

TRENDS ANALYSIS

NOVEMBER
2025

Consumer

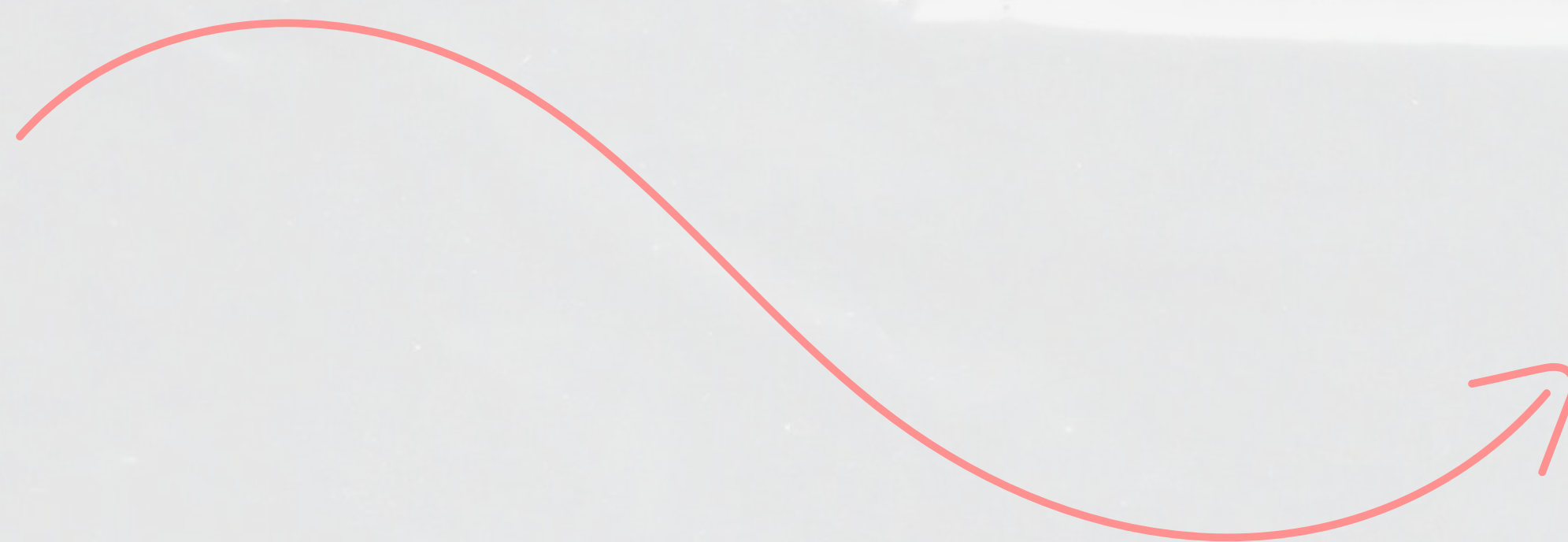
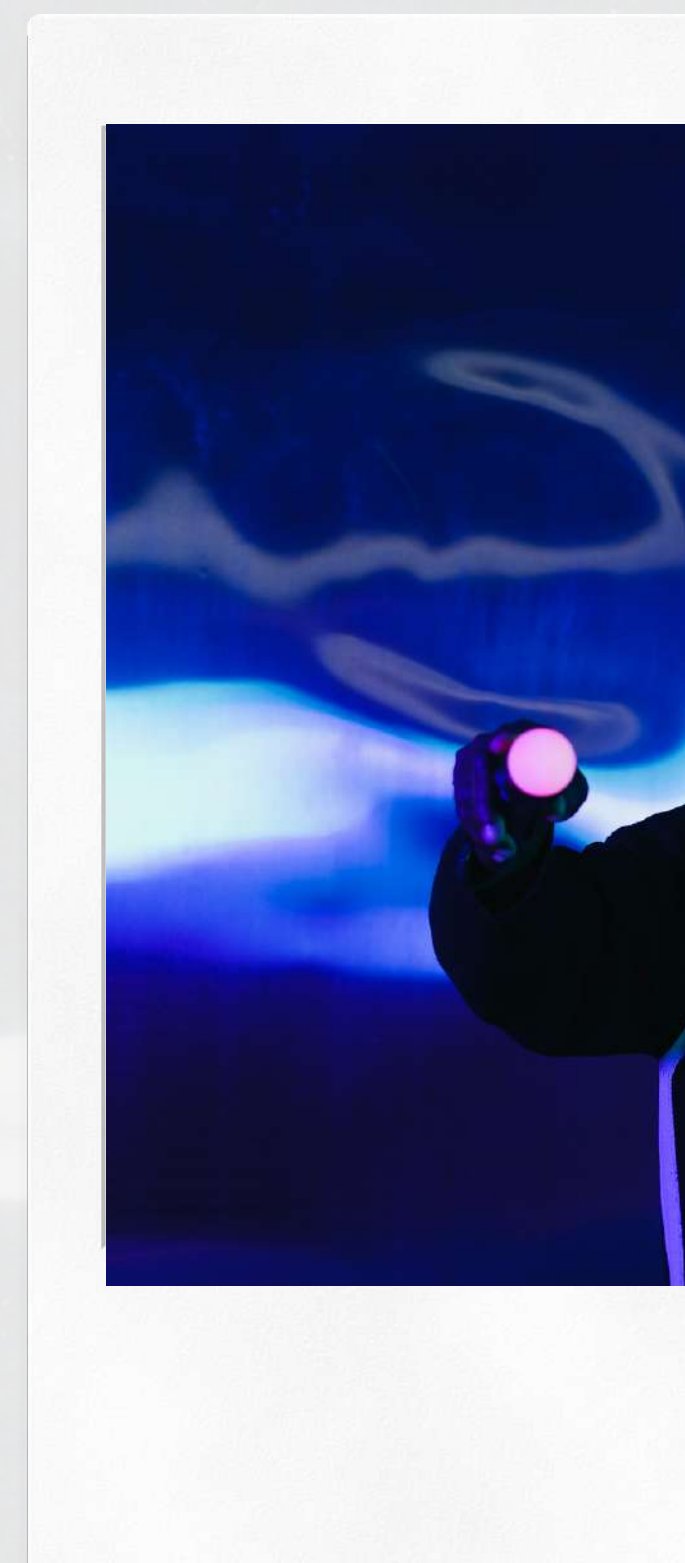
MARKETING

