

KANTAR

IGNITE

Un:
LOCKED

October 2025 Report

Welcome to October's **IGNITE** **UN:Locked** 2025 Report

Kantar IGNITE is designed to equip marketing, insights and effectiveness professionals succeed by building brands, better.

In recent years there's been an unmistakable shift in emphasis as marketing budgets come under pressure to deliver greater bang for every buck invested. To grow the topline, and the bottom, without additional budget. And quicker. Our new [Media Reactions](#) and [Language of Effectiveness Reports](#), show 2025 continues that trend.

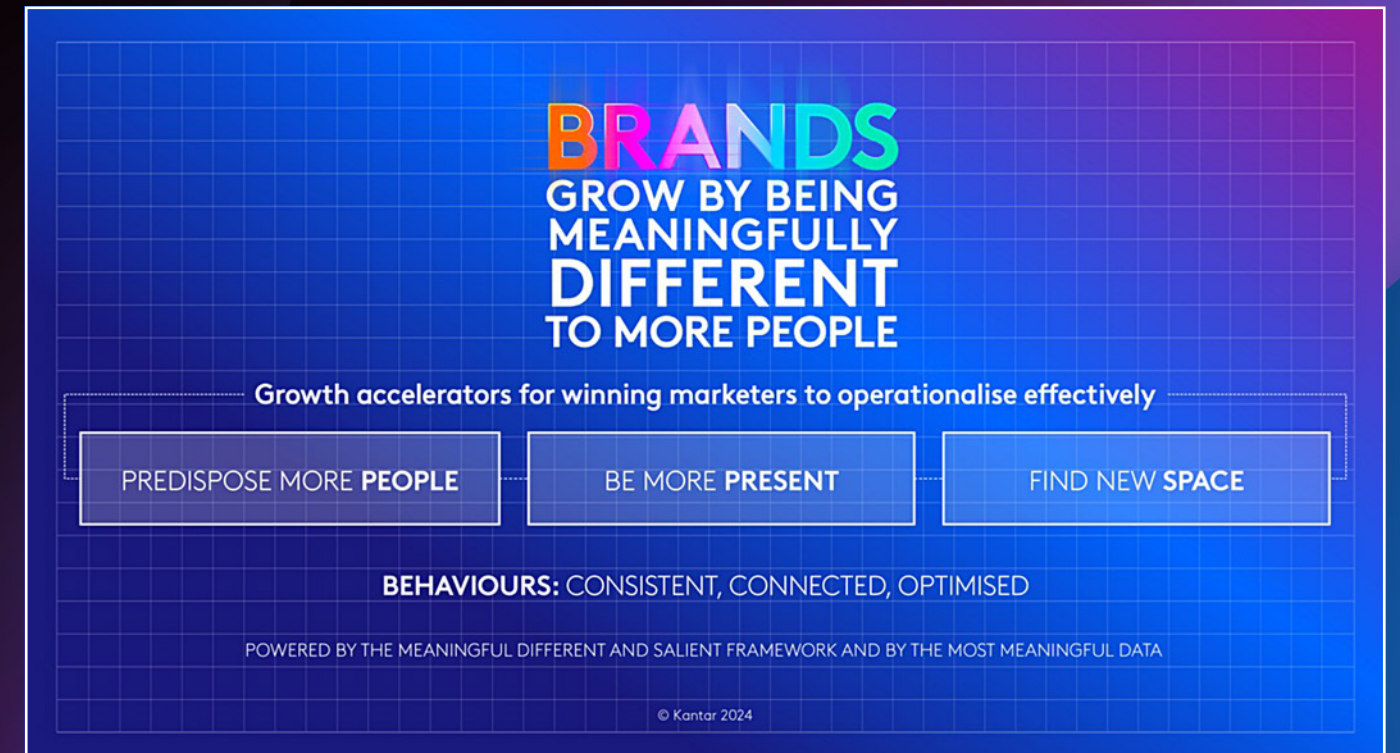
But while AI may have replaced Big Data as the organisational imperative du jour, IGNITE October highlights how driving growth requires more than 'doing AI'.

Dom Boyd

Managing Director UK Insights and
Marketing Effectiveness Practice, Kantar



Blueprint for Brand Growth



Unlocking the full power of the ultimate commercial marketing multiplier – brand – requires clear strategy, compelling execution, pioneering approaches and partnerships, and a forward-thinking approach to performance evaluation.

There's no better place to find that than Kantar IGNITE. A safe space to get fresh evidence-based inspiration from Kantar BrandZ 2025 and pioneering

thought leadership and case studies demonstrating how our Blueprint for Brand Growth drives superior performance.

IGNITE Un:Locked distils the highlights into practical takeaways.

Read it, share it, debate it and – most importantly – act on it.

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2025



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AGENDA
WELCOME + COFFEE
MORNING SESSIONS
Kantar UK Managing Director /
Kantar
Public brand strategy fuelled
Kantar's success
Warren, Niallsonide / Lynne Deason, Kantar /
Lindsay Gorton-Lee, Kantar
Hit different: New brand building frontiers
Kantar / Dom Boyd, Kantar /

DIAGEO
KANTAR
How can we
adapt to the
new socialising
landscape?

This isn't just
a
turnaround,
it's an M&S
turnaround
KANTAR
Russell Parsons
Editor in Chief,
Marketing Week
Robbie Black
Head of Brand, Creative
and Commercial
Marketing, M&S
Andrew Hill
Head of Insight and
Masterbrand, M&S
#Kantarignite



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Timeless heritage and timely disruption: The balancing act for British brands

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Session speakers



Jodie Gillary

Head of Brand Activation,
Kantar

Watch
the entire
session

Click here →



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Brand Performance
Alistair.Nel@kantar.com

Timeless heritage and timely disruption: The balancing act for British brands

Brand equity is a proven shield in uncertain times, yet UK brands lag global peers, missing out on \$10bn in value. Why aren't we capitalising on our own strengths?

Even a resurgence in Cool Britannia can't alter the awkward scenario facing British Brands. Having made the prediction in 2019, the wake-up call has arrived:

There are no longer any British brands in the BrandZ Global most valuable 100 brands.

Whilst the world's biggest brands are continuing their double-digit growth, the UK's biggest brands are languishing behind.

+8 VS +29%

KANTAR BRANDZ PORTFOLIO VS. S&P 500 VS. MSCI WORLD INDEX

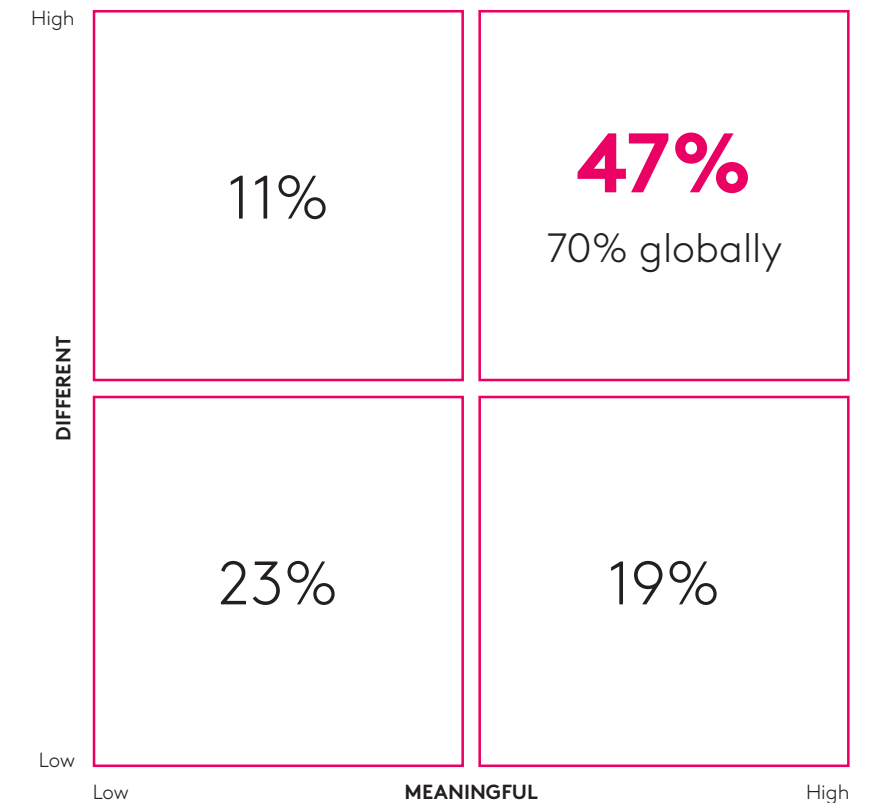
(APR 2006-MAR2025)



Meaningful Difference is the proven superpower—but less than half of UK brands have it

Brands that stand out grow five times faster, but only 11% of UK brands are truly different.

This lack of difference affects not only growth but the ability to command a higher price point. Are we too bland to command a premium?

