FJORD TRENDS 2022

Accenture Interactive

The new fabric of life

Fjord Trends organically bubble up from our designers and creatives around the globe, and tell a story of people and their relationships with the planet, technology, brands, and each other. Each trend stands on its own, but a natural connection across the set always becomes clear.

Last year's trends spoke to how people and businesses had to chart new territories as the shock of the pandemic subsided. This year, the dominant theme is about the need to respond to changes in all relationships—the threads that form the new fabric of life.

The choices we make next might impact our world and its structure in more ways than we can imagine, and it all points to shifts in people's relationships—with colleagues, brands, society, places, and with those they care about. People are also coming face-to-face with the impact they're having on the planet, and finally accepting they cannot go on behaving as though people were separate from nature.

People's growing sense of agency is manifesting as a shift in their relationship with work, which is fueling the rise of side-hustles and kitchen table businesses. This independence is putting pressure on organizations to show people the value they can get from being part of a collective.

Supply chain challenges and a growing urgency to live more sustainably are changing people's relationship with materialism, forcing them to adjust their thinking.

The metaverse is providing a new place to go, create and have experiences with others in real time. While its exact form is not fixed, we believe it's the setting for a cultural evolution that will alter 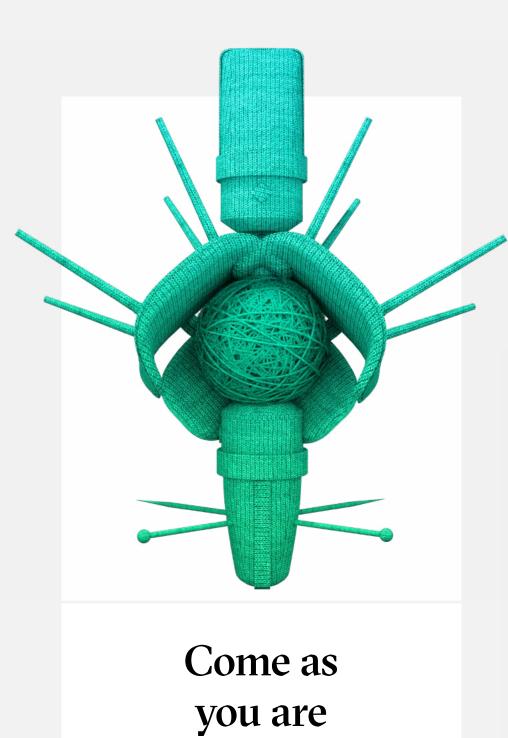relationships between people and brands. Whether in the metaverse or the physical world, what we choose to buy will increasingly be determined by brands' ability to provide the right answers in the right way and at the right time.

Organizations' responses to these shifts must be wrapped up in care. As a practice, design can be used to help companies reach beyond showing empathy and move towards expressing care for all—not just the few.
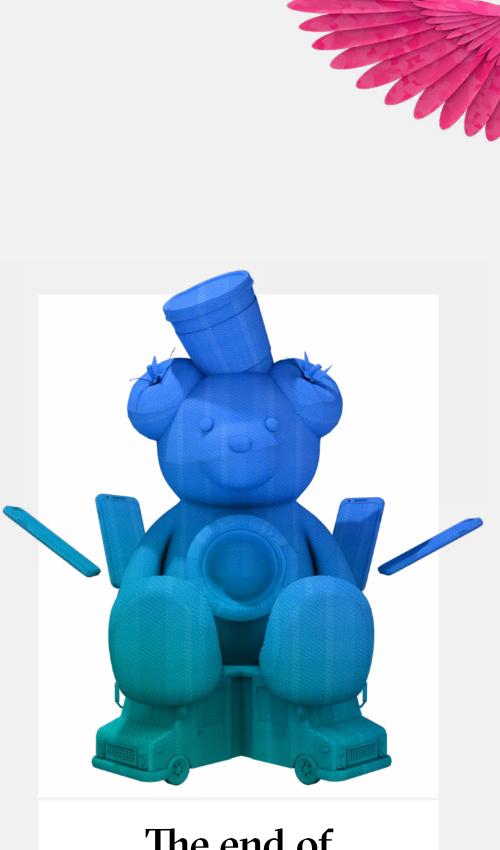
We've had two years of disruption to the systems on which society is run, and it's taking its toll. There are challenging times ahead, but we believe there are also great opportunities to design new systems, and new ways of being.

We should define how we—collectively and individually—consciously stitch together positive relationships to create a fabric of life that's good for people and the planet.
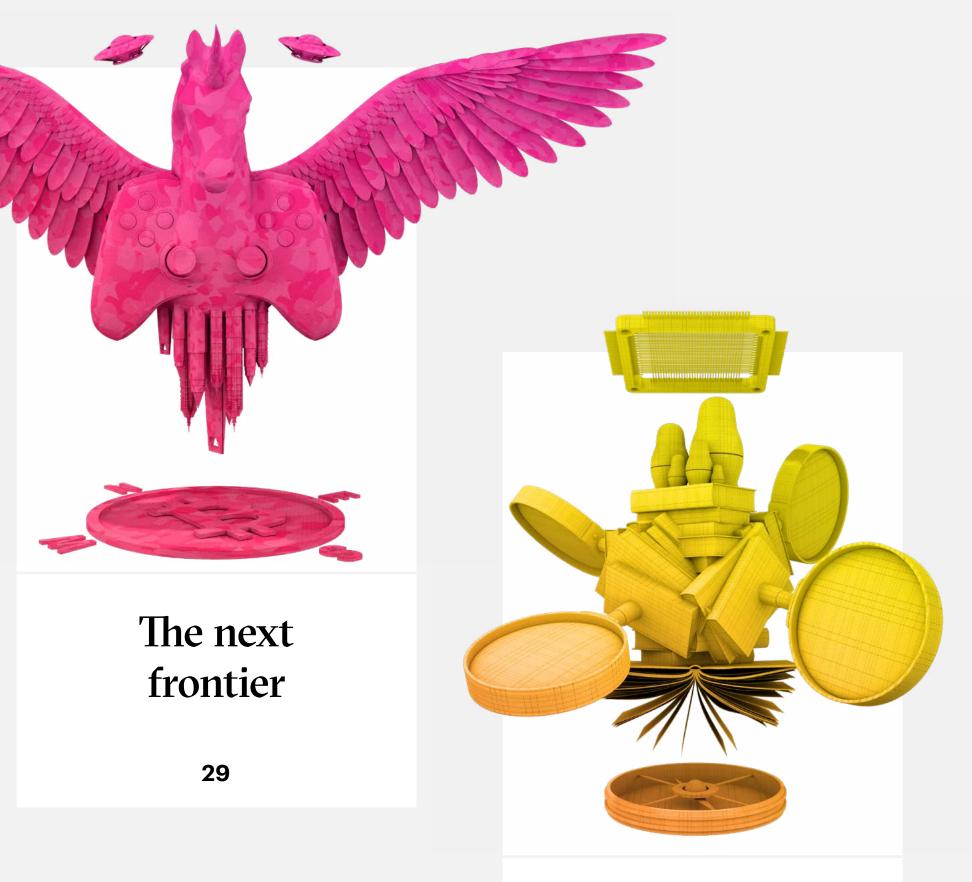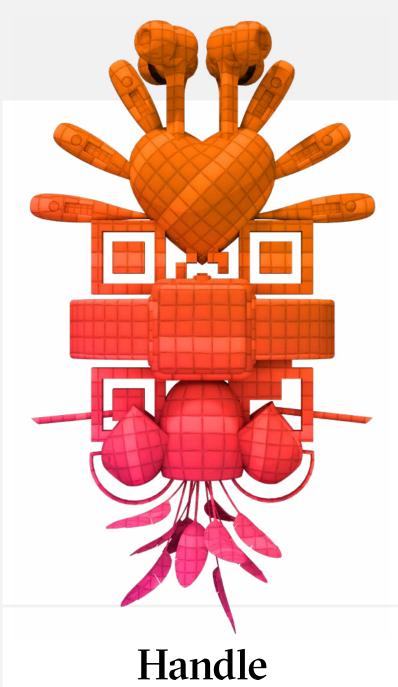
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Come as you are

We've seen a fundamental shift in how people think about their sense of agency over their lives, supported by the continued rise of the side-hustle economy. Technology has made it less risky to seek out new income streams—and many are going for it. This rise of a "me over we" mentality has profound implications for organizations in how they lead their employees, and how they nurture relationships with their consumer-creators.

What's going on

As we continue to grapple with the challenges of a global pandemic, we're starting to see—at scale—an era of post-traumatic growth take shape, which promises a shift to people's lifestyles. Post-traumatic growth manifests itself in many people in many ways, including the development of deeper relationships, openness to new possibilities, a greater sense of personal strength, a stronger sense of spirituality, and a more profound appreciation for life.

People are questioning who they are and what matters to them and, in many cases, they're finding new confidence to show up as themselves and live their true lives.
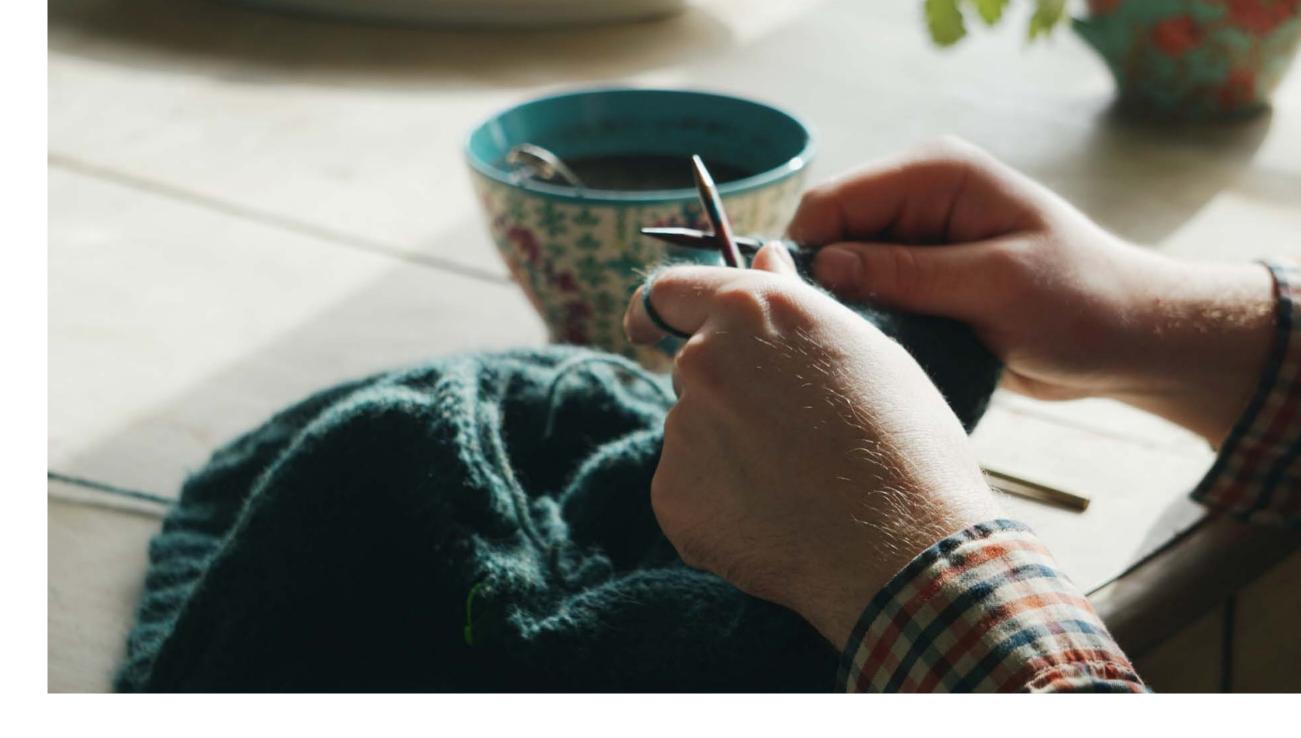
At the Tokyo Olympic Games, champion British diver Tom Daley was seen contentedly knitting in the stands, tacitly rejecting any suggestion that his choice of hobby might be unusual or uncool. In China, young people exhausted by hard work culture are challenging norms and organizing the "tang ping" movement—a call for "lying flat", meaning being content with attainable achievements instead of overworking.

We're also seeing a growing humanization of the workforce, with employees' professional and private lives blending more, and an acknowledgement that admitting to not being okay is no longer a sign of weakness at work. One study found that some 71% of executives said 2020 was their most stressful work year ever and 53% reported struggling with mental health issues at work, while 76% of employees believe their employers should take more responsibility for their mental wellbeing.

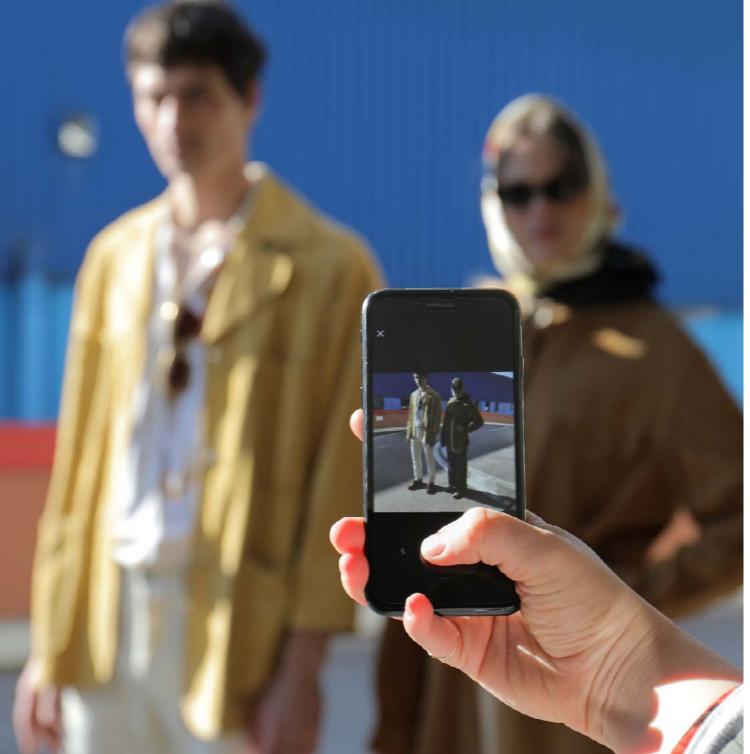Parceled up with this humanization is an acceptance of individualism and independence. People are finding a stronger sense of agency over how and where they spend their time and attention. With global economies opening up by the middle of 2021, the jobs market swung to one of demand. One of the reasons is The Great Resignation phenomenon—a term coined by American management professor, Anthony Klotz, to describe the movement of workers of all ages worldwide quitting their jobs having reconsidered their priorities during pandemic lockdowns. This was across all sectors—Big Tech included.

Internationally, a staggering 41% of the global workforce was considering leaving their employer in 2021, according to a Microsoft study. In the US, nearly one-third of more than 2,800 IT professionals surveyed said they planned to look for a new job in the next few months. In China, factories struggled to find young workers due to Covid-19 concerns and changing priorities. In Germany, more than one-third of all companies were reporting a shortage of skilled workers, and in the UK, the number of job vacancies from July to September 2021 reached a record high of 1,102,000.

Depop

Some recruiters are calling it the toughest recruitment market for talent, ever. Companies are no longer just competing with each other—they're also competing with everything else people want to do with their lives outside or instead of formal employment.

This increased search for more agency and financial freedom is enabled by side-hustles. The option to supplement or replace primary incomes is becoming easier to take, thanks to tech platforms providing channels and tools that enable people to turn themselves into businesses. In the US, people make an average of US$10,972 a year from working side-hustles such as teaching, writing blogs/newsletters, renting out their home, freelance programming and many more activities.

Many platforms provide low-code/no-code tools that enable anyone to become a reseller or open their own online commerce stores. Depop, a fashion resale site, launched in 2011 and was recently bought by Etsy for US$1.625 billion. Now powering 1.7 million small businesses across 175 countries, Shopify is one of the platforms enabling the rapidly growing creator economy. This is the economic model whereby creators can directly make money from their audiences, which is currently valued at US$100 billion and set for further rapid growth.

Today, two million of the estimated 50 million-plus creators on YouTube, Instagram and Twitch now make six-figure incomes from revenue models such as advertising, paid subscriptions, merchandise or live and virtual events. YouTube is expected to generate close to US$30 billion in ad revenue from creators this year, which it will share with the video makers who generate the content. Meta (formerly Facebook) recently announced it will pay content creators more than US$1 billion by the end of 2022 through new bonus programs designed to keep them plugged into its app ecosystem.

