

HubSpot

Talkwalker

2022






Social Media Trends

How to drive **success** in the accelerated age of the **'now'** consumer



Content

2022 Trends - Powered by consumers

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2022 Trends - Powered by consumers

1. TikTok will take over social media, leaving other platforms to adapt

A look at the rise of TikTok, and its growing dominance in the social media space. Also, how the other platforms are adapting to stay competitive.

2. Social ads will develop, as cookies get crunched

The cookie is dying. How will this impact the future of social advertising, and how will brands continue to offer more personalized services, while remaining compliant?

3. Social selling will simplify the customer journey

As the pandemic drives more consumers to buy online, this trend will look deeper into how the social platforms are tackling social selling, and how its demand will grow in the future.

4. Post-pandemic content will shape up to consumer needs

The pandemic created a world of online content consumers. They have greater expectations, and tastes, in content. How will this shape content in the future, with an always-on, snackability-demanding audience?

5. Omnichannel engagement will change the way consumers engage with social media

Consumers are no longer loyal to one channel - leading to content diffusing cross-platforms faster than ever. But, this also leads to more disinformation, and increased ease in sharing 'fake news.'

6. Maturing influencer marketing will finally come of age

Influencer marketing has grown up. With increased regulation and responsibility, more brands are taking them seriously. And following the pandemic, many have bigger and more engaged audiences than ever before. How will brands make the most of these opportunities?

2022 Trends - Powered by consumers

7. Brands will lead in social media decentralization

Communities are key - but not just within social media platforms. Many brands are now building their own in-house social networks, with in-app forums and features, to take back control of their audiences.

8. Metaverses will be the next consumer connection

What will the future of the internet look like? The biggest platforms are starting to visualize it now - an interactive community of users able to engage in a wide variety of social activities online. It's time for brands to get on board.

9. Brand inclusivity will be brand critical

CSR was big in 2020. Bigger in 2021. For 2022, brands are going to have to listen to, and act on, the social issues that matter most to their audiences. Companies are going to be integral to global change in the future.

10. Communities will develop, and take control

Consumers have a voice. It may be fairly quiet, but when those voices come together, in vast social communities, they're loud enough to change the world. Expect more vocality from users, and more socially driven changes from communities - with brands adapting quickly to react.

INTRO

Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger: Consumers continue to rule

Forget following your CEO, consumers are now in charge of your brand. We've been deep into the Age of the Consumer for some time, but the pandemic accelerated their takeover, putting them firmly in charge of 2022 and beyond.

They want more personalized content. They want faster service. They want better experiences. And they want it all now.

For your brand to survive, you will have to listen to, and respond, to their demands.

Once again, we've reached out to global experts, industry veterans, and our audience to put together a list of the top trends for the year to come. Including:

- Valuable insights into why these trends matter.
- Inspiring campaigns from brands already engaging with the trends.
- Takeaways you can action today to start driving better results for the coming years.



1 TikTok will take over social media, leaving other platforms to adapt

Overview

If there is one trend that is almost guaranteed as we move into 2022, it's the continued domination of TikTok. The short-term video platform has broken download records, quickly becoming **the go-to app for connecting with current and future consumers**. Powered by a highly personalized content recommendation system, TikTok can help brands gain exposure to and connect with a qualified, engaged audience. As the app looks to introduce an **e-commerce aspect and monetization model**, brands that want to connect with consumers need to be TikTok savvy.

Trend analysis

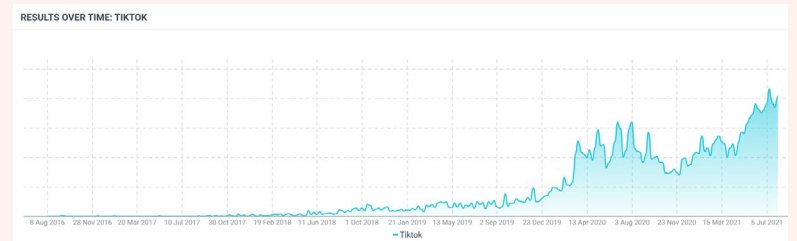
TikTok awareness has grown greatly since its inception. Conversations grew steadily until the end of 2019, and the app then spiked in popularity as people spent more time indoors during the pandemic. A 61% increase in mentions year over year during the first half of 2021, converted into new users, making it the first non-Facebook app to reach 3 billion global downloads.

Truffle Social @TruffleSocial · Jul 20
Sooo @tiktok_uk has become the first non @Facebook app to reach 3 billion downloads #globally. 🤯

It's about time for all those dismissing the app to kindly take a seat.



TikTok's takeover is causing a stir on social media.



Conversations around TikTok have been growing since the end of 2017 and gained traction during the first half of 2020, to peak in July of 2021.
Aug 2016-Jul 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

Expert insights

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“With TikTok, there is a shift from views to creations. There is no ‘formula’ in posting ‘the right thing’. A platform that embraces diversity, TikTok encourages users to project images of themselves without thinking too much about complying with certain standards. Anyone can be a creator or a trendsetter. With this democratization, content becomes more hyperlocal and thrives on being ‘recek’ as the Indonesians would say – where content that is humorous, irreverent, snackable.”



Cassandra Tan

Director, Insights and Analytics, at Universal Music Group, Southeast Asia and Korea

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“At TikTok, we believe that businesses of all sizes deserve to be discovered, and we empower brands to grow through creative content and storytelling.

Today’s consumers are increasingly tech-savvy and place a premium on keeping up with the latest trends. They are also looking for short, fun, snackable content on the go. Combine these two forces and it becomes increasingly difficult for brands to compete for user attention, especially with ads - because, people have told us time and time again, they don’t like ads.”



Shant Oknayan

General Manager, Business Solutions, Middle East Africa Turkey and Pakistan, TikTok

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“According to our research, 68% of marketers do not plan on using TikTok for marketing purposes in 2021. However, 32% are interested in learning about this platform. If you are looking to diversify your marketing beyond Instagram, look closely at TikTok. This is especially important if you are targeting Gen Z with your marketing.”



Michael Stelzner

Founder of Social Media Examiner and Social Media Marketing World

Expert insights

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The continued rise of TikTok is unquestionable. The platform offers such a low barrier to entry when it comes to producing creative, bitesize video content, whilst offering the opportunity of huge organic reach & engagement. You can also repurpose the videos & share them on other platforms like LinkedIn, like this. Some of the TikTok videos I've shared on LinkedIn have helped generate hundreds of thousands of revenue for our video & social media marketing agency.”



Dan Knowlton

Co-Founder & CMO at Knowlton

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As TikTok continues to grow its active users, we will see new opportunities for journalists and news organisations to use this platform in a way which is fitting with the platform's idiosyncratic culture and format.”



Daniella Lebor

Director at APCO Worldwide

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In 2020, TikTok was the world's most downloaded app and with more and more consumers choosing to use the creative and humorous entertainment platform, brands are waking up to the opportunity to capture a new audience and showcase their brand personality. This popularity has also encouraged the more established social media platforms, including Instagram and YouTube, to experiment with new content forms that will grab the attention of the TikTok generation.”



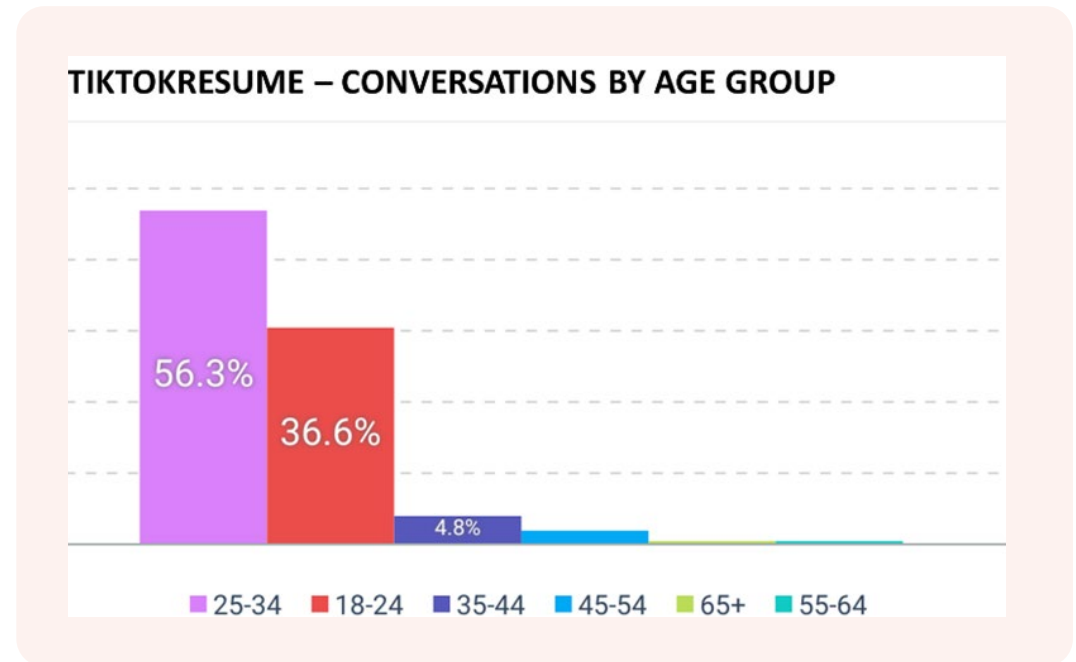
Ben Jeffries

CEO, [Influencer.com](https://www.influencer.com)

BRAND EXAMPLE

TikTok knows best

Conversations around the #TikTokResumes sparked in July when the brand **announced this new feature** that would bring more value to the consumer experience. On the path to becoming a brand that stands for more than just entertainment, TikTok Resumes allows users to post their resumes and apply to jobs directly through the platform. With over 3.4K online conversations and over 300 million views on TikTok, this hashtag has been gaining traction among younger generations who want to express their creativity when applying to jobs.



*Gen Z definitely holds the greatest interest around this topic.
Jul 2021-Aug 2021, Talkwalker Consumer
Intelligence Acceleration Platform.*

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Follow your audience

If your audience is on TikTok, you should be too. Connect with them, and know where and about what they're engaging with. To succeed on the platform, you need to make sure you're a part of the conversations they're having.

Throw out tradition

Such a sudden and strong rise in user-generated content (UGC) has **changed the way many traditional industries have been marketing**. Some brands will remain reluctant to recognize TikTok's potential, but the pandemic has shown just how crucial this new app is to access a more direct way to engage with consumers.

Prepare for a monetization model

Even with all the undeniable success, TikTok has to continue innovating to keep ahead of the competition. To capitalize on the momentum and potential, the platform is working on improving monetization processes to keep both creators and consumers from jumping ship or losing interest. Keep this in mind when planning your 2022 campaigns.

