

RETAIL

RETAIL TOP 20:

Brand Value (US\$M)

AMAZON ¹	\$396,151
WALMART	\$176,706
COSTCO	\$114,288
THE HOME DEPOT	\$87,634
TSMALL ²	\$36,012
LOWE'S	\$30,094
ALDI	\$27,702
MERCADO LIBRE ¹	\$27,277
IKEA	\$25,015
TAOBAO ²	\$24,199
SAM'S CLUB	\$23,557
LIDL	\$21,000
PINDUODUO	\$19,616
TJ MAXX	\$17,133
EBAY	\$15,707
SHOPEE	\$13,005
WHOLE FOODS	\$12,508
TARGET	\$11,384
WOOLWORTHS	\$10,674
TESCO	\$9,726

DEFINITION:

The Retail category includes physical and digital distribution channels in grocery and department stores and specialists in drug, electrical, DIY, and home furnishings.

ADD TO CART/ RETAIL BRANDS WIN WITH MEDIA, AI, AND VALUE

Category Brand Value
Year-on-Year Change

18%

Retail Top 20
Total Brand Value

\$1,099,388 M

1. Amazon and Mercado Libre include their retail business only. 2. Tmall and Taobao are part of Alibaba group
Source: Kantar/Kantar BrandZ (including data from S&P Capital IQ and Euromonitor)

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It's been a positive year overall for the Retail category, as its top brands grow 18%.

Category leader Amazon remains far ahead of the field, and has risen 17% year on year. Like many leading retail brands, it has benefitted from two big sector shifts.

The first is advanced AI's move from pilot to mainstream. Last year, Amazon's Rufus assistant boosted conversion by 60%. Meanwhile, Walmart (up 48% this year) invested heavily in predictive analytics for inventory management and personalised deals – as did rising South American giant Mercado Libre, among other players. Lowe's now has AI-powered 'shoppable' design tools to aid pros and retail consumers alike.

A second, closely related trend is the rise of retail media networks (RMNs). Retailers continue to monetise these advertising solutions at scale with the help of AI engines; as a group, RMNs are now on track to surpass TV ads in total spend by 2030 (if not sooner).

Advertisers see a lot of upside for RMNs as these networks' targeting tools grow even more refined. But brands are also looking hard at which RMN partners can give them the best return on investment. The greatest spoils will ultimately go to those RMNs that combine proven results with superior experience – think innovative analytics, clear pricing, and creative flexibility.

The likely end point of all this disruption is even more convergence between retail, advertising, and content ecosystems. China is currently furthest along on this path. Yes, deflationary

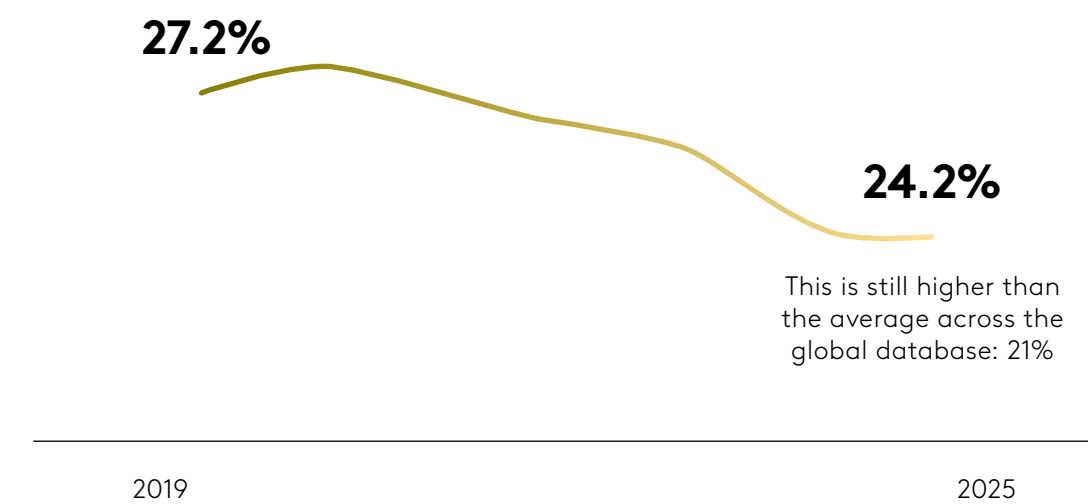
pressures have weighed on some Chinese retail brands (while boosting a new crop of discount retail chains). Even so, social commerce and live retail are clear bright spots – to the benefit of brands like Taobao and Tmall. The lesson here for retail brands is that culture matters. Meaning is about more than just functionality these days – consumers are also looking for engaging, entertaining, and communal experiences.

