

Digital Marketing Trends

2022

What's new?

2022

Retro Revolution



Old school is in session. Old school is in ses

2022

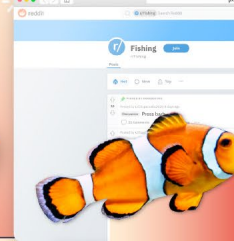
Community Content



* user-generated content is king *
* user-generated content is king *

20

Noiseless



* Small communities

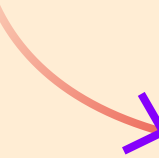
✧ You need to know ✧ You need to know ✧ You need to

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Introduction



History has always been cyclic. And if we've learned anything from our past, it's that pandemics change society.

The Bubonic Plague led to the Renaissance. The Spanish Flu led to the Roaring '20s.

The COVID-19 pandemic has parallels with the plagues of our past. It wouldn't be a stretch to predict that much like our past pandemics, our tumultuous present will lead to a great societal change in 2022.

The events of the past two years made new needs crop up and brought about a radical shift in the way companies do business. This post-pandemic recovery period is a watershed moment in which we'll decide the future of business and marketing.

As we transition into 2022, the main goals of every business should be to understand shifting consumer needs and capture new growth opportunities. That's why we've compiled this list of 10 digital marketing trends that are on the upswing — so you can win big in 2022.

This eBook will show you where the digital marketing world is headed, how leading brands are already capitalizing on these 10 trends, and actionable tips on how you can leverage them. The trends are also supplemented by insights from monitoring 100 million online sources, listening to 100,000 brands, and analyzing more than 8 billion pieces of content published online.



Let's jump right in!



Methodology

To understand the biggest marketing trends of 2022, we used Falcon, Brandwatch, and BuzzSumo to analyze topics seeing uplift which brands can leverage for future success.

As part of the research, we used:



Falcon to look into what 100,000 brands are saying on social media and how their fans are reacting.



Brandwatch to analyze public online conversations across Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, blogs, forums, news sites, and more.



BuzzSumo to analyze the performance of over 8 billion pieces of content published across the web.

In addition to our analysis, this eBook also features insights from industry leaders, influencers, and reports from **Morning Consult, Stackla, eMarketer, App Annie, Forrester, Gartner, and McKinsey.**



How did we do in 2021?

We cannot predict the future until we've looked at how we did in the past. Let's see how many of our past predictions came to fruition with this quick retrospective.

Our scoring is based on our internal research and goes from A to F, where A is a trend that reached its full potential in 2021.

The 10 trends we predicted for 2021

The year of disruption: Social-in-place.

Trend: The COVID-19 pandemic forced people and brands to create new behaviors on social. And, in 2021, we saw their usage grow, with people spending more time on social platforms. Online community building has never been more crucial for brands.

Our score: A

The rising tide of social commerce.

Trend: Lockdowns have not only made people spend more time on social media but also shop more online. Social commerce was flourishing during the pandemic, with brands looking for creative ways to compete for online buyers. Social networks also introduced creative ways for brands to sell their products and services to the community.

Our score: A

Outspoken brand activism.

Trend: 2021 proved that brand voice matters more than ever. Consumers increasingly want to buy from purpose-driven businesses that align with their personal values. At the same time, they do not hesitate to call out a brand for being inauthentic and performative. It looks like brand activism is here to stay.

Our score: A

Ephemeral content: Point, shoot, story.

Trend: Raw and authentic micro-content became more popular than perfectly-polished newsfeed posts. But while Stories and Reels continued to capture audience attention in 2021, Twitter and LinkedIn shut down their versions of Stories. It goes to show that some ephemeral features can be fleeting after all.

Our score: B

The expanding world of AR.

Trend: The world of augmented and virtual reality is definitely expanding, with more brands testing the AR waters in 2021. Instagram filters and virtual try-ons all saw a boom in 2021, making this a trend that will continue well into 2022 and beyond.

Our score: A

Data privacy: Under the microscope.

Trend: Data management has been a leading theme for most social networks in 2021, especially as they looked for new ways to provide personalized experiences while protecting the data privacy of their users. With Google phasing out third-party cookies soon, consumers will gain more control over their personal data while marketers will be challenged to customize the customer journey for their leads.

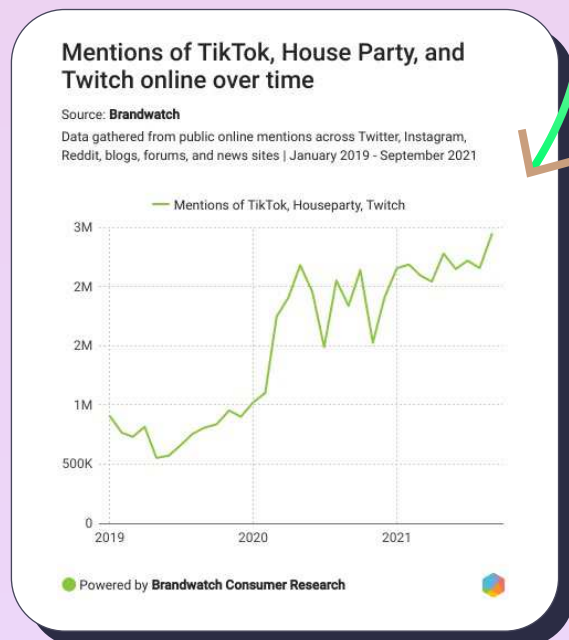
Our score: A



Niche SoMe platforms: A broader horizon.

Trend: Niche social platforms like Twitch and TikTok grew in 2021 and expanded to wider, not-so-niche audiences. Brands found such social networks as a great resource to find new leads and grow their communities. In 2021 these more 'niche' social networks offered easier access to big audiences, less competition, and advertising which was often available at lower prices.

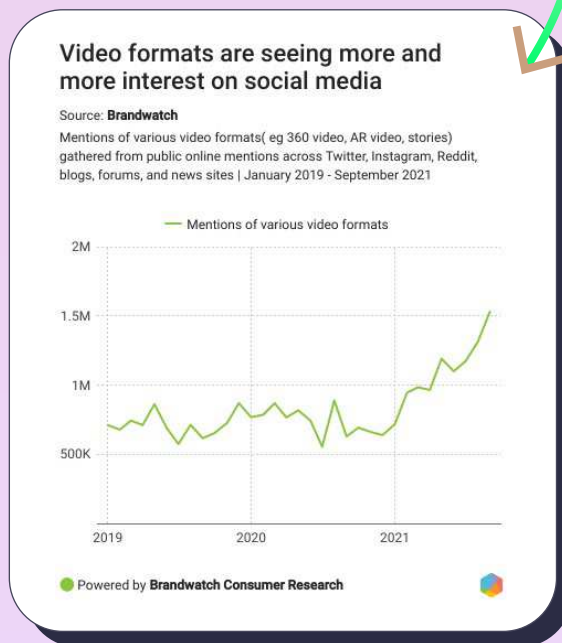
Our score: A



Video formats open new doors.

Trend: Video continues to be the preferred content format across social networks, and in 2021 they came in different shapes and sizes. Reels became a popular ephemeral feature, YouTube Shorts and Snapchat Spotlight gained traction while LinkedIn invested in long-form videos, and Instagram shared a vision for turning from a photo-focused to a video-oriented platform.

Our Score: A



A fork in the advertising road: Privacy vs personalization.

Trend: Balancing privacy and personalization was a leading theme in 2021. It shaped the social advertising world, with users looking for customized experiences but feeling hesitant about sharing their data.

Our score: A

Social media as public relations 2.0.

Trend: Social listening has been on the rise in 2021, enabling businesses to hear their audiences' voices and react accordingly. Marketers are no longer the sole creators of their brands — consumers and influencers are shaping up their stories and contributing significantly on social media.

Our Score: A

Nothing did stay the same.

In 2020, we predicted that in no year would the notion of an “ever-changing marketing landscape” be more applicable than in 2021. And the year proved us right.

