

DC

**CREATIVITY AT
A CROSSROADS**

CREATIVITY AT A CROSSROADS

INTRODUCTION

Each year we survey hundreds of CMOs around the world in order to understand how they are thinking about brands, businesses, and creativity in communications.

This year the results show a level of soul searching and reappraisal, but also a sense of empowerment not seen in previous years. More than ever, marketers are turning to creativity and technology to tackle a perfect storm of challenges; from climate change to economic upheaval to geopolitical instability and polarization.

Yet amidst all these existential questions, CMOs' number one concern remains surprisingly simple: knowing and owning their customer in a world where it has never been more challenging, or rewarding.

CMOs see their toolkit and remit expanding as a connected world blurs the boundaries between content and commerce, real and virtual, growth and good.

In that connected world CMOs aspire to build brands in new ways — through distinctive and delightful experiences, through ideas that connect with culture and through powerful, authentic brand actions.

They do of course have concerns about the role of AI: friend or foe? and about the media ecosystem and cultural landscape they are enabling with their investments. Nevertheless, despite the many challenges they face, marketers feel overwhelmingly positive about the future of the industry and its potential as a force for good.

In this report, we explore what CMOs are excited about, apprehensive about, investing in, and holding back on as they navigate 2023 and look ahead to 2030 and beyond.

Our report helps you understand how your business, brand, and investment strategies compare with other CMOs. Are you in step with peers around the industry or carving your own path? Are there areas where you're investing ahead of the industry or others where you may be lagging?

We explore the key themes and trends emerging from our data and unpack what it means for brands and businesses at a crossroads.

8 KEY THEMES FOR 2023

WINNING THE AUDIENCE

The single biggest concern for CMOs now and in the future is owning and connecting with a rapidly evolving audience as they look beyond Gen Z to Gen Alpha, and what's next.

AUGMENTED HUMANITY

With that in mind, CMOs are designing brands for a virtual world, investing in a new toolkit of technologies to enable more immersive, emotive brand experiences.

CULTURAL CAPITAL

There's no business without show business: today's CMOs are investing in platforms from podcasts to programming to engage audiences that are harder than ever to interrupt.

PURPOSE GETS REAL

They are moving beyond "purpose washing" through campaigns to pivoting their business model to a more sustainable approach for a volatile world.

FUNDING FEARS

In parallel, CMOs are concerned over the polarized, even toxic, media landscape brands could be funding with their investments and eager to elevate more diverse voices.

AI: FRENEMY AT THE GATE

AI is a cause for excitement and concern. Despite some caution: CMOs welcome efficiencies and are keen to experiment, but doubt AI-generated content will ever truly touch the hearts of their customers.

CONNECTED PEOPLE

With new challenges and opportunities coming thick and fast, CMOs don't have time for silos or boundaries. They want their agency partners to connect the right talent at the right moment, wherever it sits.

THRIVING IN A CONNECTED WORLD

In a connected world, sweet spots are emerging for brands and businesses at the intersection of brand, experience, and culture; opportunities to connect with modern customers in the spaces and places that matter most.

01

WINNING THE AUDIENCE

**IN A WORLD OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND ANXIETIES,
AUDIENCE STILL MATTERS MOST OF ALL.**

CMO's most pressing concerns revolve around building and owning relationships with a rapidly evolving audience. Their primary concern for 2023 and beyond is the ability to own the customer relationship in a world where third parties are holding many of the cards.

30% of respondents chose 'owning the customer relationship' as their main concern for both 2023 and as they look forward to 2030.

Tellingly, the other top three concerns for 2023 were all about engaging changing audiences, with 'understanding and responding to changing consumer behavior' scoring (**28%**), 'representing more diverse audiences' (**28%**), and 'understanding and keeping up with new technology' also at (**28%**).

Adding to their audience woes, Gen Z is also keeping marketers up at night, with **23%** of respondents worried about how to market to this demographic, rising to **32%** in Italy. **77%** of marketers agree that while consumer behavior has undergone rapid changes in the last five years, the agency model is yet to respond.

Amidst all the societal, economic, and existential challenges marketers face, the customer remains their number one priority now and in the future. The need to build direct relationships, to create and engage their own audiences, informs much of how today's marketers are thinking about channels, platforms, and technology, particularly as they look towards a cookieless world where first-party data will be even more vital to their success.

As customer expectations rise, and behaviors and values shift, brands must evolve and engage or they risk being ignored, and worse made irrelevant. While brand matters as much, or more, than ever brands today are built in new ways through compelling experiences, through connecting with culture, and through powerful and authentic actions. Brands today are what they do and where they show up.

Of course, there is ample evidence for 'low involvement processing'; the idea that advertising does have to be consciously noticed to have an impact. But more recent studies — including our sister agency Carat's — show the power of attention — a currency that is less certain than ever before.

CUSTOMER FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD

When asked to prioritize their key concerns for 2023, the priority remains the consumer, amidst all manner of other disruptions and innovations. We also asked for their concerns looking ahead to 2030.

MARKETERS' BIGGEST CONCERNS

	2023	2030
OWNING THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP	30%	30%
RESPONDING TO CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR	28%	29%
KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGIES LIKE AI	28%	26%
REPRESENTING MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES	28%	23%
RESPONDING TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS	20%	23%

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BRANDS AND BUSINESSES



A [Virtual KFC Store](#) by Dentsu Creative china engages Gen-Z where they live, selling 180M virtual meals.

INNOVATE OR BE IGNORED

Showing up in the spaces and places that matter most to a new generation of customers is no longer a nice to have or an experiment. It has become the only way to connect with these audiences in a meaningful way.

DESIGN FOR NETWORKS, NOT INDIVIDUALS

While it's tempting to think that building an audience means focusing one to one relationships, for a generation raised on social commerce, world building and micro-influencers the true power is one to many. Empowering customers with the tools to engage their networks on brands' behalf is a powerful social accelerator.

DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE VALUE PROPOSITION

In a world where every brand craves a direct relationship with the customer, ask yourself what unique value or reward are you offering in exchange for their time and their data, be that exclusive content, community dynamics or limited edition products?

02

AUGMENTED HUMANITY

DESIGNING BRANDS FOR A VIRTUAL WORLD DEMANDS A NEW APPROACH TO BRAND BUILDING.

