


# The Weekly Listen: Consumers' breaking point, women cast in domestic roles in ads, and is same-day delivery fast enough?

Audio



On today's episode, we discuss how close consumers are to reaching their breaking point, what consumers actually want from companies when shopping online, whether same-day delivery is fast enough, why ads are starting to depict women in domestic roles more frequently again, Subway's plans for an electric car charging "oasis," facts about weddings today, and more. Tune in to the discussion with our vice president of content Suzy Davidkhanian and analysts Blake Droesch and Evelyn Mitchell.



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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 eMarketer podcast Made possible by Meltwater. This is the Friday show that has strong feelings about olives for some reason. Victoria, who edits the show, I'm looking at you. I'm your host, Marcus Johnson. In today's show, are consumers reaching breaking point?

evelyn mitchell:

What are the perks? Are they new perks, or is the platform taking a feature that users have had access to for free and forcing them to pay to keep it? And then, of course, are the perks worth the price? And for some consumers, their ceiling is the floor.

marcus johnson:

The disconnect between what customers want and what businesses think they want.

suzy davidkhanian:

If you don't have navigation simplified, if you don't have load time simplified, if you don't have the most basic foundational things done right, consumers are just not going to be happy and they're going to go somewhere else.

marcus johnson:

Is same-day delivery the new standard?

blake droesch:

Amazon knows that delivery is the cornerstone of prime, and staying ahead of the curve is crucial in retaining membership, especially as they go to compete with services like Walmart Plus, which are gaining prominence.

marcus johnson:

Ads depicting women more frequently in domestic roles, Subway plans an electric card charging oasis, and some facts about weddings.

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 e-commerce practice. Based out of New York, it's Suzy Davidkhanian.

suzy davidkhanian:

Hi everyone.

marcus johnson:

We're also joined by one of our senior analysts on that very team, retail and e-commerce. You know him as Blake Droesch.

blake droesch:

Hello everyone.

marcus johnson:

And finally, we have one of our senior analysts on the digital advertising and media team based out of Virginia. It's Evelyn Mitchell.

evelyn mitchell:

Hello, hello.

marcus johnson:

All right, folks. What do we have in store for you today? Three segments as per usual. We start with the story of the week. We start with the question of whether consumers are reaching breaking point. We then move to the game of the week, where our contestants go head-to-head to head and give us the best takes they can from each of the four stories we have for you. We then move to dinner party data, where we tell you about some random trivia that we've recently learned. But we start, of course, with the story of the week.

We're talking consumer health, "Consumers reaching breaking points as corporations test their limits," writes Emily Stewart of Vox. Folks were once spending their way through a tough economy and record inflation using stimulus checks, boosted unemployment insurance and



savings built up during the pandemic. "Companies initially increased prices to offset their own rising costs, but may have more recently taken advantage of the inflationary moment to raise prices and increase their profit margins to their highest level in decades," Ms. Stewart continues. But they may have pushed too far. As that extra pandemic cash dwindles, household debt rises and delinquency rates on credit cards and auto loans creep back up.

Suzy, I'll start with you. Ms. Stewart of Vox was saying that consumers are reaching breaking point. What's your take on where consumers are at the moment with regards to the article she wrote and then the Economist piece and the Axios piece that I also sent you?

suzy davidkhanian:

I couldn't have said it in a better way than how she was expressing it. And it's basically there's this weird dichotomy happening, right? Everybody is worried about their personal finances, but at the same time, if you live in a big city, you might have a tough time getting a reservation at a restaurant. And so there is this weird tension that's happening, but the pendulum is starting to swing in the disfavor of the consumer because of all the things you just said, around the savings rates are going down but credit card usage is going up, and as the interest rate continues to go up, and nevermind what just happened in the banking system. And that is going to have a very negative impact on consumer confidence, I think, especially smaller businesses who have big payrolls that they're trying to figure out.

So yeah, I think there is this point where we have gotten to around also price elasticity and/or inelasticity where there was a moment in time where consumers were really open to price increases and now they're like, "Wait a second, if you're going to keep charging me more for Kraft macaroni and cheese, I'm going to go to a different option, a private label potentially option so that I can get more for my money. There's only so much you can ask for."

marcus johnson:

Well, there was a mention in the article about Kraft Heinz saying they pushed consumers too far. They said they won't push prices up anymore this year, but they increased them by 15% last year. Inflation last year was just 6.5%. I say just as high, but it's not 15%, which is where the prices went up to for Kraft Heinz. And so it does seem like folks do have a limit, and maybe we're approaching that limit.

People were spending more than they had coming in. The Economist was noting last year consumer spending shot up even as real disposable incomes fell over 6%. But now consumers

are showing less of an affinity for spending in February. These numbers just coming out, discretionary retail sales fell 4% according to Circana and retail sales fell 0.4% in that same month in February according to the commerce department.

Blake, Morgan Stanley expects retail sales to weaken in the months ahead. noting the pandemic era food stamp program recently expired as well. What's your take on where consumers are, particularly from a retail angle?

blake droesch:

Yeah, I think consumers have been willing to spend throughout this period of the last couple of months, even as they've noticed prices get higher across the board. And retail sales year over year are still up for the first two months of the year, and I think that that reflects on consumers' ability to continue spending, even as they might have a negative impression of where the economy is going.

