



Social media Trends 2023

Your guide to the future of
social marketing, commerce,
and customer service





Adapting to Endure

A defining moment in business gives social media marketers the opportunity to cement their worth

Toward the end of last year, pandemic restrictions finally started easing up and markets were booming. As we lurch into 2023, things look much more delicate. A looming recession, mounting inflation, declining consumer spending, and workforce reductions across major business sectors have made things precarious for businesses of all sizes.

Despite this uncertainty, many social media marketers find themselves in a position of relative security—they're getting larger slices of the overall marketing budget and more agency over their work. After more than a decade of growing pains, social media marketing has finally matured as a profession.

In 2023, successful social marketers will take the time and effort to carefully assess their opportunities, use a scalpel rather than a cleaver, and think about the long-term impact of their short-term actions. Those who do will cement their worth once and for all.

We hope our 2023 social media trends report serves you well in the midst of a defining year.

About the Survey

10,643 respondents

109 countries / **11+** industries

32% director and above

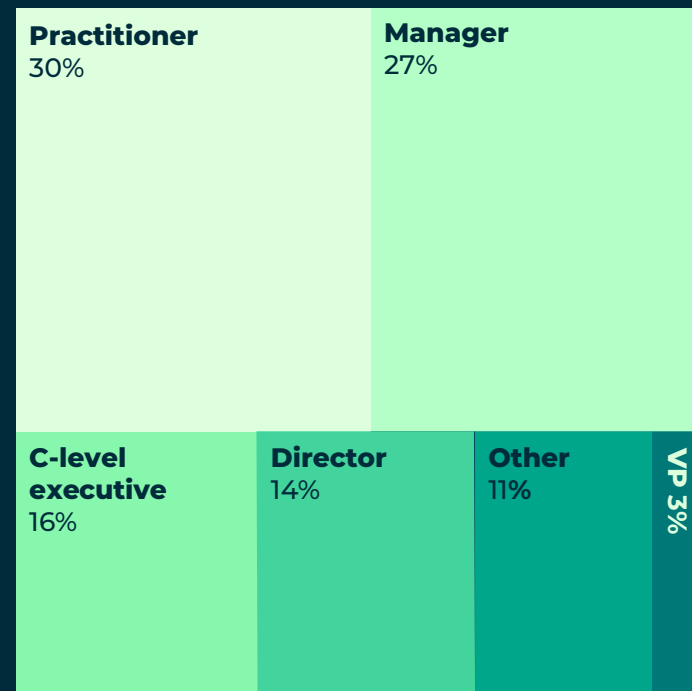
56% managers and practitioners

Research Methods

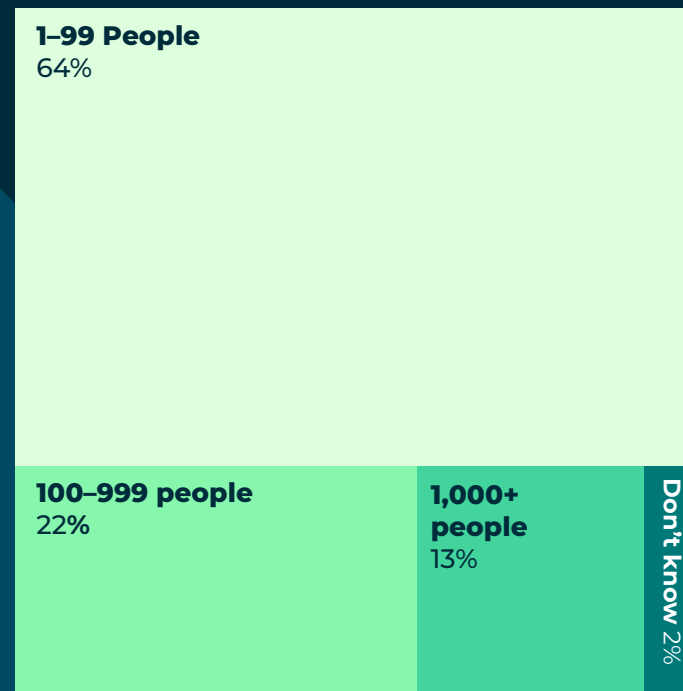
This report is based on a survey of 10,643 marketers conducted in July 2022.

We conducted primary interviews with dozens of social marketing practitioners, leaders, observers, and partners.

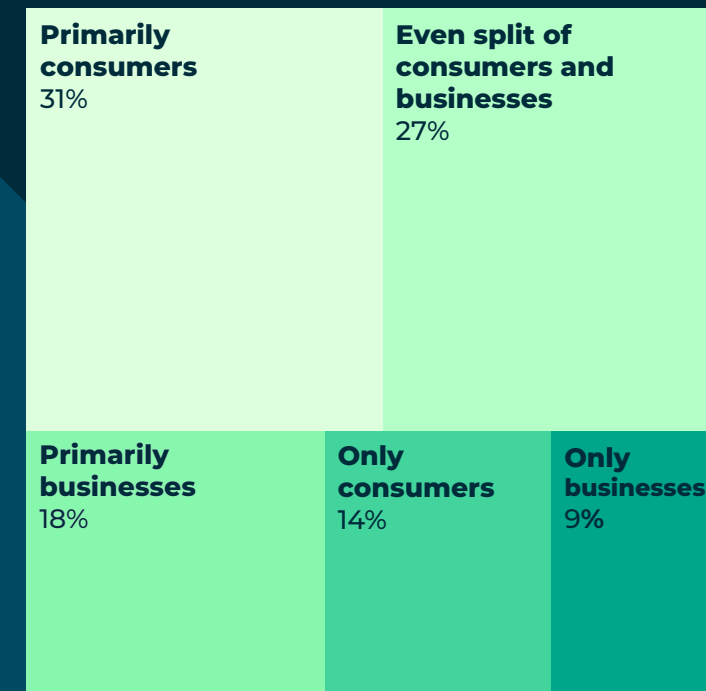
Our primary data has been supplemented by secondary research from The Harvard Business Review, McKinsey, Deloitte, Edelman, Insider Intelligence, Forrester, GlobalWebIndex, The CMO Survey, and others.



Job function of survey respondents



Business size of survey respondents



Target audience of survey respondents

Definitions



Social Marketing

The use of social media networks across all components of the marketing mix: product, price, promotion, and place.



Social Commerce

The process of selling products and services directly through social media.



Social Customer Service

The process of delivering proactive customer service (finding and responding to brand conversations with the aim of satisfying customer needs before they ask) and reactive customer service (responding to customer-initiated transactions or service inquiries) over social networks.



Contents



The Future of Social Marketing

page 6

Small businesses cozy up to creators

page 7

Budgets on the line as bosses demand social receipts

page 13

Social innovators crack the cross-posting code

page 18



The Future of Social Commerce

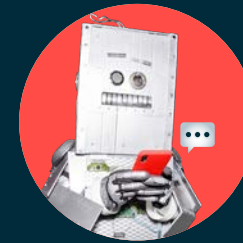
page 23

Social commerce hits the trust gap

page 24

All eyes turn to social search

page 29



The Future of Social Customer Service

page 35

The great reopening blows a hole in digital service

page 36

Marketers realize it's time to lean into customer service

page 41

The Future of Social Marketing

As marketing budgets continue to recover from the pandemic, social media spend is on its way up. Marketers are feeling more confident not just in the return on investment (ROI) of social media, but also in their ability to prove it to even the most skeptical of executives. In 2023, we'll see this confidence inspire marketers to get more strategic on platforms that can seem determined to make that as difficult as possible.



Marketing Trend 1

Small businesses cozy up to creators

Big brands stop competing for creators, leaving the door wide open for small businesses



Put it into action Start your creator collaborations off the right way—with this free creator brief (and statement of work) template. [Grab the Template](#)

Big brands are competing less for creators

For months, concerns over a seemingly inevitable recession have fueled restructures, layoffs, and operating budget cuts. Businesses are rethinking their spending—and often, marketing budgets are first on the chopping block.

While we haven't seen massive cuts in marketing spend just yet, we are seeing larger businesses reduce their discretionary spending.

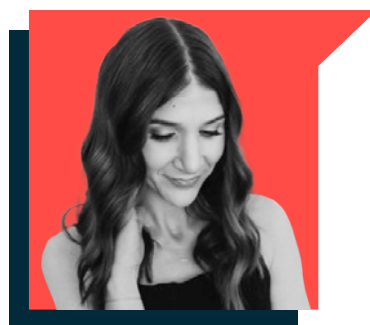
Budget for creator partnerships has been one of the first things to take a hit, with small and midsize content creators saying they're seeing declining sponsorship offers and more brands backing out of paid deals this year.

While this pullback in spending is a blow to an already precarious creator economy, it leaves the door wide open for smaller businesses to compete for top creators at lower price points.

Creators can help small businesses with their most acute marketing challenges

Small businesses say they're feeling pinched by a possible recession, too. Twenty-eight percent of small business owners expect revenues to decrease over the next year, according to the [CNBC Small Business Confidence Index](#). And 18% of small business owners expect their headcounts to decrease over the same period.

For small businesses, 2023 promises to be a year of dwindling resources, shrinking headcounts, and leaner budgets that will make their toughest [marketing challenges](#), well, even tougher. To ease the pressure, small business owners will begin leaning on the very creators being abandoned by larger businesses.



“With the recession, with COVID, and just being more financially pinched... marketing dollars always get cut. When we’re strapped for resources, creators become a very appealing tool for marketers.”

Leah Gritton

Director of Integration Strategy, [Energy BBDO](#)

The majority of small businesses don't work with creators—yet

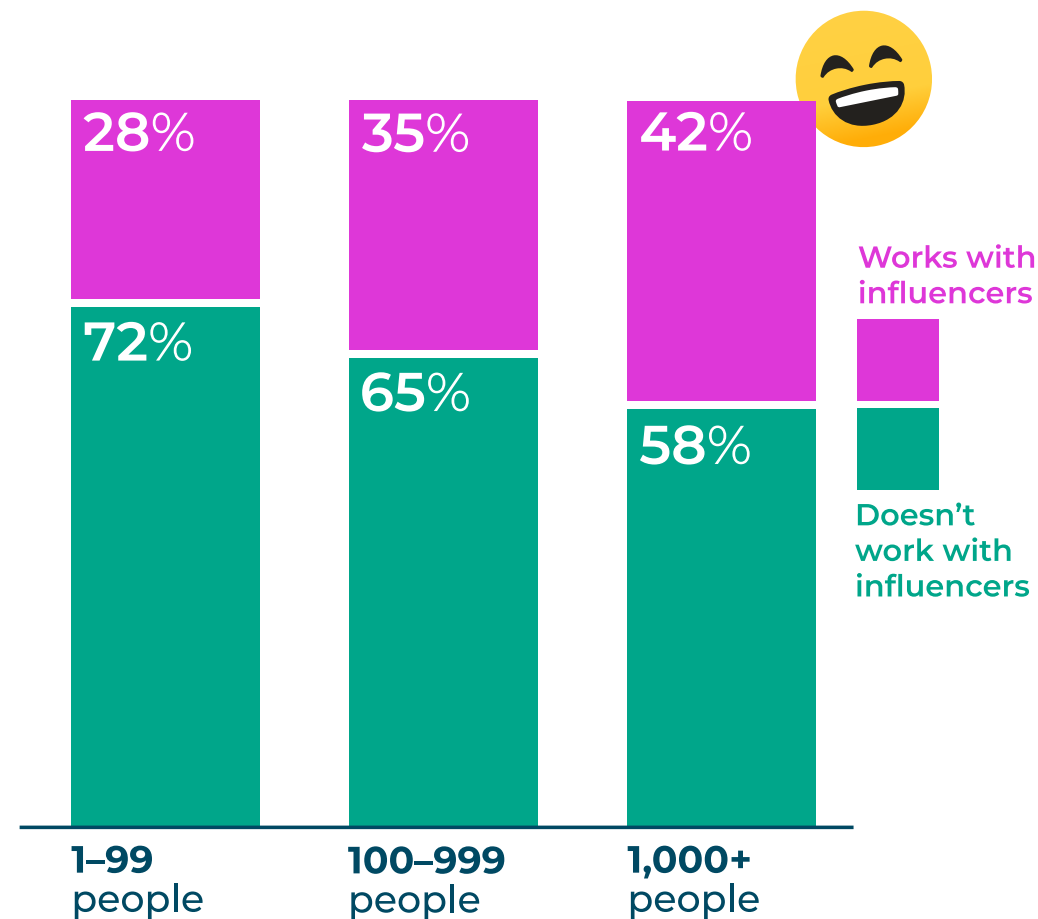
Our social trends survey found that smaller organizations are the least likely to work with creators; 72% of small businesses (those with less than 100 employees) don't work with creators in any capacity, while nearly 42% of businesses with over 1,000 employees do work with creators.

