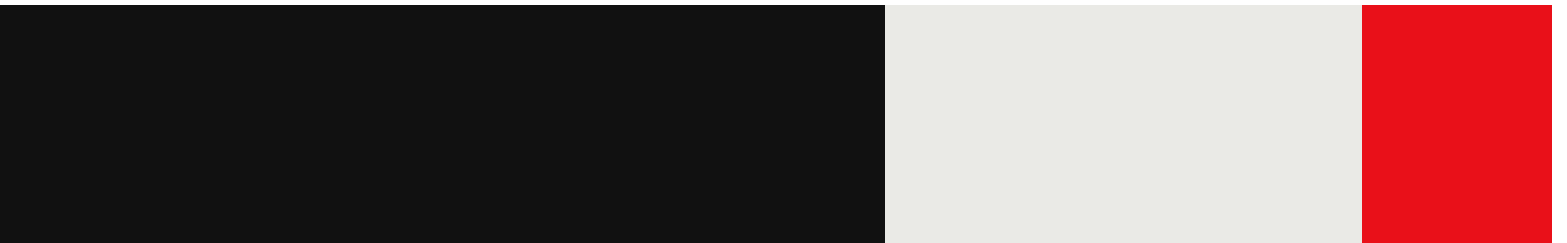


The Weekly Listen: How to think about community, Apple Pay Later arrives, and in-store robots are here

Audio



On today's episode, we discuss why brands should be thinking more about community; Apple rolling out its buy now, pay later offering; consumers' shipping priorities; H&M's new resale program; what in-store retail robots can do; facts about US national parks; and more. Tune in to the discussion with our forecasting writer Ethan Cramer-Flood, vice president of content Suzy Davidkhanian, and analyst Blake Droesch.

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Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

Hello everyone, and thanks for hanging out with us for the Behind the Numbers Weekly Listen and e-marker a podcast made possible by Cint. This is the Friday show. They can barely see

the tomatoes on Suzy's tomato plant that she'd-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Already, you're talking about it?

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, they're so small/non-existent.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Wow. They are not, and there's four of them.

Marcus Johnson:

Are there? In your imagination, maybe. I'm your host, Marcus Johnson. In today's show, why brands should be thinking more about community.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I don't know that you need to be an established brand. I think you can be an entrepreneur with one item, you're brand new, but you're solving for a problem. Whatever that friction point is that everybody sort of rallies behind.

Marcus Johnson:

Apple rolls out, it's buy now, pay later plan.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

There's going to be yet another thing that you're going to have to click on to say no to or to disconnect from or to mistakenly click or yet another process to go through when you're trying to use your Apple Pay.

Marcus Johnson:

What's consumer's number one shipping priority?

Blake Droesch:

The way that there's nuances is there's a consumer who's paying for Prime and getting free shipping quickly, in their heads, are they going, "Is that free shipping?" Or do they

acknowledge that they're paying a monthly fee for it?

Marcus Johnson:

H&M launches a resale program. Retailers turn to in-store robots and some facts about the US National Parks. Join me for this episode. We have three people. Let's meet them. We start with our vice president of content, who heads up our retail desk. She's based out of New York. It's Susie Davidkhanian.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Hi, everyone.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello. Hello. We're also joined by one of our senior analysts on that very retail team. He's based out of New York as well. We call him Blake Droesch.

Blake Droesch:

Hey, Marcus. How's it going?

Marcus Johnson:

Hey fella. Very well. Very well. We're also joined by our senior forecasting writer based out of New York. First time on the Weekly Listen, ladies and gentlemen, he's called Ethan Cramer-Flood.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Hey, Marcus. Good to be here. Thanks for finally inviting me.

Marcus Johnson:

Of course. Thank you so much for being around. You may have heard Ethan hanging out Around the World Show with Bill Fisher, but we stole him for this episode. So, welcome Ethan to the show. What do we have in store for you? Well, three segments of course. We start with the story of the week. We're talking about community and what should that mean to brands.

We then move to the game of the week where of course our panel will go head-to-head-to-head to try to give us the best takeaways they can from each of the four stories we have for

you. And we end with some random trivia. We call that dinner party data, but let's start up top of course with a story of the week

Why brands should be thinking more about community. "In the post pandemic world, people have a renewed desire to belong," writes Paul Hebert of ad Adweek. He notes that the pandemic has altered people's sense of community, saying this shift in culture presents marketers with an opportunity, since brands can benefit from tight-knit groups of like-minded individuals. Mr. Hebert explains that for marketers, this doesn't have to mean more tequila brands hosting tequila nights featuring a presentation on the history of distilling tequila between shots of tequila.

