

# B2B Marketing Trends Report 2024

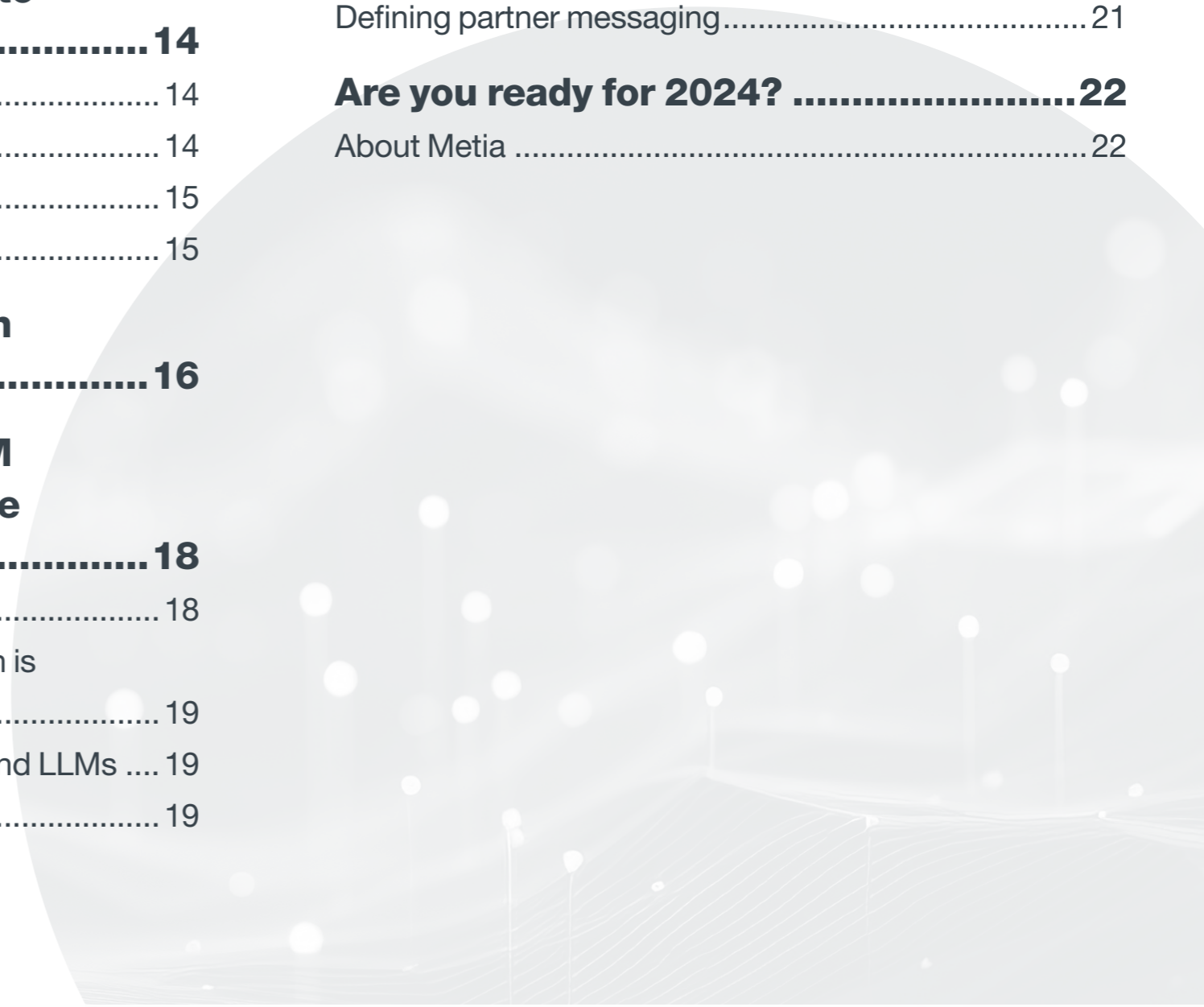
Eight essential trends for the strategic CMO

How to leverage behavioral science, AI and influencers to deliver impact and greater value to your customers.



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# 00 Introduction: the year ahead



**Dan Brooks**  
Chief Customer Officer

2023 was a year of stabilization. We embraced hybrid working and AI truly entered mainstream conversations, opening up discussions about the possibilities that lie ahead.

With a roadmap of opportunities for brands to elevate their customer relationships in 2024, marketers must ensure they find the right mix of data, technology, and communities to achieve greater cut-through and growth. Striking the right balance between cutting-edge thinking and application will therefore be especially critical as the current economic landscape continues to prove challenging.

Much uncertainty remains across the board, especially with the cost-of-living crisis showing little signs of abating. Yet, with the big tech giants continuing to show signs of growth, there's a great deal to be optimistic about.

As 2024 progresses, businesses will inevitably face another difficult year. However, those who focus on establishing trust and identifying new techniques will thrive and be able to meet their customer needs quickly and more affordably. Adopting "smarter" ways of working, powered by rich insights into audience behavior, will also be essential to determining effective stories.

Marketers who double down on creating human-centric, personal campaigns with greater precision and rigor will be able to deliver the levels of impact and relevance required to establish a competitive and commercial advantage.

In an increasingly saturated market, leveraging data, deploying influencers, and making use of emerging technologies and techniques should also be high on every marketer's agenda.

While many marketers are going to be firmly focused on experimenting with AI for the first time, we think the best course of action is to find the right mix of approaches and practices for your organization, while also riding the wave of emerging opportunities.

The chapters of the Metia B2B Trends Report 2024 will provide you with insights and expertise from across our business to help you shape and inform effective B2B marketing strategies and practices. We hope you find them valuable as you prepare for the year ahead.

