

WTF
IS
*content
strategy*
ANYWAY?

**DANGER
DEEP
CONTENT PIT**



Content Strategy. It can be a nightmare, a ‘we should have one of those I suppose’, or the thing that makes your brand famous.

This is our guide to doing it with the third of those things in mind.

We’ll unpack the problems, assess different approaches, and share a canvas to help you structure your thinking in a complex space.

HOW WE DID IT

PAID



AI

ChatGPT

Waldo

PEOPLE

Ben Shaw, CSO

Rowan Kisby,
Strategy Partner

SEARCH

Google

Instagram

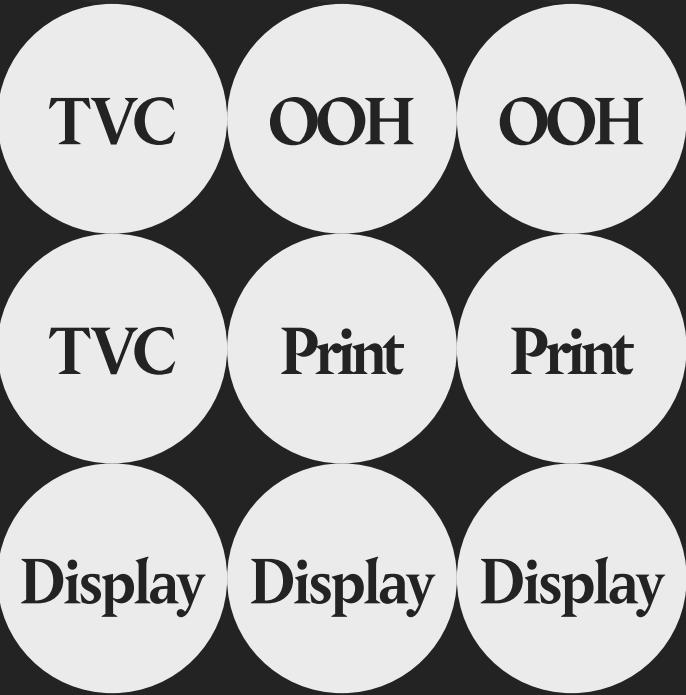
TikTok

LinkedIn

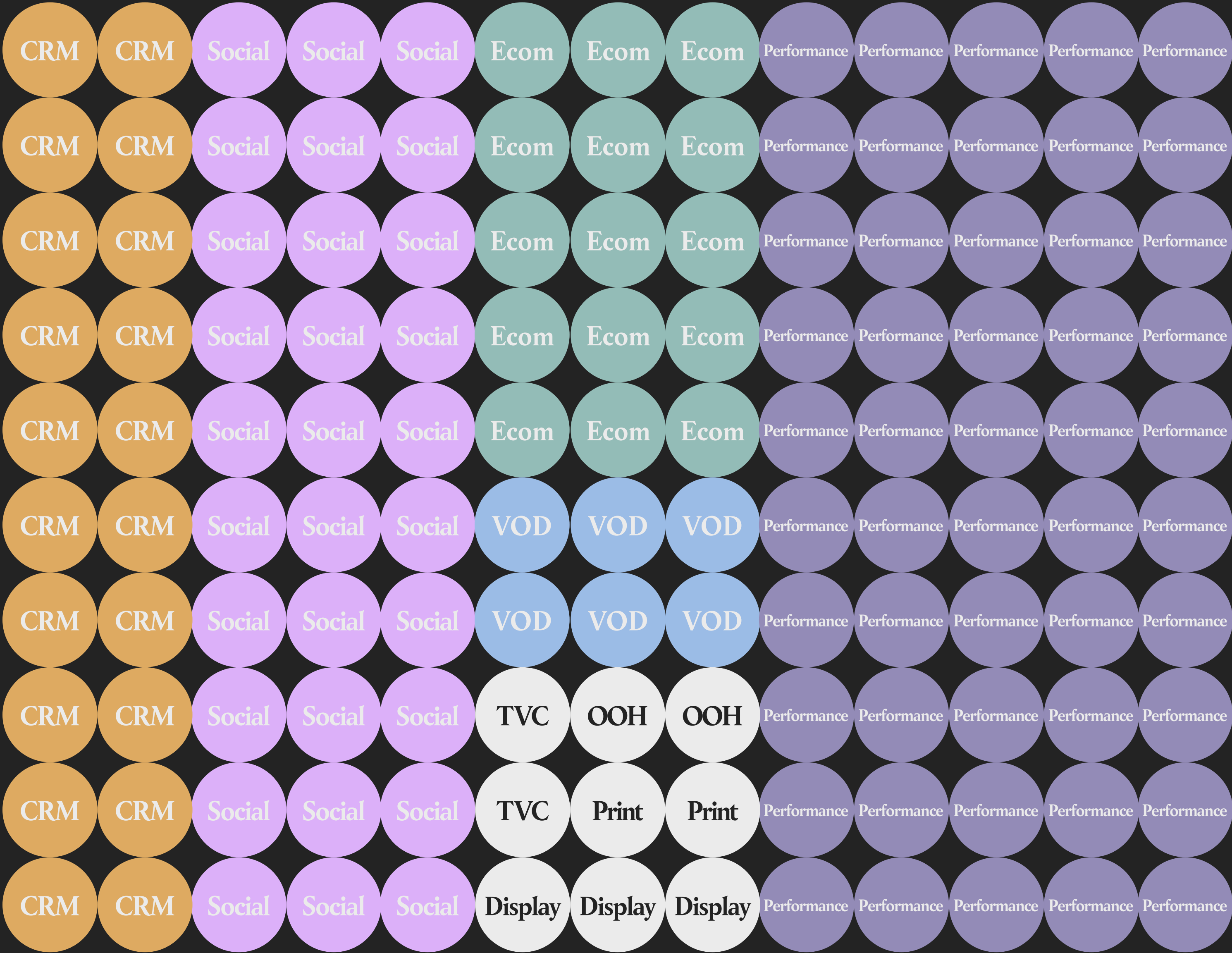
The guide to the guide

The challenge of content	4-11
Why it's hard	12-19
Our approach	20-49
TLDR?	50-54
The blank canvas	55-56

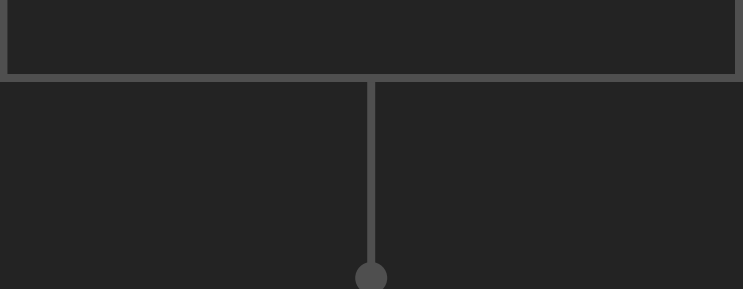
How it started



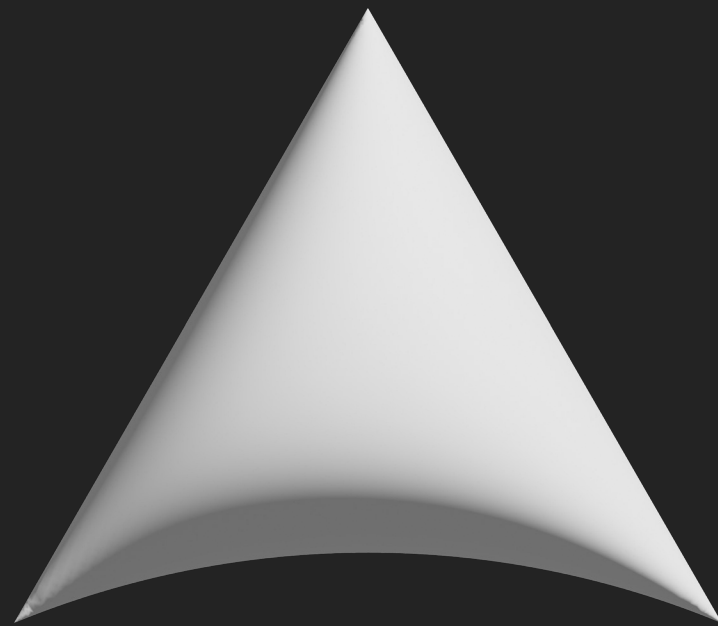
How its going



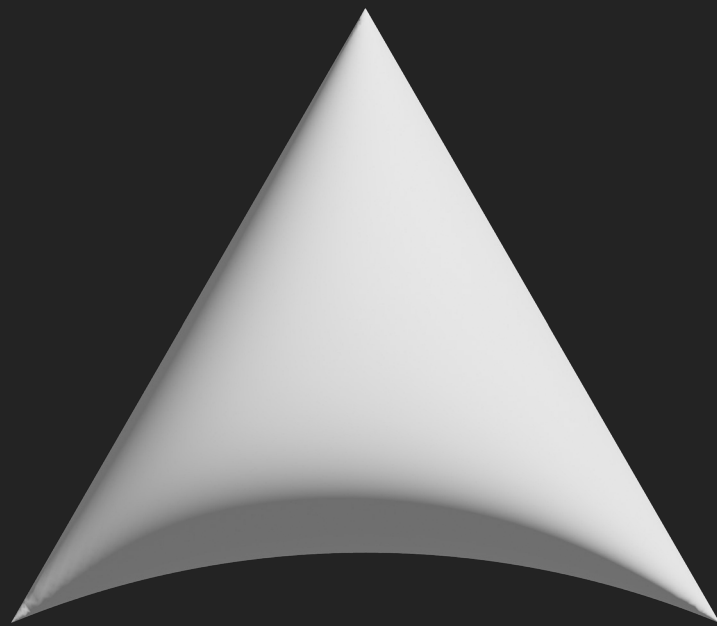
*It's no wonder today's CMOs are
struggling to get a handle on content.*



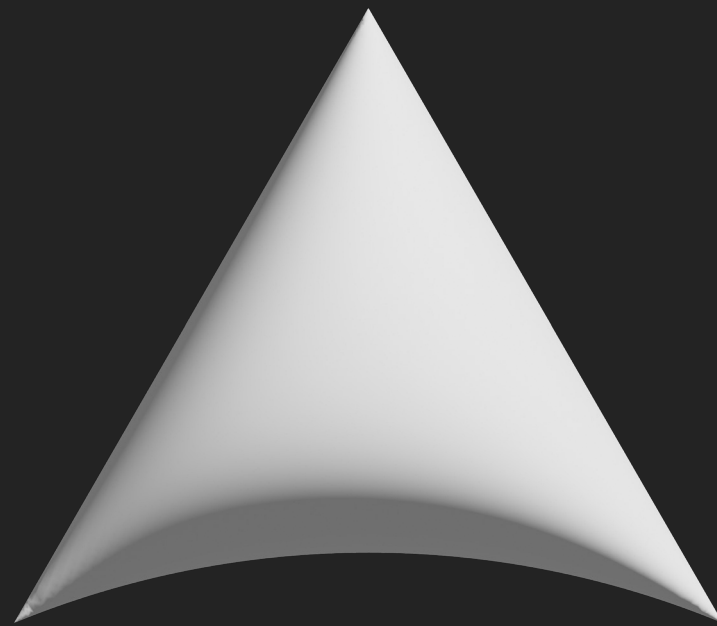
‘Content’ contains multitudes. We’re talking about the brand building, attention grabbing stuff you push out there into the world (well, your Insta/Tiktok feed) hoping to earn some attention.



More
Assets



More
Platforms



More
Often



Less
Budget

...and an email from the Chairman every time they see something in their Instagram feed that they don't understand.

Socialising ad assets?

Building brand-led pillars?

Doing trend after trend (after trend)?

They're all potential recipes for... meh.