What's the biggest barrier to entry for small businesses? Cost.

“Our main challenge is just the volatility of pricing,” says Ruby Soave, head of influencer marketing at Student Beans. “There's such a lack of standardization of how much work should cost that negotiating good prices gets murky.”

From expensive creator agencies to massive variations in the way creators price themselves, many smaller businesses feel in the dark about how much they should pay to work with creators.

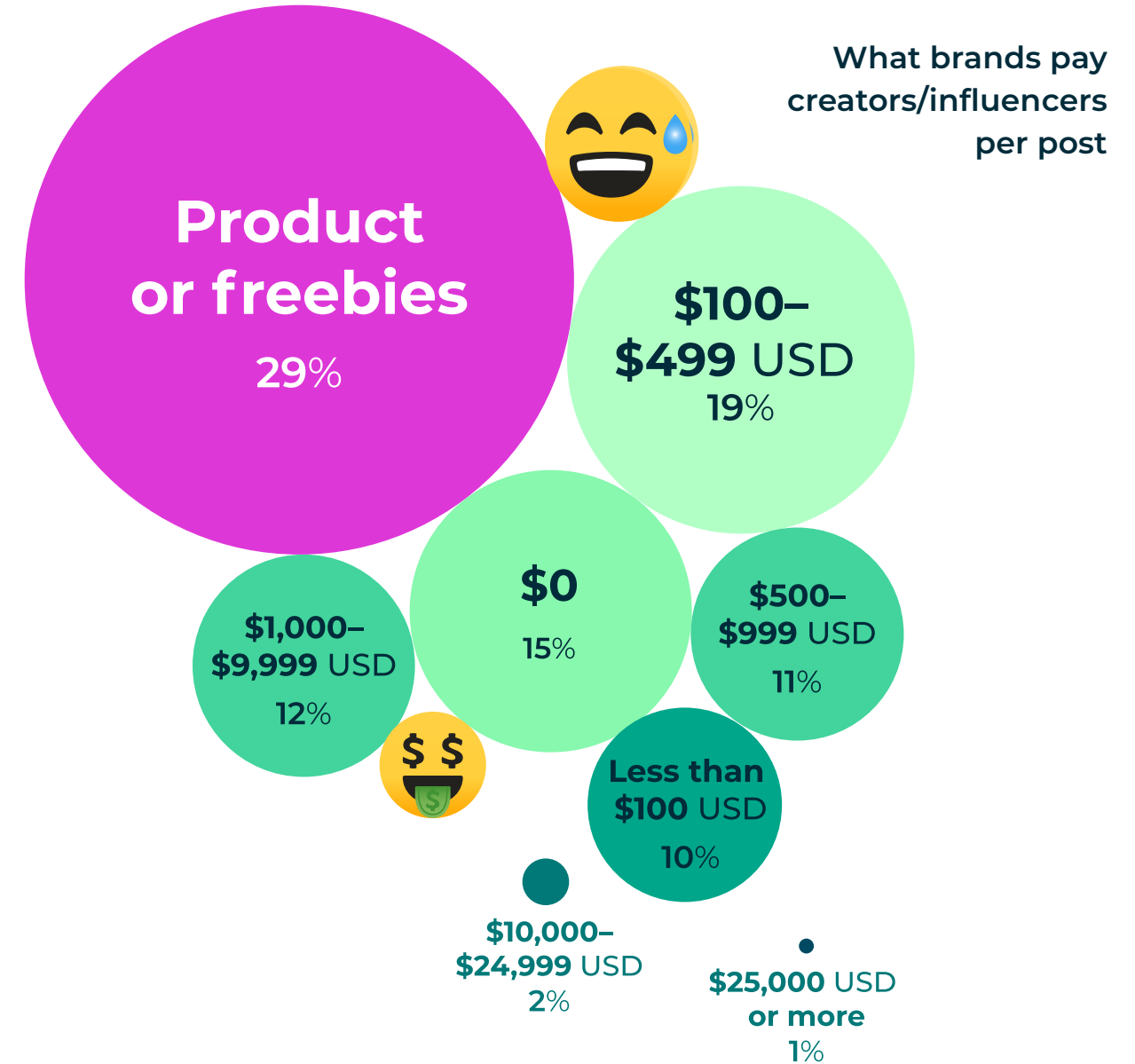
Organizations that work with influencers by size



Creators aren't as out of reach as you think

Most organizations don't go through agencies to find creators. Less than a third (28%) of brands that work with creators do so through agencies or third-party platforms, according to our survey. For small business owners, this means less overhead and much more control over who you choose to hire and negotiate with.

But working with influencers also isn't as expensive as you might think. Most creators are paid less than \$100 US per post. Now, this isn't license to pay creators nothing. Without fair pay, marketers jeopardize the future of the creator economy altogether. But for resource-strapped small businesses looking to grow reach and let experts create their content for them, cost-effective creators are well within reach.



Trend in action

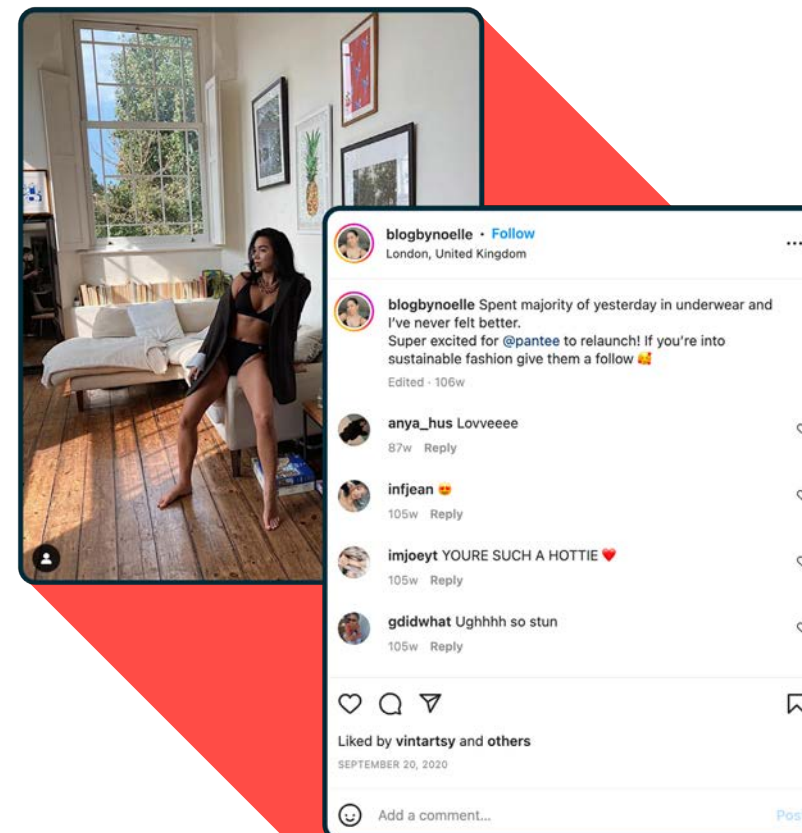
Pantee teams up with creators who share their values, uniting on their mission to reduce fashion waste

UK-based sustainable underwear brand Pantee has masterfully blended its creator strategy with its mission to reduce fashion waste and make the world a more comfortable place. Currently, the fashion industry produces an estimated 92 million tonnes of textile waste each year, and with approximately 30% of clothes made never even sold, the excess (deadstock) is often destined for waste.

Pantee made it their mission to challenge the fashion industry by making comfy underwear with this deadstock, for women by women. To double down on their principles, they partner with creators who not only share their values but who truly love their products—particularly those advocating for sustainability, mental health, and body positivity.

“We’ve started working with creators who are passionate about the same things we are”, says Pantee co-founder Amanda McCourt. “We really look to collaborate with creators who have a clear connection with our mission and truly love our products. If a creator wouldn’t buy from us, we don’t feel comfortable working with them to promote our brand. We always strive for truth and transparency.”

Pantee has been working closely with TikTok and Instagram creators whose self-described mission is mindful shopping to better reach the communities that align with their brand's sustainability mission. Beyond that, Pantee uses partnerships with creators as an opportunity to showcase their products on a multitude of shapes and sizes to contribute to the normalization of all bodies.



Recommendations

Do your research

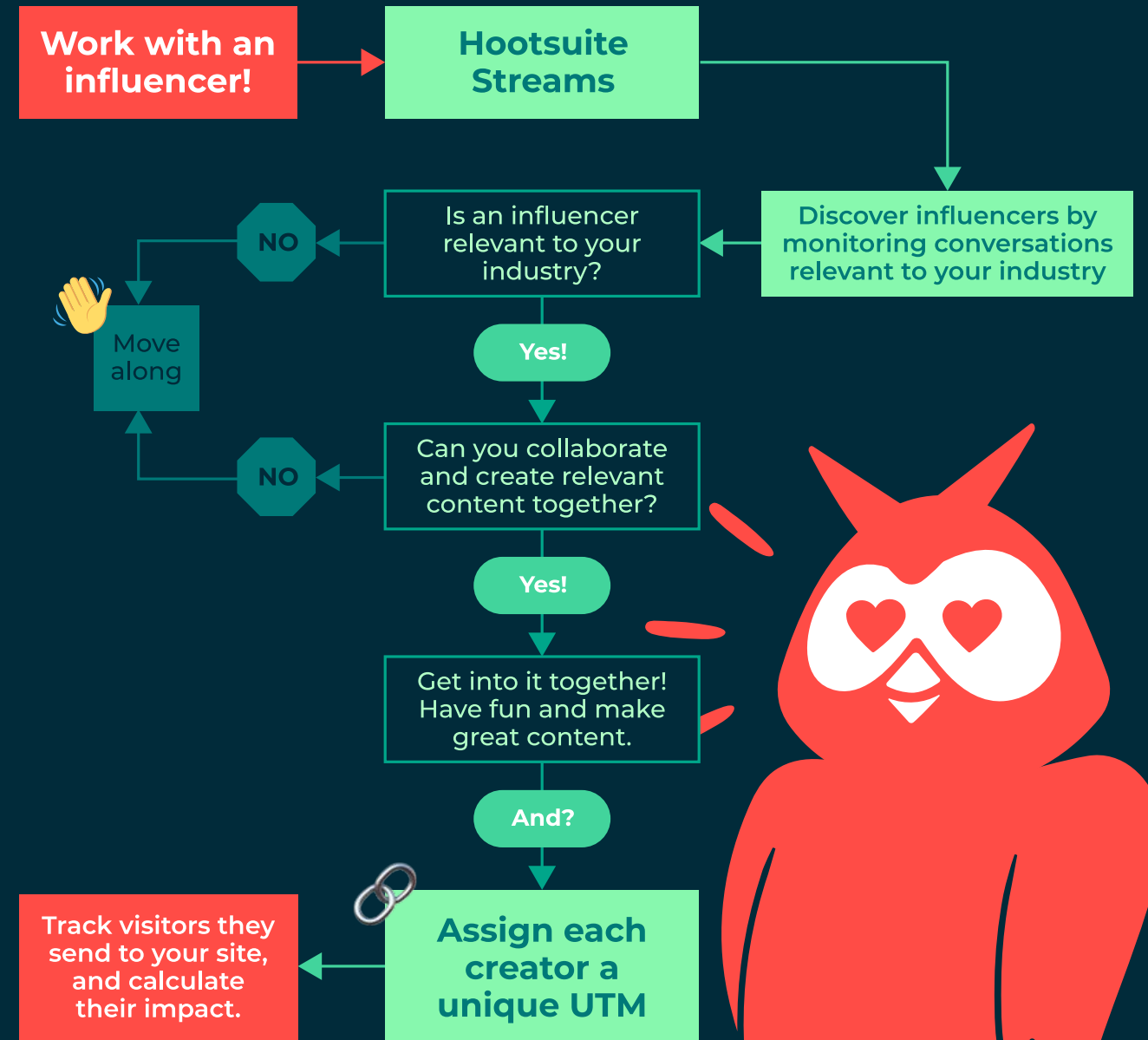
Hootsuite search streams can help you discover influencers by monitoring conversations relevant to your industry across all your social networks. Once you have an initial set of creators in mind, add them to a stream to track what they share and who they engage with. This will help you understand their relevance to your audience and identify other potential influencers to work with.

