EXCLUSIBLE

CRAFTING AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

MONETIZATION, BRAND LOYALTY, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN ROBLOX

PART 2/3

Image: NARS Color Quest by Supersocial on Roblox.

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second part of our Roblox Report. In this section, we will delve into three critical areas of the platform: Monetization, Brand Loyalty, and Ethical Considerations.

Roblox has experienced unprecedented growth over the past few years, making it the go-to platform for brands seeking to enter the Metaverse and engage their followers in a more immersive experience.

Our comprehensive report will provide you with valuable insights and strategies for establishing your brand presence within Roblox.

Source: Roblox.

CRAFTING AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

Images from https://corp.roblox.com

Manuel Bronstein, Chief Product Officer Roblox - 2023 Roblox Digital Expressions Report

"AUTHENTIC SELF-EXPRESSION IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS A UNIVERSAL CONNECTOR FOR PEOPLE: WHEN WE SHARE WHO WE TRULY ARE, WE MAKE GENUINE CONNECTION POSSIBLE. AS WE BUILD OUR PLATFORM AND PRODUCTS FOR IMMERSIVE COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION, ENSURING THAT PEOPLE HAVE THE BROADEST SET OF OPPORTUNITIES TO AUTHENTICALLY EXPRESS THEMSELVES VIA THEIR DIGITAL IDENTITY IS FRONT AND CENTER FOR US. WE WANT EVERYONE TO BE WHOEVER THEY WANT TO BE, AND CREATE AVATARS—AND DIGITAL FASHION—THEY LOVE."

CRAFTING AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

As the previous examples illustrate, a crucial element of successfully entering Roblox as a brand is managing brand identity and translating it into the virtual world. However, before even going there, brands should carefully consider the type of involvement they want to get into with Roblox.

CREATING VIRTUAL ITEMS

Many brands start with simply creating custom merchandise and listing for sale or for free on the Roblox marketplace. In combination with an awareness campaign outside of Roblox, this can serve to gauge interest and allow fans to express their love for a brand while playing. Partnerships like the one between Jailbreak developer Badimo (another popular game on the platform) and NASCAR racing led to the inclusion of NASCAR vehicles in the game - a natural fit (Lee, 2021).

BARBIE DREAMHOUSE TYCOON UGC ITEMS

Source: Barbie on Roblox.

CRAFTING AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

TIME-LIMITED GAME EXPERIENCE

When brands are ready to commit more time and efforts to Roblox, the next activation is to launch a game, which can be open either permanently, or time-limited. The latter has been popular and successful for many brands, such as Fenty Beauty or NARS. This type of campaign requires brands to create their own branded space inside of Roblox and can be used as an extension of ongoing real-life events or run separately.

Gucci, for example, hosted a fashion event in real life and then used Roblox to extend it (Hirschmiller et al., 2023). Similarly, Chipotle's Maze was an addition to the costume dining experience in their stores. Creating weeks-long experiences is more accessible for brands still investigating Roblox as a medium and feeds into a sense of exclusivity and potentially higher demand around key dates.

Source: Gucci Town on Roblox.

CRAFTING AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

Source: Roblox.

PERMANENT GAME EXPERIENCE

The bigger lift but also the most rewarding way to have a presence on Roblox is when brands build their own persistent worlds in Roblox. Instead of thinking of Roblox as a one-off activation, companies like Gucci, Tommy Hilfiger, Alo Yoga, or Walmart, have set their footprint firmly in the ecosystem with their long-running game.
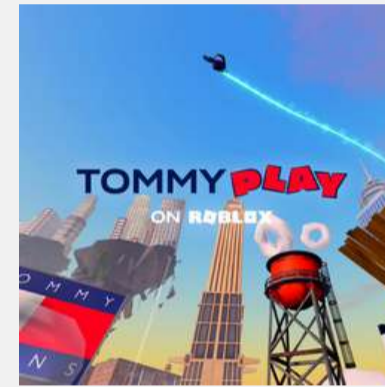
Creating such environments can be challenging as it requires consistent effort. Brands must keep their space updated with fresh and exciting elements to keep their audience engaged. It's similar to running a social media account. It's more than just setting it up and sharing 5 pictures; consistent engagement and fresh content keep fans coming and engaged.

RANKING BY LIFE-TIME VISITS FOR BRANDED EXPERIENCES

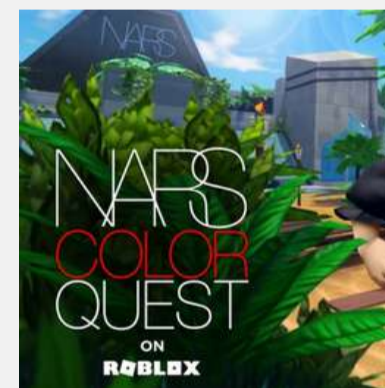## VANS WORLD
106M VISITS

ALO SANCTUARY
100M VISITS

TWICE SQUARE
72M VISITS

SUNSILK CITY
56M VISITS

TOMMY PLAY
48M VISITS

GUCCI ANCORA
48M VISITS

NARS COLOR QUEST
42M VISITS

SPOTIFY ISLAND
38M VISITS

Source: Bloxmetrics.

CRAFTING AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

"A big part of the learning curve for brands is really understanding that, if you are building your own dedicated world inside the platform, you need to think about longevity — you need to think about how we are building and continuing to invest in that world. Because if you just do it one time, one-off, you're probably better off experimenting within an existing game world."

Yonatan Raz-Fridman, CEO of the Roblox developer Supersocial. (Lee, 2022)

Regardless of the level of involvement, there are a few things that brands should and shouldn't do when entering Roblox. While there is no one-size-fits-all-all formula for brands to enter the Metaverse, below is a list of things to aid brands in making the right choices.

