

# Web Summit 2022 Marketing Trends Report

The background of the report cover is a large, dimly lit conference hall filled with a dense crowd of people. In the center of the stage, a large screen displays the 'web summit' logo, which consists of the words 'web' and 'summit' in a sans-serif font, with a stylized triangle graphic between them. Two speakers in blue suits are visible on the stage, one on the left and one on the right, both gesturing as if presenting. The stage is illuminated with blue and purple lights, and the audience is mostly in shadow.

web  
summit

A decorative footer bar at the bottom of the page, divided into four colored sections: purple with yellow diagonal stripes, teal with two purple circles, yellow with pink diagonal stripes, and pink with yellow diagonal stripes.

web **summit** Insights



## If 2020 promised to be the year of the ‘great reset’, and 2021 ‘the great reopening’, 2022 has a more unsettled outlook. This upheaval is strongly reflected in the marketing, advertising, social media and journalism trends that emerged from Web Summit 2021.

Traditional journalists and media outlets look to a new year with uncertainty about their purpose.

News influencers, new publication models and calls for greater diversity in the newsroom are shaking up the Fourth Estate, with Yasir Khan, editor-in-chief of Thomson Reuters Foundation, saying **“legacy media organisations stopped learning a long time ago ... They need to learn to adapt”**. (page 32)

The keys to brand marketing are changing too.

Consistent engagement stems from keeping your finger on the pulse of what customers want. Andreas Markdalen of frog design said that, in recent years, **“we’ve started to think about who we are ... and our perspectives and experiences as customers have changed. Brands need to consider that”**. (page 22)

Organisations that develop a brand attuned to their customers’ values, and that authentically support causes they believe in, will win out.

Social media companies are being confronted by people sick of algorithm-driven toxic content. Industry leaders are criticising ineffective reactions from the likes of Facebook, and

whistleblowers are stepping up to show that social platform malaise is born of apathy.

Frances Haugen, former Facebook employee turned whistleblower, recently called out the social media giant for its lack of user protections, saying, **“instead of investing in making sure that our platforms are a minimal level of safe, Facebook is about to invest 10,000 engineers in video games”**. (page 25)

The digital ad world boomed during the pandemic, with S4 Capital’s Sir Martin Sorrell claiming the last two years have seen US\$650 billion pumped into the ecosystem.

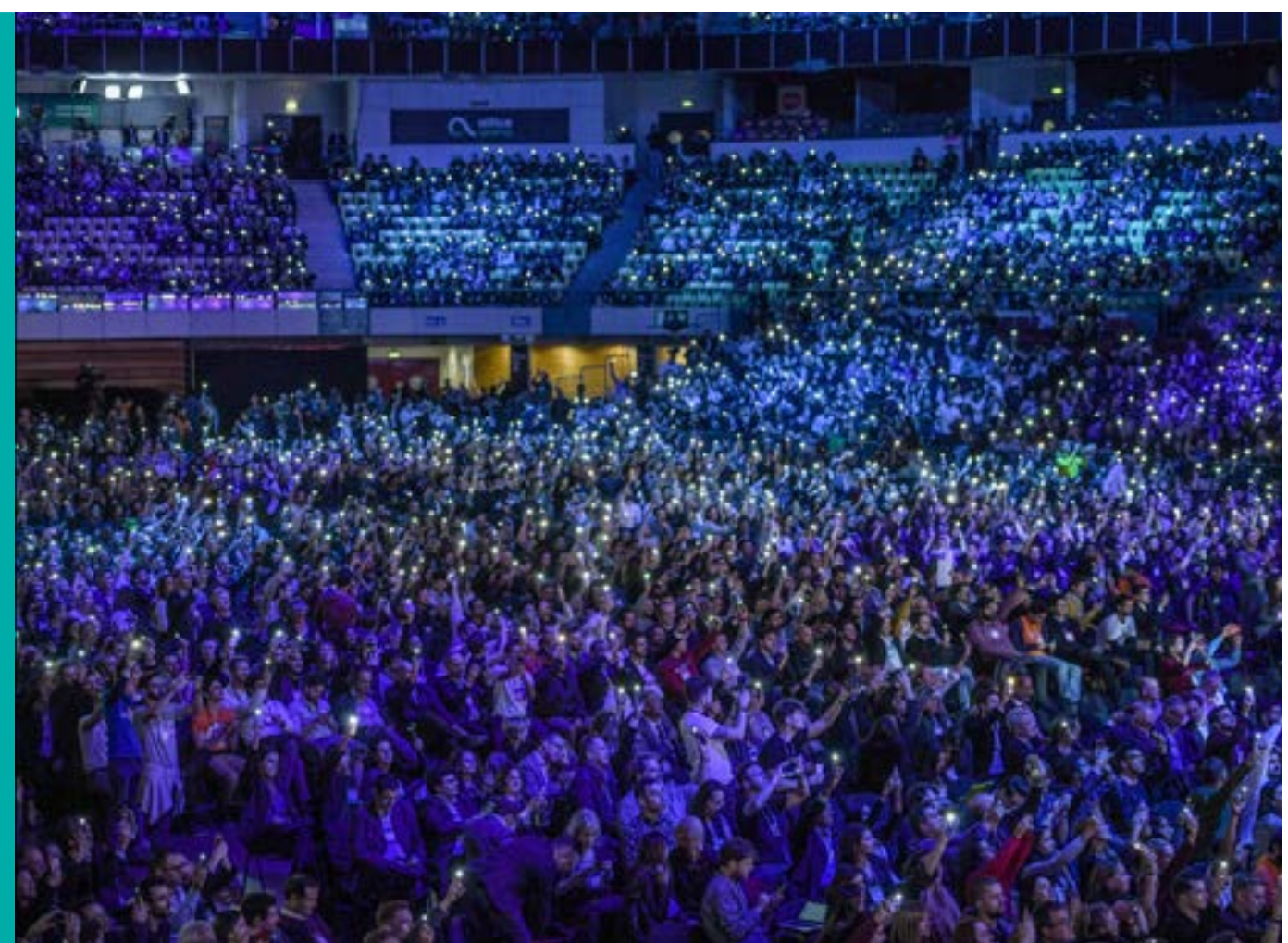
With the death of third-party cookies looming, advertisers that fail to harness emerging technologies will fall behind.

As the Trade Desk’s George Slefo put it, “you have a bunch of companies, all racing to make their own identity solutions ... which kind of invites the question, **‘Is there going to be one identity solution to rule them all?’**.” (page 5)

2022 looks set to continue the uncertainty of recent years. Here’s the inside story from Web Summit on trends that will dominate the marketing and media landscape in the near future.

“  
**Legacy media organisations ... need to learn to adapt.**  
”

Yasir Khan  
Editor-in-chief, Thomson Reuters Foundation



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**Sir Martin Sorrell**  
Founder & Executive  
Chairman, S4 Capital

# Advertising

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# Advertising into 2022 and beyond: The data from Sir Martin Sorrell

## ■ Growing the ads value of the biggest platforms

Covid-19 presented advertisers with an opportunity. **With people online gaming, socialising and shopping, advertising platforms could double down on budgets and increase their market share.**

Sir Martin Sorrell, founder and executive chairman of ad agency S4 Capital, ran through some stats in his fireside talk at Web Summit 2021.

According to Sir Martin, the pandemic-related move towards online living will influence a total global ad spend of US\$650 billion, with 55 to 60 percent of this budget devoted to existing and emerging digital ads platforms.

## ■ Sustaining growth in the ads world

“There is a ‘sextopoly’: Google, Facebook and Amazon in the west; Ali Baba, Tencent and TikTok-ByteDance in the east. We’ll see others – like Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram – grow, but the existing sextuple will remain in the ascendency,” Sir Martin said.

Continued growth in the advertising industry is based on the current holding pattern, which is split by digital adoption.



