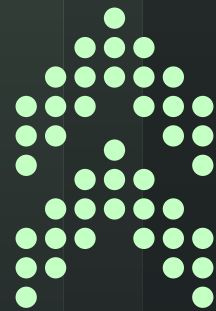


# The Media Lift Effect



How to seamlessly integrate paid and  
organic media to drive the outcomes  
that count

**Brave Bison**  
SocialChain

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In a world where discovery is driving demand...

Social has never been more **powerful** — or more **misunderstood**.

The days of throwing media budget at conversion-led campaigns and hoping for the best are over. CPMs are rising. Attention spans are shrinking. And audiences are scattered across more platforms, creators, communities, and conversations than ever before.

More than half of ad spend is wasted on content that simply isn't built for feed — overly polished, poorly targeted, or creatively disconnected from how people consume content today.

People are savvier. They scroll past anything that even smells like an ad. Add in a flood of AI-generated content, creator-led campaigns, and branded always-on — and it's no wonder attention is at more of a premium than ever.

At the same time, brands are investing more into social because it works. But with that investment comes a new kind of challenge: Disconnected teams. Disconnected planning. Disconnected creative.

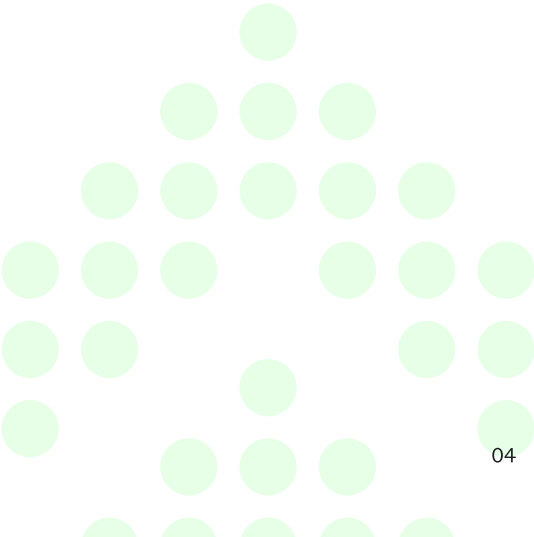
Paid, organic, and earned media often sit with separate agencies, briefed at different times, by different client teams, chasing different objectives — all developing content with its own interpretation of brand. The result? Fragmented brand IP, duplicated effort, and low-impact creative that burns through budget without delivering real value.

And when complexity increases — with new platforms, new behaviours, and new technologies reshaping how people interact with content — those cracks only get wider.

That's where we come in.

We help brands capitalise on complexity, from trend to spend — bringing together media, creative, and performance under one roof to unlock the full power of social.

Because when media and creative work together — across the customer journey — the performance upside is exponential.



We call it  
**The Media Lift Effect.**

It's what happens when brands show up consistently across paid and organic media, creating thumb-stopping work that delivers **key outcomes** across the funnel: discovery, consideration, and conversion.

The aim? To reduce wastage and increase mental availability by making content more effective. More of what people actually want to engage with, and less of what clutters the feed.

This is about engineering a system where paid and organic work together, where brand and performance are in sync.

When media and creative align across paid and organic - built with audience insight and activated through the funnel - the results speak for themselves.

We've delivered across clients:

- **73% uplift in ROAS** and **137% uplift in conversion rate** from transforming static brand assets into full-funnel, multi-format campaigns across platforms.
- **32% ROAS uplift, 27% improvement in ROI**, and **69% increase in CTR** after creative was reworked for performance and tested organically before scaling
- **£327k in incremental revenue** and **2,677 additional purchases** directly attributable to paid social exposure
- **2.06x ROAS lift** and **14.9% uplift in purchase intent** proven via controlled Meta lift studies
- **2.7k uplift in paid search visits** and **2.6k uplift in organic search** triggered by social - proving its role in driving downstream demand in addition to upper-funnel reach

The results were driven by full-funnel thinking, from insight to execution. They were unlocked by a system: where audience, media, and creative work as one, and where testing turns content into outcomes.

High-performing social requires systems thinking - and a mindset that sees social as a space to generate demand as well as capture it.

“We believe that creative opens the door, media gets you in the room and data tells you what to say.”



