

SIGNIFICANT WOMEN in BRANDED CONTENT 2025



FOREWORD

To me, one of the absolute best things about working in branded content? The people. The creative, strategic and ridiculously talented minds who push boundaries, rewrite the rules and redefine what storytelling can do. And among those leading the charge, you'll find a powerhouse of women whose impact is shaping the industry in ways that can't be ignored.

This ebook is a celebration of those women: the strategists, creatives, executives and innovators driving branded content forward, making waves and inspiring the rest of us as they go. The ebook, "Significant Women in Branded Content 2025" isn't just a list; it's testament to the incredible talent in this industry and much-needed recognition of the voices shaping its future.

To me, branded content has always been about more than marketing. It's about making real connections, crafting

meaningful stories and creating content that resonates on a deeper level. The women featured in this ebook are behind some of the most compelling and game-changing work out there – whether it's award-winning campaigns, bold new content strategies or fresh takes on brand storytelling. Their work doesn't just get seen; it sparks conversation, drives action and makes a difference.

But let's be honest: while we're here to celebrate, we also know there's still work to be done. The industry has made strides, but equal representation, leadership opportunities and visibility for women in branded content are still evolving. By spotlighting these incredible professionals, we're not just recognising their contributions, we're also hoping to inspire the next wave of women to step up, take charge and leave their mark on this industry.

So, consider this ebook more than just an acknowledgement of talent. It's a source of inspiration, a must-have industry resource and, quite frankly, a brilliant way to discover and connect with the women leading branded content today. Whether you're a seasoned pro, an emerging talent or just someone looking for a fresh perspective on branded storytelling you'll find career lessons, insights and a whole lot of wisdom within these pages.

And to the women featured here: your work matters. Your creativity, leadership and vision are not just shaping campaigns, but the future of branded content itself.

And to those reading: let these stories fuel your own ambitions, challenge the status quo and remind you that the best stories are yet to be written.

The future of branded content is being shaped by those willing to challenge the status quo, elevate new voices and craft stories that matter. And as this ebook proves, many of those leading the way are women.

Enjoy the insights, celebrate the achievements and let these stories inspire your own journey in branded content.

Kind Regards and happy reading!

/Stine Holmgaard
CGO & Partner,
Native Advertising Institute

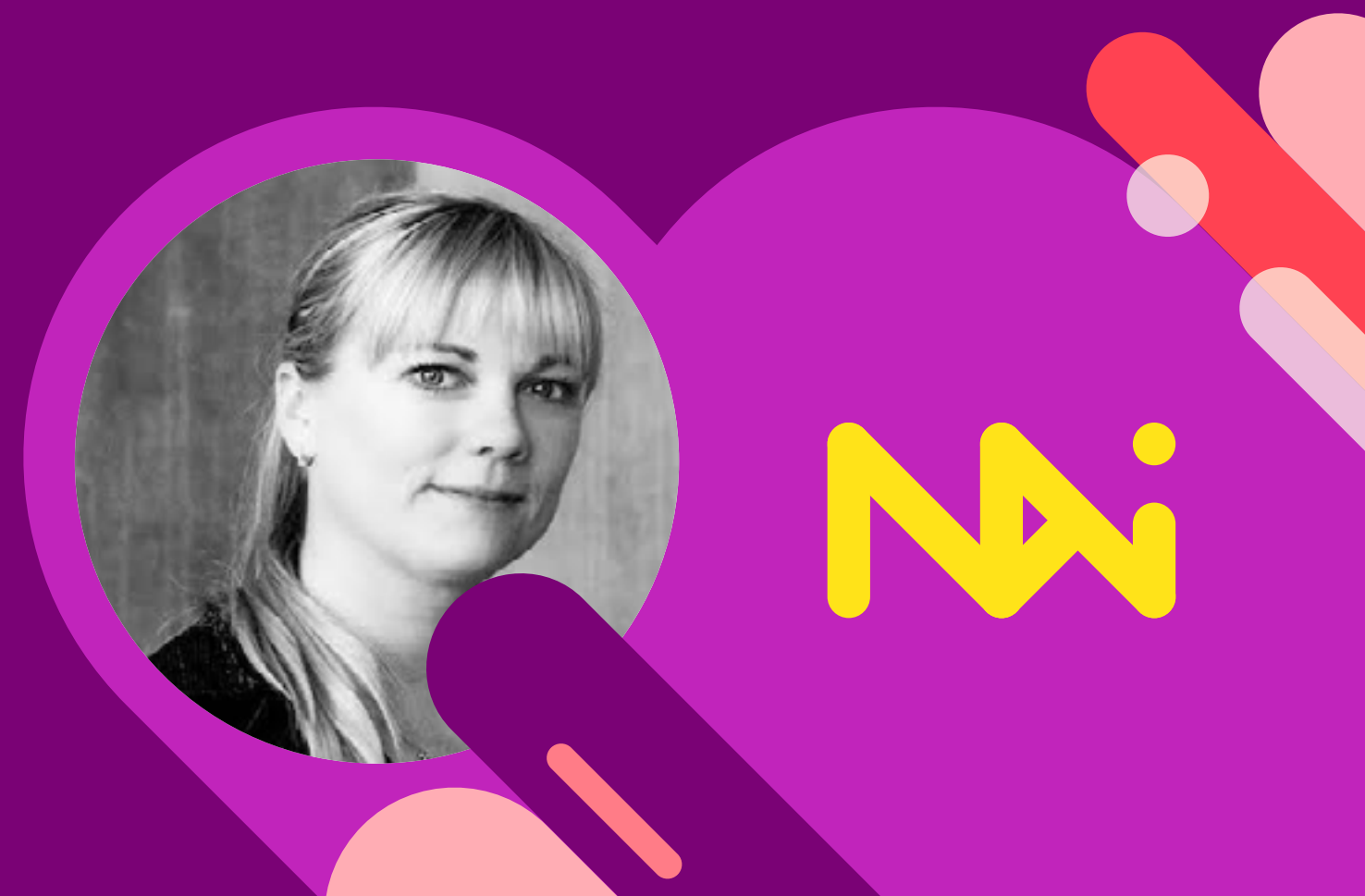


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A



NATIVE
ADVERTISING
INSTITUTE



Adriana Schroder

Brand content manager | *Editora Globo, a publishing group with over 20 brands in print, digital, and events*

Signature Work Achievements

Our branded content team delivered exceptional results in 2024, creating a high volume of impactful content: over 1,300 print pieces, 900 digital articles, and 1,500+ social media assets.

Key projects in my branded content career include a successful 6+ year partnership with Embratel on the 'Juntos no Próximo Nível'

project. This evolving project targets high-level executives, featuring content in print and digital formats within Valor Econômico, a video series with industry leaders, and an exclusive event with an international speaker. Event content is repurposed to extend the project's reach.

Another successful project was 'Stopping Power' with the energy company Engie. For the 'Stopping Power' project, in partnership with ENGIE, G.Lab developed a groundbreaking cross-media platform called 'Energy: This is Our Sport'. For the first time in history, the newspaper published 10 pages in a blue layout within the EU& supplement, which circulates on Fridays and focuses on lifestyle topics. The project also featured a blue digital hub on Valor's website, as well as content promotion through a seal on the newspaper's cover and a widget on the Valor Econômico homepage, both in the same shade of blue.

And another project that stood out in 2024 and is currently being renewed is the Longevity HUB with Bradesco Seguros. With the increase in life expectancy in Brazil - which jumped from 71.1 years in 2000 to 76.4 years in 2023, according to IBGE data - the discussion around longevity has become increasingly relevant, not only among the over-50s audience but also among young adults who are already planning a long and quality life. To generate greater reach and endorsement for the brand's Longevity campaign, Bradesco



Seguros Vida e Previdência, in partnership with O Globo, created the Longevity unbranded content hub. 103 content pieces were delivered in 10 months of the project, with deliverables in print and digital.

Key Insights

Throughout my 8 years at G.Lab, Editora Globo's branded content studio, I've witnessed the remarkable evolution of the advertising market regarding this content format. Today, advertising brands not only value but also deeply understand the strategic role of branded content. Far from being a mere advertorial, it stands out as a powerful tool to convey the brand's message in a relevant and engaging way, with the journalistic quality that our audience expects.

The complexity of my work lies in the diversity of Editora Globo's brands, which exceed 20 vehicles. Each demands a unique approach, with customized content for different sectors such as automotive, fashion and beauty, industry, and energy. This personalization, meticulously aligned with client briefings and adapted to each brand's language, ensures that results – in terms of audience, engagement, and impact – exceed or equal the performance of editorial content.

My experience at G.Lab has provided me with a privileged view of the intersection between advertising and journalism, allowing me

to create innovative projects that resonate with the audience and generate value for brands. Furthermore, it has allowed me to better understand the profile of professionals needed to work in the area: journalists with project management expertise, who also excel in customer service. A profile not always readily available in the market.

Career Lessons

Always seek to understand client objectives and strive to align content as closely as possible with the vehicle's editorial language.

Monitor results throughout the project to make potential adjustments to delivery strategies.

Stay alert to market news and formats.

Be an ally and partner to the commercial area, assisting in project construction, presenting cases, and providing solutions for new projects and renewals of those already acquired.





Agnieszka Gajzler

Managing Director TV & Digital Content
Growth Director | *Wirtualna Polska*

Signature Work Achievements

Highlights:

- Managing business and client's strategy across 30 markets
- Building from scratch business units with new digital revenue streams and products both for agency and publisher.

In areas of: strategy, data, content marketing, native ad, e-commerce, performance, social.

- Managing teams from 5 - 140 people, both local and international level
- Creating new ad segment for OTT as ad supported model for Player Adlite in Poland
- Brand positioning and brand copy OPEN.FM, top online radio station in Poland

- Scaling business revenues with size of +25 mln \$
- Digital and cultural transformation of media agency, medium structure of 60 people

Key Insights

In my opinion, industry will follow consumer needs: video of all kind, from long forms to short, fast content and authenticity. Content Creators economy will increase. Social Video platforms will be on a rise for a long time.

Career Lessons

Always be honest to yourself. If it works for You, do it, even when it is extremely hard at the beginning. Great things come with work and faith.



United Kingdom



Ali Gray

VP & Executive Creative Director | *Freethink Media*

Signature Work Achievements

- Led the creative for many award-winning partnerships at the Telegraph – including Voltoral, Philips and Braun
- Launched the Hearst UK Content Studio in 2016 and built the team up to more than 30 creatives
- Worked with global brands including Prada, BMW, Gucci and Paypal, and created Hearst UK's first interactive video for Very

- Won Best Content Studio at the British Media Awards in 2019
- Launched the first global ELLE TikTok campaign with Nike in 2021
- Launched the Freethink Creative Studio in 2023
- Oversaw the creative for the award-winning partnership between Big Think and Unlikely Collaborators. We've created 29 premium episodes with notable celebrity guests, including Steve-O, Jewel, Jason Derulo, Neal Brennan and Kel Mitchell, receiving more than 21M total views.

Key Insights

Audiences want to be entertained, inspired or educated. If you're not doing at least one of those well, you'll be easily forgotten.

The success of a branded content studio is as much about profitability as it is about overall revenue. In my experience, many companies are not great at judging how profitable their campaigns really are – and it's easy to spend time and money on things that don't significantly impact their overall success. Learning how to be intentional and discerning about your team's time and production budgets is key.

To make great branded content, you have to know who you're talking to and meet them where they are. Once you find them, you need to do four things: Capture their attention, make them understand your message, make them care about your message and convince them



to do something about it. That last part is key. Do you want them to buy something? Change their opinion? Sign up for a newsletter? Tell their friends about you? Passively watching or reading is not enough.

Making great branded content is one part data, one part vibes. I'm constantly encouraging my team to make data-powered creative decisions. We analyze completion rates, engagement rates and impact studies. But you can't forget the importance of gut instinct and personal taste. Years of experience in this industry make us qualified to know instinctively what good looks like – and sometimes that's more accurate than the data.

Personal connection is key. As we move toward a more AI-powered world, creating content at scale is easier than ever. But developing human connections remains elusive. We're leaning into first-person storytelling and on-camera hosts to help build that connection in our content.

Career Lessons

Don't be afraid to ask for help! This is a biggie. So many people have helped me along my career journey. I've sent cold emails to people on LinkedIn, begged acquaintances for introductions and reached out to alumni from my university to ask them to meet for a coffee chat or offer some advice. The worst they can do is say no. And you'll be surprised how many say yes.

Start with bad ideas first. In a creative brainstorm, it's easy to default to ideas that are safe and comfortable. And sometimes it can be intimidating to throw out an idea that feels a little wacky. But the seemingly bad, silly or weird ideas often lead to creative gold.

Embrace failures. I've managed large creative teams for nearly 10 years now, and I always try to instill a "test and learn" culture. I want my teams to innovate and not be afraid to try new things – but that inevitably comes with failure. And that's okay! It means we're learning and evolving.

Be your own loudest cheerleader. This is tough for many people to do – especially women. But self-promotion is crucial. You can be doing excellent work in your role, but if your boss or the rest of your company don't know about it, it can get lost in the shuffle.

Have fun with it. I try to remember this when things get a bit tense at work. At the end of the day, we're getting paid to make content and be creative every day. And that's pretty cool.





Ana Beirão

Head of Branded Content | *GroupM*

Signature Work Achievements

Over the course of my career, I have been fortunate to lead and contribute to a wide array of impactful projects and campaigns, showcasing expertise in branded content, storytelling, and innovative marketing strategies. With a focus on creativity, audience alignment, and seamless integration, I have developed and produced hundreds of branded content formats across diverse media platforms, always ensuring that the content provides external value for the user/viewer/reader while remaining non-disruptive and aligned with the brand's positioning.

Notable Achievements and Projects:

- 1. First Branded Content Casting for a Prime Time Soap Opera in Portugal:** Spearheaded the development of the first-ever branded content casting for a soap opera in Portugal, a groundbreaking initiative in prime-time television. This project seamlessly integrated brand messaging into the storyline, offering an innovative way to connect with audiences while maintaining the integrity of the narrative.
- 2. Creation of several Branded Content Series and Events:** Brought to life multiple branded content series and branded events, leveraging storytelling-driven approaches to engage audiences on an emotional level. These projects not only entertained but also provided meaningful value to viewers, creating memorable brand experiences.
- 3. Seamless Brand Integration Across Media Formats:** Successfully integrated hundreds of brands into various media formats, including television, digital platforms, and live events. These integrations were executed with precision to ensure they felt non-disruptive and provided enhanced the user experience, rather than disrupting it.
- 4. Development of thousands of Cross-Channel Strategies:** Designed and implemented cross-channel strategies to target specific audiences and amplify brand reach. By leveraging a mix of media



platforms, including TV, social media, podcasts, and print, I ensured that each campaign resonated with its intended audience while maximizing engagement and visibility.

- 5. Innovation and Creativity in Execution:** Pioneered innovative approaches to branded content, combining creativity with data-driven insights to craft campaigns that were both impactful and aligned with audience preferences. This included the use of immersive storytelling techniques, visually engaging content, and cutting-edge formats.

These experiences have allowed me to build a robust portfolio of successful branded content initiatives, demonstrating a commitment to excellence, innovation, and audience-first thinking. Each project has been an opportunity to push creative boundaries, deliver value, and create meaningful connections between brands and their audiences.

Key Insights

In all the years working with Branded Content, I've picked up a few industry insights along the way. First and foremost, people care about their lives, not the brand's. That's why our job is to seamlessly align the brand's stories with the real interests and passions of the audience. When done right, branded content becomes something people want to engage with, rather than something that interrupts what they're already doing. It's about inspiring, entertaining, and



adding value—not shouting for attention.

Next up: data-driven strategies. Let's face it, guessing what your audience wants is so 2010. These days, analytics are like your best friend who always tells you the truth, even if it's not what you want to hear. By using data to understand what makes your audience tick (and what makes them scroll past faster than a bad meme), we can create content that actually works. Bonus: it also helps us prove the impact of what we're doing. Who doesn't love a good ROI story?

Looking to the future, I think the next big thing in branded content is immersive experiences. With AI-driven technologies becoming more advanced and accessible, brands have the opportunity to create hyper-personalized and interactive content that feels tailor-made for each audience member. Imagine AI crafting unique storylines, dynamic visuals, or even real-time responses that make viewers feel like active participants rather than passive consumers. And let's not forget the unstoppable rise of user-generated content. People love seeing themselves in the spotlight, plus, let's be honest, it's free content for brands—what's not to love?

Career Lessons

Transitioning from a role as Branded Content Senior Account Manager at a local TV station to Head of Branded Content at

a Multinational Media Investment Group has been a journey of adaptability and continuous learning. This experience has underscored the value of embracing new challenges and perspectives—whether in a media group, an agency, or a brand. Leveraging past experiences while staying open to evolving trends and technologies is essential for growth in the ever-changing media landscape. Building strong relationships and understanding the nuances of diverse media ecosystems are fundamental to driving impactful and successful branded content strategies.

Another invaluable lesson I've learned is to always seek creative opportunities in every aspect of life. Inspiration often emerges from the most unexpected places—a casual conversation, a cultural trend, or even a personal experience. Staying curious and observant enables you to uncover unique ideas that truly resonate with audiences. Creativity isn't just about thinking outside the box; it's about recognizing the possibilities that exist all around you and transforming them into meaningful stories.





Portugal



Ana Duarte

Head of Branded Content | *PÚBLICO*

Signature Work Achievements

I believe one of the achievements I would highlight is the creation of PÚBLICO's branded content brand, Estúdio P, in 2019. I led the brand's creation and the strategy to build market awareness, and it has been a highly challenging journey. I would also highlight two projects: the first, a partnership with Google to showcase small businesses – a multi-format project (video, article, and podcast) with national coverage, designed to incorporate issues such as cultural and generational diversity.

I would also highlight the project Que caminho para Portugal? ("The Path Forward for Portugal?") – an umbrella brand created two years

ago, through which we analyze a specific topic each year, and which has been very successful. In 2023, we focused on Hydrogen, and in 2024, on Decarbonization. The project consists of multi-format content and culminates in a major event, which has successfully fulfilled its mission of promoting discussions on solutions for these areas. In the last edition, we even had the presence of the Minister of the Environment.

Estúdio P:

<https://www.publico.pt/estudiop/o-estudio>

Google:

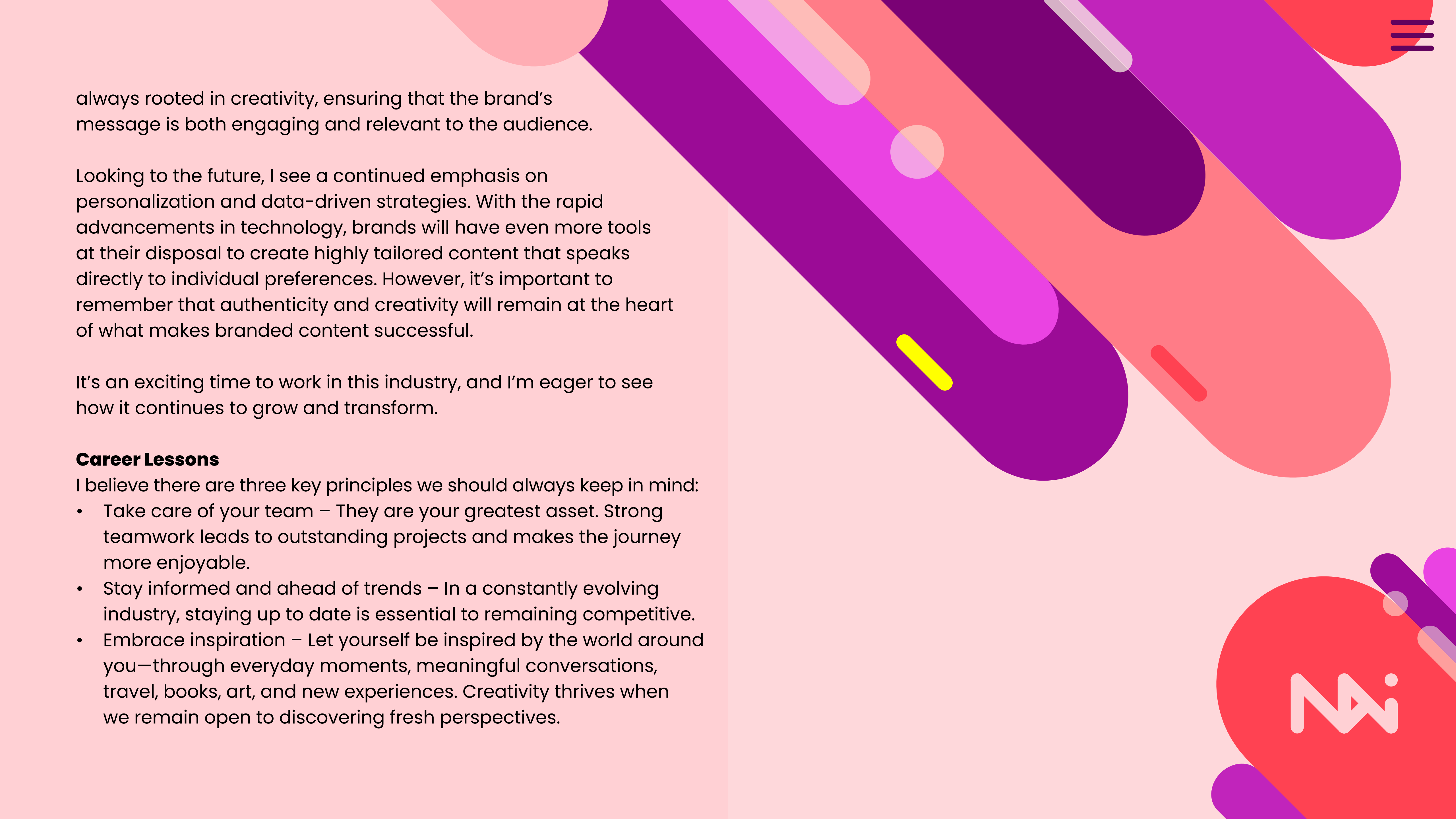
<https://www.publico.pt/estudiop/construiropresente>

Que caminho para Portugal:

<https://www.publico.pt/estudiop/descarbonizacao-que-caminho#>

Key Insights

As someone who has worked in branded content for several years, I believe the industry has evolved significantly over time. Today, content is no longer just one more tool to promote products. Brands now understand that it's more about building meaningful connections with audiences. Branded content offers a unique opportunity for brands to tell authentic stories that resonate on a personal level. In my experience, successful branded content is



always rooted in creativity, ensuring that the brand's message is both engaging and relevant to the audience.

Looking to the future, I see a continued emphasis on personalization and data-driven strategies. With the rapid advancements in technology, brands will have even more tools at their disposal to create highly tailored content that speaks directly to individual preferences. However, it's important to remember that authenticity and creativity will remain at the heart of what makes branded content successful.

It's an exciting time to work in this industry, and I'm eager to see how it continues to grow and transform.

Career Lessons

I believe there are three key principles we should always keep in mind:

- Take care of your team – They are your greatest asset. Strong teamwork leads to outstanding projects and makes the journey more enjoyable.
 - Stay informed and ahead of trends – In a constantly evolving industry, staying up to date is essential to remaining competitive.
 - Embrace inspiration – Let yourself be inspired by the world around you—through everyday moments, meaningful conversations, travel, books, art, and new experiences. Creativity thrives when we remain open to discovering fresh perspectives.
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Croatia

Ana Tomić

Marketing Director | *24sata d.o.o.*

Signature Work Achievements

I began my career 2007 at a leading full-service marketing agency, gaining broad industry experience before joining Styria Media Group in 2011. As Marketing Director at 24sata Group, I now lead B2B and B2C marketing operations, focusing on digital communications, new revenue stream promotional concepts, branded sponsorships, and custom native projects.

With a strong background in the conference business, I've been in charge of implementing Digital Takeover, the biggest B2B conference in the region, for four consecutive years. I've also

contributed to a team that has won over 100 global awards for digital and native projects.

Key Insights

I believe brands will continue to move towards more interactive and immersive content, utilizing emerging technologies like AI, AR, and VR to engage audiences in ways we haven't yet fully explored. The power of data will allow for more precise targeting and personalization, making content not only more relevant but also more effective in driving action.

Career Lessons

To any woman leading complex branded projects, here's my advice: Build a team culture based on trust, respect, and shared goals. Start by fully understanding the client's brief, their story, and how it fits into the bigger picture. It's all about connecting the dots between your team, the processes, and the people involved.

Empower your team to bring their best ideas, and make sure everyone feels supported and valued. At the end of the day, the success of your team is a reflection of you... how you guide, treat, and grow with them. When you build the right foundation, your team will thrive, even when you're not around.





Croatia

Ana Plisic

Creative Director, Partner | *01 Content & Technology*
– *C3 Croatia*

Signature Work Achievements

01 Content & Technology – C3 Croatia is the first digital agency in Croatia to integrate highly relevant, expert-approved, premium content with OpenAI GPT-3.5 Turbo LLM model, creating the first AI-powered food assistant for our client. We developed a highly precise and accurate AI assistant that provides relevant information and ensures 100% accurate link recommendations.



As a customer-obsessed agency, we achieved this by carefully analyzing user behavior while interacting with GPT models in their early stages and conducting a detailed API analysis following its launch in 2023.

For the past few years, we have been dedicated to developing analytical AI products, building a highly skilled team, and gaining a deep understanding of new, cutting-edge LLM standards. This knowledge, combined with insights into how LLMs will reshape user expectations and habits, has positioned us at the forefront of pioneering new AI-driven products and delivering entirely new ways for users to consume relevant content.

Key Insights

Digital media has rapidly re-shaped customer expectations and habits, continuously redefining how people interact with content. Those of us who witnessed this transformation from the very beginning understood one fundamental truth – this was just the beginning. As digital technologies evolve, so do customer expectations, constantly shifting in response to innovation.

For years, this evolution happened gradually, sophisticated, subtle, yet relentless pushing us to build entire teams dedicated to understanding the customer journey.

Then, in early 2023, another big shift occurred: this time, the change was fueled by LLMs and a new standards, setting a new precedent. Today users expect digital products to truly understand them and their needs intuitively. This isn't just about a new channel or another branded content format. This is a game changer that will completely redefine branded communication. The future of branded content lies in hyper-personalization and predictive engagement, where AI-powered interactions will anticipate users' needs before users even express them.

Career Lessons

- 1. Learn and Grow – Industries evolve, technologies shift.**
The ability to adapt and grow is what sets professionals apart. What works today may not work tomorrow. Therefore, the only constant advantage is continuous learning.
- 2. Understand Who You Are Solving Problem for – Success isn't just about expertise; it's about knowing who you are solving problems for.**
- 3. Customer-Centric Thinking Wins – The best ideas, strategies, and innovations come from putting the customer at the center of every decision.**





Angela Matusik

Founder, CEO | *A.M. Stories*

Signature Work Achievements

FOR HP, as head of corporate brand: The Garage, digital content hub; Innovation magazine; History of Memory, documentary series (Tribeca X winner); Generation Impact, documentary series and content hub, (Shorty Impact Winner); Dear Future Me, two part documentary film (Tribeca X official selection). FOR MIT -- The Big Idea, documentary film (Webby Award Winner, Anthem Award Winner)

Key Insights

Telling impactful, audience-first stories are an integral part of any strong brand. It helps them stand the test of time no matter what the winds of change; p'deliver; It turns consumers into audiences and

audiences into fans; and it creates deep brand affinities that are the foundations of loyalty. And so much more. Happy to discuss.

Career Lessons

Learn how to tell the story of your own success early on. Capture data, screen grabs, PDFs that you can always access. Campaigns and digital media is are fleeting -- but your career is not. Become comfortable demonstrating your role on larger teams, and showing your impact on ideas that have moved the needle for clients, brands and your employers.





United Kingdom



Anna Goldie

Senior Creative Lead | *News UK*

Signature Work Achievements

With 15 years of working in branded content I have been lucky enough to work with clients as diverse as IBM, Graff and TikTok, across digital, social, radio, podcast and print for major media owners. My proudest achievements include commissioning the transatlantic US/UK British Airways 100 campaign with The Times and The Wall Street Journal, establishing The Sun's Creative for Good competition for perception change among agency partners and working closely and sensitively with colleagues who appeared in a dial-shifting campaign for the charity Movember. Working on the UK government's Covid-19 Team Nation communications strategy during the pandemic presented a fresh challenge, and responsibility – it was paid for content with truly life-saving potential.

Key Insights

I believe branded content is at its best when you give the audience a reason to be there whether it is being paid for by an advertiser or not. If you can strip away the advertiser's logo and convey a engaging message you know you're on to a good thing.

With our always-on media brands need to be able to reflect culture quickly. With the right strategy and dynamic delivery teams native advertising can deliver this for clients – especially teams working in-house for media-owners – but we need to do a better job of convincing them.

Career Lessons

Working in branded content is sometimes like walking a tightrope – how do you keep the advertiser, editorial, and most importantly the audience happy when they sometimes want conflicting things? Being able to deliver for all three is a real skill – one that can take UN-levels of diplomacy – but it is also down to building strong relationships across all stake-holders. I've learnt that an open and collaborative approach ensures you can create campaigns that serve brand objectives and resonates authentically with audiences while maintaining editorial integrity.





Canada



Annalise Nielsen

Head of Strategy and Development | *Lower Street*

Signature Work Achievements

I've had the privilege of working with high-profile clients such as Morgan Stanley, Mozilla, Lloyds, and Rocket Mortgage, where I've led strategic discussions around leveraging podcasting to drive business growth.

When working with clients, I provide tailored solutions that align with our clients' marketing goals, helping them maximize the potential of audio content to engage their audiences and achieve measurable results.

As a thought leader in the industry, I've had the opportunity to speak at major events such as Podcast Movement, Hot Docs Podcast Festival, and Native Advertising Days, where I've shared insights on podcast strategy, growth, and best practices with fellow industry professionals. In addition, in 2024, I had an article published in Forbes under "BrandVoice" through Brand Storytelling, which allowed me to showcase my expertise on the power of audio.

