



# LESSONS LEARNED

2021 TRENDS THAT CAN PREPARE US FOR 2022

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**NBCUniversal**

# 2021: ***A WORLD. SHIFTED.***

2021 saw great leaps forward. But there were also steps back. Whether cheering on Team USA at the Tokyo Olympics or watching the devastation of the Capitol riots, both the good and bad weighed heavily on us as a nation. In the end, 2021 was about realigning our expectations in this new normal.

We have seen exciting ways culture and society are evolving in this new normal. And that's how we'd like to end the year; showcasing the trends we are saying goodbye to, but more importantly, highlighting the exciting ones ahead.

In these pages, we showcase key trends poised to shape 2022 and the lessons we've learned from 2021.





# SAYING GOODBYE

IDEAS THAT FADED IN 2021

## One Size Fits All

With consumer preferences shifting, products and services need to be optimized to specific needs amid hybrid lifestyles

## A Monolithic View of Career Success

A shift to remote work and prioritization of quality of life has caused many to rethink career success

## Specific Culture Centers

Technology and the exploration of content globally has shifted toward a more ubiquitous pop culture



# HERE TO STAY

IDEAS THAT HAVE STAYING POWER  
TO INFLUENCE 2022

**BLURRING OF  
DIGITAL WITH  
ANALOG**



**CORPORATE  
GOES SOCIAL**

**THE DIGITAL WORLD:  
FROM TRANSPARENCY  
TO OPPORTUNISM**



**WORKING.  
REDEFINED.**



**THE SHIFTING  
OF CULTURAL  
CENTERS**





# *BLURRING OF DIGITAL WITH ANALOG*



I grew up in a physical world, and I speak English. The next generation is growing up in a digital world, and they speak social.

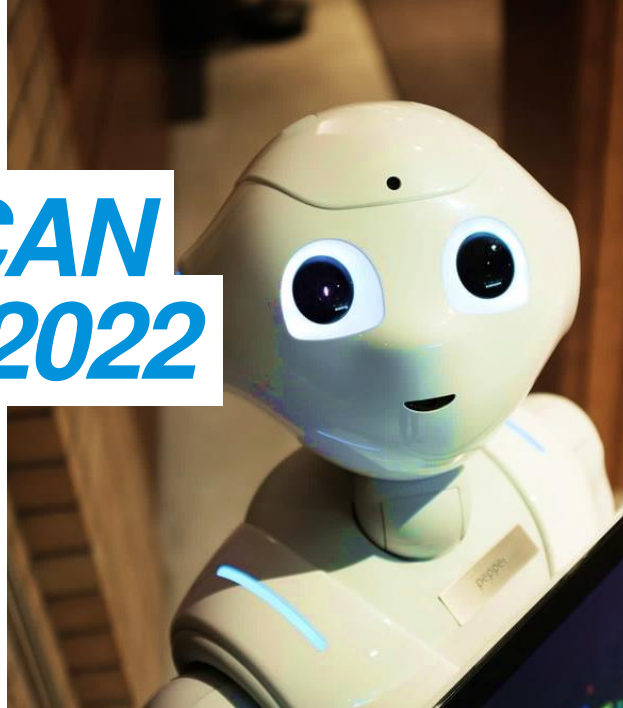


- ANGELA AHRENDTS, APPLE



HERE TO STAY:

# WHAT WE CAN EXPECT IN 2022



The rapid adoption of communication tools created cross-generational comfort in technologies never seen in history.

## Lesson Learned:

Tech no longer plays a role in our lives; it is fundamental to how we connect and interact with the world.

### AI Everywhere

2022 will see a rush to use AI in ways we are unaware of, in places we least expect.

### 44M Robots

will be working jobs in 2022, from waiting tables to building cars<sup>1</sup>



### Hybrid Everything

Meetings, shopping, even sports will have an in-person/online component.