# From scroll to strategy:

## The evolution of social

### Social has evolved. **Fast.**

What started as a space to connect with friends became an entertainment-first ecosystem. Now, it's something even bigger. A place where people **connect, debate, create, share, shop, and influence.**

Today, a single scroll can take someone from curiosity to conversion. That's full-funnel behaviour in one session. And yet many brands still think in fragments: media here, creative there; paid for performance, organic for engagement.

That split mindset no longer works.

Because the most powerful shift in social today? Discovery is driving demand.

People aren't waiting to search. They're stumbling across products while laughing at a Reel, exploring a creator's latest haul, or deep in a TikTok rabbit hole. They're uncovering brands through fan communities, subcultures, and shared recommendations, long before they ever hit Google.

Social is no longer just a place to show up. It's where decisions are being shaped. Where trust is being built. And where demand is being created — often before your brand even enters the conversation.

Strategies that separate performance from brand, or media from creative, miss where influence really happens.

### Why it matters for brands

In a fragmented landscape, attention is a limited resource. The platforms, formats, communities and conversations available to brands are endless, but your audience's time isn't.

That's why modern social strategy needs to move away from chasing platform algorithm changes or relying on a single channel. It needs to centre on people. Their mindsets, motivations, and behaviours.

At SocialChain, we call it **People Over Platforms**. Not being at the mercy of the algorithm, but designing for the audience.

When paired with the Media Lift Effect, that mindset turns social into a system for engineered demand and measurable growth.

This is where modern performance lives, and it all starts with creating intent.



# What is The Media Lift Effect?

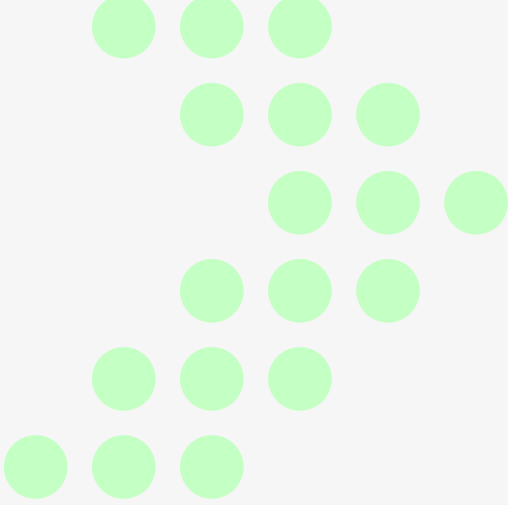
The Media Lift Effect happens when brands seamlessly integrate paid and organic social, ensuring discovery, consideration, and conversion work together to drive exponential results.

At its core, **The Media Lift Effect** connects the disconnected.

**It connects your capabilities** — taking the best elements of paid and organic and treating them as one unified force.

**It connects your customer journey** — activating organic and paid media across every phase, reducing reliance on isolated tactics for specific outcomes.

**And it connects your measurement** — aligning social KPIs and signals to work together, providing a clearer view of performance and evidencing how social is driving business growth.



We represent this with a **simple formula**:

**The Media Lift Effect**

=

**Passive x Active x Customer**

**X**

**Paid + Organic**

*Organic activates across branded content on your own channels or influencer, UGC, or creator-led content that feels native to the feed.*

