

◀ The Lacek Group

TRENDS 2025

EMPATHY EARNS BRAND LOVE



JANUARY 2025





Happy New Year! As we enter our fourth decade of helping our world-class clients nurture deep and durable levels of brand devotion, we want to offer our thoughts on the trends we believe will impact brands in 2025.

Of course, AI and other emerging technologies will continue to be front and center in any discussion about the future. But even as we incorporate them into our daily practice, we believe they are only tools and a means to an end: to build more positive customer experiences and greater emotional loyalty to brands like yours.

As always, if you read something here that piques your interest or you wish to discuss further, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to all the challenges and opportunities 2025 will bring!

Cheers,

Bill Baker

CEO, The Lacek Group, an Ogilvy One company

We can see the future.

You probably can see it too: technology. But as AI and other advances open new possibilities for building brand devotion, it becomes increasingly important to keep human experience at the forefront. Finding ways to achieve a balance will inform loyalty, engagement, and the customer experience in the coming year.

- 1 Wellness will win
- 2 AI tools will be central to customer experience and loyalty strategies
- 3 Brands will embrace cost-conscious loyalty strategies
- 4 Even if TikTok is banned, its influence will continue to dominate
- 5 The key will be keeping it all human-centered



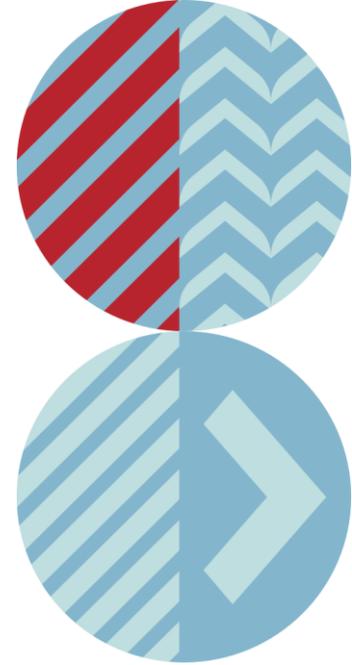


TREND 1

Wellness will win

Although many of us are tired of talking about the pandemic and its consequences, the impacts are as real today as four years ago.

In response, consumers are investing in self-care, practicing digital disconnection, and prioritizing personal mental health. Consumer and employer brands have opportunities to join the movement and support their customers and employees in innovative ways—even if their respective industries don't squarely align with wellness at first glance.



82%

of U.S. consumers consider wellness a top priority¹

51%

of Americans report depression, anxiety, or some other mental or emotional condition in the past 12 months²

- Blurred workday boundaries for remote workers, an always-on digital landscape, and enduring feelings of isolation are leaving many of us feeling burned out, unhealthy, and lonely.
- Wellness has moved from a fringe trend to a global megatrend—and quickly. The Global Wellness Institute projects an average annual growth of 8.6%, propelling the wellness economy to a whopping \$8.5T by 2027.³

¹ McKinsey, "The Trends Defining the \$1.8 Trillion Global Wellness Market in 2024." January 16, 2024. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/the-trends-defining-the-1-point-8-trillion-dollar-global-wellness-market-in-2024>.

² West Health, "New Survey Finds 75% of Americans Feel Mental Health Takes Back Seat to Physical Health Within U.S. Healthcare System," May 1, 2024. <https://westhealth.org/news/new-survey-finds-75-of-americans-feel-mental-health-takes-back-seat-to-physical-health-within-u-s-healthcare-system/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20CDC%2C%20depression,preventing%20people%20from%20seeking%20care.>

³ Global Wellness Institute. "The Global Wellness Economy: Country Rankings: Data for 2019 - 2022," January 2024.

Thought Starters

Customer engagement strategies should always be grounded in meeting customers where they are, which means recognizing and understanding their pain points and aspirations. Today, most Americans report the need to prioritize wellness. So offering wellness experiences or rewards as part of your brand's loyalty initiatives—or authentically infusing wellness into your brand essence—is a great start.



Without dredging up pandemic trauma, lead with empathy in your brand communications and let your most valuable customers know you see and understand them.



Create thoughtful, wellness-focused brand partnerships that benefit your customers and make sense for your brand and its partners.



Add a level of inspiration or motivation for loyalty program members or customers to make time and space for themselves—even if it means disconnecting from your brand temporarily.



Welcome customers in for memorable experiences that will help them relax, reset, and recharge.

Rituals—a luxury home and cosmetic retailer and Certified B Corp—is leaning heavily into wellness. In its new flagship store in Paris, the entire second floor is a day spa where customers can book quick, rejuvenating services: a 20-minute hydromassage on a warm-water mattress or time to disconnect in a private room where they can experience zero-gravity chairs, guided breathing exercises, and 4D sound stimulations.

Plus, beginning in 2025, Rituals will pledge 10% of its net profit to causes that improve the well-being of people and the planet. Some of those funds will go to supporting the conservation organization Sacred Forests; a free yoga-based app for kids called Super Chill; and the nonprofit social enterprise Tiny Miracles, which works to find scalable solutions to end poverty in low-income areas.



Relaxation and mindfulness are wellness on a personal scale, while ecological protection and economic justice contribute to our collective well-being. Think holistically how your brand connects to wellness.

RITUALS...



Partner with brands that accentuate a different area of wellness that extends your brand offering.



Global hospitality brand Westin Hotels & Resorts—an upscale chain in the Marriott portfolio—has an exclusive partnership with Strava, the world’s #1 fitness app, offering Westin guests a unique opportunity to access a variety of workout routes tailored to their property location. Guests choose a customized mountain hike, a walk at a local indoor site, or a beachside jog—and then unlock more features as they engage with the app.

