della PRESENTS THE 2027 PLAYBOOK FOR MARKETERS

LEFT ON READ

u up?

Read 9:44 PM

For brands people want.

FIND YOUR NEXT *conversation*

9 unread threads.

Pick the one you've been avoiding.

Read 9:47 PM

MESSAGES — 9 UNREAD

01 **Ghosted** — Turn support into commitment. — pg 08–12

02 **The nerves** — Pressure inside shows up outside. — pg 13–26

03 **The first date** — They swiped right. Will they show up? — pg 27–41

04 **Between dates** — Keep showing up between launches. — pg 42–50

05 **Don't ruin it** — A hundred small edits can end it. — pg 51–56

06 **Define the relationship** — Make the case to finance. — pg 57–66

07 **The seven-year itch** — You defined it. Now live it. — pg 67–73

♥ **Someone texts back** — How della helps. — pg 74–79

✓ **The receipts** — The research and the credits. The work lives at della.one. — pg 80–82

© della 2026

you know the feeling.

YOU DID EVERYTHING *right.*

The budget gets questioned.

Everyone said they loved the work.

The strategy gets passed along.

Something important falls off.

The campaign goes out, and the audience keeps scrolling.



...so why is nobody replying?

And still, you got left on read.

Read 9:46 PM

© della 2026

FOR BRAND & MARKETING LEADERS

EVERYONE said YES.

So why are we still waiting?

Read 9:48 PM



INSIDE THE BUSINESS

Make the yes concrete: scope, budget, owner and review date.

WITH YOUR PARTNERS

Keep the idea intact through every handover.

WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Give people a reason to reply, and to come back.

© della 2026

three ways to be

LEFT ON READ

01



THE BUSINESS

Everyone agrees. Who commits?

02



THE AUDIENCE

They noticed you. Why choose you?

03



THE PARTNERS

Who keeps the idea intact at the handover?

How a business treats its brand becomes how the brand treats people.

The fix is a showrunner: one person whose job is keeping the brand's story whole, through every handover. You'll see their move in every chapter.

© della 2026

WHO'S TELLING THIS ARIES.

Hopeless Romantic.

I know the feeling of being left on read.

Professionally, which is worse, because you still have to go to the meeting.

Read 9:50 PM

For over a decade, I've hosted dinners at Cannes. **By dessert, the truth comes out:** people say what they'd keep out of the boardroom.

This playbook comes from those dinners, my Left on Read conversations with brand leaders, and years of making the work.

Delivered 9:52 PM





CANNES, AFTER THE AWARDS TALK

Sophie Gold

PRESIDENT OF ELEANOR AND DELLA

© della 2026

CANNES DINNERS

I KEPT HEARING the same STORY.

loved it in the room!

Read Monday

any update on budget?

Read Tuesday

just bumping this 🙂

Read Wednesday

hello?

Read Thursday



Different leaders. Different brands.
Every ghost story I hear starts the same way.

© della 2026

CHAPTER 01 · GHOSTED

01

THE GHOSTING



Commit before the world can answer.

Read 9:54 PM

ALL agreed.
STILL WAITING.

everyone agrees the brand matters.

so, what are we committing to?

hello?

Read 9:56 PM



Everyone says they believe in the brand. The decisions show whether they do.

© della 2026



EVIDENCE / THE BUSINESS CASE FOR BRAND

of companies in Gartner's survey are stuck in a brand "DOOM LOOP"

Weak measurement, unclear impact, tighter funding. Repeat. **Companies with a strong brand strategy were twice as likely to beat their growth goals.**

A dashboard is a picture of the world, like the shadows in Plato's cave. Step outside it: watch where customers hesitate and listen for the question support keeps hearing.

Gartner, Jun 10, 2026. Survey of 426 senior marketing leaders, Sep to Oct 2025. The growth comparison shows an association only. Plato, Republic, Book VII; Fred Hebert, "Plato's Dashboards," 2021.

© della 2026

WHY *anyone* GHOSTS.



A competitor showed up with a bigger number.

So they go quiet. Silence feels free today.

Silence leaves you doing all the interpreting.

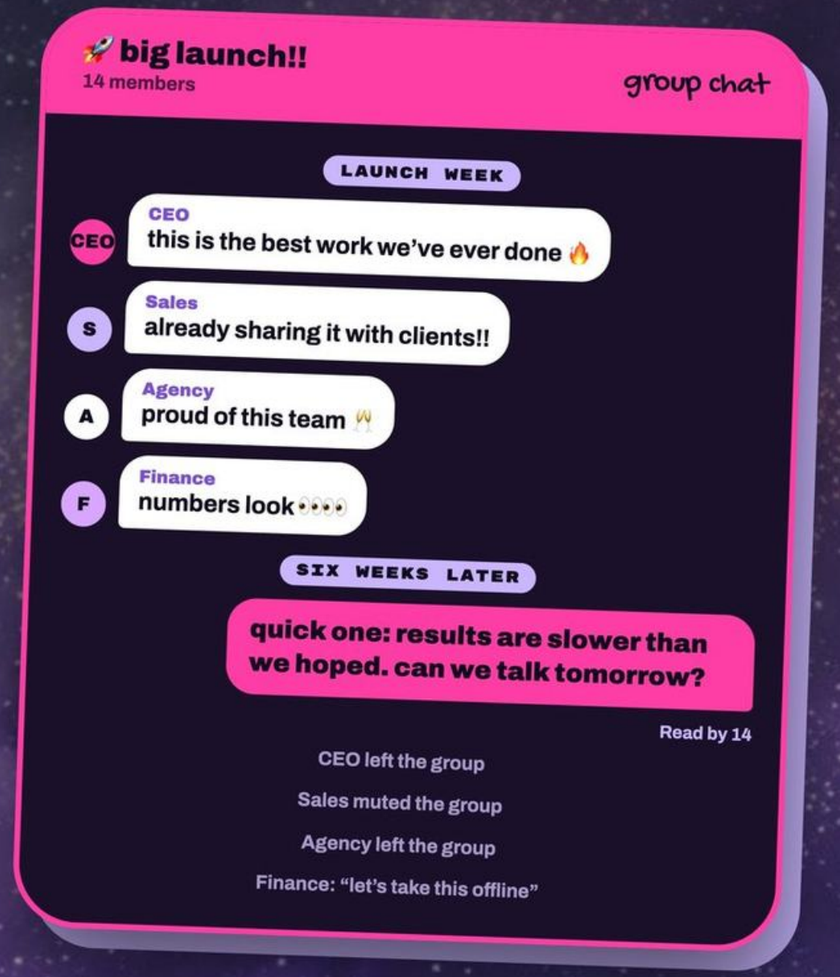
You thought you were the exception. Everyone does.

Read

© della 2026

WHEN IT WORKS, EVERYONE WANTS IN.

WHEN IT STALLS, *you're on your own.*



Marketers are a lot like directors. People look to you for a point of view, and the responsibility can feel very lonely.

© della 2026

HOT TIP

The public has not run out of attention. *It got choosier.*



Care is rarely the loudest signal. It may be the most durable one.

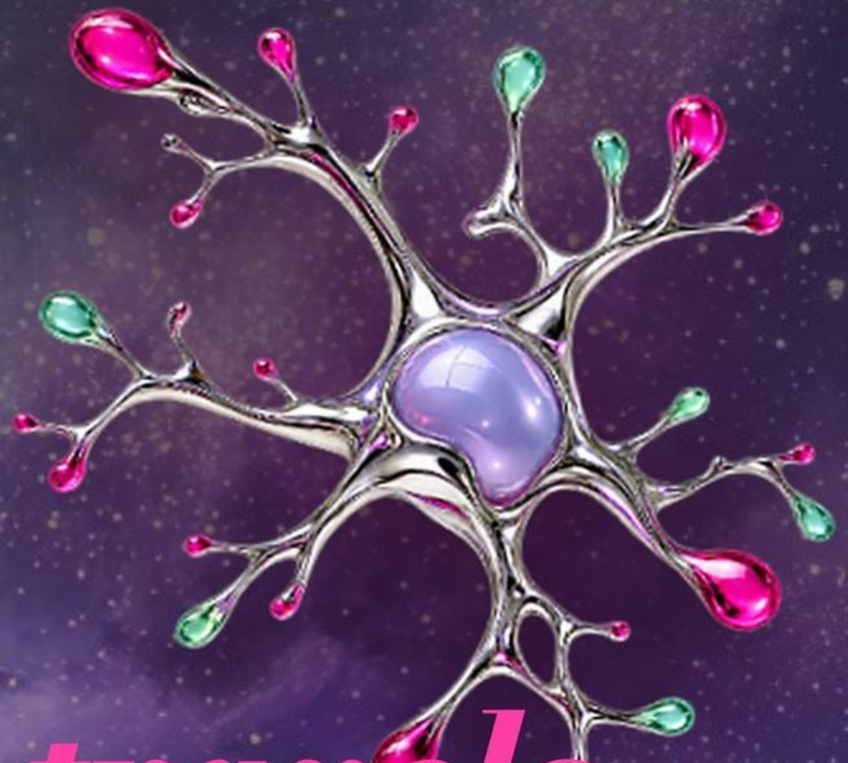
Delivered 10:00 PM

1. **Specificity is winning again.**
   Sometimes depth travels further.
2. **Audiences still want to participate.**
   Leave room for people.
3. **Usefulness has acquired charisma.**
   Expertise is attractive when it is generous.
4. **Younger makers ignore category borders.**
   Film borrows from games. Beauty borrows from food.
5. **Restraint is returning.**
   One very good thing, made properly.
6. **People notice care.**
   The right word. The silence left in.

© della 2026

CHAPTER 02 • THE NERVES

02



PRESSURE travels.

Your brand has a nervous system.

Read 10:01 PM

Yes, it's alive.



A company can have a perfectly clear strategy on Monday and behave like a stranger to itself by Thursday.

We blame the agency, the new CMO, the shifting strategy. Look behind the problem: the brand is behaving like a person under stress. **How the business feels becomes how the brand behaves.**

From "Your Brand Has a Nervous System," from della, Mar 11, 2026.

© della 2026

PRESSURE *changes* THE WORK.

Narrower brief.

Earlier objections.

Easier approvals.

Think about a creative review where everyone is curious.

The CEO frowns.

People anticipate objections. Suggestions become safer.

