

*The Reciprocity Gap*

# Where Brand Promises Break and Advantage Begins

Welcome to our first Avansere Brand Intelligence Report. What follows is a crafted perspective, informed by many people: the Avansere Collective – our network of experts – our clients, and thousands of consumers. Thank you to all the contributors and *thank you for joining us.*

**Tom Savigar & Alex Bradley**  
Avansere Co-founders

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*Brand Intelligence Report*

# The Reciprocity Gap

Customer Centricity.  
That was the promise.

85% of consumers say brands put their own interests first.<sup>1</sup>

74% of brand leaders agree that putting people, society and the planet first is essential.<sup>1</sup>

Yet only 12% believe their brand is delivering on that promise today.<sup>1</sup>

This is the distance between what brands promise and what people actually get. This is:

**The Reciprocity Gap.**

Where brand promises break and advantage begins.

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01. Our perspective is grounded in a 2025 Brand Intelligence Study, combining insights from 2,000 British consumers, 40 global brand leaders, and expert perspectives – conducted in collaboration with market research firm Opinium.

*Brand Intelligence Report*

# Our perspective on the future of brand and *The Reciprocity Gap* shaping it.

Our perspective is grounded in evidence and expertise. This report draws on insights from 2,000 consumers, 40 global brand leaders, and a network of expert voices — developed in collaboration with market research firm Opinium.

**01. Hindsight**

## The Customer Centricity Era

For decades, brands have promised to put people first. To ask not, “What can we sell?” but “What do people actually need?” Done well, this mindset is generous. Value before loyalty. Relevance before revenue. At its best, it’s human, and like any strong relationship, built on reciprocity.

**02. Future Forces**

## The Reciprocity Revolution

Now, powerful forces are rewriting the rules: socio-cultural change, economic pressure, environmental urgency, and rapid technological progress. They are raising expectations and fuelling demand for new forms of mutual value — emotional, economic, and environmental. Yet few brands deliver.

**03. Problem**

## The Reciprocity Gap

People now give brands more than ever — attention, data, money, trust. Too often, they get little in return. Customer centricity has become a slogan, not a standard. **This is The Reciprocity Gap: the perceived distance between what brands promise to give and what people actually get.** Where brand promises break, and advantage begins.

**04. Opportunities**

## Closing the Reciprocity Gap

Closing The Reciprocity Gap is the next great competitive advantage. Next-gen brands are already doing it. Legacy brands can too by reimagining what value they provide, and how. **Our report outlines five opportunities for brands** to close The Reciprocity Gap and turn reciprocity into a competitive Edge.



### Your Next Now

At Avansere, we don't just study the future of brands, *we help build it.*

This report is both a lens on the forces reshaping brands, and an *invitation to act.*



*The Reciprocity Revolution*

Key socio-cultural, economic, environmental and technological forces reshaping the road ahead for brands.

Globally the brand playbook is being rewritten. Social and cultural change, economic pressure, environmental urgency, and technological disruption are converging to raise the bar for what people expect from the brands in their lives.

These forces are not passing trends. They are macro tailwinds of change, first experienced by innovators and early adopters at the start of the adoption curve.

Over the coming decades, they will reshape the foundations of value, trust, and loyalty, changing the terms of the relationship between people and brands. These forces will do it at speed, and scale.

### Social-Cultural Shifts

- Institutional Disillusionment
- The Demographic Shift
- The Transparency Imperative
- Values-Driven Society

### Economic Shifts

- Frugal Futures
- The Greedflation Push
- The Great Wealth Transition
- Participation Economy

### Environmental Shifts

- Regeneration Over Sustainability
- Greenwashing Backlash
- Climate Anxiety
- Circular Norms

### Technological Shifts

- AI Everywhere
- Personalisation With Principles
- Data Sovereignty
- Blockchain Rails And 'Railways'

# Social–Cultural Shifts

Widespread disillusionment and demographic shifts are pushing people to move from passive consumers to active participants, and they expect brands to meet them there.

## Institutional Disillusionment

As trust in governments, media, healthcare, and financial systems collapses, people are turning to brands to fill the void. They still need anchors of reliability, fairness, and meaning, and if institutions can't provide them, the private sector must. Business is now the world's most trusted institution (63%), ranking above government, media, and NGOs. By contrast, trust in national governments across OECD countries is only 39%.<sup>1</sup> This widening gap will increase the pressure on brands to be a lead actor capable of delivering fairness in daily life.

## The Demographic Shift

By 2050, the number of people over 60 will double to 2.1 billion<sup>2</sup> and in OECD countries, there will be only two working-age adults for every person aged 65+, down from four today.<sup>3</sup> This will put huge pressure on pensions, healthcare, and caregiving, raising concerns about fairness and intergenerational balance.<sup>4</sup> Gen Z, already frustrated by perceptions of “Boomer privilege” in housing and climate, will become highly influential adults.



## The Transparency Imperative

Over half of consumers say brands are “no longer important” to them,<sup>5</sup> and 79% need proof a brand cares and understands them before buying.<sup>6</sup> Small deceits, like exaggerated claims, hidden fees, dark patterns, erode trust quickly. Practices like shrinkflation signal “less for your money,” breaking the unspoken contract. Hide the truth and you widen the gap; share it candidly, even when it's bad news, and you build respect.

## Values-Driven Society

78% of Gen Z expect companies to take a stand on causes that matter to their community,<sup>7</sup> and brands that foster inclusive communities see customer lifetime value rise by up to 57%.<sup>8</sup> People are increasingly drawn to brands that create spaces for connection, whether that's around shared interests, mental health, diversity, or cultural moments. Consumers have the tools, the platforms, and the confidence to call out hypocrisy, and brands that ignore these social needs risk being seen as transactional and uncaring, widening the gap.

01. The Edelman Trust Barometer, 2024  
02. World Health Organisation, 2025  
03. OECD, 2025  
04. OECD, 2025

05. EY Future Consumer Index, 2023  
06. Wunderman, 2023  
07. APCO, 2023  
08. Harvard Business Review, 2024

# Economic Shifts

Greedflation, the cost-of-living crisis and wealth transition are turning the spotlight on fairness in value exchange.

## Frugal Futures

94% of people worry about rising living costs<sup>9</sup>; 71% notice shrinkflation;<sup>10</sup> and 66% have boycotted brands engaging in it.<sup>11</sup> Each time a brand appears to prioritise profit over fairness, reciprocity is being eroded and trust is getting harder to win back.

## The Greedflation Push

The recent wave of “Greedflation” (inflation driven not by scarcity but by corporate profiteering) has become a tipping point for reciprocity. More than half of 2024’s inflation surge was caused by profit margins reaching all-time highs, even as households struggled with rising costs.<sup>12</sup> What might once have been dismissed as invisible economics has become visible injustice. The louder the profiteering, the louder the call for fairness.



## The Great Wealth Transition

The largest handover of assets in history is underway. Over the next two decades, an estimated \$84 trillion will move from Baby Boomers and Generation Jones to Millennials, Gen Z and charities.<sup>13</sup> With this transfer of money comes a transfer of mindset, with the inheriting generations being more climate-conscious, more diversity-minded, and equating wealth with impact, fairness, and shared progress.<sup>14</sup>

## Participation Economy

59% are more likely to buy from brands that reward them for their data.<sup>15</sup> Consumers increasingly expect a share in the value they help create. From contributing content to sharing personal data, people now want rewards and even ownership stakes.

09. EY Future Consumer Index, 2023

10. LendingTree, 2024

11. LendingTree, 2024

12. Fortune, 2024

13. Cerulli Associates, 2022

14. Morgan Stanley Institute for Sustainable Investing, 2025

15. Cisco Consumer Privacy Study, 2023

# Environmental Shifts

Climate urgency is reshaping what brands must give back.

## Regeneration Over Sustainability

There's a notable shift in engagement from the concept of "sustainability" (simply doing less harm) to regeneration (actively improving ecosystems and communities). Nearly 80% of consumers prefer regenerative brands over merely sustainable ones.<sup>16</sup> Doing less harm is no longer enough; people want to feel their purchase actively gives back to the planet, and this creates a powerful reciprocal bond.

## Greenwashing Backlash

Over 50% of people believe brands exaggerate environmental claims.<sup>17</sup> Consumers are increasingly armed with data, third-party verification, and peer reviews, making empty sustainability slogans easy to expose. Premium pricing without proof is seen not just as poor value, but as an outright betrayal of shared values.



## Climate Anxiety

With each passing year, the effects of climate change (wildfires, floods, heatwaves) become more palpable, and public concern rises. 41% of people (and 56% of young adults) say climate change is a source of anxiety.<sup>18</sup> This anxiety will turn into action: people will boycott high-carbon brands and demand science-based targets. Fatigue with pledges will give way to demands for progress reports, milestones, and independent auditing.

## Circular Norms

The linear "take-make-dispose" model of consumption is being challenged by both consumers and regulators in favour of a circular economy approach. 60% of people now consider reparability before buying;<sup>19</sup> and over half have repaired instead of replaced. Consumers increasingly see product longevity as part of the brand promise, and brands that fail to extend product life risk being seen as waste enablers.

16. World Economic Forum, 2024

17. BusinessGreen, 2023

18. Deloitte Sustainable Consumer Report, 2024

19. Deloitte Sustainable Consumer Report, 2024

# Technological Shifts

Technology is raising both expectations and ethical questions.

## AI Everywhere

If electricity powered the 20th century, AI will power the 21st. It is not a tool but an infrastructure shift, diffusing into every sector, every service, and every interaction. In less than five years, generative AI, natural language models, and autonomous agents have moved from labs to everyday life. As Jeff Bezos put it in December 2024: “It will be in everything. This is most like electricity. There was electricity, then compute, and now AI. These horizontal layers, they go everywhere.”

## Personalisation With Principles

57% of people see AI as a privacy threat; and 62% don't trust it to be ethical. As algorithms curate what we see, buy, and believe, concerns about bias, manipulation, and fairness are intensifying. Hyper-personalisation will continue to delight, but without clear consent and ethical safeguards, it will increasingly feel intrusive and widen the trust gap.



## Data Sovereignty

62% of people feel they've become “the product” in companies' data monetisation models, while transparency about data use is the number one driver of brand trust.<sup>20</sup> With this, consumers will increasingly expect to control, revoke, or monetise their own data. Brands that treat data as a loan, granted under trust, will outpace those that see it as an asset to exploit.

## Blockchain Rails And 'Railways'

Blockchain is shifting from hype to infrastructure. Rails are being laid now, with Ethereum ETFs attracting over \$1bn in inflows,<sup>21</sup> central banks piloting digital currencies, and enterprises using blockchain for payments and settlements. Beyond this, 'Railways' are emerging: expansive ecosystems of tokenised ownership, real-world assets, and Digital Product Passports, where consumers hold verifiable proof of origin, impact, and even a stake in the brands they buy.

20. IAPP Privacy and Consumer Trust Report, 2023

21. Lookonchain, 2025

# The Future Forces Are Driving a Gap

Active consumer participation. Fairness in value exchange. Regeneration and circularity. Personalisation with principles. These forces are creating a new social contract between brands and people:

## 01. Emotionally

*How a brand makes you feel*

## 02. Economically

*How a brand provides utility and makes money*

## 03. Environmentally

*How a brand affects the world*

As we will see in the next chapter, the majority of leaders and consumers agree these forms of reciprocity are mission-critical. However, *few brands deliver this today.*

This is the distance between what brands promise to give and what people actually get.

This is The Reciprocity Gap.

This is the problem we will dive into next.



## *The Reciprocity Gap*

The perceived distance between what brands promise to give and what people actually get.

In the last section, we explored the powerful social, economic, environmental, and technological forces shaping consumers' perceptions and expectations of brands.

The story they tell is consistent. People feel they are giving more and getting less back from brands. They give attention, data, loyalty, and money. They offer feedback, content, and advocacy. And yet, the return often feels smaller, slower, or more self-serving than what was promised. The value exchange is breaking down.

This is The Reciprocity Gap: the distance between what brands promise to give and what people actually get. And it's not just a feeling; it's measurable.

