

A life full of goods, not to be confused with a good life

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By [Andrea Gyllenkrok](#)

As a self-confessed anti-consumerist, I was not expecting to walk away from a consumer focussed conference feeling optimistic about the future. But after [The Big Rethink](#), the Economist conference held last week, dedicated to rethinking consumers and consumption, that is exactly what I did.

Words that would have been irrelevant in this context ten years ago - meaning, truth, [purpose](#) and intuition - dominated the stage throughout the day and there was a refreshing humanisation of the consumer and the way business can be done. All the speakers agreed that the consumption of the future is going to be experience driven rather than product driven - accessibility, empowerment, fun, REAL social engagement and [purpose beyond profit](#) is what businesses of the future will have to deliver to survive.

Anne Lise Kjaer from the future forecasting agency, [Kjaer Global](#), developed the idea of Meaningful Consumption; traditional consumption of goods does not give us happiness and we are starting to realise this. What is the meaning of life? Whatever it is, it's certainly not measured in the number of shoes in your wardrobe.

Nader Tarassoli from [Brand Inside](#) emphasized the inevitable shift of consumption by referring to the definition of the word consumption: to destroy. He took Apple as an example of a company steering away from that. Apple takes [value creation](#) one step further by making the consumer the ultimate value creator. The value creation does not stop with a beautifully packaged iPhone, it continues through being genuinely useful and delivering a seamless life enhancing [experience](#).

Another visible shift of consumption is sharing economy. Companies such as [Zipcar](#) and [airbnb](#) are giving us access to what we need without the hassle of owning and maintaining it - again, the focus is on the experience. Alex Gordon from [SignSalad](#) talked about [sharing becoming the new selling](#). If so, will time become a new kind of currency?

The Economist and the speakers did a good job providing food for thought. It was a real good human experience.

Image via [Kjaer Global](#)