

3 trends marketers overlooked in 2024 and how to capitalize on them in 2025

Article

In the last 12 months cookies got a stay of execution, [TikTok](#) did not (yet), AI exploded, and viral content cluttered our feeds. So much happened in [marketing](#) in 2024, it can be difficult

to cut through the noise and take stock of what to focus on in 2025.

Here are three 2024 trends industry leaders say marketers must make sure they don't overlook in the year ahead.

1. YouTube needs to be a priority

“I don't think we're talking about YouTube enough,” said Josh Rosenberg, CEO and co-founder of Day One Agency. “Showing up on that platform in the right way can be a big lift, but it's where millions are engaged, especially next-gen consumers. It's TV for an entire generation and opens up a world of creative possibility.”

Advertisers will be investing in YouTube next year, with US ad revenues projected to increase by 13.2%, per our November 2024 forecast. And users do view the platform as TV. Two in 5 of YouTube's \$9.83 billion US ad dollars will go to [connected TV](#) (CTV) this year.

YouTube's short-form potential may be on the verge of an explosion if this month's TikTok ban comes to fruition. Many TikTok users will migrate to YouTube Shorts, making the product even more powerful.

“We would like to see more brands center [YouTube] in their 2025 plans,” Rosenberg said.

2. AI is more than just a buzzword

“Over the past year, many organizations began adopting AI with a primary focus on efficiency,” said Amanda Richman, vice president of global media sales at Microsoft Advertising. “While this is a great starting point, the true value of AI lies in moving beyond the hype cycle and applying it to business scenarios that unlock human potential.”

Two specific areas for AI unlock include improving ad targeting and disrupting search. AI allows contextual targeting to become more complex and specific than it has in the past. This will make contextual targeting an important strategy as third-party identifiers become less reliable.

“The rise of contextual optimization is a misunderstood force in the post-cookie era,” according to Eric Shiffman, vice president of product marketing at Yieldmo. “While many associate it with a ‘back-to-basics’ approach, AI-driven contextual insights (and the expansion of what context truly means) are delivering sophisticated and scalable targeting that rivals audience-based methods—without the privacy concerns.”

AI is also changing how consumers search. “AI tools changing consumers’ search behavior will have a massive impact on use of Google Search, which in turn will drive a large shift in ad budgets that currently spend heavily on Adwords,” said Leslie Lee, senior vice president of marketing at Vistar Media.

In 2025, marketers need to be familiar with the different applications of AI and the way these uses are changing both ad-tech capabilities and consumer behavior.

3. Authentic storytelling isn’t optional

“Authenticity” has been used to describe everything from lo-fi production to consumer trust to diverse representations, according to James Heath, vice president of Así Creators at TelevisaUnivision. In an era of MrBeast-style content designed to game algorithms and cookie-cutter generative AI (genAI) content, authentic story-telling will win attention.

Heath pointed to the “Who TF Did I Marry?” series where a previously unknown [creator](#) took over TikTok telling a lengthy story about her own life. “It’s not polished; it’s not gamified—it’s great storytelling,” he said. “Audiences crave content that breaks through and connects on a personal level. This is critical for brands to understand, especially when trying to drive [down-funnel](#) impact.”

Brands need to invest in “compelling, sharable content” in order to achieve virality and drive both engagement and sales, said Glenn Ginsburg, president of QYOU Media.

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