Go for strategic focus, not reach

Don't shy away from creators with fewer followers. Large follower sizes don't necessarily lead to higher conversions. What's more important is finding a creator who can collaborate with you to make inspiring content relevant to your product or service.

Use UTM codes to track and measure results

While there are many ways to measure the success of your creator campaigns, UTM codes are the best way to get a clear picture of the results. Assign each creator their own unique links with UTM codes and you'll be able to track the visitors they send to your website, allowing you to calculate their impact on your bottom line.





Marketing Trend 2

Budgets on the line as bosses demand social receipts

Growing investment in social exposes it to new levels of scrutiny

Confidence in the ROI of social media marketing is at an all-time high

Social media has spent over a decade fighting to prove its place in the marketing mix—and it's decisively found it. Marketers' confidence in the value of social media marketing is at an all-time high.

Last year, 83% of marketers in our social media trends survey reported having some

level of confidence in the return on investment (ROI) of social media, up from 68% the year before. This year, we got more specific and asked how confident marketers were that social media was useful for marketing to or engaging with their audience. A whopping 96% of marketers reported some level of confidence.

Put it into action Impress your boss with a concise report highlighting just how well things are going on social, using this free report template.

[Grab the Template](#)

37%

Extremely
confident

How confident
are you that social
media delivers
a positive return
on investment
when it comes
to marketing and
engaging with
your audience?

40%

Confident

20%

Somewhat confident

4% Not at all confident

It should come as no surprise that almost every social media marketing practitioner we surveyed says social media marketing has value. (If you're one of the 4% who said otherwise, we're here to help.)

But what's telling is that this confidence is clearly reflected in the proportion of the marketing budget allocated to social. While marketing budgets have climbed to nearly 10% of total company revenue in 2022 (up from 6% in 2021), they still [lag pre-pandemic levels](#). Spend on social media relative to pre-pandemic levels is going up too—and it's predicted to [increase steadily](#) over the next five years.

More visibility means more scrutiny

Social media's newfound visibility has the potential to open it to higher levels of scrutiny—especially as leadership whips out the magnifying glass over the coming year.

During market downturns, many execs will look to [shore up costs and manage expenses](#) as much as possible. And in the marketing department, the pressure will fall on individual contributors and middle managers to clearly demonstrate the value they bring to the table.

This is where social media practitioners run into problems. Our survey found that, when it comes to social media, seniority has a major impact on how individuals perceive and demonstrate the value of social.

Our survey told us that...

- **Practitioners** were 17% more likely than the C-suite to say their organization uses impressions/views to demonstrate ROI.
- **VPs** were 7% more likely than practitioners to say they used time spent on their brand's website/app to demonstrate ROI.
- **C-level executives** were 13% more likely than practitioners to say they used sales/revenue to demonstrate ROI.

In 2023, marketing practitioners and leadership have to have a deeper conversation about goals to make sure everyone's on the same page. If that conversation doesn't happen and social remains so visible within the marketing budget over the next year, there's a risk that leadership may pull investment if they don't truly understand the value of the channel.

—● Connect the title to the Social ROI metric!





Expert perspective

Chris Thomas

Global Social Intelligence and Optimization Lead
Sage

How will the market downturn impact marketing budgets in 2023?

The move towards a bear market is inevitably going to focus budgets on things which deliver core business objectives. And core business objectives are always going to be, to some extent, demand led.

But brand marketing has been an underserved and under-resourced part of the mix over the last few years. I'd point to [Ehrenberg Bass](#) and [Binet and Field](#)—all of that good stuff that's been bubbling up in Adland over the last few years, it's evidence to the point that we can't preoccupy ourselves with demand-led strategies at the expense of long-term brand building.

Do you think senior leadership at most organizations understands the importance of that balance?

I'm seeing a greater level of education in our stakeholders and also a greater level of skepticism. I think people are becoming a lot more savvy at [the] leadership level about understanding the dynamics of social and questioning what their domain specialists are telling them.

There absolutely used to be a period, probably three or four years ago, where fake Facebook fortune tellers would say 'we can attribute 60% of our sales to social.' That was taken pretty much at face value as an article of faith and nobody would dig too deeply. I like to think that's changing.

What advice would you give a social media manager who's asked to do this kind of surgical attribution when it isn't actually possible?

Personally, I'll never put my neck on the block for numbers that I don't believe in. And in a climate where there is that increased forensic scrutiny at a senior level, I actually think that's a really important principle.

As a social media professional, you need to get yourself to a place where you've educated yourself around attribution and that you look at the numbers really, really critically to build up a case that you feel confident in—one that you can stand up for 30 minutes in front of the CEO and justify it to them. If you can't do that, I'd say you've got a problem.

Recommendations

Track metrics that align with your business objectives

All social media metrics can tell you something about whether you're achieving objectives and meeting your goals. But tracking the right metrics is the key to understanding your social ROI. Start with a focus on the few metrics that help you tell the right story and build your business case. Then check them regularly by setting up automated reports that go to your inbox, so you don't have to remember to pull them yourself.

Create an ROI report that shows the true impact of social

Creating a social media report is an important part of social media management. After all, tracking and analyzing your performance is the only way to really understand what you're accomplishing through your social efforts. It's also the only way to demonstrate the value of your social marketing efforts to your team and your boss. Here's a template to help you get started.

Remember the big picture

Don't chase short-term ROI to the point that you lose sight of what makes your brand valuable and unique. Jumping on a trend just to get likes and comments doesn't provide value if it annoys your audience or muddies your brand voice. It can even damage your brand in the long term.

Don't forget that the big picture of social media ROI includes returns beyond the marketing department. You can use social media to improve customer service and strengthen employee relationships—both worthwhile and valuable achievements that you should include when you consider ROI.





Put it into action Run the easiest social media audit—with this handy free template. [Grab the Template](#)

Marketing Trend 3

Social innovators crack the cross-posting code

Marketers stop chasing new features and start getting more strategic instead

The Frankensteining of the social networks continues

From Stories to Reels to Twitter's ill-fated Fleets (remember those?), social media companies have spent much of the past decade tripping over themselves to copy their competitors' most successful features.

Some of the most popular social media apps have blatantly ripped off features from some of the other most popular social media apps in what Gizmodo has called a tech version of

Capture the Flag “where the only losers are the users who are forced to persist through this cat-and-mouse game.”

But this game has not only come at the expense of user experience but also at the expense of the sanity of social media marketers, whose work lives now revolve around constantly adapting their plans to new formats, repurposing content, and wondering when the next network change will upend their carefully organized campaign.

People go to different networks for different reasons

What the networks have failed to consider is that user attention is not a zero sum game. People on one social platform are often on several others as well. And most social media users spend time on multiple platforms.

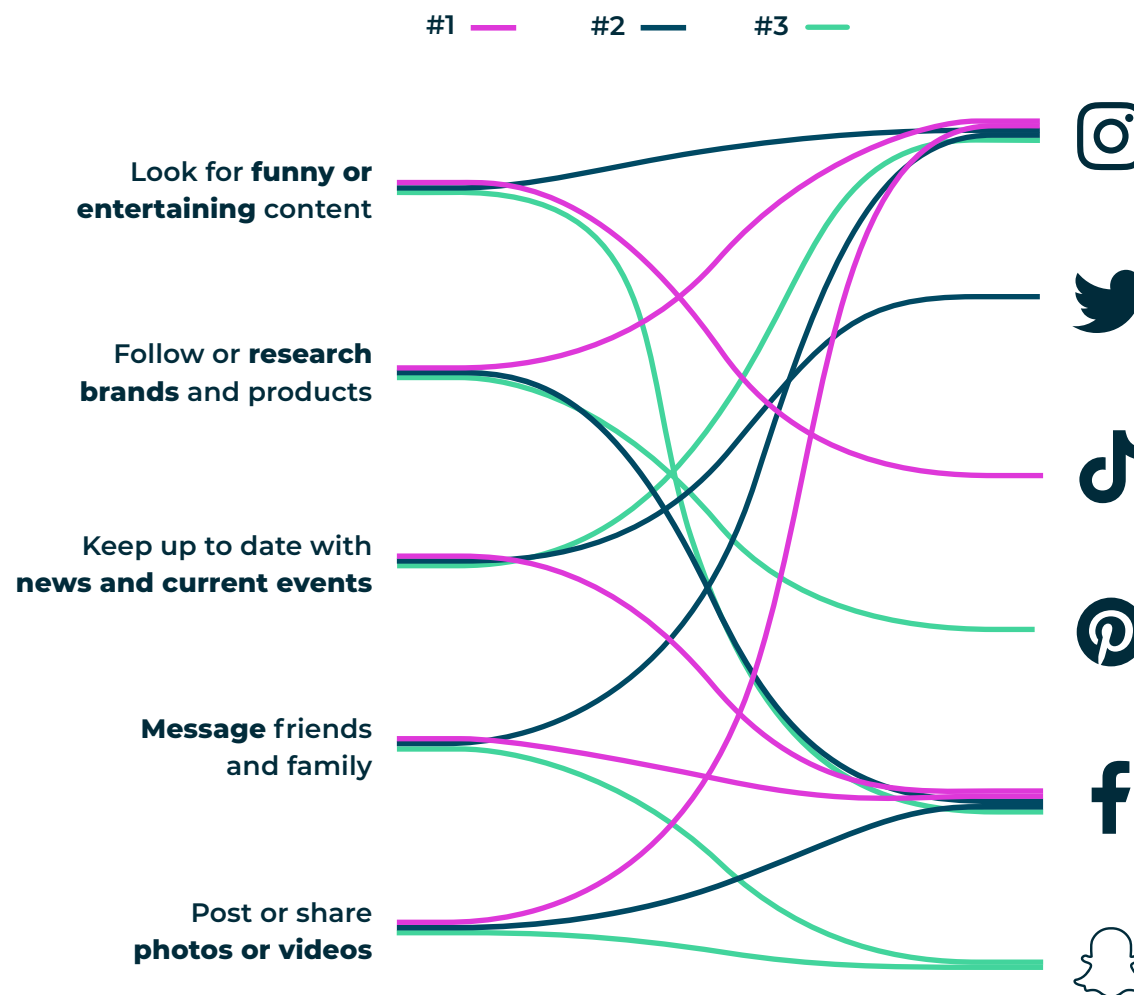
More than 84% of TikTok users are also on Facebook and almost 88% of Twitter users are also on Instagram. People don't only get different types of value from different networks, they *explicitly use different social networks for different purposes*.

On Facebook, they might catch up with a friend overseas. On Twitter, they might skim over the day's breaking news. And on TikTok, they might look for a laugh while searching for the latest viral trends.

Adding competitor capabilities to one network doesn't change the perception people have spent years forming of what a specific network is meant for. That's why Instagram Reels, for example, is struggling to compete with TikTok—even though it's basically the same thing.

In fact, stealing a competitor's features may actually have a negative impact on the perception of a social network—take this [Change.org petition with over 300,000 signatures](#) asking that Instagram stop trying to copy TikTok.

Social media activities by platform



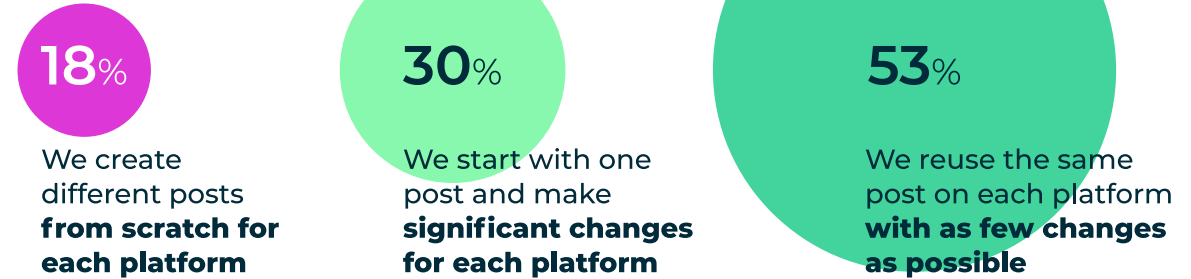
Successful marketers know that strategy is more important than tactics

With so many demands on their time and resources—and with networks looking more and more similar by the day—it’s no surprise that 52% of respondents to our survey said they cross-post content to multiple social platforms with as few changes as possible. Just 18% of marketers create different posts from scratch for each platform.