This is evident in China's domestic market, where Douyin's integrations with Taobao and Tmall have generated meaningful revenue for both platforms. These brands are also plenty active on their own – Tmall's owner Alibaba continues to build out Alimama as a central RMN tool, while Douyin has TikTok Shop's engaged overseas audience to offset tariff pressures (and the spinoff of TikTok's US operations).

Still, with greater convergence comes the risk of weaker Difference. This holds true for retail brands worldwide: it's getting harder to stand out. Brands can run ahead of this by finding new spaces that foreground novel forms of value.

Value is this year's other big story. It's now become less 'functionally' defined. Free shipping, free returns, and instant delivery once felt like untouchable perks of 21st century omnichannel retail. But thanks to margin pressure and sustainability concerns, retailers have gone back to charging for these services.

It's getting harder for brands to stand out
% of Retail brands with strong Difference



Source: Kantar BrandZ database



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AI is redefining value in Australian retail

Australia's grocery category is under growing pressure as value-led and digital-first players reshape expectations. Kantar BrandZ data shows Aldi increasing Demand Power by more than 2% between 2022 and 2025, supported by its highly Different positioning and partnerships that extend convenience. Amazon's continued expansion into grocery, including fresh delivery through Harris Farm, is further raising the bar for the incumbents.

In response, grocery market leaders are using AI to deliver more relevant and rewarding experiences. Coles' Flybuys programme delivers personalised weekly recommendations to over four million members, while Woolworths' AI-powered Olive chatbot is evolving into a more service-led touchpoint.

This shift isn't limited to grocery. Specsavers has introduced AI-powered, virtual try-on tools, making online shopping easier and helping reduce returns. Furniture brand Koala uses an in-house AI concierge to give shoppers real-time, personalised answers about products, stock, and delivery.

In beauty, MECCA launched Miss MECCA, an AI chatbot to instantly help customers with product advice, orders, and beauty questions. These examples show how AI is enhancing the retail experience and adding real value in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

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Shoppers are beginning to accept this change, even if they don't necessarily love it. What they are less willing to accept are those supposed 'necessary frictions' that brands once justified as the 'price' of extraordinary affordability (such as out-of-the-way locations, too-limited assortments, and bare-bones digital experiences).

