

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TRENDS 2025

THE GLOBAL INDIE INSIGHTS

PUBLISHED → 11 · 1 · 2025



ANALYSTS → Erika Danielsson & Jari Lähdevuori

CONTACT → jari@kurio.fi



FOREWORD

Last year, AI was the new shiny thing in the world of trends. And two years ago? Not even a footnote. Fast forward to today, and it's the must-have tool everyone's talking about. The pace of change is dizzying, and in the world of social media, it's not just about keeping up; it's about finding a way to jump on the speeding train without spilling your coffee.

Social media itself is growing bigger, bolder, and more integrated into every facet of life. New platforms emerge, new trends dominate, and somehow, it all manages to fit into the palm of your hand. Next year promises to be the era of zero-click content, where a single post can take you through an entire sales funnel without ever leaving the platform. Social is no longer just about entertainment or casual scrolling; it's where we live our lives—from learning and shopping to connecting and creating. It's the ultimate Swiss Army knife for modern existence.

Our 96 page trend report dives into all this and more. It's designed to help you navigate this ever-changing landscape, where the rules are rewritten faster than you can say "algorithm update."

A massive thank you to the 29 experts who took the time to share their insights. Without your perspectives, this report wouldn't exist. So, here's to you—and here's to an exciting, unpredictable, and undoubtedly trend-filled year ahead.



- **Jari Lähdevuori**
Executive Creative Director & Partner
Kurio - The Social Media Age(ncy)

- **Erika Danielsson**
Strategist
Kurio - The Social Media Age(ncy)

- **Juian Boulding**
President
thenetworkone



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

8 Trends for Social Media Marketing 2025



We interviewed experts from 23 of the world's leading independent agencies. Their insights can be summarized in the following eight points.

- Entertainment and escapism reign
- Search is going social
- Feed as a funnel
- From creators to curators – nailing the niche
- THE format of 2025: Influencer Format
- HumAI, the creAItor
- AI-first insights
- Zero-Click Content



METHODOLOGY

The insights were gathered by interviewing 29 social media marketing experts from 23 award-winning independent agencies, chosen from the 12000+ strong list of agencies in thenetworkone. The respondents are all part of the world's leading independent network, thenetworkone, hailing from countries as diverse as USA, India, UAE, UK, Germany, Mexico, Sweden, South Africa and South Korea. The interviews were done in November/December 2024.

All the respondents are using social media to help their clients do better communications, marketing, and eventually, business. They don't work with any particular social media platform or service-provider, thus their insights come from an objective point-of-view. Coming from not only different countries, but also different types of agencies, their answers offer a 360 view of social media marketing for the upcoming year.



01.

01 · 2025

**SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING
TRENDS 2025**

Authors



thenetworkone

The world's leading independent agencies network. With over 1,200 agencies in 115 countries, thenetworkone is uniquely suited to find you the right agency partner in whichever market you need. Our best-in-class agencies can provide advertising, PR, media, digital, events, branding and design, B2B and B2C solutions, plus anything else you might require.

Kurio // The Social Media Age(ncy)

An award-winning social-first creative agency. We are operating at the intersection of creative & data, content & media buying – using proprietary tools and frameworks. We aim for thought - leadership -publishing various annual whitepapers with partners such as Cannes Lions and thenetworkone.



Sylwia Rytel,
Head of Social Media & Influencers
180 Heartbeats + Jung V Matt



Ricardo Álvarez,
Director Planning,
Social Media
Inbrax



Dhruv Gaur,
Grp. Account Director,
Digital Marketing
Medulla



Mike Sharman,
Chief Creative Officer
Retroviral



Helen Hoyer,
Associate Director of
Engagement
Abelson Taylor Group



Sebastián Berríos,
Social Media Manager
Inbrax



Cristina Benedini,
Analytics Director
Next Different



Viren Sean Noronha,
Co-founder
The New Thing



Raven Baker,
Social & Community Lead
Adolescent Content



Pancho González,
Co-Founder & Chief Creative
Officer
Inbrax



Marta Monteleone,
Head of Digital Content
Next Different



Donagh Humphreys,
Head of Social and Digital
Innovation
Thinkhouse



Óscar Peña de San Antonio,
Chief Innovation & Digital
Solutions
Atrevia



Oana Oprea,
Head of Digital Planning &
Brand Strategist
Jam Session Agency



Diego Puzzangara,
Influencer Marketing Account
Supervisor
Next Different



Kerstin Allin,
Lead Owned Thinker
Thinkerbell



Jinah Ha,
Campaign Director
Brand New Agency



Victoria Jenkins,
Associate Director of Social
Launch



Francesco Incerpi,
New Business & Sport
Specialist
Next Different



Sarah Yim,
Strategy Director
Zulu Alpha Kilo



Alexander Morad
CEO
Bright Mind



Gaby Arriaga,
Founder
Leonardo1452



Aurelija Plioplyte,
Head of digital
Not Perfect



Serenity Griffin
Community Manager
Adolescent Content



Karan Dang,
CEO & Founder
Dang



Sagar Rege,
Partner & Director
Liwa



Sam Gormley,
Founder & Global CEO
Osaka Labs



Jordan Alperin,
Creative Strategist
Day One Agency



Saurabhi De,
Director, Consumer &
International Marketing
Medulla



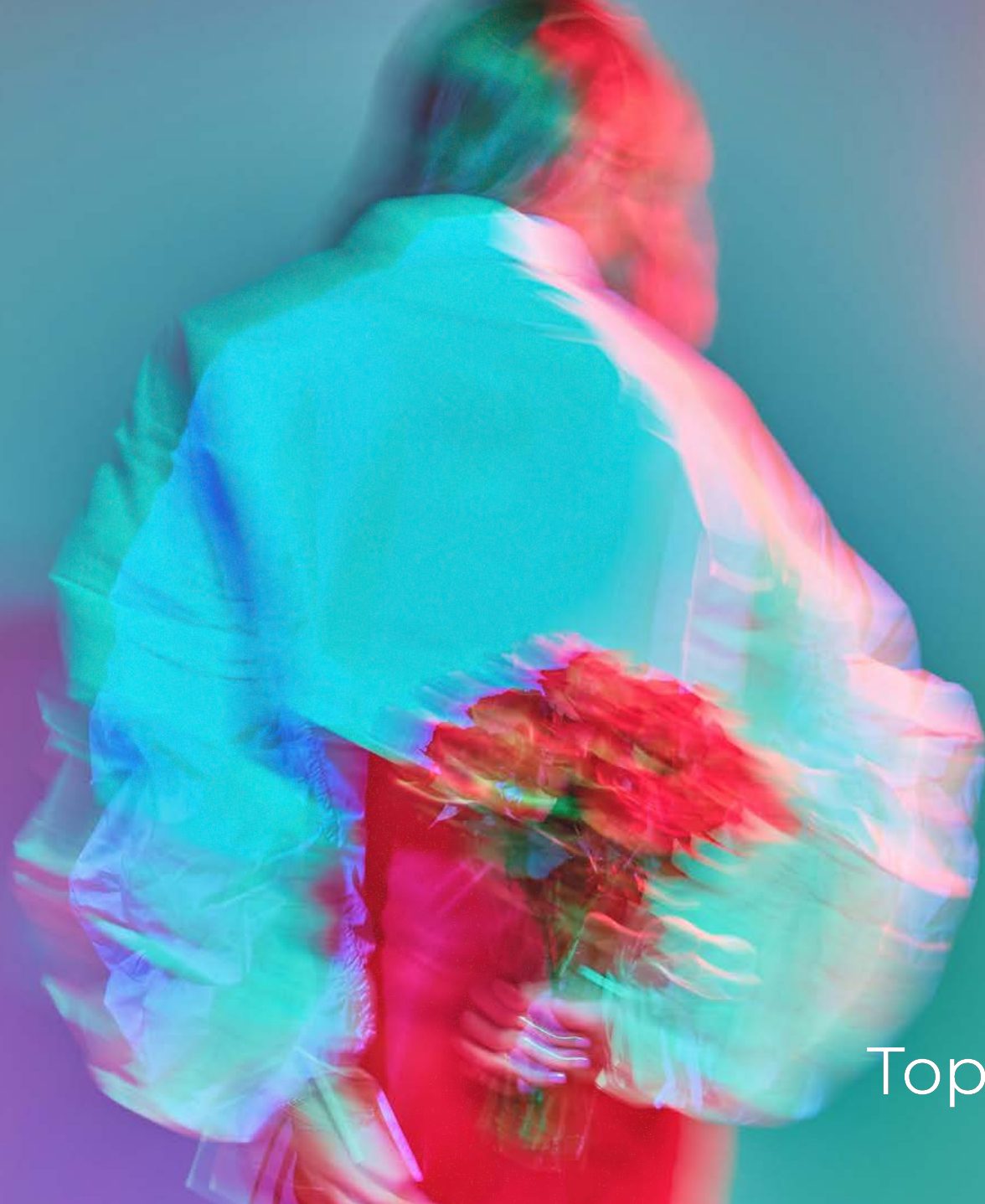
Stefanie Söhnchen,
Vice President Strategy /
Lead Digital
Piabo Communications

02.

01 · 2025

**SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING
TRENDS 2025**

Top Trends





Entertainment and escapism reign

TREND

#1

“Social media has evolved from simple networking tools into entertainment platforms. This shift has blurred the lines between social media and traditional entertainment platforms like Netflix. And because of this, entertainment is no longer just a category of content - it’s the expectation, even for serious topics or brand messaging. - - And let’s not overlook the rise of comedy creators. With so many people using social media as a primary news source, humor offers a much-needed escape. We’re even seeing luxury brands, traditionally known for emotionally neutral campaigns, jumping on board with comedy content. Brands like Marc Jacobs and Loewe are collaborating with comedians on social to bring a fresh, playful twist to their image.” – **Thinkerbell**

“Entertainment has emerged as a central theme in this new personal branding landscape. Social media influencers, content creators, and everyday users present themselves as entertainers, using creative formats to engage their audiences. From short videos and podcasts to visually stunning social media posts, self-expression is now a form of entertainment where the individual becomes both creator and brand.” – **Liwa**

“Everything Is Television, Except Traditional TV: Audiences are turning to TikTok, YouTube, and Twitch for entertainment, leaving traditional TV behind. These platforms offer something TV cannot: interactive formats that foster ongoing connections, create excitement, and instill a sense of urgency. - By 2025, these platforms will dominate as the primary entertainment destination for young people, redefining how we watch and connect. They are embracing and incentivizing long-form, interactive content to meet this demand. Spotify is expanding its video capabilities to complement podcasts, while YouTube overhauls its TV app to better showcase native creators, positioning itself as a challenger to streaming giants. Meanwhile, Twitch continues to lead with record-breaking events like Kai Cenat’s Mafiathon, reflecting the growing appetite for extended, real-time engagement. This shift highlights a fundamental change: viewers crave parasocial connections, high-energy interaction, and a deeper sense of belonging.” - **Adolescent Content**

“This shift in TikTok could be explained by the fact that it never truly was a social media, more an entertainment media.” – **Bright Mind**



Search is going social

TREND

#2

“Social platforms are set to seriously challenge traditional search engines as the primary brand discovery tool in 2025. Already, 64% of Gen Z have used TikTok as a search engine according to Adobe’s research, with the common expression being, “I Don’t Google, I TikTok” - - A quarter of people said they primarily use social media to search and communicate online, this trend is only set to rise next year. The takeaway for brands? Your digital content needs to be entertainment led, social-first in format, algorithm-friendly and effortlessly shareable.” – **Launch**

“Social media is becoming – especially for the younger generation – the new “Google search bar.” The real difference with the old-style search is that people don’t look for specific information about products and services but for inspiration.” – **NextDifferent**

“One of the most significant shifts in social media marketing will be the increasing SEO relevance of social media activities. Platforms like Reddit, with their strong focus on user-generated content and community engagement, will play a key role in driving organic traffic and boosting search engine rankings.” – **PIABO Communications**

Social media platforms are increasingly being used as search engines, particularly among younger users who prefer discovering brands through social channels rather than traditional search engines like Google. From global news to disease awareness – all information is now readily available. This shift necessitates that brands optimize their social media profiles for searchability by employing SEO best practices tailored to each platform.” – **Medulla**

“There is no reason why brands shouldn’t fight to be on top search lists on socials instead of Google, as this is the real place where users are.” – **180heartbeats**



Feed as a funnel

TREND
#3

“Platforms like Instagram and TikTok now offer integrated shopping tools, allowing users to discover, evaluate, and purchase products seamlessly within the app. This “discovery-to-conversion” pipeline has redefined the role of social media managers.” – **Jam Session Agency**

“One of the most interesting trends I see is the rise of social commerce in the US — where platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook aren’t just places to consume content, but essential hubs for discovering, exploring, and purchasing products. For me, it’s hard to imagine how much longer we’ll rely on the traditional shopping journey, which requires us to leave social platforms, visit a website, add items to a cart, login, and enter our credit card information. It’s a clunky, friction-heavy experience that just doesn’t align with the fast-paced, seamless nature of modern life, especially for the savvy, next-gen user.” – **DANG**

“The key shift is the consolidation of social networks as transactional platforms. Thanks to advanced social commerce tools, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest will further integrate with direct payment solutions. This will transform marketing strategies, shifting from lead generation to direct sales closures within the same channel. Additionally, the use of generative AI to create personalized campaigns in real time will become standard practice.” – **Inbrax**

“Social media platforms will increasingly connect desire and purchase - especially in regard to the speed between the buying impulse and the actual buy.” – **PIABO Communications**



From creators to curators – Nailing the niche

TREND

#4

“Curators are the next influencers. And Curation is the new algorithm people crave. - - As more consumers seek personalized, trend-driven experiences, curators offer a powerful way to tap into niche markets and drive conversions through curated, engaging storytelling. For marketers, this means evolving beyond traditional influencer partnerships and embracing curators as key figures in shaping brand identities in more subtle and creative ways.” – **Jam Session Agency**

“Online content is increasingly overwhelming, in reaction to this, a new type of influencer is emerging: the “culture curator.” These culture curators provide two things: the synthesis of content available and a uniquely entertaining perspective. As the landscape continues to evolve, brands will need to consider how they can partner with these emerging curators to express their brand through new mediums or even inspire new products.” – **Zulu Alpha Kilo**

“As we look ahead to 2025, the creator economy will continue to evolve, driven by multiplatform campaigns, short-form video dominance, and AI-generated content. Creators will increasingly act as curators, filtering the noise to deliver meaningful content that resonates with hyper-specific audiences.” – **THINKHOUSE**



The Format of 2025: Influencer Format

TREND

#5

“We no longer buy into the influencer; we buy into their formats — and the distribution those formats promise. Sure, brands still chase after influencers with big follower count, but the smarter ones know better. They understand that high followers don’t always mean high engagement. Instead, they ask: What’s the unique IP this creator brings? A podcast? A Reel series? A recurring character? A viral joke that’s now a signature? In today’s world, an influencer’s format is their most valuable asset. It’s their arsenal, and they’re both quartermaster and sharpshooter. Influencer marketing is becoming less about personalities and more about media planning. Brands don’t just want the person — they want the format and the reach it guarantees. And they’re ready to pay top rupee for it. In 2025, the message is clear: your format is your superpower, and it’s what keeps brands coming back. – **The New Thing**

“Times of one-sided detailed briefs are over; they [influencers] are the ones who create and use the trends first, so give them credit and let them show that they call themselves influencers for a reason.” – **180heartbeats**

“Celebrities shine annually in multi-million dollar Super Bowl ads, but the best ones leveraged celebrities in a content creator-esque, integrated marketing communications play.” – **Retroviral**



AI-first insights

TREND

#6

“AI can help unlock insights into audience behavior, predict trends, and personalize content, but the narrative core must come from a deep understanding of brand identity and audience values. This fusion of data-driven insights and creative storytelling creates an ecosystem where technology amplifies, rather than replaces, human ingenuity.” – **Liwa**

“AI algorithms analyze user behavior to deliver highly personalized content recommendations. - - AI has also revolutionized social listening by providing real-time, predictive insights. Marketers can now detect emerging trends, anticipate audience needs, and refine campaigns before trends peak, ensuring relevancy and maximizing impact.” – **Medulla**

“AI isn't just levelling up the game - it's revolutionising it. It supercharges the ability of marketers to uncover sentiment analysis, powers impactful market research, allows AI focus groups and enables rapid strategic pivots like never before.” – **Launch**



HumAIIn, the creAItor

TREND

#7

“While many users have embraced AI tools to generate content quickly and efficiently, the real skill now lies in adding a human touch to that output. AI cannot fully replace human creativity, especially when it comes to building a personal brand. Audiences crave authenticity and emotional connections, which means creators need to take AI-generated content a step further by editing and infusing it with their unique personalities, voices, and values.” – **Leonardo1452**

“AI-powered content tools will be the MVPs of 2025. - - My thesis is that the magic happens in the friction between creativity and tech. It’s the marketers who can balance AI’s efficiency with human storytelling who will truly thrive.” – **Bright Mind**

“On the other hand, social media faces “AI-enshittification,” a term coined by writer Cory Doctorow to describe the decline of platforms as profit and efficiency are prioritized over quality. Social feeds are quickly being filled with spammy, low-quality content where ‘brain rot’ and ‘AI sludge’ become mainstream. To stand out, brands will need to learn how to embrace AI for efficiency and two-way user communication while never losing sight of the human touch.” –

Day One Agency



Zero-click content

TREND

#8

“We also believe that zero-click strategies will increase. Content that is born and dies in the social network without impacting any other touchpoint. Content that is useful enough that it does not need to be reinforced with any web URL or download of any kind.” – **Atrevia**

“It may seem obvious, but I’ve noticed that companies are finally starting to understand what zero-click content is: valuable insights or engaging material provided directly on the platform without requiring users to click elsewhere.” – **Leonardo1452**

“Everything apps” embody the trend toward consolidation and utility. Inspired by the success of platforms like WeChat, these super-apps promise to integrate social networking, e-commerce, payments, and productivity into a seamless ecosystem. This appeals to convenience culture, where users increasingly demand efficiency and a centralised experience to manage their digital lives.” – **THINKHOUSE**

03.

01 · 2025

SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING
TRENDS 2025



The Interviews



180HEARTBEATS + JUNG V MATT



→ **Sylwia Rytel,**

*Head of Social Media &
Influencers*

*"There is no reason why brands
shouldn't fight to be on top search
lists on socials instead of Google, as
this is the real place where users are."*

180HEARTBEATS + JUNG V MATT (PL)

180heartbeats + JUNG v MATT is an independent interactive agency, established in Warsaw in 2007. Creativity, independence, and faith in the power of innovation are amongst the greatest values, driving the agency. Our mission is: creating brand excitement and partnering with brands that want to make a change.



