

Q4 2021

# MEDIA INSIGHTS REPORT

Key trends, data, and  
considerations



# Key Considerations for Q4 2021

## Priority Reset

Wellness and sustainability are going mainstream. Though both have always been important, more consumers are prioritizing their mental and physical health, as well as the environment. Consumers are eager to have an impact and are using their buying power to support brands that align with their goals. It will be important for brands to authentically share messages about the causes they support.

## Holiday 2021

Consumers are looking forward to a more “normal” holiday season, with travel and gifting expected to help bring families together after an extended time apart. While optimism is high, consumers and marketers alike are smart to maintain some reservations, given the uncertainty around COVID-19 variants and global events.

## Streaming Wars

[Streaming accounts for 26% of all time spent on TV](#), and this figure is only expected to increase as cord-cutting continues and consumers seek out new content. Streaming has changed how content is presented, the types of content available, and how marketers and brands leverage these platforms to reach their audiences and goals.

## The App Opportunity

The pandemic has impacted the adoption and continued usage of apps across categories. With increased time spent on their phones ([an average of 4.2 hours spent in apps per day](#)), mobile users are becoming more comfortable making purchases via apps. It'll be important to understand the nuances across generations to appropriately reach and engage with target audiences.

# PRIORITY RESET



# Financial Outlook Moving into Q4-2021

As the pandemic continues to evolve, so do financial situations and consumer spending priorities.



## Financial Situations Vary Greatly for Different Populations

Upper-income adults have fared better, with nearly [40%](#) saying their financial situation has improved versus a year ago.

Fifty-eight percent of middle-income adults say their finances are in excellent or good shape.

Lower-income adults, as well as minorities and young adults under the age of thirty, have been the most negatively impacted – being the most likely to say they or someone in their household have lost a job or taken a pay cut due to COVID-19.

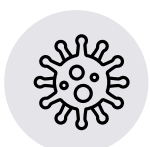


## More Savings + Emergency Funds

A year into the pandemic, [42%](#) of Americans were spending less. This was especially the case among upper-income adults, who also saved more money during the outbreak.

People also realized the importance of saving during the pandemic, as [51%](#) of people say an emergency fund is now higher priority.

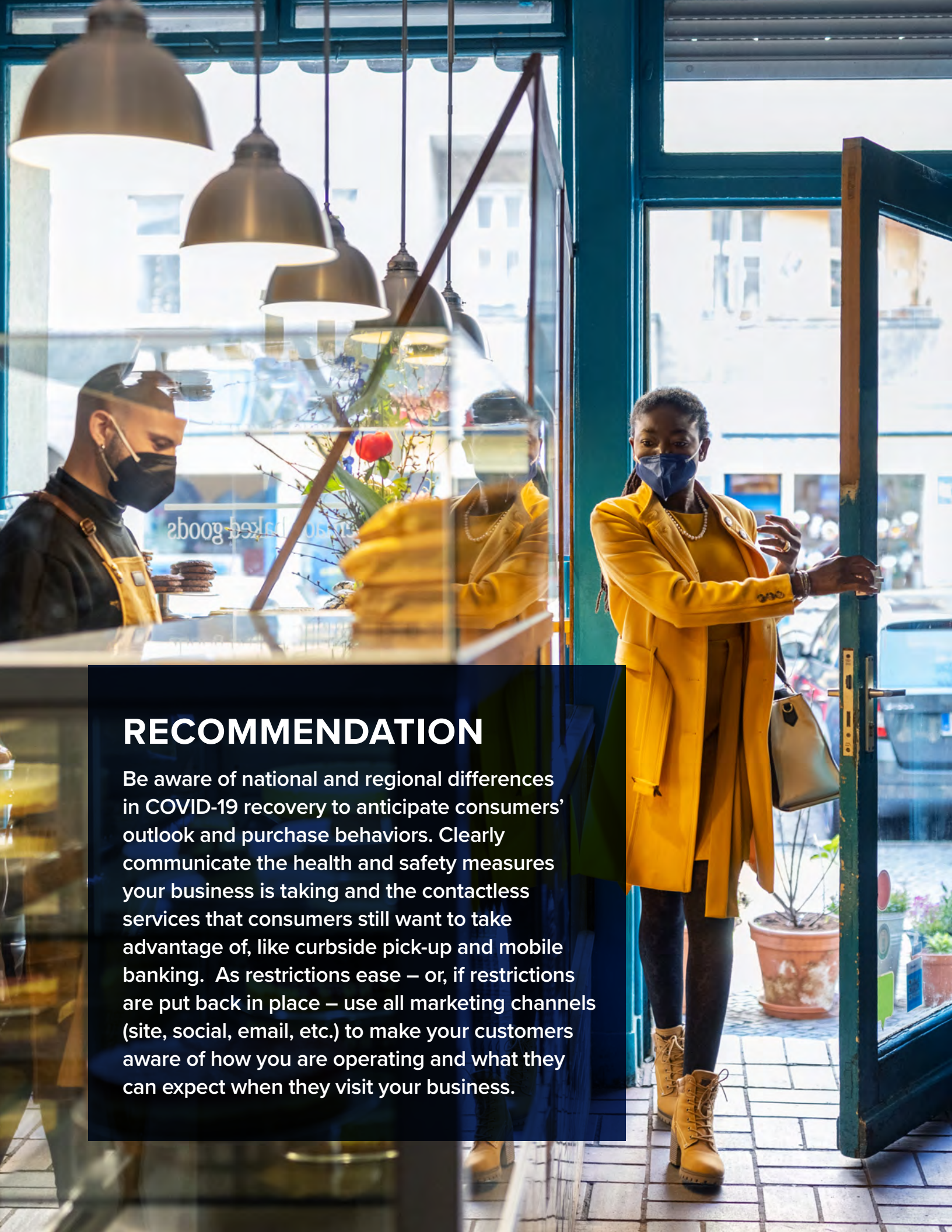
Among those receiving COVID-19 financial aid, [66%](#) of lower-income adults were most likely to use the money to pay bills or for something essential. [Thirty-five percent](#) of those with upper incomes put the money into savings.



## Will Variants Impact Recovery?

It is still too early to tell if delta or other variants will lead to renewed lockdowns, which would impact spending, travel, and business activity.

Most experts are not yet adjusting their forecasts for economic recovery, but they're closely watching the variant. If it forces schools to close or leads to shelter-in-place mandates, consumers will undoubtedly pull back spend on purchases that require a longer-term commitment or carry a risk – vacations, weddings and events, big purchases or investments, etc.



## RECOMMENDATION

Be aware of national and regional differences in COVID-19 recovery to anticipate consumers' outlook and purchase behaviors. Clearly communicate the health and safety measures your business is taking and the contactless services that consumers still want to take advantage of, like curbside pick-up and mobile banking. As restrictions ease – or, if restrictions are put back in place – use all marketing channels (site, social, email, etc.) to make your customers aware of how you are operating and what they can expect when they visit your business.

# Health & Wellness Becoming Top Priorities

The cultural push to destigmatize mental health issues and promote policies in support of overall health and well-being.



## Priority Reset: Health & Wellness

According to an L.E.K. survey, US consumers are rethinking their pre-pandemic priorities.

