



# 13 trends in sports & healthy lifestyle in Romania

# 2019

Our society is transforming at fast pace. Romanians change their shopping and consumption patterns, adopt new values and lifestyles. Among these shifts, an important aspect is how we redefine our life priorities.

## **How do we perceive our life balance? Does it matter to us? What do we do about it?**

In this Sports & Healthy Lifestyle Trend Report, we focus on a few areas we consider could be worth watching throughout 2019. They are not predictions, as several factors will play an influence on our future. However, for all interested market players, consumers, brands or organizations, these pages may provide an insightful perspective on a number of key areas with potential significant development and impact.

Enjoy!  
**The Quantix Team**

Many of the Romanians tend to place greater value on important things in our lives, giving them more time, energy or money. Among these relevant areas we constantly find sports, healthy food and mental balance. It is expected to have these themes emphasized in a society where GenX are actually the largest generation, about 50% more than the frequently discussed millennials. People between 35-55 go through profound changes in the current social context, they seek wellbeing and often afford to take initiative.

No surprise that the sport industry is growing, with more people practicing various types of activities. Consequently, we have more sport & recreation shops, more brands, a fast developing active culture.

Strongly connected, people naturally get higher interest in the quality of the food, drinks or cosmetics they use. In the supermarket or in the restaurant, consumers are more aware of the composition of the products, their source, the health benefits or potential risks. The established international brands, local producers, HoReCa, large retailers or small private shops, they all started to adapt to these trends and often take specific actions, acting as catalysts and vectors of change towards a more active and a healthier society.

# THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The active and **healthy lifestyle** is part of peoples' cultural heritage around the world. It embraces various forms, from Greece to Kenya, from China to UK or from USA to Peru. In order to discuss the potential changes in Romania, we relate more to the Western world, as we are closer to this society. We will clearly continue to have a strong input from other areas (especially from far East, when we deal with health and mental balance) but they are generally trends that also penetrate Western Europe or North America. The **body-mind-soul equation** is a central theme around the world, driving changes in peoples' behaviors and generating new business opportunities. Not all trends in Western countries reach Romania and often, those who land in our country have a delay, ranging from months to years. We have focused in this Trend Report on things we may see happening on a short time horizon.

However, it is interesting to check what trends seem to shape the Western societies, as sooner or later we may also experience these challenges. We have selected a few topics we find interesting to monitor: In gym training, many started to opt for **shorter classes** (up to 30min/session). The HIIT (high intensity interval training) was strongly promoted not long ago. There are recent debates on the potential over-stress this type of training might induce, spiking cortisol, the stress hormone. So, the short classes might be redefined. The recovery stage gives way to new products and services (i.e. increasing interest for **MCT oils**)

The world of nutrition highlights several areas of focus. We will hear more about **plant based meat** (a fast growing industry), **oat milk** or **hemp products**. We will continue to see an accelerated **fight against sugar** (from initiatives taken by Coca-Cola to the legislative pressure in the UK). One of the key words of tomorrow is **CBD** (coming from cannabidiol). Yes, cannabis is debated upon and its use seems to expand through new legal frameworks. Many organizations try to revive the **frozen food**, trying to change current perceptions people have about frozen products. People will expect more **personalized food** and they will have more options to eat out in **fast casual restaurants**, growing in popularity.

Health will be easier to control, through apps, easier testing, **online diagnoses** (major Chinese tech companies have major developments in these areas). On westerners' health agenda there will be more discussions about the **Circadian rhythms**, as quality of the sleep is researched for improvement.

# 13 trends to watch about Sports & Healthy Lifestyle in Romania



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# 01 Fit n Run

## Perspectives

Running and Fitness/Gym will continue to be the engine of sport practice in Romania. Newcomers on board, people starting to practice, will enter the world of sports through the large gates open by runners or gym members.

These two practices are viral, they spread amongst friends or office groups at fast pace.

Relatively low entry barriers, easy to get it started. It becomes a lifestyle norm, regardless the age or the gender.

## Potential impact

The number of running competitions is increasing year on year. The major competitions in Romania attract more and more participants. Studies reveal relevant shares of first timers in such amateur races. Running diversifies, having longer or shorter distances, road or trail. The fitness sector is booming, with lots of clubs or studios open in Romanian urban areas.

The sport retailers adapt and push this trend, increasing their shelf spaces for running or fitness products.





## 02 Training diversity

### Perspectives

Gym or fitness is not enough!

There are more and more branches getting out these common trunks. Lots of programs, lots of classes, lots of training approaches: Pilates, Yoga, Spinning, CrossFit, Zumba, TRX, Aqua, Body Pump, etc. Practitioners have lots of options to choose from, gyms and clubs extend their portfolios of services in order to cope with this increasing demand.