Read 10:03 PM



© della 2026

WORKED EXAMPLE / CORNER COFFEE (FICTIONAL)

ONE SLOW QUARTER.

Watch how it travels.



Pressure, behaviour, decision, experience. **The showrunner's move: fix it at the first link.**

1

THE PRESSURE

Sales dip for one quarter. The CEO asks for "something that works now."

2

INSIDE THE COMPANY

Reviews start with what the CEO might object to. Bold routes stop reaching the room.

3

THE CREATIVE DECISION

The Friday Regulars series becomes a discount push set to a borrowed trend.

4

WHAT THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

A brand that sounds like everyone else. Regulars learn to wait for the next sale.

© della 2026

THE CONSISTENCY GAUGE · OCT 2026

Who's unmistakably *themselves?*

The needle doesn't measure loud. It measures the same.



0–3 · LOST THE PLOT	Built the backstory. Burned it.
4–5 · CHASING THE NUMBERS	Every spike, a different brand.
6–7 · FINDING THEIR WAY BACK	Went quiet. Texted again.
8–10 · UNMISTAKABLY THEMSELVES	You'd know them with the logo covered.

Where would your audience put the needle?

Read 10:05 PM

della's opinion, October 2026. Editorial placements, not measurements. Every brand gets graded on the next six pages.

© della 2026

POP CULTURE BREAK · THE CONSISTENCY PROBLEM

GAME OF Thrones.

R + L = J

the fan theory everyone spent years decoding.

1M+

fans signed a petition to remake the final season.

Seven seasons of clues. Fans filled forums decoding one line of backstory.

Then six episodes **threw the payoff away.**

Read 10:07 PM

Brands do this too. Years of backstory, then one loud season that forgets it.

Game of Thrones, HBO, 2011 to 2019. R + L = J: the long-running fan theory about Jon Snow's parents. Petition: CBS News, May 2019.

© della 2026

ON THE DIAL · FAR LEFT

LOST THE PLOT.

Years of backstory. One season to lose it.

MTV

2/10

THEN 1981, “Video Killed the Radio Star”. Then TRL, The Real World, Cribs, The Hills. MTV wrote the plot.

NOW 2025. The music channels go dark, signing off with the same song.

JAGUAR

2/10

THEN Decades of the leaping cat. Grace, space, pace.

NOW November 2024. A pink film with no car. The Type 01 goes on sale in 2027.

BUDWEISER

3/10

THEN The King of Beers. The Clydesdales, the Americana.

NOW 2022: the World Cup sponsor whose beer got banned from the stadiums. 2026: brand value down 35%. Modelo took the seat.

CRACKER BARREL

3/10

THEN Decades of the Old Timer on the porch.

NOW August 2025. A flat new logo, the old one back in a week. The CEO out by August 2026.

Every one of them had the plot. **They stopped telling it.**

Read 10:09 PM

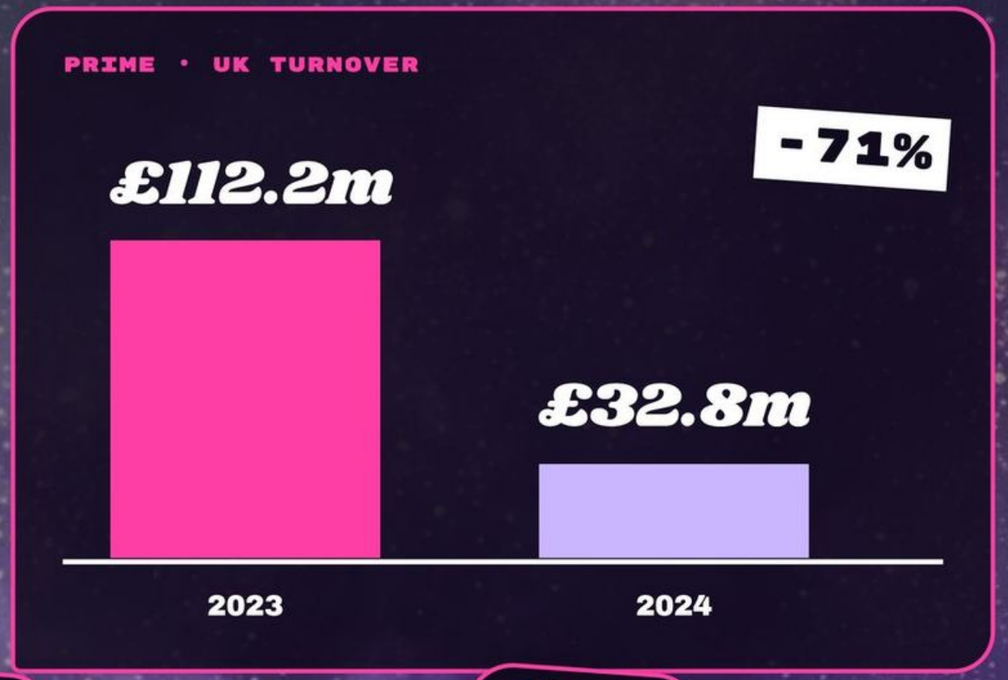
MTV: TheWrap, Dec 31, 2025. Jaguar: CNBC, Oct 7, 2026. Budweiser: PBS NewsHour, Nov 18, 2022; Brand Finance via BeverageDaily, Oct 12, 2026 (brand value, not sales). Cracker Barrel: Entrepreneur, Aug 26, 2025; Cracker Barrel 8-K, Jul 2026. della’s opinion.

© della 2026

ON THE DIAL · LEFT OF CENTRE

CHASING THE NUMBERS.

Likes aren't love.



PRIME 4/10

Built on the fame of two YouTubers. When the hype moved on, so did the turnover.

STANLEY 5/10

A work flask since 1913. $73m in 2019, $750m in 2023, on the back of a pastel cup and Target stampedes. Is the brand the flask, or the next colour drop?

POPPI 5/10

2026: a lip serum, a Love Island flavour, a travel bag. Each one a burst of attention. Which of them sounds like Poppi?

If this is your mean girl era (I'm looking at you, Wendy's), what is it buying you?

Read 10:11 PM

a spike isn't a relationship.

Read 10:13 PM

Prime: City AM, 2025 (Prime Hydration UK accounts). Stanley: CNBC, Dec 23, 2023. Poppi: SheKnows; Sporked, 2026. Stanley is still growing; "chasing" is della's read of the strategy, not a sales verdict.

© della 2026

ON THE DIAL · FAR RIGHT

Unmistakably themselves.

You'd know them with the logo covered.

Different categories. Different decades. Same mouth, every time.

Read 10:15 PM

GUINNESS

9/10

1998 "Good things come to those who wait." Black, white, a harp, a slow pour.

2026 **LoVely. Brand value up 26% while the big lagers fell.**

TONY'S CHOCOLONELY

9/10

2005 Founded to make chocolate 100% slavery free. The unequally divided bar says it on every shelf.

2026 **First TV ad ever: "There's Fight in Every Bite". A wrestler, and a live match at King's Cross. Same fight.**

DOVE

9/10

2004 Real Beauty. Real women, not models.

2026 **No AI women, pledged in 2024. Unedited Reddit reviews on a billboard.**

SPECSAVERS

10/10

2004 "Should've gone to Specsavers."

2026 **Evolved for the first time in 22 years: "Should've gone to journey savers." Still the same joke.**

Guinness: Brand Finance via BeverageDaily, Oct 12, 2026; LBB, Sep 2026. Tony's Chocolonely: Grocery Gazette, Feb 10, 2026. Dove: Unilever, 2026; Contagious, Mar 2026. Specsavers: Marketing Week, May 2026. della's opinion.

© della 2026

Read · pg 22

THE CULT QUESTION

10/10

Why can't anyone copy *Liquid Death?*

WHAT THEY COPY ~~the tallboy can~~ ~~the unhinged tone~~ ~~one viral stunt~~

WHAT THEY CAN'T

1. **Seven years of the same joke.** Most brands go edgy for one campaign, then flinch at the first complaint.
2. **An enemy.** Water dressed as beer always has something to rebel against: earnest wellness marketing.
3. **Entertainment as the business.** Not a funny bit bolted on at the end.

Liquid Death is the exception. Your brand is the rule.

Read 10:17 PM · as He's Just Not That Into You warned us

Everyone copies the can. Nobody copies the commitment.

Read 10:19 PM

MEANWHILE · ARIZONA ICED TEA

99¢

10/10

The same price since 1992. Printed on the can.

Still 99¢ in 2026, through inflation and tariffs. Just a promise nobody was allowed to break.



POP CULTURE BREAK
ATLANTA · FX · 2016

A fake ad, mid-episode. The promise is so famous it became the joke.

9/10

ALSO A CULT · TRADER JOE'S

Almost no traditional ads. The same quirky Fearless Flyer for decades. **In 2026, people still queue round the block for a $3 tote.**

Liquid Death launched in 2019. AriZona: Brandspur, Sep 14, 2026; drinkarizona.com. Atlanta, "B.A.N.", FX, Oct 11, 2016. Trader Joe's: Newsweek; WAMC, Jan 27, 2026. della's opinion.

© della 2026

ON THE DIAL · RIGHT OF CENTRE

THEY TEXTED *back.*

Coming back is possible. It just takes longer than leaving.

GLOSSIER 6/10

hey stranger. we got a bit much. too many launches.

we've closed nine stores and gone back to the products you loved.

Read 10:21 PM

VICTORIA'S SECRET 6/10

we cancelled the show after 2018 and dropped the angels in 2021. the runway came back in 2024.

...we'll see.