- Seventy-five percent will increase the time and money they spend on health and wellness activities.
- Fifty-seven percent realized that at least some of their pre-pandemic discretionary spend was unnecessary.
- Eighty percent of parents believe they will be permanently closer to their children.
- Health obsessionists (15%) have permanently changed their view of their physical and mental health, willing to spend more on personal health, rest, and well-being.



## Destigmatizing Mental Health

Across the world, mental health is seeing increased awareness, education, [spending](#), and destigmatization. This is playing out in the form of awareness campaigns such as Instagram's [#HereForYou](#) and Nike's [partnership](#) with Crisis Text. Michael Phelps has been a [brand advocate for Talkspace](#), encouraging people to seek therapy. Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles have both become mental health heroes, opening the door for more public conversations on the topic.

Some companies are now looking for ways to [help their employees](#) improve mental health and to avoid burnout, as well.



## Work-Life Integration

[More than 80%](#) of HR professionals experienced pushback about returning to the office full-time.

To help their employees cope with the strain of working during a pandemic, companies like Goldman Sachs, whose employees vented about 100-hour workweeks, are walking back the requirement to return to the office and adjusting hours.

Citigroup's CEO banned internal video calls on Fridays. It's considered a day of decompressing, as the year-long pandemic has taken a toll on the psyche of workers.

## RECOMMENDATION

Companies that enact policies to address these important issues should make their stance public, which will attract and retain talent. Brands can take advantage through awareness campaigns, products, services, and messaging aligned to these priorities (e.g., hospitality brands offering wellness packages and retreats).



# Purpose-Driven Shopping

Brand loyalty shifted during the pandemic, with consumers prioritizing the brands that align to their values and beliefs.



## Shopping with a Purpose

Over [70%](#) of adults aged 18-55 care more about product sustainability now than they did a year ago. Green business practices are increasingly important to all demographics, with [82% of millennials](#) and [52% of baby boomers](#) saying sustainability is important to them when shopping for clothes, beauty products, and travel experiences. In fact, more [than half of lifestyle consumers](#) bought a new brand or product specifically because of its sustainability practices.



## Inclusivity is In

Racial issues received increased attention in mid-2020, and as a result, brands have begun to implement more inclusive marketing and business practices, such as fashion brands embracing extended sizing and inclusive products. [Nike began advertising](#) its Nike Pro Hijab for Muslim female athletes and adaptive activewear for people with disabilities. The [“beauty for all” movement](#) moved beyond greater foundation shades to support for Black-owned brands in 2020. Unilever [eliminated the word “normal”](#) from its branding and indie startups like [Fluide](#) now offer gender-neutral makeup.



## Brands' Voices Matter

Forrester found that when choosing between two brands with similar products, [43%](#) of US adults will favor the company that takes a stand on like-minded social, environmental, or political values. This is increasingly important for younger consumers. Gen Z will be the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in US history, and they're paying attention to where brands stand on societal issues – with [58% of LGBTQ+ youth](#) saying brands that voice support for the LGBTQ+ community positively impact their feelings about being LGBTQ+.

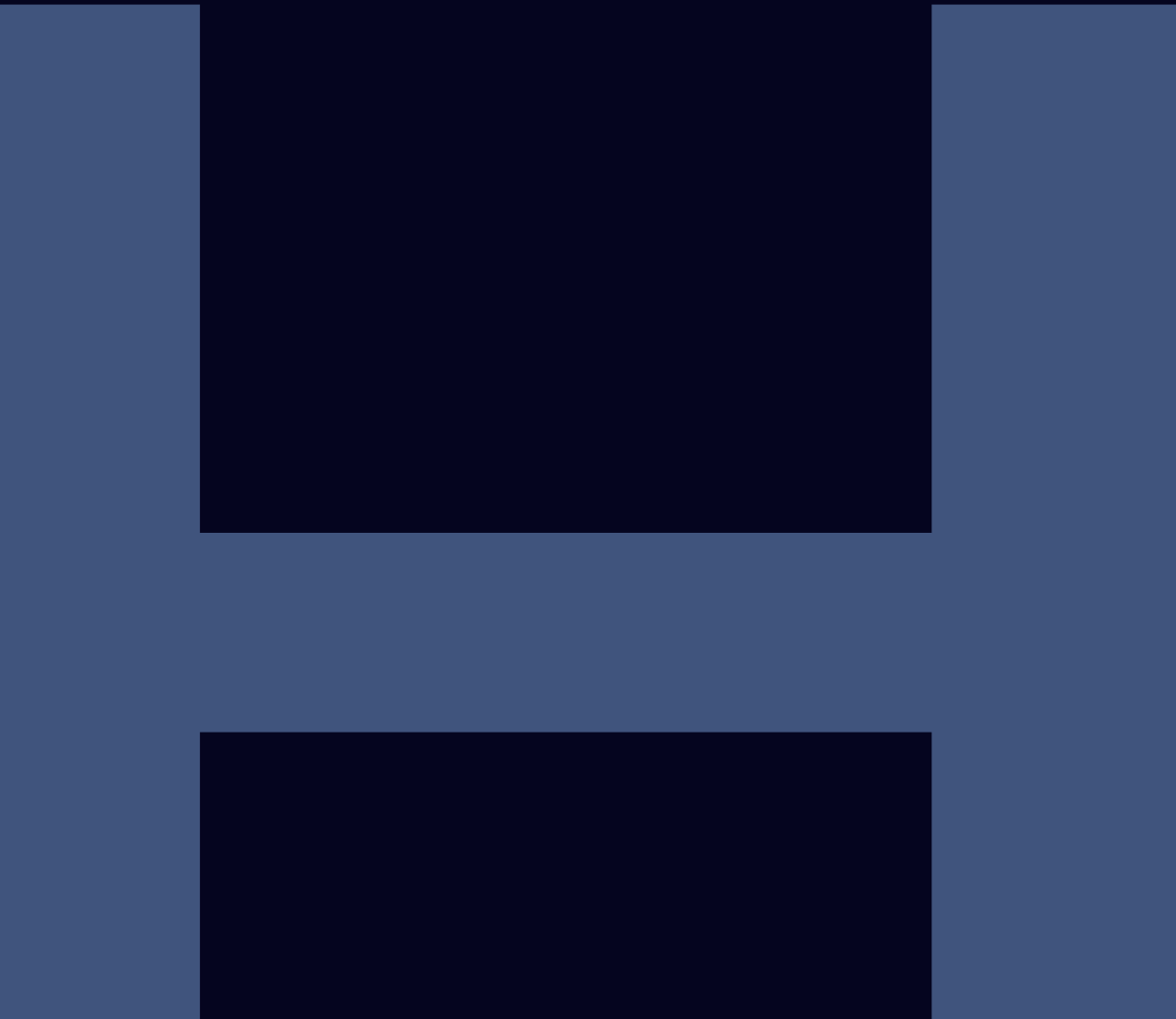


## RECOMMENDATION

Highlight green business practices – such as reusable packing, recycled or sustainably sourced materials, carbon footprint reduction, green business certifications, and donations to environmental causes. Be mindful of “greenwashing” – overstating a commitment to eco-friendly values. Brands’ product assortment and advertising should also reflect rising consumer demands for more diverse products tailored to them. Authenticity is key when sharing your brand’s stance on societal issues and the social and environmental good you’re doing.



