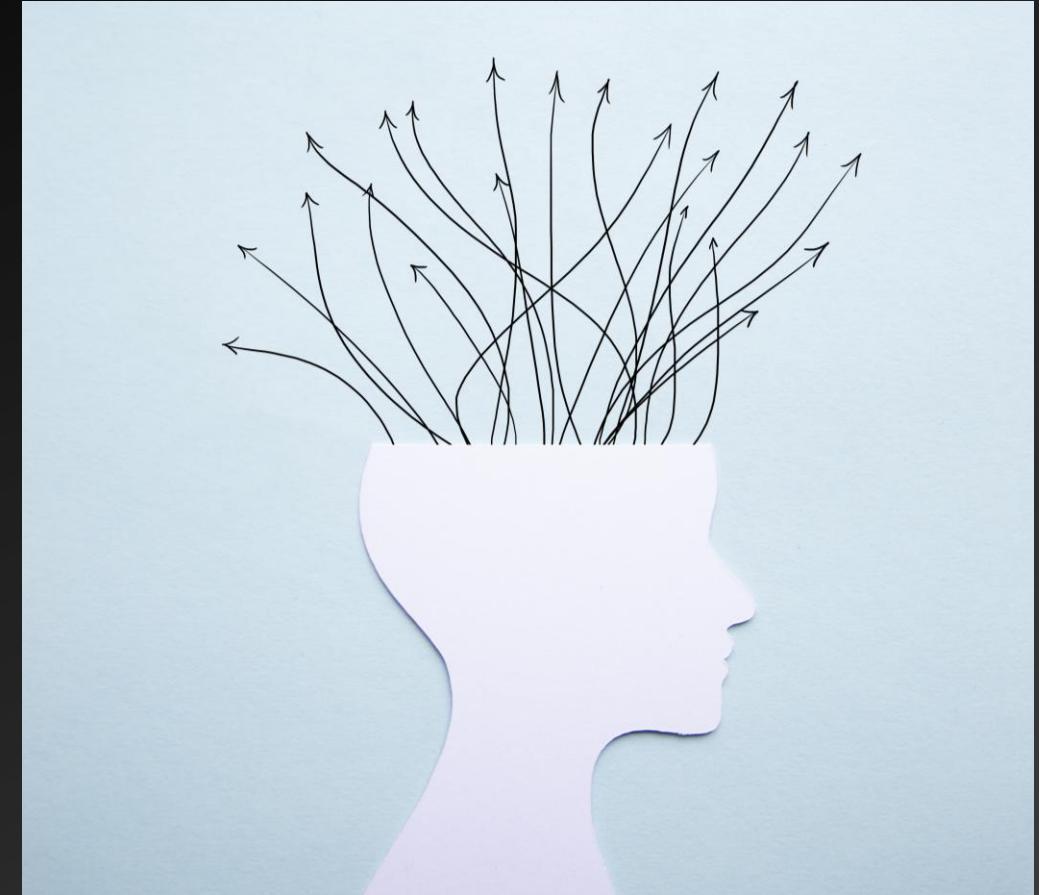
When every purchase matters

Trend: New affordability mindset

Spending with intention, not necessarily less

As economic uncertainty becomes the cultural baseline and future progress is less certain, consumers — including affluent ones — turn to everyday purchases to maintain their quality of life.

