



***SUPER
AWESOME***

**Gaming
the future:
how to make
an impact
with younger
generations**

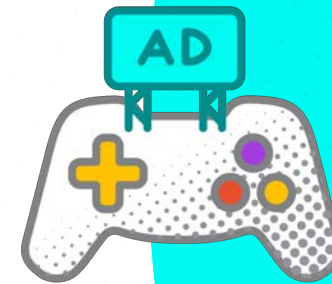


What we set out to learn

With 80% of under-18s¹ actively gaming and Gen Z dedicating 19% of their free time to it (rising to 22% for Gen Alpha¹), it's clear that gaming plays a huge role in the lives of younger audiences. **But how effective is gaming as an advertising medium for reaching them?**

Anzu, the leading intrinsic in-game advertising platform, and **SuperAwesome**, the premier youth-focused advertising marketplace, have joined forces to explore how brands can effectively and safely engage young gamers in an evolving regulatory landscape where compliance and safety are crucial.

Keep reading to learn...



The true impact of in-game advertising on younger audiences.



How these audiences influence others.



Gaming's role in enhancing omnichannel campaigns targeting these influential age groups.

Source: ¹[ExplodingTopics](#)



Where the data came from

This report leverages first-party data from SuperAwesome and Anzu, gathered through various research methods, to deliver comprehensive insights.



Social Listening¹

Analyzing trends and reactions to previous in-game advertising campaigns.

Qualitative Research¹

Qualitative research from 2 foundational studies, including 50 interviews with kids, teens, young adults (and their parents)

Quantitative Surveys¹

Across 5 foundational studies in the UK, France, Germany and the USA. Overall sample of 30,000 kids, teens, young adults ranging from 4 - 24 years old and their parents.

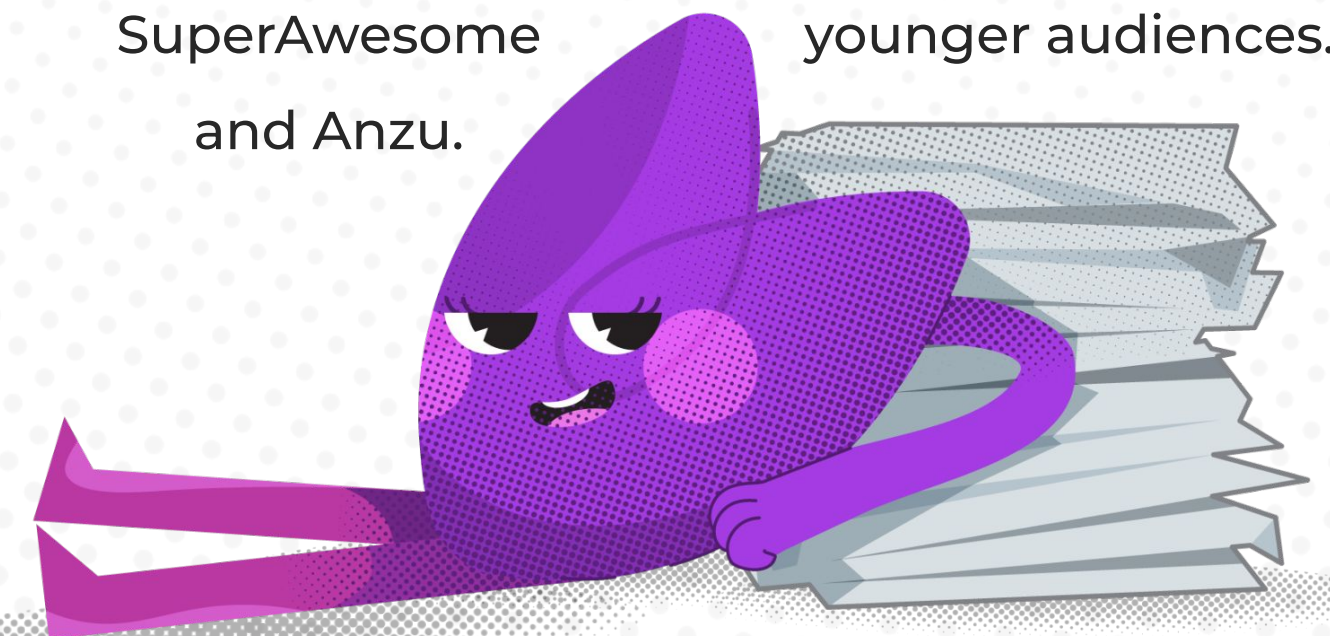
Syndicated Data

Audience insights derived from player data collected by both SuperAwesome and Anzu.

Brand Lift Data²

Analysis of over 80 brand lift studies to identify what works best for younger audiences.

