



# ***Redefining Engagement:***

## ***Consumer-Centric Strategies for 2025 and Beyond***

**Panos Alefragis**  
**Head of Digital**

The  
**Newtons**  
LABORATORY

# Reality Check

Before we look ahead, let's reflect on where we stand today and explore the key shifts and themes shaping the path forward.

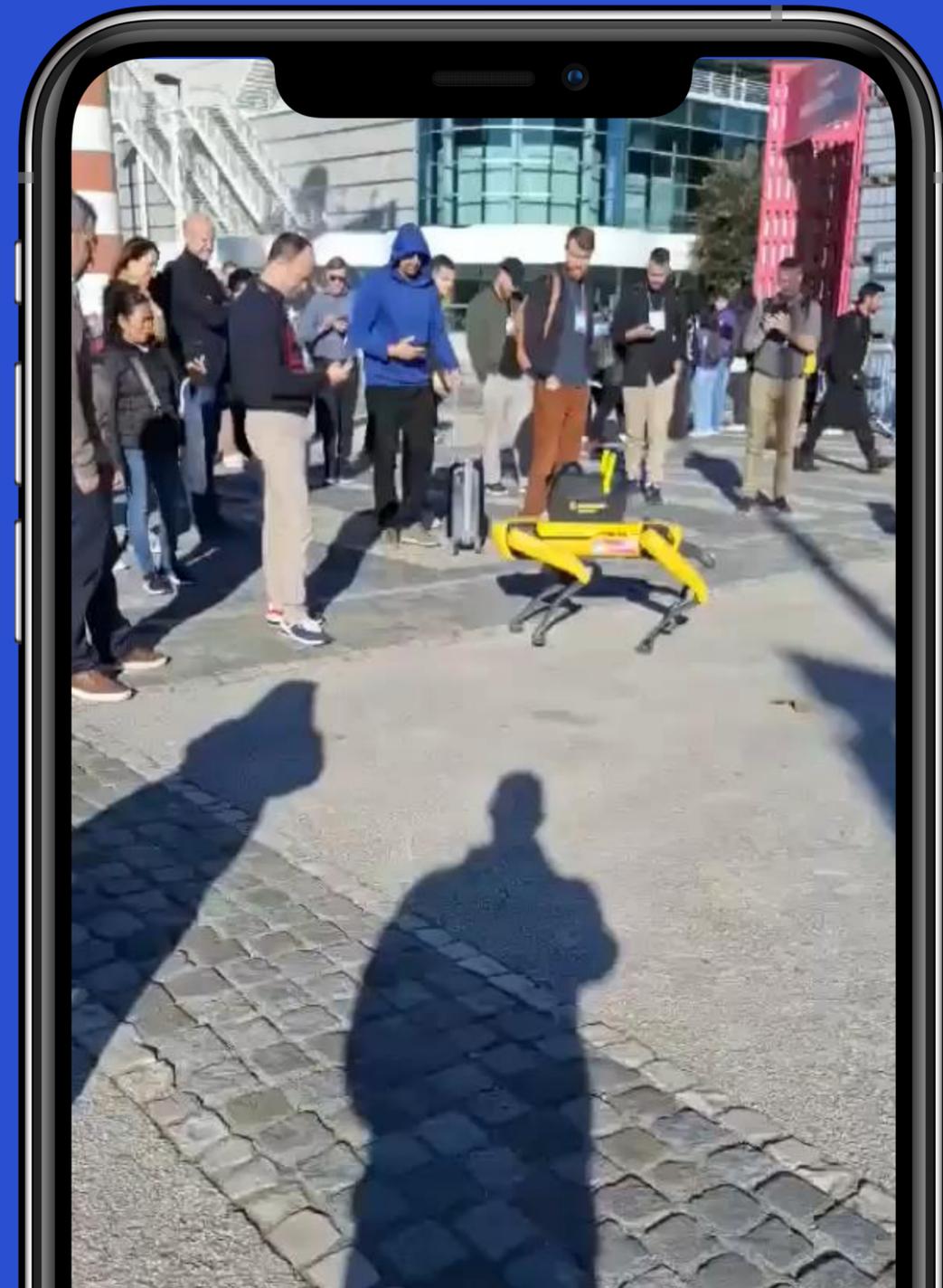
As celebrities walked the steps of the met Gala, bombs fell on Gaza.

We stand on a knife's edge of Relevant to Irrelevant.

Living in a world full of contrasts—shaping our reality and our future.



Speaking of contrasts, what we witnessed at Web Summit highlighted opposing realities.



# On the topic of antithesis, we will talk about one aspect of the future.



VS



On the one hand, industry leaders debated whether AI is here to save the planet or a risk to humanity.

On the other hand, we got a glimpse of humanity when Pharrell Williams took the stage.

# In Pharrell's words: the key is culture

Culture is what people connect with and pay attention to.

Here, TikTok trends don't just live online—they shape mainstream culture, driving everything from fashion and music to the way we talk.



