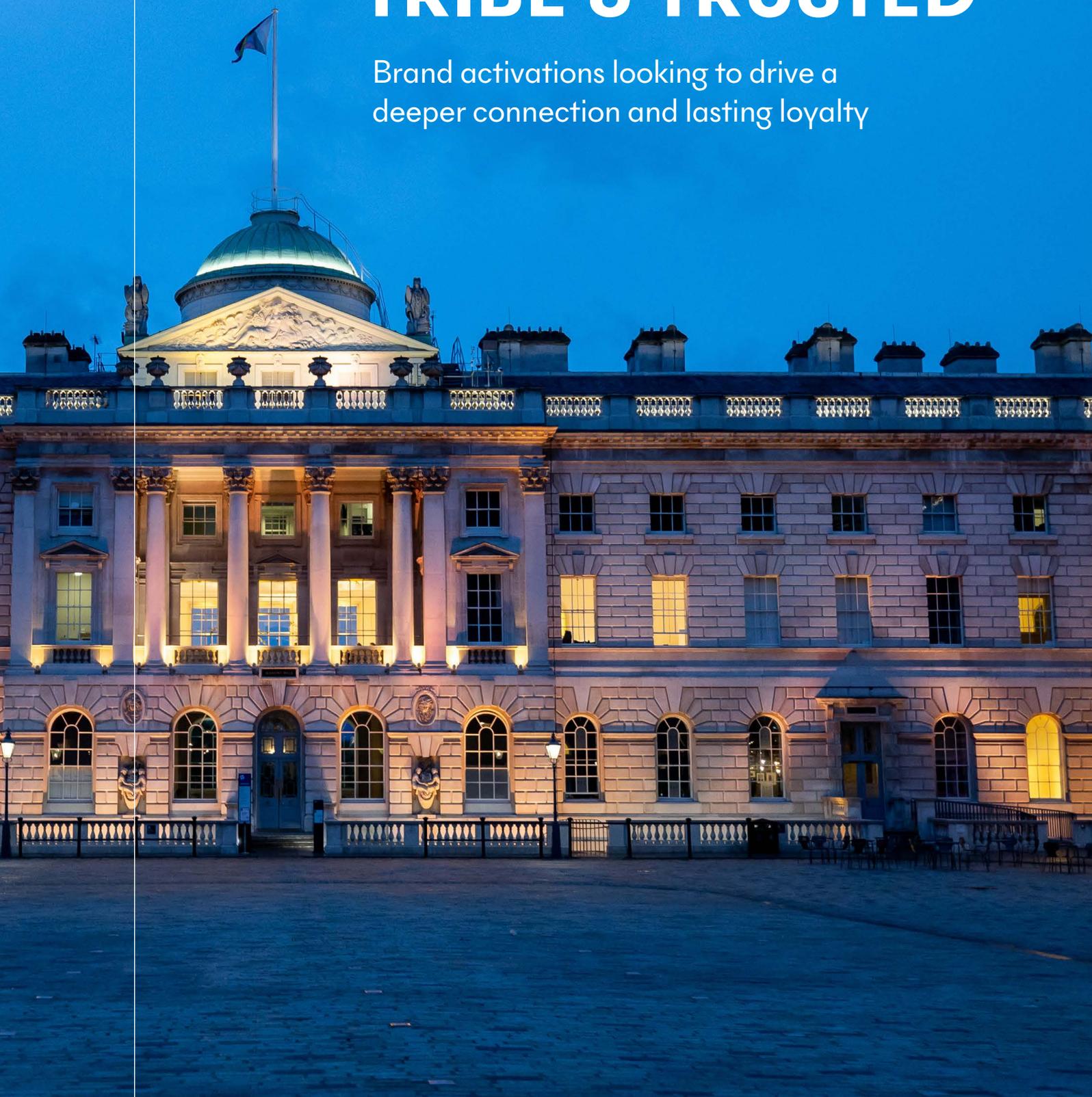


**SOMERSET
HOUSE** step inside think outside

TRIBE & TRUSTED

Brand activations looking to drive a deeper connection and lasting loyalty



INTRODUCTION

Somerset House's insight paper, **Tribe & Trusted: brand activations looking to drive a deeper connection and lasting loyalty**,

is the culmination of quantitative research carried out independently by communications agency, Triggerfish, in autumn 2023. Over 90 respondents who are recognised leaders in brand activations, from creative and field marketing agencies to brands across various sectors, including retail, gaming, and fashion took part in the survey with Tribe & Trusted drawing on an anticipated annualised turnover in excess of £100m.

Today's successful brand activation is no longer solely about getting a group together with the objective of ticking the 'tried and tested' product sampling box. It's about tribe and trusted, bringing likeminded followers together to drive a deeper connection and lasting loyalty through an authentic experience.

Somerset House's brand is the idea at the heart of their organisation. Their central location and heritage as a residency for the arts, and their spirit line of 'Step Inside, Think Outside' has led them to position themselves as the Home of Cultural Innovators. As an independent charity that connects creativity and the arts with wider society, they welcome 2.4 million visitors to site each year and are home to the UK's largest creative community (2,500 individuals including over 300 artists, designers and thinkers). Somerset House backs new talent, new methods, new technologies and continually explores the unknown through their diverse cultural programme. Working globally across art, creativity, business and non-profit, they aim to bring worlds and minds together to intensify creativity and multiply opportunity.

Tribe & Trusted's insights are from an audience of:

BRAND MANAGEMENT

21%

CREATIVE AGENCY

47%

SUPPLIER PARTNERS

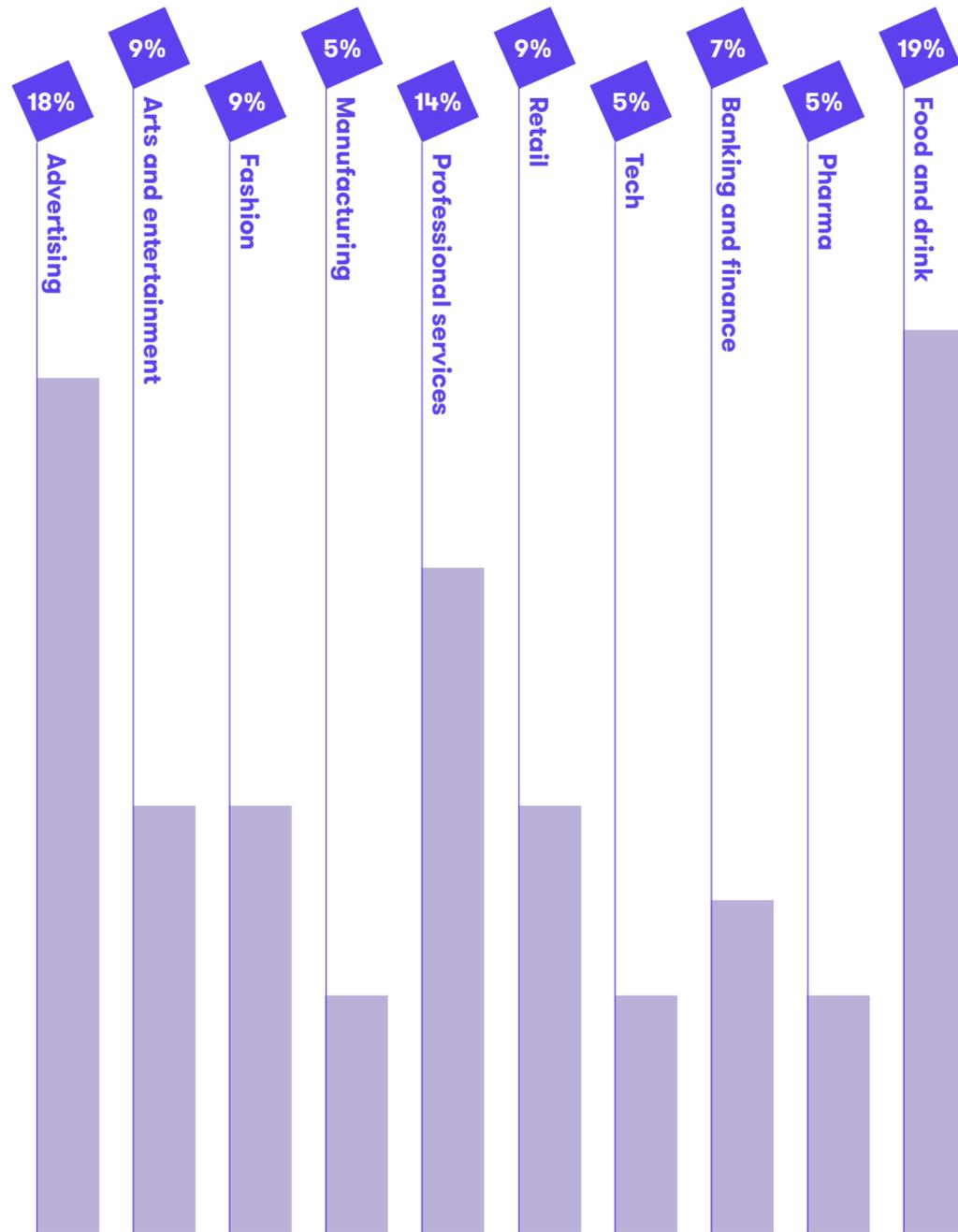
25%

ATTENDEES

7%

**TRIBE & TRUSTED IS BRINGING
LIKEMINDED FOLLOWERS TOGETHER
TO DRIVE A DEEPER CONNECTION
AND LASTING LOYALTY THROUGH
AN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE.**

Who represent the following sectors:



Age group of survey participants and of attendees at an activation:

■ Surveyed participants ■ Attendees

AGE	Surveyed participants	Attendees
18 - 24	0%	14.5%
25 - 34	50%	31%
35 - 44	50%	50%
45 - 54	0%	4.5%
55 - 64	0%	0%
65+	0%	0%

KEY TRENDS

- Organisations are putting a larger emphasis behind face-to-face marketing and live experiences, in order to widen their outreach and develop a deeper understanding of how their customers behave and interact with their brand.
- The economy and uneasy consumer outlook is being mitigated by brands who seek to amplify deeper and more enduring customer relationships.
- Social relationships and how we interact with each other has changed with social media exacerbating this. Today's guest wants to be part of a dynamic and exclusive experience drawn by shared values and outlooks.
- Consumers and workers identify with businesses and brands who mirror their ethical values and, for many people, brands have a higher competence than government.



WHAT IS A BRAND ACTIVATION?

While it's widely accepted that brand activations help build brands and drive actions for growth, we're faced with a dynamic push-pull world where brands can ignite as quickly as they can combust.

The convergence of media platforms and social channels means that face-to-face activations are imperative for brands, underlined by our research:

62%

state activations are part of a brand's wider marketing campaign

15%

see activations as a sales initiative

In a world where everyone now has a voice on public platforms, building trust is a business must that needs to be driven through candid communication allowing feedback, which builds a two-way relationship between brand and consumer.

23%

of our respondents who have budgetary responsibility for activations, want to turn the anonymity of a digital presence to an analogue, in person conversation. People trust people and social proof (and social media) enhances the brand-customer relationship.

28%

of visitors who choose to go to an activation go to be part of their tribe. They have an emotional connection to the brand and want to meet their kin and community.

Our findings are reinforced by the IPA Bellwether* Report, a quarterly survey outlining companies' marketing spend intentions and financial confidence, which highlights a growth in budgets for in person marketing (from 6.3% to 9.8%), as well as sales promotion activities (from 8.8% to 13.4%). Bellwether's report indicates that brands are looking to engage more closely with their audiences while economic uncertainty prevails in the UK. By building loyalty in uncertain times, brands will create advocacy, authenticity, and a community in person and online.

**Q2 2023 IPA Bellwether Report*

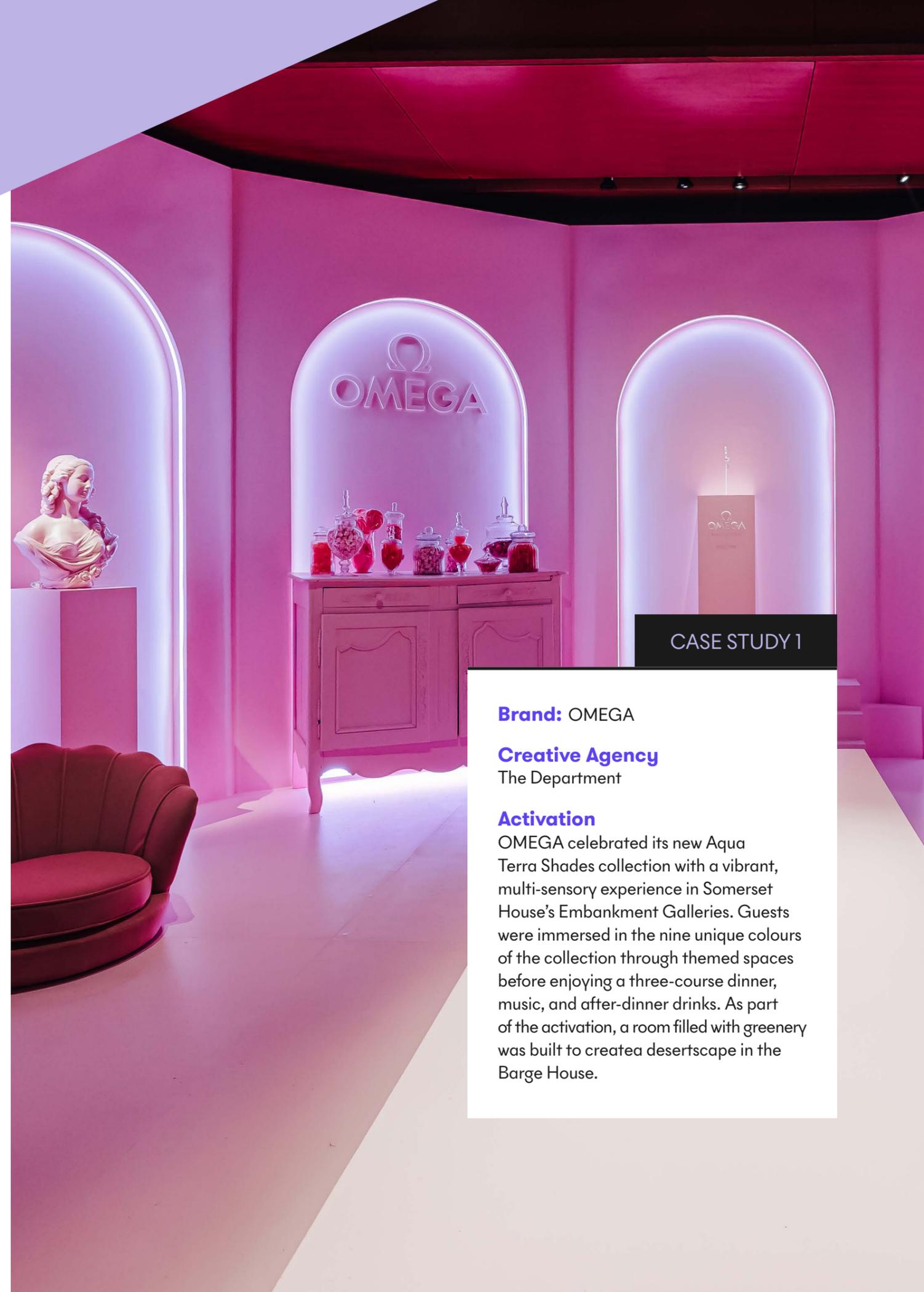
Tribe & Trusted explores what brands aim to achieve from their activations, and what today's attendees expect:

Do we hunger for knowledge, an authentic experience and time with our tribe, or is it all about good food and that standout image that will elevate our social feeds?

What components are key in creating a brand activation?