Sources: 1. SuperAwesome data / 2. Anzu data

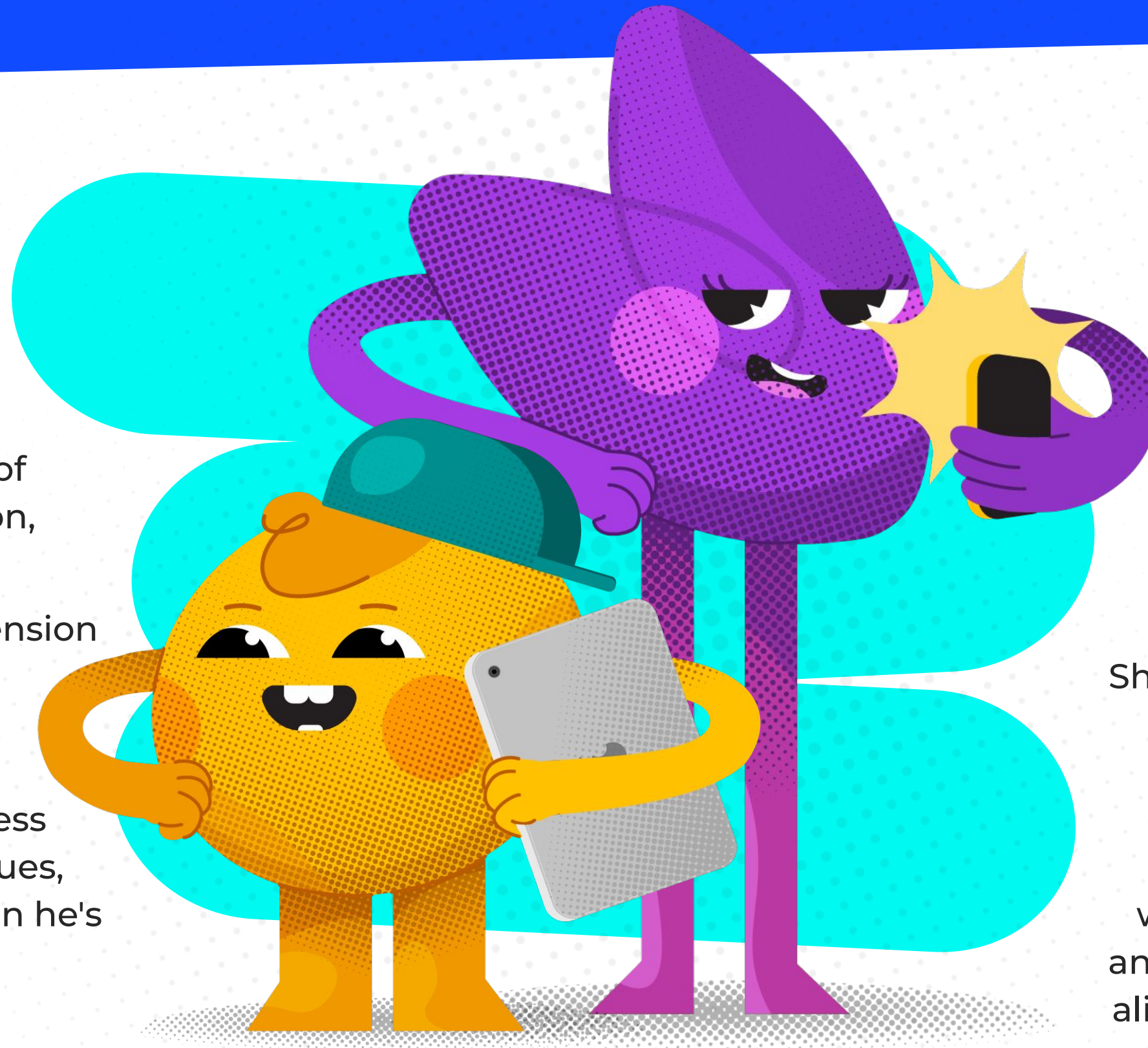


Meet Maddy and Noah

Noah (12) embodies Generation Alpha

Born after 2013, he is part of the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age. For Noah, gaming is more than a hobby — it's his main source of entertainment, social interaction, and learning.

He views technology as an extension of himself, allowing him to navigate virtual worlds as naturally as the physical one. Noah also has a strong awareness of environmental and social issues, thanks to the digital information he's constantly exposed to.

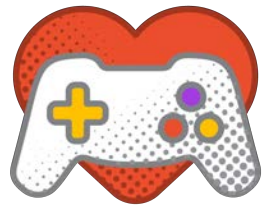


Maddy (21) represents Generation Z

Born between 1997 and 2012, she has grown up in a world shaped by gaming, social media, streaming platforms, and the rise of influencer culture. As a result, Maddy is tech-savvy, socially conscious, and entrepreneurial.

She loves creating digital content, advocating for the causes she believes in, playing with friends online, and engaging with her favorite brands in meaningful ways. Maddy values authenticity and gravitates toward brands that align with her values and lifestyle.

The lowdown



Gaming is central to younger audiences' lives

As new generations emerge, gaming captures more of their time and attention. For Gen Alpha, it is the dominant form of entertainment, and for Gen Z, it shares the top spot with social media.



Younger gamers expect ads in their games

Unlike older generations, who may still view in-game ads skeptically, 75% of young people in the UK and US say ads improve their gaming experience.



Brand loyalties lock at 16 years old

If you haven't reached your audience while they are still shedding and acquiring brands of interest, it will be too late to enter the consideration set.



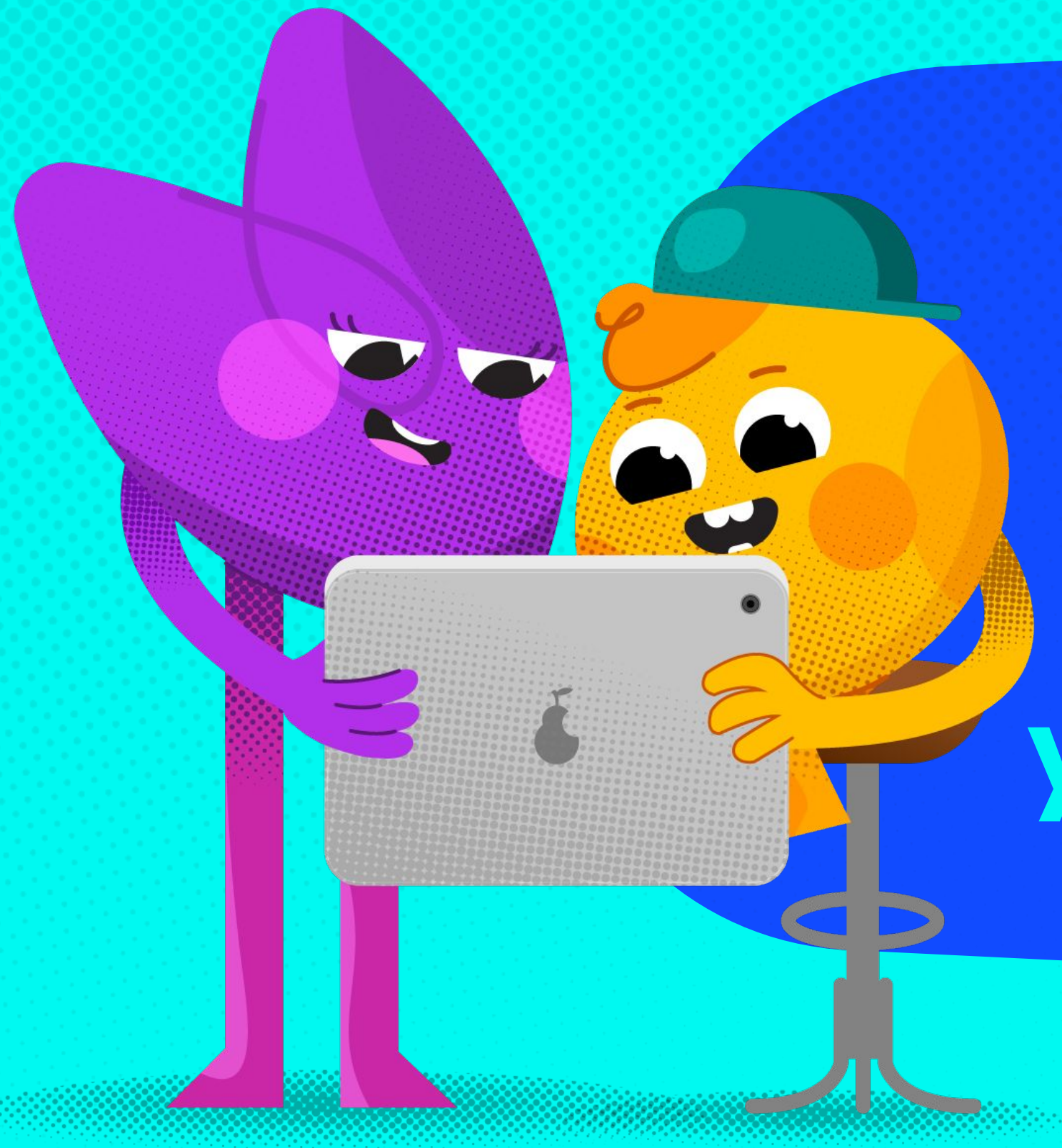
Brands benefit from gaming's 'Halo effect'

55% of under-18s show a strong affinity for branded in-game experiences, effectively recalling the brands they encounter and reporting increased brand favorability following these interactions.



