

The SAMY Social-First Manifesto

Making brands matter
in the social universe

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A note from the founder

This is probably the most exciting and insightful paper we've put together to date.

We are now 1000 Samys worldwide, and lately we've been noticing that we are all talking about the same things. Whether in London or in Miami, Milano or Mexico City, our clients are facing the same issues, our colleagues are asking themselves the same questions, and our competitors are working frantically to solve the same problems.

We claim to be social-first... but that's not happening if we are not human-first, right?

We want to be culturally relevant... but what does culture REALLY mean?

How do we transform a like into a sell?

Where do I find and engage my (real) audience?

And the elephant in the room... How do we actually coexist with AI and harness it to our advantage?

The 11 experts we've brought together on these pages live, breathe, and dream social. They work with over 300 (very) active clients across the globe and launch 40 new campaigns every week. In fact, they release a new piece of content every MINUTE. So yes—they do know a thing or two about what makes brands matter.

And they are ready to share it with us!

One last thing: if at any point something in these pages resonates with you, sparks a thought, or makes you linger a little longer (or scroll back up!)—then we've done our job. You can return the favor by sharing it with someone who might find it helpful, too.

Enjoy the read!

Meet our social-first defenders

Who are they? →

The eleven bold, forward-thinking leaders we've brought together to explore strategy, creativity, culture, and intelligence in this fascinating social-first universe work with over 300 clients worldwide—including Diageo, Microsoft, KIA, The North Face, Netflix, L'Oréal, and Samsung—across 55 markets and 18 global offices.

Patricia Aragón,
Global Director of eCommerce Emerging Solutions at SAMY.
Probably calculating influencers' ROI while you're still reading this.

Sergio Barrientos,
Strategy Advisor at SAMY.
A brand-time traveler.

Agostina Causarano,
Global Head of Accounts and Operations at SAMY.
Part brand therapist, part growth architect.

Jayson Fittipaldi,
Head of Creative US at SAMY.
A seasoned creative.

Alex Hill,
Chief Strategy Officer at SAMY.
Strategic by nature, surfer by choice.

Julia Kaiser,
Head of Intel Americas at SAMY.
Recently promoted to Head of Songwriting at home by her five-month-old, Sara.

Jari Lähdevuori,
Executive Creative Director at SAMY Nordics.
Goes by the Japanese name Haru if you misplace your right hand on the keyboard.

Santiago Lucero,
Global Chief Creative Officer at SAMY.
A rare species: a vegetarian Argentine.

Joe Moring,
Social Media Director at SAMY UK.
Considering early retirement after going viral on TikTok.

Dee Nuncio,
Head of Strategy at SAMY US.
A birdwatching enthusiast.

Ricky Pombo,
Head of Influencer Marketing Europe at SAMY.
Young Lions winner and office outfits influencer.



Probably calculating influencers' ROI while you're still reading this.

Patricia Aragón,
Global Director
of eCommerce
Emerging Solutions.

From Likes to Buys: The Evolution (and Reality Check) of Social Selling

Remember when a “like” felt like the ultimate KPI? We built content strategies around engagement, obsessing over reach, shares, and saves. And while some of these metrics are still relevant to build stronger relationships with consumers, the game has changed.

Fast forward to today: brands aren't just chasing attention. They're chasing action. This shift is fueled by a changing consumer behavior and a charged people-powered digital ecosystem that evolves by the minute.

We're in a social-first world, where the rules are constantly being rewritten by platforms, creators, and culture, and as a social-first company, SAMY aspires to be the best at this game.

Social commerce isn't a trend anymore. It's a business channel. From TikTok Shop to Amazon lives, from affiliate creators to product-tagged UGC, social selling is reshaping the path to purchase, shortening it, simplifying it, and making it scroll-stopping. It's not about pushing products; it's about creating moments that feel real, immediate, and shoppable.

We watched this ecosystem change and thrive across the years, and what we've learned is simple: the future of commerce isn't transactional, it's relational.

Consumers no longer separate entertainment from shopping. They expect brands to be present where they discover, decide, and buy all in one seamless swipe. And they expect creators to be part of that journey, not just amplifiers but authentic sellers in their own right. Which is why choosing the right creators is more crucial than ever, as one of the main key decisions that are within our power in social commerce.