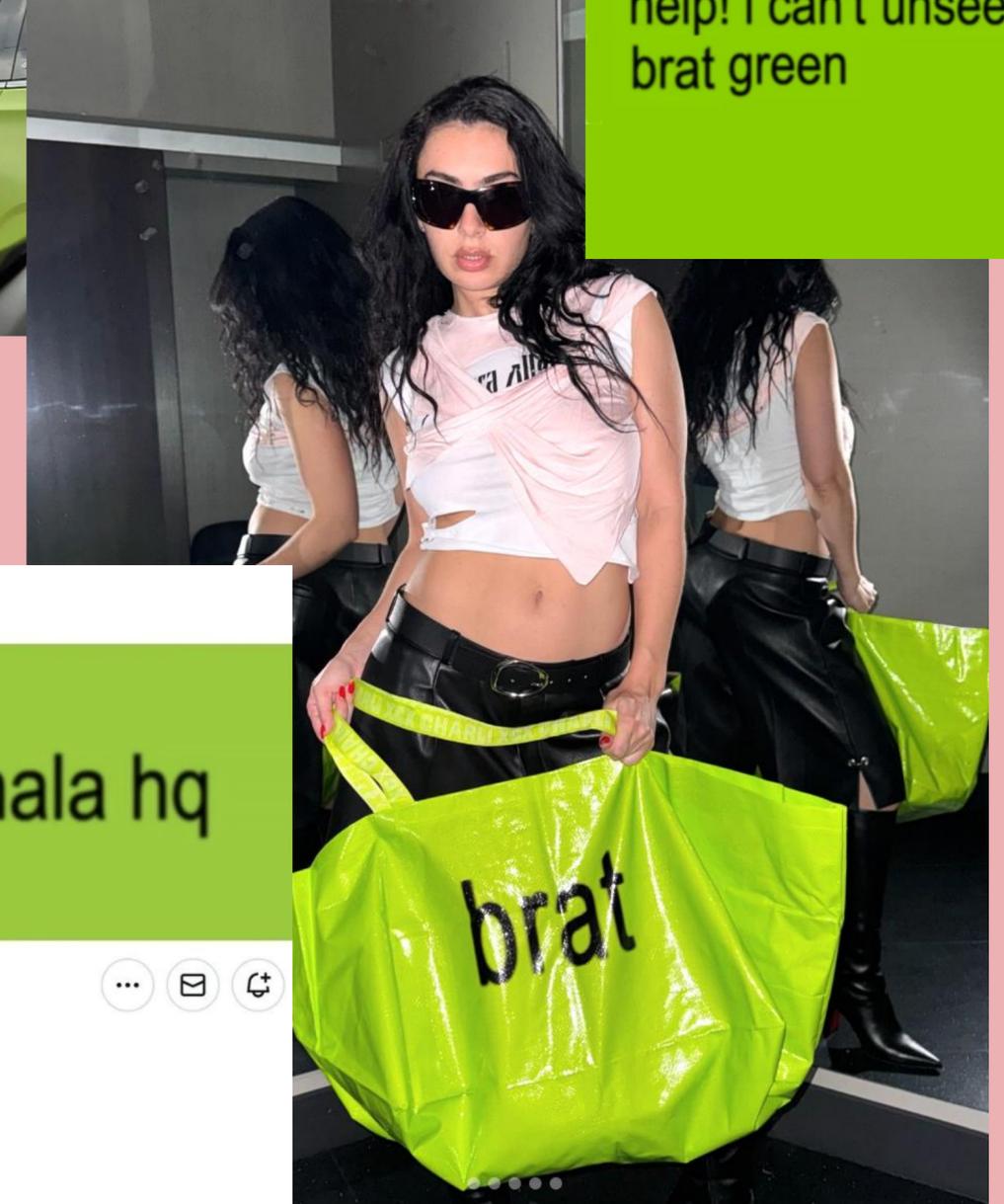
# Brat

Since its June 7 release, Charli XCX's album Brat has dominated dance charts, won praise for "making pop fun," and taken over online algorithms.

Originally the title of her chart-topping album, "brat" has evolved into a cultural movement, even influencing Kamala Harris's campaign, which adopted a brat-inspired social media rebrand to appeal to younger voters.



help! i can't unsee  
brat green



# Demure

named  
Dictionary.com's  
Word of the  
Year

The world's leading digital dictionary has named "demure" its Word of the Year — a very mindful choice that came after lexicographers analyzed a massive amount of data to determine what **word would best capture the cultural zeitgeist of 2024.**

How to be demure and modest and respectful at the work place



**demure**

/di' mjʊə, di' mjɔ: /

*adjective*

reserved, modest, and shy (typically used of a woman).  
"a demure young lady"

"Demure" went from being a simple six-letter adjective to a pop culture phenomenon in August, after a beauty influencer named Jools Lebron exploded on TikTok with a 38-second video in which she explained "how to be demure and modest at the workplace."

# Brain Rot

## *Oxford's word of the year*

Losing your mind scrolling through memes?

The dictionary has a word for that: *brain rot*, meaning “**the supposed deterioration of a person’s mental or intellectual state,**” often tied to consuming narrative-free content like TikTok videos. **Named 2024’s Word of the Year, *brain rot* reflects its cultural rise.**

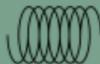
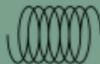
According to the New York Times, the organization analyzes a corpus of 26 billion words to capture the “moods and conversations that defined 2024.

## 2024 brain rot



2024

### Pillars of Brainrot

-  Humor
-  Absurdity
-  Surrealism
-  Saturation

## What is Brainrot?

Today, the chronically online reign supreme. “**Brat summer**” can cannibalize pop culture and media, a **baby hippo** can become the next IT girl, and being “**rizzed up**” or “**Costco guys**” are terms expected to be widely understood.

Topics once found in niche corners of the Internet have slipped into the mainstream. The most chronically online members of Gen Z and Gen Alpha are driving a new wave of absurdist humor and content: “brainrot.”

**Trends change faster than consumers scroll through TikToks.** Understanding where consumer habits and preferences are heading allows us to meet their needs before they even realize them.



Has 2024 been **brat** ?

Maybe it was more

*Demure*

or did your  rot?