Read 10:23 PM

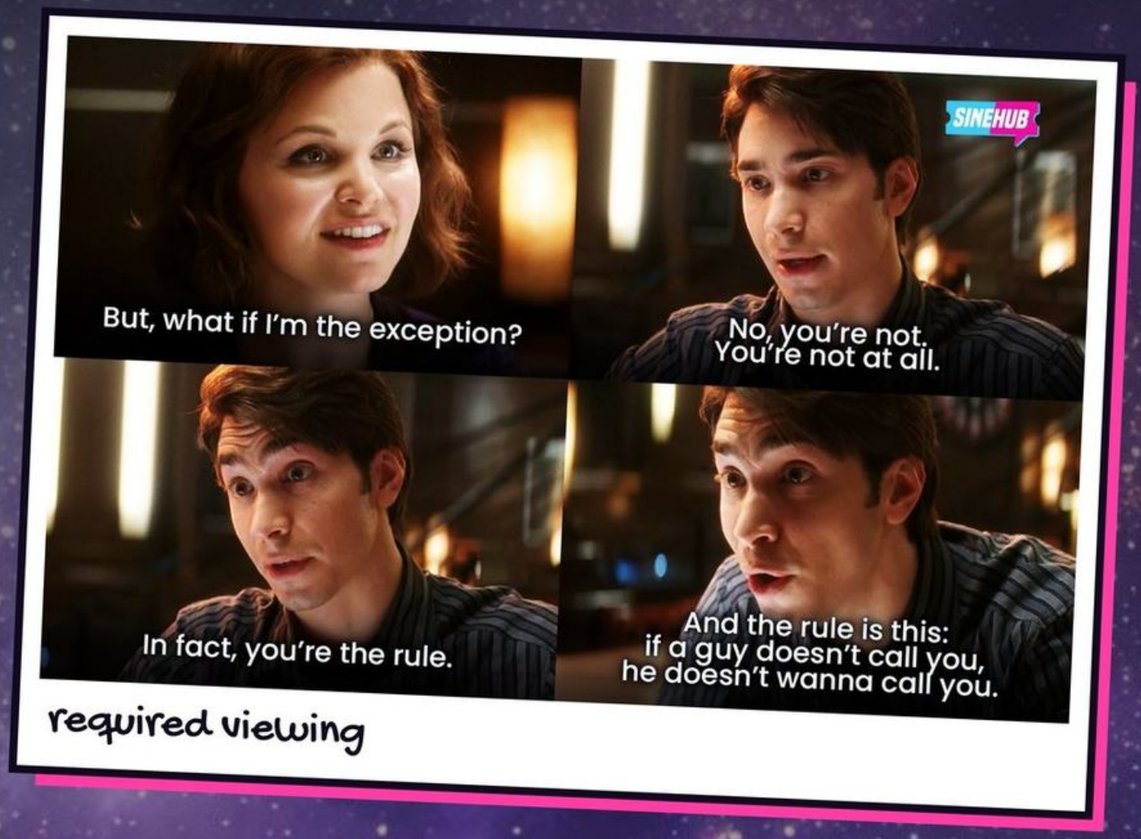
The way back is the same as the way you lost them: fewer things, said the same way, for longer.

Glossier: Cosmetics Business, 2026; Business of Fashion. Victoria's Secret: V Magazine; The Zoe Report, Oct 2026. Messages are della's paraphrase, not quotes.

© della 2026

POP CULTURE BREAK

HE'S JUST NOT THAT into you.



THE RULE, FOR BRANDS

If your audience isn't calling back, they're just not that into you.

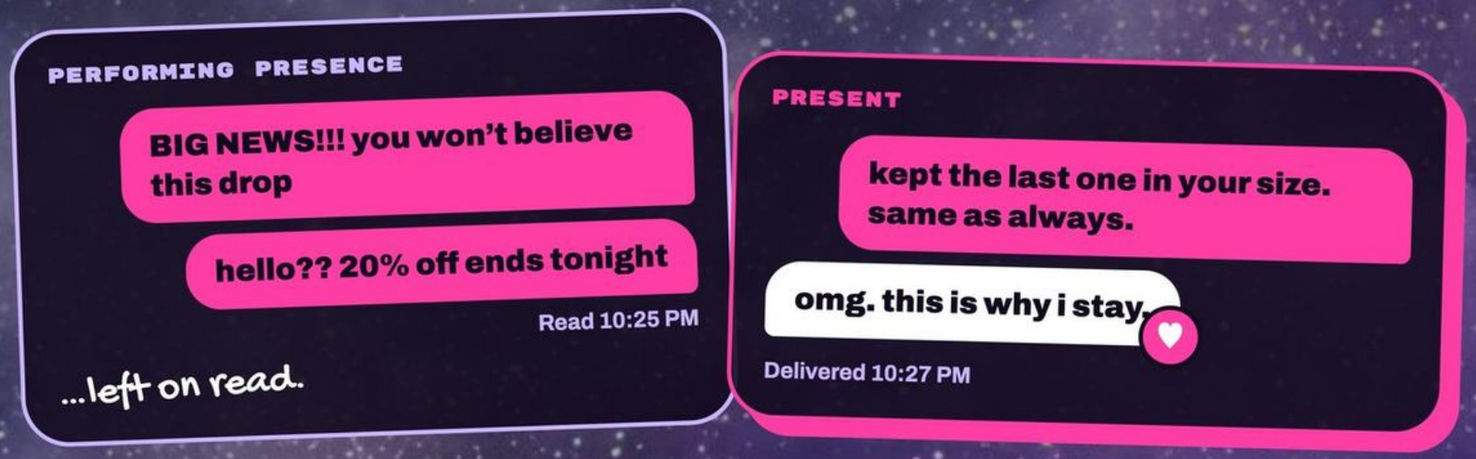
No exceptions. The fix isn't a louder message. It's being worth calling back: the same voice, the same promise, every time.

He's Just Not That Into You. New Line Cinema, 2009. Stills © New Line Cinema, via SineHub. Gigi and Alex. The title began as a line in Sex and the City.

© della 2026

PEOPLE FEEL *the difference.*

Your audience has a nervous system too. They can tell a brand that's present from one performing presence, even when they can't explain how.



80%

trust the brands they use, more than business, government, media or NGOs.

Trust is the reply. Consistency is how you earn it.

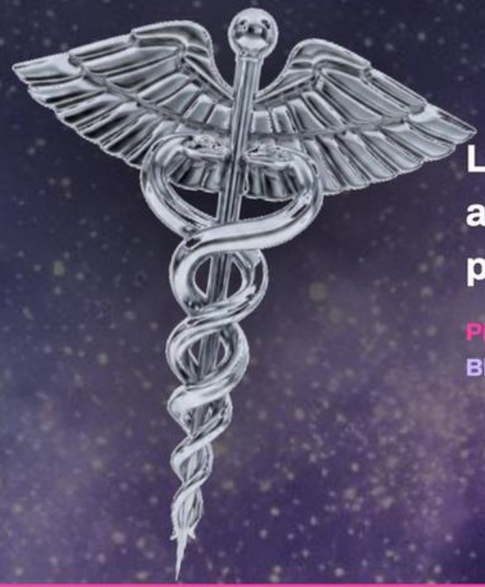
Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brand Trust, 2025.

They always know.

© della 2026

CHAPTER 02 / THE SHOWRUNNER'S MOVE

TAKE YOUR *pulse.*



Look at the last three months of work and decisions. Be honest about which pattern shows up most.

Pink: Corner Coffee, a fictional brand.
Blank lines: your decision.

MOST COMMON PATTERN

- [ ] Regulated (steady, recognisably us)
- [x] Reactive (chasing every spike)
- [ ] Withdrawn (gone quiet, playing it safe)

e.g. Reactive: three new campaigns in six months.

THE PRESSURE BEHIND IT

e.g. A new competitor two doors down.

ONE POSITION WE'LL HOLD

e.g. The friendliest counter in town.

OWNER AND REVIEW DATE

e.g. Brand lead. Review in March.

© della 2026

CHAPTER 03 • THE FIRST DATE

03

EARN YOUR PLACE.



IT'S A MATCH ♥

They swiped right on your brand.

Now, will they show up?

still on for tonight?

Read 10:29 PM

...stood up. Ask Gigi.

THE SECOND DATE

Your profile got the swipe. PERSONALITY gets the second date.



A POINT OF VIEW ISN'T A PERSONALITY

A slogan is what you say. A personality is how you act when nobody's briefing you: the reply, the receipt, the late-night DM.

THE PERSONALITY TEST

"...it would make me sad if Coca-Cola went away."

DANIELLE HAWLEY

Ask people what they'd miss if you disappeared. If the answer is "the discount", that's not a personality.

Read 10:31 PM

© della 2026

POP CULTURE BREAK

I couldn't help but wonder...

WHO ACTUALLY is this brand?



SEX AND THE CITY

Take the logo off. Find the detail doing the remembering. Then protect it.

- Your sound.
- A recurring gesture.
- The shape of the pack.
- A phrase people borrow.

Sex and the City. HBO, 1998 to 2004. della Weekly 05, Sep 2026.

© della 2026

THE LEADER'S DECISION / PARTICIPATE OR PASS

Stop trying to make *fetch* *happen.*



MEAN GIRLS

Sometimes what we call agility is

anxiety moving quickly.

we should do the trend

is it ours though?

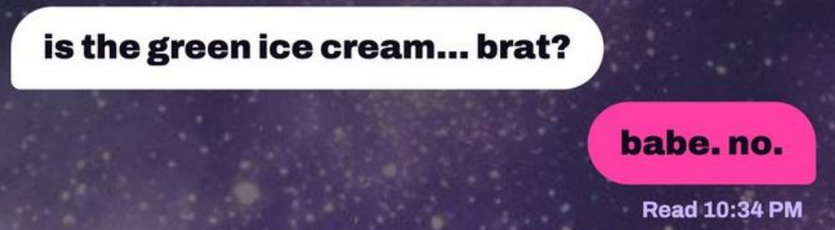
Read 10:33 PM

Mean Girls. Paramount Pictures, 2004. Love-bombing backfires: 70% unsubscribed from 3+ brands in 3 months; 78% prefer fewer, more targeted messages. Optimove 2025, 329 US adults.

© della 2026

ON THE RECORD

Who's trying to make *fetch* happen?



NOT FETCH

KFC

Brat summer, 2024: a video of slightly green ice cream, made in store.

The response was lukewarm at best.

NOT FETCH

ASDA

Brat summer, 2024: added #bratsummer to its TikTok bio. That was the activation.

A hashtag is not a personality.

NOT FETCH

OLIVE GARDEN

Labubu, 2025: photos of a Labubu eyeing the breadsticks.

Unlimited breadsticks were already the joke. Labubu added nothing.

NOT FETCH

PILLSBURY

Labubu, 2025: Labubu posts, because everyone else was doing Labubu posts.

Joined the queue, not the conversation.

NOT FETCH

LOUIS VUITTON

2025: $1,200-plus bag charms that looked a lot like Labubu. Not an official partner.

Mixed reactions. Luxury doesn't chase.

ACTUALLY FETCH

E.L.F.

