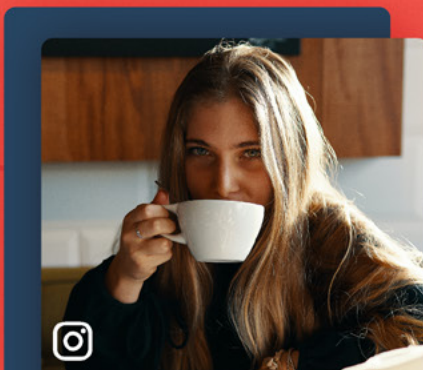
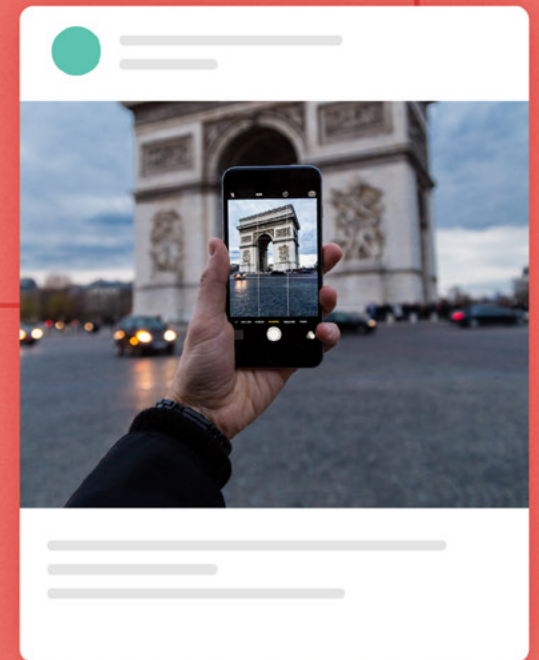
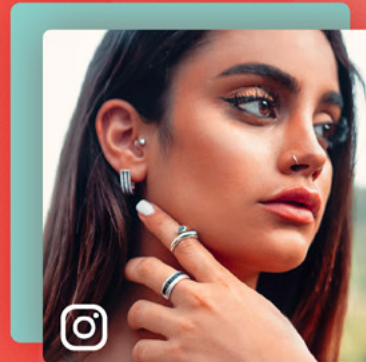




The State of User-Generated Content

2022



Note from the CEO

2020 changed the way people live their lives. 2021 emerged as another year of change — in people’s expectations, values, and desires for themselves and the future. As more people seek out new jobs and brands to shop from, creating engaging experiences is key to forming meaningful relationships that drive business results. In the future, these experiences will happen more frequently in AR and VR environments, like the metaverse, which will require new strategies and skillsets to bridge physical and digital worlds.

Leaders need to prioritize experiences, diversity, equity, and inclusion *through* authentic content marketing to connect with audiences: internal and external. And with brands living in the shadow of the Great Resignation, organizations will need to show why candidates should want to work for them and highlight their values using employee-generated content (EGC) — which has proven critical for hiring, retention, and ongoing employee engagement.

There is a rising demand for authentic, diverse voices – and our latest data shows that brands who share honestly are able to better connect with and understand their audiences. Additionally, online commerce is growing, with eCommerce vendors seeing record numbers in sales. Brands that don’t invest in online shops are going to need to pivot as consumer habits continue to move online.

Shoppers care about convenience first, and beyond that, want to shop with brands that they know and trust. They expect personalization and an ongoing relationship with their favorite shops – online *and* offline.

We are excited to present our **annual 2022 State of User-Generated Content report by TINT**. This year’s report explores the ways that brands connect with their communities, the impact of content across the entire customer journey and experience, how organizations interact with their employees, and strategies for 2022 and beyond. We wanted to highlight relevant and emerging trends for the next twelve months, and incorporated a new consumer trends survey to learn what people are looking for from brands in 2022.

There is a beacon of hope for the future — marketing teams are growing in headcount and budget. But that doesn’t come without growing pains. Our research revealed that teams feel overwhelmed by the rapid growth, and have challenges with engagement and ROI.

We look forward to supporting social, marketing, communications, and recruiting teams as they evolve over the coming months and years. We hope that these insights will help incorporate customer and employee voices into brand strategy, while making content marketing more engaging (and effective).

Please share your thoughts and feedback on the report data with us on social media (and what you think about including consumer trends). We’d love to hear from you.



Sameer Kamat
CEO, TINT

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Executive Summary

Authenticity speaks to customers. Today's consumers care about hearing from more diverse voices and those they can relate to, and like to engage by developing relationships with brands. Not only do customers feel this way, but job candidates want to connect with their employers in a meaningful way, too.

Results from our survey show that brands should lean on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, which boomed in 2021 – to learn from and reach new customers, then continue the conversation on email and other channels.

Visual content, and video in particular, continues to be an engaging way to capture new fans in a crowded space. But content needs to be inclusive and incorporate accessibility features (like alt text in images and closed captions in videos) in order to reach all potential audiences.

We found that 85% of consumers use social media to conduct research about new companies. As social commerce and hybrid experiences continue to grow, the need for an active omnichannel presence – online and offline – will only become more important.

A prevalent theme in this year's report is that **UGC and EGC continue to represent untapped potential for brand marketing and recruiting efforts**. In the coming year, organizations will share experiences and amplify voices authentically, invest in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and develop community-driven approaches to reach business goals.

**FUTURE
MARKETING OF**
PRESENTED BY TINT

Want to keep up with marketing, social, and UGC trends as they happen?

Subscribe to the Future of Marketing and once a week, we'll send you the top insights and strategies.

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Consumer Trends and Themes in User-Generated Content (UGC) + Employee-Generated Content (EGC)

Consumer Trends

TREND #1

Personalized Shopping Experiences

People want personalized online shopping experiences and product recommendations.

TREND #2

Connecting More with Brands

Consumers want to form connections with brands and share their brand moments.

TREND #3

Consumers Care About DEI

Diversity and authenticity are important to consumers.

TREND #4

Social Media Starts Brand Relationships

Different generations have different communication preferences, but social media reigns supreme.

TREND #5

The Informed Consumer

Consumers are more informed than ever, and aren't sure if they trust paid ads and influencers.

Marketing Themes

THEME #1 Engagement vs ROI

Different teams have different opinions on which one is more important.

THEME #2 Team Growing Pains

Marketing teams are growing, but their top challenge is still budget. How can teams maximize impact with less?

THEME #3 The Untapped Potential of User-Generated Content

UGC holds untapped potential for marketers, especially for eCommerce and advertising.

THEME #4 Employee-Generated Content Strengthens Recruiting and Employee Engagement

With a rise in employee turnover in 2021, EGC offers a way to improve recruiting efforts and increase satisfaction and engagement with current employees.

THEME #5 Effectively Embracing DEI

It's time for brands to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion content, thoughtfully reflect on social issues, and connect with creator communities.

THEME #6 The Power of Visual Content

Authentic visual content is the viral content marketing and advertising strategy marketers are looking for.

THEME #7 The Rise of Web 3.0 and the Metaverse(s)

The next frontiers for consumer engagement are here - are you ready?