180HEARTBEATS + JUNG V MATT

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

Emerging users' expectations are both higher and lower regarding the content they consume. This requires a special kind of equilibrium that not many brands know how to provide. Consumers want to see authenticity behind the brand's profiles, not forced use of trends, odd partnerships, or real-time marketing, whose only purpose is to fill an empty slot in a content calendar. This doesn't mean a big budget, huge production, or lavish influencer trips, but ideas tailor-made for the audience we are trying to reach. A lovely creative that we spend hours developing won't mean anything if its only message is the generic one that the brand wants to communicate. With the use of GenAI, they can do it themselves, so what they need is for us to listen to them and follow their lead. Focusing on the narrative and seeing how it aligns with the audience's expectations and preferences is the sweet spot we should all aim for.

At the same time, when fun comes into play, everything might go out the window as social media users seek not only information but also escapism in these difficult times. One mismatched TikTok video that is fun can equal a whole campaign in changing the perception of the brand. Be creative, push the limits, don't be afraid to do something out of the box, and focus on what you want to say, not only how you want to do it. It's the Internet, so your content will still end up sandwiched between evergreen cat videos, news broadcasts, and the latest beauty releases presented by current top influencers. Stand out and stand for something you believe in.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

We can see the rise of understanding that the brand has to have something to say on social media and not treat it as only a way to highlight the offer. Users want to see if you have an idea for your brand and not just jump from trend to trend with the product in hand. A distinctive tone of voice, content you can create on your own that is still engaging and shows the brand's essence, is key. Don't shy away from using USG or content creators to be closer to your audience, but always remember what you want to say and how the brand should be perceived. Coherence doesn't have to be boring, just know who you are and what suits you. Forcing content and trends will always seem fake, we all didn't have brat summer, even if we said we did. Social care has always proven to be a great source of insights; now, it has become a tool of community building that is necessary to be closer to the customer who expects and deserves it. It's a two-way conversation that benefits everyone. Focus on the channels that suit your brand, but don't be scared of exploring Bluesky, Lemon8, and new emerging ones that might become the go-to in 2025 in the light of current changes, so be prepared to follow your audience.

The use of AI needs to be highlighted as it is more common now and will slowly be taking over different aspects of running social media channels. Don't underestimate its power by keeping it in the creative part only and generating new versions of the sad cat video (we all know which one) or personalizing creatives into oblivion, but use it to better understand the metrics and data. Social listening, analyzing the sentiment, and overall performance - can all be evaluated in depth using new tools, and as we learn new approaches to social media, it's important to see how things work in our day-to-day communication.



180HEARTBEATS + JUNG V MATT

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

The great AI debate continues, and it's more important than ever as GenAI is here to stay and change the way we work forever. If you haven't adapted the use of it on the daily in 2024, 2025 might be the last call for it. It's widely known that it can be used for creatives (including videos and animations), reducing the work on the production team, bouncing back ideas and synthesizing insights, increasing levels of social care, optimizing campaigns, and personalizing assets. The possibilities to create great content and analyze everything thoroughly before and after the launch are endless. However, we can't forget that not only are we using it, but our audience is as well, so we should be prepared for it and make the brands as promptable as possible. Chat GPT and other tools are slowly becoming another touchpoint in the campaign ecosystem to meet our audience, and we need to be ready for that.

Not forgetting B2B communication, similarly to B2C, it's necessary not to just push the huge amount of personalized assets with every offer possible and hope that one will stick and end up in more business. Focus on the message, have it clear from the start and consistent among all channels, and then adapt & adjust. Every business will be optimized using AI and personalizing each creative as much as they can, so remember what differentiates your products and use it as an umbrella idea that later can be molded into what is needed.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Authenticity is more important than ever before when it comes to influencer marketing. For the last few years, we have all witnessed the growth of the importance of micro and nano influencers that users could actually relate to, and that shared their values, problems, and their price point. Nowadays, we can dive even deeper into the influencer pool and focus on specific niches that match the brand's essence. Using fandom key ambassadors, creators from particular interest groups, or age-specific influencers can be beneficial. Especially that the community they build is crucial, giving the sense of belonging to the audience and brand reaching out to appreciate it by creating something just for unique to make them feel seen.

It's about the quality of the reach and not just the big numbers. Moreover, using influencers as co-creators of ideas and not just an outlet gives an authentic boost to the campaign with insights into what the users want to see. Times of one-sided detailed briefs are over; they are the ones who create and use the trends first, so give them credit and let them show that they call themselves influencers for a reason. This extends as well to UGC and visual content creators who have been on the rise for the past few years as a way to make the assets the users want to see.



ABELSON TAYLOR GROUP



→ **Helen Hoye,**

*Associate Director of
Engagement*

"The rise of AI in social media is reminiscent of the era when online dating first entered the digital space. People were excited, skeptical, and even apprehensive all at once. Yet, over time, it became a new normal."

ABELSON TAYLOR GROUP (USA)

Abelson Taylor Group is a healthcare and wellness marketing agency that delivers a return on imagination. From market and media insights and strategy to creativity to tech, we're imaginative in all the ways that influence market behaviors and deliver what matters for our clients: improving health and well-being while providing tangible, measurable market results that grow your brand.



ABELSON TAYLOR GROUP

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

Today, users are more comfortable in their social media environments than ever before. Platforms increasingly tailor content suggestions based on users' historical interactions, creating a highly personalized experience. Users now expect that the moment they open a social app, they'll not only see updates from accounts they follow but also discover additional content aligned with their preferences.

However, the sheer abundance of these "content flavors" can feel limitless—and, at times, overwhelming. Brands are constantly striving to avoid being perceived as "outdated" or "annoying" in their social media presence and interactions with their audiences.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

With the formalization of a potential TikTok ban earlier this year, other social platforms have actively responded by finding ways to attract TikTok users and influencers. Many platforms have introduced new features and embraced the short-form video format, capitalizing on the growing trend of "snackable" content.

Unsurprisingly, TikTok influencers and content creators have begun exploring alternative platforms. YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram have rolled out various financial incentive programs to reward creators and encourage their migration. These efforts aim to establish their platforms as the new go-to destinations for short-form video content.

While direct TikTok competitors have been quick to react to the potential disruption, it will be interesting to see if platforms like X, Threads, or the emerging player BlueSky will remain focused on their core offerings of real-time, short-form text updates or pivot to incorporate emerging trends.



ABELSON TAYLOR GROUP



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

There is no doubt that 2024 has been defined by the undeniable influence of AI, which has permeated various aspects of the digital world, including social media. Its presence is everywhere—from AI-powered content editing tools to personalized chatbots. AI enables users and brands to create and engage on platforms more efficiently, analyze and forecast data with unprecedented speed, and customize their presence and experiences almost instantly. This innovation has elevated social media to a level previously unseen in its history.

The rise of AI in social media is reminiscent of the era when online dating first entered the digital space. People were excited, skeptical, and even apprehensive all at once. Yet, over time, it became a new normal. Similarly, while we are still exploring AI's full capabilities in the social sphere, and not all users and brands have embraced its potential, its impact on the social landscape will undoubtedly grow more profound in the years ahead.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Becoming an influencer today is easier than ever, particularly for those who create content around topics they are genuinely passionate about. However, by 2024, the influencer market has become oversaturated, leading to consumer fatigue. Social media users are increasingly bombarded with product offerings and demos, which can overwhelm audiences and dilute the impact of influencer campaigns.

Many influencers have leaned into the easy “money-making” model, producing excessive amounts of sponsored content. This over-commercialization often erodes audience trust, making it harder for brands to connect authentically. Additionally, brands that avoid influencer marketing may find it increasingly challenging to compete in the crowded social space.

To overcome these common challenges, the key lies in partnering with content creators who excel in their niche and adopt a storytelling approach that is unique, authentic, and engaging. These creators foster deeper connections with their audiences, helping brands stand out and build lasting trust.



ADOLESCENT CONTENT



→ **Raven Baker,**

*Social & Community Lead
Serenity Griffin, Community
Manager*

“Reliant on AI for validation, young people use it to calm anxiety, boost confidence, or make decisions when friends or family aren’t available. Users can also personalize their AI, shaping it into the ideal companion they can’t always find in the real world.”



→ **Serenity Griffin**

Community Manager

ADOLESCENT CONTENT (USA)

Adolescent Content is a global agency and content studio uniquely powered by Gen Z and youth creators. Founded to amplify authentic youth voices, Adolescent specializes in crafting innovative campaigns, commercials, branded content, and social strategies that resonate with today’s diverse, ever-evolving audiences.

Through Youthtellers, its dedicated research and insights division, Adolescent uncovers actionable data and emerging trends, ensuring brands stay ahead of the curve in youth-driven markets.



ADOLESCENT CONTENT

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

Everything Is Television, Except Traditional TV: Audiences are turning to **TikTok**, YouTube, and Twitch for entertainment, leaving traditional TV behind. These platforms offer something TV cannot: interactive formats that foster ongoing connections, create excitement, and instill a sense of urgency. TikTok Live, for example, keeps creators streaming for hours, sharing intimate details, and encouraging viewers to return for continued engagement. 82% of our Youthtellers, ages 15-27, say they feel more connected to creators and their stories when content is longer and more in-depth.

It's like a **never-ending FaceTime** with your favorite creator, a heightened body-doubling experience. On Twitch, streams like Kai Cenat's bring surprise guests, unpredictable moments, and real-time interaction, creating an experience that is both dynamic and captivating.

By 2025, these platforms will dominate as the primary entertainment destination for young people, redefining how we watch and connect. They are embracing and incentivizing long-form, interactive content to meet this demand. Spotify is expanding its video capabilities to complement podcasts, while YouTube overhauls its TV app to better showcase native creators, positioning itself as a challenger to streaming giants. Meanwhile, Twitch continues to lead with record-breaking events like Kai Cenat's Mafiathon, reflecting the growing appetite for extended, real-time engagement. This shift highlights a fundamental change: viewers **crave parasocial connections**, high-energy interaction, and a deeper sense of belonging.

23 Y/O F - Los Angeles, CA: "I see the demand for longer-form stories that are broken up into small pieces continuing. It's always been a thing, and it will continue to be. Short-form videos are a big thing right now, so that deters people from longer videos. People have a very short attention span unless we're talking about the TikTok multiparters. Think storytime-style videos, but ones where the story is spread out across a series of multiple TikToks, rather than being a singular long video."

20 Y/O F - Kansas City, MO: "I feel more connected to creators or their stories when they share longer, in-depth content because it makes them seem more human and relatable. It feels less like curated, planned content and more like a friend's private story, where they're sharing their authentic thoughts and experiences. This deeper level of sharing allows me to see their personality and struggles, making it easier to connect with them on a personal level. It creates a sense of intimacy and trusts as if they're inviting me into their world rather than just presenting a polished version of themselves."

Slang Is Losing Its Regionality: Social media allows everyone to connect, regardless of where they are based. Slang that was once considered regional is now easily shared online and quickly adopted into daily vocabularies worldwide.

Driven by **TikTok's algorithm, the fascination** with African American Vernacular English (**AAVE**), and the **cultural energy** of cities like New York, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, and Miami, social media breaks down geographic barriers, making regional expressions more accessible than ever.

A phrase coined in one city can go viral and become part of someone's vocabulary halfway across the world. While this diffusion highlights the cultural impact of these regions, it often strips slang of its original context and meaning, reshaping how language travels and evolves in the digital age. Long story short, as we move into 2025, our ways of speaking will continue to converge, making us sound more and more alike.

23 Y/O F - Miami, FL: "Though there is technically a difference between AAVE and slang (in my opinion), I believe most slang words originate from AAVE nowadays. AAVE has always been around, and as an African American, I'm finding things I grew up hearing my parents, friends, or community say enter the public domain via wider adoption on the internet. I don't want to be arrogant and say every single slang word has originated from AAVE, but a lot of them clearly have."



ADOLESCENT CONTENT

22 Y/O M - Hesperia, California: "I'm white, so take this with a grain of salt. If I had to guess, rap music and the queer community seem like the two main routes that take AAVE from being something white people find annoying/uneducated to being cool (obviously, this is a huge generalization, but I've seen slang terms like 'bae' and 'lit' go from 'too ghetto' to 'hip with the kids' in real-time)."

Users Will Make Purchases to Signal Sameness: Users are leveraging their purchasing power and attention to signal their ability to conform to societal trends, fostering a culture where "**sameness**" becomes a form of **social currency**. 73% of our Youthtellers, ages 15-27, think having similar products or styles as your peers helps foster a sense of belonging.

People will buy more of the same products, wear more of the same clothes, and adopt shared habits to feel accepted. This behavior will become even more common as the need for connection intensifies, driven by algorithms that offer a window into aspirational lifestyles and seamlessly showcase the goods needed to achieve the look and fit the part.

The desire to belong is universal, but in 2025, this need will evolve in ways that empower brands to demonstrate how their products and services can help users achieve this sense of belonging. Whether through fashion, technology, or entertainment, users will feel a stronger **urge to align with mainstream trends**, affirming their place in the larger social narrative.

23 Y/O M - Austin, TX: "Being similar to other people gives you a sense of comfort that you belong and that you feel valued. We like to feel represented as people but also be recognized as individuals."

24 Y/O F - Somerset, NJ: "Certain items are a signifier of belonging, as in that item has significance to the group of people that you belong to. People who don't identify with your group can also tell that you have chosen to align yourself with the image/values of your peers."

Users Turning to AI for Emotional Validation and Friendship: Young people are turning to **AI chatbots** for emotional support and friendship, often confiding in them more than they do with their friends. As loneliness becomes more common, we will see an increase in young people using AI to fill emotional and social gaps. Whether it's for a quick laugh, virtual therapy, or relationship advice, AI provides **immediate support** that is accessible, non-judgmental, and free from the complexities of human relationships. Unlike friends who might judge, gossip, or offer biased advice, AI can remain neutral.

Reliant on AI for **validation**, young people use it to calm anxiety, boost confidence, or make decisions when friends or family aren't available. Users can also personalize their AI, shaping it into the **ideal companion** they can't always find in the real world. This trend is expected to grow by 2025, with AI increasingly seen as a reliable, supportive, and non-judgmental presence.

26 Y/O F - Tinton Falls, NJ: "I like ChatGPT because it helps me decipher what people's meanings are behind their words. As an autistic person, it's been a great 'translator' in that way since I often take things too literally and sometimes struggle to see beyond that. ChatGPT helps a lot with that aspect."



ADOLESCENT CONTENT



SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Food as Entertainment: In 2024, food became a **luxury** and a **central aspect of social life**. By 2025, restaurants are set to become the #1 “third space.” With Americans managing tighter budgets, food will be the primary indulgence when they choose to splurge. Restaurants are capitalizing on this shift, tapping into multi-sensory dining experiences, experiential dishes, personalized menus, and highly shareable interiors. 65% of our Youthtellers, ages 15-27, say they prefer to socialize with friends at chain restaurants like Chili’s, Olive Garden, and Raising Canes. Items like sizzling fajitas, limited edition merch, cost-effective offers, and colorful daiquiris are all major draws.

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

People Will Engage More with Features That Offer Anonymity: There’s an increasing **sense of shame** tied to digital behavior, driven by concerns about how others might judge the content users engage with, the algorithms that feed it to them, and the amount of time they spend on their devices.

Features that enable more private interactions are encouraging greater engagement and screen time. For instance, Instagram took an early step in August 2019 by removing the “followers” section of the notification tab, which showed users what their connections were liking and following. This gained momentum in June 2024 when Elon Musk removed the feature on X (formerly Twitter) that allowed users to see the interactions of people they follow.

By obscuring this information, platforms are reducing the pressure of public scrutiny and creating spaces where users feel more comfortable exploring and engaging freely. As apps continue to **prioritize anonymity**, these features are likely to become key drivers of user retention and interaction, shaping the future of digital social spaces.

24 Y/O M - Los Angeles, CA: “I like more content now [since likes are hidden on X]. I don’t need others seeing what I like, nor do I want them to perceive me.”

20 Y/O M - Kansas City, MO: “I find myself liking more content now that others can’t see what I engage with. The removal of the visible “like” feature provides a sense of privacy and reduces the fear of judgment from others about my preferences or opinions. It feels more freeing to engage with content without worrying about how my likes might be perceived. This change allows me to focus on genuinely liking content that resonates with me rather than curating an image based on public engagement.”

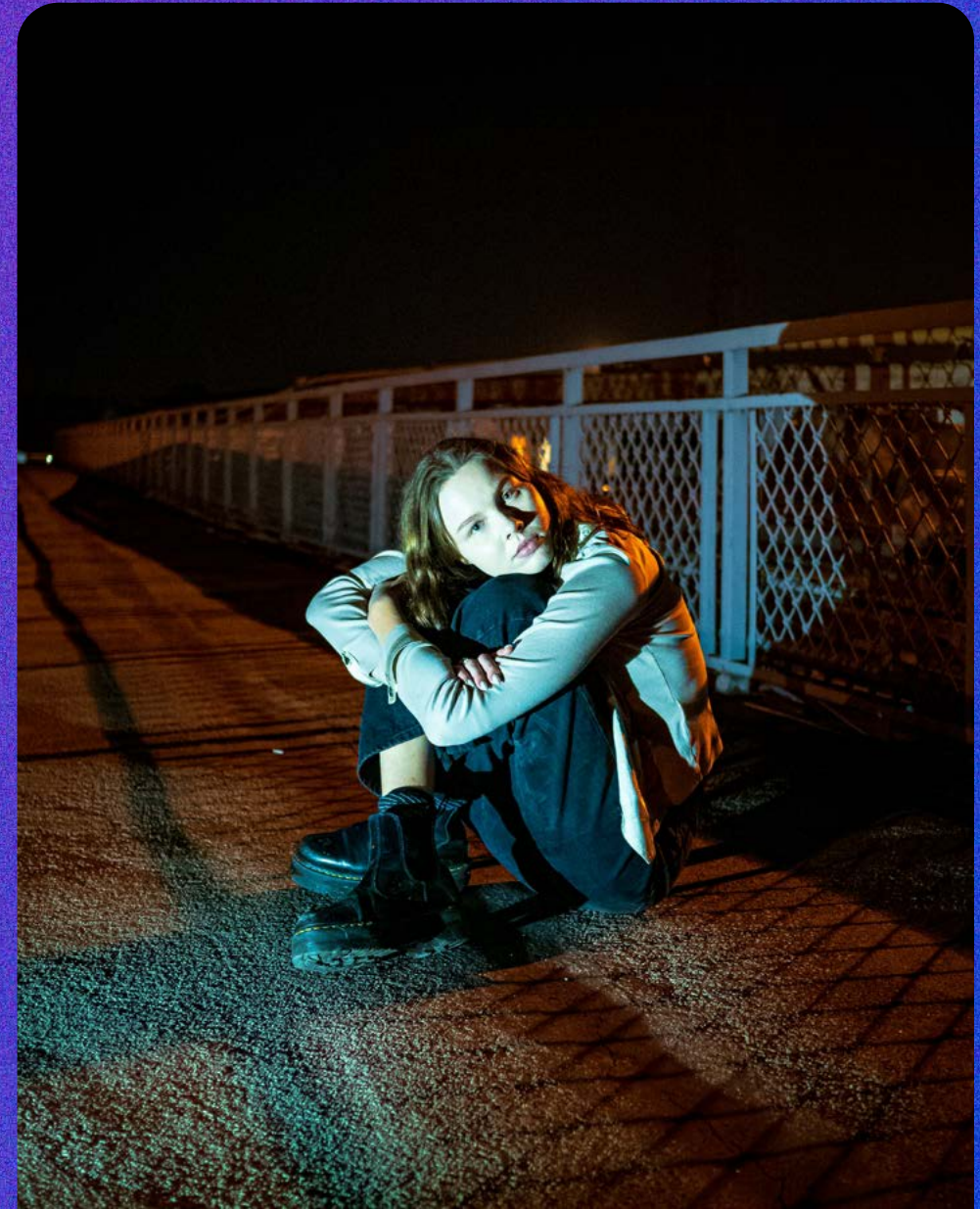


ADOLESCENT CONTENT

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

As the influencer economy continues to grow, we will see more content creators with large platforms turning to monetization strategies that emphasize exclusivity. This shift will drive the rise of paid communities, paid close friend lists, subscriber-only content, and other forms of personal access. These approaches will not only help followers feel more connected to the creator, fostering deeper trust and loyalty, but will also provide influencers with valuable additional revenue streams.

