

ACTIVEWEAR CHAMPIONS AND CHALLENGERS

the new rules of engagement

written by

Mynt.

Welcome to the 2026 edition of our Activewear Champions and Challengers report.

We first published this in 2019. Re-reading it seven years on has been a useful exercise in humility: some of what we called has happened faster than we expected, and some of it has reversed entirely. The chapter we thought was the quietest – service – has turned out to be the most commercially urgent thing in the document.

Mynt turns 25 this September. We have spent almost all of that quarter century working with sport and outdoor brands, and this report is what a lot of that watching adds up to: six shifts we think matter, and the brands we think are getting them right.

The competitive picture has not softened. If anything the gap between the champions and the challengers has narrowed again, and the advantage has moved decisively towards whoever understands their customer best – not whoever spends most.

We hope you enjoy it and look forward to your feedback.

Ollie Patterson,
MD, Mynt

the old rules no longer apply

Every trends report published in 2019 said the rules were changing. Almost none of them said which way.

Seven years on we can be more specific, because the answers are now in. Physical retail did not die – it became a diagnostic service. Personalisation did not stay a monogram – it became a scan. The brands that automated their customer service to the bone are quietly hiring people back.

What has actually changed is where the advantage sits. It has moved away from scale and spend, and towards knowing precisely who you are for. That is why a Manchester women's football shop and a Bolton brand's twelve-hour hill race belong in the same report as Nike and adidas.

The old rules have not simply expired. They have been replaced by a harder set – and the challengers are reading them more carefully than the champions.

*"The rules governing the fashion system may now be in flux
– which means there are opportunities for companies to rewrite them altogether."*

– The State of Fashion 2026:
When the Rules Change, McKinsey & Company and The Business of Fashion

The global activewear market is no longer merely flourishing.

Worth around \$440 billion in 2025 and forecast to reach \$920 billion by 2033, it continues to outgrow most of retail. But the growth rate matters less than who is capturing it. McKinsey puts the sporting goods sector on a more sober 6% a year to 2029, and the gap between those two forecasts is essentially a bet on whether the incumbents hold their share.

The evidence says they are not.

On and Hoka have taken running from brands that owned it for forty years. Adanola and TALA built nine-figure businesses without a wholesale account. Castore went from nothing to dressing national teams inside a decade.

Consumer demand is still the engine – people are buying activewear for daily life as much as for sport. What has changed is that the barrier to competing has collapsed.

A brand with a strong point of view, a community and a supply chain can now reach the same customer as a brand with a stadium sponsorship.

The years ahead look genuinely transformational, as physical stores recalibrate into testing labs, clubhouses and repair benches – offering the things that cannot be recreated online.

The winners will be those who look proactively at the opportunities rather than defending the position they already hold.

upping
the
game

\$920bn

Projected Global Activewear market by 2033, from \$440bn in 2025.

the pivotal generation

Generation Z make up 22% of the global population and 27% of the global workforce, rising to 31% by 2035.

But the more useful fact about Gen Z in 2026 is that they are no longer arriving. The oldest are around thirty. They run marketing teams. Some of them are reading this.

The generation now doing to Gen Z what Gen Z did to millennials is Gen Alpha – already the largest cohort alive at roughly 24% of the world's population, and the first to have never known a retail environment without a screen in it.

They are being shaped by sport differently again: by creators rather than athletes, by participation formats like HYROX and parkrun rather than broadcast, and by a women's game that has been mainstream for their entire conscious life.

The brands taking the time to understand these cultures in depth – from trail running to the sneakerhead resale floor to girls' football – are the ones who will still be relevant when this cohort has money.

the six key shifts

- 01 AMPLIFIED EXPERIENCES
- 02 COMMUNITY HUBS
- 03 HYPER-PERSONALISATION
- 04 NEXT-GENERATION SERVICE
- 05 RARITY AND REWARD
- 06 FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

01

AMPLIFIED EXPERIENCES



“61% of Gen Z now prefers to discover new products in-store, a reversal that speaks volumes about what this generation wants: experience”

PwC, The Gen Z paradox, 2025

Activewear retailing is inherently experiential.

Seven years on, the question is no longer whether to build a destination – it is whether the destination does something a phone cannot.

The best 2026 spaces are not showrooms.
They are labs, gyms, race-week basecamps and repair benches.



La Sportiva, Arco, Italy

True Destinations

When we designed La Sportiva's new retail concept, the journey began in Arco, Italy.

Set against the dramatic backdrop of Castello di Arco, the strategic decision was made to place the brand's new physical customer experience within one of the world's most iconic climbing destinations.

The store is a beacon for true outdoor enthusiasts driven by 'nothing but mountain'.



Moving away from standard, peaceful marketing imagery of clean mountain landscapes, Columbia embraced chaotic, live-action extreme stunts reminiscent of Jackass to physically prove their gear's technical limits.

Activating the brand's new platform, 'Engineered for Whatever', they hired professional stunt performers to put their activewear through ridiculous real-world trials

One trial involved strapping someone to the front of a snowplough and driving through insanely wintry conditions to test the heat-retention of the Glacier Ridge jacket.

To demonstrate the strength and stretch of their ROC cargo pants (trousers), they dangled a man from a rope of trousers above crocodile-infested waters – hoping he wouldn't fall in!



Extreme Product Testing

Columbia Sportswear

Sporthaus Schuster in Munich has based the interior of its store on a mountain, with a huge 'rock face' soaring through its seven stories.

You can navigate the store via wooden bridges or clip in and use the climbing holds to actually scale the summit.

On top of this you can book adventure tours through their service desk. This store was voted best in class by Monocle magazine.

Product Playgrounds

Sporthaus Schuster, Munich



Cross-Industry Connections

Instead of paying for traditional, expensive stadium billboard ads during the massive Hyrox London fitness race, Gymshark staged a complete visual takeover of a retro sandwich shop called Frank's just steps away from the finish line.

They renamed it The Jacket Patch and partnered with viral internet food icon Spud Man to hand out free, carb-loaded baked potatoes (with hyper-focused thematic names like “Ski Con Carne” and “Sled Pulled Pork”) exclusively to exhausted race finishers. They packaged the food in custom wraps printed with the cheeky line: “Cooked? Me too.”

Alongside the free hot food, Gymshark surprised finishing athletes by gifting or discounting their exclusive Conditioning Club Patch Jackets right at the counter, instantly turning thousands of exhausted competitors into walking billboards.



