HubSpot · Glimpse

Consumer Trends Report

Exploring what makes buyers click, tap, and buy.

2024

What's coming up

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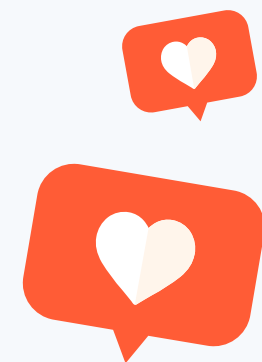The future of browsing via AI & social search

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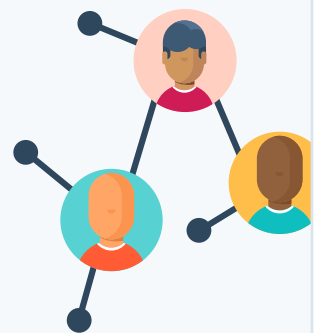
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In a social-first world, everyone's a creator

CHI THUKRAL
Senior Team Lead, Brand Social at HubSpot
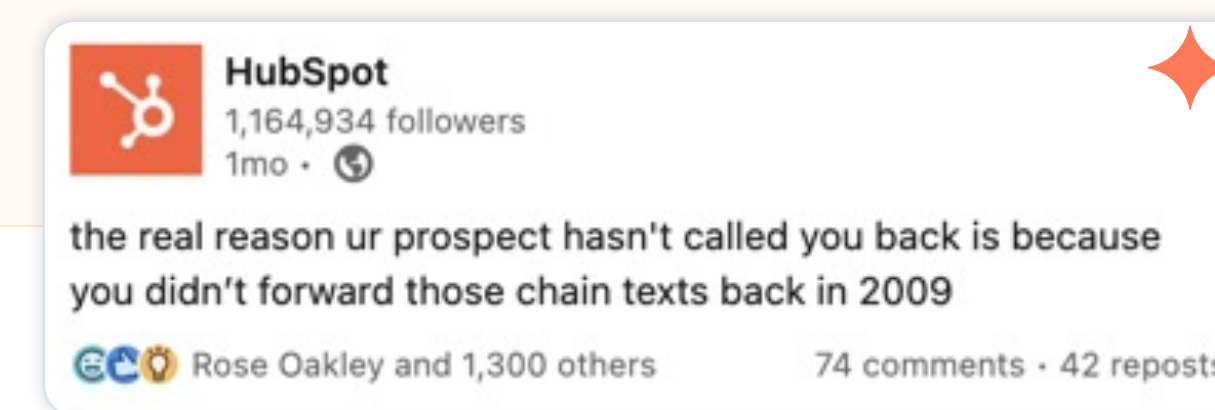
In 2016, a Black Mirror episode called 'Nosedive' depicted a world where social status is currency. The episode was satirical, but it made us all think...a lot (especially those of us working in social). In the past eight years, we've gotten closer to this reality. Our recent survey found that today, one in five consumers considers themself a creator or influencer.

We're living in a society driven by social proof and social identities — which has its challenges and opportunities. The challenges? Growing in a saturated market and cutting through the noise. The opportunities? Endless. Any brand, no matter the size or industry, can lean into their personality, turn employees into creators, and build a loyal community. While the ways that consumers interact with each other and brands online is changing, it's opening up new spaces for brands to shine through. At HubSpot, we've been experimenting on LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, and other social channels, and it turns out people really love silly little jokes and videos (in addition to valuable content and tutorials).

We're excited to see how a social-first world shapes business strategy in the year ahead, and we hope you'll share your journey with us along the way. Happy scrolling!

If I could give a few suggestions for brands in the year ahead based on the data, I'd say —

1 See how easy it is, as a consumer, to find and buy from your brand via social or mobile, then optimize.

2 Go all in on brand personality, showcase creators on your team, and share your brand's values — bonus points if this comes directly from your founders.

3 Invest in data privacy and protecting your consumers' information, and be transparent about what you're doing.

4 Lead with value, build relationships before selling, and help users navigate your content and grasp the benefits.

5 Create and launch bold, creative brand content that stands out and tells your story.

HubSpot
1,164,934 followers
1mo · 🌐

the real reason ur prospect hasn't called you back is because you didn't forward those chain texts back in 2009

Rose Oakley and 1,300 others   74 comments · 42 reposts

Tapping is the new clicking

Last year, the time that consumers spent on mobile apps passed 5 hours daily, on average, up from 2022. Consumers are living on their phones more than ever and not just scrolling for fun, but researching and making purchasing decisions. And in the midst of a social-first, mobile-first revolution, AI has entered the scene in a big way. People are starting to use AI to research new products and get inspiration in the day-to-day.

Another key theme across the consumer landscape this year is value. Over half of consumers feel we're in a recession and 55% are tightening budgets as they expect it to last, though concerns aren't quite as strong as they were in 2023.

To better understand how consumers are thinking about the digital shopping experience, investing in brands, and sharing online, we surveyed 700+ consumers across the U.S. in January 2024 and talked to brand leaders. Here's what we found.

Top digital consumer shopping trends

#1 **Consumers want to conduct their own product research.**

When researching a brand or product, 59% of consumers prefer to gather information themselves rather than speak to a human.

#2 **Social media is the #1 product discovery channel, and buying directly via social media is up YoY.**

Most consumers prefer social media for product discovery and 1 in 4 social media users bought a product on social in the past 3 months.

#3 **Consumers shop on their phones more than any other device.**

Consumers use mobile phones more than any other device for online shopping and when searching for questions online.

#4 **1 in 3 consumers use AI chatbots like ChatGPT, primarily to learn or find inspiration and ideas.**

Consumers are trying AI tools in their personal and professional lives, mainly for research, ideas, and inspiration.

#5 **1 in 5 consumers consider themselves content creators or influencers.**

21% of consumers consider themselves content creators or influencers, jumping up to 45% for Gen Zers and Millennials.

#6 **More than half of consumers are being more careful with spending.**

53% of U.S. adults are more concerned with how they spend their money and more than half feel we're in a recession.

#7 **75% of consumers say data privacy is a human right.**

76% of respondents are concerned with how companies use their personal data and most feel that data privacy is a right.

#8 **Consumers want to support brands committed to diversity and inclusion, and small businesses.**

50% of U.S. adults say brands should do more when it comes to social advocacy and consumers appreciate when brands share their values.

5

HubSpot

Find out what makes customers tick & scale your most successful marketing channels

Bring all your marketing tools, data, and analytics together to uncover meaningful marketing insights in an intuitive platform with smart features. After just six months, marketing customers see a 115% increase in inbound leads, an 81% higher deal close rate, and 108% more website traffic.

Social Media Hub

Run every social media campaign from a central location, never miss a mention, and attribute business value to social.

Marketing Automation

Set your marketing campaigns on autopilot with marketing automation software powered by CRM data.

Marketing Dashboards & Reporting

Empower your team with analytics powerful enough for an analyst, but accessible enough for everyone.

AI Chatbot Builder

Qualify leads, book meetings, provide customer support, and scale your one-to-one conversations — all with chatbots.

Try HubSpot Marketing Hub Free

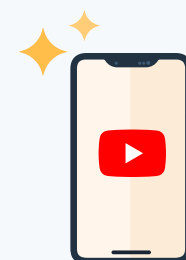# Online consumer shopping and discovery habits

For digital natives and most consumers today, everything happens on their phones — from scrolling social for fun, to shopping, to communicating with friends, family, and coworkers. And more specifically than living on mobile, consumers are spending more time on social media. What are they doing on social? Shopping, for one. Annual online retail sales passed $1T in 2022 and grew over 7% to $1.12T in 2023, representing 22% of all retail sales — an all-time high. And according to our recent survey, mobile commerce is now more popular than browser-based shopping.

Despite this boom in online commerce, shoppers are concerned about a recession, and more than half are tightening their personal budgets. As consumers approach online shopping in the year ahead, they're being smarter with purchasing decisions.
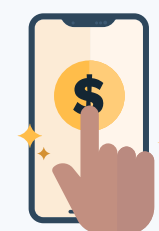
When shopping online in 2024, consumers want to:

Conduct their own independent research.	**Quickly access social media information and videos on a product or company.**

|	
Be able to discover, evaluate, and buy right from their phone.	**Save money and prove value.**

Let's explore the motivations and expectations consumers have for shopping online and discovering new brands this year.

Consumers are discovering new products on their phones from influencer recs

Why are short-form social media videos so darn compelling? Consumers use social video today for much more than entertainment and jokes. They're making decisions based on content they see on social, mainly from creators or influencers. Gen Zers even feel that recommendations from influencers are more important than recommendations from friends and family.

Consumers are looking for authenticity and a peek behind the curtain to make sure that what they invest in and who they choose to follow are trustworthy. This shift towards wanting more authentic reviews began with a trend where consumers searched for a phrase and added "+ reddit" or "+ tiktok" for a more unfiltered, honest result where they could quickly see their peers' opinions and feedback. Now, consumers go right to the source — social videos.
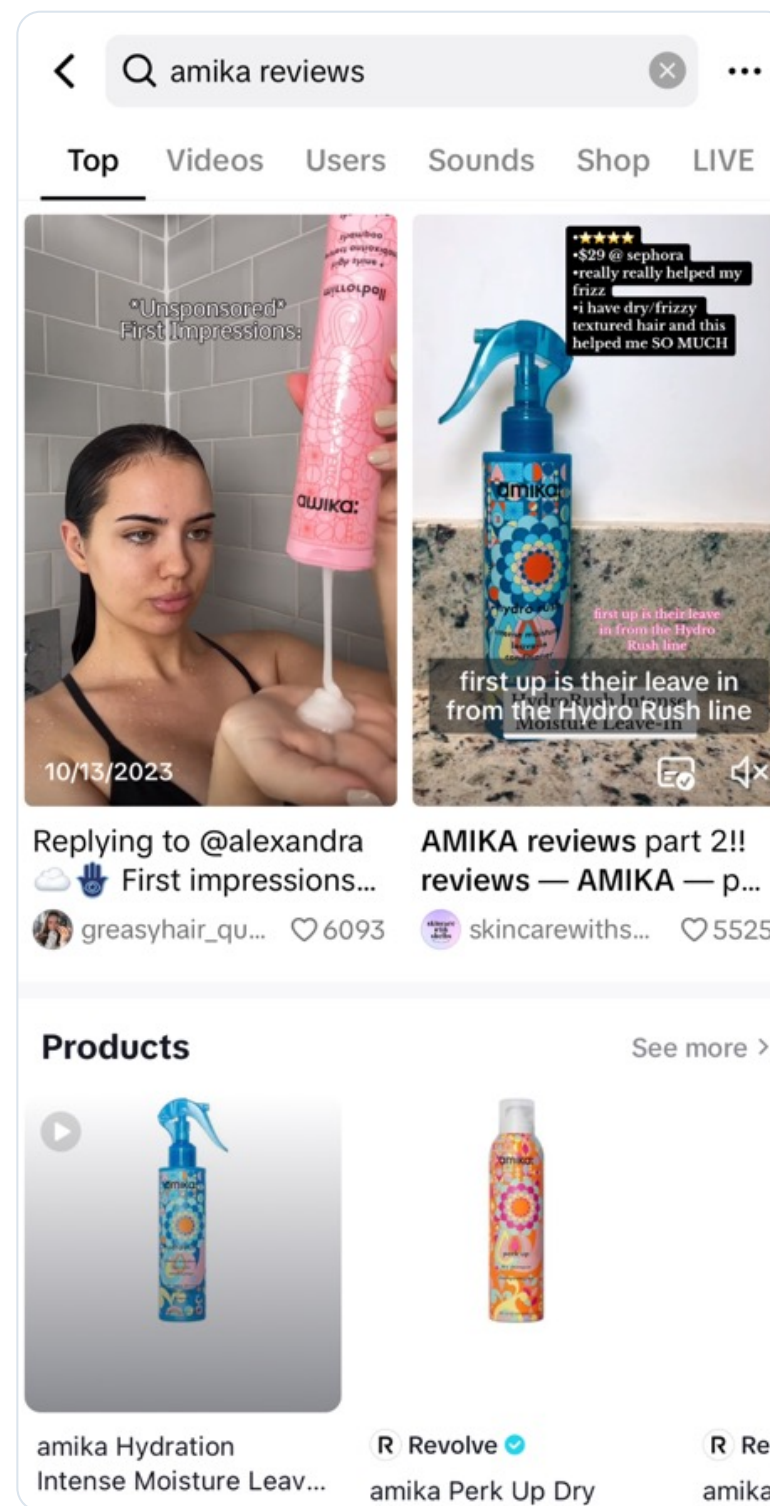
Social media
is the #1 channel for product discovery for Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X.