On the content creation side, I've been managing the Pacific Content blog for several years and sent out more than 80 issues of the Pacific Content newsletter, consistently delivering valuable insights and strategies to the podcasting and marketing communities.

Key Insights

Branded content needs to feel as "non-branded" as possible. This doesn't necessarily mean keeping the brand touch light (though usually it DOES mean that). It could just mean making sure the content is actually GOOD, is actually providing value to the target audience.

If you focus too much on what YOUR brand stands to gain, you risk missing the opportunity to create something that will actually capture the attention of your target audience. Unlike traditional advertising, branded content is opt-in. You can't buy people's attention, force them to consume your long-form content. People



have to choose to engage with it, so it must offer real value to your target audience in order to capture their attention and keep them engaged.

Career Lessons

Women often hold the majority of purchasing power and financial decision-making in their households, so bringing your own experiences and preferences to your work in branded content is a strength. Create content that YOU would enjoy—your perspective can make your work stronger.

In terms of career advice, I would offer: enter every conversation with confidence. If something's unclear, ask questions. But don't let jargon or unfamiliar concepts intimidate you. Stay curious, do your own research, and follow your passions. Voice your opinions (backed by examples and data) because they can spark important conversations and shape the future of the industry.





Finland

Anne Leinonen

Team Lead Concepts and Content | *A-lehdet*

Signature Work Achievements

In recent years, I have focused on developing A-lehdet's Creative Solutions team and strengthening its collaboration with our sales team, clients, and other key stakeholders. We have grown our sales, refined our processes, and ensured that our creative content meets the highest quality standards. This year, our key priorities include expanding our video capabilities and enhancing data utilization. I have also been developing an innovative commercial supplement product, which has already become a key pillar of our print sales. This year, we will publish five supplements.

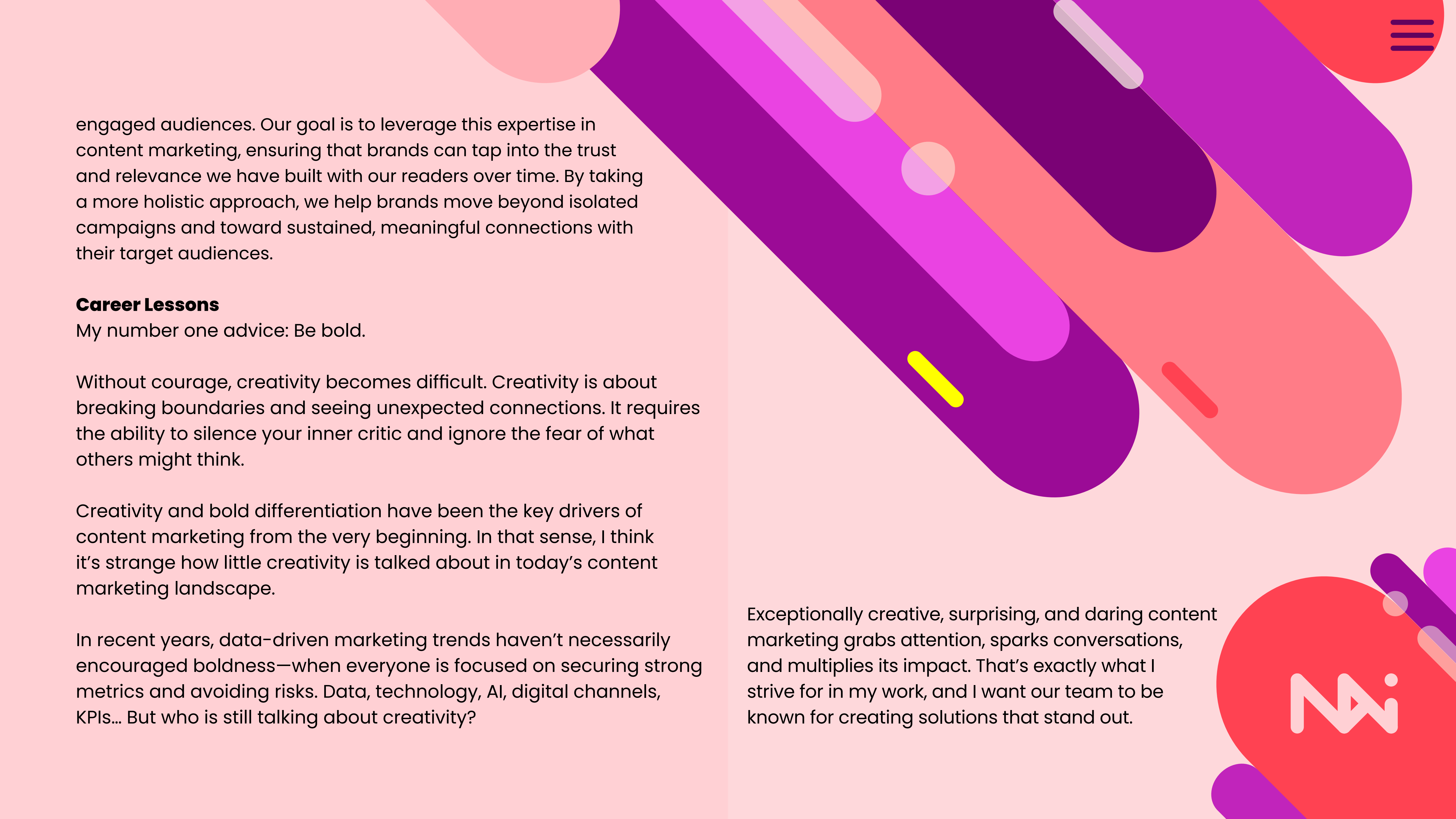
Previously, I worked with journalistic content at Finland's largest news media outlets, specializing in live broadcasts and event reporting. From my work as a journalist and a managing editor, I've brought to

the commercial side sharp editorial perspectives, an efficient way of working, and a fearless attitude.

Key Insights

In branded content in A-lehdet, we are increasingly shifting our focus from selling individual products to selling themes and audiences. Rather than offering one-off native articles, we aim to create context-driven content packages that allow brands to own entire topics, making their marketing more impactful, long-term, and strategically thought-out.

We are particularly strong in verticals such as home & living and women's media, where we combine deep industry expertise with highly



engaged audiences. Our goal is to leverage this expertise in content marketing, ensuring that brands can tap into the trust and relevance we have built with our readers over time. By taking a more holistic approach, we help brands move beyond isolated campaigns and toward sustained, meaningful connections with their target audiences.

Career Lessons

My number one advice: Be bold.

Without courage, creativity becomes difficult. Creativity is about breaking boundaries and seeing unexpected connections. It requires the ability to silence your inner critic and ignore the fear of what others might think.

Creativity and bold differentiation have been the key drivers of content marketing from the very beginning. In that sense, I think it's strange how little creativity is talked about in today's content marketing landscape.

In recent years, data-driven marketing trends haven't necessarily encouraged boldness—when everyone is focused on securing strong metrics and avoiding risks. Data, technology, AI, digital channels, KPIs... But who is still talking about creativity?

Exceptionally creative, surprising, and daring content marketing grabs attention, sparks conversations, and multiplies its impact. That's exactly what I strive for in my work, and I want our team to be known for creating solutions that stand out.





The Netherlands



Anne Marije De Vries Lentsch

Business Strategist for Growth | *Interim*

Signature Work Achievements

I am most proud of the achievements where, together with a great team, content has expanded brands beyond expectations. Like my experience in expanding a Millennial brand to a number one position by increasing its digital reach tenfold purely through strategy, data, and content (and an amazing team). Or setting up a full-service branded content unit with hundreds of campaigns, where we made ambitions true for so many different brands purely through content. From milk to credit cards to perfume: content works for everyone, as long as it is applied correctly.

Key Insights

I believe in strategic frameworks where consumer insights, content data, trends, and creativity (energy) come together. One concept where all these elements click together. You have to ask yourself: what works for the audience regarding the topic and what doesn't? And most importantly: what are their needs?

How does the product or service add extra value to the audience's lives at this moment?

It's a mix of psychology and creativity with a touch of common sense, where content truly works its magic—expanding brands, building authority, creating communities, selling products, and so on. But you have to think it through and make it fun at the same time—then the content energy starts doing its work!

Career Lessons

Keep learning and apply this so your work continues to evolve. Keep track of what works and what doesn't so you can improve your work with every new project.

And importantly: have energy while creating content (the audience will feel this), celebrate the wins with your team, and share the knowledge with others.





United States



Annie Granatstein

Chief Content Officer | **Independent Content Consulting**

Signature Work Achievements

Founded Marriott International's first Content Marketing Center of Excellence across 35+ brands worldwide; Launched two series on Amazon Prime Video; Oversaw Marriott's first-ever custom content programs with Washington Post, Vox, Rolling Stone Magazine; Built The Washington Post's content studio; Won Tellys, Webby's, Shortys, Native Advertising Awards

Key Insights

To make the most of your content investment, I advise taking a 360 degree approach from the beginning. Start with your concept and

determine how to best tell your story on each platform and medium.

With the advent of AI, it's more important than ever to have human storytellers using this tool vs handing the creative reigns over which is resulting in generic content.

Brands can be at the leading edge of entertainment if they do it right, focusing on meaningful messages, prioritizing their audience, and surrounding content with holistic marketing campaigns

Career Lessons

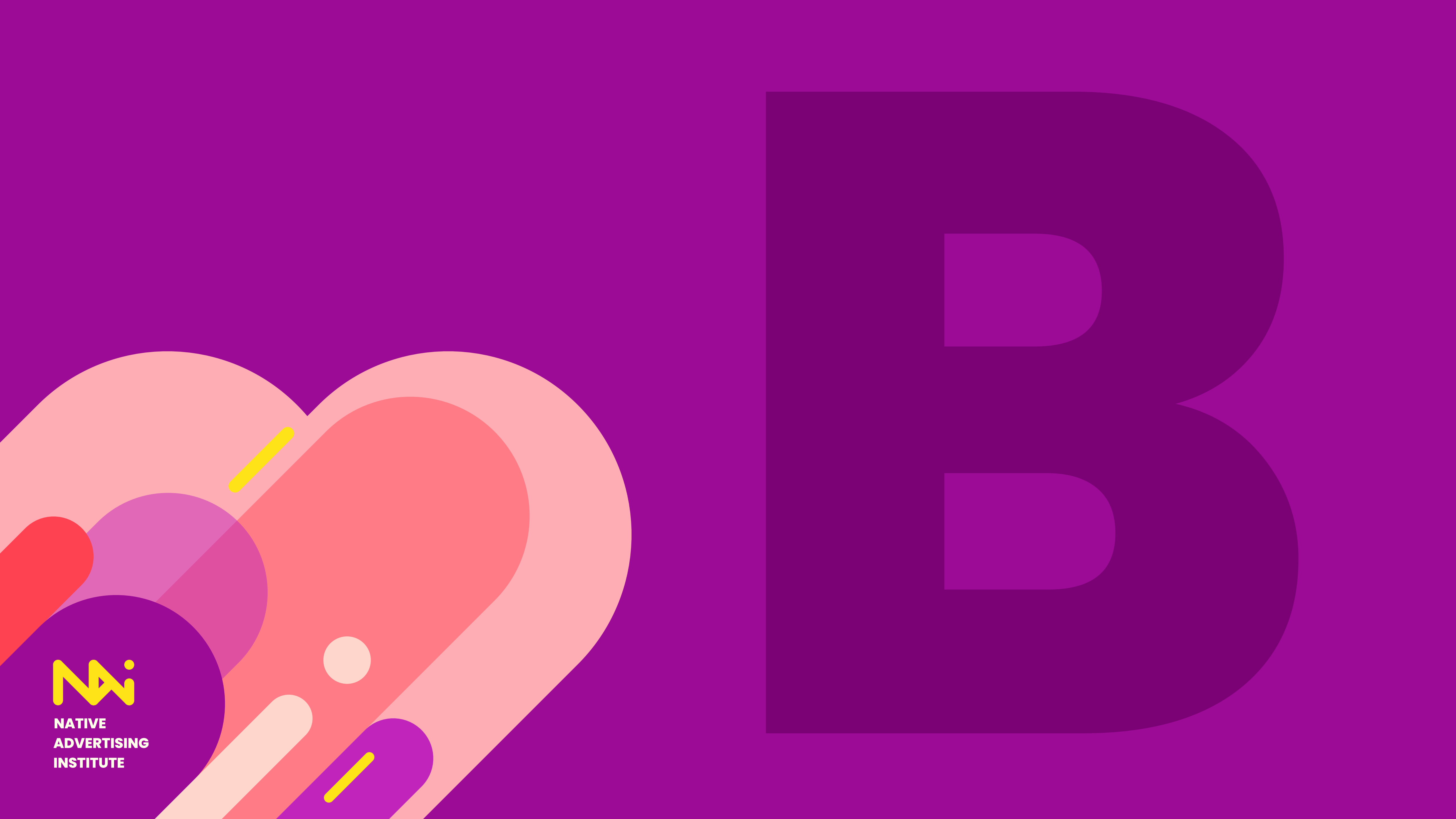
Start with your audience and ensure you get to know their needs, tensions, where they are consuming content first before you focus on what your brand is looking to achieve.

Cultivate relationships with internal collaborators who understand the value of storytelling.

Create a holistic content strategy before determining tactics.

Find your purpose-what lights you up-and let it lead the way in your work and career decisions.





**NATIVE
ADVERTISING
INSTITUTE**

BB



United States



Blair Thill

VP, Lifestyle Content Strategy | *Dotdash Meredith*

Signature Work Achievements

Never-been-done before is the name of my game in my time at Dotdash Meredith. The first program I ever made a splash in was leading creative for an interactive games hub for Cinnamon Toast Crunch. It was the first time we ever used a bespoke microsite to house games meant for parents and kids alike, and the engagement results were through the roof. From there, I got a taste for pushing the boundaries of our native products--executing the first shoppable interactive video for Target, a faux music video for Starbucks, and a Dan Levy-starring entertaining series for Cointreau. But the two

biggest milestones in my career were absolutely: leading a team of creatives to put on a surprise Trunk or Treat + Jason DeRulo concert during Covid in partnership with Walmart;and innovating DDM's native take on AI with multiple advertisers, from Campbells to Walmart to Toyota.

Key Insights

The arc of video storytelling in the ten years I've been in branded content has absolutely been the most interesting evolution I've seen. When I first started in this business, video was executed in the most premium way, with an emphasis on high-production quality and longer form storytelling. Those qualities are just not as important in branded content right now--and in fact, pale in comparison to authenticity. Now, you can tell a ten second story or a two minute one. You can feature an editor, an influencer, or a celeb. It doesn't matter. It'll resonate as long as it feels authentic to your brand, to the talent, and the platform. With this evolution, storytelling has really opened up to look different from campaign to campaign, and that's really exciting.

Career Lessons

Despite the fact that we're dealing with revenue, I think it's important never to take this job too seriously. That's how you keep your creative edge, and push yourself to take risks.





United States



Bria Bell

Vice President, Speaker Bureau Lead,
NAMR & LATAM | *J.P. Morgan*

Signature Work Achievements

- Winner of the Pivot Award, issued by the Women in Content Marketing Awards (this award recognizes a nominee who has made a shift from a different career field into content marketing—and is already forging a path to greatness. She has fewer than five years of experience in the field of content marketing).
- Named one of the top 50 women leaders of Dallas in 2023, issued by Women We Admire
- Promoted to Vice President in Feb. 2025
- Personal Brand & Thought Leadership: A significant milestone has been the development of my personal brand and thought

leadership within the marketing space. My unique career trajectory, moving from TV news to a global bank, has generated considerable interest. I've been invited to speak at several industry conferences and featured on podcasts, where I've shared my expertise on the power of storytelling in marketing and the importance of adapting to evolving industry landscapes. These opportunities have not only amplified my personal brand but have also contributed to the broader conversation around career transitions and the transferability of skills.

- Other business milestones: I've been able to demonstrate my ability to drive significant results through strategic marketing initiatives. Firstly, I spearheaded a comprehensive video content strategy for J.P. Morgan Payments at Nacha, resulting in a 600% increase in video content for this respective event. This wasn't just about volume; it was about targeted distribution and engagement. I managed LinkedIn content scheduling for maximum reach, streamlined event promotion through landing page collaboration, and captured compelling on-the-ground content. This significantly boosted our industry visibility. Secondly, I played a key role in revamping the proposal process for conference speaking engagements. Through collaborative efforts, we achieved a 200% increase in approved sessions for the CIB Payments team at major industry events like AFP (2024) and MRC Vegas (2025). This directly translates to increased thought leadership opportunities and brand exposure for J.P. Morgan Payments.



Key Insights

As someone who deeply believes in the power of storytelling, I'm constantly energized by the potential of branded content. For me, it's not just about creating something visually appealing; it's about crafting narratives that resonate on a human level. I truly believe that a well-told story, executed with authenticity, can create magic.

What excites me most is the challenge of developing content that's both insightful and relatable. Seeing an idea come to life, knowing it will connect with an audience, is incredibly fulfilling. In my role, I'm constantly reminded of the importance of a 'human-first' approach. This mindset not only improves my work as a storyteller and content creator but also shapes me as a person. It's about recognizing the shared experiences that connect us all.

In today's competitive landscape, I'm always looking for inspiration beyond my immediate field. I'm fascinated by the innovative content being created across industries. The rapid evolution of AI and other tools presents both opportunities and challenges. It's a constant reminder that to stay at the top of my game, I must remain a lifelong student of the industry.

Career Lessons

Embrace calculated risks. Ditch the fear of "what if" for "what's next?" History rewards the bold. In branded content, innovation is your legacy. Dare to experiment, challenge norms, and amplify your voice. Your audience craves authenticity.





United States



Britt Whitmore

Executive Producer, STAT Brand Studio; Executive Director of Marketing & Sponsorships | *STAT*

Signature Work Achievements

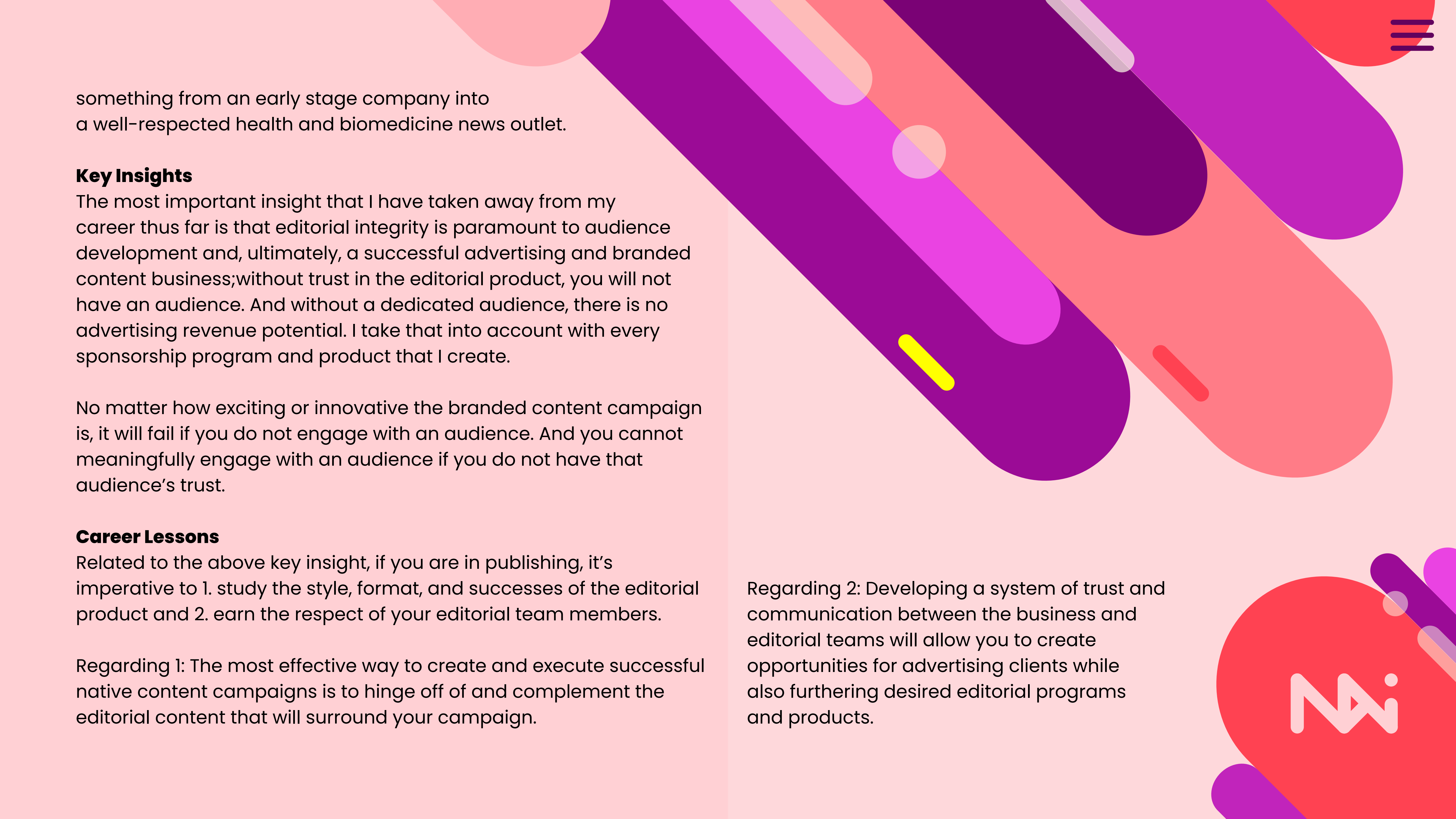
As someone who has been in the publishing world for 13+ years – both “old” media, and “new” media – I have extensive experience creating and executing cross-platform advertising campaigns to drive revenue for media companies. I particularly enjoy growing and adapting media businesses to match the current market, and I’m skilled at scaling teams and strategies as companies grow.

I started my advertising and integrated marketing career with Hearst and Condé Nast. There, I learned the foundational aspects

of media and how to think big and flashy when it comes to advertiser programs and partnerships.

I then took those foundational skills and built upon them at [what was then the new start-up] PureWow (now under Vayner Media). There, I honed my content marketing skills, at times creating and delivering up to seven six-to-seven-figure custom content marketing proposals for different clients a day. Being at a true start-up gave me the flexibility to experiment, particularly when it came to growing relationships and collaborating across the business and editorial teams. I perfected the dance along the editorial/business line – how to work together with mutual respect in order to maximize revenue without sacrificing editorial integrity.

When I joined my current company, it was about eight months into STAT’s tenure. There was no formal rate card, no media kit, and a nascent revenue strategy. Working with my incredible boss, Angus Macaulay (then Chief Revenue Officer, now Chief Operations Officer), I was able to take my experience at established media companies – both what worked and what did not work – and apply it to design the best of both “old” and “new” media techniques. STAT is now a successful media company that encompasses articles, premium subscriptions, podcasts, videos, events, and reports. With the rest of the executive leadership team – including Executive Editor and Co-Founder Rick Berke – it’s been a pleasure being able to help mold



something from an early stage company into a well-respected health and biomedicine news outlet.

Key Insights

The most important insight that I have taken away from my career thus far is that editorial integrity is paramount to audience development and, ultimately, a successful advertising and branded content business; without trust in the editorial product, you will not have an audience. And without a dedicated audience, there is no advertising revenue potential. I take that into account with every sponsorship program and product that I create.

No matter how exciting or innovative the branded content campaign is, it will fail if you do not engage with an audience. And you cannot meaningfully engage with an audience if you do not have that audience's trust.

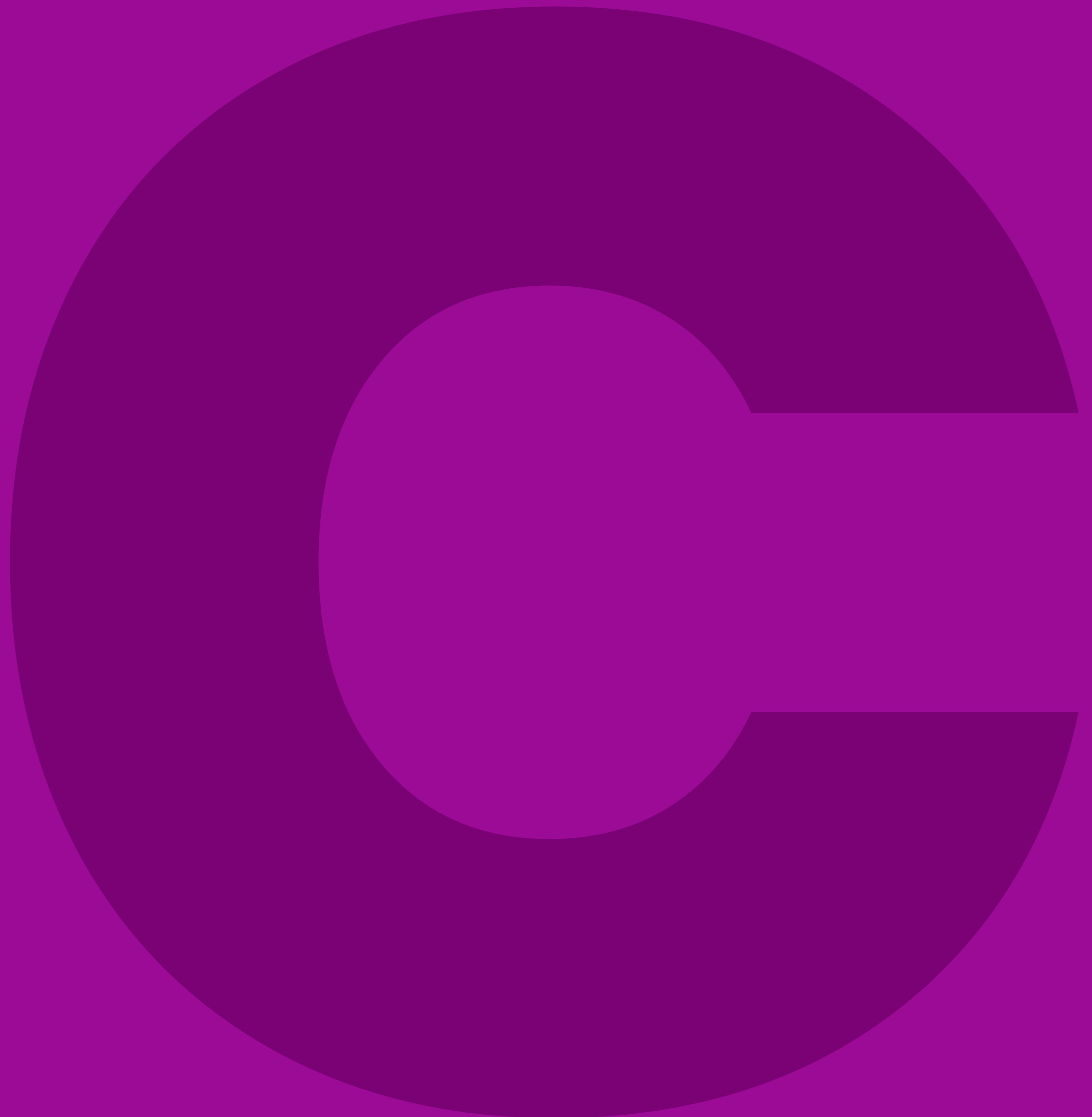
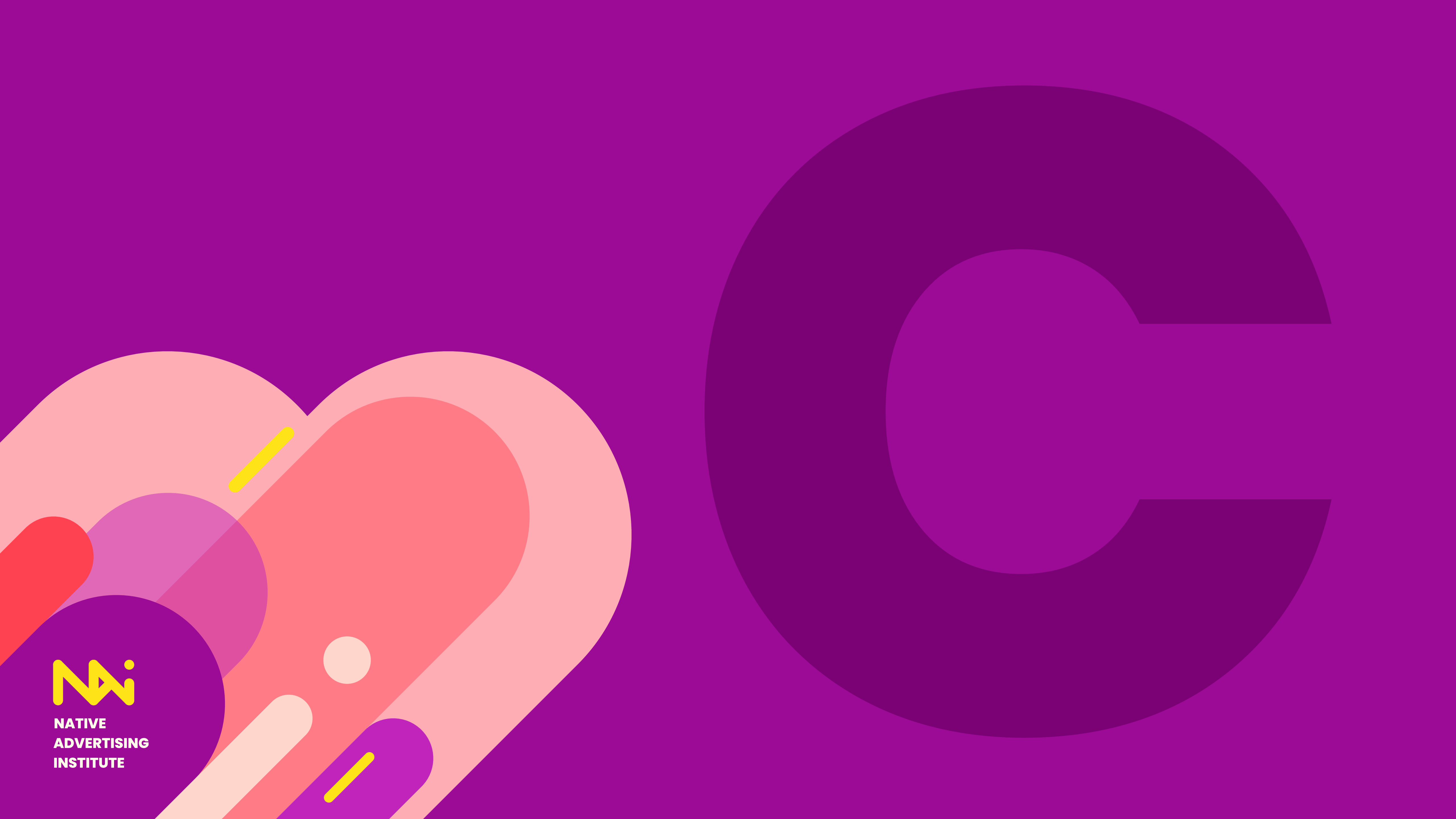
Career Lessons

Related to the above key insight, if you are in publishing, it's imperative to 1. study the style, format, and successes of the editorial product and 2. earn the respect of your editorial team members.