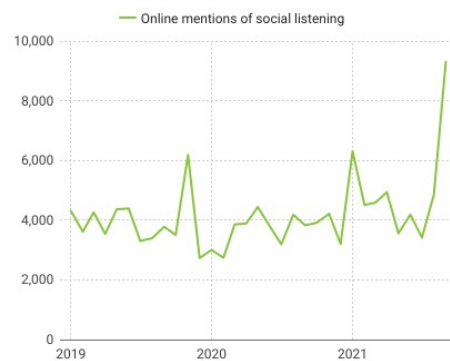
2021 saw the introduction of new social networks like Clubhouse, the growth of old ones like TikTok, a boom in social audio, the sunseting of niche pandemic faves like Houseparty, the arrival of dozens of new features in our favorite social media platforms, and several other marketing shifts, opportunities, and innovations.

As we emerge out of the pandemic, more of these innovations and growth opportunities will appear, presenting you, as a marketer, a ripe chance to leverage the following key marketing trends just as they crystallize.

Online mentions of social listening are growing over time

Source: **Brandwatch**

Data gathered from public online mentions across Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, blogs, forums, and news sites | January 2019 - September 2021



Powered by **Brandwatch Consumer Research**



What's new?

2022:

What the crystal ball says



Trend #1

2022

Retro Revolution



Old school is in session. Old school is in ses



Overview



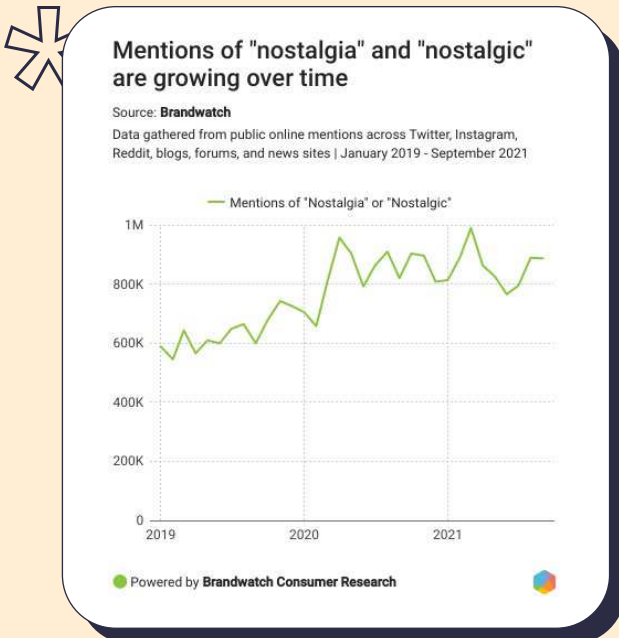
In September 2021, Blue's Clues' Steve Burns got in front of the camera and sent millennials who grew up watching the show into a tailspin. For a lot of viewers, Blue's Clues was an integral part of their formative years. This [simple video](#) features Steve in costume explaining his abrupt exit 20 years ago. It helped Nick Jr. garner over 2M likes and 529K retweets, and it was just a part of the show's 25th-anniversary celebration.

How is a children's show relevant for digital marketers, you ask?

Nostalgia pays.

The COVID-19 pandemic — a time of immense global upheaval — has made us long for simpler times when words like *masks* and *vaccines* were not a part of our daily lingo. This collective longing for the years gone by has made nostalgia marketing a big part of every marketer's playbook.

And we have the data to back it up. According to Brandwatch, the mention volume of the words "nostalgia" and "nostalgic" is much higher now than compared to pre-pandemic times.



People are clearly craving the comfort of the familiar in these tumultuous times, and it shows.

It's not just Blue's Clues.

- [Tamagotchis](#) have made a comeback.
- Oreos launched a limited edition packaging that lets you create your own [mixtape](#).
- ABBA announced its [first studio album](#) in 40 years.
- ...and a lot more brands are indulging in nostalgia with their campaigns.

The old-school vibe is undoubtedly *in* again.





Early movers

Pepsi hit the right notes for Grease.

To celebrate Grease’s 50th anniversary, Pepsi reimagined *You’re the One I Want*, featuring rapper and songwriter Doja Cat. The brand used this campaign to launch two limited-edition flavors complete with retro cans and callbacks to the soda shops of the 50s and 60s.

Per [Falcon Benchmark](#), this video ended up being Pepsi’s second most engaging of all its videos in 2021 at the time of writing this eBook.

NYX Cosmetics and the Y2K aesthetic.

In July 2021, NYX Cosmetics became the first brand to use Triller’s livestream shopping — [another 2022 trend](#) right here — to host a throwback-themed event. The show featured early 2000s pop stars, who recreated their Y2K looks using the NYX Cosmetics Fall 2021 collection.



Word cloud of the keywords and phrases brands have used while discussing Y2K on Instagram in the past year.



#Y2K #aesthetic #didyouknow

Y2K is having a moment on social in 2021, with several brands like [H&M](#), [ColourPop Cosmetics](#), and [DollsKill](#) all publishing posts around it.



↳ Data from Falcon

Starburst and the little lad who likes berries and cream.

With the [Berries and Cream](#) trend blowing up on TikTok and [amassing over 1.2 billion views](#), Starburst launched an official “Little Lad” Halloween costume in 2021. The brand also ran sweepstakes, asking fans to recreate the original song and dance from the 2007 commercial in their TikToks for a chance to win the official Little Lad costume.

This is an excellent example of brands being required to move at the speed of social. The Little Lad built up steam on TikTok in August 2021, and by September Starburst had taken notice, [tweeting about it](#) and eventually launching a whole campaign around it.





If a trending hashtag appears, can brands be far behind?

#piggyback #marketing

AXE, The Habit Burger Grill, Dominos Australia, and several other brands also piggybacked on the **#BerriesAndCream** trend across different social networks.

Marketer takeaways

1

Find the right theme.

What retro idea do you want to use for your next campaign? Whether it's relaunching a much-loved product from your past like Starburst or commemorating an anniversary through a brand partnership like Pepsi, you need to identify the exact themes you think your audience will connect with.

For which you need to...

2

Research your audience.

Think of the different personas in your audience. What's the demographic? Which generations do your products or services cater to the most? Now, put that together with the themes you think will invoke the warm fuzzies in your audience.

3

Be timely and relevant.

Is there a current trend you can associate with your brand? Start planning for these eventualities so you can put something out right away. Starburst noticed the Little Lad trend and had an entire campaign, press release, and everything that goes with them running in less than a month.



Trend #2

2022

Community Content

* user-generated content is king *

* user-generated content is king *



Overview



In 2021, Trusted Media Brands — the owner of Reader’s Digest, The Family Handyman, Birds & Blooms, and others — added another company to its portfolio by acquiring streaming and social video company Jukin Media.

The latter had already gathered over 100 billion lifetime views and its addition will quadruple Trusted Media Brands’ monthly audience reach, giving it access to a massive stash of user-generated content.

Why is this important?

More and more brands are realizing the value of user-generated content and putting in measures to scale it.

The need for UGC is also evident in the data:

- According to a report by Morning Consult, Gen Z and Millennials are less trusting of the average brand.
- A survey by Stackla revealed that only 19% of consumers find brand-created content authentic.
- 56% of consumers also revealed through the Stackla survey that they’re more influenced by social posts when online shopping than during pre-pandemic times.

Consumers today are belief-driven and increasingly look for authenticity from brands. We did just tell you that nostalgia marketing is in, but the glossy perfection of the ‘90s is definitely not.



TikTok made me buy it.



#trending #fyp

Take, for example, CoverGirl and their Clean Fresh Skin Milk Foundation. The brand went vegan in 2019 and dropped a new line of makeup which flew under the radar for many. That is, until a TikToker made a now viral video declaring that this \$7 foundation was much better than higher-end brands she’d tried before. Much like other TikTok-famous products, this one flew off the shelves, and its sales are up by 269% compared to 2020.

While the concept of user-generated content is not new, this shift towards belief-driven buying has made peer reviews and word-of-mouth marketing way more important than the carefully curated Instagram feed of a brand.



You heard it here first

“Alignment to a customer’s capital-V “Values” is surmounting the idea of “value for money”; there’s an increased need for meaningful connection around important factors like diversity and inclusion. A big-ticket ATL campaign around CSR is one tactic, but for brands to get authenticity right across the buyer journey, they need to show that authenticity, not just shout about it.

The need for mission-led brands that are diverse and inclusive in how they communicate is no longer a ‘nice to have’ – it has become a commercial imperative. Today’s consumer wants to align with mission-led brands that they can trust and that are authentic.”