Beyond paid communities, this trend will expand to include unique forms of engagement, like Billie Eilish using her close friends list on Instagram to tease new music, creating viral buzz and boosting her platforms. More creators will follow suit, offering exclusive access to coveted information, unfiltered live streams, or even 'secret' spam accounts to engage their most loyal fans, further solidifying the growing importance of exclusivity in digital engagement.





ATREVIA



→ **Óscar Peña de San Antonio,**

Chief Innovation & Digital Solutions Officer & Former President of Metaverse/ Web3 Commision from IAB Spain

“We also believe that zero-click strategies will increase. Content that is born and dies in the social network without impacting any other touchpoint. Content that is useful enough that it does not need to be reinforced with any web URL or download of any kind.”

ATREVIA (ES)

We are a Global Communication and Corporate Affairs Agency, operating in 17 countries and a Partner Agency in 30 more territories. We have developed a methodology that enables companies to solve complex problems, with multiple stakeholders, through listening, strategy, creativity, and different agency and consultancy practices. We believe in commitment, and from the moment and the way we operate, we can become activists of the change, and drivers of a sustainable future. Because there is a way to communicate, to create sustainability plans, to define the purposes and the culture of a company, the relationship with the shareholders and with the interest groups, and that makes the difference. Because the change rests in the hands of the companies, we can help them to integrate the change into each of their decisions. Creating movements, dialogue networks, studies, and counseling every day, putting the focus on people.



ATREVIA



S L M Y

KURIOE
THE SOCIAL MEDIA AGENCY

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

A rebalancing of forces is taking place in the platform ecosystem. The new world order is driving people -and also brands- to make decisions about the channels they want to be on in the coming years. There is a lot of pressure.

This will result in a further fragmentation of the audience, which is moving to new spaces more in line with their individual values and interests. This shift is being seen in those users migrating from X to Threads or BlueSky, or from X to LinkedIn. These movements in user behavior in social media are indicative of the search for environments that favor privacy and authenticity, away from the misinformation and toxicity that sometimes characterize the Internet giants. This trend will continue in 2025.

This phenomenon is also followed by brands, which are not willing to appear in spaces that have an impact on their reputation and encourage misinformation. The advertising industry is looking for new places to publish its content strategies and boost positioning through more controlled and secure paid media strategies.

On the other hand, we find ourselves in relevant change on the consumer side. If there is one word that defines the relationship between technology, economy, and society today, it is the search for quick alternative solutions to any daily issue that requires time and effort. In slang, they call it smartcuts or shortcuts, and it's a buzzword, a trend among Millennials and Generation Z. A new set of beliefs with which to approach life, at all levels.

Anyone who has daughters or sons between the ages of 14 and 22, let's ask them. They prefer a quick fix by searching TikTok than going to a medical specialist (with the risk of self-diagnosis and self-medication linked); they prefer a video pill on Instagram of how to make a healthy recipe in two minutes than consulting a cookbook by the most renowned chef or the best nutritionist; they give more credibility to the agile investment recommendations of "experts" and millionaires in finance and trading that flood YouTube than following a regulated financial course or an extensive stock market investment guide. Shortcuts offer immediate rewards. They satisfy in a context where the pace of life is increasingly accelerated, and where time is a precious resource.

In this context, we are talking about a new type of consumer who seeks immediate solutions, who is not willing to waste time, who values work-life balance, who makes intensive use of technology, and who focuses on optimizing everything that affects his or her life, from health or entertainment to finances.



ATREVIA



SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Speed. Social networks are the thermometer of the functioning of the Society. They are its loudspeaker. And it progresses, mutates, and evolves at a dizzying pace. So does its content. That's why content creators are the ones who best respond to this challenge, and brands are aware of it. They need to reach their audiences with the content that best connects with them while at the same time, they need greater speed in generating a response.

We will see an increase in investment in creator marketing, with a greater weight on micro-influencers and macro-influencers versus the conventional creative investment strategy.

We will also see an increase in investment in social media oriented to business objectives, such as sales. Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok are leading the way in social commerce, a trend that will increase in 2025 because it is a direct route to improving the shopping experience.

We also believe that zero-click strategies will increase. Content that is born and dies in the social network without impacting any other touchpoint. Content that is useful enough that it does not need to be reinforced with any web URL or download of any kind. A trend that has also begun to be glimpsed in conventional SEO strategies, where users reward getting quick information from the first search result without the need to go to the brand's website.

This will have a tremendous impact on the measurement of digital marketing strategies and, of course, on the recent efforts of brands to increase the weight of First Party Data.

On the other hand, social networks are authentic spaces for people's conversation, especially through comments. This has begun to arouse the interest of brands, which are exploring ways to integrate into the conversation in the most appropriate way. Brands are intervening by commenting on the content of content creators, in a strategic way, with brief comments, and with agile interventions made in less than 24 hours. This will be a trend as long as brands do not compromise the authenticity of content creators' comments.



ATREVIA



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

2025 will be the year of full integration of AI into social media creative production pipelines. Brands are pushing agencies and social media teams to accelerate response times to viral trends and phenomena, while asking if it is possible to be more efficient in planning and editorial production.

We will see an increase in the use of AI-based workflows in social media in areas such as: image creation, animation of static elements, non-linear editing, sound, transcreation, multi-language translation, development of virtual influencers, among others.

It will be important to learn to balance the weight of AI and human participation in the creation of content for social media. We are facing channels that base their success on authenticity, dialogue between people and relationships. The use of AI should not alter that equation. Brands that cross the red line run the risk of disconnecting their audiences, as is happening with many vertical media that are reducing their staffs and teams in favor of AI, at all stages of the process, from ideation, generation and production.

One of the most relevant applications in the field of artificial intelligence and social media will be the use of virtual archetypes for content creators and brands. For those who do not know what this is, it is the creation of a virtual entity (an AI-based personalized assistant), which has the characteristics of a specific human being, a buyer persona, and is able to convincingly emulate their way of thinking, behaving or buying. Thanks to this, content creators will be able to develop content automatically with much greater relevance, tailored to the preferences, concerns and behaviors of the target audience. They can also be used to respond to questions, make comments or personalize any brand interaction with their micro-audiences. Of course, and with more precise training, it is possible to use them in online reputation management, responding appropriately to negative comments or reacting to positive ones.

Along with artificial intelligence, advances in the field of spatial internet, more specifically with augmented reality (AR), are relevant and will continue to grow in 2025. It has been shown that advances at the technical level (texturing, lighting, raytracing), as well as in the hardware of the latest mobile devices, makes the development of amplified experiences via AR through Instagram, Snapchat or Tiltok filters, grow. This trend evolves in parallel to the increase of social shopping within these platforms, as virtually testing products significantly reduces returns.



ATREVIA

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

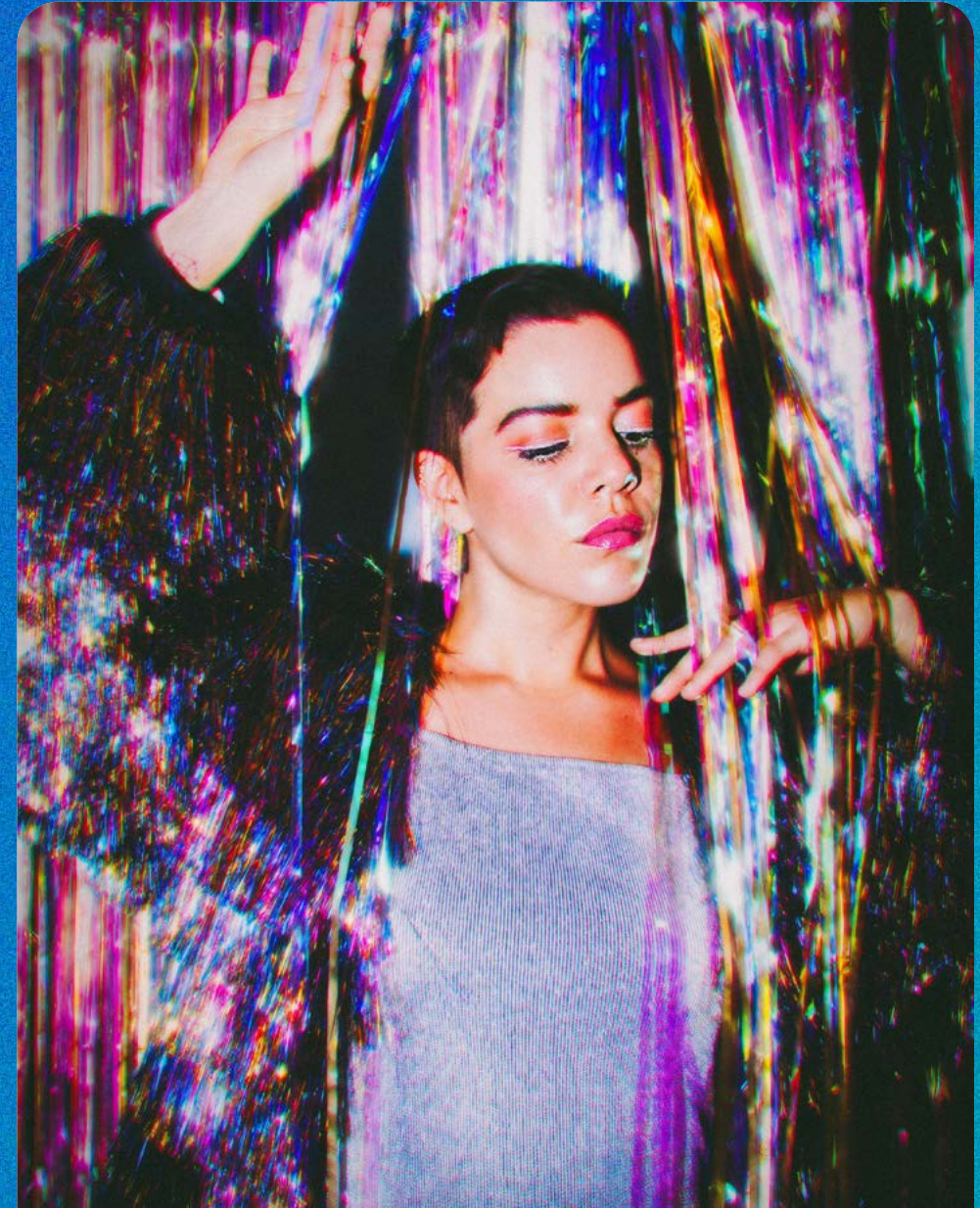
Elon Musk's recent tirade on X sums up what is to come: "You are the media now". We are going to experience a repositioning of the role of content creators globally, an increase in their relevance in brand strategies versus conventional media. It is about the democratization of content on a global scale, therefore, the number of people who want to share their knowledge, monetize their content and produce authentic content will increase (podcasters, video content creators, online trainers, etc...). The value of niche content will increase. And the fragmentation of audiences will accelerate further.

We should not be surprised, then, to see micro communities talking about niche topics such as "mindfulness techniques for eSports players", "green gadgets for people who live in vans" or "waste-free cooking for college students".

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

LinkedIn has become an efficient channel for demand-generation strategies. And since content creation is the basis of this strategy, we are going to see more and more brands innovating in content formats and typologies on this platform. Short videos are a format that is gaining ground, and so is the use of micro-influencers and/or specialized B2B content creators.

Along with micro-influencers, many brands have realized that among their employees, there is a fantastic pool to create fresh, truthful, and authentic content with a direct impact on the brand. This trend, called Employee Advocacy, will continue in 2025. Employees bring authenticity to content creation and are a help in any content strategy based on organic growth. Within this strategy, we must add the personal brand-building efforts of the company's top managers, CEOs, and even the dolphins who are called upon to continue the management and leadership of a family business.





BRAND NEW AGENCY



→ **Jinah Ha,**

Campaign Director

“Building relationships and fostering trust between brands and consumers will emerge as the most critical strategy.”

BRAND NEW AGENCY (KR)

Brand New Agency is a creative agency based in Korea. It develops communication strategies and various creative solutions for brands. The agency has an impressive track record, having won awards at prestigious international advertising festivals such as Cannes, Clio, and the New York Festivals. Its major clients include leading consumer goods brands such as Jack Link's, Henkel Consumer Brands, and Yuhan-Clorox.



BRAND NEW AGENCY



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

The most notable trend of 2025 is the democratization of content creation. Users are no longer passive consumers of content but are establishing themselves as active creators. This shift has been accelerated by the advent of generative AI, which has lowered the barriers to content production. With various AI technologies and platforms, users can easily create high-quality content. This change not only leads to greater content diversity but also fosters the activation of new content creation communities.

Another key trend is the growing popularity of short-form and vertical video content on social media platforms. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are rapidly expanding, providing an endless canvas for creativity and storytelling. Understanding the short-form content trend and creating differentiated creative content will remain critical tasks in 2025.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

The most fascinating transformation in social media marketing is its evolution into a community-driven space. Moving beyond simply promoting products or increasing follower counts, social media is becoming a hub for communities that share specific interests and values. Building relationships and fostering trust between brands and consumers will emerge as the most critical strategy.

Consumers no longer rely on one-sided messages and instead seek connections with people who share similar interests. At the heart of this trend lies the concept of authenticity. Rather than asserting their own narratives, brands must focus on the stories of their consumers. Collaborating with diverse creators actively engaged in these communities offers a compelling way to achieve this.

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

The most noteworthy technology of 2025 is generative AI. This innovation is revolutionizing content creation, establishing itself as a powerful tool for both brands and consumers. The ability to effortlessly generate text, images, videos, and music is expanding the ecosystem of social media content.

Whereas traditional marketing pushed mass-produced content to consumers, generative AI now enables the automatic creation of content tailored to users' preferences and interests. This presents an exciting opportunity for brands and marketers to attract new users and captivate their attention.

Generative AI is not just a new tool; it is fundamentally redefining how users and brands engage with social media. This technology will continue to play a central role in shaping the future of social media.



BRAND NEW AGENCY



INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Influencer marketing is shifting from macro-influencers to micro-influencers. While follower count was once the key metric for evaluating influencer quality, today, qualitative factors such as authenticity and engagement have become more significant. Influencers with genuine engagement and authenticity play a pivotal role as effective endorsers who attract and immerse consumers in the brand.

Micro-influencers establish a relatable image and rapport with their audience on social media, earning high levels of trust and strong connections with followers. This contrasts with macro-influencers, who, despite larger audiences, often see lower engagement due to ad-heavy content. The relationship between micro-influencers and their followers resembles a small tribe, making communication targeted at their communities a strategy with high ROI relative to marketing budgets.

Moreover, while macro-influencers often involve higher costs and limited accessibility, leading to one-off campaigns, micro-influencers are better suited for fostering long-term relationships with brands. Acting as brand ambassadors, they can extend their influence within the communities they center.

By 2025, targeting the communities of diverse micro-influencers aligned with brand personas will become a core marketing strategy.

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

In the B2B sector, the application of generative AI technology has also become increasingly important. Generative AI serves as an efficient sales enablement tool, empowering sales teams with AI-generated email drafts, presentation materials, and customized demo scripts. These tools save time on customer communication, allowing teams to manage more potential clients and boosting ROI by reducing repetitive tasks.

In B2B communication, the utilization of generative AI is rising. For instance, AI can create materials such as industry news and trend reports to attract potential leads, automatically distribute them, and analyze their performance. AI also collects real-time data on how content is consumed, making instant adjustments as needed to improve reach and engagement rates.



BRIGHT MIND



→ **Alexander Morad,**

CEO

"We already see a loss of interest in UGC, and I think that will mostly be replaced by AIGC (AI-generated creators). It's already too easy to create amazing AI creators with apps such as Captions suddenly, you can have 20 different creators talking about your product in 5 different languages in just one day."

BRIGHT MIND (SE)

Bright Mind will help you "out entertain" your competition. We're specialized in social media. We're on a mission - we want to make every business understand the importance of using social media the right way. Let us help you with your social media and we promise you that we'll increase your sales, give you new insights about your costumers and enhance your brand even more."



BRIGHT MIND



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

Social media has slowly shifted into a new era, one where platforms are increasingly creator-first. Instagram, for example, has become awkward for “regular” users. The casual photo dumps that kind of revived it a bit are now also ‘cringe’ and it’s mainly for celebrating milestones or achievements. Interestingly, TikTok seems to be heading in a similar direction, slowly transitioning from a place for unfiltered creativity to a platform where creators and influencers dominate. By 2025, we’ll see this trend solidify, marking a shift away from the “wild west” of user-generated content. It’s very premature for TikTok, this usually happens when a generation pivots to a new platform and I don’t see Gen Alpha blowing up a new one during 2025, and when they do, it will probably be avatar-based. This shift in TikTok could be explained by the fact that it never truly was a social media, more an entertainment media. Either way, this shift will turn the ‘regular’ consumers more passive than they’ve ever been, putting a lot of responsibility on the platform’s algorithms.