Gymshark

A pure-play e-tailer's first store in 14 years, and it carries no stock to take home. A running lab performs gait analysis with specialist fitters. RFID tags on 100+ shoes trigger on-screen breakdowns of the tech.

The top floor is a Q&A arena for athlete sessions and podcasts. You buy; it ships next day.



The Testing Floor

SportsShoes, London

733 sq m, Arc'teryx's largest European store.

A staffed repair workshop sits on the shop floor: technicians wash Gore-Tex garments, leak-test them and patch holes in about fifteen minutes, with the customer choosing patch colour and placement.

Staff also authenticate third-party purchases.

'Repair' becomes theatre.

The after-sale becomes the reason to walk in – and the reason to come back.



Arc'teryx, London



Repair As Theatre

Borrowed Moments



Nike - Regent Street, London

A two-week London Marathon activation.

Ground floor: a footwear try-on lounge with treadmills.

Upstairs: free physio for race-entered runners, a fuel bar and a comfort zone.

Nike ran athlete talks, group runs with local crews, shoe engraving and spectator poster-making stations.

Retail collapsed into race-week service. For a fortnight the store stopped being a shop and became a support crew.

Little Stories in Valencia is a sneaker store designed exclusively for children. The goal was to create an experience for little ones.

Every detail is designed to encourage imagination and play but at the same time, highlight the products on display.



Little Stories, Valencia



Playful
Spaces

New York brand KITH's London shop-in-a-shop inside Selfridges.

It's not just about the clothes as the brand has also brought the KITH Treats bar along too, meaning you can pick up an ice cream along with the latest sweater or t-shirt.



KITH Shop at Selfridges, London



A Reason
to Linger

KEY TAKEOUTS

01

KEEP IT REAL

Build the experience that cannot be recreated on a screen. Anything a phone can already do is not a reason to visit.

02

MAKE THE STORE EARN ITS RENT TWICE

The strongest stores clear the floor after hours and become a venue. One lease, two businesses.

03

SERVICE IS THE SPECTACLE

Watching someone be measured, fitted or repaired is more compelling than any product wall.
Put the expertise where it can be seen.

04

HARNESS THE POWER OF PLAY & FUN / EXTREMITIES

Step away from the hard sell. An environment built for self-exploration and truly immersive and fun product trial will hold attention far longer than one built for rational transaction.

02

COMMUNITY HUBS



***“UK participation in HYROX
is up 5,614% since its 2021
London debut, trained for
through 1,700 affiliated gyms”***

Triathlon Insight, 2026

Younger consumers care deeply about community – but they no longer expect a brand to build one for them.

For most of the last decade the ambition for brands & retailers was to found something: a clubhouse, a members’ space, a branded run crew.

In 2026 that looks like an expensive way to arrive late. The communities already exist. They are run by volunteers, they meet on Tuesday nights, and they are fiercely protective of who gets to stand alongside them.

So the winning move has shifted from founding to showing up – sponsoring, equipping and serving groups a brand did not create and does not control. It is cheaper, it is faster, and it carries a credibility that no amount of budget can manufacture.

The run club is now the single most important retail format in this sector. Almost none of them belong to a brand.



Two floors built for runners rather than shoppers: 100 lockers for bags and kit, an in-store coffee station, a community wall and dedicated event space. Group runs, training sessions and workshops.

The opening stunt had 50+ runners race a Saucony-branded London bus to the door.

The lockers are the tell. You are meant to arrive in kit, leave your bag, and come back sweaty!

Built for Arrival

Saucony, London



The world's first standalone women's football store. Boot fitting by playing position, sports bra fittings, period performance underwear advice.

Programmed as a fan space: match watch parties, Panini sticker swaps, player panel talks and sewing workshops to repair damaged kits. Founder Helen Hardy cites a 9:1 men's-to-women's merchandise gap.

A subculture with no home built its own. The repair workshop and the watch party sit on the same calendar.



Foudy's, Manchester



Specialist Sanctuaries

In the heart of Shoreditch, the adidas Originals' flagship store at 15 Hanbury Street is a multi-layered experience that provides the ultimate destination for the sneakerhead.

Billed as a destination for local creatives to meet, network and bring their ideas to life, the brand is aiming to insert itself into the local community by acting as an incubator of local sub-culture.

The space plays host to activations, drops, DJ sets and panel discussions. The focal point of the store is a colossal table tailor-made for co-working, encouraging people to spend time alongside other like-minded people.



Collaborative Workspaces



adidas Originals, London



REI is the largest consumer co-op and specialty outdoor retailer in the US.

Bringing the outdoors in was a key ambition for the project and large warehouse-style windows and garage doors allow daylight to enter and offer views into the store.

The outdoor courtyard encourages local outdoor enthusiasts to hang out. REI's expert staff use the space for gear demos and events.



REI flagship, Washington DC



Common Ground

Go where the Customer is



Patagonia, Cayton Bay

A travelling repair van fixes any brand's kit free, first-come-first-served – zips, tears, buttons, pulls – plus workshops teaching shell patching and re-waterproofing.

Surf legs add loan wetsuits while yours is fixed, film screenings, upcycling clinics and NGO meet-ups. 35,000+ items repaired across Europe in 2025.

A pop-up third place with no purchase required, parked where people actually surf and ski.



A retailer's media arm sponsors an existing local running community for a 14-week London Marathon training block along the Thames.

Five pace groups from 7:15/km to 4:45/km, each with its own run leader, headed by Alistair Brownlee.

Very merchandises adidas running product while runners trial it on the sessions.

Buying into a grassroots club rather than founding one. Cheaper, faster and more credible than building from scratch.

Sponsor, Don't Found



Very x adidas

ARC is the UK's first communal contrast therapy club.

5,000 sq ft with a 65-person sauna at 88°C, custom ice baths at 1–5°C and an amphitheatre-style communal lounge.

Sessions are guided and named – 'Morning Warrior', 'Dopamine Reset' – combining contrast therapy with breathwork and mobility.

Evening socials run with live DJs.
£15 introductory sessions.

Recovery reframed as sober social life.
The sauna is where a fitness community actually talks to each other.