DOs

UNDERSTAND THE AUDIENCE AND CULTURE

The audience on Roblox is pretty young, comprised mostly of young Gen Z, and Gen Alpha (67% of Roblox users are under 16), which is, for many brands, a rather new segment that might never have bought their products before (think luxury brands). Additionally, brands should spend some time on Roblox to gain insights into the culture of Roblox, which derives from what it enables users to do. Roblox's culture is very diverse, empowering, and inclusive. The multiplayer element further enhances a shared culture, shaping users' attitudes.
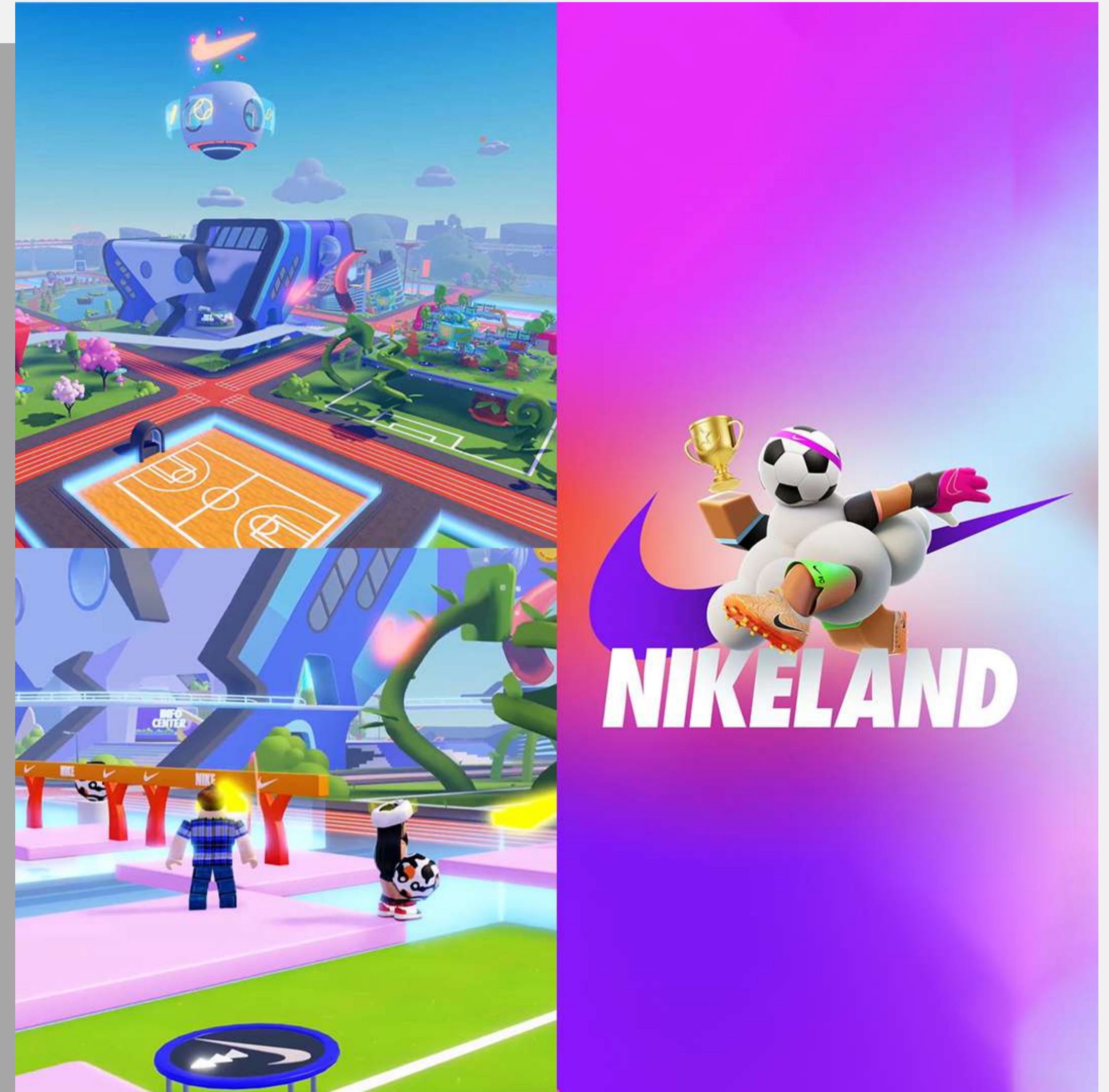
Source: Nikeland on Roblox.

DOs

CREATE GENUINE EXPERIENCES

Authenticity is key in Roblox. Players can tell when brands are not being their real selves in the metaverse. Therefore, it's important to align your brand identity with Roblox and create a cohesive experience that aligns with key values. There are a variety of ways to achieve that: NARS recreated some of their textures in the game, and Paris Hilton's team made sure to reflect her quirky, bubbly personality inside of her Slivingland experience.

Source: NARS Sweet Rush by Supersocial on Roblox.

DOs

EMBRACE CREATIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Roblox's audience is very tuned in and creative. On a platform where everyone can build games and design their Avatars, brands should follow suit and encourage creativity and individual expression. Another topic that resonates with the Gen Z audience is sustainability. All items on Roblox do not create the usual waste associated with fashion - additionally, fashion companies like H&M have used Roblox to encourage their audience to recycle old garments.

Source: H&M Loooptopia on Roblox.

DOs

BUILD DIVERSE EXPERIENCES

Build diverse experiences: Depending on the degree of involvement, if a brand builds an entire world, the focus should be on offering a diverse set of experiences. The most successful brand experiences combine gamification, mini-games, avatars, digital items, multiplayer elements, competition, and social interactions to keep users engaged and entertained.

Source: Amazon's Holiday Dash on Roblox.

DOs

WORK WITH AN EXPERIENCED STUDIO OR DEVELOPER

Roblox is a new frontier for traditional dev companies. All successful brand experiences leverage the expertise of developer studios that have established a track record in building games on Roblox. Stay creative and consistent, especially when building a longer-lasting presence. It is also essential to run new activations and add fresh elements in order to keep users engaged and interested.

Exclusible is an experienced Roblox studio, and we can help with your project from design to strategy.

Source: Twice Square on Roblox.

DON'Ts

OVERLY COMMERCIALIZE

Roblox users are very sensitive to advertising and being sold to. Consequently, brands have to carefully deliberate how they can keep a balance between providing value and marketing. Ultimately, players will choose the entertaining, fun experiences over those where they feel like being only targeted. Another thing to keep in mind is pricing when trying to sell items. 100 Robux for a child who has no income and needs to ask a parent for permission is a lot. Overcharging for an item signals being out of touch with the community - and high prices are only justified when the item lives up to it.

UNDERESTIMATE THE METAVERSE

While coverage of the metaverse comes and goes, Roblox is here to stay - its user base growing alongside it. It's important to consider the importance of the metaverse for one's marketing strategy and allocate sufficient resources to continue maintaining the experience.

DISREGARD COMMUNITY INPUT

Roblox, more than other multiplayer platforms, is driven by its community. Brands need to ensure that they take community input seriously and make changes as necessary. Otherwise, they might quickly lose their audience and get negative rating.

DON'Ts

BE BORING

Users on Roblox have a variety of experiences and items to choose from. However, if an experience is deemed boring by users, it will quickly be downvoted and avoided by others. Brands can ensure their experiences are engaging by incorporating interactive elements, rewards, and regular content updates. Social elements, such as collaboration and interaction, can also make an experience more entertaining for users.

FORGET TO PROMOTE

Your aim is to expand your audience on Roblox, keep in mind that many of these players are also active on various social media platforms. If your campaign goes unnoticed, it won't generate the desired buzz. Therefore, it is important to promote your Roblox experience through various tactics such as sponsoring it on Roblox's discovery page, influencer marketing, participation in Discord communities, creating immersive ads (advertising space in other Roblox games), portals, among others. Roblox offers all the necessary tools to increase the visibility of your experience.

DOs & DON'Ts

Overall, authenticity is a core component of successfully establishing a brand in Roblox. Others include building in line with Roblox's culture, tapping into its creativity, and being careful with commercialization. Players use Roblox to have fun, challenge themselves, build, and interact. Not for their online shopping. That's why brands that focus on building meaningful connections with their community will outperform those that are just in it for a quick advertising gig.

Source: Spotify Island on Roblox.

