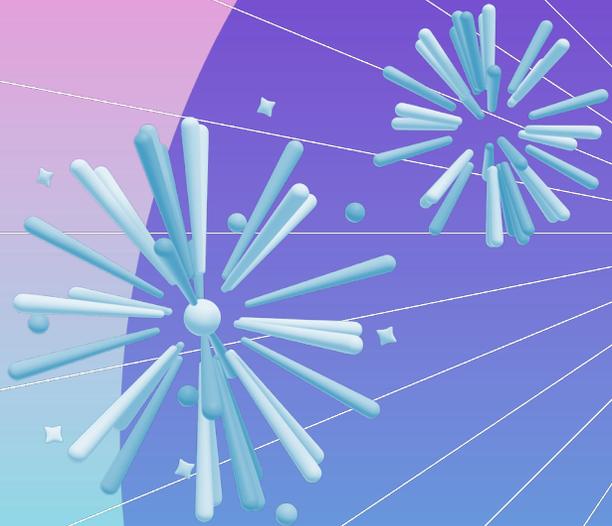
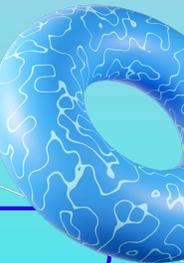


THE CULTURE GAP

CHAPTER TWO



**WELCOME TO THE
100YR OLD CUSTOMER**



2026

THE EXISTENTIAL CONSUMER AND THE 100-YEAR LIFE

How lifespans are
reshaping what
consumers want
from brands and
how brands navigate
culture IRL and URL.



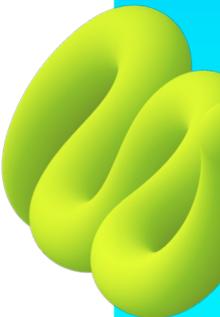
The 100-year life: brand loyalty for longer

For the first time in human history, a child born today can reasonably expect to live 100 years or more. By 2050, the number of centenarians will rise from 500,000 to 3.7 million. Today's five-year-olds will live to 100.

This changes the fundamentals. Career arcs stretch across five decades. Relationships unfold across radically different life chapters. Financial planning extends across generations. Identity becomes a series of reinventions, not a fixed point.

For brands, this represents an unprecedented opportunity: customers who need you not for a transaction, but across decades and multiple life stages. The competitive advantage belongs not to those who acquire best, but to those who remain meaningful as people evolve.

But there is a problem. Before brands can build this kind of loyalty, they must understand what is actually happening to consumers right now.

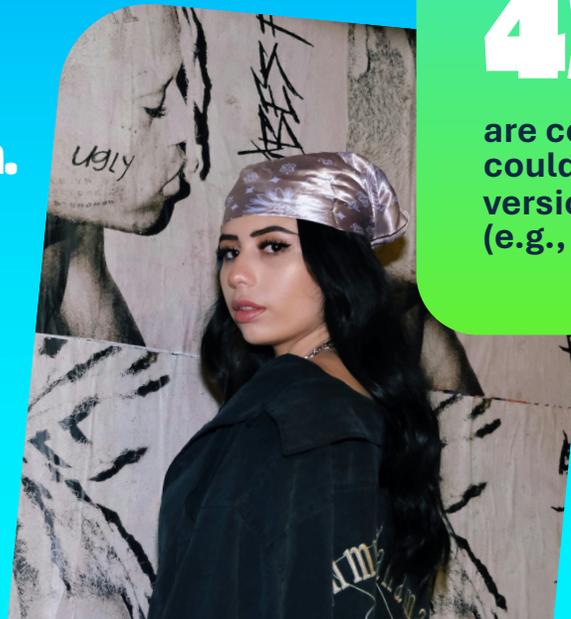


CONSUMERISM IN CRISIS

In a survey conducted by FH with more than 4,000 adults across the UK and USA we found that across the world, people face unprecedented uncertainty. The straightforward path - education, career, family, retirement - has fractured into multiple chapters of reinvention, each bringing possibility and pressure in equal measure.

