sprinklr

Unboxing Insights for 2024

Social Media Marketing's Next Chapter
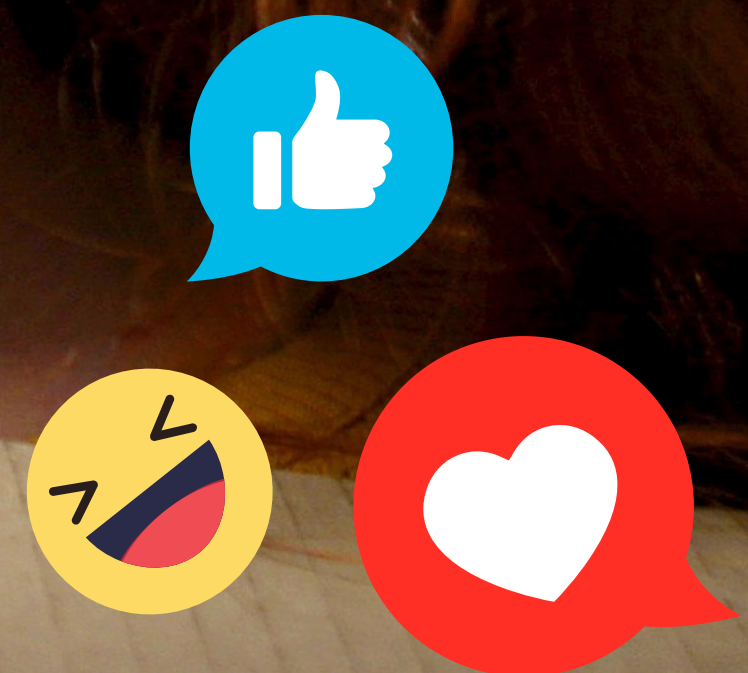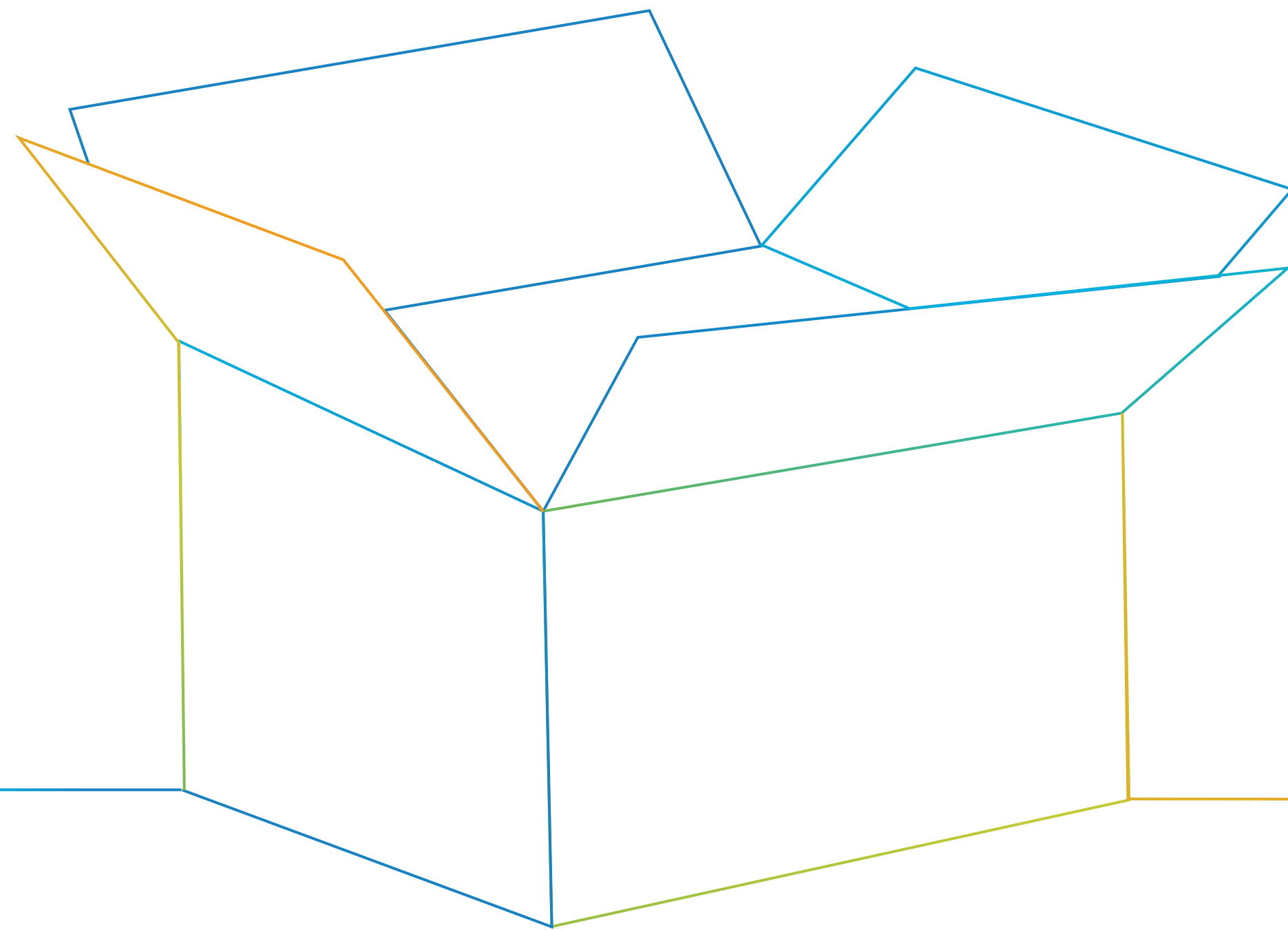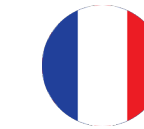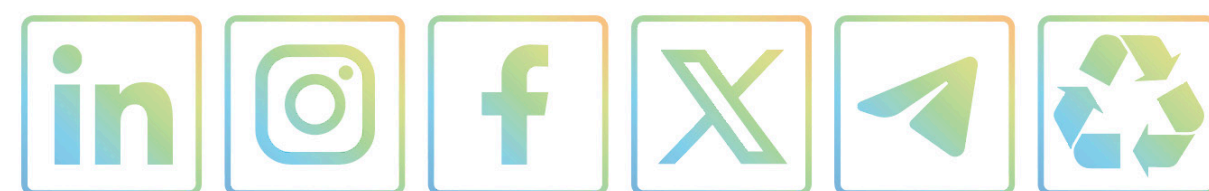
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Foreword

