

A Metia report

# B2B Marketing Trends for 2022

Four essential trends for the strategic CMO



**metia**





# Table of contents

---

Introduction ..... 4

Trend 1  
**Marketing without purpose is like coffee without beans** ..... 6

Trend 2  
**Adapting to new models of working and marketing** ..... 9

Trend 3  
**Beyond good intentions: Meeting the DEI demand** ..... 12

Trend 4  
**Time to prepare for a cookie-less future. Get started now.** ..... 17

Are you ready for 2022? ..... 20

# Introduction

Steve Ellis, Founder, Metia Group

2021 can easily be described as a roller coaster. It started off in the lows of lockdown, then saw restrictions lifting and glimmers of light at the end of the tunnel, and finished with another lap of the lockdown experience.

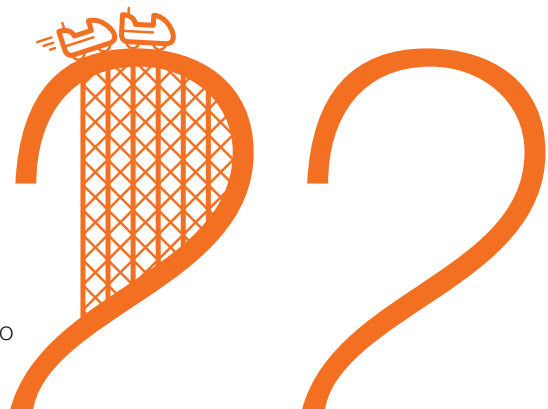
Volatility due to the pandemic was manifest in every aspect of our lives in 2021. In business, some sectors boomed, while others went bust. Sustainability, diversity, and equity pushed their way from the margins into the mainstream.

## Tech is changing everything

The tech sector continued its inexorable ascent, with the world's biggest technology brands asserting their dominance like never before. Apple, Microsoft, and Alphabet reported combined profits of \$50 billion in the second quarter of the year. They also achieved a combined value of \$6.4 trillion – double their collective value when the pandemic started. This financial landmark also served to highlight the increasing influence that Big Tech has on every aspect of our day-to-day lives.

Customer behavior has unequivocally changed. While some behaviors have returned to their pre-pandemic state, many customers' expectations and priorities have shifted and adapted, both out of necessity and desire. We've all adopted different living and working practices, embraced new experiences and routines, and explored new environments within which to do business. Habits have changed and marketers must now adapt.

Businesses have learned how to adopt and embrace hybrid working practices while maintaining business continuity and creating a positive employee experience. Marketers have needed to focus on being creative and impactful in how they engage and interact with their customers. They must sustain and intensify this focused approach in 2022.



## **Growth, innovation, and purpose**

Although uncertainty remains, there is reason to be optimistic about 2022. We believe that marketers need to shift emphasis, from concerns about survival or recovery to a more positive focus on growth and purpose. The need for highly responsive and personal communications, which are adaptable to the changing needs of the audience, will place greater importance on customer experience and on digital and data strategies.

The chapters of the *Metia B2B Trends Report 2022* provide you with insights and expertise from across our business to help shape and inform effective B2B marketing strategies and practices. We hope you find them of value as you prepare for the year ahead.

Needless to say, this is what we do. If you need a hand, get in touch.

## Marketing without purpose is like coffee without beans



**Steve Ellis,**  
Founder,  
Metia Group

The pandemic has changed the way we live our lives. Our reflections on notions of community, shared endeavor, and questions of fairness have put a spotlight on issues that have been festering in the shadows.

Just as society has looked at itself, brands and businesses are having to re-evaluate not only their products and behaviors but also their very reason for existing.

The business author Simon Sinek crystalized the idea of purpose in business: “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.” Without a clear and direct purpose, it’s difficult for businesses to remain relevant, distinctive, and commercially successful in an increasingly crowded, complex, and unpredictable marketplace.

### Aligning with your audience

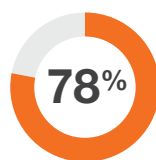
The concept of purpose-driven marketing is not new. Even before the pandemic, the need for businesses to have a purpose beyond simply chasing revenue and market share had been steadily gaining momentum over many years. Historically, this may have amounted to just layering on a superficial veneer of goodness through giving or philanthropy. Today, that is no longer enough.