Pop Culture



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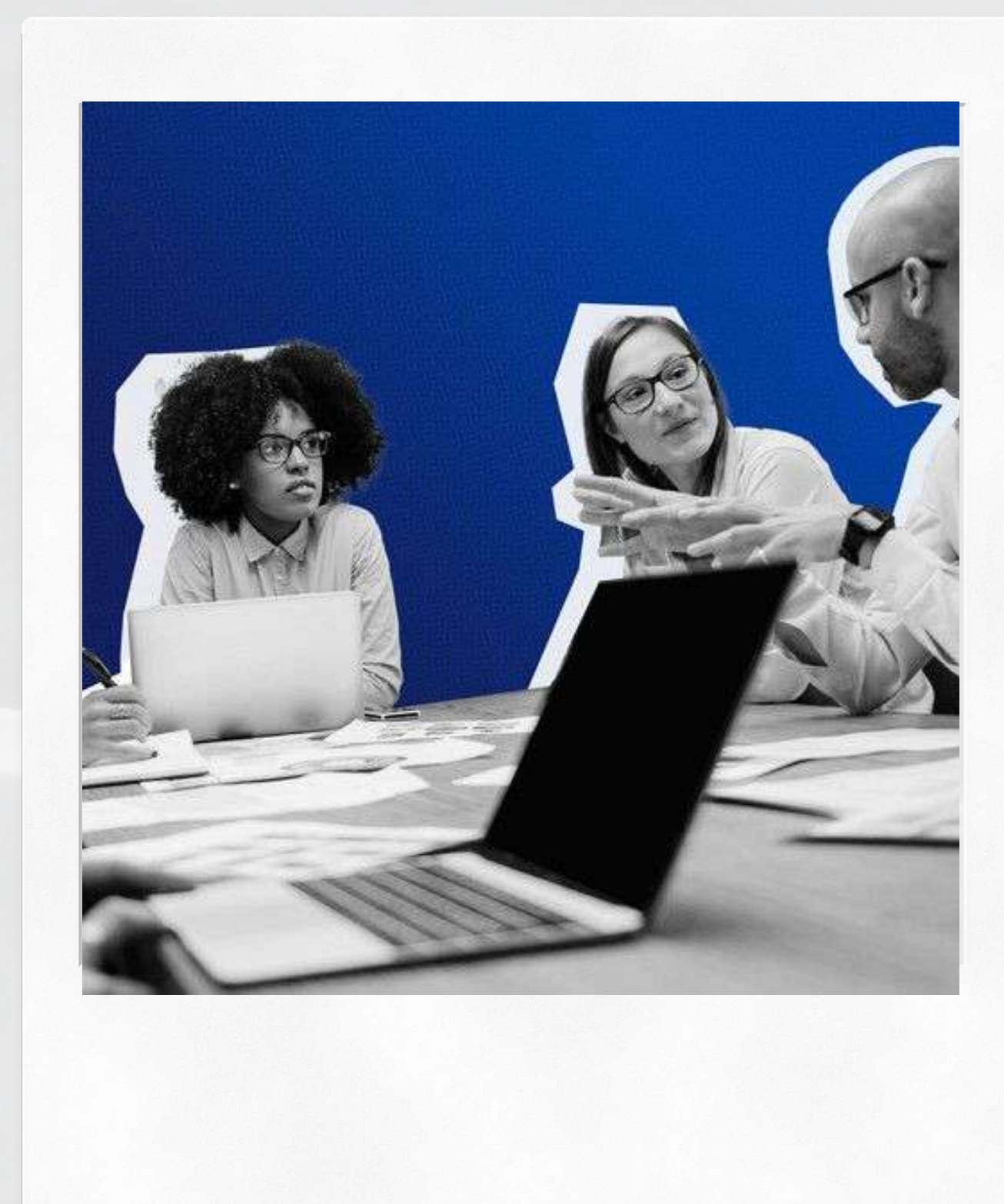
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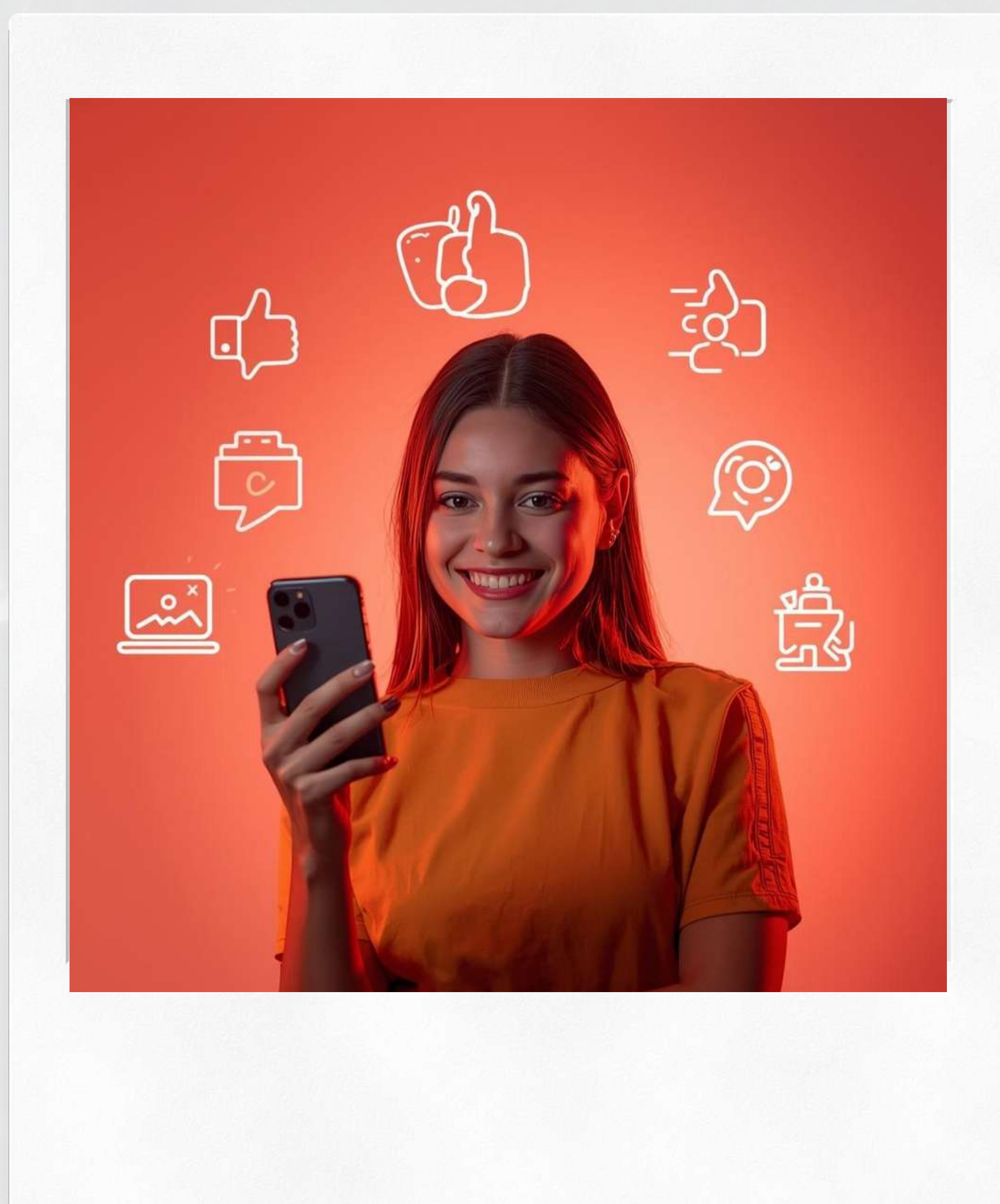
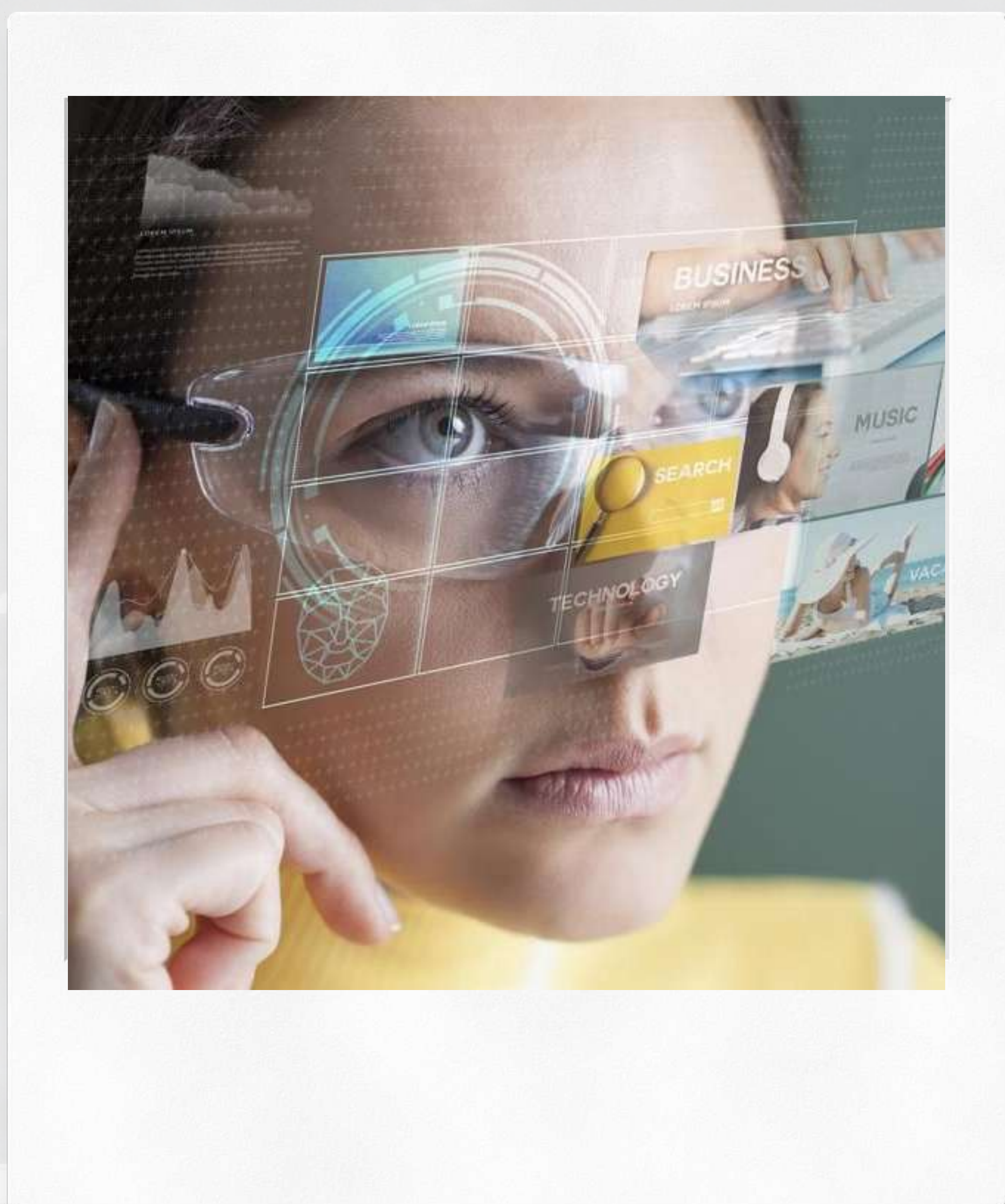
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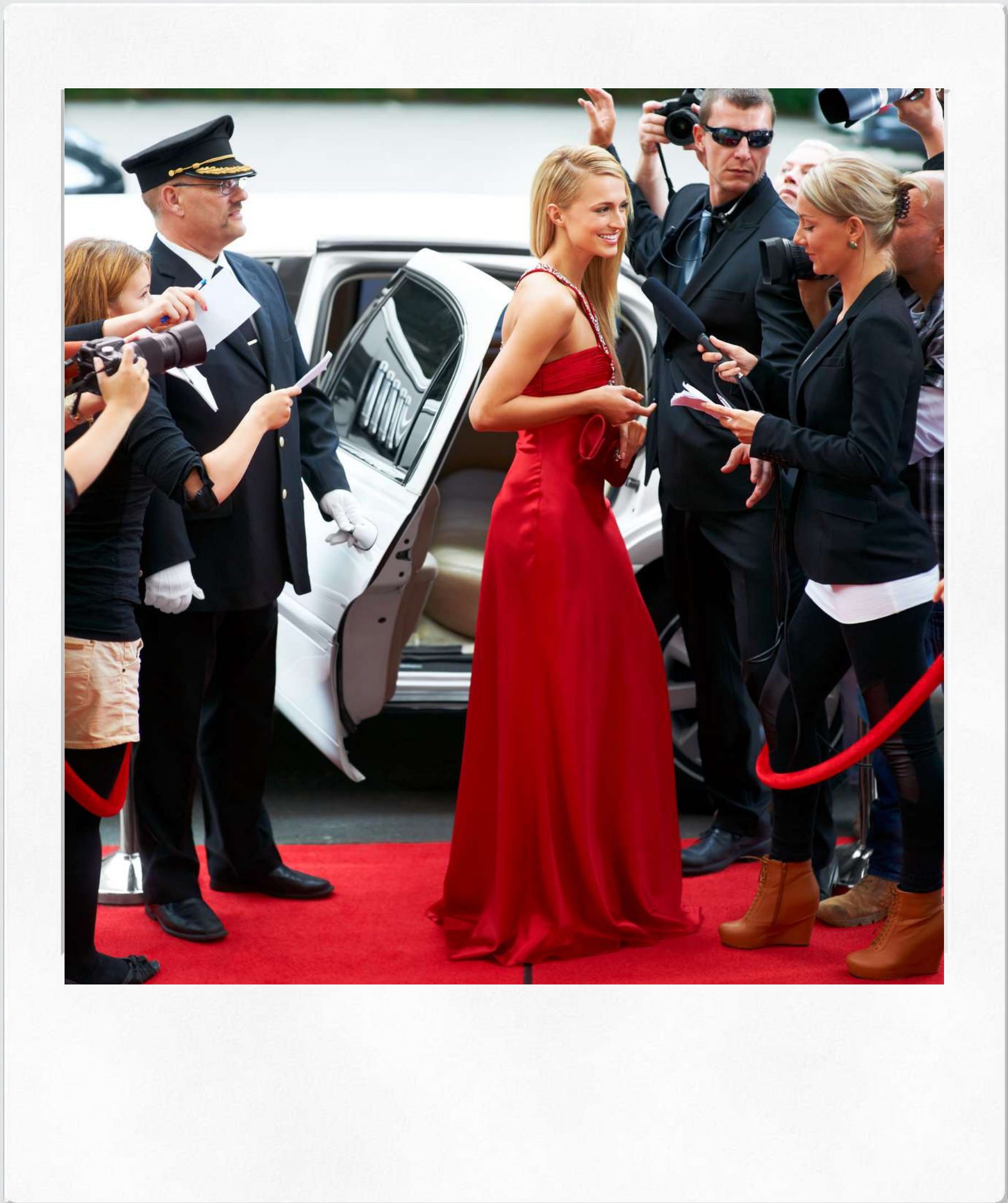
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MARKETING SHIFTS