Order of importance (most important to least)

CORPORATE BRAND MANAGER	CREATIVE AGENCY
1 Access to something unique	1 Access to something unique
2 1:1 engagement with brand	2 1:1 engagement with brand
3 Standout location	3 Standout location
4 Enter/infotainment	4 Brand association
5 Brand association	5 Enter/infotainment
6 Food and drink	6 Photo opportunity
7 Meet and greet with ambassador	7 Meet and greet with ambassador
8 Photo opportunity	8 Food and drink



CASE STUDY 1

Brand: OMEGA

Creative Agency
The Department

Activation

OMEGA celebrated its new Aqua Terra Shades collection with a vibrant, multi-sensory experience in Somerset House's Embankment Galleries. Guests were immersed in the nine unique colours of the collection through themed spaces before enjoying a three-course dinner, music, and after-dinner drinks. As part of the activation, a room filled with greenery was built to create a desert landscape in the Barge House.

OUTCOMES

What do organisations seek to achieve?

Brand connection is the foremost reason for an activation: bringing people together for the connection, conversation, and community. Brand activations enable emotional connection and shape long term loyalty.

By stimulating a two-way conversation, brands can listen and respond to their audiences and create a sense of shared ownership, which builds advocacy more effectively and authentically than any advertisement or campaign. These relationships must be built on an ongoing basis through the multi-layer marketing play book - with brands demonstrating sensitivity to their communities, cultures, and identities.

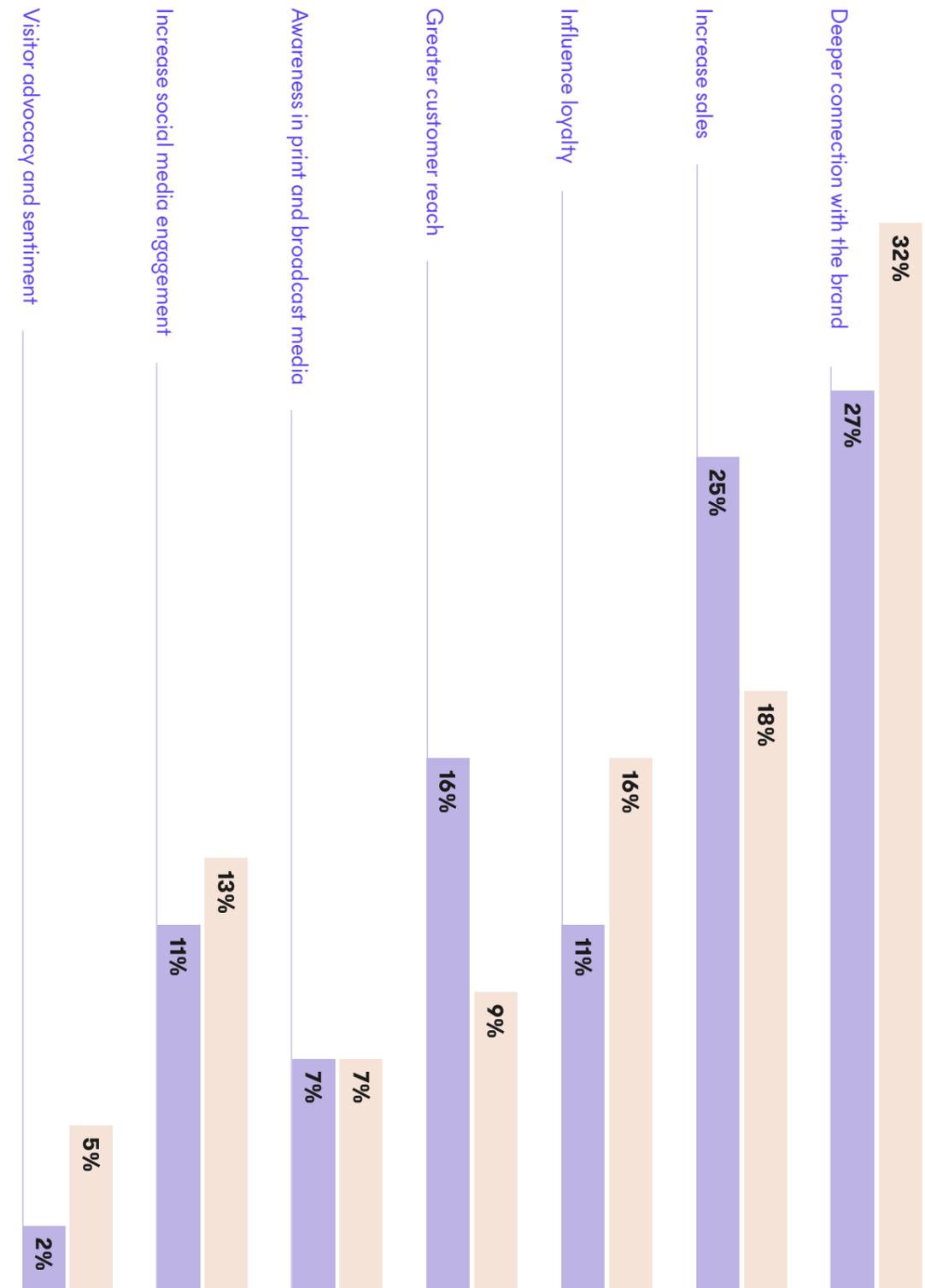
The traditions of media awareness and print coverage are being eroded by social media as brands know they can reach their audiences directly, and more importantly, algorithms enable viral potency.

Return on investment will always be a significant factor for event. Brands continue to place a focus on sales as a key outcome in increasingly difficult times, however it's over-ridden by the need to establish trust with consumers, and therefore, agencies are more focused on measuring return on experience.



What outcomes do you want to achieve from your activation?

■ Corporate brand ■ Creative agency





CASE STUDY 2

Brand: Hennessy

Creative Agency

This is Mission

Activation

Launched as part of [Get Up Stand Up Now](#), a major exhibition celebrating the past 50 years of Black creativity in Britain and beyond, Hennessy: For the Culture explored how a 250-year-old cognac brand has become synonymous with British music culture, specifically Hip-Hop and Grime. The installation unearthed the link from a drink to a lyric discovering how Hennessy became intrinsic to Black culture through specialist interviews and quotes from influential figures, archival Hennessy imagery and products surrounding its alignment with pro-Black initiatives. Hennessy Lates brought the Hennessy installation to life with performances from Grime pioneer Jammer, Garage soundsystem Heartless Crew and Jungle legend General Levy.



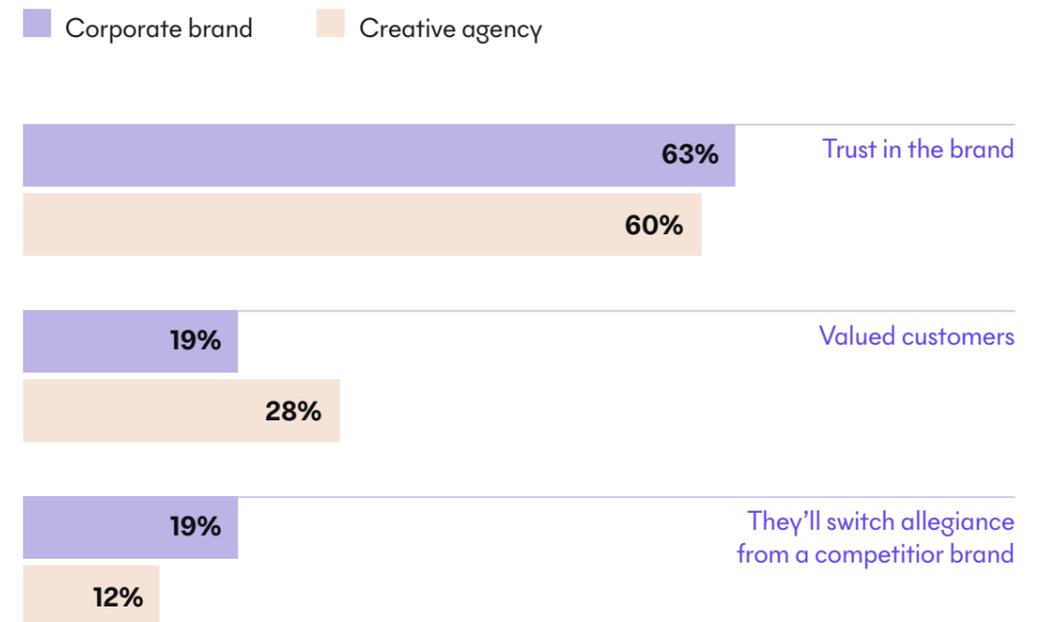
OUTCOMES

The value of an emotional experience

Whilst driving sales remains a key consideration for brands, it's over-ridden by a desire to establish trust and integrity amongst their consumer and followers. Part of a brand's equity, trust plays an important role in driving customer preference and long-term loyalty.