More recently, research has supported the human desire to find or align with a higher purpose. For example, Deloitte has highlighted that companies which authentically embed their purpose into their business typically grow three times faster on average than their competitors.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic has brought a new lens to the way marketers must view their purpose.

### Keep investing. It matters.

TripAdvisor’s business is built around travel, an impossibility during lockdown. Unsurprisingly, TripAdvisor was forced to make cuts and undertake restructuring over the past two years.



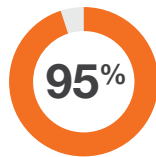
of consumers will choose a brand that’s purpose-driven, rather than one that isn’t.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/marketing-and-sales-operations/global-marketing-trends/2020/purpose-driven-companies.html>

Yet the business still invested in its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. In October 2021, Christine Maguire, General Manager and Vice President for Global Media Business at TripAdvisor, told *Adweek* that this investment was born out of the need to focus on values and authenticity. Similarly, at Havas, recently appointed Chief of Social Impact Lindsay Stein outlined how “purpose” has increased in significance, citing that 78% of consumers will choose a brand that’s purpose-driven, rather than one that isn’t.

### Time for change?

In purpose as in technology, the vast majority of businesses tend to be laggards, complacently dragging their heels behind more committed early adopters. Only 24% of organizations have embedded their purpose into their business to the point of influencing innovation, operations, and their engagement with society.<sup>2</sup>



of people claim to have made at least one pandemic-related change to their lifestyle that they expect will now become permanent.

In these strange pandemic times, retaining a “business as usual” type of inertia is particularly risky. According to an Accenture poll, 95% of people claim to have made at least one pandemic-related change to their lifestyle that they expect will now become permanent.<sup>3</sup> Habits and preferences are being reset and reconsidered. 2022 is no time for complacency.

### Everyone seeks purpose

Looking beyond your customers, what about your own employees? How has your business been affected by the Great Resignation? Purpose gives your team a reason to believe. A reason to stay for the long haul.

Many organizations have yet to fully realize the importance and value of incorporating purpose into their marketing and communications strategies. These businesses should change direction in 2022. They need to communicate and express their purpose to drive engagement with their brand, story, or solution. But very often they first need to find their purpose. That is both an inward- and outward-looking task.

Some points for consideration:

- 1** Purpose must be derived from the core motivations of the business’s leadership: its founders, senior executives, and employees.
- 2** It must genuinely align to the business’s vision for its services or products.
- 3** Purpose should be expressed authentically and evidenced by the actions of the business.
- 4** To be successful, it must also be framed in the language of the audience you serve and be attuned to their motivations. If your purpose doesn’t connect to the audience, it doesn’t resonate and will fail.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2021/06/24/why-the-future-of-purpose-driven-marketing-is-at-the-edge/?sh=51def2d06556>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.accenture.com/ca-en/about/newsroom/company-news-release-covid-consumer-research-2021>

## Honesty is always best

Ethical and moral issues need to be considered when framing a purpose. Your purpose should be authentic and honest (attributes that are not always traditionally associated with all marketers). There is no room for gray areas or weasel words. Customers will find and call out any lack of honesty.

Claims made about sustainability or social purpose are increasingly on the radar of advertising regulators. Marketers must be aware that any claims they make around their business or its purpose will need to be genuine and evidenced by fact or they run the risk of fines from regulators and, perhaps worse, the wrath of the crowd.

For example, the International Chambers of Commerce (ICC) recently updated its framework for responsible environmental communications.<sup>4</sup> In the UK, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has also announced it will conduct a series of inquiries during 2022 into claims around topics including sustainability, net zero, carbon neutral, heating, transport, and recycling.<sup>5</sup>

Your purpose should be authentic and honest  
(attributes that are not always traditionally  
associated with all marketers).

## An opportunity for growth in 2022?

As we look to identify opportunities for growth in 2022, B2B marketers should be working with their leadership to re-evaluate how they communicate with customers and how they bring purpose into that narrative – with particular emphasis on storytelling and articulating why it matters to those customers.

