

FUTURE OF MARKETING

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FUTURE OF MARKETING

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Contributors

MaryLou Costa

A business writer whose work has been published by outlets including *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The London Evening Standard*, *Marketing Week*, *Sifted* and *Stylist*.

Alec Fenn

A journalist and author with more than 10 years' experience of writing about topics ranging from sport to healthcare. His work has been published by FourFourTwo.com and BBC Sport.

Jack Apollo George

A writer and semiotician interested in the ethics and aesthetics of technology, sustainability and cultural change. His articles have appeared in *The Day* and the *New Statesman*.

Clara Murray

Raconteur's data journalist writes data-led stories, infographics and interactive content. She previously worked at Reach's Irish titles and was also a Google News Initiative digital fellow.

Rosalyn Page

An award-winning writer covering technology, innovation and digital lifestyles. Her work has appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Which?* magazine.

Emily Seares

An award-winning journalist specialising in fashion, retail and luxury. She contributes to a wide range of publications, including the *Daily Mail* and *Drapers*.

Raconteur reports

Campaign manager

Matthew McCulloch

Editor

Sarah Vizard

Deputy editor

Francesca Cassidy

Reports editor

Ian Deering

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James Sutton

Chief sub-editor

Neil Cole

Sub-editors

Lorraine Eames

Christina Ryder

Commercial content editors

Laura Bithell

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Associate commercial editor

Phoebe Borwell

Head of production

Justyna O'Connell

Design/production assistant

Louis Nassé

Design

Kellie Jerrard

Harry Lewis-Irlam

Colm McDermott

Sean Wyatt-Livesley

Illustration

Celina Lucy

Samuele Motta

Design director

Tim Whitlock

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TECHNOLOGY

All hail artyficial intelligence?

The rise of high-quality image generators powered by AI promises to open up exciting new possibilities, but the prospect of their widespread adoption is causing disquiet among many creatives

Jack Apollo George

It wasn't meant to happen like this. Yes, the robots were always going to come for everyone's jobs, but it was the menial ones that were set to go first. Freed from the need to fill out spreadsheets and perform administrative duties, we were all supposed to have extra time to indulge in more creative, fulfilling pursuits. Yet Microsoft Excel still exists while AI algorithms are producing works of art that are both commercially viable and critically respected.

An AI artist, Jason Allen, recently caused outrage among old-school digital artists by winning a digital art competition. One of the writers of US publication *The Atlantic*, Charlie Warzel, provoked the ire of illustrators around the world by choosing to adorn an article about controversial radio host Alex Jones with an AI-generated caricature as opposed to using a stock photo or commissioning a portrait.

Three new products – OpenAI's Dall-E 2, Midjourney and the truly open-source Stable Diffusion – have transformed the way we see creativity since their launches this year. Given a simple text prompt, they can create remarkably accurate visuals in an infinite number of styles. From superimposing Kermit the Frog on images to imagining an expanded version of Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, they are astounding visual playgrounds.

Nando Costa, director of Google's design outreach team, is optimistic about the creative opportunities being opened up by these new technologies. He argues that tools such as Dall-E 2 and Midjourney will "change the way we do everything across creative production".

But it's unclear whether anyone truly grasps the significance of these advances at such an early stage. Discussing AI art on their podcast, *My First Million*, internet entrepreneurs Sam Parr and Shaan Puri compared the arrival of these technologies to passing a purple unicorn on the road and not stopping to make sense of what you have seen. "Dream" or "generation" engines, as they called the likes of Dall-E 2, are indeed something we can recognise as special without necessarily being able to understand their implications.

If the output is good enough for both expert eyes and the mainstream media, their application for



Various results from Stable Diffusion, an open-source machine-learning text-to-image generator, for the phrase "draw me an unemployed illustrator in the style of William Blake"

commercial purposes should be straightforward, right?

For some design, brand and PR agencies, the potential is clear. "This is the future of creativity," argues Melanie Commey, creative director at Bound to Prosper. "It gives non-designers a new opportunity to create and blend concepts, offering the capacity to generate imagery in multiple styles."

Could this effectively reduce time spent on design or reduce the manpower needed? "This is dependent on how the technology is integrated in agencies over time," Commey says. "But it definitely has the ability to change the nature of creative

work as we move to a more virtually focused realm."

For other players in the space, AI can serve as a well of inspiration – at least, that's how Diagram is attempting to use it. The firm's AI-based systems aid automation via design tools such as Figma.

"AI augments and enhances human creativity," says Diagram's founder and CEO, Jordan Singer. "Our AI will extend designers' existing creativity and embed itself in their workflows to allow them to work faster and iterate on ideas in tandem with the team."

After all, the impressive outputs from these AI art generators are

possible only because human artists and photographers originally perfected each of the styles and subjects depicted. In that sense, these image-generation toolkits are useful sieves, enabling us to explore recombined versions of what we've already seen. They can become an aid, just as libraries and Wikipedia help writers with their research. But these technologies are clearly not without controversy.

"Every tool is permitted and AI is happening one way or another," observes David O'Reilly, an award-winning artist and animator. "But this species derives its entire value from the creative work of uncredited and unwilling participants."

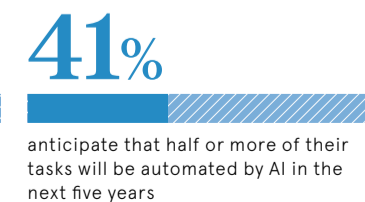
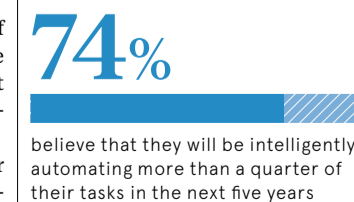
AI algorithms are trained on images and accompanying texts from across the internet. For many people, this root data belongs to our shared human heritage. And a lot of it would originally be the work of individual artists. Yet, when you use Midjourney or Stable Diffusion to illustrate an article, there is no credit awarded to the creatives who originally fuelled the training data. This makes many artists, even those working in the digital sphere, wary. There's a difference between having your job taken away by a machine that's simply better at making art and being usurped by one that uses material stolen from you and countless other artists.

The speed and relatively low cost of generating high-quality outputs is the most immediately troubling aspect for illustrators and other creatives. For editors and marketers, it's a cheap option for bespoke content. For freelance illustrators, it might mean industrial-scale redundancy in real time.

Nonetheless, the opportunities for streamlining design briefs, trying out new ideas and replacing dull stock imagery will make life distinctly easier for many in the profession. But it is unclear whether the world of visual creativity will necessarily be richer for this new technology in the long term. After all, even the text prompts themselves can be automated.

"The question is no longer whether a computer can make art, but whether a human is needed at all," O'Reilly says. "AI is likely to lead to unimaginably beautiful art and powerful affirmations of humanity, as well as widespread job disruption and the atrophy of fundamental human skills."

The question remains: will that outcome be worth it? ●



Marketing AI Institute, 2022



ADVERTISING

Nixed messaging

As millions struggle to cope with the cost-of-living crisis, ad campaigns must take care not to patronise consumers, who have become weary of faux empathy and highly sensitive to condescension

Clara Murray

During a pandemic, there should be few things easier to sell than disinfectant. Dettol's marketing team may have been surprised, then, by the furious backlash to an ad for the sanitiser brand that appeared on the London Underground in September 2020.

Intended as a warm evocation of the joys of office life, with lines that spoke of "plastic plants" and "the boss's jokes", the McCann-created advert was instead widely derided. People who weren't ready to give up fully remote working interpreted it as an attack on their preference for staying at home while others even viewed the campaign as a state-sponsored attempt to chide workers back to their desks.

While the furore might not have harmed Dettol's bottom line – its parent company Reckitt Benckiser reported record sales that year – it illustrates how vital it is for brands to get the tone and the wording of their messages right in a crisis.

That will be top of mind again for many businesses as the UK heads into another difficult winter. Spiralling energy prices, inflation at a four-decade high and the looming threat of a recession have sent consumer confidence plunging to

record lows. With three-quarters of Britons reporting that they are worried about the cost-of-living crisis, it's something that few businesses can ignore.

"I can't think of a single client who isn't in some way asking what they should be doing about this," reports Lucy Jameson, founder of creative agency Uncommon London. "We've got briefs for January already and we're trying to figure out if everyone is going to be suicidal by then."

Reading the public's general mood correctly and responding to it with empathy, not condescension, will be crucial. That's easier said than done, of course, so how are marketing experts planning to get it right?

Katie Vanhoutte, head of strategy at FutureBrand Paris, stresses that empathy should not be used as a comms tool. Instead, brands should approach consumers as people first and find ways to meet their needs.

"It's a precarious moment, but it's also a huge opportunity to step up and show you're taking meaningful action," she says.

Jameson agrees that businesses that can point to concrete measures they are taking to improve people's lives will fare better. "Find something interesting to do that is useful

for people and then advertise that," she advises.

Many brands used this approach during the early stages of the Covid crisis. Jameson points to her company's work with BrewDog, when the drinks brand used one of its distilleries to produce free hand sanitiser for the NHS. Another client, ethical cleaning product maker Ecover, set up a fund to invest excess profits in green innovators.

Other examples include Tesco ads that guided customers through the new rules of socially distanced shopping during the first lockdown. Looking further back, Hyundai boosted sales amid the 2007-08 global financial crisis by launching a programme to take back licensed cars from customers who'd just lost their jobs. Today, this approach looks like Asda's relaunched Just Essentials budget range, or Ikea selling children's meals for 95p at its in-store cafes.

