

Small
World x Tracksuit

PRESENTS



ENTERTRAIN OR DIE

3.0



INTRODUCTION

Creatives worldwide are tearing down the wall between entertainment and advertising. Marketeers are finally starting to notice. It comes on the back of our efforts and so many others. Graphs, stats and color from Entertain or Die have filled Canva decks from Cannes to California with entertainment—first brand building goodness.

Hopefully, by now, our job isn't to convince you that entertainment builds brands, but to explain how you can bottle that magic for the brands you build – and what it takes to do so when the landscape is constantly, seismically, chaotically shifting underfoot. Just when you thought you'd caught up, Gen Z have become social fatigued; Mr Beast is changing what “entertainment” even means; Small W•rld client Duolingo symbolically killed their owl mascot, signalling the end of unhinged storytelling; and fanaticism around superheroes has given way to horror, anime, video games and more niche standoms. **It's a lot.**

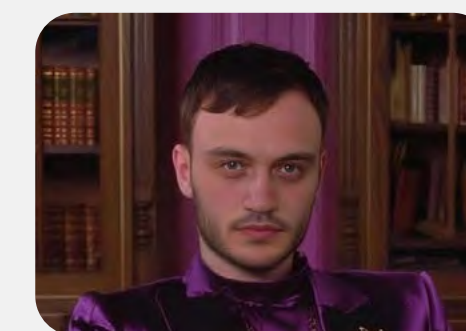
We cover all of this over the following pages. This document is a 101 on how to think about entertaining ideas. It's split across the four steps that we follow to make brands like Hot Topic, Oatly and Dr Squatch more entertaining: **How to know what entertains people** (mapping), **how to make modern entertainment** (making), **how to make sure your entertainment is seen** (sharing); and **how to measure it** (you guessed it, measuring).

And all of that is sandwiched between research into who the most entertaining brands in the world are, and how that entertainment value drives brand growth (thanks, Tracksuit),

Finally, one important note: you'll see a lot of mentions of social and creators in this deck. That's not because we think these disciplines are synonymous with entertainment. It's because social is the world's greatest democracy, where ideas have a chance to spread purely based on how entertaining they are, and creators are our fearless world leaders in this analogy. The term social-first has become misleading, bastardised to mean a set of platform-by-platform tick-box exercises and creators have been confused with influencers, a pure play media solution.

To us, social-first should mean entertainment-first. According to YouTube's Culture and Trends report, [57% of 14- to 24-year-olds](#) agree that they have been more excited to see new content from creators than new TV shows or movies. Our phone screens have overtaken television and cinema as the ultimate laboratory for experimenting with entertainment ideas, and creators are the new Nutty Professors, tinkering and causing chaos to fantastic effect.

Creators are fluent in the multi-tiered language of socials. Data from System1 shows they build brands faster because they understand the gravity of attention: how it moves, mutates and multiplies when given the right impetus. The rest of us are just trying to keep up.



Dan Sakey 🍌
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Tracksuit

THE CASE FOR ENTERTAINMENT

EVERYTHING IS BORING

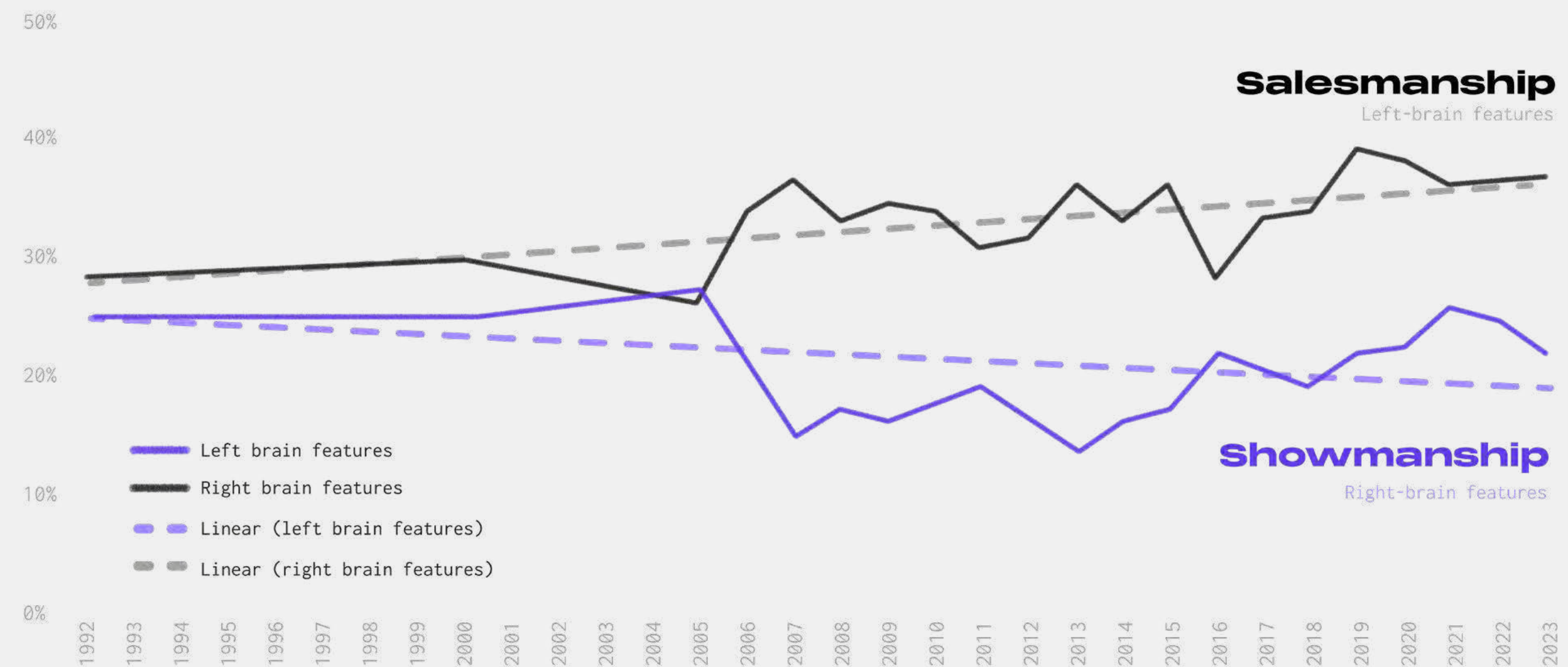
Sometime in the early 2000s, ads became boring — no one really knows why. But in 2001, Britney Spears performed "I'm a Slave 4 U" at the VMAs with an albino python draped over her shoulders, and we think that could have been the trigger.

Perhaps in this pre-viral moment, at the apex of 2000s entertainment, the universe of all-things-good-and-fun expanded too far, triggering an exothermic chain reaction (fuelled by body glitter) that resulted in the heat death of good advertising.

Whatever the cause, beginning in the 2000s, Showmanship sharply declined in favour of Salesmanship and ads became increasingly functional (as per [System 1](#)). At the same time, internet culture became far more entertaining, weird and audience-centric, making increasingly salesy ads only more overtly boring.

SHOWMANSHIP FEATURES HAVE DECLINED; SALESMANSHIP FEATURES NOW DOMINATE

Average proportion of left- and right-brain features present across ads in ad breaks from each year



Above graph is a reconstruction of [System 1 data](#)

The chasm between wildly entertaining internet culture and tame, tame advertising has widened since. The situation is now so dire that Peter Field and System 1 recently reported that [50% of ads are less engaging than watching cows grazing in a field](#).

The most common emotion that ads now elicit? Neutrality. Absolutely nothing.

Performance channels have a lot to answer for. Spend shifted over the past decade from TV (a high attention channel with strong emotional influence) to social (a low attention channel), where ads are heavily sales-driving and are about as exciting as paste. (WARC, System 1). Meanwhile, dull ads make it 27% more expensive for brands to convert (Field), and do nothing to cultivate the emotions needed to drive long term build branding.

The good news is that brands now have the opportunity to win bigger, if they're willing to put themselves on stage and entertain people.

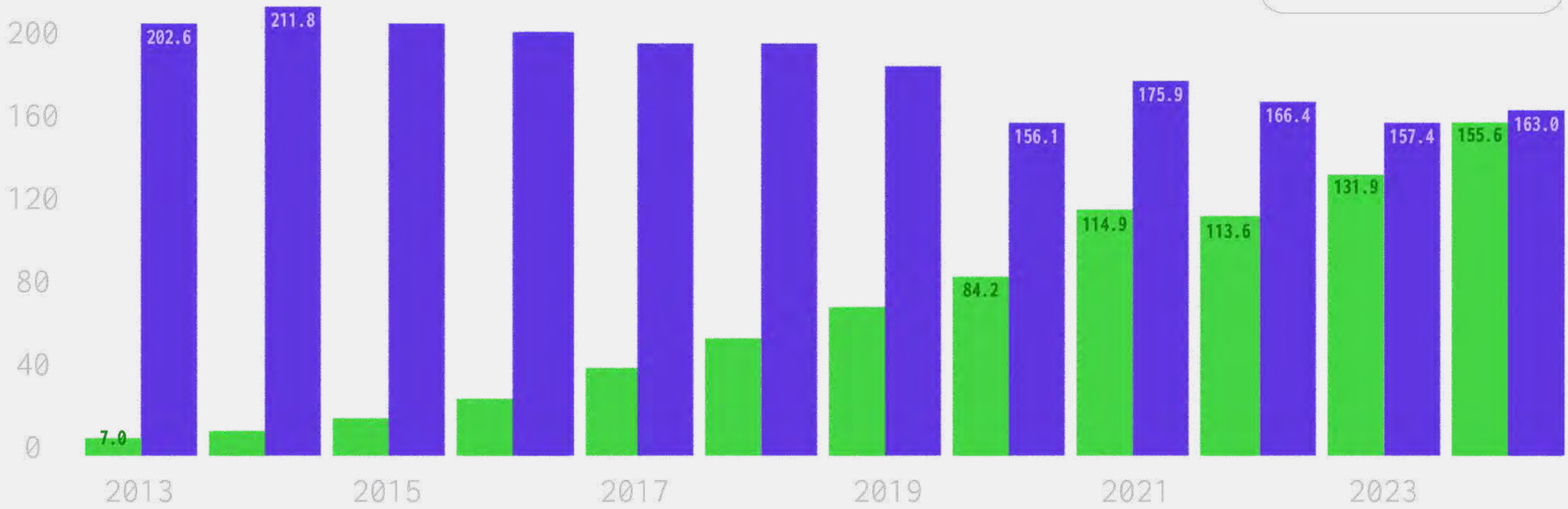
ALL THE MONEY IS HEADED TOWARDS DULL

DIGITAL FINALLY KILLED THE TV STAR

US\$ BN
CURRENT PRICES

GLOBAL, META & LINEAR TV AD SPEND

KEY
■ META
■ LINEAR TV

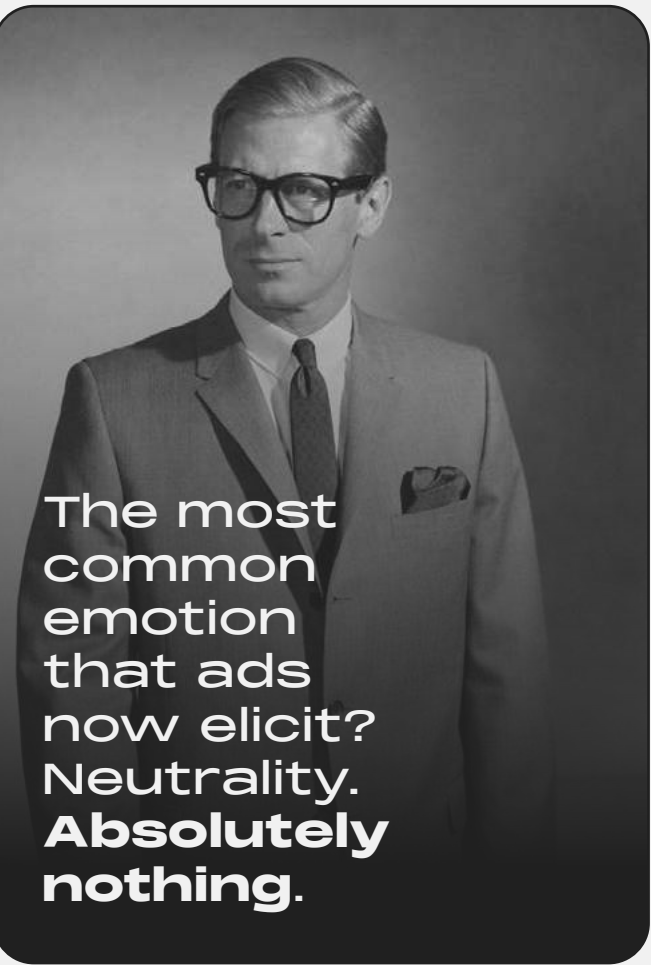


Source: The Extraordinary Cost of Dull, Peter Field, Jon Evans, EatBigFish & System 1



