

STYLE ID AFRICA

TRENDS

ANALYSIS GUIDES

STYLE ID AFRICA

MARKETING SHIFTS

SOCIAL
PLATFORMS &
CONTENT

DIGITAL/TECH
INNOVATIONS

POP CULTURE
TRENDS

OCTOBER 2025

A person wearing a grey sweater is holding a large, translucent sphere. The word "INTRO" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the sphere. The person's hands are visible, with one hand gripping the sphere and the other pointing towards it. The background is a solid light blue-grey color. There are two bright pink rectangular shapes: one in the top-left corner and another in the bottom-left corner.

INTRO



DUCTION

The digital landscape is moving faster than ever, with platforms, technology, culture, and consumer expectations evolving in real time.

This monthly update is designed to capture the pulse of what matters now, across social media shifts, emerging digital and tech trends, marketing innovations, and cultural movements shaping consumer behaviour.

By connecting the dots between pop culture, brand strategies, and everyday digital habits, this report offers a sharp snapshot of where attention is going and what's influencing it. Think of it as your guide to navigating the noise, spotting opportunities, and staying ahead in a world where change is the only constant.



CONTENT



01 Marketing Shifts

OF



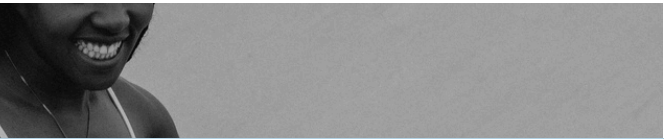
02 Consumer Behaviours



03 Digital/Tech Innovations



04 Social Platforms & Content



05 Cultural Movements



REPORT



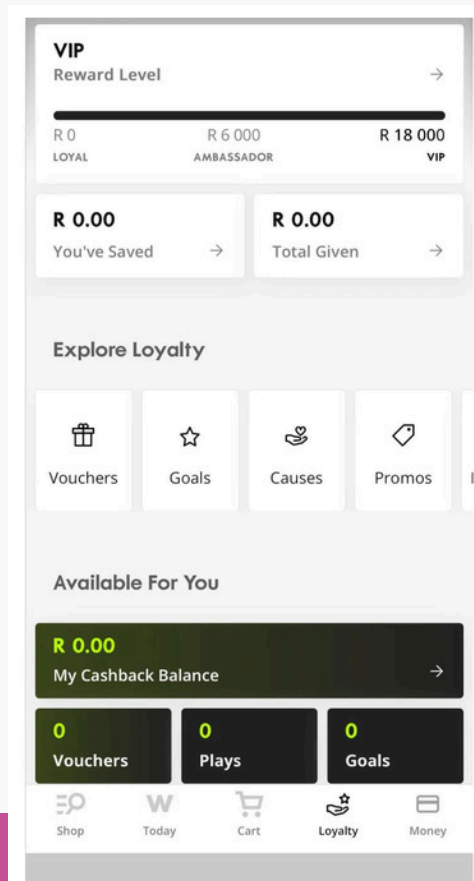
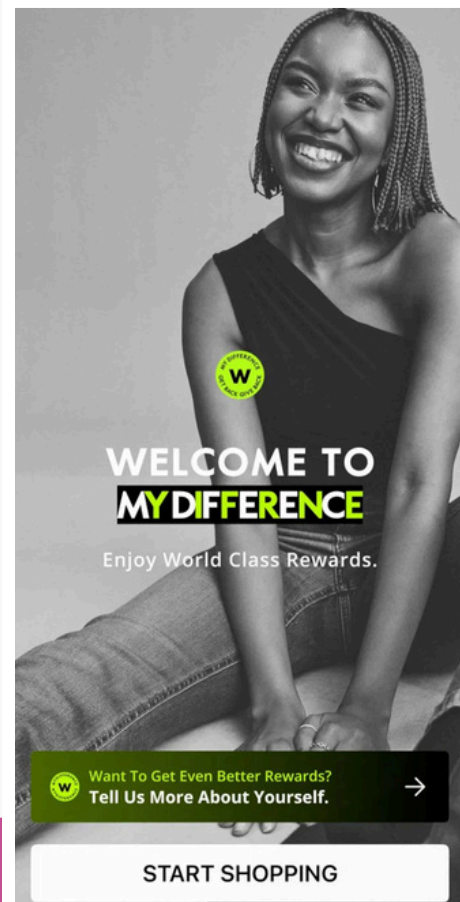
06 Pop Culture Trends

A woman with curly hair and glasses is pointing at a tablet held by a man in an apron. They are both smiling and looking at the screen. The background is a blurred office or retail environment. A purple semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "MARKETING SHIFTS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

MARKETING SHIFTS

LOYALTY MARKETING

Traditionally, loyalty was one piece of the mix, driven by rewards programs or repeat purchase incentives. But in today's landscape, it has evolved into a **strategic growth lever** that's about more than retention: it **blends emotional connection, personalisation, and community-building**. This makes it both a foundational pillar of the marketing mix and a trend in its modern execution, as brands increasingly see loyalty not just as the end of the funnel but as an **ongoing cycle of engagement**.