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The message is very simple. Most companies have a social media team sitting in a corner still doing their own thing. I would submit to you, because of these three major disruptions — channel proliferation / abundance of data, creators and generative AI — the time's now to mainstream social media and move it from that corner into the center of everything that you do across your customer-facing teams.
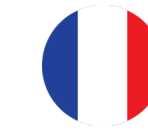
— Ragy Thomas, CEO and Founder, Sprinklr

▶ Watch Ragy weigh in on the ever-evolving social media space.

Introduction

Introduction

The rise of social media as a customer engagement channel has been steady since the pandemic. It's arguably the most lucrative marketing channel around in terms of potential returns. Not just the monetary gains but also the social capital it helps brands build by means of two-way interaction with consumers.

"What we are finding with the evolution of social media as a whole is that we are going back to the roots of communication. And the root of communication is sitting around a fire pit in the evening and just having a conversation, deeply focused on each other and being social," says Ragy Thomas, CEO and founder, Sprinklr. However, this evolution is posing considerable challenges to brands looking to establish a genuine connection with their audiences. The proliferation of social channels, abundance of unstructured data and frequent algorithm updates have made understanding customer needs difficult and engagement ineffective.

"One of the biggest disruptions in the social verse is social saturation … we have over 10 major social media platforms that businesses and brands of all sizes need to be active on. So, it can be very challenging to get your message across with so much competition, so much content," adds Mari Smith, social media evangelist and expert. At first, brands dealt with this channel proliferation by relying on point solutions, which only added to their woes. Then GenAI popped into the scene, and marketers didn't hesitate to jump on the bandwagon.