# HOLIDAY 2021



# Holiday Shopping Season Underway

While optimism is high, levels will fluctuate with continued uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 variants and global events.



## Making Up for Lost Time

- Nearly all adults currently [feel comfortable socializing in person](#), so expect an increase in travel and gatherings as consumers approach the holiday season with a new appreciation for traditions and celebrations.
- Seen by many as superior to tangible gifts, experiences are expected to increase in popularity after the extended period at home and with the promise of protection afforded by vaccines. Flexibility in terms of dates and refunds will be important to promote consumer confidence.



## Purpose-Driven Holiday Shopping

- [Over half \(56%\)](#) of all adults want brands to recognize holidays from a variety of cultures, with young adults increasingly expecting brands to do so [\(68% of 18–44-year-olds vs. 40% of 55+\)](#).
- With many prioritizing both physical and mental health, wellness is an important gift category and messaging theme this year.
- More consumers are looking for brands and retailers who offer sustainable products, leading to a boost in the popularity of secondhand shopping.



## Early Shopping & Deal Seeking

- [More than four in ten adults shop year-round](#) for the holidays to take advantage of sales and deals throughout the year.
- Last year, Black Friday promotions started earlier to account for COVID-induced shipping delays and to compete with Prime Day. We anticipate seeing sales start as early as October this year.
- Expected shipping delays due to continued COVID-19 impacts on supply chains will spur some customers to start shopping earlier and to avoid deliveries altogether by using curbside pickup or shopping in-store.

## RECOMMENDATION

Consider different financial situations when planning segmentation and messaging around holiday promotions, as well as transparency around the best deals of the season, so shoppers know when to act fast. Inclusivity in messaging and creative will be important to attract younger consumers.



# Consumer Behaviors Shifting

Macroeconomic events will continue to impact spending, shopping preferences, and gift trends.



## Gift Givers Want Efficiency

Two-thirds of consumers aim to get their holiday shopping done as fast as possible.



## Consumers Will Shop Early

Forty-two percent of consumers shop year-round for the winter holiday and 31% of US shoppers have already started their holiday shopping.



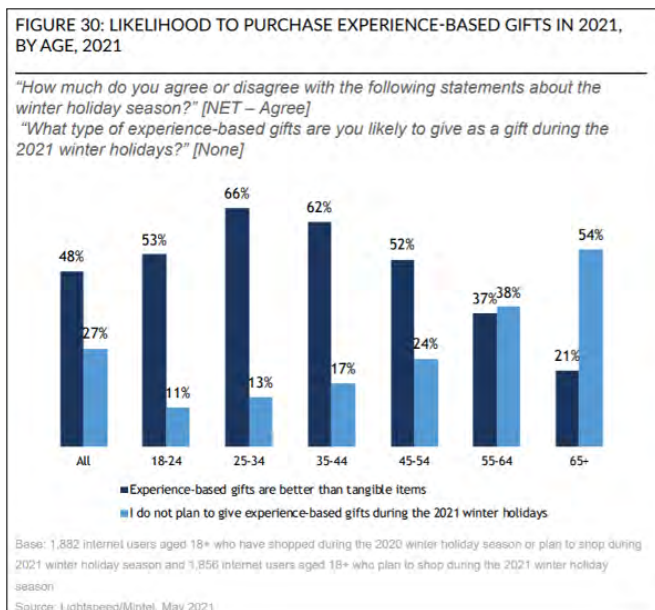
## Gifting Clothing is Back

There will be a focus on experiential gifts and wellness-related items, more so than in 2020. The same is true for clothing and beauty as people go back to work, school, and socializing.



## Spend Will Increase Slightly

A 2.5% sales increase is predicted, pushing total holiday spend to \$853 billion.



\*Note: Americans shopped less than expected last month as the delta variant continues to spread (CNN)

A woman in a black sleeveless dress is leaning over to help a young girl in a yellow dress put on shoes. They are on a wooden porch with a large window in the background. The woman is holding a pink and black shoe, and the girl is sitting on a wooden chair. There are several pairs of shoes on shelves in the background.

## RECOMMENDATION

To win holiday gifting dollars, capture consumers' attention early and be transparent about promotions. As the holidays approach, consider messaging that assures shoppers that your brand can help make their holiday shopping more efficient. For example, share gift ideas and gift guides tailored to key audience segments to make gifting easy.

# Taking Measures to Stay Competitive

Retailers must meet new consumer expectations - many of which were set during last year's holiday season.



## Buy Now, Pay Later

Twenty-three percent of adults (and 35% of millennials) seek out retailers who offer flexible payment solutions.



## Think Beyond Black Friday

More than four in ten adults don't think it's as important to shop on Black Friday because consumers have been conditioned to believe deals are always available.



## Curbside + In-Store Pickup

Consumers find value in the convenience of not waiting for deliveries or paying for shipping. In fact, shipping costs are a top reason for abandoning carts online.



## Seamless Omnichannel Experiences

Eighty-five percent of holiday shoppers plan to do some shopping in-store, while ecommerce will continue to be the driver of retail sales.

FIGURE 24: MEANING OF VALUE, 2021

"When thinking about what value means to you when shopping, which of the following do you consider to be the most valuable?" [NET - Any rank]



Base: 1,985 internet users aged 18+ who have shopped in-store for listed products or have shopped online in the past 12 months

Source: Lightspeed/Mintel, April 2021



## RECOMMENDATION

Marketers should promote buy now, pay later partnerships in their holiday communications, as well as highlight curbside or in-store pickup as an added value, especially as shipping windows get close. Consider highlighting in-store safety and events and promos to help drive foot traffic.



# Millennials Redefining Philanthropy

In addition to monetary contributions, many givers are donating their time and talents to the causes they care about.



## Young Donors Are Influenced by Their Peers and Social Media

- Forty-eight percent of millennials donated through a social media platform.
- On average, millennials give \$481 annually.
- The average online donation is \$177, but this tends to vary drastically based on factors such as income, mode of donation, and recipient.



## Philanthropy is Now Defined as Any Act of Social Good

- Nearly half of all donors cited the purchase of products from socially responsible businesses as philanthropy.



## Global Events Have Shifted Donor Priorities

- The top three global challenges identified by donors in 2021 are:
  - Hunger
  - Access to basic health services
  - Racial discrimination



## RECOMMENDATION

Nonprofit organizations should be sure to have a social media presence and engage with accounts that post about relevant causes. Encourage donors to share their donations via social to help amplify their message and lean into peer-to-peer influence.



# Fluctuating Expectations for Travel, from Booking to the Types of Trips Taken

Will Vaccine Confidence Be Enough to Get Travelers Out the Door This Holiday Season?

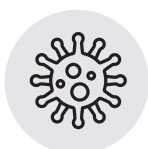


## Holiday Booking Insights

Many families made their holiday 2021 travel arrangements earlier this year, excited to reunite with loved ones after a year of lockdowns. Flight bookings for November and December 2021 are [30% higher](#) than they were at this point in 2019.

Others are holding out on making holiday travel plans and monitoring the evolving pandemic. We will continue to see last-minute bookings – and cancellations – this holiday.

Millennials and Gen Z [continue to be more open to travel](#) during the winter holidays compared to older counterparts.