And companies can show up in unexpected places. "Perhaps a cracker brand can connect with a book club. Maybe a neighborhood coffee shop can set aside a couple of tables for the local running group after their morning jog," he writes. Suzy, I'll start with you. What do you think about this article and how should brands be thinking about community?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I think it's interesting for me because, I'm going to tie it into the next article as well, in terms of, I always thought about community as the next buzzword beyond personalization and this idea of one to many communications and how can you be more effective to talking to people in a way that is meaningful to them as a brand? How can you scale personalization in a meaningful, non-creepy way, which was community. But then the other article was trying to make the distinction between an audience and a community, and it's that idea I think that's most critical is around this warm and fuzzy feeling, and it doesn't have to be a shared activity.

It could be a shared value, but that it truly is interactive and that you're harnessing the power of people wanting to talk to each other and wanting to listen to each other and wanting to engage with one another versus say, personalization again, which is the brand talking to you as the consumer or an audience, which again is the brand talking to a larger number of people, but in a one way communication kind of way. I think it's a must. You need to find ways to delight and surprise your consumer in a way that is meaningful to them and this is another way.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Shira Feuer, CMO of skincare brand Trinny London wrote one of the pieces we read for this, which was from Adweek as well, talking about how your audience and your community are not the same thing, but you need both. She was noting that while consumers need

practical information, the one to many communication, the power of community is in its autonomy. The many to many variety saying that platforms like Instagram and TikTok are good for broadcasting to your audience, but Facebook groups is best when it comes to developing a community of folks who talk to each other.

Blake, what'd you make of this piece and the kind of differences between audience and community and the importances? The importances? The importance of both.

Blake Droesch:

The importance of both.

Marcus Johnson:

Just creating words here.

Blake Droesch:

I think there's a point there, but it's really difficult to say, "Okay, and brands and marketers should do this about that," because a lot of the more powerful communities that you see on Facebook groups, and I'll also add Reddit is a very, very powerful place-

Marcus Johnson:

Good one.

Blake Droesch:

... for community, at least the brands that I'm interested in, that I'm engaged with on these community level. The brand has to be there, it has to be well established, it has to have a cult following. It has to have affinity to a niche audience of enthusiasts to begin with, and then the community needs to form I organically around it in order for it to be authentic.

I think what the nut to crack would be like, how do you get to a point where you can position your brand so that can happen because marketers trying to intentionally create community, it's going to seem inherently inauthentic and we've seen experiments like that happen in the past and it does not create a community around a brand in a way that Nike, for example, has in the sneakerhead community or other big brands have within these really powerful niche communities online.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I do think that you're a hundred percent right about this authentic versus inauthentic, and I would say it's probably important to think about the right platform to create your community. Is it on your website, like they were talking about Lego Land and how it's on their website versus other platforms where there's this social media platforms kind of like how we think about live streaming, where do you do it?

But what I would say is I don't know that you need to be an established brand. I think you can be an entrepreneur with one item, you're brand new, but you're solving for a problem. Whatever that friction point is that everybody sort of rallies behind and wants to understand, be part of. And most important I think is to not have it be a transactional relationship, but really an engaged two-way communication kind of relationship.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

I think one of the points that came out of it was that ideally you don't have to create it at all and it's already there and then you go find it and you figure out how best to get engaged and all these articles in this entire conversation, this whole discourse seems like a giant Clarion advertisement for Reddit. Those Reddit guys just must be jumping from the rooftops whenever they hear a conversation like what we're having now. Because even before these authors brought up Reddit, I was like, "Oh, they're just talking about Reddit," and no one's pained me to say this, so I probably should shut up.