▶ 22.1K



▶ 4.6M

Nothing worth having comes easy

Great content has to work
hard to earn attention. And
the rewards are commensurate
with the challenge.



Creating Contagious
Moments



Building brand
Fandoms



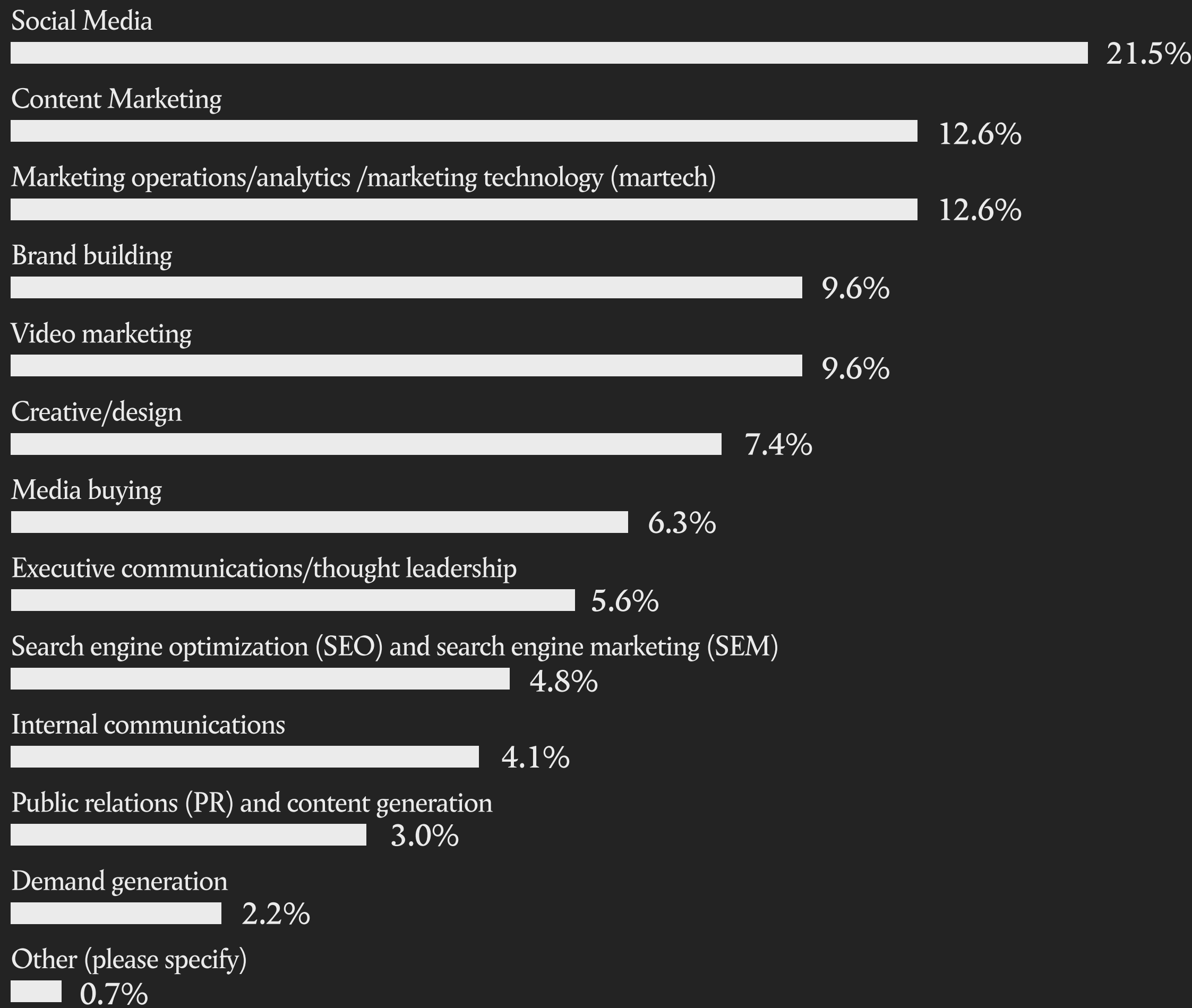
And unlocking whole
New Audiences



*It's no wonder it's high on CMOs' lists when it comes to **impact generation**.^{*} Or that 88% of them agree that it's more important than ever for brands to be part of culture.^{**}*

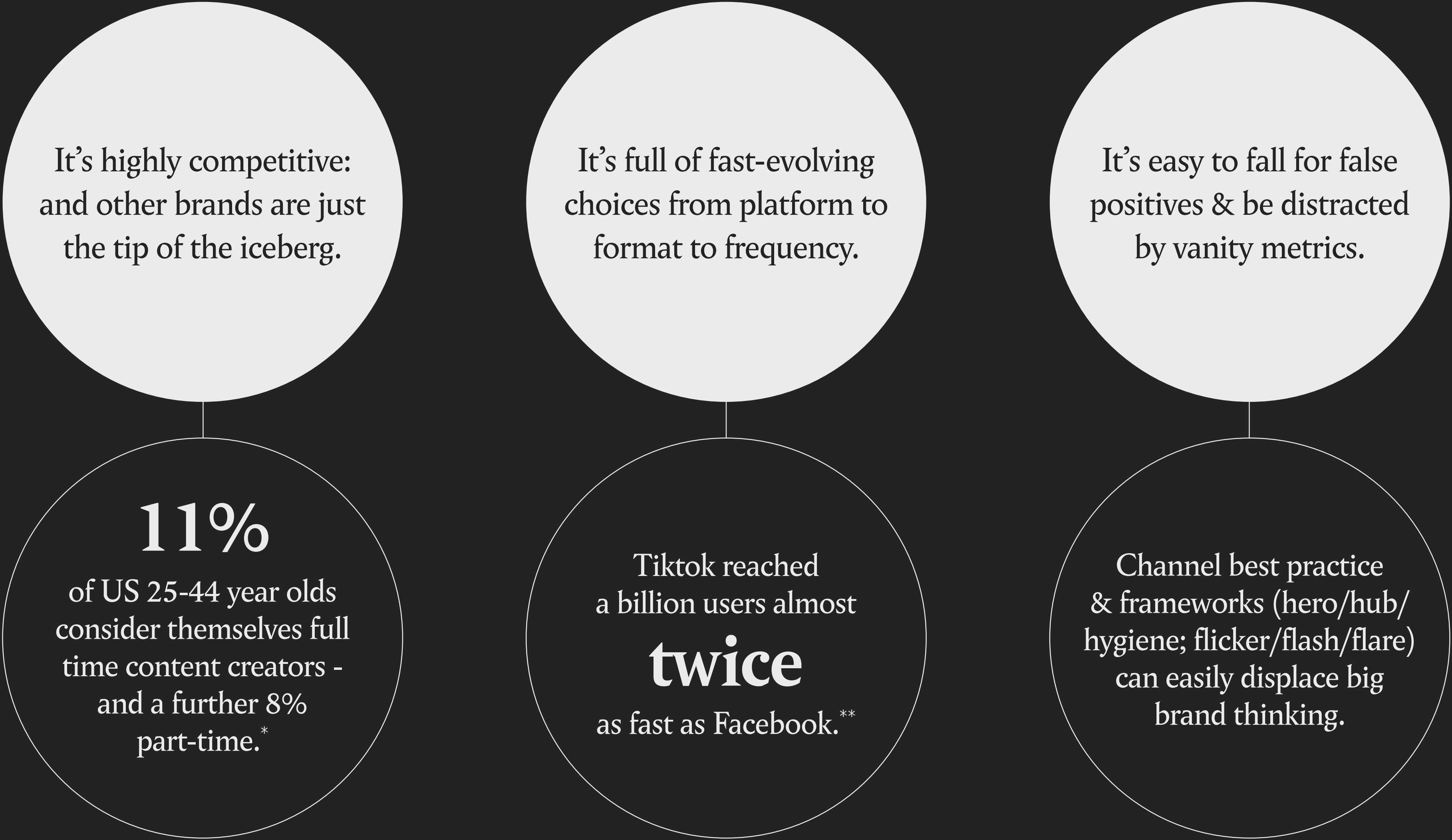
Areas Where US CMOs Have the Greatest Return on Their Marketing/Communications Investment During 2023, Oct 2023

% of respondents



Source: Matter Communications “2024 Marketing Outlook Survey” Nov2, 2023

So why is content so hard to get right?





The biggest challenge for today's brands?
The fragmentation of culture that the content boom has created.

Microcultures *have replaced* Monoculture



They’re chosen by us

*Through the accounts we follow, groups
& subreddits we join, and apps we use.*

And chosen for us

*By the algorithms that interpret interest
signals to fill our FYPs**

*‘For you’ pages

And in a world of microcultures and communities,
understanding your audience's cultural edits
has never been more important

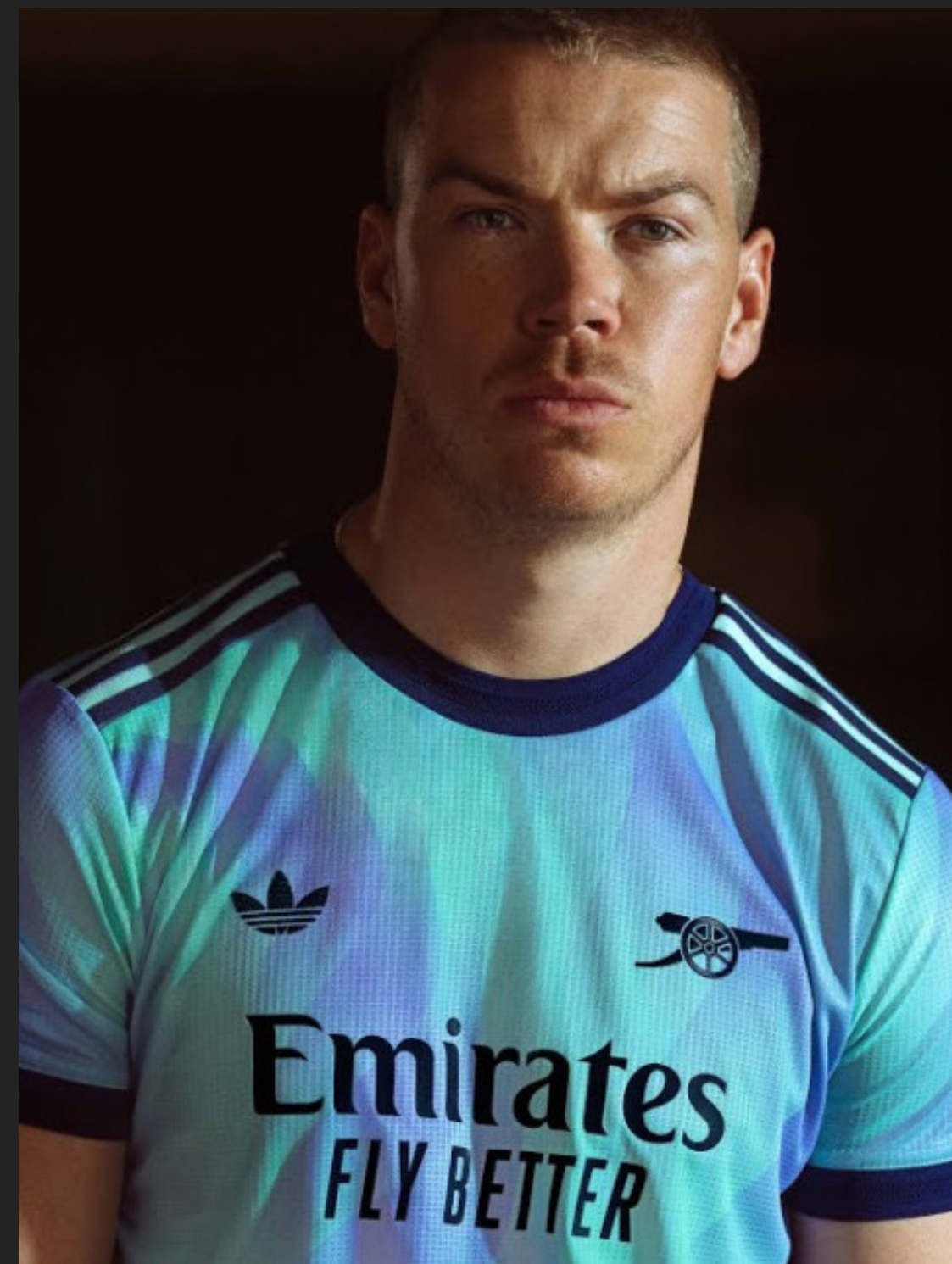










**They demand a radical new approach to relevance
And signal a whole new opportunity for content.**

This isn't the viral culture of the naughties. It's an opportunity to connect deeply with the niche.