MONETIZATION AND
BRAND LOYALTY
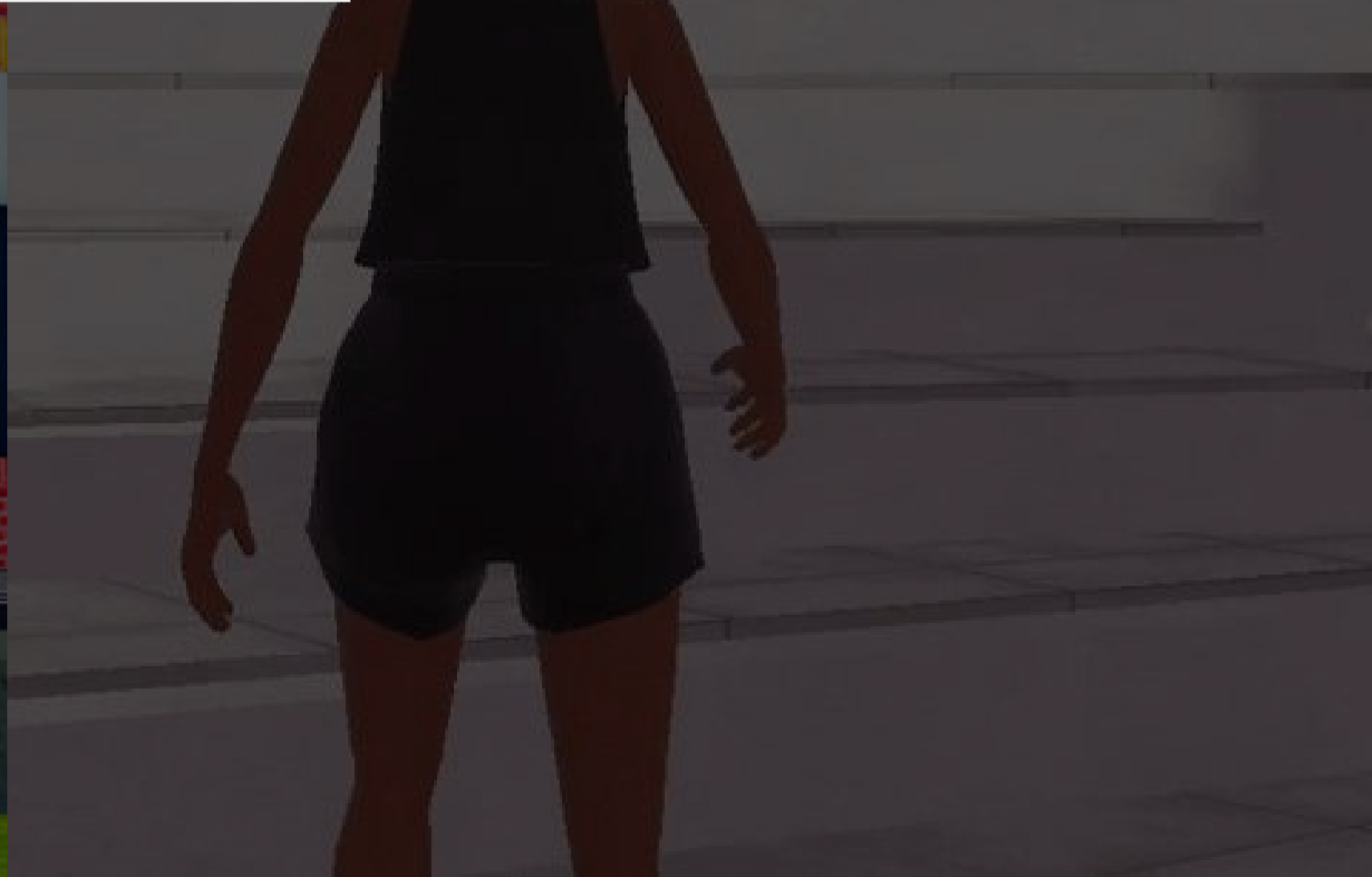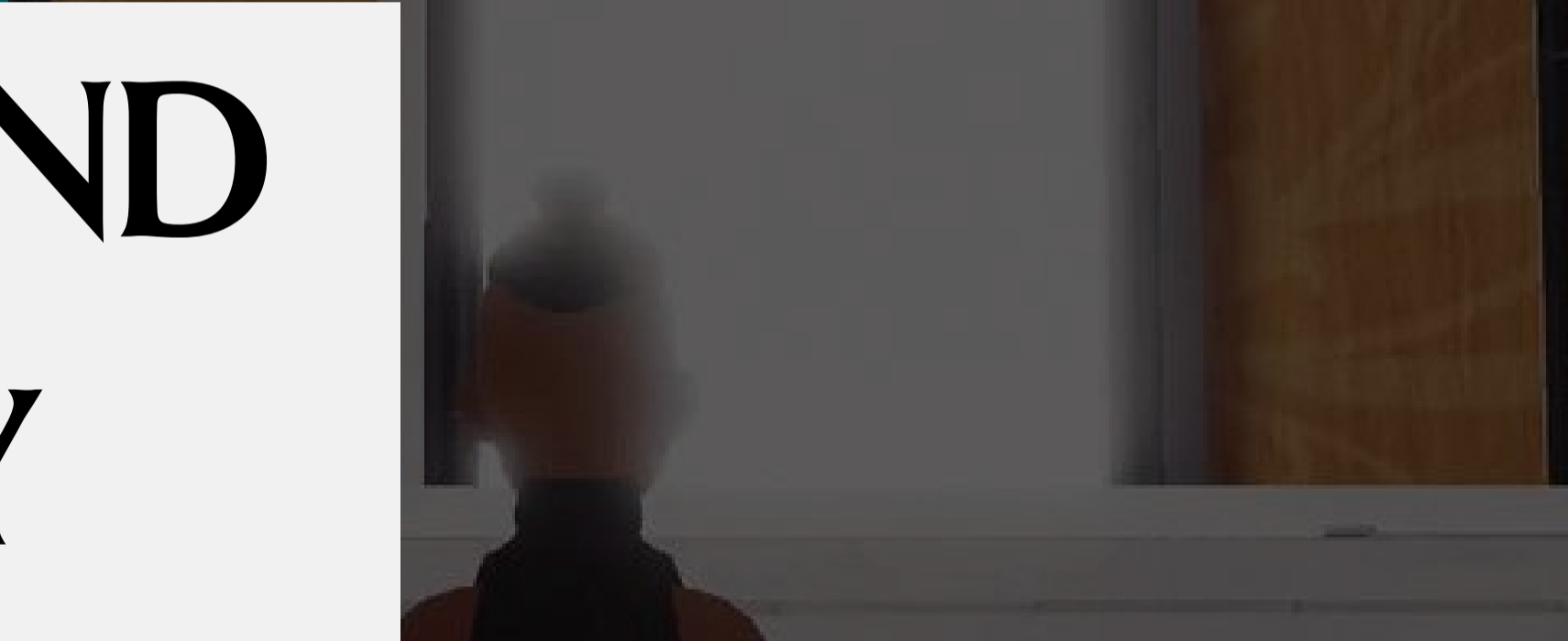
MONETIZATION

In the Roblox eco-system, the internal currency is called Robux. Spending Robux is the way to acquire a variety of items and enhance a user's experience.

Brands will earn Robux when users spend them to buy the items that the brand sells either within its own game experience, or directly on the Roblox marketplace.

It creates an additional revenue stream for brands, which will be able to convert their Robux for a fiat currency of their choice.

MONETIZATION

TAPPING INTO UGC

UGC stands for user-generated content and describe items that brands and any user of Roblox can create and either sell or distribute for free to the rest of the users. It is up to the brands to set the price at which they want to sell each item. Brand will earn Robux and Roblox will take a 30% commission on each transaction happening within the brand's game experience. If the transaction happens on the Roblox marketplace, Roblox will take a 70% commission.