The huge takeaway for me was not just the point about how the pandemic era made everyone cherish the idea of community more than ever, but that it changed the way that people go find and get involved with and get engaged with these communities and platforms like Reddit and others like it, were exactly in the right place at the right time and we're showing, I mean everybody knows they blew up. Their user base in the US is up over 50 million now, it was nothing close to that back in 2019, and I think that's because it perfectly sort of provides what everyone was looking for during the pandemic and now is still sticking with.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

And I think the Reddit one is interesting, right? Because it's like one gigantic platform with lots and lots and lots of different groups within it and you don't have to participate in the whole thing. You do whatever you want. And I think brands and marketers really worry about scaling, but maybe that's not the right way of thinking about a community. If you have more than five or six, I don't know what the right number is, but if you have a small group of people that are

super engaged and then start talking about your brand in a very positive way to others, maybe that's worth it even though it's super small.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Well, one of the other benefits was noted by Nirm Shanbhag, US Chief Strategy Officer of creative agency Sid Lee, saying nine in 10 community members are likely to buy from a brand that contributes to their group in a meaningful way. So, there are some real tangible benefits, not just people feeling warm and fuzzy about your brand or maybe staying aware of or engaged with your brand when they're not buying things, but also people when they go to think about buying the thing, you are top of mind because you're part of that community that they have.

That's all we've got time for, for the story of the week. Let's move of course to the game of the week. Today's game, what's the point? Where I read out four stories and contestants, Suzy, Blake, and Ethan tell us what they think is the main takeaway of the story. Okay answers get one point, good answers get two, and answers that leave you with the same feeling as a hot shower after a cold walk. Answers will leave you with that feeling, they'll get you three points.

Each person gets 20 seconds to answer before they hear this. If you run long, it's a technical foul, minus two points. Two technicals gets you ejected from the game. Most points wins, gets you the last word. It's too straightforward. I'm kidding. It's overly complicated, but we play it anyway. Round one, we start with Suzy. Apple rolls-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Can I just say before you start? Ethan, he's very serious about the time constraints and the red flags and all these other rules, just so you know.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

That's bad news. Any time constraint is bad news for me, I have no chance.

Marcus Johnson:

In theory, I mean it, but no one listens, so [inaudible 00:11:09]. Yep. You know you don't listen. You're the worst offender. Round one, we start with the worst offender, we call her Suzy. "Apple rolls out its buy now, pay later plan," writes Joseph De Avila of the Wall Street Journal.

The new service called Apple Pay Later lets people split purchases into four payments spread over six weeks with no interest and no fees. People using the iPhone's wallets app can borrow anywhere from 50 to a thousand dollars using Apple Pay Later. Users will have to link a debit card, not a credit card, as their loan repayment method. But Suzy, Apple rolling out its buy now, pay later plan. What's the point?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I think Apple is trying to... It's doing so well with the wallet and many people are using it, and so I think it's trying to figure out what is that next iteration. As we all know, buy now, pay later hit it and so they're trying to figure out what do they do? They did a credit card with Goldman Sachs, not super popular. Apparently Goldman Sachs is losing a billion plus dollars.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Wow.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So, this is the next thing. I think what's interesting from this perspective is that they have a cap. A lot of the other buy now, pay later don't have a cap. They have a thousand dollars cap it seems on this. More importantly, I think it's just a way for them to get more data about consumers and while they're saying they're not going to sell your data, which I believe they're not going to sell the data, I do think at some point they could become a platform of sorts where they understand exactly who's using their product and can start selling ad space potentially, or helping with sort of collaborations and co-branding sort of products.

Marcus Johnson:

Ethan?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah, that answer was incorrect. The point of the story is that there's going to be yet another thing that you're going to have to click on to say no to or disconnect from or to mistakenly click or yet another process to go through when you're trying to use your Apple Pay to buy something online or through an app and then inevitably mess up and end up doing something you didn't mean to do.

Marcus Johnson:

More friction. Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah, I think going off on both of those, whenever Apple does something, it draws attention because they're just so integrated with the way that people live their lives and more so now pay for things, but I think this is going to be big for buy now, pay later as a whole. 'Cause with Klarna, you already see their logo when you're checking out to buy literally anything online and due to Apple's presence, I think just like Ethan said, you're just going to start seeing it everywhere, which is just going to be way more likely for adoption to uptick.

Marcus Johnson:

Let's move to round two. We start with Ethan. What's consumers number one shipping priority? Well, according to a recent morning consult survey, shipping cost is nearly three times more important than speed, cost versus speed. When consumers are buying things online, 57% said cost was the number one priority. 20% said speed, 10% said incentives. Things like store credit or rewards, 8% said predictability, so being able to choose the exact date that the thing arrives, and 6% said the environmental impact.