An emerging trend started to penetrate the local market, with a focus for shorter and more intensive training. This could expand in running or cycling as well, potentially reframing the spectrum of events (marathons are great, but shorter races may attract more onboard)

### Potential impact

Expanded “menus” create traction into gyms, avoiding routine and boredom. This diversification also creates the foundation for specialization, for trainers and smaller studios. It is a proper platform for personalized training, which is also emerging in our fitness market. In this context, it is expected that sport addicts choose small specialized gyms where they find the right blend of services. This puts pressure on gyms to improve the quality of the trainers & their facilities.



# Tougher competition for sport brands

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## Perspectives

As number of sport practitioners and their income levels grow, sport brands find the Romanian market more attractive. This tightens the competition, established international brands fighting local or regional players or private labels of major retailers.

Another relevant insight is the broader share sport brands take from the “fashion” industry. Adidas, Nike, Puma or New Balance built product lines, often in partnership with key influencers, meant to gain in the casual and elegant segments. Ladies in Adidas outfit or guys with fancy jackets and NB shoes will be more of a norm at parties or social events, feeding the athleisure culture.

## Potential impact

Sport brands are “musts” in all shopping malls, the main commercial attraction of the Romanians. There is no more just Adidas and Nike, many other big brands gain share (i.e Salomon, New Balance or the new aggressive Under Armour, to name just a few). On the other hand, Decathlon, Intersport and Hervis expand, increasing sales of their private labels. On top of this, e-commerce provides Romanians great deals and enlarged ranges of products.

This competitive context will drive increased sales and will give space for smaller niche brands to penetrate the market.

# 04 A star is born?

## Perspectives

Simona Halep is the shining star of professional sports in Romania. She finished 2018 as the WTA #1. Statistically speaking, she is expected to lose this position some day in 2019. How will she adapt? Will she stay strong and fight back? Or will she get lost in the crowd, somehow similar to Bute after Froch?

No easy answer! But a major question for brands seeking the new shining stars.  
Where to place a bet?

## Potential impact

Romanians continue to suffer in the professional arena, with few icons, few models for the young generations. Cristina Neagu has amazing performances in handball. However, she is shadowed by Halep, which continues to keep the spotlight.

The recent rational position of COSR regarding the expected Romanian performance in Tokyo 2020, with very low expectations, is a sad but realistic perspective. The future of Romania in the international arenas is rather gloom. Tennis seems to provide hope (not only through Halep, there are lots of high class performers there). We have great results in other sports but their level of interest is, unfortunately, modest (i.e. table tennis, gymnastics, volleyball, rowing). After so much disappointment in the king sport, will the U21 national team revive football with a surprising performance at the Europeans?

Will brands or public bodies initiate long term investments in strategies and programs to born the next Romanian champions?



# 05 Life 360

## Perspectives

There is more and more debate around the world on the need to take care of all pillars of our lives. This is not at all new in the history of mankind, but, in the current fast moving world, it requires a strong emphasis. Being active, consuming quality food & drinks, sleeping well, having financial stability and strong emotional connections to others, contribute to an overall state of wellbeing. This holistic approach tends to gain traction in the lifestyles of Romanians, early adopters subsequently acting as evangelists in their social groups.

## Potential impact

This trend is relatively new in other western markets as well but it is expected to be more visible in Romania mainly through initiatives taken by large corporations, for the wellbeing of their employees. Packages of benefits will cover more pillars of a balanced life in an integrated approach. This could become a differentiator for employers of choice.

We may also see in Romania some early signs of ventures into holistic cabinets / venues, the so called one-stop-shops for sports and health. As people value their time, in heavy city traffic conditions, having everything under one roof may be a rational choice and attract certain market segments.





# It's for me 06

## Perspectives

Being an average person in a broad population is no longer satisfying. I am an individual, a complex physical and spiritual organism and I need customized approaches to be happy.

People understand they could get special treatment, they need personalized guidance to things that matter: medical examinations, nutritional plans, body workout or other training practices, life coaching or spiritual fulfilments, all these need to be developed in a one-to-one environment.

## Potential impact

Trainers, coaches, nutritionists and physicians will direct their efforts towards a one-to-one approach, giving personalized guidance to their customers. Top gyms and private medical clinics will capitalize on this approach as this is the emerging consumer trend. These services should integrate the input coming from various apps people started to use, adding knowledge, interpretation and recommendations on top of the parameters people collect. A top trainer will be less and less the best performer in a particular sport, but the most knowledgeable, having high communication skills and sharing insights from multiple areas.



## 07 Active aging

### Perspectives

Many say aging is firstly a mental priming. There are signs in Romania that becoming a senior does not necessarily activate the “traditional” lifestyle pattern we may be used with. We see around us lots of elder people interested in practicing various types of sports, keeping in good shape & tonus. The focus on diets and nutritional aspects amplifies considerably, seniors being highly attracted by natural products in order to avoid risks and maintain a good health condition. As senior segments get more access to information and have disposable income on a growing curve, their economic impact is worth considering.