**Sir Martin Sorrell**  
 Founder & Executive  
 Chairman, S4 Capital

### US\$215 billion

Google raised US\$215 billion in ad revenue across 2020, up US\$70 billion from 2019.

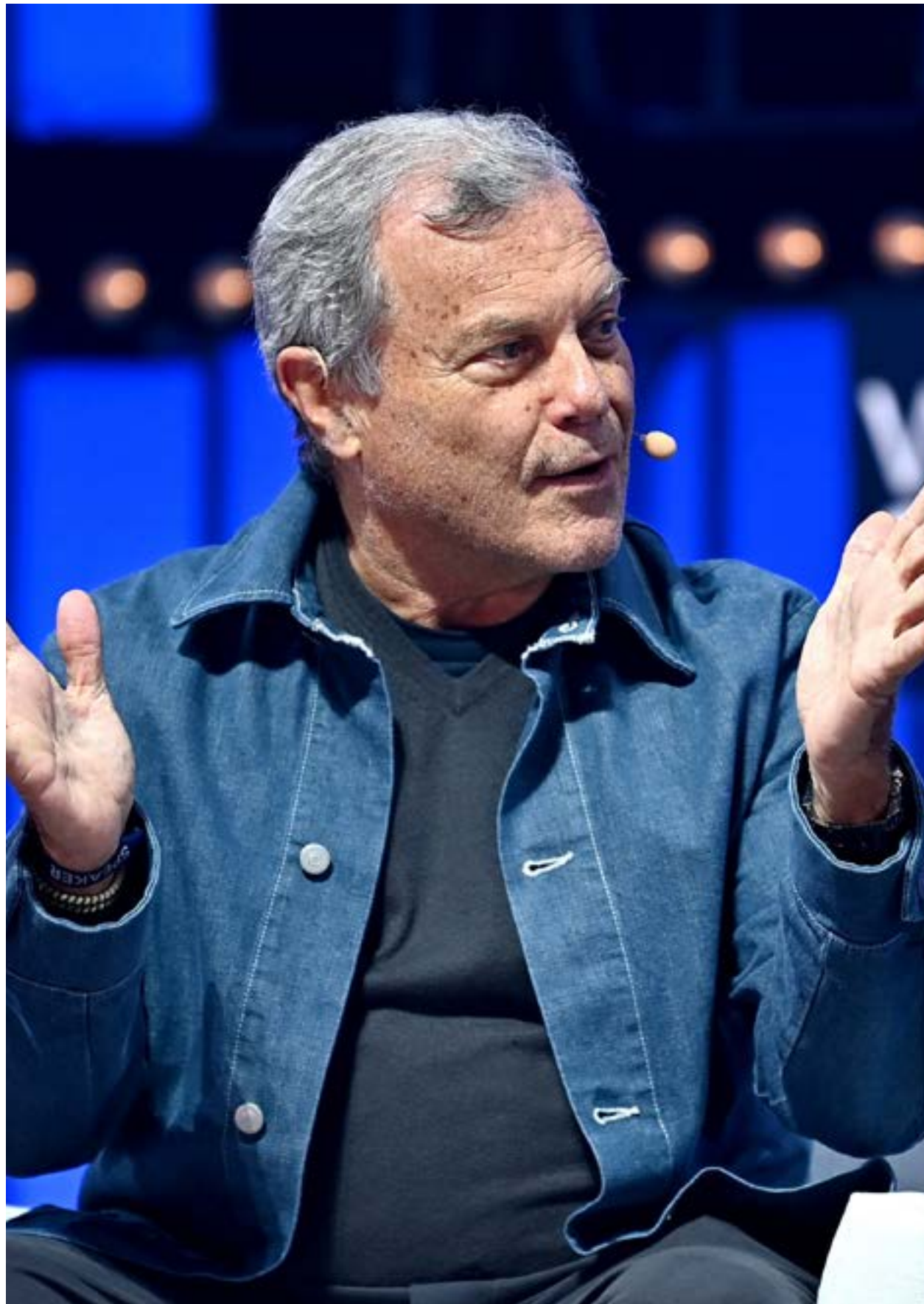
### US\$115 billion

Facebook raised US\$115 billion in ad revenue across 2020, up US\$32 billion from 2019.

### US\$35 billion

Amazon raised US\$35 billion in ad revenue across 2020, up US\$10 billion from 2019.





**There are really two planets [for ads businesses] ... no-growth and high-growth.**

**Sir Martin Sorrell**  
 Founder & Executive Chairman, S4 Capital



As Sir Martin described it, “there are really two planets [for ads businesses] ... no-growth and high-growth”.

**He emphasised that embracing digital transformation was going to be key to sustaining long-term growth.** He also noted that current GDP growth is around five percent, with similar levels expected in 2022, but that this growth would return to pre-Covid levels of one to three percent by 2023.

“We have two tailwinds behind us: GDP growth and digital transformation. By 2023, analogue companies will start to slow down significantly, while digital companies should continue to flourish,” he said.

### ■ Reuniting a global ads market

**The global ads market continues to see socio-political divisions between global powerhouses.** The rift between western and eastern economies is well-known, but Sir Martin emphasised that bringing these spheres together is essential.

“The split among ads markets is 70 percent North America, 20 percent EMEA and 10 percent Asia. We’d like to see that more at 40-40-20,” he said.

“The biggest issue from an operational perspective for advertisers is the relationship – or the lack of relationship – between the US and China,” he continued. “Trying to get some re-alignment between the two biggest economies on the planet is the critical issue.”

### ■ Data and creativity together

Sir Martin noted that a surprisingly large number of advertising corporations are increasingly reluctant to turn to data and analytics as the main inspiration behind their campaigns.

“Ad executives from traditional advertising firms look back with rose-tinted glasses to Don Draper ... and argue that data doesn’t inform creativity. I disagree with that,” he said.

He suggested that ads businesses that consider the ‘data v human creativity’ debate as a binary, where only one approach or the other works, will struggle to match the growth of more innovative firms.

**“There is a ‘sextopoly’:  
Google, Facebook and  
Amazon in the west; Ali  
Baba, Tencent and TikTok-  
ByteDance in the east.  
We’ll see others – like  
Snapchat, Twitter and  
Instagram – grow, but  
the existing sextuple will  
remain in the ascendency.”**

**Sir Martin Sorrell**

Founder & Executive Chairman, S4 Capital



# A world without cookies

The ‘Great Cookie Crumble’ began in 2020, when third-party cookies were phased out for the majority of mainstream web browsers (Safari, Firefox, Edge and Brave). Now that Google has planned to discontinue third-party tracking on Chrome by 2022, we look at what advertising companies are doing to fill this gap, from zero party data analytics to bespoke identity solutions.

**Kristin Luck, president of ESOMAR** (the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research) and founder of ScaleHouse, says there are better ways to target ads.