Virtual items include cosmetics, functional powerups, game passes, loot boxes, and access passes. It's worth noting that developers need to have at least 30,000 Robux earned before they can withdraw funds.

However, instead of straight-up selling UGC, brands can also start by offering them for free to drive interest and engagement. A popular tactic is to offer UGC to players for going through challenges and investing time in the game.

To monetize players' desire to achieve the game's goal, experiences might offer users the choice between unlocking a certain item using their Robux or investing time.

When offering free UGCs, brands should be aware that Roblox will charge a fee to do so. Prices vary based on the type of item, but generally range between 10 - 50 Robux / piece (0.1 to 0.5 euros). This should be accounted for when doing any budgeting.

Source: VANS World on Roblox.

MONETIZATION

AVATARS ENABLE PEOPLE TO EMBRACE THEIR UNIQUENESS

62% OF PLAYERS
CARE "A LOT" THAT THEIR AVATAR LOOKS GOOD TO THEM

30% OF PLAYERS
CARE ABOUT THEIR AVATAR BEING UNIQUE

37% OF PLAYERS
CARE "A LOT" THAT IT LOOKS GOOD TO OTHERS

31% OF PLAYERS
CARE ABOUT IT BEING ATTRACTIVE/GOOD LOOKING

36% OF PLAYERS
BELIEVE THEY ARE JUDGED LESS ON THEIR LOOKS IN THE METAVERSE

36% OF PLAYERS
SAY EXPRESSING THEMSELVES IN IMMERSIVE SPACES VIA THEIR AVATAR FEELS BETTER

18% OF PLAYERS
BELIEVE THEY ARE JUDGED LESS ON THEIR LOOKS IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD

16% OF PLAYERS
FEELS BETTER EXPRESSING THEMSELVES IN 2D SOCIAL MEDIA, POSTING IRL PHOTOS

MONETIZATION

CONSUMERS SEEK EXCLUSIVITY: LIMITED-EDITION WARES

Roblox launched the ability for its community, including brands, to offer free or paid Limiteds in the Roblox Marketplace, and earn from resales of those exclusive items. Since launch, community-created Limiteds are resold for more than their original cost, and many items get acquired very quickly. Gucci Ancora Experience is an example of this phenomenon, where all three Gucci Ancora limited-edition items sold out within one hour to eight hours of users solving the challenges in the brand's new immersive neighborhood where art and fashion come together.

30,000 ITEMS
GUCCI ANCORA ICE CREAM CONE SOLD OUT WITHIN EIGHT HOURS OF USERS SOLVING THE CHALLENGES.

20,000 ITEMS
GUCCI ANCORA HAT SOLD OUT WITHIN APPROXIMATELY FOUR HOURS.

10,000 ITEMS
GUCCI ANCORA HAIR DISAPPEARED INTO PEOPLE'S VIRTUAL CLOSETS IN UNDER ONE HOUR.

MONETIZATION

DRIVE REAL-WORLD PURCHASES

Brands like Chipotle have used Roblox as an additional avenue to distribute discount codes. The lucky first visitors got their food entirely for free, while others could still order with a discount. This strategy allowed them to bridge Roblox and the real world, contributing to hitting one of their highest sales days during their activation.

Another example was Forever 21. The retailer launched in Roblox with its "Forever 2 Shop city," where users could manage digital stores and compete to be the highest-performing store. Throughout, players could buy some of the items like apparel, makeup, and accessories. In addition to that, various items were also available for purchase physically on their partner page, creating another connection between the digital and physical worlds (Walk, 2022).

Source: Forever 21 Shop City on Roblox.

BUILDING BRAND LOYALTY

The Metaverse is a great place for brands to build loyalty. Research suggests that simply incorporating gaming and metaverse elements into existing communities increases loyalty significantly (Jeong & Kim, 2022). Roblox is no exception, as it allows more rich, immersive interactions with potential audiences. Engagement on Roblox isn't rivaled by any other platform (On average, a Roblox user spends 78 hours per month playing, 3 hours more than on Youtube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Netflix combined).

BUILDING BRAND LOYALTY THROUGH IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Games in Roblox are amongst the rare channels where brands benefit from such a long attention span from users. This provides a unique opportunity to immerse them into a brand's experience, values, and history. Through interactive gameplay, brands can increase retention of their experience and gain exposure as well as awareness. Users will come to associate their positive impressions from the game with the brand, laying the foundations for brand love and converting them into paying customers in the future.

And even if they do not immediately purchase anything, Roblox users still share their favorite experiences well beyond the metaverse on TikTok and other social media platforms, lending themselves to virality. Gaming is a new medium for brands to write their history and build community to increase brand loyalty.
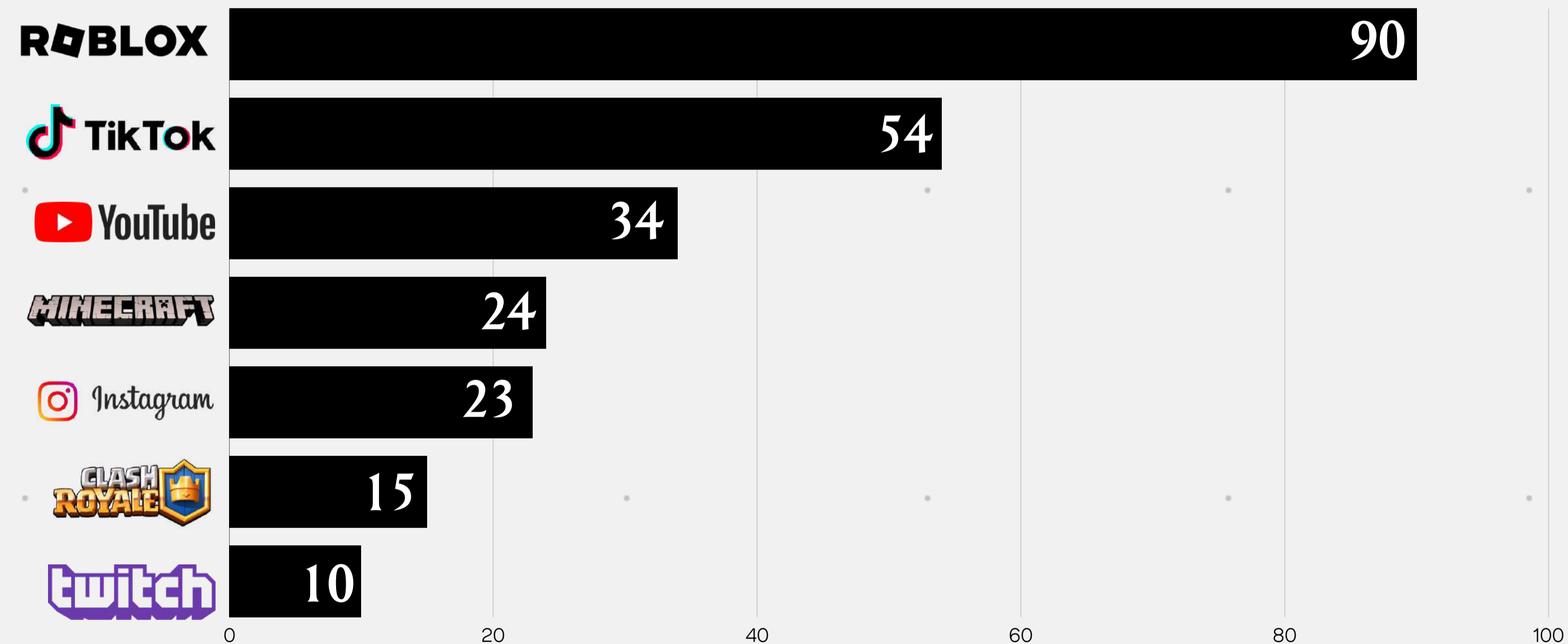

Source: Tommy Play on Roblox.