The best stuff will go unseen by millions. If it's not for you, you probably won't understand it.

This isn't just about knowing football - it's knowing about the man in the brown jacket

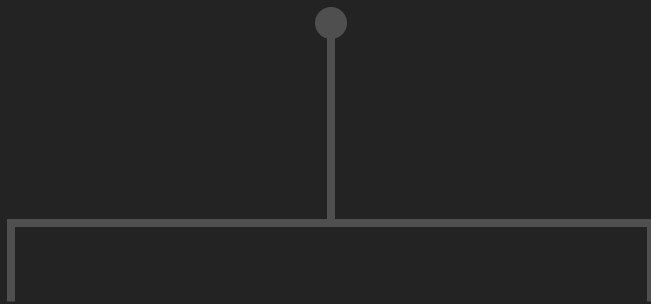


-  @ossnips9329 2 weeks ago
Patrick Vieira with the Vapo Rub at the end 😊
👍 172 🗨️ Reply
👇 1 reply
-  @tanishqyagi5619 2 weeks ago
1:18 He's here as well!
👍 447 🗨️ Reply
👇 8 replies
-  @syakdudu 2 weeks ago
When that guy in brown jacket appears....😂 the man, the myth, the legend!
👍 422 🗨️ Reply
👇 2 replies
-  @29king_kai29 2 weeks ago
OH MY GOD it's the guy
👍 222 🗨️ Reply
👇 5 replies
-  @Gabinelli11 2 weeks ago
1:05 🤔🤔🤔 yeah. Whoever made this ad... Thank you for acknowledging the unhinged era we went through during Big Gabi's signing. We were analysing clouds, car interiors, insta boomerangs 🤔
👍 48 🗨️ Reply
-  @omaryahya7258 2 weeks ago
This is the best out of the 3. Addidas have really slapped with the kits in the last 3 seasons. All bangers
👍 129 🗨️ Reply
-  @tajsoupidis1741 2 weeks ago
Shoulda been our away kit this kit looks insane
👍 312 🗨️ Reply
👇 12 replies
-  @shethakshay39 2 weeks ago
0:54 loved the inclusion of Kelly Smith and Vic Akers
👍 86 🗨️ Reply
👇 4 replies

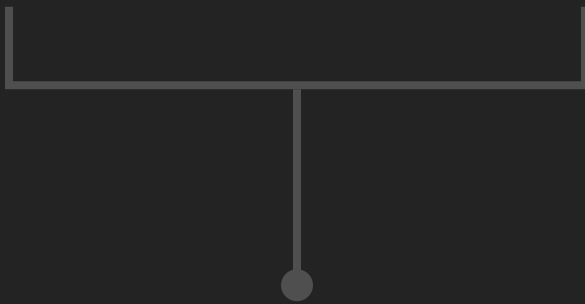
So how should you tackle it



Big brand thinking
that supercharges impact

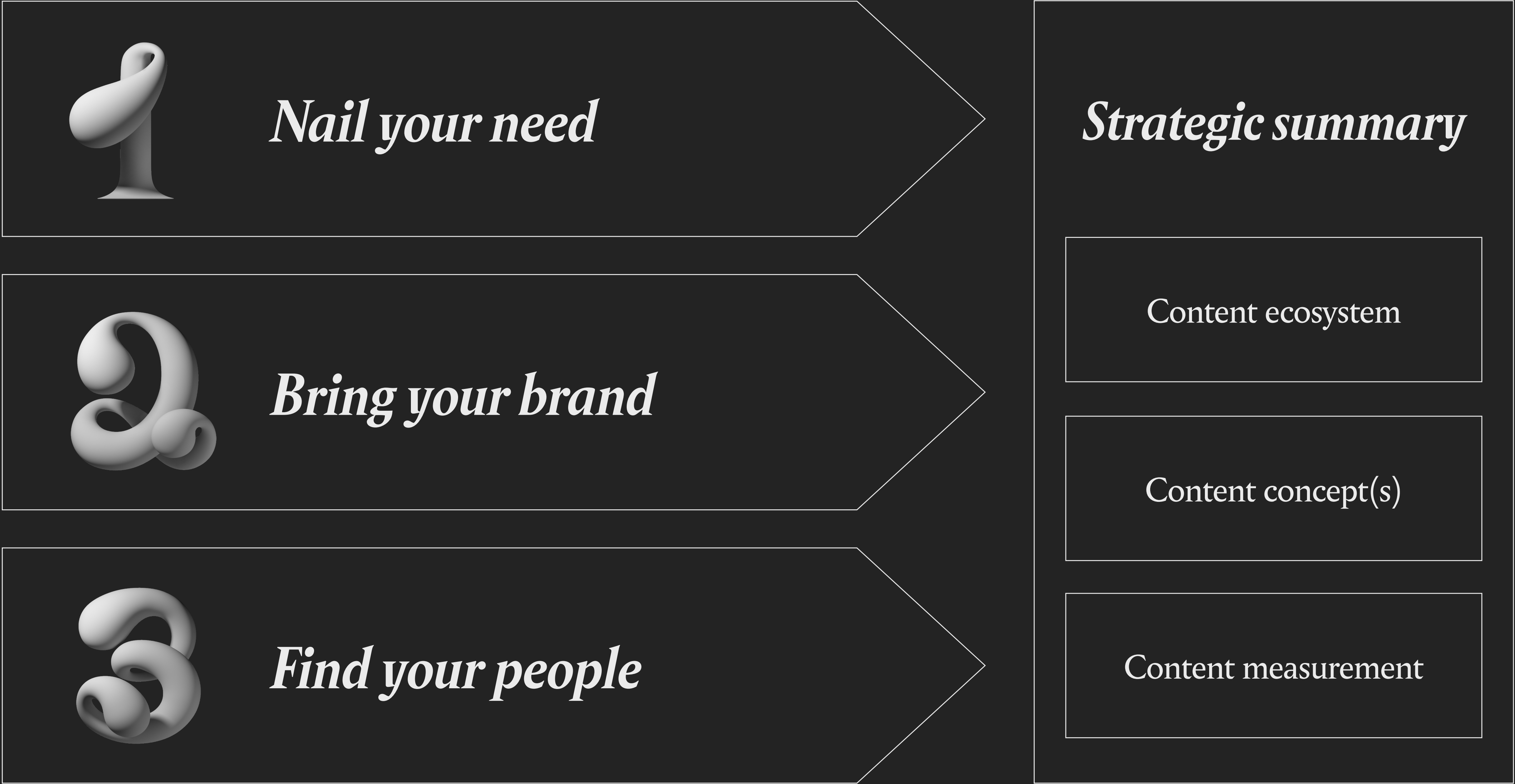


Here's our brandsocial approach

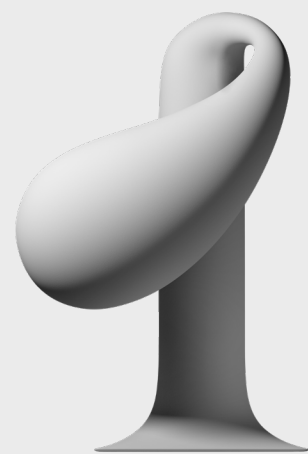


Deep understanding of the digital,
cultural levers to pull

The brandsocial content canvas

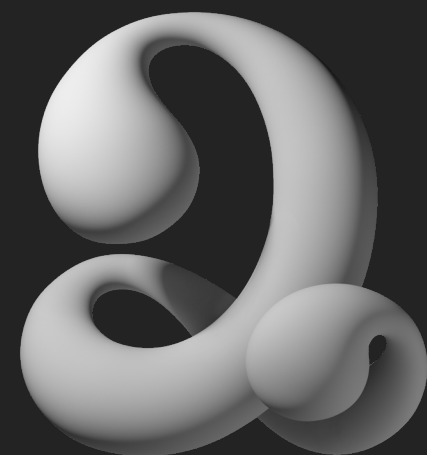


The brandsocial content canvas

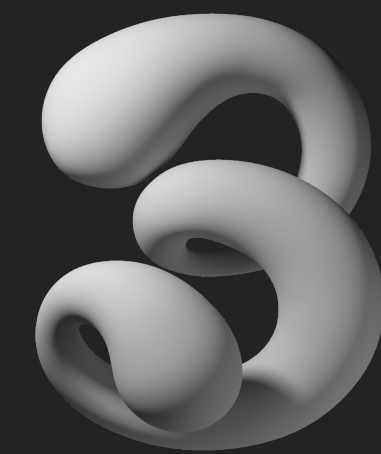


Nail your need

Which big jobs need doing?
Where are you struggling to deliver through classic comms?
Where is content likely to be able to add significant value?



Bring your brand



Find your people

Strategic summary

Content ecosystem

Content concept(s)

Content measurement

Pointless content is **Pointless**

*Don't just create to fill the feed, jump on a bandwagon, or plug gaps in a content calendar.
What makes sense to make will depend entirely on the problem you're trying to solve.*

Start by identifying - and prioritising - the contributions content can make to your communications and business objectives.

*Build brand
affinity*


*(Re)Engage
a specific
audience?*

*Change product
perception?*


*Deliver a specific
key message?*

Consider which jobs need doing, but also which jobs other channels may struggle to do.
Remember: while content may more naturally suit an affinity-building objective brands like Aldi have shown how successfully it can also build vs functional perceptions - eg for low price.


Red Bull stay salient




Adventure Unscripted
30:15 min




HOW TO BE SUPER HUMAN
The woman who beat fatal landslides to top Everest
58:29 min



HOW TO BE SUPER HUMAN
The man who rowed around the world
55:30 min



North of Known GoPro vid
1:25 min



Watch Gavin McClurg fly

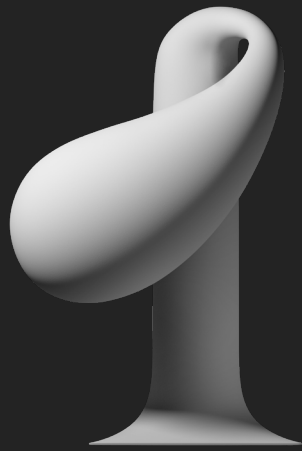
Dove push purpose



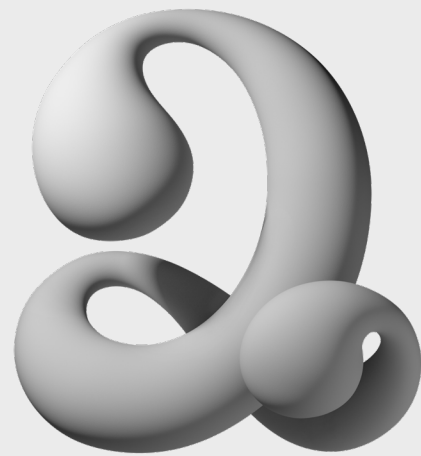
Lidl feed fandom



The brandsocial content canvas

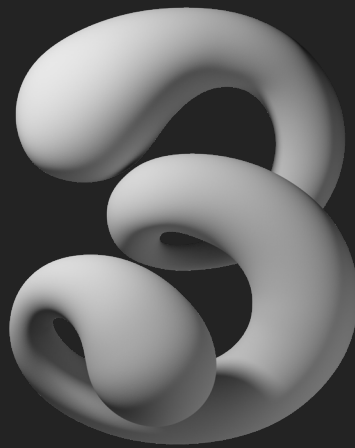


Nail your need



Bring your brand

Which pieces of your brand will help guide what and how you create?
Where is there greatest potential?



