

MHCS: BUREAU OF STRATEGY

MAY 2026

PAPER

CURATION ECONOMY: THE STRATEGIC POWER OF TASTE

CONTENT



06	THE PARADOX OF CHOICE	16	EDITOR'S PICKS	36	CONCLUSION	42	INDEX
12	THE MAXIMIZER BEHAVIOUR	32	CURATION: THE HUMAN SPARK	40	MHCS	43	CREDITS

**TODAY, MANY BRANDS
BELIEVE THAT PACKED
CATALOGS, WITH NUMEROUS
REFERENCES, WILL ALLOW
THEM TO SELL MORE.
HOWEVER, THIS IS NO
LONGER NECESSARILY
THE CASE, AND PERHAPS
IT NEVER WAS, BECAUSE
AN OVERLY FULL CATALOG
CAN BE INTIMIDATING. THE
KEY, NOW, IS SELECTION:
PRODUCT SELECTION,
CREATIVE SELECTION,
HEARTFELT SELECTION.**

01

THE PARADOX OF CHOICE

IN 2000, THE DUO *SHEENA IYENGAR* AND *MARK LEPPER* DECIDED TO TEST THEIR HYPOTHESIS: "*THE MORE CHOICE YOU HAVE, THE BETTER.*" THEIR CONCLUSION WAS CLEAR:

BEYOND A CERTAIN POINT, A SURFEIT OF CHOICE BECOMES DEMOTIVATING, AND THIS IS WHAT THEY WOULD CALL "*THE CHOICE OVERLOAD*" OR "*THE PARADOX OF CHOICE*".

A DISPLAY A, COMPOSED OF 24 VARIETIES OF JAM, AND A DISPLAY B, OF ONLY 6, WERE PLACED IN A PREMIUM SUPERMARKET IN CALIFORNIA.

THE EXPERIMENT



THE DIFFERENT VARIETIES WERE OFFERED FOR TASTING, WITH ONE CONDITION: A PURCHASE VOUCHER WAS OFFERED TO THE CONSUMER WISHING TO ACQUIRE A JAR.

THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT
THE PROPORTION OF VISITORS
ENCOURAGED TO BUY BY DISPLAY
A WAS ONLY

3

MEANWHILE, FOR
DISPLAY B, THIS
FIGURE CLIMBED TO

30%

02

**THE MAXIMIZER
BEHAVIOUR**

THIS IS WHERE THE PARADOX LIES: WHY DOESN'T A GREATER DIVERSITY OF CHOICE ENCOURAGE MORE BUYING? THIS IS WHERE THE SO-CALLED "MAXIMIZER" BEHAVIOUR COMES INTO PLAY.

THE MAXIMIZER WANTS TO TEST AND COMPARE EVERY OPTION BEFORE DECIDING. IF THEY CAN'T, THEY START FEELING ANXIOUS AND LESS SATISFIED WITH THEIR CHOICE. AS A RESULT, MAXIMIZING CONSUMERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BUY WHEN THERE ARE FEWER OPTIONS ON THE TABLE, AND MORE LIKELY TO WALK AWAY WHEN THERE ARE TOO MANY.

ONLINE, THE CATALOG IS POTENTIALLY INFINITE, AND ALL THE SORTING EFFORT FALLS BACK TO THE USER.

DECISION PARALYSIS IS NOT A THEORETICAL HYPOTHESIS. IT IS A MEASURABLE REALITY, LINE BY LINE, IN EVERY BRAND'S ANALYTICS DASHBOARDS.

MORE SPECIFICALLY WITHIN THE FASHION SECTOR, THIS RATE PEAKS AT

IN 2026, THE UPPER END OF THE AVERAGE E-COMMERCE CONVERSION RATE STANDS AT



THIS SAME RATE CAN REACH, AT ITS LOWER LIMIT, DOWN TO

03

EDITOR'S PICKS

AN "EDITED BY" PRODUCT SELECTION SENDS A CLEAR SIGNAL TO THE CUSTOMER: THIS SELECTION IS EMBODIED, IT WAS CREATED BY A REAL PERSON, WITH WHOM THEY CAN COMPARE THEIR TASTES, AND RELATE TO. IT EMBODIES A REAL POINT OF VIEW AND CAN HAVE A POWERFUL MARKETING IMPACT.

