

GLOBAL BRAND LAB REPORT

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four



Our brand lab report is compiled by Four's team of retail and lifestyle experts and analyses some of the latest innovations, experimental campaigns and transformative developments, which are keeping iconic destinations, retail and lifestyle brands alive for consumers on a global scale. We also explore how consumer behaviour is changing - now and forever - and how brands are evolving to succeed during this evolutionary time.

Images on this page and the cover are of The Bahamas, our destination spotlight this month. See page 8 to find out more.

CONSUMER TRENDS, CAMPAIGNS & BRAND ACTIVITY

JOHN LEWIS' FESTIVE VENUS FLYTRAP, COKE'S AI GENERATED HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN AND KFC'S KENTUCKY FRIED TURKEY

Three branded snow globes by jewelry brand Astrid & Miyu graced New York's Bryant Park on October 6th, Edinburgh's Calton Hill on October 7th, and London's Carnaby Street on October 8th. Despite being on-site, viewers won't see the installations until they pull out their phones and witness the captivating CGI-created scenes on Instagram and TikTok. The posts lead to a pre-registration site which launched on October 9th for the advent calendars.

Coca-Cola's latest generative AI initiative, part of a global holiday campaign, introduces Create Real Magic—an AI-powered holiday card generator using GPT-4 and Dall-E 2. Accessible until December 26, the tool allows users to experiment with holiday content, personalize greetings with generative AI-driven text, and share on social platforms. This initiative opens up iconic assets, such as classic Santa Claus depictions from 1931 and the beloved polar bear family introduced in 1993.

Fans of the charming Venus Fly Trap Snapper from John Lewis's 2023 advert can visit the character this festive season in the city. Introduced in the latest festive ad, Snapper is a spiky character planted by a young boy aiming to grow his own Christmas tree. Instead of a traditional Norway Spruce, the planted seed blossoms into a Venus Fly Trap, becoming a beloved part of the boy's family. To celebrate the new festive advert, there's a 15ft tall Snapper installation at John Lewis's Oxford Street shop, visible until Christmas.

KFC has launched a festive campaign responding to requests by customers for fried turkey saying that they'll stick with chicken.

The supermarket chain announced that they wanted to help customers through the cost of living crisis in place of an ad this year. The marketing budget will instead be used to promote its value and own label ranges.



FASHION & LIFESTYLE

KIM KARDASHIAN'S POTENTIAL REBRAND, IKEA'S TOWEL SKIRT RESPONSE AND ALDI'S PIGS IN BLANKETS POP UP



Skims x Swarovski

Kim Kardashian's shapewear brand Skims brand has launched a Christmas collaboration with Swarovski crystal. Skim's has also recently come out with a menswear line. In general, it seems that Kim Kardashian is entering a new era with a rebrand, especially as her reality show appears to become less relevant in popular media and to her audiences.



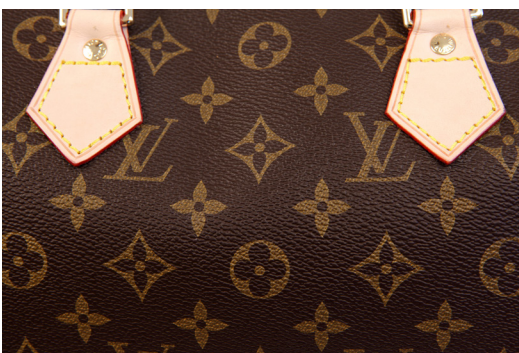
IKEA takes a swipe at Balenciaga with 'towel skirt'

The Swedish brand has brought attention to its Vinarn bath towel in response to Balenciaga's \$925 towel skirt on their Paris AW 2024 runway.



Aldi's Pigs in Blankets Pop-Up

Like Bob Ricard's 'press for champagne' the Aldi Café, located in Camden Passage, will feature a 'press for PIB' button.



Louis Vuitton X Damien Hirst

Louis Vuitton and Damien Hirst are rumoured to be collaborating on a new collection of 'pill' bags. The brand has also recently launched its **new ski collection.**

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

MEAN GIRLS REUNION, ALDI'S SOCIAL MEDIA EMPIRE AND MICROSOFT'S HOLIDAY AI

Lindsay Lohan, Amanda Seyfried and Lacey Chabart reprise roles from Tina Fey's hit noughties comedy. The epic holiday spot promotes its Black Friday deals to customers. The ad features classic scenes from the 2004 movie Mean Girls and features much of the original class, except now they are adults.