In response, something new is emerging: **existential consumerism.** Not consumption driven by want or need, but by the search for control in a world that feels increasingly out of control.

People consume to invest in their futures, optimise their bodies and careers, protect their identities. They believe the right product will restore agency. But the systems designed to deliver this control are quietly eroding it instead.



77%

feel the need to take more precautions or make more preparations than before



This anxiety is compounded by new fears:

43%

are concerned that AI could generate fake versions of them (e.g., deepfakes)

85%

believe the world feels more unstable and unpredictable



SIX INTERCONNECTED FORCES ARE DRIVING EXISTENTIAL CONSUMERISM

Together, these six forces create a culture in which people feel they must constantly consume, optimise and protect themselves, not because they want to, but because the alternative feels too risky. That is the crisis.

But it is also the opening for brands willing to move differently.

1 The Monolith Beneath the Marketplace:
Choice feels infinite but agency is limited

2 Homogenisation Through Wellness:
Medical innovation is narrowing what healthy looks like

3 Optimisation Overload:
Progress has replaced peace as the marker of a life well lived

4 Digital Life Displacement:
Core experiences are moving online but creating deeper isolation

5 Attention Fragmentation:
The ability to sit with your own desires is disappearing

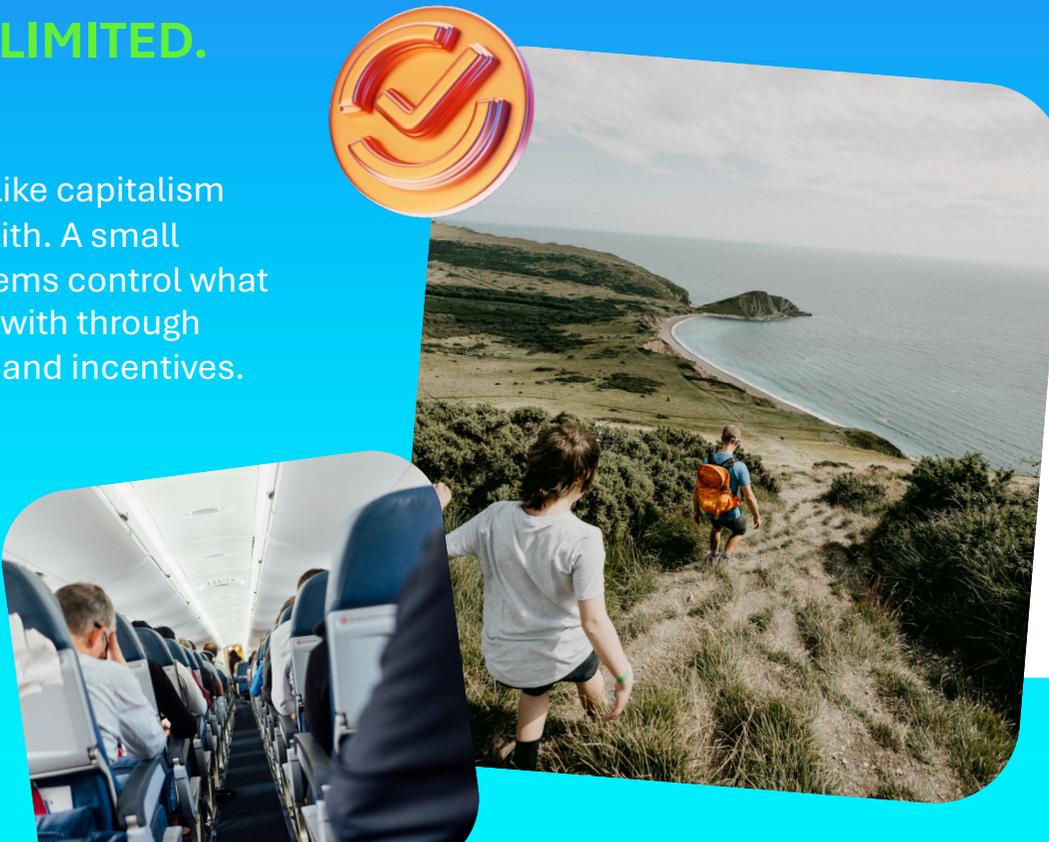


6 The Paradox of Control:
Every tool designed to protect is creating new vulnerabilities

THE MONOLITH BENEATH THE MARKETPLACE

CHOICE FEELS INFINITE
BUT AGENCY IS LIMITED.