### 84% of People

Want hybrid options for attending events in 2022, according to a global survey<sup>2</sup>



### Uncanny avatars

As we improve AR in ways that feel natural, expect 2022 to dip deep into the uncanny valley.

### 10 Companies

have announced plans to leverage the metaverse in 2022 to host meetings and conference with employees<sup>3</sup>

HERE TO STAY:

# ***HOW MARKETERS CAN PREPARE***

## **Lesson Learned:**

Tech no longer plays a role in our lives; it is fundamental to connecting and interacting with the world around us.

# **FORTNITE**

Epic Games took an online multiplayer game and made it into something unique. From playing the game to hosting live concerts, Fortnite has evolved into this new blurred world.



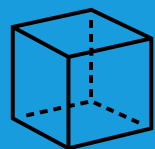
## **Be Authentically Real**

Robots, algorithms and the electronics that power them are impersonal. As AI becomes fused into our daily lives, being genuine is increasingly important to distinguish us from our robot overlords.



## **What's Your Hybrid Strategy?**

It's not enough to advertise online and in person. Are they connected seamlessly to carry the experience from the digital to the analog to the augmented?



## **How Does Your Brand Present in the Artificial?**

You've become an expert on branding online and in person. But what does your brand look like in augmented reality? What's the virtual avatar of your brand?

# CORPORATE GOES SOCIAL



The American dream is alive but fraying...  
Major employers are investing in their workers  
and communities because they know it is the  
only way to be successful over the long term.



- JAMIE DIMON, JP MORGAN





HERE TO STAY:

# WHAT WE CAN EXPECT IN 2022

Consumers not only expect brands to deliver a great product or service, but also positively contribute to society.

## Lesson Learned:

Brands need to take a stance on issues consumers care about and move beyond just messaging to drive actual impact.

Sources in notes



## Purpose is Not Just a Section of Your Website

Purpose driven messaging  
will become prominently featured in  
all communications

### 70% of CMOs

see that having purpose  
in their marketing messages  
is a key priority<sup>1</sup>



## Balance Purpose & Customer Centricity

Brands will need to deliver  
on causes that consumers  
care about (sustainability) while  
also being customer centric

### 52% of Consumers

believe sustainability is  
important, but they give into  
what's more convenient<sup>2</sup>



## DEI is Front and Center

Brands will prioritize internal and  
external DEI initiatives and foster a  
culture of inclusivity to attract and  
retain employees

### ~80% of Workers

say that they want to work for a  
company that values diversity,  
equity and inclusion<sup>3</sup>

HERE TO STAY:

# HOW MARKETERS CAN PREPARE

## Lesson Learned:

Brands need to take a stance on issues consumers care about and move beyond just messaging to drive actual impact.



Chipotle is all-in on a sustainable future. The brand's most recent creative showcases its support of small, local farmers. Chipotle communicates its sustainability efforts to investors and consumers consistently throughout the year.



## Take a Stance

Consumers and employees expect brands to take stances on important social issues; silence is no longer an option. It's better to be proactive than reactive.



## Be Always On

While there are certain tentpole moments throughout the year that are opportunities to let your purpose shine (Earth Day, Veterans Day, Black History Month, etc.), the most successful brands live and communicate their purpose throughout the year.



## Tailor Your Messaging

Most people are interested in a brand's purpose, but it needs to be communicated differently to specific audiences (consumers, employees, investors) based on their needs.