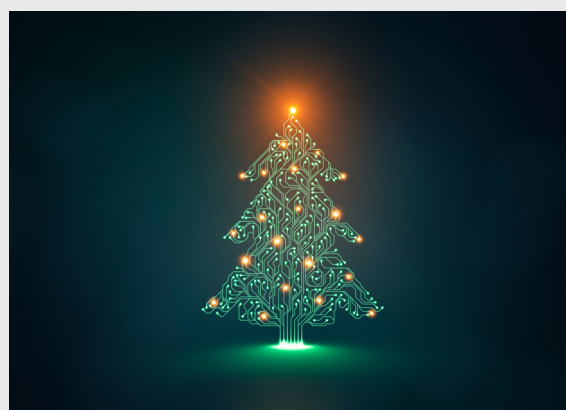
How ALDI reached millions to achieve social media fame

From a spat with M&S over its Cuthbert cake, to launching clothing on TikTok, Aldi notched up almost 2 billion impressions during its three-year social push. Aldi is the winner of the 2023 Marketing Week Award for Long-Term Brand Building Excellence, Aldi regained market share to overtake Morrisons as the UK's fourth-largest supermarket in September 2022.



Microsoft AI crafts digital artwork inspired by holiday traditions around the world

A new campaign from Microsoft celebrates how artificial intelligence can bring the diverse tapestry of holiday traditions to life around the globe. Aptly named 'Make your holiday a masterpiece' shows people using AI to illustrate their most cherished holiday rituals, showing that technology is a tool best powered by humanity.



ARTS & CULTURE

AMAZON'S HEART-WRENCHING ADVERT, SHAUN THE SHEEP COLLABORATIONS AND PERONI'S COMMUNITY AD

Amazon Prime advert

This year's Amazon advert is one to add to the weep list. It tells a short story of three older ladies watching kids sledging during a snow day and thinking "why can't we do this ourselves?". The thought is well why can't they do the same. One of them buys a cushion for her friend and as soon as they set off, they are reliving the glory days of their youth. And guess what - the cushion was bought through Amazon Prime. The message the ad relays hones in on the idea that age is just a number, and everyone can use new technology - namely Amazon's same day / next day delivery services.

Barbour X Shaun the Sheep

Barbour have just done a collaboration with childhood favourite, Shaun the Sheep. Cooked up with all of Aardman's usual wizardry, it sees the farmyard gang getting together to mend their Farmer's patched (Barbour, presumably) jacket.

Peroni: Living every moment by Unbound

This year's Peroni advert was directed by British Bafta-winning director Tom Green. Peroni's Christmas offering follows Nino as he shovels a pathway through the snow in his hometown Torino, which allows the community to join him for a beer. Green's work is a stellar example of a well put together ad, drawing on the importance of community spirit in tough times.



CHRISTMAS ADS 2023

THE FESTIVE SEASON IS HERE ONCE AGAIN AND BRANDS ARE GETTING THEIR SEASONAL ADS OUT EARLY. THEY ARE ALL COMPETING FOR ATTENTION IN UNIQUE WAYS BY EITHER PULLING ON THEIR VIEWERS HEARTSTRINGS OR MAKING THEIR AUDIENCE BURST IN LAUGHTER.

JD Sports launched its Christmas campaign called 'Forever Forward', celebrating over 25 years of the retailer's iconic JD Duffle Bag. British rappers, Central Cee and Kano, star in the nostalgic ad celebrating youth culture.



Waitrose: Just can't get enough by Saatchi & Saatchi

Waitrose's festive advert, starring Graham Norton, centres around a Christmas party where things keep going wrong. However, the supermarket's food ends up saving the day, as the ad points out "when the food's good, everything's good".



Shelter: Good as gold by Don't Panic

In the UK, figures show that 131,000 children are in temporary accommodation this Christmas - an increase of 10,000 since last year. To highlight this, housing and homeless charity, Shelter, has released a poignant festive ad that brings these numbers to life.



ALDI: Kevin the Carrot by Mccann UK

Aldi's Christmas ad takes inspiration from Willy Wonka as it brings back Kevin the Carrot with an array of characters, including Greedy Gluttonous Grape and Sulky Sour Rhubarb, which is full of festive fun and innuendos.



INFLUENCERS & KOLS

ONES TO WATCH



3.7M TikTok Followers

Introducing TikTok sensations Brookie and Jessie, known for their viral dance choreography with hits like Louis Theroux's 'Jiggle Jiggle' (68M views) and Meghan Trainor's 'Made You Look' (59M views). Embracing their role as 'Christmas angels,' the duo stars in Debenhams' Wonderland Is Waiting and Aldi's Christmas ad campaigns.