"What's really happened over the last nine months or so is a rapid awareness and adoption of generative AI technology… everyone all of a sudden seemed to be aware of AI and able to experiment with it," says Paul Roetzer, founder and CEO, Marketing AI Institute. But the marketers' haste in adopting the technology, which is still in its nascent stages, further complicated things. Nonetheless, AI has emerged as a focal point as brands start to pivot from using social media solely to increase brand awareness toward knowing their customers better and enhancing engagement.

To fully gauge the impact of AI on the future of social media marketing, we surveyed 500 respondents from 12 countries across 9 business verticals and uncovered four insights that you'll need to consider as you work toward your social media marketing goals for 2024. Now, let's take a closer look at each one of them.

Methodology
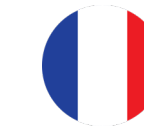
Methodology

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To understand the current state of social media marketing around the world and anticipate marketers' plans for 2024.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Sprinklr partnered with Kantar Profiles, a data and evidence-based agency, to conduct a quantitative survey to gather insights around the goals and challenges of social media marketers.

We inquired about their future areas of investment, focus and primary objectives moving forward.

KANTAR

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

500 social media marketers across B2B, B2C, B2B2C organizations

With annual revenue of $700 million and above; 24% of respondents were from companies with $1 billion or more in annual revenue

Across geographical locations of: U.S., U.K. and Ireland, Germany, France, Netherlands, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand
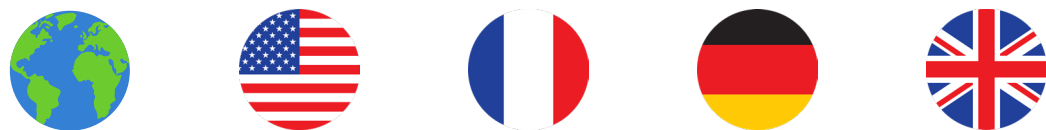
With job titles:
- C-suite, senior leadership, senior managers and mid-level employees
- 63% of respondents were directors and above

From business verticals: Technology, BFSI, travel and hospitality, entertainment, retail, CPG, automobile, education and e-commerce

Global Insights

INSIGHT 01

AI will redefine the customer journey

DIGITAL TOUCHPOINTS

- Digital Billboard
- Viral Email
- Online Ads
- Search
- Landing Page
- Blog
- 3rd Party Sites
- Website
- Mobile
- IM/Chat
- Newsletter
- Email
- Blog