But while cross-posting saves time, it comes with a heavy cost: results. Our survey found that marketers who create different posts from scratch for each network are *significantly more confident in the value of that content*.

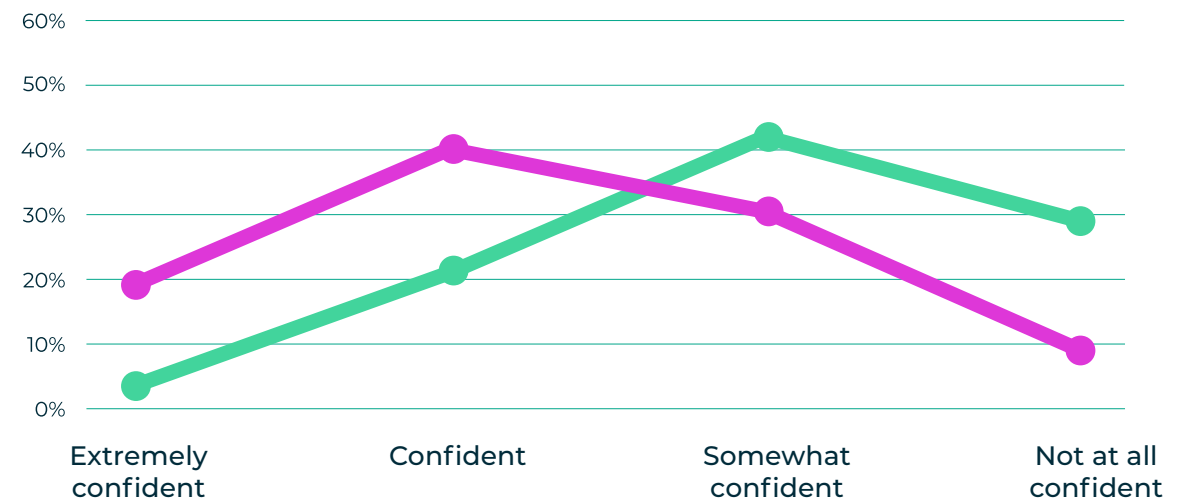
As the Frankensteining of social networks continues, the most confident marketers will spend less time worrying about which copycat feature to start using next and more time exploring platforms that best reflect their business goals. They’ll focus on creating content that’s well suited to those platforms, rather than trying to keep up with every feature-level change the networks throw their way.

How does your organization most commonly create social posts?



Confidence reusing social posts across networks vs. creating different posts from scratch across networks

From Scratch ●
Reusing ●



Trend in action

How The Washington Post brings the news to a new generation on TikTok

The Washington Post may be 140 years old, but with the help of their social media manager Dave Jorgenson—lovingly known as the [WaPo TikTok guy](#)—they’ve found a way to introduce a new generation to serious journalism in frequently unserious ways.

Jorgenson has helped the company amass over 1.4 million followers by sharing his tongue-in-cheek videos about life at the office and memes about current events.

When you compare The Washington Post’s lighthearted approach to TikTok with their Facebook or Twitter presence, it’s clear they’re being strategic about who they’re making their content for on each network. On a platform like TikTok, where people go to be entertained rather than informed, Jorgenson’s absurdist approach to the news has turned the Washington Post into a Gen Z darling.



The Washington Post

Recommendations

Conduct a social media audit

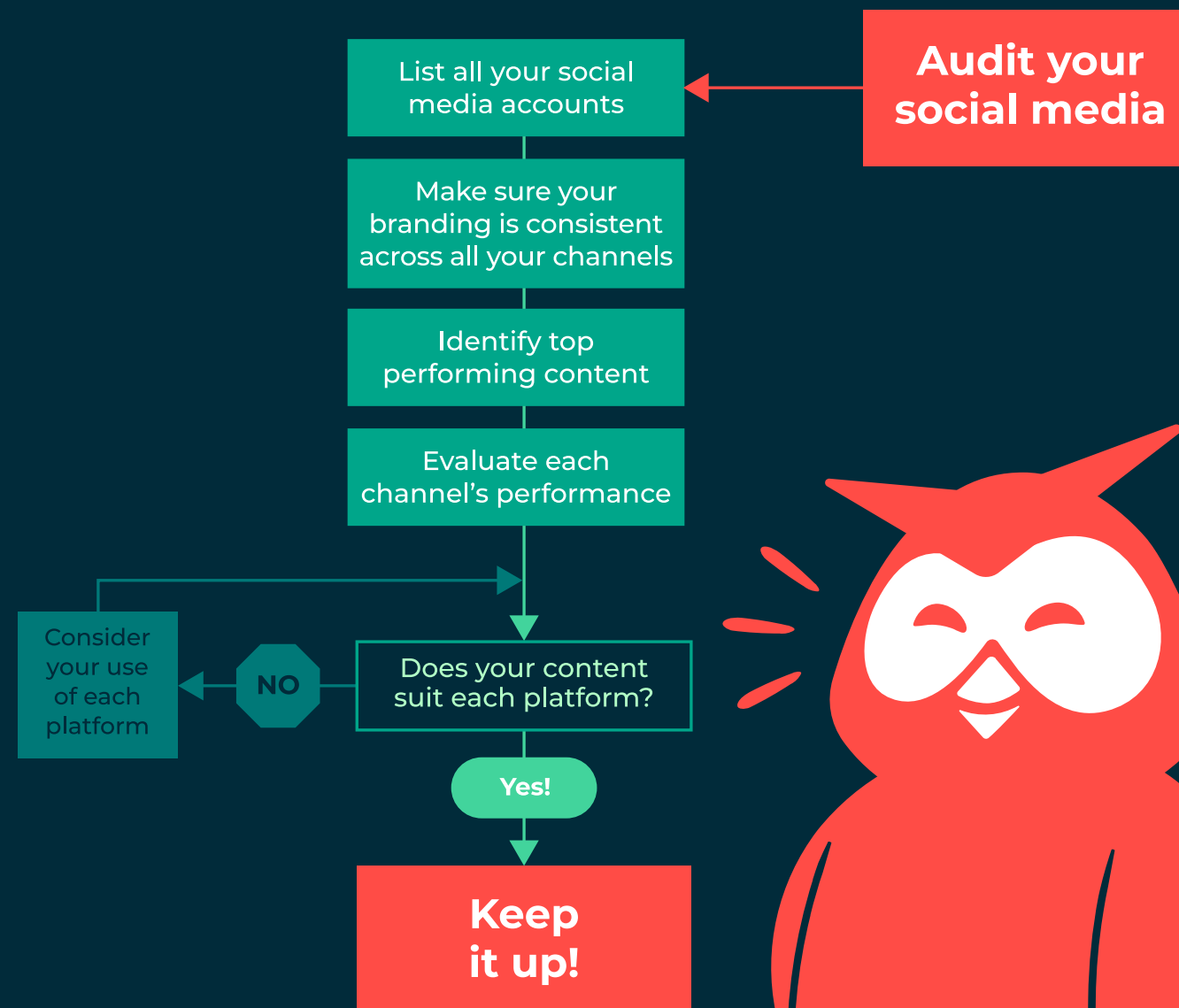
If you're already using social media, take stock of your efforts so far. Ask yourself the following questions: What's working, and what's not? Which networks does your target audience use? How does your social media presence compare to the competition? Once you collect that information, you're ready to brainstorm ways to improve. We've created an easy-to-follow [social media audit guide](#) to walk you through each step of this process.

Make your content fit for each platform

By making your content fit for each platform, you can provide experiences that are in line with your audience's reasons for being there—and that's a much stronger insight to base your strategy on than demographics alone.

Search for inspiration

All of the social networks feature success stories that highlight how brands use their tools effectively. You can usually find these on the business section of the social network's website. (For example, take a look at the [Facebook business success stories](#).) These case studies offer valuable insights you can apply to your own goals for each social network.



The Future of Social Commerce

While social commerce has roared ahead in markets outside North America, marketers here face a trust gap that's left them struggling to replicate that success. But there's a massive revenue opportunity, with US social commerce sales set to grow 34.4% this year to \$53.1 billion. Marketers who get it right will reap the rewards, attracting a fresh wave of new shoppers and inspiring their existing customers to spend more.





@girlbosstown

Commerce Trend 1

Social commerce hits the trust gap

An emerging barrier to social commerce becomes a competitive advantage for marketers who break through it

Networks pull back on social commerce plans

Last year, social commerce seemed destined to be the next big thing in ecommerce. As sales blasted past \$350 billion in China, North American and European marketers scrambled to position themselves to take advantage of a new way to make money directly from social beyond advertising.

Since then, social commerce has arrived with less of a bang and more of a yawn. Despite its success in China, North American and Euro-

pean consumers haven't shown much interest in the technology—so much so that Meta decided to shut down its live commerce functionality on Facebook and affiliate product tagging option on Instagram. TikTok has also scaled back its ecommerce plans, delaying the launch of live shopping.

With almost every major network pulling back its social commerce plans, the promising future of social shopping feels farther off than anticipated.

Put it into action Unlock the potential of social commerce with this beginner's guide to getting started.

[Grab the Template](#)

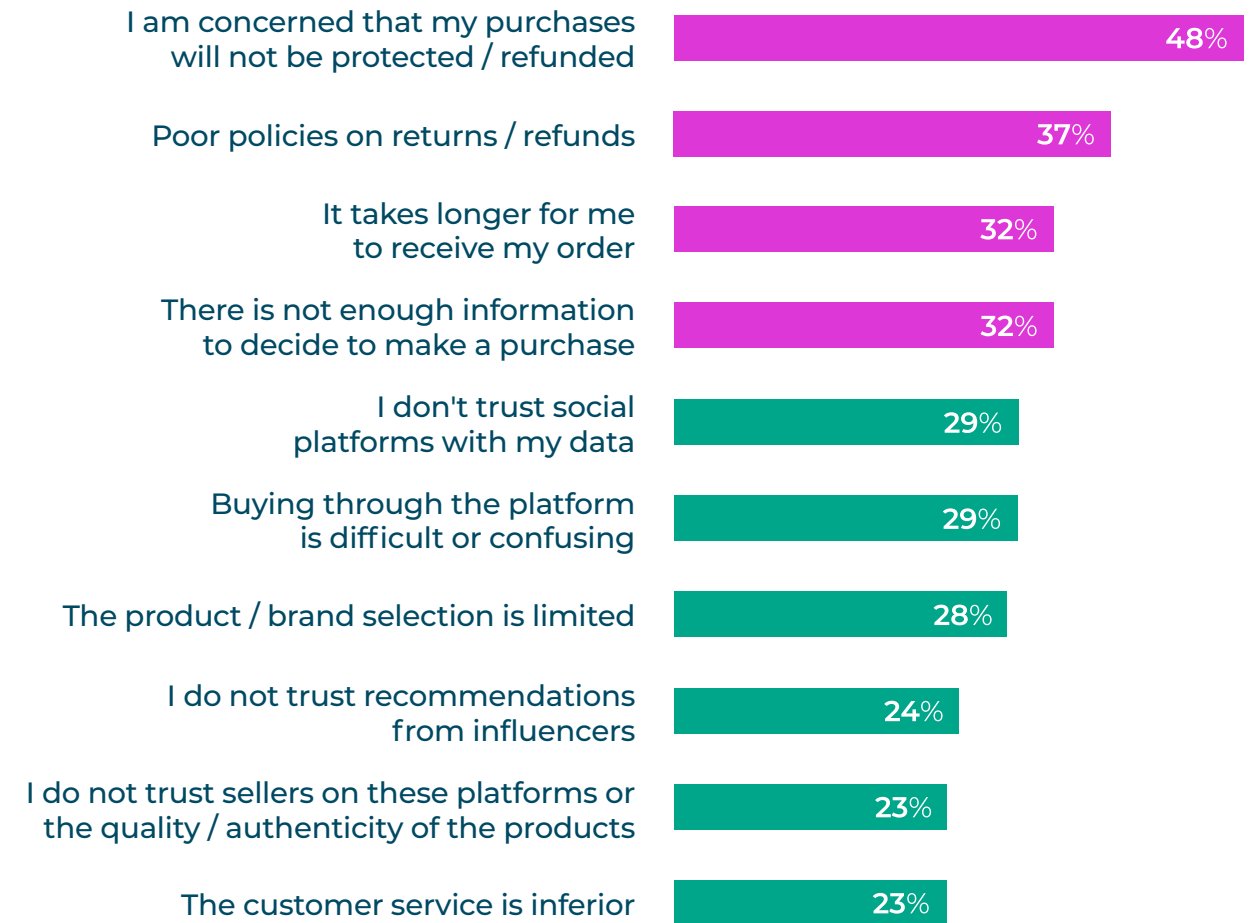
Consumers say the biggest barrier to purchasing through social is trust

What's behind the tepid adoption of social commerce? A lack of trust in both social networks and vendors.