# THE DIGITAL WORLD:

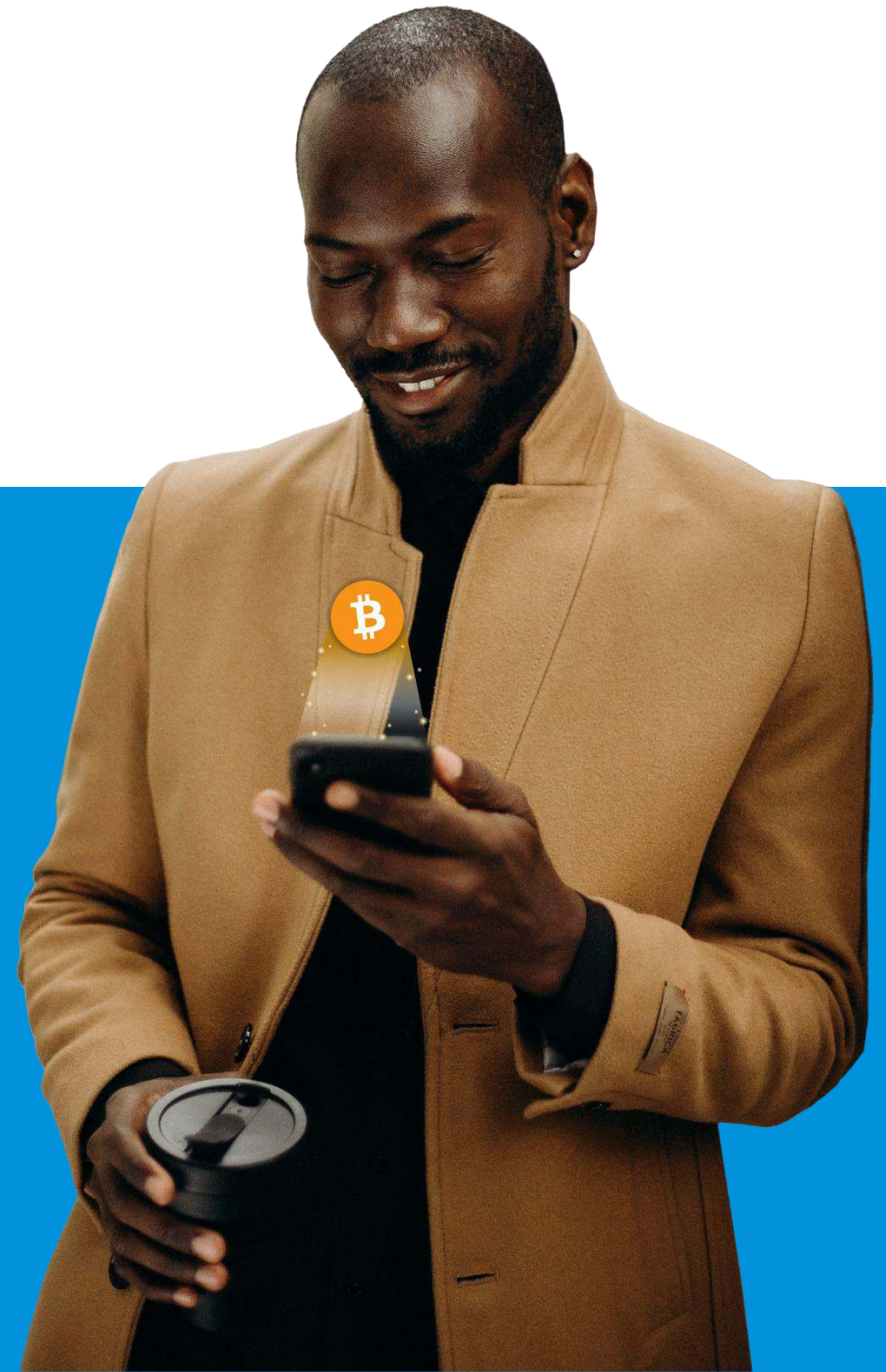
FROM TRANSPARENCY TO OPPORTUNISM



Too many of the visions of this emerging technology take us straight down the road of dystopia, where everything is for sale and nothing is shared.” *(on crypto and NFTs)*



- **NATHAN SCHNEIDER**, PROFESSOR,  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO





HERE TO STAY:

# WHAT WE CAN EXPECT IN 2022

The democratization of new digital tools, assets & technologies will continue to empower consumers across the globe.

## Lesson Learned:

Each new digitally-driven phenomenon continues to challenge the status quo, but also threatens to create a variety of negative societal repercussions.