ROBLOX IS THE BEST MEDIA FOR YOUNG GENERATION

AVERAGE TIME SPENT PER MONTH

Source: GEEIQ, September 2023

WHERE DO GEN Z SPEND THEIR ATTENTION? (AVERAGE HOURS PER MONTH)

Platform	Hours
ROBLOX	90
TikTok	54
YouTube	34
MINECRAFT	24
Instagram	23
CLASH ROYALE	15
twitch	10

0   20   40   60   80   100

ROBLOX
AVERAGE DAILY ENGAGEMENT

3 HOURS
PER USER PER DAY

BUILDING BRAND LOYALTY

WORD OF MOUTH

If experiences are well thought through and hit a nerve, such as the Chipotle Burrito Builder, they lend themselves to word of mouth. Even though Chipotle ran out of discount vouchers for users in the first 30 minutes of its campaign, people continued visiting as they heard about it from friends. The leaderboard highlighted the players rolling the most burritos, and polling of players on Twitter further increased the brand's reach, cementing the buzz around it and benefiting the brand way beyond the activation period.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

While fans of brands on Social Media remain in silos, on Roblox, anyone going through the experience at the same time can chat with each other and interact. This offers brands the opportunity to go beyond a one-way relationship towards having engaged conversations between their fans and the brand.

Source: Roblox.

BUILDING BRAND LOYALTY

NARS Cosmetics, for example, turned their CEO into the host of the experience and crafted a character after him, which gave users insights into the brand's founding story and created more of a personal bond between users and the brand.

By creating a sense of belonging among their audience, users are more likely to feel attached to the brand, leading to increased loyalty.

Additionally, brands can leverage user-generated content (UGC) within Roblox to encourage community interaction. This could involve user-generated fan art, videos, or custom in-game content related to the brand. Recognizing and rewarding the most engaging user-generated content can further strengthen the sense of community and brand loyalty.

In summary, Roblox is the perfect platform for brands to build on existing strategies to increase loyalty. However, when interacting on the platform, the age of their audience can pose some special challenges, as we'll explore in the next section.
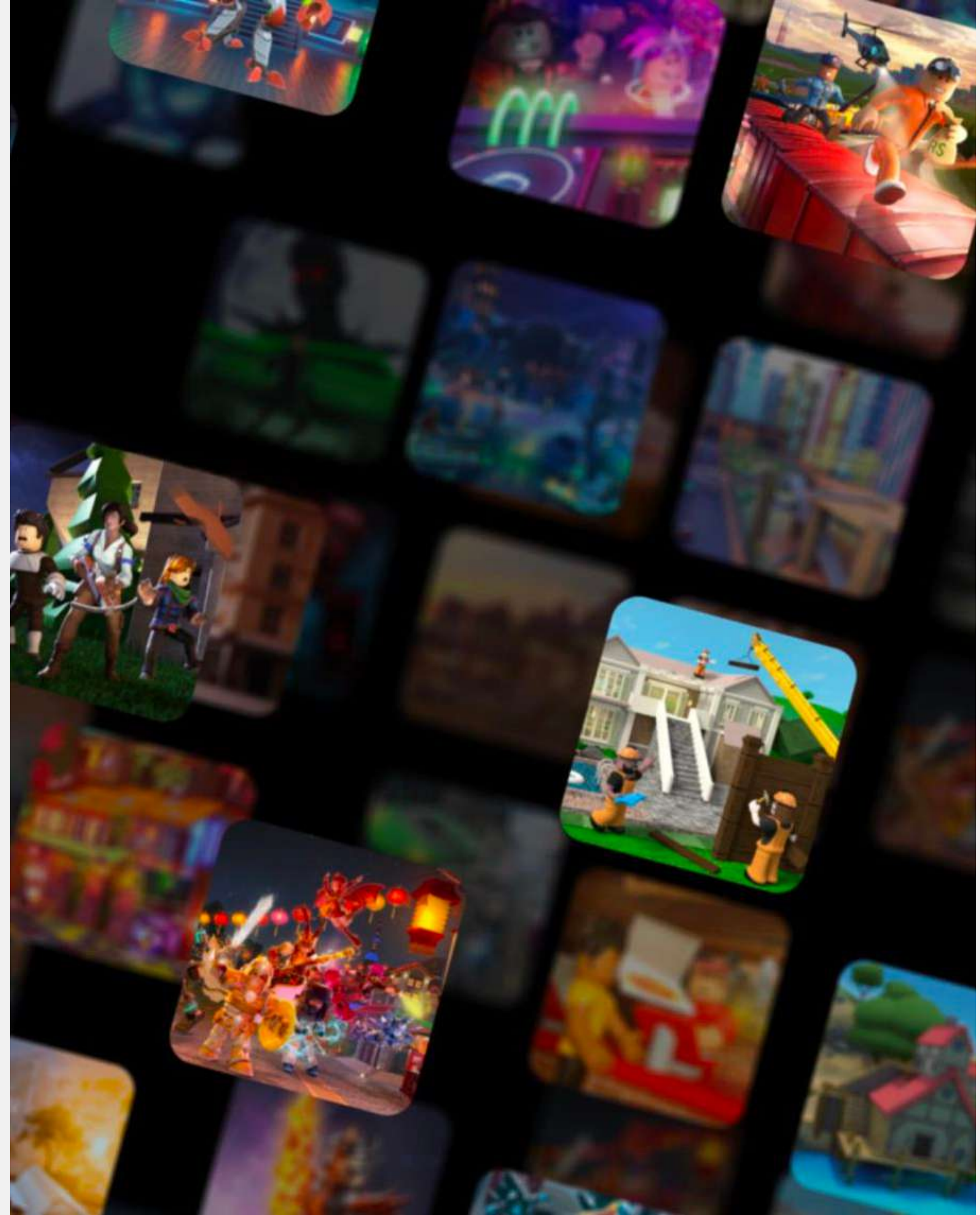
NAVIGATING REGULATORY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

OVERVIEW

Roblox's user base is young, which creates potential problems for brands trying to advertise to them. While the lines blur between what's advertisement and what is a branded experience, there are some ethical considerations brands should take into account when deciding how to set their experience up.

