

# TURNING TRENDS INTO COMMERCIAL IMPACT

The Culture of Conversion

 PMG **DIGITAL VOICES**

# Culture is a result of what communities care about...

Image: Kylie Jenner Instagram



The way consumers buy today is shaped by what they see and share online, from 2016 nostalgia to DIY “Japanese Cheesecake”. Trends spark virality, but it’s specific community groups – from BookTok readers and run clubs, to skincare Reddit threads and football fandoms – that drive real influence. When creators reflect these communities and their behaviors, influence turns into intent, and intent turns into sales. Culture-led campaigns are redefining how brands convert attention into revenue.

## ...and the Creator Economy is where Culture meets Commerce.

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## Inside this report you will discover...

### Culture vs. Clout

The difference between being a culture leader and a culture parasite. Spoiler, you don't want to be the latter!

### Beyond Last Click

The ROI conundrum and why you need to think beyond last click attribution.

### Speed is Strategy

How to build systems that will help you to run your campaigns at speed and achieve scale.

### Creators in Control

Why you should trust influencers to become the new creative directors of your brand.

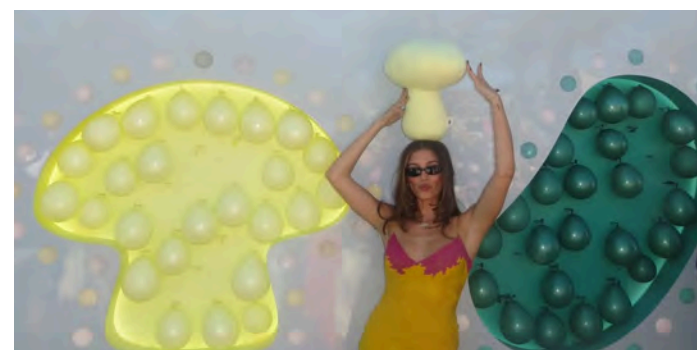
# What you will learn



# The Fight for Relevance



# Brand marketing is no longer a megaphone – it's a conversation, engaging with hundreds of communities at once.



## 93%

of consumers skip or block ads.

Brands must work harder than ever to earn and hold attention as audiences gain control over what they consume. 93% of consumers skip or block ads. This emphasizes the scale of the problem that brands face in getting audiences to care about the messages they're putting out.

The brands that cut through are those that understand the communities they want to reach and show up in ways that feel natural to those spaces. This often means contributing to existing conversations rather than interrupting them, and creating content that adds value – whether through entertainment, utility, or shared identity.



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**We're asking customers to give us the most valuable asset they have: their time.**

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Jennifer  
Quigley-Jones

Founder,  
Digital Voices

Case Study

# AFTER DARK RUN TOUR

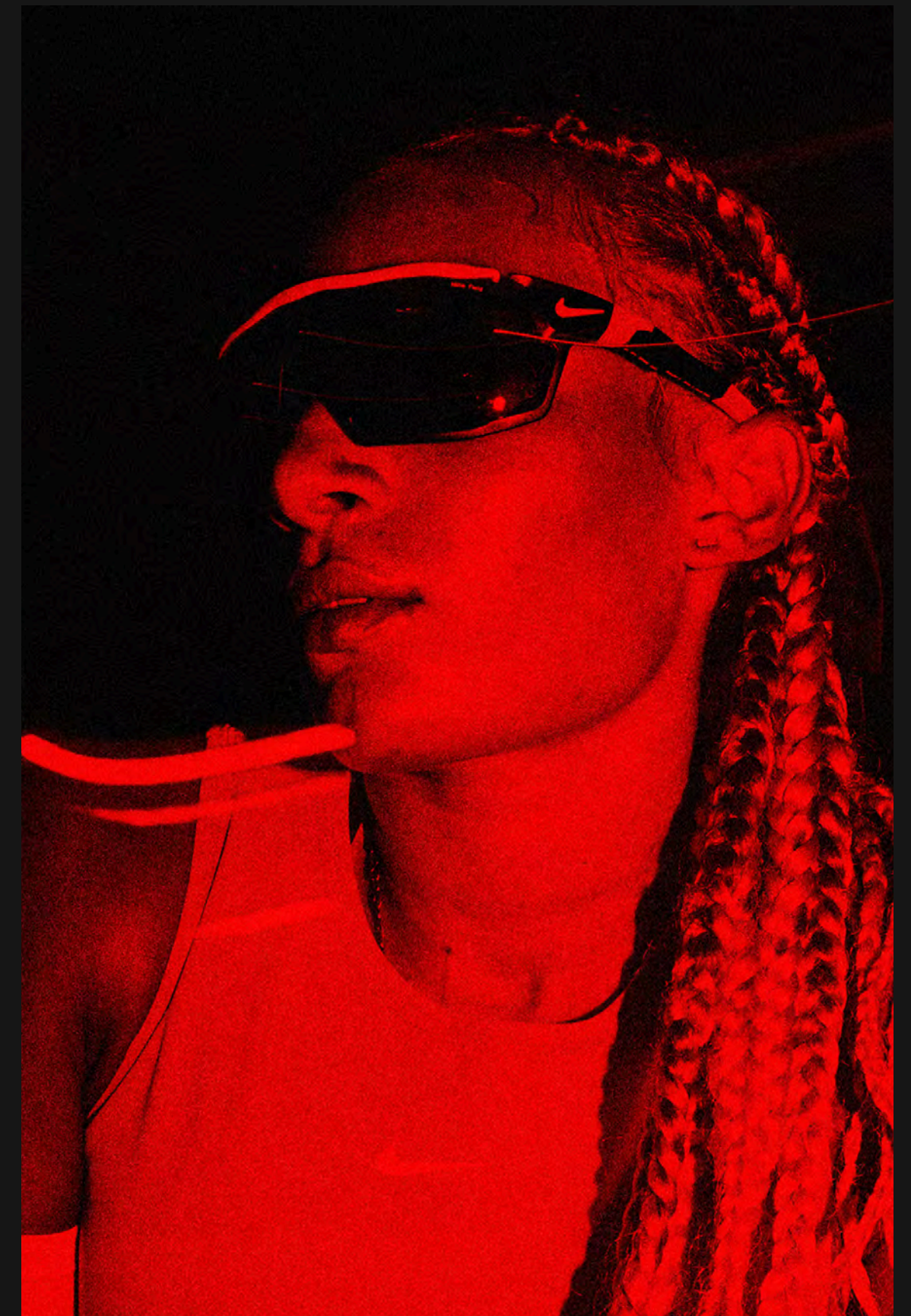


## Keep up to speed with your customers

Nike identified a growing need within its community: women were actively seeking safe, social opportunities to run after dark.