50%

Of ads are less engaging than watching cows eat grass



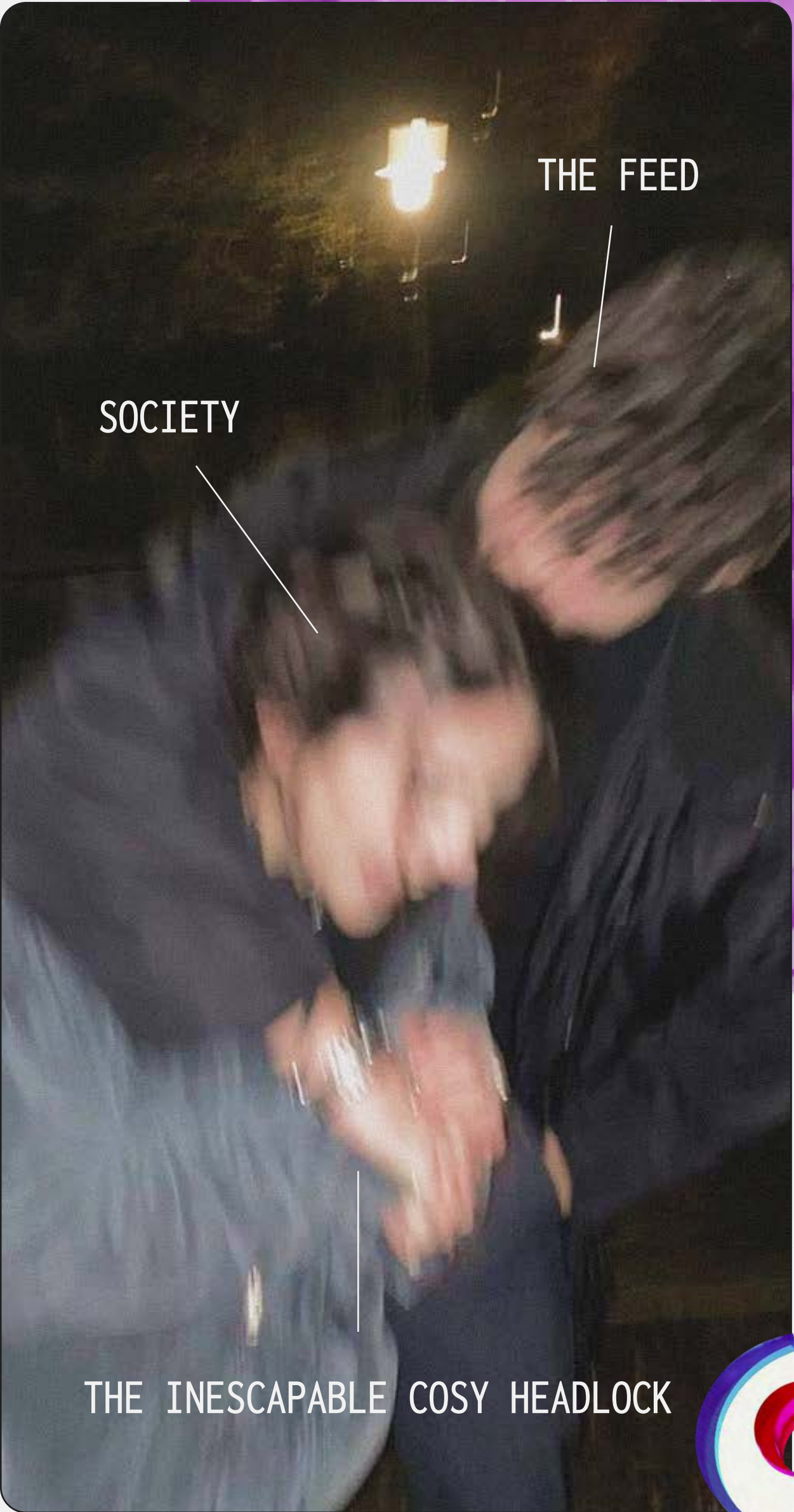
The most common emotion that ads now elicit? Neutrality. **Absolutely nothing.**

PEOPLE EXPECT TO BE ENTERTAINED, BRANDS ARE FALLING SHORT

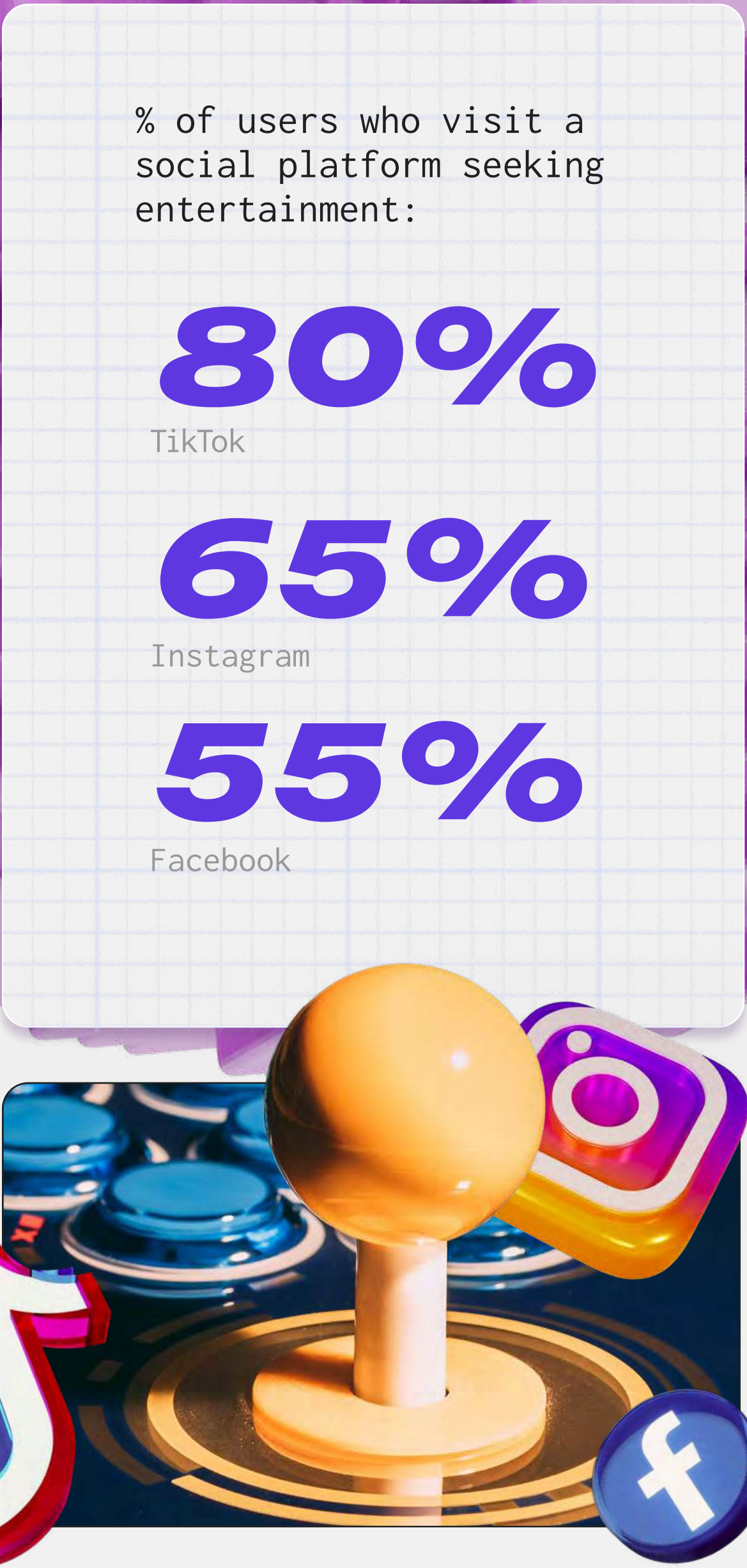
Our industry may be in a dullness crisis, but the world still expects to be entertained. In a society gripped in a cosy headlock by The Feed, the brand's who'll win can't just beat other brands, they'll have to lip-sync for their lives to emerge victorious against the best creators on social.

It's baffling to see companies not only continue to invest in dull ads, but to also run them on the same channels people go to be entertained. Eighty percent of TikTok users visit seeking entertainment, on Instagram it's 65% of users, and on Facebook 55% ([Digital 2024 Global Overview Report, We Are Social & Meltwater](#)).

Like the most mediocre of Hinge dates, brands seem to equate showing up at the table and talking about themselves with a job well done. But the people sitting across from them are looking for humour, charm or, at the very least, more in common than their current GPS coordinates.



THE INESCAPABLE COSY HEADLOCK



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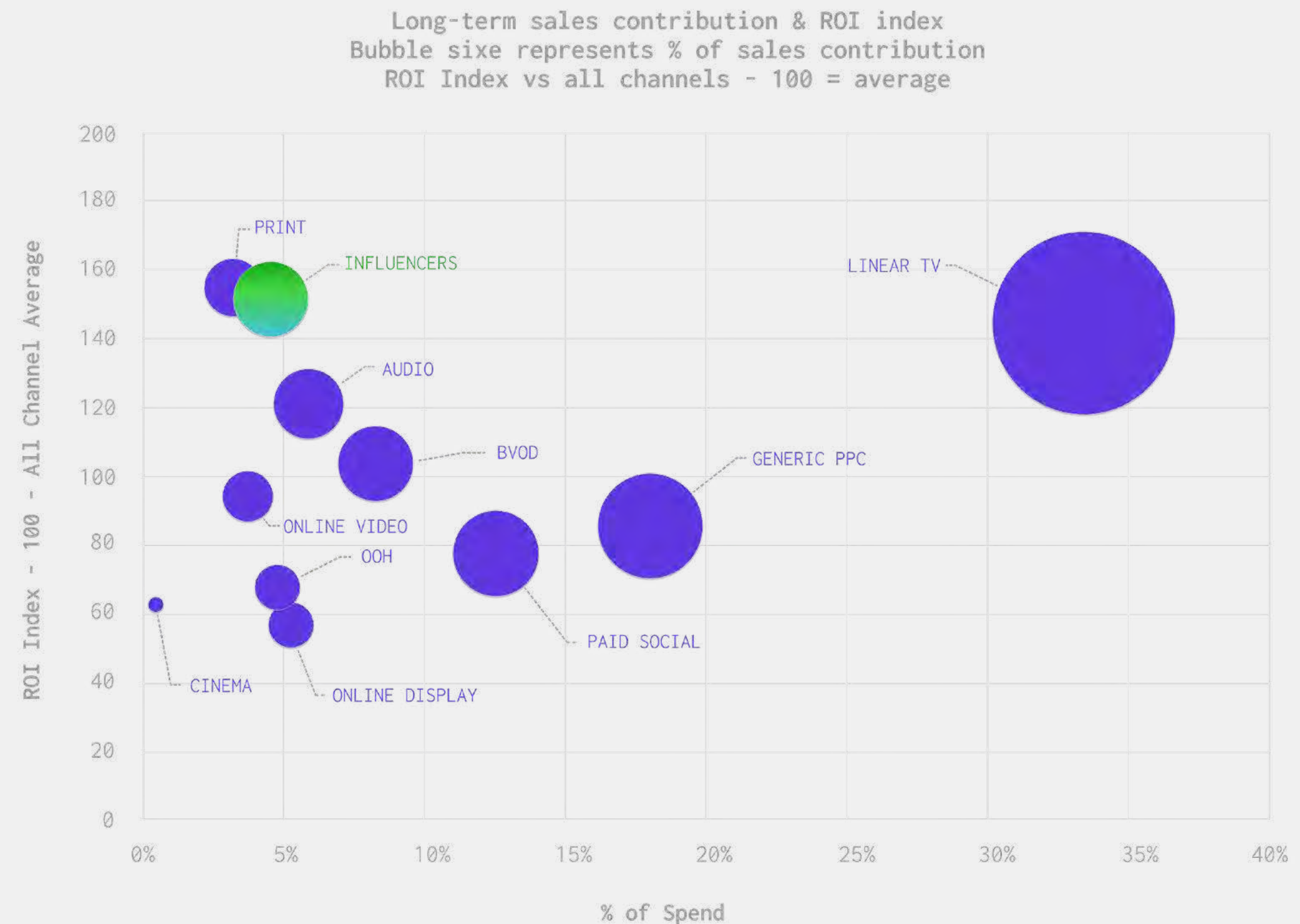


CREATORS AS LONG-TERM BRAND BUILDERS

Considering all this, it's easy to understand why creators are collectively mopping the floor with advertising: people actually want to watch them.

Last year, we argued that creators should be viewed as operators. We now see mounting evidence for why you might want to give Mr. Beast a corner office in your agency (despite the risk that he may tempt you to lock yourself in a padded cell to compete for \$1M and a lifetime supply of Mr. Beast chocolate bars).

In 2024, [research from the IPA and Andrew Tindall](#) established that creators have the highest long-term ROI of any other channel, with returns that rival linear TV, for less spend. Beyond ROI, however, we are seeing long-term positive impacts from creators on brand building. Analysis by System 1 and the Effies, of more than 1,250 campaigns from the US and Europe, showed that creators are now the most effective touchpoint when it comes to creating future demand and lasting brand effects.