We're also seeing an increase in platforms where creators can be paid by their fans for exclusive content. Examples include Substack (for journalism), OnlyFans (for entertainment), or Airbnb and Yuup (for local experiences). Newsletter platform, Substack, now has more than 250,000 paying subscribers, and its top ten publishers rake in some US$7 million between them each year. According to its co-founder, Chris Best, highly respected journalists are flocking to the platform after becoming exhausted by the constant pressure to strive for the next viral hit on social media.
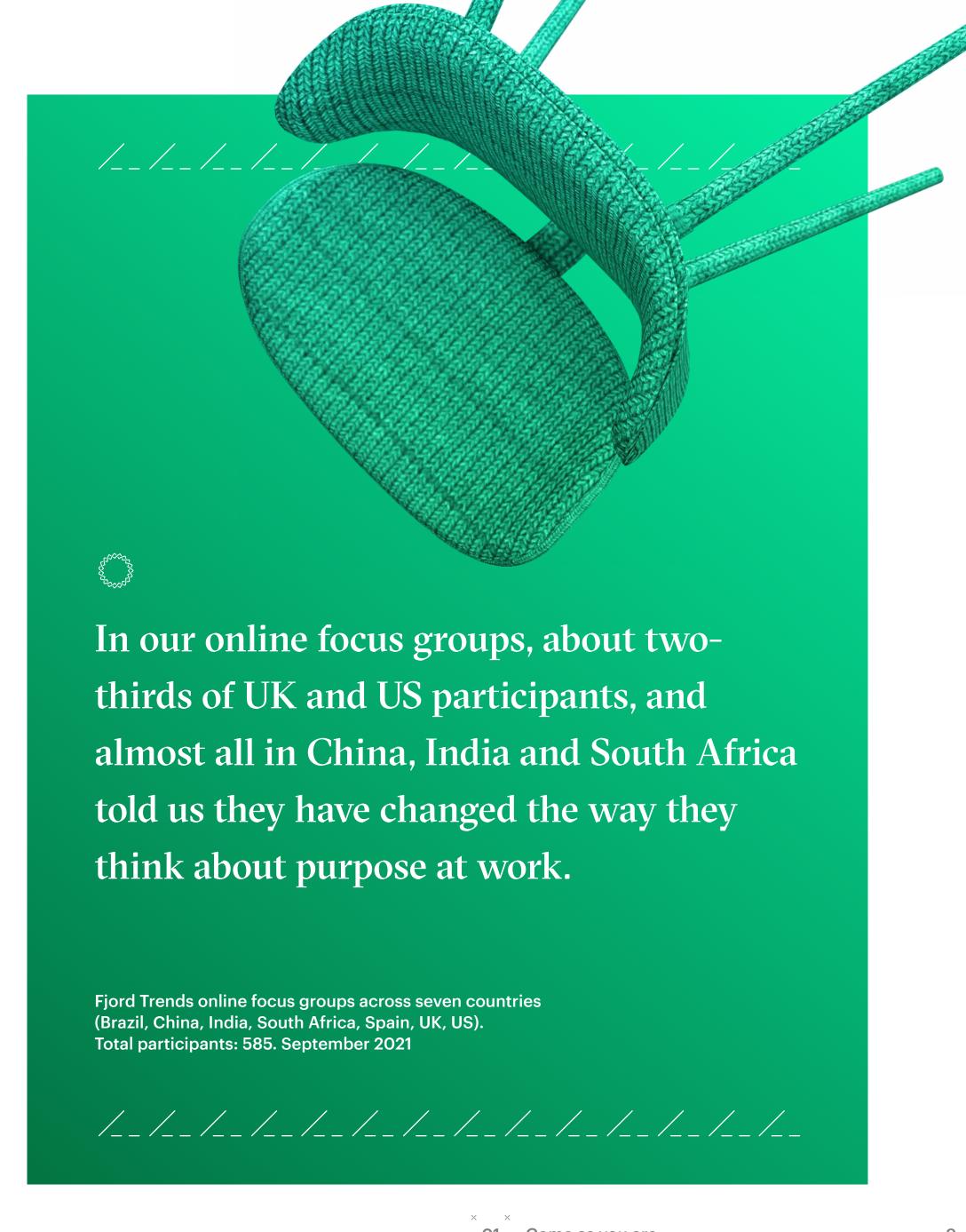
This shift in opportunities and attitudes around work and income has a direct impact on more traditional employment. It's reshaping collective attachment to systems that need the power of a group to thrive. As employers reopened their offices without any indication yet of what the new workplace normal will be, many wrestled with if and how best to make workers feel safe and willing to come back.

In the US, Deutsche Bank called for the end of remote working, while Australian tech giant Canva unveiled new flexible working, meaning employees only need to be in the office eight times a year. In South East Asia, six in ten respondents to one survey said they'd quit their jobs if not provided with post-pandemic flexibility, and in Spain, many companies were divided over employees' eventual workplace return. This uncertainty around the future of where people work makes the availability of alternatives even more important.

We might see an increase in so-called "edge organizations", as described in Accenture's Business Futures 2021 report. It speaks to the way leaders respond to the changes and challenges by pushing decision-making authority to people at the "edges", where teams are connected by networks and empowered to decide how to organize, work, meet corporate goals and deliver on the mission while optimizing for local performance.

Many organizations are grappling with the repercussions of having a workforce that's

In our online focus groups, about two-thirds of UK and US participants, and almost all in China, India and South Africa told us they have changed the way they think about purpose at work.

Fjord Trends online focus groups across seven countries
(Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Spain, UK, US).
Total participants: 585. September 2021

been physically apart for so long, affecting team dynamics, effective innovation, and collaborative working. The tension between employees' growing preference to decide where they want to be versus employers' take on what's best for business appears to be growing.

The rising individualism underlined by a "me over we" mentality is stressing empathy between colleagues within companies and changing people's aspirations as consumers, which presents new challenges and opportunities for employers and brand owners alike.

The rising individualism underlined by a "me over we" mentality presents new challenges and opportunities for employers and brand owners alike.

What's next

Organizations need to understand these shifts in people's ambitions, sense of agency and ways of living, and examine and respond to the potential impact on their business. There's a key tension to navigate: people's desire to meet their own needs versus their share of the responsibility for the wellbeing of the communities they belong to and, ultimately, rely on.

Employers now face an important leadership challenge. They need to balance the flexibility they offer to individuals with the needs of the team, and work towards the greater good of the organization so that creativity, diversity and trust-building can thrive.

They also need to attract and retain the right talent while acknowledging and accepting that their employees are future-proofing themselves against the business. This makes it very important to take a fresh look at the employee value proposition, with today's context in mind.
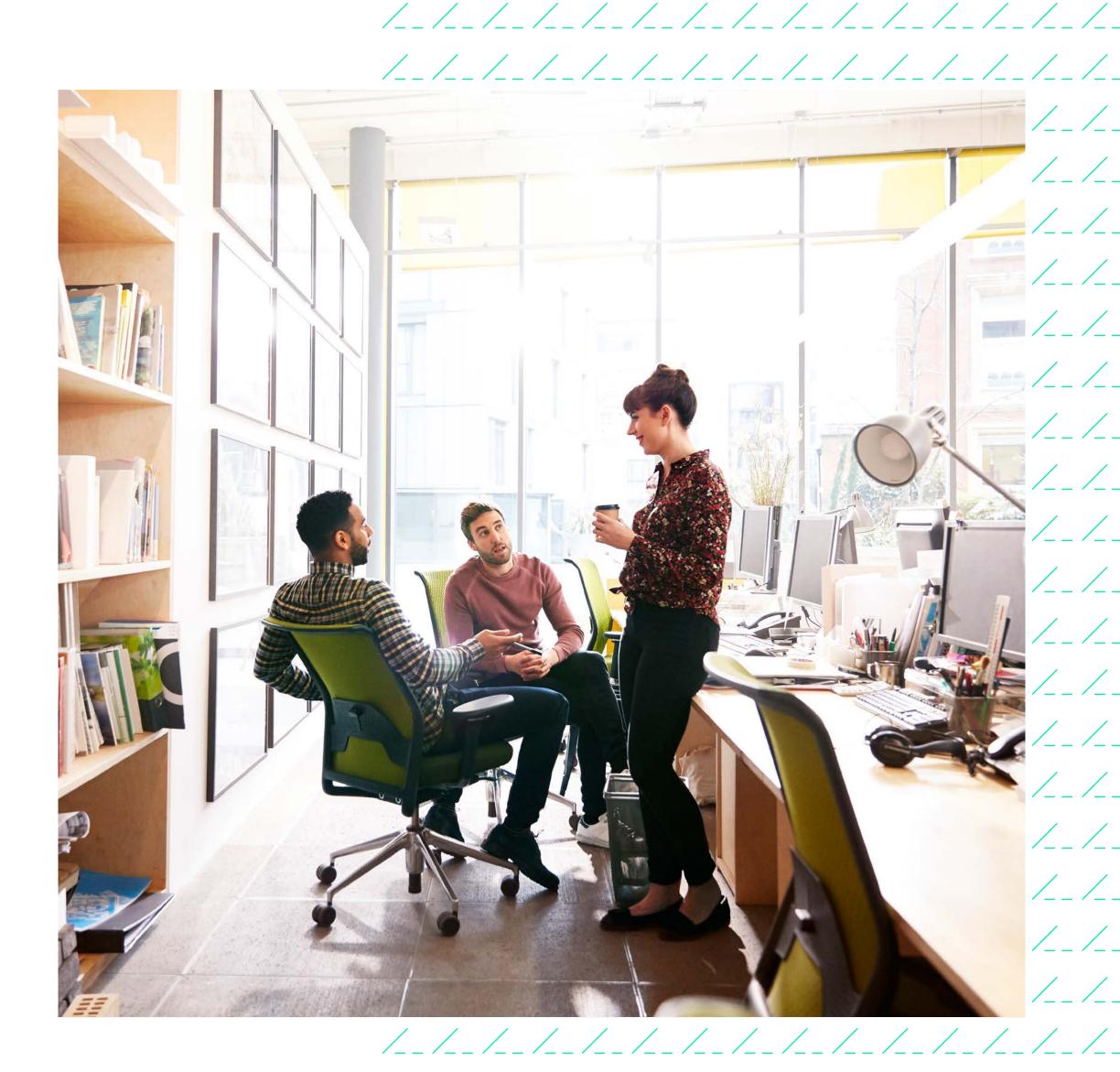
Firstly, the benefits package. Having already adjusted perks for the digital world, employers need to interrogate their suitability for a flexible and remote workforce. How attractive is a rail season ticket or company car, for example, when an employee no longer regularly commutes to work?

Secondly, work culture needs a booster shot of "we". Businesses might have to work hard to help individuals see its value, and ensure that employees understand the responsibilities and the benefits of being part of the collective. Business is a team effort, and the "we" mentality involves giving to others through things like teaching skills or mentoring. Senior leaders must emphasize the value of teams and their

importance for engagement, innovation and creativity.

Lastly, the new human experiences that arise out of this could begin to change the fabric and nature of companies. It'll be a significant challenge defining how to differentiate employee experience when work just feels like a set of tasks coming out of a laptop. Work has become more transactional thanks to the rise of tech tools, so companies must adjust the balance of the employee experience to be about more than just task productivity.

The tensions based on the rise of individual agency don't just affect a person's employment. The need to care about the collective is very important for social movements and any action that requires thinking beyond oneself. Not everyone has the luxury to move jobs or homes, or to freely express themselves.

Opportunities to create and adapt life services to support this next generation of consumer-creators are expected to grow.

For brand owners, people's desire to have more control means they might need more details when considering purchases so they can make informed decisions about what's right for them, in their current mode. Brands have the opportunity to guide people in their decision-making by helping them to navigate information layers, which we explain further in our trend, This much is true.

As the side-hustle economy continues to grow, so too will the needs for the infrastructure within it—from design and manufacturing support through to audience access and delivery. As this happens, companies will increasingly need to acknowledge that creators are not just their customers but also competitors and collaborators, and change their behaviors accordingly.

Opportunities to create and adapt life services to support this next generation of consumer-creators are expected to grow. The process of acquiring financing to buy a new house, for example, is an opportunity for fresh thinking, as it was originally designed when full-time employment was very much the norm. Insurance, parental cover and healthcare would also present companies with routes to accommodate people's new ways of working.

Already, services are emerging to cater to those working for themselves. Examples include Moves, which helps gig workers improve their financial health and Lili, which is banking for freelancers. More will follow.

At the heart of this trend is a wider societal tension between individualism and the collective, between self-definition and the comfort of tribes. This tension is spread unevenly across the world but we believe it will continue to be a defining cultural debate, with economic and experiential consequences that could be felt everywhere.

Left: Depop

We suggest

Think

Reflect on the rise in self-agency and "me vs we" mentality, and the implications for your organization–how will you attract and retain talent and customers in this new context?

Say

Clearly verbalize the value of groups, community, and teams, and how the rise of self-agency and the need for collectivism can coexist for the good of your organization.

Do

Get creative about how your company's value proposition can evolve to accommodate people with multiple sources of income. Act on any weak spots within your organization to ensure your employees don't walk away.

The end of abundance thinking?

Scarcity of raw materials, a shortage of workers, strained distribution channels and even new austerity laws are shaking abundance thinking built on availability, convenience, and speed. For those who have taken abundance for granted, this is a powerful demonstration of what a future with supply shortages would feel like. Now is the time to learn from this—by designing for scarcity thinking and making business nature positive.
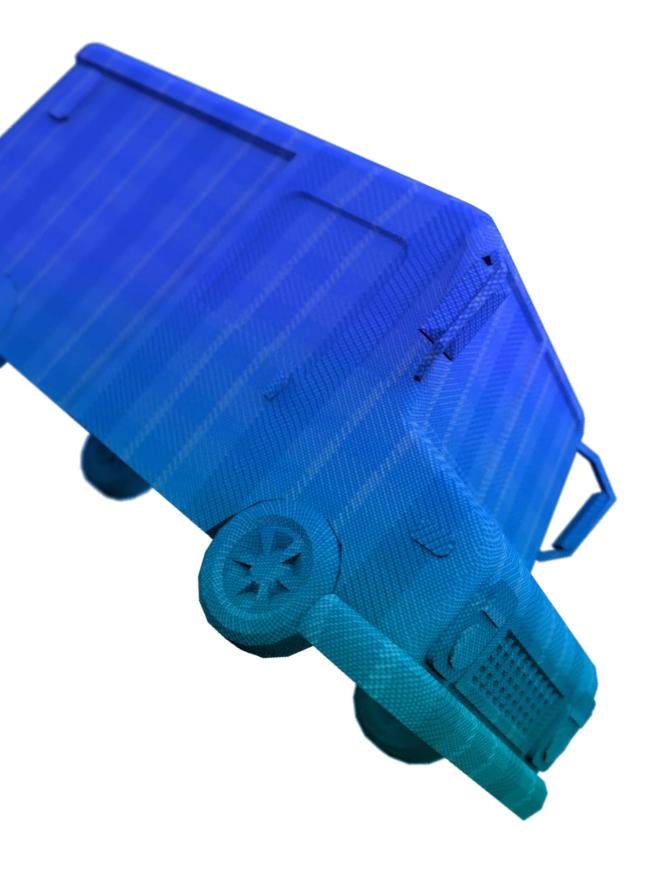
What's going on

Over the past year, many of us have witnessed and felt what it's like to face empty shelves, rising energy bills, and shortages in everyday services. It's come as a shock to those who have grown used to getting whatever they want with minimal effort—those who have been lucky enough to enjoy "abundance thinking".

This supply crisis started with lockdowns impacting manufacturing workers, which prevented or drastically slowed the flow of goods and their raw materials, and the movement of goods within markets. Then the Ever Given container ship blocked the Suez Canal in March 2021, significantly disrupting the world's trade and supply chain for months.

Since then, a shortage of trucks and drivers to collect imported goods, together with fluctuating restrictions as the pandemic ebbed and flowed, stalled many container ships around some of the world's busiest ports. A wide array of materials, parts and goods have fallen into short supply.

A global shortage of semiconductor chips—essential components in millions of products including cars, washing machines, smartphones and more—arose after lockdown prompted a surge in demand for computers, tablets and games consoles. The same shortage was behind the fact there were an estimated 72% fewer vehicles on US car dealership lots in August 2021 than in August 2019. In September 2021 in Japan, Honda Motor Co. blamed a shortage of parts for a 60% drop in its production.

In Vietnam, lockdowns left exporters struggling to transport goods—including coffee beans—to ports for shipment around the world, raising concerns about global coffee supply. In Argentina, shortages in refrigerated containers caused by global shipping disruptions and drought-stricken rivers in the heart of South

America delayed beef due for export. In Italy, the tomato harvest was threatened by a shortage of cans.

Many countries suffered worker shortages, too. Truck drivers were in short supply in the US, UK, Germany, Spain, and France, causing disruption to everyday services. One factor behind this was a longstanding concern about tough working conditions that had been left unaddressed. The US state of Massachusetts addressed a school bus driver shortage by deploying the National Guard.

In many countries, these issues slammed the brakes on abundance thinking and scarcity became a feature in people's expectations. While scarcity will be seen as a threat to some, for a lot of people, it's not new. Price increases are disproportionately affecting those who already have little, making it even harder to make ends meet. Worldwide, energy prices are soaring and people are concerned about the cost of heating their homes during colder months.

Abundance thinking was also challenged in China, but under a different political context as efforts to regulate excesses in many industries such as Big Tech, entertainment and gaming were driven by a desire to "encourage high-income groups and enterprises to return more to society".

Climate change has been another key catalyst—people are starting to see and understand the impact of abundance thinking on the planet. Throughout 2021, this impact was felt through a series of natural disasters from unseasonal flooding to devastating wildfires. In Madagascar, the UN estimated in July that 30,000 people were experiencing the highest internationally recognized level of food insecurity, as the country stood on the brink of the world's first climate change-induced famine.

Brazil, home of the world's biggest maritime hubs for coffee, soybeans and sugar, experienced its worst drought in almost 100 years.

Events of the past year also revealed how interconnected and interdependent our commercial infrastructure is, which is something shoppers might have not been aware of before. For example, when a rise in world gas prices forced the UK's largest fertilizer manufacturer to suspend production, the knock-on impact unforeseen by many was a sharp drop in the supply of one of its by-products—industrial CO_2—which threatened the supply of items dependent on it, including plastic-wrapped foods like fresh meat.
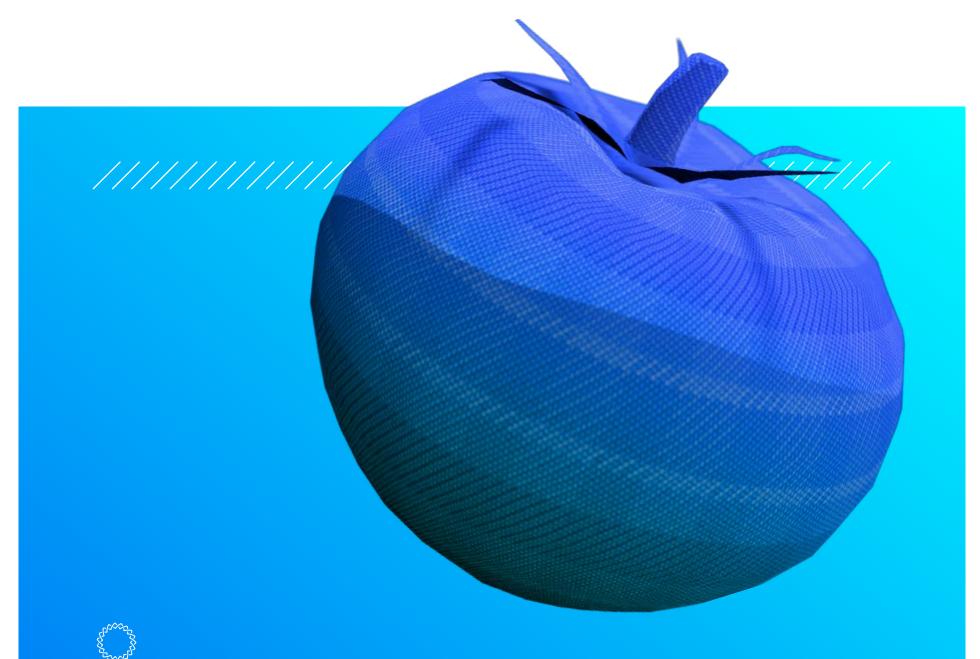
In some markets including the US and UK, demand sky-rocketed as unavailable items came back into stock—a behavior fueled by a new wave of on-demand delivery services bringing groceries in minutes. There was also a noticeable shift towards a things-will-only-get-worse mindset. Sparked by concern that products may not be available for Christmas, Czech retailers saw unseasonably high demand for typical Christmas gift items—toys, cosmetics, jewellery—in September and October, while in previous years the peak had been mid-December.

