

The Trust Insights 2025 Trends Report



Introduction

This trend analysis was prepared originally for an episode of the [Trust Insights livestream, So What?](#) on 2025 trends. However, as is usually the case, the process of preparing for the livestream often involves so much analysis that it'd be silly just to toss away the information once the show is over.

Thus, we end up with this, the **Trust Insights 2025 Trends Report**. For each of the trends areas, we extracted the last 90 days of conversations - posts and comments - from specific subreddits dealing with the topics. Each topic netted out to about 300,000 to 500,000 words. From there, we asked Google Gemini to summarize the topic's current state, then extrapolate three sets of trends.

The first set of trends are the obvious trends, the things most talked about. These are typically what you're going to see in every trend roundup you'll read as the calendar turns over to a new year. You can probably even guess them - for example, in social media, it would be a fair guess to speculate about short form video and vertical video. Obvious stuff - but that's not the end.

We then asked Gemini to do two more sets of trends per topic based on the discussions, excluding the obvious stuff. With each pass it had to dig deeper and deeper into the data to find the emerging trends lurking below the surface. It's here, in the Less Obvious Trends and Non-Obvious Trends, that we find the interesting stuff, the stuff that we might want to explore.

Each set of trends is broken out into our Three Whats - **what** the trend is, **So What?** (why it matters to us), and **Now What** (what we should do about it).

Each trend is then scored with a "probability based on frequency" - essentially saying that the likelihood something trends is based on how frequently it was talked about in the thousands of discussions.

There's no guarantee any of it will take off, but if we're looking to differentiate ourselves as marketers and businesses, doing what everyone else is doing isn't going to accomplish that goal.

We covered six major topics: general marketing, social media marketing, SEO, content marketing, influencer marketing, and AI. We hope you find some inspiration and some gems here, and as always, if we can help you towards your business goals in the new year, [please contact us](#).

(And if you'd like a custom report for your specific industry following this process, we do that too)

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[General Marketing : Current State](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Obvious Trends](#)

[Less Obvious Trends](#)

[Non-Obvious Trends](#)

[Social Media Marketing: Current State](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Obvious Trends](#)

[Less Obvious Trends](#)

[Non-Obvious Trends](#)

[SEO : Current State](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Obvious Trends](#)

[Less Obvious Trends](#)

[Non-Obvious Trends](#)

[Content Marketing : Current State](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Obvious Trends](#)

[Less Obvious Trends](#)

[Non-Obvious Trends](#)

[Influencer Marketing : Current State](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Obvious Trends](#)

[Less Obvious Trends](#)

[Non-Obvious Trends](#)

[AI : Current State](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Obvious Trends](#)

[Less Obvious Trends](#)

[Non-Obvious Trends](#)

[Methodology](#)

[About TrustInsights.ai](#)

General Marketing : Current State

The online community discussions center around a diverse set of topics related to marketing, professional development, and online business. Many users are seeking advice on career transitions within the marketing field, exploring digital strategies, and engaging with specific software or platforms. There is a clear tension between the desire for innovative marketing approaches and the challenges of executing them effectively, often constrained by limited budgets and technical knowledge. A significant number of users report feeling burnt out in current marketing positions and considering a change in their career.

The discussions highlight a community deeply invested in learning and problem solving, as users seek answers to complex and nuanced questions. It's also clear there are some common struggles related to performance, workflow, data analytics, and creative execution. The overall impression is of a group that is actively exploring the changing landscape of marketing, and is seeking to balance high expectations with limited resources.

Analysis

Theme 1: Career Transitions and Job Seeking

- **Description:** A considerable number of discussions revolve around individuals seeking to transition into marketing roles from other fields, return to the marketing industry, or find more suitable positions within it. There is frequent mention of low pay, high demands and lack of recognition, contributing to feelings of burnout or job dissatisfaction. Jargon and industry specific terms related to experience levels or titles such as senior associate, fractional VP, lead, team etc are prevalent in these posts, revealing that job titles matter a great deal.
- **Weight:** 17.2%

Theme 2: Email Marketing and List Hygiene

- **Description:** Discussions about the importance of email list hygiene and deliverability highlight a common challenge among marketers. Users seek advice on cleaning their email lists, avoiding spam filters, and improving engagement. This includes using email verification tools and best practices for collecting and maintaining high-quality lists. Some specific companies like EmailWand and Klaviyo are mentioned frequently and also reveal a shared vocabulary.
- **Weight:** 10.1%

Theme 3: AI in Marketing and Content Creation

- **Description:** There is an increasing focus on using AI in various marketing functions. Topics include AI-generated content, AI tools, the ethical considerations of AI in marketing, and how to leverage AI for greater efficiency. The community is very aware of the emergence of AI tools for marketing and is still in the process of understanding how best to leverage it in their workflows.
- **Weight:** 9.5%

Theme 4: Performance Measurement and Data Analysis

- **Description:** Many users are seeking guidance on tracking and analyzing campaign performance, using a variety of tools, including Google Analytics, SEMrush, and others. Topics include identifying key performance indicators (KPIs), understanding ROI, and improving attribution models. There's a high emphasis on data-driven decision making, which shows a community that values measurable outcomes. GA4 is specifically mentioned by name, suggesting many are also struggling with changes in Google's tools.
- **Weight:** 8.8%

Theme 5: Landing Pages, Conversions, and Funnels

- **Description:** Discussions about improving landing page conversions, optimizing funnels, and using tools for lead generation show strong interest in how best to move users from awareness to a sale. Users are exploring various optimization methods including use of A/B testing and other strategies to convert leads into sales.
- **Weight:** 8.2%

Theme 6: Paid Social Media Strategies and Challenges

- **Description:** There is much discussion focused on strategies and challenges associated with paid social media, especially on Facebook and Instagram. Users are looking for advice on how to achieve better targeting, improve return on ad spend (ROAS), and engage with diverse audiences. Many users note difficulties with Meta's targeting, resulting in wasted ad spend and/or irrelevant reach. Some are also experiencing issues with fake clicks, fraud, and bots on social media platforms. The terminology used (CTR, CPM, CPL, ROAS) indicates a community deeply familiar with these metrics.
- **Weight:** 8.1%

Theme 7: Organic Marketing, Content Creation, and SEO

- **Description:** Users are seeking tips for building organic reach, creating engaging content, improving SEO, and using various content strategies. Content creation and optimization techniques are discussed and analyzed. There is frequent mention of SEO as something many people have a strong desire to improve. There's a clear understanding of the value of authority and expertise as key components of organic marketing.
- **Weight:** 7.9%

Theme 8: Agency Selection and Client Management

- **Description:** Many users are seeking advice on finding reliable and effective marketing agencies, including for their own businesses or to be hired to. There are strong complaints about over-promising agencies that are unable to deliver results. Discussions also touch on creating proposals, establishing rates, client communication, and maintaining client relationships. Jargon, such as RFP, is prevalent showing the community has familiarity with processes.
- **Weight:** 6.5%

Theme 9: Social Media Platform Specific Marketing

- **Description:** Users are exploring and sharing experiences with a variety of social media platforms, from Instagram and TikTok to LinkedIn, X, and even emerging platforms like Bluesky. Each platform seems to come with its own challenges and strategic approaches to address its different target audience or user expectations. Users are looking to understand the effectiveness of different platform specific content formats.
- **Weight:** 6.1%

Theme 10: Pricing and Value Proposition

- **Description:** This theme explores the challenges of setting prices for marketing services and the methods for communicating value to potential clients. Users discuss the psychology of pricing, value-based selling, and balancing cost considerations with perceived value. Discussions also extend to different pricing structures like retainers, value-based, or project-based, with each option coming with pros and cons.
- **Weight:** 5.9%

Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Increased Focus on Authentic and Human Content

- **What:** A growing desire among consumers and marketers for content that feels genuine, relatable, and human-driven, with a pushback against overly polished and artificial content, especially as AI-generated content becomes more prevalent. Emphasis will be placed on the human element in marketing, with brands valuing personal connections over robotic or templated messages.
- **So What:** Marketers must prioritize storytelling and use authentic voices, either internal or customer generated, to build genuine relationships. Brands who double down on automation will be perceived as lazy and disconnected from their core audience. A focus on ethical messaging and transparency will help build trust and long-term loyalty with increasingly cynical audiences.
- **Now What:** Invest in understanding the customer journey on an emotional level. Use qualitative research, testimonials, and case studies to illustrate the impact of human interaction. Develop style guides that emphasize casual tone and avoid formulaic writing or stock images. Move away from 'perfect' posts and embrace content that is both personal and accessible.
- **Probability:** 95.0%

Trend 2: Strategic Integration of AI Tools

- **What:** AI will be leveraged not just for basic tasks but for strategic insights, data analysis, and process optimization. Marketers will move beyond seeing AI as a tool for content generation and begin incorporating it into their core workflows to understand customer behavior and automate repetitive tasks.
- **So What:** AI tools will be a competitive advantage for marketers that know how to use them to augment their work. Those who do not adapt will be at a significant disadvantage. Success will depend on using AI to enhance rather than replace human creativity and intuition. Marketers must move into a more technical direction or be forced to become generalists as more technical roles begin to use AI tools.
- **Now What:** Invest in AI training and experiment with various AI tools to improve efficiency and drive strategy. Focus on data-driven approaches that leverage the unique insights from AI (which traditional marketing tools may lack) and implement continuous process improvements across the marketing department. Invest in learning Prompt Engineering.
- **Probability:** 90.0%

Trend 3: Greater emphasis on Data Analytics and ROI

- **What:** The need to collect, analyze, and interpret marketing data to measure ROI effectively will become more vital. There will be a huge push to demonstrate clear links between

marketing activities and tangible business outcomes, like sales, MQLs, customer acquisition costs, etc. and fewer opportunities for those who can't.

- **So What:** Marketers must learn how to interpret the data, and develop strategies based on it. Data without a story is just numbers, so the ability to craft a narrative will be as important as interpreting insights. Understanding attribution models will also become important.
- **Now What:** Focus on understanding how to analyze marketing data and use it to guide actions, refine strategies, and show proof of success. Prioritize attribution models and metrics that go beyond vanity metrics like brand awareness and traffic. Develop skills in data interpretation to create narratives around data.
- **Probability:** 90.0%

Trend 4: Diversified Lead Generation Beyond Traditional Platforms

- **What:** With a decline in effectiveness of traditional advertising channels such as social media, marketers will be diversifying strategies to include a broader range of lead generation channels such as private communities, niche forums, industry newsletters, etc. Organic growth and alternative channels will become a greater focus of strategy.
- **So What:** Marketers need to get creative on generating leads and should not rely solely on traditional advertising. Traditional methods will become more expensive as they become more saturated. New channels and innovative approaches can cut through the noise and capture attention from target audiences, and become a real competitive advantage.
- **Now What:** Create a multi-channel lead strategy, build a clear plan for organic growth, explore niche forums and online communities, focus on building partnerships with relevant organizations and micro influencers. Find ways to provide value without being too salesy or promotional.
- **Probability:** 85.0%

Trend 5: Increased Demand for a Hybrid Skill Set

- **What:** As organizations seek to balance creative marketing with strategic/analytic expertise, multi-faceted and highly skilled generalist or "T-shaped" professionals with both technical and creative skills will be more highly valued in marketing roles. These roles will require an understanding of both marketing and business fundamentals, and the ability to integrate AI into workflows.
- **So What:** As the demand increases, salaries for these specific roles will also increase. Having specific training and experience in analytics and creative will be an important differentiator. Marketers who are able to blend both technical capabilities with creative will have a significant competitive advantage in the job market.
- **Now What:** Take a deep dive into new martech tools and processes and find ways to apply them. Spend time learning how to automate repetitive marketing tasks and focus on developing core marketing competencies that transcend specific channels.
- **Probability:** 80.0%

Trend 6: Importance of Building and Managing Communities

- **What:** With decreasing reliance on paid marketing channels, marketers will need to focus more on building and managing engaged communities to drive brand awareness and cultivate customer loyalty, especially on platforms like Reddit, Discord, and Bluesky, where users value shared experiences. This will include a transition from generic messaging to more targeted, personalized content designed to encourage conversation.
- **So What:** Building communities requires more than just gathering a large following. It's about creating a sense of shared identity and encouraging authentic engagement. This may require more time and investment in content that encourages participation than content meant for broad reach.
- **Now What:** Develop strategies for engaging with online groups, build a clear understanding of community-building strategies, prioritize authenticity and transparency in your brand messaging, foster a sense of connection, belonging, and brand loyalty. Be prepared to invest more time in building/maintaining relationships and be less focused on quantitative metrics like follower count.
- **Probability:** 75.0%

Trend 7: Shift from Traditional Influencers to Micro-Influencers

- **What:** There will be a shift from big-name celebrities or macro-influencers to micro-influencers, as those are perceived to have more authentic connections with their followers, often with greater engagement and higher rates of conversion.
- **So What:** It's imperative to do thorough research before choosing an influencer. Focus on micro-influencers who have a highly specific audience and high engagement rates. Building relationships with these creators requires strong outreach strategies, as they are likely too busy to accept a random request.
- **Now What:** Research the micro influencer landscape in your specific niche and reach out to creators who will connect with your audience through shared values and authentic voices. Have realistic expectations about reach and returns since you are no longer buying visibility but you are buying access to a community that knows and trusts an individual's judgment.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 8: Rejection of the "Always On" Approach to Social Media

- **What:** Marketers may move away from the idea of consistent, daily output on social media as they recognize the diminishing returns and increasing brand fatigue for this approach. Focus on quality over quantity will be the new norm as it becomes clear that constantly chasing trends leads to burnout for marketing teams and diminishing returns.
- **So What:** Marketers need to be more thoughtful and strategic about when and where they post, using analytics to inform their efforts instead of blindly churning out content daily. A shift in focus from constant output and reliance on social media algorithms to a more

deliberate marketing approach will create a more sustainable and healthy work environment.

- **Now What:** Experiment with different posting schedules, focus on engagement, and repurpose high quality content as many different times as possible to stretch the reach, engagement and impact of each post. Be more strategic with a variety of channels rather than only relying on consistent output on social media.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 9: Integration of Experiential and Ambient Marketing

- **What:** Marketers will be exploring unconventional and memorable ways to connect with their audiences through experiences that blur the line between online and real world events. This includes using physical spaces as marketing opportunities, creative partnerships with local businesses, and utilizing a variety of non-traditional advertising platforms.
- **So What:** There is a need for marketers to step outside of digital and create tangible interactions with their audiences that will resonate and stay top of mind. This may involve rethinking standard approaches to ad placement, physical or local event presence, and also create partnerships with local businesses.
- **Now What:** Explore creative and unexpected ways to present their brands outside of traditional marketing channels. Design campaigns that go beyond the online sphere and look for real-world touch points where the brand and customer can authentically connect. Consider using physical spaces to evoke and enhance customer experiences.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Trend 10: Increased Focus on Financial Literacy and ROI

- **What:** Marketing is a business and the business has an objective of making a profit. Marketers who can understand and speak the language of finance are needed to help align marketing initiatives with business goals, while showing their value through clear and comprehensive reporting. More budget and performance conversations will be necessary as leaders look to align marketing strategies with revenue goals and cost reduction pressures.
- **So What:** A new push for marketers to demonstrate a clear return on their marketing investment by becoming skilled at data-driven decision making and ROI-focused strategies. Focus will be placed on metrics that actually matter to business health and growth.
- **Now What:** Spend time learning more about financial metrics and data and how to apply it to measure value. Become more comfortable with tracking and reporting on results that go beyond leads and impressions. Seek opportunities to take ownership of budget development and budget management.
- **Probability:** 55.0%

Less Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Rise of Niche and Personalized Search Experiences

- **What:** Beyond general Google searches, users are gravitating towards specialized platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, ChatGPT, and even Reddit for specific needs, leading to more niche-based, tailored searches rather than general ones. Search engine results pages are also being reorganized with a more personalized result. This could lead to search results for similar terms having vastly different outcomes depending on what the search engine thinks you'd value.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to create content and marketing strategies for a variety of diverse platforms and search technologies, including video or highly visual content for social media and tailored long form content for AI. They also need to develop strategies for leveraging these varied search trends to maximize visibility for their clients. This calls for a more agile approach to content and advertising strategies.
- **Now What:** Focus on multi-channel strategies that acknowledge changing search habits, and optimize content to be discoverable on multiple platforms. Research specific content for specific search patterns and prepare to invest in a broad range of platforms rather than trying to chase specific top results on google.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 2: Growing Scrutiny of Click Fraud and Bot Activity

- **What:** Marketers are increasingly aware of click fraud and bot activity, particularly on social platforms, which skews their analytics and makes reporting and performance measurement less reliable. High CPMs and inflated metrics will cause increased efforts to address the bots and low-quality leads generated by these fraudulent activities.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to become more adept at detecting fraud, filtering it out of their marketing funnels, and building attribution models to ensure more reliable and genuine data. This increased scrutiny will require a much deeper understanding of how each platform is actually being used by real customers as opposed to bots and fake profiles.
- **Now What:** Adopt new tools, strategies, and frameworks for identifying and eliminating click fraud. Focus on authentic engagement and metrics that show real interactions over views or likes. Incorporate brand safety filters to exclude fraudulent or questionable channels and publications. Develop multi-platform tracking systems to build more accurate reporting of conversions and engagements.
- **Probability:** 65.0%

Trend 3: Emphasis on Long Form Audio & Video Content

- **What:** In response to an over saturation of short video, a renewed appreciation for long-form video and audio will grow. Consumers will increasingly desire longer, more

thoughtful content that speaks to niche interests and demonstrates expertise on the topic. This will also be in response to the proliferation of fake-seeming short content.

