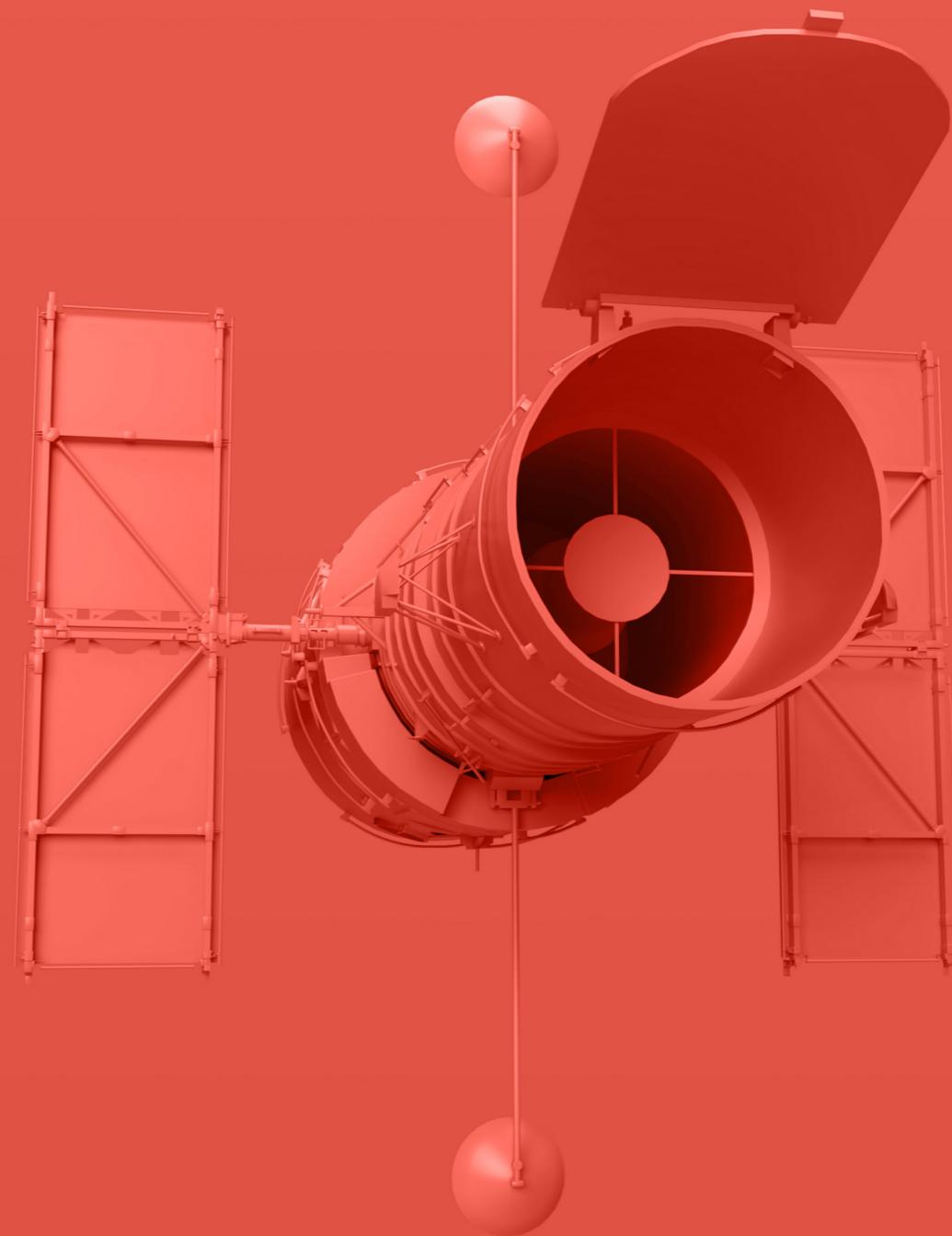
