

FAST FORWARD REPORT

THE GOOD DEED ECONOMY

Learn from Matter Neuroscience, Heineken, IKEA, Tecate and the Spanish Red Cross as brands engineer the kindness institutions used to handle, addressing the 871,000 deaths globally each year linked to loneliness.

May 2026



Trend Overview

- Loneliness is now classified as a public-health emergency in major economies, and the social infrastructure that used to absorb it (third places, civic groups, in-office water coolers) has thinned out faster than anything has replaced it.
- Brands are stepping into the gap with deliberately lo-fi, friction-forward design: payphones, beer bands, tea cafes staffed by grandparents, group filing nights for taxes. The product is a small interaction, often with a stranger, anchored to something the brand already does.
- This is not CSR. The activations are commercial moves with measurable upside on traffic, retention and share-of-occasion. The bet for any brand: the next decade of loyalty will be earned by the company that engineers the kindness rather than just talking about it.



871,000

deaths globally each year are associated with loneliness and social isolation, a toll on par with obesity or smoking that has turned connection into a public-health category brands are now expected to serve.

(🌍, Jun 25)

**Health & Wellbeing** March 2026**Matter Neuroscience installs payphones to connect zoomers and boomers**

Matter Neuroscience bought two payphones on Craigslist and Facebook, installed one on a Boston college campus and the other in a Reno senior living facility, and connected them via VOIP. Pick up one, the other rings. The project, Call a Boomer, is designed to bridge two of the loneliest demographics in the United States. Calls are recorded with consent and shared anonymized on social media. Matter previously connected Republican and Democratic strangers via the same hardware in California and Texas.

**Food & Beverage and Entertainment** April 2026**Heineken's light-up beer band turns toasts into Spotify matches**

At Coachella 2026, Heineken handed out The Clinker: a light-up band that snaps onto a beer can or glass and syncs to the wearer's Spotify or YouTube Music account. When two cans clink, the band lights green if the two people share musical taste and prompts them to swap socials. The bands were exclusive to Heineken House and distributed first-come-first-served to pre-registered attendees via a microsite that parsed their listening data.

**Health & Wellbeing and Non profit & Social Cause** April 2026**Brazilian pet brand sends rescue dogs to comfort kids in chemo**

Petlove partnered with the Instituto Caramelo shelter and São Paulo's GRAACC pediatric cancer hospital on Love que Cuida, launched March 2026. Three trained therapy dogs (mixed-breed, elderly or disabled, the kind shelters call invisible pets) visit GRAACC to comfort children during cancer treatment. The interactions trigger endorphin and serotonin release in patients. Petlove uses the hospital visit footage on social to build adoption demand for the dogs.



Financial Services

 April 2026

TaxAct registers April 8 as National Admin Night so Americans can file together

TaxAct registered April 8 as National Admin Night, encouraging Americans to invite friends or family over to file their taxes side by side. The free starter kit ships with a playlist, group filing guide and progress tracker, plus a discounted flat-rate filing offer. The concept formalizes admin-night behavior already bubbling up on TikTok, after a Wall Street Journal reporter chronicled hosting what he called the lamest party ever.



Food & Beverage

 March 2026

Café União redesigns 6,000 Brazilian office break rooms via competition

Brazilian coffee brand Café União launched Up na Copa by Café União in November 2025, inviting employees from over 6,000 companies to demonstrate why their office copa (break room) deserved a complete makeover. In March 2026 it announced the winners: sportswear company ASICS and sports media company Kings League Brazil, each receiving a fully revitalized break room and a year's supply of Café União's full coffee portfolio.



Social Media

 April 2026

A Nairobi app lets professionals broadcast they want company

Kenyan startup Drinkmates launched what it calls a social logistics engine in April 2026, designed for urban professionals across Africa. Users broadcast location-based intentions like 'co-working in Kilimani' or 'socializing in Westlands' to specific contact circles. Anyone in the circle can join without lengthy back-and-forth. A six-week private beta in Nairobi held 100% cohort retention. The company is rolling out to Lagos and Johannesburg next.



Home & Living

🇬🇧 March 2026

IKEA opens a London 'home away from home' for Muslim commuters at iftar

Across the UK, sunset during 2026 Ramadan fell during the evening rush, leaving millions of Muslim commuters caught between home and breaking fast. IKEA responded with Iftar At Ours, a pop-up where commuters could come, eat and pray together. The space was developed in partnership with Muslim community organizations and based on cultural consultation rather than a marketing brief. It ran across multiple sunset hours during Ramadan.