- **So What:** Marketers will be shifting to the creation of longer and more in depth content. Long-form, evergreen, and content that can be repurposed to different formats and channels will become more valuable. Video and audio content that's focused on a core concept will be valued over more generalized content.
- **Now What:** Develop strategies to create high-value, long-form audio and video content, and use data-driven insights to create more engaging and informative pieces. Explore using video as a basis for written content to maximize impact. Develop series that can be broken down into multiple segments for repurposing.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Trend 4: The Proliferation of "Do It Yourself" Marketing Advice

- **What:** More and more companies are relying on easy-to-use softwares to handle various aspects of marketing, from design and analytics to AI-generated content. There is a clear divide between those that see it as a solution that automates work and others who see it as a way to augment their existing workflows.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to emphasize unique value and the human expertise they offer, as the value of marketing is increasingly seen as being easy to accomplish with low effort or low expertise. Marketers will need to pivot away from being seen as simply implementers of a plan towards being the orchestrator of overall strategy.
- **Now What:** Focus on client education and emphasizing intangible value, such as experience, strategic insight, or the ability to create relationships with their audience, while positioning your service as a tailored strategic approach rather than a tool-based approach. Marketers need to offer custom strategies based on their clients' values and goals rather than focusing on what is achievable via AI or automation.
- **Probability:** 55.0%

Trend 5: The Blurring of Personal and Professional Social Media Presence

- **What:** Marketers and business owners alike will begin to more easily blend their professional and personal identities, using personal social media to promote their professional activities and leveraging their professional skills to share more personal content. This will stem from both the need to present as authentic voices and a pushback against the intense professionalization of online activity.
- **So What:** Individuals will present themselves online as a cohesive whole, bringing all their experiences and skills into a single social account. Building trust and credibility will rely heavily on showing the human behind the business, rather than separating the two into professional and personal life.
- **Now What:** Marketers will need to start integrating their own personality and viewpoints with their professional activities, building a singular brand that incorporates both professional expertise and personal values or passions. Instead of separate marketing

pages for work, personal, and passions, people will be pushing toward a single cohesive presence.

- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 6: Value on the Process Over Product or Service

- **What:** As the tools for creating products and services become more and more widespread, value is going to increasingly be tied to the process of creating a specific item or project, not just what product/service is being sold. This will be an effort to focus on intangible aspects of marketing such as relationships, empathy, and a positive experience over specific outcomes, which AI and automation cannot replicate.
- **So What:** Focusing on the processes, ethics, and relationships in your business may become a key differentiator as more businesses focus on automation for commoditized products. Brand messaging will lean less into products and more into human stories and value as AI commoditizes digital interactions and low-effort business operations.
- **Now What:** Highlight transparent and ethical business practices. Share stories that humanize the customer experience. Shift emphasis from the specific product or service being offered and emphasize the overall values of the brand. Prioritize meaningful connections over product/service features.
- **Probability:** 45.0%

Trend 7: Diminishing Returns of Mass Appeal Marketing

- **What:** Traditional mass marketing that tries to appeal to everyone with a generic message is becoming less effective as consumers seek a connection to specific communities and values. The generic content of the mass-market approach will feel too broad and without a point of reference for targeted consumers.
- **So What:** Marketers will have to move away from broad messages and prioritize engaging in a more personalized way. To do so requires going beyond demographics and engaging with smaller niche audiences. Marketers will need to develop messaging that emphasizes specific values, emotions, and community needs.
- **Now What:** Narrowly define target audiences, and create messaging tailored to those communities. Engage with micro-influencers and leaders in those communities. Prioritize building direct relationships over blasting a broad message.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 8: Preference for Transparency over Slickness

- **What:** Consumers are getting increasingly frustrated with overly polished and professional looking marketing, which is often interpreted as untrustworthy. They are more likely to engage with marketing that is imperfect, authentic, or quirky.
- **So What:** Brands may need to experiment with styles that are more raw, organic, or humorous. Messages that show vulnerability and an authentic approach to the marketing

journey may lead to more meaningful connections with an audience over well-branded messages.

- **Now What:** Let brand personality shine and create less perfect content, and focus on relatability, honesty and transparency. Consider leaning into humorous or self-deprecating campaigns rather than trying to emulate the perfection of higher production value campaigns. Incorporate User Generated Content into marketing strategies.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 9: Blurring Lines Between B2B and B2C Marketing

- **What:** As user expectations change, B2B companies are starting to use messaging strategies typically reserved for B2C marketing, like a focus on personal narratives, emotion, and relatable content. Even in the B2B space, people care about the person behind the products or services.
- **So What:** B2B marketers will have to rethink and update messaging and strategies. Personal narratives, emotional stories, and authenticity will be seen in B2B communications, with an emphasis on building a human connection with brands.
- **Now What:** Incorporate emotional storytelling into B2B communications. Understand that decision-makers are humans and are influenced by human factors. Start using strategies traditionally seen in B2C to establish authority and build relationships.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 10: The Rise of Highly Specific Content and Creative

- **What:** As attention spans are declining, marketers are being forced to focus on highly specific offers and creative. Audiences have become sophisticated at recognizing and ignoring generic campaigns, which are being perceived as a form of spam. This means that hyper personalized advertising messaging and creative could be the new norm for all channels.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to develop laser focus on audience segments and a strong grasp of the nuances of their target audience. Generic offers, keywords and messaging will have less value. Creative campaigns tailored to specific audiences with specific needs will be prioritized.
- **Now What:** Shift from general to targeted approaches by diving into customer insights and motivations. Create hyper-personalized marketing assets, landing pages and customer journeys based on different demographics and client expectations. Invest in systems that let you personalize ad campaigns for different audience segments.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Non-Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Increased Focus on Ethical AI Implementation

- **What:** As AI tools become more widespread, marketers and organizations will need to focus more on the ethics of AI use, going beyond basic compliance and addressing questions around AI bias, data privacy, and responsible deployment to ensure ethical marketing practices and customer trust.
- **So What:** This trend calls for a deeper reflection on the impact of using AI, and a strategic approach that prioritizes ethical applications over simply maximizing output. The conversation will not be about using AI but *how* it's being used. Ignoring these ethical challenges can damage brand perception, lead to lawsuits, and will erode consumer trust.
- **Now What:** Establish internal guidelines and protocols for AI usage, prioritize using AI in a way that puts ethical considerations at the forefront, build transparency into customer communications about AI, conduct regular audits of AI applications to identify areas where data privacy or bias are a concern, and support open discussions with external stakeholders about AI's impact on their business.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 2: Leveraging Experiential Marketing with Intentional Virality

- **What:** Marketers will focus on blending physical events with online engagement using social media for greater reach. New and creative approaches will involve developing shareable and memorable real-world experiences that will then spill into online visibility through UGC and other social formats to build brand awareness, strengthen brand affinity, and improve customer experience.
- **So What:** Brands can achieve the best of both worlds - build an immersive brand experience that is also easily amplified online. New strategies will rely on creating experiences that naturally lead to social sharing and virality rather than just trying to force engagement through gimmicky techniques.
- **Now What:** Design more shareable, photogenic experiences at events, incorporate prompts for social engagement and content creation at physical events, and design campaigns that encourage users to share their experiences. Make the customer the star of the brand experience by integrating unique touchpoints that also encourage online content creation. Focus on creating a memorable experience that will lead to UGC rather than an intentional focus on pushing your product/services.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 3: Re-evaluation of Traditional Marketing Metrics

- **What:** As the marketing landscape evolves, marketers will question the value of traditional metrics and push toward metrics that better represent a brand's impact and business objectives (and move away from vanity metrics). There'll be emphasis on metrics such as

customer lifetime value (CLTV), brand equity, share of voice, cost of customer acquisition (CAC) etc. rather than traffic, opens, views, or likes.

- **So What:** This shift will require a more nuanced approach to data analysis that better aligns marketing efforts with tangible financial metrics. It will also challenge the industry to re-evaluate how they value the results of a marketing campaign and understand the impact of marketing in different stages of the funnel.
- **Now What:** Refine data collection to capture higher-level insights on customer value, prioritize full funnel metrics, tie each marketing tactic to measurable results (like ROI, cost savings, increased profit) over broad metrics like visits or impressions, and develop financial modelling skills to better communicate results to management teams.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 4: Emergence of 'Cozy Web' Micro-Communities

- **What:** As the more public platforms become increasingly saturated with ads and bot activity, brands and consumers are gravitating toward smaller, private online communities (e.g., WhatsApp groups, Discord servers, paid email lists) for more genuine and focused engagement, which provides a greater emphasis on authenticity and targeted networking. These cozy web spaces often have a greater emphasis on human interaction and community values.
- **So What:** A more decentralized approach to online engagement, and a shift away from the traditional platforms that are seen as too corporate and less authentic. Marketers will be focusing on building niche communities or partnering with existing groups rather than blindly pushing content out into a broad marketplace.
- **Now What:** Instead of focusing on amassing followers on larger platforms, start building and engaging in niche online communities that provide a stronger connection with a more targeted audience. Move away from traditional broadcast marketing and shift into a more conversational format with direct interactions with ideal customers.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 5: Emphasis on Emotional Storytelling in B2B

- **What:** Traditional B2B marketing is shifting towards a more humanistic approach, incorporating emotional storytelling and genuine connections in what are typically deemed sterile and unengaging marketing campaigns. Marketers will move away from feature-based marketing into approaches that emphasize the emotional and relational aspects of their brand story.
- **So What:** B2B marketing will focus on highlighting how solutions resonate with human experiences, build trust and empathy in addition to focusing solely on product performance or efficiency. The move towards emotion-driven content will create new opportunities to connect with customers on a deeper level.
- **Now What:** Explore new methods of storytelling that go beyond facts and features and connect at a more human level, develop marketing campaigns that demonstrate an

understanding of the underlying emotions that drive business decisions, build an authentic brand that is both rational and intuitive, and look to connect on common values and goals.

- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 6: Integration of Hyperlocal and Community Marketing

- **What:** As customers crave authenticity and real connections, marketers will more broadly embrace hyperlocal campaigns. Marketers and businesses will focus on partnering with local communities and businesses to meet a more specific demographic of buyers.
- **So What:** Hyperlocal campaigns are less costly than broad multi-channel campaigns, and they will help improve brand recognition by creating a sense of local investment and shared purpose. The approach can foster genuine brand engagement, increase loyalty, and demonstrate how the brand aligns with the values of the local community.
- **Now What:** Identify local community and business partners that align with brand values and goals, tailor messaging and strategies specifically for local needs, support community-driven initiatives that help to build a positive and lasting relationship with local customers. Prioritize authentic human interaction.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 7: The Search for a "Better Than Human" AI Experience

- **What:** As users recognize the limitations and low quality outputs of basic AI applications, there will be a demand for models that create a more authentic, intuitive, and seamless user experience. The novelty of using AI will be supplanted by a need for something that provides better results.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to move past generic AI tools into more customized, tailored models that generate better outputs. There will be a greater need to demonstrate that human input will enhance the AI output, not replace it.
- **Now What:** Explore and experiment with newer more complex AI models, focus on finding ways to make data more actionable, develop strategies for blending human input with AI automation, and implement a framework to showcase how AI is enhancing, not replacing, human creativity and ingenuity.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

Trend 8: Data Privacy and Transparency Becomes a Core Value Proposition

- **What:** As consumers become more aware of their data privacy and are wary of companies collecting data that is not directly relevant to their purchase or service, transparency will become a more valuable aspect of marketing campaigns. Brands will be pressured to not only adhere to data privacy regulations, but also offer a deeper look into their processes and what they collect.
- **So What:** To build brand trust, you will need to create ethical marketing that addresses and clearly articulates how the business manages customer data, and the steps you take to

protect privacy. Emphasis will be placed on building ethical frameworks for data collection, management, and usage for your company.

- **Now What:** Audit your existing data handling methods, clearly outline your policy on collecting data, and communicate that to your customer base with easy to read language. Make privacy a central value within your brand identity and demonstrate this through your marketing content. Prioritize responsible AI, and other tech tools that you use.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

Trend 9: The Rise of Curation over Creation

- **What:** With so much content out there, the role of the marketer will change towards the curation of content from other sources, rather than just focusing on new content creation. Marketers will be leveraging social listening to identify quality content that is already online and then acting as a filter for those sources to provide audiences with a highly curated view of the internet that matches their specific needs.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to become experts in identifying valuable content, and must shift their lens from content production to selection and promotion. Curating external sources and building that into a coherent marketing message will become more important than only promoting that organization has created what.
- **Now What:** Develop strong social listening skills, prioritize finding great and helpful content from outside of your organization, leverage AI to analyze available content and filter information that is not relevant or useful, and build a strategy that leverages both organic content and expert curation.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

Trend 10: The Rise of Hybrid Physical and Digital Brand Engagement

- **What:** Marketers will be focusing on blending digital and physical spaces to create a more immersive and holistic brand experience. This may include using technology to enhance in-person events and utilizing physical spaces to promote digital offerings.
- **So What:** Blending the digital and physical will create new opportunities for brands to connect with customers on more than one level. This hybrid experience will improve customer engagement and create deeper long-term relationships.
- **Now What:** Experiment with multi-channel experiences that include interactive and blended options, use augmented reality to create in-person experiences that integrate with their digital presence, and design campaign strategies that leverage digital and physical opportunities for engagement.
- **Probability:** 5.0%

Social Media Marketing: Current State

This document presents a comprehensive analysis of online community discussions focusing on social media management, content creation, and user engagement. Discussions reveal widespread challenges experienced by both novice and experienced social media professionals, such as difficulties with algorithm changes, obtaining legitimate followers, low engagement, and monetization issues. Concerns about the impact of AI and the changing landscape of social media are also apparent, and users are actively seeking authentic and ethical approaches to navigate these complexities. Despite many challenges, there is also an overwhelming enthusiasm for the many opportunities that exist within the changing social media landscape.

Analysis

Theme 1: Challenges and Frustrations with Social Media Algorithms

- **Description:** Users frequently express frustration with changing and often opaque algorithms on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, X, and Facebook. They are experiencing significant drops in reach and engagement, leading to uncertainty about best practices and how to optimize content for visibility. Many users expressed concern that posting is not a pathway for growth, and it was emphasized that without paying for ads it is almost impossible to have any impact.
- **Weight:** 20.4%

Theme 2: Monetization and Brand Partnerships

- **Description:** Users are exploring various ways to monetize their content and seek brand partnerships, but the discussions revolve around the ethics and methods of this monetization. Users reported feeling cynical of the current state of influencer marketing and were looking for more genuine relationships between business/brand and content creator. Concerns about inauthentic and scamming influencers were also highlighted. Apparently many people are getting cold emails from people who have no intention to do anything but steal money. This suggests a market for building trust and authenticity.
- **Weight:** 19.2%

Theme 3: Authenticity vs. Performance on Social Media

- **Description:** Discussions reveal a tension between posting authentic, valuable content and optimizing for algorithmic performance. Users express a desire for genuine connections and community, as opposed to chasing high follower counts or going viral with content that feels forced or inauthentic. Users are increasingly wary of inauthentic content. This suggests a growing desire to move away from social media as just a marketing or advertising platform.

- **Weight:** 15.3%

Theme 4: Tools and Resources for Content Management and Social Media Strategy

- **Description:** Many users are actively searching for tools to streamline their content planning, scheduling, engagement and community management and they often look for free or low cost options. There are some strong opinions on what software is best in all of this, showing that this aspect of social media marketing and management is both necessary and a complex issue.
- **Weight:** 13.8%

Theme 5: The Impact of AI and Automation on Social Media Management and Content Creation

- **Description:** Users are curious about the potential of AI to improve content creation and management but have concerns around bias, authenticity, and transparency. The impact of AI on labor within the field of social media marketing is heavily discussed. The benefits of AI seem to be focused around automating repetitive and time consuming tasks but it has yet to be clearly shown how AI can solve problems that human creative and technical understanding bring to the table.
- **Weight:** 11.1%

Theme 6: Concerns About the Future of Social Media

- **Description:** Users are questioning the longevity and value of social media due to concerns about toxicity, addiction, and perceived manipulation by the social media platforms. There is some hope that new apps or platforms will emerge which can more ethically handle our need for connection and sharing information, and also give people more control. There is also a sense that we are at a point of no return with social media.
- **Weight:** 10.9%

Theme 7: Account Recovery, Security, and Restrictions

- **Description:** Users are facing issues such as account blocks, shadowbans, and difficulty accessing support, which underscores the lack of human intervention and transparency on many social media platforms. In many cases, it seems like social media companies are quick to restrict access, but do not do enough to ensure good/genuine accounts can get back their pages.
- **Weight:** 8.3%

Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Increased Emphasis on Short-Form Video Content

- **What:** Short-form video content on platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts will continue to dominate user attention, with video lengths shifting slightly (like YouTube Shorts' expansion to 3 minutes). This format is engaging and easy to consume, allowing for quick delivery of information or entertainment.
- **So What:** Marketers must continue adapting by creating video content that's both authentic and attention-grabbing to stand out in a crowded digital space. This requires skills in video editing and storytelling.
- **Now What:** Focus on mastering short-form video creation, experimenting with different styles and formats to see what resonates best with their target audience.
- **Probability:** 95.0%

Trend 2: Shift Towards Authenticity and User-Generated Content (UGC)

- **What:** Consumers are increasingly skeptical of traditional advertising and influencer campaigns. Genuine, relatable user-generated content from a non paid persona will gain significance in its stead. It's not just about endorsements but about real people sharing their experiences. This means that brands need to have an angle that makes their products worthy of UGC creation.
- **So What:** Businesses should focus more on building trust, transparency, and finding ways to show authenticity through the content they produce or commission. This signals a need to engage real people in their marketing process.
- **Now What:** Actively seek out UGC, work with smaller, niche creators, and highlight the real stories behind your brand.
- **Probability:** 90.0%

Trend 3: Diversification of Social Media Strategies Beyond Meta Platforms

- **What:** Content creators are growing weary of the dominant social platforms and are seeking out alternatives with lower costs, algorithmic fairness, and more control over their content. The limitations of existing platforms are forcing content creators and brands to shift focus to alternatives like X, BlueSky, Reddit, and niche communities to get the most ROI.
- **So What:** Businesses will find that there is less value in trying to be everything to everyone and instead may need to shift focus on one or two platforms that their customers are most active.
- **Now What:** Develop a focused approach for the one or two key platforms your target audience engages in, while continuing to maintain a minor presence on others. Experiment with new platforms for potential growth opportunities but without over committing to them.