33%
of respondents have discovered a new product on social media in the past three months.

1 in 4
consumers prefer to discover new products through social media over any other channel.

Social media shopping habits

Social media is the present and future of e-commerce as social shopping gets more popular and easier — but brands need to build trust with their audiences to get into their wallets. Currently, 47% of social media users feel comfortable buying through social apps (up from 41% in January 2023) and only 45% are confident in giving social platforms their credit card information. Overall, social shoppers skew younger, with 43% of Gen Zers buying via social media app in the past three months.

> While over 80% of shoppers were satisfied with a recent social purchase, only about 30% felt that what they bought was "high quality."

Influencers are impacting more purchase decisions, sending DMs for customer service is increasingly common and preferred, and more users are participating in online communities that drive ecommerce engagement. Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are the most popular platforms for social shopping, and social shoppers say Facebook and TikTok have the best in-app shopping experience.

Biggest concerns consumers have around social shopping + tips for brands to address them

CUSTOMER CONCERN	TIP FOR BRANDS
The companies aren't legitimate.	Showcase your company's mission, vision, values, and leadership team and maintain a secure, professional website. Use a cohesive brand to convey a sense of legitimacy and trust.
It will take longer than expected to arrive.	Add an FAQ link on your profile with expected shipping times, customer service contact info, and other common concerns from new customers.
They won't be able to get a refund.	Clearly communicate your return policy during the checkout process and after customers make a purchase. Make it easy to get in touch with your team if customers have issues.

Want to elevate your social media marketing and reach more active consumers?

Get HubSpot's guide to social media marketing →

Mobile commerce is more popular than browser-based shopping

Consumers now use mobile phones more than any other device for online shopping and when searching questions online, especially among those between ages 18-54. The ecommerce app market is projected to grow significantly, by almost 10% annually, in the next five years as consumers transition from shopping in-browser to on their mobile phones. Nike, for example, was able to tie 18% of annual revenue in 2022 to mobile apps — including the Nike app, the Nike SNKRS app, and Nike Training Club.

71%

of Gen Zers use mobile most often when shopping online.
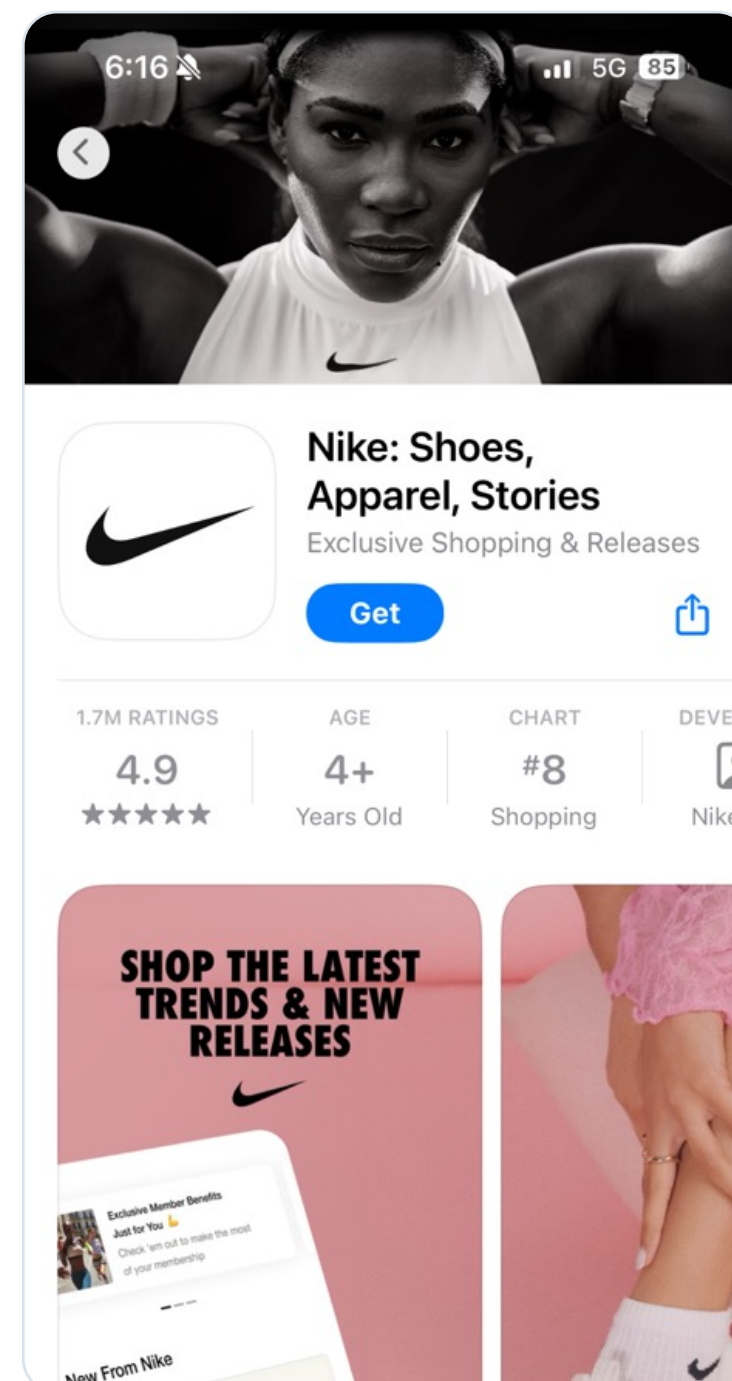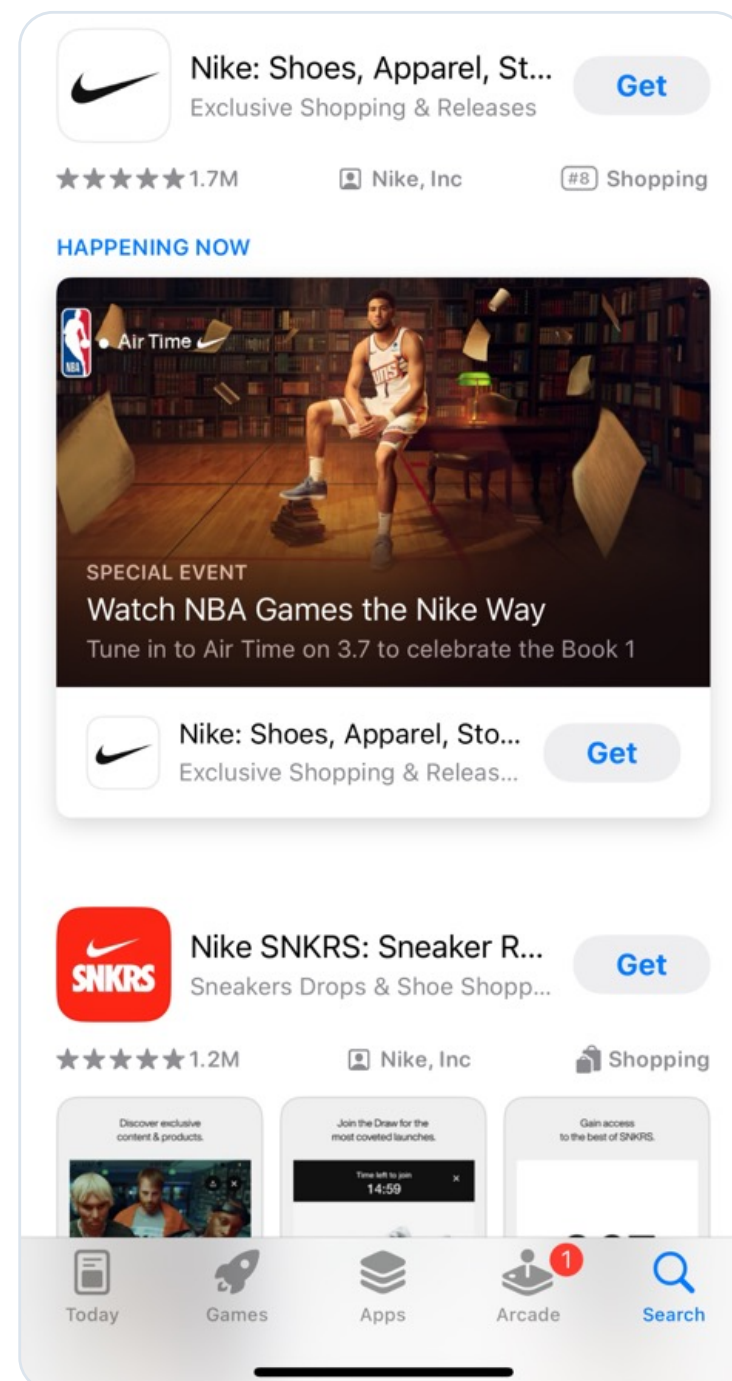
Mobile-first marketing and advertising tips

1 Update your website and landing pages so they're mobile-friendly or responsive, and use larger buttons for easier tapping.

2 Build and test mobile-specific ad campaigns and increase your bids for mobile devices so they're more likely to be seen.

3 Regularly audit emails, webpages, ads, and digital shopping journeys and make sure there's a smooth mobile experience.

4 Invest in SMS marketing, personalized using data from your CRM.

5 Depending on your industry and resources, consider creating a mobile app for your customers.

6 Segment users that primarily engage via mobile and send campaigns designed for mobile.

7 Create more short-form video and short-form content for easier consumption via mobile.

Check out more mobile marketing ideas →

The recession is affecting consumer spending

Over half of consumers say we're in a recessio,n and 55% are tightening budgets as they expect it to last (down from 63% in May 2023). Brands will need to show audiences that they offer value for the cost and work hard to provide excellent customer experiences and support, or face losing customers.

57%
of consumers think the U.S. economy is currently in a recession.

47%
of U.S. adults have taken steps to plan or prepare for a recession.

53%
of U.S. adults are being more careful with how they spend their money.

The future of browsing via AI & social search

Just a few years ago, the typical path a consumer would take to learn about something new or search for a new product or service would look like heading over to Google, searching for what they wanted using keywords or phrases, and browsing through some reviews, brand websites, and demos.

Now, that can look like one of two completely different paths. One starts with the user opening up an AI chatbot or using an AI-assisted Google search and typing a sentence or question about what they're looking for. The other starts with opening Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube and searching for a topic or content creator to learn more about a subject or search for a product or service.
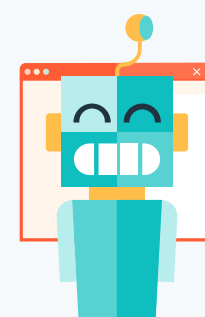
3 in 5

consumers want to use AI to save time and shop smarter.