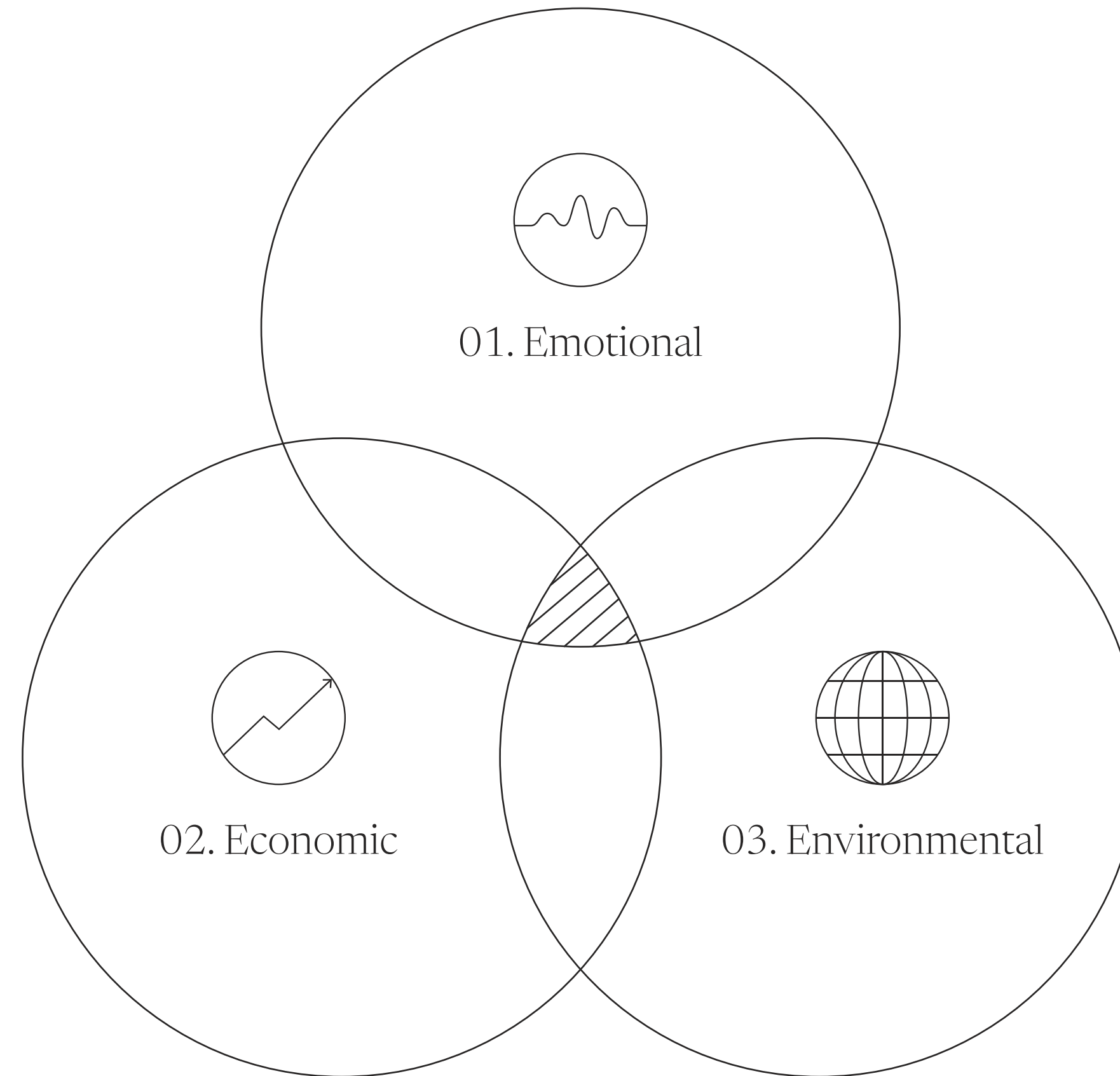
# Measuring The Gap

To understand where and how brands fail to return value, we analyse reciprocity through three interconnected spheres:

**01. Emotional Reciprocity**  
How a brand makes you feel

**02. Economic Reciprocity**  
How a brand provides utility and makes money

**03. Environmental Reciprocity**  
How a brand affects the world



## The Evidence

Our 2025 Brand Intelligence Study<sup>1</sup> has revealed:

85%

of consumers believe brands put their own interests first.

74%

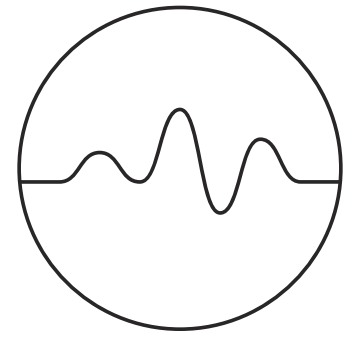
of brand leaders say prioritising the needs of people, society, and the planet is essential to brand success, yet only 12% believe their own brand delivers on this.

1 in 5

brands meet the foundational needs people expect across all three spheres.

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# The Emotional Sphere

## How a Brand Makes You Feel

### The Definition

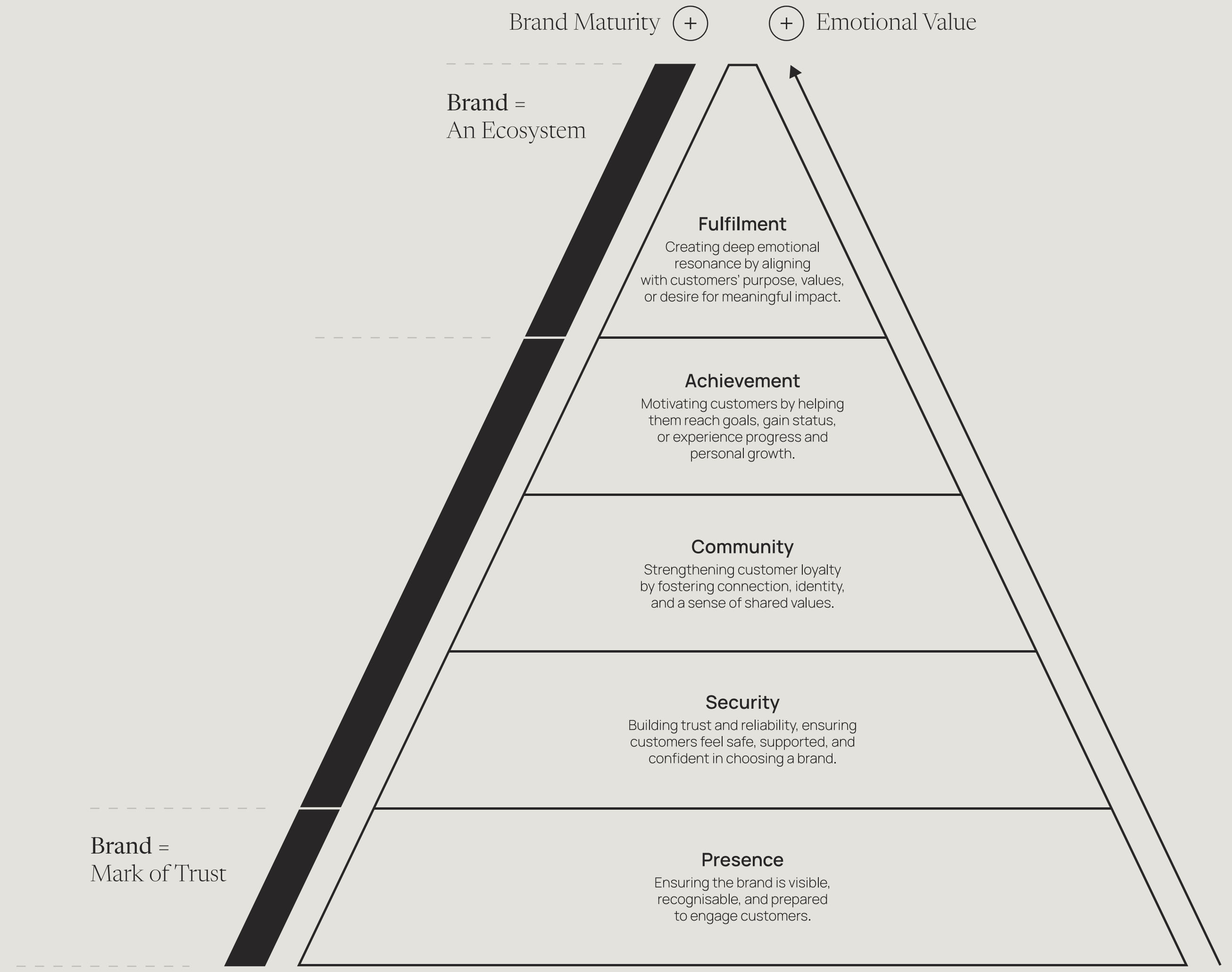
The Emotional Sphere helps brands understand and measure how they make people feel.

#### An evolution from brand as a mark to brand as an ecosystem.

Brand began as a mark of trust (literally branding cattle) and evolved into an ecosystem of products, services, and experiences designed to shape how people feel, think, and behave. Today, brand is no longer just a mark of trust and security, but an ecosystem for emotional fulfilment.

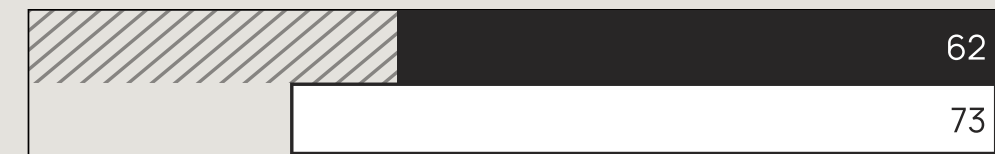
### The Model

Rooted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it offers a lens to assess the emotional depth of brand value: from foundational trust to personal fulfilment. The higher the human need a brand meets, the deeper and more lasting the emotional connection it can create.

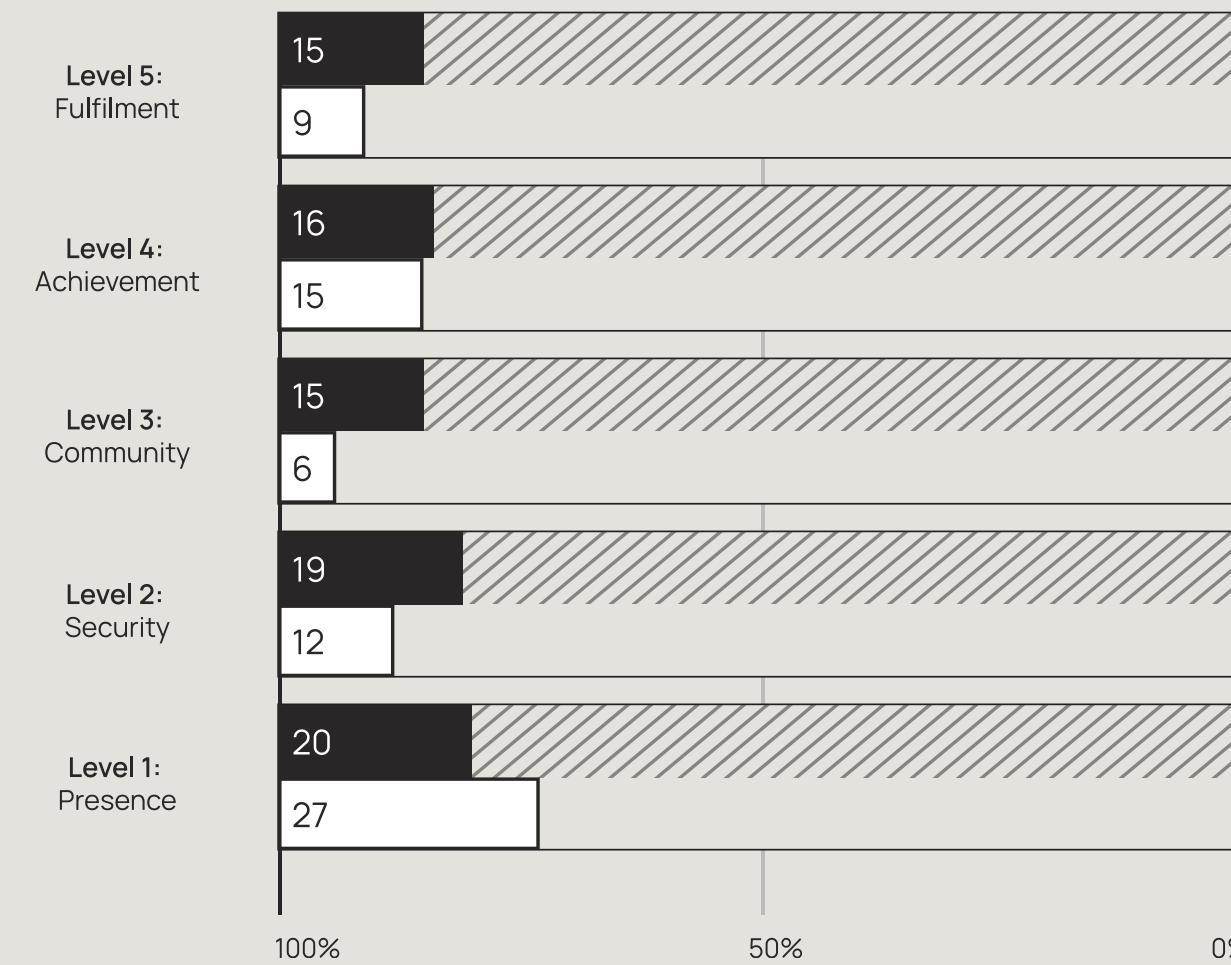
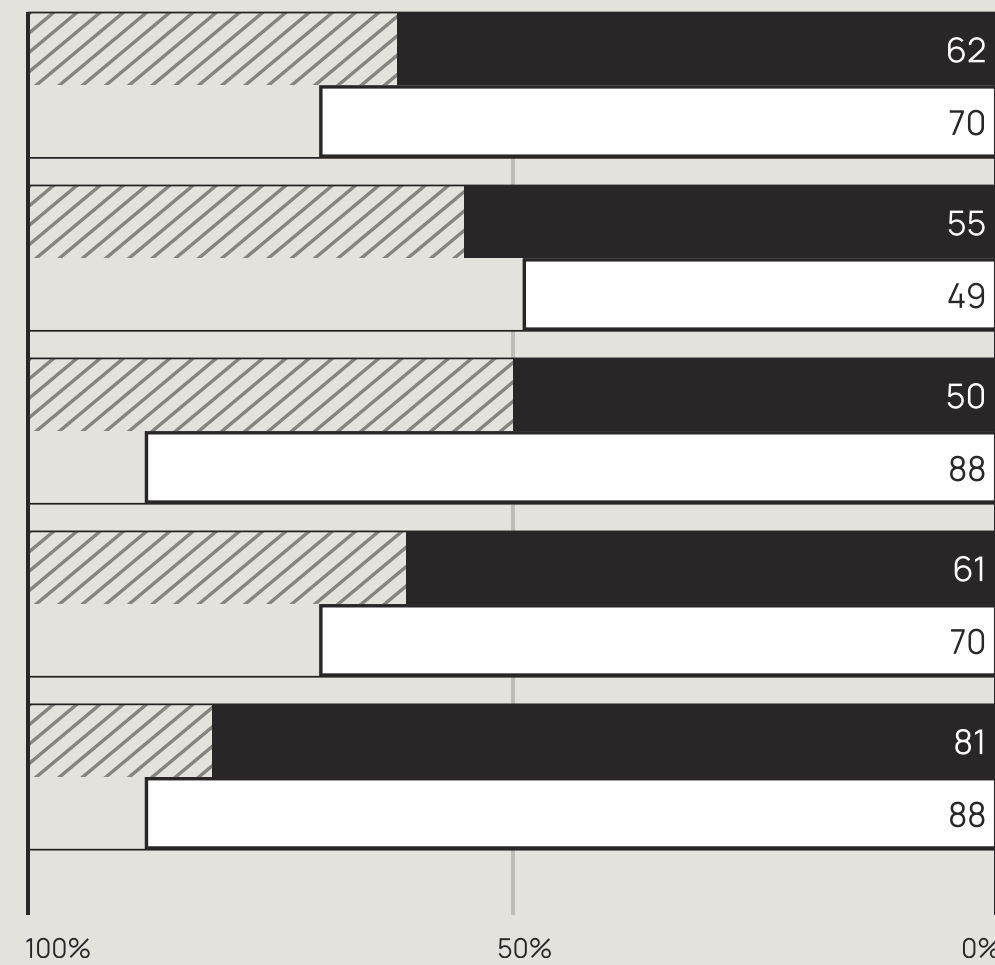


Rooted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, The Reciprocity Gap: Emotional Sphere.