Alex Vaidya
CEO, Storystream





Early movers

Clinique says #ZitHappens.

In a bid to reach younger audiences, Clinique launched a TikTok campaign called #ZitHappens to remove the stigma that surrounds acne. According to Sameer Agarwal, the vice president of Clinique North America, this campaign not only reached new audiences but also helped drive sales.

Saks embraces the UGC style.

Saks Fifth Avenue has been ahead of the UGC game for years now with a dedicated hashtag customers

can use while featuring their Saks hauls on social media. The #SaksStyle hashtag has been used in 118K posts on Instagram at the time of writing this eBook.

#LulusOriginal and the next viral dance challenge.

Online retailer Lulus partnered with HerCampus and Jalaiah Harmon to create an original song and dance in a bid to encourage a dance challenge on TikTok. As of writing this eBook, the #LulusOriginal hashtag has amassed over **10.8 million views**.

Marketer takeaways

1

Analyze what your customers are sharing.

Research the audience that's already posting about you. Analyze the demographic that posts the most about you, see which product they talk about most, and ask yourself more questions about these users and their behavior. Answering them will help you craft a strategy to leverage UGC at scale.

2

Conduct a challenge.

Ever seen how fast a TikTok dance challenge catches on? One of the best ways to ensure UGC is to initiate a contest or challenge and encourage users to participate in it.

3

Engage with the community.

Encourage the users already posting about your brand through reposts, sharing, and mentions. Your community is vital to building a strong UGC strategy, so interact with them and be more receptive to the UGC you already get so you can inspire more.



You heard it here first

“The strategic role of UGC in marketing will evolve massively in 2022.

Brands that can earn and nurture a customer’s trust will win out. Elevating and celebrating User Generated Content — real content, created by real people — will play a huge role in connecting brands with their customers in an authentic and meaningful way.”



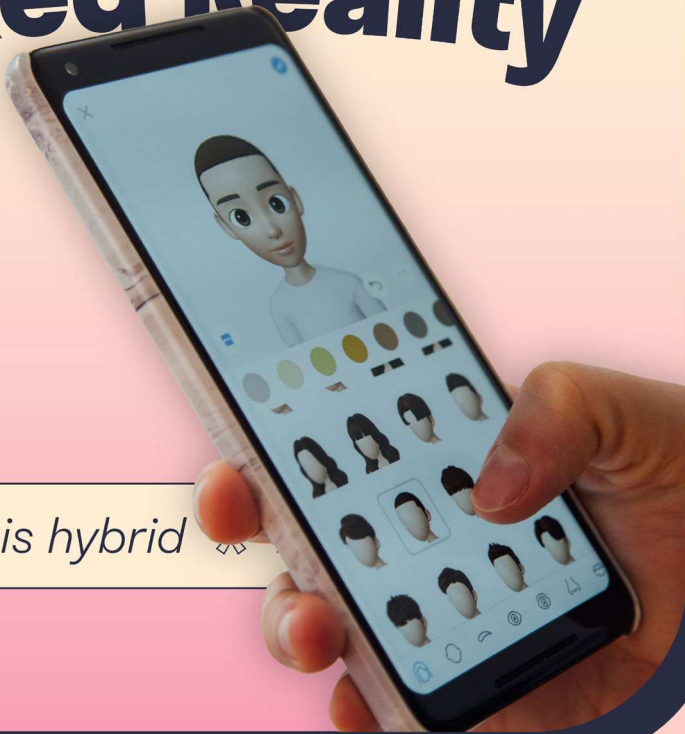
Alex Vaidya
CEO, Storystream



Trend #3

2022

Mixed Reality



* The future is hybrid *



Overview

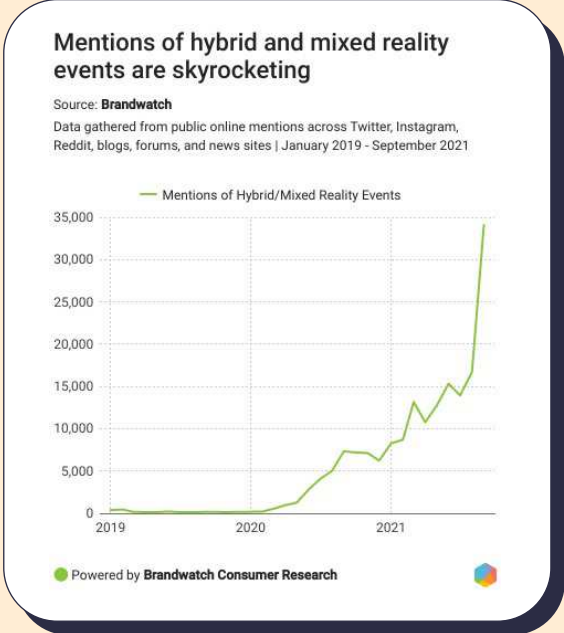


Augmented reality is a trend thrown around a lot at the end of every year as a prediction for the future. But at no time has the impact of the virtual on the physical shown more signs of growth than during the pandemic.

One could even say that the pandemic has accelerated the trend, with brands having to go full digital in a blink. In fact, McKinsey reports that both businesses and customers experienced five years' worth of digital adoption progress in just eight weeks in the beginning of the pandemic.

“Hybrid” is the word of the year across all industries, thanks to pandemic-induced shutdowns and digital adoption. And both mixed reality and hybrid events have seen an increased volume of online mentions over time, according to research by Brandwatch.

This amalgamation of the physical and digital will stick around in 2022, especially with big companies like Facebook backing this trend. Incidentally, Facebook, Inc. has now been rebranded to Meta, with the company creating 10,000 new jobs across the European Union to help build the metaverse. Facebook has also already made its first big investment in the metaverse, spending \$50 million on research programs to ensure these products are developed responsibly.



The metaverse goes beyond digital marketing.

#meta #tech #ar

In September 2021, a new music-related game show called Alter Ego started airing. In the show, contestants sing from backstage while motion capture technology transfers their movements to their digital avatars on screen.

On the other side of marketing, events are also going hybrid. A Forrester survey reveals that 58% of marketing leaders agree that “all flagship B2B marketing events will be hybrid in two years”. It’s not much of a stretch to say that the future is hybrid, irrespective of whether we’re talking about work, events, conferences, or retail.



You heard it here first

“The shift to hybrid events reflects changing attendee behavior and expectations. Hybrid events have the ability to create truly transformative experiences. We must let go of any unconscious bias we may be holding about the format and include hybrid events in our roster to reach a larger audience of potential customers.”



Dino Kuckovic
Director of Community & Events
Falcon.io



You heard it here first

“When thinking about ‘Mixed Reality’ in the realm of hybrid events, the new opportunities presented by not only technological advancement, but by also gaining acceptance of the community of the benefits and authentic relationship building capabilities that virtual experiences provide will inevitably offer global event organizers enormous new opportunities in 2022 to enhance industry connection at scale.”



Brian Leddy
VP, Business Operations
Adweek





Early movers

Burberry's social retail store.

Launched at the end of 2020, Burberry's social retail store in Shenzhen, China, was the start of a new line of digitally-enabled, immersive retail experiences. This specific store is centered around a custom WeChat mini-program that allows customers to interact with the brand both in-store and online.



Nike, too, has its own social retail store called Nike Rise.

#shopping #socialretail

First tested in Guangzhou, China, Nike opened yet another store in 2021 in Seoul, South Korea. With pandemic restrictions easing and consumers tentatively returning to brick-and-mortar stores, we believe that gamifying the in-store experience with social apps will redefine retail commerce in the coming years.

Etsy House and the online marketplace.

Etsy came up with an interactive AR experience for shoppers to tour a virtual house comprising curated items from its marketplace. This new feature joins a long line of AR experiences Etsy has started providing, including an AR feature that lets you see how art prints would look on your own walls before hitting Buy.

Macy's now allows live shopping.

The retailer launched live shopping in October 2021, with weekly livestreams on Macy's Live. In addition to watching in real-time, customers can also catch all previous broadcasts on the website.