- **Probability:** 85.0%

Trend 4: Focus on Community Building and Meaningful Engagement

- **What:** Meaningful engagement and fostering a sense of community is proving to be more valuable than chasing views and follower counts. Brands are increasingly looking at building loyal and engaged audiences. Micro-influencers who actually form communities within their accounts will continue to grow in popularity.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to foster real, valuable interaction and conversation, rather than just blasting content into the void. The goal is to create a network of loyal advocates who will stick around for the long term.
- **Now What:** Focus on creating content that invites interaction, and actively engage with the audience in the comments section. Use more personalized outreach (DMs) to build relationships.
- **Probability:** 80.0%

Trend 5: The Importance of User Data Privacy and Transparency

- **What:** Concerns about privacy, data handling, algorithmic manipulation are prompting people to look at their use of social media. With concerns about transparency and censorship at the forefront, platforms may need to change their relationship with their users.
- **So What:** Businesses will need to take measures to demonstrate a trustworthy and ethical relationship with their customers to build trust.
- **Now What:** Be transparent about data usage, opt for privacy-friendly platforms, and highlight any effort to respect your user's data and rights.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 6: Greater Use of AI-Powered Tools for Social Media Management and Content Optimization

- **What:** AI tools will continue to gain popularity and will be used to generate posts, analyze performance, and for social listening. Integrating AI into social media management will reduce time spent on mundane tasks.
- **So What:** Businesses will be able to optimize their workflows, but must not rely entirely on AI, and instead lean more into original and unique content.
- **Now What:** Explore what current and emerging tools can do, and seek solutions that augment their human effort, rather than eliminating it entirely. Invest time in building AI literacy, while finding ways to retain human creativity and authenticity in content and marketing.
- **Probability:** 65.0%

Trend 7: Experimentation with AI in Content Generation, Coupled With a Demand for Authenticity

- **What:** The increase in AI-generated content will create a counter trend toward a greater demand for authentic and human-generated content. New algorithms may even focus less on bot-like behaviours (such as too many posts with no engagement or obvious ad copy).
- **So What:** Marketers will need to be very aware of not only what they are doing but what the content they create means and communicates about the brand they represent.
- **Now What:** Develop creative content that is human-centered. You have the ability to discern when you can use AI tools or when you should depend more on original human creativity.
- **Probability:** 55.0%

Trend 8: Integration of E-commerce Features on Social Media Platforms

- **What:** With more focus on direct-to-consumer sales, the ability to purchase within the apps will become more important.
- **So What:** Businesses will need to streamline and integrate their sales process to capture sales directly from social media channels.
- **Now What:** Ensure your product pages are in line with your marketing messaging, make sure payment methods are easily accessible, and that your website or landing page clearly shows the offer and steps to purchase.
- **Probability:** 45.0%

Trend 9: Shift Towards User Controlled Algorithms

- **What:** User frustration with black-box algorithms and data gathering practices could create a preference for platforms that give users more control over how their feeds are created. There is also growing frustration over the way social media prioritizes algorithm driven posts over the posts from accounts that users choose to follow.
- **So What:** Companies may need to re-evaluate the ethical implications of their marketing practices and take a less pushy approach with engaging audiences.
- **Now What:** Test new platforms and focus on direct communication rather than relying on algorithms to deliver a message.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 10: Increased Regulation and Scrutiny of Social Media Practices

- **What:** Governments may begin to take a more active role in overseeing data privacy and platform transparency. As more research emerges regarding the negative aspects of algorithms it will be harder for platforms to dismiss or turn a blind eye to user requests for greater control.
- **So What:** Companies need to stay informed of new and emerging laws and ensure their business practices are ethically and legally responsible and provide a good user experience that also provides user privacy.

- **Now What:** Have a data privacy plan and review it regularly to prepare for future changes, implement user-friendly content moderation tools, and stay up to date with new and emerging trends in ethical marketing practices.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Less Obvious Trends

Trend 1: The Use of "Low-Quality" Content as an Authentic Signal

- **What:** A trend toward purposely using "low quality" content as a rebellion against the highly produced, highly curated content that is common on platforms like Instagram. This can include the use of low-res imagery, static photos, raw video, or unedited text.
- **So What:** Consumers may become wary of brands with 'too good to be true' production and marketing and will instead value seeing brands and companies showing their imperfections and faults.
- **Now What:** Consider using lower production value content to highlight authenticity, use unedited video, share raw behind the scenes footage, or focus more on the voice, perspective, or personality of individuals when producing video content.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Trend 2: Increased Use of Niche and Geographically Targeted Groups

- **What:** A movement away from mass-market reach to smaller, more targeted and intimate groups on platforms like Facebook, Reddit, Discord, and private messaging applications.
- **So What:** Businesses will focus more on direct, targeted engagement and community growth strategies that have a higher conversion rate vs reach with a larger, less engaged audience.
- **Now What:** Explore niche groups for customer engagement, and prioritize direct communication over wide-range, brand messaging. Instead of a shotgun approach (hitting everyone) look for the bullet approach (reaching the exact individual)
- **Probability:** 55.0%

Trend 3: Social Media Used as a Tool for Personal Transformation and Self Discovery

- **What:** Users are starting to leverage social media for education and information gathering rather than for doom scrolling or escapism, as a means to achieve professional or personal goals, ranging from health/fitness to coding or career development.
- **So What:** This signals a shift towards a more intention-driven social media usage where platforms are used as a tool, rather than just a form of entertainment or distraction.
- **Now What:** Develop content that is both authentic and educational, and that can teach your users a new and useful skill. Also, build a community that supports growth and provides resources.
- **Probability:** 45.0%

Trend 4: User-Driven Community Moderation

- **What:** A desire for greater control over who is present, what topics are discussed, and the overall vibe of the social experience. Users are becoming more keen to use their ability to block, mute, and curate their online experience.
- **So What:** Social media will slowly shift to more community focused environments where community members have greater influence on the types of people that will be able to engage with the site.
- **Now What:** Businesses may need to implement more robust community guidelines and prioritize a user-driven approach to moderation over algorithmic driven control.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 5: The Return to Traditional Marketing Formats

- **What:** There is growing skepticism toward the reliance on social media for all marketing needs as more consumers are starting to tune out the hyper engagement, clickbait, and ad saturated content. There may be a growing return to older, traditional methods for direct and localized outreach.
- **So What:** Social media might not be the end all be all, and it will become important to evaluate what other methods of promotion are effective in any given area.
- **Now What:** Acknowledge the limitations of social media and incorporate other methods into a well balanced strategy.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 6: Hybrid Approach to Content Creation

- **What:** Due to the high effort and resources required to stay on top of social media trends and algorithms, more people will start to rely on multi-purpose content that can be repurposed to long and short form.
- **So What:** Creators will need to adapt and will start to blend existing formats with a focus on content that can be published in multiple formats with minor adjustments.
- **Now What:** Start building a more scalable content process by investing in workflows and content generation that can have an ongoing value across multiple platforms and various use-cases.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 7: Focus on Localized Content over Global Virality

- **What:** Content is increasingly becoming localized rather than trying to appeal to a massive audience. This has led to niche communities with specific interests and shared cultures.
- **So What:** Businesses may find greater value in establishing strong ties to local communities that have genuine shared interests and values.
- **Now What:** Develop location-based marketing tactics and make sure your messaging resonates within those specific communities rather than appealing to a global audience.

Also explore collaborating with community based influencers or content creators in those areas.

- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 8: "Anti-Influencer" Culture Emerges

- **What:** As people become more aware of the negative aspects of algorithms and social media manipulation, they will be more turned off by traditional influencers and instead seek out genuine and authentic voices.
- **So What:** Companies may need to shift focus away from hiring traditional influencers to having people genuinely use the product they endorse.
- **Now What:** Emphasize honesty and transparency in marketing campaigns, with actual product demonstrations and direct engagements from consumers.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 9: Social Media as a Supplement to IRL Experiences

- **What:** Users are seeking ways to use social media as a tool for more personal and genuine relationships with friends and family by posting less and communicating more via personal messages and closed groups.
- **So What:** Content consumption and creation on social media platforms may decrease in favor of more personal communication channels.
- **Now What:** Prioritize building a strong brand that can also be used for personal, one-on-one communication, or to help provide solutions for specific problems that help to create closer relationships between brand and consumer.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 10: Rise of "Ethical" Social Media Alternatives

- **What:** As concerns about current platforms increase, people will increasingly try to move over to smaller, more user-focused platforms that are explicitly anti-algorithm.
- **So What:** This could be the first step in the demise of the platforms we know as more and more people will gravitate towards open source platforms that offer better data privacy and security.
- **Now What:** Invest in ethical and transparent social media practices. Create a product that is honest and forthright about what it provides and how it does it.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

Non-Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Emphasis on Strategic Time-Based Scheduling

- **What:** A focus on posting content at specific times that align with a variety of factors including known optimal user activity and engagement, but is also timed to real world events.
- **So What:** Marketers will likely need to focus on specific times of day or days of the week for content delivery and be actively aware of local or national events that may affect viewership and engagement. It may also indicate a need to move away from a more chaotic, always-on type of content strategy.
- **Now What:** Implement a very defined and specific posting schedule with an understanding of key events or topics that will take place throughout the month.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 2: Focus on Micro-Engagement Tactics

- **What:** The use of small, low effort interactions that are designed to elicit a response. These are intentionally low-effort from the user, and can include things like polls, quizzes, questions, and other interactive comments to build engagement.
- **So What:** The intent of this type of strategy will be to increase engagement in comment sections which may indicate to algorithms that the content is of value and should be shared more widely. This can be a way to amplify reach and build community.
- **Now What:** Experiment with a variety of micro-engagement calls to actions and track their results. Identify a range of content that best fits the desired outcome.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 3: The Emergence of AI-Assisted Content Moderation in User Communities

- **What:** The use of AI tools to sift through, identify, and flag problematic content is becoming more common, and could shift to more community specific applications.
- **So What:** User-led moderation will be powered by AI, giving communities the tools to curate the experience they want without the need for manual or human moderation. This will be primarily useful for niche communities with very specific needs and values.
- **Now What:** Focus on AI tools that can provide real-time content analysis and moderation, with emphasis on clear, transparent moderation policies, and offer opportunities for users to appeal to decisions made by AI.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 4: Rise of Specialized Social Media Platforms for Creative Niche Communities

- **What:** A shift away from general, public-facing platforms toward smaller, more intimate, niche oriented platforms where creators and artists can experiment and share their work in a more private and trusted environment.
- **So What:** The fragmentation of social media audiences may force businesses and brands to more intensely focus on reaching their ideal audience on specific platforms, and may cause smaller niche communities to become more valuable than larger, broader platforms.
- **Now What:** Focus on the best suited platforms for your niche audience, participate in them as a member of the community, and see how you can tailor your marketing efforts to work within those contexts.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 5: The Re-Emergence of Old Internet Formats

- **What:** A renewed interest in older, legacy platforms (such as MySpace or MSN) that allowed greater customization and more personal expression.
- **So What:** Social media, like fashion, will be cyclical. Older formats may be revived in a more modern way that appeals to the next wave of users.
- **Now What:** Look for platforms that are leveraging nostalgia in their messaging or user experience, to see where you can integrate content that has a familiar and comfortable feel.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 6: The Use of Social Media as a Tool for Escapism and Alternative Reality Building

- **What:** Users will explore ways to leverage social media as a way to detach from reality and create new worlds or identities that serve as a more desirable alternative to the real world.
- **So What:** The focus will be less on showing off wealth and success, but more on exploration, experimentation and creating a strong emotional connection through fantasy and escapism.
- **Now What:** Consider adopting fantastical elements, strong world building techniques, and relatable characters that can take your audience into a whole new world.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 7: Increased Focus on Community Guidelines, Ethics, and Brand Transparency

- **What:** There is a growing call for brands to explicitly state their approach to content moderation, data protection and AI usage. As user fatigue sets in, customers will begin to trust brands that prioritize their well-being and not only data collection and profits.
- **So What:** Brand authenticity, ethical practices, and corporate responsibility will become more important than ever for attracting and retaining an audience.
- **Now What:** Develop clear and transparent policies for content moderation, data usage, and how your brand handles its marketing strategies. Highlight the human elements behind your brand, and share a clear mission statement.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 8: The Rise of Hybrid and Multi-Platform Personalities

- **What:** Content creators are seeing the value of being a cross-platform presence, rather than relying on a single social media app, even if they only prioritize one platform over all the others.
- **So What:** Brands will seek out creators that have a presence on multiple platforms, and create content that is designed for specific platforms while having a general messaging that can be shared across all.
- **Now What:** Optimize content so that it can work across multiple platforms, and make sure your overall branding is cohesive across all of them.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 9: Rejection of AI Generated Content and the Desire for Human Creativity

- **What:** There may be a strong counter reaction to AI generated content with increasing value being placed on human creativity, and organic, unique content that is not produced by robots.
- **So What:** Authenticity will become more highly valued for its uniqueness and human element.
- **Now What:** Focus on highlighting the unique human value within your brand and the people behind the operation.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 10: The Use of Social Media as a Testing Ground for New Products

- **What:** Content creators may use social platforms for product testing feedback from customers, using quick polls, and rapid fire feedback to adjust products before they are released to the public, therefore saving on research costs while simultaneously generating awareness and engagement.
- **So What:** Products will become more refined, and it will be easier to test what works and what does not.
- **Now What:** Share your process online with existing and potential audiences to receive genuine and immediate feedback, or offer the opportunity to participate in product design before launch.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

SEO : Current State

The online community data reveals a diverse range of topics and concerns within the SEO community, primarily revolving around the technical aspects of SEO, website migrations, and strategies for increasing traffic and rankings. There's a strong emphasis on challenges with Google's updates and the effectiveness of specific techniques. The community's expertise is evident in the discussions, with users sharing their experiences, seeking advice, and debating best practices. This indicates a focus on practical, actionable insights and troubleshooting.

The community grapples with questions of perceived authority vs practical rank, as they debate the nuances of Google's ranking system. The use of AI and related technologies in search engines and content creation are also areas of interest, reflecting a forward-thinking approach in the industry. Discussions around monetization and scaling strategies suggest a mix of seasoned experts and ambitious entrepreneurs in the community. These community conversations tend to emphasize practical experience, experimentation, and testing with tangible outcomes over rigid SEO checklists.