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



# 00 Introduction: our global perspective



## Jason Cheang, Vice President, APJ

APJ is evolving rapidly with increased market dynamism and business uncertainties. Accelerated workforce transformation and digital adoption is now central. 2023 saw a greater focus on digital marketing. Advertising revenues increased by 7%, so outsourcing these functions will be pivotal to success in the next 12 months. Forrester predicts that about 3–5% of client-side B2B marketing expertise will shift to agencies next year, as marketers move more cash into B2B digital and marketing transformation. 2024 will also see sustainability and fueling responsible growth as a key narrative for companies in APJ, with 60–69% of Asia Pacific CEOs committing to either a net-zero or carbon-neutral target.



## Ben Atherton, Managing Director, UK

After a year when client priorities seemed to be about finding a more stable operating rhythm in B2B marketing, I'm hoping to see growth in two areas. First, storytelling around ESG needs to move from a "tick box" exercise that satisfies the needs of an annual report to something that engages customers and employees as well as regulators and shareholders. Second, following the recent LinkedIn B2B Institute<sup>1</sup> paper, I'm focused on how we can bring more emotion into brand-building to complement rational performance marketing campaigns in the UK and EMEA. Given that 95% of our clients' audiences are not in market at any one time, helping our clients create mental availability for their brand is something that should lead to some creative and exciting work in 2024.



## Amber Whiteman, President, US

One space where we should expect to see additional clarity in 2024 is the impact of GenAI and its potential to not only help us create content more efficiently, but also understand our target audiences more dynamically. We believe that the real golden goose will be when we teach GenAI to collate our massive data lakes, interpret our creative ideas (which 47% of Nielsen survey<sup>2</sup> respondents listed as the most critical factor in marketing success), and create content that's highly dynamic and personalized. This thinking holds true for anyone looking to create content and marketing plans for their clients or companies, whether B2B or B2C, to achieve greater marketing impact with more cost-effective and relevant content.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2023/11/21/why-performance-branding-the-frontier-b2b-marketing>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2017/when-it-comes-to-advertising-effectiveness-what-is-key/>

# 01 How behavioral science can help create lasting customer relationships



**Misia Tramp**

VP Customer Experience  
Strategy & Insight

As the marketing landscape and commercial audience expectations evolve, brands find themselves not just selling products, but striving to forge authentic, meaningful, and human connections. Customers increasingly demand messaging that aligns with their preferences and values – with more calls for personalized messaging and a growing desire to engage with brands that align with their values and personality. Customers are no longer merely ‘purchasers’; they are discerning individuals seeking meaningful interactions and a sense of belonging from the brands they choose to support.

But how do brands build these connections if they don’t fully understand the language, preferences, and needs of their audience? Enter behavioral science—a powerful insights tool that goes beyond demographic data and engagement metrics. Behavioral science, offers brands a nuanced understanding of the motivations, needs, and preferences of target audiences (and how to serve them). With brands expected to focus more on establishing profound and authentic relationships with their customers in 2024 exploring how strategically leveraging behavioral science can help, will be critical to success.

## Why authenticity matters in 2024

Consumers are not only making purchasing decisions based on the merits of a product or the reputation of the brand. Their decisions are also based on brand values, a brand’s understanding of them and their needs, and the relationship they have built with the brand. For instance, 84% of B2B buyers<sup>3</sup> are likely to choose a vendor who clearly understands their business objectives. While 71% of consumers<sup>4</sup> expect companies to deliver personalized interactions and 76% percent get frustrated when this doesn’t happen.

The Salesforce and McKinsey statistics underline a fundamental truth: in an age of nearly unlimited options, consumers are actively seeking brands that deeply understands them and engage them on a personal level. Despite this, many brands still struggle to meet these expectations, often relying on traditional, one-size-fits-all marketing approaches.



<sup>3</sup> [https://www.salesforce.com/content/dam/web/en\\_us/www/documents/research/salesforce-state-of-the-connected-customer-4th-ed.pdf](https://www.salesforce.com/content/dam/web/en_us/www/documents/research/salesforce-state-of-the-connected-customer-4th-ed.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-value-of-getting-personalization-right-or-wrong-is-multiplying>

## The role of behavioral science

In a market where consumers demand more from brands than surface-level engagement, behavioral science stands out as a practical tool for marketers seeking genuine, enduring connections.

Marketers can use behavioral science to generate data-driven strategies. Unlike static demographic information, behavioral science considers dynamic factors such as preferences, motivations, and journey pathing. Understanding these details lets marketers adapt, delivering content that fits evolving expectations and builds lasting connections with their audience. There are four core benefits.

- 1. Personalization and relevance:** Behavioral science allows marketers to move beyond generic messaging, offering personalized content that directly addresses the unique needs of each consumer.
- 2. Trust and credibility:** When consumers feel understood and catered to on a personal level, it fosters a sense of credibility and authenticity.
- 3. Proactive and predictive messaging:** Behavioral science equips marketers to predict future consumer behavior based on historical data. This foresight enables brands to stay ahead of trends, tailor campaigns proactively, and adapt swiftly to changing consumer expectations.
- 4. Operational efficiency:** Behavioral science helps optimize resource allocation by identifying the most effective channels, timing, and types of content.

## Maintaining human connections in the age of AI

With automation and algorithms set to dominate the marketing agenda in 2024, the challenge to establish human, authentic connections will only intensify.

Behavioral science is far from being at odds with AI. It actually harnesses the power of AI to cultivate more authentic relationships. By doing so, behavioral science can extract nuanced insights from vast datasets, allowing brands to understand individual preferences, behaviors, and emotions on a deeper level.