Regarding 1: The most effective way to create and execute successful native content campaigns is to hinge off of and complement the editorial content that will surround your campaign.

Regarding 2: Developing a system of trust and communication between the business and editorial teams will allow you to create opportunities for advertising clients while also furthering desired editorial programs and products.







United Kingdom

Cameron Townsley

Creative & Events Director | *The Digital Voice™*

Signature Work Achievements

In nearly five years at The Digital Voice™, my biggest highlight is always going to be our team! It has been my pleasure to build up our creative design and events teams into two thriving business units with six amazing people. Hiring, mentoring, and helping them grow into new roles has been hands down such a personal highlight!

Together, we've seen amazing progress, with events management up 45%, creative design up 15% from 2023 to 2024, with 2025 set to be our biggest yet.



Some highlights we've achieved together:

- Collaborated with our incredible team to win the Public Relations Standard of Excellence 2024 at The Web Awards.
- Lead UK & EMEA events for GumGum, impact.com and Nectar360 and helped craft content campaigns for Diageo, Limelight, Preciso, impact.com, VeraViews and more.
- Helped bring the Nectar360 Retail Media Summit to life, the largest Retail Media event at Cannes Lions, which is back again this year!
- Worked alongside inspiring women in advertising through The Women in Programmatic Network, Digital Leading Ladies and Bloom UK.

Key Insights

Authenticity is key. Brands connect with consumers when they feel seen, heard and understood but everything must be done authentically. I have seen branded content partnerships and integrations be most successful when this holds true.

Career Lessons

My two biggest pieces of advice are: don't be afraid to be yourself and seek inspiration from everything! This will help you find the role that makes your heart sing, with people that match your energy, and allow you to create your best work!

When you feel stuck, look outside your immediate industry. I like to turn to Pinterest, creative publications, or even go for a walk. Inspiration always comes from the most unexpected places. So, my advice to women in branded content? Embrace what makes you unique, and it will empower you to create something incredible.





Carolina Almeida

Branded Content Specialist & Content Strategy
Consultant | *Freelancer/Independent*

Signature Work Achievements

- Managed, produced, and developed +350 branded content projects over the past two years, contributing to a 30% increase on branded content's revenue.
- Created +100 strategic proposals for clients across several industries such as Business, Tourism, Technology, Lifestyle, Fashion, and Beauty.
- Developed integrated special projects, fostering synergy between editorial, commercial, and new business teams.

- Implemented new project management methods, optimizing workflows and organization within branded content departments across media groups.
- Structured collaborative processes between editorial and commercial teams, enabling more effective strategic alignment and the creation of differentiated content for clients.
- Strengthened the connection between editorial, commercial, and new business departments, driving the development of innovative and profitable projects.
- Opened new business opportunities by implementing more integrated branded content strategies focused on tangible results.

Inspired colleagues and clients by spreading the potential and passion for branded content reinforcing its value as a powerful storytelling and engagement tool.

- First Portuguese jury member invited for Native Advertising Awards.

Key Insights

I believe that Branded Content in Portugal has enormous growth potential that is yet to be fully explored. The market is still not making the most of this incredibly rewarding path for brands, readers, and media groups. There are several challenges, but also an increasing willingness to invest, create, and benefit from strong branded content projects.



On one hand, brands need to understand what this format truly is—it is not the same as traditional advertising and should therefore be considered in communication plans in a unique way that does it justice. On the other hand, media groups in Portugal must invest in structured, robust, and well-integrated branded content departments to meet (and, more importantly, exceed) the expectations of both brands and readers. By doing so, they can deliver creative and effective solutions that help drive business growth.

And finally, readers will be able to engage with brands in a more emotional, entertaining, and meaningful way through narratives that truly deserve their attention.

I'm incredibly excited to see what the future holds for branded

content in Portugal and eager to continue being part of this journey of growth.

Career Lessons

In these past years, I have been learning to listen to my inner voice and stand by it, even in environments where there is a dominant masculine energy that tends to drown out our intuition. I believe that women have a very unique way of thinking and viewing the world, one that is often not given the space and voice it deserves. Let's not give up on making ourselves heard and always look around to help amplify other voices that are echoing too quietly. The creative and strategic strength of branded content projects can only benefit from this!





Sweden

Caroline Swärd

Head of Operations Bonnier News Brand Studio |
Bonnier News AB

Signature Work Achievements

Something I am very proud of is how I have managed to unite 200 publishers in Sweden under a single Native product. Regardless of which title the reader chooses, our native product is recognizable. Of course, we adapt the content to follow the publisher's tone, but it would have been impossible to work with different appearances and



markings for 200 publishers. In addition to this, I am proud to have contributed to the IAB Sweden Task Force in refining and clarifying the various products available. Instead of casually calling everything Native Advertising, we have established the umbrella name Content Advertising, and each product under it gets its own spotlight. This enables product development and provides advertisers with a better understanding of which product to purchase and what to expect from each product.

Key Insights

I have had the honor of working with Content Advertising, primarily Native Advertising, since 2015 when it was relatively new in Sweden. One of the key factors has been the collaboration with our various editorial teams, who trust us to create the right- and high-quality content. We aim to provide value to our readers while communicating what the client wants to convey, and it is this balance that is crucial. Over the years, many have realized the value of Content Advertising and the impact it creates by engaging users/readers. Therefore, it becomes increasingly important to educate the market about the different solutions available.

When we talk specifically about Native Advertising, it's basically a creative product, but when it strays too far from the editorial content, it becomes something else, a different content product. Native, in its pure form, is commercial editorial content. I firmly hold on to what

Native should be, and Native evolves alongside how editorial content develops. We should definitely challenge, but we must not undermine the foundation of what Native is and should be.

Career Lessons

It is still predominantly men who hold leadership positions in many of the companies we work with as clients. However, approximately 50% of our readers are women. This makes it of utmost importance that we ensure women's voices are heard and that we create content that resonates with the female audience.

And for your everyday work: With knowledge and competence, stand up for what you believe in. Share knowledge and increase understanding of how to best work with different types of content products. Be inspiring and engaged. I am passionate about what I do, and it makes people listen and builds trust.





INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING ISN'T JUST ABOUT NUMBERS—IT'S ABOUT BEING AUTHENTIC

Gone are the days when brands could get away with sticking a few diverse faces into an ad campaign. Superficial DEI is not only bad for society (and creativity) – it's also bad for the bottom line. For truly inclusive storytelling, we need to build diverse, welcoming teams where every creative is given the space and safety to express their authentic selves.

By Jainnie Cho (VP, BBC StoryWorks, BBC Studios)

DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) is under scrutiny. In January, Mark Zuckerberg publicly declared companies have been “neutered” and need more “masculine energy,” while in the same month, the Trump administration began issuing a series of executive orders aimed at dismantling DEI programs across the federal government and the private sector.

But despite these stories dominating the headlines, data stands behind the rewards of inclusive marketing and storytelling. A 2023 study by UM (the global media agency network of IPG Mediabrand) shows that retreating from DEI initiatives is bad for business, with

purchase intent more than doubling when socially-conscious brands engage advertising media partners that share common values.

Last November, Creative Equals (an organisation focused on promoting DEI within the creative industry) in partnership with Effie UK released a report highlighting the critical role of DEI in marketing effectiveness. It revealed 69% of Effie finalists and winners had DEI embedded authentically into their brand story and proposition. The report also cited other research, including an analysis by Facebook that found diverse representation in marketing generated a higher ad recall in 90% of simulations.



There are more easily quantifiable metrics, like counting faces. Then there are more nuanced and harder-to-measure – but equally meaningful – things to consider. In the same Creative Equals report, it emphasised that positive, stereotype-free portrayals create greater impact than simple representation. Referencing a Tesco Mobile ad with a black woman as the main character, it said: “This [Tesco Mobile] ad portrays the protagonist in a playful manner. There is vulnerability in her portrayal which subverts the ‘Strong Black Woman’ stereotype that puts undue social pressure on black women to maintain emotional resilience.”

Diverse voices, subverted expectations

This conclusion about the Tesco Mobile ad was telling – so much socially-conscious messaging can seem perfunctory or insincere that it has its own name: “purpose washing”. Authenticity matters more than simple representation – it’s the quality, rather than just the



There are more easily
quantifiable metrics,
like counting faces.

quantity, that counts. For this to happen though, there needs to be a diverse team of storytellers in place.

Because ultimately, the people who make the work shape the work. And in this sense, the advertising industry could be doing a lot more to make this space inclusive – to identify and bring in people with genuinely different perspectives and experiences.

This won’t happen due to individual goodwill alone. Company and/or industry-wide initiatives to support employees and increase representation are key for meaningful progress. In this sense, I feel proud to be working for BBC Studios, one of the most transparent organisations in the UK media sector for voluntarily disclosing protected characteristics. We have industry-leading initiatives like the Inclusion Rider, which ensures a minimum of 20% of on-screen talent and production teams on all new commissions either come from a diverse ethnic heritage background, have an experience of living with a disability, or are from a low-income background. There’s also the BBC Extend initiative, which ring-fences jobs for applications from people who are deaf, disabled or neurodivergent for a specific period before advertising them more widely.

Inclusive teams make better stories

Even if your company or team are not there yet in terms of diversity, it’s equally important to nurture an environment where everyone, no



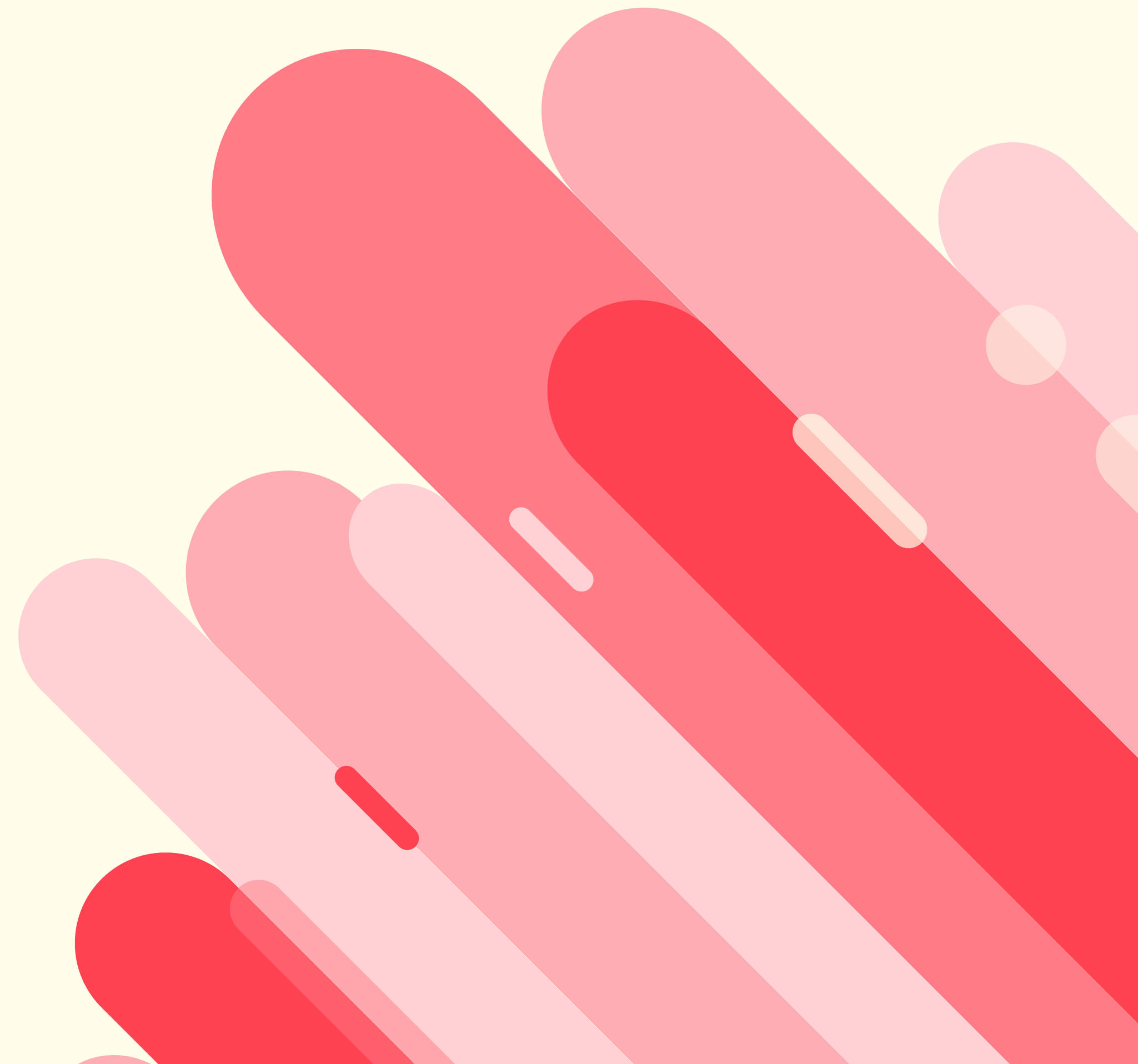
matter who you are or where you come from, feels like they can voice different opinions.

I remember my first branded content project: a campaign for an Asian skincare brand. I was only a few weeks into my new role and the senior producer on the team asked for my thoughts on the film's music score. "How does this sound to you? Is it what a white person like me would assume the background music to this kind of setting should be?" I replied "It sounds like something out of 'The World of Suzie Wong'." We had a good laugh and changed the music for the final edit.

As a Korean woman working in the UK for more than a decade, there were times when I didn't speak up about an iffy line of dialogue or the authenticity of a storyline in fear of being labelled difficult or different. But when that colleague – someone more senior and white – proactively asked me what I thought about the music, I remember feeling like I had the right to be in the room – and that my different opinion might even help the team create a better story. It may seem like a small example, but seeing someone in that position inviting their assumptions to be challenged was a great indicator of the kind of diversity they're looking to achieve.

For me, DEI has never been about sitting through that hour-long company training session that nobody pays attention to. It's

never been about looking at a pink-suited woman of color in an ad campaign and thinking "Oh, that's me!" As with all worthwhile concepts, diversity – and storytelling – are never that black-or-white. It takes empathy, time and genuine communication in which we listen to each other, even though we don't look like the other person, or come from where they come from, or we even disagree with what they're saying.





Singapore



Celine Asril

Strategy Director | *South China Morning Post*

Signature Work Achievements

- Ran Singapore's first major food community and editorial website
- One of Singapore and the region's first Content Strategists
- APAC Women Content Champion 2021 (Content Marketing Summit Asia / Asia Content Marketing Association)
- Rising Star of the Year – Strategic Planner (Hall of Fame Awards 2018)

Key Insights

1. Generative AI is commoditising basic content creation—articles, captions, scripts—but in an increasingly AI world, human-led insights, creativity, and storytelling are still key differentiators. Publishers who

integrate AI while maintaining editorial integrity (fact-checking, curation, strategic storytelling) will win. While AI can help companies scale content strategy, production, human editors and strategists must ensure brand voice, ethics, and cultural relevance remain strong.

2. Brands will continue to invest in interactive, immersive content, AR/VR experiences, and Web3 storytelling rather than static articles and videos. Future branded content might include AI-generated video hosts where appropriate, immersive 3D stories, or even interactive metaverse-style content hubs, even AR-powered storytelling.

3. News Publishers will increasingly be seen as premium agencies – as traditional agencies struggle with media fragmentation, premium publishers will evolve into hybrid content studios/media agencies, especially because they already have built up years of trust through storytelling with their audiences and clients.

Career Lessons

Women are often brilliant strategists but hesitate to “sell” their work. Understand sales psychology – learn the art of pitching, upselling, and closing deals and bring it into your storytelling. Being able to sell your content ideas, showcase impact, and negotiate budgets will accelerate your career.





Chloe Patterson

Head of Publisher SaaS | *Avid Collective*

Signature Work Achievements

Launched Avid Collective's SaaS platform, Avid PubSuite. A market-first, end-to-end platform, custom-designed to improve the way the industry plans, manages and reports on branded content campaigns.

Key Insights

Publishers are at a cross-roads, facing down the influence of big tech and global ad spend with publishers decreasing YOY, despite the total global ad market increasing. To survive, we need the industry to prioritise branded content standardisation and improve current inefficient buying, production and measurement. The

impact of this would mean the channel which is the hardest for big tech to replicate (branded content) becomes easier and more efficient for advertisers to buy, so they lean in with more budgets and buy more frequently!

Career Lessons

Lift your view from the business you work within, and make connections across the industry – everyone is facing surprisingly similar challenges and we are stronger working together and solving challenges collectively, than we are in silos.





United Arab Emirates



Christelle Abou Anny

Associate Content Director | *Digital Media Services (DMS) – a Choueiri Group brand*

Signature Work Achievements

I've been in the industry for almost a decade, and it's been an incredible journey. One of my proudest achievements is simply getting started — transitioning from a background in translation to marketing, then into native and branded content, and now leading

the Content Department at Digital Media Services (DMS) – a Choueiri Group brand. My passion for words and storytelling made the shift feel natural, and that foundation continues to shape how I approach content today.

In my current role, I've had the privilege of working with some of the world's most iconic brands, as well as exciting startups across the MENA region. Every campaign, every challenge, and every collaboration has broadened my perspective — not just on content, but on the power of connection and storytelling in real life.

More recently, I've been part of an exciting milestone: helping brands establish their presence on Pinterest in the MENA region. Through DMS' partnership with Pinterest, we've been driving the platform's expansion in key regional markets, unlocking new opportunities for brands. 2024 marked the start of this new chapter, and I'm proud to be helping brands shape their content strategies on Pinterest. As more brands embrace its unique potential, I look forward to seeing how this space evolves.

Key Insights

I believe branded content is an ever-evolving industry. At its heart, it's about telling stories that truly resonate with audiences — stories that spark emotion, inspire action, and leave a lasting impact. To do this, we must constantly adapt, staying agile as we navigate



cultural shifts, behavioral trends, economic fluctuations, and the ever-changing digital landscape. The challenge isn't just keeping up — it's staying ahead, anticipating what will matter next, and shaping conversations rather than reacting to them.

In today's cluttered digital universe, creativity is no longer just about breaking barriers or presenting the never-seen-before. It's about finding that sweet spot — that twist, that connection — that just clicks. It's about making people feel something in a way that feels natural, intuitive, and real. And that, to me, makes creativity more powerful than ever.

To succeed, brands must also leverage platforms authentically; what works on Pinterest won't necessarily work on TikTok, and what thrives on TikTok won't always resonate on Instagram. Steer away from the one-size-fits-all approach and instead create with intent, by understanding the nuances of each platform and crafting content that belongs there.

Looking ahead, I believe AI will reshape how brands craft content. We need to embrace it, not fear it. But that also means we must push for streamlining, disclosure, and regulation to ensure transparency and fairness. AI can enhance creativity, speed up production, and unlock new possibilities, but human insight, cultural sensitivity, and ethical responsibility must always lead the way.

Above all, those who put the audience first — who create content that is contextually relevant and genuinely valuable — will lead the industry. People don't want to be sold to; they want to be engaged, inspired, and understood. The brands that get this right will not just capture attention but will build true, lasting connections.

Career Lessons

- Own your voice and your journey: Don't wait for a seat at the table or for the perfect opportunity to come along. Create your own space, speak up, and make things happen.
- Adapt and keep learning: Platforms evolve, and trends come and go. The best content leaders are the ones who stay curious, embrace change, and continuously refine their craft.
- Lift as you climb: Success isn't just about individual wins — it's about building a strong, supportive industry. Share knowledge, mentor, and champion those coming up behind you, especially other women. A thriving industry is one where we uplift each other.





Brazil

Christiane Bertelli

Content Manager at Glab | *Editora Globo*

Signature Work Achievements

Seasoned Communication, Content, and Marketing Strategist with 17 years of experience driving impactful results. My experience as a journalist in newsrooms across diverse platforms, including television and websites, has provided me with a unique perspective on developing content strategies. This background instilled in me a deep commitment to bringing purpose, authority, quality, and truth to



content creation, while also honing my ability to identify and capitalize on audience opportunities.

Expertise in crafting compelling narratives and developing innovative campaigns that deliver measurable results. Industry accolades include a WAN-IFRA award for Best Branded Content, an ABERJE award for best Branded Content project in the country, and international recognition at the Native Advertising Awards.

Established and scaled content departments, implementing a strategic team structure to drive growth and deliver exceptional results for brands, a proven ability to build and scale business models with strategic vision and strong management skills.

Focused on data-driven content solutions, integrating creative services and performance measurement to maximize impact. My inherent curiosity and keen interest have driven me to continually explore new formats. My experience in digital channels has also led me to champion the importance of a data-driven approach from the outset. With a track record of innovation and a commitment to delivering exceptional results in branded content and digital marketing, we've elevated internal benchmarks for content creation and publication. Today, we stand as one of the largest branded content studios in the Brazilian market, handling hundreds of projects annually.

Featured Projects:

Global Citizen: a multiplatform project that, since 2017, has brought together leading thinkers from the contemporary world, such as Barack Obama, Viola Davis, Al Gore, and Sanda Ojiambo, in content series published on websites, radio, and print newspapers. Publication of podcasts, online and offline articles, and special supplements, totaling hundreds of content pieces.

InovaBra: A series of video content for social media about InovaBra Habitat, Bradesco's co-innovation space. Proven 70% increase in the client's reputation index as an innovative bank. The only project in all of Latin America to be awarded.

Key Insights

Today, we're navigating a fascinating intersection of creativity and technology. Here's what I'm seeing:

- Authenticity reigns supreme: branded content that resonates is built on genuine storytelling, aligning with brand values and addressing real audience needs. This isn't just a trend; it's the new baseline.
- Data-driven creativity: data is our compass, guiding content strategy, optimization, and measurement. Understanding audience behavior, preferences, and engagement is crucial for creating impactful experiences.

- AI-powered personalization: artificial intelligence will enable hyper-personalization of content, delivering tailored experiences to individual users. This will require a deep understanding of ethical considerations and data privacy.

Human connection: in a world increasingly dominated by technology, the need for genuine human connection will become even more critical. Brands that can foster meaningful relationships with their audiences will thrive.

Emphasis on ethical storytelling: as brands become more powerful storytellers, they must prioritize ethical considerations. This includes transparency, authenticity, and a commitment to responsible representation.

Voice and audio: audio and voice based content will keep growing. From podcasts to audio first social media, the evolution of how we consume information is shifting, and brands need to be ready.

Career Lessons

Throughout my career, I've learned that a successful professional journey is built upon a foundation of technical skills combined with essential values and practices such as:

- Collaboration: i believe in the power of teamwork. The diversity of ideas and experiences enriches the work and drives innovation.

- Active listening and strategic reflection: when faced with complex challenges, I've learned to value the time dedicated to reflection and the search for innovative solutions. Pausing to analyze, question, and explore new approaches is crucial.
- Data-Driven decisions and intuition: i believe in the combination of data analysis with intuition. The ability to interpret information and make data-driven decisions is essential in the digital world. However, intuition, developed through experience, complements the analysis and allows for more complete decisions.
- Embracing errors: there's no innovation without attempting to adopt a new path. And to be open to this, it's necessary to quickly identify errors, analyze them, and quickly think about how to correct the course.





**NATIVE
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Denise Cornelisse

Head of &C the brandstudio & Sales | *&C Media*

Signature Work Achievements

Since joining &C, I've been deeply inspired by the impact of branded content. While my background was primarily in sales within the media industry, moving into the world of storytelling with the &C brandstudio team opened up a new chapter. Over the past year, we've seen significant, sustainable growth, not only in the number of brands we work with but also in the budgets behind our campaigns. This growth is a testament to our approach — one that integrates branded content as a core part of our clients' strategies.

We focus on reaching women in the most relevant way, ensuring that content isn't just an add-on but an integrated part of the conversation. This approach has proven successful, and we're now

more ready than ever to amplify this even further. We've managed to establish lasting relationships with brands, creating a situation where they come back to us again and again, rather than just doing one-off campaigns.

A key element of our success lies in the brand effect research we incorporate into all major campaigns. These studies provide us with valuable proof of impact, helping to demonstrate to our partners the tangible effects of branded content. By showcasing these insights, we not only build trust with our clients but also drive the continued success of branded content as a vital part of a brand's strategy.

One of the standout cases that truly exemplifies our approach was with Chilly. This campaign was so well executed that it not only informed and inspired our female audience, but also drove direct sales of the product. While driving sales isn't always the goal of branded content, when everything aligns — great content, the perfect match with the brand, and a clear strategy — it becomes a powerful result.

Despite being a relatively small, independent player, we've developed a unique collaboration model with both the editorial team and the marketing team of &C, which has allowed us to create authentic, impactful campaigns that resonate deeply with our female audience.

The Netherlands





Key Insights

In my experience, branded content has evolved from a nice-to-have to a must-have in any brand's strategy. It's no longer just about selling products; it's about creating authentic, meaningful connections with the audience. We are seeing an increasing demand for content that doesn't just inform but also engages, inspires, and activates.

One of the most significant shifts I've noticed in the industry is the personalization of branded content. Audiences, especially women, are becoming more selective about the brands they engage with. They want content that resonates with them, that feels relevant to their lives, and that aligns with their values. Brands need to tap into emotions and provide real value, rather than pushing a hard sell. The future of branded content will likely revolve even more around personalized experiences, where content feels tailored to the individual.

Another key insight is the importance of measurable results. Clients are increasingly asking for proof that branded content works. This is where I see the integration of data and research becoming even more crucial. At &C, we've made it a priority to track the brand effect of our campaigns, showing our partners tangible proof of success. We need to move beyond the "vanity metrics" like likes and shares and focus on deeper insights such as brand perception, loyalty, and

actual sales. This shift in focus will help solidify the importance of branded content as a core business strategy.

Looking to the future, I believe the role of AI and technology in content creation and distribution will only grow. However, I am a firm believer that while AI can help speed up processes and improve efficiency, the human touch will always be at the heart of successful branded content. The best campaigns are still the ones that connect on a human level — creating experiences that resonate with people, making them feel seen and understood.

Career Lessons

One of the most important lessons I've learned is the power of building relationships. As women, we excel at connecting with others, nurturing trust, and supporting one another. These connections are key to career growth.

Another lesson is to trust your intuition. Our instincts, especially as women, often guide us in the right direction. Trusting your gut feeling, even when unsure, can be a game-changer.

Lastly, don't underestimate the value of your voice. Our perspectives matter. Speak up, share your ideas, and inspire others — your voice can shape the future.





United States

Diamaris Welch

Vice President, Branded Content | *DotDash Meredith*

Signature Work Achievements

I lead branded video with a platform-first, strategy-driven approach that ensures storytelling isn't just seen—it's felt.

I've reworked how we produce at scale, building a system where brands can create impactful campaigns without waste or compromise. By restructuring how creative and production teams



collaborate, we've made the process clearer, faster, and more strategic—so the focus stays where it should be: on creating work that actually connects.

At the same time, I've championed authenticity in branded content, ensuring every piece we make is designed for how people actually consume media today—from fast-moving social content to immersive digital experiences. Under my leadership, our work has earned recognition from Digiday, Shortys, and the Gramercy Institute, proving that strategy-led creative doesn't just perform—it wins.

But making great content isn't enough. Who's making it matters. I've built teams where women aren't just in the room—they're leading the conversation. I mentor, advocate, and push for real opportunities because the future of branded content should reflect the voices shaping culture.

I'm leveraging technology, creativity, and strategy to push the boundaries of what's possible. The industry is changing fast, and I'm here to make sure we're the ones driving it forward.

Key Insights

Branded content needs to be smarter, sharper, and impossible to ignore. That's the standard I set with my team. Social is moving at lightning speed, and brands that don't evolve with it will get left

behind. You have to stand out. That means creating content that is authentic to the platform, the talent, and the audience. If it feels forced, people scroll past.

The best branded content creates real engagement. The question isn't just, "What's the story?" It's "What's the human element that makes people care?" Brands that embrace direct consumer connection, cultural relevance, and talent-led storytelling will win. Those that don't? They'll keep chasing attention instead of earning it.

Career Lessons

Chaos often signals change, and change creates openings for innovation. In the branded content space, where trends shift quickly and new platforms emerge constantly, the women who lean into this (without permission) will spot the gaps, grow, and push forward.





Croatia



Dina Hrastović

Head of Content | Telegram & Money Motion

Signature Work Achievements

Dina played a key role in launching the first digital native agency in the region, pioneering content and native marketing. Since then, she has been actively educating the market on these disciplines, shaping industry standards. As a recognized conference speaker, she specializes in the intersection of content marketing and technological advancements, and currently, as a board member of the Croatian AI Association, she focuses on the future of content and policy in the AI era.