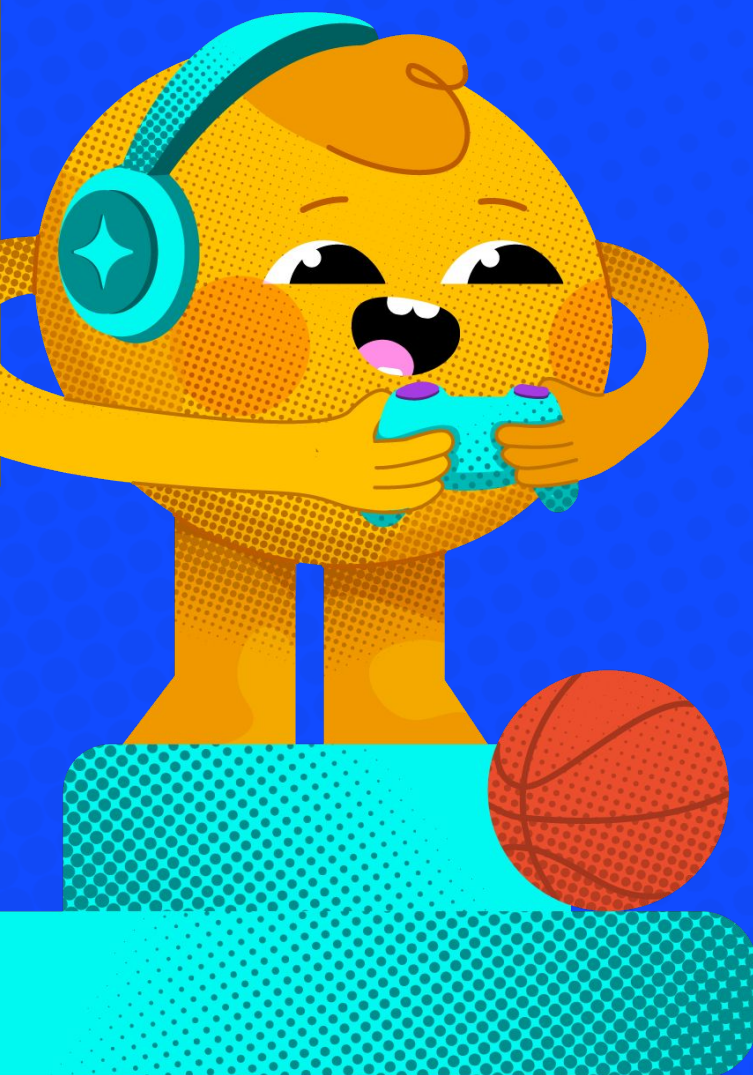
Young gamers are powerful brand advocates

Gen Z gamers are more likely to recommend products they've encountered in games compared to those they've seen on other digital platforms like YouTube, Netflix, Instagram, and TikTok.



Why is gaming
a good place
to **connect with**
younger audiences?

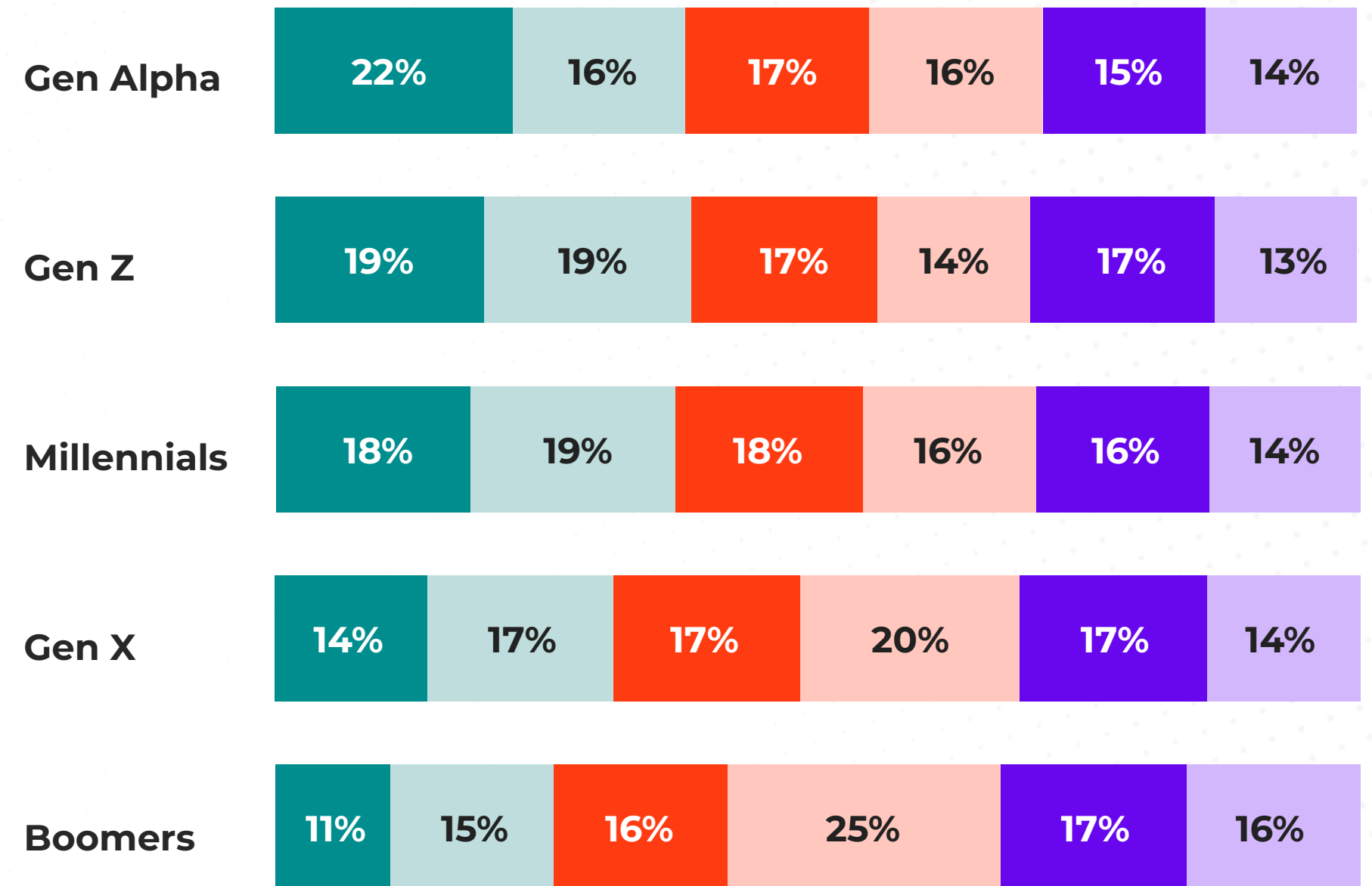
With each new generation, time spent gaming grows



How we spend our spare time is **highly fragmented**; however, it's clear that each new generation is spending more time gaming. To remain relevant, you must **match your marketing budget accordingly** and be aware of just how big the gaming opportunity is, especially for younger audiences.