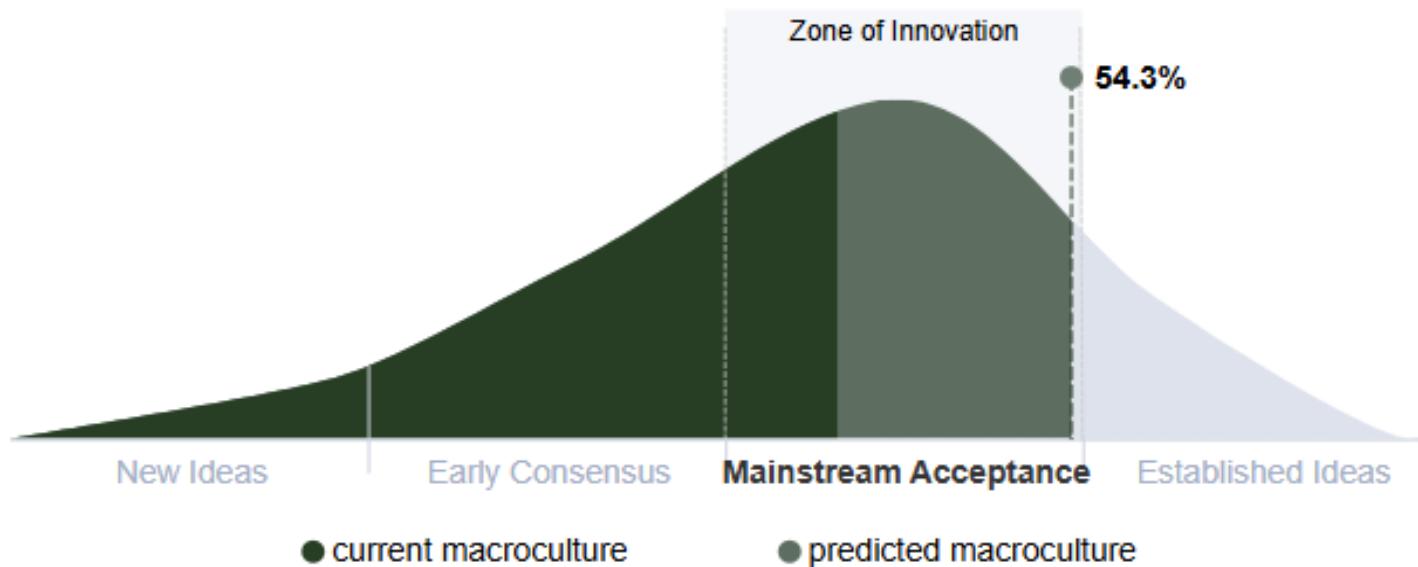
- Expectations per purchase continue to rise.
- Perceived value now outpaces price points, driving momentum behind **premium-affordable options**.



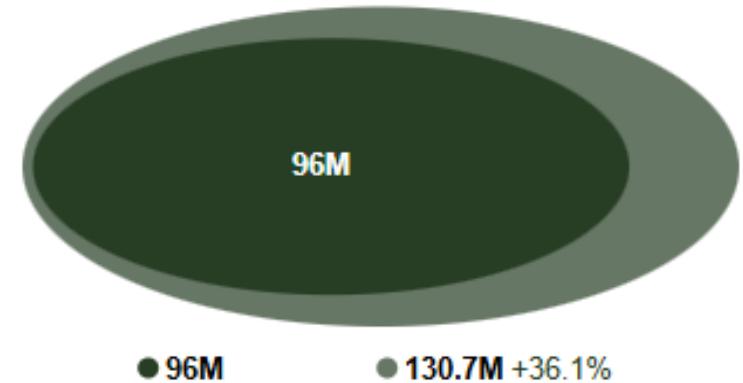
The evolving affordability mindset is becoming mainstream

Culture: affordable products, premium product, economic uncertainty

Maturity Curve
39.9%
current



Population



This topic scores 39.9% on the **maturity curve** and is expected to expand to 54.3% in 12-24 months.

This culture is currently relevant to 96M **people** and is expected to grow by 36.1% in 12-24 months.

Subtrend: Micro-optimizing daily life

Rethinking the shopping basket

Consumers don't:

- Make dramatic, across-the-board cuts

Instead, they discuss:

- **Trimming selectively** and buying fewer items
- **Protecting, even upgrading quality** in everyday routines

