

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a large, vibrant red ring with a prominent diamond. The hand is adorned with several rings, including a gold ring with a lattice pattern. The background is a black grid pattern on a light grey surface.

Spring

Navigating the New Media Schism

Diversifying content strategy to drive deeper engagement

London

New York

Los Angeles

Milan

NAVIGATING THE NEW MEDIA SCHISM: DIVERSIFYING CONTENT STRATEGY TO DRIVE DEEPER ENGAGEMENT

2022 was dominated by the attention economy and algorithmic rat race.

However, the dominance of thumbstopping and snackable content is increasingly at odds with growing audience desire for deeper meaning and more rewarding content.

We now find ourselves in the midst of a media schism: an opportunity for marketers to recalibrate and embrace a diversified approach to content creation.

A host of new channels, platforms and content formats have emerged to serve audiences' need for immersion, intimacy and cultural resonance. While they provide a fertile landscape for brands to create new content and connections, they require a strategic approach: identifying key opportunities to create and integrate more engaging content into the mix.

In this report, we share 5 key principles to keep in mind when creating content to drive deeper engagement in this new media landscape.

1. Define your cultural & editorial authority

It's time for an evolution of brand storytelling as consumers are more informed than ever and seeking authentic cultural narratives.

Brands can satisfy this desire by carving out a clear, compelling and editorial position. Curated narratives and a distinct POV creates authenticity and credibility while making clear what you represent as a brand.

Brands can also act as publishers, bringing in engaging voices that anchor a brand's cultural position and enticing new audiences. By defining your authority and integrating it into all areas of communication, you can go beyond brand storytelling to brand world-building



PATAGONIA

Patagonia clearly communicates their brand position, values and culture throughout their content and across channels and platforms. The brand also invests in longer formats from documentary to essay to film, creating a unique editorial world where brand purpose permeates all things. 'Patagonia Stories' brings together a "collective of storytellers" across essay and film whose work is all deeply reflective of the brand's eco-activism and commitment to the planet.