ROBLOX USERS AGE DISTRIBUTION

25+
14.4%

Under 9
25.8%

17 to 24
16.5%

13 to 16
13.4%

9 to 12
29.9%
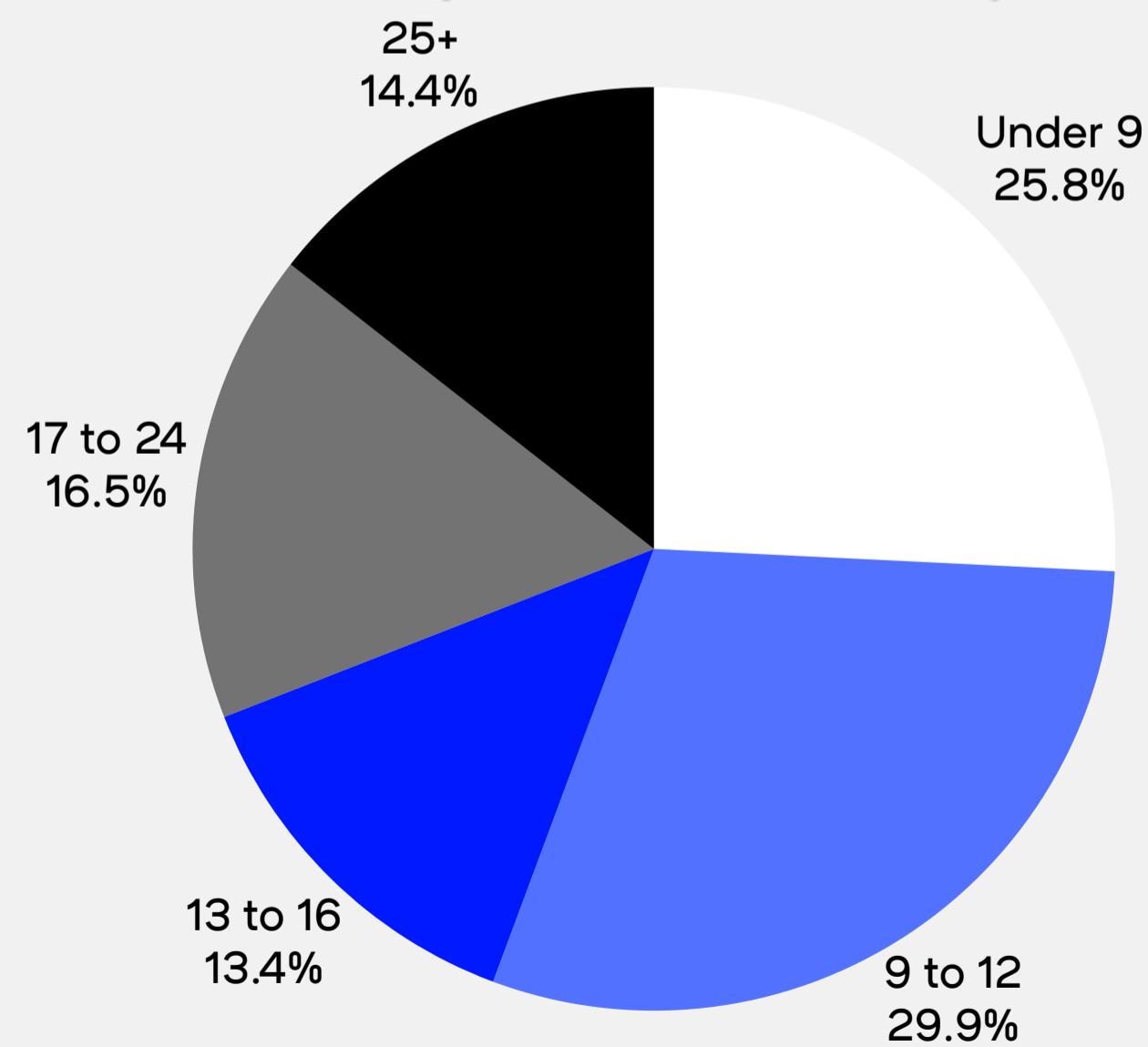
ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN

Marketing Ethics is an important topic, and it's great to see that there is a growing awareness about the ethical issues surrounding advertising to children. It is important to ensure that the balance of power between the marketer and the audience is not exploited and that children are not taken advantage of.(McGee and Heubusch, 1997)

Research suggests children under the age of 9 may not fully comprehend persuasive intent, making advertising to them questionable. Advertisers should focus on creating informative and appropriate marketing messages for this age group, which can help build a positive relationship between them and advertisers.
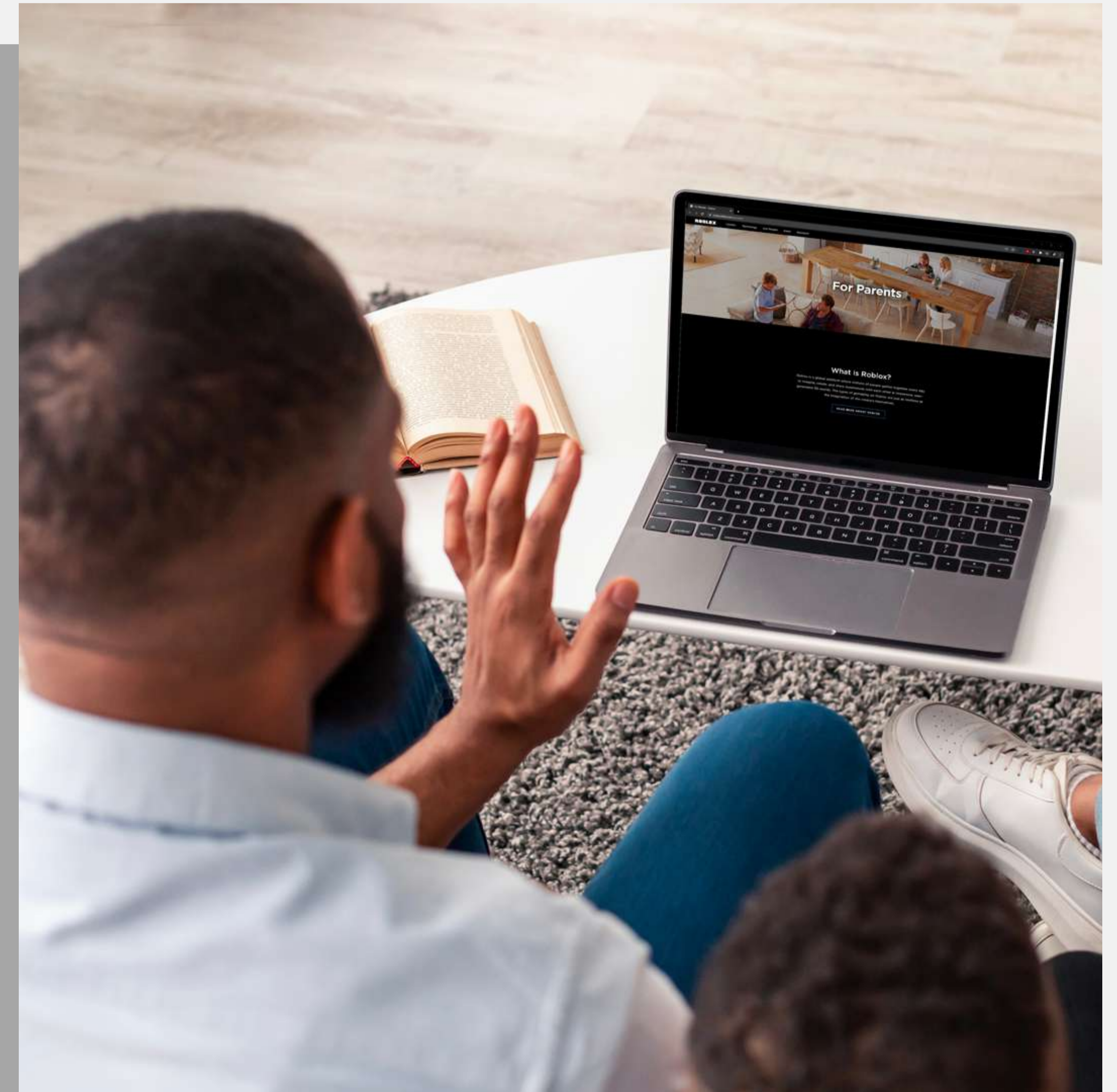
REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Frameworks and the degree to which advertising is restricted differ by country. Norway and Canada, for example, have banned advertising to children under the age of 12 on broadband completely. in the US, COPPA establishes that advertisers cannot market to children under 13. (Newman & Ritchie, n.d.)