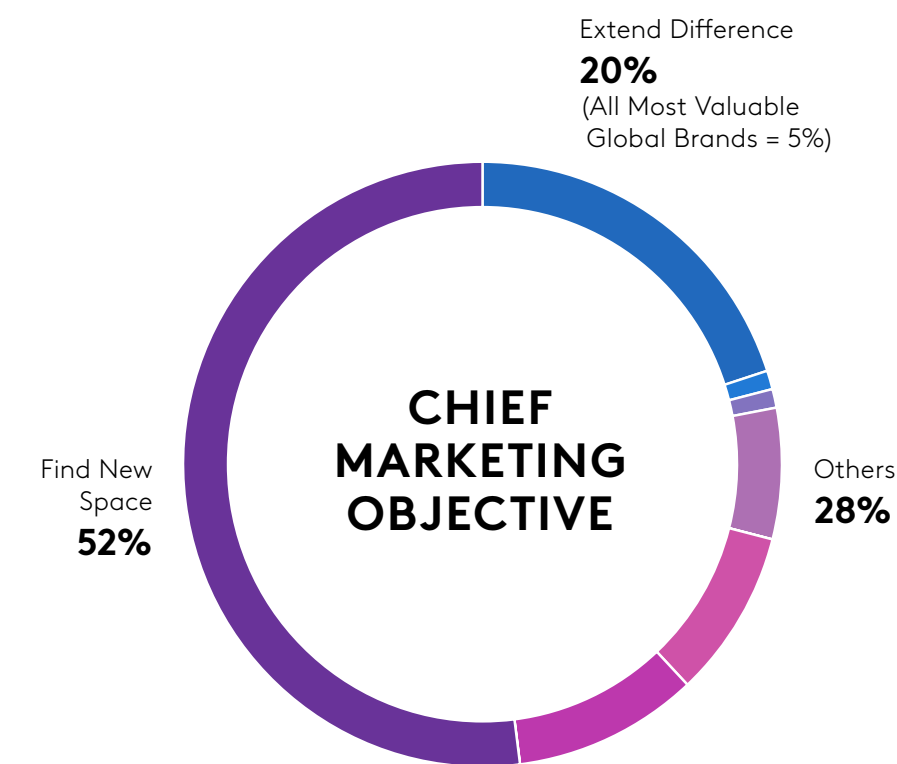
There's a better way for brands to support their margins: Difference. Because even as BrandZ data shows retail brands are struggling to stand out. Difference remains critical to support Pricing Power.

Ease and value now have to move in tandem. And they have to connect to genuine Difference.

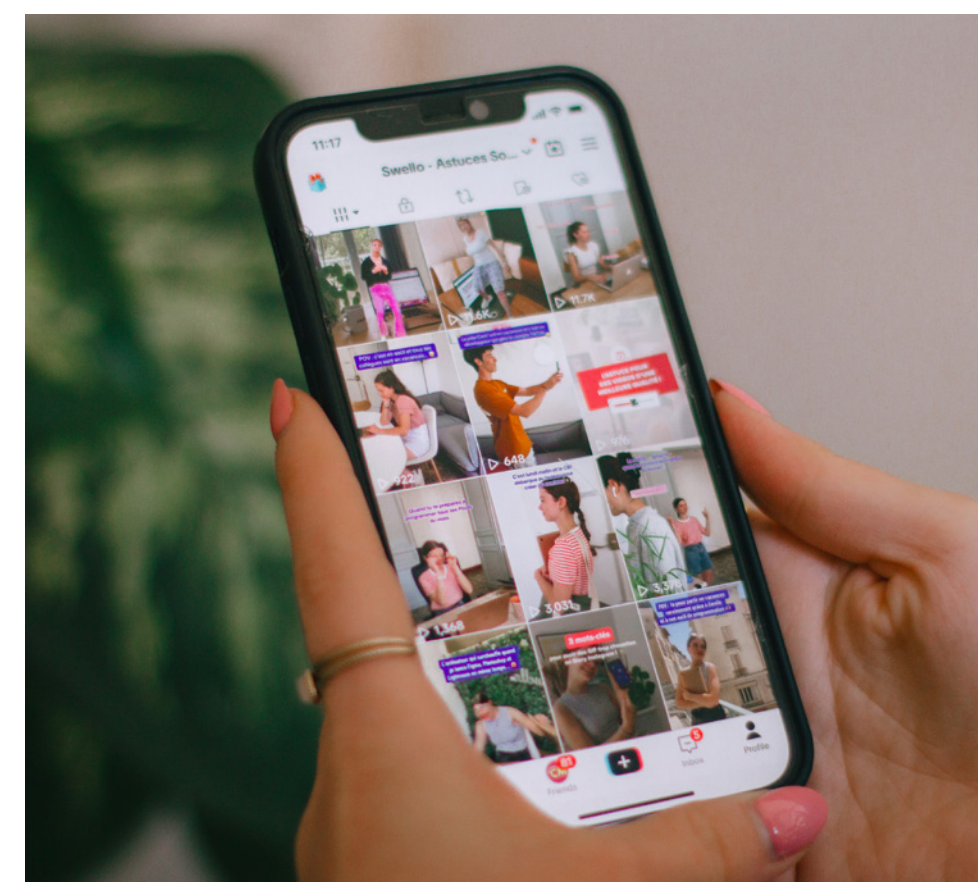
A final note on advertising: it's become important to communicate not just with AI tools, but also for AI systems. To win placement among AI-curated shopping recommendations, brands need to audit how they appear consistently across a wider range of content sources, from Wikipedia pages to trade publications. They also need to recruit the right mix of influencers and inspire more user-generated content (though these would still be must-dos even without the rise of AI agents.)