Labubu, 2025: a creator cosplaying a Labubu beauty influencer doing a GRWM.

Same trend. It worked, because it sounded like e.l.f.

The trend was never the problem. Joining one that isn't yours is.

KFC, Asda: Campaign, Aug 2, 2024. Olive Garden, Pillsbury, Louis Vuitton, e.l.f.: Modern Retail, Jul 1, 2025. Verdicts are della's opinion.

© della 2026

LOVE ISLAND USA · SUMMER 2026 · ON THE RECORD

“DEAR MELANIE, *leave that man.*”

Twelve brands. Same post. Same joke. Same week.

STUBHUB any event you like	**JETBLUE VACATIONS** a holiday	**OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE** “all this could be yours”	**REGAL** a movie night
CITY CRUISES cruises for life	**HERITAGE STORE** unlimited rosewater	**DISCO NAIL CLUB** nail sets for life	**STELI COSMETICS** skincare for life
CRAB SHACK cheesesteaks for life	**CHATTANOOGA LOOKOUTS** tickets and a jersey	**OTF PARK SLOPE** unlimited classes	**SGF FAM** free legal advice



STUBHUB WENT FIRST



One joke, twelve times. Which one did you remember? Read 10:36 PM

“Dear Melanie” posts, Love Island USA season 8, summer 2026. Taste of Reality, Jul 11, 2026; Campaign US, Jul 10, 2026; Forbes, Jul 14, 2026. Fan post @drunkat5am. della’s opinion.

© della 2026

POP CULTURE BREAK

Born to be a babygirl. Forced to be a big dawg.



That's every brand that joined the pile-on. Nobody hired them to be the funny one.

Read 10:38 PM

"Big dawg is crazy, but okay." Love Island USA, 2026.

© della 2026

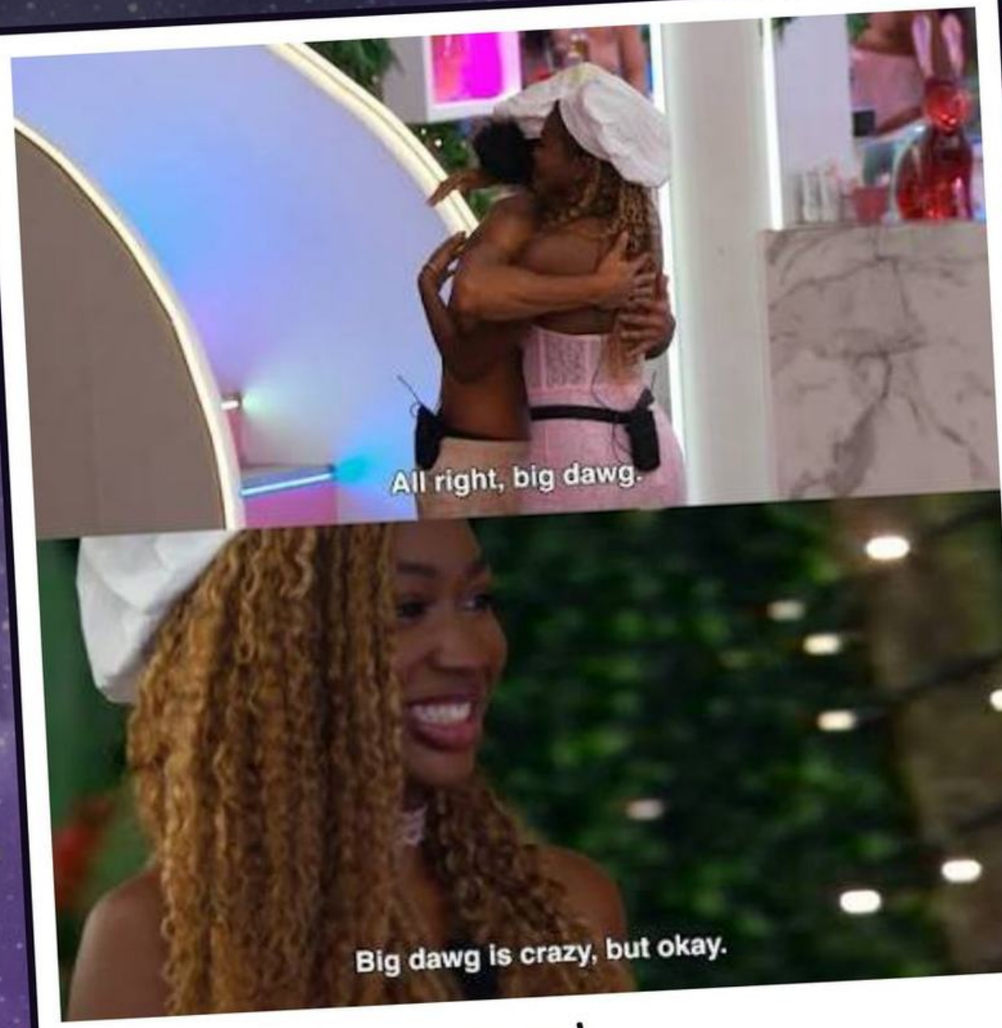
MEANWHILE, IN THE VILLA

Big dawg *is crazy,* *but okay.*

Twelve brands shot their shot. Melanie was in the villa, with no phone.

she left all twelve on read.

Read 10:40 PM



the only reply anyone got

Love Island USA, Peacock, 2026. Still via fan post.

© della 2026

BUT HOLD UP

Can a brand jump on what's *happening right now?*

Yes.

it's about you, not the moment

it sounds like you

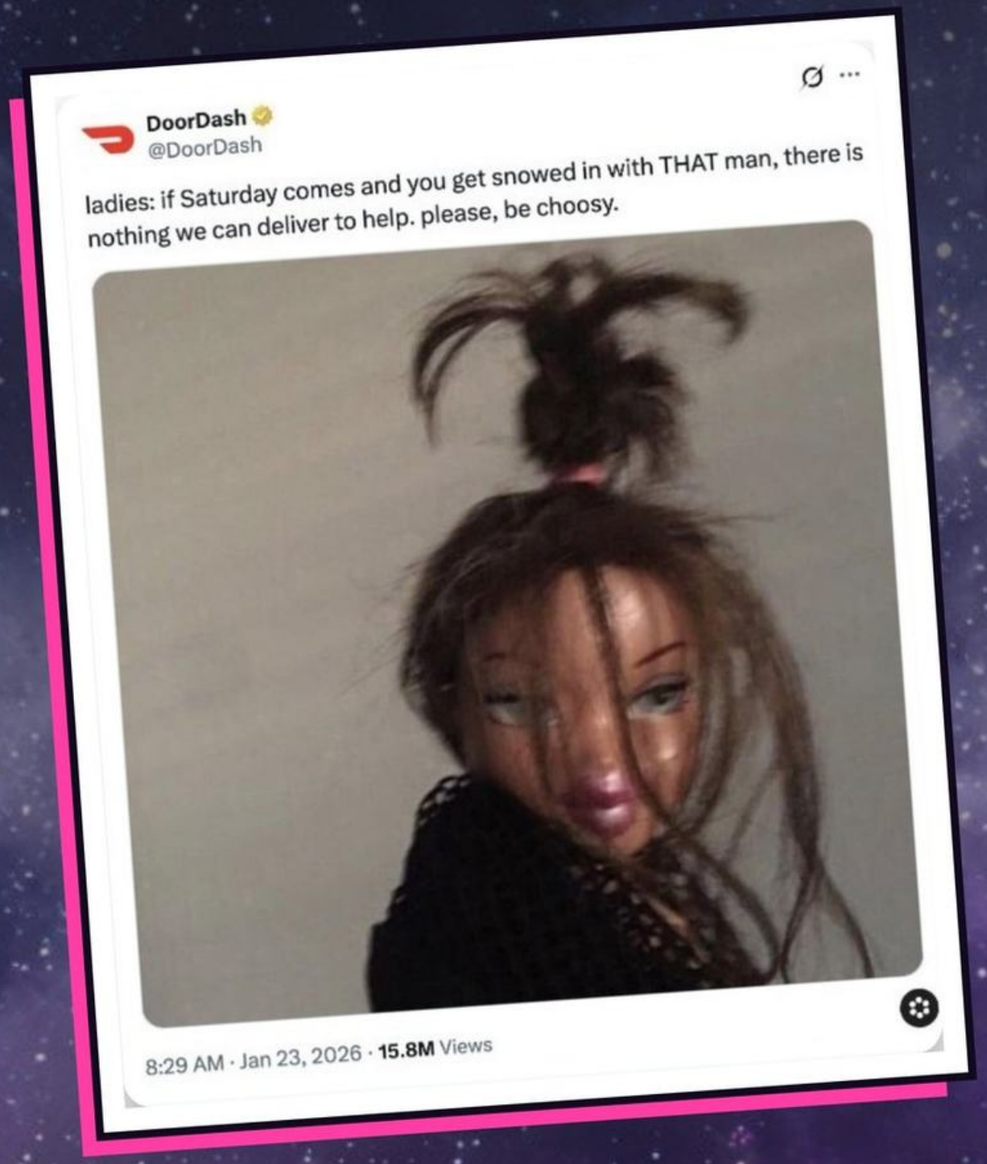
only you could say it

exhibit A:
next page ↓

When the moment is already yours.

Read 10:42 PM

© della 2026



DOORDASH

DELIVERY IS *the* PUNCHLINE.

They can solve quite a few of your problems.

Your taste in men is apparently beyond their capabilities.