Technofeudalism looks like capitalism but operates as a monolith. A small number of tech ecosystems control what we see, buy and engage with through shared algorithms, data and incentives.



BRAND MOVE: Restore genuine agency

- **Reduce noise.** Offer clarity, not infinite options.
- **Embrace curation.** Editorial selections beat algorithmic ones.
- **Be transparent.** People trust brands that explain why, not just what.
- **Create exit ramps.** Offer friction-free ways to opt out: This builds loyalty, rather than engagement theater.

Why it builds 100-year loyalty: Across a century, consumption needs shift radically. The brand that respects agency today becomes the brand they return to when life changes.

59%

feel constantly shown things to buy, watch or try, but want to consume less

HOMOGENISATION THROUGH WELLNESS

MEDICAL INNOVATION IS NARROWING WHAT HEALTHY LOOKS LIKE.

Wellness is now identity. Healthcare innovations like GLP-1s, biohacking and genetic testing have reframed health as something to optimise, not simply maintain. This medicalisation of the self has created new status signals and new divides: who can access advanced treatments, who chooses natural paths, and who feels pressured to conform to emerging norms of engineered wellbeing.

But there's something more troubling happening. As medical innovations become visible and accessible, they are narrowing our collective imagination about what healthy bodies can look like. A uniform ideal emerges, one that increasingly exists regardless of individual biology, culture or lived experience.



I WISH I HAD KEPT THE NOSE OF MY ANCESTORS.

Bella Hadid famously got a rhinoplasty aged just 14



This means even when people make the choice that feels medically right for them, they face social judgment.



56%

of GLP-1 users or considerers feel there is stigma attached to using GLP-1s

72%

of GLP-1 users or considerers see it as taking control of health, not a shortcut

BRAND MOVE: Expand the definition of health.

- **Normalise choice without judgment.** Medical decisions are personal, not moral.
- **Celebrate diverse representations.** Healthy looks different across ages, cultures and life stages.
- **Reframe health as holistic.** Move from metrics to wellbeing.
- **Preserve heritage.** Design treatments that support natural diversity, not erase it.
- **Act responsibly in the body economy.** Bring transparency. Refuse to profit from narrow ideals.

Why it builds 100-year loyalty: Across a century, bodies transform. The brand that **celebrates diverse health expressions** across ageing becomes the one people trust through all of it.

OPTIMISATION OVERLOAD



PROGRESS HAS REPLACED PEACE AS THE MARKER OF A LIFE WELL LIVED.

We are living in an age defined by optimisation. Wellbeing is no longer something to enjoy but something to measure, track and improve. Progress has replaced peace as the marker of a life well lived.

Your worth is tied to how relentlessly you push yourself. You are expected to optimise your sleep, fitness, diet, career, investments, side projects and mental health simultaneously. In this culture, standing still has become the greatest fear. Feeling all right becomes suspicious, as if comfort signals a lack of ambition.



45%

sometimes feel overwhelmed keeping up with health management

57%

feel guilty when they don't stick to their health routines

43%

say optimisation of health has become more obligation than enjoyment

36%

say trying to be at their best physically takes a toll on their mental health

The protective tool has become destructive for younger generations

While **26%** of Gen Z invest in health approaches to keep up with the demands of modern life...