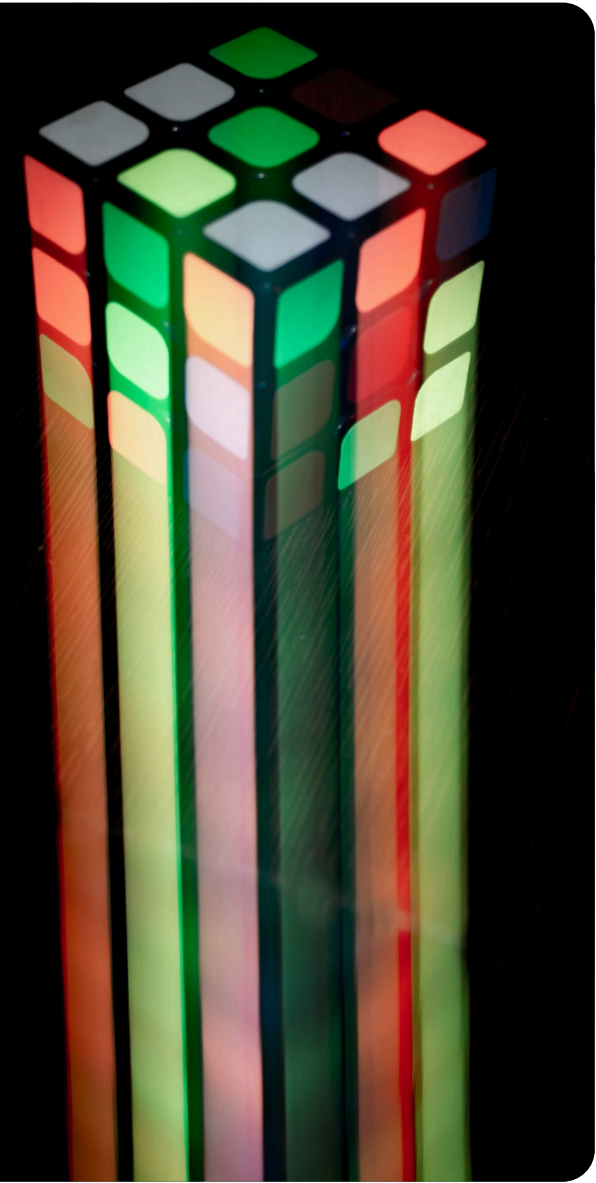
## Why does this matter?

Because when any one stage is weak, it limits your overall effectiveness. But when all three stages work in harmony, across paid and organic, social transforms from a simple reach tool into a full-performance engine.

In practice, the Media Lift Effect is the combined power you get when media and creative collaborate across the entire consumer journey — from discovery to engagement to conversion — spanning both paid and organic channels.

Think of the formula as a mental shortcut and visual reminder. From the paid side, it means building solid ad account foundations fuelled by data, allowing creative to reach the right audiences at the right time.

When this integration happens, brands don't just reach people. They connect with them. They influence them. And ultimately, they win.



## Making the **model** work for you

The Media Lift Effect gives brands a new way to think about social, as a connected system, not a set of siloed tactics.

But the power of the model lies in how it's applied.

Real lift comes from aligning your audience understanding, creative decisions, and media delivery to work in harmony, across paid, organic, and earned; across the funnel; and across time. That requires clarity on who you're targeting, how they're behaving, and what creative actually drives action at each stage.

In other words, the Media Lift Effect starts with knowing where you stand and where the biggest opportunities for lift really are.

## Here's what that means:

**Passive** equals discovery...

The moments when your audience first encounters your brand.

**Active** covers engagement and consideration...

When people interact and start to form opinions.

**Customer** is conversion...

The point where interest turns into action.

The magic happens when all three phases align across both paid and organic activity. This compounding effect delivers impact that is greater than the sum of its parts, unlocking outcomes that no isolated tactic could achieve.

# Start with your people.

## Your audience is your strategy.

Once you understand where you are, it's time to **focus on who you're speaking to.**

Because your audience isn't a single, static group. They're a collection of mindsets, motivations, occasions, and journeys — all constantly evolving.

Building robust, future-proof social strategies starts with putting your people front and centre.

This means diving deep into:

- 01

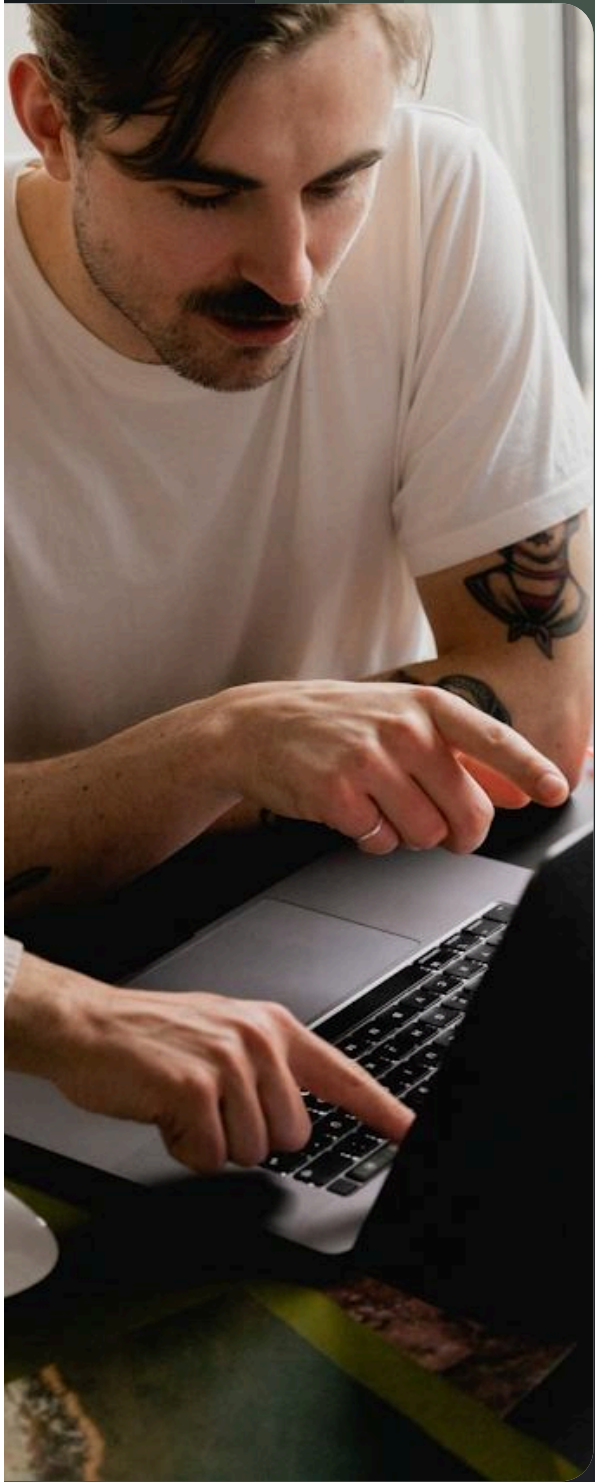
**Mindsets**  
What drives your audience's decisions and behaviours?
- 02

**Journey mapping**  
How do they move from discovery to consideration to conversion?
- 03

**Motivations and needs**  
What problems are they trying to solve? What aspirations guide them?
- 04

**Moment mapping**  
When and where are they open to hearing from brands?
- 05

**Personalisation**  
How can you tailor your approach to different audience segments?



 Audience**GPT**




**To do this well** requires more than guesswork or assumptions.

**That's where AI solutions like AudienceGPT come in.**

AudienceGPT is Brave Bison's proprietary AI tool which acts like a focus group at your fingertips. It analyses first-party data and combines it with psychographic insights to give a rich, nuanced picture of who your audiences really are, what they care about, and where they spend their time online.

With this insight, brands can connect the dots between audience, media, and creative — building presence across the funnel that truly resonates.

**Use the audit and audience insights together to map:**

-  Where your audiences are spending time
-  What they care about and engage with
-  How best to reach them with the right message at the right moment

**Put simply:** Your audience is your strategy. The better you understand them, the more effective your media and creative will be.

# Audit.

## Understand where you stand.

Before you can lift performance, **you need to know where you're starting from.**

That's where the audit comes in.

Using core marketing science principles — Distinctiveness, Scale, Impact, Accountability, and Innovation — the audit gives brands a clear view of their current social presence.

It reveals where you're winning, where you're underperforming, and where the biggest opportunities lie.

01

### Distinctiveness

How well does your social content stand out in a crowded feed?

02

### Scale

Are you reaching enough of your target audience across platforms and formats?

03

### Impact

Is your content driving meaningful engagement and moving people through the funnel?

04

### Accountability

Do you have clear measurement in place to track what's working?

05

### Innovation

Are you experimenting with new ideas, formats, or technologies to stay ahead?

This rigorous assessment helps break down silos and spot gaps between paid and organic, creative and media, messaging and targeting.

The audit isn't a one-off exercise. It's a vital compass that guides smarter decisions and better allocation of time, budget, and creative effort.



# Creative is the new **targeting**.

## Performance is a **creative** problem

When it comes to ad effectiveness, creative is the biggest lever we have, contributing up to 70% of campaign success.

That makes it more than a production challenge. It makes it a performance strategy.

In a media landscape where organic algorithms are volatile and paid delivery is expensive, creative becomes the constant — the one thing within our control that can spark interest, drive action, and amplify impact.