The same has been reported in other countries, including the UK and Canada.

While supply chain shortages might be a temporary challenge, the impact is expected to persist and open the door to a shift in our abundance thinking, particularly relating to the environment. Scarcity of goods could affect customers' morale, and brand owners should be prepared to manage their expectations around convenience and sustainability.

Almost half of our online focus group participants said they are ready to stop or have already stopped buying as much clothing, footwear and furniture in the name of sustainability.

Fjord Trends online focus groups across seven countries (Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Spain, UK, US). Total participants: 585. September 2021

> When designing for the balance between affordability and sustainability, organizations need to decouple innovation from the notion of "new".

What's next

In our *Liquid infrastructure* trend last year, we forecasted the supply chain as a new point for value creation. Since then, our thinking has evolved in two main ways:

Firstly, we now expect an urgent need for the coming together of marketing, customer service, and supply chain in order to protect and support brand reputation. Supply chain issues significantly impact the buying experience, especially as customers feel the volatility of prices, delivery times, and unavailability of desired goods. People will inevitably be vocal online when they can't get what they want, so companies should handle the challenges with care.

Secondly, we now believe that designing for the balance between affordability and sustainability could be the next big opportunity for brands to break new ground. Ultimately, many customers will likely weigh up the good of the planet with their families' basic necessities when making purchasing decisions. An understanding of this balance should be at the center of brands' sustainability innovation—both in the short and long term.

To make progress on this front, a mindset shift would be needed to decouple innovation from the notion of "new". It's often said that people have to change behaviors, but this is hard to do when they're constantly being influenced otherwise. For sustainable behaviors to stick, brands are going to have to think differently.

One method might be to create new value for customers through services that extend a product's life, rather than making incremental upgrades that prompt people to discard an item in decent condition for a more desirable— but not dramatically different—new release.

In fashion, the H&M Group has partnered with the clothing rental platform Gemme Collective to put collections from their brands Weekday and & Other Stories up for rent in Stockholm. While luxury fashion rentals aren't new, this is interesting as it comes from fashion brands with a business model based on people frequently replacing their clothing in response to seasonal trends.

A lack of convenient solutions for repair means that it's often easier to buy new. For brands, this could be resolved with new services that cater to the customer and government shifts. A "right to repair" movement is rising to counter the planned obsolescence of tech devices. In September, the European Commission proposed a rule that seems to be forcing manufacturers to create a universal charge solution for phones and small electronic devices to encourage the reuse of existing chargers and reduce waste. In the UK, "right to repair" rules are now in place, legally requiring manufacturers to make spare parts available to people buying electrical appliances.

As we question the role of abundance thinking in business, "less" doesn't have to mean "loss".

This is a moment in time when supply chains are fragile, and businesses can analyze them for circularity and find places for regeneration. We forecast a growing momentum towards "regenerative business" that replaces the traditional "take, make, dispose" model with a more circular approach. This means exploring new practices such as dynamic pricing, micro-factories, and hyper-localized manufacturing. The rise of on-demand brands and platforms, for example, has enabled Spanish fashion brand Alohas to manufacture only the volume of products customers order.

While regenerative businesses vary in size, model and shape, all are about creating a better world in the process of doing business, by balancing fitting with natural ecosystems with being productive for people. Recently, international discount retailer, Lidl, undertook an industry-leading project to repurpose ocean-bound plastic waste into Prevented Ocean Plastic—a new packaging material which improved the recyclability of its fresh fish packaging and incorporated recycled content.

Other regenerative business principles include redistributing resources to assist in making sure the whole ecosystem is doing well. General Mills, for example, is working to advance regenerative agriculture across its sourcing footprint on one million acres by 2030. The company has committed to reducing absolute greenhouse gas emissions by 30% across its full value chain over the next decade.

It's likely that the "nature positive" movement will gain momentum in the coming years. Nature positive means enhancing the resilience of our planet and societies to stop and reverse nature loss. According to the Future of Nature and Business report, it could open up business opportunities worth US$10 trillion by transforming the three economic systems that are responsible for almost 80% of nature loss: food, infrastructure and energy.

To realize these opportunities, businesses would have to do more than mitigate negative impacts. They are expected to work in ways that support our natural world's ability to replenish itself, which will possibly involve overhauling the systems people depend on.

As we question the role of abundance thinking in business, "less" doesn't have to mean "loss". Rethinking our default setting of abundance should be an important first step. Having recognized the interconnectedness of everything, the second would be to start collaborating with others in the ecosystem to tackle climate change—our most pressing challenge.

We suggest

Think

Contemplate what this supply chain disruption means for your business, and your customers. Can you create new business models by extending existing product life?
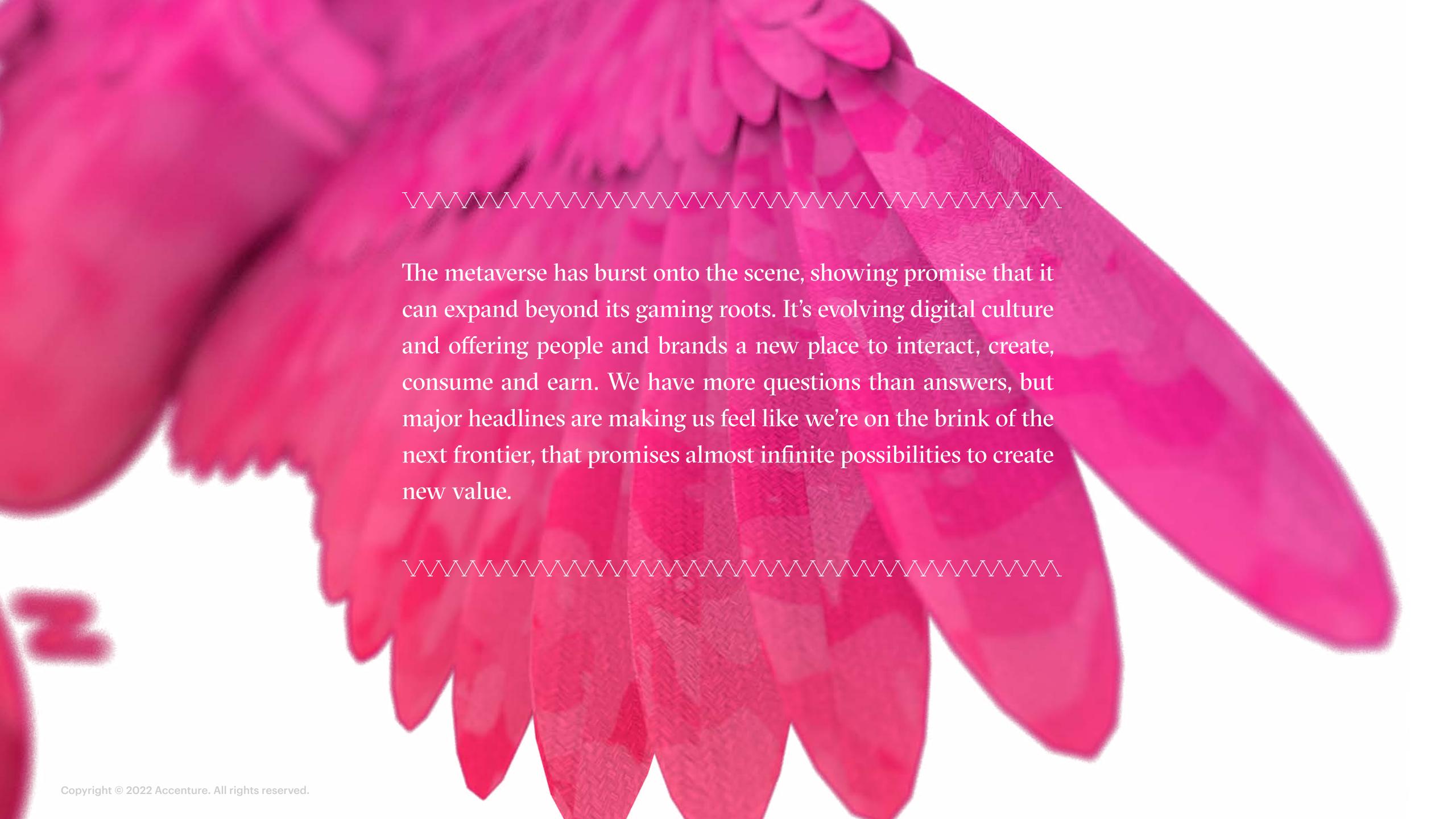
Say

Tell your innovation teams and product development teams that innovation does not have to mean new. Quite often, working under constraints yields the most creative solutions.

Do

Establish your sustainability roadmap to get your business and your customers to net neutral—and, further, to nature positive.

The next frontier

The metaverse has burst onto the scene, showing promise that it can expand beyond its gaming roots. It's evolving digital culture and offering people and brands a new place to interact, create, consume and earn. We have more questions than answers, but major headlines are making us feel like we're on the brink of the next frontier, that promises almost infinite possibilities to create new value.

What's going on

The world is buzzing with metaverse fever, brimming with potential, excitement and unanswered questions.

The metaverse is a new convergence of physical and digital worlds and embodies the next stage of how physical interacts with digital, which we've been examining in our past trends. It's a place where people can meet and interact, and where digital assets—land, buildings, items, avatars and even names—can be created, bought and sold. This new system of place will shift culture and digital behavior expectations, and succeeding here will rely on brands' understanding of their customers and how/if they exist in this new world.

Gucci Roblox

The notion of place is important. While people do "visit" apps and websites, they may not have a sense of going anywhere. In the metaverse, people can virtually go to a place with its own architectural/spatial logic, or experience it on top of where they are. It's a very different mental model, with consequences. It creates new layers on our 3D real world, but also a sense of endless spaces people can go to, that may create infinite possibilities for brands.

The gaming industry is leading the early iterations. Gaming psychology reports that people play games to compete and achieve, to socialize with a community or to be part of a group effort, and to be mentally immersed as a form of escapism. In the recent past, many have welcomed this respite from the homes where they've been locked down. People flocked to online game platforms like Roblox, which soared in popularity during the pandemic, hitting 43.2 million daily active users in Q2 2021.

While we're seeing mass adoption of the metaverse in the gaming community, others are experiencing it in different ways. For some, the metaverse is becoming a new place to make money. The creator economy is expanding in definition to encompass different types of future metaverse employment: creators will make assets; performers will create real-time content; bridgers will connect the physical to the digital world; participants will learn, explore and enhance; builders will design and organize experiences; the community will help, attract and engage.

Use of Roblox Studio—which blends gaming, creation and social networking tools—has sky-rocketed, and players are monetizing it by streaming to Twitch and YouTube. In addition to those that make money creating, others are making money by playing and learning. Play-to-earn, create-to-earn, and learn-to-earn are all models that are turning fun activities into work. Axie Infinity, one of the leaders in play-to-earn, allows people to participate in the development of the game and earn simply by playing. It had an 85% surge in 2021.

Creators and artists are minting digital items of value, such as videos, music, event tickets and generative art on non-fungible tokens (NFTs). An NFT authenticates a person's possession of that digital item, meaning the deed of ownership can't be copied. An NFT is a binding agreement between creator and customer—it's an asset with value that has potential to increase. This move creates scarcity and builds desirability into digital items, which is something we haven't seen before.

Collectors are creating a buzz with headline-grabbing auctions of art through NFTs. In August, 12-year-old Benyamin Ahmed from London made £290,000 when he sold NFTs for a series of pixelated artworks he'd created, depicting whales. When Argentinian designer Andrés Reisinger recently sold via online auction ten NFTs—each for a piece of digital furniture for use in virtual, 3D spaces—the most expensive went for US$70,000. Earlier in the year, a digital-only Gucci handbag sold for more than the price of its real-world version.

The line between customer and creator seems to blur more and more every day. Empowered by platforms such as Patreon, Twitter Blue, YouTube "Join" and Twitch, we're seeing a consumer-to-consumer economy start to bloom. Customers and creators look to brand partnerships to make their careers as content creators sustainable.

Over the past year, we've also observed that people are looking for a multi-player experience for non-gaming activities. For instance, Netflix created a new feature for people to watch movies or shows together while apart, and Apple SharePlay is bringing people together around experiences by creating a Group Activities application programming interface (API).

Advancements in hardware technologies are allowing people to experience 3D and Augmented Reality (AR) in exciting new ways. Whether AR or Virtual Reality (VR), these technologies are helping us to experience places differently. Meta (formerly Facebook) has invested heavily in VR, and has made headlines

recently for its intention to evolve into a metaverse company. The US Army's adoption this year of Microsoft's HoloLens technology in training is further evidence of AR/VR's journey towards the mainstream—Microsoft calls it "mixed reality". HoloLens headsets enabling the wearer to see through smoke or around corners, or project a 3D map into their field of vision, will be available to train 120,000 US soldiers as part of a rollout which began in September 2021.
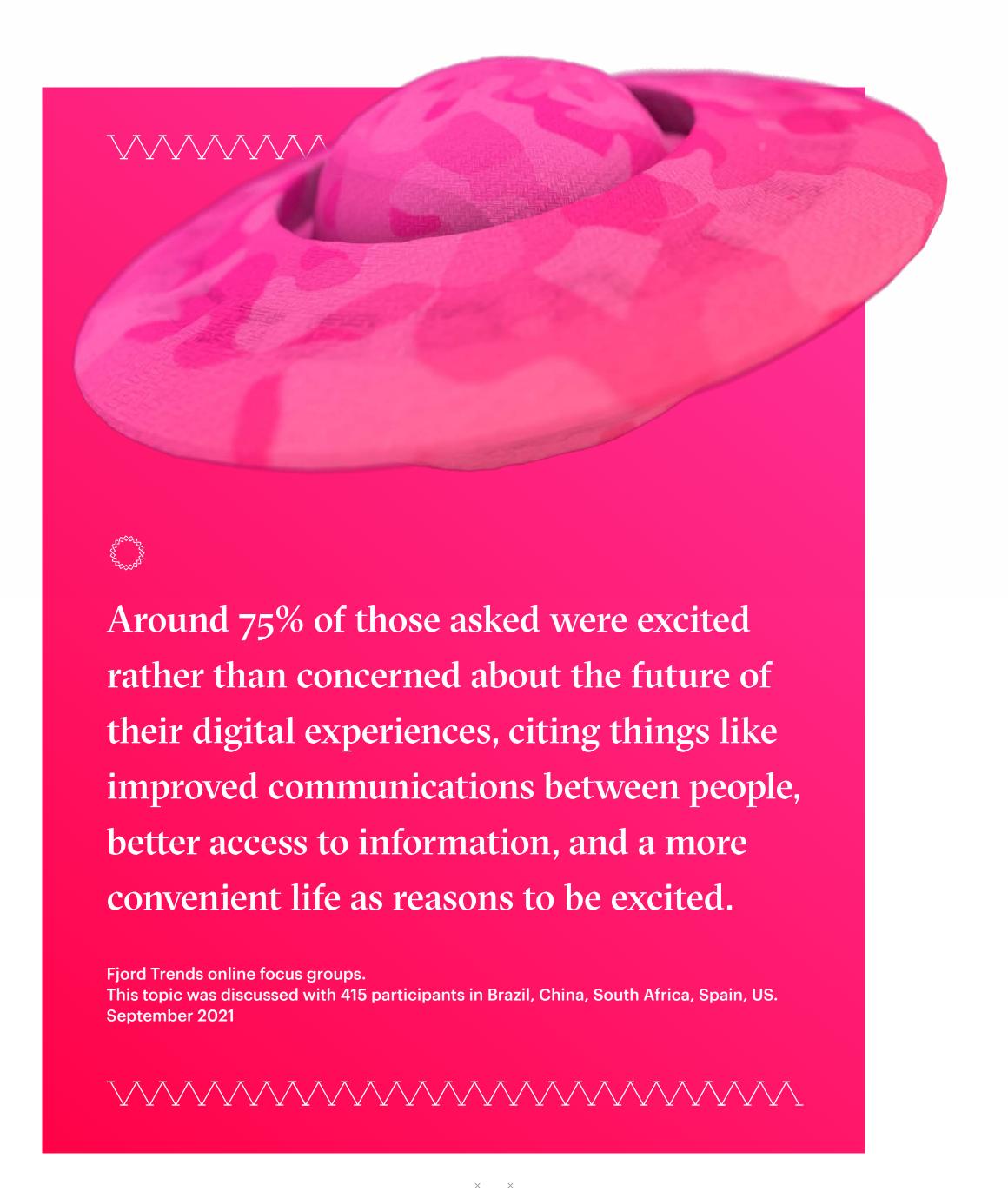
Niantic, the company behind Pokémon GO, is using AR to "make the physical world better". In partnership with famed theatre group Punchdrunk, Niantic is using AR to create the future of interactive audience experience at the cross-section of gaming and theater. Snap Inc. launched the latest version of its AR glasses, Spectacles, which it hopes some of the creators already making AR effects in Snapchat will use to experiment with creating new experiences.
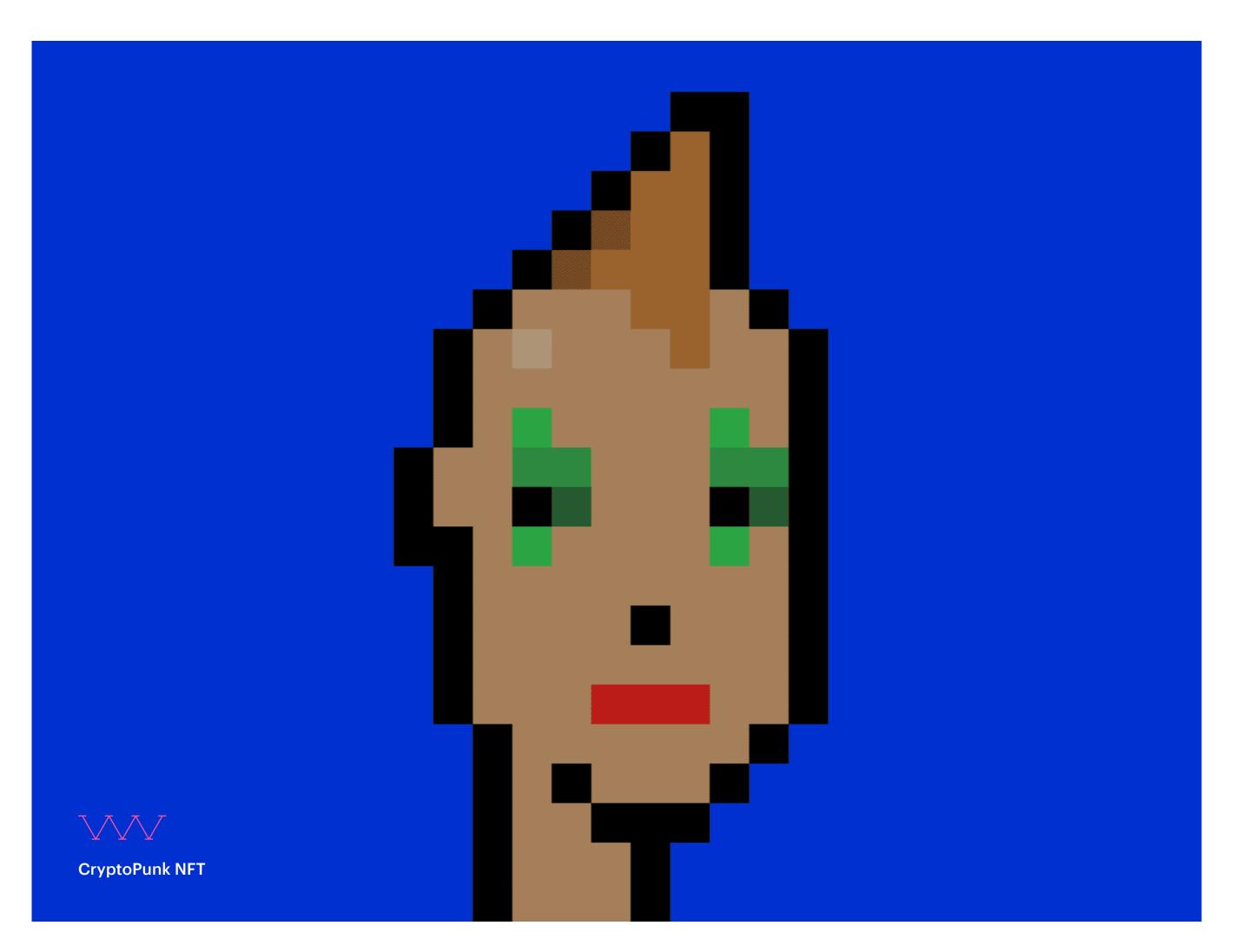
One of the defining characteristics of the metaverse is the opportunity for people to decide how they present themselves there.