54% of them say that trying to be at their best physically takes a toll on their mental health

BRAND MOVE: SHIFT FROM PERFORMANCE TO PROTECTION

- **Promote rest over constant improvement.** Position rest as productive. Self-acceptance as strength.
- **Design tools that reduce cognitive load.** Trends over moment-to-moment data. Fewer notifications. Clearer guidance. Calm, not more data.
- **Reframe optimisation as guidance, not stakes.** Shift from “perfection” to “balance,” from “vigilance” to “awareness.”
- **Celebrate sustainable habits over extremes.** Small consistent choices beat dramatic overhauls.
- **Protect what makes us human.** Not everything needs to be tracked. Meaning emerges outside our control.

Why it builds 100-year loyalty:

A 100-year life cannot be lived in **constant optimisation**. The brand that gives permission to rest, to accept, to cycle between effort and ease becomes the one people return to across decades.



DIGITAL LIFE DISPLACEMENT

CORE EXPERIENCES ARE MOVING ONLINE BUT CREATING DEEPER ISOLATION.

More of our lives are taking place online. Dating, romantic relationships, socialising, meeting new people. Not just entertainment, but the connective tissue of life itself.

Dating and relationships are already taking place online and for younger generations, the idea of online-only romantic partners isn't a strange one

- **Over 1 in 5 (22%)** say dating and romantic relationships are taking place online as much as, if not more than, in person. This is even higher for Millennials (31%) and Gen Z (34%)
- In fact, **33% of Gen Z and 29% of Millennials** say they'd feel comfortable having an online-only romantic partner (compared to just 15% of Gen X and 5% of Boomers)

32%

of **Gen Z** and **28% of Millennials** say they'd feel comfortable getting sexual satisfaction via online only sources (compared to just 15% of Gen X and 6% of Boomers)



The paradox: more connected, more isolated. Digital platforms promise intimacy but deliver performance. They promise community but create comparison. They promise connection but require a curated self.

In response, people consume more (dating apps, social platforms, virtual experiences) trying to find the genuine connection these tools promise but cannot deliver.

BRAND MOVE: CREATE REAL BELONGING, NOT DIGITAL SIMULATION



- **Design for presence**, not performance. Remove metrics that incentivise curating.
- **Use digital as gateway**, not replacement. The app connects people. The experience is in-person.
- **Support offline social skills.** Presence and vulnerability are increasingly rare and valuable.
- **Build genuine community.** Small groups. Repeated interactions. Real stakes. Not algorithmic reach.
- **Celebrate solitude.** Help people sit with their own thoughts. This is increasingly difficult and necessary.



WHY IT BUILDS 100-YEAR LOYALTY:

A 100-year life is only meaningful through genuine relationships rooted in real presence. The brand that facilitates actual connection, not simulation, becomes woven into how people live.

ATTENTION FRAGMENTATION

YOU CAN'T TRUST YOUR OWN JUDGEMENT IF
YOU CAN'T SIT WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS.

Feeds, screens and platforms erode focus and, more fundamentally, our ability to trust our own judgment.



Living online is impacting how we exist in the world – from what we experience to the attention we give it. And this is more pronounced for younger generations.

- 50% of respondents say they feel like living online means missing out on moments that aren't recommended to them by their algorithm, with this being even more pronounced for Millennials (63%) and Gen Z (72%)
- Many struggle to sit with their own thoughts, with 60% saying that being online impacts their ability to have quiet moments with stimulation, rising to 73% of Millennials and 71% of Gen Z
- So much so, that 42% of Gen Z say they struggle to sit for more than just 15 minutes with their thoughts without distraction



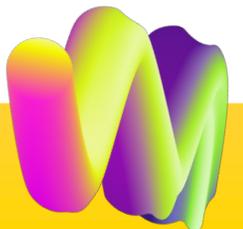
Even storytelling is adapting. Matt Damon recently shared that Netflix encourages filmmakers to assume **audiences are half-watching**, urging them to restate plot points because so many viewers are on their phones. This raises an uncomfortable question: Are our attention spans shrinking or is the culture around us lowering its expectations, training our minds to operate at the lowest level of attention? It's a cultural alarm bell.

