



Marketing Trends to Watch in 2025

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Introduction

Every year we see technological developments and cultural shifts that force marketers to adapt their strategies to stay ahead of the curve. What are the big themes that will drive changes in marketing throughout 2025?

Nobody should be surprised that AI still leads the agenda, with the technology advancing at a breakneck pace. New capabilities and use cases appear every year, and marketers are keen to take full advantage of the opportunities on offer.

But there's a lot more happening in the marketing space than just AI. The growing threat of misinformation continues to be a headache for PR and comms executives. Influencers and content creators are in high demand, which is driving them to push for more equitable deals from brands and social platforms.

And all the while, social media keeps on evolving. Social networks are now more popular than linear TV, but with TikTok facing a potential U.S. ban, and new platforms gaining traction, there's plenty of disruption to keep marketers on their toes!

Read on to discover our pick of the biggest marketing trends for the next twelve months.



AI Reshaping Content Marketing

Content marketing traditionally revolves around creating high-quality content to attract customers through search engines. However, recent AI developments could disrupt this model. In 2024, Google introduced AI summaries that answer user questions directly in search results, minimizing the need to click on links. OpenAI's new SearchGPT offers similar AI-generated responses, while more users are turning to ChatGPT for quick answers over Google.

14% of the top 20 Google search results are AI-generated content

Source: Originality.ai

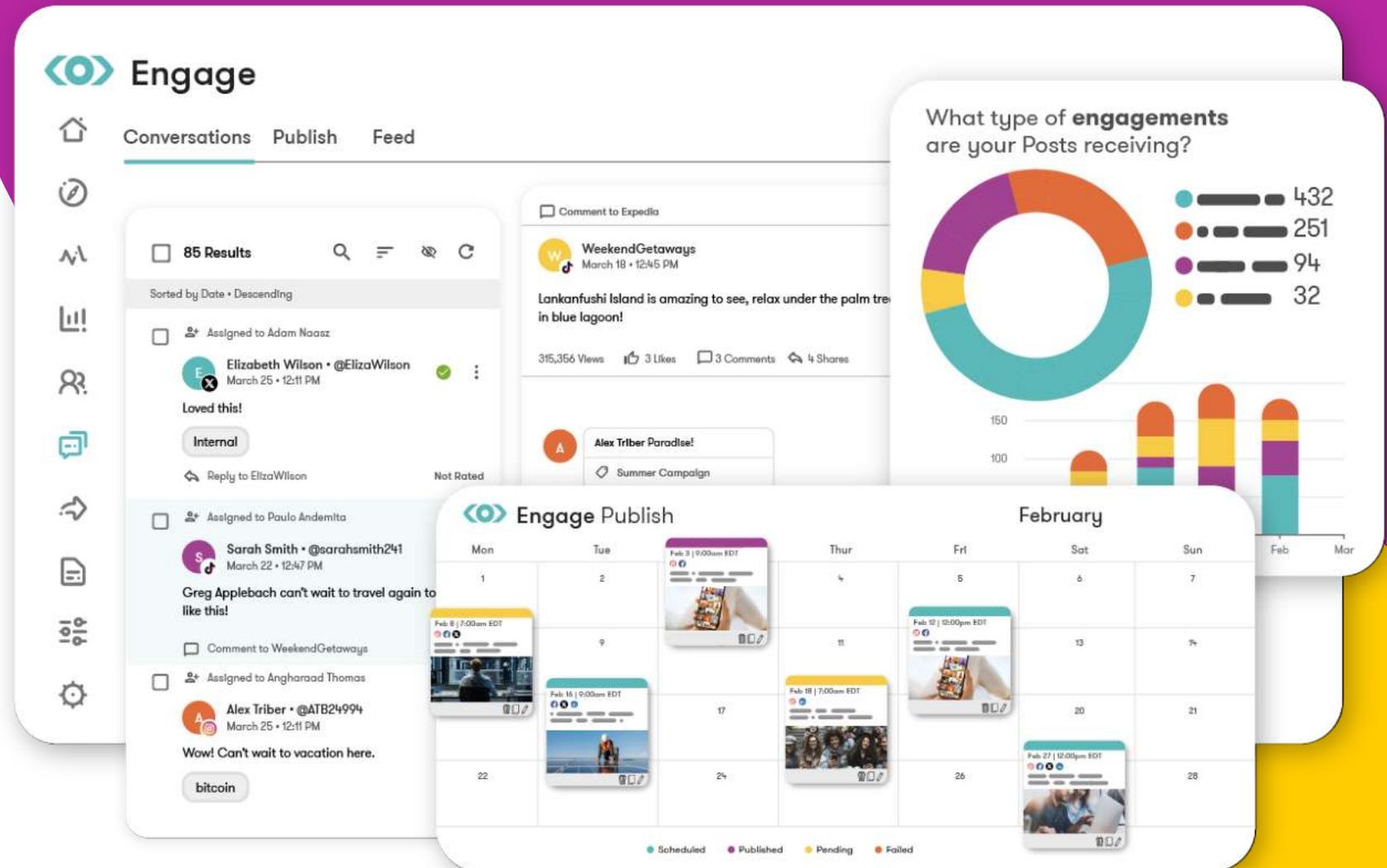
For content marketers, this shift poses a challenge — without visitors landing on their websites, guiding potential customers through the sales funnel becomes harder. Additionally, AI tools can sometimes provide outdated or inaccurate brand information, making it essential to ensure accurate representation on AI platforms.

The rise of low-quality, AI-generated content is also cluttering search results, with estimates indicating **around 14 percent of Google's top 20 results** now contain AI-generated content. This trend makes it harder for quality sites to stand out, and research shows that while consumers prefer human-generated content, they often **can't tell the difference unless explicitly informed**.

Marketers should consider highlighting human-created content by focusing on unique insights, brand personality, and expertise that AI can't replicate. Emphasizing transparency in content creation builds trust, as audiences value knowing if the content is human-made.

With changing search behaviors, diversifying traffic sources is wise. **HubSpot found** that about a quarter of consumers now search for brands on social platforms. Investing in social media engagement and community-building is a strong hedge against potential drops in organic traffic, with tools like **Meltwater's social media management solution** supporting these efforts.

Finally, optimizing content for AI discovery through consistent updates and authoritative content ensures relevant and current brand representation across all platforms.



Increased AI Regulation

With AI's rapid growth, regulation has become a priority across the developed world. In August 2024, the European Union introduced the **Artificial Intelligence Act**, set to take effect in 2025, regulating AI based on risk levels. High-risk uses face stricter rules, while most marketing-related AI applications fall into low- or medium-risk categories, primarily requiring transparency from vendors rather than users.