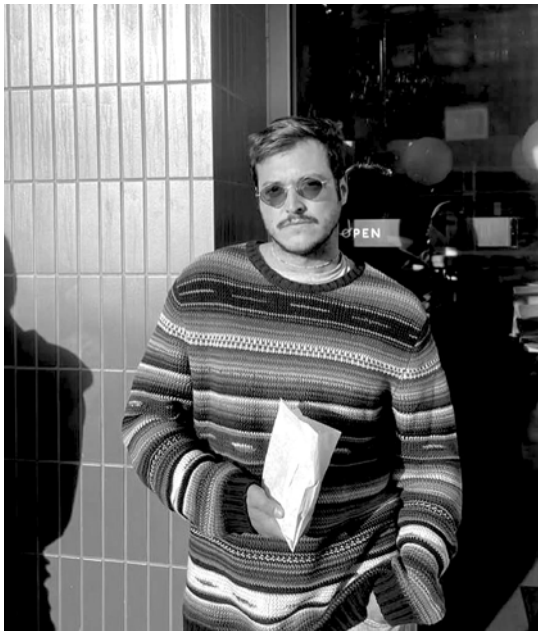
Winning in this space means understanding that the old playbook doesn't apply. It's not about broadcasting, it's about co-creating. Not just storytelling, but story-selling. It's not about viral reach- it's about meaningful results.

Social selling is still evolving, but one thing's clear: likes may spark interest, but only trust and relevance convert.

And for brands willing to lean in, adapt fast, and build with creators, not just through them. This new era offers unprecedented opportunity.

So next time someone asks, “How do we get more likes?” flip the script.

Let's talk about how we turn those likes into buys.



Young Lions winner and office outfits influencer.

Ricky Pombo,
Head of Influencer
Marketing Europe
at SAMY.

Sergio Barrientos,
Strategy Advisor at
SAMY.



A brand-time traveler.

Beyond Platform Presence: Why Legacy Agencies Can't Achieve Social Velocity Without a Human-First, Integrated Core

Nearly every agency is "going social" these days. From heritage creative shops to legacy media giants, social media departments are cropping up everywhere. But simply adding a social team, or even a few savvy content creators, isn't enough.

These traditional agencies, rooted in decades of advertising-first thinking, still operate within structures that are too slow, too siloed, and too removed from the cultural pulse to truly thrive in a social-first world.

The old handoff model, where strategy passes the baton to creative, which then tosses it to social for final amplification, feels like a relic. In today's real-time, relevance-driven landscape, this process isn't just inefficient; it's ineffective.

Achieving true social velocity, moving at the speed of culture, not just content calendars, requires a fundamental shift.

It's not about building a social team as an add-on. It's about reimagining the core of how a brand shows up in the world, starting with a deep understanding of human behavior and the fluid nature of modern identity and culture.

Social relevance isn't a campaign. It's a capability.

What separates culturally resonant brands from those that feel out of sync isn't the size of their social budget or the number of platforms they're on. It's their ability to listen, interpret, and act with empathy in real-time.

That requires an integrated model where intelligence, strategy, creative, community management, and insights aren't separate silos, they're in constant dialogue.

Legacy agencies often lack this fluidity. Their structures were built for broadcast: predictable, polished, and controlled.

Social, on the other hand, is unpredictable, participatory, and demands imperfection. It's where brands are expected to have a point of view, not just a message. That's hard to do when teams are built around delivering assets, not cultivating conversations.

Being platform-present isn't the same as being culturally fluent.

Brands don't earn cultural capital just by showing up on TikTok or Instagram. They earn it by demonstrating they get it, the humor, the nuance, the subtext.

That kind of fluency can't be manufactured in a brainstorm or retrofitted into a campaign. It comes from teams that reflect the culture they're speaking to and who are empowered to act in the moment.

This is why a human-first, integrated core matters. It puts real people, creators, strategists, analysts, and community voices, at the center of the work. Not just to produce content, but to shape what a brand means in a social context. When empathy leads and silos fall, brands can finally match the pace, tone, and relevance of the world they're trying to connect with.

Social isn't a channel. It's the water we're all swimming in. And unless agencies evolve their core operating systems to match this reality, they'll keep missing the cultural moments that matter most.

Because social isn't a silo, it is a system shift. Stop building departments, start building behaviors.



Agostina Causarano,
Global Head of Accounts
and Operations at SAMY.

How to Pitch Perfect: Real Lessons from a Not-So-Perfect Pitch

*Part brand therapist,
part growth architect.*

It wasn't an a cappella showdown, but pitching to a major brand has its own version of high-stakes performance. The moment the client walks in, everything shifts. Every word, every pause, every slide — it's all choreographed to connect.

Especially in social media, where success hinges on real-time cultural relevance. Spoiler: nothing revolutionary — just the kind of thing that hides in plain sight when you're too busy trying to impress.