¹Engaging with video games / gaming content = Playing video games, viewing gaming video content or socializing through / visiting gaming communities

Source: Newzoo Global Gamer Study 2023



% Leisure Time Spent per Week per Entertainment Platform (Outside of Work)

Modern entertainment

- Engaging with video games (content)¹
- Social networks
- Streaming movies / series

Traditional entertainment

- Watching broadcast TV
- Listening to music / radio / podcasts
- Reading

Younger audiences love to game

Gaming is more than just an activity for younger audiences; it's a **vibrant and immersive experience** deeply integrated into their lives. Beyond just playing, they are immersed in their favorite games' storylines, worlds, and communities. Gaming has evolved beyond traditional entertainment mediums, becoming a **central part of their cultural fabric**. It's a place to hang out, learn, build relationships, compete, and engage with a diverse range of media.

55%

of under 18s in the UK, FR & DE say **gaming is their favorite activity**¹

65%

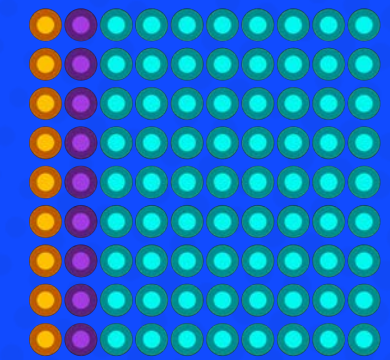
of parents of kids aged 6-9 say they **watch video game streamers** and that increases to 75% of parents of kids aged 10-12¹

90%

of under 18s in the US play video games with **75% of households owning a console**²



On average **under 16s play 11 hours of video games every week**¹



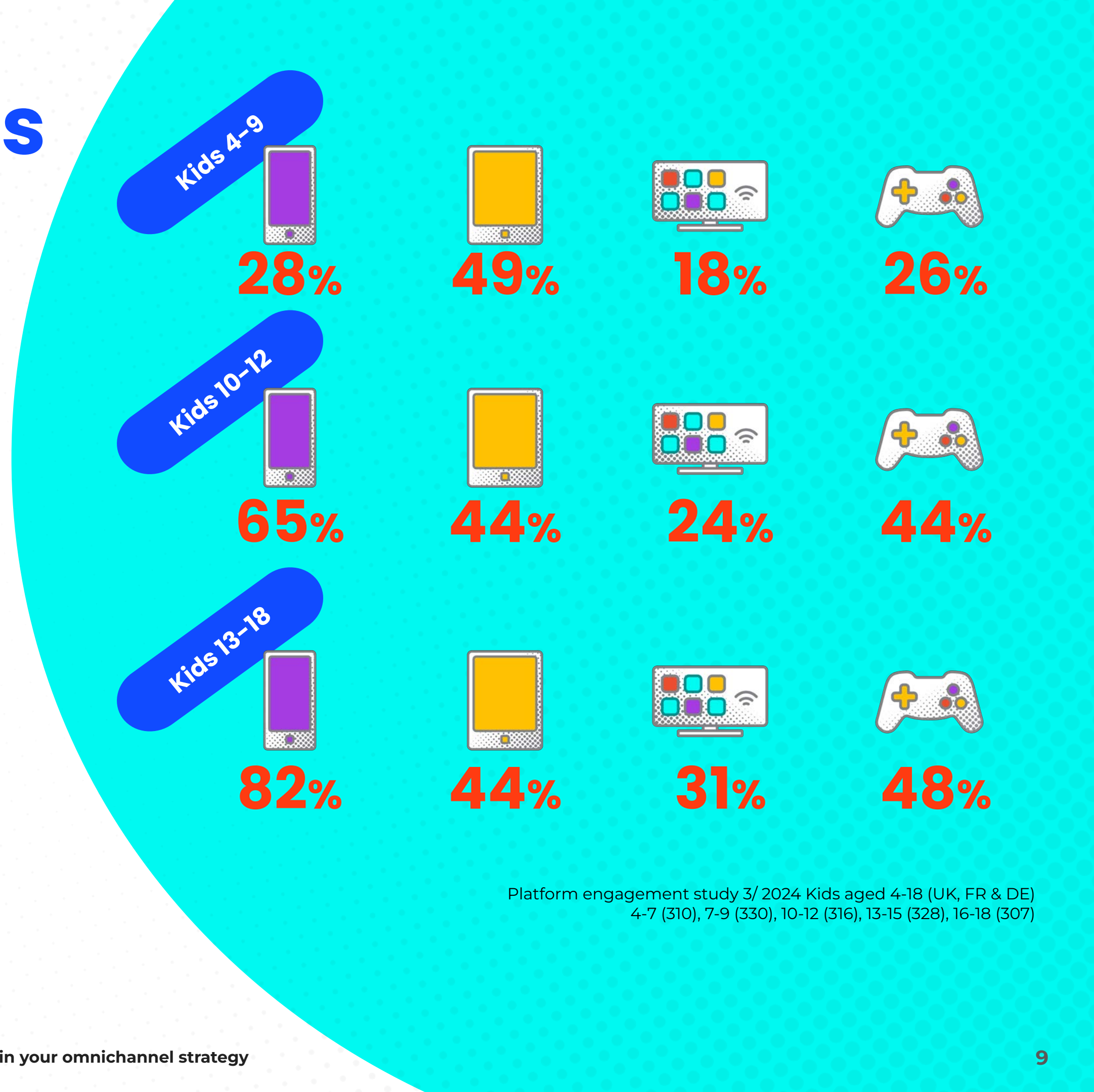
Globally, there are approximately **618 million gamers under the age of 18**, (20% of the total gamer population)³

Source: 1. SuperAwesome data / 2. PubMed / 3. ExplodingTopics

Younger audiences play everywhere

Under 18s are gaming **across every platform**, seamlessly transitioning between mobile, console, and PC based on their where they are, who they're playing with, and what time of day it is.

Younger generations don't confine themselves to a single gaming device, and neither should your strategy if you want to forge meaningful connections. By adopting a **multi-platform approach**, you can engage with younger gamers wherever they play, ensuring you capture **key audience segments** across all their preferred devices.



Platform engagement study 3/ 2024 Kids aged 4-18 (UK, FR & DE)
4-7 (310), 7-9 (330), 10-12 (316), 13-15 (328), 16-18 (307)

Younger generations are more aware and open to in-game ads

Unlike older generations, younger players have grown up with in-game brand sponsorships and ad-funded games that **enhance their playing experience**.