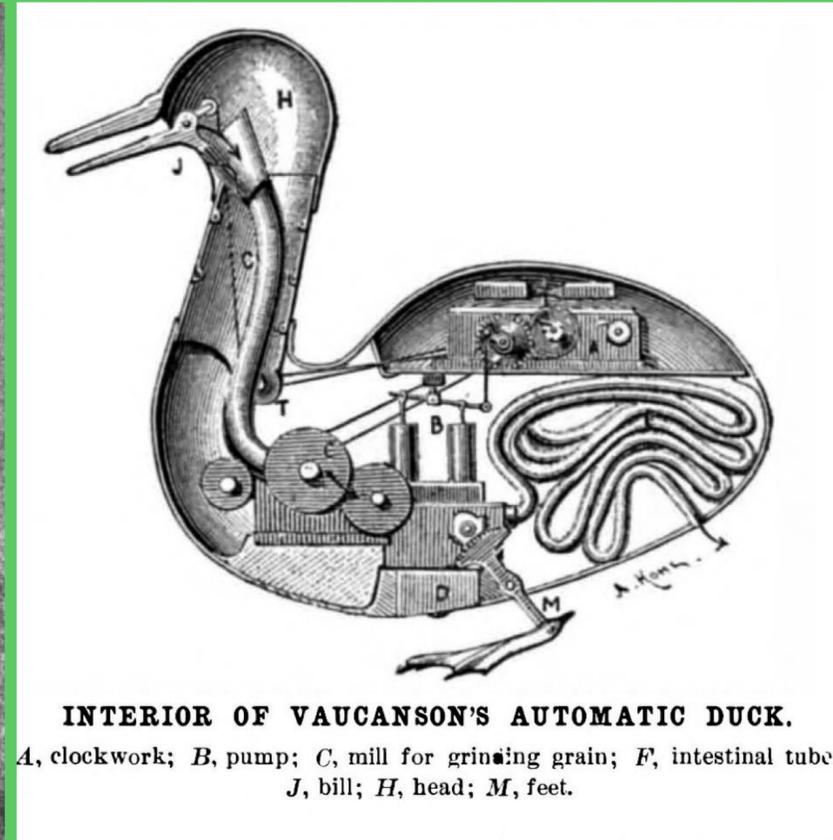
# The Future Consumer

If you think you know consumer behavior, think again.

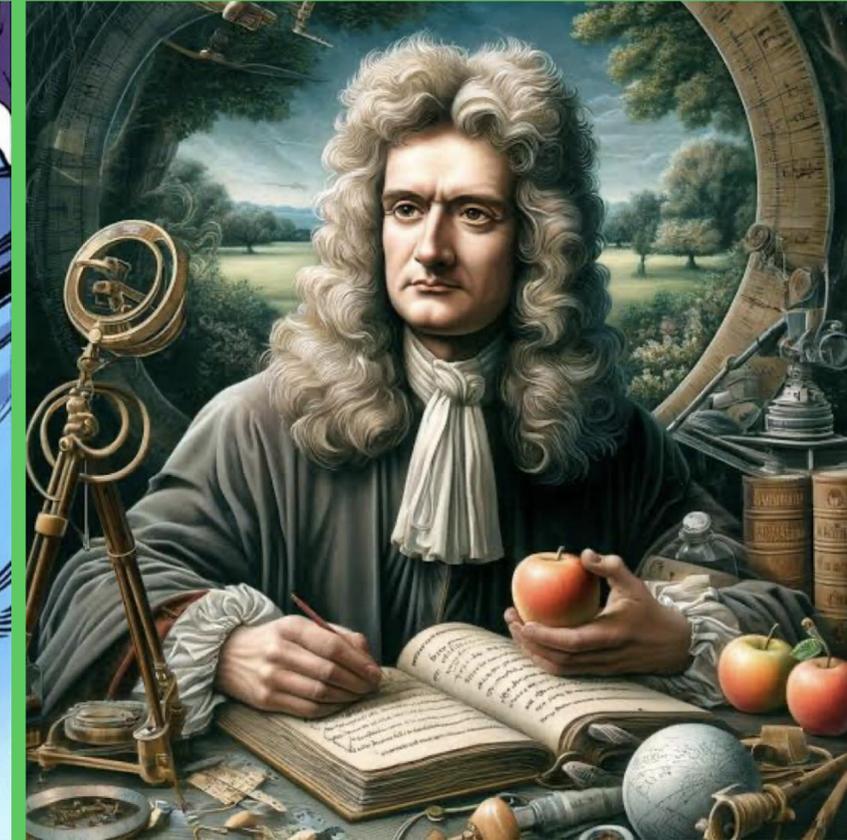
Consumers no longer fit into traditional archetypes.



# Consumer Profiles



**INTERIOR OF VAUCANSON'S AUTOMATIC DUCK.**  
A, clockwork; B, pump; C, mill for grinding grain; F, intestinal tube;  
J, bill; H, head; M, feet.