But brands should avoid telling customers what to do, especially if their business is on the front line of the crisis. Vanhoutte notes that any message from an energy supplier that advises struggling bill-payers to "don extra jumpers and turn down their thermostats is unlikely to land well. Anything [an energy firm] says that's not highly self-aware and humble will sound inauthentic and may be misconstrued."

Ensuring consistency between words and deeds is also vital for businesses in their roles as employers. There is more public awareness than ever before of how companies treat their workers. That means the likes of below-inflation pay offers, unfair executive bonuses and impersonal mass lay-offs announced via Zoom will all be noted by customers – and the negative fallout from such decisions could well outlast the cost-of-living crisis.

If there's one thing that brands can learn from the pandemic, it is that empathy cannot be a message in itself. During the first lockdown, businesses ranging from Samsung to Heineken released eerily similar adverts featuring soft piano music, shots of empty streets and sombre, yet hopeful, voiceovers.

"That po-faced tone of 'we are all in this together' immediately became patronising," says David Stevens, executive strategy director at branding agency Wolff Olins.

Sarah King, global head of brand strategy at Kantar's insights division, agrees: "It was one giant blob of an ad. Brands ceased to be distinctive. If you're going to force yourself into someone's attention, you owe them something either really useful or really entertaining."

“Any message from an energy supplier that advises struggling bill-payers to don extra jumpers and turn down their thermostats is unlikely to land well

Experts concur that people may soon tire of hearing about ongoing crises, looking instead for escapism and a sense of fun. The number of people who say they avoid the news because it puts them in a bad mood has doubled over the past five years to almost half of UK consumers.

"I do think that people need a bit of joy and hope. Otherwise, it all gets very, very bleak," Jameson says. "By the time the fifth advertiser tells us: 'We hear you – and that's why we're holding our prices at last year's level,' we're going to have tuned out."

Even if a brand doesn't have a vast marketing budget, it can invest in creativity, she adds. "Do something clever or surprising. Make people laugh. Find some humour if that's right for your brand."

Stevens believes that there might be a move towards hedonism from certain businesses. "I'm keen to see if brands go the other way and try to help people feel like there's still fun to be had," he says. "There are still good times ahead. There's been a long hard road but there is light at the end of the tunnel – and there are ways to forget, enjoy and be a bit more celebratory."

Businesses might be tempted to cut costs by slashing marketing budgets. Indeed, it might not feel right to sell, sell, sell as households tighten their belts. But King argues that communicating should be seen as an investment, not an expense.

"There's a mountain of evidence to show that brands which invest in recessions come out stronger and ready for the upturn," she stresses. "If you continue to produce quality communications, you're building your brand even when the opportunity for an immediate sale may not be as obvious."

A widely cited MarketSense study found that US brands that invested

“By the time the fifth advertiser tells us: 'We hear you – and that's why we are holding our prices at last year's level,' we're going to have tuned out

in advertising during the 1990-91 recession emerged stronger than those that cut back. Even during the depths of the Covid crisis, only 6% of people thought businesses should stop advertising, according to a Kantar study. One theory goes that familiar brands can provide a much-needed sense of normality during unstable times, King says.

Jameson notes that inaction carries another risk: British Gas earned a "fat cat" reputation in the 1990s that took nearly a decade to shift. "It let this get out of control and did not manage the narrative," he says.

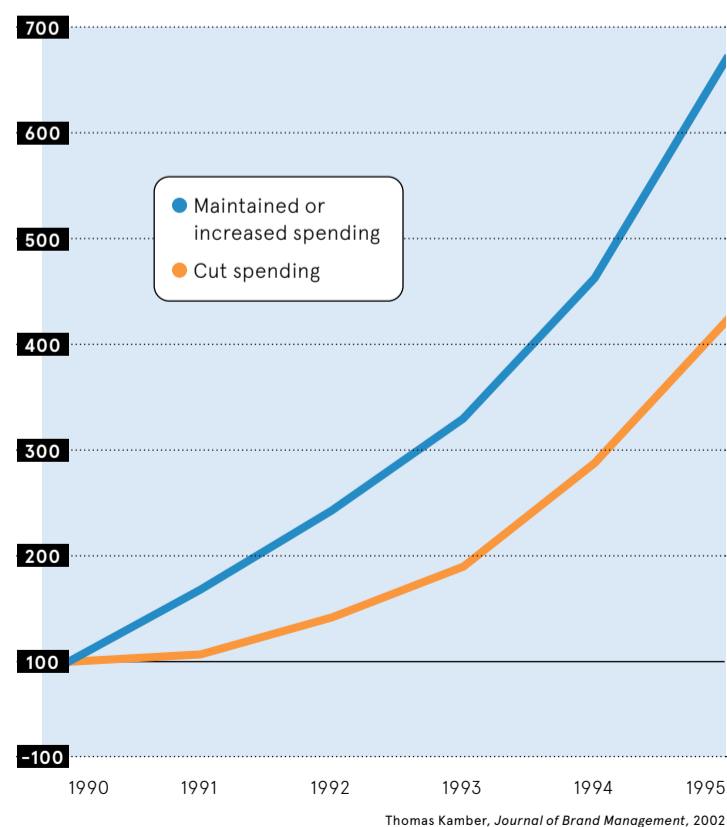
Whatever a brand does say should be true to its purpose. "Uncertain times are not when a brand should be changing this," Vanhoutte says. "This is really about doubling down on what value you bring to people's lives and how you earn your place."

When there are hard things to say, she believes that consumers would rather hear that a business is working hard to fix the situation, even if it doesn't have a magic solution.

"Covid has changed the game," Vanhoutte says. "We all expect a lot more honesty from brands." ●

FIRMS THAT CUT THEIR AD BUDGETS DURING THE US RECESSION OF 1990-91 SAW RELATIVELY LOW SALES GROWTH AFTERWARDS

Sales growth indices for Fortune 500 companies, starting from 100 in 1990



Q&A

Marketing at full power

Emarsys CEO **Joanna Milliken** previews the company's flagship Power to the Marketer Festival, celebrating the marketer's skill and prowess. The event, taking place online and in-person on 4-6 October, will showcase how this multifaceted discipline is innovating and embracing the ever-changing omnichannel



Q Why is it such a critical time to celebrate the marketer and show what's possible when it comes to the future of marketing?

A We have been on a never-ending journey where channels and data keep being added into the mix, both generational and regionally. There is a constant need to connect data and activate it across those channels – all while trying not to let it overwhelm us.

There are times when organisations think they need to have it all, the perfect 360-degree customer view. Certainly, it's a mission, something to strive for, but there's plenty to work on in the here and now. Nearly a third of marketers can't reach their goals because they are unable to act on existing customer data, and 50% can't deal with new customer data because it's stuck in siloes. But marketers are the glue that holds the organisation together. They need this data to work for them to be able to deliver on customer demands.

Q You recently did some research to find out what the impact would be for businesses that fully commit to the idea of being 'customer-obsessed'. What does this mean and what were the findings?

A What is certain is that the customer is 100% in charge. We commissioned Forrester to speak to 622 senior marketers globally to find out where their businesses were on this journey to 'customer obsession'. I like Forrester's definition: it's the ability to connect channels in a clear way that's frictionless. We've seen additional research saying that customer obsession improves satisfaction by double digits, so focusing on it and creating unified goals to put it into action is a clear success strategy. Yet the Forrester research found that only 15%

of businesses fell into the category of being fully customer-obsessed.

Q What does the ideal customer-obsessed strategy look like and why are so few marketers succeeding?

A It's about making sure that you can leverage the data you have access to, looking at the channels you know are working but also trying out new things. But in today's fast-moving world it's also about doing them quickly. Many marketers have been hamstrung because they're under a huge technological burden. One customer told me it took them 12 different systems to build a campaign.

Q What can attendees – both in-person and virtual – expect from Power to the Marketer 2022?

A This is a multi-centre, multi-partner event that not only showcases the latest thought leadership but also features insights from top marketing talent and leading organisations. We've partnered with Vogue Business to shine a global spotlight on innovations that mean consumer needs are met in both physical and virtual environments. Some presentations will be a little more out-there and futuristic, and others will be best-in-class insights that you can take away and use today. We are celebrating the power of the marketer and all they have achieved, and all they will be able to achieve – with the right support and tools at hand.

Emarsys is in the business of breaking down the siloes between data and overcoming the multi-system maze marketers must navigate. For some brands I talk to, every time a marketer wants to add a new attribute or field, they have to start it as a new IT project. Marketers can't function like that in today's world.

Two recent additions to our platform really show how we can help marketers move into the future. One focuses on Conversational Channels – finding

new ways to connect with customers across WhatsApp, and soon Facebook, Messenger, chatbots and more.

The second is really a recognition of marketers as that glue, that organisational connective tissue. It's more important than ever that they work in collaboration with their colleagues across other departments, such as sales or sourcing. Our Account Engagement solution allows marketers to reach new audiences in collaboration with, or sometimes on behalf of, their sales partners, surfacing higher quality, sales ready leads. It gives vital whole-organisation visibility into marketing activities and their results, but in a privacy-first way.

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DATA

Handle with care

Marketers have never had so much data available to them, but extracting true value from all this material, while complying with privacy regulations, is no mean feat. How are they rising to the challenge?

Rosalyn Page

Businesses that make the most effective marketing decisions have a thorough understanding of their clientele based on good, clean data. As Georgia Swanson, director of marketing at digital consultancy ARQ, puts it: "Like chess players, we marketers must analyse the moves we require to win. The only way we can do that and find the best path is by

having accurate data to hand and the scope to interpret it."