Key Insights

Tomorrow is so much more interesting than yesterday. Hopefully, everyone will seek it out. For the past 20 years, our work—the creation of different types, formats, and styles of content—has been incredibly shaped by the tech revolution happening in parallel. Few roles offer as much freedom as working with content, and we should embrace the possibilities AI tools and platforms provide. We must experiment, play, explore new solutions and content mixes, and allow ourselves to fail and learn.

Parts of our creative work that were once resource-draining, reserved for the biggest budgets and most hyped ideas, are now embedded in every process, enabling us to test and refine how we reach our audiences and achieve our goals. This is not to say we shouldn't be responsible with it—ignorance is no longer an excuse. I am truly excited about what's ahead.

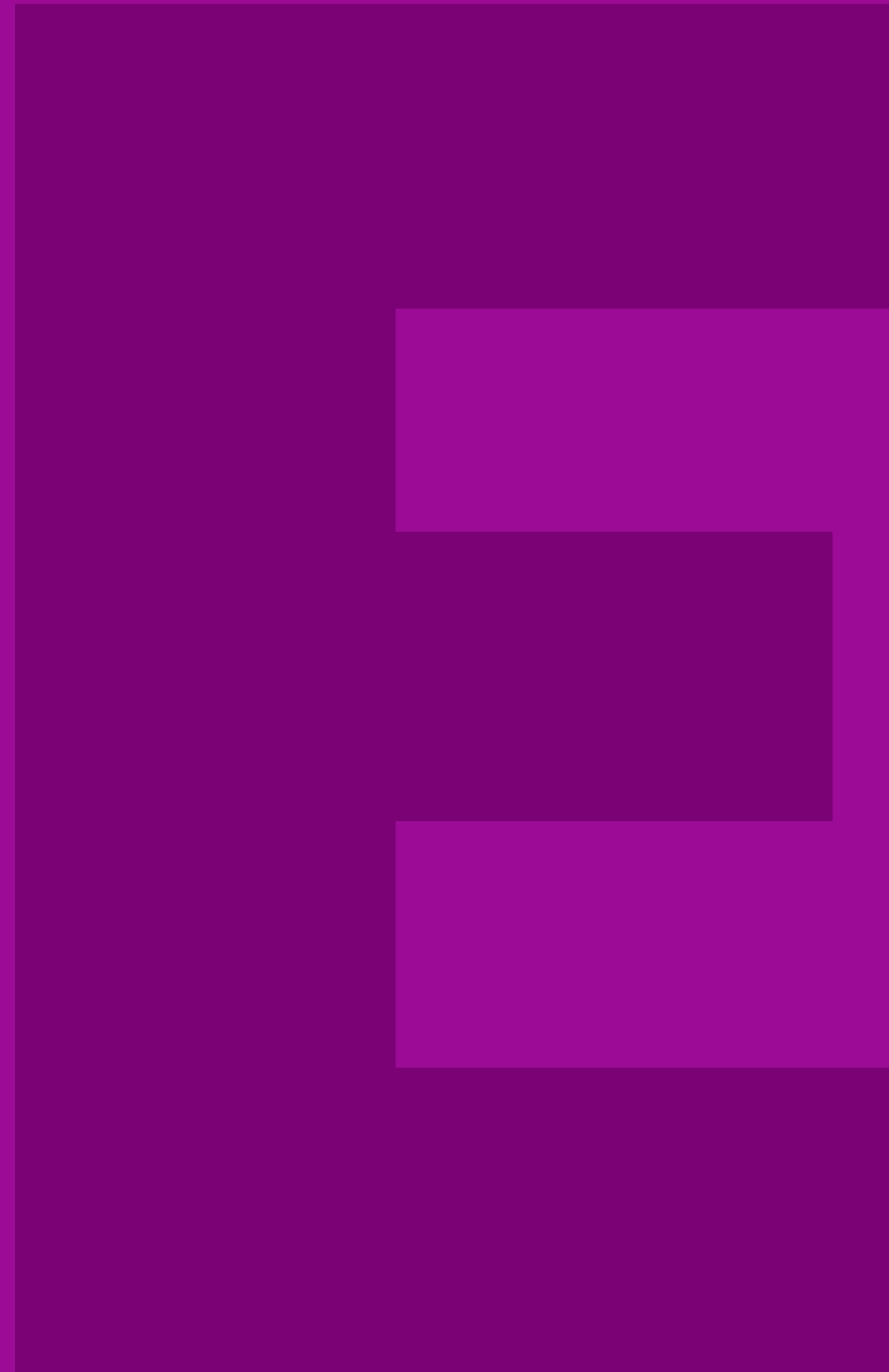
Career Lessons

There are countless amazing women uncovering, investigating, creating, and curating incredible stories that everyone should be lucky to experience. Find the topic that drives you, seek out women who excel in it, reach out to them, and actively work toward making your dream a reality.





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United States

Ebony Jones

VP, Content | *Spark Foundry*

Signature Work Achievements

Ebony Jones spearheads all media partnerships for The Campbell's Company's portfolio of brands. She is responsible for crafting authentic brand storytelling and fostering innovation through partnerships to help achieve Campbell's business goals and enhance consumer connection.

Throughout her tenure, she's successfully executed innovative content experiences in industries including CPG, technology, and luxury fashion. Jones has received multiple industry accolades for her work, including an Effies and a Cannes Lion, and has been invited to speak at industry conferences, including ANA Masters of Marketing and Advertising Week New York. Notable, awarding winning campaigns include the Goldfish's "Go For The Handful" and Campbell's JNl "Spoonful of Joy" commercial event. Additionally, Ebony has led unexpected brand moments including Netflix series integrations and brand partnerships that appeared on the runway during Milan Fashion Week.



Jones joined Spark Foundry in 2018. Throughout her tenure, she's successfully executed innovative content experiences in industries including CPG, technology, and luxury fashion. Jones has received multiple industry accolades for her work, including an Effies and a Cannes Lion, and has been invited to speak at industry conferences, including ANA Masters of Marketing and Advertising Week New York.

Jones is passionate about mentorship. Outside of work, she serves as a Vanguard sponsor and an alumni advisory board member at her alma mater, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Key Insights

Authenticity is key. Brands connect with consumers when they feel seen, heard and understood but everything must be done authentically. I have seen branded content partnerships and integrations be most successful when this holds true.

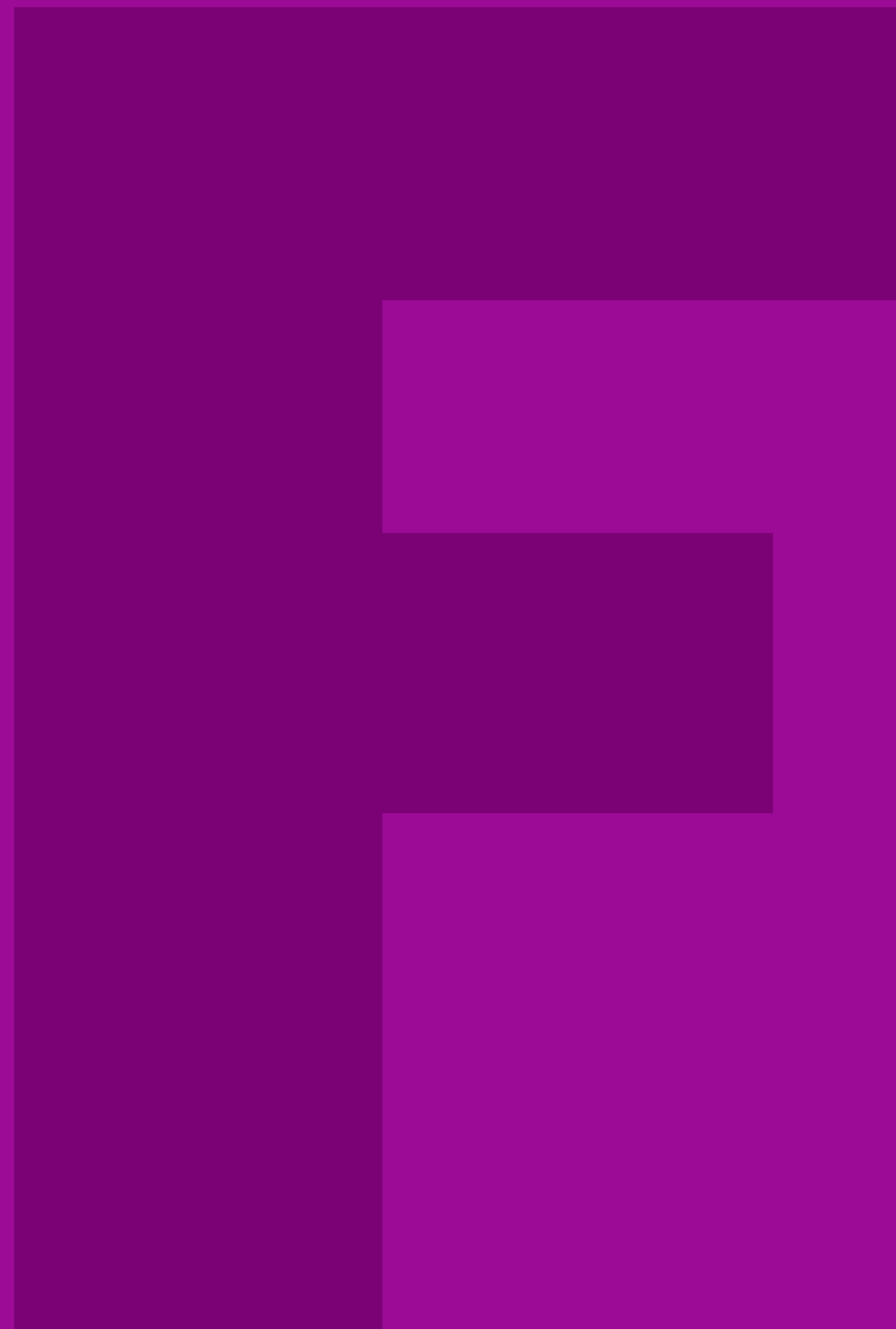
Career Lessons

Collaboration is key. Ensure your branded content partners see you and your brand as having an equal place at the table for ideation and production. It is important for both the brand and partner voice to be equally represented.





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United States



Farra Kober

VP Content Studio, BBC StoryWorks | *BBC Studios*

Signature Work Achievements

BBC Studios:

- BBC StoryWorks named Agency of the Year at 2024 Brand Film Awards
- In first year with org have developed content programs generating over 20M+ in revenue for the organization

Sr. Director of Global Content at WeWork:

- Developed organization's first social influencer and brand ambassador program
- Led content program for organizations first ever global innovation summit
- Relunched global web strategy leading to an increase in SEO traffic by 350%

VP Content Studios at theSkimm:

- Launched company's first daily podcast and newsletter companion ranking in top 5 of Apple charts about debut
- Led first multi-platform branded content campaigns with Shondaland, Freeform, NBCSports, HBO, Fox, and Fidelity- including the develop and execution of live podcast tapings and events

Director of Digital at MSNBC

- Led the org to their best-year-ever in digital video viewership with a focus on atomization of cable programming and social distribution
- Named Cynopsis Top Women in Digital, Rising Star

Awards:

- 2024 Brand Film Awards, Agency of the Year, BBC StoryWorks
- 2019 Webby Award Honoree, Best Interview Podcast, Skimm'd From The Couch



- 2017 Digiday and Shorty Award Finalist, Best Facebook Live, Election 2016
- 2016 Cynopsis Top Women in Digital, Rising Star
- 2015 Cynopsis Social Good Award, Best Nonprofit/Corporate Partnership (MSNBC and Global Citizen Festival)
- 2013 Shorty Award, Best Use of Social Media for News
- 2012 Emmy Award, Outstanding Live Event Turnaround, XXX Olympics

Key Insights

At BBC Studios, Science of Engagement (SoE), a bespoke measurement tool developed by BBC StoryWorks, uses AI-enhanced facial recognition technology providing powerful insights into the emotional journey experienced by the viewers of brand content and carries out implicit association tests to analyze the extent to which that content changed perceptions of the brand.

Utilizing this tool we've gleaned measurable insights and correlation between emotionally connective storytelling and measurable action.

At BBC StoryWorks our approach to brand films is narrative in nature, focusing on people centered stories. We've found that brands featured our films, across industry and topic, that are formatted with this human centered approach experience on average:

60% lift in perception of trustworthiness
88% lift in perception of sustainability
66% lift in perception of authenticity
49% lift in perception of innovation
56% lift in purchase intent

And there was significant statistical correlation between an increase in a perception of a brand's trustworthiness and increase in purchase intent.

(Source: BBC News / Element Human Benchmarking Database – October 2024, 132 Branded Content Campaign Cases)

Specific to the travel industry and content marketing:
Globally, when it comes to travel destination decisions Family and Friends are the #1 influence for prospective travelers, followed by online publishers. (BBC Global Travel Study, Sept/Oct 2024). So, when it comes to travel content, at the BBC we intentionally emulate a familial experience in our narrative approach.

For example: In each episode of USA Through Film, a series which we produce for Brand USA, viewers tag along with a well-known film or television personality as they introduce us to a city they love. Through fine dining and holes in the wall, high culture and public art, desert vistas and urban hubs, we learn even more about our



already-familiar hosts against the backdrop of fascinating, cross-country locales. Our celebrity hosts aren't just reasons to watch— via an intimate, unguarded narrative, they also successfully parallel the familial relationships that are proven to drive Travel decision-making. The hosts inspire curiosity in our target audience as they share their personal connections to each location and invite our visitors to check it out for themselves.

And we know emulating this familiar relationship specific to travel content drives results. After Brand USA's target demographics viewed the USA Through Film series, 80% of participants said they plan to visit the US within the next 12 months. Exposure to the videos produced a 75% lift for "Very Positive" sentiment towards the United States.

Career Lessons

Being an active listener and translator is critical to success in this arena.

So often we start with what feels like "great creative" -- but the ability to really listen and understand your stakeholder's needs, whether that be a client, CFO, sales partner, product developer, and then translate your creative into a strategy using their language is necessary to selling that idea through to fruition. Not everyone "speaks creative," it's incumbent on you to translate creative strategy into their area of expertise and understanding to push ideas forward.





Portugal



Filipa d'Avillez

Head of Marketing, Branded Content, Events,
and Audiovisual | Forbes Portugal & Jornal
Económico | *Media Nove*

Signature Work Achievements

Engine of Dreams

Real stories of small businesses, from north to south of the country, that have found their greatest ally in technology. These are stories of strength, resilience, adaptation, and happiness.

omotordossonhos.observador.pt – M&P 2022 Awards and
Communication | Honorable Mention

“Looks Can Be Deceiving: Mental Health Matters” – A project by
Observador Lab – Creativity Award 2021 | Branded Content/
Digital Category

Observador Eco Wins in the “Branded Content/Content Marketing”
Category at the Creativity in Self-Promotion & Media Innovation
Awards by Meios & Publicidade

This category recognizes the best branded content/content marketing
projects created or published on digital platforms. Evaluation criteria
include originality, relevance, execution, and content quality.

The Creativity in Self-Promotion & Media Innovation Awards honor the
best self-promotions and promotional spots across television, radio,
print, and digital media.

observador.pt/perfil/observadoreco/

Key Insights

Branded Content is a growing field in the Portuguese market.

It is still a very recent area in a country with a formal and somewhat
puritan market. Only in the last 15 years has it begun to solidify and,
consequently, grow and establish itself. We still have a long way to go
before brands fully understand the true potential of Branded Content.



Typically, brands seek out this format with a rather restrictive mindset, expecting only positive portrayals. However, the quality and wealth of information that a brand possesses can be explored in ultra-creative ways, ensuring that the consumer, reader, or viewer will never forget the message. Yet, in Portugal, there is still a strong tendency to play it safe, with little risk-taking in this field.

I believe this is a journey, and in the future, Branded Content will continue to evolve and reach its full potential—especially with the increasing integration of new technologies such as AI. However, I also believe that the true secret remains the power of emotion. The emotional depth we infuse into the stories we tell is what makes them memorable. The most impactful and unforgettable campaigns are always built on emotion.

The future of Branded Content lies in this certainty—blending emotional storytelling with new technological tools. That is the Branded Content of tomorrow.

Career Lessons

The final word is ours. Especially as women. Our workforce must know how to work with us based on rules we define. However, it is also our responsibility to always maintain balance and good judgment.

Valuing mistakes is crucial on the path to success. A culture of learning through recognizing failure is the right approach to achieving meaningful results.





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Brazil

Gabriella Sandoval

Content and Strategy Specialist in business-oriented communication | *EXAME*

Signature Work Achievements

As the Head of the Branded Content team at Exame, I lead high-impact projects for major clients, including Sebrae, with whom we have established a dedicated hub to amplify stories of women entrepreneurs. This initiative not only enhances visibility for female-led businesses but also strengthens our brand's positioning as a key player in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation.

Additionally, I have overseen the development and execution of strategic branded content campaigns that drive engagement, deliver measurable business results, and reinforce Exame's leadership in content marketing.

These achievements reflect my commitment to creating meaningful narratives that generate value for both our clients and our audience.

Key Insights

As the Head of the Branded Content team at Exame, I see branded content evolving beyond traditional advertising—it's about storytelling with purpose. Audiences today seek authenticity, and brands that genuinely connect with their communities through meaningful narratives will stand out.

One key trend I observe is the rise of impact-driven content, particularly in areas like entrepreneurship, sustainability, and diversity. Our partnership with Sebrae, for example, highlights the power of content in amplifying female entrepreneurship, proving that storytelling can drive real social and economic change.

A key challenge we face is balancing the message our clients want to convey with the way our audience prefers to consume content. Successful branded content is not just about what brands want to



say, but how to say it in a way that feels relevant, engaging, and valuable to the reader.

Looking ahead, I believe AI and data-driven storytelling will redefine how we create and distribute branded content. Personalization and interactive experiences will play an even bigger role, making content more immersive and engaging. However, the human touch—empathy, creativity, and authenticity—will always be at the heart of compelling storytelling.

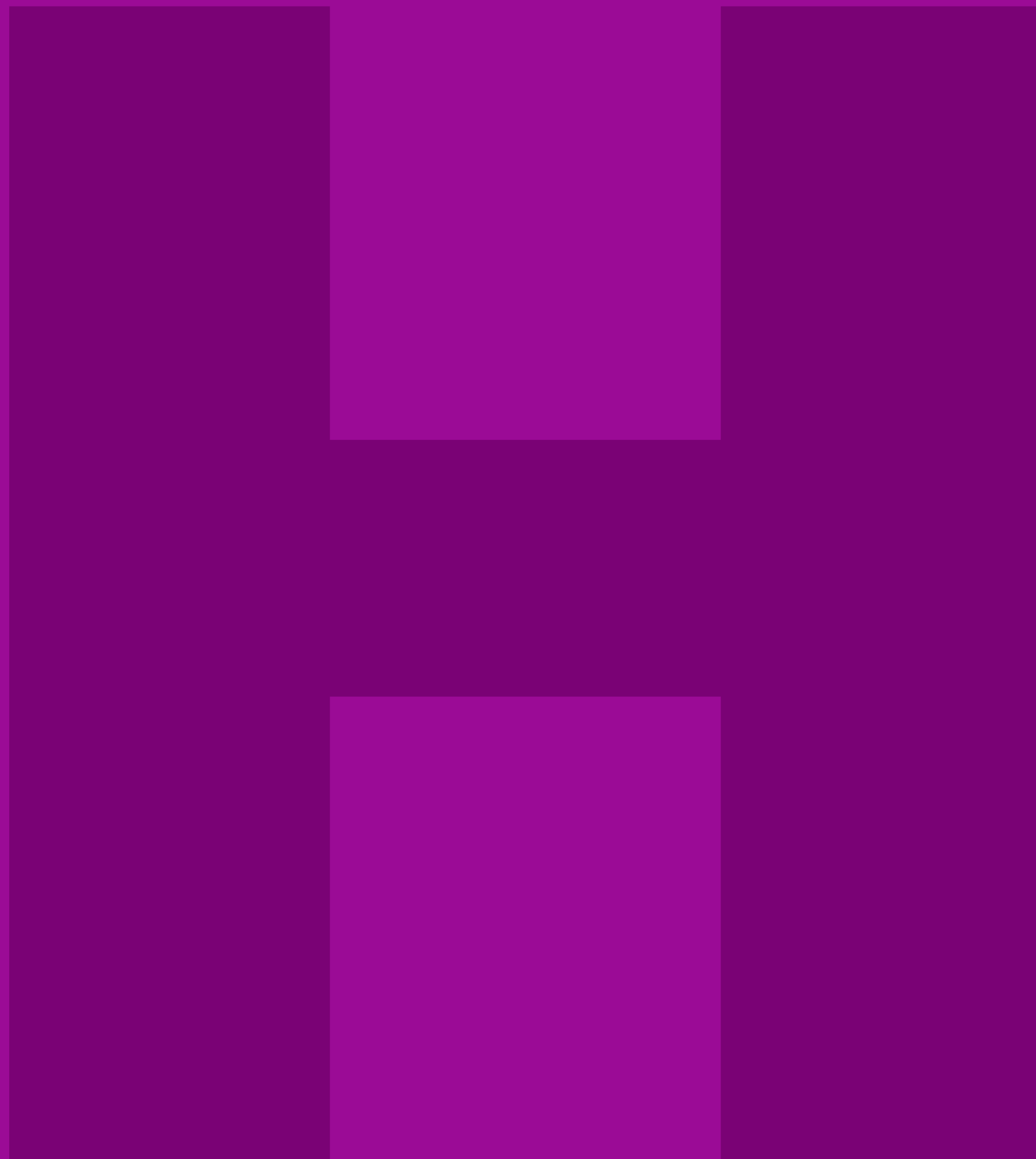
Career Lessons

One of the biggest lessons I've learned in my career is that authenticity and resilience are key to thriving in branded content. This industry is constantly evolving, and to succeed, you need to adapt, stay curious, and never stop learning.





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Finland

Hanna Repo

Content Marketing Director | *Alma Me-*

Signature Work Achievements

I have established the content marketing unit within Alma Media, a digital services and media company, as part of Alma Media Solutions. I lead Alma Brand Studio and have been involved in ideating, conceptualizing, executing, and selling multiple award-winning campaigns and branded narratives.

Key Insights

I believe in branded content and am full of curiosity about the amazing things we can create with the help of AI.

Career Lessons

Be brave, trust your ideas





Australia



Hannah Mansur

Chief of Staff | *Mamamia*

Signature Work Achievements

I'm lucky to have had a broad range of experiences despite technically only working in two businesses—consulting firm PwC and Mamamia media company. I've done everything from global leadership forums for insurance companies in New York to advertorials for two-person startups.

Mamamia's Very Peri Summit stands out as one career highlight for doing a lot with a little. What began as a brilliant idea from our co-founder turned into a movement. Working with just two other

incredible women, we shattered our ticket sales targets by 60x, effectively kickstarting the rebrand of perimenopause in Australia. We created a space where women could talk openly about a life stage that had been whispered about for generations.

As an audiophile who joined Mamamia specifically to work with podcasts, driving the creation of branded audio content was particularly rewarding. Pitching and launching an IVF and assisted fertility podcast with Virtus Health remains one of my most meaningful projects. Having experienced the IVF journey personally, creating content that helps other women navigate their path to motherhood merged my professional skills with deep personal purpose.

I'm still getting to do new and exciting things. I'm currently leading the implementation of AI across Mamamia's workforce—bringing all my branded content experience to ensure our team knows how to harness these powerful tools while maintaining our distinctively human voice. The sweet spot is using technology to enhance human creativity, not replace it.

Key Insights

The most successful branded content isn't about cleverly disguising advertising. Women can smell insincerity from a mile away. BUT they don't mind brand integration when it adds value to their lives. When



I'm creating or editing branded content I'm always looking to make sure it solves genuine problems for women.

Looking forward, the relationship between AI and branded content is fascinating. The brands winning in this space aren't replacing human creativity with technology—they're using AI to amplify human insight or get to a more interesting place faster.

Everyone's worried about how to keep up with the constant stream of new AI tools and features, but the true competitive advantage isn't knowing the most about the latest AI; it's the ability to blend human understanding with new technology and communicate that clearly to others. So remember, if you're working in branded content and you're decent at your job, you've already got an advantage versus the rest of the population because you're a great communicator.

Career Lessons

Avoid specialising too early. I started in psychology, moved to consulting, and now lead branded content initiatives—this breadth of experience is my superpower. The best branded content professionals are generalists who can juggle lots of priorities: creative, commercial, strategic, and always put the audience experience first.





United Kingdom



Hayley Sharp

Managing Director, Brand Partnerships
International | *Vox Media*

Signature Work Achievements

Award Nominations:

- Future Frontier Awards, Visionary Business Leader
- Media 30 under 30

Voluntary Pursuits

- Ideas Foundation: An award-winning charity championing creativity in the classroom and diversity in the workplace

- Career Seminars: Driving awareness of the media industry within disadvantaged schools and providing mentorship to young women interested in a digital media career
- Media Mentorship: Launching an Internship scheme that provides first-hand experience in digital media to fuel career development for school leavers

Key Insights

Adaptability is Key – The digital landscape is constantly evolving. Transitioning from print to digital early in my career showed me the importance of embracing change, innovation, and technology to stay ahead.

Resilience Drives Success – Launching a U.S. company internationally at a young age was daunting, but it taught me that self-belief and perseverance are crucial when navigating uncharted territory.

Mentorship Matters – Working under great leadership can shape your career in unexpected ways. A strong mentor provides guidance, support, and inspiration, helping you become a better leader in turn.

Career Lessons

Take Time to Find Your Passion – You don't have to have everything figured out early on. Exploring different roles and industries will lead you to the right career path in time.



Embrace Challenges as Learning Opportunities – The biggest obstacles—whether launching a business, leading a new team, or navigating industry shifts—are often the best teachers.

Surround Yourself with the Right People – Great managers and mentors can elevate your career by offering both professional guidance and personal support.

Stay Curious & Keep Evolving – The digital space is ever-changing, and success comes from staying open to learning, innovating, and adapting.





United Kingdom



Helen Anglim

Director: Conde Nast Commercial
Creative | *Condé Nast*

Signature Work Achievements

20 years working across the content space for brands like The Guardian, Huff Post, Microsoft, Yahoo and Conde Nast

Build out and merger of Aol, Microsoft and Yahoo to create RYOT Studios under the Verizon umbrella, distributing quality content at scale.

Winner of the Drum Chair Award – Downtime with Huff Post, Crowne Plaza

Director of Conde Nast Commercial Creative – working across all

brands and platforms to create impactful campaigns that reach high net worth individuals.

Board Trustee for Improbable Theatre

Key Insights

I've worked in the UK branded content space for a number of years and have been responsible for numerous award winning campaigns. There are a few important factors for creating great branded content campaigns.

First – always respect your audience. They come to you for information or to be entertained. You might try and advertise to them openly, but if you're not giving back, they will pass on by; and they might not come back. Always remember why they come to your platforms in the first place and stay true to that.

Secondly, make sure you make your content discoverable. It can be amazing and beautifully crafted, but you need to make sure it is consumed in order to shift brand perception and deliver the right results. Embed it on your platforms, post it on your socials, devise new ways to create standout and cut through. Speak to your audience wherever they might be.

Thirdly, content can be expensive to create. Make sure you work



every piece as hard as you can. Edit and slice to create different cuts for social. Vary what you shoot the content on (on shoot day) so its platform specific and always think about where it will run. When people visit your brand they will expect a unifying thread across all your platforms, but ultimately a different viewing experience. TikTok is very different to IG, online different to print. Make sure your thread is united, but your content is platform specific.

Branded content is a great business to work in and its constantly evolving – you will always be learning. The challenge now, more that ever is to create content that cuts through. The increase in the volume of content is huge – and with Ai content (or Ai slop) flooding the space, the creation of quality content is more important that ever.

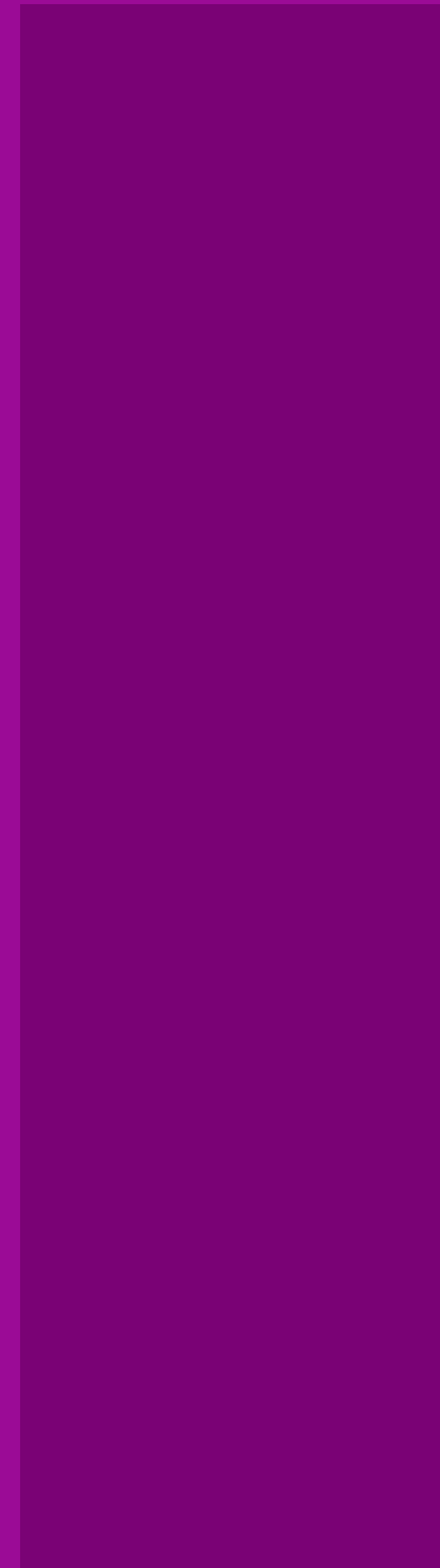
Career Lessons

I'm a bit of a geek. Throughout my career, I always like to have a plan and to be really clear on what my goals are. If I need to pivot or change thats fine, but it's great to have everything documented, so I can review my decisions and hold myself to account. The best advice I have been given is to always be useful – to clients, your team, your boss. Make sure that you ladder into their goals and that you are clear what their goals are. If you can help someone else solve their problems, and you are always solutions focused then you will standout.