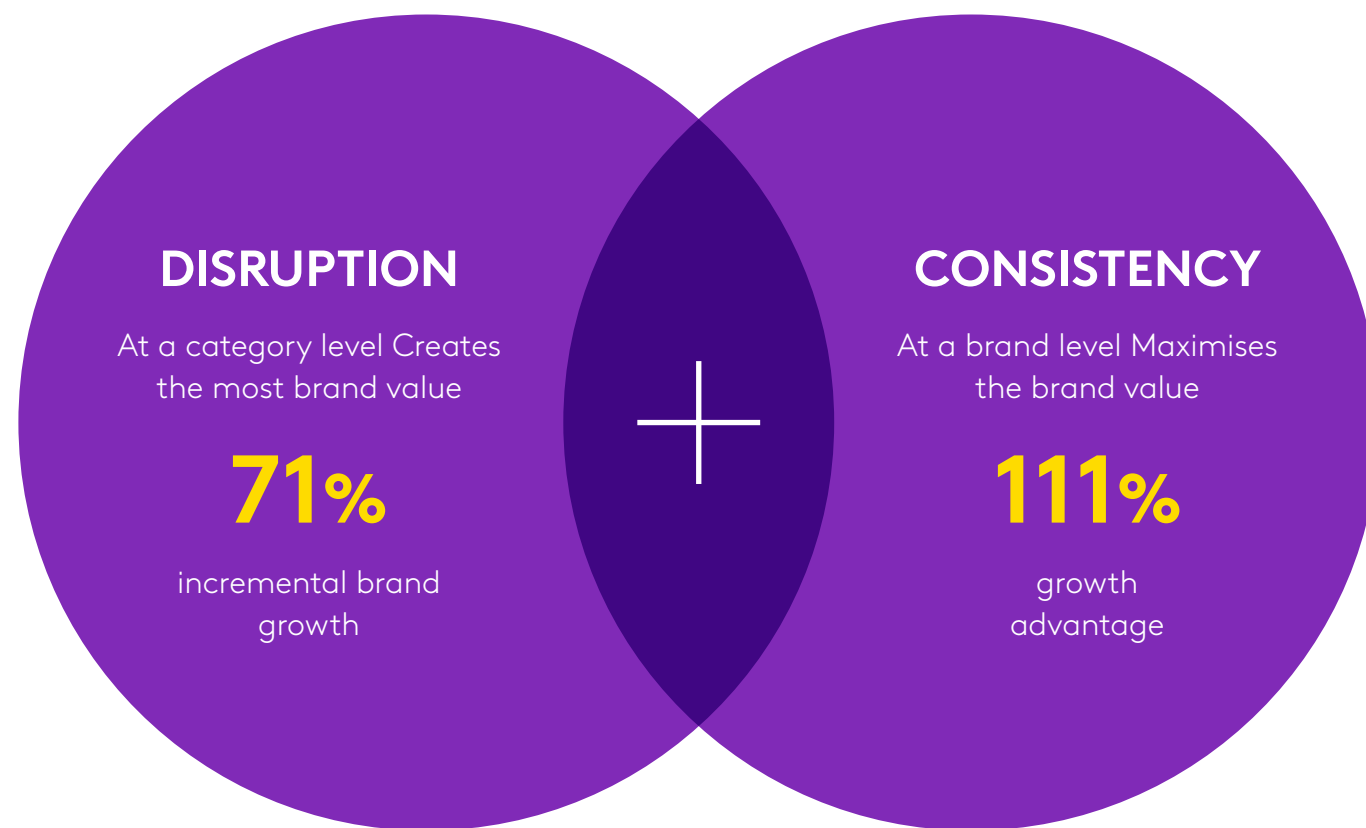


Watch the BrandZ UK Top 75 launch video

Culture is a shortcut to timeliness and a route to reignite timelessness:

British brands have long relied on their storied pasts and iconic status, but in today's fast-moving world, heritage alone is not a growth strategy. Timelessness gives brands their DNA, their recognisability, and their staying power. But in a world that moves at the speed of TikTok, being timely—tapping into culture, digital moments, and new platforms—is what keeps brands relevant and talked about.

Disruption has to be a continuous process—it's a mindset, not a single action. Consistency isn't about doing nothing and staying the same—it's about being clear on your brand's positioning and identity but flexing the articulation in order to evolve with culture.



Content, creators and collabs: The brands leading the way don't just 'advertise'

Disruption is no longer about shouting the loudest; it's about being in the right place, with the right partners, at the right cultural moment.

Are you in the game, or on the sidelines?

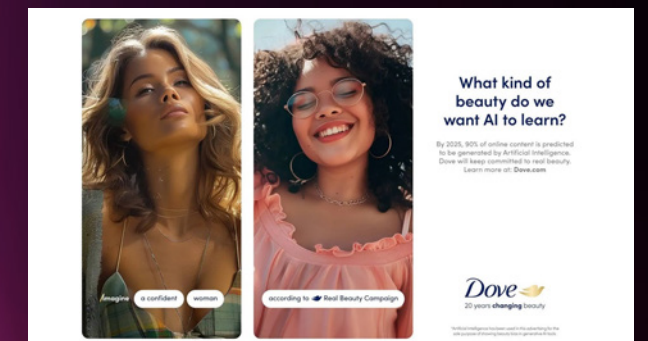


Hilton's metaverse based hotel on Roblox where a virtual stay can generate real loyalty points.

Chipotle's burrito-proof lipstick in partnership with Wonderskin – anchored in the social media trend for 'Mukbang'.



Dove joining forces with Pinterest to question the impact of AI generated content on real beauty.



Heritage Isn't enough—British brands must reinvent Britishness for a new era

Britishness can be a differentiating route into cultural relevance, especially when competing with Global brands.



Blending heritage with modernity: Burberry, after a period of losing sight of its roots, has reconnected with its British heritage through its "Back to the City" campaign which champions London's multicultural and creative energy. It stars viral TikTok sensation "bus auntie"—a mental health nurse from London known for joyful selfie videos on London buses.

"Properness" and no-nonsense regional values: Yorkshire Tea has leaned into its identity as an authentic British brand from the North, scaling its regional appeal into a global success.



Icons don't follow time, they set it."

Samuel L. Jackson,
Adidas Superstars campaign, 2025

**Be the timeless
British clock that's set
a few minutes early.**

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Building brand
magnetism:
How audacious
strategy fuelled
success for
Nationwide

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Session speakers



Richard Warren

Director of Brands
& Marketing, Nationwide



Lynne Deason

Head of Creative
Excellence, Kantar



Lindsay Gorton Lee

Brand Strategy
Consultant, Kantar

Watch
the entire
session

Click here →



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Building brand magnetism: How audacious strategy fuelled success for Nationwide

Magnetism is about attraction, charm, persuasion - an invisible force that attracts one thing to another. Brands that have this magnetic pull grow. They have a clearly defined set of associations that make them feel meaningful and different that ensure they come to mind readily when a relevant need or usage occasion arises. As Lynne Deason put it:



Magnetic brands have got this feeling of rightness that predisposes us to choose them over other alternatives and means we're willing to pay more for them."

Lynne Deason, Kantar

Nationwide's transformation is a masterclass in Brand Magnetism. Faced with a choice, disrupt or be disrupted, it chose reinvention, venturing into new spaces while staying true to its core. With a strategic JTBD to drive difference while maintaining meaning, Nationwide leaned into what mattered to people and set the brand apart. By rallying behind a bold, new purpose, refreshing its brand assets, and engaging with culture to create

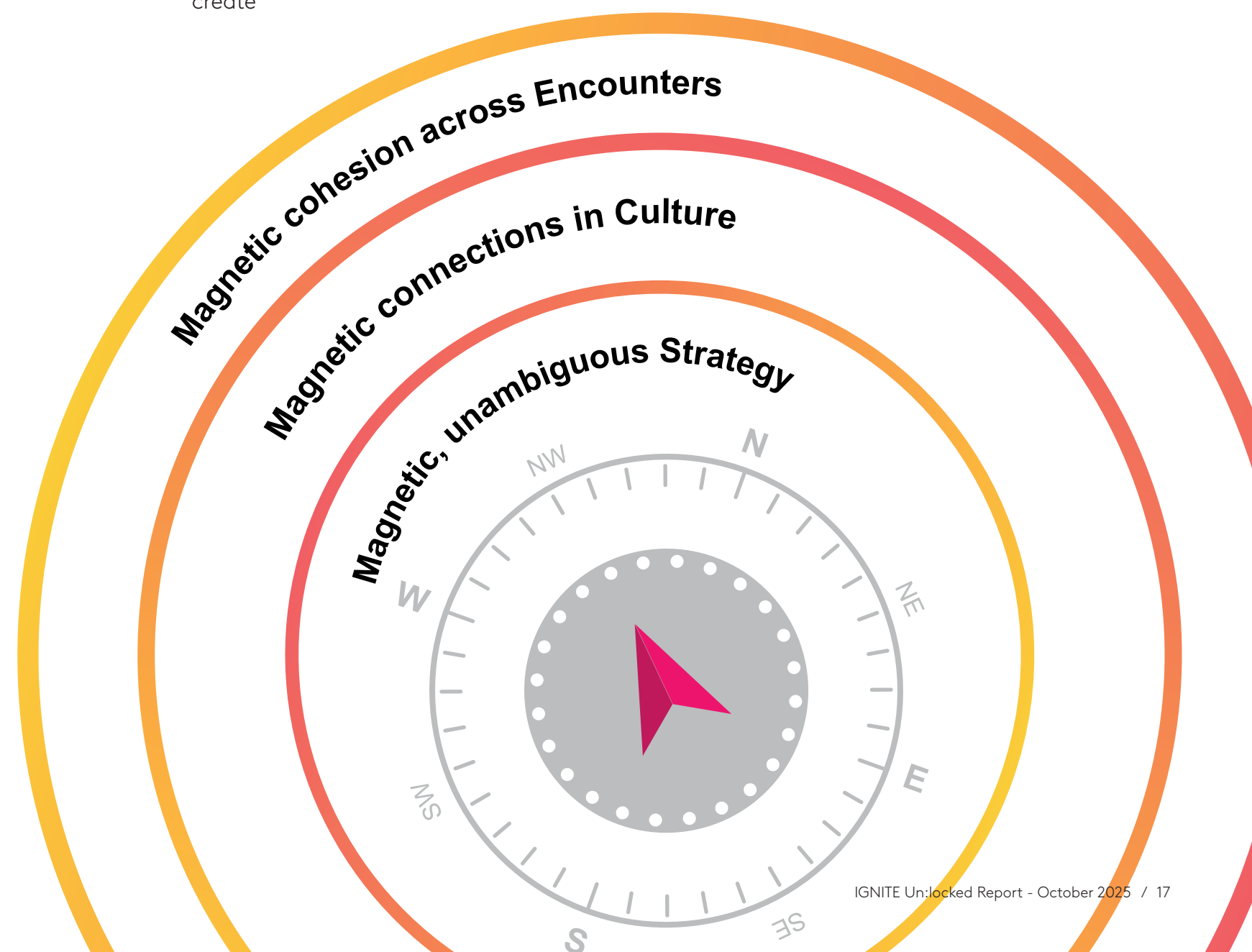
connection, Nationwide demonstrates how a clear, magnetic brand strategy can drive growth.