IBM 2024 Consumer Study

This has completely changed how brands need to approach social search and address the effects of AI on the consumer research process.

Consumer perspectives on AI

After the initial buzz around ChatGPT died down, people started to play around with AI tools over the past year, and they're getting to see how this new tech is going to completely revolutionize how we interact and conduct our daily lives. About a third of consumers are regularly using AI tools like ChatGPT and starting to trust AI more, but people are still unsure about how much they can believe AI-generated content from brands. For shopping, AI is bringing retail into the digital age by making Cher-from-Clueless-approved virtual outfit try-ons a reality, and making it easier and faster for consumers to find specific items.

1 in 3

consumers use AI chatbots like ChatGPT, and they are starting to trust AI more.

45%

of consumers feel hesitant about AI, while 25% feel excited.

Image via Social Focused
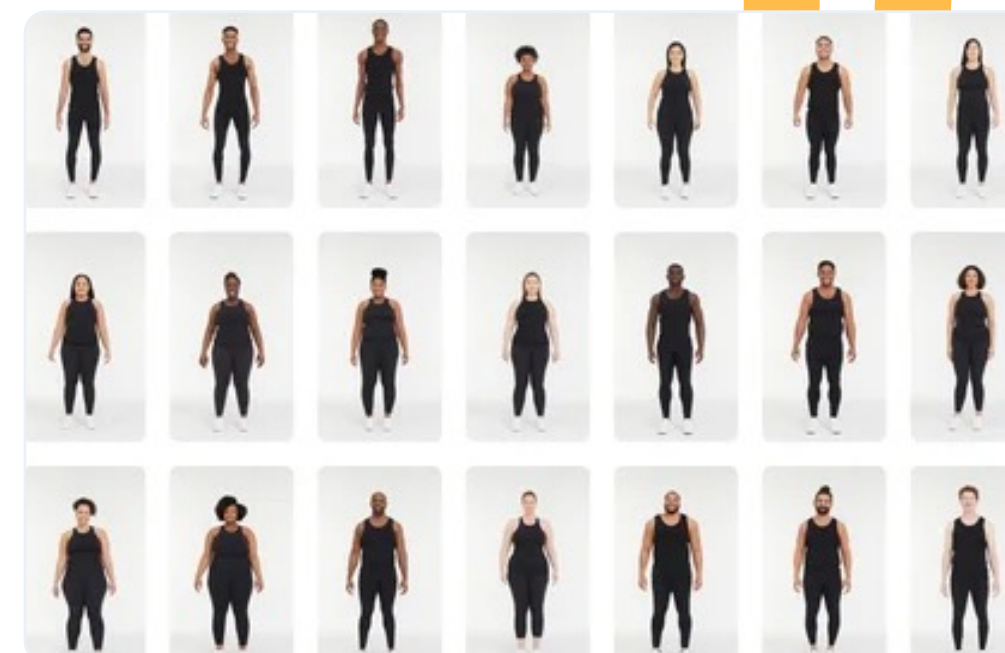
Image via Google

When it comes to shopping, here are a few futuristic ways consumers are using AI, or want to try it:

1 Google's AI "virtual try-on" feature lets shoppers see products on themselves before buying, making shopping faster, more individualized, and more inclusive.

2 Google AI shopping aggregates and summarizes reviews from different sites across the web.

3 Amazon's generative AI tool answers shopper questions as they browse.

4 IBM's consumer study found that the top ways consumers want to use AI while shopping are 1) to research products, 2) to get service, answers, or resolve issues, 3) to look for deals or promotions, 4) to look for reviews or recommendations, and 5) to shop for products or services.

Personalize your consumer marketing with AI

Try HubSpot AI tools →

How Generative AI-powered search is transforming consumer behavior, and why that matters for every retailer

Over the last twenty years, online shopping has become a pretty familiar activity for consumers. We're all accustomed to the entire ecosystem of searches, online reviews, paid ads, and social posts that mesh together to build a buyer journey.

For most retailers, the path to growth now passes through Google (or Amazon or Instagram). Successful retailers hire performance marketers who are adept at taking advantage of changing search algorithms, influencer landscapes, and consumer needs to drive sales. This is as true for Fortune 500 companies as it is for Direct-To-Consumer (DTC) startups—though of course with important variations across industry and market.

But generative AI-powered search is coming, and everything is about to change. First slowly, and then all at once.

Search is the linchpin of the existing online consumer ecosystem. And emerging forms of generative AI-powered search work differently than traditional search. Therefore, as generative AI-powered search proliferates, the online consumer ecosystem will also evolve.

The organizations that get ahead of this change will seize important advantages, while those that continue to operate as usual will face daunting challenges. In fact, one important strategy is to fight fire with fire: Harness the power of generative AI to better predict shifts in consumer behavior!

What is Gen AI-Powered Search?

Here's how Google describes AI-powered search and its impact:

"With generative AI in Search, we can help you understand the full picture when you're shopping, making even the most considered and complex purchase decisions faster and much easier. . . When searching for a product, you'll get a snapshot of noteworthy factors to consider and products that fit the bill. You'll also get product descriptions that include relevant, up-to-date reviews, ratings, prices, and product images."

The bottom line is that more shopping-related content, from product recommendations to pricing searches to reviews, will appear on a single page delivered by Google (or Bing or Perplexity, a new player in the space). As a result, it's also less likely that traffic will be driven to individual shopping sites.

So if you're an online retailer accustomed to tracking changes in the Google algorithm and making adjustments over time, you'll increasingly need to understand a new factor: the impact of generative AI-powered search on product discovery and purchasing behavior.

New Research about Consumer Behavior and Generative AI-Powered Search

To investigate the future of online shopping, we launched a study on the Glimpse platform in March 2024 to 500 US-based technology enthusiasts who reported experimenting with "Generative AI (like Chat GPT, Bing, Microsoft Copilot, Google AI Search, Gemini, Dall-E, or Photoshop Generative Fill)." We asked about their shifting purchasing and product discovery habits relative to gen AI-powered search.

Here's what we discovered:

74%
of those who have tried gen AI-enabled products or platforms at all, nearly three quarters have already used them for a shopping-related purpose like researching products, pricing, or reviews.

72%
of all respondents already plan on using gen AI-powered search for shopping more frequently in the future.

79%
of those who have used gen AI for online shopping rated their experiences either "somewhat" or "far" better than shopping experiences with traditional search engines.

76%
of all respondents said that it sounded either "somewhat" or "much" more appealing than shopping with traditional search, when shown a brief description of gen AI-enabled online shopping.

AI search
If executed well, gen AI-enabled search can address most of the top complaints respondents report having about traditional search like the need to wade through multiple pages of search results, increasingly "spammy" results, and difficulty finding what they're looking for.

But everyone's not the same when it comes to the adoption of gen AI-powered search and online shopping. Retailers must be attentive to who they're attempting to engage. For instance:

- Men (33%) are significantly more likely than women (25%) to find gen AI–powered search "much" more appealing for online shopping.

- Other Glimpse studies with Hubspot and with Charter, a leading B2B media organization, revealed major gaps in AI adoption patterns across races, genders, income levels, industries, and notably across national markets.

The Story Behind the Story

Those topline numbers are compelling, but let's take a look below the surface with the help of Glimpse's gen AI-enabled research platform.

Here are the ways consumers are currently using gen AI-enabled search for online shopping, according to Glimpse's AI-powered dashboard.
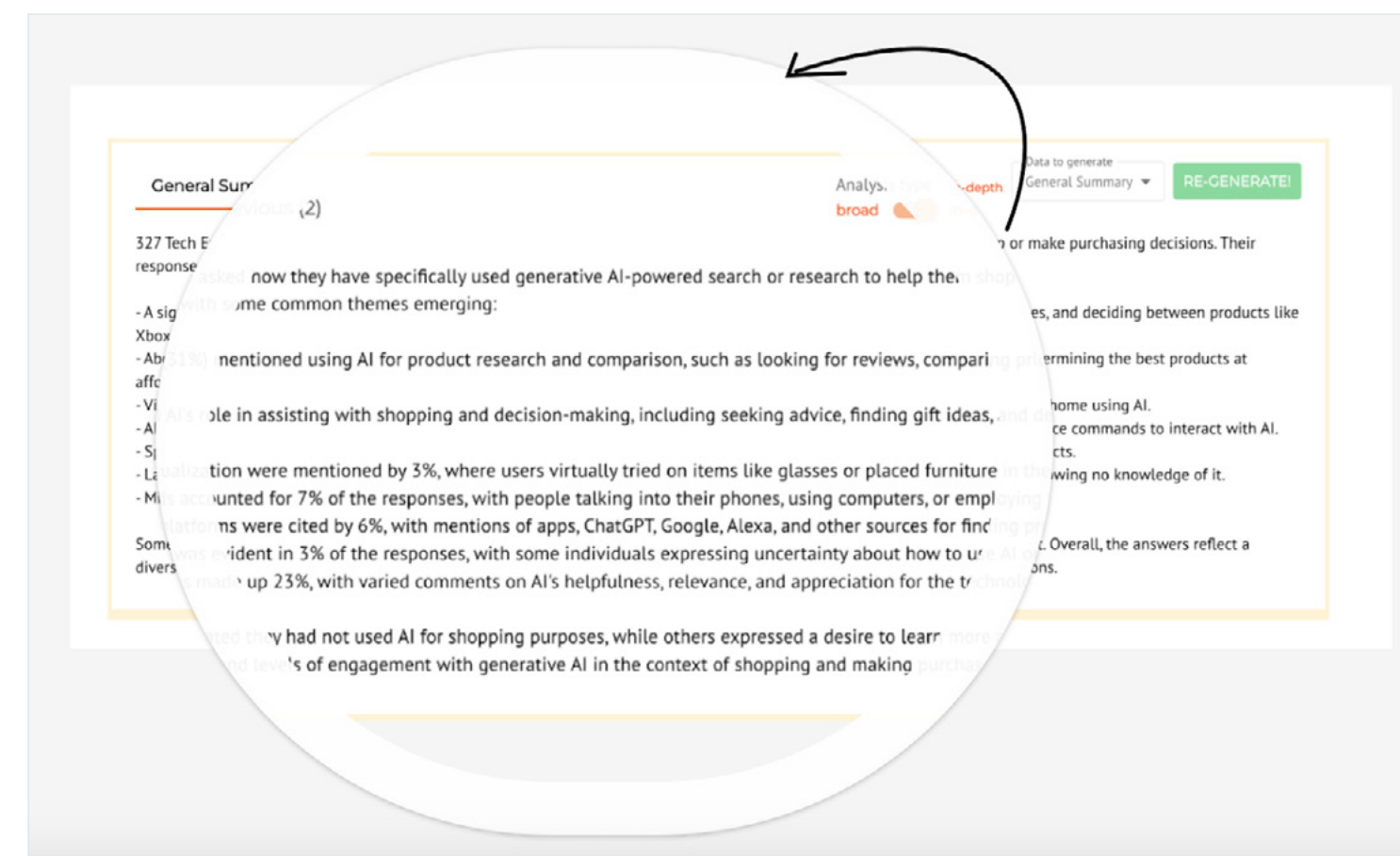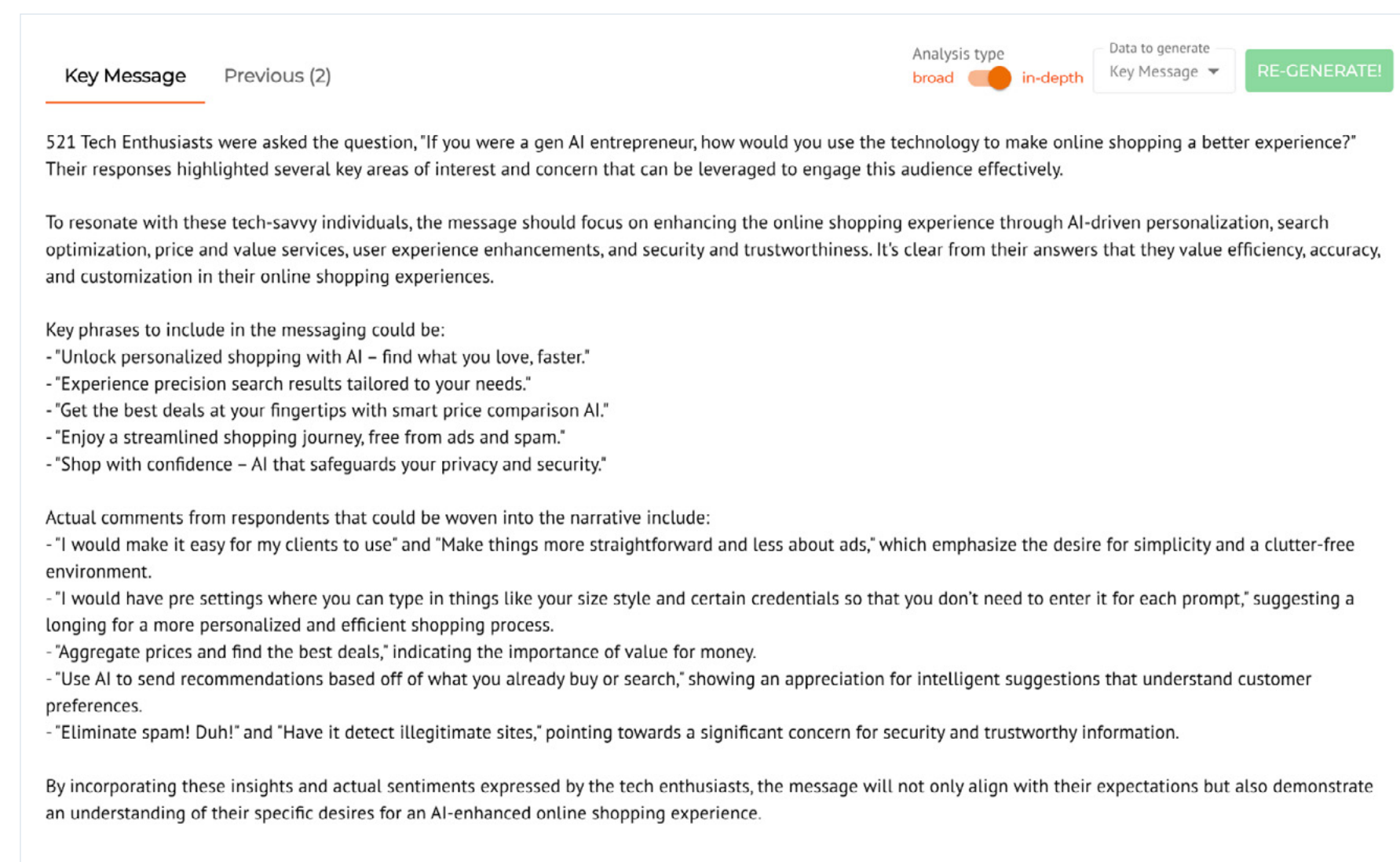
Glimpse's AI-powered dashboard displays a summary of responses from 300+ tech enthusiasts regarding their use of AI-powered search. For example, 31% mentioned using AI for product research and comparison.