Read 10:44 PM

© della 2026

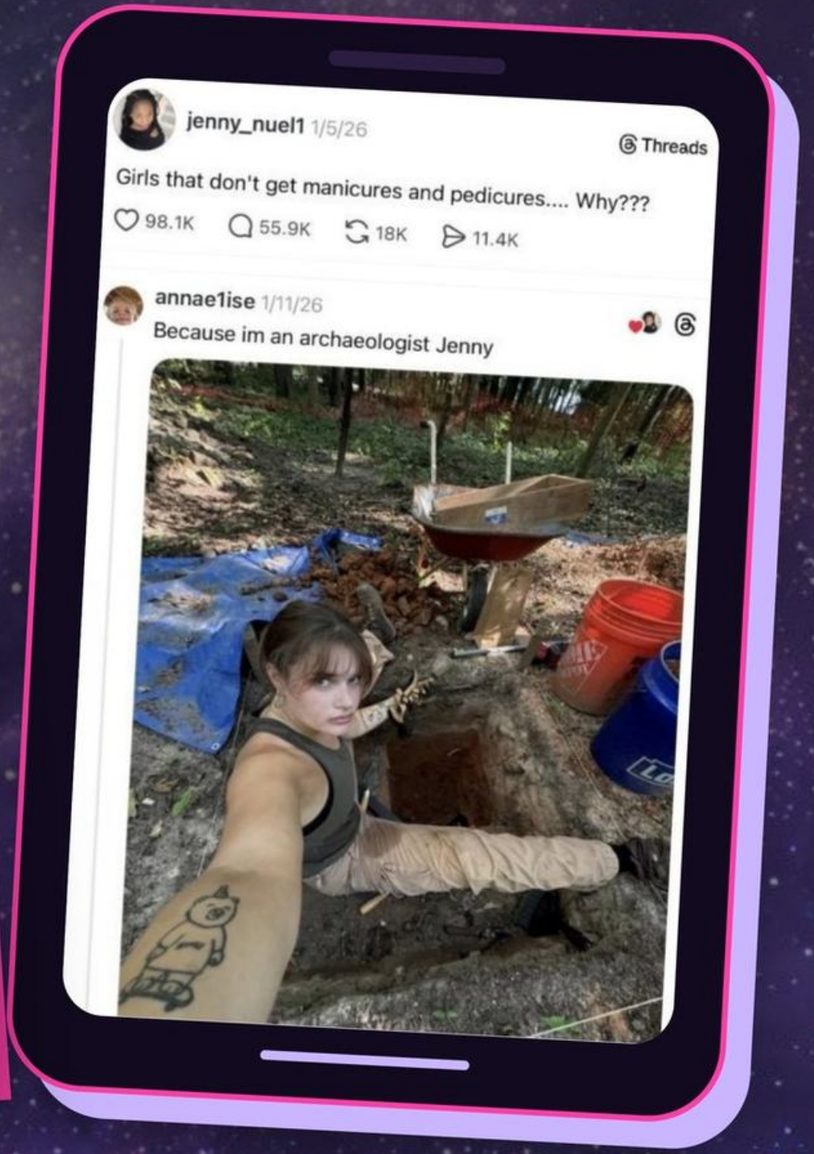
Listening in, WITH A *remit.*

"...MANICURES AND PEDICURES... WHY???"

Read 10:46 PM

The leader decides where the brand belongs, who can reply and when to pass. **In this thread, a nail brand has a useful role.** A brand with little to add lets it run.





Thread screenshots via della research. Cartoon © Tommy Siegel.

© della 2026

HOT TIP

Read the first hundred comments yourself.

The post tells you what you said. The comments tell you what people heard. Before the next performance report lands, look for three things.

TOP COMMENT

my morning routine is finding the shirt i slept in.

♥ 84K people feel seen

On a good day, it quietly hands you the next brief.

What are people repeating without being prompted?

What are they adding that was absent from the work?

Which comment is better than the caption?

Delivered 10:48 PM

© della 2026

HUMOUR HAS A JOB.

Agree on the edge. Give the team permission to use it.

"Funny comes first because humour breaks the awkwardness. We laugh together."

"I would much rather someone love what we do or hate it than feel 'meh' about it."

SUSAN C. ALLEN Read 10:50 PM



© della 2026

GIVE JUDGMENT *a home.*

Name who settles grey areas. Give the team real examples and a route to a timely decision.



crimes-against-the-brand •••

D **Danielle Hawley on Left on Read**
I'm thinking of starting a Slack channel called "Crimes Against the Brand"!

B **Brand team**
More people can make assets. Give them examples, support and someone to call.

Read 10:52 PM

© della 2026

GIVE THE PRODUCT a job in the story.



Before approving the idea, take the product out. Does the story still resolve?

Read 10:54 PM

TENSION

An everyday problem.

PRODUCT

Changes the outcome.

RELIEF

Feels earned.

From a della proposal: a home-services idea built on small “uh-oh” moments.

© della 2026

CHAPTER 03 / THE SHOWRUNNER'S MOVE

DO WE BELONG *in this moment?*

Fill this in before you jump on a moment. Any blank is a reason to find out more first.

Pink: Corner Coffee, a fictional brand. Blank lines: your decision.



WHAT IS HAPPENING, AND TO WHOM?

e.g. A snow day. Parents are home with the kids.

WHY DO WE BELONG HERE?

e.g. We're the walkable place that opens early.

WHAT USEFUL THING CAN WE ADD?

e.g. Free cocoa for kids before 10.

DECISION

☐ Participate ☐ Adapt ☐ Pass

e.g. ☒ Participate. Owner: store ops. Today.

© della 2026

CHAPTER 04 · BETWEEN DATES

04

BETWEEN THE BIG MOMENTS.

Marketing runs on tentpoles. Fund the relationship **between launches.**

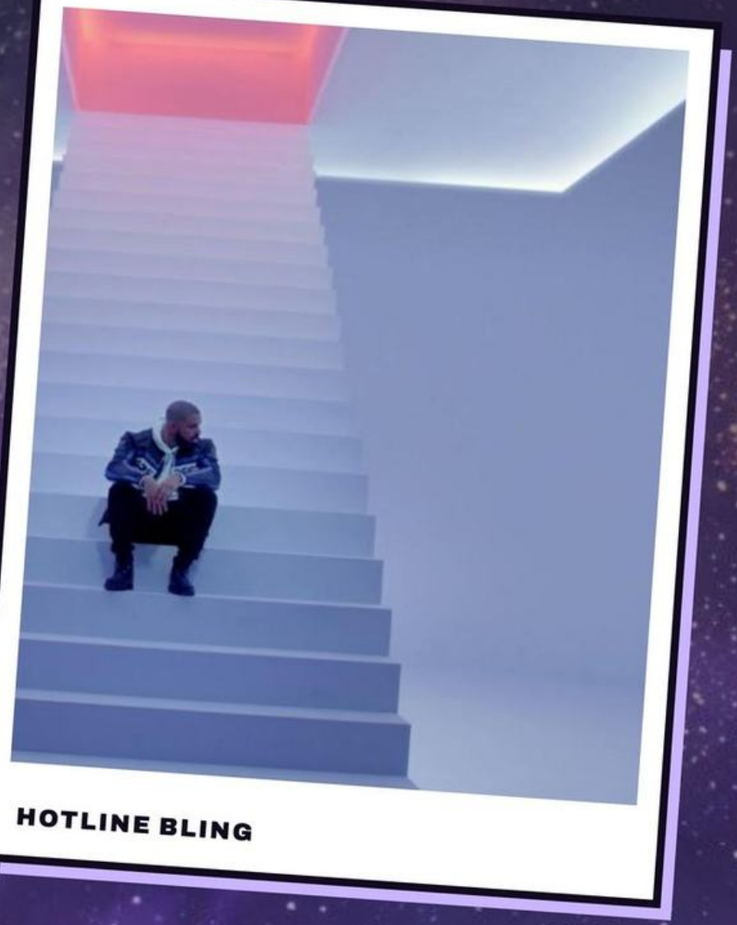
Read 10:56 PM



POP CULTURE BREAK

You used to call me *on my cell phone.*

Read 10:58 PM



Big launch, then silence? Your audience is singing Drake at you.

Agree on a funded cadence and an owner between launches. Then let the team make it happen.

Drake, “Hotline Bling” video, 2015 (Cash Money / Republic).

© della 2026

POP CULTURE BREAK

Cut to black.

Game of Thrones lost the plot in one season. The Sopranos held it for six, right up to the last frame.



CONSISTENCY COMPOUNDS: THE MOST CONSISTENT BRANDS SAW

+27% more very large brand effects

and

+28% more very large business effects.

People still argue about the ending. Nobody argues it wasn't the same show.

A reason to come back: one repeatable format, a useful answer to a question people keep asking.

Read 11:00 PM

The Sopranos, HBO, 1999 to 2007. Game of Thrones, HBO, 2011 to 2019. System1 x IPA, Compound Creativity, Oct 2024: top 20% most consistent brands vs bottom 20%.

© della 2026

EVERYTHING IS *YOUR* *brand.*



A charming first date followed by a confusing bill tells two stories.

The leader owns the gap between the promise and the experience.

© della 2026

THE CUSTOMER *you already have.*

Every rom-com has one. The one who was there all along, while you were busy trying to make fetch happen. **Ride or die.**

> *"When the emotional bank account is full, even if your customer has a bad experience, they're far more likely to give you a pass."*
>
> DANIELLE HAWLEY

Before the next acquisition push: what would bring them back?

Read 11:04 PM

POP CULTURE BREAK



"I like you very much. Just as you are."

DANIEL CLEAVER = THE TREND

Exciting. Expensive. Gone by the next quarter.

MARK DARCY = THE CUSTOMER YOU HAVE

Already likes you. Wants you to stay yourself. Has been waiting for you to call.

Bridget Jones's Diary. Working Title / Universal / Miramax, 2001.

© della 2026

BRANDS THAT TEXT BACK

LEFT ON READ, LEFT FOR *someone else.*



stop watering it and they leave.

73%

say they'll buy from a competitor if a brand doesn't respond on social.

Read 11:06 PM

Sprout Social Index 2025. How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days, Paramount, 2003.

© della 2026

MEET THEM IRL.

+10.7%

US OUT-OF-HOME REVENUE, Q2 2026

As trust in online content falls, physical presence counts for more.

Read 11:07 PM

US out-of-home revenue +10.7% in Q2 2026, a record $3.16B (OAAA, Aug 18, 2026). 63% of Gen Z have intentionally disconnected from screens for their wellbeing (YPulse, Jan 2026).

© della 2026

RESOURCE THE WHOLE PROMISE.

Approve the whole programme: research, making, sign-off and the capacity to reply.

A launch budget alone leaves the relationship unfinished.

Read 11:09 PM

> *"Whatever we create needs to be properly resourced and worthy of the community."*
>
> SUSAN C. ALLEN



© della 2026

CHAPTER 04 / THE SHOWRUNNER'S MOVE

WHERE DOES THE *brand show up?*

Look at recent work across at least four places people meet you. Use real examples, then pick the one repair that matters most.

Read 11:11 PM

Pink: Corner Coffee, a fictional brand.
Blank lines: your decision.