Soon, people will be able to have their own high-quality avatars that they can dress and accessorize. Today, it's easier and quicker for developers, graphic designers, and/or technical creators to create diverse, photorealistic characters with realistic motion capture, thanks to Unreal Engine's MetaHuman Creator.

The metaverse is less about becoming immersed in a fantasy world of unicorns and dragons, and more about an opportunity to escape from the limits of four physical walls to spend time in a virtual space that's a version or extension of real life. Unlike on-demand content that's always there when people are ready for it, in the metaverse, people make themselves available to be a part of something in real time.

A few brands are trying to integrate into the space today. Examples include Burberry, which has launched its first digital collection in a multiplayer game, Mythical Games' Blankos Block Party. NASCAR released branded digital horses on digital race platform, ZED RUN. American rapper Megan Thee Stallion

Around 75% of those asked were excited rather than concerned about the future of their digital experiences, citing things like improved communications between people, better access to information, and a more convenient life as reasons to be excited.

Fjord Trends online focus groups.
This topic was discussed with 415 participants in Brazil, China, South Africa, Spain, US.
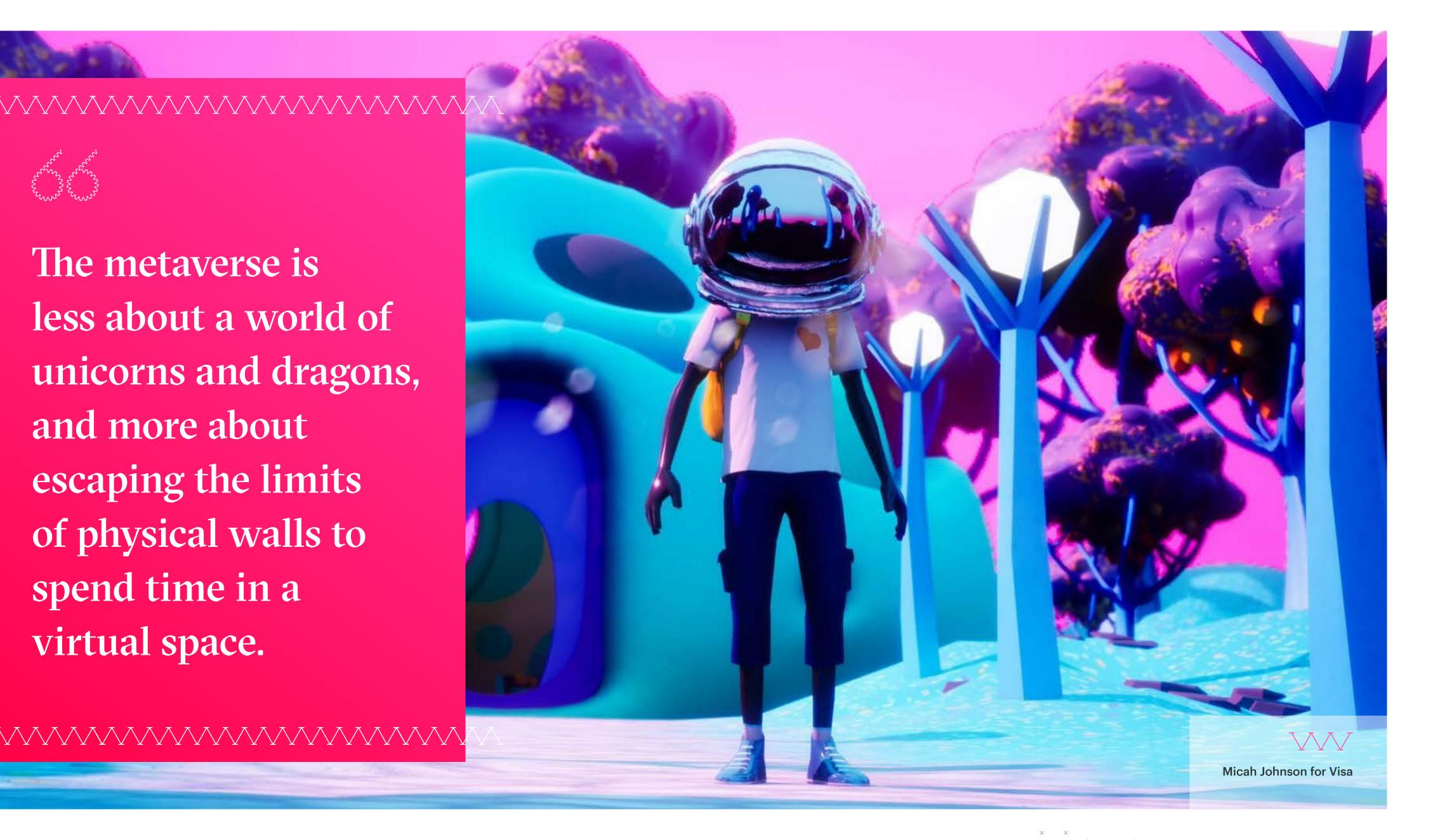September 2021

CryptoPunk NFT

signed with AmazeVR to star in an immersive experience set for simultaneous theatrical and at-home release. Visa bought a piece of digital art to add to its collection of historic commerce artifacts—its first NFT purchase. TikTok launched a virtual platform to host events—TikTok World— the first being its own business-to-business conference. All this happened in just a few weeks.

The metaverse's future will be interesting to watch unfold. Right now, we have more questions than answers on what it will ultimately become, but we can be certain that the first vision of the metaverse won't be the last.

> The metaverse is less about a world of unicorns and dragons, and more about escaping the limits of physical walls to spend time in a virtual space.

Micah Johnson for Visa

What's
next

Andrés Reisinger, the Hortensia chair

Significant cultural shifts tend to start in a place—like Renaissance Florence, Vienna in the 1900s, and the Swinging Sixties in London. The location for the next one is the metaverse. It will affect how people experience art, music, movies and brands that take part in, (or at least mirror), the phenomenon. We can't predict exactly what shape it will take, but we know it's coming.

For example, the original vision for the metaverse was one where a person could arrive with a single login, then meander around different places and activities. With over 200 companies creating their own unique entry points, that's not becoming the reality. It might come later, or not at all.

There's work to be done to build bridges between platforms. How do digital assets transfer across platforms when they have different designs? For example, .jpeg shoes created in Sandbox might look odd in the realistic worlds created in Unreal. There's a need for standards and uniformity in cases like these.

In the immediate future, we expect to see a period of questioning, learning and experimenting on what's possible. Any brand or creator wanting to operate in the metaverse must be ready for a lot of trial and error, with all focus on the end user's experience. For instance, there's a question around whether people value digital products as much as they do physical products, so brands will need to define their consumption value propositions for digital products and experiences.

For brands, experimenting with the metaverse may come with a risk, as with anything new, and the rewards are not guaranteed. However, it might be a risk worth taking since technology is constantly evolving, and choosing not to be part of it may mean a brand is left behind.

Unique experiences are the key to attracting new people—outside of the gaming community— into the metaverse. Initially, we believe brand owners will establish their own spaces within the metaverse, or look to Big Tech to create metaverse-as-a-service platforms they can engage with. Increasingly, these spaces will probably evolve beyond the brand or company websites that are commonplace today, into more neutral spaces where subtle and sophisticated interactions can take place, and in ways that are fluid and free-form.

Designers, digital product developers, creatives and technologists will play a central role in virtual world-building and content placement, as everything is 3D-based. Development methods in gaming will become mainstream as more 3D experiences come online—like playtesting for example, where gamers give quality control feedback on experiences prior to a game launching to the wider public.

It's hard to talk about what's next without talking about ethics—embedding ethics from the start should be an absolute must.
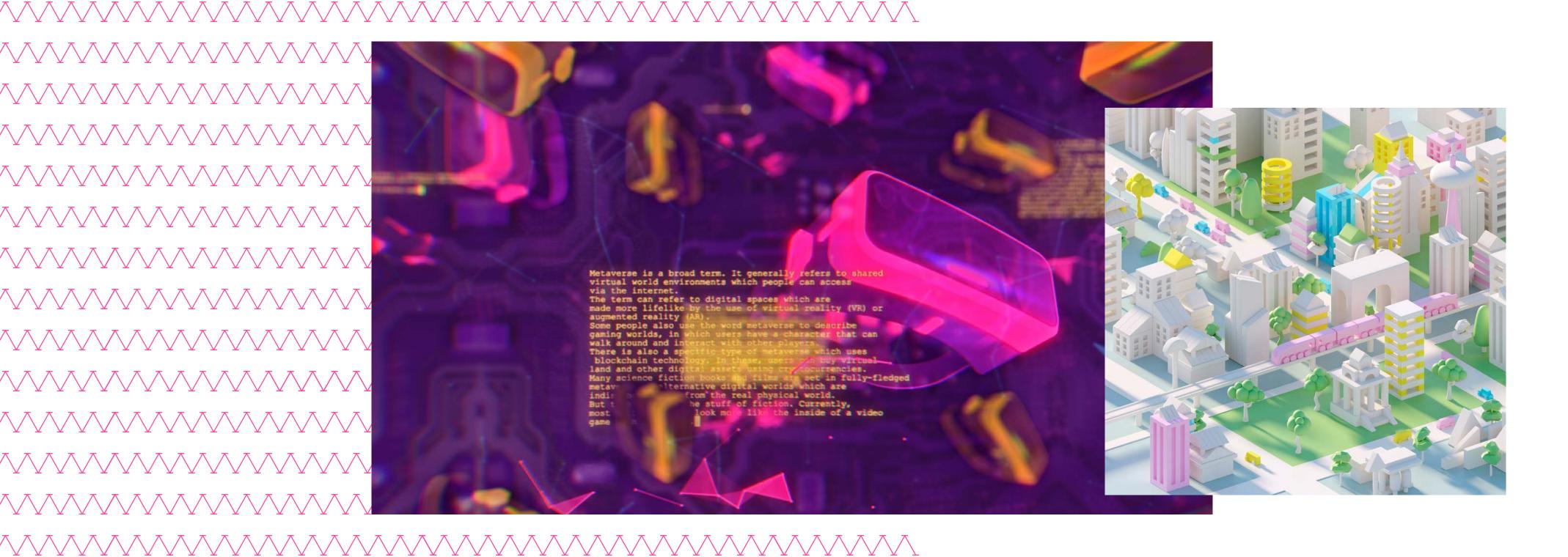
It's hard to talk about what's next without talking about ethics—embedding ethics from the start should be an absolute must. The harm caused by the current internet experience is plain to see—organizations should do better in the next iteration, with more transparency. It will be critical to learn from previous mistakes. Unintended tech consequences are impacting humanity right now, and openness about that impact will need to be part of building trust in the metaverse—particularly around behavior control, sustainability and accessibility. As brands seek to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the metaverse, we encourage open debate around the ethics relating to who people are and what they do there.

The questions surrounding the future of the metaverse are numerous and varied, including: How will data be used and stored? How can new algorithms be developed that block sensational, clickbait headlines, and by doing so end polarization and disarm the trolls? How can child protection be designed into a metaverse experience from the start?

The democratization of access might lead to a new wealth of shared cultural experiences and new economies, however, innovating responsibly will be the foundation of every brief going forward.
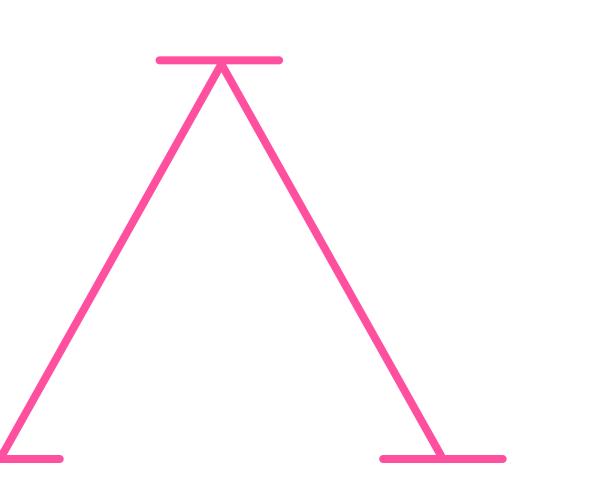
Metaverse is a broad term. It generally refers to shared virtual world environments which people can access via the internet.
The term can refer to digital spaces which are made more lifelike by the use of virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR).
Some people also use the word metaverse to describe gaming worlds, in which users have a character that can walk around and interact with other players.
There is also a specific type of metaverse which uses blockchain technology. In these, users can buy virtual land and other digital assets using cryptocurrencies.
Many science fiction books and films are set in fully-fledged metaverse alternative digital worlds which are indistinguishable from the real physical world.
But these are the stuff of fiction. Currently, most metaverse look more like the inside of a video game

At the moment, the environmental concern is significant because running the metaverse takes a large share of energy. NFTs have a substantial negative impact on the environment: one estimate suggests that creating a single average NFT generates more than 200 kilograms of planet-warming carbon—equivalent to driving 500 miles in a standard American gasoline-powered car.

The metaverse gained huge traction during the pandemic—an event that made life exponentially more digital. What we cannot know yet is how its evolution will go from here. It may continue to boom and grow, it may shapeshift into something else. Or it may fizzle unless enough people find continued value or relevancy in it.

We may well be on the brink of a new cultural epoch—if this is true, this shift will be associated with the metaverse. Whatever happens, the metaverse may offer infinite potential as a brave new space for companies to explore, test, and innovate, all of which makes it—to say the very least—tremendously exciting.