GUCCI VAULT

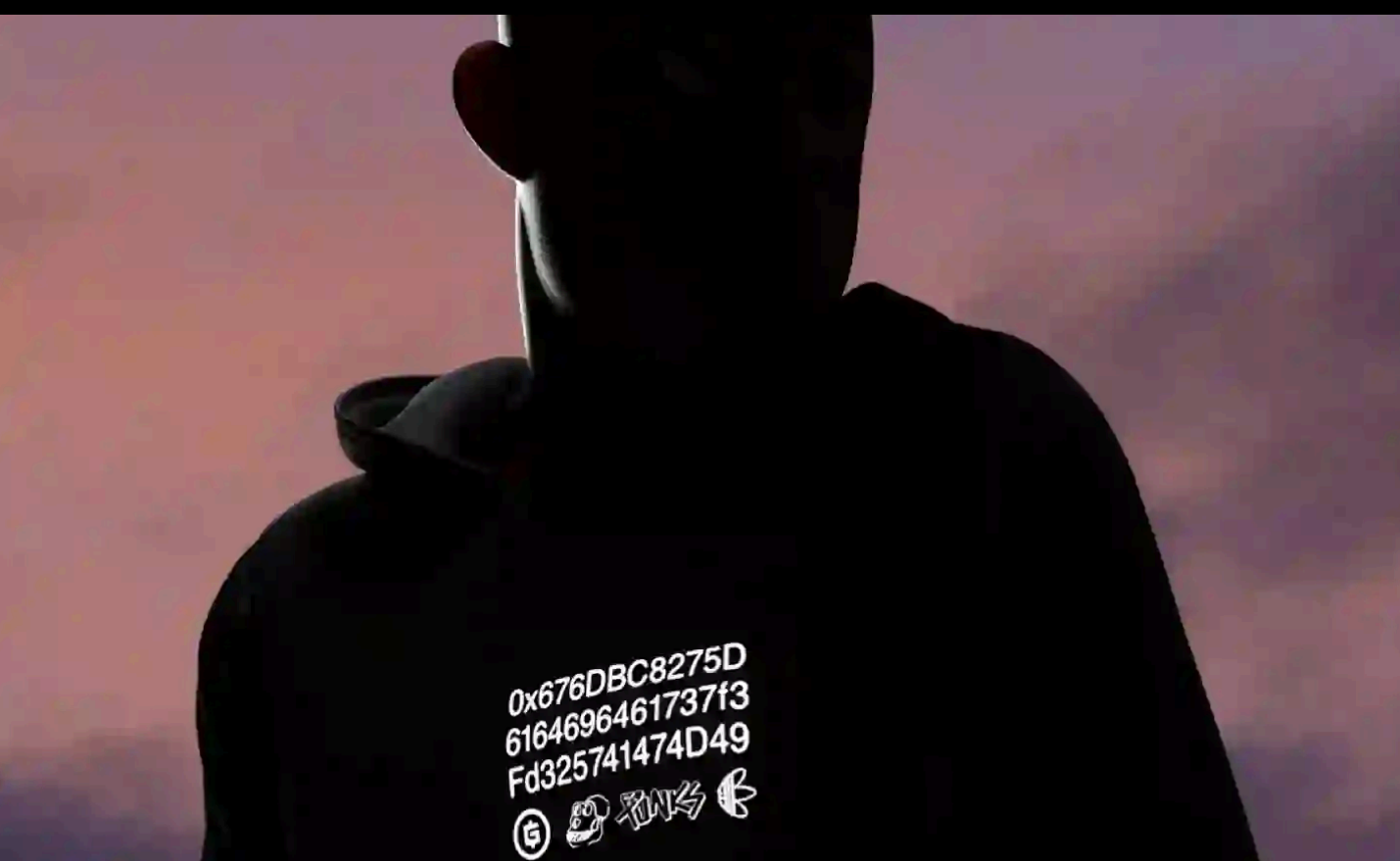
Displaying its rich cultural heritage through an immersive experience that syncs past, present and future, Gucci Vault is a curated platform that fully encapsulates the brand's eclectic world. The Vault was envisioned as a secret place for treasures both real and virtual, innovating the e-commerce landscape and showcasing new designers and surprising collaborations. A luxury shop that feels like an underground magazine sharing art, poetry & Web3 initiatives with cultural and editorial authority.

2. Create community-first spaces for audiences to engage

The shift from social media to social networks reflects a growing audience need for spaces to connect and share passions and purpose.

The rise of fandoms and the conversation community is powering possibilities for brands: creating opportunities to embrace spaces like Discord, Reddit and Telegram where fans are feeding into the brand story, expressing knowledge and expertise with pride while building their own micro-communities.

Navigating these platforms and fostering impassioned communities requires dedication and clear strategy but can generate direct access and deep consumer insight. There is also connective strength in spaces which have both physical and digital expressions, creating holistic ties to audiences.



ADIDAS DISCORD

In 2022, the brand launched their own Discord server to focus on its “Into the Metaverse” NFTs and created a dedicated team who monitor and care for the community, which attracted 30,000 members in one day. In keeping with the spirit of transparency that is central to any Discord strategy, Adidas have been open about the learnings and level of investment required to operate a successful community.



FONDAZIONE PRADA

The flagship physical spaces in Milan offers a host of community-first events, which have clear translation online for audiences to share feedback and fandom. Celebrating the art and culture that shapes our lives, the commissioning programme is a clear expression of the brand’s purpose for its fans and is recreated across dedicated social media platforms from Instagram to Youtube to Soundcloud.

3. Rethink media to support consumers' desire for mindfulness & meaning

Consumers are seeking out more thoughtful and meditative approaches to content consumption as algorithmic anxiety pushes the need for more considered, personal and mindful media.

With Gen Z spending an average of 6.42 hours a day on their phones, the rise in screen fatigue is driving alternative media formats. Audio offers respite from this and in 2022 we saw a 51% increase in podcast plays, according to Spotify data. The immersive strength of audio goes beyond podcasting with opportunities to be found in playlists, soundscaping and ASMR.

There's also a lot to be said for the power of print with its contemplative and creative potential for brands to explore traditional yet compelling storytelling.



