



# SOCIAL TRIBES THE NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

*Winning with a spectrum of online behaviours*

 AGENCY

# THE NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Social media is no longer an easy place to map your audiences, it's a plethora of channels with differing behaviours in how people engage, so the likes of age, gender and location are not enough to grow your brand.

There is a broad spectrum of change that has shifted dramatically in recent months from constantly updating algorithms to polarised echo chambers. Where influence culture has pushed some people into a state of 'buy now' performative behaviour, others have shifted into a state of latent voyeurism, forcing brands to shift their social media strategies to play into the habits of modern life. This shift is full of opportunity but will be difficult to navigate for brands that are operating on outdated customer persona maps.

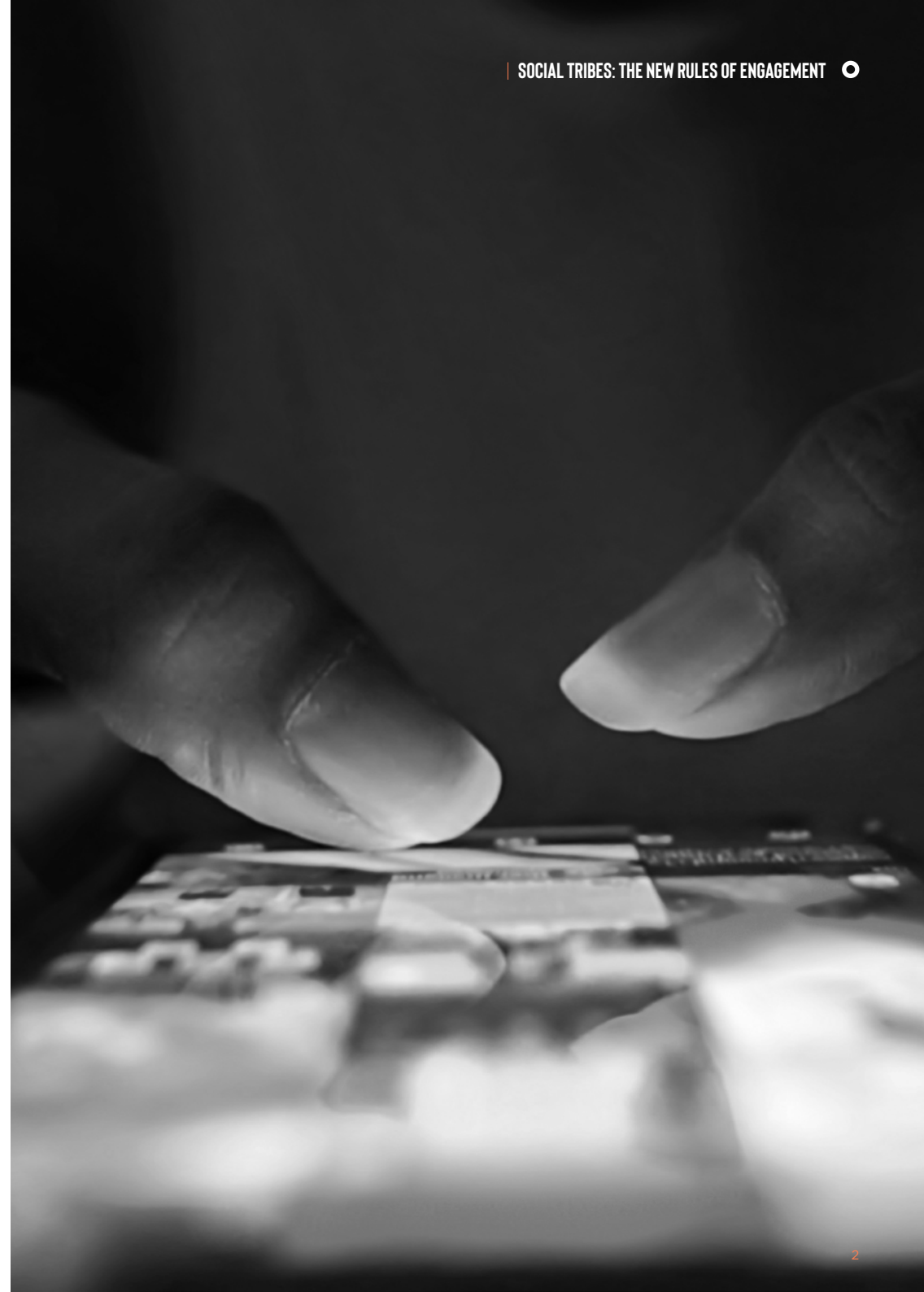
Traditional segmentation methods are proving increasingly ineffective in a world where audiences are no longer defined by demographics alone. According to recent research by Treasure Data, 61% of UK marketers believe conventional segmentation models are outdated, and 63% feel they no longer meet the needs of today's consumer landscape. Even more tellingly, 56% admit they struggle to target audiences effectively, as behaviours and motivations have become more fluid and harder to predict.