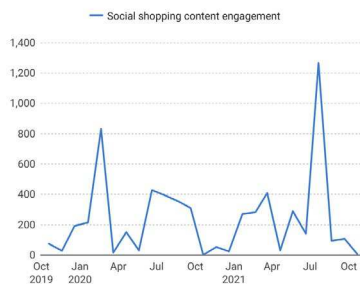
Social and livestream shopping are here to stay.

According to BuzzSumo, the terms "social shopping" and "livestream shopping" have both seen an uplift over the last couple of years.

#shopping #trending

Engagement around "social shopping" content has grown in 2021

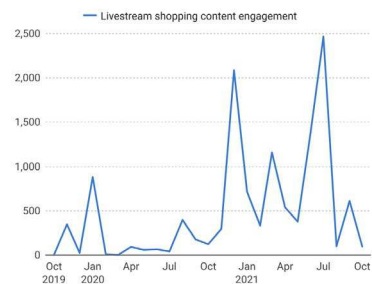
Source: BuzzSumo
Data gathered from content published online and engaged with across Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Reddit October 2020 - October 2021



Powered by BuzzSumo

Engagement around "livestream shopping" content has grown in 2021

Source: BuzzSumo
Data gathered from content published online and engaged with across Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Reddit October 2020 - October 2021



Powered by BuzzSumo





Burger King keeps it real with NFT.

In September 2021, Burger King partnered with Sweet, a nonfungible token (NFT) platform, as part of its Keep It Real meals. Each Keep It Real meal box carried QR codes that guests had to scan to unlock one of three digital collectibles. Collecting all three NFTs led to various rewards for customers.



Budweiser has NSFW NFTs in its Ethereum wallet...

...is a sentence we never imagined ourselves saying. But here we are.



#nft #crypto #ethereum

In addition to Burger King, several different brands have jumped on the NFT bandwagon, including, of course, Budweiser. The beer brewer even changed its Twitter profile picture to a hand-drawn beer rocket NFT. Revealing its wallet address, however, led to trolls sending in NSFW NFTs to Budweiser.

The trolling aside, several other brands like Visa, Arizona Iced Tea, Dolce&Gabbana, and Taco Bell have also got in on the NFT hype.

At the time of writing this eBook, the number of brand tweets around NFTs has been steadily increasing throughout 2021. The tweets are primarily from brands belonging to sports, banking and finance, technology, luxury, retail, education, and personal care industries.



↳ Data from Falcon





Marketer takeaways

1

Implement an innovation mindset.

The current marketing landscape demands innovation and testing. You need to be creative and develop out-of-the-box means to rise above the social media noise. Whether it is a digitally immersive retail store, a hybrid event with a social media play, or something as simple as an Instagram filter, you need to embrace the innovation mindset to stand out.

2

Think engagement, think gamification.

Immersive digital experiences are an excellent way to gamify marketing. They also help create a buzz around your products or services and prompt users to engage with your brand. Make sure your gamified campaign isn't just engagement bait, though. Your campaign needs to be true to your brand identity and also resonate with your audience, providing them with some value.

3

Choose the right tech.

Social retail, AR, NFTs... This trend of blending the virtual with the physical provides a lot of different creative avenues to go down. Don't jump on the bandwagon just because all the popular kids are doing it. For instance, a mom-and-pop store will definitely not switch to social retail overnight — at least, we aren't in that season of Black Mirror yet. Instead, think about what will engage well with your customers and pick the right tech for it.



Bonus brand examples:

#brand #examples

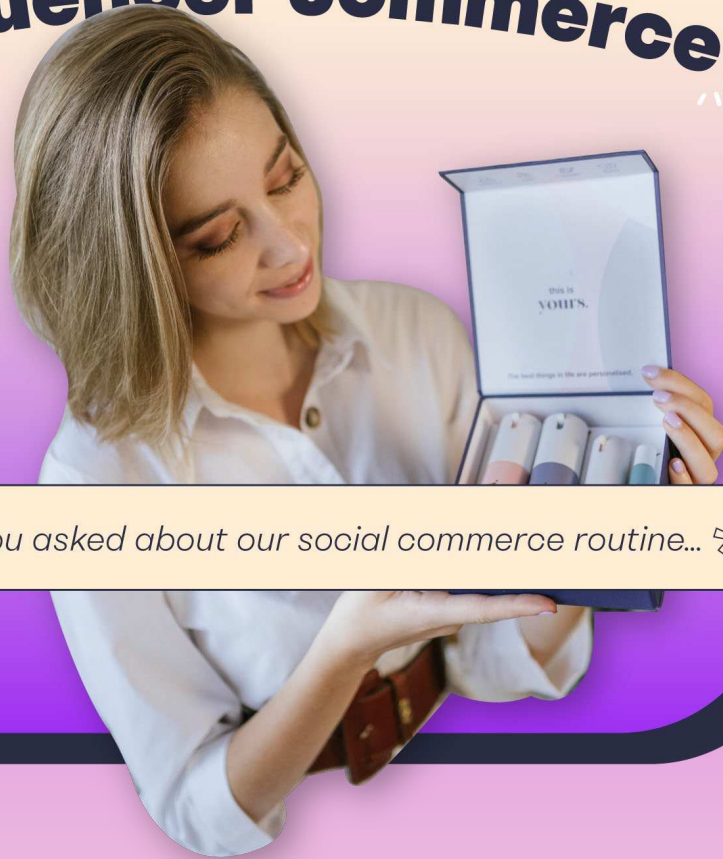
- CLIF Kid's back-to-school AR campaign.
- General Mills partnered with Meijer and Obsess for a virtual football tailgating experience.
- Verizon's immersive AR treasure hunt.



Trend #4

2022

Influencer Commerce



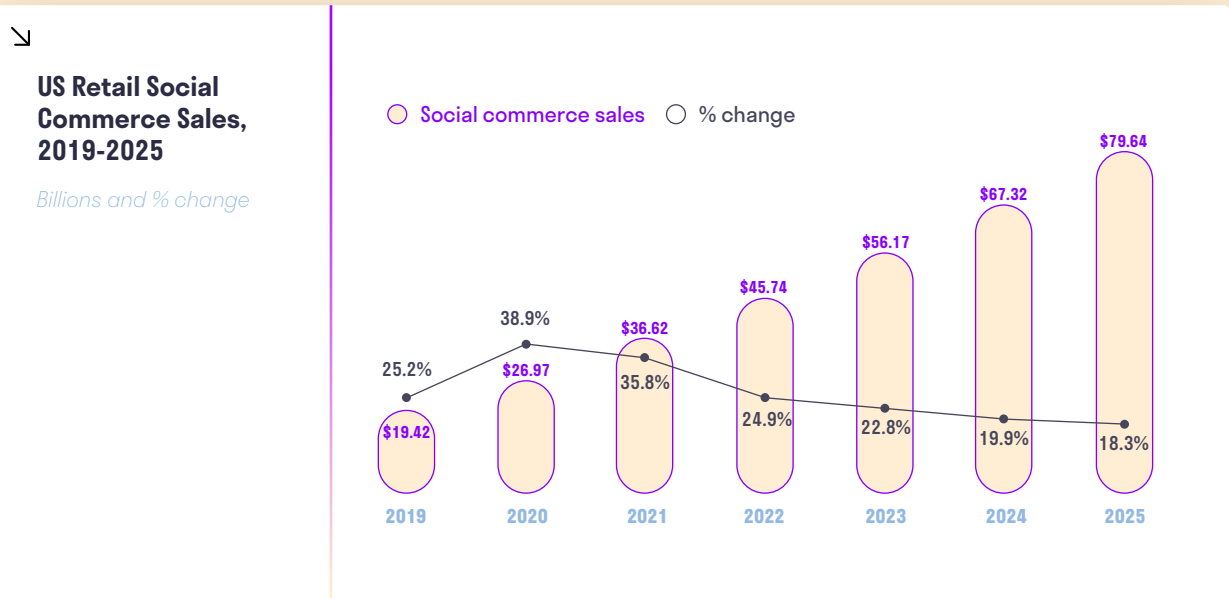
✧ A lot of you asked about our social commerce routine... ✧





Overview

According to [eMarketer](#), US social commerce sales will increase by 35.8% to \$36.62 billion in 2021. Social commerce is one section of the eCommerce umbrella that is clearly booming and will continue to grow.