ARC, London



The Sober Social



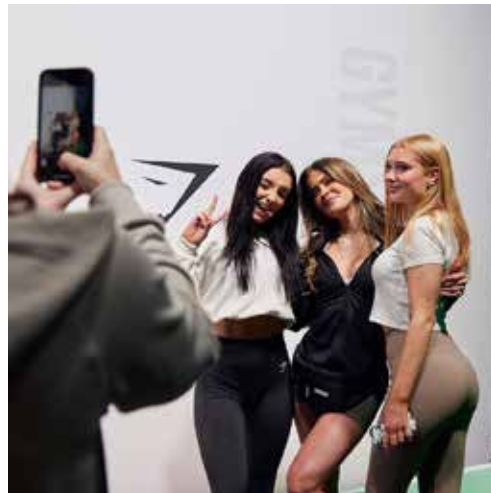
Community As Spectacle

A two-day warehouse takeover, free and ticketed.

Three 'PR cages' on the underground level let attendees attempt max lifts in front of a crowd. 'The Street' ran tattoo and nail bars, a comic shop and merch pop-ups.

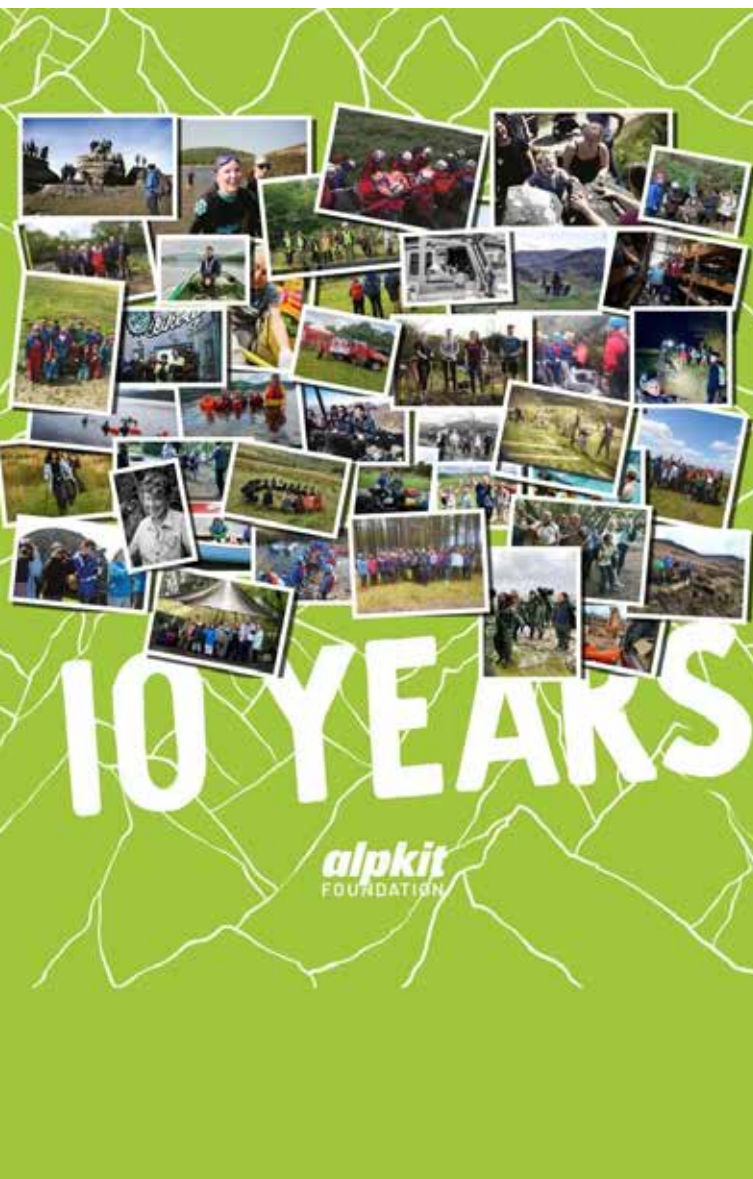
Sixty-plus athletes did meet-and-greets. A Loyalty Lounge served top-tier members only.

The community turned into a festival. Product is one stall among many and the brand is the promoter, not the retailer.



Gymshark





Alpkit routes 1% of sales into a foundation that makes deliberately tiny grants – £50 to £500, in cash or in kit – reviewed by a rolling panel every two months.

Ten years in it has passed £1 million across more than 3,000 projects, from over 10,000 applications.

One recent award: £300 to Pedal Power in Glasgow, for bike maintenance for refugee and asylum-seeking women.

Grass

Roots

Focus



Alpkit

KEY TAKEOUTS

01

SPONSOR, DON'T FOUND

The credible communities already exist and are not looking for an owner.
Equipping one you did not create buys credibility you cannot manufacture.

02

BUILD FOR ARRIVAL, NOT BROWSING

Lockers, showers, water and coffee tell people the space is for them.
Fixtures tell them it is for the product.

03

GIVE THEM A REASON TO COME WITH NOTHING TO BUY

Repair benches, workshops and screenings bring people through the door on days they were not shopping.
That is when loyalty is built.

04

SERVE THE OVERLOOKED

The most valuable spaces exist because a group had nowhere else to go.
Find the audience your category has been ignoring and give them the room..

03

HYPER-PERSONALISATION



“88% are more likely to buy when engagement is personalised in real time – but only 44% of brands say they are executing at that level.”

Twilio, State of Customer Engagement, 2025

In 2019 personalisation meant putting your initials on a trainer.

In 2026 it means a markerless AI reading your gait in under a minute, an insole printed to your foot on site, and an agent that buys on your behalf before you reach the retailer's website.

The customisation zone has become a diagnostic service – and the point of sale has left the building.



Runners Need x Ochy

The customer runs on a treadmill while a phone camera records.

Ochy's markerless AI returns asymmetries, stride mechanics and shoe compatibility in under a minute.

Rear-view analysis is free within 30 days of a shoe purchase or £15 standalone; a full side-view assessment is £25.

The runner keeps the report.

Free gait analysis turned into a paid, portable biomechanical profile the customer owns.

Personalisation with a price tag people will pay.

Data You Keep



JD Sports

The Invisible Storefront

US consumers are able to shop from JD Sports directly on ChatGPT, Copilot + Other AI Platforms

Shoppers can complete the entire purchase inside the AI app – discovery, basket and payment in one click, never visiting jd.com.

Built on commercetools and Stripe after an 18-month re-platform. JD cites 60% of US 18–24s already using AI in the shopping journey.

Personalisation has moved upstream of the retailer entirely. The assistant knows the shopper; JD becomes the supply layer.