How important is it that brands deliver this?



Are brands delivering this today?



100% 50% 0%

100% 50% 0%

KEY:  
Consumers<sup>1</sup> Brands<sup>2</sup>

01. Consumer data in Avansere's inaugural brand intelligence report, titled 'The Reciprocity Gap' is from proprietary quantitative research conducted in collaboration with Opinium.

02. Brand data was from Avansere's survey of 40 brand leaders.

## The Gaps

### Feelings ignored

62% of consumers expect brands to meet their emotional needs and 73% of brand leaders say it drives growth, yet only 14% believe their own brand delivers.

*"Next-gen brands win by designing for psychology, creating experiences that make people feel valued, connected, and seen."*

- Avansere Expert

### Security is table stakes, and still under-served

In these shaky times, 81% of consumers want brands to feel predictable, principled, and protective, and 88% of brand leaders agree this is critical to brand success, but only 1 in 5 brands deliver.

*"In a wobbly world, people seek stability, certainty, and a return to soul, brands must respond with reassurance."*

- Avansere Expert

### Belonging: the most-wanted, least-delivered pay-off

While 88% of brand leaders see fostering connection, shared values and community-building as the key to loyalty, a staggering 6% admit their brand actually creates it.

*"Brand-led communities are sought after as places for growth and personal progression, not just consumption."*

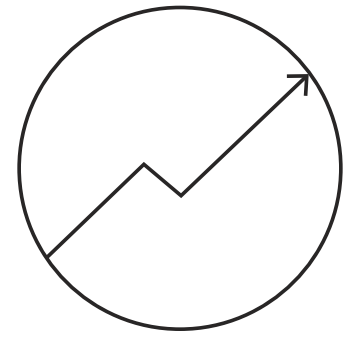
- Avansere Expert

## The Takeaway

Close the Emotional Reciprocity Gap where it is the widest: belonging.

Strengthening loyalty by fostering connection, identity, and shared values is vital to brand success, yet only a handful of brand leaders believe their brand actually delivers it.





# The Economic Sphere

## How a Brand Provides Utility and Makes Money.

### The Definition

The Economic Sphere helps brands understand and measure how they deliver concrete, meaningful utility to people and generate fair profit in doing so.

#### An evolution from brand as a mark to brand as a guide.

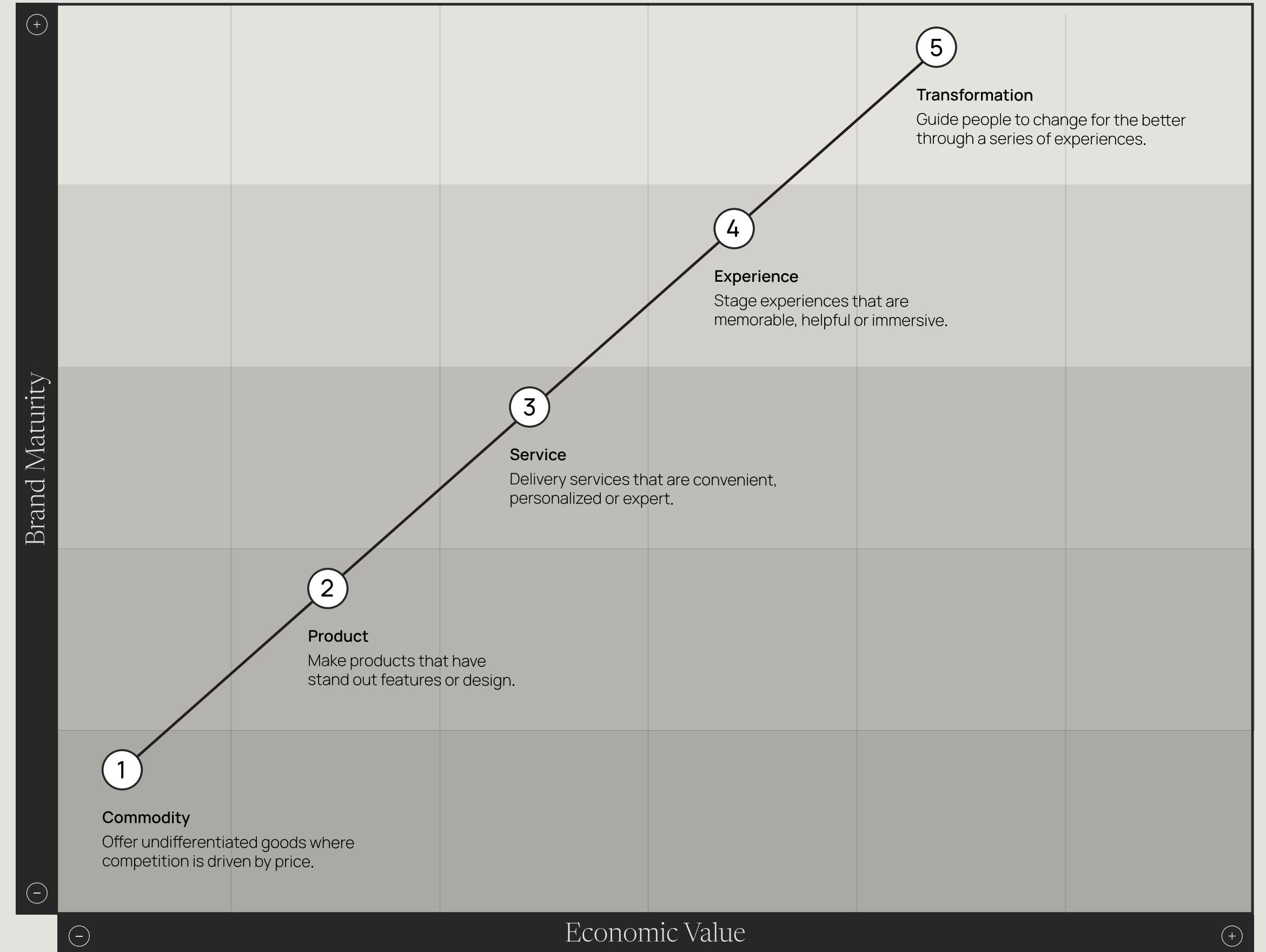
Brands were once built around goods and were focused on function, price, and convenience. Today, leading brands are evolving how they deliver value creation, from goods and services, to experiences and personalised transformations.

### The Model

Rooted in Pine & Gilmore's Progression of Economic Value, it offers a model to assess the evolution of brand value: from undifferentiated commodities to transformative offerings. The higher a brand operates on the value curve, the more differentiated, personal, and premium its offer becomes, and the more resilient its relevance and margins.

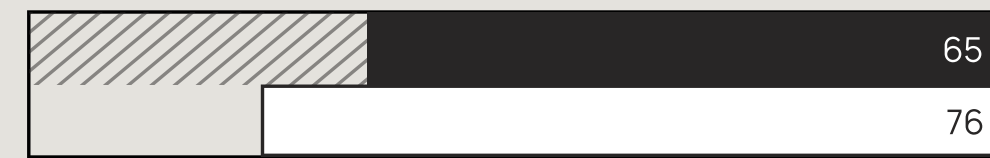
Brand =  
A Guide

Brand =  
Mark of Trust

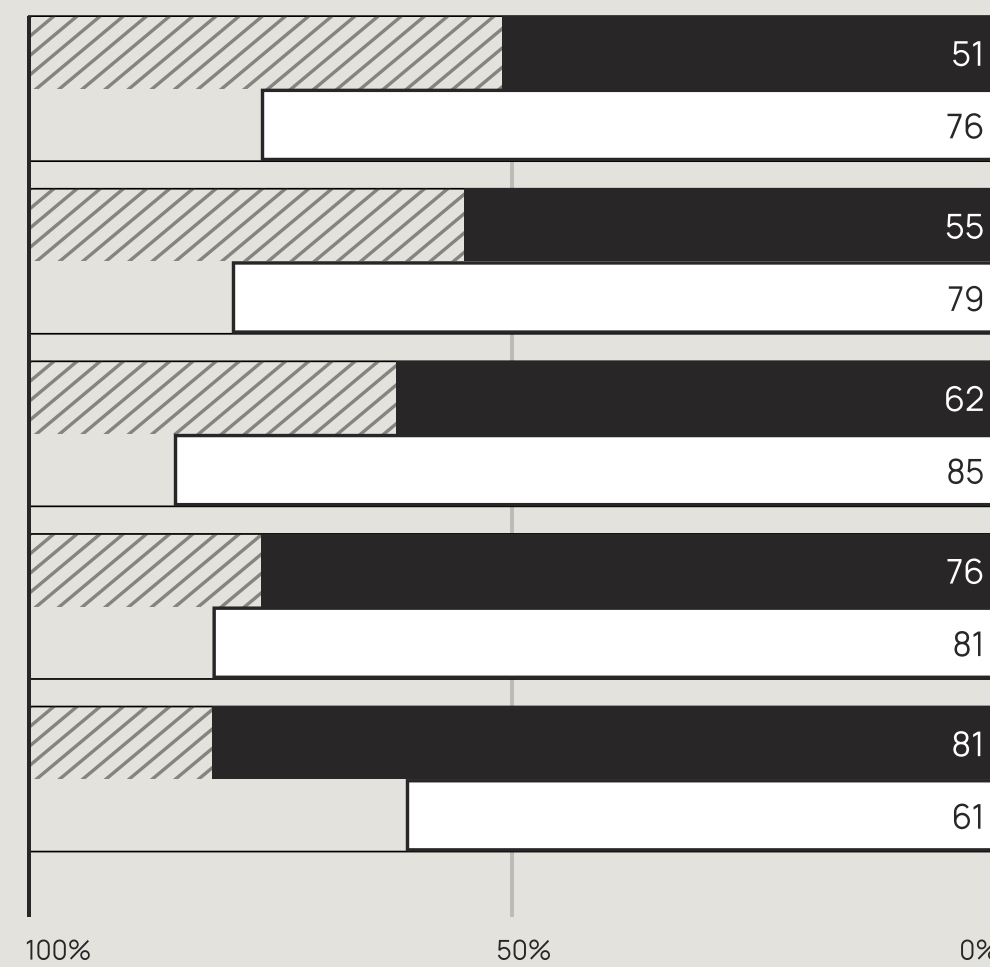


Rooted in Joe Pines' Progression of Economic Value, The Reciprocity Gap: Economic Sphere.

How important is it that brands deliver this?



Are brands delivering this today?