However, marketers must be mindful. AI systems used for personalizing campaigns or chatbots handling customer data will be subject to transparency and disclosure requirements within the EU. This evolving legal landscape will vary by country, making it crucial for marketers to stay updated.

In the U.S., President Biden issued a **2023 Executive Order** promoting transparency and content labeling in AI. While not yet legislation, the order may pave the way for broader AI regulation, though it could be overturned by a future administration. Meanwhile, California's recent AI safety bill was vetoed by Governor Newsom, who cited concerns about stifling innovation.

Globally, governments are recognizing AI's risks and moving to regulate. Alongside the EU and U.S. actions, new laws are emerging at state and national levels worldwide. AI, once an unregulated frontier, is now under increased oversight. For marketers, staying informed on AI regulation is essential to ensure compliance.



The Booming Creator Economy

Meltwater's October update of the [2024 Global Digital Report](#) found that 23.2 percent of internet users watch influencer videos every week, and 19.5 percent say that following influencers and celebrities is their main reason for using social media. So, it's clear that influencers/creators are an important element of the digital media ecosystem, both in terms of attracting audiences to social channels and providing brands with opportunities to reach those audiences.

In August of this year, President Biden hosted the first-ever [White House Creator Economy Conference](#), a clear sign of the growing importance of the industry.



SOURCE: The White House

The revenue model for creators is changing, too. While brand-sponsored content still accounts for the bulk of their income (and has grown by \$3 billion since 2021), other revenue sources such as platform payouts, merch sales, subscriptions, tips from fans, and affiliate sales are also growing rapidly.

\$8.14 billion -
US influencer revenue from
branded content, 2024.

As many of the platforms converge in functionality, there's an increasing scramble to recruit creators. After all, if you can make a successful short-form video clip on TikTok, for example, then why not share it on YouTube, Instagram, or X, which all offer the same capability?

To this end, most platforms have pushed out new features and programs to help creators monetize their content more easily and lucratively. TikTok has a new subscription model, Meta has improved payouts for high-performing creators, and YouTube is providing more tools to help creators snag subscribers. These are just a few examples — right now, social media companies are rolling out the red carpet for content creators. Creators, in turn, are increasingly demanding fairer compensation.

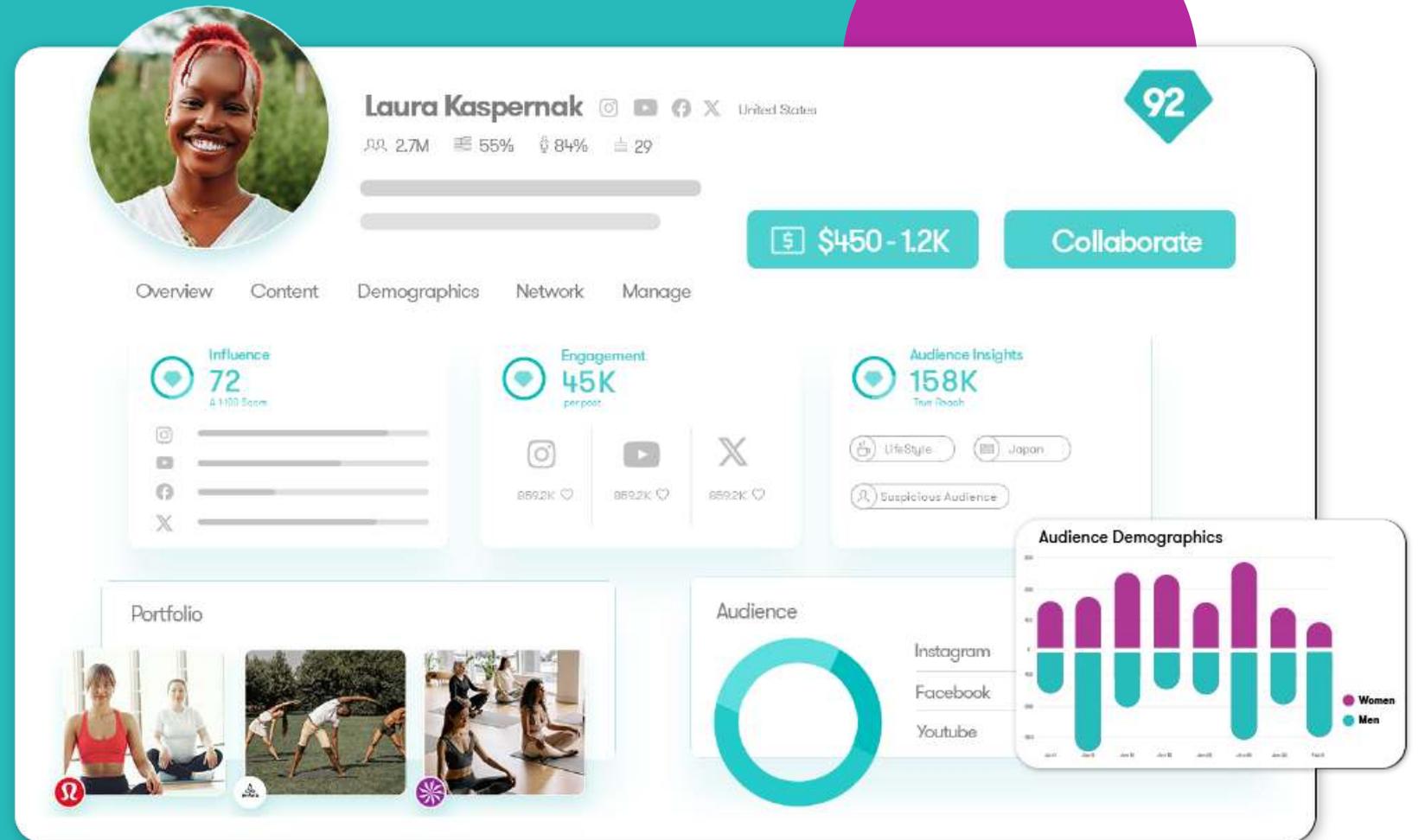
For marketers, the booming creator economy provides a wealth of opportunities to find powerful new brand partners who can help get your messages to new audiences. In 2025, marketers should evaluate their current influencer programs and ask whether they have what they need to vet and manage the growing number of creators out there.

Find Influential New Partners for Your Brand

With so many influencers and digital creators to choose from, it can be difficult to find and vet the right brand partners to help you grow your reach.