THE SHIFT TO CREATOR **MARKETING**

Creator marketing has evolved from traditional influencer campaigns into a strategic pillar for brand growth. Rather than simply featuring a product in a post, brands now collaborate with creators as co-creators of content, culture, and experiences. This shift reflects a deeper understanding that audiences trust creators' voices over traditional advertising, valuing authenticity, relatability, and community influence.

Brands are increasingly turning to creator marketing as the core engine of their content strategies. Unlike traditional advertising, which pushes messages to broad audiences, creators produce authentic, culturally relevant content that resonates with highly engaged communities. By collaborating with creators, brands tap into ongoing storytelling, trendsetting, and social commerce opportunities, ensuring content is not just seen but shared, discussed, and acted upon.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

Partnering with creators allows brands to achieve cultural relevance, becoming active participants in conversations and shaping trends, rather than merely observing them, ensuring their presence is both meaningful and influential in the communities they engage.

This shift positions creators as central to brand growth, driving both awareness and conversion. They are no longer just amplifiers but co-creators of content, shaping narratives, setting trends, and fueling the continuous flow of content that keeps brands culturally relevant in a fast-moving digital landscape.



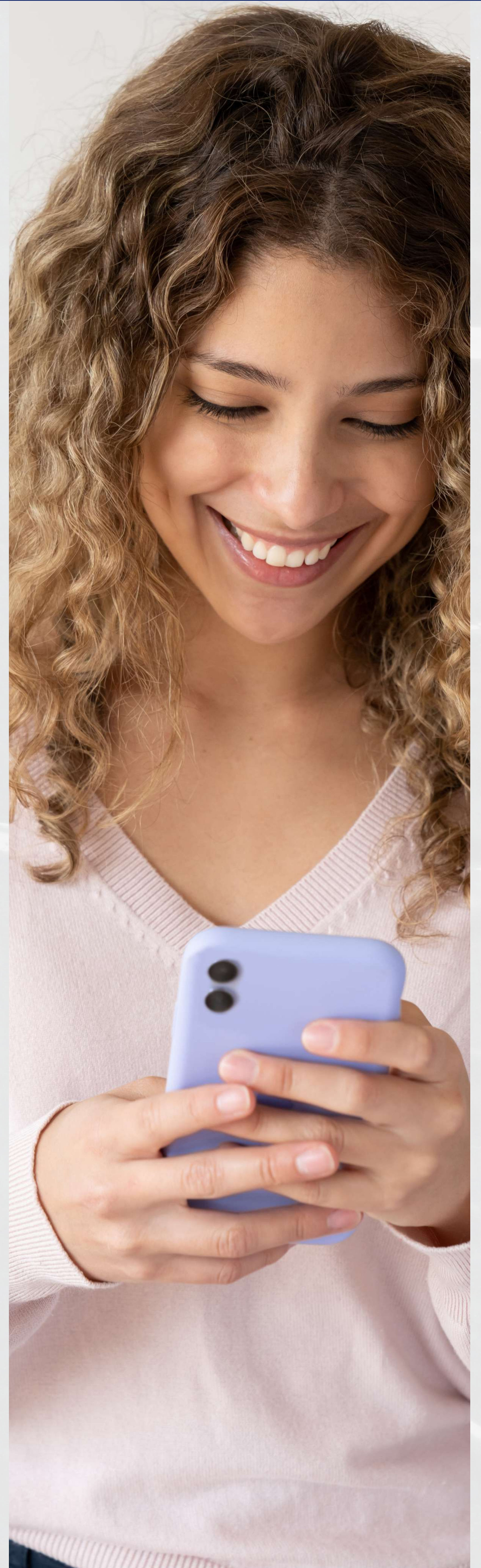
SOCIAL-FIRST MARKETING IS THE NEW STANDARD FOR 2026

In today's digital landscape, attention has migrated to social platforms. Consumers no longer wait to be reached through traditional media, they actively discover, engage, and share content on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Threads. This shift has given rise to social-first marketing, where campaigns are designed with social as the primary channel, not an afterthought.

Social-first marketing puts social platforms at the heart of brand strategy, prioritising native, real-time, and community-driven content. For brands, it enables authentic engagement, trend responsiveness, and measurable impact, while influencers become strategic partners, co-creating campaigns and experimenting with formats. This approach fosters loyalty, amplifies reach, and drives sales through immersive, culturally relevant experiences. Embracing social-first marketing positions both brands and creators to capitalise on the evolving digital landscape.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

Social-first marketing is not just a tactic, it's a strategic mindset. Brands and influencers that embrace this approach can create content that resonates deeply, responds in real-time, and drives meaningful business outcomes in 2026 and beyond. This provides a platform for influence and creative authority.