Today's consumers expect to feel recognised and understood, gravitating toward brands and influencers who build communities, provide exclusivity, and create meaningful engagement.

True loyalty is no longer rooted in "spend more, get more," but in **consistent authenticity, cultural relevance, and the ability to nurture lasting relationships**.

What does this mean for you:

For brands and influencers, loyalty means cultivating trust and cultural relevance, **building communities that stick** not because of the transaction, but **because of the connection**. The goal is to design experiences that inspire belonging and advocacy, not just repeat purchases.

THE RISE OF VIBE



We're witnessing a fundamental shift in how marketing is done. The focus is not only on new tools or faster processes, but on the collapse of the **barrier between having an idea and bringing it to life**. This transformation has given birth to **Vibe Marketing**, a new paradigm where **thought and execution merge into one fluid, intuitive process**.

Vibe Marketing is all about where campaigns **lead with mood, aesthetic, or emotional resonance** rather than traditional data-first strategies. Creative execution is becoming more intuitive, where brands are using AI to **translate a vibe into visuals, tone, and storytelling** faster than ever.

MARKETING



This allows brands to create campaigns that feel more authentic, **resonating with audiences on a deeper level** by aligning with their **emotional state or mindset**. It's a shift from efficiency to relevance, where the focus is on creating experiences that truly connect with people.

What does this mean for you:

Vibe marketing shows that **audiences respond more to mood, emotion, and cultural resonance** than just product features or messaging. Brands and influencers should lead with aesthetic, tone, and cultural cues in content. Also using **authentic storytelling and platform-native formats** to create emotional connections that drive engagement and loyalty.

A photograph of a woman with curly hair and glasses pointing at a tablet held by a man in an apron. The text 'CONSUMER BEHAVIOURS' is overlaid in a yellow box. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOURS

THE MINDFUL CONSUMER



In 2025, South African consumers are increasingly adopting mindful consumption practices, characterised by **intentional spending and a focus on quality over quantity**. This shift is driven by economic pressures, environmental concerns, and a desire for personal well-being. Younger generations, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, are leading this movement, **prioritising essentials and experiences** that align with their values.

Recent data indicates that 74.7% of South African consumers cite **financial constraints as a barrier to spending**. Common cost-cutting strategies include canceling subscriptions (28% in Gauteng), reducing clothing budgets (35%), and switching to more affordable brands or stores (28% of Gen Z). Additionally, 58% of consumers always look for sales and promotions, with 34% prioritising the lowest price over quality or convenience.

What does this mean for you:

South African consumers are embracing a more intentional approach to spending, **focusing on value, sustainability, and alignment** with personal values. This trend reflects a broader global movement towards **conscious living and mindful consumption**. For brands, you need to highlight product quality, sustainability, and value to align with consumers' mindful spending habits. Influencers must showcase genuine, thoughtful purchasing and partner with brands that reflect conscious consumption values.

CONSUMERS WANT INSTANT GRATIFICATION



48% of South African's say their spending is **online**, this will increase to 56% over the next 5 years. **Instant gratification** has become a defining consumer behaviour, continually evolving in **response to faster technology, seamless platforms, and rising expectations** for immediacy. Consumers no longer just desire speed, they expect it as standard, with patience shrinking in both digital and physical spaces.

This behaviour reflects a deeper cultural shift where convenience and immediacy are **no longer perks but benchmarks**, shaping how brands must design experiences, content, and services to keep pace with an audience that equates value with "now."