The TINT State of User-Generated Content 2022

New Consumer Trends Survey + Data to Guide 2022 Strategy

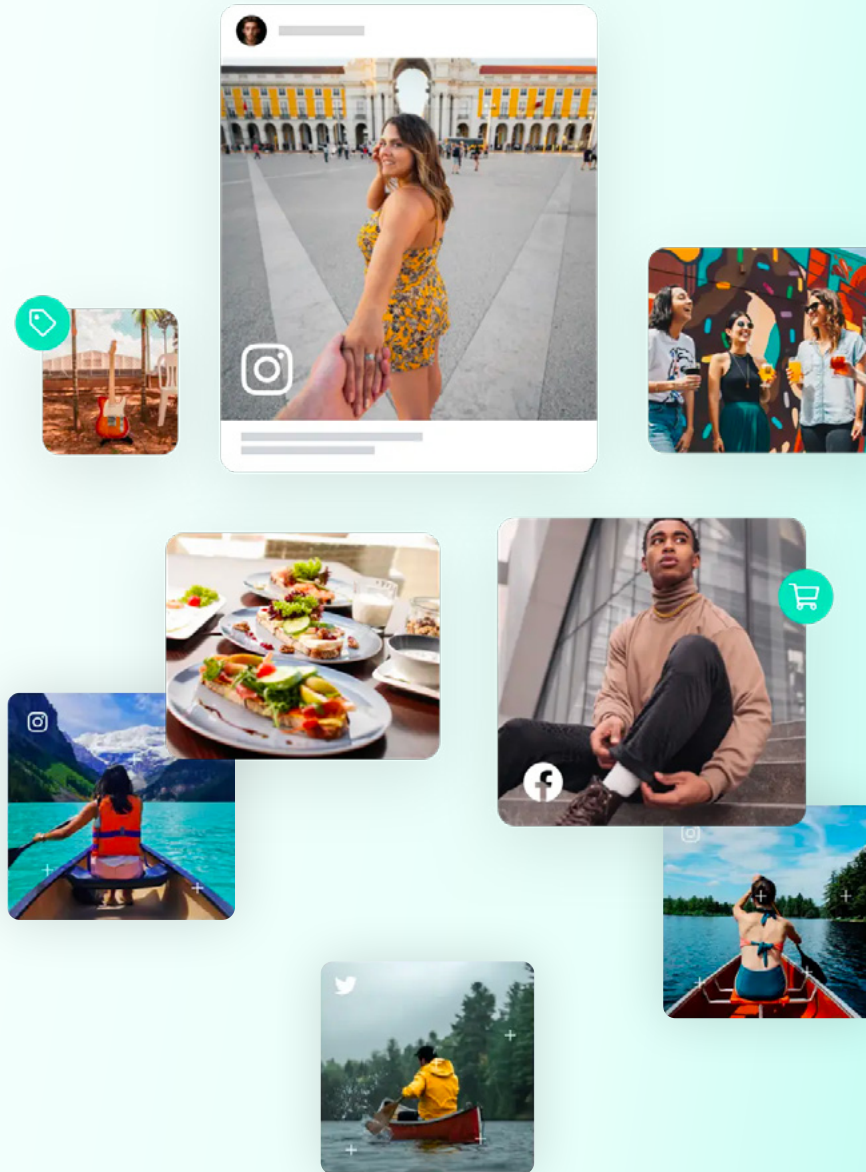
Last year, we surveyed marketers from around the world to learn how brands are connecting with their customers, their challenges, and how user-generated content can drive effective marketing strategies. This year, we've expanded our findings by cross-referencing consumer and marketer data to explore how brands can better align with consumer expectations.

After two years of accelerated digital transformation, consumer expectations have changed. But, there's a continued movement towards community and connection between companies and their advocates.

Our last report revealed the importance of brands being connected to their customers. That theme remains prevalent in this year's report.

Taking experiences virtual became absolutely essential for brands to thrive during the pandemic. Now, building off of two years of digital everything, there's a new appreciation for meaningful connections and authentic experiences between brands, individuals, and teams.

This year's themes illustrate the power of new perspectives and how brands can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable future. We hope this report can help to guide your marketing, communications, human resources, and sales strategies to greater results in 2022 and beyond.





Enterprise UGC Platform

Build Trust, Grow Engagement, & Increase Sales

TINT is the trusted enterprise User-Generated Content platform to tell your story through the voice of fans, customers, and employees. Weave the power of UGC and authentic influencer marketing into every step of the customer journey.

[Learn More](#)

2021 Consumer Trends: What Buyers Expect Today

Trends change from year to year – but 2020 and 2021 saw the rapid evolution and adoption of new technologies and practices. Consumer expectations have changed drastically and the way they seek to meet those expectations has shifted, too.

It isn't enough to understand how marketing and communications have changed. We need to understand what consumers and fans want and expect; so we have introduced a new consumer trends section to our State of User-Generated Content report.

With this new data, teams can make informed decisions about 2022 strategy and budget. A deeper understanding of the consumer experience can help brands improve engagement, increase ROI, and connect with new audiences. Here are key insights and consumer trends to guide your strategy in 2022.

CONSUMER TREND #1

Personalized Shopping Experiences

People want personalized online shopping experiences and product recommendations.

A personalized online shopping experience is an expectation for most customers (with an emphasis on *online*). People want to see how others are using products and services. They trust real people and their experiences more than brand-created content.

Q: Have you purchased something online over the past year?

Yes



No



What do people want from online shopping experiences? Who do they trust for recommendations?

77%

of shoppers are more likely to buy from brands that personalize their shopping experience.

72%

of consumers believe that reviews and testimonials submitted by customers are more credible than the brand talking about their products.

76%

of consumers have purchased a product because of someone else's recommendation before.



CONDUCTING BRAND RESEARCH

How do consumers research new brands?

The most popular platform for brand research among consumers is Facebook. The second most popular is Instagram.

18-24 year old consumers (the vanguard of Gen Z) were more likely to choose Instagram as their primary channel for brand research.

Consumers aged 54+ were most likely to choose Google as their preferred method of researching a brand.

Hootsuite Social Insights

What about other social platforms?

In [Hootsuite's Social Media Trends 2022 Report](#), they found that Facebook and Instagram are the most effective channels for marketers, but marketers' belief in the success of TikTok, Pinterest, and Snapchat jumped significantly this year.



CONSUMER TREND #2

Connecting More with Brands

Consumers want to form connections with brands and share their brand moments. Consumers want opportunities to engage with brands they love. And the more brands share user-generated content, the more people are likely to share something themselves. There's real power in user-generated content (UGC) from brand loyalists — and with a little guidance and encouragement from brands themselves, UGC can become a key marketing strategy that brands can harness to deepen connections with their customers.



How do consumers want to interact with brands online in 2022?

Almost 7 in 10 consumers (69%) are likely to post on social media after having a positive experience with a brand.

73%

of consumers agree that they wish more brands would run contests or giveaways.

64%

of consumers have tagged a brand or used a hashtag on social media before.

60%

of consumers wish that more brands would tell their fans and customers what type of content they want them to create.

Q: If a brand you like and use is re-sharing content by customers, are you more likely to share content about the brand or its products?

Yes



64%



Try creating branded social templates for your audience to use to share their experiences online, highlighting UGC as the content you want them to create.

CONSUMER TREND #3

Consumers Care About DEI

Diversity and authenticity are important to consumers.

After almost two years of challenges for people around the world, authenticity and honesty have shone through. People want to hear real stories from company leadership, happy users, and diverse voices to feel that they can connect with brands. Consumers want to buy from brands that reflect their own values and worldviews. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are incredibly important to today's consumers.

