



HDY FUTURE THINKING

How do you use consumer and content trends to grow your brand?

KEEP CONNECTED

Since the pandemic started, life has felt like a rollercoaster. People, brands and businesses have all had to learn how to adapt and grow in challenging times.

In a world that is still changing against the backdrop of the pandemic, how can brands and businesses connect with an evolving audience?

Understanding the consumer and content landscape is vital to authentic engagement. **Read on to discover the HDY take on the trends you need to know about.**

CONSUMER TRENDS



THE BIG FINANCIAL SQUEEZE

Households are facing a triple consumer squeeze over 2022/23 as inflation, higher interest rates and increased national insurance contributions are set to hit our wallets at once.

Coupled with increasing energy and fuel prices, the cost of living will likely remain significantly higher than previous years. Data from the Centre for Economics and Business Research suggests a typical UK family of two adults and two children are predicted to spend **£33.60** more per week, adding up to a whopping **£1,700** per year.

The Bank of England predicts that by Spring 2022, inflation could increase by as much as **6%**. Even if this peak is short-term, it will put even more financial strain on consumers.

With some households predicted to experience an **income drop**, it'll soon become a **battle of the brands** when it comes to fighting for a share of consumer spending. Brand experience, customer service and product proposition will be more important than ever as we move through 2022.

For audiences to engage or spend with a brand, they need to clearly understand the value proposition. Showing brand authenticity and inspiring trust will be key to engaging audiences.

TAKING CONTROL

After the unpredictability of the last couple of years, people are more aware of how precarious our way of life is. This has had a knock on effect for consumers.

Many of us feel unsure about planning ahead this year, meaning we might think twice before booking certain events such as that long-haul holiday. The focus is likely to remain on short-term plans that are easier to manage - things like **staycations, at-home entertainment or wellbeing**

will remain prevalent. Who wanted two weeks all-inclusive in Barbados over a Netflix binge anyway?

By making things more manageable, or tackling uncertainty head on, consumers regain a sense of **taking back control**. When we are hit with things that are unavoidable, like the pandemic, we look to take a breath with the things within our power.

Brands can inspire a sense of control in audiences through transparency, simplicity, and great customer service.

AUTHENTICITY IS KEY



A turbulent 18 months has led to a time of **self reflection** for many consumers, as we were forced to re-evaluate what was important to us and switch gears where necessary. We discovered we could get through life with that little bit less, and this has led to a **change in attitudes** around what we buy and do.

Consumers are shifting towards **living more authentically** and this manifests right through to choosing brands and businesses that align with their own personal values such as sustainability or social responsibility.

Consumers are now placing much greater importance on company values and social stances.

We as people are beginning to care more about the world we live in, our society and our immediate networks. Brands and businesses need to show their own integrity and care.

LITTLE MOMENTS OF JOY



It's these little moments
of joy that get us through.
Show your audience positivity...
sometimes it's ok to be playful.

With lockdowns, restrictions and last minute cancellations, consumers have learnt to **appreciate the small things** we once took for granted. Dinner with your best friend. Date night. Family movie night. Upcycling an old piece of furniture. Whatever it is that brings a smile to your face.

Brands need to see the importance of lifting their audiences with **positive communications or experiences**; things that won't necessarily disappear with sudden changes to government guidelines.

By offering a **splash of fun** and a sprinkle of playfulness, brands can give consumers some light relief from the stress of recent times and provide an escape from everyday worries, stresses and boredom.