### Potential impact

Having active seniors should be a priority for the public policies as well as for brands. Beyond the huge positive social impact, brands may connect to this trend and support it as a) active, healthier seniors are more favorable to consume a broad range of products and services, and b) improving the quality of life for the elder segments is a matter of social responsibility. We should also bear in mind the large share of people above 50 years old (over 36%) in the alarming Romanian pyramid of ages. We expect more products and services targeted at seniors in various categories, not so much pharma.

# 08 Bioaddiction

## Perspectives

We may not know exactly what Bio or Eco means, but we have a broad representation and we started to enjoy the idea! We see elder consumers and school kids alike, scanning the Bio shelves and buying “green” products. This trend is strongly connected to the perception that Romanian agricultural products are superior, more natural and better in taste. Some time ago we had just a few products to choose from and they were basically very expensive. These barriers tend to be pushed away, as Bio/Eco offers expanded considerably over the past couple of years, while prices are no longer untouchable. And, yes, packaging is cool as well!

## Potential impact

The impact is major, reshaping shelves in large supermarkets. Food & drink producers consider brand extensions or launches of new brands. New bio restaurants appear in malls or in other commercial areas, attracting more people and spreading the word. This trend may impact the whole chain in Romania, with potential growth of “from farm to table” approach.

Consumers will require more info before purchasing. This eco wave will first touch foods & drinks, things that go inside our bodies, but will also touch the surface: the interest for eco products is expected to grow in Personal Care too.



# 09 Dietocracy

## Perspectives

We live in a country where the religious fasting has a high incidence.

Every now and then, different diets have captured the attention of large segments. What we see now is a proliferation of the interest in food components, in understanding our nutritional intake.

There are numerous trends about what we should eat or drink, how to prepare them, how to mix them, etc. The market is full of (often contradictory) pieces of information, people ultimately buying in ideas they fit with. Regardless their beliefs, food & drinks are clearly key items on consumers' personal agendas.

## Potential impact

We will have increased number of people choosing specific diets: from quite restrictive approaches (i.e. vegans could be included in this category) to more moderate approaches (i.e. gluten free, sugar free, low calories, etc.)

An interesting emerging trend in this area is the intermittent fasting which may gain new adopters.

Product packaging will adapt to this, highlighting those aspects that matter in consumers choices. Restaurants will also have to act rapidly on this trends (beyond the religious fasting, which is quite considered already).

Dieticians and nutritionists should increase their presence, in individual cabinets or in integrated services provided by gyms, clubs, fitness centers.



# Measure & track 10

## Perspectives

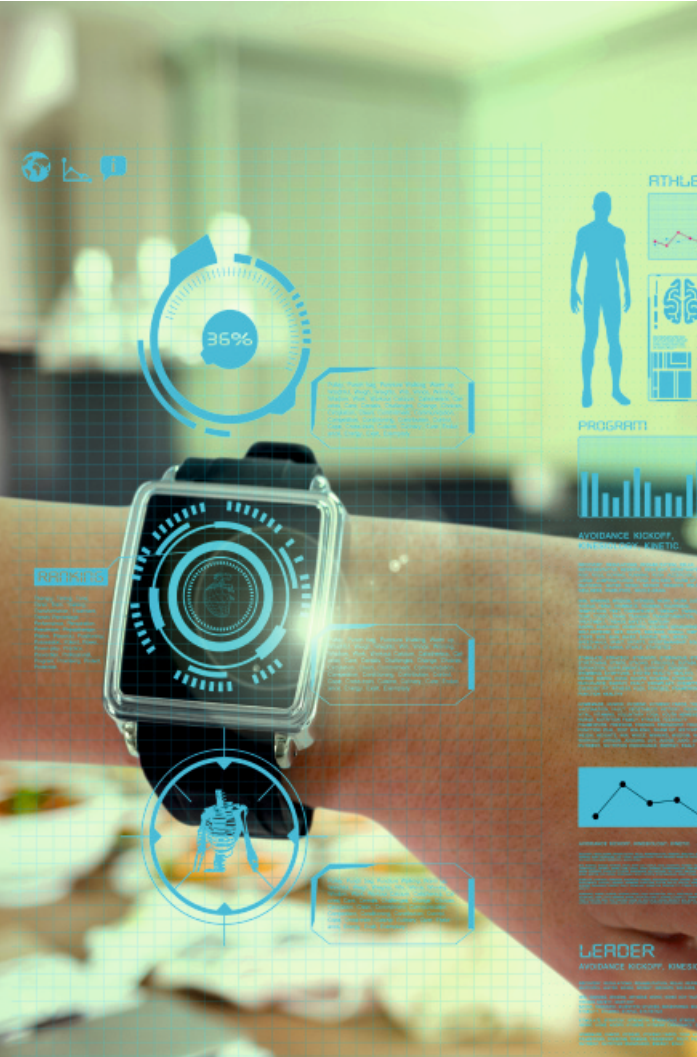
How many calories have I burnt today?  
How many steps did I take?  
How was the quality of my sleep?