Keep expansion on the horizon

Recently, TikTok rolled out some **new restrictions on DMs for teens** to make sure the app is safe and available for every age. As the app grows, so will its features and services. Keep up or get left behind.



Overview

As **Google** works to phase out cookie tracking by 2023, the future of social advertising remains to be defined. For brands, this means learning to balance the need for personalized services and the need for consent and compliance. While the **"cookieless future" seems bright** for advertisers, good publishers, and consumers, those that have been profiting off of privacy-invasive data collection from users will need to rethink their strategy.

Trend analysis

Advertising has come a long way, and with social media, brands are able to reach larger audiences than before, increasing brand awareness and engagement. This past year, social platforms have become a huge asset for advertisers to reach consumers in a more personal and direct way. The internet's ability to collect **billions of data points on users** is an absolute gold mine for brands. Advertisers have realized the importance of social ads and how crucial they will be moving forward.



Expert insights

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The customer journey is not linear. We all know this by now. It is also shorter than ever. The path to purchase is becoming more and more unpredictable but for sure Community Commerce is and will continue to play a major role not only in driving conversion but also in shrinking the purchase journey as we know it. Think shoppable ad formats but also organic trends like #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt; those are at the core of transforming the traditional customer journey from one where hesitation and browsing take the lead, to one that goes straight to purchase, thanks to the power of social proof.”



Tony Kayouka

Head of Digital & Social Media, Leo Burnett MEA

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Social commerce has experienced an exponential increase and has significantly changed e-commerce. This trend will continue in 2022. Even TikTok recently jumped on the e-commerce trend and now offers shopping links. In addition, corporate influencers will become more and more important - whether it's to achieve marketing targets or to recruit staff.”



Rita Löschke

Managing Director, Leipzig School of Media

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Social networks want to occupy a lower place in the purchase funnel of goods and services, and the ease of purchasing via social commerce (including during live events) will be the real game-changer. This will have an impact on the Customer Experience that will be increasingly fragmented and distributed across various channels, as well as the data generated that will need to be handled by management through a single, ordered, and consistent measurement framework. In this sense, data strategy will become fundamental to understand user behavior and optimize performance.”



Gabriele Carrieri

Digital Manager, Servier Italia

Expert insights

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“Killing the Cookie is a power play from one of the most important and influential tech giants but also the greatest opportunity for marketers to abandon lazy tactics and develop a more direct relationship with prospective and existing customers. Paid social and email marketing will become increasingly important, but the winners coming out of this will be the brands who understand the power of the customer relationship.”



Toby Daniels

Founder, Social Media Week,
Chief Innovation Officer,
Adweek

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“This year, consumers and brands alike stayed online due largely to the global pandemic. This uptick in all things digital resulted in a huge spike in social ads, a trend that is sure to continue into 2022. Brands turned to ads as a quick solution, which increased competition in an already crowded ad space. Social platforms have become a huge asset for brands trying to reach their audiences. The brands that will come out on top are those that use consumer insights and social ads to drive business impact and provide hyper-relevant content for targeted audiences.”



Tanvee Gupta

Head of Demand Generation,
Talkwalker

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“Whether it’s Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, or social ads, innovation is needed to capture users’ short attention spans. Those who focus on interactive content, moments of surprise, and emotion will take their content marketing to the next level and be able to meet the demands and viewing habits of target audiences today.”



Doreen Kunze

Marketing Manager, Leipzig
School of Media

BRAND EXAMPLE

GoPro really goes for it

GoPro has a whopping total of 18.2 million Instagram followers, 2.23 million Twitter followers, over 10.7 million Facebook followers, and a widely used hashtag (#GoPro). They consistently make use of their social channels in a variety of ways, always making sure their content is on-brand and channel-specific.

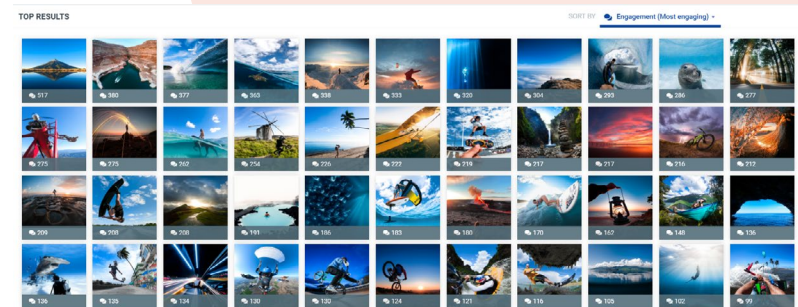
GoPro runs consistent marketing campaigns, such as their Photo of the Day competition, to increase engagement and maintain customer loyalty, and showcase the quality of their products. Their social media posts and overall presence is better than any pop-up or clickable ad because it's genuine and representative of their brand and mission. With clearly thought-out initiatives and content, it's no surprise their following is as large as it is.

How consumers are driving the trend

49% of internet users say they're likely to buy brands they see advertised when browsing, creating a huge opportunity for advertisers to grow through this tactic. However, success here hinges on your ability to deliver personalized ad experiences that speak to needs or ideas that consumers already have in mind. User expectations for ads vary across generations, so the trick is to gain a deep understanding of your audiences' preferences and build your strategy around them.



GoPro's Photo of the Day competition helps drive consumer engagement for the brand.



We can see GoPro's Photo of the Day competition bringing engagement to the brand across social media platforms. Aug 2020-Jul 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Tap into the trust of user-generated content (UGC)

With so many people installing ad blockers and actively trying to avoid ads, you'll have to get creative. Most consumers trust other consumers over brands, so ensure UGC content is a part of your game plan.

Time for some target practice

Archery is no longer just for Robin Hood. Facebook alone has **52,000 data points**, including every message you've ever sent or received, every time you've logged on, messaged, downloaded files, and more. With such an enormous amount of data available to advertisers, brands can get ahead with extremely targeted and personalized ads.

Make metrics your new BFF

Make sure your decisions are data-driven, with insights into your consumers. Develop a complete analytical picture of your customers, then shape your strategy around it.

Engage, entertain, and educate

It is inherently difficult to nail the tone of an ad, but one thing that can be effective is pairing the pitch with information or other helpful content such as **Whole Foods' community blog that provides recipes, tips, and local vendors.**



3

Social selling will simplify the customer journey

Overview

While social commerce was previously focused on ads or promotions, platforms are beginning to provide new and innovative selling solutions that focus on making the journey easier for buyers. For example, Instagram introduced **new shopping features** which allow social media users to purchase items without ever leaving the app. Moving into 2022, brands should reevaluate the purchasing paths they offer and consider taking advantage of social selling opportunities through Instagram posts, Reels, Stories, and more.

Trend analysis

As social media platforms are starting to provide e-commerce merchants with new shopping features, channels such as Instagram have become synonymous with social media influencers. These influencers endorse brands through strategic partnerships, promoting their products and services to their large, loyal follower bases. This influencer marketing push marks a big opportunity for brands to align their products and services with relevant influencers to meet new audiences in a place where they are already spending most of their day. If you're not already considering this strategy, now is the time: **69% of marketers plan to disburse more money on Instagram influencers** than any other market this year.



Expert insights

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“The growth of social selling - seamless social selling is the way of the future and social ads are adapting to the need. TikTok ads showed that ‘native’ advertising is a lot more compelling for a savvy audience that can see through staged promotions.”



Fab Giovanetti

Founder of **Alt Marketing School**

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“2022 will see the continuation of TikTokesque functionality popping up on social platforms as TikTok maintains its app download lead. In-platform shopping will keep evolving. We’ll also see if live audio spaces become popular with the mainstream after some major players scrambled to add them in 2021 in response to Clubhouse’s sudden user surge.”



Dr. Karen Sutherland

Senior Lecturer, University of the Sunshine Coast |
Co-Founder, **Dharana Digital**

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“Social selling will continue to gain in importance in 2022. On the one hand, influencers who have been promoting products via their channels with vouchers will increasingly launch their own creations. Capital Bra with its iced tea or CrispyRob’s chips are good examples. On the other hand, companies will develop new formats such as product livestreams with direct customer feedback.”



Thilo Wessel

Head of Social Media International, **Kaufland**

Expert insights

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TikTok will continue paving the way and setting the tone for other platforms. It's not just about TikTok-like formats such as reels or short videos; the way TikTok develops content, sets trends, and engages users is unique. But this algorithm will not be easy to copy.”



Janni Deitenbach

Social Team Lead, Douglas

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For me, the trends of 2022 are The Power of Social & Community Commerce. Young brands like “Charles,” “Shihuitan” and others are showing how sales will have to be re-thought in the future. The impact on brands is huge. So are the opportunities. Let's tackle it.”



Christoph Pietsch

Chief Growth Officer, Publicis
Groupe Germany

“

2022 will see an uptick in social selling as sales teams transition from face-to-face to remote selling and new-age buyers preferring digital channels for making a purchase.”



Shaleen Sehgal

Digital & Social Media Expert

BRAND EXAMPLE

PrettyLittleThing's pretty (not so) little giveaway

Social commerce is not just selling on social media; you need consistent interactions that lead to consumer interest. Social commerce has gradually been increasing in popularity over the last few years, however, due to COVID-19's consequent lockdown, social commerce has experienced an explosive surge as users familiarized themselves with e-commerce.

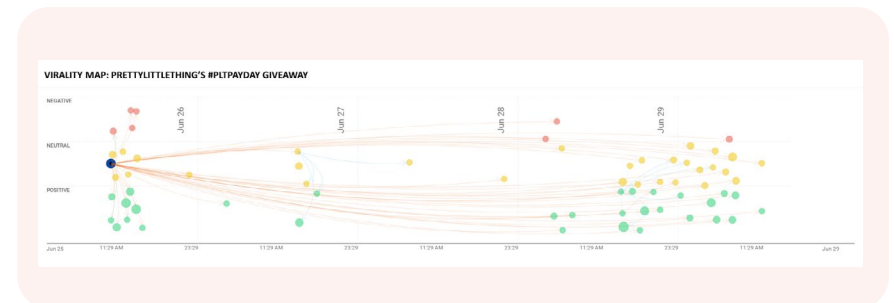
PrettyLittleThing is an online clothing brand that uses influencer marketing to engage their community, posting an average of six times a day to increase their chances of visibility. In June 2021, PrettyLittleThing's summer giveaway received over 8.7K engagements. The Virality Map of the above tweet shows how most of the reactions were positive.

