

Checking in on some 2024 predictions: AI, Gen Alpha, attention, and audio

Article

In January, our EMARKETER Daily newsletter team made some [advertising and marketing predictions for 2024](#) on everything from AI to attention metrics.

The themes of our predictions have remained timely—AI is influencing algorithms, brands are engaging young people, and performance marketers are looking at the big picture—but they weren't all 100% accurate. Here's a look at how we did.

1. Meta, TikTok, and YouTube will compete for the ultimate generative AI feed

[Meta](#), [TikTok](#), and YouTube all made clear plays to incorporate AI into all of their offerings, from search to advertising to video and image editing. But AI-generated algorithm creation wasn't one of these focuses.

AI is certainly working in the background to keep algorithms engaging, but it isn't being marketed as a consumer-facing product in this way.

Outcome: Incorrect

2. Brands make big plays for Gen Alpha

Sorry [Gen Zers](#), Gen Alpha was the next big focus for brands in 2024. This was particularly true of beauty products, which young influencers like Evelyn GRWM have been showcasing on their own accounts. Shein and Casetify worked with Gen Alpha influencers, while [Claire's](#) focused on the generation with a new fragrance line. Drunk Elephant made a post about which of its products were safe for children. And Dior even launched a \$230 perfume for babies.

"We're starting to see more brands will tap into the Gen Alpha interest and opportunity," said Sky Canaves on our "[Behind the Numbers](#)" podcast. "They have to tread a little carefully because you don't really want to market anti-aging and very expensive skincare products to 10-year-olds, but I think there are other ways to approach it."

Expect to see even more plays for Gen Alpha in 2025. With the oldest Gen Alphas turning 12, kids have an increasing [influence](#) on purchase decisions.

Lawmakers are raising alarm about marketers targeting kids and kids' social media use in general. But Gen Alpha's spending power will only continue to grow, meaning marketers will keep going after the cohort.

Outcome: Correct

3. Performance marketers will integrate attention metrics into ROI

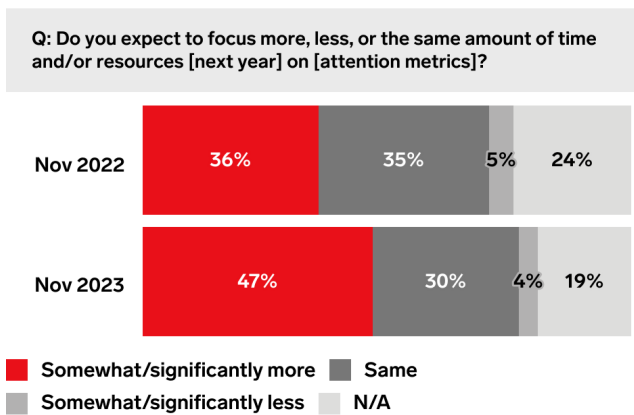
[Third-party cookies](#) may have received a stay of execution this year, but signal loss means marketers still don't have the visibility into consumer purchase journeys they once had. As a result, marketers are moving away from metrics like last-click attribution and toward more holistic ones, including attention metrics.

Nearly half (47%) of buy-side decision-makers expected their organization to focus somewhat or significantly more on attention metrics in 2024, according to a November 2023 Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) [survey](#). That was an increase of 11 percentage points over their expectations for 2023.

“Attention metrics are super important because a lot of other metrics that are used as a proxy for attention are easily gained, inefficient, and flatten content in a way that I think is really bad for high-quality content producers,” said our analyst Max Willens on our [“Behind the Numbers”](#) podcast.

Attention Metrics Have Risen in Advertisers' List of Priorities

% of US buy-side decision-makers, Nov 2022 vs. Nov 2023



Note: Nov 2022 n=223; Nov 2023 n=203
Source: Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), "2023 Outlook Survey," Nov 17, 2022; IAB, "2024 Outlook: A Snapshot into Ad Spend, Opportunities, and Strategies for Growth," Nov 30, 2023

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This prediction is very much still a work in progress. Without simple methodology and standardization, marketers are limited in their ability to use attention metrics. Keep an eye out for increased adoption in years to come.

Outcome: Correct

4. Cheaper, ad-supported tiers come to Spotify

We were incorrect about this one, but Spotify did make a number of ad plays and teased a new tier launch.

The digital audio company [rebranded its ad platform](#) from Spotify Ads Studio to Spotify Ads Manager in an effort to attract more programmatic ad-buyers. It launched a [supply-side platform \(SSP\)](#) offering video ad inventory. And it created a [revenue-sharing program](#) for podcast hosts.

Spotify suggested it will soon launch a new “super premium” tier on its Q3 earnings call, which would include higher sound quality and “a bunch of other things,” according to CEO David Ek.

The company will have to find a way to keep growing revenues this year. Close to half (45.7%) of US digital audio listeners will be Spotify listeners in 2025, a dominant figure that has reached saturation. Without the ability to grow subscriptions, Spotify will have two main options—get subscribers to spend more, or get more money from advertisers.

Outcome: Incorrect, but on the right track

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