How can brands build trust and credibility in 2022?

By Committing to Amplifying Diverse Voices

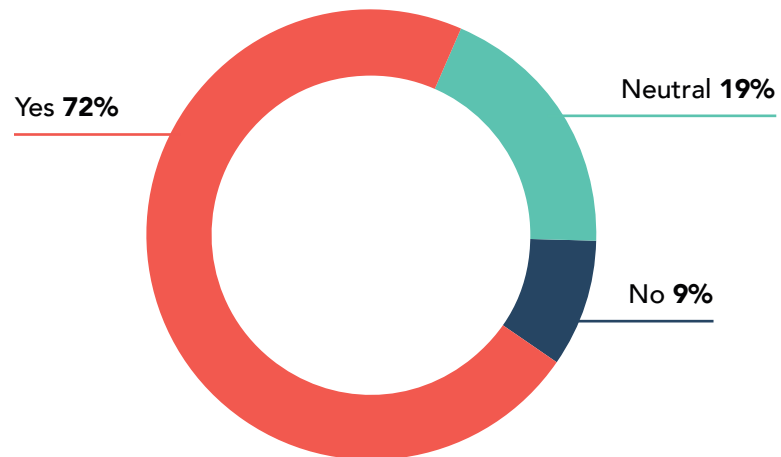
65% of consumers agree that it's important to them to see brands channeling diversity in their brand.

By Sharing Authentically and Engaging in Conversations

45% of consumers agree that they would unfollow a brand due to too much self-promotion.

By Encouraging Honest Customer Reviews and a Culture of Feedback

Q: Reviews and testimonials submitted by customers are more credible than the brand talking about their products.

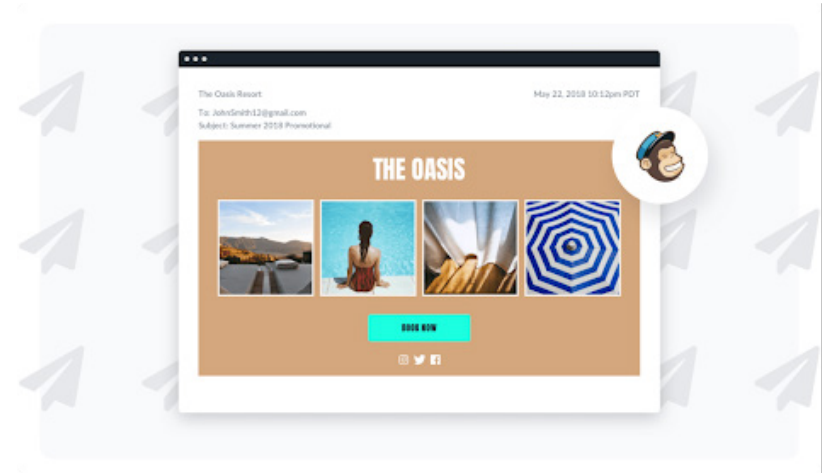


CONSUMER TREND #4

Social Media Starts Brand Relationships

Different generations have different communication preferences, but social media reigns supreme.

Consumers are nearly **3x more** likely to engage with a brand's social media content than any other type of media they create. 18-44 year olds prefer social media for marketing communications, but consumers over the age of 45 prefer email over social media and other channels.



Q: What content are you more likely to engage with?

Social media



Video



Newsletter



Podcast



Blog



Other



Take social content from your community and embed posts in other channels to drive more meaningful interactions back on branded social channels.

Q: What channel would you prefer for marketing communication?

Social media



Email



Direct Mail



SMS



Other

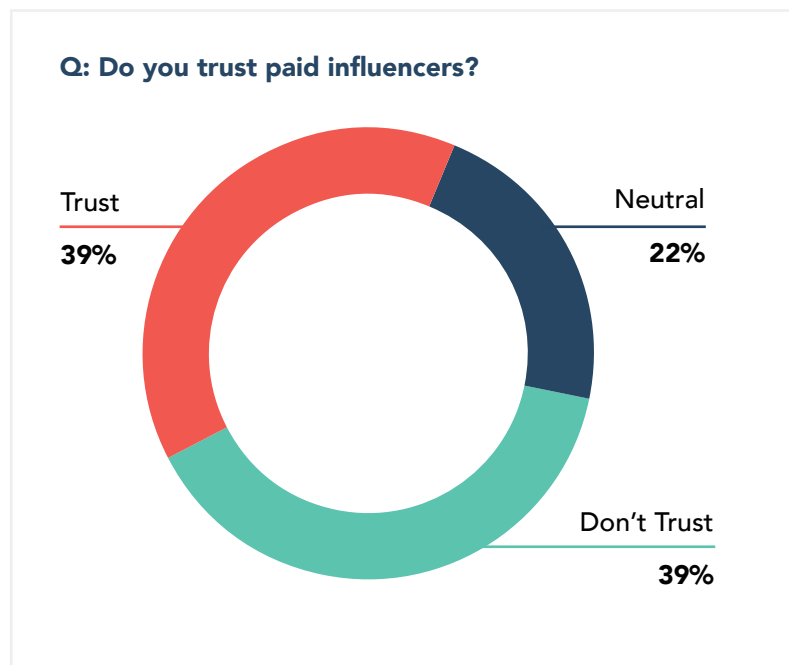


CONSUMER TREND #5

The Informed Consumer

Consumers are more informed than ever, and aren't sure if they trust paid ads and influencers.

Most people can tell when a brand is advertising to them, and they trust reviews and testimonials more than influencers. Consumers aren't sure if they trust sponsored advertisements, with 6 in 10 people feeling neutral or not trusting paid ads.



KEY TAKEAWAY

To make advertising more trustworthy, create ads based on user-generated content (UGC).

78%

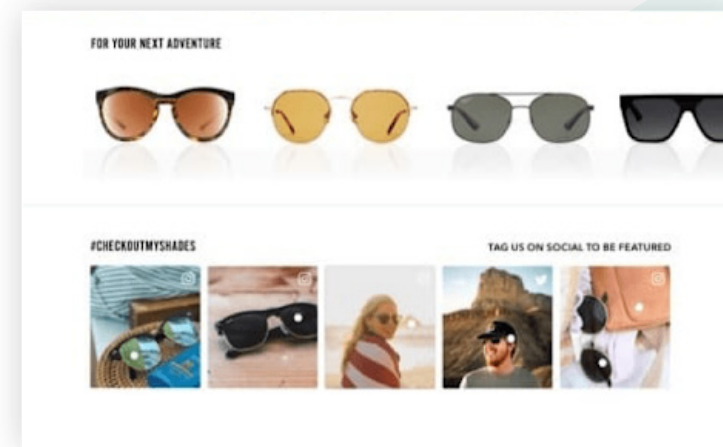
of consumers feel that they can tell when a brand is advertising to them.

75%

of consumers report that they are likely to search for reviews and testimonials before making a purchase.

Consumers are looking for ways to engage with their favorite brands online and are drawn to brands who share the most authentic voices – their peers. They are informed and trust recommendations, and expect a personalized shopping experience.

Marketers and advertisers — are you meeting these expectations?



The background is a solid teal color. In the center, there are three concentric circles of varying shades of teal. The innermost circle is the darkest, the middle one is a medium shade, and the outermost one is the lightest. A dashed white line forms a large circle around the center, overlapping the outermost teal circle.