Today, consumers are bombarded with digital ads, driven by algorithms, with nearly 3.5 billion phishing emails sent daily. It's not surprising that potential customers can be apprehensive about engaging with the barrage of brands that interrupt and reach out. Customers seek authenticity and want to build relationships with brands they can trust.

How do planners want their attendees to feel at the activation?



OUTCOMES

Attendees' expectations

There's a disconnect in expectations between brand outcomes and attendee outcomes: **50% of guests state that 'feeling valued' for their advocacy is a top priority against just over 23% of brands and agencies who are looking to prompt a feeling of value in their attendees.**

The disconnect could be due to the fact that visitors have already carried out and identified the brand they want to be associated with. They've gained the trust of the brand and now want their affinity and loyalty to be recognised and valued.

<p>50% Feel a valued customer</p>	<p>17% Trust in brand</p>	<p>33% Switch allegiance from a competitor brand</p>
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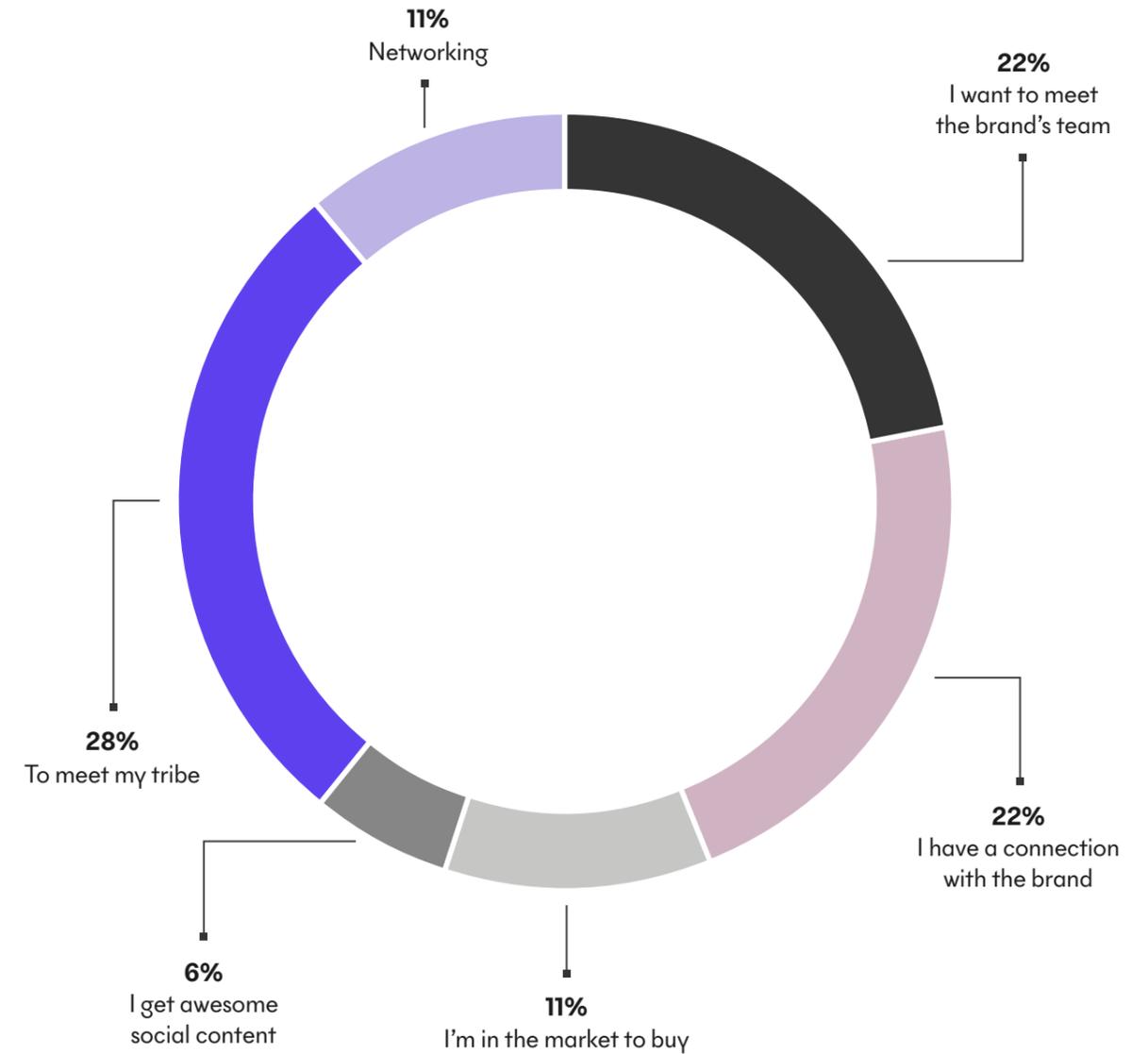
WHAT MOTIVATES VISITOR NUMBERS

Attendees' perception

Networking with others and building relationships with the brand's community are key drivers for today's knowledge hungry attendees.

By trusting in a brand, people feel connected to likeminded followers who share similar values and behaviours. We're now stepping outside of societal norms as getting together goes tribal and communities are created on trust, shared values, and aspirations.

Why do you choose to attend a brand activation?



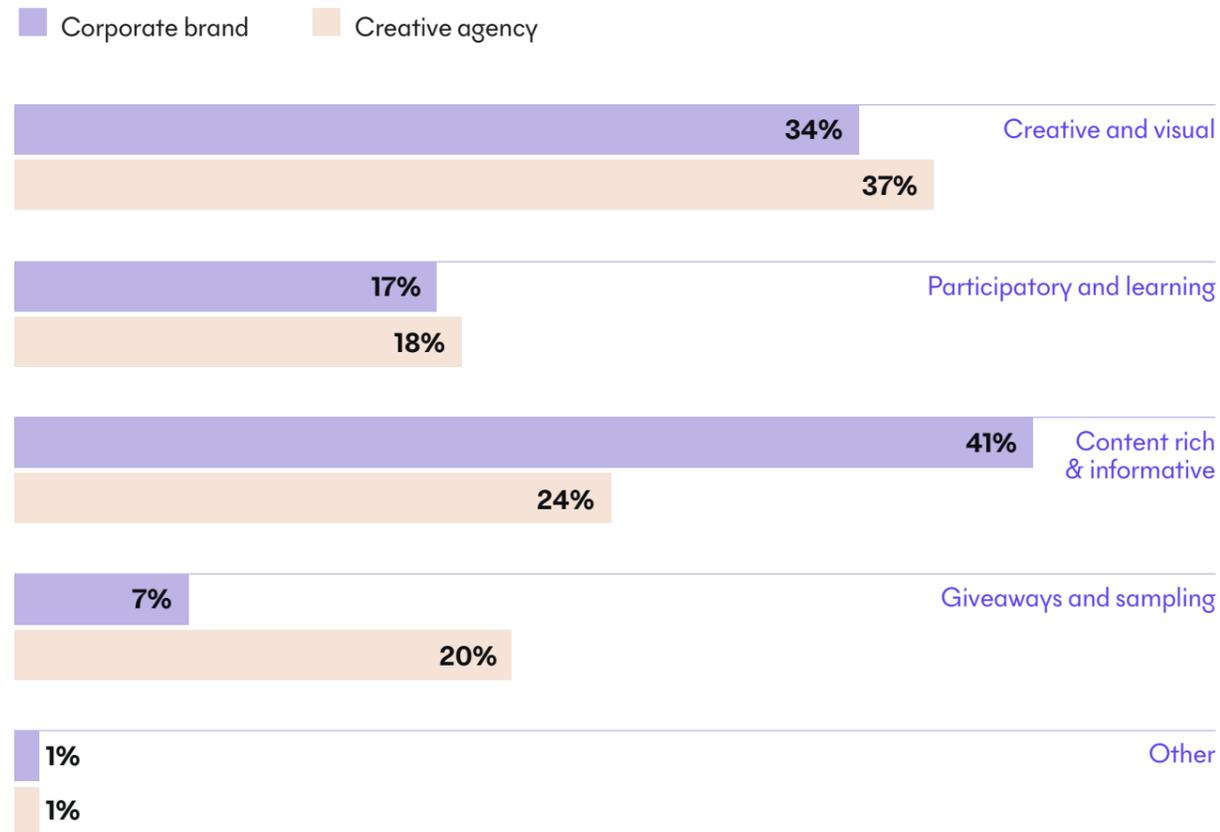
Creative and visual brand activations are an important way of extending an event's reach, with consumers more likely to post on their social media channels if they are given access to a unique environment or setting. Whilst gathering social content may not be the biggest driver for attending an event, when in attendance a creative brand activation and standout destination does wonders for a brand's social footprint, as consumers then post on social media to prove that they've experienced a cultural moment with their tribe.