Nationwide's transformation and resulting growth is a fantastic example of how to build Brand Magnetism through three key levers: unambiguous strategy, connection in culture and cohesion across encounters.



The opportunity that we saw... is that we can be the full scaled competitor to the big banks by focusing exclusively on customers."

Richard Warren,
Nationwide



#1 Magnetic, unambiguous brand strategy

A bold, clear vision of what the brand stands for - distinctive, meaningful, and audience-first. It sets the course for everything the brand does.

"If brands don't have clear direction, they are going nowhere," says Lynne Deason. Nationwide's journey began with a radical rethink of its purpose:

We defined the purpose in 2023 for Nationwide as banking, but fairer, more rewarding and for the good of society. This is a departure, saying that we don't want to be seen as a building society. We want to be seen as a bank."

Richard Warren, Nationwide

Nationwide dropped "building society" from their brand, unveiled an updated look across every touchpoint, and embedded its purpose across the business. This clarity of vision became the brand's "Magnetic North" - a guiding force for all decisions.

The clarity of that vision is so clear for Nationwide that it will fit onto a fridge magnet. Can you fit your Magnetic North onto a fridge magnet? Because if you can't, it suggests you need to distil and simplify even further."

Lynne Deason, Kantar



#2 Magnetic connections in culture

Deep, authentic connections in culture drive Brand Magnetism. This is about shaping culture, not chasing it.

"When you realise culture's potential impact on brand and business growth, then you realise it's a business imperative. Brands that are culturally vibrant grow six times more than those who don't. Because effective cultural vibrancy builds Meaningful Difference"
— Lindsay Gorton-Lee

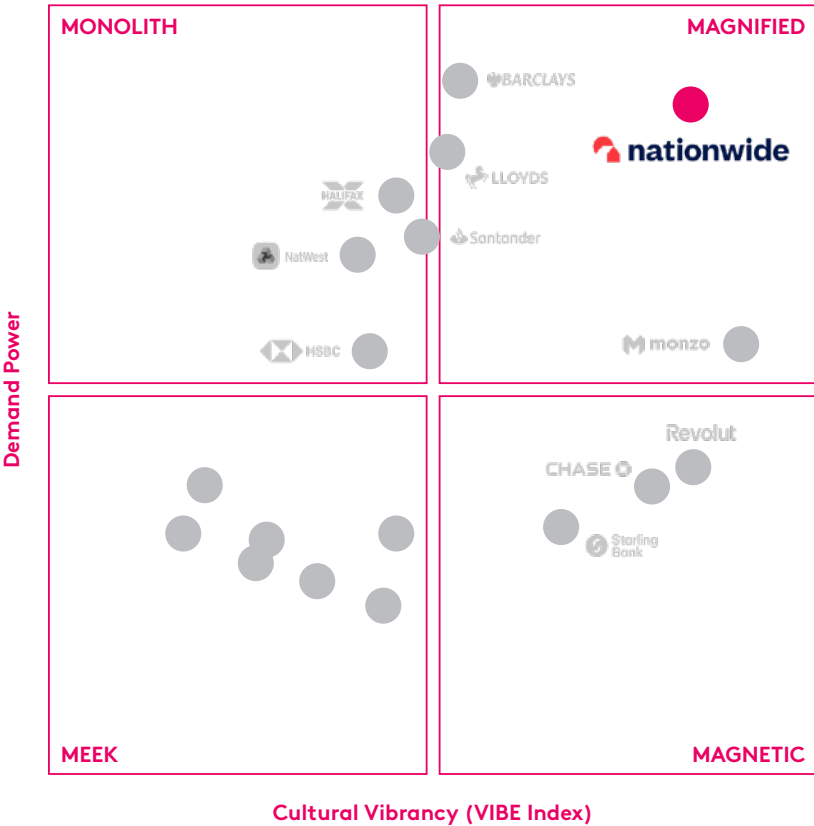
Nationwide doesn't just reflect culture - it helps shape it. Its encounters resonate personally, win in context, and connect unmistakably with the brand.

We weren't closing branches. And, you know, this has been a great source of difference. A meaningful difference to us. ...we take great pleasure in the banks continually announcing that they're closing branches because everyone's now banking digitally, which just, you know, isn't true."

Richard Warren, Nationwide

Nationwide leaned into culture with bold activations like "NationFried" (chicken shops for students during fresher week) and 'Fairer Share' (giving £100 a year to 4 million members). These platforms were unmistakably Nationwide,

connecting with strategically important cohorts. They set Nationwide apart from both traditional and neo-banks, moving it ahead of traditional banks and in line with neo-banks on Kantar's cultural vibrancy scale (VIBE).



Go from meek to magnetic with effective cultural connection

#3 Magnetic cohesion across all encounters

Magnetic cohesion means every brand encounter glues together and reinforces the Magnetic North, creating clarity through consistency. Consistency is designed in, making it impossible not to connect the dots.

As Lynne Deason explains:

“Each interaction with your brand is an opportunity to consolidate those perceptions and associations that exist in people’s heads. It’s a bit like a stalactite in a cave -you’ve got to drip in exactly the same place for that to become really clear.”

Nationwide delivered a cohesive experience across every channel - from branch to app to advertising - using a consistent creative platform, distinctive assets, and a recognisable emotive tone of voice.

The result?

Nationwide’s brand clarity, ad awareness and ad effectiveness soared, showing the entire category what’s possible when you design cohesion in from the outset.

It’s helpful to imbue a consistent, recognisable, emotive tone of voice into your magnetic north and then through into all your exposures and experiences. This is about how brand makes you feel and what it says about you - and that’s a big part of what makes it magnetic.”

Lindsay Gorton-Lee, Kantar



Implications for brands and marketers

Nationwide's transformation shows that with a clear strategy, authentic cultural connection, and relentless cohesion, brands can create Brand Magnetism and drive growth - even in the most challenging markets.



I'm so inspired by Nationwide's success story. Having that really clear vision, that sense of direction, bringing that to life in a culturally vibrant and engaging and effective way, and then ensuring you've got that cohesion across all of your assets is for sure going to set you up to build a really magnetic brand."

Lynne Deason, Kantar

Ready to build your own Brand Magnetism? Kantar is here to help you unlock growth by shaking things up - while staying true to brand DNA.

Distil your magnetic north:

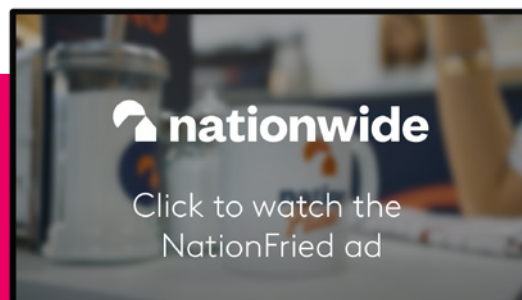
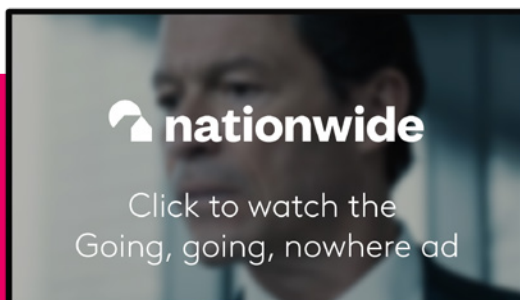
Make your brand's direction so clear it fits on a fridge magnet.

Connect authentically to culture:

Find the cultural spaces where your brand can lead, not just follow.

Design for cohesion, create clarity:

Build consistency beyond repetition—across every channel, every experience, every time.



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New brand building frontiers: Creator-led effectiveness

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Session speakers



Bianca Cioti

Global Communications
Manager, Desperados



Dom Boyd

Managing Director,
Kantar Insights UKI



Simon Atherley

Head of Marketing
Effectiveness, Kantar

Watch
the entire
session

Click here →



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New brand building frontiers: Creator-led effectiveness

Brands face a conundrum.