These challenges are made greater by the growing number of channels to juggle within the social media landscape. Consumers now use multiple platforms simultaneously, for different purposes, each with its own cultures, norms and interaction styles.

According to GWI, the average internet user now spends 2 hours and 26 minutes per day on social media, using more than seven platforms per month. For marketers, this raises a critical question: how do you cut through the noise and meaningfully connect with audiences whose digital lives are fast-moving and increasingly individualistic?

Our solution is to change how you view your audiences. Rather than focusing on static characteristics, our Tribes framework is built on the behaviours, motivations and values that clearly define how people connect with brands. Social Tribes are dynamic, real-time audience clusters that help marketers move beyond basic targeting to create deeper resonance and relevance.

We've identified six core Tribes that are defining the new rules of engagement. These insightful profiles should help inspire your refreshed audience segmentation to get your brand back on top of your social game.





**IDENTITY SEEKERS**



**EXPERIENCE COLLECTORS**



**KEYBOARD CONSCIOUS**



# THE SPECTRUM OF SOCIAL TRIBES

*The behaviours that marketers should be looking out for.*

**LATENT VOYEURS**




**COMMUNITY CATALYSTS**



**SCROLL HARDENED**







# IDENTITY SEEKERS

*Tribe 1*



# IDENTITY SEEKERS

## Tribe 1

**This Tribe sees brands as a tool to support their own self-expression. Identity Seekers' purchasing decisions are deeply intertwined with the identity they present online, choosing products that align with who they are, or who they want to be.**

### Engagement style

- Highly active on aesthetic-led platforms like Instagram, Pinterest and TikTok.
- Frequently post unboxings, reviews and styled content that reinforces their personal image.
- Engage deeply with brands that have clear values and a defined personality.
- Attracted to personalised offers or exclusive drops.

### Motivators

- Alignment with their identity and beliefs.
- Products or campaigns that reflect uniqueness or rarity.
- Social recognition - likes, shares and validation from their digital circles.

### Strategies for brands

- Co-creation campaigns or tailored recommendations.
- Collaborations with culturally aligned influencers.
- Storytelling that clearly communicates brand values.
- Content that helps consumers present their best selves online.



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**ACTIVE ON AESTHETIC-LED PLATFORMS**



**FREQUENTLY POSTS STYLED CONTENT**



**ENJOYS SOCIAL RECOGNITION**

### STRATEGIES FOR BRANDS

- Co-creation campaigns or tailored recommendations.
- Collaborations with culturally aligned influencers.
- Storytelling that clearly communicates brand values.
- Content that helps consumers present their best selves online.



# BRAND EXAMPLE

## *Blank Street*

Blank Street is a minimalist coffee chain founded in Brooklyn in 2020 that has since taken over social media with its distinctive stores focussed on simplicity, efficiency and style. The brand's pared-back design and lifestyle-led marketing appeal to those seeking curated routines and brands that enhance their personal narrative.

### Why it resonates with Identity Seekers:

- Clean aesthetic and neutral tones match a wide range of personal aesthetics.
- Personalised app experiences and localised social storytelling help users feel part of something smaller and more exclusive.
- Collaborates with influencers who share its visual and lifestyle ethos.
- Offers a sense of independence and individuality in contrast to larger, mainstream coffee chains.