Brands today are built at the intersection of belief and behavior, creativity and technology. CMOs are embracing a new experience toolkit with the power and potential to infuse every interaction with humanity and with emotion. **87%** of CMOs agree that brands today are built through experiences. This number rises to **91%** in the US and **93%** in Australia.

84% of marketers believe that every aspect of the customer journey can and should tell the brand story, from Comms to Commerce, while **88%** agree it is essential that the customer experience matches up to the brand promise.

CMOs believe firmly in the coming together of creativity, technology, and craft to shape brand-building experiences.

The key ingredients in creating truly brand-building experiences were identified as “technology that enhances the creative idea” (**48%**) and “innovative new interfaces such as gaming, virtual worlds, gesture, and touch” (**48%**). Closely following were “Delightful interactions enhanced by technology such as AR and Image Recognition” (**45%**) and “A powerful organizing idea that shapes the Experience Vision” (**43%**).

The importance of almost all these factors has increased by at least 5 percentage points YoY, demonstrating an increased importance of building brands through innovative, immersive, ownable experiences. With these ambitions in mind, CMOs are investing in technologies with the potential to shape experiences that are as delightful, and distinctive as they are easy and effortless.

The most commonly used technologies CMOs claim to be leveraging today include social commerce (**35%**), chatbots for CX (**28%**), virtual brand properties like avatars and idols (**28%**), and virtual reality (**27%**). Technologies designed for a world where new experiences emerge everywhere and every day, and the boundaries between real and virtual, content and commerce have disappeared.

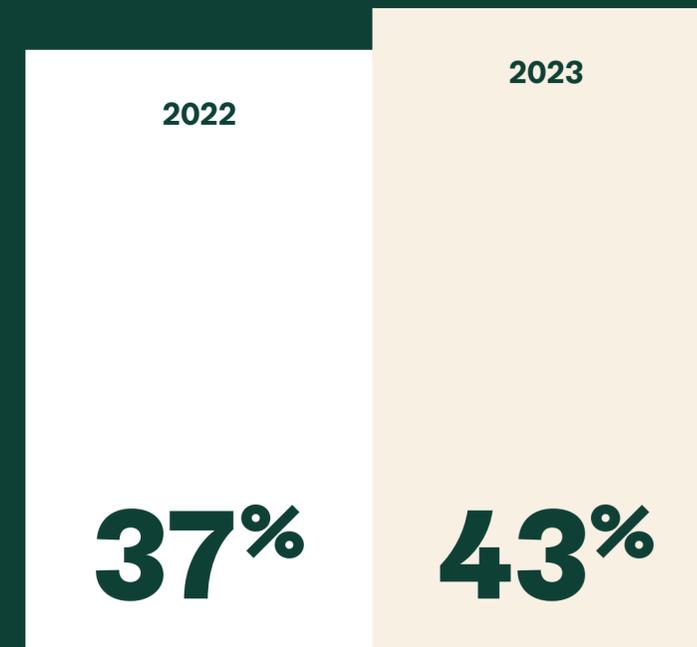
Of all the technologies explored, social commerce is the one showing the single greatest increased adoption reported by CMOs year on year, up 4 percentage points versus 2022 and highlighting the ever-stronger connection between content, influencers, and commerce.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT BRAND EXPERIENCE?

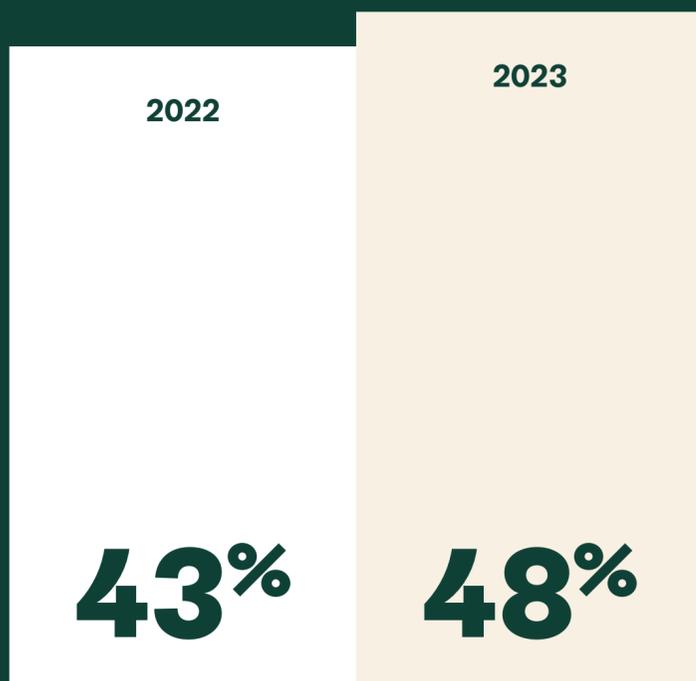
INTELLIGENT PERSONALIZATION TO SURPRISE AND DELIGHT



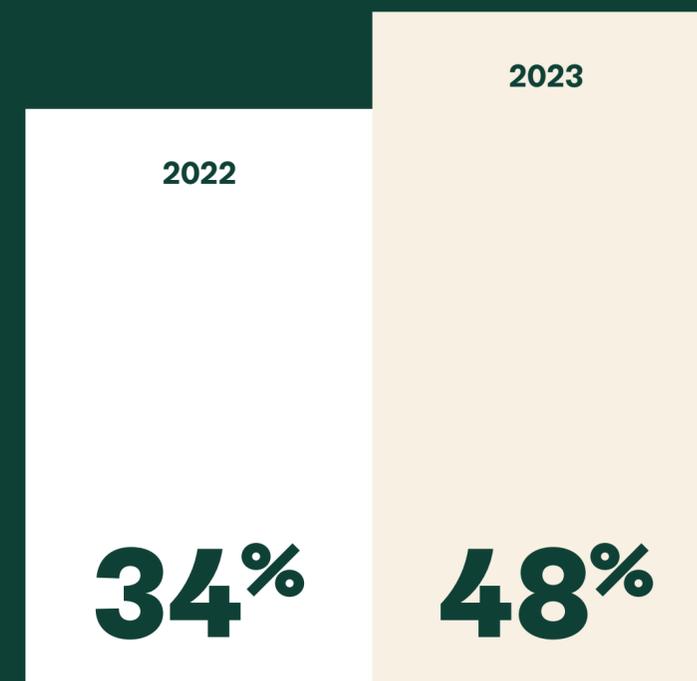
A POWERFUL ORGANIZING IDEA



INNOVATIVE NEW INTERFACES



TECHNOLOGY THAT ENHANCES THE BRAND IDEA



A NEW EXPERIENCE TOOLKIT

CMOs are embracing new interfaces from voice to gesture, AR to AI. Enabling ideas that are distinctive, delightful and disarmingly human.