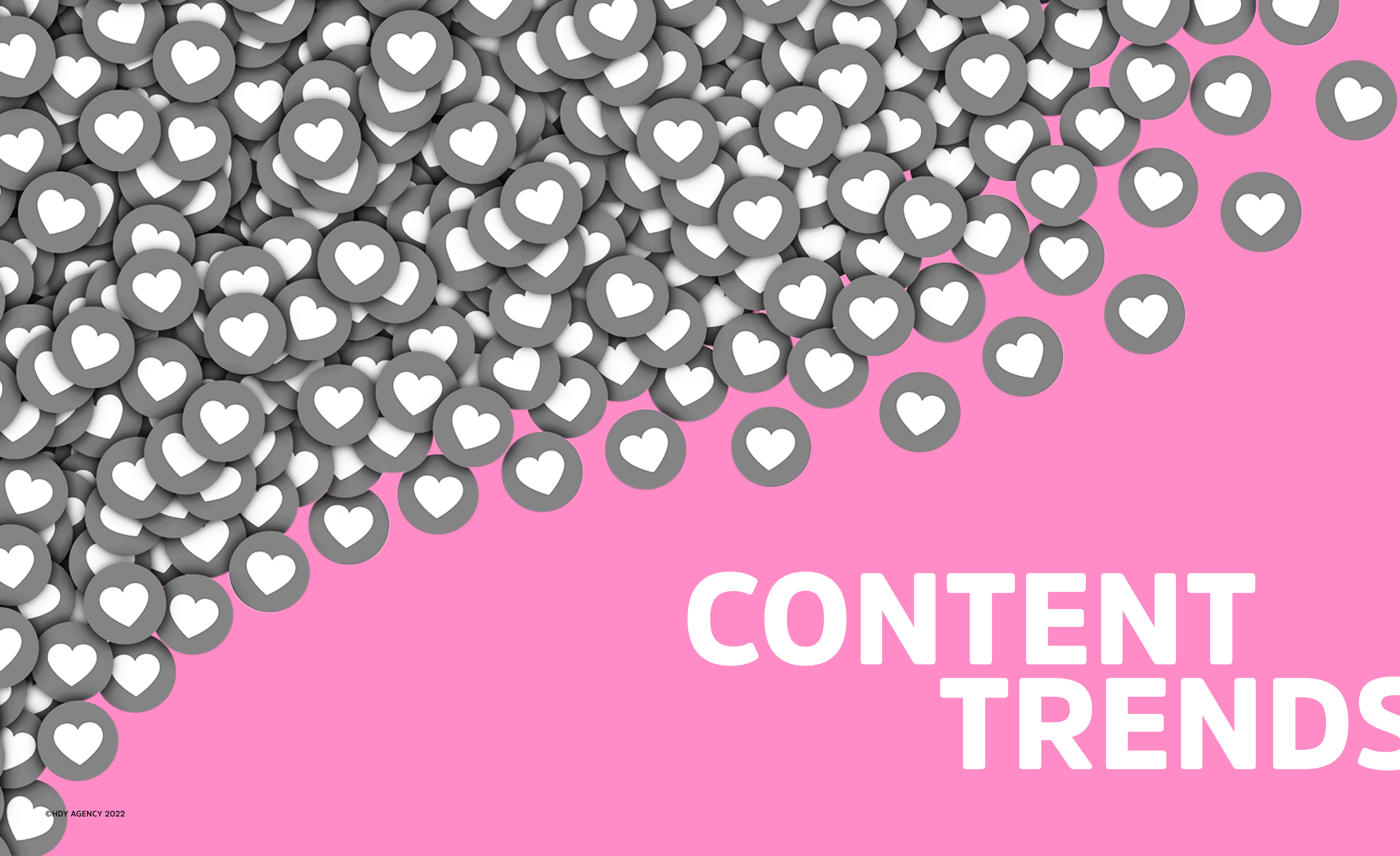
In addition to offering **novel experiences**, brands can encourage consumers to have fun with everyday routines and experiment with fashion, beauty, food and cooking. If we are looking for a silver lining to the pandemic, we were given the time to explore new hobbies and rediscover old passions. Let's keep this up!

After the experience of lockdown, consumers have become more conservative in their spending and more selective in the brands they engage with.


HDY's approach starts with **understanding your audience. This is crucial, so you can understand where they're at and what their pain points and drivers are, and how can your business or brand can authentically align with them.**

Insight is key to brand and content relevance - and HDY knows that **strategic content is essential. Communicate in a way that is authentic and be true to your brand.**

Naddy Onions, Client Services Director, HDY Agency



CONTENT TRENDS

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a text block. The magnifying glass is positioned over the text, making it larger and more prominent. The hand is holding the handle of the magnifying glass, which is a silver and black tool. The background is white.

