



Mastering the Art of Experiences

Mastercard connects with
people around the globe to
shape the future of experiences
and their impact



How do we value experiences?

Why do some shine brightly and then fade, while others continue to enrich our lives? When do moments become truly priceless memories? And what do the answers to these questions look like in the wake of a pandemic?

It's been two decades since Mastercard presented the world with its vision of Priceless®. Led by the insight that experiences matter more than things, Priceless introduced the world to the power of personal connection and emotional fulfillment.

The world has changed since that idea made its debut. Priceless too has evolved beyond creative into a full marketing program designed to engage, enable, and inspire Priceless experiences. And now, the global pandemic is having a very profound, much accelerated impact on how we live our lives and what matters most.

There are as many interpretations of Priceless experiences as there are people to appreciate them. But what should we be considering as we move forward? Have our values changed? Have our passions shifted? What role is technology playing? Do experiences still matter?


Listening across the world

Mastercard embarked on global research in December 2020 to explore the changing perceptions of experiences in today's culture. Close to 18,000 people across 18 different countries were interviewed to discover what ignites their passions, what motivates exploration, how digital experiences enhance the real world, and how the things people do can create value in their lives.

Around the world, the values that serve as the foundation for Priceless still hold true. Two-thirds of people say they prioritize experiences over material possessions

and four out of five people say they prefer experiences they can share with family or friends to the ones they have themselves.

Priceless experiences are still grounded in passion areas like sports, music, travel and food. They have meaning in people's lives, a positive impact on their communities and the world, and leave people feeling uplifted and inspired. The strong majority of people say they prefer experiences that teach them something new, expose them to new cultural influences, or take them to new places.

A woman with dark skin, wearing a bright pink long-sleeved shirt and a wide-brimmed straw hat, is sitting on a sandy beach. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She is holding a small, colorful striped bowl filled with red fruit, possibly strawberries. In the background, there is a blue inflatable ring on the sand and a body of water under a clear sky. A woven basket with orange and pink straps is visible in the lower right corner.

"The pandemic forced people to reconsider what they need from experiences, and brands to reimagine how to deliver them. Our findings help us understand what is most meaningful to people today, and what experiences Mastercard can bring them to help create moments and memories that are truly Priceless."

– Raja Rajamannar

66%

prioritize experiences
over material
possessions

81%

prefer experiences
that they can do with
their **family/friends**
over experiences for
them alone

44%

say **digital experiences**
can be as engaging
as in-person experiences

People are open to having these rich, engaging experiences both offline and online. Four out of ten people say digital experiences can be just as engaging as in-person ones.


Of course, as the creator of Priceless, Mastercard helps people pursue their passions with curated experiences they can find on Priceless.com – experiences that correspond to the fulfillment they seek today. In addition to Mastercard's ten existing passion areas, several emerging trends that add meaning to experiences were identified.

Selfcare to strengthen connections with others

After a year of shutdowns and quarantines, we've all learned that minding the self isn't selfish. Rather, it gives others access to the best version of you, energized and ready to engage. Almost two-thirds of people around the world agree.

People recognize it takes whole-person wellbeing to be their best selves. In response to the stress and isolation of the last year, they are practicing a range of different methods to get themselves there. A majority of people indicate they engage in "technology-enabled wellbeing," rest and balance, and/or soothing activities.





"As the world's motivations
and inspirations change, so will what
Mastercard offers, always there
to connect people to
Priceless possibilities."

– Raja Rajamannar

64%

overall agree **taking good care of themselves** helps them connect with others

71%

globally like to visit **new places** so they can see and do things they've not done before

And people's energy behind these trends is growing. Twenty-two percent have expanded their use of technology-enabled wellbeing since the pandemic began, while rest and balance and soothing activities have risen in importance for twenty-nine percent and thirty percent respectively.

Despite people's pent-up desire to reach out and connect with others due to the pandemic, the research found people to be more interested in experiences that build resilience. Future experiences must cater to people's holistic sense of wellbeing to help them hone their best selves so they can bring more to their interactions with others.

A growing appetite to seek out greater learning through experience

People are feeling more empowered to seek out experiences that expand their horizons. More than three-quarters of people say they prefer experiences that let them learn something new, and almost half say the ability to learn from an experience feels more important due to the pandemic. Not only has the pandemic heightened their interest, it also accelerated people's reliance on technology as a means to deliver these experiences.

Whether that means seeing a familiar passion in a new way, trying something completely new, or engaging with new places and cultures, they are eager to seize those opportunities. Two-thirds are open to different cultural experiences that will broaden their horizons, and seven in ten people say they like to visit new places where they can see and do things they haven't done before.

Experiences that expand our horizons can happen on a grand scale or on an intimate, personal one. Often times, grandeur is used to lure people to experiences, but more meaningful connections address the curiosity they have around exploring other cultures and enhancing their knowledge.