Of those who said cost was the most important factor, an overwhelming majority, 78% said they're most likely to choose free. Maybe unsurprisingly, but Ethan, what's consumers number one shipping priority? What's the point?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

The number one point in this article is that the overwhelming majority of people, like you're with me and are mystified as to how much companies like Amazon are investing in and prioritizing and spending on this rapid delivery when in fact the vast majority of us don't care that much and are far more interested in how much it costs and the reliability of course as well. But we're not losing sleep over whether or not our 10 rolls of toilet paper are going to arrive in six hours or tomorrow versus two days from now, and that all of us are far more interested in how much it all costs and maybe they can relax a little bit on the speed element.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Ethan. I could not disagree more. And I'm surprised that you used toilet paper as an example because when you run out of toilet paper, I think you're definitely wondering when it's going to get there. But I do think that yes, I mean, free shipping is always more important. I wrote a report on this and that data is conclusive across multiple different sources, but the way that there's nuance is because a consumer who's paying for Prime and getting free shipping quickly, do they think that, in their heads are they going, "Is that free shipping?" Or do they acknowledge that they're paying a monthly fee for it?

I think that's the way, especially for a company like Prime where you've got, what is it like 68% of the population has access to it. They basically are, that's the expectation is that they're looking for the speed because the cost is already built in for something that they live with every day.

Marcus Johnson:

Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I think for me, the biggest point is research is important, right? Retailers think that they should be focusing on one thing, whereas consumers are saying, "No, actually we want you to focus on something different." I think the reason why cost of shipping is top of mind right now, and it actually has always been because I've studied this in my past life as well, is right now specifically it's because there's a recession-ish. Sort of everybody's a little bit on edge about where they're spending their money, so they're a little bit more conscious of that, but also after the pandemic, there are just so many more options of how to get your things.

If you're not going to get it quickly enough for whatever your needs are, you can go to the buy online, pickup in store. You can do curbside pickup, you can do locker pickup, you can do door dashes of the world that are partnering with pharmacies and other sort of retailers. So, there are so many more options that cost becomes even more important now.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Am I the only one that plans ahead-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yes.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

... and knows when my toilet paper's going to run out?

Blake Droesch:

Yes.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

How are you in New York and you don't use all these other things? First of all, if your toilet paper is running out, you're walking to the store, guys.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah, exactly.

Blake Droesch:

Running.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

It's easier. It's on the corner for me.

Blake Droesch:

I don't want to pay... I'll walk to the store where I know I can get it for a good price, but if I'm going to the closest available place to get toilet paper, I'm getting ripped off.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah, it's just for one role.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Well, I also don't even know that that's true. I've started paying attention more to this. I think there are some... Not toilet paper obviously, but I think that there are-

Marcus Johnson:

Got to get out more, Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

... many products that are more expensive online than in-store, and I can't remember what website I saw it on where it says, "Buy it online, it's \$5, buy it in the store, it's 4.50." Again, these are made up numbers. I don't know what that differentiation is, but they are starting to say, "We realize sell sending stuff to you is expensive, so we're going to start charging you more." I've actually seen it with pasta sauce.

Blake Droesch:

A big example, because pasta sauce, if it's in a glass jar, is going to be heavy and take up space. It's the same thing if you want to get, as Suzy knows, I'm a big fan of seltzer and I exclusively drink it out of a can. And if you want to get a 12 pack of seltzer shipped to you, it's like \$20. But if you go to the store, it's like \$6.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Right. And even if you go to the most expensive store.

Blake Droesch:

Probably, yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

Right. Let's move to round three. The halfway mark though. Suzy and Blake tied with five. Ethan just behind on four. Round three. We start with Blake. "H&M launches a resale program," notes Insider Intelligence's Senior Retail Analyst, Zach Stanbor. He explains that H&M partnered with ThreadUp to launch H&M Pre-Loved, its first resale platform in the US on hm.threadup.com.

But recent morning consult research shows the consumer's participation in the resale market is virtually identical to where it was last spring. 42% of the general population has made a secondhand purchase in the last three months according to this morning consult data. But Blake, H&M launching a resale program, what's the point?

Blake Droesch:

Unless I'm totally missing the point here, I would imagine that this is one-

Marcus Johnson:

Possibly.