Health & Wellbeing and Non profit & Social Cause

🇪🇸 April 2026

The Spanish Red Cross gets EUR 235,000 to fight loneliness in one city

In April 2026, the city of Alicante awarded the Spanish Red Cross a EUR 235,000 contract to run a loneliness program targeting residents aged 60 and over, including the city's large international retiree community. A team of around 12 psychologists and social workers will conduct more than 800 weekly interventions: emotional support, cognitive stimulation, group activities, digital skills training, plus home visits for those with reduced mobility.



Food & Beverage

🇹🇷 March 2026

A Turkish honey brand opens a Bee Rights Ambassador role

Anavarza Bal, one of Turkey's largest honey producers, posted a job in March 2026 for a Bee Rights Ambassador. The role: build a Bee Rights department focused on bee welfare, regenerative ecology and adapting global bee-health protocols to Turkish beekeeping. The ambassador will run habitat restoration projects, train beekeepers in sustainable practices and represent bees in industry and policy conversations. The brand uses the line 'Where there are bees, there is life.'



Entertainment and Non profit & Social Cause

 March 2026

Reporters Without Borders builds a US press freedom room inside Minecraft

March 2026 saw RSF expand its Uncensored Library, a virtual library inside Minecraft, with a room dedicated to the United States. The room documents what RSF calls subtler attacks on press freedom: removed government web pages, FCC pressure on media, an unpublished Ann Telnaes cartoon depicting Jeff Bezos kneeling before Donald Trump. Built by 24 Minecraft specialists since 2020, the library has been visited over a million times and its in-game books read 10 million times.



Food & Beverage and Work & Education

 April 2026

Tecate hires deported Mexicans into Heineken's convenience store chain

In 2025, the United States deported over 160,000 Mexican migrants to a country where many had no support network. In April 2026, Heineken-owned Tecate launched Welcome Back, Paisano, with FUNDES and Heineken's Tiendas SIX convenience store chain. The program offers returnees 24 months of training, mentorship and employment within the SIX retail network. The first phase commits to hiring over 100 people, expanding as new SIX locations open.



Health & Wellbeing

 March 2026

An abandoned Quebec church becomes a pickleball clubhouse

AMEN PICKLEBALL opened in March 2026 in Chambly, Quebec, in an abandoned church repurposed by three friends. The venue features three full-size pickleball courts inside the heritage architecture, with original elements like church pews preserved as decor. The former choir is now a lounge overlooking the courts. The space includes a beverage counter, a video game area and a members' lounge called Heaven's Club.

Opportunity Spaces

Body double the dreaded individual task

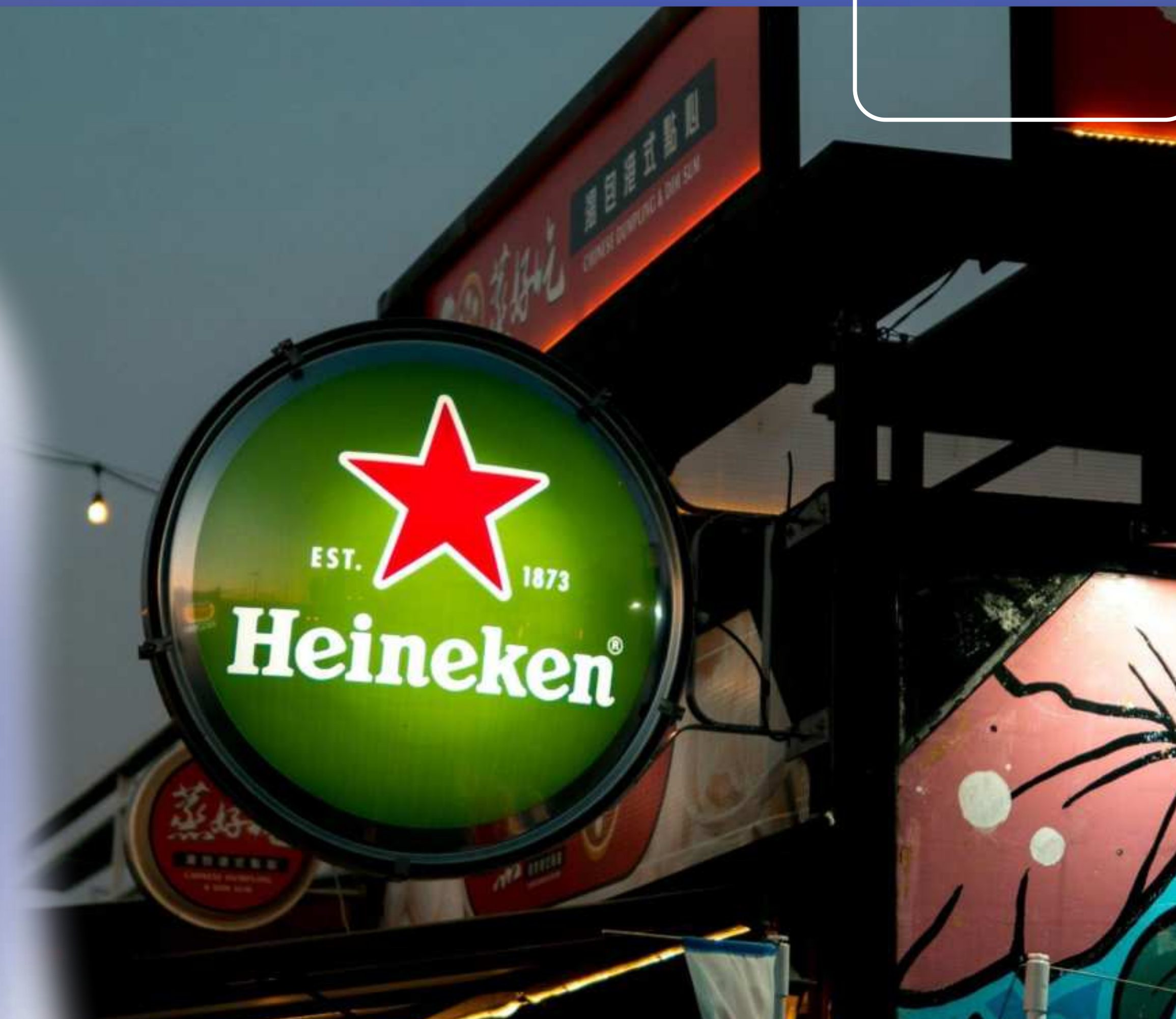
TaxAct's Admin Night formalizes co-presence as a productivity hack, with 41% of Gen Z saying it helps them follow through on tasks they would otherwise avoid. The same template fits any high-friction personal task brands sell into: insurance enrollment night, retirement account opening parties, health-screening Saturdays, will-writing brunches. The brand's job is to manufacture the social occasion that makes the task happen, and ship the playlist, the snacks and the discounted offer alongside it.