Source: eMarketer, May 2021

While we've already looked at livestream shopping and UGC, one aspect of social commerce that will gain considerable traction in 2022 is influencer marketing.

Influencers can:

- Help you reach a bigger audience and create brand awareness.
- Sway your target customers' purchasing decisions.
- Improve brand loyalty and trust.

The meteoric rise in popularity of apps like TikTok and Twitch also shows the potential for activating influencer partnerships. We predict that 2022 will see the impact of influencers reaching the bottom of the funnel, and helping with quantifiable conversions.



You heard it here first

“Brands that can’t incite word of mouth on their own in social media miss out on engaging in the place where we spend most of our time online. The solution? Developing relationships with others in social media who have an affinity for your brand or similar products. We trust people more than brands, so it’s time for your company to stop advertising in social media and start collaborating with others to take advantage of the potential for influencer commerce.”



● **Neal Schaffer**
Digital & Social Media Marketing
Consultant, Speaker & Author





Early movers

Wonderful Pistachios partnered with streamer GoldGlove.

This packaged foods company sponsored streamer GoldGlove's live streams to reach his vast audience base on Twitch and YouTube. The brand also ran exclusive promotional offers for viewers in a bid to broaden its clientele.



Did you know?

#didyouknow

80% of esports fans eat or drink while watching live streams. This was a *Wonderful* opportunity for this brand to reach new audiences.

Dr Pepper at zero gravity.

To promote its Zero Sugar soda, Dr Pepper teamed up with Triller to take 20 influencers on a zero gravity flight. This was definitely a unique way to use influencer marketing to drum up excitement about a product release.

The Charli & Dixie x Simmons mattress.

In early 2021, mattress brand Simmons partnered with the D'Amelio sisters to launch a memory foam mattress. They also promoted it through a TikTok sweepstakes. This was a smart approach to speaking to the Gen Z crowd on TikTok, especially considering the net follower count the D'Amelio sisters have.



Follower count

#follow #dameliofamily

Charli D'Amelio: **125.2 million**
Dixie D'Amelio: **55.2 million**

#SimmonsDreamRoom had **47.8 million views** at the time of writing this eBook.





Marketer takeaways

1

Define your goals.

To build a proper influencer marketing strategy, you first need to identify your goals and key results. This will help you work backwards and identify the influencer(s) who will help you achieve your goals.

2

Find the right influencers in your niche.

Once you've listed your goals, identify the influencers operating in the same vertical or niche as your brand. Their followers will already be invested in their content and the topic they are known for, so their opinions and endorsements mean a lot. Micro and nano influencers, in particular, can help you engage better with your niche target audience.

3

Use analytics to measure results.

Like any other marketing campaign, influencer marketing efforts need a strong feedback loop. Measure the return on investment of each campaign to build a data-backed influencer marketing strategy.



How do you measure success anyway?



#influencer #kpis

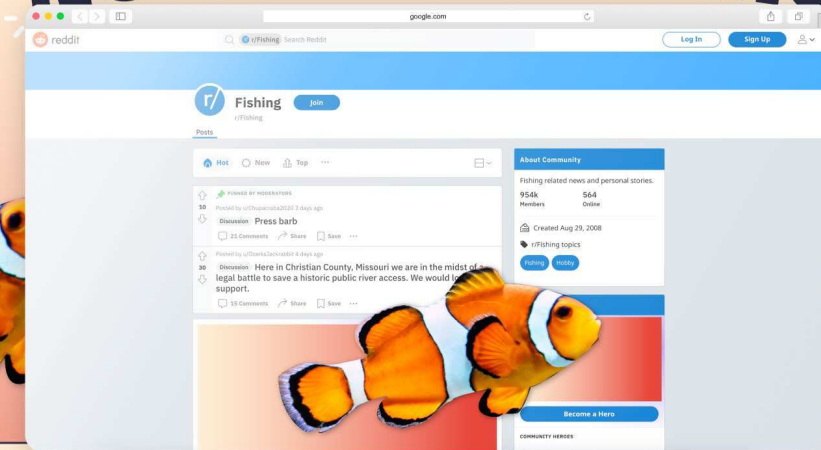
Ask your influencers for more data to measure success. In addition to their engagement metrics, also keep an eye on site traffic and your own engagement around the time to see if the influencers are sending any visitors your way.



Trend #5

2022

Noiseless Niche



✧ Small communities win big ✧ Small comm



Overview



In 2021, you cannot wander into a Barnes & Noble without encountering a “Trending on #BookTok” table.

BookTok, the book community of TikTok, gets over 20 billion views and has even given brick-and-mortar stores a sales boost. Just the hashtag #BookTok had over **24 billion views** at the time of writing this eBook.

This is a larger sign of the importance not just of short-form entertainment like TikToks but also of subcultures and communities.

Social media is noisy, and some users are moving away to create niche communities where they can communicate with like-minded individuals about shared interests. These communities give users a sense of belonging, especially in a time of immense upheaval where human connection is lacking.

Niche communities exist in both bigger platforms — through your Slack channels, Facebook Groups, subreddits, and forums — and as smaller social networks. Steering conversations in such communities is also easier because of the topic focus, increased engagement, less noise, and even less competition.



Did you know?

#fishing #outdoors #reel

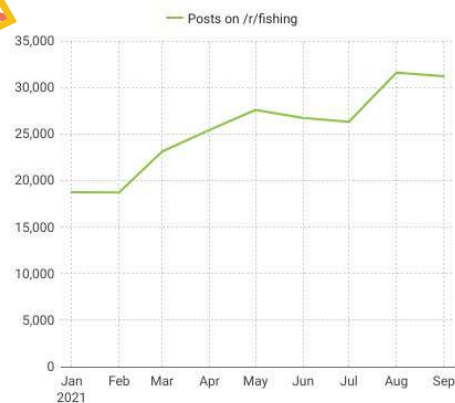
The fishing subreddit r/fishing has seen a good growth in posts in 2021.



2022 will definitely see users migrating to smaller communities and forming subcultures. This is why a lot of brands, too, are already targeting niche communities in their marketing. Jumping on this trend early can help you build strong relationships with your audience before the competition does.

Posts on /r/fishing have grown in 2021

Source: **Brandwatch**
Data gathered from /r/fishing | January - September 2021



Powered by **Brandwatch Consumer Research**





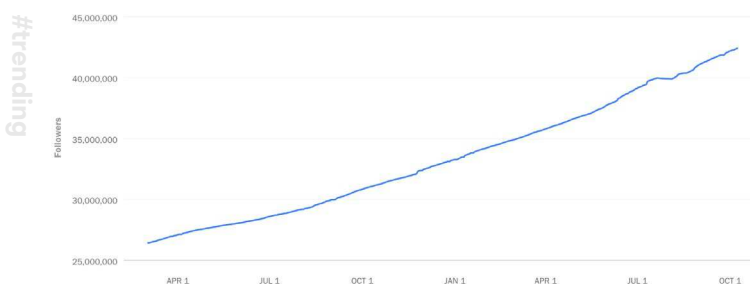
Early movers

433 and the goals it serves across social.

433 is a niche football community that has grown over the years and tries to live up to its name as The Home of Football. The community is spread across multiple social networks and creates content that stands out on all of them.



433's Instagram follower count has grown by 60.7% since 2020.



Data from Falcon Benchmark

Hot Topic, Discord, and Anime & Beyond.

The retail chain created a Discord server called Anime & Beyond for the anime fans in its audience. Hot Topic already sells anime apparel and accessories. This Discord server was a great way to appeal to the already big anime fanbase in its target audience.



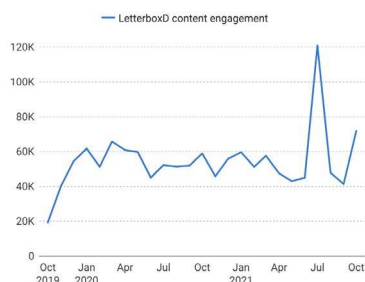
Other brands with a Discord presence include Adobe, Taco Bell, Sacramento Kings, UK Defence Journal, and many more.

#discord #niche

According to data from Falcon, while the industries having conversations on Discord include the usual suspects like Technology and Consumer Electronics, other verticals like Sports, Education, Retail Chains, and Food and Beverage also feature in the list.

