Welcome, SD FRIENDS & PARTNERS

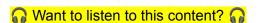
SUMMARY

This document summarizes key takeaways from discussions on digital and DTC strategies, focusing on creative content, testing, and brand storytelling. Enjoy:) xx LS Things like...

- MMM's The coming changes for attribution and measurement
- Brands + Showing up in LLM's (Search GPT)
- Content Strategy for Social and what stories and formats go where
- SEO Shifts that are critical
- Affiliate trends
- Creative Content Strategy
- DTC Shifts and Stories of Success
- Beauty DTC Reviews of Strategy

How this works

- The top area is a summary
- The bottom (70+ pages = the direct summaries by topic you can dig into)
- Yes you can make a copy.



Here is the Audio of this guide from Notebook LLM (22 MINUTES)

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS IN CASE ITS HELPFUL

- Creative Cycle Time (CCT): The time it takes to move from a creative idea to its launch, learning phase, and iteration. A key metric for digital marketing efficiency.
- Demand Creation: Marketing strategies focused on generating new consumer interest in a product or category, often through top-of-funnel, emotion-led storytelling.
- Demand Capture: Marketing strategies focused on converting existing demand, targeting consumers who are already searching for a solution, typically through SEO and performance marketing.

- **Content Marketing 2.0:** A modern approach to content that focuses on shaping perception of a brand's mission, vision, and values, aiming for consumers to identify with the brand.
- Brand Storytelling: The process of anchoring a brand in a repeatable belief system or narrative that resonates with consumers and differentiates the brand.
- Net New Creative: Completely original ad concepts involving new hooks, formats, talent, messaging, or visual approaches.
- **Creative Iteration:** Small modifications to existing, well-performing ad creatives to extend their lifespan or improve their performance.
- 80/20 Testing Split: A recommended ratio for creative testing where 80% of tests involve net new concepts and 20% involve iterations of existing winners.
- 50/50 Production Rhythm: A balanced approach to creative production where 50% of output is new creative and 50% is iteration, aimed at maintaining team efficiency and consistent output.
- **UGC (User-Generated Content):** Content created by customers or fans of a brand, such as reviews, testimonials, and social media posts.
- **LLM Visibility:** The concept of optimizing a brand's presence and content to be included in the training data and outputs of Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT.
- CRO (Conversion Rate Optimization): The process of improving a website or marketing funnel to increase the percentage of visitors who complete a desired action, such as making a purchase.
- Post-Click Optimization: Focusing on improving the user experience and conversion rates
 after a user has clicked on an ad, encompassing the landing page and subsequent steps in
 the customer journey.
- CAC (Customer Acquisition Cost): The cost associated with acquiring a new customer, typically calculated by dividing total marketing expenses by the number of new customers acquired.
- LTV (Lifetime Value): The total revenue a customer is expected to generate for a business over the course of their relationship with the brand.
- MMM (Marketing Mix Modeling): A statistical technique used to analyze the impact of various marketing channels on sales and to forecast future performance.

THIS IS THE SUMMARY

PART 1: STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

Demand Creation vs. Demand Capture

Modern growth strategy splits into two core levers:

Demand Creation: "Get people to care—even if they weren't looking"

Top-of-funnel, emotion-led storytelling that creates net-new interest. Lots of detail on this in the coming pages.

Examples:

- Oatly Billboards Messaging like "We're printing climate footprint data. Here's a blank space for Big Dairy" created viral discourse.
- **RightStuff (dating app)** Viral TikToks from the founder built a following of 2.3M through humor and controversy.
- Hero Cosmetics Broke into gaming via Twitch streamers, unlocking new female audiences.

@ Demand Capture: "Convert people already looking"

Mid-to-bottom funnel execution across SEO, performance, and UX.

Examples:

- Canva 170M+ monthly visits via high-intent tools (resume builders, social post templates).
- Zapier SEO built on integration-based keywords ("Notion + Google Sheets").
- **HelloFresh** Personalized product paths for niche dietary needs.

Brand Storytelling = Strategic Identity

The most successful brands anchor themselves in a repeatable belief system:

- Nike: "You're an athlete."
- Ollipop: "A better-for-you soda."
- Liquid Death: "Aluminum rules."

Execution Tactic: Retell your founding story 20+ ways—raw, polished, short, long, episodic, ad-style, TikTok-native, etc.

Ex: **Midday Squares**: One founding story told in dozens of formats. One polished YouTube video hit 7M+ views.

Content Marketing 2.0

Old model: SEO blogs, long videos, passive awareness.

New model: Cultural narrative that expresses your brand's mission, vision, and values.

• Create a worldview. People should identify with you, not just consume from you.

PART 2: CREATIVE STRATEGY

Jess Bachman - Creative Cycle Insights for Social / Digital

Creative Budgeting

• Spend 5–15% of your ad budget on creative. Sweet spot: 10%.

Most Important Metric: CCT (Creative Cycle Time)

- CCT = Idea → Launch → Learn → Iterate
- Target cycle: 2 weeks. 1 week if team is elite.
- "Slow approvals & reporting are silent killers."

Service Video vs Static

- Video fills the funnel. Static empties it.
- Heavy static use = Either broken funnel or massive brand equity.

Testing Creatives Like a Baseball Umpire

- 3x CPA = Strikeout if no conversions.
- Clicks without sales? = Foul ball, keep swinging.
- Don't test abstract "concepts"—test fully-executed creatives.

Creative Testing Ratio

- 50% net new, 50% iteration = healthy cadence
- Iterations drive compounding wins. But beware: too much = "iteration paralysis."

80% Net New / 20% Iteration

Source: Jess & Dar (from Motion creative strategy session)

- **Use case**: This is their **recommended testing ratio** overall especially for teams trying to push novelty and avoid "iteration paralysis" (where everything starts to look the same).
- Why: TikTok and Meta audiences fatigue fast. Net new creative helps break that fatigue and keep content fresh.
- **Iteration is still important**, but meant to scale proven winners, not dominate the pipeline.
- Savannah's workflow follows this too she makes ~4–5 net new ads/week and ~1–2 iterations.

50% New / 50% Iteration

- Source: Jess Bachman (Fire Team) in his Creative Strategy webinar notes
 - Use case: Framing a healthy cadence for creative production, not just testing.
 - Why: Iterations are where the compounding value happens. They're easier to make, lower risk, and help scale winning ideas. But you still need consistent freshness.
 - The **50/50 approach** is ideal for keeping your team sharp while maintaining performance.

So Which Should You Use?

In practice, many top teams do both:

- Maintain a 50/50 production rhythm to keep the team efficient and consistent.
- Run an 80/20 testing split to ensure learning and performance gains.

X Tool Stack

- **Motion** (analytics, tagging)
- **Notion** (concept organization)
- Slack (fast feedback loops)
- Adobe Suite (preferred production)

Savannah Sanchez - Top Performing Formats in 2025

- 1. Custom Jingles: Use tools like Sunno.com to generate catchy, product-driven jingles.
- 2. Text Exchange Format: Simulate fake iMessage threads for high relatability.
- 3. Photo Flip: Start with stills, then cut into lifestyle video.
- 4. Fake FaceTime: Record two angles of yourself and edit like a video call.
- 5. **Podcast Format**: Simulate a podcast recording + b-roll.
- 6. **Two-Person Skit**: Product-centered humor with duo storytelling.
- 7. **TikTok Comment Hook**: React to (or fake) a comment.
- 8. **Scroll-Stopping Frame**: First frame = cliffhanger visual.
- 9. **POV Unboxings**: Native, ASMR-friendly, and emotional.
- 10. Sticky Note Format: Budget-friendly, lo-fi, powerful.

Hook Testing & Iteration Process

Weekly Flow: Set one up

Mon–Wed: Research, planning

• Thurs-Fri: Brief creators

Mon–Tues: Get content backWed–Fri: Edit, launch, learn

Best creator and influencer talent is trained talent. Don't chase reach—train for tone.

PART 3: CONTENT STRATEGY & PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Foundational Content Every Brand Should Make

1. Founding Story (20x series):

- Tell the same founding story in 20+ formats. Why?
- Different formats = different emotional triggers, reach, and resonance.
- Ex: Mosy, Midday Squares, Glossier all reframe their "why" across TikTok, IG, YouTube, email, and paid.

2. TV-Style Episodic Series

- o Example: Lydia for On Running, Buildspace's Cold Tub Truths, Nike's "Margot"
- o Consistency in style, timing, voice.

3. Product Showcases

- Clear, mouthwatering, and benefit-led.
- Example: Joy Resolve's coffee alarm clock, Buttermilk nugget reels.

4. Behind-the-Scenes

- Manufacturing, design, sourcing, founder life.
- Ex: ASRV's design videos; Unfinished Legacy's drops.

5. Brand Updates as Content

- o Product launches, restocks, internal wins → all public.
- Ex: Ollipop TikToks announcing Costco launch.

6. Influencer Integration

Native to your series—not just shoutouts. Let them host, react, or co-create.

PART 4: TESTING, MEASUREMENT & CRO

Creative Testing & Feedback Loops

- 3x CPA rule = baseline test cost
- **Hook testing** = swap first 2 seconds, keep rest identical
- CCT speed = compounding learnings

CRO = Performance Storytelling Post-Click

From Warp Drive's framework:

7 Golden Rules

1. Store must be stable, fast, mobile-friendly.

- 2. CRO = full journey, not button color.
- 3. Only 3% ready to buy—optimize for them.
- 4. Load times over 2s? You're losing money.
- 5. High-intent vs. low-intent traffic needs separate flows.
- 6. CAC rises, CRO is your hedge.
- 7. Users care about outcomes, not features.

Testing Wins

- Headline test in listicle = +15.5% lift
- Optimized PDP vs. Shopify default = +25% lift
- Infinite offer testing: Subscriptions vs. bundles

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PART 5: CHANNEL STRATEGY & MEDIA

Roles & Strategic Use

Platform	Role in the Funnel	Strategic Notes
IG Reels	Top-of-funnel awareness & reach	Strong for visual storytelling, lifestyle content, product discovery. Use native text, trending audio, and lo-fi aesthetics to maximize reach.
IG Carousels	Product education & conversion support	Better for deeper product explanation, feature breakdowns, and sequential storytelling. Avoid gimmicks — clarity and payoff matter most.
TikTok	Trends, identity, and community engagement	Use to show personality, lean into culture, test bold ideas. Lo-fi, founder-led, or creator-led content wins. Great for seeding and discovery.

YouTube Shorts	Long-tail awareness & evergreen reach	Best for education, lifestyle series, or recurring brand beats. Strong SEO + cross-platform longevity. Underused but high-leverage.
YouTube (long)	Consideration and education	Ideal for explainer videos, behind-the-scenes, deeper brand narratives. Strong when paired with search and embedded on PDPs or LPs.