Klear, [Meltwater's influencer marketing platform](#), provides everything you need to manage creator relationships and scale up your campaigns in the increasingly professionalized world of influencer marketing.

Our solution lets you access our database of over 30 million different influencers across industries, as well as manage and measure all of your campaigns from a single tool.



[Learn More](#)

The Growing Misinformation Challenge

Protecting your brand's reputation is one of the most important responsibilities of the PR team, and that job has **suddenly become a lot more difficult**. Generative AI has made it easy for bad actors to create fake news, images, and even videos.

Misinformation and deepfakes can have a real and damaging impact on business. In May 2023, an AI-generated viral image of an attack on the Pentagon **caused a stock market drop**, and when a fake tweet announced that pharma giant Eli Lilly was **giving away insulin for free**, the company's stock fell by more than 4 percent in a single day.

As far back as 2019, researchers believed the cost to the global economy could be **as much as \$78 billion per year**. Since then, AI has become significantly more capable of producing deepfake images and convincing misinformation, so the current figure is likely to be much higher.

A study from the University of Zurich, Switzerland, found that the GPT-3 LLM is adept at **creating compelling disinformation**. Equally, people are not confident of the public's capacity to identify false information; IPSOS found that less than half of those surveyed

44% of people believe that others are capable of spotting fake news.

Source: IPSOS

across 29 countries believed that people in their country were capable of identifying fake news.

Given the scale of the problem and the potential consequences, tackling it effectively will require not just **regularly updated skills** but also the right tools. Meltwater has partnered with leading specialists to give our customers the tools they need to guard against misinformation. Our **partnership with NewsGuard** helps to assess the reliability and credibility of news sources shown in our search results, while Blackbird AI uses *narrative intelligence* to identify and understand deepfakes, misinformation, and disinformation attacks on your brand.

Proactive Reputation Management

The increasing risk presented by AI-fueled disinformation is only one challenge faced by PR professionals. The constant drive to secure clicks and eyeballs has driven the online news cycle to a frenetic pace that makes TV news channels feel comparatively sedate.

It feels like there's always something new happening, some new crisis being pushed to the top of the agenda, and hovering over every brand is the ever-present risk that it could get caught up in some unforeseen scenario with potentially disastrous consequences for its reputation.

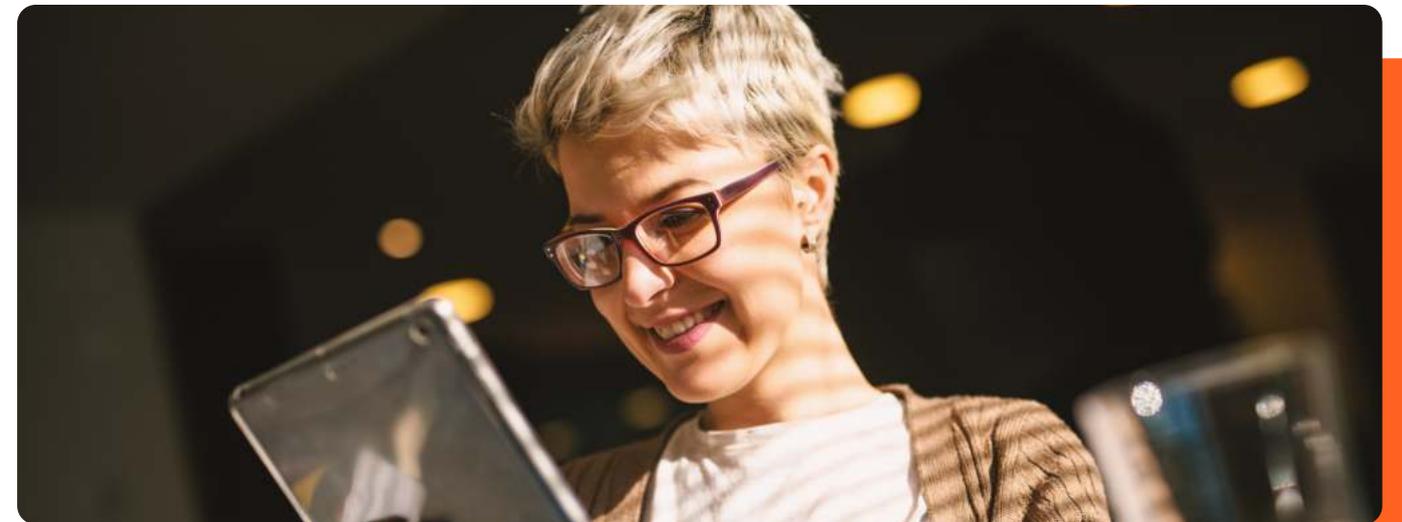
Robust crisis-comms processes are essential, but PR can also help mitigate the risks of potential crises by working to build consumer trust in advance of any reputational challenge. Transparent and open communication is at the heart of this. If the media and your public already know that you can be trusted to be honest with them, then in a crisis situation, you'll already have some goodwill in the bank, which can help smooth the waters.

As part of your crisis comms planning, you should map out the most likely issues your brand could face and prepare responses, including audience segmentation, key media, messaging, approved spokespeople, key contacts, and roles/responsibilities for comms execs and the

leadership team. Regular training and role-playing for these scenarios will help ensure everybody is better prepared.

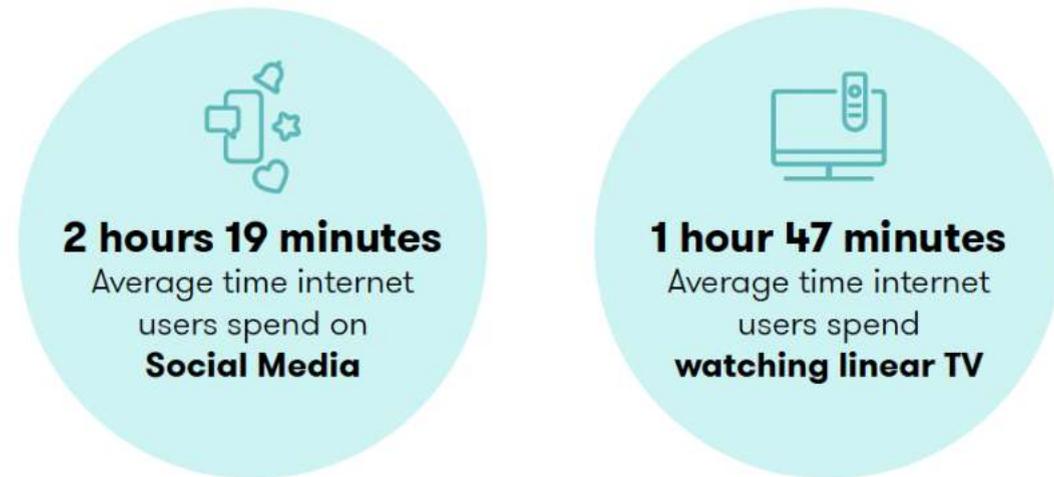
But for the scenarios that you can't predict, you should have a set of guiding principles that dictate how your organization will respond, and in those situations, it's best to be transparent, consistent, and sincere in your communications.

