

Gartner for Marketers

# Gartner Marketing Predictions 2022: Forging New Connections



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# Strategic CMOs are poised to ride digital's ascendance

As the pandemic forced so many daily interactions online, the lines between customer and provider and between commercial and social interactions began to blur.

There's no going back. Strategic marketing leaders must now take the lead to advocate and deliver on strategies that embrace digital as the foundation of new connections with and between customers, employees, business partners and social influencers, not just of existing relationships.

To help you through the transition, this year's crop of marketing predictions explores the consequences of digital's ascendance on related themes such as the privacy movement, flexible workplace, employee advocacy, sales enhanced with artificial intelligence (AI), virtual influencers and social commerce.

## Marketers Seek New Ways to Connect



### Physical World Touchpoints



### Digital World Touchpoints

#### New connections

- Privacy movement
- Flexible workplace
- Employee advocacy
- AI-enhanced sales
- Virtual influencers
- Social commerce

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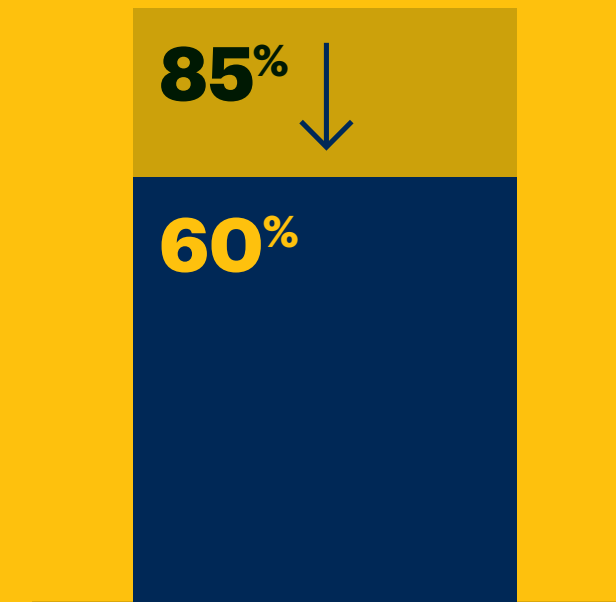
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## Prediction No. 1

# Digital Users Express Opt-Out Ambivalence

By 2023, the **opt-out rate for mobile app tracking will decline from 85% to 60%** as consumers learn that untargeted ads increase their exposure to low-quality content.



Source: Gartner

# Digital users express opt-out ambivalence



## The evidence

Early predictions about the collapse of online tracking are proving to be overblown. Roughly one-quarter of digital users would allow tracking today, and another quarter say they might allow it in certain situations.



## The impact

- The initial impulse customers had to opt out of tracking is fading. There's potential for a full reversal to "accept all" tracking from trusted brands or well-established publishers.
- Consumer privacy-setting behavior is being influenced by the experience that brands provide.
- Apps and websites that give customers a reason to opt in will gain a significant revenue advantage.



## The opportunity

- Give customers compelling reasons to trust you with personal data.
- Make it easy to change privacy behaviors and settings.
- To overcome data degradation, optimize contextual targeting and measurement.

**Learn more about how marketers are adapting how they collect customer data in:**  
[Brands Retreat Behind Walled Gardens](#)

Prediction No. 2

# Workplace Flexibility Opens the Door to Advertisers

By 2023, the **volume of ad impressions** TV and streaming media channels deliver during traditional 9-to-5 working hours **will grow by 60%.**



Source: Gartner

# Workplace flexibility opens the door to advertisers



## The evidence

**Regular schedules and daily routines have changed** from what they were prepandemic for half of responding consumers.

By 2022, remote and hybrid employees will spend 20% more time during the day watching video content.



## The impact

- Ads placed in former high-demand spots during morning and evening programs may no longer reach the volume, nor the type, of customers that brands want to engage.
- A move away from prime time could be good news for marketers — especially those who've been priced out of prime-time spots.