But she adds that the task of collating material that's worthy of interpretation from the wealth of sources available to them won't be straightforward in most cases.

"Disparate, siloed data presents room for human error. It may need to be pulled in from multiple imperfect sources and stitched together," Swanson says. "Our goal is to determine what's most valuable to our customers at various times and work out how to reach them at the right point in the buying cycle with messages that resonate with their goals. I want to understand their needs now, over the next six months and in two years' time – even before they know themselves."

One way to form such an understanding is the use of commerce media and the data it provides. Commerce media – from videos and reviews to guides and recommended content – has become a crucial bridge connecting marketers to online audiences worldwide. By enabling consumers to discover and purchase goods as part of their everyday experience on the web,

“You could be the most strategic, data-driven marketer in the world, but you'd be unable to make any impactful decision without access to unified data that presents the insights you need

from, their media consumption and the potential to expand into new markets," she predicts.

Lawrie Jones, MD of medical supplements provider Stronger Bones, also helps ecommerce businesses to meet their growth targets by using targeted ads and other content.

"More data means better decisions," he says. "Our in-house data gives us the confidence to invest in new channels knowing that we can compare their performance effectively. That's a good thing for both the industry and its customers, who benefit from greater choice."

The main goal should be to find where customers are, especially if you're weighing up potential investments in new channels such as the metaverse, according to Jones. "More intuitive, targeted advertising helps to build better relationships with clients," he adds. "That should translate into better relationships with customers, which should in turn translate into higher sales."

For Swanson, there's still a key challenge to overcome once the data has been gathered. As she sees it, marketing is a strategic play – and great marketers are defined by their ability to interpret data and come up with actionable campaigns based on it.

"You could be the most strategic, data-driven marketer in the world, but you'd be unable to make any impactful decision without access to unified data that presents the insights you need," Swanson says.

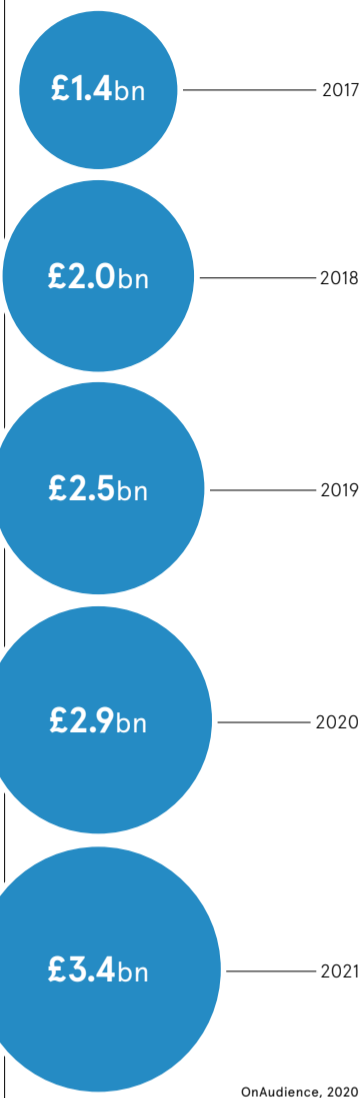
Data virtualisation is emerging as an effective way for marketers to achieve a holistic view of data across the gamut of sources. As organisations struggle to process the growing volume of data being generated, the use of this technique is set to increase by an average of 20% a year until 2031, according to Allied Market Research.

Applying both advanced analytics and machine learning, data virtualisation enables customer insights to be generated as a single view of the customer, drawn from different stores but presented as if it were one seamless database.

Swanson says that one of the key benefits of this technology is its ability to establish links between data points. She explains: "Several data

THE MARKET FOR DATA IS GROWING IN VALUE

Size of the UK market for marketing-related data in 2017-21



OnAudience, 2020

points will feed into the decision-making process behind a marketing initiative. The relationships between all these components are important in informing expectations of that initiative and its overall performance. For example, without the right balance of opportunity, budget and channel, there is no way of identifying whether the campaign will lead to the desired outcomes or not."

For those who must make the right marketing calls, achieving such balance is the holy grail. ●

Regulatory rigours

The ongoing challenge of extracting more valuable insights from data is set to become tougher for marketers, with jurisdictions around the globe legislating to protect consumer privacy. Gartner has predicted that three-quarters of the world's population will have their personal data covered by some form of legal protection by as early as 2024

Sydney-based fintech company Frollo is acutely aware of the fine line it must tread. It specialises in open banking, working with financial institutions to give customers secure access to their data under the terms of Australia's Consumer Data Right, which was introduced in the banking sector in 2020.

Frollo's head of marketing, Piet van den Boer, explains that one of his firm's fundamental tenets is that consent can be given by customers, but it can be withdrawn just as easily.

"We can't assume that, just because we're able to collect data, we can use it for everything," he stresses. "We need to be conscious that consumers own their data."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the legislative push to protect privacy is fuelling the popularity of data-provisioning platforms such as Privitar and DataPlus, which are designed to help firms comply with the relevant regulations. It's part of a shifting dynamic between marketers and customers, as multinationals tackle the challenge of ensuring compliance in several jurisdictions while giving their

customers peace of mind with respect to how their data is being managed.

Van den Boer believes that it will soon become standard practice to offer privacy-compliant solutions. "We're shifting to an era in which consumers are more in control of their data," he says.

Future privacy regulations are also likely to compel businesses to be more selective in their data-collection practices to reduce their exposure to legal penalties and the associated reputational damage. It's leading to a change in philosophy among marketers about what material they need to obtain from customers.

"Data minimisation" is van den Boer's term for the new approach. "Collecting only the minimum needed is a complete departure," he says. "It used to be about collecting all the data."

SPONSORSHIPS

Why brands must play a long game in women's sport

Businesses are clamouring to sponsor England's Euro 2022 stars after the Lionesses' victory. But lasting partnerships with the broader goal of backing women's sport in general will be key to reaching a highly engaged new audience

Alec Fenn

England Women's win over Germany in the final of the 2022 Uefa European Championships was watched by a peak TV audience of 17.4 million in the UK, turning members of the squad into household names. Now, with the Women's Super League bringing in record attendances, brands have a new world of marketing opportunities to explore, from advertising to multimillion-pound sponsorship deals.

Luca Russo, the brother and agent of Lioness star Alessia, whose back-heeled goal in the semi-final turned her into a viral star, says his phone hasn't stopped ringing. "We've had a lot of interest from brands looking to work with Alessia. It's an exciting time for her," he says.

She isn't the only England player attracting interest. Captain Leah Williamson has agreed deals with Gucci, Nike and Pepsi, while Lucy Bronze has also partnered with the drinks brand, plus EE and Visa.

Social media is likely to provide another avenue for brands and players to cash in on England's footballing success. Chloe Kelly, who scored the extra-time winner in the final, saw her following surge from 150,000 at the start of the tournament to 413,000 at the time of writing. A study by Betting.com estimates that the Lionesses' headline acts could command up to £1,500 for a single sponsored post on Instagram.

While sponsorship deals in the aftermath of the Euros are likely to provide immediate returns for brands, could there be more value in pursuing longer-term strategies within women's sport? For Lisa Parfitt, co-founder of sports marketing agency The Space Between, the answer is clear.

"Our research last year found that fans of women's sport are 25% more likely than followers of men's sport to purchase sponsors' products.

Brand recall among fans of women's sport is also twice as likely as it is among those of men's sport."

Why is that? "Women's sport has struggled for investment for such a long time that there is a genuine appreciation for a sponsor coming in and spending money," Parfitt says. "Fans know how important that money is. That's because, even now, women's football at the domestic level isn't financially sustainable. In men's sport, fans are used to there being so many brands because there are so many eyeballs, which means big visibility."

With a surge of brands expected to enter the market, though, competition for those eyeballs will be fierce. How can a sponsoring firm stand out from the crowd?

"Brands must understand their role," Parfitt says. "They need to be clear about what it is they're going to do to support a club or sport. A brand's job isn't to fund women's football, for example, but it will reap bigger long-term benefits if it has a wider purpose."

Her assertion is based on data. The Space Between's research has found that 50% of fans of women's sport strongly agree that sponsors should be working "to make the world a better place".

In 2020, health insurer Vitality agreed a three-year deal to sponsor the Women's FA Cup, having enjoyed success with a host of other women's sports, including hockey. Vitality's partnership with England Hockey resulted in a 122% increase in the number of local clubs offering informal "Back to hockey" training sessions between 2017 and 2021.

Alexa Chaffer, director of PR, content and social at Vitality, explains: "Our entire sponsorship strategy is aligned with our core purpose, which is to make people healthier and enhance and protect their lives. With the FA Cup, the goal is to increase the visibility of women's

football and inspire more girls and women to take up football or other sports and stay physically active."

Purpose is also at the heart of Lewes FC's new partnership with Xero. The accountancy software company agreed a three-year partnership with the Women's Super League 2 club in July. Xero plans to help the club to develop financial sustainability, working with local small businesses and accounting and bookkeeping communities. The investment will also enable the club to hire staff to deliver its strategy and communicate the importance of sound financial management to the grass-roots club community.

It isn't only big brands that have grasped how to capture the attention of fans through authenticity. Women's football clothing and sportswear brand Miss Kick has a brand story that resonates with every girl who has grown up wanting to play football.

Its founder and CEO, Grace Vella, says: "Growing up, I had to wear boys' football and training kits, which were always too big. I wanted

to create a clothing brand that inspired girls to play football."

Miss Kick has invested heavily in showcasing its range to girls and their parents at the grass-roots level, which has resulted in a loyal following of online customers.