The initiative forms part of the JD Group's strategic pillar, 'beyond Physical Retail', as the company continues to invest in infrastructure, technology and digital to support its long-term growth ambitions.

VivoBiome by Vivobarefoot is a radical scan-to-print, circular footwear system that creates bespoke, 3D-printed barefoot shoes tailored to your exact foot dimensions.

The customer scans their feet by smartphone or on an in-store scanner, retrieves the scan online, adjusts length and width in a fit visualiser and orders.

The shoe is 3D printed to that foot using Carbon DLS. Tabi Gen 02 landed at £110 – down from £260 for the first release.

Made-to-measure at a price that is starting to look like retail.

Sizing is replaced entirely by individual foot data.

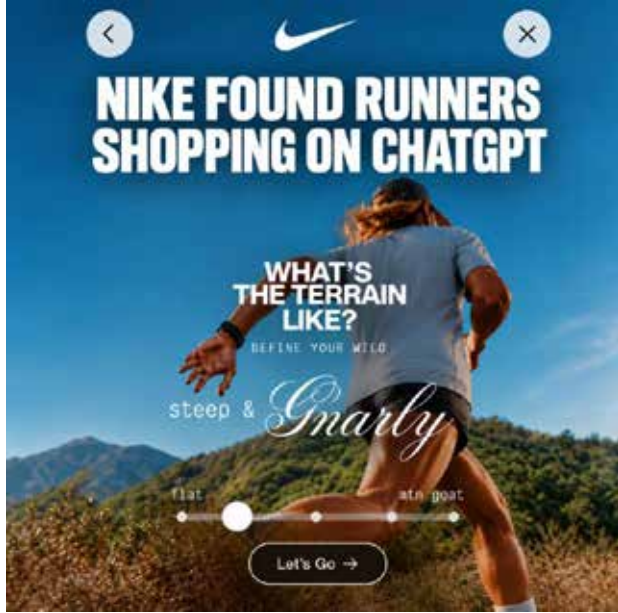


Vivobarefoot



Total Personalisation





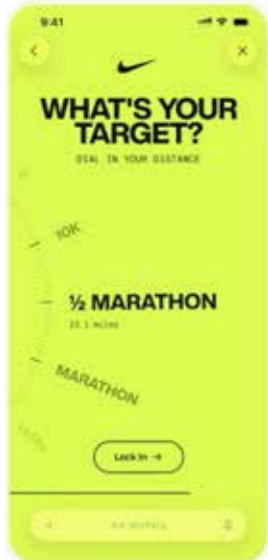
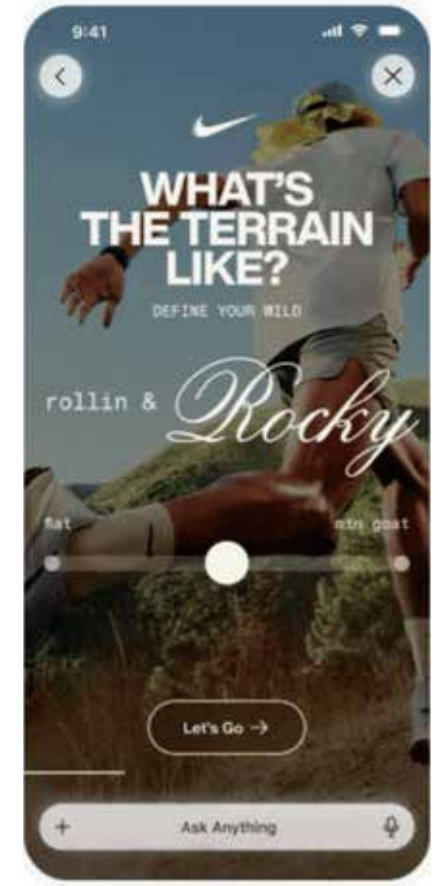
Nike x ChatGPT

Product Talks

Nike saw that people were asking ChatGPT to find their perfect running shoe, so they decided to build an OpenAI plugin to formally enter the chat.

It uses conversation to cater the product recommendation based on your target distance, terrain, and style.

Some of the terrain options like "Rollin & Rocky" and "Smooth & Chill" tune into the audience's way of speaking to help likeminded audiences find their perfect pair.



Co-Authored



Castore x Feyenoord

Castore and Feyenoord asked supporters to design the club's fourth shirt.

3,929 entries were cut to twelve concepts by Castore's design team, then settled by two rounds of public vote. The

finished shirt carries 2,945 supporters' first names inside its squad numbers – and Castore replaced its own wordmark on the chest with “het legioen”, the name the fans use for themselves.

A colourway picked from a menu is personalisation. This is authorship – and the brand gave up its own logo to prove it meant it.



KEY TAKEOUTS

01

AVOID GIMMICKS

Ask whether the personalisation is genuinely useful to the customer.
A measurement they keep is. A monogram is not.

02

OWN THE DATA, NOT JUST THE MOMENT

A one-off interaction is a nice experience.
An aggregated data set is an asset – and often a story worth telling publicly.

03

CHARGE FOR IT

A service worth having is a service worth paying for.
Free positions expertise as a giveaway; a price positions it as a profession.