AWARENESS — **CONSIDERATION** — **PURCHASE** — **SERVICE** — **LOYALTY**

PHYSICAL TOUCHPOINTS

- Word of Mouth
- Radio/TV/Print/Outdoor
- PR
- Direct Mail
- Call Centre
- Store
- Call Centre IVR
- Promotion on Invoice
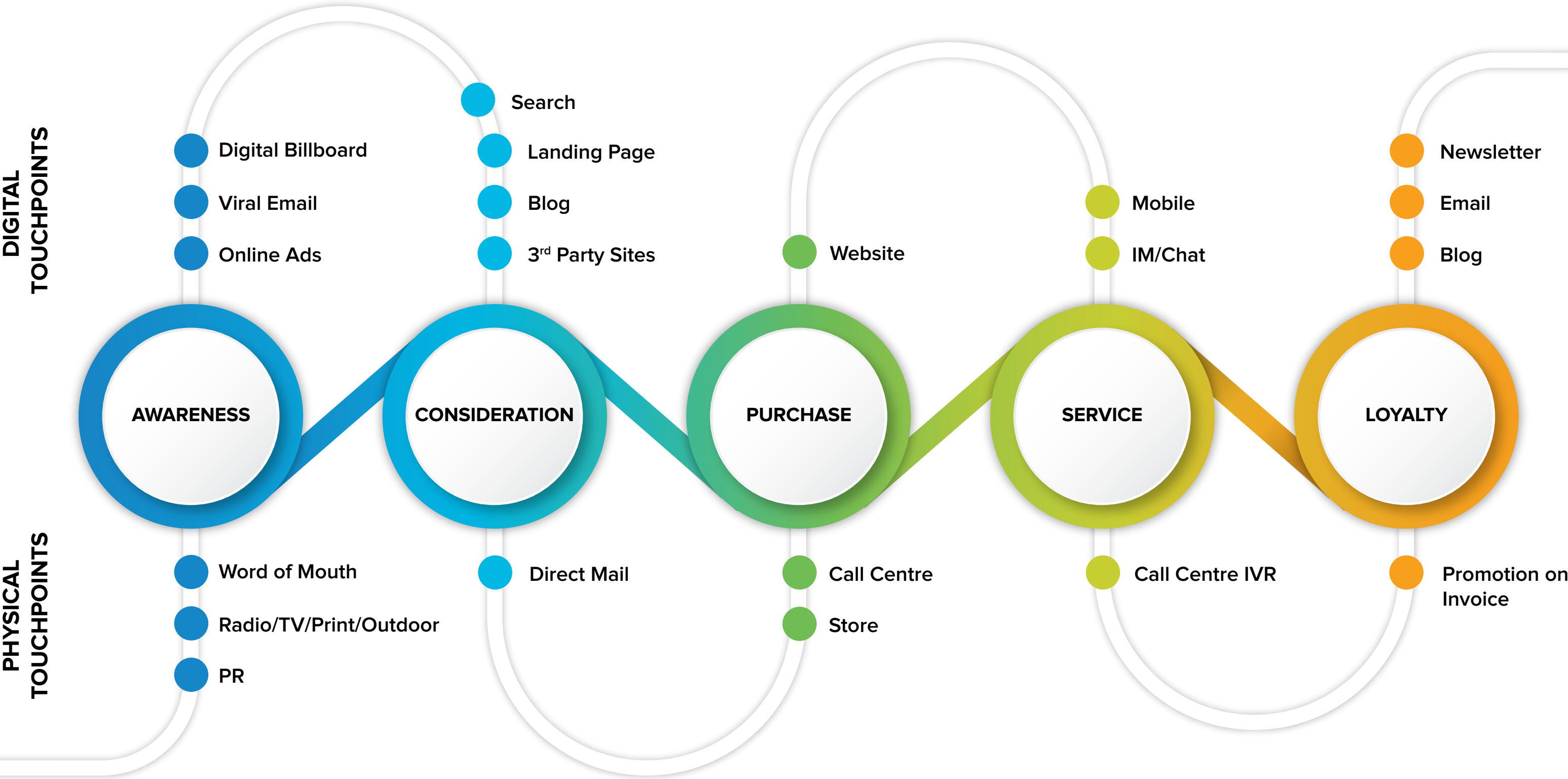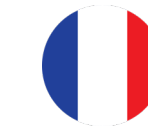
75% of social marketers plan to implement generative AI tools to offer better customer experiences on social media.

"One of the things that brands need to get right to sell on social is to remember that the roots of social media are around being social," says Ann Handley, chief content officer, MarketingProfs. With social commerce fast replacing e-commerce as the preferred way to shop online, marketers need to prioritize engagement and innovation to reduce friction across touchpoints and make customer journeys smoother. In fact, our survey revealed that 3 in 4 marketers globally plan to implement AI to offer better customer experiences on social media.

As your brand competes with other brands for customer mindshare on social media, creating quality content will be key to standing out from the competition.

"In social commerce, you're literally competing in the stream against everything. You're competing against my friends, my mom, cat videos and the Kardashians," says Jay Baer, Founder, Convince & Convert. "If you're trying to sell me a sweater, the first two seconds of whatever video you're going to show me about that sweater better be massively compelling to stop the scroll and get me interested."