After nearly a decade working in this space, I've learned that strong creative ideas aren't enough. In social, you're entering a conversation already happening, and to truly add value, you need to understand what people are laughing at, debating, boycotting, or celebrating.

You need to go beyond trends and into behaviors. And you have to do it while delivering results.

For a recent pitch to a well-known heritage brand looking to “get social,” we went all in.

We built a concept rooted in digital behaviors, not just demographics. We showed how the brand could move from broadcasting to belonging through reactive content, strategic timing, and platform-native storytelling.

We even predicted the likely tone of the comments section (because if you're not planning for comments, you're not planning for social).

We prepared thoroughly. Refined every slide. Practiced every transition. The thinking was sharp, the creativity was tight, and the strategy was clear.

They loved it.

And then... they picked someone else.

Their feedback? “It felt too complete. We weren't sure where we fit in.”

It was a moment of reflection. The ideas were solid. The execution was strong. But we missed something fundamental: space.

We hadn't left room for collaboration, challenge, or co-creation. We'd pitched something too polished, and in doing so, unintentionally excluded the client from the process.

Here's what that experience taught us, beyond just chemistry:

1 | Leave Room to Co-Create

Clients don't want a finished product. They want to be part of the journey. Build in areas where their voice can shape the outcome.

2 | Make the Strategy Feel Shared

Even the best thinking needs to feel accessible. Present ideas in a way that sparks discussion, not just admiration.

3 | Listen Before the Pitch, Not Just After

Sometimes we listen best after the decision. But real insight comes from active listening before and during, not just presenting, but sensing the room.

4 | Clarity > Completeness

A pitch isn't the final word — it's the start of a conversation. Clarity of direction is more important than covering every detail.

We didn't win that pitch. But we walked away better. In the next one, we brought strong thinking — and open space. We left room for questions. For ownership. For alignment. And... we're still waiting on procurement.



A seasoned creative.

Jayson Fittipaldi,
Head of Creative US
at SAMY.

AI Prompting Humans to be More Human

As AI-generated content continues to flood our social-first world, we've all encountered moments where something just feels... off. Sometimes it's subtle—an extra finger, a misplaced thumb—other times it's glaring, like limbs that start or end unnaturally.

While AI often stumbles when trying to replicate human realism, paradoxically, it's also become a powerful tool in helping us connect more deeply from a cultural point of view. Here's how.

The Challenge

In a world where algorithms drive velocity and attention is currency, brands face a critical question: how do we truly matter? Today's audiences aren't passive consumers—they're socially engaged, culturally aware, and expect authenticity in every interaction.

To break through the noise, it's not enough to show up. Brands must belong. That starts with adopting a human-first approach—not as a campaign angle, but as a foundational philosophy.

The AI Factor

Putting real people, along with their emotions, behaviors, and cultural context—at the center of brand decision-making is no longer optional. Understanding values, language shifts, identity signals, and evolving habits isn't just a research function; it's the pulse of cultural relevance.

Achieving this requires real-time intelligence. By using AI-powered listening tools, brands can constantly calibrate against culture, capturing signals from niche subcultures to mass movements. This gives teams a unified view of conversations, sentiment, and social energy before trends go mainstream.

The Human Factor

But this isn't about replacing humans. It's about empowering them. AI informs, but humans decide. We're seeing a subtle shift—a role reversal, even. Instead of just prompting AI, we're entering an era where AI prompts us to be more human. It's not about automation for its own sake—it's about amplifying the human strengths that matter most.



Alex Hill,
Chief Strategy Officer
at SAMY.

Why Emotional Connection Is Key for Brands in a Social Universe

*Strategic by nature,
surfer by choice.*

Welcome to the algorithmic age.

It's a time where we can see more, find more, and consume more than ever before.

Here, media platforms have redefined the rules of engagement - prioritising content that resonates in a space of eternal discovery.

They've shifted from enabling peer-to-peer socialising and consumption to global interaction and exploration.

The traditional 'passive' audience is dead.

This environment has ended traditional consumer behaviour, and evolved audiences with diverse wants, needs, expectations, and attitudes.

They aren't just passive 'recipients' but active participants who use this space as a digital passport to discover, contribute and enjoy.

Now, they expect brands to align with their values, support their lifestyles, and co-create their cultures.

Consuming seamlessly across an ever expanding social universe.

Today's audiences scroll endlessly yet consume effortlessly over a fragmented media landscape.

They cruise between content & ads, creators & influencers, podcasts & how-tos - and beyond - without ever treating each moment in silo.