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Sweden



Ida Fridh

Head of Creative Studio |
Aller Media AB

Signature Work Achievements

I have spent my career pushing the boundaries of branded content, driven by one core belief: content should not only reach people—it should resonate, engage, and create real impact. My passion lies in crafting authentic storytelling that delivers value—not just for advertisers, but first and foremost for the audience. This is what makes branded content powerful. This is what makes it work.

With a background spanning Disney, Bonnier, Schibsted, and Aller Media, I have been part of the branded content evolution from its earliest days—transforming it from static placements to immersive,

multi-platform brand experiences. My expertise lies in merging editorial integrity with commercial creativity, ensuring that every campaign we create is not just seen, but truly felt.

Industry-defining contributions

Authenticity at the core – content that drives connection and business impact

I have always championed authentic, insight-driven storytelling as the key to successful branded content. By focusing on real value for the audience, I have helped brands shift from interruptive advertising to engaging narratives that build trust, loyalty, and measurable results.

From print to video-first, social-first, and 360° brand ecosystems
Branded content is constantly evolving, and so am I. From launching Schibsted's native video business to building Aller Media's Creative Studio into a multi-channel powerhouse, I have always been ahead of the curve—developing video-led, social-first, influencer-driven campaigns that break through the noise and create cultural relevance.

Creative Studio – Scaling branded content into a full-fledged content agency

At Aller Media, I transformed our branded content division from a print-based business into a full-scale content agency, integrating video,



digital, influencers, live experiences, and commerce-driven storytelling. Today, our work doesn't just reach audiences—it moves them.

Award-winning work and business impact

- Tidskriftspriset – Creative Advertising Deal of the Year
 - “Game Squad Goes Fashion” (Xbox x ELLE)

A video-led, culture-driven campaign that challenged gender norms in gaming and turned fashion into a platform for inclusivity—creating record-breaking engagement and long-term brand impact.

- Tidskriftspriset – Creative Advertising Deal of the Year
 - “Livet under armen” (Dove x ELLE)

A bold, socially-driven content campaign designed to empower women through authentic, editorial-quality storytelling, resulting in organic reach, audience engagement, and business success.

- Multiple Native Advertising Awards – Recognized for best use of video, innovative storytelling, and audience engagement.
- Digiday Awards nominee – Several high-impact, video-first branded content campaigns recognized on an international level.

Shaping the future – Always evolving, always innovating

I don't just follow trends—I create them. I believe that branded content should always be a step ahead, constantly adapting to new platforms, behaviors, and cultural shifts. Whether through new

video formats, interactive storytelling, or audience-first strategies, I am committed to pushing branded content forward—so it remains authentic, relevant, and truly valuable.

Because at the end of the day, great content doesn't just reach people—it moves them. And that's what I do best.

Key Insights

Branded content has evolved from a “nice-to-have” to a must-have in modern marketing. It's no longer about just reaching people—it's about making them feel something, engage, and take action.

Authenticity is everything

Today's audiences are more discerning than ever. They don't just consume content—they curate their experiences. If a brand's message isn't authentic, relevant, and valuable, it will be ignored. This is why branded content must be audience-first, built on real insights, real storytelling, and real impact.

Branded content is shifting from passive to interactive

The future isn't just about telling stories—it's about inviting audiences into them. Interactive formats, social-driven storytelling, and video-first strategies will continue to dominate. I see a future where branded content seamlessly integrates commerce, entertainment, and participation, making the audience an active part of the narrative.



Editorial meets commerce—content as an engine for

business growth

We've moved beyond vanity metrics. The most successful branded content isn't just engaging—it drives tangible business results.

Whether through social commerce, influencer-driven storytelling, or immersive video experiences, content needs to deliver both brand value and commercial impact.

AI will accelerate creativity, but storytelling remains human

AI is changing the way we create, personalize, and distribute content—but creativity, strategy, and emotional connection will always be human-led. The brands that win in the future will be those that use AI to enhance storytelling, not replace it.

Branded content is no longer an ad—it's an experience

The future belongs to brands that understand how to build meaningful relationships with their audiences. Content needs to feel editorial, inspiring, and seamless—not interruptive. Those who master the balance between storytelling, data, and engagement will shape the next era of branded content.

For me, it has always been about creating content that doesn't just reach people—but truly moves them. That's the power of branded content, and that's what I will continue to push forward.

Career Lessons

Own your expertise—but stay humble. Trust your skills, speak up, and take space, but remember that no one knows everything. Curiosity and humility will take you further than prestige.

Be kind—it's a power move. Kindness is not a weakness. Strong teams are built by people who lift each other up, not by those who push others down.

Know your worth—and ask for it. Put a price on your expertise and dare to demand what you deserve. No one will offer it if you don't believe in it yourself.

Work in a team, not in a bubble. The best ideas come from collaboration. Surround yourself with people who challenge you, support you, and make you laugh.

Have fun! Work takes up a big part of life—make sure you do something you're passionate about, work with people you enjoy, and never forget to laugh.

And most importantly, be yourself. Your unique voice is your strength.





Ida Kofoed

Head of Storybook | *Concept X*

Signature Work Achievements

I've been with Concept X for almost 10 years, and one of my milestones was co-founding Storybook – a dedicated branded content unit. Since launching in 2019, we've built a strong team of journalists and creative project managers, planning, conceptualizing and running over 800 campaigns and earning multiple awards along the way.

Key Insights

When done right, branded content has so much potential for adding real value for the audience. The most impactful campaigns happen when we truly understand the audience – what they need, what

they care about. By diving deep into their interests, branded content becomes one of the most powerful ways to deliver commercial content they actively engage with, creating value not just for the brand, but for the audience as well.

Career Lessons

Never be afraid to challenge traditional formats or ways of thinking – branded content thrives on innovation. We operate in a constantly evolving market, and pushing boundaries is essential to maintaining the highest quality in our industry.





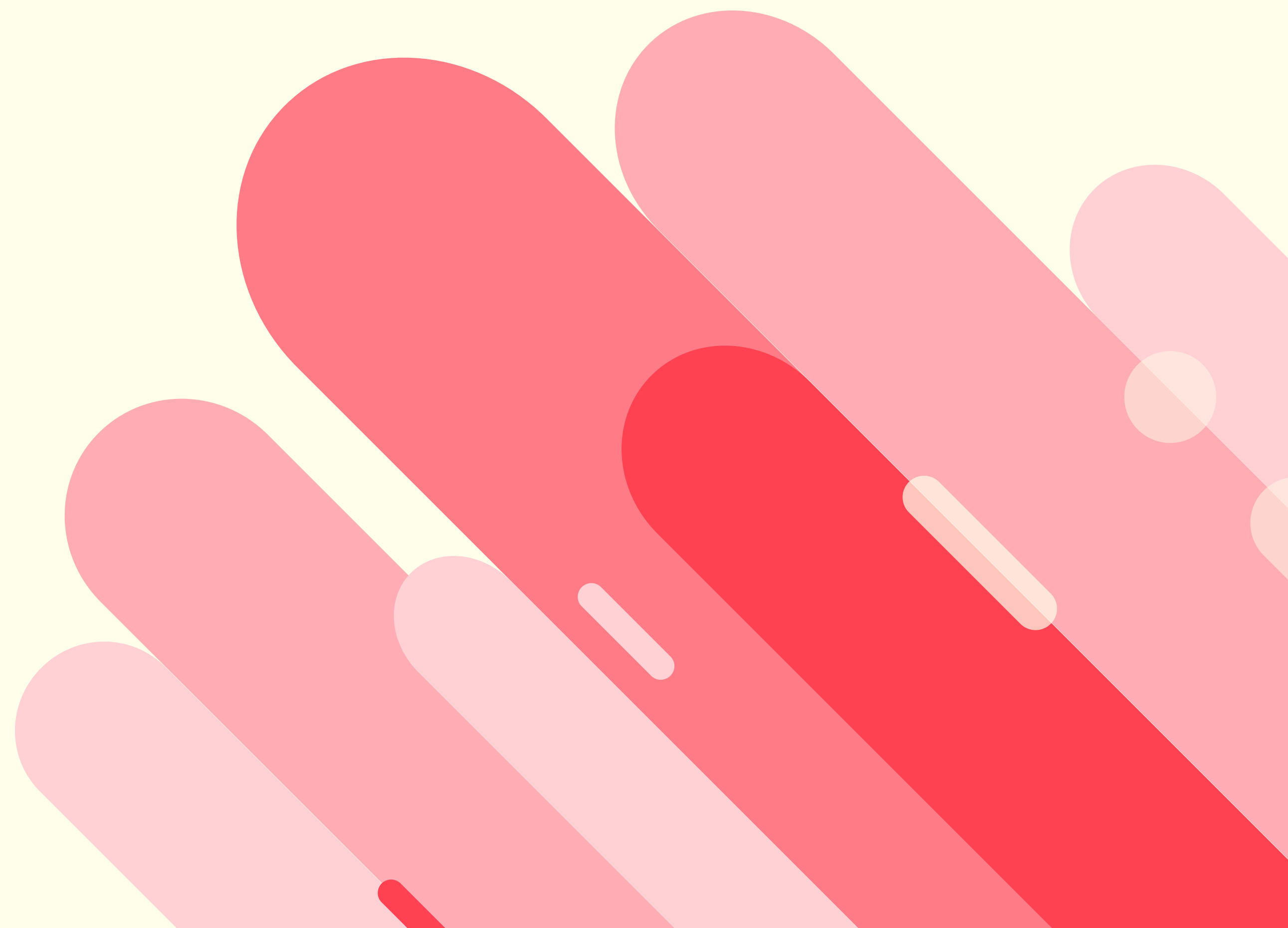
LIGHTS, CAMERA, ADS! HOLLYWOOD MERGING WITH BRANDED CONTENT

By Kristen Berke

Something very exciting is happening in our industry right now. And no, I don't mean the implementation of AI in creative suites or CRM tools (shocking, I know). I'm referring to the unprecedented merging of advertising and traditional Hollywood.

It's no secret that brands have wanted a seat at the table of golden statues for a long time. And they're no stranger to awards shows either – industry events like the Clio and Cannes Lions have shown that ad execs will just go ahead and plan their own party after being shown the door by Hollywood traditionalists time and time again.

And that's been the status quo for decades; film and television was one thing, advertising was another. They're cousins with a semi-





codependent relationship, but never without different backgrounds and conflicting values to contend with. Today, however, we see brands and studios playing so closely in the sandbox it's sometimes hard to tell which is which.

Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, Coca-Cola

For starters, take the in-house studios being built at countless brands, whose P&Ls have absolutely nothing to do with content creation: Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, Coca-Cola, Nike and Northwell Health, just to name a few.

Northwell's content studio, launched just last year, has already garnered 6 Emmys and 1 nod for the Oscars shortlist. Programming focuses on personal stories about patients and healthcare providers, a perfect focal point for the brand. Other healthcare companies are undoubtedly taking note, as the earned media these programs provided, far exceed the ROI any media buy would have garnered.

And then we have case studies like Barbie and LEGO movies, which prove the power of filmmaking in driving a brand into the mainstream lexicon like never before.

In aggregate, the LEGO movies alone have grossed over \$1 billion. While it's unclear exactly how much LEGO directly invested in these films, it's safe to assume their profits far outweigh the costs.



Brands changed.
Brands are now smarter
and more sophisticated
than ever before.

Footwear brand Allbirds recently announced a partnership with Stanley Tucci to develop a 4-part dinner party series called Cards on the Table with a long list of celebrity guests in the queue.

And just the other night, at the 97th Academy Awards, we heard Zoe Saldana thank YSL Productions in her acceptance speech for Emilia Pérez, the first fashion maison to create a full-fledged production subsidiary dedicated to creating feature-length films. I highly doubt they'll be the last.

So what changed?

Brands changed. Brands are now smarter and more sophisticated than ever before. A decade ago, branded content, or branded



entertainment as it's more commonly referred to nowadays, consisted of longer or series-based commercials directly tied to the product. There wasn't much of a difference between a linear TV spot and a piece of branded content built for social or YouTube outside of the platform being leveraged.

But brands are increasingly moving away from producing this type of content. Most of the brands we speak to at LA Times Studios are interested in subsidising films tied to a larger initiative with social momentum and cultural impact.

These topics fall across a broad spectrum with the one through-line being: issues their target audience cares about. This can be anything from climate change to education to nature conservancy – as long as it meets the broader social criteria.

But the main change is seen in the actual content itself, as you can watch an entire feature-length film that doesn't mention or showcase the brand once except for the credits. Brands are now coming on board as executive producers for films regardless of whether or not it relates to their fine leather bags.

Brands are providing a surprising alternative

It's an exciting shift, to say the least, given the state of the entertainment industry right now. It's no secret Hollywood has been

struggling since the pandemic. COVID-19 slowed production to a halt and, just when we thought things were turning a corner, the strikes occurred – not to mention the disruption of the streaming business and its ongoing saturation of attention and funding among industry vets. And lest we forget the LA fires that ravaged the City of Angels in January.

Hollywood just can't seem to catch a break and filmmakers are scrambling. Brands are providing a welcome if not surprising alternative to content creators just looking to make the projects they care about. And brands are happy to oblige when it brings them alignment with a cause and an audience they care about.

The fact of the matter is, that Hollywood has always been a branded content business, just never self-identified as such. But now that more brands are willing to invest in these projects without such a heavy-handed pitch for their products, content creators are getting the funding they need and brands are getting the cache they want.

It's a win-win for all parties and something to celebrate as this industry evolves. If we can just get out of our own way and worry less about the semantics, or "the way it's always been", we'll see a lot more brand-funded projects from independent filmmakers coming soon to a theatre near you.



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United Kingdom



Jainnie Cho

VP, BBC StoryWorks, BBC Studios | *BBC Studios*

Signature Work Achievements

Rather than state personal milestones, I'd love to mention that being on the jury panel for various industry awards, including Native Advertising Awards and Digiday, has been one of the more enlightening and inspirational parts of my branded content career to date. The industry has changed so much since I first started back in 2016, with much richer and thought-provoking stories that I had the privilege to see as a jury member. I've noticed that the branded content campaigns that, either I have led or have seen from other brands or publishers, have evolved to become much more multi-platform, utilising "sight, sound and motion" fully. I've also seen the growth of more longer form storytelling in branded content. I'm excited to see how the branded entertainment industry evolves and how it will be even more involved in telling impactful, meaningful stories with this longer, more dedicated format.



Key Insights

I've taken a slightly unorthodox route into branded content — via journalism, both breaking news and features writing. I find the intersection between branded content and journalism quite fascinating. For me though, it's all storytelling. There's good and bad branded content and journalism out there. But what makes a story good, whether that's branded or editorial, is the same — a clear and different POV, hard work (on-the-ground reporting, attention to detail, teamwork and collaboration based on trust) and true insight that might surprise, delight or inspire those who read, watch or listen to that story.

Career Lessons

Diversity, whether that's in the stories we tell or in who tells those stories, is what keeps the branded content industry exciting and fresh. Without diverse voices, the industry just wouldn't be able to keep up with the stories that people want to consume and enjoy today. So if you are a woman in the branded content industry, my advice would be to voice your truth, even though you might be scared or intimidated to do so. You have been hired in your role for a reason so trust in your informed judgement and opinion.





South Africa

Jerusha Raath

Publisher: News24 | *News24, Media24*

Signature Work Achievements

My team and I have celebrated significant milestones in the branded content industry. In 2023, my commercial content team earned the honour of being named Studio of the Year (under 20 employees) at the Native Advertising Awards. Over the past four years, we've received numerous accolades from prestigious organisations such as the World Association of News Publishers and the International News Media Association. As a trained journalist, I pioneered our newsroom's multimedia strategy, introducing documentaries, podcasts and live streams to our news offering.



Key Insights

In the world of branded content, for us publishers, it's all about staying true to our journalistic roots. We create powerful stories by marrying journalism's integrity with the punch of commercial appeal. Looking ahead, I think the future of branded content for news publishers lies in blending our storytelling prowess with newsroom excellence. This way, we ensure our content shines as brightly as the groundbreaking journalism we champion. It's about crafting engaging, meaningful narratives that not only captivate audiences but also help build resilient, future-ready newsrooms. Leveraging data and creativity, we can make our mark with purposeful, personalised stories.

Career Lessons

I have had the immense privilege of being led, mentored and coached by women in the industry; these women leaders were shape-shifters, they hold their own in any room: able to navigate

complex situations and still create impact. Here's what I learned from them:

- You're going to mess up. That's okay. Give yourself the same grace you give others: pick yourself up, learn the lesson and don't beat yourself up. Mistakes make you stronger.
- Own your ability. Imposter Syndrome is a waste of time. You belong in your role and you have what it takes to flourish. (And! If you're a mother like me, mum-guilt is a waste of time too. It doesn't serve you and it doesn't serve your family. Be fully present at work. Be fully present at home. You're doing your best and your family is lucky to have you.)
- Build your network. Surround yourself with allies who inspire, empower and challenge you. Leann on them, learn from them and then pay it forward when you can.





United Kingdom



Jo Quaye

Head of FT Studio | *Financial Times*

Signature Work Achievements

At the BBC (many moons ago now) I started some initial early research work into content specifically designed for mobile consumption and younger audiences. This led me to develop and produce an episodic pilot for young people in schools, which brought a brilliant opportunity to work with writers, directors, a cast and crew, experiencing first-hand the whole production process, from concept

through to the technical roll-out in schools. From there, I led the creation and production of an Italian drama, 'La Mappa Misteriosa', for language learners. Though going back to my old student haunt of Bologna was a lot of fun, the long nights and level of detail needed to lead cast and crew on a low-budget film over a two-week shoot (and putting more of myself into the process than I thought possible) was intense – to say the least. But I gained so much satisfaction and a sense of pride from what I achieved, I was hooked. It was a relatively small project but deemed a success and gained bigger audiences internationally.

From there, I learned a lot more about digital and the power of data visualisation at The Guardian, and then moved onto T Brand Studio at The New York Times, producing cutting-edge branded content while building out new production teams in Hong Kong and Paris.

Now I head up FT Studio: a talented team creating editorially driven and visually impactful branded content at the Financial Times. This job is a perfect culmination of all the skills I have gained so far. I am very proud of the campaigns we have produced, successfully increasing production values and quality of our output over the past year. It has been great seeing the team grow, and working with clients who have trusted us to push creativity and storytelling to new heights. Watch this space, as I'm confident there will be more to come!



Key Insights

As a content producer, first and foremost, I enjoy the variety of experience that working in branded content has given and continues to give me. I have led video and digital projects in the travel, lux, business, arts and lifestyle space, building strong relationships with clients, solving problems and using storytelling skills honed throughout my career in a multitude of ways. I value the international perspective it offers, working with global companies and audiences. Even with all the constant changes and developments in media, finding unusual stories or telling established stories in new and interesting ways can break through the noise and resonate with audiences.

Career Lessons

A few thoughts I have:

- If you are early on in your career, get as much experience as you can, and persevere with the hard stuff. Looking back, it was the projects that I found the toughest where I learned the most.
- Work with good people.
- Take considered risks and work in environments that encourage it. Sometimes risks yield results, sometimes they don't! But you can learn a lot from the ones that don't.
- Try and maintain perspective: enjoy what you do but always look beyond and at the bigger picture.
- Follow your instinct. Everything tends to work out in the end!





United Kingdom



Joanna Carrigan

Strategy Director and Consultant | *Self*

Signature Work Achievements

Branded content leader with 15 years of editorial, creative and strategy experience. Formerly of News UK, The Huffington Post and Dow Jones. Industry judge, speaker and contributor.

Key Insights

Branded content sits at the intersection of commerciality and creativity. When it's done correctly, the blend is seamless. Listening to what clients really want to achieve, finding inspiration in data and layering on that intangible creativity is where brilliant campaigns come to life. I feel very lucky to love what I do, and to be able to support journalism—which we need now more than ever before.

Career Lessons

Supporting each other as women is crucial—lift her up, shout her name, cheer her on.





The Netherlands

Jotta Erath

Strategic Partnership Manager | *FD Mediagroep*

Signature Work Achievements

I have been involved in native advertising since 2012, consistently focusing on B2B. After a successful career at media agencies and publishers, I joined Management Scope, a sophisticated niche journalism platform dedicated to the boardrooms of the Netherlands. At Management Scope, I was responsible for establishing and nurturing content partnerships with corporate market leaders, emphasizing knowledge sharing and a journalistic approach.

In 2015, I transitioned to FD Mediagroep, the premier media company for business in the Netherlands, serving the leaders of today and

tomorrow. Since then, I have provided advanced clients with a trustworthy voice through expertly crafted branded content on the FD Mediagroep platform. In 2016, with a small, agile, multidisciplinary team, I helped pioneer podcasting in the Netherlands. As one of the first media brands to embrace this medium, we have grown into the largest commercial podcast publisher in the country. This expansion has attracted numerous successful partnerships, resulting in several popular shows. Many of these podcasts have also been broadcast on BNR Nieuwsradio, with some programs securing long-term partnerships with esteemed partners.



Key Insights

Demand Generation: Demand generation is a crucial marketing strategy aimed at creating brand awareness and generating interest among potential customers. As a brand, you create micro-moments to stay top-of-mind. Sponsorships and branded content play a significant role in this, serving as the perfect always-on marketing strategy. By being audible in a substantive, journalistic manner that aligns with your theme or domain, you not only enhance the association of your brand with the relevant topic but also reach a targeted audience already interested in the subject matter.

Rapid Developments in AI: Technological advancements in AI present opportunities for branded content. These developments are progressing rapidly, offering the potential to reduce production costs and increase efficiency. However, they also lead to an abundance of content. The challenge for brands is to stand out amidst this influx. How do you differentiate yourself as a brand in such a crowded space?

Brand Safety: Brand safety in advertising refers to the measures and strategies advertisers employ to ensure their ads do not appear on inappropriate or harmful websites or alongside controversial content. This protects their brand reputation and maintains a positive association with their brand. It is challenging for brands to position themselves within a trustworthy environment. Our advice is to

carefully select where your brand is visible to ensure it aligns with your values and maintains your reputation

Career Lessons

Stay Authentic:

- Always be true to yourself and your values. Authenticity resonates with audiences and builds trust.
- Embrace Innovation: Stay ahead by embracing new technologies and trends, such as AI and digital media.
- Build Strong Partnerships: Cultivate meaningful relationships with clients and partners to create impactful content.
- Focus on Quality: Prioritize high-quality, substantive content that aligns with your brand's message.
- Be Resilient: The industry can be challenging, but resilience and adaptability will help you thrive.

Stand by Your Woman: Always show solidarity with other women. Support, uplift, and empower each other to create a stronger, more inclusive industry. Together, we can achieve great things!





Joyce Parente

VP, Marketing Solutions | *The Guardian US*



United States

Signature Work Achievements

I am fortunate to have been a part of the “branded content ride” since its inception. I’ve watched it grow up, so to speak, and have evolved along with it.

Key Insights

Stay fresh. I see a lot of formulaic work. Look, I know it is hard to reinvent a wheel but put in the extra thinking, go a little crazy, experiment and be bold. You may have to tone that all down—or leave it on the cutting room floor, even—for the final pitch, but it also might lead you to something truly innovative. And it will encourage your team to be brave and outspoken if they see you, a leader, willing to push the boundaries.

Career Lessons

Make sure you are seen and heard as both left brain and right brain adept.





United Kingdom



Julia Linehan

CEO and Founder | *The Digital Voice*TM

Signature Work Achievements

I am about to hit my 30 year anniversary of working in the digital advertising industry. This August marks this milestone and over the last 3 decades I have had the pleasure of being in leadership roles at some of the biggest publishers, adtech companies, agencies and trade bodies.

I am incredibly proud of the work I have done in the brand safety space; both as Head of IASH which led the way to tighter rules for

ad networks and agencies and more recently, as industry founding advisor to UKSAFC.org where we are fighting to stop ad fraud.

I am of course most proud of being a female founder and set up my own PR and amplification agency 12 years ago. I have now grown the company to 37 incredible creative, communications and marketing experts and we have become a well loved and award winning company!

Key Insights

AI is probably the most exciting but also the most threatening factor which will impact branded content in the coming years. It is important to remember to use it in ways that helps you / your work be more efficient but not at the detriment of originality and creative thinking. You power AI and you are the driver of it. Make it work for you and take only what you need. Human creativity, imagination and strategy cannot be equaled. Do remember that and know how important your role is!

Career Lessons

Be bold, be brave and be you. There should be no room for imitation – both in the work you produce but also in who you are. Be yourself; create your own work and above all, embrace your uniqueness. Your voice and work matters – celebrate it.





Germany

Juliane Sydow

General Manager Axel Springer
Brand Studios | *Media Impact*

Signature Work Achievements

Throughout my career, I have played a pivotal role in shaping the native advertising unit of one of Germany's leading publishing houses, driving strategic growth, innovation, and industry recognition. One of my key achievements has been the successful merger of the native studios of Germany's top media brands, BILD and WELT, creating a unified and powerful entity. In this process, I not only established the strategic direction of the unit but also positioned it

within the publishing house and its marketing ecosystem to maximize impact and synergies.

Leading a team of dedicated experts, I have fostered a culture of collaborative innovation while significantly expanding revenues into the double-digit million range. A key factor in this success has been the ability of my team and I to understand both the market and the brands we work with, ensuring that our strategies align with industry needs and client expectations. At the same time, I strongly believe in empowering my team, giving them the freedom to bring their expertise to the table and shape our creative and strategic direction. By creating an environment of trust, autonomy, and shared vision, we have been able to push creative boundaries, challenge conventional approaches, and set new industry standards.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed, as we have been honored with prestigious awards, including Native Studio of the Year and Most Creative Campaign at the 2024 Native Advertising Institute Awards. These milestones reflect not only our commercial success but also our contribution to the evolving landscape of native advertising.

Through strategic leadership, innovation, and a strong results-driven approach, I have helped establish our Native Studio as a leading force in the industry, setting new benchmarks for excellence and creativity.



Key Insights

I see a significant shift in marketing activities driven by the evolution of the global economy. Tech-driven advertising and AI are transforming the industry, yet at the same time, grand, immersive brand experiences are becoming increasingly crucial. In the future, only those who can create truly standout experiences will make a lasting impact.

Consumers crave compelling, authentic storytelling and entertainment. Advertising that delivers on these expectations will remain relevant. However, it will always require skilled professionals who understand how to craft these narratives in a way that resonates.

At the same time, securing revenue is becoming more challenging than ever. Every deal, every campaign demands strong ideas and flawless execution. The industry's future belongs to those who can master both – creativity and precision.

Additionally, brand-safe media environments are more important than ever. As fake news and misinformation continue to pose a serious risk to the industry, brands must ensure that their content appears in trusted, high-quality editorial spaces. The credibility of advertising depends on the credibility of the platforms it appears on – and this will remain a key factor in the industry's future success.

Career Lessons

One of the most important lessons I've learned in my career is that confidence and curiosity are key. In branded content – and in any industry – women should own their expertise, speak up, and trust that their ideas are just as valuable as anyone else's. Too often, we wait until we feel 100% ready before taking the next step. But the truth is, no one has all the answers – and that's okay. Growth comes from trying, learning, and adapting. And not being ashamed of your self-confidence, being proud of yourself and your achievements is a very valuable insight.

Another key lesson: Creativity and business go hand in hand. Branded content is not just about storytelling; it's about impact. Understanding how creative ideas drive business success will make you an even stronger player in the industry. So, don't just focus on the content – learn about strategy, revenue models, and innovation.

And finally, build your network and support other people around you. The best careers aren't built alone. Share knowledge, celebrate successes, and create spaces where the next generation of female leaders in branded content can thrive.

Most importantly – be bold, have fun, and never underestimate the power of a great idea.





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United States

Kate Pfetsch

Chief Content Strategy Officer | *Independent Consultant (former Marriott, Discovery)*

Signature Work Achievements

Kate pioneered Marriott's Content Studio, leading the company's global entertainment strategy and developing award-winning video series, podcasts, and social content. Her work earned prestigious awards such as the Telly, Webby, Shorty Impact, Brand Film, NAACP Image Awards, and film festival official selections. She spearheaded Marriott's debut on streaming platforms, launching two film series on Amazon Prime Video that broke audience engagement records.

As Global Head of Content Strategy, Kate built Marriott's first content Center of Excellence, leading strategy and ways of working for teams across 150 countries.



Prior to Marriott, Kate managed branded entertainment at Discovery, creating and launching custom multi-channel programs for high-profile brands including Toyota, Purina, Mobil1, American Express, E*TRADE, and Michelob Ultra.

Marriott Film Series:

- Travel by Design
- The Power of Travel
- StoryBooked

Key Insights

Over the years, brands, agencies, and publishers have churned out an overwhelming amount of content, yet I'm constantly reminded that we're all still figuring it out as we go. What's truly exciting is watching how some brands are diving headfirst into branded content, while others remain on the fence about its value and ROI.

I'm particularly excited to see challenger brands take bold,

calculated risks – forcing traditional players to rethink their entire approach to content marketing and how they build relevance with their audiences. It's the right time for more brands to embrace long-form entertainment and shake up the standard marketing playbooks.

I'm keen to see more brands embrace a holistic strategic planning approach, crafting content plans that engage wider audiences across diverse platforms.

Career Lessons

Never stop learning, questioning, and staying curious about why some things click while others miss the mark. Dive deep, analyze, and keep pushing forward. Above all, remember that the ultimate goal is to create something valuable, beautiful, and insightful for your audience. Nail that, and the business metrics will take care of themselves.





United Kingdom



Katie West

Head of Content Ventures | *APEX Content Ventures, Publicis Media*

Signature Work Achievements

The Face of Max Factor, Got to Dance with Kindle Fire, Spontex and Trollied scripted comedy partnership, Fit in Five branded ent with Fitbit, Parkrun with Vitality, Callaway clothing in Sky Golf, Women's aid and Van Wife on Ladbible, Royal London and Big Boys Don't Cry, Tresemme and Britain and Ireland's Next Top Model, Diet Coke and Styled to Rock.