The New Nihilists

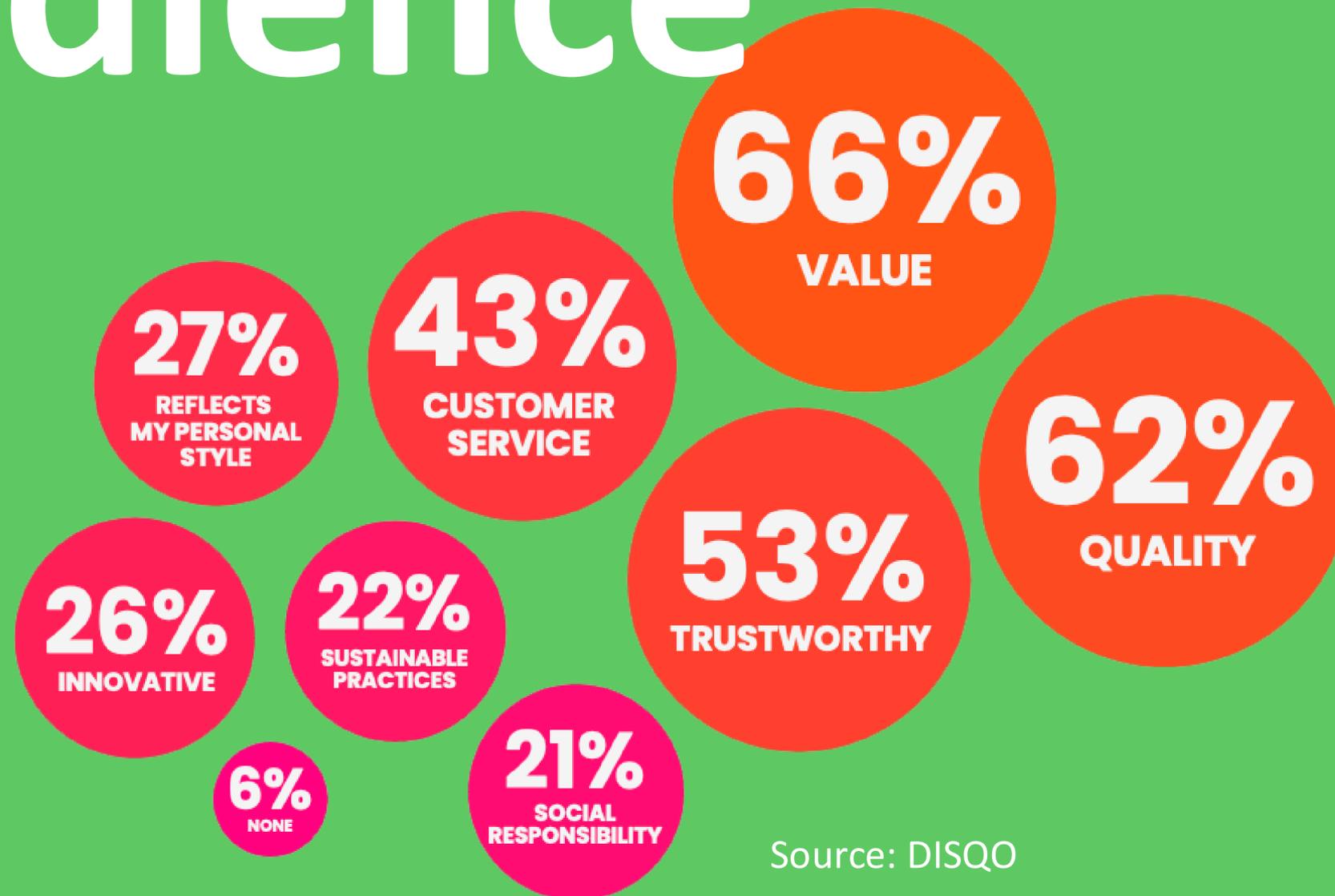
The Reductionists

The Time Keepers

The Pioneers

Source: WGSN

# What Matters to our Audience



Source: DISQO



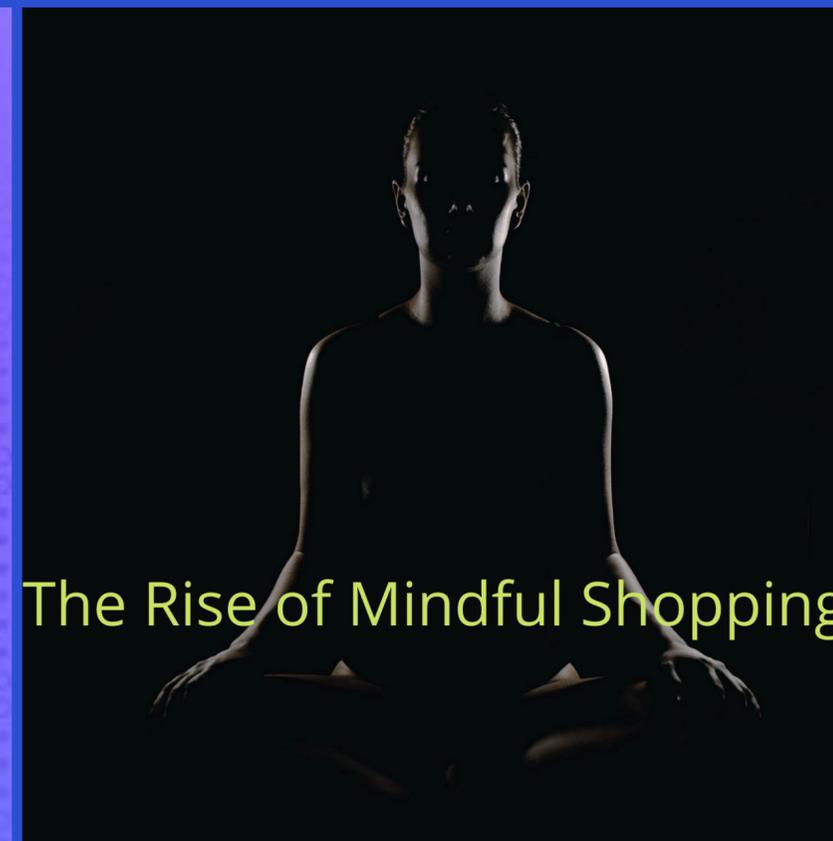
# Retail Trends 2025:



Social Commerce



AI & Personalization



Mindful Shopping



Phygital Retail

# Social Commerce



Shopping on Social Media Platforms expected to reach \$1.2 trillion globally by 2025.

Source: Accenture



# Social Shopping has hit the primary arena

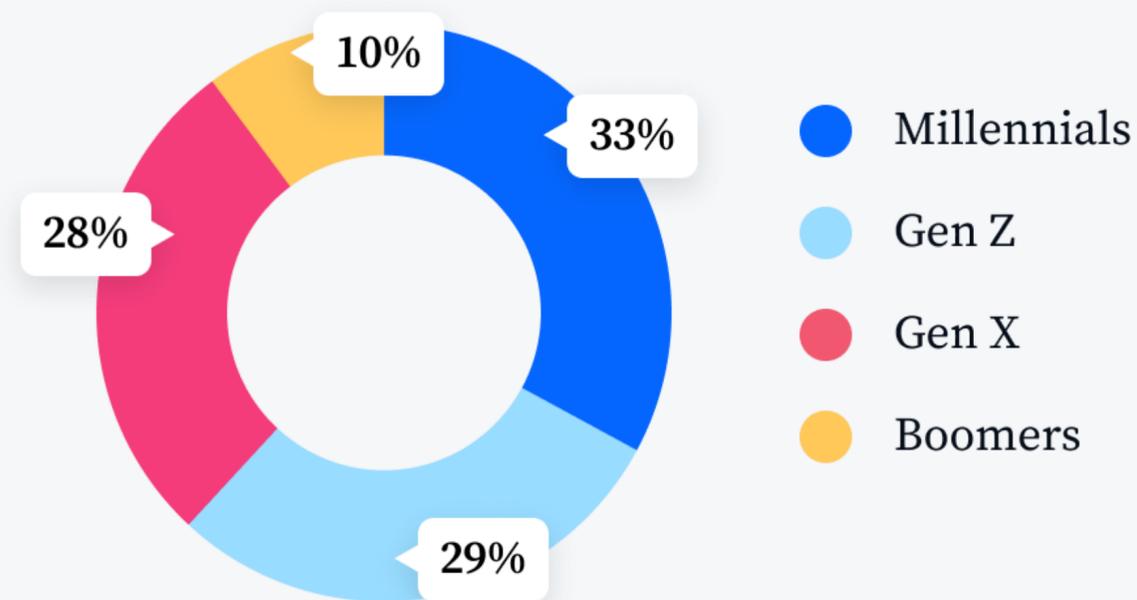


Social media platforms have become key destinations for consumers to **discover, research, and purchase products.**

Temptation is everywhere and with **opportunities to buy blended into everyday interactions**, social shopping feels like the most natural thing in the world.

