

Four Key Themes to Watch for at Cannes Lions 2023

Article

The news: The ad and creative community will be heading to the south of France next week for the annual **International Festival of Creativity**. Here are four key themes that will dominate the conversations on the Croisette.

AI will be the talk of the town: Marketers are keen to understand how to incorporate new technologies like **ChatGPT** to increase productivity and creativity, and how to use predictive analytics to drive performance. The combination of generative AI and predictive AI could be a game change for the ad industry, with the potential to upend current business models.

- Generative AI is currently best-used as a tool to improve and expedite the creative process. Expect plenty of discussions around current **best practices** and (potentially awkward) conversations about how genAI will affect ad and marketing jobs.
- As the industry moves closer to the deprecation of cookies, this year will bring more forward-looking conversations on how predictive AI can improve ad performance and personalization.

Top 5 Uses for Generative AI According to Marketers Worldwide, May 2023

% of respondents

1. Basic content creation	76%
2. Write copy	76%
3. Inspire creative thinking	71%
4. Analyze market data	63%
5. Generate asset images	62%

Note: among respondents in Australia, the UK, and the US who are using generative AI
Source: Salesforce survey conducted by YouGov as cited in company blog, June 5, 2023

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(On Monday, June 19, principal analyst **Jasmine Enberg** will moderate a panel discussion with **Reddit** and **Vidmob** on “Community-Based Creative & The Edge of AI Insights” at Reddit’s headquarters. Register for the session here:

<https://vidmobxredditcannes2023.splashthat.com/>)

Creators will be everywhere: Companies like **TikTok** and **Pinterest** have long included creators in their programming, but otherwise, creators haven’t been well-represented. That won’t be the case this year. Several major influencer marketing firms are also expected to have a major presence, including **Whalar** and **Influential**, which is taking over prime beach real estate previously held by **Twitter**.

- Influencer marketing has become a permanent **line item** on most brands’ budgets. Spending will continue to increase as campaign prices rise, ad market dynamics shift, and ad creative continues to trend more native.

- As the industry evolves toward long-term brand-influencer relationships, creators have also earned a seat on the stage—and at the brand strategy table. [Co-creation strategies](#) will be a major topic as brands seek to leverage the power of creators to both market and build products.

Leading Types of Influencer Partnerships Among US Marketing Professionals, Jan 2023

% of respondents

Brand ambassadors	80%
Themed or hashtag campaigns	79%
Integrated campaigns	77%
Product collaborations	76%

Note: n=300 who work with influencers for marketing or advertising initiatives
Source: Capterra, "Capterra's 2023 Influencer Marketing Survey," March 14, 2023

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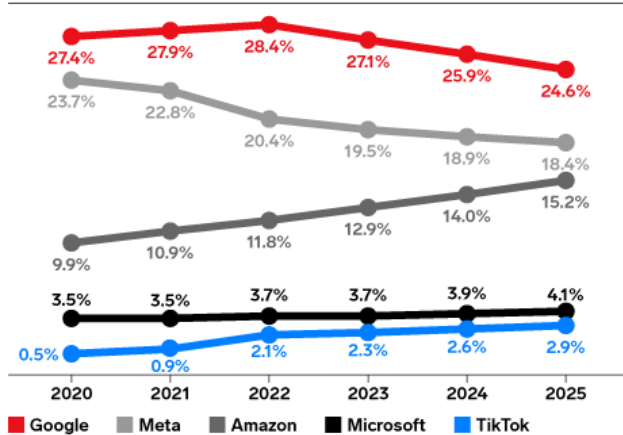
Big Tech will still make a big splash: Twitter Beach will be gone, but **Amazon, Apple, TikTok,** and **Netflix** are new(ish) players that are expected to show up in a big(ger) way this year. Mainstays like **Meta, Google, Spotify,** and **Snap** will return to their residences on the Croisette.

- There are few other events that bring together as many of the world's top CMOs as Cannes Lions, providing ample opportunity for tech, social, and ecommerce firms to mingle with and pitch their growing (or struggling) [ad businesses](#) to the C-Suite.
- Amazon** arrived at Cannes in full force in 2022, and this year will be no different. Its [retail media ad business](#) is putting pressure on Meta and Google, and the company is now **angling for upper funnel ad dollars**. Big brands are crucial for its next phase of growth, which includes expanding [CTV](#) ad inventory for **Prime Video** and **Freevee**.
- Meta will be **all-in on the metaverse** again, and the launch of [Apple's Vision Pro headset](#) has given it new legs to stand on (pun intended): Apple's entry into the headset market validates Meta's VR vision, and any excitement Vision Pro generates could lead to a short-term sales boost for Meta. **Apple is expected to have its biggest-ever Cannes presence**, but its focus will be on getting buy-in for its nascent ad business.
- Google and **Microsoft** are going head-to-head in the [genAI search](#) race—and will be just a 5-minute walk from each other on the Croisette. More users are trying Microsoft's Bing thanks

to its ChatGPT-4 integration, but Google remains the dominant player in terms of search traffic and ad revenues.

Share of Digital Ad Spending Among Select US Companies, 2020-2025

% of digital ad spending



Note: includes advertising that appears on desktop and laptop computers as well as mobile phones, tablets, and other internet-connected devices, and includes all the various formats of advertising on those platforms

Source: eMarketer, March 2023

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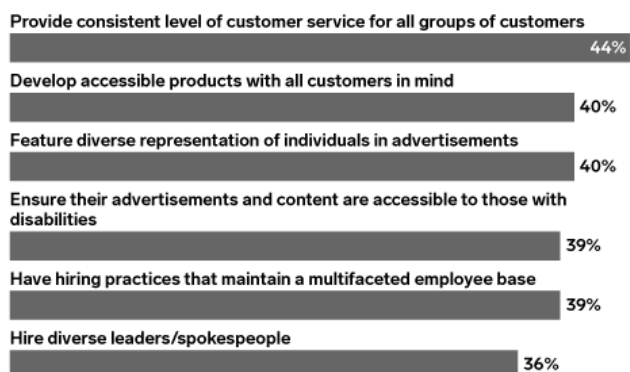
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DE&I will be top-of-mind: Marketers and advertisers are on the front lines of the current culture wars, grappling with tough questions on how to respond to issues from supporting LGBTQ+ communities to sustainability. Brands know that diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives can drive success, but implementing those strategies can be uncomfortable—and at times, risky.

- Gen Z is the **most diverse**, demanding, and digital generation, and representation is one of their core values. As Gen Z grows up and their purchasing power expands, marketers and business leaders may need to reevaluate their strategies and operations.
- One size doesn't fit all brands when it comes to forming a DE&I strategy. But what is clear is that people expect brands to do more than just pay lip service to a cause; they want action.

Types of Actions US Internet Users Would Like to See Brands/Companies Take to Promote Diversity and Inclusion Efforts, March 2023

% of respondents



Source: Integral Ad Science (IAS), "Diversity and Inclusion," June 1, 2023

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Insider at Cannes: Principal analyst Jasmine Enberg will join a discussion on brand bravery during the CMO Insider Breakfast at Axel Springer's Freedomhaus. The breakfast is by invite-only, but many other Axel Springer and Insider events are open to the public:

<https://info.insider.com/cannes2023>