But I think that there are certainly the practical considerations that consumers make, but a lot of it is the underlying is the psychological factors that contribute to how people spend their money. And I think what we've seen really over the last week with the banks, even though it doesn't affect the majority of consumers, it's really only one incident that started off as isolated. We're now seeing sort of a little bit of a domino effect or a tremor from it.

But things like this get in the news, and that can really have an impact on how consumers choose to spend their money. And sometimes it's as great of an impact as what their financial statements actually look like. So I think that what we've learned this year and in the last week is that things really can change drastically in terms of how people feel about the economy and their financial situation and how they choose to act on it. So to answer your question, I think in the coming months, even though, yes, retail has been basically staying flat in terms of people spending for the beginning of the year, I do think that in the coming months we likely will see a little bit of a pullback in spending, certainly if we continue to hear stories in the news such as what's been happening the last week or so with these banks.

marcus johnson:

Yeah.

suzy davidkhanian:

Well, and I think, like was I saying about the news, things like inflation is coming down, the supply chain snafus are coming to an end, commodity prices are coming down, makes consumers wonder why are these CPG companies charging us even more now? What do they have to charge us more? And then you throw on the Walmart news, right? So Walmart had a great year, but they're forecasting that their next current year, the 2023 year is not going to be great and it's going to be down five percentage points to last year is their forecast. So when a company that's doing really well that all eyes are on thinks that they're not going to perform quite as well, that too, as Blake is saying, is going to have a psychological potential impact on people and where they're shopping and what they're doing.

marcus johnson:

I thought it was also interesting, you talked about prices are coming down, why am I still paying a lot at this place or at that place? Katie Thomas, who leads the Kearney Consumer Institute, she was saying she's hearing retailers are pushing back on price increases from manufacturers because they get blamed by the consumer saying, "People don't get mad at Proctor and Gamble because of the price of their Pantene shampoo goes up. They get mad at Walmart." So where those consumers place blame, I think, is also interesting, going back to what Blake was saying about perception being reality for the consumer.

Evelyn, we've mentioned to some of these metrics that are going in the wrong direction. Some of them are going in the right direction, that Suzy mentioned. But as Ms. Stewart notes from Vox, household debt is up, hitting a record \$17 trillion in Q4. Excess savings peaked above \$2 trillion in 2021 and started to fall as government stimulus ran out, things got back to normal. And Goldman Sachs, they think households have spent a third of their excess savings and will have spent another third by the end of this year. That was noted in the Economist. When it comes to the consumer, what are you paying most attention to at the moment?

evelyn mitchell:

So I think something, an interesting parallel trend that's happening is all of these new subscription offerings that are coming from online platforms, big online platforms like Meta, like Twitter. And that this was kind of the premise of the third article that you sent us from Axios.

So as platforms paywall more content or established paid subscriptions, there will be consumers that spring for that more comprehensive level of access, which consumers and



how many depends on the value exchange. What are the perks? Are they new perks or is the platform taking a feature that users have had access to for free and forcing them to pay to keep it? And then, of course, are the perks worth the price? And for some consumers, their ceiling is the floor. Sometimes it's a matter of principle, but for many it's just a financial reality. The cheapest option is the only option.

So then I think about what that means for advertising, and it means that consumers and households with higher incomes will get harder and more expensive to reach because they can and will pay to avoid ads. And that's not ideal, but it's kind of a fact of life, right? And this isn't new. It came up in relation to Apple's app tracking transparency policy too. iOS devices are generally more expensive than Android or Samsung devices and iOS users tend to be more affluent. And now, iOS users are less trackable than Android or Samsung users, which makes them harder and more expensive to reach. So we see this playing out time and again. And as inflation continues to be a problem for consumers, especially consumers with lower incomes, this isn't likely to get any better.

marcus johnson:

Yeah, the piece was interesting because it was noting that consumers are getting squeezed on all fronts, not just on the retail side of things. But as Hope King of Axios was noting, there are social media giants who are starting to charge users for improved account security and support, promising wider public exposure. Dating apps are testing \$50 to \$500 monthly plans for their most intentioned users. Uber, Lyft, Instacart, DoorDash, all launching subscription services. Major news organizations have implemented paywalls. Some of us may have noticed when we go to look at some news now from a site that we typically go to that we can't, we have to pay for it now. And it's not until you put all these things in one place that you start to note that, as she puts in her headline, "The quality of the internet life is coming at a higher price."

Similar to, Evelyn, we were talking the other day about women in leadership roles. After Susan Wojcicki leaving YouTube, then you've got Cheryl Sandberg and you start counting and you, "Oh yeah, actually there are a lot of folks who have left." So once you put them all in one place, you really start to notice that there's been a kind of quiet trend happening.

Greg Deco, Chief Economist at EY-Parthenon summed things up pretty well, saying what we're seeing in terms of the health of consumers' balance sheets is that they are rapidly deteriorating.