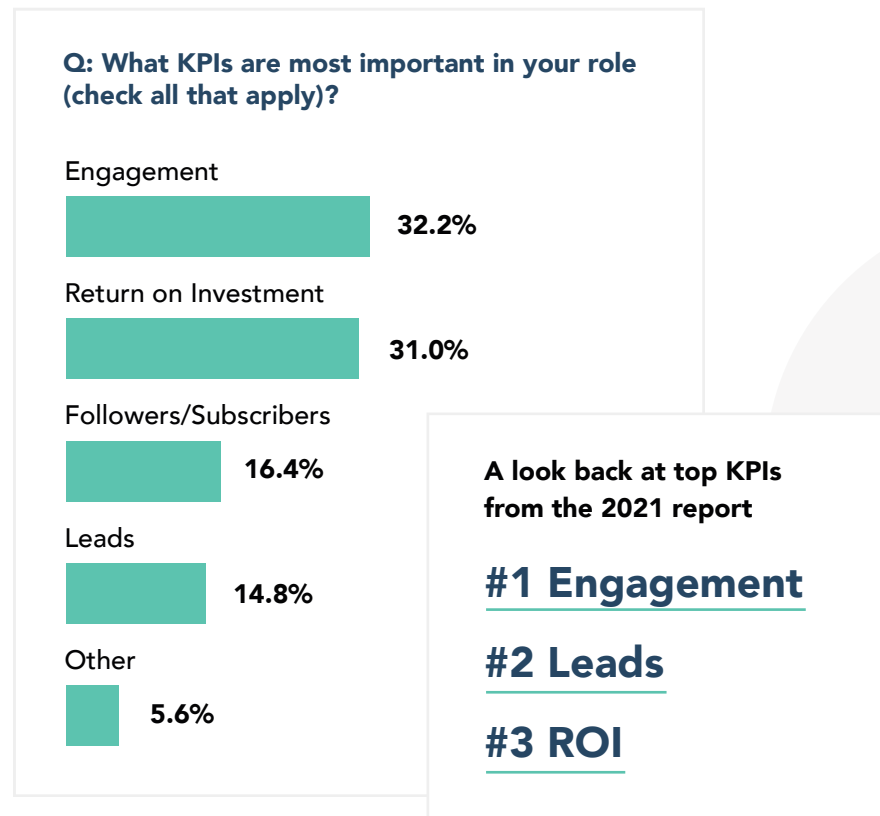
2022
**Marketing
Themes**

MARKETING THEME #1

Engagement vs ROI

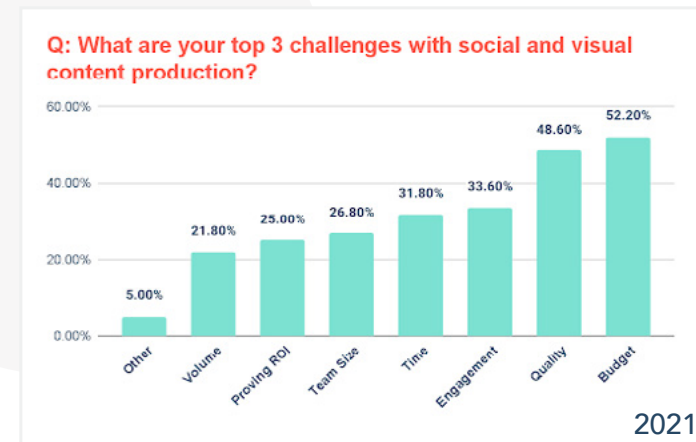
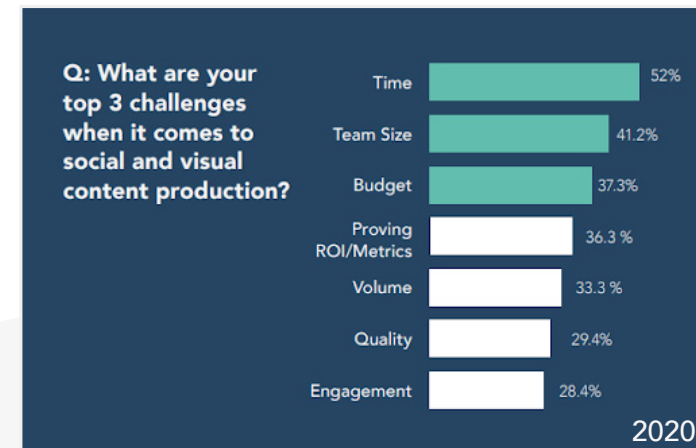
Teams have differing opinions on which one is more important.

Last year, the most important key performance indicators (KPIs) for marketers were engagement, leads, and return on investment (ROI). This year, **the top KPI is still engagement**, followed by ROI and attracting followers. After a year where many organizations had to cut resources and work with lean budgets, marketers are even more concerned with proving the value of their investments.



ENGAGEMENT

Brands understand the power of an engaged audience, and it remains the top goal for marketing teams for the second year in a row. But it's getting harder to achieve. Engagement is now one of marketers' top 3 challenges, up from being the 7th biggest obstacle in 2020.



ROI

It can be difficult to follow marketing results all the way to revenue. With ROI rising as a primary goal for marketers, teams are ready to invest in tools and learn the strategies to directly attribute marketing efforts with sales. ROI goes hand in hand with budget being the top challenge marketers are facing.

Social media and brand content have the potential to significantly impact ROI. Customer sentiment and [response to social content can affect a company's overall bottom line](#) (for the long-term), like when Nathan Apodaca's viral skateboarding video nearly doubled the stock price for Ocean Spray. By listening to how people are interacting with brands and carefully looking at how that correlates with specific performance metrics, social media teams can strategically tailor their marketing to hit goals more efficiently.

"For marketers who are looking to expand a category, a clear focus on engagement provides insights that help determine whether people are paying attention. Much of that engagement then paves the way to trust, from there it's a clear path to the conversion side which ROI is well-positioned to track. Think big picture about the impact you are looking to drive; not all attribution models are created equal."



Maggie Lower
CMO, Hootsuite

Proving Social Media ROI

Social media ROI can look like attributing a spike in sales (or stock price) to a viral video, or directly associating a social ad with conversions. What's more important is how well social media is serving the purpose you're using it for.

STEP 1. Define why your brand uses social media (KPIs). *Brand awareness? Relationship building? Direct conversions?*

STEP 2. Determine your brand's benchmarks. *What are your existing engagement rates? What does social media success look like?*

STEP 3. Set up tests, analyze, and optimize in an ongoing effort to improve social performance. *Use UGC and compare against brand and industry benchmarks.*

STEP 4. Calculate the amount your company spends on social and content marketing efforts. *Consider the time it takes to create and distribute, along with ad spend.*

STEP 5. Track performance metrics that align with your KPIs. *This can mean followers, views, impressions, reach, engagement, sales, use of discount codes, or conversion rates.*

FREE RESOURCE

[How to Measure Social Media ROI for Business](#)

The Engagement vs ROI Debate

Which one is more important — an engaged audience, or high sales month? Engagement leads to ROI, so they are connected no matter what. The more people interact with content, the more likely they are to buy, and the more brands are able to learn about their ideal target audience. Teams are split on which should be prioritized in 2022.

Leadership teams are more likely to choose ROI as their top goal for the coming year. Marketers and advertisers know that engagement is the key, the precursor to results, but positive ROI is the ultimate goal.