One wildcard to watch is Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book). If it plays its cards right, it could bridge the gap globally as we wait for the next big social media sensation. It’s a fascinating moment where the old rules of social media are fading, and the future feels wide open.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

AI is reshaping the game for social media marketing, making it more segmented, dynamic, and efficient. In 2025, the rise of agents and hyper-accessible AI tools will allow marketers to create more with fewer resources, making personalized campaigns at scale a reality. It doesn’t just streamline workflows but it also changes how marketing teams approach content creation and audience engagement. This will have a direct effect on both consumer behavior and marketing teams. My thesis is that the magic happens in the friction between creativity and tech. It’s the marketers who can balance AI’s efficiency with human storytelling who will truly thrive. The best campaigns will leverage AI to handle the heavy lifting while leaving room for creativity to shine through, delivering not just content, but connection. Social commerce will also explode, especially on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Netflix, where shopping will become an integrated part of the user experience. It’s all about creating a seamless journey from discovery to purchase.



BRIGHT MIND



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

AI-powered content tools will be the MVPs of 2025. When it comes to creativity and creation, we have platforms such as Captions, HeyGen, ChatGPT, Suno, and alike that will enable marketers and creators to produce high-quality content and ideas, faster than ever. On the user side, AI will have an interesting impact on the e-commerce experiences. Picture this: you upload a photo of yourself to a clothing brand's site, and suddenly, you're the model, virtually trying on outfits in real time on that webpage. Virtual try-ons like this, combined with interactive AR features and personalized recommendations, will transform how we shop online.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

In 2025, it's all about micro- and nano-influencers and AI avatars. In a digital world that will be much more segmented, niche creators who have insanely loyal followings will be very strong. They're perfect for brands looking to build trust in specific communities. We already see a loss of interest in UGC, and I think that will mostly be replaced by AIGC (AI-generated creators). It's already too easy to create amazing AI creators with apps such as Captions suddenly, you can have 20 different creators talking about your product in 5 different languages in just one day. Brands are catching on, using them for campaigns where full creative control is key. Another trend? Long-term partnerships over quick collabs. With the rise of AI creators and micro- and nano-influencers, companies will turn to the bigger influencers for long-term partnerships. Brands and influencers are teaming up to build stories over time, creating deeper audience connections. It's less about "one and done" and more about playing the long game.

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

On social media, I've never really separated the two, I usually add b2b+b2c and create b4h, which is business 4 humans. At the end of the day, I run a business, but I consume social media as a human. I believe it will become even more so in 2025. Platforms like LinkedIn are evolving from boring corporate spaces into hubs for storytelling and thought leadership and are stronger now with their focus on short-form videos. There has been a little rise during 2024 when it comes to Employee-generated content, not too much, though, and I think it will stay the same during 2025.



DANG



→ **Karan Dang,**

CEO & Founder

“Long-form content will make a comeback. I’m not talking about the long-winded corporate messages, but rich, in-depth storytelling that adds value, and then microcontent will fill in the gaps—snackable pieces of content that complement and drive home the broader narrative.”

DANG (US)

DANG is a creative consultancy and agency specializing in Next-Gen Centricity™. Founded by internationally acclaimed Creative and Brand Executives Karan & Shruti Dang, DANG focuses on crafting innovative strategies and impactful storytelling tailored for Gen Z and Gen Alpha. With a deep understanding of culture, creativity, and community, DANG helps brands break into culture authentically through trend analysis, digital anthropology, and cutting-edge creative storytelling. Whether it’s redefining brand experiences, unlocking youth influence, or designing for the future, DANG is where bold ideas meet next-gen innovation.



DANG

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

In my opinion, by 2025, social media will become an even more integral part of our daily lives, not just for entertainment, but as a functional tool that blends seamlessly with our routines. One of the most interesting trends I see is the rise of social commerce in the US—where platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook aren't just places to consume content, but essential hubs for discovering, exploring, and purchasing products. For me, it's hard to imagine how much longer we'll rely on the traditional shopping journey, which requires us to leave social platforms, visit a website, add items to a cart, login, and enter our credit card information. It's a clunky, friction-heavy experience that just doesn't align with the fast-paced, seamless nature of modern life, especially for the savvy, next-gen user.

We've already seen the beginnings of this on TikTok and Instagram, where you can watch a video, tap on a product, and make a purchase without ever leaving the platform. I believe this will only accelerate. By 2025, I expect shopping to be almost instantaneous—whether you're scrolling through a TikTok feed or interacting with an influencer's livestream. This means the journey from inspiration to transaction will shorten, and social platforms will become essential to the purchasing process. Gen Z and Gen Alpha are all about efficiency, and if social media can become as useful as it is entertaining, it will likely become their go-to space for discovering and buying everything from products to experiences. Social media is no longer just a passive, entertainment-driven tool—it's becoming an all-in-one digital marketplace and service hub.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

For me, the most exciting shift in social media marketing by 2025 will be the rise of founder-led marketing. As I see it, brands have been overrun by a sea of impersonal, mindless advertising that consumers are starting to tune out. With younger generations rejecting traditional marketing, the need for authenticity and relatability has never been greater. Founder-led marketing, where the actual person behind the company becomes the face and voice of the brand, is something I've seen grow in popularity, and I truly believe it will skyrocket in the next few years. We've already seen this at the upper echelons with figures like Brian Chesky of Airbnb and Mark Zuckerberg of Meta taking more personal, public roles, but by 2025, this trend will extend far beyond the tech giants.

Consumers, especially Gen Z, have increasingly shown they want to connect with brands on a deeper, more personal level. They are no longer satisfied with seeing a polished logo or generic brand message; they want to know who is behind the brand and what that person stands for. This is where founder-led marketing comes in. I think brands that embrace this trend and humanize themselves by showcasing their leaders will be able to create a more authentic connection with their audiences.

What excites me the most is how this shift will also make community-building the new face of brand development. Instead of simply pushing out advertising, brands will need to foster genuine relationships with their communities. They'll need to listen to their audience, engage in meaningful conversations, and build spaces where people feel they belong. This is especially true for younger generations, who are drawn to brands that stand for something and speak to their values. As a result, long-form content will make a comeback. I'm not talking about the long-winded corporate messages, but rich, in-depth storytelling that adds value, and then microcontent will fill in the gaps—snackable pieces of content that complement and drive home the broader narrative. I really believe 2025 will see this balance of long-form and microcontent become the foundation of successful social media marketing.



DANG



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

In my view, the most exciting technology trend in social media by 2025 will be AI integration at scale. We're already seeing the power of AI in platforms like TikTok and Instagram with their recommendation algorithms, but I think it's going to become even more personalized. Platforms will be able to use AI to predict not just what you'll like, but what you'll buy—transforming how brands can engage with their audiences. AI will also automate and optimize content creation, helping marketers generate creative assets more quickly and efficiently while maintaining high standards.

For me, the real game-changer will be AI agents that take on multiple roles. These agents will combine processes and oversee the lower-funnel marketing tasks, like quality control and optimization, allowing human teams to focus more on strategy and high-level creative work. For example, AI might automatically adjust a campaign based on real-time data, ensuring that content reaches the right audience at the right time. It's going to take away a lot of the grunt work and make campaigns smarter, faster, and more effective. As much as AI will assist in creation, I still believe human oversight will be key to refining the content and ensuring it resonates with real people.

But AI isn't just about efficiency—it's also about new opportunities for monetization. I'm particularly interested in how social platforms will continue to introduce new ways to make money directly from engagement. Whether it's through livestream shopping, branded content, or interactive ads, platforms will continue to offer new avenues for creators and brands to generate revenue. This will make social commerce an even more integral part of how brands connect with their audiences, and how influencers monetize their followings.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

I think one of the most important shifts in influencer marketing by 2025 will be the rise of micro-influencers and creator-led brands. As much as influencer marketing has been dominated by big names, I'm seeing a shift toward smaller, highly engaged audiences. I really believe that micro-influencers will become the go-to for many brands because they offer more genuine, personal connections with their followers. These influencers often have more dedicated, loyal communities who trust their opinions and recommendations. For me, this is a huge opportunity for brands to tap into these niche audiences that align more closely with their values and messages.

What I find even more exciting is the shift toward creator-led brands. I've been noticing how many influencers are moving away from just being the face of a brand and instead starting to build their own products and businesses. By 2025, I expect more influencers to monetize their communities in innovative ways—whether it's through launching their own product lines, creating subscription-based services, or even starting their own digital platforms. This move gives creators more control over their income and enables them to build businesses that are directly connected to their followers. It's a game-changer for the creator economy, and I believe it's going to redefine how brands and creators collaborate.



DANG

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

When it comes to B2B, I think social media will be at the forefront of brand-building efforts. Traditionally, B2B marketing has been more formal, with a focus on email campaigns, LinkedIn posts, and industry-specific content. But in my view, social media will be the driving force for B2B companies looking to humanize their brands and build deeper relationships with clients and partners. LinkedIn, in particular, is evolving into a powerful marketing tool for B2B brands, providing a platform for content, networking, and thought leadership all in one place.

I also see B2B influencers playing a bigger role. These are industry experts or thought leaders with a loyal following, and they will help B2B brands connect with a more engaged audience. This is a shift I'm particularly excited about because it humanizes the B2B space, making it more approachable and relatable. The B2B world will become more social-led, where content creation, community engagement, and relationship-building become central to brand strategy. Social media will be the place where B2B companies can showcase their values, share insights, and nurture long-term relationships, all while positioning themselves as authentic and transparent brands.





DAY ONE AGENCY



→ **Jordan Alperin,**

Creative Strategist

“Social media faces “AI-enshittification,” a term coined by writer Cory Doctorow to describe the decline of platforms as profit and efficiency are prioritized over quality. Social feeds are quickly being filled with spammy, low-quality content where ‘brain rot’ and ‘AI sludge’ become mainstream.”

DAY ONE AGENCY (USA)

Day One Agency is an independent creative communications agency designed to help brands build legacy through relevance. We believe that nothing earns relevancy and connection like a great story, and have structured our creative powerhouse to help brands Shape, Share and Fuel those stories. Since our founding in 2014, we’ve partnered with world-renowned brands like American Express, Chipotle, Converse, e.l.f, Nike, Lyft, Ferrara, and more. With a focus on fewer, deeper client relationships, we power our work with mutual investment, ruthless prioritization, and an obsession with the consumer to develop breakthrough creative.



DAY ONE AGENCY



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

Platforms have long shaped our algorithms, prioritizing engagement metrics over user preferences – looking at you, Meta with the controversial move to make Instagram feeds recommendation-heavy. And yet, as we move into 2025, the balance of power is beginning to shift. While platforms still dictate algorithms and platform features, users are increasingly asserting their influence in a fragmented social media ecosystem – showcasing a growing desire for digital autonomy and a rejection of the pressure to perform for algorithm-driven engagement.

This shift is especially evident in the recent migration from X (formerly known as Twitter) to Bluesky. This marks a pivotal moment as a legacy platform is finally being shaken to its core by users seeking spaces that prioritize community support and transparency. In a more subtle user power move, Instagram's "Grid Zero" trend, where users archive or delete posts to create a blank slate, signals a pushback towards posting performativity. Similarly, on TikTok only about half of users actively post, favoring a more intentional approach to social media. Recognizing this shift, both TikTok and Instagram have introduced features that allow users to reset feed recommendations, responding to growing demands for control and personalization.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Building a 'digital community' is not a new concept in marketing. In fact, it's become a buzzword that social media professionals love to latch onto. But the best brands and creators that stay winning, understand the differences between a 'performative community' versus actually creating two-way user interactions, honing in on the superfans. We're experiencing a digital cultural shift where fans aren't just involved in the comment section, but are true collaborators in the inner workings of brand participation.



DAY ONE AGENCY



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

AI has dominated the news cycle for the past two years, reshaping every possible industry and conversation across the internet. In 2025, we're finally reaching a turning point where AI is no longer just experimental, it's an integral part of the social media experience for both users and creators. From appearing visibly in our feeds to working behind the scenes in analytics or concept ideation, AI is changing the way we consume content and create content.

We're navigating a delicate balance between AI-driven efficiency and oversaturation. We know, of course, that AI serves as the new 'middle-man' for copywriting, concept ideation, and making social media processes more efficient in our always-on digital culture. For example, TikTok's new Creative AI suite, Symphony, empowers creators with tools to brainstorm new ideas and instantly take the work out of generating voiceovers or subtitles. On the other hand, social media faces "AI-enshittification," a term coined by writer Cory Doctorow to describe the decline of platforms as profit and efficiency are prioritized over quality. Social feeds are quickly being filled with spammy, low-quality content where 'brain rot' and 'AI sludge' become mainstream. To stand out, brands will need to learn how to embrace AI for efficiency and two-way user communication while never losing sight of the human touch.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Deeply integrated creator partnerships that go beyond one-off collaborations are the key to success in today's influencer marketing landscape. Fleeting promotional influencer content isn't enough in 2025. Influencers want to be treated as true partners, showcasing their commitment to fans or a specific niche, all while building long-term brand associations.

This shift is driving innovative approaches to influencer marketing. For instance, employees are humanizing brand accounts, stepping out from behind the curtain, and turning 'employee-generated content' into a common practice—where social media managers are taking on the role as creators. Brands like Starface are also leading the charge in initiatives like Star Market, a merch store featuring original handmade creations crafted by niche creators. These close long-term influencer partnerships are reaching new levels and will only continue to become the norm.



INBRAX



→ **Ricardo Álvarez,**

*Director Planning,
Social Media*



→ **Sebastián Berríos,**

Social Media Manager



→ **Pancho González,**

*Co-Founder & Chief
Creative Officer*

“AI-powered chatbots will merge with immersive experiences, allowing brands to interact with users through 3D avatars or virtual reality environments. Additionally, social platforms will leverage predictive models to recommend content not only based on interests but also on emotional states detected through contextual signals.”

INBRAX (CH)

Inbrax is an ad agency full of creative services with digital marketing at heart.



INBRAX



S L M Y

KURIOE
THE SOCIAL MEDIA AGENCY

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

PG: The most interesting trend is the rise of private and community-based social networks. Users are seeking more intimate and authentic environments, migrating from mass platforms to options like Discord, WhatsApp Communities, or Telegram groups, where they can interact in safer, more personalized spaces. Additionally, ultra-short content consumption and immersive formats (such as 3D videos or augmented reality) will become dominant, driven by the evolution of devices like smart glasses.

RÁ & MÁ: Short Videos and Authentic Content: The most significant trend in user behavior on social media in 2025 is the dominance of short video formats and the demand for authentic content. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts are leading in engagement, blending entertainment with authenticity. These formats have shifted from simplistic productions to sophisticated narratives, addressing user expectations for real, relatable stories.

Statistically, these platforms favor brevity and authenticity, catering to algorithms that prioritize concise and engaging content. Users gravitate towards relatable storytelling, pushing brands to focus on building authentic connections through emotional resonance. For example, TikTok's endless short stories create an addictive and immersive experience.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

PG: The key shift is the consolidation of social networks as transactional platforms. Thanks to advanced social commerce tools, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest will further integrate with direct payment solutions. This will transform marketing strategies, shifting from lead generation to direct sales closures within the same channel. Additionally, the use of generative AI to create personalized campaigns in real time will become standard practice.

RÁ & MÁ: Integration of Social Commerce and Search Features: The integration of social commerce into social media platforms represents the most critical shift. Platforms like TikTok now double as search engines, offering users practical recommendations and authentic reviews. This trend has tremendous implications for marketing, especially in the awareness and consideration stages of the customer journey.

For example, users search for answers like "Best restaurants nearby" or "Ideal washing machines for small apartments," where brands leveraging authentic influencer collaborations excel. Social commerce enables seamless shopping experiences, blending user-generated content with e-commerce functionality.



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

PG: The most relevant technology will be the advanced integration of generative AI and visual voice assistants in social networks. AI-powered chatbots will merge with immersive experiences, allowing brands to interact with users through 3D avatars or virtual reality environments. Additionally, social platforms will leverage predictive models to recommend content not only based on interests but also on emotional states detected through contextual signals.

RÁ & MÁ: AI Revolution in Content Creation and Strategy: Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming content creation, enabling automation, mass personalization, and real-time analytics. Despite challenges with “plastic” textures in generated content, AI optimizes targeting and operational efficiency. Future advancements aim to bridge gaps in emotional connection, enabling brands to maintain authenticity while scaling personalization.

AI's analytical capabilities and creative support streamline processes, but emotionally resonant content still requires a human touch. Over time, AI's ability to replicate authentic emotional nuances will likely grow, enhancing its utility in digital storytelling.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

PG: The most important change will be the rise of virtual influencers and the blockchain-based creator economy. AI-generated influencers and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) will transform how influence is measured and rewarded. Brands will seek creators who combine authentic content with technological innovations, focusing on metrics such as building active communities and contract transparency through smart contracts.

RÁ & MÁ: Focus on Micro-Influencers and Niche Communities: The most important shift in influencer marketing is the rise of micro- and nano-influencers, who offer brands greater authenticity and direct connections with niche audiences. These smaller-scale influencers cultivate organic segmentation, amplifying genuine consumer voices. For instance, fan communities like those for “Mortal Kombat” demonstrate the power of listening to these niche groups to adapt strategies and revitalize engagement.

Collaborating with influencers embedded in subcultures ensures that brands remain authentic and resonate with highly specific audience segments. This approach aligns with broader trends emphasizing community-building over traditional mass marketing.



INBRAX



B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

PG: In the B2B space, social networks will become key platforms for education and thought leadership building. LinkedIn will expand its offering of advanced analytics and segmentation tools while emerging platforms focused on vertical sectors (such as engineering, healthcare, or sustainability) will allow companies to develop deeper, more strategic relationships with potential clients. Furthermore, hybrid events and metaverse experiences will become essential for B2B interaction.

RÁ & MÁ: TikTok and Short-Form Video for B2B Engagement: Even in B2B, platforms like TikTok are emerging as creative and discovery hubs. Businesses leverage short-form videos to highlight innovation and build thought leadership. The authenticity and brevity demanded by B2C audiences are now spilling into B2B communication, creating opportunities for companies to humanize their brands and foster connections in a relatable manner.

Moreover, AI-driven personalization allows B2B marketers to segment audiences and deliver tailored messages efficiently. The balance of authentic storytelling and innovative tech solutions positions B2B brands as both relatable and forward-thinking.



JAM SESSION AGENCY



→ **Oana Oprea,**

*Head of Digital
Planning & Brand
Strategist*

"The future of advertising isn't just reaching audiences; it's being invited into their world."

JAM SESSION AGENCY (RO)

Jam is an agency with a unique blend of progressive business and creativity, collaborating to create brands that resonate with today's generations and those to come. Jam is the most awarded local independent agency in recent years, proud to collaborate with business partners who are passionate, courageous individuals, who continuously challenge traditional communication models with the aim of creating authentic emotions.