Analysis

Theme 1: Website Migration Challenges and Indexing Issues

- **Description:** A significant portion of the discussions centers around the challenges of website migrations, with users experiencing indexing problems and traffic drops following such processes. The issue of 301 redirects being ignored or processed incorrectly by search engines is a prominent concern. This highlights the difficulties in maintaining site visibility, especially for older domains, when moving to new platforms or URLs. It also emphasizes the need for advanced troubleshooting to verify how Google is viewing the newly structured content, and to quickly address unexpected traffic loss.
- **Weight:** 21.2%

Theme 2: Backlink Strategies and Link Quality

- **Description:** Another important theme is backlink acquisition. Community members are interested in strategies for obtaining quality backlinks from relevant and authoritative sites while avoiding black-hat or manipulative techniques. The efficacy of different types of backlinks from diverse sources is also a recurring point of discussion, specifically in relation to building authority for local businesses or specialized websites. Jargon and technical terms related to this topic, such as Domain Authority and Page Rank, are common in these discussions.
- **Weight:** 18.5%

Theme 3: Content Creation, AI, and Keyword Research

- **Description:** There's a notable focus on content creation and keyword strategies in the context of AI technologies. Community members debate best practices for leveraging AI tools in content generation, the importance of optimizing for long-tail keywords, and ways to maintain user engagement by incorporating real-world examples and humanized copy. There is a concern over AI bias and bias in general, as there's a desire to make content more inclusive, informative, and relatable.
- **Weight:** 15.7%

Theme 4: Core Web Vitals and Technical SEO

- **Description:** Technical SEO issues related to core web vitals and site speed are recurring concerns. Community members share challenges related to implementing structured data, mobile responsiveness, and JavaScript rendering, while also discussing the relative importance of metrics as interpreted by Google's Search Console and other third party platforms. There's a discussion about the potential for conflicting code or theme errors, and the best way to address technical issues for long term ranking.
- **Weight:** 14.9%

Theme 5: GMB, Local SEO, and Map Pack Rankings

- **Description:** Users frequently discuss Google Business Profile and strategies for ranking in local map results. This topic is approached through discussions about GMB optimization, reviews, NAP consistency, and strategies for maintaining visibility in local search results. Users seek clarification on the validity of various local SEO techniques, and ways to compete with businesses that have established profiles. There's interest in how best to position a business locally.
- **Weight:** 12.3%

Theme 6: Google Algorithm Updates

- **Description:** The impact of various Google core updates is a constant point of concern, particularly in relation to traffic fluctuations, ranking drops, and the best approaches to recover from HCU (Helpful Content Update). Community members share their personal experiences and discuss best methods to identify their site-specific issues and develop a plan of action in the face of these changes. These discussions tend to focus on broad themes, like overall value, or user intent, rather than technical aspects.
- **Weight:** 8.5%

Theme 7: Tools & Software

- **Description:** Users frequently ask about affordable or alternative tools, and discuss their pros and cons for various functions such as keyword research, backlinks monitoring, or site audits. Discussions cover both paid and freemium tools and what they are best used for.
- **Weight:** 4.9%

Theme 8: Career & Freelancing

- **Description:** A recurring theme involves career advice and job tips related to SEO, with users asking about how to gain experience, how to position oneself, or how to make a living in a very competitive market space. These include questions regarding what sort of roles are a good next step or ways to approach clients and potential employers.
- **Weight:** 4.0%

Obvious Trends

Trend 1: AI-Augmented SEO Workflows

- **What:** AI will be increasingly integrated into various SEO tasks, such as content creation, keyword research, and backlink analysis. However, human review, editing, and oversight will remain a critical component of the process.
- **So What:** This shift will drive efficiency for SEO practitioners, while it also emphasizes the need to integrate human creativity and judgment. Content quality will remain a focus, making well-crafted, thoughtful pieces more valuable. Those who fail to adapt might be left behind by AI or, paradoxically, overwhelmed by AI.
- **Now What:** SEO professionals should invest time in learning how to use AI tools effectively while also developing strong skills in human-guided content strategy and execution.
- **Probability:** 95.0%

Trend 2: Emphasis on User Experience (UX) and Content Quality

- **What:** Search engine algorithms will continue to focus on rewarding websites that offer excellent user experiences with a priority in helpfulness, accuracy, and engagement. Google's ongoing efforts to improve search results will place increasing value on content that genuinely meets the needs and intent of the users, while high-bounce rates and short dwell-times will negatively impact a website's ability to rank.
- **So What:** SEO will no longer be about shortcuts or algorithmic games. Content that is original, human-focused, and offers a strong user experience will be prioritized in organic results, where sites that deliver on this will have higher traffic and also a greater chance of earning a click through rate.
- **Now What:** Businesses must emphasize creating well-structured, informative content and focusing on user engagement rather than solely optimizing for keywords.
- **Probability:** 90.0%

Trend 3: Quality Backlinks and E-E-A-T Signals Will Remain Crucial

- **What:** While link quantity may decline in importance, the value of high-quality backlinks from authoritative sources in relevant niches will be prioritized by search engines as a signal of a website's authority and relevance.
- **So What:** Backlinks, especially those from reputable sources, will continue to be important. The practice of building authority with natural methods, such as by getting featured in publications, will be more effective than relying on low quality link building techniques. Content that is well researched and showcases authority will also become a prerequisite to securing backlinks.
- **Now What:** Marketing professionals must shift towards building relationships with industry experts and journalists for media mentions and higher quality placements, while also

building content that naturally attracts links due to its value to other websites and platforms.

- **Probability:** 85.0%

Trend 4: Prioritization of Local SEO & Google Business Profile

- **What:** Google Business Profiles will become even more central to how users find local businesses, especially on mobile. Proximity and other local search features on Google Maps will increase in importance, and users will rely on those listings to help choose where they shop or who they hire.
- **So What:** Businesses with a physical location and service areas must prioritize their GMB presence by having all details accurate, building reviews, and updating it frequently with new photos or content.
- **Now What:** Businesses must ensure their Google Business Profiles are fully optimized, with consistent NAP data and positive reviews. Regular posting of new content on GBP will become equally as important as content on their main websites.
- **Probability:** 80.0%

Trend 5: Increasing Emphasis on AI-Generated Search Results

- **What:** Search engines like Google, Bing, and specialized AI chatbots will integrate AI-generated summaries more into search results and offer AI-driven search interfaces. As users become more comfortable with AI, they may start relying on these tools directly rather than relying on organic links, and the methods to get featured may change.
- **So What:** AI tools will increasingly take over informational search queries, making it much more difficult to get organic traffic for these types of topics. Commercial and branded search terms may become even more important for driving organic traffic to websites, and AI overviews will require businesses to improve the signals they send to help them get considered.
- **Now What:** Websites must adapt to AI generated content by publishing content that highlights unique selling proposition, brand credibility, and other factors that Google values, to gain prominence in these spaces.
- **Probability:** 75.0%

Trend 6: Increased Multi-Channel Marketing

- **What:** Given the increased importance of both organic search and AI, businesses will increasingly feel the need to rely on multiple digital channels. This includes not only Google search, but also other channels like social media platforms (Reddit, Pinterest, TikTok) and other traffic sources.
- **So What:** Overreliance on Google search alone can no longer be sustainable. With Google AI results pushing organic content lower in search listings, businesses that focus only on websites and SEO may see fewer and fewer people finding them on the search results.

- **Now What:** Businesses must actively engage with audiences on their preferred channels while using tools like Pulse for Reddit to understand and connect with various niche audiences.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 7: Focus on Data and Transparency

- **What:** With the changing SEO landscape, businesses are finding the need to track their marketing activities in Google Search Console and Google Analytics, and other tools to build custom reports.
- **So What:** Data analysis and reporting will be key to assess the real effectiveness of any tactic, SEO or otherwise. This transparency will help businesses make informed decisions with better understanding of what strategies actually yield the best results.
- **Now What:** Those working in marketing need to master data analysis in platforms like Google Analytics and Google Search Console, and utilize that data for their SEO reporting. They will also need to learn how to set up or maintain those data capturing tools as well as the data reports from them
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 8: Decreased Value of Manipulative SEO Techniques

- **What:** Google's algorithms will continue to get more sophisticated at identifying and ignoring or penalizing websites that use spammy or manipulative link-building techniques, such as Private Blog Networks, paid link placements, and thin content creation.
- **So What:** Old SEO strategies based on spam or "gaming the system" will no longer be effective in the long run.
- **Now What:** Websites must focus on building authority through legitimate strategies, such as earning high-quality backlinks, creating original content, optimizing for search intent, and providing a good user experience.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 9: Shift from Keyword Density to Semantics

- **What:** Algorithms will focus on semantic relationships, latent semantic indexing (LSI), and intent-based keywords, diminishing the importance of keywords as the sole means of optimization.
- **So What:** SEO professionals must move beyond simple keyword stuffing and instead focus on understanding the context and meaning behind user queries to create content that is relevant and useful.
- **Now What:** Content creators must begin focusing on long-tail keyword phrases that clearly match the user's search intent.
- **Probability:** 65.0%

Trend 10: Continued Volatility with Search Engine Updates

- **What:** Google's core algorithm updates will remain unpredictable and have a varying impact on websites, sometimes with mixed results.
- **So What:** SEO requires constant adaptation and a long-term approach. It's a process of continuous testing, experimenting, analyzing, and optimizing. There is no long-term 'set it and forget it' strategy that lasts forever.
- **Now What:** Professionals must use data-driven decisions, and create a plan for every SEO action. They must remain open to changes and ready to adapt their strategies based on any feedback.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Less Obvious Trends

Trend 1: The Rise of Intent-Driven SEO and Content Personalization

- **What:** Traditional keyword-based SEO will further give way to a focus on user intent. Content will be tailored to specific audience segments, leveraging insights from GA4 and other analytics data.
- **So What:** Generic content may continue to lose effectiveness, which requires a shift toward producing hyper-relevant and targeted content to address unique user needs and questions, especially if looking to rank in niche markets. A deeper understanding of how users are behaving online will also be required.
- **Now What:** SEOs need to integrate behavior data from analytics platforms with keyword research and use it to refine their content marketing strategy to better match audience's user and purchase intent. Look at how your high performing pages are structured, compared to lower performing pages.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 2: The Growing Importance of Conversational AI Optimization

- **What:** Search interactions will shift further from text-based queries to more conversational, voice-driven searches. AI Chat platforms will be used as a starting point to source ideas, but also as a tool to provide a more personalized response from other web tools.
- **So What:** SEO will need to optimize not only for search engines but also for AI-powered search interfaces. This implies a greater emphasis on Natural Language Understanding and long-tail keywords and long-form sentences or prompts.
- **Now What:** SEOs should optimize content to be conversational, using a more human and less robotic writing style while using more natural language. Focus on long-tail keywords (actual user prompts) and structured data to facilitate more accurate interpretations of intent by AI search platforms.
- **Probability:** 65.0%

Trend 3: Authority Through Actionable Content and Original Insights

- **What:** Search engines will increasingly reward content that provides clear, actionable advice supported by real-world examples, and actionable, tested and demonstrable insights.
- **So What:** Information or theory-driven content will have a limited impact in SEO, as it's quickly being replaced by AI search tools.
- **Now What:** Businesses must focus on building content that goes beyond generic information and provides tangible solutions, tested strategies and insights for their readership.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Trend 4: The Resurgence of Community Driven Engagement

- **What:** Niche communities and user-generated content platforms like Reddit will have a stronger role in the web search. SEO professionals must understand the importance of having a social media presence on these platforms, but not for promotion but for genuine human interaction and value.
- **So What:** Businesses that prioritize user-generated feedback and engage in authentic online conversations will perform better in search results. Direct engagements will help Google determine a site's authenticity.
- **Now What:** Content creators need to focus on creating content that engages specific communities, building trust, and earning organic backlinks from these unique sources. Community management should be a core consideration, not just as a place to push out product links.
- **Probability:** 55.0%

Trend 5: Focus on Zero-Click SERP Optimizations

- **What:** SEO efforts will move towards making content as visible as possible within the SERP. Featured snippets, knowledge panels, and other rich results will gain additional importance. AI Overviews will also become the main method for many search queries, especially in low competitive niches where Google trusts the first to rank higher for relevant keywords.
- **So What:** Traffic to a website may see a decrease as Google increasingly answers users' questions directly on the search page itself.
- **Now What:** SEOs must focus on optimizing their websites to appear more often in featured snippets and use schema markup to make Google capture more detailed information directly on the SERPs. A clear strategy to rank in the top 1-3 should take priority over simply ranking for search queries.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 6: Ethical SEO and Transparency Becomes a Differentiator

- **What:** As Google and other search engines combat manipulative practices, businesses and consumers will increase their demand for SEO and content marketing strategies that are transparent and ethically minded.
- **So What:** In the future, businesses will be more inclined to hire SEO and marketing agencies who provide authentic, user-first strategies. Those who attempt to game the system will be punished.
- **Now What:** Businesses must make sure their approach to SEO (both on-page and off-page), is ethical, transparent and aligns with current Google Guidelines.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 7: Focus on First Party Data over Third Party Data

- **What:** The value of third party data from tools will decline, instead it will require that SEO professionals rely on gathering and using first-party data to assess site performance.
- **So What:** Collecting unique insights directly from the interactions people have on their websites and using it to enhance user experience will be the key to effective content optimization.
- **Now What:** SEO practitioners will rely more on their own data, testing and tracking rather than relying on other 3rd party metrics for actionable decision making.
- **Probability:** 45.0%

Trend 8: Dynamic Content based on User Signals & Geo Location

- **What:** A website's ability to provide content based on what google knows about you will be more common as search becomes more tailored to location, demographics, and other data points that Google has about you.
- **So What:** Websites that can provide relevant, user-specific content will outrank sites that present the same copy to everyone
- **Now What:** SEO strategies will involve more personalization based on user intent, geo-location, device and behavior patterns. The structure of content pages will emphasize this personalized content in addition to static SEO-driven pages and blog posts.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 9: Prioritizing Visual and Video Content

- **What:** Image and video optimization will take more prominence as Google's search landscape becomes much more visual and multimedia rich. In time people will favor this over text only content
- **So What:** The focus must extend beyond text SEO towards image alt tags, description and other technical meta data. SEOs will also need to build video content to tap into a different audience.
- **Now What:** SEOs will not only be optimizing content for text-based SEO, but also images and videos as the format will become an additional ranking factor. They must improve user experience by creating engaging and relevant multimedia.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 10: Micro-Communities and Niche Forums

- **What:** As search engines continue to change, smaller, niche communities and forums will increase in importance and visibility.
- **So What:** The future of SEO requires an understanding of where specific target audiences spend their time online, instead of casting a wide net for everyone.
- **Now What:** Marketers must engage with niche-specific audiences through organic participation and relationship building (with genuine value, and with no expectation for

getting something in return) that will then make the SEO on these platforms more worthwhile.

- **Probability:** 30.0%

Non-Obvious Trends

Trend 1: The Rise of Micro-Conversions and Engagement Tracking

- **What:** SEOs will shift their focus beyond traditional rankings to also micro-conversions on a page. This means tracking small actions like clicks on specific elements (buttons, images, embedded videos), time spent in certain sections, and social media shares, to ensure they align with business goals. Tools like Microsoft Clarity will see greater use, and user engagement metrics will become a more common reporting metric that is as important to SEO as link building.
- **So What:** SEO success will be based on a site's ability to meet both search engine criteria and user engagement metrics. Simply optimizing for rankings without thinking about user satisfaction may not be enough to achieve long term success. Pages that have a low bounce rate but do not convert will still get ranked by Google, whereas sites that convert will get more visibility.
- **Now What:** Businesses should prioritize user engagement and intent by tracking micro-conversions through Google Tag Manager and analytics tools, to identify sections that encourage users to explore the site further and/or engage with a business' brand or product.
- **Probability:** 45.0%

Trend 2: SEO & AI in Collaboration

- **What:** AI tools will be used as intelligent assistants for content creators who will increasingly rely on AI to generate copy, identify patterns, analyse data, and improve workflow speed.
- **So What:** The power of AI will be used in production of content where SEO's will be required to have a better level of skill and creativity in prompting, testing and managing the output to fit better with user needs and intent.
- **Now What:** SEO professionals need to develop their abilities in using AI, while also developing their creative writing abilities to properly review and adapt AI-generated content for the best results.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 3: Emphasis on Data-Driven Strategic SEO

- **What:** SEOs will spend more time analysing data from both search engines and from user behavior, and then using that to refine their strategies and tactics. The importance of data in SEO will increase as the ability to act on that data becomes more essential to compete effectively in complex niches.
- **So What:** Data analysis and reporting skills will be of more value to clients as this ability highlights patterns and insights that can shape strategy and provide a rationale for the next steps.

- **Now What:** SEO specialists will need to become proficient in data analytics, utilizing tools like Google Search Console and BigQuery, while also developing strong skills to identify problems and make informed recommendations on the basis of reliable information.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 4: "Re-Humanizing" SEO Content

- **What:** A backlash against AI generated content will cause a shift towards authentic, human created/edited content that connects with audiences on an emotional level.
- **So What:** Search engines may start to prioritize authentic content by de-valuing AI-generated copy and also use a set of new algorithms that may identify AI and value that as less useful to users.
- **Now What:** Content creators need to focus on building trust with real humans, stories, and experiences that make content relatable, useful, and authoritative. Generic or mass-produced content will be less effective than unique, human-created content.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 5: Blurring Lines Between SEO and User Experience Design

- **What:** The separation between SEO and user experience is rapidly collapsing. User journeys will also become a core ranking factor as search engines begin to weigh engagement and conversions as a main signal of content value.
- **So What:** SEO will increasingly become about building holistic experiences, designing web pages and content that are both easily discoverable and genuinely valuable to audiences.
- **Now What:** SEO specialists must collaborate with UX designers, content creators, and software developers to build websites that drive engagement, traffic and conversions.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 6: The Rise of Long Form Audio Content.

- **What:** As more AI is added to platforms, search will become an increasingly multi-media experience. Voice search will become much more significant than previously thought or predicted.
- **So What:** Podcasts, audiobooks and other long form audio may begin to influence SEO through a new form of user interaction signals.
- **Now What:** SEO specialists must explore strategies for optimizing audio content to help businesses remain visible in search.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 7: The Importance of Brand Reputation & Trust

- **What:** Brand mentions and brand reputation, especially where it's not directly linked to your website, will act as a form of social proof in the world of AI Search.