## Digital Assets Continue to Take Off

But environmental impacts and worries of power imbalance will heighten.

**91 Terawatt-hours**  
is consumed annually mining cryptocurrencies, which is more energy consumed than Finland or Argentina



## One Click Shockwave

From meme stock millionaires to Twitter mobs, the power of online communities continue to influence & pressure global markets.

## GameStop +904%

GameStop's market cap was driven by a Reddit forum that effectively became an echo chamber for an army of young retail investors



## Authentically Influential

With many social influencers looking to make a quick buck, brands need to be more selective in order to build consumer trust long-term.

## +319% Better Engagement

For micro-influencers vs. mega-influencers (celebrities)

HERE TO STAY:

# HOW MARKETERS CAN PREPARE



## Put consumers first

As brands continue to wade into new areas (i.e. NFTs) it is important to prioritize consumers and their experience with the brand over easy, digital monetization. Tread lightly while figuring out what works best.

## Lesson Learned:

The democratization of new digital tools, assets & technologies will continue to empower consumers across the globe.



This year's Macy's Thanksgiving Parade allowed consumers to bid on 10 unique NFTs of iconic parade balloons.



## Focus on authenticity

As the vast sea of social influencers continues to grow, ensure you choose authentic influencers who can truly connect to your brand to your message. Optimize your strategy based on your influencers' trust scores.



## Building literacy will go a long way

With so many new digital platforms, tools, assets & more, there has never been a better opportunity for brands to help educate consumers on how they can maximize the power of emerging digital technology (in general, or through the lens of the brand).

# ***WORKING. REDEFINED.***

“ A hybrid work world will be tougher than all in person or all remote, it takes a lot more forethought and none of us have figured out exactly how it is going to work. ”

- **BRETT HAUTOP**, LINKEDIN





HERE TO STAY:

# WHAT WE CAN EXPECT IN 2022

The pandemic made us redefine what it means to have a “flexible” work environment and led to the “great resignation.”

## Lesson Learned:

People don't want to shape their lives around their job, they want them to coexist.



## Determining your hybrid structure

**86% of companies**  
plan to have employees work  
from home 1-4 days of the week in  
the new year



## The Office [Augmented]

**\$600B**  
2022 forecast for spending  
on AI and software to  
automate tasks in the office



## Staying tuned in to your employees

**41% of employees**  
are considering changing  
employers in the upcoming  
year in a bid for greater flexibility

HERE TO STAY:

# ***HOW MARKETERS CAN PREPARE***

## **Lesson Learned:**

People don't want to shape their lives around their job, they want them to coexist.



Microsoft quickly adopted a hybrid work model, updating its approach from conferences to hiring practices. And they continue to invest and update Teams Collaboration software.



## **Building from the ground up**

All companies are trying to figure out what the future of their workplace will look like. Brands must quickly adapt and shape their hybrid office to not only run efficiently, but address employee concerns.



## **Commit to your culture**

No longer do users care only about the product they're buying; they also care about where it comes from. Showing off your company culture will be a necessary part of selling your brand.



## **Power of Advertising**

In order to be effective in today's world, advertising is most effective when used in conjunction with an organizational culture that is committed to action.

# *SHIFTING CULTURAL CENTERS*



In our digital age, we can connect and innovate across borders like never before – with your smart phones and Twitter and Me2Day and Kakao Talk. It's no wonder so many people around the world have caught the Korean Wave, Hallyu.



- **BARACK OBAMA**, FORMER US PRESIDENT





HERE TO STAY:

# WHAT WE CAN EXPECT IN 2022

Cheap internet everywhere. The long road to a connected world is starting to shape our culture in new and unique ways.

## Lesson Learned:

Expect US content to have more global influences, from TV to film and beyond.



## Global Consumption of Local Content

As consumption shifts online, so do preferences for global music, film and art.

### 6B People

are projected to have direct access to the internet by the end of 2022<sup>1</sup>

## eLearning About New Cultures

Social media will accelerate new cultural exploration and adoption, especially while travel is limited.