People care more than ever about their privacy online, as they become wiser to not only how brands keep their data safe, but how their data is used for marketing purposes.

PRIVACY MATTERS

This consumer need has kickstarted tech giants to ramp up online privacy. We've recently seen Google Chrome commit to end third-party cookie support by 2023, and iOS Mail Privacy to restrict how brands can track email behaviour.

Brands and agencies know that **data is key** to reaching the right audiences and providing them with relevant content based on behaviour. But with data becoming more protected, how can brands effectively target audiences?

The call for privacy means that cookies will eventually be replaced by privacy-led alternatives. Google has unveiled its **Topics API** and its approach to "interest-based advertising". Topics will track users' interests and the content they consume to group consumers in up to **350** topics. A shift to broader advertising and a cull of data and behavioural analysis available means we'll no longer be able to hyper-personalise ads. For brands to remain one step ahead, they must **understand audience interests, and create meaningful, authentic content to build brand trust and cut through the noise.**

GET READY FOR SOCIAL SHOPPING

The world of shopping has changed from what it once was. It's no surprise that global e-commerce sales have grown at an unprecedented rate since 2020. It's predicted that the UK's e-commerce industry will experience a compounding annual growth rate of **5.16%**, and by 2025, the industry is expected to reach **£113 billion** in market value.

(Source: Statista)

Now is the time for retail businesses to ramp up their social shopping approach.



New ways have emerged to make online content more “shoppable”. Users can now buy products directly from social posts - saving us from unsuccessful vague internet searches after seeing a must-have dress in an untagged post online. We have seen the start of this already with the launch of **TikTok Shopping** in Q4 last year - a social commerce solution which lets TikTok creators promote and sell products on the platform.

Numbers show **43%** of Gen Z and **49%** of Millennials have purchased products or services directly from social media platforms. This is big for brands vying for the attention of younger consumers and they're taking heed: **73%** of businesses are currently selling on social media platforms and another **79%** plan to within the next 3 years. (Source: Harris Poll on behalf of Sprout Social)

What we're seeing is a major elevation of home shopping—taking the winning elements of traditional TV home shopping (remember that?) and socialising it to create **community and engagement** like never before.

VIDEO MARKETING

Supercharged by the 2020 lockdowns, video is now a core part of digital and social content and audiences can't get enough of it - people are watching more online video than ever before, averaging at a huge **19 hours per week!** That's nearly double the hours watched in 2018. Furthermore, people are **twice as likely** to share video content with their friends than any other type of content, including social media posts.

Explainer videos will continue to be one of the most watched forms of video content, as audiences look to social video to tell them about a product, brand or service - in fact **96% of people** have watched an explainer video in 2021.

YouTube continues to be the major video platform, and this Google-owned channel remains the second largest search engine. The capabilities for paid video ads across YouTube is ever-improving, backed up by the fact that **88% of video marketers** plan to include YouTube in their 2022 marketing strategy.



Short-form video is incredibly popular, especially content that is fun and lighthearted. **TikTok and Instagram** are the go-to platforms for this type of content, particularly TikTok which is now used globally by more than **1 billion** people. YouTube is snapping at the heels of TikTok, with YouTube shorts generating **5 trillion views** to date and plans to test branding shopping and content placements.

Source: Video Marketing 2022, Wyzowl

One of the biggest video trends in 2022 is the **short-form content**. Viewers have increasingly short attention spans, so we'll be developing video content that is **short, snappy and engaging**. Tie this in with the TikTok boom and you're onto a winner.

Morgan Tedd, Motion Content Lead, HDY Agency



THE METAVERSE IS HERE

In October 2021, Mark Zuckerberg launched the **Facebook rebrand to “Meta”**, signalling the company’s desire to lead the metaverse transformation.

Essentially, this term captures the possibilities of **virtual and augmented reality**; one in which virtual shared space is accessible through VR headsets, AR glasses or smartphone apps.

