

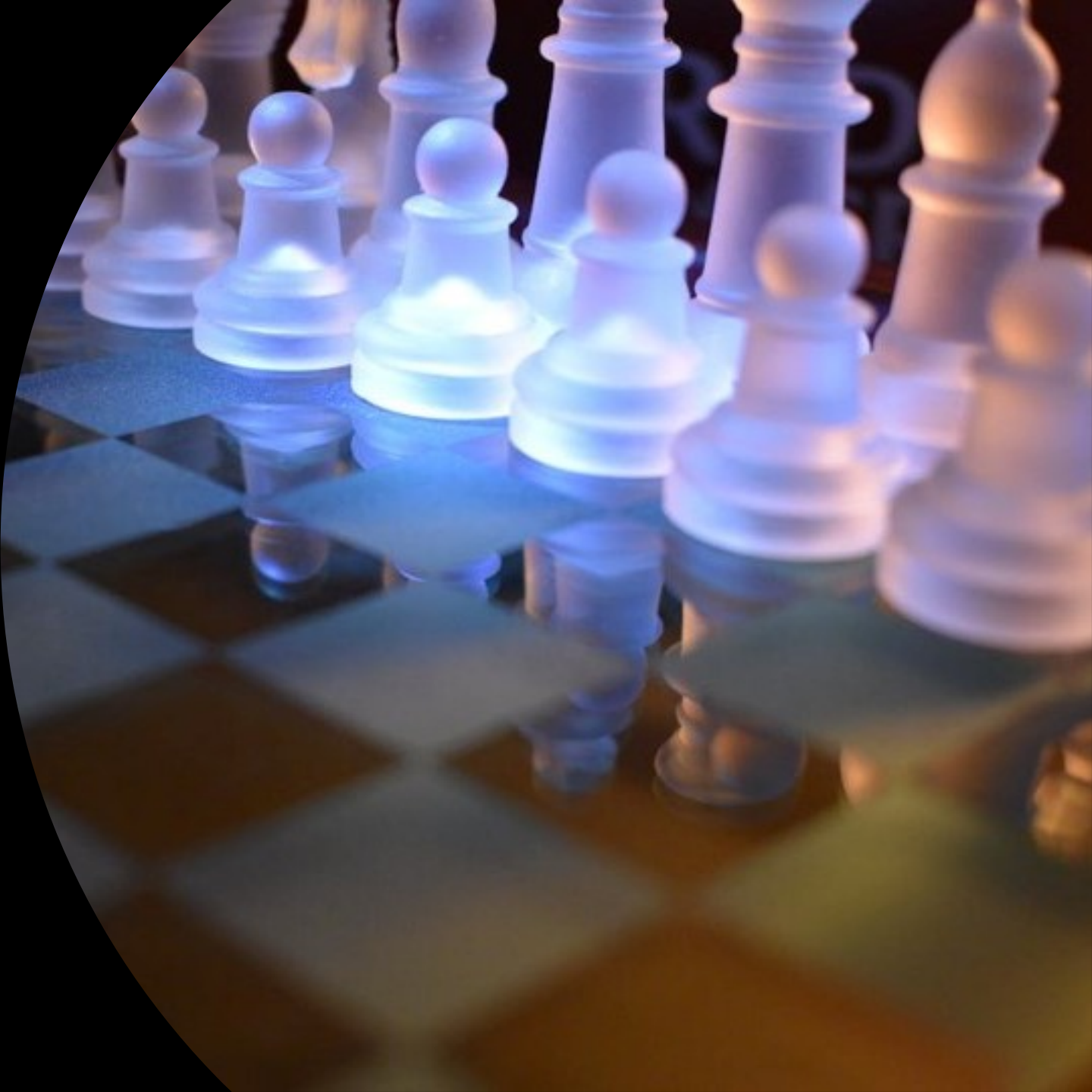


6 for '26: What Brands & Retailers Can't Afford to Ignore

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#1

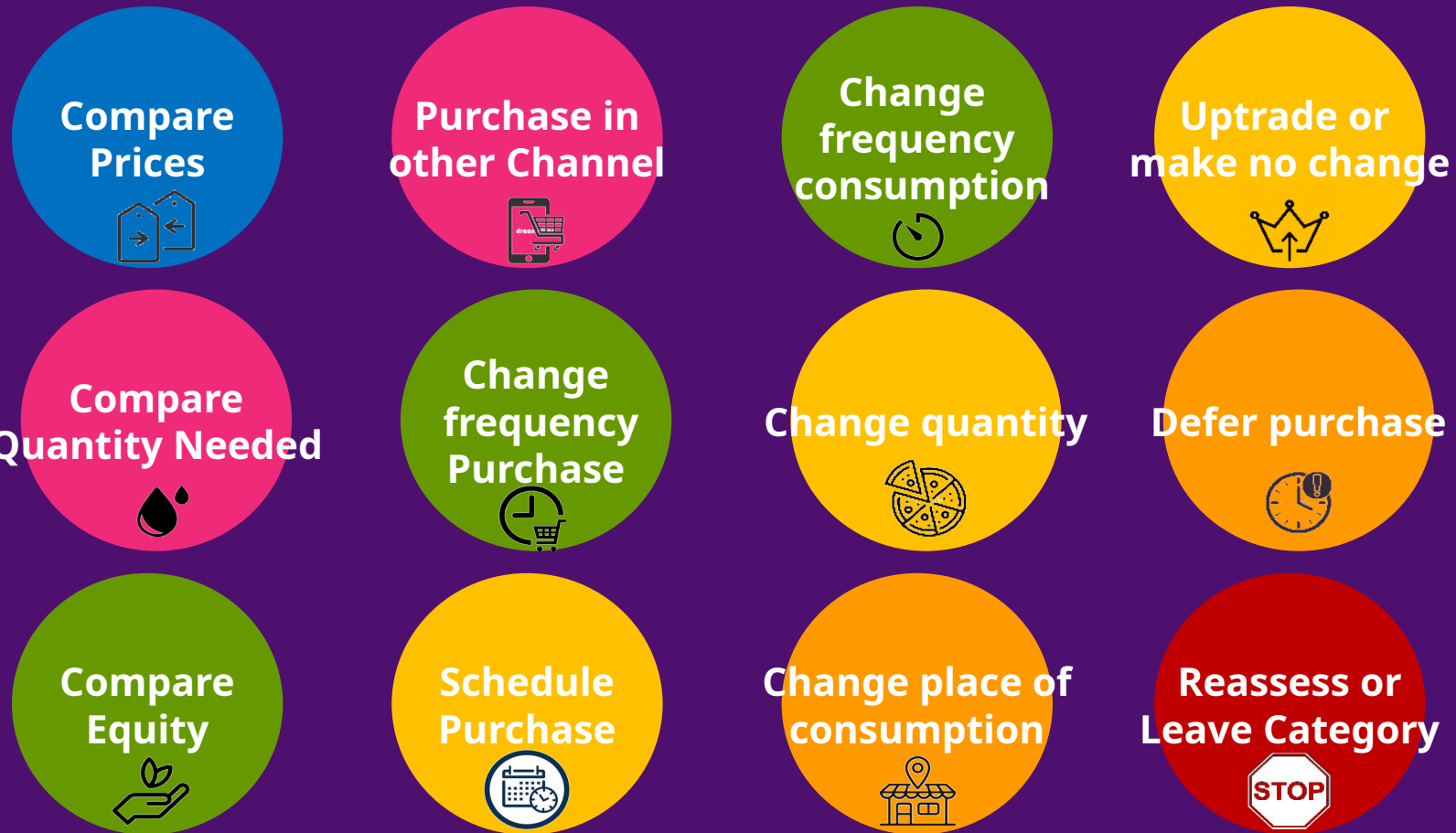
Inflation

Then and Now

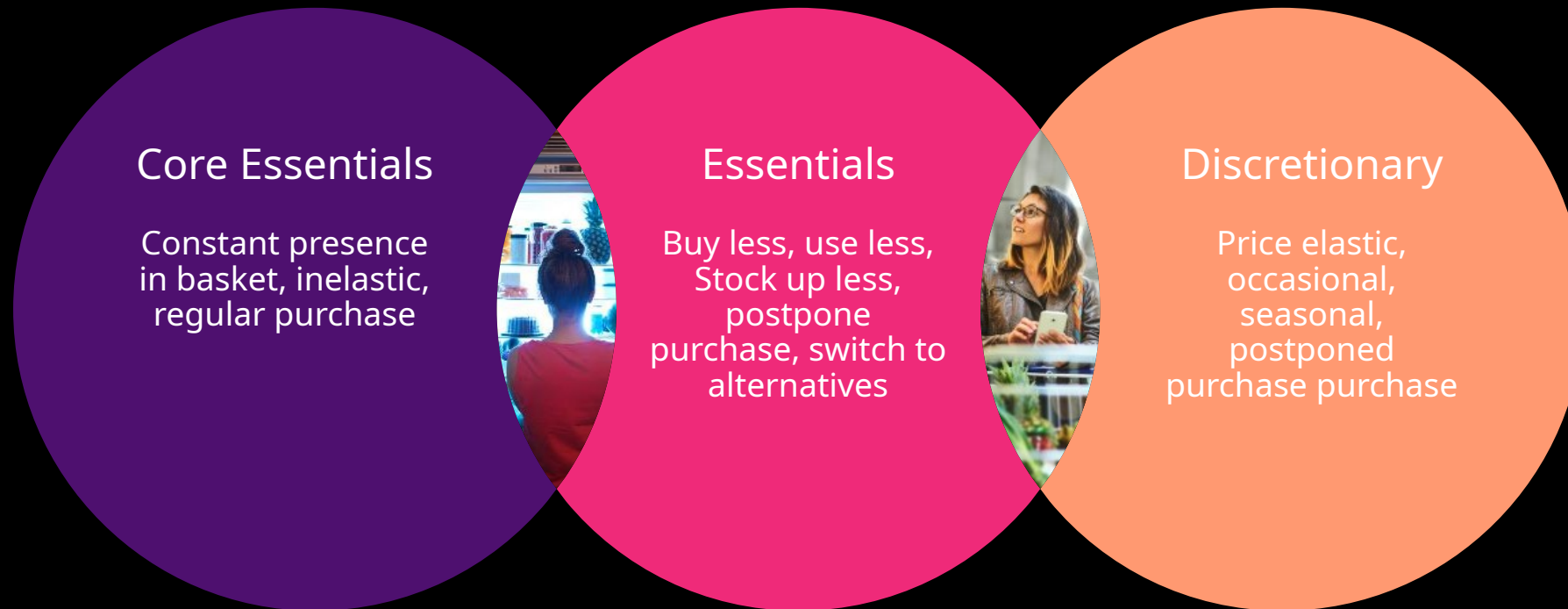


How shopper behaviours change through inflation

Characterizing them as 'downtrading' is an over-simplification



Consumers are re-defining Essential and Discretionary in their grocery basket.



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to reverse volume losses and drive growth, the strategy needs to take account

of **where the brand sits on the essential vs discretionary**

spectrum and **how price elastic the brand is.**



In an **essential** category, getting picked up is not the problem. **It is already in the basket.** Instead, the **focus is that they buy your brand** (stealing them from rivals or retaining existing shoppers) and to make sure they feel it is worth paying for even if they buy or use less.

Differentiation through Innovation is a key source



In a **discretionary** category, the priority is **becoming relevant in the consumer basket again.** Reminding consumers of the key reason to buy, and the pricing, promotional and marketing geared towards ensuring **consumers buy now, rather than later,** is crucial.



#2

Price

From Threat to
Growth lever

After years of intense inflation, pricing should no longer be seen only as a threat. It must become a strategic lever for driving value growth — not just a tool for protecting or expanding volumes

With elevated prices, now a reality across all categories, the strategic management of margins between products and categories has never been more critical. The goal is clear: maximize value growth, not just safeguard volumes

- ✓ Shift from volume-centric to value-centric strategies
- ✓ Leverage pricing as a growth driver, not a defensive tool
- ✓ Optimize margin mix across categories for sustainable profitability
- ✓ Adapt to consumer behavior in a high-price environment