All this data is just a click away. People scan products to check on the metrics they care for, they track what they eat & drink and correlate it to their physical activities. This data driven environment may drive us crazy at some extent but it is undoubtedly a trend we face and need to adapt to.

## Potential impact

We acknowledge that technology changes our lives, from transportation to entertainment, from communication to...nutrition and sports!

In a world of handy apps, on smartphones or smartwatches, it becomes a habit to have instant access to info about food we consume, about the parameters describing our daily activities, sport routines or even quality of our sleep. All these metrics, integrated and analyzed, may lead to decisions about food, drinks or sport practices. Beyond tracking and logging data, the next challenge is to understand it and take proper actions.



# 11

## Smoking. Recalculating route.

### Perspectives

Being a smoker is not what it used to be... On one hand, the incidence is going down, in the overall context of promoting healthy lifestyle habits. On the other hand, traditional smoking is shifting towards e-cigarettes, with all its foggy halo of uncertainty and lack of validated confidence. However, this new trends are heavily promoted by the major tobacco players in Romania (possibly as trial markets in some instances), therefore changes in consumer behaviors are visible.

### Potential impact

Smoking continues to be in dire straits as a business, as this industry is strongly impacted by legal restrictions and administrative decisions. Beyond that, changes in consumers habits are reshaping the whole category.

The thick smoked pubs or restaurants seem ancient history. However, e-smoking is often permitted indoors, despite being a strongly debated issue. Regardless of the legal context, people have become more sensitive to their rights, to acting more responsible and not having a negative impact on the person nearby. Healthy or not? E-smokers are not very clear on the answer. Not even authorities. However, e-smoking continues to grow, within a new, innovative business model designed by the big global players.





# Responsible touch 12

## Perspectives

As brands and corporate reputation still matter, organizations understand that being responsible is key in their sustainable development. Romanians become more sensitive to these stories, to companies' involvement in social matters.

Volunteering and donating are still in emerging phases but they become more visible. Purchase and consumption is less a material, transactional flow. It becomes more important that I, the consumer, understand that you, the organization selling me products or services, have a clean image and it is worth investing you with trust.

## Potential impact

Will planting trees or collecting used batteries contribute to sales? Yes, taking proper actions with proven social impact will continue to build brands and corporate reputation, which are key for sustainable growth.

Will this strategies work for Romania? Definitely yes! The impact will be seen in more CSR initiatives taken by companies, authentic and transparent. This will become the norm, a "hygiene factor". It will be hard for organizations to differentiate and build on these actions but could risk a lot failing in this space.

We expect more people involved in volunteering activities. Social influencers will play a critical role in generating changes and driving behaviors. Food and drinks brands need to build authentic and clean "stories" to make consumers buy, beyond promotions and discounts.

# 13 Nextgen at the startline

## Perspectives

There are some frequent topics we come across when discussions about kids are initiated: many of the parents complain that children spend too much time with electronic gadgets; that sport is not properly practiced in schools; that kids eat or are tempted to eat a lot of junk food. On top of these, we receive some worrying statistics about children obesity (data showing issues for Romania). Health is also in focus, from vaccines to stress at young ages. In such an unclear environment, many parents & tutors started to seek options to set the proper courses for their kids, driving more resources for an improved education and lifestyle.

## Potential impact

More consumers will play higher attention to food and drinks for their children. This is an educative process, driving an emerging segment of quality food conscious kids. We will see more and more youngsters with clear nutritional habits, from being vegetarian to having strict control on consumed & burned calories. We will see lots of early adopters of healthy food brands or fast casual restaurants being very young. In this trend, sport will be (re)emphasized in children education. Clubs, instructors, kids competitions or sales of sport articles for kids should have a favorable market context to grow.



# Quantix Marketing Consulting in a nutshell

- Initiators of Sport in Romania research projects. Pioneers in the market on this domain.
- Strong background in marketing research & consultancy (senior level, over 20 years research/marketing for the managing team, agency and corporate)
- Several articles and conferences on research, sport insights and healthy lifestyle
- Over 20 sport related research projects between 2014-2018
- Sport consultants for different top companies in Romania
- The only research & consulting company specialized in sport insights in Romania
- Insights partner for several associations and major competitions in Romania (Bucharest RUNNING Club / Bucharest Marathon, Raiffeisen, Bucharest Half Marathon, Baneasa Race, Maratonul Olteniei, Smart Athletic, Elite Running Club)



# Happy to help organizations with insights on sports and healthy lifestyle !



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