Arq

Arq Lab & The WeAreGroup Presents

The Experience Builders

Decoding a new era of Experiential Storytelling

Picture the scene

It's Soho, early summer, and humming in the seats of the Underbelly Boulevard is an audience packed with a who's who of marketers and brand experts. Everyone was there to listen to the industry's best and brightest talk about creating game-changing experiences.

Leading proceedings was Arq Lab's group holding company and think-tank entity; The We Are Group, setting the scene with the seismic shift in how consumers interact with brands. Powerfully illustrating why 'experience' has risen to the top of the CMO agenda as a way to connect with people, and how brands can ultimately design more impactful experiences – in person and virtually - for their audiences.

Setting The Scene

by **Anton Jerges**

CEO and Founder of WeAreGroup,
Anton Jerges, kicked things off with a simple fact:

"We are more distracted than ever."

The stats are stark. We check our phones on average every 12 minutes, are bombarded with between 4,000 and 10,000 messages a day, tap 2,617 times, and scroll through 362 feet of content. We spend longer on screens than we do asleep. Brands aren't even competing for attention within their category any more, as competitors can include any form of technology or entertainment. As Netflix's quarterly investor report explained:

"We compete with (and lose to) Fortnite more than HBO."

Gen Z has grown up in a world of on-demand content, making them incredibly selective about what they give their time to. Gen Alpha (of whom there will be almost 2 billion by 2025) has never known analogue and has always been digitally connected. In short, attention has never been harder to get or to keep, making it perhaps the world's most valuable currency.

"Obtaining attention is obtaining a kind of enduring wealth that puts you in a preferred position to get anything this new economy offers."

Michael Goldhaber, Author & Researcher

THE EXPERIENCE BUILDERS

DECODING A NEW ERA OF
EXPERIENTIAL STORYTELLING

COLLIDER

The Experiential Opportunity

If attention is scarce and competition is everywhere, marketers must change tack. But it isn't enough to simply say *"brands have to stand out,"* the question is how do they stand out? In what way? Using what channels?

According to our speakers' analysis, the answer is brands have to entertain. Being entertained is already an innate psychological need, but they argue it is now an essential marketing strategy. In a recent study, 79% of CMOs said brands must entertain and engage rather than interrupt, something borne out by **Coca-Cola's** experience-driven strategy:

"Every action needs to drive people to reach for a Coke. It is no longer about communicating but creating experiences, allowing people to interact with us and each other through our brand."

Teejay Sonza, Category Director, Coca-Cola

Dig deeper into the data and you'll find there has been a 141% increase in search intent for experience brands over the last 15 years, as well as a 70% increase in consumer spending on live experiences and events. 91% of consumers are also more inclined to purchase a brand's product or service after participating in a brand activation or experience.

If the old saying was "the aim of marketing is to make sales superfluous," to update it for the modern era we must add: "the aim of experiences is to make marketing superfluous."

But theory is only as good as the execution. So, how do we create the best experiences?

The Evolution Of Experience

by **Charlotte Bunyan**

Immersive Behaviours

Charlotte Bunyan, Founder and MD of Arq Lab

Immersive experiences are revolutionising brand engagement, offering unprecedented opportunities for connection and interaction. Charlotte's talk illuminated the exciting frontier of Web3 and the metaverse, emphasizing that success in this realm hinges more on mindset than technology.

In today's landscape, where Gen Z and Gen Alpha are favouring ad-free subscriptions and gaming over traditional social media, traditional marketing approaches are losing ground. In tandem the acceleration of technology – often AI-powered – and the evolution to Web3 means the opportunity for brands to innovate is immense.

Whilst the rapid pace of cultural and technological change can be daunting, especially for marketers who are expected to achieve more with fewer resources, Arq is dedicated to helping brands navigate this new frontier.

Charlotte, in collaboration with acclaimed behavioural scientist Patrick Fagan, conducted research to decode the success factors of Web3 and create a framework that empowers marketers to rethink how to connect with audiences and confidently step into this evolving space.

Now is the time for brands to embrace these changes, harness the potential of Web3, and create truly immersive experiences that resonate and engage.

