FJORD TRENDS
2022

Accenture Song

The new fabric of life

There are challenging times ahead, but we believe there are also great opportunities to design new systems, and new ways of being.

We should define how we—collectively and individually—consciously stitch together positive relationships to create a fabric of life that's good for people and the planet.

We've had two years of disruption to the systems on which society is run, and it's taking its toll. The choices we make next might impact our world and its structure in more ways than we can yet imagine.
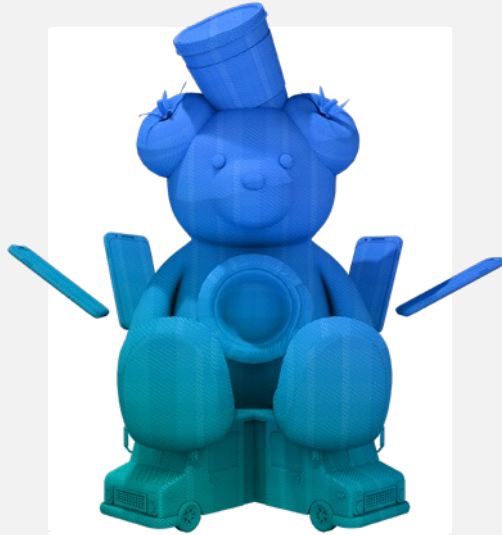
As we face up to the impact we're having on our planet, we're finally accepting we cannot go on behaving as though people were separate from nature.

It all points to shifts in people's relationships—with colleagues, brands, society, places, and with those they care about—the threads that form the new fabric of life.
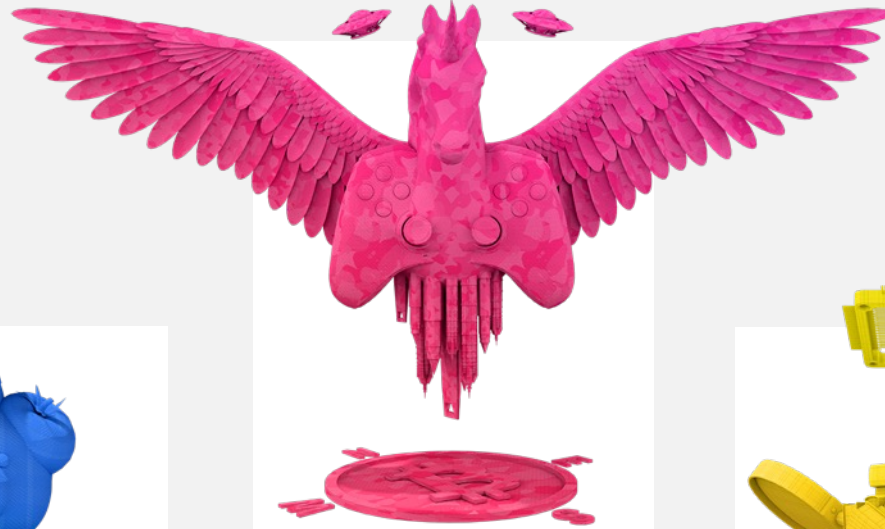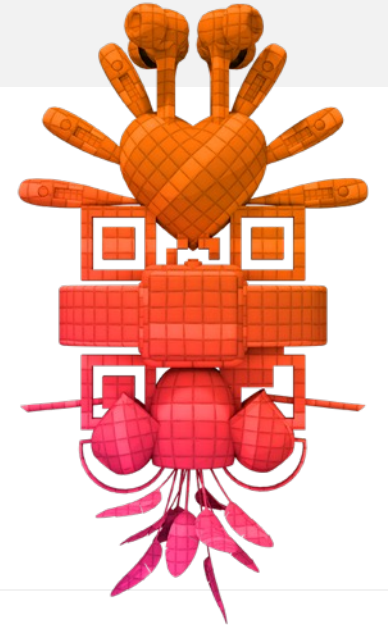
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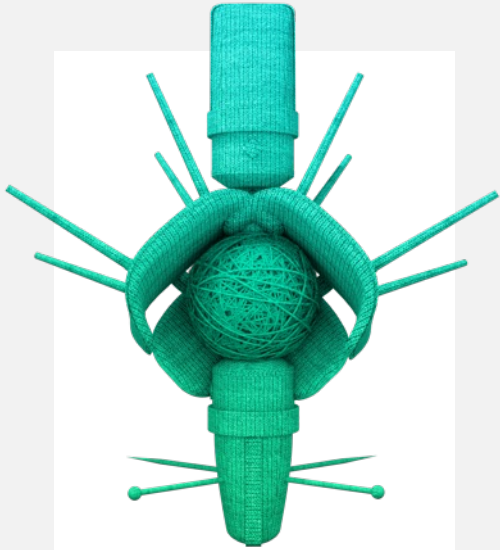
Come as
you are