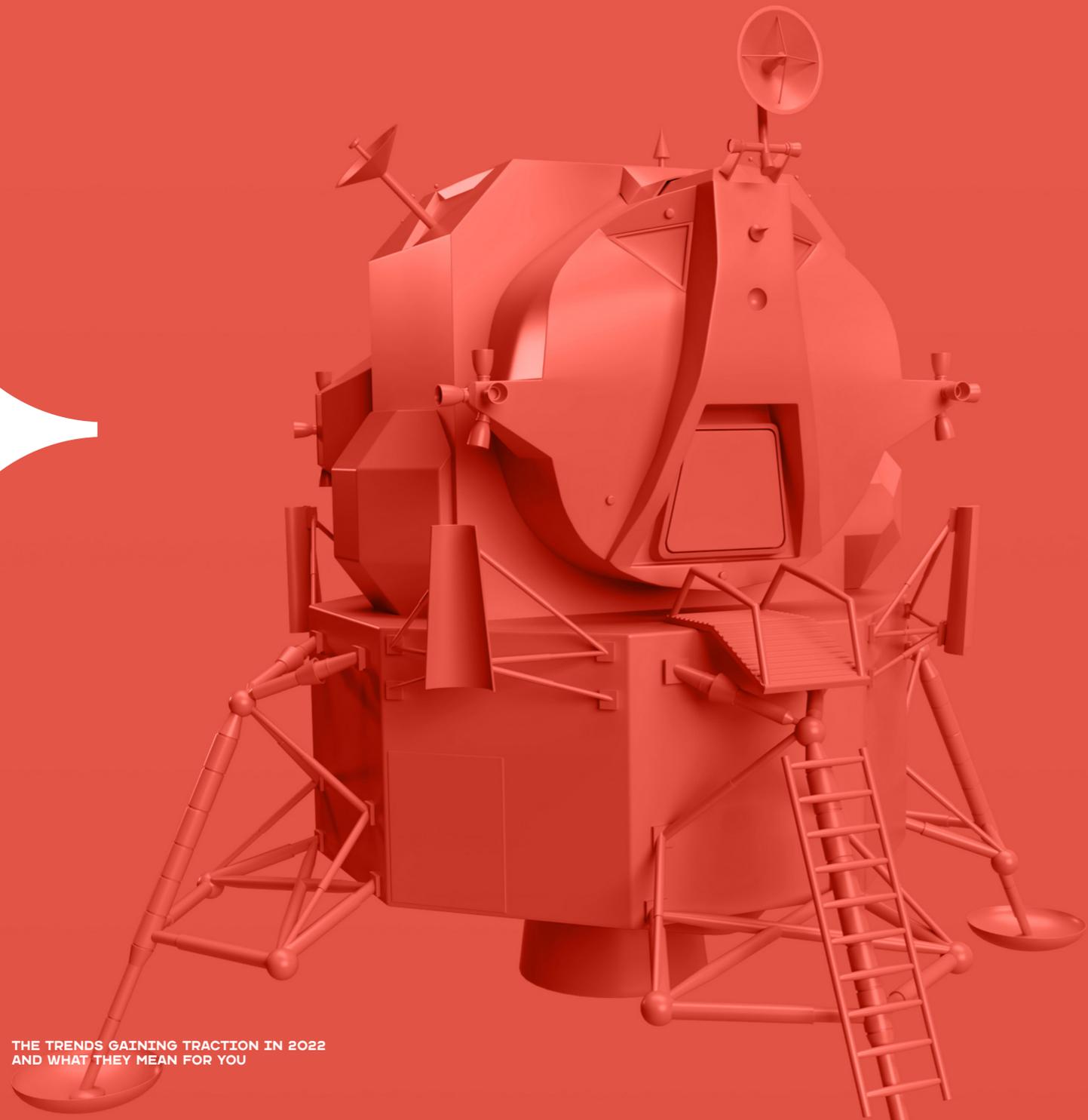