In response, the brand launched the After Dark Run tour – a series of nighttime running experiences designed specifically for women, combining sport with culture and community. Nike built the activation around real behavior, creating an environment that felt both energizing and safe for women runners.

The tour scaled globally, running across cities including Shanghai, Sydney, Mexico City, London, Los Angeles, Manila, and Mumbai. The inaugural series drew over 50,000 women to seven races across five continents. Nike successfully created an experience that resonated worldwide while strengthening its connection with its audience by responding to a clearly defined community need.

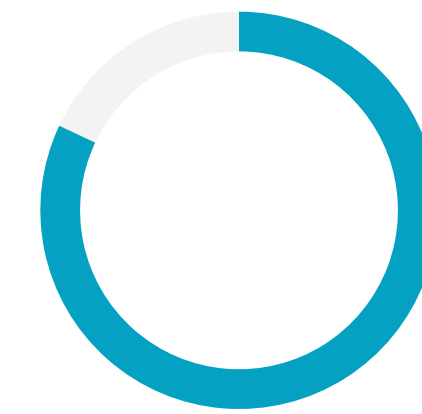


# Don't be a Community Parasite



**Culture is often mistaken for a moment – something to jump on, react to, or hack.**

**In reality, it is far more powerful and far less controllable. To put it bluntly, brands must become community members, not community parasites.**



## 82% of businesses say social listening is essential for strategic planning.

The smartest brands understand that you have to earn your spot within a cultural moment, and put in the work to get there.

Earning permission to show up requires constant, active listening. Comments, fandom behavior, creator conversations, reviews, and wider social signals offer a live feed into what matters and how it's being expressed.

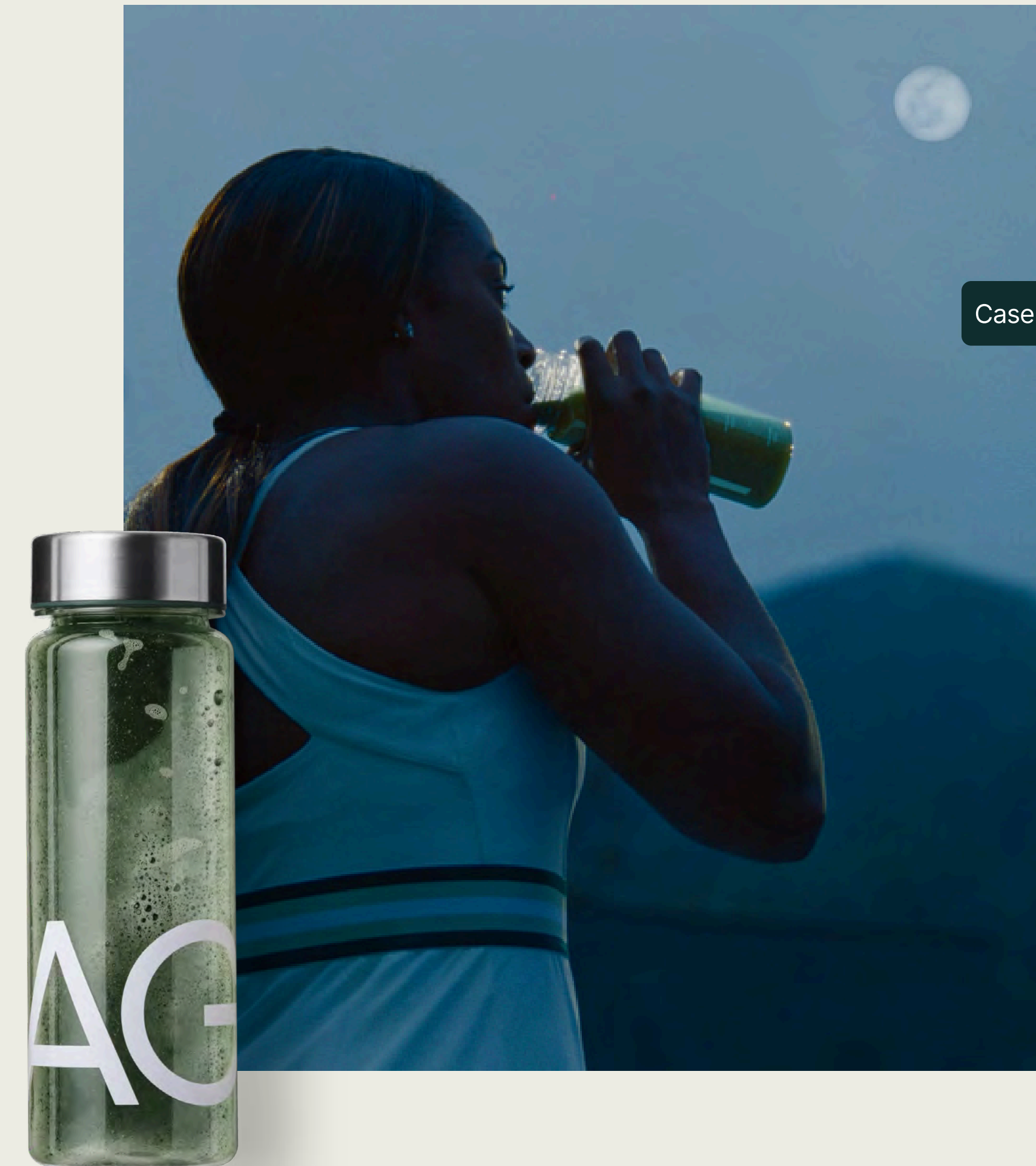
# AG1<sup>®</sup>

## Good Morning, Moon

AG1's "Good Morning, Moon" campaign reimagined the classic children's book Goodnight, Moon to celebrate its community of "morning people." The campaign focused on lifestyle over product, highlighting the rituals that define how its audience of fitness and wellness enthusiasts start the day.

The hero video was narrated by legendary music producer Rick Rubin, who is a long time AG1 drinker and advocate for slow, intentional living. The campaign featured real customers, from athletes to parents. AG1 also produced a regional variation of the ad featuring local narrators and familiar faces, like Australian surf legend Mick Fanning lending his voice to the voice over in that market.