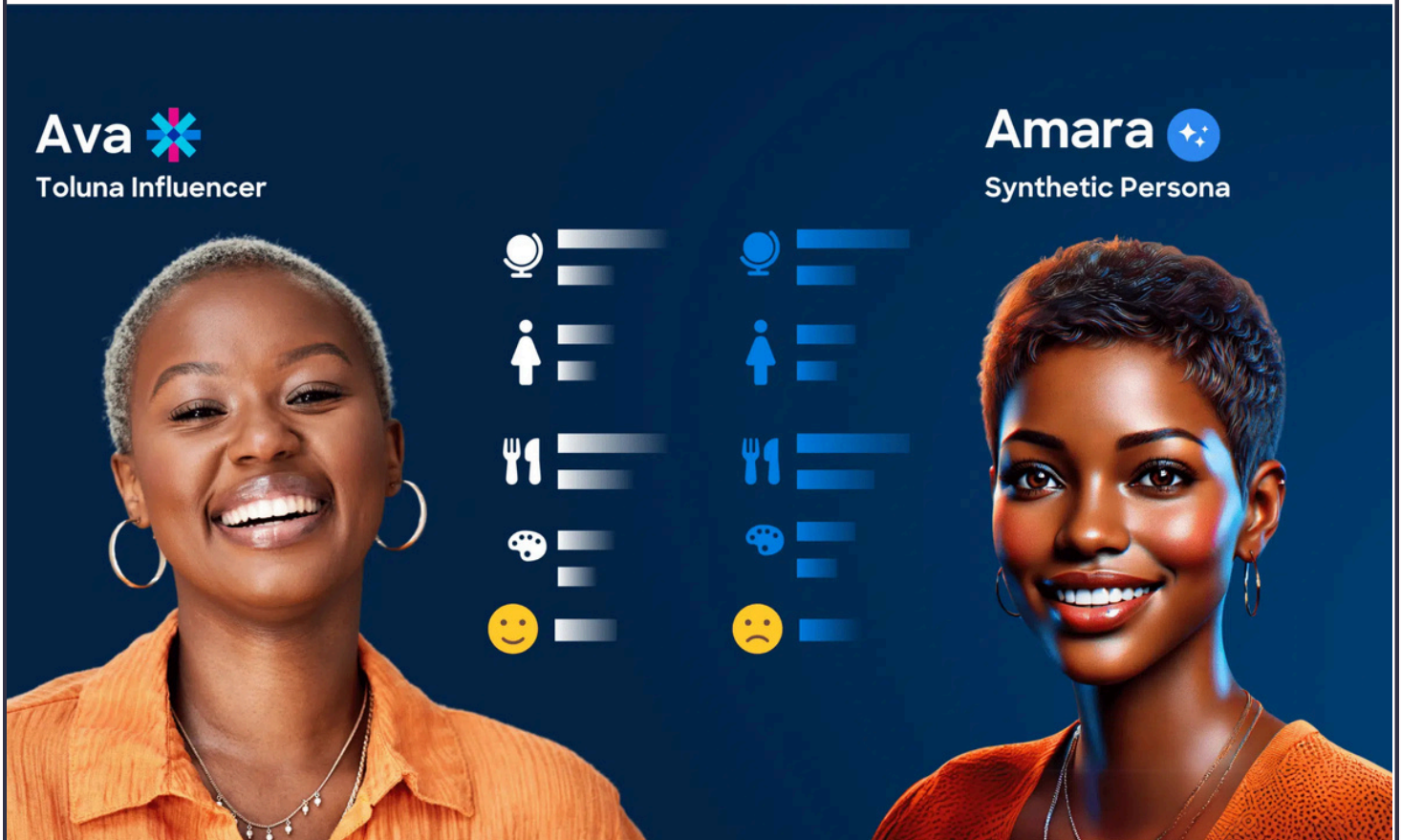
What does this mean for you:

For brands and influencers, instant gratification means **creating experiences, content, and interactions** that deliver value in the moment. Success lies in being **accessible, fast, and frictionless**, whether that's through **short-form storytelling, real-time responses, or immediate rewards**. Those who can capture attention quickly and meet expectations instantly will not only satisfy today's consumer but also build the kind of trust and loyalty that keeps them coming back.



DIGITAL & TECH INNOVATIONS

THE RISE OF SYNTHETIC CONSUMERS



The rapidly evolving world of business and technology, a groundbreaking phenomenon is **reshaping the language of insight**, the rise of synthetic consumers. As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, so too does its application in consumer behaviour. Today, **synthetic consumers**, which are **AI-driven entities that simulate human purchasing behaviours**, are playing a transformative role in how products are tested, marketed, and even created.

This shift signals a **new era of hyper-personalisation, predictive insights**, and product development, where brands can experiment, adapt, and innovate faster than ever before. Unlike traditional consumer personas that rely on surveys and focus groups, synthetic consumers **are dynamic, constantly learning and evolving**. They interact with virtual environments, test products, provide feedback, and even react to advertising content, all without human intervention.

What does this mean for you:

For brands, this means personalising messaging at scale, and **experimenting with concepts virtually**. For influencers, it provides data-driven guidance on what **content resonates with different audience segments**, enabling more targeted, engaging, and relevant storytelling. For marketers, strategists, and innovation teams, this means **shorter research cycles**, more confident creative briefs, and faster alignment across teams.

GOOGLE AND PAYPAL TEAM UP ON AGENTIC COMMERCE

The PayPal logo is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif font against a solid black rectangular background.

PayPal announced on Wednesday a new multi-year partnership with Google that will see the payments giant using Google's AI technology to **create new AI-powered shopping experiences**. PayPal's solutions, meanwhile, will be integrated across Google's products, and PayPal will work with Google Cloud on hosting and improving its technology infrastructure.