WHICH OF THESE TECHNOLOGIES ARE YOU USING?

GENERATIVE AI

35%



SOCIAL COMMERCE

34%



VIRTUAL BRAND AVATARS

28%



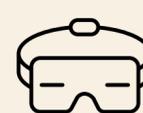
LIVE STREAMING

28%



VIRTUAL REALITY

27%



AUGMENTED REALITY

22%



BLOCKCHAIN

22%



VOICE

21%



WEB 3.0 TECHNOLOGIES

20%



WHAT IT MEANS FOR BRANDS AND BUSINESSES

EXPERIENCES EVERYWHERE

Spatial Computing and Social Commerce blur the boundaries of content and commerce, real and virtual. There are no limits to the spaces and experiences that can be augmented with real-time digital data. Craft and innovation are coming together to imagine new possibilities, from AR configurators to Augmented Storytelling, all powered by integrated data and commerce platforms.

NEW BRAND IDENTITIES

The old world of static brand books and guidelines is no longer fit for purpose. Modern brands must connect belief and behavior, brand values, and CX principles in a single integrated system, that is operationalized at scale through modern digital design systems to create a living, breathing brand.

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE DESIGN

It is no longer enough to design for frictionless experiences that often deliver functionally but are creatively forgettable. We must design for the moments that matter, creating experiences in the online space that are as distinctive and ownable as concept stores or signature packaging are in the offline world.

"Scrolling Therapy" by Dentsu Creative US and Eurofarma uses innovative facial recognition to treat symptoms of Parkinson's.

03

CULTURAL CAPITAL

ENGAGE OR BE IGNORED: CMOS ARE INVESTING IN CREATING CULTURE, CONVERSATIONS AND CONTENT.

79% of CMOs agree that 'in a world where advertising is easier to ignore, it's more important than ever to entertain and engage.'

86% agree brands should aspire to create culture and build their own audiences, creating content and entertainment properties consumers actively choose to spend time with. Even within advertising campaigns, there is a powerful desire to entertain, to create moments of joy and optimism in a challenging economic and cultural climate.

58% agree that advertising doesn't entertain enough; marketers in China (**75%**) and Italy (**72%**) are most likely to agree on the need to entertain.

When we asked where CMOs are investing their money today, **38%** say they have already invested in 'branded content' as an entertainment marketing tactic. **37%** have invested in TV Programming, **34%** in Influencer partnerships, **33%** in Publishing, and **32%** in Entertainment Platforms, and IP.

Respondents in China (**41%**) and Brazil (**40%**) are most likely to have invested in Entertainment Platforms and IP, with Canada most likely to invest in TV Programming (**48%**), alongside the UK (**40%**). When asked which platforms they see as having the highest potential for creativity, it is interesting to note that well-established social platforms such as YouTube and Instagram dominate, with **54%** of clients agreeing that YouTube has very high potential for creative expression, closely followed by Instagram at **51%**.

CONNECTING CONTENT AND COMMERCE

In terms of the highest potential for creativity, streaming platforms such as Netflix and HBO also feature prominently at 42%, while TikTok is making rapid gains on traditional TV, at 38% each. Increasingly TikTok is not viewed as a social media platform but an entertainment channel, setting the standard for brands connecting content and commerce. By courting a young and global audience, it is increasingly stealing attention away from both traditional and streaming platforms.

80% agree that technologies such as live streaming are blurring the boundaries between content and commerce as never before. The rise of social commerce, live streaming, and immersive entertainment properties spawning their own merchandise and retail concepts have created a world where content and entertainment properties play a powerful role at every stage of the path to purchase.

The ability to connect world-class entertainment with an understanding of modern media and customer journeys will be a significant advantage for brands with the right capabilities.



80% AGREE THAT TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS LIVE
STREAMING ARE BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES
BETWEEN CONTENT AND COMMERCE.



THERE'S NO BUSINESS WITHOUT SHOW BUSINESS

CMOs agree entertainment will be a key component of brand building in 2023 and beyond; and that it's a skill set in high demand.



86% AGREE THAT BRANDS SHOULD ASPIRE TO CREATE CULTURE AND BUILD THEIR OWN AUDIENCES.



79% AGREE THAT BRANDS NEED TO ENTERTAIN AND ENGAGE, NOT INTERRUPT.



58% AGREE THAT ADVERTISING AS IT STANDS TODAY DOESN'T ENTERTAIN ENOUGH.

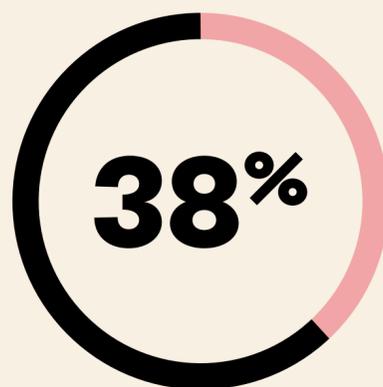


CONNECTING THROUGH CULTURE

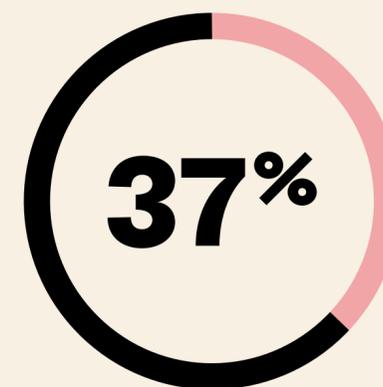
In a world where interrupting is getting harder and harder, CMOs seek to connect through culture.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU INVESTED IN?