The firm reinvests 2.5% of every sale into its Miss Kick Foundation, which provides free opportunities for girls to get into the sport. Vella has signed up rising stars of the women's game as ambassadors, including Liverpool's Taylor Hinds and Hannah Cain at Leicester City. Partnering with a Lioness could prove more difficult, though.

"Most of the big names have deals with the likes of Adidas and Nike," she explains. "As a condition of those deals, they can't partner with other sportswear brands."

For the Lionesses, the attention of global brands is likely to continue, but Luca Russo stresses that his client can afford to be selective.

"This is all about value," he says. "We're seeking long-term partnerships for Alessia. She has got a vast audience that is bigger than a lot of

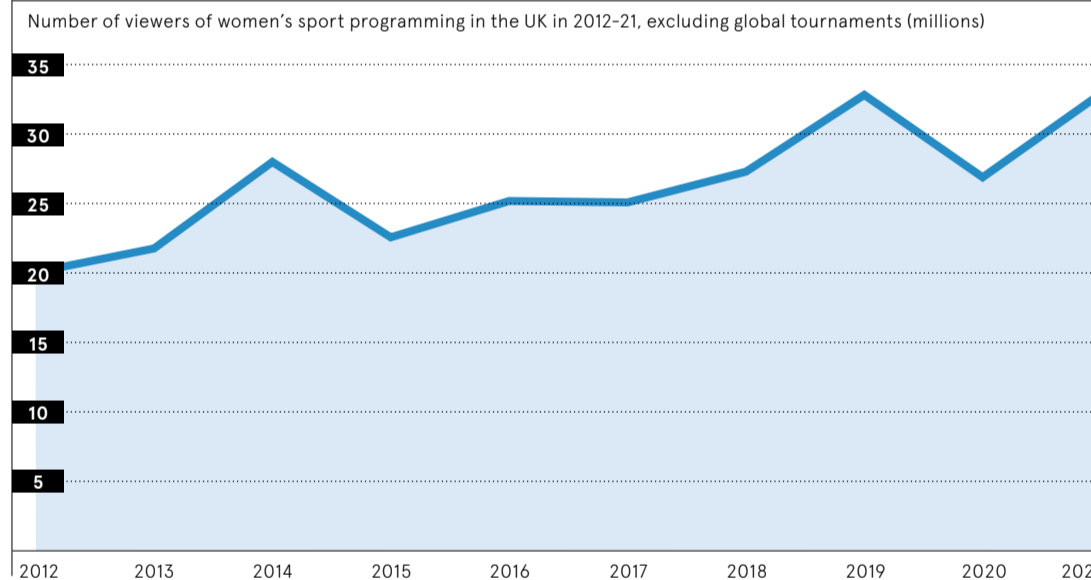
big-name male players and is far more engaged."

Russo and her teammates are at the start of a four-year cycle that could take them to a World Cup, another Euros and an Olympic Games, where more female athletes than ever are likely to be courted by big brands. Those that commit to long-term, authentic partnerships with a wider purpose to develop women's sport are likely to win the hearts, minds and wallets of a new generation of fans. ●

“A brand's job isn't to fund women's football. But it will reap bigger long-term benefits if it has a wider purpose

HOW WOMEN'S SPORT HAS GROWN ITS DOMESTIC TELEVISION AUDIENCE

Women's Sport Trust, 2022



Pride and joy: the Lionesses have become hugely more marketable since their success in Euro 2022



Naam Baker - via Getty Images

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Influencer marketing has become a well-established technique in the UK, with its value to consumer brands increasing steadily in recent years. But the real growth story in this field has been in large emerging markets such as China and India, where budgets are bigger and conversion rates are far higher. Might a lengthy downturn dampen marketing's enthusiasm for influencers, or is their allure recession-proof?

75% of brand marketers are planning to dedicate budget to influencers over the next 12 months

The global influencer marketing industry is worth an estimated

\$16.4bn

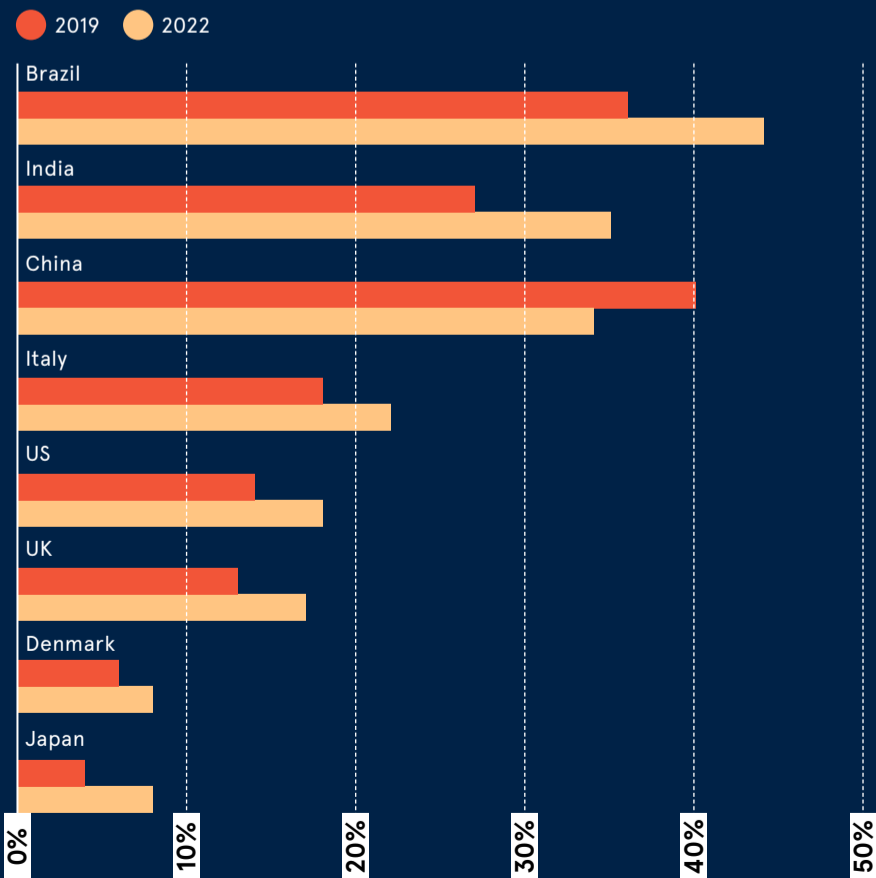
On a single day in October 2021, two of China's top live-streamers sold goods worth a total of

\$3bn

Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022

THE CONVERSION GAP

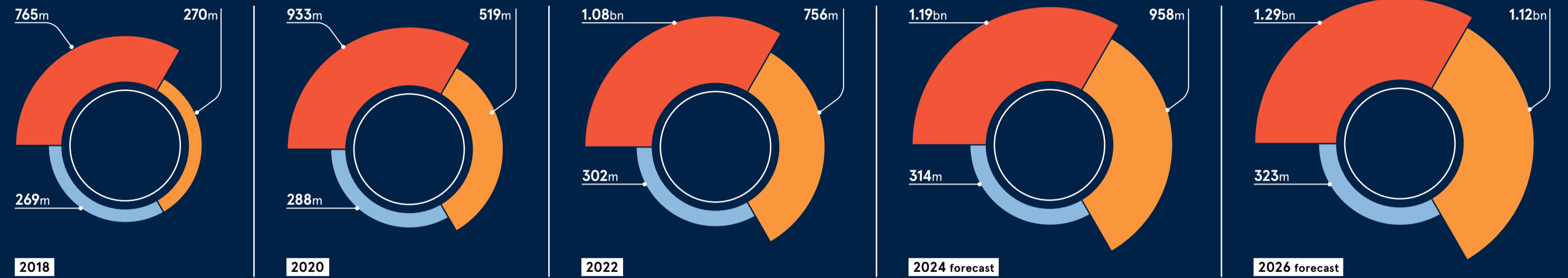
Share of respondents who report having bought products because influencers advertised them



Statista, 2022

THE NEW MEGA-MARKETS

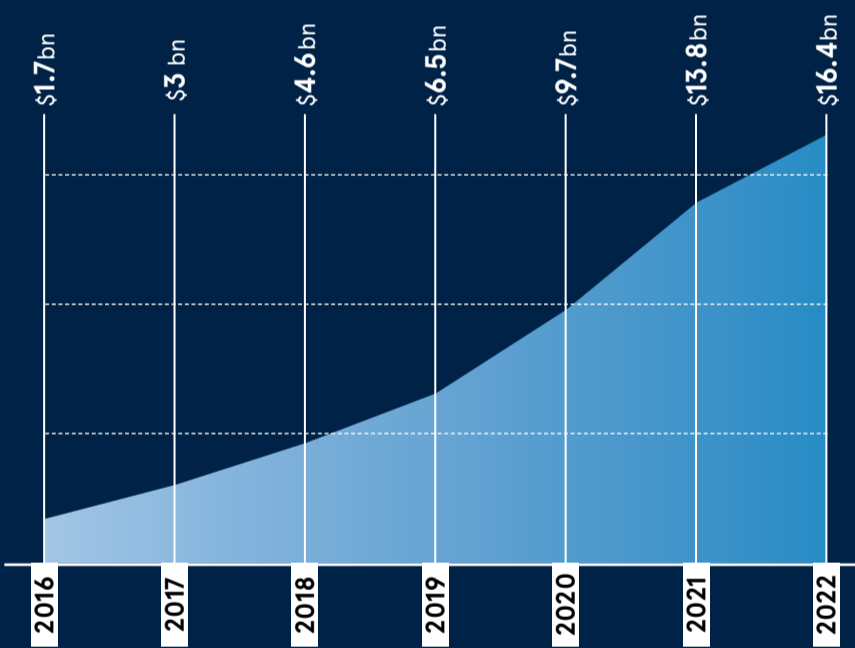
Estimated reach of influencer marketing in China, India and the US, by number of users