In 2023, Jam Session Agency was ranked 1st European independent agency in the Effie Index. In 2024, Jam received 10 awards at Effie Romania and 11 awards at local festivals like the Romanian PR Awards and the Internetics Gala.

Overall, Jam Session Agency was recognized for its creativity and impact on global competitions like WARC, SABRE, D&AD, and Golden Hammer, reinforcing its position as one of the top independent agencies in Europe.



JAM SESSION AGENCY



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

Certainly, in terms of how people use social media, one of the fastest-growing trends that we have analyzed closely has been **The Rise of Private and Niche Communities**.

As social platforms become crowded, and the algorithms become increasingly unpredictable and incomprehensible, private groups and specialized communities are thriving. Platforms like Discord, Slack, and WhatsApp are being used for deeper, more focused interactions – with engagement rates soaring to nearly 50% —ten times higher than on traditional platforms (Buffer, 2024).

The trend of private and niche communities is not only visible on standalone platforms like Discord and Slack but is also shaping functionalities within mainstream social media apps like Instagram and Facebook. For instance: (1) **Broadcast Channels:** Instagram's broadcast channels, such as those used by creators like Brendahastag, allow influencers and brands to create a one-to-many communication channel. Here, they can share exclusive updates, and behind-the-scenes content, and engage directly with their most dedicated followers, fostering a sense of belonging and exclusivity. (2) **Close Friends and Private Feeds:** Tools like Instagram's "Close Friends" and Facebook's friend list-specific feeds offer users more personalized sharing options. A good example of hopping on this trend was leveraged by Billie Eilish, who added all her followers as "close friends" for a limited time, creating not just hype but an intimate and special connection.

For our industry, tapping into these tools means aligning with the growing demand for meaningful interactions and leveraging exclusivity to build trust and loyalty. The future of advertising isn't just reaching audiences; it's being invited into their world.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

I think that the last 4 years in particular have fundamentally changed the place of Social Media people at the "marketing table". Once seen as brand storytellers and "meme lords", they are now pivotal players in sales and marketing strategies. Our work involves not only crafting engaging content but also delivering measurable e-commerce outcomes.

Viral trends on platforms like TikTok, such as the feta pasta craze that generated over 600 million views but also triggered a global 67% surge in feta sales exemplify this shift. (Greekcitytimes, 2024). These viral movements don't just sell products—they shift industries. From food to fashion, businesses are increasingly integrating social commerce strategies to harness this momentum.

Platforms like Instagram and TikTok now offer integrated shopping tools, allowing users to discover, evaluate, and purchase products seamlessly within the app. This "discovery-to-conversion" pipeline has redefined the role of social media managers. For the marketing industry, this evolution demands a rethinking of social media's purpose. Social media specialists must balance the art of engagement with the science of sales, bridging the gap between brand-building and direct revenue generation. The future of e-commerce lies in these hybrid roles, where creativity and commerce converge.



JAM SESSION AGENCY



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

It's hard to answer a question like this without mentioning the impact that AI has already begun to have, from content creation to analysis and reporting. AI's integration into social media marketing has truly revolutionized the way content is created, providing unprecedented speed, scalability, and personalization. A notable recent example of this trend is Coca-Cola's 2024 Christmas campaign, which used AI to reimagine its iconic "Holidays Are Coming" ad. By leveraging AI platforms, Coca-Cola was able to rapidly produce over 100 different versions of the commercial, customized for various global markets (The Campus Agency, 2024).

But AI's impact on social media marketing extends beyond content creation into crucial areas like social listening, insights generation, and reporting. Tools we use - like **Emplify** and **Brandwatch** - are perfect examples of how AI can optimize these functions. These platforms allow us to analyze vast amounts of social media data in real-time, offering actionable insights about consumer behavior, trends, and brand sentiment.

As AI continues to develop, its role in social media marketing will expand even further, making tools essential for staying competitive in an increasingly data-driven landscape. These technologies empower marketers to go beyond simple content creation, turning raw data into actionable strategies that can directly influence business outcomes. If at first, we were "afraid" of AI, now I don't see how we could function without it.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

(My personal favorite): Curators are the next influencers. And Curation is the new algorithm people crave. I loved seeing the rise of curators as the new influential voices in the digital landscape. Curators like Tiffany Ferg (@TiffanyFerg), The Sartorialist (Scott Schuman) or Jeremy Fragrance (@jeremyfragrance) have developed a reputation for discovering, selecting, and sharing content that resonates with a particular niche or audience. Unlike classic influencers who rely on direct product endorsements, curators inspire their audiences by shaping perceptions and setting trends without necessarily pushing sales directly. They act as tastemakers, guiding their communities through their personal selections, be it through fashion, travel, or new technologies.

This shift is particularly relevant as audiences seek authenticity and a sense of community rather than just product promotion. Curators tend to have smaller, highly engaged followings compared to traditional influencers, but their recommendations are more trusted due to their perceived genuine interest and expertise. For brands, working with curators means focusing on fostering relationships and providing value rather than just creating transactional partnerships.

As more consumers seek personalized, trend-driven experiences, curators offer a powerful way to tap into niche markets and drive conversions through curated, engaging storytelling. For marketers, this means evolving beyond traditional influencer partnerships and embracing curators as key figures in shaping brand identities in more subtle and creative ways.



JAM SESSION AGENCY

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

Collaborative content in B2B marketing is a trend that's picking up steam, and it's fascinating to see how it's evolving.

By partnering with experts, influencers, and other brands, companies can create value-driven content that resonates with their target audience, builds credibility, and generates organic leads. Whether it's a joint webinar, a podcast, or a co-authored blog post, these collaborations bring together fresh perspectives and deepen the connection with customers. **It's not just about sharing content anymore; it's about sharing value,** building trust, and expanding reach through authentic, community-driven interactions.

Lately, I've been interested in how LinkedIn has taken collaborative content to the next level by introducing features that allow users to co-create value-driven content directly on the platform. LinkedIn Events, for example, allow B2B brands to host live events and invite other industry leaders to co-host webinars or panel discussions. The benefits of this type of collaboration are twofold: it allows the host brand to share the spotlight with experts in their field, and it gives the guests access to new audiences, building their own thought leadership. The results are impressive as well since LinkedIn declared that Live videos, on average, get 7x more reactions and 24x more comments than native videos produced by the same broadcasters (LinkedIn Marketing solutions, 2024).





LAUNCH



→ **Victoria Jenkins,**

*Associate Director of
Social*

“According to a recent survey by Capterra, Generative AI is expected to produce 48% of all social media content by 2026, and 83% of companies anticipate increasing their investment in Gen AI tools.”

LAUNCH (UK)

We're Launch, one of the UK's leading independent creative brand PR agencies. Driven by creativity and exceptional talent, we cover the full range of PR, from social media and content, to experiential and media relations. What sets us apart? For us, it's providing our clients with long term, ownable 'creative territory', regardless of the channel. It's a skill we've honed over 20 years, across hundreds of brands and thousands of campaigns. We Own It. And we push our clients to do so, also.



LAUNCH



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

Social platforms are set to seriously challenge traditional search engines as the primary brand discovery tool in 2025. Already, 64% of Gen Z have used TikTok as a search engine according to Adobe's research, with the common expression being, "I Don't Google, I TikTok". The platforms user-generated social content is often cited as feeling "more authentic" than the ads and optimised websites typically found at the top of traditional search engine results. A quarter of people said they primarily use social media to search and communicate online, this trend is only set to rise next year. The takeaway for brands? Your digital content needs to be entertainment led, social-first in format, algorithm-friendly and effortlessly shareable.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

AI has revolutionised how marketing teams and the industry work on social media campaigns, and this trend is set to only accelerate in 2025. According to a recent survey by Captterra, Generative AI is expected to produce 48% of all social media content by 2026, and 83% of companies anticipate increasing their investment in Gen AI tools.

AI isn't just levelling up the game - it's revolutionising it. It supercharges the ability of marketers to uncover sentiment analysis, powers impactful market research, allows AI focus groups and enables rapid strategic pivots like never before. AI, like any tool, is only as effective as the prompts guiding it, and the most impactful Gen AI campaigns always incorporate a human touch.

There's a big disconnect currently between AI usage and levels of public trust. A recent YouGov survey found that 73% of consumers are concerned about AI-generated content, so brands need to think carefully about how they are applying this tech and ensure that they are being transparent about its usage.

The challenge for 2025 and beyond is clear: brands must harness the power of AI thoughtfully, blending tech innovation with human creativity, to build trust and create campaigns that truly resonate.



LAUNCH



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

The metaverse is maturing. It's set to fundamentally reshape social media in 2025, merging the digital and physical worlds into an immersive, interactive experience. It's no longer just about gaming or digital hangouts; it's becoming the foundation for social shopping, networking, and socializing.

Traditional social media platforms focus on scrolling through 2D content, but the metaverse will introduce 3D spaces. In 2025, the metaverse will allow for large-scale social gatherings, from virtual concerts to conferences, where you can attend as an avatar. As VR and AR devices become cheaper and more accessible, everyone from artists to brands is establishing a presence there.

With the right virtual infrastructure, people can engage in social activities that feel less limited by physical and geographic constraints, opening up more accessible, globalized opportunities. The metaverse will redefine social media engagement - from likes or comments - to time spent in virtual spaces, interactions within branded worlds, or participation in gamified brand experiences. Influencers are set to take on virtual avatars of their real-life personas, hosting branded events and product launches in these virtual worlds.

Niche social communities and content creators will flourish in the metaverse, as it will allow for hyper-personalized 3D environments. Ultimately, the metaverse is set to blur the lines between social media, gamification, and e-commerce, creating an entirely new digital ecosystem for connection, creativity, and commerce. Brands and users alike will need to adapt to this dynamic shift.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Local is the new global. Micro-influencers with niche, community-focused content are likely to prosper like never before. As people crave more relatable content, the glamorous global influencers are feeling a tad out of touch. Instead, neighborhood-style influencers with highly tailored, hyper-local recommendations are set to thrive. Platforms are already experimenting with neighborhood-based feeds - with smaller private groups, and influencers are creating bespoke WhatsApp communities. Think less content of celebrities having cocktails in Capri and more customized recommendations from your local coffee shop.

Forget one-size-fits-all. Deloitte's data shows that nearly 75% of people are more likely to purchase from brands that deliver personalized experiences. Generative AI is fuelling hyper-personalized content experiences, creating everything from individualized music playlists based on your daily mood to AI-powered shopping assistants that redesign their recommendations in real time based on your recent digital purchases and preferences. A recent study by Botco showed that 73% of brands are already "using generative AI to help create text, images, or videos." This trend is only set to rise exponentially.

This social media trend taps into the return to 'community', as people seek to establish closer connections online. Local micro-influencers deliver value on the ground with more intimacy and less gloss, really owning their authenticity and bespoke expertise.



LAUNCH



B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

2025 is set to see a further surge in Employee Advocacy and B2B influencers on social media. Employees act as brand ambassadors by sharing company updates and personal experiences to humanize the brand and expand its reach organically. Gen Z influencers are taking the reins, and they're doing more than just polishing up their LinkedIn resumes, they're tackling career challenges head-on and sharing raw, unfiltered industry insights.

According to LinkedIn's data, "87% of B2B buyers prefer content from trusted industry influencers over branded sales messages." LinkedIn thought leaders bring their expertise and credibility to B2B sales and data shows that "67% of B2B buyers engage with influencer content during the consideration and research phase of the buyer journey." Social brand ambassadors don't just sway the decision-makers at the top, they infiltrate the entire buying committee, sparking recognition and bolstering the brand's credibility across every stakeholder in the room.

In 2025, the B2B brands that thrive will utilize a powerful collective of social storytellers, who turn authentic connections into measurable ROI.



LEONARDO1452



→ **Gaby Arriaga,**

Business Trends Consultant, Creator of the Near Future Thinking tool, Founder of Leonardo1452 and Business del Futuro

"It may seem obvious, but I've noticed that companies are finally starting to understand what zero-click content is: valuable insights or engaging material provided directly on the platform without requiring users to click elsewhere."

LEONARDO1452 (MX)

Leonardo1452 is a consulting company specializing in consumer trends in Latin America and the creator of the tool Near Future Thinking©. As trend hunters we look for tendencies that point to nascent market dynamics that have not yet come into companies' purview – markets in early stages of development. Leonardo1452 is an expert at detecting these emerging habits that can approach with the force of an ocean wave so that you can make effective business decisions about what to adjust to ensure your pre-eminence in years to come.



LEONARDO1452



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

One of the most interesting and important trends in social media is the move to humanize AI. While many users have embraced AI tools to generate content quickly and efficiently, the real skill now lies in adding a human touch to that output. AI cannot fully replace human creativity, especially when it comes to building a personal brand. Audiences crave authenticity and emotional connections, which means creators need to take AI-generated content a step further by editing and infusing it with their unique personalities, voices, and values. This approach ensures that the content feels genuine and resonates deeply with the audience.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

From a B2B perspective, a significant shift in social media marketing is the growing use of predictive analytics to anticipate future buying behaviors and preferences. By leveraging high-quality first-party social media data, marketers can better understand customer actions at each stage of the sales funnel and optimize campaigns to make a big impact at crucial moments. This involves analyzing vast amounts of user-generated data—likes, shares, comments, and demographics—and using historical data to forecast trends. The result is the ability to create highly personalized experiences that resonate with audiences, maximize ad spending efficiency, and ultimately drive stronger business outcomes.



LEONARDO1452



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

It may seem obvious, but I've noticed that companies are finally starting to understand what zero-click content is: valuable insights or engaging material provided directly on the platform without requiring users to click elsewhere. Examples include threads (on platforms like Threads or Bluesky, especially as people leave X) or TikTok videos that deliver the full experience up front. As users increasingly demand immediate value, this approach caters to their preference for instant insights without interruptions. For instance, LinkedIn posts without links often see higher engagement, making zero-click content essential for B2B brands looking to stand out and capture attention in an increasingly competitive space.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

A significant shift in influencer marketing is the growing focus on neurodiversity. Influencers are increasingly discussing and advocating for the acceptance of neurological differences like autism, ADHD, and dyslexia. By sharing personal stories and creating educational content, influencers such as @theaspieworld and @neurodivergentrebel help demystify these conditions and challenge misconceptions. For brands, incorporating neurodiversity into campaigns goes beyond inclusivity—it fosters deeper connections with audiences, challenges stereotypes, and promotes a more understanding society. This approach enriches narratives and paves the way for a more inclusive marketing landscape.



LIWA



→ **Sagar Rege,**

*Partner & Director at Liwa
Content Driven*

“AI-powered tools and user-friendly software have removed the technical barriers to content creation. Tasks that once required specialized skills—such as graphic design, video editing, or writing—are now accessible to anyone with a smartphone. This accessibility has redefined personal branding from the domain of marketing professionals to something almost anyone can pursue.”

LIWA (UAE)

Liwa is a hybrid creative agency + production house that evolved from a conventional agency model 13 years ago to bridge the common budget and timeline gaps between concept development and production. By integrating creative strategy and execution under one roof, we streamline processes, ensuring that every idea we propose is purpose-driven, cost-efficient, and production-ready from the outset.

We partner directly with brands and global agencies to creatively problem-solve across both ideation and execution. From defining campaign narratives to producing world-class video content, we deliver end-to-end solutions tailored to business objectives. Our expertise spans live-action, animation, mixed media, and full-scale productions — crafting compelling stories that connect brands with audiences effectively.

Our work has been recognized at the highest levels of the industry, with award wins including Gold at Cannes Lions, LIA, Dubai Lynx, Effies, D&AD, Midas, New York Festivals, and Clios. This legacy of creative excellence underscores our commitment to producing work that’s both creatively ambitious and strategically impactful.



LIWA



S L M Y



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

The Evolution of Personal Branding: From Envy to Expression.

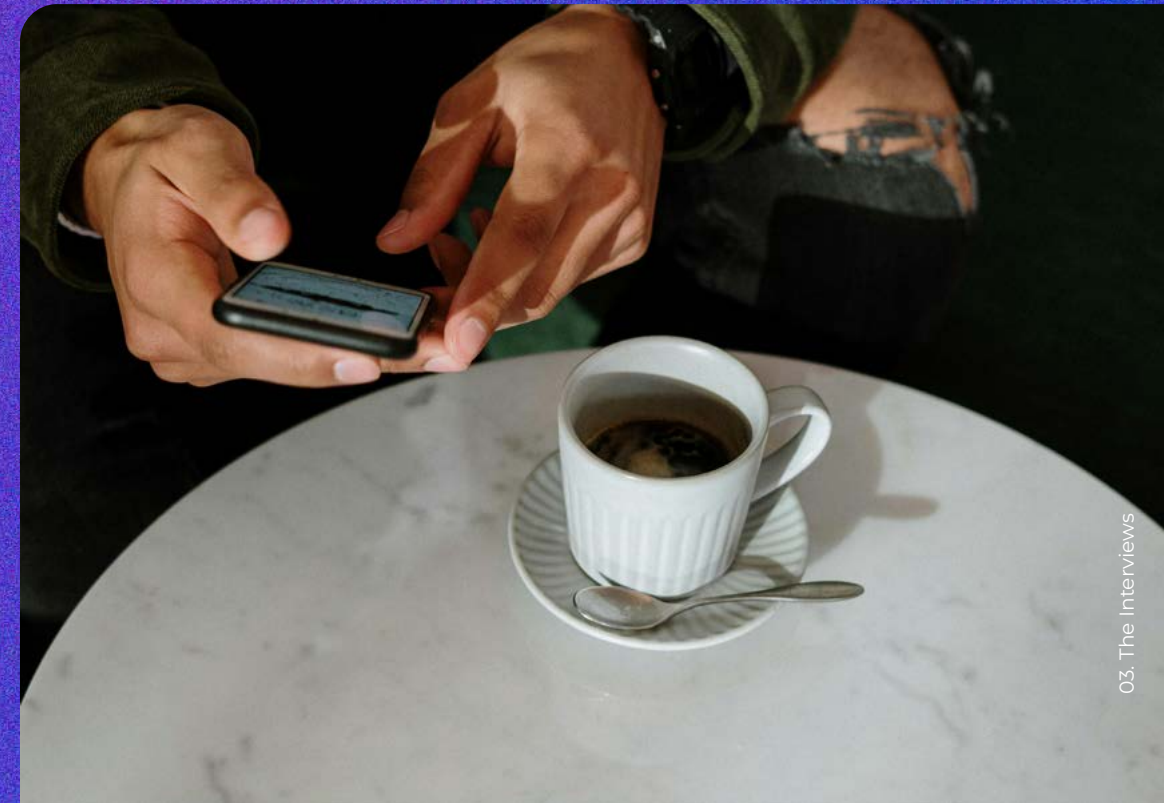
Personal branding has undergone a dramatic transformation in the digital age. What once centered on inducing envy through curated images of success has evolved into open, authentic self-expression. Today, individuals use digital platforms to showcase achievements and communicate their values, beliefs, and creative visions. This cultural shift reflects a more profound societal change where personal identity is expressed through stories rather than status symbols.