How consumers are driving the trend

To get a consumer's attention and keep it, brands are having to think outside the box and get creative. Livestreams have become a popular way in which consumers can interact and even purchase products immediately. The more you know about your consumers, the better you'll be at creating content that attracts them. As brands catch on, you can expect more shoppertainment content on social media platforms.



PrettyLittleThing's giveaway was a big engagement driver for the brand.



This virality map demonstrates the sentiment over time related to PrettyLittleThing's summer giveaway.

Jun 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Your visuals should attract

If you're using social media to sell, be as eye-catching as possible. According to statistics from Instagram, **70% of shopping enthusiasts turn to the platform to discover products**. Use image analytics to find industry-engaging images, sure to stop a serial scroller in their tracks.

Get personal

Consumers want personalized experiences, and brands that want to stay competitive need to get onboard. Try to be as responsive as possible. Consider chatbots or **consumer analytics tools** to guarantee the customer journey is as smooth as can be.

Simplify and make it seamless

You can no longer neglect your **customer experience**. The faster and easier it is to navigate your platform and process, the better your chances of making a sale. No one wants a complicated ten-step process just to check out.

UGC as a way to connect

Connect with your consumers with user-generated content. Whether it's improving how reviews are accessed or collaborating with happy customers, **UGC is a great way to sell** on social as it generates trust while increasing engagement.

Keep up with current social commerce trends

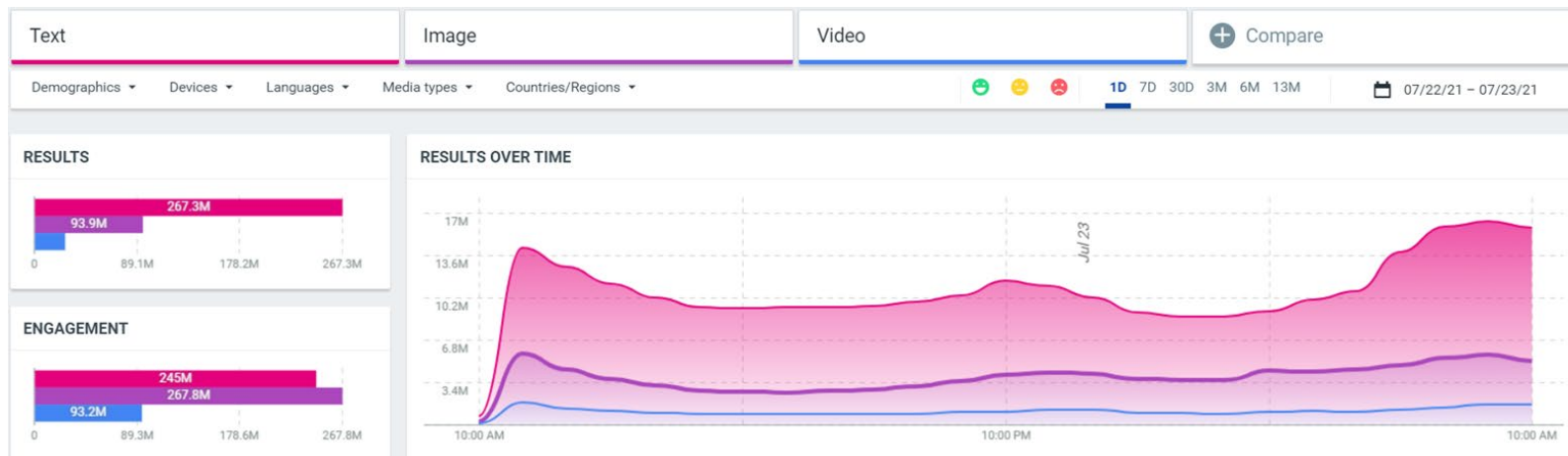
In 2022, more and more platforms will incorporate or revamp social commerce into their planning, such as **Pinterest launching buyable pins**. Upgraded functionality within social commerce is the way to go.



Overview

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marketers have had to adapt to the content trends that followed, challenging the existing rules of customer relationships and brand building. Social media was already an integral part of our lives, the pandemic drastically increased usage all over the world. There are **over half a billion more people using social media worldwide** than at the same time last year, indicating an almost 14% year-over-year increase.

In order to remain visible to their potential customers, brands must communicate in local and detailed terms, targeting specific audiences based on what is most relevant to them. This might mean creating specific content for a generation, location, gender, or hobby. Now that companies have their own personal data, users expect them to provide tailored experiences across the entire customer journey.



*Although there are more branded text mentions, both video and image content drive more engagement per mention.
Jul 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.*



Josh Constine - SignalFire ✓
@JoshConstine

So...Mark Zuckerberg, Spotify CEO @eldsjal, and Shopify CEO @Tobi just joined me on my Clubhouse show @PRESSCLUBhouse to discuss the creator economy!

Come join our \$1 Trillion market cap room
joinclubhouse.com/event/PQ7vYwvM



10:03 PM · Mar 18, 2021 · Twitter Web App

53 Retweets 28 Quote Tweets 503 Likes

The rise of Clubhouse made everyone stand up and listen.

Trend analysis

Although text conversations have the highest amount of results, engagement per mention tells a different story. Text results receive 0.91 engagements per mention while images receive 2.85 and video results receive 1.5.

Media consumption trends have been accelerated by the lockdown. With consumers stuck at home, they've turned online for information, entertainment, and connection.

This has driven an uptick in content creation, to fill the growing demand. Consumers want stories shaped for them, not only containing the information they want, but also in a style they want to consume. This led to a particular increase in live audio and video - a format that was already loved, but now with added interaction and engagement.

Brands will have to expand their content strategies in 2022 and beyond, both identifying the content, and style of content, their consumers need.

Expert insights

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“Due to Clubhouse and Twitter Spaces, audio content is the social media trend to watch for 2022. It’s perfect because you’re able to share valuable content and connect with your audience through live conversations. And you don’t need to be on camera or have fancy equipment.”



Madalyn Sklar

Twitter Marketing Expert

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“With consumers accessing more content post-pandemic, brands have to compete for even shorter attention spans across an ever-growing set of platforms. Understanding which platforms help tell which parts of your brand story is going to be key. The opportunity lies in using different platforms to tell a more cohesive and differentiated story.”



Ivy Esquero

Head of Enterprise & Loyalty Marketing, Hilton APAC

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“Habits have transformed over the past year. From increased digital content consumption to online retail, we’ve changed the way we shop, explore, and interact with each other. And it will only continue to change and evolve. The algorithm has a lot to answer for in the way platforms feed us information, as well. User attention span has diminished while the need for meaningful and value-added content is a requisite demand, too. As it stands, Arabic content is not where it should be despite demand. Right now, there’s 1% of Arabic content online, but an Arabic online audience of 5%. Coupled with the post-pandemic trends and changes, content has to fill the gap between supply and demand to meet shaping trends and habits.”



Mike Alnaji

Director of Content Creators & Brand Partnerships, New Media Academy

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“The pandemic has had a seismic impact on the media sector in many parts of the world; there are fewer journalists in full-time employment and many publications are prioritizing coverage for advertisers. That makes the job of any communications person much more difficult. We have to focus on owned media, set up newsrooms within our organizations to produce good content, and pivot to new content formats like audio to remain relevant to our stakeholders.”



Alex Maalouf

Corporate Communications Director MEA, Schneider Electric

Expert insights

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“2022 will be about substance over spin. Amid Covid, geopolitical tension, climate change, and a firehouse of fake news - purpose, action, and authentic dialogue will make brands and organisations stand out.”



Tim Williamson

Managing Director, APAC,
Telum Media

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“The shift in consumer behaviour during the pandemic has led brands to rethink digital business models to meet the growing needs and expectations of their audiences. A key goal is to increase social trust around your brand. In a more crowded digital landscape, it is harder to capture insights and information that position data-informed creative as the ultimate currency to build that confidence. The decrease in offline experiences also creates an opportunity to complement data-driven content with immersive activity including influencer marketing, UGC content, and live streaming that reflect the brand’s unique offline personality to build human connectedness and authenticity.”



Samantha Bartel

CEO and Managing Partner,
Instinctif Partners MENA

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“The pandemic accelerated a trend toward creating less content - but ensuring it’s of higher quality. Producing content for the sake of producing content no longer meets the bar for brands who are tuned in to what their audiences are looking for. It’s time to up your game.”



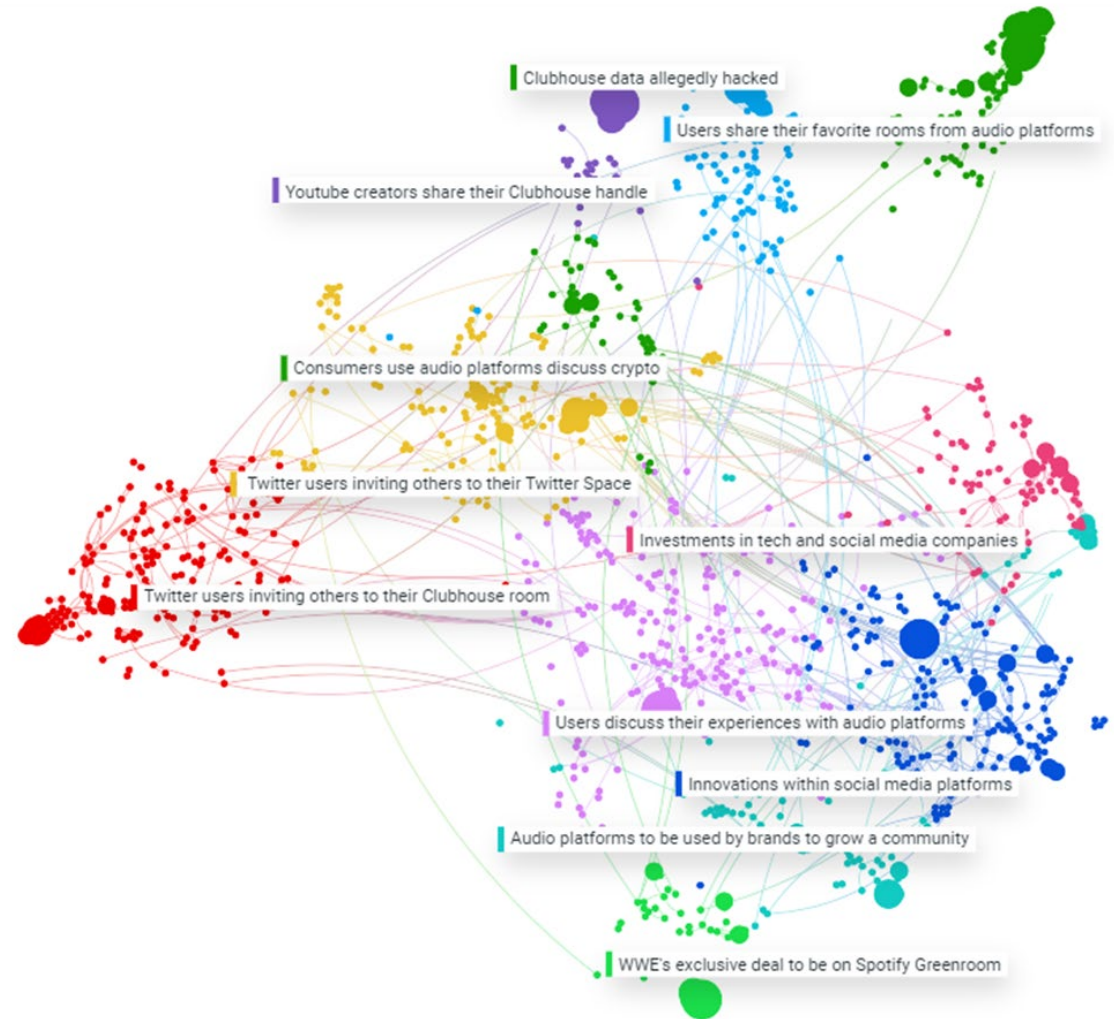
Michelle Garrett

Public Relations Consultant,
Garrett Public Relations

How consumers are driving the trend

Content demands adapted as people's lives changed. The shift from working from the office to working from home, meant people wanted more personalized experiences shaped around their lives.