YOU DON'T NEED TO DIG THROUGH THE CATALOG, SOMEONE YOU TRUST HAS ALREADY SORTED IT OUT FOR YOU.





Lucy yeomans,
editor-in-chief at
Porter, summarized
their philosophy
as "curate the
trends": reduce
the noise to show
only the essential,
with a real editorial
point of view. It's
not distribution.
It's artistic
direction applied to
conversion.

CUSTOMERS WHO ENGAGE
WITH EDITORIAL CONTENT
SPEND MORE BY

10%

PORTER MAGAZINE
SUBSCRIBERS SPEND MORE
OVERALL BY UP TO

86%

THEY ALSO PLACE MORE
ORDERS BY

24%

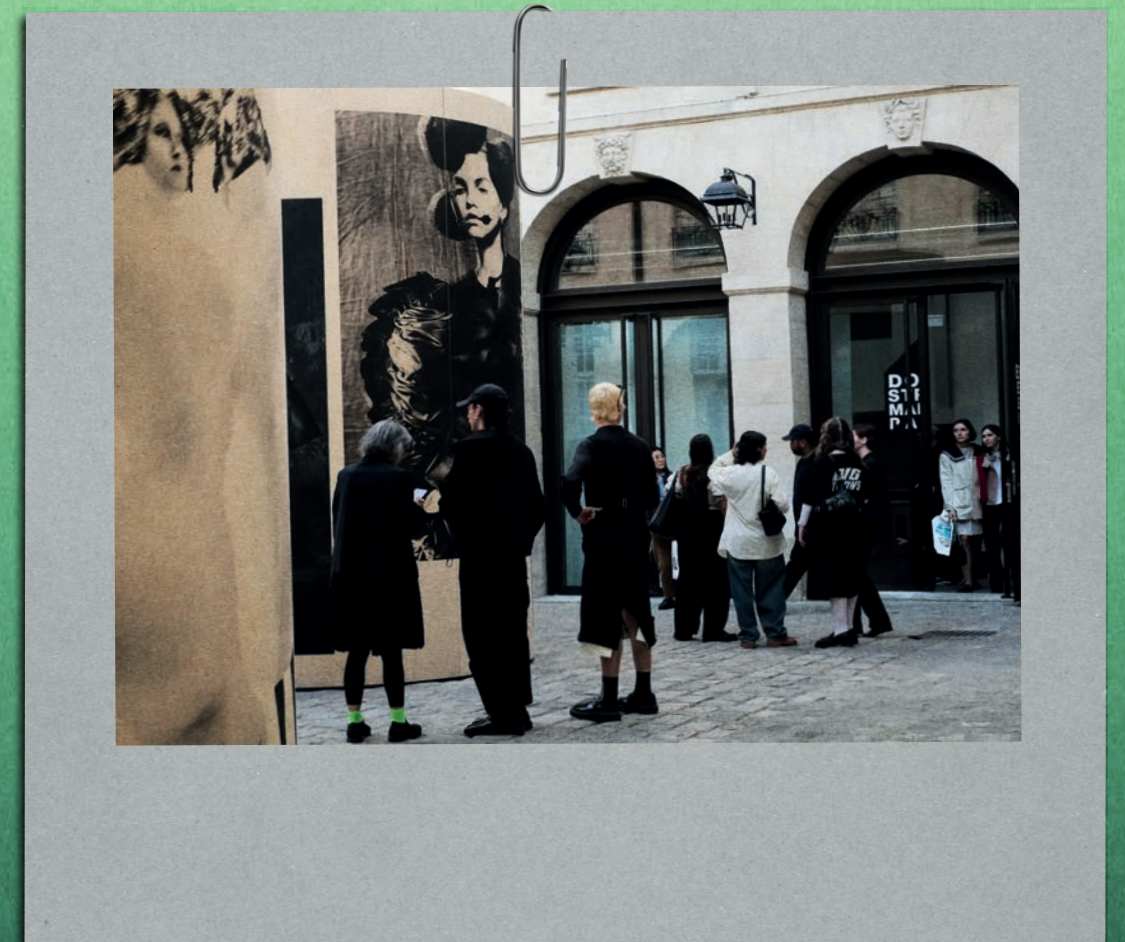
COLETTE, IN PARIS,
HELD THE SAME CONVICTION