Developing stories that clearly demonstrate a credible offering and resonate with your customers and staff will give greater weight and meaning to the commitments and pledges you make. They will help bring your customers along with you and connect with new prospects.

This is particularly important if you recognize that customer behaviors are shifting and the way they interact with you has changed. Ultimately, people want to buy from – and work for – organizations that share their values. Building trust by delivering on your promise will ensure you have an impact.

## Making sense of purpose in B2B

On the face of it, purpose-led marketing may seem more relevant in B2C markets, but B2B organizations should also develop a consistent purpose that resonates and differentiates.

Listening to and understanding exactly what your customers really want is key. B2B decision makers are human too. They have emotions, fears, and ambitions. Knowing their motivations and understanding their use of language ensure that the purpose you find in your organization – and the language you choose to communicate it – will resonate with your customers and stakeholders.

<sup>4</sup> <https://iccwbo.org/media-wall/news-speeches/icc-issues-new-guidance-on-environmental-claims-in-marketing-and-advertising/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.asa.org.uk/news/new-advertising-guidance-on-misleading-environmental-claims-and-social-responsibility.html>

## Adapting to new models of working and marketing



**Matt Robinson,**  
Content Director,  
Metia

In-person events and flexible working, both in and outside the office, returned in 2021. And then – due to the Omicron variant – they paused again. With constant uncertainty and audience unpredictability, marketers must assume that virtual working will remain a default for 2022.

The novelty of online meetings has long passed, so the quality of employee and customer virtual experiences remains a priority.

You didn't have to look too far on LinkedIn in the latter half of 2021 to see posts celebrating the return of in-person events. Yet it remained clear that many of the key landmarks in the B2B calendar, such as Microsoft's Build in tech or SWIFT's Sibos in finance, remained 100% digital in response to the continuing difficulty of international travel.

Nonetheless, some industry events – perhaps most notably the huge and diverse Consumer Electronics Show (CES) – opted for a return to face-to-face interactions. The efforts of CES to revert to an in-person experience drew a mixed response from exhibitors and delegates.

### A step change for events

According to one executive, Microsoft was “blown away by the reception and appetite” it received for its annual conferences from developers and IT professionals when it elected to adopt a virtual event strategy throughout 2021. Joanna Yee Hui Sze, Director of Events Marketing Communications at Microsoft, explained, “Historically, our events breakdown is 80% US and 20% global; today that mix is 70% US and 30% global.”<sup>6</sup> When you consider that virtual attendance rates can be up to 10 times higher than for in-person events, it's not surprising the Redmond-based company is committed to incorporating a virtual component into its event strategy moving forward.

<sup>6</sup> <https://adage.com/article/twitter/3-key-insights-b2b-marketers-navigating-new-normal/2375826>

This potential increase in audience reach represents a hugely appealing prospect for businesses, opening up the possibility to engage both larger and also previously inaccessible audiences. It also presents marketers with some immediate challenges for 2022.

### **New ground rules for virtual interactions**

To succeed, events programs need to not only be compelling but also make the process of attending simple and smooth. The novelty of being digital has passed. Audiences expect minimal barriers to entry. In this context, barriers include the number of clicks needed to log in and the number of fields of personal data that attendees have to give up to access content.

Nor is there any necessity to actively be “there” in real time. If the content is good and made available on-demand, it can become even more valuable in the long term and the possibility for long-tail engagement is greater.

Virtual event strategies aligned to highly targeted account-based marketing (ABM) campaigns have delivered powerful results.

Marketers need to shift their focus from achieving the drumroll and video-sting excitement of a conference’s opening keynotes to how they can take full advantage of their event’s content assets in “best of” reels and personalized customer playlists throughout the year.

Additionally, marketers need to think beyond the main event program. Whether you’re an exhibitor or delegate, meeting orchestration and networking facilitation are just as important. That last statement may raise eyebrows; we’ve all seen conference delegates break into a jog to dodge overenthusiastic sales pitches. However, we also know delegates attend conferences to gather information and insight – but not to listen to irrelevant pitches.