That's where we'll leave that so we've got time for the story of the week. It's time, of course, for the game of the week. Today's game, What's the Point? Where I read out four stories and have contestants, Suzy, Blake and Evelyn 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...

suzy davidkhanian:

Stuffed olives.

marcus johnson:

No. Not again. Ugh. I can't talk about olives anymore. Or listen to you guys talking about olives.

suzy davidkhanian:

At first, I thought you were going to be like, "What's the point of playing when we all know Suzy's going to win this week?"

marcus johnson:

Definitely not this week. Definitely not most weeks. The same feeling as the promise of walking into a good bakery.

suzy davidkhanian:

Oh.

marcus johnson:

Yeah?

suzy davidkhanian:

That's a good one.

evelyn mitchell:

That's good one.

marcus johnson:

Yes. Yes. Where you're like, "I'll take two of everything." Those kinds of answers will get you three points. You get 20 seconds to answer before you hear that bell. Run long is a technical foul, minus two points. Two techs gets you ejected from the game. Whoever has the most points wins. Let's play.

We start with round one. Evelyn, businesses think extra features enhance online shopping, consumers disagree, notes a survey from CMS company, Storyblok. It found a large divide existed between what online businesses think customers want and what they actually need. For example, 65% of people think ease of navigation is most important when using a site, but just 28% of companies prioritize this. 65% for people, 28% for companies. Another example, 77% of businesses say chatbots enhance the customer experience. 77% said that, but only 27% of consumers see a benefit. So Evelyn, businesses and consumers apparently not being on the same page. What's the point?

evelyn mitchell:

I've seen this before, where business leaders have the uncanny ability to forget things that as consumers we all know. Sometimes they'll rewrite narratives and jump through a lot of hoops to convince themselves and their teams of a course of action. Privacy is one of those areas. Frequency capping is another one. And this is just one of those instances where business leaders need to remember not to trade in their consumer cap for a professional cap when they're working. Keep the consumer cap on under the professional cap. Be a consumer first because it is common sense.

blake droesch:

Oh, two hats.

marcus johnson:

Trendsetter. Suzy, you're up.

suzy davidkhanian:

So I think the point is you need consumer research. You need to understand what consumers want from their voice and not what you think they want. And this is an age-old issue, right? Every senior leader is looking for the next new, big, sexy thing like crypto or like QR code payment. And I think, unless you have the basics right... And that's what we saw in the study. If you don't have navigation simplified, if you don't have load time simplified, if you don't have

the most basic foundational things done right, consumers are just not going to be happy and they're going to go somewhere else. And we see that in a lot of our benchmarks, where we're asking consumers, "What is the most valuable X feature," whatever we've decided to study, and it's never really what you expect and some of the more basic ones are not the ones that retailers are offering.

marcus johnson:

Blake.

blake droesch:

People need to be their own super users on their platforms and it's really astonishing sometimes when you encounter a user experience that is so obviously poor that it's not something that is identified and prioritized immediately by the people who work at these platforms. And I think Suzy and Evelyn are exactly right, it's often because senior leadership can become distracted by shiny objects, whether it's the Metaverse or livestreaming or ChatGPT and all of this stuff, if you don't have the basics figured out, is essentially useless, right? Because you can certainly impress people and create fancy new activations, but at the end of the day, if the nuts and bolts don't work, that's really where you win customers.

marcus johnson:

Two points a piece going into round two. We start with-

suzy davidkhanian:

Come on.

marcus johnson:

What's the problem now?

suzy davidkhanian:

No, I just thought we would have intrigue from the beginning.

marcus johnson:

Did you not think Blake and Evelyn deserve two points?

suzy davidkhanian:

No, I'm just surprised I got two. That's all, I guess.

marcus johnson:

Were you hoping for three with that answer? No one thought three. People thought, "That's generous, Marcus."

Round two, we start with Suzy. "Amazon looks to same-day delivery to spur growth," writes Insider Intelligence Senior Retail Analyst, Zak Stambor. "Amazon is investing heavily in its network of ultra-fast delivery options that let shoppers get their orders within hours of clicking the buy button," according to Sebastian Herrera of the Wall Street Journal. He writes that a central part of Amazon's ultra-fast delivery strategy is its network of warehouses Amazon calls same-day sites that are a fraction of the size of Amazon's large fulfillment warehouses designed to prepare products for immediate delivery. But Suzy, Amazon looking to same-day delivery to spur growth. What's the point?

suzy davidkhanian:

I feel like this is a setup because this should have been a Blake first, but it's cool. I'm okay with not winning. I think this is-

marcus johnson:

Wait, why should this have been a Blake first?

suzy davidkhanian:

Because this is like what Blake studies day in and day out, but I'm going to go first-

marcus johnson:

That's why I was giving you a chance.

suzy davidkhanian:

Oh, got it.

marcus johnson:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

suzy davidkhanian:



Nice save there. So you know what? I think this is really interesting because Amazon is fooling themselves thinking their little baby distribution centers are going to be the same as Target's gigantic footprint. I think the fact that they are charging for delivery already in Whole Foods Delivery and Fresh Delivery is a really bad setup. This last mile quick efficient delivery is so expensive, and I just don't think Amazon has the chops to do it. And to compete with an ever-growing and super cluttered group of companies, so like Targets and Walmarts of the world, but also the delivery systems, the Ubers and DoorDashes, plus the Shopify style platforms that are also offering this service. I think it's a dud.