Identity Seekers, who treat every purchase as a personal brand decision, find resonance in Blank Street's low-key sophistication and social media presence that mirrors their own aspirations. With content that fits seamlessly into stories and feeds, it enables self-expression without overstatement. As a result, the brand benefits from organic promotion, user-generated content and deep customer loyalty from a Tribe that prizes visibility, alignment and authenticity.





# EXPERIENCE COLLECTORS

*Tribe 2*



# EXPERIENCE COLLECTORS

## Tribe 2

**This Tribe prioritises meaningful, novel experiences. They seek brands that deliver excitement, access and emotional memory. Experience Collectors aren't afraid to go first and try something new, and they will advocate for the experiences they enjoy through their own social content.**

### Engagement style

- Tag and share pop-ups, live events and brand stunts.
- Enthusiastic reviewers of experiences rather than products.
- Follow brands that are constantly evolving and experimenting.
- Often discover new brands through peer recommendations and event content.

### Motivators

- Novelty and excitement.
- Immersive or limited-time moments.
- Social capital gained from being 'in the know'.

### Strategies for brands

- Build moments that are designed to be shared.
- Launch surprise drops or invite-only activations.
- Incorporate interactivity and emotion into storytelling.
- Focus on creating memories, not just transactions.



## EXPERIENCE COLLECTORS

**WHO ARE THEY?** This Tribe prioritises meaningful, novel experiences. They seek brands that deliver excitement, access and emotional memory. Experience Collectors aren't afraid to go first and try something new.

 **ENJOYS POP-UPS AND LIVE EVENTS**

 **FOLLOWS EVOLVING BRANDS**

 **MOTIVATED BY EXCITEMENT**

### STRATEGIES FOR BRANDS

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# BRAND EXAMPLE

## *Unplugged*

Unplugged curate off-grid cabin retreats designed to help guests digitally disconnect and reconnect with nature. The cabins are minimalist, remote and phone-free – with phones locked away for the duration of the stay and analogue alternatives, like maps and disposable cameras, provided to guests to help create a truly offline experience.

### Why it resonates with Experience Collectors:

- Offers a unique and immersive break from digital fatigue.
- The experience is deliberately shareable – guests are encouraged to document their stay via film camera.
- Creates strong emotional memories tied to wellness, novelty and nature.
- Drives FOMO with limited booking availability and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Unplugged's brand proposition fits perfectly with the Experience Collectors' desire to try something different and emotionally fulfilling. Despite encouraging disconnection, the brand has built a robust social presence through guest storytelling and nostalgic photography. These offline moments transform into highly shareable stories, allowing the Tribe to reflect on their stay in a way that stands out from the usual digital noise. For Experience Collectors, Unplugged offers the kind of story that enriches their personal narrative – and that's what keeps this Tribe coming back, and sharing widely.



# KEYBOARD CONSCIOUS

*Tribe 3*



# KEYBOARD CONSCIOUS

## Tribe 3

This Tribe engages heavily with social justice content, especially during moments of cultural or media spotlight, but can disengage once public attention fades. The Keyboard Conscious like to follow ethical brands, but keep a close eye out for any activity does not align with their values.

### Engagement style

- Frequently share cause-based content on Stories and feeds.
- React strongly to brand missteps or perceived inauthenticity.
- Follow activism pages and repost trending social justice content.
- Highly engaged during peak social issues but prone to rapid fatigue.

### Motivators

- The appearance of moral alignment.
- Public signalling of values.
- Content that's easy to share and emotionally resonant.

### Strategies for brands

- Be prepared with fast, credible responses during moments of social heat.
- Ensure your public stances match internal practices.
- Avoid opportunistic messaging – consistency matters.
- Support causes over time, not just during news cycles.



## KEYBOARD CONSCIOUS

**WHO ARE THEY?** This Tribe engages heavily with social justice content, especially during moments of cultural or media spotlight, but can disengage once public attention fades. They like to follow ethical brands that align with their values.