The end of
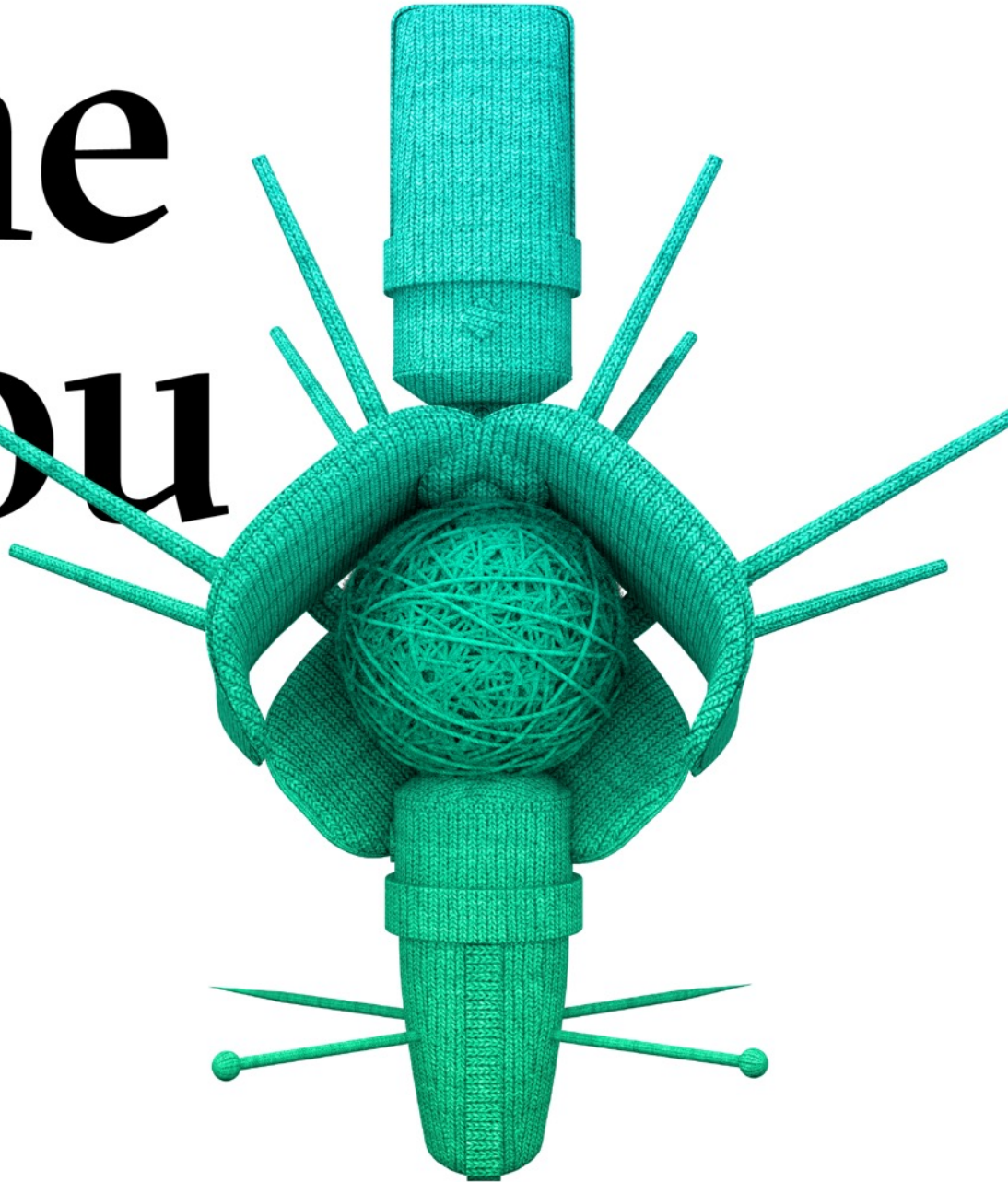abundance
thinking?

The next
frontier

This much
is true

Handle
with care

Come as you are

People are fundamentally thinking differently about their sense of agency over their own lives, supported by new opportunities like the side-hustle economy. The rise in independence has major implications for organizations' relationships with employees and consumer-creators.

What's going on

In this era of post-traumatic growth, people are **questioning** who they are and what matters to them.

They are finding a **stronger sense of agency** over how and where they spend their time, and new confidence to **be themselves**. This has a significant impact on work.

Employers are **no longer just competing with each other for talent**, but also with the other things that employees want to do with their lives.

The rise of side-hustles is a feature, a cause and a symptom, as tech platforms provide **channels and tools that allow people to turn themselves into businesses**.