The majority of national advertising codes in the EEA area are enforced by self-regulatory bodies and based on the International Chamber of Commerce's Advertising and Marketing Communications Code. (International Chamber of Commerce, 2018)

This code highlights that special care should be taken when marketing to kids. Article 18 of the code recommends that any advertising "should not undermine positive social behavior, lifestyle, and attitudes." (International Chamber of Commerce, 2018)

Another area to consider for brands is the online privacy of children. In the US, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act specifies how data from children can be used, collected, and shared. When building inside Roblox, Brands have to take Roblox's internal terms of use, community, and advertising standards into account.

ROBLOX'S INTERNAL GUIDELINES AND RULES

Brands will have to comply with Roblox's Terms of Use, which specify the type of experiences they can launch, how to monetize, and general fee structures.

In general, developers are not allowed to show advertising to any user under the age of 13. This means that only age-verified users can be targeted with direct ads. When it comes to creating ads, brands are encouraged to act with integrity and be transparent. It is however possible for a brand to open a game for an audience below 13, if that game is considered "content" instead of "advertising". Unfortunately, Roblox refuses to provide a clear definition of what makes the distinction between content and advertising.

It is also forbidden to direct users off of the Roblox platform. It is however possible to go around this rule, as see in the Gucci Town experience.

Roblox also allows Brands to limit access to their experiences by age (below 13 or below 17).

THESE GUIDELINES INCLUDE

ZERO TOLERANCE
FOR CHILD ENDANGERMENT, TERRORISM, VIOLENCE, THREATS, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION

INSTANT BANNING
FOR DISCRIMINATION, HATE SPEECH, AND HARMFUL BEHAVIOR

PROHIBITING
POLITICAL CONTENT, INCLUDING PARTIES, OFFICIALS, AND INFLAMMATORY TOPICS

RESTRICTIONS ON THE ROBLOX ECONOMY
POLITICAL CONTENT, INCLUDING PARTIES, OFFICIALS, AND INFLAMMATORY TOPICS

INTEGRITY RULES
ENCOURAGE USERS AND CREATORS TO BE FAIR AND REFRAIN FROM CHEATING, SCAMMING, AND SPAMMING

ROBLOX'S INTERNAL GUIDELINES AND RULES

Any brand entering Roblox should carefully review the guidelines, community standards, and advertising terms by Roblox, in addition to consulting professionals on how to handle audiences and differing standards across the world.

In the following part, we will examine a few best practices for brands in dealing with ethical considerations on Roblox.

Source: Roblox.
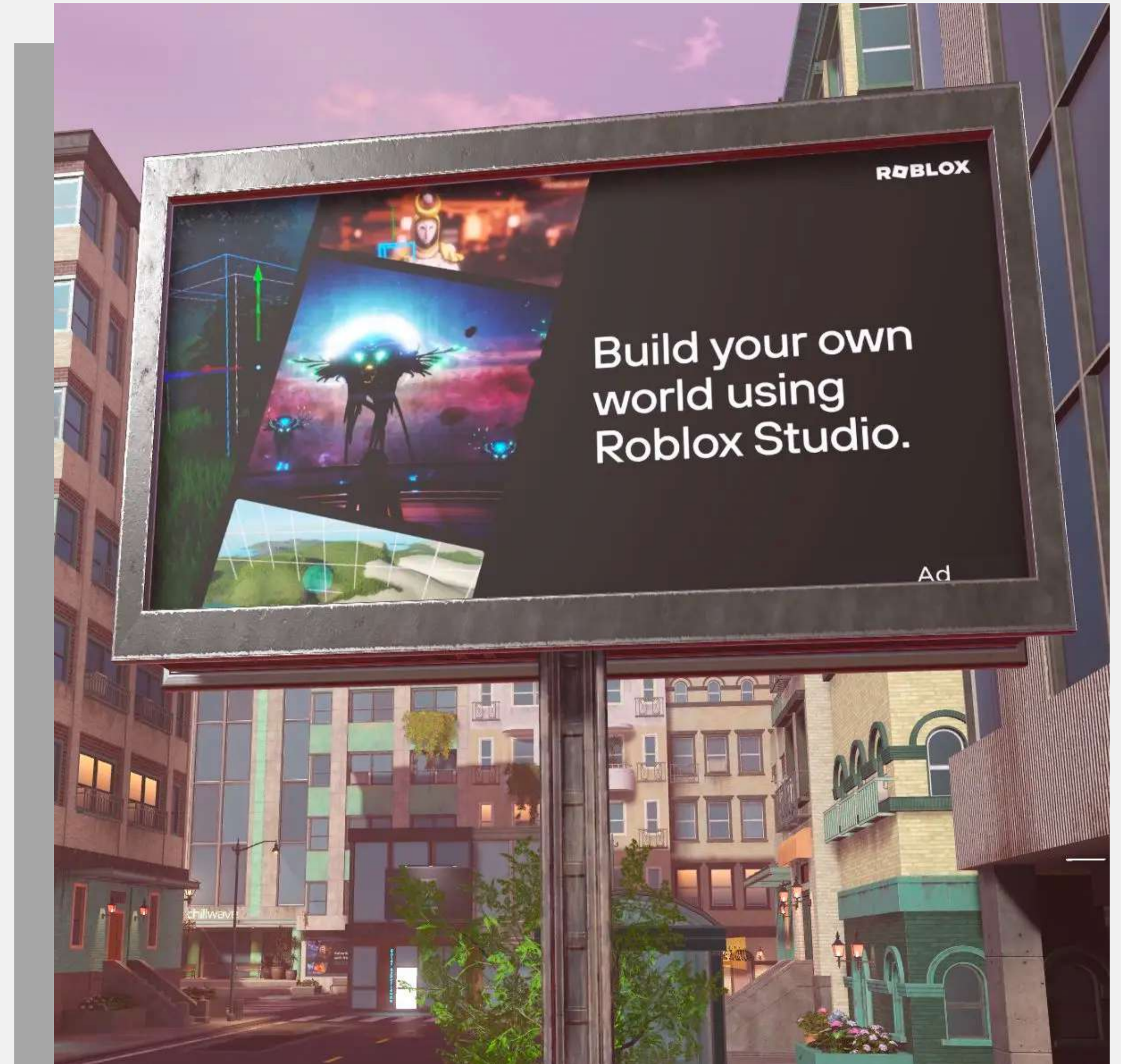
BEST PRACTICES

To stay on the safe side, it's advised to consult experts with experience in building on Roblox, such as the Exclusible team. Since the US is the biggest market in terms of spending for Roblox, Roblox, and by extensions all experiences have to adhere to the requirement to not advertise to kids under 13. Below are some best practices for building safe and sound experiences as a brand.