Ultimately, retailers looking to build on this year's success will need to take a holistic approach. While some retail brands need to strengthen their Difference, many are also well positioned to find new space, which means meeting needs in adjacent categories and finding their place in new consumer ecosystems.

% of Retail Brand Value within each Objective



Kantar BrandZ, Top 20 Retail Brands; Most Valuable Global Brands 2026



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Private label reflects consumer trust

Social trust varies widely around the world, and it's a key variable to consumers increasing their purchases of private-label products. Regular surveys reveal that individuals and families that place less trust in government, banking, or personal safety are less likely to buy private label over national brands. These people are also less likely to 'recover' from buying poor-quality private labels.

A global map of private-label penetration has long shown that most of Europe and Canada buys private label. In large part, this is due to consistent investments in well-defined tiering of private-label products by key retailers such as Carrefour, Aldi, Tesco, Loblaws, and Sobeys. Their investment of brand strength supports private-label sales, but only for populations with high social trust.

It's clear that even the strongest of branded retailers cannot simply mirror their European strategies elsewhere. Private labels in lower-income countries may be addressed as a daily need rather than an occasion, so understanding that dynamic is vital. Also, paying extra for the assurance of national brands is sensible to those that cannot afford to lose even small sums on potentially poor choices. Consistent communication around the quality of the retailer's brand, then, is critical to private-label success.

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BRAND SPOTLIGHT

Walmart

2026 BRAND VALUE

\$176,706 M

+48% vs 2025

Improved Difference to support 'Great Value' positioning

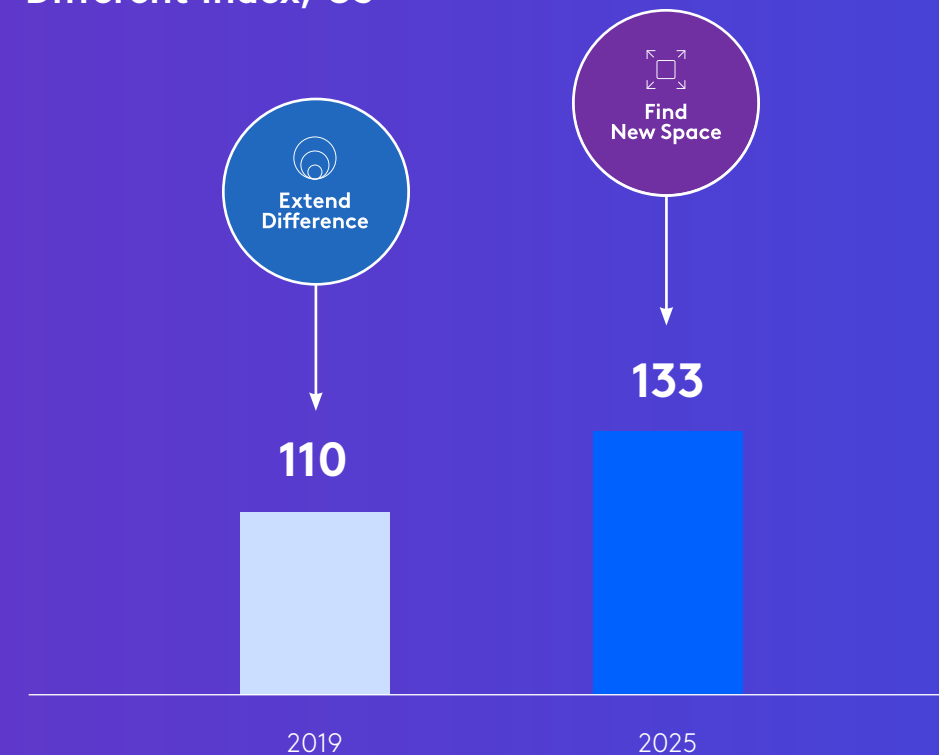
Walmart became one of the fastest-rising brands of 2026 by scaling its omnichannel approach, retail media, and membership offerings to new heights. It had long been a highly Meaningful brand – but until recently, it had been leaving Difference on the table. Over the last year, Walmart has fixed this by reframing what value looks like. Rather than competing on price alone, Walmart has proven it can compete against the field on speed, access, experience.