When entertainment assumes our attention is already gone, it reveals how much cognitive autonomy has already been lost.

In response, 41% say they'd like to cut down on apps and social platforms (rising to 55% of Gen Z).

This isn't a productivity problem. **It's autonomy erosion.** When you can't sit with your thoughts for 15 minutes, you can't distinguish between what you want and what you've been shown. You default to algorithmic recommendations, influencer suggestions, platform promotions. You no longer feel autonomous. You are guided.

The result: people consume more, seeking certainty in external sources because they've lost access to their own internal compass.



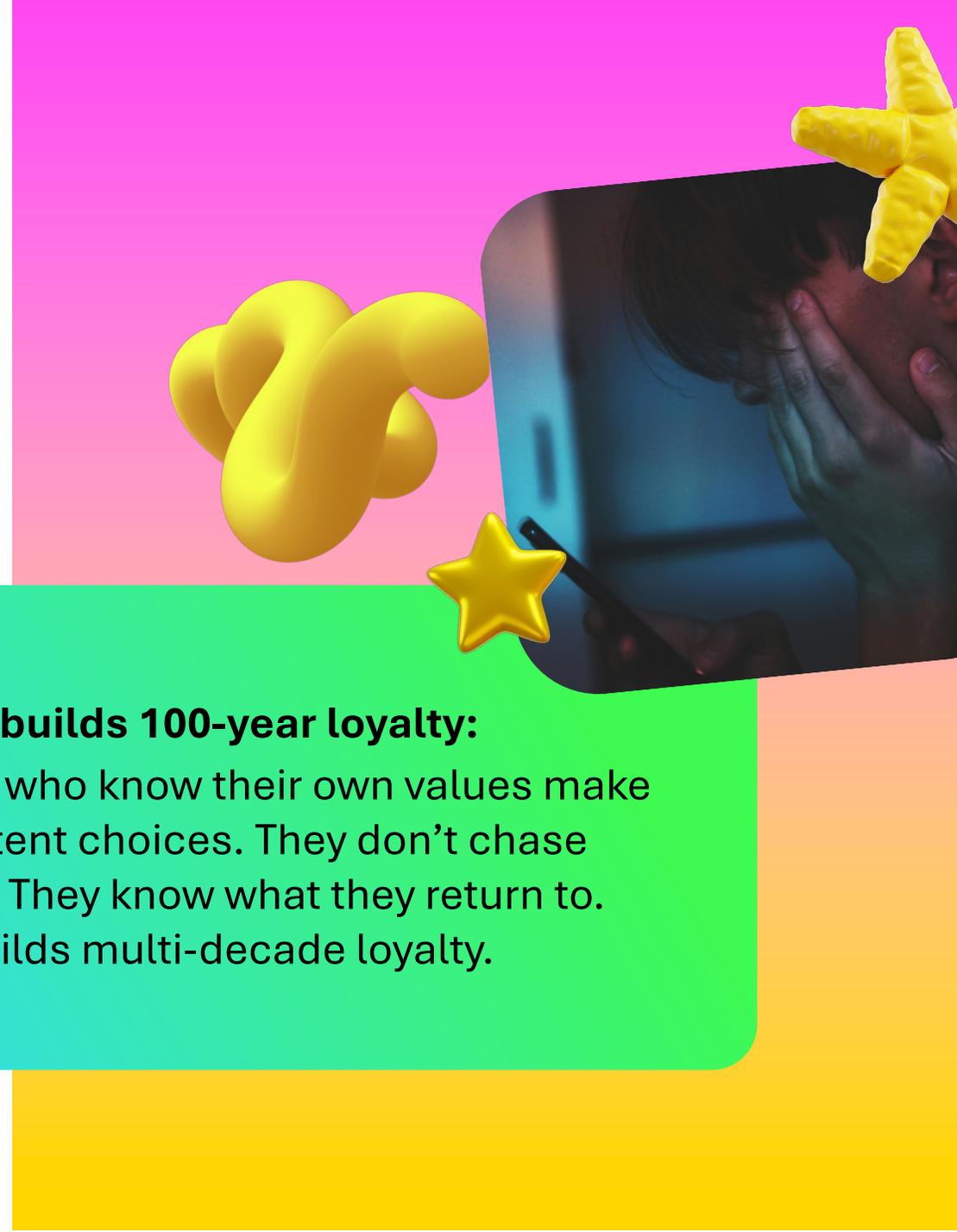
BRAND MOVE: RESTORE INTERNAL AUTHORITY

- **Create pathways to disconnect.** Design products that help people go offline. Celebrate disengagement.
- **Support introspection.** Help people understand their own patterns, values and desires without judgement.
- **Slow down decision-making.** Offer time before checkout. Friction in the right places builds confidence.
- **Replace algorithmic steering with exploration.** Let people wander without being led.
- **Honour boredom.** It's where creativity and genuine desire emerge. Don't optimise it away.



Why it builds 100-year loyalty:

People who know their own values make consistent choices. They don't chase trends. They know what they return to. This builds multi-decade loyalty.



THE PARADOX OF CONTROL