We suggest

Think

Consider your product in the metaverse—how it's seen, how it's purchased, where it goes, how it's used by your metaverse customers. The lifecycle of your product, brand, and experiences requires a complete mindset shift. The metaverse is a place and not just another channel.
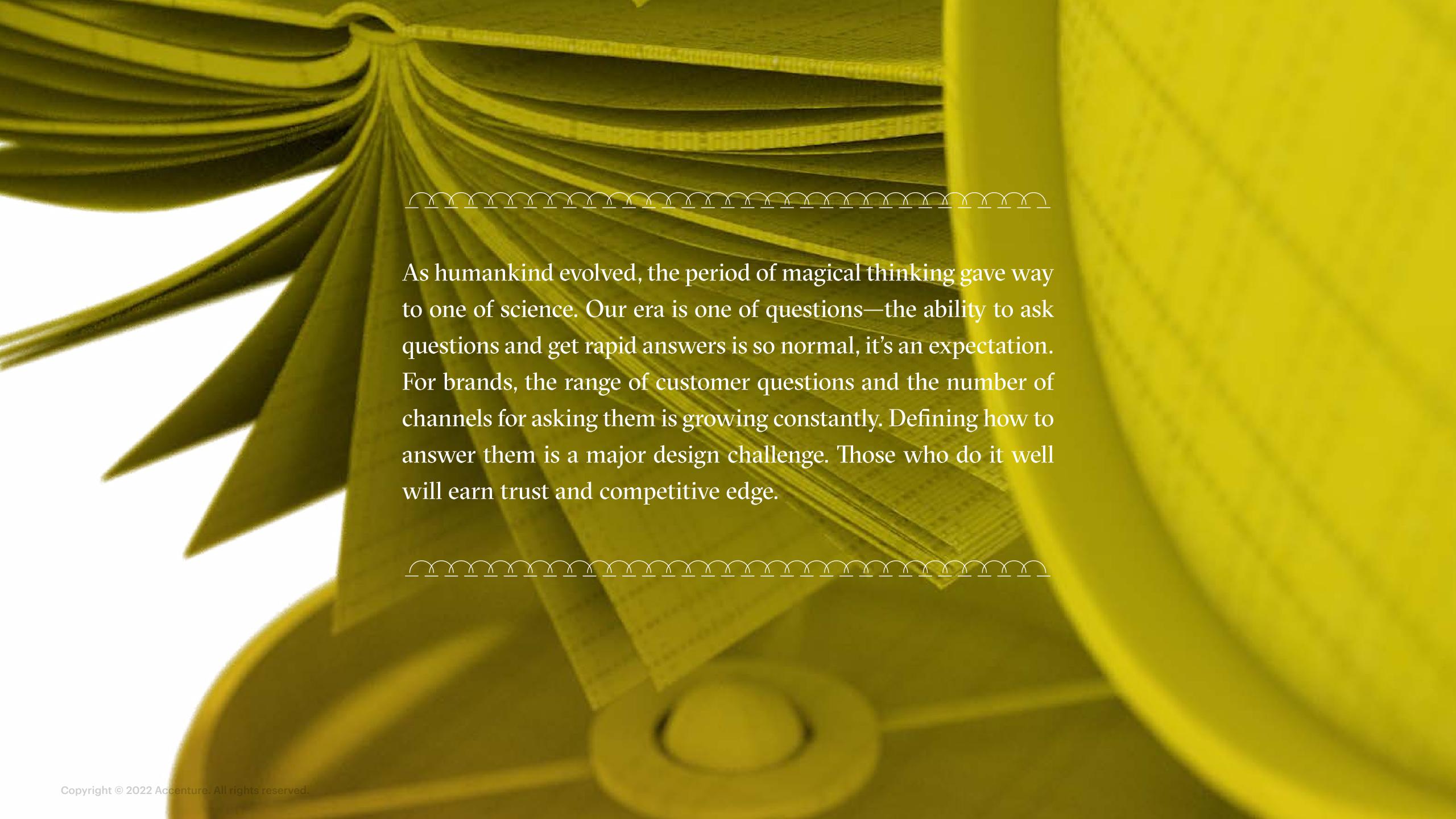
Say

Ask people (especially young people) about the games they're playing and the clothes they're buying for their avatars. Talk about the experiences they're having with their friends online to learn more about the metaverse's potential.

Do

Approach the metaverse with curiosity and playfulness, but always with integrity, ethics, care, and respect for the environment.
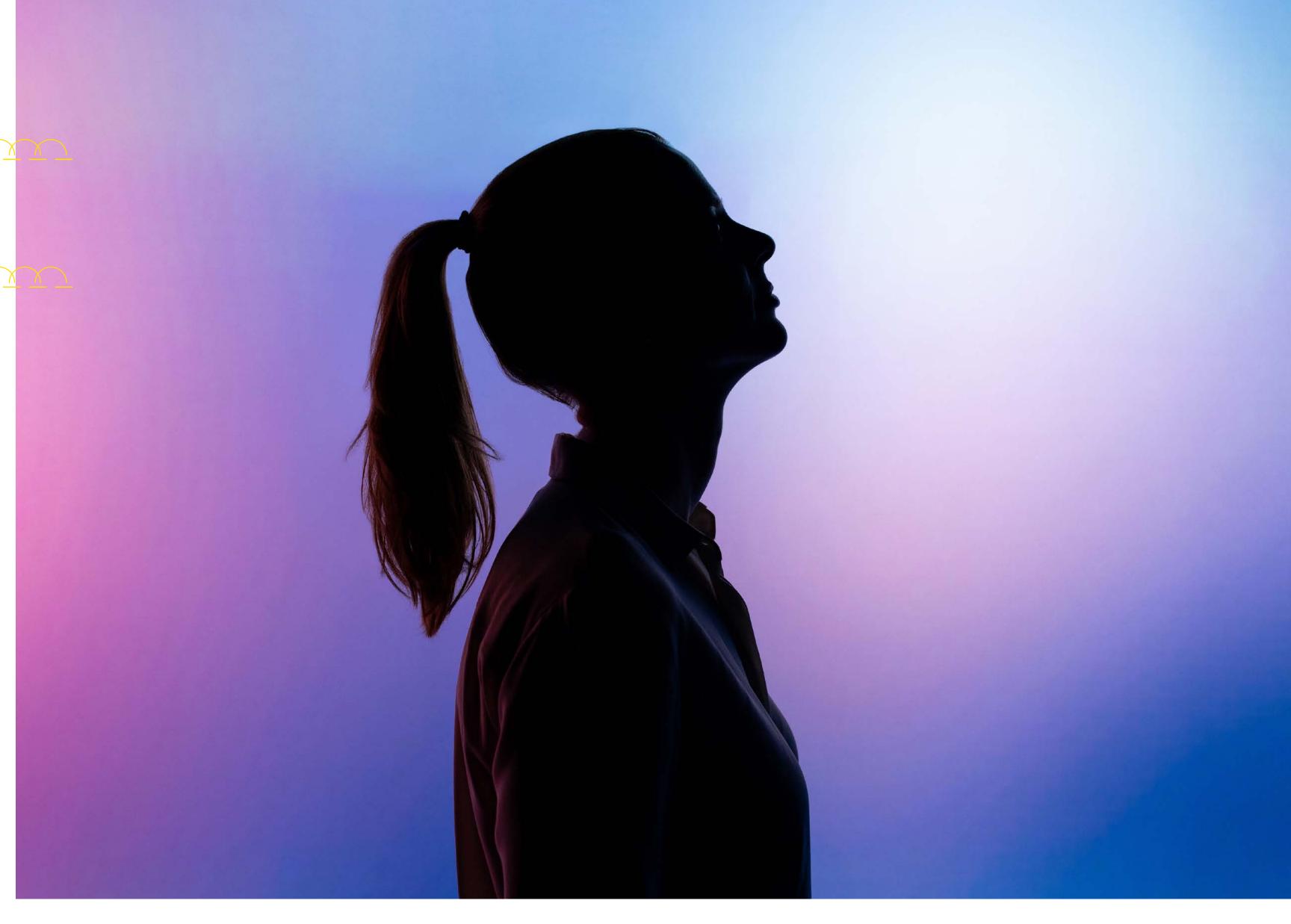
This much is true

As humankind evolved, the period of magical thinking gave way to one of science. Our era is one of questions—the ability to ask questions and get rapid answers is so normal, it's an expectation. For brands, the range of customer questions and the number of channels for asking them is growing constantly. Defining how to answer them is a major design challenge. Those who do it well will earn trust and competitive edge.

What's going on

It's 24 years since Google was founded, and one of its most profound effects has been the way it has evolved people's relationship with questions. Asking questions and having them answered at the touch of a button (or brief exchange with a voice assistant) has become part of everyday life—an expectation people barely think about. The fact that it's so easy and immediate means they're asking more questions.

As people get answers from more and more sources, like social media, prolific disinformation means they're increasingly doubting the answers they find.

People tend to trust those within their own social group over people they don't know. It's been suggested that, over the past 18 months, trust has been so tested that it's created "Information Bankruptcy"—a state characterized by record-low levels of trust in all information, alongside soaring fears around job security, personal safety and autonomy, and societal matters. As a result, many are increasingly interrogating the sources of the answers they get.

One of the most debated issues in 2021 was around the safety of the Covid-19 vaccines, stoked by people's social media posts about their own side-effects—some of which were vanishingly rare or misattributed to the vaccines. Some people find such posts more persuasive than expert scientific opinion and evidence-based research data, as they worry about their own risk.

Incidences of inflammatory language, lack of integrity, misinformation and the politicization of everything are accelerating a decline in trust in experts and governments.
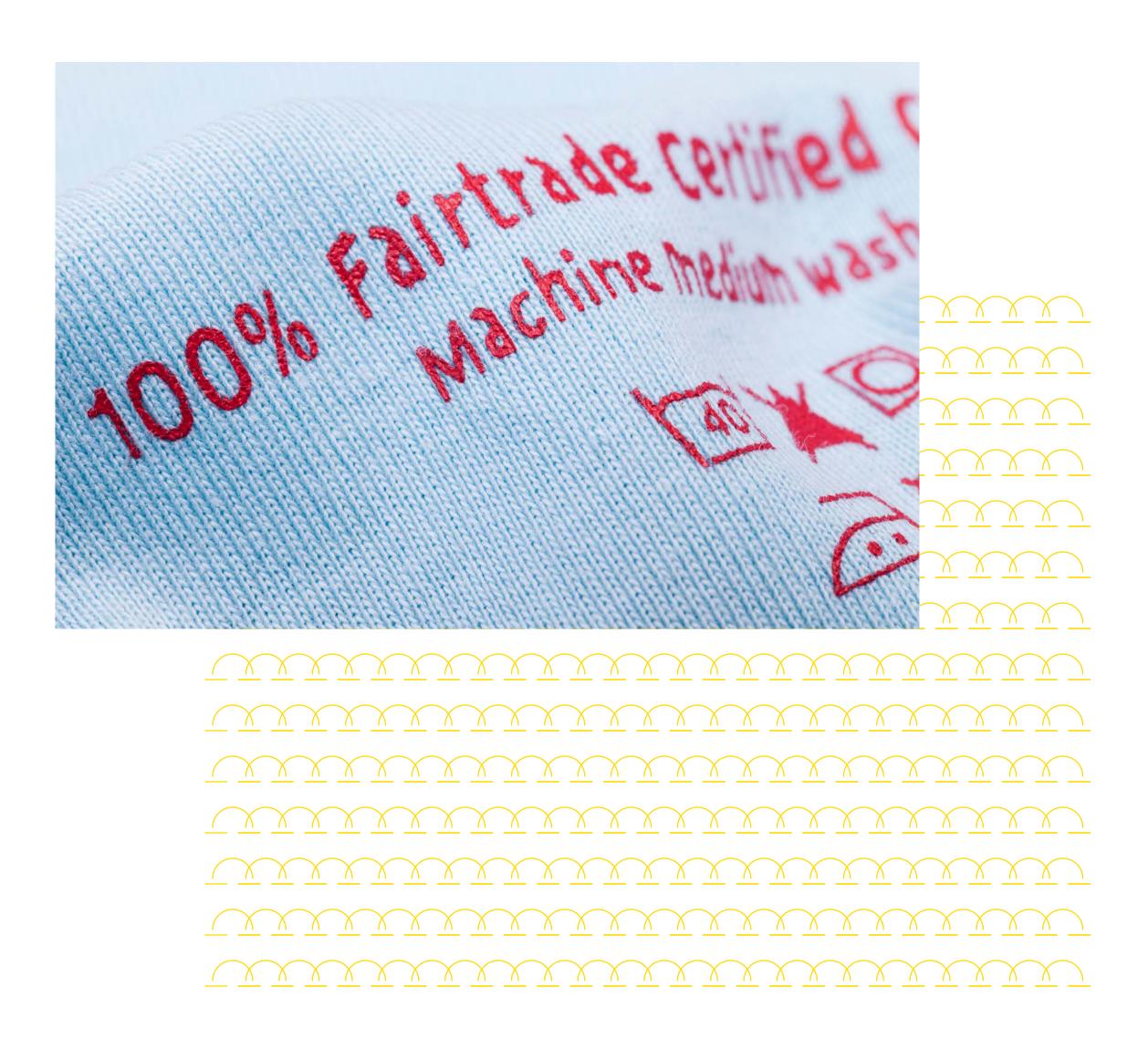
Sometimes, a lack of information can be damaging. At the time of writing, expectant mothers make up 32% of the hospitalized, critically ill coronavirus patients in the UK, due to a lack of early conclusive evidence and misinformation on the vaccines' impact on pregnancy. The UK now recommends the vaccine during pregnancy.

Trust is critical, and not just in relation to health. People want and need to be able to trust all sources of the answers they seek— including educators, banks, caregivers, insurers, mechanics and retailers. Customers want to make informed purchasing decisions, and that means they need to be able to trust what they're told about their options. Edelman found that while 81% of shoppers say that trust impacts their buying decisions, just one-third trust the brands they buy from.

In the past, the factors influencing decision-making were relatively simple as they were mainly functional—related to product
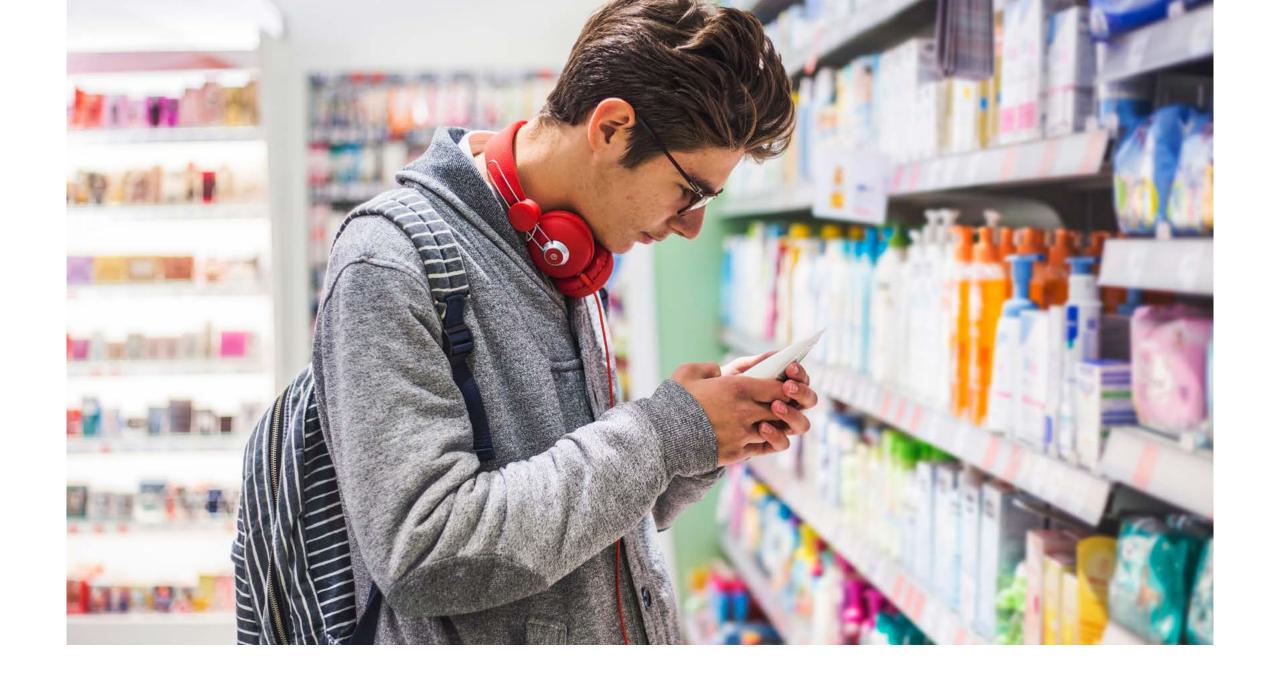
specifications and price, perhaps. From there, decision-making factors moved on to questions around the whole experience and payment mechanics, including one-click transactions, and the option to buy now and pay later.

Most recently, people's emotional and moral concerns have been making the process more complex, with a particular focus on ethical and sustainability values. In fact, sustainably marketed products and services outperformed their conventional counterparts across 36 categories in 2020. In 2021, they outgrew consumer packaged goods as a total.

There are a number of organizations calculating ethical consumption scores for people to look into as they are shopping now. Companies like thredUP have found a way to explain the carbon footprint of the clothes in people's own closets.