And here are the emotions associated with gen AI-enabled online shopping, with "appreciative," "joyful," and "satisfied" in the lead:
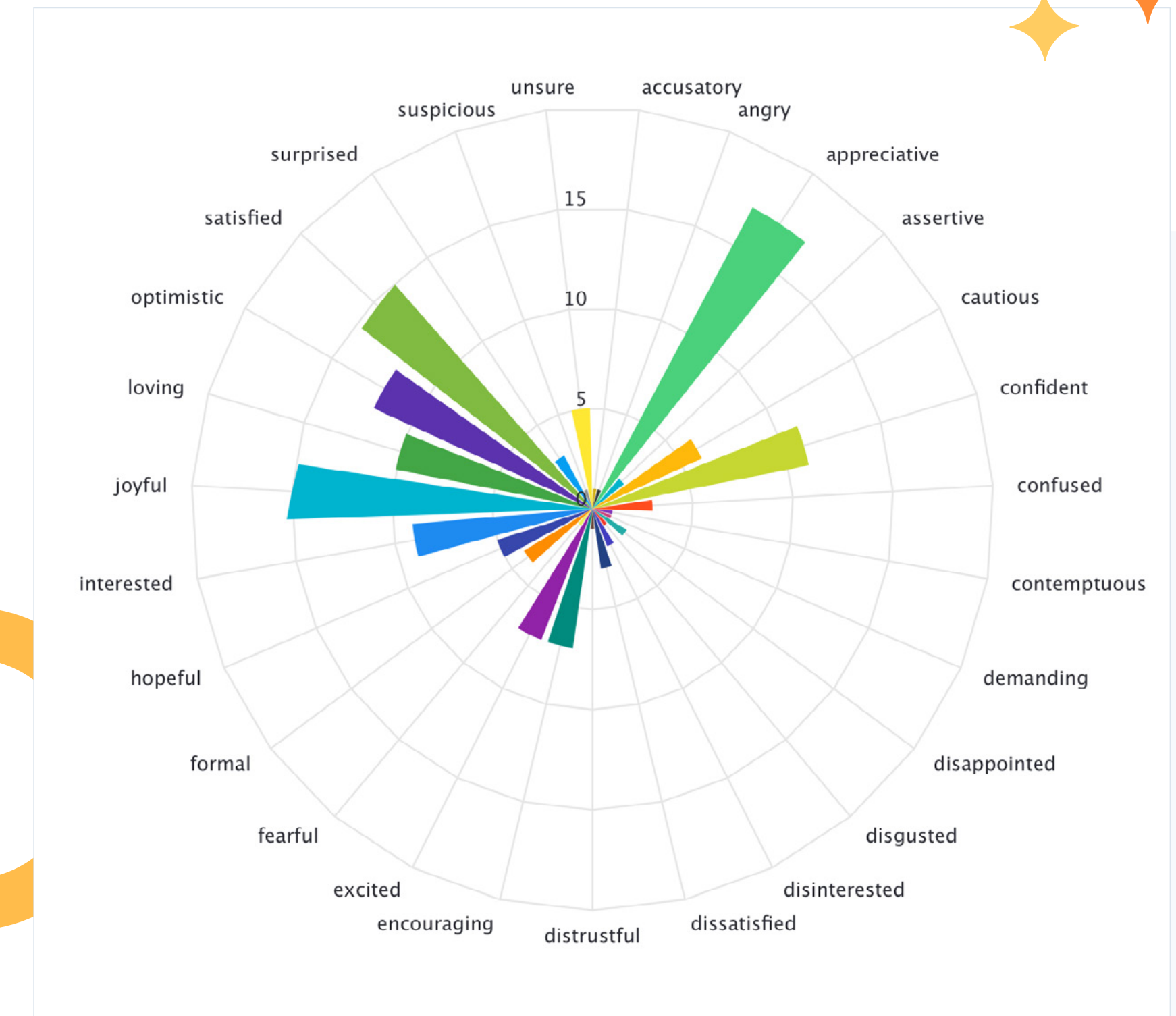
Finally, here are the recommendations the Glimpse dashboard makes for retailers and AI search engineers to address the concerns and desires of shoppers—based on the responses of real consumers:

Here, the Glimpse platform makes suggestions about how to message to consumers regarding AI-powered search. The recommendations are based on consumer responses to survey questions and include quotes directly from consumers.

So what should retailers who value their online sales do to convert this emerging challenge into an opportunity to drive discovery and sales growth?

Here's How to Meet Change Head-On

Five tips almost any organization can put into action:

#1 Learn, learn, learn how your customers are likely to adopt gen AI-enabled shopping before they do. Looking at search or social data isn't sufficient here! It's vital to engage in first-party research to discover the underlying needs, preferences, and emotions driving change – and then to determine how best to address them. Differences across markets, categories, genders, etc. matter!

#2 Empower your performance marketers to learn about gen AI-enabled search and get ahead of changes in the ecosystem. They're already watching Google's algorithm like hawks; Now, they'll have new opportunities to leapfrog the competition when it comes to shopper discovery.

#3 Use platforms like HubSpot to more closely track the buyer journey. It will almost certainly change shape; discover exactly how before the competition does.

#4 Take a page from Walmart's book and incorporate gen AI-powered search features on your own domain. This step may sound daunting but it's easier than it sounds to enable visitors to access intelligent shopping assistants using simple language queries, for instance.

#5 Understand that this shift means lower costs and barriers to entry associated with other gen AI-powered features like true personalization, smart dressing rooms, and a whole set of innovations that will spread throughout the industry. It's time for every retailer to begin experimenting with the features that are most likely to drive conversion.

Glimpse

Gather brand new insights on the audiences that matter most to your organization.

Use Glimpse's industry-leading approach to generative AI to find out what your customers are thinking and uncover awareness, emotions, and evolving opportunities, instantly.

✓ Run quick-turn studies and gather information about any audience–fast

✓ Track sentiment and awareness across your target market over time

✓ Host studies for your own customers, viewers, or employees

✓ Upload datasets from any source–from social comments to NPS–and extract insights using gen AI

✓ Get instant feedback from entire audience segments or from AI versions of individual customers

Try it now
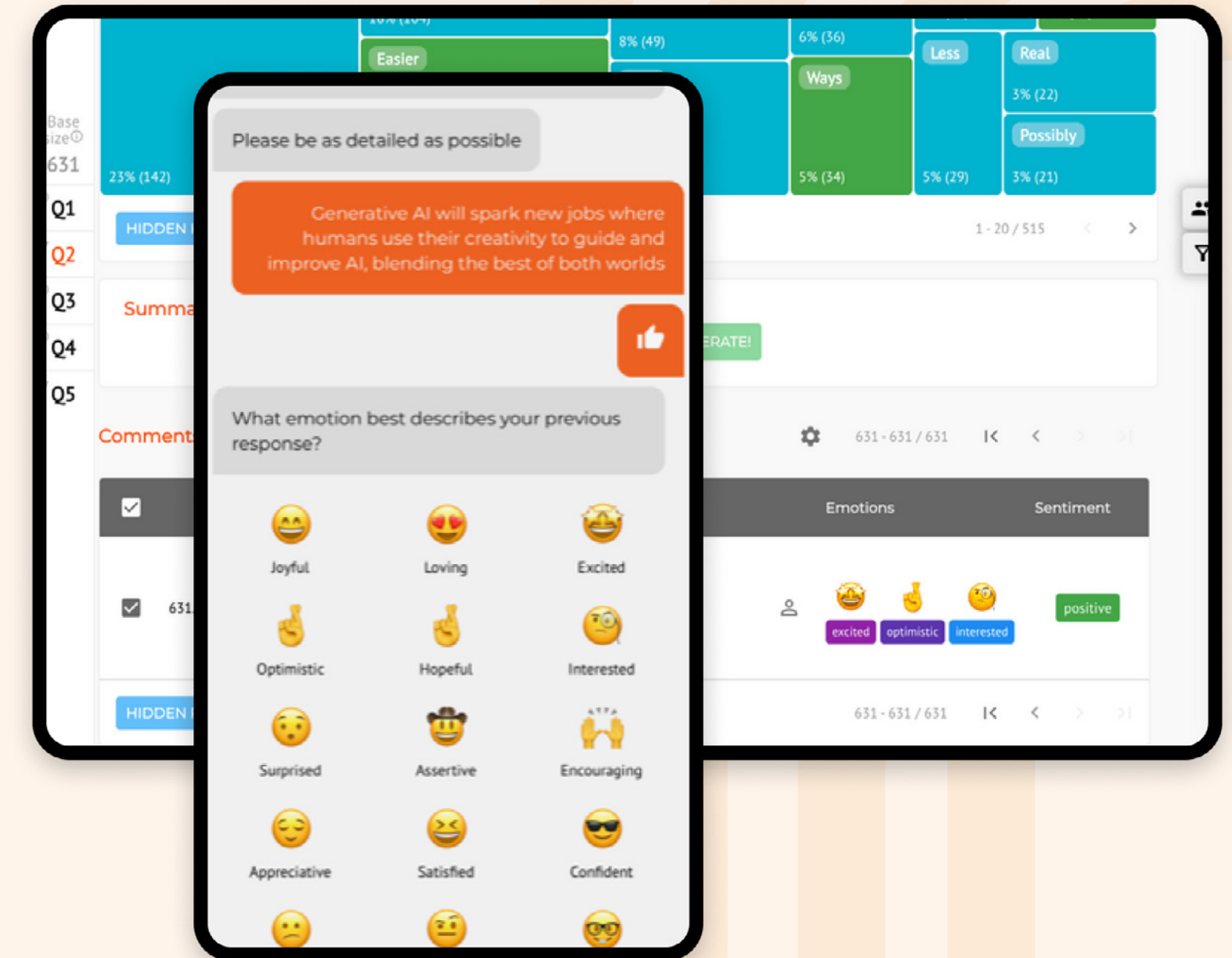
How consumers engage on social media