What attracts you to a brand activation?



When it comes to the corporate brand and agency perception on what motivates visitor numbers, agencies put creativity and product sampling way ahead of brand owners, who want to share content and knowledge amongst their attendees. Brands are recognising that consumers are becoming more knowledge hungry, and as such are prioritising content and providing takeaways in the form of new learnings, rather than giveaways.

What motivates visitor numbers - brand and agency perception

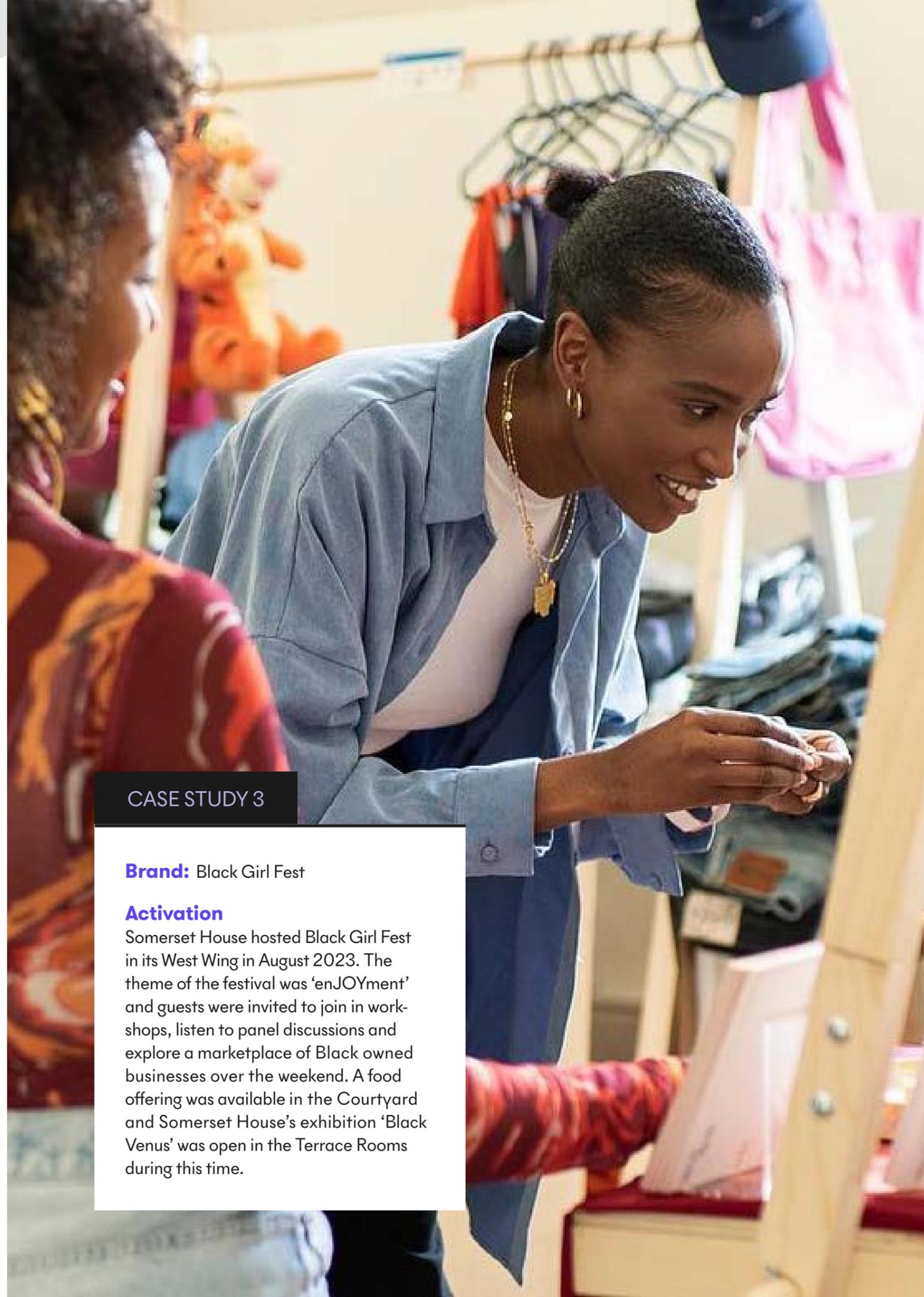


CASE STUDY 3

Brand: Black Girl Fest

Activation

Somerset House hosted Black Girl Fest in its West Wing in August 2023. The theme of the festival was 'enJOYment' and guests were invited to join in workshops, listen to panel discussions and explore a marketplace of Black owned businesses over the weekend. A food offering was available in the Courtyard and Somerset House's exhibition 'Black Venus' was open in the Terrace Rooms during this time.





CASE STUDY 4

Brand: UNIQLO

Creative Agency
Event Concept

Activation

For the first time, Japanese global apparel retailer UNIQLO hosted a special exhibition, The Art and Science of LifeWear: New Form Follow Function, in Somerset House's Embankment Galleries. Taking place during London Fashion Week, the exhibition was a large-scale immersive and experiential showcase of LifeWear the UNIQLO philosophy that expresses simple, everyday clothing with a practical sense of beauty. Guests enjoyed highly instagrammable experiences including a mirrored room lit by lamps made from the full colour palette of UNIQLO socks; a large kaleidoscope art installation made of LifeWear hanging from the ceiling, and a sensory walk through a tunnel constructed of UNIQLO AIRism fabric. A series of experimental and immersive zones showcased the science behind UNIQLO's most advanced technologies, as well as the company's sustainability achievements.