79K Instagram Followers

Paul Mason, a runway veteran for over three decades, closed Jean Paul Gaultier's final show in 2020. His resemblance to Santa and unique adult-focused joy-bringing mission have propelled him to permanent stardom, making him a year-round Fashion Santa. Mason, embracing the holiday spirit, not only embodies Christmas expertise but also serves as a fashion authority, finding joy in the festive season's short-lived, vibrant styles.



62.1K TikTok Followers

Josy Lopez, a vibrant destination and lifestyle influencer, curates engaging Christmas-themed content. From festive season guides to recommending the best Christmas trees, enchanting places to visit, and delightful Christmas markets, she transforms holiday exploration into a joyous experience for her audience.

DESTINATION SPOTLIGHT

THE BAHAMAS: CHRISTMAS IN THE CARIBBEAN



With 'winter sun' being the number one reason for Brits to go abroad for Christmas, more of us are jet setting off to the tropical destinations to spend our holidays. Swapping the chilly British weather for blue skies and beaches, the Bahamas is the perfect destination for a Christmas in the Caribbean.

The Bahamas is the home of the world's largest underwater cave systems, the third largest barrier reef in the world, as well as multiple abandoned shipwrecks - adventure seekers will have plenty to discover and explore!

With its origins dating to the 18th century, Junkanoo is a colourful carnival celebration that takes place on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. With roots in West African culture, Bahamians parade throughout 16 of the country's islands, wearing intricate costumes and incredible choreography, and offers an alternative for typical Christmas festivities.

Different islands offer different experiences, with Paradise Island boasting big-names Atlantis and the Four Seasons, whereas Harbour Island offers a more intimate vibe with the promise of pink sand beaches..

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PLANNING TRENDS

GLASGOW TIMES' "BANK ON US", BARCLAYS INCENTIVES, & TAX EFFICIENT GIFTS

Glasgow Times launch "Bank on Us" to help struggling families this Christmas

The newspaper has partnered with 39 food banks to ensure no one goes hungry, and are aiming for every child in Glasgow to open a present on Christmas day. Paper bags were inserted into every copy of the Glasgow Times on 15th November for readers who are able to donate – they can fill the bag with food items and hand into a partnered food bank. They are also raising money for a toy drive.



Barclays rewarding new customers with a free £175 before Christmas

High street bank Barclays have launched a new switching offer, giving £175 before November 30th. To receive the offer customers will need to close and switch their current account using CASS, bring over 2 direct debits, download the Barclays app, and join Barclays Blue Rewards.



Gift your family, not HMRC

As inheritance tax bills are soaring and gifting allowances are frozen, UK Citizens are turning more towards gifting money for Christmas to boost financial security for their children and grandchildren, whilst minimising potential tax bills.



IN THE WORKPLACE

THE FIRST “NORMAL” CHRISTMAS IS UPON US, GEN Z’S THOUGHTS ON CORPORATE PARTIES AND GIVING TUESDAY



Pub group Fuller’s set for a merry Christmas as workers flock back to the office

The pub chain, which has around 400 sites in the UK, has said that bookings for the festive period were 11 per cent ahead of last year, setting the scene for the first ‘normal’ Christmas since the pandemic. Simon Emeny, chief executive, said the group was heading into December ‘with a great sense of optimism’.



‘Bah Humbug’ to office Christmas parties as Gen Z would prefer bonuses than spending on festive ‘fun’

Leading recruitment and employment technology company, Career Wallet recently published an extensive workplace survey to give a true overview of working life in the UK. The report highlighted that as employees across the UK are being hugely impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and high interest rates, 9 out of 10 under 35s (91%) would rather their employer use the budget for a Christmas party on staff bonuses instead.



How to cultivate a culture of giving in the workplace

Giving Tuesday, launched in 2012 as a response to commercialism, has grown into a global movement, with 35 million participants contributing \$2.7 billion in 2021 and \$3.1 billion in 2022. Corporate involvement has raised concerns about diluting its altruistic essence, emphasising the need to balance corporate engagement with individual generosity.