Engagement around content from the website LetterboxD has grown in 2021

Source: **BuzzSumo**
Data gathered from content published online and engaged with across Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Reddit October 2020 - October 2021



Powered by **BuzzSumo**

LetterboxD breaks the box office.

This social media site just for movies has blown up in the last couple of years. BuzzSumo, too, notes that the engagement of content around LetterboxD has seen a major uptick since the beginning of the pandemic. It's yet another sign that users want to settle in with their niches of shared interest.





Marketer takeaways

1

Identify your goals.

Who do you want to reach? Where do they usually hang out? Do you want to create your own channel, or is it okay to participate in conversations in an existing channel?

Once you have your answer, act on one of the following two tips.

2

Create a community around your niche.

Communities have become high-growth channels. Create a Slack channel, Discord Server, Facebook Group, or any other kind of online community where your audience can create a shared bond over your niche. Ensure you don't focus too much on making a sale and inadvertently drive users away from your community.



Are you ready to grow with social?

Join [Grow With Social](#), our community on Facebook to talk trends and connect, learn, and grow as digital marketers.



3

Mark your presence in an existing community.

Instead of creating a new online community, you could always establish your presence in an existing one. Run ads on the communities that allow them — subreddits and niche platforms like Dribbble and Goodreads, all allow advertising. You might also want to participate without running ads — just make sure you're adding value to the community when you're posting.



Global Taco Day on Discord

[#tacotuesday](#) [#foodie](#)

On Global Taco Day, in addition to creating its own Discord server, Taco Bell also dropped [gift cards](#) and [special offers](#) in other channels and across various social networks.



Trend #6

2022

Consumable Content



** Satisfy the snackable content appetite **



Overview

According to a [report](#) by App Annie, TikTok has now beat YouTube's average watch time for Android users in the US. This is particularly impressive because the network only allows for a video length of three minutes, whereas YouTube allows much longer videos. The latter is also behind in terms of engagement, with BuzzSumo showing that video engagement on YouTube has **declined by 37% since 2020**.

TikTok's meteoric rise in popularity in such a short period of time has not exactly gone unnoticed, with the other social networks coming up with their own snackable clones including Instagram (and [Facebook!](#)) Reels, [YouTube Shorts](#), and Snapchat's [Spotlight](#).

Much of TikTok's success can be attributed to its short-form content that's authentic, entertaining, and democratizes social media for all.



Turns out even
goldfish are better
than us.



[#goldfish](#) [#attention-span](#)

[Studies](#) have shown that the average human attention span has fallen from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds now.

So if you're still with us and reading this beast of an eBook, take a bow!

With decreasing attention spans comes an increased appetite for digestible microcontent. The shift to mobile has also created the need for pithy content that captures your audience's attention quickly.

Visual storytelling, in particular, sticks around in people's minds [more than text](#). This is where your images, videos, infographics, and memes stand out in your audience's eyes.

2022 will see more brands embracing micro-content to reach large audiences.

Early movers

Pepsi's bite-sized docuseries on Black cuisine.

Pepsi partnered with celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson to launch a docuseries on the history of Black-owned restaurants. This campaign was a part of Pepsi's Dig In initiative, and the videos went up on Dig In's Twitter and Instagram and Marcus' YouTube channel.



You have to taste this.



#trending

This post was Pepsi's most engaging of all its Instagram posts in 2021, up to the time of writing this eBook.

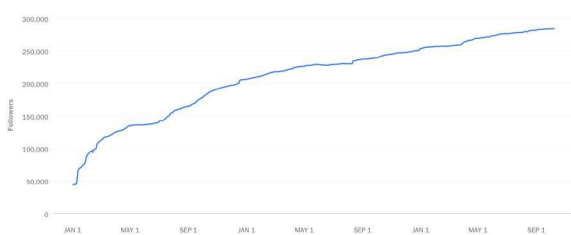
Snackable content — the Sparknotes version.

This study guide brand has seen an immense rise in following on Twitter and Instagram, and not just amongst literature majors. This success can definitely be attributed to the classic literature memes Sparknotes posts. No one can resist slamming down the like button when they see posts somehow relating Edgar Allen Poe to Parks and Recreation.

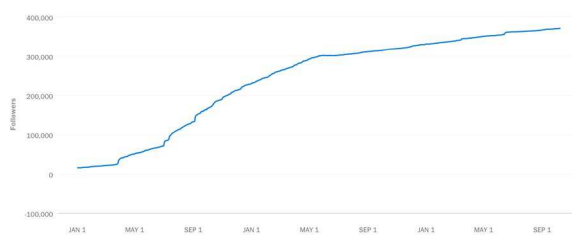


Sparknotes follower growth rate since January 1, 2019.

Instagram: 548.5%



Twitter: 2376.2%



↳ Data from Falcon

Neutrogena debunks myths on TikTok.

This personal care brand debuted its first TikTok campaign in 2021 by debunking skin care myths in short videos. This approach helped the brand reach a wider audience and appeal to them with educational, snackable content.



Marketer takeaways

1

Remember that brevity is key.

This may be obvious, but any piece of snackable content should be skimmable and easy to consume. At the same time, it should also inform your audience and entice them to engage with it. If you're creating video content, remember that every second and every word counts.

2

Don't shy away from repurposing.

Snackable content doesn't have to exist in a vacuum. You can also repurpose your existing long-form content into snackable bites for social. This will also drive people to your website, giving your content a nice bump in traffic.

3

Leave room for serendipity.

Snackable content does occasionally involve jumping on trends, pop culture moments, and Twitter memes. By all means, plan your long-term snackable content calendar, but also be ready for bandwagon-jumping when the need arises.



The Squid Game sensation.



#memes #squidgame

With this Netflix show taking the world by storm, several top brands, including [Razer](#), [Pepsi](#) and [Budweiser](#), piggybacked on the trend with memes and references to Squid Game.



Trend #7

2022

Cross-Generational Marketing



✧ *It's not all "OK boomer" and cheugy* ✧ *It's not all "0*





Overview

Gen Z seems to be the one generation every marketer is trying to get the attention of. In 2022, however, it is imperative to look beyond the fads of just one generation and understand them all to market better.

↳ Gen Z	The oldest Gen Zers are 24 at the time of writing and are seen as the trendsetters with enough influence to control consumer behavior and create cultural shifts.
↳ Millennials	The oldest millennials have turned 40 this year and have a lot of <u>spending power</u> .
↳ Gen X	Gen Xers are in their prime working years and <u>earn way more than any other generation</u> .
↳ Baby Boomers	Baby boomers have had more time to accumulate wealth and have <u>\$2.6 trillion</u> in buying power.

Many businesses have been slow to realize that just focusing on millennials and Gen Z with their digital marketing is missing out on key audiences with a lot of buying power (Gen X and baby boomers). If your brand has people of all ages in its target market, your marketing must also cater to the different generations and their preferences.

↳ How do you understand the priorities of different generations in 2022?	<p>#politics #movies #games</p> <p>According to Brandwatch, politics is a big part of Baby Boomers' 2022 outlook. On the other hand, Gen Z is more entertainment-focused, with many of their conversations featuring excitement for movies and games coming out in 2022. This is a simple example, but it shows that these two different generations have two different sets of priorities for and thoughts on the coming year.</p>
--	---



Early movers

Walmart targets Gen Z with 4Walls.

Walmart now has a TikTok channel dedicated to interior design called 4Walls aimed at Gen Z and millennials. Launched in July 2021, the channel already had over 301K followers at the time of writing this eBook.



Walmart 🧡 TikTok

#trending

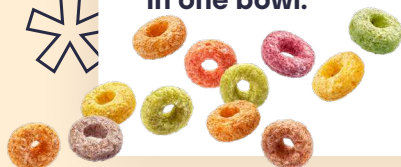
The retailer has seen massive success on TikTok, with the official Walmart account seeing more than 850K followers at the time of writing.

General Mills and Gen X.

General Mills celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Monster cereals with their return in retro-style packaging along with a remake of the Monster Mash song. In addition to being a total shoo-in for the Retro Revolution trend, this campaign also shows how General Mills is appealing to Gen Xers by making them nostalgic for the '70s.



All the monsters
in one bowl.