blake droesch:

So I'm not just going to read my quote from this article verbatim because that would be too easy, but I will say-

marcus johnson:

Blake was quoted in this article.

blake droesch:

... For the first time in a long time, Amazon is feeling pressure in the delivery space. Said Blake Drosch, E-marketer and Senior analyst at Insider Intelligence, quote-

marcus johnson:

Don't trust him.

blake droesch:

"Amazon was a pioneer in the next-day and same-day space, but today, consumers can access these types of delivery speeds from nearly every major retailer. So Amazon knows that delivery is the cornerstone of Prime and staying ahead of the curve is crucial in retaining membership, especially as they go to compete with services like Walmart Plus, which are gaining prominence."

marcus johnson:

Great answer, Blake. Well played.

blake droesch:

Thank you, thank you.

suzy davidkhanian:

Technical foul.

blake droesch:

That was totally off the cuff, so I appreciate it, Marcus. Thank you.

marcus johnson:

Yeah. No, I could feel that. I could tell. Yeah. Just shooting from the hip. Just shooting from the hop.

suzy davidkhanian:

I think that's a technical foul, for sure.

marcus johnson:

On you? Yeah, I thought about it. Evelyn, you're up.

evelyn mitchell:

Oof. Okay. What stuck out to me was that 65% of US consumers check a product's availability on Amazon to see if shipping is faster. To me, that's huge and shipping is a crucial part of Amazon's identity, right? Free shipping, I think, is really what kind of catapulted Amazon Prime to ubiquity. So even though Amazon isn't really at the cutting edge of the shipping frontier anymore with Walmart and Target and Instacart having pretty robust same-day capabilities, I mean, 65% of consumers still check Amazon before making a purchase. That's wild and it's a good indicator that the groundwork Amazon laid with shipping way back when is still a tailwind now.

suzy davidkhanian:

Plus we didn't really define what ultra-quick shipping is, right? Is that the one hour, is that the three days? Because if you think about their little distribution centers, it's not only, but it's only a hundred thousand SKUs and so they obviously have way more SKUs than that. So there's definitely not everything's going to be ultra-fast.

blake droesch:

Yeah, but that's interesting though because what they're trying to do is keep up with-

suzy davidkhanian:

Yeah, the gorillas.

blake droesch:

... these retailers that are on Instacart and DoorDash because their inventory is rather limited as well because it's only what's in the store that it's delivering from.

marcus johnson:

Yeah, you don't get extra points, Suzy, in case you're wondering.

suzy davidkhanian:

I don't?

marcus johnson:

But a few points from me. It's interesting because, even though there's like the fastest delivery or the least fastest delivery, there's really the average delivery, which is really important as well. And according to Nielsen IQ data, other retailers are slowly but surely catching up with Amazon in terms of average delivery speed. In 2021, Amazon averaged just over three days to everyone else's just over six. And last summer, it was Amazon's two days to everyone else's four and a half, even though there are faster and slower options than that.

A second point here was noted in the piece, Target recently investing a hundred million dollars to speed up and lower the cost of delivering online orders. Shopify rolling out its own shop promise service guaranteeing next-day and two-day delivery. I thought this was interesting, a recent survey from software company, Shippo, finding that people valued up-to-date order information over fast shipping. And I've heard that from a few friends anecdotally, as well, "I don't need the thing in 10 minutes. I'd like to just know when the thing ships, when can I be home to make sure I get it? I'm planning for that." Just 10% of shoppers wanted same-day or next-day delivery. That was down from 18% in 2021. So maybe it's people's idea of convenience really is changing.

We move to round three. Blake just out in front with five points. Suzy and Evelyn tied on four. However, the first two rounds were retail-focused, which is Suzy's specialty. So really, it's like

she's in the last place. Round three, we start with Blake. "Ads are depicting women more frequently in domestic roles," writes Sara Karlovitch of Marketing Dive, citing a new report from CreativeX. It found, last year, 57% of people in ads are women. Men were cast in professional roles 73% more often than women versus 2021, and 30% more often in leadership roles. The representation of women in professional settings actually fell by over 20% in 2022. Women were cast 46% more often in domestic roles and more often in family settings. But Blake, as depicting women more frequently in domestic roles what's the point?

blake droesch:

I think the most alarming statistic that I've found in this article was that there was a 24% drop in women working in the marketing industry between 2021 and 2022. And I think searching for an explanation as to why representation has seemed to take a few steps backwards, that was one potential reason. But I think that, when it comes to representation, I mean, not only is it the right thing to do in advertising, but it's always the smart thing to do. People want to see themselves in the ads, or at least that's the idea of it. So if you're not a representative of what people are actually doing out in the world, then you're going to fail to relate to an audience.

marcus johnson:

Evelyn.

evelyn mitchell:

Happy Women's History Month. It struck me as ironic that all of this information came out and it's history month.

marcus johnson:

Yes. Suzy.

suzy davidkhanian:

So I have a completely different perspective in that I found the headline very shocking and the data inside the article also very shocking. But not having read the report, I just didn't understand, what is a professional setting? I mean, we see M&M commercials where they're at the boardroom and we see Tide commercials where there are plenty of women and men and other diversity and inclusion folks. And then we have the dads doing laundry. Remember the

one where it's like the little girl with her cape and the dad is like, "Oh, it's laundry day, but I'm going to let her wear her cape"? There are so many different sort of roles out there.