- **So What:** It will become increasingly important to proactively manage an organization's brand reputation, engaging with reviews, and also building a strong brand presence on other web platforms.
- **Now What:** Businesses must prioritize authentic, positive online engagement and public relations to ensure they are seen as trustworthy and credible.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 8: Hyperlocal & Niche Focus

- **What:** SEO will be less about trying to capture all the traffic in a big market and more focused on micro-targeting niche communities and underserved demographics.
- **So What:** The strategy for reaching these audiences requires a nuanced, targeted, and data-driven approach, where SEO efforts are geared towards engaging with a specific subset of customers with a more refined intent.
- **Now What:** SEO specialists will need to understand their clients' businesses more deeply and to develop marketing strategies with narrow audience segmentations, even in larger target markets, to optimize value and resources effectively.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 9: Server Side Optimization and Infrastructure

- **What:** Having fast page load times and efficient website servers will be crucial to improve technical SEO and reduce issues with indexing, page load and other technical related aspects, which are becoming an increasing threat to SEO success.
- **So What:** Site administrators need to invest time into properly configuring all aspects of their website structure and servers, to avoid being bottlenecked by issues.
- **Now What:** SEOs must have working knowledge of web performance and server configuration to improve technical SEO aspects and ensure seamless crawling.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 10: Intent-Based Meta Descriptions

- **What:** Generic keyword stuffing in meta descriptions will be replaced with meta descriptions that align with the intent of the page and the user's search query.
- **So What:** Writing accurate and compelling meta descriptions will be a major skill to ensure users choose the right result in the SERPs.
- **Now What:** SEO professionals will need to write meta descriptions that accurately reflect the type and topic of the content on each page, while also making them enticing to searchers, to improve traffic via greater CTR and SERP visibility.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Content Marketing : Current State

The provided text data from an online community reveals a diverse set of topics related to digital marketing, content creation, and social media strategies. A significant portion of the discourse revolves around the use of AI tools in content creation and their effectiveness, and discussions on the impact of social media algorithms and emerging platforms. Additionally, community members share their experiences with specific tools, techniques, and marketing approaches, covering areas from SEO to video production and branding. Overall, the community demonstrates a high level of engagement with practical challenges and a desire to find strategies for better performance and results.

Analysis

Theme 1: AI in Content Creation

- **Description:** This theme encompasses discussions on using AI tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and Humbot for writing, editing, and generating marketing content. Community members share their experiments, workflows, and concerns about AI-generated content sounding robotic or being flagged by detection tools. There is interest in leveraging AI for efficiency while also seeking strategies for maintaining a human touch and authenticity. A lot of discussions were around methods for using ai but avoiding the generic AI voice.
- **Weight:** 16.3%

Theme 2: Social Media Marketing and Strategy

- **Description:** This theme involves discussions about using various social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (Twitter), Threads, and YouTube for marketing purposes. Community members share tips on engagement, growth tactics, and specific content types that work well on these platforms. There are also concerns and questions about algorithms, monetization and the challenges of growing an audience. A significant portion of the dialogue focused on short form video content as a primary vehicle for driving engagement and reach.
- **Weight:** 15.6%

Theme 3: Content Creation Techniques and Tools

- **Description:** This theme focuses on practical advice and tools for content creation across different formats including video, blog posts, and graphics. Community members share their preferred software, equipment, tips for editing, and their general workflows for production. Also explored are some alternative methods for writing and content creation, without AI or traditional workflows. There was an emphasis on balancing efficiency with creativity and authenticity.

- **Weight:** 15.1%

Theme 4: Content Distribution and Promotion

- **Description:** This theme deals with various strategies and platforms for distributing and promoting content. Topics include email marketing, SEO, using social media platforms for content discovery, and various approaches for engaging audiences and driving traffic to web pages. Community members share their preferred methods and experiences in distributing their content, especially on building brand authority.
- **Weight:** 14.8%

Theme 5: Audience Engagement and Interaction

- **Description:** This theme covers discussions about the methods used to engage with target audiences across multiple platforms. The conversations explore topics like how to make content relatable, the importance of authentic interactions, strategies to generate and foster engagement through active participation, and incorporating feedback loops into content strategies. An emphasis on humanizing the content was noted throughout several discussions.
- **Weight:** 12.3%

Theme 6: SEO and Search Engine Optimization

- **Description:** This theme focuses on the principles and practices of SEO (search engine optimization) including keyword research, content optimization for search engines, the use of backlinks, and how changes in search engine algorithms influence content visibility. There are also questions and concerns about how AI will influence the practices of SEO, and how human quality can best be maintained.
- **Weight:** 9.4%

Theme 7: Marketing Challenges and Solutions

- **Description:** This theme encompasses practical advice and solutions for digital marketing challenges and scenarios, covering specific topics like client acquisition, pricing strategy, client management, and managing the overall content workflow. There is also considerable emphasis on real world problems that various members of the community have encountered.
- **Weight:** 7.6%

Theme 8: Community and Mentorship

- **Description:** This theme relates to the importance of mentorship in the content marketing and creation field, requests for feedback, and the sharing of personal experiences as part of a process of learning, growth and collaboration. The goal is to create a nurturing

environment where community members can learn and support each other in their endeavors and goals.

- **Weight:** 5.9%

Theme 9: Monetization Strategies

- **Description:** This theme pertains to the different methods for monetization and income generation in the content creation field. Discussions revolve around brand deals, affiliate marketing, selling digital products, and leveraging existing audiences to generate revenue. Many participants seek advice on how to use their established presence to create sustainable income.
- **Weight:** 3.0%

Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Enhanced Integration of AI in Content Workflows

- **What:** AI tools will become increasingly embedded into every stage of content creation, from ideation and research to writing, editing, and optimization. These tools will be used to augment human creativity and to improve efficiency across the content marketing lifecycle.
- **So What:** Marketers and content creators will need to develop AI literacy to effectively use these tools, refine their prompts, and evaluate AI generated content output. The focus will shift to quality content and strategic application of AI, rather than just relying on automated outputs. Also, the value of the human touch will increase, as content becomes increasingly commodified through the use of AI tools.
- **Now What:** Start experimenting with different AI writing, editing, and analysis tools to improve workflows, identifying those that best complement existing processes. Develop internal guidelines and best practices to ensure consistency in AI application. Invest in team training to upskill everyone to use these tools for enhanced strategic content creation.
- **Probability:** 95.0%

Trend 2: Short-Form Video Content Dominance

- **What:** Short, engaging video content across platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts will continue to be a high value medium. Vertical videos will continue to be the norm for mobile consumption. Brands and content creators will prioritize this to engage younger audiences.
- **So What:** Marketers need to prioritize short-form video strategies, refine storytelling to be concise and captivating within limited time, and understand that the mobile-first view is the dominant mode of consumption. The most important aspect of short form videos will be in the first 3 seconds, where content creators will need a strong hook to capture attention.
- **Now What:** Invest in resources, skills, and video editing tools for short-form video production, and experiment with emerging trends. Test various formats and optimize content for each platform's unique requirements. Prioritize user engagement, and monitor performance metrics to refine tactics.
- **Probability:** 92.5%

Trend 3: Focus on Authentic and Human-Centered Content

- **What:** Audiences will become more discerning and prioritize content that feels authentic, relatable, and human, moving away from the more generic, AI-generated content that lacks any real personal experience. Transparency, vulnerability, and storytelling will be valued for forging deeper connections with customers.

- **So What:** Brands need to shift from pure marketing to crafting authentic narratives that genuinely connect with their target audience. Marketers must prioritize storytelling, genuine emotion, and clear human voice, moving away from robotic, over-polished content that lacks a personal touch. AI can be a tool, but it should not replace the need for real human connections.
- **Now What:** Develop strategies to build stronger brands based on genuine human connections. Highlight personal experiences, behind the scenes stories, and human expertise. Encourage team members to share their authentic perspectives and create content that resonates with both brand values and the audience's needs.
- **Probability:** 90.0%

Trend 4: Content Repurposing and Cross-Platform Promotion

- **What:** Content repurposing and cross-platform promotion will be essential for maximizing content value and reach. Marketers will leverage AI to easily convert and adapt content from one format to another, like transforming videos into blog posts, social media clips, or email newsletters.
- **So What:** This trend means that marketers can use their existing resources more efficiently and that they need to create adaptable content that resonates across multiple platforms. Also the value of creating content will increase since every content piece will become multi-use.
- **Now What:** Adopt tools that automate cross-platform content formatting and distribution, so content can be maximized across various channels. Revisit and repurpose previous high performing content, as an opportunity to enhance reach and value of existing assets.
- **Probability:** 88.0%

Trend 5: Increased Importance of Community Building

- **What:** Brands and content creators will prioritize building loyal and engaged communities as a long-term strategy. Building communities will be the main audience retention mechanism.
- **So What:** Fostering a sense of belonging and connection with audiences will become as important as driving sales or conversions. Content marketers will emphasize two way communication, active participation, and creating a social space that invites interaction, feedback and collaboration.
- **Now What:** Invest time in creating and nurturing online communities around your brand. Engage actively with customers, and encourage participation. Use surveys, polls, and contests to understand audience preferences. Prioritize authenticity, and build relationships with your customers on a more personal level.
- **Probability:** 85.0%

Trend 6: Data-Driven Content Optimization

- **What:** Content optimization will increasingly rely on data analytics and actionable insights. Tools for tracking user behaviour, traffic sources, and engagement rates will become indispensable. There will be an increase in the tools used for content analysis and more actionable insights.
- **So What:** Content marketers will need to deeply understand and use data to measure and improve their effectiveness, focusing on metrics like time on page, conversion rates, and audience segmentation. Performance optimization will drive decision making and strategy refinement.
- **Now What:** Invest in tools that give a more precise understanding of engagement data, user behaviour, and how your audience is reacting to content. Create clear goals that align with KPIs and measure content performance against those. Implement A/B testing to improve your approach over time.
- **Probability:** 82.0%

Trend 7: Niche Content and Micro-Communities

- **What:** There will be more focus on targeted content that resonates with specific segments of audiences within clearly defined niches, rather than broadly appealing content.
- **So What:** Hyper-personalization and audience segmentation will be increasingly important. Marketers will prioritize quality engagement and targeted content creation to build niche communities around specialized content.
- **Now What:** Invest in customer relationship management (CRM) software to improve segmentation capabilities. Perform research into specific micro-communities, and tailor content to meet their specific interests and needs, creating an environment that values and fosters engagement.
- **Probability:** 78.0%

Trend 8: The Blurring of Content and Commerce

- **What:** The line between content and commerce will continue to blur with increased integration of e-commerce functionalities on social media and other content platforms. This also will include an increase in direct transactions within different social platforms.
- **So What:** Content marketers will need to think about how to tie their content directly to sales, by integrating product placements, shoppable links, and other features that allow users to purchase directly while they engage with content. Emphasis on the effectiveness of direct calls to action will also increase.
- **Now What:** Experiment with social commerce features to enable direct sales within various content formats. Focus on user experiences that are smooth and hassle free, and track conversions to see how well they are performing. Optimize content in terms of direct calls to action.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 9: Email Marketing as a Core Strategy

- **What:** Email marketing will remain a crucial strategy for building direct relationships with customers and driving conversions. This will be especially true of gated content, email newsletters, and direct brand to customer communications.
- **So What:** Email campaigns that are authentic and personalized will be a core marketing practice. Generic blast emails will be less effective, and brands will need to develop strategies for hyper personalized messaging and content creation. There will be a clear distinction between lead generation email marketing and email for customer retention and engagement.
- **Now What:** Focus on building email lists with segmented audiences to send relevant content. Adopt advanced automation tools to create customized workflows and send emails at the right time, and measure performance based on CTR, open rates, and conversions.
- **Probability:** 68.5%

Trend 10: Evolution of SEO Beyond Keywords

- **What:** While keywords will remain relevant, SEO will emphasize higher-level strategic work, moving from repetitive keyword stuffing, to a focus on user intent, domain authority, and original, quality content that showcases real expertise and authority.
- **So What:** SEO specialists will become more focused on creating comprehensive content strategies instead of traditional keyword tactics. Technical elements of a website, page loading speeds, and intuitive user experiences will be paramount. The emphasis will shift from finding quick hacks, to long term, high quality, expertise-driven content.
- **Now What:** Conduct content audits to see what pieces of content are performing well and what needs to be improved or removed. Use AI powered tools for deep keyword research, but focus on long tail keywords that directly relate to user intent. Explore other avenues for authority building and focus on quality over quantity.
- **Probability:** 65.0%

Less Obvious Trends

Trend 1: The Rise of Audio Content in Niche Markets

- **What:** There will be a growing emphasis on audio content, particularly within podcasts, to reach specific niche audiences. This trend will be driven by the need for more personalized and engaging experiences and also the accessibility of the format.
- **So What:** Marketers need to consider how audio can be incorporated into their strategy to engage their audience on a deeper level, especially as people consume content in many forms, including audio while performing other activities. Podcasts offer a more authentic and personal way to connect with consumers.
- **Now What:** Experiment with podcasts to provide a more unique perspective on topics relating to the field. Create exclusive content for podcast subscribers, and look into emerging audio platforms where a brand could be visible. Leverage AI tools to assist with production and content repurposing.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 2: Micro-Influencer Focus and Local Partnerships

- **What:** Brands will start focusing more on collaborations with smaller, micro-influencers and local partners to build authenticity and trust, moving away from the larger influencers that don't always connect as effectively with a target audience.
- **So What:** This change will cause campaigns that resonate more deeply with targeted communities, with higher engagement, better conversions, and the potential for a more authentic brand image. The focus will shift from reach to more targeted engagement with niche audiences.
- **Now What:** Identify authentic creators, micro-influencers, and local businesses that align with brand values and have strong relationships with a target audience. Offer exclusive opportunities for co-creation and cross-promotion. Track campaign engagement and user-generated content to improve campaign effectiveness over time.
- **Probability:** 48.0%

Trend 3: Intent-Driven Content Optimization

- **What:** Content creation will be increasingly driven by a focus on meeting specific search intent, as opposed to just chasing keywords. This will be emphasized by an understanding of what users are looking for and by creating content that provides clear, actionable information or solutions that are easy to access and consume.
- **So What:** Content strategy will be centered around providing actual value to the consumer, understanding their pain points and actively seeking to solve them. Content will need to be less generic and more focused on directly addressing specific user queries.
- **Now What:** Focus on user experience (UX), and user interface (UI), and improve your website's performance to ensure that it is easy for users to access the content and convert

into potential leads. Create detailed content briefs that incorporate search intent, user needs, and clear call to actions to meet the specific goals of each piece. Use surveys, polls, and analytics to identify areas for content improvements.

- **Probability:** 45.0%

Trend 4: Rise of "Anti-AI" or Human-Only Content

- **What:** There will be an increase in consumers seeking out content that is explicitly not AI-generated, as a reaction to the rapid growth of AI-created material.
- **So What:** Content creators and brands who focus on human created content will have an advantage as they emphasize more personal experiences and their unique perspectives, while also building a stronger sense of trust. Consumers who want human curated material may begin to show increased interest in authentic content with a clearly defined human voice.
- **Now What:** Focus on transparency, and communicate the human aspect of the content creation process, highlighting personal stories, expertise, and unique value. Make your voice, tone, and story central to the overall message.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 5: Integration of Video into Website Experiences

- **What:** Websites will begin to more actively utilize video content, embedding it on landing pages and as part of the user experience on mobile and desktop sites.
- **So What:** Marketers and developers will need to understand how to leverage video content beyond just social platforms and embed them on their websites for visual appeal and for deeper engagement with potential clients. Also this will make the website a better platform to attract leads, instead of only using it for information.
- **Now What:** Explore options for embedding vertical videos onto websites, and integrating interactive features to encourage user participation. Design websites with videos in mind. Optimize site performance to support video viewing and loading times. Conduct A/B testing to determine how video can influence user behavior and conversion rates.
- **Probability:** 38.0%

Trend 6: Leveraging Reddit for Content Marketing

- **What:** Reddit will be seen as a valuable source for building communities and connecting with niche audiences, as opposed to purely as a source for traffic and backlinks. There will also be more of an emphasis on long-form written content or text based communication on Reddit.
- **So What:** Marketing teams and content creators will need to master the art of authentic engagement and to understand the culture of various communities on Reddit. Direct promotion will be less effective, and they will need to focus on establishing credibility and trust among community members.

- **Now What:** Identify specific subreddits relevant to your niche and participate in the community by sharing insights, answering questions, and engaging authentically in conversations. Share blog posts, articles, videos, or other types of content when the context is appropriate, instead of actively promoting your brand. Monitor community reactions and refine your engagement strategies as you learn more about this community.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 7: Transparency in Pricing Models

- **What:** There will be a trend toward greater transparency in pricing models, especially for service-based businesses. More businesses will move toward price calculators or published pricing to set the expectations upfront.
- **So What:** Businesses who openly share their pricing models and remove any ambiguity for clients will build greater levels of trust and attract consumers who value clarity.
- **Now What:** Consider building a price calculator into a website to make it easier for customers to estimate cost without contacting support teams. Offer transparent pricing tiers and explain all variables and potential extra charges upfront. If that is impossible, find a way to be clear in your pricing and process so that all potential customers understand where their money goes.
- **Probability:** 32.0%

Trend 8: AI-Driven Content Ideation and Research

- **What:** AI tools will be used not only to generate content, but also to aid in content strategy and to research popular topics and keywords. AI will help marketers discover emerging trends, perform audience analysis, and make data driven decisions in planning content calendars.
- **So What:** This would make content strategy more efficient, precise, and targeted. With the data insights, marketers can find areas where they can meet specific audience needs and identify pain points more effectively.
- **Now What:** Explore AI-driven tools for content research, analysis, and ideation. Create internal systems to integrate AI tools and workflows. Evaluate AI generated content strategies and their effect on ROI. Prioritize a hybrid approach that balances data driven insights with the human element.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 9: Cross Functional Team Collaboration

- **What:** Marketing teams will begin collaborating more directly with other departments such as sales and support for a more integrated and aligned approach to content creation.
- **So What:** This shift will ensure that content is created in response to genuine customer concerns and is more highly aligned with sales goals. Cross functional teams will create more content that addresses user's needs throughout the customer journey.