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Make sure your teams are aligned towards the same goals and aware of other team goals. Provide transparency on company strategy so that all employees are aware and feel involved in the bigger picture.

Speaking of engagement and ROI — did you know that

[UGC specifically increases engagement, CTRs, and conversions?](#)

MARKETING THEME #2

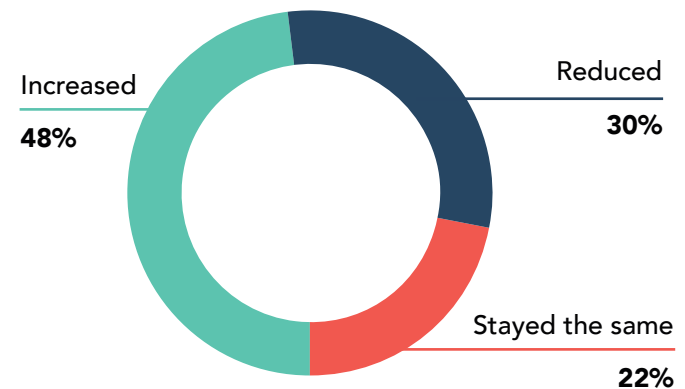
Team Growing Pains

Marketing teams are growing, but their top challenge is still budget. How can teams maximize impact with less?

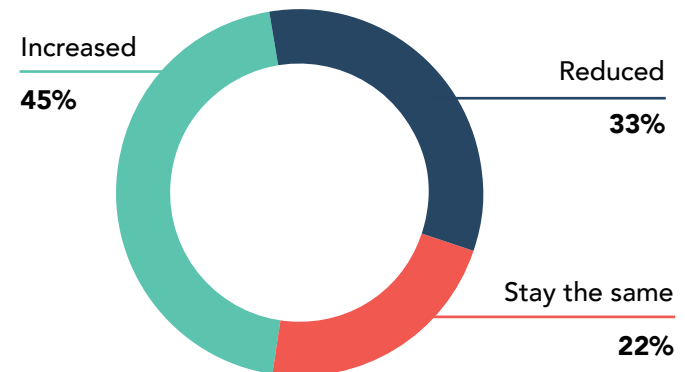
In 2020, more than half of marketing teams reduced their budget. Only a small percentage of marketing teams increased their budgets, and more than 40% of marketers felt that headcount was a challenge. In 2021, marketing teams and budgets switched into growth mode, but with that growth comes challenges in scaling and managing new production demands.

Marketing teams are growing

Q: How was the size of your team impacted in 2021?



Q: How was your organization's overall marketing budget impacted in 2021?



But there are growing pains for scaling marketing teams.

The top challenge marketers face with social and visual content production is *budget*. This is followed by content quality and engagement — a persistent theme across all marketing organizations as engagement becomes more competitive in a crowded landscape.

Teams with 10+ marketers are the most likely to strongly agree that it takes their team too long to create content. Is this because they have longer or more complex approval processes?

How enterprise teams can optimize content production workflows

Youri Hollier, Director of Digital + Social for Tim Hortons says that he sees marketers struggling most with the quantity of work. “The hardest thing is knowing what to prioritize. We’ve been able to navigate that pretty well, but it’s a never-ending struggle with constantly evolving platforms,” he says.

Here’s how Youri recommends solving the content approval bottlenecks and “endless” work that can be done on marketing teams.

Know what to prioritize and find out *what* your teams are spending their time doing.

Identify areas for optimization and automation.

Don’t look at every social platform every day.

“Find efficiencies. The work is endless. Using the right software at the right time can tremendously help. And the future of marketing? It’s more digital.”



Youri Hollier
Director, Digital and Social at Tim Hortons

EXPLORE OUR CONVERSATION WITH YOURI

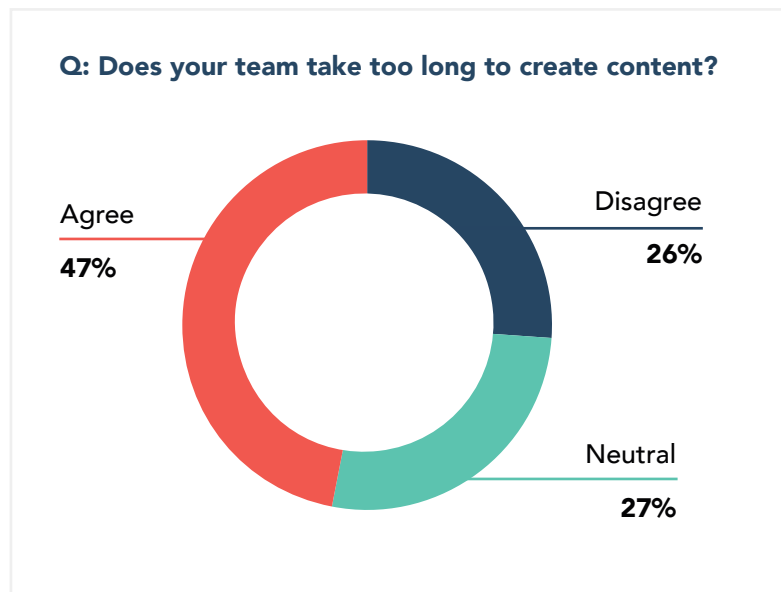
[\[Blog/Podcast\] Perspectives: Featuring Youri Hollier, Director of Digital + Social, Tim Hortons](#)

Marketing Challenges

47% of marketers agree that it takes their team too long to create content.

60% of marketers feel pressured to continually produce greater amounts of content at a high frequency.

60% of marketers take the time to format content for all screen sizes and social media platforms.



Rights Requests + UGC

45% of marketers ask for permission every time they reuse content created by others. And for a good reason. **Reusing content without asking for consent can lead to rights violations**, fines, a negative sentiment from online followers, and legal trouble — all things that brands would rather avoid.

Given that UGC sees 4X higher engagement rates, it's worth exploring more ways to source content ethically at scale. Implement a process to drive more content, get permission and document it, and build your bank of approved UGC to use across all marketing channels.

To ensure brand safety when sourcing user-generated content:

1. Always get the creator's permission to use their content.
2. Document the approval and save it in an organized location.
3. Check for copyright infractions on the image. People don't always know if they have the rights to use an image before sharing.
4. Tag the creator + share the love. It's not exactly required, but can help amplify the content and is a nice way to thank the user and build community.

FREE RESOURCE

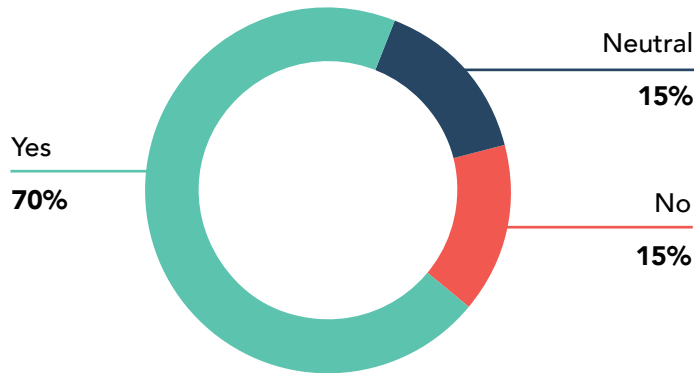
Bookmark the [Guide to Social Media Rights + UGC](#)

MARKETING THEME #3

The Untapped Potential of User-Generated Content

UGC holds untapped potential for marketers (and other departments like HR + recruiting), especially for social commerce, eCommerce, and advertising.