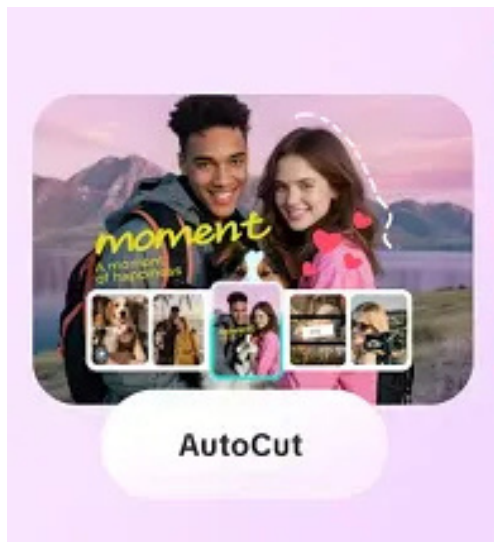
As part of the deal, PayPal will be listed as a **key payment provider** for card payments in areas like Google Cloud, Google Ads, and Google Play. Other products being integrated by Google include PayPal's branded checkout, Hyperwallet payouts service, and PayPal Payouts service.

What does this mean for you:

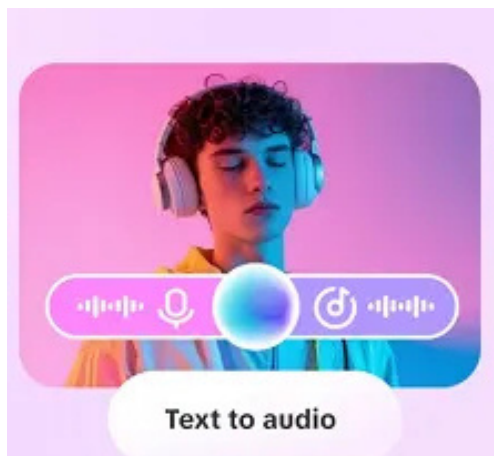
This partnership **streamlines digital payments** across platforms, making checkout faster, safer, and more seamless. For brands, it underscores the need to **remove friction in the consumer journey**, where speed and trust drive conversion. For influencers, it signals opportunities to **integrate smoother purchase pathways into content and collaborations**, turning inspiration into instant action with minimal barriers.

The Google logo is displayed in its multi-colored, sans-serif font against a solid black rectangular background.

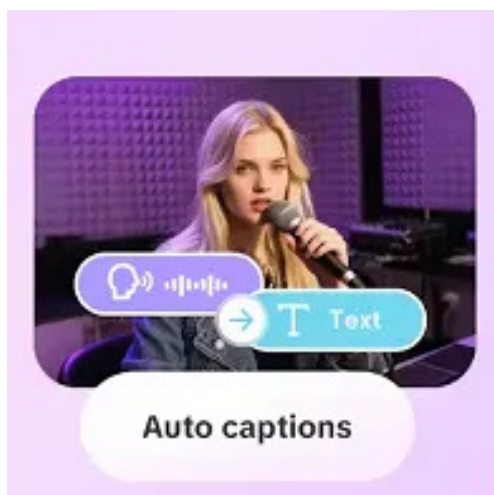
CAPCUT ADDS NEW FEATURES INCLUDING LINKEDIN INTEGRATION



TikTok's CapCut is rolling out some new options, as it **seeks to maintain its place as a top video editing app**. It recently added a new LinkedIn integration, which enables CapCut **users to export videos from CapCut to LinkedIn direct**.



CapCut also recently added some **new generative AI tools** to help audiences **create more engaging content**. Among the new AI tools CapCut has added, **text-to-video creation, AI media generation, AI avatars and characters** and improved editing tools such as AutoCut, AI Clipper and Transcript tools for editing and customising your content.

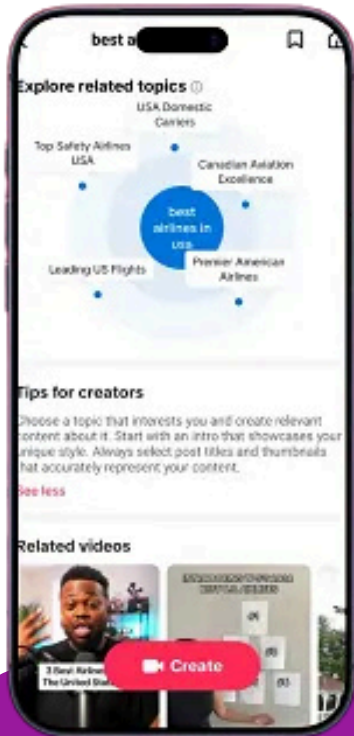


What does this mean for you: CapCut's new features **empower creators to produce polished, platform-ready content faster** and more efficiently. For brands and influencers, this means scaling creative output, **experimenting with AI-driven storytelling**, and tailoring content for professional and social audiences to boost engagement and reach.