They connect to content in different ways, but always demand relatability, authenticity and relevance.

They don't just discover and buy 'things' - they discover and buy into communities, cultures, and identities.

Evolving from awareness to affinity.

While the playing field and target audiences for brands have evolved, their goals haven't.

They still need audiences to know their brand, understand their product, and buy it - but the strategies and tactics needed to achieve it all, have.

Brands that just compete endlessly for a moment of attention will fail - but those that also strive for relevance, emotional connection, and relationships will succeed.

In fact, it's proven those that are emotionally connected to a brand are twice as valuable than those that are just 'satisfied'.

For brands, emotional resonance and connection isn't just beneficial - it's essential.

Just ask Liquid Death. The North Face. Dove. They focus on awareness, and affinity.

Moving from funnels to ecosystems.

To build meaningful relationships and connection, we need to stop thinking 'advertising first', and start thinking 'human first'.

Traditional approaches are built around awareness and performance campaigns. Siloed TV and print ads, big productions, and a 'one size fits all' approach.

Modern approaches focus on building messages, experiences and journeys that are targeted, integrated, and adaptable.

When our world is dynamic, our marketing needs to be too.

In this model, the focus needs to be on creating a continuous and connected loop of engagement, where customers not only discover, interact and purchase, but promote, advocate, and align - for the long term.

Making emotions happen.

How can brands and agencies build connection using this model?

Understand - utilise social listening and research to truly understand the conversations happening around your brand and industry, and audience attitudes, behaviours, needs, preferences. Let them write the brief.

Define - build a communications plan and brand strategy that's geared toward real audience issues and needs, vs simple brand aspirations. Mix platforms, tools, spaces and places, and create a unified, human first journey that supports up, not sells down.

Create - build content, experiences, campaigns, always on activity, communications and chat that is created for the culture of your audience, or reacts to it. Lean on storytelling, creator collaboration, localisation, community interaction, and co-creation.

Optimise - measure emotional and brand metrics - like sentiment analysis and brand affinity - to truly understand impact, and adapt messaging and targeting accordingly.

What it all means.

In our social-first universe, where consumers are inundated with content, emotional connection is the differentiator. It's not about being the loudest voice but the most resonant one. For brands, CMOs and agencies, the challenge is to shift from just chasing awareness to cultivating affinity.

Because in the end, it's not just about being seen—it's about being felt.

It's about making brands matter.



Julia Kaiser,
Head of Intel
Americas at SAMY.

The Trap of Cultural Relevance

Recently promoted to Head of Songwriting at home by her five-month-old, Sara.

For quite a while now, cultural relevance has been an omnipresent concept, popping up in practically every brief, conversation, and conference.

And that's a good thing, of course. But it can also become one of those shiny traps we in advertising tend to fall for, those ideas that are good and important but that, once we start hyping them up as the ultimate solution, can actually become counterproductive.

In this case, I'm seeing two main issues getting in our way.

Issue #1: What We Think Cultural Relevance Means

Something I've noticed over and over is the use of the phrase "cultural relevance" as a fancy way of saying: TikTok trends, funny memes, and whatever's creating buzz on social media. I'm all for brands getting in on that, but isn't that a pretty narrow definition of the word "culture"?

And let's be honest: can we really be culturally relevant if we're just jumping on the same "culturally relevant" topics as every other brand and doing it in a similar way?

Take Bad Bunny's latest album, for example. The buzz around it revealed a huge gap between how people and brands tend to react to cultural moments. People were genuinely celebrating the songs and their messages, posting fun and heartfelt videos of their hometown, their families, their friends, and their travels.

But brands quite literally didn't dare to go past the cover. They just repeated the same joke: two chairs and some corny, mostly forced puns on "Debi tirar más fotos".

They all missed a real chance to join something that was actually relevant to their audience's culture and connect meaningfully with them.

But the most dangerous aspect of treating cultural relevance as just "what's trending on social" is that it makes every brand strive for the same thing, which undermines the very reason brands exist in the first place: differentiation.

Issue #2: Thinking Social Trends are the Only Way to Be Relevant

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for brands using hot topics to really engage with their audiences on social media and beyond.

But it's not a one-size-fits-all solution, especially when it becomes so common that brands start to blend together. It's one way to be relevant, for sure, but there are lots of other ways too.

We could consider creating original entertainment, like Curry's in the UK does with their hilarious TikTok videos. We can also find an insight that really matters to our audience's lives – IKEA did this really well recently with its "Proudly Second Best" campaign targeting young parents.