💸 Organic vs Paid Media

Туре	Primary Role	Strategic Implication
Organic	Trust-building, storytelling, community	It's where identity and narrative scale. Key for long-term affinity and retention. Critical for establishing tone, values, and consistency.
Paid	Acquisition, iteration, scale	Use paid to validate creative, scale winners, and discover new audiences. Paid is your feedback loop engine — fast testing, fast learning.

Key Mindset:

Organic is for brand debt repayment (trust, depth, loyalty).

Paid is for discovery & iteration debt (testing, learning, scale).

Retail + DTC Hybrid Learnings

These examples aren't just brand stories — they illustrate broader go-to-market frameworks:

Brand	Hybrid Strategy Takeaways
Jenny Kayne	Built a full-funnel system with catalog (retention), Meta (acquisition), and retail (trust + brand experience). Their content engine fuels all 3.
Aesop	No digital ads, but immense physical storytelling via store design, rituals, packaging, and product experience. Proof that brand can be the acquisition channel.
Casper	Initially over-indexed on DTC and VC-fueled growth. Eventually had to pivot to retail for sustainable CACs and higher AOV. Shows that DTC ≠ only online.

Strategic Channel Principles

1. Channels Have Jobs

 Not every platform is for every brand moment. Know what job a channel is doing—don't force engagement on an education channel or education on a virality channel.

2. Create Once, Distribute Everywhere (CODE)

Repurpose hero content across formats: a YouTube longform can spawn Reels,
 Shorts, email GIFs, and PDP videos.

3. Map Content to Funnel Stage

 Don't treat content and media as separate. Align what you're saying with where the customer is in their journey.

4. Use Media Spend to Build Moats

 Don't just chase ROAS — use spend to build data, test creative hypotheses, and scale up winning formats that can live beyond the campaign (into PDPs, emails, product pages, etc.).

5. Watch for Channel Fatigue

 Creative can die before spend does. Constantly refresh with net new formats, not just copy variants. Especially true on Meta and TikTok.

High-Leverage Moves

- TikTok Spark Ads to boost top-performing creator content (blends organic and paid seamlessly).
- YouTube Shorts + Pinterest + Reddit for long-tail visibility and niche audience targeting (underutilized in most DTC brands).
- Affiliate Creators for TikTok Shop combine social proof, reach, and conversion in one
 unit.

Feed testing into PDPs — If a hook works on Meta, consider how it informs your landing page headline, offer stack, or bundle layout.

PART 6: AI, SEO, LLM & MEASUREMENT

Platform-Specific Roles & Strengths

Instagram Reels = Awareness & Community Warmth

- Best for light storytelling, visual identity, influencer intros.
- What works: High-quality lo-fi, UGC montages, founder POVs, visual ASMR.
- Goal: Show up consistently, not just virally.

• **Pro tip**: Treat Reels as a brand TV channel — recurring formats > one-offs.

instagram Carousels = Product Education + Deep Dive Moments

- Highly skimmable but info-rich.
- Use for comparisons, how-to sequences, ingredient callouts, "5 Things to Know" series.
- **Best when** it pays off with *real* value, not gimmicks or vanity.
- CTA Tip: Last slide should always invite action save, shop, or engage.

∏ TikTok = Culture, Trends, and UGC Testing Lab

- Short shelf life, but high virality potential.
- Ideal for:
 - Community humor
 - Reactive/in-the-moment content
 - Creator-led storytelling
- Use it to test: Hooks, talent types, formats, and discover what resonates fast.

YouTube Shorts = Long-Tail Discovery & Cross-Platform Reuse

- Slower burn but deeper engagement.
- Great for evergreen content like founder intros, how-to tutorials, and product stories.
- **Underrated for brands**: Content often ranks on YouTube search + Google + Al overviews. **Tip**: Recut TikToks for Shorts, but with tighter editing and better metadata.

Organic vs Paid: Not Just a Budget Decision — A Content Strategy Divide

Organic	Paid
Depth, trust, storytelling	Discovery, iteration, optimization, newness!
Builds credibility & community	Scales fast with proven winners

Influences brand perception	Drives volume & traffic
Great for founding story, BTS, POV	Great for <i>product demo</i> , UGC remixing

Best-in-class teams do both — and remix between them.

💡 Turn an organic hit into a paid test. Or pull performance learnings into content planning.

Retail + DTC: Channel Hybrid Models Driving Growth

You don't have to choose between DTC or retail — but you do need a channel strategy that maps your media, content, and product accordingly.

Jenny Kayne

- \$100M brand built on:
 - Catalog (retention + tactile brand expression)
 - Meta (discovery + performance)
 - Physical retail (aspirational experience)
- **Key insight**: Each channel plays a defined role in the brand funnel and their content reflects that (e.g., lifestyle content for Meta, polished editorial for catalog, architectural minimalism for retail).

🧴 Aesop

- \$2.5B acquisition by L'Oréal despite no digital ad spend.
- Brand built on:
 - Retail design as marketing (stores = media)
 - Long-term cultural brand equity
 - Exclusivity & consistency
- **Learning**: Prestige positioning doesn't require paid media but it requires flawless execution across IRL, product, and experience.

Takeaways for Channel Mix & Media Allocation

- 1. Plan content per platform strength don't syndicate blindly.
 - TikTok ≠ Reels ≠ Shorts. Let behavior shape strategy.
- 2. Organic is not "free" it's long-game brand building.
 - Measure: saves, DMs, comments, shares, repeat views.
- 3. Paid is not just scaling it's structured testing.
 - Run creative testing frameworks (e.g., 80/20 net-new to iteration).
 - Use tools like Motion for hook analysis, thumbstop vs conversion. Otherwise you are shooting in the dark.
- 4. Don't ignore YouTube.
 - Shorts = underpriced awareness.
 - Longform = search, depth, and LLM visibility.
- 5. Omnichannel brands win with intentionality, not just presence.
 - Media, content, and product must adapt to each channel's consumer journey.
 - Align creative with inventory strategy (e.g., hero SKUs get full-funnel creative support).
- 6. Catalogs and retail aren't relics.
 - Physical touchpoints (catalog, store, packaging) are becoming brand identity carriers again — especially for beauty, fashion, and wellness.

XX PART 7: INFLUENCER, COMMUNITY, & UGC

UGC = Operational + Marketing

- Support tickets, reviews, NPS = product feedback
- Testimonials, influencer POV = marketing gold
- Best brands connect both: reviews become messaging insights

Ratings/Reviews as Strategy

- "Mini focus groups at scale"
- Summarize with AI (Yogi, ChatGPT, Otter.ai)
- Use attribute sentiment & freshness as KPIs

Brand Trust = Micro Authenticity

- Nano-creators outperform when storytelling is honest
- "Unconscious UGC" (unprompted reviews) > scripted collabs

Content Flywheel: Jenni Kayne Example

- Product-led planning
 - Market your HEROS
- Creative cadence across:
 - Studio shoots
 - Lifestyle shoots
 - Internal UGC
 - o Creator UGC

80% of winning revenue came from top 20% of creators.

"We never just show a product. We always push a lifestyle."

THIS IS THE THE DEEP DIVE

BELOW YOU WILL FIND ALL THE SUMMARIES INDIVIDUALLY ON CORE TOPICS

Marketing Mix Modeling (Michael Kaminsky)

Main Point:

Building a marketing mix model is not enough — *validating* it is the critical (and often overlooked) step.

Key Takeaways:

- MMM = causal inference, not just prediction. The goal is to understand true incremental impact
 per marketing dollar.
- Validation is hard because the ground truth is unknowable, dynamic, and context-specific.
- Overfitting is dangerous: High in-sample R² can be misleading. Validation techniques like holdout forecasting, parameter recovery, and robustness checks are essential.
- Misspecification: Models often ignore real-world variables like time-based changes, seasonality, or nonlinear effects.
- Validation toolkit includes:
 - Holdout forecasting / backtesting
 - Parameter recovery
 - Robustness checks
 - o Lift tests
 - Forecast reconciliation

in LLM Optimization & Brand Visibility (Crystal Carter)

Main Point:

LLMs are not just a trend — they are search platforms. Brands must treat LLM visibility like SEO and take proactive steps to appear and be cited.

Key Takeaways:

 LLMs ≠ traditional search engines. Users engage differently and can query across tools like Gemini, Claude, Copilot, and ChatGPT.

Two types of LLMs:

- Static pre-trained (ChatGPT-3.5, Gemini, Claude)
- Search-augmented (ChatGPT-4, Perplexity, Copilot)
- **LLM visibility** ≠ **ranking.** Static models rely on training data. To influence them, get mentioned in high-authority content that makes it into the training data.
- **Brand entity optimization matters.** Wikipedia, Wikidata, structured schema, and consistent brand mentions are critical.

Actions to take:

- o Influence brand mentions in top publications (especially LLM partners).
- Create custom GPTs for visibility.
 Submit feedback directly to LLMs to correct brand info.
- Monitor crawl behavior using tools like Wix Bot Logs, Screaming Frog, or custom log analysis.
- Use LLM prompts to test brand recognition ("What do you know about [brand]?").
- Key tip: The journey is: Search visibility → Search-augmented LLM inclusion → Training dataset inclusion.

Modern SEO Framework (Sarah)

Main Point:

SEO isn't just about Google anymore. The new SEO includes platforms like LLMs, YouTube, Reddit, and TikTok, and heavily incorporates user experience and CTR data.

Key Takeaways:

- **User behavior is central**: Google rankings are increasingly driven by real-world engagement (time on page, bounce rate, CTR).
- CTR manipulation works, though not recommended. But the takeaway is: CTR drives rankings
 more than we admit.

- YouTube & video are underutilized: Video content ranks in Google, YouTube, and sometimes even perplexity. All overviews link to YouTube more than any other domain.
- Al overviews (SGE) don't always cite top-ranking pages: Good UX, useful content, and uniqueness matter more than position.
- LLM visibility requires brand mentions across trusted training data sources, not just backlinks.
- Create once, distribute forever: Think beyond blog content repurpose into podcast, video, forum, Reddit, etc.
- New metrics to track:
 - % of "deadweight" pages
 - Organic traffic velocity
 - o Branded vs. non-branded traffic
 - Perplexity and ChatGPT referrals via GA4
- Recommendation: Don't block Al crawlers. Guide them. Trim irrelevant pages, focus on high-value content.

Shared Mental Model Across All Three

- Old SEO is transactional. New SEO is entity-driven, user-experience obsessed, and platform-diverse.
- LLMs and MMM both demand rigorous validation and testing, because traditional metrics can mislead
- Proactive brand optimization and structured content will win in both MMM modeling and LLM surfacing.
- Feedback loops (whether in MMM backtesting or LLM thumbs-up corrections) are essential for improvement.