Two brands that stood out in handling their Roblox experiences in an ethical manner were Kraft Heinz and Kellogg's.

COMPLY WITH COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

AND WITH ADVERTISING GUIDELINES FOR MARKETING TO CHILDREN.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE ROBLOX ECONOMY

POLITICAL CONTENT, INCLUDING PARTIES, OFFICIALS, AND INFLAMMATORY TOPICS

CONTENT REVIEW

CONSTANTLY REVIEW THE CONTENT THAT IS SHOWN ON YOUR PLATFORM AND REACT TO COMMUNITY FEED BACK. DON'T DISPLAY ANYTHING THAT COULD FOSTER ACHIEVABLE STEREOTYPES OR BE HARMFUL TO CHILDREN.

AVOIDING REAL MONEY TRANSACTIONS

EXPERIENCES ALLOW THE CREATION OF IN-GAME CURRENCIES THAT DON'T REQUIRE KIDS TO SPEND REAL MONEY.

TRANSPARENT DISCLOSURE

LABEL GAMES AS ADVERTISEMENTS SO KIDS ARE AWARE OF BEING MARKETED TO.

SELF-REGULATE

BE RESPONSIBLE, AND ACTIVELY MANAGE THE EXPERIENCE. ROBLOX MIGHT NOT PROVIDE A LOT OF ON-HAND GUIDANCE, SO IT FALLS ON BRANDS TO MAINTAIN POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS.

BEST PRACTICES

The cereal brand Kellogg's created the Froot Loops World based on its popular colorful morning snack, Froot Loops. The game was clearly labeled as an advertisement in order to adhere to best practices. Kellogg's chose to classify their game as an ad and also refrained from using Robux in their experience.

Instead, players could collect missing Froot Loops colors and then redeem them for in-game assets such as power-ups or items to dress their avatar in. Avoiding the in-game currency allowed Kellogg's to create a child-friendly game that did not require asking parents' consent to purchase items using their funds.

KraftHeinz took a similar approach by enabling players to earn their in-game currency by racing against each other.

The clear disclosure of ads hasn't deterred children from trying the games. Froot Loops World has seen 10.5 million visitors (Roblox Games Froot Loops World, 2021), and Lunchables Racing had 651k visitors.

BLOXMETRICS

Bloxmetrics, created by Exclusible, is your ultimate destination for comprehensive marketing and data insights on the rapidly growing Roblox platform. It offers real-time metrics, including current users per game, play frequency, active experiences, monthly active users, and average session length.

In addition, Bloxmetrics provides clear rankings for the hottest and most popular experiences, making it the go-to resource for understanding the latest trends and data on one of the most trending gaming platforms.

Get in touch

Explore bloxmetrics.com

EXCLUSIBLE

WANT TO UNLOCK THE POWER OF ROBLOX FOR YOUR BRAND?
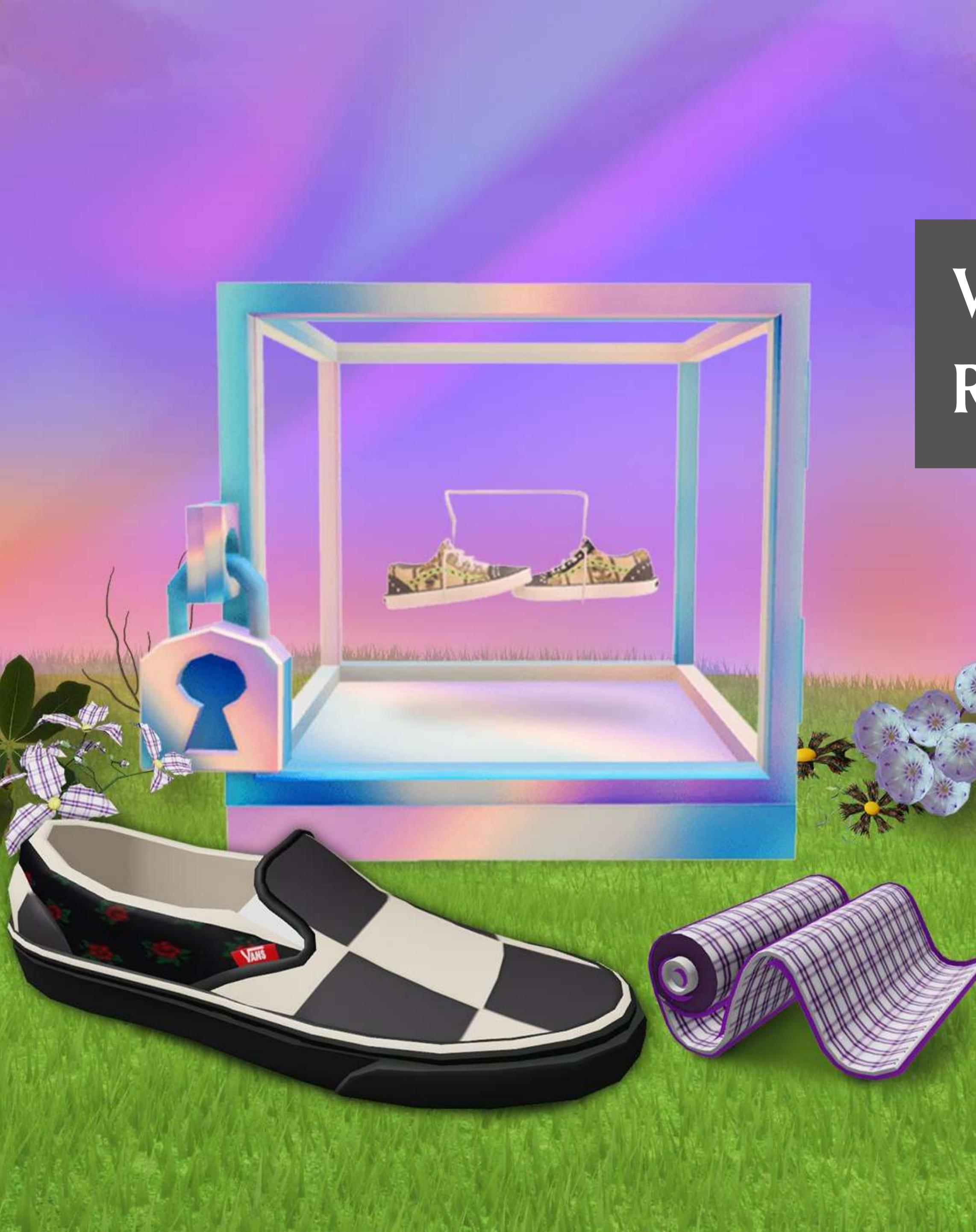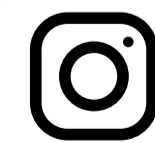
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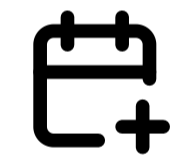
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