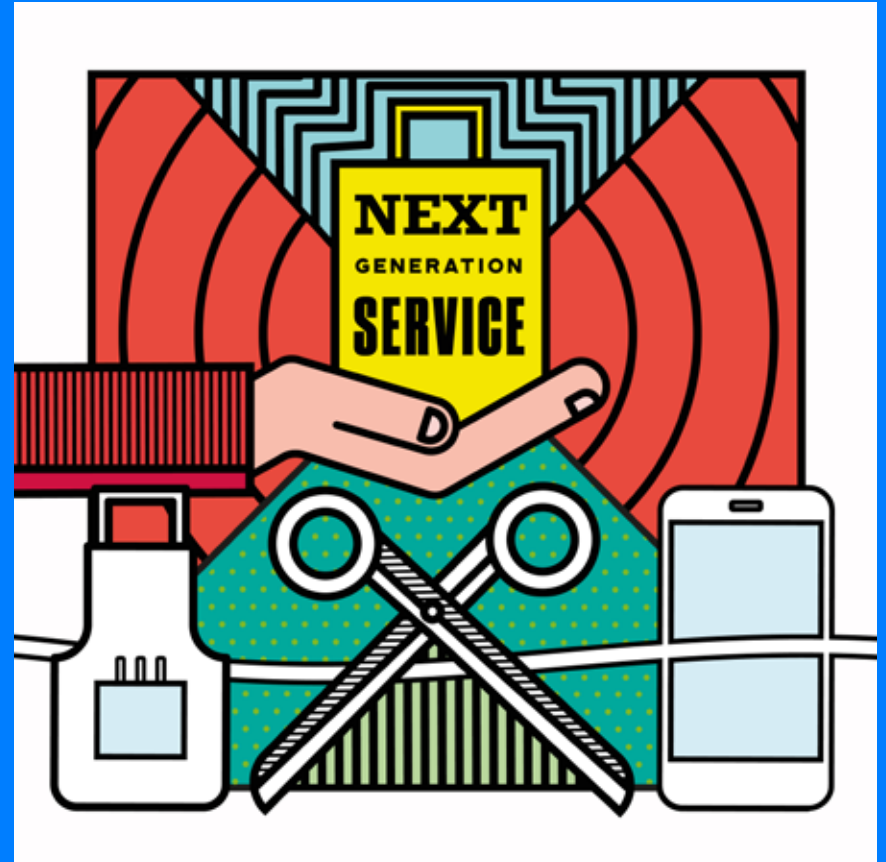
04

PREPARE FOR THE AGENT

When an assistant does the buying, your product data becomes your shop window.
Get it right before someone else's algorithm reads it.

04

NEXT-GENERATION SERVICE



“83% of UK consumers prefer speaking to a real person. Only 4% prefer a chatbot – and among 16–24s, just 7%”

8x8 UK consumer research, October 2025

This chapter has changed more than any other since 2019 – and it has changed in the opposite direction to everyone’s predictions. Automation has moved upstream into discovery and checkout, where it genuinely works. The human has been redeployed downstream into fitting, repair and aftercare, where it now reads as the premium tier. The brands winning are the ones that know which is which.

Buying Inside The Assistant



Nike x Google

Nike announced a new artificial intelligence-powered shopping feature that allows U.S. consumers to discover and purchase Nike products directly through Google's Gemini app and AI Mode in Search.

"With this new AI-powered shopping experience, Nike is again elevating the marketplace and how consumers engage with sport – using technology to anticipate their needs and connect them to our brand in more intuitive, seamless ways," says Shannon Glass, VP, Nike Direct.

Timed to the 2026 World Cup, leading with boots, kits and fan apparel.



Machine Opens Human Closes

PUMA has created its first AI Store Concierge.

A large in-store display running a holographic conversational AI agent. Shoppers talk to it in English, Spanish, French, Arabic or Mandarin – it auto-detects the language – and ask about product detail, fit, performance and live stock.

Staff then pick up the thread for personal recommendation.

Built on Google Cloud and LiveX.AI.



PUMA, Las Vegas

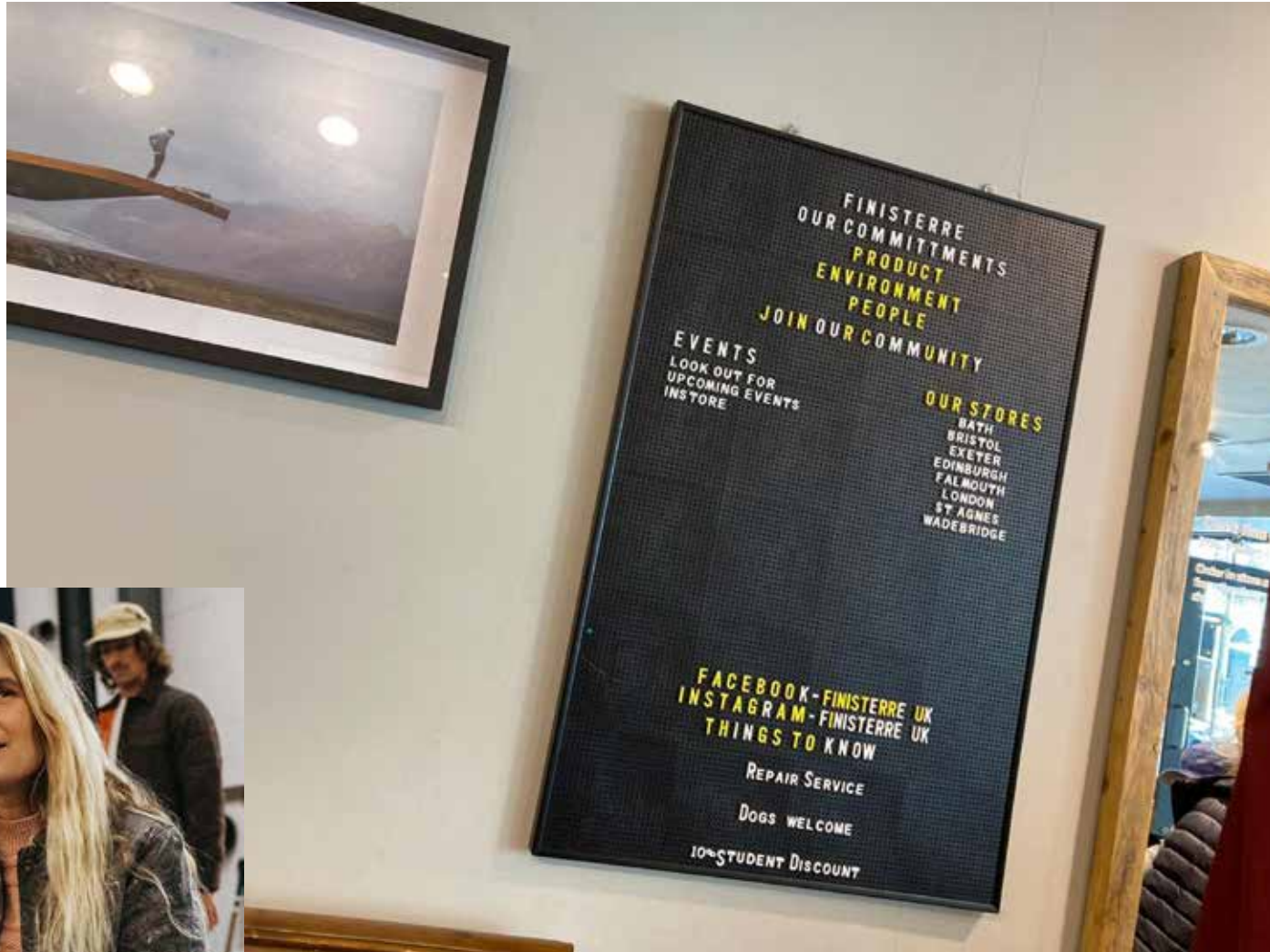
UK lifestyle brand, Finisterre, take inspiration from Patagonia.