This ensures that the personalization facilitated by AI isn't just a technical exercise but a means to authentically connect with consumers. Behavioral science becomes the guiding force that humanizes AI-driven interactions, transforming data-driven insights into meaningful engagements and deep relationships.

For brands striving to remain competitive in a quickly evolving landscape, behavioral science stands as the foundation upon which strategic and informed decisions can be built.

It unlocks the secrets of customer behavior and paves the way for proactive adaptation to emerging trends. By embracing the insights derived from behavioral science, brands position themselves not just to meet but to exceed the evolving needs of their audience, ensuring a competitive edge in the ever-shifting B2B marketing landscape.

## 02 Why doubling down on video content is more critical than ever



**Dan Brooks**  
Chief Customer Officer

In an age increasingly being defined by the creative potential of AI, there is a countervailing force that's holding its own in the realm of audiovisual media: authenticity. Borrowing from the realm of B2C, and reflecting on the emotional journeys that brands have created in this space, B2B businesses have the opportunity to engage audiences in increasingly creative and more meaningful ways.

Looking back on the year at some of the most impactful campaigns across B2B and B2C marketing, authenticity has been a common theme. From an execution and storytelling perspective, the Norwich City Samaritans campaign struck a powerful chord with audiences across platforms. Although the subject of mental health is more broadly resonant, the power of the story enabled the campaign to connect on a deeper level. The most important lesson from a creative standpoint is that we shouldn't always focus on center stage, that is, the client. In the B2B context, this focus should be on the end customer.

### **Time to let the customer shine**

When we consider the options open to brands in building credibility with advocacy, rather than just awareness, the two most powerful avenues are customers and industry experts such as analysts. Polished videos featuring C-suite executives extolling the virtues of a solution and the ROI achieved still have their place, but video is a medium for showing rather than telling.

Going down the value chain, and letting customers share their success, immediately creates a more authentic connection to the outcomes that partnerships, products, and services can deliver. It's always a difficult sell, convincing a client that their own content needs less of them and more of their customers, but in the land of B2B, advocacy delivers authenticity. Content that communicates the strength of a solution through its beneficiaries is intrinsically authentic, so investment in customer stories should be a focus for 2024.



## The rise of the perennial

With the preponderance of social media platforms and generational cohorts that increasingly tend toward more bite-sized, shareable content, social-ready video assets are another element of audiovisual media that's gaining influence and will certainly inform creative strategies in 2024. Similarly, longer-form content is also gaining traction with all generational cohorts, which are themselves becoming less significant from a content targeting perspective. Increasingly, those we once referred to as "digital natives", i.e., those born into the digital age, are no longer the most digitally adept by default. Today, the ability to consume information via traditional media channels as well as curated content across social messaging and media platforms is widespread, giving further credence to the concept of the "perennial".

As with all video content, a compelling story is crucial. Whether it's shortform content, such as memes, which can succinctly communicate complex ideas, or longer form content that explores ideas and themes in greater depth, there is a delicate balance in getting it right. When it comes to the buying journey, senior decision-makers will certainly be interested in ROI, but that doesn't mean they want to be bombarded by stats amid a deluge of corporate speak.

At the same time, there are some terrible examples of organizations incorporating memes in their marketing output, for which the target audience is not "in" on the joke or reference. It's therefore important to push boundaries, but to keep in mind that maintaining brand integrity means knowing the limits.

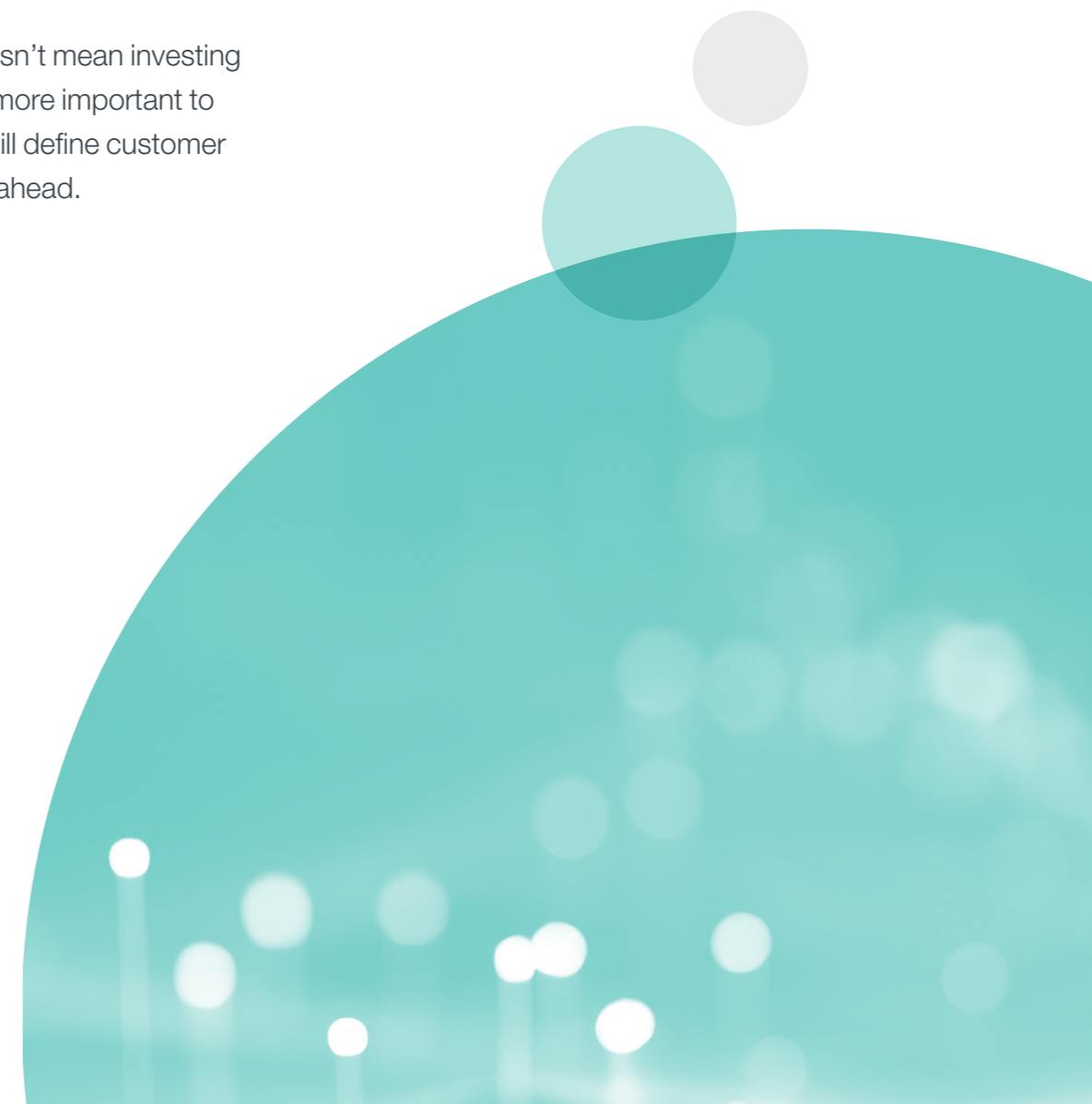
## Getting in step with the up-tempo march of GenAI

