

THE EVOLVING
DIGITAL WORLD IN

2022







2021 was a defining year for many aspects of the digital marketing world. From the Meta rebrand and the growth of TikTok to the expansion of shoppable content, the digital marketing industry is continuously evolving and innovating.

As we look towards the future, some themes such as shoppable content will continue to expand, and new trends will emerge. This trend report highlights the need-to-know opportunities for digital marketers in the coming year.



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Shifting Mindsets Around Discounts

Brands are adapting to the shifting mindset of consumers around discounts. In the past, steep discounts have been used as a tactic to acquire new customers or re-engage existing ones. However, looking into 2022, brands will replace these generalized discounts with unique offerings. Examples could include free shipping, in-store experiences, or free personalization. “Brands have been eager to move away from a reliance on using steep discounts to acquire new customers and instead identify opportunities to offer value through their products and the role they play in customers’ lives,” says Sherene Hilal of Bluecore.

It’s time for brands to move away from generic, unfocused offerings and tap into the wants and needs of their direct customers.





Continuing Emphasis on Brand Mission

Consistent with trends seen throughout 2020 and 2021, 2022 will bring a continued emphasis on brand mission. Consumers are increasingly choosing brands that align with their stance on social, environmental, or other issues. Maximizing profits is no longer the sole purpose of brands.

Consumers want to see that brands understand their values. However, this must be done authentically. Brands need to clearly emphasize what they stand for, and use this as a basis looking ahead. It's not enough to speak out on every social issue. Brands must show that they're committed to these issues, and how these issues align with their overall purpose. Finding this balance will be more important than ever before.





Decreasing Reliance on Meta's Facebook and Instagram

This will be the year when brands begin reducing the percentage of their paid media budgets on Facebook and Instagram in a meaningful and consistent way. We've seen hints of this over the past few years, (i.e. when social unrest led to many brands pausing ads for a few days). Now that consumer engagement is fragmented across so many other platforms, especially younger consumers, brands will rely less on Facebook and therefore will be ready to take the bigger step of diversifying their media budgets.





Adopting TikTok on a Massive Scale

TikTok will take market share away from Facebook in a meaningful and sustainable way. TikTok was the most downloaded non-game app in the first 6 months of 2021, with 383M installs from January to June. The app is also known as the most engaging social media app, with an average session length of 10.85 minutes. While TikTok grew immensely in popularity in 2020-2021, many brands continued to rely on Facebook and Google for paid marketing. This will change in 2022. TikTok has the highest Gen Z penetration in America, with 47.4% of its active users between the age of 10 and 29. Brands need to look at their audiences and focus on the platforms that will resonate with them.





Investing in Video & The Creator Economy

Modern video formats will take center stage. With the rise of TikTok, many brands will look to shift their investment to video in the coming year. Videos receive 12x more shares than other content on social media. In particular, short-form video and UGC-style clips will see a dramatic increase. Around 90% of consumers say UGC-style content is more trustworthy and feels more authentic.

The preference towards UGC-style video content has helped grow the influencer marketing space in recent years. In the coming year, PR budgets will shift to influencer marketing as brands start to recognize the importance of incorporating this into their digital strategy. The influencer marketing space is expected to reach \$34.6B by 2027.





Expanding of Shoppable Content

Shoppable content will expand even further. Consumers will be able to shop directly from Amazon Prime TV or social live streams. Without ever leaving a video, consumers can purchase a product. While creators currently have to promote affiliate links or online stores in captions or in-video elements, platforms such as YouTube are testing and rolling out shoppable content features. This is especially evident in the expanding influencer marketing space. Studies predict that sales through live streaming will reach \$500B by 2023. For brands that are looking to tap into influencer marketing for ROI-driven campaigns rather than brand building, this will be key.

Marketers will be closely watching the relationship between online retailers and in-store experiences. As consumers embrace social commerce, brands will continue to reprioritize and update their strategies.





Entering the Metaverse

The metaverse, a virtual reality space with digital avatars, has been a hot topic going into the new year. However, augmented reality and virtual reality will remain niche for a while. Despite the growing media attention (largely from Facebook changing its name to Meta), the Metaverse is still a long way from becoming mainstream. Many experts, including Bill Gates, predict that widespread adoption is at least a few years away. Mass adoption of virtual reality headsets, mainly as a result of high prices and limited options, will not happen in 2022.

However, looking ahead into the next decade, the metaverse will begin to take over our current working and social worlds. Zoom meetings will be replaced with 3D spaces and digital avatars. Lunch dates with friends will be swapped for virtual hangouts. While the metaverse is not expected to see a significant takeoff in 2022, this will be a foundational year for the groundwork.



