

## First Insight Consumer Testing Reveals Value-Driven Fashion Risk Takers

By Arthur Zaczekiewicz  
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When it comes to men's fashion, changes in color preferences, patterns and fasteners are just as trend-driven as women's wear, while favored brands reflect a diversity in taste and style that varies depending on the age group tested.

After crunching data from the recent fashion weeks in New York and Europe, predictive analytics firm First Insight Inc. found that red went from being unpopular last year to being trendy this year among 2,800-plus men and women consumers tested. The average positive sentiment for red jumped to 35 percent this year, up from an 8 percent score last year. But navy was the overall top color as its net positive sentiment score increased 35 percent over 2015. With patterns, solid designs emerged as the most popular, trending up 6 percent from 2015.

For fasteners, zippers trended down 19 percent this year as compared with last year while looks with buttons "maintained an identical 32



Theory Men's RTW Fall 2016

percent average positive sentiment" in both years. Overall, medium-length outfits were most popular, which was followed

by short lengths. Long lengths were third, overall.

Regarding designers, the top four brands this year were: Theory, Thomas Pink, Michael Kors and Nautica.

"Red was unpopular in 2015, but now it is much more trendy," said Joe Callahan, director of marketing at First Insight. "Men's fashion is starting to be more aggressive, and they're taking more of a risk with fashion."

When measured by average positive sentiment, Theory was the top brand with a score of 39 percent. Salvatore Ferragamo, while not one of the top four brands, had the top overall item tested with a positive sentiment score of 67 percent. The brand also

had three of the top five items that were measured overall. Jim Shea, chief commercial officer at First Insight, said there's a lesson



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here for brands where “you can have a standout item yet not be consistent enough to be a top brand” in the minds of the consumer.

By gender, LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton’s Thomas Pink was the top brand among men while Theory was number one for women. The analysis also showed that women preferred hooded outfits, which compares to hoodless looks for men. And black was favored more by men while women leaned toward navy. Regarding fasteners, men preferred buttons while women favored toggles.

And by age demographic, Theory was the top brand for those between 19 and 44 years old while Thomas Pink and Perry Ellis scored better with those 45 and older.

Callahan and Shea said that for consumers tested, sentiment may not always correlate with value. “For example, those aged 19 to 29 valued the top Thomas Pink sport coat \$87.77 more than

those ages 45 to 59,” the report stated. “However, those aged 45 to 59 had higher positive sentiment toward this item — 5 percent higher than those 19 to 29.”

“Brands often think that consumers buy what they love,” Callahan said. “But people tend to buy products that they value instead, which is a combination of price and sentiment.”

The brands tested included Calvin Klein, Coach, Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Michael Kors, Nautica, Perry Ellis, Prada, Salvatore Ferragamo, Theory, Thomas Pink, Tommy Hilfiger and Versace.

Of the 2,864 responses collected, 798 were male and 2,066 were women. The largest age segment of those polled were between 30 and 44. By household income, most of the respondents earned under \$75,000 per year, which was followed by those earning between \$75,000 and \$125,000.