Today, generative AI tools can ingest long-form deliverables in textual form and produce market-ready video content with relative ease. They can also break up hero content and create video assets that can be shared more widely, aligning with the platforms and expectations of the audiences and platforms discussed above.

It doesn't go without saying that brands need to begin preparing for and adapting to the implications of this technology and learn how to harness it effectively. Outside of creating the content itself, there are parts of the creative process that can be expedited with generative AI tools, such as brainstorming, visualization, storyboarding, and pitches. Understanding how and where GenAI can deliver real value will rely on education and a commitment to a mindset that seeks mastery over the technology that has already shown its unsettling potential.

Clients are increasingly interested in how and where generative AI has been used to deliver projects and, in many cases, are exploring the technology themselves—with an eye toward reducing costs and expediting delivery.

Ultimately, doubling down on video doesn't mean investing twice as much in video content. It's far more important to understand the dynamics at play that will define customer and market expectations over the year ahead.



## 03 Why establishing a rich content engine is a valuable investment



**Matt Robinson**  
Content Director

Storytelling is an essential part of our everyday lives. It permeates the books we read, the movies we watch, and the products we buy. Yet creating powerful and engaging stories is far from easy. There are many factors that can determine the extent to which they will connect with audiences and deliver their desired impact.

Establishing a robust content engine is one of the fundamental building blocks for effective storytelling. As we start 2024, marketers unequivocally need to ramp up their creative efforts. Placing a greater focus on content strategies and establishing clear and directional goals paired with SEO and search data are only parts of the puzzle. They may help retain or improve visibility and drive greater web engagements, but to truly tell compelling stories brands need to go further. They need richer insights into customer behaviors and must understand what drives action. And then they must align that knowledge with the perspectives and experiences of every customer-facing department to inform and implement an effective approach to content strategy and delivery.

### Produce real, emotional content

With 2024 set to be the year where brands have to strive to “make it real” for audiences, greater focus needs to be placed on creating highly personal content that delivers rich and engaging experiences for audiences. Especially those that increasingly expect and demand more from the brands and businesses they interact with. Equally, brands must focus on making these experiences connected and seamless for the customer, and for every department inside their organization.

Despite 70%<sup>5</sup> of organizations claiming they integrate content strategy into their overall marketing/sales/communication strategy, it is clear the path to success is far from straightforward. According to the Content Market Institute, a number of organizations indicated that content is not a coordinated business function. Businesses also say that they struggle to create the right content, to create content consistently, and to identify ways to differentiate the content they produce.

<sup>5</sup> <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/articles/b2b-content-marketing-trends-research/>



### Ease the pressure of doing more with less

Marketing budgets continue to tighten, calls to “do more with less” are intensifying, and competition for attention has never been higher. This presents a major barrier to meeting expectations and fulfilling marketing requirements. If you do not align content creation and distribution with wider business activities, it’s unlikely these efforts will reflect the wider goals of the business.

Equally, if sales teams are unaware of the content that’s being produced and communicated externally, this can result in the content lying stagnant and not being shared with relevant customers. Communicating a narrative in keeping with the values of the brand is essential. At least provide the ability for audiences to truly immerse themselves in a consolidated narrative.

As the year progresses, brands need to ensure that they establish greater internal alignment so they can ensure all customer engagements are consistent and optimized to deliver the most impact and value. Successful content engines unite teams, processes, and tools to support the creation and distribution of content, from blogs and white papers to podcasts and webinars.

Your website may typically serve as the central hub for all your content, but all other paid, earned, and owned broadcasting channels need to be in line with the overarching narrative you are looking to share.

Audiences not only expect their brand engagements to be rewarding, but they also want connected and familiar stories and messages that are responsive to how they choose to interact. Content may be key, but if that content doesn’t reflect the voice or need of every department across the organization, it won’t fulfill its true purpose or potential.

Even with the best team of content creators or the best-paid media practitioners, brands can struggle to create high-quality content that delivers value to everyone and ensures it reaches the right audiences at the right time. Therefore, there has never been a better time to establish the fundamental principles that will enable you to deliver a robust and valuable marketing activity in 2024.