© Core Message

Building an MMM is easy. Building a good one is hard. Validation is what separates the two.

★ Why MMM Validation Is So Difficult

1. MMM = Causal Inference, not just prediction

- You're trying to understand what caused an outcome, not just predict it.
- This makes it far more complex than just minimizing prediction error.

2. The True Incremental Impact Is Unknowable

- You can't ever know the "true" ROI of a channel like Meta or TV.
- o There's no "ground truth" to compare your results to.

3. Marketing Performance Changes Over Time

- Even a good model can't stay static—seasonality, creative, platforms, and markets evolve.
- Validation must be **ongoing**, not one-time.

Common MMM Pitfalls

1. Overfitting

- The model latches onto noise instead of signal.
- Adding variables improves in-sample metrics (like R² or RMSE) but degrades real-world performance.
- High R² ≠ good MMM!

2. Model Misspecification

• Using **linear regression** imposes assumptions (e.g., time-invariant effects, independent variables) that don't reflect real-world marketing.

Example: A sunscreen brand's media is more effective in summer, but a linear model won't capture that unless coded specifically.



The 5 Most Important MMM Validation Methods

#	Method	Why It Matters
1	Holdout Forecast Accuracy & Backtesting	Test the model's predictive power on unseen data—see if it generalizes.
2	Parameter Recovery	Inject known values into a simulation to see if the model can recover them.
3	Stability & Robustness Checks	Slightly tweak the data/model and see if outputs hold—instability = bad model.
4	Lift Tests & Experiments	Compare model predictions with actual outcomes from experiments (if available).
5	Dynamic Spend Deployment & Forecast Reconciliation	Use model recommendations, deploy spend, and reconcile outcomes with predictions.



Key Takeaways

- MMM validation is not optional—it's essential for trustworthy insights.
- Traditional fit metrics (R², MAPE, RMSE) are misleading in causal modeling.
- You need multiple validation lenses—because there is no one "truth."
- A model that *looks* good can still cause millions in budget misallocations if unvalidated.



What's Good About Meridian

1. Bayesian from the Ground Up

- Built fully on Bayesian methods → Clear assumptions + proper uncertainty propagation.
- Transparency and interpretability are much improved over older models.

2. Geographic Hierarchical Modeling

- o Similar to Lightweight MMM (also from Google).
- Allows for variation across geographies → better statistical power and more flexibility.

3. Time-Varying Intercept (Baseline Sales)

Supports changing baseline sales over time (though implementation details are fuzzy).
 Hyperparameters (like "knots") control how the intercept evolves.

4. Supports Non-Media Marketing Signals

- Search Volume: Based on Google research to mitigate search endogeneity.
- Reach & Frequency: Can incorporate upper-funnel metrics (though caution is advised—measurement methods are opaque and vendor-specific).

5. Strong Causal Inference Documentation

- Emphasizes limitations, assumptions, and the importance of transparency.
- A step forward in making MMM more rigorous and educational.

Key Limitations

1. No Time-Varying Channel Effects

- Assumes channel ROI is *fixed* across the entire period (e.g., Facebook = 3.5x ROI for 2.5 years).
- Ignores seasonality, creative changes, or platform shifts, which leads to mis-specification.

2. Weak Support for Experimental Data Integration

- Can't handle multiple experiments across time (e.g., Q2 vs. Q4 tests).
- Setting priors is now easier (via ROI inputs), but still incompatible with time-varying performance.

3. No Explicit Modeling of Channel Interactions

- o Fails to connect upper-funnel (TV) with lower-funnel (search) behavior.
- o Ignores known halo effects or behavioral spillovers.

4. Limited Budget Optimization Tools

- Only allows *unconstrained optimization* ("spend the whole budget optimally").
- No support for real-world constraints (e.g., minimum/maximum per channel, locked-in budgets).

5. Weak Model Validation Features

- No built-in tools for:
 - Parameter recovery
 - Stability checks
 - Robustness tests
 - Holdout forecasting
- Without these, it's easy to run MMMs—but hard to know if they're any good.

TL;DR for Practitioners

- Meridian is promising, especially for open-source Bayesian MMMs with good documentation.
- BUT: It's not production-ready for advanced teams—especially if:

- You run frequent experiments.
- You rely on constrained budgets.
- You care about dynamic performance or halo effects.
- Still, it's a great base for experimentation and may grow with community contributions.

Search GPT Overview

- Search GPT is being rolled out across the U.S. inside ChatGPT.
- It allows users to search the web in real-time from within ChatGPT, providing direct links, embedded YouTube videos, and summarized information.
- This feature blurs the lines between traditional search engines and conversational AI, posing a significant challenge to Google Search.

ChatGPT vs. Google Search

- Google still wins for deep search utility (links to Netflix, full reviews, pictures).
- ChatGPT's UI and results are improving, but more useful for high-level summaries and curated info.
- Al overviews (Google) vs. Search GPT deliver similar info, but ChatGPT links are more visible and click-friendly, favoring large trusted brands (e.g., Semrush, Search Engine Land).

ightharpoonup Video Is the Future of SEO

- All major Al search tools (Search GPT, Perplexity, Google Al overviews) pull and rank YouTube videos prominently.
- Videos can now play natively in the AI interface fewer clicks needed, better user experience.
- Videos rank faster and appear more often in AI results than blog posts.
- SEO strategies should shift toward video-first content that ranks both in YouTube and Al search.

✓ Impact on SEO Strategy

- Al-generated answers reduce the need for users to click through to websites, meaning:
 - o Informational blog posts may get less traffic
 - o Brand mentions and trust inside Al summaries become more valuable than clicks
- To adapt:
 - Create **video content** tied to key queries and topics
 - o Get your brand mentioned in authoritative blog posts that Al pulls from
 - o Focus on trust, topical authority, and structured content AI can easily parse

Takeaways for SEO Professionals

 SEO is no longer just about ranking on Google — it's about appearing inside Al search outputs.

- Focus on becoming a source of training data that models like GPT are fine-tuned on.
- Expect lower traffic volume from AI search, but greater brand awareness and conversion efficiency if mentioned.
- Tools like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google's Al Overviews will increasingly dominate search behavior by end of 2024.

Key Recommendations

- 1. **Double down on YouTube SEO** Fast indexing and high visibility in Al tools.
- Structure your written content Use clear summaries and headers that AI can interpret.
 Get brand mentions in authority blogs, forums, and video transcripts.
- 3. Monitor Al summaries of your industry regularly to understand how your brand shows up.

"Storytelling Meets Commerce: Engaging and Converting with Killer Content"

Hosted by:

- Jenny Marlo, Head of Content, CommerceNext
 Panelists:
- Ashley Shapiro, VP Marketing & Media, American Eagle
- Carly Gomez, SVP Marketing, Fabletics
- Angela Clark, VP Digital Studio, Patagonia
- Colleen Waters, VP E-commerce, Steve Madden

• Manish Noral, VP Sales Engineering, Vimeo

1. Content Strategy Themes

- Channel prioritization: Each brand has a different focus (e.g., YouTube modular cuts for Steve Madden, deep storytelling for Patagonia).
- Influencer content drives performance (Fabletics, AE).

2. Full-Funnel Content Alignment

- Content was mapped across the customer journey:
 - Awareness: Influencer, storytelling, PR, YouTube.
 - Consideration: Explainers, UGC, interviews.
 - o **Conversion**: PDP UGC, TikTok Shop, shoppable video.
 - Post-Purchase: CRM/ambassador content.
 - o **Loyalty/Education**: Sustainability, brand mission.

Funnel Stage	Best Content Types (per panelists)
Awareness	Influencer campaigns, storytelling videos, PR hits, YouTube content
Consideration	Explainer videos, UGC testimonials, designer/founder interviews

Conversion	PDP (product detail page) content, shoppable/interactive video, TikTok Shop
Post-Purchase	Creator repurposing, CRM/email content, loyalty programs
Loyalty / Education	Mission-driven content, sustainability stories, community storytelling

Why it matters:

This is an actionable framework to **map content creation and media planning to intent** — ensuring you're not wasting high-production storytelling on a retargeting ad, or using conversion-focused content for cold reach.

Each format has a role:

- Awareness content = spark interest and cultural relevance.
- Conversion content = build trust and close the sale with social proof and clarity.
- Loyalty content = deepen relationship and brand affinity.

2 3. The Video Opportunity

- Vimeo shared data: 87% of shoppers convert better with video.
- Video formats include:
 - Product spotlights with interactivity.

- o UGC and influencer POVs.
- o Behind-the-scenes and mission-led storytelling.

4. Testing & Iteration

- Weekly reviews, constant A/B testing.
 PDP content with/without video.
- Test types of UGC (e.g., styling vs. workout, men vs. women).

腌 5. Shoppable & Interactive Video

- TikTok Shop success (Steve Madden, Fabletics). Usually is best under \$50 or \$75
- CTV + QR code retargeting noted.
 Affiliate creators = best ROAS-driving units.

6. The Future of Content

- Bets on Al-generated, shoppable, and personalized video.
- Long-term creator partnerships > one-off influencer posts.
- IRL retail is coming back as experiential content.

Key Takeaways from Jess Bachman sessions

Foundational Creative Truths

- Beware of bad creative advice:
 - Red flags: single-brand operators, people speaking in absolutes, or those clearly selling something.
- Agency vs. In-House? Best results come from healthy competition between both. Ideally, 50/50 split in creative output.
- Creative budget rule of thumb: Spend 5–15% of your ad spend on creative. 10% is the sweet spot.

Video vs Static

- Video fills the funnel, static empties it.
- Video = persuasion. Static = performance retargeting or rational messages.
 Heavy static use = sign of either a broken funnel or a very large brand with high awareness.

Most Important Metric: CCT (Creative Cycle Time)

- Creative Cycle Time = Time it takes to go from idea → launch → learn → iterate.
- Fast cycle time = faster learning = more wins.
- Target: 2week cycle (1 week possible if team is sharp).
- Slow approvals & reporting are silent killers. Don't let process kill speed.

How to Test Creatives Like a Baseball Umpire

- Spend = swings.
- No conversions after 3x CPA? Strike out.

Foul balls = signals (clicks, strong hook rate). Allow more spend.

• Don't test creative "concepts" until your **execution is dialed**.

© Creative Production Efficiency Is a Trap

- More isn't better. Better is better.
- Focus on "less but better"—optimize for learnings, not volume.
- Meta doesn't care about your content efficiency. It rewards performance.

X Creative Testing + Iteration

- 50% new / 50% iterations is a healthy cadence.
- Iterations are where the compounding value happens.
- Don't let "testing" get hijacked by ineffective ad sets—ensure everything gets spend.