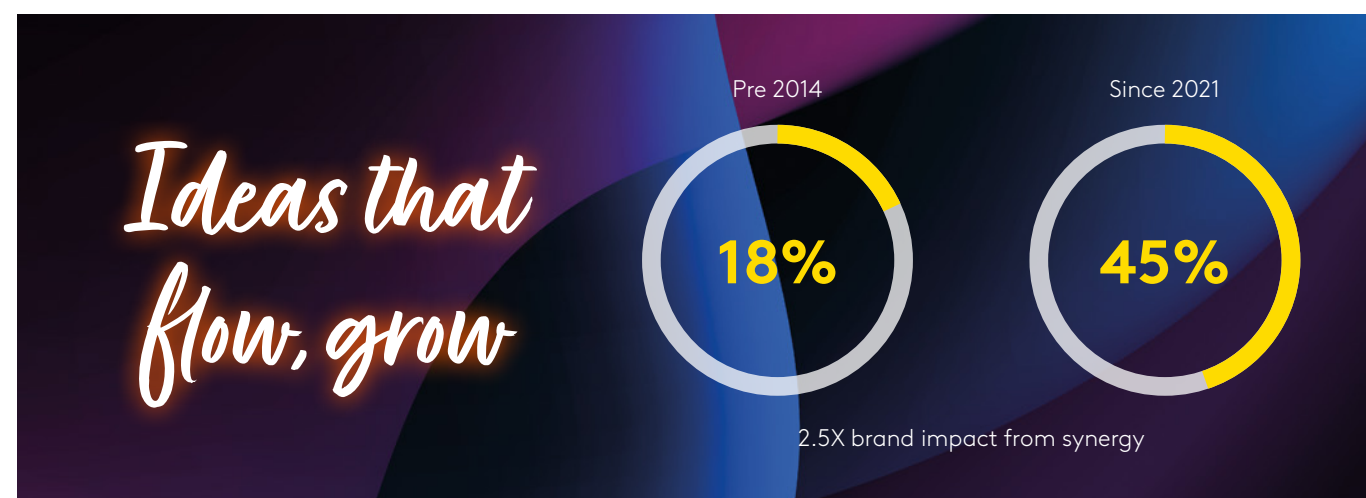
Marketers recognise the power and growth of the creator economy to connect with audiences and engage authentically.

But in an era of 'lots of littles', having clear brand connective tissue has become 2.5X more important.



Scale is the thing that drives your business. But how do you create big in a world made of lots of little, where channels are fragmented, where audiences are atomised, where attention is tiny? The key is applying connected creativity"

Dom Boyd, Kantar



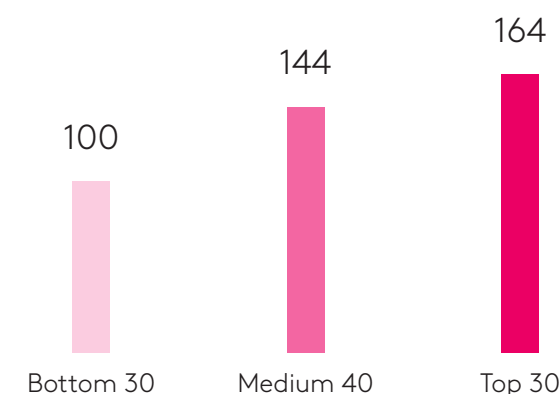
Beware the 'brand gap' when using creators.

In the new era of creator-driven creativity, brands are creating advantage by harnessing creators as the heartbeat of culture to build cultural vibrancy.

Kantar evidence shows that, when used well, creator content with strong quality supercharges brand building through distinctive and coherent content that reinforces the brand idea.

However, the evidence also highlights how currently only a minority of creator content connects back to the brand – there's a brand gap.

Creator Content Brand Impact



But

Only **27%** of creator content links to the brand



Creators can supercharge brand building

vs social paid

Saliency	+13%
Brand recall	+19%
Brand consideration	+36%

The 5 steps to winning with creators, using connected creativity

#1.
Commit to a magnetic long-term brand idea: it's your glue.

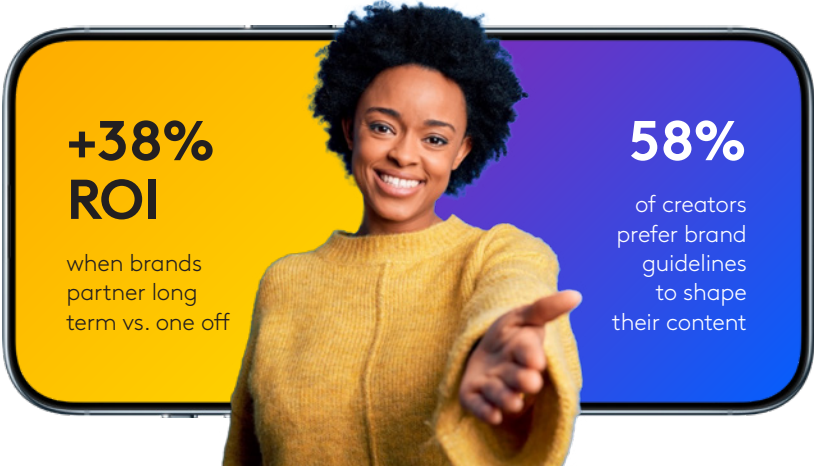
#2.
Focus on building cultural vibrancy: brands with strong VIBE grow 6X more.

#3.
Creators are your new creative directors. So partner wisely, and brief well – the key is good brand idea fit.

#4.
Be contextually fluid by customising for platform and community context: ideas that flow, grow.

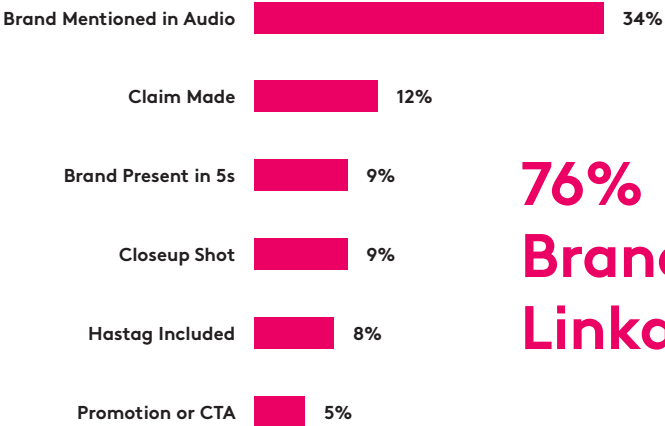
#5.
Bake in your brand to all your content: 6 executional factors drive strong brand linkage.

Creators are your new *creative directors*
So partner wisely.