So it was a bit underwhelming, the article and the study, because I just didn't understand what they were trying to measure. Is it in magazines, is it on TV, is it on digital ads? And I really do think, Blake, you're right, that 20% drop is alarming. But in today's world in terms of diversity and inclusion and sensitivity, I can't imagine that because there are less women working in marketing that there isn't representation. So it is baffling, this study.

marcus johnson:

Yeah, I mean, there probably is, but maybe there's... I thought that was one of the most interesting points that jumped out to me. The number of women working in this study fell, as Blake mentioned, 24% from 2021 to 2022 according to She Runs It. Ms. Karlovitch noting that the loss of women workers in the space may be partly responsible for the decreased representation of women in the professional setting across advertising categories. And maybe, yeah, there is still representation, but less than before.

suzy davidkhanian:

But what is professional setting? That just doesn't even make sense.

marcus johnson:

Right. Well, this was just in general.

blake droesch:

Yeah, and it did it mention that professional settings overall were used less frequently. Maybe it has something to do with people weren't at work, but I think that still didn't-

suzy davidkhanian:

Make up for it?

blake droesch:

... make up for... Yeah, it was particularly just over index. Yeah.

evelyn mitchell:

Well, and more people were at work in 2022 than they were in 2021.



blake droesch:

Right.

suzy davidkhanian:

Yeah.

marcus johnson:

Right. At the office.

suzy davidkhanian:

But at home.

evelyn mitchell:

Yes.

suzy davidkhanian:

Oh, at the office.

evelyn mitchell:

In an office professional setting.

marcus johnson:

Exactly, exactly. The other thing that jumped out to me was age. When looking at age, ads featuring women aged over 60 grew over 200% year-on-year. However, the increase went from 0.3% to 0.9%. So in other words, women over 60 are still seen in less than 1% of all ads.

All right, let's check the scores going into round four. Double points round four, of course. Blake still ahead, seven. Suzy and Evelyn behind on six. We start with Evelyn. "Subway plans electric card charging oasis with green spaces, bathrooms, and playgrounds," writes Alex Fitzpatrick of Axios. The sandwich giant is partnering with electric vehicle infrastructure startup Gen ZEV Solutions on the plan. Mr. Fitzpatrick notes that Subway plans to start with smaller format fast-charging stations at some of its locations this year, with plans to launch the bigger Subway oasis facilities sometime down the road. Ha ha ha. Down the road. Evelyn, Subway planning electric car charging oasis. What's the point?

evelyn mitchell:

I didn't really have much to say about this until I looked into whether we had an EV adoption forecast and came across a January article from our connectivity and tech briefing that featured a stack that actually made me gasp. To fully transition from gas vehicles to electric vehicles, the US would need three times as much lithium as is currently produced globally.

marcus johnson:

Perfect.

evelyn mitchell:

I mean, so maybe Subway should invest in the asteroid mining initiative aiming to procure more sustainable EV mineral sources. I mean, I think that would be just as good of a fit for the brand as EV charging oases.

marcus johnson:

Yeah. Great research, Evelyn. Suzy, I hope you're taking notes there because that was just fantastic job.

suzy davidkhanian:

Well.

marcus johnson:

Suzy, you're up.

suzy davidkhanian:

I think I do. You sent us this article and the rendering was very cool. However, did you know that, this year, Subway put themselves up for sale for \$10 billion? They're in a hundred countries and they have 370,000 locations. So while, Evelyn, you're a hundred percent right, they are maybe not in the right spot, it is very cool that they're thinking about sustainability and it's a cool rendering. It's fun, it's inviting. If you think about it, it also takes an extensive amount of time to charge your car. So people can charge their car, eat lunch, hang out, have some good vibes around Subway, but they're clearly not spending their money in the right spot because they were talking about tough economic times and that's why they were thinking about selling themselves.

marcus johnson:

Well played, Suzy. Blake.

blake droesch:

So I think it's true, it takes a long time for an electric vehicle to charge, which seems kind of odd that a quick-service restaurant is going to be building out all of these electric vehicle stations because how long does it really take to get in and out of Subway? That's kind of the point, right?

suzy davidkhanian:

The game is on.

blake droesch:

And I understand trying to create the vibes, but I mean, have you been in a Subway shop recently? The vibes are not particularly strong. I would work on fixing the vibes in the-

suzy davidkhanian:

But did you see the oasis?

blake droesch:

The rendering of the oasis looks fantastic.

suzy davidkhanian:

It does, it looks so fun.

evelyn mitchell:

Renderings to look good.

blake droesch:

As renderings often do. I think the gap between the rendering of the oasis and the reality of the Subway sandwich shop is... I don't know.

suzy davidkhanian:

I was telling my brother at dinner yesterday, my brother and his friend, and they were like, "Oh, we went to Subway on our drive from Canada to the US, and the guy making the Subway was a younger person." There's a labor shortage, obviously, we all know. And so he was like, "He piled on the ingredients. No wonder they're having a tough time."