### 74% of Gen Z

Reported using social media for learning about new things<sup>2</sup>

## Glocal Influencers

Influencers aren't new. But using locally relevant influencers in global campaigns will be.

### \$15B

Total projected spend on influencer marketing in 2022<sup>3</sup>

HERE TO STAY:

# HOW MARKETERS CAN PREPARE

## Lesson Learned:

Expect US content to have more global influences, from TV to film and beyond.



Coke went global with their “Real Magic” campaign, running the gaming themed content in over 150 countries and amplified via top Twitch streamers.



## Execute Locally; Think Globally

Culturally clueless creative is a no-go. But brands will be challenged to tap into the emerging global culture zeitgeist while remaining true to local cultures, practices and beliefs.



## What is the vibe of your creative?

Post-COVID ad consumption saw a surge in listening with sound. Knowing more discovery is happening internationally, how is your creative integrating more global sounds?



## Tap into talent

Predicting the next big thing in global culture waves can be tough . But utilizing recognizable, global talent as brand ambassadors can help tap into broader cultural trends without feeling mistimed.



# WHAT IF WE ARE WRONG?

*In case our trends are off, here are Noststradamus's predictions for 2022:*

## The Rise of Robots

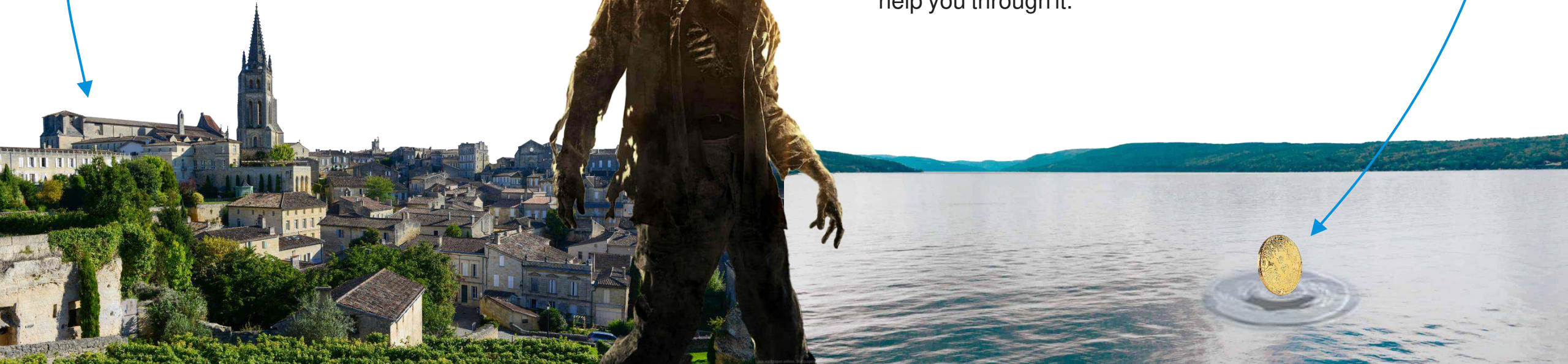
We googled companies in Aquitaine, France to see if they had a burgeoning robotics industry there. Couldn't find anything but that's where Nostradamus thinks will be "ground zero" for where the rise of robots will go down.

## Year of the Living Dead

According to our pal Nostradamus, we are looking at a 50/50 split on a zombie apocalypse before the end of 2022. Good news though, the CDC is ready and has [this](#) handy guide to help you through it.

## The Growth of Digital Currency

Nostradamus was probably a "Crypto Bro" but may have gotten some details wrong. He thought currency would fundamentally change or be created by throwing coins into a lake. We think he meant to say a data lake, so, Crypto!





# THANK YOU

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For more information on predictions, trends and our thoughts about the new year, please contact Gina Reduto ([Gina.Reduto@nbcuni.com](mailto:Gina.Reduto@nbcuni.com))

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