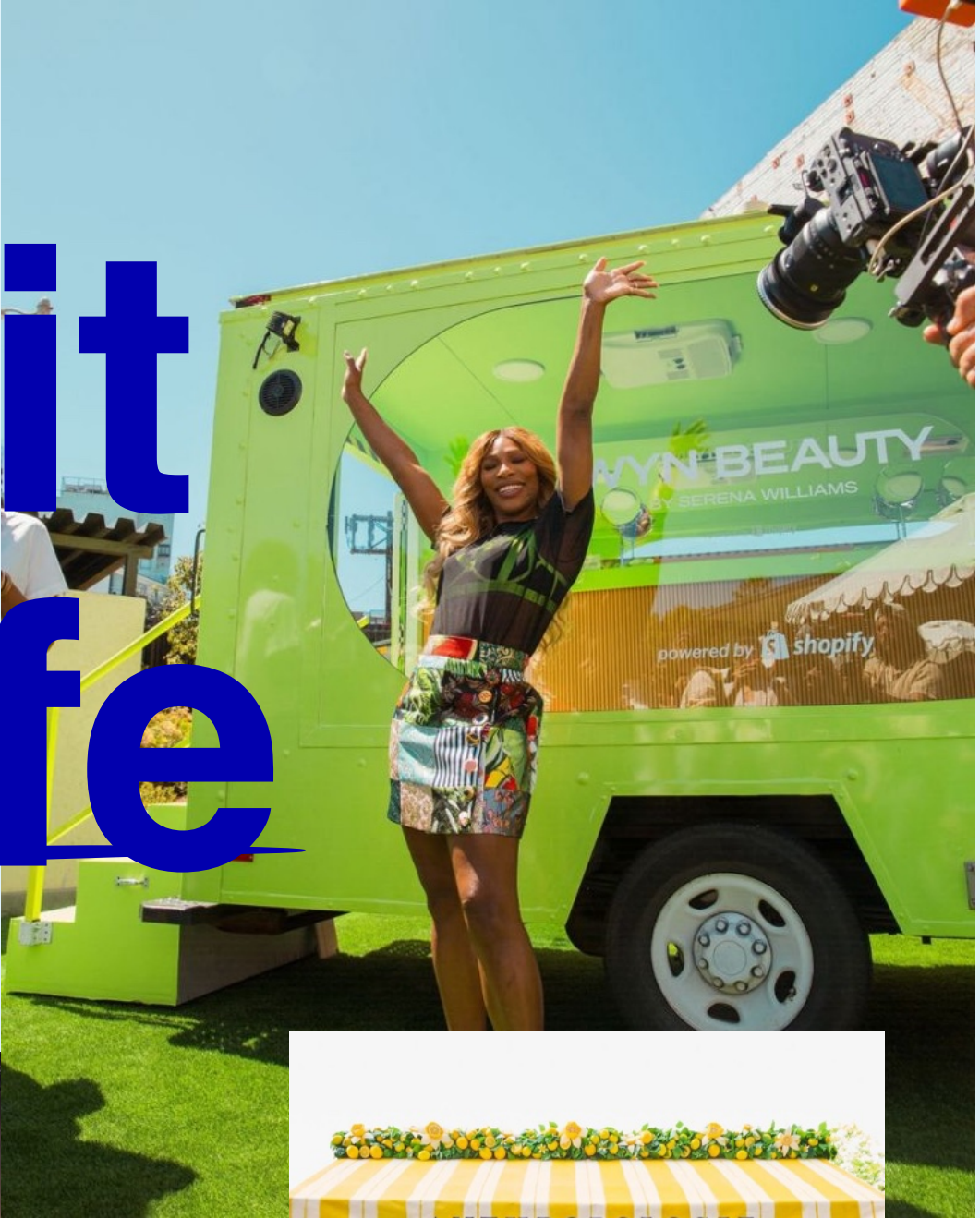




It only matters if it happens in real life



**In a world in flux,
successful
brands create
meaning through
experience**

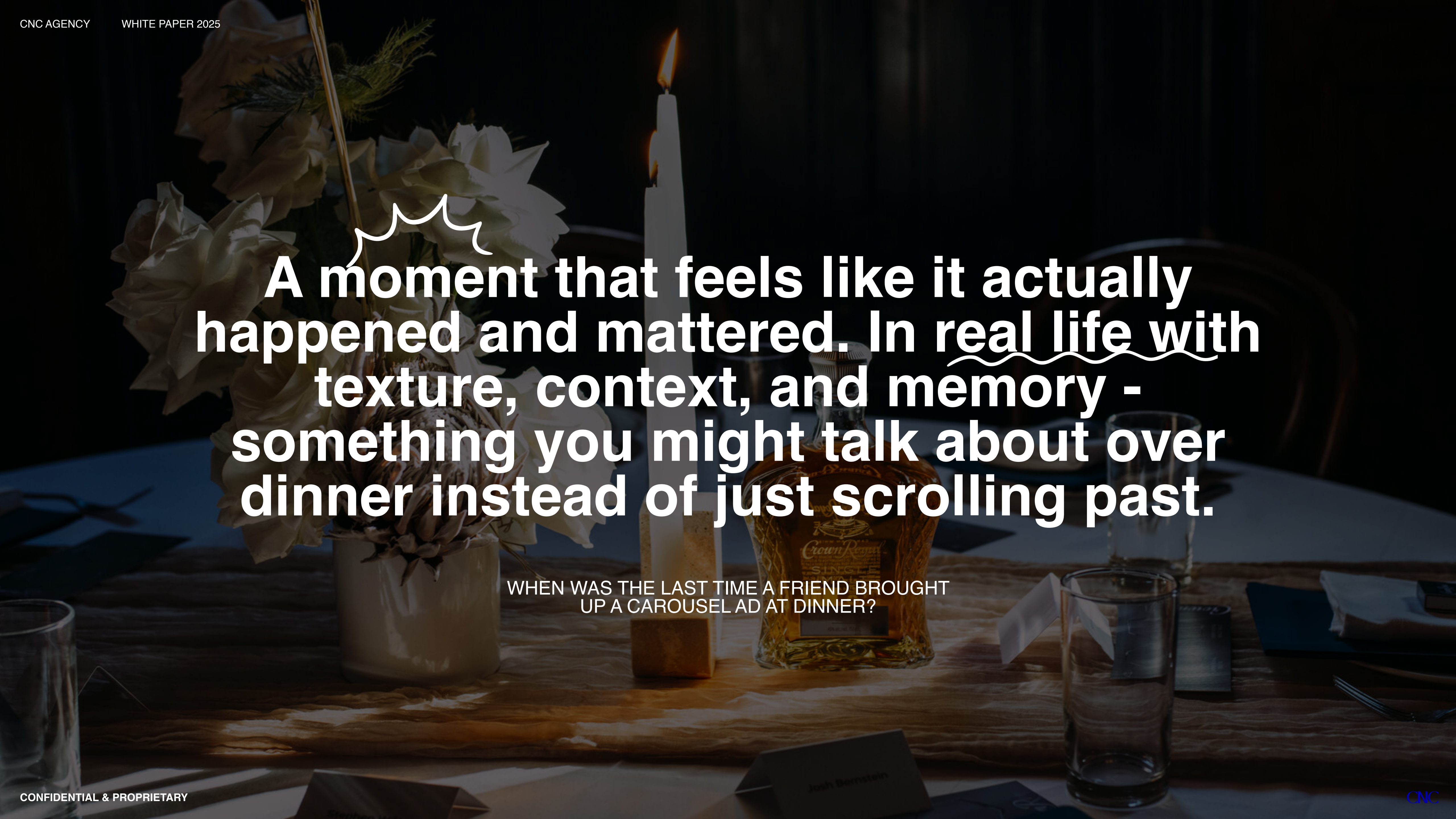




It's never been easier for brands to be in constant contact with their audience, and never less clear if any of it means anything. The tools are frictionless, the content is infinite¹, and the result is a strange kind of overexposure: brands saying more, showing up everywhere, and leaving almost no impression at all.

The emotional bandwidth that once connected people to products and brands has been totally reallocated—to group chats², to niche subcultures³, to anything that doesn't feel like it was optimized by committee. The fractionalization of culture⁴, profligacy of AI content⁵, and decline of third spaces have pushed consumers to a breaking point⁵.

So what cuts through? Not louder content or stronger CTAs or smarter CRM triggers.