The campaign drew on deep community insight to create something culturally resonant and human rather than following a traditional, product-led brief. By centring real behaviors and emotions, AG1 positions itself as part of a daily habit. This campaign demonstrates how insight-driven ideas can drive stronger connection and impact by focusing on what your community really cares about.



# Make it Memorable



# The most effective campaigns are often unconventional, driven by deep community insight, and humanize the brand. They succeed by not following a rigid brief.

Source: [Social Targeter](#)

Unconventional ideas can outperform polished advertising when they reflect how a community actually communicates. Audience-native creativity often looks strange internally but known externally, especially in fandom, meme, and creator-led spaces. Success comes from leaning into specific community humor, rituals, and references. In fact, content tailored for specific audiences can increase engagement rates by up to 47%.



Image: Myra Magdalen Instagram



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**Sometimes the weirdest ideas have the greatest impact on a very specific community.**

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Esther  
Bochner

Senior Director, Content Marketing,  
Audible



## Case Study

## Audible's Dungeon Crawler Carl

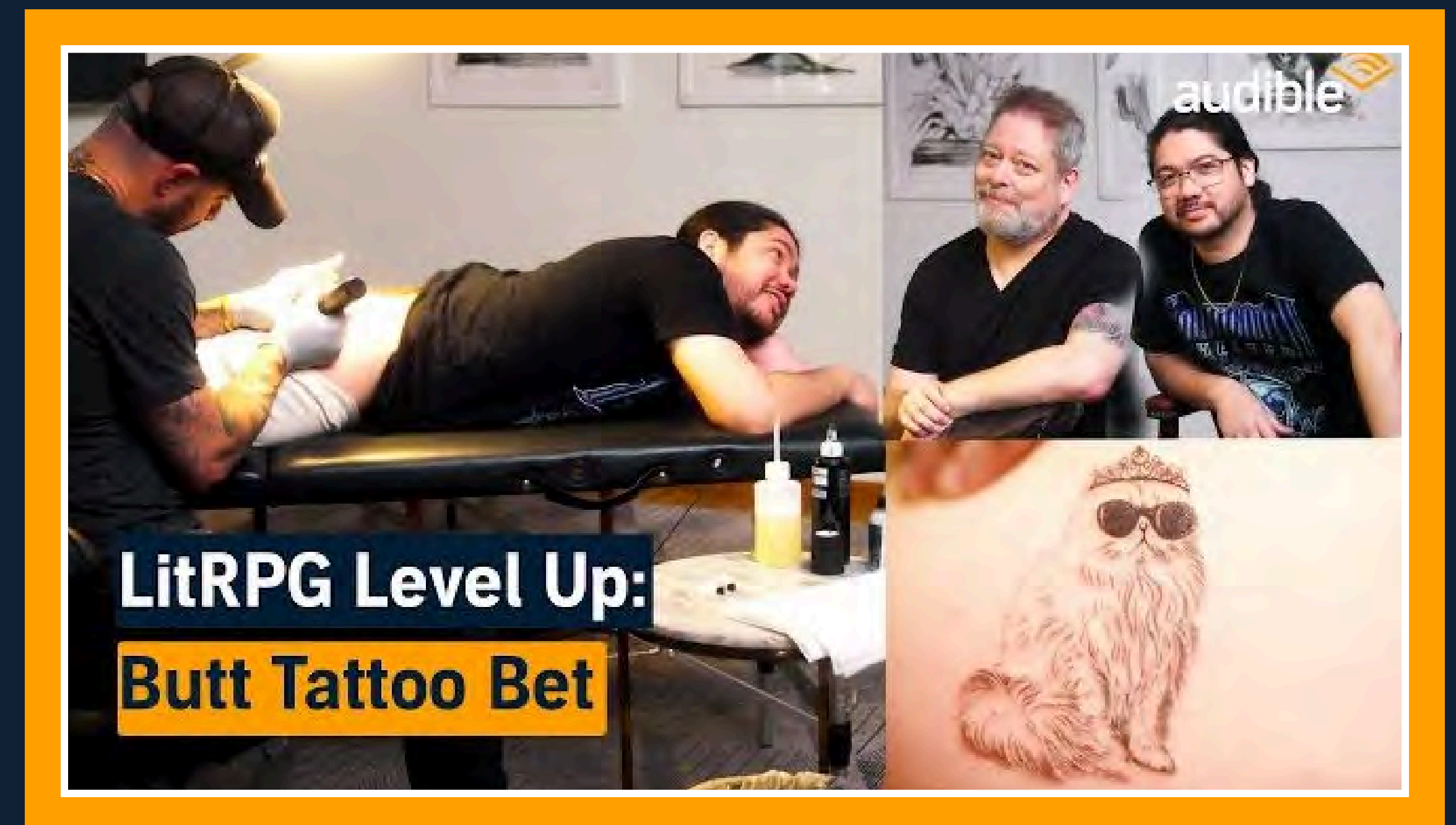
A strong example of community-led marketing came from [Audible's Dungeon Crawler Carl](#) series, a niche role-playing game audiobook title with a highly engaged and distinctive fandom. The fandom communicates in its own language, often through memes and in-jokes, creating a strong sense of shared identity.

A few years ago, the Dungeon Crawler Carl audio book narrator joked in an interview that if the series reached a certain level of success, he would get a tattoo of the main character on his butt. Audible revisited this statement when it came time to promote book seven. The brand team decided to bring the tattoo promise to life. Audible documented the entire experience: finding a tattoo artist, filming the narrator getting his first-ever tattoo, and having the author interview him throughout – reflecting on the series, its characters, and the fandom behind it.