Here's how AI can help you up your content and customer engagement game:

Quick tips to enhance your customer journey:

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- Prioritize authentic communication over quick customer responses

- Take stock of all the touchpoints a customer usually traverses to assess how you can integrate AI seamlessly into those touchpoints

- Ensure the AI model powering your solution is built on robust foundations

CONTENT CREATION

Inspiration and ideas: generates ideas or content prompts to spark creativity for content creators

Efficient production: expedites content creation by generating diverse content formats quickly

Variety and options: provides a wide range of content options from text to visuals and even multimedia, along with translation capabilities

Consistency: ensures a consistent tone, style and quality across created content

CONTENT PERSONALIZATION

Audience insights: analyzes user data to create personalized content catering to individual preferences

Tailored messaging: customizes content according to demographics, behaviors and past interactions

Dynamic adaptation: Allows for real-time adjustments based on user engagement and feedback

**Scalable personalization:** enables personalized content at scale, even for large audience segments

BRAND RESPONSIVENESS

Real-time engagement: provides tools to respond swiftly to trends or user interactions

Adaptive brand voice: adapts the brand's voice and messaging to align with current discussions or sentiments

Crisis management: assists in handling crises by offering rapid response strategies and communication

Monitoring and analytics: offers insights and analytics tools to gauge the impact of responses and brand interactions
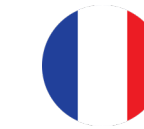
INSIGHT 02

Social listening's horizon will expand beyond social marketing

The ritual of businesses monitoring and analyzing online conversations and discussions surrounding their brand is as old as social media itself. Now, with AI tools, this practice has gained prominence. "When you start listening, not just to conversations about you, but about what matters to you, it changes the game," says Ragy Thomas.

In our survey, 38% of respondents said they'll prioritize monitoring online conversations to address negative sentiment swiftly, while 35% mentioned the gathering of valuable audience data for content creation and campaign strategies will take precedence. According to Mari Smith, "Brands would do well to appoint a CLO, a chief listening officer. That's a term that's been around for a decade or more. And so there are some amazing tools out there that brands and businesses of all sizes can utilize to deeply understand what audience members are saying."

With 1 in 2 marketers planning to invest in social listening tools in the next 6 months, their main use cases will be:

Improve product/ services (39%)

Identify customer pain points, feedback and preferences to refine existing products or develop new ones that better meet consumer needs

Lead generation (34%)

Understand consumer behavior and intent, facilitating more targeted and effective lead generation strategies

Real-time sentiment analysis (34%)

Gauge audience sentiment toward your brand or specific topics, providing insights into how the audience perceives and reacts to your campaigns or products

Influencer marketing (32%)

Collaborate with the right influencers to tap into specific audience segments, harnessing their reach and credibility to drive engagement and conversions

Quick tips to enhance your customer journey:

- Get a social listening solution that can unify customer data from different sources and eliminate data silos

- Leverage listening to track influencers or thought leaders in your industry to identify potential partnerships or collaborations

- Use geolocation features within your listening tool to analyze region-specific trends and tailor your strategies accordingly
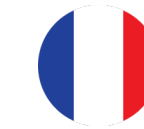
## INSIGHT 03

AI will allow the workforce to be more human

"I think it's very natural for people, whether you're an artist, a writer, a marketer, a designer, a video production person to have these fears about AI doing these jobs. And I think what we need to do is really accept that AI is here. We can't stop it from coming and assisting us in these things."

— Paul Roetzer

1 in 3 social marketers highlighted AI literacy as a key challenge for AI adoption in their organization. But the general consensus is that AI-powered automation can result in operational efficiencies and tremendous cost savings for businesses. However, it also raises questions about the future of human roles in social media marketing. "Now we're entering into this AI era where maybe you don't even need as many skills on your team in terms of being able to actually craft and create content in whatever format it might be," says Jay Baer before adding, "But now you have to have somebody who's great at commanding the forces of AI. You need an AI prompt engineer to be able to figure out how to get the most out of the AI tools."