But only if it's built the right way.

## Paid can't save **poor** creative

Even with budget behind it, underperforming creative will struggle.

Platforms are engineered to favour content that feels native, earns attention, and delivers value. If your ad looks like an ad, it'll be taxed in the auction — or worse, ignored altogether.

**The best assets aren't always the most polished, instead they're the ones that:**

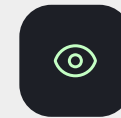
- > Feel right for the platform
- > Speak to the audience's mindset
- > Reflect where they are in the funnel

As per our framework, creative is the bridge between audience, media and message, and it must flex across all three.

## Funnel-first, not format-first

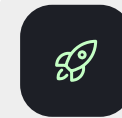
To drive real lift, creative should map to real motivations — curiosity, consideration, conversion — not just media placements.

We break this down into three key creative modes:



### Passive

Spark curiosity through relevance



### Active

Drive engagement through storytelling



### Customer

Support action through clarity & ease

Too often, brands build for one outcome. But on social, people don't move neatly down the funnel. They zigzag. They discover, skip, return, buy.

That's why the most effective assets don't just capture interest. They convert it. In one scroll.

Social creative has the unique power to do both jobs at once — spark and sell — when it's aligned to both the brand's strength and the audience's want.

## Testing isn't optional

High-performing creative doesn't happen by accident. It happens through testing.

**Organic content should be used as a live lab:**

- > Run small batches
- > Track signals like thumbstop rate and dwell time
- > Learn what works before scaling through paid

This ensures only validated creative gets amplified, improving efficiency and increasing effectiveness.

## Enter AI: the new creative co-pilot

AI tools can now support ideation, variation, and scaling — giving teams the freedom to explore multiple directions without blowing timelines or budgets.

**Used right, AI helps brands move faster:**

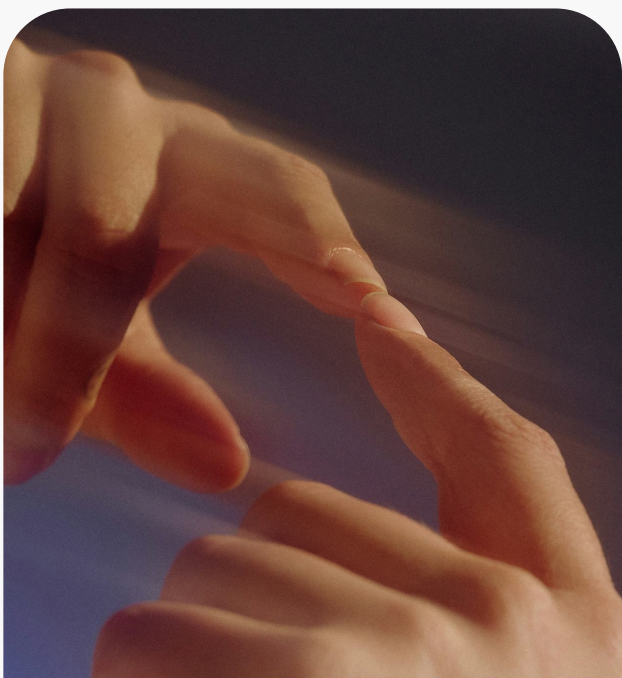
- > Testing more formats, hooks and narratives
- > Matching creative to audience mindsets
- > Iterating what works, retiring what doesn't

But it still starts with strategy: understanding the job each piece of content must do and where it fits in the wider media plan.



# Paid media gives **creative** its wings.

Paid isn't just about reach. It's the **delivery engine** for creative — helping brands scale what works, fast.



**In the Media Lift Effect model, media plays one core role: amplify proven creative to the right people, at the right time, in the right place.**

When executed well, paid doesn't just boost visibility. It drives measurable business outcomes by aligning creative with user mindset and platform behaviours.

## **60/40: A smarter split**

A high-performing media plan starts with smart budget allocation. We recommend using the 60/40 rule as a starting point — 60% brand-building, 40% performance.

That balance ensures long-term brand equity is built alongside short-term conversion, maximising both reach and revenue over time.

Brand budgets allow creative to shine across upper-funnel moments of discovery and consideration. Performance budgets focus on lower-funnel efficiency: capturing demand, remarketing, and driving conversion.