To give yourself an early warning of any brand crisis that might be brewing online, use a tool like **Meltwater Media Intelligence**, which can alert you to unexpected increases in conversations about your brand and help you get to the bottom of those discussions quickly.



Social Media Overtakes Linear TV

The October update of Meltwater's **2024 Global Digital Report** found that 92.7 percent of internet users use social media every day, while just 88.7 percent watch linear TV. The report also shows that the average time spent using social media every day is 2 hours and 19 minutes, compared to 1 hour and 47 minutes for linear TV.



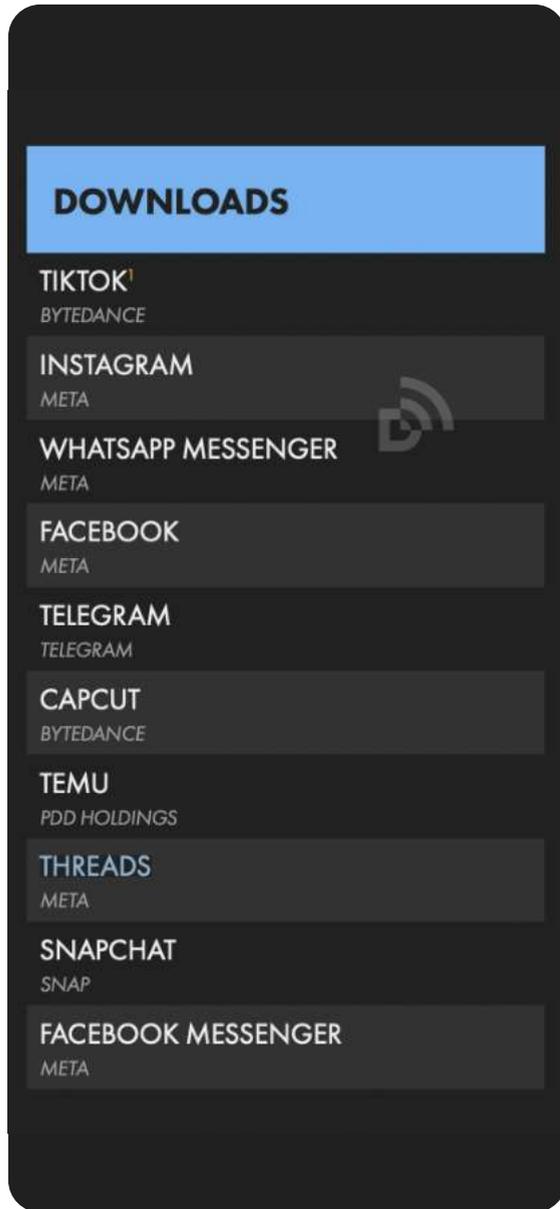
This is echoed in research from eMarketer, which suggests that, for the first time in 2025, **more people will use social networking platforms** than watch linear TV on a monthly basis.

This might not feel like a huge paradigm shift, and maybe the only really surprising thing is that it took so long for social media to outpace linear TV, but it still represents a significant milestone in media consumption. Social networks are now more of a draw for consumer attention than conventional TV. The inescapable conclusion is that social media has become a better channel for reaching consumers than TV advertising.

Although people are watching less linear TV, video is still hugely important. YouTube viewership exceeded linear TV in 2023, and TikTok is expected to reach **955 million users in 2025**, more than doubling since 2020. People want to watch video content on their own terms rather than on the schedules of broadcast TV.

It's important to understand that there's a huge appetite for good quality online video content, so there's an opportunity for marketers to reach new and bigger audiences by either producing their own branded videos or working with talented creators.

Threads Going Mainstream



Following Elon Musk’s acquisition of Twitter in 2022, several competitors saw an opportunity to move into the microblogging space, and Meta’s Threads is by far the most successful. By October 2024, Threads had already **reached 275 million monthly active users**, compared to an estimated 336 million for Twitter, now renamed X.

According to Meltwater’s latest update of the **2024 Global Digital Report**, Threads was the 8th most downloaded smartphone app in Q3 2024.

In recent months, there’s been a noticeable increase in the number of brands and professional media building a presence on the platform, including: **Marvel, TikTok**, the **American Red Cross, CNN, Google**, the **UK government, TechCrunch**, and many more.

Threads is growing fast and has the full weight of Meta behind it. It’s quickly maturing into a tool that social

media marketers can feel comfortable with, and with many large brands now adopting the platform, it’s safe to say that Threads looks like it will be a success for Meta. If you’ve been holding back and wondering whether it’s worth investing resources into building a profile on Threads, now is the time to get started because there’s a growing audience waiting to hear from you.

Marketers should spend some time on Threads examining how audiences interact with different brands on the platform, as well as how your competitors are starting to work it into their social strategy. Plus, with **Meta expected to introduce ads on Threads in early 2025**, marketers should start thinking now about how this new offering could factor into their paid efforts.

TikTok: Huge, but Facing an Uncertain Future

TikTok has exploded in popularity, quickly growing to become the platform of choice for younger social media users. Meltwater's October update of the **2024 Global Digital Report** lists TikTok as the 15th most popular website in the world, with an average of 2.3 billion monthly visits.

The report also shows TikTok as the world's most downloaded app as of October 2024 and that it has 1.7 billion monthly active accounts, putting it in the top five most used social media platforms. Capitalizing on this popularity, TikTok has worked hard to court marketers, offering an array of tools and content designed to tempt brands to take it seriously as a marketing channel.

But U.S. lawmakers **passed a law that will ban TikTok** unless its owner, ByteDance, sells to a non-Chinese owner due to worries about data harvesting and links to the Chinese government.

To many, a complete ban on one of the most popular social media services seems unthinkable, and **public support for a ban is waning**, but despite vigorous legal challenges from TikTok, the ban is still expected to take effect if the service is not sold by January 19th, 2025.

There are a number of potential candidates to buy the platform; Meta, Microsoft, OpenAI, and **Amazon, in particular**, are all being mooted as a possibility, but right now, it's anybody's guess.