EVERY TOOL DESIGNED TO PROTECT IS CREATING A NEW VULNERABILITY.

Across health, finance, identity, relationships and work, people are taking more precautions. They are more vigilant, more protective, more guarded.

But the tools that promise protection are shifting responsibility from institutions to individuals, extracting personal data and creating new anxieties in the process.

Women experience this most acutely. They are advised to track their health obsessively while intimate data is sold to advertisers. Told to manage finances responsibly while algorithms optimise wealth concentration. Encouraged to pursue treatments while facing judgement for their choices. Sold autonomy while experiencing systematic exposure.

**The promise was empowerment.
The reality is surveillance
disguised as self-care.**

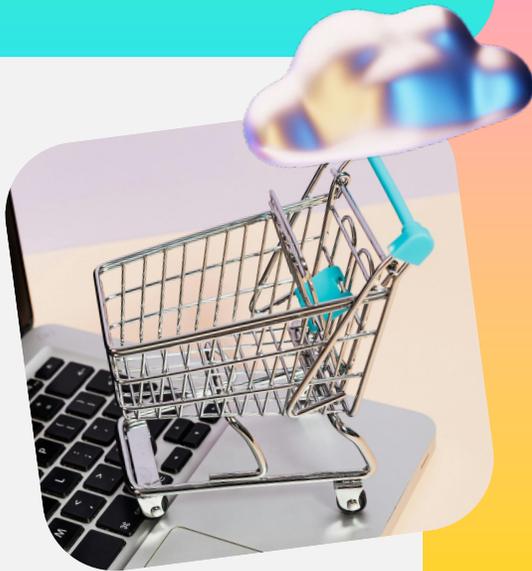
Many women are experiencing a deep sense of violation as they realise that personal information shared with health care apps may have been leaked or passed on without their consent. Details about their bodies, cycles and symptoms were offered in confidence, yet the spaces that promised support now feel exposed and unsafe. This loss of control is not just technical. It's emotional, shaking trust and leaving women wondering whether tools designed to empower them are instead exploiting their vulnerability. In an age where digital safety is tied so closely to personal autonomy, these breaches feel like personal betrayals, not just data lapses.