Westin’s commitment to wellness long predates today’s growing megatrend. In 2014 the brand invested \$15M in a campaign promoting healthier lifestyles for its guests *and* employees. The campaign highlighted six pillars of health that remain central to Westin’s brand ethos: sleep well, eat well, move well, feel well, work well, and play well.



Wellness has a broad scope, leaving you lots of room to be creative about long- and short-term partnerships to help your brand’s customers recharge.

WestinWORKOUT Routes Around The World

The image displays three screenshots of the Strava app showing workout routes created by Westin Hotels & Resorts. Each screenshot includes a title, a brief description, a map with an orange route, and a distance/elevation gain summary.

- HIKE UP A MOUNTAIN:** "The Westin Tempe Route – Hike up 'A' Mountain". Distance: 1.7 mi, Elevation Gain: 305 ft. Description: "A short walk from the front door of one of our newest hotels brings you to a manageable hike up 'A' Mountain. At the top, You'll be rewarded with lake views." Map shows a route around Hayden Butte Preserve in Tempe, AZ.
- WALK AROUND THE MALL:** "The Westin Denver International Airport 'Mall Walk'". Distance: 1.1 mi, Elevation Gain: 104 ft. Description: "Embark on an exciting airport walk, perfect for seasoned travelers. Explore the world's third busiest airport by foot, marveling at art installations along the way." Map shows a route around the Denver International Airport terminal.
- JOG BY THE BEACH:** "The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, Bali Route - 8K Scenic Jog". Distance: 7.8 km, Elevation Gain: 12 m. Description: "Dive deeper into Bali's wonders with an extended jogging route. Immerse yourself in the beauty of Waterblow and Peninsula Island, adding extra adventure to your trip." Map shows a route along the coast of Nusa Dua, Bali.



OUR ADVICE

Most customers are looking for productive self-care and mindfulness that will help them stay grounded in today's noisy, fast-paced society. Brands that find ways to offer connections to wellness-focused experiences, partners, or rewards will bank some valuable brand love.

Ask customers about their wellness aspirations and fine-tune your offerings.

Using surveys at meaningful moments in your customers' journeys is a good practice for many reasons—especially for the continually changing wellness landscape. Asking customers what wellness practices are important to them will help your brand stay relevant.

Foster community around wellness.

A key part of wellness is maintaining healthy social connections. Finding initiatives that build community around your brand values can help your customers forge those connections while increasing engagement and fostering brand loyalty.

Stay authentic and be accessible.

Brands that genuinely embrace wellness, rather than simply using it as a marketing tactic, tend to resonate more with consumers. Making wellness practices and products accessible to a wider audience is crucial for success.





TREND 2

AI tools will be central to customer experience and loyalty strategies

Artificial intelligence (AI) gives loyalty marketers a new superpower: the potential to deliver hyperpersonalization at scale.

Using robust member data, AI can help your brand deliver on customer expectations while evolving engagement at the individual level.



76%

of customers are frustrated when their brand interactions aren't personalized¹

91%

of marketers say they're already using AI tools in their jobs²

- Generative AI and predictive AI are transforming loyalty and engagement by helping marketers guide more connected, seamless experiences for customers.
- Loyalty is ideally positioned to take advantage of AI's potential. Now brands need to solve how to best deliver on it by finding ways to measure success and then fine-tune strategies.

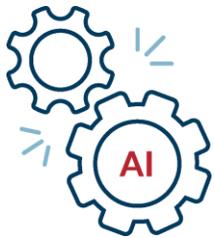
11

¹McKinsey, "The Value of Getting Personalization Right—or Wrong—Is Multiplying." <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-value-of-getting-personalization-right-or-wrong-is-multiplying>.

²Ad Age Studio 30, "Less Do, More Think: How to Succeed in the AI-Powered Marketing Era." <https://iterable.com/whitepaper/less-do-more-think-how-to-succeed-in-the-ai-powered-marketing-era/>.

Thought Starters

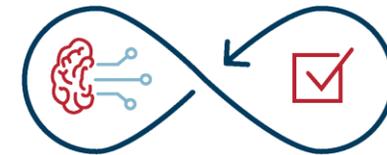
The robust and extensive data held by loyalty programs lays a strong foundation to scale personalization using AI tools. Now brands need to deliver on that latent potential. Is your brand harvesting all the available insights of the data you hold—and then acting on those insights? Can AI deliver value earlier for your brand and customers?



Build models to test AI functions before putting them to use. Doing so will help you drive informed, incremental implementation.



Design vigorous assessment practices for your AI use to thoroughly monitor and measure what's working and what needs improvement.



Get creative and stay agile. AI technologies—both predictive and generative—change quickly. Embracing a flexible, ongoing test-implement-assess approach will help your team stay current.