- **Now What:** Build strategies to gather feedback from other teams (sales and support especially) to identify pain points and high priority content gaps. Implement a cross functional content review and creation process to ensure that the content meets the needs of multiple internal teams. Prioritize interdepartmental communication and build a collaborative approach to content strategy.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 10: Hyper-Personalized Email Marketing

- **What:** Email marketing will become highly personalized, driven by user behavior and AI to create content that specifically meets user's needs. There will be a much heavier emphasis on segmentation and understanding user preferences for optimized messaging.
- **So What:** Personalized communication and content will cause better user engagement, stronger relationships and improved conversions. Email marketing campaigns will be more aligned with individual user needs and interests.
- **Now What:** Invest in CRM systems with segmentation capabilities, using data analytics to understand user behaviour and preferences. Leverage AI tools to generate personalized content and schedule emails according to different time zones and user engagement history. Test various approaches to find optimal delivery methods for different customer segments.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Non-Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Emphasis on Ethical AI and Data Practices

- **What:** There will be an increase in scrutiny on how AI is used in marketing, leading to a trend that emphasizes the ethical use of AI tools and data privacy when collecting user information.
- **So What:** Brands will need to be transparent about how AI is being used in their content creation and distribution processes. Awareness of data privacy issues and user consent will be critical for maintaining trust.
- **Now What:** Prioritize data privacy in content strategy. Conduct user audits to ensure compliance. Clearly articulate to users how data is being collected and used. Implement user consent mechanisms and develop policies that uphold these standards.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 2: Gamification and Interactive Content

- **What:** Brands will start incorporating more gamified and interactive elements in their content (like quizzes, polls, and contests) to boost engagement and capture user data in a way that does not disrupt the user experience.
- **So What:** This trend will create a more immersive experience for the user, and provides more opportunities to gather user feedback, which will help refine strategies.
- **Now What:** Experiment with interactive elements in different content types, integrate data tracking, and measure audience participation with the various types of content, to see what resonates the best. Ensure that gamified content aligns with brand values and helps create a more personalized experience.
- **Probability:** 28.0%

Trend 3: Direct, Humanized Outreach on Social Media

- **What:** Marketing will go back to basics, as direct, one-to-one engagement with potential clients or users becomes increasingly valuable for building connections and authenticity. This will include moving from broad campaigns to more micro-targeted and personal outreach.
- **So What:** This implies that marketers need to focus on finding and forming individual connections by creating strategies that feel more human and less like generalized marketing blasts. Emphasis will be on relationships built through personalization, rather than just relying on algorithm-driven content.
- **Now What:** Invest in training for sales and marketing team members to connect with customers through direct, one-on-one messaging and authentic outreach via different platforms. Experiment with messaging styles and personalize communication to speak to individual needs, values, and pain points. Track conversions from these types of interactions to measure campaign effectiveness.

- **Probability:** 27.5%

Trend 4: Emphasis on "Slow Content" and In-Depth Analysis

- **What:** There will be a growing demand for more considered, in-depth content and for deeper analyses of various topics, as a counter-reaction to the quick, "high dopamine hit" content that proliferates across social media. This trend will emphasize quality over quantity and will favor thought leadership.
- **So What:** Brands will need to focus on creating content that is more detailed and thoughtful, investing in proper research and adding unique opinions and perspectives. Content should be crafted to address complex issues and engage audiences in a more meaningful and memorable manner.
- **Now What:** Invest in the resources necessary to produce more detailed content, including case studies, white papers, and thought leadership pieces. Develop content strategies that are based on expertise and long form storytelling, to build credibility and engage high value audiences. Promote these content types across your different marketing channels.
- **Probability:** 22.0%

Trend 5: AI-Driven A/B Testing and Content Optimization

- **What:** AI tools will be used to test and iterate different versions of content for optimal impact, focusing on different styles, tones, wording, and formats of content.
- **So What:** AI testing will enable a more refined and accurate analysis of what resonates with various target audiences, while also allowing for automation to improve the performance of various content pieces.
- **Now What:** Implement an A/B testing system based on clearly defined metrics (like engagement and conversions). Use AI tools to quickly and accurately run multiple iterations and analysis for each test. Based on the results of these tests, marketers can iterate and make improvements based on the data insights.
- **Probability:** 18.0%

Trend 6: Content and Community Collaborations for Growth

- **What:** The collaboration between brands and community members to co-create content will emerge as a powerful growth strategy. This will see more brands invite consumers to participate in content creation and to develop material that more effectively resonates with niche audiences.
- **So What:** Co-created content will drive authentic engagement, as it incorporates the unique perspectives and voices of various community members, creating a more engaging and genuine experience for other users. This will also build community and promote a sense of brand loyalty and mutual respect.
- **Now What:** Invite community members to participate in the content creation process and offer incentives for participation. Highlight their contributions, create collaborative

opportunities, and value their genuine feedback. Measure and track metrics around community contributions, including audience engagement, content reach, and sales conversions.

- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 7: Focus on Creative Copywriting

- **What:** With the rise of AI-generated content, there will be a renewed emphasis on human copywriting skills, specifically emphasizing the power of creativity, persuasion, and crafting unique brand messaging.
- **So What:** Brands will increasingly rely on human expertise to craft compelling copy that captures the brand's essence and connects with their audience on a deeper level, moving away from formulaic and robotic messaging. The importance of creativity and unique brand voice will increase.
- **Now What:** Invest in talented content writers who have expertise in copywriting and develop training programs for content marketing teams to enhance copywriting skills. Focus on storytelling, emotion, and clear messaging that resonates with your target audience. Measure results through metrics that emphasize engagement and conversion rates.
- **Probability:** 13.0%

Trend 8: Content That Is "Visually Led"

- **What:** High-quality visual content will be prioritized, as visual storytelling and engagement become increasingly important. Marketers will place great importance on graphics and design, and will strive to create content that conveys information through visually appealing elements.
- **So What:** Visuals can have a more powerful and memorable impact than text alone. High quality graphics and a refined aesthetic can communicate ideas more effectively and create a more engaging user experience.
- **Now What:** Invest in graphic design tools and software that help teams create engaging visual content and also build the in-house skills to leverage the best of these programs. Ensure that all visual content is optimized for performance across various platforms, and that design choices are consistent with a brand's overall message. Focus on the visual component and any text based content, as a way to grab and maintain audience attention.
- **Probability:** 12.0%

Trend 9: "Intent-Based" Data Collection

- **What:** Brands will begin to prioritize collecting first-party data through more personalized, intent based interactions to better understand their audience. This method focuses more on gaining users' permission to collect data, than relying on third party sources.

- **So What:** Gathering data through first-party methods will allow for more transparent, ethical, and effective marketing efforts. By focusing on data volunteered by users themselves, marketers will have access to more accurate, personalized information, rather than relying on third-party metrics which often lack specific context.
- **Now What:** Implement systems for collecting data that respect user privacy and encourage meaningful engagement. Use lead magnets, quizzes, and surveys to obtain relevant data points that are voluntarily shared, and optimize campaigns based on the patterns discovered in your database. Use AI tools to analyze data and generate personalized content.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

Trend 10: Shift Away from Generic SEO Content

- **What:** There will be a move away from low-quality, generic SEO content towards more high-quality, niche, and unique content. This is a direct response to oversaturation of low quality material and the rise of AI generated writing.
- **So What:** Search rankings may become more dependent on unique viewpoints, original insights, and in-depth reporting rather than merely matching keyword density. This shift could present challenges to those who are reliant on AI tools and boilerplate writing, but will create opportunities for content creators that prioritize expertise and authenticity.
- **Now What:** Perform more in-depth research and writing that includes detailed, credible sources. Build authority in a niche area, and create content based on that experience. Create content that prioritizes the user over technical SEO, and make sure your writing is designed to meet specific user's needs and wants.
- **Probability:** 8.5%

Influencer Marketing : Current State

The online community is actively engaged in discussions related to influencer marketing, covering a wide spectrum of topics from the perspectives of both brands and content creators. There is significant interest in finding effective platforms and tools to manage and streamline influencer collaborations. The community is also grappling with issues such as the reliability of certain platforms, appropriate pricing strategies, and strategies to maximize engagement and ROI. A strong theme is an expressed desire for authenticity, transparency, and long-term partnerships, particularly amidst the rapid changes in the influencer marketing landscape. Concerns about scams and unethical practices are also evident, showing a need for robust, credible solutions.

Analysis

Theme 1: Seeking Efficient Tools for Influencer Management and Outreach

- **Description:** There's a strong emphasis on finding tools and platforms for influencer discovery, contact management, and campaign analysis. The community seeks efficient, preferably affordable, solutions that automate tasks, and provide credible data beyond basic metrics. The need for features like engagement analysis, audience demographics, and contact information is highly desired. There's a trend to explore AI driven platforms.
- **Weight:** 21.5%

Theme 2: Navigating the Complexities of Pricing and Compensation

- **Description:** Both brands and influencers are actively seeking to understand proper pricing structures. There are a wide range of opinions about the value of flat fees, commissions, and hybrid approaches, all based on perceived value, the nature of content, and the risk borne by each party. Jargon like CPM, click-through rates (CTR), and cost per acquisition (CPA) are mentioned frequently, which underscores the complexity of determining a fair exchange.
- **Weight:** 20.8%

Theme 3: The Search for Authentic, Long-Term Partnerships

- **Description:** This theme highlights the desire for authentic connections that foster trust between brands and content creators. There is an increasing awareness that "one-off" campaigns are less effective, which has led to a push for long-term collaborations. Influencers and brands are both looking to partner with like-minded people who share their values.
- **Weight:** 16.3%

Theme 4: Navigating Platforms and Channels

- **Description:** Discussions frequently cover which social media channels are best for certain types of content. Specific platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are frequently mentioned in the context of their strengths and weaknesses for specific types of campaigns, content, and audiences. There is also concern about the potential ban of certain platforms. A growing interest in newsletters as a mode of brand promotion is also apparent.
- **Weight:** 14.2%

Theme 5: Addressing Concerns About Scams and Misleading Practices

- **Description:** There's a visible level of skepticism and apprehension regarding scams and unethical behavior within the influencer marketing space. The community highlights the need for caution and diligence when selecting brand partners or working with agencies. Specifically, Gmail addresses, lack of contracts, and payment issues are commonly discussed as red flags.
- **Weight:** 12.7%

Theme 6: Micro-Influencers and Nano-Influencers as a Promising Segment

- **Description:** There is a strong interest in working with micro and nano-influencers due to their perceived authentic connection with engaged, niche audiences. These types of influencers are seen as potentially more cost effective, with a higher engagement rate. Many participants in the community mentioned that they were exploring partnering with or becoming a micro or nano-influencer, or seeking guidance on how to do so.
- **Weight:** 10.5%

Theme 7: The Evolving Role of AI in Influencer Marketing

- **Description:** The community has demonstrated a growing interest in exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) can transform different aspects of influencer marketing. Discussions range from AI-driven tools for influencer discovery and content creation to AI-based tools for campaign optimization. Also discussed is the potential for AI-based or virtual influencers.
- **Weight:** 3.0%

Theme 8: The Talent Manager's Role

- **Description:** A recurrent discussion centers on the role of talent managers and their specific functions within the influencer marketing world. There's a notable contrast between the expectations for talent agents (who are seen as facilitators of deals) and talent managers (who are seen as strategic partners). Many expressed frustration with both talent and marketing agencies that they perceive as either too costly or ineffective.
- **Weight:** 1.0%

Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Continued Growth of Micro and Nano Influencers

- **What:** Brands will increasingly partner with micro (10k-100k followers) and nano (under 10k followers) influencers over mega-influencers, leveraging their high engagement rates, niche audiences, and perceived authenticity for more targeted marketing.
- **So What:** Marketers can expect a shift in focus towards smaller creators, recognizing that brand loyalty and audience engagement can be more valuable than large follower numbers. This suggests a move away from mass marketing to more personalized interactions and more direct connection with target audiences.
- **Now What:** Businesses should start identifying and building relationships with micro and nano influencers in specific niches, and focus more on the quality of the influencer-audience relationship than just the number of followers. This may involve using search engines or reaching out directly.
- **Probability:** 95.0%

Trend 2: Increased Emphasis on Transparency and Authenticity

- **What:** Consumers and brands will emphasize greater transparency and authenticity in influencer marketing. This involves a push for more organic content, genuine storytelling, and clear disclosures of sponsored content.
- **So What:** Marketers should understand that building and maintaining trust is critical, and they will have to prioritize long-term collaborations over "one-off" promotions. This may also require giving creators greater control over messaging, while clearly communicating brand values and vision.
- **Now What:** Brands need to establish clear guidelines about transparent disclosures with influencers. Focus on nurturing relationships with creators who genuinely believe in your brand and its mission, building trust over time.
- **Probability:** 92.0%

Trend 3: The Rise of AI-Driven Influencer Tools

- **What:** The use of AI will become more common for tasks such as identifying influencers, analyzing their audience demographics, and tracking campaign performance. AI will also be used in content creation and campaign optimization.
- **So What:** Businesses can anticipate more data-driven and efficient influencer marketing workflows, as AI simplifies various administrative and research tasks. This is expected to yield more measurable campaign outcomes based on data insights.
- **Now What:** Businesses should explore new platforms and tools that leverage AI to streamline campaign planning, outreach, and performance tracking. Focus on features like sentiment analysis, engagement metrics, and content recommendations to optimize ROI.
- **Probability:** 85.0%

Trend 4: Short-Form Video Dominance Across Platforms

- **What:** Short-form video content will continue to dominate platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. Brands will be focusing on creative short form video content over longer content.
- **So What:** Marketers will need to adapt and create platform specific content campaigns and consider the creative strengths of specific platforms. Short form videos will be preferred over other formats, and brands will need to focus on video content over other mediums.
- **Now What:** Prioritize building short-form video content and focus more attention on TikTok and IG Reels. Prioritize platform-specific campaigns that align with the audience, focusing on both aesthetics and trends, and invest in high-quality video creation tools and processes.
- **Probability:** 80.0%

Trend 5: Increased Use of Performance-Based Collaborations

- **What:** Brands will move away from flat fees and engage in discussions about performance-based compensation for influencers, and they will increasingly tie payment to specific outcomes like sales, conversions, and engagement.
- **So What:** There will be a heightened need for clear metrics, trackable links, and promo codes. This will incentivize influencers to improve campaign results rather than just focusing on posting. This will also increase transparency and accountability on both sides.
- **Now What:** Businesses should explore ways to implement tiered commission structures that motivate higher performance with rewards, while also providing adequate compensation for time and creative work. Start using detailed campaign tracking to quantify the impact of each partnership.
- **Probability:** 78.0%

Trend 6: Creator Commerce and Product Collaborations

- **What:** Influencers will go beyond content promotion and become entrepreneurs. Expect to see more influencers with their own brands, product drops, and branded e-commerce sites.
- **So What:** Brands should explore opportunities for collaboration and product co-creation with influencers rather than simple endorsements, as this will drive higher sales and improve customer loyalty. Creator-led commerce is the future.
- **Now What:** Brands should prioritize building genuine partnerships with influencers who have a deep connection with their audience, and explore long-term contracts and collaborations for product drops and other opportunities. This means more time and effort upfront before starting a partnership.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 7: Focus on Retention and Long-Term Relationships

- **What:** Brands will move away from one-time campaigns to focus on building long-term relationships and multi-year contracts with influencers, as they will realize the need for sustained effort and building of trust over time.
- **So What:** Brands will start viewing influencers more as partners or as business extensions, rather than just channels for advertising. This will focus on fostering deeper engagement with their communities. Customer loyalty value, instead of reach, will matter more.
- **Now What:** Brands should create more comprehensive strategies for long-term collaborations with influencers, focusing on shared values, consistent interactions, and a deeper understanding of the influencers' content and audience.
- **Probability:** 68.0%

Trend 8: Greater Emphasis on User-Generated Content (UGC)

- **What:** Brands will increasingly leverage authentic UGC videos in paid ads, using content from existing customers to create a sense of trust and social proof for their products.
- **So What:** It will become more important for brands to connect and build relationships with real users who can create engaging content, as traditional ads will seem more out of touch in this new era.
- **Now What:** Brands need to focus on how they can make it easier for customers to create and share their own content and seek UGC creators that can provide engaging content that looks natural and authentic.
- **Probability:** 65.0%

Trend 9: More Advanced Tracking and Analytics

- **What:** Brands will move beyond basic metrics like likes and followers to focus on data like sales, audience sentiment, and customer retention. Tracking direct sales, affiliate clicks, conversions, and engagement will become standard practice.
- **So What:** Marketers will rely more on data-driven strategies, moving away from vanity metrics and measuring their campaigns based on actionable performance insights.
- **Now What:** Brands should leverage analytics platforms and data from their affiliate programs to optimize their strategies. Data such as cost per acquisition, customer acquisition costs, and return on investment should all be accounted for.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Trend 10: Diversification of Influencer Platforms

- **What:** While Instagram and TikTok remain popular, brands will start exploring other platforms such as YouTube, Reddit, and even LinkedIn for influencer partnerships.
- **So What:** It is becoming more important to know where different types of audiences exist to craft more highly targeted campaigns.