CONSUMER BEHAVIOURS



CONSUMER MINDSHIFT 2026: THE GLEAMERS

Squeezed between rising living costs and the pressures of hustle culture, The Gleamers are turning their back on traditional life milestones to celebrate smaller pleasures, community support networks and more achievable 'minorstones'. The Gleamers represent a mindset shift in consumer behaviour, not just another demographic to target, but a way of living and valuing that brands must align with. The Gleamers need uplifting products, services and experiences that offer small but significant improvements to everyday life.

As people who think outside of societal expectations, they will expect brands to design for their life stage rather than their biological age, and they will be drawn to anything that nurtures care, community and happiness in tangible and achievable ways.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

Position your brand as a partner in everyday joy rather than aspirational perfection. Celebrate "minorstones" (small achievements/moments) rather than only major milestones. Develop offerings that meet the Gleamers' need for uplift, simplicity, sensorial joy, care and community. These could be "feel-good" luxuries, everyday rituals, communal experiences, or items that support a slower and more meaningful life.



TIKTOK DRIVES ACTION: BRANDS MUST RETHINK SHOPPING STRATEGIES

TikTok's latest insights reveal that Q4 shopping in South Africa has evolved beyond big sale days like Black Friday into an emotional, community-driven experience fueled by discovery, creators, and FOMO. More than half of purchases now happen outside major sales events, with momentum spanning October to December. Shopping is no longer purely transactional, it's about connection, culture, and entertainment. Notably, 9 in 10 South Africans take action after seeing Q4 content on TikTok, shopping daily with joy and inspiration.

The report also identifies distinct shopper behaviours that come to life on TikTok, from **Hunters** (price-conscious planners) and **Curators** (trendsetters influenced by creators), to **Sprinters** (impulsive buyers), **Explorers** (experience-driven shoppers), and **Occasional Shoppers** (event-driven gift seekers). Each persona engages with content and creators differently, underlining the importance of tailored storytelling.

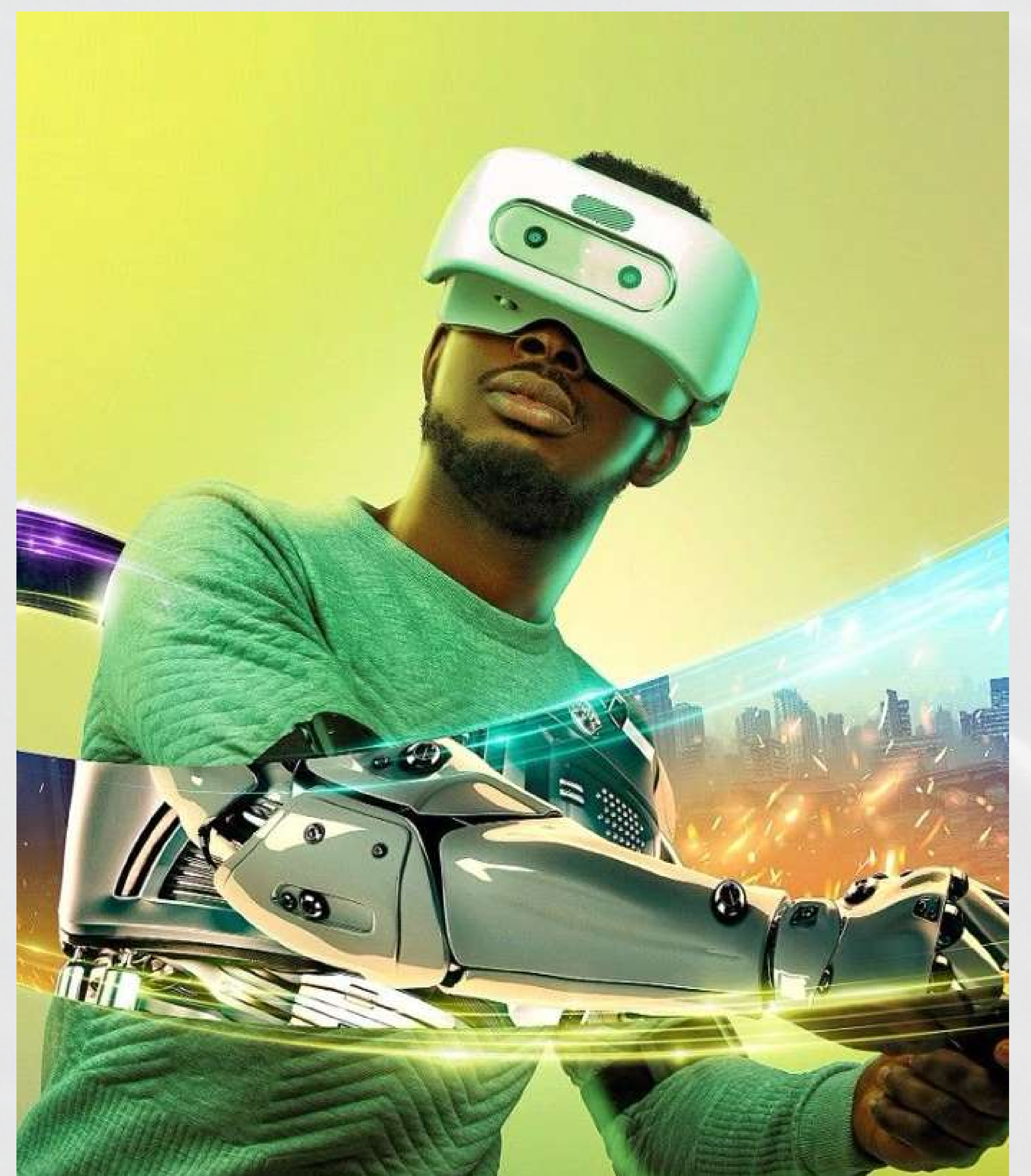


WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

For brands, this means rethinking the retail calendar and moving from short-term campaign bursts to always-on engagement that nurtures excitement and participation across the full festive period. Strategies should focus on, creator-led storytelling that connects emotionally and authentically. Secondly, shoppable entertainment, which integrating content, culture, and commerce seamlessly. Lastly, micro-moments of inspiration, not just mega-discount days.



DIGITAL & TECH INNOVATIONS



NEW CHATGPT WEB BROWSER LAUNCHES TO TAKE ON CHROME

OpenAI has officially entered the browser market with the launch of ChatGPT Atlas, a new AI-powered web browser that integrates ChatGPT directly into the browsing experience. The company says the move marks a major step in reimagining how people navigate, interact with and use the internet.

Atlas is available now for macOS users worldwide, with versions for Windows, iOS and Android expected soon. It's open to Free, Plus, Pro and Go users, with Business customers gaining access through a beta programme. ChatGPT Atlas is built around a conversational interface, as opposed to relying on search bars and extensions like most browsers do. Users can either type or speak directly to ChatGPT, ask questions about the page they're viewing, or request summaries and comparisons. The browser space is transitioning from passive content delivery (you go seek a browser to visit sites) to active, task-oriented AI assistance (the browser helps you accomplish tasks).



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

This represents a shift in how people discover, engage with and act on digital content. For brands and creators, the big insight is that content may no longer just live on web pages awaiting clicks, instead, intelligent agents may surface, summarise or re-present content when and how users ask for it. Your audience might engage with your brand not just by landing on your site, but by being referenced by an AI assistant.

THE RISE OF CREATOR NETWORKS

Creator networks are emerging as the next evolution in influencer marketing, where brands don't just collaborate with individual creators on isolated campaigns but build structured ecosystems of creators who consistently engage, amplify, and co-create content around the brand.