Meta allows users to **interact, socialise, explore and create content in a virtual environment** and make virtual transactions using blockchain technology and cryptocurrency, which the metaverse has close links with.

The Metaverse has, in theory, been around for a while. Virtual gaming like the Fortnite phenomenon, for example, is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the Metaverse.

This year we have already seen brands like Gymshark hold virtual Metaverse meetings, and investors paying millions to snap up metaverse land.

The metaverse is a truly exciting opportunity for both consumers and brands. It allows businesses to provide unique experiences to their audience whilst providing immersive spaces for consumers to interact with one another and the businesses brand. Marketing will become three dimensional and more ubiquitous with more emphasis on trust and self-ownership instead of chasing views and treating people as targets.

Josh Birch, UX Specialist, HDY Agency

PODCASTING GROWS

The podcast industry is growing, changing, and really starting to pick up the pace. There are over **2 million** active podcasts, over **48m** podcast episodes and **424m** podcast listeners - that's an incredible **15% growth** in listeners year on year.

(Source: Emarketer)

We anticipate a rise in podcast marketing, driven by the detailed targeting available and a loyal audience listening. Podcasts often instil trust and loyalty in their listeners and this means there is plenty of opportunity to engage target customers with your brand - **72%** of listeners who have followed a podcast for 4 or more years have converted through a sponsored ad.

While podcast reach and consumption is as high as ever, podcasts are still most widespread among young audiences, with close to **40%** of UK listeners aged 26 to 35 listening to podcasts on a weekly basis.

(Source: Buzzsprout)

Podcast listeners access and discover podcasts through market leaders **Spotify and Apple**. Spotify is showing signs of overtaking Apple as the most popular podcasting platform due to the way they secure exclusive content and cross-promote podcasts across their product offerings. Announcements from Spotify have highlighted the strong performance of podcasts as the pandemic has progressed, with the service announcing that podcast listening time almost doubled year-on-year in Q4 2020.

(Source: Mintel)

Our recommendation is to plan podcasts strategically with your target audience in mind. By knowing your audience and how they listen to podcasts, you can use podcasts as a content tool to authentically connect with your audience.

Content marketing is becoming increasingly complex, driven by the ever-changing digital landscape, and the consumer need for **authentic, relevant brand content**. It's important to remember that one size does not fit all; content needs to be totally in sync with channel and audience to build brand trust and engagement. We're excited by the challenge of **strategically using content** to unlock first party customer data. This is going to be integral to giving brands and businesses the ability to engage with audiences in a relevant, targeted way.

Leanne Franklin, Strategy Director, HDY Agency



CONTENT DESIGN TRENDS

Just imagine how boring life would be if design stayed the same! More than just a forgettable fad, this year's graphic design trends reflect a year's worth of constraints and clichés being upended for the sake of something new. What better way to showcase this than with a brand new colour of the year.

PANTONE 17-3938 Very Peri is the new colour on the block. Said to encourage **personal inventiveness and creativity** with its courageous presence, this colour is opening up a landscape of possibilities and a new vision of rewriting life as we know it. The perfect follow up after two years of madness, this colour reflects connotations of blue with a mixture of new perspective that resonates today.

In any industry, design is a constant state of flux. As trends come and go, agencies adapt quickly to **stay ahead of the game**. Which is exactly what we do at HDY. But we don't stop at trends. Our creativity is what brings us to life. It's what keeps us from falling to the wayside. As 2022 is underway, HDY has invested in taking its **creative offering** to the next level. From hiring apprentices who are the cutting edge of what's cool right now, to experienced professionals in design, moving content and typographic exploration. And that's just for starters. **2022 we're ready for you!**

Paul Power, Creative Director, HDY Agency

3D DESIGN

DESIGN TRENDS

It is no surprise that the 3D design trend is still going strong. Offering **limitless possibilities** to designers, a mashup between 2D and 3D design gives graphic creators the best of both worlds, leaving space for the imagination to run wild.