Taking a fresh take on something we think we already know is often a

winning approach, which CoorDown demonstrated masterfully in their viral campaign, showing people with Down syndrome in a totally different light.

Another great example is AppleTV promoting Severance a couple of months ago with a clever stunt at Grand Central Terminal, reminding us of the power of surprising people in unexpected places (IRL!) with something worth sharing.

One Last Thought on the Future of Relevance

To really nail cultural relevance, we need to think about what we actually mean by culture, make it part of a wider strategy, and ask ourselves questions like:

Is this really helping us connect, or just making us think we are?

How does this contribute to the brand's ultimate goals?

Are we differentiating ourselves effectively when jumping into existing conversations?

Are there other ways to be relevant to our audience that we're missing?

Advertising is ever-changing, always chasing what's next. And it's important not to get too carried away and forget the lessons we learn along the way. Real cultural relevance is key, as is relevance through entertainment or through lifestyle insights – and we need to keep working on each as we approach what I think is the next big shift.

One that will increasingly broaden the gap between the brands that just keep following trends with no clear goal and the ones that resist the urge to be everywhere and seek *strategic relevance* by taking a second to make sure they're being intentional about where they put their efforts.

The brands that understand that and dare to aim for deliberate messages over volume or speed will be the winners.

The AI creativity boom will only make this shift more critical in the long run, since agility and abundance in production won't be a problem, but distinctiveness will. If "joining the conversation" was the key for the last decade, building actual strategic relevance through differentiation will be the urgent priority for the next.



Goes by the Japanese name Haru if you misplace your right hand on the keyboard.

Jari Lähdevuori,
Executive Creative
Director at SAMY Nordics.

From Likes to Lions: The Results Are in for Social- First Brands

Social-first has the last word.

Already has. And will have in the future, too. But don't take my word for it – just look at the numbers.

Let's start at the top: 5.24 billion.

That's how many identities are active on social media right now. And that's more than ever before. We spend about 2.5 hours a day scrolling, tapping, and sharing – that's where it plateaued after the rise during the pandemic.

All of it happens across an average of seven different platforms. Seven!

It's no wonder that marketing spend has followed the audience. Social media has already overtaken TV. According to WARC, Meta alone is on pace to outspend all of global TV advertising in 2025.

Statista projects that in 2025, worldwide social ad spend will hit a jaw-dropping \$256.46 billion – a 160% rise in just six years. And yet, some still treat social as an add-on. A nice-to-have.

Here's the kicker: the best campaigns in the world don't.

We've been analyzing Cannes Lions winners for over a decade – 12 years, 7000+ awarded campaigns. What we've found is clear: nine out of ten of the winners in the last five years have used social media as a key element.

This year, the number hit an all-time high: 92%. These days, it's getting hard to find a world-class campaign that didn't utilize social.

That's not a coincidence. Our deep dive into the Social & Creator Lions category – ever since it launched in 2018 – shows that social-first campaigns aren't just showing up more often. They're showing up bigger.

Measured in impressions (the one metric nearly every winner reports), the results have never been better. The average number of impressions was 5 bn in 2024, and 1,5 bn during 2018-2023 (on average).

Social-first isn't a trend. It's a strategy. A mindset. A measurable advantage. To summarize its essence for any marketer, it might go like this:

It's about ideas not only memorable, but also shareable.

It's about campaigns born to live, not built to die.

It's about executions with real people, all those users, creators, co-workers.

It's accepting low control, embracing emergent.

It's social first, every second.

Now go and make that social magic – aim for the stars (whatever may guide your business), touch the skies (blueskies even), and have fun while doing it (the algorithm will sense it too!).

Let's get social.



A rare species: a vegetarian Argentine.

Santiago Lucero,
Global Chief Creative
Officer at SAMY.

Social-First, Humans Even Before, and Creative Always

For quite a while now, cultural relevance has Social first, social first, social first—those two words are on the lips of every marketer, advertiser, and communicator today.

And it makes sense: if people are spending most of their time on social media, it's only logical that many players who once operated in other media want to learn, understand, and join the game.

But for me, the real question isn't whether to be Social First or not. Now more than ever, there's a deeper layer we can't ignore: being Human First—and Creative even before that.

Because if we want to connect with real people, if we want to be part of their conversations, emotions, and decisions... no algorithm can do that without a powerful idea behind it.

Creativity is the only thing that can turn data into a story. An insight into an unforgettable moment. A product into a shared experience.

So, what does it really mean to be Creative First, Human First, and Social First? First, it means understanding that when a brand communicates, it's speaking to people.