BRANDED CONTENT



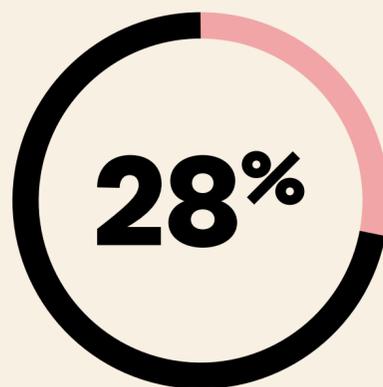
PARTNERSHIPS (INFLUENCER)



ENTERTAINMENT PLATFORMS



TV PROGRAMMING



DOCUMENTARY MAKING



PODCASTING



WHAT IT MEANS FOR BRANDS AND BUSINESSES



Our team in the US created an anthem for [7-11's Slurpee](#) in partnership with hip-hop star Flo Milli.

EMBRACE THE JOY DIVERSION

A pent-up demand for post-pandemic joy, celebration, and self-expression meets a challenging economic environment. Brands that can provide moments of joy, humor, and uplift will be rewarded.

CAPTURE AN UNFAIR SHARE OF ATTENTION

The myth of shorter and shorter attention spans has been exposed by many studies, attention is not scarce, it is unevenly distributed. Binge-watching boxsets, gaming, and streaming marathons all show that it is imminently possible to capture attention with the right content, formats and channels.

CROSS THE STREAMS

The boundaries between culture and commerce have never been more blurred, and consumers have seemingly never been less concerned. Immersive entertainment properties and lifestyle vloggers create seamless pathways from buying into a world and a lifestyle to buying into a brand or product.

04

PURPOSE GETS REAL

**IN A VOLATILE WORLD, CMOs AGREE THAT WHAT'S GOOD
FOR BUSINESS IS GOOD FOR SOCIETY.**

69% of CMOs agree that we are so focused on purpose, we have forgotten how to sell. This doesn't however mean an end to purpose, but rather an end to purpose as a side project and a pivot towards purpose as a core driver of sustainable business growth.

In a world where every industry is facing radical climate-accelerated disruption, a brand's approach to climate and its commercial success will be inextricably linked. **78%** of marketers believe that in a world where economic volatility is accelerated and exacerbated by climate volatility, there is no longer any disconnect between what is good for society and what is good for business.

As we see all too plainly around the world, the cost of inaction on climate change will rapidly outstrip the cost of action as governments legislate against industries with the most damaging footprint. As we have seen across 2023, businesses in every sector are impacted by extreme weather and its ripple effects on supply chain and business continuity.

81% of CMOs agree that their business will undergo a fundamental pivot in response to climate change while **78%** state that every brand should possess an ethical purpose or a socially conscious mission. This thinking is even more pronounced in the United States, where an overwhelming **94%** of marketers share this perspective.

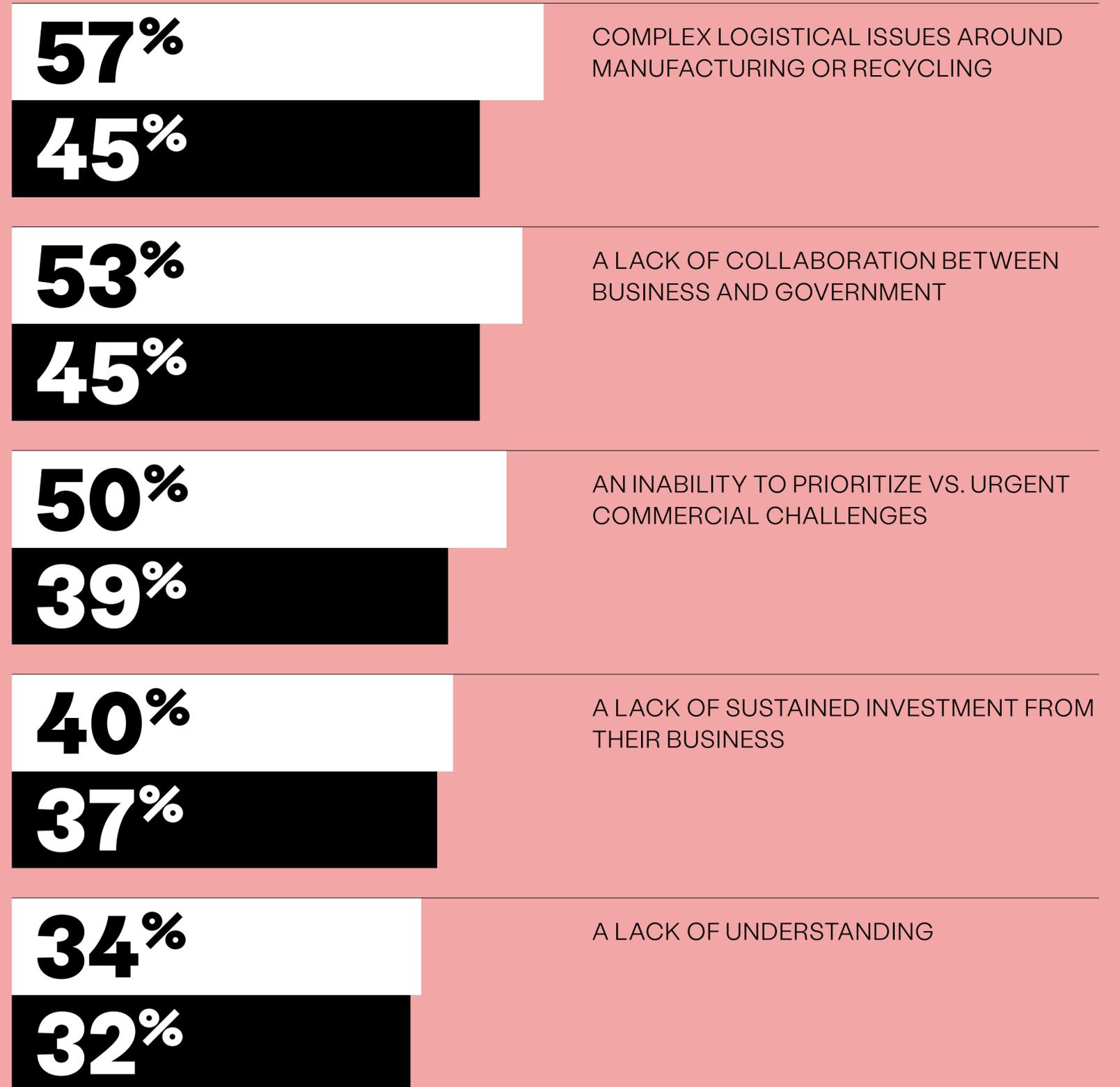
Yet it is becoming more challenging today for brands to take an ethical stand or make bold claims about their carbon footprint. On the one hand, we see an emerging and vocal backlash, on the other we see concerns and regulations around over-enthusiastic claims or "greenwashing."