A driving force behind this change is the democratization of technology. AI-powered tools and user-friendly software have removed the technical barriers to content creation. Tasks that once required specialized skills—such as graphic design, video editing, or writing—are now accessible to anyone with a smartphone. This accessibility has redefined personal branding from the domain of marketing professionals to something almost anyone can pursue.

Entertainment has emerged as a central theme in this new personal branding landscape. Social media influencers, content creators, and everyday users present themselves as entertainers, using creative formats to engage their audiences. From short videos and podcasts to visually stunning social media posts, self-expression is now a form of entertainment where the individual becomes both creator and brand.

The availability of creative tools has also expanded the range of voices in the digital ecosystem. People from diverse backgrounds can now share perspectives that might have remained unheard in a pre-digital world. This inclusivity has reshaped what it means to be a “personal brand.” It’s no longer about perfection or exclusivity—it’s about authenticity, relatability, and connection.

As AI technology continues to advance, the future of personal branding looks even more dynamic. AI-driven platforms will enable even more personalized and immersive content, pushing the boundaries of how stories are told and shared. This evolution underscores a key insight: personal branding has shifted from envy-driven presentation to meaningful expression. In this era, everyone has the potential to be a creator, a storyteller, and ultimately, a brand.





SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

The Power of Storytelling in the Age of AI-Driven Content.

The digital media landscape has never been more fragmented. Audiences are scattered across various platforms, each shaped by specific preferences and consumption habits. For instance, Gen Z makes purchasing decisions on gaming platforms like Roblox and Fortnite, while millennials lean toward social media and streaming services. This evolving ecosystem demands more than just targeted marketing—it calls for storytelling that resonates across diverse touchpoints.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has further disrupted the way content is created, enabling image and video production where creativity faces virtually no limits. AI-driven tools empower brands and agencies to produce dynamic, visually striking, and emotionally engaging content at unprecedented speeds. However, this technological leap comes with a critical challenge: ensuring that creativity remains rooted in relevance and context. Even the most visually impressive content risks fading into digital noise without a compelling story.

For brands and agencies alike, harnessing AI's potential goes beyond using it as a production tool—it's about making storytelling more impactful. AI can help unlock insights into audience behavior, predict trends, and personalize content, but the narrative core must come from a deep understanding of brand identity and audience values. This fusion of data-driven insights and creative storytelling creates an ecosystem where technology amplifies, rather than replaces, human ingenuity.

Clients must invest in brand narratives that adapt to multiple formats while maintaining consistency in message and tone. Meanwhile, agencies need to push the boundaries of contextual creativity, crafting stories that fit seamlessly into gaming environments, interactive experiences, and immersive media. Success depends on a shared commitment to creating stories that are both innovative and culturally and emotionally resonant.

In this evolving digital era, AI-powered storytelling isn't just a marketing trend—it's a necessity. The future belongs to those who can blend human creativity with technological prowess to craft stories that inspire, engage, and drive action. The ultimate competitive advantages remain in a world where imagination has no boundaries, context, and creativity remain.



LIWA



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

Embracing AI with a Human Touch: The Future of Storytelling in 2025

As AI continues to reshape creative industries, its most significant impact may not be the technology itself but how humans adapt to it. In the coming years, particularly in 2025, the defining creative feature will be the human ability to merge technological capabilities with authentic storytelling. While AI offers unparalleled opportunities—generating characters, creating environments, and scaling content—the human touch will elevate stories beyond algorithmic output.

AI-powered tools already enable the creation of immersive content at scale, reducing production time and costs. However, this technological efficiency must not come at the expense of creativity. For brands, the challenge lies in balancing economic gains with artistic integrity. Using AI should not be viewed merely as a cost-saving measure but as a creative multiplier that empowers human talent to explore new frontiers in storytelling.

For example, in filmmaking, the roles of directors, cinematographers, and production designers remain essential—even in AI-driven projects. While the physical shoot may have transitioned from real-world locations to virtual environments, creative professionals still shape the vision, mood, and narrative direction. AI is a tool that enhances creative output, not a replacement for human insight.

From a client's perspective, this demands a mindset shift. Brands must recognize that AI-driven production still requires expert talent to craft meaningful narratives that resonate with audiences. They should invest not just in technology but also in people who understand how to use AI effectively—directors who can envision AI-powered films, production designers who can craft virtual worlds, and editors who can seamlessly blend real and digital elements.

Fostering an industry-wide learning culture is equally important. The responsibility to adapt doesn't rest solely on institutions—it extends to individuals. As AI evolves, professionals across creative disciplines must continuously learn, experiment, and refine their craft. This human-AI partnership will be the cornerstone of future creative success.

Ultimately, AI's true potential lies not in its ability to generate content but in how it amplifies human creativity. The future of storytelling belongs to those who can navigate this new landscape with empathy, originality, and a willingness to push creative boundaries. In 2025 and beyond, the power of storytelling will depend on how well humans and AI collaborate to transform imaginative possibilities into compelling realities.



LIWA

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

The Future of Influence: AI-Driven Digital Personalities.

As we move toward 2025, the world of influencers is set to undergo a transformative evolution driven by artificial intelligence. What began as experimental AI characters on social media is quickly becoming a strategic marketing tool, with brands creating custom digital influencers who embody their values, voice, and vision.

Unlike human influencers, AI-driven personas offer brands complete creative control. They can be programmed to say the right things, live curated digital lives, and consistently reflect the brand's identity. These digital personalities are not subject to the unpredictability of human behavior, ensuring seamless brand representation.

However, the real challenge lies in giving these AI influencers a genuine, relatable human essence. Success won't come from simply saving money on influencer partnerships—it will depend on brands' ability to craft AI personas that feel authentic and emotionally resonant. Audiences connect with stories that reflect real experiences, emotions, and struggles. Brands must create digital influencers with depth, evolving personalities, and narratives that resonate in meaningful ways.

One of the most exciting prospects is the potential for longevity. Digital influencers don't age, face scandals, or experience personal setbacks. They can evolve, building a lasting connection with audiences across generations. This opens new possibilities for long-term brand storytelling, where digital characters can take on immersive roles in campaigns, animated series, or even metaverse experiences.

The future of influence isn't about replacing humans—it's about expanding the boundaries of storytelling. AI-driven influencers must inspire trust, create empathy, and embody authenticity, proving that technology can enhance—not dilute—the power of genuine human connection.



S L M Y

KURIO E
THE SOCIAL MEDIA AGENCY

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

Breaking the B2B Content Barrier: Embracing Entertainment and Technology in 2025

The traditional notion that B2B content must be formal, serious, or purely informational is outdated. As I often remind my clients, marketing professionals and executives at B2B organizations don't go home to watch corporate videos—they unwind with compelling content on platforms like Netflix or Amazon Prime. This shift in content consumption highlights an important truth: B2B audiences crave engaging, entertaining content just as much as B2C consumers do.

As we approach 2025, the possibilities for B2B storytelling are immense, thanks to advances in AI-powered content creation and scalable production technologies. With today's tools, producing high-quality, visually stunning, and emotionally engaging content is no longer the exclusive domain of big-budget consumer brands. B2B companies now have the ability to craft narratives that resonate not only with their business clients but also with broader audiences, including end-users and even government institutions (B2G).

This convergence of B2B, B2C, and B2G marketing creates unprecedented opportunities for brands to elevate their communication strategies. By embracing cinematic storytelling, immersive brand experiences, and emotionally driven narratives, B2B organizations can transform complex product offerings into compelling content that informs, inspires, and entertains.

Tech content platforms can further enhance this creative push by streamlining production processes, personalizing campaigns, and generating data-backed insights. These technologies empower B2B marketers to deliver highly relevant and creative messaging at scale, ensuring their content breaks through the digital clutter.

The future of B2B marketing isn't about abandoning professionalism but embracing human-centric storytelling. By adopting an entertainment-driven approach, B2B brands can build deeper emotional connections, redefine industry benchmarks, and emerge as thought leaders in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. In 2025, success will belong to those willing to tell stories that inform, engage, and inspire - all amplified by the usage of emerging technologies.



MEDULLA



→ **Saurabhi De,**

Director, Consumer & International Marketing



→ **Dhruv Gaur,**

Grp. Account Director, Digital Marketing

“AI has also revolutionized social listening by providing real-time, predictive insights. Marketers can now detect emerging trends, anticipate audience needs, and refine campaigns before trends peak, ensuring relevancy and maximizing impact.”

MEDULLA (IN)

Medulla is a specialist healthcare advertising agency that firmly believes that digital and advertising go hand in hand. Any advertising agency that cannot create for the social and digital world has no right to exist. Even in healthcare. Even in a remote corner of the world. This is reflected in our digital credentials – winning Gold Lions at Cannes in the Digital Integrated and Social Media categories, or being recognized as the #4 Most Effective Specialist Agency of the Year by WARC or the #4 Most Effective Independent Agency of the Year at Effies, or being awarded the Content Marketing Agency of the Year at the Abby Awards.



MEDULLA



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

The most interesting and important trend in social media usage is the growing integration of AI. AI is transforming how we interact with social platforms, from content creation to personalized recommendations. Here's how:

Content Creation: AI-powered tools are making it easier for individuals and businesses to create engaging content. Generative AI can produce text, images, and even videos, reducing the time and effort required for content creation. This democratization of content creation is opening up new opportunities for creators and businesses of all sizes.

Personalized Experiences: AI algorithms analyze user behavior to deliver highly personalized content recommendations. This means users are more likely to see content that interests them, leading to deeper engagement and stronger connections with brands. For businesses, this offers a powerful way to target specific audiences and deliver relevant messages.

Ethical Considerations: As AI becomes more integrated into social media, ethical considerations are becoming increasingly important. Issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the potential for misinformation need to be addressed to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI.

Patient Outreach in Healthcare: Health organizations are using social media to start conversations, connect with consumers, and drive awareness. By incorporating AI-driven tools such as telehealth services, chatbots, and systems for remote diagnosis and patient monitoring into social media, they can deliver customized content, improve access to high-quality medical care, and elevate patient outcomes.

B2B Implications: For B2B businesses, AI-powered social media offers significant opportunities. AI can help analyze market trends, identify potential customers, and personalize marketing messages. Additionally, AI-powered chatbots can provide efficient customer support, freeing up sales teams to focus on more complex tasks.



MEDULLA



SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

One of the most interesting and important shifts in social media marketing for 2025 is the growing emphasis on **hyper-personalization powered by AI**. Social platforms are evolving from one-size-fits-all approaches to highly tailored experiences driven by advanced algorithms, predictive analytics, and machine learning. This trend impacts marketing functions, teams, and the industry in three significant ways:

Customer-Centric Strategies: Social media marketing is no longer about broadcasting; it's about creating micro-moments of relevance. Marketers can now use AI-driven insights to design personalized campaigns that speak directly to individual user preferences, behaviors, and needs, fostering deeper engagement and brand loyalty.

Shift Toward Conversational Commerce: Platforms are integrating shopping experiences into their ecosystems through AI chatbots, shoppable posts, and voice search optimization. Teams adapt by merging social and e-commerce strategies, ensuring seamless user journeys from discovery to purchase.

Emphasis on Authenticity and Community Building: With the rise of platforms emphasizing niche interests and decentralized social networks, brands need to focus on creating value-based communities. Influencer partnerships are shifting towards more genuine collaborations that align with a brand's mission as audiences demand transparency and purpose-driven content. Subject matter experts, such as healthcare providers and professionals, are gaining more popularity as influencers.

Social Media as a Search Engine: Social media platforms are increasingly being used as search engines, particularly among younger users who prefer discovering brands through social channels rather than traditional search engines like Google. From global news to disease awareness – all information is now readily available. This shift necessitates that brands optimize their social media profiles for searchability by employing SEO best practices tailored to each platform.

Implications for Marketing Teams:

- + **Upskilling:** Marketing teams need to develop AI literacy and learn to work effectively with AI tools.
- + **Data-Driven Decision Making:** AI-powered analytics tools provide valuable insights to inform data-driven decision-making.
- + **Ethical Considerations:** Marketers must be mindful of ethical implications, such as data privacy and algorithmic bias.
- + **Adaptability:** The rapid pace of AI development requires marketers to be adaptable and embrace newer technologies.

For the healthcare and pharma industry, **increased emphasis on patient-centricity** is one of the most significant shifts in social media marketing. This shift involves focusing on the needs, concerns, and experiences of patients rather than simply promoting products.



MEDULLA



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

In 2025, the most fascinating and transformative technologies reshaping social media are: **Generative AI for hyper-personalized content creation** and **immersive AR/VR experiences**. These innovations are redefining how users engage with platforms, how brands tell their stories, and how businesses connect with their audiences.

Generative AI: A New Era of Content Creation

Generative AI is at the forefront of social media innovation, making content creation smarter, faster, and more inclusive.

- + **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Platforms are integrating generative AI tools that allow users to create high-quality images, videos, and text-based content effortlessly. Generative AI can automatically improve design and content language, create diverse educational materials, improve navigation systems and mobility aids, and even facilitate e-learning to make it more accessible to diverse populations and people with physical and cognitive impairments.
- + **Hyper-Personalized Engagement:** Brands are leveraging AI to craft dynamic content that adapts to individual user preferences, delivering experiences that resonate on a personal level and drive stronger connections.

Immersive AR/VR Experiences: The Social Media Metaverse

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies are moving social media beyond the screen, creating immersive, interactive environments.

- + **Virtual Spaces and Events:** Social platforms are enabling users to participate in virtual meetups, brand events, and digital product launches in fully immersive settings.
- + **AR-Powered Commerce:** From virtual try-ons for fashion and beauty products to AR-enabled furniture placements in your living space, these features seamlessly merge the digital and physical shopping experiences.

AI-Powered Predictive Social Listening

AI has also revolutionized social listening by providing real-time, predictive insights. Marketers can now detect emerging trends, anticipate audience needs, and refine campaigns before trends peak, ensuring relevancy and maximizing impact.



MEDULLA



INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

The most interesting and important shift in influencer marketing for marketers and brands in 2025 is the growing emphasis on authenticity, niche micro-communities, the growth of live shopping, and virtual influencers. These changes are redefining how brands engage audiences and measure the impact of influencer partnerships.

Authenticity and Purpose-Driven Influencers

- + Audiences in 2025 value **genuine connections** over polished ads. They are drawn to influencers who align with their values and demonstrate authentic storytelling. HCP influencers emphasize more on authenticity and transparency and are trusted to share genuine experiences and insights, avoiding overly promotional content. Even patients and caregivers of many diseases, especially rare diseases, are becoming more vocal on social media.
- + Brands are prioritizing partnerships with purpose-driven creators who have a strong connection to their followers, **focusing on long-term collaborations** rather than one-off promotions to build trust and credibility.

Rise of Micro-Influencers and Niche Communities

- + Micro- and nano-influencers are gaining prominence as they offer highly engaged, loyal audiences within specific niches. Their smaller but more focused follower bases often drive better ROI for brands targeting particular demographics or interest groups.
- + Influencers are now creating micro-communities, fostering deeper interactions with their followers in spaces like private groups, Discord channels, and exclusive live events, making these partnerships more valuable for marketers.

Growth of Live Shopping: Live shopping is becoming a cornerstone of influencer marketing, allowing real-time interaction between influencers and their audiences.

Virtual Influencers: AI-powered virtual influencers are becoming increasingly popular. These digital personalities can promote products and services, reaching a new generation of consumers.

B2B Influencer Marketing: A Strategic Shift

In B2B, influencer marketing is evolving from awareness-focused campaigns to thought leadership-driven collaborations:

- + **Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) as Influencers:** B2B brands are partnering with industry experts, consultants, and niche community leaders who have established credibility and influence in specific domains.
- + **LinkedIn and Niche Platforms:** LinkedIn remains the hub for B2B influencer marketing, but specialized platforms and forums are becoming equally critical for engaging with decision-makers.
- + **Content-Focused Strategies:** B2B influencers are co-creating webinars, whitepapers, and in-depth content that provides value and addresses industry challenges, moving beyond transactional engagements.



NEXT DIFFERENT



→ **Cristina Benedini,**

Analytics Director



→ **Francesco Incerpi,**

New Business & Sport Specialist



→ **Marta Monteleone,**

Head of Digital Content



→ **Diego Puzzangara,**

Influencer Marketing Account Supervisor

“TikTok, usually associated with B2C content, is also gaining popularity in the B2B sector, thanks to the tendency of “experts” to share their solution-oriented advice. That created niches of audience useful for B2B companies to target through.”

NEXTDIFFERENT (IT)

Next Different is the main Italian integrated and independent communication company born from the union between Different, one of the main national players in creativity, events, research, and PR, and Next14, the leader in data-driven media strategy and planning services with a strong technological approach.

From creativity to media planning, from events to retail media, from PR to digital, as well as data, loyalty production, and post-production services. Thanks to the data collected by the proprietary technological platform One with access to unique insights on over 15 million consumers and the market research of EMG, the research institute part of the group, we accompany customers along the entire communication path: from the definition of the strategy to creative development, from execution to media planning, up to the analysis of the results achieved.



NEXT DIFFERENT

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

CB: Social media is becoming - especially for the younger generation - the new “Google search bar.” The real difference with the old-style search is that people don’t look for specific information about products and services but for inspiration.

This new way of searching is maybe one of the reasons why engagement (measured in the number of interactions with content) is decreasing across all platforms: people are scrolling for inspo and are attracted by content that is relevant to them, but this attitude does not necessarily involve any desire to actively engage with the content itself.

Attention could be the real KPI that we need to consider. Especially in a digital - but not only digital - world where we are constantly overwhelmed daily by thousands of ads or content that are irrelevant to the consumer.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

MM: With the advent of TikTok in 2019, there has been an acceleration towards less polished and more spontaneous, almost homemade content. This has brought out a figure halfway between the video maker and the social media manager, roughly called content creator, who manages to create “amateur” videos for brands, using tools such as Capcut directly from the mobile phone.