This year's take on 3D work shows artists mimicking **realistic designs of glass and crystal**, bringing graphic design to the next level.

Complementing holographic and 3D trends, we can expect to see a rise in realistic frost glass backgrounds as seen on the new Windows 11 update.


This trend is proving **adaptable to all formats**, from illustrations and animation to web design and typography, although a lot of its popularity comes from app design.

MOTION GRAPHICS

Static graphics seem to be a thing of the past with more creatives opting to keep things moving with motion design this year. From billboards to websites, it is clear that we are beginning to see more brands in motion, aligning with the rise of virtual reality.

Mitch Paone, creative director at DIA Studio says

“On a superficial level, a static image can’t compete with a looping gif. On a deeper level, movement creates identity, just like how we can identify a salsa dancer versus a hip-hop dancer. The dancer could be the same, but their motion tells the story... A brand can now have own-able choreography, or a behaviour, that provides tremendous personality, all enabled by the screen.”



2022 is the time for **breaking rules** (possibly due to all the lockdown parties that have come to light) and with rule breaking comes the typography trend that resonates with the Riso print philosophy: something is beautifully off and imperfect.

Whether brands decide to differentiate by having a single letter upside down, bigger, smaller or omitting it completely, 'fonts with a twist' is all about **breaking order**. Extreme bubble design is a great example of this trend with use of rounded graphics and lettering styles mixed with elongated forms. It lets brands be expressive in a fun, unique way that maintains that sense of **childlike whimsy** that we all crave in life.

FONTS WITH A TWIST

Three overlapping compact discs (CDs) are shown on the left side of the page. They are arranged diagonally, with the top-left CD partially overlapping the middle one, which in turn overlaps the bottom-left one. The CDs exhibit a vibrant iridescent effect, with colors ranging from deep blues and purples to bright greens, yellows, and oranges, depending on the angle of light reflection. The central silver hubs of the CDs are visible, showing some text like 'TOSHIBA' and 'DAIICHI DENKO'.

90'S NOSTALGIA

Walking into a new year always calls for a bit of reflection. This graphic design trend calls for **re-experiencing the 90s** through memphis design patterns, simple emojis and primitive internet frames. This nostalgia allows consumers to experience fond childhood memories through the likes of bright colour blocks and dripping slime.

Y2K makes a comeback during this 90s throwback with low poly CGI, bubblegum pinks, blues and that nostalgic iridescent tone. Also, **Frasurbane** is making its way to graphic design following its success in the interior decorating world. With stately serifs, muted colours and carefully placed design elements, this trend harkens back to the 90s with a young adult perspective. Balancing out adult sophistication with youthful hipness.

ECO AESTHETICS

Sustainability has moved beyond the colour green with an Earth symbol - consumers are aware of greenwashing and brands must do more to prove that they are putting the planet first.

“With an **Extended Producer Responsibility scheme** coming into effect April 2022, brands are under increasing pressure to use more sustainable materials in their packaging or risk additional taxes for not complying.” - Matthew Glpin, design director at Free The Birds.

Nods to sustainable culture are now more subtle and design for sustainable brands has moved away from clichéd colours and towards a **bold, fresh digital language and identity.**

THE HDY VIEW

One key thing to take away from all of this is that **consumers are more switched on than ever**. They know exactly what they want and this sets the bar sky high. Brands are expected to know who their audiences are, what's important to them and how to speak to them in an authentic way.

Brands and agencies can use this information as a chance to **focus on their values** and align with their customer base and the current state of affairs. By forging a more genuine relationship between consumer and brand, they'll be equipped to survive the quickly developing channel landscape. Brands need to be mindful that changes in privacy, particularly across digital, will require some **thinking outside the box**. By understanding your target audience and the channels themselves, you can keep on top of trends, plan ahead and seize opportunities.

Strong content and stand-out creative are the two guaranteed ways to connect with audiences. Brands must utilise both and allow them to work alongside each other to make the best impression.

Angel Gaskell, MD and Co-Founder



Any questions?

We'd be happy to chat.

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