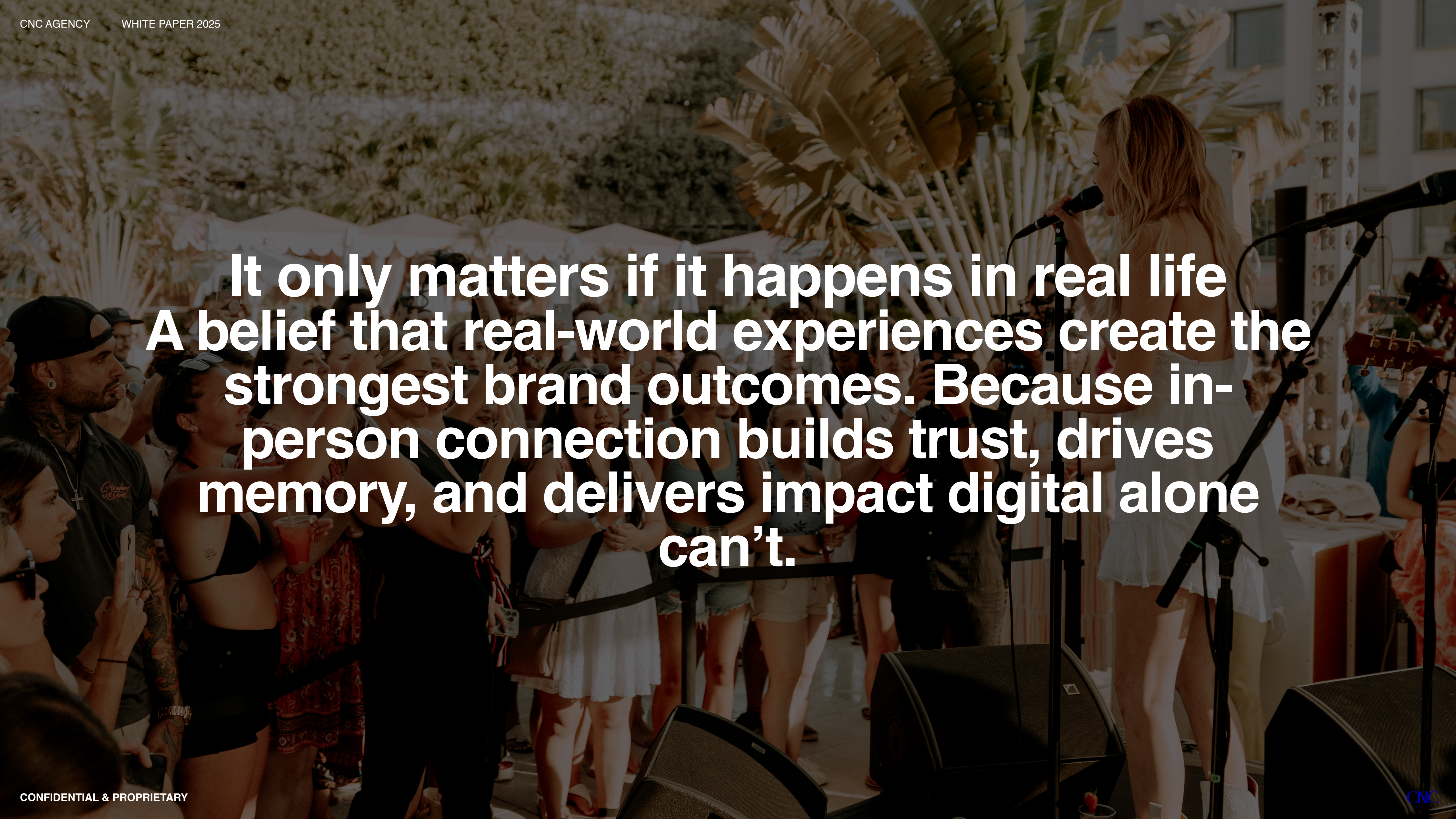
A moment that feels like it actually happened and mattered. In real life with texture, context, and memory - something you might talk about over dinner instead of just scrolling past.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME A FRIEND BROUGHT UP A CAROUSEL AD AT DINNER?

56% of consumers say they feel emotionally connected to a brand through experiences,

compared to just 16% through traditional advertising⁵. If brands want to matter, and therefore to succeed in this new environment, they'll have to show up.



A woman with long blonde hair is singing into a microphone on a stage. She is wearing a white, short-sleeved, button-down shirt. In the background, a large crowd of people is gathered, some holding up their phones to take pictures. The setting appears to be an outdoor event with large tropical plants and a white tent in the background. The overall atmosphere is lively and festive.