THE TRENDS GAINING TRACTION IN 2022

AND WHAT
THEY MEAN
FOR YOU





FUTURE LANDSCAPES

There is no sugar-coating it, we have been through the ringer in recent years. The seismic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, against the backdrop of growing inequality and social injustice, not to mention the small matter of the climate crisis, has understandably generated a steep rise in anxiety. We have been forced to relinquish control, undo the social ties that had bound us together and undertake radical lifestyle changes. Our resilience and adaptability have been severely tested.

2021 brought some respite but also the global aftershocks of struggling supply chains, a rather ugly exit of Trump from the White House, stark vaccine inequality and yet more new temperature records and severe weather events.

2022 will see individuals taking back control and forging brave new paths based on their redefined values and personal passions. We believe this 'once in a lifetime' moment provides significant opportunities for businesses and brands to do likewise, and to play an important role in a more successful, optimistic future.

#1 GET REAL AKA THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

DRIVERS

- The spread of misinformation and multiple 'truths' is leading to a more fragmented society with increasingly polarised views
- The proliferation of beautifully curated influencers jars with the reality of real life and all its lockdown imperfections
- Far from mindless 'consumers', people are wise to marketing trickery, greenwashing practices and misuse of their personal data

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

A willingness to embrace the world in all its imperfect beauty

- Social media is ever popular as a platform for self-expression but there is a growing 'rejection of perfection' and signs of the end of the curated self
- False information has caused confidence and trust to plummet. As a result, people need transparency and clarity in order to build trust and get back control
- We want honesty and authenticity from our spokespeople, casual spontaneity over performance and polish, and heroes who are strong enough to show their vulnerability to earn our trust
- Evolution of the influencer of the future from self-promoter to self-discoverer

PROOF POINTS

- Simone Biles' openness about her mental health concerns came as a shock but was quickly embraced as we realised that even our heroes have struggles
- Backlash against digitally enhanced images on Instagram - #NoFilter
- Ever growing popularity of influencers who share ideas versus products
- Campaigns featuring body positivity/real skin
- Brands that fail honestly recover better

HOW YOU CAN BE PART OF IT

- Brands that create deep connections and help people to feel happy and fulfilled being their authentic selves will be most successful
- Don't be scared to wear your heart on your sleeve through honest self-expression
- Consider the use of dynamic, more relaxed 'spontaneous' imagery
- Speak the same language as your buyers; reject superfluous jargon and industry-speak
- Provide clear, unambiguous information to help give your customer a sense of control over their choices
- Reflect diversity



REPRESENTATIVE CAMPAIGN
Frida Baby Breast Care (US, 2021)

#2

LIFE REFRESH AKA THE PURSUIT OF PURPOSE

DRIVERS

- A crisis provides the right conditions for change
- A combination of health anxieties and enforced lifestyle shifts have led to an evolution in working habits and changing priorities around health and wellbeing
- Traditional leaders and institutions have been found wanting; change leadership is coming from grass roots communities
- Increased awareness of intersectionality and social inequality is causing people to analyse their own biases and change their values and beliefs

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

A re-evaluation of personal values, lifestyles and goals

- The pandemic has been destabilising, leading to much soul searching: who are we? What do we want/need? Are we what we do?
- We've emerged from lockdown with a 'YOLO' mindset, ready for freedom, joy, meaning, adventure, personal expression, and a need to 'make it count'
- The majority of employees wish to retain the positive impact of remote working and changing patterns in how we work, leading to changing attitudes around why we work
- Record numbers are leaving and changing jobs, due partly to a delayed reaction after staying put, and partly to changing needs and values
- Activities and purchases that enhance physical and mental wellbeing are on the rise: downloads of mindfulness apps such as Headspace have risen significantly, and UK pet care sales have doubled



REPRESENTATIVE CAMPAIGN
Burberry Open Spaces (2021)

PROOF POINTS

- The 'Great Resignation' peaks as 8m Americans and over 1m UK employees quit work in July and August 2021 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, UK Labour Force Survey, ONS)
- 46% of UK holidaymakers plan to spend more on holidays post-pandemic
- A shift to slowing down, mindfulness and balance: twice as many people prioritise time for themselves in 2021 compared with 2015 (Euromonitor)
- #ThatGirl –TikTok trend

HOW YOU CAN BE PART OF IT

- Reflect this attitude change; emphasise positivity in communications and explore campaigns that encourage people to be bold and brave. Inspire a sense of limitless possibility
- Ask yourself what you can do to help them with their lifestyle change, e.g., how can you help them slow down/simplify/get deeper?
- Think about where they are, attitudinally and literally: are you where they are, and are you demonstrating it?