Every organization is different, but putting content strategy at the core of everything you do—in a clear, seamless, and connected manner—will be critical to your enduring success.



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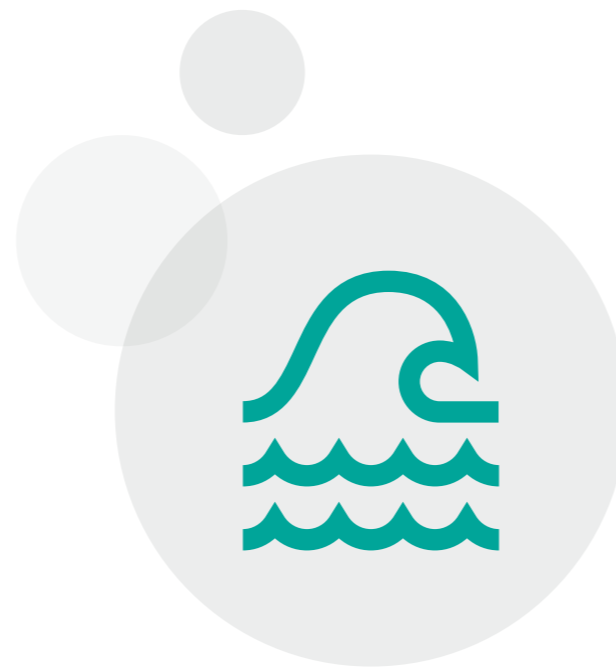
# 04 How to make sure you are ready to ride the wave of B2B influencer marketing



**Liz High**  
Financial Services Practice Lead

In 2023, brands invested over \$21 billion in influencer marketing,<sup>6</sup> a 29% increase compared to 2022. This trend isn't limited to consumer-facing businesses; B2B marketers are also recognizing its value.

According to a global survey, 75% of B2B marketers included influencer marketing in their 2023 strategies, and 93% of CMOs intend to expand influencer efforts in 2024.<sup>7</sup>



## Reported outcomes from B2B influencer marketing are persuasive:

**61%** of influencer marketing campaigns drove increased sales.<sup>8</sup>

**58%** improved brand reputation.<sup>9</sup>

**47%** enhanced brand advocacy.<sup>10</sup>

**67%** of campaigns involving influencers outperformed those relying solely on brand marketing.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/>  
<sup>7</sup> <https://bit.ly/469s6P2>  
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.toprankblog.com/2023/11/b2b-influencer-marketing-report-23/>  
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.toprankblog.com/2023/11/b2b-influencer-marketing-report-23/>  
<sup>10</sup> <https://www.toprankblog.com/2023/11/b2b-influencer-marketing-report-23/>  
<sup>11</sup> <https://bit.ly/469s6P2>

Whether you're considering dipping a toe in for the first time or you're ready to dive in headlong, it's crucial for businesses to understand how to leverage influencer marketing effectively.

Here's our five-step guide to building a winning influencer strategy in 2024:

## Step 1 Define your why and how

Influencer marketing requires the same rigor as any other strategy. Start by identifying your audience, considering your channel strategy, and setting goals that are specific and measurable. Key questions to ask yourself are:

**What are your objectives (e.g., awareness, interest, desire, acquisition) and how will you measure success?** Influencer marketing is most often associated with top-of-funnel activity, but in B2B a powerful cross-funnel approach can drive everything from brand recall and trust to MQLs and SQLs to revenue.

**How does influencer marketing fit within your broader marketing strategy?** It should align with, support, and enhance your other investments.

**Which channels will you focus on?** Effective influencer strategies are multichannel, not just a social media play. If you build effective relationships with influencers, you can engage them in multiple ways. For example:

- **Thought leadership events and media:** This includes webinars, conferences, panel discussions, and publishing articles or white papers in industry publications.
- **Company events and pre-sales engagement:** Engage with them in one-on-one meetings, mentoring, networking events, customer advisory boards, or user groups.

**What should you explicitly expect from influencers?** In influencer marketing, ensure your brand is represented ethically and compliantly, especially in regulated industries. Establish clear contracts but balance this with allowing influencers to narrate your story authentically in their voice, fostering mutual trust.


**Who are the right influencers for you?** Influencer voices and values need to align carefully with your brand. It might seem obvious, but influencers are only influential if your customers and prospects believe they are.

## Step 2 Find your people

Choosing the right influencers depends on your goals, audience, market, and budget. For example, if you're Salesforce, you can employ mega influencers like Matthew McConaughey to pose philosophical questions about your AI strategy. But if you're not, you still have plenty of room to get creative with micro influencers in your network and industry.

- Employees can be influential advocates.
- Customers can help promote reciprocal relationships.
- Thought leaders and subject matter experts lend credibility.
- Academics and analysts offer research-based insights.
- Business owners and entrepreneurs bring practical experience.
- Content creators and journalists can communicate complex ideas in accessible ways.

Key qualities to look for in influencers include expertise, content creation ability, multichannel influence, and authenticity—and you can find these in many places.



### Step 3

#### Build your story together to inspire authentic engagement

This involves creating content that resonates with your audience and allows influencers to genuinely connect with them. It's not about hard selling; it's about sparking conversations and building mutually profitable relationships through collaboration and a fair exchange of value.

It's also about agreeing on talking points—not scripting conversations—and providing resources that influencers can adapt and share. Treat influencers as peers, understand their goals and establish a mutual benefit. Engagement is at the heart of influencer marketing.




### Step 4

#### Get out of your comfort zone

An influencer strategy gives you the opportunity to experiment with new channels. Find a podcaster in your vertical and develop a mini-series. They need content, you need their followers.