Find your people

Strategic summary

Content ecosystem
What, who, where?

Content concept(s)
Creative approach Wrapper(s) & reactive

Content measurement
*KPI-laddered metrics
Tiered measurement strategy*

Leave the pillars in the portico

Just because your positioning gives you permission to talk about something, doesn't mean your audience will stick around to listen. Lean into the elements most relevant to solving your problem; and most likely to resonate in culture.



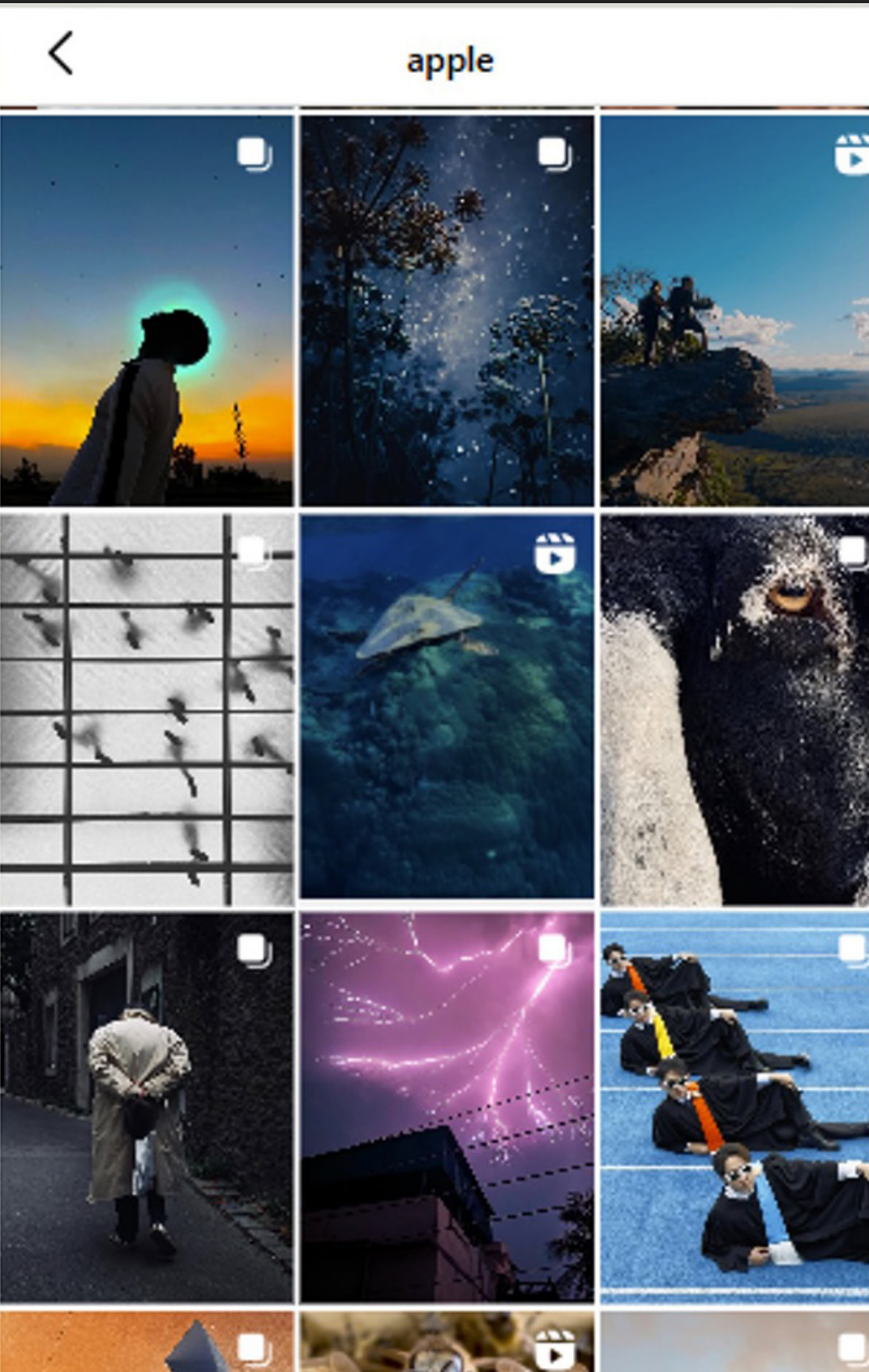
This could look like...

Identifying relevant aspects of your brand POV - brand values or beliefs that could lead to a distinctive presence

Plumbing brand assets for something that supports cut-through

Leaning into brand lore - the things that have already become part of culture.

Apple lean hard into the spirit of creativity



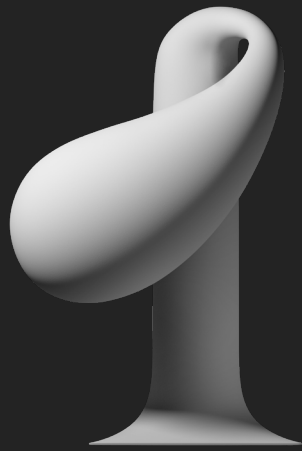
Nutterbutter turn 'Aidan' lore into an unhinged conspiracyfest



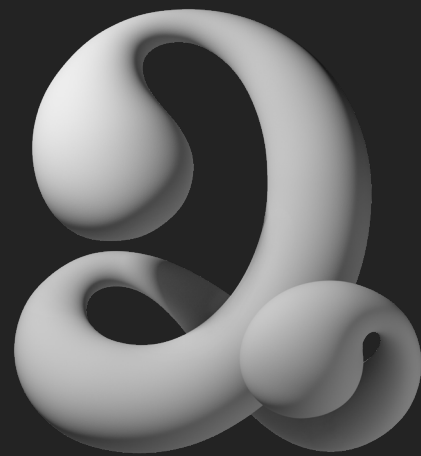
Wendy's use their mascot to lean into 'roast' culture.



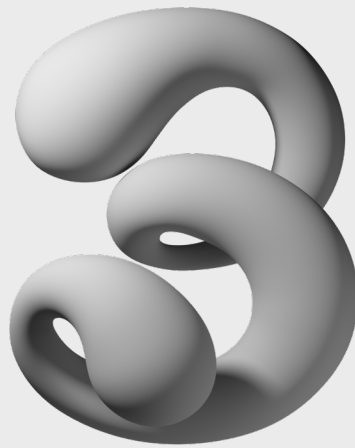
The brandsocial content canvas



Nail your need



Bring your brand



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Which cultures and communities can we tap into to tackle the problem?
Brand ones? Category ones? Beyond the category for those yet to engage
with it? What do their digital ecosystems and conversations look like?

Strategic summary

Content ecosystem

Content concept(s)

Content measurement

The algorithm is your enemy

Swerve the illusion of ‘mainstream’ content culture to find the niches and insights that will really resonate for your target audience.

Identify the social subcultures relevant to your objective(s) and immerse in their digital world.



Which channels are they on?

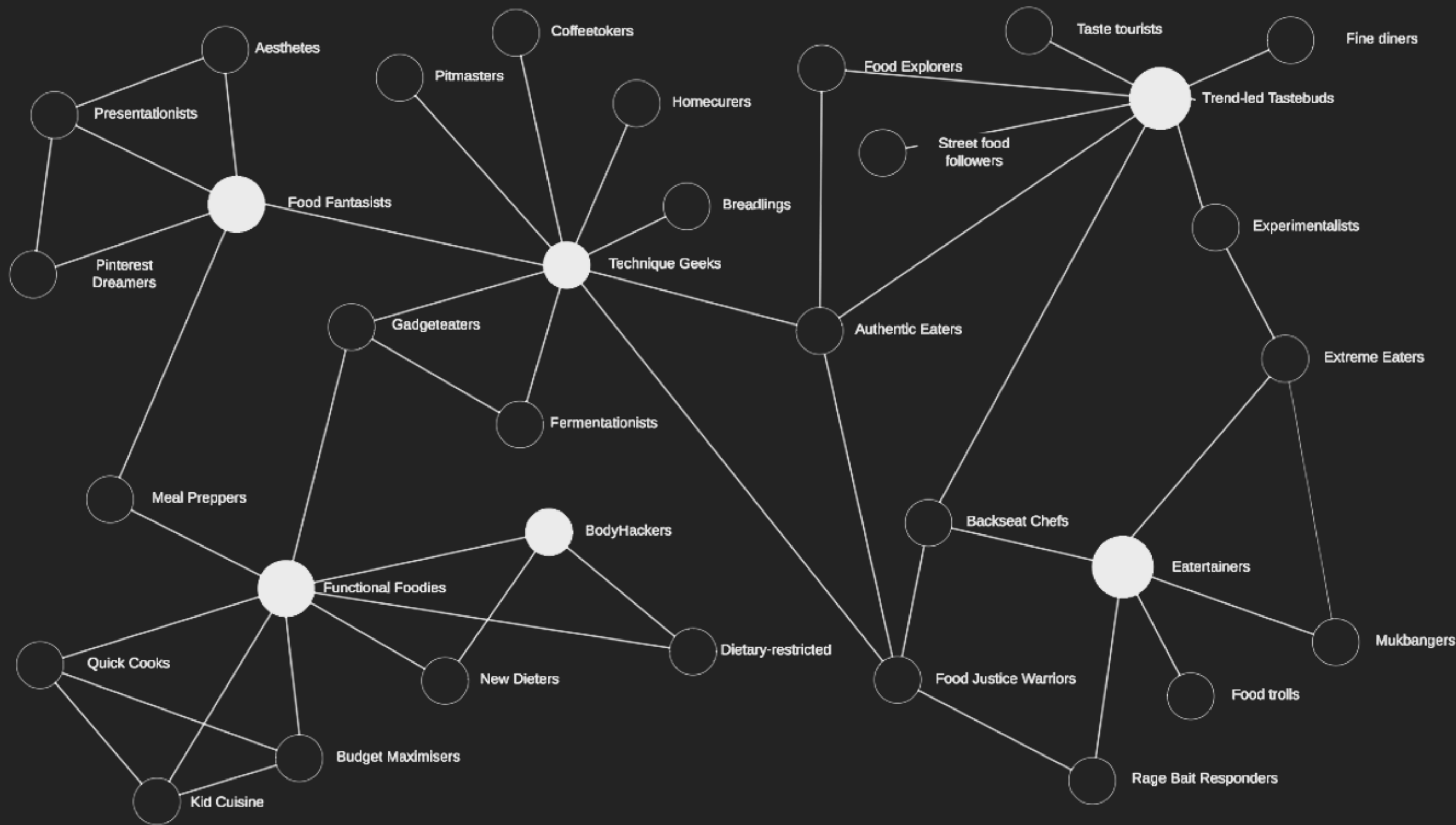
Which content do they consume?

Which conversations do they have?

Who has clout in their digital worlds?