Best Skill in Creative Evaluation

- Ask two questions while watching:
 - 1. "What am I feeling?" (engaged, bored, confused, etc.)
 - 2. "Why am I feeling it?" (slow cut, unclear copy, wrong music, etc.)
- Stack that emotional awareness over any framework or pop psych theory.

Tool Stack & Workflows

- Uses **Motion** for analytics and concept tagging. Love this! Use it a lot.
- Notion for asset organization and tracking creative concepts. Airtable and other tools can work, the point being - have one.
- Slack for internal reviews. Simpler, faster comms > fancy feedback tools.
- Adobe Suite for production. In-house editing preferred.

Final Advice

- Don't be precious about creative—kill your darlings fast.
- Don't dump organic content into ad accounts unless you add a selling component.
- "Singles and doubles win the game." Don't rely only on home runs.

Top Performing Ad Formats & Creative Strategies

1. Use Custom Jingles

- Tools like Sunno.com let you generate fun, catchy ad music with custom lyrics. Critical to think about music.
- Pair with b-roll or visuals for a standout, scroll-stopping ad.

2. Text Message Exchange Format

- Start the ad with a fake text exchange (screen-recorded on iPhone).
- Great for Q4 sales and evergreen storytelling.
- A/B test vs traditional testimonial intros.

3. Photo Flip

• Combine stills + video in one ad (e.g., images first, then lifestyle video).

• Use multiple faces to improve relatability and engagement.

4. Fake FaceTime Format

- Record twice in different outfits and overlay to simulate FaceTime.
- Engaging and cost-effective (can be edited with CapCut or After Effects).

5. Podcast Format

- Simulate a podcast setup with a \$20 mic from Amazon.
- Combine voiceover "podcast" style with b-roll to stay native to Reels/TikTok.

6. Two-Person Skit

Great for generic products (e.g., protein bars) where storytelling matters more than features.
 Use humor and interpersonal dynamics to stand out.

7. TikTok Comment Hook

- Overlay a fake TikTok comment and respond to it within the video.
- Effective, tried-and-true hook that still works well.

8. Scroll-Stopping First Frame

- Don't just focus on the first 2 seconds—make the first frame a visual cliffhanger.
- Use shocking imagery or strong captions (e.g., "I look insane").

9. POV Unboxings

Start with "POV" and deliver fast, engaging try-on or unboxing clips.

10. Sticky Note & Mirror Format

- Low-budget, easy to film using post-it transitions.
- Works especially well for creators/founders filming at home.

Creative Strategy & Process Tips

11. Sound-First Approach

- Think: What emotions does your product evoke? (stress → calm, insecure → confident)
- Add ambient or ASMR-style audio. Trending melodies can inspire scripts even without copyrighted use.

12. Creative Research Comes First

- Spend 2–3 days a week mining ideas and analyzing performance.
- Use Foreplay, Motion, TikTok Creative Center, and Ad Libraries.
- Look for winning formats, messaging, and visual/sound styles.

13. Hook Testing Rules

Only change the first 2 seconds when A/B testing hooks.
 Avoid testing too many variables at once.

14. Production Speed = Advantage

• Use a weekly cadence with team:

Mon–Wed: Research & Planning

Thurs–Fri: Creator briefs

Mon–Tues: Get content back

Wed-Fri: Edit + Deliver

15. Best Talent Is Trained Talent

- Build long-term relationships with creators vs tools and sourcing on databases.
- Prioritize energy and camera presence over large followings.
- Train creators on brand tone and style over time.

Social Media Trends for 2025 (Jayde's Annual Trend Report)

1. Multi-Layered Hooks

- You now have under 2 seconds to hook attention.
- Combine:
 - Audio (voice/sound)
 - Visual motion
 - On-screen text
- Hooks must be authentic and varied to avoid burnout.

2. Long-Form Content Comeback

- Platforms are pushing **longer videos** (YouTube TV, TikTok 10–30 min).
- Great for creator monetization and platform retention goals.
- YouTube is now more watched than Netflix on TVs.

3. Rise of Micro-Communities

- Social shifting from broadcast to intimate, niche interactions.
- New features: Instagram Notes, YouTube's updated Community Tab.
- Creators should focus on **fostering conversation** and **relationship depth**.

4. Zero Click (and Minimal Click) Content

- Content must deliver full value without asking users to click away.
- Rise of automation (e.g., **ManyChat**) to deliver links via DMs.
- Link in bio is dying; DM-driven link delivery is outperforming.

5. Multiformat Content Renaissance

Carousels, photos, long-form, and short-form all have value again.
 Platform algorithms (like Instagram) now favor diversity in formats.

6. Shortened Trend Cycles

- Trends now last weeks instead of months.
 Requires constant experimentation and content variation.
- Stay culturally relevant by **spending time on the platform**.

7. More Creativity Triggered by Al

Tools like Al video, image, and script generators = lower barriers.
 Social content will become richer and more experimental.

• Greater competition requires standout creativity.

8. Social Commerce Is Accelerating

- TikTok Shop is leading, but others (YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest) are following.
- Platforms want to close the loop—discovery → purchase all in one place.
- Social commerce will be mainstream in 2025+.

Testing & Measurement Best Practices

16. Creative Testing Budget Rule

- Spend at least 3x your target CPA on a creative before judging it.
- Use Motion to compare thumbstop vs conversion to identify winners and tweak hooks.

17. Net New vs Iteration Ratio

- 80% Net New / 20% Iterations.
- Too many iterations = "iteration paralysis" (everything looks the same, no standout creative).

18. Match Creative to Target Age

- Match ad length to target demo:
 - o Gen Z: 10–15s
 - o Millennials: 20–30s
 - o 40+: 45–60s or more

19. Creative vs Landing Page Congruency

- Don't worry about *perfect* visual/messaging match.
- Use landing page to explain benefits; ad should capture attention/emotion.

20. Set Testing Goals by Spend

- ~\$25K/month spend = 1 creative test/week.
- Increase testing volume proportionally as spend scales.

What It Means

80% Net New:

- These are completely new creative concepts—new hooks, formats, talent, messaging, or visual approaches.
- Often inspired by ad libraries, TikTok trends, competitor analysis, or user behavior insights.
- Examples:
 - A new ad using a podcast spoof for the first time.
 Switching from UGC to animation.
 - Introducing a new creative strategy like a fake FaceTime or jingle.

20% Iterations:

- These are small modifications to existing winning creatives, often done to extend their lifespan or refine them for better performance.
- The goal is to maximize what's already working, not reinvent it.
 Examples:
 - Swapping out just the hook in the first 2 seconds.
 Using the same script but with a different creator or visual style.
 - Shortening a 30-second ad to 20 seconds.
 Recutting a high-performing ad with a new first frame or thumbnail to reignite performance.

@ Why This Ratio Works

1. Freshness Wins Attention:

 TikTok and Meta audiences get fatigued fast. Net new formats help you keep up with trends and avoid ad blindness.

2. Iteration Drives Efficiency:

 Once you find a high-performing concept, iterating on it gives you a low-lift way to scale spend and performance.

3. Balanced Risk and Reward:

- o 100% new ideas can be high-risk, high-reward.
- Iterations reduce creative risk, but if overdone, you risk "iteration paralysis" where everything looks the same and performance stalls.

4. Creative Learnings Compound:

 Iterating on winners gives you valuable learning (e.g., which hook formats work best) that can be applied to future net-new creative.

K How It's Executed in Practice

Weekly Workflow you can use

- 2-6 ads per week per client.
 - 1–2 = hook swaps or new talent on a top-performing ad (iteration).
 - 4–5 = brand-new ideas using new scripts, formats, or storyboards.

Another option

- Even "net new" ads may borrow winning messaging or layouts, but will look visually distinct.
- Believes in avoiding overly rigid A/B iteration frameworks that stall scale.

Avoiding the Trap: "Iteration Paralysis"

This is when:

- You've iterated the same winning creative so many times that nothing feels different.
- You're stuck changing headlines or music with no new ideas entering the mix.
- Ads stop standing out in-feed, and your performance plateaus.

To fix it:

- Force in some truly weird or bold net new formats.
- Encourage your team to take creative risks (e.g., custom jingles, ASMR, FaceTime spoofs).
- Track success rate of net new ideas just like you would iterations—don't ignore data.

Content Strategy Summary

This document distills the most valuable takeaways from top-tier creative strategy webinars, podcasts, and real-world brand examples. It's intended to guide content teams in building impactful, performance-oriented content marketing strategies across platforms like TikTok, Meta, YouTube, and Instagram.

1. Strategy Foundations

Demand Creation vs Demand Capture

- **Demand Creation**: Top-of-funnel, emotion-driven content to generate awareness. Ex: entertaining video series, founder stories, founder-led hot takes, out-of-home stunts.
- Demand Capture: Mid-to-bottom funnel tactics targeting people already searching. Ex: SEO, how-to videos, search-optimized tools/templates (e.g., Canva, Zapier).

Content Marketing 2.0

- New definition: Content that amplifies your brand's mission, vision, and values to shape perception and build affinity.
- It's not just about SEO blogs or passive storytelling—it's about identity formation.

Brand Storytelling = Strategic Identity

- Translate your mission, vision, and product into a cultural narrative people can connect with.
- Examples:
 - o Nike: "You're an athlete."
 - Liquid Death: "Aluminum sucks."
 - o Ollipop: "A better-for-you soda."
 - o BPN: "Go one more."
- Storytelling = Repeating the why across touchpoints (content, ads, email, website).
 Narratives evolve: Ollipop went from "Prebiotic tonic" → "Healthy soda alternative."

2. Content Marketing 2.0 Definition

Creating and distributing content that drives a narrative to **shape perception** of your mission, vision, and values.

Old model = share blogs & videos \rightarrow hope to attract.

New model = create a worldview \rightarrow make people identify with you.

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2. Content Testing & Reverse Engineering

The Grid Test

Review a brand's last 15 posts.

- Categorize by:
 - Content type (e.g. behind-the-scenes, UGC, meme)
 - Format (e.g. Reels, carousels, photos)
 - Purpose (e.g. awareness, engagement, product education)
 - Storyline (what brand message is it reinforcing?)
- Outcome: Identify what's working and find repeatable formats.

Net New vs Iteration Ratio

- 80% Net New / 20% Iteration is a strong ratio to aim for.
- Constant novelty keeps feeds fresh and drives discovery.
- Iteration helps scale winning content (with faster production and better ROI).