A photograph of two young women with long brown hair looking at a gold-colored smartphone. The woman on the left is holding the phone, and both are looking at the screen. The background is a solid teal color. A purple rectangular overlay is positioned at the bottom of the image, containing the text 'SOCIAL PLATFORMS & CONTENT' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

SOCIAL PLATFORMS & CONTENT

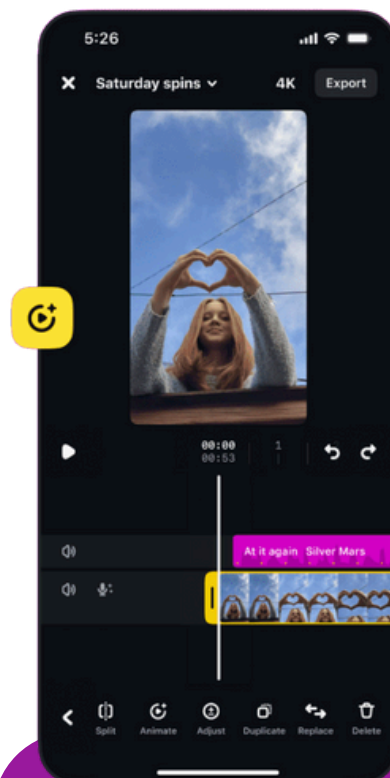
PLATFORM UPDATES



TikTok

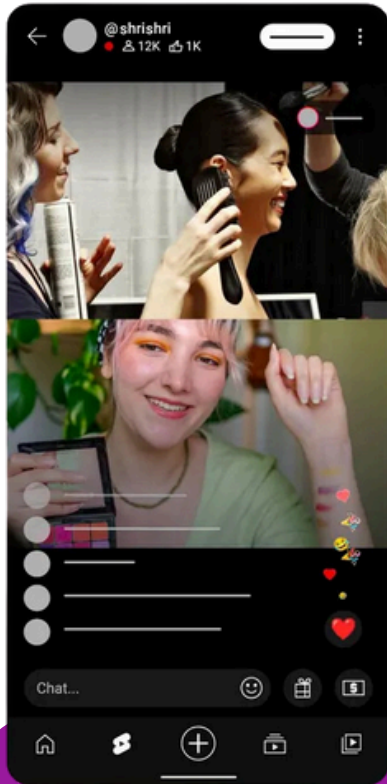
TikTok highlights related trending topics to help guide creators. This will be done via a new element within its creator analytics that **highlights trending concepts based on your existing posts**. All to inspire creators with more resonant content ideas.

Instagram added **transition editing and saved sounds** to its editing app, Edits. The app will now enable you to convert clips into overlays, providing new creative options for your clips. It also gives you more control over the speed for transitions.



Instagram

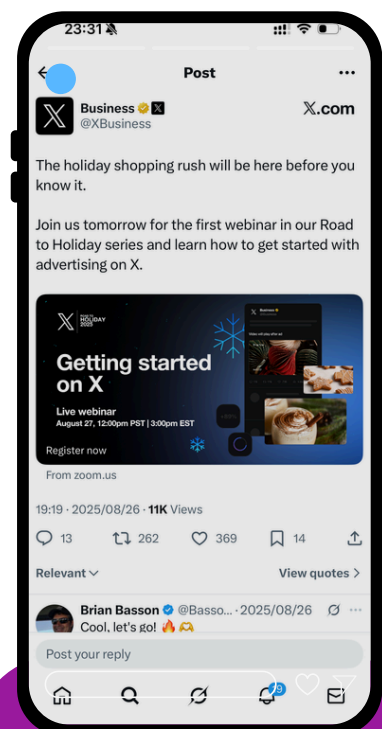
PLATFORM UPDATES



Youtube

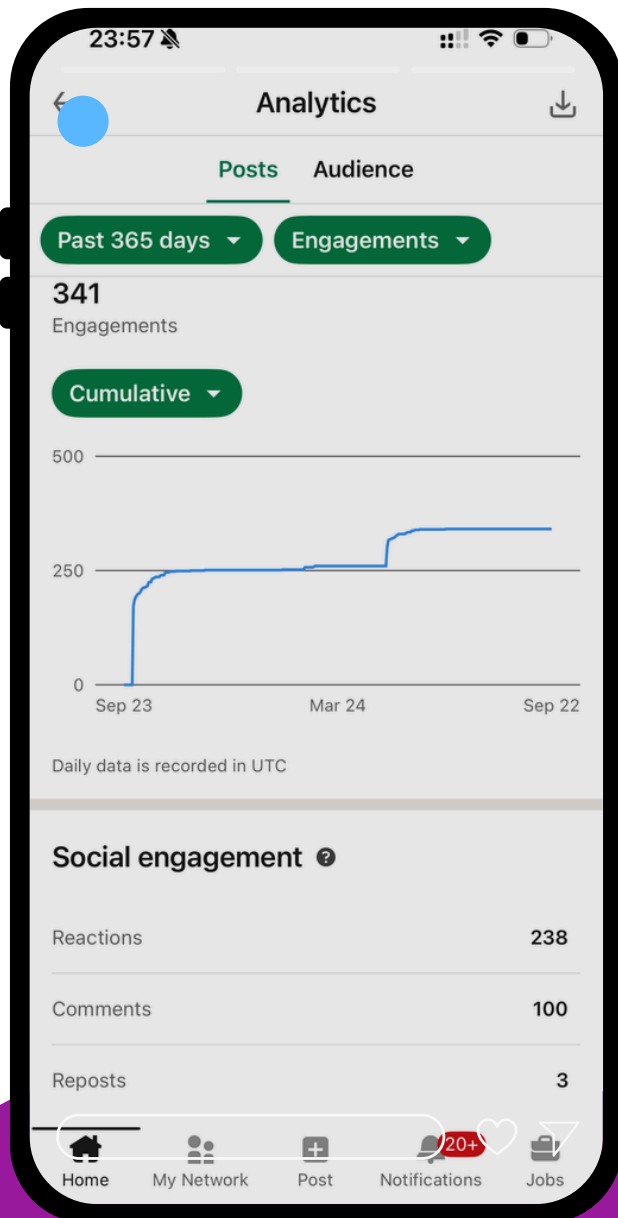
YouTube announced new features that are part of the largest **upgrade to Live**. Features such as **playables and side-by side ads**, are designed to help creators get discovered, grow their channel and increase their earnings.