Statista, 2022

A CLEAR GROWTH TRAJECTORY

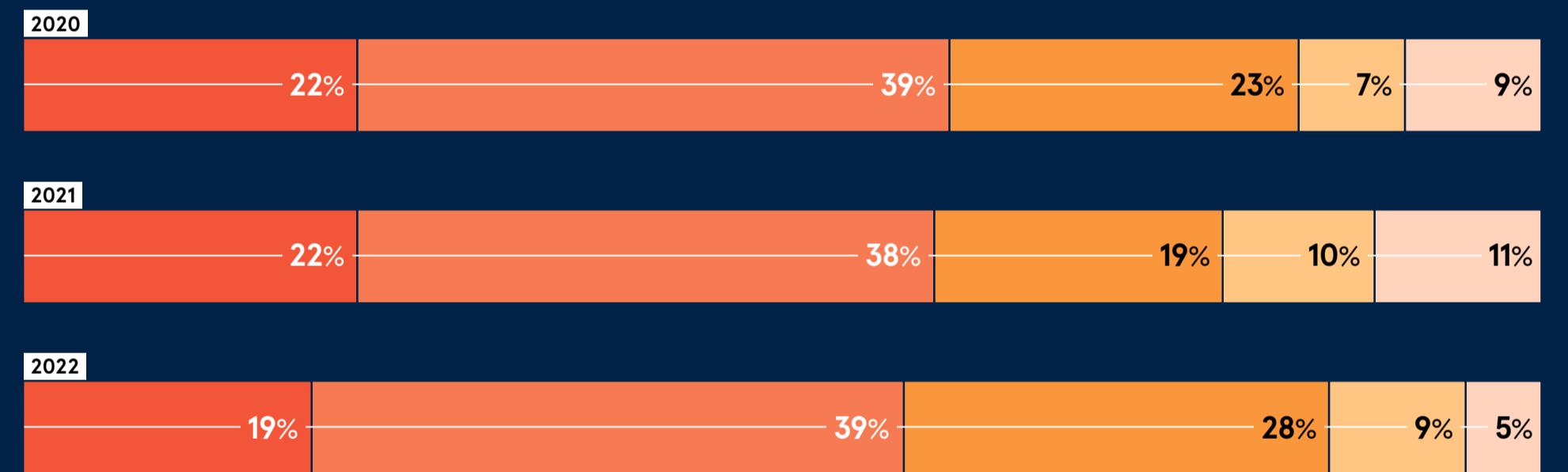
Size of global market for influencer marketing between 2016 and 2022



Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022

A MORE CONSIDERED ROLE FOR INFLUENCERS?

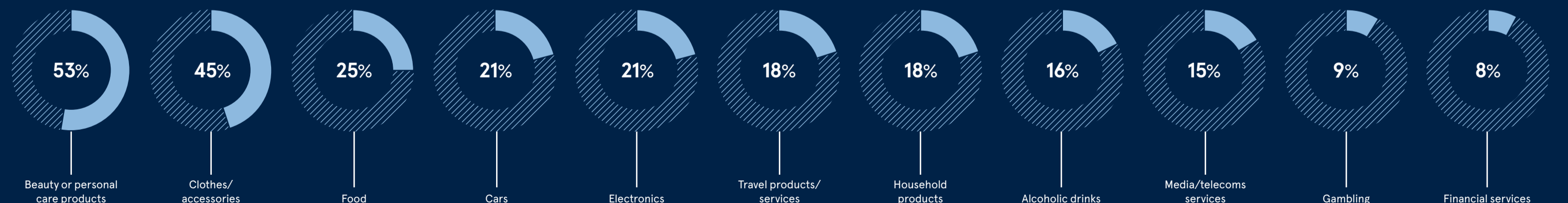
Share of marketing budgets spent on influencers worldwide



Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022

WHERE INFLUENCE MATTERS

Estimated effectiveness of influencer marketing according to internet users worldwide, by industry



YouGov, 2021

Marketing in the platform age: How to transform and drive growth in a connected ecosystem

Short-term marketing is a must when meeting real-time demands. But, successful brands are combining this with long-term, value-driven marketing to engage consumers on a new level, especially at a time of economic uncertainty when trust in brands becomes critical

The new ecosystem of digital platforms is driving a shift in marketing trends and consumer engagement. Meeting customers' immediate demands whilst building sustainable growth can present a daunting challenge for businesses attempting to steer a path through an ever-shifting digital landscape. Today's marketing and media ecosystem is dominated by digital platforms that go beyond geographical boundaries, connecting people like never before. These online spaces are the new 'countries,' where people live their lives, transacting, sharing, and creating. The onus is on organisations to adapt their marketing strategies to meet these expectations or risk falling behind their competitors.

“These new platforms and consumer dynamics are compounding and challenging conventional notions of growth

“The levers of growth are changing,” says Adam Gerhart, CEO of global media and marketing services company Mindshare. “There is now borderless platform connectivity that is empowering the consumer to demand more from brands. These new platforms and consumer dynamics are compounding and challenging conventional notions of growth.”

A better way to understand people

With consumers more empowered to call the shots, there is a newfound opportunity for brands to prioritise lifetime customer value over short-term sales. Getting locked into acquisition churn and burn is unlikely to drive sustainable growth and a narrow focus on optimising the sale alone is a zero-sum game.

It is no longer just about how to reach consumers; it is also about understanding what motivates them in much greater detail and then helping businesses to plan and buy these audiences based on their motivations or emotions across digital platforms at scale. Winning means winning a consumer's trust and becoming the brand they value and can align their values with – which is doubly important in tighter economic conditions. And to truly grow, brands will need to succeed across multiple platform ecosystems, both their own and the GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) giants.

“The way that brands talk to a person needs to acknowledge the multitude of dimensions of that individual as a complex human being and not just someone to sell products to. In the past, digital marketing has made a lot of assumptions about people. It is easy to put someone in a box,” says Victoria Cook, global chief data strategy and insights officer at Mindshare.

She argues that organisations should be considering both context and platform when connecting with audiences. Building trust starts with acknowledging the fluidity of human identity. Cook continues: “Brands need quality data that captures this complexity. It is really about combining data that fuses accuracy and empathy.”

There are several ways to approach this evolving landscape. Mindshare is tapping into what it refers to as ‘good growth’ which requires an ability to deliver predictable outcomes at scale through data while also accounting for empathy and insight into consumer motivations. This puts people at the heart of growth strategies. Their implementation of ‘precisely human intelligence,’ which balances and integrates accuracy and empathy to drive growth is the next step.

The proprietary Audience Origin data service is the bedrock of this approach, holding extensive, first-party consumer data around interests, behaviours, media consumption and decisions about purchases and spending across 74 markets. “This



human intelligence allows us to help our clients use their media with the intention to meet that changing consumer demand,” says Gerhart.

Machine learning products powered by precisely human intelligence are a means of getting to grips with the nuances of audiences at scale. By taking empathy data and connecting it to precision data, businesses can better understand consumers' motivations, mindsets, and emotions.

Looking to Asia for the future of marketing

Asia's harnessing of digital platforms for

marketing purposes is very advanced and significantly different to that in the rest of the world.

Ecommerce penetration is broadly similar in Europe and Asia, at 78% and 74% respectively. The differences emerge when evaluating mobile usage. 85% of APAC consumers use mobile for online shopping compared to just 47% in the UK. A recent proprietary GroupM study across Asia Pacific found 82% of respondents said that they purchased via online shopping platforms. This is not that different from other regions. However, what is notably different is that 34% report that this is being done

via super apps – a far cry from the mere 6% in the UK. Helen McRae, CEO of Mindshare Asia Pacific, says: “Consumers in Asia see more connectivity. They can socialise, purchase, and be entertained all in one ecosystem. WeChat is probably the best example, where you can chat with friends, order a taxi, shop for clothes, transfer money, order a takeaway and watch programmes, all within a single environment.”

The emergence of super apps is challenging marketers to be more connected and more consumer-centric. This new level of connectivity and



Consumers in Asia see more connectivity. They can socialise, purchase, and be entertained all in one ecosystem

flexibility is built into Asian platforms such as TikTok from the start. Many brands are advanced in creating the right digital ecosystem, but this ecosystem looks different to that in other regions and companies must embrace transformation and review legacy practices to deliver on growth strategies.

“Mega Days like Singles Day in China are where ecommerce comes to life with big sales, but alongside these events there is live streaming, influencers taking the stage to talk about products and a more all-encompassing push is playing out,” says McRae. “It is not only just about the sale but everything that goes around it.”

GDP in South-East Asia is projected to grow at just over 5% for 2022 and 2023, including China at 4.25% and India at 7.9%. This exceeds predictions for the US and EU, which lag at around 2%, according to Euromonitor and the IMF. McRae says: “Brands should be using this opportunity to build digital ecosystems that look different to the ones that exist in other regions. The world is not one size and the levers of growth are shifting in Asia and elsewhere.”

With such fast-moving economies and consumers, brands mustn't sit still and should instead think laterally about data and data signals. Mindshare used traffic data flow feeds to help clients in China pinpoint opportunities and see where growth was returning. With Louis Vuitton, it was boosting live streaming attendance at shows with data insights from consumers around a pent-up desire for travel, including taking over one of China's hot vacation spots for the show.