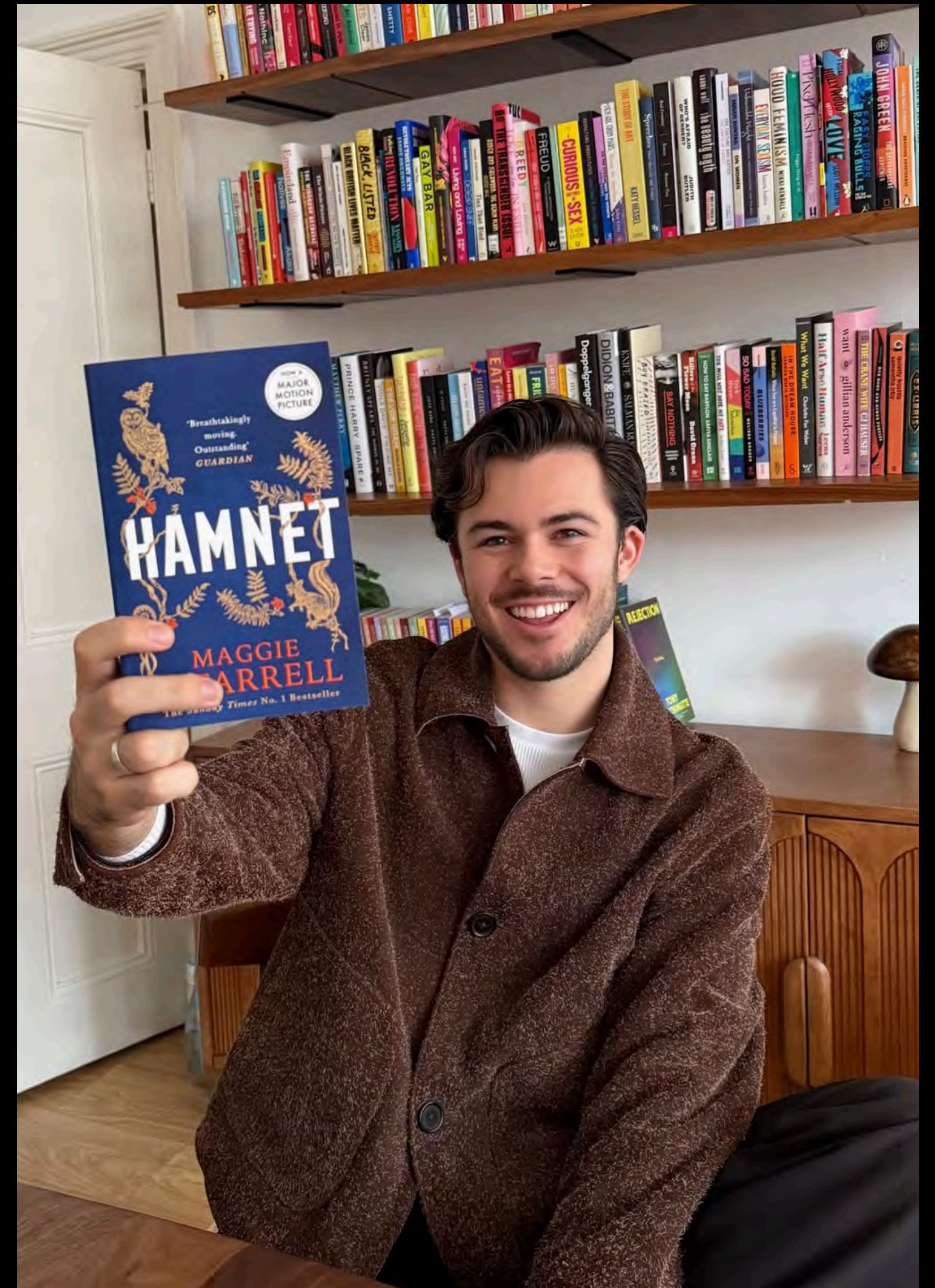
### The Result

The result was a piece of content that felt deeply rooted in the community. Audible shared the campaign on YouTube, with tailored distribution on platforms like Reddit, allowing the core fandom to engage, share, and amplify it organically.

It was unconventional, unexpected, and highly specific – and it worked – because it was built from a specific moment the community already cared about.

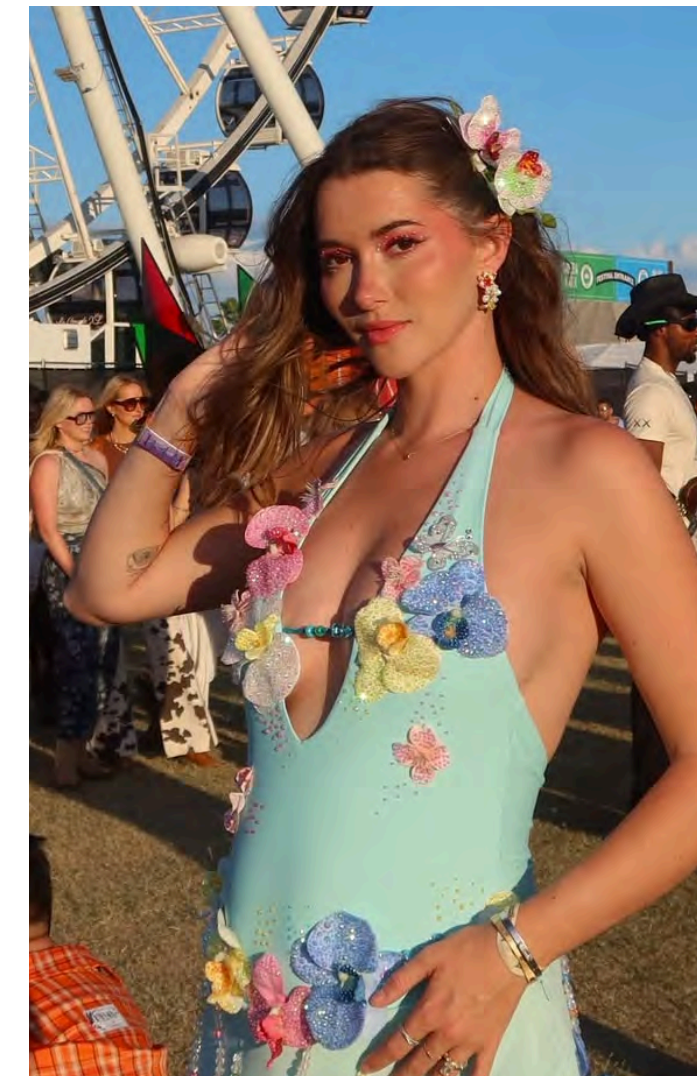


# Creators Run the Show



# Brands must provide creative freedom and trust the creator's knowledge of their audience for content to resonate and achieve high velocity.

Image credit: Ninja, Owen Thiele, Madeleine White, Kai Cenat



Traditional, highly scripted creator briefs often lead to content that feels generic and easy to scroll past. In contrast, creators understand their audiences deeply. They know what captures attention, what drives engagement, and how to make content feel native to the platform.