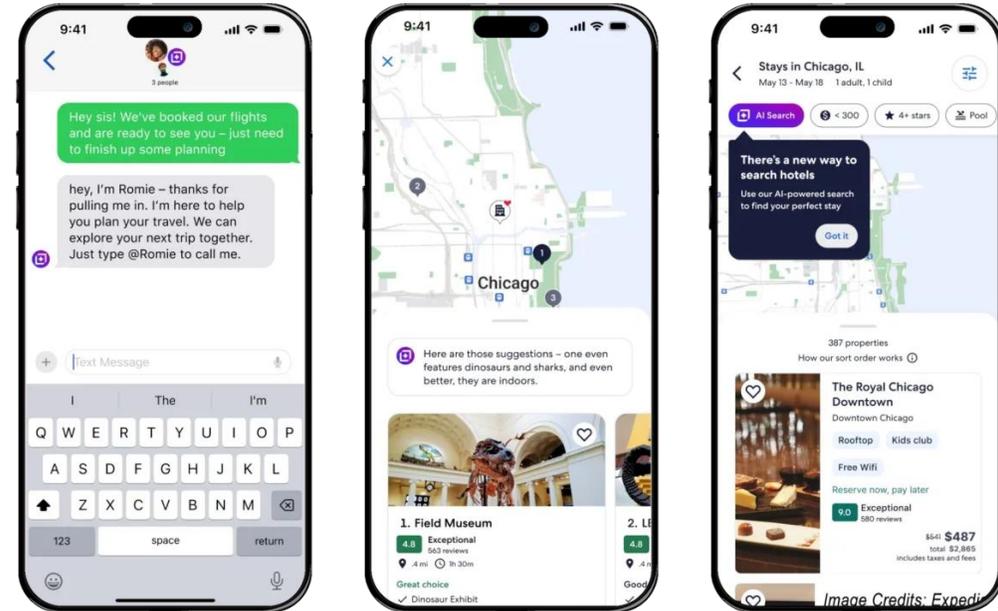


Adopt AI tools to streamline your customers' experiences in real time.



Online travel hub Expedia announced the launch of an AI-powered travel assistant, Romie (to help you roam—catch that word play?). The feature—which aims to serve as booking agent, concierge, and personal assistant—can operate outside the Expedia ecosystem in group chats on the popular messaging apps iMessage and WhatsApp.

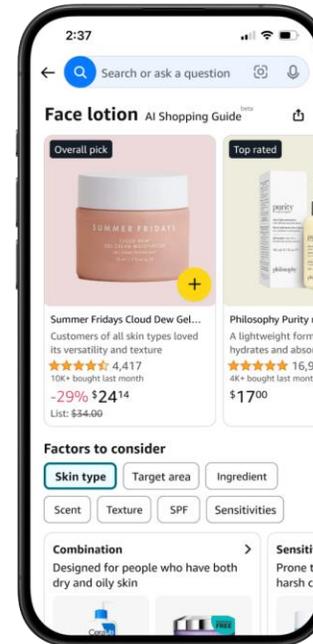
Romie tailors recommendations for itineraries, accommodations, and activities; anticipates travel disruptions like weather delays; facilitates group planning; and helps ensure seamless travel.



If you dream it and build it, AI can deliver next-level personalization alongside a streamlined user experience—potentially achieving new levels of engagement and satisfaction.

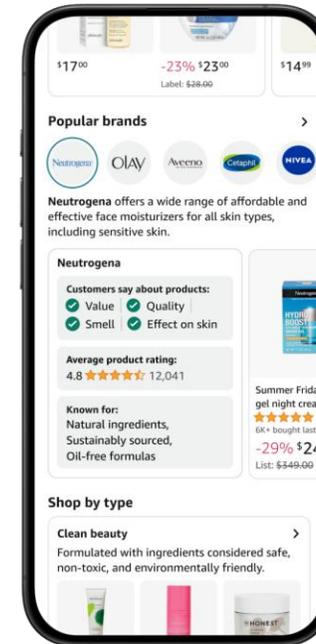
Find ways to tailor individual experiences at scale.

Amazon, the e-tail leader, recently launched AI shopping guides on its app and website. The guides create curated landing pages based on users' past purchases and product searches to deliver relevant products and information (e.g., recommendations, top-rated brands, product features, and use cases). The aim is more informative, efficient, and tailored shopping.