#3

Generational
Expenditure



Spotlight often on **Gen Z**

Senior generations hold most wealth: real estate, investments, savings

Millennials remain underappreciated

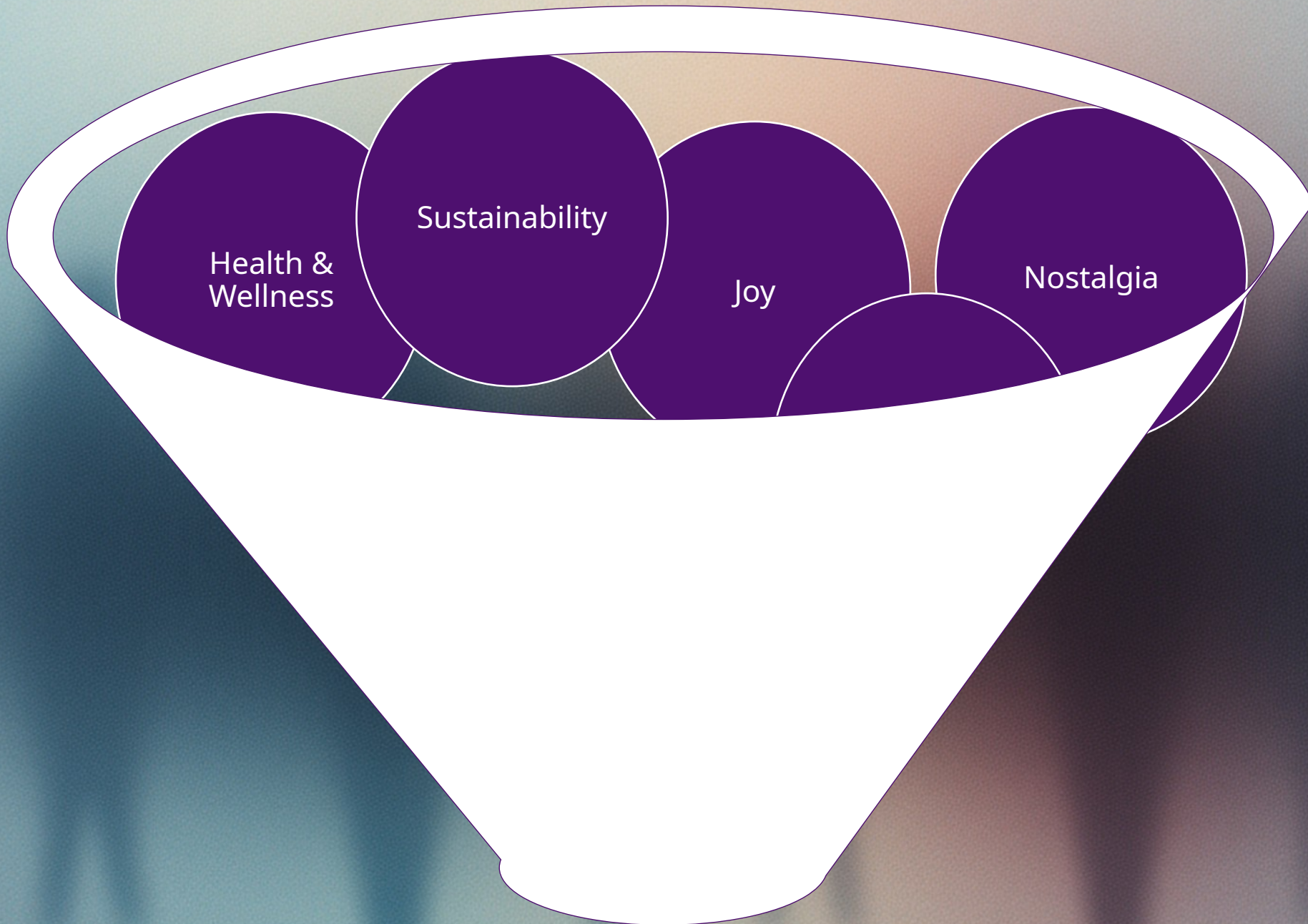
But Why?

- Millennials drive consumer trends and spending patterns
- Born early 1980s to mid-1990s; in prime earning years - They are the spending decision maker for 3 generations
- Tech-savvy, value experiences, demand authenticity and sustainability - seek wellness, sustainability, experimentation but also loyal to long lasting brand companions

#4

Megatrends
Shopper





Health &
Wellness

Sustainability

Joy

Nostalgia

#5

Sweet-talking
Skynet



The new global Influencer

In today's landscape, no strategy to address shifts in consumer behavior can ignore the global game-changer: AI



Solutions like ChatGPT, DeepSeek, and Gemini are becoming integral partners across the entire customer journey—from need recognition to purchase completion

These platforms now deliver highly targeted **recommendations**, pinpointing specific **brands**, products, and services with remarkable precision.



AI doesn't trust marketing/ campaigns. It trusts documentation

AI surfaced truths brands weren't always eager to hear

it became an uncomfortable truth teller—a kind of an automated BS detector, applied evenly and without apology

AI will answer questions about your brand, whether you're ready or not. It doesn't reward spend. It rewards clarity. It doesn't trust slogans. It trusts evidence

AI is now a dietitian, dermatologist, pharmacist, personal trainer, manager, psychologist and a life/career coach

#6

Virality

Ride or Die (?)