The most culturally in tune brands are using lighter, more flexible creator briefs or simply outlining what *not* to do to. This gives creators the freedom to build content in formats they know perform, rather than forcing brand-first messaging into their work. When creators are treated as creative directors, branded content feels more genuine, travels further, and drives stronger performance.

# Creative freedom in action

## Meet Mary Allyson

Mary Allyson is a content creator who transforms pop culture trends into high-energy baking videos. With over 2 million followers and billions of views on YouTube, she has built a format that consistently reflects what her audience cares about – from Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour and K-pop Demon Hunters to viral products like Labubus and niche internet trends like “67”. Her approach shows how creators translate trends into performance, using data and audience insight to guide what works.



## How Mary transforms trends into commercial results:

### Uses data as a filter

Analyzes comments and engagement patterns to validate which trends and cultural moments her audience are engaged with.

### Builds brands into proven formats

Integrates partnerships into her existing content style – baking themed cakes – to drive strong retention and minimal drop-off.

### Stays close to her community

Actively engages with her audience to understand which cultural moments resonate, whether that’s Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour or emerging internet trends.





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**I reply back to comments, I heart comments, I talk to my subscribers in person and really know what they care about.**

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Mary Allyson

Content Creator

# Speed Wins the Feed

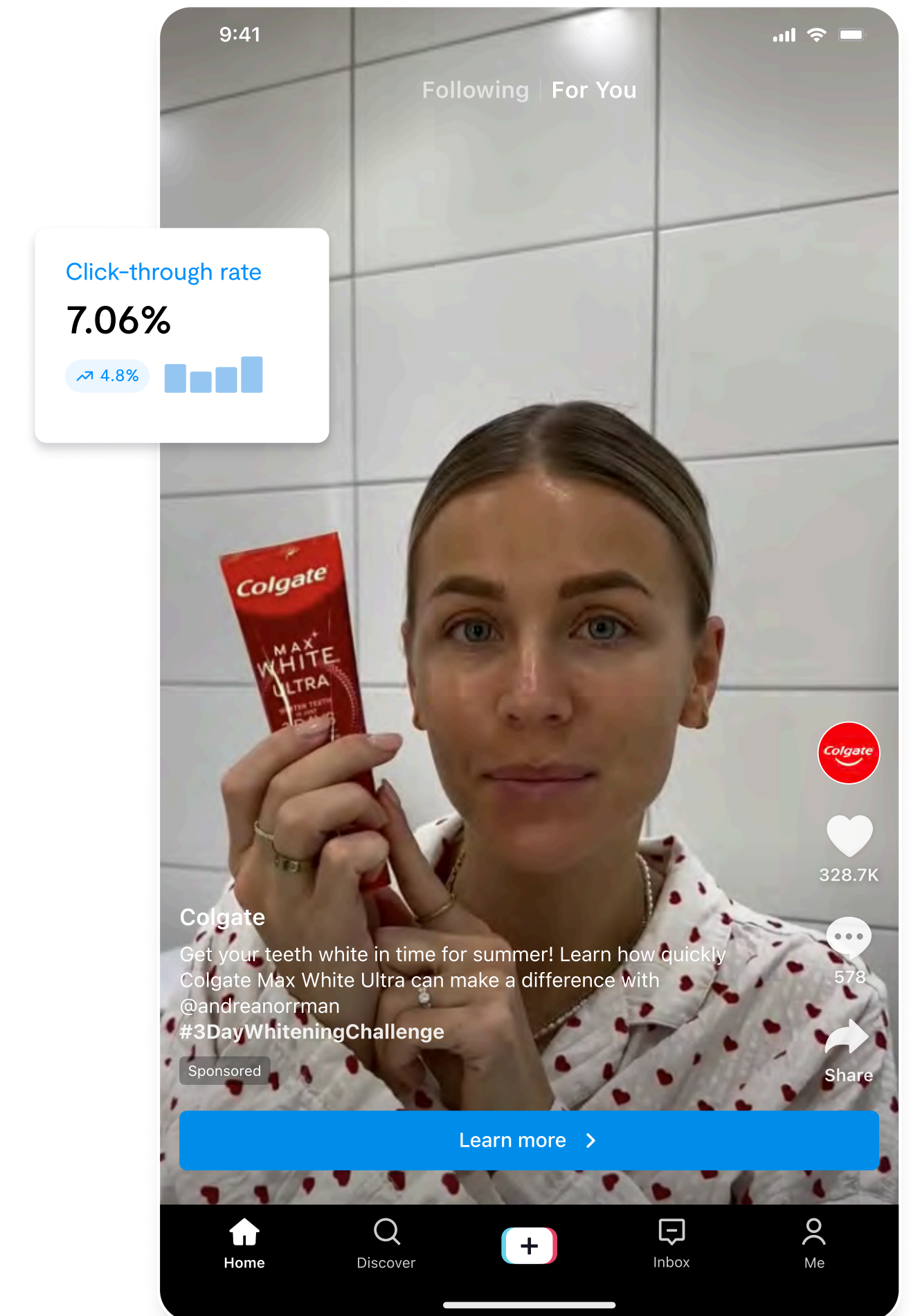


Turning Trends into Commercial Impact

# Creator and culture marketing no longer fails because of ideas. They fail because brands lack systems to move at the right speed.

The biggest internal barrier for brands is not creativity, but the speed and rigidity of historic organizational systems. Scalability requires robust, integrated frameworks that align legal, finance, media, and marketing teams in advance to help activate ideas, approve content, and scale campaigns without unnecessary delays.

This is particularly critical for legacy organizations where internal processes can slow down execution. Building robust, pre-approved systems ensures that when a piece of content starts to gain traction, teams can respond immediately – whether that’s amplifying it through paid media, extending its lifespan, or adapting it across channels.





“

**We're analyzing [influencer] content as it goes live. If it takes off, it could be boosted for broader reach. So, we make sure we have the contract in place to be able to flexibly secure 30, 60, 90-day usage rights from the creator quickly.**

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Kim  
Tipton

Senior Social Media Manager,  
Kimberly-Clark.