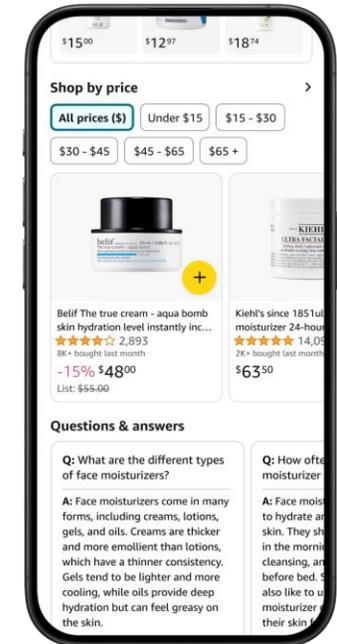
LEARN

key terminology and factors to consider



DISCOVER

different product types and the most popular brands



FIND

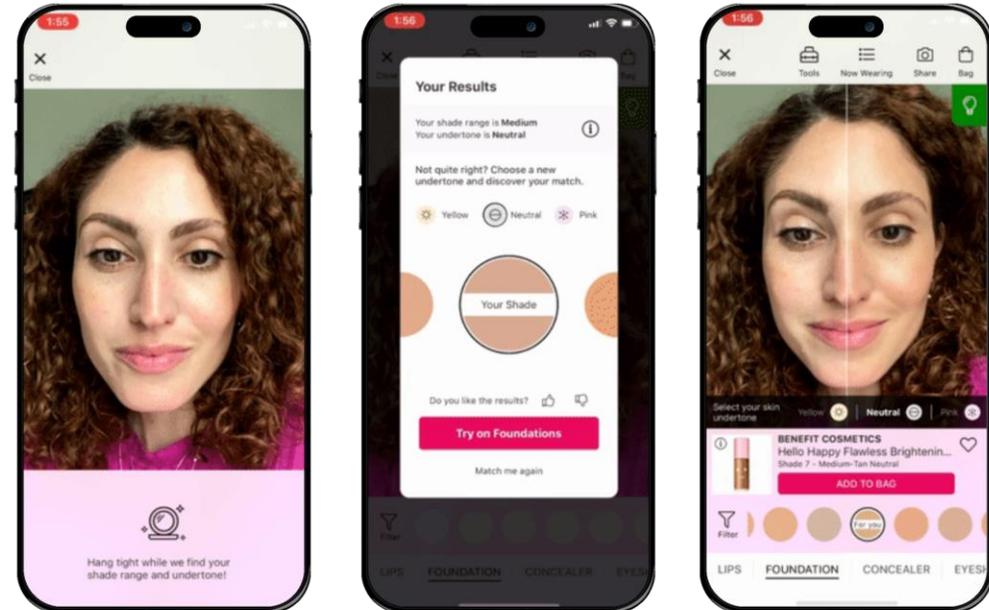
the right products for your use cases



AI tools that help your customers save time and effort can nurture emotional ties that build brand devotion.

Design ways to use AI's capabilities to serve up personalized rewards or experiences.

Last year Ulta Beauty worked with Hang, an AI-based loyalty platform, to pilot a gamification initiative called GlamXplorer for top-spending members of Ultimate Rewards. Today participating members can access mini games, timed challenges, and quests connected to Ulta's virtual try-on function, GLAMlab. The more they engage, the more rewards they earn. The rewards—which include gift cards, discounts, and free products—are hyperpersonalized based on each member's behaviors and preferences across e-commerce and social channels.



AI can help you combine time-tested loyalty strategies, such as personalization and gamification, creating a synergy that accelerates brand love.



OUR ADVICE

AI is here, but its possibilities are still being discovered. Engagement, loyalty, and experience initiatives offer prime opportunities to innovate how AI can help brands mine existing data to access the value of customer relationships beyond transactions. And then it can deliver on that value earlier and better to build lasting relationships.

Assess how you monitor and measure success.

Part of building your team's AI capacities is ensuring you're all thinking about the big picture. Counting clicks and opens won't be enough.

Remember that just because you can doesn't mean you should.

AI is developing quickly, and regulations haven't caught up. Make sure your team defines best practices for AI-fueled data use—including security, transparency, and fairness.

Get creative with technology.

Finding ways to leverage AI tools for your brand will probably require a healthy combo of tech savvy, top-notch analytics, and creativity. Starter projects with a contained scope will help your team test AI tools and gather insights to inform AI-powered initiatives that are purpose-built for your brand.



TREND 3

Brands will embrace cost-conscious loyalty strategies

Value is a leading principle for consumers and businesses, especially in the current moment as most Americans feel the pinch of inflation.



58%

of U.S. households are extremely concerned about inflation¹

87%

of loyalty programs plan to engage customers in nontransactional ways in the next three years²

- Brands that find creative ways to fine-tune their loyalty initiatives can increase profitability and maintain—and even improve—customer value and trust.
- New revenue streams and partnerships are opportunities to provide value for customers while keeping program expenses low.

18

¹ Zak Stambor, "While Grocery Inflation Has Slowed, It Continues to Weigh on Shoppers' Purchase Decisions," Emarketer, December 9, 2024. <https://www.emarketer.com/content/us-households-inflation-concerns-grocery-spending-trends>.

² Queue-It, "107 Staggering Statistics That Show the Power of Loyalty Programs in 2024." July 16, 2024. <https://queue-it.com/blog/loyalty-program-statistics/>.

Thought Starters

Successful loyalty programs keep value for customers at their core while maintaining financial viability through a positive return on investment.

Rather than cutting benefits (and putting customers' trust at risk), brands should seek solutions that maximize financial results and preserve value.



Seek out partnerships and collaborations that benefit both the brand and the customer.



Investigate creative, new, and potentially unexpected revenue streams.



Explore membership and subscription offerings to drive repeat purchases.

Dream up new partnerships that create momentum and value.

A novel collaboration between Heinz and Kate Spade New York resulted in ketchup-inspired designer apparel and accessories.

The legacy condiment and established fashion brands teamed up for a limited-edition capsule collection that appeals to foodies and fashion lovers alike. The unexpected pairing helped both brands reach new audiences.



kate spade
NEW YORK



 Collaborations can harness the energy and revenue from your partner brand's enthusiasts for a shared win.

Uncover new revenue streams that benefit both your brand and your customers.

Co-branded credit cards provide a new revenue stream for brands and offer customers a host of appealing benefits.

With no annual fee and no fees on foreign transactions, the Amazon Prime Rewards Visa Signature Card is an appealing option for many shoppers, but especially members of Amazon Prime, the brand's subscription service with various benefits, including free shipping and access to streaming content. The card offers Prime members 5% cash back on Amazon.com and Whole Foods Market purchases, and 10% or more on a rotating selection of items on Amazon.com. Cardholders with a Prime membership also receive extra cash back on Chase travel purchases and Amazon Fresh grocery delivery.