The biggest change we saw from 2023 to 2024 social media trends has been the rise in popularity of YouTube and TikTok. And one of the most surprising trends was the continued consumer presence, across age groups, on Facebook. We're seeing more and more people identifying as influencers or creators, and a stronger theme of trusting creators for recommendations. Communities have remained important for brands, leading to tight-knit connections with their followers and a boost in brand advocacy and awareness.
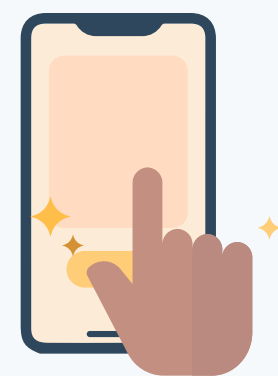
87%
of U.S. adults report that they use social media.

21%
of consumers consider themselves content creators or influencers.

40%+
consumers use social media to learn new things or find ideas + inspo.

The reasons why people go on social media have changed a bit — this year, consumers say they're going on TikTok for ideas and inspiration, which wasn't as popular last year, and across the board, they want funny and entertaining content. More people use LinkedIn as a source for news and cultural trends than last year, and X marks the spot to follow celebrities and influencers.

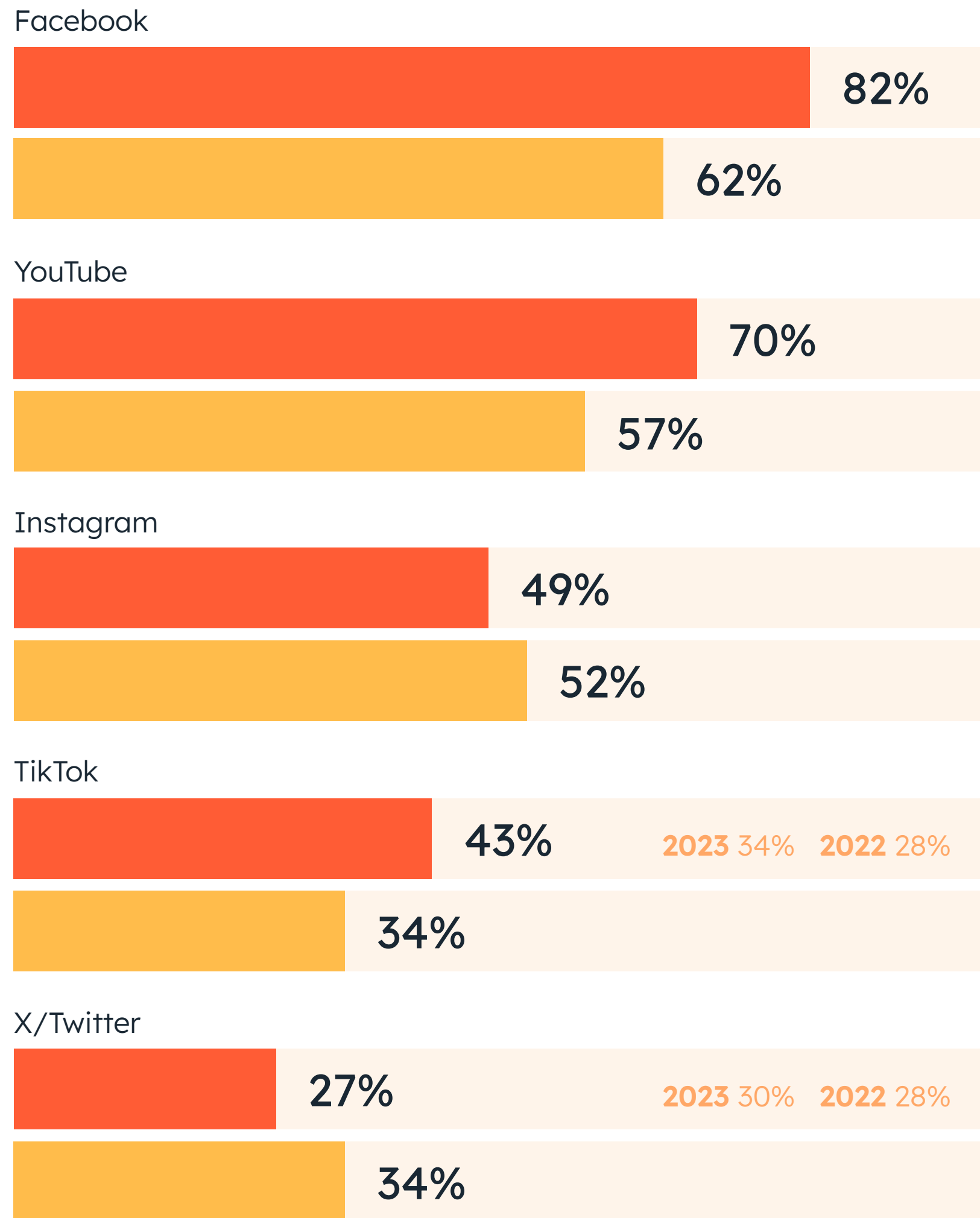## BRAND TIP

When asked why people primarily use different social media platforms, the only one that showed strong consumer interest in following brands and products was LinkedIn. Brand social teams should plan a strategy that's less direct and self-promotional on platforms like Facebook and Instagram where consumers are mainly keeping up with friends and family or seeking out entertaining content.

Which social platforms did you use in 2023?

🔴 **CONSUMERS**   🟡 **BRANDS**

Facebook
- 82%
- 62%

YouTube
- 70%
- 57%

Instagram
- 49%
- 52%

TikTok
- 43%   **2023** 34%   **2022** 28%
- 34%

X/Twitter
- 27%   **2023** 30%   **2022** 28%
- 34%

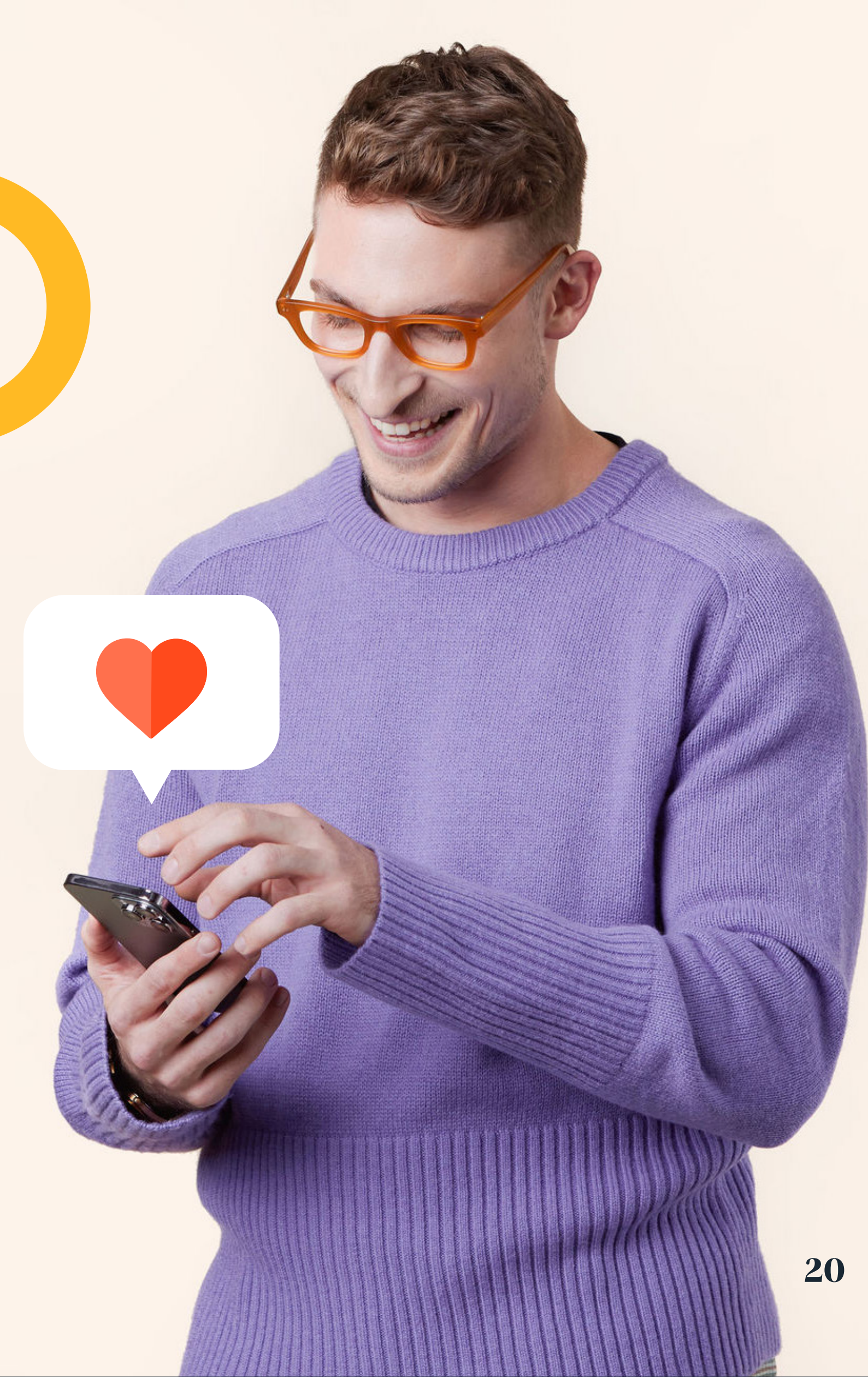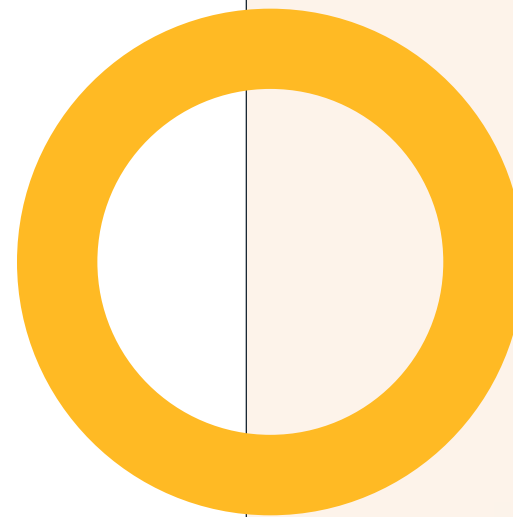## Preferred social platforms by generation