BUCHERER ASMR

In 2022, Spring developed an ASMR social series, #WatchAndRelax with Bucherer. From popular ASMR soundbites to fine watch and jewellery specific chimes, the series focuses on the hypnotic and indulgent luxury of ASMR. The looped videos create moments of headspace and delight as part of the product showcase: a luxury within luxury.



LIBERTY'S 'THE HALL'

The luxury retailer has launched a bi-annual bulletin of the season's breaking beauty news, trends and launches in celebration of the brand's experiential offering within the space. The printed paper has an aesthetic quality, which is both nostalgic in medium and rich in content. With guest editors and insightful features, the paper is available in store, drawing audiences in to the unique experience that the Liberty Beauty hall offers.

4. Harness gaming to fuel social engagement

Motivated by an appetite for co-creation and collaboration, younger generations are more engaged and willing to spend time interacting with content: adding to the narrative, contributing, commenting and reframing it through their own lens.

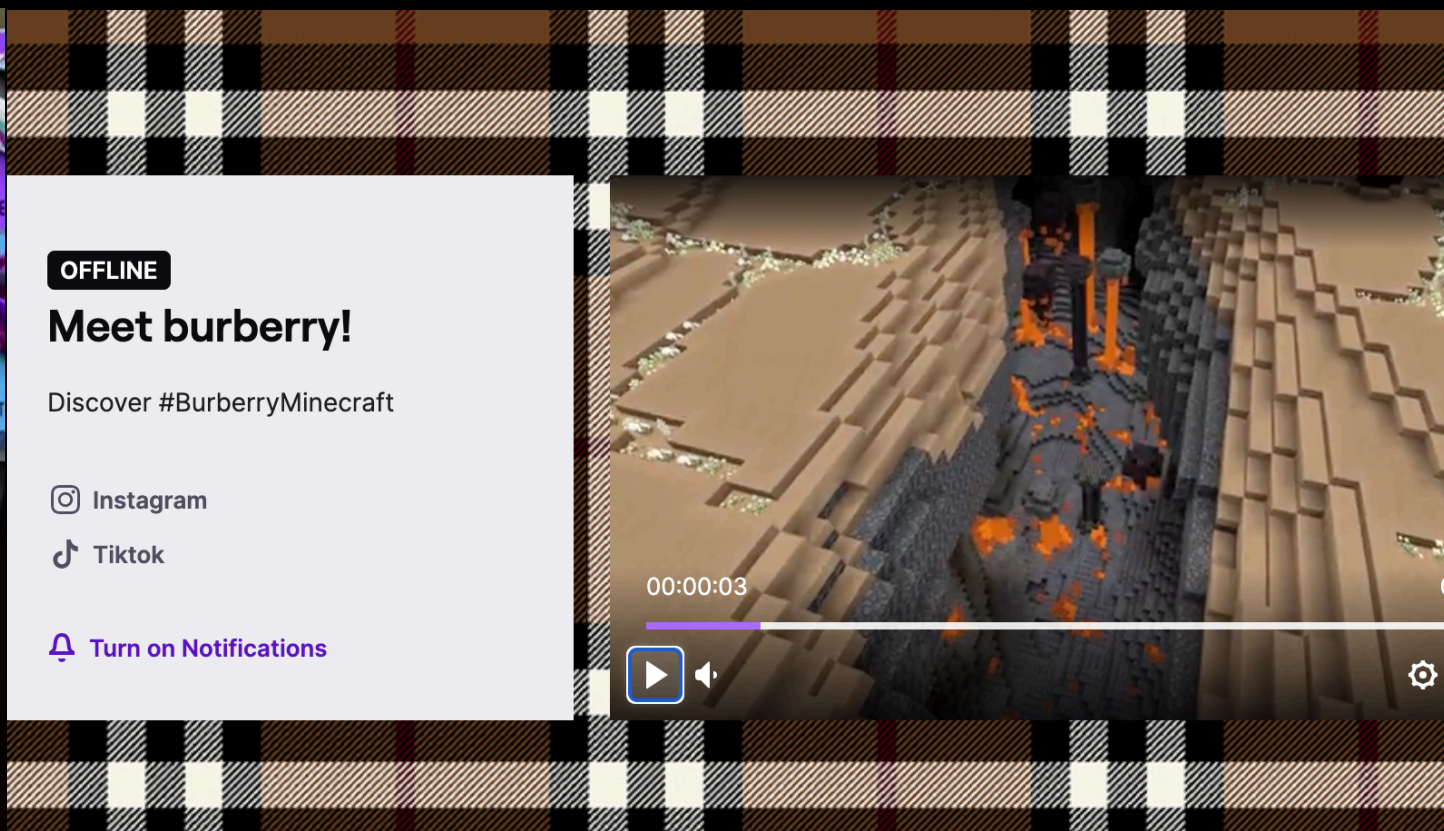
Gaming and streaming are changing the way we think about communities and shared experiences. There is a rich and evolving creator-fan ecosystem seeking engagement that extends beyond opinion and into co-creation opportunities.