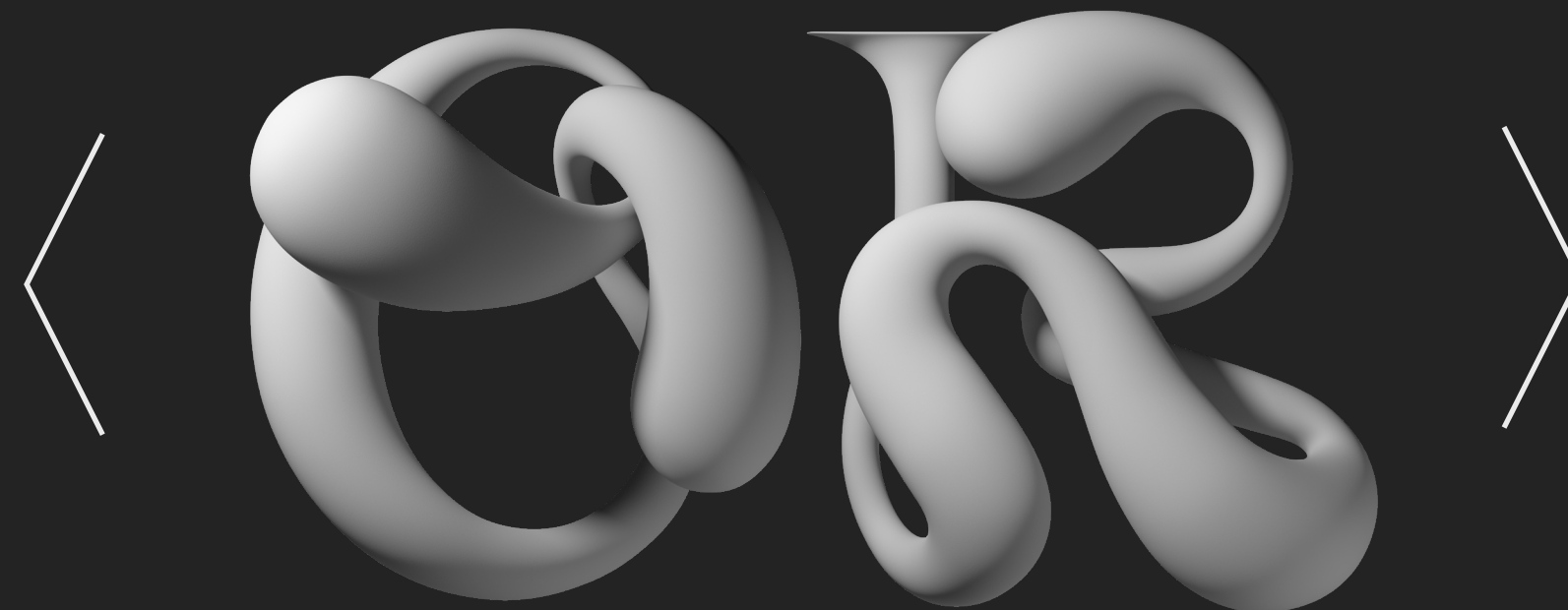
Which communities are they part of?

Dig deep to get to the interesting stuff. ‘Foodies’, for example, contain contain myriad communities, and their behaviours will differ massively.



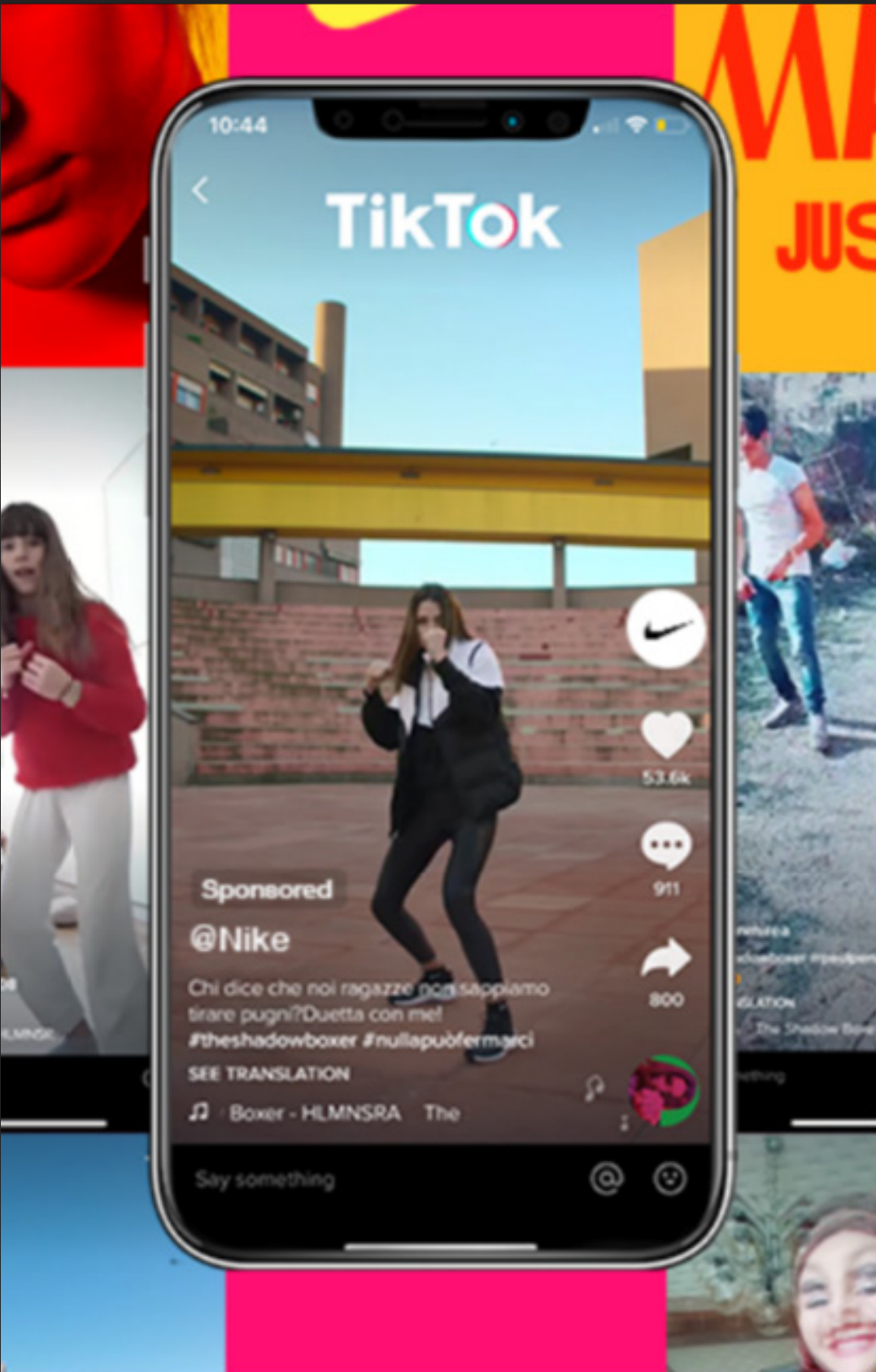
Track the content and conversations your audience are seeing: it'll be much more interesting than #demure

Manually, eg. using keyword search or customised profiles designed to mirror your audience's browsing habits



Using social monitoring tools to track the output of key subculture authors, defined audiences, or to follow conversation around culturally-aligned keywords

Nike leant into challenge culture



HP tapped conspiracy drama fans



Morning Brew hit up mystery obsessives



The brandsocial content canvas





The answer isn't always
‘Facebook, Instagram & TikTok’

*Looking to connect
with an older, post family
female audience?*

*Think Facebook - including
interest groups.*

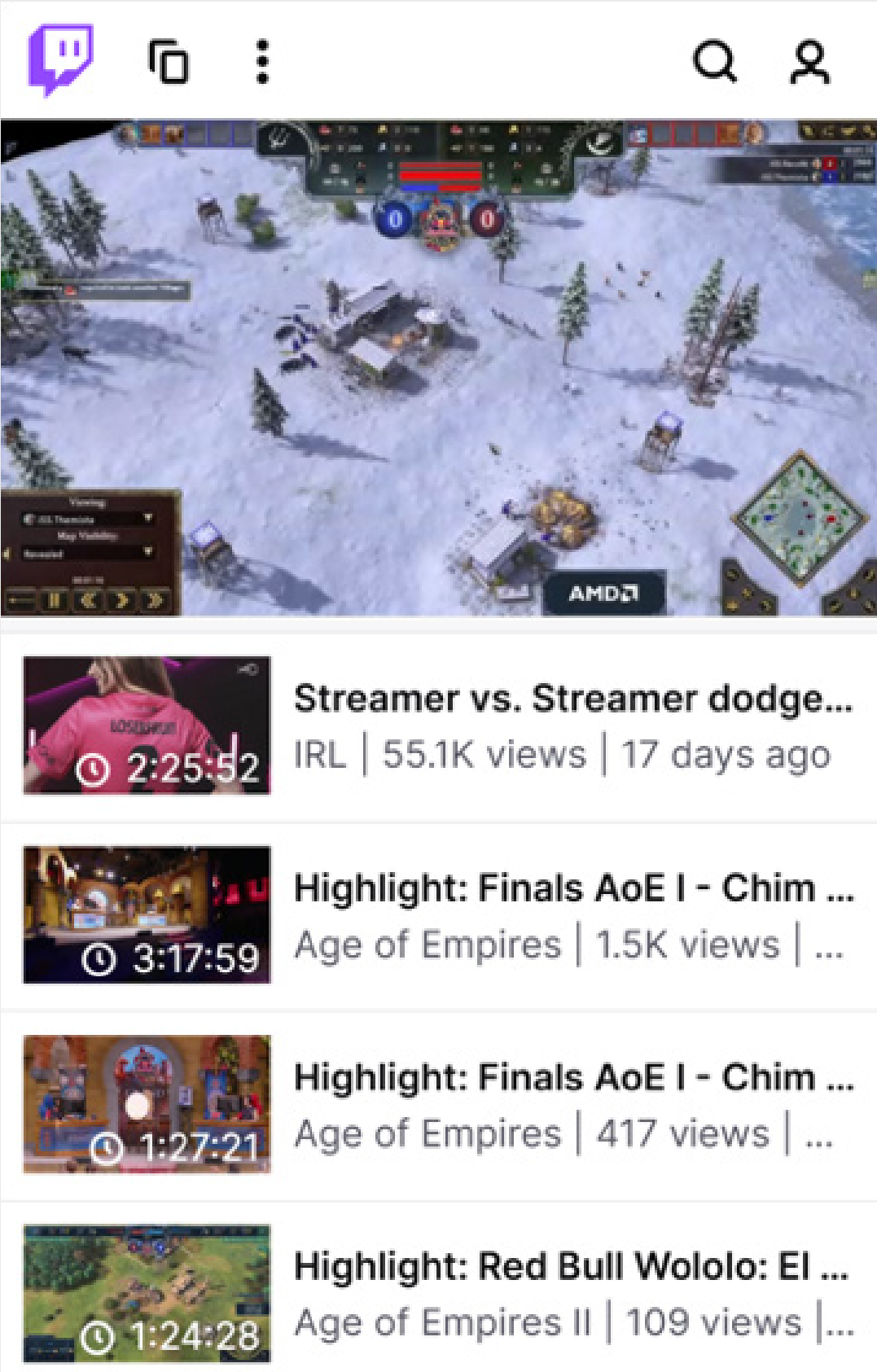
New mums?