GEN Z
- TikTok
- Instagram
- YouTube

MILLENNIALS
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Instagram

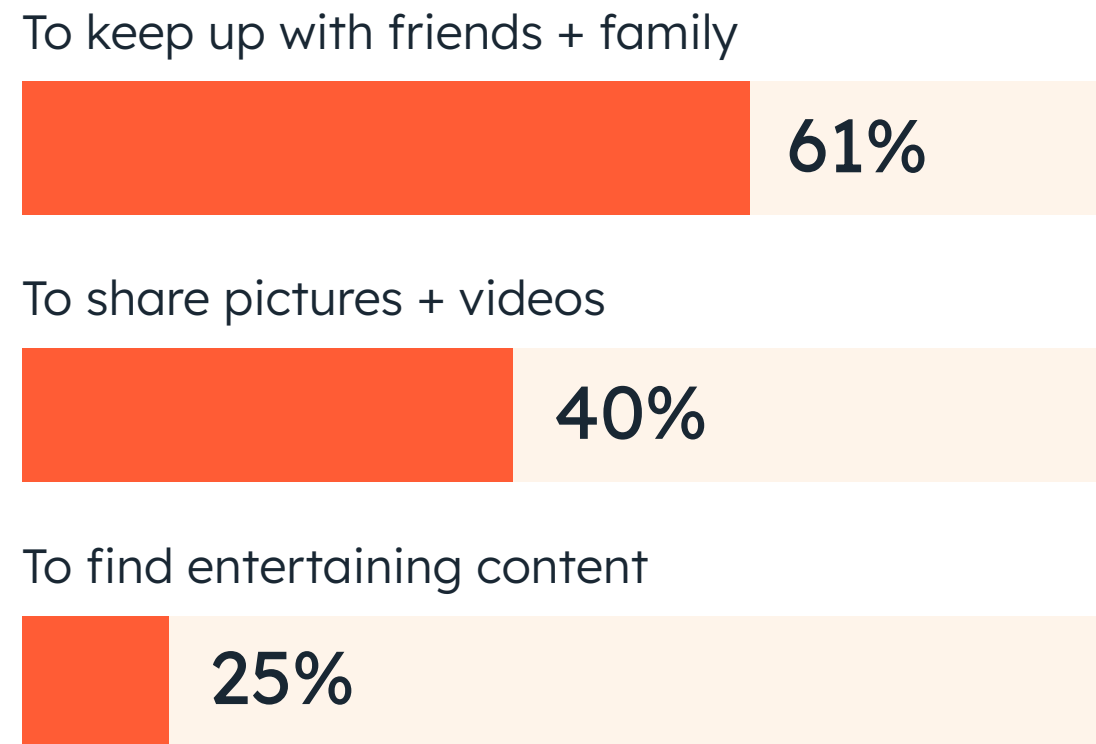**GEN X + BOOMERS**
- Facebook
- YouTube

Why do people use social media?

Facebook

To keep up with friends + family
61%

To share pictures + videos
40%

To find entertaining content
25%

Instagram

To keep up with friends + family
33%

To share pictures + videos
29%

To find entertaining content
27%

YouTube

To find entertaining content
46%

To learn new things
38%

For ideas + inspiration
27%

TikTok

To find entertaining content
38%

For ideas + inspiration
32%

To learn new things
31%

X/Twitter

To keep up with news + cultural trends
33%

To keep up with celebrities/influencers
28%

To learn new things
27%

LinkedIn

To learn new things
28%

To keep up with news + cultural trends
23%

To keep up with brands and products
19%

Content creators and influencers are now interchangeable

Influencers are impacting more purchase decisions. At the same time, the line between personal accounts and creator or influencer accounts is getting blurred, with around 1 in 4 people considering themselves creators or influencers. This jumps up even higher among Gen Z and Millennial respondents, to 45%. These influential online personalities are growing more powerful by the day. By creating high-quality user-generated content (UGC), creators are driving significant results for the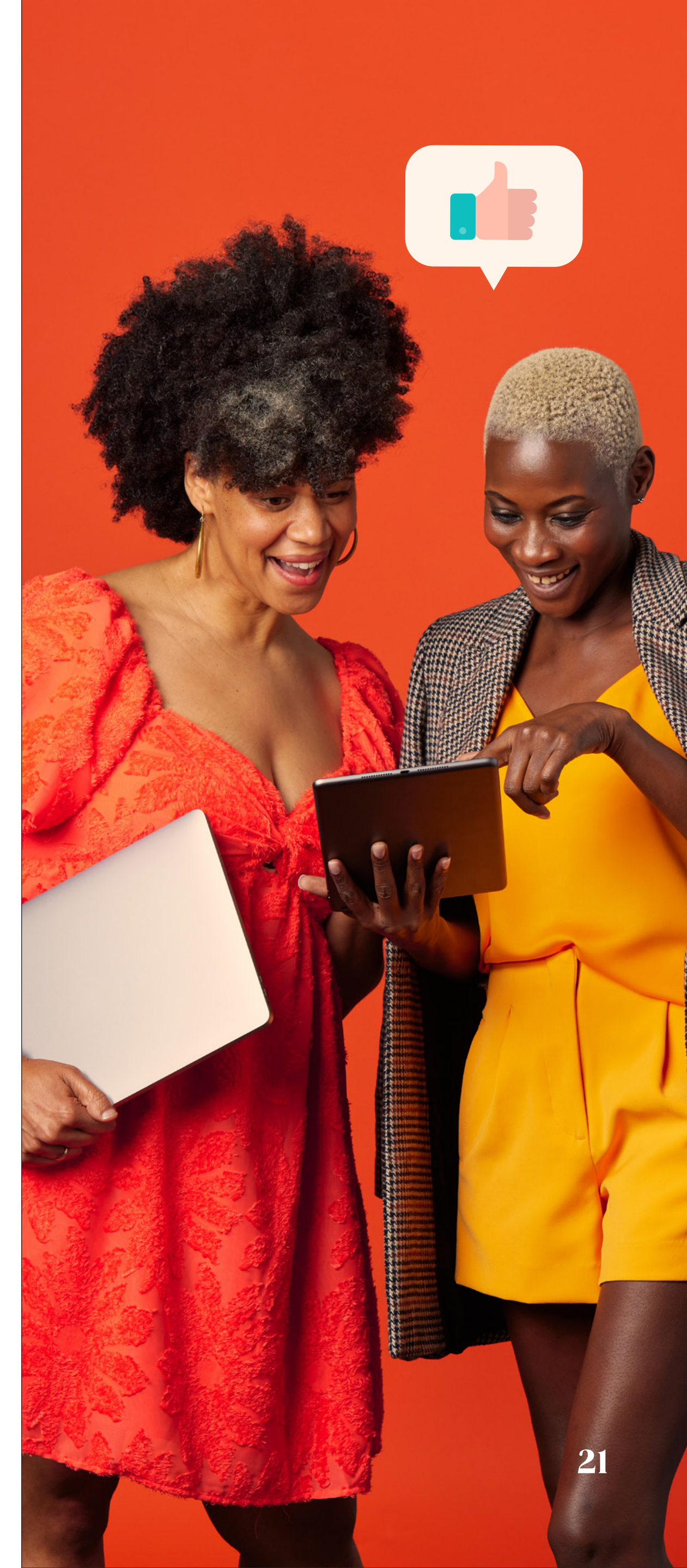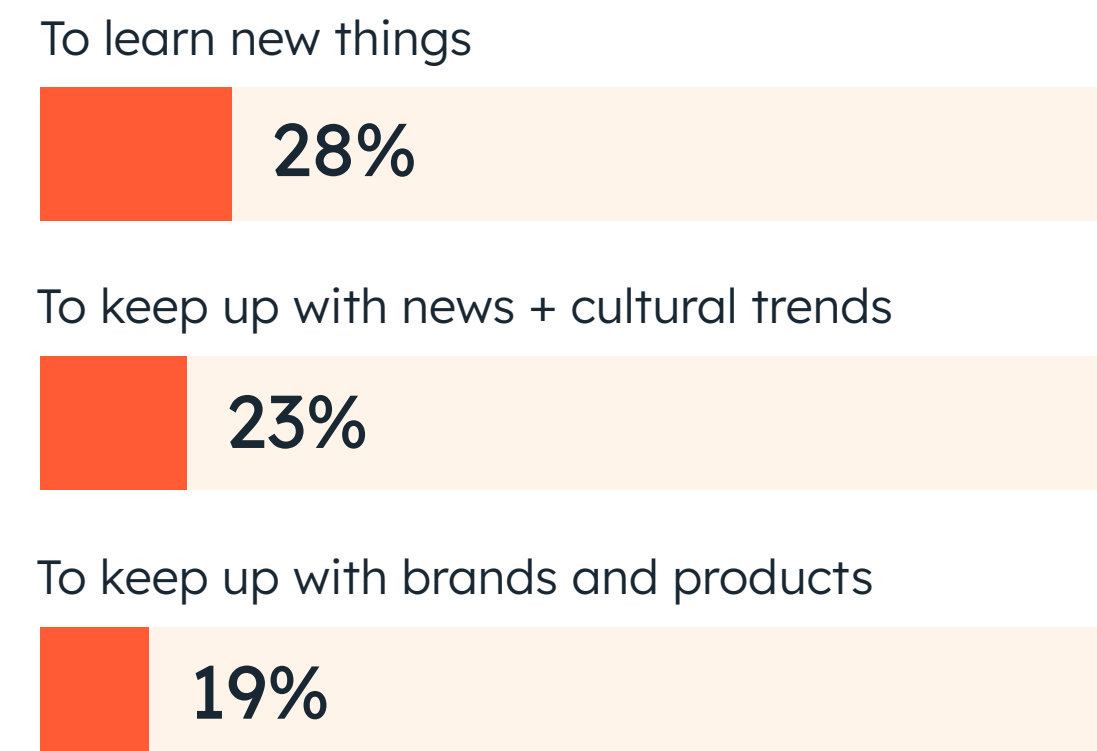 brands they promote, like this video about HubSpot from Nico Rojas, a brand strategist with over 350K TikTok followers that generated over 550K views and thousands of engagements.