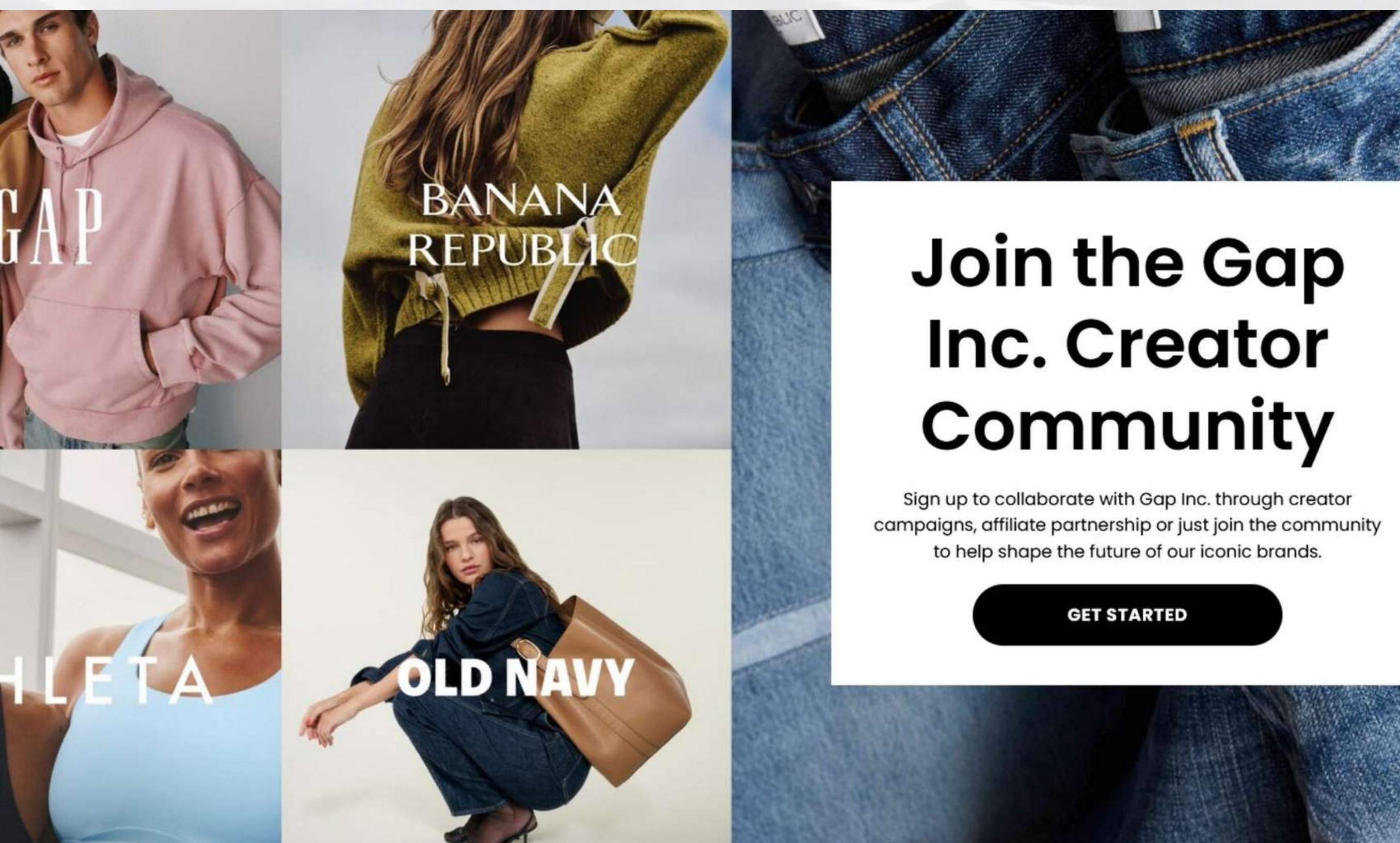
Examples include CNN launching CNN Creators to tap into independent journalists and storytellers, and Gap creating a creator and loyalty advocacy program to combine influencer marketing with consumer loyalty.

This trend reflects a shift from transactional collaborations to long-term, scalable partnerships, where creators are treated as strategic stakeholders and content engines rather than one-off promoters. It allows brands to maintain authentic voices across channels while ensuring consistent brand storytelling.

Creator networks act as both the content engine and the cultural pulse of the brand. They provide a scalable, authentic, and community-driven way to maintain relevance, amplify campaigns, and foster long-term loyalty, all while allowing brands to respond in real time to trends and cultural shifts.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

Building or tapping into a creator network isn't just marketing, it's embedding creativity, community, and culture into the brand's DNA. Ensuring constant engagement and relevance in a fast-moving digital landscape.



CNN creators



SOCIAL PLATFORMS & CONTENT



PLATFORM UPDATES



01

TIKTOK

TikTok has launched new travel ads powered by its advancing AI ad targeting models. Which is designed to help travel marketers tap into its highly engaged, aspirational audience, by showcasing relevant offers and options in-stream.

02

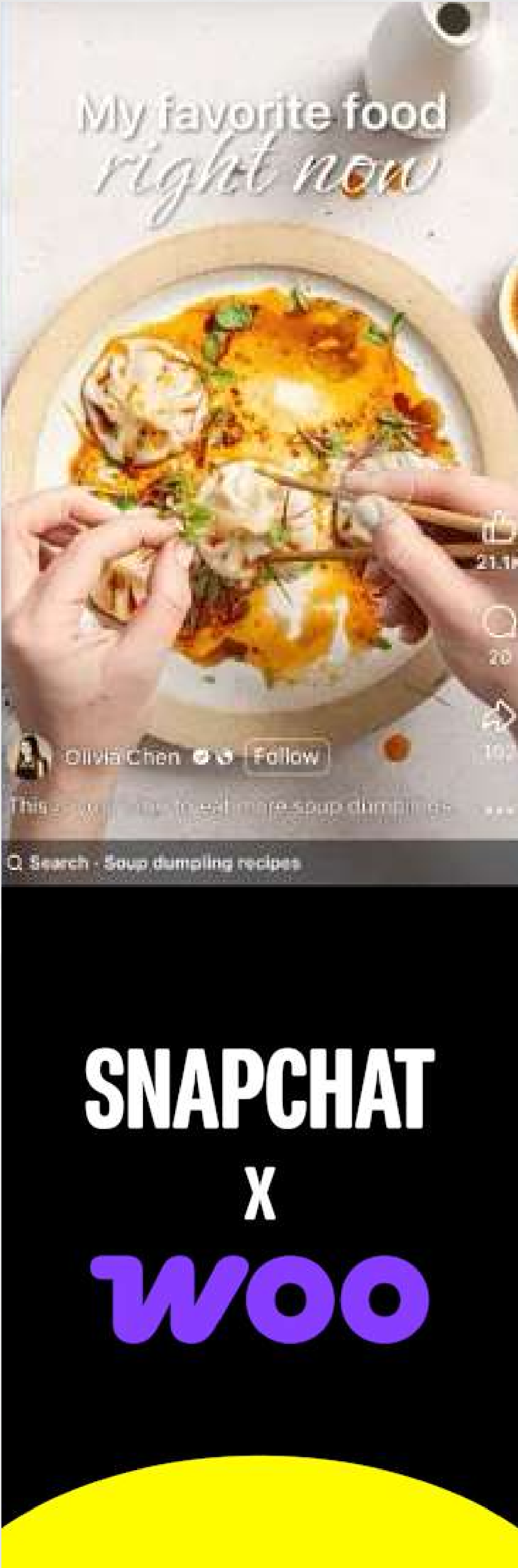
INSTAGRAM

Instagram has rolled out a new award for creators, which aims to showcase creativity and talent within IG content. Instagram says that the awards will look to provide a platform for genuine creative talent, as opposed to trend-chasers and algorithm acolytes.

03

PINTEREST

Pinterest has added a range of new content to its Pinterest Academy education resources. This includes video from its recent "Pinterest Presents" event, covering all of the latest announcements and updates.