X launched **holiday marketing hub** to steer brands' efforts. The hub includes links to a range of upcoming **webinars** with X's ad team, covering key topics like how to **use the X pixel**, the latest ad tools on X, and creative best practices.



X

PLATFORM UPDATES



LinkedIn

LinkedIn **added post send and save insights.** This is to help you measure on-platform performance. This will indicate how many people have **bookmarked** and how often your post **was shared** in a private message.

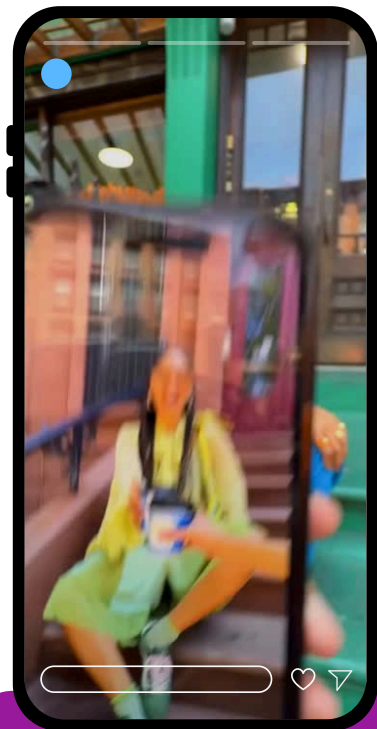
CONTENT TRENDS



Evolution of photodumps
- **Photo collage**

Transitions have moved from simple jump cuts to **cultural storytelling tools**. Creators now use them to signal transformation and versatility. This shift showcases **rhythmic satisfaction** to keep audiences engaged.

The photodump has evolved from a single candid post into **curated carousels and collage-style** formats. This reflects how **sharing has shifted** from raw spontaneity to creative storytelling.



Evolution of transitions -
Cheers & phone

CONTENT TRENDS



Storytelling hooks -
5 ways of hooks

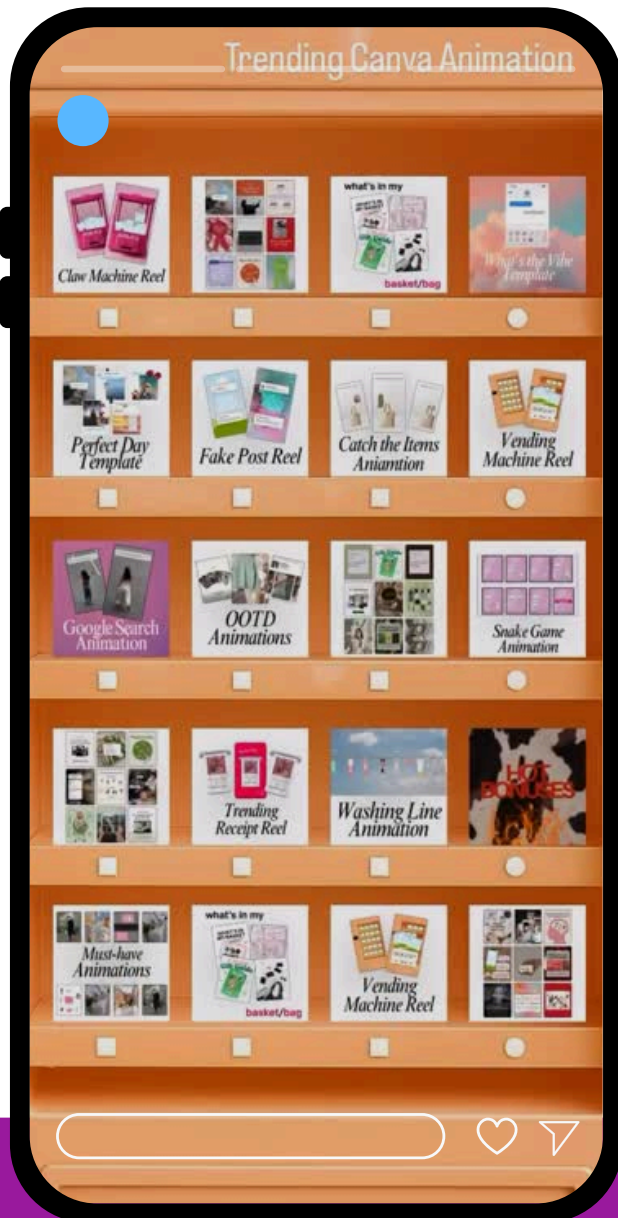
Visual hooks are **bold, eye-catching elements** that grab attention within the first seconds of content, ensuring audiences stop scrolling. They're crucial because strong visuals **spark curiosity**, and drive engagement.