Values-driven consumption continues to rise, and it's an important shift to note. People want to feel good about what they're buying. They're asking more questions that need answers at the point of sale, around topics like the ethical treatment of workers and animals, and fair trade.
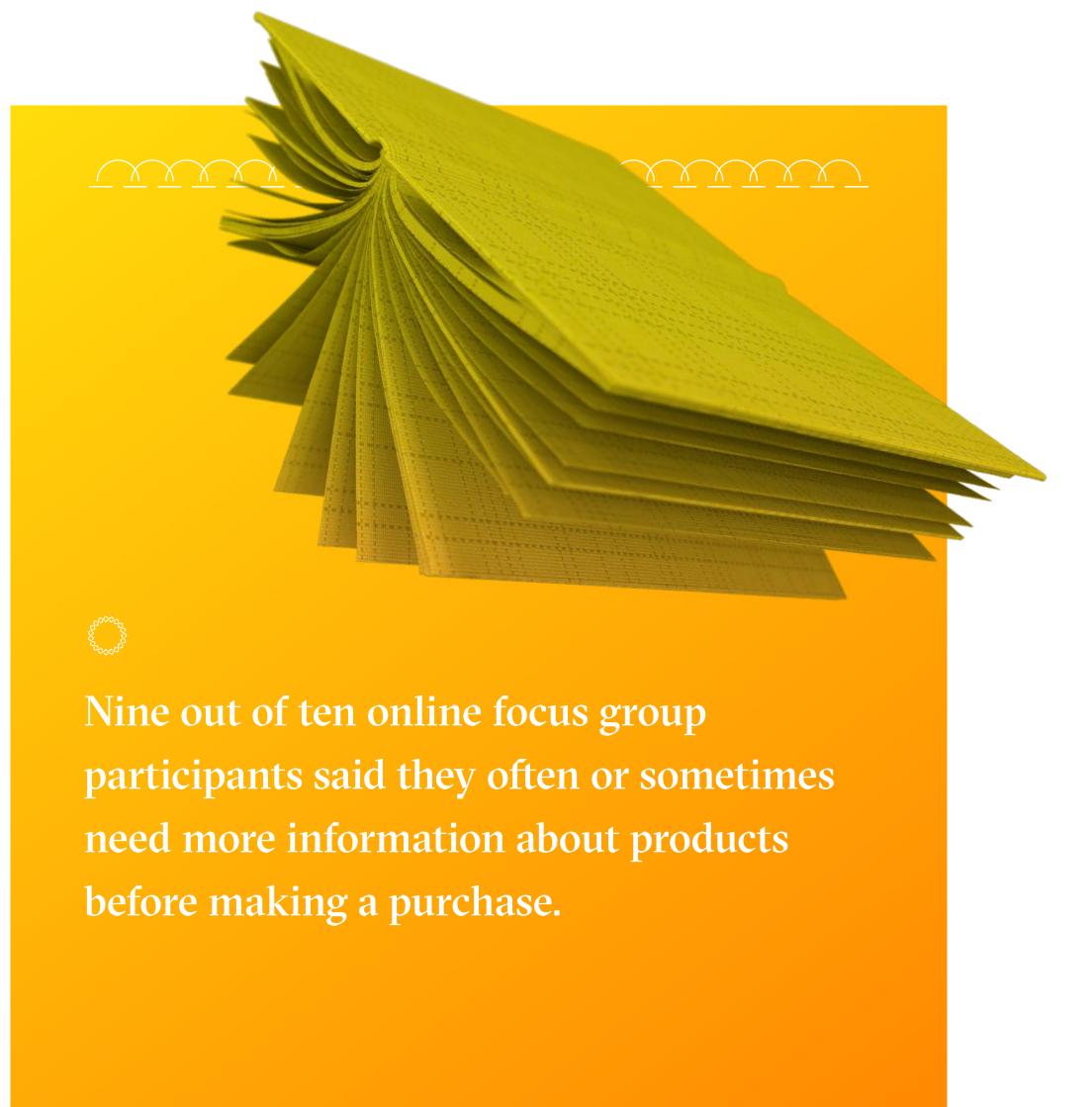
Everlane, a fashion retailer, has provided radical transparency on its product page, answering a lot of the values-based questions people may have. Their product page provides details and pictures of the factory where its products are made, how much water it recycles in its manufacturing processes, whether the factory meets their high ethical standards, and clear pricing breakdowns for things like materials, hardware and labor.
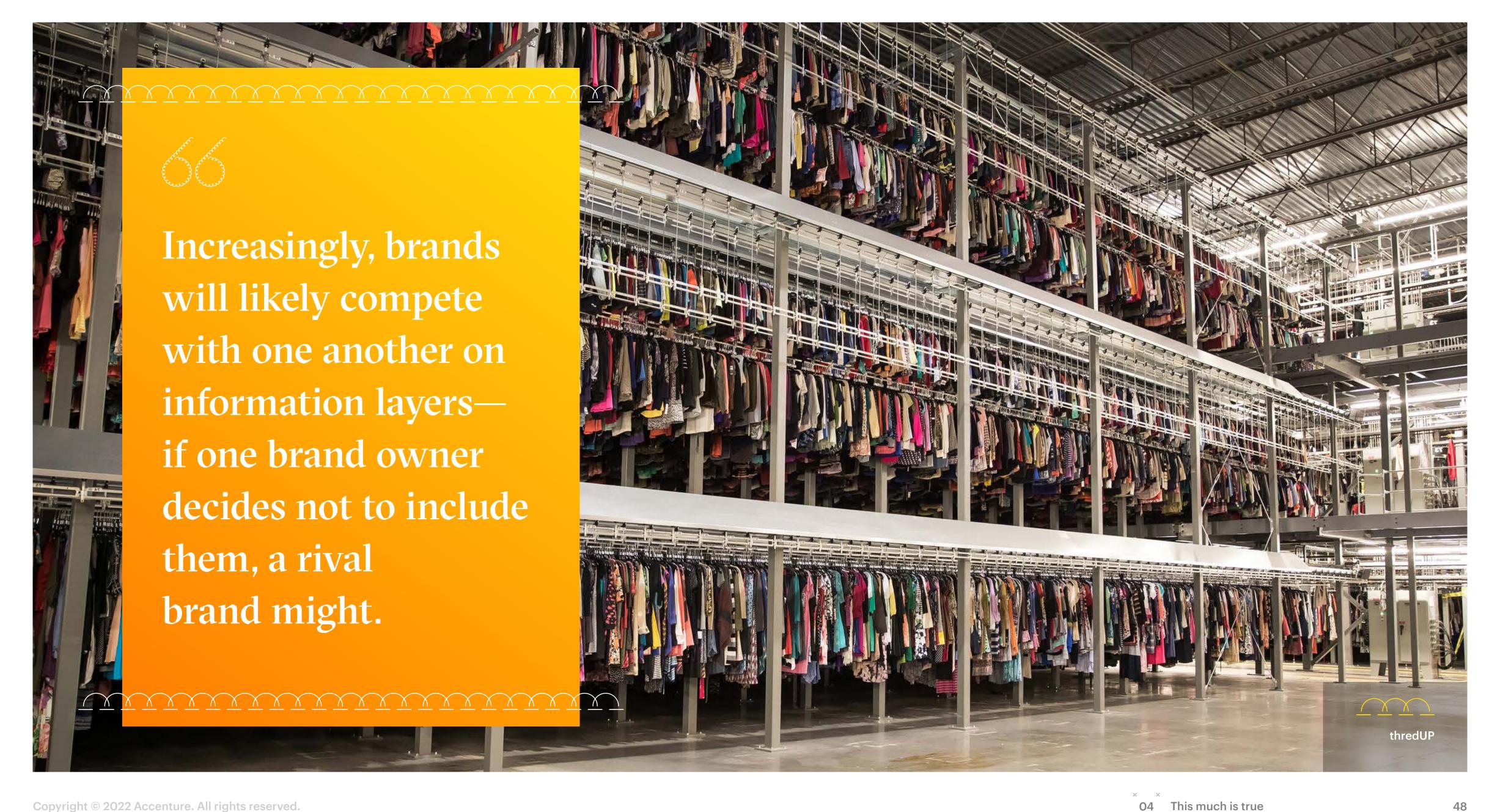
A brand is a bundle of promises, and customers want more details about those promises than ever before. Customers expect brands to deliver against each of their commitments at the right time, and in the right way. They want to be able to get answers at moments of interaction with the product or service they're considering buying, and at the point of purchase.

Delivering on customer demands for information is a way to show transparency, which builds credibility. The layers of information a brand owner chooses to impart should therefore be a clear and open demonstration to its customers of how it's performing.

Nine out of ten online focus group participants said they often or sometimes need more information about products before making a purchase.

Fjord Trends online focus groups across seven countries (Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Spain, UK, US). Total participants: 585. September 2021

> **Increasingly, brands will likely compete with one another on information layers— if one brand owner decides not to include them, a rival brand might.**

thredUP

What's next

Thinking about answers to our questions as information layers at the point of sale is both critical and complex. The challenge is dealing with the limited space for information layers and people's short attention span.

We've moved from a pre-digital information imbalance, when companies knew more than customers, to a post-digital interpretation imbalance, where customers are expected to work out how to interpret what they're told.
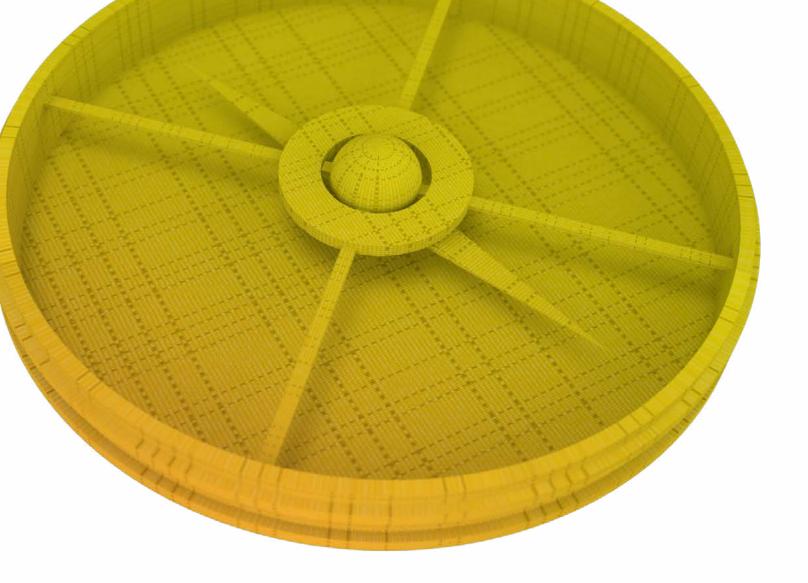
Brands should make strategic choices about what information layers to use (marketing will play a key role here), and how to design them across touchpoints with the aim of building trust. These layers would have to be simple to use, delivering the right information in the most appropriate form, with transparency. Brands should be able to adapt each layer's shape and the amount of information displayed according to the place, interface, and people's ever-changing modes. They will likely need to accommodate the fact that, at any given moment, the same person might be shopping in their role as an interior designer, or as a parent, or as an amateur athlete. They might be seeking the cheapest available option, or they might be in the mood to splurge.

A brand's macro purpose—its "About us"—would need to be part of every crumb of content it puts out because what's needed is not just a brand or a design guide, but a consistent narrative at every level. Content design will be key—from identifying questions customers want answered to incorporating new ways of answering them at the point of sale.

Conversation is a natural part of the human experience—it's how people share and find out information, how they frame who they are, and how they grow and learn. We believe brand conversations with customers will evolve and be used to structurally solve the challenge of providing the right answer at the right time and in the right way.

Already, conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI) powers an array of basic question-and-answer services, but approaches will likely evolve both in ambition and sophistication. This isn't about generic sales bots—rather, it's about offering customers the rich, in-depth information they're seeking. Conversational AI will increasingly happen on demand and be specialized, involving layers specifically requested by the user.

Brand conversations with customers will evolve to structurally solve the challenge of providing the right answer at the right time and in the right way.

Specialized virtual consultations, which grew during the pandemic as customers were forced to spend more time at home, will likely develop further. Recently, Bobbi Brown Cosmetics and Perfect Corp partnered to launch personalized online beauty consultations tailoring the experience to each customer using AR, AI and personalized product recommendations. Other brand owners should take inspiration from such a tailored approach.

We also believe that conversational AI will be built into more apps and websites as a voice layer. This would help people to get real-time support in a way that engages all the senses and delivers layers of information in a gradual way that guards against overwhelming them.

On websites, an integrated voicebot can quickly and easily provide real-time assistance like personalized directions and information about a product or service. It can also help to transfer people between teams, like sales and customer support. Such services behave like a virtual assistant that knows almost everything about

the company's product or service, and guides the customer's experience.

Hybrid interfaces will also play an important role. They would be able to augment physical objects with a digital layer of information, delivered as a sensory experience through smart devices (such as smart glasses), and customized according to customer mode.
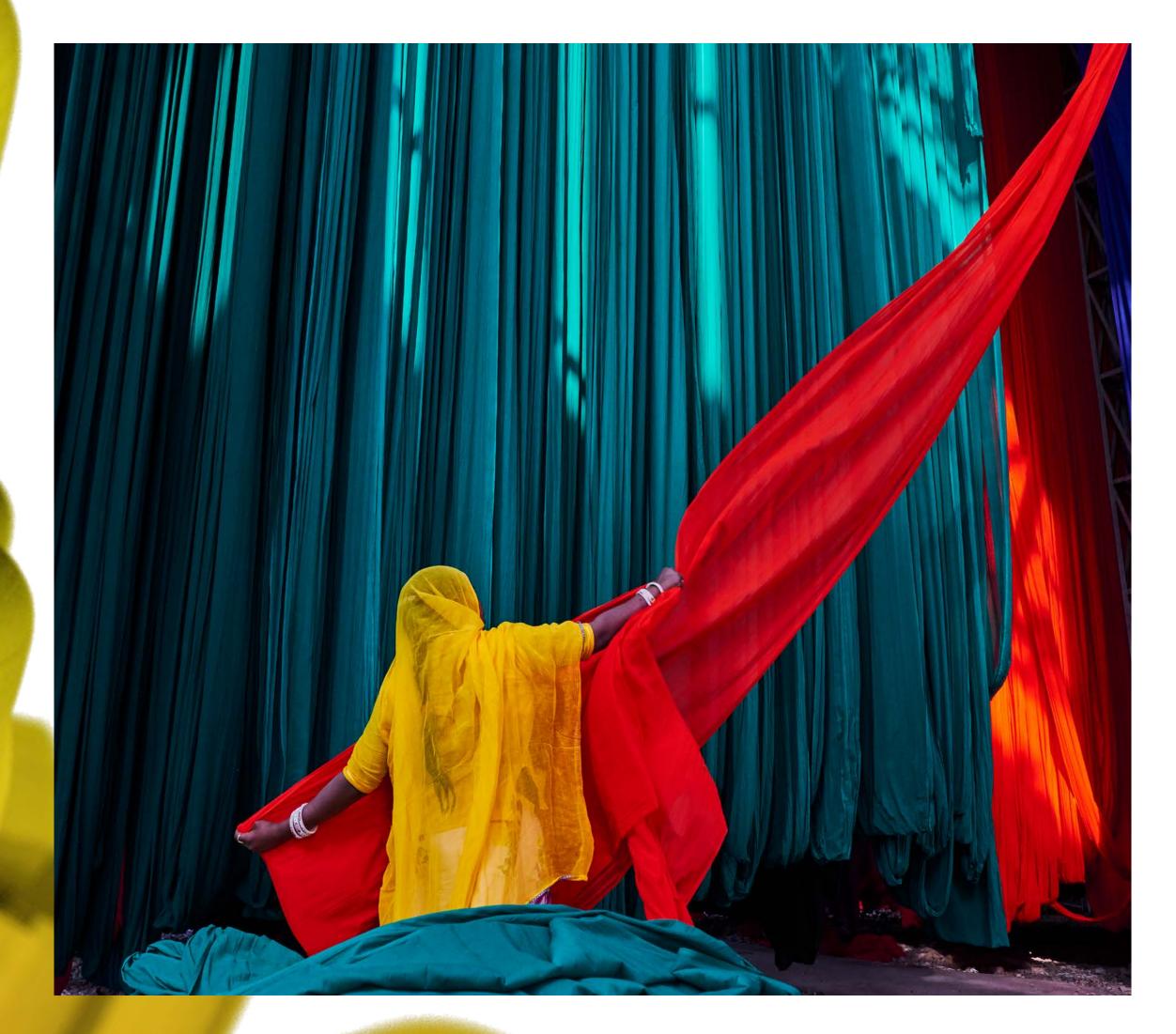
Mastercard partnered with Swedish think tank, Doconomy, and the UN Climate Change Secretariat to create DO Black—a credit card that tallies the carbon footprint of a user's purchase and, when they've exceeded their carbon budget for the year, cuts them off. Imagine a next-generation app that helps a customer change their behavior by sharing this information with them before they buy.

Today, customers typically need to consult third-party reviews or news sources to find answers to their questions on a range of considerations—from ethical reputation to value for money—then bounce back to the retailer to complete their purchase. In the future, AI might provide integrated solutions that centralize such data, bringing together brand and product information at the point of purchase.

Brands have an opportunity to encourage loyalty by rewarding customers for making more ecologically responsible purchases. Benefits could be offered to those shopping sustainably, rising according to a customer's commitment and performance tracked over time. Brands could do well to reimagine loyalty programs around these goals, and to build in a community component to reassure people that their efforts

are contributing to something bigger than just them—something measurably impactful. Increasingly, brands will likely compete with one another on information layers—if one brand owner decides not to include them, a rival brand might. Granular design decisions are likely to have direct strategic implications. As a result, the remit of designers' work would become more complex.

While designers will be the ones responsible for finding and building in the information layers, this task will span across the whole organization, especially across brand, marketing and customer service, as well as operations. As we have noted before, supply chain is now the front office too.

A layer of AR for more information isn't appropriate in every instance, like people's weekly supermarket shop. In these cases, tracking the questions customers are asking and using limited time and space to answer them will be a very important skill. Those questions could become a new form of currency in themselves. When it comes to higher-ticket items such as a new wide-screen TV, a leading edge of customers is already increasingly preoccupied with learning more. This indicates the trend will likely spread.

Truth is demonstrated through proof. It's unreasonable to expect all customers to interrogate the credibility or veracity of the information they're offered, so the expectation is on brands to substantiate what they say in their information layers—with the intention of lightening the customer's mental load. It's no longer enough to just present something as a truth without backing it up properly.

As companies find themselves under growing pressure to respond to people's questions, new information layers will provide a powerful trust-building opportunity. The better companies become at designing information layers, the more trust they will gain.

We suggest

Think

Research the types of questions customers are now asking in—and of—your industry. Outside of your sales channels, consider where people go to get information about your company or products, and how you can create information layers that mean they don't have to go there.