**Both are needed. Both should be working together.**

## Media fuels **precision and scale**

Paid media delivers more than reach; it delivers relevance at scale. That's what powers real performance. That's what turns thumb-stopping creative into action-driving results.

People use social for different reasons - to be entertained, inspired, informed or reassured. These motivations shape how they engage with content, regardless of the platform they're on.

To unlock performance, paid activation needs to flex with this nuance, matching media strategy to how audiences behave and engage on each channel.

It's no longer enough to repurpose one creative across all placements. Campaigns should be architected around attention patterns and motivations. That means adapting your message, your objective, and even your call-to-action depending on where your audience is in the funnel.

**When media and creative are built together, they do more than deliver impressions. They deliver impact.**

# Learning beats guessing.

In modern media strategy, instinct isn’t enough. The best results come from testing, measuring, and adapting — not assuming. When testing is baked in from the start, every campaign becomes a learning opportunity. And every insight helps sharpen the next.

The Media Lift Effect model calls for continuous optimisation across three key phases: Passive, Active, and Customer. To do that, you need to know what good looks like at each stage.

## A measurement model built for nuance

Many measurement frameworks struggle to connect brand objectives with business outcomes. They either focus too narrowly - optimising for micro-metrics like CTR - or too broadly - relying solely on lagging indicators like revenue. What’s missing is a model that reflects how media works across the funnel.

The Media Lift Effect bridges this gap. It defines what success looks like at each level of the customer journey - connection, audience, and brand - and builds a measurement system that links those social signals to commercial impact.

### The ultimate goal is to measure what matters:

- **Connection Effects** tell us how effectively content is distributed and whether it resonates with people.
- **Audience Effects** assess how behaviour and perception shift in response to media.
- **Brand Effects** quantify whether our activity contributes to real business value - sales, market share, or future demand.

	Connection Effects	Audience Effects	Brand Effects
Objective	Measure distribution effectiveness and creative resonance	Measure brand associations that help grow market share	Measure tangible business value (or a proxy of it)
Example KPIs	Reach, impressions, views VTR, VTCR Engagement Rate, comments	Brand recall Brand consideration Purchase intent	Sales, revenue EMV Share of Voice/Sales
Method	Experimentation AB / MVT testing Analytics	Incrementality Attribution	Brand tracking Econometrics, MMM

This stack works on a feedback scale - from fast, surface-level signals like view-through rate, to slower, deeper diagnostics like brand tracking and MMM. Critically, each tier is connected, helping teams understand the cumulative and compound effect of social media when measured correctly.

## Test smarter, move faster

### The Media Lift Effect demands testing across three levels:



#### Tactical

Platform-level metrics like thumbstop rate, watch time, CTR



#### Channel

Media mix modelling to assess return by channel



#### Behavioural

Lift studies and holdout tests to isolate true impact

Each layer gives you a different lens. Combined, they offer a 360° view of effectiveness, from micro engagement to macro business outcomes.

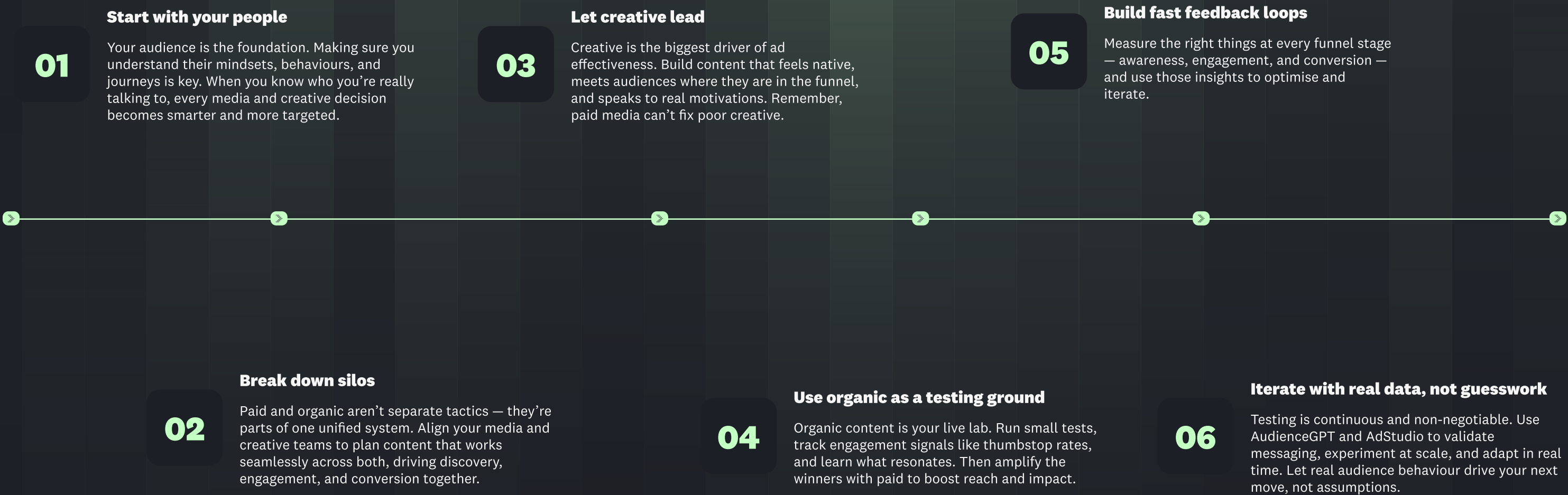
Looking back is useful. But it’s what you do with it that counts.