Virtual event strategies aligned to highly targeted account-based marketing (ABM) campaigns have delivered powerful results. Tailoring each message to the individual and offering a fair exchange of value will facilitate setting up 1-to-1s between account teams and their customers or prospects.

Active conversations and wider outreach can help accelerate and enrich relationships. Consequently, businesses should invest resources into identifying new ways to connect through alternative channels and better ways to communicate compelling stories.

## A fresh approach is needed

Event-based thinking needs to move on. For marketers, it's all about defining these in-person and virtual activities within their wider digital strategies and customer journeys.



of marketers have adjusted their digital engagement strategy since the start of the pandemic.

According to Salesforce's seventh edition of its "State of Marketing" report, 90% of marketers have adjusted their digital engagement strategy since the start of the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> Of those, half of all B2B firms claim to have completely changed their digital marketing strategy in the last year.

Critical B2B purchase decisions are increasingly moving from in-person or digital to in-person and digital. In 2022, that trend is set to continue. How do you plan and adapt your strategies accordingly?

### Changing communication habits

Success stems from properly understanding the behavior of your audiences. With people now less likely or willing to travel due to work-from-home policies, the possibilities for capturing and sustaining attention face to face either no longer exist or at best are highly unpredictable. This means your campaign execution needs a sharp focus in order to deliver impact.

In 2022, marketers will have to look more closely at how and when their audiences are interacting with content and be ready to adjust their approaches accordingly. By listening to their customers and adapting their communication strategy in response to changing circumstances, businesses can derive more value from investments in both online and offline events.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.salesforce.com/form/state-of-marketing/>

TREND **3**

## Beyond good intentions: Meeting the DEI demand

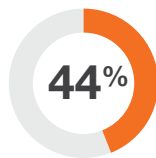


**Sara Sanford,**  
Director of Marketing  
Research, Metia

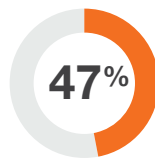
Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies are no longer an optional choice for corporations. As DEI becomes a fundamental requirement, businesses need to ensure they build, execute, and communicate effective strategies.

The US workforce is transforming. Forty-four percent of millennials, who make up the largest portion of the workforce, are non-white,<sup>8</sup> and the majority of the population will be non-white before the year 2050.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the workforce is now 47% female,<sup>10</sup> approximately one in six adults in America is considered to be neurodiverse,<sup>11</sup> 20% of the workforce is now at least 55 years old,<sup>12</sup> and one in six Gen Z adults identifies as LGBTQ.<sup>13</sup>

### The transforming US workforce



44%  
of millennials, who make up the largest portion of the workforce, are non-white.



47%  
of the workforce is now female.



20%  
of the workforce is now at least 55 years old.



Approximately one in six adults in America is considered to be neurodiverse.



One in six Gen Z adults identifies as LGBTQ.

8 [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/20180124\\_metro\\_millennialreport\\_pressrelease.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/20180124_metro_millennialreport_pressrelease.pdf)

9 <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/03/21/views-of-demographic-changes-in-america/>

10 [https://www.latimes.com/b2b/inspirational\\_women/story/2021-12-05/balance-and-diversity-remain-elusive-at-many-tech-organizations](https://www.latimes.com/b2b/inspirational_women/story/2021-12-05/balance-and-diversity-remain-elusive-at-many-tech-organizations)

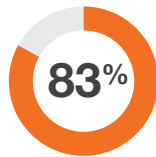
11 <https://www.headstart.io/insights/neurodiversity-at-work-and-its-untapped-commercial-potential/>

12 <https://builtin.com/diversity-inclusion/ageism-in-the-workplace>

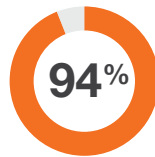
13 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329708/lgbt-identification-rises-latest-estimate.aspx>

Today's employees and consumers also care about inclusion more than previous generations. A 2020 hiring survey revealed that 83% of Gen Z candidates prioritize a company's commitment to diversity and inclusion when choosing where to work.<sup>14</sup> Ninety-four percent of millennials consider whether a business is an ethical employer before purchasing from them,<sup>15</sup> and multicultural consumers make up almost 40% of the US population.<sup>16</sup>

### 2020 hiring survey revealed



of Gen Z candidates prioritize a company's commitment to diversity and inclusion when choosing where to work.



of millennials consider whether a business is an ethical employer before purchasing from them.



multicultural consumers make up almost 40% of the US population.