They are accustomed to and receptive to seeing their favorite brands within the games they play. This familiarity presents a **unique opportunity** for your brand to become part of these close-knit gaming communities and **forge early connections** with young players.



75% of young people in the UK and US say ads improve their gaming experience.¹

64% of people aged 18-34 have seen in-game ads, compared to 34% of 45-64s.²

40% of young people in the UK and US say branded content makes games more fun.³

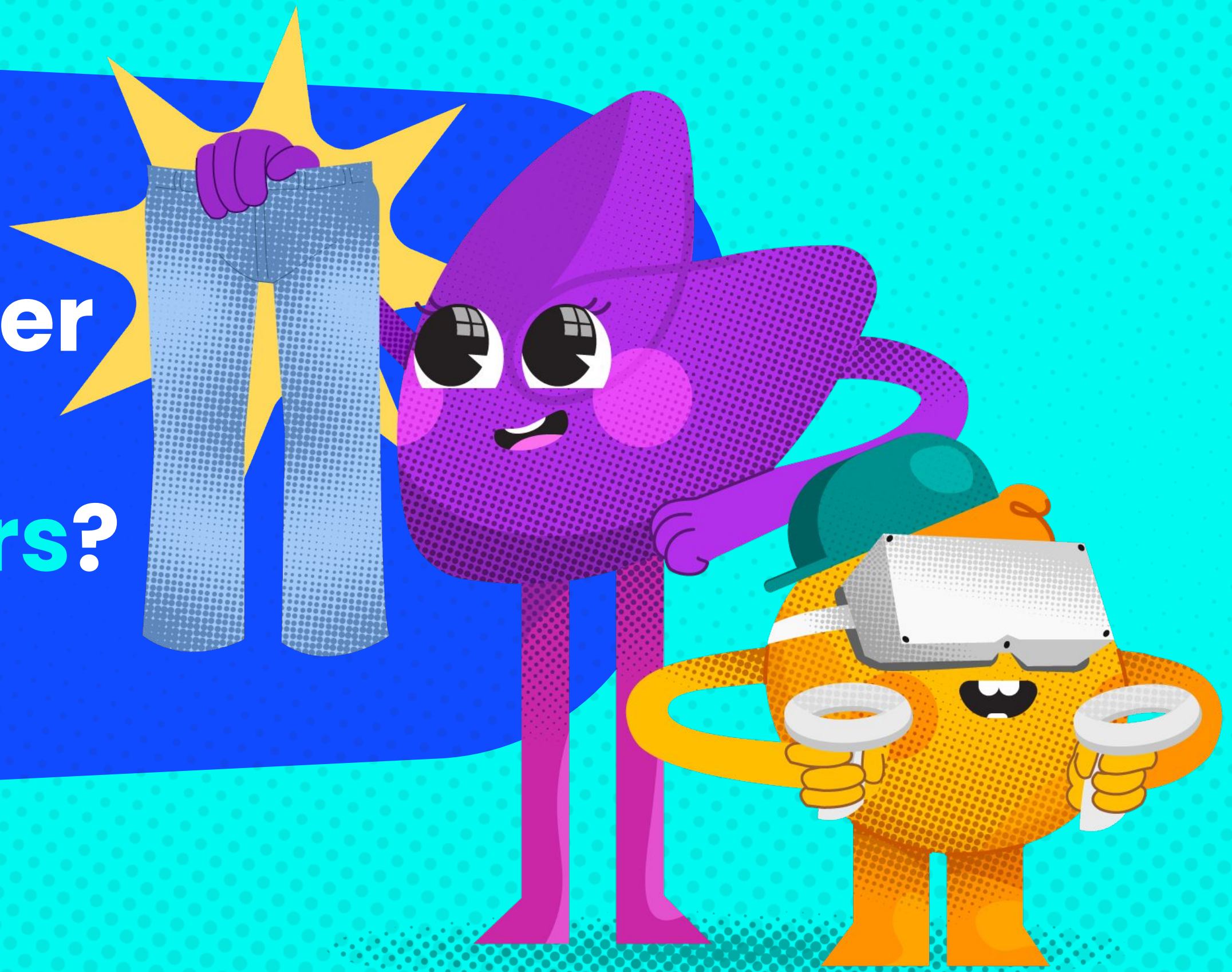
25% of UK and US teens are more likely to notice in-game ads than any other kind of ad.³

Source: 1. SuperAwesome, How brands can connect with young audiences in the metaverse. Ages 6-16

2. Anzu Gamer Survey

3. SuperAwesome's Family Democracy Tracker, Wave 7; A8: Which of the following platforms are you most likely to notice advertising on? US, 13-18 year olds.

How do younger audiences influence others?



Young gamers shape household spending

The following statements reflect insights from parents about their children. The data highlights a crucial trend: **younger audiences wield substantial influence over household decisions and purchasing behaviors.**

Understanding this reveals the opportunity for brands to craft campaigns that resonate with younger audiences and leverage their influence to drive household purchases.

SuperAwesome tracker: Family Democracy Tracker, parent question UK, DE & FR parents of kids aged 4 - 18 (JAN 24)