Key Insights

Branded Content and brand integration into TV programming is a mixture of many factors coming together to work well. Done well, they work well as a self performing piece of content for the platform and seamlessly and effortlessly involve a brand partner. It take a lot of careful account management and clear boundaries and understanding from all parties involved as the process of making TV content compared to making TV advertising is very different and needs to be navigated well. It is possible to make great TV content that serves the audience and integrate brands into this content well. It's also possible to make content that is extremely well made and represents a brand - for example the recent work with Merman for Women's Aid - Van Wife.

Career Lessons

Working in branded content requires 2 major skills. 1. It's pragmatic and takes a lot of legwork and organisation. and 2, Its relationship based and takes someone who understands all the various needs of at the various stakeholders, clearly understanding and communicating how all these part work together. I have found that this business has many women who are at the heart of these successful deal and I feel that branded content can suit women very well.





United Kingdom



Katrina Murray

Branded Entertainment Consultant | Merman

Signature Work Achievements

Van Wife – Merman x LADBible x APEX – 16 million impressions across the campaign and a 17% lift in spotting the flags in coercive control.

Scratch to Batch – Channel 4 fully funded by Lidl. Currently wimming the slot with 1.2M consolidated over Ep 1.

Numerous Prop Opps placed in TV shows which have driven exponential return in media value and contributed to budgets.

Key Insights

Respect for the brand is paramount. Building brilliant, engaging content around a brands objectives is the only route to success – and will result in returning commissions and wider conversations.

Career Lessons

Brands want to work with people they trust. Its a new landscape for them and its our job to be the best guide & partner possible.





United States



Kaylee King

Managing Director, Partner | *Special Operations*

Signature Work Achievements

Kaylee is an Emmy-winning managing director with 15+ years of experience in commercial, branded content, and documentary filmmaking. A founding member of T Brand Studio at The New York Times, she won a Cannes Lions Grand Prix for the VR piece How Nature Is Inspiring Our Industrial Future. She also launched and led T Brand Studio's international branch in London, working with global brands like Emirates, Volvo, Samsung, and Cartier. Kaylee has filmed worldwide, including in hard to reach places like Varanasi, the Maldives, and Okinawa. At AOL Huffington Post, she oversaw branded travel content and contributed as a writer. A recognized industry

expert, she created pivotal campaigns like the three-part New York Times branded documentary series for the Orange Is the New Black launch.

Key Insights

Great storytelling wins. This can look a million different ways, but if you are able to translate a story, experience or set of information into a compelling narrative, you will hook your audience. I like to figure out the story and let that dictate the format — whether it's a short TikTok video or a branded doc series. Figure out what you're trying to say first and then fight for the format it works best in. Don't be afraid to zoom way out when you're in the middle of a project and ask yourself, does this make sense to someone who is seeing this for the first time? Sometimes you have to be more literal in storytelling than you want to be, but if it means it will be clearer for the audience it's worth doing.

Career Lessons

Be reliable. Work hard. Be kind. Speak up. Cliches? Maybe. But I've use these ideals as my North star in my career and it helps me keep my head squarely on my shoulders. Of course there are outlying situations that can rattle your cage a bit, but returning to those principles has paid off in the long run.





United States



Kristen Berke

VP, Strategic Branded Content Partnerships |
Los Angeles Times

Signature Work Achievements

I have worked in branded content for 15 years, first at the agency level before moving into the MCN space and then landing at the LA Times in 2014. Most recently I was promoted to build out our new branded content team within LA Times Studios, overseeing our go-to-market strategy, mission statement, new website and client partnerships division. Our Studios Short Docs team won an Oscar in 2024 for Best Short Documentary and has worked with some of the largest

companies in the world on branded content projects including Pfizer, Bank of America, Audible, Netflix, CBS, UNICEF, Versace, Balenciaga, Blue Cross and many more. We are the dominant voice of the west coast with a national audience across our digital and social channels reaching millions of readers every day. Our paper has won 52 Pulitzer Prizes. Our work reflects the modern style and sophistication of the west coast paired with the legacy and expertise of a 140+ year old institution.

Key Insights

Branded content is quickly becoming a critical component of sustaining the news publishing and media industry at large; as print circulations decline and display advertising becomes more automated than ever before, more brands are turning to branded content to tell their stories. Brands have recognized that media inventory will only take them so far. True brand recall only happens when consumers feel seen, and the best way to do that is by sharing stories that speak to them on a personal level. Another fascinating shift is the merging of traditional Hollywood and branded entertainment that is restructuring how we think about and execute our content campaigns. Brands are more sophisticated now, which means they are more interested in aligning with content that focuses on innovation at scale, social impact and economic progress rather than just selling product. The work we're talking about now has little to do with the brand itself and more to do with how this work is going



to leave a lasting impact on consumers. There are new questions being asked, like how can we tell a story that resonates with millions of people who want to build a better world? What can we as a brand do to make a difference? It's thrilling to see so many companies supporting larger initiatives, whether it's coming on board as an executive producer of a project midway through, or commissioning mission-driven independent filmmakers to make work they actually care about. In a nutshell, the industry is rapidly evolving as brands become more invested in causes bigger than themselves. And it's a win-win evolution: great for content creators, great for brands, and great for our industry. I am both humbled and excited by how far we've come in such a short time and very bullish on the next couple of years for branded content.

Career Lessons

Never assume you know what someone needs. Go into every conversation with an open mind and a lot of curiosity, but hardly ever should you have your answers pre-baked. Always do your homework on previous work and let that drive your questioning but wait to share your ideas until you hear from partners directly. What makes this work so fun is the ability to be flexible, creative and educational all at once, so make sure you apply that same ethos to the early stages of the process. These skills come naturally to so many women so my advice is to lean into that feminine intuition even more and let it drive the project forward.





United States



Kristine Francisco

VP, Design, Forbes Content & Design Studio | *Forbes*

Signature Work Achievements

My team and I have developed a content-driven design philosophy where content informs design and design elevates content. Some notable projects that embody this approach: Billie Jean King's Path

To Parity (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/gainbridge/2024/05/06/billie-jean-kings-path-to-parity/>), Casing Resilience (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/take-me-fishing/2023/06/23/casting-resilience-entrepreneur-ty-haneys-advice-for-leaders-go-fishing/>), Poised To Outperform (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/t-rowe-price/2024/11/20/poised-to-outperform-rev-up-your-investment-strategy-with-active-etfs/>), and How Maserati Taps Into Tradition And Innovation (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/maserati/2024/04/19/how-maserati-taps-into-tradition-and-innovation/>)

Key Insights

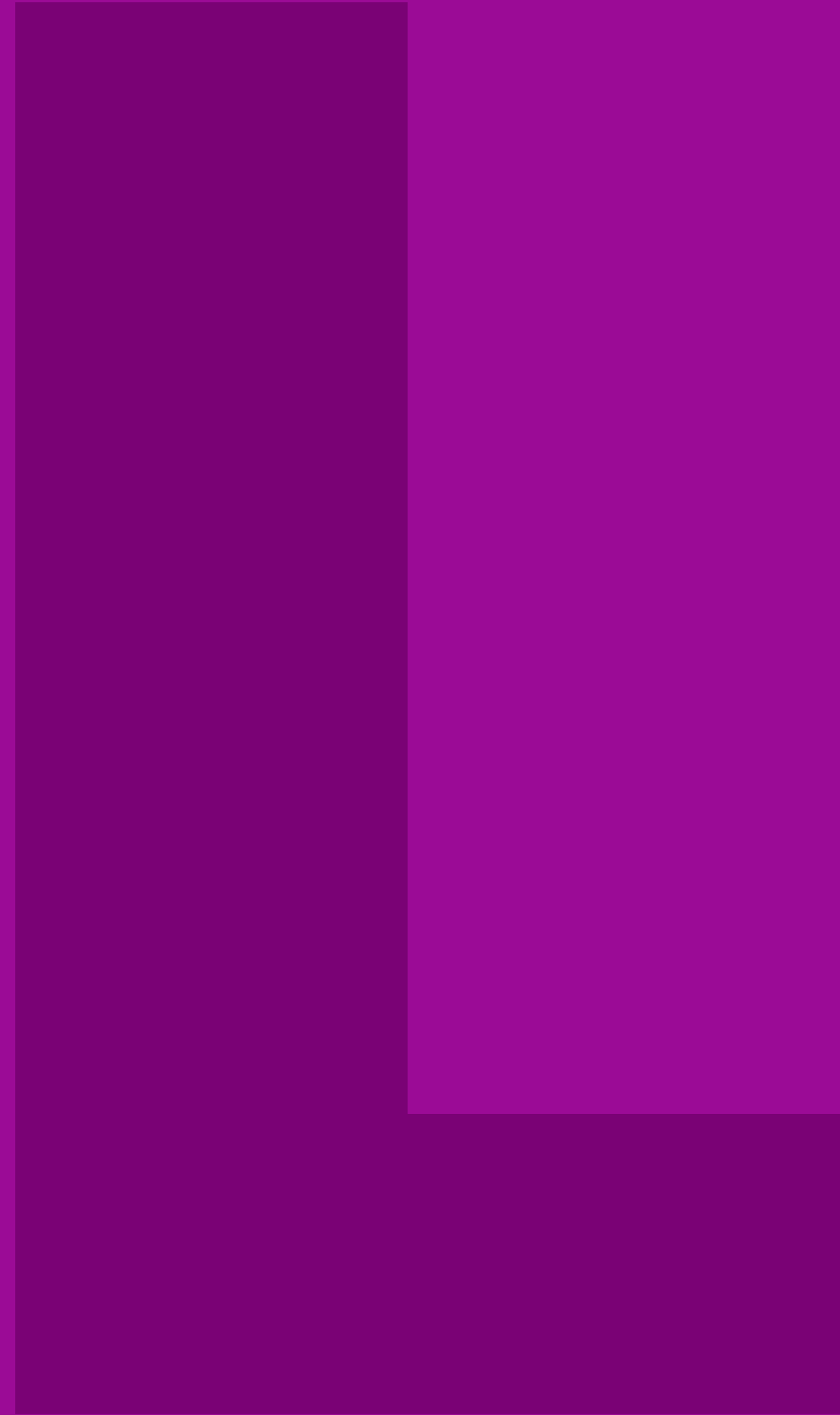
I believe a truly collaborative process is key. Designers and editors should not work in silos. In creating this amorphous boundary, we become more empathetic collaborators, our storytelling becomes more succinct, and our user experience more seamless making for branded content that deeply resonates with readers regardless of time, place, or trends.

Career Lessons

Have a beginners mindset where each project is approached with curiosity and a state of play. This openness removes barriers to creativity, leads to innovative and novel solutions, and can lift you above the noise of difficult stakeholders whether internal or external.



NATIVE
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United States

Laura Baker-Finch

SVP, Content Strategy and Client
Activation | *Dotdash Meredith*

Signature Work Achievements

Having started in the industry before 'branded content' departments were commonplace, I'm proud to have played a role in growing this discipline across top publishers, platforms, and brands. At Dotdash Meredith, the largest print and digital publisher in the U.S., I lead a custom content team that has crafted compelling stories for household names like Campbell's, Delta Airlines, and P&G, as well



as luxury brands like Lexus, American Express, and Leading Hotels of the World. Additionally, I've helped shape the way branded content is integrated into media, from my early work in the music industry—crafting sponsorable content for streamers, festivals, and labels—to leading innovative, cross-platform storytelling strategies today.

Key Insights

I often find myself asking, 'What's next?' While native advertising has existed in some form for over a century, it has only been a widely recognized discipline within publishing for less than two decades. The need for brands to tell meaningful stories isn't going anywhere—but the how, why, and where of content consumption will continue to shift. The rise of creator-led media, AI-powered personalization, and platform-specific storytelling is rapidly changing the landscape. To truly drive success for clients, we must not only innovate and experiment but also anticipate consumer behaviors. The brands and publishers that embrace agility and audience-first thinking will be the ones that thrive.

Career Lessons

Branded content is an ever-evolving field, and one of the most important lessons I've learned is that success comes from staying adaptable, advocating for your ideas, and trusting your instincts. This industry requires constant innovation—what worked yesterday won't necessarily work tomorrow—so don't be afraid to push boundaries and experiment.

For women in branded content, my advice is to own your expertise and make your voice heard. Whether it's in a brainstorm, a client meeting, or a leadership discussion, your perspective brings value. Seek out mentors, but also be willing to mentor others. And finally, remember that the best ideas don't always come from following the trends of the industry, but from understanding and anticipating what audiences truly want and need. Stay curious, stay bold, and never stop asking, 'What's next?'





United States



Lauren Chomiuk

Director of Program Management,
Fortune Brand Studio | *Fortune Media*

Signature Work Achievements

During my tenure with Fortune Brand Studio (FBS), I've led marquee programs with globally recognized partners including Accenture, AWS, EY, Dollar General, Salesforce, Zurich North America, and more. Over the past year, amid headwinds such as accelerated global expansion and increasing internal demands, I led a small but mighty team of program and production managers to service more than 200 global partners—a 23% increase YoY. As a key member of the FBS leadership team, I led the launch of our first major branded content

programs in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia on expedited timelines. Coordinating client teams across time zones from Macau to Madrid, San Francisco to Singapore, I worked diligently to grow our business and create deep partnerships with clients who are keen to reengage in 2025. As a result, FBS nearly doubled our international creative, editorial, and design awards to date, being recognized with more than 90 awards and accolades in the past year alone.

Key Insights

In an industry—and world—that is constantly changing, you can't shy away from discomfort. It's imperative to take a step back from what has worked in the past and focus on new opportunities and ways of thinking. That kind of adaptability allows client-facing teams to strike a better balance of maintaining long-term relationships with partners while also finding ways to break new business.

Career Lessons

One important thing that I have learned over the course of my career is that the best thing anyone can do to succeed is truly believe that you belong in every room and at every table you're invited to. Once you're there, surround yourself with trusted experts, and say yes to every opportunity, even—and especially—if it pushes you out of your comfort zone. You cannot grow without change.



Leslie Cunningham

Supervising Producer and Head of Branded Content | *Diagonal Media, LLC*

United States



Signature Work Achievements

- Co-Head of Branded Content, Diagonal Media
- 2024 Best Director, iWoman Online Shorts Festival
- 2023 Featured Director, SHOOT New Director's Showcase

Key Insights

Since the beginning of time people have connected with stories that teach us how to be human and remind us that existing is a collective experience. If your content can harness those universal truths and use that to incite to action or elicit internal change, you'll always have an audience.

Career Lessons

- Nobody is waiting to hold your hand and make your ideas come true, you have to do that.
- But you don't have to do it alone.

- Ask for help, admit when you're unsure, commit to consistently learning something new, get used to being uncomfortable, and swing hard for the things you want, even (and especially) if you don't think you'll get them. Most importantly, stay in touch with people and don't forget to shout about your achievements.
- You're crushing it girl - drink some water, wear your sunscreen and keep going.





United States



Lexi Jarman

Global Head of Creative Strategy | *Financial Times*

Signature Work Achievements

- Leading the introduction of branded content at the Financial Times to become a core component of our commercial offering.
- Crafting award winning partnership strategies for clients from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Bain, iShares to GE, Coinbase and many more.

- Developing the commercial strategy for Moral Money – an editorial section dedicated to delivering cleaner, fairer capitalism.

Key Insights

The future of our industry is predicated on a few key elements – the smart use of technology and data, creativity and quality. It is incumbent upon us to make sure we strive for creative strategies that deliver maximum value for their intended audience and we can do that by ensuring we combine those foundational elements intelligently. It is only by doing this that we avoid the race for the bottom. If we feel a sense of collective responsibility for lifting the overall quality of the content we produce, we all stand to win – including the consumer.

Career Lessons

Don't waste time trying to be someone else, it is the unique things within you that set you apart from the rest so embrace those things without hesitation. Spend time developing your own personal style. It's great to learn and borrow from peers, mentors and senior management, but emulating them completely can mean you lack authenticity or feeling like you're behaving outside yourself. It takes time to understand what makes you uniquely "you" but that is where you will have the greatest impact, success and also happiness.





United States

Lisa Rounds

Editorial Director, Branded Content |
Mpls.St.Paul Magazine

Signature Work Achievements

RBC Wealth Management: “Women & Wealth” print/digital campaign and “Prosper-US” custom magazine for women in financial services. Evereve “Inspiring Women” print/digital/video campaign. Danner Boots print/digital campaign. MSP International Airport: “Insider’s Guide” print/digital campaign. Housing First of Minnesota: “Homeownership for All” print/digital campaign.

Key Insights

Campaigns are most successful when the people leading and creating the branded content come from journalism backgrounds because of their strong storytelling instincts. Branded content needs to be as interesting, intriguing, and punchy as the non-sponsored content around it. I built a team of service journalists and lifestyle

writers who could write in the voice of our city lifestyle magazine and platforms. We have recently started calling our branded content “branded editorial.” In our 9 years of creating branded content for advertisers, we’ve significantly increased revenue at our company. In the past 2 years especially, there seems to be an increased interest in print, and we have created multiple print campaigns (with digital extensions) for advertisers. I’m seeing a very strong interest in branded content in general in these last 2 years, as marketing folks seem to be understanding the value of editorial style branding and third-party validation.

Career Lessons

A background in journalism is invaluable!





United States



Lizzie Blumenthal

Director, Content Production & Innovation | **Native**

Signature Work Achievements

I've had the opportunity to shape and refine branded content strategies in ad tech, balancing creativity with performance.

Some of the work I'm most proud of includes:

- Leading a major shift in how our content team operates, streamlining workflows between Strategy, Content, and Client Success to make campaign execution more efficient.
- Driving the integration of AI into our content process, making ideation faster, smarter, and more data-driven without losing the human touch.
- Helping brands tell more immersive stories by rolling out formats like Native Stories and Canvas, which bring content to life in more engaging ways.

- Strengthening our content strategy by using insights to drive performance, making sure branded content doesn't just look good—but delivers real impact.
- Managing partnerships with vendors and publishers to expand our branded content offerings, ensuring brands have access to high-quality, credible storytelling opportunities.

Key Insights

Capturing attention today is harder than ever—especially on mobile, where people scroll fast and expect instant value. Brands have just seconds to make an impact, which means content needs to be quick, engaging, and built for mobile-first experiences. I think short-form video, interactive formats, and AI-driven personalization are changing the game, but the content that truly sticks still feels human. Moving forward, it's all about creating connected content ecosystems that flow seamlessly across platforms—grabbing attention, keeping it, and making every second count.

Career Lessons

If there's one thing I've learned, it's that you don't have to choose between creativity and strategy—both are essential. The best work happens when we embrace both our creative instincts and our ability to think analytically. Advocate for your ideas, back them up with data, and don't be afraid to challenge the status quo. This industry thrives on fresh perspectives, and your voice matters.





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NM



United States

Maclaine West

Director of Branded Content | *National Basketball Association (NBA)*

Signature Work Achievements

Maclaine has consistently demonstrated an unparalleled and unique ability to research and develop industry trends, implement emerging strategies within the NBA Global Partnerships and Media team, while fostering meaningful connections within the Sports Business and Entertainment landscape. Her grit and positive approach to her role at the NBA sets the stage to revolutionize how fans and athletes engage with branded content. Just this season, Maclaine and her



team were responsible for increasing revenue by 30% YoY from league partners for the sponsorship of Branded Content. Maclaine has had the opportunity to work at some of the largest brands within the Sports sector including the NBA, The Springhill Company, Bleacher Report and FOX Sports yet her reputation precedes her. Her creativity has supported campaigns many recognize including Nike x NBA Air Time, Uninterrupted's The Shop, NBA x Peloton, Bleacher Report's The Power of Her, and Uninterrupted's Kneading Dough. She has fostered a creative environment on her team where many seek inspiration, and she empowers her team to have a 'voice' by giving them autonomy on projects and campaigns as she looks to build the next wave of like-minded and hard working professionals at the NBA. Maclaine is a part of the next-generation of leaders at the NBA and beyond as her impact has been seen on the screen and also felt as fans engage and empathize with the stories she is looking to tell in the content she creates.

Key Insights

Leading the branded content team at the NBA has given me a front-row seat to the evolution of storytelling in sports. Branded content is no longer just about sponsorships—it's about creating narratives that resonate authentically with fans while delivering value for partners. The key to success is aligning brand partner's objective with marquee moments that feel organic and additive to the fan experience. Within our team, we are always brainstorming new ways on how to connect

with our highly engaged and loyal 222M followers on social platforms. Looking ahead, I see continued growth in content that blurs the lines between entertainment, commerce, and community-driven storytelling. Platforms will change, but the brands that succeed will be those that prioritize cultural relevance, audience-first storytelling, and strategic partnerships.

Career Lessons

Success in branded content—and any career—comes down to grit, grace, and gratitude. Work hard, stay resilient, and always lead with integrity. Be curious, ask questions, and say yes to opportunities that push you outside your comfort zone. Advocate for yourself, but also recognize the power of relationships—building genuine connections will take you further than any job title. Most importantly, appreciate everyone you meet along the way. The industry is small, and gratitude goes a long way. Stay adaptable, keep learning, and never underestimate the impact of showing up prepared and with purpose.





United States

Marissa Solis

SVP – Global Brand and Consumer Marketing |
National Football League

Signature Work Achievements

MEXICAN-BORN Marissa Solis is a magnetic and inspirational leader who turned a childhood dream of public service into a thirty-year career building iconic brands across CPG, Sports, Retail, and the Public Sector. As SVP of Global Marketing at the NFL, she is one of the League's highest-ranking female executives and currently leads all advertising, media, in-stadium marketing, and fan development initiatives. Marissa has leveraged her passion for helping others and expertise in public service to make a difference in corporate America, holding leadership roles in management consulting,



marketing, and sales at Procter & Gamble, Deloitte Consulting, and PepsiCo. In addition to driving game-changing growth initiatives for these leading companies, her diverse experiences have shaped her mission of bridging cultures through the power of human-centric story telling. She has been the mastermind behind many initiatives including Cheetos Cannes Lions' winning "Deja Tu Huella", Doritos many recognized Superbowl Campaigns, and Frito Lay's award winning "Twas the Night Before KickOff/Superbowl" commercials. In 2020 Marissa was recognized by Ad Age as one of the "Most Powerful Women in Sports" for championing the football watching occasion in the partnership with PepsiCo and the NFL.

In 2022, Marissa and her NFL Marketing team won a Sports Emmy for "Run With It" – a Super Bowl spot that told the story of Diana Flores and launched a revolution in Girls Flag Football around the world.

An award-winning executive and renowned public speaker, Marissa serves on the Board of Directors of Consolidated Communications,

the Clio, AIMM (Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing); the North Texas Chapter of Make-a-Wish Foundation; and The Melville Family Foundation. She has been featured in a wide array of outlets, including Ad Age, AdWeek, NBC, The New York Times and TIME.

Key Insights

Now more than ever it is critical that branded content is authentic and inclusive and that it is centered around human-centric real stories that reflect the consumer base we serve. This is critical in engaging a broad set of audiences to ensure brand relevance and growth.





United States

Mary Gail Pezzimenti

Head of Creative | *Washington Post*

Signature Work Achievements

Lucky enough to lead an award-winning team every year! Most recently, 3M Earthland. Global, robust 360 campaign showcasing infrastructure thought leadership innovations: immersive interactives, video, social, experiential.

Key Insights

Test and learn always. Take risks. You can only learn about impactful engagement by experimenting. The industry needs to embrace and experiment with AI now and ride the wave of innovation or be run over by it.

Career Lessons

The only thing you can rely on is change. Be flexible, resilient and constantly skill-building.





Croatia

Matea Petrović

Native Lead | *Index.hr*

Signature Work Achievements

1. Native Advertising Institute Awards (2024): Awarded Bronze for Best Use of Online Media for the compelling campaign “Remember the Children’s Homes,” which distinguished itself globally at the prestigious Native Advertising Institute Awards.
2. Jury Member at Native Advertising Awards (2024): Served as a jury member, evaluating submissions across 31 diverse categories.



This role deepened my expertise and allowed me to contribute to setting standards in the industry by recognizing creative excellence and strategic innovation.

3. SoMo Borac (2023): Led Index.hr to win “Best Native Campaign of the Year” at the SoMo Borac Awards, one of the most esteemed recognitions in the region, for our innovative digital marketing strategies.
4. Royal Television Society Awards (2020): Nominated for the Royal Television Society Student Television Award for my documentary “Carrying Myself,” which I directed and produced as part of my final project at the University of Salford.

Recent specialization: Recently obtained a specialized qualification in Graphic Design in February 2025, enhancing my proficiency in visual storytelling. This adds a significant accolade to my existing two master’s degrees in Journalism and TV Documentary Production, underlining my dedication to continuous learning and excellence in media.

Key Insights

In the world of branded content, things are moving incredibly fast, and it’s all about striking the right balance. Artificial intelligence and advanced data analytics are revolutionizing how we connect with

audiences, allowing us to tailor our messages like never before. But with all these cool tools at our fingertips, the challenge is to keep our stories authentic and relatable.

As we look ahead, I’m excited about the possibilities. I see a future where we harness these technologies to not just sell products but to tell stories that matter, that resonate on a personal level. We’re moving towards more personalized and impactful content, but it’s crucial that we don’t let the tech overpower the human element. Our goal is to use AI and data smartly, enhancing our creativity rather than replacing it.

Career Lessons

stay endlessly curious. Learn constantly, network smartly, and always be ready to adapt. Speak up with your unique voice and don’t just blend in;stand out. Remember, the best content balances bold ideas with audience needs. Keep your life balanced too;it fuels your creativity. Most importantly, as you climb, lift other women.





Nigeria

Maureen Ifada

Marketing Director | *FRIESLANDCAMPINA*
WAMCO NIGERIA PLC

Signature Work Achievements

Key campaigns:

Peak Breakfast Campaign: A campaign that promotes Peak milk as the hero at Breakfast. Milk is an additive and usually not the key focus at breakfast, more like a bridesmaid in a wedding. Apart from traditional above the line communication, we took this campaign further by harnessing the election season and asking consumers to vote for their favorite breakfast meal with Peak milk.

Repositioning of Three Crowns Milk on the health and wellness platform as the brand that cares for mum while mum cares for the family with the tagline “healthy mum’s happy families”. Simply put, mum cares for the family but who cares for mum? Three Crowns of course! Validated with the low cholesterol functional benefit and emotional mum’s love.

Internal Business Milestone:

Commercial acumen with responsibility in Consumer Dairy, Specialized nutrition and Sales function (Shopper Marketing & Channel & Category Development in Sub-Saharan Africa). I led the digital transformation for E-Commerce, leveraging different digital Route to market Models using differentiated channels strategies.

Industry Milestone:

Fellow of National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (FNI MN) and Top 50 Most influential women in Marketing Communications in Nigeria in 2024. Jury Member, Native Advertising Awards 2025

Key Insights

- In content creation, authenticity matters! The audience can tell! Story telling is key to make content more engaging, memorable, personal and distinctive.
- Focus on creating few high quality content instead of many low quality content i.e. Quality over quantity.

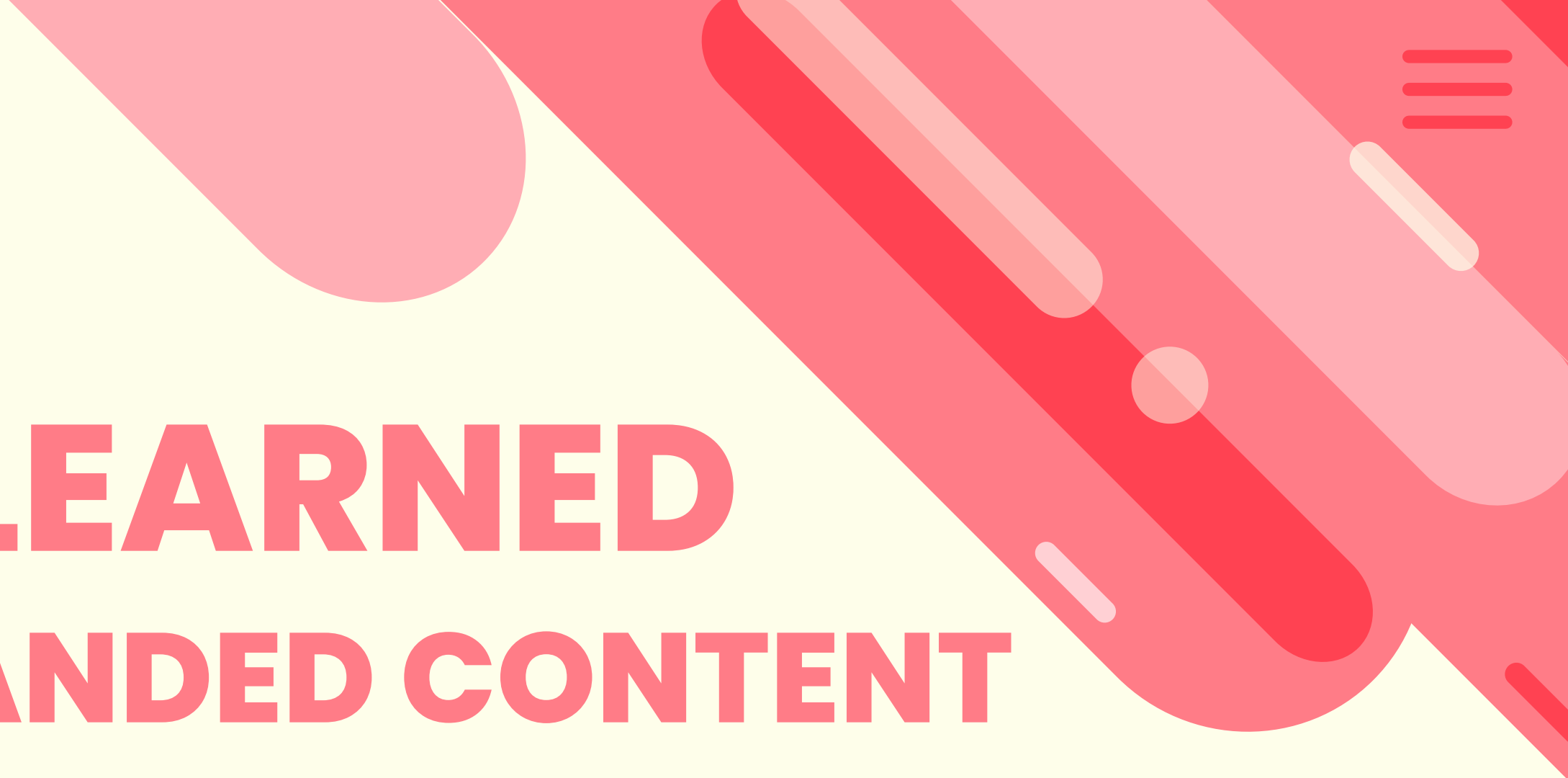


- Know your audience, their needs, pain points and tensions and create content that resonates with addressing these needs.
- Consistency is key in tone, style, messaging. Keep refreshing but be consistent.