Clearly, DEI is now more than a “nice to have” or a compliance requirement to be minimally satisfied. Getting DEI right means getting access to the next generation of both talent and consumers.

### Beyond talk: Meaningful action

This undeniable demand, unfortunately, hasn't translated into impact. Only 22% of employees believe their employer has publicly stated that DEI is a priority and has a clear roadmap for getting there,<sup>17</sup> according to GEN, the nonprofit behind the first standardized certification for intersectional equity in the workplace. A 2020 study surveying over 800 HR professionals demonstrated similar findings: 76% of companies have no diversity or inclusion goals.<sup>18</sup>

Employers considering a DEI strategy often feel challenged by the numerous forces reshaping the world of work. It's estimated that up to 30% of jobs in the developed world will be taken over by machines, AI, or robots in the next 20 years.<sup>19</sup> Even the concept of the physical workplace is no longer a given, with Twitter, Facebook/ Meta, and Amazon all announcing in 2021 that their employees can work from home indefinitely.

In the face of these shifts and the unknowns we are yet to encounter, crafting a DEI strategy can feel daunting. How can you know that the policies you implement today will be relevant even a year from now?

The core DEI stages that follow can help your strategy survive the unknown.

14 <https://hiring.monster.com/employer-resources/recruiting-strategies/workforce-planning/workforce-diversity-for-millennials/>

15 <https://www.conecomm.com/2017-cone-communications-csr-study-pdf>

16 <https://livingword.co.uk/in-an-increasingly-diverse-market-brands-can-drive-growth-with-multicultural-marketing/>

17 [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5928a7bfe4fcb57df093e59b/t/5e505db52bf5dc55ccdb6a34/1582325179065/GEN\\_Certification\\_Reference\\_Guide.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5928a7bfe4fcb57df093e59b/t/5e505db52bf5dc55ccdb6a34/1582325179065/GEN_Certification_Reference_Guide.pdf)

18 <https://www.hrdive.com/news/just-going-through-the-motions-employers-fail-to-make-dei-a-business-fun/595293/>

19 Kurt Andersen, “Evil Geniuses: The Unmaking of America: A Recent History” (New York: Random House, 2020).

## **Stage 1:**

### **Creating a data-smart DEI strategy — act on data, not best guesses**

No matter how well you think you know your culture or how open you believe employees are, test your assumptions. We are living in an age when it's easier than ever to collect, analyze, and act on data. The following guidelines can take your DEI strategy from being data-driven to being data-smart:

**Evaluate upstream indicators.** Many organizations measure end results, or lagging indicators, such as the percentage of people in leadership who are women or people of color. These indicators do not identify processes upstream that would lead to different outcomes. Measuring leading indicators — the processes that drive progress on lagging indicators — will drive inclusive success.

You can identify leading indicators by using your employee engagement survey to measure the quantifiable disparities between different populations' lived experiences. For example, do equal percentages of women and men, or white employees and employees of color, report being asked about their career goals in the last 12 months, being invited to a networking event, or having a conversation about pay? The more specific you are in finding the gaps in experiences, the more effectively you can tackle these challenges in your DEI strategy.

Tracking indicators upstream lets you address the root causes of gaps in representation, rather than just guessing at them.

**Ask employees what they want.** It may seem obvious, but this crucial step is often overlooked. Even if paid leave and flexibility top the list for what women want nationally, for example, that doesn't mean that these are the priorities for women in your organization. You won't know unless you ask. When analyzing feedback, pay attention to the responses from underrepresented employees, whose answers may be in the minority and yet can hold the keys to retaining and supporting them.

**Analyze data at the intersections.** When interpreting the feedback you capture, make sure your analysis is intersectional. I see a lot of organizations that silo both their race data and their gender data and don't look at the intersection of the two. As a result, they've lost the story of women of color (this also applies to other facets of identity, such as age, neurodivergence, and caretaking status). If your data is not intersectional, it's not equitable.