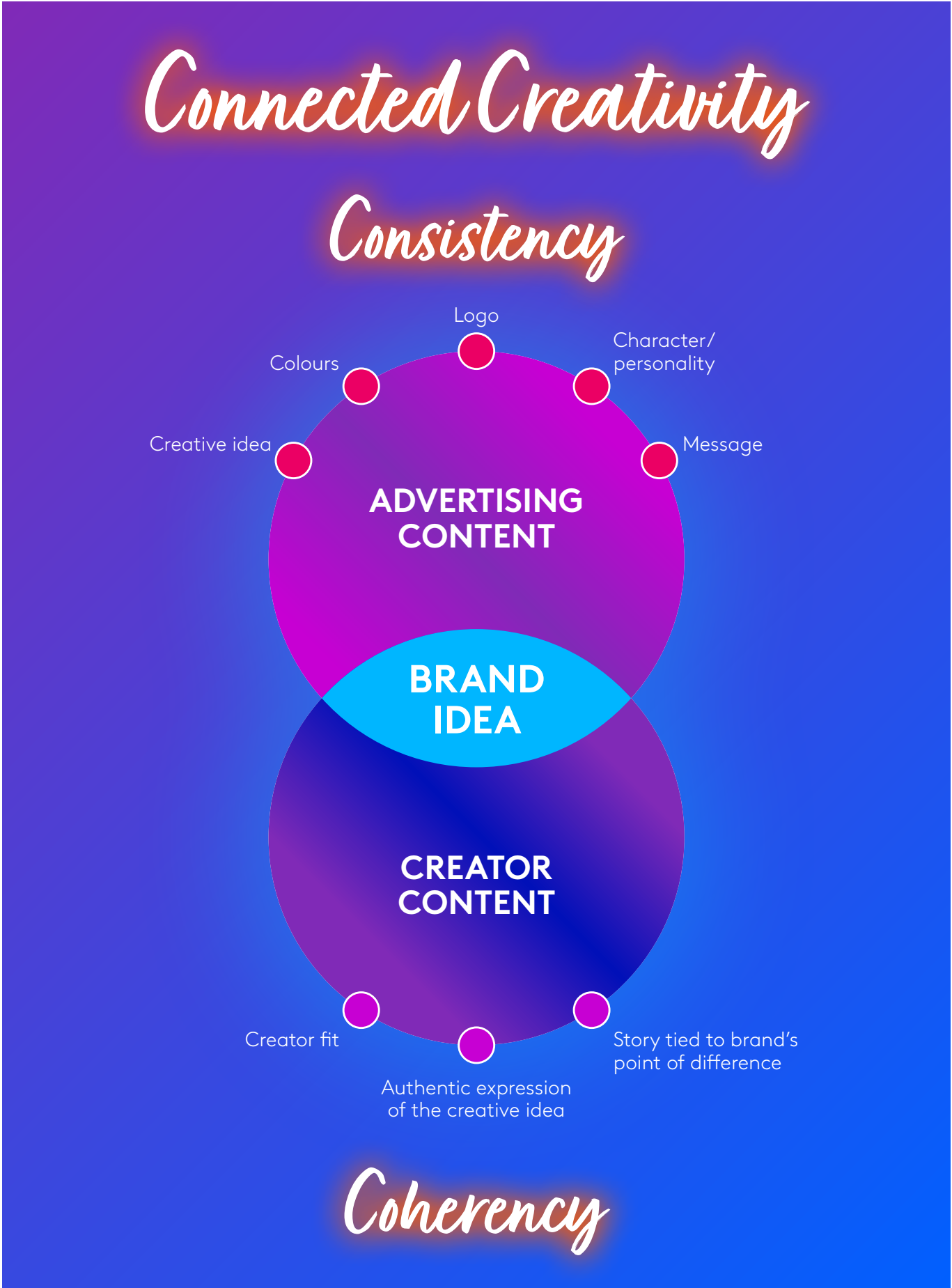


Baking in your brand to your content

Branding drivers



76% Brand Linkage



Putting it into practice: Kantar x Desperados



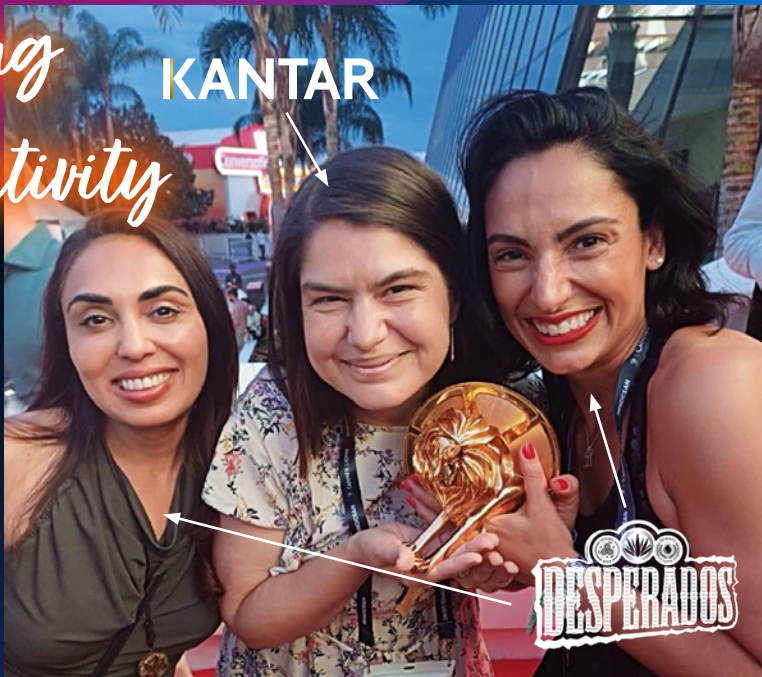






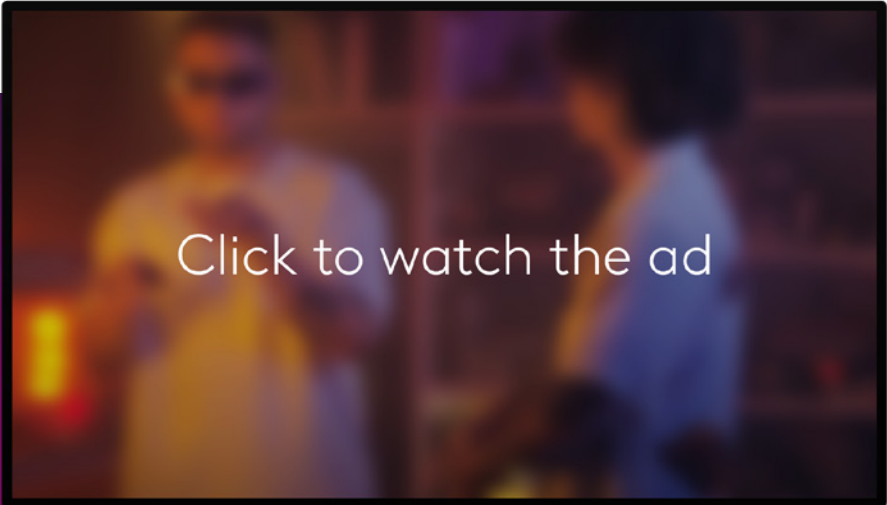
2.5x
ROI

Award-winning
Connected Creativity



70+ Creators

Music video with Ovy powered a flywheel of experiences and creator content around music culture passion points





The beer with
LATIN VIBE

+27%

Brand recall

+8

Meaningful index

+10%

Targeted brand imagery

+15%

Purchase intent

2.5x ROI

More effective vs
previous campaign

Applying connected creativity.

What helped Desperados succeed?

- ✓ Find the insight: Desperados found a tension for Gen Z between wanting to let loose and needing control
- ✓ They used this to link to consumer passion points in culture and connected to their brand's DNA via 'The Beer with Latin Vibe'
- ✓ Treated creators as their creative directors not just an amplification channel - they trusted their instincts and were rewarded with culturally vibrant content
- ✓ They focused on coherence not consistency: 'lots of little' exposures unified by a clear campaign platform idea, brand tone of voice and emotive clarity



If you want creators to deliver, what we really need to give them, first and foremost, is a creative idea that is strong enough for them to gravitate around."

Bianca Cioti, Desperados

Implications for marketing effectiveness in creator era



While many of the fundamentals of effectiveness remain in place, it's clear that the proliferation of content in the creator era poses new challenges.

*We need **systematic, single source and synergistic** measurement techniques to account for this.*

*AI powered measurement from our **LINKAI** and **LIFT** solutions offers features to make this more manageable."*

Si Atherley, Kantar

Get the right IDeA

Creator effectiveness questions to ask

INSPIRE

Do you have a culturally vibrant platform idea?

DEVELOP & EVALUATE

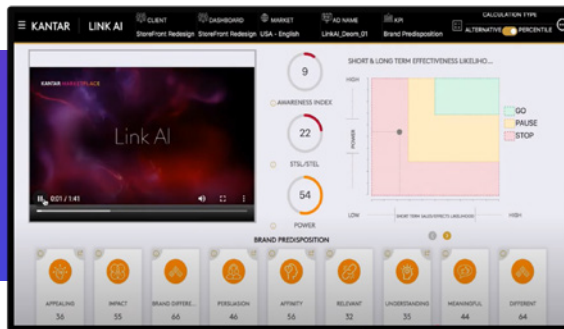
Can you pinpoint which creator content is effective and why?

ATTRIBUTE

Can you attribute creator campaigns to business performance?

How Kantar helps supercharge creator effectiveness with AI.

Find which creator content works and why



LINK AI

Systematic



Prove the brand impact of creator campaigns

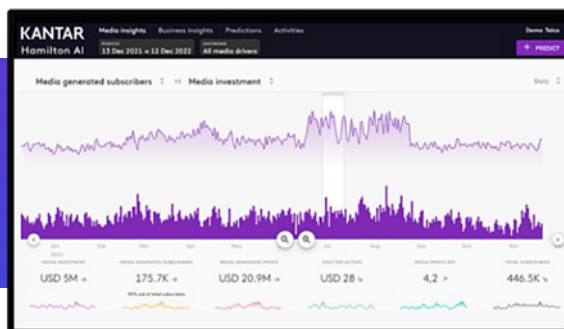


LIFT+ THX

Single Source



Prove the £ impact of creator campaigns



LIFT ROI

Synergistic

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The secret to communicating with modern audiences

Jamie Laing Ignites the Stage

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Session speakers



Jamie Laing

Entrepreneur, BBC presenter and co-founder of Candy Kittens



Dan Fanshawe

Senior Client Director, Media, Kantar

Watch the entire session

Click here →



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The secret to communicating with modern audiences



I should not say this, but I think creators demand quite a lot of money for what they're delivering... brands have much more power than they realise."

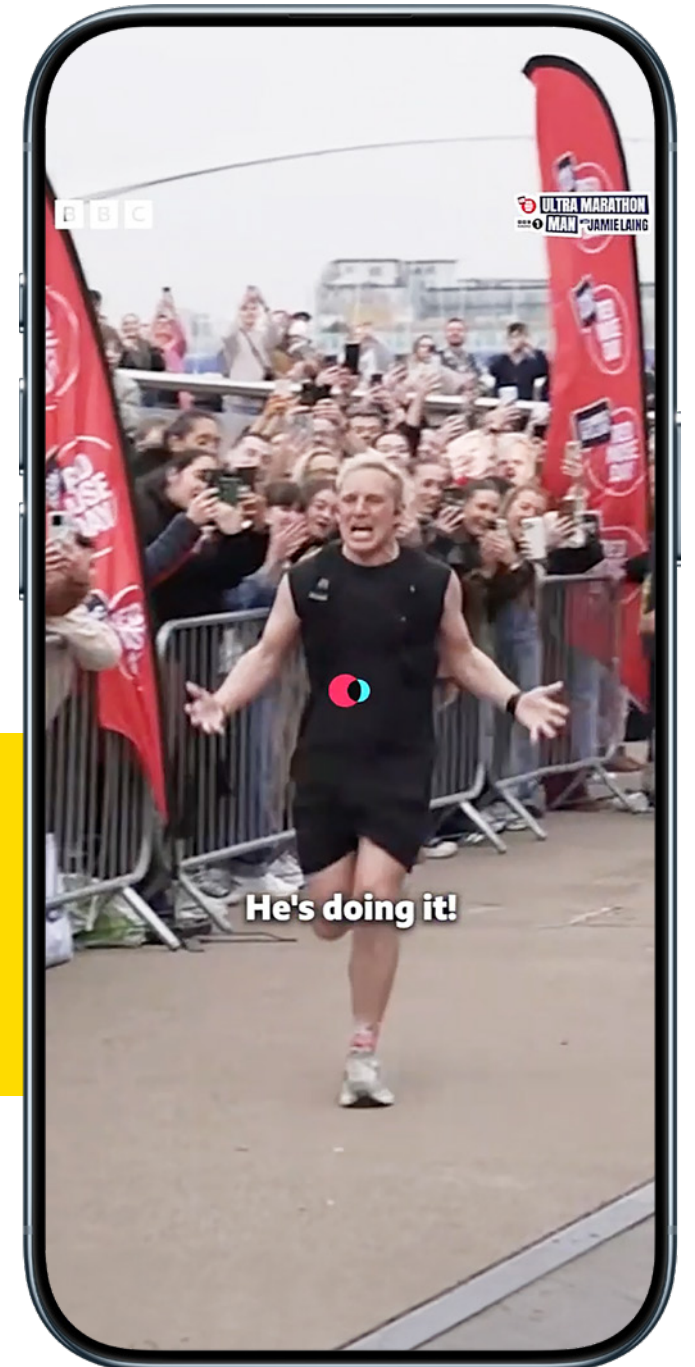
Jamie Laing, Entrepreneur, BBC presenter and co-founder of Candy Kittens



Jamie Laing—Candy Kittens co-founder and podcast dynamo—didn't just headline Ignite, he owned it. With wit, honesty, and a sugar rush of inspiration, **Jamie challenged marketers to break through the chaos of today's media jungle** and connect with audiences in unforgettable ways...