marcus johnson:

[inaudible 00:29:59].

blake droesch:

So much for shrink-flation.

marcus johnson:

Great point, Blake. And a good enough point to win you the game. 11 points. Forget the drum roll, Blake won. 11 points to Blake. Suzy and Evelyn with 10 apiece. The quick service point was particularly poignant and astute. So well played to you Blake, you get the championship belt.

blake droesch:

Thank you.

marcus johnson:

And the last word?

blake droesch:

It's an honor to have the championship championship belt.

marcus johnson:

Yeah, it is.

blake droesch:

I will say I've been watching the World Baseball Classic.

marcus johnson:

Okay.

blake droesch:

Some seriously lopsided match-ups. Last night, I watched the Dominican Republic play Israel, and I watched Mexico play Great Britain. And I got to say-

marcus johnson:

We have a team?

blake droesch:

... Google Great Britain's uniform and you'll see how serious they are about the World Baseball Classic. It's literally the lamest uniform that you could ever imagine. It looks like they put literally zero effort into it. It's like some Times New Roman font that just says Great Britain on it. All these other teams have these colorful, cool logos and hats. And they were like, "All right, look, guys."

marcus johnson:

This looks like a Sunday league team.

blake droesch:

"We know that we're only going to be here for a few games. Let's not spend too much time on the apparel."

marcus johnson:

Yeah.

blake droesch:

But yeah, that's my plug, the World Baseball Classic.

marcus johnson:

These are bad.

blake droesch:

Fun times.

marcus johnson:



I didn't even know we had a team. What waste of time. Not baseball, but no offense, England, but what are we doing? Maybe focus on soccer first, win there and then expand. Getting crazy with baseball all of a sudden. All right. Anyway, that's all we've got time for the game of the week. Time now for dinner party data. It's the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing that we've learned this week.

Blake, go.

blake droesch:

So this is some data from YouGov America about the enduring appeal of classic technology. So they polled Americans about classic technology to find out whether or not they are currently using these different objects or systems. So the number one thing, that piece of classic activity that Americans are still doing are sending letters in the mail. So 55% currently do that. 29% still own a landline phone. 23% mail a postcard and 22% write with a fountain pen.

However, the technologies and things that Americans are not really doing so much anymore are making a phone call on a rotary dial phone, using a public payphone to make a call, makes sense because there aren't any, or having an account on MySpace, which I'm not sure if MySpace is still operating as a website. I thought it wasn't. I thought it was kind of off.

marcus johnson:

I mean, even if it is, there's six people. All right. Very nice. Any of those that you are doing the most, Blake, or doing the least?

blake droesch:

Yeah, a lot. I'm kind of a weirdo in that sense. I still do write with a fountain pen.

marcus johnson:

Really?

blake droesch:

I listen to analog music.

suzy davidkhanian:

Wow.

blake droesch:

Yeah.

suzy davidkhanian:

Wait, how do you listen to analog music?

blake droesch:

CDs and records.

suzy davidkhanian:

You have a CD player?

blake droesch:

Yeah, I do. I still have my whole... I was a freakish CD collector in high school, and I just couldn't part ways with my CD collection, so I just still have it.

marcus johnson:

Well played.

suzy davidkhanian:

I wish I'd known. I just donated a bunch of CDs. Well, my parents donated.

marcus johnson:

He probably wouldn't have wanted your music. Let's be real.

suzy davidkhanian:

No, who doesn't want Madonna and Duran Duran?

marcus johnson:

Yeah, most people.

suzy davidkhanian:

I'm going to stop because I don't want to tell about the other.

marcus johnson:

Yeah. No, no, please. What else you got there in that little collection?

suzy davidkhanian:

No, that's all I got.

marcus johnson:

Evelyn.

evelyn mitchell:

All right.

marcus johnson:

Save us.

evelyn mitchell:

Everything Everywhere All at Once cleaned up at the Oscars on Sunday, and in honor-

marcus johnson:

How?

suzy davidkhanian:

I know, right?

evelyn mitchell:

... of this spectacular film-

marcus johnson:

It's good? I haven't seen it, but the trailer looked horrendous.

suzy davidkhanian:

I agree.

evelyn mitchell:

No, it actually is spectacular. I highly recommend.

marcus johnson:

Okay. I should try it first.

evelyn mitchell:

And I have some data about bagels, and if you don't know what I'm talking about, like Suzy and Marcus, please go watch Everything Everywhere All at Once.

suzy davidkhanian:

And Blake.

evelyn mitchell:

Wait, am I the only person who's seen it?

suzy davidkhanian:

Yep.

blake droesch:

Yeah.

marcus johnson:

Yeah.

evelyn mitchell:

Victoria's seen it.

victoria:

I haven't, not yet.

evelyn mitchell:

Y'all. Okay, well then none of you're going to know what I'm talking about. Anyway.

marcus johnson:

The listeners will.

evelyn mitchell:

But we can still have a conversation about it. We all know bagels. Okay. According to GrubHub, the top bagel flavors in the US as of January 2022 were-

suzy davidkhanian:

I know. All dressed.

evelyn mitchell:

You already know?

suzy davidkhanian:

Yeah, all dressed. Whatever that one is called, the all seasoned.

evelyn mitchell:

All dressed? Everything.

suzy davidkhanian:

Everything bagel.

marcus johnson:

All dressed?

evelyn mitchell:

No. Well, I'm going to go from-

marcus johnson:

All dressed?

evelyn mitchell:

... five down to one. Or up to one? So number five was rainbow-

suzy davidkhanian:

Ew.

evelyn mitchell:

... which I don't think really is even a bagel flavor-

marcus johnson:

No.

evelyn mitchell:

... but that's just me. Number four was Asiago.

suzy davidkhanian:

Oh, that's interesting. Very sophisticated.

evelyn mitchell:

I love an Asiago bagel. Number three is everything.

suzy davidkhanian:

Oh.

evelyn mitchell:

Or all dressed.

marcus johnson:

The all dressed. It's called all dressed on the street.

suzy davidkhanian:

In Canada, we have all dressed chips, so that's how I got that.

marcus johnson:

Of course you do. Ketchup chips.

evelyn mitchell:

Those sound dank. Yeah.

marcus johnson:

What's second?

evelyn mitchell:

Number two is cinnamon raisin.

suzy davidkhanian:

Ew.

evelyn mitchell:

And number one is blueberry.

suzy davidkhanian:

Stop.

marcus johnson:

What about regular? Plain's not up there?

evelyn mitchell:

Plain is not up there.

marcus johnson:

It's a classic.

blake droesch:

There's only three bagels.

evelyn mitchell:

Maybe people don't consider it a flavor. I don't know.

marcus johnson:

Talk to us, Blake.



blake droesch:

Plain, poppy seed, sesame seed. You don't need anymore than that.

marcus johnson:

The end. Moving on.

evelyn mitchell:

I agree. Garlic.

blake droesch:

Garlic's good. No, garlic's good. I'll take that.

marcus johnson:

Let's get that out of there. Let's get that out of there.

evelyn mitchell:

And you don't like Asiago?

blake droesch:

I've never had an Asiago bagel.

suzy davidkhanian:

Me either. It sounds very sophisticated.

evelyn mitchell:

Oh, seek one out. They are delicious.

marcus johnson:

Seek one out.

suzy davidkhanian:

I'm going to have to do that.

marcus johnson:

Suzy, you're up.

suzy davidkhanian:

Happy St. Patrick's Day.

marcus johnson:

Ah, yes.

suzy davidkhanian:

So today, apparently there are religious undertones to the holiday. However, most people know it as a drinking holiday and it might be one of the bigger drinking holidays. So I did a little bit of research on that because we need to understand sales. Can you guys guess how much is expected from a volume perspective for St. Pat's Day? 6.5 billion.

evelyn mitchell:

Whoa.

suzy davidkhanian:

\$44 per person. So me too, I thought that was a lot. But then I went and checked. Valentine's Day is \$26 billion and Easter is \$16 billion, so then it didn't seem so big, but it's still quite big, right? And so as retailers, you really need to understand what people are doing for all the different real or Hallmarky holidays to make sure that you're capturing your fair share of sales.

marcus johnson:

Yeah.

blake droesch:

Marcus, what do British people in America do on St. Patrick's Day?

marcus johnson:

British people in America?

blake droesch:

Yeah.

marcus johnson:

Avoid it.

blake droesch:

Avoid it?

marcus johnson:

No, most people probably go drinking. Yeah, I'm not sure. I don't know any British people over here. I've seen none. I feel like I'm the only one who's over here, to be honest.

evelyn mitchell:

How do you know if you see a British person?

marcus johnson:

You speak to them.

suzy davidkhanian:

Well, you hear.

marcus johnson:

You hear them speaking perfectly and you go... You see them with a Great Britain baseball shirt on and you go, "Oh, that's hideous. Take it off."

Very nice. All right, I've got one for you. I've got a lot for you, actually, today. Facts about weddings is according to The Knot 2022 real weddings study. So I think I've done one on weddings before when they came out with the last study, but here's some updated numbers for you. There's lots of really interesting stuff in here, so let's see how much we can get through. Number one, it was a record year. 2022 was a record year for weddings in the US. 2.6 million couples got married. That's up from 2.2 million pre-pandemic 2019.

Number two, a return to normal. Just 7% of folks said their wedding date was impacted by COVID-19 last year. That's down from 27% who said the same thing in 2021. So from 27 to 7 in terms of folks saying their wedding was impacted by COVID-19, their wedding date.

Number three, some numbers on engagements. The average engagement length in 2022 was? Guesses?

suzy davidkhanian:

Four months.

evelyn mitchell:

No, 2022. I'm going to say 14 months.

marcus johnson:

Blake?

blake droesch:

16 months.

marcus johnson:

Oh, Blake and Evelyn, battleships either side of it. 15 months.

evelyn mitchell:

Nice.

marcus johnson:

Most 70% sought parental permission before the proposal. More and more folks feel pressure to plan a unique proposal. A record 23% rely on wedding pros to help with the engagement. Couples spent an average of nearly six grand on an engagement ring, 85% went diamond.