## Delta Variant Drives Uncertainty

Delta variant-related concerns are disrupting travel plans, with 27% saying the variant [caused trip postponements](#). The number of travelers reporting a “not ready” mindset has climbed to 28.4% from 19.3% one month ago.

The intersection of technology and safety, namely in tools like [vaccine passports](#), has become increasingly important to consumers.

Flexibility continues to remain a top priority for travelers in Q4; interest in “cancel for any reason (CFAR)” coverage [has doubled](#) in the past year.



## New Types of Trips Emerge

[Multi-generational travel](#) increases as families reconnect after extended time apart.

[Sustainability](#) is important for travelers, though most are not willing to be inconvenienced by it.

Weddings are now back on the books and the [number of weddings](#) in 2021 is 30% higher than 2019, driving group bookings.

“Taking a road trip” still [leads](#) as the method of travel people are most comfortable with, and will likely remain a popular option for travel this holiday season.

## RECOMMENDATION

Traveler confidence has been impacted by the delta variant, causing some to postpone their winter travel plans. Brands must stay close to evolving travel restrictions and public health measures and communicate requirements and procedures clearly on site and in marketing messaging. Travel marketers must also meet new consumer expectations for flexible booking and cancellation policies, prominently highlighting these flexible options in marketing efforts. Marketers should tap into the new trip themes and traveler types, targeting interested audiences with relevant messaging and offerings.



# STREAMING WARS



# Streaming at a Glance

Advanced TV streaming continues on an upward trajectory with heavy consumer adoption.

TV streaming accounts for 26% of all time spent on TV, although this number could increase to 33% by the end of 2021.

- Time spent with network and cable TV is holding strong at 64%, but it is expected that 27% of US households will cut cable in 2021.
- Eight percent of time spent is on video-on-demand, streaming from cable set-top boxes, and other TV uses, such as gaming and watching DVDs.

Ninety-one percent of Americans subscribe to at least one TV subscription service, and 93% of Americans plan to increase or maintain streaming subscriptions.

- Nearly seven million American households dropped their traditional pay TV subscription in 2020, a record high, with many looking for entertainment alternatives during the pandemic.
- Cord-cutting has skyrocketed due to three main factors: people want to be digitalized, lack of time, and availability of more/different types of content.



***The average American household pays for four streaming services annually, spending an average of \$47 per month.***

# Streaming Wars: Who Is Winning?

Netflix, HBO Max, and Disney+ are winning big with subscribers and content.



Netflix leads the streaming field, ranking highest in overall subscriber size, original content output, and industry ranking, and second in critical buzz.

- Debuted in 1997
- 207 million subscribers
- Produced 461 original TV show titles, 1.7x more than all other streaming services combined
- Original content commanded 50% share of US audience interest in 2020 (searches/downloads)



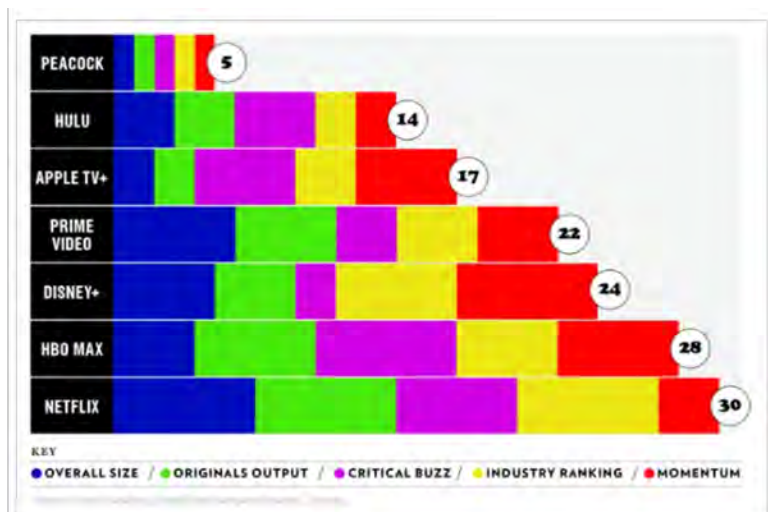
HBO Max ranks highest in critical buzz and second in original content output and momentum.

- Debuted in 2020
- 64 million subscribers
- Produced 50 original TV show titles
- Won more Emmys in 2020 than any other platform



Disney+ ranks highest in momentum and second in industry ranking.

- Debuted in 2019
- 104 million subscribers
- Major franchiser, 100 million+ global subscribers in less than 18 months



Graphic: by Vulture

**Overall Size:** Number of subscribers; size and popularity of its library; international scope; money.  
**Originals Output:** Scope of first-run content; how many people actually watch it.  
**Critical Buzz:** The most acclaimed content offerings (both new and library); awards love.  
**Industry Ranking:** Based on a survey of a dozen Hollywood and Wall Street insiders.  
**Momentum:** Who is experimenting and shifting the paradigm. If Netflix was the first mover, who's the next mover?

# RECOMMENDATION

Marketers and brands should be cognizant of the constantly evolving streaming space, focusing on subscriber audience, content output, buzz, and potential growth opportunity. Recent mergers, partnerships, and new players in the space should also be of interest, allowing marketers to lay groundwork for greater potential audience reach, targeting niche audiences, and unique opportunity integration across appropriate streaming services and programming.





# Battle of the Eras: Traditional vs. New Players

While traditional streaming services expect to compete with newer players, challenges lie ahead.

There are over 200 OTT streaming media services competing globally.

Major challenges for traditional TV platforms include:

- Managing their legacy channels while simultaneously growing D2C services to maximize revenue
- Keeping up and producing enough original content to compete with newer streaming players
- Having deep enough pockets to woo and retain talent, from actors to TV producers
- Obtaining a global platform to compete with newer players such as Netflix and Amazon

Netflix has produced 461 original TV show titles compared to NBC's Peacock (34), CBS All-Access (28) and Disney+ (17).

Certain TV genres could hit a breaking point sooner as internet-based services have been chipping away at major sports rights in recent years, including:

- Amazon Prime's Thursday Night NFL coverage
- Disney+/ESPN+ live streaming services
- Apple TV's discussions about NFL's Sunday Ticket Package with DirecTV agreement set to expire in 2022

Traditional TV streaming service bucket defined as services with a pre-existing or historical channel/network

New streaming service bucket defined as streaming services without a pre-existing network/channel



VS.



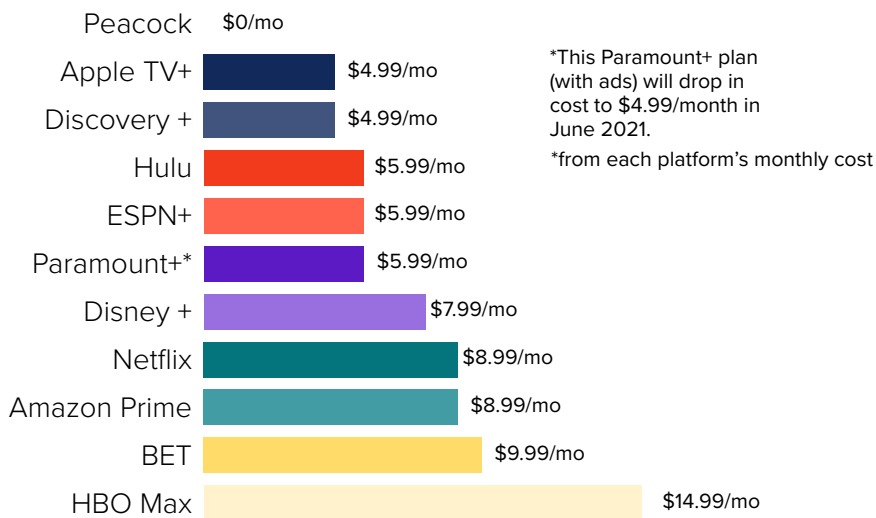
## RECOMMENDATION

As traditional TV networks enter the streaming market, there will be heavy competition within the space. While traditional TV partners determine how to keep pace with newer streaming companies, there are opportunities for marketers and advertisers to help shape the conversation and create valuable partnerships.