Not to targets. Not to audiences. To human beings.

With contradictions, feelings, needs, whims, intelligence, humor, and a unique curiosity. Forgetting this is the first step toward irrelevance—on social media and everywhere else.

Creativity, when honest and emotionally intelligent, lets brands escape the logic of interruption and become part of culture.

Not by imitating what everyone else is doing, but by creating what no one else dared to imagine. Not by repeating formulas, but by finding a voice that's authentic and different.

I like to think of the relationship between brands and people as a relationship between equals. Would you choose to spend time with someone who only wants to please you?

Or with someone who only talks about themselves, repeating how great they are?

Or would you prefer someone who listens, who understands you, who sometimes unsettles you with a truth, but always leaves you with something meaningful: a good laugh, something to reflect upon, an emotion, or a spark of curiosity?

In the same way, people—whether digital natives or not, Boomers or Gen Alpha—aren't interested in self-centered brands or brands chasing likes.

They care about those who bring something to the table. And that doesn't come from following TikTok trends or repeating what social listening says you should say.

It comes from brave ideas, clear points of view, a sense of humor, emotional intelligence, and a creative sensitivity capable of seeing reality through a different lens.

That's what Creativity is. Making people feel you're wonderful, without them even realizing it. "People don't read ads. They read what interests them. Sometimes that's an ad," said a San Francisco agency in 1950.

It's never been more true than it is today. In this social-first era, ruled by algorithms and noise, the only thing that can make your brand matter is a good idea.

That's why, before being Social First, we must be Human First.

And before that, still—we must be Creative Always.



Joe Moring,
Social Media Director
at SAMY UK.

Community Outreach: The Copy-Powered Content Stream You're Sleeping On

*Considering early
retirement after going
viral on TikTok.*

Year-on-year, we're seeing a 33% increase in the average number of comments on social platforms like Instagram, and some brands are getting more engagement on a single comment than they are from up to 10 pieces of content.

Just breathe that last point in for a moment.

Around half of your monthly content output could be getting less engagement than a single comment.

We're talking no more than five to ten words. This content stream is called 'community outreach' and it's undoubtedly the most important organic social discipline that you've not asked your brand team to mobilise in 2025.

If you have, then you're not just helping your brand, you're helping to maximise the reach of community content, as platform algorithms use comment engagement as a key driver for reach in 2025... so they'll be very thankful [psst you'll also get a follower for life].

In one of the examples we recently saw, a member of the community suggested that a car brand would never comment on their content. This was an opportunity for us to create impact on some community UGC, with followers from the auto vertical watching on, helping their content reach over 1 million people.

When we execute community outreach, we're not talking about following the flood of admin sheep in the sea of social slop to the next big shiny trending beacon, all leaving the same comment...

We're talking about leaving the right comment, in the relevant place, at the right time, aka what we would consider industry-leading Community Management [CM].

Speaking generally, outside of outreach, if you're still sleeping on CM, you're missing out on a huge copy-powered content stream that could benefit your engagement and follower numbers by the time your next QBR comes around.

For years, brands have seen CM as a 'nice to have' - answering comments on owned posts and customer complaints. An easy task for most content managers to support, driving to wider customer service teams in times of crisis.

Well, those days are officially over. In 2025, you can't expect the conversation to come to you. You need to go fishing for it. You need a dedicated resource, backed with an effective outreach strategy, to find those big fish (the highly engaged comments that drive thousands of potential followers to your profile or drive content reach).

Do the math. Imagine you get 5 'big fish' per week. That could be the equivalent of up to 50 social media posts in terms of engagement.

Plus, we've proven that high engagement on a comment helps to grow your follower count (through the correlation of highly interacted comments and follower spikes).

If you remove assets for a moment, the copy is the rawest representation of the brand. This content medium is all about TOV, perspective, humour, wit, speed - everything fans love about a brand.

It's time to stop sleeping on your community management strategy. This is a non-negotiable. Outreach to us on this post for more info.

After all, we know a thing or two about industry-leading CM.



A birdwatching enthusiast.

Dee Nuncio,
Head of Strategy at
SAMY US.

Realer Than Ever: The Rise of IRL x URL Communities

Community is no longer a passive brand value—it's a practice.

Across beauty, fashion, wellness, and lifestyle, we're watching niche communities do something bigger than engage. They're showing up. They're building culture, shaping narratives, and turning everyday people into micro media machines—on and offline.

Don't be surprised when your favorite brands are having neighborhood pop-ups all spring and summer!