Creative agencies have a vital role to play in helping clients navigate these difficulties and make lasting change.

MAKING IT REAL

On a positive note, we are seeing a significant decrease year on year in the barriers and blockers CMOs encounter when pressing for more sustainable business.

The most significant declines were in the area of logistical complexity, collaboration, and sustained investment, although **45%** of CMOs still cite lack of collaboration as a significant hurdle.



WHAT IT MEANS FOR BRANDS AND BUSINESSES



"Colors of the World", by our team in the US, helps every child to feel seen, represented and valued.

SUSTAINABILITY IS NOT A SIDE PROJECT

Sustainability can no longer be a side project or nice to have. In a world where an increasingly volatile climate is having a direct and material impact on businesses across every category, the only long term-growth is sustainable growth.

WE SELL HOPE

While we are confronted every day with ever more alarming headlines on climate change, we have huge power as an industry to inspire hope in a sustainable future and inspire the action needed to make change possible. While infrastructure and innovation are needed, only through the power of emotion can we affect lasting behavioral change.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE STARTS WITH SYMBOLIC ACTION

Systemic change is needed but is hard-won. Our Dentsu Good methodology urges brand teams to think about the symbolic actions that will signal change and become a beacon and rallying cry for the organization.

05

FUNDING FEARS

AS PURPOSE BECOMES CORE TO THEIR BUSINESS, CMOS QUESTION THE MEDIA ECOSYSTEM THEIR INVESTMENTS ARE FUNDING.

CMOs have significant concerns about the polarized, sometimes toxic, discourse their budgets may be funding. Despite many positive social impact initiatives, this poses important systemic questions for the media and creative industry.

While **86%** of CMOs express excitement about the industry's future, with **83%** feeling positive about its impact for years to come (rising to **94%** in China), there is a strong desire to balance business objectives with more ethical considerations.

62% are worried about the potential adverse consequences of their campaigns and investments on the environment and on society.

This signifies a growing awareness of the industry's responsibility to balance purpose and profit.

64% express concerns that their media spending may inadvertently contribute to political polarization, raising questions about advertising's role in shaping public discourse.

Yet another area of concern is social media, with **59%** expressing concern about its impact on younger generations, highlighting the need for a thoughtful approach to harnessing the power of digital platforms and technologies. With **86%** stating that Influencer marketing is a key component of modern campaigns, collaboration between platforms, agencies, and marketers is needed to ensure we can use influencers in a safe and authentic way going forward.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Despite their concerns, marketers remain convinced that advertising can be a force for good in the world, particularly when it comes to the role of brands in funding diverse voices and creating new platforms.

81% agree that brands can use their budgets to amplify independent and diverse voices, while **88%** agree that creative advertising has the power to change society for the better.

We have an extraordinary opportunity not only to shape the conversation but the places and spaces the conversation plays out in, to build a more courteous, considered, and healthier public forum.

81%

**AGREE BRANDS CAN USE BUDGETS
TO AMPLIFY INDEPENDENT
AND DIVERSE VOICES.**

88%

**AGREE CREATIVE ADVERTISING HAS
POTENTIAL TO CHANGE SOCIETY
FOR THE BETTER.**

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BRANDS AND BUSINESSES



Our global [Dentsu VI](#) solution enables brands to create Virtual Influencers using AI and motion capture.

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

We've known for decades that where a brand shows up is as important as what it says. But it's no longer a simple question of which titles or partners a brand selects. Today, brands face profound choices over whether the millions of dollars they spend on advertising fund a dialogue that makes the world a better place or damages it.

FROM BRAND SAFE TO HUMAN SAFE

Brand safety has long been a consideration for advertisers in the online space. As we wrestle with new concerns from deep fake technology to AI-generated stories and imagery in the future we may need to consider not only brand safety but the safety of people and society.

AUTHENTIC INFLUENCE

Influencer marketing is increasingly important for marketers around the world. Yet as they look ahead to 2030, a significant concern is managing their brand in an authentic and brand-safe way. Meanwhile, the 'De-Influencing' trend and the rise of platforms such as Be Real suggest a need to balance aspiration and authenticity in new ways.

06

AI: FRENEEMY AT THE GATE

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN GENERATIVE AI HAVE SPARKED INTRIGUE AND CONCERN IN EQUAL MEASURE.

The breathtaking rise of Generative AI is filling many CMOs with both excitement and trepidation.

When wrestling with the question “AI: Friend or Foe?” marketers are ambivalent. For the industry today, AI is perhaps best viewed as a “frenemy,” with the potential both to drive speed and efficiency and to create a new generation of challenges. The optimists among us (**83%**) say that AI will enable human teams to take on more creative tasks, while **86%** agree that it will improve efficiency.

An additional **87%** of marketers affirm that Generative AI represents the future of advertising and marketing, while **26%** express their intention to adopt Generative AI soon. However, it is telling that over half of our respondents (**57%**) agree that Generative AI might take their jobs.

Interestingly our survey showed that marketers are positive about the potential use of AI in marketing however **61%** of our respondents agree that Generative AI will impact society for the worse.

Despite nagging job insecurity, the majority of clients hold a steadfast belief in the irreplaceable value of human craft and emotion in brand communications (**82%**), asserting that Generative AI can never fully replace the essence of human creativity (**75%**).