## **Stage 2:**

### **Implementing your DEI strategy**

**DEI is not kickball. Work with data-smart experts.** Companies that do not rely on expertise often take what could be described as the "kickball approach." DEI becomes an extracurricular activity, similar to the company kickball team or party-planning committee. Everyone gathers in the break room one afternoon, contributes their best DEI ideas, and the company runs with the one that sounds the most fun.

Building inclusive workplaces requires an interdisciplinary, cross-functional combination of soft skills and technical knowledge. These are some of the disciplines Metia has used to support DEI strategies:



#### **Advanced statistical analysis**

If companies need to take an intersectional approach to their employee data, how do they assess small sample sizes with confidence?



#### **Vendor management**

Hospitals didn't manufacture the PPE that infamously didn't fit female healthcare workers during the pandemic,<sup>20</sup> but someone did! How does inclusion factor into vendor choice?



#### **Marketing**

What do you do when your company's language around DEI has "caught up," but your target audience's language hasn't?



#### **Change management**

How does a change in policy get communicated, and what are the impacts going to be on processes downstream?



#### **Compensation laws, discrimination laws, and state-by-state exceptions**

For instance, there are five US states in which you can't ask candidates what their salary expectations are in an interview. In all five of these states, we have worked with employers who had been asking this question and didn't know they weren't compliant.



#### **Terminology**

What terms are being used for DEI in multinational organizations? In the UK, for example, EDI is used instead of DEI, and BAME has been used instead of BIPOC, but it's now being replaced by "minority ethnic group."

DEI is an art of managing extreme complexity. The need for multidisciplinary expertise cannot be met by adopting a kickball approach.

If you do not have a DEI expert in-house, find a qualified one to work with you, at least on a consulting basis. When evaluating practitioners, ask what kinds of metrics they use and look for the upstream measures of success discussed earlier.

**Model the behavior yourself.** This is especially important for those in leadership positions. Let's say your company has decided to embrace the use of pronouns in email signatures, but the choice to do so is optional. This opportunity was created for those who have been misgendered or feel they easily could be. They are the ones who are going to benefit, but they are also the ones who must take on the risk. If only those who "need" this policy are the ones taking advantage of it, it makes them stand out. Being one of the few to embrace pronouns in their signatures can feel like waving a giant flag that says, "Look at this choice I'm making!"

If, however, it is common practice, or at least not a glaring exception, for people to include their pronouns in their email signatures, those who would benefit feel less like obvious outliers. Adding the pronoun comes at little risk for most and lessens the risk for those who benefit.

20 [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/24/sexism-on-the-covid-19-frontline-ppe-is-made-for-a-6ft-3in-rugby-player?fbclid=IwAR24nN-jD3iG5Z6lt6BJPZq60\\_PY4TfxJ-rPEcLxtabdFNPSdz7aHU6g](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/24/sexism-on-the-covid-19-frontline-ppe-is-made-for-a-6ft-3in-rugby-player?fbclid=IwAR24nN-jD3iG5Z6lt6BJPZq60_PY4TfxJ-rPEcLxtabdFNPSdz7aHU6g)

### Stage 3: Communicating your strategy

**DEI is not charity.** A few years ago, we worked with an employer who wanted to understand why women were leaving the company faster than other employees. We spent months conducting surveys and interviews, pinpointing where the gaps were and what needed to change. The leadership team committed to an action plan and prepared to present to their employees. During their all-company meeting, we watched proudly as their CEO shared what he had learned, where they had made mistakes in the past, and what they were going to change. Then he closed with the line, “We’re excited to finally be lifting you ladies up.”

We watched confidence deflate. Heads shook. Eyes rolled. This one statement reinforced an inequitable power dynamic, making him a hero who was reaching down to lift up employees “in need.”

When employers communicate about DEI like it’s a charity campaign, it makes underrepresented employees feel like problems to be fixed.