04

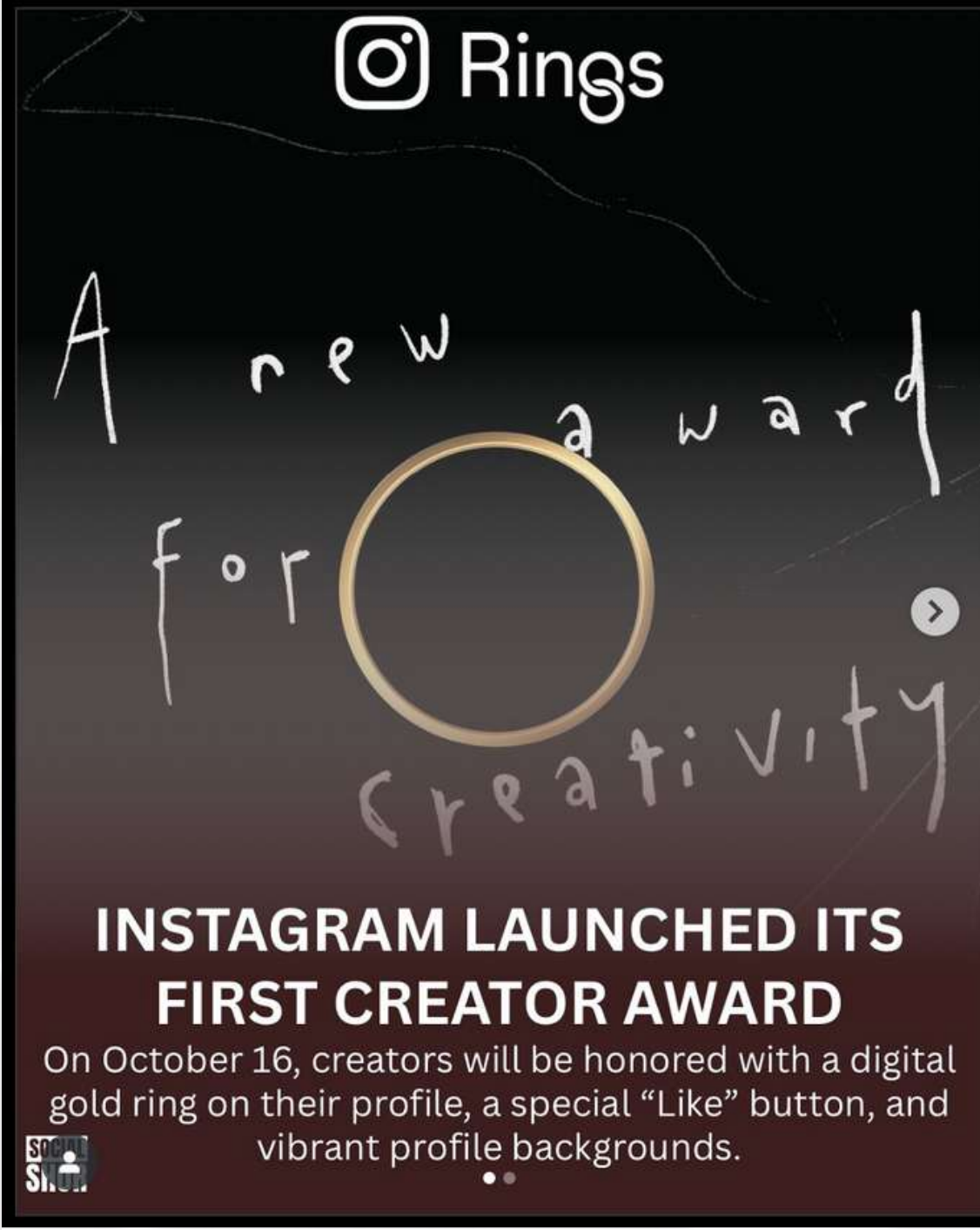
FACEBOOK

Facebook has announced some new updates to boost Reels engagement. Including indicators on posts that your friends have liked, and algorithm improvements, designed to surface newer videos faster.

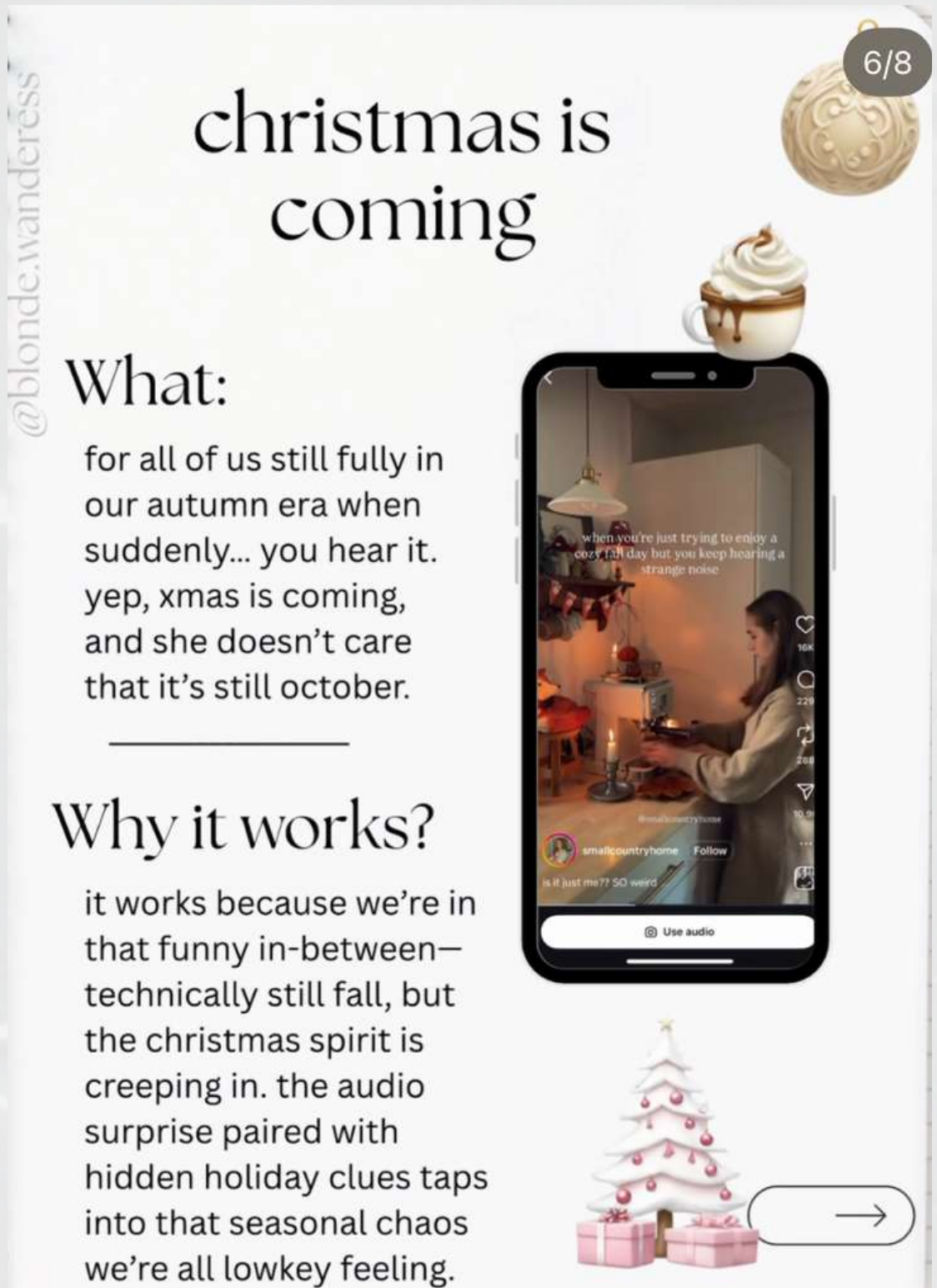
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SNAPCHAT

Snapchat has announced a new integration with online store platform WooCommerce. This will enable WooCommerce users to include purchase links within their Snapchat promotions.



CONTENT TRENDS



01

CHRISTMAS IS COMING - TRENDING AUDIO

The audio “Christmas is Coming” has become a go-to sound for festive content. It works as a cue-to-action for audiences and signals the moment when the year flips into the festive mindset.

02

13 THINGS I DO TO FILL MY CUP - CAROUSEL

This carousel trend is all about self-care storytelling. Users are sharing a series of slides that list small, personal rituals, that help them recharge. The tone is introspective yet aesthetic, often paired with minimalist visuals.

03

LIFESTYLE PROPS - EFFECTS

The “Lifesize Lifestyle Prop Effects” trend on Instagram is transforming everyday scenes into surreal, cinematic moments. These edits or set designs make ordinary objects appear monumental.



04

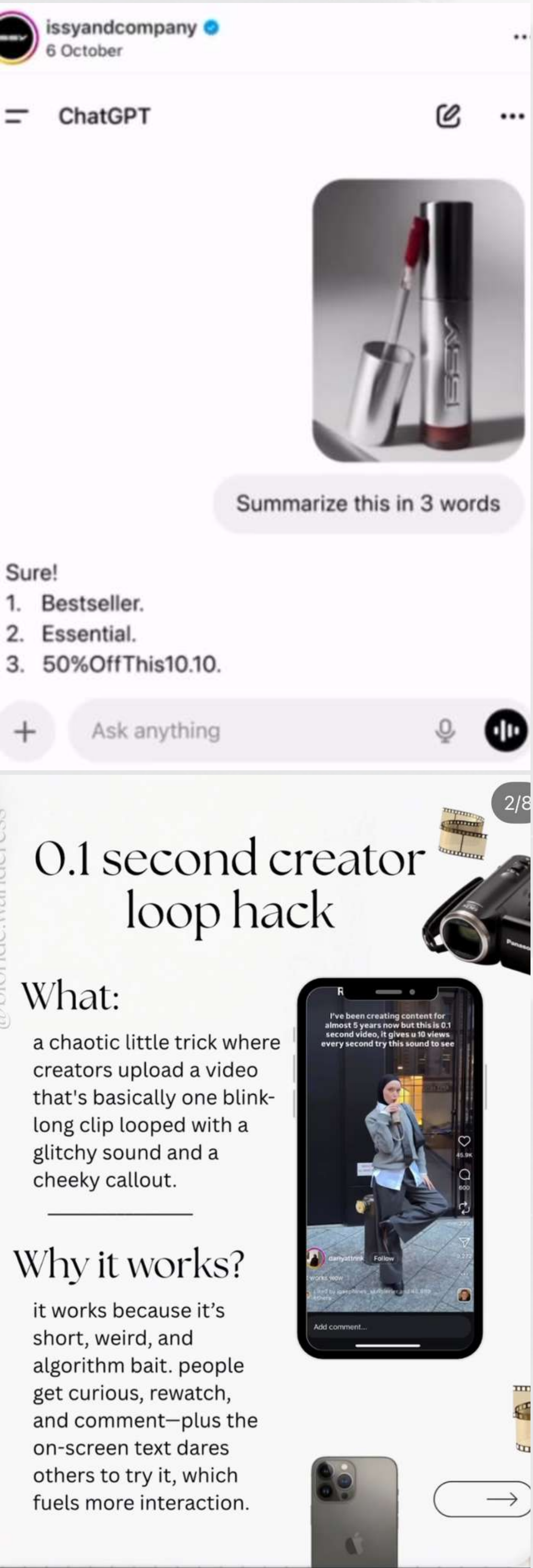
FAKE CHATGPT PROMPTS - FORMAT

This trend reimagines AI chat screenshots as a creative storytelling format. Creators design fake ChatGPT conversations that are witty, ironic, or deeply personal, using the interface as a way to express thoughts, jokes, or inner monologues.