**It only matters if it happens in real life
A belief that real-world experiences create the
strongest brand outcomes. Because in-
person connection builds trust, drives
memory, and delivers impact digital alone
can't.**

Meaning through experience drives success

At CNC, we've had a front-row seat to watch how some of today's most culturally relevant brands like Nike, Uber, and Notion drive business success through meaningful experiences. They've made IRL interaction a strategic partner to digital communications and seen 10-60% revenue growth in the past 2 years.⁶⁷⁸

Emotionally connected customers are 52% more valuable than even highly satisfied ones.



Nike is turning stores into cultural spaces with Café Grind.



Notion reimaged its 2024 user conference as a community movement, not a brand broadcast.



Uber is showing up where life happens: on campuses, at events, in the everyday.

Culture

We're living in an era of infinite scroll and diminishing returns – the coherence of culture is breaking under the volume and diversity of content in our feeds and on our screens. Our shared experiences¹⁰, the ones once shaped by local institutions¹¹, daily rituals¹², third spaces, or even just leaving the house¹³ have given way to fractured timelines and hyper-personalized feeds.

Even monoculture moments (the ones we collectively fixate on) arrive flat, commodified and totally ephemeral.

In response, we're seeing a collective reevaluation of our choices as a culture¹⁴. Consumers are reaching out for what feels grounded, real, and embodied. Whether it's finding a run¹⁷/book¹⁸/knitting¹⁹/board game²⁰/choir²¹/wine/gardening/comic book club, the pattern seems to be the same: people are trying to reclaim a sense of presence and real life connection.