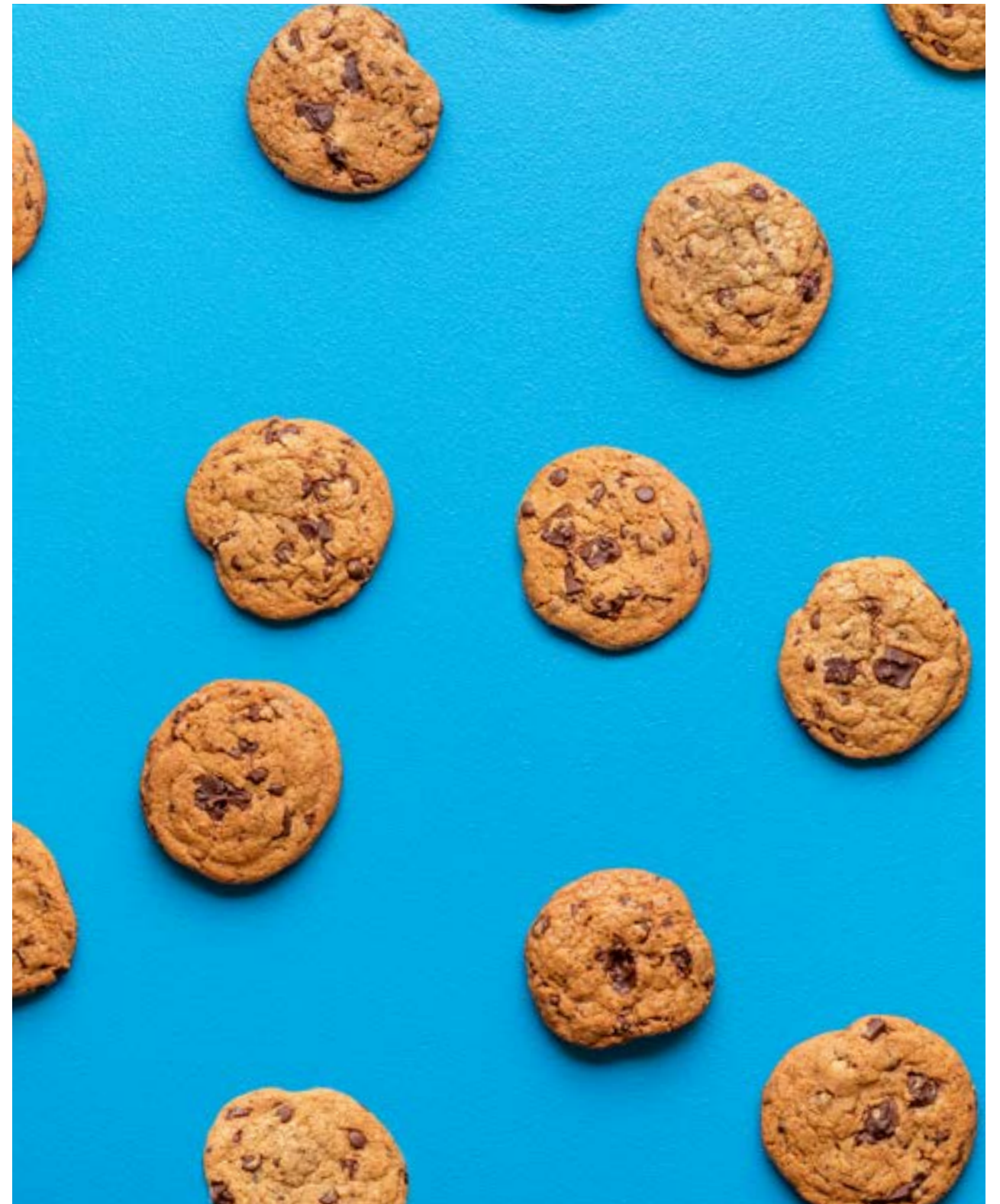
“I think the landscape of cookies, as it stands today, is really different than when it first started. Originally, cookies were designed for individual websites to be able to track information, and to be able to offer more relevant products and services,” she explained.

“How that’s changed over time is that your identity is being tracked over multiple websites. Your behaviours are being tracked across every website that you’re using on the internet, and people have varying levels of tolerance and a right to privacy.”

Stepping back and realising that third-party cookies are not just bad for online privacy, but that they were also designed for an entirely different job (they were created by Netscape engineers to keep track of what online shoppers left in their trolleys), perhaps it’s time to seriously consider alternatives.

“I think there’s a wonderful opportunity to do a better job at this targeting. We need to find ways to better track that across platforms; across screens. What we’re seeing when I speak to clients, which are all the biggest advertisers in the world, is there are some things that are missing in the digital ad space,” said Alexandre Guerin, CEO of Ipsos in France.

One of these is **combining existing consumer behaviour data with an ad-targeting or digital activation strategy** in order to drive more engagement.



I think there’s a wonderful opportunity to do a better job at this targeting...

**Kristin Luck**  
President, ESOMAR





And this space is already filling up rapidly. Data analytics companies are using novel ways to build consumer profiles in an ethical manner that respects privacy.

**“This is, in part, why we’re seeing the rise of these data as a service (DaaS) companies,”** observed Kristin.

“You’ve got companies like Distillery – which is building audience profiles – providing a more comprehensive landscape of consumer behaviours that goes beyond what you could normally get with cookies because they’re using predictive modelling techniques.”

There are also startups, including HyphaMetrics, that are touting what is known as zero-party data. And all of these solutions, said Kristin, will actually enhance what advertisers are able to do, rather than play second fiddle to cookies.



**Sebastian Kopp**  
Founder, Veja



So why the love affair with cookies?

**“One of the reasons cookies worked in digital advertising for so long is because they were a neutral currency. No one owned them,”** explained George Slefo, senior editor at the Trade Desk.

“What we’re seeing right now with the looming death of third-party cookies is you have a bunch of these companies, all racing to make their own identity solutions and some of them are proprietary.

**“In other words, they want to make a little bit of money off of creating the next identity solution, which kind of invites the question, ‘Is there going to be one identity solution to rule them all?’”**

Kristin and Alexandre don’t think so. With GDPR and regulations differing by country – and, in the case of the US, often by state – this will not be a one-size-fits-all market. There will probably be a hundred more Distilleries and HyphaMetrics to come.



**“We can’t just think about data as an individual resource ... Data is pooled [by social media companies] and becomes a resource to generate algorithms that can be used for social harm.”**

**Christopher Wylie**  
Research Director, H&M Group





# Rumours of TV ads' death are greatly exaggerated

Though the decline of television advertising has been much discussed over the past number of years, it would seem too early to count the medium out. Kochava founder and CEO Charles Manning took to the PandaConf stage to share some important statistics.

**“Linear TV ad buys are being bought in the way linear TV is bought. And a lot of that ad dollar is moving over to connected TV because it’s a new form of big screen ad buys,”** said Charles.

“Now, what CTV provides is measurement unlike anyone in linear TV has ever experienced before ... **so the level of fidelity of insight on a per-household basis, or a per-connected device basis, is really outstanding,**” he continued.

**US\$14.6 billion**

Over-the-top ad spend on connected TV estimated to grow to US\$14.6 billion by 2023

**4**

Average number of US streaming services per household grows from 2.8 (2018) to 4 (2021)

**26,040 apps**

Already 26,040 Apps on Roku Channel Store

**197 million**

197 million US adults will go online while watching TV in 2022, up from 191.1 million in 2020