TikTok offers a great opportunity for social media marketers, so it makes sense to include it in your social strategy, particularly if you're aiming for a younger audience. But there's a lot of uncertainty about whether the platform will be available six months from now. If you already have a brand presence on TikTok, it might be time to start encouraging that audience to connect with you on alternative platforms.

Reddit: A Sleeping Giant

In some respects, Reddit is the unsung hero of social media despite having over **1.2 billion monthly active users** and beating Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in terms of **engagement growth**. It's one of the most visited websites in the world and currently gets close to six billion visits per month, but despite this, it accounts for less than one percent of social media ad spend.



How much longer will marketers ignore this sleeping giant? The company is actively investing in making itself more attractive to marketers. For example, it recently **acquired Memorable AI**, a platform that uses

generative AI to help advertisers improve campaign performance, while the **Reddit for Business LinkedIn page** is packed full of content designed to convince marketers of the site's virtues.

Finally, the company recently signed a deal with OpenAI to use its data to train the AI giant's models. This makes a lot of sense since Reddit is a rich source of constantly updated, high-quality (mostly) human-generated content, which is essential to keep those models working well. Not only does this provide a new revenue stream for Reddit, but it also creates an even more powerful incentive for the company to keep its users engaged and contributing meaningfully to the communities.

Reddit is a social media powerhouse that marketers shouldn't ignore. Not only does it offer huge reach, but the site is made up of around 140,000 highly engaged communities, tightly focused on just about every niche topic imaginable. It's one of the few social platforms where there's still plenty of value in organic engagement, as well as paid advertising opportunities. On top of this, Reddit data is a powerful source of consumer insight, which can be accessed using tools like **Meltwater Explore** and **Consumer Intelligence**.

Transform Data into Insights Faster!

Whether it's Reddit, podcasts, or traditional news, comprehensive **social listening software** like Meltwater can help you tap into and glean insights from 1.3 billion social media posts, news articles, and blogs, every single day.

With Meltwater, you can focus on what's important, capture the mentions that matter and uncover the insights you've been missing.

[Learn More](#)



The Power of Peer-to-Peer Recommendations

When consumers are researching product purchases, it can be difficult to separate the signal from the noise. There are so many paid product placements and fake reviews muddying the waters when all consumers really want are honest recommendations. That's why many consumers increasingly seek them out from peers online.

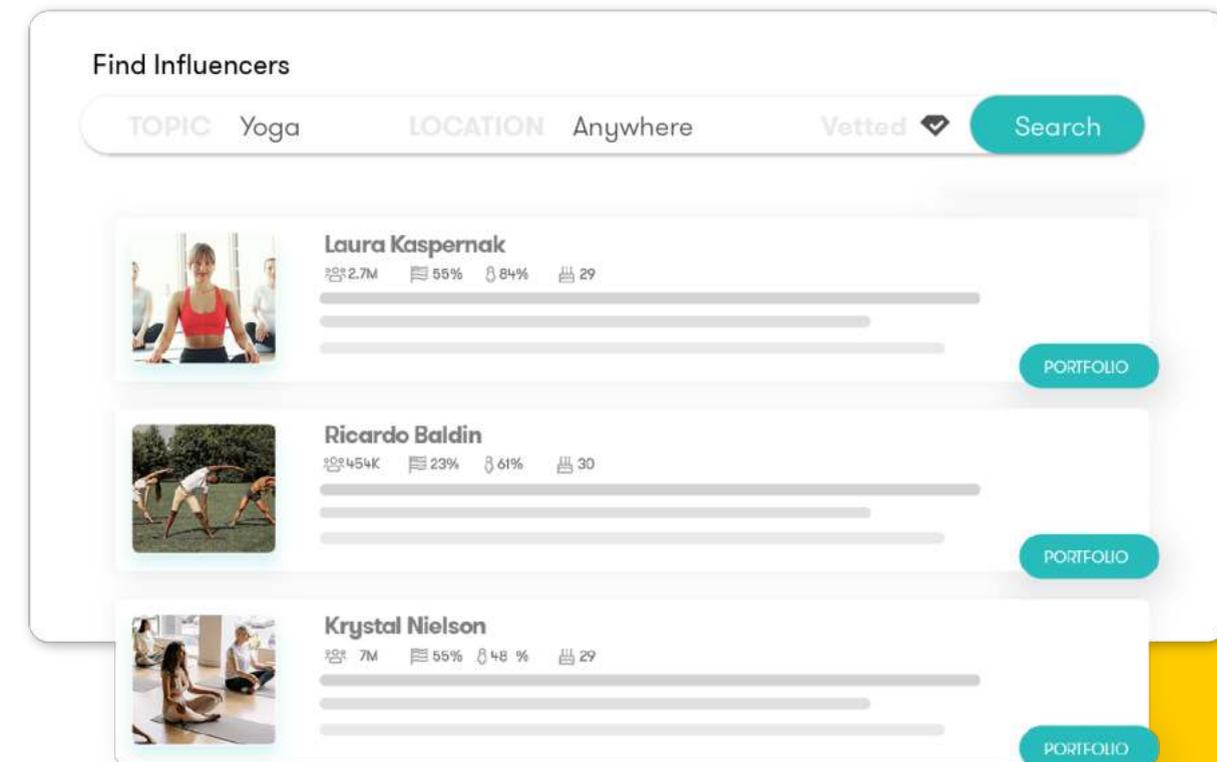
Our report, [2024 Consumer Insights: Retail](#), found that 51% of internet users research brands, products, and services online before making a purchase, and they are significantly more likely to use social media for that research than consumer review sites. Reddit is the top choice of social platforms for such research. With tens of thousands of passionate communities dedicated to everything from cosmetics and wedding dresses to headphones and video games, it's the ideal place to get honest, informed opinions.

Reddit performs exceptionally well in search engine traffic — its communities [feature highly in search results](#) for a huge and diverse number of organic search queries. This makes it especially powerful for consumer recommendations since a discussion thread where your brand is mentioned is likely to get a lot of organic traffic.

But regardless of whether these peer-to-peer recommendations are taking place on Reddit, other social media channels, or dedicated consumer review platforms, brands need to monitor how they are performing in these spaces. This can be done with a social listening tool like [Meltwater Explore](#), which enables you to

track brand mentions across all social channels as well as leading consumer review sites.

Influencer marketing plays a role in this, too, as micro/nano-influencers are often seen as more authentic and build more direct relationships with their audiences than celebrity influencers can. In some respects, a recommendation from a smaller influencer can be trusted as much as a peer-to-peer recommendation. [Meltwater's influencer marketing solution, Klear](#), can help you identify [micro-influencers](#) and manage your campaigns with them.