47%

feel the ability to **learn from an experience** has become more important due to Covid

Craving a break from the everyday

49%

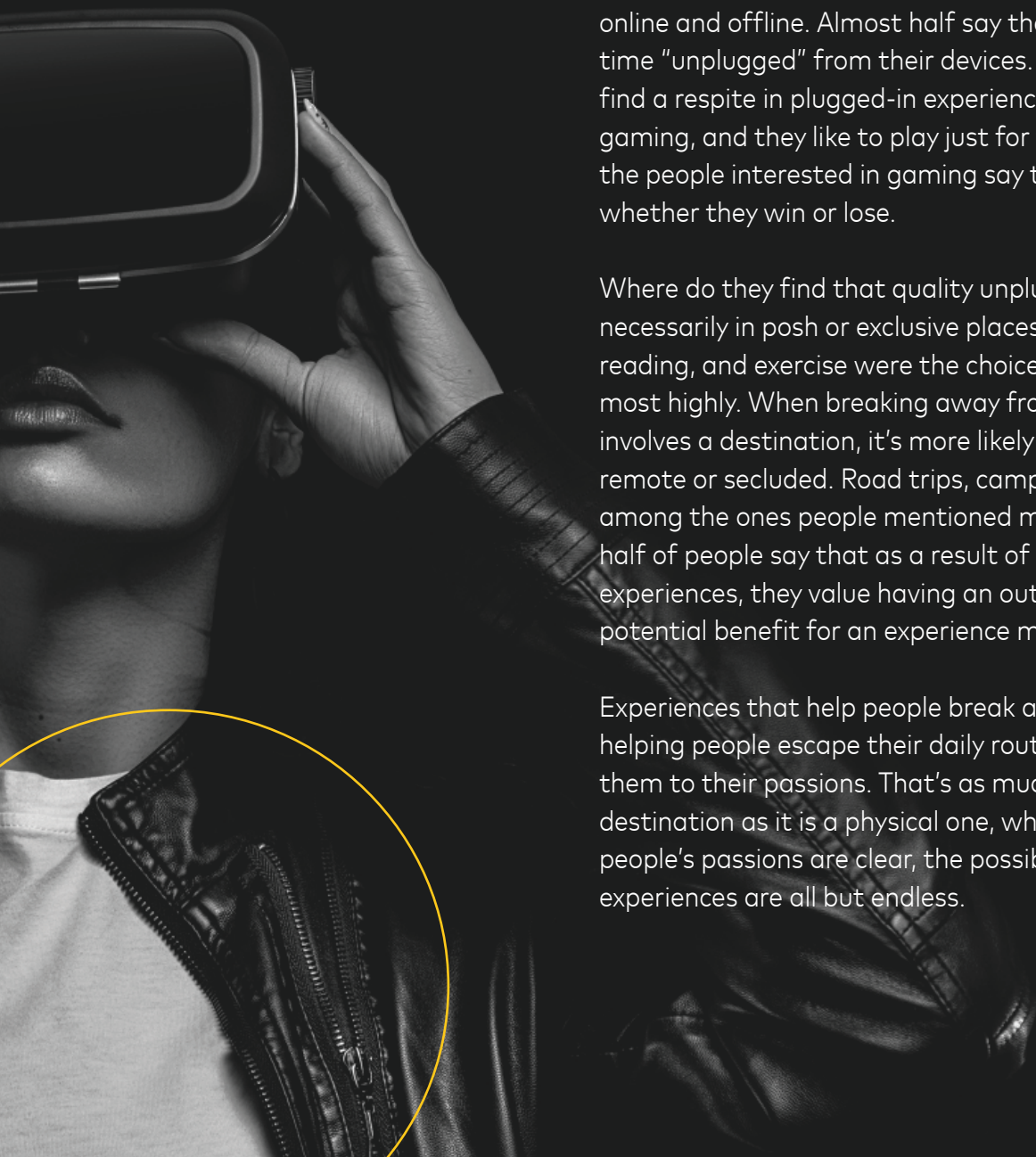
of those **interested in gaming** say they play a game just for fun or to relax, with no desire to win or advance

Routines can box people into stress and repetition. When it's time to break away, people want to share time with others they care about. In choosing to lean into this quality time together, they want experiences that keep them fully engaged in the moment.

As they step away from their everyday routines, more than one-third say that an entertaining or relaxing break is an important quality they want in an experience, though the ways they choose to break away vary among online and offline. Almost half say they value spending time "unplugged" from their devices. Among those who find a respite in plugged-in experiences, many turn to gaming, and they like to play just for the sake of it: Half the people interested in gaming say they find it relaxing whether they win or lose.

Where do they find that quality unplugged time? Not necessarily in posh or exclusive places. Road trips, reading, and exercise were the choices they prioritized most highly. When breaking away from the everyday involves a destination, it's more likely to be somewhere remote or secluded. Road trips, camping, and hiking were among the ones people mentioned most often. Nearly half of people say that as a result of their pandemic experiences, they value having an outdoor location as a potential benefit for an experience more than before.

Experiences that help people break away are all about helping people escape their daily routines by connecting them to their passions. That's as much a mental destination as it is a physical one, which means when people's passions are clear, the possibilities for enriching experiences are all but endless.





Enduring the Power of Priceless

People still value experiences that bring them closer to their passions and to each other. The experiences they pursue vary widely and offer a wide array of personal rewards. Priceless experiences mean many things to many people – and they're willing to invest time and energy to make them happen.

What's changed is perspective. Today, people don't only want momentary entertainment; they want a transformative moment that leaves them feeling uplifted and inspired for a long time to come.

"After a year of lifestyle limitations, consumers have a pent-up demand for experiences that are remarkable and shareable. Post pandemic, we don't expect consumers to seek a volume of experiences but rather **experiences with perceived longevity** – things that they will never forget and that they can relive through stories, personal betterment, or community impact. Priceless."

– Wayne Levings, Kantar