Blake Droesch:

... of those things where there's a trend... That's often the case. I would imagine that this is a scenario where there's a trend like resale and all of a sudden every retailer needs to hop on it, even if it's not the right thing for them. And H&M's, a perfect example, right? It's fast fashion. The closer are often at a lower price point than most other retailers.

The idea that they need to get into the resale game is a little odd to me. I don't think a lot of people are going to look to H&M for resale, unless this is really just a PR move to say, "Oh, we're fast fashioned, but look, we're sustainable. We have this resale platform." Maybe that's the case. But other than that, I don't really see a reason for it to exist at all.

Marcus Johnson:

Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I don't know that I agree with you, Blake, in terms of, I think sustainability is important no matter what type of brand you are. I think it's the way of the world right now. I think the more interesting thing that H&M is doing is circular, sort of trying to be climate friendly by doing circular activities, like getting people to bring back their jeans to recycle.

From a resale perspective, it is clearly important for brands to be doing it, to have control over their branding. It's a different revenue stream. I don't think everybody's going to jump on this. I think they did during the pandemic when there wasn't enough stuff, but I don't think it's really going to be the way of the future today.

Marcus Johnson:

Ethan.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

The underlying trend beyond just what H&M is getting up to was interesting to me because there was a data point in there suggesting that participation in overall resale was actually, growth was starting to slow. Overall sales were starting to slow. And what they had determined was that even though there was a great deal of interest in this, primarily because of inflation and cost consciousness and price increases and everything that we've been talking about, there aren't enough sellers out there actually, and that a company's interested in

generating activity in this space need to make it easier for people to get rid of their stuff to become seller.

In other words, there's a whole heck of a lot of people that would be interested in being buyers to save money here, but there's not enough people turning around and selling, and so there's an imbalance in the market.

Marcus Johnson:

Two points from me. One from Morning Consult noting saving money was the leading motivation for resale shoppers, unchanged from last year. 92% of US adults saying that's why they choose to shop secondhand. And second point is we estimate the US fashion online resale marketplace sales, marketplace sales will grow 15% this year to reach \$14 billion.

We moved to round four and the scores at the moment, Suzy with eight, Ethan and Blake tied up on seven. But of course it's double points round four, and we start with Suzy for retailers turning to in-store robots and other automated devices to improve the customer experience. Right, our very own Zach Stanbor, he notes that, "According to our own retail automation forecast, we expect 40% of large retailers, those making over \$10 million in revenues, to use in-store robots this year."

Giving some examples, BJ's Wholesale Club partnering with Simbe Robotics to have its tally robot stock shelves and accurately price items. Lowe's is testing autonomous security robots from robotics company Knightscope to patrol parking lots to enhance safety. But Suzy, retailers turning to in-store robots. What's the point?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I think we've all been talking about labor shortages, especially when it comes to retail and restaurants. There's a lot of really good that comes from automation. And I think it's especially important if you think about automation when it comes to these low level, low impact type of tasks, which are really important like clean floors, but that you don't necessarily need a person to do it.

Saving people and associates because that's now the scarce commodity resource, right? Saving those people to do delight, customer engagement sort of activities, ensure that a customer is having a human touchpoint and then using robots to do things like checking inventory and security or cleaning floors, totally makes sense.

Marcus Johnson:

Ethan.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Suzy, once again, that was incorrect.

Marcus Johnson:

So close.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I love it.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

The point of the story is that all those creepy weird drones that you see in gigantic suburban supermarkets and big box stores are here to stay and it's only going to get worse. However, I think-

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, good.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

... in New York City, those of us that shop all the time in incredibly cramped, tiny little shops where there's no space in the aisles, and I personally haven't seen any of these anywhere. I think we're still off the hook for a while until they make these drones a lot smaller. But in my hometown in Syracuse, you see them everywhere in the big stores and we all just going to have to get used to it.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake.

Blake Droesch:

I have, because I have been shopping in the suburbs in a while, I have no idea what Ethan's talking about.

Marcus Johnson:

It's terrifying out there.

Blake Droesch:

But yeah, I mean, when you think about all the things that cost retailers money, whether it's shoplifting is certainly something that's been talked about in the news, but I think waste and inventory glut is certainly the primary way that retailers have lost money in the past, and especially today with consumer behavior shifting so rapidly.