1 WHERE THE AUDIENCE MEETS US

☐ Film ☐ Social ☐ Email ☐ Product ☐ Support

e.g. ☒ Cups, the app, the counter, Instagram.

2 WHICH CUES MAKE IT OURS?

e.g. The orange lid, names on cups, the barista banter.

3 WHAT CONTRADICTS THE PROMISE?

e.g. The app sends generic promos that sound like a different brand.

4 THE ONE REPAIR, OWNER AND DATE

e.g. Rewrite app messages in the counter's voice. CRM lead, by May.

5 A REASON TO RETURN

e.g. Friday Regulars: one customer's order and story each week.

© della 2026



HOT TIP

SUPER BOWL LXI · SOFI STADIUM, LOS ANGELES · 02.14.27

The Super Bowl and Valentine's Day *are going on a date.*

Something completely ridiculous and rather wonderful is going to happen.

One very complicated evening. Wings beside champagne.

Delivered 11:13 PM

© della 2026

CHAPTER 05 · DON'T RUIN IT

05

PROTECT THE WORK.



A hundred small edits can end the relationship.

Read 11:15 PM

WHO CAN SAY *YES*?
WHO CAN SAY *NO*?

> *"The biggest enemy of creativity is those lengthy, rigorous approval processes."*
>
> MANU ORSSAUD / DUOLINGO CMO

01 / ACCOUNTABLE

A named person who signs it off.

02 / CONSULTED

Expertise with a clear remit.

03 / INFORMED

A late preference is a new request.

Read 11:17 PM



The brief is a shared agreement: one priority, one person who can say yes.

Manu Orssaud, Duolingo CMO, in Adweek: "Hi! It's Duo: The Marketing Strategy Behind the Internet's Favorite Green Menace," Rebecca Stewart, Apr 8, 2025.

© della 2026

WHAT WE KEEP HEARING IN AGENCY LAND

12 to 18 weeks.

To approve one piece of work. Longer doesn't make it better. It just makes it longer.

300-ODD DAYS BETWEEN TENTPOLES ÷ 12 TO 18 WEEKS A PIECE = **2 or 3** things you get to say all year.

ENTER THE SHOWRUNNER

When one person holds the story, most of those questions were answered months ago. If you've been yourself all along, the moment doesn't need a meeting.

decision by committee is how good work dies politely. Read 11:19 PM

can we make the logo bigger? wk 2

the regional team wants a version wk 7

can we try it in blue? wk 12

...can we go back to v1? wk 16

↓ the drain of mediocrity

10/10

MEANWHILE, AT LIQUID DEATH

Concept to execution, in-house. A team small enough to "fit in an SUV, legally." Its own production arm, Death Machine. Run like a TV writers' room.

"It is sometimes rare that a ton of different opinions make for great creative."

DAN MURPHY, SVP MARKETING

12 to 18 weeks: the approval cycle we keep hearing quoted across agency and brand teams, an observation, not a study. The maths assumes each piece goes through approval one after another, not in parallel. Liquid Death: Marketing Brew, Jan 12, 2026; LBB, Nov 5, 2025.

© della 2026

“The worst thing you can say about a brand is:

fine.”



“Fine” is the message you send when you’ve stopped caring.

Read 11:21 PM

Susan C. Allen / Co-founder and Chief Brand Officer, Here We Flo

© della 2026

CRAFT IS HOW YOU SHOW YOU GIVE A SHIT.



I ask directors to understand the business problem and the history of the idea. **The goal is stank face: the face you make when the work is too good to be polite about.**

01 / CASTING

Makes the situation believable.

02 / CLOSE-UP

Makes the product clear.

03 / PAUSE

Lets the reveal land.

Read 11:23 PM

© della 2026

CHAPTER 05 / THE SHOWRUNNER'S MOVE

AGREE ON *the job.*

A completed approval brief. Fill it in together before anyone starts making, and keep the signed-off version **where the team already works.**

Pink: Corner Coffee, a fictional brand.
Blank lines: your decision.

APPROVAL BRIEF

1 AUDIENCE AND OBJECTIVE

e.g. Lapsed app users. One return visit.

2 ACCOUNTABLE APPROVER

e.g. The CMO. One name.

3 CONSULTED, AND BY WHEN

e.g. Legal checks the offer by Tuesday.

4 WHAT A USEFUL RESULT LOOKS LIKE

e.g. A clear lift in returning app users within a month.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

© della 2026

CHAPTER 06 · DEFINE THE RELATIONSHIP

06

MAKE THE CASE.

Time to define the relationship.

so what are we?

Read 11:25 PM



WHAT A STRONG BRAND BUYS YOU

BRAND OPENS DOORS *BEFORE THE SALE.*

> *...because people **like the brand** and want to work with us, we can make it happen..."*
>
> SUSAN C. ALLEN, LEFT ON READ EP. 2

Brand gets the swipe. Desire is what makes them stay.

© della 2026

COUNT BOTH,

or the easiest thing to see will win the next budget.



1 MEASURE 1 / ACTION
What people did: clicks, sign-ups, sales. Check it weekly.

2 MEASURE 2 / DESIRE
Why they chose you: unprompted recall, preference over a cheaper option. Check it every quarter.

> *"Performance marketing doesn't create desire, it captures it. Only brands that play a part and earn their place in culture can create desire."*
>
> DANIELLE HAWLEY

A click is instant gratification. Desire grows slowly, and the value is in the journey.

Read 11:27 PM

© della 2026

THE BRAND NERVOUS SYSTEM, REVISITED

Fast-twitch MARKETING is a nervous system stuck in fight or flight.

FAST-TWITCH

Fires instantly. Tires fast.

React. Post. Be in every funnel. Report it by Friday. Do it again on Monday.

SLOW-TWITCH

Steady. Goes for years.

The same voice every quarter. The ad a ten-year-old still remembers at 40.

WHAT A BRAND-SIDE LEADER TOLD US

“The metrics make us look like we have our shit together.”

looking in control isn’t the same as being regulated.

Read 11:29 PM

…and the audience can feel the panic.

Fast-twitch muscle fibres contract quickly and fatigue quickly; slow-twitch fibres sustain effort for longer. The brand version is della’s metaphor. Quote from the Brand-Side conversation, 2026.

© della 2026

WHAT A BRAND-SIDE LEADER TOLD US

AGE 10 sees a Ferrari ad.

AGE 40 buys the Ferrari.

30 years.

Which dashboard caught that?



> *"If companies are going to grow for the long term... they need long data."*
>
> LES BINET / WARC

Long-term relationship status: both stay on.
The split is about proportion.

60% BRAND | 40% ACTIVATION

Read 11:33 PM

can you prove the ad worked?

ask me in 2056.

Read 11:31 PM

Thirty years doesn't happen by accident.
It happens on purpose.

From the Brand-Side conversation, 2026. Ferrari was their example. 60/40 is an average; the right mix varies by category. Binet: WARC, Jan 10, 2020. Split: Les Binet & Peter Field, The Long and the Short of It (IPA, 2013).

© della 2026

THE LONG GAME, WITHOUT THE LONG FORECAST

The plan isn't a timeline. *It's a personality.*

MEANWHILE, IN NAPA

Bill Harlan runs Harlan Estate on a 200-year plan: "looking back 100 years and looking ahead 100 years... It's about time and continuity." He doesn't win by forecasting 2226. He wins by never changing what Harlan Estate is.

six months in the job. maybe a two-year runway. bonuses paid by the quarter. how do i think in 100 years?

you don't need 100 years. you need to be the same brand on monday as you were on friday.

Read 11:35 PM

THE SHOWRUNNER'S VERSION

Nobody greenlit six seasons of The Sopranos.

They greenlit a pilot that knew exactly what show it was.

Then the showrunner reset that intention every season, every episode. That's how you get six.

FOR THE PERFORMANCE MARKETERS

Consistency plants. Performance harvests. You need both, in that order.

You can't retarget someone into love.

A regulated brand isn't run by the forecast. Stay yourself this quarter, then the next one. That's the long game.

Bill Harlan, Wine Spectator, "Bill Harlan's 100-Year Vision", Apr 12, 2021. The Sopranos, HBO, 1999 to 2007.

© della 2026

SO, WHAT IS SOMEONE TO DO?

six pages into chapter 06, you may be wondering...

BE intentional.

Like you would in a relationship.

THE SECRET TO A LONG MARRIAGE

Ask anyone. It isn't chemistry. It's choosing, every day, how you're going to show up.

Can you prove it will work? Not if you're not intentional. Intention is what gives finance a horizon.

THE DTR, BRAND EDITION

what are we?

One personality, the same in every room.

what are we doing?

The one job brand has this year, agreed before anyone writes a brief.

what are we saying?

One story. Every channel, every episode.

where is this going?

Goals we can measure: desire, every quarter.

Read 11:37 PM

© della 2026

GIVE FINANCE A HORIZON.

Historical research frames the case. The next campaign still has to earn its return.

Pick one gap. One owner. The people who can change it in the same room.

HORIZON.xls

- This much budget.
- For this long.
- Reviewed on this date.

Say what you will stop doing to pay for it.

OK

"Relationships build over years." Shinola's Dana Mosa Basha, talking to Rachel Karten. Link in Bio, Oct 8, 2026.

