NEW NORMAL
Asian consumers are changing the way they think

...about relationships, religion, sexuality, race, gender, work and home.

Across the continent, traditional views on a range of fundamental social issues are amid transformation. In some instances, that change is happening faster than anywhere else on the planet. One example?

Between 2007 and 2013, the proportion of people in South Korea who say homosexuality should be accepted by society rose from 18% to 39%: the largest increase among any of the 39 countries surveyed, which included the US, Brazil and Australia (Pew Research, June 2013).
When it comes to these changes, context is everything.

So don't get us wrong ;)

When it comes to social norms that are centuries (or more!) old, change doesn’t happen overnight, everywhere, or uniformly.

So yes: across much (but not all) of Asia, traditional views on marriage, religion, sexuality and more prevail.

Often, it’s not the current numbers that are head-turning (for instance, 39% of people in South Korea now think being gay is okay, against 88% in Spain).

It’s the fact of new attitudinal changes, and the pace of those changes, that demand attention.

Because, of course, it’s often when these attitudinal changes begin, and when they’re at their fastest, that they are most socially disruptive.
NEW NORMAL | Millions of consumers – often young, urban and educated – across APAC are dispensing with tradition and embracing new beliefs and attitudes on key social issues. Now, they'll reward brands that understand and embody the NEW NORMAL.

DEFINITION

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These four drivers are playing a key role in the erosion of old social norms and the evolution of new beliefs, attitudes and mindsets:

- **GLOBAL BRAIN**: Growth in internet users in APAC beats the global average by 60% (ComScore, July 2013).
- **Urbanization**: According to UNDESA, in the last two decades the APAC urban proportion has risen by 29%, more than any other region.
- **Female spending power**: Female participation in the labour force in Singapore has increased from 51% in 2003 to 58% in 2013 (Ministry of Manpower* Singapore, September 2013).
- **Travel**: It’s estimated that outbound travel from India will rise from 4.5 million people in 2011 to 70 million by 2030 (Amadeus & Oxford Economics, April 2014).

* Time to change the name to Ministry of People Power? ;)

*WHY NOW?*

Four big shifts propelling the NEW NORMAL.

Amid the many other (complex) forces at work.
WHY NOW?

The consequence? An ever-growing expectation gap.

Attitudes (among many) are changing fast. But institutions – brands included – tend to change slowly.

The result? Millions of consumers who expect brands to understand, speak to and serve their identities, lifestyles and attitudes find that desire is going unmet.

But now, a few forward thinking brands are daring to address and serve the many varieties of NEW NORMAL arising across the continent.

Just check out the examples that follow.
The proportion of female employers increased by 8%, – from 22% to 30% – in Asia Pacific between 2002 and 2012. Globally, the average increase was 5%.

UNESCAP, 2013
FEATURED INNOVATIONS
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Tanishq

Indian jewelry ad celebrates remarriage
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Ooredoo

Telecoms program enables Myanmar women to run their own small business
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Pantene

Philippino shampoo ad questions gender stereotypes
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

ELEMENT

Asia’s ‘first gay lifestyle magazine’

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

CHAIWAT THONGSAENG

“Oh! That hunk from BANGKOK LOVE STORY”

THE WELL-GROOMED ISSUE:

KIEHL’S L’OREAL ALIEN BIOTHERM HOMME PRADA JEANPAULGAULTIER BVLGARI AND MANY MORE
Google

‘Reunion’ video ad builds bridge between India and Pakistan
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Hafu

Japanese documentary chronicles mixed-race experiences
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Chuan Spa
Hong Kong

Spa treatment for men
Korean Air

Personal grooming workshop for male staff
Biotherm Homme

Skincare for men brand opens first ever store in Singapore
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Asian Paints

Indian ad campaign pokes fun at husbands
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Tourism Authority of Thailand

Campaign welcomes LGBT travelers
NEW NORMAL: FEATURED INNOVATIONS

Coca-Cola & Singapore Kindness Movement

Brand uses drones to deliver drinks to guest workers in Singapore
What does the NEW NORMAL mean for brands?
Navigating choices

New social freedoms mean new lifestyle choices: empowering but also sometimes scary. Consumers will embrace campaigns and content which help them navigate a path through the NEW NORMAL, and communities that allow them to share their experiences.
Easing tensions

Social change – and the casting off of old, reassuring certainties – means social tension. Build services and communities that help consumers come together, see other points of view, and find common ground. A sense of humor always helps!
In a NEW NORMAL world, well-worn categories such as ‘luxury consumer’ and ‘youth brand’ just don’t mean what they used to.

The result?
A chance for your brand to capture entirely new types of consumer, if you have the daring to rip up your brand rule book and commit a few HERITAGE HERESIES.
Consumers won't just expect you to serve their NEW NORMAL lifestyles: they'll expect your people to reflect the NEW NORMAL, too.

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**PAUL BACKMAN**
Chief Client Officer
paul@trendwatching.com

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