If predictive technology and robots can be used to make any of that sort of accounting for more efficient, then it's going to be a no-brainer for retailers, particularly ones that are dealing with a little bit of a sales growth decline with rising operating fees. This is exactly the type of stuff that, especially when we were at NRF earlier this year, people were talking about, is how to use technology to operate more efficiently on the back end.

Marcus Johnson:

It seems to be happening quite fast as well, because as I mentioned that according to our retail automation forecast, we expect 40% of large retailers to use in-store robots this year. Before the pandemic, 2019, a quarter of retail stores used robots. So, from 25% to 40 in a few years, half will.

All right, that's what we've got time for, for the game of the week. We count the scores, pretty easy. They're low numbers. Suzy is this week's winner of the game of the week, 12. 11 for Ethan, 11 for Blake. I wasn't saying low numbers because you guys did badly. There aren't many points to go around, so it doesn't take long. Don't need a formula like Stewart.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Got it.

Marcus Johnson:

When he was counting points on our other show. Suzy, you won. Congratulations. You get 12 points, you get the belt and the last word.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I get the belt, too?

Marcus Johnson:

You do get the championship belt. That's how we do. And the last word, what do you want to tell people?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

This is my first time winning in 2023.

Marcus Johnson:

No, it's not.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

This is unexpected. Yes.

Marcus Johnson:

Is it really?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm pretty sure because I'm counting.

Marcus Johnson:

No one's surprised. Okay.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm not really counting, honestly.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Chalkboard right there.

Blake Droesch:

[inaudible 00:25:53].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

My nose just grew.

Marcus Johnson:

We saw Suzy turn to her right with a little piece of chalk and went...

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I finally won. I mean, I would talk about my tomatoes, but I will just tell everybody-

Marcus Johnson:

Please don't.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

... to check Instagram for the latest picture. And that's all I got to say. It took forever to get here with the tomatoes, but there are four right now.

Marcus Johnson:

All right. If you're going to check these out, they're on... Vee, what's the site? What's the page?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Instagram?

Marcus Johnson:

I don't know what kids call it.

Vee:

The Instagram page.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah.

Vee:

Yeah. Check out our Instagram page.

Marcus Johnson:

Behind the Numbers. What is it though?

Vee:

Behindthenumbers_podcast.

Marcus Johnson:

Behind the... that's where you should go. Thank you, Vee.

Vee:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

But bring a magnifying glass, because they're tiny.

Vee:

No. Unnecessary.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

We'll enlarge it. Don't worry.

Vee:

You don't need to enlarge it. They're gigantic.

Marcus Johnson:

Very generous, Victoria. Very generous. Anyway, that's all we've got time for, for the game of the week. And talk about tomatoes, it's time now for dinner party data. This is the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing we've learned this week. I say it quickly for no reason. Suzy, you're up.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Okay. It's Good Friday today, so I thought I would talk about Easter because that has a big impact for retailers. Can you guess what the expected spend for Easter holiday is in the US?

Marcus Johnson:

Total or-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Total.

Marcus Johnson:

Total. Okay. \$7 trillion.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No. Come on.

Marcus Johnson:

I'm kidding.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

24 billion. Up four to 6%.

Marcus Johnson:

So close.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

In 2009, which is another recessionary sort of difficult time, the spend was \$13 billion. This is the highest expected spend for Easter. That's \$192 per person. On average, 81% of Americans say that they are egg-cited to participate-

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, don't do that.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

... in Easter. Can you guys guess what is the one category that over 90%... Not over, 90% of people are going to be purchasing?

Marcus Johnson:

Chocolate.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Candy. Correct. I didn't see this listed, but I do think that the highest value from a dollar perspective is food, with 89% of people buying food specifically for Easter at \$7.3 billion. It's a lot.

Marcus Johnson:

Wow.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So, grocery stores, liquor stores, everybody get ready. And the last bit of information from NRF, which I thought was fascinating, was that men are buying more things for Easter than women and are spending more. So, marketers, target the men.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, very nice. We move to Ethan.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

I just got a infographic today that is not work related, but maybe tangentially because it is, I guess, based on consumers showing me the population of major cities around the world from 1950 until today ranked in order along with the population scale. And what was fascinating for me as a New Yorker is that New York City was the largest metropolitan area in the world in 1950.