Engineer the strangers' first second of contact

Heineken's Clinker did not engineer the conversation. It engineered the prompt: clink, light goes green, swap socials. That removes the most expensive moment in any social encounter, the approach. Apply it at retail (proximity tags in queues that surface a shared interest), in transport (seat-back screens that show fellow travelers' open conversation cues) and in workspaces (badge systems that trigger only when two people opt in). The bet is on micro-mechanics.

Procure into the loneliness budget cities are starting to write

Alicante's EUR 235,000 contract with the Spanish Red Cross is a small line item that signals where the puck is going: municipalities are now treating loneliness as a procurement category alongside vaccination and addiction services. Brands and platforms whose products bear on connection (community spaces, pet companies, intergenerational programs, transport for the isolated) should be in the bidding rooms early. Build a B2G offer that cities can buy with public-health money rather than a B2C product chasing a sympathetic ad spend.



TrendWatching's Trends x AI x Innovation Playbook

One trend, three new winning
products or services.
All yours, in just 30 minutes.



Innovation Autonomy

Spotting and curating
trends. Dreaming up new
products and services.
Prototyping them at
speed, alongside
synthetic users and
expert agents, and
sending them straight to
digital or physical
shelves.

We're not quite there yet. But
as AI gets smarter, faster,
and more agentic, the puzzle
pieces are snapping into
place. We call it Autonomous
Innovation, and yes, it may
just flip entire organizations,
industries (and maybe the
economy) on their heads.

Turn THE GOOD DEED ECONOMY into your next winning product, service or campaign

The platform's [AI x Ideation Playbooks](#) will help you turn this trend into tangible products or brand activations — in under 45 minutes.

Just open the Playbook, open your AI assistant, and follow the instructions. You'll generate on-trend concepts, user-test them against synthetic consumer personas, visualize the actual experience, then package everything into a brief ready to share with your team or clients.

It runs entirely inside your own AI assistant — be it ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude or Copilot. True trend-driven innovation.

TREND-WATCHING

Trends x AI x Innovation Playbook

Trends x AI x Innovation Playbook

Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4

TREND-WATCHING

What you'll be doing today

Basically, you'll turn
this trend into three
campaigns.

You'll work with
your own AI assistant
six times.

Each stage builds on the last: from
setting the brief, to developing
concepts, to sharpening and
producing visual concepts.



TREND-WATCHING

Stage 4/6

Test With (Real) People

4.2

Test your
concepts
and co-
create

After the testing, you'll be offered

OPTION A

Co-creation session

Pick a persona and a concept. Your AI
assistant will go fully in character as
that person and respond to your
questions and proposed changes as a
genuine collaborator. Not a summary
of their views — their actual voice.
Type "End co-creation" when done and
you'll get a synthesis of what shifted.

TREND-WATCHING

Stage 5/6

Write and Visualise

5.3

Generate
visual
concepts

If you're using Copilot:

