

Marketers' 2025 priorities: AI, social listening, and creator partnerships

Article

Last year, marketers' priorities included navigating a rising [connected TV \(CTV\)](#) landscape, using [AI](#) to optimize budgets, and questioning whether traditional [measurement](#) strategies like

[last-click attribution](#) could use improvement.

This year, marketing leaders tell us they are focusing less on AI as a high-level concept, and more on its most practical use cases for their challenges. This maturation will bleed into a range of verticals, including [influencer marketing](#) and [social media strategy](#).

From deprioritizing virality to sharing data across channels, here's what [marketers](#) are focused on in 2025.

Using AI to personalize, rather than generalize

Instead of solely leaning into generative AI's potential to maximize efficiency and deliver high-level messaging, marketers are exploring its abilities to enhance personalization.

Eric Danetz, president of AI marketing company Cognitiv, said he's focused on using more advanced data to help clients decide "which message someone will respond to based on their recent behavior."

"There is some AI fatigue out there," said Danetz, "so leading with AI is not as much a priority for us as leading with the advanced outcomes we can deliver for brands."

Ogilvy, for example, is tapping AI to deliver personalized experiences for fans in the growing world of women's sports. Jesse Echeverría, director of acquisition, performance strategy and media at Ogilvy USA, said launching distinctive work that doesn't just "pinkify" traditional sports campaigns is crucial.

"We're building predictive models that analyze fan behavior across platforms—from [streaming](#) services to social media—to anticipate (fan) needs and desires," he said. "This allows us to optimize media spend, personalize messaging, and even identify emerging trends before they hit their peak."

Ranking social listening above virality

While marketers have historically associated social media with the chase for virality, they are prioritizing social listening and community building this year.

"It's no longer about being everywhere at once," said Scott Fisher, founder and chairman of Select Management Group. "It's about being meaningful to the right people at the right time."

With so many brands vying for their attention, VML Connections supervisor of social Ivy Everitt says marketers shouldn't let their enthusiasm about a launch or a product distract from the needs of their target consumers.

“Leveraging social listening to see what the everyday person and consumer is saying about your brand should be a top priority for marketers,” said Everitt. “I feel like we often see brands get so tied up in the ‘benefits’ of their product that they overlook what people are actually experiencing or feeling.”

Everitt added that social listening often replaces the desire to “hop on viral trends just for the sake of it,” which she said can blur a brand's identity.

To avoid missing the mark, brands and agencies are focused on making more educated creative decisions in the social space. Creative [agency](#) Day One CEO and co-founder Josh Rosenberg said this year the shop is “doubling down” on its wing dedicated to gathering youth insights that informs their work, Ask [Gen Z](#).

“We know that youth drives culture, culture drives relevance, and relevance leads to legacy,” he said.

Pursuing meaningful partnerships

As [influencer marketing](#) matures, brands are recognizing the value of long-term partnerships in maintaining both audience attention and trust.

“These relationships not only create sustained value but also integrate [creators](#) as true brand advocates, helping everyone grow,” said Fisher. “Consumers are also more likely to trust a creator's opinion when they see them using a product or service repeatedly, and that's a top priority.”

In a saturated market, Everitt stressed that stronger ties are necessary for partnerships to stand out—especially when “consumers are getting smarter about marketing and advertising every day,” she said.

“As the industry matures, the focus will shift from follower counts and likes to meaningful engagement and measurable ROI,” said Glenn Ginsburg, president of QYOU Media.

“Partnerships will require a deeper alignment between brands and creators, ensuring content resonates authentically with target audiences.”

Challenging channel siloes

This year, marketers are focused on sharing resources and maintaining consistent standards for all marketing channels. Beyond holding influencer marketing to higher measurement standards, brands are also tapping into advanced data in more traditional channels like out-of-home (OOH).

Raj Lala, vice president of demand sales and development at Vistar Media, said continuing to blend often-siloed performance and brand marketing tactics is a priority this year.

“Often the missing piece to a performance-focused campaign is a branding and awareness element,” said Lala. “Brands that invested more in awareness-driven tactics alongside their performance media, such as [programmatic](#) OOH, saw better performance in [lower-funnel](#) conversion tactics across all other digital channels.”

As a company with a wide range of media products, TelevisaUnivision is well-versed in repurposing content and expanding partnerships. Creators are now featured in half the network’s branded content campaigns, up from 13% two years ago, said senior vice president of social strategy Leslie Koch.

“Creator content will continue to drive marketing impact in 2025 and will expand ‘beyond the phone’ to linear programming, digital, audio, and experiential platforms,” she said. “Creators are front and center in social content across the industry, providing advertisers with a massive opportunity to connect with younger audiences.”

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