Career Lessons

Keep Learning, continuously educate yourself on the latest branded content trends, platforms, and best practices. Be authenticity and ensure the content you create aligns with your values, personality, and tone. Build Your Personal Brand and invest in producing well-crafted, engaging content that resonates with your values. Networking and Community Building is very key. Attend industry events, join online communities and collaborate.





SHORT LESSONS I'VE LEARNED IN 12 YEARS OF BRANDED CONTENT

By Filipa d'Avillez

The world of **branded content** is constantly evolving, with creative storytelling and strategic brand partnerships taking centre stage. As more women take on leadership roles in this field, their unique perspectives and approaches are having an increasingly significant impact. However, navigating this industry still presents challenges – particularly in a sector that often fails to place female voices in top leadership positions.

1. Trusting my Instincts

In life in general, and at work in particular, instinct is a powerful compass for deciding the right course to take. We know our audience better than anyone, and our life experiences can guide us in creating authentic and engaging campaigns.

2. Always Stay on Top of Trends

Keep an eye on trends and always be eager to learn. Never stop learning. Whether through training sessions, brainstorming with peers or experimenting with new tools, making this a priority is essential for continuous growth and evolution.

3. Teamwork

Teamwork is a well-kept secret. Leverage your ability to collaborate with diverse teams to bring your vision to life and achieve exceptional results. Asking for help and sharing the spotlight is an art. Teamwork always – always – leads to more impactful and innovative content, and the female voice is essential to shaping the team dynamic.



4. Leadership

The ability to lead is a given. It must be exercised with confidence. It is crucial to embrace our leadership potential and stand firmly behind our ideas and decisions. Whether directing a campaign, managing a team or pitching creative ideas to clients, taking ownership of our space is essential for success. The more we assert our value, the more others will recognise our expertise and competence.

5. The Art of Failing Well

The journey to success in **branded content** often involves trial and error. Embracing failure as part of the learning process is key. We should not be afraid to take risks, pitch bold ideas and experiment with new formats. Every failure is a lesson; it does not define us but instead makes us better and stronger.

6. Mentorship

Seek out women who have walked similar paths and are willing to offer advice and share experiences – it will help us grow. Additionally, creating or joining groups of women in **branded content** can provide the sense of community and support needed to achieve greater success in the industry.

Never be afraid to ask for guidance and support. Being part of a network or mentorship program can offer valuable insights and give us the confidence to keep moving forwards. Equally important is

stepping into the role of mentor when other, more junior women seek advice and support regarding their own growth.

7. My Story

I have been working in this field for 12 years. The first time I tried to sell **branded content** to a brand, they burst into laughter. I have lived through many incredible moments, celebrated victories and cried over defeats. I have been underestimated for being a woman, on occasion male colleagues have even refused to work under my direction for that reason. But I have also been recognized and rewarded for the work I've accomplished.

It has been an unbelievable journey, and I am grateful every day to work in an industry that is constantly evolving and growing year after year.

The future of **branded content** is bright, and as women continue to push boundaries, their influence will only expand. Let's keep innovating, stay endlessly curious and, above all, always believe in the value we bring to this industry.





United States

Megan Davey

Managing Director of Strategy & Insights | *VML*

Signature Work Achievements

Megan has worked on the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development account since 2012 with many campaigns recognized by Cannes Lions (1 Gold in Creative Data, 3 Silvers in Media & PR, a Silver in Creative Data and a Bronze in Digital Craft), the Effies (Bronze) and Clio (Gold, Silver & Bronze). Such campaigns include Laugh Tracker, Six Degrees to Tennessee, Tennessee Colorblind Viewfinder, Snap Your Way In, Tennessee Matchmaker and Live from Tennessee.

She has also worked across numerous other accounts spanning different categories and audiences. Notably, with just 6 weeks until the 2019 Super Bowl, she worked on the predominately women team to bring Bumble's first ever Super Bowl spot to life starring Serena Williams.

In 2023 and 2024, Megan led the strategy to bring the global Coca-Cola music program, "Coke Studio," to the North America market,



reinventing the program for a new audience and time earning a Silver and two Bronze awards at LIA (London International Awards) for the “Be Who You Are” anthem in the music-video category.

This year (2025), Megan was part of the jury team for the Native Advertising Institute’s 2025 Awards judging submitted work for the category “Best Native Video.”

Key Insights

As the world looks to be constantly amused and every touchpoint a portal into entertainment, we need to tell stories around our products, services and brands that are not only relevant to our intended audiences, but is thought of as a form of entertainment. Branded content is that key to building relationships through affinity and emotion that powers audience attention. As we looked to the future, integrating brand stories into the places and spaces our audiences choose to spend time requires deep understanding of current and target audiences to build compelling entertainment that resonates.

Career Lessons

Do not be afraid to switch paths. Having switched gears a couple of times on my path to today, I’ve found that each experience has made me a smarter marketer, better collaborator and more empathetic partner. We’re in a time when everything is moving so fast, being able to wear multiple hats and/or have a hybrid skillset is a huge bonus.





Megan Gilbert

Vice President, Fortune Brand Studio | *Fortune Media*



United States

Signature Work Achievements

In the past year, under Gilbert's leadership, FBS serviced 200-plus global partners (+23% YoY) and launched Fortune Brand Studio's first major branded content partnerships in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. From Macau to Madrid, San Francisco to Singapore, Gilbert worked diligently to create deep partnerships with clients who are keen to reengage in 2025. As a result, FBS nearly doubled our international creative, editorial, and design awards to date. In 2024, our work was recognized with 92 awards overall, making us the most awarded B2B branded content studio for another consecutive year.

Key Insights

Amid headwinds throughout the industry, it's key to lean into human-centric storytelling and high-quality work. Stay nimble and aware of what others are doing, but identify what your team excels at and figure out ways to expand on that.

Career Lessons

Build strong teams and encourage excellence by inspiring women to push themselves creatively and professionally; bring your mentees into the fold and let them learn new skills to round out their experience and contributions to the creative, the clients, and the team.





Melanie Leach

CEO | *South Shore*

Signature Work Achievements

South Shore is the UK's leading provider of Advertiser Funded Entertainment in the UK. The company currently has prime time series in production for M&S, Flutter Group, Aldi, Jet 2 and Lidl.

Key Insights

The demand for AFE in the UK is increasing year on year. In 2025 South Shore will deliver more than 30 hours of prime time ad funded content to the UK's largest commercial broadcasters.

One of our biggest clients in the UK is the British retailer, M&S, who have 3 prime time series in production for ITV1. A recent piece of research published by M&S shows that for every £1 they spend on TV production £5 is returned to the business.

Career Lessons

Producing ad funded entertainment always involves multiple stakeholders and so it's important to make sure ambitions and deliverables are aligned for all parties from the start.

In my experience the most successful projects are conceived with a brand and a broadcaster working hand in hand from the very beginning.

Understanding the brands marketing objectives and marrying those with the needs and tone of a commercial broadcaster can bring great commercial success for everyone involved.





Norway



Mikaela Folkestad

CEO | *Schibsted Partnerstu-*

Signature Work Achievements

I have been privileged to lead Schibsted Partnerstudio, one of Norway's foremost content marketing agencies, as Managing Director since December 2021. In these years we have experienced significant growth, expanding our annual revenue to over NOK 300 million. Our commitment to delivering high-quality content has been recognized with the "Årets Innholdsbyrå" (Content Agency

of the Year) award for three consecutive years. Prior to this role, as Head of Product and Technology, I spearheaded innovative product development initiatives that enhanced our service offerings and solidified our market position.

Key Insights

In today's rapidly evolving media landscape, authenticity and audience-centric strategies are paramount. Brands must focus on creating valuable, relevant content that resonates with their target audiences, fostering genuine connections. The integration of data-driven insights and AI with creative storytelling is essential to navigate the complexities of modern content consumption. Looking ahead, I foresee a continued shift towards personalized content experiences, necessitating agile approaches and continuous innovation in our industry.

Career Lessons

Embrace continuous learning and adaptability; the content marketing landscape is ever-changing, and staying curious is key. Build and nurture a strong professional network—it provides support, inspiration, and opportunities. Focus on the things you can control, and adapt to new technology that can enhance the branded content experiences we create.





Croatia



Mirta Dabić

Chief Creative Content Producer | *24sata d.o.o.*

Signature Work Achievements

In 2019, I joined Styria Media Group after 17 years in advertising, working with agencies like McCann Zagreb, Publicis Croatia, and Saatchi & Saatchi Croatia as a copywriter and creative director. Those years gave me a strong foundation to thrive in the fast-paced, competitive media world, where I now lead 24sata's Native Studio as Chief Creative Content Producer.

I'm grateful for the chance to work on native projects in the "small budget" market, where creativity is truly the key to making an impact. Our focus is on crafting long-term hero campaigns for 24sata and its clients, advocating for values like sustainability, education, health, and entrepreneurship. Each year, we also create a diverse range of custom native campaigns designed to meet the specific needs of our clients while always keeping our readers in mind.

Our Native Studio has gained international recognition, winning numerous global awards, including being named "Native Studio of the Year." This recognition has reinforced our position as a leader in native advertising, not only in Croatia but also in the region.

Key Insights

From my time in branded content, I've learned that creativity is the real game-changer in today's crowded media world. It's not just about delivering a message anymore—it's about telling stories that truly connect with people. At 24sata's Native Studio, we focus on making content that feels real and relevant to both the brand and the audience.

It's clear: people want content they can trust, not just ads. The future of branded content is about building relationships, not just pushing products.



Looking ahead, I see technology and personalization taking center stage, but we'll have to be careful to keep things authentic. Also, with sustainability and social impact becoming more important, brands that genuinely stand for something will win.

Career Lessons

1. Embrace Your Creativity:

In branded content, creativity is everything. Trust your instincts, take risks, and don't be afraid to bring your unique perspective. It's what sets you apart.

2. Stay True to Your Values:

Be authentic. Stick to what you believe in. Whether it's sustainability, equality or diversity, your work will resonate more when it's aligned with what really matters to you.

3. Keep Learning:

The industry moves fast, and so should you. Stay curious, keep up with new trends and don't be afraid to experiment with fresh ideas.





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Denmark

Nana Kring

Head of Branded Content | *dentsu*

Signature Work Achievements

In recent years, my team and I have dedicated our efforts to professionalizing a rapidly evolving industry: Influencer Marketing. Indeed, it has become a matter of pride for me to continuously advocate for responsible marketing and professionalization of an industry that has often been characterized as somewhat unregulated, chaotic ‘Wild West.’ This includes everything from ensuring fair

conditions for influencers and creators, transparent pricing, well-crafted briefs, to rights and documentation. No doubt, we have made significant progress, but there is still much work to be done.

Key Insights

Sustainable marketing has been a hot topic for quite some years now. Looking forward, I’m confident that both sustainable and responsible marketing will become even more crucial. This applies to all types of (branded) content – influencer content, native, video series, podcasts, and social media content. In an ideal world, content – especially branded content – and social responsibility would be inseparable. However, things are more complex, particularly when influencers or other content creators (journalists, writers, media, etc.) collaborate with brands for commercial purposes. Therefore, I’m convinced that there will be an increased focus on the fact that all stakeholders – brands as well as agencies and content creators – hold an important responsibility towards readers, followers, users, and consumers. For instance, brands and agencies must provide thorough briefings and training sessions educating partners about themselves and their products or services, and their initiatives in responsible marketing. Comprehensive and accurate information and documentation prior to branded collaborations should prevent influencers and/or other content creators from making unrealistic or exaggerated claims about a brand’s sustainability initiatives. If such claims



occur, it could lead to harmful accusations of greenwashing, where the brand is accused of misrepresenting their social responsibility or intentions. Thus, I believe that responsibility, ethics and transparency will be quite important topics on the agenda moving forward.

Career Lessons

Remember, there is always a valuable lesson to be learned, even in the most impossible or insurmountable situations. I've certainly

encountered my fair share of "zero points" in both my personal and professional life. What I've discovered is that within these "absolute zero points," there is often a hidden new beginning or turning point. This realization has taught me that even the most challenging situations can be the foundation for new growth – or perhaps even a new success! It's a paradox worth reminding yourself, when you're in a difficult situation or feel like you're hitting rock bottom.





United States

Natasha Whitling

Senior Vice President | *Burson Global*

Signature Work Achievements

Most recently, I have served as storytelling and content lead for corporate reputation campaign, Here for What Matters for Dollar General – featuring several award-winning native advertising partnerships. I also focus on non-profit and foundation communications – most recently collaborating on the award-winning launch of The Elton John AIDS Foundation’s Rocket Fund.

Key Insights

As a public relations professional, I have found a lot of gratification in the close collaborations I have had with native advertising partners. I feel this part of the industry will only continue to grow and shift in

prominence as traditional media changes, providing rich opportunity for impactful brand and corporate storytelling.

Career Lessons

Two words come to mind – authenticity and confidence. Leading with authenticity in my storytelling and partnerships has always served me well. Additionally, quality mentorships have helped me build confidence to voice my opinion in the room and stand firm in my strategic decisions.





Belgium



Nora Vanderschrick

Head of native, creative & strategy | *DPG media*

Signature Work Achievements

In the realm of digital media, I try to make my mark through a practical and refreshing approach to native advertising. I focus on effectively combining strategy and creativity while staying true to the core values of the industry. Do I tell something new in a new way?

One of my key strengths is fostering collaboration between editorial and sales teams without compromising editorial independence. It's striving to achieve a balance that benefits both parties – without in any way interfere with the deontological independence of editorial teams.

A project that exemplifies this is a digital culinary video strategy with advertiser Lidl. This was unprecedented due to the extend of the project: we've developed together with Lidl a new brand as a culinary platform with not only innovative interactive video, but also personalized recipes and shopping lists, a social media extension, both online as in print. A unique collaboration with the editorial team, a multi-year partnership, a bilingual project and an exceptional view-through rate of the video (more than 61%) made the project even bigger.

This partnership has put our team at DPG Media on the map as a leader in native advertising and led to us being invited to speak at various events. Needless to say this made me a very proud teamleader.

Subsequently, we had more major partnerships that also had a social impact, such as KBC & Corona, or Dove & the Real Nina, and Velo Veilig Vlaanderen. All these cases were awarded both nationally and internationally, among others by The Native Advertising Institute.



Key Insights

The evolution of how native advertising was initially perceived as a threat by editorial teams and how it has now found its place within our diverse media titles, sitting perfectly alongside independent editorial content. Editorial content provides a context to make native advertising more relevant. This is achieved with a constant dialogue and the right agreements on labeling and placement.

Career Lessons

Always keep the long-term goal in mind. Native advertising remains relevant only if you have a long-term strategy that keeps it sustainable and continues to focus on quality over quantity, no matter how much they bombard you with targets and short-term objectives. Maintain the balance between 'tartine' and 'vitrine.' (= expression meaning: Ensure a balance between campaigns that put bread on the table and those that earn awards for your PR, image, credibility, recruitment and keeping the shiny award shelf up-to-date! :-))





RP



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Brazil and Portugal



Patrícia Weiss

Chairwoman Branded Content Marketing Association
– BCMA Brazil and Portugal / Brand Storytelling
& Content Consultant and Curator / Head of Brand
Storytelling and Content at ASAS.br.com |
BCMA BRANDED CONTENT MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Signature Work Achievements

With 37 years of experience in the fields of marketing, communication, content and storytelling, I have worked for decades as a strategic leader, co-creator and executive producer for several branded content and brand storytelling projects such as documentaries and short films like “Beco das Garrafas” documentary

for Heineken, Itaú bank’s short film “Father”, Natura&Co together with other brands film “When we are what we want to be”, in the two seasons of the documentary series “Humanity In Me” for the Nestlé brand, also in the global series for Instagram (California) “TogetHER” – about the strength of women entrepreneurs across the world and, among other projects, I just led as a Brand Storytelling Consultant and Curator, the conception and production of the new TV series “Roots” for the Brazilian bank Sicredi.

Key Insights

I use to say that stories and good content are shared because audiences find them interesting, not because they belong to a brand. And probably, the brands’ biggest challenge in the present days is how to captivate and get the attention and the time of today’s dispersive audiences. Brands need to make their first switch, their first key turning point by choosing to tell meaningful stories, which isn’t interruptive but is completely focused on the audience. Where hero and protagonist are the audiences – not brands – and the focus is not on impact or views and likes but on provoking and expanding a relevant conversation with society, leaving a legacy.

Brands must address the truth with honesty, with amplitude and depth because this is what really matters to people, taking over the moral duty to represent the society and dare to transform the culture. With less promise and more purpose. Because what really matters



isn't what or how brands do, but why. A brand narrative with a broad meaning to society materializes the encounter between brand's purpose and human need. When the brand's truth is in tune with people's truth through relevant and meaningful stories, it creates value and takes the relationship between brands and audiences to another level. Relevant content like meaningful and true human stories, about people, not about the brands.

Career Lessons

The Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano once said that what moved him to write was (in free translation): "Being able to look at what is not supposed to be seen but deserves to be seen, the small, the tiny things of unknown people, the micro-world where the true greatness of the universe lives and, at the same time, to be able to contemplate the universe through a keyhole, that is, from little things, to be able to look beyond, to the great mysteries of life." So choosing the path of meaningful narratives where stories are connected to reality - with a humanistic truth, has proven to work very well. A choice that is directly related to the brand's purpose, its vocation and role in the world and to what is relevant and makes sense to the audiences. Be open to new approaches, seek the truth, the originality and peculiarity in characters and narratives that can truly connect people's hearts. I keep saying that nowadays brands that generalize don't speak to everyone. So find the authentic and unique in everything you do.





RR



Czechia



Radka Bendova

Head of Creative Lab | *Vltava Labe Media, a.s.*

Signature Work Achievements

I was there at the inception and created an in-house content agency within one of the largest publishing houses in the country (Czech News Center, a.s.). The agency provided services in content marketing, video production, and podcasts, offering clients comprehensive campaign solutions. Our projects were recognized multiple times at international competitions such as the Native Advertising Awards and Effie, as well as the national Fenix Awards.

Key Insights

Over the years, I have watched the industry evolve from simple campaigns built on PR articles to deeply integrated storytelling that truly resonates with audiences. Campaigns have not only placed great emphasis on content but also on visually engaging and captivating design that draws readers into the story and makes them a part of it. For me, the key to success is always finding the right balance between brand objectives and authentic engagement.

Looking ahead, I believe hyper-personalization and AI-driven strategies will play a crucial role. Audiences are becoming increasingly discerning, and brands that prioritize transparency and value-driven storytelling will have the upper hand. Content is king, and the reader should always come first.

Career Lessons

Don't be afraid to try new things! It's important to experiment, even if only one out of ten attempts succeeds. Don't stray from what you're good at just because others are doing something different. Your originality should be one of your top values. And never forget about people – they are the key to the success of any great team or company.





United Kingdom

Raquel Bubar

Managing Director, T Brand Studio International | *The New York Times*

Signature Work Achievements

Under Raquel's leadership, T Brand Studio International has received awards for its innovation and creativity from Digiday, Campaign, World Media Awards, M&M Global, British Media Awards, Brand Film Festival .

Raquel was shortlisted for Campaign U.K.'s Inspiring Women award in the Conquering Creativity category in 2024. She has served as a judge of Native Advertising Awards and co-chair of the World Media Awards and has spoken at events including Cannes Lions, AdWeek Europe, AOP Crunch, IAA U.K., IAB Madrid, City Nation Place, nextMedia.Hamburg, and VideoWeek London.

Key Insights

Just as newsrooms explore new ways to tell stories through interactive formats, videos, and podcasts, the best content studios follow suit—pushing the boundaries of traditional advertising to create innovative branded content that feels relevant and engaging across every channel.

Career Lessons

Working for a mission-driven company gives you a powerful guiding light for everything you create. Find a mission that aligns with your identity, and let that purpose shape the branded content you produce.





Finland



Ria Vaahto

Business Manager, Native Advertising |
Sanoma Media Finland

Signature Work Achievements

Having worked with native advertising for nearly fifteen years, Ria had been part of the Finnish native space almost since it has been born.

In her current job as the business manager for native advertising at Sanoma Media Finland, Finland's largest publishing and entertainment house, she helped shape the business from the

ground up. This included creating the products and processes in-house and client relationships necessary to create a viable new business to support more traditional advertising styles.

This was a winning strategy, with Ria growing the business nearly 50% in the first three years after taking over the job and establishing market share of an estimated 33% of the local digital native advertising market by 2024.

In addition Sanoma have won countless international and domestic awards in competitions such as the Native Advertising Awards, International Content Marketing Awards and the Pearl Awards, after Ria took over the business, placing strong emphasis on creative and marketing that creativity to the World.

She is an active participant in IAB Finland, in the content marketing task force, and has been involved with the creation of many local industry defining projects such as finally mapping the size of the Finnish native advertising market in 2024, establishing common terminology for native advertising, and creating IAB standard influencer guidelines for the local market.

Key Insights

Content marketing should not be created in a vacuum. Clients are willing to put money into producing good content, and



we've finally managed to hammer home the message that we need to drive traffic to that content in order for it to be effective.

And that's it. So many clients and content studios stop there. Just having people consume your content won't be enough to reach your commercial goals.

Content is not king – it's actually the work force. It's about how you put that content to work for you that will bring royal results.

We should be more focused on how to incorporate native advertising into a larger marketing context and how to lead potential consumers effectively forward on the customer journey. How do we make sure our consumers are familiar with our brand before they come across native advertising? How do we cultivate those leads, that express interest in our content? How can we help these people reach a tactical purchase decision?

When you create content you don't position as a strategic part of a larger marketing plan, you are missing out on the actual ROI you could achieve.

Career Lessons

We still seem to think that our work will speak for us – and hopefully it does – but you need to give it a voice. No one is going to notice those numbers, if you don't point them out. No one will realize you brought home the trophy, if you leave it on the shelf. We need it to be an everyday effort to make a little noise about ourselves and our fellow female workforce. And if it feels awkward trying to tell the corner office what you contributed to the business this quarter, here's a hint. Instead of hyping up yourself, hype up your colleague. Create an environment where female solidarity and positive re-enforcement is the norm.





United States



Romy Oltuski

Executive Editor, Content & Design Studio | *Forbes*

Signature Work Achievements

I'm proud to lead the Forbes Content & Design Studio's team of talented editors, who've produced hundreds of high-impact, innovative storytelling experiences in partnership with leading brands.

Key Insights

As an editor, I've found that the most engaging branded content emerges from a seamless fusion of content and design, where both elements work in concert to tell a compelling story. Truly immersive, interactive, and user-friendly experiences come to life when creatives share a unified vision—rather than seeing their contribution as one step in an assembly line.

Career Lessons

1. Any brand's story can be interesting—it all comes down to finding the right angle.
2. Be nice to everyone. I'm not exaggerating when I say that's the best career (and life) advice I've ever received.





5



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United Kingdom

Sam Glynne

Head of EMEA, Entertainment and Culture Marketing | United Talent Agency

Signature Work Achievements

I set up the world's first 24/7 branded content channel on linear TV (The Audi Channel), I ran Branded Entertainment globally for production giant Fremantle working on their hit shows such as X Factor and Got Talent, and in 2022 I set up the EMEA division of UTA's Entertainment and Marketing division, where we curate the 'careers' of various brands (Ancestry, Vinted, Lush, Gymshark, Google, Coca Cola to name a few) in film, TV, music and culture.

Key Insights

I've been championing Branded Entertainment for more than 20 years. Every year there are conferences and press stories which pronounce "THIS is the year for Branded Entertainment" ... but I really

feel the industry has matured and is ready for scalable content that reaches a brand's customers in an authentic way. The key is to create content that audiences would seek out regardless of a brand funding it, to weave the brand's values in seamlessly and to create stand-out moments in culture with the brand at the heart.

Career Lessons

If you are operating in the sidelines of any industry, find your people or tribe, and work with them. It's irrelevant if they are competitors, the key is to create a network that supports and champions one another via a common goal.





Norway



Sara Narvhus Oksdol

CEO | *Amedia Innholdsbyrå*

Signature Work Achievements

In 2018, Sara established Amedia Innholdsbyrå, the brand studio of Amedia, Norway's largest publisher of editorial media, transforming it into a leading force in native advertising and branded content.

Building High-Performing Teams: She built and led a team of creative experts and producers, fostering a culture of innovation and

collaboration that consistently delivers compelling, audience-driven content.

Driving Results and Growth: Under her leadership, Amedia Innholdsbyrå has achieved significant growth, positioning itself as a key player in both national and local markets in Norway, helping brands effectively connect with their target audiences.

Pioneering Native Advertising: Sara's strategic vision and passion for results-driven storytelling have set new standards in native advertising, establishing Amedia Innholdsbyrå as a benchmark for high-quality, editorial-style brand content.

Key Insights

In my role at Amedia Innholdsbyrå, I've seen firsthand how powerful branded content can be when it resonates authentically with audiences. Today, the key to effective native advertising is relevance—creating stories that add value, inspire, and engage. It's not just about promoting a brand; it's about connecting on a deeper, more meaningful level.

Looking ahead, I believe the future of our industry lies in hyper-personalization and data-driven storytelling. As technology continues to evolve, we must leverage insights to craft content that speaks directly to individual interests and needs. At the same time,



staying true to editorial integrity and authenticity will be crucial for maintaining audience trust.

I am passionate about pushing the boundaries of native advertising, exploring new formats and platforms that captivate and engage. My goal is to continue leading the way in innovative brand storytelling, ensuring that Amedia Innholdsbyrå remains at the forefront of this ever-changing landscape.

Career Lessons

In branded content, authenticity is key—stay true to your voice and values to build trust. Embrace curiosity and continuous learning as the industry evolves rapidly, and don't fear taking calculated risks. For women in this field, lead with confidence and believe in your vision. Surround yourself with inspiring mentors and build collaborative teams, as success is a collective effort. Finally, prioritize resilience and balance. The journey has ups and downs, but staying grounded and empowering others will help you thrive and shape the future of branded content.





Croatia



Silvana Mrvelj

Director of Sales for Media Solutions |
Večernji list/Styria Media Group

Signature Work Achievements

As one of the pioneers of native advertising in Croatia, I have launched or reorganized content and native advertising departments in four of the largest Croatian media—24sata, Telegram, Adria Media Zagreb, and Večernji list. I have won around ten awards for the most effective and creative native campaigns for various clients and

industries (clients include Kaufland, HT, and PAN beer) in Croatia, as well as at the Native Advertising Institute competition.

I built my career as a journalist and editor-in-chief of numerous magazines, publications, and special supplements before shifting my focus in 2014 to native advertising and the creation of branded content, campaigns, and projects within media organizations, where I lead creative advertising departments. I am particularly proud that, in every media house I have worked in, I have successfully transformed the approach to content creation for clients by insisting on boundary-pushing creativity and fully integrating all available media platforms to maximize reach.

Over the past two years, I have reorganized Večernji list's native advertising department and was promoted to Director of Sales for all media solutions. In addition to developing concepts for creative campaigns for numerous clients and advertisers of Večernji list, I am especially proud of native projects such as Women Changing Croatia and Brain Talk—a project focused on youth mental health—because these initiatives aim to create a positive impact on Croatian society and provide concrete solutions.

Beyond my work in major Croatian media houses, I have also developed solutions, concepts, and strategies for clients across various industries at Real, Croatia's largest media agency.



Key Insights

Branded content is a lasting and undeniable value that, with the development of media, digitalization, and the rise of social networks, only changes its form—evolving into new formats. However, branded content remains the most influential form of advertising. Its essence lies in creating engaging content that provides concrete information, solutions, or a presentation of a product or service. The greater the creativity and diversity of formats, the higher its effectiveness.

In the coming period, the most in-demand format for branded content will undoubtedly be video, as it can be easily adapted for various platforms—ranging from news portals to Instagram, TikTok, influencer profiles, and corporate social media accounts. Maximizing reach and effectively redistributing the created format is crucial to ensuring that the campaign reaches as many people as possible.

The trend of involving relevant experts, public figures, influencers, and even consumers in the creation of branded content continues to grow, as does the relevance of the information being shared. Recently, leading Croatian media outlets have increasingly incorporated formats such as conferences and panel discussions into branded content campaigns, creating projects aimed at driving tangible societal change in Croatia—allowing advertisers to become part of this positive transformation.

Career Lessons

Creating branded content may seem like an impossible mission to many. However, crafting engaging, authentic, and effective branded content by using the core tools of journalism, combined with a touch of creativity—and even a bit of madness—is an incredibly fun and exciting job. Especially because tomorrow always brings a new brief and a new challenge to create something even better!

Being a woman in this process, leaving your mark, and creating a campaign that gets people talking gives each of us the opportunity to showcase versatility, creativity, dedication, precision, and multitasking skills. And we all know—women excel at that!





Sofia de Sousa

Creative Director | *Medialivre*,

Signature Work Achievements

As a professional with almost 25 years of career, I can be characterized by a strategic approach combined with creativity, always focused on disruptive solutions that challenge the status quo. My major ability has been to anticipate trends and implement effective strategies sets as a leader in the media sector.