A permanent repair workshop inside the store, open Wednesday to Friday for drop-in consultations, paid repairs and amendments – plus teaching customers to mend, and selling home repair kits.

Led by textile artist, Amy Brock-Morgan.

Open to any garment, not just Finisterre's.

The named, credentialed human is the product. Repair as retail theatre and retention at once.



Finisterre



The Named Expert

Second Lives

At Decathlon UK, customers bring any brand of bike or kit in; a trained team member physically assesses condition and issues value as bank transfer within the hour, or as a gift card.

Now 50+ items across 15 sports categories, trade-in values up to ~45% of original RRP, with a 20% bonus for loyalty members on bikes.

Trade-in only works with a human making a judgement call in front of you. Un-automatable service, at mass-market scale, profitably.

Decathlon UK



Salomon



Salomon brought the idea of circularity to life at Run Culture: Live in London, where it also introduced runners to GRAVELANZA – its new gravel-running event concept, blending elements of road and trail running ahead of a London debut in 2027.

Alongside the running experience, Salomon partnered with United Repair Centre to repair almost 50 pieces of outdoor gear over the two-day event. Visitors could also get involved themselves, transforming retired Salomon advertising banners into nearly 50 unique bags.

It was a simple but tangible example of a brand taking circularity beyond sustainability messaging – giving existing products and materials a second life, while inviting consumers to actively participate in the process.

Cross-Industry Service

JD Sports and Uber Eats launch
rapid football shirt deliveries

Official football shirts delivered
from JD stores via Uber Eats in
minutes, timed to a
Saturday-night England fixture.

Digital director Nicola Burnett
framed it as giving fans access
to the products they want, when
they want them – which on a
match night means before
kick-off.



JD Sports x Uber Eats

KEY TAKEOUTS

01

AUTOMATE DISCOVERY, HUMANISE AFTERCARE

Machines are better at finding and paying. People are better at fitting, judging and repairing. Get the split the wrong way round and you pay for it twice.

02

HUMAN SERVICE IS NOW THE PREMIUM

After a decade of automation, a person who knows the answer has become the luxury. Price and position it accordingly.

03

PUT THE EXPERTISE ON THE SHOPFLOOR

Aftercare hidden in a back room is a cost. The same work done in view is a reason to visit, and a reason to come back.

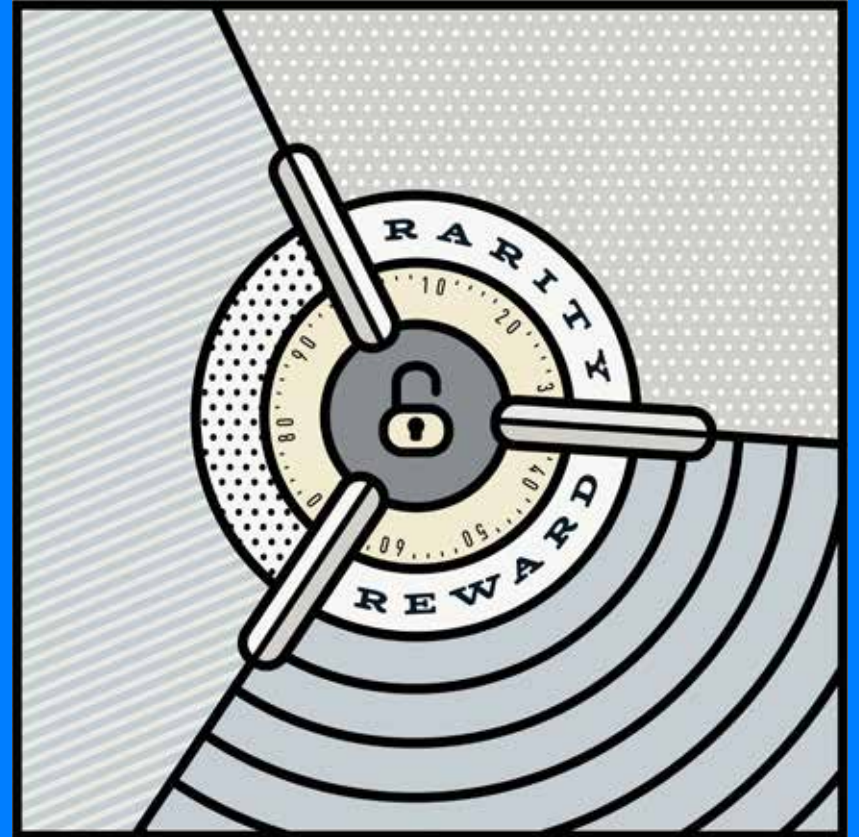
04

FAST AND SLOW

Run two journeys. One quick, streamlined and efficient. One for the customer who wants to take their time and be advised properly.

05

RARITY AND REWARD



***“Only 100 athletes were admitted to
Represent’s first fitness event,
from over 2,000 applications – selected by
application, not payment or ballot”***

Athletech News, July 2025

Rarity has changed hands. The raffle, the bot and the artificial drop are tired – and consumers know when scarcity is manufactured.

The strongest 2026 mechanics gate access on effort and participation instead of luck or spend: run the miles, log the session, turn up on the day. Scarcity you earn is the version people still respect.

Redefining Currency

Four XP tiers, status held for twelve months. Members earn 10 XP per £1 spent – but also 10 XP per workout logged in the Gymshark Training app, capped at five sessions weekly.

Higher tiers unlock early access, exclusive product and event invitations.

The 2025 LIFT London Loyalty Lounge was tier-gated.

Training itself becomes spendable currency. Gymshark’s CDO framed it as ‘shop, share, and crucially, show up.’



