



2025

**MARKETING
TRENDS AND
STRATEGIES**

to thrive in uncertain times



SOURCECODE

With the 2024 election behind us, it's time for marketing and communications leaders to transition from scenario planning and "wait-and-see" planning pauses to decision-making despite continued uncertainties. While 77% of CEOs have indicated the election will impact business strategy well into 2025, specifics won't be known for a while.

However, one overarching trend in uncertain times will remain: the expectation for marketing and comms leaders to "do more with less."

While 87% of marketing leaders acknowledge that brand building remains a top priority, achieving this goal is undeniably challenging due to barriers like internal silos (36%) and limited budgets. (34%) As "no normal" continues to define the world in which we live, closing gaps to achieve goals has pushed open the door to consider flexible, data-driven approaches that adapt to changing stakeholder needs, many hinged on AI even as only 27% feel prepared to manage the expanding role of generative AI.

Does this sound familiar? As you're determining the best path forward for next year, below are four trends bubbling to the surface to help shape and hone your 2025 decisions despite unknowns.

TREND 01

Consumers are tired of the restrictive algorithms in social media platforms.

In a global study by [Foresight Factory](#), 64% of consumers surveyed agree people should limit the time they spend on social media; a 12% increase since 2021. Furthermore, 38% of Americans believe the quality of content on social media has worsened over the past five years. When consumers are connecting, they're looking for a deeper connection within a community, turning to smaller, trusted spaces and community-focused platforms in greater numbers: Reddit has seen its daily users [increase 47% YoY](#) while Discord has [600+ million users](#) as of 2024. Across "traditional" social media platforms like Facebook, [usage varies widely](#) by age, gender, etc.



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Personalized marketing in 2025: Building trust and connection

Whether your marketing content is human- or AI-generated, keeping it personal and true to your brand is essential. Consumers now expect hyper-personalized messaging that speaks to their unique needs, interests, and preferences. With advances in AI-driven data collection and analysis, leverage these tools to gain deep insights into your customers and stakeholders, enabling you to craft messages that resonate on an individual level. Create a framework to scale this personalization across fragmented channels in a way that remains authentic to both the individuals and platforms involved. Achieving this will require creativity, data fluency, and the skill to apply personalization authentically—whether the interaction happens on a new social platform, through immersive tech, or via emerging AI tools.

To truly engage, connect with subcultures, tap into expertise, and maintain a human touch, breaking free from the constraints of algorithmic conformity.

When planning, consider this...

Is your existing data infrastructure able to process and synthesize complex insights from AI and machine learning tools?

Make sure your platforms/tools offer real-time, 360-degree customer views to help you track preferences and behaviors to easily segment and create targeted messaging based on individual channels.

How big is your library of content and is it segmented by stakeholder?

It may be helpful to create a set of modular, adaptable content that can be quickly customized based on audience segments and platform requirements to aid in efficiency and scale.

If you are using AI to create content, is the model trained on your unique brand voice? Is it trained to generate content that is relatable to your customers and doesn't sound overly impersonal?

Set guidelines, train models and encourage your team to infuse brand voice and empathy into automated content to balance humanity, personalization and efficiency.

TREND 02

Consumers want to slow down; friction in their day-to-day experiences isn't always bad.

Fears around AI and pushback on social media algorithms are also leading consumers to desire - and demand - opportunities to intentionally slow down and connect on a more meaningful level. 50% of consumers state the relationship a company nurtures with its customer base is as significant as its offerings. That relationship pays off, with 50% willing to share personal information in exchange for more tailored experiences.

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Embrace the unknown

Stay Agile with New Channels and Formats: Embrace emerging social platforms, immersive tech (e.g., AR/VR), and AI-driven interfaces, but develop an adaptable framework to manage rapid shifts. Equip your team with the skills to quickly test, learn, and adjust strategies for new digital spaces, ensuring your personalized approach remains relevant and engaging across all touchpoints. For example, at SourceCode we regularly creates task forces to try new products, including establishing our own AI task force that has been the source of recent innovations like our [Amplify](#) offering, journalist automations to improve our daily work, and more fun takes like the [Cringe-o-meter](#). When planning, consider this...

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How are you and your team staying on top of emerging tech trends like AR, VR, & AI?

Invest in “test-and-learn” skill-building activities that will help your team quickly understand, test, and adapt to new digital channels and formats. Consider setting up new tech “task forces” for learning and reporting back.

Are the data and personalization tools you are currently using/considering able to work across multiple platforms/channels?

