



CULTURED

**HOW BRANDS CAN MAKE THEIR MARK IN CULTURE
AND WHY IT MATTERS**

Why “Cultured” Matters

How is culture defined today, and what are the pathways to building an iconic brand through cultural connection – and do consumers care?

This comprehensive approach allowed us to capture diverse perspectives and dig deeper into critical questions:

- How do consumers define and perceive culture?
- Do they see brands as relevant in shaping it?
- And most critically, should brands play a role in shaping culture—and if so, do they have a responsibility to do so?

The findings were resounding: 75% of consumers believe that brands should always remain connected to culture, offering marketers a clear mandate to embrace their cultural role.



Objectives

Our mission was to close this gap and provide that roadmap, in addition to:

- Driving earned attention in the marketplace by elevating M Booth's visibility and influence.
- Solidifying our position as the leading agency with a deep understanding of culture and its evolving dynamics.
- Catalyzing innovation through the development of cutting-edge methodologies and tools that enhance the quality and effectiveness of our work.



SOME HELPFUL DEFINITIONS FOR MARKETERS + COMMUNICATORS

FROM CORES TO AESTHETICS, MOVEMENTS AND MORE, THERE ARE A HOST OF BUZZWORDS CONNECTED TO CULTURE TODAY. CULTURE IS NEVER ONE THING. THERE ARE MANY LAYERS AND JET STREAMS THAT COME TOGETHER TO FORM A CULTURAL COLLECTIVE. IT'S A SYSTEM," says Adrianna G. Bevilaqua, Chief Creative Officer at M Booth.

RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

From Common Ground to Cultural Framework

- 1 RELATE TO CULTURE:** Brands that relate to culture show up in spaces that are familiar and embraced by their audiences. They can entertain, engage and even amplify this culture to ensure they are top of mind with their consumers and seen as like-minded.
- 2 SHAPE CULTURE:** Brands shape culture when their point of view provides consumers with a new way to think and behave. This can show up as a way to challenge social norms or even destigmatize behaviors that hold their consumers back.
- 3 CATALYZE CULTURE:** Brands that catalyze culture inspire new ways of thinking about their products or their category. They expand the purview of their brand or company with key audiences.
- 4 IMPACT CULTURE:** Brands that impact culture have a positive impact on society resulting in a positive impact for the brand's relationship with its key stakeholders.

STRATEGY

Empowering Brands by Listening to Consumers

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CULTURAL ARCHETYPES™

In 2001 Carol S. Pearson and Margaret Mark wrote *The Hero and The Outlaw: Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes* and introduced a 12-archetype framework for brands based on Carl Jung's 12 Ancestral Archetypes.

Inspired by this framework and our own research in cultural connection, we've identified **8 Cultural Archetypes for brands interested in making their mark on culture.**

“OUR PROPRIETARY STUDY, “CULTURED,” BOTH CHALLENGED AND CONFIRMED OUR HYPOTHESES AROUND BRANDS AND CULTURE, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE DATA EXPANDED OUR THINKING ABOUT THE ROLES BRANDS CAN PLAY IN CULTURE BY BRINGING MORE RIGOR AND SPECIFICITY TO THE PRACTICE.

BONNIE ULMAN MILLER, CHIEF RESEARCH & INSIGHTS OFFICER AT M BOOTH

There is nowhere brands can't go

From social norms to social issues, to politics, food culture, fashion, technology, media and more

The Framework

8 Cultural Archetypes

RELATE TO CULTURE:



CULTURAL CHASER

These brands are here to participate in culture and weave in and out of cultural heat moments. They show up to enhance the spaces where they play and this may come to life via event experiences.



CULTURAL COMMENTATOR

These brands take on low-risk topics like how you roll toilet paper or squeeze your ketchup. They avoid controversy by playing in safe spaces related to pop culture and benign preferences.

CATALYZE CULTURE:



CULTURAL INNOVATOR

These brands are innovating their product offering at the pace of culture and are able to marry benefits to how consumers want to live today. Our research shows that technology and the ability to innovate matters to consumers and is a place where they believe brands can have a critical role.



CULTURAL TRAIL BLAZER

These brands eclipse their category and take their brands into spaces in culture where their competitors dare not go. Think beauty brands that go full on comedy or beverage brands that help consumers plan for the afterlife.