While AI tools can assist with certain tasks, authenticity (that customers crave and appreciate) and our inborn intuition will remain key to designing effective campaigns as before. Why? Because a nuanced understanding of the target audience is essential for crafting compelling content, building trust and loyalty and driving strategic decision-making.
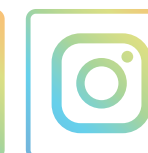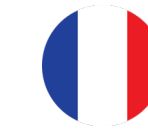
It is important to view AI as a tool that can enhance human capabilities rather than replace them. Jay notes, "Here's where I think the differentiator lies … brands that are using AI to create actual content in the social verse, I think are doing it incorrectly. To me, the better role for AI is as your brainstorming partner [that is] using AI to accelerate, enhance and optimize the creativity and strategic thinking of your team."

If done right, the synergy between AI and humans can augment the following attributes that are intrinsically human.

Judgment: by processing vast amounts of data and highlighting patterns or trends that might be overlooked

Productivity: by streamlining workflows and processes, thereby optimizing resource allocation and time management

Empathy: by leveraging customer information to deliver customized recommendations or solutions

Here are our recommendations to improve AI-human collaboration:

- Set clear objectives and devise a plan to achieve them with AI
- Ensure the AI model or tool you intend to leverage is trained on data relevant to your use cases and industry
- Opt for a unified solution as relying on disparate AI tools for distinct use cases such as listening, engagement, social care, etc., could mar customer experiences
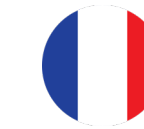
INSIGHT 04

Data security and AI bias emerge as immediate priorities

The use of AI raises questions about data privacy, security and consent as well. With more than half of our survey respondents planning to invest in AI tools in the coming months, companies must handle user data responsibly and transparently. Having clear-cut data security and privacy policies in place to protect user information will become indispensable soon. Marketers understand the gravity of the situation as close to 40% of respondents stated security concerns as one of their top challenges in AI adoption.

Here are a few ways you can ensure the privacy and security of your customer data:

01 Make sure user data shared with your generative AI vendor isn't used to train their own models

02 Employ data masking or other such anonymization methods to protect user identities while still leveraging valuable data insights

03 Invest in employee training programs to cultivate a culture of data security awareness and responsibility within the organization

04 Develop and regularly update data retention policies, outlining the duration for which user data is stored and the methods for secure disposal when no longer needed
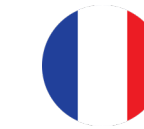
56% of marketers are planning to invest in AI tools in the coming months. At the same time, 39% of them have security concerns which they state as one of their challenges in AI adoption.

That's not all. The integration of AI in marketing campaigns comes with its own set of challenges and considerations. Another concern is algorithmic bias. AI systems learn from existing data, which can sometimes contain biases and prejudices. These biases can result in discriminatory outcomes, such as excluding certain demographics or perpetuating stereotypes.

To tackle algorithmic bias, you should:

Ensure clarity and precision in your prompts to generate more targeted and accurate responses, reducing the potential for bias

Incorporate diverse datasets and involve a wide range of perspectives to train AI algorithms to deliver more unbiased and equitable results

Regular audits and evaluations of AI systems can also help identify and rectify any biases that may emerge over time

**Things to address when implementing AI into your workflow:**

- What kind of data is being shared with AI vendors? Is sensitive data like account numbers, personal identifiers, email addresses being masked before sharing with the AI vendor?

- How does the AI vendor use your data? Does the vendor use it to train its AI model?

- What are the guardrails in place to prevent or mitigate the possibility of AI hallucinations?