# ‘You’re not being asked if you want advertising’: Consent and insight into the future of ad data use

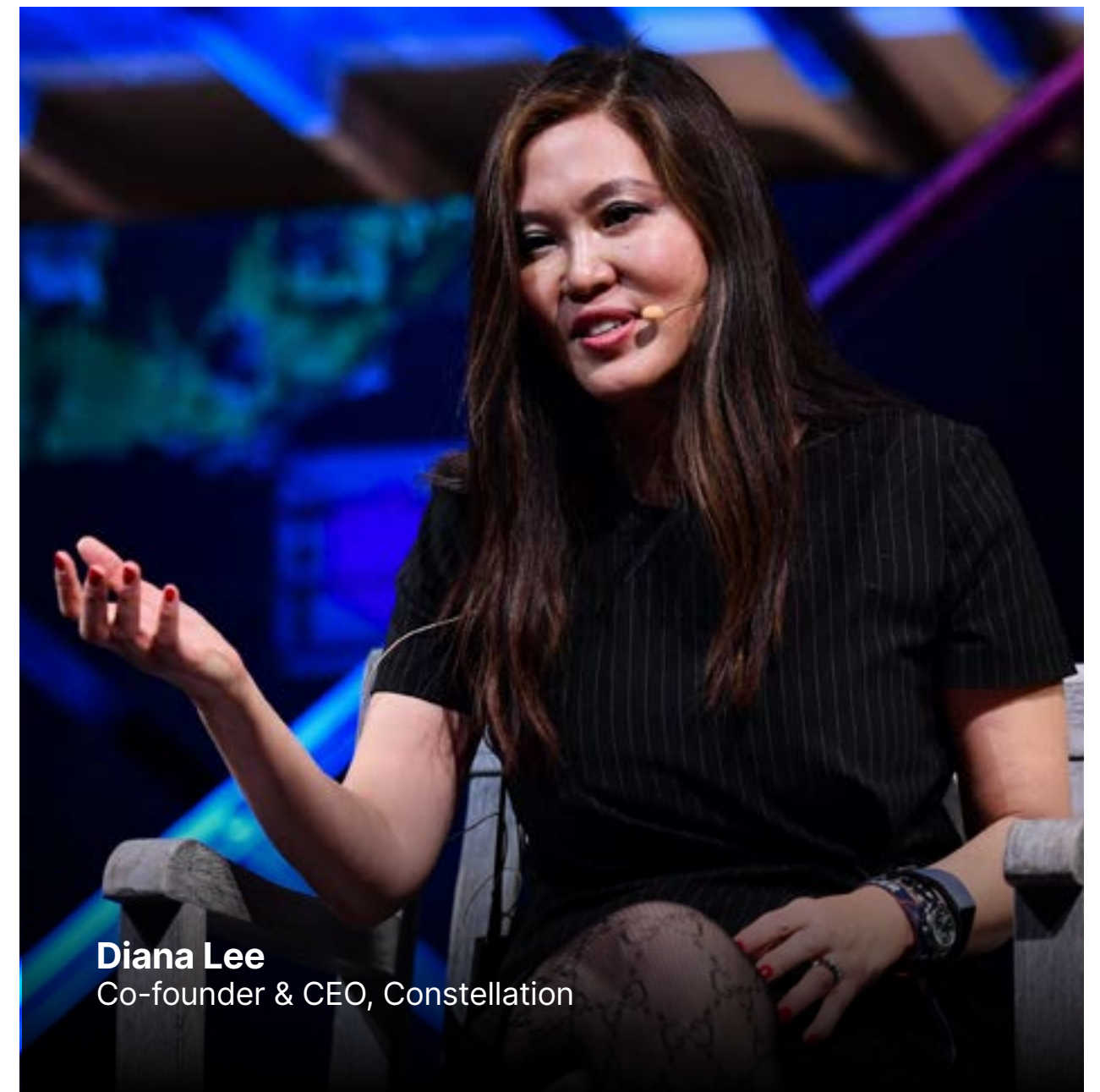
Consumer data use in the ads industry has become one of the tech world’s most contentious topics. Advertisers and social media platforms see this data as a resource to be controlled. Internet users, meanwhile, are confused about how, where and why their data is used.

“You cannot consent to something you don’t understand. And you can’t understand how and why third-party suppliers take your data and sell it to others,” said Brendan Eich, founder and CEO of secure web browser Brave.

Diana Lee, co-founder and CEO at Constellation, echoed this sentiment: “We’re all being asked, ‘Do you want tracking?’. But that’s not the question that needs to be asked ... What you’re really being asked is ‘Do you want tailored advertising or do you want general advertising?’”

Christopher Wylie, who was a whistleblower in the 2018 Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal and is now research director at H&M Group, thinks a focus on consent alone isn’t enough.

“The conversation around transparency misses the point,” he said. **“In no other sector do you get companies putting the onus back on consumers to understand complex technological conditions.** If you get on a plane, you don’t have to know how the engine works – or know what’s in your medication at the doctors – because there is a competent regulatory body that looks out for that. We need something



**Diana Lee**  
Co-founder & CEO, Constellation

like that for how tech companies manage our data.” There have been calls for greater regulation of the likes of Facebook, Google and Amazon for years, with many critics claiming these companies are increasingly turning to data harvesting as their main form of income.

**More regulation of how data is used for advertising is key,** regardless of the form that regulation takes. With digital cookies on their way out, is now the ideal time to rethink the current system?

[Read more](#)





# Marketing

1. 'Abba gets it': How old classics are finding new audiences on TikTok
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# ‘Abba gets it’: How old classics are finding new audiences on TikTok

Swedish supergroup Abba have released their first album in decades. To coincide with the release, the group joined the home of viral dance trends: TikTok.

**Abba’s first post used no material from the new album because it made more sense to tap into what the TikTok community was already enjoying, sharing and riffing on.**

Chiquitita had previously gone viral in a Twilight mashup that featured a slowed-down clip of the famous piano music outro.

The group’s marketing team was savvy enough to debut with a piano-heavy clip of Dancing Queen, before teasing the creator audience with some big news: the impending release of album Voyage.

“Abba gets it,” said TikTok’s global head of music, Ole Obermann, citing other heritage acts who have joined the platform. The Eagles, Queen and the Beatles are now on TikTok, as is John Lennon’s estate, with whom TikTok worked to create content for his birthday.

Marketing via TikTok isn’t an exact science, but the overarching rule of thumb is to go with the crowd, said Ole.

If the audience likes a classic, capitalise on this wave of popularity rather than trying to force new music on them, he advised. In this way, new life can be breathed into old songs. A whole new generation not only listens to them but also creates their own takes and, if you’re lucky, creates a new dance trend on the back of it.



## 1 billion per month

TikTok has one billion monthly active users. 35% are aged 19–29.<sup>1</sup>

## 89 minutes per day

The average user spends 89 minutes per day on the app<sup>2</sup>

## 8 out of 10 songs

Eight of the 10 global bestselling songs in 2020 started on/were amplified via TikTok

## CKay on TikTok

CKay track Love Nwanti hit #4 on the UK charts after trending on TikTok

## Shazams increased

UK artist Dave had a 20-fold increase in Shazams after Taylor Swift used one of his tracks in her TikTok debut

## A song from 1984 goes viral

Matthew Walder’s 1984 hit Break My Stride charted in 2020 after going viral on TikTok

<sup>1</sup> Source: TikTok <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/1-billion-people-on-tiktok>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Music Business Worldwide <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/tiktok-users-watch-the-app-for-an-average-of-89-minutes-per-day-and-theres-732m-of-them-worldwide/>



**The key is to have short-form content that allows for riffs, remixes and reinterpretation.**

“Dreams, by Fleetwood Mac, which is over 44 years old, has very much a chance of becoming as popular on TikTok as the latest release by Lil Nas X,” noted Mark Savage, music correspondent for the BBC. This idea holds credence, as Matthew Walder’s Break My Stride – a song from 1984 – ended up charting in 2020 after going viral on the platform.

Music marketers might be wondering what the magic ingredient is that makes a song go viral on TikTok in the first place.

Ole said it’s a mix of things, giving the example of breakout Nigerian artist CKay who found an audience on TikTok with his song, Love Nwanti. Ole also pointed to Taylor Swift’s first TikTok, which paid homage to UK artist Dave and gave him a boost in the process.

This trend of using social media channels to promote music is creating a need for new types of marketing strategies that involve leveraging influencers and brands. Musicians are responding by creating their own TikTok videos, using the platform to sell exclusive merchandise, and even creating custom dances.

And TikTok is constantly on the lookout for artists it can work with, said Ole, giving the example of Scottish postman Nathan Evans, otherwise known as ‘the Sea Shanty Man’. Following his viral success and official collaboration with TikTok, Nathan has hung up his postman’s bag and moved into a career in music.

“We saw the sea shanty trending and didn’t know what to make of it, but met with [Nathan]. **We see the organic trend and then push that. It’s about leveraging what the community already makes happen,**” said Ole.



“

**The key is to have short-form content that allows for riffs, remixes and reinterpretation.**

**Ole Obermann**  
Global Head of Music, TikTok

”



“[The pandemic] put an end to the super glossy, airbrushed content, and people got real. People aren’t looking for ‘perfect’ anymore. They’re looking for real.”

**Anna Anderson**

Director of Influencers, Condé Nast



# Influencer marketing is growing up

Influencer marketing has come a long way since the early days.