*Consider Instagram - including
broadcast channels - TikTok,
and local Facebook groups*

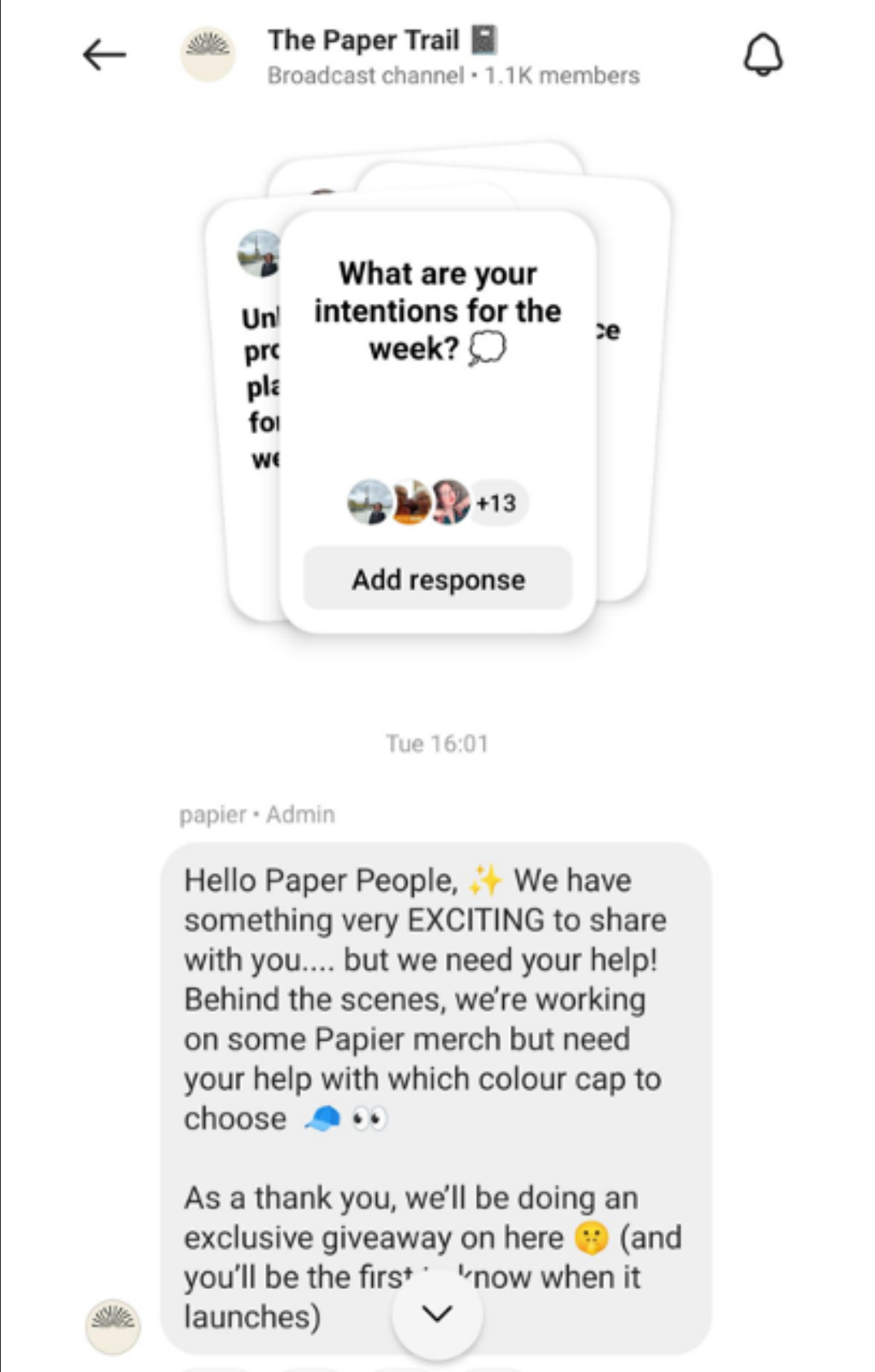
*Want to engage affluent
men about health?*

*Add YouTube
and Strava to the mix.*

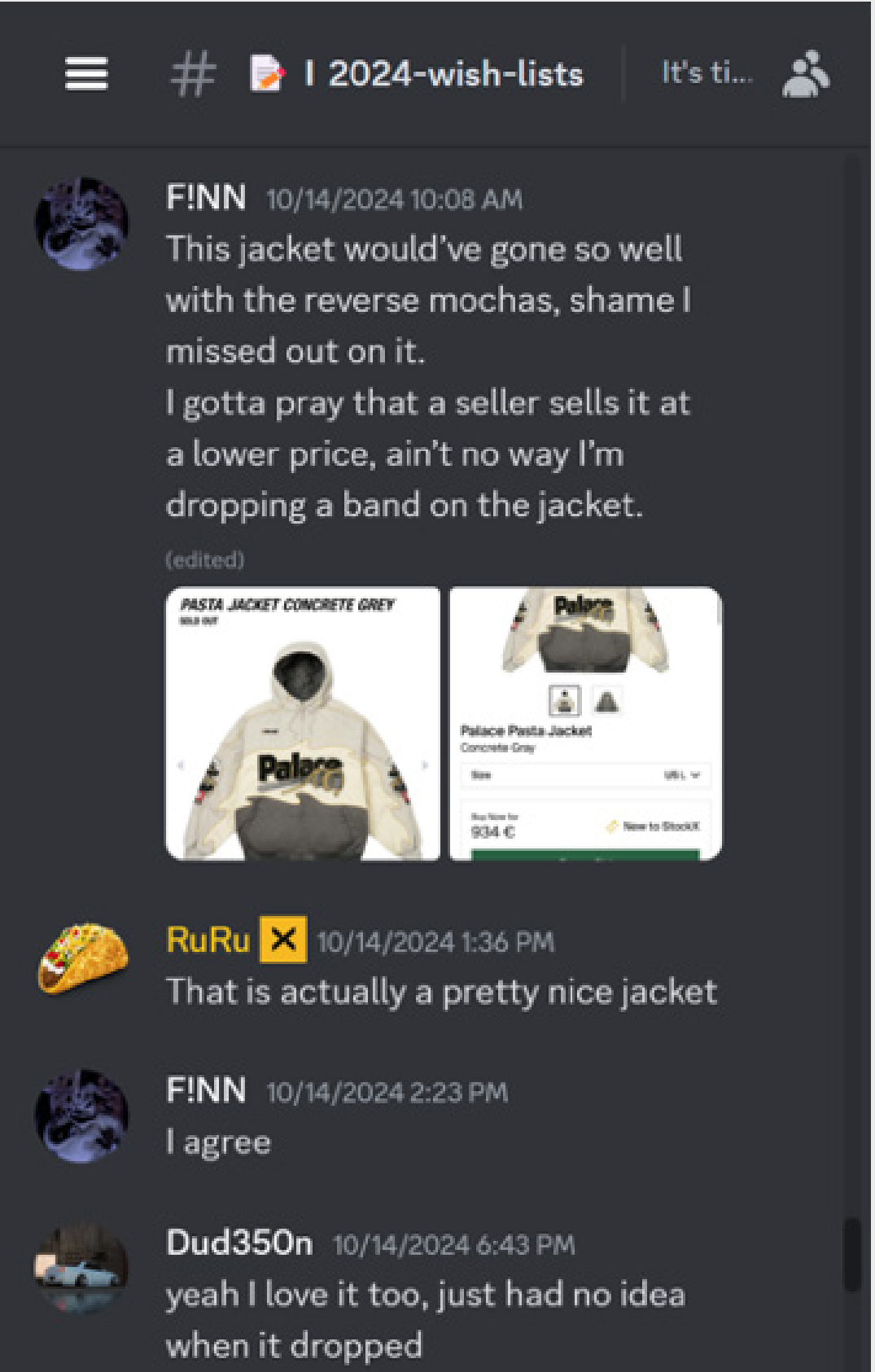
Red Bull’s Twitch doubles down on esports action



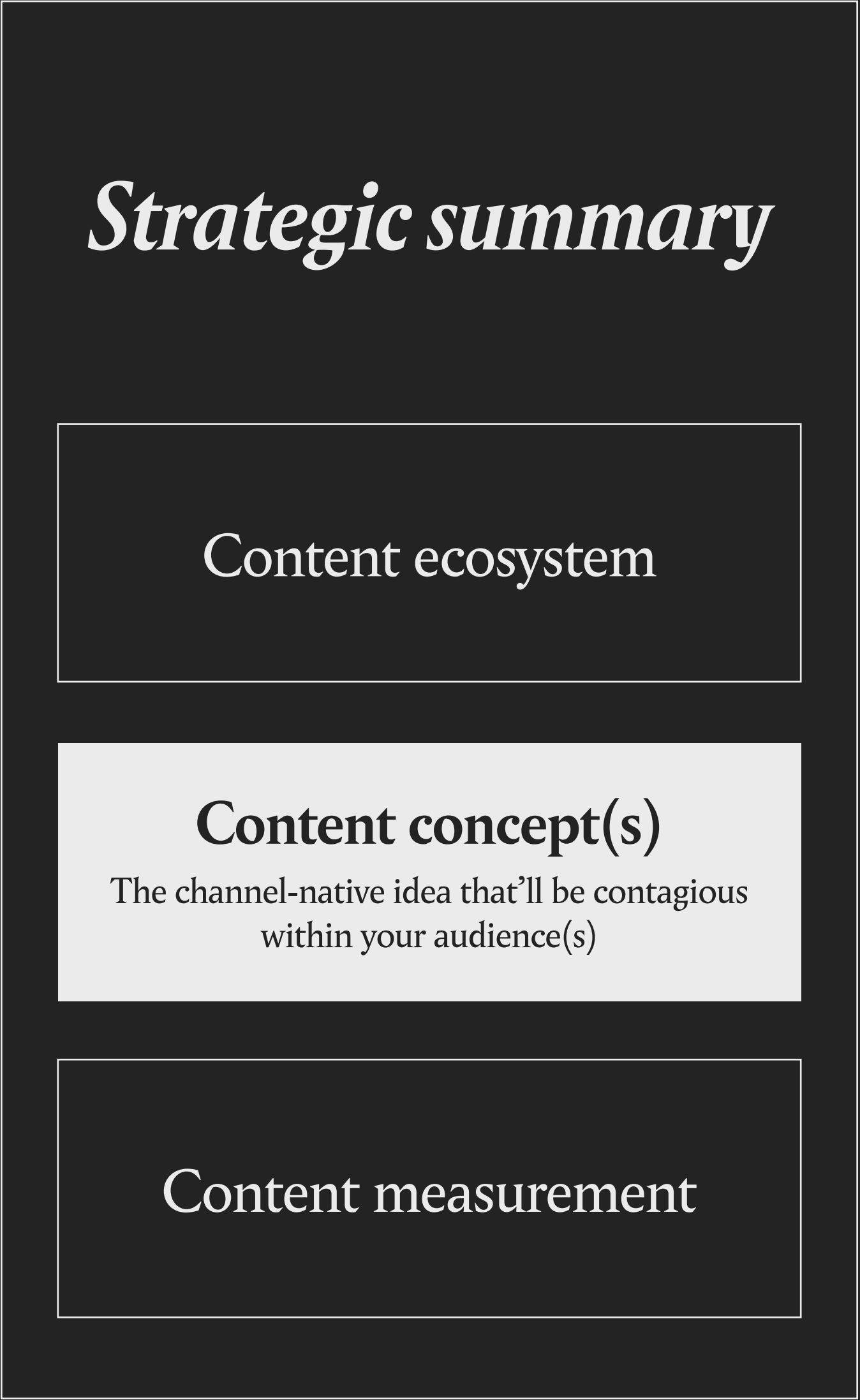
Papier’s Broadcast channel connects them to serious journalers