Growing Generational Divides on Social

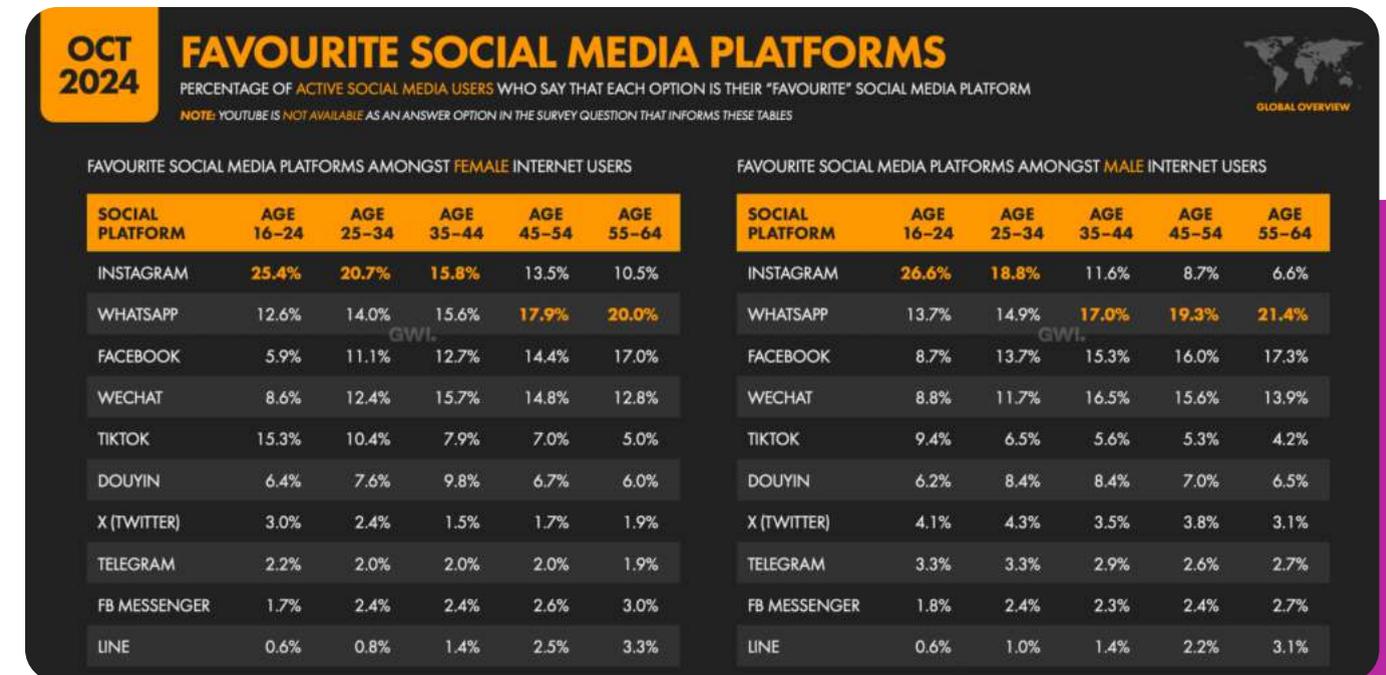
Remember when young people began throwing around “OK Boomer” to dismiss older generations or ideas they perceived as outdated? That particular meme took off in 2019, and since then, it feels like the generational divide has only grown wider on social media.

As more of our lives have shifted into online spaces, people have naturally gravitated toward their own digital tribes — Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials, Gen Zs, and Gen Alphas. These communities have fostered a stronger sense of generational identity, but as each group becomes more entrenched, it also contributes to a deeper generational divide.

Marketers need to know how to capture the attention of these different cohorts — they have different influences and brand affinities, consume different media, and even prefer different social networks. **Meltwater’s 2024 Global Digital Report** shows a clear preference for Instagram and TikTok among younger adults, while those over 45 favor Facebook and Whatsapp.

But this doesn’t mean that people only congregate with others of a similar age on social media. Online communities are complex and

multi-faceted; people form connections through shared interests, values, influences, and preferences, and while age can be a significant factor, it’s only part of the puzzle. In 2025, marketers need to take a more nuanced approach to audience segmentation rather than relying solely on demographics, so you can more deeply understand how potential customers think, feel, and behave online. By finding these digital tribes and uncovering what makes them tick, you’ll be better equipped to create resonant, authentic messages and content.