The top two concerns for social buyers stem from a lack of trust in vendors, according to an Accenture [survey](#) of over 10,000 consumers. Their biggest concern is that their purchases won't be protected or refunded. They're also worried about the quality and authenticity of products and sellers on social media. And the third most common concern stems from trust in the social networks themselves; people say they don't want to share their financial information with the networks.

According to Accenture Top concerns with social commerce

Source: What matters in the social commerce experience, Accenture, April 2020



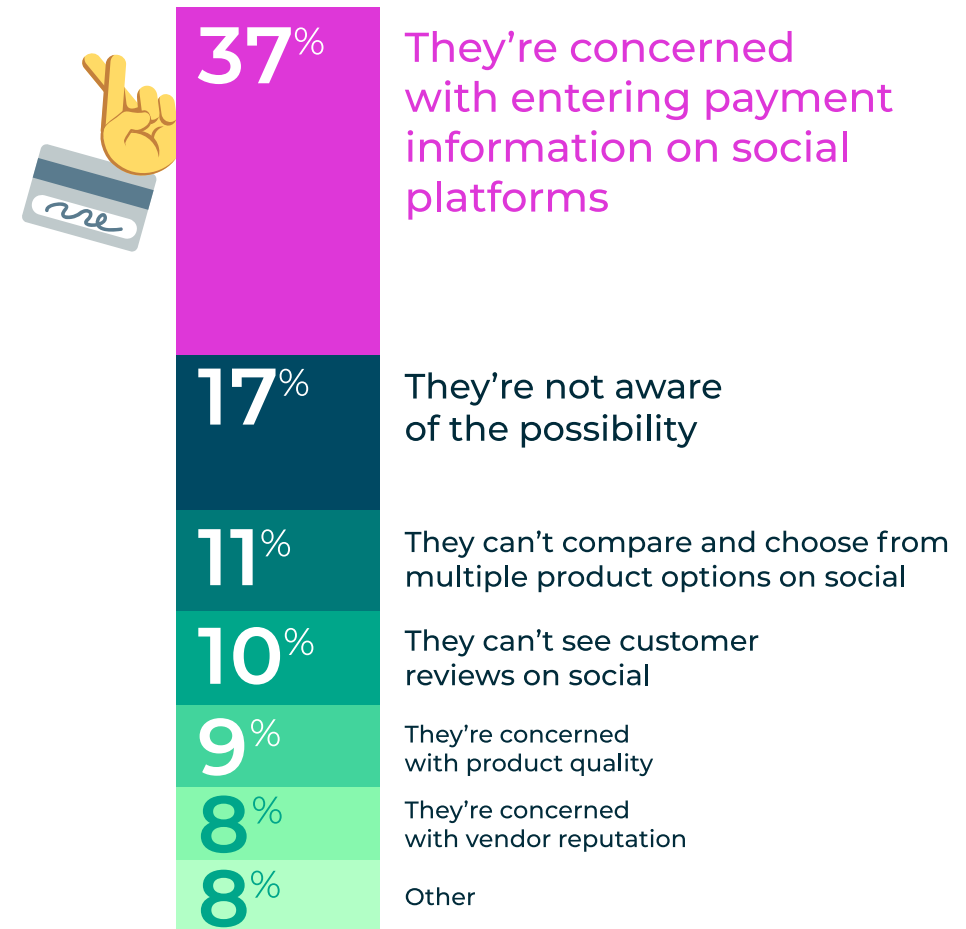
Marketers haven't faced up to their role in this trust gap yet

Our survey asked marketers what they believe are the greatest barriers for social buyers. And, while marketers also think trust in networks is to blame—our data suggests they don't realize they have an even bigger role to play.

Of the marketers we surveyed, 37% said that concern entering payment information on social platforms was the biggest issue for social buyers—in line with the results of Accenture's consumer survey. But while almost half (48%) of consumers told Accenture that vendor reputation and product quality was their main concern when shopping on social, less than 8% of the marketers we surveyed said the same.

Smart marketers know that the social commerce experience is about much more than technical concerns. To overcome the trust gap and turn skeptical shoppers into buyers, marketers will have to work on the basics: offer easy returns and refunds, display ratings and reviews from other buyers, and keep buyers notified about the status of their purchases throughout the customer journey.

What are the greatest challenges preventing customers from completing purchases directly on social platforms?



Marketers who master the basics will build a lasting advantage

So here's the thing. When networks and vendors do overcome that trust barrier, social shoppers are very sticky and reliable repeat buyers.

The average US social buyer will spend \$518 via this channel in 2022, up 27% from last year, according to [Insider Intelligence](#). Annual spend will increase by \$419 per buyer over the next three years, reaching \$937 in 2025. And social commerce sales growth is also expected to remain above pre-pandemic levels through to 2024.

So yes, in 2023 we're likely to see social commerce features get scaled back. Many marketers and business owners will make knee-jerk reactions and stop investing in their social storefronts.

But it's far too early to take Facebook's shutdown of its live commerce feature or reports that TikTok is abandoning its plans for livestream shopping in the US as an indicator of their overall social ambitions. Proactive brands will continue to see the opportunity ahead—and they'll relish seeing their competitors abandon social commerce plans early, leaving the playing field wide open for those with the patience to hang on.

**The average US
social buyer will spend**

\$518

**via social shopping in 2022,
up 27% from last year**

Source: Insider Intelligence

**Annual social media
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\$419

**per buyer over
the next three years**

Source: Insider Intelligence

Recommendations

Start with the basics

Creating a trusted shopping experience built on the basics is table stakes for achieving success at scale. If shoppers aren't sure they'll receive what they order or be able to exchange something, they'll hesitate—or leave. Double down on doing the simple things well across your social stores, like reliable fulfillment, hassle-free purchase protection, and refunds to protect buyers.

Play the long game

Social commerce experienced two years of exceptional growth throughout the pandemic, and while growth in the number of social buyers is slowing, the amount of social commerce sales is still rising. 2023 will be a watershed moment for early adopters and those who persevere through the trough of disillusionment. Social commerce isn't going anywhere—but its widespread adoption might take a little longer than we thought.





Commerce Trend 2

All eyes turn to social search

Social search optimization emerges as a make-or-break skill for marketers

Google's been the go-to in search forever—but that's changing

For most of the current millennium, Google's been an unbeatable cultural force. Competitors from Bing and Yahoo to Ask Jeeves and Duck-DuckGo couldn't match the search engine giant's ability to yield fast and accurate information. Google's clear, neutral presentation of results, ranked by their relevance to the widest possible user base, gave it an effective monopoly that's well into its second decade.

But today, Google faces new and maybe not-so-unlikely competition from social media

platforms. Younger generations, in particular, are going to platforms like TikTok and Instagram to do things like figure out where to go for dinner, buy that sweater they saw on the street, or spend their fleeting vacation days.

Instead of scrolling through Google's long list of results, they look to social platforms for travel tips, recipes, and news. Forty percent of 18- to 24-year-olds are now using social media as their primary search engine, according to an [internal study](#) by Google. In September 2022, the New York Times even proclaimed that "[For Gen Z, TikTok is the New Search Engine.](#)"

Put it into action Quickly optimize all of your posts for social search with this [checklist of SEO essentials](#).

[Grab the Template](#)

While it's tempting to join the pundits making sweeping generalizations about the impending death of Google, let's stick with the data and take a closer look at how search behavior differs on social media vs. search engines—and for whom. Here are three truths backed by our own data.

Social networks are visited by more people than search engines every month

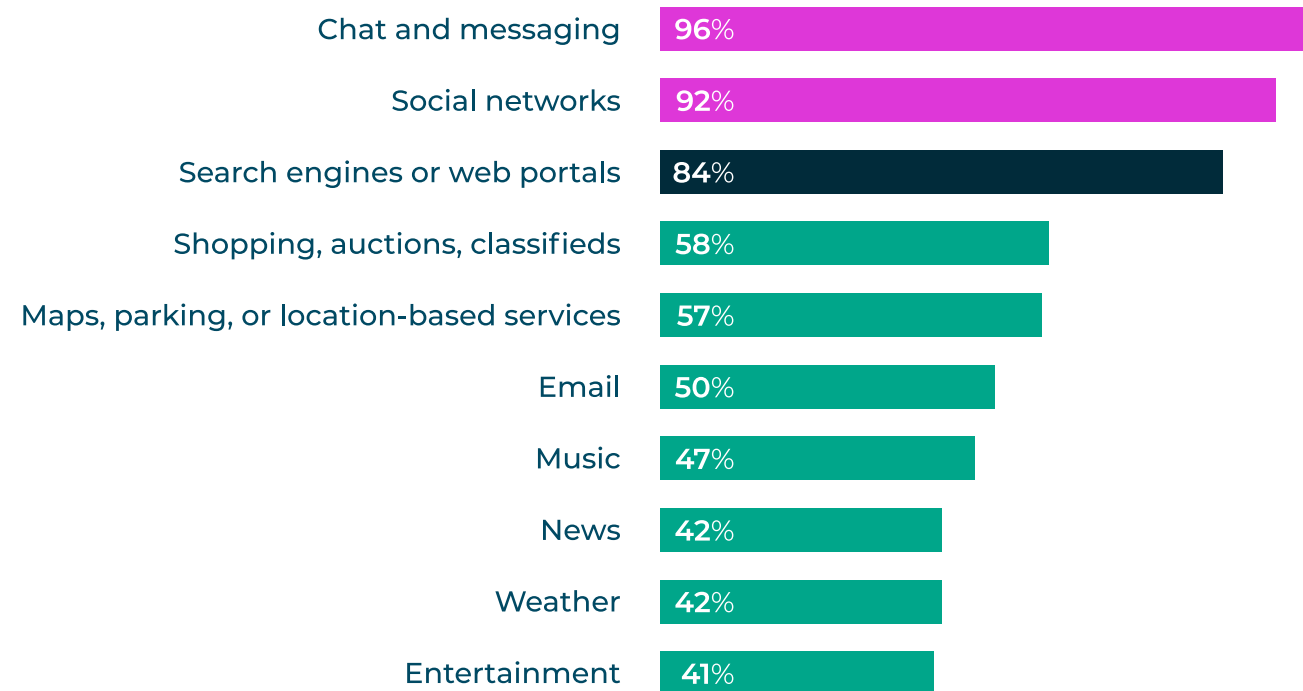
More internet users aged 16 to 64 visit social networks than search engines on a monthly basis. What's more, nearly a third of the time that people spend using the internet is spent on social media.

More than a tool to keep in touch with friends and family, social media has become an engine of culture where we collectively engage in almost every aspect of daily life.