Some numbers on the planning process. Couples' top challenges during the planning process are, Evelyn, who's planning a wedding?

evelyn mitchell:

Budget.

marcus johnson:

It's 47%, yep. And number two?

evelyn mitchell:

Guest list.

marcus johnson:

Mm-hmm. 36%. Yep, spot-on. Yep.

evelyn mitchell:

Of course.

suzy davidkhanian:

That was awesome.

marcus johnson:

Couples, on average, they'll pay for half the wedding costs themselves. 46% of planning was done on a computer. Almost as much, 44%, done on a smartphone or tablet.

Some numbers about the wedding. Guest size is down 14 guests from 2019 to today, it went from 131 to 117. The wedding party is down from 10 to eight. The share of folks going on a honeymoon, 73%, and having a destination wedding, 18%, is back. They're both back to pre-pandemic levels. The average cost of the ceremony and reception is? Guesses?

suzy davidkhanian:

Average US?

marcus johnson:

Yep.

evelyn mitchell:

I think last time it was like \$30, so I want to say it's probably gone up to like, let's say \$40.

suzy davidkhanian:

Yeah, I would've said \$45.

marcus johnson:

\$30,000.

evelyn mitchell:

It's still \$30?

marcus johnson:

It was up two grand from 2019.

evelyn mitchell:

Oh, from 2019.

marcus johnson:

In New York, it'll run you \$60 grand on average. In Phoenix, it'll run you \$24. So there's some discrepancy there. And in terms of cost, the biggest cost is?

suzy davidkhanian:

Food and drink.

marcus johnson:

Venue. Food's second. Venue's about 40%. It depends how many people you have, but typically, according to like 117 guests, which is the average here, if you times that by how much it costs on average per person, it's venue first. So 40% of the cost is venue, 30% of the cost is food for people. Then photographer, florist and dress are 9, 8 and 7% each.

suzy davidkhanian:

I thought the food was part of the venue, to be honest with you.

evelyn mitchell:

It depends on the venue.

marcus johnson:

The venue is our final stat, or penultimate stat. Venue, the most popular venue was banquet hall, and tied for first, banquet hall and farm, barn, ranch.

suzy davidkhanian:

Stop.

marcus johnson:

Which is one category. Yep. Then it's historical building, then it's hotel and then it's country club.

evelyn mitchell:

Where do y'all think I'm having my wedding?

suzy davidkhanian:

A barn.

marcus johnson:

A barn.

suzy davidkhanian:

Marcus, come on. That was mine.

marcus johnson:

What?

suzy davidkhanian:

Barn.

marcus johnson:

You stole it from me.

evelyn mitchell:

It is a historic farm. So it's kind of-

suzy davidkhanian:

Is it really?

evelyn mitchell:



Yeah.

suzy davidkhanian:

Stop.

marcus johnson:

A historical farm?

suzy davidkhanian:

You're part of the stat.

evelyn mitchell:

I am.

marcus johnson:

Final thing I'll say on this, there was some numbers in terms of what is on the rise, traditions or things that are on the rise and things that are losing momentum. Number one was requesting an unplugged ceremony, no photos and videos.

evelyn mitchell:

Yeah.

marcus johnson:

Then having a signature cocktail, offering gluten-free options at reception, offering vegan options at reception, and then incorporating a wedding theme. They were the top five most on the rise. The top five most losing momentum. So the bouquet toss was up there. Handing out wedding favors, that's down. Creating a wedding hashtag is down. Having a day-after brunch for guests is down. That's a shame. And then wedding party members wearing the same outfit design. Thank goodness that's down.

blake droesch:

What about big cakes?

marcus johnson:

The only reference to cake in the study was the top trends of 2022, and 74% of people said they had a cake-cutting ceremony. I hate that. You can never see. You're always at the back. You don't know what's going on.

blake droesch:

Just serve the cake and make it a big cake.

marcus johnson:

We can scratch that one. Let's get that one out. Anyway, that's all we've got time for this episode. Thank you so much to my guests. Thank you to Evelyn.

evelyn mitchell:

Thank you, Marcus.

marcus johnson:

Thank you Suzy.

suzy davidkhanian:

Thanks for having me.

marcus johnson:

And thank you to Blake, this week's winner of the game of the week.

blake droesch:

Thanks for having me.

marcus johnson:

Thank you to Victoria who edits the show. James, who copyrights it. Stuart, who runs the team. And thanks to everyone for listening. Thank you to Kevin for helping us with some of the tech stuff before this very episode. You guys can head to [behindthenumbers\\_podcast](#) for our new behind the scenes segment called the James Question. We'll see you guys hopefully on Monday for the Behind the Numbers Daily, an E-marketer podcast made possible by Meltwater. Happy weekends.

evelyn mitchell:

I want to say my dog seems to be walking around with a ball and then dropping the ball and the ball will make a noise while it bounces. So I'm going to be listening for that. I might have to go back a few times and I don't know how to get her to stop. Sorry.

marcus johnson:

No trouble.

blake droesch:

Give that dog a technical foul.

Speaker 6:

Oh my God. Evelyn lost. I have a chance.

marcus johnson:

Still not.