**"IN A WORLD
OF ALWAYS-ON,
INSTANTANEOUSLY
AVAILABLE
PLEASURES,
SELECTION IS
DIFFERENTIATION,
CURATION IS
DISTINCTION."**

Sarah Andelman

DOVER STREET MARKET, CREATED BY REI
KAWAKUBO OF COMME DES GARÇONS IN
2004, IS OFTEN CITED AS THE FIRST CONCEPT
STORE TO HAVE TRULY REINVENTED RETAIL
THROUGH CURATION:

MIXING BRANDS, CREATING UNEXPECTED
ASSOCIATIONS, AND EVOLVING THE MIX
EVERY WEEK.

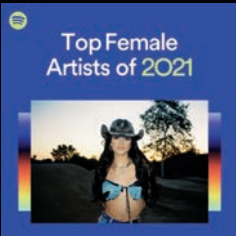


THESE TWO SPACES DEMONSTRATED THAT
AN EMBODIED SELECTION COULD TRANSFORM
A COMMERCIAL LOCATION INTO A CULTURAL
DESTINATION.

THE ANALOGY WITH STREAMING
PLATFORMS IS PARTICULARLY
REVEALING HERE TOO.

WHETHER IT'S SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC,
OR OTHERS STREAMING APP, SOME OF
THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PLAYLISTS,
LIKE *"RAPCAVIAR"* OR *"TODAY'S
TOP HITS"* AREN'T DRIVEN BY
ALGORITHMS ALONE, BUT BY HUMAN
EDITORIAL WORK. FIGURES LIKE *MEHDI
MAÏZI* EMBODY THIS CURATORIAL
ROLE: SELECTING, SHAPING, AND
GIVING CULTURAL MEANING BEYOND
THE DATA.

WHAT GIVES VALUE
TO THE SELECTION
IS NOT THE
RECOMMENDATION
ENGINE:



IT IS THE HUMAN
JUDGMENT THAT
SIGNS IT.



**COLLABORATION
IS CURATION**

ASSOCIATED  WITH CERTAIN ACTIONS,  CURATED SELECTIONS  CAN SIGNIFICANTLY BOOST CONVERSION RATES, PARTICULARLY  THROUGH COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN BRANDS  AND CREATORS. ALTHOUGH THE TERM "CURATION"  IS NOT ALWAYS USED BY BRANDS TO DESCRIBE THESE INITIATIVES, THEY ARE INDEED SELECTIONS CARRIED  OUT BY WHAT IS CALLED A CURATOR,  WHETHER IT'S A CREATOR IN THE PROPER  SENSE, ANOTHER BRAND, AN ARTIST,  OR A STUDIO.

04

**CURATION: THE
HUMAN SPARK**

For brands, the lesson is direct: the product highlighted by an identifiable human being weighs infinitely more than one simply pushed by an algorithm.

THESE CURATED COLLECTIONS ARE PART OF CONTEXTUALIZED RECOMMENDATIONS, CAPABLE OF REACHING ULTRA-PERSONALIZED CONSUMER PROFILES...

PROFILES THAT ARE THEREFORE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO FEEL CONCERNED AND ATTRACTED BY THE PRODUCTS, PRECISELY BECAUSE A TRUSTED PERSONALITY OR ENTITY CO-CREATED THEM.