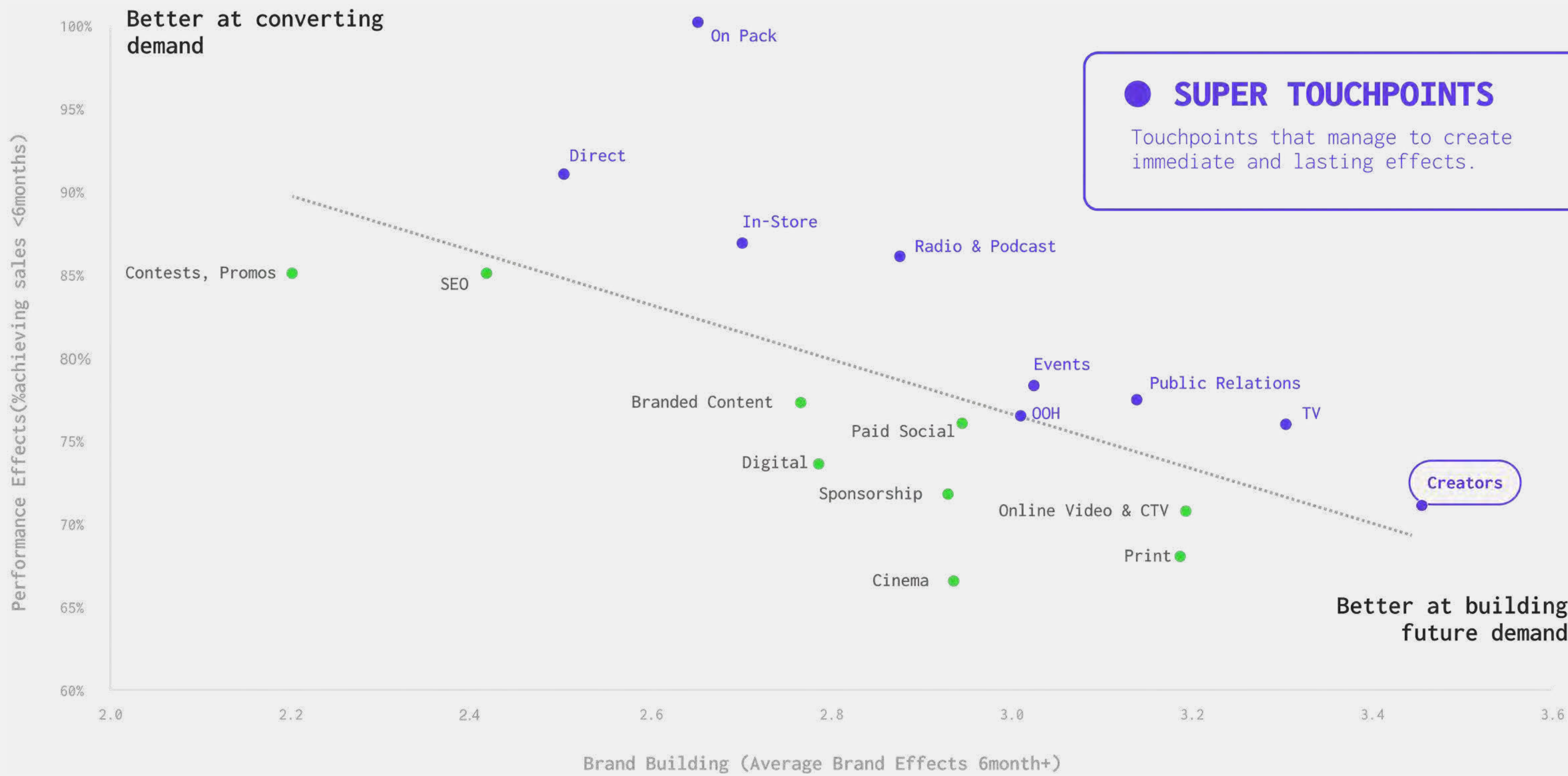


Influencer ROI Index = 151

Influencer Sales Contribution = 6.2%

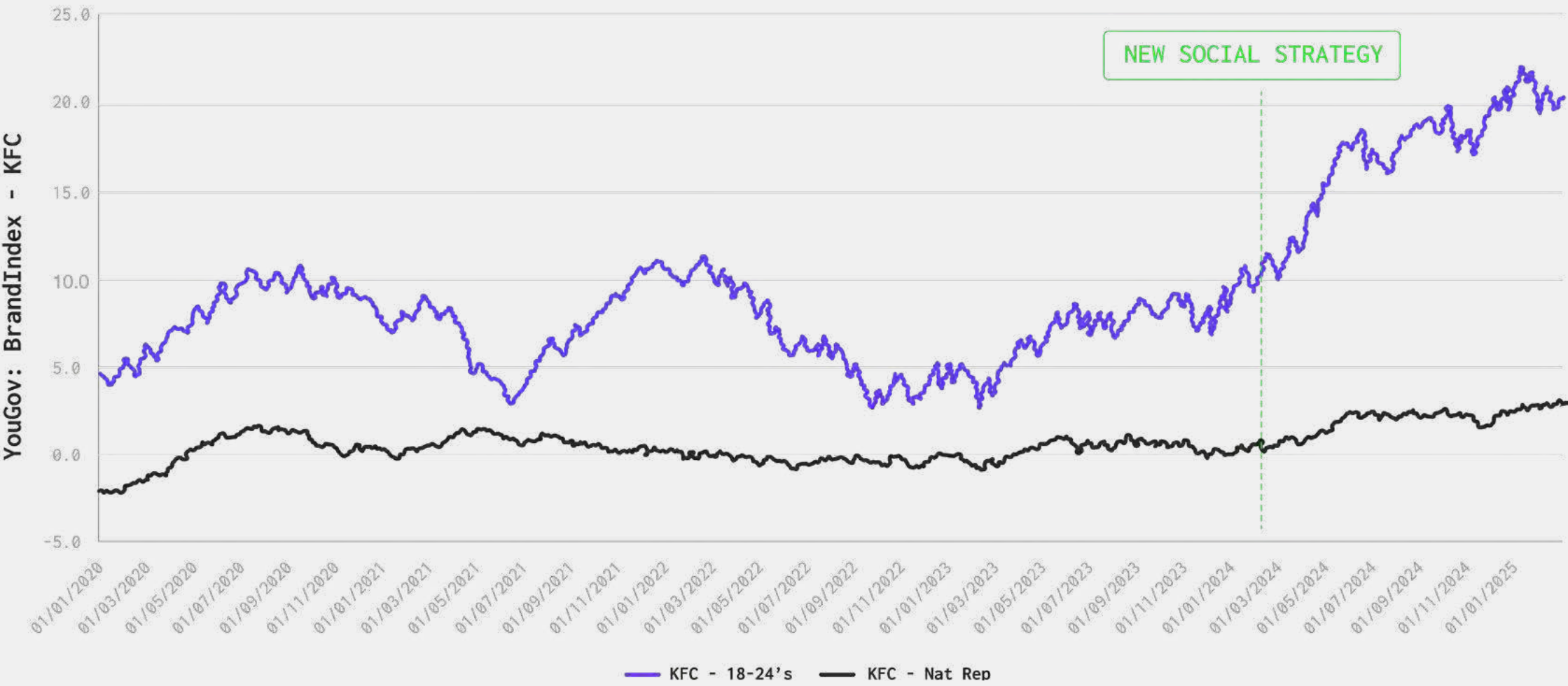
Above graph is a reconstruction of [System 1 data](#)

THE WORLD'S GREATEST ENTERTAINERS ARE CREATORS.



Above graph is a reconstruction of [System 1 data](#)

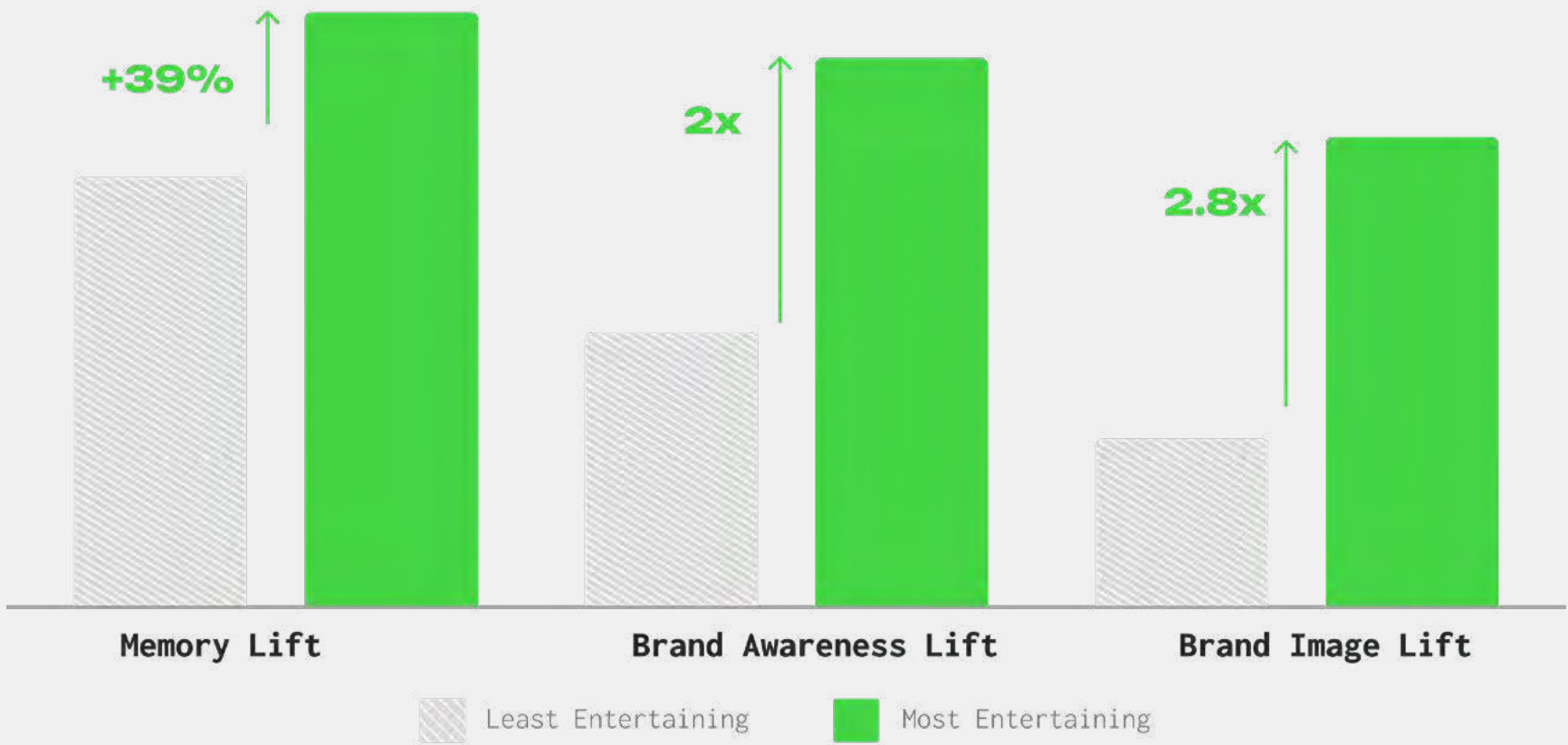
KFC VIRAL SOCIAL STRATEGY TRANSFORMED ITS BRAND



Graph data per [The Drum](#)

BRAND LIFT

by 'Showmanship Features', top vs bottom quartile



ENTERTAINING BRANDS ARE LASTING BRANDS

Entertainment presents us with a huge opportunity to build lasting brands that people remember. It's the magical override button, allowing the right brain's excitement to overcome the left brain's grumblings to take action, like, buy and remember what brands make.

When companies entertain people successfully, it changes the entire business's trajectory. When KFC UK embraced absolute chaos on its social, its brand equity shot up.

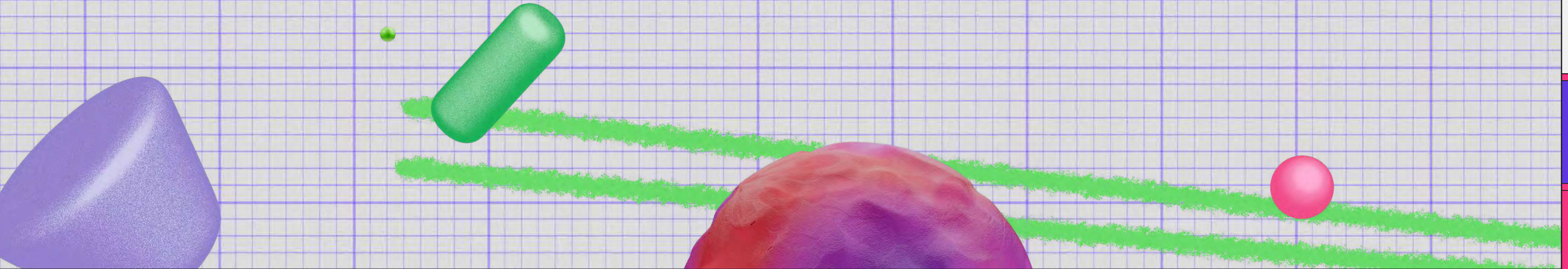
We know that entertaining short-form ads on digital channels create more lasting brand growth by supercharging attention and positive sentiment amongst consumers. Stories, sense of place, and characters go a long way towards attracting eyeballs and staying embedded in people's brains for longer periods of time.

According to [System 1](#): "Entertaining short-form builds more sentiment and attention. Sentiment and attention builds more brand."

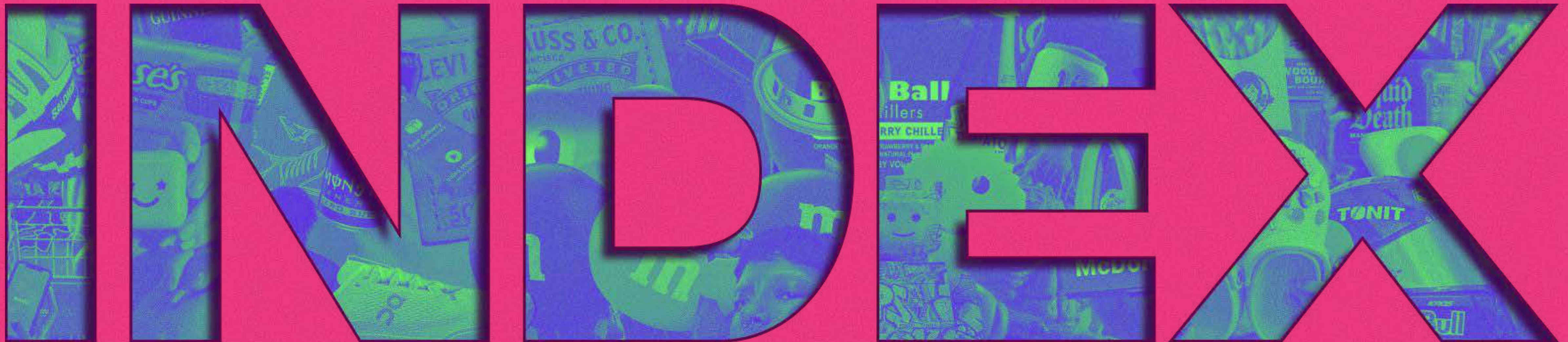
It's easy to see why 97% of the world's 30 most entertaining brands ([per Small W.rld's 2025 Entertainment Index](#)) posted revenue growth, and why over two-thirds of them reported double-digit gains ([Entertainment Branding and why it Matters, WARC, March 2025](#)).

Brands, now more than ever, need to step up and entertain or risk quietly expiring in the corner with no-one to mourn them. So, we hope this year's Case for **Entertainment**, and of course Britney Spears and her snake, helps to get you fired up and firing out more hilarious, dumbfounding, entertaining work that moves people, and brings your clients along for the joyride.





THE ENTERTAINMENT



THE ENTERTAINMENT INDEX

The Entertainment Index (EI) is a data-driven scoring system, created by Tracksuit, that measures how effectively brands create and sustain entertainment value.