The Economic Reciprocity Gap

Level 5: Transformation

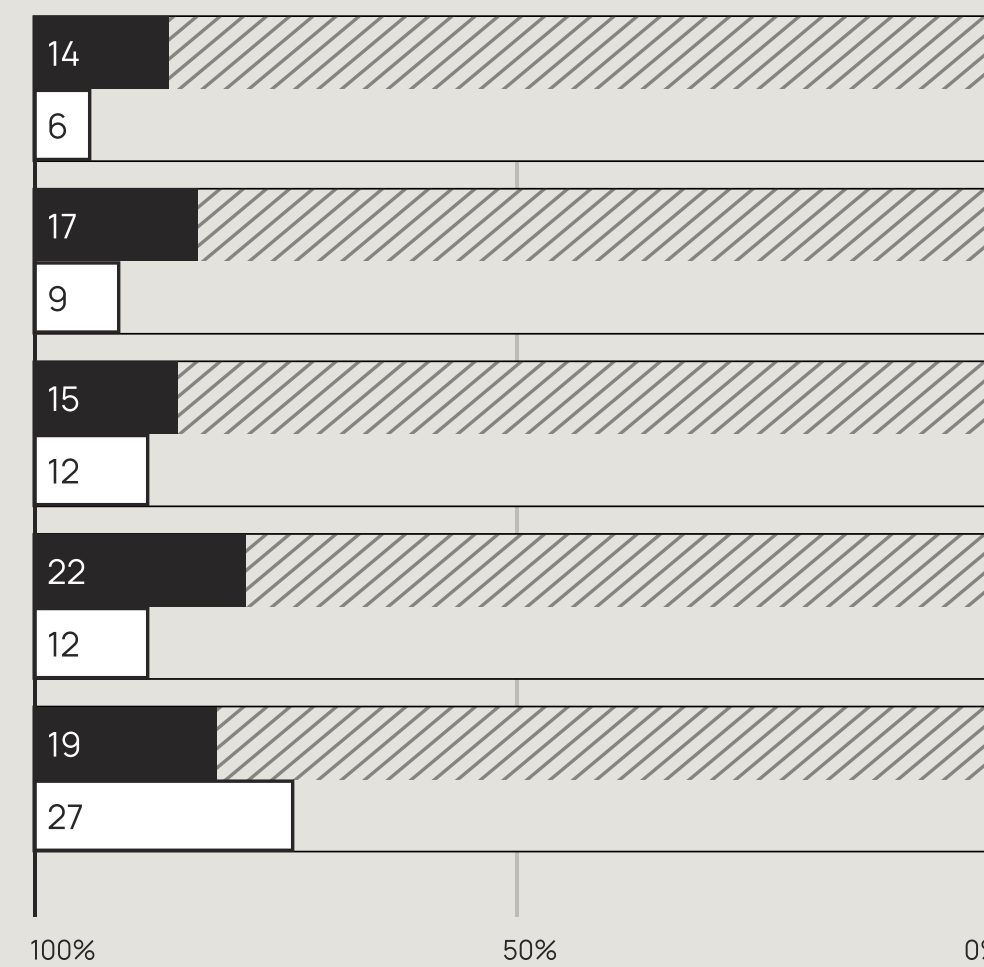
Level 4: Experience

Level 3: Service

Level 2: Product

Level 1: Commodity

100% 50% 0%



100% 50% 0%

KEY:  
Consumers<sup>1</sup> Brands<sup>2</sup>

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02. Brand data was from Avansere's survey of 40 brand leaders.

## The Gaps

### The stark and systemic economic reciprocity gap

65% of consumers and 76% of brand leaders agree it is critical brands meet the full spectrum of people's value needs (from commodity to transformation) but just 13% say it's happening.

*"Consumers will give loyalty to brands that give them agency, clarity, and care in return."*

- Avansere Expert

### The product quality bar is being widely missed

76% of consumers and 81% of brand leaders see standout product design, quality and branding as the baseline for brand success, and yet only 12% of leaders believe their brand actually delivers this.

*"The old exchange of product-for-money is over. Today's consumers ask: what else do I get from this brand?"*

- Avansere Expert

### Brands are aiming high, but mostly in theory

85% of brand leaders say competitive advantage hinges on solving customer problems through convenience and customisation; 79% on staging memorable experiences that create emotional loyalty; and 76% on delivering life-changing, personalised transformations. However, only 10% deliver these ambitions.

*"If you're not adding value, you're just adding to the noise."*

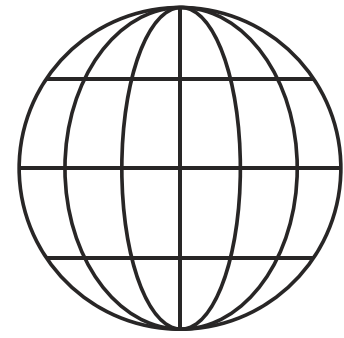
- Avansere Expert

## The Takeaway

### Close the Economic Reciprocity Gap where it is the widest: Meaningful Value

Brand theatre won't win in a trust-poor market. Value people can quantify beyond the product is now expected, through services, experiences, and, most progressively, transformations.





# The Environmental Sphere

## How a Brand Affects The World.

### The Definition

The Environmental Sphere helps brands understand and measure how they affect the world.

#### An evolution from brand as a mark to brand as a catalyst.

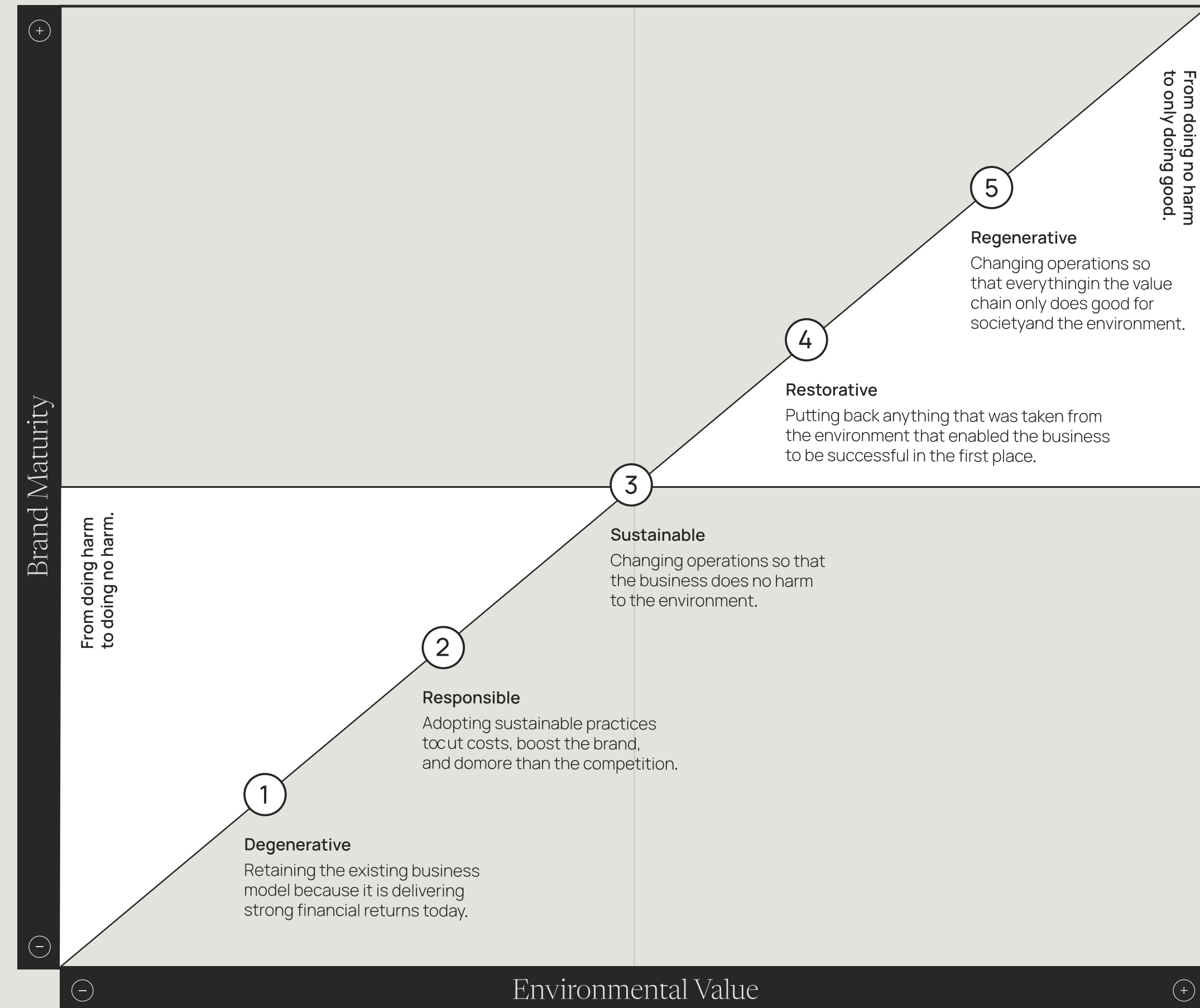
Most brands still profit by taking what they need from people and the planet, but mounting ecological costs and new regulations are forcing a shift. Success now means contributing to the health of the planet and the resilience of society, not just “doing less harm,” but actively sustaining, restoring, and regenerating the ecosystems that support life and commerce.

### The Model

Rooted in Bill Reed and the Regenesi Group’s Regenerative Development and Design framework, it offers a lens to assess brand value according to environmental stewardship, and the shift from degenerative to regenerative impact. The higher a brand moves, from doing harm, to doing no harm, to only doing good, the less extractive and more circular its business model becomes.

Brand =  
A Catalyst

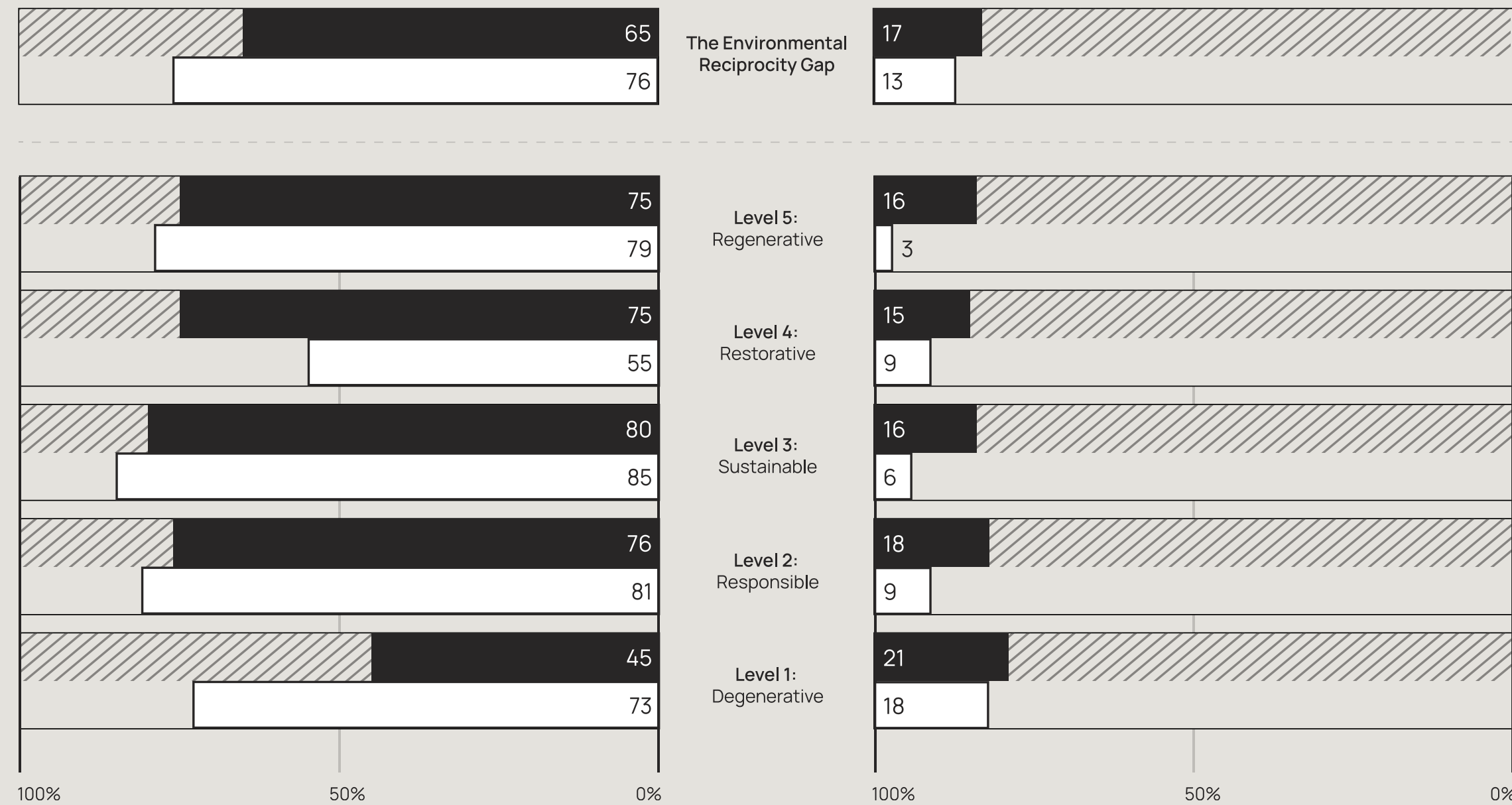
Brand =  
Mark of Trust



Rooted in Reed' Regenerative Development and Design framework, The Reciprocity Gap: Environmental Sphere.

How important is it that brands deliver this?

Are brands delivering this today?



# The Gaps

## From green claims, to green gains

65% of consumers agree it is important that brands look out for the environment, and 76% of brand leaders say it's critical to growth, yet only 13% believe their own company delivers.

*"We need brands that move beyond performative 'care' into regenerative practice. From passive to active responsibility."*

- Avansere Expert

## 'Do no harm' bottleneck

Shifting from degenerative to genuinely sustainable operations is the new zeitgeist: 85% of brand leaders and 80% of consumers insist on it, yet only 6% of brands clear the bar. Small wonder 75% of leaders still defend business-as-usual, even when it costs the planet.

*"The political climate may soften commitments, but the scientific climate won't. The future will reward those who act now."*

- Avansere Expert

## Regenerative reality check

75% of consumers, and 79% of brand leaders, say brands should actively do good for nature, people, and communities. Yet only 3% claim to make a genuine regenerative impact.

*"Environmental stewardship means giving back more than you take, through design, systems, and truth in action."*

- Avansere Expert

KEY:



01. Consumer data in Avansere's inaugural brand intelligence report, titled 'The Reciprocity Gap' is from proprietary quantitative research conducted in collaboration with Opinium.

02. Brand data was from Avansere's survey of 40 brand leaders.

# The Takeaway

**Close the Environmental Reciprocity Gap where it is the widest: sustainability.**

There's a big gap between global economic and political pressures, brands' efforts, and what most consumers actually want.



# From Problem To Opportunity

## Belonging. Meaningful Value. Sustainability.

In 2025, The Reciprocity Gap is clear: a widening fault line where value promised is not value delivered. It erodes brand trust, loyalty, and relevance.