 **SHARES CAUSE-BASED CONTENT**

 **REACTS STRONGLY TO INAUTHENTICITY**

 **ENGAGES DURING PEAK SOCIAL ISSUES**

### STRATEGIES FOR BRANDS

- Be prepared during moments of social heat.
- Ensure your public stances match internal practices.
- Avoid opportunistic messaging – consistency matters.
- Support causes over time, not just during news cycles.

# BRAND EXAMPLE

## *Ben & Jerry's*

Founded in Vermont in 1978, Ben & Jerry's is an ice cream brand known for its ethical stance and vocal activism. Despite being owned by Unilever since 2000, the brand has maintained a high-profile commitment to progressive values, social justice and political causes.

### Why it resonates with Keyboard Conscious audiences:

- Long standing public support for causes including climate justice, refugee rights, and racial equality.
- Regularly publishes open letters, petitions and resources aligned with grassroots campaigns.
- Tone of voice and visual content are adapted for easy sharing – from stories to quote tweets.
- Messaging consistency builds credibility with audiences wary of performative activism.

Ben & Jerry's success with the Keyboard Conscious Tribe lies in its consistency. While many brands dip in and out of activism during headline moments, Ben & Jerry's stance is unwavering – even when it sparks controversy or public challenge. Its ability to communicate values clearly, visibly and continuously builds trust with audiences who are highly attuned to inauthenticity. For this Tribe, Ben & Jerry's offers a safe endorsement – a brand they can post during social justice cycles without fear of backlash.





# LATENT VOYEURS

*Tribe 4*



# LATENT VOYEURS

## Tribe 4

**This Tribe rarely engages with social content publicly but consume it regularly without leaving digital footprints. They are discerning and deeply informed, taking on the role of quiet curators, collecting inspiration, culture cues and trends while remaining largely passive on the surface.**

### Engagement style

- Rarely like, comment or post their own content.
- Frequently save posts or share them privately in group chats or DMs.
- Trust algorithmic feeds more than active following.
- May have public-facing accounts for passive browsing but also maintain private, secondary ones for their own posting.

### Motivators

- Staying culturally informed without public involvement.
- Inspiration and trendspotting for personal use.
- A sense of connection without obligation to engage.

### Strategies for brands

- Prioritise visually compelling, saveable and shareable content.
- Use carousels, short-form video and infographics that encourage private sharing.
- Don't rely solely on likes or comments as success metrics.
- Embrace consistency to remain present in algorithmic feeds.



## LATENT VOYEURS

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 **RARELY POSTS THEIR OWN CONTENT**

 **MAINTAINS PRIVATE ACCOUNTS**

 **TRUSTS ALGORITHMIC FEEDS**

### STRATEGIES FOR BRANDS

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- Use carousels, short-form video and infographics.
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# BRAND EXAMPLE

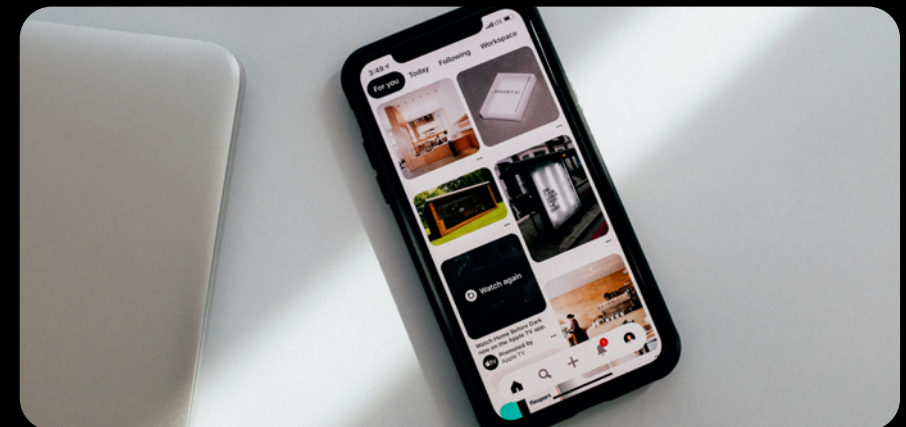
## *Pinterest*

Pinterest is a visual discovery platform that allows users to browse, save and organise content into personal moodboards. Unlike most social platforms, it emphasises quiet consumption and private curation over public interaction or self-promotion.