Q: Are ratings and reviews important for your organization?



Marketers at large orgs are most likely to strongly agree that ratings and reviews are important. *Is this strategy prioritized by enterprise orgs?*

6 in 10

marketers feel that their audience engages more with UGC in marketing and communications channels.

At TINT, we've always been passionate about sharing user voices and helping brands grow using UGC. Now, the untapped revenue potential of UGC is too great to ignore.

[Hootsuite's latest social trends data](#) showed that marketing leaders want to expand the impact of social media in other areas in the organization outside of marketing, like HR and sales, opening up even more opportunities to leverage UGC and EGC.

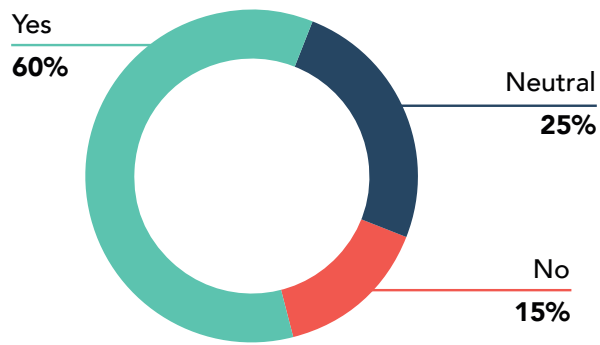
70% of marketers report that ratings and reviews are important for their organization, and **61% plan to incorporate more user-generated content (UGC)** into their marketing in 2022. Why?

"Stakeholders will judge the authenticity of a marketing campaign and content partnerships by looking at a company's actions to see evidence of transformation reflected in its strategies and operations."



Eva Taylor
Corporate Social Responsibility Director,
Hootsuite

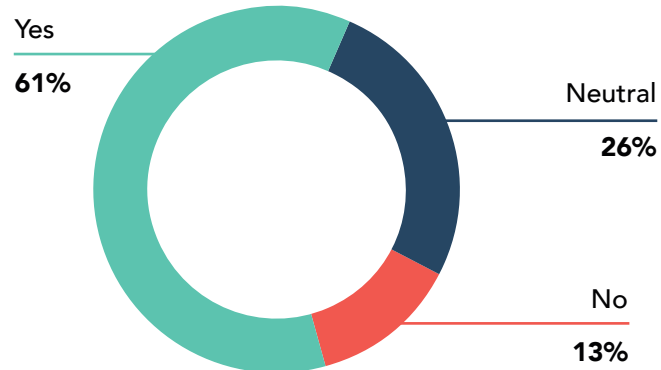
Q: Does your audience engage more with user-generated content than branded content?



So, engagement is the top KPI for 2022 + UGC helps with engagement. **Check. ✓**

But... **only 41% of marketers regularly use user-generated content in their marketing.** 61% want to **incorporate more UGC in 2022**, showing that brands are seeing the value from both a production *and* engagement perspective.

Q: Do you plan to incorporate more user-generated content (UGC) in your marketing in 2022?



Almost 70%

of marketing teams are missing out on the benefits of **social proof**. This is a major opportunity for brands!



UGC is more trusted by consumers, and represents a huge potential for improving the sought-after engagement that brands want. (Not to mention it saves marketing teams time and resources needed to create high-quality content. **Score.**)

Let's review the 2021 consumer data around UGC:

72% of consumers believe that reviews and testimonials submitted by customers are more credible than the brand talking about their products.

76% of consumers have purchased a product because of someone else's recommendation before.



Consumers want to engage online and create content that's shared by brands.

64% of marketers often ask customers to share content to a specific hashtag or by tagging their brand handle on social media.

Related 2021 consumer trends:

73% of consumers agree that they wish more brands would run contests or giveaways.

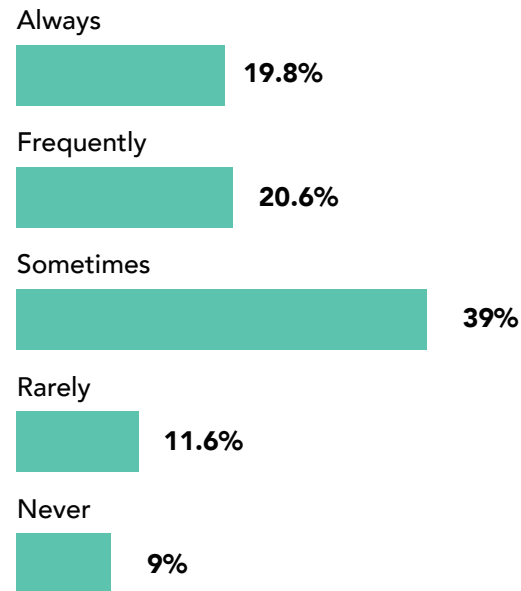
69% of consumers report that they have participated in a brand contest or giveaway.

64% of consumers agree that when brands they like and use re-shares content by customers, they are more likely to share content about the brand or its products.

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Brands can ask for more reviews, testimonials, or product/service content, and consider using contests or giveaways to encourage consumers to post. 70% of marketers feel they could do a better job asking for testimonials, and 60% of consumers wish brands would tell them what to share — the likelihood for engagement is high.

Q: How often does your organization use content created by its fans, users, or customers (UGC) in marketing?



For marketing teams using UGC in a limited way, or not taking advantage of repurposing content across social media platforms and other branded marketing channels, the first step is to look through recent brand mentions online. Then, refer back to the process of obtaining the rights to share.

Where are marketers using UGC today?

#1 Social media

#2 Advertisements

#3 Email marketing

Where to Amp Up Use of UGC Content

SOCIAL COMMERCE

On social media posts, ads, product and digital shops

WEBSITE

On the homepage or throughout the site

ECOMMERCE

On product listing pages or confirmation pages

Looking for somewhere to start with UGC? Try social ads. They perform well, provide ample data for future marketing campaigns, and see higher engagement with lower CTRs. Read the [Complete Guide to UGC](#) to learn more about running UGC social ads.

Employee-Generated Content is Key for Recruiting and Employee Engagement

With the stratospheric rise in employee turnover in 2021, EGC offers a way to improve recruiting efforts and increase satisfaction and engagement with current employees.

In 2021, [one in four people quit their jobs](#). This wave of employees leaving has been deemed “The Great Resignation,” and it is shifting the ways that companies operate. It has been a time of change with record numbers of available job postings remaining open for candidates. People are under pressure at work, feeling burned out, and taking the steps they need to in order to maintain their mental health and wellbeing.

Upon further study, [mid-career employees are quitting the most](#), suggesting that they are in high demand, and feeling overworked — many are managing remote or hybrid teams for the first time and seeking out teams with established remote processes.

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Building remote collaboration workflows is extremely time-consuming and needs to be strategic. Having remote-friendly tools and structure in place is attractive for new managers or leadership team members.

During the pandemic, people worked more, which has led to [a majority of marketers feeling the burnout](#). How can companies address employee burnout and develop a culture of mental wellbeing and collaboration?

Addressing burnout on fast-paced marketing teams

Here’s how managers and leaders can tackle burnout and team pressure to create a more inviting work environment for existing and potential employees.