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

FI: A key trend in social media for 2025 is the increasingly advanced integration of Artificial Intelligence. AI is being used to personalize content, improve advertising targeting, and simplify the creation and optimization of posts. Meta, for example, has launched generative AI tools to enable marketers to create advertising campaigns faster, and platforms such as YouTube are introducing AI features for interactive visual content, such as the ‘Dream Screen’ for short videos. Another emerging aspect is the growth of social commerce, which allows users to shop directly on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, offering seamless and more immersive shopping experiences, including through the use of augmented reality.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

DP: The beginning of 2024 was a turning point in influencer marketing in Italy. After a major scandal for a fake charity operation involving a food company and the most famous Italian influencer, Chiara Ferragni, Brands became more careful about investing in influencer marketing. Today, there is a very careful need for transparency between talent and brand, and certainly, the focus has shifted a lot from big-generic-celebs to niche but category-bound, micro and medium creators. Makeup, travel, and fashion are the main categories with a strong rise in food and tech.

B2B 2025: If you didn’t touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

MM: LinkedIn continues to dominate as a platform of choice for B2B marketers (thanks to the targeting features). TikTok, usually associated with B2C content, is also gaining popularity in the B2B sector, thanks to the tendency of “experts” to share their solution-oriented advice. That created niches of audience useful for B2B companies to target through.



NOT PERFECT



→ **Aurelija Plioplyte,**

Head of digital

“Users are less loyal to their favourite social media networks and their attention span is at an all-time-low. Therefore, there is no need to spend money and focus on long and interconnected storytelling - the solution is simple - create a VIBE.”

NOT PERFECT (LT)

Not Perfect Companies is an integrated creative, digital, and design agency established in 2000 that's grown to be almost 100 people. We're renowned for creative work that gets the nations talking. Whether that be in our home region of the Baltics or in an increasing number of countries around the world.



NOT PERFECT



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

0 attachment. 0 loyalty. As dramatic as it may sound, there is a noticeable pattern: users and creators often leave a platform right when it stops trending or loses its enjoyable factor and becomes boring. Take BeReal as an example — it experienced a huge surge in popularity at first, but people soon became disinterested because it required too much commitment. Although platforms are continuously searching for new ways to enhance gamification and flexibility, not everyone can keep pace with users' growing demands.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Users are less loyal to their favourite social media networks and their attention span is at an all-time-low. Therefore, there is no need to spend money and focus on long and interconnected storytelling – the solution is simple – create a VIBE. One content piece can be strong enough if you play your cards right and have distinct brand assets. Great examples of such social media communication tactics are progressive fashion brands (e.g., Jacquemus, Balenciaga), Ryanair. Every post is a new small campaign.

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

This year, Meta launched its own AI, which provides a range of services, from content suggestions for creators to real-time answers for customer inquiries. In contrast, LinkedIn is developing collaborative articles by combining AI-generated topic suggestions with contributions from relevant LinkedIn members. As a result, this technology is establishing a permanent presence in the social media landscape, and innovative ways to utilize it are expanding.

Another emerging trend is zero-click content. The launch of “Threads” has popularized the use of platforms that deliver information without requiring users to click through for more details. This trend has been embraced by various brands and has become an integral part of their communication strategies.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Influencers are being increasingly overshadowed by everyday creative content creators, such as those on TikTok, who have a more specific focus. These creators present themselves in a more relatable and authentic manner, gaining popularity not only on TikTok but also across various social media platforms. Trends like “What I Eat in a Day” and “Day in My Life” offer users a genuine, down-to-earth connection. As a result, this kind of everyday content is likely to dominate in the coming year, especially given the noticeable decline in overly polished and curated content.



OSAKA LABS



→ **Sam Gormley,**

Founder & Global CEO

“These platforms [e.g. Walmart Connect’s B2B tools] are leveraging first-party data to target B2B buyers with the same precision as consumers, which is driving efficiency in procurement processes and reshaping how B2B retail operates”

OSAKA LABS (UK & USA)

Sam Gormley is a digital marketing innovator with a passion for all things Internet, specializing in the rapidly evolving world of retail media. As the founder of Osaka Labs, Sam combines data-driven insights, creative strategy, and emerging technologies to help businesses thrive in the online marketplace. With a deep commitment to harnessing the power of digital platforms, Sam focuses on Walmart marketplace solutions and retail media advertising, ensuring clients stay ahead in the competitive e-commerce landscape. Through strategic planning and a vision for integrating AI-driven efficiencies, Sam is dedicated to unlocking growth and transforming how businesses engage with their audiences online.



OSAKA LABS



S J M Y



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

The most important trend is the rise of retail platforms like Walmart as media hubs, transforming how people discover and shop for products. Social media behaviors are bleeding into these platforms—shoppers are engaging with video content, personalized recommendations, and reviews directly within retail ecosystems. For Walmart, in particular, users are treating it like a hybrid of Amazon and TikTok, leveraging in-app search, shoppable content, and AI-driven product suggestions to make purchase decisions. This shift is massive for brands—it's no longer just about being on social; you need to have a robust presence directly on retail platforms, too.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

The biggest shift is the convergence of retail media and social media marketing. Platforms like Walmart Connect are essentially becoming social platforms in their own right, complete with dynamic ad placements, influencer collaborations, and shoppable videos. Walmart's investment in its retail media network has made it an end-to-end ecosystem for reaching, engaging, and converting customers. For marketers, this means creating strategies that integrate seamlessly across social channels and retail platforms, ensuring a unified experience from discovery to purchase.

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

Walmart's Retail Media+AI innovation is setting a new standard. Features like predictive analytics for ad placement, in-app shoppable video ads, and enhanced targeting based on purchase history are revolutionizing the space. Walmart's ad tech stack allows for precise, bottom-funnel targeting, which blends social-style engagement with direct conversions. Another game-changing feature is the incorporation of AR and VR into product browsing on platforms like Walmart, enabling immersive experiences that make the digital shopping journey feel tactile and personal.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Retail platforms are redefining the influencer game by becoming direct collaboration hubs. Walmart, for instance, is building tools that let creators showcase products in sponsored posts or livestreams hosted on the Walmart app itself. This removes friction and keeps audiences within the platform, making it easier for influencers to drive measurable sales. These retail-integrated partnerships are more transparent and ROI-driven, appealing to marketers looking for direct attribution from influencer campaigns.

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

For B2B brands, retail platforms like Walmart are shifting how businesses collaborate and advertise. Walmart Connect's B2B tools now allow wholesalers, distributors, and even SaaS providers to market directly to decision-makers who are purchasing for stores or organizations. These platforms are leveraging first-party data to target B2B buyers with the same precision as consumers, which is driving efficiency in procurement processes and reshaping how B2B retail operates. For marketers, it's about understanding these hybrid retail spaces and capitalizing on tools tailored for bulk buyers and business accounts.



PIABO COMMUNICATIONS



→ **Stefanie Söhnchen,**

*Vice President Strategy /
Lead Digital*

“Social media platforms will increasingly connect desire and purchase - especially in regard to the speed between the buying impulse and the actual buy.”

PIABO COMMUNICATIONS (DE)

The communications agency PIABO, based in Berlin, is the leading European full-service partner for the digital economy. PIABO provides outstanding international visibility for companies in the fields of e-commerce, travel tech, fintech, food tech, HR tech, health tech, blockchain/web3, consumer electronics, IoT, artificial intelligence, AR/VR, Cybersecurity, Deep tech, SaaS/Cloud and green tech. The range of services offered by its multidisciplinary consulting teams includes public relations and social media, as well as brand strategy, content marketing, and influencer programs. PIABO is led by founder and CEO Tilo Bonow and COO Daniela Harzer and, as a strategic partner, has been actively supporting its clients in achieving their local and global growth and development goals since 2006. Its client portfolio includes GitHub, Google, Lieferando, Omio, Sequoia Capital, Shopify, and Withings.



PIABO COMMUNICATIONS



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

One of the most important developments will be the rise of a forum-like culture on platforms like LinkedIn, Reddit, and Discord. This trend will be particularly relevant for B2B brands, as professionals are increasingly looking for spaces to engage in expert discussions and share knowledge.

Niche communities that are centered around specialized topics are emerging, with users deeply engaging in discussions and debates. This offers marketers a valuable opportunity to establish thought leadership and build meaningful relationships through authentic participation.

Additionally, we'll see a continued focus on second-hand markets and local groups, especially for finding deals and promoting sustainable consumption. Marketers can make use of this by supporting community building around their brand and integrating their products or services into these groups in a meaningful way.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

One of the most significant shifts in social media marketing will be the increasing SEO relevance of social media activities. Platforms like Reddit, with their strong focus on user-generated content and community engagement, will play a key role in driving organic traffic and boosting search engine rankings. Therefore, it is crucial that marketers optimize their social media content with SEO in mind, focus on relevant keywords, engage in discussions, and build high-quality backlinks.

Another major shift will be the rise of AI-powered automation. This will enable marketers to scale their efforts significantly, especially for tasks that require handling large amounts of data, e.g., in the e-commerce sector. AI tools able to automate content creation, scheduling, and even community management are becoming increasingly prominent, allowing marketers to dedicate more time to strategic initiatives.



PIABO COMMUNICATIONS

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

Social media platforms will increasingly connect desire and purchase - especially in regard to the speed between the buying impulse and the actual buy. Features like “search on-screen” (already being implemented by brands like Samsung) and enhanced AI-driven UX will enable users to identify and purchase products they see in social media content with minimal effort and maximum speed. This smooth integration of shopping functionalities will shorten the customer journey and encourage impulse purchases.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

The influencer marketing landscape is becoming increasingly competitive. Marketers will need to prioritize hyper-relevance and authenticity to stand out from their competitors.

This means collaborating with influencers who are either highly relevant to their target audience or have a truly unique and engaging personality. Micro-influencers with niche expertise or creators who distinguish themselves with their unique voice and style are becoming increasingly prominent. This is also due to the proven higher impact of micro-influencers that marketers are discovering more and more.

While this trend applies to both B2C and B2B, the B2B influencer market is still relatively free of competition. This will be a unique opportunity for brands to partner with thought leaders and industry experts to build credibility and reach new audiences.





RETROVIRAL



→ **Mike Sharman,**

Chief Creative Officer

“The Perfect Couple was one of Netflix’s most critically acclaimed series of 2024, and the ability to weave brands like Tanqueray into the dialogue of key scenes - between Nicole Kidman and Liev Schreiber - brings a product to life and prominence, unlike any traditional commercial spot.”

RETROVIRAL (RSA)

Retroviral is an independent, award-winning communications agency. We have a challenger mindset. We offer an alternative way of thinking, challenge the status quo, and use innovative business models that disrupt to deliver impact and value.

We pride ourselves on being more than just an advertising agency. We are a hub of creative energy, a results-driven impact agency that brings a catalyst for earned media success. We are committed to delivering unparalleled results through our bespoke offering of earned media and virality-driven, bottom-line, high-impact campaigns and projects.

Retroviral has recently been lauded by Provoke Media: Africa Consultancy of the Year, MarkLives - PR Agency of the Year, and Ad Focus Small Agency of the Year.



RETROVIRAL

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

We've made everything artificial - from our intelligence that demands doomscrolling to deliver on our dopamine needs - to outdoors with FAUX out-of-home CGI pieces.

The user craves experiential; whether it's an event or an authentic, raw, doccic style story, humans are on the hunt for more humanity. We are more than just thumbs clicking our consciousness to the top of a funnel.

The user of 2025 wants to be seen, heard, and truly engaged.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Our view is that branded content is evolving into branded entertainment. The extremes between the instant gratification, bite-sized content worlds of TikTok and Reels, and long-form streamers / YouTube offers brands an opportunity to double down on branded integration in more authentic ways. The Perfect Couple was one of Netflix's most critically acclaimed series of 2024, and the ability to weave brands like Tanqueray into the dialogue of key scenes - between Nicole Kidman and Liev Schreiber - brings a product to life and prominence, unlike any traditional commercial spot.

More shows will be built around brands or brand platforms, and this merger of creativity is incredibly exciting for copywriters the world over. The more authentic this integration, the more widely adopted this tactic will become.

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

We've only seen the tip of the artificial iceberg. More AI tools, more realistic outputs, and more production company jobs under threat are what we can expect in 2025. Text to video will result in more content white noise than ever before and earned will require new ways to cut through the cacophony of clutter.

Your relationships are more important than ever in 2025. From clients to news editors. Budgets will be under pressure and demands of varieties of formats and durations (15s, 60s, 16x9, 9x16, 1:1) will expand to test your margins.

The earned media expert who understands branded content and has a trustworthy distribution network will be one of the most in-demand unicorns of the year.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

'Triple threat' in showbiz used to sing, dance, act. We're in the age of 'quadruple threat' - sing, dance, act, create. Celebrities shine annually in multi-million dollar Super Bowl ads, but the best ones leveraged celebrities in a content creator-esque, integrated marketing communications play.

If your brand can tap into synergistic celebrity, you'll break the internet and sales records. Case in point - Michael Cera x CeraVe - a campaign of the year.



RETROVIRAL



B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

Business people are just people. The B2B trends of 2025 will adhere to consumer principles:

- + More human humanity
- + Entertain your business audience
- + Cut through the clutter of corporate comms – video/audio/visual
- + Unlock the EMfluencers - your employee influencers who are your audience's colleagues - from C-suite celebs to call center cool-kids - how can you build a reward program for the individuals encouraging the consumption of the corporate Kool-aid?



THE NEW THING



→ **Viren Sean Noronha,**

Co-founder

"I've noticed the urge to use content as social currency is at an all-time high. What you share is your language, your vibe, and your identity. It's a handshake, a shout-out, and a personality quiz rolled into one."

THE NEW THING (IN)

The New Thing is an agency founded by Viren Noronha along with Gautam Reghunath and PG Aditiya of Talented. TNT was founded as a creator-led agency that prides itself on two things: 1) saying a strong NO to doing 30 posts a month and 2) making brands work for the internet instead of the other way around. Staffed entirely by creators, The New Thing's primary focus is to help their brands create cultural conversations and moments on social - something they believe very few brands are getting right.



THE NEW THING

USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

In a May 2024 interview, Adam Mosseri dropped a truth bomb that anyone who plays the social media game figures out sooner or later: shares reign supreme. People have come to 'share content' more than they like, comment, or save. You'll hit that share button before you've even finished watching a Reel. And when you do, it's not just to one person—it's to at least ten. I've noticed the urge to use content as social currency is at an all-time high. What you share is your language, your vibe, and your identity. It's a handshake, a shout-out, and a personality quiz rolled into one. For me, there are friendships I've kept alive purely through the back-and-forth of shared posts. Why? Because the content I share says more about me than any Myers-Briggs test could. Zoom out, and it's clear: high-performing, viral, evergreen content always boasts more shares than any other engagement metric. For creators, that's the North Star—optimize for shares, and everything else follows. Marketers? Same game. Shares drive visibility, reach, and cultural relevance like no other metric.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Social media teams are undergoing a major identity overhaul—and it's for the better. Gone are the days when these teams were packed with strategists, copywriters, designers, and creative leads — all extremely talented professionals, sure, but often people with zero skin in the social media game. Folks who post maybe once every few weeks, if that. Today, creators are taking the driver's seat on both the agency and brand sides. Social media teams actively want 'creators.' That's because 'social' has finally realized it works best in the hands of those actively creating for it. A few years ago, hitting a million views took a village. Social teams needed celebrities, production houses, expensive directors, massive media spending, and paid PR to hit a million views. Now? A million views is just a creator, a smartphone, and a joke on a regular Tuesday.

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

I hate to pile on the bandwagon, but AI has more than earned its buzzword status. It's the ultimate TAT killer for creators- cutting down SOWs, doubling as a creative's soundboard, giving designers an extra hand, drafting airtight JDs, and whipping up last-minute, polished presentations. I'm unashamed to say I run everything through AI—scripts, pitch decks, even this write-up—just to see what comes out the other end. It's not perfect. But in its imperfection, it opens doors to new ideas. The ones who embrace AI don't just meet deadlines—they redefine them.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

We no longer buy into the influencer; we buy into their formats—and the distribution those formats promise. Sure, brands still chase after influencers with big follower count, but the smarter ones know better. They understand that high followers don't always mean high engagement. Instead, they ask: What's the unique IP this creator brings? A podcast? A Reel series? A recurring character? A viral joke that's now a signature? In today's world, an influencer's format is their most valuable asset. It's their arsenal, and they're both quartermaster and sharpshooter. Influencer marketing is becoming less about personalities and more about media planning. Brands don't just want the person—they want the format and the reach it guarantees. And they're ready to pay top rupee for it. In 2025, the message is clear: your format is your superpower, and it's what keeps brands coming back.



THINKHOUSE



→ **Donagh Humphreys,**

*Head of Social and Digital
Innovation*

"In 2025, the role of social marketers will expand from content creators to key contributors in the boardroom, where their insights into customer behaviour and data-driven campaigns inform overarching business decisions. With platforms serving as rich ecosystems for first-party data collection, marketing teams will increasingly be tasked with demonstrating how social media contributes to measurable outcomes, from revenue growth to customer retention. This evolution elevates social media leaders to strategic partners in shaping brand identity and market direction."

THINKHOUSE (IRE)

With headquarters in Dublin and offices in London, THINKHOUSE is one of the world's leading independent agencies. Powered by youth culture, our digital-first, future-fit marketing is for progressive brands that care about people and the planet. THINKHOUSE is a BCorp-certified company! Reaffirming our goal to put the planet and purpose at the heart of everything we do.



THINKHOUSE



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

The recent direction of travel in user behaviour is defined by two diverging paths: the **fragmentation of the social media space** and the simultaneous rise of “**everything apps**.” These trends reflect contrasting user desires—intimacy and specificity on the one hand, and convenience and integration on the other—both reshaping how platforms serve and retain their audiences.

On the fragmented side, users are increasingly drawn to niche platforms that offer **personalised, purpose-driven experiences**. Smaller, community-centric spaces like Discord or BeReal thrive by fostering emotional intimacy and aligning content with specific interests. This shift is a response to **content fatigue** and a desire for control over digital interactions, with users prioritizing depth of connection over the breadth of audience. These platforms allow users to cultivate multiple personas tailored to different parts of their identity, whether professional, personal, or hobbyist. However, fragmented platforms face challenges in scaling while maintaining the trust and authenticity that make them appealing.

Conversely, “everything apps” embody the trend toward **consolidation and utility**. Inspired by the success of platforms like WeChat, these super-apps promise to integrate social networking, e-commerce, payments, and productivity into a seamless ecosystem. This appeals to **convenience culture**, where users increasingly demand efficiency and a centralised experience to manage their digital lives. Platforms like X (formerly Twitter) are already moving in this direction, embedding financial transactions, AI tools, and expanded content types. However, this drive for utility risks diluting the emotional connection that users associate with social platforms, turning them into transactional rather than social spaces. Moreover, the centralisation of services raises concerns about **data privacy** and monopolistic behaviour, potentially alienating users who value autonomy.