As that situation flips again, expect demands to expand again. The traditional 5-day office week is no longer guaranteed, so brands will have to offer a broader catalog of experiences to meet a broader range of lifestyles. To keep ahead, successful brands will have had to keep their ears open to fully understand their customers.



The many conversations, and how they intertwine, as seen through a Conversation Cluster. Aug 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Be specific

Make conscious decisions about who you are marketing to, which consumers you're targeting. Do your research and get access to **consumer insights** so you're always creating content for a specific audience, whether that's a generation, location, or language.

Tap into the realm of audio

Many different types of content and channels surged in popularity this year, aided by the realities of pandemic restrictions. Expand on audio and podcasts creation, to prioritize live conversations with your audience.

Whip up more snack-sized content

Time is money, and the pandemic has produced consumers who are acutely aware of their time and what content is worthy to consume. Keep your content digestible in length, form, and style. And, ensure it's exclusive and personalized.

Improve the customer experience

Seamless, stress-free, and simple. Make it a walk in the park for a potential customer to consider and purchase from you. That might mean including VR features to make it easier for consumers to buy without seeing or handling a physical product.



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Omnichannel engagement will change the way consumers engage with social media

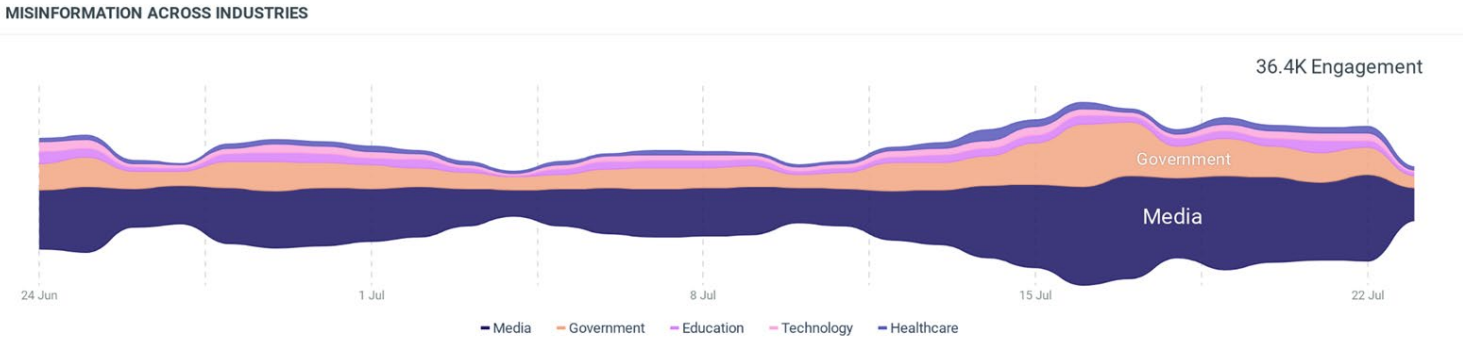
Overview

64.5% of internet users receive breaking news from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram instead of traditional media. With this rise in information comes the opportunity to expand audiences, and grow your consumer connections, by providing the information consumers want.

But there's also an increased risk of fake news and misleading content - if you aren't telling the right story, consumers will find it elsewhere, with content that is possibly detrimental to your business. For brands to keep up or stay afloat for the next year, it's imperative to exploit every advantage. This means getting your hands on consumer insights.

Trend analysis

There are over 8 million results of misinformation in online conversations since the beginning of 2021. Misinformation continues to affect our day-to-day conversations, regardless of the industry. The visual below plots mentions of misinformation alongside various industries over time. Media (dark blue) continues to grow in this respect, as both traditional media and social media are the channels through which misinformation spreads, and also the ones that must challenge it directly.



Conversations around misinformation continue to grow, as brands look for new ways to tackle the crisis. Jun 2021-Jul 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

Expert insights

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“In 2022, social listening, and subsequently social intelligence, will be a key trend. Brands aren’t seeing the full picture of their industry and audience if they’re not performing social listening, gathering insights, and making strategic decisions based on those learnings.”



Nick Martin

Social Engagement Specialist
at Hootsuite

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“Digital road mapping is essential to stay top of mind for your customers. Ensure the transition to a transaction is easy and memorable by providing convenient options at every point in their journey with you.”



Ming Johanson

CEO of Marketing Jumpstart

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“Co-creation platforms (IG, TikTok, Koji) will continue to influence pop culture as long as they keep providing the creator economy with templates, filters, and assets that allow users to experiment without the need for technical expertise. The brands, platforms, and creators that facilitate the most co-creation will have the most opportunities to successfully enter consumer conversations. To do this with confidence and precision they need to have insight into consumer conversations as they relate to a brand’s narrative. Having a finger on the pulse of audience insights will continue to be essential in order to stand out in the crowded digital content ecosystem.”



Susana Salazar

Director of Digital
Transformation,
Communications, Media & PR,
Bacardi

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“I think ‘social audio’ will become mainstream in 2022. This idea is largely underutilized at the moment, but apps like Twitter Spaces, Clubhouse, Spotify Greenroom & Deep Dive will soon be commonplace. Most importantly, we will start to see browser-based variations appearing for these sites and that will be an absolute game-changer.”



Keith Keller

Twitter Marketing Specialist

Expert insights

“

Video has become a common language to many of us, helping to meet our evolving need for connection, which is stronger than ever before. This is why we're seeing more people turn to live-streamed, immersive and relatable content on YouTube to find that sense of togetherness. There is an opportunity for brands and creatives to connect more deeply with their audiences by tapping into the relatable and participatory creativity by YouTube's diverse community of content creators.”



Tarek Amin

Director for the Middle East and North Africa, YouTube

“

Video has been growing its share as the favored content format in social. In 2022, we can expect to see more nuanced sub-spaces in video rather than the conventional short vs long clusters of content/media.”



Umesh Krishna K

Marketing Director, Swiggy

“

As Zoe Scaman puts it: Brands use social media for wide reach and engagement, the real lifeblood of social is to understand the way “deep niche spaces” have risen, grown, and sustained themselves across fan communities.”



Abigail Goh

Connections Strategist at Digitas MY

BRAND EXAMPLE

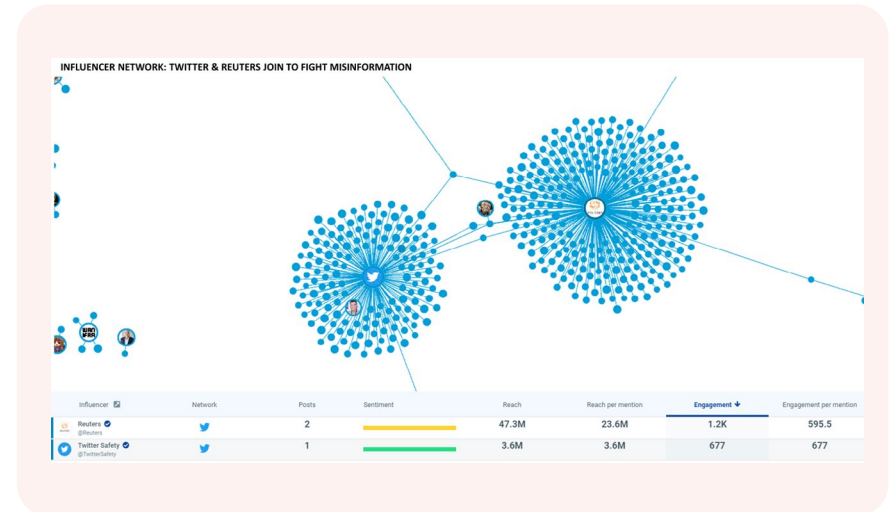
Twitter + Reuters join forces to battle misinformation

In an effort to fight the problem of misinformation, social media platforms and traditional media have been careful about the spread of fake news. Recently, Twitter **announced a partnership** with The Associated Press and Reuters aimed at ensuring only high-quality content appears at the top of search results for popular topics.

By working more directly with AP and Reuters, who also partner with Facebook on fact checks, Twitter says it will be able to increase the speed and scale to which it can add this additional information to tweets and elsewhere on its platform. In particular, that means in times where news is breaking and when facts are in dispute as a story emerges, Twitter will be able to quickly turn to these more trusted sources to improve how contextual information is added to conversations.

How consumers are driving the trend

While bots are sometimes used to perpetuate fake news, internet users typically play a huge role in the spread of misinformation online. **A recent study** revealed that lack of attention was the driving factor behind 51% of misinformation sharing on social media. With this in mind, brands should keep close tabs on what their audience is reading and believing and commit to sharing factual information that builds consumer trust.



This influencer network shows the interactions that the Twitter Safety account and the Reuters account have received in less than 24 hours to their partnership announcement. Aug 2020-Jul 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Tackle disinformation

Misinformation can be critical to your brand reputation. Provide your audience with the information they are looking for, otherwise, someone else will. Social media is a powerful tool, but it has to be carried out with goodwill and appropriate consideration.

Focus on your audience

All your social media pages should be honest and informative. Ensure you don't alienate your consumers by sharing irrelevant, inaccurate information. Once you lose a customer's trust, you lose them to a competitor.