The rising individualism is creating a **"me over we" mentality**, which presents new challenges and opportunities for employers and brand owners.

What's next

Organizations must navigate the tension between people's desire to meet their individual needs and their share of responsibility for the wellbeing of the collective.

Employers face a **leadership challenge:** to balance **individuals' flexibility** with the **needs of the collective.** This will mean rethinking the employee value proposition in the new context, and helping people see the value of teams and of giving to others.

Beyond the employee, brand owners must understand how this shift affects what people buy. Side-hustle creators are now their **customers, competitors and collaborators** so they will need to find out who is what in any given moment.

This will likely be one of the defining cultural debates of the next five years.

We suggest

Think

Reflect on the rise in self-agency and "me vs we" mentality, and the implications for your organization–how will you attract and retain talent and customers in this new context?

Say

Clearly verbalize the value of groups, community, and teams, and how the rise of self-agency and the need for collectivism can coexist for the good of your organization.

Do

Get creative about how your company's value proposition can evolve to accommodate for people with multiple sources of income. Act on any weak spots within your organization to ensure your employees don't walk away.

Come as you are
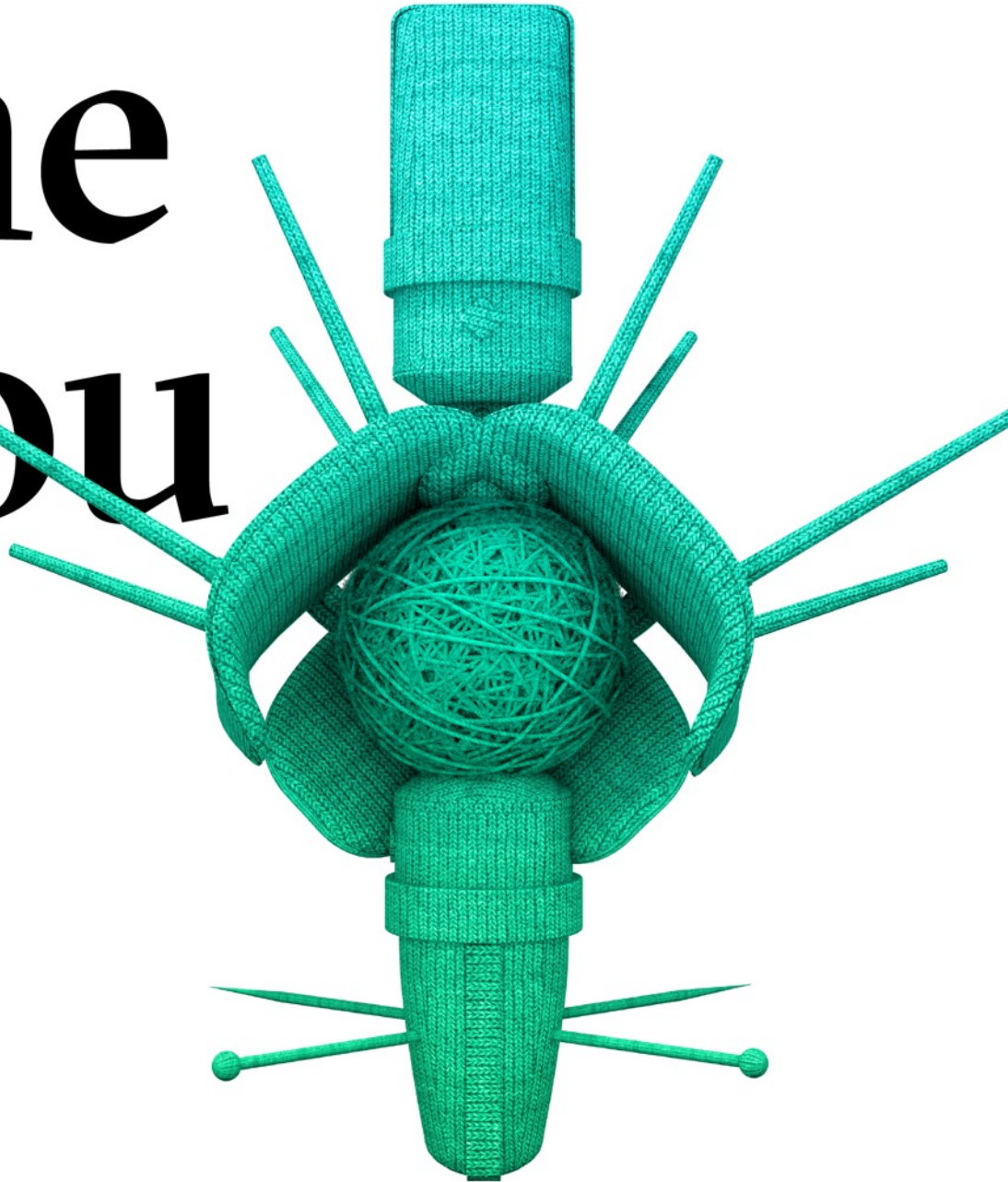
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The end of abundance thinking?