This emotional push-pull reflects a broader user dilemma: fragmented platforms excel at fostering intimacy and meaningful interaction but may leave users overwhelmed by the growing number of apps to manage. Meanwhile, everything apps deliver convenience and breadth but risk losing the specificity and trust that make smaller platforms attractive. AI plays a crucial role in both models—enhancing personalisation in fragmented spaces and supercharging utility in everything apps—but its increasing presence also raises questions about the balance between human and machine-generated interactions.

Looking ahead, a few safe predictions emerge. First, niche platforms will continue to thrive, particularly among younger, digitally-savvy users who value authenticity and community. Second, everything apps will see adoption driven by their ability to integrate commerce, content, and daily utilities, likely dominating in regions where convenience is king. However, the challenge for both models will be navigating user trust, particularly regarding data ownership and privacy.

A possible if unlikely outcome in 2025 would be greater interoperability between platforms. Governments or user demand might push platforms to enable seamless cross-platform interactions, allowing users to combine the benefits of fragmentation with the convenience of super-apps. This would fundamentally reshape the competitive landscape, creating a future where the choice between fragmentation and consolidation is no longer binary but complementary. Top of Form Bottom of Form



THINKHOUSE

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Social media marketing in 2025 is at a crossroads, where technological advancements and shifting consumer behaviours are transforming how marketers engage audiences, measure success, and deliver results. The most significant changes revolve around **hyper-personalisation, seamless commerce integration, and the rising strategic importance of social media in the boardroom**. These trends are redefining the role of marketing teams, blurring the lines between creativity, data, and commerce, while elevating social platforms as central to business growth.

The rise of hyper-personalisation at scale is arguably the most impactful shift in social media marketing. Thanks to advancements in AI and machine learning, marketers now have the tools to deliver tailored content to individual users based on real-time data like location, behaviour, and preferences. No longer limited to demographic targeting, brands can now execute thousands of micro-campaigns simultaneously, each designed to feel bespoke. For example, AI can create individualised ad copy, visuals, and product recommendations for users, all dynamically adjusted to suit their context or even their mood. This level of personalisation goes beyond engaging users—it builds deeper connections and fosters brand loyalty, placing a premium on marketers' ability to harness AI tools effectively.

Complementing personalisation is the **integration of social media with e-commerce**, transforming platforms into end-to-end shopping ecosystems. By 2025, the gap between content discovery and purchase will have almost disappeared. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest are already embedding shopping functionality directly into feeds, allowing users to seamlessly buy products without leaving the app. This shift positions social media as both a storytelling medium and a direct revenue driver, meaning marketers must balance creativity with conversion-focused strategies. AI again plays a key role, enabling personalised shopping experiences through predictive algorithms that recommend products, optimise pricing, and reduce friction in the customer journey. For marketing teams, this demands a new mindset—one that sees social media not just as a channel for engagement but as a critical node in the e-commerce funnel.

As these capabilities evolve, **social media marketing is no longer a tactical function but a core driver of business strategy**. In 2025, the role of social marketers will expand from content creators to key contributors in the boardroom, where their insights into customer behaviour and data-driven campaigns inform overarching business decisions. With platforms serving as rich ecosystems for first-party data collection, marketing teams will increasingly be tasked with demonstrating how social media contributes to measurable outcomes, from revenue growth to customer retention. This evolution elevates social media leaders to strategic partners in shaping brand identity and market direction.

Predictions for 2025

- + **Hyper-personalisation and AI-driven marketing** will dominate, empowering brands to deliver campaigns that feel individually crafted at scale.
- + **Shoppable social media experiences** will continue to transform platforms into hybrid entertainment-commerce hubs, making social media central to consumer spending.
- + **As per the “everything app” idea**, social media in 2025 could possibly become a **fully integrated marketing and sales platform**—offering not only personalised ads and e-commerce but also embedded financial tools, customer service AI, and loyalty programmes. This evolution would make social media the single most critical touchpoint for managing the entire customer lifecycle.

Marketing teams that embrace these shifts and invest in the right technologies and skills will thrive in this increasingly dynamic landscape. Those who don't may find themselves left behind as the speed of innovation continues to accelerate.





THINKHOUSE

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

It will come to no surprise to any reader that we are predicting that AI technologies will have the greatest effect on the nature of social media in 2025. So, perhaps the future of social media creativity isn't human at all? Generative AI is poised to transform the way we create, share, and consume content in ways that are both exciting and unsettling. While machine learning has long powered social platforms, generative AI takes it a step further—shifting from curation to creation. This evolution could redefine the rules of engagement for brands, creators, and agencies alike.

Social media's success owes much to machine learning's ability to serve content users relentlessly consume, but generative AI introduces a new paradigm: creativity on demand. It promises to democratise creativity in much the same way smartphones democratised content creation.

With just a few well-worded prompts, anyone can now become a designer, writer, artist, or coder—no prior skills required. A small business owner, for example, can instantly craft a polished ad campaign complete with copy, visuals, and video. Agencies, too, stand to benefit: generative AI compresses the timeline from ideation to execution, transforming concepts into fully realised assets within minutes.

But this democratisation comes with risks. Where smartphones flooded social media with cookie-cutter content, generative AI could supercharge sameness—or worse, produce content that feels eerily off. Will social feeds evolve into a dynamic canvas of infinite originality, or a sterile stream of uncanny AI creations?

Generative AI offers both promise and peril. For brands and creators, it opens doors to unprecedented opportunities but also challenges them to maintain authenticity in an AI-saturated world. The question now is not whether AI will shape social media, but how. Those who embrace this shift early, with a keen eye on balancing innovation and authenticity, will shape the narrative of social media's next chapter.





THINKHOUSE



INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

2024 was a landmark year for creator marketing, with brands generating 486.6 billion impressions through partnerships—a staggering 184% increase from the previous year. Nearly 200,000 unique creators produced 3.1 million posts. As creator marketing continues to mature, it is evolving beyond scale into a more strategic, community-driven, and purpose-focused ecosystem.

A defining trend in the creator economy is the shift from audience size to audience trust. Brands are prioritising creator attributes and audience demographics over follower counts, reflecting a focus on quality and engagement. Creators are fostering smaller, loyal communities, leveraging platforms like Patreon and Discord to offer exclusive content and deeper connections. For marketers, these community-centric models unlock highly engaged audiences, allowing for more authentic collaborations and impactful campaigns.

Long-term partnerships are becoming the gold standard. In 2024, 40% of creators participated in multiple campaigns with the same brands, allowing them to integrate messaging naturally into their content. This shift from transactional, one-off deals to sustained relationships not only improves ROI but also builds credibility for both creators and brands.

Creators are also increasingly stepping into entrepreneurial roles, launching their own products, merchandise, and even businesses. This evolution sees creators transitioning from influencers to full-fledged brand builders. Examples like Emma Chamberlain's coffee line and MrBeast's Feastables highlight the vast potential of creator-led ventures. These developments are redefining partnerships, with co-creation and shared ownership becoming integral to successful collaborations.

The growing emphasis on sustainability and ethics is another major shift. Consumers are increasingly drawn to creators who advocate for social and environmental causes, and brands are aligning their partnerships with creators whose values resonate with their audiences. This trend underscores the rising importance of purpose-driven marketing within the creator economy.

The pressure of constant content production has also put creator well-being in the spotlight. Many are openly discussing burnout and prioritising mental health, resonating with audiences who value vulnerability. Brands must adapt by offering fair compensation, flexible timelines, and collaborations that prioritise the human aspect of creator relationships.

As we look ahead to 2025, the creator economy will continue to evolve, driven by multiplatform campaigns, short-form video dominance, and AI-generated content. Creators will increasingly act as curators, filtering the noise to deliver meaningful content that resonates with hyper-specific audiences.

The future lies in authenticity, innovation, and purpose. Brands that invest in long-term, values-driven partnerships with creators will not only navigate this dynamic landscape but also define the next chapter of digital engagement and cultural influence.



THINKHOUSE



B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

By 2025, B2B marketing will be defined by its ability to harness cutting-edge technology to deliver precise, efficient, and impactful strategies. As buyer expectations continue to mirror the hyper-personalised experiences of the consumer world, and social media platforms evolve into fully-fledged sales ecosystems, the role of AI and integrated tools will become pivotal.

Two key shifts stand out as game-changers:

Hyper-personalisation and ABM as the Gold Standard

By 2025, hyper-personalisation and account-based marketing (ABM) will be the cornerstones of B2B marketing strategies. AI-powered tools will enable mid-sized organisations to scale ABM campaigns that were previously resource-intensive, making it easier to deliver tailored content and offers to individual stakeholders within target accounts. For example, AI can help identify decision-makers, analyse their behaviour across touchpoints, and generate personalised emails, LinkedIn ads, or even dynamic content on websites. This will allow B2B marketers to align their efforts more closely with sales teams, driving greater engagement and higher conversion rates.

Social Media as a Pipeline Driver

Social media will solidify its role in lead generation and nurturing, with platforms like LinkedIn evolving into sophisticated tools for pipeline development. Enhanced features, such as AI-driven lead scoring, in-app demo booking, and integrated CRM capabilities, will make it easier for B2B marketers to move prospects seamlessly through the buyer's journey. This shift will position social media not just as a branding tool but as a critical driver of measurable business outcomes.



THINKERBELL



→ **Kerstin Allin,**

Lead Owned Thinker

“The power of this format [“bite-sized” stories] hasn’t gone unnoticed by brands. Many are now adopting episodic storytelling strategies, moving beyond one-off campaigns to create serialized content with cliffhangers, sequels, and ongoing narratives that build a deeper connection with audiences. This strategy transforms passive viewers into active, engaged fans who eagerly await the next installment.”

THINKERBELL (AU)

Thinkerbelle represents the coming together of marketing sciences and hardcore creativity – or, as we like to call it, ‘Measured Magic.’ We are an agency of Thinkers and Tinkers and have extensive experience in the worlds of research, strategy, customer experience, owned, shared, earned & paid media, design, and creative execution. We have helped some of Australia’s best-known and most loved brands find their inner magic.



THINKERBELL



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

The most interesting trend is the continued fragmentation and proliferation of online content. Social platforms have transformed the once-shared, collective experience of mainstream media into something more dynamic and diverse. The days of gathering around to watch a trending show or cultural moment have evolved into a new ecosystem of clips, memes, and interpretations scattered across platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Reddit.

For many, especially younger audiences, mainstream is no longer dominant—it's just a starting point. A single episode of a show now sparks countless variations: hilarious TikTok trends, reaction videos, deep-dive analysis, and niche discussions in online communities. These fragments are consumed in hyper-personalised ways, tailored by algorithms and creators, making the experience unique for each viewer.

This shift is reshaping the way culture is created and interacted with. Cultural moments now take on new life as they evolve across platforms, inviting greater participation and creativity from users. It democratizes content, giving rise to diverse voices and niche creators who can connect with audiences in more meaningful ways. What was once a passive experience has become active, with everyone contributing to the narrative in their own way. There is no longer a single dominant source shaping public opinion. This is the new reality of popular culture: fragmented, dynamic, and profoundly personal.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

Social media has evolved from simple networking tools into entertainment platforms. This shift has blurred the lines between social media and traditional entertainment platforms like Netflix. And because of this, entertainment is no longer just a category of content - it's the expectation, even for serious topics or brand messaging.

Creators are leading this movement, particularly on TikTok and YouTube, where they craft episodic, highly engaging narratives that mirror mini-TV series. These "bite-sized" stories are addictive, creating anticipation and loyalty in ways traditional advertising rarely achieves. The power of this format hasn't gone unnoticed by brands. Many are now adopting episodic storytelling strategies, moving beyond one-off campaigns to create serialized content with cliffhangers, sequels, and ongoing narratives that build a deeper connection with audiences. This strategy transforms passive viewers into active, engaged fans who eagerly await the next installment.

Social platforms have become a primary source of entertainment. People turn to social not just to connect but to be entertained—and this shift demands that brands rethink their approach to content. Traditional ad strategies alone are no longer sufficient. To resonate, brands embrace storytelling that feels organic, engaging, and entertaining—because on platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels, you're not just competing with other brands; you're competing with the internet's most captivating creators.



THINKERBELL

TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

An interesting shift we're seeing in social tech is the rise of decentralization, highlighted by platforms like Bluesky. Users are increasingly seeking more control over their online experiences, favoring platforms that prioritize autonomy and give them a greater say in moderation, algorithms, and community standards. However, this shift isn't without challenges—content moderation and safety become exponentially harder in these environments, raising questions about balancing freedom with accountability.

At the same time, there's a growing move toward subscriber-based models like Patreon, which are transforming how creators and audiences interact. Users are willing to pay directly for content that resonates with them, bypassing traditional advertising models. This shift is reflected in features like paid newsletters, Instagram Subscriptions, and YouTube memberships, where creators deliver tailored, authentic content to their most loyal supporters. Both trends highlight a broader desire for more meaningful, user-driven online experiences.

These shifts signal a future where social media is increasingly shaped by users and creators, with communities taking center stage. For brands and platforms, the challenge lies in adapting to this decentralized, personalized landscape and finding new ways to foster trust and connection.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

There's magic in the unexpected. We're seeing a rise in innovative content creators who carve out highly specific and distinctive niches, particularly on TikTok. Think @Logagm's cucumber content or @ayame.p's reactions to things getting squished. Consumers are hungry for content that feels fresh, different, and even a little bit obscure.

For brands willing to be bold, this is an exciting opportunity. Partnering with unconventional creators—whose content may not fit neatly into the brand's category—can lead to surprising and memorable collaborations. These unexpected pairings not only spark creativity but also attract far more attention than a traditional, in-category partnership might.

And let's not overlook the rise of comedy creators. With so many people using social media as a primary news source, humor offers a much-needed escape. We're even seeing luxury brands, traditionally known for emotionally neutral campaigns, jumping on board with comedy content. Brands like Marc Jacobs and Loewe are collaborating with comedians on social to bring a fresh, playful twist to their image.

Ultimately, the boundaries of influencer/creator marketing are expanding. Creativity is thriving in unexpected places, and brave brands are winning.

B2B 2025: If you didn't touch upon B2B in your answers to the above four questions, please share your thoughts on any of those within B2B.

In the B2B landscape, storytelling is becoming pivotal in social content. Platforms like Instagram and even TikTok are no longer just places for fashion or FMCG. Many B2B brands are realizing social as powerful tools for creating emotional connections and building trust with businesses and key decision-makers.

Brands like Square, GoDaddy, Canva, and Google are leading the way by leveraging storytelling to humanize their offerings. This shift is crucial because decision-makers in B2B markets are still people—they're on socials, and they value content that resonates on a human level.



ZULU ALPHA KILO



→ **Sarah Yim,**

Strategy Director

“Online content is increasingly overwhelming, in reaction to this, a new type of influencer is emerging: the “culture curator.” These culture curators provide two things: the synthesis of content available and a uniquely entertaining perspective.”

ZULU ALPHA KILO (CA)

Zulu Alpha Kilo is a Toronto-based creative company that has built a reputation as an industry outlier and is one of the most respected independent agencies in the world. On two occasions, Zulu has won top honors from Ad Age, as Small Agency of the Year and International Agency of the Year.



ZULU ALPHA KILO



USER BEHAVIOUR 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important trend regarding how people are using social media?

We've entered an era of 'peak content' with hundreds of photos and videos that we scroll past once and struggle to find again. In this saturated storytelling and entertainment landscape, some brands are moving beyond one-off posts to tell a more sustained story.

This approach isn't limited to brands—it's also embraced by pop culture icons like Sabrina Carpenter. From her concert set design to her Erewhon smoothie, SKIMS campaign, and endlessly quoted "I'm working late, cause I'm a singer" line from Espresso, her branding leans into today's consumption-first mindset of consumers. Her story leaves breadcrumbs for her fandom to immerse themselves in her evolving tastes and the broader world of pop culture (i.e., the 'Kill Bill' reference in her music video for "Taste").

Today's consumers look to society as a broader world to explore; they want to be able to thread narratives together and immerse themselves in the bigger story.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in social media marketing for the marketing function/teams/industry?

In recent years, brands and agencies have leaned heavily into reacting to culture. From trending audio clips to popular narrative formats, content teams have been liberal with where and when they show up. Today, it is no longer enough to simply "show up" on social, we need to link these fleeting moments with the larger journeys of consumers to build mental availability on social.

Take Duolingo, for example, its viral (and now iconic) "BBL" skit fed directly into a larger campaign rollout in the lead-up to their Super Bowl spot, weaving together a narrative that built over time and spanned platforms. We are also seeing publishers like NYT Cooking partner with martech platforms like "manychat" to link digital journeys, sending editorial content to users via Instagram DMs when they comment on posts using a specific emoji.

In response to this, we will see the growing importance of the comms. Skillset as teams figure out how to navigate an increasingly complex digital landscape and quantify efforts on social against business goals.



ZULU ALPHA KILO



TECHNOLOGY/FEATURE 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important new/trending technology or feature related to social media?

Many brands have already begun exploring AI-supported content production, be it pulling from asset libraries or adapting creatively to multiple specifications. There is no doubt that this will help scale our work. That said, if we are to realize the true potential of generative AI, it needs to remain in service of smart, creative strategy.

We did this in a recent campaign for Campbell's, where we reimagined what the iconic soup can have looked like throughout history — using generative AI. The Warhol-esque reproductions stemmed from an idea unique to the brand, distributed on a visually driven platform: Instagram. Moving forward, this combination of old and new could be a formula for success when working with generative AI.

INFLUENCERS/CREATORS 2025: What is the most interesting and/or important shift in influencer marketing for marketers/brands?

Online content is increasingly overwhelming, in reaction to this, a new type of influencer is emerging: the “culture curator.” These culture curators provide two things: the synthesis of content available and a uniquely entertaining perspective.

On TikTok, we see creators such as @jasper_garner (who highlights small brands), @shannon.d.lange (who reviews Vogue Wedding features), and @BentonMcClintock (whose #thankgawd series pokes fun at extravagant designer items) use direct-to-camera commentary to react to and reinterpret what they discover.

Instagram, by contrast, caters to curators of aesthetics and niche “-cores” with popular curators like @migonettetakespictures, who shares whimsical “photo dumps” of animals, @trionfi_mondo who celebrates the artistry of cakes, and @station.09 who curates the dreamy world of anime-inspired foods. On this platform, the focus shifts from commentary to the curation of exciting visual worlds like the curation trends of early 2000s Tumblr. In comparison to TikTok, these Instagram curators excel in curating distinctive moods that resonate with the aesthetically driven content on the platform.

As the landscape continues to evolve, brands will need to consider how they can partner with these emerging curators to express their brand through new mediums or even inspire new products.

THANK YOU FOR READING

PUBLISHED → 11.1.2025



ANALYSTS → Erika Danielsson & Jari Lähdevuori

CONTACT → jari@kurio.fi