● CULTURE

● PEOPLE

● BUSINESS

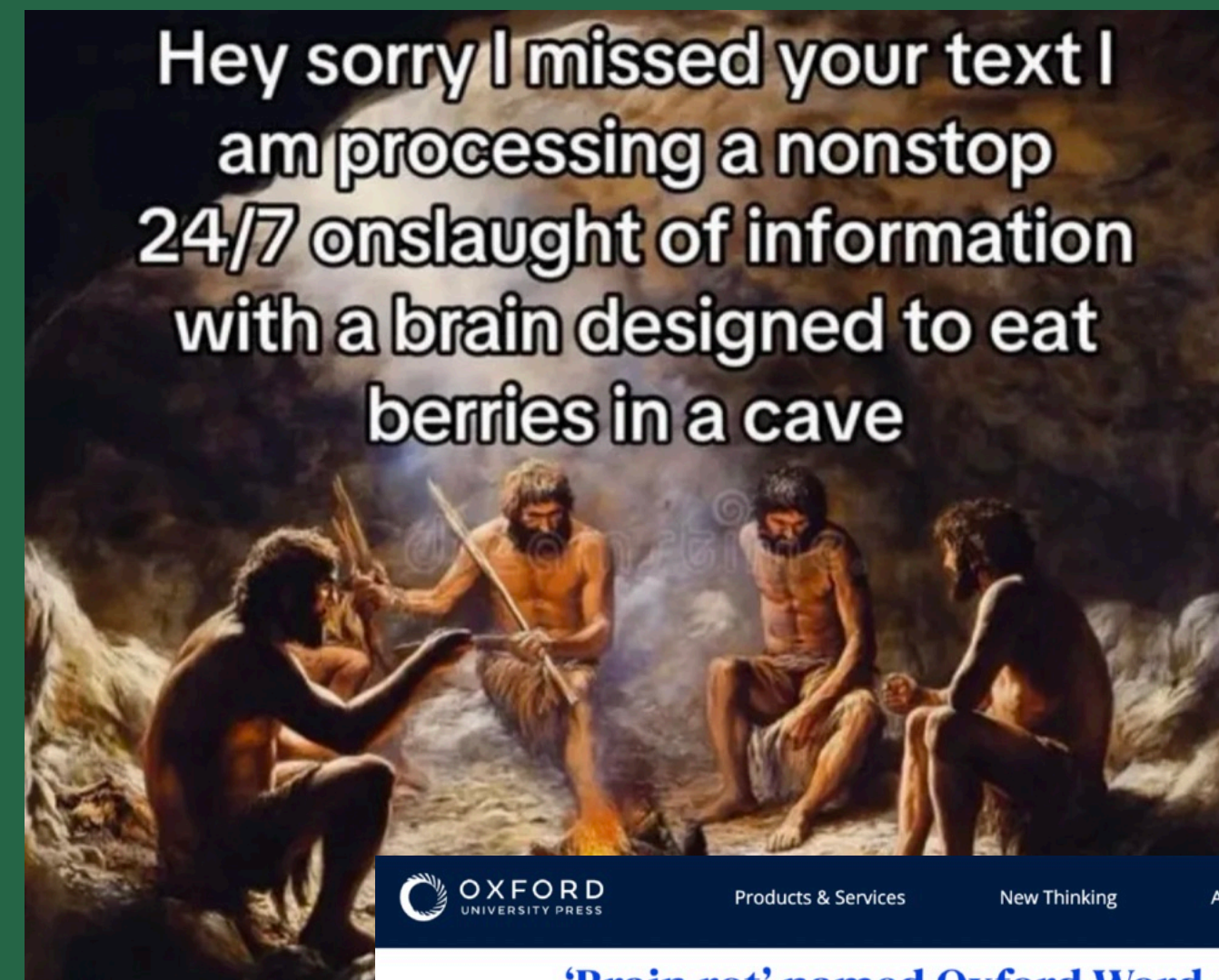
People

The human brain wasn't built for the volume of headlines it's asked to metabolize daily.²² It's a firehouse of breaking news, product launches, personal tragedies, and celebrity gossip all before lunch. What happens when AI accelerates the volume?

The most popular content on TikTok is about people doing things in real life. There's something telling about watching other people touch grass while we scroll past from the couch.

Memory has a bias for reality.

In this environment, in-person experiences offer clarity. They slow the scroll, create an emotional anchor to brands, and create memories our minds can hold onto.



Business

The economic pressure to optimize the marketing mix for digital is real: reach has never been cheaper, and AI can churn out a thousand assets before creative team finishes their morning coffee. But the very things that make modern marketing efficient also make it forgettable.²³

Great brands understand that LTV is driven by meaning and emotional connection, and both are made through experience.^{25,26} That's why brands around the world are creating creating more pop-ups, rethinking retail experiences, and even reimagining what consumer engagement might look like via classes, retreats, or mini-festivals.

According to Deloitte, 70% of consumers feel more connected to brands that engage them in the real world.²⁴