Hooks are essential for **cutting through the noise** and driving deeper engagement. Storytelling hooks grab attention in the first few seconds, pulling audiences **into the narrative** before they scroll away.



Visual hooks -
Aesthetic grid

CONTENT TRENDS



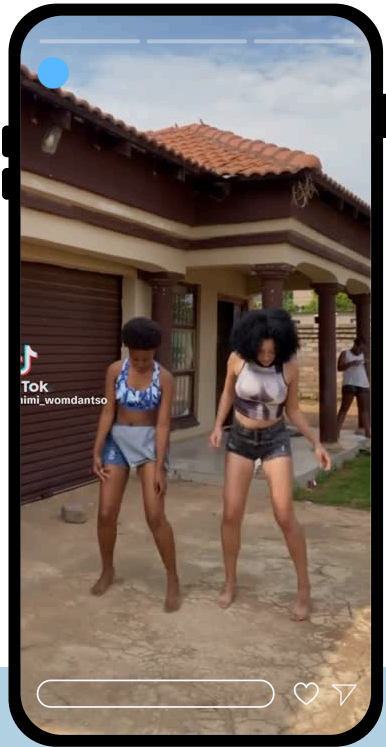
Evolution of animations -
Vending machine

Animations have evolved from simple, playful visuals into a versatile content style that **conveys stories, data, and emotions in dynamic ways**. The ability to capture attention makes it a vital tool for brands and creators.



CULTURAL MOVEMENTS

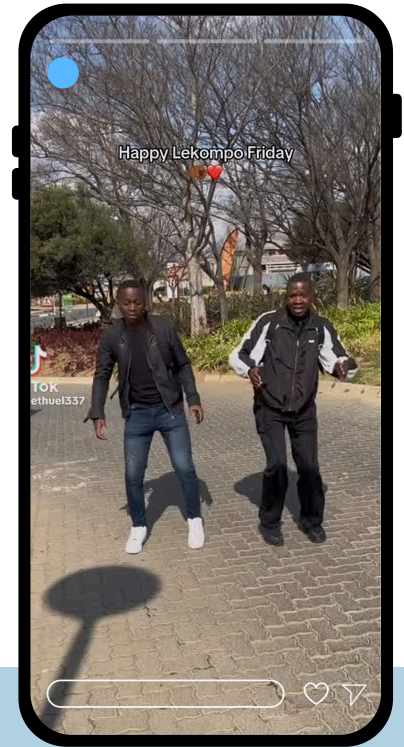
BACARDI VS MASKANDI VS LEKOMPO



Bacardi



Maskandi



Lekompo

South Africa's music scene is experiencing a **powerful cultural movement** led by three distinct genres, **Maskandi, Lekompo, and Bacardi**, each carrying deep social resonance and growing mainstream influence. Maskandi continues to embody heritage and storytelling, anchoring identity in tradition, while Lekompo brings township-rooted energy and a new wave of dance-led creativity. Bacardi, meanwhile, has exploded as a youth-driven sound of freedom and celebration, spreading from Pretoria streets to national recognition.

Together, these genres are more than music, **they shape fashion, dance, language, and digital expression**, offering brands and influencers authentic pathways to **connect with audiences through culture that feels hyper-local yet increasingly global in reach**. On platforms like TikTok and Instagram, these genres thrive through dance challenges, viral snippets, and creator-led remixes that amplify their reach beyond local borders. They're shaping how young South Africans express identity online, fusing music with fashion, humour, and visual culture.

What does this mean for you:

Cultural credibility comes from collaboration, not appropriation. By **partnering with grassroots creators**, supporting the communities driving these sounds, and authentically weaving the music and lifestyle into campaigns, brands can tap into a movement that is both hyper-local and globally influential. Influencers, in turn, can use these genres as **cultural storytelling tools**, bridging tradition, youth energy, and digital trends to create more relevant, resonant content.