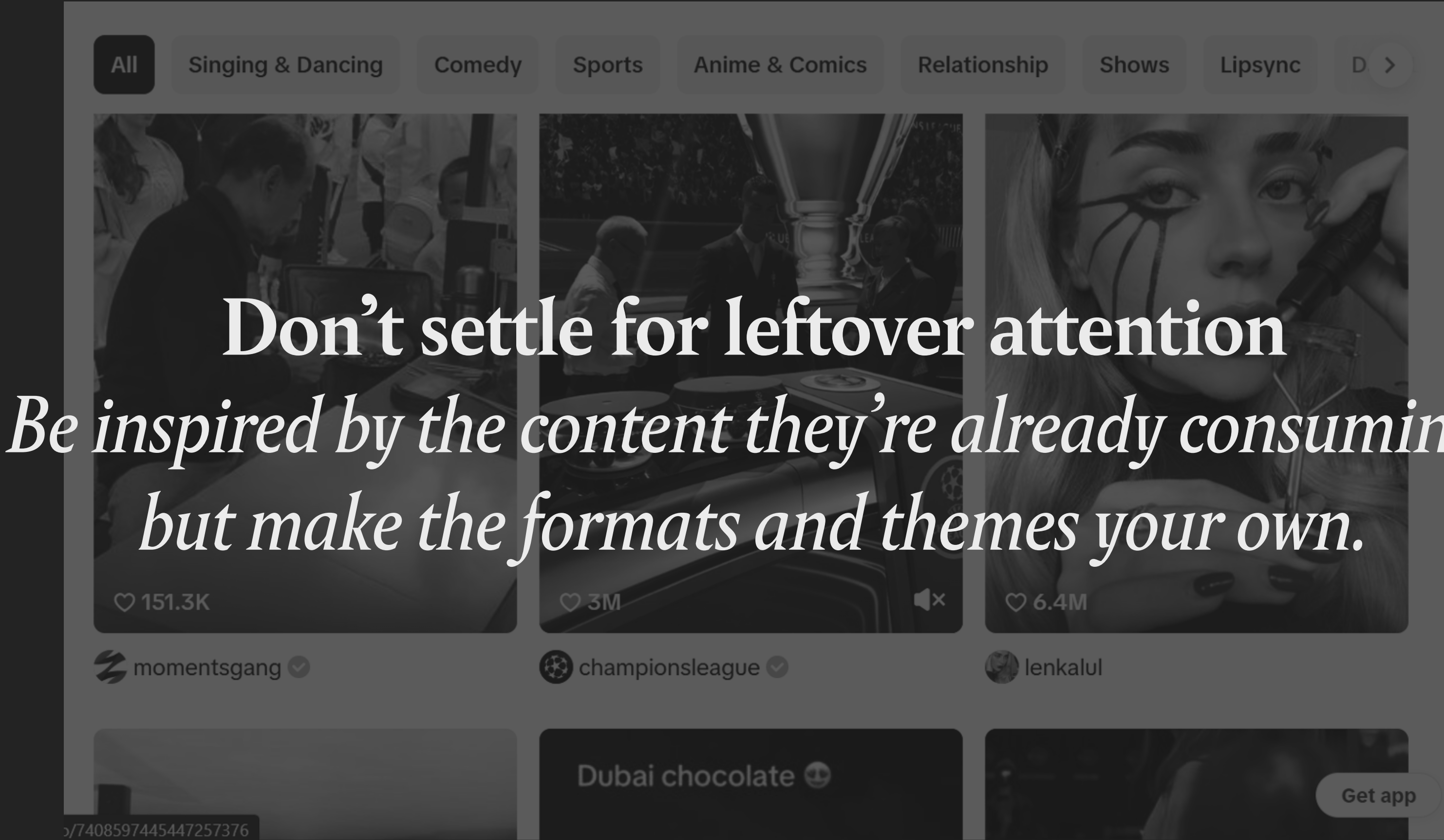


StockX round up sneakerheads on discord



The brandsocial content canvas





Take your brand to illogical extremes

(After all, tiktok loves a niche)



@Sylvaniandrama

Theory:

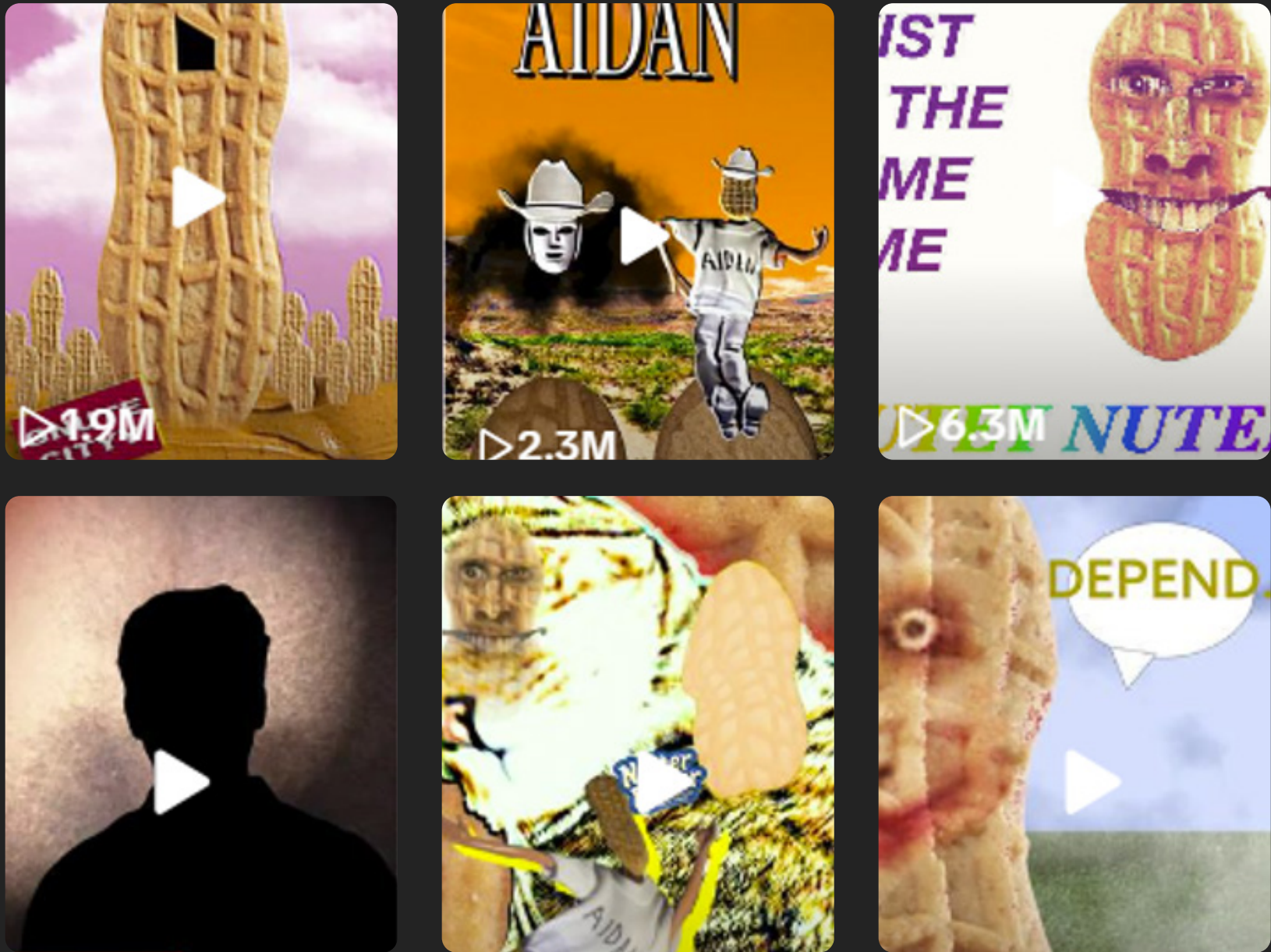
*“If you’re dull on
TikTok, you’re invisible”*



Peter Field

The Extraordinary Cost of being Dull

Practice:

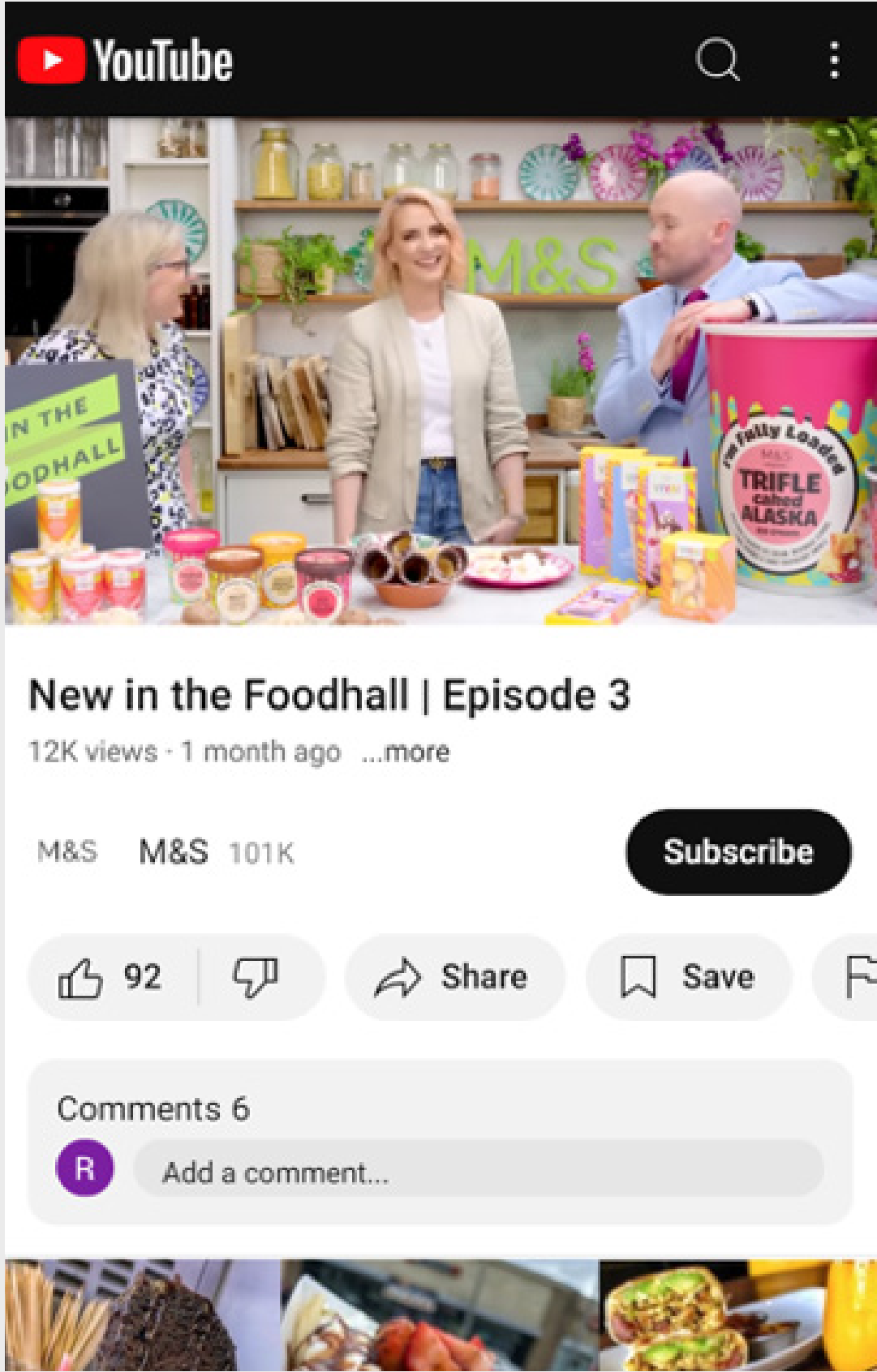


The weirder nutter butter got, the more
attention they earned

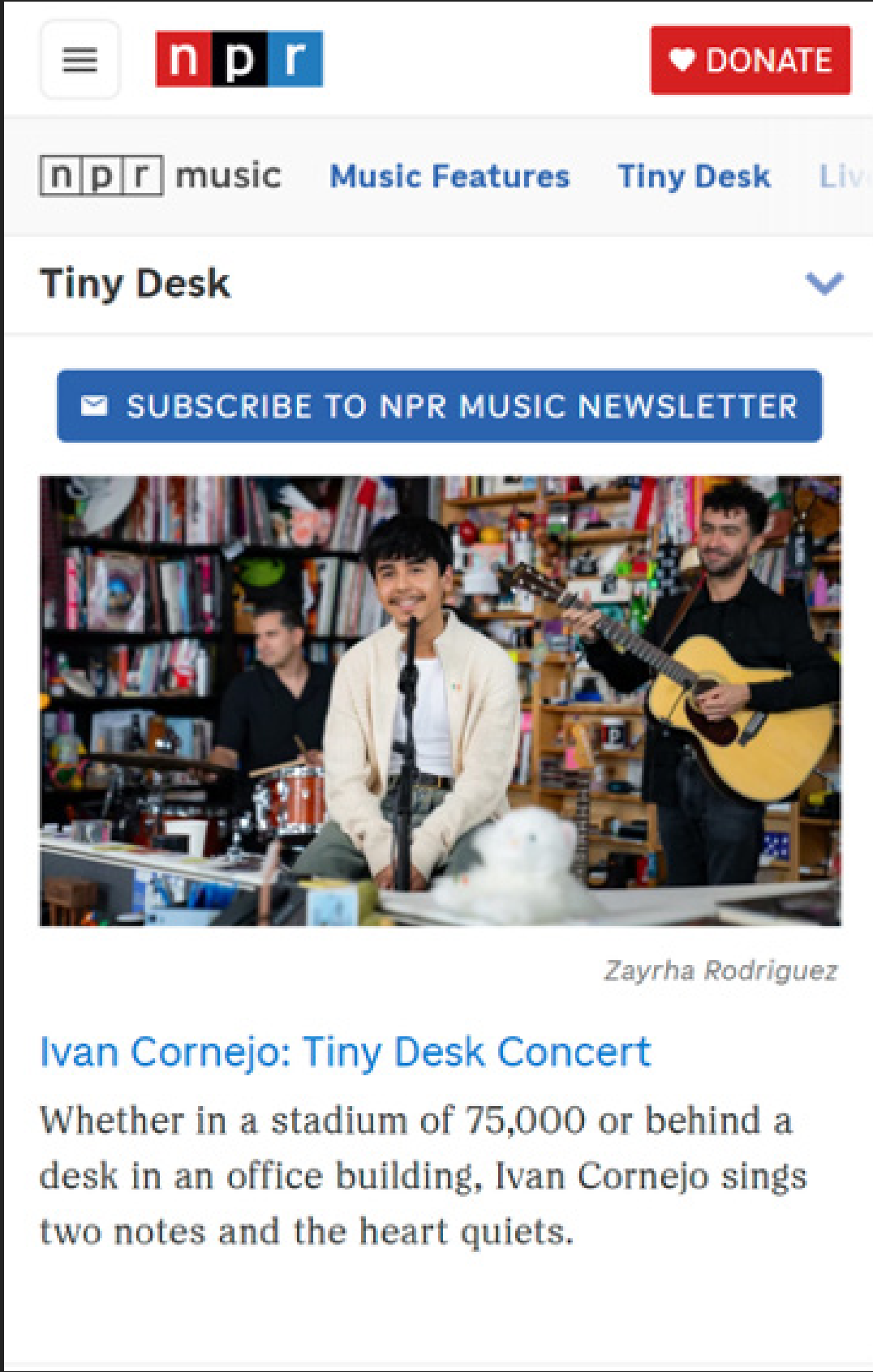
Alexis Bittar do ‘reality’ tv,
documenting the fictional exploits
of Margeaux Goldrich



M&S lean into the talk show
format with “New in the Foodhall”



NPR offer raw music with their
pared-back Tiny Desk Concerts - a
long running, unexpected hit.



The brandsocial content canvas



**Make things that matter, *and you'll
finally have something worth measuring.***

Useful proxies

Available, but sometimes ambiguous

<i>Post level metrics</i>	<i>Reach, engagement, CTRs... You know the drill.</i>
<i>Wrapper/ theme metrics</i>	<i>Avg metrics, per wrapper, topic or theme; to identify which is performing best and retire tired concepts</i>
<i>Channel level metrics</i>	<i>Avg metrics by channel; to enable performance comparisons & ecosystem refinement</i>
<i>Brand/business level metrics</i>	<i>Brand sentiment, share of social voice, leading indicators like share of search, and actual sales.</i>

More accurate methodologies

Expensive, but (more) accurate

<i>Brand lift studies</i>	<i>Pre and post surveys to determine campaign impact - but usually spend dependant</i>
<i>Attribution & Econometrics</i>	<i>Dive deep to identify channel contribution and impact on big business outcomes</i>

*KFC used useful proxies to flip their strategy: switching from amplification to fame when this gravy fountain took off on social
(WARC, 2018)*



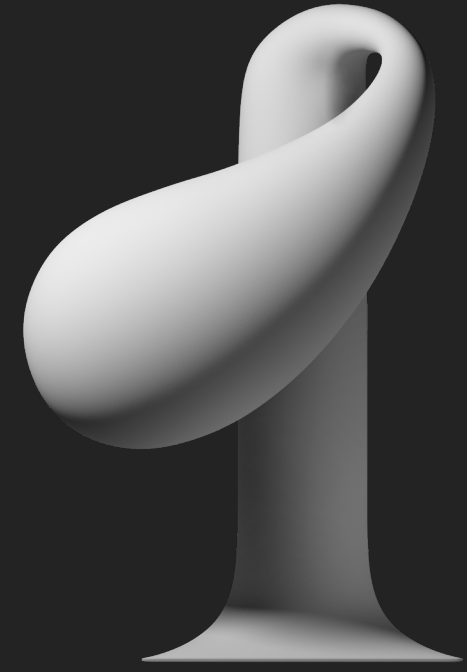
*Aldi use 'Share of search' as a leading indicator of gains in market share as a result of social, alongside full blown econometrics
(WARC, Aldi UK: Loveable Disruptors, 2024)*



*Duolingo see a direct correlation between posting on TikTok and an increase in new learners who choose 'TikTok' in their 'how did you hear about us' survey.
(LinkInBio)*



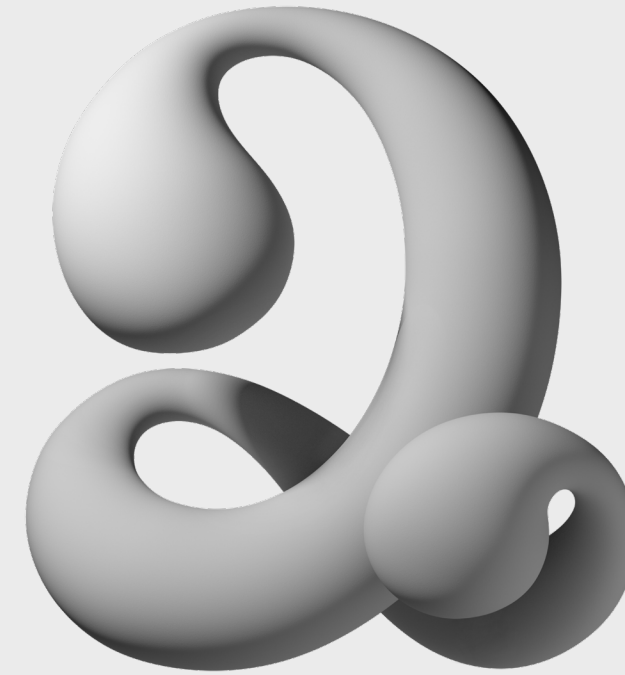
TLDR?



Nothing worth having comes easy

*If you're doing the below,
there's a chance you're wasting £££:*

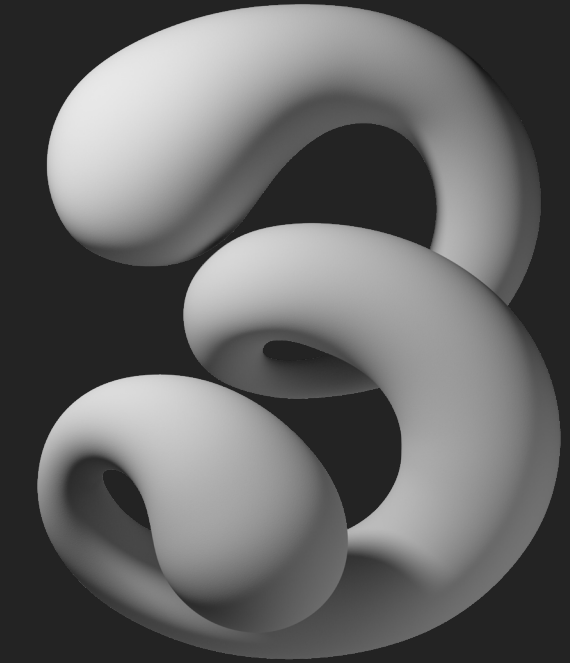
*~~Jumping on trends~~
~~Creating brand pillars~~
~~Socialising ad assets~~*



Know your niches

*Online culture no longer exists.
Today it's all about the niches.*

*Find those that help you deliver
on brand objectives, and immerse
yourself in them.*

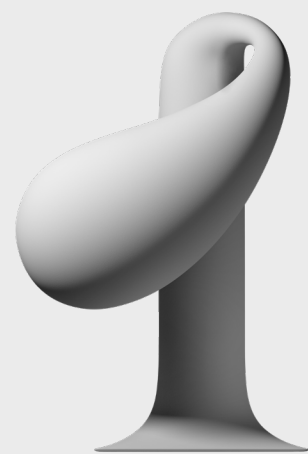


Go hard or go home

*As Peter Field says, "If you're dull
on TikTok, you're invisible"*

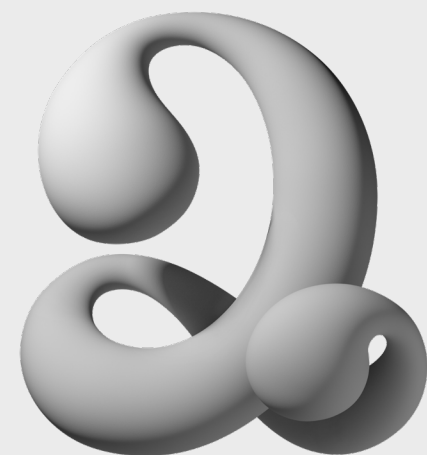
*Whatever your channel or ecosystem,
aim to outdo not emulate, with big, unique
content concepts built to capture your
audience interests and generate genuine
brand impact.*

The brandsocial content canvas



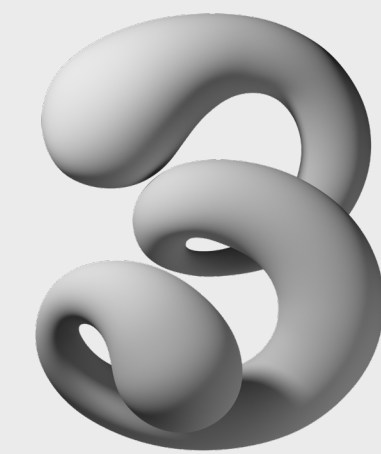
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Strategic summary

Content ecosystem

Key platforms and tactics

Content concept(s)

The channel-native idea that'll be contagious within your audience(s)

Content measurement

The metrics and measurement strategies that will indicate success

Pssst...

*That's not all. Those great insights you get to?
They've got a life beyond content.*

*Done well, content can become the testbed of your
broader creative output: inspiring big, juicy campaign
ideas with real cultural roots.*

Find out more about the brandsocial
approach with MullenLowe
newbusiness@mullenlowe.com

Appendix: The Blank Canvas

The brandsocial content canvas