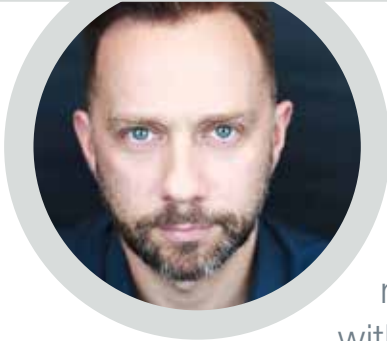
Consider these framings instead:

- 1** “We want to reach our full potential, and we can’t do that if we’re not including everyone.”
- 2** “We realize that our business started off with imbalanced representation, and now we want to more closely represent those we serve.”
- 3** “We’ve learned that different groups have had different experiences and access to opportunities. We’re leveling the playing field going forward by taking the following steps...”

**Don't communicate without commitment.** More and more organizations are being called out for posting statements of solidarity while having no action plans for dismantling bias within their own organizations. It's OK if you're being forced to reckon with the fact that you haven't had a strategy in place. Now is a great time to start. But commit. And then build in accountability by sharing with all your employees the actions you plan to take.

This overview touches on some key points to keep in mind when crafting your DEI strategy for 2022. We look forward to bringing you more insights in the coming year.

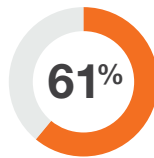
## It's time to prepare for a cookie-less future. Get started now.



**Simon Hurrell,**  
Senior Director -  
Digital Experience

The importance of a first-party data strategy is at the top of the priority list for marketers. Businesses need to urgently adapt and define new strategies to address the upcoming withdrawal of third-party cookies in 2023.

In a practical sense that deadline is already upon us. Firefox and Safari have already adapted to the new regulations. After a false start, Chrome is lagging slightly behind but will get there in due course.



of high-growth businesses are already shifting to a first-party data approach.

According to Deloitte, 61% of high-growth businesses are already shifting to a first-party data approach,<sup>21</sup> indicating a growing shift in recognition of the need to respond to this rapidly changing digital environment.

For many marketers, however, identifying the most effective path forward remains a challenging prospect. This is especially true at a time when we're seeing both increasing regulation around the use of data and growing customer expectations for privacy. Yet there are multiple options that can help marketers use data to serve dynamic, highly personalized ads programmatically.

### Where is your data stored?

First, it's important to consider how you're communicating with your customers today – across all your digital platforms – and to confirm the extent to which those connections rely on the use and application of third-party cookies.

Then marketers must assess whether those connections and interactions could be delivered effectively or perhaps better through other, more direct means.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/xe/en/insights/topics/marketing-and-sales-operations/global-marketing-trends/2022/the-future-of-marketing-in-a-third-party-cookieless-world.html>

For this process to be successful, marketing organizations need to have a robust, detailed data structure and a managed data platform to effectively organize, connect, and optimize data in a secure and compliant way. This means marketers will need to become familiar with new sets of tools and systems beyond their familiar comfort zone of CMS, CRM, and marketing automation.

A sensible first step is to undertake a Marketing Operations Audit to capture and describe the systems and tools currently used and their functionality. Surprisingly few organizations have captured this sort of architectural view and update it regularly. In larger enterprises, the architectural view may be kept beyond the reach of marketers. With the proliferation of new marketing applications – many with low barriers to entry, especially those hosted externally as SaaS solutions – it's easy for the IT estate of marketing to grow, duplicate, extend beyond the firewall, and sometimes expose data to risk.

### **Building better marketing operations**

A Marketing Operations Audit is the first step toward building your future strategy and achieving a better end state. An audit provides a structured assessment for review and gap analysis. Without the clarity an audit provides, investments in improvement will be wasted.

Good data connectivity systems, solid processes, and governance will help marketers ensure that every interaction is relevant, addressable, and measurable.

One of the biggest concerns is that data is not connected to the customer consistently across the organization, making it hard to use and difficult to extract insights. This is primarily because the data has either many different owners or none. The marketing function has the opportunity to step up and become the custodian of customer data.

With ever-increasing datasets scattered across the organization in different tools and systems, gaps in governance and ownership can leave organizations at risk. Similarly, unifying data is a constant challenge, especially if the data is located in different identity spaces or gathered in various contexts.