GIFT SEARCHING

TIKTOK HAS SURPASSED GOOGLE FOR GIFT SEARCHING



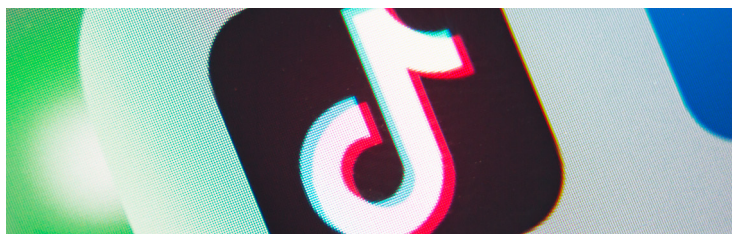
TikTok is becoming more than a social media platform

TikTok is fast-becoming more than just a social media platform, but also a search engine, where users look for inspiration for ideas.

According to Adweek, 40% of GenZ now turn to TikTok/Instagram instead of traditional Google search to be inspired.

Our Mapper360® insights also evidenced that TikTok now surpasses Google for gift searching.

TikTok has even started the TikTok shop, where many shoppers have reported it to be 'way too addictive'.



Total of 135K posts with 962M views around #giftideas on TikTok in the last 12 months in the UK.



204% increase in TikTok conversation volume around #giftideas from 2020 to 2023 in the UK.

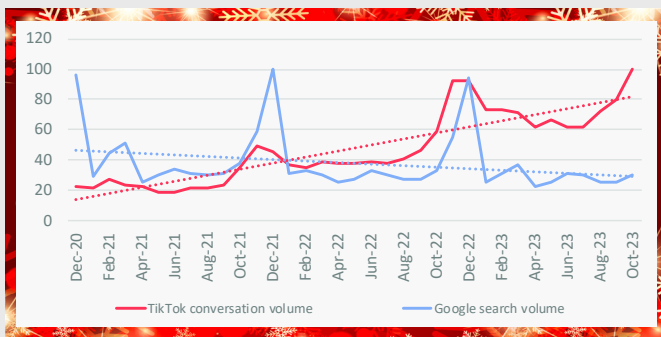


6.8K online mentions of TikTok shop since it was launched in Nov 2022, with a 88% increase over the last 6 months.

TIKTOK IS BECOMING THE NEW SEARCH ENGINE

PEOPLE ARE SHARING ON TIKTOK CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS, WISHLISTS, AS WELL AS HACKS AND DIY TUTORIALS

Interest of 'gift ideas' over time



Related interests

DIY & handcrafts, vlog, beauty, romance and relationships

Related hashtags

#giftforher #giftbox #giftforhim #christmasgift #diygift

There is a **spike** of people looking for gift ideas around **November & December** every year.

An interesting difference now is that **TikTok conversation** on 'gift ideas' also sees an **overarching rising trend from 2020 to 2023**, with interest levels being higher one year after another.

Increases by 204% from 2020 to 2023

Whilst **search volume** on Google **decreases** slightly over the years.

Decreases by 17% from 2020 to 2023

Evidently, TikTok has now surpassed Google as the platform for gift inspirations.



@angelsign_



@jadenversluis



@charmingworlds.com



@listsbymillie

TIKTOK SHOP

VOLUMES OF MENTIONS OF TIKTOK SHOP IS EVENLY SPLIT IN TERMS OF GENDER, JUST SLIGHTLY SKEWED TOWARDS FEMALE (55%).

HOWEVER, THESE PEOPLE ARE PREDOMINANTLY YOUNGER, AGED 18-34 (61%), FOLLOWED BY 25-34 (21%).

People share online their hype for TikTok shop, as well as positive reviews of products they bought



"The last session for us at the @FoodDrinkExpo is all about how #TikTok shop is going to change the game for food and bev businesses through social commerce. Excited for this one..."



"My first TikTok shop order is arriving today eeee! It's already been funded by one of my bitch boys, but I want it reimbursing again! Send £15 then say thank you like a good dog"



"It seems my sleep deprivation due to a sick child isn't such a bad thing afterall! Bought this weighted hula hoop at 3am on TikTok shop a few days ago. Blummin' love it! #fitnessgirl"



"Giving the disco bulb I bought from TikTok shop a spin... I love it!!"

Complaints about getting scammed, and getting overwhelmed by all the TikTok shop ads



"I randomly remembered I ordered something on there like a week ago and then I check TikTok shop and see the orders not even there, and then I searched up the product/company and there's NOTHING"



"TikTok Shop advertising is getting so out of hand, can't be legal"



"I'm tired of people trying to sell me stuff on TikTok shop, it's enough!!!"



"Americans are so lucky they don't have TikTok shop, the UK girlies act like their life depends on selling us stuff and it's so annoying"



Four Agency Worldwide is an independent media, marketing and communications agency and certified B Corp. Find out more at four.agency

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