# Like, Share, Follow, Buy

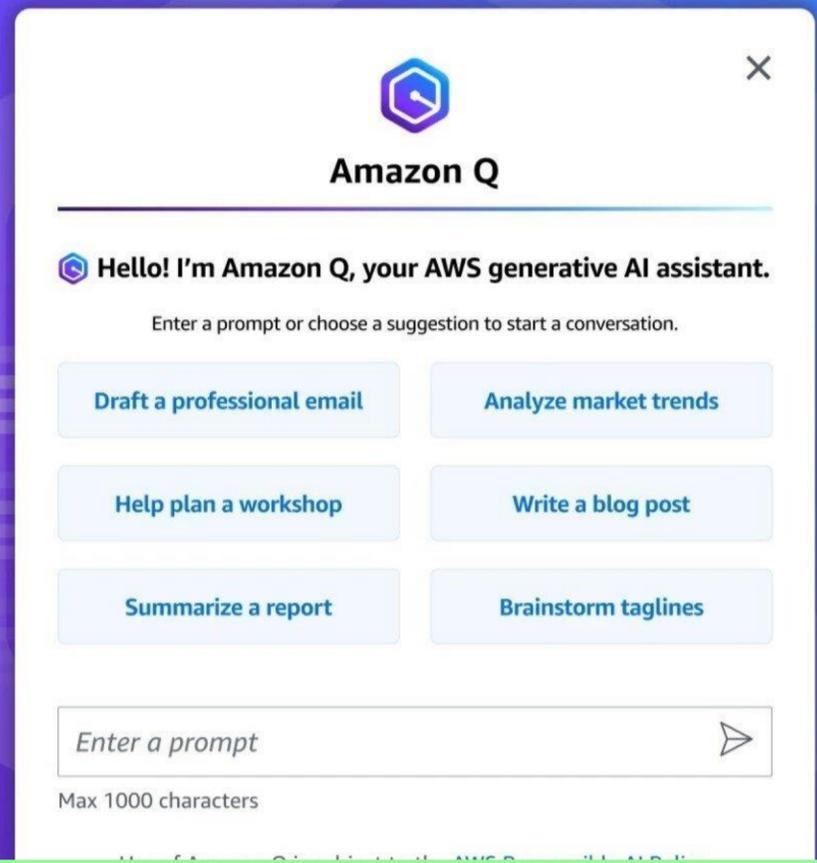
**Distribution of social commerce spending worldwide in 2025, by generation**



By tapping into what's culturally relevant to target audiences, brands can share inspirational content to drive mega sales on social media.

# AI & Personalisation

A new type of **generative AI-powered assistant** that is specifically for work and can be tailored to your business.



The chatbot market is expected to grow to **\$8.97 billion in 2025**, up from \$7.57 billion in 2024.

Source: Shopify

Shoppers will rely more on chatbots in 2025.



88%

of consumers had at least one conversation with a chatbot within the past year.

Source: Tidio

# Chatbots do it better

Chatbots are gaining ground as the go-to option for providing customer support in a fast-paced world.

OpenAI has ChatGPT.  
Google has the Bard chatbot.  
Microsoft has its Copilots.

On Tuesday, Amazon joined the chatbot race, announcing its own AI assistant: Amazon Q.



Despite the digital interface, their warm, personalized language creates an intimate customer experience and customers clearly appreciate the fast response times and support outside regular hours.

## 3in4



companies that introduced chatbots reported being satisfied with the results.

Source: Tidio

# Mindful Shopping



58%

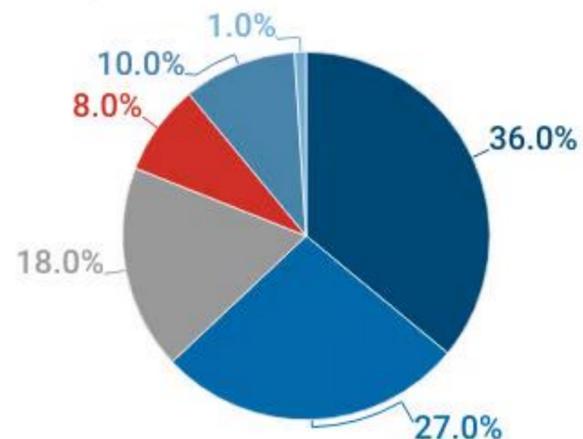
of consumers would rather  
pay more for an eco-friendly  
product.

Source: GWI

# Mindful shopping practices as a necessity.

## 5-Year Change in Sustainable Shopping Habits

(by share of global consumers)



● Modest change ● Significant change ● Minor change ● Life-altering change  
● No change ● Shop less sustainably

Source: Statista

Customers, especially millennials and Gen Z, have high expectations about how brands promote their values and what commitments they make to sustainability.

Sustainable products emphasize ethical sourcing, fair treatment of workers, eco-friendly packaging, support for local sourcing, and animal welfare.

Terms like "vegan," "eco-friendly," and "biodegradable" can help lift sales numbers when used honestly.

# At first glance, this seems like a win for retail, but let's dig deeper:



Consumer behavior can be inconsistent—what they say they do doesn't always align with what they actually do.