A recent study by Mindshare called ‘The Geography of Purpose’ also revealed that only 5% of consumers in Vietnam assume brands are never trying to be genuine, compared to 48% in Japan, showing that whilst all consumers are demanding more from brands, there are differences across cultures: “brands need to ensure that trust and purpose are connected to the local landscape and what consumers locally value.”

An example of this is Lifebuoy in Indonesia. In place of discounts, the brand offered consumers a free doctor consult session for every pack bought. This approach not only built trust in the brand but also addressed a need in the country where healthcare is not accessible to all.

Growth starts with reduction Tom Johnson, Mindshare's global chief solutions officer, spearheads the creation of solutions to help clients drive

‘good growth’ and digitally maturity. He works alongside clients with a focus on organisational design, operating models, infrastructure, consumer strategy, automation, and commerce.

“The first point is that growth often starts with reduction, certainly if it is to be ‘good’” says Johnson. He argues that many big companies already have all the technology they need and are somewhat bloated as through the last few years of hyper growth in ecommerce it has been easy to justify investment in this space.

There is now a need to take a step back and evaluate what is required and what is getting in the way. For Johnson, the strategy is clear. It's about identifying “pockets of overreliance or underuse or things that are not being done well, extracting those and using them to double down on the things that will drive future growth.”

It's why the first thing Mindshare often does with a new client is a maturity audit to identify where it can highlight the opportunities, as opposed to just deploying some media. “We all talk about digital as the present and future, but there are still incredible silos within marketing to address, they largely exist because growth and legacy have had to co-exist. Integration is critical and you must remove those silos if you want to succeed,” says Johnson.

Companies on a marketing transformation journey all too often try to be excellent at one or two things in a silo, like search marketing, and so miss the bigger picture, or they try to do it all at once and fail. But the digital ecosystem is now so competitive you have to build incrementally, adding small changes up and ensuring it all stays connected. “Integration now matters as much as individual performance,” says Johnson.

Measurement must also be connected. Success is all too often determined by measuring media output alone but there is often a blind spot when it comes to factoring in all the things that sit behind the output, whether it's the technology, the cost of the people, the delivery network, or the product itself. “We believe it's good for businesses to factor all this in, whether directly applied or just acknowledged and as we move to a digital first economy, this becomes crucial,” says Johnson.

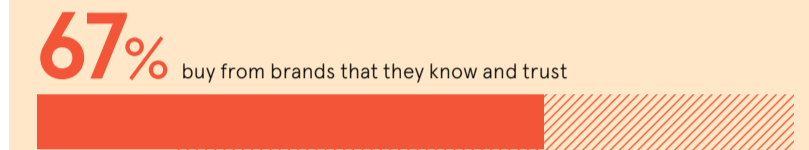
It is not about a desire to eke out one more sale, but engaging with the entire ecosystem to understand consumers more intimately, creating lifetime value and in that journey, focusing on finding the small things that can add up, this means looking as much at what you don't need, as what you want to add.

“This is why we try and balance the ‘good’ with ‘growth’,” says Gerhart. “It isn't just a messaging approach, it's about embodying what is good for the consumer, what is sustainable growth for a brand and what delivers good growth for all.”

For more information, please visit [mindshareworld.com](https://www.mindshareworld.com)



Across 25 markets consumers are prioritising brands that align with their beliefs:

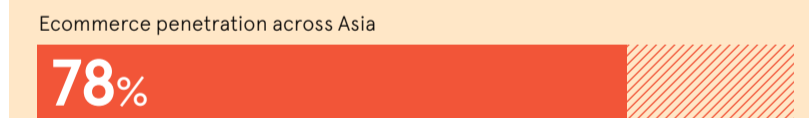


Younger generations are behind a value shift in purchasing decisions

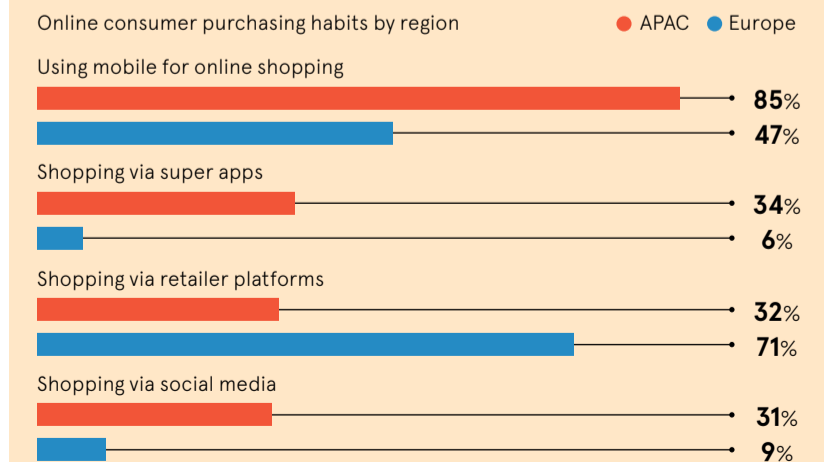


Audience Origin Brand Purpose Study, 2022

Ecommerce penetration is broadly similar across European and Asian markets



APAC consumers are prone to embracing new ecommerce platforms



GroupM Consumer Eye Study, Wave 5, June 2022

INVESTMENT

Cash converters: how to turn early-stage funding into growth

Marketers have a key role in finding the right investors for startups and scaleups, but the hard work won't stop after the money's been banked, as two senior professionals explain

MaryLou Costa

Elodie Ferchaud has been with Boundless Life for little more than three months, but she has gained a wealth of fundraising experience in that time. When she joined the Montreal-based startup to become its most senior marketer, it had recently obtained £1.75m in seed funding. The company has since embarked on a series-A round.

Ferchaud is head of demand generation at the firm, which specialises in providing medium-term accommodation, co-working space and education services for digital

nomads with children in tow. The Frenchwoman has worked in several countries herself, including Switzerland, Sweden and Japan during a nine-year stint with Procter & Gamble. Today she is based in the historic Portuguese town of Sintra, where Boundless Life is developing a community for travelling families.

"Marketing is a lot about defining what we're selling and the customer requirements we're answering, so careful attention has been paid to building our product and telling our story," Ferchaud says. "There

are many steps in a fundraising campaign that are close to what marketing does daily. In this case, it's about helping the founders to determine who the right investors are – those that believe in our product and will help us on the way – as well as personalising our outreach and tracking those efforts."

Boundless Life has yet to close its series-A round, but it is already planning a crowdfunding campaign on the Republic platform. It hopes to attract relatively small investments from keen nomads who can serve as brand ambassadors.

"We believe that we'll find many active supporters through crowd-funding," Ferchaud says. "This will raise money while also spreading awareness of our product, which is fundamental. It will be a great way to find more like-minded families."

While this approach sounds like it should be an easy win, Ferchaud knows that the hard work is far from over. Two tasks in particular – building an attribution model to track the success of customer-acquisition activities and building a highly tech-savvy team to detect and exploit new opportunities – have been keeping her both busy and accountable.

"Developing the right attribution model is critical," she says. "This is about making assumptions as to where your growth will come from, which is what you present to investors. The model will help you to identify the best levers for growth, so that you can move away from any that aren't working and double down on those that are."

Indeed, building an attribution model is where much of the heavy lifting in marketing occurs after an investment round. That's especially true in Boundless Life's case, because a customer's typical journey from learning about the firm's offering to making a purchasing decision is lengthy.

"People do need time to get acquainted with our product and trust it. It's also not that easy for them to understand each step along the way. That's why building an attribution model is complex in this context," Ferchaud says. "But the pressure to deliver on the targets that have been set is heavy."

Marius Nedelcu, chief marketing officer at TransferGo, agrees that the marketing function is the first to feel the weight of expectation after a big injection of capital. He joined the money-transfer platform in July 2016, just after the London-based firm had announced a £3m series-A funding round. He's since helped the business through two further rounds totalling £62m.

"Marketing can work faster than other departments, so that's why it always gets the pressure first," Nedelcu observes. "The product team, for instance, will take time to use the money, so everyone turns to marketing and says: 'Can you show some growth?' Straight away, I had to prepare a plan and spend my budget to bring in customers."

A year on from TransferGo's most recent fundraising round, the task of keeping promises to investors has defined how the marketing team works. It's become highly data-driven – something of a departure for Nedelcu, who previously focused on brand-building in the health and fitness sector.

He admits that the volume of data his team had to process initially felt overwhelming, but he has since become a convert, having learnt a lot from the insights he's gained from the process. Big TV campaigns, for instance, are not a priority, as TransferGo has found that these are relatively inefficient ways for it to reach potential customers.

“You have to show that you're spending wisely and not just bringing in traffic that doesn't convert into anything**”**

"You have to show that you're spending wisely and not just bringing in traffic that doesn't convert into anything," Nedelcu stresses. "Our focus for the past two years has been on ensuring that the people we bring to our door are potential customers: migrants who need to transfer money internationally."

Team-building is another area in which Nedelcu and Ferchaud have had similar experiences. Both have felt the pressure to strengthen their departments after a big investment, but Ferchaud would advise marketers in a similar position not to be hasty when recruiting.

"There is pressure, but everyone who's hired fast also learns the hard way that, if your gut tells you that a candidate might not be right, it's worth pushing back against it," she argues. "If you make a mistake here, it could have an impact on everyone in the organisation and hinder the firm's growth."

Nedelcu also recommends that senior marketers brush up on their leadership skills so that they can keep their teams motivated even if the business hits a rough patch.