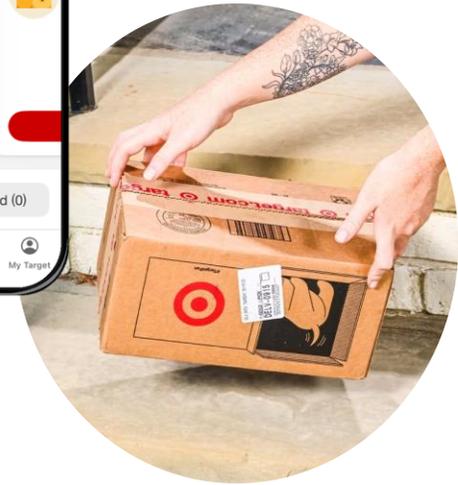
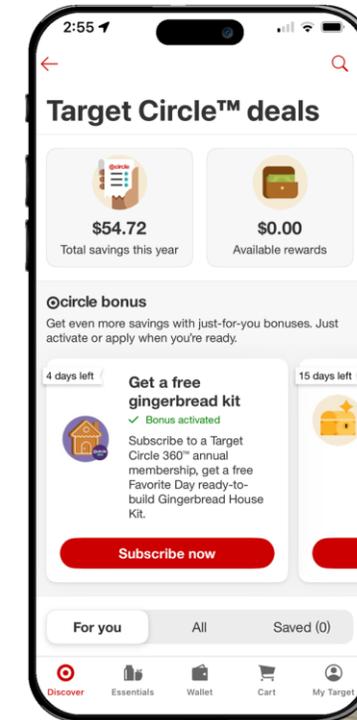
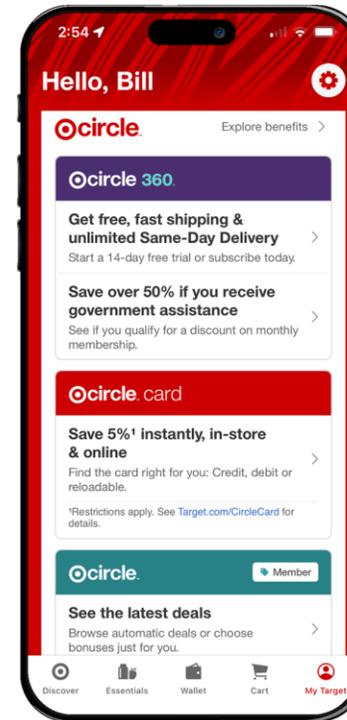
The earned rewards can be redeemed for Amazon.com purchases or for cash back, gift cards, or travel purchases on Chase.com.



Cross-sector collaborations can amplify the impact of your brand's loyalty-connected initiatives.

Investigate ways to keep your brand competitive and profitable with memberships and subscriptions.

In April 2024 retail powerhouse Target launched a paid tier of its membership program to compete with delivery services like Instacart and DoorDash. For a monthly or annual fee, members of Target Circle 360 receive unlimited same-day order delivery with Shipt and free two-day shipping. (That's in addition to purchase bonuses and personalized deals offered in the no-cost tier, Target Circle.)



 Finding subscription offerings and paid membership options can open a new and steady revenue stream while forging new bonds fueled by convenience, value, or even exclusivity with customers.



OUR ADVICE

Brands, like consumers, are focused on maximizing value. Strategic investments in programs that bring new opportunities for both brands and consumers are a win-win.

Fine-tune your loyalty offerings to increase revenue without sacrificing value for your members.

Make the shopping experience stand out without breaking the bank. Budget-friendly benefits—like personalized recommendations, exclusive access to sales, or other inexpensive perks—matter to program members.

Prioritize partnerships and collaborations that engage and excite your members.

Drive engagement and sales with strategic collaborations. Unexpected partnerships can breathe new life into both brands, generate buzz, and encourage cross-promotion that expands reach and sparks interest among new customer demographics.

Buffer your bottom line with new revenue streams that also expand benefits to your consumers.

Offerings like subscriptions, premium membership tiers, and co-branded credit cards provide customers with value and convenience and create new income streams.

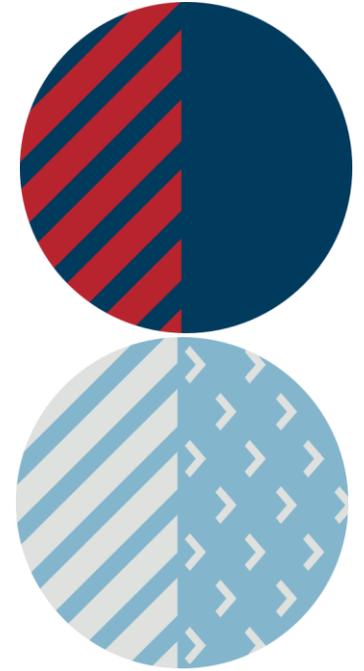


TREND 4

Even if TikTok is banned, its influence will continue to dominate

Popular for shopping, news, ratings, and trends, TikTok has replaced search engines for some users.

Its short-form video format will continue to appeal to customers—on TikTok or other emerging platforms.



54%

of business owners use TikTok to promote their businesses¹

71%

of TikTok shoppers have made a purchase after seeing a product on their For You feed²

- TikTok's 170 million active users in the United States invest their trust in its curated community, particularly in the perceived authenticity of influencers and microinfluencers.
- Leaning into the platform's anti-authority atmosphere can inject new energy into established brands and mundane products.
- If it survives its legal battles, TikTok's quirky content will keep grabbing eyeballs and opening wallets.

25

¹“Using TikTok as a Search Engine,” Adobe Express, January 4, 2024. <https://www.adobe.com/express/learn/blog/using-tiktok-as-a-search-engine>.

²“TikTok shopping behavior worldwide as of January 2022,” Statista, December 19, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1323243/tiktok-shopping-behavior/>.