86%

Say their child's opinions matter when purchasing things for them

82%

Say their child's opinions matter when purchasing things for the family

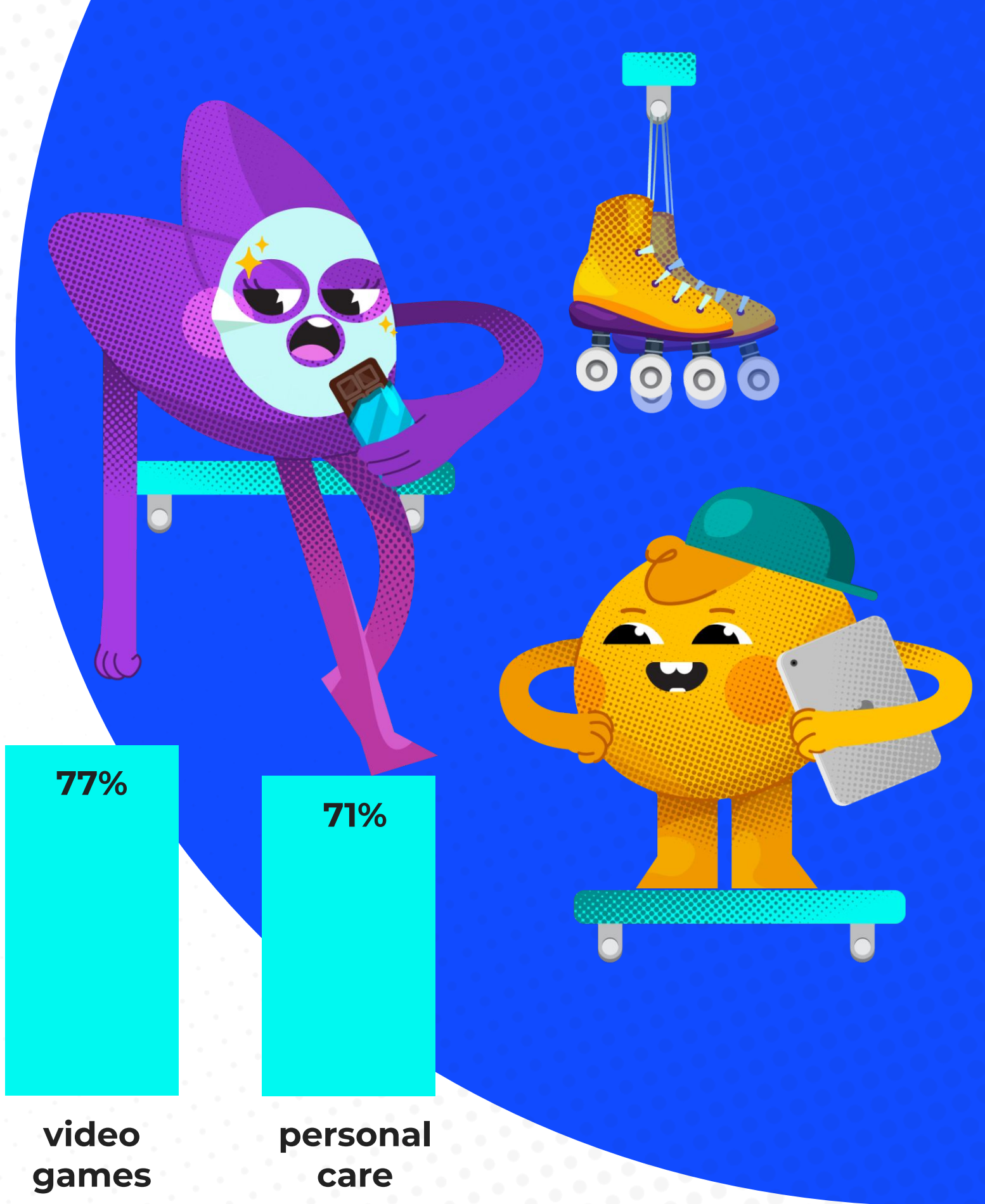
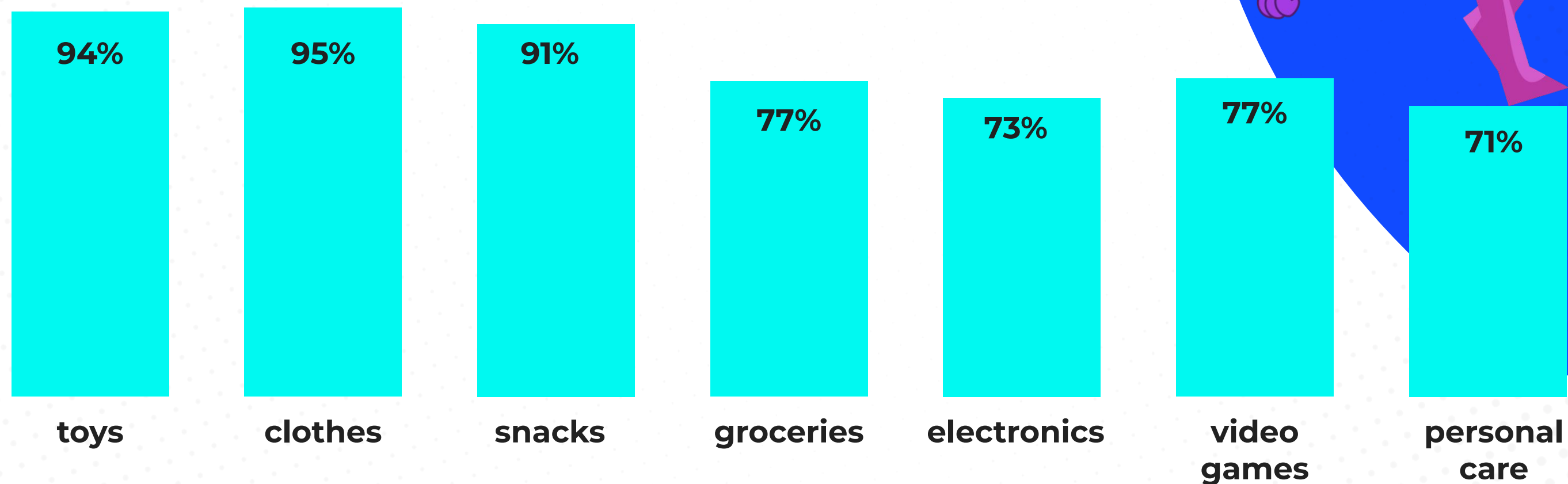
66%

Say they prioritise purchasing things for their children over other expenses

This influence transcends verticals

A closer look reveals that younger audiences are **shaping purchase decisions** across a wide range of product categories, from everyday snacks and groceries to consumer electronics and personal care.

How much are under 18s influencing your purchasing behavior?

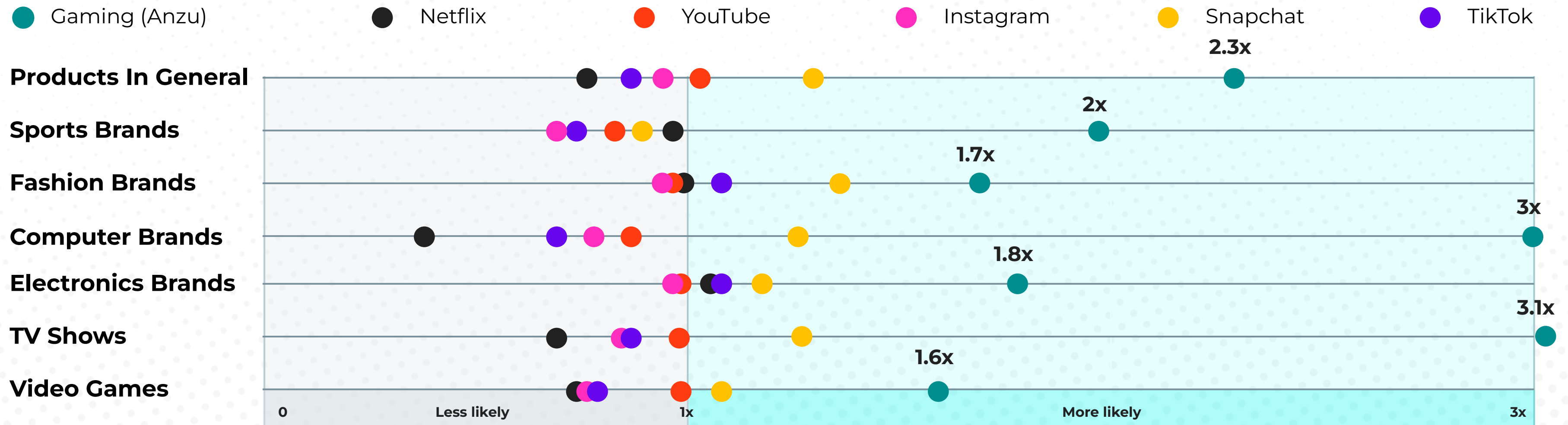


The Family Democracy Tracker B2 product and services for which you consider your child's view (top 3 box x age group x 3) Jan 24 Parents 4 - 18 yo UK, FR & DE

Younger audiences exposed to in-game ads are more likely to influence others

From the below graph, it's clear that across all the major categories, under 18s are much more likely to advise others based on ads they've seen in games over those they've seen across other digital media channels.