The maturation of this space has seen influencers move from **Kardashian wannabes to KPIs and ROIs**. The “Wild West of marketing,” as Unilever chief marketing and communications officer Keith Weed scathingly referred to it, has been tamed.

“There was no disclosure going on. People were buying followers. It was intractable back then ... People didn’t want to take it seriously,” said Ben Jeffries, CEO and co-founder of Influencer.com.

Ben pointed out that influencer marketing is firmly on the radar of media agencies, and is part of the media plan: “You can speak to CMOs of huge blue chip companies and they will know what influencer marketing is. You no longer have to educate people.”

Influencer.com co-founder Caspar Lee pointed out how fluid the boundaries now are between social media influencers and traditional mainstream media personalities.



**Caspar Lee**  
Co-founder & Chief Visionary Officer,  
Influencer.com



**Ben Jeffries**  
Co-founder & CEO, Influencer.com

**“We have seen a shift [if you look at] all the spectrums of celebrity – like journalists or artists – who have become creators, especially during the lockdown.** You see those talk show hosts who have almost had to go back into their bedrooms and become YouTubers themselves,” said Caspar.

But how does influencer/creator marketing measure up to traditional or more well established forms of marketing?

“ROI is the big phrase in influencer marketing right now,” explained Ben. As the market has matured, Ben said, it’s had to ‘grow up’ as an industry, and it’s paramount that one can “compare influencer marketing directly to an email or TV marketing campaign”.

Analytics are also playing a major part. Influencer.com recently launched a platform called Waves, which tracks ROI, allowing users to see when content goes live and the data associated with it.

Companies looking to work with influencers or content creators now have the tools to track and measure success.



# The power of community marketing

Marketing underwent a sea change in 2020. Brands such as Jägermeister had to adapt to a world in which there were no physical venues for their product, and online communities including Reddit experienced rapid growth.

**During the Covid-19 pandemic, Jägermeister developed #SaveTheNight, a campaign centred on the creators and artists who fuel nightlife** – a vital component of the brand’s success.

“Jägermeister is a brand that is embedded in nightlife culture,” said global CMO Wolfgang Moeller. “When you look back on [2020], suddenly 60 percent of our business just shut down. No nightclubs; no bars; no festivals; no places where you normally have a shot.

“We were sitting in our home offices thinking, ‘What are we going to do?’ We looked into the community to see what was needed ... The nightlife community out there really needed support because they had no income anymore, and the audience was looking for entertainment.”

#SaveTheNight – a platform to connect DJs, entertainers and other nightlife performers with their audiences – has so

**We wanted to do something that powered the community; really solved a problem for them.**

**Allan Blair**  
Head of Strategy, Engine

far supported 1,350 ‘meisters’ (patrons) across 52 different markets by hosting events and even releasing limited edition products.

In particular, Jägermeister has focused on diverse communities, helping to save under-threat lesbian bars in the US and connecting the DJ community in South Africa with its audiences to crowdsource new dance hits.

“Community is really important to Jägermeister and, because of that, we didn’t want to follow the conventional marketing wisdom of making a thing, putting that thing out there, and driving people to it,” explained Allan Blair, head of strategy for Engine, the marketing firm that worked with Jägermeister to develop #SaveTheNight.

**“We wanted to do something that powered the community; really solved a problem for them,”** Allan continued.

While Jägermeister was helping to save communities, Reddit was watching its own communities thrive. The 16-year-old social media platform grew by almost 200 percent during the pandemic while expanding to more than 100,000 communities.

While this was advantageous to a company that receives the bulk of its revenue from advertising, it should also be on the radar of marketers, said Reddit COO Jen Wong: “We have users on Reddit who are not on other platforms ... and what’s really different for marketers is the idea of intentional time.”

A lot of time spent on phones and social media is not necessarily intentional, she explained. But, when people go to Reddit, they are intentionally going to find specific information. **They do so with an open mindset and a lot of trust in the niche, interest-driven community they are part of.**

This, said Jen, is a market segment that is “very rare at this scale and with that graph”.

# From airbrushed to authentic: A post-Covid marketing evolution



Over the years, for most brands, marketing has been about creating the perfect glossy video or meticulous press release that encapsulates the message they're trying to share with their audience.

But Covid-19 moved the dial, bringing authenticity as a brand value to the top of people's minds.

Zoom calls during the height of lockdown, conducted in sweat pants and without makeup, looking our realest and rawest, became normal. And marketing began to adapt to this. **Now, more than anything else, consumers demand truthfulness and authenticity from their brands.**

Anna Anderson, director of influencers at Condé Nast, agreed: "[The pandemic] put an end to the super glossy, airbrushed content, and people got real. People aren't looking for 'perfect' anymore. They're looking for real."

Anna went on to say that consumers' desire for greater honesty comes with an increased level of responsibility for brands to do more than just pay lip service to their values.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, we talked a lot about whether brands should be talking ... That changed once the conversation became more about emphasising a purpose and voice," Anna said.

## So how do you move from airbrushed to authentic in your marketing strategy?

NYCE CEO Philip Michael noted a need for more nuanced segmenting of a company's customers: "[During the pandemic] I saw a trend toward psychographics instead of demographics."

**'Psychographics' classifies groups of people by psychological factors, such as desires and interests, rather than demographic metrics such as age or location.** In doing this, it's possible to more easily discover what motivates people and



**Anna Anderson**  
Director of Influencers, Condé Nast

what connects them to you, outlining a middle ground between their idea of your organisation and fidelity to your values.

Anna, meanwhile, said more open conversations between brands and customers about consumers they wanted to see from the companies they supported were key to uncovering more authentic marketing.

"There's a much greater dialogue between consumers, influencers and brands [than before the pandemic]," she said, showing that paying attention to what customers want is key to surviving in the post-Covid world.



**“It’s not about being reactive in the moment. It’s about building empathy with your customer base.”**

**Andreas Markdalen**

Global Chief Creative Officer, frog design



# Making your brand stand for something, not everything

In the past, it was often enough for major brands to say ‘no comment’ when major social and political events unfolded. But today’s brands may need to do so much more.

[New data from Sprout Social](#) shows that 70 percent of consumers believe it’s crucial for brands to take a public stand on issues in society.

Jacob Benbunan, founder of Saffron Brand Consultants, noted that a brand is **“always meant to be about purpose; standing for something”**.

Is it possible – or advisable – for brands to tie their colours to the mast with every new social trend or emerging news story?

Virtue signalling. Woke washing. These are just some of the accusations leveled against the world’s biggest brands in recent years as companies try to build a connection with a more socially and environmentally conscious audience.

Andreas Markdalen, global chief creative officer at frog design, noted that a thorough thought process is involved in associating your brand with the big issues of the day:

**“It’s not about being reactive in the moment. It’s about building empathy with your customer base.”**

Catherine Keogh, chief corporate affairs and brand officer of Kerry Group, agreed, saying “it’s important to listen”.

Without due consideration of whether your customers care about a given social issue or not, supporting a cause can seem inauthentic and even exploitative.

Drum’s CEO Luke Southern picked up on this, using the Black Lives Matter protests to demonstrate why businesses shouldn’t comment on social issues simply because others are doing so: “Last year [during the Black Lives Matter movement], many brands jumped on the bandwagon. I’m not saying all of it was inauthentic, but some of it did feel it.”

Jacob noted that silence on certain social or political issues is completely acceptable for businesses as long as it remains true to a brand’s *raison d’être*: **“Truth and transparency are the most important things that you can have as a brand.”**



# Marketing in 2022 and beyond: Covid-19, the digital transformation, and two-speed marketing

In the years ahead, digital transformation is on the up, and the traditional agency model is on the way down.

On Centre Stage in Lisbon, in a wide-ranging conversation, one of the marketing industry's leading minds, Beam Suntory president of brands Jessica Spence, laid out her assessment for the years ahead.

"Covid has been one of the biggest enablers of digital transformation for a lot of people. But when I look at how we're thinking about our marketing needs, we're increasingly seeing that we need to operate at two speeds," she said.