...Jamie also revealed his life's theme song, the brand he's loving right now, and yes—his favourite swear word. The message? In a fragmented media world, **bold storytelling and brand obsession win every time.**

Let's unpack five sweet, sweet takeaways...

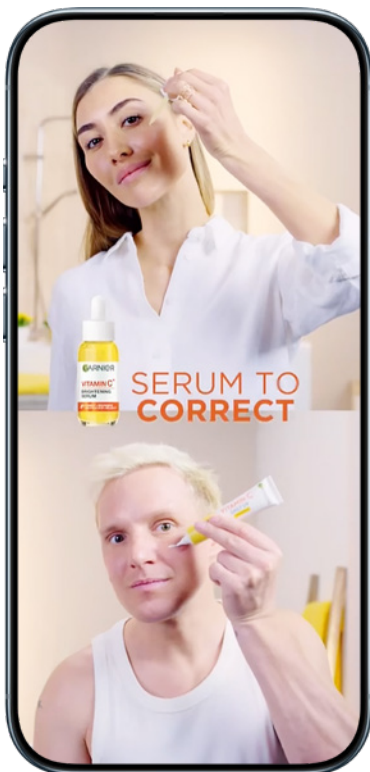




1. **Do what lights Your Fire and build your dream team.**
Jamie's secret? He figured out early what makes him thrive, and he surrounds himself with people who amplify his strengths. Success isn't solo—it's a team sport.

2. **Obsess over your brand, not the competition.**
Forget the side-glances. Jamie's nephew won his sports day by focusing straight ahead, not on rivals. Brands win by doubling down on their own story—not chasing others.

3. **Creators are powerful, but brands hold the cards.**
Yes, creators drive impact. But brands can—and should—be bolder in negotiations. Demand real ROI, vet your partners, and don't just take their word for it. If they promise to save the whales, make sure they're actually saving whales.



4. **Storytelling is your superpower: Crank it up.**
Want to stand out? Lean into storytelling, and don't be afraid to show your funny side. Candy Kittens' content is proof: bold, playful, and top-tier for brand-building.

5. **Social media: Show up or fade out.**
If your brand isn't seen at least three times a day, you're invisible. Be present, be meaningful, and reach your audience where they live. And whatever you do, please—ditch the word "Slay."

Inspired?

Speak to Kantar about how we can help with your storytelling

Kantar's LINK AI results for Candy Kittens' content

Power Building Top 20% ↑

Affinity Building Top 18% ↑

Difference Building Top 20% ↑

Enjoyment Building Top 20% ↑



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Putting AI-native leadership into practice

IGNITE

Session speakers



Darren Hardman
Corporate Vice President
and CEO of Microsoft UK



Elaine Rodrigo
Chief Insights and
Analytics Officer, Reckitt



Marie Ridgley
Executive Managing
Director, Kantar UK&I



Thomas Prosser
Head of Qualitative,
Kantar

KANTAR



Microsoft

Watch
the entire
session

Click here →



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Digital transformation starts from the core

A recent MIT study found only 5% of GenAI pilots deliver enterprise-wide value. The rest stall at proof-of-concept.

This highlights how AI native leadership isn't a tech project, it's a business transformation that starts at the heart of the business. So leaders must embed AI into the organisation's strategic and cultural DNA.

The key to success is to begin with the end in mind: design

for scale, embed measurement, focus on ROI from day one and foster a culture that embraces experimentation and learning.

Microsoft's deep partnership with Kantar highlights the power of this approach, seeing Kantar as a 'frontier' client that is in the top tier for adoption of CoPilot.

“AI transformation not something that you just ask the CIO to deliver... it has to be done at the core of the business. And so that ability to see the opportunity and to lean into it is actually a real cultural change for an organisation.”

AI isn't created equal: quality data is the foundation for competitive differentiation

AI alone isn't the answer to creating competitive advantage. The 'engine' is only as powerful as the principles you build it on.

To make sure you get diamonds not rocks you need high-quality data you can trust at scale, fuelled by datasets with unique IP such as Kantar's validated MDS, BrandZ and Blueprint models.

These fused datasets are the bedrock of fresh insight and competitive advantage, and lie at the heart of the 'brand intelligence platform' that Kantar and Microsoft are building with Reckitt.

“If your data isn't unique and high quality, you're building a house of cards. So that's the challenge: knowing what unique data you've got, how to access it and how to fuse it together to create real advantage.”

KANTAR

Digital transformation

EQUIP OUR TEAMS

Empower people by providing the latest tools and technology to get the full benefits of AI.



WORKING SMARTER

TRANSFORM THE CORE

Transform how we deliver for clients by building new tools.



TRANSFORMATIONAL SPEED AND PRODUCTIVITY

INNOVATE THE OFFER

New go-to-market solutions.



SHAPING OUR INDUSTRY

The next chapter:
Brand tracking
reimagined

- ✓ Analytics connecting different data sets to outcomes
- ✓ Validated methodologies that fuel strategic decision-making
- ✓ Integrated platforms that can be used by everyone

- ✓ Real-time insights for better decisions today
- ✓ Powerful AI insights dashboard
- ✓ AI Automated reports and headlines

Data collection

Consumer Survey Data

Digital Data

Partner Data

3rd party integration

BRAND INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

Powered By Kantar Common Data Model

Strategic analysis & reporting

API Integration: Reckitt Genesis Platform

Kantar Integrated Dashboard

KaiA Assistant*

Self-serve analytics

ROI / ROE

KANTAR

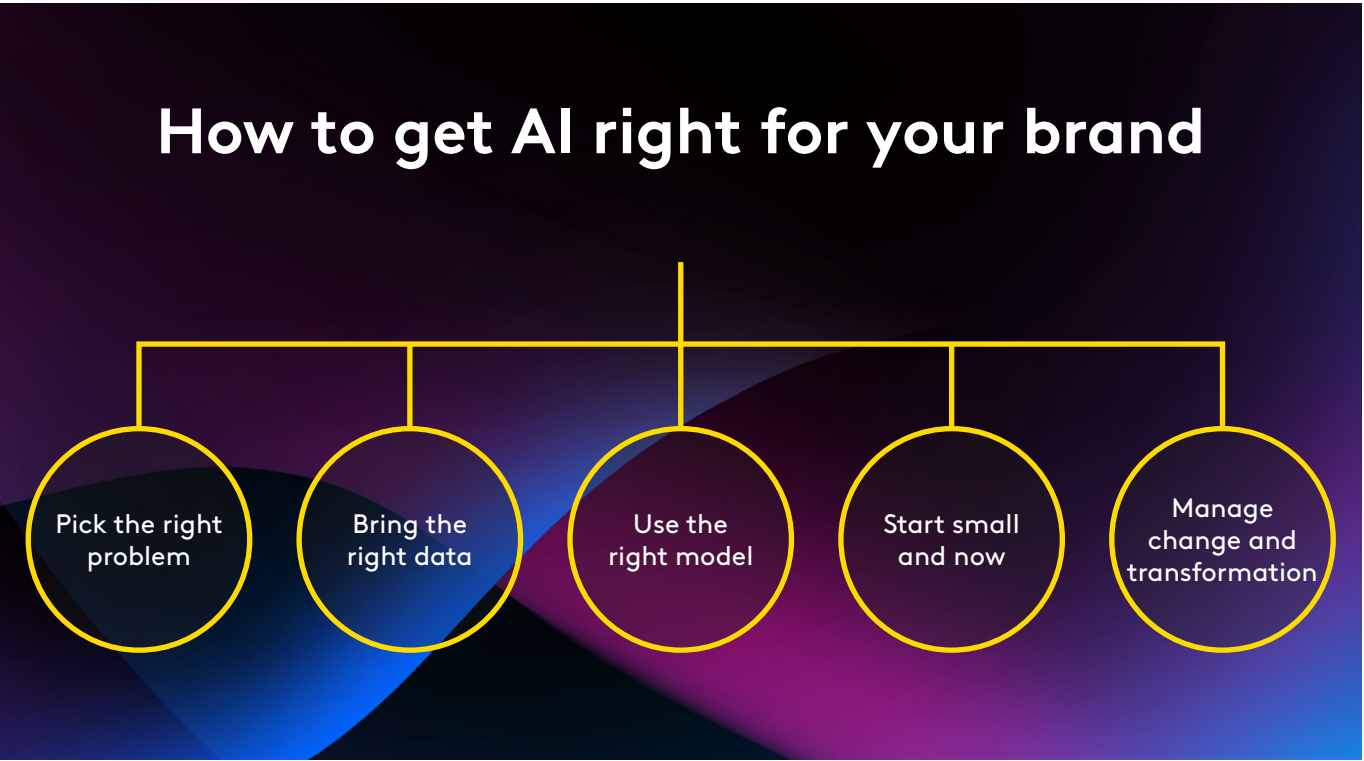
It's time to shift from efficiency to effectiveness

While there's been a lot of focus on using AI to strengthen operational efficiency, the real value creation shift will come from creating stronger insight and impact.