Share information that resonates

In 2022, posting and sharing videos is fundamental for any marketing campaign that wants to succeed. 84% of consumers said watching a brand's video convinced them to make a purchase or subscribe to a service.



Overview

Influencer marketing is now a dominant marketing methodology. As the impact of social media continues to grow, so too does the weight and influence of influencers. New rules have resulted in increased influencer regulation and responsibility, while **many influencers have thrived with drastic audience** and engagement growth.

Influencer marketing now offers better results, with fewer risks.

The brands that make the most of these opportunities are those that dig into what makes consumers tick and identify the influencers that will drive the most impact. If you're not considering influencer marketing moving into 2022, you're at risk of missing out on expanding your customer base.

Trend analysis

Influencer disruption was already starting to happen, but the pandemic definitely sped things up. The incredible growth of TikTok, **"unfiltered" or unscripted content, and the rise of everyday influencers** have all witnessed huge breakthroughs in a short amount of time. The Influencer Marketing Hub's 2021 survey reported **67% of respondents are using Instagram for influencer marketing.**

As the line between social media and e-commerce becomes increasingly blurred, influencer marketing connects with consumers, allowing brands to flourish and see immediate results.

Expert insights

“

“Influencer marketing is no longer about blindly throwing precious budget in search of influencers with large followings. It’s about collaborating with content creators and developing relationships with them for a variety of mutual benefits to their business and yours.”



Neal Schaffer

Author, *The Age of Influence*

“

“The maturation of influencer marketing - Brands want to work with influencers who are not just amplifiers but have a social conscience. The pandemic has shown us that an over-consumeristic society isn’t all good for the planet. Influencers that have clear vision and purpose on their niche will thrive.”



Gordon Glenister

Global Head of Influencer Marketing at the Branded Content Marketing Association

“

“Influencer Marketing driving ROI will be a trend that we are likely to see in 2022. Brands will leverage influencer marketing across not just for top of the funnel, but also bottom of the funnel. This combined with more robust attribution and affiliate models will lead to an exciting year for content creators.”



Vikas Chawla

Co-founder, *Influencer.In*

“

“Smart brands will build meaningful partnerships with relevant creators for long-term collaborations. Alas, many will just try to rent their feeds for what they perceive to be ads, then be disappointed with the outcomes.”



Jason Falls,

Senior Influence Strategist, Cornett and host of Winfluence - *The Influence Marketing Podcast*

Expert insights

“

Influencer marketing is growing at an exponential pace globally. Off the back of recent findings from the WEF report, the future of jobs is digital. Globally, the digital economy is 22% whereas in the UAE it's 4%. Therefore, it is evident there is room for improvement for influencer marketing in the region. Right now, there isn't a sufficient enough ecosystem to facilitate creators and brands to collaborate on achieving results to drive action. Moreover, we've seen influencers disappear during the pandemic due to a lack of value-driven content created and strategy. The pandemic however has helped mature influencer marketing as a whole as people turned to their phones

for content when the globe was on lockdown, putting a further emphasis on influencer marketing. Governments need to ensure they have the right ecosystem and laws/regulations in place to help advance the industry where there is a lack of infrastructure to help influencers monetise in their various sectors – as niche as they may be – such as space, technology, law, medicine, sustainability, and real estate. It is important that every field builds a global sphere of influence and inspires others to blaze a trail.”



Mike Alnaji

Director of Content Creators & Brand Partnerships, New Media Academy

VOICE OF THE PUBLIC

“

Consumers are going to be looking for a more trusted influence in their purchasing decisions. The trend will favor smaller influencers who are more relatable.”



Kathleen Marrero

Digital Marketing Strategist at First Fig Marketing & Consulting

BRAND EXAMPLE

Louis Vuitton, BTS, and International Tiger Day, oh my!

During the pandemic, it was particularly tough for brands to create engaging events--but not for fashion giant Louis Vuitton. They roped in K-pop sensation BTS as brand ambassadors, and members of the group headlined Louis Vuitton's #LVMenFW21 fashion show in Seoul this year. Their tweets around BTS and the show were the most engaged among fashion results at the time. The influencer network showed how the brand was able to capitalize on BTS' massive reach among the K-pop community.

On the other hand, International Tiger Day proved that smaller influencers can be just as powerful as macro-influencers. Influential personalities such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and cricketer Sachin Tendulkar led the way to raise conservation awareness about the country's national animal. However, sandwiched between these two macro influencers were two artists with considerably lower reach generating as much engagement and raising awareness about tiger conservation through their art.

Both these examples illustrate how effective influencer marketing can be, whether the influencer chosen is macro, micro, or even niche.

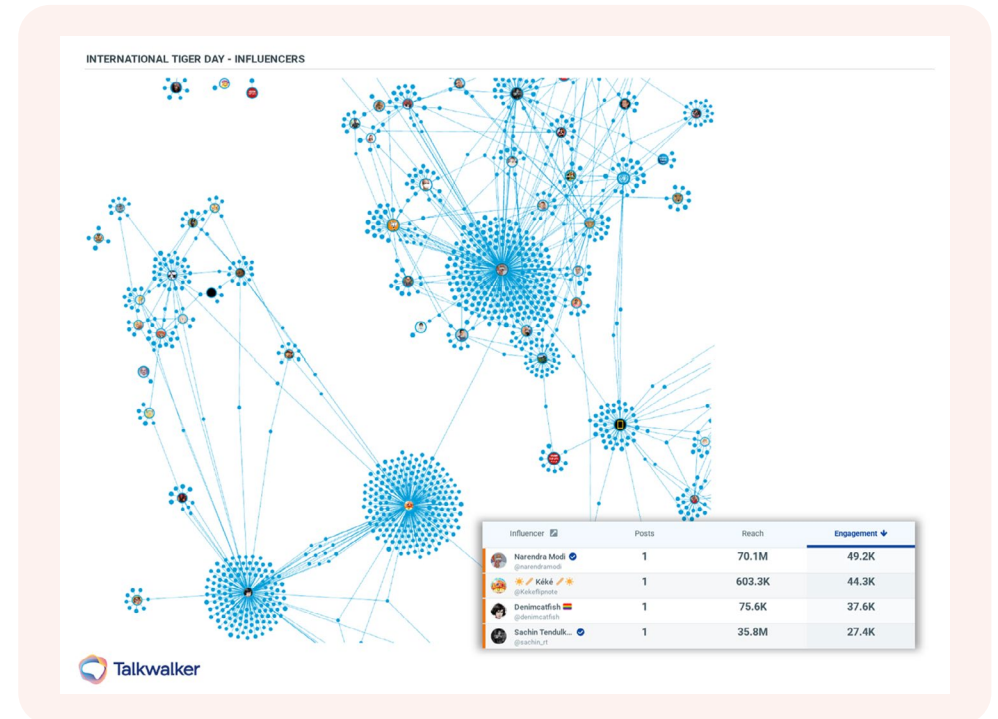


The power of BTS - By teaming up with the Kpop band, Louis Vuitton boosted their brand engagement within their audience.

How consumers are driving the trend

The pandemic led many consumers towards influencer communities - a valuable source of infotainment when other traditional mediums, like live theatre and cinemas, weren't available.

This has led to the growth in variety and value of influencers - more influencers, with larger, more relevant audiences. Influencers are able to reach consumers on a level that many large brands simply cannot - **with nearly half of consumers depending on influencer recommendations before purchases**. Increasingly, everyday people are becoming influencers, and it's this understanding of what consumers want that will continue to drive this trend in 2022.



*When it comes to influencer marketing, micro or nano influencers can often drive just as strong results with their communities.
Aug 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.*

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Consider influencers of all sizes

Different influencers will help you achieve different goals. While a celebrity might have a large reach, a micro influencer's audience might feel closer to them and provide you with a higher conversion rate.

Engagement rate, exposure, or e-commerce?

Define your goals. Do you want more exposure for your brand? A more loyal customer base? Higher sales or increased ROI? Make sure the influencers you reach out to align with the bigger picture of your brand.

A is for "authentic"

A greater demand for content also comes with greater expectations, including a push for authenticity. For most consumers, this means deeper connections with influencers as well as value-driven content.

Stay on top of sentiment

It's always a good idea to be **tracking sentiment**, more so when working with influencers. Make sure consumers are on the same page as you and the influencers that represent your brand.

Value your influencers and never underestimate their impact

With influencer marketing on the rise, it's no wonder the conversations around it have gotten louder. The launch of a recent app **F*** You Pay Me**, is the collaboration of a frustrated content creator and data scientist. FYPM **functions similarly to Glassdoor**, but with influencers in mind. Creators can leave reviews of brands they have worked with, share ad rates, and give and get other crucial information for negotiating sponsored content deals. The bottom line: creators need to be paid more equitably.



Overview

The most important things about social media -- socializing, connection, maintaining relationships -- are the very things that COVID-19 made that much more complicated. To counter it, brands need to double down on making sure their platforms, apps, and channels include a social component to them.

Communities are key, but they're not just limited to the main social media platforms anymore. Many brands are now building their own in-house social networks, with in-app forums and features to take back control of their audiences. Decentralized social media has a different **infrastructure with no central server** and no company controlling the site.

The coming year will see a continuation of brands leading the way with a stronger interaction aspect to the customer experience.

Trend analysis

Moving into 2022, consumers will continue interacting through social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. However, it's likely that we'll begin to see more brands -- specifically those in the travel, payment, and navigation space -- incorporate social components directly into their user experience.

When consumers are able to interact with their social group in an app, **the overall engagement and retention increases**. Now they don't have to go to their favorite social media channel to comment on that blocked road or message their friend thank you for paying for last night's dinner; they can do so directly in these applications.

Expert insights

VOICE OF THE PUBLIC

“

“Due to the seismic shift in marketing, social media and marketers must provide AI-driven voice-first experiences to ensure their message breaks through the increased content saturation in the right context on the user’s choice of device and/or platform based on how, when, and where they want to receive it.”



Heidi Cohen

CMO of Actionable Marketing Guide

“

“Over the next few years, we will witness the creation of an ecosystem which is platform and channel agnostic. 2022 will see its building blocks - e-commerce, entertainment, music, audio chats, gaming coming together within a platform. Brands need to rethink content, and also how consumers will navigate between these experiences.”



Vartika Malviya Hali

Executive Director, Global Digital Intelligence, Nielsen IQ

“

“Personalisation and localisation is the key to unlocking the power of social media in the current and future world. This means niche social media platforms which help you target a specific population and give you the ability to display more personalized content will gain a lot of traction.”



Shreya Kothari Sawala

Product Marketing Lead, Finturi

“

“We may be physically distant, but we’re definitely more socially, even spiritually connected. Keep the social fire burning.”



