

How marketers are navigating the boom of AI-powered social media ad tools

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“Most marketers want to be cutting-edge, and to be able to say that they’re exploring new technology,” Jack Johnston, associate director at Tinuiti, said about AI’s explosion into social

media tools. “But our focus is not just being gimmicky and tapping into AI because it’s AI, but doing it because there’s a real business value and a positive impact that can come from it.”

With the rise of AI has come an influx of tools touting new AI-enabled features. But just because it’s hyped, doesn’t mean it’s effective. “Whenever we’re vetting a new technology, we want to slowly scale it to prove its value before we instruct [clients] to buy into it,” Johnston said.

Marketers make time for testing. Johnston’s team leans on the native AI-powered social media features (such as **TikTok’s** Creative Assistant to suggest audio and stickers) for smaller clients that are interested in being more nimble. “Where we’ve seen the most value is really for brands that might not have the resources or time to develop their own creative or draw data,” he said.

- Almost half (49.2%) of US CMOs are using AI for content creation, according to a September 2023 report by Deloitte, Duke Fuqua, and the American Marketing Association. The same study found that 28.0% are using AI for marketing automation.
- Nearly 7 in 10 (67%) US marketers agree that one of the leading benefits of using generative AI is the ability to create content faster and save time, per March 2023 data by HubSpot.
- Last year, marketers worldwide also upped their use of AI to assist with social media activities, including editing and refining text (86%), developing new ideas (82%), and generating images (52%), per August 2023 data by Hootsuite.

“A lot of our exploratory testing has been very focused on time savings,” Johnston said. “Next, is figuring out a way to quantify that from a performance perspective... being able to tie that back to return-on-ad-spend improvements, clickthrough rate, or brand lift, for example.”

Some 43% of marketers worldwide say customer satisfaction is the most effective way to measure the success of AI-driven initiatives, according to a January 2024 report by Ascend2.

There are no shortage of platforms to test:

- **Meta** closed 2023 by testing over 20 new uses of generative AI across its platforms, enhancing search, business messaging, and more. Its October 2023 release includes features that generate different backgrounds for product images and copy variations.

- **TikTok's Creative Assistant** uses AI to analyze top-performing ads for inspiration and best practices, brainstorm video concepts, and refine scripts.
- **Snap** teamed up with Microsoft in September 2023 to integrate sponsored links in its chatbot, My AI.
- **Pinterest's** AI-powered inclusivity tool allows users to sort through images by body type, creating a positive, brand-safe environment for shoppable content.