#trending

This 50th-anniversary post garnered General Mills its highest engagement on Instagram in 2021 up to the time of writing this eBook.

19/99 and inclusive beauty.

19/99 is a Canadian beauty brand that launched during the pandemic and has already caught a lot of attention for staying true to its word of being age-inclusive. As its name indicates, all products are made for women between the ages of 19 and 99. A simple scroll through their Instagram feed will show you just how generationally inclusive this new brand is.



Marketer takeaways

1

Find out what makes each generation tick.

Gen Z isn't just about TikTok, just like millennials aren't just about killing the doorbell industry. Each generation has specific and unique characteristics. Identify those and put them together with their spending power, the social networks they haunt, and more, and you have an excellent generational strategy for marketing.

2

Adapt your messaging.

What works for one generation may not work for another. Make sure to adapt your messages for each generation depending on the insights you've gleaned about them.

3

Use diverse marketing efforts.

If your audience is diverse in age, your marketing content should reflect that. Ensure that all your customers can see themselves reflected in your marketing messages and that you aren't pigeonholing your content to focus on just one age group.



What's the world talking about right now?



#social-listening

With social listening, you can tap into trending topics amongst your target audience and understand their priorities better. And breaking conversations down by different audience segments, like generation, can help you to find the nuance that'll help your digital marketing resonate.



Trend #8

2022 Social Support





Overview

Customer crankiness is apparently at an all-time high right now, with WSJ reporting that adults are throwing tantrums while dining, flying, and shopping. If there's one thing you need to know about irate customers, it is that they talk. And usually on social media.

Times are a-changing, and it's no longer enough just to list a customer support email on your social media and call it a day. Customers expect help and answers in a blink, and your support team needs to respond just as fast.

With brands going fully digital in 2020, the need to provide prompt customer service via social media has also risen. In fact, Forrester predicted that digital customer service interactions will increase by 40% in 2021.

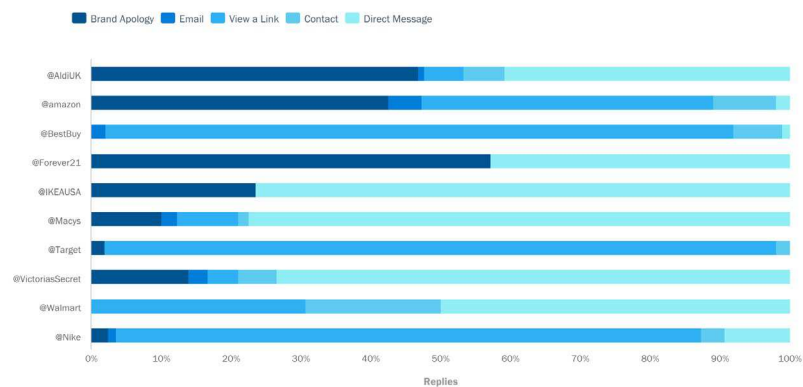
Using social media — an inherent marketing medium — to provide prompt customer service has already become a must-have. In 2022, marketers need to be prepared to see this expand beyond answering basic queries to using chatbots, providing personalized advice, and more.



Customer service and top retail brands.

#happycustomer #love

Quality customer service is essential to deliver an excellent retail experience. Here's how top retail brands handled customer service via Twitter in 2021.



According to Falcon Benchmark, the top customer service response in the retail industry seems to be to invite customers to DM the brand. This might mean that some grievances are taken out of the public domain, but that won't work every time.





Early movers

(Culture) Kings of productivity.

This Australian premium streetwear brand — and a Falcon.io customer — has managed to double the number of direct messages and improve productivity by a mile. As a brand with an ever-increasing customer base, Culture Kings still puts the customer first and provides excellent service by replying promptly.

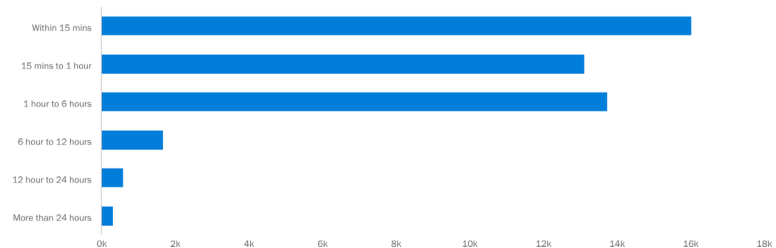
Spotify really cares.

Some brands prefer running a whole separate account for social customer service, and Spotify is one of them. SpotifyCares has been ahead of the social customer service game for years and is an evergreen example every new brand should look up to. The team answers users promptly, be it about feature requests or helping with issues.



SpotifyCares' average reply time.

#reply-time #customer-care



According to Falcon Benchmark, on average, SpotifyCares replied to customer queries in over 1 hour, 46 minutes in 2021.

BMW Germany and Whatsapp.

Whatsapp is one platform some brands are already using to send personalized messages to their customers. BMW Germany, for instance, uses Whatsapp to optimize workshop customer service. This has led to the brand's callback requests dropping by 60% thanks to real-time Whatsapp updates.





Marketer takeaways

1

Use social listening to communicate with customers proactively.

According to [Gartner](#), only 13% of customers have received proactive service from brands. With social listening, you can proactively look for trends, jump into conversations with customers, and fix issues quickly instead of waiting for an @ mention with a complaint.

2

Create a new handle for customer support.

Like Spotify with SpotifyCares, create a dedicated customer service handle on social media to respond to customers and support them. Alternatively, platforms like [Falcon](#) can help ensure that all messages flow into one inbox, and you never miss a customer ping.

3

Document, document, document.

Social customer service is relatively new, after all, so make sure to document your processes and edit them on the go so your support team can put their best foot forward on social.



Psst... Ever considered [Falcon](#) for customer service? 🤔

[#falcon](#) [#engage](#)

Tools like [Falcon](#) can help you come closer to your customers on social. You can manage all social media engagement from one inbox, create custom response templates to common questions you receive via DMs, and do so much more.



Trend #9

2022

Audio Activity



* Mic'd up and ready to be heard * Mic'd up





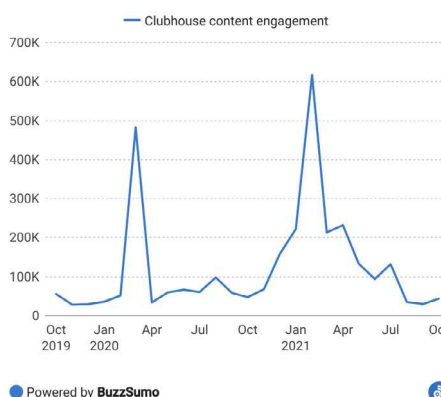
Overview

Starved of social interaction, live audio quickly became an avenue for consumers to be entertained and informed, and for marketers to connect with those consumers in 2021. It all started with the social audio app Clubhouse, which immediately led to several clones cropping up as new apps or additional features in existing social networks.

According to BuzzSumo, engagement around Clubhouse content has been declining in 2021. However, there is a 76% uplift for Clubhouse when you compare total content engagement in 2021 against 2020. The decline could, perhaps, be attributed to the app coming off of closed beta and the initial attention jumping to the next big thing.

Clubhouse content engagement peaked in 2021

Source: **BuzzSumo**
Data gathered from content published online and engaged with across Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Reddit October 2020 - October 2021



In 2022, audio in general will surely be a part of the marketer playbook. TikTok has always been a trendsetter, and even this app has realized the importance of audio, adding a roster of Sound Partners.



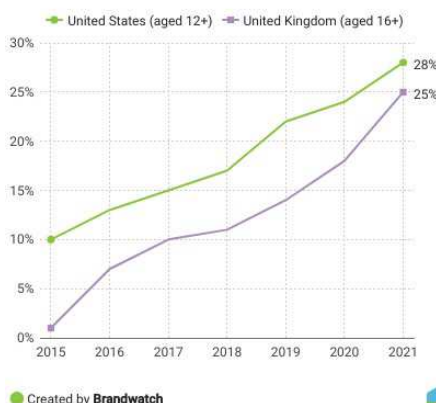
People love listenin'

#trending

As the Brandwatch Bulletin recently reported, the number of people tuning in to podcasts is only increasing, showing that the audio market as a whole is here to stay.