Senen Perlada

EVP & COO at PHILEXPORT

BRAND EXAMPLE

Venmo's online presence kicks it up a notch

The ever-popular mobile payment service, Venmo, manages to keep its users engaged, by allowing inter-user conversations and connections. This engagement continues on the brand's social media channels. The tweet below, which refers to the emojis added to transactions, received over 1.2K engagements.

Looking at the reasons why consumers enjoy payment apps like Venmo, we found that besides appreciation for donations or crowdfunding initiatives, they also liked the fact that there is a way to share payments easily to raise awareness for certain causes.

Others have also mentioned that it allows them to stay socially connected when making money transfers to friends, family, or causes they care about.



Venmo knows how to stir conversations within their audience.

How consumers are driving the trend

Consumers no longer see you as a brand but as a connection. Expecting not just a service from you, but a way to interact, engage, and communicate. The option for brands is to either allow those interactions to happen offsite, through forums and social media, or to keep it within their own platform. This enables brands to better shape the conversations happening around them, while also gathering valuable data and insights around their consumer base.

A social element within your products/platforms will be key in the coming years and help build that feeling of a brand community.

MAIN THEMES AROUND VENMO



The keyword phrases related to Venmo mentions, demonstrating the positivity the brand generates from consumers. Jul 2021-Aug 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Consumers want to connect, so let them

If you're going to introduce a social aspect to your brand, don't overcomplicate it. Take cues from how your audience interacts on their favorite social media platforms to better understand the type of social element they might want to see coming from your brand.

Use **consumer insights** and reference competitors or industry leaders to see how others are succeeding or flopping.

Centralize your customer data

To help build stronger communities, collate all your available customer data to get a more comprehensive understanding of what your consumers want. This will help shape your messaging and strategy.

Make UX your go-to for everything

Whether you're adding a comment section to a feature or expanding the possibilities of a messaging board, user experience is vital. If something doesn't flow quite right or the overall process is less than smooth, consumers will jump ship before you even have a chance to get going.

Be aware of control, content, and censorship

If you do look into the benefits of your own social network, you need to keep the pros and cons front and center. Users will have more control, will be **less likely to accept censorship over their content**, and UGC will reign supreme.



8

Metaverses will be the next consumer connection

Overview

The metaverse: an amalgamation of the physical world, the augmented, and the virtual. An unknown word a few years ago, the metaverse is gaining momentum -- and fast. This catch-all term combines **subsets of technology, merging them into a single entity**. Brands were already slowly moving towards virtual reality when COVID-19 hit, resulting in an acute need for online socializing and interaction.

Led by the gaming industry, access to digital reality has really spiked thanks to its ability to connect people in our new reality of limited in-person interactions. Whether you're invested in virtual dressing rooms, digital meet-ups, or AR-driven filters and features across social media channels, it's become increasingly clear that VR and the metaverse are here to stay.

The widespread availability of technology and social media gives AR games a strong incentive to create and maintain a digital space or metaverse of their own. Competitive brands can then insert themselves into these virtual realities. *Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg announced in July this year that Facebook would strive to build a maximalist, interconnected set of experiences straight out of sci-fi – a world known as the metaverse.* Whether it's Minecraft, Fortnite, Roblox, or metaverses that are yet to be created, the key to staying relevant is **consumer intelligence**.

Across industries and markets, advertisers have realized the unique potential of the metaverse and what VR can offer. If carried out correctly, companies can connect with their audience on an even deeper level. In 2022, we will see an increased interest and value in brands investing in the phygital space - a term already mentioned 62.5k times in the last year.

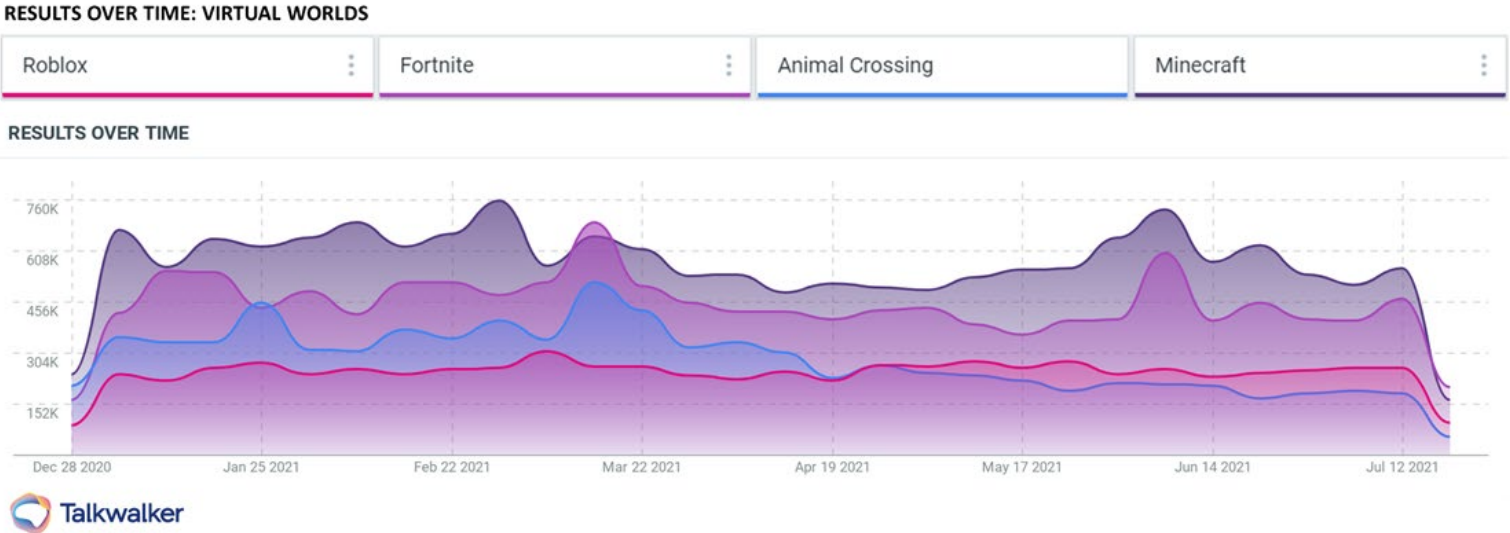


Facebook is introducing the metaverse into the workplace, with the announcement of Horizon Workrooms.

Trend analysis

More and more often, people in the gaming industry crave increasingly immersive experiences. Which explains why virtual worlds, such as those from Fortnite or Animal Crossing, have performed so well. The four main games today that offer a virtual experience have amassed a strong online presence as seen when conversations are tracked.

Like many of the trends that we will see driving 2022, the inclusion of virtual reality is being spearheaded by the younger generations. This emerging trend is proof that offline and online experiences are slowly merging, creating even more opportunities for brands. A lot of the brands Gen Z players are invested in serve as social spaces as well as gaming communities. These environments allow for creativity, collaboration, and competition, which is keeping it at the forefront of the digital age.



*The communities with immersive, interactive virtual worlds are continually driving more consumer conversations.
Jan 2021-Jul 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.*

Expert insights

“

The Metaverse is becoming the future playground for brands, where real and virtual worlds converge. It's exciting to see how this extended reality has evolved and how brand owners have responded. Expect more action in this realm, as a platform to share brand love and reinvent the fabric of society.”



Tania Tai

Managing Director at DIA
Brand Consultants (Malaysia)

“

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's the need to find the interconnectivity between almost every facet of our lives, discover how they complement one another and learn – to continuously learn. We have seen this ring especially true in our ecommerce space, with businesses – particularly small and medium businesses – finding their footing in the online space when the physical was limited. It is a process of iteration and commitment, one that results in an approach to our everyday lives – be it personal or work – that is truly unique. As we evolve into a Metaverse company, we'll be able to take this to the next level by offering people the most social computing experience, letting them do things together that haven't before been possible, getting closer to the content than ever before – giving phenomenal opportunities to creators and artists, as well as the e-commerce space. I am extremely excited as to what the future will hold.”



Ramez Shehadi

Managing Director, Facebook
Middle East and North Africa,
Facebook

“

While Facebook is looking into the metaverse, we mostly witness a rise of the “multiverse”, a multi-faceted approach to consuming content on social media. However, we see different understandings of the same message, based on which platform it is displayed on. Both a risk of misreading/misinformation and an opportunity for brands to speak their audiences' (right) Language.”



Samuel Pavin

Founder and Principal
Consultant at Resumption

Expert insights

“

Most importantly, we will start to see browser-based variations appearing for these sites and that will be an absolute game-changer. Through blockchain and open-source technology, we are seeing the emergence of decentralized social networks where data will no longer be controlled and processed by a central authority but the users themselves. Social networking will soon be done through the fediverse - a collection of interconnected servers that is independent and free from the control of behemoth tech companies.

In this realm, the user has the final say – how their social network operates and behaves. More importantly, they are in full control of data and content – free from ownership and censorship. In this world, content creators are not bound by somebody else’s rules of engagement and algorithms. Independence and control will be held sacred again.”



Ron F. Jabal, APR

CEO, PAGEONE Group

BRAND EXAMPLE

Gucci Garden experience

The Gucci Garden experience was an event that combined both art, culture, and the virtual world. It showcases how the metaverse can make certain things more accessible for people worldwide, **expanding Gucci's goal of empowerment and self-expression.**

The collaboration between Roblox and Gucci was a stunning example of both inclusivity and ingenuity. The Roblox platform offered a visual feast for the eyes featuring detailed environments with dynamic, personalized textures and patterns for each individual visitor's mannequin. Similar to the physical exhibition in Florence, the Roblox version of the Gucci Garden has multiple themed rooms where visitors can be immersed in Michele's creativity, inspirations, and captivating vision.

The experience in Roblox was launched in May and generated 40K conversations around that time. Consumers reacted to the presence of this brand in the virtual world by mentioning how it's a good example of merging the physical into the digital realm. It was also a way to reach a younger crowd, one that might not interact as often with Gucci in the physical world.

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

It's a consumer's world

Whether you're engaging with your audience on social media or stepping into a constructed world on Fortnite, as a brand, you need to be constantly aware of what the consumer is saying and thinking.

Understand the communities you're trying to reach

Imagine you're a contractor building a house for a client, but you don't bother meeting them, or getting any information on how they might prefer it to look or function. How well would that go over? The same concept applies to the metaverse and virtual reality. People won't be interested in your brand, platform, or space you build if it does not suit their needs and their interests. Take the time to reflect, gather consumer insights before diving into the metaverse and the endless possibilities it brings.

