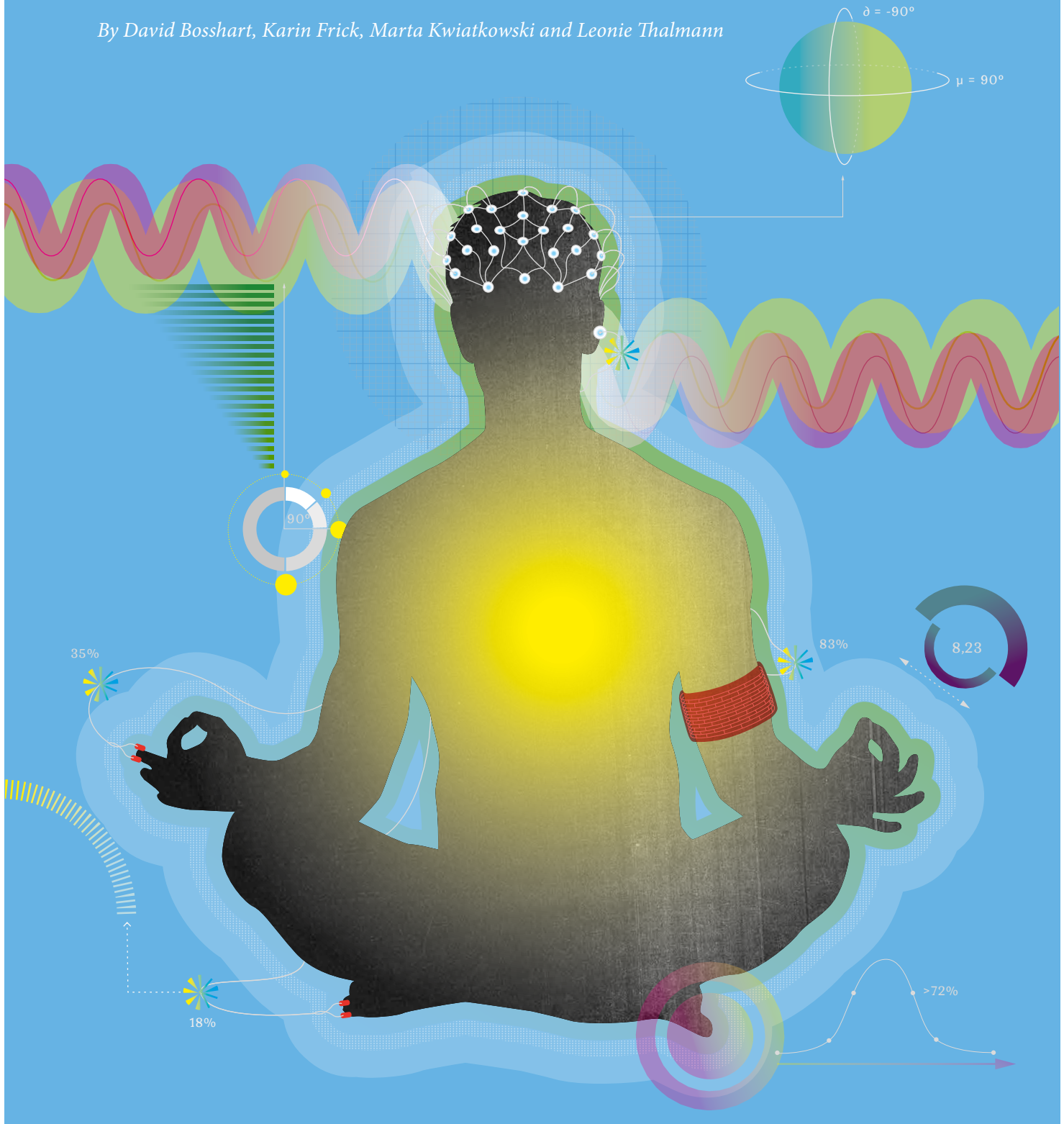


# WELLNESS 2030

## The new techniques of happiness

*By David Bosshart, Karin Frick, Marta Kwiatkowski and Leonie Thalmann*



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The new techniques of happiness

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# Summary

The industry is booming. Hardly a week goes by without a new guide, coach, course or treatment. But what is happiness, anyway? Every epoch and culture defines it differently. Today, it is mainly associated with positive emotions, health and a general state of well-being. Even if happiness does not have an end goal, it is defined as a measurable goal in our meritocratic western society.

We are on a quest to decode happiness. Will we be able to produce it soon? There are two approaches to this: firstly, the wellness movement, which no longer treats health as the absence of illness, and secondly, the tools of the mind, i.e. proper posture, awareness and other forms of self-reflection. Digitalization has expanded the technical range of these tools and offers up individual metrics for happiness.