Top types of websites visited and apps used

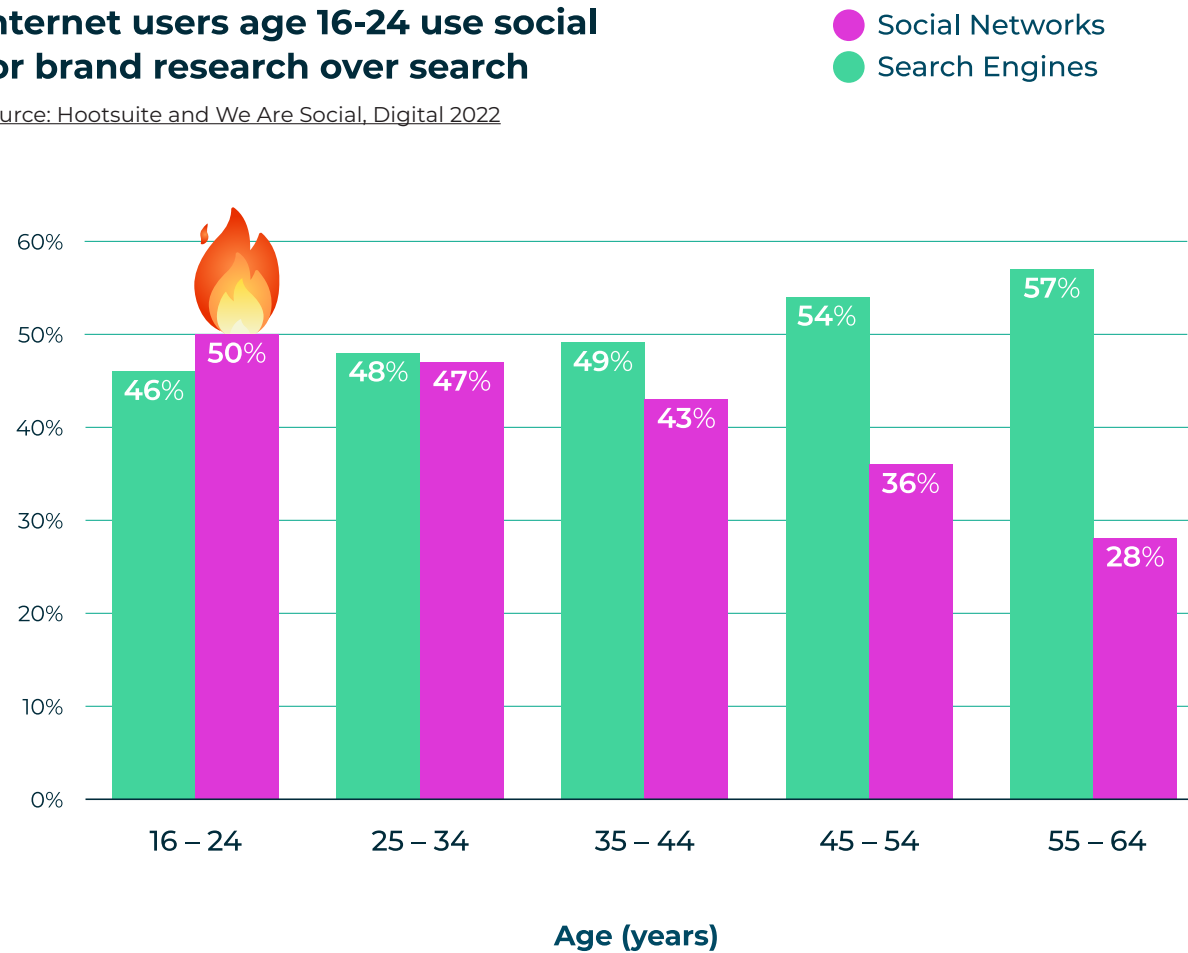
Percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 who have visited or used each kind of digital property in the past month

Source: Hootsuite and We Are Social, Digital 2022



Internet users age 16-24 use social for brand research over search

Source: Hootsuite and We Are Social, Digital 2022



Younger people are considerably more likely to use social networks for brand research

When it comes to shopping, more people under the age of 25 turn to social media to research and evaluate brands. And social's utility for marketing goes well beyond advertising: Gen Z uses social media more than search engines to evaluate products, compare prices between competing brands, and make decisions about where to spend their money.

When it comes to discovery, search engines and TV are still ahead

Evidently, though, marketers should be careful about putting all their eggs into the social media search basket. For the average person on the street, search engines and television (for all of you Zoomers out there, that’s the big screen in your grandparents’ living room) are still the main place where people discover new products and services.

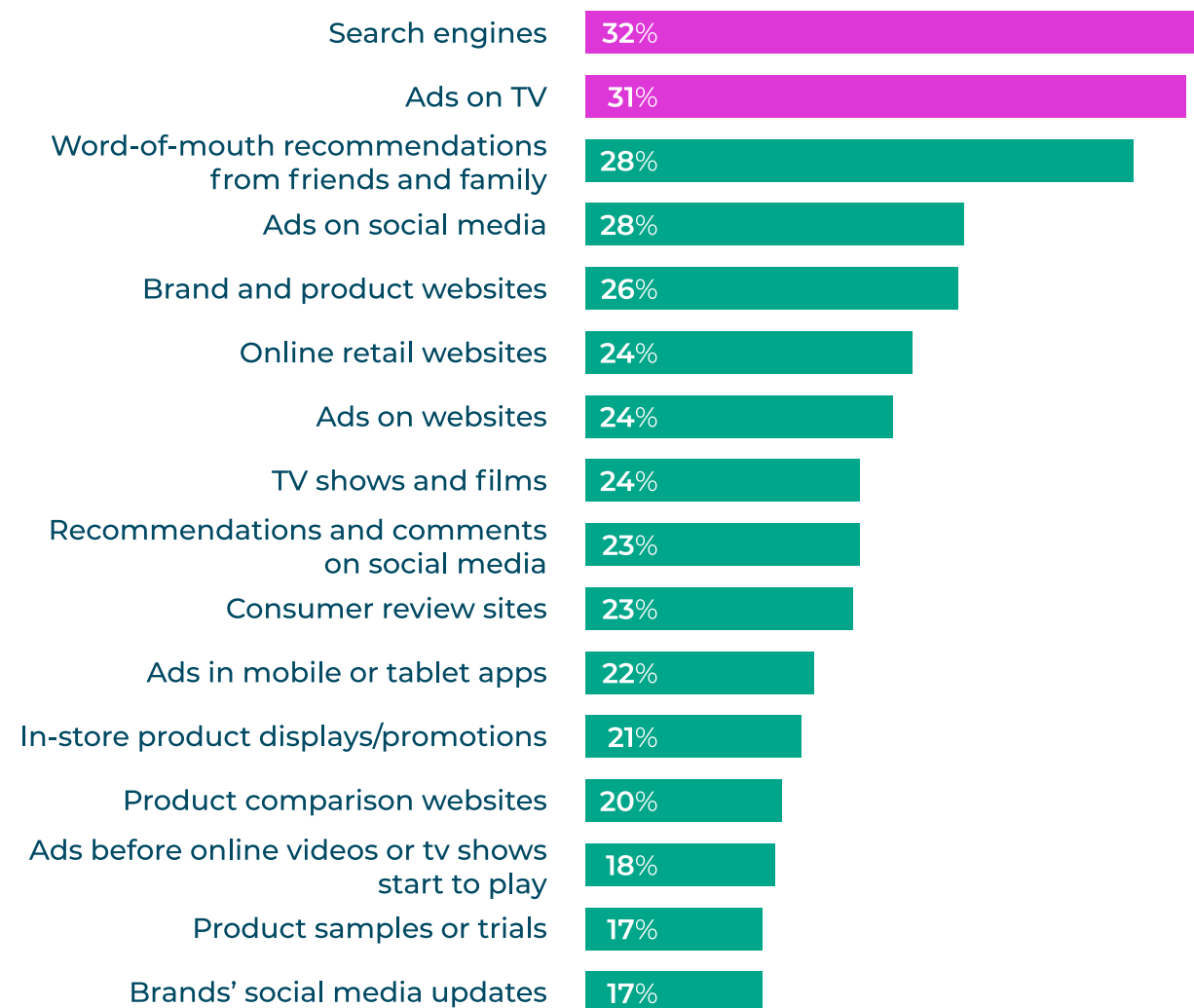
TV’s followed by word of mouth. So for the moment, people are more likely to learn about your brand during a commercial break or an old-school conversation with a friend than they are to discover it on TikTok.

Social’s search dominance is just beginning

The transition of search from web to social will be long and generational. Don’t get too caught up in headlines about the impending death of Google search when, for the vast majority of people, it’s still one of the main ways they’ll learn about your business.

But the shift towards social media as a primary search mechanism is happening—and it’s not too early to start preparing. In 2023, social media marketers and small business owners who want to get ahead should start mastering the basics of [social search optimization](#).

Percentage of internet users who use each channel as a primary source of information when researching brands



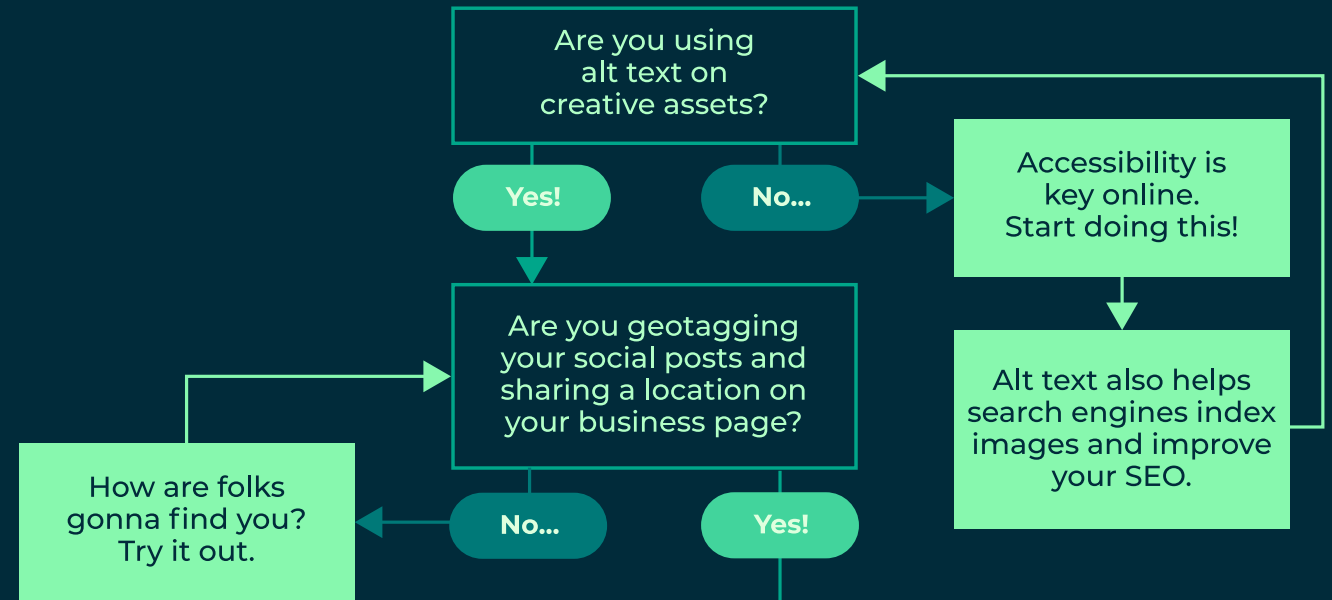
Recommendations

Always use alt text on creative assets

Alt text (also called alt descriptions) is used to describe the contents of an image within HTML code. Adding alt text to images is a guiding principle of accessibility on the web and helps search engines index images, which can improve your search engine optimization (SEO).

Geotag your posts and make sure your location is accessible

Local SEO is essential in industries like hospitality, dining, and entertainment—and for small businesses with brick-and-mortar shops. Whether it's a regular search or a voice search, you want your business to appear at the top of the search results when someone in your area is seeking your service, so make sure to add a location to your business page and to any content you share whenever possible.





Expert perspective

Brayden Cohen

Team Lead, Social Marketing and Employee Advocacy

Hootsuite

How are search behaviors on social changing how you think about your day job?

Search is never going to be dead when it comes to Google. But people's habits are changing. They're using social to search for new products. Whereas beforehand, I think people were just coming to social for reviews or getting to know a brand, now they're going for social to actually buy. And we know that because networks like Instagram are actually fully integrating commerce functionality into their products. The main thing it's changed for me is my perspective. I treat our social pages like a mini landing page and website—I try to imagine using our social channels as the main point of purchase.

What advice do you have for small businesses who maybe don't have a ton of time to invest in their social feeds?