But a gap is also an opening. The very forces creating this problem also carry within them the seeds of competitive advantage for the brands ready to act.

Closing The Reciprocity Gap is not just about fixing what's broken. It's about building something better: systems, experiences, and relationships where value flows both ways, by design.

In the next section, we explore where those opportunities lie, and how brands can turn reciprocity *from a moral ideal into a competitive edge.*



*Closing the Reciprocity Gap*

How brands can close  
The Reciprocity Gap  
and build a lasting  
competitive edge.

The old playbook of persuasion and performance is fading. The new standard is clear: value must be mutual.

In the following section we outline five opportunities for brands to turn reciprocity into a competitive edge. What unites them is a simple conviction: the future belongs to brands that give back more than they take.

Each opportunity carries both strategic and tactical implications: from informing positioning and investment decisions to products, services and experiences. From architecting moments that last mere seconds to designing relationships that endure.

“Products are becoming increasingly anodyne —stripped of character, human touch, and point of view. These are the very elements that create a sense of connection for the user.”



– James Shaw  
*Avansere Collective Partner,  
Founder Peace and Albam*

## The five opportunities to close The Reciprocity Gap

01.

Transform the Transaction

02.

Support People's Growth

03.

Build Conscious Presence

04.

Cultivate Belonging

05.

Craft Meaningful Rituals

# 01.

## Transform the Transaction

**Reimagining the act of buying as investment in culture, craft or society.**

Move from payment  
→ To patronage.

### Who's closing the gap now?

Across sectors, brands are reimagining the act of payment as a cultural or social contribution. Van Cleef & Arpels preserves craft heritage through its L'École, School of Jewelry Arts, where buying a piece of jewellery indirectly helps sustain the next generation of artisans. Hendrick's links commerce to conservation with its Limited Edition Amazonia Gin, funding rainforest reforestation with every bottle sold.

TreeCard takes this further into everyday life, transforming daily spending into tree planting and allowing consumers to tie financial behaviour directly to environmental impact.

Together, these initiatives show how transactions can evolve from simple exchanges into acts of patronage that enrich culture, community, and the planet.

### So what?

Brands that prove their power lies beyond profit turn doubt and distrust into belief.

# 02.

## Support People's Growth

**Help people make meaningful progress in their lives.**

Move from product, service and experience  
→ To transformation

### Who's closing the gap now?

Across industries, brands are helping people make meaningful progress in their lives. Nike's Project Moon Shot supports women runners on a multi-month journey to achieve their goals. Belmond – an LVMH acquisition expanding the group into the transformation economy – enriches growth through immersive travel that blends luxury with meaning. Soho House mentors underrepresented creative talent, unlocking careers and widening access to opportunity.

Together, these brands show how a series of experiences can be stitched into pathways for growth, helping people learn and achieve their goals.

### So what?

Brands that authentically support people's growth stand apart and connect more deeply.

# 03.

## Build Conscious Presence

**Show up with empathy, adapt and deepen connection over time.**

Move from a brand identity  
→ To a brand companion

### Who's closing the gap now?

Technological advancements are enabling brands to act less like static identities and more like living companions. Rimowa's Digital Product Passport turns a suitcase into a trusted partner, recording authenticity, repairs, and ownership to build continuity over time. Spotify's AI DJ X lets listeners talk to a DJ who adapts to their mood in the moment.

Platforms like Character.ai deliver personalised, emotionally intelligent interactions, signalling the near-term potential for building a connection between brands and people.

Together, these innovations show how empathy and dialogue make brands feel more human, managing emotions in real time and deepening connection.

### So what?

Empathy and dialogue are more human than a one-way brand monologue.

# 04.

## Cultivate Belonging

**Invite participation, reward commitment, and build shared identity.**

Move from passive loyalty  
→ To active membership

### Who's closing the gap now?

Brands are turning loyalty into belonging by building communities, not just customer bases. RH (previously Restoration Hardware) fosters belonging through a membership ecosystem that spans retail, restaurants, and hotels, extending its business well beyond furniture sales. BIG NIGHT in New York has created a one-stop hub for dining and connection, with a membership program segmented by foodie type (snackers, chefs, and hosts) turning shared meals into shared identity.

Dtravel uses blockchain and its TRVL token to give members voting rights in the DAO and a share of the economic upside, making every customer both a decision-maker and an investor in the platform's growth.

Together, these examples show how loyalty can evolve from passive consumption into active membership built on participation and shared value.

### So what?

True connection makes loyalty feel like community, not coercion.

# 05.

## Craft Meaningful Rituals

**Deliver brand-led experiences that repeat, deepen and matter.**

Move from brand touchpoints  
→ To brand-led rituals

### Who's closing the gap now?

Brands are transforming moments into memories through brand-led rituals that are ownable, repeatable, and emotionally resonant. Hermès sustains heritage with its recurring “Silk Knots” tutorials, teaching scarf-styling in-store and online to embed craft into personal practice.

Le Labo makes fragrance intimate, with scent-blending and naming ceremonies that turn purchase into a daily ritual. And LEGO creates family traditions with its communal Build Days, inviting generations to gather, make, and share in repeatable moments of joy.

Together, these examples show how rituals turn the everyday into experiences that endure.

### So what?

Rituals transform moments into memories, and memories into advocacy.

# From gaps to gains: emotionally connected customers are worth 3× more

Opportunities alone are not enough. The real challenge lies in identifying each brand's unique Reciprocity Gaps, and closing them authentically.

Across emotional, economic, and environmental spheres, closing Reciprocity Gaps turns cost into advantage. For example, customers who feel emotionally connected to a brand deliver 306% higher lifetime value than those who are merely satisfied.<sup>1</sup>

Premium and luxury brands have particular permission to play in this space, where people expect more than superior product and service quality. Certain sectors are also naturally advantaged (retail, airlines, travel, and hospitality) where long-term connections and loyalty schemes are already ingrained.

Yet every sector has the opportunity to surface its Reciprocity Gaps, close them, and innovate.

As we close this section, five expert voices from the Avansere Collective share how brands can turn gaps into gains, moving from problem to possibility.



01. Motista, Tolliver-Walker, 2020.

# The five opportunities to close The Reciprocity Gap

01.

## Transform the Transaction

Reimagining the act of buying as investment in culture, craft or society.

Your next now is patronage. Beyond payment.

02.

## Support People's Growth

Help people make meaningful progress in their lives.

Your next now is offering Transformations. Beyond products, services and experiences.

03.

## Build Conscious Presence

Show up with empathy, adapt and deepen connection over time.

Your next now is brand as a companion. Beyond brand identity.

04.

## Cultivate Belonging

Invite participation, reward commitment, and build shared identity.

Your next now is active membership. Beyond passive loyalty.

05.

## Craft Meaningful Rituals

Deliver brand-led experiences that repeat, deepen and matter.

Your next now is brand-led rituals. Beyond brand touchpoints.




High

Effort

Low

Let's realise your next now.



A person is silhouetted against a sunset sky, standing on the peak of a mountain. The background consists of rolling hills and mountains under a warm, golden light. The quote is centered in the upper half of the image.

“Reciprocity isn’t another campaign – it’s a mindset shift. Brands need to stop thinking in terms of short-term returns and start building long-term relationships.”



– Hem Patel  
*Avansere Collective Partner,  
Founding Partner and Managing Director, Parallel*

# Perspectives on The Reciprocity Gap

The following perspectives are from the Avansere Collective – our expert community that fuels our reports, events, and client work. Spanning consumer psychology, technology, economics, policy, the environment and brand-led experience. Each explore why reciprocity is no longer optional, but systemic.

## Reciprocity as Infrastructure

### By Rakhi Rajani

Avansere Collective Partner. Chartered Psychologist and ex-Genomics England Chief Strategy & Digital Officer and McKinsey Associate Partner.

“

Reciprocity is not a “nice-to-have” feature, it’s a neurobiological necessity.

”

### Synopsis

Rakhi is a Chartered Psychologist, technologist, and strategic leader. She has held senior roles at McKinsey, QuantumBlack – McKinsey’s AI consultancy – and Genomics England, bringing more than 20 years’ experience at the intersection of deep tech and behavioural science. Her work spans healthcare, energy, aerospace, and other complex systems, where she applies innovation to drive lasting change.

In her piece, Rakhi reframes reciprocity as a system requirement, not a soft skill. She explores the neuroscience of trust, the psychology of fair exchange, and how brands can move from transactional engagement to relational design. Her argument is clear: if you want people to stay, give them a reason to believe.

“When reciprocity fails, especially after someone has invested emotionally, the brain’s reward circuits shut down.”



In our current data generating world, we repeatedly hand over personal information, time, and trust. We sign up for newsletters to get a minor discount, provide our phone number “just in case”, connect health apps to each other in the hope they will give us an answer - all contributing to an often one-sided (or hidden) flow of data.

Despite the fact that data, when leveraged with intelligence, enables exponential insight and innovation, what we get back is often minimal, impersonal, or opaque. This imbalance between what people give and what they get is increasingly evident across industries, and is what this report outlines.

The consequences are, in hindsight, predictable: disengagement, irritation, distrust, and apathy. When people sense that their effort, personal data or vulnerability is met with indifference, they withdraw - sometimes from platforms, institutions, and the systems designed to support them. Worse, many over-share personal information for small transactional rewards, putting their privacy at risk.

#### **Reciprocity is Neurobiological**

Reciprocity is not a “nice-to-have” feature, it’s a neurobiological necessity. Across cultures and history, fair exchange has been essential to cooperation and survival. Neuroscience shows that when we give and receive in fair measure, the brain releases oxytocin - a hormone that fosters trust and social bonding.

However, when reciprocity fails, especially after someone has invested emotionally, the brain’s reward circuits shut down. People experience psychological withdrawal, skepticism, and reduced engagement. Research shows that persistent unfairness elevates stress hormones - encouraging people to disengage from products, services and organisations that don’t “do the fair thing”.

We don’t just remember what we give, we track it. Mental “ledgers” form as we subconsciously tally our contributions versus our returns. When the ledger tips into deficit, behaviour shifts. People stop investing when they feel a system isn’t returning their effort - whether it’s an employee burning out or a customer switching providers. In situations such as healthcare and education, the behavioural shifts may lead to reduced adherence to relevant protocols.

“  
Reciprocity is one of the most powerful principles of influence. Psychologist Robert Cialdini identified it as the first of six universal principles of persuasion.  
”

### The Psychology of Staying

Reciprocity is one of the most powerful principles of influence. Psychologist Robert Cialdini identified it as the first of six universal principles of persuasion. Even simple, symbolic acts: a thank you, a small gesture of care, a clear acknowledgment of one's input - all help build an infrastructure of reciprocity. These mental models can shape future interactions by signalling that a system can be trusted.

Reciprocity also acts as a heuristic - a cognitive shortcut in decision-making. If a platform, person or organisation treated us fairly before, we assume they will do so again. That expectation lowers cognitive effort for future interactions, increasing retention and sustained cooperation - because we carry forward the expectation that future exchanges will remain reciprocal.

### Systems That Only Take, Eventually Break

The “reciprocity gap” is most visible in systems that focus on taking. Many digital business models optimise for short-term extraction of value, undermining the emotional capital that sustains engagement.

Consider two examples:

- Data or feedback black holes: Platforms that harvest personal data or solicit user feedback yet provide only token benefit in exchange.
- Siloed services: Health systems that generate extensive patient data but deliver siloed, impersonal treatment.

These approaches might yield quick wins, but over time they damage trust and motivation. As Natasha Schüll observes, a system that “takes without giving back” becomes a system of extraction, eroding agency, causing fatigue, and inviting resistance.

### Reciprocity as a Competitive Edge

To reverse this trend, we must shift from transactional moments to relational infrastructure, and systems should be built to reciprocate by design. Organisations that build strategic, reciprocal frameworks can engineer different, more responsive mechanisms for innovation and engagement.

Leaders should focus on simple strategies:

- Design for bilateral value: Ensure interactions provide a ‘cognitive return on investment’
- Signal generosity early: Deliver small acts that show the system knows how to ‘give back’
- Enable convergence: Fuse disciplines to catalyse exponential innovation through systems of intellectual reciprocity, where cognitive frameworks, epistemologies, and missions intersect.