Experiment with credible TikTok creators or YouTubers to tell your story in a way you would never consider. The results might surprise you. Take a look at Adobe, Salesforce, Square, and Grammarly hashtags on TikTok and be prepared to think differently. Experiment.



### Step 5

#### Measure and adjust

Finally, constantly evaluate the effectiveness of your campaigns. Use the metrics aligned with your goals to assess success and be ready to tweak your strategy based on these insights. Remember, influencer marketing is an evolving field, and flexibility is key to staying relevant and effective.

In truth, B2B influencer marketing is not just a trend; it's a vital part of modern marketing strategies. By understanding its nuances and adopting a structured approach, you can harness its power to build brand presence, foster genuine customer engagement, and drive growth throughout 2024.

# 05 How generative AI can be used to enhance the creative process



**Matt Robinson**

Content Director

Generative AI is expected to boom in 2024, with Forrester predicting that 60% of skeptics will use and value it in 2024, whether they realize it or not. Yet, despite emerging defiantly on the agenda of many in 2023, there are inevitably many questions and debates about what it means. To what extent will it change the way we live, work, and play? How will GenAI affect business and delivery models? And for marketers especially, how will it shape and change the creative process?

## Commercial value of AI

Organizations that don't embrace AI or look to fold it into their businesses and service offerings will inevitably get left behind. They will risk losing market share and become less relevant. Worse still, they will fail to capitalize on the wealth of opportunities this emerging technology can deliver.

That may sound familiar, even obvious. However, the practicalities around how and what to do are far from straightforward. As the stewards of creating and communicating stories that must now stand for something, evoke emotion, and be bold, personal, and meaningful.

Marketers should not let fear blindsides them from a wealth of possibilities. While there will be concerns about the impact on jobs over the long term, how we adapt and respond to those challenges will only emerge and evolve with time, as has been true for any major technological innovation over the last 50 years. It shouldn't, therefore, impact or restrict the possibilities of the now.

## Human centrality

Driving impact and value has and will be key for marketers. And finding new ways to maintain a distinct and competitive edge is increasingly difficult in an already crowded and overserved marketplace. With B2B buyers expected to increase their demand for more human-centric conversations and relationships in 2024, organizations need to find more advanced and reliable ways to improve the customer experience, while also accelerating business growth. If harnessed correctly, GenAI can help find that ideal sweet spot. But investment in experimentation and team upskilling is essential.

According to a recent study conducted by the Content Marketing Institute, 72% of organizations use generative AI. That's a big number, right? But when you consider that 61% of organizations lack guidelines on using it, a clear skills gap is emerging. Organizations must look at two distinct areas.



### Optimizing AI integration


From an input perspective, focusing on crafting clearly defined prompts that deliver meaningful, tangible, and accurate outputs is essential. With a wide range of possible outputs, the specificity with which you use tools like ChatGPT to supplement your creative process can live or die by how well you “feed the engine.” Investment in experimenting with different approaches, styles, and requests helps hone the necessary skills, but it must be based on a sound understanding and clear communication of the desired outputs.

From an output perspective, ensuring content is on point is equally vital. Even if your request is as simple as asking for an alternative list of SEO-friendly titles for your next blog series, you still need to apply human intelligence to determine whether the outputs that you’ve been served are factually correct, linguistically accurate, and in step with what you intend to use them for. This process of reviewing, editing, and refining will ensure that AI is there to supplement, ideate, and support the creative process—not dictate, replace, or define it.

### Finding the right fit

In early 2023, commentators were quick to say outputs from AI tools “made no sense” or were “just flatly wrong.” And many would argue that was fair. But much like when you start your hunt for the perfect outfit, you don’t always strike gold the first time. You can go to your local shopping district and purchase something off the rack, but that may not be exactly what you are looking for or need. Alternatively, if your situation permits, you can opt for something tailored to your own specifications. One option gets the job done. The other is clearly “the right fit.”

With adoption and application expected to accelerate exponentially in 2024, the focus should shift to how to find solutions that perfectly suit your purposes. Choice is and will always be paramount to your decision. But finding the right fit takes time, persistence, and patience. The way you harness AI in your creative journey will be no different. But when you find the right fit, it can and will provide greater long-term value.



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## 06 How to drive commercial growth with sustainability in mind



**Sean Donovan**

Vice President, Global Accounts

Sustainability has been at the heart of many organizations' communications messaging in the past few years. Between January 2020 and September 2023, 35.2% of conversations about sustainable development emphasized the importance of improving lives through better health, better access to innovation and opportunity, better education, and more. Many organizations have made strides to build and promote their sustainability efforts, but there has been skepticism about how effective, genuine, or far-reaching enough some of these attempts have been. Many companies still don't see the full economic benefits of a robust, authentic, and future-looking sustainability strategy.

Most know that embracing sustainability is good for business in that it not only helps mitigate risks but also fosters innovation, attracts conscientious customers, and secures financial investment. Born out of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, sustainability is now seen as a key driver of business growth. However, understanding how to translate that belief into growth is the ongoing challenge.

Less than 25% of conversations about sustainable development focused on curtailing energy use, slowing climate change, and preserving environments. Organizations that integrate the SDGs into customer experience planning, innovation, and their product roadmaps will drive greater value to their customer base and ultimately to their own growth. It can no longer be just an exercise in ticking boxes but instead must become a fundamental business imperative.

Last year started to see a shift away from "greenwashing" to the establishment of firmer and more robust commitments to sustainability. And in 2024, this trend will continue as successful companies finally realize that sustainability strategies require genuine commitment, not only in communications but in every facet of their operations. Increased regulations—such as the standards that the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) determined should be implemented starting in January 2024—mean the onus will fall on marketers at all levels and remits to be aware of the requirements and what their company is doing about it.