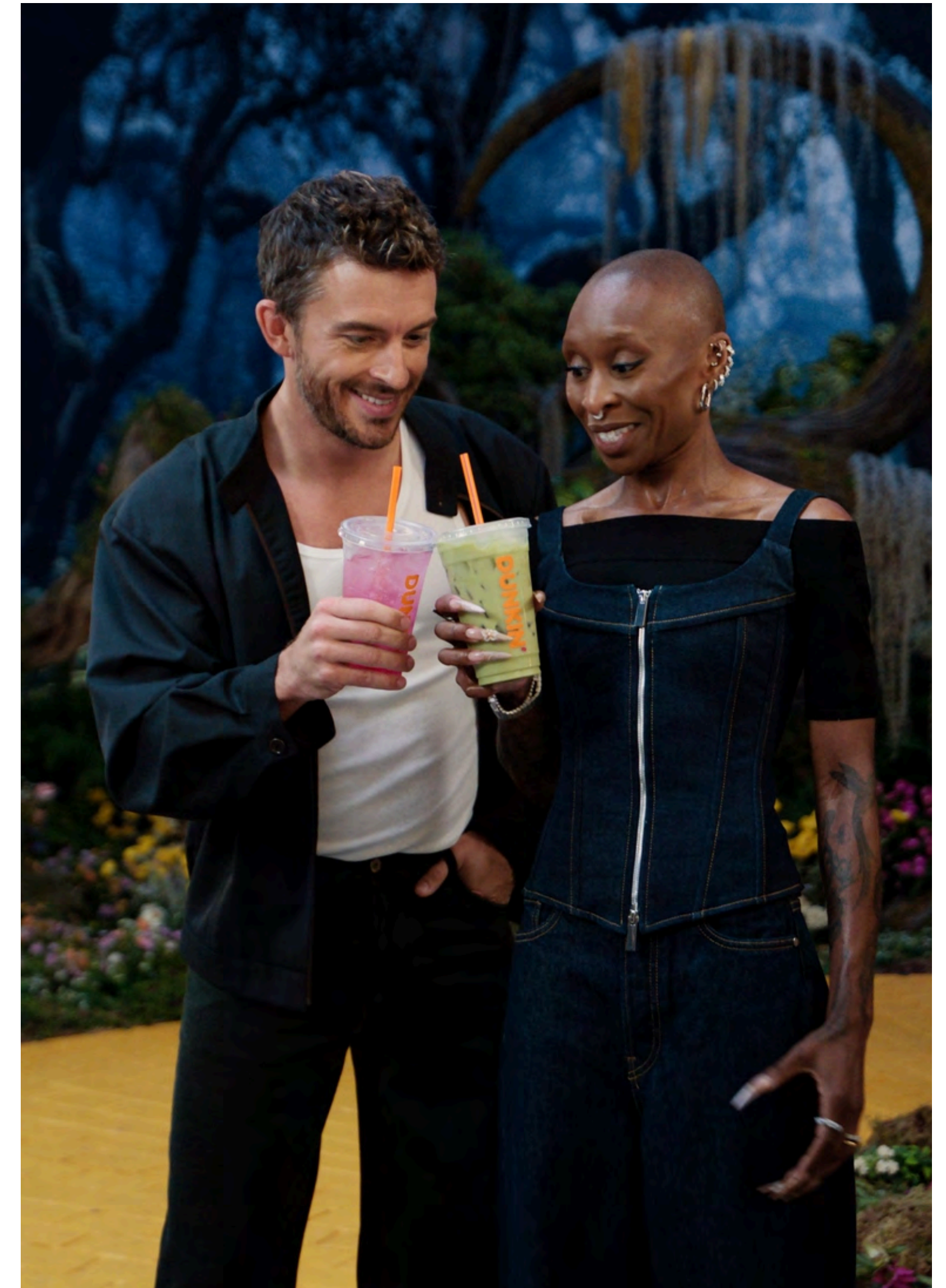
# Legacy is no longer a strategy..in fact, 67% of consumers are now less loyal to brands compared to two years ago.



Brands need to innovate consistently to stay relevant and maintain attention as brand loyalty declines. Responding to culture at speed is now a core requirement.

Media integration is equally important when it comes to enabling this. Influencer, social, and brand teams can no longer operate in silos. Having aligned processes in place from the outset allows brands to identify, adapt, and scale content quickly when a cultural moment emerges.

Operational efficiency also extends beyond internal teams. Reducing friction for creators is a key differentiator. Simplifying processes such as approvals, communication, and onboarding allows brands to react faster, collaborate more effectively, and produce content that feels timely, relevant, and native to the moment.