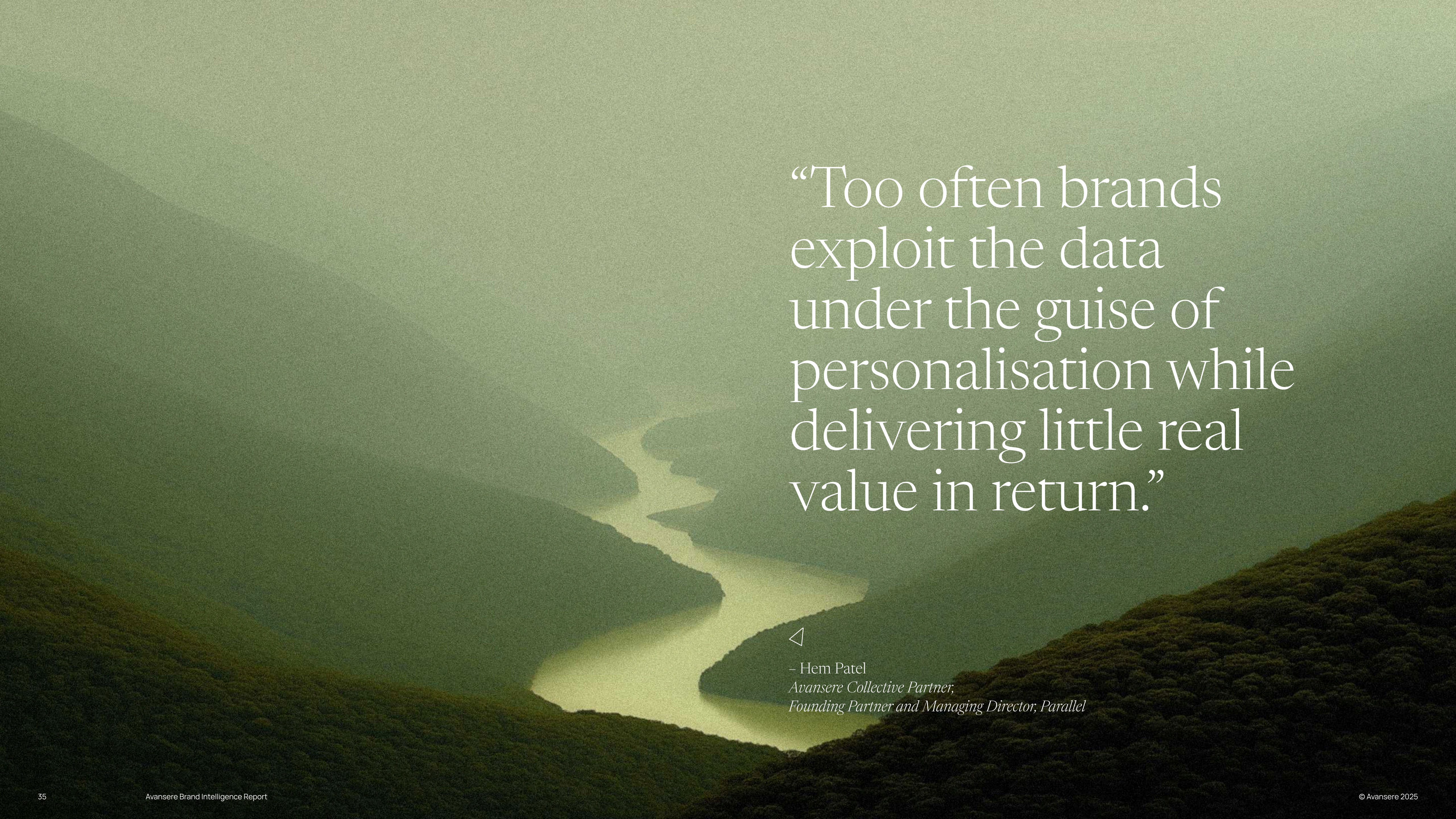
### Rethinking Metrics

This is an opportunity to rethink the breadth and depth of metrics and materially redefine business models. Organisations should track indicators that capture reciprocity, such as:

- Reciprocal value of data shared
- Reciprocal return on engagement

Reciprocity is infrastructure and a strategic imperative.





“Too often brands exploit the data under the guise of personalisation while delivering little real value in return.”



– Hem Patel  
*Avansere Collective Partner,  
Founding Partner and Managing Director, Parallel*

# From buying to belonging: Loyalty in a Tokenised World

## By Jaou Touré

Avansere Collective Partner. Blockchain & Web3 Startup builder, former investor at the World Bank and consultant at McKinsey.

## Synopsis

Jaou is a Web3 strategist and former investor at the World Bank and consultant at McKinsey, where she advised leading tech companies including Airbnb and Amazon. She now works at the frontier of decentralised innovation and token-based ecosystems.

In this piece, Jaou explores how emerging technologies are reshaping the meaning of loyalty. Traditional models built on accumulation and inertia are being replaced by systems based on participation, co-ownership and mutual gain. In this new world, brands that offer belonging will outperform those that rely on repeat purchase alone.



“

The old model “I buy from brands that project an aspiration” is being replaced by a new socio-economic contract “I only buy if I belong”.

”

“

In a world where a large portion of our time is spent online and a vast majority of our interactions are digital<sup>2</sup>, we absolutely need to do a better job reinserting trust and belonging in digital ecosystems.

”

#### **The Trust Deficit and the Rise of Token Economies**

Marx's theory of capitalism centres on the structural antagonism between capital and labor. In the digital age, however, that dynamic is undergoing a profound transformation with the rise of artificial intelligence. AI doesn't entirely threaten to replace labor but in major parts of the economy, it displaces it as the central input into production. Within that AI paradigm, human contributions in the form of data generation, clicks and creativity remain essential. Yet a significant share of the economic value is created by an algorithmic combination of data, energy and compute.

This evolution isn't solely about labor displacement or economic dynamics, it fundamentally reshapes our social contracts. As more individuals fear to become disengaged from value creation, they increasingly seek ownership, participation and governance rights. The accelerated growth of the token economy, rooted in web3 technologies, exemplifies this shift. Early adopters of web3 projects often behave as stakeholders and micro-investors rather than mere consumers. They own digital tokens, participate daily in ecosystems and vote to shape the governance of token economies.

The old model “I buy from brands that project an aspiration” is being replaced by a new socio-economic contract “I only buy if I belong”.

“

Crypto and Web3 aren't gimmicks... They're infrastructure for next-gen loyalty and consumer engagement.

”

#### **Loyalty Programs Are Dead. Long Live Engagement Programs!**

Traditional loyalty schemes (i.e., punch cards and discount tactics) are increasingly outdated in today's digital context of hyper-personalisation and real-time customer activation. According to a McKinsey study,<sup>1</sup> “Driving loyalty alone isn't enough to retain and engage customers, while pricing alone is becoming less effective”. Brands now require more than transactional perks to capture attention. They must cultivate emotional bonds using digitally native tools.

Simultaneously, the deluge of targeted advertising and PR-driven messaging has triggered a credibility crisis for brands. As trust erodes, consumers no longer settle for transactional loyalty, they seek genuine engagement. In a world where a large portion of our time is spent online and a vast majority of our interactions are digital,<sup>2</sup> we absolutely need to do a better job reinserting trust and belonging in digital ecosystems.

That's when crypto and Web3 may enter the digital commerce world to make a difference by introducing new mechanisms for user engagement and authentic connection: token incentives, community governance, and digital ownership. These aren't gimmicks. They're infrastructure for next-gen loyalty and consumer engagement. When users hold an asset and stake it (a bit like a fixed-term savings account with rewards) you get one of the strongest signals of long-term endorsement a market can provide. Stakers stay. They advocate. They build alongside the brand. They literally have a stake. From Formula 1 fan tokens to decentralised media.

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01. “Members only: Delivering greater value through loyalty and pricing”.  
Authors: Kelsea Alderman, Oren Eizenman, Jad Hamdan, Jake Hart, Emily.  
02. Online Nation 2024: Media use and attitudes — Online habits. Ofcom, 2024. UK.  
03. Stablecoin surge: Here's why reserve-backed cryptocurrencies are on the rise,  
World Economic Forum, 2025

**The Stablecoin Payment Era Is Coming ...  
and Engagement Might Never Be the Same**

Blockchain technology is still relatively nascent but it is rapidly gaining momentum. And one of the first applications to have gained product-market fit is stablecoins, which are digital representations of fiat currencies (mostly US dollars) on blockchain rails. In 2024, stablecoin payments annual volume reached \$27.6 trillion<sup>3</sup> and quietly surpassed the Visa card network's transaction volume.

Stablecoin use cases are likely to continue expanding on the back of growing market demand and major regulatory milestones. In Europe, the Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation (MiCA) was established in December 2024 and provided the EU's first legal framework for stablecoins. In Hong Kong, the Stablecoins Bill was passed in May 2025. In the United States, the GENIUS Act, signed into law on July 18, 2025, has established the first federal framework for stablecoins. Meanwhile, governments across the world from Nigeria to Brazil are working on establishing their own regulatory frameworks.

These regulatory frameworks are great news because they make these new tech instruments much safer to use for individuals globally by imposing verifiable reserve standards, audits and licenses on issuers. With safer stablecoins, more can now be done to leverage their superpowers: programmability, verifiability and digital governance (on top of low transaction cost and speed).

So we ought to ask ourselves: Will the growing role of stablecoins in the payment stack expand into the user engagement stack? Will the world's first compliant internet-native form of money help us close the growing Reciprocity Gap?



“

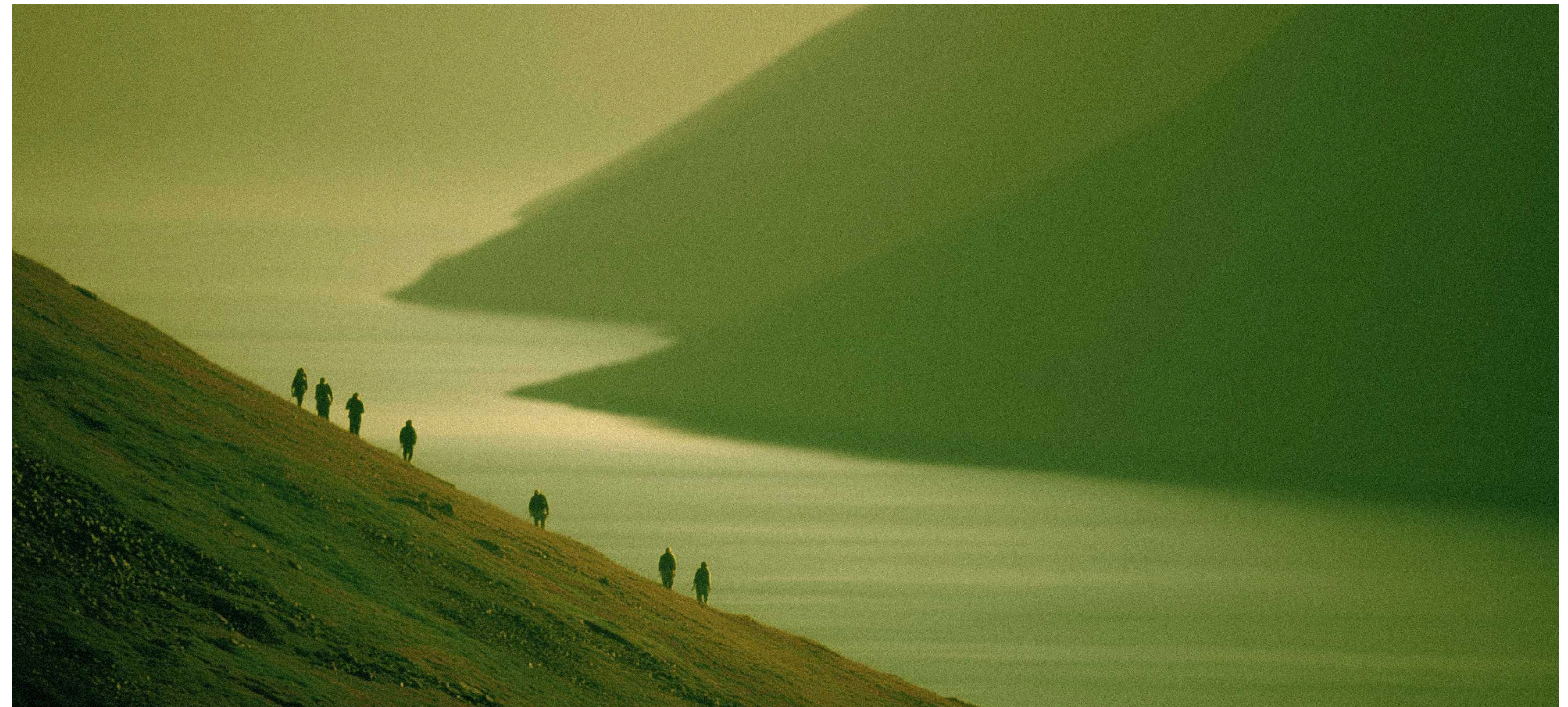
In 2024, stablecoin payments annual volume reached \$27.6 trillion and quietly surpassed the Visa card network's transaction volume.

”

“

Will the growing role of stablecoins in the payment stack expand into the user engagement stack?

”



“Brands need to be much more transparent with their customers about how they are creating value, what their goals are and what the implicit bargain is between everyone.”



– Michael Newton  
*Avansere Collective Partner,  
CEO Qorium and ex-VP Nike*

# Brands as Beacons: How to Empower the 89%

**By Matthew Phillips**

Avansere Collective Partner. Groundswell  
Lead and ex-United Nations.

“  
89% of people globally  
want stronger climate action  
presents an unprecedented  
opportunity.  
”

## Synopsis

Matthew leads Groundswell, a climate initiative backed by the Bezos Earth Fund, Global Optimism and the Systems Change Lab. He previously held senior roles at the UN Climate Change Secretariat and helped launch the Race to Zero campaign.

His opinion piece highlights the power of the silent supermajority – the 89 percent of people who support stronger climate action. He argues that brands are uniquely placed to activate this belief and help people move from climate paralysis to participation. By offering agency, not advocacy, brands can become a force for mobilisation.

## The Untapped Majority

We are losing the narrative battle on climate action. The revelation that 89% of people globally want stronger climate action presents an unprecedented opportunity<sup>1</sup>. This supermajority exists across political divisions but remains untapped and unorganised. The forces of division have weaponised climate into a powerful "us vs. them" message, with "eco-dictatorship" narratives gaining traction while their misinformation spreads up to 6 times more effectively than factual climate content on key platforms. This creates a perfect storm: brands struggling with consumer trust while society fragments around the issue that will define our future.

This 89% supermajority includes 61% of conservative voters in G20 countries<sup>2</sup>. The climate movement isn't losing because people across the political spectrum don't care—we're losing because we're being outmanoeuvred by opponents who've simultaneously built a coordinated yet asymmetrical narrative infrastructure, while climate advocates continue investing in outdated tactics that fail to make climate action personally relevant or culturally resonant.