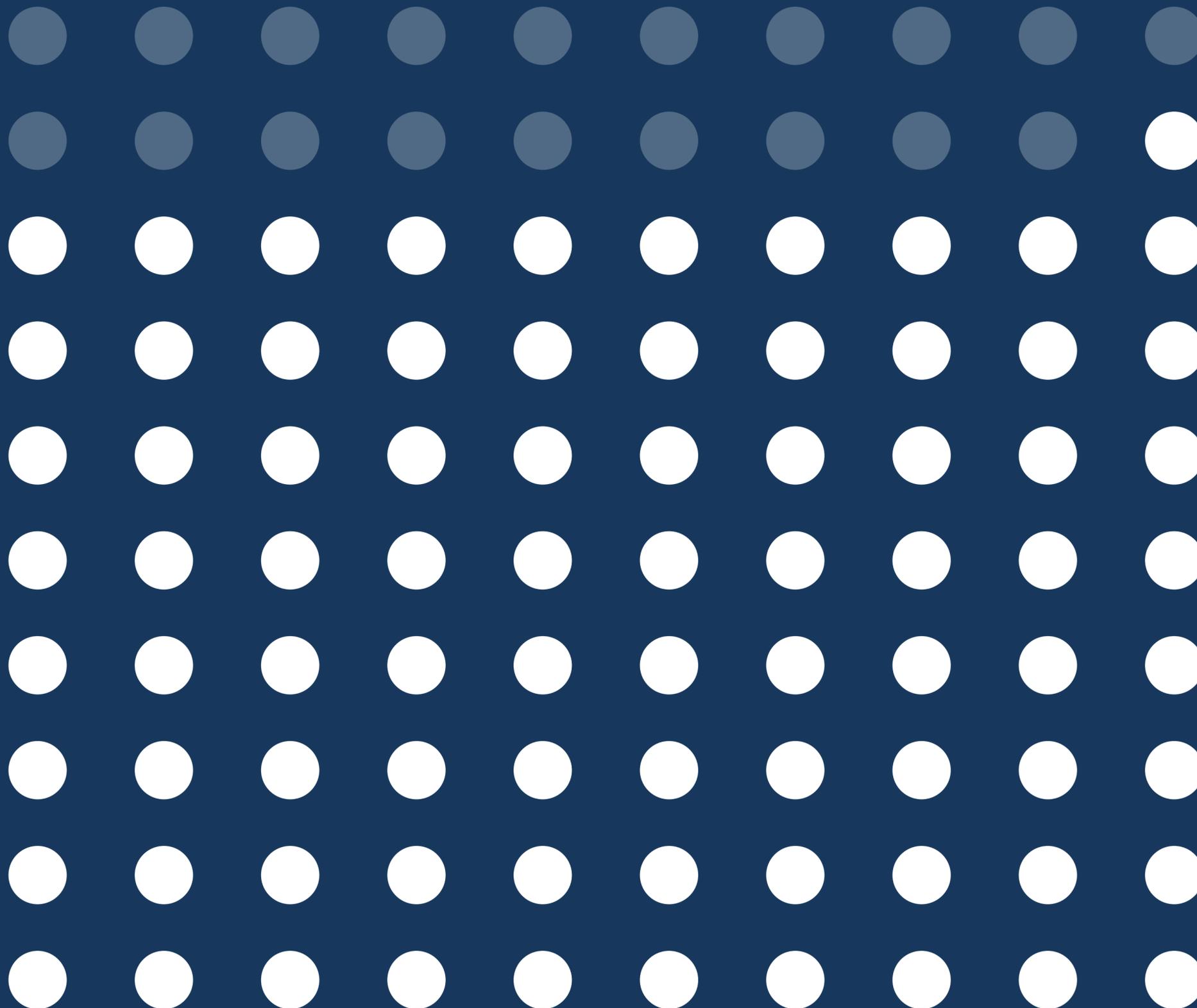
HUMAN-CREATED CONTENT

Perhaps most significantly, **77%** of marketers agree that AI will never create content that truly moves them: a fascinating challenge for brands and agencies. Can AI Touch our hearts? Can a robot make us cry?

81% of respondents agree that customers will pay a premium for human-created content.

It's a fascinating concept to explore; just as handmade products now command a premium in an industrialized world, human-made content may command a premium in a world of AI-generated content.

Will opinion become more or less important in a world of AI editorial, where facts are easily synthesized, and what does it mean for the future of publishing and the cultural and political discourse it creates?



WHAT IT MEANS FOR BRANDS AND BUSINESSES

FROM EXPERIMENT TO ENTERPRISE

While Generative AI has been a fun experiment or plaything for many, it is rapidly scaling for the Enterprise. Platforms such as Adobe's Firefly (in Beta) and Sansei embed Generative AI at the heart of tools used by designers and developers the world over while tackling concerns over copyright issues and brand consistency.

NEXT-GENERATION CRAFT SKILLS

While there is much anxiety about the impact of AI on job security, in practice Generative AI requires a deep understanding of craft, design, photographic skills, and aesthetics. The ability to craft the right prompt to lead to distinctive and brand appropriate outcomes requires a powerful blend of creative and strategic skills.

CHANGING DYNAMICS

Generative AI will undoubtedly unlock new efficiency opportunities, but perhaps most exciting is the opportunity for truly dynamic and personalized experiences, responding to new data and context at pace. "Personalization to surprise and delight" is one of the key characteristics CMOs look for in designing creative experiences.



"Jardim Sonoro" by Dentsu Creative Portugal uses Gen-AI to fuse nature and music with extraordinary results.

07

CONNECTED PEOPLE

**TO NAVIGATE COMPLEXITY, CMOS NEED FLEXIBILITY
AND DIVERSITY OF TALENT.**

Our survey illustrates that marketers are no longer prepared to settle for brand or performance, global or local, efficiency or expertise, they want the best of both. We see this in the kinds of work they believe will have the most impact, their call for more collaboration in their own business, and in the relationship they want with their agency partners.

83% believe brands benefit from consolidating their efforts with one agency holding company, acknowledging the power of the network in a data and technology driven-world.

Yet **85%** of marketers also value the diversity of thought that comes from partnering with multiple agencies, calling out the flexibility and agility of local partners.

It therefore becomes the network's challenge to find intelligent ways to balance competing imperatives in a world where **86%** of marketers agree they want their agencies to connect the right talent around the right brief, wherever it sits (inside the network or beyond).

Successfully navigating these demands requires agencies to adopt a much more fluid approach to talent and expertise, enabled by tech, incentivized by the right financial models, and most importantly by a spirit of radical collaboration, generosity, and curiosity.

Similarly, when it comes to brand and performance, we see some extraordinary data. **77%** of CMOs agree that we need to recommit to brand, **35%** agreeing "strongly".