# Service Pricing Tiers

US households are OK viewing ads, provided monthly cost remains low.

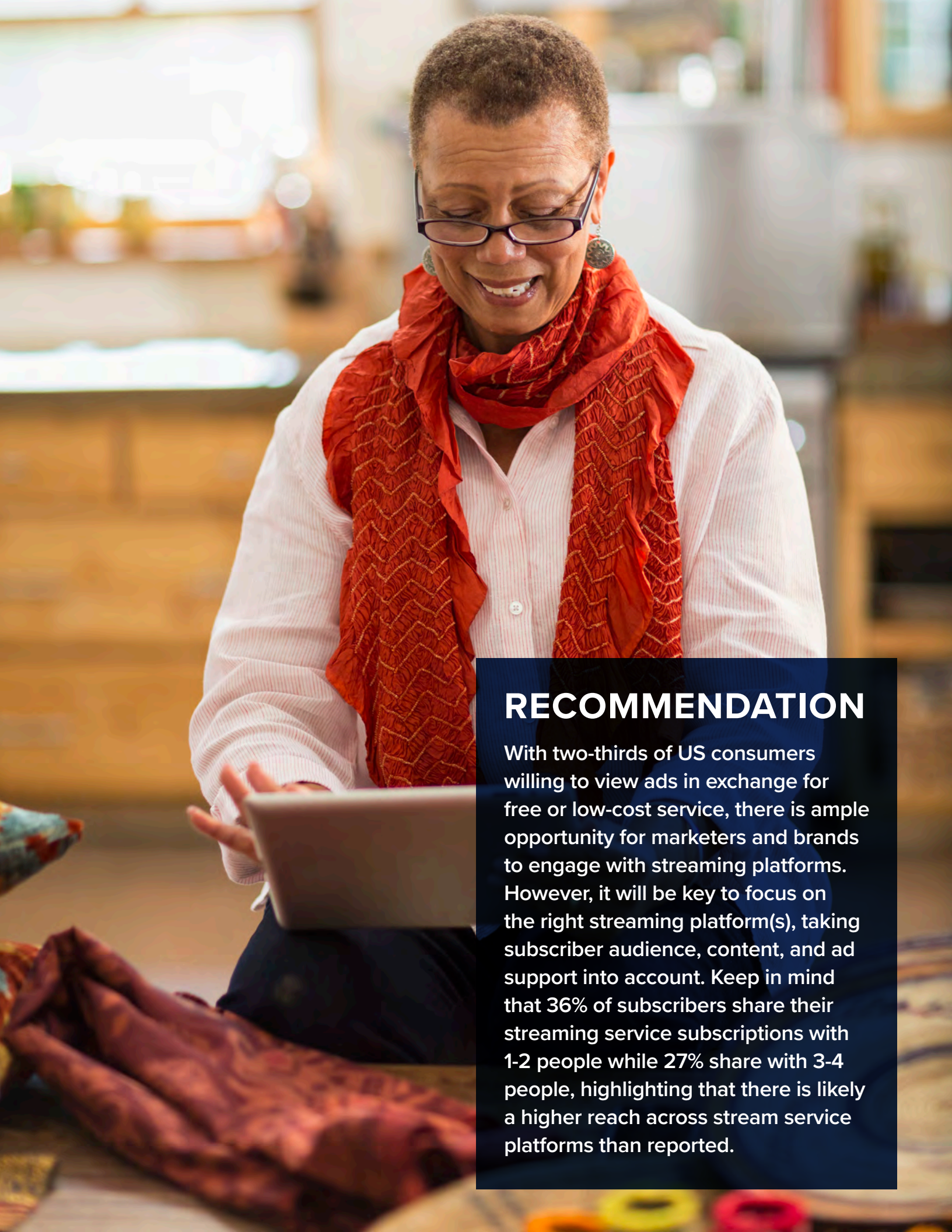


Most streaming services have both ad-supported and ad-free pricing models.

**67%** would choose ad-supported TV over an ad-free subscription.

**41%** would prefer free or low-cost TV with commercials versus paying a premium.

**74%** share streaming subscriptions with family they live with, while 37% share with people they do not live with.



## RECOMMENDATION

With two-thirds of US consumers willing to view ads in exchange for free or low-cost service, there is ample opportunity for marketers and brands to engage with streaming platforms. However, it will be key to focus on the right streaming platform(s), taking subscriber audience, content, and ad support into account. Keep in mind that 36% of subscribers share their streaming service subscriptions with 1-2 people while 27% share with 3-4 people, highlighting that there is likely a higher reach across stream service platforms than reported.

# Streaming Trends for 2022

Expect ongoing evolution of streaming platforms with content, technology, and device upgrades.

As we look ahead to 2022, TV streaming will continue to evolve and become even more complex, especially as more streaming services enter the market and various partnerships, mergers, and acquisitions take place.

The streaming audience will also continue to shift. Younger audiences will seek to stay engaged with new and exciting content while older audiences may finally make the shift away from traditional TV to streaming, presenting a huge opportunity for traditional TV streaming services to recapture some of their legacy audiences.

As streaming services serve new shows that engage and inspire, or bring back shows of familiarity and comfort, this platform has changed how content is presented, the types of content available, and how marketers and brands can best utilize streaming content across multiple devices.