#3

CLIMATE CATASTROPHE AKA CHANGING FOR THE PLANET

DRIVERS

- Widening acceptance that a warmer future is now inevitable, that we are already seeing the impact, and that serious action is needed urgently
- The desire to live sustainably and minimise our footprint is affecting how we buy and use products, especially in younger age groups
- Spending patterns once again shift away from 'stuff' towards experiences (after a delivery-on-demand fuelled resurgence during the pandemic)

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Positive action becomes mainstream

- As pandemic-induced stress subsides, we will see environmental anxiety rise
- A growing awareness of 2030 targets and eco-anxiety is driving behaviour change among a broader population
- There is an ever expanding range of new products and services on the market that claim to minimise harm or have a positive impact on the environment
- Perceived inactivity of world leaders/big business is leading to decentralisation of power as community groups focus on improving their own environments
- Convenience is on a collision course with sustainability
- Expectation for brands to help buyers reduce their impact on the environment

PROOF POINTS

- 46% of young people say that eco-anxiety affects their daily life (Trendwatching)
- 67% of people tried to have a positive environmental impact every day in 2021 (Euromonitor)
- Increasing sales of low and zero carbon options, 33% buying used/second-hand items at least every few months (Euromonitor)
- Tech is helping to trace supply chains and measure environmental impact of our purchases, e.g., Yayzy carbon footprint calculator app
- A paper by KPMG suggests that the pandemic has "brought online retail forward by about five years", turbocharging the establishment of D2C routes to market



HOW YOU CAN BE PART OF IT

- Make environmental impact part of your strategy and monitor your business impact on people and planet, as well as profit
- Small Interventions can make a huge difference. Identify the problems you need to solve to become environmentally 'friendly' and activate your NPD pipeline
- New business models including buy back schemes, D2C, refurbished product offerings, peer-to-peer marketplaces and reusable packaging can provide new revenue streams and drive brand relevance. Can you re-use or recycle surplus materials, reduce waste, and investigate e-commerce opportunities?
- Is there a community that is important to your brand or company? Find their leaders and begin to engage with them

#4

REDEFINED SPACES

AKA BLENDING THE REAL AND THE VIRTUAL

DRIVERS

- The loss of 'normal' social interactions during lockdown brought about the rapid uptake of tech solutions for human connection
- The evolution of flexible spaces to fulfil multiple functions, e.g., home as workspace, entertainment facility, wellbeing retreat etc.
- Broad adoption of hybrid and remote working patterns driving an urban exodus
- Technology offers us open access to the existing and new worlds without the need to leave home

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

The blurring of life on and offline

- Socialising online is now the preferred form of entertainment for many, particularly younger generations. Platforms like Roblox and Fortnite are more than just games; they're spaces to inhabit with friends
- A wave of home improvement geared towards creating flexible hubs designed around multiple activities
- Workplaces too are having to redefine what they offer candidates in order to win the war for talent
- We are at the dawn of a new era for the internet: the Metaverse is coming and will be designed and created by the digital architects that take the initiative. Many brands are already getting in on the act, buying product placement and advertising space
- Social networks are gearing up to join the Metaverse too. Community based networks, such as those found on gaming platforms, YouTube and TikTok, are regarded as huge opportunities for brand activation



PROOF POINTS

- Growth of home improvement: paint sales increased by 47% and garden items by 48% during the pandemic (Statistica)
- 48% find it difficult to manage work and leisure boundaries (Mintel)
- 38% of people took part in online gaming at least weekly in 2021 compared with 29% in 2015 (Euromonitor)
- Virtual music festivals, art exhibitions and sports events are becoming ever more common on gaming and social media platforms
- Virtual stores have emerged, selling digital only products such as NFTs designed to equip and elevate avatars

HOW YOU CAN BE PART OF IT

- Is there a specific community, real or virtual, that would be particularly interested in your offer? What value can you offer them in that space?
- Can you bring gamification into your brand experience?
- Get creative. What is the perfect way for people to engage with your brand? Whatever you can imagine can now be built
- Workplaces are adapting to the changing needs and expectations of their employees. How are you accommodating the desire for flexibility, and supporting needs around personal purpose and wellbeing?

ARE YOU FIT FOR 2022 AND BEYOND?

Are you focused on forming deep and supportive human connections based on understanding and trust? Do your customers see you as an ally or catalyst in their personal pursuits?

It's never been more important to challenge traditional business models, many of which no longer suit evolving customer attitudes, needs and behaviours.

Sustainability equals advantage. Are environmental goals integral to your strategy and are you measuring your progress against them honestly?

People are returning to pre-pandemic life at different rates based on their individual comfort levels, and 2022 will continue to be a period of significant personal and collective reflection. Adaptable businesses and brands offering hybrid models and the ability to pivot between in-person and virtual connections will be the ones best placed to ride the road to recovery and offer something of real value in the changing world.

If you'd like to explore how these trends could apply to your business or brand, get in touch with tash@wearesuperstar.com

SOURCES

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