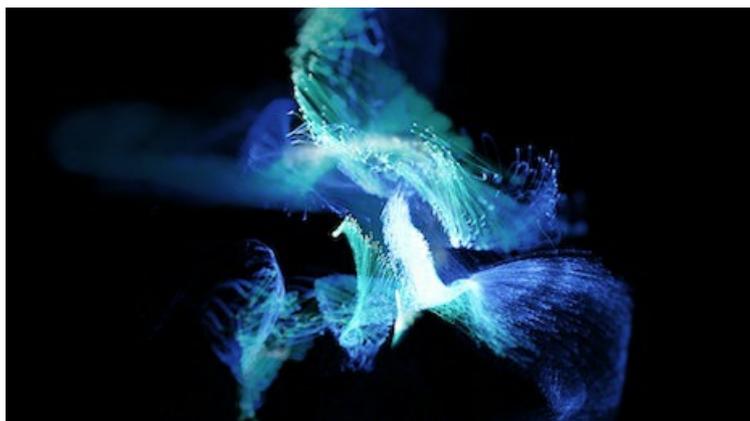


INTERNET

As metaverse opportunities expand, consumer expectations grow: Accenture

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The metaverse is the next marketing frontier for many brands and retailers. Image credit: Richard Horvath/Unsplash

By KATIE TAMOLA

The digital world is no longer impending, but rather here, and the metaverse provides a crucial outlet for brands and retailers to bring consumers into the future today.

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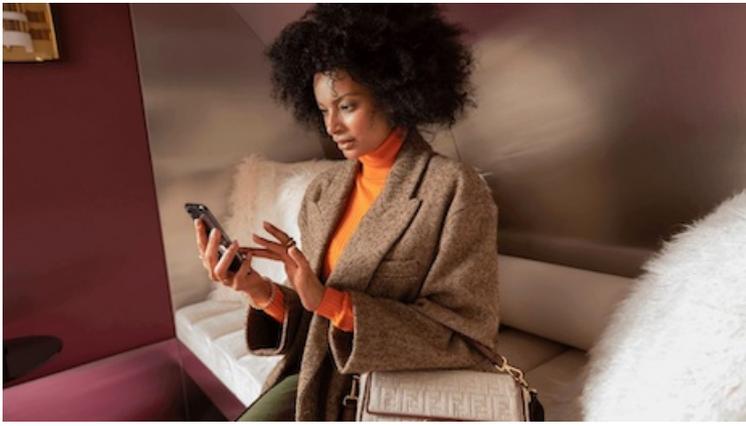
A new **report** from information technology company Accenture identifies four current trends surrounding the metaverse: WebMe; Programmable World; The Unreal and Computing the Impossible. With 28 percent of survey respondents believing that the metaverse will have a breakthrough impact on their organization in the future, it is clear that brands are seriously contemplating how to best exist in the metaverse.

Accenture Research conducted a global survey of 24,000 consumers to capture insights into their use of, interactions with and beliefs about technology in their everyday lives.

Future is now

The metaverse encompasses many different platforms and trends.

The first trend Accenture examines is WebMe, which entails the ways in which brands have explored new ways to craft and utilize digital experiences, ultimately inviting consumers to experience a virtual world in ways they never have before.



Consumers will continue seeking customize options in the metaverse and physical worlds. Image credit: Farfetch

WebMe speaks to consumers not only witnessing the metaverse, but being an active part of it.

The Programmable World trend speaks to control, customization and information aspects of the digital world, and the ways in which these processes will overlap with the physical world.

With such myriad customizable options available in the metaverse, consumers will begin to look and expect the same willingness from brands and retailers to cater to their needs in the physical world.

Ninety-two percent of global executives said they believed that leading organizations will push the boundaries of the virtual world to make it more real, increasing the need for persistence and seamless navigation between the digital and physical worlds.

The following trend is The Unreal, where concepts like artificial intelligence (AI), chatbots and virtual realities cause consumers and brands to ruminate on what is authentic and what is not.

Brands and consumers must be cognizant of bad actors using these technologies and creating misinformation and "deepfakes," convincing videos of a person in which their face or body has been digitally altered so that they appear to be someone else.

Ninety-six percent of global executives agree that their organizations are committed to authenticating the origin of their data and genuine use of AI.



Gucci is among the luxury brands that is experimenting in the metaverse. Image courtesy of Gucci

With new technologies, organizations are learning new ways to tackle what once seemed like insurmountable challenges. Thus, Computing the Impossible refers to how expectations are higher to use such technologies for good.

More than three-quarters of global consumers, 77 percent, expect companies to use technologies to solve society's large, complex problems because they will benefit them and their communities.

Nearly all executives, 98 percent, believe continuous advances in technology are becoming more reliable than economic, political and social trends in informing their organization's long-term strategy.

Clearly, with great power comes great expectations.

Thriving in the metaverse

Luxury brands across sectors have begun dabbling in the metaverse.

Earlier this year, Gucci is bringing its iconic Vault into the future.

Vault, the house's experimental online space imagined by creative director Alessandro Michele, continued to foster its multidimensional nature by striking out into the metaverse in February. Vault's virtual shelves held a wide-ranging combination of vintage Gucci products and new creations by handpicked designers and will soon feature a wider offering of noteworthy brands selected by Mr. Michele ([see story](#)).

Last month, McLaren Automotive launched the first pillar of its metaverse strategy, the MSO Lab.

The MSO Lab will bring forth a new digital community from McLaren's in-house bespoke division, McLaren Special Operations (MSO). Membership in MSO Lab will allow consumers access to rare NFT drops in addition to unique experiences ([see story](#)).

However, there is a lot of progress to be made, as many consumers are uninformed or confused by the metaverse.

There may be a learning curve in attracting consumers to the metaverse as half of shoppers are still unfamiliar with the entity, according to a new metaverse and social commerce report from CommerceNext. Only 5 percent of respondents said they were enthusiastic users of the metaverse, indicating that brands and retailers have a way to go in terms of making the space relevant to consumer needs and comprehensible ([see story](#)).

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