The problem isn't public opinion but communication and engagement. People feel alienated by jargon-heavy, elitist language when they're mired in cost-of-living crises, wondering how they'll get to the end of the week, let alone the end of this critical climate decade. Brands have the cultural reach and economic influence to bridge this chasm—making the supermajority visible to itself while closing their own reciprocity gap.



“Brands can become platforms that help people recognise their own collective power.”

“

Smart brands provide hope and agency rather than guilt and despair.

”

#### From Paralysis to Participation

These days, the pendulum has swung from greenwashing to greenhushing, leaving brands paralysed in a climate of fear. After years of criticism for overstating environmental claims, many companies have retreated into silence—afraid to speak about climate action, nervous about regulatory scrutiny, unsure how to navigate competing stakeholder demands. This greenhushing represents a massive missed opportunity precisely when bold leadership is most needed.

But brands can break through this paralysis. Instead of asking consumers to trust corporate climate credentials, they can become platforms that help people recognise their own collective power. Rather than “buy our green product,” the message becomes “support the movement you’re already part of.” This shift—from selling sustainability to revealing solidarity—paints an entirely new paradigm where brands escape the greenwashing-greenhushing trap by focusing outward rather than inward.

#### Hope, Agency and Opportunity


Moreover, rather than wasting energy debunking climate misinformation, smart brands can “flood the zone” strategically with evidence of exponential progress. Renewable energy is now the cheapest form of power in most of the world.<sup>3</sup> Electric vehicle sales jumped from 1 in 25 to 1 in 5 cars.<sup>4</sup> Battery sales are doubling every 2-3 years, phasing out half of fossil fuel demand. This creates a powerful competitive edge: brands provide hope and agency rather than guilt and despair.

In a world where market uncertainty has paralysed corporate climate communication, helping the supermajority recognise its power transforms fear into opportunity. This moves brands beyond defensive positioning to offensive opportunity-making. That’s where the real advantage lies: helping people discover they’re not alone, they’re not powerless, and they’re already part of the 89% needed to win the narrative battle, and with it, the climate decade.



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01. CCNow  
02. The 89 Percent Project  
03. International Energy Agency  
04. International Energy Agency's (IEA) Global EV Outlook 2025



“Brands need to draw themselves closer to the truth of what they are doing and communicate honestly.”



– Jeffrey Bowman  
*Avansere Collective Partner,  
Creative Director, OTSDR and Co-Editor The Outsiders*

# From Mark to Companion: Brand as Interface

**By Franco Roncoroni**

Avansere Collective Partner.  
Designer, Ex-R/GA and McKinsey

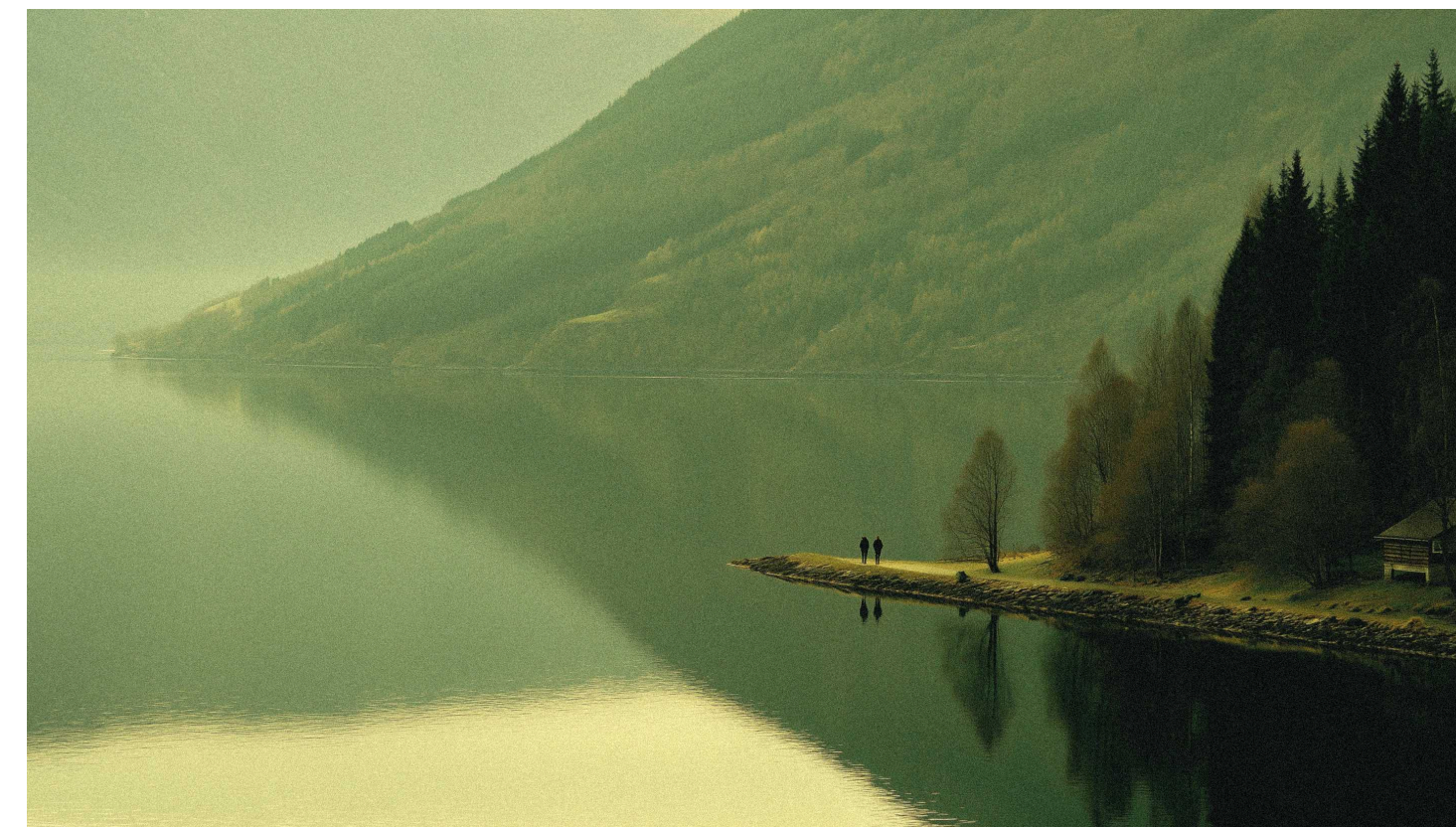
“  
With the rise of AI, brands are no longer static. They can speak, respond, and even remember.  
”

## Synopsis

Franco is a design director whose career spans R/GA, Frog and McKinsey. He works at the intersection of brand, product and service, shaping how brands show up and connect in the modern world.

In his piece, Franco makes the case for a new model of brand behaviour — one rooted in presence, not performance. Brands are no longer just messages or visual systems. They are evolving into interfaces, capable of emotional intelligence, interaction and care. The future brand is not a logo. It is a companion.

“  
We’re in a moment that doesn’t just call for more content or smarter campaigns. It calls for a shift. From brand-as-broadcast to brand-as-companion.  
”



For most of the last century, brands acted like lighthouses—signals of trust, aspiration, and identity. They didn’t need to say much; the glow was enough. But in today’s fast-scrolling, notification-heavy, choice-saturated world, a signal alone no longer cuts it.

People give a lot. Their time. Their attention. Their data. Their emotional energy. And too often, what they get in return feels flat. Automated. Transactional. Like a loyalty card with no real loyalty behind it.

This lopsided exchange creates what we call The Reciprocity Gap. It’s the emotional distance between what a brand promises and what a person actually feels. And the wider that gap grows, the easier it becomes to walk away.

We’re in a moment that doesn’t just call for more content or cleverer campaigns. It calls for a shift. From performance to presence. From persuasion to participation. From brand-as-broadcast to brand-as-companion.

### From Signal to Presence

The traditional model of branding prized clarity. Consistent logos, tight taglines, neatly defined archetypes. The goal was recognition. But in a world of fragmented attention and infinite choice, recognition alone is no longer enough. People are looking for resonance.

Today, it's not just about what a brand says. It's about how it shows up, when it chooses to engage, and why it's there at all. With the rise of AI, brands are no longer static. They can speak, respond, and even remember. Branding moves from a set of touch-points to something more relational, something ambient and evolving.

As a result, the design question changes. It's no longer simply "What story are we telling?" but "What relationship are we nurturing?" A relationship that listens as much as it speaks. One that adapts not just to preferences, but to emotions. A brand in this new context behaves more like a companion than a campaign.

“We’re not just shaping visuals or scripting moments of interaction. We’re designing how it feels to be in the presence of a brand.”

### Designing for Reciprocity

Many brands are racing to personalise. But too often, personalisation means recognising what we clicked, not how we felt. Automating our needs, while missing our tone. Echoing our name, without actually knowing us.

This is the gap between recognition and relationship.

But when a brand acts like a true companion—attuned, responsive, and emotionally intelligent—the return goes far beyond engagement metrics. It builds something more durable: trust. And trust, once earned, compounds over time.

This creates a competitive edge. It's the upside of showing up differently. When people feel understood instead of targeted, remembered instead of tracked, they don't just return. They remain.



### A New Role for Design


This shift reframes the role of the designer. We're not just shaping visuals or scripting moments of interaction. We're designing how it feels to be in the presence of a brand, and just as importantly, how that brand feels in our presence.

Design becomes less about consistency and more about attunement. Less about control, and more about responsiveness. It's about creating moments that linger,

not just function. Moments that feel grounded, relational, and real. As memory becomes a capability of machines, the most human thing a brand can do is make us feel remembered—not through code or predictive logic, but through care, intention, and presence.

That is the power of companionship. That is the competitive edge built by closing The Reciprocity Gap.



A woman with long, wavy hair is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a dark jacket. The background is dark and out of focus, with some warm, yellowish lights visible, suggesting an outdoor setting at night. The overall mood is warm and positive.

“The outdoor industry, across the board, suffers from a gendered reciprocity gap. Most brands can't even properly see its dimensions, or the damage it is doing to their brand and business.”



– Katie Dreke  
*Avansere Collective Partner,  
DRKE Founder and CSO. Ex-Nike,  
Droga5 and Wieden + Kennedy.*

# Digital Product Passports: The Brand-Building Opportunity

**By Nicolas Roope**

Avansere Collective Partner.  
Co-founded Poke and Plumen,

## Synopsis

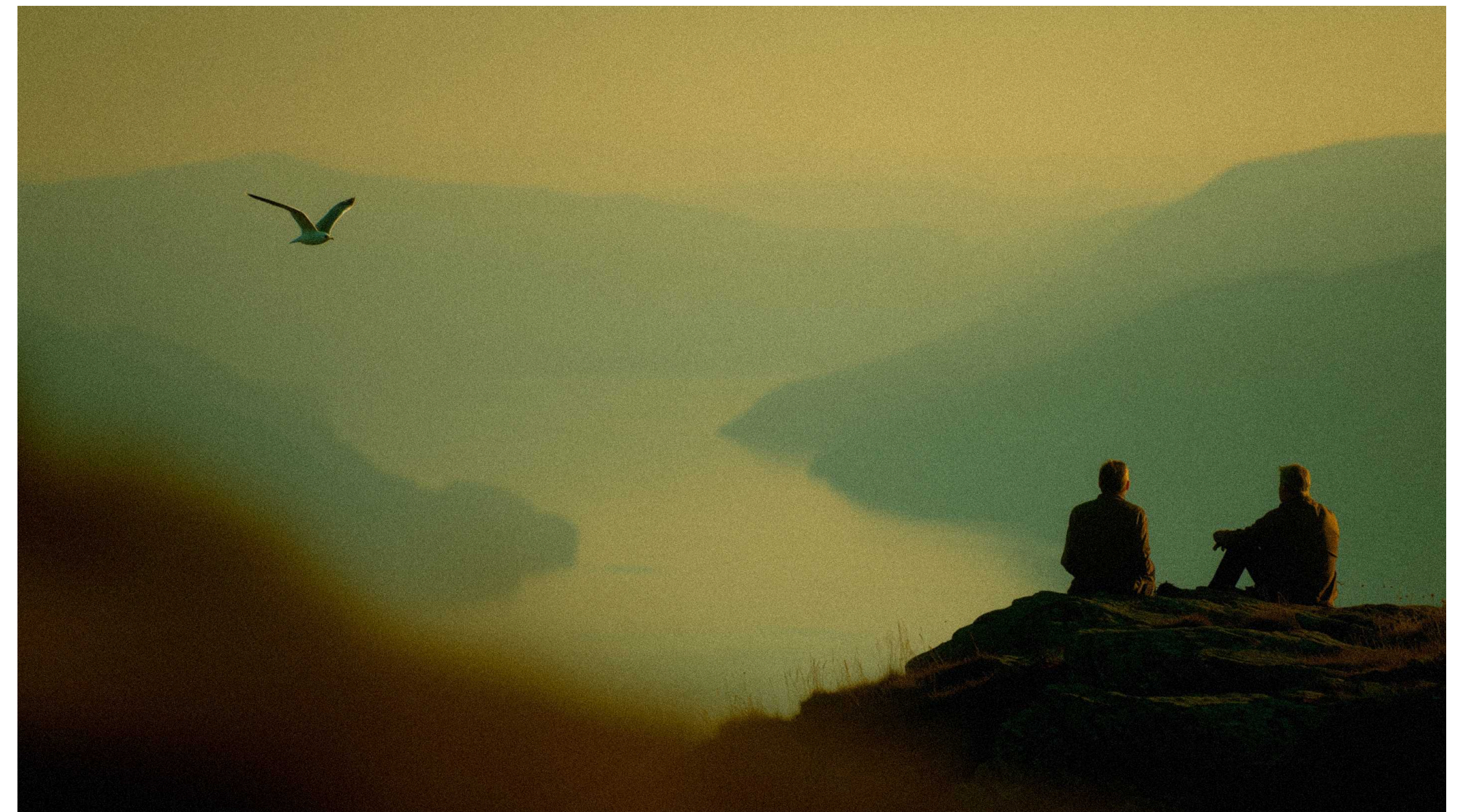
Nicolas is a creative director, designer and technologist whose work bridges the worlds of product innovation, sustainability and storytelling. He has led work for brands including Skype, Google and Virgin Voyages, and co-founded Plumen, whose products are in the permanent collections of MoMA and the V&A.