To enable this at Kantar, Chief AI Scientist Ashok Kalidas has been working with a team of 500 Microsoft & Kantar AI scientists on 50+ pioneering R&D projects.

This process has informed a simple 5-point model for putting AI native brand building into practice, which has step-changed impact on Reckitt.

"We're now 70% faster at insight generation, and our innovation concepts have 2X better performance. So being AI native means we've become better as marketers and brand builders."



Amplify impact through continuous innovation

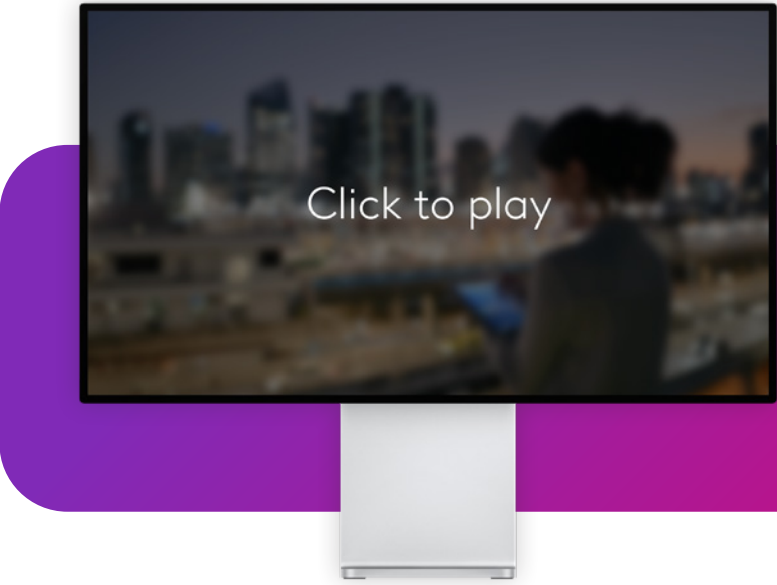
In periods of rapid radical change, rich partnerships are critical to accelerating progress, fuelling continuous learning, feedback, and iteration.

Kantar's AI team have pioneered award-winning new solutions such as LINKAI which have revolutionised the way clients are developing, optimising and evaluating creative content through meta learning.

"There's a deep partnership and relationship between Microsoft and Reckitt. That's amazing because it creates continuous innovation and constant evolution with our huge AI lab."



"LINK AI has helped us scale up creative quality by going from optimising a few assets to a few thousand, including meta analysis that feeds MMM ROI models. And that makes us better, much better at marketing."



Watch our AI-native video

Unlocking growth at scale by experimenting

The true power of AI-fuelled insight comes from hardwiring in imagination and experimentation.

Change is created “in the hands of the people” on a personal, team and corporate level.

So inspire teams to adopt, adapt, and experiment with AI tools.

A great example of this is Kantar’s week-long #AIFestival held in offices around the world that included Saïd Business School Futurologists, client panels, learnings from start-ups, breakthrough use-cases and hands-on practical experimentation sessions.

Capabilities are exciting. But real change is created in the hands of people... so you need to fire up people’s imagination and their willingness to experiment, learn and adopt.”



Putting AI native leadership into practice

- Digital transformation starts from the core**

Design for scale, measure impact and focus on ROI from day one. This is what makes Kantar one of Microsoft’s ‘frontier’ clients.
- Quality data and IP is critical to creating competitive advantage**

To get diamonds not rocks you need high-quality data you can trust, fuelled by unique datasets such as Kantar’s MDS. This is the rocketfuel underpinning Reckitt’s ‘brand intelligence platform.’
- Shift from efficiency to effectiveness**

A simple 5-point approach helps put AI native brand building into practice. This has delivered 70% faster insight at double the performance for Reckitt.
- Amplify impact through continuous innovation**

Deep collaborative partnerships are critical to accelerating progress. Reckitt’s use of LINK AI’s creative meta-learnings has been a marketing game-changer.
- Unlock growth at scale by experimenting**

The true power of AI-fuelled insight comes from hardwiring in imagination and experimentation.



*Kantar are one of our
'frontier' businesses,
who are in the top tier
for pushing new
boundaries in AI"*

Darren Hardman

Microsoft UK CEO



KANTAR

IGNITE

Partnering to disrupt

Collaborating to shape a preferable
future for consumers.

IGNITE

Session speakers



Javier Camino

Global Head of Futures and
Culture Planning, Diageo



Naureen Mohammed

CPG Director,
Pinterest



Paolo Lorenzoni

VP EMEA Marketing,
Tinder



Meredith Smith

Senior Director, Creative
Strategy, Kantar

Watch
the entire
session

Click here →



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Disruptive questions can be better solved together

In an era of unprecedented complexity, brands face questions too big to tackle alone. The session brought together Kantar's Meredith Smith with Javier Camino, Head of Futures and Culture Planning at Diageo, Naureen Mohammed, CPG Director at Pinterest and Paolo Lorenzoni, VP EMEA Marketing at Tinder.

The session introduction set the tone: it's time to stop working in isolation and start reaching across the aisle. By partnering with non-competitor brands and sectors who

share similar challenges and ambitions, organisations can pool their intelligence, broaden their perspective, unlock richer insights and find new space that can disrupt the market. As highlighted at the event, "disruptive change requires bold moves across sectors to shape the world consumers are asking for." Only together can we anticipate and meet the evolving needs of tomorrow's consumers—collaboration is the new competitive edge.

Disruptive questions are hard to answer on your own, and disruptive change requires bold moves across sectors to shape the world consumers are asking for."

Meredith Smith, Kantar



Shared data deepens consumer understanding.

During their session, Diageo, Pinterest, Tinder and Kantar shared how bringing their distinct data sets and intelligence together provided a much richer view of consumers, their behaviours, preferences and emerging needs.

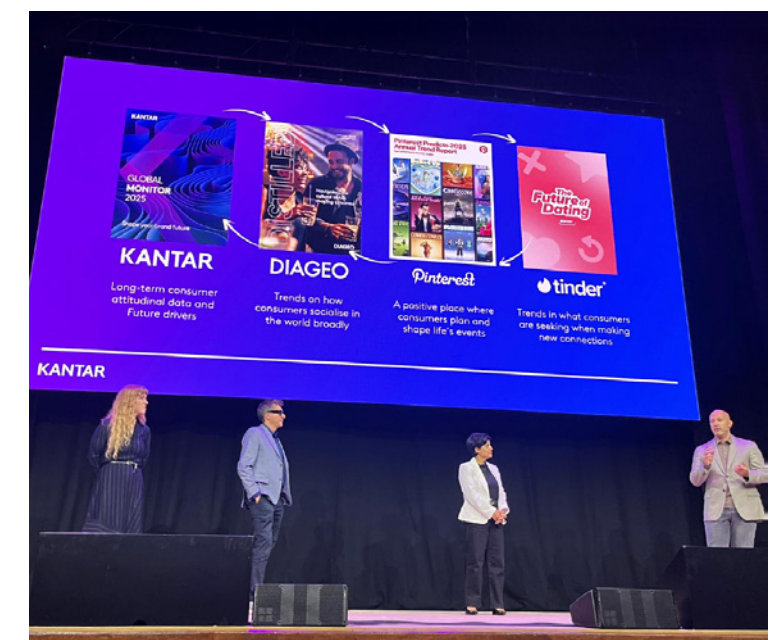
When partnering together on their recently launch 'Future of Socialising' report, these four organisations shared how they brought deep insights together – from Diageo's Foresight System and Pinterest's 'Pinterest Predicts' annual view to Tinder's 'Future of Dating' insights report. Combining these data sets and insights brought a well-rounded and granular picture of the consumer's evolving social world.

Each source of intelligence is powerful, but when brought together, they create a richness of consumer

understanding that could never be achieved alone. By combining long-term attitudinal data, behavioural signals, and real-time trends, brands can build a more vibrant, culturally relevant portrait of the consumer—unlocking disruptive insights and shaping the future together. This is the true value of cross-organisational data: it's not just about seeing further, but about seeing more clearly, together.

Each of these sources of intelligence is powerful – but when combined, they bring a richness of consumer understanding that could never be achieved alone."

Javier Camino, Diageo



Partnering is not an option – It’s an imperative.