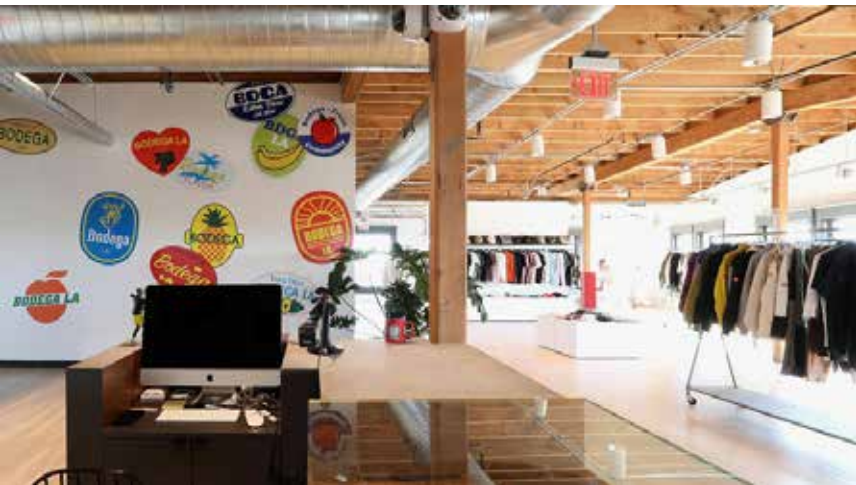
Gymshark



Hide and Seek

Cult Boston-based store Bodega, which is hidden behind a convenience store, has opened its second outpost behind the fruits and vegetables of Downtown LA's bustling produce district.

Adjacent to The Row (the area's latest shopping district), it has three levels of men's and women's sneakerhead apparel and accessories set in an expansive and distinctly industrial warehouse setting.



Bodega, Los Angeles

Branded Strava segments placed on real roads in each city.

Runners, walkers and wheelchair users competed two ways: individual Local Legend status in their city, and collective city mileage.

Each city's Local Legend won free food for a year; the winning city earned an offer for everyone.

50,000 codes went out by SMS.

Gamification



Chipotle x Strava

The British brand's first fitness event. Teams of five competed for twelve straight hours – an hourly 5km run plus optional Ski Erg.

Only 100 athletes were admitted from over 2,000 applications, selected by application rather than payment or raffle.

Winners took £5,000 and custom 247 kit unavailable commercially.

Scarcity of place, awarded on willingness to suffer.

A British brand, a Lancashire hillside, and a 20:1 application rate.



Represent 247

Effort = Reward



Cliff-Side Pop-Up:

A two-day publicity-friendly concept saw US-based marketing agency, Work in Progress, collaborate with advanced materials company 37.5 Technology to install a pop-up shop on the side of a cliff in Eldorado Canyon, Colorado.

Shoppers had to climb 300ft to receive free items!



Cliff-side pop-up, Colorado

Extreme Rewards



KEY TAKEOUTS

01

MAKE THEM EARN IT

Access granted for effort has replaced access granted by luck.
A raffle creates resentment; a qualifying standard creates pride.

02

REWARD SHOWING UP, NOT JUST SPENDING

Recognise participation as well as purchase.
The customer who trains in your product is worth more than the one who merely bought it.

03

PRESENCE IS THE NEW EXCLUSIVITY

Being in the room is the most honest gate there is – and the hardest to fake, resell or bot.

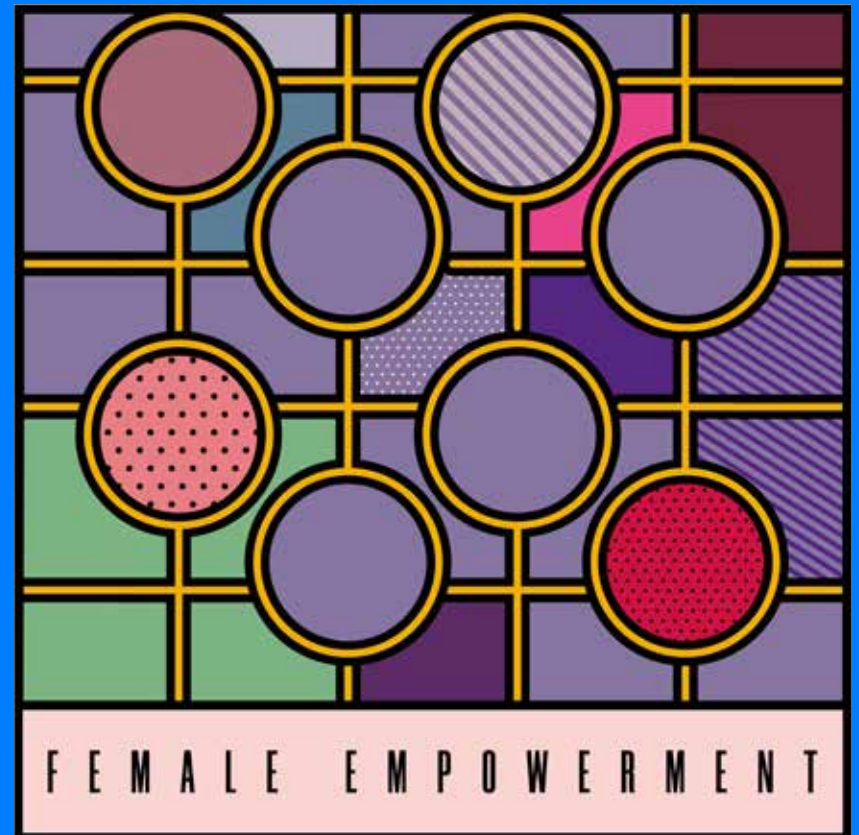
04

KNOW WHEN TO OPEN THE VAULT

Manufactured scarcity has a ceiling, and consumers can tell the difference.
Withholding stock indefinitely eventually reads as contempt.

06

FEMALE EMPOWERMENT



“Global revenues in women’s elite sport will reach at least \$3 billion in 2026 – a 25% increase on the \$2.4 billion generated in 2025.”

Deloitte, Game Changers, April 2026

In 2019 this chapter was about representation in advertising. In 2026 it is about product engineering, commercial scale and a UK market transformed by two home tournaments. Women’s sport revenue has grown 4.5 times faster than men’s, and still accounts for under 2% of the total US sports market. The headroom is the opportunity – and the brands winning are the ones solving real problems, not writing better copy.

Kit for Purpose



ASICS



The current UK PE Kit makes teenage girls feel uncomfortable:

Weather and warmth

"I'm either too hot or too cold. I'll get soaking wet when it rains."

Fabric feel and look

"It's itchy and see-through. It makes you really self-conscious."

Shape and fit

"It's baggy and shapeless. It feels like it's made for boys."

Period concerns

"We worry period leaks will show. You can't carry tampons anywhere."