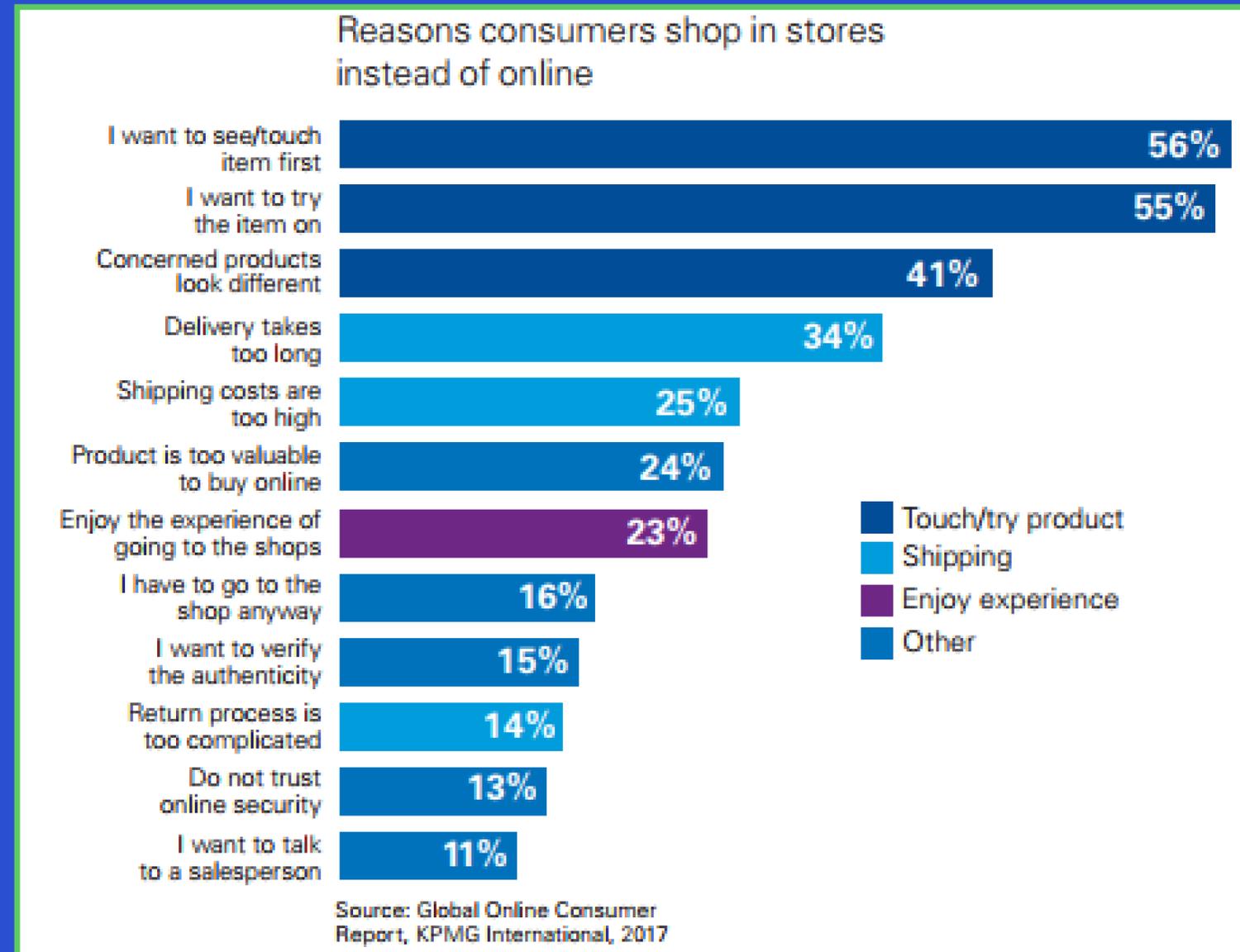
GWI research shows consumers' desire for brands to be eco-friendly has declined across five major European markets.

People have good intentions. But as prices rise, sustainability is becoming more of a luxury. Consumers will choose eco-friendly options only when they can afford to.

# In-store Shopping Comeback

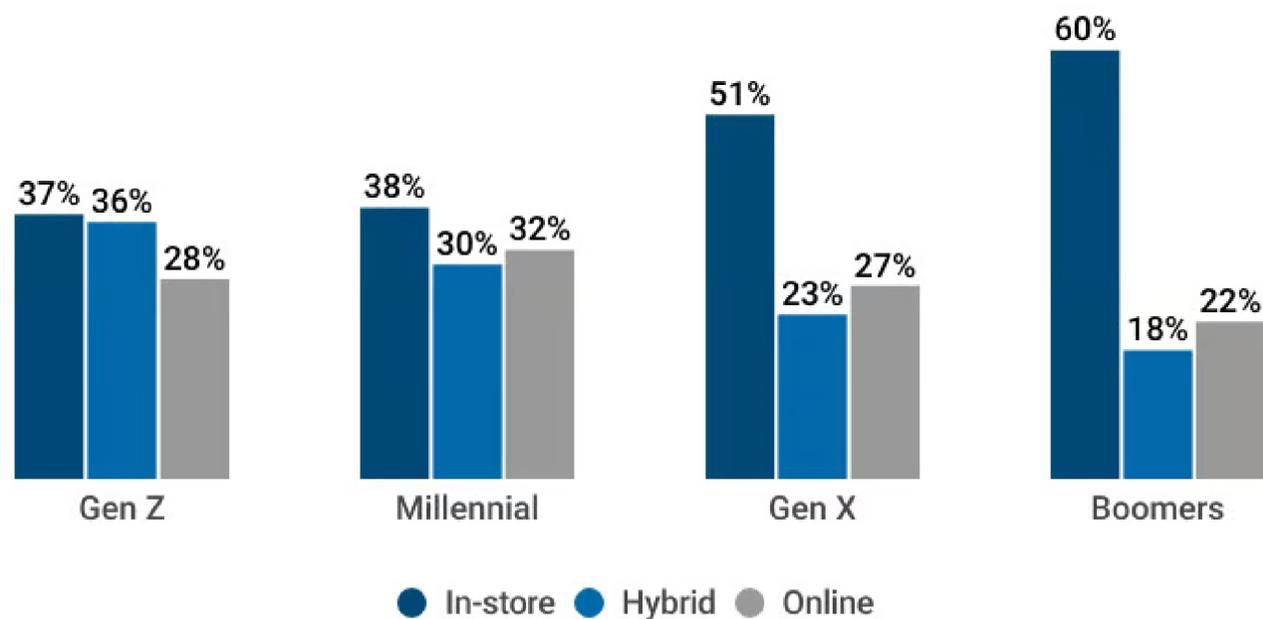
Brands already know that consumers aren't ready to give up the in-store shopping experience.