Make sure you understand the current and future potential of the platforms you use to plug into new technologies you’re considering/testing to ensure customer insights are optimized regardless of medium.

TREND 03

Customers are looking for new and interesting ways to connect and are willing to try new and different experiences if they're meaningful.

Immersive technologies like AR and VR are on the rise, with an anticipated growth rate of nearly 28% over the next 4 years, transforming customer engagement by offering interactive and captivating experiences that deepen connections. Tying to the past to evoke familiarity and comfort, nostalgia marketing like Dunkin's "Iced Boys" continues to drive engagement and plays a critical role in consumer purchasing; for example, almost half of dessert and candy eaters in the US like desserts that remind them of their childhood. Beyond nostalgia, emotional marketing strategies, like Calm's silent ad during election results, underscores the power of contrast and emotional resonance, demonstrating how thoughtful engagement can captivate and foster meaningful relationships with audiences.



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Create a safe and ethical approach to data collection and use

As personalization intensifies and data collection becomes more sophisticated, security is critical. In an era of “no normal”, the ability to protect consumer data is as important as using it responsibly. Staying ahead of increasingly complex data privacy and security threats while fostering trust with your customers will be critical. This means being proactive in learning and adopting the latest security measures while ensuring ethical transparency in how data is collected, managed, and applied. With the boundaries of communication technology expanding, balancing innovation with responsible data use is a non-negotiable to long-term success.

When planning, consider this...

How often are you discussing data security when considering your marketing and communications strategy? Who is responsible for understanding and checking you are meeting regulatory standards?

Work closely with your IT team to incorporate data privacy and security into your strategy; identify who within your team is informed and review plans from a regulatory viewpoint. Schedule regular audits to proactively find vulnerabilities, enhance customer confidence, and safeguard brand reputation.

Have you shared or made your data practices and policies easily accessible to your customers?

Build trust with consumers through transparency. Communicate existing and revised data policies by outlining what data is collected, how it is used, and how it is protected.

Do you know the privacy protections of any new tools you're considering?

Innovation is important and necessary, but so is ensuring privacy protections are in place and align to the privacy standards your organization have set before integrating them into your plans.

TREND 04

AI moves from a passenger position supporting marketing strategies to the driver of them, but keep your eye on connection.

AI is expected to grow at a 36.6% annual rate from 2023 to 2030. As 56% of businesses intend to use AI to optimize operations, marketers are leaning into it most notably for content creation (87%) and content personalization (71%). Expect to see more (and improved) tools available in 2025 that use AI to more effectively predict customer behavior, analyze large data sets and personalize content at scale; the key will be identifying tools that will help you scale and improve efficiency without losing that critical human touch that leaves most consumers still distrustful (70%) and cautious (54%) of AI advances.



36.6%

Annual growth rate of AI from 2023 to 2030.

Stay nimble

The rate of change across any industry has accelerated exponentially, with more transformation happening across marketing and communications in the last three years than in the previous two decades. To thrive in this environment, embrace a mindset of continuous learning and agility. Those who succeed will be the ones who not only stay curious but master the art of learning how to learn quickly. This will require pivoting away from strategies that no longer work and having the courage to step outside comfort zones. The ability to anticipate shifts in technology, audience behavior, and communication channels—and adjust strategies in real time—will become a core skill as the "new normal" of constant disruption will be the only norm.

When planning, consider this...

What is your organization's current approach to learning and development? Is it broken down by specific departments and skills?

Develop a program that blends external and internal training opportunities to ensure you're incorporating broad skill sets and perspectives. Beyond trainings, invest in workshops and industry conferences to keep your team updated on innovations. For example, CodeBase, the internal L&D program we run through our agency, incorporates internal, industry and external expert training sessions.

Does your team ask questions when thinking through problems? Do they push themselves and other members of the team by asking "why" you're approaching a problem a certain way?

Encourage curiosity; promote task force, independent study culture and reporting back by providing resources and spaces for self-directed learning.

In 2025, thriving amidst uncertainty will demand a balance between innovation and adaptability. Build trust and meaningful connections with stakeholders by leveraging data-driven personalization, embracing emerging technologies, and maintaining ethical transparency. With agility and continuous learning as guiding principles, organizations can not only navigate the "no normal" but also redefine success in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Ready to shape your strategy for what's next?

Start by prioritizing personalization, exploring emerging tools, and nurturing a culture of adaptability within your team.

Learn more

sourcecodecommunications.com

hello@sourcecodecomms.com