Marcus Johnson:

Wow.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

And as of 2023, it has fallen outside the top 10. It's actually 11th in the world. However, the twist, and that may seem predictable for those of us that have been angsty over New York's declining population and maybe cities in America losing population. This is a story that has been told. But the twist that I wasn't expecting is that New York actually has vastly, vastly grown in that time period.

It's far bigger now than it used to be. It's just that all these other cities in the world shot past it into outrageous scales of population. And so New York has fallen behind, not because it hasn't

grown tremendously. It has, it's much bigger, but because these other ones are just gigantic. And then Marcus, for you.

Marcus Johnson:

Talk to me.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

It's even worse. London was the third largest metropolitan area in the world in 1950. And as of today, I can't even tell you where it is on the ranking because it has dropped off completely.

Marcus Johnson:

Really? That far down?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

It's not in the top 15, so I don't know where to find [inaudible 00:30:08]-

Marcus Johnson:

Thank goodness. It was too busy already. Wow. Is Tokyo number one.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Good guess. Tokyo was number two back in 1950. No, no, no. You're correct. Tokyo was number two back in 1950 and today it is number one. That stayed at the top the whole time.

Marcus Johnson:

Who's two and three?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Delhi is number two, and Shanghai is number three.

Marcus Johnson:

I was going to guess Mumbai. Nice. Very good. Fascinating. Thank you, Ethan. Blake. You're up, mate.

Blake Droesch:

I was going to say, I'm glad I had a few minutes to put the pieces together because Susie, you're talking about ordering all of these cans of pasta sauce online. I guess now that you're talking about the tomatoes that you're growing, it's clear that you don't have enough tomatoes to mix your sauce from scratch. So, this is why you're frantically comparing prices of tomato sauce online.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Correct.

Marcus Johnson:

Suzy could get a small packet of Ketchup's worth.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

But one day, you know what? Actually the tomatoes are cheaper at Whole Foods right now. And someone told me the joke that they're getting ready for my mass production.

Marcus Johnson:

Don't hold your breath.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I was like, "That makes sense."

Blake Droesch:

Okay, real quick, from Global Web Index, they ran a survey about nostalgia and they asked people which form of media was the number one trigger for nostalgia. And number one, coming in at 71% was movies followed by 64% who said music. 60%, TV shows and 47% photographs, which I thought was really interesting because I kind of always associate music with nostalgia and I feel like that's sort of like a common trope, but no. I guess movies more so.

And then they also asked about what people experience today, which gives them feelings of nostalgia. The number one answer was that they enjoy screen adaptations of past media, like a book or a video game as it's adopted to a TV series or a movie. And even 56% of consumers said that they like it when brands and companies use their past logos or advertisements

because it evokes feelings of nostalgia for there. So, there's a little tidbit for our marketing audience.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, very nice. I wonder if you ask someone what's your top three most nostalgic things, whether that's a movie or song or whatever, maybe we'll have to ask James that, Wee. On the James question, which is our behind the scenes segments on our Instagram page, which I've forgotten the name of, but you can find it somewhere.

Blake Droesch:

Behindthenumbers_podcast.

Marcus Johnson:

Nailed it.

Vee:

Thanks, Blake.

Marcus Johnson:

Thanks, Blake.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

It's 'cause he's following my tomatoes.

Blake Droesch:

It's already been spoken to.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Well, and he's following my tomatoes very closely.

Marcus Johnson:

Probably not.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So, obviously that's why he knows.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, that was fascinating, Blake. All right, I've got one for you real quick. The most visited US National Park in 2022 was? Any guesses?

Blake Droesch:

Yellowstone?

Marcus Johnson:

No, that was...

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Crater Moon.

Marcus Johnson:

Yellowstone didn't make the top.

Blake Droesch:

Oh, yeah. Wasn't Yellowstone closed all year last year because of the weather?

Marcus Johnson:

2, 3, 4.

Blake Droesch:

Might it have been an anomalous year?

Marcus Johnson:

Yellowstone was, hang on a second. Seventh.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Wow.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. What did you say, Suzy?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I was just joking when I said Crater Moon, but it is... I don't think people know it, but it's amazing there and I would highly recommend it.

Marcus Johnson:

Is that a real thing?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

Are you just making up places?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I don't know what it's considered, but there's water... It's like very cool.