How many people listen to podcasts weekly?

Source: **Infinite Dial report, RAJAR, and Ofcom**
Chart shows estimated % of the population who listen to a podcast at least once a week.





Early movers

Estée Lauder dares to love audio.

Thanks to a partnership with The New York Times, the beauty brand jumped on the audio bandwagon with its Dare to Love campaign. The campaign followed a creative storytelling narrative, with artists and influencers talking about different types of love.

NFL and Twitter's multi-year partnership.

The NFL and Twitter announced a multi-year partnership wherein the

league would be creating exclusive audio content on Twitter Spaces. As part of the partnership, the NFL also promised to host 20 Spaces for the 2021 NFL Season.

WWE, Spotify, and Greenroom.

WWE and Spotify's The Ringer formed a partnership in August 2021 to create original content, including post-match conversations on Greenroom for the SummerSlam and a podcast.

Marketer takeaways

1

Be human.

The whole concept of live audio is backed by users expecting authentic, non-curated conversations around topics of interest. If you're getting into social audio as a brand, try to be genuine and human to connect with your audience better. After all, social audio is more a branding exercise than a way to advertise and make a direct sale.

2

Partner with influencers.

We did say influencer-backed social commerce is going to be a trend in 2022. Partner with an industry influencer to host a conversation on a topic relevant to your brand, industry, or niche. NARS Cosmetics got it right with this Clubhouse conversation with influencers.

3

Sponsor a room.

Not willing to talk yourself? Sponsor a conversation — preferably around your niche — to give your branding a boost amongst attendees.



Trend #10

2022

Improved Inclusivity

✧ *Marketing that reflects your user base* ✧





Overview

First things first: Inclusivity is not a marketing ploy to increase profits.

Why, then, is it on this list? That's simple.

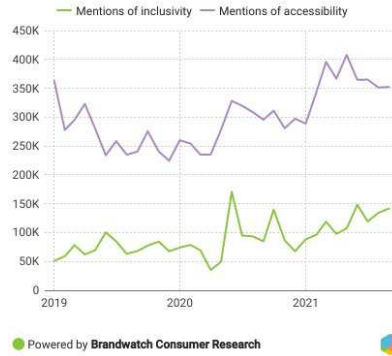
Your products and services are not targeted towards just one type of customer. That's why your marketing should strive to represent everyone irrespective of race, sexuality, gender, religion, and more.

We used Brandwatch to look into mentions of accessibility and inclusion across all sites, and discovered that conversations around these topics have been growing across 2020 and 2021. This indicates that inclusivity is something every brand should be working towards bettering and improving over time (it's not a one-time-only task).

Mentions of inclusivity and accessibility are increasing over time

Source: **Brandwatch**

Data gathered from public online mentions across Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, blogs, forums, and news sites | January 2019 - September 2021



The past two years have seen a lot of calls for better representation in media and advertising, diversity in the C-Suite, and for businesses to go beyond performative activism and do better. 2022 will see more brands taking this to heart — making inclusivity and accessibility a top priority for everyone.



Word cloud of brand tweets around diversity, equity, and inclusion in 2021.



#diversityandinclusion



Data from Falcon





Early movers

Olay's #DecodeTheBias initiative.

In 2021, Olay partnered with Algorithmic Justice League and Black Girls Code to challenge algorithmic bias, wherein beauty searches prioritize white models. This initiative aims to send 1000 girls to code camp and pursue careers in STEM.

Frito-Lay's back-to-school blastoff.

This snack brand partnered with aspiring astronaut Alyssa Carson for the Back to School Blastoff initiative. Frito-Lay aims to diversify STEM by

sending 50 girls to Space Camp in the next five years as part of this initiative.

McDonald's, FaZe Clan, and inclusion.

McDonald's partnered with the eSports organization for content activations around diversity and inclusion. FaZe Clan's announcement tweet fetched the brand over 40K likes on Twitter.

Marketer takeaways

1

Be mindful of identities.

If your website, post, or ad features real humans, is there an identity you're over-representing? Surely, your product isn't just used by one set of people, so make sure to represent people equally, regardless of their age, race, sexuality, religion, or gender identity.

2

Words have power.

So, choose them carefully. You don't want to exclude an entire group of people inadvertently. "Hey, guys", "ladies and gentlemen", and other commonplace expressions are all exclusionary in one way or another. Be mindful of the words you use in your marketing communications so as not to other the very audience you're marketing to.

3

Practice what you preach.

Inclusivity is not a box you check off to win marketing points by posting statements on Twitter. Start internally and see if your team has members from diverse cultural backgrounds. Even if there is diversity, biases can still exist. Approach inclusion as something that requires constant assessment and sensitivity checks rather than a one-and-done type task.



You heard it here first

“Everyone today is focused on creating content. But in a world where content is abundant, what we’re missing is context. How can you create content that drives attention towards context that makes the world a better place?”



● Benjamin Von Wong
Artist, Advisor, Activist



Bonus Trends

While these 10 trends should definitely be top of mind for all marketers, here are a few more that almost made the list and still deserve to be mentioned.

Marketer mindfulness.

Businesses will no longer shy away from speaking about mental health and well-being online. Hopefully, they'll also walk the talk in 2022.

Crumbled cookies.

With Google phasing out third-party cookies soon, marketers will look for alternatives to track user identity in 2022.

Personalized privacy.

Brands will continue to grapple with balancing providing the magic of a personalized experience with data privacy laws.

AI & automation.

Integrated chatbots, predictive personalization of content, automated ad campaigns, and other AI influences will gain ground in 2022.

Decentralized giants.

Considering users' issues with Big Tech — misinformation, lack of privacy, and data ownership, to name a few — can federated social platforms be far behind?

Fandom future.

Whether brands rope in unexpected celebs as ambassadors or use immensely popular K-pop bands in livestream shopping events, 2022 will see marketing and fandom come closer than ever before.

You did it!



You've made your way through all our predictions for 2022.



Go, you!

Bear with us for a few more minutes to see how you can put the trends to good use. But, before that...

Time to ...

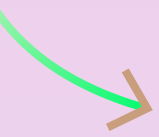
**Take a deep
breath, in
through your**



Ok, that's enough!



You know the trends. Now what?



Are you ready to start implementing some changes in your marketing? Gather your colleagues and answer these questions to figure out your next trend-backed marketing campaign.

* **What is the purpose of our brand?**

* **Which trend from this list fits our brand best? Why?**

* **How can we adapt it to fit our branding and tone of voice?**

* **What are our KPIs and how are we going to measure them?**

Well done, you.

Now that you know which trends will dominate in 2022, you definitely have an edge over your competitors.

If you liked this eBook, check out some

of our other guides:

[The Fluff-Free Guide to Instagram Marketing](#)

[The Brandwatch Guide to Trend Spotting](#)

[Why You Should Tap Into Trending Content Before Your Competitors](#)

[The No-Sweat Guide to \(Social\) Content Marketing](#)

[The Practical Emoji Guide for Social Media Marketers](#)

If you *really* liked this eBook, give us a shout on social. 🙌



January 25-26, 2022

We're bringing the heat at

spark. DIGITAL

Let's talk **more trends** at Spark Digital, our **free two-day virtual summit**.

Hear from industry experts, get your burning questions answered, and join the conversation on **January 25-26, 2022**, one marketing trend at a time.

SAVE MY SEAT

Take your marketing to the next level in 2022.

The trends you've seen so far will definitely give your brand a competitive edge, irrespective of your industry. *Helping you grow with social* is our thing, so here's how we can help.



Spot emerging trends.

Explore the voices of billions of people and listen to what they are saying about your brand, products, and competitors at all times.



Get competitive intelligence.

Track your competition's every move and glean insights to incorporate into your own social strategy.



Publish with ease.

Plan, preview, and publish posts across all your social networks from one centralized calendar.



Come closer to your customers.

Handle all your social media engagement from one easy-to-manage and customizable inbox.



Create automated ad campaigns.

Simplify ad management and reporting for all your channels, and collaborate easily across teams and markets.



Learn what works (and what doesn't).

Track your performance across all channels without having to look at a single spreadsheet or manipulate data.

Are you ready to grow your business in 2021?



Try Falcon



Brandwatch brings structure and meaning to the voices of billions of consumers.

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