Some of my career milestones have been the Implementation of Innovative Campaigns, such as the creation and execution of (M) eu Verso <https://meuverso.sabado.pt/oncologia.php>, a campaign that redefined market standards for health insurance, setting new benchmarks for creativity and effectiveness. Also one of the most important work that I've ever been involved is the Mercedes campaign named Respect <https://respeitopelaagua.sabado.pt/>, that is focused on the Oceans and world sustainability. It's difficult for me to give examples because I've done hundreds of very relevant cases.

One of the things that make me more proud is the Teams that I have worked with. It's been a privilege leading diverse teams, fostering collaboration, and leveraging talent to achieve common goals, integrating along the way emerging technologies into media strategies, ensuring relevance and competitiveness in the industry, that led us to receiving awards and distinctions that validate our commitment to excellence and innovation.

I like to think that part of my job is to invest in the growth of new professionals, contributing to the evolution of the media landscape in Portugal.

Key Insights

- What works for everyone, works for no one. This is my work mantra. This is the idea that I never let go of.

- Dimension is not quality. I don't want a 25-year-old guy to be impacted by content about incontinence for middle-aged people. It's a waste of money, resources and in the end, a poor service for the brands and the audience.
- At the end of the day, we are talking to people, but we have to talk to the right people, those who are interested, those who identify with it, those who will care. Those who wanna talk to us.
- Understanding the dynamics of society and its complexity will increase our goals in making a good branded content in any kind of format. Right now, video is king, but there is so much we can do to deliver a good message.
- We have to find intelligent ways to create and curate relevant branded content for our audience.
- If we have what they need, they will find us, they will consume our content, and if we are lucky enough, they will follow us.
- I really believe that each person is unique, so we have to do unique branded content.

Career Lessons

When I started my career, content for brands was not yet being discussed in Portugal and I had the privilege of being part of the first team to do so in Portugal. Of course, being a woman was a challenge and being young was even more so. This was a new aspect on a market in which men were predominant and ensuring that my

knowledge was taken into account was one of my biggest challenges from the beginning.

However, I think I have always been lucky to work with directors who believed in me and always gave me credit for what I believed in doing. We have been winning together, on a path that was initially unknown to everyone and which is currently one of the most challenging in the market due to increasing competition.

If I had to give advice to a young woman who is starting her career in this area, I would tell her: don't settle, take courses, be curious, always look for new things. Our worst enemy is not growing by ourselves and not wanting to be more. If someone says we are not enough, we have to show our grit.



Sweden



Sophie Miskiw

Branded editorial consultant | *Sophie Miskiw*
Brand Storytelling

Signature Work Achievements

- Bronze winner, Native Advertising Awards 2018 – As Commercial Editor at The Local Europe, led A Woman's Place, a collaboration with the City of Stockholm, which earned Bronze in the Best Use of Online Media category.

- Named One of NAI's 100 Significant Women in Native Advertising 2019 – Honoured for contributions to the industry and impactful storytelling.
- Key contributor to the double award-winning Stockholm Business Region website – In 2023, led copywriting for the entire site, shaping content across all sub-pages to elevate the region's brand.

Key Insights

Great brand storytelling depends on knowing your audience. The better you understand who you're speaking to, the more compelling your story becomes. But the magic happens at the intersection of story and brand – the best narratives capture a brand's essence and values without feeling like a sales pitch. This is where the most lasting and meaningful brand connections are built.

Career Lessons

Education is key in branded content. Too many still see it as fluffed-up advertorials, but it's about so much more than selling; it's about forging real emotional connections. When brands commit to the long game instead of chasing quick wins, they're far more likely to stand the test of time. My advice is to steer them toward this mindset, and don't back down when they push for yet another thinly veiled sales piece.





Canada

Stefanie Croley

Project Manager | *Amplify Content Studio*
by Annex Business Media

Signature Work Achievements

As the Editorial Director for the agriculture group at Annex Business Media, I played a large role in the approach and development of sponsored content programs within our publications. Recognizing the growth and value of content marketing, especially as the scope of projects evolved, we launched the Amplify Content Studio in November 2022 in an effort to help B2B marketers tell better stories. As Amplify's project manager and lead writer, I have been an integral part of this launch, building processes and best practices and





spearheading dozens of audience-centric content programs. Our studio leverages Annex's exclusive first-party audience data with experienced industry writers to connect B2B companies with their target customers through thoughtful and engaging content. Niche markets and tactics are our specialty – we've developed highly engaging articles, videos, webinars and quizzes for audiences in various industries including agriculture, manufacturing, construction and more. Most recently, a sponsored article we created for an advertiser of Manure Manager magazine won a silver medal at the Canadian Online Publishing Awards.

Key Insights

Branded content often gets a bad rap – and as a journalist, I've been guilty of buying into that. It didn't take me long to realize that, when done well, branded content is good content – and audiences will recognize it as such. It doesn't have to be promotional or boring just

because it's paid for. As content marketers, we have an obligation to reverse this negative perception by putting storytelling first, prioritizing transparency and authenticity, and creating genuinely helpful, informative, entertaining content. The more branded content feels like something people actually **want** to consume, rather than something they **have** to tolerate, the better its reputation will be.

Career Lessons

Empathy, emotional intelligence and conscious listening skills are arguably just as important as your experience, qualifications and knowledge, especially when it comes to building relationships with colleagues, clients and audiences. Don't be afraid to own your expertise, but remember that a good communicator (and leader) listens more than they speak.





India



Sujata Dwibedy

Chief Executive Officer | *dentsuX*

Signature Work Achievements

Transformed Intel's business by securing an award-winning content & brand solution on Times Internet by creating a platform to de-mystify online education, notably called the PC Paathshaala campaign. Achieved revenue growth during the Covid-19 year and exceeded expectations.

On Mondelez: Created Angry Birds games for Gems during the game's peak popularity. Engaging the children who normally access Mother's phones. Developed Pokémon-themed games for Marvellous Creations, a unique initiative that showcased the fillings inside the chocolate, aligning with the launch of Pokémon's mobile game.

Earlier, in the past role in a previous agency, won multiple awards including EMVIES and Big Bang for the successful launch of Captain Morgan for Diageo, collaborating with MTV to create the innovative Captain's Shack campaign a 13-part series.

Have initiated many such integrations depending on the brands requirements and keeping in mind the business objectives.

Key Insights

For any successful branded content integrations, the essence of the brand is key, and the end goal needs to be the business outcome.

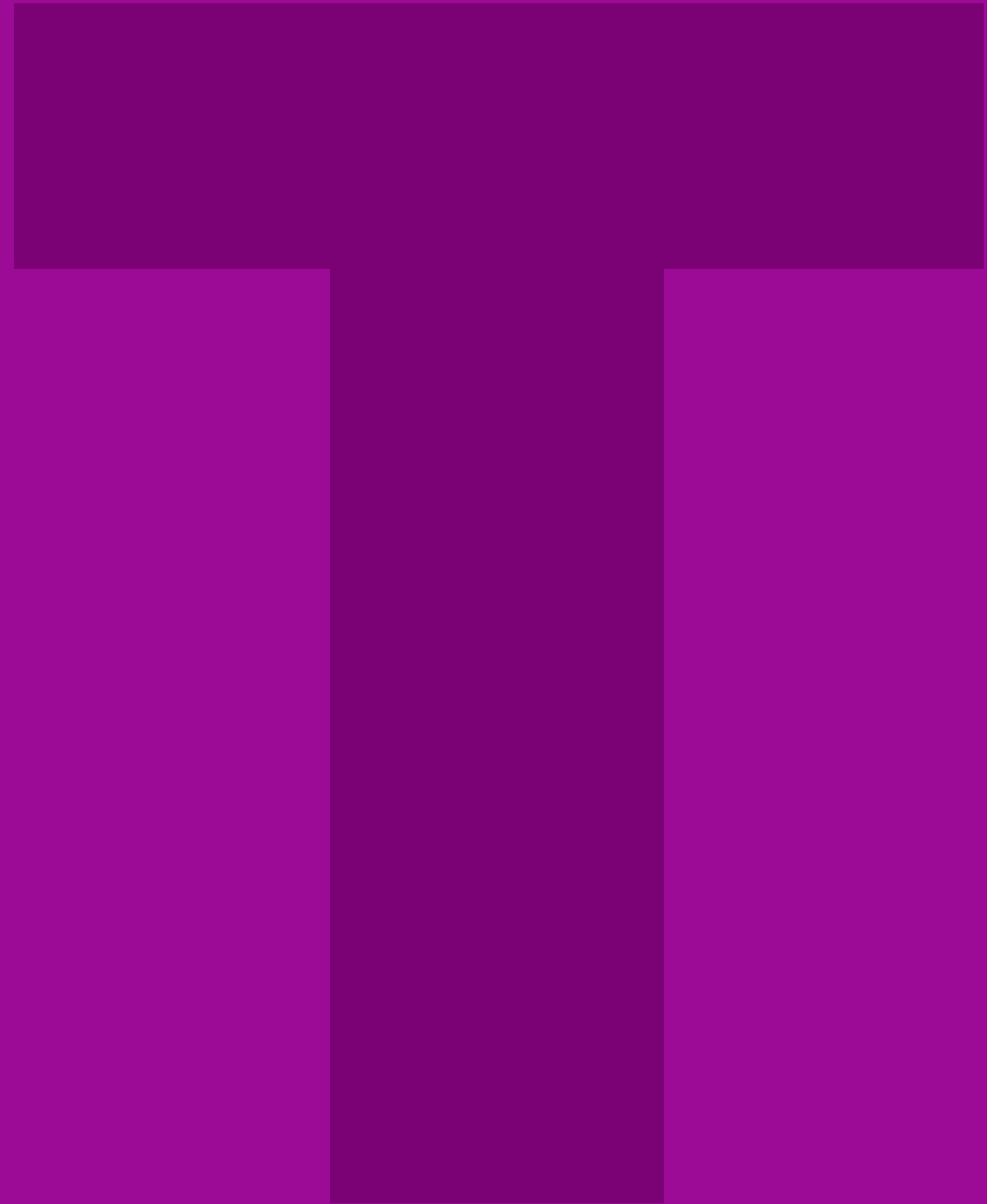
Career Lessons

Resilience is the key. Being consistent in performance and creativity, putting in hard work and sincere efforts. Building a network. And most importantly being open to learn.





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Norway



Tine Karlsen

CEO | *Vev*

Signature Work Achievements

My career has been dedicated to advancing digital storytelling, and my work at Vev has been a testament to that mission.

As the co-founder and CEO of Vev, I have led the development of a collaborative visual editor that empowers creative teams—designers, developers, and content creators—to craft and launch interactive websites and digital experiences with unparalleled creative freedom. This vision has driven Vev’s growth, securing \$7 million in seed

funding and expanding our footprint to 700 customers globally, including enterprise leaders such as Schibsted, Axel Springer, Fortune, The Economist, Pfizer, Experian, and the World Wildlife Fund.

A key milestone in our journey has been the acquisition of TIME Sites, a strategic move that strengthens our presence in the U.S. market and expands our reach in enterprise markets. This acquisition cements Vev’s position as a leader in interactive content and enhances our ability to support global brands in their digital storytelling efforts.

Beyond technology, I am passionate about fostering innovation in digital marketing and empowering creative teams to build immersive, visually compelling content. As a female founder, I also recognize the importance of visibility and leadership in the industry, inspiring more women to pursue entrepreneurship and technology leadership.

Key Insights

Branded content is at a pivotal moment. Over the past decade, we’ve seen brands and publishers push the boundaries of storytelling, moving from static articles to deeply immersive, interactive experiences. Audiences today expect more—they want engaging, visually dynamic narratives that feel as intuitive and compelling as the platforms they use daily.



One of the biggest shifts I've observed is the growing need for flexibility in content creation. Traditional CMS platforms have struggled to keep up with the demand for visually rich, interactive content. That's why at Vev, we've focused on enabling creative teams to design and launch immersive digital experiences—without being limited by rigid templates or heavy development cycles.

Looking ahead, I believe the industry will continue to evolve in three key ways:

The rise of composable content – Marketers and publishers will move toward modular, reusable content that can be adapted across channels, personalizing experiences at scale.

AI as a co-creator, not a replacement – While AI-generated content is gaining traction, human creativity remains irreplaceable. The most impactful branded content will come from teams who leverage AI for efficiency while maintaining creative control.

Greater integration between storytelling and commerce – We're seeing a blurring of lines between content and commerce, where editorial and shoppable experiences merge seamlessly. The brands that succeed will be those that create content-driven experiences that feel natural, not forced.

At its core, the future of branded content isn't just about new tools—it's about storytelling that captivates, connects, and converts. The brands that embrace creative freedom and technological agility will be the ones shaping the industry's next chapter.

Career Lessons

- Creativity is a business advantage – Creativity isn't just about aesthetics—it's a strategic asset. The ability to craft compelling narratives and think beyond traditional formats is what sets great branded content apart. Whether you're a writer, designer, strategist, or marketer, hone your creative instincts and push for bold ideas.
- Be adaptable, but stay true to your vision – The industry is constantly evolving—formats change, platforms shift, and new trends emerge. Stay curious, embrace innovation, and keep learning. But at the same time, know what you stand for and what kind of work excites you.





V



NATIVE
ADVERTISING
INSTITUTE



United Kingdom

Verity Hosken

Creative Director | *Future Publishing*

Signature Work Achievements

Launched Future Creative, the branded content studio from Future Publishing, in July 2024. Shaping Future's branded content offering across our 200+ media brands including Marie Claire, Who What Wear, Living Etc, Homes & Gardens, Tech Radar, T3, Games Radar and PC Gamer.

Key Insights

The rise of AI is happening at the same time as a major deterioration in social media discourse and together these trends are driving a crisis of trust, leaving a space for publishers and branded content to step into where audience's needs are not being met. The opportunity for brands to build valuable relationships with their audiences through high quality branded content is therefore richer than ever.

Career Lessons

Branded content sits at the intersection of publishing and marketing, data and creativity, audience and brand, and the dynamic position it holds guarantees a state of constant flux and change. To thrive and build a career we need to flow with change and stay curious about new developments especially those that initially feel challenging. Investing in your relationships across the industry and building a strong network of peers you can talk to is immensely valuable because – perhaps especially for women – conversation and community fuels our resilience and sparks our best ideas.





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Germany

Yvonne Beister

Strategy & Content-Director / *Axel Springer
Brand Studios / Media Impact*

Signature Work Achievements

Yvonne is one of Germany's top storytelling experts, with more than 15 years of leadership experience in the media, marketing, and advertising industries—on both the journalistic and commercial sides.

At Axel Springer Brand Studios, she and her team of strategists and creatives have executed over 1,000 cross-media campaigns for all major brands (from Amazon till Coca Cola, from Meta till Zalando). She has been awarded the Native Advertising Award eight times, won



the Smarties Future Marketing Award and was nominated for the Nova Innovation Award by BdZV.

Until 2016, Yvonne Beister was responsible for the entertainment section of BILD, Europe's leading newspaper, and in 2009, she and her team from the Springer Academy won the Axel Springer Prize for Young Journalists. In 2015/2016, she led the Springer office in Los Angeles.

Yvonne is a passionate advocate of New Leadership and strongly believes in the power of support. That is why she is actively involved as a mentor at APX, the startup investor of Axel Springer SE and Porsche AG.

Key Insights

Will AI replace all creatives now? That's the question many colleagues are asking. And our answer is NO.

Storytelling and creative stories are still among the biggest awareness drivers in the German advertising landscape. Many brands need true professionals by their side to explain what makes a great story, how to produce it, and how to stage it effectively.

Brilliant ideas will always have a future—AI tools help us scale them even better. But the core idea, along with careful journalistic

background research and fact-checking, remains essential. There has never been a more exciting time to work in a publishing house than now. Everything is changing rapidly, everything is in flux—and we are shaping it all. What a fantastic opportunity!

Career Lessons

If you have a seat at the table, let 10 more other women in!





BY WOMEN, FOR WOMEN

WHY BRAND STORYTELLING FOR WOMEN IS THE SMART BUSINESS MOVE

On International Women's Day, we often cast the spotlight on women in the workplace by promoting women into leadership positions, applauding achievements, and offering professional advancement advice. And these conversations are totally important! But today, I want to use this space to focus on the other side of the equation. Let's talk about women consumers – and how we've been failing them.

By Annalise Nielsen

Why Should Brands Focus on Women Consumers?

It's no secret that women are powerful consumers for brands. For decades, women have been driving purchasing decisions on consumer goods like groceries and household items. But they also take on the majority of gift buying in most families and make decisions on big-ticket items, like healthcare, insurance or car purchases. Over all, women make up 85% of all consumer purchasing decisions and identify as their household's primary shopper.

Millennial women, in particular, are a crucial demographic. As part of the "Sandwich Generation" Millennial women are juggling caregiving demands of raising children and caring for aging parents,

whilst making buying decisions for everyone in their household. And in addition, Millennial women are increasingly becoming the breadwinners in their families, making their economic influence even more significant.

But the story doesn't end with Millennial women. Older women present another incredibly important, yet underserved consumer group. While Millennial women are making decisions regarding the necessities of a household, older women in today's economic climate actually have more disposable income. Many have seen their children leave the nest, they own their own homes, and they



have the financial freedom to make purchasing decisions free of the caregiving pressures of the Sandwich Generation.

And yet, brands continue to overlook or underestimate women of all ages. The result? A missed opportunity that leaves significant revenue on the table.

- Women purchase over 50% of products that are traditionally marketed towards men (cars, home improvement products, consumer electronics, etc).
- Only 7% of women aged 49–64 feel brands and retailers cater well to their needs.
- Nearly half of women aged 35–60 feel advertising doesn't reflect their lives or feel relatable.
- Only 29% of women feel they are accurately represented in advertising.
- 60% say that marketing continues to portray outdated views of women.

Despite their outsized economic impact, many brands continue to miss the mark when it comes to serving women consumers.

The Disconnect

You might be surprised to hear me criticise brands for not paying enough attention to women consumers. After all, just scroll through

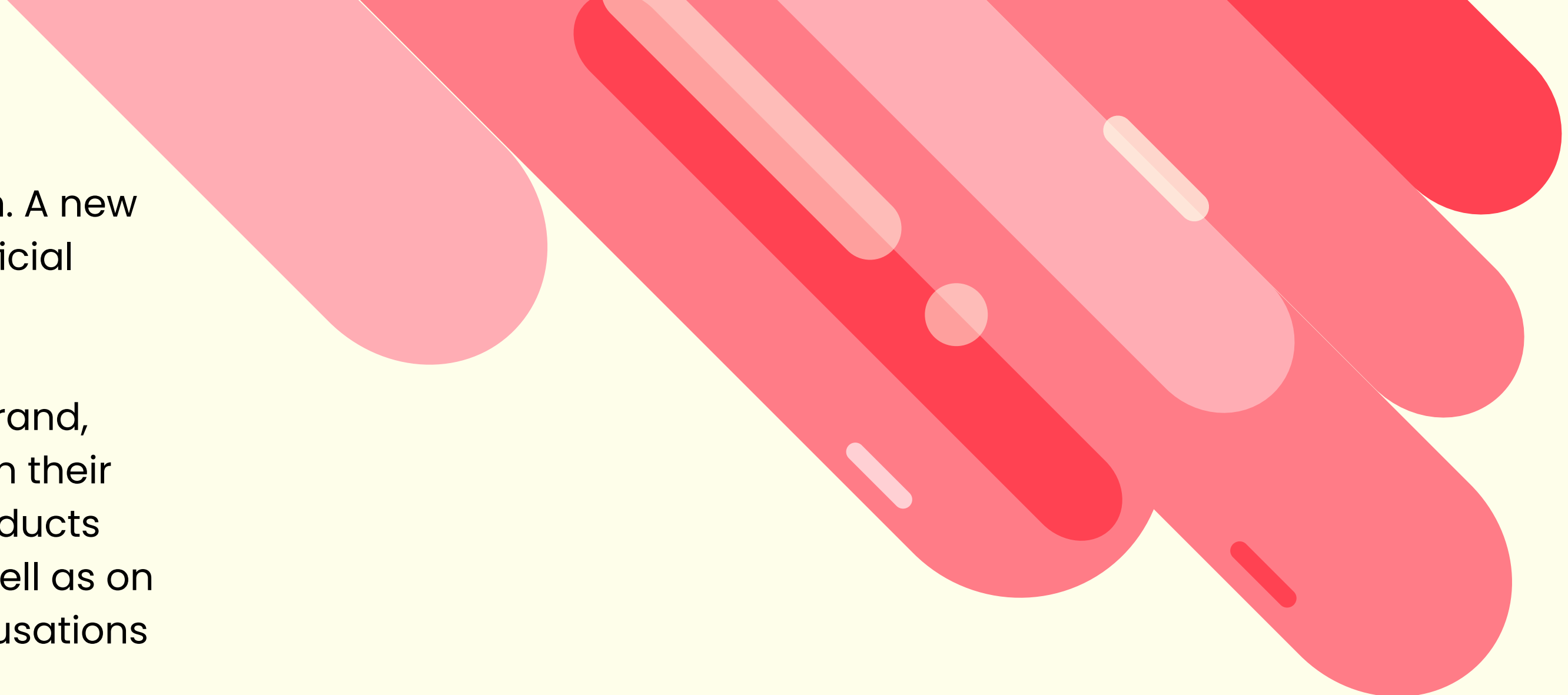
my Instagram or TikTok feeds, and you'll see no shortage of ads for beauty products, fitness gear or parenting products targeting women. However, the vast majority of this brand activity is concentrated in performance marketing and influencer partnerships – strategies that often focus on short-term sales conversions rather than building deep, lasting connections.

Performance marketing does what it's designed to do: drive traffic. But on its own, it doesn't create long-term business results. It doesn't foster community around your brand, or lead to customer loyalty (85% of women indicate that if they like a brand, they will remain loyal to it).

In an effort to mimic word-of-mouth marketing and generate a sort of social proof, influencer marketing has become a favourite among brands targeting women (77% of influencers monetising their content



In an effort to mimic
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are women). The problem is that consumers are catching on. A new push towards “deinfluencing” reflects a real fatigue with artificial influencer recommendations.

Here’s the truth: if you build a real community around your brand, you can create genuine social proof. Women are influential in their communities, sharing recommendations for brands and products they love with friends, neighbours, and family members as well as on social media. These are real “influencers”, with no risk of accusations of promoting bad products solely for the paycheck.

Women are increasingly looking for brands that offer something more than just a product pitch. They want genuine, relatable content that speaks to their real needs. They’re sick of the hard sell. Brands spend so much time pumping dollars into the bottom of the funnel, they’ve failed to really get to know the women they’re trying to reach.

Why Brand Storytelling is the Perfect Way to Connect with Women

Brand storytelling is the key to unlocking authentic connections with women consumers. It allows brands to engage on a deeper, more emotional level, giving them the opportunity to build lasting relationships. The solution here isn’t just “representation”, as slotting women into your billboard or display ads won’t fix the problems listed above. It won’t make women feel understood, nor will it demonstrate that your brand genuinely grasps what matters to them.

Long-form storytelling allows brands to dive deeper into their customers’ needs, concerns, aspirations and values, fostering a stronger emotional connection. Storytelling also builds community. It’s not just about selling products; it’s about creating content that invites women to connect with your brand on a personal level. This level of engagement builds trust – something vital to keeping women loyal to your brand, even when they have other options.

Brands also have an opportunity to fill programming gaps for women. This means not just creating content that replicates what you might see from non-branded media outlets, but actually providing more than what’s already out there. For example, despite making up a



A brand that shows
it understands the
menopausal journey
can become a trusted
voice in women's lives

large portion of our female population, menopausal women are often overlooked or not represented in mainstream media. This presents a huge opportunity for brands to create spaces for women to share their stories, offer educational content and validate their experiences. A brand that shows it understands the menopausal journey can become a trusted voice in women's lives, forging a connection that goes beyond the product.

Tips for Brands Wanting to Reach Women Effectively

If your brand is ready to rebuild its relationship with women consumers, here are some key tips to ensure your content lands the right way and drives long-term success:

- **Make Sure You Really Know Your Audience**

This should go without saying, but women are not a monolith. Before embarking on producing brand storytelling content, take the time to understand the specific women you're speaking to. Relying on stereotypes or oversimplified ideas will quickly backfire, so make sure your content reflects the true diversity and complexity of women's lives.

- **Keep Content Non-Judgemental**

Women are already inundated with messages about what they should or should not be doing – whether it's parenting advice, beauty tips or wellness trends. Instead of pushing an agenda, create content that validates women's experiences and provides real value, without dictating how women should live their lives. Empower women with information that helps them make their own informed decisions.

- **Ensure Content is Research-Based and Thoughtful**

Women are well-informed consumers who expect credible, well-researched content. If your brand gets caught out sharing advice or insights that aren't based in solid research, you risk eroding any trust you may have already built. Be transparent and make sure your content has been carefully vetted. The goal is to provide value to women, not just push a product. And, in turn, women will reward you with their purchasing decisions.



- **Avoid Overemphasizing Appearance**

Women are often bombarded with content focused on their appearance. While this content may perform well on social media, content that preys on women's insecurities will not lead to long-lasting brand loyalty. Women already report feeling that brands overestimate their preoccupation with their physical appearance. Instead, focus on celebrating women's accomplishments, ideas and experiences. Empower women through thoughtful, inspiring content that demonstrates how your brand sees women as multi-dimensional individuals, valuing them for more than just their appearance.

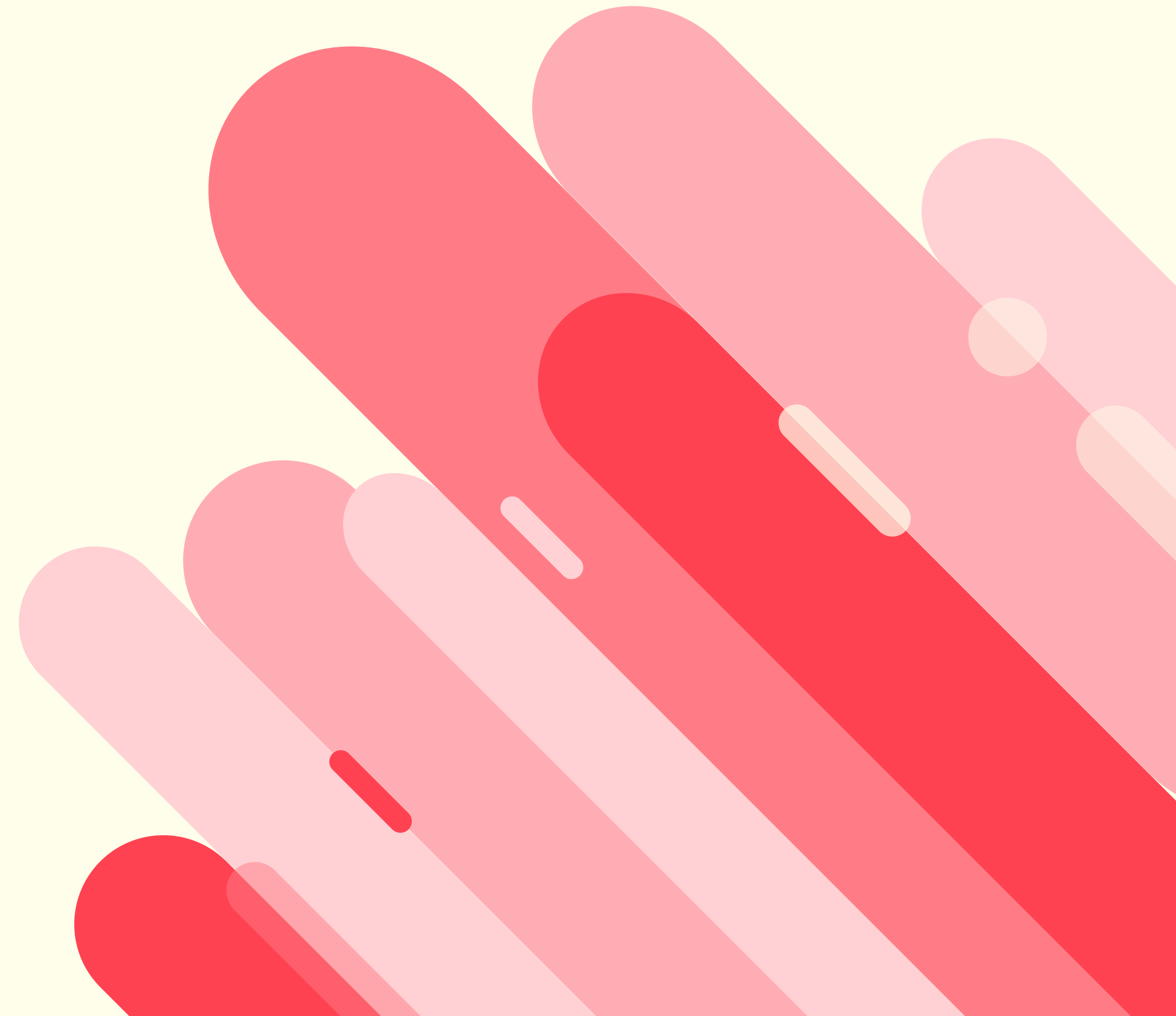
- **Hire Women into Decision-Making Roles**

It should be obvious, but if you want to create authentic content that demonstrates you truly understand your consumers, you probably need people on the team who reflect that target audience. It's not enough to simply put women in front of the camera – women need to be leading your content strategy, production and decision-making. Their insights will ensure your content truly resonates with your audience on a deeper level.

Call to Action

For International Women's Day, I didn't want to write a post just pushing for more women in leadership, or greater representation in media. I mean, yes, that is the call-to-action here. But don't do it

just because it's the "right" thing to do – do it because it's good for business. (And it's the right thing to do.) By investing in content that reflects women's real lives and experiences, brands can build trust and loyalty, while also tapping into massive opportunities for long-term growth.





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