A leading example can be found in the interactive strength of Twitch and its influencer network, where there is potential for brands to celebrate the curatorial creativity of its younger creators.



LEXUS X TWITCH

Lexus invited 'a new generation of drivers' to co-design the ultimate car for gamers in partnership with gaming influencer, Fuslie. Viewers of the stream (+ 1 million) voted on everything from the exterior wrap, the ceiling lighting, the cup holder, gaming hardware and more. The finished product was then revealed live one month later with Fuslie giving a tour of the vehicle. The massive engagement demonstrates the power of audience collaboration on Twitch.



BURBERRY X TWITCH

The brand led the way for luxury fashion brands in the space during the pandemic when they streamed their SS21 runway show. They have continued to use the platform to share content for their Twitch audience. Curated and relevant video for their Twitch followers is added to the platform, most recently a stream of their Minecraft partnership for users to respond and engage with in the video chat.

5. Extend storytelling with episodic cadence

Boosted by a desire for intimacy and greater access, audiences are looking for continuity of storytelling and content that goes beyond the campaign.

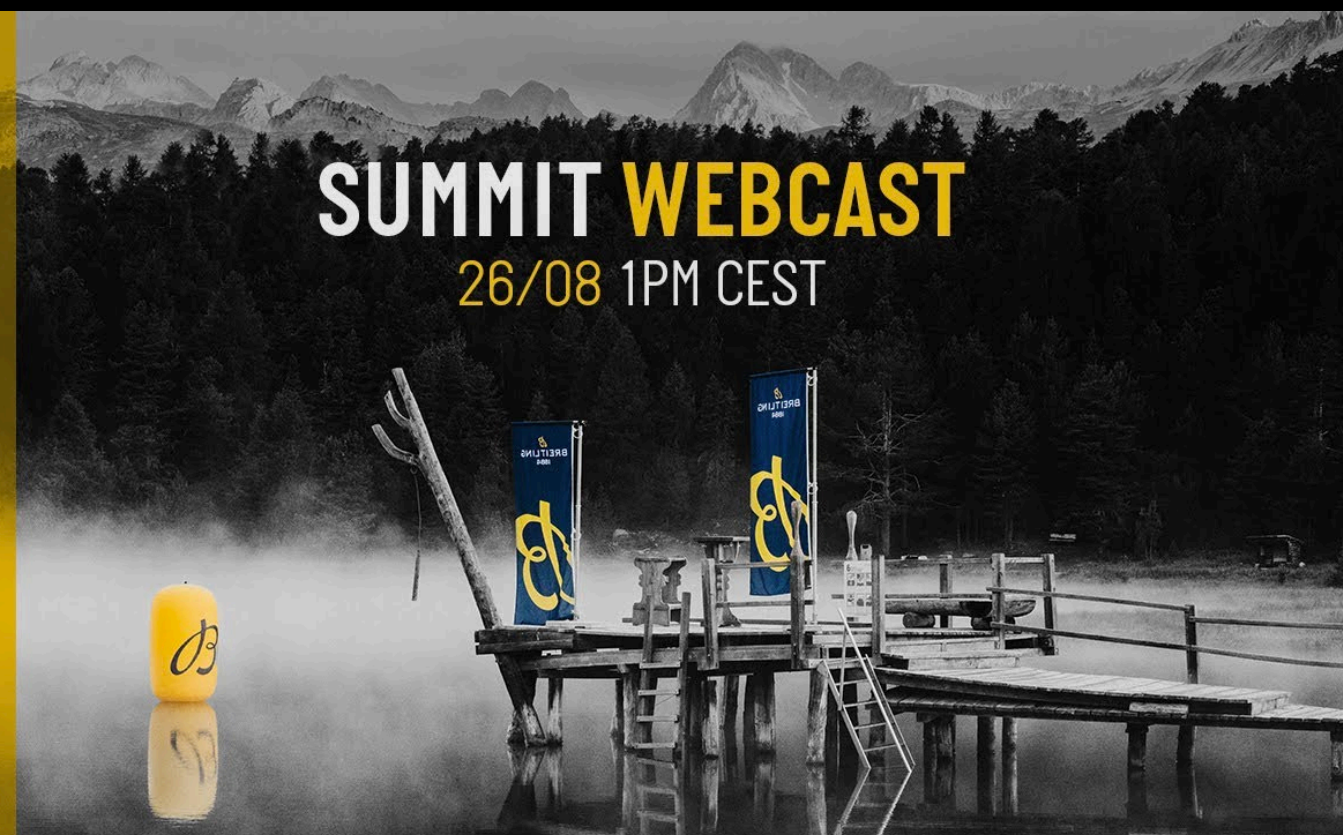
The Media Schism is fuelling boundless means of brand expression and the need to shake up traditional thinking. Brands are innovating how and when content is created. Episodic cadence and media drops can deepen and extend engagement while new approaches to brand documentary and film "lift the veil".