### Why it resonates with Latent Voyeurs:

- Encourages passive consumption and long-term inspiration-gathering.
- Algorithm-led discovery mimics intuitive scrolling without needing to follow accounts.
- Saving and moodboarding functionalities align perfectly with private sharing habits.
- Avoids pushy calls to action or notifications, allowing low-pressure engagement.

Pinterest's entire experience is built around private, algorithmic exploration – exactly how this audience prefers to engage. Pinterest doesn't demand comments, reactions or content creation; instead, it rewards repeat visits, inspiration-hunting and quiet brand interaction. For this Tribe, Pinterest is a tool, not a broadcast channel. Brands that embrace this behaviour, creating content designed to be saved, revisited and quietly shared, can benefit from meaningful traction without the need for surface-level engagement.





# COMMUNITY CATALYSTS

*Tribe 5*



# COMMUNITY CATALYSTS

## Tribe 5

**This Tribe is focused on connection with their peers through brands. Community Catalysts gravitate towards brands that build communities around their products, enhancing the emotional connection between brand and consumer that this Tribe craves.**

### Engagement style

- Active in brand-run groups, broadcast channels or membership schemes.
- Loyal to brands that listen, respond and include them.
- Share content to support their community rather than self-promotion.
- Engage in feedback loops, surveys and beta testing.

### Motivators

- A sense of shared identity or mission.
- Peer interaction and mutual support.
- Belonging to something meaningful.

### Strategies for brands

- Offer platforms for discussion and peer-to-peer recognition.
- Celebrate community achievements and spotlight members.
- Make feedback loops highly visible and impactful.
- Reward contributions with access, influence or experiences.



## COMMUNITY CATALYSTS

**WHO ARE THEY?** This Tribe is focused on connection with their peers through brands. They gravitate towards brands that build communities around their products, enhancing the emotional connection between brand and consumer that this Tribe craves.

✓ **ACTIVE IN BRAND-RUN GROUPS**

✓ **LOYAL TO BRANDS THAT LISTEN**

✓ **MOTIVATED BY MEANINGFUL CONTENT**

### STRATEGIES FOR BRANDS

- Offer platforms for discussion and peer-to-peer recognition.
- Celebrate community achievements and spotlight members.
- Make feedback loops highly visible and impactful.
- Reward contributions with access, influence or experiences.

# BRAND EXAMPLE

## *Runna*

Runna is a personalised running app offering training plans and coaching support for runners of all levels. Combining expert-led programming with a strong emphasis on community and accountability, it fosters connection through social channels, live events and user-generated milestones.

### Why it resonates with Community Catalysts:

- Promotes peer encouragement, shared goals and mutual achievement.
- Actively involves the community through features like ambassador spotlights and shared challenges.
- Leverages influencer coaches and everyday runners alike to foster accessibility.
- Creates space for co-creation, story-sharing and celebration of community success.

Runna's success with Community Catalysts lies in its ability to offer more than a product – it offers belonging. The brand has cultivated a peer-led ecosystem where runners not only follow training plans but feel supported by people just like them. Its tone of voice is encouraging and inclusive, while its social content regularly highlights user journeys, PBs and group achievements. Community Catalysts want to be part of something bigger, and Runna ensures that every user has a platform to celebrate their community and connect with like-minded peers.





# SCROLL HARDENED

*Tribe 6*

# SCROLL HARDENED

## Tribe 6

**This Tribe has grown up online and can't be shocked into attention. The Scroll Hardened expect brands to seamlessly engage them by using content that hook them instantly with humour and entertainment.**

### Engagement style

- Rapid-scrolling, short-form content consumers.
- Active in meme culture, niche fandoms and livestreams.
- Prefer humour and irreverence over inspiration or aspiration.
- Interact through reactions, duets, or low-effort formats.

### Motivators

- Entertainment and escape.
- Peer-led trends and challenges.
- Exclusive digital perks or collectibles.

### Strategies for brands

- Make content snackable, funny, or specific.
- Use irreverence to stand out without trying too hard.
- Lean into native platform trends quickly and lightly.
- Offer digital rewards and create reasons to return.