Bandit Grand Prix



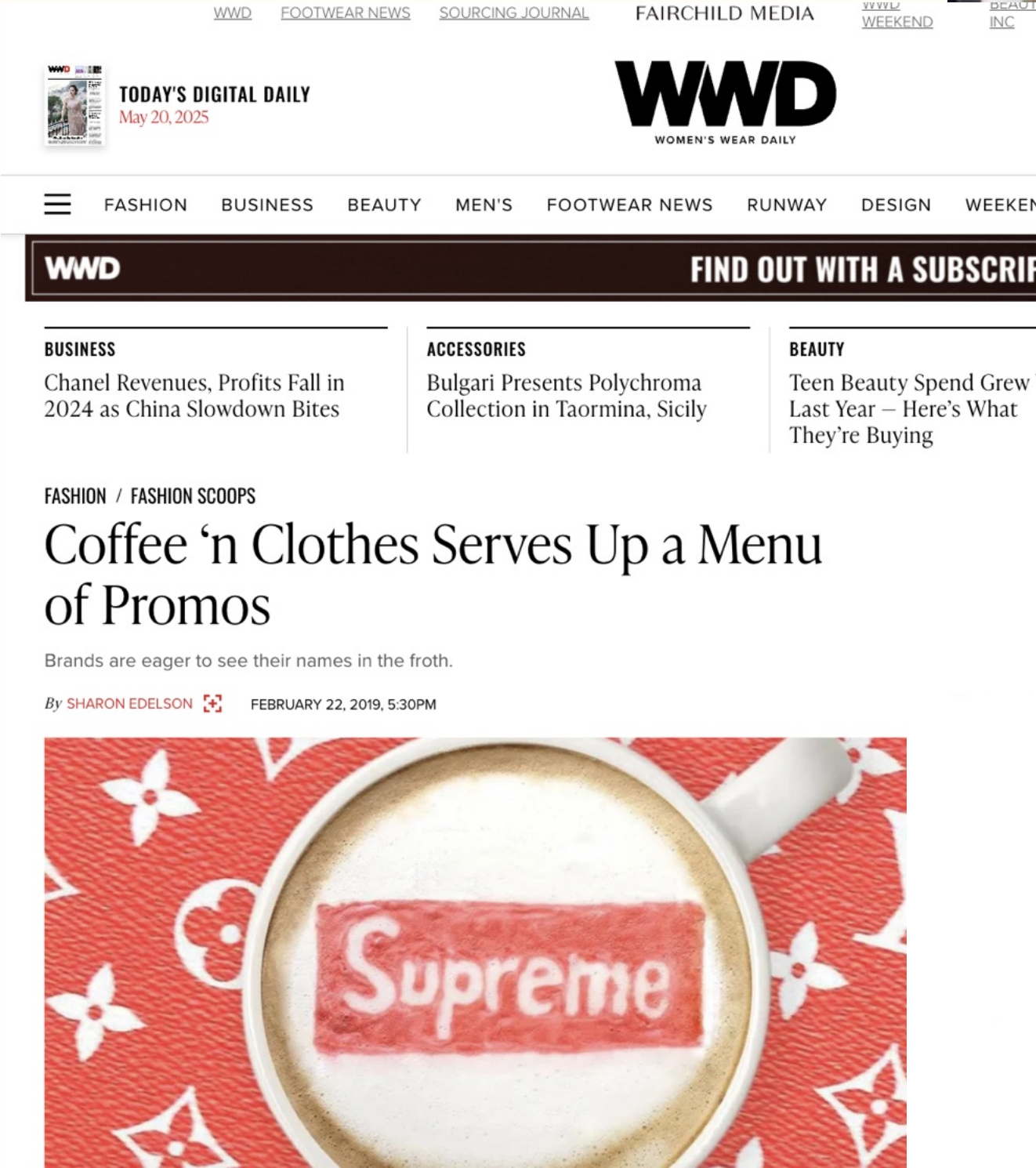
Friends Central Park Experience



Goop Wellness Summit

We felt this friction first

We didn't start as an agency, we started as a digital brand building a community through content. Coffee 'n Clothes was born online and built for discovery, but over time, we realized the things people remembered weren't the posts. They were the moments, the pop-ups, the physical drops and the times they showed up in person and felt something. That realization changed everything. We shifted from content to experience because that's where the connection was: not in the feed, but in real life. In this way, it wasn't a rebrand, it was a response to what was actually working. We've been on both sides of this shift—and that's why we believe in what we're building now.



Build for the world people live in, not just the one they scroll through



IMMERSIVE

Create things that guests can *experience*, not just look at. Great experiences pull people in visually, physically, emotionally to create real resonance and memory.

PERSONAL

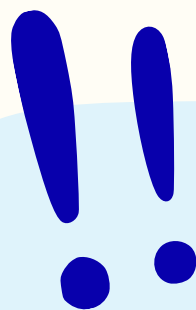
Experiences with meaning should feel personal - like they were made for *solely for every guest*. Whether through technology or simple touches like custom giveaways, the sense of intention is what resonates.



THEATRICAL

Memorable experiences include a small moment of surprise or charm: whether it's a host who feels like a character or a space that feels more like a set than a setup.

How To Get Started

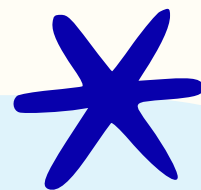
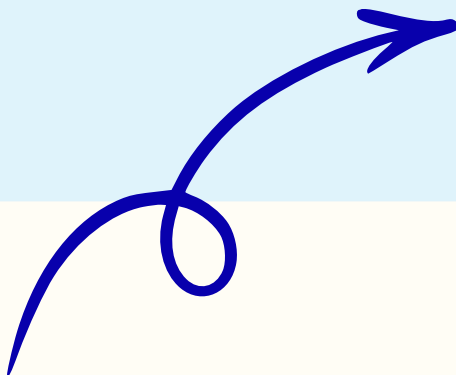


JUST START

Brands don't need a perfect plan, they need momentum. Our advice is to start with one experience, one moment, one real-world interaction that reflects what your brand stands for and treat it like a prototype. Chances are you'll learn more from doing than debating.

TRACK WHAT MATTERS

When starting out, it's important to clearly define what success looks like to have a clear, level-headed reflection on the experience. Look at how people feel, not just how they click. Are they talking about it? Coming back? Bringing others? Use the data to communicate value internally, and as a springboard to develop future momentum.



CODIFY YOUR STRATEGY

Once you've found what works, build the system around it. Define the role real-life experiences play in your brand's growth across experiences, stories, and product. Create a holistic view that's repeatable, scalable, and shareable. When strategy meets structure, good ideas turn into long-term advantage.

Go Deeper

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Get In Touch

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