How? By speeding up fulfilment (including same-day deliveries and curbside pickup) with the help of AI that more precisely forecasts inventory and demand. Diversification into health clinics and financial services has also helped. So too has beefing up Walmart's private-label brands. And then, to wrap it all together, Walmart's marketing has shifted toward more inclusive, human storytelling – with creative that highlights all the varied ways that Walmart shows up daily in people's lives. The result is a brand that fully justifies its 'Great Value' positioning.

Chief Marketing Objective



Different Index, US



Source: Kantar BrandZ, US Grocery Retailers

BRAND SPOTLIGHT



2026 BRAND VALUE

\$21,000 M

+36% vs 2025

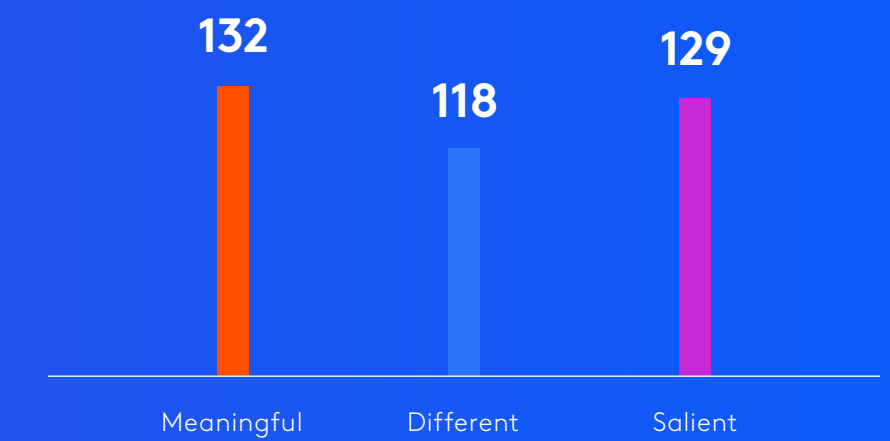
A Meaningful, disruptive brand

With strong consumer perceptions across Europe, grocery and home goods retailer Lidl is perceived to be a disruptive player – one that's changing the rules of value brand building and shopper behaviour.

Its award-winning private labels, strong fresh credentials, and premium seasonal ranges have decoupled price from perceived quality. It's a brand that strikes people as worth more than it costs (Lidl's relentless cost discipline also has the benefit of forcing incumbents into more defensive pricing strategies). Meanwhile, special buys and seasonal drops make for interesting discovery moments year-round, rewarding it with repeat visits.