The Emergence of Premium Affordable Categories



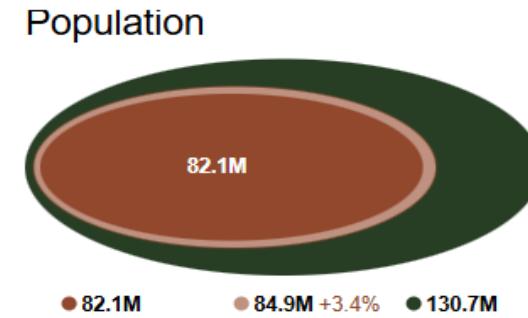
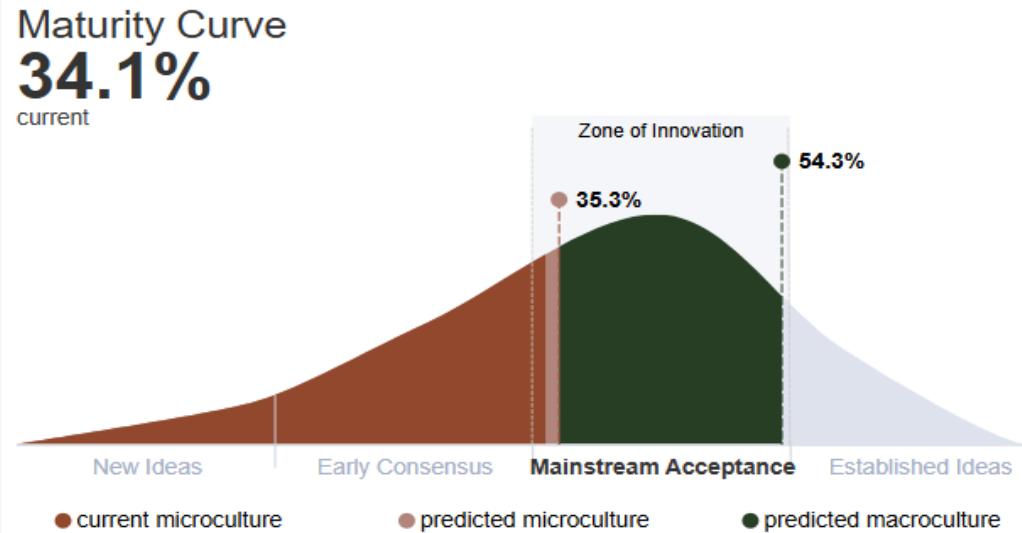
Subtrend: Micro-optimizing daily life

- **Moments of Joy:** Seeking modest luxuries — skincare, quality ingredients, and small novelties — as everyday indulgences during economic strain.
- **Moments of Health and Wellness:** Treating health as a smart spend, consumers gravitate toward fewer, higher-quality foods and snacks, functional ingredients, and fitness.
- **Moments of Participation:** Rejecting hype- or algorithm-led personalization in favor of premium experiences shaped by their own input and involvement.



Becoming more strategic about everyday purchases

Culture: affordable products, premium product, economic uncertainty Topic: high quality



This topic scores 34.1% on the **maturity curve** and is expected to expand to 35.3% in 12-24 months.

This culture is currently relevant to 82.1M **people** and is expected to grow by 3.4% in 12-24 months.

LUX TAKE

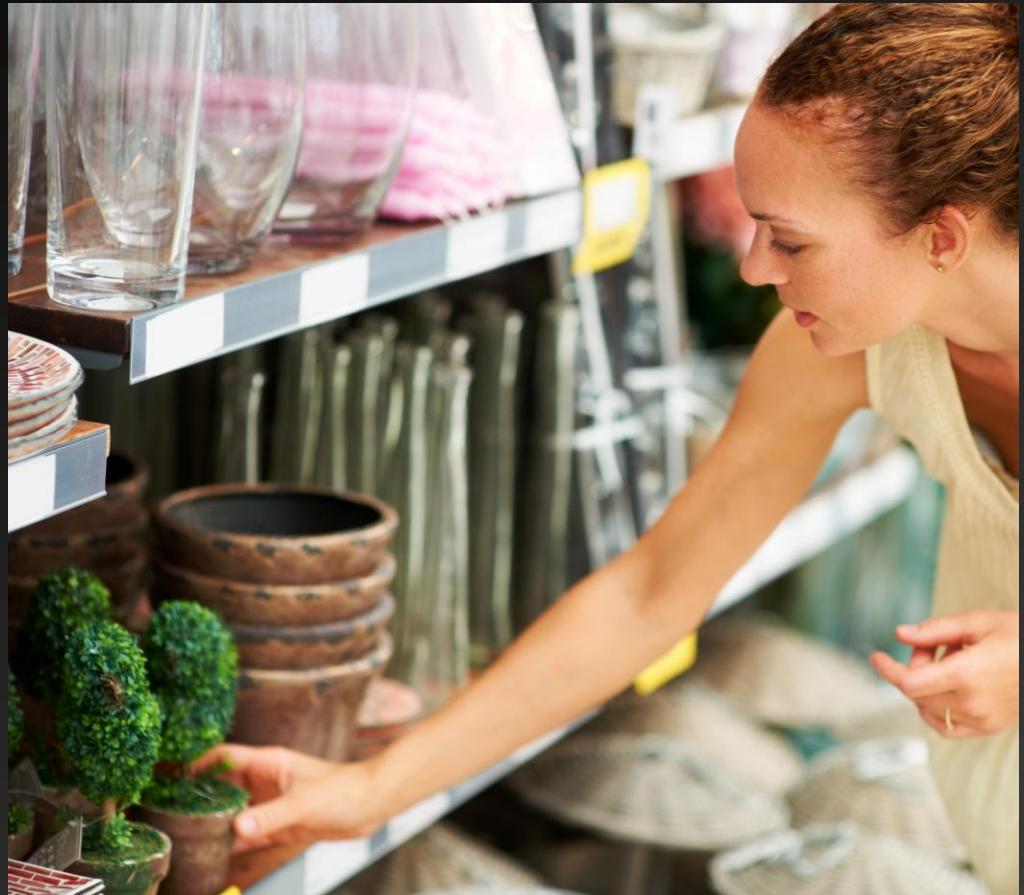
Consumers expect to get more value from everyday choices, but they're still open to new solutions and new definitions of what "worth it" looks like.