In his piece, Nic recasts Digital Product Passports (DPPs) as more than compliance. They're a blueprint to reset the brand-consumer relationship. Unique, scannable IDs tether products to transparent histories, unlocking authentication, resale, ownership transfer, and service layers across the product's life. As items accumulate provenance and stories, ownership becomes membership and community. The future product isn't just bought; it's stewarded.

“

Treat DPPs not as a compliance burden, but as an opportunity to design new forms of connection, loyalty, and value.

”



The EU will soon require many products to carry unique IDs through legislation called Digital Product Passports (DPPs). At first glance, this looks like a compliance exercise for CIOs and IT teams. But treating DPPs as an operational tick-box misses a bigger opportunity: rewriting the consumer-brand relationship.

#### **What is a Digital Product Passport?**

The DPP is part of the EU's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR). It aims to promote a circular, sustainable economy by providing transparent information on a product's lifecycle. Rollout will begin between 2026 and 2027, initially targeting high-impact categories such as batteries, textiles, and electronics. Each product will carry a scannable data carrier (QR code or RFID) linking to mandatory, product-specific information.

This isn't just about compliance. By forcing disclosure of materials, sourcing, and production, DPPs empower consumers to make better choices while pressuring producers to raise their standards. Structurally, it resembles blockchain: a ledger connecting unique tokens with unique, "nonfungible" owners.

#### **Elevating Emotional and Brand Value**

It's tempting to see DPPs as just an IT headache. But history shows that small foundational shifts can transform entire industries, like streaming did with music. A unique product record tied to a unique customer may feel unimportant, yet it could reshape ownership, authenticity, and engagement.

One immediate win is authentication. Luxury brands, long plagued by counterfeits, have embraced DPPs as a standardised solution. Chloé partnered with Vestiaire to enable resale authentication. Breitling uses them for repairs, insurance, and warranties. Ulé, a Shiseido brand, links DPPs to personalised services, exclusive events, and rewards. Pinko introduced NFC "birth certificates" tracing garments made from upcycled materials. The Aura Blockchain Consortium is pushing a cross-industry standard so that customers don't face a patchwork of apps and logins.

While these initiatives start in luxury, the implications extend to mainstream brands: genuine, symmetrical relationships with consumers built on tangible value exchange, anchored in trust.

“The bigger DPP opportunity is designing for continuity of ownership. Imagine buying a mountaineering jacket second-hand, only to discover it once summited Everest.”

**From DPPs to Brand Membership and Community**

A product's unique code guarantees authenticity, enables resale, and allows secure ownership transfer. That benefits brands who can profit from secondary markets, and consumers, for whom value is preserved. Suddenly, brands must think beyond the original buyer toward the full chain of future owners and community members. Monetisation across the product's life becomes possible, as do services that preserve or enhance residual value. Cars already operate this way: branded servicing boosts resale, powered by trust in the original manufacturer.

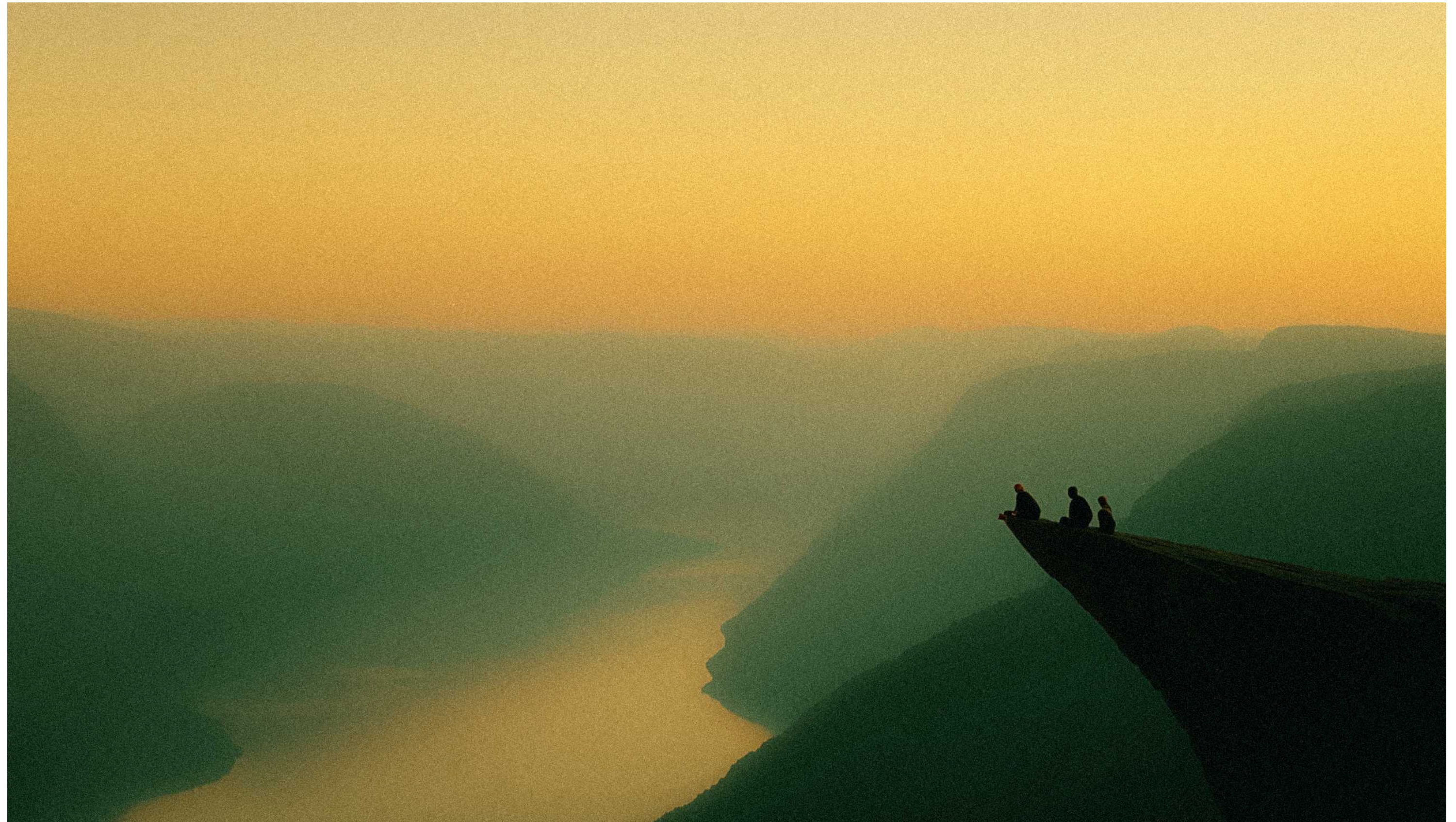
Today, ownership relationships usually end with the warranty's expiration. Once a product ages, it becomes the consumer's problem. DPPs challenge this model. A century ago it would have seemed odd for a vendor to lose interest in their product so quickly; soon, it will seem odd again.

Adding value to a product's record doesn't need to be complex. QR codes already host manuals and provenance data, simple, useful, and easily extended. But the bigger opportunity is

designing for continuity of ownership. Imagine buying a mountaineering jacket second-hand, only to discover it once summited Everest. That story would increase its value, change how you wear it, and give it a "special glow" against vanilla alternatives. With DPPs, products can accumulate history and meaning, reversing the traditional curve of depreciation by creating lasting value for both brand and consumer alike.

This model aligns commercial opportunity with sustainability. Brands face a fundamental contradiction: driving value by selling more while pledging to consume less. Circularity, enabled by DPPs, allows both, extending product life, creating richer ownership journeys, and reducing waste.

The challenge is as much experiential as it is operational. Treat DPPs not as a compliance burden, but as an opportunity to design new forms of connection, loyalty, and value.



Uncover your brand's  
Reciprocity Gap and close  
it to build an advantage.

85%

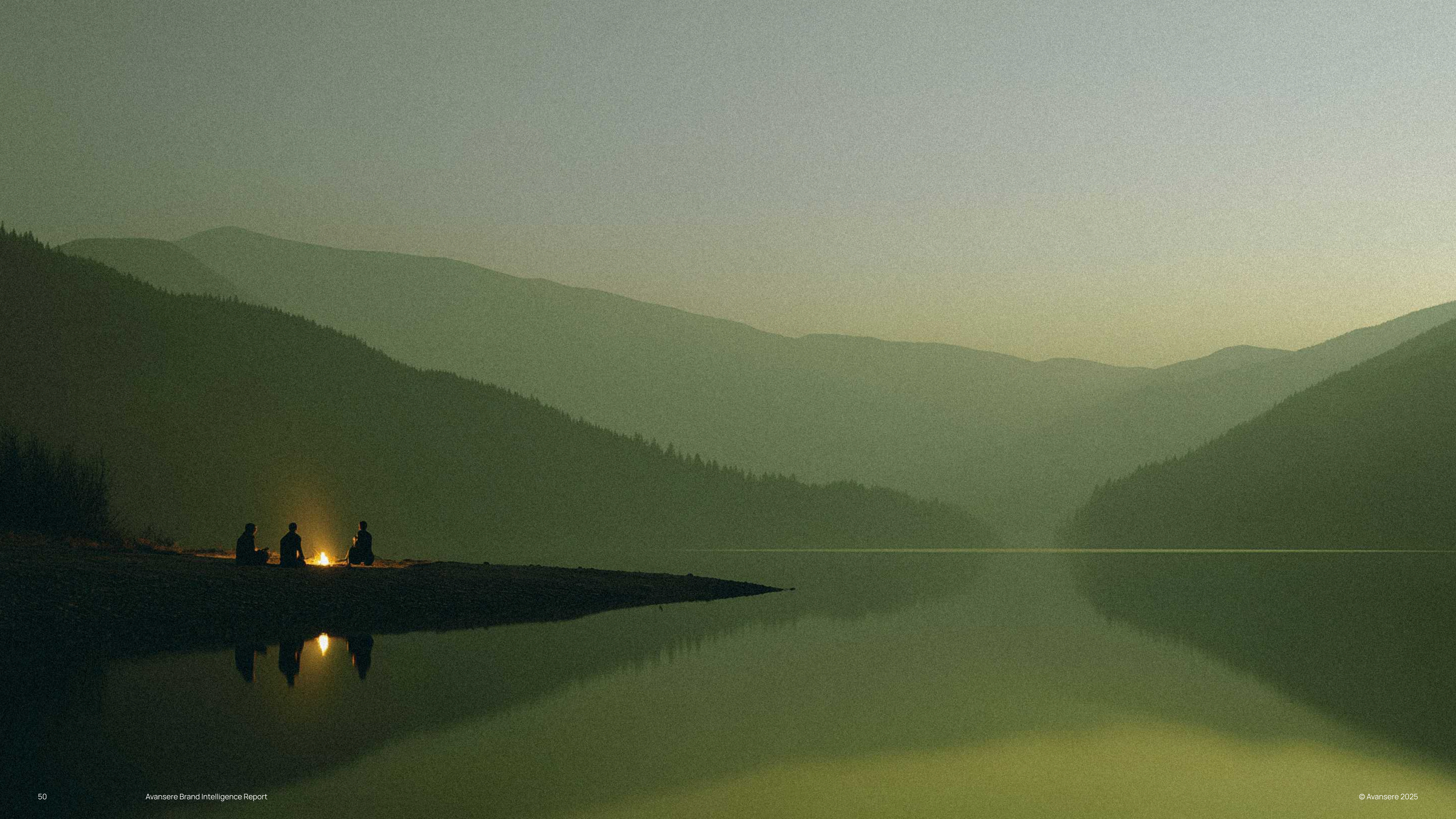
of consumers say brands  
put their own interests first.

74%

of brand leaders agree that  
putting people, society and  
the planet first is essential.

12%

believe their brand is  
delivering on this  
promise today.



# Where awareness shifts to action and reciprocity becomes advantage.

## What We Found

- ◀ **People are raising the bar.**  
They want more than products or perks. They expect mutual value – emotionally, economically and environmentally.
- ◀ **The signals are clear.**  
A widening gap between intention and impact. A growing trust deficit. And a new generation of customers who expect more in return.
- ◀ **The opportunity is now.**  
Brands that close the gap don't just earn loyalty. They unlock a competitive edge.

## Your Next Now

**This report is just the beginning.**  
Every brand has its own Reciprocity Gap to close. Every brand has a niche to succeed within. Every industry has its own rules to follow or break.

### So ask yourself:

1. What's the distance between what your brand promises and what your customers perceive?
2. How can you turn that gap into a competitive edge?

At Avansere, we deliver **bespoke diagnostics** and ideas to uncover your gaps and realise your next now.

[hello@avansere.no](mailto:hello@avansere.no)

*Thank you\**

Avansere

**\* For reading and thanks to:**

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