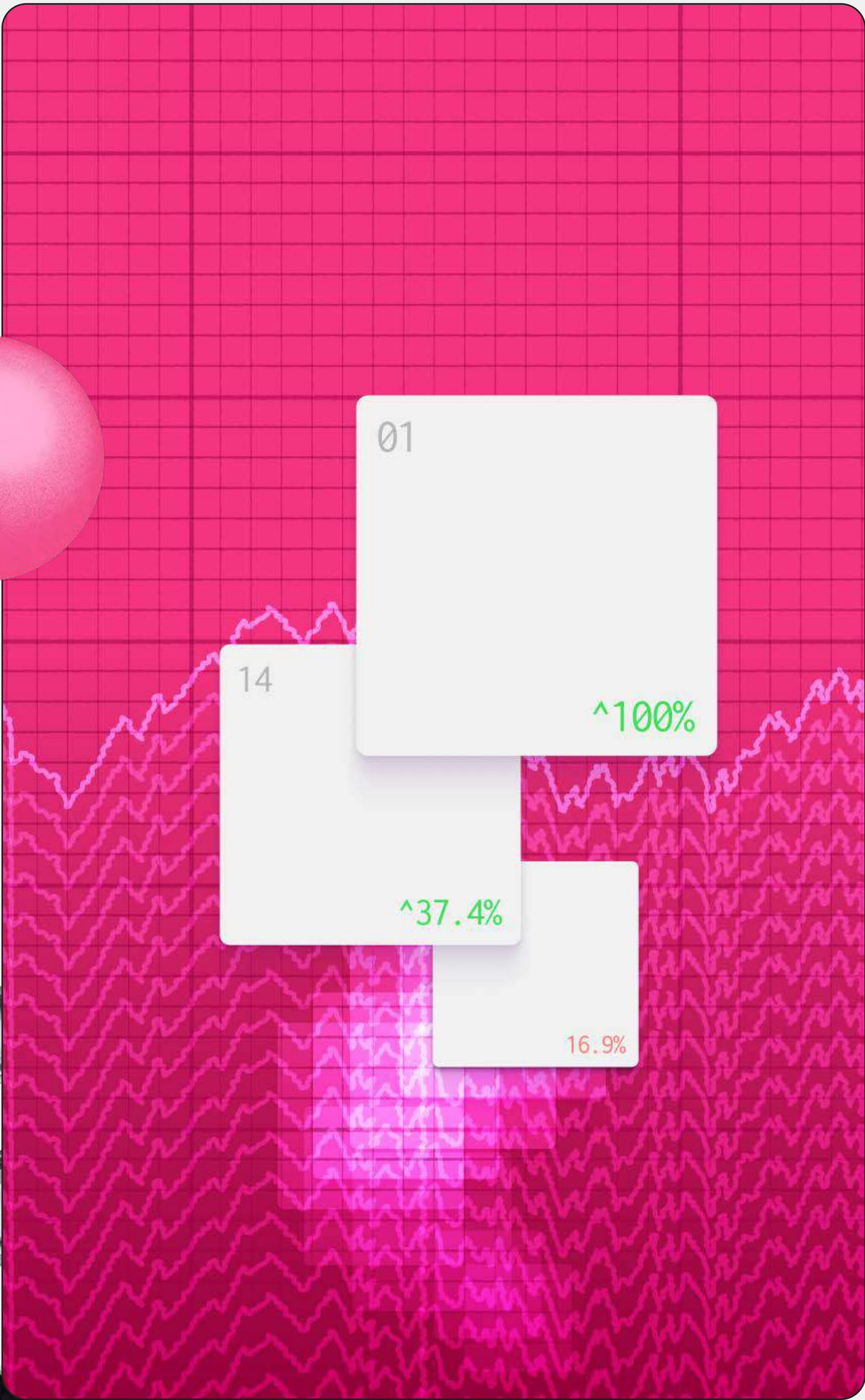
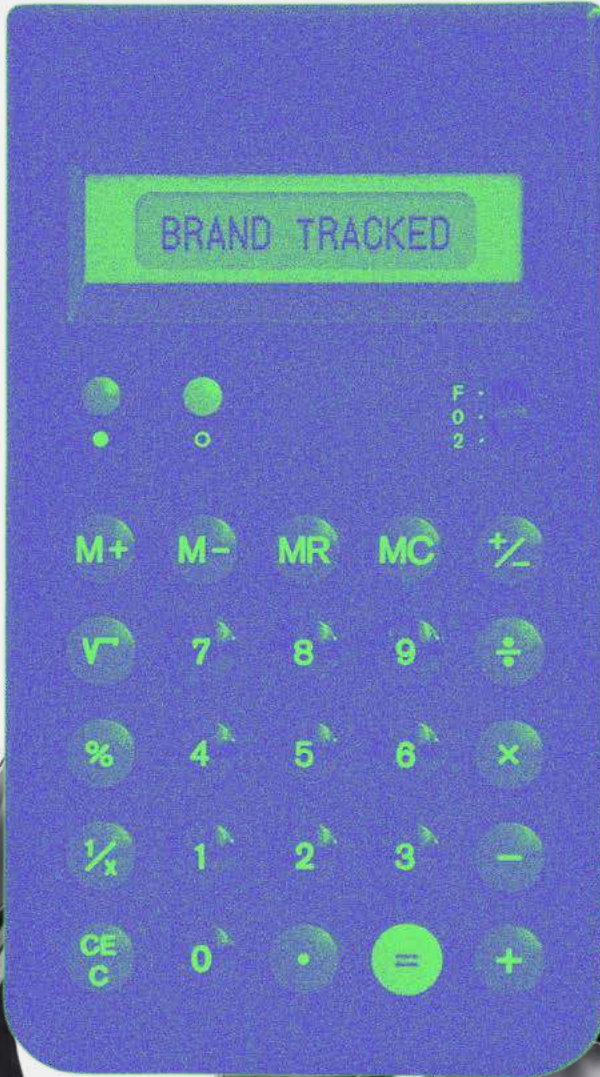
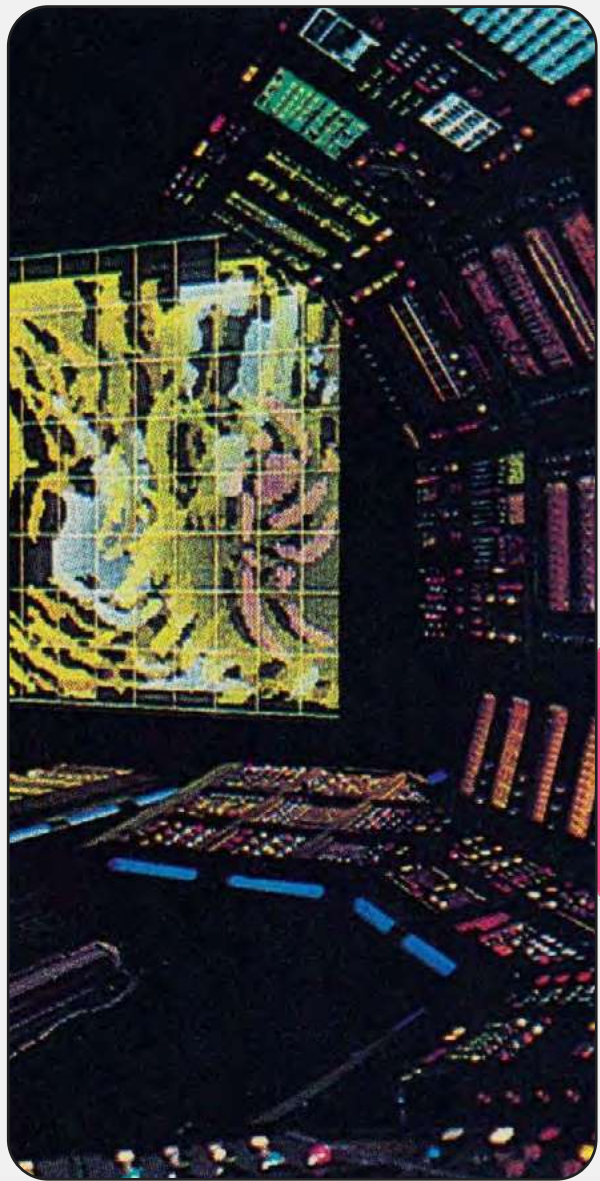
We analysed 16,200 US general population consumer survey responses to get a set of metrics which we combined into our rankings. The Entertainment Index sits within a wider ecosystem of data for these brands including longitudinal brand tracking metrics including awareness and consideration which have been included in the analysis.

Brands to be judged were selected by a panel of brand strategists and entertainment experts from around the world. We retained the top 30 brands from last year as our champions and got our expert panel to select 70 new brands to enter the fray for the chance to be deemed most entertaining. Brands needed higher than 10% prompted awareness to qualify.

Being on this list does not make you entertaining by default and The Entertainment Index is all relative and calculated based on the brands within the index itself. It is a way of ranking brands which experts consider best in class, purely on entertainment value. The lower down the list, the less entertaining a brand is, relatively speaking.

N.B. For this year's list we opted to remove entertainment or media brands as we felt they benefited from being entertainment platforms in their own right.

See a mini index of these brands on page 20.



WHAT MAKES A BRAND ENTERTAINING

For the 2026 release of Entertain or Die 3.0, Tracksuit and Small W•rld made a couple of changes to the methodology. Namely off the back of more thorough research, the statements that were used to compile the index were expanded and refined to create more differentiation and nuance in the index.

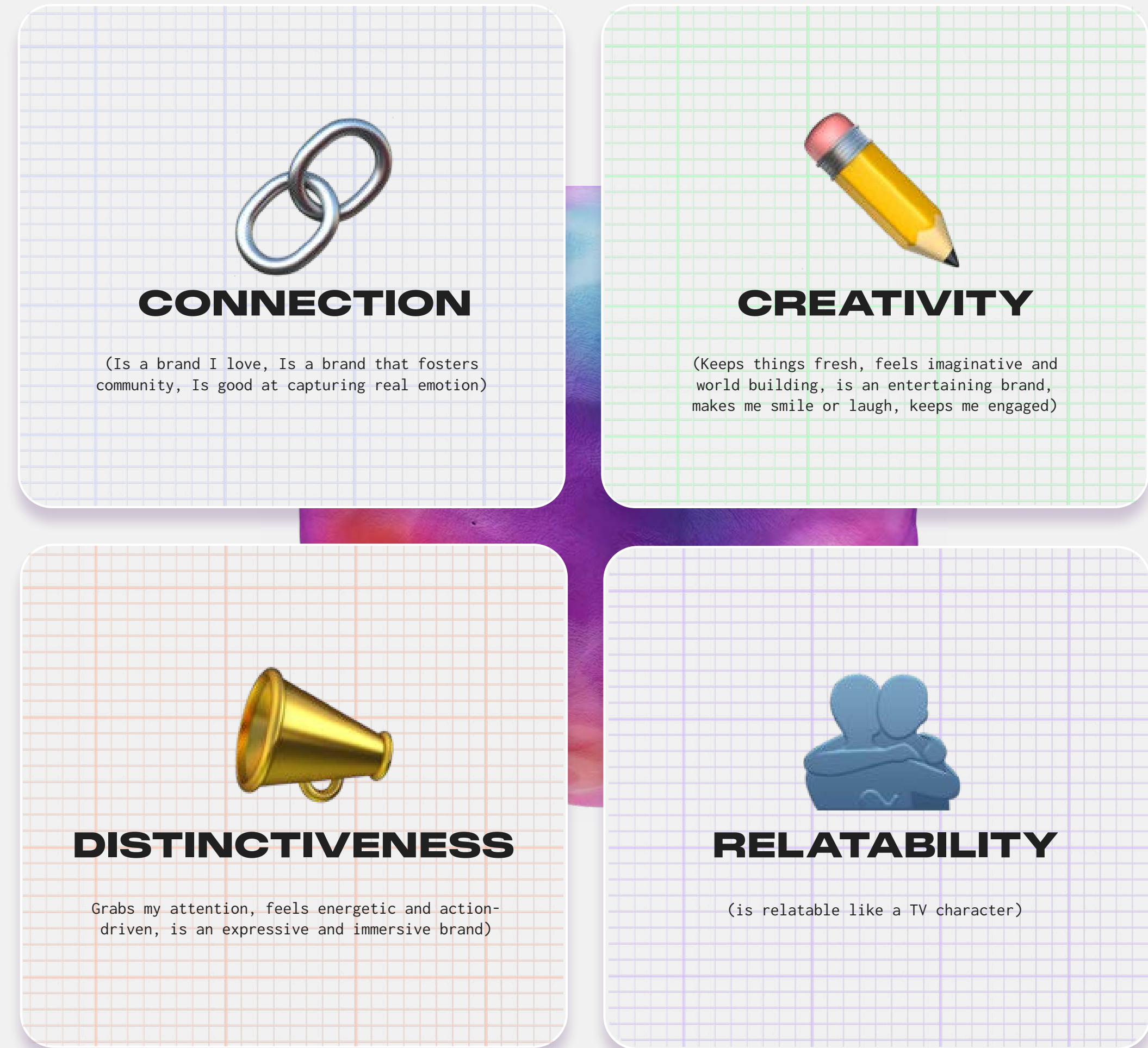
Secondly, social content data was removed (as it skewed to large brands who had legacy followings) and the focus became purely on consumer perception from survey responses (i.e. people's explicit agreement about brands).

The most entertaining brands performed well in **all** the pillars, scoring high in at least one statement in order to be entertaining.

Statements like “feels imaginative”, “relatable like a TV character”, “grabbing attention” and “good at capturing real emotion” are ones that the most entertaining brands tend to over index on.

As per [our previous study](#), the most entertaining brands weren't always the most loved.

Statements fell into four core pillars:



MEET THE TOP 30

01 m&m's	02 Reeses	03 Dove	04 HERSHEY's	05 Spikeball	06 PORSCHE
07 GoPro	08 LEGO	09 BuzzBallz	10 HELLMANN'S	11 a n	12 ARC'TERYX
13 HEINZ	14 OREO	15 MATTEL	16 STARFACE	17 Kraft	18 CeraVe
19 THE PINK STUFF	20 KitKat	21 Scrub Daddy	22 amazon	23 MONSTER ENERGY	24 Old Spice
25 Liquid Death	26 Dr Squatch	27 OURA	28 THE NORTH FACE	29 Sprite	30 Neutrogena



- STABLE
- NEW ENTRANT
- RISER
- FALLER

The brands people find the most joyful, the most shareable, the most talked about — the most undeniably entertaining.

Removing media companies has allowed pantry staples like M&Ms, Oreo, and KitKat to culture-shaping forces like LEGO, Amazon and Mattel to flourish. They prove entertainment first marketing is becoming the default language of modern global brands, and that even the most established brands can adapt to this model given the chance.

But the real story sits in the mix. Previous entertainment darlings like Liquid Death and Duolingo have taken a hit, with Duolingo just dropping out of the top 30. But new entrants like Dr Squatch and BuzzBallz, both Small World clients, have exploded onto the scene rewriting the rules with internet-native creativity that captures eyes and minds.

If you'd rather skip ahead to see the full 100, feel free on **page 26**. But that would be a bit like jumping straight to the final scene of a film - technically possible but actually nonsensical.