Monetizing nostalgia



Increasing streaming quality/speeds



Gaining value from franchises



Rising niche streaming services



Releasing episodes week to week vs. bingeing



More traditional players entering the field



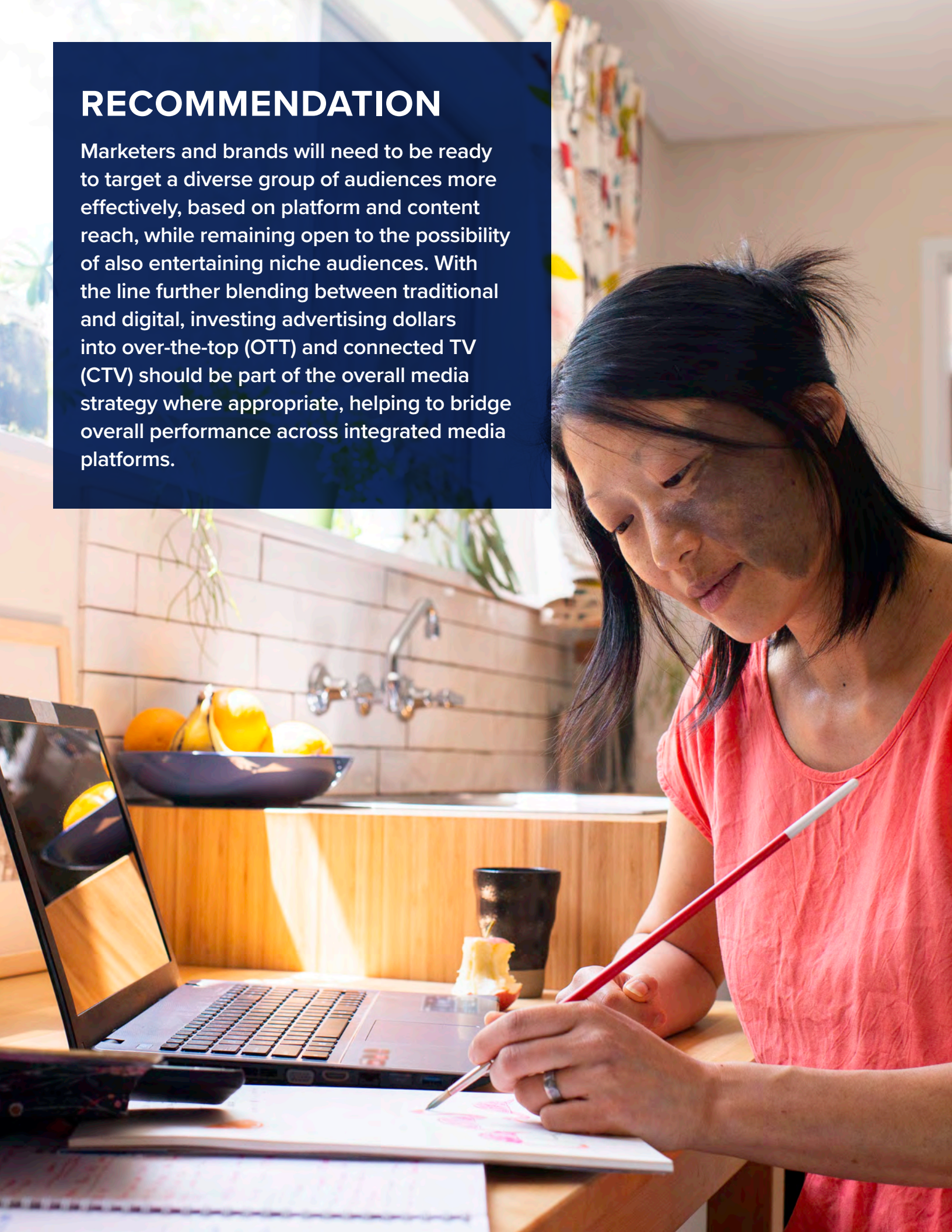
Focusing content on docuseries, music, and short-form videos



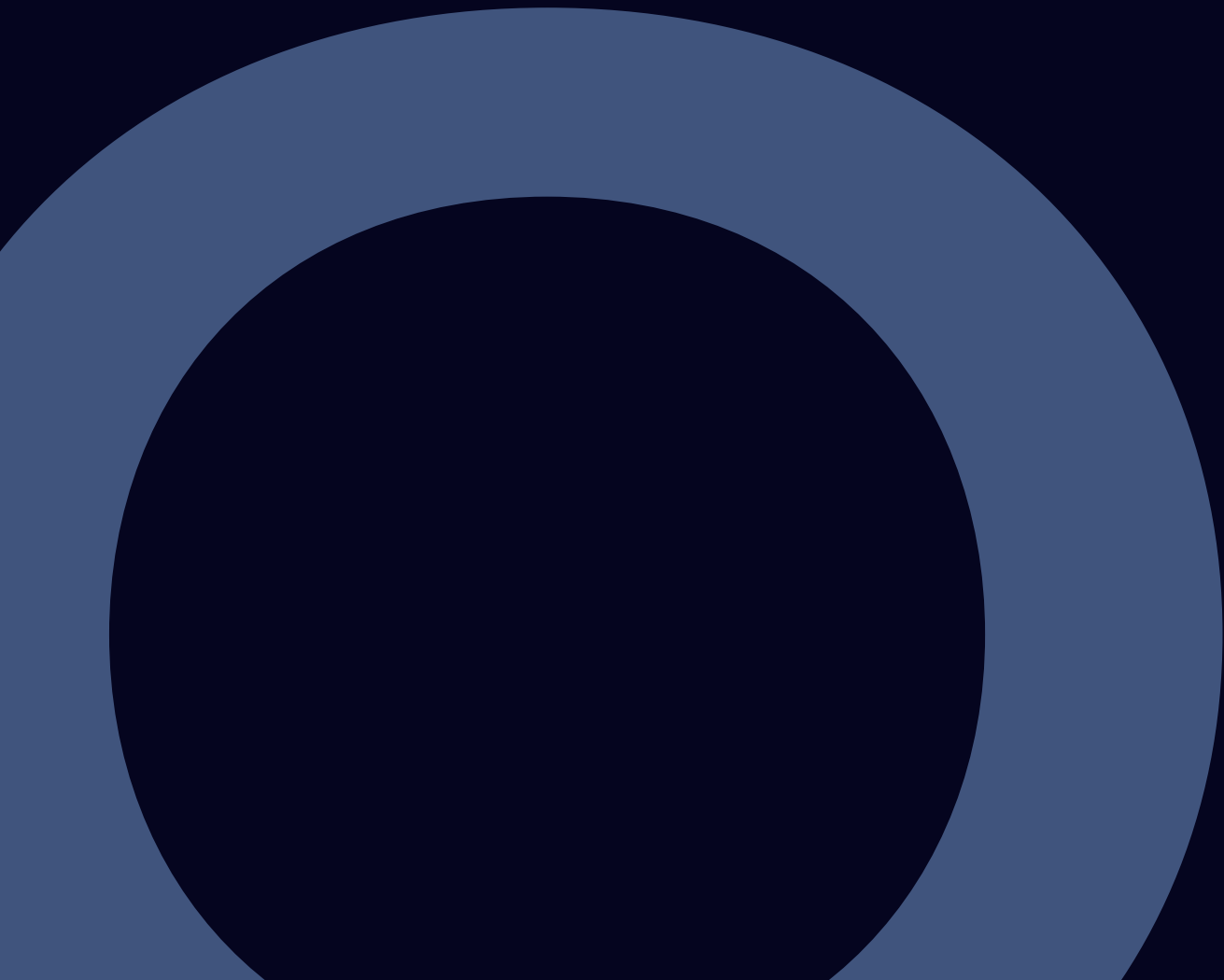
Mobile continuing to capture TV streaming share

# RECOMMENDATION

Marketers and brands will need to be ready to target a diverse group of audiences more effectively, based on platform and content reach, while remaining open to the possibility of also entertaining niche audiences. With the line further blending between traditional and digital, investing advertising dollars into over-the-top (OTT) and connected TV (CTV) should be part of the overall media strategy where appropriate, helping to bridge overall performance across integrated media platforms.