When it comes to the most important factors in Gen Z's purchase decisions, recommendations from influencers are even more important than recommendations from friends and family (9% vs. 7%). And on the same thread of the changing world young people live in, 28% of social media users now follow virtual influencers, up from 25% in May 2022. Virtual influencers can be a lower-cost way for brands to promote their products, with an influencer that perfectly matches their brand vibe and (hopefully) won't go rogue or threaten brand safety.
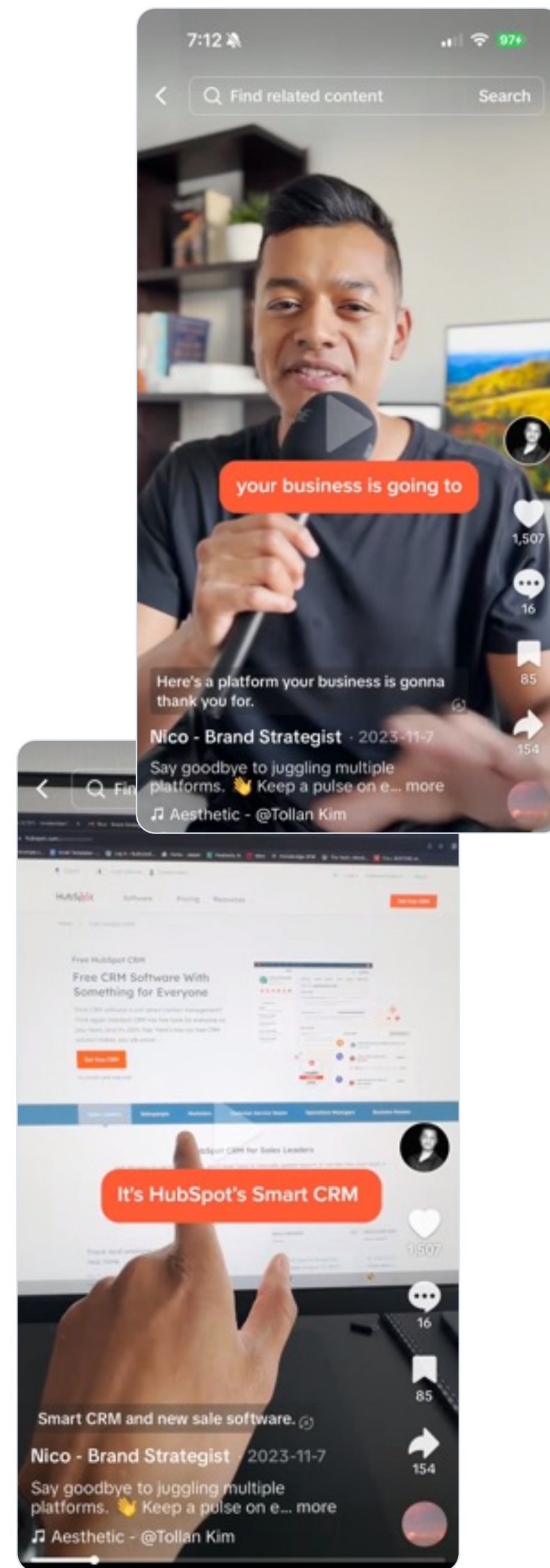
Brands need to make it easy for creators and influencers to partner with them

Turns out influencers are, well, influential. More than 20% of social media users bought a product based on an influencer's recommendation in the past three months. And these influencers weren't celebrities, 62% of influencers that successfully inspired a viewer to buy had under 10K followers, and 25% had under 1K. To make influencer or creator partnerships more beneficial to both parties and develop long-term relationships that lead to brand advocates, here are a few tips.

✅ **Keep your brand kit updated and shareable.**
Make it easy for creators to stay on brand and match your aesthetic.

✅ **Deeply understand your target audience.**
This will help you choose the right influencers and help guide your shared strategy.

✅ **Clearly define your goals for influencer marketing.**
Do you want to increase brand awareness? Drive sales? Engage your audience?

✅ **Let influencers' personalities shine (that's the whole idea).**
Consumers want authenticity and overly promotional content will be ignored.

✅ **Share brand guidelines, but don't be too restrictive.**
Guide your influencer partners on what's okay and what's too far for your brand.

Grab your copy of The Ultimate Guide to Influencer Marketing →

Online communities are holding steady as places for connection and brand growth

As the world gets more and more digital, people continue to crave community — 27% of social media users report active engagement in an online community in the past three months. Brands are thinking about community even more now with a social-first mindset. Brand communities can be made up of customers, users, subject matter experts, employees, or influencers.

A clear example of the power of community is at our annual event, INBOUND. INBOUND brings the larger marketing, sales, and tech community together, but it's also inspired sub-communities, like Black@INBOUND, Women Sales Pros, and Out at INBOUND. As brands approach their community strategy in 2024, they should look towards the organic groups and employee segments that have naturally formed, and facilitate growth with resources and support. See if there are active Slack channels, informal meetups, or hot online conversations that could turn into a thriving community.

> " The power of community is so important in a post-AI world."
>
> **LAURIE AQUILANTE FAIOLA**
> VP of Marketing, Community-Led Growth,
> HubSpot

For brands to stand out on social media, they need to be funny, authentic, and relatable

Organic is the name of the game this year — people want real connections and honesty, potentially as a result of the growth of artificially produced content. There is a massive opportunity for brands to stand out on social media by making authentic and relatable content. Of the types of content brands post on social media, 52% of consumers say funny content is the most relatable and 38% say relatable content is.

63%
of consumers feel the content brands post on social is authentic or relatable.

59%
of consumers feel that brand content is tailored to their personal interests.

63%
of consumers say it's more important for marketing videos to be authentic than polished.

Data privacy and social media advertising changes

2023 was the year the third-party cookie died. The faster technology accelerates and the smarter the tools we use get, the more concerned consumers become with their data security. This year, as more and more people test out AI tools and new tech, they're growing wary of what they feel comfortable sharing and where they feel safe and secure sharing private information. When consumers are reading headlines like "The Times Sues OpenAI and Microsoft Over A.I. Use of Copyrighted Work," it can lead to some hesitation around who has access to what, and what's trustworthy to use in a work or personal setting.

Consumers are overwhelmingly concerned and distrustful of how companies use their personal data — more than half usually don't allow companies to track their data, and 75% say data privacy is a human right. Sixty-two percent of consumers even feel that companies should pay for access to their data. As a result of the increasing data concerns, companies are moving towards zero-party and first-party data for personalization and targeting.

76%

of consumers are concerned with how companies use their personal data.

71%

of consumers say trusting a company determines if they'll share their personal data.

76%

of consumers are concerned with how companies use their personal data.

3 in 4

consumers say they should have complete control over how companies use their data.

The Times Sues OpenAI and Microsoft Over A.I. Use of Copyrighted Work

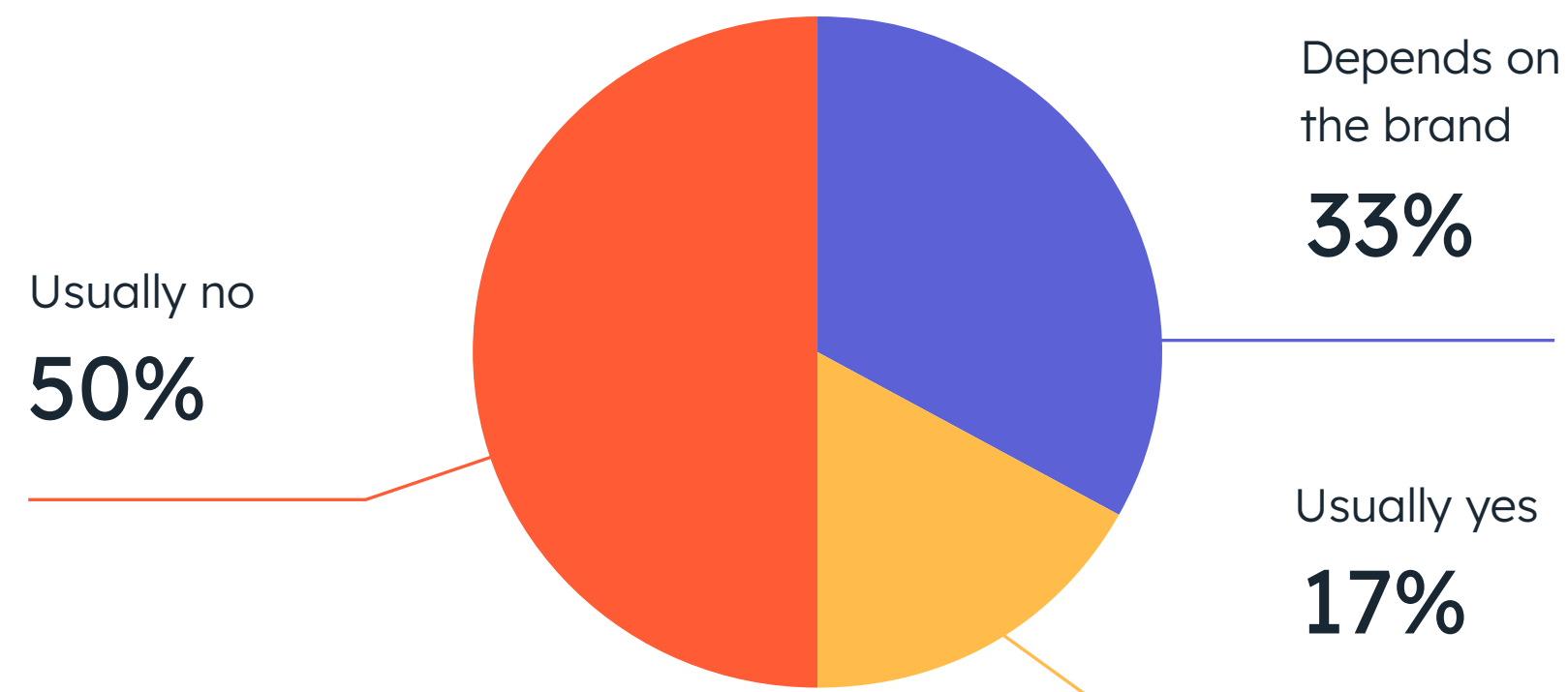Millions of articles from The New York Times were used to train chatbots that now compete with it, the lawsuit said.

A lawsuit by The New York Times could test the emerging legal contours of generative A.I. technologies. Sasha Maslov for The New York Times

Do you allow personal data to be tracked by companies?

Depends on the brand
33%

Usually no
50%

Usually yes
17%

How brands can make people more comfortable sharing their data

1. Allow users to choose whether or not to share their personal data.

2. Allow users to delete their personal information from your database any time they want.

3. Tell customers that user data will be stored safely and securely.

4. Pledge never to sell personal data to another company.

5. Communicate exactly how personal data will be used.

6. Comply with government rules and regulations around data privacy.

Cookieless personalization and ad targeting 101

As advertisers look for new targeting solutions to replace third-party cookies, they're turning to contextual commerce and user-reported data. Here are some of the options that brands have to target customers and prospects while maintaining privacy.

Zero-party and first-party data

The more data you can collect directly from your audience, like zero-party data (data given freely by customers via forms or surveys) and first-party data (data collected based on user activity), the more personalized you can get with ads and marketing. Use interactive forms and show exactly why and how you're going to use customer data.

Google's Privacy Sandbox and data clouds

To protect consumer data while providing brands the ability to conduct advanced targeting and better understand audiences, tools like Google's Privacy Sandbox or Snowflake's Media Data Cloud offer a secure environment with access to encrypted customer data. In a secure cloud-based sandbox, users can safely manipulate customer data to better understand and reach their audiences.

Native targeting options through ad platforms

Popular social media ad platforms have access to incredible amounts of data on their users. Experiment with the built-in advertising tools on TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn and experiment with mobile vs. desktop audiences, different regions, and other hyper-personalized groups.

Contextual targeting

Identify and market to audiences based on the types of content they consume and the context in which they consume it. This takes topics and subject matters, from podcasts, for example, and helps find people who have actively identified themselves as interested in these types of content. Then, while they're in the moment, contextual targeting helps you serve an ad that makes sense to the listener.

"Given the data realities of podcasts against the broad depth of content and subject matter they cover, contextual targeting solutions are incredibly valuable in connecting advertisers to the content and audiences they want to reach."

MOLLY MITCHELL
Principal Product Marketing Manager, LinkedIn

Upskill your digital advertising expertise

Identify and choose from a variety of alternative options to third-party cookies for social ad targeting.