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BRANDS THAT ENTERTAIN ARE MAKING BANK



Businesses adapting well to the new role of brands in an entertainment-first world are increasingly outperforming their peers.

Across the Top 30 brands in the Entertain or Die Index, the vast majority are growing. From breakout challengers like **Oura** (+100%) and **On** (+30%), to cultural heavyweights like **LEGO** (+12%), **Amazon** (+12%) and **Apple** (+16%), entertainment is proving to be a powerful growth engine.

From the top 30 brands* (83%), those deemed most entertaining, only five reported revenue decline. Nearly half (47%) achieved double-digit growth. Put simply, being entertaining pays.**

Admittedly this is a slight decrease from last year's figures where all but one recorded growth and two thirds achieved double digit growth.

However, with us removing over performing entertainment platforms (all big tech) and brands like Porsche and Mattel hit by ludicrous tariffs, this was to be expected.

By earning attention, brands are building an army of fans willing to share their stories, dramatically increasing reach while reducing reliance on paid media.

*We've referenced the top 30 brands we had accurate data for, meaning we've gone down to rank 43.

**This data is based on actual and predicted fiscal year results for 2025 as of March 2026

02	04	06	07	08	10
^4.4%	^4.4%	-6%	-19%	^12%	^2.5%
11	13	14	15	16	17
^30%	-3.5%	^5.8%	-1%	^10%	^3.5%
18	20	22	23	25	26
^5.5%	^3%	^12%	^10.7%	^20%	^5%
27	28	30	31	32	33
^100%	^1%	^2.9%	-3.1%	^2%	^2%
35	36	37	40	41	43
^8.6%	^5.1%	^4%	^39%	^16%	^15%

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FANDOM MAPPING

HOW TO KNOW WHAT ENTERTAINS PEOPLE

Reality check: people spend less than 1% of their day thinking about your brand. If you want to earn their attention on the algorithmic internet, you need to connect your brand to the things they're already engaging with and the spaces they're already in. One powerful route is through fandoms.

Fandoms aren't a new concept, but how we think about them as marketers is stuck in 2014. Fan culture isn't limited to mainstream sports or nerdy niches; it's anything your potential customers are spending an outsized amount of time with: gardening, goths, goblins, you name it. These are all fandoms and have their own subcultures within them.

Ultimately, it means putting your customers ahead of your brand. It's about what they want to see, not what you want to show them. Think of fandom mapping as an entertainment-specific take on the first step of any good marketing plan: diagnosis. What are the people you're trying to reach passionate about? How can your brand become part of that? As Ulta Beauty CMO Kelly Mahoney said during the 2025 Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity: *"You have to really find that space where culture meets whatever is relevant for your particular brand."*

Fandom mapping is how you find that space. Small W.rld, for example, has built a tool called the Fandom Mapper™ that scrapes a sample of a brand's social following to figure out which creators and content they excessively engage with. From there you can see which passions to play in. We've done this for clients like Duolingo and Twilio in the last six months. The work of [Gabriel Davis](#) and his GAR AI are leading the way in fandom mapping as well. But you don't always need tools to succeed, the Duolingo team (and many others) go analogue with [several burner phones set up with different TikTok algorithms](#) to better understand niche subcultures. The game is the same, but rather than trying to reach everyone at once with a consolidated media buy, you aim for smaller groups of more transfixed eyeballs that cumulatively aim for the same reach. As [Meta's Peter Buckley](#) puts it, brands are now being built "from the edges in" (sorry Byron Sharp).

Your brand can slide into any appropriate niche, wide or narrow. Just listen to the conversation before trying to lead it. Anime - which is now watched at least weekly by 50% of Gen Z, "even in markets traditionally dominated by Hollywood studio entertainment", according to [Dentsu's 2026 Media Trends report](#) - is a huge fandom that many brands have successfully joined. Duolingo is launching its own anime series, produced by the creators of Big Mouth (proper effort).

In China, luxury fashion houses are tapping into growing books and poetry fandoms. Bottega Veneta set up an interactive installation using several thousand poetry anthologies and [Miu Miu brought its Literary Club salons to Shanghai](#).

Before speaking to fans, these brands become fans themselves. McDonald's excavates its comments section for cultural artefacts, which often inspire their next idea. *"It's so important we're talking fan to fan, not brand to fan,"* the brand's VP of marketing, brand, content and culture, Jennifer Healan [said on a podcast](#).

Wimbledon perfected this during the 2025 tournament by diversifying its social content to appeal to more than just tennis fans. There were posts about aesthetics for the design fans and players' "cheat meals" for the foodies. And its Overheard series, which let followers eavesdrop on spectators' conversations via social, took a Wimbledon brand truth - it's great for people-watching - and turned it into a cultural moment.

Fandom mapping isn't a shortcut to soulless partnerships. To really succeed in engaging with fans - and ideally convert them into fans of your brand too - you have to prove you're as passionate as they are.



"He's playing Wimbledon at 22 and I'm just drinking Pimms on a hill"



PERFORMANCE ART

HOW TO MAKE ENTERTAINING IDEAS

The ideas that entertain people, and how they're made, vary wildly by context. What makes an entertaining movie is different to what makes an entertaining meme. What works for one audience, one platform, might die a tragic death on another.

But these distinct worlds are starting to converge. Creatives are channelling Doctor Frankenstein, chopping up high art and low art, silliness and seriousness, artificial and real, and stitching select pieces haphazardly together. And whilst their monster looks nothing like Jacob Elordi (at least not always), it's just as deliciously entertaining. And the process of how they're pieced together is just as important as their final form.

We've noticed these chimeric creations have several consistent anatomies. The first is what Samir Chaudry has called "[high effort, low stakes](#)" in relation to the viral antics of Anthpo, the man behind the Timothee Chalamet lookalike contest. This is the opposite of optimisation, it's silliness at the edge of pointlessness, but so intricately planned that it's impossible not to be entertained by the juxtaposition.



Think of Anthpo's other performance art piece, masquerading as [a kid who 3D-printed Crocs](#) to put on statues around New York (including the Statue of Liberty), which turned out to be content for the plastic-shoe-maker. Or fashion critic Lyas hosting watch parties for Dior's runway shows. It's the thoughtful absurdity that draws people in. Artist Nik Bentel embodies this energy in his work, like the campy Matcha Urgency Bag he made with [Small W•rld for Oatly](#). *"I want things to feel considered but not overly serious," he told Aspire, "like someone showed up to a black-tie event in a well-tailored clown suit."* Give people a story and they'll pay attention.

A different subversive tactic is available for usually boring brands: be bold, be weird, be bigger than your brand guidelines suggest you should go. Brita water filters had TikTokers singing along to their [kitten-themed "Bwita" song](#); bird protection charity [RSPB](#) has surprised and delighted with its punny social content ("just another Egret" sang to the tune of All American Rejects); and train company Amtrak went viral for its hectic, monster-truck-y promo posts.

[The Met Police](#) jumped on the Timothee Chalamet prompted EsDeeKid hype with TikTok edits to his 4 Raws track meant to deter bike thieves ([even UK PM Keir Starmer has tried to use trending tracks to his social advantage](#) lol). [Small W•rld created an evil children's toy](#) to drive sign-ups for its encrypted cloud storage service. If these brands, people and political figures can beat the algorithm, what's your excuse?

Next is the telemorphosis of social media. Brands are creating repeatable, TV-like formats that keep users coming back. Rewards company Bilt scripted a series, Roomies, about four roommates in New York: one-minute-ish episodes, zero branding, hundreds of thousands of views. BAPE aired an in-store game show featuring recognisable influencers.

Small W•rld took this to the next level for [Hot Topic](#), recruiting a cast of creators to write, star in and direct Mall Rats, a campy TikTok first series celebrating alt fandoms and celebrating mall culture. We'll look at the success of that series in our measurement section. Look through your socials: could your best-performing video be expanded into a series?

As [Adam Faze of Gymnasium](#), a social first show producer, says "Brands are TV networks. And making shows that organically reach Gen Z on the platforms they watch is the future of marketing."

Creators build branded worlds better than anyone else. They're the embodiment of show, rather than tell. You can recognise a creator's Reel before seeing their face, the visual codes give it away. Amelia Dimoldenburg is edited choppily in a chicken shop; Subway Takes' guests speak into Metrocards; even Littered Mvmnts - the artist who impersonates litter he finds on the street - has a distinctive split screen. Consistency is a profit multiplier - whether it's with characters, sounds or recurring images.

Timothee Chalamet did it all in the run-up to the Marty Supreme premiere: the jacket, the tracksuit, the EsDeeKid track, and he caricatured himself (atop the Las Vegas dome). Brands are catching on: Duolingo, JustEat, Domino-hoo-hoo, and Small W•rld's episodic Rescuerama work with Rescue Remedy gave the wellness brand an instantly recognisable, TikTok-friendly look.



Finally, this new wave of entertainment is leveraging reality, either by proving it's real or embracing the fact that it's not. Apple TV released a [BTS tape](#) to show how they made their idents, getting clout for its craftsmanship, while on a smaller scale creative director Pablo Rochat shared an instructional video for how he produced a reality-bending Heineken ad. *“As some brands slopify themselves, it will be the ones that invest even deeper in good creative that will stand out,”* [Rachel Karten writes](#) in her newsletter.

How you made something is fast becoming as, if not more, important than the final product: process is everything; it proves your creativity is human not AI-generated. BTS videos are outperforming the originals, studios are dropping making-of films alongside TV shows, even [Charli XCX has launched a Substack](#) to dig deeper into her creative process.

Design-driven consumer goods brand Craighill embodies this in [its social content](#): beautifully shot videos explaining functional choices in their designs.

For Microsoft, Small W•rld also embraced this how-to energy, with creator videos that dug into how Excel helped in the production of [a stop-motion animation](#), [a 3D-rendered artwork](#) and [a very unusual musical instrument](#).

How you made something is fast becoming as, if not more, important than the final product

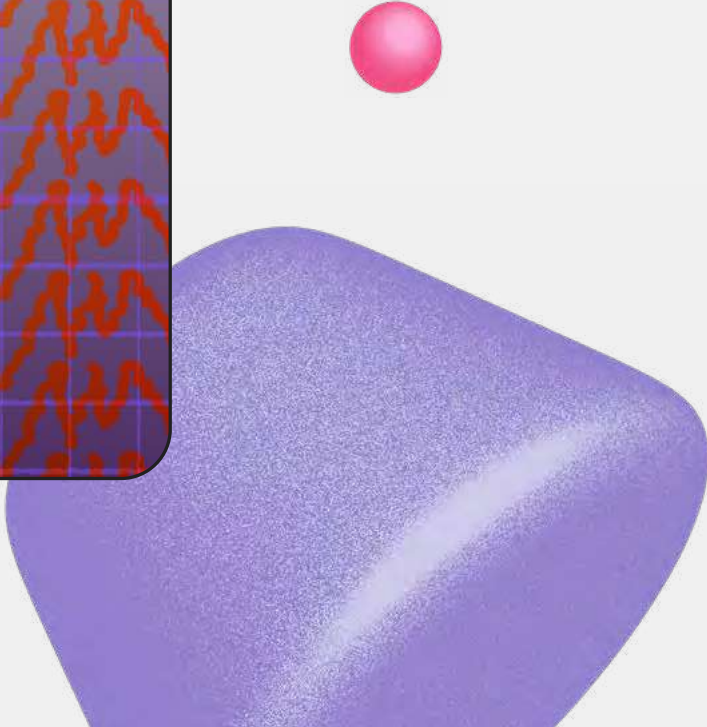
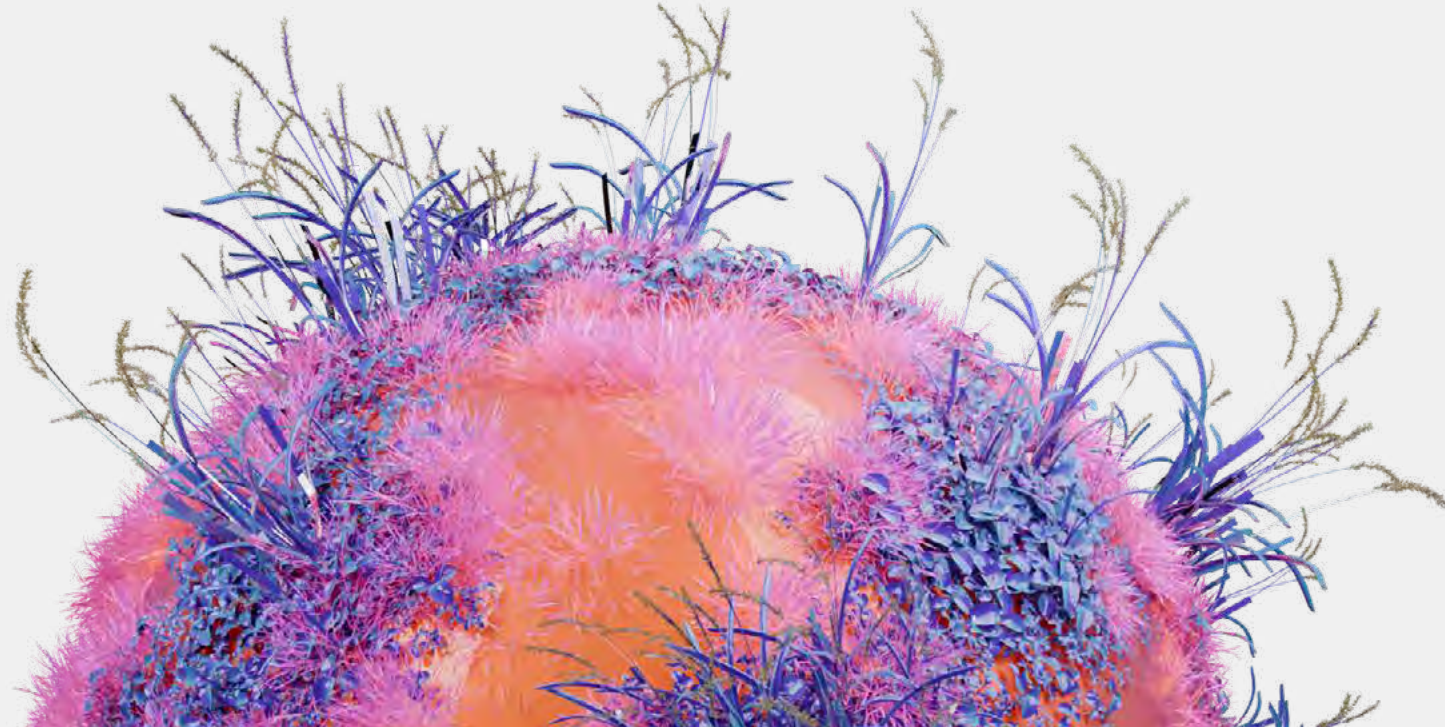
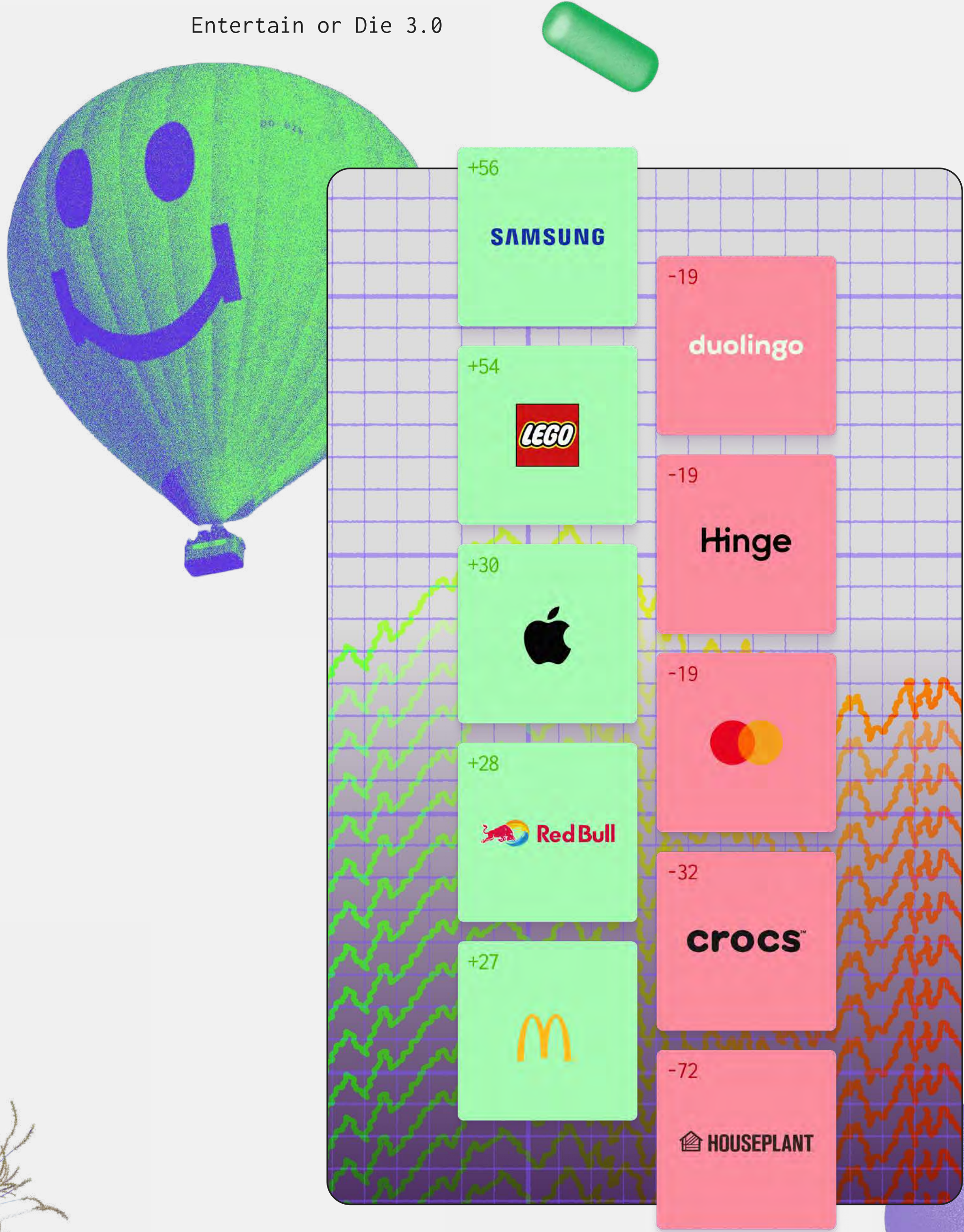