Viral Finder + Social Blade + SparkToro

- Tools to identify what content is working for competitors.
- **Social Blade** → Find outlier growth spikes
- **Viral Finder** → Analyze top-performing content (best to worst)
- **SparkToro** → Audience overlap & inspiration from similar brands
- Helps spot:
 - Top performing formats
 - Narrative structure
 - Common patterns (hook type, delivery, CTA)

Discovering a path to content strategy 2.0 : Critical Tools and Process

Every piece of content should amplify the identity of our brand

People care about you through content

And that drives top of mind awareness & relevance.

How a content team discovers audience & strategy

- 1. Select 1-2 competitors or 'heat brands' you admire and see the audience cross over. This is brand X.
- 2.Look at Data on a tool like Socialblade, find the spikes of growth on brand x.

a. Ask why?

- 3. Use Viralfindr to go to the account to see top content.
 - a. Look at 4 areas: types, format, purpose, and story.
 - b.Then look at common denominators of success: structure, delivery the things that stick.
- 4.Go to Spark Toro with the same brand. Use the audience-follows feature. You can see the demos of who follows - you will see the accounts they follow, the sites they visit, and some great data points.
 - a. Look to see who follows X and also follow Y
- 5. Repeat this with Brand Y.
- 6.See patterns on what resonates with the community across the 4 areas
- 7.Do a grid test to see how Brands x and y are testing. Look at the 4 questions on the last 15 posts.
- 8. Look at many other data sources and input to begin to get answers to four questions around content strategy.

What do we need to answer

There are four questions to use to set how we think about content.

- 1. What content types does our audience like to consume?
- 2. What formats do they engage with?
- 3. What is the best content for specific goals (awareness, sales, etc)?
- 4. What stories resonate?

3. Foundational Content Every Brand Should Make

1. Founding Story (20x Series)

- People connect with the why. Repeat it in different formats: raw, polished, short, long.
- Ex: Midday Squares founding video (7M+ views).

2. TV Show Format / Episodic Series

- o Repeatable, scalable, theme-driven content.
- Ex: "Lydia for On Running" travel + running series; "Cold Heart Truth" (ice tub interviews).

3. Product Showcase

- Simple, clear, mouthwatering or compelling.
- Ex: Buttermilk's dipping Reels; Joy Resolve's coffee alarm clock.

4. Behind the Brand / Behind the Product

- Let your internal team tell stories. Use process, design, sourcing.
- Ex: ASRV's design philosophy; Unfinished Legacy's shirt drops.

5. Brand Updates as Content

- IG and TikTok = Communication tools, not just marketing.
- Ex: Ollipop launching in Costco via simple TikToks.

6. Influencer-Led Content

Use aligned creators to bridge credibility and discovery.

o Best when creators blend into series, UGC, or 'as seen in the wild' content.

4. Tactical Creative Tips

Hooks & Retention

- The first 3 seconds matter most.
- Try: shocking fact, confession, question, pattern break.
- "Pop in the Pool" Technique: say the hook while doing something (ex: applying sunscreen) to double retention.

Series = Habit Formation

- Same time, format, and style creates familiarity and anticipation.
- Think: Fear Factor, Hot Ones, Buildspace founder videos.

Shooting on iPhone > Overproduced Content

- Lo-fi ≠ low quality. Lo-fi = fast, real, native.
- Lydia for On Running drove 50K followers, shot on iPhone.

5. Distribution & Platform Observations

- IG Reels = Reach Engine (especially for awareness and community)
- Carousels = Engagement & Product Education
- YouTube Shorts: Underrated, longer tail engagement
- Organic = Brand Building, Paid = Acceleration

6. B2B & SaaS Implications

- Content marketing for software is shifting too:
 - Story-led content is overtaking lead-gen gated whitepapers.
 - o Example: **Square**'s mini-documentaries about their merchants.
 - Example: **Loop**'s TikTok series on why Black/Brown drivers pay more for car insurance.

- Don't default to blogs. Do:
 - Educational TikToks
 - Founder POVs
 - User stories as UGC
 - Collab with customers who have an audience
- Zapier + Canva = Best in Class Demand Capture
 - o SEO-optimized tools/templates with clear conversion CTAs.
 - Stack long-tail keywords and back-end sign-ups.

7. Culture & Platform Shift

- Consumers auto-scroll ads. Marketing must:
 - Interrupt patterns
 - Speak to identity
 - Feel native and entertaining
- UGC > SEO articles.
 - o Ex: Recipe blogs are dead, TikTok is where discovery happens.
 - o Search engines will evolve toward visual, short-form UGC in next 5 years.

EXAMPLES OF DEMAND CREATION

"Get people to care even if they weren't already looking."

1. RightStuff (Conservative dating app)

- Viral TikToks from founder = inflammatory + funny → 2.3M followers
- Polarizing = free distribution
- TikTok IS the funnel

2. Oatly Billboards

- "We're printing climate footprint data. Here's a blank space for Big Dairy."
- Position your competitors as shady or outdated

3. Hero Cosmetics

- Unlocked new audience by seeding acne patches to Twitch streamers (female gamers)
- Found non-obvious whitespace through *channel exploration*

© EXAMPLES OF DEMAND CAPTURE

"Make it easy for people already looking to find and convert."

1. Canva

- 170M monthly organic visits from free tools (resume builder, flyer templates)
- Each tool = high-intent keyword magnet
- Free → account sign-up → upsell

2. Zapier

- SEO strategy built around integration keywords (e.g., "Canva + Notion automation")
- Knew people already wanted to do this, so they made the solution & owned the SERP

3. HelloFresh

- Product personalization to fit dietary demand (vegan, keto, etc.)
- Designed the experience around capturing *niche but motivated* eaters

***** TAKEAWAYS

- Great content = narrative x execution x format.
- Your "Founding Story" is your cheat code. Retell it 20+ times in fresh formats.
- TV-style repeatable series > scattered 1-off content.
- Use tools (SparkToro, Viral Finder, Social Blade) to reverse engineer what works don't start from zero.
- Think like a DTC brand, even if you're in software (ex: Square using local merchant stories).
- Marketing budget = split into demand creation (culture, buzz, virality) and demand capture (tools, SEO, paid retargeting).

Big Picture Themes

1. 2025 = Year of Post-Click

- With rising CACs and economic uncertainty, brands must monetize more of the traffic they already have.
- Post-click optimization is the lever to pull when pre-click ad efficiency hits a wall.

2. CRO is Not Binary

It's not just about tweaking button colors or moving elements "above the fold."

CRO should address the full customer experience—from ad to offer to checkout, across mobile, storytelling, performance, and brand perception.

% 7 Golden Rules of Conversion Rate Optimization

(CRO)

Insight Rule

Without a strong foundation, you will not succeed.	Your store must function at market expectation —load time, stability, mobile responsiveness. No fancy tactics will work on a broken base.
2. CRO is not binary.	It's the entire journey , from the ad through the funnel to checkout—not isolated A/B tests.
3. Only 3% of your audience is ready to buy.	You need to nail that 3% with optimized journeys while nurturing or retargeting the rest.
4. Fast load times are non-negotiable on mobile.	Anything over 2 seconds = burning cash . Use tools like Google PageSpeed or Pingdom to test.
5. Not all traffic is equal.	Optimize differently for high-intent (search) vs low-intent (social). Push search users straight to checkout, persuade social users first.
6. It's easier to increase conversion than to lower CAC.	Rising media costs are a given. CRO is your best hedge.
7. Customers don't care how innovative your product is.	They care about how it makes their life better . CRO must connect product benefits to customer needs.

Full Funnel Optimization Approach

1. Start closest to the money:

- o Optimize cart mechanics: offers, bundles, upsells, AOV boosters.
- Ensure everything in the checkout flow works as expected.

2. Then focus on storytelling:

- Use landing pages, founder stories, and persuasive copy **before** PDPs.
- Especially critical for top-of-funnel social traffic.

3. Warp Drive enables agile testing:

- o Dynamic funnels, offer splits, headline tests.
- o Split test infrastructure, not just creative.
- Single link = no disruption to ad campaigns.

💡 Tactical Wins Shared

- **Headline test in a listicle** → 15.5% lift in conversion.
- Optimized pages vs Shopify PDP → +25% lift.
- Infinite offer testing: Subscription vs bundles vs standard PDP, tested in real time.

Strategic POV

- Post-click = **performance storytelling** married with brand experience.
- CRO is **not optional** at \$50–150K/month stage—often the bottleneck to scale.

• For \$10–50M/year brands, CRO becomes a margin optimization engine.

Why Shift to Post-Click?

Because:

- CAC (customer acquisition cost) is rising, especially after iOS14.
- Top-of-funnel media is less efficient than it used to be.
- Most brands already generate enough traffic they just aren't monetizing it well.

So instead of just focusing on driving more clicks (pre-click), they recommend optimizing **what happens** *after* the click:

- Landing pages
- Product detail pages
- Cart/checkout flow
- Post-purchase journeys

Key Tactics in the Post-Click Strategy:

- Performance storytelling: Use landing pages with founder stories, bundles, testimonials not
 just generic PDPs.
- Cart optimization: Add AOV boosters like upsells, bundles, and offers.
- **Shoppable video:** Let customers click and buy directly from content (especially on TikTok Shop, Vimeo, etc.).

- Dynamic testing infrastructure: Use tools like Warp Drive to A/B test funnels, headlines, layouts without disrupting ads.
- CRO as a margin engine: Especially crucial for \$10–50M brands who are hitting scale but struggling with margin pressure.

🧠 Big Picture Takeaway:

"With rising CACs and economic uncertainty, brands must monetize more of the traffic they already have."

That's the essence of the **post-click strategy**:

Make every click count.

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Who Should Reach Out to Warp Drive?

- DTC brands doing \$50K-\$50M/month in revenue.
- Marketers struggling with rising CAC and stalled scale.
- Brands who know what to do (cart upsells, landers, stories) but lack bandwidth or in-house muscle.
- Agencies looking for better post-click performance.

- Aggressive DTC Playbook: Casper exploded onto the scene with a slick website, pastel branding, and a radically generous 100-day return policy.
- Viral Marketing Blitz: Invested heavily in podcasts, YouTube, and social ads, becoming omnipresent online.

- VC Darling: Raised \$340M, attracting celebrity investors like Leonardo DiCaprio and Ashton Kutcher.
- Poster Child of DTC: Alongside Warby Parker and Dollar Shave Club, Casper represented the DTC dream: cut out the middleman, sell online, and scale fast.
- Target Offer: Rejected a \$900M acquisition from Target, holding out for a \$1B+ valuation.
- Pre-IPO Valuation: Hit \$1.1B in 2019.