Say

Tell your customers that you want to make sure they feel confident buying from you by giving them more transparency and information at the point of sale.
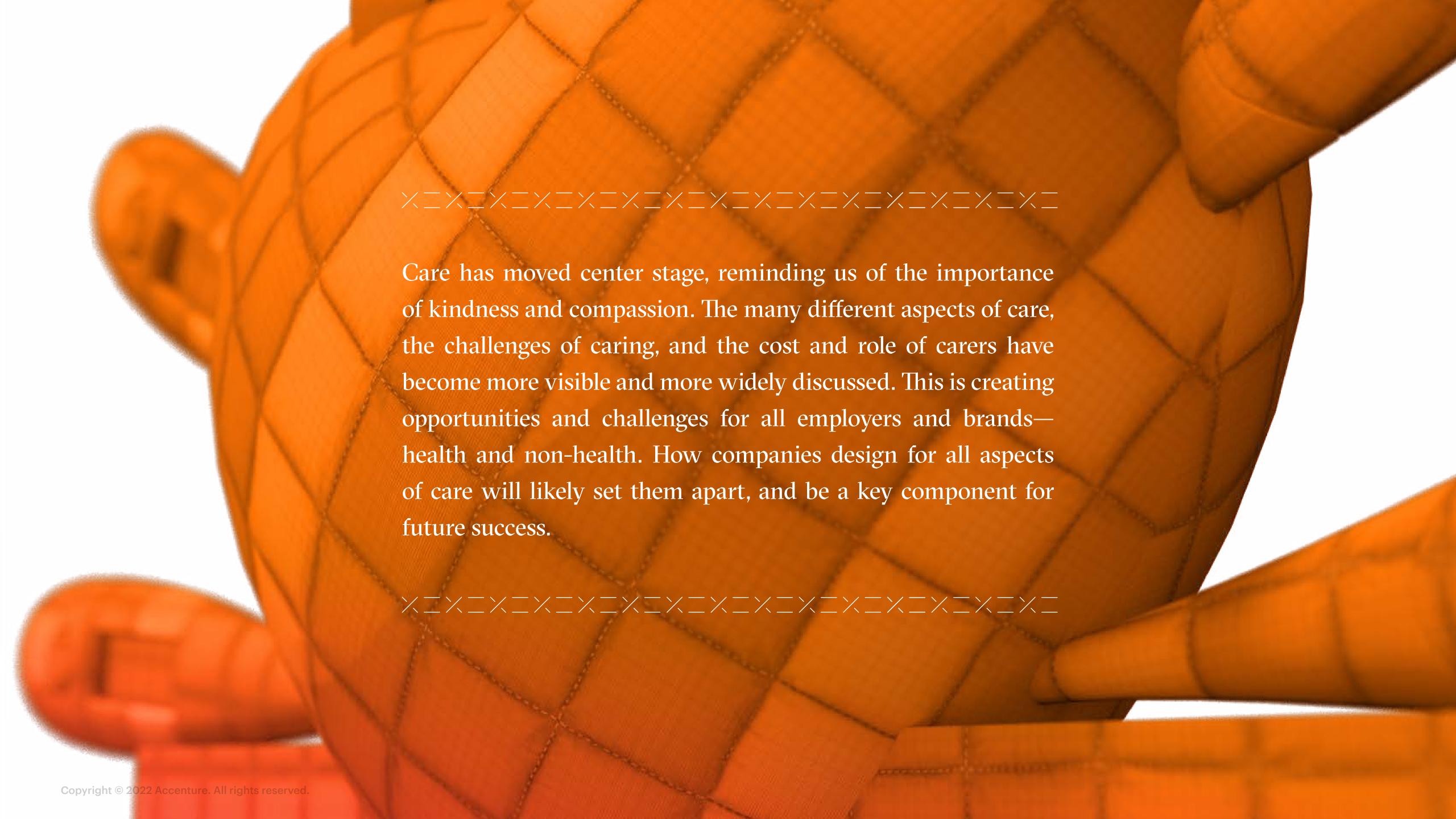
Do

Design new information layers to build trust with your customers and communities and prove your commitment to answering your customers' ever-increasing questions about your product and services—in ways that are easily discoverable both inside and outside the sales channel. Use data to understand as much as you can about the layers each customer is seeking.

Handle with care

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Care has moved center stage, reminding us of the importance of kindness and compassion. The many different aspects of care, the challenges of caring, and the cost and role of carers have become more visible and more widely discussed. This is creating opportunities and challenges for all employers and brands—health and non-health. How companies design for all aspects of care will likely set them apart, and be a key component for future success.

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What's going on

Care and compassion are rooted in human nature—they're arguably the character traits that define humanity. Caring is an act of kindness and concern for others. It goes past empathy and builds trust. In all its forms, care became more prominent this past year: self-care, care for others, the service of care, and the channels to deliver care (both digital and physical).

Firstly, there's the rising importance of self-care. The pandemic has wreaked havoc on mental health around the world—this was one of the biggest global signals coming from our design studios as we crowdsourced these trends. In the UK, 87% of HR leaders have experienced increased numbers of employees disclosing

issues around mental health, and 82% have seen greater numbers of staff reporting feelings of loneliness.

We've seen an increasing willingness for dialog about the mental health challenges many of us face, as a way to comfort and support each other. Many celebrities signaled their readiness to accept their vulnerabilities, with world-class athletes prioritizing their mental health in high-profile situations, such as Simone Biles's withdrawal from some events at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Secondly, the access to services that enable people to care for their loved ones was reduced or disrupted. In adjusting to the change, those who take care of others seemed to be taking on more responsibilities on top of the busy lives they had pre-pandemic—to educate their children, to help with medical appointments, to shop for their parents. These additional tasks were not transactional—they were emotional obligations that increased the load for people who were already stretched. In Singapore, 35- to 54-year-olds have struggled with the toll of additional responsibilities, both financially and with their own health, as they care for both their parents and children—and this is probably happening elsewhere in the world, too.
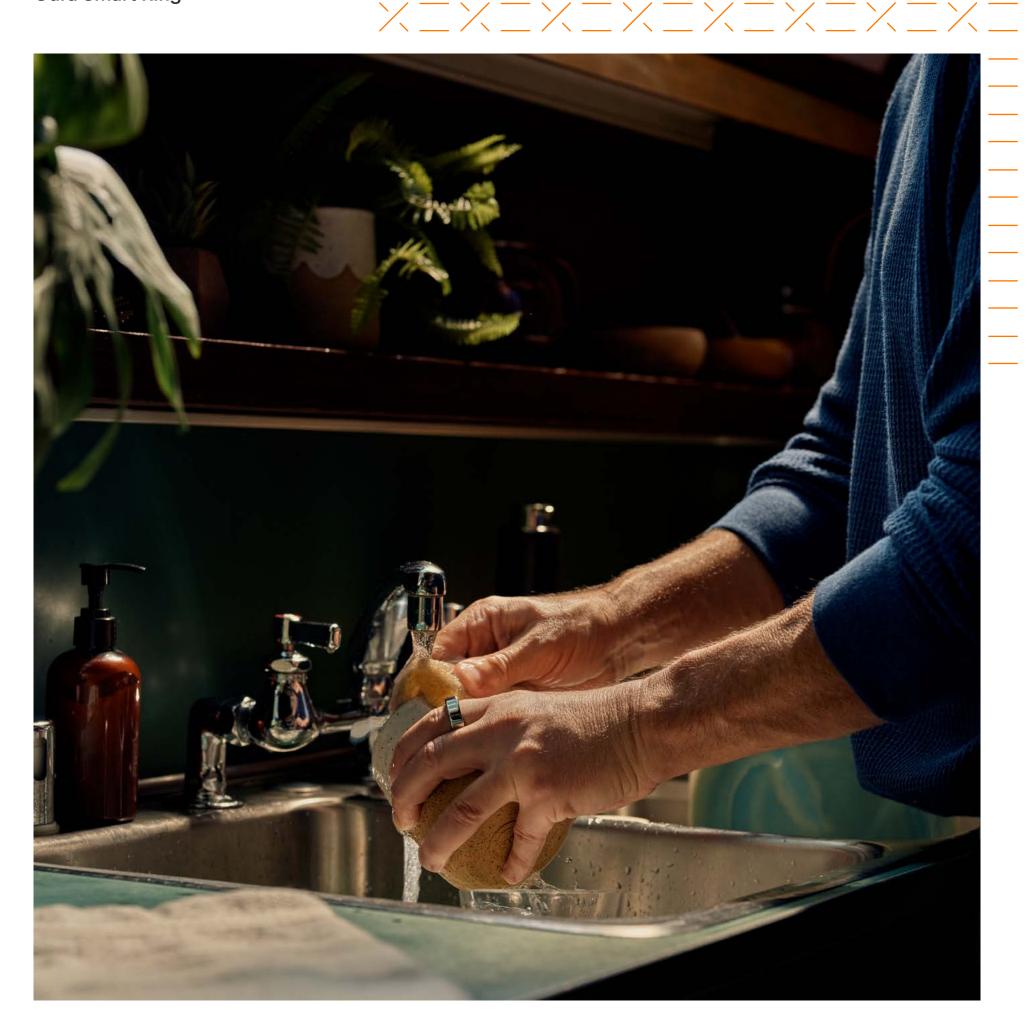
Caring is emotional work, and paid care workers—doctors, nurses, medics, care home staff, all those with care as a critical part of their job description—had a sharp rise in burnout due to managing so many critically ill patients. In March, research that analyzed 65 studies across 21 countries found that over 20% of healthcare workers have reported pandemic-related anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Thirdly, outside of families, the amount of time and attention now devoted to caring for the wellbeing of colleagues has increased for many people. Compassion and grace among colleagues for personal struggles—be it mental health, grieving, or a sudden disruption through illness—have become normalized in work.

Oura Smart Ring

This increased emotional toll within work, on top of productivity expectations, has caused some in management positions to reach a breaking point and seek out other employment.

As 2021 progressed, a growing list of companies—from Nike to Bumble, LinkedIn and Hootsuite—acted to support employees' mental health by shutting down their offices for a week. Like many other businesses in 2021, Accenture hired a Chief Health Officer, Dr. Tamarah Duperval-Brownlee, to focus specifically on employee wellbeing and investment. Taking care of employees is a moral imperative, of course, but their wellbeing also has a direct impact on business performance, operational resiliency and sustainability. This is reinforcing the importance of nurturing a culture of care in the workplace.

Technology has played a key role in helping people take care of themselves and those in their close circle. Tech has been a lifeline for many during the pandemic—keeping businesses working, allowing people to shop, and connect with family—and it's playing a central role in care, too. For instance, the Careology app helps cancer patients feel more in control of their experience, and connects their support network so they can easily stay on top of treatment plans and updates.

Technology has become both a new channel and source of solutions for care, as the pandemic forced mass adoption and acceptance of technology for healthcare and wellbeing. Telemedicine has rapidly accelerated in recent years, with more medical consultations done remotely. For a lot of people, this has made access to medical care easier.
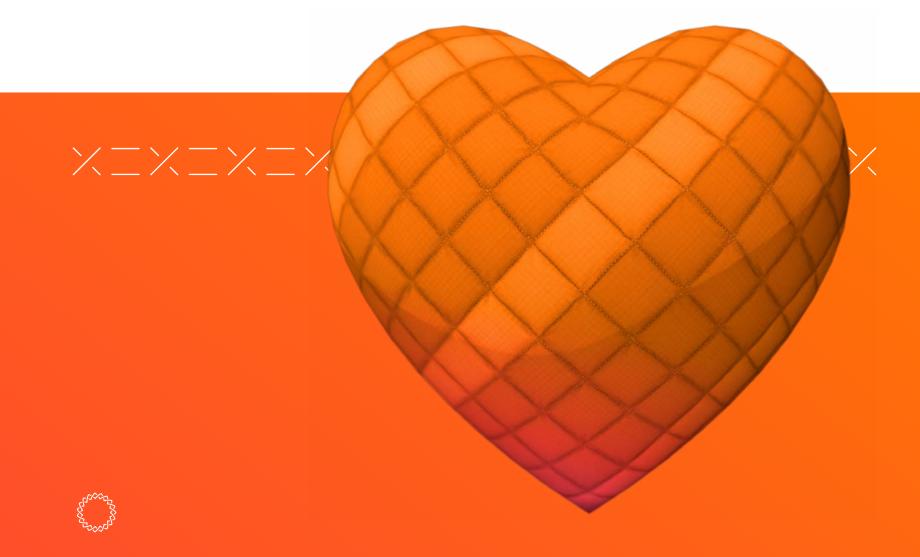
The demand and urgency to provide care in new ways have fueled a rise in services that offer wellness and care monitoring for people. Devices from smartphones to FitBits and Oura rings are widely used to monitor vital signs, blood pressure and oxygen levels, and interest in tracking less well-known health markers like Heart Rate Variability is rising. The appetite for anxiety- and stress-management apps and wearables seems insatiable.

Further, people are growing more comfortable using a combination of digital and physical services to care for themselves and others, and companies are responding with hybrid propositions. Lululemon's acquisition of Mirror, which provides live online personal training classes at home, supplements its core fitness apparel business.

This openness to using tech for care was further accelerated by the inevitable use of Covid-19 passes in many countries. Out of collective responsibility to those that are vulnerable in society, people have started to exchange health information about their vaccination status for access to public spaces like restaurants, theaters

and airports, usually using a smartphone. It also signals another important behavioral shift: sharing of previously private health information publicly. Comfort levels on sharing this information vary from person to person, but a majority are doing it, giving communities the confidence to open up knowing this is a good way to minimize risk for their patrons.
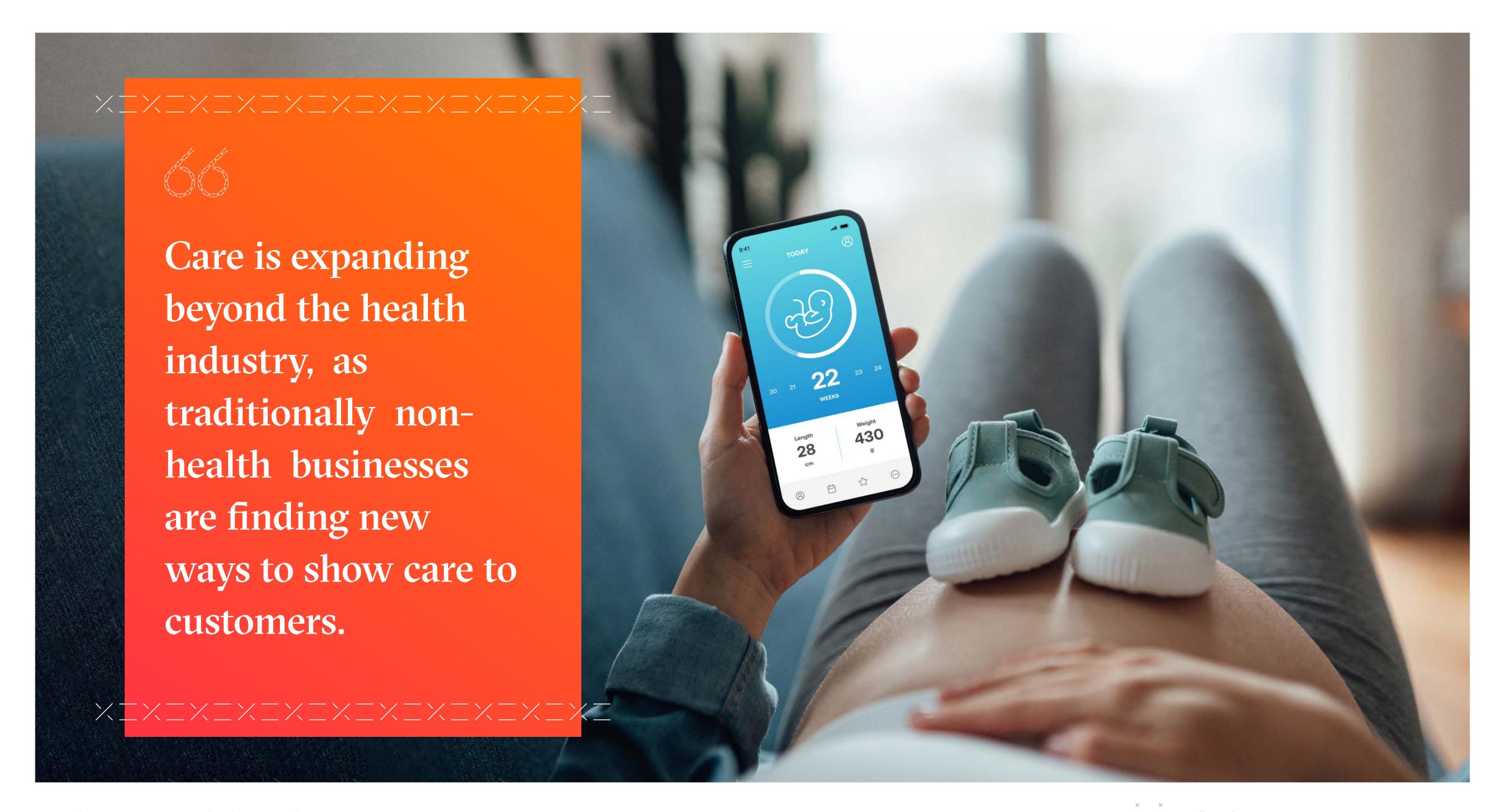
The focus of care is expanding beyond the health industry, as traditionally non-health businesses and services are finding new ways to show care to customers. Self-care, taking care of others, and taking care of carers has become an important focus.
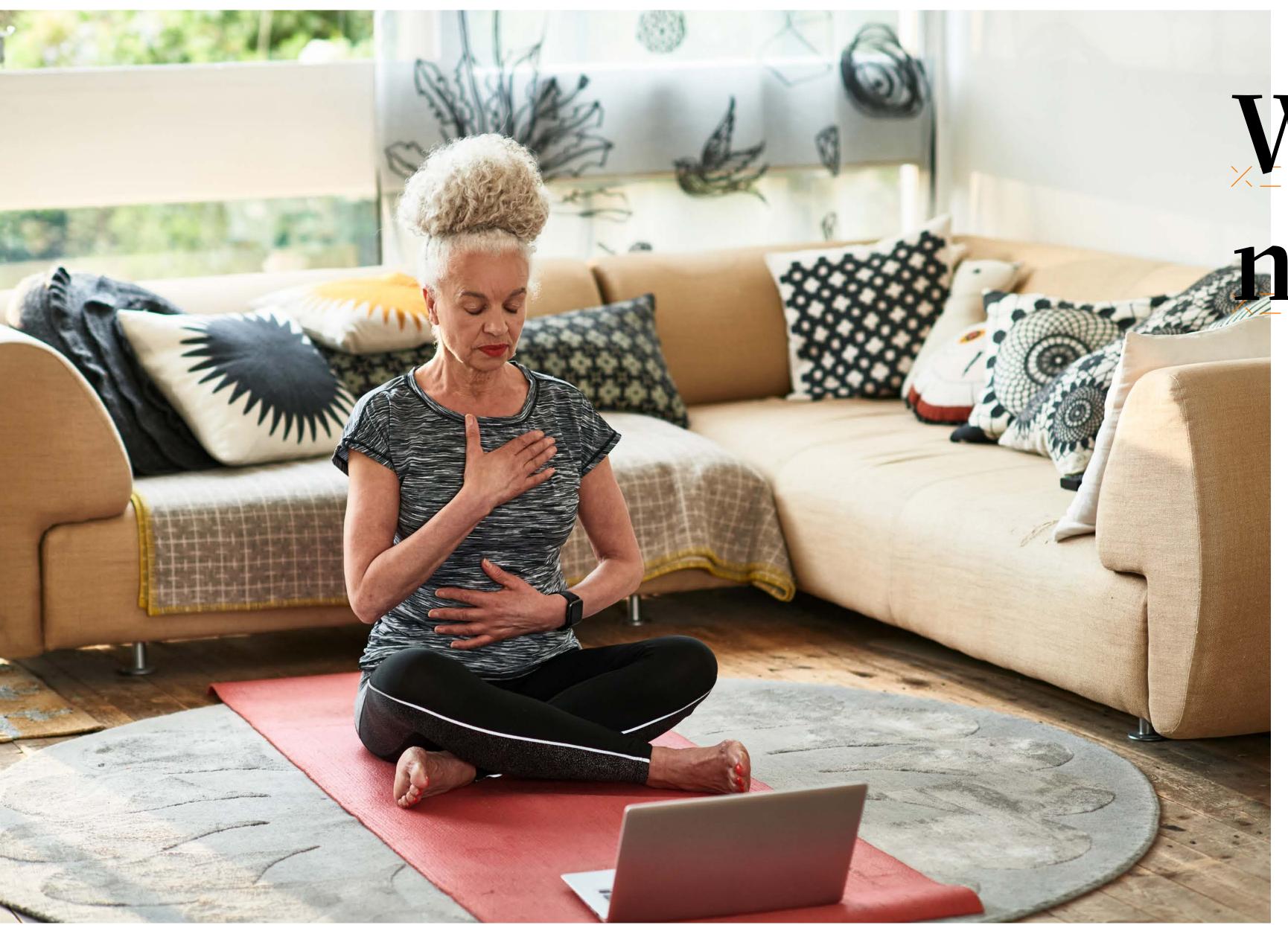
While Covid-19 passports were widely accepted as a solution to open up societies, our online focus groups participants signalled some unease about technology companies getting increasing access to health data, how they might use it, and their ability to use it responsibly and keep it secure.