77%

feel the need to take more precautions than in the past
(80% women; 81% Gen Z and Millennials)



“Few things feel more private than what you tell your period app. Month after month, you confide your most intimate details: when your period arrived, how often you had sex, whether you masturbated, if you’re trying to have a baby. You treat it like a digital diary, believing these intimate details remain safely tucked away in your phone. My period app knows more than my partner. To think that information could be compromised makes me feel sick to my stomach and completely violated.” ~ Anonymous



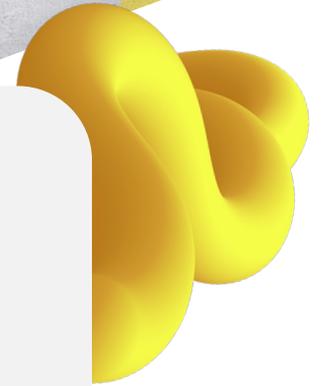
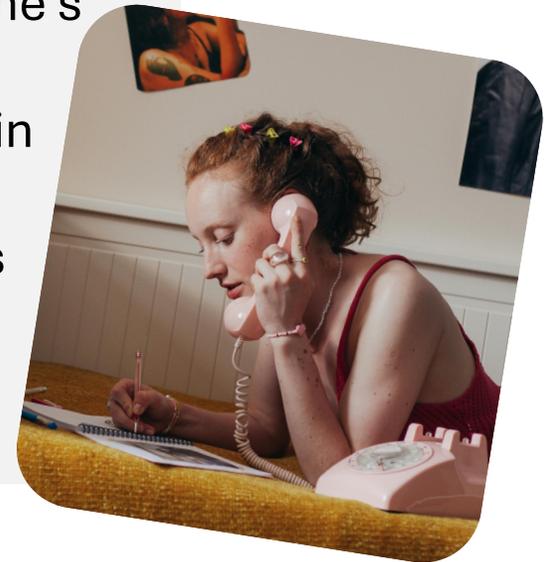
BRAND MOVE: TREAT DATA WITH TRUST, NOT AS AN ASSET

- **Privacy is a right, not a feature.** Make it the default, not something customers opt into.
- **Be radically transparent.** Tell people exactly what you collect, why and what you do with it in language they understand.
- **Give genuine control.** Let people easily see, download, delete and manage their data. Make opting out simple.
- **Refuse to monetise intimacy.** Health data, relationship information, financial details are trust to be protected, not assets to be traded.
- **Respond with empathy when breaches happen.** Own the violation. Offer practical support. Recovery of trust takes longer than loss.
- **Bring women to the table as co-designers.** If you're building for women, involve them in shaping data protection from the start.

Why it builds 100-year loyalty:

Over a century, personal data accumulates exponentially.

The brand trusted with someone's **most intimate information** becomes the brand they remain loyal to across all future life stages. That trust, once lost, is almost impossible to recover.



FROM EXISTENTIAL CONSUMERISM TO 100-YEAR LOYALTY

The six forces outlined in this report create one outcome: existential consumerism. People consume searching for agency, which erodes the very agency they're seeking. Breaking this cycle is the brand opportunity.

In a 100-year life, loyalty is not built through acquisition or metrics. It is built through genuine respect for human agency across decades of changing needs.



THE BRANDS THAT WIN:

- Reduce noise instead of amplifying it**
- Celebrate diversity instead of enforcing conformity**
- Promote balance instead of optimisation**
- Enable presence instead of performance**
- Support autonomy instead of steering choices**
- Protect data as sacred, rather than considering it an asset**

These brands compete on trust, not innovation speed. Trust is the only currency that compounds over a lifetime.

The existential consumer doesn't want more products or pressure. They want agency back. They want brands that protect them, not profit from their vulnerability. They want to know that across the decades ahead, someone has their back.

That is the brand opportunity of the 100-year life.



METHODOLOGY



Research methodology:

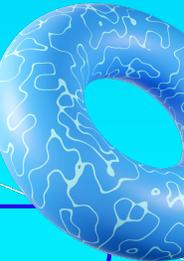
Study conducted by TRUE Global Intelligence (TGI), the in-house research practice of FleishmanHillard

10-minute online survey with 4,210 individuals across the UK (n=2,047) and USA (n=2,163). Respondents were nationally representative (18+), weighted to age, gender, region, and education.

Fieldwork took place between 23rd - 30th January 2026.

For more info on tailoring the cultural and creative strategies in this report to your brand contact:
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CULTURE



REPORT

2026