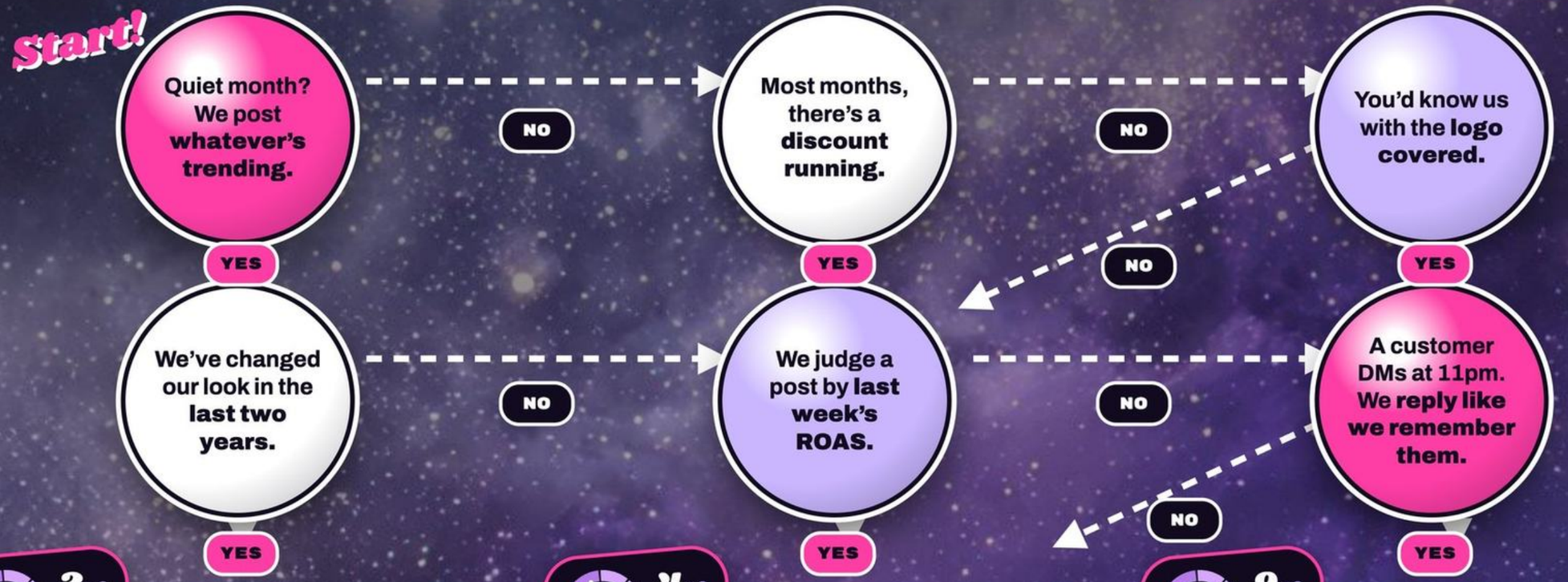
© della 2026

QUIZ! What's your brand's attachment style?

follow the arrows. be honest, darling.

the budget ask is easy when you're secure.

Read 11:39 PM



2/10

YOU'RE...

Anxious

You change yourself every time they go quiet. Lost the plot, babe.

4/10

YOU'RE...

Transactional

They'll stay as long as the discount does.

9/10

YOU'RE...

Secure

Regulated. Unmistakably yourself. Take this into the budget meeting.

© della 2026



Image: Public Desire

© della 2026

CHAPTER 07 • THE SEVEN-YEAR ITCH

07

seven: the number of perfection.
also, the year of the itch.

LIVE IT.

You defined it. Now live it.

Read 11:40 PM



WHAT A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE BRAND TOLD US THIS MONTH

Everything outside will change.

Culture moves. You'll always have to react to it.

OCTOBER 2026, PLANNING FOR 2027

still figuring out our 2027 calendar.

still figuring out how much headcount we'll get.

still figuring out which partners we can bring in.

and who you are? that part's already decided.

Read 11:42 PM

THE ONE THING YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR

Who are you every single day? Every single minute?

The calendar, the headcount and the partners will land when they land. How you show up for your colleagues and your customers starts on Monday.

that's how you nurture the love story, and don't get left on read.

From a della conversation with a global marketplace brand, October 2026. Paraphrased.

© della 2026

THE 7 RULES *for not getting left on read.*

1 Know who you are before you go out.

You'd know them with the logo covered. · PG 17

2 Show up on the boring days.

The other 300-odd days between the tentpoles. · PG 42

3 Always text back.

73% would buy from a competitor instead. · PG 47

4 React to culture. Don't become someone else for it.

Stop trying to make fetch happen. · PG 30

5 Have the money talk early.

Give finance a horizon. · PG 64

6 Choose it again every season.

The showrunner resets the intention. · PG 62

7 Check in before the itch.

Daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly. Not just on the anniversary. · PG 59

tear this one out. stick it on the fridge.

Read 11:44 PM

Seven: the number of perfection, and the year of the itch. Page numbers point back to where each rule comes from.

© della 2026

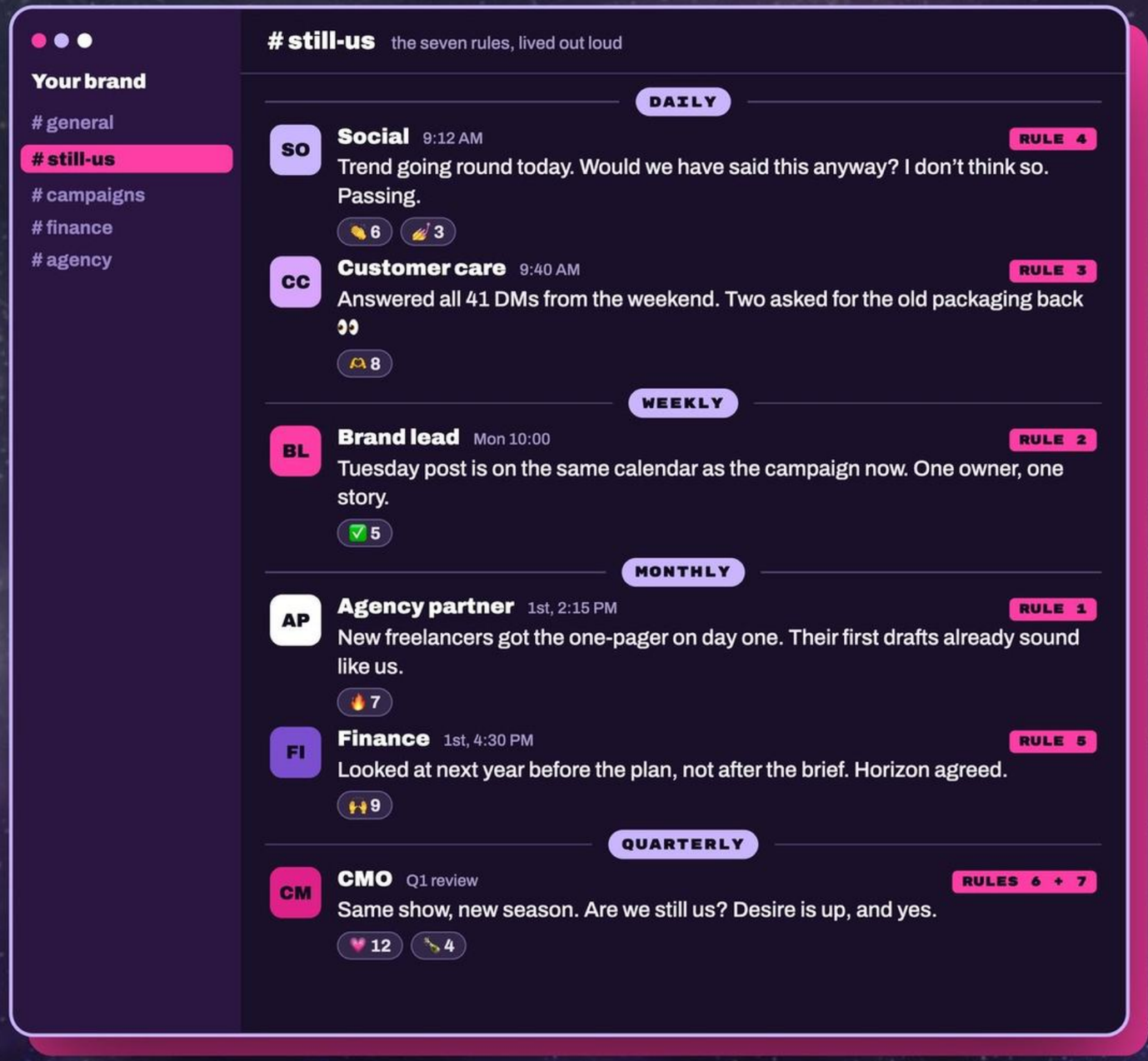
THE 7 RULES / WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

Living it *inside.*

with your colleagues.

Not once a year on the anniversary.
Every day, a little.

Read 11:46 PM



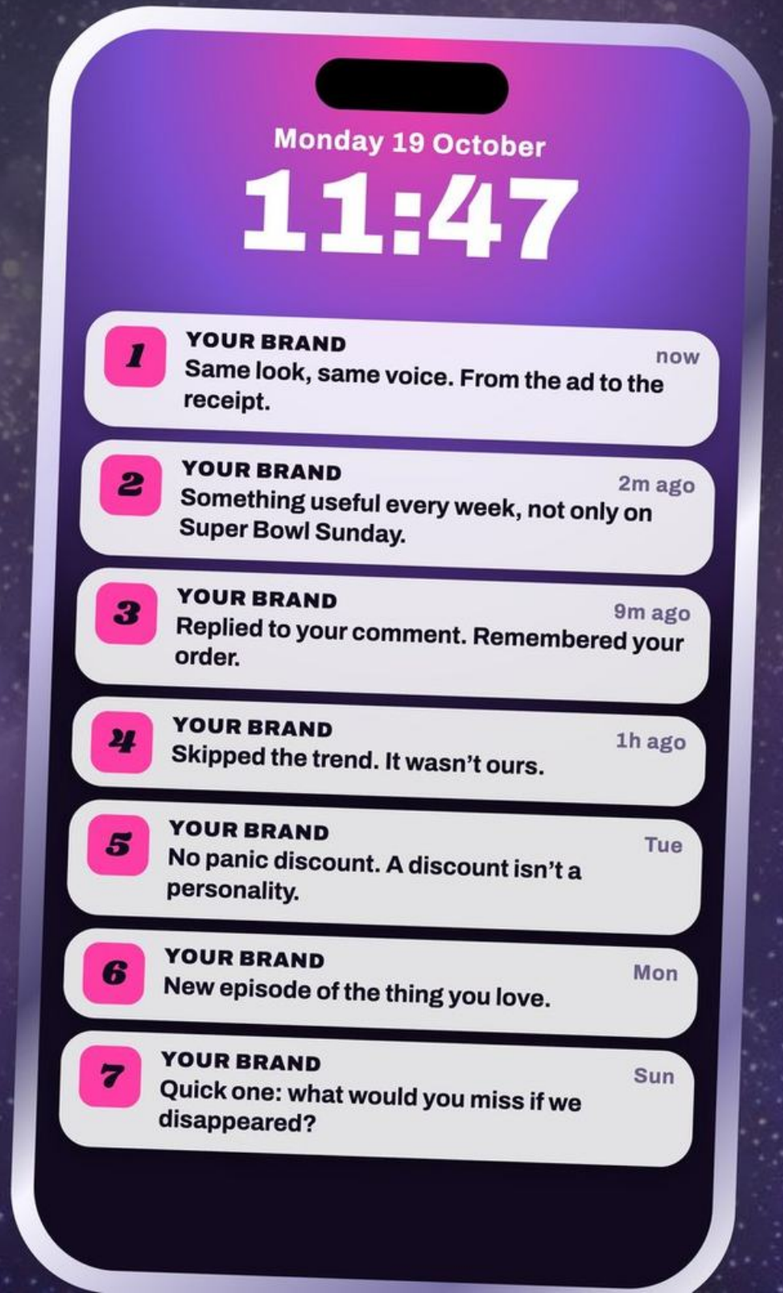
THE 7 RULES / WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Living it *outside.*

with your customers.

every touchpoint is a text.
answer like you mean it.