75% agree that we need to double down on performance, with **33%** agreeing "strongly". Of course, there are significant local nuances—China, Brazil, and Italy are significantly more likely to agree that now is time to focus more on brand.

The US is most likely to agree with the statement "I often have to focus on the short term to the detriment of the long term", at **88%**. Nevertheless, there is a prevailing sense that either/or is no longer good enough.

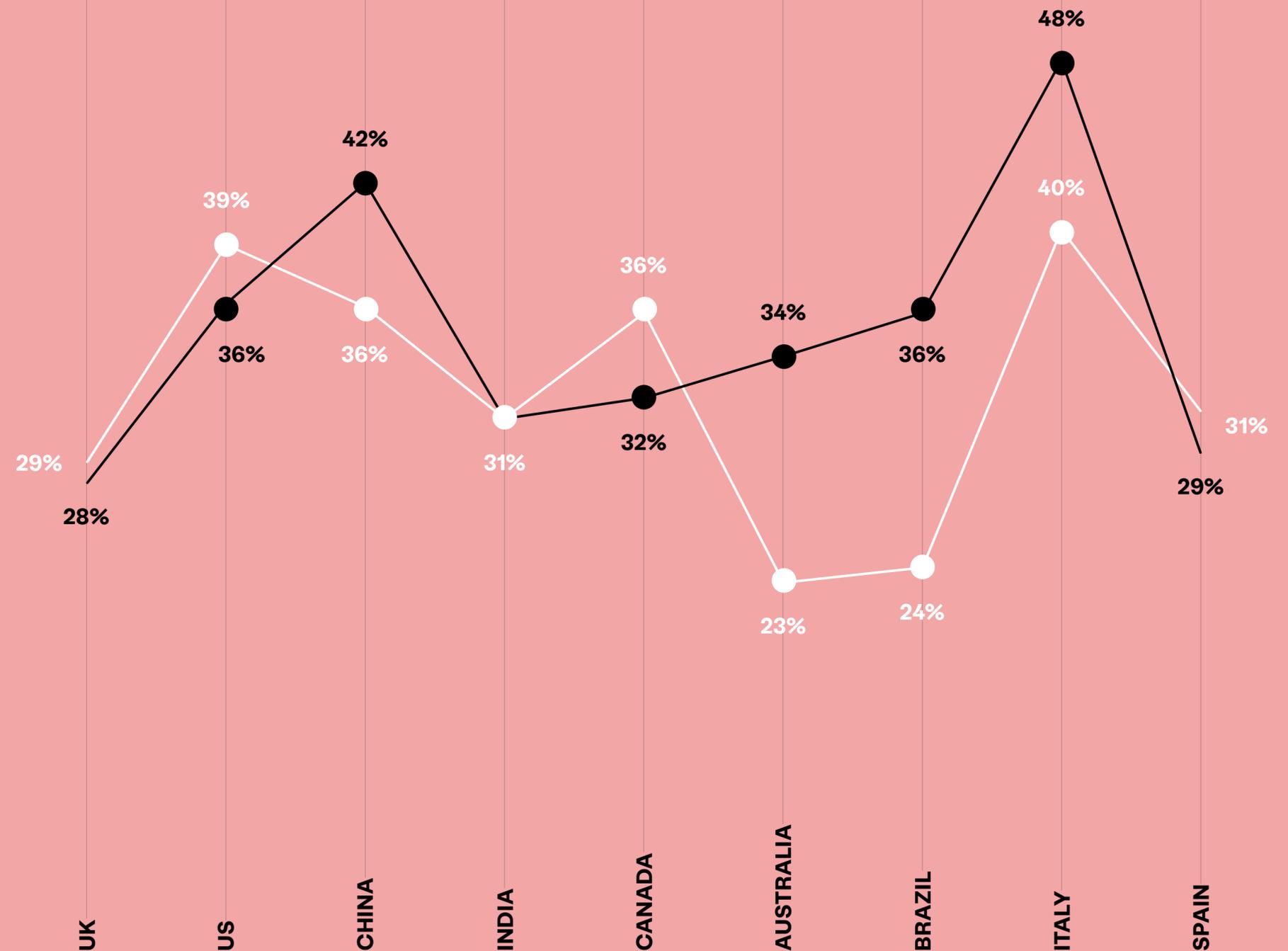
BALANCING BRAND AND DEMAND

When it comes to Brand vs Performance, CMOs are clear that there can no longer be a question of either/or.

At a global level, CMO's agree in almost equal measure that the industry needs to double down on performance and recommit to brand. While individual market nuances explain some of this apparent contradiction, perhaps the larger point is that we must avoid the dangerous middle ground where we do neither wholeheartedly.

In a media landscape with so many different opportunities both to build powerful brand emotion and to use data to personalize and convert why settle for a halfway house?

Better still, why not embrace new possibilities to connect compelling content and effortless transaction as never before?



● STRONGLY AGREE WE SHOULD FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON BRAND

● STRONGLY AGREE WE SHOULD DOUBLE DOWN ON PERFORMANCE

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BRANDS AND BUSINESSES



"[The Everything Book](#)", a collaboration between our teams in India and Portugal, brings education to rural India.

CONNECTED TALENT

CMOs want the ease of one, the power of many. The perfect team for today's fast-changing and volatile world does not exist; the businesses and brands that can connect the right talent in the right moment or can connect surprising talent to unlock new outcomes will thrive.

INTEROPERABLE, NOT IDENTICAL

With access to great talent and agile teaming, one size doesn't have to fit all. Modern agencies will connect centers of excellence and centers of delivery leveraging shared systems and platforms but without sacrificing local flair, originality, and character.

INTELLIGENT SCALE

In a world of global brands and intelligent automation, scale is no longer about the number of points an agency has on a map, but its ability to use data and technology to deliver impact and consistency in the most efficient way possible.

08

THRIVING IN A CONNECTED WORLD

**THE SKILLS NEEDED TO THRIVE IN A CONNECTED WORLD SIT FIRMLY
AT THE INTERSECTION OF BRAND, EXPERIENCE AND CULTURE.**

For a generation of CMOs who value knowing and owning their audience above all else, responding to changing customer expectations and behaviors is imperative.

That means responding to a generation with heightened expectations of brand integrity, heightened expectations of customer experience, and increased ability to avoid content that fails to engage or entertain.