Those who have been able to rely on the availability and convenience of the things they want are having to think again. Scarcity, shortages, distribution delays, austerity laws and sustainability factors are driving forward the nature-positive movement, and a more measured approach to consumption.

What's going on

"Abundance thinking" describes being able to rely on the ability to get whatever you need—quickly, easily, conveniently.

Over the past year, **supply chain disruptions, inflation, worker shortages** and **climate change disasters** have led to **empty shelves and delays**. This slammed **brakes on abundance thinking**.

These events revealed how **interconnected and interdependent** global commercial infrastructure is.

Scarcity of goods will affect **customers' morale**, and brand owners should be prepared to manage their expectations around **convenience and sustainability**.

This shift potentially opens a window to **reframe consumerism**, and we might find that the **behavior change that has been forced upon us catalyzes new habits**.

What's next

We see an urgent need for **close collaboration across organizations**, which will likely be how companies need to operate around sustainability.

Designing for the **balance between affordability and sustainability** will be the next big opportunity for brands to break new ground. This balance reveals the need for a mindset shift to **decouple innovation from the notion of new**.

While supply chains are fragile, businesses can analyze them to find opportunities **for regeneration** and **nature-positive business**.

As organizations rethink the default setting of abundance, **"less" doesn't have to mean "loss"**, and businesses must start collaborating with others in the ecosystem to tackle climate change.

We suggest

Think

Contemplate what this supply chain disruption means for your business, and your customers. Can you create new business models by extending existing product life?

Say

Tell your innovation teams and product development teams that innovation does not have to mean new. Quite often, working under constraints yields the most creative solutions.

Do

Establish your sustainability roadmap to get your business and your customers to net neutral—and, further, to nature positive.

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The next frontier

The metaverse is showing promise beyond its gaming roots to offer people and brands a new place to interact, create, consume and earn. Its true potential is yet to be seen but recent indications signpost this as the next frontier, which could offer infinite possibilities for new value and a cultural evolution.

What's going on

The metaverse is a new place to go where people can meet and interact, and where digital assets can be created, bought and sold. It will shift **culture and digital behavior expectations**. Finding success will rely on brands' understanding of their customers and how/if they exist here.

While gaming communities lead adoption, creators are exploring it as a **new place to make money,** and new jobs are emerging as part of the **Creator Economy.** Tech advancements are bringing **3D and AR** experiences closer to the mainstream.

The metaverse offers **infinite possibilities for brands**, and many are successfully experimenting with it.

The metaverse is a guess that a number of emerging phenomena will come together, and that **people want it**.

What's next

Significant **cultural shifts** always start in a place—the next one is the metaverse, affecting how people experience art, music, movies, brands and more.

Expect a period of questioning, learning, and **experimenting on what's possible**, a lot of trial and error, with focus on user's experience. These questions will ground the thinking:
1. What's the entry point?
2. Will common standards be developed?
3. Do people value digital products like physical ones?
4. What's the process, and do organizations have the right teams?
5. Is it healthy, and how can ethics be embedded?
6. How do businesses reduce the impact on the planet?

This moment might be the brink of a **new cultural epoch**, and the metaverse may offer infinite potential as a brave new space for companies **to explore, test, and innovate**.

We suggest

Think

Consider your product in the metaverse—how it's seen, how it's purchased, where it goes, how it's used by your metaverse customers.

The lifecycle of your product, brand and experiences requires a complete mindset shift. The metaverse is a place and not just another channel.

Say

Ask people (especially young people) about the games they're playing and the clothes they're buying for their avatars.