Key Takeaways

- Social media usage is being supplanted by gaming

- The advancement of VR and the Metaverse is finally realising its potential

- CMOs are now expected to do more with less

- Immersive experiences – virtual and augmented – offer a far greater level of engagement

Experience 3.0
by **Arq Lab** & **Patrick Fagan**

A Behavioural Scientist explained Web3 as

Democratised   Giving consumers the ability to create and have ownership and control; a one-to-one value exchange.

Immersive   It's richer and more immersive with interactive virtual spaces, resulting in more meaningful interactions.

Fluid   It's borderless and hard to pin down; a galaxy of technologies and ecosystems including blockchain, AR, VR, AI, the Metaverse.

In the physical world, delivering an experience might reach around 80,000 people at a venue like Wembley. In contrast, creating an experience in a virtual space like Roblox can engage with up to 300 million monthly active users. The difference is incomparable.

In the virtual world, there are also no physical limitations and the only constraints are those of imagination. This opens up a realm of opportunities for innovative and boundary-pushing content. Patrick spoke about the digital inclusivity that virtual worlds and experiences enable and their virtue in being continually refreshed and recast, often by creators themselves, ensuring an evergreen fan-led experience.

Web3 also has the potential to build strong audience allegiances, akin to those seen with sports teams or fashion influencers. It is the ultimate lean-forward medium. Once immersed in compelling virtual content with a headset, or without, users attention is undivided. This complete immersion ensures that users give 100% of their time and attention, making the engagement incredibly powerful.

▶ **Download Patrick's whitepaper here.**

Experience 3.0
by **Arq Lab** & **Patrick Fagan**

Self

"It gives an opportunity for consumers, through notions of self-sovereign identity, to control the way that their personas are perceived in the digital world."

S is for 'self', putting the user at the centre of the experience. It's highly personalised and allows people to play with their identity, express creativity, feel in control and have a sense of ownership.

Case Study

Examples of campaigns dialling up 'Self' include a Burger King skin in Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, an ownable digital asset that lets users express their identity within the game; and Ralph Lauren launching a range of bitmojis to allow people to express their style virtually.

Transformative

"It's about helping people to understand products in an interactive way that gets them excited... and gets perhaps to understand the product in a deeper way that then could."

T is for 'transformative'. Web3 can be inspiring, meaningful and uplifting, with the potential to make people's lives different, fulfil needs and change how they view, interact, and collaborate with a brand.

Case Study

Transformative campaigns include the Porsche AV Visualiser showing people their driveway with a luxury car in it; and a Marriott hotel in Madrid recreating itself as a digital twin, allowing people to step into a room and experience it virtually before booking.

A is for 'accessible'. Web3 offers brands a chance to speak to audiences authentically and in their native habitat; without any issues of tech or trust.

Case Study

The Travis Scott concert in Fortnite allowed fans to enjoy an immersive musical event from the comfort of their living rooms. And Maybelline's GCI fake OOH advert went viral, making a virtual experience highly accessible with no effort on the audience's part.

Gamified

"Those environments are, at the core, very social. In the same way as I used to get back from school, go on MSN, the same thing is happening on Roblox."

G is for 'gamified'. Web3 has huge potential for social and gamified interaction. There are three key elements - a sense of achievement, a shared experience and being playful.

Case Study

Tommy Hilfiger's TOMMY PLAY in Roblox is a space for people to build a community, socialise and play, with regular expansions and collaborations. And The Great Oreo Cookie Quest was the world's first global, augmented reality scavenger hunt.

Extraordinary

"You can feel that moment of wonder and surprise because it isn't real. It's a little like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory - fantastical things that don't exist in real life."

E is for 'extraordinary'. Web3 breaks free from the constraints of reality, with the only limit being one's imagination, making for more visceral, freeing, entertaining and boast-worthy experiences.

Case Study

NASA's Access Mars VR project lets ordinary people walk on the face of another planet. And Ubisoft collaborated with the Smithsonian, using VR to allow people to experience historic sites which are no longer standing.

Summary

"When the appropriate levers of success are applied, the opportunity for experiential marketing – both in the real and virtual worlds – is huge. It's time to embrace these opportunities and make traditional marketing superfluous."

Anton Jerges, CEO, WeAreGroup

Get in touch to explore the future of brand experience

If you're interested in hearing more about how we can help brands unlock the possibilities of next generation immersive brand experiences, you can drop an email to Charlotte.Bunyan@arq-lab.com

Arq-Lab.com