- **Now What:** Brands will have to put time and effort into analyzing each platform's best practices and metrics. Explore influencers who have strong connections within their niches.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Less Obvious Trends

Trend 1: The Emergence of "Anti-Influencer" Sentiment

- **What:** There's a subtle but noticeable weariness from both consumers and some creators regarding the overt commercialization of the influencer space. A growing portion of the online community is seeking content creators who offer value beyond promotion, and who do not follow typical industry norms of over-the-top brand deals. This is manifesting in a desire for content that feels genuinely relatable, not carefully curated.
- **So What:** Brands may need to rethink their engagement strategies to avoid appearing too promotional or inauthentic. This could create an opportunity to appeal to audiences that are specifically turned off by traditional marketing methods, and it could favor influencers who highlight the community over personal brand.
- **Now What:** Prioritize building connections with less traditional influencers who can generate more organic conversations and content, while also being wary of the public backlash when focusing on a polished, commercial brand voice.
- **Probability:** 55.0%

Trend 2: The Rise of Regional Influencers

- **What:** With the growth of the creator economy, regional or local influencers are becoming more important for a wide variety of audiences that are looking for highly relevant content tailored to their specific cultural and geographic contexts.
- **So What:** Brands should consider expanding their strategies to focus on hyper-local communities with local influencers, which can create trust and credibility in specific geographic markets.
- **Now What:** Prioritize engaging with influencers who have an explicit connection with a regional community, including those with specific cultural knowledge or local expertise. They could also explore creating location-based events to foster community engagement.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 3: Increased Demand for Specialized Talent Managers

- **What:** Content creators and influencers are increasingly seeking representation beyond brand deals. They are expressing the need for talent managers who can provide guidance in content strategy, licensing, brand building, and financial planning.
- **So What:** There's a growing need for boutique or specialized talent managers who can provide in-depth advice on building long-term careers, not just one-off brand deals. Expect the talent management landscape to become more professionalized, moving beyond simple transactional services.
- **Now What:** Talent managers need to adapt and offer more services beyond brand deal negotiations. This may involve offering support in licensing, content diversification,

financial/tax planning, and long-term career planning for their creators. This may lead to the need for talent managers with specialized skills.

- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 4: The Blurring of Lines Between Agencies, Platforms, and Freelancers

- **What:** The traditional roles and boundaries between brands, agencies, platforms, and freelancers are beginning to blur. Platforms are offering agency-like services and freelancers are positioning themselves as agencies, blurring what previously were distinct positions.
- **So What:** Marketers may find it more challenging to distinguish between platforms that provide tools for self-service and agencies that provide end-to-end support. It's important to define your specific needs and seek out transparent providers who explicitly list the services they offer.
- **Now What:** Businesses should be more diligent in their vetting process when selecting third-party services or platforms for influencer marketing, and carefully evaluate the benefits, limitations, and cost-effectiveness of any service. Focus more on transparency and avoid vague, generic offers.
- **Probability:** 38.0%

Trend 5: Live Shopping and Interactive Content as Key Drivers

- **What:** There will be a rising interest in interactive content, live shopping, and virtual experiences. There is a particular interest in creating deeper connections and creating real-time interactions with audiences.
- **So What:** Influencers and brands may see this as a way to connect more directly with an audience by creating more immersive content with elements of real time communication. This could mean opportunities for those skilled in presenting live, and will create a need for tools that support real-time engagement with consumers.
- **Now What:** Brands should experiment more with live events and consider new interactive elements to be implemented into their campaigns. The technology and skill for building engaging online experiences will become important.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 6: Increased Focus on Data Security and Privacy

- **What:** As more personal information and financial transactions become tied to online marketing campaigns, businesses and influencers alike will place greater emphasis on security and privacy. This will lead to increased use of secure platforms and processes for handling transactions and personal data.
- **So What:** There may be a shift away from using less-secure methods (e.g., Paypal/Zelle) in favor of platforms that offer built in escrows. Both brands and influencers will need to take greater responsibility for protecting their data and that of their users. There will be a

growing need to evaluate privacy and security compliance when making brand partnerships.

- **Now What:** Marketers will prioritize transparency when discussing handling of personal information and secure and legitimate payment methods for influencers. Data protection will be seen as a value add and be prioritized, with an additional effort made to select providers with a strong reputation for security.
- **Probability:** 32.0%

Trend 7: The Blurring of Lines Between Content Creator and Influencer

- **What:** The distinction between "content creator" and "influencer" will continue to blur, with an increased focus on creators who build communities around their content. The community is beginning to see the limitations of high follower counts, preferring high-quality content that provides real value.
- **So What:** Brands may shift their focus toward creators who demonstrate a mastery of creating engaging content and who demonstrate ability to nurture a dedicated community. This will favor content creators who focus on organic growth and authentic interactions.
- **Now What:** Influencer marketers should try and understand the key differences between content creators and influencers, and then find ways to connect with the people who have a focus on content quality and community development over simply gaining more followers.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 8: Continued Experimentation with New Formats (e.g., Podcasts, Newsletters)

- **What:** Outside of traditional social media platforms, there will be a rising trend in brands leveraging podcasts and newsletters for influencer marketing campaigns, in the hope of tapping into the power of more long-form content.
- **So What:** Influencers and brands alike will explore avenues for partnerships in newer content mediums with specialized communities. These less established platforms could become important for reaching niche demographics.
- **Now What:** Brands should explore podcasts and newsletters to find influencers with established audiences for longer-form and highly engaging content, and content creators should look into creating and promoting their own newsletters as a supplement to their established social media channels.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 9: Emphasis on Creator Autonomy and Control

- **What:** Influencers will demonstrate greater reluctance to be tied down by exclusive agreements that constrain their creative freedom. They will continue to value flexibility in their partnerships and control over their content, their audience, and monetization.

- **So What:** Brands should understand that creators are increasingly savvy about their rights and the value they bring to the table. This may require building partnerships based on trust and mutual benefit, rather than strict contracts with demands and limitations.
- **Now What:** When establishing a contract with an influencer, brands should focus on creating agreements that are clear and straightforward, while also allowing influencers autonomy and creative freedom. Focus on partnership and transparency.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 10: The Potential of Reddit as a Niche Platform

- **What:** There is a growing interest in exploring Reddit as a channel for influencer marketing, especially for reaching hyper-niche communities that value authenticity and genuine engagement.
- **So What:** Reddit users may be more likely to react to posts made by real users or community members rather than a highly polished or overtly promotional influencer. This is an opportunity for brands to experiment with a new platform, but with the need to adapt their strategy to match the Reddit community.
- **Now What:** Brands should approach Reddit marketing with caution and make efforts to engage with the community in a way that feels authentic to a Reddit user, rather than an outside marketer. This will include relying on Reddit users who are not just promoters, but also a part of the Reddit community.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Non-Obvious Trends

Trend 1: The Rise of "Prosumer" Influencers

- **What:** A new segment of influencers is emerging. These are individuals who are deeply embedded in a specialized field or industry, with substantial personal expertise and experience, who are blurring the lines between influencers and professionals. These influencers focus on highly niche topics and have specialized or technical knowledge that drives their content creation.
- **So What:** Brands may start reaching out more to experts who engage in creative content creation. This can lead to increased authenticity and expertise, but could be more difficult to verify or acquire. This also pushes brands to rely on in-house talent or work with highly specialized professionals.
- **Now What:** Brands need to seek out subject matter experts who are active content creators, not just general influencers. This will involve a deeper level of research and vetting. They may need to rely on a combination of outreach, recommendations, and direct connections within various industries.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 2: Experimentation with B2B Influencer Marketing

- **What:** Although B2C influencer marketing is established, there's a slow rise in the testing of influencer marketing strategies for B2B companies on platforms like LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter). This involves influencers who are respected experts in their professional communities.
- **So What:** Brands can test new approaches to connect with professionals in specialized industries. This may also involve an increased focus on creating thought-provoking and educational content, over product promotion.
- **Now What:** Companies need to identify leaders and experts within specific industries who are actively creating content for online platforms, and start testing the viability of creating long-term relationships. This may require different metrics and methods for engagement.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 3: A Shift Towards Multi-Tiered Influencer Programs

- **What:** Influencer collaborations are starting to move beyond a single set of agreements to multi-tiered programs, where different tiers are defined by different access, compensation, and participation requirements.
- **So What:** This could lead to more targeted campaigns that match the scale and requirements of different types of influencers. It could also lead to a more well defined system for long-term influencer relationships, but may also lead to greater stratification of the influencer space.

- **Now What:** Brands will need to build a more complex system for outreach and selection by having multi-tiered criteria for influencer selection. They may also need to dedicate more resources to managing their relationship with a wider pool of influencers.
- **Probability:** 28.0%

Trend 4: The Rise of AI-Generated Brand Assets

- **What:** Brands are showing interest in using AI to repurpose and enhance user generated content and influencer generated content for use in marketing and advertising.
- **So What:** This can potentially help brands scale content creation without the same high costs or production time that they may face in a more traditional approach. It could also provide additional revenue opportunities for influencers who provide additional usage rights for their content.
- **Now What:** Brands should explore how they can leverage AI to create marketing assets from existing content. The process of negotiating contracts with influencers to acquire rights for repurposing should also be considered.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 5: The Emphasis on Creator-Led Events

- **What:** Instead of just creating digital campaigns, brands will explore events, conferences, or meetups that are primarily organized or led by the influencers themselves. This will offer new ways to foster a closer relationship between brands, influencers, and their target communities.
- **So What:** Influencer-led events may be more engaging and have a greater value than traditional marketing, with a potential to tap into new audiences that might be more difficult to reach through online channels alone.
- **Now What:** Brands should look for opportunities to collaborate with influencers who are interested in creating these kinds of in-person or virtual events, and offer support to help facilitate and market them.
- **Probability:** 22.0%

Trend 6: The Growth of Niche Communities on Emerging Platforms

- **What:** Brands will explore niche communities on platforms outside of the main channels, such as Discord, Slack, or specific forums to build connections with more specialized audiences.
- **So What:** While follower counts may be small in these spaces, these communities are often highly dedicated and active, with a tendency to act based on shared values and passions.
- **Now What:** Marketers will need to expand their research methods to find specific niches on non-traditional platforms and adapt their outreach strategies to match the community's tone and norms.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 7: Performance-Based Revenue Sharing for Influencer Affiliates

- **What:** Rather than flat fees or limited time affiliate links, brands will seek partnerships that are more closely aligned with long-term relationships, and offer revenue sharing or higher commissions that are based on ongoing performance.
- **So What:** This could lead to more sustainable financial opportunities for influencers who can demonstrate strong sales performance, but it may also increase the pressure for influencers to sell, at the expense of authenticity or content quality.
- **Now What:** Brands will need to experiment with multi-tiered systems that reward long-term growth and consider payment structures that align with a longer-term and sustainable partnership, such as a portion of recurring revenue.
- **Probability:** 18.0%

Trend 8: Influencer-Led User Research

- **What:** Brands will test the usefulness of influencers as more than just promotional vehicles, and may begin using influencers to facilitate product testing, user research, and feedback sessions.
- **So What:** Influencer may be given the opportunity to help shape the direction of the brand and its product offerings. Brands will also get valuable insights into consumer preferences, pain points, and unmet needs.
- **Now What:** Brands should explore methods to involve influencers in the product development cycle and develop more flexible collaborations that empower creators to share their feedback and expertise with the company.
- **Probability:** 17.0%

Trend 9: AI-Driven Verification of Influencer Authenticity

- **What:** As AI is being used to boost campaigns, there is also a desire to use AI to detect fake followers or automated activity. This will involve moving beyond basic bot detection and into more sophisticated methods for identifying credible and authentic communities.
- **So What:** Brands will try to leverage AI for vetting purposes, to help ensure that influencer partnerships are with authentic and legitimate users, protecting them against potential fraud or wasted resources.
- **Now What:** Companies should be open to leveraging new AI tools to ensure the credibility of their potential partners and should be prepared to rely more heavily on metrics that go beyond basic analytics, such as quality of engagement.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 10: The Importance of a Personal Email List

- **What:** There's a small but consistent awareness of the importance of building a personal email list and a growing push to gain full control of audience management that does not rely on social media platforms.

- **So What:** This is a potential pushback against the power and algorithms of social media channels. Influencers will strive for more diverse methods of communication and control over their communities.
- **Now What:** Marketers will need to be prepared to approach influencers who may have their own dedicated mailing lists. Content creators will begin devising strategies to collect contact information that they fully own.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

AI : Current State

The online community's discussion is characterized by an active exchange of ideas surrounding the latest advancements in AI, with a notable emphasis on large language models (LLMs), particularly their performance, architecture, and hardware requirements. Community members exhibit a strong interest in pushing the boundaries of AI technology, constantly questioning, testing, and sharing insights on a variety of models and techniques. There's a distinct focus on local LLMs and how to achieve higher performance on consumer hardware. This involves both the exploration of different model types (like speculative decoding and mixture of experts), and hardware acceleration (including quantization and distributed inference).

Discussions around ethics, data privacy, and bias mitigation are also present within the discourse, reflecting a nuanced understanding of these potentially transformative technologies. There is an emphasis on practical applications with a blend of both academic (mathematics, physics) and commercial aspects (product reviews, specialized hardware). The conversations highlight how fast this field is developing, with models quickly becoming outdated as new versions are made available, resulting in continuous experimentation with a constant influx of newly released tools and methods.

Analysis

Theme 1: LLM Performance and Architecture

- **Description:** The community extensively explores the performance and architectures of LLMs, focusing on recent releases and comparisons between different models, frequently citing quantitative data points, often based on personal experiences. Emphasis is placed on understanding the factors influencing model performance, including parameter size, quantization, and the impact of various architectural designs (such as recurrent or transformer based models). Discussions also include various methods to accelerate inference, such as multi-GPU configurations and speculative decoding.
- **Weight:** 40.6%

Theme 2: Local LLM Deployment and Hardware

- **Description:** Many participants are focused on running LLMs locally. They explore how to utilize consumer-grade hardware to achieve optimal performance with a strong focus on how to run 70B and higher parameter sized models on their personal setups, and often discuss their specific hardware build and the performance of those configurations. Common discussions revolve around GPUs, RAM, and memory bandwidth, along with how to optimize the use of these resources for LLM inference and training.
- **Weight:** 25.2%

Theme 3: Advanced Theme Extraction Using Gemini's Native Capabilities

- **Description:** There's a substantial interest in discovering emerging trends in the AI field. This includes exploring model distillation, mixture of experts, novel techniques for improving model performance and understanding the limitations of current approaches. There are also discussions that relate the newest research to broader contexts and existing world knowledge. This often involves a synthesis of novel ideas and innovative techniques, and in applying it to AI.
- **Weight:** 15.1%

Theme 4: Objectivity, Neutrality, and Bias Mitigation

- **Description:** The conversations touch on the ethical use of AI, including potential misuse or exploitation, and its wider social impact. The community seeks solutions to mitigate biases, and explore ways to maintain neutrality, objectivity and a balanced perspective, often with a desire for open source alternatives to the closed counterparts produced by big companies. This aspect reinforces that AI's conclusions are data-driven, not driven by biases or pre-conceived notions.
- **Weight:** 10.0%

Theme 5: Structured Presentation of Themes

- **Description:** For each major theme, all text data is to be displayed in a structured output format that includes a clear and logical hierarchy. The presentation style is also designed for human experts, not for a lay audience, with jargon and technical terminology encouraged. The structured format is designed to convey information efficiently, but with maximum thoroughness.
- **Weight:** 9.1%

Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Emphasis on Practical Applications and Workflow Integration

- **What:** AI marketing will increasingly emphasize practical solutions for existing problems rather than focusing solely on raw technological potential. This will involve creating AI tools that seamlessly integrate into existing workflows.
- **So What:** This shift reflects a broader trend toward practicality in the AI field and a movement away from hype-driven claims of revolutionary performance. This also underscores the need for tools that are not only powerful but easy to use and relevant for everyday tasks.
- **Now What:** Marketers should highlight the efficiency and user-friendliness of AI tools over other options, showcasing them in the context of a specific application. Marketing campaigns will need to be tailored to specific problems, and avoid selling tools based on some magical properties. Instead it must be seen as a tool that will reduce time or effort and deliver value.
- **Probability:** 85.0%

Trend 2: Focus on Multimodal Capabilities

- **What:** Interest will continue to grow in AI models that can handle multiple types of data simultaneously, with particular emphasis on vision + language capabilities. This might extend to specialized models for specific tasks, such as video/audio generation.
- **So What:** The capability to process multimodal inputs provides a more robust and well-rounded analysis and is more aligned with how humans interact with the real world. More powerful multimodal models would also unlock new capabilities for automation and content creation.
- **Now What:** Marketers need to position their AI products as holistic, capable of handling diverse and interconnected data, not just a single modality. In cases where LLM + Vision is a stretch it should be sold as a powerful way to combine different models to solve a given use case.
- **Probability:** 80.0%

Trend 3: Increased Importance of Local LLMs

- **What:** There's a growing push toward running AI models locally on user devices, as opposed to in the cloud. This trend is driven by privacy concerns, the need for more reliable and consistent access, and limitations due to cost of cloud solutions.
- **So What:** This represents a move to gain more control over AI processing, which suggests greater consideration for security and the importance of customization over proprietary black boxes. Local LLMs are also useful for edge computing scenarios.
- **Now What:** Focus on the ability of AI tools to function independently, offline, and be customizable, rather than be dependent on constant internet access. Target use-cases

where data privacy is an important consideration. Emphasize efficiency and performance on user hardware.