## SCROLL HARDENED

**WHO ARE THEY?** This Tribe has grown up online and can't be shocked into attention. The Scroll Hardened expect brands to seamlessly engage them by using content that hook them instantly with humour and entertainment.

 **CONSUMES SHORT-FORM CONTENT**

 **PREFERS HUMOUR OR IRREVERENCE**

 **MOTIVATED BY PEER-LED TRENDS**

### STRATEGIES FOR BRANDS

- Make content snackable, funny, or specific.
- Use irreverence to stand out without trying too hard.
- Lean into native platform trends quickly and lightly.
- Offer digital rewards and create reasons to return.



# BRAND EXAMPLE

## *Duolingo*

Duolingo is a free language-learning app known for its gamified user experience and irreverent tone. With a strong social media presence, it has become synonymous with internet culture, often leaning into absurd humour and meme-led communication.

### Why it resonates with Scroll Hardened:

- Embraces chaos, humour and absurdity – the currency of this audience.
- Leverages reactive content and pop culture references with speed.
- Skips polish in favour of relatability and relevance.
- Personifies the brand through the Duolingo owl, Duo, to create entertaining narratives.

Duolingo doesn't chase social engagement – it earns it through deep understanding of platform behaviour. Its TikTok strategy resonates with the difficult to impress Scroll Hardened users who value speed, irony and entertainment over polished sales content. The brand's posts often reference niche internet culture and trends, earning shares and reactions for their wit rather than their branding. For this Tribe, Duolingo's refusal to over-explain itself or take its product too seriously is what builds credibility. It offers something rare in the crowded scroll: content that doesn't try too hard, and therefore hits harder.



# WHY SOCIAL TRIBES MATTER FOR MARKETERS





# WHY SOCIAL TRIBES MATTER FOR MARKETERS

As the digital landscape becomes more nuanced, the old ways of targeting no longer deliver. Understanding and engaging with audiences through the lens of behavioural Tribes allows marketers to:

At O.agency, we help brands get under the skin of their audiences, and truly understand what makes them tick, not just who they are on paper. We turn these insights into sharper messaging, stronger community engagement and smarter social media strategy. By moving beyond demographics and into the realm of real human behaviour, we offer a firmer foundation for long-term brand building.

*Let's work together to decode your audience, define your Tribes, and design a strategy that keeps up with the future of consumer culture.*

# 1

IDENTIFY THE EMOTIONAL, CULTURAL, AND CONTEXTUAL DRIVERS BEHIND **PURCHASE DECISIONS.**

# 2

CREATE **MARKETING STRATEGIES** THAT MEET AUDIENCES WHERE THEY ARE DIGITALLY, SOCIALLY, AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY.

# 3

MAKE USE OF **REAL-TIME INSIGHTS** TO EVOLVE CAMPAIGNS IN STEP WITH CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS.

# HAVE WE GOT YOU THINKING?

Get in touch with us for a **free strategy consultation** on how you can evolve your social media strategy to win with your audiences, no matter their behaviours.



**KARI OWERS**

Founder

## Let's talk Brand Fame Strategy

What do you want to be famous for? Our Brand Fame Strategy helps you define who you are, and how to put your purpose, values and personality in the places that matter. From reactive social to building a community around your brand, we can help you save time and money by having a clearer picture of where you should 'be famous' and more importantly, what to edit out of your marketing mix.



**KIRSTY OSTELL**

Managing Director

## Let's talk Offectiveness™

Are you confident that your entire marketing mix is delivering results? Our Offectiveness™ model helps your brand and marketing team to see beyond the performance metrics hype, and quickly understand your marketing impact on your big business objectives. These insights can unlock new growth and increased budgets for your department.



**EMMA ROBERTS**

Insights Lead

## Let's talk Culture Strategy

What does your brand's playground look like? We can help your team understand the wider context of the market it is playing in, and what cultural conversations you should be a part of. We build robust Culture Strategies for growth in your current and future market landscape, whilst also helping you to tap into new customer frontiers.





# SERIOUSLY CREATIVE

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