Talk about the experiences they're having with their friends online to learn more about the metaverse's potential.
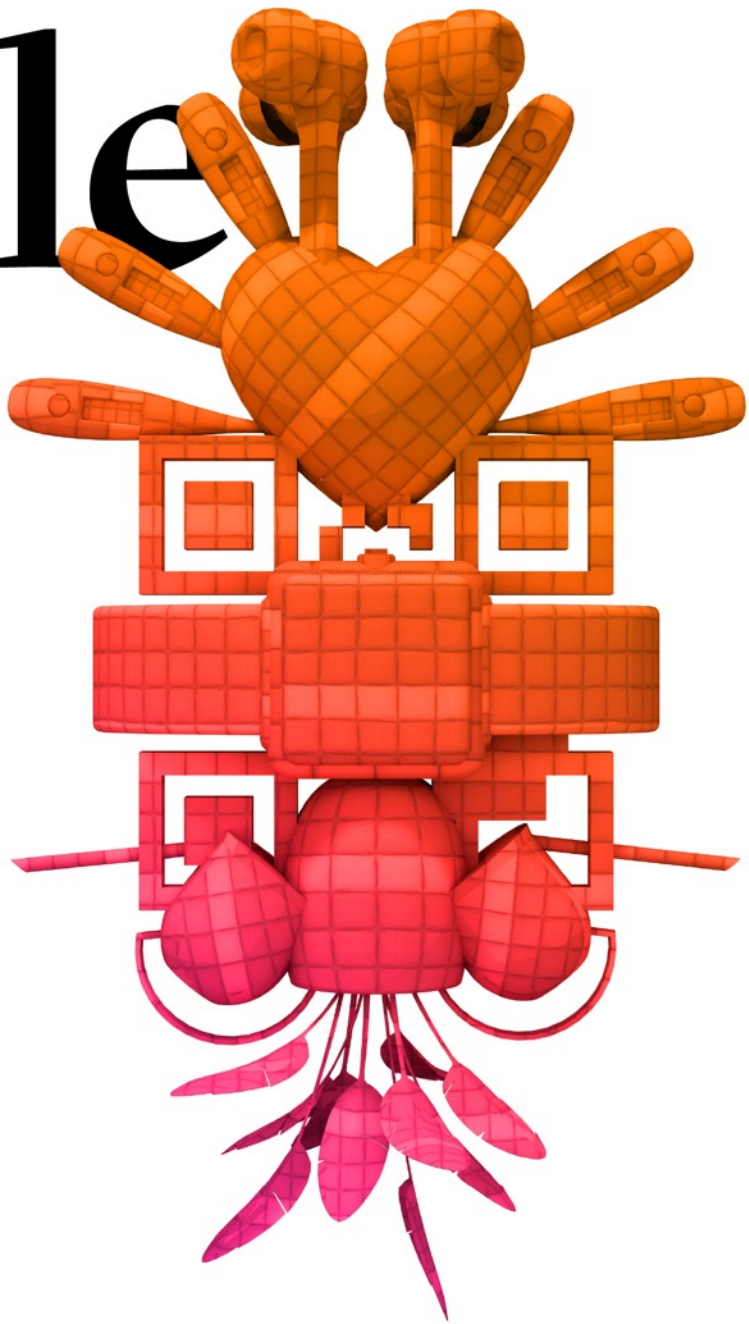
Do

Approach the metaverse with curiosity and playfulness, but always with integrity, ethics, care, and respect for the environment.
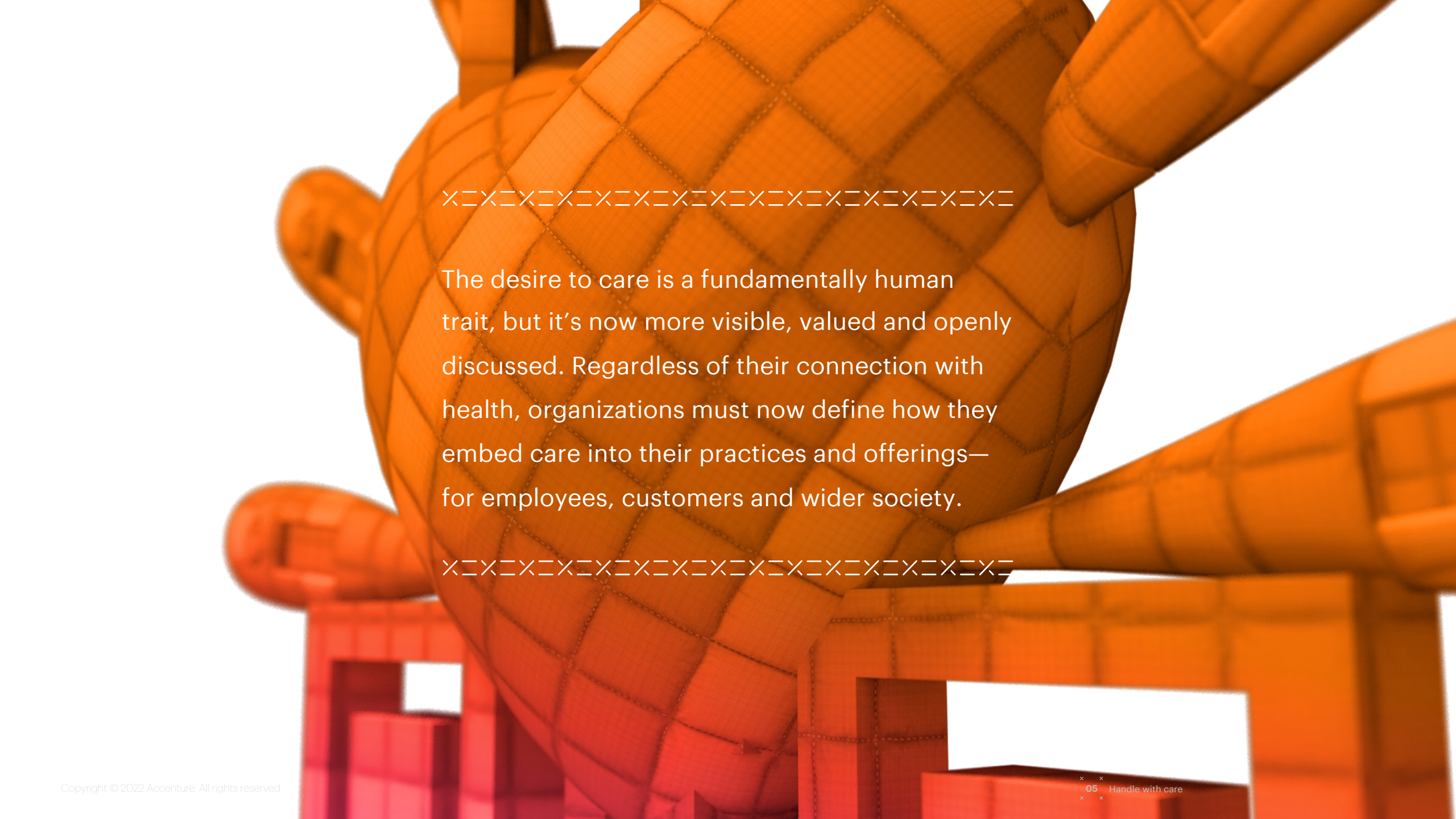
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Handle
with
care