Regional Insights
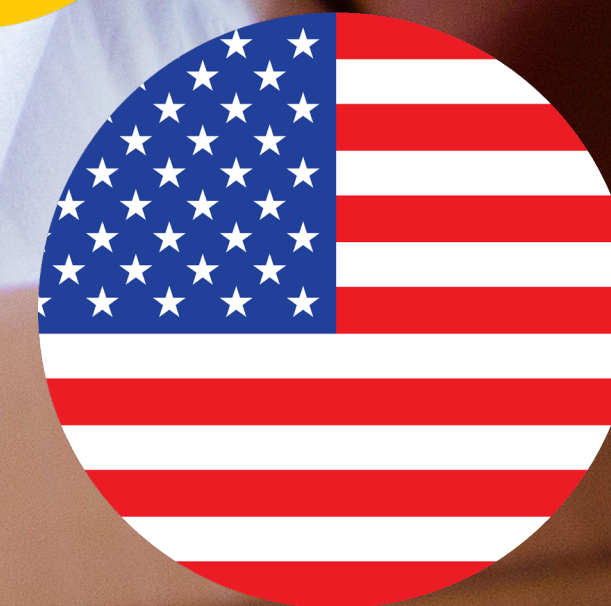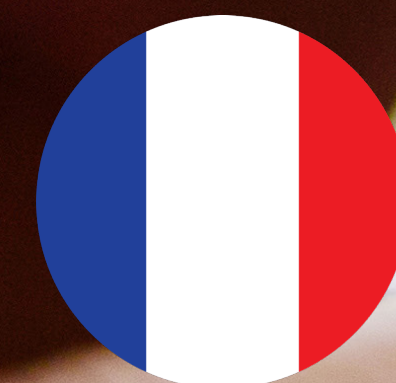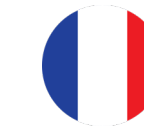
The United States

INSIGHT 01

AI is changing how B2B marketers use social media

In 2023, B2B marketing in the US saw a large shift toward revenue generation. Traditionally focused on awareness, only 25% of social media marketers targeted revenue generation. This is rapidly changing with the integration of AI. It's redefining the role of social media, moving beyond mere awareness to actively enhance customer engagement and drive revenue generation. The investment trend echoes this transition. While 38% invested in AI tools in 2023, 52% plan to increase their investment in 2024. This upward tick in AI adoption isn't solely about awareness, it's primarily aimed at fostering engagement and boosting sales. A substantial 79% of marketers seek to improve engagement through AI, with 63% targeting revenue growth and lead generation. This signals a paradigm shift toward AI-driven strategies for achieving tangible business outcomes.

INSIGHT 02

Ethical and security concerns more pressing than job loss due to AI

When discussing concerns related to adopting AI for social media marketing, survey respondents unanimously highlighted ethical concerns (56%) and worries about data security (52%). These concerns have surpassed apprehensions about potential job loss, previously a primary concern in AI discussions, which now stands at (36%). In such a scenario, it becomes vital for brands to team up with technology partners that have an unwavering focus on security and governance.

OTHER INSIGHTS:

Make tech consolidation your top priority

Marketers need to prioritize consolidating tech tools for streamlined operations and cohesive strategies, aiming for more unified and efficient workflows.

Nearly 20% of marketing budgets are spent on tools and platforms but 1 in 3 marketers struggle to manage the plethora of tools. Almost 50% of marketers have recognized this challenge and plan to invest in tech consolidation in the next six months.

Tap into real-time listening to offer differentiating experiences

Harnessing real-time listening capabilities revolutionizes business strategies, empowering swift and adaptive decision-making based on immediate insights.

61% of marketers say they will invest in analyzing real-time data via social listening in the coming six months to improve brand reputation, manage crisis better and innovate on products and services.
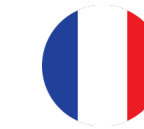
France

INSIGHT 01

Emphasis on revenue reshapes social media marketing

Social marketers in the region are charting a unique course in social media strategy, with a strong focus on transforming social platforms into key revenue-generating channels. In 2023, their main activities included influencer collaborations (68%), advertising (60%), social commerce (52%) and customer support (60%). Distinctively, 64% of social marketers measure social media success by conversion rates, a metric not prioritized to this extent in other surveyed countries.

In 2024, 72% will invest in AI technologies, with their secondary objective being to boost lead generation and drive revenue growth (60%). This revenue-centric approach sets marketers from France apart from their global counterparts, who prioritize customer engagement.

INSIGHT 02

Martech stack simplification is on the cards

The country's social media marketers demonstrate a keen interest in streamlining their marketing stack. Despite employing a unified approach — with 68% managing social media marketing efforts centrally across various geographies and product/service handles — they encounter a significant challenge: managing a multitude of tools and platforms, as cited by 56% of them.