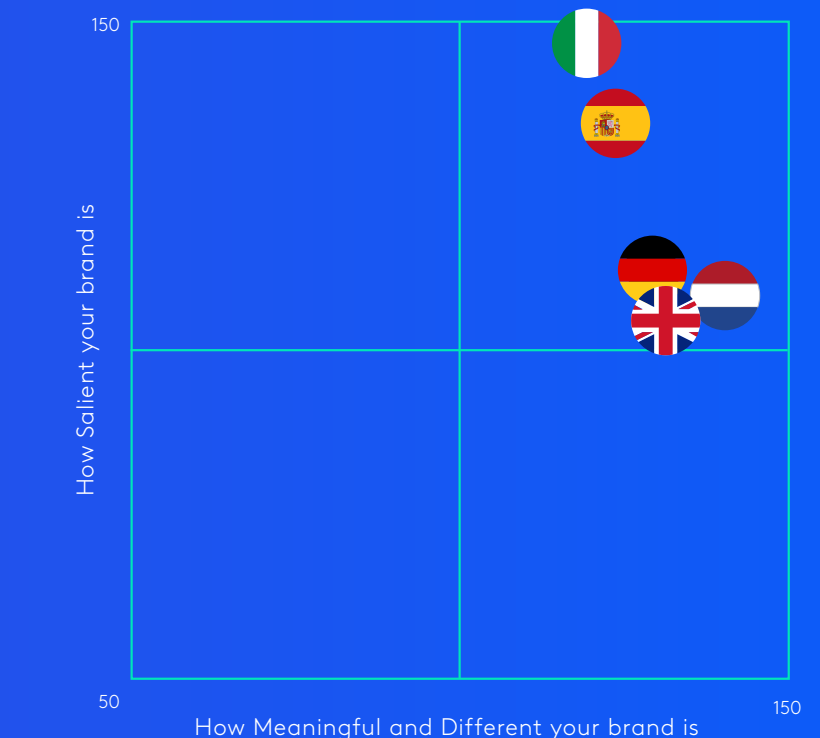
In 2025, Lidl rolled out its first unified brand campaign across all 31 European markets under the platform 'Lidl. More to Value'. By doing so, the brand has repositioned itself as offering more than just a rational, low-cost switching option.

Global brand equity



Source: Kantar BrandZ, Most Valuable Global Brands, global data, 2026

Brand equity across markets



Source: Kantar BrandZ, Grocery Retailers, 2025

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BRANDS TO WATCH



Local corner shops and convenience stores continue to build strong connections with communities. People see them as more convenient and trustworthy than other retailers. They're familiar, dependable, personal, and they maintain a constant neighbourhood presence – all attributes that consumers appreciate in times of economic and political uncertainty.



TikTok Shop is gaining traction with consumers because it blends entertainment, discovery, and shopping into a frictionless experience. Creator-led content builds trust and social proof. Meanwhile, a seamless path from discovery to purchase boosts conversion compared with traditional ecommerce journeys.