"The brands thriving in 2025 aren't just making content—they're creating spaces where belonging, participation, and play come alive."

This environment has ended traditional From Loyalty to Leadership: Platforms Driving Advocacy

Enter platforms like TYB and Roster. They're not just loyalty tools—they're brand-building infrastructure. Think Rare Beauty, Ceremonia, Saie, and Topicals. These brands treat their communities like collaborators, not customers.

The payoff? Feedback loops, product seeding, and UGC that reads like friendship, not a feed drop.

Drugstore staples are leaning in, too. ChapStick launched its TYB community to energize fan-powered storytelling, while brands like e.l.f. and Milani have built strong reputations around creator-led campaigns and value-first access.

These aren't just budget-friendly brands—they're behaviorally rich ecosystems ready to activate.

IRL Moments Made for Social

That same energy is spilling offline. Ulta Beauty World is part tradeshow, part pop-up fantasy land. It's made for glam stations, storytelling booths, and shared selfies with strangers-turned-besties. The content isn't a bonus—it's the point.

"These aren't just photogenic activations—they're narrative-building devices."

Trips That Tell a Bigger Story

Co-branded getaways are hitting differently. Halfdays x ILIA in the snow. Beis x Poppi at Stagecoach. It's brand universe expansion in motion—and it builds cultural capital. Not just products in pretty places, but context, chemistry, and content that converts.

And let's talk consumer trips. Ouai's Take Me With Ouai brought everyday fans into the NYC glow-up. Glow Recipe's TYB-powered Seoul adventures turned users into global beauty insiders. These aren't just travel moments—they're trust builders.

"When a customer feels like they're part of something bigger—and gets to act on it—that connection becomes sticky."

Games, But Make It Cultural Currency

Now entering the chat: game-show style formats. Big Silly Trivia Game is the moment. Think downtown girls' night meets sleepover energy, wrapped in pop culture. It's invite-only, prize-loaded, and feels more like a group chat with stakes than a marketing play. This is gamification done right.

Apps Designed for Offline Belonging

People want a connection that doesn't end with a like. Enter Geneva, the app recently acquired by Bumble, billing itself as "the online place to find your offline people." From group runs to creative meetups, it's helping digital-first communities find real-world rhythm.

Tools like Geneva and Tiny Club don't just support community—they activate it. Event invites, group threads, shared calendars. The kind of UX that ends in actual eye contact.

And we can't talk about cult-favorite communities without shouting out Snaxshot. What started as a newsletter for snack disruptors has evolved into a hyper-loyal ecosystem of early adopters, founders, and flavor chasers—united by taste, but bonded through conversation.

The Bottom Line

The brands thriving in 2025 aren't just creating content; they're creating space for belonging, participation, and play. This allows passionate consumers to really co-create in meaningful ways. These living, breathing communities aren't just followed.

They're felt.

This is our Manifesto

We think and act human-first

There's only one way to build lasting human connections in marketing: through human-first thinking (not advertising-first). It's an obvious truth we genuinely live by, understanding who our audiences are, what they need, and how they behave to craft emotional bonds with precision, purpose, and inclusivity. We decode people's values, lifestyles, behaviors, and cultures to **make brands matter in the social-first universe.**

We are culture curators

SAMY's strength lies in our deep cultural understanding, with global awareness but underground knowledge. We navigate the cultural nuances that shape each community, tapping into both expected and unexpected moments that spark affinity and relevance. By uncovering the attitudes, emotions, and patterns behind universal themes—across geographies and languages—we help brands forge meaningful connections with fandoms and subcultures, the co-creators of brand narratives, while **building cultural capital.**