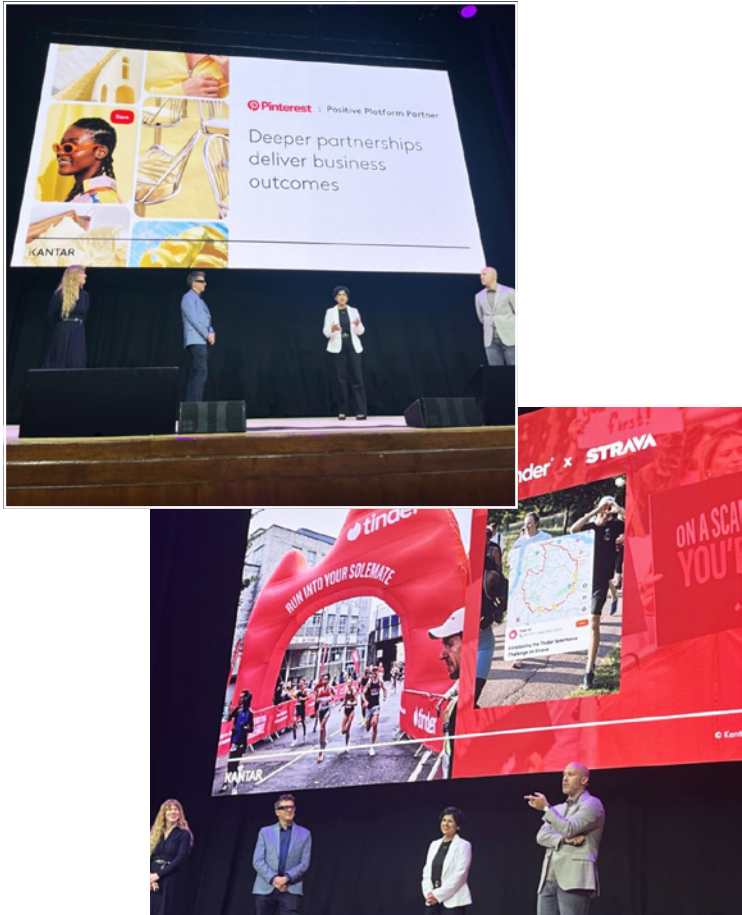
Pinterest and Tinder shared with the Ignite audience how they pioneered innovative partnerships by collaborating with brands like Dove and Strava, transforming how brands connect with consumers. Pinterest joined forces with Dove to launch “Real Beauty DNA,” a personalised digital

experience that empowered users to define and share their own vision of beauty, winning multiple Cannes Lions awards. Tinder partnered with Strava for the “Run Into Your Solemate” campaign, merging digital and real-life experiences to engage thousands of runners and spark new connections.

These collaborations demonstrated exactly how platforms and brands, when united, can create disruptive, culturally relevant solutions that drive deeper engagement and meaningful impact.

“Partnerships are the core of what marketing is today. If markets are conversations, there can be no conversations on your own. For brands, partnering is not an option, it’s an imperative.”

Paolo Lorenzoni, Tinder



Partners across sectors can shape a future that consumers expect.

The Partner to Disrupt session concluded with a powerful message: brands cannot shape the future alone. By joining forces across sectors—spirits, social platforms, food, dating, home care, and more—brands unlock the ability to answer disruptive questions and create bold, consumer-centric solutions. The session highlighted how shared data and collaboration deepen consumer understanding, fuel innovation, and allow brands to pro actively shape the world consumers are asking for, rather than simply reacting to change. As the session wrapped up, attendees were encouraged to scan the room for

new partnership opportunities and imagine shared activations that could launch in the coming year. The final call was clear: every brand has the power to disrupt and build a preferable future, but only by reaching across the aisle and partnering with others. Now is the time—join the movement and help shape the future consumers truly seek.



Shape the future: What shared activation could you launch in Q1 2026?

Gen X Group of 12 friends

Bookable Public Event Space

Divorce Party

BAILEYS

Pinterest

tinder

YOUR brand

Key takeaways

1. **Partner to Disrupt:**
Don't just talk to your own sector—reach out, collaborate, and co-create.
2. **Leverage Data:**
Share and combine data to unlock richer insights and shape the future, not just react to it.
3. **Stay Audience-Centric:**
Keep consumer needs, values, and aspirations at the heart of every partnership.
4. **Join the Conversation:**
Connect with peers across industries— 600+ Ignite attendees were proof of the appetite for disruption.



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This isn't just
a turnaround,
it's an M&S
turnaround

Kantar BrandZ
Brand of the Year 2024.

IGNITE

Session speakers



Russell Parsons

Editor In Chief,
Marketing Week



Robbie Black

Head of Brand, Comms
and Omnichannel
Marketing, M&S



Andrew Hill

Head of Loyalty and
Masterbrand, M&S

Watch
the entire
session

Click here →



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M&S: From burning platform to Kantar BrandZ brand of the year

This session with Andy Hill, Head of Masterbrand and Loyalty and Robbie Black, Head of Brand & Communications showed how M&S transformed from crisis in 2018 to 12 consecutive quarters of growth and gaining over a million extra customers in 2024 along.

During this time it underwent a remarkable transformation from a high street stalwart facing existential challenges to a brand celebrated for its innovation and highly impactful marketing, winning both Kantar BrandZ and Marketing Week Brand of the Year 2024.

The session highlight how the turnaround was driven by insight, innovation, and leadership with clear vision and bold action set the stage for recovery.



“We don’t have a God-given right to exist. Unless we change and develop this company the way we want to in decades to come, there will be no M&S.”

Archie Norman, 2018



Putting the customer right at the heart

M&S prioritised listening to customers and understanding perceptions with initiatives including “customer weeks” and leadership time in stores.

As Andy revealed “one of the big problems was that everywhere you looked, there’s something you wanted to fix or improve. So the steer

from Archie to myself and the insight team was: go and listen to the customer, go and tell us what the customers are saying.” So M&S leadership

hardwired customer-centricity into company behaviours,

requiring support centre staff to spend at least 7 days a week in stores and launching “customer weeks” two to three times a year to bring real shoppers into the office.

The customer research revealed a paradox: shoppers professed love for M&S but perceived it as too expensive, not relevant to them, and not offering “real food” for everyday occasions.

The insight team’s work focused on dismantling three barriers – price, relevance, and authenticity – by shifting price perceptions, and making the brand more accessible and inclusive.

“There is nothing like having real live customers who are there in your office telling the truth to senior people for them to really listen.”

Rebuilding relevance by reviving the brand's core DNA

While M&S had strong residual awareness, especially among older generations, that awareness alone wasn't translating into sales.

As Andy noted "everyone likes the idea that the British Library exists, but no one actually really wants to have

to spend their time there." The trouble was that we were seen as for special occasion only for food, and not special enough for clothing, so we needed to build quality back in.

The key to unlocking this started by bringing back the iconic 'this is not just...this is

M&S' line, which played a pivotal role in re-establishing differentiation, providing a clear organisational north star to rally the organisation and marketing behind, ensuring consistency in quality messaging and product experience across every touchpoint.

"This is not just food, this is M&S food' is so deeply embedded in British culture... It's a benchmark by which we judge everything we do internally."



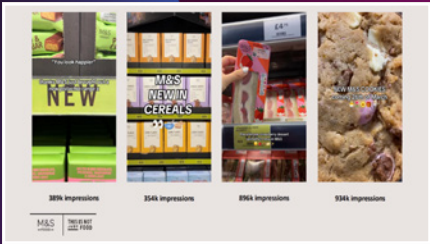
Bringing the brand to life with new formats & digital

M&S has consistently pushed the boundaries in using social media and branded entertainment initiatives to tell its story in new ways, including formats such as 'From Farm to Foodhall with Tom Kerridge', 'Cooking with the Stars' and 'Dress the Nation'.

This has driven perception shifts and business outcomes including a plus 15 percentage point increase in people agreeing that they saw M&S as a credible place to do a weekly shop once they'd seen Cooking with the Stars.

Handing over control of social media to 600+ local stores has also paid off, as the grassroots approach allows it to communicate new information and foster stronger connections with local communities with 2.75 million impressions every week with an engagement rate around 5.5%.

"Every single store wants to go out there and talk to their local community. It's not just about working with professional creators."

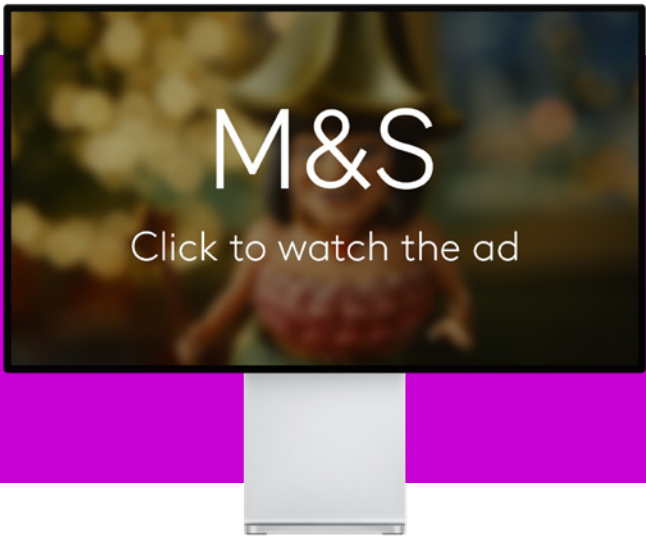


Consistency, value and the power of storytelling

While M&S has consistently pioneered new high-reach routes to market, it has also executed with excellence and consistency.

A great example of this is M&S' Xmas campaign which has starred Dawn French for the last four years.

Kantar's evidence shows the power of this approach – it has not only got stronger each year to become the No1 most recalled brand campaign, it has delivered that recall on a fraction of the budget of competitors giving it by far the strongest 'Excess' Share of Voice.



Key takeaways

1. Identify your differentiating North Star: it's the key the unlocks everything. For M&S this was bringing back 'it's not just....'
2. Be obsessed with bringing customers into the boardroom, to truly understand what it takes to address your biggest barriers.
3. Disrupt, consistently – find fresh ways to bring your DNA to life emotionally through new formats, and execute with excellence.



How Kantar can help you succeed

Kantar is dedicated to shaping your brand future to unlock superior advantage

And with our industry-leading Blueprint for Brand Growth framework with MDS, specialist expertise, best-in-class AI, industry-leading benchmarks and thought leadership we love partnering with ambitious brands.

We hope that you enjoyed IGNITE and our Un:Locked October 2025 report. But more importantly, that you've been inspired to take action and unlock the full potential in your brand.

This could be through getting a demo of our latest tech solutions, asking us for a point of view on how to win in your category or challenging us with a brief.

Please do reach out.
We'd love to help.

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