Future Power Index

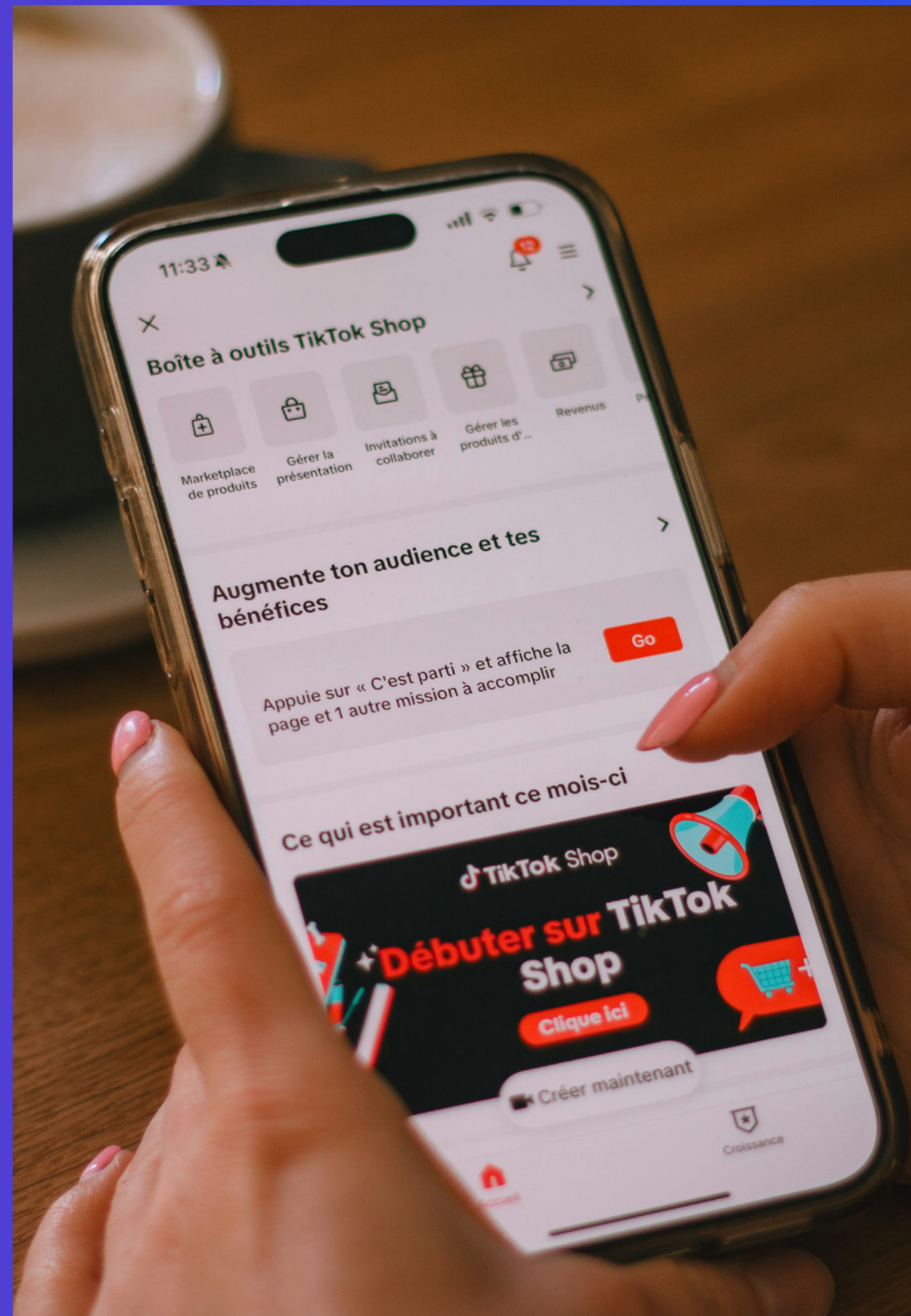
137

Kantar BrandZ, Other Local, Grocery Retailers, Average across 11 markets, 2025

Future Power Index

120

Kantar BrandZ, TikTok Shop, SEA average, 2024 - 2025



IMPLICATIONS

01

REDEFINE VALUE THROUGH DIFFERENCE

Retail growth is being driven by brands with a new take on value. Yes, price still matters, but so do speed, access, relevance, and experience. Your task is to decide which of these levers can support your brand's differentiated offer, justify its margins, and make its value proposition harder to copy. To do so, you'll need excellent intelligence.

02

EARN RELEVANCE THROUGH CULTURE

Meaning in retail is recentring around relevance that feels local, cultural, and human. From trusted neighbourhood retailers to creator-led storefronts, brands that feel embedded in people's lives are picking up momentum. Marketers should invest in community connection and emotionally resonant experiences, and then amplify these moments to a wider audience.