## The opportunity

- Align your ad strategy to take advantage of the times of day your audience is most receptive.
- Evaluate media plans with an eye on how well they can adapt to timing changes.
- Leverage audio as a key part of messaging — audiences may still be listening even when their eyes are focused on work.

**Build the foundations of your digital advertising plan with: [Digital IQ: Advertising Benchmarks](#)**

Prediction No. 3

# Employee Advocacy Drives Brand Credibility

By 2023, **90% of B2B social media marketing strategies** will incorporate scaled employee advocacy programs.

90%



Source: Gartner



# Employee advocacy drives brand credibility



## The evidence

**When employees share content, it achieves a 200% higher click-through rate than when the company shares it,** according to LinkedIn.

This is at a time when trust in company-sourced information has hit an all-time low.

Together, these facts point to employees having higher personal credibility with customers than brands have. Organizations can leverage the personal touch to build brand trust and drive commercial outcomes using employee advocacy programs that scale the curation and distribution of brand content through social channels.



## The impact

- Employee advocacy programs achieve higher reach and engagement than more conventional approaches to earned and owned social media.
- They also bring secondary benefits beyond customer acquisition, such as increased employee engagement and productivity, and improved reputation.



## The opportunity

- Build or strengthen your B2B social marketing strategy with employee-driven programs aimed at building brand recognition and trust.
- Scale employee participation with easy-to-use platforms that optimize relevant content.
- Equip employees with a steady stream of content to share with their social networks.

**Learn how to leverage the power of employee advocacy in:** [Activating Your Employees as Brand Ambassadors](#)

Prediction No. 4

# B2B Sales Merges the Best of Digital and Human Methods

By 2025, **one in five B2B companies will use artificial intelligence/machine learning** to proactively slow down customers' journeys by connecting customers with sales reps during digital commerce interactions.



Source: Gartner

# B2B sales merges the best of digital and human methods



## The evidence

The pandemic accelerated a **digital-first B2B buying trend**, further blurring the boundaries between marketing and sales. Buyers and sellers now expect website transactions to overtake human-led sales by 2023, but buyer beware: B2B customers who pursue a sales-rep-free experience are more likely to regret their purchase decisions.



## The impact

- Marketers can support customer self-service purchases by designing smooth digital experiences.
- Marketing and sales force automation systems increasingly will be integrated with other customer-facing interaction channels to facilitate seamless transitions through the buying process.
- Successful B2B organizations will balance digital customer engagement with human-led interactions at key moments to steer buyer decisions.



## The opportunity

- Design shared processes, with common objectives, across the marketing, sales and tech functions involved in digital commerce.
- Identify the behaviors that indicate customers are losing momentum or about to accelerate into high-value transactions.
- Test and adopt technology and interventions to bring sales reps in at high-value moments.