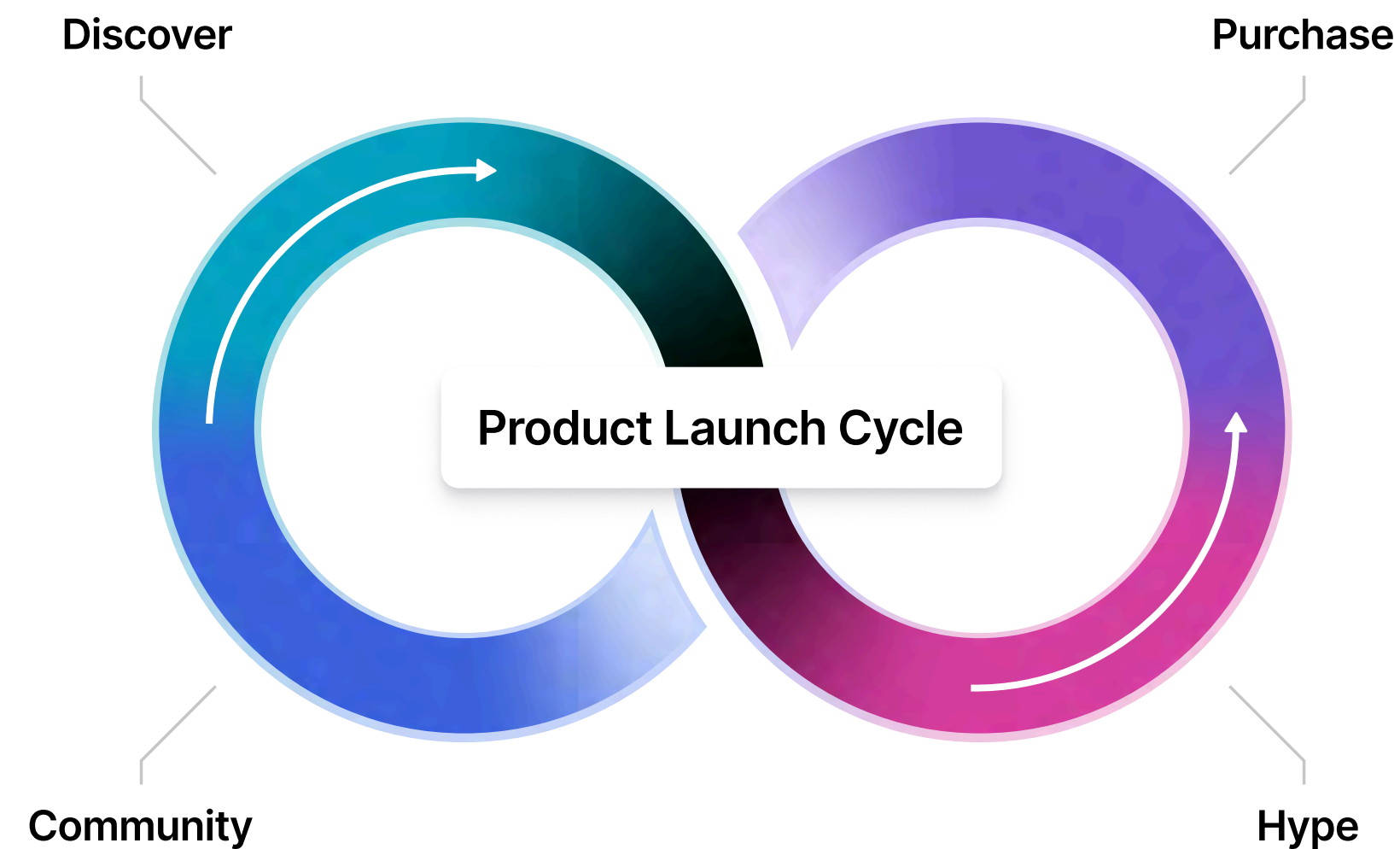


**The most common challenge, cited by 60% of brands, is the inability to operationalize creator marketing at speed.**

# Convince the CFO



**Last-click attribution fails to capture the long-term ROI of cultural activations. Today's world requires new measurement models.**



## Proving ROI in culture-driving campaigns

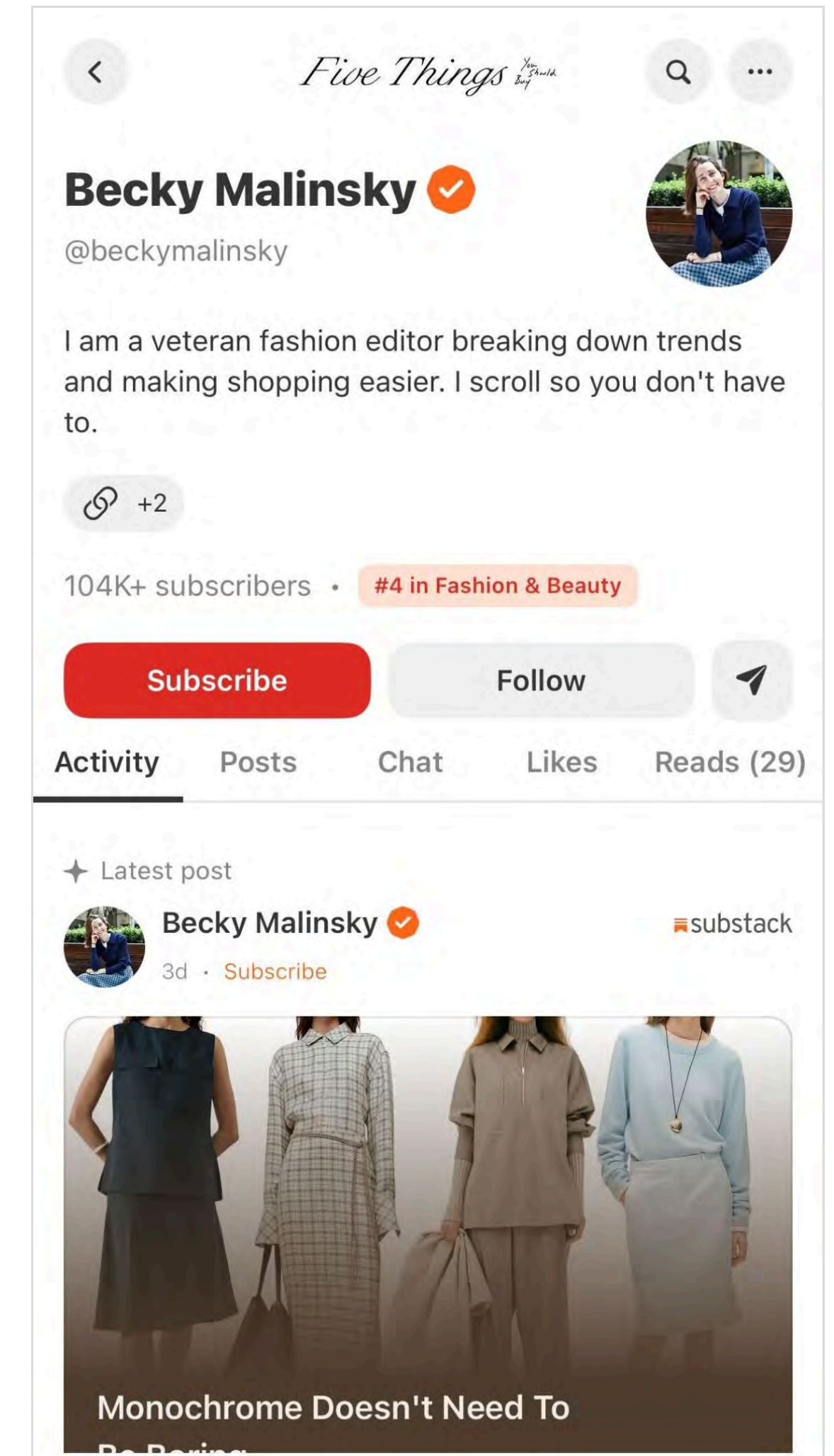
Traditional attribution models – particularly last-click – are too narrow to capture the full impact of creator activity, often missing upper-funnel influence and long-term brand effects. Post-purchase surveys consistently show that a consumer's first, most memorable interaction is often with a creator, not a branded asset. This reinforces the role of creators in driving awareness, consideration, and long-term brand affinity.