⋈⊟

The desire to care is a fundamentally human trait, but it's now more visible, valued and openly discussed. Regardless of their connection with health, organizations must now define how they embed care into their practices and offerings— for employees, customers and wider society.

⋈⊟

What's going on

Care in all its forms became more prominent in 2021: self-care, care for others and the service of caring.

First, there's self-care. Increased awareness around mental health has elevated the need to care more for ourselves.

Then there's care for others. Those who take care of others took on more responsibilities on top of the busy lives they had pre-pandemic, as services for those they cared for were reduced or disrupted.

We've also seen a rise in care for employees, with more and more colleagues suffering their own consequences of the pandemic.

What's going on

And finally, there's the service of caring.

People need support. Society is accepting **technology as a channel and solution** for care, and growing more comfortable using a combination of physical/digital, so brands are responding with hybrid offerings.

The pandemic forced some aspects of health that were once **private to become public**, as people exchange our vaccine data for access to public spaces.

The focus of care is expanding **beyond the health industry** and traditionally non-health businesses and services are finding new ways to show care to customers.
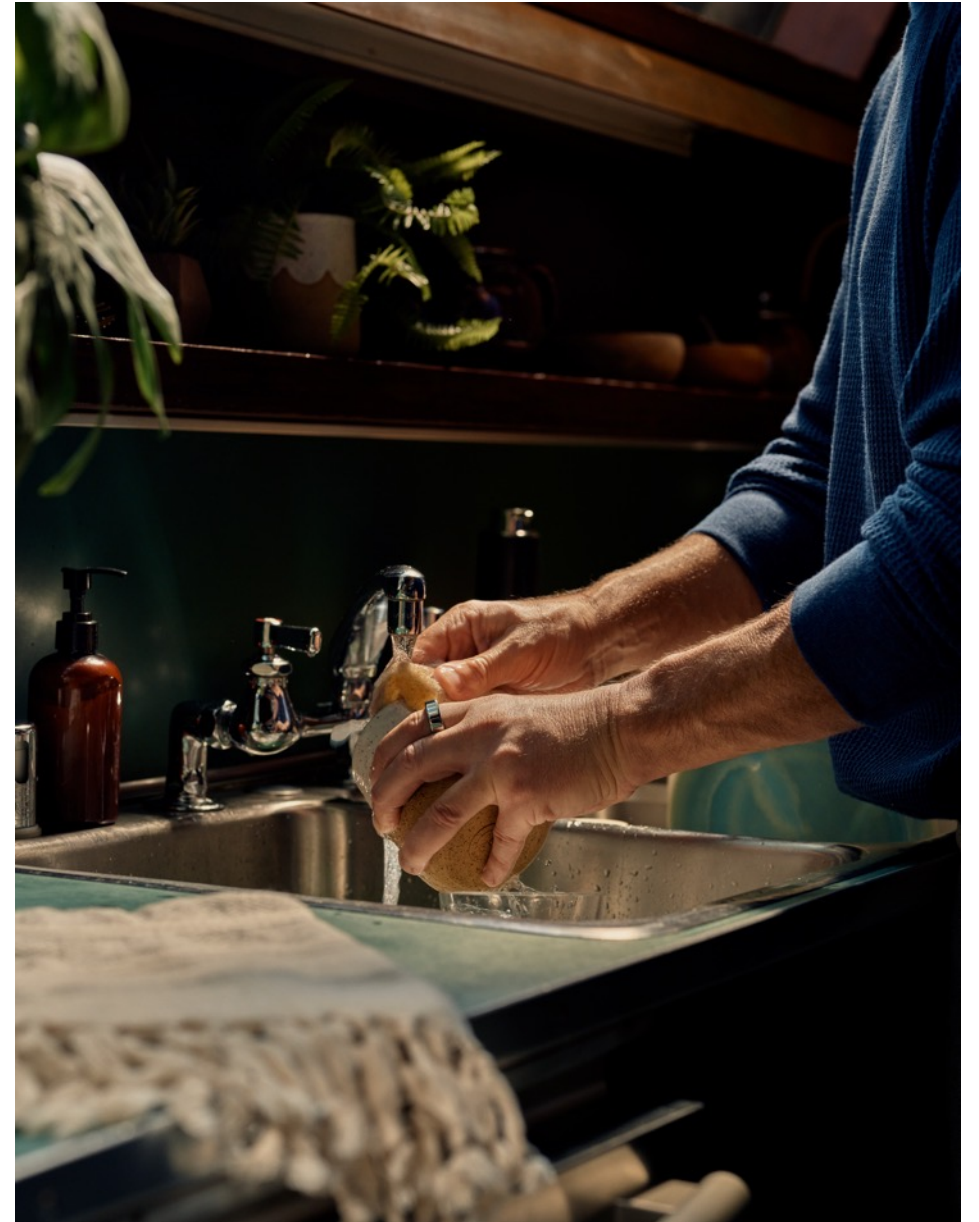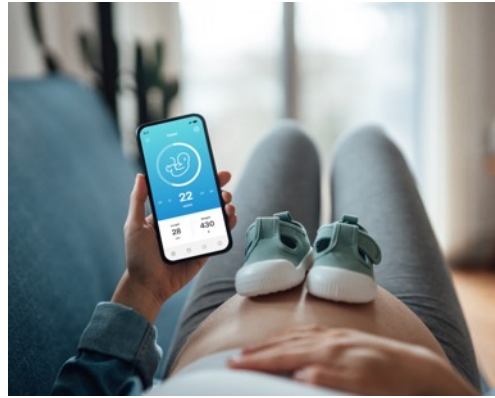
What's next

Self-care and care for others will continue to be a priority. This matters to brands and employers because it's a much-needed addition of emotional touch that builds trust.

There are many ways to create value in caring through design:

1. Expand **accessibility** and define it more broadly.
2. Prioritize **mental health** and safety.
3. Explore **multisensory design** to boost inclusivity.
4. Reduce operational white noise.
5. Protect customer data.

Care is now more visible, more valued and more openly discussed. Organizations need to build care consciously into design and make time and space for the things that matter.
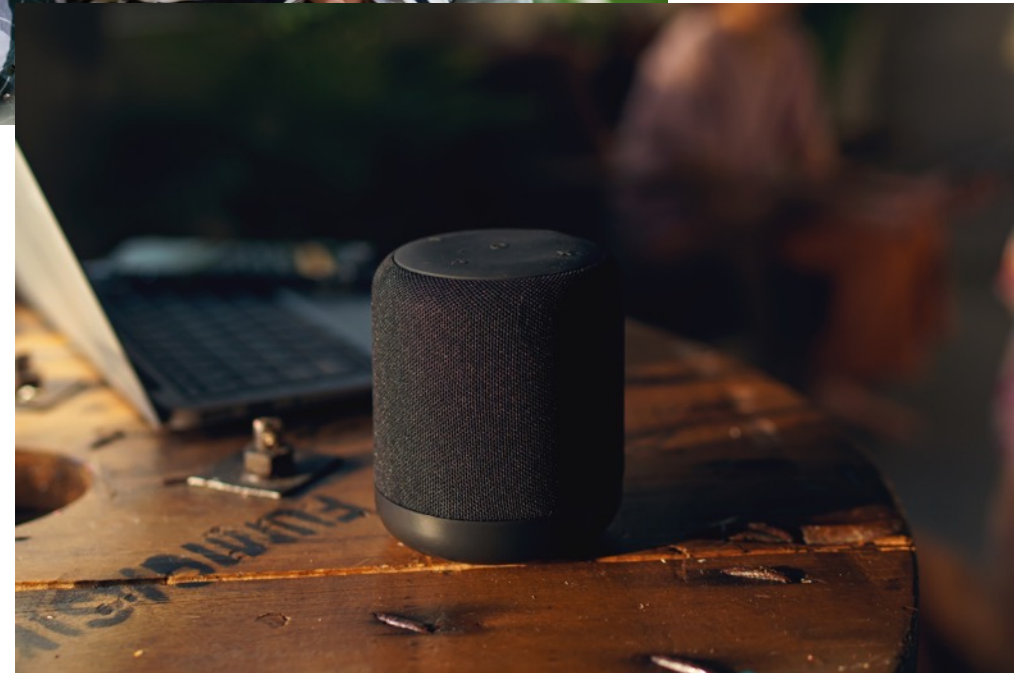
We suggest