5

0.1 SECOND VIDEO - LOOP HACK

The 0.1-second video loop hack is a micro-video trick creators use to make repeating clips that feel seamless and punchy in feeds. The power of the loop is attention through repetition plus perfection of a single moment.





CULTURAL MOVEMENTS



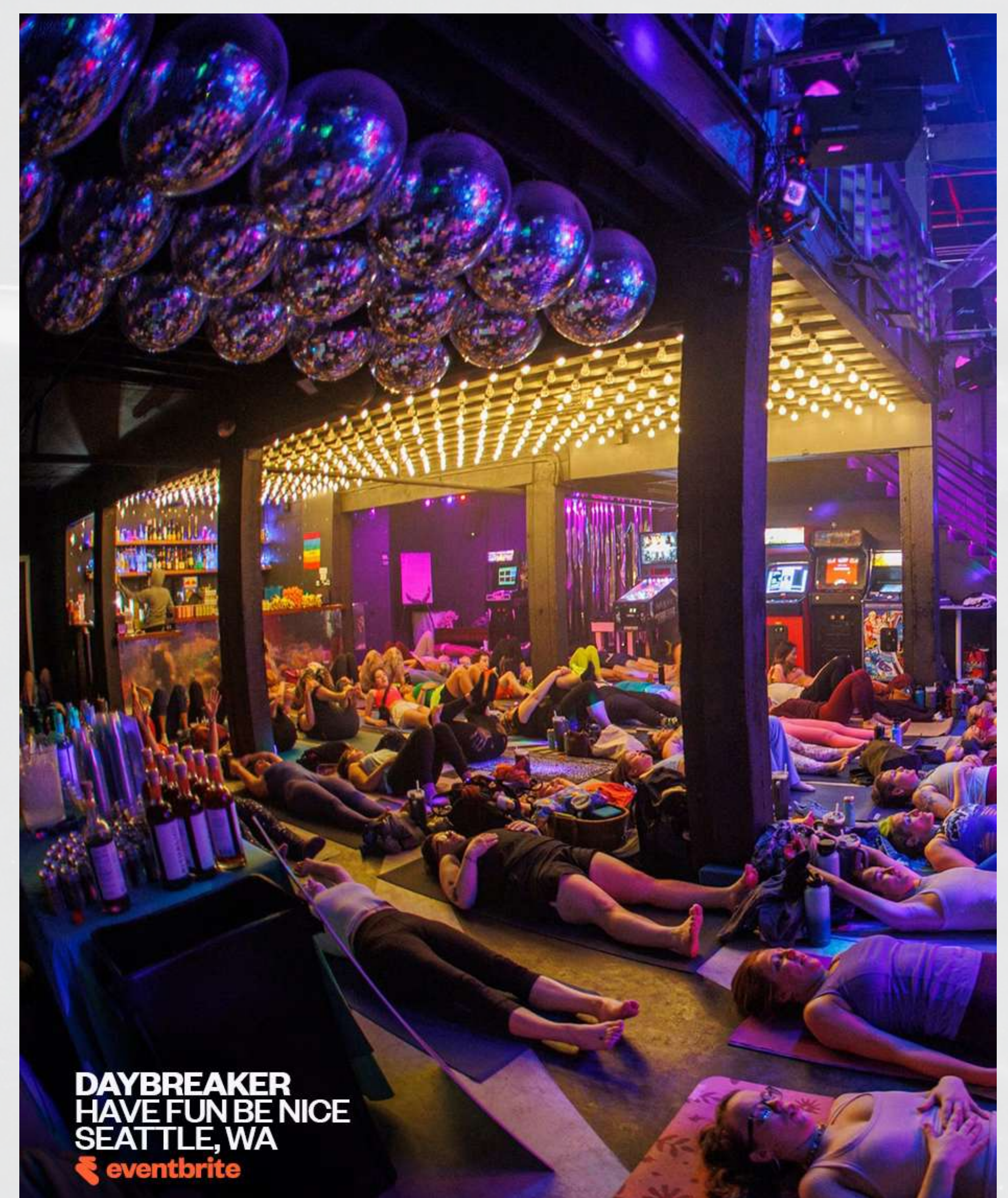
THE NEW NIGHTLIFE: SOFT CLUBBING

Gen Z is fundamentally rewriting the playbook for social connection, with many wanting to drink less to prioritise better sleep, mental health, and physical fitness. This isn't just a "sober curious" trend, it's a deeper cultural shift. A new generation is looking for more from their social lives, choosing real, meaningful experiences that help them truly connect with others, as a way to push back against the filtered world of digital life.

Welcome to "Soft Clubbing," a movement that encompasses morning dance parties and coffee shop DJ sets, wellness-focused gatherings like sauna raves and cold plunge socials, as well as sober raves and daytime events that conclude by early evening. Eventbrite global data shows a 92% increase in sober-curious gatherings, highlighting the growing popularity of these vibrant, boundary-pushing events that fuse wellness, music, and authentic community like never before.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

The rise of soft clubbing signifies a paradigm shift in social behaviour, where wellness, authenticity, and community take precedence over traditional nightlife norms. Brands and creators who recognise and adapt to this trend have the opportunity to forge meaningful connections with a demographic that values experiences that nourish both body and soul. By aligning with the principles of soft clubbing, brands can not only enhance their relevance but also contribute positively to the evolving landscape of social engagement.



MUSEUM OF YOUTH CULTURE

The Museum of Youth Culture (MYC) is set to open a permanent 6,500 sq ft site in Camden, London (St. Pancras Campus) in late 2025. It will feature three galleries, including one dedicated entirely to young creatives, archive collections of youth culture artifacts, workshops, events and a café/record-shop environment.

Youth culture is being elevated from “ephemeral trend” to legitimate cultural heritage. The fact that an institution is dedicated exclusively to documenting youth voices, styles and sub-cultures signals that “what young people do” is not just fleeting but foundational to culture. The museum isn’t just retrospective: it’s participatory. Forty percent of the space is dedicated to young people’s input and creation. It acknowledges that youth-driven change (music, fashion, tech, identity) is a force for innovation, community-building and cultural evolution.

As the museum founder says: “Youth culture drives innovation, challenges norms, and creates communities, it's one of the most powerful forces in society”.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

Youth culture is no longer a niche or sub-segment, it’s becoming mainstream heritage, identity and marketplace. Brands that treat it as such, that invest in its depth, communities, creators and history, will move from chasing youth culture to being part of it. That shift creates a stronger foundation for relevance, authenticity and long-term brand equity.



CULTURAL MOVEMENTS

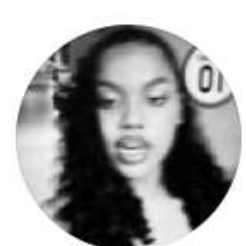


TRAVIS SCOTT: CULTURAL MARKER

Pop culture icon Travis Scott, who operates at the intersection of music, fashion, brand-collaboration and youth culture, brought his Circus Maximus show to Johannesburg's FNB Stadium on 11 October 2025. The event wasn't just a concert, it was a spectacle, an immersive brand and lifestyle experience (fire, visuals, production), reinforcing that culture is now experience-driven, not just listening-driven.

South African fans made it clear, that this wasn't just another concert. From the moment the lights dropped, more than 70,000 people turned what could've been a rainy, delayed night into one of communal euphoria. Despite weather and delays, the crowd's energy didn't waver, raged, formed mosh pits and screamed until the ground felt like it shook. Social media lit up with reactions: "What a night" and "Emotional" were common refrains among attendees. Local fans expressed pride that Johannesburg could host a show of this scale and global significance, it underscored that South Africa is firmly on the map for world-class live experiences.

As one article put it, he's "a cultural trail-blazer and disrupter" who has redefined the sound and scope of modern hip-hop.