"You still have needs for the more epic banner pieces of content or assets. And, now, I think some of the more traditional agencies are well equipped to work at that pace". said Jessica. "But what we saw as well through the pandemic, and accelerating, is the need for constant content at speed-of-culture."

Jessica believes that this two-speed requirement may not suit larger, more established agencies – a trend that we have seen with increasing frequency.

"So what we're looking at is in-sourcing. I think there are definite benefits to bringing some pieces of that in-house," she said.

"You can in-source, you can outsource. You can also look at forms of communities," Jessica told us.

This can be an opportunity for smaller agencies, and for more diverse talent. Her advice for brands was to "...have that mindset of, 'You don't care where the idea is coming from, **as long as it's the best idea, and it's going to be delivered fast.**'"



**You don't care where the idea is coming from, as long as it's the best idea, and it's going to be delivered fast.**

**Jessica Spence**  
President, Beam Suntory

# 3



## Social media

1. Tackling toxicity and demanding accountability
2. Influencer marketing: High demand, low supply, and an opportunity for growth
3. How to do your social media marketing right
4. Raking in the Robux in the metaverse



# Tackling toxicity and demanding accountability

**Time is up for tech giants who continue to profit from algorithms that are a contributing factor in misinformation and uncivil discourse.**

One company, in particular, has been called out repeatedly: Facebook (now known as Meta). This hit public awareness in 2021 thanks to whistleblower Frances Haugen.

In reference to the platform's rebrand, Frances said: "Instead of investing in making sure that our platforms are a minimal level of safe, Facebook is about to invest 10,000 engineers in video games. I can't imagine how this makes sense."

Frances has also said that Facebook knew the negative impact Instagram was having on teen girls and young women, but did nothing to change.

Social media can be treacherous for these girls and young women, said actor, director, and co-founder of Amy Poehler's Smart Girls, Amy Poehler.

The actor, who said "we live in a patriarchal society", noted that, unfortunately, girls are "very used to being viewed and watched". This is amplified on social media, she argued.

Amy herself doesn't have any social media accounts. She decided early on that "it wasn't the way I wanted to participate in a conversation. It wasn't for me. But I understand it from an outsider perspective".

Another public figure who has no social media accounts is Thierry Henry. The French football icon disabled all of his accounts in March 2020 following racist abuse. He has called out both Facebook and Twitter for their inability to deal with hate speech on their platforms.

"They are doing nowhere near what is required for us to feel safe on it, let's be honest. **[Social media] is an essential tool in the world we live in, but can it be safe? That's the big thing,**" he said.

[Read more](#)



**I found things [on Facebook] that I thought were putting lives in danger.**

**Frances Haugen**  
Facebook Whistleblower

# 2

## Influencer marketing: High demand, low supply, and an opportunity for growth

Social media has been with us for more than a decade now. Yet it's still something that many brands struggle to master.

Good social media management is key to marketing success. Some of the most successful brands in this space are influencers and content creators, whose livelihood depends on their online savviness.

"You should be at a platform in which there is demand for content, but not enough supply of content. **TikTok blew up. There was a lot of demand for content, but not enough supply of content creators,**" said influencer Nas Daily, founder and CEO of Nas Academy.

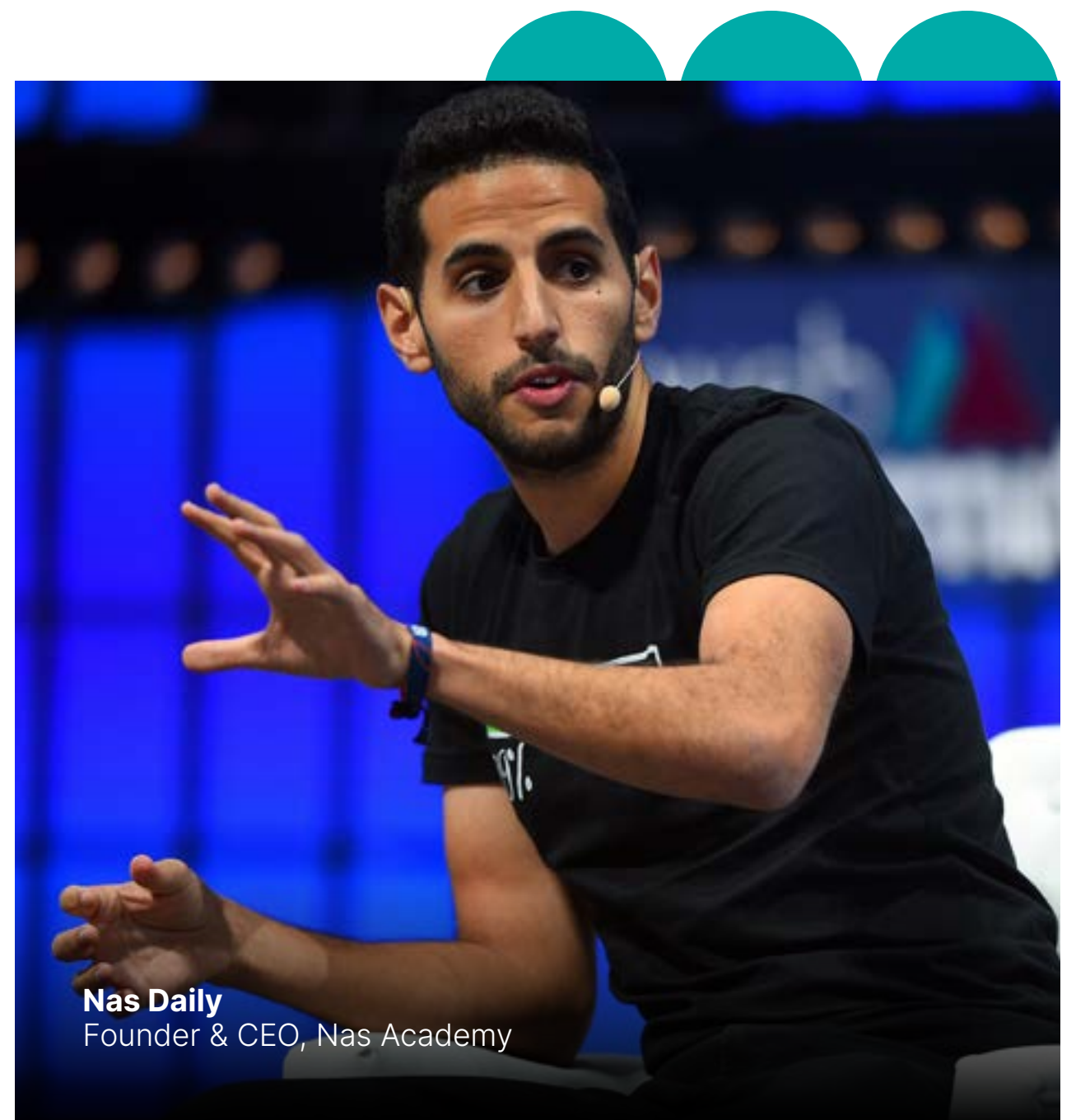
It's not just about finding the demand, it's also about knowing your platforms. Nas told us: "If you want kids, go to YouTube Shorts, TikTok and Snapchat. If you want CEOs, go to LinkedIn. If you want technology people, go to Substack. If you want 25 and above, go to Facebook."

Entrepreneur and content creator Sarati said that you have to know your audience, and know where to find them: "I'll take my TikTok videos [and] post them on Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube Shorts – all five – and they'll all have different reactions. Sometimes they do great on TikTok and go viral, [but] are horrible on Facebook and Instagram, because it's such a different audience."

Influencer.com co-founder and content creator Caspar Lee went further than both, saying, "it's not just about the platforms. It's about what's within the platforms".

All three had some advice for where brands and creators should go.

Sarati told us: "Gen Z, they're all on Snapchat. And if you're trying to look for a younger audience, that's where you go."