Err on the side of over-inclusive

As the metaverse and what it consists of expands, so do the potential problems that come with it. In order to reach as many communities as possible, safety and inclusivity is a must, as exemplified by the Gucci Garden experience. In order to be successful in creating a metaverse that is creative, vibrant, and beneficial, you have to consider everyone from the very start.

Cordially competitive

Much like **Snap is focusing on Spotlight** as a direct competitor to TikTok, if you're going to enter the digital realm and be successful, you need to **be aware of what others are doing well**, as well as learn from their mistakes.

Experiment and get creative

There are a lot of unknowns that come with the metaverse and having an open mind is half the battle. Even as the metaverse gains traction, it will take time before it's fully accepted. Whether one single metaverse emerges or multiple brands and platforms will create their own, it's clear that experimentation is vital to test and see what works in this period.



Overview

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) was a huge topic of conversation in 2020 -- and even bigger in 2021. In 2022, brands need to focus on their commitment to CSR by listening and acting on the social issues that matter most to their audiences.

Consumers are no longer interested in **performative allyship**, empty promises, or one-time donations. They have high expectations, preferring brands that take initiative to foster connections with their audience, as well as bringing together people with differing opinions. Brands need to thoroughly analyze their actions, deeds, and culture to stay on top in 2022.

Trend analysis

The pandemic has forced consumers to make changes in how they live their lives, and as a result, they want more from the brands they follow and buy from.

Nearly **three-quarters of CNN's audiences value companies that behave more sustainably**, but they want to see that it's more than skin deep; they want consistent proof that brands are walking the walk. As a result, many brands are looking towards employees, consumers, and the communities they make up, not just shareholders or top brass.

About **70% of employees claim they would not work for a company without a strong purpose**, and this belief is affecting the way brands tackle brand inclusivity and rolling out their campaigns in 2022. To be a part of those that witness success as opposed to stagnation, or even decline, you'll need consumer insights to keep up with the speed at which changes are now happening.

Expert insights

“

Social media today needs to be personal, relevant and values-oriented—no matter who the audience is. And to get there, brands need to start by listening. By listening to what customers, their fans, and what the world at large is saying, organizations can drive human connection in everything they do.

Today, social media strategies that highlight brand values around the issues that matter the most—from social and environmental priorities to DE&I—have become table stakes.

Brands that are driving new belief systems around those things that are undeniably human, like mental health, are creating new business practices for a better world.”



Maggie Lower

CMO at Hootsuite

“

In 2022, companies that will stand out from the crowd and build a stronger brand will be the ones embracing diversity and people in the real world. Early adopters of brand inclusivity will have a massive advantage over other brands to influence consumers. Studies are showing that inclusive ads convert better than stereotypical ads and companies simply cannot ignore it this year.”



Mathieu Girolet

Digital Marketing & Brand
Manager at Koch & Co

“

More than ever before, brands will need to have an opinion on issues that affect our world. From racial issues to environmental topics, consumers want to see what brands will say and act and hold them accountable.”



Chris Asahara

Global Head of Content and
Social Media at Les Mills

“

Brands will increasingly lose control of the conversations about them and will need to find alternative ways to maintain and uphold their reputation across efforts like sustainability, inclusivity, storytelling, etc.”



Nicole Radtke

Community Engagement
Specialist, Bosch

Expert insights

“

Responsibility. Platforms will own up to and address issues around content and harassment in the face of increasing regulation. And brands will need to drop ‘purpose marketing’ to show they can do the right, responsible thing by their users and employees.”



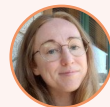
Samit Malkani

Head of Brand & Creative
Marketing, SEA & India,
Google

VOICE OF THE PUBLIC

“

Now more than ever, people are prioritizing themselves--their values, personal time, and self-care. Brands that build alignment through personalized, mission-oriented, and honest content will see the greatest traction.”



Colleen Molloy

Global Employment Brand
Manager at Axon Enterprise,
Inc.

“

Look for more Hacktivism -- social activists/hackers using their skills to shut down or clog up accounts or emails that they don't agree with. As a result culture and social issues will play a much larger role on social media than brands may be comfortable with. Also, brands are looking to target diverse audiences, so look for much more scrutiny and skepticism around social reach and engagement numbers. Today's brands want to reach specific audiences and demographics -- not the whole world. And they are designing campaigns around niche marketing.”



Katie Delahaye Paine

CEO, Paine Publishing, LLC

BRAND EXAMPLE

Everyone is Awesome with LEGO

Companies can no longer create their products or services and stay on the sidelines of topics that matter to their audience. Brands today must engage with topics like mental health, sustainability, and social justice, or face becoming irrelevant in 2022. Well aware of this, the LEGO Group announced a new set in May this year, Everyone is Awesome, to celebrate diversity during the upcoming Pride Month.

LEGO's new set shows the brand's commitment to promoting love and acceptance around the world. The announcement was discussed by more than 20K people during the week of its launch, and the official tweet from the company was liked, retweeted, and commented on by nearly 50K users. With this launch, the LEGO Group showed it believes in a diverse and inclusive workplace, which is why they've not stopped there, partnering with various organizations to make sure it supports employees who identify as LGBTQ+.

Conversations around the product itself were welcoming, with over 64% positive sentiment during that week. Many went to social media to share their excitement, celebrate the initiative, and talk about the perfect time to launch this product. LEGO has proved that committing to a topic important to their customers is a great way to show where the company stands. With so many brands competing for attention, those that stand out and connect with their audience will come out as winners.



SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Real people make real connections

You should always aim to be relatable, but there is nothing worse than a company that says one thing but practices something completely different. Ensure the people representing your brand and managing its voice are genuine, consistent, and in line with your goals.

Build your community

It pays to be in touch with the people you are trying to connect with. For instance, Happy Socks changed it up this year for Pride. Instead of launching a large campaign, they **focused on the people**, the consumers that make up their community. They donated the entire budget of \$20,000 to InterPride, an organization that promotes LGBTQ+ communities worldwide, and released a Pride collection of rainbow-colored styles.

Be prepared for the next major issue

2021 has proven in order not to be blindsided, you need to have a **crisis plan in place** just in case the worst happens. No one can predict the future, and the more prepared you are, the better off you will be.

Listen before you speak

At a time when there seem to be more voices clamoring for attention than ever, it is vital that you take the time to listen carefully to **what your consumers are saying**. Come up with ways to include as much of your audience as possible.

Actions speak louder than words

Ulta Beauty took this saying quite literally when they pledged more than **\$25 million to a diversity and inclusion initiative**. They carry 15 black-owned beauty brands and have a diverse workforce. Some brands only make statements in support of prevalent social issues, but don't take action where it counts. Don't echo popular sentiment to keep your audience engaged, put in the effort to be a genuinely inclusive brand.



Overview

Many businesses tackle social media incorrectly by hoping something will stick. Brands need to be more strategic, with content shaped around the consumer, with the aim of establishing loyal and engaged communities.

But brands don't always have control of these communities. Social media allows them to form outside of the brand bubble and 2021 has already shown the power of these communities, with them causing disruption across several markets. It is critical to **strategize digital infrastructures and collective spaces**, with the strengthening of these online communities continuing to be a priority well into 2022.

Trend analysis

Isolation and social distancing has increased our need to socialize and connect. 2022 will witness the continued increase of online communities, and these groups will become more crucial for businesses to cultivate relationships and address their needs.

The social issues that have been in the spotlight such as elections, the BLM movement, the #MeToo movement, sustainability, and many more **have one major thing in common**: they all have a driving force of communities behind them. A collective power that enables their cause, idea, or mission. Social communities can come together and grow, often very quickly, and successful brands will be able to tap into these communities with the right message and intention. Companies like Lunch on Me, EnrichHer, FounderGym, and Black Women Tech Talk amplify social communities and messaging.

Expert insights

“

I'm always saying it - People buy from people and now more than ever we are seeing the power of communities and the power of a personal brand. Build a community around your brand and you will have a whole army of marketeers ready to talk about your brand and how great it is. I created a community of Female Business owners, but any brand can create a community providing you are adding value and making them feel a part of something and make them feel special, valued and involve them in decision making for new releases and news.”



Samantha Kelly

Twitter Expert, Community builder, Twitter Spaces host, Director of the Women's Inspire Network

“

The last 18 months have been pivotal in showing the power of online communities, and there is no clearer indication of this than the record levels of engagement, learning, and content creation we saw on LinkedIn. Over the last 12 months alone there has been a 50% annual increase in member consumption of our learning content.

At a rate of 130 new members signing up to join LinkedIn per minute, we now have 774 million members worldwide, including more than 40 million in MENA. Within our vision to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce, we take pride that four people are hired every minute on LinkedIn. As businesses and workers navigate the future of work, new models of career paths will emerge-- but no matter how these paths evolve, professionals can find others on LinkedIn to relate to. Our community exhibits a rich diversity of interests, motivations, and definitions of success that everyone can be a part of.”



Ali Matar

Head of LinkedIn MENA and EMEA Emerging Markets

“

At the intersection of culture & consumer lies the science & art of community building. The consumer is no longer an on-looker but a very active participant in a brand's community building, with a vociferous presence of their own, shaping pop culture in real time. The community is now the trinity - the culture shaper, the creator & also the consumer.”



Dipashree Das

Senior Marketer, Global OTT Content Platform

Expert insights

“

Communities are going to experiment with their own economies. Through the use of Creator Coins and other forms of blockchain-based currencies, communities will be able to allow members to unlock new forms of value as they interact, deepening the value of such communities for all participants.”



David Berkowitz

Founder, Serial Marketers

“

In 2022, people will remain isolated. Brands/tech that help create a community space to belong to, will most likely win. Like using Discord or dedicated servers, for a place to hang out and do activities together. People can't hang out on TikTok or Instagram!”



Emily Lim

Head of Marketing at TruTrip.co

“

An emerging trend is building communities through voice. Audio-only chat apps & podcasts (Clubhouse, Spotify, Aawaz, Apple, etc.) have seen listenership numbers surge in the last 18 months. Digital audio (voice) presents the opportunity to pick a theme and build a community around that, without the pretension of video or static images.”



Deepali Naair

Chief Marketing Officer, IBM
India & South Asia

“Our world is constantly evolving, shaped by the communities and conversations that build our societies. Those conversations and audiences are Twitter's superpower, reflective of what's happening across topics from culture to sport and everything in-between. An example of an impactful cultural conversation was #BlackLivesMatter which began on Twitter and witnessed a global societal shift. Locally, #SaudiNationalDay is a celebratory moment that unites leaders, people, and brands on Twitter. Also, #Sports communities continued to grow during the #TokyoOlympics, which engaged fans, athletes, and brands to chime into conversations. This momentum is expected to continue locally with the #ArabCup, and the #WorldCup2022.”