Think

Treat care as both formal and informal. Acknowledge that care is important, emotionally taxing work.

Consider how you can develop products and services—and the KPIs related to them—around the needs of people who have care as part of their daily work.
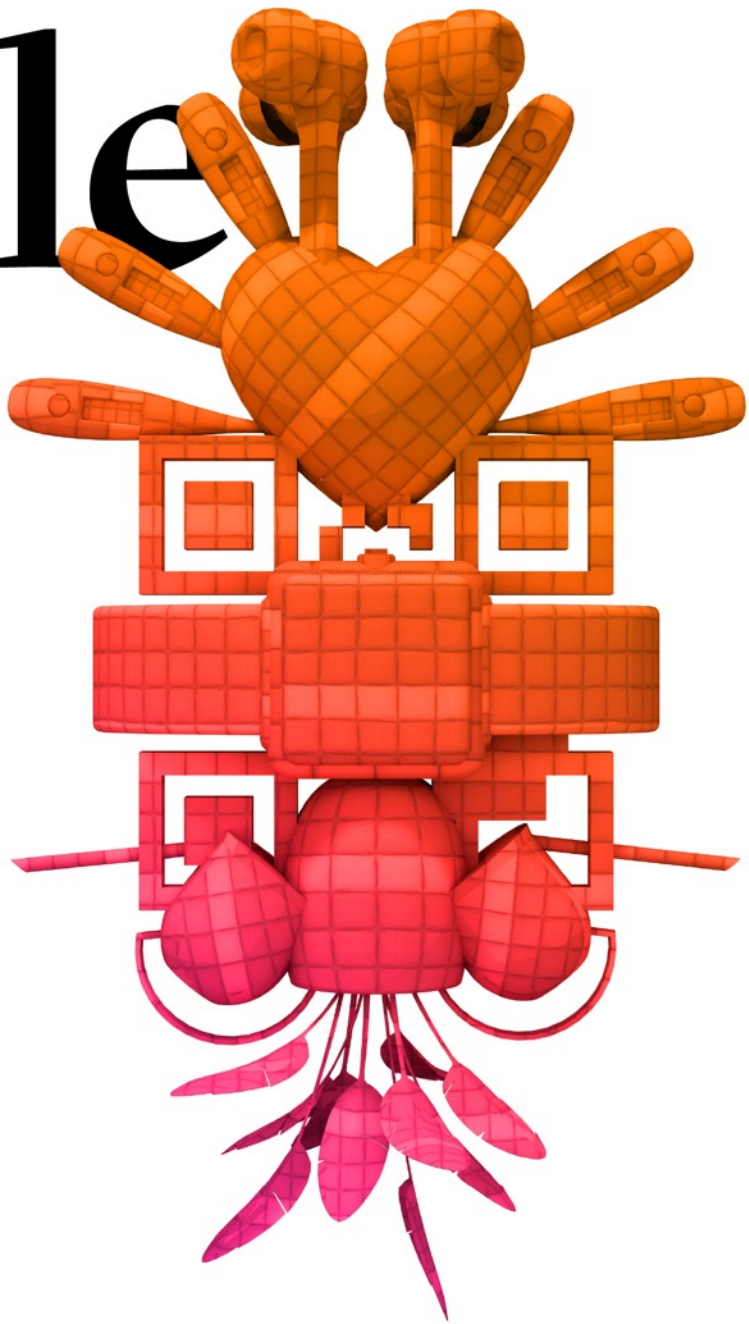
Say

Clearly communicate that care is not transactional. Define what care means for your organization and use it as a guiding principle in your design work and communications.

Do

Declutter your organization of the things that most frustrate your employees and customers. Look for ways to minimize the noise, (such as communications, internal processes, external products/services), to give people more time and space for the things that matter.

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