1. Address it. Leaving signs of burnout unaddressed can lead to resignations and unhappy employees.
2. Encourage rest and recharging. Recent [workplace data from Owl Labs shows that 87% of employees are interested in the 4 day work week](#), and 72% are interested in core hours. Consider giving employees a day off each week, or start with meeting-free days.
3. Listen to (and seek out) opinions from employees. Gen Z has a new attitude at work — meaningfully analyzing everything, and considering its impact. [Gen Z was the first generation to say no to Wall Street demands of working weekends](#), forcing Goldman Sachs to implement a new rule — no work on Saturdays. The workplace will never look the same as it did 50 years ago, and it is headed in a healthy direction for employee wellbeing.
4. Encourage employees to share their experiences using employee-generated content (EGC). Employee resource groups and internal thought leaders can be hugely impactful for employee morale and mitigating burnout. Foster connections between employees and support honest conversations about mental health and challenges in the workplace.

READ MORE

[Addressing marketing burnout with action](#)

How are companies attracting new talent and engaging employees?

52% of communications + HR teams regularly use employee-generated content (EGC) in communications channels.

Remember, consumers are most likely to engage with content on social media, and they are extremely *likely* to share content if a brand is already sharing customer content. The same concept applies to employee engagement.

Where are marketers using employee-generated content (EGC)?

#1 Social media

#2 Ads or job postings

#3 Events, recruiting efforts, job fairs

Where *should* marketers be using more EGC?

- **Screens in the workplace**
- **Career pages**
- **Internal contests**
- **Employee swag**

Employee advocacy is key to attracting new employees, establishing company loyalty, and retaining employees. It's important to the future of work and emerging as the next evolution of having a personal brand — having a strategic professional brand.

EGC is a form of influencer marketing that is rooted in organic, authentic employee actions and behaviors. Consumers want to engage with brands and they want the brands to give them ways to engage online — the same goes for employee-brand interactions.

In the race to hire, think about what candidates are looking at. [Employee social profiles](#) see 10X more followers than branded accounts, and 8X the engagement.

“Employee-generated content is a valuable way to extend social’s impact to other areas of the business, and can be applied to any industry whether it’s a B2B or B2C organization. Many departments could also benefit from leveraging EGC — we’ve seen great use cases from Human Resource and Employer Brand teams and sales organizations adding EGC into their strategy. It’s the perfect way to humanize your brand across all business units through external marketing channels.”



Brayden Cohen
Social Marketing and Employee
Advocacy Lead, Hootsuite

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Provide branded templates and guidelines for employees to encourage new hires to share an announcement when they start with your company, new job opportunities, or why they love working for your company. Reshare EGC on social media and career pages to show potential employees your work culture. Consider employee takeovers on social media, or employee resource groups creating their own profiles and social media accounts.

Employee content benefits for brands:

- Establishes trust and credibility
- Creates a thought leadership persona for employees
- Provides access to a larger network of engaged customers or potential candidates
- Helps surface job postings on social media algorithms

READ MORE

[How employee advocacy and internal influencers increase engagement and build a stronger company culture](#)

“We have leaders who are inspiring and experts in their fields so we are trying to find creative ways to share their voices on social media. It’s important to provide direct access to our experts, and share their information online.”



Aleksandra Kuzmanovic
Social Media Manager,
World Health Organization



MARKETING THEME #5

Effectively Embracing DEI

It's time for brands to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion content, thoughtfully reflect on social issues, and connect creator communities.

People trust other people. They want to hear from those who have similar experiences to them, whether they are shopping for a new bathing suit online, searching for a new job, or trying a new service for the first time. They also want to understand the who and the why behind the brands that they support.

During the pandemic, [charitable giving reached record numbers](#), hitting almost \$500B in 2020 alone, while the economy took a sharp downturn. People gave what they could to organizations that mattered to them.

While the past two years have been challenging, they have also reminded people that we are all connected, and a part of the global community. **63% of marketers plan to blend more community voice with their brand voice** in 2022, up from 39% last year.

Consumers are

4-6X more likely

to buy from and advocate for
"purpose-driven" companies.

Source: [Zeno](#)

There is a long way to go for most companies in sharing their mission and values, though. **6 in 10 marketers feel that their organization could do a better job at highlighting participation in social issues.** Millennials + Gen Xers are the most likely to feel strongly that their company could do better, and those who are 54+ are the least likely to agree. While there is an overall expectation for companies to do more and be more involved in community issues, older generations aren't as passionate.

How can brands embrace more DEI in their content?

When sharing DEI content, the most important element is authenticity. By sharing individuals and their voices and experiences using UGC, which is naturally diverse and highlights real voices from the audience, brands can show their support and purpose in a genuine way, rather than using actors or influencers who don't align with their mission. Digital natives (Gen Z and Millennials) can spot fake-authentic content from a mile away.

To ensure brand safety when sourcing user-generated content:

1. Encourage conversations online and facilitate customer and employee engagement with your brand.
2. Work with creator communities who are passionate about sharing online and align with your company mission.
3. Connect with influencers who reflect brand values.

KEY TAKEAWAY

While people may not know how they feel about influencers, they follow and trust creators online. Find the right creator-influencers and you can strategically connect with new communities. And — develop employee personas and internal influencers to help your brand grow and engage online.

71%

of marketers plan on showing more diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility in their content in the future.

“Brands can try to fake authenticity using actors, but a better alternative is to tap into the content from their actual communities and fans. Content from real users is more authentic, it naturally shares more diverse perspectives, and it is more effective in engaging audiences and driving conversions.”



Matt Greener
Vice President of Marketing,
TINT

MARKETING THEME #6

The Power of Visual Content

Authentic visual content is the viral content marketing and advertising strategy marketers are looking for.

Visual content marketing is more engaging and drives more conversions than brand content. Since marketing teams’ top goals for 2022 are engagement and ROI they need to incorporate dynamic visual content to be successful. In 2022, we predict a rise in visual content around travel experiences, events, retail and new products, and lifestyle brands as people return to normal.

There will be bigger and better activations and experiences with more engagement from audiences, who are energized and excited for socializing and connecting. User-generated content will show how people are enjoying these new experiences, encouraging others to do the same. Much of the visual content revolution will revolve around video. In 2021, the [Head of Instagram announced that they are no longer a “photo-sharing app” and will be focusing on dynamic video content](#). And marketing teams took note — **71% of marketers plan on increasing efforts in video content in 2022.**

[Hootsuite’s Social Media Trends 2022 Report](#) showed that the **most exciting opportunity for marketers in 2022 is experimenting with new content and ad formats** — brands should test out UGC, videos, and testimonials in ad campaigns.

If companies haven’t prioritized user-generated content, shared more diverse voices than branded content alone, or experimented with new content formats like video, now is the time. The data is clear — people want to interact with the companies they admire, and they are ready and waiting for brand teams to start conversations online. During a time where in-person engagement was less possible, brands have shown up to create meaningful moments in the virtual world, and gained new loyal followers because of it.



TikTok, a platform based entirely on video, has grown quickly, and saw the biggest jump in planned investments from marketing teams for 2022. Some brands have found big success growing using video content, especially on emerging platforms. Now, others are scrambling to figure out the best ways to get their brand involved and drive results. Video marketing can be even more time consuming than static content to produce in-house, so UGC is a great way to share fan-created videos and incorporate video content at scale. Brands can include fan-generated video reviews or testimonials in social media campaigns, email series, and on their website.

Here's [how Cisco uses employee-generated content to drive engagement](#).