# THE APP OPPORTUNITY

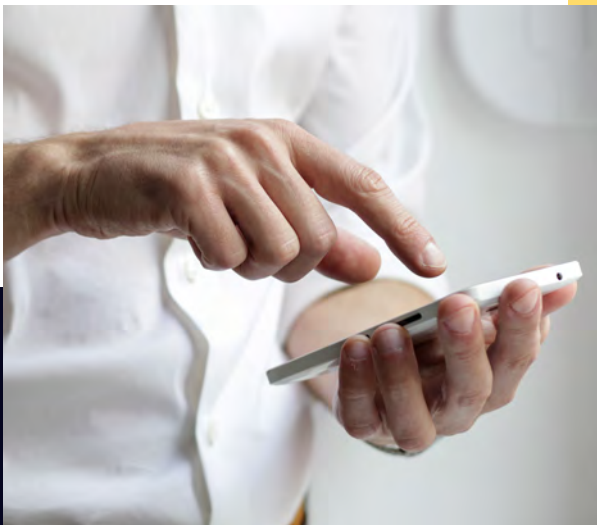


# Growing App Usage

Marketers invest more as consumers spend increasing time and money in-app.

The pandemic accelerated many digital behaviors, speeding up mcommerce adoption and driving breakthrough growth across app categories.

- Consumers are devoted to their mobile devices, spending nearly four hours a day on mobile apps, up [20% from 2019](#).
- Mobile users are becoming more comfortable making purchases via apps, spending [\\$42 billion across](#) Android and iOS app download and in-app purchases this year.
- Advertisers are projected to spend [\\$12.41 billion on app-install ads](#) (+15% YoY) and [\\$94.28 billion on in-app ads](#) this year (+13.7% YoY).



***“For companies, mobile apps are significantly more valuable than the mobile web...When a company’s app is installed, it now owns a piece of real estate on a consumer’s most personal belonging.”***  
– Adam Blacker,  
VP of Insights at Apptopia



# RECOMMENDATION

Marketers should consider their mobile app strategy and how they are engaging with consumers through the funnel, from app download through to user retention.



# The Staying Power of Apps

Consumers expect brands to keep pandemic conditions in mind, making it safe, fast, and easy to engage.



## COVID-19 driven

- Business apps are up 30% during Q2 2021 versus pre-pandemic, as hybrid work and work-from-home are solidified as the new norm.
- Food & drink US sessions grew 60% YoY in Q4 as consumers sought out food delivery, pick-up, grocery, and reservations.



## COVID-19 accelerated

- Gaming is the most popular app category, netting over 1 billion monthly global downloads.
- Retail time in-app has sustained at higher YoY levels with global consumer spending up 80% in Q2 2021 versus Q4 2019.
- Social apps with video formats are driving growth, contributing to 20% more time in-app and 80% growth in in-app spending.
- Photo and video apps surged 375% from Q4 2019 to Q2 2021, driven by a shift in social sharing format.
- Entertainment, driven by streaming apps, saw 70% growth in Q2 spending compared to Q4 2019.
- Fitness app downloads are up 15% YoY as consumers canceled gym subscriptions, opting for outdoor activities and at-home workouts.
- Finance apps saw 90% YoY growth in hours spent over the past year as consumers shifted more of their customer journey online.

A man in a brown leather jacket and purple scarf is walking hand-in-hand with a young girl in a yellow coat and red backpack on a city street. The man is looking down at the girl with a smile. The girl is looking towards the camera and smiling. The background shows a busy street with buildings and other people.

## RECOMMENDATION

The pandemic impacted adoption and continued usage of apps across categories. Consider whether your audience is turning to category-relevant apps to engage with content and, if so, position your brand as the one to use. As advertisers, review your customers' consumption habits to identify in-app opportunities that fit into their daily digital behaviors. Categories largely driven by COVID-19 will be watched closely to see if they return to pre-pandemic levels. Those accelerated will remain part of the customer journey.

# App Audience Insights

Generational nuances inform formats and placements.

Ninety-one percent of mobile device time is spent in-app. Gen Z, millennials, and Gen X/ baby boomers all increased their app usage over the past year. Their top apps highlight category preferences and differences in how they use digital.

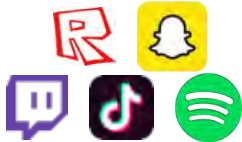


## Gen Z

Frequency: High

Session length: Short

+16% YoY



Brand & ad priorities

video, influencers, authenticity, engaging

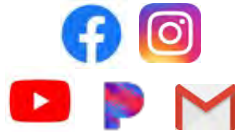


## Millennial

Frequency: Moderate

Session length: Moderate

+18% YoY



Brand & ad priorities

shoppability, experiential, brand values, influencers, reviews



## Gen X

Frequency: Low

Session length: Long

+30% YoY



Brand & ad priorities

value, loyalty, convenience



*Ninety-one percent of mobile device time is spent in-app.*

## RECOMMENDATION

Tune into the nuances between generations to appropriately reach and engage with your target audience. For example, Gen Z expects brands to show up in an authentic way, whereas Gen X is looking for value and rewards from a brand.



# Privacy Considerations and Measurement Concerns

As consumers choose not to be tracked, it becomes increasingly difficult to measure the efficacy of your app efforts.



## Mobile Attribution

Mobile attribution is the tracking process of the user app journey, from discovery to in-app events and potential conversions. The two primary companies with mobile app stores, Apple and Google, have an information gap regarding the ads a user will see before installing an app to download, but mobile attribution bridges the gap of this process via in-app tracking platforms.