Yet the intrinsically valuable information hidden in this data can often be imperative to transforming how effectively marketers can communicate with customers. Good data connectivity systems, solid processes, and governance will help marketers ensure that every interaction is relevant, addressable, and measurable. And they can be confident that they're using the data in a way that will not land their organization in hot water with data and privacy regulators.

### **Using data for personalized experiences**

With customer behavior and habits in a state of flux as the pandemic continues to shape and redefine our lives in so many ways, marketers need to adapt and move with their customers' changing preferences. This makes the selection and deployment of a Customer Data Platform (CDP) a priority.

What are the main impacts of deploying a CDP?



Maintaining customer profiles becomes essential rather than just nice to have. As a result, sales, marketing, and customer success all need to be incentivized to ensure data is up to date, useful, and connected.



With effective data-connectivity in place, identifying and defining “lookalike audiences” and carrying out audience segment building is both simpler and far more likely to improve the impact of campaigns.



Brands will update website experiences so that customers can adapt and tailor how they allow brands to communicate with them and the themes/topics that they want to hear about.



Brands will spend more time trying to collect more first-party data on their platforms. For example, newsletter sign-ups will become more common and forms will become more intelligent, focusing on the benefits of opt-in to comms.



They will also be less comfortable using lead-gen forms to collect basic data and will instead want to get audiences to their website to allow identity platforms to build new targeting strategies.

### **A fair exchange of value**

Metia has long championed the need for a “fair exchange of value” in organizations’ interactions with prospects and customers. This requirement will only grow stronger in 2022.

Personalized customer experiences are increasingly important, and success will be determined by the creation of more complete data profiles that are built or permitted by the customers themselves.

Customers are intelligent. Offer them something of value for the exchange involved in these data transactions and they will participate. This is as much a change of mindset as a tooling issue.

Marketers need to think like educators, curators, and publishers. Ask first, what exchange of value am I offering for this data? The organization’s sales purpose will always be better served through carefully nurtured relationships built on trust.

Brands need to spend less time in 2022 following a broadcast approach and focus more on building deeper connections with prospects, customers, and partners. In this initiative, it’s crucial to connect and protect data, and to identify ways to introduce contextual marketing approaches that provide precision targeting and seamless experiences at scale.



## Are you ready for 2022?

We hope this report has been informative and gives useful insight for your 2022 planning.

Change is continuous in our industry. That's why it's important that organizations are ready to face the complex challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

We expect B2B marketers to be under the spotlight more than ever before. If you'd like to discuss these trends in more detail, please get in touch at [info@metia.com](mailto:info@metia.com). And if you're curious to learn more, you'll find a host of additional content and resources at [www.metia.com](http://www.metia.com).

## About Metia

Metia Group is a global marketing agency with offices in London, Seattle, Austin, and Singapore. We employ over 100 marketing professionals; each is an expert in a particular area of specialization.

Our clients include big corporations and ambitious businesses. We provide them with structured marketing programs that reach across geographies, scale massively, can be deployed systematically, and are measured relentlessly.

Metia has specialist services designed to support our clients in the areas of Insight, Demand, Content, and Advocacy. These services are based upon deep expertise and proven methodologies and enabled by unique tools and systems.

In addition to working with technology and digital-native businesses, Metia works with global banks, community banks, credit unions, neo-banks, and fintechs across North America, Europe, and Asia, helping them to design new customer experiences, build brands that resonate online, and connect with new audiences.

To learn more about our capabilities and discuss how we could help you reach and engage your target audiences with focused, measurable campaigns, please contact us at [info@metia.com](mailto:info@metia.com).

### Metia Group

 [metia.com](https://metia.com)

 [@metia](https://twitter.com/metia)

 [facebook.com/MetiaGroup](https://facebook.com/MetiaGroup)

 [linkedin.com/metia](https://linkedin.com/metia)

### EMEA

 +44 (0)20 3100 3500

 [info@metia.com](mailto:info@metia.com)

### North America

 +1 425 629 5800

 [infoUSA@metia.com](mailto:infoUSA@metia.com)

### Asia

 +65 6224 7992

 [info@metia.com](mailto:info@metia.com)