RISERS AND FALLERS

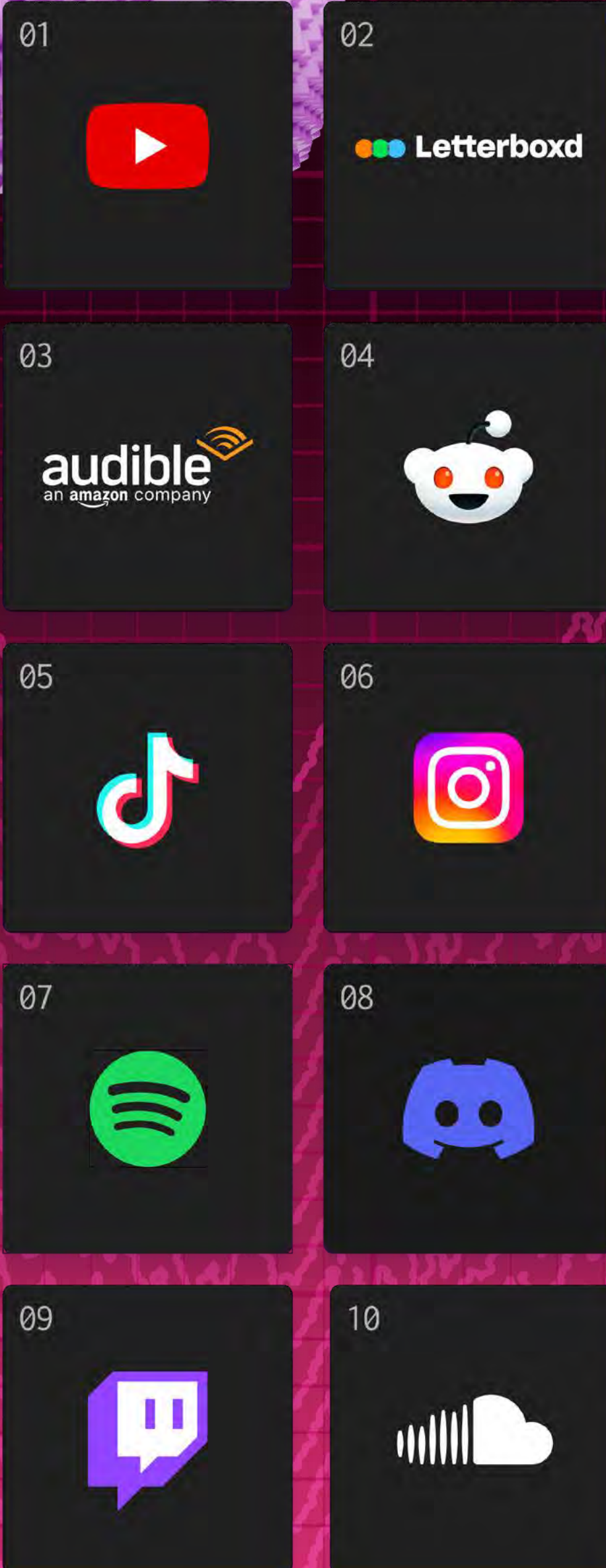
This year's index shows how quickly entertainment momentum can rise or fade.

This year **Samsung** (+56), **LEGO** (+54), and **Apple** (+30) are among the biggest risers, proving that brands investing consistently in cultural storytelling can rapidly climb the rankings. **LEGO's resurgence is particularly notable**, fuelled by a steady stream of entertainment projects, from its massive **LEGO Fortnite universe with Epic Games** and cross-media storytelling expansions across games and streaming.

At the other end, a few once-buzzing brands have slipped. **Houseplant** (-72) shows the limits of founder-led hype when cultural output slows, while **Duolingo** (-19) dipped following social leadership changes, controversy around its AI-first strategy and the changing pace of social briefly stalling its once-dominant social presence. But if history tells us anything, it's that entertaining brands rarely stay down for long.



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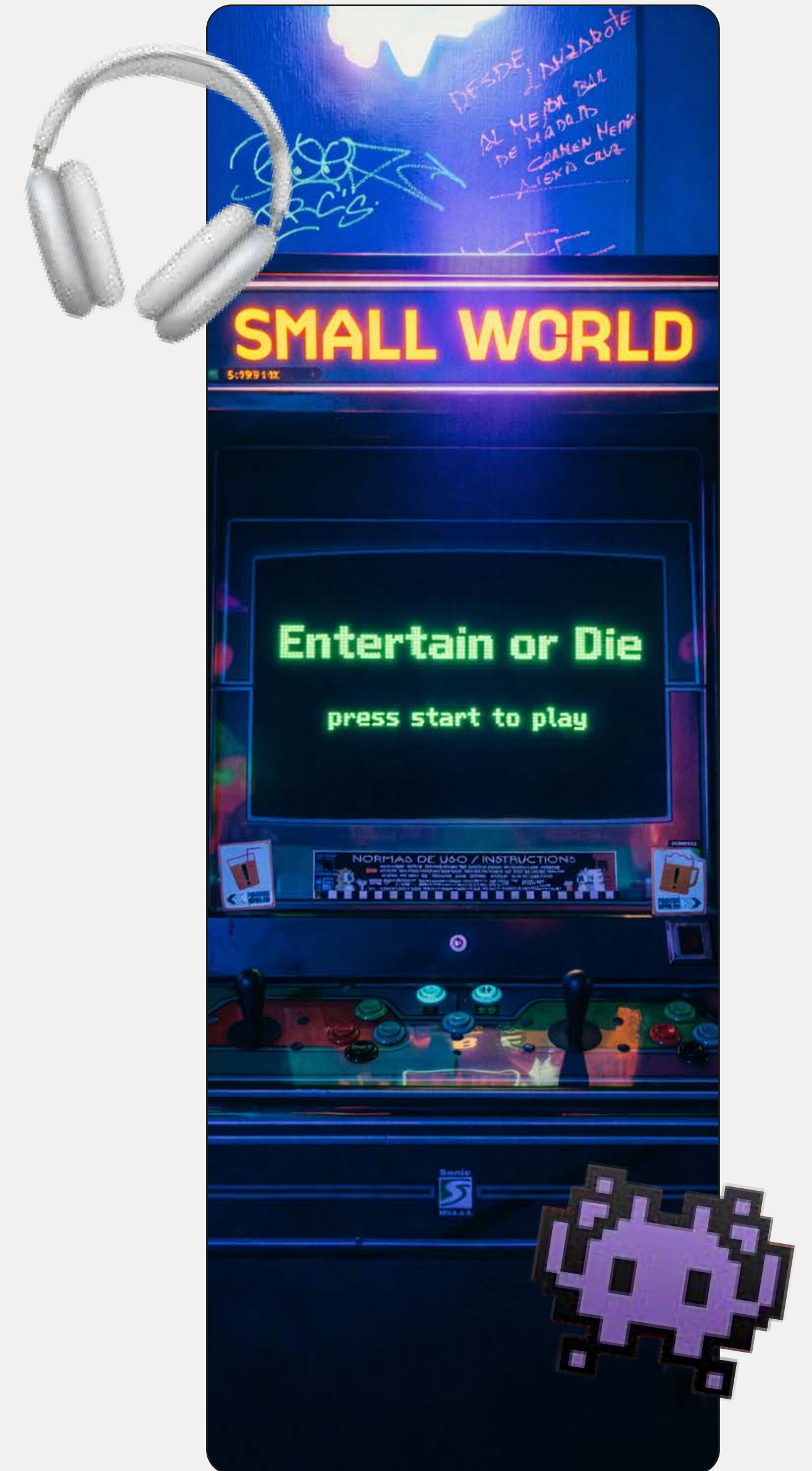
ENTERTAINMENT BRANDS

MINI INDEX

Entertainment and media platforms are naturally more entertaining and have an inherent advantage, so we opted to exclude them from the main index. However, we still tracked a top 10 to understand which platforms are setting the pace when it comes to entertainment.

Within the group, **YouTube** remains the **clear leader**, continuing to dominate the entertainment landscape as the internet's most powerful video and creator platform. Interestingly, **TikTok** has seen a **noticeable decline**, as the platform became a political tool in the US and became more saturated with slop content.

Meanwhile newer or culturally resurgent platforms like **Letterboxd** (although with **12% prompted awareness**) and **Reddit** are gaining ground by offering highly engaged, community-driven entertainment experiences that feel closer to what social media once was.