BECAUSE WHAT MATTERS MOST OF ALL IS THE TRUST

A CONSUMER PLACES IN A BRAND, MUCH MORE THAN THE BREADTH OF A CATALOG AND WE KNOW IT:

CONSUMERS BUY WITH THE HEART, BECAUSE DESIRE OUTPERFORM RATIONALITY WHEN TIME IS SHORT FOR ARBITRATION.

IT IS ALSO THE CLARITY THEY SEEK,

NOT EXHAUSTIVENESS, AS THE LATTER CAN PROVIDE THEM WITH TOO MANY ELEMENTS, SLOWING DOWN OR CANCELING ANY DECISION-MAKING.

05

CONCLUSION

CURATION IS NOT A PASSING TREND, IT IS A STRUCTURAL RESPONSE TO A WORLD SATURATED WITH CHOICES.

THE NUMBERS CONFIRM IT, THE BEST PLAYERS IN THE SECTOR PRACTICE IT, AND CONSUMERS OFTEN ENDORSE IT WITHOUT EVEN BEING ABLE TO NAME IT.

"EDITED BY" IS NOT JUST AN EDITORIAL FORMAT, IT IS AN ACT OF TRUST PLACED UPSTREAM OF THE CONSUMER, A WAY OF SAYING: WE HAVE ALREADY CHOSEN FOR YOU, BECAUSE WE KNOW YOU. AND IT IS PRECISELY THIS POSTURE THAT BUILDS LASTING RELATIONSHIPS, SOLID CONVERSION RATES, AND

BRANDS THAT ARE NOT JUST SEEN,

BUT
ARE
TRULY
CHOSEN

BUREAU OF STRATEGY

MHCS IS AN END-TO-END BUREAU OF STRATEGY DEDICATED TO BUILDING BRANDS THROUGH THE CRAFT OF OBSERVATION AND THE DISCIPLINE OF RADICAL CHOICE. STRUCTURED LIKE A STRATEGY STUDIO AND SURROUNDED BY AN ECOSYSTEM OF EXPERTS, WE TURN YOUR VISION INTO A CLEAR, STYLISH, AND DEFENSIBLE BRAND INFRASTRUCTURE. OUR ROLE IS TO HELP YOU MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS AND REFINE YOUR BRAND EXPRESSIONS OVER THE LONG TERM, ACROSS MARKET, CULTURE, AND PEOPLE.

IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE HOW THESE SHIFTS APPLY TO YOUR BRAND AND YOUR STRATEGY, GET IN TOUCH WITH US.

YAHYA@M-H-C-S.COM

M-H-C-S.COM



LET'S BUILD A BRAND
PEOPLE DON'T SCROLL PAST
BUT ACTIVELY CHOOSE

INDEX & CREDITS

<https://ecopsycho.gretha.cnrs.fr/?p=17099>

Adobe Business – Taux de conversion e-commerce benchmarks

Synolia – Taux de conversion du e-commerce en 2025/2026

Insider Trends – How Net-a-Porter is rethinking retail

Business of Fashion – Inside Net-a-Porter's Strategy for Porter Magazine

System Magazine – Shop talk. Colette & Dover Street Market

Culted – How Dover Street Market changed the retail landscape

Artist Tools – Spotify Playlist Placement

Mark Lepper, Sheena Lyengar, Sarah Andel Andelman, Lucy Yeomans, Grams Design Office, Bazaar Seven, Thames Hudson Gb, Awoke, Taschen, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Dior, Vivienne Westwood, Prada, Versace, Yves-Saint-Laurent, Mondrian, Porter Mag By Net-A-Porter, Net-A-Porter, Dover Street Market, Comme Des Spotify, Asics, Porsche, Aimé Léon Doré, Musée Guggenheim, Le Musée Imaginaire d'Oli, Astroworld, David LaChapelle, Mathieu Lehanneur, Lego, Keith Haring, Okley, Meta.

EDITOR: Enzo Thoirain

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Léo Truc

DIRECTOR: Yahya Ennouari

**THANKS
FOR
READING
US.**