Fjord Trends online focus groups across seven countries
(Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Spain, UK, US).
Total participants: 585. September 2021

> **Care is expanding beyond the health industry, as traditionally non-health businesses are finding new ways to show care to customers.**

What's next

The responsibilities around self-care and caring for others will likely continue to be prioritized. This matters to brands and employers because it's a much-needed addition of emotional touch. Visibly caring for customers builds brand trust.

It means aligning with moments that matter, creating new services, and harnessing technology in an appropriate and measured way. Some 73% of people around the world now consider "wellness" an essential element of any brand's strategy.
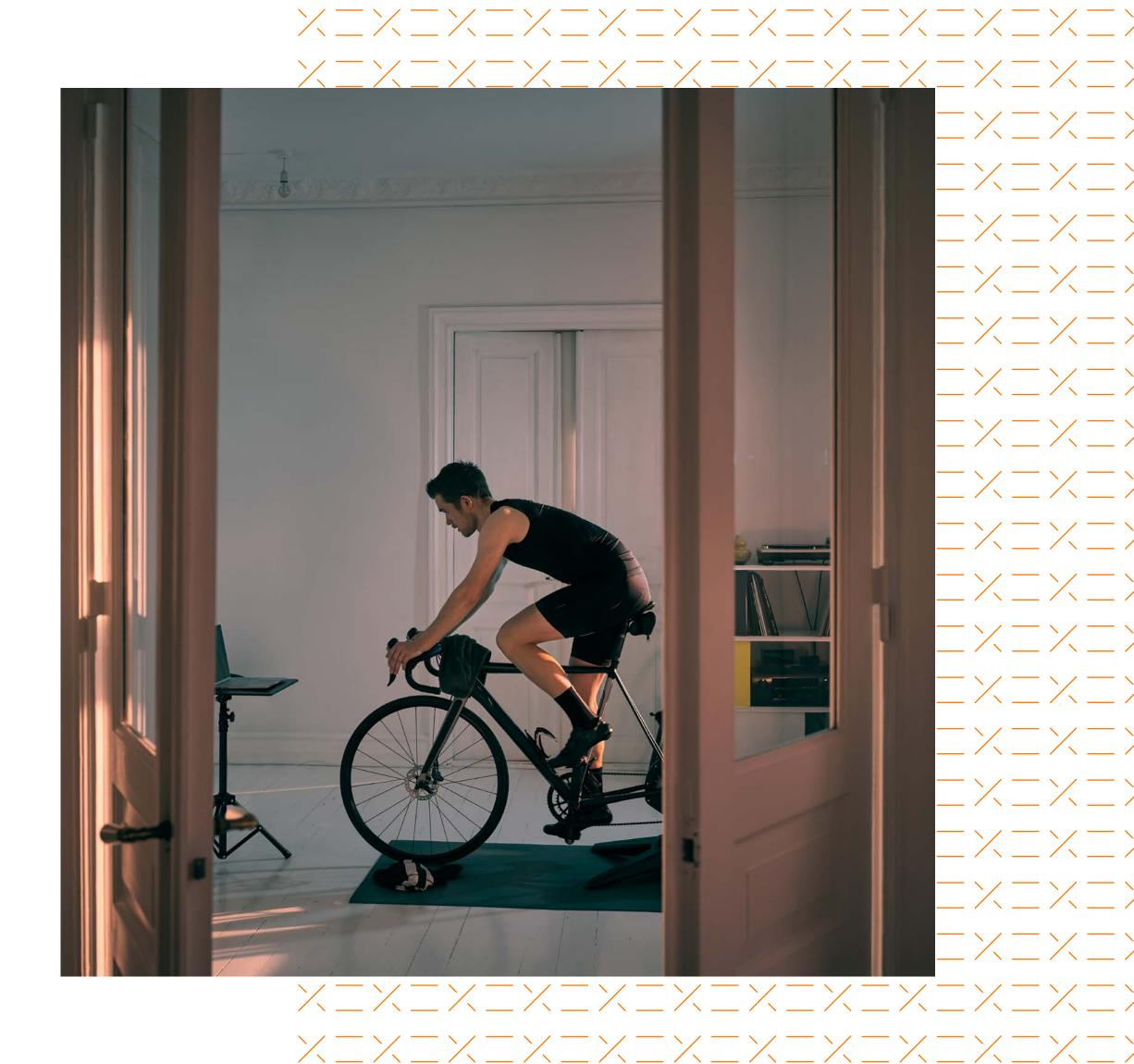
Already, Spotify has created Wellness Packages to support people's need to focus on themselves. Nike has been coaching athletes and customers on the importance of self-care through its website. Unilever has adjusted its communications to shift emphasis from looking better to feeling better, including removing the word "normal" from beauty and personal care brand communications.
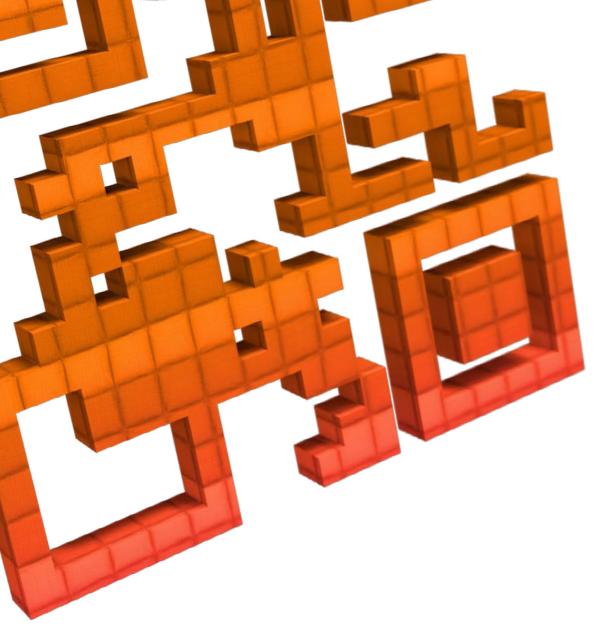
Peloton has reimagined fitness and nurtured an inclusive wellness community through their Connected Fitness products. To build on their goal to democratize access to fitness, they've now expanded beyond individual customers by launching Peloton Corporate Wellness, a premier wellness benefit for organizations—including Accenture Interactive—to offer their employees. Meanwhile, Zwift enables people to ride alongside a community of like-minded, at-home cyclists in a range of engaging routes, including a virtual Tour de France. Care is being embedded into services and products, and these are just a few examples.

Looking ahead, infusing kindness and compassion for others is a business opportunity that design can help with. There are many ways to create new value in caring through design:

Firstly, by expanding accessibility. It's critical for brands to consider whether they're being expansive enough in their definition of accessibility. There are barriers to care for others—especially for the people whose need for care is highest.

Today, 15% of the world's population—1.2 billion people—have some form of disability. Yet despite a sharp increase in the adoption of telemedicine in 2020, many health-related digital experiences remain inaccessible. Fewer than 10% of websites, for example, have features that enable people with certain disabilities to use them. Meanwhile, the number of lawsuits over digital accessibility for people with disabilities is steadily rising.

Multisensory design is an empathetic approach that recognizes the many ways in which people experience and react to a product or service.

At the time of writing, less than 3% of the top one million websites are fully compliant with accessibility standards.

Brands should evaluate their channels, products and services for accessibility in the wake of the massive shift to digital care.

Secondly, by prioritizing mental wellbeing and safety. Designing for the mental wellbeing and safety of people is critical. This isn't new, but the use of dark patterns used to influence people's digital behavior has been under growing public scrutiny because they may often not be used responsibly. Designing KPIs that measure the benefit/risk to people and their relationships will likely be a differentiator for a caring business. Already, we've seen TikTok roll out a wellbeing guide in its Safety Center—a primer on eating disorders, expanded search interventions, and opt-in viewing screens for triggering searches.

Thirdly, by exploring multisensory design to boost inclusivity. Multisensory design is an empathetic approach that recognizes the

many ways in which people experience and react to a product or service, environment or experience—subtle and obvious, consciously and unconsciously. It extends beyond the prevailing focus on visual design with features that also appeal to other senses, such as smell or touch. For care-related propositions, audio has significant potential.

Voice brings nuance, context and emotional comfort. Social audio is now connecting people through conversations on topics of shared interest. Fueled by a desire for a connection away from screens, voice services boomed during the pandemic, including podcasts, use of voice assistants, and sales of related hardware like wireless earphones. In the US, 67 million Americans listen to podcasts every month, audio

streaming has increased 32% year on year, and 41% of people use voice search each day. Twitter recently enhanced its live audio offering, Spaces, to make its conversations easier to discover.
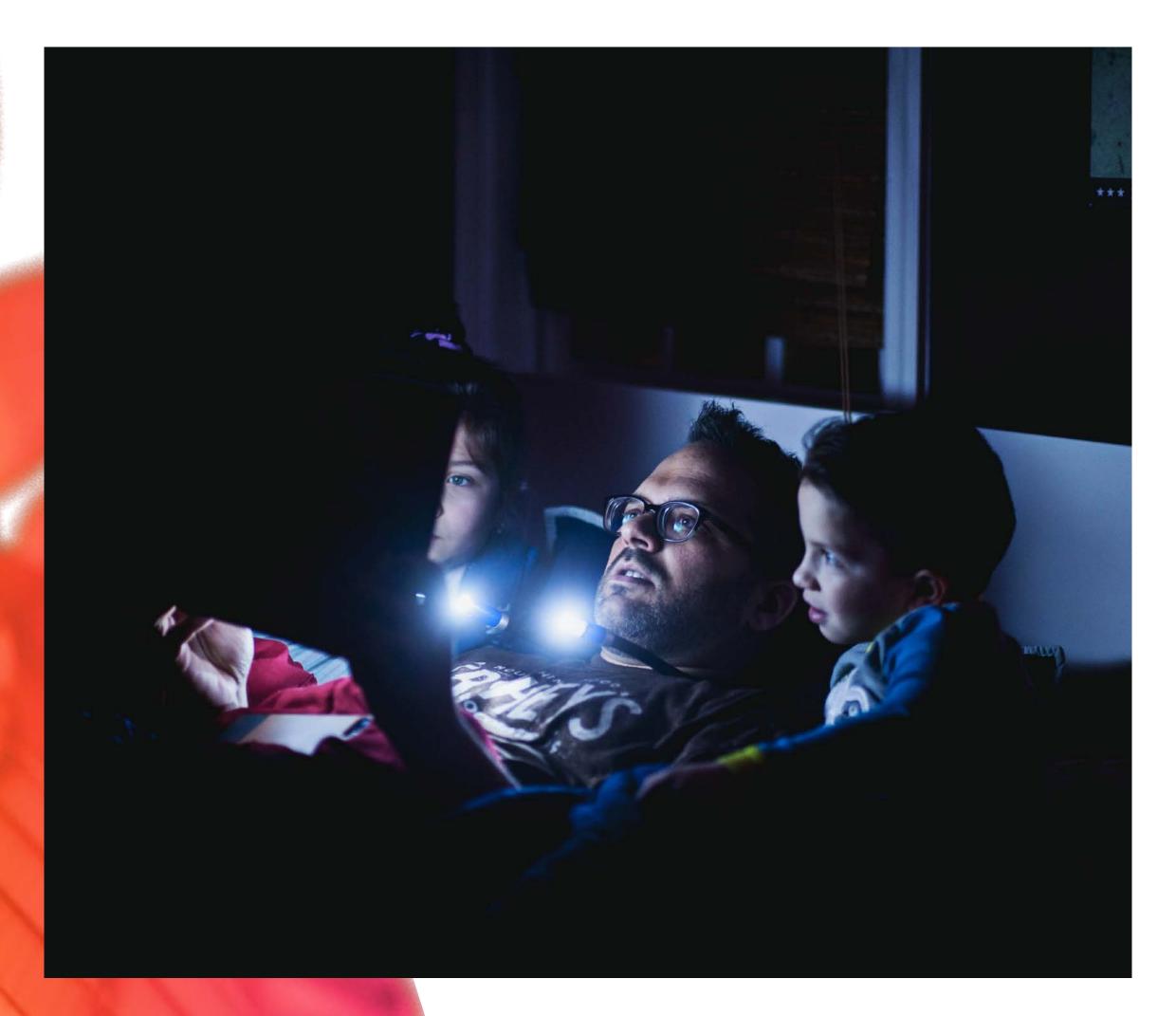
Fourthly, by taking a fresh look at the detail of the employee experience. Many companies are working to streamline old processes—signs to this effect were spotted in our latest CMO

research, "The Great Marketing Declutter", which highlights how marketers are taking care of their teams by decluttering the working day.

Designing internal processes and rules to reduce employees' mental load is a subtle, yet important way to show care. "Meeting-free Fridays" aren't enough—it has to go further and deeper than that. It means reducing the number of clicks

Right: Oura smart ring and app

and pages in a procurement tool, or minimizing approval layers, or cutting down the number of notifications in collaboration tools—these are all things that can help reduce the noise. In all aspects of work, employers can declutter and make cumbersome experiences invisible and easy, and give people space to do the work they're meant to do.

Showing care also means doing everything possible to protect customer data. With the rise of digital care, there's a growing risk around health data security. Further, organizations providing care services or products would need to respond to customers' increasing demands for new layers of care-related information at every point of interaction—something we explore in-depth in our trend, This much is true.

Care has always been an important part of being human, but the difference is that it's now more visible, valued and openly discussed—a welcome change. Design will provide useful and effective tools for companies to move beyond showing empathy and compassion and start acting upon people's concerns with care. Designers and businesses alike need to make space for being able to practice care—it's not enough to talk about it. The aim should be to deliberately design and build care into systems.

We suggest

Think

Treat care as both formal and informal. Acknowledge that care is important, emotionally taxing work. Consider how you can develop products and services—and the KPIs related to them—around the needs of people who have care as part of their daily work.

Say

Clearly communicate that care is not transactional. Define what care means for your organization and use it as a guiding principle in your design work and communications.

Do

Declutter your organization of the things that most frustrate your employees and customers. Look for ways to minimize the noise, (such as communications, internal processes, external products/services), to give people more time and space for the things that matter.

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Methodology

Crowdsourcing from our people

Each year, we ask our 2,000+ designers and innovators from across Accenture Interactive's Design community to watch out for potentially influential signals and trends. We run Fjord Trends workshops throughout June-August in 40+ locations around the world, then teams pitch their top ideas to the editorial team in August-September. From there, the editorial team works together to shape and refine the trends report.

Fjord Trends 2022 editorial team

Mark Curtis, Martha Cotton, Nick de la Mare, Talya Fisher, Katie Burke, Jussi Edlund, Michael Honeck, Quezia Soares, Lucia Ciranova, Elisabeth Edvardsen, Morgan Smith, Helen Tweedy, Meg Carter.

Validating our trends with experts

Once the trends are refined, we put them to the test with Accenture's own experts in Talent and Organization, Supply Chain and Operations, Technology, Sustainability, Research and Development, among others.

Fjord Trends 2022 research team

Agneta Björnsjö, Jhaharha Lackram.

Remesh.ai

We've extended our research to validate themes externally by running a series of online focus groups in seven markets (UK, US, Brazil, China, Spain, South Africa, India). Total number of participants: 585.

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2022