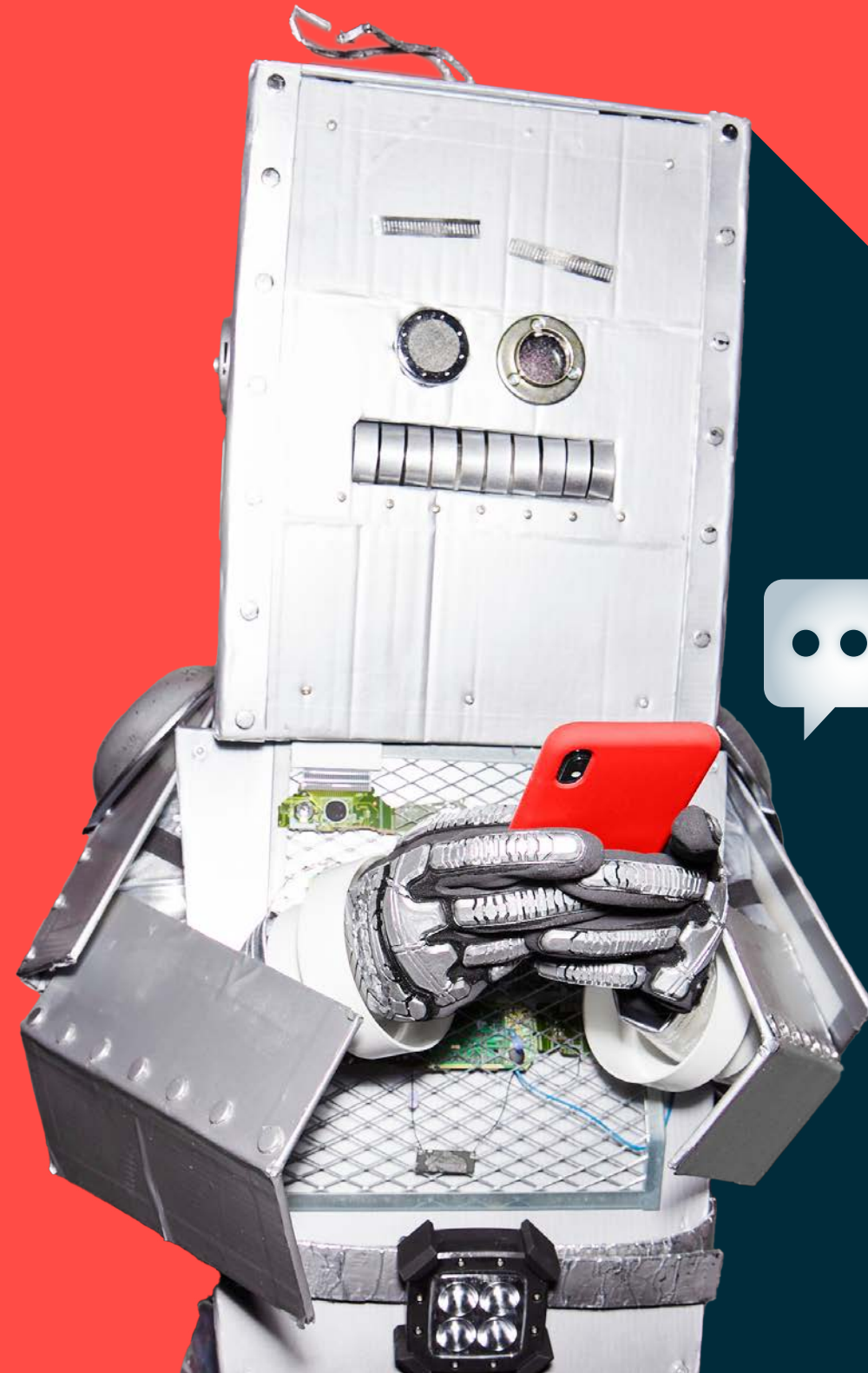
First and foremost, my advice is to nail down your content strategy. It sounds so basic, but that's actually where it starts. If you're putting out valuable content that resonates with your audience, or your prospective audience, it's gonna perform well, and it's gonna be pushed out into an algorithm and more people are going to see it.

So it's really about doing the simple things well?

Yeah, exactly. Doing the fundamentals right is what makes you more discoverable across every social network. Optimize your profile, make it interesting to navigate, have a clear bio, geotag your posts, have a profile photo. Keep it succinct.

The Future of Social Customer Service

A shift to digital during the pandemic left customers more willing than ever to engage with brands over social and messaging channels. But it's also left them also increasingly impatient, inclined to prioritize convenience over price, and ready to walk away from businesses that aren't meeting their expectations. In 2023, we'll see leading organizations turn to automation to solve their most urgent customer service challenges—and turn a critical eye on who exactly is expected to manage customer service within an organization.





Customer Service Trend 1

The great reopening blows a hole in digital service

A rapid return to in-person shopping makes businesses lose focus on digital customer service

Shoppers think the quality of customer service has dropped massively

During pandemic restrictions and lockdowns, many companies successfully managed to navigate people's increased need for digital shopping and services. Ecommerce, curbside pickup, and other online services boomed—and the businesses that successfully revamped their customer experience during the pandemic excelled into 2021.

But as restrictions lift and shoppers return to brick-and-mortar stores, many businesses have failed to maintain the quality of their digital services over the last 12 months. The overall quality of customer experience fell for more than 19% of brands, Forrester found in a survey of over 96,000 US consumers. Meanwhile, overall customer satisfaction has dropped to its lowest level in 17 years—since the inception of Forrester's Customer Experience Index.

Put it into action Get started with social customer service with this [helpful guide to Facebook Messenger](#). [Grab the Guide](#)

With the return of in-person shopping, brands have stopped focusing on digital services

Why are consumers unhappy? They're feeling neglected. During the pandemic, they became accustomed to shopping online—and while many have returned to in-person shopping, they still expect digital services to be available to them.

Businesses can't just go back to old ways of working and expect their customers to follow suit. In 2023, businesses of all sizes will have to strike a better balance between online and offline customer experience to keep customers satisfied.

Resource-strapped businesses turn to automation

That's tough news for many business owners who—after fighting tooth and nail to survive a pandemic—now face a confluence of supply chain challenges and declining sales as consumers rein in their spending.

For businesses looking to keep costs in check while boosting the efficiency of online services, cost-effective automation tools will be key in 2023. And customer service should be the highest priority place to go about implementing automation.

Chatbots and simple conversational AI tools can cut down support queues without raising headcount. They allow you to instantly handle frequently asked questions and fulfill online orders. In 2023, these AI tools will become indispensable for businesses struggling to balance online and offline customer service.

Overall customer satisfaction has dropped to its

lowest level in
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years

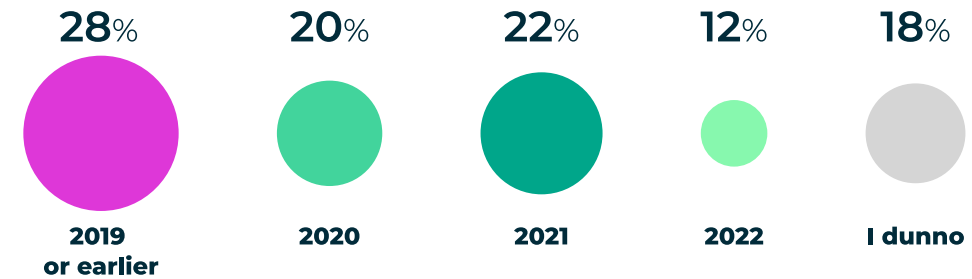


Chatbot adopters poised to gain a massive first mover advantage

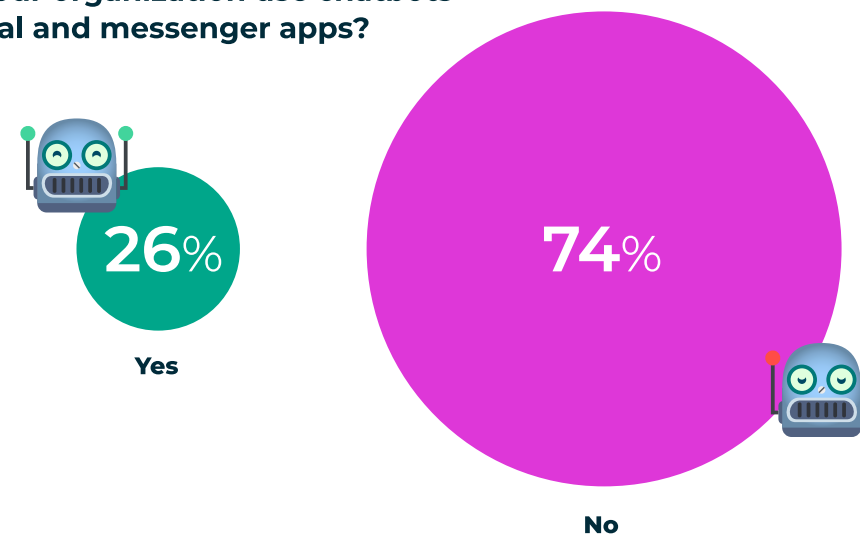
Even among organizations that prioritize social customer service, conversational AI is still in its early stages. In our survey, only 26% of organizations that said they use social as a primary customer service channel told us they use chatbots on social and messaging apps. And of the organizations that do use chatbots on social and messenger apps, more than half of them (53%) adopted chatbots at some point during the pandemic.

In 2023, the businesses that keep their focus on digital customer service stand to win out against those that don't. Cost-effective chatbots are a quick win for those looking to better their online customer experience while shoring up expenses and limiting overhead in the short term. Over the long term, they're a worthwhile investment for any business that wants to get out ahead with an emerging technology that'll become common [over the coming decade](#).

When did your company first introduce chatbots on social and messenger apps?



Does your organization use chatbots on social and messenger apps?



Recommendations

Dispel the myth that chatbots are impersonal

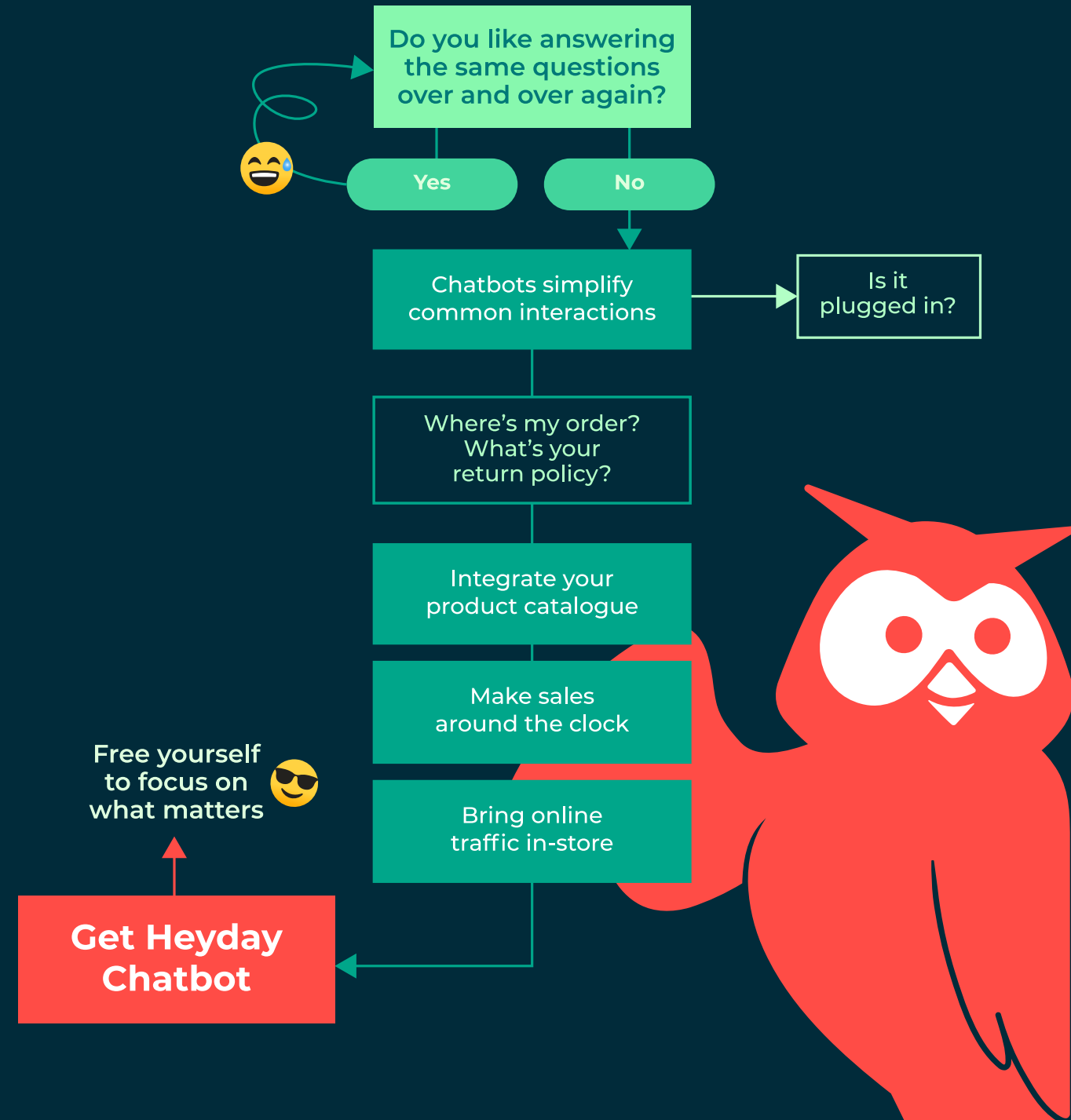
Most customer service requests are variations of the same few questions. That's not a recipe for a great conversation—that's an assembly line that needs to be managed. Chatbots simplify these common interactions that would otherwise suck up a ton of your customer service staff's time. And conversational AI tools like [Heyday AI](#) go a step further: With the ability to distinguish between multiple choices, make a decision, and gather insights, they free your support team up to spend more time solving the problems that really require a human touch.