Acknowledging this concern, the third primary objective for 2024, as cited by 56% of marketers, involves investing in the consolidation of their marketing tools. This emphasis on streamlining processes and systems mirrors a strategic shift toward more efficient and integrated marketing operations.

Germany

INSIGHT 01

Social listening paves way for influencer discovery

In 2024, B2B marketers in Germany are set to revolutionize influencer marketing by integrating social listening tools into their strategies. 52% plan to invest in these technologies, not just for enhanced social marketing but to pioneer a new use case: identifying influencers who align perfectly with their business needs.

This strategic shift sees 60% maintaining their investment in listening tools, with 50% utilizing them for influencer discovery. These tools also continue to aid in competitor analysis (44%) and in refining content and campaigns (44%), marking a significant evolution in how B2B marketers leverage technology for more targeted and impactful marketing efforts.
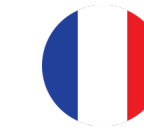
INSIGHT 02

AI transforms marketing focus to revenue

In 2023, social marketers homed in on growing brand awareness (76%), building trust and transparency (68%) and gathering real-time feedback (60%). Already, 40% of them have integrated AI into their social media marketing, showing a proactive approach to leveraging technology.

A significant shift seems to be underway in 2024. 1 in 3 social marketers in Germany plan to invest in AI and GenAI tools to enhance their social media marketing efforts. The primary focus of this investment? To excel in generating leads and driving revenue from social media, with a staggering 86% targeting this goal. Additionally, 79% aim to boost customer engagement on social media, indicating a strategic pivot from awareness to active engagement.
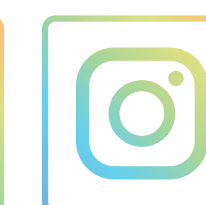
The United Kingdom

INSIGHT 01

Marketers plan to use AI to transform social marketing

In 2023, the heartbeat of social media marketing in the region was content creation, with 20% of marketing budget dedicated to this endeavor. Social marketers faced a daunting challenge: keeping up with the ever-changing, fast-paced trends on social platforms. But there's a game-changer on the horizon for 2024. A whopping 63% of marketers are set to invest in AI and GenAI tools. What's driving this shift? A desire to not just keep up but to excel.

With AI, 75% aim to enhance engagement, 66% strive to boost lead generation and revenue and 40% seek to improve content generation. This surge in AI utilization hints at a future where AI touches every facet of social media marketing. Particularly intriguing is the burgeoning use of AI to amplify leads and revenue — a novel application with potential to reshape the marketing landscape. Watching how AI evolves in this role promises to be a compelling chapter in the story of social media marketing.

INSIGHT 02

Social listening will go beyond social

In 2024, half of the social marketers surveyed are gearing up to invest in social listening, signaling a shift in its application beyond traditional social media strategy enhancement. It's not just about monitoring brand reputation, which 45% are focused on, but there's a deeper, more collaborative angle emerging.

Notably, 37% are using social listening to refine their products and services. This marks a crucial alignment between marketing and product teams, bridging gaps and fostering synergy. Also, 34% are leveraging it for lead generation and another 34% for crisis management, expanding the role of social listening as a *multifaceted tool* in the marketing arsenal.

ABOUT SPRINKLR

Sprinklr is a leading enterprise software company for all customer-facing functions. With advanced AI, Sprinklr's unified customer experience management (Unified-CXM) platform helps companies deliver human experiences to every customer, every time, across any modern channel. Headquartered in New York City with employees around the world, Sprinklr works with more than 1,400 valuable enterprises — global brands like Microsoft, P&G, Samsung and more than 50% of the Fortune 100. Sprinklr's value to the enterprise is simple: We un-silo teams to make customers happier.

ABOUT KANTAR

Kantar's Profiles division is home to the world's largest audience network. With access to 170m+ people in over 100 global markets, it offers unrivalled global reach with local relevancy. Validated by industry leading anti-fraud technology, Kantar's Profiles Audience Network delivers the most meaningful data with consistency, accuracy, and accountability – all at speed and scale."