The Fall (2020–Present)

Financial Reality Check

- **IPO Disaster**: Slashed valuation by 50% to \$500M just before IPO.
- Post-IPO Collapse: Valuation dropped further, layoffs ensued, and operations in Europe shut down.
- Consistent Losses:
 - o 2017: -\$73M
 - o 2018: -\$92M
 - o 2019: -\$93M
 - o 2020: -\$90M

💸 Unit Economics Breakdown

- Avg mattress sale: \$710
- Gross margin: 50%

- CAC: \$275-305
- Refund rate: ~20%
- Admin + ops costs: \$300/mattress
- Result: Losing ~\$200 per mattress sold

Diminishing Returns on Advertising

- Ad Spend as % of Gross Profit:
 - 0 2017: 91%
 - o 2018: 80%
 - o 2019: 73%
 - o 2020: 60%
- Early wins were due to cheap, unsaturated Facebook ads.
- As competition surged, CPC rose 93% (2019), making growth unsustainable.

The Irony of Retail

- Casper now embraces **retail growth**, the very thing it set out to disrupt:
 - Retail revenue up 74% YoY, now 20% of total revenue.
 Higher AOV: \$820 in retail vs \$710 online.
- Retail growth outpaces DTC growth (20% YoY).

• Like **Everlane** and **Away**, Casper now seeks shelf space and foot traffic to stay afloat.

DTC Hype Crash & Industry Reckoning

- Macro shift: Cheap digital acquisition is gone. Saturation, rising CAC, and low retention undermine DTC economics.
- High-profile struggles: Brandless collapsed, Honest Company, Everlane, and others have pulled back.
- Investor sentiment: DTC seen as overhyped; unicorn valuations are now suspect.

Key Takeaways for Marketers & Founders

- CAC ≠ LTV: Cheap ads can't mask fundamental margin problems.
- Brand ≠ Business: Slick branding must be paired with durable economics.
- Retail is not dead: Physical presence can drive higher AOV, trust, and retention.
- VC ≠ Viability: Funding can hide bad economics...until it can't.
- Pride is costly: Rejecting Target's \$900M offer may go down as one of the biggest strategic missteps in DTC history.

The Future of Marketing = Data + Measurement

© Conversion APIs (like LinkedIn's CAPI)

Enable direct, privacy-safe data connections between advertiser and platform, bypassing cookies. This:

- Improves campaign performance.
- Expands optimization beyond just purchase events (e.g., leads, video views).

Increases conversion tracking accuracy.

Rrivacy-Safe Infrastructure is Non-Negotiable

- Traditional tracking (like pixels and cookies) is increasingly blocked or limited.
- CAPI gives marketers direct server-to-server connections, allowing better tracking and more reliable measurement, all in a privacy-compliant way.

The Adoption Barrier Isn't Tech — It's Alignment

- **CMO** sees value (10–30% workload reduction, better optimization).
- CTO sees cost (infra upgrades, team training).
- Legal team slows rollout due to compliance scrutiny.
- Solution: Cross-functional alignment is critical. Get buy-in early from all sides.

Advice for the C-Suite:

- 1. "Listen to your partners." Trusted implementation partners (like Jellyfish) are at the forefront and can de-risk adoption.
- Pick a partner that's done it before. Don't go it alone CAPI is complex, and experienced teams can guide infrastructure, compliance, and optimization strategy.
- 3. Invest in future-proofing your org. Shift from "media buying" to "data measurement strategy."
 Agencies are evolving from media agencies to data agencies of record.

4.

Top-Level Concepts for Affiliate

1. Affiliate = Partnership + Performance-Based Compensation

Definition - performance-based model where affiliates receive compensation for driving conversions rather than simply clicks or impressions.

- It's not about impressions or clicks—it's about driving conversions and getting paid for
- Affiliate marketing is evolving from shady roots to legit performance marketing, especially in the DTC space.

2. Influencers as Performance Marketers

- Creators increasingly prefer affiliate models or hybrid structures (flat fee + performance incentives).
- Creators who convert well prefer performance deals—those who don't are being filtered out.

3. Customer → Affiliate Conversion = Low-Hanging Fruit

- Automatic affiliate enrollment post-purchase (via thank-you pages, Klaviyo emails).
- Treat customers as creators: offer real cash incentives (not just coupons) + tiered rewards.

Use CX moments (e.g. "Where's my order?" tickets) as affiliate reminders.

4. Retention Is the Overlooked Superpower

Keep affiliates engaged with tiered commission structures, milestone rewards, and regular email updates.

• Offer monthly contests, giveaways, or temporary commission boosts (e.g., during BFCM).

Strategic Framework for Affiliate Programs

Step	Action
1. Evaluate Readiness	Social listening, post-purchase surveys, inbound interest from creators.
2. Start Simple	Turn customers into affiliates with no-brainer incentives.
3. Enable Growth	Set up inbound creator application forms + outbound creator outreach (no-strings-attached gifts first).
4. Structure Smart	Use flat-fee-per-conversion for simplicity or percentage of AOV if products are expensive. Match CAC to ad benchmarks.
5. Prevent Code Leakage	Use tools like Social Snowball's Safe Links to avoid attribution hijacking from Honey/Coupon extensions.
6. Build Multi-Tier Systems	Define programs by creator type (VIP, micro, customer), each with their own commission and gifting structures.

Channel-Specific Insights

TikTok Shop

- Built entirely on affiliate logic—no flat fees.
- Strong for low AOV items but growing in mid/high AOV.
- Integrated creator content fuels organic + paid (QVC for Gen Z).

Social Snowball Integrations

- Sync DTC + TikTok Shop affiliate programs.
- Aggregate creator performance across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.
- Automate tier progression, reward unlocks, and comms.

▼ 5 Quick Tips for Starting or Optimizing Affiliate Programs

- Make Onboarding Frictionless: Turn every purchase into an affiliate opportunity immediately—no application needed.
- 2. **Email Often**: Share high-performers, upcoming promos, incentives. Creators need regular reminders.
- 3. **Gamify It**: Tiers + milestones create long-term engagement loops.
- Protect Your Attribution: Safe Links > Static Codes. Stop coupon extensions from stealing attribution.
- 5. **Don't Use Creative Briefs**: Let creators do their thing. Briefs kill authenticity—and performance.



DTC STORY OF SHIPHERO x BLACK WOLF NATION

Advice for Other Brands

- Early-Stage Brands (<50 orders/day):
 - o Do fulfillment yourself. Learn from it. Get close to the customer.
 - Avoid 3PLs early unless absolutely necessary—most won't give you the attention you need.
- In-House Fulfillment vs 3PL?
 - o It's not about order volume, it's about headspace and core strengths.
 - If logistics excites you → maybe worth in-housing.
 - Otherwise, outsource and focus on brand, marketing, product.

Iterative Product Strategy

- Stayed close to customers (literally Googled their addresses early on).
- Used feedback loops to:
 - Create new product bundles (oily skin, dry skin)
 - Develop new SKUs (body wash for back acne, quick-dry sprays)

• **Empathy and fast iteration** became a competitive edge.

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Fenty Beauty's E-Commerce Marketing Strategy – 5 Key Tactics

1 Cross-Branding with Savage X Fenty & Fenty Skin

- Fenty Beauty leverages its brand ecosystem particularly Savage X Fenty and Fenty Skin to cross-promote.
- These brands often co-feature in email campaigns and product bundles (e.g. fitness kits, seasonal gift sets).
- Strategic benefit: Shared audiences, increased basket size, and a unified lifestyle aesthetic across Rihanna's brands.
- ** Tip: If you own or partner with related brands, consider co-marketing activations, collabs, or bundles.

2 Rihanna as the Face of the Brand

- Rihanna is front and center in both ads and emails.
- Her image and name are used in subject lines, creative, and CTAs.
- Celebrity founder strategy is used to drive open rates, brand loyalty, and cultural buzz.
- ** Tip: If you work with a celeb or macro creator, use them more subject lines, product intros, testimonials, even casual BTS.

3 Aggressive Promo Cadence & Reuse of Creative

- Fenty sends 3–9 emails per week, spiking around key promotional periods like Black Friday,
 Halloween, and Christmas.
- Uses same visual assets multiple times, often changing subject lines or order of appearance.
- Sends multiple emails per day during big promotional windows.
- * Tip: Don't be afraid to:
 - Resend high-performing emails with a new subject line.
 - Send twice a day during peak moments.
 - Extend life of your creative "users rarely open more than one of your emails anyway."

4 Bundling as a Core Skincare Sales Tactic

- Fenty rarely promotes a single skincare SKU.
- Products are almost always grouped into "routines" or "duos."
 - o Example: Cleanser + Toner or Full 4-Step Routines.
- Bundling:
 - Raises AOV (average order value).
 - Frames the solution, not the product.
 - o Makes benefits clearer (e.g. "hydration + glow" instead of just "moisturizer").

• * Tip: In skincare, always sell the result. Build bundles around problems or routines.

5 Ad Strategy: Rihanna + Social Proof + Routines

- Ads mirror the email strategy:
 - Use Rihanna in hero shots.
 - o Feature real customers, UGC, and testimonials.
 - o Emphasize "steps" or complete skincare journeys.
- Top ad formats:
 - Step-by-step product walkthroughs (Step 1 to 4).
 - o Before/after visuals (even if subtle).
 - **Hybrid ads** mixing celebrity + customer social proof.
- * Tip: Even if you don't have Rihanna, combine creator or UGC content + transformation + bundle offer.

Takeaways for DTC Marketers

- **Celebrity-led** storytelling + community = cultural edge.
- Bundling is a huge lever, especially in skincare/wellness.
- **Email frequency** can be much higher than you think.

- Creative reuse is not lazy it's efficient.
- Cross-branding multiplies momentum when executed well.

Top 5 Marketing Mistakes Beauty & Wellness BrandsMake (and How to Fix Them)

1 Founders Try to Do Everything Themselves

- Founders spending time writing newsletters or posting on Instagram = wasted time.
- You must delegate or outsource to people with actual expertise in each area (design, paid media, email, etc.).
 - "A founder doing an Instagram post is a waste of kind [time]."

2 Brands Hire One or Two In-House Marketers to Do It All

- In-house generalists can't execute a strong **omnichannel strategy** alone.
- Effective marketing today requires specialists across functions: strategy, creative, SEO, paid media, lifecycle, etc.

3 They Choose Agencies Based on Past Big-Brand Experience

- Many small brands fall for flashy portfolios but big results with huge budgets ≠ scrappy growth.
- Agencies that crushed it with L'Oréal or Estée Lauder might not be a fit for early-stage brands with leaner resources.

4 They Use a Bunch of Freelancers Without Strategy

- Hiring a bunch of independent freelancers = **disconnected execution**.
- SEO might be saying one thing, social another with no cohesive voice or KPIs.
- Strategy must guide all creative and channel work.

5 They Trust "Full-Stack" Consultants Who Overpromise & Don't Execute

- Some consultants claim to do it all (operations, marketing, product, etc.) but don't actually deliver.
- Be cautious of big promises without **proof of execution** or team support.