Option 1

Ride the viral wave →
be highly agile, with resources that can be rapidly reallocated (suppliers, raw materials, R&D, marketing, sales) to capture each trend at its peak

Strategic choices for Retailers and Brands

Option 1

Choose not to follow the wave—or adopt late→ focus resources more effectively on supporting existing products and practices, making more cautious moves and launches. Risk becoming trapped in a strategy that ignores younger generations of consumers who decide, choose, and get bored faster than ever

The Wisdom of Balance

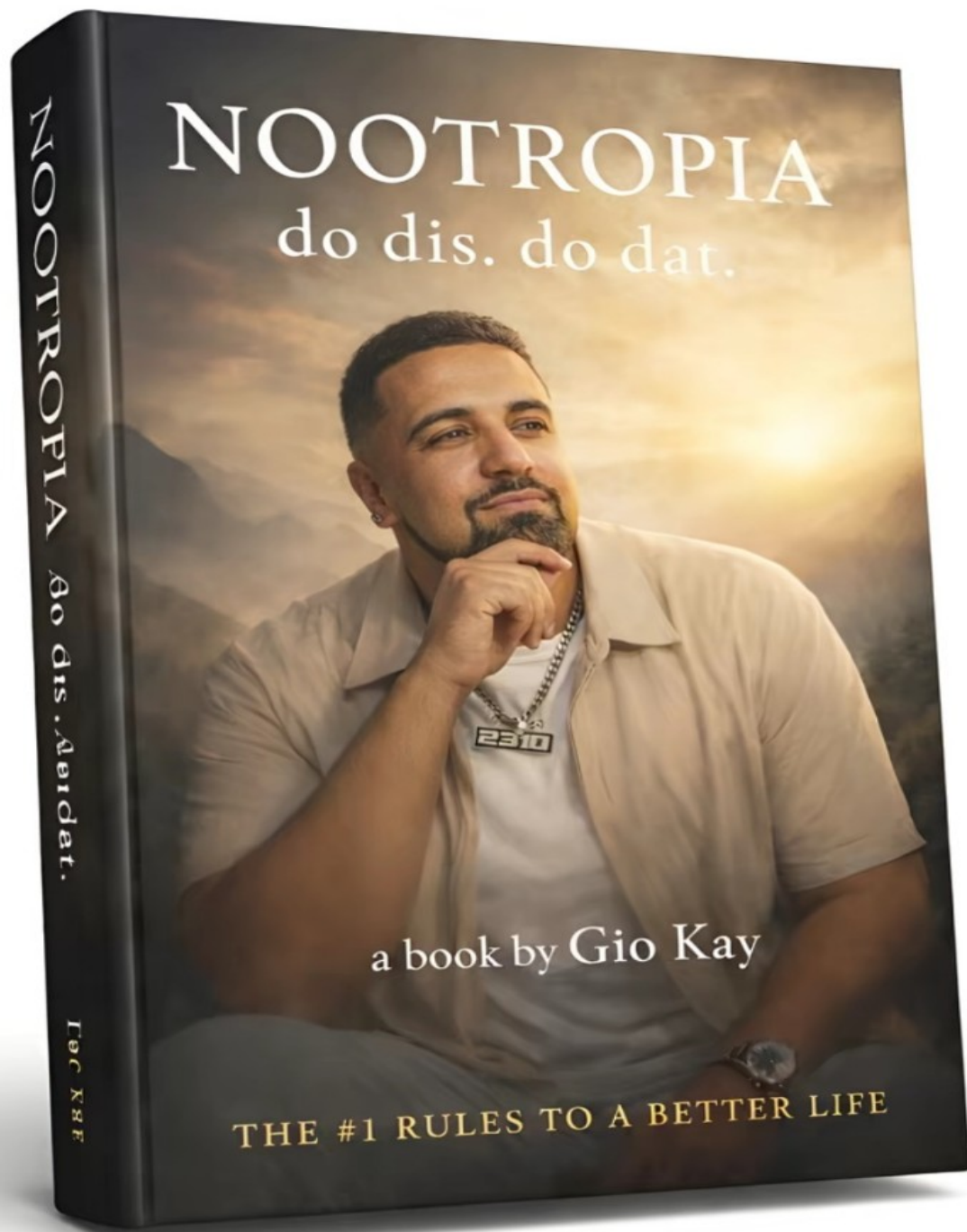


Modern Marketing Strategy must combine the best of both worlds:

Recognize long-term macro trends (e.g., wellness, sustainability, snacking/indulgence, tourism, home cooking)

Selectively engage with their short-lived expressions (e.g., chia, Dubai chocolate, protein, social media-driven behaviors)

What Confucius Teaches Us



«Η αλλαγή ξεκινά
όταν η **νοοτροπία** πάψει
να βλέπει εμπόδια
και
αρχίσει να βλέπει
επιλογές.»