The fledgling wellness industry has a promising future ahead. According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), it grew by more than 10% between 2013 and 2015 to reach a value of USD 3.7 trillion. These five major trends will shape the market in the future:

## **1. TECHNOLOGY IS BRINGING ABOUT A CONVERGENCE OF HUMANS AND TECH**

Digitalization is transforming our world in a major way. This will enable lifestyles with many more options and will influence our habits, needs and desires in every aspect of our lives. We are redefining ourselves: what does it mean to be human? There are three critical determining factors here: hyper-connectivity, disintermediation, entanglement – the symbiosis between humans and technology.

## **2. BIOHACKING – THE SHORTCUT TO WELL-BEING**

Biohackers are a subculture of people with a whole range of different backgrounds. Driven by a pio-

neering spirit, they are connected by their openness to crossing disciplinary lines and their belief in the ability to make things possible. They want to liberate themselves from the limitations of nature, age and disease.

Biohacking is already impacting the wellness industry today. A fresh way of thinking is taking hold – a new understanding of do-it-yourself combined with the recognition of how everyone is capable of revealing and developing their own self-healing powers.

## **3. DATA SELFIES**

We already live in a selfie culture. Smartphones have made the self-portrait a dominant form of communication. How we present ourselves is who we are. In the future, however, new data will be added to these images of our outward appearances, adding metrics for our inner lives. For a number of years now, wearable tech has been collecting data on our heart frequencies, the number of kilometers we walk and the calories we burn. This data offers insights into our well-being and is of particular interest to the wellness industry. The more data is collected from various sources, the more precise and multifaceted our digital doubles become. We will become intelligible to machines and thus able to be coded for improved well-being.

## **4. WELLNESS IS SOCIAL – MAKE PEOPLE HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER TOGETHER**

In the pre-digital age, finding people who were good for us was often a question of luck. Today, there are new tools that optimize the search for a long- or short-term partner. Online matching platforms make it easier to find people who suit us.

In the 21st century, connecting with other people has taken on a new dimension: collaboration is

now a part of our everyday lives. Together we are smarter, learn better, reach our goals faster and make fewer mistakes. We still organize this collaboration on an ad-hoc basis for each individual task, but in the future, algorithms could take on the work of choosing the partner who suits us best. What's more, the involvement of artificial intelligence could significantly increase the quality of the results.

#### **5. BIOFEEDBACK REPLACES SURVEYS AND LIKES**

The technology for measuring emotions has made great strides and is now being tested in a number of applications. Apps are attempting to trace behavioral patterns and emotions from passively monitored smartphone data. It is possible to discern how a person is feeling simply by looking at the way they use their cell phone. Which apps do they use frequently? How often do they text? How long do they speak for and with whom? How many steps do they take and how long do they sleep? This panoply of smartphone data offers up very precise indications of a user's mental and physical health.

For the future of the industry, this trends means:

#### **The wellness industry will become an extension of the data economy**

The wellness industry must make itself fit for a data-driven future. It will become an extension of the data economy, have to decipher the wishes of its customers and create offers that match them. In this world, only those service providers who speak most directly to our own individual prospects for happiness will prevail.

#### **Biohackers and Silicon Valley are the new pioneers of wellness**

Biohackers are set to shake up some of the rules

of play. The lucrative unicorns emerging from Silicon Valley are one indication that the code to human happiness may well be cracked there. It is hard to predict which innovation bubbles will burst. What is certain is that the most innovative companies – and the ones who cope best with setbacks – are the most likely to survive and change the industry in the long term.

#### **The wellness industry needs a hacker's mindset**

In the coming years, the industry will have to focus on unorthodox partnerships and the ability to think beyond the classical understanding of wellness. The wellness industry will need the courage to experiment and, to ensure this, it must also take on the mindset of a hacker. Only in this way will it be possible to gain customers' long-term trust and pave the way for data-driven wellness.

#### **In the era of customer ratings, consumer data management will become a key area of expertise**

The culture of likes and dislikes will not bypass the purveyors of wellness. The ultimate judgment of quality will come in the form of customer ratings, regardless of how many stars or seals of approval industry members distribute amongst themselves. In the long term, this could lead to a shift from expert knowledge to comprehensive consumer data management. Only those who have access to the best data will prevail.

#### **Blurring the boundaries between wellness and health**

In the future, the lines between wellness and health will become increasingly blurred. The closer the wellness industry moves towards healthcare, the closer it comes to a regulated market. This regulated market is unlikely to relax in the future. The most regulations can do is slow the pace. They will not be able to stand in its way.

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