DISRUPTOR BRANDS

MINI INDEX

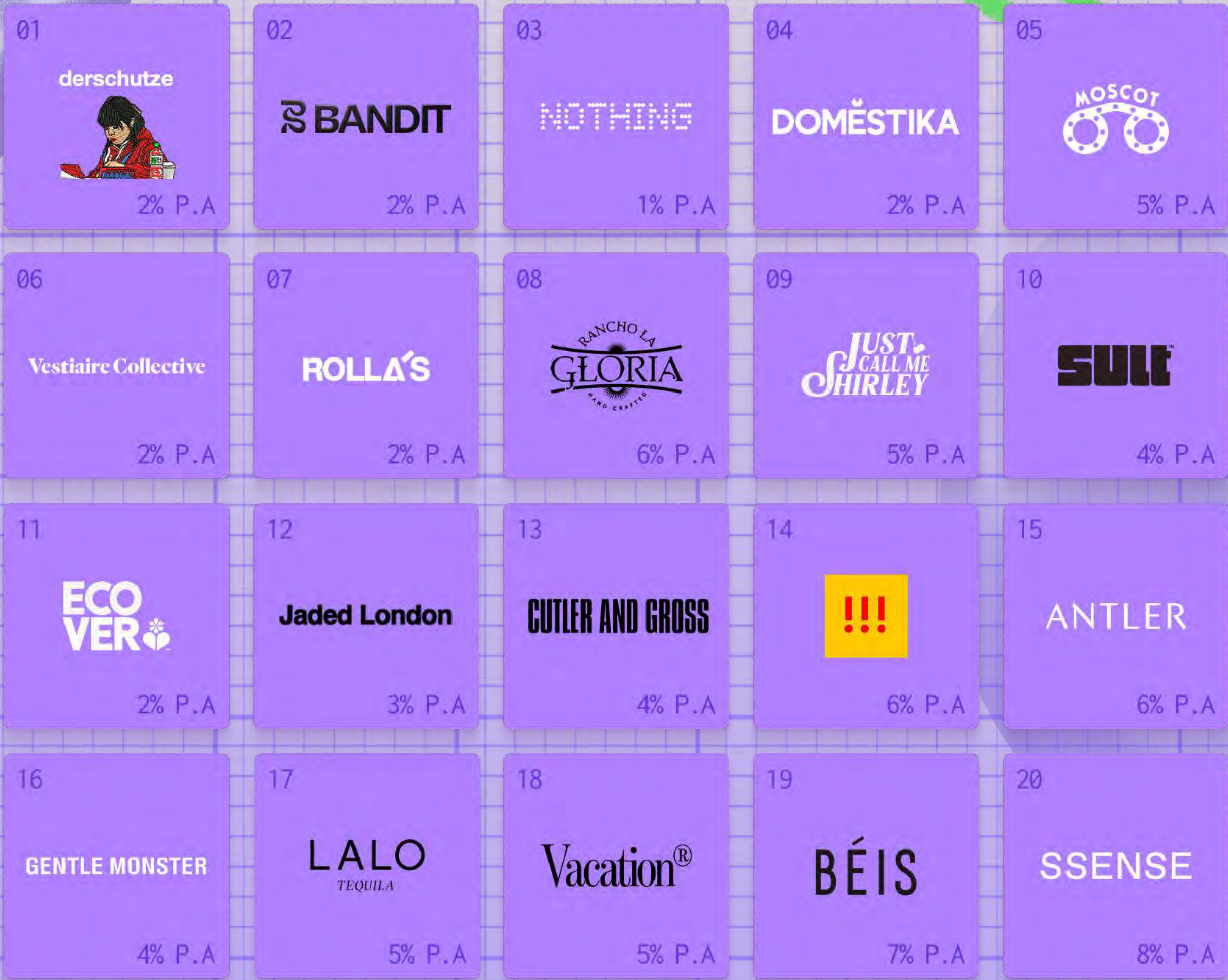
When you ask brand experts to pick their favorite brands, some go decidedly niche to prove their knowledge (we're looking at you Joe). Rather than exclude their brands outright, we created the disruptors mini index.

These Disruptor Brands have less than 10% prompted awareness, but they outperform the average brand on Entertainment Score. In other words, the people who do know them already find them highly entertaining, a powerful signal of future cultural momentum.

Brands like Gentle Monster, Nothing and Vacation Inc. are building cult-like audiences through creativity, and distinctive brand worlds.

These brands are small in reach but big in entertainment efficiency, generating disproportionate engagement relative to their awareness, likely to lead to an increase in awareness in the future. In an entertainment-first world, that's often how the next breakout brands begin.

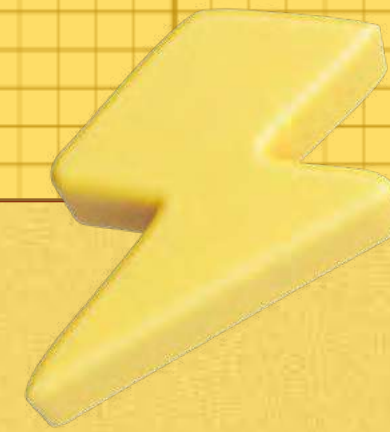
If they continue to scale their visibility while maintaining their entertainment value, many of these disruptors won't stay under the radar for long.



P.A = PROMPTED AWARENESS

DISCOVERY BY DESIGN

HOW TO SHARE ENTERTAINING IDEAS



The internet used to reward the loudest ideas or the ones that could pay to be heard. Now algorithms favour the ideas cleverly constructed to travel the furthest

Reach, once the holy grail of marketing, has lost its allure, now a cheap metric treasured only by Zuckerbergian dashboards. [Boston Consulting Group calls it out plainly](#): “reach does not guarantee influence.” It’s no longer an indicator that ideas are being shared or reshared organically by real people, or that they’re converting customers.

As reach is redefined, distribution gains significance. How content is sent out into the world shouldn’t be a post-production afterthought, but an essential part of how a modern idea will be received. Take creator Zara Dar, who posts her [STEM tutorials on Pornhub](#) to maximise ad revenue (don't worry, that link is SFW) – the content lives on YouTube too, but the creative tweak to the distribution is what gets results. In a sense, the distribution is the idea here.



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Use the fragmentation of the media landscape to your advantage and deliver your big idea in a collage of micro-moments. Brands are being built through what creative effectiveness guru Grace Kite calls [“lots of littles”](#), rather than one activation or spot. Vaseline did this by taking [the beauty “hacks” 450+ creators were doing with its product](#), verifying which ones worked and turning those UGC videos into shoppable social spots. Sales jumped 43%, but more importantly, Vaseline was legitimised to all the audiences of this creator cornucopia.

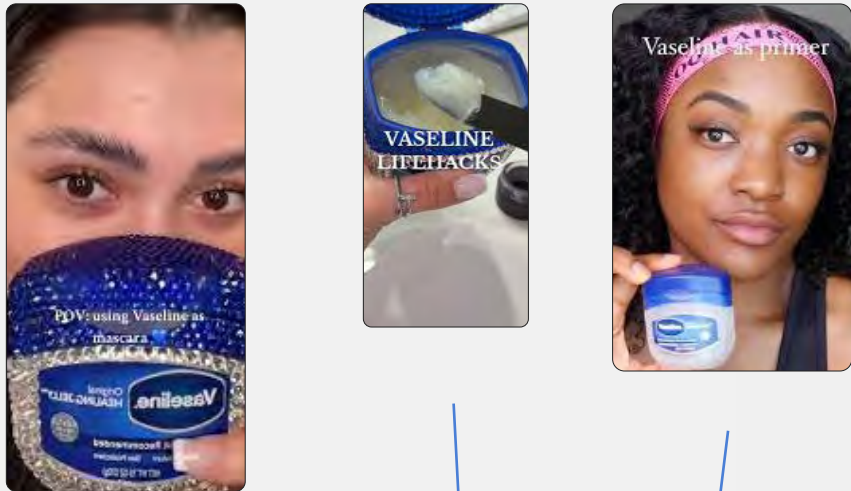
Clipping is another way to design for discovery. It's as simple as grabbing the best moments from a longer piece of content to scale up the opportunities for interaction. The algo will love you for it because, like all good clout-chasers, algorithms latch onto ideas they've seen repeatedly in various contexts. Brands can clip content themselves or - even better - engineer a situation where everyone else will do it for them. Whack on a livestream worth watching and watch the clips appear across the internet.

This is social proof for the internet generation. If someone sees 10,000, 1,000 or even just ten different accounts sharing your content, they'll be more motivated to engage. Make work that begs to be clipped, rather than paying for your own post to be seen 100,000 times

French music artist Rilès [ran on a treadmill for 24 hours](#) to promote the launch of his album Survival Mode; Australian senator Charlotte Walker won votes by talking policy during [Minecraft streams](#); and financial platform Ramp [hired Brian Baumgartner](#), Kevin from the Office, as its CFO and livestreamed his first day. Clip city. As James Rowe, president of branded content studio OBB says: ***“Clipping is the new syndication. It’s how live moments find new audiences across platforms.”***

On that note, you should be working across different channels, finding the formats that work best for each. As part of the [promo for the film Eddington](#), A24 made a TikTok for the cult leader character Vernon Jefferson Peak, where he espoused his various teachings. On’s Dreamers spot with Zendaya got 5m views on YouTube, but its additional [social content](#) (including bloopers from the spot and jokey Reels with Law Roach, Zendaya’s stylist) added another 45m+ and dozens more routes to discovery.

With his [“three horizons of discovery”](#), Callum McCahon reminds us that it's not enough to create for your followers; the path to being seen now runs through algorithms, communities and curators simultaneously.



MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

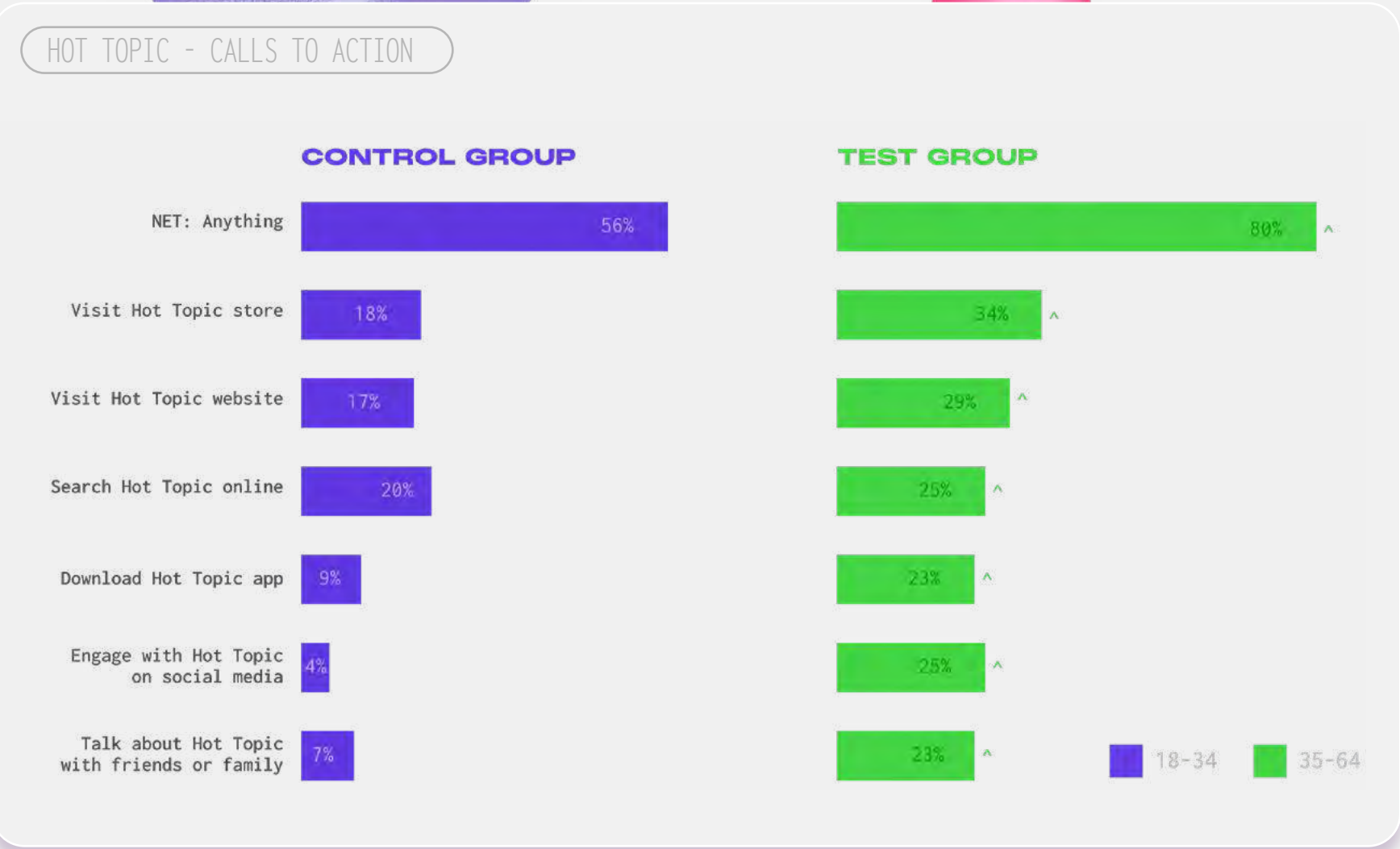
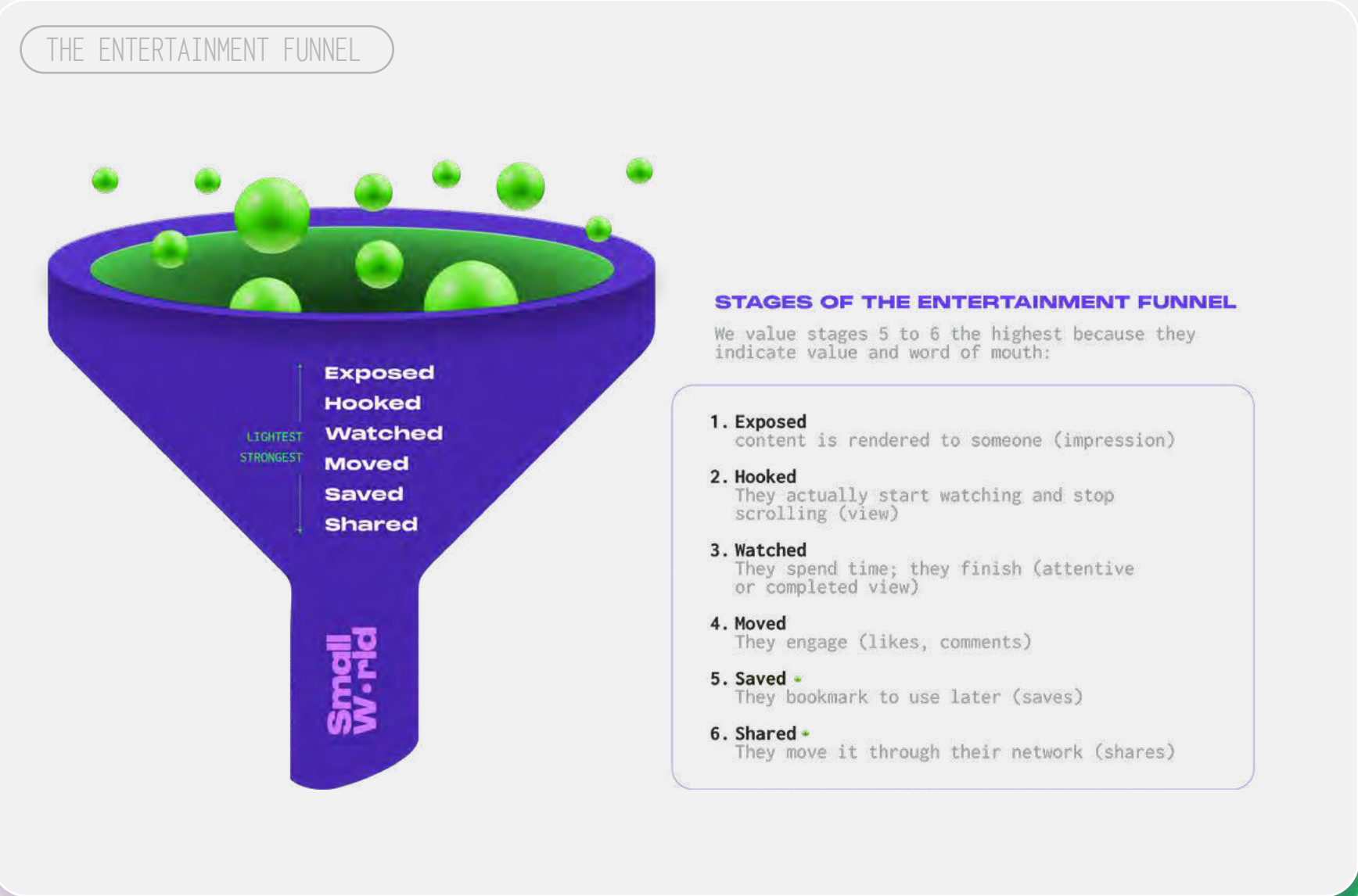
HOW TO MEASURE ENTERTAINMENT'S EFFECTIVENESS

We all know the measurement trap. Business leaders gravitate toward performance metrics because they're immediate, tangible and easy to report. Clicks, impressions, and engagement rates deliver instant gratification. But like any high-dopamine fix, that pleasure fizzles out pretty quickly.