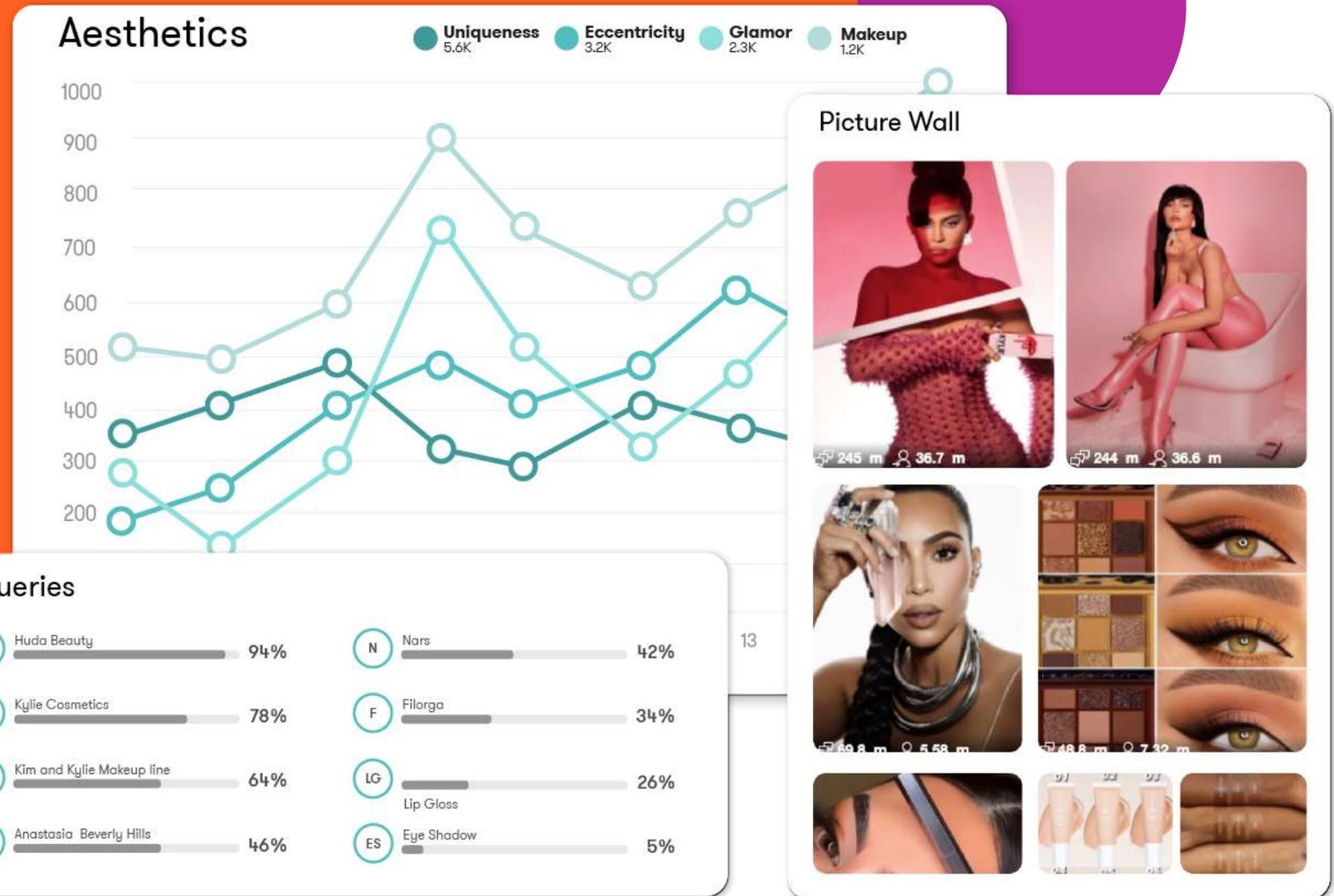


Discover What You Don't Know About Your Audience

Using a tool like [Meltwater Consumer Intelligence](#) helps you to discover and understand digital tribes that are relevant to your brand on a psychographic level so you can target them with more personalized campaigns.

Our solution gives you the power to segment your audiences based on behaviors, attitudes, and influence levels. That way, you can craft more compelling campaigns that speak directly to their needs and interests.

[Learn More](#)



Easier Data-Driven PR

The industry has talked about **becoming more data-driven** for a long time, but recent advances in AI have changed this from a discussion panel talking point to a tangible reality. We've had access to huge volumes of data ever since the media world moved online, but the problem has always been how to make sense of it all if we don't have our own teams of data scientists on hand to analyze it for us.

Today, we have Large Language Models (LLMs) that can rapidly sift through mountains of media and social data, creating summaries, detecting sentiment, spotting trends and patterns, measuring campaign performance, and explaining it all to us in plain English.

Equally, AI makes it faster and simpler for PR executives to carry out research, look for ideas, and test theories by simply asking the machine to find exactly the data we're looking for instead of having to build complex Boolean search queries. Furthermore, modern technologies have made it easier for PR teams to measure the impact of their efforts, an especially important piece given that many PR pros are increasingly being pushed to attach true metrics to their campaigns.

Meltwater's **media relations** solution gives PR teams the power to be more data-driven, from creating press releases to evaluating multi-channel campaign performance. Our AI-powered solution can quickly generate a targeted media list in seconds based on a few key campaign messages. Our new **Paid, Earned, and Owned Dashboards** give your organization an at-a-glance, unified view of your brand across channels. It's never been easier for PR teams to be more data-driven — it's just a question of whether you have the right tools at your disposal.



LinkedIn's Continued Growth

In the B2B world, LinkedIn is the undisputed social media king; there's simply no competition. According to the October update of our [2024 Global Digital Report](#), it's now the 18th most visited website in the world — an impressive feat, given that most of the top 20 sites are B2C focused. It gets an average of 1.7 billion visits each month and has 1.15 billion users, up from 850 million in 2022.



This makes LinkedIn an extremely powerful channel for reaching professionals in just about every industry. It provides plenty of options

for doing that, including highly targeted paid ads and a wide range of organic content formats (such as newsletters and live-streaming video) for building out a thought leadership program.

Whether you're interested in building up your organization's brand on a business profile or positioning your executives as industry leaders, there are a lot of opportunities on LinkedIn. For instance, the platform's recently expanded Thought Leader Ads now allow companies to sponsor posts from external thought leaders, not just internal industry experts. This is an exciting new opportunity for marketers to identify respected industry leaders and partner with them for LinkedIn thought-leadership content, a tactic that can help bolster your brand's credibility and reach new, highly engaged fans of those outside experts.

LinkedIn also expanded the capabilities of its sponsored articles, so that organizations that post articles on their company pages can now **sponsor those articles for awareness, engagement, and even lead generation.**

In the new year, marketers should test out some of these features to see if they're viable new additions to your marketing strategies.

Personalized Campaigns Becoming Essential

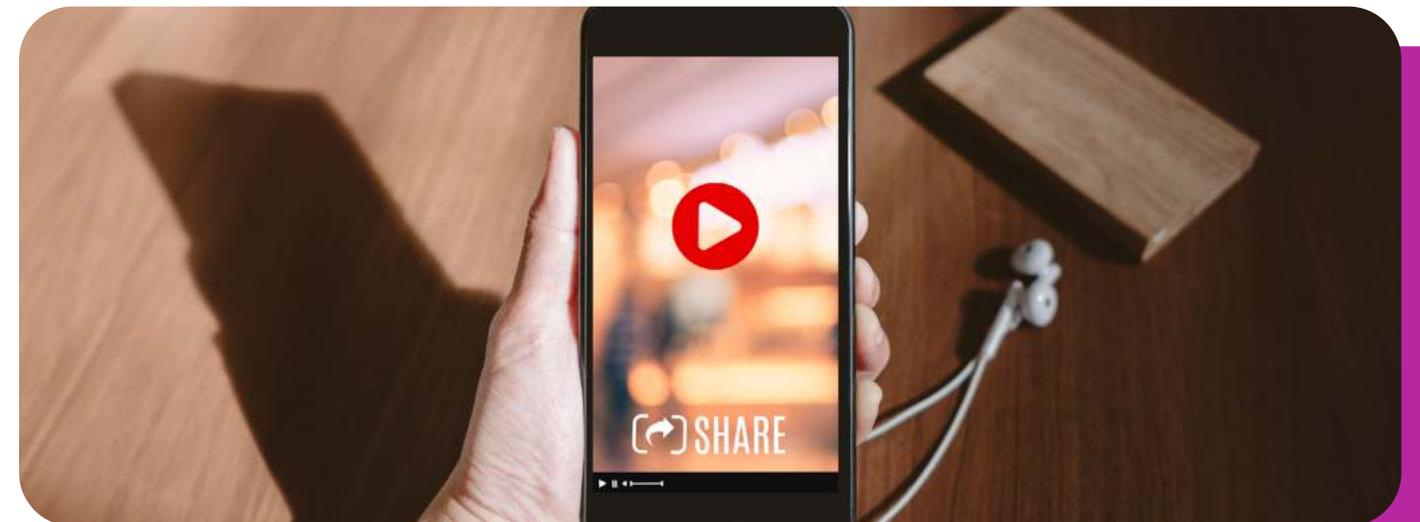
It's no secret that there's a lot of noise out there. Wherever consumers go, they're bombarded with marketing messages in the real world, on TV, on podcasts, from influencers, and pretty much everywhere they spend time. So, it's harder than ever to cut through and grab their attention with the shotgun approach of generic marketing designed to appeal to as many people as possible.