All of Metia's B2B clients have sustainability strategies, so at the end of 2023 we carried out an extensive insights exercise into this increasingly important subject, examining over 13 million B2B digital conversations on the topic. (The results are fascinating and worth a deeper conversation with our leading insights specialists.)

Through this exercise, we've predicted eight essential trends that will underpin 2024 sustainability strategies. Here's a peek at some of them:



### **Sustainability investments will evolve from being a differentiator to becoming a core driver of decision-making and revenue strategy.**

A sustainable development strategy has become necessary for long-term resilience. It isn't just about doing good or being seen to be good. Sustainable development needs to be a core consideration in your overall business strategy planning. Successful companies will achieve this goal.



### **The definition of "sustainability" will be broadened.**

As hugely important as it is, sustainable development is more than climate action and energy transformation. It's a complex web of environmental, societal, and economic drivers that can't be achieved as a siloed workstream. Companies' sustainable developments will need to become an intricate tapestry where corporate ESG initiatives, inclusion and diversity policies, technological innovations, social advocacy, and more are woven together to create a fabric of progress toward a better world.



### **Investing in change management will help scale sustainability efforts.**

Hard wiring sustainability levers into how business is done will require investments in evolving legacy practices as well as the implementation of new processes and principles. Currently, there is not enough investment in the change management required to embed and scale sustainability efforts. As emphasized at the Finextra Sustainable Finance Live event held in October 2023 in London, there's growing pressure to create legislation and guidelines around investment criteria. In other words, investors want to support authentic structures and to put an end to greenwashing in the industry. For example, the ISSB's new standards will ensure that financial statements include full disclosure in order to meet capital market needs.



### **Embracing ESG data and measurement is critical to success.**

Successful measurement of sustainability initiatives and their impact is a key challenge in operationalizing sustainability efforts, and it will become critical to optimizing sustainability efforts and demonstrating their value.



### **Big tech brands will start to become sustainability heroes.**

Technology is not the enemy. Cloud innovations, big data, AI, and smart devices are powerful catalysts for optimizing sustainability efforts, reshaping industries, and driving positive environmental and social outcomes. 2024 will see technology companies come to the fore as drivers of future sustainability success.

# 07 How refining your SERPs and LLM strategies can improve your online visibility



**Amelia Bowles**  
Paid Media Lead

In the relentless pursuit of increased visibility and customer engagement, businesses are constantly seeking innovative strategies to connect with their audience effectively and build lasting relationships. However, as the landscape becomes increasingly competitive, achieving brand discoverability requires a meticulous strategy.

As we step into 2024, the dynamic realm of digital marketing is undergoing a seismic shift, primarily driven by the rise of AI and the emergence of large language models (LLMs), which present a compelling opportunity for marketers. In 2024, marketers must enhance visibility by navigating between search engine results pages (SERPs) and LLM strategies to not only uphold traditional approaches but also embrace innovative strategies to optimize assets and ensure success.

## The impact of AI on search strategy

This year marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of AI and its profound impact on the way marketers approach search strategy. The traditional keyword-centric approach is gradually making way for more sophisticated AI-driven algorithms. Machine learning (ML) algorithms analyze user behavior, preferences, and context, enabling marketers to tailor their strategies with extraordinary precision.

AI is no longer a supplementary tool but a driving force that demands a recalibration of traditional approaches. This includes incorporating AI-driven insights into content creation, ensuring that it aligns seamlessly with the evolving preferences of search engines. In 2024, AI is poised to revolutionize search algorithms, making them more intuitive and responsive, which demands a nuanced understanding from marketers. This shift requires marketers to think beyond keywords and delve into predictive analytics, ML, and natural language processing. By embracing AI-driven insights, businesses can anticipate user intent, deliver personalized content, and stay ahead of the competition.



## Decoding LLMs: Why swift implementation is crucial for marketers

Large language models are at the forefront of this AI revolution, offering unprecedented capabilities for hyper-personalization and more effective customer interactions. But what exactly are LLMs, and why should marketers act swiftly to implement strategies centered around them?

LLMs—exemplified by ChatGPT and integrated into platforms like Bing—can comprehend the intricacies of language, allowing marketers to create content that resonates on a personal level with their audience. Swift implementation of LLM strategies is crucial to staying ahead of the curve because these models enable marketers to create dynamic, engaging, and personalized content that fosters brand loyalty.

## Navigating the interplay between SERPs and LLMs

Search engine results pages are becoming more dynamic, considering not only traditional ranking factors but also user intent and context. LLMs play a pivotal role in this evolution by providing search engines with a deeper understanding of user queries and preferences.

In 2024, the challenge will be to achieve sustained engagement in an era of information overload. How can marketers make sure their stories get seen while also maintaining and building increasing levels of engagement?

To navigate this, marketers must optimize content for discoverability on platforms like Bing and leverage innovative features such as Google's Search Generative Experience and Perspectives feeds. Marketers need to craft content that aligns with the dynamic nature of SERPs. This involves understanding the intent behind user queries and tailoring content to address those needs.

Leveraging LLMs, marketers can create conversational content that resonates with users, increasing the likelihood of visibility on SERPs. It's not just about ranking high on search results; it's about crafting narratives that captivate audiences and spark meaningful interactions. Marketers need to understand the nuances of user intent, incorporate conversational elements into their content, and use LLMs to create personalized, context-aware experiences. Achieving this delicate balance is essential for maintaining and building increasing levels of engagement in 2024.

## The importance of a complete approach

In the era of AI-driven strategies and dynamic SERPs, striking a balance between time-tested methods and cutting-edge innovative techniques is essential for a comprehensive marketing strategy. While AI and LLMs offer unparalleled opportunities for personalization, traditional methods should not be discarded.