Antoine Caironi

Head of Revenue, MENA,
Twitter

Expert insights

“

“We will continue to see a strong focus on community, but with the surge in community being used as a buzzword, you’ll see a realization that brands facilitate community but don’t own them. With NFTs, you see this with the receiving/buying of NFTs as an entry point into a community with users changing their social media avatar to self-identify as a member. In addition, there is talk of the collective naming instead of the founders that are associated with them.”



Christina Garnett

Senior Marketing Manager,
Offline Community &
Advocacy, HubSpot

“

“The pandemic forced the majority of the population online and on to social platforms as a way to stay in touch. In the past it was perceived as a way to flick through memes or another way to read the news, but social media has now emerged as a medium that gave a voice to the masses while the world adjusted to being at home. It encourages creativity, community, and opportunity through which people could not only communicate with each other, but also stay entertained and informed. Working from home and lockdowns made literal home-grown social influencers commonplace with short-form videos which reached a peak with the rise of TikTok and Instastories.”



Omar Qirem

CEO, Edelman Middle East

“

“We live in times where the sense of community is more valuable than ever. The pandemic has reminded most of us the essence of belonging, feeling cared for, valued and seen as a member of a community. That’s why brands are growing more empathetic to their audiences. Social media users are also associating with brands that make them feel wanted, seen, acknowledged and most importantly helped. That’s why brands are investing more on regular Twitter Spaces, Tweet Chats, Live Webinars, Podcasts, Facebook Groups, LinkedIn Groups because they want to belong in a niche that informs, educates and entertains them.”



Janet Machuka

Founder, ATC Digital
Academy

Expert insights

“

Over the past decade, the power of communities has catapulted by bridging interest groups with social media. However, COVID isolation has served as a catalyst to further elevate the need for specialized communities on a professional level given the work-from-home islands of isolation. When the global Insight250 award was launched in April 2021 for market researchers, it received over 15 million views in the first week alone, connecting a network of data-driven experts worldwide due to a community void in the space. This connected professionals globally to discuss evolving challenges and debate emerging solutions. This illustrated the growing need for community support that many professional sectors need.”



Mark Harrington

Chief Marketing Officer, [mTab](#)

“

As the number of touchpoints explode and brand marketers adapt to digital en masse, the power of brand communities helps in bringing back the balance and provides the brand with a human face.”



Prasad Sangameshwaran

Editor, [ETBrandEquity.com](#)

“

The decline of tracking capabilities will be the headline for social media advertisers in the next few years. Marketers desperately need to focus on building community to counteract increasing data-blindness.”



Christopher Penn

Chief Data Scientist,
[TrustInsights.ai](#)

“

The developing power of communities - Consumers have never been more connected – but it’s never been harder to connect with them. Artists, athletes, and brands have billions of fans on social media. However, Big Tech players have put up walled gardens, are censoring content or squeezing organic fan reach dramatically. Next-level social marketing strategy is about turning ‘fans on lease’ into direct fan relationships and owned communities.”



Igor Beuker

Speaker, Entrepreneur,
Futurist, Activist

Expert insights

“

“As more people come together in communities to discuss large societal topics like sustainability, we will begin to understand more about attitudes, opinions, and the behaviours stopping mass adoption. This will bring better insight to brands on how to frame and position their products and services.”



Dr Jillian Ney, Founder

The Social Intelligence Lab

“

“Over the past two years, we’ve seen a 30% growth in companies making the investment in creating brand-owned communities. Why? Because companies recognize that while they need to be able to listen and engage on all the channels that matter to their customers, there’s tremendous value in being able to host those conversations on a brand’s own property, where customers create authentic connections with each other, build brand love, improve customer experience, and create long-term loyalty.”



Katherine Calvert

CMO, Khoros

“

“Social media will return to its roots, which means that the community idea will once again come to the fore. This will be accompanied by UGC becoming established as a content form.”



Vivian Rust

Team Lead Social Media,
Territory

BRAND EXAMPLE

The GameStop resistance

At the beginning of this year, the stock market witnessed a **period of pandemonium**. We saw how brands like GameStop, AMC, Nokia, BlackBerry, and others, held on tight as online conversations put the ride on full throttle and disconnected the brakes.

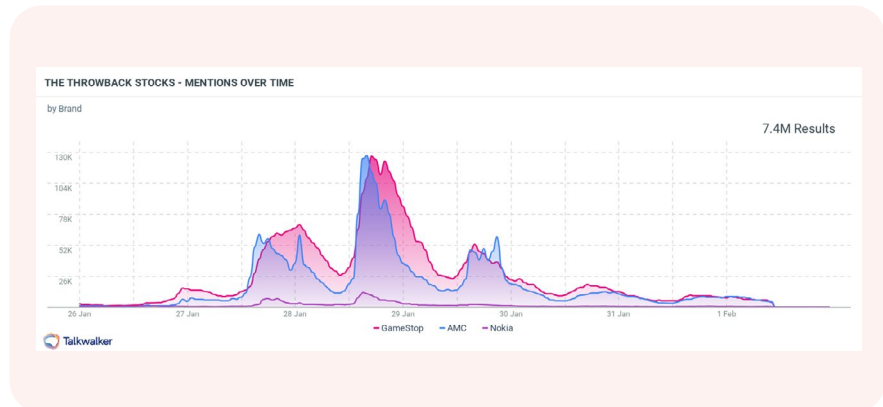
Having social media users creating such an effect on Wall Street is yet another example of how **influential online niche conversations** can be. Earlier this year we shared how one of **Elon Musk's tweets** sent a brand's stock through the roof.

As the market tried to wrap its head around these social-fueled stocks, the popularity of investing was on everyone's mind, with **9.1M mentions** around investment terms over the last 7 days, compared to **3.1M the week before**. Investing in the stock market is easier today than it was a decade ago, and as shown below, there was a mix of emotions. Some felt it was good to have greater accessibility to this market, and others showed confusion towards the week's events.

Influential conversations can happen anywhere, and since the start of the pandemic, more and more of these conversations are happening online. Sharing ideas online has become a way of helping others with their issues, rallying support around your own concerns, and driving real-time change in a multitude of cases. As a brand, it is crucial to monitor conversations across various platforms and demographics which could have an impact on your business.



Amateur investors shared tips across social media, and united, shook up the stock market.



The overlapping conversations around GameStop and AMC, led by shared discussions on forums. Jan 2021-Feb 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.

BRAND EXAMPLE

Everyone is Awesome with LEGO

How consumers are driving the trend

Consumer communities aren't as passive anymore. With more ways to connect with like-minded communities across the globe, they are no longer content with passively discussing their interests.

Instead, they have the dedication and people-power, to actively drive change. These communities are quickly identifying the issues they're interested in as a whole, and then taking action to change those issues.

Expect to see more consumer activism in the coming year, with these stronger communities driving more change in their markets.

REACTIONS TO NEW SOCIALLY DRIVEN SHARE-BUYING TREND



*The emotions related to the new socially driven share-buying trend.
Jan 2021-Feb 2021, Talkwalker Consumer Intelligence Acceleration Platform.*

SUMMARY

Takeaways for accelerating brands

Transparency is key

Every aspect of your platform, brand, and online presence should be genuine and as transparent as possible. Allow for engagements and recognition wherever possible, such as comments, likes, voting, and other ways to provide feedback or participation.

Be persistent and scale up

Just like you can't expect an online community to burst into existence overnight, you cannot expect it to maintain itself without consistent effort or knowing your audience. Communities grow because people feel good about being a part of something; make sure that stays at the focus of your endeavors.

Give consumers a reason

Tapping into specific communities can help boost brand engagement, exposure, and even **brand love**. Give them a strong reason to stick around so you don't lose people after initial interest.

Pursue what truly matters to your brand

Sure you want to connect with your audience, and you always want to be on top of the issues that matter to them. But before diving in headfirst, make sure it's an issue you can follow through on. There's nothing worse than a brand that's all talk.

Be wary of potential social crises

Even if you're not always engaging with or promoting content that revolves around social issues, you still have to be careful what you attach your brand name to. Nobody wants a PR crisis. That's a surefire way to lose customers.

CONCLUSION

For brands, 2022 is the year of the 'now' consumer.

More than ever, consumers need to be the focus of every piece of content, strategy, or campaign put into action. The secret to winning over your audience is engaging your audience, which is why it should come as no surprise that connection served as the underlying theme across the 10 trends we outlined in this report.

Consumer demands are high, but so are the opportunities. The brands that **accelerate consumer intelligence** to the forefront of their 2022 strategy, will be the true winners next year.

Methodology

Insights were taken from Talkwalker's Consumer Intelligence Platform for the last 13 months, prior to August, 2021. For some examples, up to 5 years of back data was used.

Given the nature of the topic and the importance of forecasting trends accurately, we put emphasis on examples and data gathered between January and August 2021.

Mentions of topics were gathered from a variety of media including news sites, social media channels, blogs, and forums.

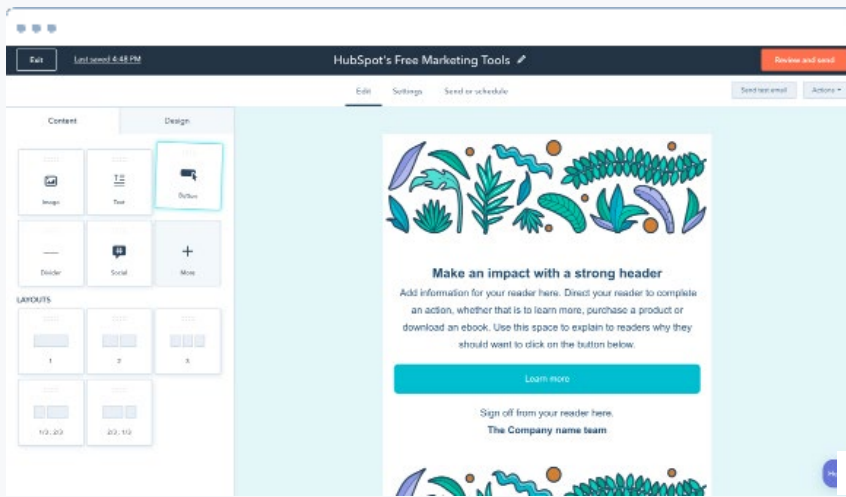
Sentiment analysis is performed with an average of 90% accuracy, with the ability to detect sarcasm and ironic comments. Images are compared to a database of over 30,000 brand logos, to help identify brands in social media photos and videos. Queries were used to identify the topics discussed. In some cases, these may have been improved using Boolean operators, to help remove false positives.



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