How likely are younger audiences to advise others on different categories?



Source: Comscore - Plan Metrix, June 2024, Gen Z audiences



Key insights and evidence

Gaming's 'halo effect' impacts how younger audiences feel about brands

Across all gamer segments, branded experiences within games are **highly impactful**. Young audiences show an affinity for interacting with brands during gameplay, effectively recalling the brands they encounter in-game and reporting **increases in brand affinity** after these interactions. This shows the power of gaming for **driving brand recognition** and fostering **stronger connections** amongst younger audiences.

Source: SuperAwesome Bespoke Research: Platform Engagement Study (2024)
What gaming platforms does your child use?
My child asks for products seen on x gaming platform
SuperAwesome, Leveraging Gaming for Brand Affinity

82%

Memorable Brand

66%

Brand Affinity Uplift

86%

Affinity for Brand Experiences

Gamers under 18

70% of under 18s ask for **products seen on popular gaming platforms**



Campaigns are **more effective** amongst younger audiences

No matter where on the marketing funnel you want to drive impact, gaming is great at **moving younger audiences**. This is especially true for **building brand favorability**, as in-game ads offer a unique opportunity for brands to connect with younger consumers before their brand loyalties are fully established.

Source: Anzu Brand Lift Database, 2021 to 2024. Under 34s compared to those over 35