**Nas Daily**  
Founder & CEO, Nas Academy

**Both Caspar and Nas see LinkedIn as a major opportunity, especially for personal branding.** "Use LinkedIn if you're an entrepreneur ... You can get these massive opportunities that you just maybe wouldn't get in other places," said Caspar.

Nas sees LinkedIn as a particular growth area, mirroring the surge in demand for video that is apparent across all platforms. He told us that "60 percent of the news feed will likely become video. Images are dead. Text is dead. So video is the future. Let's all agree on that ... **Nobody's creating video content on LinkedIn. That's the opportunity. Your profile is going to change.**"



**“Engagement-based ranking is dangerous because, right now, extreme content wins out on that basis.”**

**Frances Haugen**  
Facebook Whistleblower

# How to do your social media marketing right

We all do social, but do we do it well? Hootsuite CMO Maggie Lower has some top tips for knocking your online presence into shape.

## ■ Tap into your employees' social media presence

This is about the growing trend of employee advocacy – ie, amplifying your brand or message through your employees' social networks. Maggie said that, according to a Cisco study, employees' posts on social media generate eight times more engagement than the same content shared on the brand's official profiles.

"One of our products that is on fire is the Amplify platform, which is for employee advocacy. If you think about activating your entire employee population, you are going to get more views and more eyeballs on your content than if you simply put that within your marketing team," she said.

**"If you're not already exploring employee advocacy, you really should be."**

## ■ Social isn't just for B2C brands

"You don't have to limit all the fun in marketing to B2C brands. You're seeing some B2B brands embrace some really neat ideas in the social space as well," Maggie explained.

She shared that the research backs this up. A study released by the International Data Corporation (IDC) shows that 75 percent of B2B buyers are on social. Added to that, 84 percent of executives also have a presence.

**"To assume that people in C-level positions like myself aren't on social looking for ideas would be a poor assumption,"** she added.



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**If you're not already exploring employee advocacy, you really should be.**

**Maggie Lower**  
CMO, Hootsuite

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### ■ Be brave and test new approaches

“This is going to sound very high-level, but I think it’s important to be brave,” advised Maggie.

“If you look at the advent of platforms like TikTok, you don’t actually have to talk to everybody at the same time. You can be on a broad platform and still have specific messaging go out. With these shorter-form content pieces, you have a lot more latitude and I think you can have a lot more fun,” she added.

“If you’re not already testing, you’re going to find yourself really behind within 12 to 18 months.”

### ■ Listen up and know your audience

Maggie said: “There isn’t one way to do social media right. Any time we’re working with a company, ... from the largest Fortune 500 to a small solopreneur, the most important thing we say is to start listening.”

By listening, she meant reaching the audience where they are. This is about knowing what channels your audience receives information on; what resonates with them.



“There isn’t one way to do social media right ... the most important thing we say is to start listening.”

Maggie Lower  
CMO, Hootsuite

“Frankly, that’s the most basic principle of marketing: **know your audience. In social, I would embrace that same concept,**” she said.

### ■ Social is no longer just for the marketing team

“If you’re thinking about how to really amplify your social experience, you should be looking at customer support. We’ve made some really big investments in a customer support strategy where we use AI and machine learning to take those frequently asked questions and have them resolved in real time,” explained Maggie.

This is the direction Hootsuite believes social is going and, to that end, it has purchased a company that allows users to transact for business directly in social chat.

For example, if someone is looking for a particular t-shirt in blue and size medium, but it’s out of stock, the AI will pop up another shirt in a similar style that the shopper can click on and be taken right into an ecommerce experience directly from chat.





**Jon Vlassopoulos**  
Global Head of Music, Roblox

**Zara Larsson**  
Singer

## Raking in the Robux in the metaverse

We all have a vague idea of what the metaverse is by now. While Meta (formerly known as Facebook) is looking to dominate this space, some virtual worlds – such as Roblox – have been around for a few years.

Roblox is an online sandbox environment where users can engage in worldbuilding, and can create their own games and other content for fellow Robloxers to interact with. Users don't do social, like they do on 2D platforms – it's more about creating and consuming virtual objects and experiences.

**One particular avenue that is thriving within this 3D social platform is music.**

Swedish pop star Zara Larsson has tapped into this market, first partnering with the platform during the pandemic in order to promote her new album, Poster Girl. She has since hosted virtual dance parties and also just hung out with her fans.

But what's really raking in the Robux (yes, it's the Roblox currency of choice) is merch – virtual merch. **Zara sells her likeness in the form of an avatar** with accompanying outfits, hairstyles and even signature dance moves.

"You can do basically whatever you want. There is no limit to creativity," said the music artist, who has – to date – made a seven-figure sum from selling this merchandise.





# Journalism

1. 'The stakes are incredibly high': Why journalism needs to win back audience trust
2. Are subscriptions the best model for balancing what readers and writers want?
3. Is there a more effective way to deliver news?
4. Diversifying the media lens with gen Z in mind
5. Paywalls, Substack, and protecting high-quality journalism



# ‘The stakes are incredibly high’: Why journalism needs to win back audience trust



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I would raise two things: polarisation and disintermediation.

Alessandra Galloni  
Editor-in-chief, Reuters

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**Trust in news is falling. In fact, it’s at an all-time low.**

A recent Reuters news report polling news consumers across 40 countries found that, on average, fewer than four in 10 people (38 percent) trust most news most of the time – down from 42 percent in 2019.

However, trust in the news differs by country. The US has the lowest level of trust (29 percent) while Finland enjoys the highest (65 percent). That leaves big questions for the news industry. First: why do people not trust the news? Second (and vitally): how can this trust be won back?

“I would raise two things: polarisation and disintermediation,” said Alessandra Galloni, editor-in-chief at Reuters.

**“As the world has become more polarised – politics and society – some media has become more polarised too,** and I think that that has eroded trust. ... Over the past decade or more, social media and other platforms have allowed a disintermediation so that governments, institutions and individuals no longer need to go through the press to get their messages out,” she continued.

Kat Downs Mulder, managing editor at the Washington Post, agreed. In this fragmented media landscape, she argued, people no longer read the same newspapers in the morning or watch the same news at night.

News consumers have, according to Kat, “the ability to construct our own verticals of information; select the creators that we directly go to for news; select the institutions that we do trust”.



Daniel Klaidman, editor-in-chief at Yahoo News, said the news industry does not operate in a vacuum: **“There is particular distrust in institutions that are considered elite institutions, and I think that is part of the problem with media these days. We are generally considered elite.”**

Thomson Reuters Foundation editor-in-chief Yasir Khan echoed this, saying: “One of the biggest things that hobbles legacy media is the delusion that we are objective. Objectivity goes out the window when you choose one story over another. What we should be aiming for is accuracy and fairness.”

Often, the media does not look like the people it’s covering, and that’s why it’s not considered credible, added Alessandra.

“It’s really imperative for newsrooms to become like the world that we cover; to become more diverse in not only who we are, but in what we cover, and to expand our horizons in the sorts of stories we cover and how we cover them,” she said.

Verification and fact checking are key journalistic tools, too. “At Reuters, we try to follow the path of strictly fact-based, rigorously fact-checked journalism,” said Alessandra.

She noted also that acknowledging when mistakes have been made is important:

“We are reflecting the first draft of history and, sometimes, actually, it may be wrong. And when it’s wrong, we have to be sure to correct it as fast as possible,” she added.

How does honesty and an adherence to fact-checking stack up against the news that performs best on social media (ie, the sensationalistic, emotionally driven, outrage provoking and sometimes outright fake news stories that attract the attention of the masses)?

“I have seen a lot of audiences saying that they are looking for ... unbiased news gathering and reporting. But when you see the numbers and traffic, and what people read, they are also after something that’s a little bit more emotional and maybe even sensational,” mused Kat.

“So I wonder how we navigate those challenges of what people are actually clicking on or tuning into watch, and what we know and have a responsibility to deliver.”