TAKE THE FREE COURSE
Social Media Advertising in a Cookieless World →

Corporate responsibility and brand trust are winning

Companies taking a stance on social issues has grown more important and influential on consumers' purchasing decisions, with 50% of U.S. adults saying brands should do more when it comes to social advocacy. Consumers are increasingly choosing to support brands committed to diversity and inclusion, as well as small businesses.

At HubSpot, we're investing in diverse founders' brands with HubSpot for Startups and working hard to support underrepresented communities.

HubSpot's Chief Customer Officer Rob Giglio's life motto is "The most worthy deed helps someone else succeed," and he has it proudly displayed on his LinkedIn profile. "It's a phrase that my dad used to say," he shared on the Intelligently Inbound podcast. "It wasn't just about business, it was about people. I try to live up to that."

Consumers are closely following how brands operate, treat their employees, react to social issues, and who their leadership teams are. They want to "vote with their dollars" and invest in companies that they believe in, whether they're buying a new travel coffee mug on TikTok or choosing the HR platform their global organization will use. Brand teams, customer success teams, HR teams, and leadership teams need to work together to share what makes their organization unique, what they care about and are investing in, and why people should trust their brand.
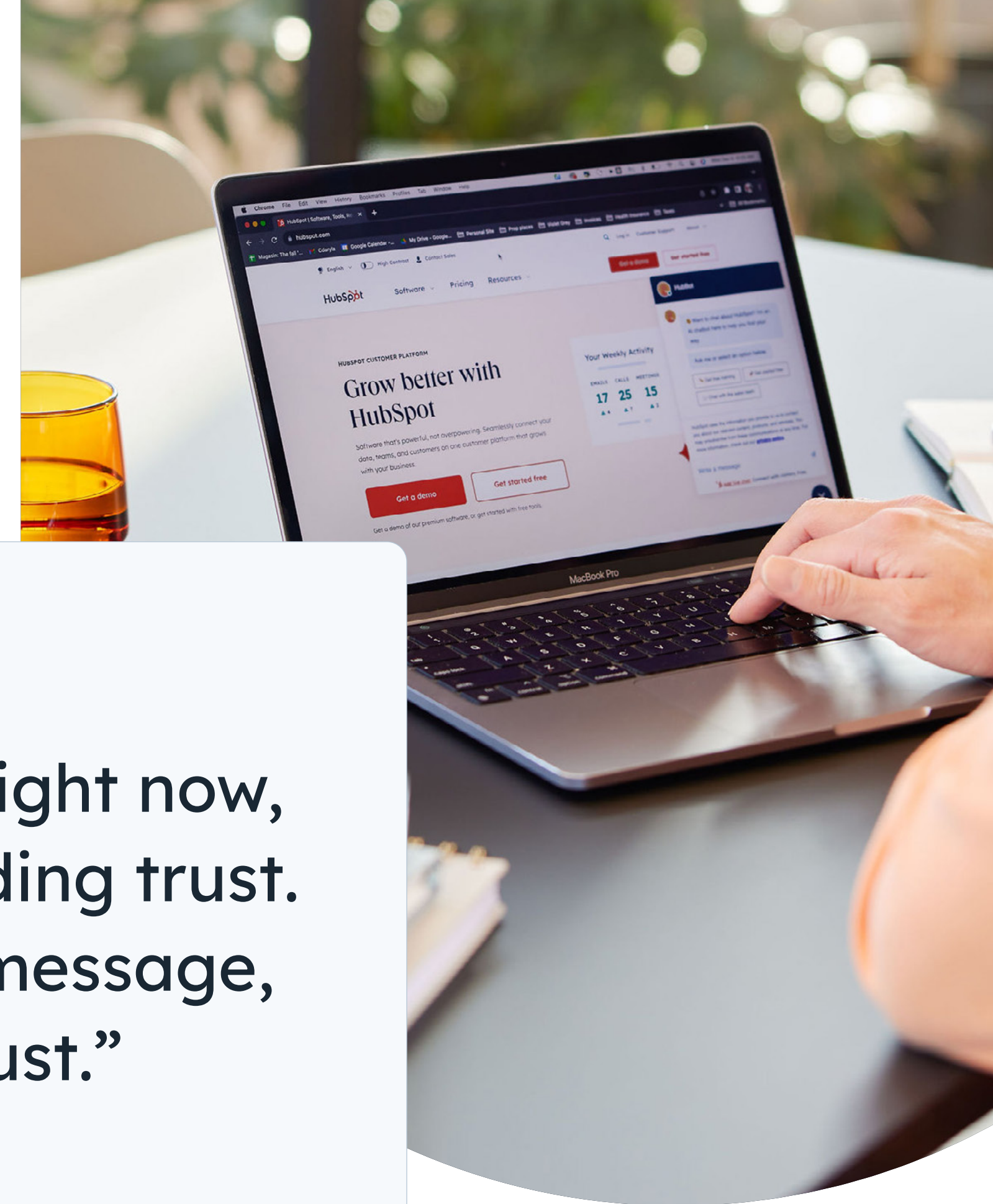
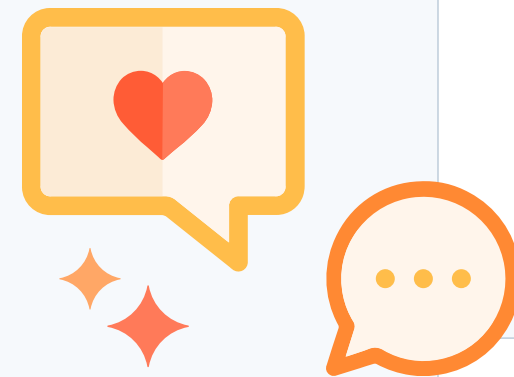> " We have to, right now, focus on building trust. Simplify the message, emphasize trust."
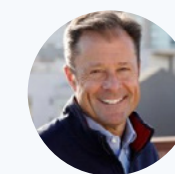
ROB GIGLIO
Rob Giglio, CCO, HubSpot

Making connections starts on social

This year, connections between consumers and brands will start on social media. And every interaction on social is amplified by engagement in a user's network, contributing significantly to their perception of a brand. The deciding factor between brand success and failure lies in the pocket of their target audience — and may the silliest, most authentic, most educational brands win.

Here's what brands can take from this report and incorporate into their ecommerce and digital marketing strategies in 2024.

#1 **Consumers want to conduct their own product research.**

Optimize your content and make it more discoverable via web, social, and video.

#2 **Consumers shop on their phones more than any other device.**

Audit and improve your mobile shopping and customer communication experience.

#3 **Social media is the #1 product discovery channel, and buying directly via social media is up YoY.**

Establish a brand presence across the top social media platforms and add a shop link to your profiles.

#4 **1 in 3 consumers use AI chatbots like ChatGPT, primarily to learn or find inspiration and ideas.**

Experiment with ways to make it easier for shoppers to find information, like an AI chatbot on your website.

#5 **1 in 5 consumers consider themselves content creators or influencers.**

Partner with creators whose values align with your brand and build long-term relationships.

#6 **More than half of consumers are being more careful with spending.**

Lead with value and offer flexible pricing options for your customers.

#7 **Consumers want to support brands committed to diversity and inclusion, and small businesses.**

Share brand values and take your audience behind the scenes, showing them who's behind the brand.

#8 **75% of consumers say data privacy is a human right.**

Invest in cybersecurity and AI policies that protect customer data and be transparent about your stance.

HubSpot

Connect with your audience and prove business value

Prioritize social media interactions and never miss mentions from your most loyal brand advocates with HubSpot's smart social media tools.

- Build and publish social media campaigns with ease, using our AI-powered social post generator.
- Monitor social mentions automatically with streams based on certain keywords.
- Report on social media marketing ROI and set up custom social reports and dashboards.
- See how social media impacts your larger marketing campaigns and strategy.

Get a demo
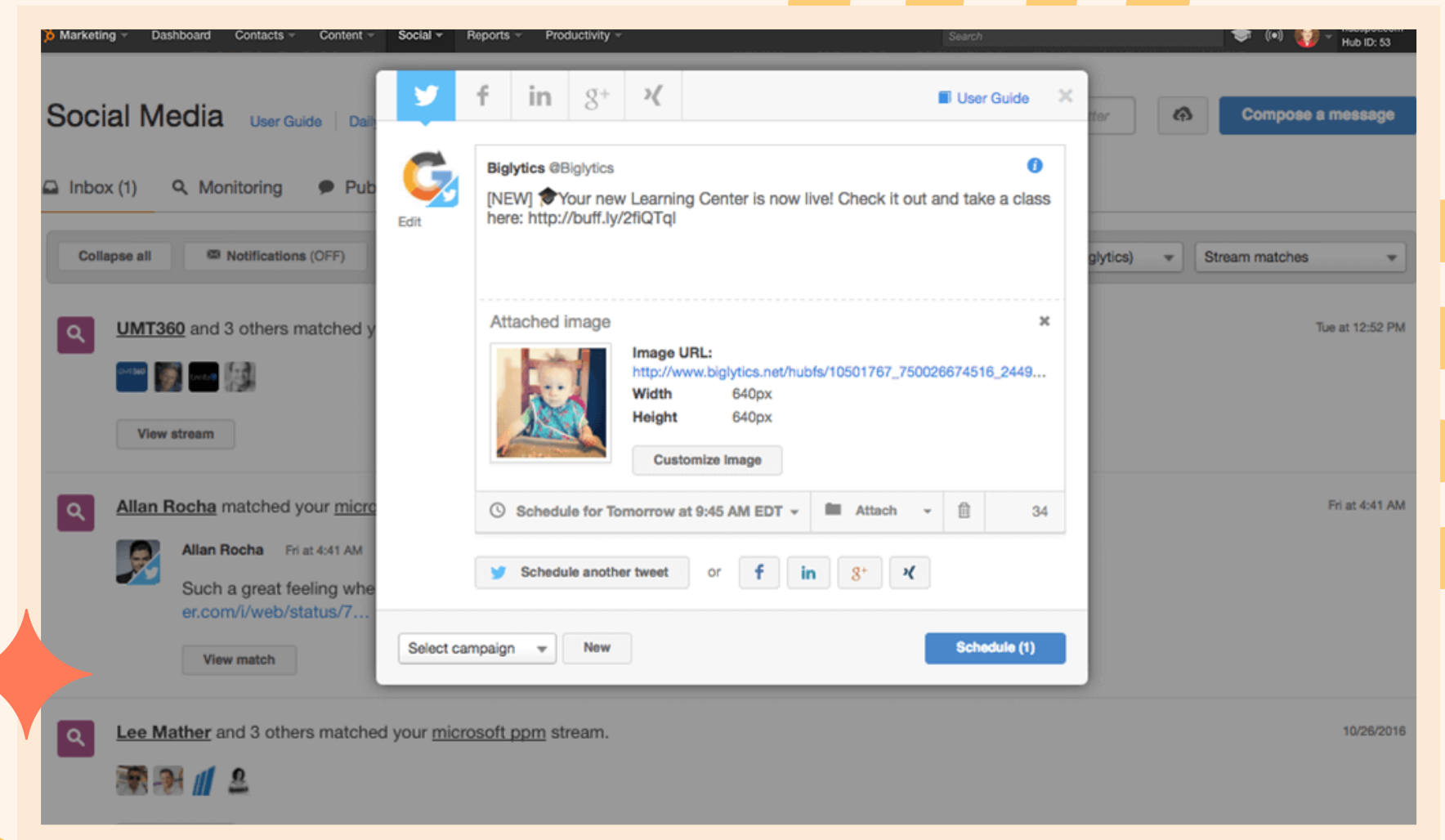
Methodology

We surveyed 700+ consumers in the U.S. in
January 2024 to gain the insights for this report.