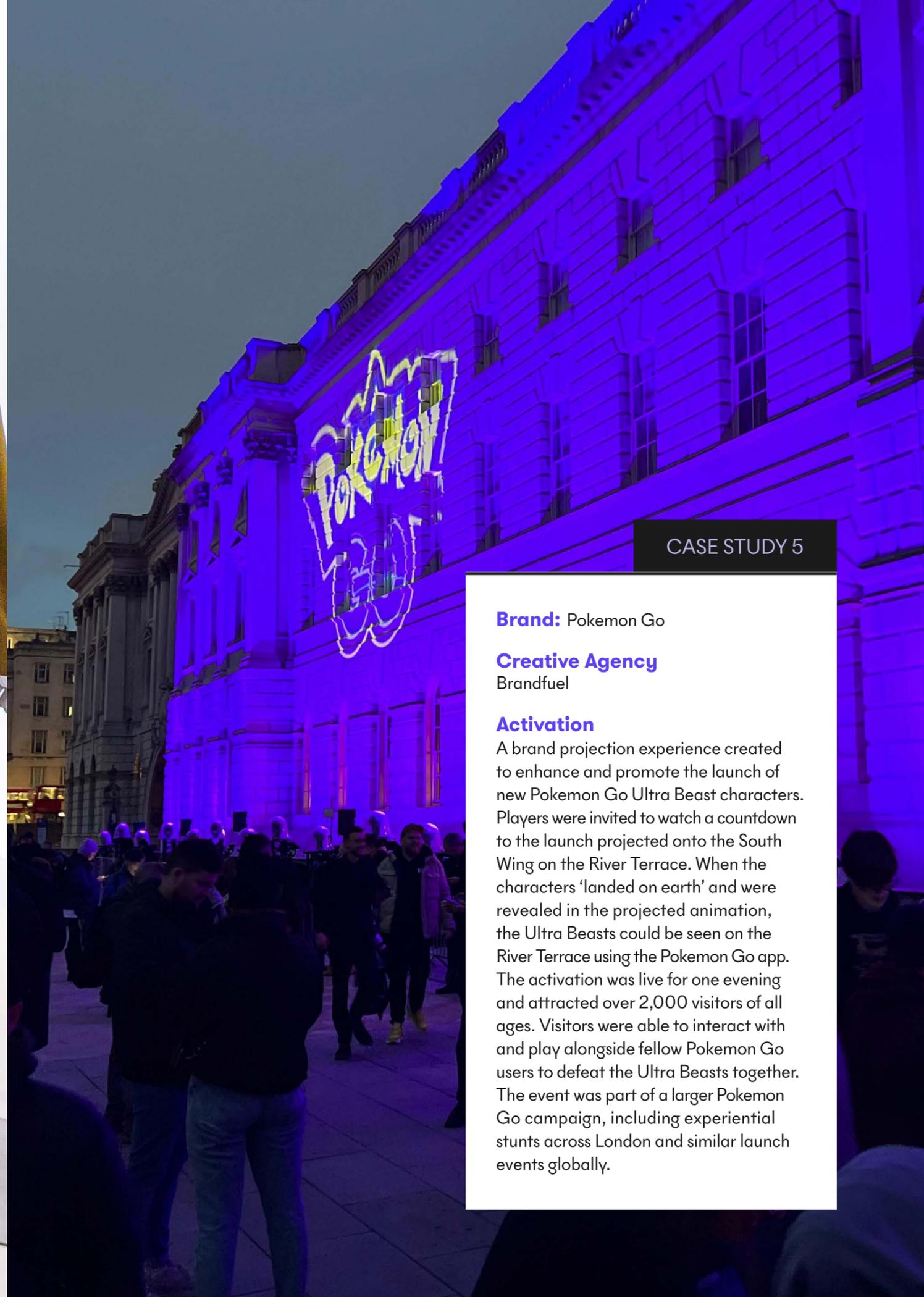
CASE STUDY 5

Brand: Pokemon Go

Creative Agency
Brandfuel

Activation

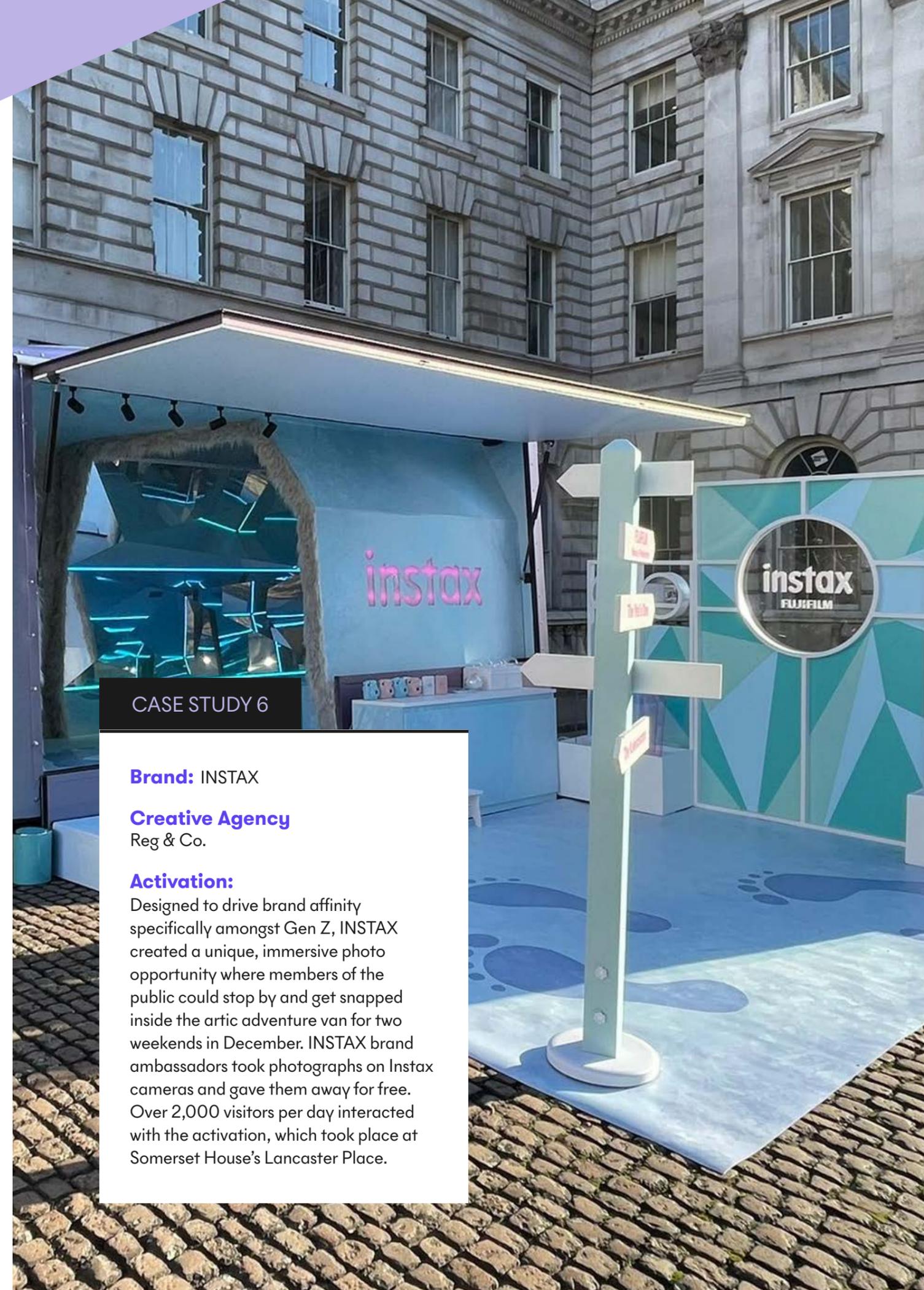
A brand projection experience created to enhance and promote the launch of new Pokemon Go Ultra Beast characters. Players were invited to watch a countdown to the launch projected onto the South Wing on the River Terrace. When the characters 'landed on earth' and were revealed in the projected animation, the Ultra Beasts could be seen on the River Terrace using the Pokemon Go app. The activation was live for one evening and attracted over 2,000 visitors of all ages. Visitors were able to interact with and play alongside fellow Pokemon Go users to defeat the Ultra Beasts together. The event was part of a larger Pokemon Go campaign, including experiential stunts across London and similar launch events globally.



HOW DO YOU MEASURE A BRAND ACTIVATION'S SUCCESS?

Order of importance
(most important to least)

CORPORATE BRAND	CREATIVE AGENCY	ATTENDEES
1 Visitor numbers	1 Visitor numbers	1 Access to something unique
2 Brand recognition	2 Brand recognition	2 1:1 engagement with the brand
3 Increased sales	3 Increased sales	3 Enter/Infotainment
4 Print and broadcast media coverage	4 Dwell time at the activation	4 Standout location
5 Insta user generated content	5 Print and broadcast media coverage	5 Food and drink
6 Dwell time at the activation	6 Insta user generated content	6 Meet and greet with brand ambassador
7 TikTok user generated content	7 TikTok user generated content	7 Brand association
8 YouTube user generated content	8 YouTube user generated content	8 Photo opportunity



CASE STUDY 6

Brand: INSTAX

Creative Agency
Reg & Co.