Success Traits of Brands That Scale

- They build a trusted team and let them do their job.
- They commit to a brand voice and don't dilute it.
- They understand their brand is **alive** it will evolve but needs a strong identity.
- They **engage experts early** (including marketing and operations).
- They don't try to be for everyone they solve a specific problem for a specific audience.

Founders Must Embrace Iteration

- Expect to go through multiple brand evolutions (product, packaging, messaging).
- Even successful brands often **reformulate** or reposition as they grow.
- That's not failure it's refinement.

Laura's Closing Advice:

- Bring marketing in early not as an afterthought.
- Focus on the founder story and product solution.
- Niche down: "You can't market to everyone."
- Treat your brand like a **living personality** that's allowed to grow but must stay true to itself.

The Power of Content Marketing in Beauty & Cosmetics

Why It Matters

- 1. Builds Brand Awareness & Credibility
 - Helps brands stand out in a crowded market.
 - o Showcases expertise and builds trust.
- 2. Drives Meaningful Engagement

- o Through blogs, videos, and social media content.
- o Sparks conversation and community through comments and shares.

3. Educates Consumers

- Explains products, benefits, and trends.
- o Positions the brand as a helpful, knowledgeable authority.

Key Strategies for Engaging Content

1. Know Your Audience

- Conduct research and build buyer personas.
- Understand needs, pain points, and preferences.

2. Use Visual Content

- Beauty is visual—think high-quality images, how-to videos, infographics.
- Demonstrate product use and inspire creativity.

3. Offer Value

- Tutorials, skincare routines, product reviews, trend insights.
- Share actionable tips that improve consumers' lives.

4. Encourage User-Generated Content (UGC)

- Showcase real customers, reviews, and routines.
- Host UGC contests and repost tagged content.

5. Leverage Social Media

- Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are critical.
- Focus on short-form, entertaining, and educational content.

* Case Study: Glossier

What Worked:

- Created Into The Gloss, a beauty blog with:
 - o Skincare tips, interviews, and real community stories.
 - Positioned Glossier as a trusted, authentic beauty resource.
- Leveraged Instagram to:
 - Highlight user content and product visuals.
 - o Actively engage followers (comments, DMs, shares).

Result:

- Built a loyal, inclusive community.
- Drove massive brand growth through storytelling and authenticity.

Final Takeaway:

Consistent, high-quality content = brand trust, customer loyalty, and long-term success.

If you're building a beauty or skincare brand, Glossier's playbook shows the power of being informative, visual, and community-driven. Let me know if you want a template or playbook to build your own beauty content strategy.

© Key Topics Covered:

1. Celebrity Brands & Creator-Driven DTC

- Celebrity + Mass Distribution = The new winning formula.
- Examples:
 - o **Rob's Backstage Popcorn** (Jonas Brothers): \$7M raised, 8,000 stores.
 - Feastables (MrBeast): Walmart distribution, massive top-of-funnel.
 - Rare Beauty (Selena Gomez): \$100M+ brand, built on creator-led storytelling, authenticity, minis, bundles, and Sephora exclusivity.

What Works:

- Celebrity is actively involved in content + sales (not just a face).
- Strategic partnerships and retail distribution (e.g., Sephora, Walmart).
- Whitelisting and UGC to scale authenticity and engagement.

2. Aesop's \$2.5B Acquisition by L'Oréal

• Largest L'Oréal acquisition ever (all cash).

Key Metrics:

- o \$537M revenue (2022), 22% EBITDA margin.
- 400+ global stores, no digital ad presence—built through retail design, prestige positioning (e.g., restaurants/hotels), and product experience.

Growth Drivers:

- Global expansion, spa-like store experience.
- Limited editions, premium pricing, and perfect brand execution.
- Virtual consultations & high-margin, low-CAC DTC.

3. What Makes Creator Brands Win (or Fail)

Winning Traits:

- o Founders are *deeply* involved (content, meetings, product).
- o Authentic storytelling and direct fan engagement.
- Mass retail integration + trial driving formats (minis, bundles).

Risks:

- o Overreliance on a single celebrity's face (e.g., MrBeast Burger vs. Feastables).
- o Exit challenges if the celebrity is inseparable from the brand.

4. Stripe's Annual Update

- \$817B in transactions (+26% YoY).
- Highlighted checkout optimizations:
 - Letting users *type* expiration date converts better than dropdown scrolls.
 - Adaptive acceptance increases revenue by ~0.7% on average.
- New Charges: Stripe will begin charging for tokenized card storage (\$20K/yr for some brands), potentially adding 10% to Stripe's own revenue.

5. Checkout Optimization Tips

Moyes & Nick's tips to boost conversion:

- Always show a lock icon + "Secure checkout" for trust.
- Use proper input formats (numeric keyboard for phone/ZIP/CVC).
- Get email first to recover abandoned carts.
- Use Google address autocomplete or ZIP-first forms.
- Avoid duplicate form fields.
- Eliminate friction where possible—don't confirm CVC unless necessary.

6. Beauty & Skincare Industry Boom

• High margins, product-led growth, low loyalty → big acquisition target.

- Recent exits: Deciem, Hero Cosmetics, Supergoop, Grown Alchemist.
- Brand loyalty is low, but trial and marketing execution drive performance.

🔑 Takeaways:

- Creator brands thrive when there's authenticity, real content, and massive retail.
- Beauty brands win with premium experience, high margins, and customer-led storytelling.
- **Stripe** sees tons of room to optimize checkout UX—small details compound.
- Aesop proves that non-traditional marketing + stunning branding = long-term moat.

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1. CONTENT STRATEGY THEMES

Channel Prioritization

- American Eagle: Heavily leans on influencer & creator content. Authenticity and cultural relevance are top priorities.
- Steve Madden: Doubling down on YouTube with modular campaign content cut by category (e.g., sneakers → boots).

- Patagonia: Leans into deep storytelling (e.g., films, activism), especially via YouTube and CTV.
- Fabletics: Heavy investment in micro-influencers, using content across acquisition and PDPs.

"Influencer content performs 3x better than brand content." - Ashley, AE "We now aim to have 60% of PDPs with UGC videos." - Carly, Fabletics

2. FULL-FUNNEL CONTENT ALIGNMENT

(X) Content Mapped to the Journey

All panelists emphasized aligning creative with the right stage of the customer journey, often through a combination of:

Funnel Stage Tactics Used

Awareness Influencer campaigns, storytelling, PR, YouTube

Consideration Explainer videos, UGC, designer interviews

Conversion PDP UGC, interactive/shoppable video, TikTok Shop

Post-Purchase Ambassador/creator repurposing, content in CRM/email

Loyalty/Education Deeper brand storytelling (activism, sustainability)

"We're very purposeful based on how long we've known the customer." - Carly, Fabletics "We test what UGC performs for men vs. women—styling vs. workout." - Carly

🞥 3. THE VIDEO OPPORTUNITY



- 87% of shoppers are convinced to buy via video.
- 82% of global web traffic is now video.
- Vimeo offers interactive, Al-powered, and shoppable video solutions.

Best Practices

- Product Spotlights: Clickable overlays and interactive quizzes.
- Customer Stories: UGC, unboxings, influencer POVs.
- Behind-the-Scenes: Brand mission, sustainability, design insights.
- Global Reach: Use Al for auto-translation & accessibility.

4. TESTING & ITERATION

What's Being Tested

- Creative types (e.g., UGC vs. studio vs. influencer)
- Copy & headlines
- Homepage vs. legacy designs (e.g., Fabletics A/B tests)
- PDP performance with/without video
- Ad iterations (weekly creative reviews)

"We look at results Monday, pick the winner, and make 10 versions of it." – Carly "Be careful not to over-test in high-risk periods like Holiday or Back-to-School." – Ashley

10 5. SHOPPABLE & INTERACTIVE VIDEO

→ Where It's Working

- TikTok Shop is a big win (especially for Steve Madden, Fabletics).
- Creators who convert are **different** from creators who entertain—identify both.
- CTV and QR retargeting also playing a role.

"Our TikTok Shop ROAS is up 40% above benchmark." – Ashley "Affiliate influencers are the simplest shoppable ad unit." – Ashley



6. THE FUTURE OF CONTENT & STORYTELLING

Al is the Shared Bet

- Personalized video experiences
- Conversational commerce (e.g., "What should I wear camping in Jackson Hole?")
- Multimodal AI: Find the product by asking about what's in the video
- Content versioning at scale

X Other Trends:

- In-real-life (IRL) moments will make a comeback—especially post-pandemic.
 Longer creator partnerships (lifestyle integration, not just one-off posts).
- Stronger brand governance vs. content decentralization—Patagonia is still navigating this tension.

"Malls are back. Dating apps are down. People want real-life connections." – Carly "What used to be retail is now experiential content." – Colleen

Top Takeaways

- 1. Influencer and UGC = Performance Goldmine, but only when tightly aligned to your strategy.
- 2. Map content to every stage of the customer journey—from first touch to loyalty.
- 3. Video must be shoppable, testable, and scalable—lean into modular formats.
- 4. Test everything—but focus on tests that matter and lead to real change.
- 5. All is not just for copywriting—it's transforming video discovery, translation, and interaction.
- 6. In-person + content = brand trust IRL is back and it's a key opportunity.

100M Brand

Speakers:

- Alexa Ritacco, CMO, Jenny Kane
- Emily Hickey, Founder, Chief Detective (Fractional CMO & Board Member at Jenny Kane)

Company Growth Snapshot

2018: \$8M

- 2021: \$100M
- 2024: Forecasting \$150M
- Goal: Become a \$1B lifestyle brand

Key Channels:

- **Digital acquisition** (especially Meta)
- Catalog marketing
- Retail

Creative Machine = Core Growth Engine

Jenny Kane's success was largely fueled by **constant content production**, testing, and refinement across categories (apparel, home, beauty).

"We never just show a product. We always push a lifestyle."

Target Audience

Women aged **26–55** who aspire to the **Jenny Kane lifestyle**: effortless elegance, wellness, comfort, and aesthetic simplicity.

Emily's Framework: 3 Levers for Step-Function Revenue Growth

1. Product Assortment = Growth ceiling

- o "A+ products" drive growth, not B products.
- Hero SKUs determine scale and margins.
- 2. Buying & Planning = Predictability
 - o Deep inventory on ad-supported styles.
- 3. Content & Creative = Leverage
 - o Most underutilized growth lever in DTC.
 - o "Content is the atomic unit of modern DTC."