A holistic approach involves integrating the best of both worlds, ensuring a seamless and engaging customer experience across various channels. Organizations that invest in both traditional and futuristic techniques are more likely to maintain a competitive edge and achieve significant brand visibility in the channels that matter most to their target audience.



# 08 Why partner marketing is critical to establishing more meaningful connections with customers



**Dan Brooks**  
Chief Customer Officer

For organizations with partner programs, 2024 is set to deepen the nature of collaboration, as the channel becomes a crucial avenue for building more meaningful relationships with customers and driving new business. In recent years, sales departments have not seen the headcounts and levels of investment return to pre-pandemic levels, largely due to ongoing economic pressures. Buyer preferences are also shifting to technology partners that offer more value through a greater understanding of the solutions and services available to them outside their core provider's ecosystem.

These factors are bringing about a closer reliance on channel partners to become the irreplaceable, trusted technology advisors for customers.

## A hybrid approach

There is now acknowledgment from vendors that they cannot be the sole provider of everything their customers need. This means that their channel partners must have the knowledge of the wider vendor offerings and ecosystem in order to understand where and how solutions can be integrated and deliver real value. Customers ultimately want to know that their own IT estate is meeting business requirements and that their technology partners are invested in helping them navigate the evolving and increasingly fragmented and complex technology landscape.

Hybrid cloud strategies are a typical example of the paradigm shift that has led to vendors moving away from a protectionist state of mind, with the likes of Google, AWS, and Microsoft accepting that many customers do not want to rely on one provider to manage their entire IT posture.

Vendors understand this dynamic and are increasingly using their partner ecosystems, and the expertise within, to cut through and deliver added value to customers. The result of this evolution is that organizations with partner programs now also want assurances that their channel partners have wider knowledge of the competitor landscape and can embed themselves as advisors, rather than only as funnels of proprietary offerings.

When operated effectively, this strategy creates new opportunities and routes to market, as complementary products and services can be added around competitor offerings. Critically, it also establishes the greater emotional and personal touch that businesses are increasingly seeking. Partners must therefore pivot messaging toward showing an understanding of the complex needs of customers and provide confidence in their ability to assist with the integration of technology that sits outside the master vendor's ecosystem.



## Defining partner messaging

Vendors will, of course, have their role to play in defining messaging and helping partners become well-rounded and essential consultants. It's not enough for them to communicate targets around products and services without providing partners with the essential tools and educational assets that will empower them to confidently sell them. Getting this right will certainly be a factor in determining the success of partner programs in 2024.

Customer data, and insights from this data, for example, will be crucial when it comes to defining messaging and meeting the real (as opposed to the perceived) needs of customers. By analyzing customer feedback and conversations, as well as their long-term technology roadmaps, vendors and partners are able to understand the key anxieties and purchasing triggers and to adjust go-to-market messaging accordingly so that decision-makers are engaged effectively at key inflection points in their buying journeys.

Through acting as a technology-agnostic advisor, partners can further embed themselves into customer environments and technology adoption roadmaps. The obvious benefit here is that partners are privy to vendors' product roadmaps and therefore can align engagement around nascent technologies with customers' business objectives.

The advent of generative AI is a clear example of how this dynamic works in practice. With the release of ChatGPT, businesses quickly began exploring the technology's potential to enhance operations. With the inside track on vendors' AI offerings, partners could educate customers on the potential value of proprietary offerings, stealing a march on their market rivals by showing how the technology could be adopted and integrated into the existing stack, and the benefits of choosing their core vendor's solutions.

In essence, effective partners still wear their team colors, but they will understand and appreciate the potential value of players among their rivals. In 2024, this is the mentality that will deliver success for vendors and their channel partners.

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# Are you ready for 2024?

## We hope this report has been informative and gives useful insight for your 2024 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 provide highly integrated marketing programs that will improve your business performance.

We believe that insight guides strategy, content fuels conversation, and demand drives revenue.

Our clients include the world's leading corporations and largest brands as well as fast-growth businesses aiming to disrupt the status quo.

During the past two years, we have executed marketing campaigns in 88 countries and 39 languages.

## Metia at a glance

**90**  
Professionals

Client Services | Consulting |  
Program management |  
Editors | Writers |  
Design | UX | AI | Motion |  
Architects | Developers | PM | QA |  
eDM | PR | AR | Marketing | Social

**30+**  
Years experience

**Strategy**  
Audience | Brand | Growth |  
Compete Innovation |  
Content | Customer journey

**Insight**  
Qualitative | Quantitative |  
Linguistic modelling | Social  
media and marketing analytics

**Influence**  
Media relations | Analyst relations

**Advocacy**  
References | Content | Social

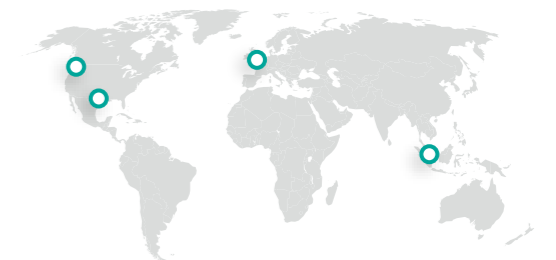
**Digital**  
Web | Apps | Mobile | Email

**Lead generation and relationships**  
Marketing automation |  
ABM | eDM | CRM |  
Social media marketing |  
Search engine marketing |  
Community management

**Partner Ecosystems**  
Developer and partner marketing

**4**  
Locations

London  
Seattle  
Austin  
Singapore



## What should you do next?

To start a conversation about how we can help your business, contact:



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