But the news business is a business at the end of the day. Media outlets want to encourage people to click. There is a balance to be had and, as Daniel explained, in trustworthy



**Yasir Khan**  
Editor-in-chief, Thomson Reuters Foundation

journalism, “you have to be disciplined about that”.

## **What happens if this trust in the news continues to fall?**

“In order to have a functioning society and functioning democracy, we have to have underlying facts that we can agree on and debate in order to figure out what policies and practices we should have as a culture and a society,” urged Kat.

“We have to have some common ground,” she continued. “We have to be able to agree on a certain set of information that we can have an exchange around.

**“The stakes are incredibly high.”**

**“The subscription model allows us to go much deeper into industries where there’s a smaller audience ... advertising only does not.”**

**Alyson Shontell**  
Editor-in-chief, Fortune



# Are subscriptions the best model for balancing what readers and writers want?

**As we move away from the era of print broadsheets, and into more exclusively digital publications, journalists are looking for new platforms on which to monetise news stories.**

Nicholas Carlson, Insider's global editor-in-chief, noted that free news shared on social media has led to an increase in clickbait and misinformation. He said finding a successful funding model, such as digital subscriptions, is key to increasing journalistic quality.

Alex Kantrowitz, founder and executive-in-charge of the Big Technology Podcast, agreed with this notion that paid news represents a more sustainable future for journalism with integrity: **"The more we can get readers to pay, the better the end product is going to be."**

In a talk she delivered at our 2021 North American event, Collision, Fortune editor-in-chief Alyson Shontell asserted that subscriptions help publishers target specific audiences by interest: "The subscription model allows us to go much deeper into industries where there's a smaller audience ... advertising-only does not."

**Creating premium digital news isn't free, so how do you deliver it to a paying readership?**

Nicholas believes that, alongside having multiple streams of income, subscriptions are vital. This isn't just because they attach accountability and legitimacy to content shared digitally, but because, he asserted, subscription journalism changes the dynamic between reporter and reader.

"When it's free journalism, [the content] needs to be interesting to a lot of people. When you do paid journalism, you need to do something that is very interesting to a few people."

Reporting on stories that people want to see should be tempered by journalists writing within their area of expertise.

**You don't want to just create content that readers want to see all the time.**

**Nicholas Carlson**  
Global Editor-in-chief, Insider

Nicholas said, "you don't want to just create content that readers want to see all the time, because that's how you end up with bad journalism or clickbait".

Working through a subscription model also gives publications a trackable system for discovering what news stories are meaningful to people and which are of lesser importance.

"People are going to hit the paywall and not subscribe, not subscribe, not subscribe, and then hopefully cave, and say, 'I need to read this one!' And, once they do, we'll have to continue writing quality stories. And we'll know that, when they unsubscribe, we have something we can learn from," said Nicholas.

Readers using their own money to support publications that deliver them the news stories they want and need, thereby lowering the reliance on ad or syndication income... The ultimate win-win?

# Is there a more effective way to deliver news?

**Print isn't the news powerhouse it once was. Now, the format through which we consume our news is starting to diversify.**

He described how he left a role at BuzzFeed News to trial using online newsletter platform Substack to report on stories he was interested in. He offers advertising space in his sendouts, and syndicates his newsletter for further income.

Alex now receives around US\$1,250 per month from advertising alone.

“With working reporters, for a long time, there was a divorce between the editorial and the business side,” said Alex. **“Journalists didn't want to know about how money was being made inside the publications. Then we faced a decade of terrible lay-offs, and now we care about it – a lot.”**

Alex noted that the monetised model of newsletters gave him the opportunity to improve the quality of his writing and the stories he picks.

“Working through email actually disincentivises you to write too much, because nobody has ever said, ‘We want more email’. If your newsletter isn't high quality, people will hit spam.”

Alex also claimed that a high-growth model based on a subscription list is an outdated metric for assessing success. He said: “A lot of the time, companies put growth above everything ... I want to be doing this for 10, 20, 30 years, so I want to build a readership community sustainably.”

He also stated that people unsubscribing from his newsletter wasn't negative, and was instead a way to whittle down his audience to the truly engaged: “Every unsubscribe brings you closer to your tribe.”

[Read more](#)



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**Every unsubscribe brings you closer to your tribe.**

**Alex Kantrowitz**  
 Founder & Executive-in-charge, Big  
 Technology Podcast

”



“When it’s free journalism, [the content] needs to be interesting to a lot of people. When you do paid journalism, you need to do something that is very interesting to a few people.”

**Nicholas Carlson**  
Global Editor-in-chief, Insider

# Diversifying the media lens with gen Z in mind

**“We want our newsroom to look like our readership and the world that we report on.”**

A line – delivered by Vice Media’s senior director of global news operations, Erika Allen, at Web Summit 2021 – that seems logical. But, in years past, this hasn’t been the case. At a senior level, media outlets were mostly run by white men.

That’s why Erika’s declaration holds so much power.

It’s a point that Versha Sharma, editor-in-chief of Teen Vogue, agreed with wholeheartedly: “Inclusivity is even more important than diversity, because you are actually making the effort to include people of different backgrounds.”

This typifies a trend among media publications focused on younger audiences – mainly millennials and gen Z – of putting diversity and inclusion at the forefront of their priorities.

**A recent Forbes panel demonstrated that diversity is a key conviction held by many gen Zers.** For outlets targeting these populations, adapting their workforce to include writers, designers, presenters and others from a range of backgrounds makes sense.

However, this shift towards media publications that better reflect the modern world and the convictions of gen Z has another useful benefit.

**“The gen Z audience is not shy about sharing what topics are important to them,”** Versha said.

Erika corroborated that sentiment, claiming, “young people on social media are a wealth of great story ideas ... The more engaged our audience is online, the better our reporting”.

A more outspoken readership with stronger convictions about diversity and authenticity than in generations past will naturally lead to media publications that don’t just reflect that in the newsroom, but also produce news stories that reflect those experiences in the real world.

“The media industry has come a long way, but it does have much farther to go,” said Erika.

The efforts of leading publications such as Teen Vogue and Vice Media in a manner that places diversity at the forefront of their identities have helped forge their brands.



**Inclusivity is even more important than diversity.**

**Versha Sharma**  
Editor-in-chief, Teen Vogue





# Paywalls, Substack, and protecting high-quality journalism



**Whether due to the proliferation of fake news, changes to revenue streams, or a lack of trust, there is a need to protect the sustainability of high-quality journalism.**

Broadly speaking, there seems to be some consensus on what journalism looks like in 2022. Yahoo News chief investigative correspondent Michael Isikoff summed it up, quoting Charles Dickens: “It’s the best of times, it’s the worst of times; we are seeing some really phenomenal investigative reporting ... and yet, at the same time, we’re seeing the flood of disinformation.”

The decline of local journalism, largely due to a lack of financial viability, may be seen as particularly responsible for this.

Michael said: “We’re seeing the decimation of local journalism around the United States ... So many newspapers are shutting down, or slashing their staff; slashing investigative reporting. The basic function that we do, which is holding people accountable, isn’t being done at the local level.”

Dame Melanie Dawes, CEO of Ofcom, made a similar reference at a separate talk, saying, “I do think that regional and local news reporting is incredibly important. And, of course, the business models for that have been completely disrupted by the development of online markets”.

Matthew Kaminski, editor-in-chief at Politico, believes that consumers’ willingness to pay subscription fees is cause for optimism. **“The comfort that people now have for paying for things online I think gives me more hope that there are ... some openings going forward,** where people do need to know what’s going on in their communities,” he said.

Subscription services may be the way forward for news organisations, as they provide more stable revenue than advertising models, as well as a more loyal customer base.

John Witherow, editor-in-chief at the Times of London, sounded a positive note on the industry’s future, saying, **“successful journalism brands have effectively become direct-to-consumer brands”**.

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