→ ■ Meta = A Creative Game

- Facebook's algorithm rewards relevant, engaging creative.
- Winning ads get access to "high-value" customers.
- Poor-performing creatives **penalize** your delivery and raise CPMs.
- Relevance > Budget

Content Pillars: The Jenny Kane Recipe

Pillar	Frequency	Who Owns It	Notes
Studio Shoots	1x/quarter	Brand Team	High-quality ecomm imagery, consistent
			backdrops, some lifestyle cues

Lifestyle Shoots	1–2x/quarte r	Brand Team	Shot in homes, outdoors—seasonal and scenic
Team UGC	Monthly	Ads Team	Internal team shoots content in gifted products
Creator/Influencer UGC	Ongoing	Brand + Growth Team	Via ambassador program and paid collabs

Massador Program

- ~150 creators: 5K-500K followers
- Receive 2–3 products/month
- Trackable codes & 6x ROAS
- 80% of revenue from top 20% of ambassadors
- Only ~10% of content becomes a winning ad hence the need to cast wide

The Art + Science of Testing

Testing Imagery

- Test laydowns vs. lifestyle vs. product shots
- Seemingly "less polished" or unique cues often outperform

Example:

 Top-performing ad was a black sweater laydown with neckline — not the beautiful lifestyle or ecomm shots.

Testing Messaging

- Use Value Prop Stack Ranking
- Write 30–200 headlines per product
- Example for sweaters: test messaging about fit, fabric, seasonality, styling advice, reviews, etc.
- "Nobody cares about fabric. People care about how it makes them feel or look."

Explainer Videos

- Combine winning visuals + headlines
- Built like a funnel: attention > persuasion > conversion
- Every component is **data-proven** before scaled

* How It All Works Together

"Hero Product System"

- Portfolio of SKUs that drive repeatable, scalable growth
- Content and inventory aligned around them

Cross-Functional Team Integration

- Brand, Growth, and Planning teams operate as one "creative flywheel"
- Constant feedback loops across teams prevent silos
- Shared planning calendar ensures aligned content and spend

Top 6 Takeaways

- 1. **Meta is a creative game.** Winning = relevance, not bid size.
- 2. **Product is the foundation.** "A" SKUs carry the brand.
- 3. Everything is tested. Guessing = penalties.
- 4. Lifestyle cues matter. Moroccan rugs beat minimalist white walls.
- 5. Cast a wide net. Most content won't work—test until it does.
- 6. Content is the new media plan. It's your "atomic unit" of scale.

Final Thoughts

- This is a playbook for modern brand building.
- It shows how to balance performance + brand without sacrificing either.
- Jenny Kane's approach makes a compelling case for systematized creativity: a combination of team structure, hero product focus, iterative testing, and clear ownership across content streams.

Big Picture Themes for 2025

1. 2025 = Year of Post-Click

- With rising CACs and economic uncertainty, brands must monetize more of the traffic they already have.
- Post-click optimization is the lever to pull when pre-click ad efficiency hits a wall.

2. CRO is Not Binary

- It's not just about tweaking button colors or moving elements "above the fold."
- CRO should address the full customer experience—from ad to offer to checkout, across
 mobile, storytelling, performance, and brand perception.

% 7 Golden Rules of Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

Rule	Insight
1. Without a strong foundation, you will not succeed.	Your store must function at market expectation —load time, stability, mobile responsiveness. No fancy tactics will work on a broken base.
2. CRO is not binary.	It's the entire journey , from the ad through the funnel to checkout—not isolated A/B tests.
3. Only 3% of your audience is ready to buy.	You need to nail that 3% with optimized journeys while nurturing or retargeting the rest.
4. Fast load times are non-negotiable on mobile.	Anything over 2 seconds = burning cash . Use tools like Google PageSpeed or Pingdom to test.

5. Not all traffic is equal. Optimize differently for high-intent (search) vs low-intent (social).Push search users straight to checkout, persuade social users first.

6. It's easier to increase conversion than to lower CAC.

Rising media costs are a given. CRO is your best hedge.

7. Customers don't care how innovative your product is.

They care about how it **makes their life better**. CRO must connect product benefits to customer needs.

🔁 Full Funnel Optimization Approach

1. Start closest to the money:

- o Optimize cart mechanics: offers, bundles, upsells, AOV boosters.
- Ensure everything in the checkout flow works as expected.

2. Then focus on storytelling:

- Use landing pages, founder stories, and persuasive copy **before** PDPs.
- Especially critical for top-of-funnel social traffic.

3. Warp Drive enables agile testing:

- Dynamic funnels, offer splits, headline tests.
- o Split test infrastructure, not just creative.
- Single link = no disruption to ad campaigns.

Tactical Wins Shared

- Headline test in a listicle → 15.5% lift in conversion.
- Optimized pages vs Shopify PDP → +25% lift.
- Infinite offer testing: Subscription vs bundles vs standard PDP, tested in real time.

Strategic POV

- Post-click = **performance storytelling** married with brand experience.
- CRO is **not optional** at \$50–150K/month stage—often the bottleneck to scale.
- For \$10–50M/year brands, CRO becomes a margin optimization engine.

⊗Subscription Key Moves

Priority	Tactic	Benefit
★ Onboarding Journey	30-day content + usage email/SMS flows	Reduce churn in month 1
Pause Option	"Skip this month" UX flow	Cut cancellations by 25–50%
	Target past cancels with quiz + incentive	Boost low-cost reactivation

Plan Flexibility	Add annual, ramped, and tiered offers	Appeal to broader subscriber preferences
== Seamless Payments	Add APMs like Apple Pay & PayPal	Lower failed payments, fight fraud
† Loyalty Program	Reward referrals, reviews, purchases	Increase stickiness, reduce churn
Micro-Community	Invite-only skincare forum or IG sub-group	Foster emotional brand loyalty

⋒ Motion x Common Thread Collective Podcast — Taylor Holiday (2025)

Topic: The post-COVID reality of e-commerce, agencies, and performance marketing

This conversation between *Eric Dyck* and *Taylor Holiday (CEO of Common Thread Collective)* unpacks the strategic resets and operational shifts needed in today's DTC and agency environment. Here's what stood out:



1. Resetting Media Spend Expectations

- Many brands are overspending to chase unsustainable growth patterns set during the iOS14/COVID boom.
 - The first step for most: **cut spend** and realign to a new, more realistic marginal frontier.
- Performance ≠ scale. **Efficiency first**, then expansion.

2. Flexibility > Headcount

- CTC's model embraces flex staffing—permanent headcount is kept lean, with flex talent layered on top.
- In a volatile market, operational costs (OPEX) must match worst-case revenue baselines—not best-case dreams.

3. Agencies Need a New Operating Model

- CTC evolved from 60 → 200+ employees during the pandemic, but faced culture and integration challenges.
- Now shifting toward a law-firm-style model:
 - o Celebrate high-value ICs (individual contributors), not just people managers.
 - o Everyone, even execs, bills hours.
 - o Talent density > org chart hierarchy.

4. Bridge Between Marketing & Finance

- CTC positions itself not just as a creative/performance agency, but as a financially-minded partner.
- Success is defined by **contribution margin**, not just ROAS.
- Forecasting, FP&A, and performance modeling are part of every engagement.

5. Al as an Efficiency Layer

- CTC has a dedicated Al Director.
- Uses LLMs to:
 - Sumarize Slack convos
 Answer client FAQs
 Automate internal workflows
- Result: Lower operational cost + faster service delivery.

6. Don't Stay in the "Creative Hamster Wheel"

- Instead of endlessly optimizing top-performing SKUs (e.g., leggings), brands should look to expand product categories.
- Product expansion = margin growth + lower returns + story potential.
- Example: Born Primitive's successful move into **footwear**.

7. How to Approach Meta in 2025

- ASC (Advantage+ Shopping Campaigns) are the new default—lean into the algorithm.
 The marketer's job is to optimize for outcomes, not tinker with the machine.
- Set clear goals (e.g., profit per order) and use bid caps strategically.

8. LTV Is Limited for Most DTC Brands

- Non-subscription DTC brands often overestimate LTV growth potential.
- Reality: You need a constant stream of new customers or new categories to grow sustainably.

9. "Top-of-Funnel" is a Luxury

• TOF channels like TV, YouTube, Snapchat only make sense after you've nailed the core:

- Meta
- Search
- CRO
- Focus on core acquisition efficiency before you scale into awareness plays.

Final Takeaway

"The service business model is underrated. It's better than SaaS for most people. Fall in love with it."

Taylor Holiday

Holiday's closing advice was a call to embrace the simplicity, intimacy, and resilience of the service business—especially in a market increasingly dominated by SaaS valuations and tech hype.

— P CORE TAKEAWAYS FROM THE UGC WEBINAR

1. UGC Has Dual Purposes: Operational vs. Marketing

- Operational UGC includes support tickets, reviews, and NPS surveys—used for product feedback and CX.
- Marketing UGC includes influencer content, testimonials, and brand advocacy—used to drive reach and conversion.
- Best-in-class brands connect the two: using operational feedback (esp. reviews) to fuel and inform marketing content strategy.

2. Reviews & Ratings = Underleveraged Goldmine

- They're the most structured and influential UGC, especially at the point of purchase.
- Act like "mini focus groups" at scale, often containing both praise and critique in the same review.
- Brands like **Tylenol**, **Tula**, and **Nestlé Coffee-Mate** used review insights to:
 - Clarify expectations
 - Launch new marketing angles
 - Influence product messaging or even product dev

3. Analytics & Al Are Changing the Game

- Al tools like ChatGPT, Fireflies, Otter.ai, and Yogi enable:
 - Summarizing large sets of reviews
 - Extracting product/experience themes
 - Identifying mismatches between marketing and reality
- Amazon is already testing Al-generated review summaries—which will become a new norm for shoppers and a new KPI for brands.

4. KPI Evolution for UGC

- Brands are moving beyond "volume + star rating" to more nuanced indicators:
 - Trends in polarized reviews (1-2 vs. 4-5 stars)
 - Review freshness (esp. post product update)
 - Attribute-level sentiment (e.g., taste, value, texture)
 - Comparative analysis against competitor reviews
- Potential formula:

(volume of 4-5 star reviews) – (1-2 star volume) / time window and cross-reference with repeat purchase behavior or channel lift.

5. Trust Is the Currency — and UGC Is How You Earn It

- Across all brands, trust was cited as a key driver of conversion.
- Consumers are increasingly skeptical; influencer or brand messaging alone isn't enough.

- UGC, especially "unconscious UGC" (unprompted honest feedback), carries the most weight.
- Micro or even nano-creators with authentic stories can shape perceptions—and reach the C-suite.

6. Make the Business Case for UGC

- UGC isn't just brand love—it's performance:
 - Boosts conversion (esp. when expectations are aligned)
 - Influences product improvement cycles
 - Drives retention by closing the gap between customer wants and product realities
- Business case = file growth + conversion lift + retention, not just top-of-funnel impressions.