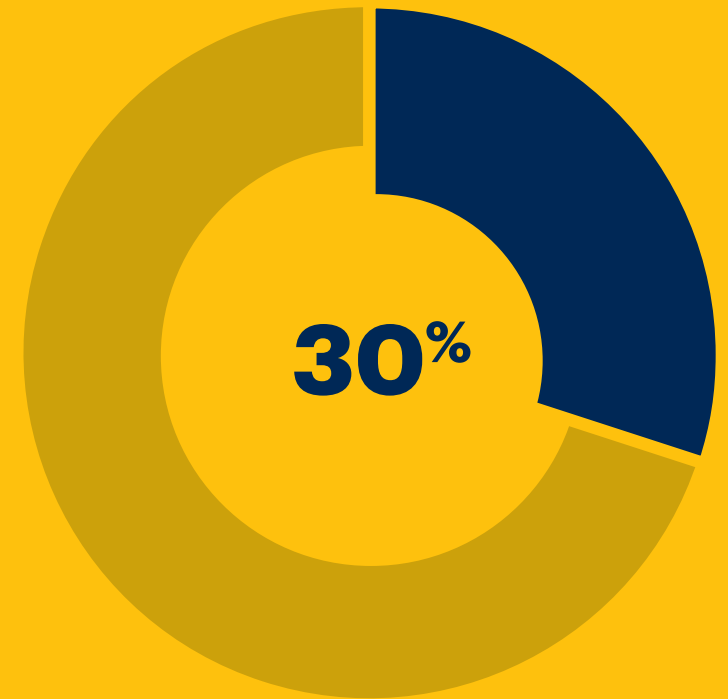
### Webinar on Demand

**Define a strategy for marketing e-commerce that complements and adds value to existing sales channels: [Build the Best Business Case for B2B Digital Commerce](#)**

Prediction No. 5

# Virtual Influencers Disrupt Celebrity-Led Programs With the Promise of Greater Control

By 2026, CMOs will dedicate **30% of their influencer and celebrity budgets** to virtual influencers.



Source: Gartner

# Virtual influencers disrupt celebrity-led programs with the promise of greater control



## The evidence

**A growing share of the \$14 billion marketers currently spend annually on influencers is going toward virtual influencers.** These fictional characters — often crafted with input from marketing and PR agencies and created by animators — already represent brands like KFC, LG and Renault, across industries from fashion and consumer packaged goods to manufacturing. Popular in Asia, virtual influencers are gaining traction in the U.S.



## The impact

- Computer-animated personalities could be worth millions in brand endorsements alone.
- Virtual influencers give brands more control over messaging at lower costs than they spend with celebrities. There's also less risk, since virtual influencers can't be involved in scandals or leave the firm.
- Brands can still experience challenges in the form of consumer backlash against inauthentic narratives or impossible beauty standards.



## The opportunity

- Explore how virtual influencers might represent your organization, industry and region.
- Monitor customer sentiment about virtual influencers and investigate ways to collaborate with existing influencers.
- Identify and monitor virtual influencers as part of your social monitoring practice.
- Measure relationship performance using the same KPIs for virtual influencers as for traditional influencers.

**Explore new ideas for promoting your brand:**  
**[The Role of Marketing in Digital Transformation and Innovation](#)**

Prediction No. 6

# Your Customer's Favorite Store Is a Social Platform

By 2026, **60% of millennial and Gen Z consumers will prefer making purchases on social platforms** over traditional digital commerce platforms.



Source: Gartner

# Your customer's favorite store is a social platform



## The evidence

Nearly **one-third of B2B and B2C organizations have included selling on social platforms as part of their digital commerce strategy** — motivated by growing customer purchase activity on social channels. Younger consumers in particular are turning toward commerce options that emphasize convenience and discovery.



## The impact

- Social platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and Twitter are integrating and encouraging social commerce.
- As e-tailers vie for market share, brands need to rethink the customer experience and how organizational design supports it. Successful social commerce requires a simple but enriching path to purchase.



## The opportunity

- Cater social content strategies to engaged consumers who are likely to embrace social commerce.
- Boost the quality of content on social media product pages with information that addresses customer needs.
- Be transparent to allay consumer concerns around data privacy.

**Understand how to do more with your social marketing, one of the most effective channels:**  
[Digital IQ: Social Marketing Benchmarks](#)

# Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for marketing leaders:

## Newsletter



Gartner Keynote: Why Marketers Are Vital for Connected, Successful Organizations

Marketers lead on driving relationships with key stakeholders.

[Read Now](#)

## Webinar



The Top U.S. Consumer and Cultural Trends for 2022

U.S. consumer trends shape strategic planning in 2022.

[Watch Now](#)

## eBook



Chief Marketing Officer Leadership Vision 2022

Three actions for CMOs will help drive success in 2022 with lower budgets.

[Download Now](#)

## Analyst Insight



Employees as Brand Ambassadors

Activate the power of employees as your greatest brand ambassadors.

[Read Now](#)

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