This means that campaigns need to be more personalized and tightly focused on even small market segments, with tailored messaging that appeals to their unique wants and needs. Effective personalization can create deeper customer loyalty and even lead to increased revenue because consumers both prefer and expect it. Consider for a moment the popularity of Spotify Wrapped, the music streaming service's annual year-end summary of its users' listening habits. This highly personalized annual campaign has only grown more popular and more viral because it delivers an interactive experience curated specifically for you.

Unfortunately, not every brand has the same level of access to user data that Spotify enjoys. Instead, many brands run into

common roadblocks when creating more personalized campaigns — limited consumer data, reliance on manual methods, and outdated demographics chief among them. (TIP: *For more information on the importance of personalized campaigns and how to build them at scale, download our [Guide to Personalization at Scale](#).*)

Modern tools, like [Meltwater Consumer Intelligence](#), can help you break through those roadblocks and apply analytics to billions of online data points. Our solution can help you build a nuanced picture of your audience segments that empowers PR and marketing professionals to create more relevant content and targeted campaigns.



Trendjacking to Boost Reach

It's hard to get your brand's organic social media posts to reach a big audience these days — most social channels expect businesses to put up some budget if they want to get seen, so the reach of organic social has been in decline for years.

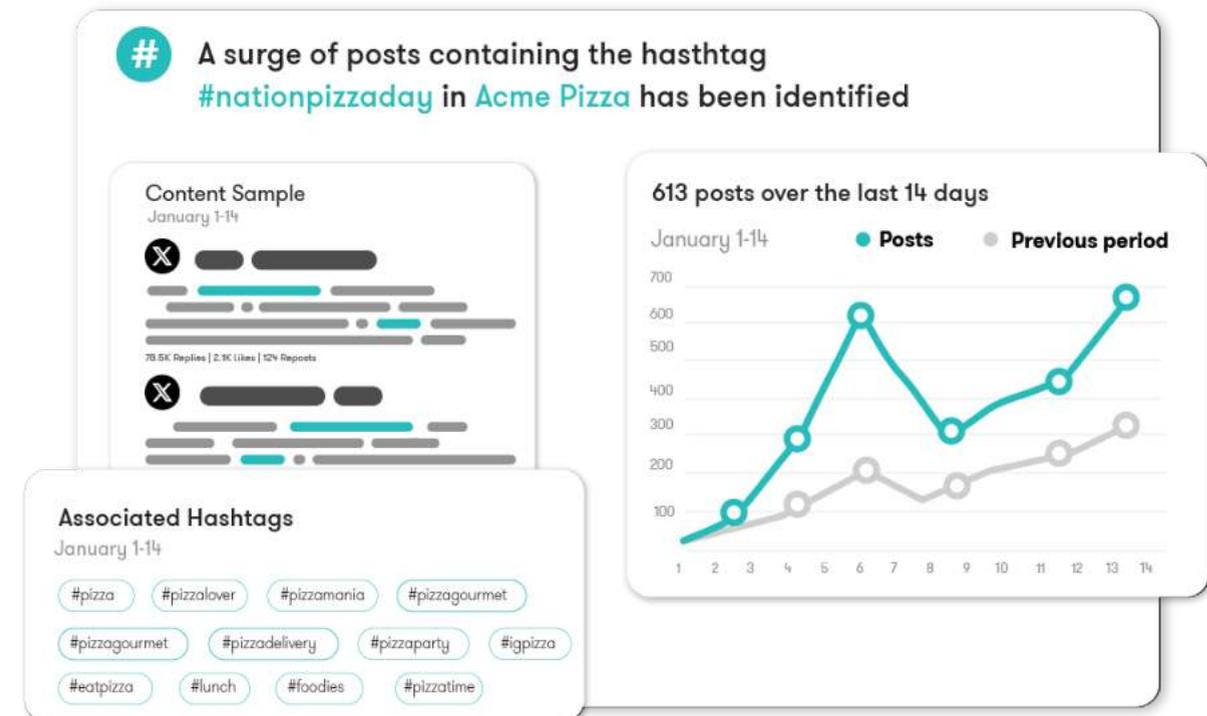
But savvy social media managers have learned that **trendjacking** is a cheat-code that hitches their content onto a rising trend, potentially getting it in front of a massive audience without paying to boost it. This year saw no shortage of viral trending moments that brands jumped on, from **neon-green Brat Summer** to the **countless Moo Deng memes**.

Done well, it can be highly rewarding — not just because you get a cost-effective boost in brand visibility, but because audiences really appreciate it when you get it right, and that generates valuable positive sentiment.

The only problem is that as more brands have discovered the value of trendjacking as a strategy to boost organic reach, it's becoming more competitive. The good news (for you) is that a lot of brands simply don't put much effort into getting it right, so they'll make clumsy, poorly thought-out attempts to jump on trending topics, which is a big turn-off for audiences. (TIP: Our **Ultimate Guide to Trendjacking** provides a full playbook with everything you need to start hopping on trends like a pro.)

The trick to getting it right is to give the job to smart, creative people who understand digital culture, and empower them to react quickly. Trendjacking simply doesn't work if your approval processes don't allow content to be published quickly while the trend is still hot.

As well as using social listening tools, like **Meltwater Explore**, to identify and analyze trending topics in real-time, consider a social media management solution that has streamlined approvals workflows to ensure content gets signed off and published efficiently, like **Meltwater Engage**.



Be ready for whatever a changing world throws at you.

Meltwater's suite of solutions puts you in control.

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