Thought Starters

To reach sought-after audiences, particularly Gen Zers, find ways to democratize your brand narrative—as TikTok’s visual, relatable, and quickly consumed content does so well. But success requires an understanding of the channel’s culture and community—and, crucially, a willingness to be playful.



Embrace TikTok’s community vibe—which hinges on creativity, authenticity, and connection.



Prioritize building lasting relationships rather than selling. Entertaining and adding value will naturally draw followers and engagement.



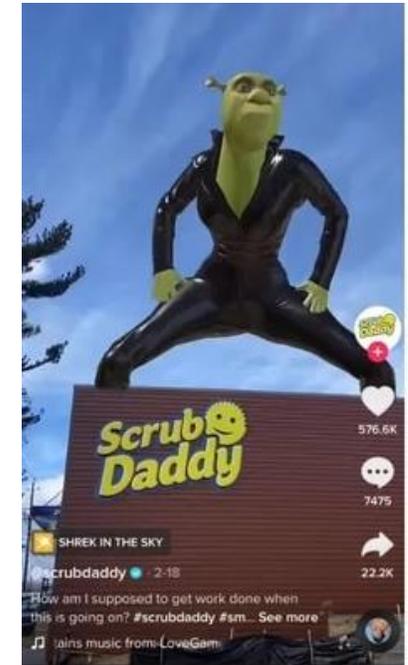
Seek out influencer partnerships and user-generated content to build your brand’s credibility and extend its reach beyond your usual strategies.



Forge new connections with entertaining, on-trend content.

Scrub Daddy's iconic smiley-faced sponge is the personality behind the brand's TikTok account, which boasts four million followers. The sponge brand expertly and playfully taps into viral trends to reach the "CleanTok" community—TikTok users and influencers who share cleaning tips and hacks.

Illustrating the brand's keen understanding of the platform's culture, Scrub Daddy creates entertaining and shareable content, making it a standout example of TikTok's marketing potential.

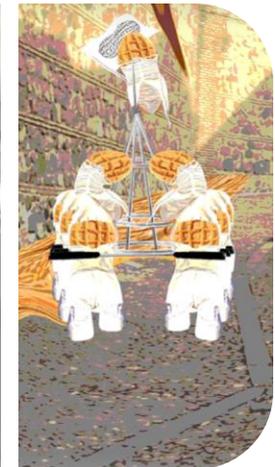


 Finding enthusiasts in your sector and entertaining them can engage audiences that ignore traditional marketing.

Embrace the platform's culture and humor.

Nutter Butter's TikTok account is leaning into an "unhinged" persona that's both unexpected and engagingly strange. Drawing in users with chaotic humor and surreal content, the brand has found a playful absurdity perfectly suited to TikTok's spontaneous culture.

The brand has cultivated a bold voice that sets it apart—especially among Gen Zers, who appreciate brands that aren't afraid to be quirky and offbeat. TikTok users are drawn to Nutter Butter's new posts for their eccentricity and sheer fun, bringing new attention to an apparently staid veteran of the cookie aisle.



Garnering attention on TikTok can take many forms, and Nutter Butter chose playfully odd posts that surprise and entertain.

Be open to unexpected collaborations.



Already known for its cheeky persona on TikTok, language-learning app Duolingo recently leveraged the connection between the cover of Charli XCX's hit 2024 album, *Brat*, and Duo the Owl, the app's mascot. Both feature a distinctive bright green. Both feature a distinctive bright green.

Duo made a splash by appearing in a "brat" T-shirt on the singer's tour. The move showcased the brand's playful personality and commitment to cultural relevance and inspired a torrent of shareable posts. By aligning with a pop culture favorite, Duolingo reinforced its appeal to Gen Zers and younger millennials, audiences who appreciate brands with a sense of humor and self-awareness.



29



Creating memorable, shareable moments that connect with popular trends can help brands break through in today's noisy marketplace.



OUR ADVICE

Explore how your brand can use fast-paced, nontraditional platforms like TikTok to intrigue and entertain new audiences.

Immerse yourself in the platform's nuances.

Don't approach content creation for TikTok or similar channels as you would traditional marketing, or even other social media. Success in these formats depends on tapping into their tone, trends, and humor.

Think of your TikTok content as a contribution to the community rather than a sales pitch.

TikTok users value authenticity, self-awareness, and playfulness. Established and emerging brands need to tune in to the platform's entertainment-focused atmosphere.

Collaborate with influencers and microinfluencers to establish credibility and encourage user-generated content.

TikTok users trust the creators and influencers they follow. Partnering with creators who have an authentic connection to your brand can extend your reach with those existing communities of followers.



TREND 5

The key will be keeping it all human-centered

Perhaps driven by the continuing need to reconnect after pandemic distancing, the exhaustion of managing their digital lives, or the desire to pamper themselves during tumultuous political and economic times, many consumers crave a return to real-life experiences.



61%

of customers are willing to pay more for personalized experiences¹

80%

have engaged, or are interested in engaging, with brand experiences²

- Consumers want to engage with brands in personalized, immersive ways.
- Brands that engage customers with in-person experiences focused on superior customer service, community building, and immersive entertainment will earn loyalty.

32

¹ "Medallia Research Finds 61% of Consumers Are Willing to Spend More for Personalized Experiences, but Only 25% of Experiences Are Highly Personalized," Medallia, February 15, 2024. <https://www.medallia.com/press-release/medallia-research-finds-61-percent-of-consumers-are-willing-to-spend-more-for-personalized-experiences/>.