Facts about visual content in marketing

70% of consumers agree that when they see others sharing photos, they are more likely to share photos, too.

64% of consumers feel that if a brand they like and use is re-sharing content by customers, they are more likely to share content about the brand or its products.

63% of consumers believe that visual testimonials are more credible than written testimonials.

72% of consumers trust images shared by customers more than stock photography.

62% of consumers report that they are more likely to click on content like ads, websites, social posts, or emails, that feature customer photos rather than an image created by the brand.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Consumers trust customer images more than stock photos, and are more likely to engage with ads that feature user-generated content. Incorporate user and employee-generated images and videos in marketing campaigns and social ads to increase engagement and conversions.

Using [user-generated content in social media ads](#) can reduce cost-per-click (CPC) by 50%. Since a top challenge faced by marketers is budget, making efforts to maximize ad spend can open up funds to hire more employees or invest in new marketing and collaboration tools.

LEARN MORE

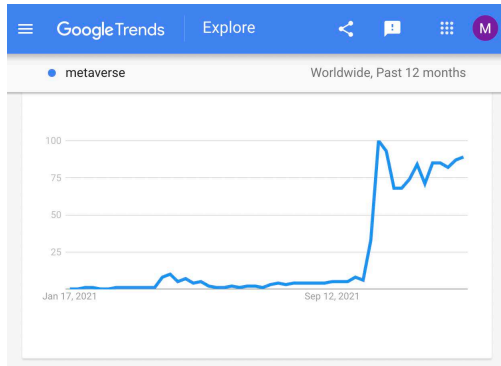
[The visual content marketing guide to driving conversions](#)

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MARKETING THEME #7

The Rise of Web 3.0 and the Metaverse(s)

2021 was filled with rumblings of a new digital universe. We saw brands build out storefronts in Roblox and create live virtual concerts in Fortnite. These were precursors to the proclamation that would “officially” launch the Metaverse. On October 28, 2021, Mark Zuckerberg announced the name change from Facebook to Meta and their plans for the digital frontier of the future, rocketing the metaverse conversation from the fringes into the mainstream.

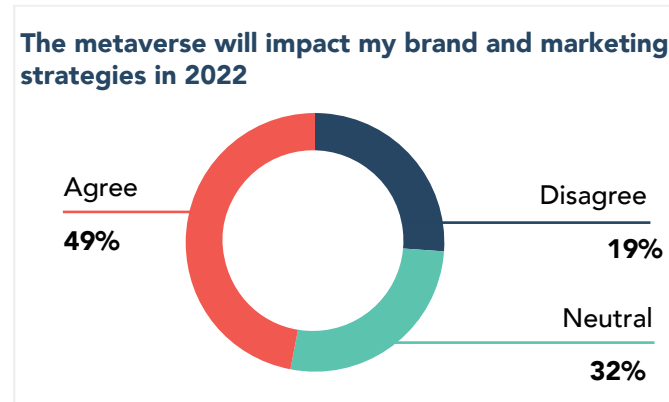


Ever since, there has been seemingly endless buzz and speculation about the metaverse(s), Web 3.0, non-fungible tokens (NFTs), and cryptocurrency. Blockchain and a unified virtual experience have dominated news as every person and every brand scrambles to figure out exactly what this all means for the future of marketing.

Where there's attention, there's opportunity. Some brands will lead; blazing paths for others to follow. The battle for attention is heating up. Marketers know that where there's a captive audience, budgets and advertising must follow.

Already, many fashion and beauty brands are experimenting with NFTs, launching exclusive collections and creating bridges to the digital world through physical activations. As a sign of things to come, Nike recently acquired RTFKT - a studio that develops virtual collectibles and experiences.

Bloomberg analysts estimate that the global metaverse revenue opportunity could approach **\$800 billion by as soon as 2024**. While Tim Sweeney, CEO of Epic Games (makers of Fortnite) is quoted as saying, “Over the coming decades, the metaverse has the potential to become a multi-trillion-dollar part of the world economy.”



Understandably, many brands and marketers don't know what to do yet, while the early adopters are embracing uncertainty with excitement and an attitude of adventure. Some of the most prominent metaverse plans for marketers in 2022 include, Advertising and sponsorships, Virtual events, Crypto payments and creating tokens, Lines of digital collectibles, and AR simulations for products and services.

User-generated content remains the cornerstone of consumer engagement. Web 3.0 and the metaverse expand on the opportunity, creating new ways for people and brands to explore new platforms together (creating content along the way).

Soon, content will be much more than just photos and video. Creating games, digital art, and interactive experiences could be as easy as creating an Instagram Reel or a TikTok video. All of these new content types represent opportunities for brands to engage with their audiences — and we're already seeing brands introduce their own NFT collections and phygital product offers to generate revenue and build community.

For now, one thing is certain and that is that the long-term viability of the metaverse(s) will require marketers to embrace this brave new world where engagement blends the digital and the physical.

The Future of Marketing

What does the future of marketing look like?

We're constantly looking ahead to what the future holds for marketing and every week, share the latest insights with our global community of over 25,000 leading marketers.

Based on this year's State of User-Generated Content report results, the future of marketing is centered around community, authenticity, and real engagement between passionate individuals and brands. Younger generations are encouraging better work-life balance and more "purpose-driven" brands who are involved in advancing positive change. As the world evolves, so do consumer preferences, and marketing strategies need to adapt to stay ahead. The way that people consume information, communicate, and form opinions has changed in a digital landscape, and been shaped by a rapid shift to an almost entirely virtual existence.

Our team curates insights from marketing leaders, facilitates conversations with the brightest in the industry, and conducts research to learn exactly how brands can connect with their audiences and make the most of UGC. We want to support marketers in becoming the best they can be, reducing team workload and burnout, and finding ways to exceed their goals.

"There's just something about the raw, unpublished component of user-generated content (UGC) that doesn't make it feel highly overproduced. UGC feels natural and authentic because it's real – and it's an opportunity for brands to really drive connection with their consumers."



Luz Corona
Community Editor, AdWeek

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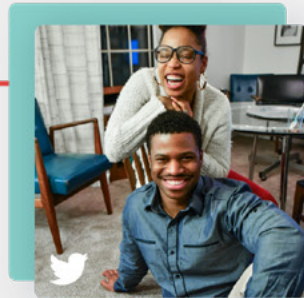


Thank You

Thank you for reading our annual State of User-Generated Content report and for sharing it with your team or others who may find it useful. This report shows hope for the future, and a positive outlook on the future of marketing. Overall, it reveals the immense power of human connection. We hope that this data empowers your team to enact change, inspire, connect with your audience, ease your workload, and accelerate your results.

Please share your thoughts with us on social media [@tint](#). We look forward to connecting with you!

This report was created in partnership with the amazing team at [CXD Studio](#), a creative marketing agency.



Methodology

The State of User-Generated Content is a report compiled and published by TINT. The purpose of this report is to drive clarity and provide insights on the forces and trends shaping the marketing landscape, and the challenges and opportunities that global brands face.

The data for this report was gathered using online surveys, collecting data from a global audience of 500 consumers and 500 marketers. Additional data were included from TINT and partner resources. Links are incorporated throughout the report.

We would like to thank all respondents and collaborators for their time and invaluable input. This research would not be possible without your attention to detail and thoughtful contributions. Individual survey data and participants are held in strict confidence.



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