But what are consumers looking for when shopping in person?



# More shoppers will head in-store.

Primary Shopping Method by Generation



Source: National Retail Federation

New stores aren't the only thing consumers are looking for when shopping in person.

So what have been the biggest changes in in-store purchase drivers?

- Product demonstrations (+12%)
- Good restrooms (+9%)
- Free samples (+7%)
- Loyalty points (+6%)
- Friendly service (+5%)
- Free gifts (+5%)

Source: GWI

# Phygital Retail

The ideal solution for stores, merging the speed and convenience of online shopping with engaging in-person experiences and exceptional customer service.

Hybrid retail combines online and in-store shopping. Online stores now serve as showrooms, distribution hubs, and entertainment spaces.



Tech-enhanced shopping experiences that blend the physical and digital worlds can strengthen customer relationships and increase sales.



# Digital Trends 2025:



AR



Ephemeral Content



Social Listening



Inconsistency

# AR: From imagination to reality

AR is no longer a futuristic concept. It's here, and it's changing the way consumers interact with brands. You're not just selling a product—you're creating an experience.



Snap, Meta, Microsoft and Apple are increasing their investment in tech that attempts to integrate seamlessly into our lives and onto our bodies.

# Ephemeral Content: The Power of Now

Why It Works: The Psychology 🧠

FOMO (Fear of missing out)

**70%**

of Instagram users check their feed at least once a day.

Authenticity

**86%**

of consumers say authenticity is important when deciding which brands to support.



Ephemeral content is here today, gone tomorrow, and that's exactly what makes it so compelling. In a world of constant digital noise, these short-lived posts are a powerful way to keep your audience engaged.

Creating a sense of urgency and exclusivity that's hard to replicate, the urgency compels users to act quickly, boosting interaction rates.

# Social Listening: Refining the art of trendjacking



It doesn't matter what corner of the platforms it's coming from. The content you're seeing is an open conversation now.

Social listening provides real-time insights into whether a trend resonates with the audience, their sentiments, and whether the trend is peaking, fading, or still growing.

Remember when going viral was the ultimate goal?

RIP Trends: Viral trends are the one night stand on TikTok.

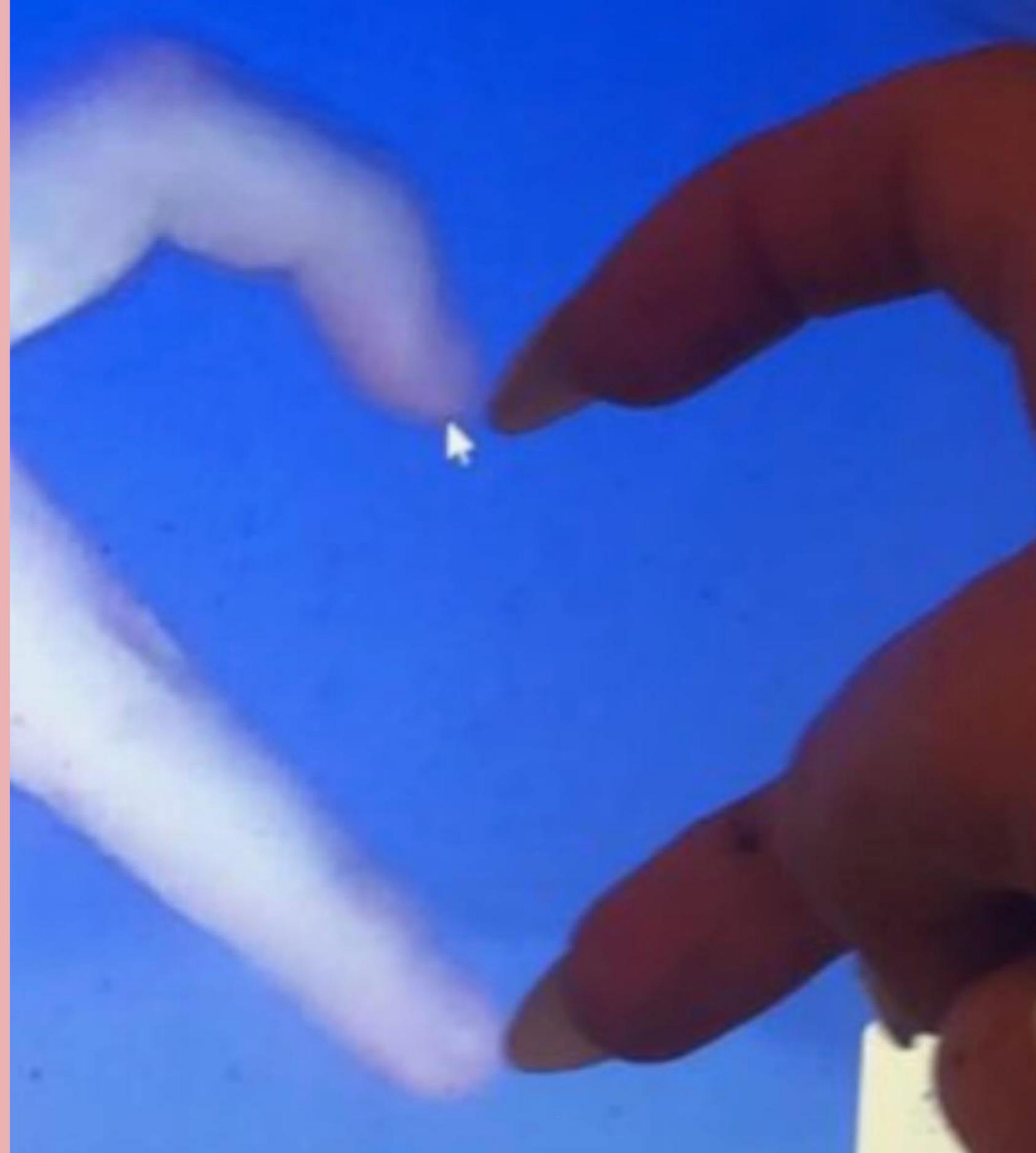
Chasing random and fleeting moments of virality is both ineffective and inauthentic, and brands piling on trends quickly kills them.