At Dentsu Creative, we believe that in a changing landscape, brands are built through actions, experiences, and culture.

Actions that place purpose at the core of the business, not the periphery.

Experiences that connect craft and innovation to deliver truly distinctive and delightful interactions.

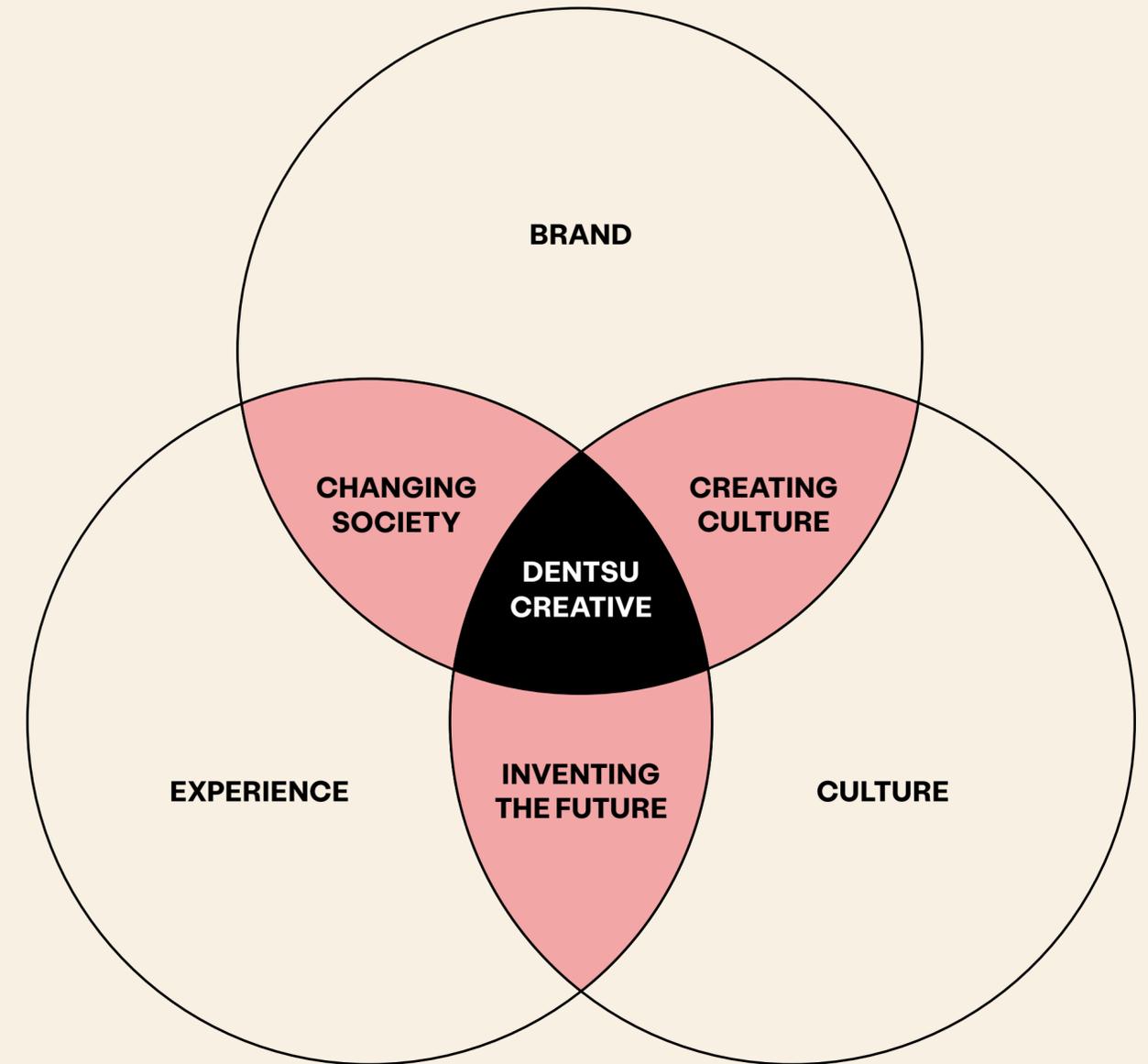
Creativity that creates culture and earns its own audience; both creating entertaining campaigns, and enduring entertainment platforms.

A connected world creates new challenges but also new opportunities as the boundaries between culture, commerce, entertainment and experience blur, enabling new possibilities that are highly engaging and highly effective.

CREATIVITY FOR A CONNECTED WORLD

The only truly effective strategy for modern brands is to connect with modern customers in the spaces and places that matter most to them. That means innovating at the intersection of brand, experience, and culture, creating ideas that change society, create culture and invent new possibilities.

At Dentsu Creative, we connect diverse skills and specialisms to imagine new possibilities. We know the future belongs to those with the imagination to invent it.



BEYOND BRAVERY

IN SUMMARY

Despite dramatic advances in technology, CMOs remain committed to the transformative power of creativity. **85%** view creativity as a catalyst for economic growth, with this sentiment increasing to **94%** among US marketers. When we consider CMOs' attitudes to creative risk-taking, **60%** agree that we are not taking enough creative risks as an industry (rising to **75%** in China and **72%** in Italy).

Yet perhaps it's time to move beyond the notion that less traditional approaches are a risk and instead see them as the safest and most effective strategy for engaging customers in a rapidly changing world.

If the exponential rise of AI teaches us anything it's that innovation can no longer be at the periphery of what we do. The very new becomes the new normal all too quickly.

We've long had the evidence, as an industry, that famous, attention-grabbing work has the greatest commercial impact. To reach new audiences, we have no choice but to bring breakthrough creativity to bear in the channels that reach, connect with, and convert them most effectively. Only then do we stand a chance of creating ideas with true and lasting impact.

The choice is simple: innovate, entertain, inspire, or be ignored.

In that scenario, creativity that creates culture, shapes society, and invents new possibilities is not a luxury but an essential.

At this crossroads for creativity, what could be more exciting?

THANK YOU

To access insight into the role of creativity and the creative experience among senior marketing professionals, we surveyed over 700 CMOS or those in equivalent positions, from Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Italy, Spain, the UK, and the US.

The fieldwork was conducted in May 2023.

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