A viral video that racks up millions of views might spike your engagement dashboard, while doing very little for your brand long-term. If the audience can't recall who you are, you've created yesterday's content, not future equity.

It's the fundamental tension modern marketers face: the metrics that are easiest to measure often tell you the least about whether you're building a strong brand.





In the dashboard, you want to be tracking deeper interactions with your content. Not impressions, not even likes, but saves, shares and, even better, remixes - that's the bottom of our Entertainment Funnel, where the most value and word of mouth lies. ***“Is it breaking through to places you can't get with a PR firm?”*** Liquid Death SVP of marketing, Dan Murphy, said at our 2025 SXSW panel.

Only when you've got a great engagement signal from your audience should you start boosting that work. At Small W.rld we look for the number of shares to be $\geq 25\%$ of likes, then we know it's spreading on its own - like the [Oatly Matcha Urgency Bag](#) we made with Nik Bentel, for example, which had a 2:1 likes to shares ratio. Paid should amplify momentum, not try to create it.

Murphy says they'll test out a \$5k spend on social to reach people outside Liquid Death's usual audience bubble, and see if the save and share ratios hold, or improve. If they do, it becomes a YouTube pre-roll, which they track again - if they see broad appeal (people aren't skipping it after the required five seconds), then the idea could work on TV.

But you should also be thinking beyond dashboard stats, even for social, entertainment campaigns. Apply your traditional channel metrics to the measurement Wild West of organic Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. For Hot Topic's Mall Rats, a TikTok sitcom series, Small W.rld and Tracksuit created a custom lift study to prove its effectiveness with a level of sophistication usually reserved for TV ads. Not only did the series garner 10m+ views, it also nearly doubled a viewer's intention to visit a Hot Topic store (see graph to the left).

Long-term, you need to monitor how your entertainment value and fame are building over time using brand tracking tools like Tracksuit. The key shift? Going beyond just tracking awareness and considering perception, [just as we did for Hot Topic](#). From our research, we know that the most entertaining brands score highly in all four of the following pillars: connection, creativity, distinctiveness and relatability.

It really is entertain, or die. Statements relating to these values should be front and centre of your tracker, alongside brand-specific perceptions. Statements like “feels imaginative”, “relatable like a TV character”, and “good at capturing real emotion” are ones that the most entertaining brands tend to over-index on. Interestingly, as with last year, brand love is uncorrelated with entertainment value.

These elements matter most for capturing attention and creating memorable experiences. But understand the distinction: these are levers for building equity, not the final goal.

The entertainment you make may be mostly unserious, but its long-term effects don't have to be. IPA research consistently shows that emotionally engaging creative work drives significantly stronger business effects when paired with brand-building investment. What you're chasing is a brand that people know, remember and prefer.





THE ENTERTAINMENT INDEX

Entertain or Die 3.0

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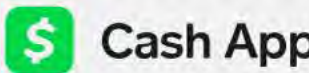
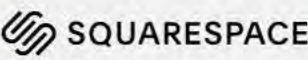
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TLDR; ENTERTAINING BRANDS ARE PEOPLE'S FAVOURITE BRANDS



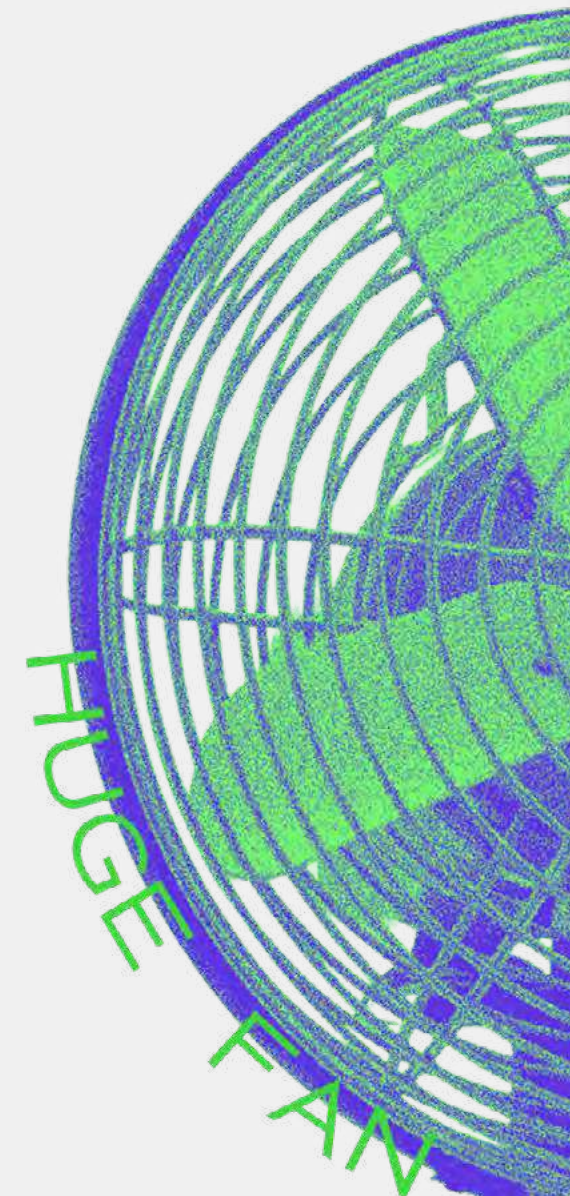
We tracked brand funnel metrics for all of our brands. Our analysis found one killer statistic. For the Top 30 most entertaining brands, over half (17) of these brands have double the levels of preference than the average of the Bottom 30 entertaining brands (9%).

High preference means being people's favorite brand in a certain category or context, and therefore the brand that they buy the most and are the most loyal to.

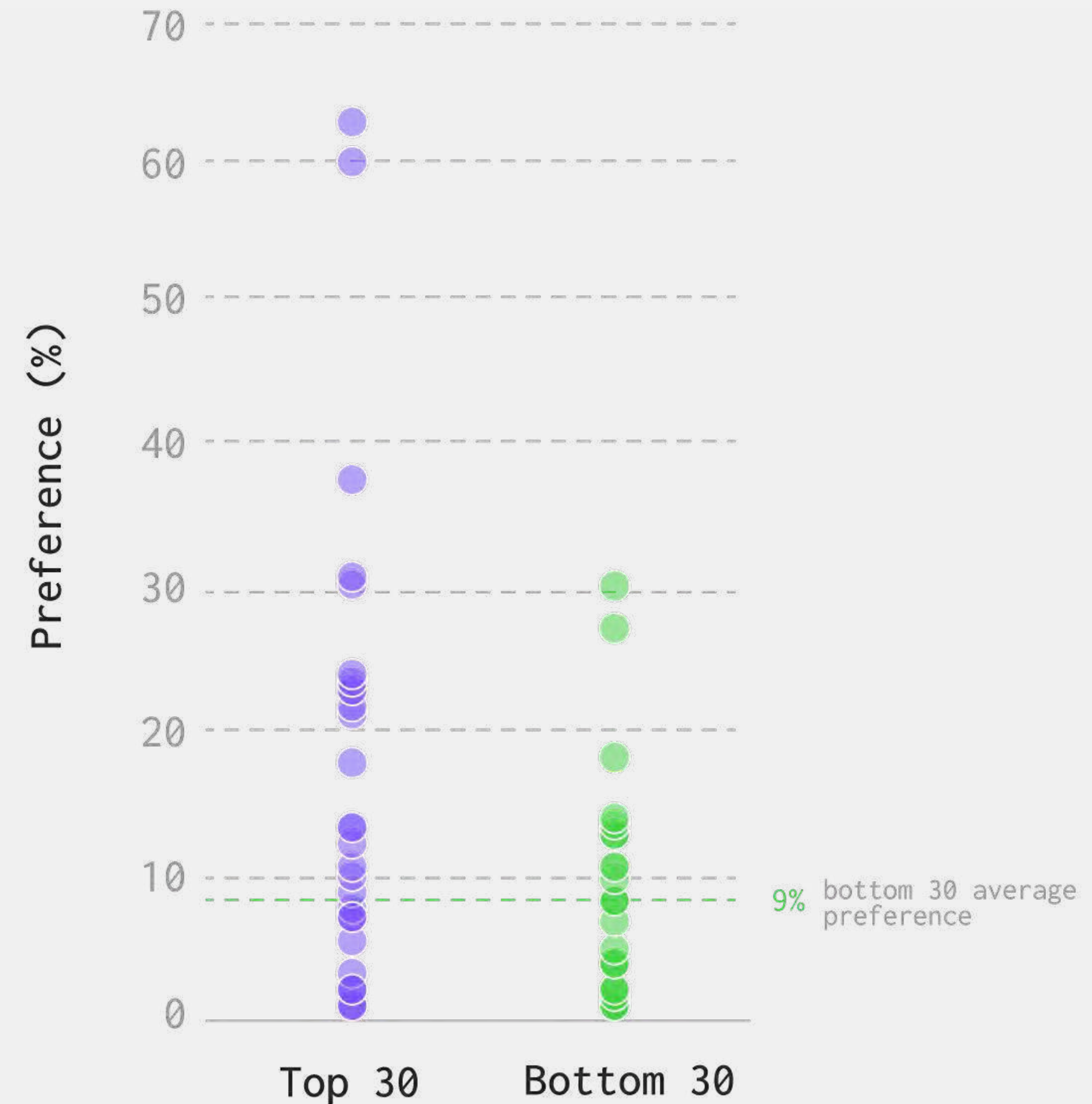
Within the Top 30, preference was only low for Luxury Goods (which are infrequently purchased) and emergent brands that hadn't found their footing within their category.

Therefore to be entertaining drives consumer favoritism. Entertainment means you stand out. Entertainment means people are more likely to pick you first off the shelf than another brand

N.B. interestingly awareness has no correlation with entertainment. Upon running correlation analysis we found that actually the correlation was quite weak. This means being a household name doesn't automatically make you an entertaining brand and entertainment value can actually be a secret weapon for unlocking greater awareness, rather than the other way around.



Entertain or Die



CONCLUSION

If there's one thing Entertain or Die 3.0 should leave you with, it's this: entertainment isn't a garnish you sprinkle on top of tactics once the "serious work" is done. It is the work. It moves hearts, minds and bottom lines alike.

It's about understanding what people are obsessed with, making work that earns its place in those worlds, designing it to spread, and measuring whether it actually lands. That's why this document exists: not to hand you a silver bullet, but to give you a way of thinking. A framework for navigating a landscape that will keep changing long after this PDF has been closed, forwarded, screenshot, or inevitably half-remembered in a meeting six months from now.

And central to this whole thing actually working? The modern-day entertainers, to whom we dedicate this. Creators, the cohort, inadvertently show us how modern-day brands should be built. They've clocked the modern rules of attention through trial by comment section. They understand pacing, payoff, character, repetition, and escalation. They know when to show the trick, when to hide it, and when to blow the whole thing up for a laugh.

Increasingly, the smartest brands aren't just hiring these people; they're pulling them closer to the engine room, letting them shape ideas upstream rather than decorating them downstream.

As a result, the best brands are starting to behave more like creators themselves. A convergence of brand and entertainment experts. A shared grammar is emerging between people who know how to build brands year to year and those who win minutes on the internet day to day.

In sum, the future belongs to the people who treat entertainment as a craft, creators as partners, and attention as something you earn, not buy. Everything else is just content.



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AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Entertain or Die 3.0

If you got this far, it means you either skipped straight to the end (in which case 🙌) or you were thoroughly intrigued, engaged and ultimately, entertained.

So let us tell you who we are and what's next.



We're Small W•rld; we turn brands into entertainers by collaborating with the world's best creators. But you probably guessed that already. We work with brands like Hot Topic, Oatly, Under Armour and Dr Squatch.

Tracksuit

At Tracksuit we deliver beautiful, radically affordable, always-on brand tracking. We've democratized brand health measurement with enterprise-level robustness at a fraction of the cost, and we make it easy to measure and communicate the value of brand.

Together, we care about inspiring the next wave of entertainment first brand builders and, either directly through projects or indirectly through our research, helping brands like yours grow.

If you're a person working at a brand that felt entertained by this but unsure how to take the next step to become the newest member of the 100, we have an offer you can't refuse **spoken in mob boss**.

For a select 10 brands, we're offering a chance to be ranked on the index and audit your current marketing approach. We'll give your team a deck of 5 action points to make your brand more entertaining today. Adidas, Innocent and Canva have already obliged.

Just send an email with the subject ENTERTAIN ME to hello@meetsmallworld.com to start the application.

CREDITS



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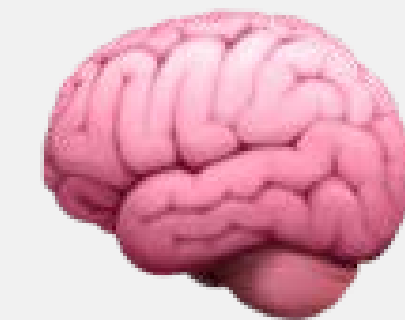
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