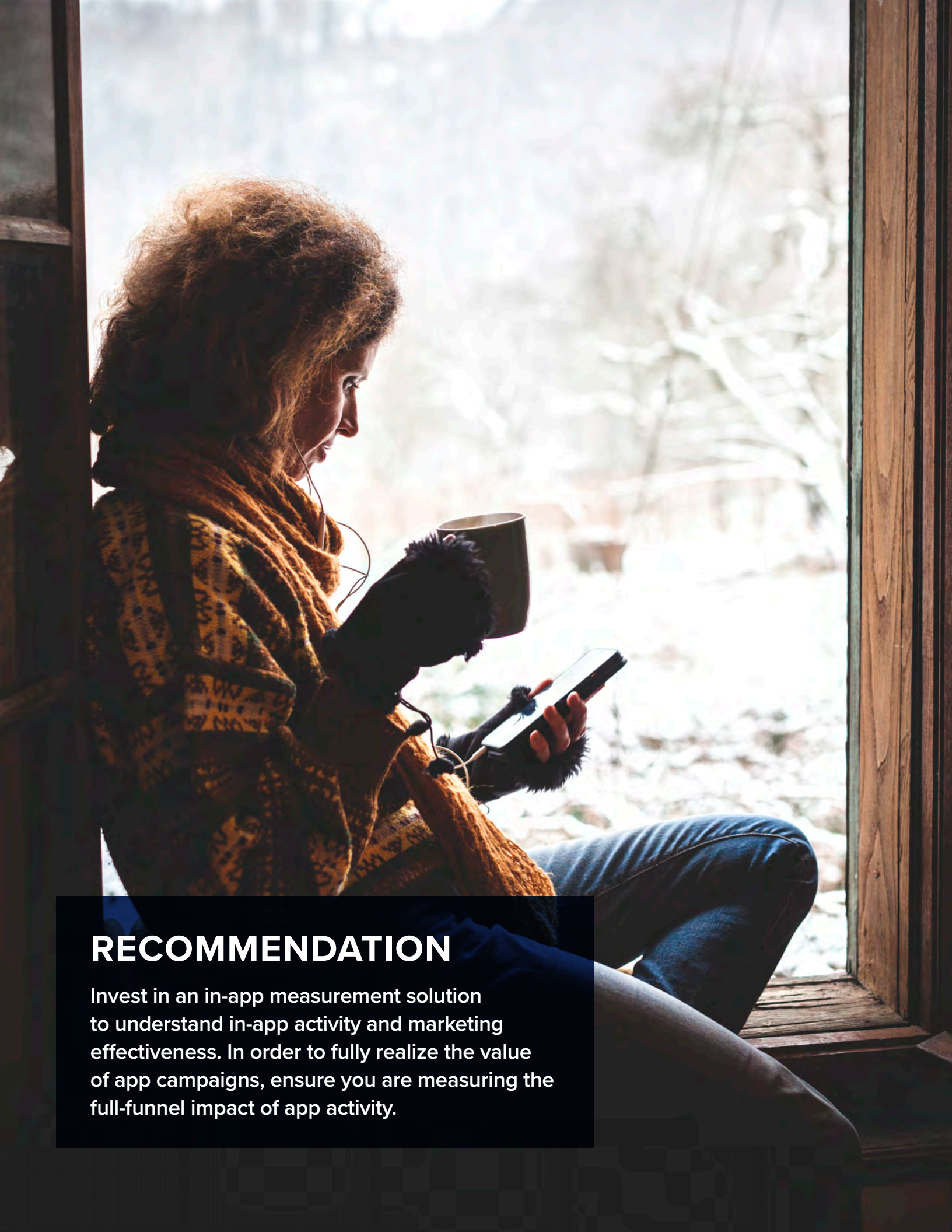
## How It Works

Unlike traditional web-based attribution, which utilizes cookie IDs and site pixels to identify users, mobile app attribution relies on mobile IDs for the Apple and Google Play app stores on iOS and Android. Realizing the need to identify users across multiple sessions, Apple and Google have developed their own solutions, the IDFA (Identifier for Advertisers) for iOS, and GAID (Google Advertising ID) for Android.



## Recent Changes and Challenges

App Tracking Transparency (ATT) now requires iOS users to opt in to tracking/measurement. This results in the need for different measurement methods for those who opt in and those who do not. Those who opt in will be grouped with the much larger segment of Android users, as the GAID matching remains unchanged. For those who opt out (expected to be the vast majority) SKAdNetwork and other tools, including modeling, must be leveraged to fill in the gaps.



## **RECOMMENDATION**

Invest in an in-app measurement solution to understand in-app activity and marketing effectiveness. In order to fully realize the value of app campaigns, ensure you are measuring the full-funnel impact of app activity.

# App Opportunity for Marketers

Here is a checklist for those who aren't sure how to get started.

## If you already have an app:

- ✓ Acquire new users through an app download campaign.
- ✓ Use [deep-linking](#) to drive success via increased conversion rates.
- ✓ Acquire new users through competitor conquering on the Google app store and UACs/Facebook app campaigns.
- ✓ Apply a brand defense strategy on the Google app store.
- ✓ Have a reengagement strategy for those who download / engage with your app.
- ✓ Consider app loyalty (e.g., exclusive discounts for app users).
- ✓ Use push notifications to drive app engagement.
- ✓ Consider iOS vs. Android app advertising, weighing the device your consumers own vs. advertiser-friendly policies. (Once relatively split between iOS and Android app-install, Apple's share of advertiser app spend [dropped to 29%](#) after IDFA/iOS14.5 roll out.)

## If you do not have an app:

- ✓ Consider in-app advertising to reach relevant app audiences.
- ✓ Continuously evaluate your mobile site for page speed, easy navigation, seamless checkout experience, and [other mobile site best practices](#).
- ✓ Consider if developing an app is right for your brand and the purpose it would serve – improve customer experience, increase engagement, drive retention/loyalty, etc..
- ✓ Evaluate competitors' apps and how you can differentiate.

## In-app advertising:

- ✓ Consider where your audience spends their time, since [81%](#) of time on mobile is spent in app.
- ✓ Target apps that align with your audiences' interests, or leverage available user data (e.g., device type, geo, gender, age).



# CHANNEL- SPECIFIC STRATEGIES



# Channel-Specific Strategies for Q4 2021

## SEM

- Auction-time bidding will be key to success for competitive queries.
- Inventory management, looser match types, and DSAs can aid in capturing new, emerging search queries.
- Competition will increase the cost of advertising. Combined with tough comps from 2020, CPCs are expected to rise.
- Communicate alternate delivery options in ad extensions – BOPIS, curbside, etc.
- Call out “free & fast” shipping when applicable ([see more](#)).
- Increase LIA presence after holiday shipping cutoff.
- Test and implement Google’s Predictive Audiences.
- Consider image extensions.
- Advertise gift cards through PLAs.

## SEO

- Ensure Local Storefront + Google My Business (GMB) information is up to date to inform consumers of alternate business operations including hours, pick-up options, and shopping requirements.
- Take advantage of relevant pandemic-related [GMB attributes](#).
- Regularly review and update content to align with evolving consumer behaviors as recovery occurs.
- Prioritize Core Web Vitals by ensuring a good website user experience through site speed and navigation.
- Review and update on-page content and images to ensure alignment with company views, policies, and recent shifts in consumer behaviors.

## Display

- Pay attention to regional differences in recovery and consider geo-specific strategies.
- Share gift guides to help make shopping seamless for customers.
- Tune into the nuances between generations to appropriately reach and engage with your target audience.
- Promote your mobile app and identify in-app opportunities that align with your customers' behaviors.
- Message alternative shopping options like buy online, pick up in store (BOPIS), curbside, and free delivery/returns.
- If applicable, leverage augmented reality and dynamic ad formats and video.
- Consider advanced TV.

## Social

- Highlight partnerships with buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) services.
- Highlight added value offerings and deals, such as free gift wrapping or gift card promos.
- Share gift guides to help make shopping seamless for customers.
- Consider new social platforms to reach audiences whose media consumption habits have changed.
- Message alternative shopping options such as BOPIS, curbside, and free delivery/returns.
- Test shoppable and AR social ad formats to help bring products to life for those who aren't shopping in store.
- Leverage online video.



# Questions? Reach out!

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# About Merkle

Merkle is a leading data-driven customer experience management (CXM) company that specializes in the delivery of unique, personalized customer experiences across platforms and devices. For more than 30 years, Fortune 1000 companies and leading nonprofit organizations have partnered with Merkle to maximize the value of their customer portfolios. The company's heritage in data, technology, and analytics forms the foundation for its unmatched skills in understanding consumer insights that drive hyper-personalized marketing strategies. Its combined strengths in performance media, customer experience, customer relationship management, loyalty, and enterprise marketing technology drive improved marketing results and competitive advantage. With 12,000+ employees, Merkle is headquartered in Columbia, Maryland, with 50+ additional offices throughout the Americas, EMEA, and APAC. Merkle is a dentsu company. For more information, contact Merkle at 1-877-9-Merkle or visit [www.merkleinc.com](http://www.merkleinc.com).