Activation:

Designed to drive brand affinity specifically amongst Gen Z, INSTAX created a unique, immersive photo opportunity where members of the public could stop by and get snapped inside the arctic adventure van for two weekends in December. INSTAX brand ambassadors took photographs on Instax cameras and gave them away for free. Over 2,000 visitors per day interacted with the activation, which took place at Somerset House's Lancaster Place.

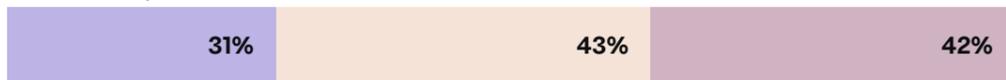
WHO CARES?

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a key watchword in the events industry and a proven ESG framework in the supply chain is imperative for budgetary sign off for an activation.

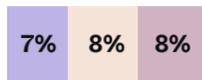
What part of ESG do you consider to be most important?

Corporate brand Creative agency Attendee

Sustainability of build



Celebrating upcoming live performance talent



Local product and services



Diverse workforce



Charitable giving



Accessibility



Unsurprisingly, sustainability and diversity come out as key considerations, which reinforces the point that loyalty is established through shared outlooks, values, transparency, and trust.

43% of creative agencies are focussed on a sustainably built event, while 34% of corporate brands want to showcase a diverse team and workforce.

The fact that attendees want to see a charitable element to the event should be noted as a potential way to draw visitor numbers by brands donating to their chosen cause or charity. This giving element also bucks the notion that events should have lots of giveaways and samples. Today's attendee is highly conscious of their impact on the environment and is drawn just as much by purpose as product.

Accessibility was not considered as important as diversity and sustainability by respondents which highlights that as an industry there is a lot of work that still needs to be done to champion this area.



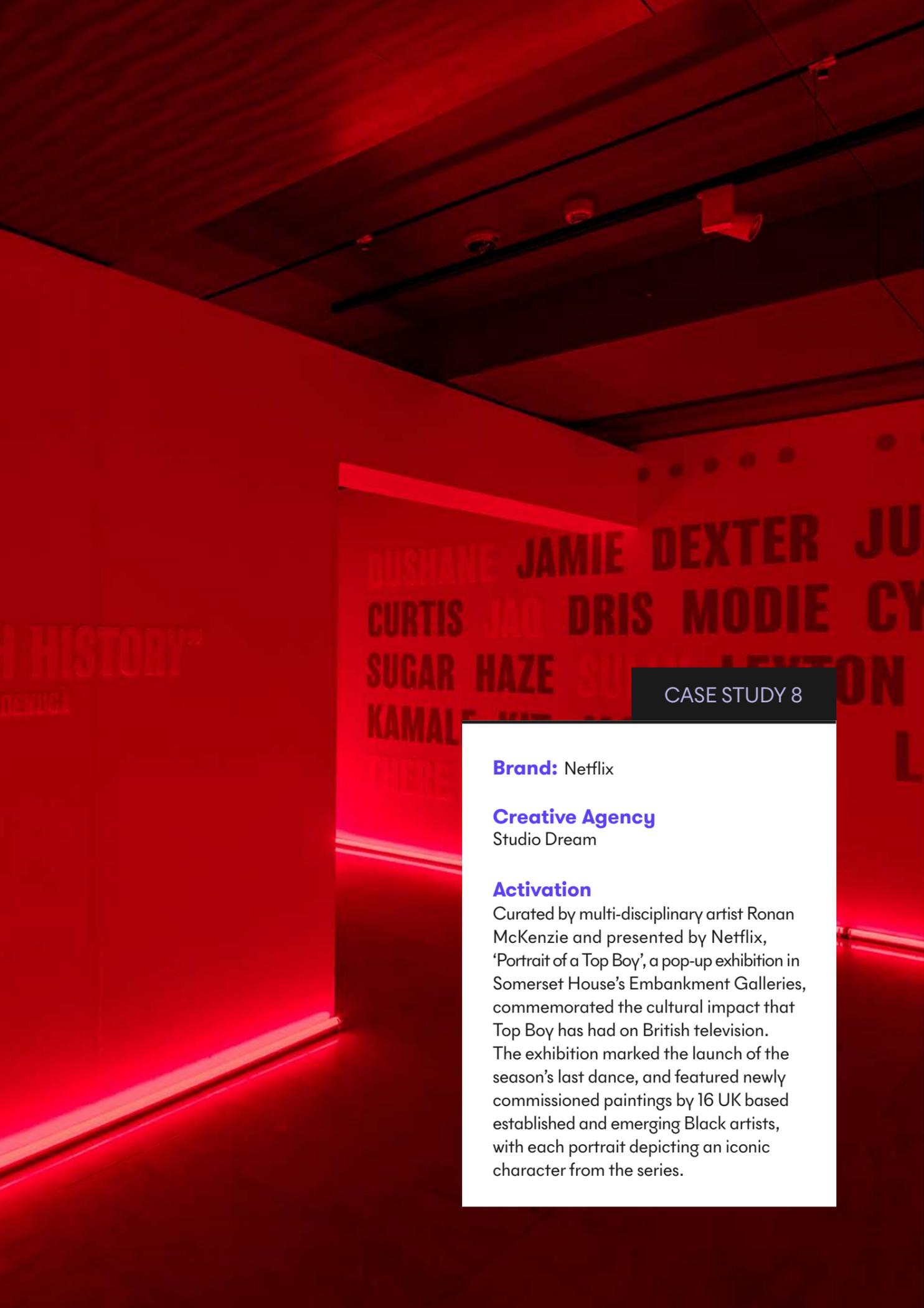
CASE STUDY 7

Brand: Runway Group Retail Pop Up

Creative Agency
My Runway Group

Activation

My Runway Group took up residency in Somerset House's East Wing, with a pop-up featuring a specially curated range of products from its roster of over 200 Black-owned businesses. This immersive and transformative retail experience celebrated Black creativity, culture, and entrepreneurship.



CASE STUDY 8

Brand: Netflix

Creative Agency
Studio Dream

Activation

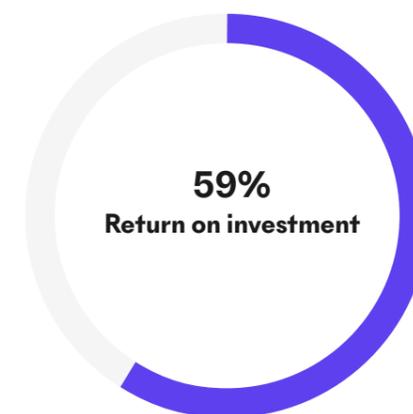
Curated by multi-disciplinary artist Ronan McKenzie and presented by Netflix, 'Portrait of a Top Boy', a pop-up exhibition in Somerset House's Embankment Galleries, commemorated the cultural impact that Top Boy has had on British television. The exhibition marked the launch of the season's last dance, and featured newly commissioned paintings by 16 UK based established and emerging Black artists, with each portrait depicting an iconic character from the series.

BUDGET OR BRAND?

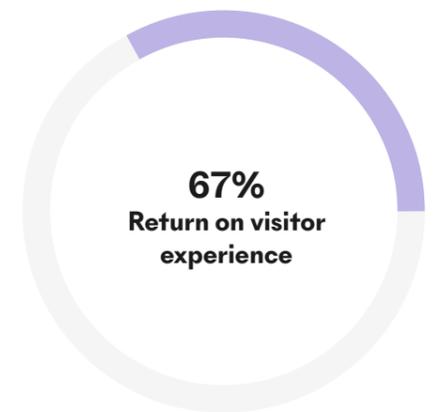
Agencies are driven by measuring return on experience (ROE). Although ROE doesn't provide all of the hard numbers budget holders crave, it can more effectively shed light on experience conversion rate, from physical attendance to social shareability to continuing brand engagement.

In an industry where the ROI model is hard to compute, ROE offers its own unique set of insights and data, giving marketers a valuable tool to learn how consumers actually engage with and experience their brand.

Corporate brand manager - what's more important?



Creative agency - what's more important?



TRIED & TESTED BY OUR RESPONDENTS

Brands who do it well

Which brand does activations well?