Enable your CX experts to focus on sales opps

Let your chatbot answer questions like "Where's my order?" and "What's your return policy?" so your humans don't have to. Conversational AI tools like [Heyday AI](#) let you integrate your product catalog with chat to help customers easily navigate your online shelves—and allow you to make sales around the clock.

Make your online and offline CX work in tandem

Use your chatbot to bring online traffic in-store. With built-in store locator features, [Heyday AI](#) makes it easy for customers to find the nearest store and make an appointment. According to our internal data, 90% of in-store appointments made by our chatbot lead to a purchase and one in four customers are net-new.



Trend in Action

Global sport and fitness retailer Decathlon takes the pressure off their people with a chatbot

As a global sport and fitness retailer with more than 2,000 brick-and-mortar stores worldwide, Decathlon knows the importance of delivering world-class customer service.

In collaboration with Heyday, [Decathlon UK](#) developed a digital assistant to support its sales and customer service efforts at scale. Today, the digital assistant handles tens of thousands of customer conversations every month—and it’s a resounding success, with Decathlon’s data from Meta showing that 96% of customers were satisfied with their bot interactions.

“We wanted to find a way to reduce our cost to serve, while also engaging new customers,” said Charles Guth, customer loyalty team leader at Decathlon UK. “Heyday’s comprehensive customer messaging platform and Messenger provided the right mix of top-notch conversational AI and platform features to boost our human team’s efficiency.”



Customer Service Trend 2

Marketers realize it's time to lean into customer service

As many marketers struggle to take a greater role in customer service, great ones stand out

Social customer service is largely the responsibility of the marketing department

Last year, we predicted that marketers would take a greater role in customer service in 2022. And, to their credit—and ours—they have. This year, we asked which teams are responsible for providing customer service on social channels. The answer might surprise you.

Less than 8% of organizations said their customer service team was exclusively responsible for providing customer service on social and messaging apps. Almost half (49%) of organizations said that social customer service was usually or exclusively the responsibility of the marketing team.

Put it into action Save time responding to common questions using these free DM replies. [Grab the Template](#)



Many marketers don't feel equipped for customer service

Last year, we predicted that social marketers would embrace this newfound responsibility and take more agency in working with customer service teams.

Unfortunately, what we've found is that many marketers don't feel equipped to take on care. Only 21% feel they do a good job servicing customers on social channels, according to a [survey](#) by the CMO Council and IBM. Because

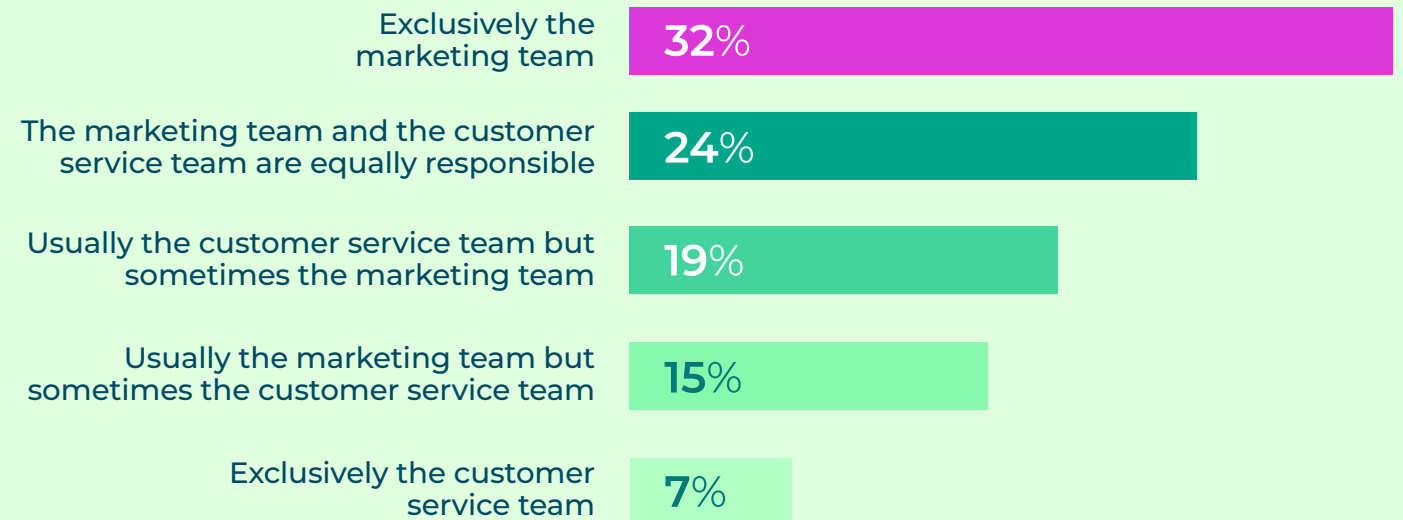
of this disconnect, many businesses are leaving customers hanging and revenue on the table, says Chris Campbell, CEO of reputation management software [ReviewTrackers](#).

"I think the biggest thing that's still a missed opportunity for a lot of businesses is just taking the time to respond to your customers," he says. "Right now we're just hanging up on them when we're not responding to their queries."

What's the root cause of the problem? Campbell thinks a lack of education and rigid silos are to blame.

"In businesses, we theoretically break out functions to be more efficient," he says. "But it's really everybody's job to deliver a great customer experience. Marketers are neither trained to respond to customers, nor is there an incentive to if that responsibility sits outside their remit and with another team."

Which team within your organization is responsible for providing customer service through social and messaging apps?



Proactive marketers will take the initiative to adapt

We get it: Social was never meant to be a customer service channel. But now it really can't be ignored. Social media has taken an outsized role in customer service—and businesses, as well as practitioners, are caught dealing with the repercussions.

After all, if marketers see it as their responsibility to build brands, ignoring customer service is detrimental to that goal. A brand isn't just a logo or a promise; it's a result. It's a customer's gut feeling about a product, service, or company. And it's every marketer's responsibility to make sure that gut feeling isn't soured by unanswered DMs.



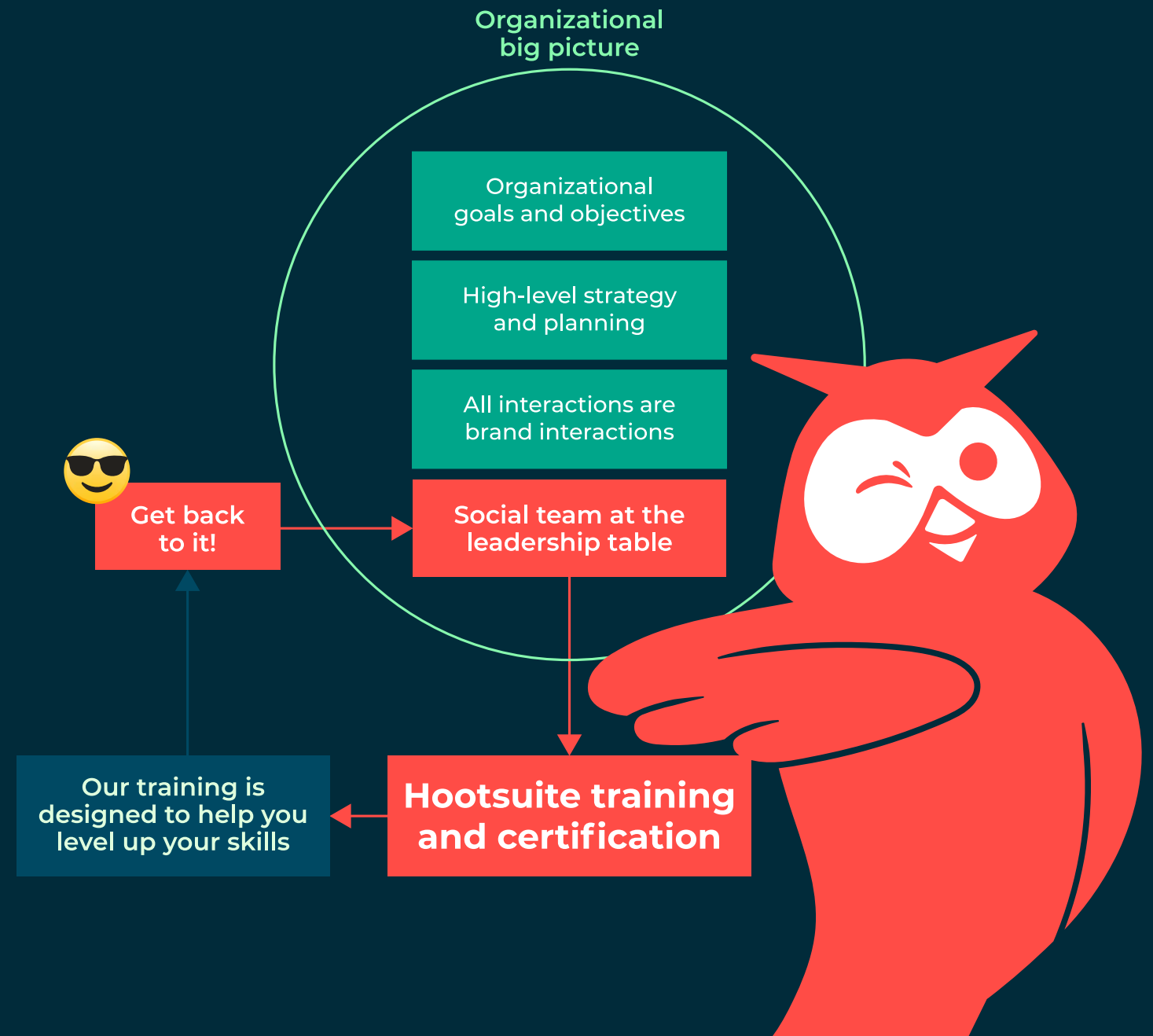
Recommendations

Give social a seat at the leadership table

Without formal education and training, social is often siloed off from the rest of the organization or treated as an afterthought used to repost promotional messages. In reality, social should be treated as a core function of any modern organization—and that means looping senior members of your social team into high-level strategy and planning. This will get your social strategy fully aligned with your organization's goals and objectives, and help your social team see how their work fits into the bigger picture for your organization.

Invest in better training for your marketers

For social media marketers looking to build critical skills specific to social marketing or take the next step in their careers, Hootsuite offers training and certification. Whether your team is full of starry-eyed novices looking to build a foundation in marketing basics or seasoned professionals trying to adapt to the demands of a new workplace, our training is designed to help you succeed.



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The global leader in social media management

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