"Otherwise, they will crack under pressure," he warns. "But, if you're a great leader, they'll follow you and bring their best to the table even during challenging times. That's what I am working on daily." ●

31%

of UK marketers believe that their function has a greater strategic role than ever before
Marketing Week, 2022

38%

of startups fail because they are unable to raise enough new capital
CBInsights, 2021

INSIGHT

'Brave creative ideas are challenging convention and even leading to changes in the law'

At this year's Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, it was clear that brand marketers worldwide are becoming increasingly aware of the role that creativity plays in improving business performance and driving real progress in society. But what are the conditions for success? Consensus and 'buy-in' inside the organisation are vital, of course, but it's also about choosing the right partners, agencies and individuals to work with.

The global creative community came together at the festival to recognise the people and companies harnessing creativity to drive business growth, effect cultural change and solve immense challenges in a changing world. The Lion award winners hail from more than 90 countries, representing many and varied disciplines across the creative marketing and communications ecosystem. Together, they tell a fascinating story about the shape of the industry.

The *Lions Creativity Report 2022* provides the definitive benchmark: a set of global rankings for the highest-performing companies and individuals based on their Cannes Lions performance. As brand marketers turn their attention to the 'how', this new publication – which features expert commentary from Lion-winning creative minds – is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the future landscape and conditions for success.

The report, which can be downloaded free from [lovethehework.com](https://www.lovethehework.com), ranks the most creative people in the industry, from creative directors to copywriters. And, aside from highlighting the regions where creative excellence is flourishing (India dominated across the board this year), it reveals who the new players are and who is consistently grabbing the top spots over time.

"Everything stems from an alignment on positioning, strategy and ambition," observes Burger King's global vice-president of marketing, Sabrina Ferretti, in the report. "Everyone at Burger King is here to produce powerful creative work to drive business growth."

This sentiment is clearly paying off. For the third consecutive year, Burger King ranked as the number-one Creative Brand of the Year – a title that both honours a brand and recognises its partner agency. Winning an enviable 25 Lions this year, the restaurant company has been

combining participation, playfulness and purpose to connect with its customers. This led to strong global growth in sales for the company in the second quarter of 2022.

This correlation between creativity and business growth grows ever stronger. Perhaps that's why the number of entrants in our Creative Effectiveness category leapt by 82% this year.

To see where the industry is heading next, we can look to the report's insights. Through its in-depth analysis of Lion winners, it examines trends that every marketer should have on their radar. For instance, it explains how brave creative ideas are challenging convention and even leading to changes in the law.

"Morning After Island" is just one remarkable example of such innovation. In Honduras, taking the morning-after contraceptive pill can lead to prison, which is one reason why a quarter of women in the country become mothers before they're 18. Women's rights organisation Grupo Estratégico para la Pastilla Anticonceptiva de Emergencia (GEPAE) brought agency Ogilvy Honduras on board to inject creativity into its awareness campaign.

They built a wooden platform in international waters just off the coast and laid on a regular boat service to it, enabling women to take the pill outside Honduran jurisdiction without fear of prosecution. As well as receiving global attention, the campaign finally earned GEPAE a meeting with the president and a seat at the policy-making table. "Morning After Island" also won Honduras its first ever Lion. In fact, it won eight awards at the festival.

By understanding the conditions for success, building consensus and choosing the right collaborators, the industry is in a great position to drive progress through creativity. ●



Simon Cook
CEO, Lions



B2B marketing during a recession

With economic recession on the horizon in the UK, B2B marketers need to analyse their activities to ensure their activity is reaching the right people and getting the best possible ROI

As recession looms, B2B marketers are putting their budgets under the microscope. How can they navigate the economy's troubled waters to maintain sales and take advantage of the upturn when it arrives?

"B2B marketers shouldn't be planning for business as usual over the coming year," says Lisa Nakano, vice-president and research director at research and advisory firm Forrester. "With turbulence in the economy, they need to think beyond making modest spending increases and focus marketing budgets on key areas of investment while weeding out poorly performing activities."

Forrester's Planning Guide 2023 for marketers in demand and account-based marketing (ABM) – those selling products and services to businesses – advises B2B marketers to boost revenues from existing customers, grow their audiences and sharpen up the impact of their content. The firm also believes this is a good time to experiment with new technology and processes to find effective ways of getting the most out of the marketing budget.

"Cross-selling to existing clients and upselling them more products is classic recessionary behaviour and should be pursued with vigour. Customers are unlikely to bring on new vendors during times of crisis, so B2B marketers can find ways to move them through the sales funnel by offering them more of their products and increasing their usage. This will go some way to make up for a lack of new business," says Nakano.

When times get tough, it is vital for B2B marketers to engage strongly with the all-important decision-makers who will sign on the dotted line for

their products. Forrester notes that B2B buyers have become more protective of their privacy and less likely to give out contact information. To overcome this, demand and ABM marketers should invest in technology that allows them to connect with those key contacts while honouring their anonymity.

"This is a time to try out solutions such as advanced web analytics, working with data providers, deploying customer data platforms, and trying data unification applications. Fewer than one in four marketers say they are using solutions such as these today to help them reach and engage the growing number of buyers who are waiting longer to reveal their identities," says Steven Casey, vice-president and research director in the Forrester Decisions for Demand and ABM Service.

When the economy contracts, an easy win for B2B marketing is to improve the delivery of content. To succeed in 2023, organisations will need to make their content more accessible and easier to digest. Some 73% of organisations say that content is often too hard to adapt and customise, according to Forrester's 2022 B2B State of Content survey.

Using the right technology, marketers can create a modular approach to content so it can be broken into chunks and deployed in different ways along the buying journey and at the most effective points in the customer life cycle. Focusing on the content engine, marketers should improve metadata and automated tagging to make it easier for prospects to find relevant content. They should also make use of sense-and-respond capabilities, using AI and automation to assemble content

modules and orchestrate experiences, and to provide the analytics and performance data needed to improve the context in which they find the content.

Meanwhile, an area of potential savings is scaling back in-person live events in favour of digital or hybrid. "While the largest companies may feel it's still vital to keep inviting prospects to spend time with their thought leaders, smaller businesses may choose to run events focusing only on the key accounts, rather than extending a general invitation. Running virtual marketing events stands to bring deep savings," says Nakano.

Savings can also be made by weeding out underperforming activities. According to Forrester's 2022 State of ABM Survey, 26% of initiatives are ABM in name only and do not follow best practice. Forrester advises marketers to start by improving the lowest performing 20% of ABM programmes – or dropping them altogether – and gradually work up to analysing those that are revenue generating but underperforming.

Overall, says Casey: "At Forrester, we are strong believers that by investing in marketing strategically during a difficult time like this, it can set you up well to minimise any shrinkage should it occur in your business. You will then be well positioned to grow once things turn around."

For more information visit
forrester.com/bold/planning-guides

FORRESTER®



Blanca Paloma Sanchez via Unsplash

INTERVIEW

'It was clear that we should focus on music'

When **Jim Mollica** joined Bose as CMO in 2021, the firm was in danger of losing touch with its audiophile audience. He explains how it's re-engaging with these core customers

Sam Forsdick

It's been a rough couple of years for Bose Corporation. After venturing into wearable technology and healthtech, the manufacturer of high-end audio equipment saw its sales revenue fall from a peak of \$4bn (£3.5bn) in 2019 to \$3.2bn last year. Over the same period, its workforce shrank from 9,000 to 7,000.

The Massachusetts-based company has shuttered its direct-to-consumer hearing-aid division, although its technology is being used by specialist provider Lexie Hearing as part of a partnership

“Celebrating the communal nature of music shows our customers that we value the same things as they do”



announced in July. Similarly, experiments with sleep aids and Bose Frames – a set of sunglasses with built-in speakers – have distanced the business from its traditional customer base.

Jim Mollica, who became Bose's first global CMO when he joined from apparel brand Under Armour in January 2021, believes that this loss of focus on the company's core market has contributed to its disappointing performance of late.

“When you're a company driven by innovation, there's no shortage of opportunities to wander into new spaces. Maybe we didn't always have the strongest filter on some of that innovation,” he admits.

In May this year, Bose stated that it would be focusing on “the products and technologies that matter most to our customers”. Its latest offerings certainly support that assertion. Take the QuietComfort Earbuds II, for instance. These are designed to automatically adjust the sound performance “to your ears' liking” by using a system that uses the principles of echolocation to determine the exact shapes of each user's ear canals.

“It's our mission to bring transformatonal and immersive sound experiences to people who are passionate about music,” Mollica says. “From the start, it was clear to me that we should focus on music. There was no need to be distracted by other things.”

In some ways, he is working to win over his 15-year-old self. “At that age, the two things that were most important to me were basketball and music,” he recalls.

The music that he was into during his teenage years wasn't to his parents' liking, so he saved up for his own set of Bose Acoustimass speakers that he could use in his bedroom, thus starting his “love affair” with the brand.

So, when the firm approached Mollica about the job, he answered the call “with a resounding ‘yes’”. Having the opportunity to be a part of a brand that is so storied was really important to me.”

One of the first things he did in the newly created role was to examine the company's heritage to see how he could “reinforce the idea that Bose doesn't just treat music as an accessory”.

Technical experts have often held senior roles at the firm, which was founded in 1964 by Amar Bose, an electrical engineer specialising in acoustics. In 2011, two years before his death at 83, he gave a controlling stake to his alma mater, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, on the proviso that the firm would remain privately owned.

“Here at Bose, that love for music innovation has always been present,” says Mollica. “But there

is an opportunity to rearticulate and sharpen our mission by consistently bringing it to life through content and experiences across all of our brand touchpoints.”