A GENRE REINVENTED FOR A NEW ERA

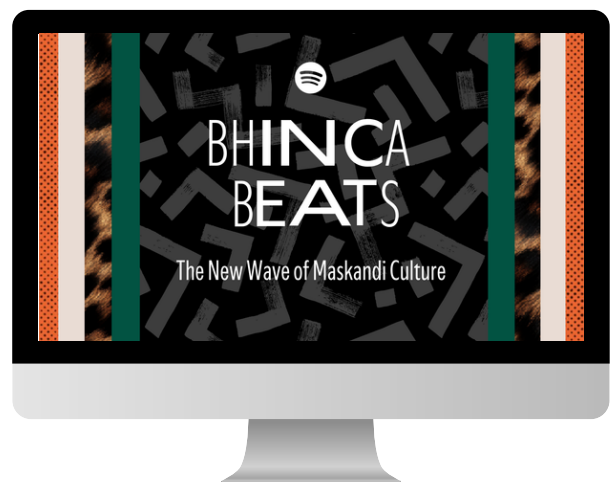


In South Africa, the rebirth and resurgence of the vibrant folk genre Maskandi has captured the attention of music fans, becoming **the country's fastest-growing sound on Spotify** over the past two years. Steeped in Zulu storytelling traditions, Maskandi has spanned generations and has typically resonated most in rural parts of the country, including the KwaZulu-Natal province it originated from. But as artists **fuse Maskandi's sound with Amapiano, gospel, and hip-hop**, urban **Gen Zs are embracing the genre** as a way to **reclaim their heritage and express their cultural fluency**. This has resulted in a full-blown Maskandi renaissance, fuelled by pride, experimentation, and authentic storytelling.

On Spotify, nearly half of Maskandi's listeners are under 35, and many are **gravitating to the Bhinca Nation playlist**, which is the destination for the genre's hottest hits. Averaging more than 2 million plays each month, the playlist has grown by more than 3,000% since 2022.

What does this mean for you:

This signals how **hyper-local sounds are carving out global digital stages**, blending heritage with modern expression. For brands, it highlights the opportunity to back emerging genres early, positioning themselves as cultural allies by **amplifying new voices** and embedding music into campaigns. For influencers, Bhinca Nation offers **fresh storytelling fuel**, enabling creators to showcase originality and cultural pride while engaging audiences with something new. To leverage this, brands and influencers should **co-create with artists and design experiences** that celebrate the genre's roots while giving it room to evolve.





CULTURAL MOVEMENTS

NOSTALGIACORE

Nostalgiacore is a **pop culture trend** defined by the revival of past decades, aesthetics, and cultural touchstones, blending comfort, familiarity, and retro references into today's digital landscape. Unlike the more time-specific Y2K movement, nostalgiacore stretches across multiple eras, from '80s arcade culture and '90s cartoons to early 2000s internet vibes.

Its appeal lies in the **emotional pull of the familiar**, consumers find joy in revisiting childhood icons, vintage fashion, and old-school media, reimagined for modern platforms and lifestyles. For influencers, the movement has become **a creative playground**, lending vintage references with modern content formats to drive engagement across TikTok, Instagram, and beyond.



What does this mean for you:

For brands and influencers, nostalgiacore offers a powerful way to **build emotional resonance and cross-generational relevance**. By remixing nostalgic references into campaigns, products, or content. Whether through retro-inspired visuals, throwback collabs, or reissued classics, they **can spark both comfort and novelty**. The key is tapping into genuine cultural memories rather than surface-level retro styling, and giving audiences a **fresh way to relive the past in the present**.

NOSTALGIA COLLABORATION: LEVI'S X TOY STORY



The new Levi's x Toy Story collection blends Western authenticity with the playful energy of Andy's toy box, **transforming beloved characters and moments into wearable art.** To celebrate 30 years since Toy Story changed animation forever with the iconic friendship of Woody and Buzz, Disney and Pixar have teamed up with Levi's for a **special 30th Anniversary collection.**

The collection, launching 2 October, celebrates the Western frontier spirit behind Woody and the adventurous heart that defines the Toy Story films. The collection **features 23 unique styles across apparel and accessories**, including denim pieces for the authentic Levi's heritage and western theming throughout to showcase the natural tie between Woody and Jessie's Western-inspired design and Levi's brand heritage. The anniversary collection will be available on **Levi.com, the Levi's App, select Levi's Stores and DisneyStore.com.**

What does this mean for you:

The Levi's x Toy Story collaboration shows how brands can tap into pop culture nostalgia, **blending heritage fashion with iconic media moments** that audiences already love. For brands, it highlights the power of **storytelling through familiar cultural touchpoints.** While for influencers, it creates opportunities to **bridge personal nostalgia with fresh content**, using beloved characters to drive engagement and emotional resonance.









STYLE  AFRICA

TRENDS

ANALYSIS GUIDES

SEPTEMBER 2025

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