Subtrend: Brand loyalty

Value without compromise

Brand loyalty is being redefined around reliability, not price alone. Two distinct behaviors are emerging:

- **Consumers discuss still paying more for brands they trust not to disappoint.**
- **Trading down no longer means accepting lower quality.**
 - Premium cues at everyday prices build trust (e.g., high quality dupes and store brands)



“ ”

Higher-income shoppers describe choosing Walmart and other store brands for quality and performance that rival premium brands at everyday prices.

SUBTREND: BRAND LOYALTY

THEME:

Everyday low price

UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:

Demonstrating financial savvy without visible sacrifice

KEY INSIGHT:

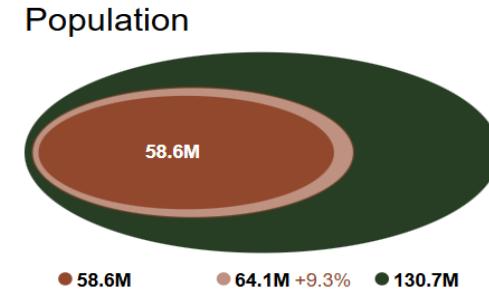
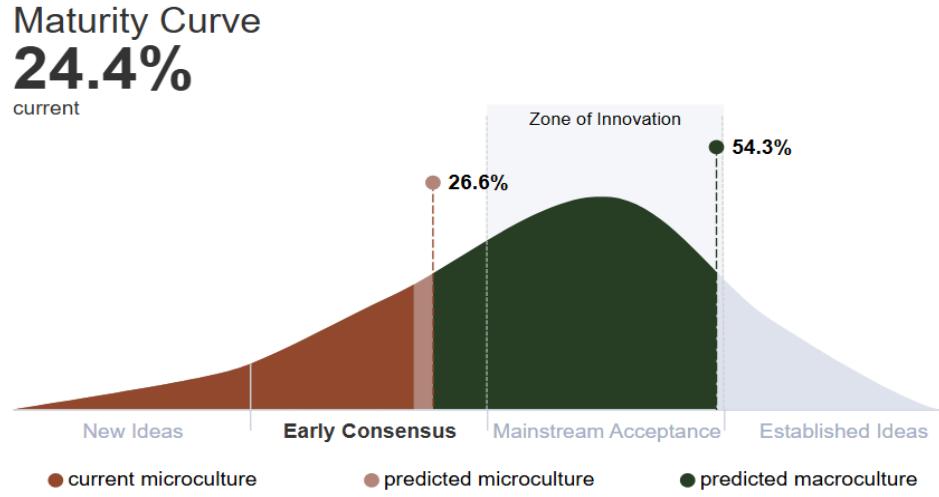
Affluent consumers say Walmart's low-price positioning and sales let them buy more without losing perceived quality, so bargains feel like smart choices.



"I don't need flashy packaging to know I got a smart deal."

Beyond trading down

Culture: affordable products, premium product, economic uncertainty Topic: trust brands



This topic scores 24.4% on the [maturity curve](#) and is expected to expand to 26.6% in 12-24 months.

This culture is currently relevant to [58.6M people](#) and is expected to grow by [9.3%](#) in 12-24 months.

LUX TAKE

Brands can maintain or build loyalty by consistently proving they deliver real value at prices consumers perceive as reasonable.

Key implications

Navigating the New Affordability Mindset

Key Takeaways

1

Upgrade everyday routines.

Show clearly how your product makes daily life easier, better, or more reliable so consumers can quickly see the benefit and feel confident choosing it.

2

Don't trade quality for price.

Lower prices can't compensate for products that disappoint. Instead of downgrading, brands must unlock better pricing through smarter innovation and process optimization.

3

Include value add-ons.

For wealthier consumers, paying more is acceptable when the experience is seamless and the added value is explicit. Price premiums must be clearly earned and communicated.



Thank You



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