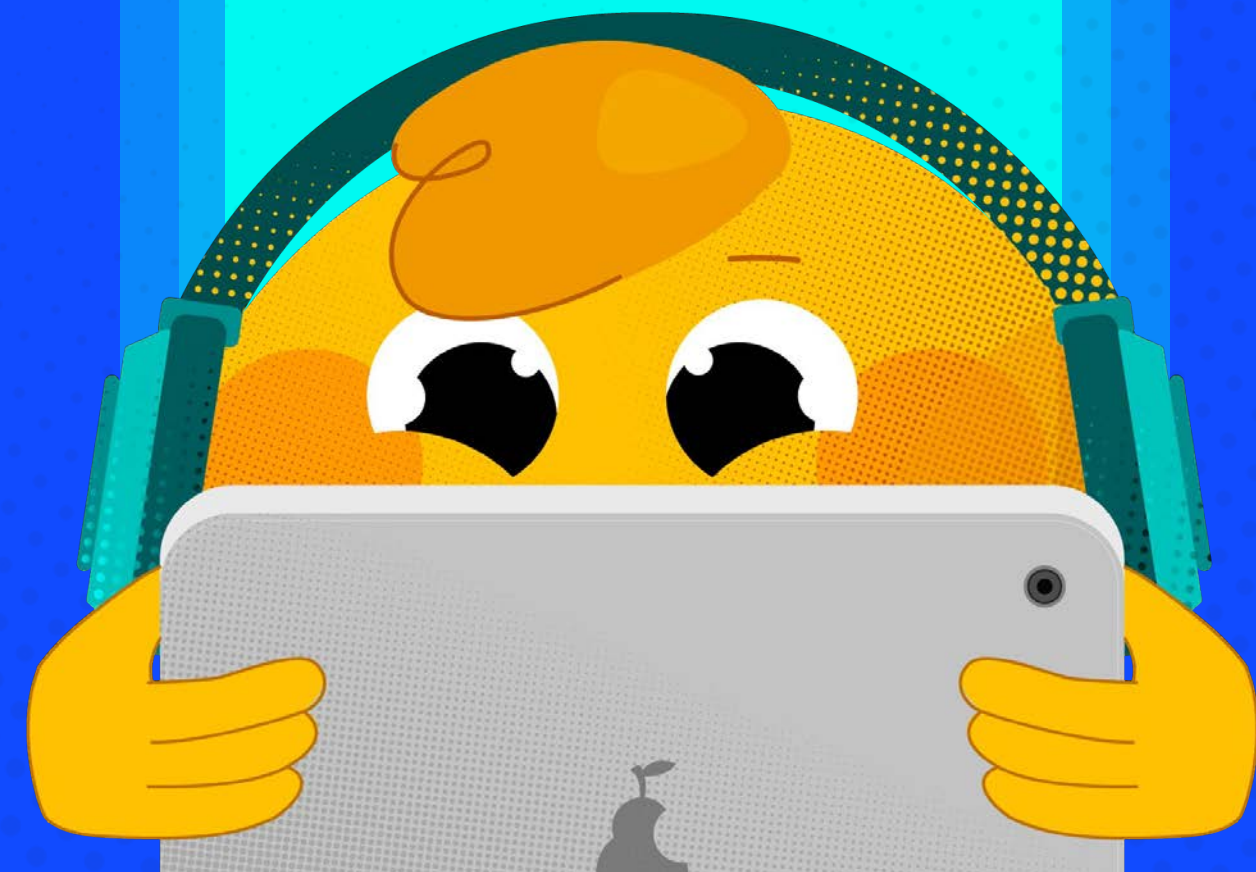
Younger vs older audiences

+1 PT higher for **brand awareness**

+9 PT higher for **brand favorability**

+7 PT higher for **ad recall**

+7 PT higher for **purchase consideration**



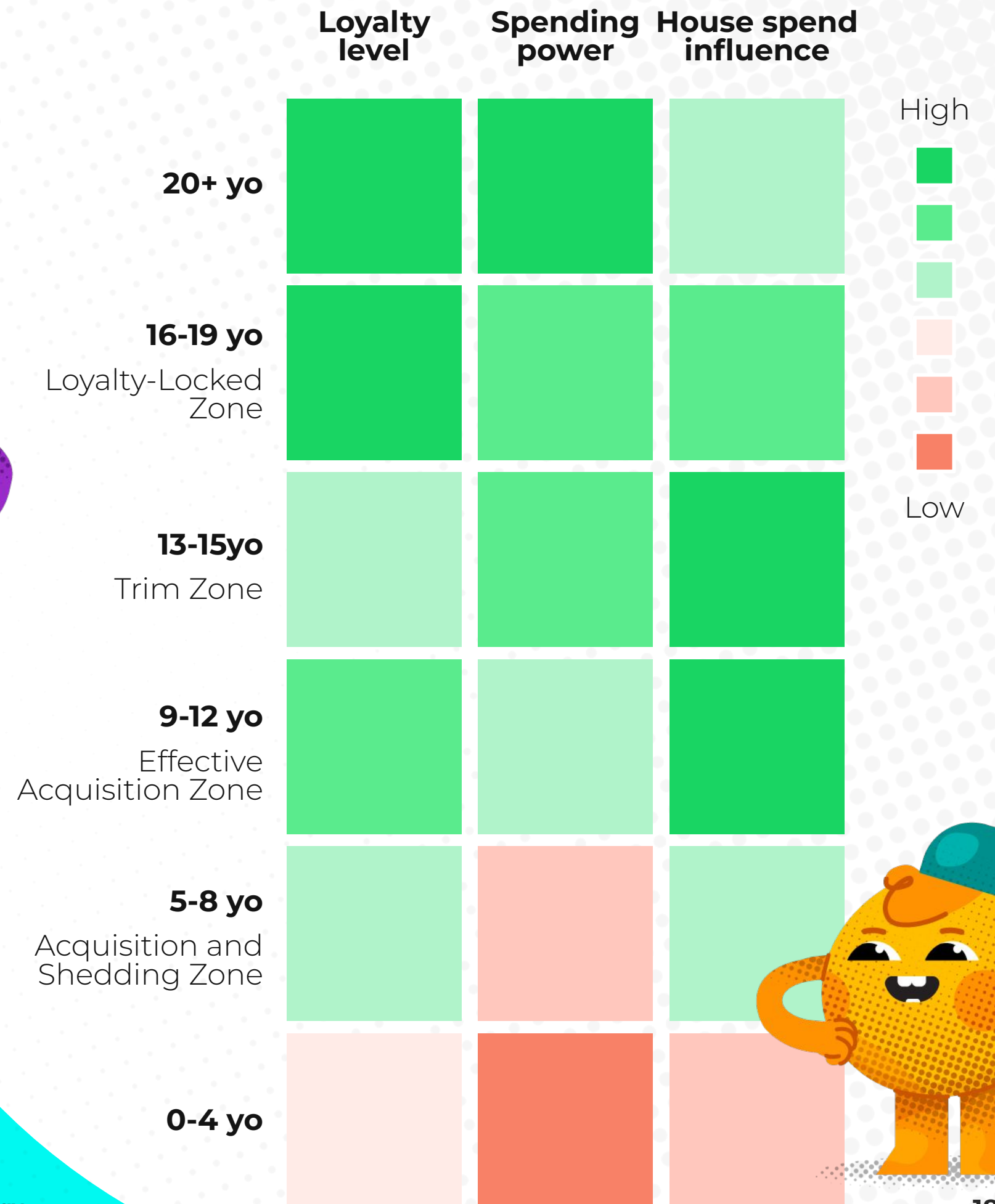
Reaching consumers before their loyalties lock is essential



By ages 16 and above, loyalties lock. If you haven't reached your audience earlier, while they are still shedding and acquiring brands of interest, you will be **too late** to enter the consideration set.

Add to this the cost of acquisition, and the all-important household influence, and the impact of late entry to the **Loyalty Lifecycle** becomes apparent.

Source: 'How kids and Young Teens have raised the stakes for brand loyalty' research by SuperAwesome



Best practices: What to do next?

Step 1:

Match budgets to media attention

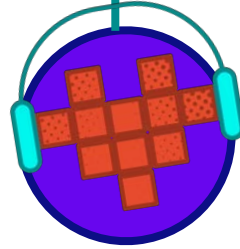
When targeting under-18s, **align your media spend with where their attention is focused.** They are shifting away from traditional channels and spending significantly more time immersed in gaming.



Step 2:

Focus on ad recommendation

Use gaming to **boost ad recommendation among younger audiences.** In your budgeting and creative approach, focus on how your ads can encourage recommendations within this demographic.



Step 3:

Tailor creatives for younger audiences

Collaborate with creative experts to **design game specific content that resonates with under-18s,** with a focus on driving recommendations and engagement.



Step 4:

Measure purchases at the household level

Conduct brand lift studies and track household-level measurement to **assess recommendation success and incremental sales lift** within family units.

Key considerations for advertising to younger audiences

When advertising to younger audiences globally, it's important to consider different regulations and best practices. Focus on these **three key areas**:



To learn more, get **KidAware certified with SuperAwesome**



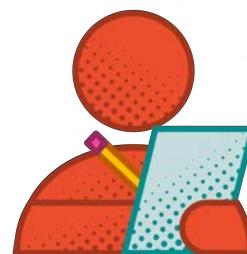
Data Protection Regulations

Global regulations are increasingly restricting the collection of personal data, and will eventually prohibit profiling and online behavioral advertising to under 18s. To effectively engage this audience, companies must adopt contextual advertising solutions.



Responsible Design

Ads should undergo scrutiny to prevent manipulative design or deceptive mechanics that could unfairly influence children in alignment with Age Appropriate Design Codes. This proactive approach ensures transparency, clarity and that all ads and games are designed with children's best interests as the priority.



Self-Regulatory Guidelines on Advertising Content

Ads should be carefully vetted by a team of legally-trained experts to ensure that the content and messaging of ads comply with advertising self-regulatory principles like the Children's Advertising Review Unit and the Advertising Standards Authority. This includes ensuring that ads are free from violence, unsafe environments, disturbing content, or suggestive themes.

Closing Remarks



This research highlights how gaming has evolved into a cultural cornerstone for younger generations, shaping their social currency and identity. It's evident that, to stay relevant, brands must meet these audiences where they are. By leveraging the insights and strategies outlined in this report, brands can confidently take the first step toward meaningful engagement in this space.



Nerissa MacDonald
EVP Global Sales, Anzu



In a time where attention is more fragmented than ever, it's so important to use resources like this report to build a greater understanding of player behaviors and motivations for brands. Generalised tactics don't connect with this audience, and we can see that their influence is extensive. As platforms continue to compete for attention it's vital to work with partners who can activate multi-channel strategies that truly speak to Gen A and Gen Z in an appropriate way.



Jessica Watson
Head of Innovation & Delivery,
SuperAwesome

Closing Remarks



This research proves what many suspected already, that gaming is rapidly becoming the dominant form of entertainment for younger demographics.

As a result, we'll continue to see a sustained growth and refinement in gaming first approaches, which I think is cause for celebration. It is a space that, for me, is synonymous with creativity and innovation, delivering great results for clients whilst being creatively rewarding for media teams to work on.



Charles Crotty
Head of Innovation, Digitas



Currently, gaming is a 'nice to have' for brands in the same way social was ten years ago. No one wants to be last to the party when digital experiences, for many of us, include gaming in one way or another.

There is huge scope for brands and advertisers to find their space and obtain the benefits outlined in this research, and brands leaning in early will be the ones winning for longer.



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get started?
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