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@teylizzlmylizzl

X.com

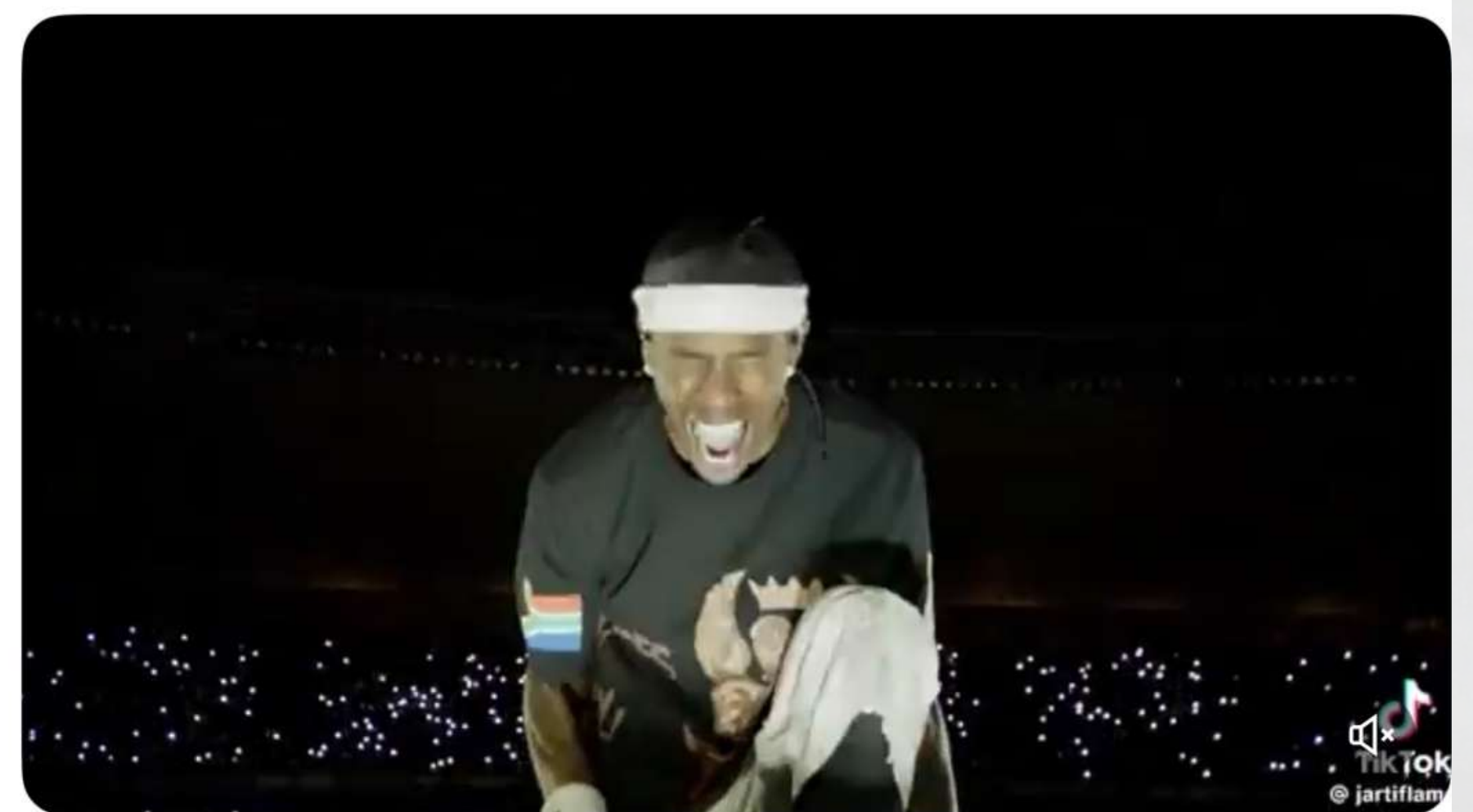
Travis Scott YOU OWE ME NOTHING ❤️👊



Nkele Mogono
@MogonoNkele

X.com

I didn't know who Travis Scott was until I watched this video. My daughter and her cousins all went and couldn't understand what was the hype all about. Namanje
But watching this video, damn I got goose bumps 🙌🙌🙌
Being a South African a.k.a iNunu, is something else 🇿🇦🇿🇦🇿🇦🇿🔥



07:47 · 2025/10/16 · 128K Views

44

151

1,3K

258



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

Pop culture icons today aren't just about releasing songs, they're moving experiences, global tribes and lifestyle markers. For South Africans, it validated their place in global youth culture. For brands and creators, it proves that when scale, emotion and local passion align, you get more than a live show, you get an iconic moment. The event symbolises culture as a platform and brands must think beyond product promotion to create experience, community and identity.

THE BACKUP DANCER TREND

The “famous backup dancer” is a metaphor for today’s digital friendship: people showing up for each other, hyping one another, and co-starring in each other’s moments, even if it’s just for laughs. This trend taps directly into the essence of participatory culture, the foundation of pop culture today. It blends humour, performance, and shared social rituals, making ordinary people feel like stars for a moment. The idea of bribing friends or family to be your “backup dancers” flips traditional celebrity culture on its head, as anyone can stage their own music video moment.

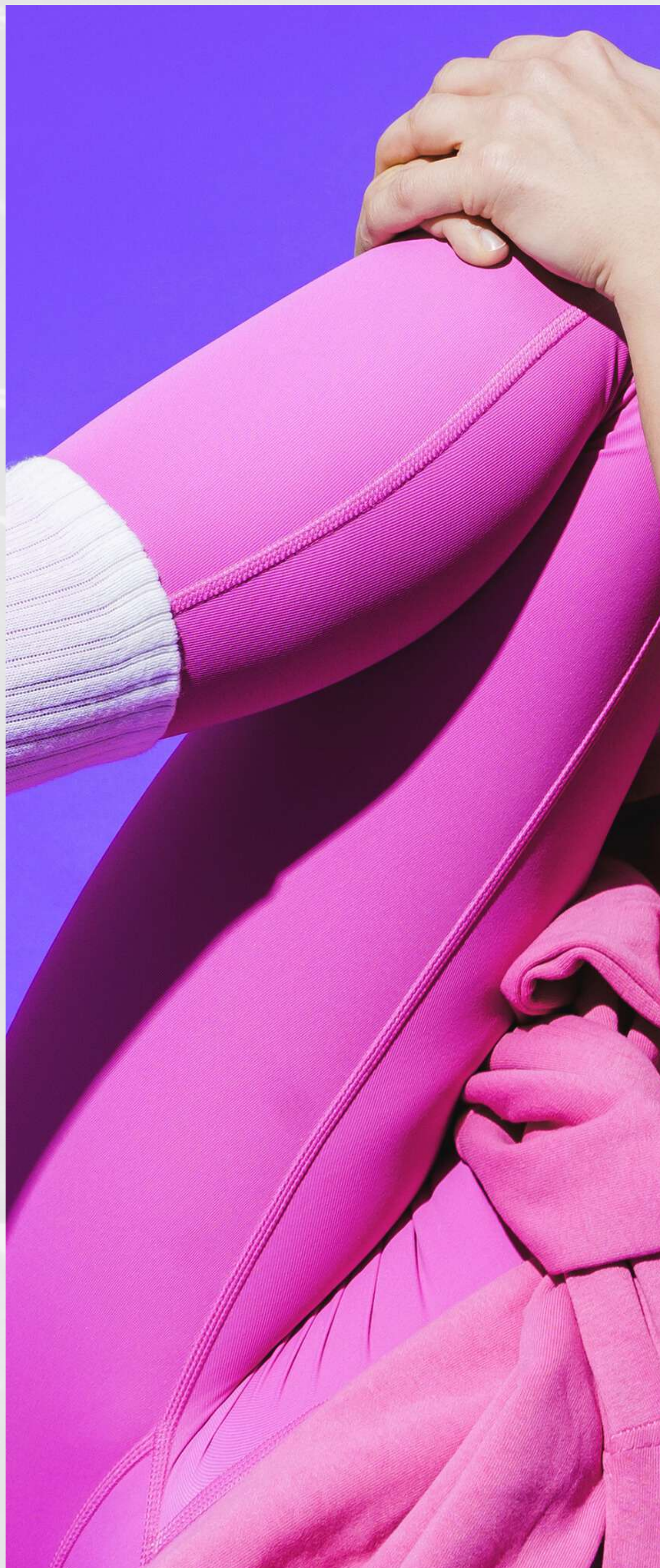
At its core, the trend shows how performance has become a language of connection. In a time where social media often feels curated and aspirational, this trend thrives on imperfection and play. It’s a reminder that digital culture is moving toward “communal joy” and co-created moments, rather than individual perfection. It’s also deeply relatable and social: it celebrates friendship, self-expression, and lighthearted collaboration, all of which are central to Gen Z and Gen Alpha humour. The dramatic front performer paired with the enthusiastic or chaotic background dancer mirrors real-life dynamics we all recognise, which makes it irresistibly memeable and shareable.



<https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSUnJXSPL/>

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU:

This trend proves that pop culture today is created, not broadcast. The shift, from spectatorship to participation, is what defines the new wave of pop culture on platforms like TikTok. For brands, this trend underscores the power of low-stakes, high-emotion content, the kind that feels spontaneous, participatory, and fun. Creators can use it to express personality and humour, showing that relatability outperforms polish.



STYLE  AFRICA

TRENDS ANALYSIS

NOVEMBER 2025

Consumer

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