In response, brands are broadening how they measure success. Rather than relying on a single metric, they are combining signals such as sentiment, shares, reviews and acquisition. Some are developing internal custom frameworks, including "relevancy scores," to better track the impact of cultural activations on sales and traffic.

# How are creators influencing their audiences to purchase?

Creators are using platforms like Substack to influence their communities purchases. Tailored, personalized newsletters like Becky Malinsky's "5 Thing You Should Buy" Substack features weekly articles that share, rate, and review the fashion picks that her loyal following should add to their baskets.

Case in point



# How to measure cultural impact

## Define one clear objective

Whether it's awareness, consideration, or conversion, align all metrics to a single goal.

## Build tracking before launch

This can look like unique UTMs per creator, affiliate links, and post-purchase surveys.

## Look at the entire funnel

Creator discovery sits at the top, engagement and intent are trackable in the middle, and conversions and ROAS become clear at the bottom of the funnel.

## Optimize in real time

Assess performance at 24, 48, and 72 hours. You can then scale high performing content, and adjust formats and, messaging, and spend on what's falling short.

## Benchmark against yourself

Track your ROAS over time and focus on improving your creator strategy based on your unique brand rather than focusing on industry averages.

# Key Takeaways



### **Build for communities, not one off campaigns**

Identify the specific communities your brand serves (e.g. fandoms, subcultures, interest groups) and map where you have permission to show up. Shift from broad audience targeting to community-first strategy and messaging.

### **Expand how you measure success**

Go beyond last-click attribution by combining post-purchase surveys, sentiment analysis, and engagement with internal metrics like relevancy scores. Build a multi-signal measurement framework that captures both short- and long-term impact.

Images: Sidemen Instagram

### **Redesign your briefs for creator-led output**

Move away from rigid, scripted briefs. Instead, clearly define the “what not to dos”. Let creators shape the execution, treating them as creative directors, not distribution channels.

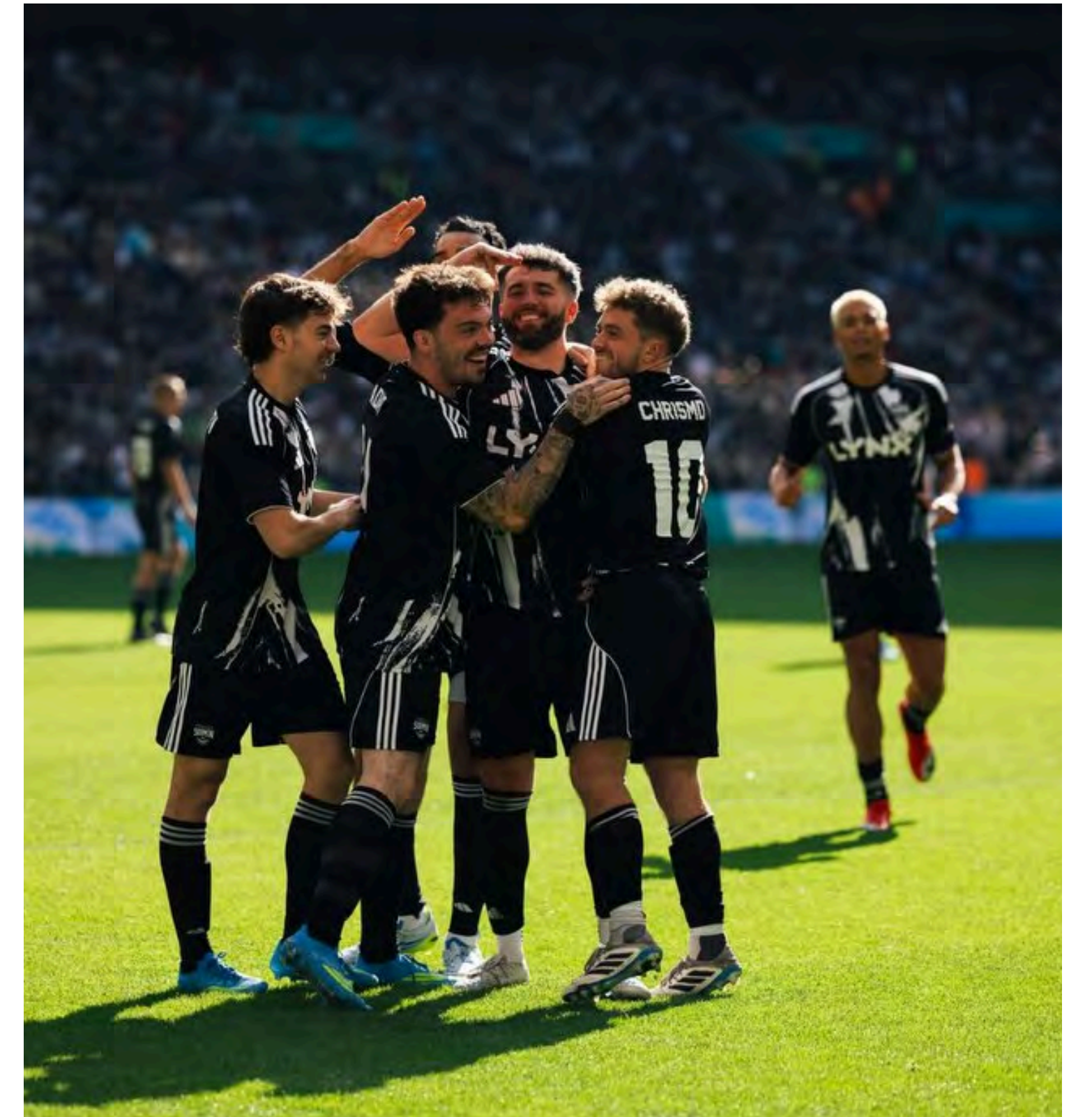
### **Structure your team for action**

Audit your internal processes (legal, finance, approvals, media) and identify bottlenecks. Align cross-functional teams to pre-approve frameworks so that you're to act when content gains traction.

### **Start small, then scale what works**

Use test-and-learn budgets to prove the value of Influencer Marketing internally. Pilot unconventional ideas. Model what scaled investment could deliver, and treat culture-led marketing as an iterative system, not a one-off risk.

# Key Takeaways



# Contributors



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**Mary Allyson**

Content Creator

Digital Voices is a PMG company

**We put the world's leading brands at the heart of culture to drive growth. Let's work together.**

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