SHAPE CULTURE:



CULTURAL LIBERATOR

These brands dialogue around taboo topics and destigmatize issues to create more energy and excitement for their category. They are not afraid to go there and help influence and introduce a new set of norms. We know through our research that consumers are very open to brands playing a role to shape new norms.



CULTURAL REBEL

These brands catalyze trends instead of following trends. They galvanize subcultures and design for their most influential stakeholders.

IMPACT CULTURE:



CULTURAL CRITIC

These brands are taking a stance on an issue in culture that is relevant to their product and offering and forming a values-based opinion. They look at their category and are not afraid to be critical and highlight what needs to be elevated or improved.



CULTURAL ACTIVIST

These brands take on social and political topics that are likely to create cultural waves. These brands are often going out of the lane of their products and services into high-risk topics and do not back down and retract. They do not shy away from politics or appearing out of their lane on issues. Although this space may feel risky, we know that almost half of consumers are open to brands taking on social causes and even getting political.

The Framework

8 Cultural Archetypes



The Impact

- ▶ “Cultured” has been downloaded nearly **hundreds of times** – generating notable organic traction, including downloads by journalists at **The Washington Post** and **eMarketer**, which led to unprompted coverage. The social content has garnered 100,000s if thousands of touch points sparking client and new business inquiries.
- ▶ The research has sparked significant interest: we have conducted personalized 1:1 trainings with several clients, while numerous others have accessed the report independently, leading to several new business inquiries, including **Delta Airlines**. Downloads span a wide array of influential companies, including **American Express, P&G, Kimberly-Clark, Heineken, Campari, Arla Foods, ConAgra, Campbell’s, Paramount, TikTok, Hanna Andersson, Gallo, Diageo, Kenvue, Meta**, and more.
- ▶ Higher education institutions like **Cornell University, Brown University**, and **Texas Christian University** have also accessed the report. M Booth chief creative officer and Cultured co-author Adrianna G. Bevilaqua presented the findings at **Wake Forest University** and a **Columbia University** symposium on creativity.
- ▶ Received **downloads from other best in class agencies:** Leo Burnett, MSL, tbwa, Publicis, Zeno, Allison, Archetype, Mischief, Octagon, TrendyMinds, McKinney and more.



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Leading in Culture, Credibly



believe that brands should be connected to culture at all times.

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Step 1 Culture Audit: We leverage 2,000 data sources to benchmark a brand's cultural resonance and visibility against the competition. We look beyond the mainstream, identifying high-growth opportunities within fan communities, adjacent subcultures and emerging spaces that traditional social listening often overlooks.

Step 2 Culture Mark Identification: Targeted surveys capture consumer perceptions regarding awareness, authenticity, and strategic positioning. Using **AI and Natural Language Processing**, coupled with human analysis, brands are benchmarked against our **Six As** framework—*Audacity, Approach, Agility, Appeal, Adoption, and Arc*—to generate a definitive **Culture Mark** that identifies their current position in culture.

Step 3 Strategic Blueprint: We translate insights into a roadmap that sharpens your brand's cultural presence. This blueprint defines a differentiated position and identifies culture sparks—the specific niches where your brand can show up authentically. By refining your voice to connect credibly with the zeitgeist, we bridge the gap between your current standing and



What's Next?

- Next, we're developing CultureMark, a powerful tool designed to help brands navigate and thrive in culture. This tool will provide diagnostics to help brands assess their current position and create strategic prescriptions for engaging more effectively.
- In a time when DEI is under attack, culture serves as a crucial reminder to focus on building enduring relationships with key stakeholders rather than reacting to fleeting trends. Our research shows that 75% of people want brands to stay consistently engaged in culture, making it essential for brands to understand the diverse elements that shape our world.
- Inclusivity isn't just a value—it's a critical foundation for success in our industry. CultureMark will empower brands to align with these expectations and create meaningful, lasting connections with their audiences.

“IT'S CRITICAL FOR BRANDS TO APPROACH THE CULTURE WITH A GENUINE DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE, TO COLLABORATE, AND TO COMMITMENT. DON'T BE A CULTURE VULTURE. CONTRIBUTE TO THE CULTURE TO FIND WAYS TO HELP GIVE BACK.

LAMAR DAWSON, SIRIUSXM'S TIKTOK RADIO HOST AND POP CULTURE EXPERT

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ONLY THE BOLD IDEAS
ONLY THE BOLD WORK
ONLY THE BOLD PEOPLE

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