# Inconsistency: Flip The Script

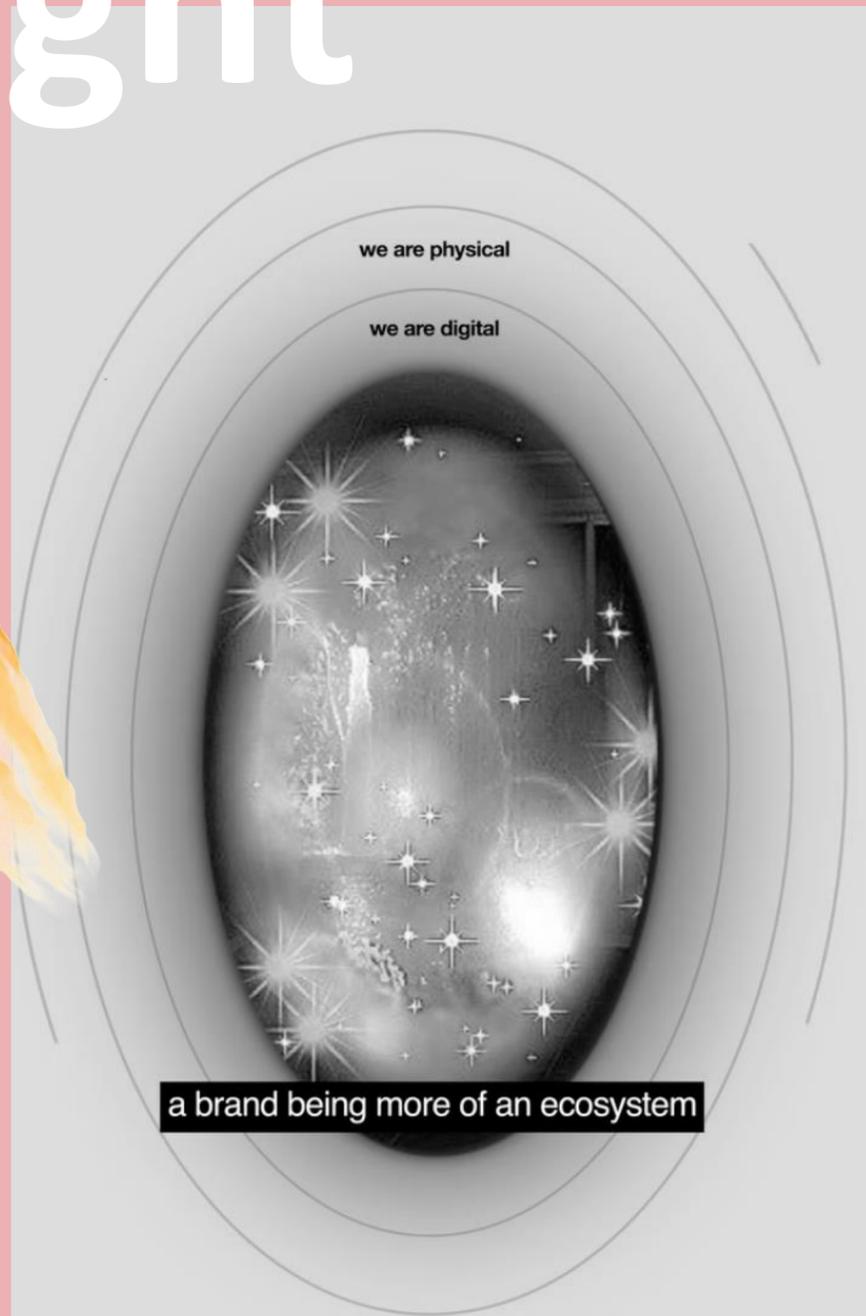
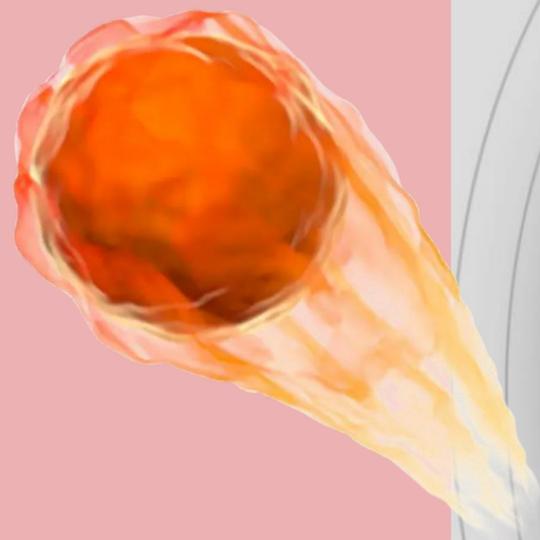
Now isn't the time to play it safe. Brands need to abandon brand consistency to push creative boundaries and test content that pushes beyond their brand guidelines to capture and delight audiences.



**Digital natives  
drive culture  
online - to  
know them is  
to win them.**



# Moving at the speed of light



As the trend cycle eats itself alive, digital audiences participate in all forms of garnering attention.

The pace of social is fast as ever. And digital culture is the primary driver of culture.

"Digital culture" and "culture" have become synonymous.

If you win on social - you win big.



# Brands need to go on a dopamine fast.



**“ Our competition is not other brands in the category. It’s other things that you see in your social feed. That’s our competition. ”**

**Andy Pearson, VP of Creative at Liquid Death Mountain Water**

# Thank You

The  
Newtons  
LABORATORY