■ Corporate brand ■ Creative agency



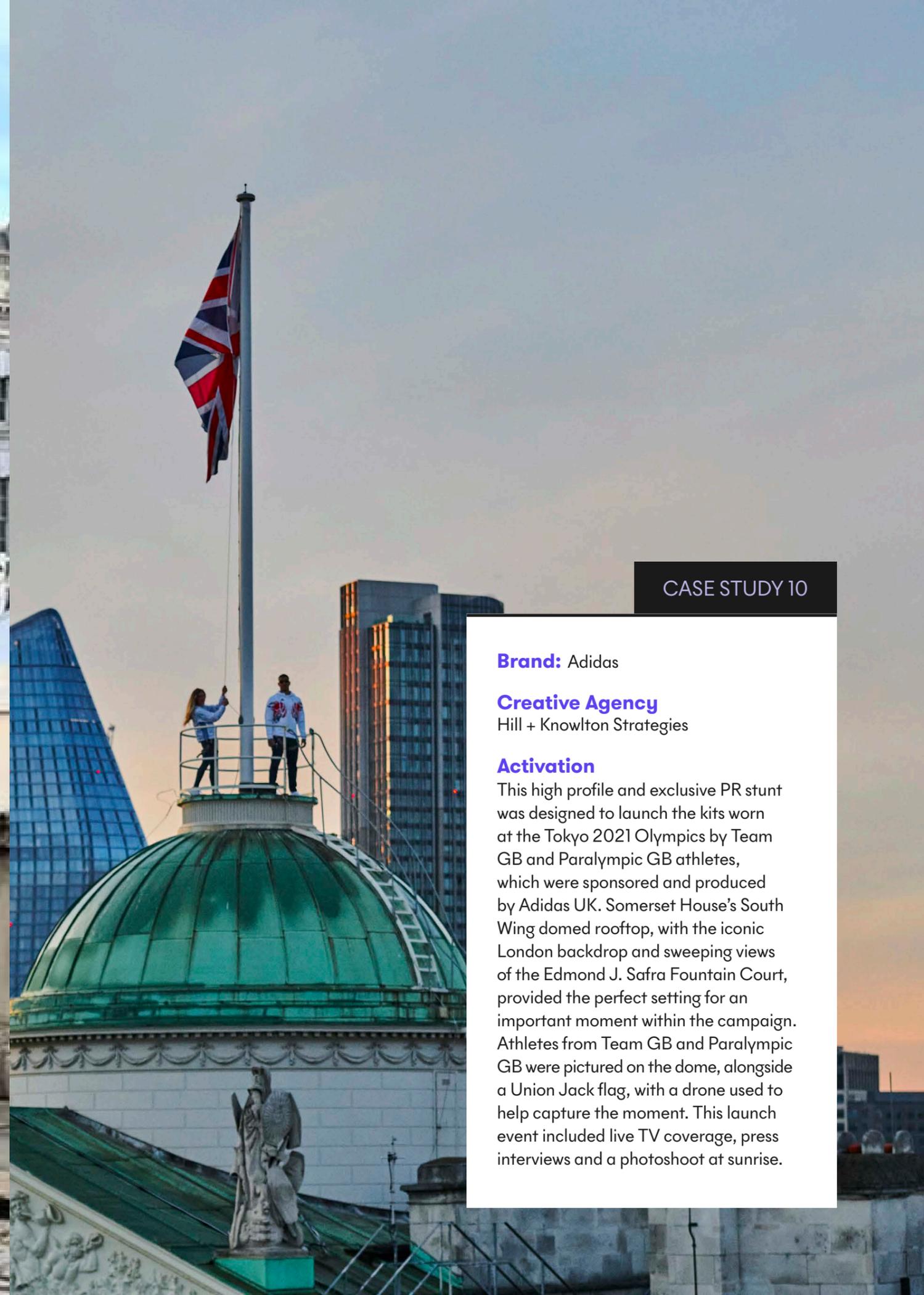


CASE STUDY 9

Brand: Hotel Chocolat

Activation

Hotel Chocolat hosted a pop-up on the Upper Terrace for two consecutive years during SKATE, which is at the heart of Somerset House's winter programme and one of London's best loved attractions. Each year SKATE attracts more than 170k ticket-buyers between mid-November and mid-January, with over 500,000 people experiencing the venue's courtyard.



CASE STUDY 10

Brand: Adidas

Creative Agency

Hill + Knowlton Strategies

Activation

This high profile and exclusive PR stunt was designed to launch the kits worn at the Tokyo 2021 Olympics by Team GB and Paralympic GB athletes, which were sponsored and produced by Adidas UK. Somerset House's South Wing domed rooftop, with the iconic London backdrop and sweeping views of the Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court, provided the perfect setting for an important moment within the campaign. Athletes from Team GB and Paralympic GB were pictured on the dome, alongside a Union Jack flag, with a drone used to help capture the moment. This launch event included live TV coverage, press interviews and a photoshoot at sunrise.

SOMERSET HOUSE, THE HOME OF CULTURAL INNOVATORS

We are known for our outstanding cultural programme, but we are much more. Our impact reaches beyond the arts into society at large:

- 262 days of free exhibitions annually
- 259k engage with our digital programme
- 1,000+ young people aged 18-30 engage with our career development programme

When we posed the question ‘what is a brand activation?’ we wanted to interrogate exactly what brands want to achieve as a result of these live experiences and also what drives today’s attendee to turn up. It is clear from this research that brand connection and creating a tribe of consumers who share the same values and outlooks is one of the main reasons for hosting an activation – enabling those emotional connections and solidifying long term loyalty is something that is best created via authentic face-to-face interactions.

Consumers value this authenticity and the opportunity to build a relationship with a brand they can trust, and in turn, become part of a community – a tribe of likeminded individuals.

Sustainability and diversity are key considerations across the board, which reinforces the point that loyalty is established through shared outlooks, values, transparency and trust. The focus is just as much on the purpose behind a brand as the product itself, which resonates with us as an organisation. All commercial event hire income directly contributes to Somerset House’s programme, education and outreach work and helps to maintain our venue’s Grade I listed site.

Driving sales still remains a key consideration when planning an activation; however, it is surpassed by the need to create trust with their consumers. Regardless of whether it is experience or investment that is measured, a successful brand activation is defined by:

- access to the unique
- the opportunity to engage with the brand
- a standout location



2.4M VISITORS ANNUALLY

500,000 sq. ft grade I listed site

75 Somerset House Studios artists and their teams in over 15,000 sq. ft of studio space

At Somerset House we are able to provide that ‘standout location’ and are proud to work with supply partners who uphold our values for creativity and innovation, diversity and sustainability. The scope and scale of our central London location, our cultural programme and our partners and onsite community facilitate ‘access to the unique’, and help organisations elevate their brand engagement with consumers.

We have values we live by, we have a strong heritage and we have brands who trust us.

We have creators, talent and a community that are drawn to us.

Today’s brand activations are no longer solely about getting a group of people together to tick the ‘tried and tested’ product sampling box. It is now about being ‘tribe and trusted’ as brands seek to bring followers together to drive a deeper connection and lasting loyalty. As the Home of Cultural Innovators, we are

Tribe & Trusted.

Jenny Freestone
Commercial Director, Somerset House Trust.

MEET OUR VIBRANT CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Creative enterprises

- Dedicated offices for creative businesses
- Currently home to 117 organisations
- 134 creative enterprise residents
- 75+ artists

Exchange

- Affordable shared workspaces for freelancers and start-ups from across the creative sector
- 400+ members. Including those on bursaries and Black Business Participants

Black Business Residency

This twelve-month programme provides a combination of co-working and project space as part of Somerset House's extensive creative community. BBR Members will also benefit from mentorship and interactive masterclasses led by leading professionals in the creative industries.

Somerset House Studios

- Studio space and support for collaborative, multi-disciplinary artists engaging with bold ideas, urgent issues and pioneering technologies
- 70+

Makerversity

- A pioneering membership community of makers, designers and innovators with access to workspace, workshops, machines and tools
- Over 300 members

Meet the artists, makers and creative businesses who make up our dynamic, expansive and mutually supportive creative network.



**SOMERSET
HOUSE** step inside think outside

In collaboration with
TRIGGERFISH

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