## Don’t forget about... The creative feedback loop

What performs well organically can, and should, inform your paid strategy. If a post drives above-average saves, shares or watch time, amplify it with budget. Once that paid campaign runs, analyse the results to inform your next wave of organic content.

This insight loop drives continuous improvement and reduces wasted spend.

# How to activate The Media Lift Effect





# A new era of media planning

The way people discover, consider, and convert has changed, and media planning needs to change with it.

The Media Lift Effect is a response to that shift. It's a planning system designed for how people behave today — fragmented, feed-first, and full of micro-moments. Instead of chasing attribution ghosts or over-indexing on last-click wins, it aligns creative, media and audience around three real-world behaviours: Passive (discovery), Active (engagement) and Customer (conversion).

Search still matters. But it's no longer doing all the heavy lifting. Social, creators, and algorithms are shaping demand earlier — often before intent has even formed. That's why we're seeing budget flow upstream: towards content that earns attention, media that amplifies it, and strategy that plans for both.

The Media Lift Effect helps brands respond to these changes, not with more noise, but with smarter planning. Planning that links platform signals to performance goals. Planning that bridges brand and performance. Planning that earns attention and turns it into action.

## Because when you build for behaviour, results follow.

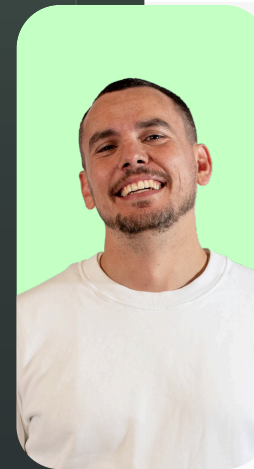
Our model unites strategy, media, creative and measurement, all under one roof. We blend SocialChain's cultural edge and creative instinct with Brave Bison's performance depth and media expertise. From brand storytelling to conversion strategy, we help brands plan for behaviour, build for effectiveness, and drive lift at every stage of the funnel.

**Drop us a line and let's get brave.**



**Joe Edge**  
Head of Growth  
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## Meet the Authors



**Gareth Harrison**  
Strategy and Innovation Director, SocialChain

Gareth initially joined SocialChain in 2022 as a strategist, leading and building out social strategies across a wide range of clients including KFC, Warner Bros (DC) and more. Since becoming a senior strategist in November 2023, he's been developing and overseeing the execution and effectiveness of social, influencer and campaign strategies for Jameson and SharkNinja at a global level, plus Holland & Barrett, Waitrose and John Lewis.



**Mark Byrne**  
Director of Paid Media, Brave Bison

Currently the director of paid media at Brave Bison after joining as a performance director in 2018, Mark's experience spans several major markets, having worked in both network and independent agencies in Dublin, Toronto, and London. He oversees all global client strategies, ensuring campaigns are effective and future-proof. Mark's ability to innovate is exemplified by his focus on integrating paid search and social strategies. By bridging these areas, he has created synergies that enhance overall campaign effectiveness and drive greater ROI for clients.