Another approach sees the introduction of subscription models which deliver greater access and proximity for brand fans.



DIOR YOUTUBE

Dior uses its Youtube channel to share bespoke fashion storytelling with its audience. Multi-lingual longer-form video series range from behind-the-scenes content to 'Art de Vivre: The Dior Maison World' and 'In my Lady' episodes. The channel also features extended runway, atelier and campaign content - all crafted in the iconic house style.



THE BREITLING WEBCAST

In the face of pandemic lockdown restrictions, Spring worked with Breitling to reimagine the tired B2B tradeshow experience, extending audiences to B2C. The webcast series invited watch enthusiasts into a dialogue with the brand's ambassadors and senior leadership with a fresh accessibility. The episodic and conversational quality brought the audience into the picture, going beyond campaign content.

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IN SUMMARY

Navigating the new media schism: Diversifying content strategy to drive deeper engagement



1. DEFINE YOUR CULTURAL & EDITORIAL AUTHORITY

As consumers seek out authentic cultural narratives, it is important to carve out a clear, authoritative and editorial position and go beyond storytelling to brand world-building.



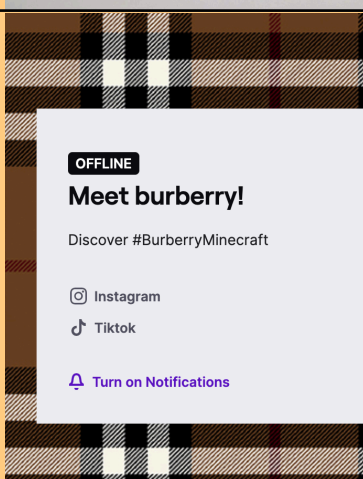
2. CREATE COMMUNITY-FIRST SPACES FOR AUDIENCES TO ENGAGE

Celebrate the rise of fandoms and satisfy audience desire for connection by creating physical and virtual spaces for audiences to share passions and values.



3. RETHINK MEDIA TO SUPPORT CONSUMERS' DESIRE FOR MINDFULNESS & MEANING

As audiences seek respite from algorithms and screen time, look to alternate formats in the audio and printed spaces to support the need for more mindful media.



4. HARNESS GAMING TO FUEL SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

With a growing appetite for co-creation and collaboration amongst younger audiences, platforms like Twitch can create new points of contact with fans.



5. EXTEND STORYTELLING WITH EPISODIC CADENCE

As consumers look for continuity of storytelling, brands can embrace episodic formats or subscription models to go beyond the campaign and extend engagement.

How are you navigating the new
media landscape?

If you'd like to discuss how Spring can help you,
please reach out to us at
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