Marcus Johnson:

Where?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

It's in one of the Dakotas.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

What about Zion or Arches or those Utah ones? They're pretty popular.

Marcus Johnson:

That's your guess?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Or the Everglades, there's a huge population around the Everglades. Does that count if you drive through it?

Marcus Johnson:

Really quickly, sorry, Ethan.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Crater Moon?

Marcus Johnson:

It's not a thing. You type in Crater Moon, it just comes up with Luna Craters. Craters on Earth's moon. Okay? Don't try to find Crater Moon, folks. It's about as real as Neverland or Sesame Street.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Wait, no. There is.

Marcus Johnson:

While Suzy looks for Crater Moon on a map of the moon, I'll tell you it's... Wait, sorry, Ethan. Your guess?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Zion.

Marcus Johnson:

No. Zion, not on the top 10.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Utah's far from everywhere, but I like it.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, but it does get mentioned a lot, so I would've thought, you know, Zion. I would've thought Yosemite, Yellowstone. No, the Great Smoky Mountains, which is actually a national park. 13 million visits.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yes.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, go on, Suzy. What've you found?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off.

Marcus Johnson:

No, go on. What've you found?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I got very excited. I was like, "Yes, it is." It's called Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserves.

Marcus Johnson:

That's different from Crater Moon crater.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I mean, come on, I Googled-

Marcus Johnson:

You missed two of the four words. Craters of the Moon National Park Service. Okay, now we're talking. And this is where? Where have you visited this?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

South Central Idaho.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, yeah. It it. Okay, Idaho, I've not got to you yet-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Look at how cool it is.

Marcus Johnson:

... but I'll see you soon. It does look pretty cool, yeah. But it doesn't make the top 10. Distance seconds with three times less visits than the Great Smoky Mountains was the Grand Canyon National Park. Oh, I'm talking nonsense. Sorry, Ethan. Zion was third.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

There you go.

Marcus Johnson:

There you are. Rocky Mountains was fourth. Acadia was fifth. That rounds out the top five, if you're wondering where Yosemite is sixth, Yellowstone seventh, Joshua Tree eighth. Cuyahoga. Is that how you say it? Cuyahoga Valley was ninth and Glacier in-

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Alaska.

Marcus Johnson:

Montana.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Oh, Montana.

Marcus Johnson:

Well, I think it bleeds into... Where does it bleed? I think it bleeds into, goes up into Canada, but no, yeah. Round out the top 10. A second fact here. There are 63 national parks. Third fact, the biggest park. Do you guys know which one is the biggest by area? I hadn't heard of this one before. Wrangell, with a W, Wrangell Saint Elias National Park & Preserve in Alaska. Established in 1980, it covers over 13 million acres. If you can't wrap your head around what

that means, because no one can, it's the same size as Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the country of Switzerland combined.

If it was a country itself, Wrangell St. Elias National Park, it would be the 121st largest. It's bigger than Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut, and Hawaii combined. And the park features nine of the 16 tallest mountain peaks in the US. Over half of the tallest mountain peaks in the US. Two more for you. Fourth fact, the smallest, no one will get this one. This is staggering that's a national... It's 192 acres. You know the Gateway Arch in Missouri?

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

In St. Louis? That's where that is. That plot of grass, Gateway Arch, is a national park. It's 68,000 times smaller than the largest one in Alaska. And finally seven of the top 10 national parks are in Alaska.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

They have a lot of space.

Marcus Johnson:

It's basically just one big national park. Yeah. I know, Alaska. Here I come. I'm kidding. I don't like the outside. Anyway, that's all we've got time for, for this episode. Thank you so much to my guests. Thank you to Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Pleasure to be here.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Ethan.

Ethan Cramer-Flood:

Ah, you're very welcome.

Marcus Johnson:

And thank you to Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

Of course. Of course. This week's winner of the game of the week. Thanks to Victoria. She edits the show and tells me what my Instagram page is called too often. Thank you to James who copyedited the show, and Stuart who runs the team. Thanks to everyone listening in.

To say hi, you can message us on... I've got it written down. Yes. At the end, I should have made it bold and font 72. Behindthenumbers_podcast is where we are on Instagram. We'll hopefully see you guys on Monday for the Behind the Numbers Daily. That's an e-marketer podcast and it's made possible by Cint. Happy weekend.