Delivered 11:48 PM



© della 2026

WHEN IT'S WORKING · INTENTION, AT SCALE

Your mythology ISN'T yours.

In a relationship that's working, you start to influence each other.

YEAR SEVEN

you say that thing i say now.

you started it. i just kept it.

so whose is it?

ours.

Read 11:50 PM

you can shape the conditions.
you can't script the result.

MANAGE IT TOO TIGHTLY

and it stops being mythology. It becomes propaganda. A brand that constantly corrects interpretations is a brand that is afraid of you.

THE WORK IS NOT CONTROL

The work is integrity. Show up consistently as yourself, act on your values whatever the commercial pressure, then release the outcome.

That is not a loss of power. That is what power actually looks like at scale.

From della on Substack, "Your Mythology Isn't Yours," Apr 30, 2026. fromdella.substack.com

© della 2026

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE WHEN A BRAND KNOWS ITSELF

Know who you are, *then you know what can flex.*

WHAT STAYS

Hot pink. The puns. The tone.

"Asking us to make the packaging black or fundamentally tone down who we are… that wouldn't work."

WHAT CAN FLEX

The leading tagline.

"The leading tagline might change, but the brand remains recognisable."

THE EXAMPLE • HERE WE FLO

Here We Flo is a period and intimate care brand with a frank, funny voice. Tesco put this line at the point of sale. Another retailer wasn't ready, so Flo wrote a different line that still sounded like Flo.

THE LINE

your vagina has standards, as it should.

NOW WRITE YOURS

What stays: .....

What can flex: .....

Who settles the grey areas: .....

Agree it before the retailer, the agency or the new CMO asks. Then flexing never feels like losing yourself.

Susan C. Allen, co-founder and Chief Brand Officer, Here We Flo, on Left on Read Ep. 2.

© della 2026

SOMEONE TEXTS BACK



on my way.

Delivered 11:51 PM

HOW della HELPS · THE IDEA THAT CONNECTS EVERY CHAPTER

EVERY BRAND *needs* a showrunner.

Someone who holds the story together across campaigns, everyday content and the people making it.

That's us. della keeps the story coherent and moves it through execution, so you can stop personally connecting every brief.

The campaign is one episode.

Tuesday's post is an episode too.

Someone has to hold the whole season together.

Read 11:52 PM



© della 2026

HOW della HELPS / WITHIN THE AGREED REMIT

WHAT WE OWN. YOU APPROVE.

Agencies keep leading their campaigns and specialist disciplines. della holds the continuity between them, alongside your team.

YOU APPROVE

Business priorities, budgets and material brand decisions.

della OWNS

The narrative platform, creative direction and content priorities.

YOU APPROVE

Legal requirements.

della OWNS

Briefing and creative oversight: how the central idea translates into each format, and what needs reworking.

Delivered

© della 2026

HOW della HELPS / THE FIRST MONTH

AFTER THE FIRST MONTH.

The practical difference: more connected briefs, and more decisions settled before they reach your desk.

Exact outputs depend on the engagement: Discovery, Sprint or an ongoing partnership.

- An agreed narrative platform.
- Clear creative principles.
- A prioritised programme of work.
- An approval process with named owners.

Delivered

© della 2026

LET SOMEONE help carry it.



Write down one decision you're carrying alone, and who could help you make it.

What decision are you carrying alone?

Read 11:54 PM

What would help you make it?

Read 11:56 PM

© della 2026

WE ALWAYS text back.

If you found your budget, handover or audience problem in these pages, bring it to us. **We'll start with the decision you're carrying alone.**

One brand. One connected world. Let's talk.



hello@della.one / della.one.

First to break the silence gets a drink on me. See the work at della.one.

© della 2026

REFERENCE

THE RESEARCH



JAN SAENREDAM, 1604

THE BIG PICTURE

Gartner, Jun 10, 2026 (426 senior marketing leaders). Plato, *Republic*, Book VII. Fred Hebert, “Plato’s Dashboards,” 2021. Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brand Trust, 2025. Sprout Social Index 2025. Optimove, 2025.

CONSISTENCY AND THE LONG VIEW

System1 x IPA, *Compound Creativity*, Oct 2024. Les Binet & Peter Field, *The Long and the Short of It*, IPA, 2013. Les Binet, “Les Binet on why long-term marketing matters in the age of short-termism,” WARC, Jan 10, 2020, warc.com. Bill Harlan, Wine Spectator, Apr 12, 2021.

THE CONSISTENCY DIAL (PAGES 18 TO 23)

Game of Thrones petition: CBS News, May 2019. MTV: TheWrap, Dec 31, 2025. Jaguar: CNBC, Oct 7, 2026. Budweiser: PBS NewsHour, Nov 18, 2022; Brand Finance via BeverageDaily, Oct 12, 2026. Cracker Barrel: Entrepreneur, Aug 26, 2025; Cracker Barrel 8-K, Jul 2026. Prime: City AM, 2025. Stanley: CNBC, Dec 23, 2023. Poppi: SheKnows; Sporked, 2026. Guinness: LBB, Sep 2026. Tony’s Chocolonely: Grocery Gazette, Feb 10, 2026. Dove: Unilever, 2026; Contagious, Mar 2026. Specsavers: Marketing Week, May 2026. AriZona: Brandspur, Sep 14, 2026. Trader Joe’s: Newsweek; WAMC, Jan 27, 2026. Glossier: Cosmetics Business, 2026; Business of Fashion. Victoria’s Secret: V Magazine; The Zoe Report, Oct 2026. Scores are della’s opinion.

© della 2026

REFERENCE

THE RESEARCH, *continued.*



REFERENCE

THE FIRST DATE

Fetch: Campaign, Aug 2, 2024 (KFC, Asda); Modern Retail, Jul 1, 2025 (Olive Garden, Pillsbury, Louis Vuitton, e.l.f.). "Dear Melanie": Taste of Reality, Jul 11, 2026; Campaign US, Jul 10, 2026; Forbes, Jul 14, 2026.

BETWEEN DATES

Out of home: OAAA, Aug 18, 2026. Screen breaks: YPulse, Jan 2026. Brands that text back: Sprout Social Index 2025.

PROTECT THE WORK

Manu Orssaud, Duolingo CMO, in "Hi! It's Duo: The Marketing Strategy Behind the Internet's Favorite Green Menace," Adweek, Apr 8, 2025, adweek.com. Liquid Death in-house: Marketing Brew, Jan 12, 2026; LBB, Nov 5, 2025. Approval cycles: della's observation, not a study.

MAKE THE CASE

Dana Mosa Basha, Shinola, on Link in Bio with Rachel Karten, Oct 8, 2026. Attachment theory: Bowlby; Ainsworth.

CONVERSATIONS

Left on Read with Danielle Hawley, and Susan C. Allen of Here We Flo (Ep. 2). The Brand-Side conversation, 2026. A global marketplace brand, Oct 2026. Cannes dinners, over a decade.

della WRITING

"Your Brand Has a Nervous System," Mar 11, 2026. "Your Mythology Isn't Yours," della on Substack, Apr 30, 2026. della Weekly 05, Sep 2026.

POP CULTURE

He's Just Not That Into You; Sex and the City; Mean Girls; Love Island USA; Hotline Bling; Bridget Jones's Diary; The Sopranos; Game of Thrones; Atlanta; How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days.

© della 2026

REFERENCE

Image CREDITS.

FILM AND TV

PG 46 Bridget Jones's Diary (2001)
Still © Working Title / Universal / Miramax.

PG 24 He's Just Not That Into You (2009)
Stills © New Line Cinema. Meme via SineHub.

PG 29 Sex and the City (1998 to 2004)
Still © HBO.

PG 30 Mean Girls (2004)
Still © Paramount Pictures.

PG 43 "Hotline Bling" (2015)
Music video still, Drake. © Cash Money / Republic Records.

PG 22 Atlanta, "B.A.N." (2016)
Still © FX.

PG 34 Love Island USA (2026)
Stills © ITV Studios / Peacock, via fan post.

DOLLS AND MEMES

PG 12 "born to be a babygirl, forced to be a big dawg"
Doll meme. Also page 33.

PG 38 Glam doll close-up
Photograph by Gonzalez.

PG 49 "Are you free after work? Me after work."
Doll meme, @jacksonjumpingzz.

PG 55 "Stank face."
Doll meme.

PG 11 "Was I becoming a haunted house?"
Sex and the City meme. Still © HBO.

PG 28 "date idea: we watch all of my reposts"
Redrawn by della from a viral meme.

PG 37 Candy-heart cartoons
Also pages 41, 45 and the hot tip after 12. © Tommy Siegel.

PG 3 Doll photographs
Also pages 4, 5 and 52.

POSTS, ADS AND STILLS

PG 32 StubHub and JetBlue posts
Love Island USA, Jul 2026. © the brands. Fan post © @drunkat5am.

PG 36 DoorDash post on X
© DoorDash.

PG 37 Threads post and reply
© the account holders.

PG 44 The Sopranos (1999 to 2007)
Still © HBO.

PG 47 How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (2003)
Stills © Paramount. Meme via @bestmovielines.

PG 61 Ferrari print ad, "What can be conceived can be created"
Vintage ad © Ferrari.

PG 66 "Take a deep breath" Nokia graphic
Image © Public Desire.

All images remain the property of their owners. Made something here and want credit? Tell us at hello@della.one. Chrome props and editorial art: della. See all our work at della.one.

© della 2026

THE 2027 PLAYBOOK FOR MARKETERS

TO BE continued.



Read 12:09 AM

love, d