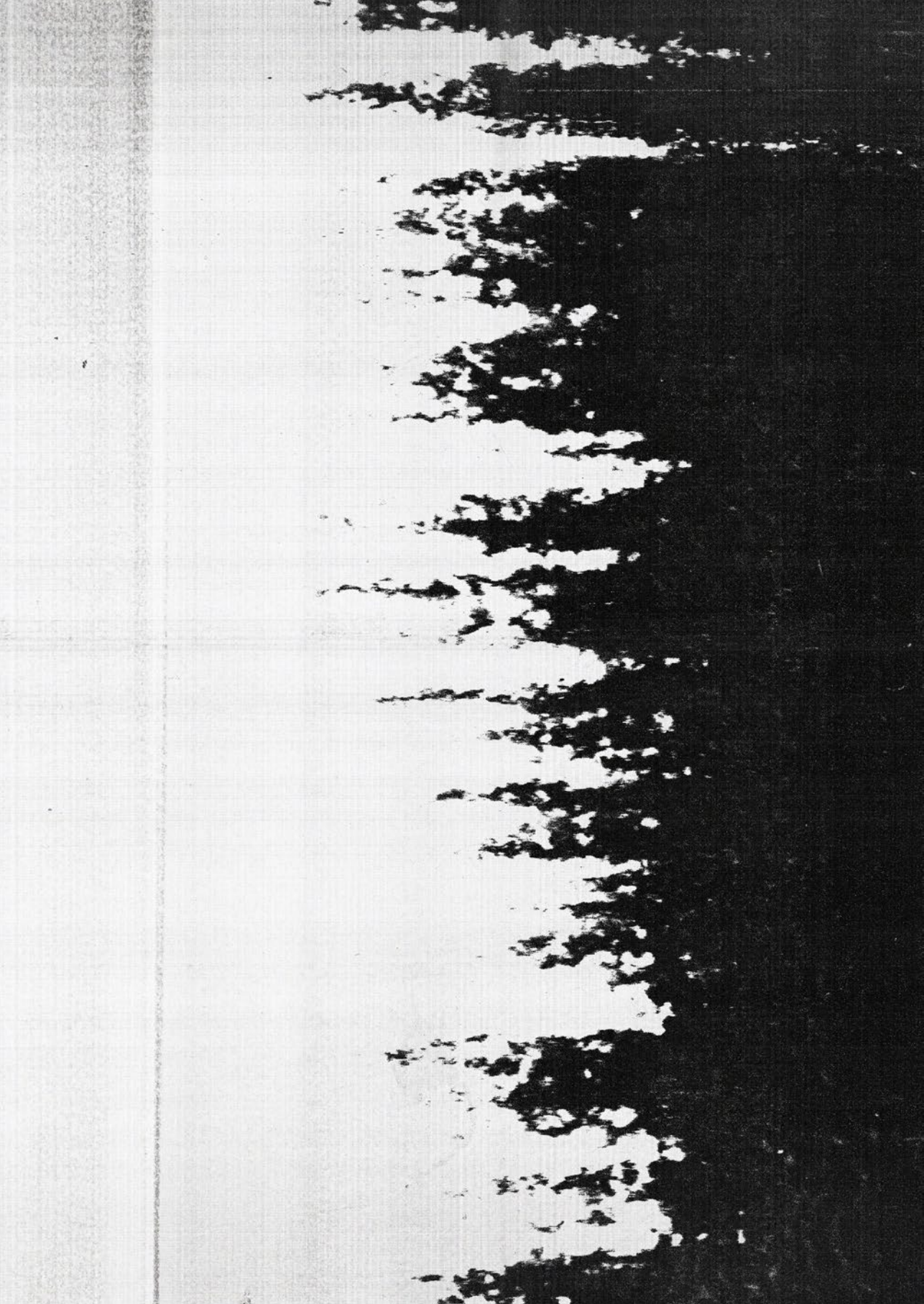
Creativity is our mindset

For us, creativity isn't just about delivering a concept, campaign, or activation: **It's a mindset** that guides everything we do. It's also the key to turning insights into compelling stories. Through emotional storytelling, authentic activations, and innovative ideas, we ensure brands show up where and when it matters most. Our team has a unique ability to transform intelligence into pioneering, integrated work, led by creatives who know how to unlock potential in a world that never stops changing.

We solve the most pertinent business challenges

We analyze brand and industry challenges and deliver effective solutions. From uncovering audience insights to blending social and influencer strategies, optimizing the customer journey, or building integrated experiences, **we solve every business problem.** We don't do it alone: In partnership with trusted tech leaders like Sprinklr, ViralMoment, TikTok, Meta, Snapchat, and Google—plus our proprietary Intelligence Suite—we craft smarter strategies that engage active audiences who discover, contribute, and enjoy across many platforms.



A black and white photograph of a rocky coastline. The image shows waves crashing against a dark, jagged rock formation. The water is white with foam from the breaking waves, contrasting sharply with the dark rocks and the dark sky. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down at the shore.

**We don't have all the
answers, but we will
find them together**

We enjoy the journey, learning from mistakes, exploring the unknown, and taking bold risks on fresh ideas. We shape this path with our clients: their voices guide every outcome. When we truly understand their ever-changing needs, we're equipped to help them build **emotional resonance** with their consumers—people shaped by attitudes, values, and beliefs. As humans ourselves, we know we don't have all the answers. But we'll find them together, enjoying every step along the way.

S L M Y