² "Consumers Overwhelmingly Prefer Brand Experiences Over Traditional Advertising," Reach3, February 8, 2023. <https://www.reach3insights.com/consumers-overwhelmingly-prefer-brand-experiences-over-traditional-advertising>.

Thought Starters

With consumers hungry for in-person connection, service, and experiences, brands need to prioritize real-life engagement.



Identify ways to elevate the in-store shopping experience. Design personally curated moments that seamlessly transition consumers from the digital space to the physical space.



Create community by designing and offering immersive events and pop-ups that resonate with your brand ethos. In other words, find ways to bring people together in real life to share your brand message.



Consider how your brand can connect with customers in unexpected ways through surprise-and-delight moments tailored to their behaviors.

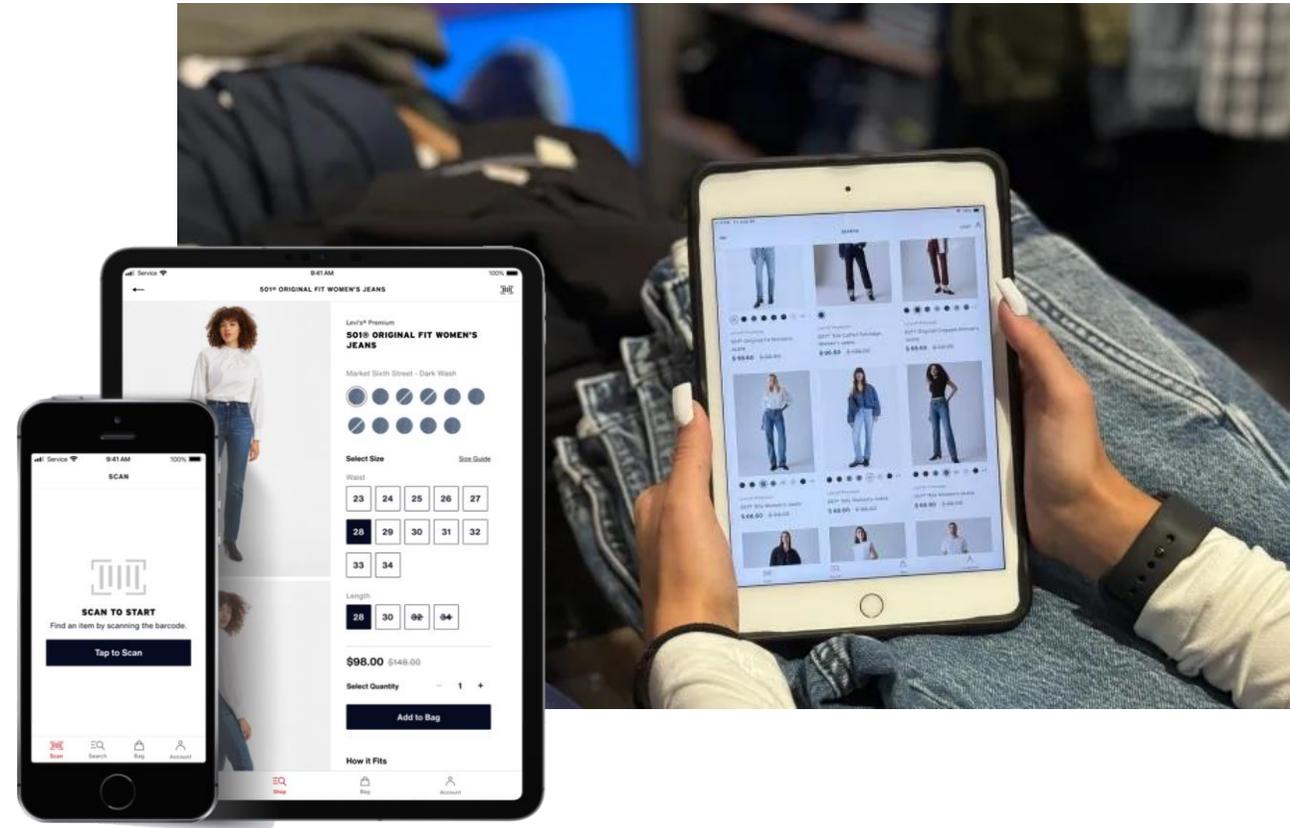


Put new tech in the hands of your staff, not customers.

Rather than complicating the customer experience with an additional app, clothing giant Levi's gave in-store stylists technology that helps them streamline and customize the in-person shopping experience for members of the Red Tab loyalty program. With the customer's permission, Levi's associates can use the BackPocket app to view previous purchases, sizing information, style preferences, and saved products to tailor recommendations.

The app also lets personnel check inventory and factor loyalty benefits—e.g., earned discounts or birthday rewards—into their recommendations, creating a highly personalized experience without asking in-store shoppers to sign in, swipe, or scroll.

Levi's REDTAB™
MEMBER PROGRAM



Empowering staff with technology can improve the in-person experience for customers.

Give customers unforgettable, immersive experiences.

Beauty retailer Sephora holds pop-up immersive experiences designed to engage customers beyond the traditional retail setting. Offering hands-on access to new-product launches, live tutorials, and exclusive experiences that make customers feel part of an insider community, these events help knit strong personal connections with the brand.

In 2024 its biggest annual event, SEPHORiA, brought beauty lovers together for an exciting weekend of highly immersive experiences in a fun house-inspired space. This pop-up event fosters moments that resonate and turn casual shoppers into loyal brand advocates.

SEPHORA



Immersive experiences have valuable potential to build community and entrench brand loyalty.