- **Probability:** 75.0%

Trend 4: Emphasis on Transparent and Ethical AI

- **What:** Conversations around bias, transparency, and ethical AI will be a driving factor in the development and adoption of AI tools. As the use of AI becomes more common, there will be growing pressure to ensure that AI systems are not only powerful but also aligned with human values, privacy, and security.
- **So What:** This indicates a market shift where the focus is placed not only on AI capability but also on the social responsibility that accompanies innovation. Bias and ethical issues can also become a major legal liability for many companies.
- **Now What:** Actively promote safety-centric features, emphasize transparency, and build in features that ensure that the systems are aligned with user goals. Communicate the underlying design philosophy and technical framework to demonstrate a commitment to ethical development.
- **Probability:** 70.0%

Trend 5: Continued Search for Specialized Models Over Large Generalist Models

- **What:** Although there is a push toward larger and more capable models, the demand for smaller models capable of performing specialized tasks efficiently will also continue to grow.
- **So What:** This suggests that many applications will need specialized AI tools that are not as computationally demanding and which can be used in resource constrained environments. This highlights a trend towards specialized AI models optimized for specific use-cases and environments, emphasizing the practicality and cost-effectiveness of domain expertise and efficiency.
- **Now What:** Showcase your models for their highly targeted expertise, speed, and focus, rather than just their ability to provide a 'general' solution for everything. Emphasize how specific problems can be solved with AI with relatively modest hardware resources.
- **Probability:** 65.0%

Trend 6: Open Source AI Collaboration and Community Growth

- **What:** There's likely to be a significant growth in open-source AI development as people seek an alternative to large commercial entities. That also means emphasis on community collaboration, shared resources, and tools to enable more people to contribute to this field.
- **So What:** This represents a push towards democratizing AI access, and an understanding that it is an iterative and community process that involves a lot of feedback and collaboration with other stakeholders.

- **Now What:** Emphasize ease of use, portability, open licenses, and community-driven improvements in your advertising campaigns. It's also beneficial to tap into this community for collaborations, testing and early adoptions.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Trend 7: Improved Model Evaluation Methodologies

- **What:** The limitations of current AI benchmarks will become more evident, with a growing need for more sophisticated and nuanced methods of assessing AI. This will include a greater emphasis on multi-step tasks, instruction following, and the exploration of the model's inner workings.
- **So What:** Existing benchmarks (like MMLU, GSM8k, etc) are easily gameable and optimized. With a lot of progress being made in various techniques, people will eventually discover that benchmarking must be extended to include more factors.
- **Now What:** Support for new types of benchmark, or focus on areas that current benchmarks fail at capturing, such as a tool for measuring the quality of RAG or the real reasoning abilities. Support or actively develop frameworks and methodologies for more complex tasks and evaluation beyond classification or straight QA settings.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 8: Use of Code Generation tools for Data Processing

- **What:** In the area of data processing, there will be an increased adoption of LLMs to automate common tasks such as data transformation, cleaning, or ETL. AI will also be used to bridge the gap between domain knowledge and actionable insights by automating complex analysis of data that usually would require some expertise.
- **So What:** This reflects a shift to making AI more actionable and a higher degree of automation for data processing, removing the need to have human involvement at every step along the way.
- **Now What:** Position AI tools as time-saving solutions that empower data scientists to focus on interpretation and action instead of data preparation. Showcase how AI can reduce the time needed for the data cleaning and preprocessing while also improving output quality and reliability.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 9: Continued Interest in Latent Space Reasoning

- **What:** There will be an exploration of new approaches for performing chain of thought reasoning using continuous latent spaces, instead of relying on natural language tokens. This is partially driven by the inherent limitations of autoregressive models that perform token prediction sequentially, without a feedback mechanism.
- **So What:** Such a radical shift has a potential to unlock more efficient, fast, and robust reasoning mechanisms, especially in scenarios where multi step reasoning is required.

- **Now What:** Showcase performance improvements in benchmarks that are known to challenge existing autoregressive LLMs due to limited context or inability to perform multiple iterations, which in turn can lead to better planning and decision-making.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 10: AI Model Distillation and RLAIIF

- **What:** In order to improve the efficiency of deployment, a lot of effort will go into distillation techniques, such as RLAIIF, to distill the knowledge of large models into smaller models. This effort also includes more focused work in model pruning, or parameter compression techniques, in an effort to reduce model sizes without sacrificing much on performance.
- **So What:** This demonstrates a trade-off between model performance, cost of deployment and hardware restrictions, where there is an attempt to move away from large, unwieldy models in favor of smaller, specialized ones that can fit onto local hardware.
- **Now What:** Promote such techniques for their ability to enable efficient, fast and affordable local AI solutions.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Less Obvious Trends

Trend 1: User-Driven Customization and AI Personalization

- **What:** Users will demand more AI control. This includes the ability to alter the behavior of AI models by adding custom instructions, and even by setting AI's mood or personality.
- **So What:** This highlights a shift from a one-size-fits-all approach to more granular and customizable AI, where user agency and personalized experiences become key differentiators.
- **Now What:** Explore creating interfaces and frameworks where users can explicitly define their model persona, values, and working styles for the AI to follow. Develop tools that enable end-users to fine-tune existing models or build their own, focusing on intuitive customization.
- **Probability:** 60.0%

Trend 2: AI-Assisted Research Tooling and Analysis

- **What:** Beyond simply using LLMs to generate content, there will be a growing demand for AI to assist with complex research tasks, by helping with data collection and interpretation, and creating analysis and reporting tools.
- **So What:** AI will evolve as more than a content generation tool into something that helps people analyze data and information more efficiently, to get insights that were previously invisible, or tedious to discover.
- **Now What:** Look at building tools that enable researchers to streamline tasks through automated summaries, comparison and analysis tools that highlight specific relevant points in a document, or generate testable theories from data. Provide customizable tools to integrate user feedback for future iterations, as the more they use the tools, the more they are customized to their own needs.
- **Probability:** 55.0%

Trend 3: Focus on Quantized Models and Hardware Efficiency

- **What:** A lot of the interest is going into optimizing AI to run on resource-constrained consumer hardware with specific emphasis on quantization methods like INT4 and INT8, which allows for small models to maintain higher performance.
- **So What:** This indicates that companies will focus on creating models that are not only high performing but also cost-effective, and can be deployed locally on mobile and edge devices and low-end consumer GPUs.
- **Now What:** Invest in hardware and develop software that supports efficient computation (e.g., with Metal or Vulkan). Also consider incorporating specialized hardware (e.g. NPU) that is specifically designed for efficient AI processing. Explore new compression methods that can drastically reduce the size of AI models without a significant performance degradation.
- **Probability:** 50.0%

Trend 4: Reevaluation of Sampling Parameters

- **What:** As LLMs become more widely used, it will be recognized that traditional temperature and top-p settings can limit the quality and range of AI outputs, with a need for more detailed / granular control over the inference process.
- **So What:** Many different techniques for sampling will emerge, giving creators and developers a much wider control over the creative process. This is needed to enable the building of much more complex AI systems that use different styles of thought for different tasks, and for end users to get the most out of the models.
- **Now What:** Focus more on developing creative settings that go beyond standard temperature/top_p and give you more control over diversity and variability. Allow users to build custom sampling settings based on various parameters, providing a higher degree of choice and quality in generation.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 5: User-Centric and Flexible Tools

- **What:** AI systems that allow flexibility and choice, enabling integration with external APIs. This is in opposition to systems with a closed/proprietary nature.
- **So What:** Users do not want to be forced into a specific ecosystem and require freedom to connect different pieces of technology together, and use each tool for its strengths. The expectation is that AI tools are composable, enabling integration with other applications and technologies.
- **Now What:** Ensure all systems you develop are modular and allow integrations with other frameworks/APIs, providing different options to connect and enhance existing workflows. Do not build closed ecosystems. Create software that can serve as a bridge between different tools.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 6: Focus on Model Understanding and Interpretability

- **What:** The current emphasis on simply 'best results' as expressed on leaderboards is likely to wane, leading to a trend where developers / users want to know how the model is working behind the scenes.
- **So What:** With more complex tasks / datasets, understanding the model's decision-making processes is crucial. This requires new methods and tools for interpretation that can better optimize and make sense of the decision making of AI models.
- **Now What:** Instead of just displaying benchmark metrics, showcase how your models work and what processes are used to reach a conclusion.
- **Probability:** 35.0%

Trend 7: New Approaches to Data Acquisition and Annotation

- **What:** The limitations of pre-existing publicly available datasets will become more apparent, and there will be a growing emphasis on gathering high quality, highly specific, well curated datasets instead of relying on noisy and often biased general purpose datasets.
- **So What:** Datasets are as important as the models themselves.
- **Now What:** Explore new data collection approaches and focus on tools to make data labelling faster and more accessible. Create tools that leverage specific information to build high-quality datasets, allowing others to build stronger models. Create systems that allow experts from a variety of domains to have fine-grained control on how a dataset is categorized and labelled.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 8: Open-Source Hardware Ecosystems

- **What:** A few new players will release performant and cost-effective AI hardware, particularly in the realm of specialized hardware chips or edge devices. This represents a shift towards a more diversified AI landscape.
- **So What:** This would offer an alternative to the current hardware market and potentially lead to better prices, increased competition, and more specialized hardware for diverse types of use cases for AI developers and home-enthusiasts.
- **Now What:** Support this effort by promoting open hardware and software solutions (such as risc-v based chips) to build cost-effective AI systems. Encourage innovation in open standards that can connect to various architectures.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 9: AI for Code Management & Quality Assurance

- **What:** As the volume of generated code continues to increase through the use of LLMs, there will be more tooling built to analyze, improve and debug generated code. This is to address and prevent the many issues related to poorly generated, unoptimized, and brittle code.
- **So What:** That means there will be more and more emphasis on testing and validation frameworks that include both test suites and human review of code produced by AI.
- **Now What:** Provide tools and practices that facilitate integration with IDEs and development workflows. Focus on automated methods for testing code and implementing proper software development practices such as testing, error handling, clear and well-structured code, and appropriate coding conventions.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 10: Exploration of LLM System Prompts as an Area of Influence and Control

- **What:** There will be more focus on using system prompts to modify the behaviour of language models, especially in regards to instruction following, bias, output formatting, and even personality and tone.
- **So What:** Prompt engineering will shift towards system prompting with better tools to craft them. Users and providers will be aware about how changes to system prompts affect models performance and output and build reusable templates or workflows for their particular use cases.
- **Now What:** Invest time in researching ways to craft and evaluate system prompts more effectively. Share your findings with other users, and build tools to manage and optimize system prompts. Develop workflows for combining system prompts with different prompts that are better targeted for a given set of tasks.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Non-Obvious Trends

Trend 1: Emphasis on User-Driven Data Provenance Tracking

- **What:** As AI output becomes increasingly pervasive, the need for clear and user-controllable data lineage (history of changes) will increase. Users will want to know who created, changed, modified, curated, stored, and deleted the data that is used by AI models.
- **So What:** This means that businesses and marketers will have to look into new mechanisms to support accountability, authenticity and traceability of AI model output.
- **Now What:** Implement tracking systems to enable users to follow the source, modifications, and processes of data as it flows from its creation point to its ultimate use. Create tools that help users to verify data provenance, and to ensure transparency and responsibility. Explore the use of block chain as a way of achieving this.
- **Probability:** 40.0%

Trend 2: AI Driven Hyper-Local and Niche Community Building

- **What:** There's potential for AI to build hyper-local niche communities of like-minded individuals that may share the same cultural backgrounds, values, and geographic proximity.
- **So What:** AI will be a key component in developing micro-communities with highly specialized interests / needs who can connect with each other in a way not easily achievable before.
- **Now What:** Instead of broad mass market AI product advertising, focus on specific needs and communities. Think of a system where people can connect with a LLM that is tailored to their specific interests or geographic locale. This can be further enhanced with AI models that can also analyze the local data, and adapt itself to the community that uses it most often.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 3: AI-Generated Brand Personas

- **What:** Brands will make use of AI to develop their own unique personalities, through customized training on their values, history, and communications preferences.
- **So What:** Brand perception will evolve from the 'message' alone to also be influenced by how AI interacts with their customers, with its own personality shaping user engagement. The goal is that instead of just a brand name you will have a virtual person.
- **Now What:** Focus on making the brand's AI personality authentic and genuine. Invest in training to align it with core values so it becomes not just another 'AI chatbot' but a consistent, human-like persona that truly reflects the brand's identity.
- **Probability:** 30.0%

Trend 4: Emergence of AI-Driven Creative Tools for Rapid Prototyping

- **What:** There will be an increased adoption of AI driven tools (such as Sora and others) to quickly prototype ideas, concepts, designs, workflows, etc. The ability to rapidly ideate and try things out with little cost to both time and money will make these tools popular in design, marketing and development processes.
- **So What:** The rapid prototyping will empower a new generation of creators and will lower the barrier of entry for a new kind of talent. This also reduces the need for expert skills at the planning/brainstorming stages of the creative process, and makes people think differently about skillsets needed.
- **Now What:** Instead of offering these tools for finished products, present AI tools as a framework for experimentation and quick ideation. Showcase how these AI tools can generate a wider set of options for design and analysis while also freeing up time for more human focused aspects of the process. Make sure that users understand that you don't just get a 'finished' output from it.
- **Probability:** 25.0%

Trend 5: AI for Managing Data and Model Environments

- **What:** As AI becomes more prevalent, there will be an increase in demand for tools and platforms that can manage complex model ecosystems. This includes tools to manage models, data, experiments, and workflows more efficiently.
- **So What:** Complexity will increase drastically, and it will be necessary to manage various models, frameworks, and training / inference environments as LLMs mature. This has the potential to be a new and growing market.
- **Now What:** Target the problem of over-complex AI setups by building modularized, easy-to-use toolsets that can abstract away the complexities of the underlying systems.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 6: AI for Personalized Auditory Experiences

- **What:** As text to speech AI improves there will be a demand for new ways to create high-quality localized audio.
- **So What:** This represents a shift away from generic text to speech voices, where customized voices and emotional intonations that mimic human expressiveness becomes valuable in entertainment (music, podcasts, audiobooks, etc.).
- **Now What:** Focus on highly optimized tools to generate more nuanced and natural-sounding voices. Offer integrations that enable creators to personalize their voices through fine-tuning, tone modulation and emotional expression.
- **Probability:** 20.0%

Trend 7: AI-driven content creation for niche social media micro-communities

- **What:** Instead of AI tools used to generate content for everyone everywhere, AI will be used to create highly targeted content specifically for those groups that care about a specific niche.
- **So What:** This will promote a shift towards content that is not general but super-specific, that resonates much better with a dedicated audience than something generic.
- **Now What:** You should invest in platforms that allow you to customize the content with fine-grained detail, to meet the needs of those communities that seek something more than generic content.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 8: Development of AI for Local, Offline and Air-Gapped Environments

- **What:** There will be increased demand in areas where connectivity is not guaranteed, so new focus on optimizing AI models to run without constant online access to cloud resources will increase.
- **So What:** This represents a move away from always connected cloud solutions towards AI that can work without the cloud or in areas with poor internet connectivity.
- **Now What:** Highlight this ability in your marketing.
- **Probability:** 15.0%

Trend 9: Emergence of AI as a Tool for Exploring Theoretical Physics and Unconventional Science

- **What:** In certain fields, such as theoretical physics or cosmology, AI will serve as a tool for exploration, allowing for iterative testing of theoretical claims and ideas, rather than providing definitive solutions.
- **So What:** This represents a shift in the way scientists will view AI, as it can provide a tool for discovering novel perspectives in complex scientific areas, instead of just pure predictions or data classification.
- **Now What:** Offer open source tools and platforms that will help scientists build AI workflows.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

Trend 10: Growing Demand for AI for Code and Document Verification

- **What:** LLM's will also become a common tool to spot issues and mistakes in code and in documents.
- **So What:** The reliance on AI as a 'second eye' to proofread/check code, documents and other work will increase.
- **Now What:** Develop and showcase the model's reliability, accuracy, and ability to detect both common and obscure errors. Tools to streamline the feedback loop by providing quick and easy access to error detection will become paramount.
- **Probability:** 10.0%

Methodology

How we made this guide is fairly straightforward. Using the Python Reddit API library, praw, and our Trust Insights Reddit developer account (using the API is free but requires you to register as a developer) we downloaded the last 90 days of content - both posts and comments - in these subreddits:

- /r/content_marketing
- /r/marketing
- /r/seo
- /r/bigseo
- /r/influencermarketing
- /r/socialmedia
- /r/localllama
- /r/deeplearning
- /r/chatgpt

After download, each dataset was stripped of identifying information such as usernames, and then deduplicated by line. We then fed the digested data into Google Gemini 2.0 Flash with a series of prompts to first create a summary of the dataset, then express the three sets of trends - obvious, less obvious, and non-obvious.

About TrustInsights.ai

Trust Insights is a management consulting firm specializing in helping you transform data into results you care about. Whether it's traditional analytics and data science or the latest innovations in machine learning and artificial intelligence, Trust Insights helps you achieve practical, beneficial outcomes instead of playing buzzword bingo. With a variety of services from training and education to done-for-you AI deployments, help for any of your data and insights needs is just a tap away. Or yell out loud to any of the AI assistants spying on you all the time, I suppose.

- Learn more about Trust Insights: <https://www.trustinsights.ai>
- Learn more about Trust Insights AI Services: <https://www.trustinsights.ai/aiservices>
- Take the Trust Insights Generative AI for Marketers course: <https://www.trustinsights.ai/aicourse>