Bose's work in this area has included securing singer-songwriter Tai Verdes, rapper Kid Cudi and virtual band Gorillaz as brand ambassadors and partnering with DJ Heron Preston for his New York Fashion Week show, which featured a set from The Strokes.

Associating with such prominent artists helps to give Bose's customers “confidence in their purchases, as well as reinforcing the fact that we are making these products specifically for them”, according to Mollica. “Celebrating the communal nature of music shows our customers that we value the same things as they do. It's an extremely important part of our strategy to demonstrate this.”

This messaging extends to audio experiences other than music. A partnership with HBO, for example, saw Bose's sound system feature prominently during the TV network's promotions for the *Game of Thrones* spin-off series *House of the Dragon* at the San Diego Comic-Con event in July.

There are also plans to introduce a “sound concierge” service that helps customers to fine-tune their audio equipment to match their needs, whether they're listening to music, watching movies or playing video games.

“This gives us an incredible opportunity to cater to all these different listening occasions,” Mollica explains. “Creating content-rich experiences and building a community around sound improve the brand's authenticity.”

The company's change of emphasis has been made easier by the fact that all of its employees have “dedicated their lives to sound”, he adds. “We need to get close to the consumer as a brand, so it really helps that we have so many audiophiles and musicians in the business.”

He compares Bose's recent marketing efforts to those of drinks brand Red Bull, which has taken an unorthodox approach to building awareness through its associations with football, motor racing and extreme sports such as air racing and cliff diving.

The marketing team at Red Bull has “done an incredible job of associating the brand with certain cultural moments”, Mollica says. “Here at Bose, we want a presence in any place where music matters. We want people to know we don't just talk about music; we're embedded in it. Music is endemic to who we are and what we do.”

With plans to produce marketing content to coincide with the Grammy Awards early next year, Bose is clearly a believer in the power of association to set the record straight about its priorities as a brand and re-engage the enthusiastic following it had worked so hard to earn in the first place. ●

STORYTELLING

Automated for the people

Campaigns that win both hearts and minds are the mark of so-called emotionally intelligent brands. Here are some that have used cutting-edge digital tech to enhance a compelling narrative

Emily Seares

Achieving success in marketing “requires a deeper understanding of the journey of people's lives, not just more data about the shopper journey”.

So said Kantar's chief knowledge officer, J Walker Smith, when he addressed marketers gathered at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in June. In his opinion, brands need to put the human experience at the centre of everything they do.

Research by global media agency Carat supports Smith's assertion. It asked 15,000 consumers in 15 markets to rank more than 50 well-known companies on their emotional intelligence (EQ). Each firm's score was based on the extent to which respondents agreed with statements such as “this brand understands people like me and what we need”. The resulting *Brand EQ Report 2022* revealed that the 20 highest-ranked organisations had massively outperformed the world's

major stock market averages on growth in shareholder value between 2010 and 2021.

It might seem like a counterintuitive idea at first glance, but the latest digital technology can be “an incredible enabler of human connections”, says Ricardo Marques, vice-president of marketing at Michelob Ultra. He's well qualified to comment: the beer brand has successfully combined a high level of EQ with both artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) on its way to becoming number two in the US by sales volume.

Michelob Ultra's award-winning “McEnroe vs McEnroe” campaign, by FCB New York, featured a virtual match between the veteran tennis star and digital avatars based on him in the 1970s and 1980s. The AI system analysed more than 1,000 of his past matches, while a motion-capture session with McEnroe helped to generate his movements on the AR version of the court.



Serious technology: FCB New York's innovative campaign for Michelob Ultra combined augmented reality and AI with the enduring box-office appeal of tennis star John McEnroe

“It's important for firms to consider how to connect with their entire audience. Digital technology can often offer them the solution”

“One of the biggest challenges for any brand is to earn, not buy, the attention of its audience,” Marques says. “That's what technology, with storytelling that not only entertains but also lands a purposeful message, can do.”

Celebrating the career of one of sport's biggest characters was the inspiration behind the campaign, which aimed to “remind our audience to enjoy the ride and have fun in the pursuit of their dreams”, he explains. “In this case, the technology let us bring a different angle to his story by taking him on a journey back in time. That's the exciting opportunity for marketers: to innovate, be purposeful and entertain.”

With more than 10 million views across all of ESPN's channels, “McEnroe vs McEnroe” drew a bigger TV audience in the US than the average nightly viewership of the six games played in the 2021 National Basketball Association Finals.

It's not only in the sporting world where marketers are using cutting-edge technology to enhance great human stories. Vodafone's haptic-suit experience at the Mighty Hoopla pop festival in London this June is another example of a brand hitting the EQ brief.

As Mighty Hoopla's official connectivity partner, Vodafone used

the power of its 5G network to make the event as inclusive as possible. It applied this and other advanced systems to enable festival-goers with hearing impairments to ‘feel’ live music like never before.

The telco's brand and marketing director, Maria Koutsoudakis, explains that members of her team began by identifying an area in which they felt Vodafone could have the biggest positive impact. Then they explored opportunities to tell an emotive story that had the best chance of resonating with the public. By translating sounds from both the stage and the crowd into vibrations that could be felt across the whole body, Vodafone's innovative haptic suits enabled their users to experience a live music event as never before.

“We're really excited about the possibilities,” Koutsoudakis says. “We would love to help make them ubiquitous in live music. But there's even more we can do beyond that, from game-changing VR experiences to letting fans feel the crowd from home.”

Rosh Singh, MD of brand innovation consultancy Unit 9, believes that Vodafone found the ideal combination in this case.

“It definitely helps when a brand has emotionally intelligent activations that match its core purpose or mission,” he says. “As a company that's focused on connecting for a better future, Vodafone certainly hit the right note. Inclusivity has become a huge topic – and rightly so. It's important for firms to consider how to connect with their entire audience. Digital technology can often offer them the solution.”

An award-winning campaign for sporting goods retailer Decathlon by BBDO Belgium is another case of a company making effective use of

the latest tech in the name of inclusivity. This time, it was all about getting inside the metaverse.

“The Breakaway” created the first e-cycling team for prison inmates, enabling convicts serving time in the top-security Oudenaarde Prison to pedal away anonymously on Zwift, a virtual world where 3 million cyclists ride together.

The French-based multinational had wanted to make freedom its central theme after the widespread Covid lockdowns had restricted almost everyone's movements for months at a time in 2020-21.

Thomas Lejeune Debarre, the firm's marketing and communications director in Belgium, explains: “We used technology to ensure that a specific group of people, who don't have access to this feeling of freedom, were able to experience it. Besides cycling, the whole point was to create interactions with the outside world.”

Everyone knows Decathlon in Belgium, he adds, but many people may not know what the company stands for. “Our ambition was to make them realise that, when we speak about making sports accessible to the many, we do mean it.”

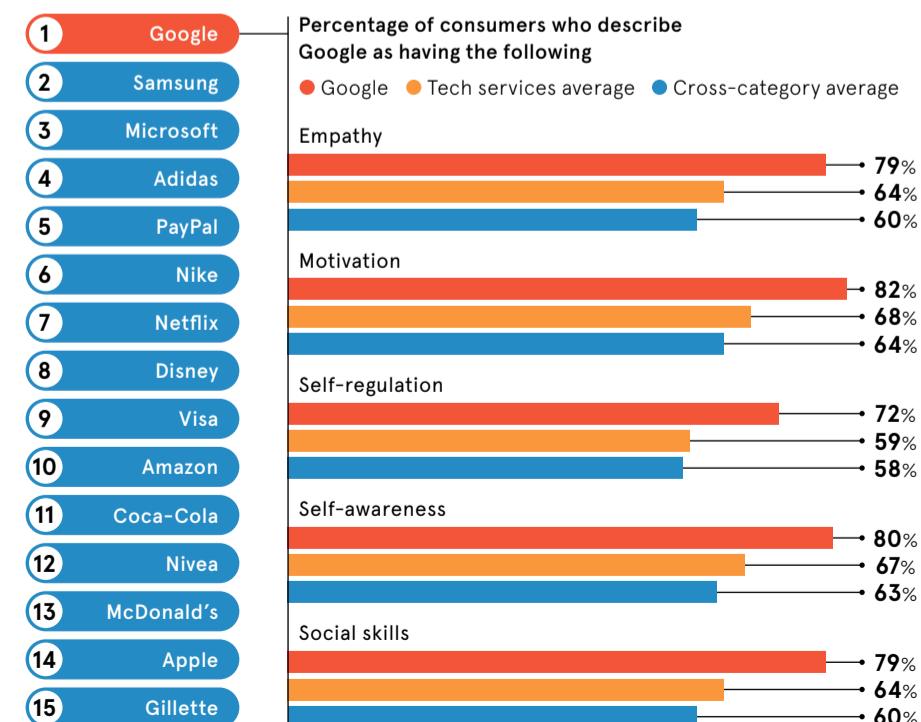
High-EQ firms are using compelling narratives – augmented by the powerful new tech at their disposal – to forge deeper, more meaningful connections with consumers. Richard Robinson, director at marketing advisory firm Econsultancy, sees this as a successful tactic for any brand seeking to pull away from the peloton. He is a great believer in the power of “stories told well, communicated through empathy and evidenced by data”.

Such stories, Robinson predicts, “will become the hallmark of every great brand that manages to survive the 2020s”. ●

THE TOP 15 EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT BRANDS

Carat, 2022

Based on a study of 50 brands from the Americas, EMEA and Asia Pacific, including a survey of 15,000 consumers





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