Connect people with your brand and each other.

Coca-Cola orchestrated a branded takeover of the United Airlines lounge in Chicago's O'Hare Airport, with the goal of providing an oasis of rest and relaxation in the middle of a hectic travel hub.

With comfortable seating, soft lighting, and a fireplace, the lounge offered a space to relax with seasonal Cranberry Sprite and perhaps start a conversation with fellow travelers.



Unique brand experiences can reach customers in unexpected places.



OUR ADVICE

In-real-life interactions with your brand appeal to today's customers, who yearn for more human-to-human connection. Consider all the touch points along your customers' journeys and explore how in-person experiences, as opposed to digital ones, can be leveraged to cultivate brand enthusiasm.

Personalize in-store customer service.

Human interaction is what fundamentally differentiates the in-store shopping experience from online purchasing. Take that to the next level with hyperpersonalized recommendations and services that make your customers feel pampered.

Nurture a sense of community.

Give your customers the opportunity to connect with your brand—and each other—at memorable, immersive in-person experiences.

Connect your brand with moments of relaxation.

Offer customers a break from their hectic daily activities with events and experiences designed to promote moments of relaxation, pampering, and connection.

37

2024: A RECAP

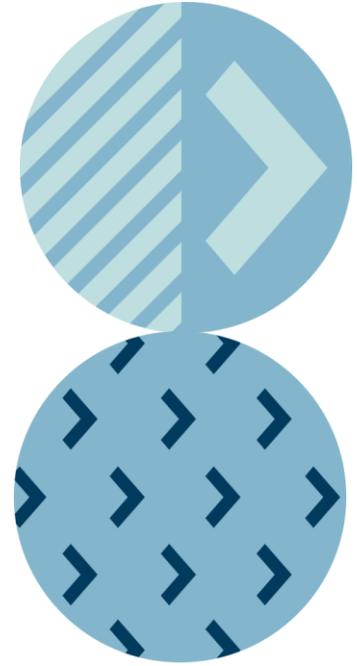
Staying on top of trends in engagement, loyalty, and experience takes a dash of intuition, a pinch of prognostication, and a load of expertise.

In our [2024 Trends](#), we discussed the rising importance of brands finding ways to reinvigorate engagement efforts by leaning into the wow factor.

We encouraged brands to consider how they might team up to build an ecosystem of products and services for customer-focused, wraparound experiences.

We pointed out the importance of authentic communication that reflects your brand values—especially in the case of a misstep.

We also reflected on the acceleration of AI as an innovating force in marketing and loyalty. We can anticipate many ways AI use will develop, but unanticipated challenges are bound to crop up.



38



Perfecting the strategies that help brands engage customers and foster brand devotion demands continual evolution.



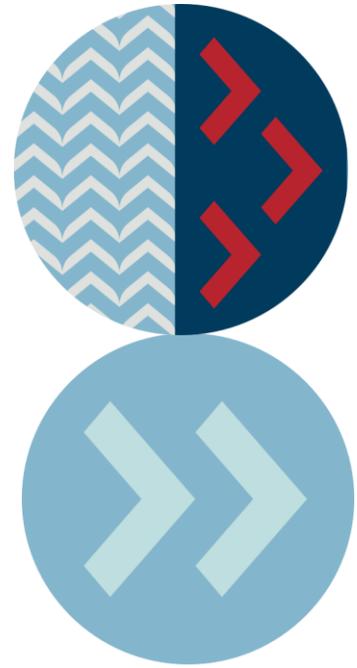
2025: A LOOK AHEAD

Stay attuned to new tech tools but remain human-centered.

Brands need to keep exploring the dynamic landscape of ways to reach, engage, and inspire customers throughout the entire brand journey.

New AI capabilities, careful assessments of the loyalty value proposition, and even TikTok's influencer culture can help your brand forge strong, lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with your target customers.

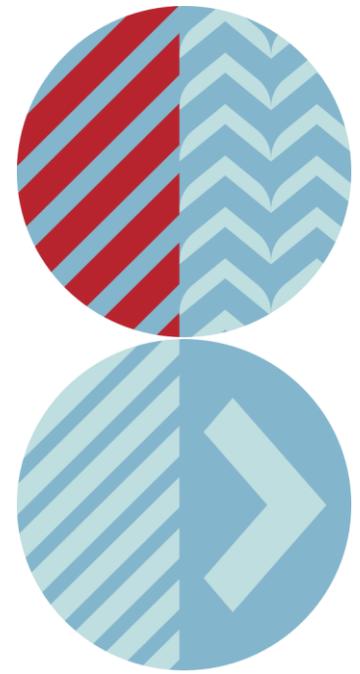
But it's also important to remember that technology is just a tool to achieve the emotional ties that underpin brand devotion. Aim for a dynamic balance between experimenting with innovative tech capabilities and keeping it all human-centered. That's how you can integrate engagement goals, implement data-driven insights, woo customers with personalization, and cement lasting loyalty.



We're always thinking.

Go to lacek.com/insights or [sign up](#) for the *Thinking Out Loud* newsletter to stay on top of emerging trends from our customer engagement, loyalty, and experience experts.

For more than 30 years, The Lacek Group has been perfecting the art and algorithms of brand devotion. We help world-class brands identify their highest-potential customers, engage them across channels throughout their lifecycles, personalize each relationship for optimal long-term results, and measure the true effectiveness of those efforts. The Lacek Group is an Ogilvy One company.



40

Get in touch to learn more:

Emily Perry

Associate Director, Business Development

emily.perry@lacek.com