ASICS worked with Inclusive Sportswear and the charity Mind to prototype a redesigned school PE kit, tested at a school flagged by Sport England for low participation.

Period-friendly design, sweat management, style choice and multiple body types.

Their research: 64% of UK girls drop out of sport before 16; only 12% are satisfied with current PE kit.

Canadian athleisure retailer lululemon has opened a 'Mindfulness' space within its new flagship store in Midtown New York.

The move is further proof that meditation and other mindfulness-based practices formerly considered 'alternative', are continuing to cement their place in mainstream consciousness.



lululemon 'Mindfulness' space,
New York

Mindfulness Havens



The tenth-anniversary relaunch, built on an audit of 4,000+ photographs from English leisure facilities: only 40% pictured were women, just 117 were Black or South Asian, only 14 visibly disabled.

The campaign street-cast thirteen women – pregnancy yoga, wheelchair rugby, walking football, kitchen dancing.



Casting Reality



This Girl Can / Sport England

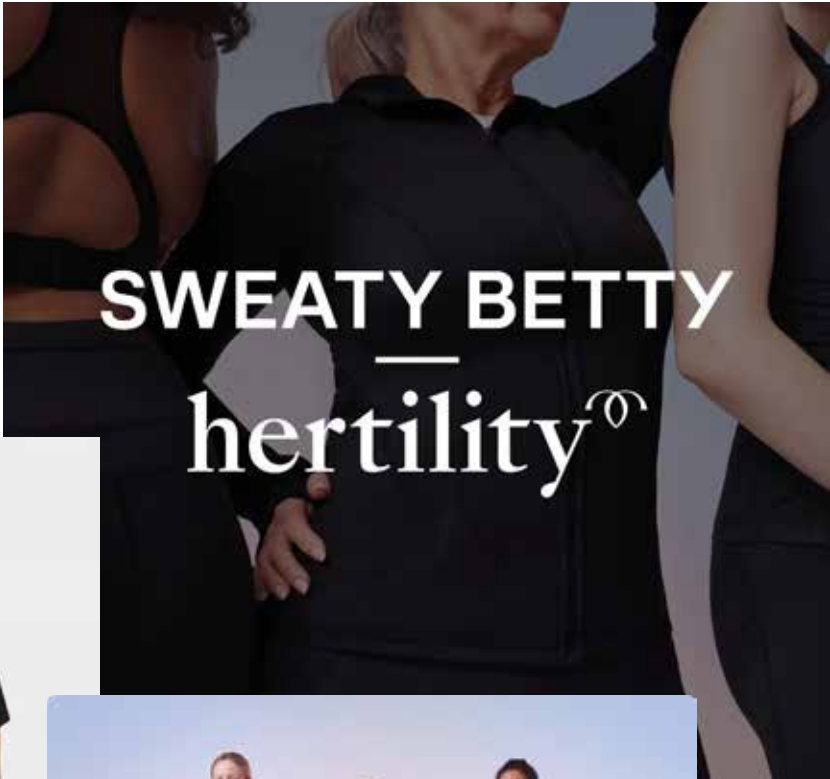
After the Lionesses' second consecutive Euros title in 2025, Nike repainted its 2022 'HOME' mark – the centre of the H removed to form a Roman numeral II.

Rolled out within hours across squad aircraft livery, fan flags at Southend Airport, player t-shirts, Downing Street, Buckingham Palace and the London victory parade.

Reactive Storytelling



Nike x Wieden+Kennedy London



SWEATY BETTY
—
hertility[®]



I'm *not*
ovary-acting[®]



Sweaty Betty x Hertility

A collaboration with women's health company Hertility producing activewear designed around life stages:

Leak Protect Power Leggings with absorbent technology for menstruation-related incontinence, plus maternity leggings, shorts and vests.

Framed against one in four women dropping out of sport in adolescence, and a third becoming less active through menopause.

**Solving the
Unsaid**

43% of girls who once considered themselves "sporty" disengage after primary school, against 24% of boys; 61% cite lack of confidence and 73% are uncomfortable being watched.

- Women in Sport.



Boosting
Self-Esteem

Sportsgirl, Be That Girl campaign



Nike, London



Mass

Participation



A women-only night race series
– 10K and half marathon – across
Sydney, Mexico City, Shanghai,
Seoul, Mumbai, LA and London.

Each stop carries coaching,
race-prep services, Hyperice
recovery zones and a post-race
party.

Free six-week and twelve-week
training plans in the Nike Run
Club app feed the start line.

Grace Beverley's DTC activewear brand opened its first standalone store after Selfridges shop-in-shops in 2024, drawing opening-day queues.

CEO Morgan Fowles framed it as hospitality over transaction – 'when she comes into this space, we're hosting her.'

The business remains "social first". Ahead of the opening, the TALA communicated with its "broadcast subscribers" through Instagram messages to invite them to book an appointment slot to ensure access inside on the first day of trading.



**Social First,
Store Second**

KEY TAKEOUTS

01

ENGINEER, DON'T DECORATE

Redesigning the product beats rewriting the campaign.
A reshaped fit solves a problem; a new strapline describes one.

02

THE HEADROOM IS THE ARGUMENT

Women's sport is growing several times faster than men's from a fraction of the base.
The opportunity is the gap, not the current figure.

03

SOLVE THE UNSAID

Periods, leaks, pregnancy and menopause are product briefs that almost nobody is writing.
Whoever writes them first owns the category.

04

REPRESENTATION IS A CASTING DECISION

Audit who actually appears in your imagery, in-store and out.
The gap between your stated values and your picture library is usually larger than you think.

As activewear brands, large and small, work to connect with a younger consumer, the rules of engagement have changed again – and this time the direction is clearer.

Two things run through everything in this report. The first is that relevance now beats reach. The most effective ideas we found were rarely the biggest or the best funded; they were the ones aimed precisely at somebody. A women's football shop in Manchester, a repair van in a Cornish car park, a hundred people selected from two thousand to run up a hill in the rain.

The second is that effort has become the currency. Consumers will give a brand their time, their data and their Saturday morning – but they expect the exchange to be honest, and they can tell instantly when scarcity has been manufactured rather than earned.

It remains a genuinely level playing field. Challenger brands with modest budgets are still taking share from incumbents, faster than in 2019, not slower. The advantage belongs to whoever understands their customer best.

Let's explore the possibilities together. We'd love to hear your feedback and see how Mynt can support your brand's future ambitions.

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