



7 Digital Trends for Brands to Embrace in 2023

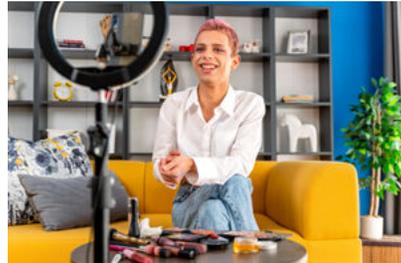


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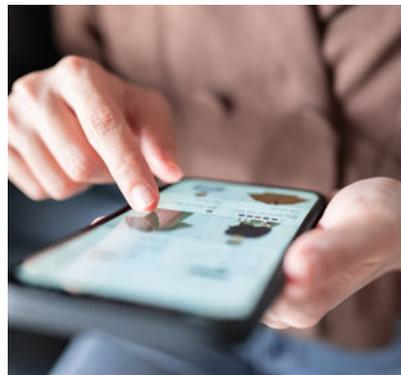
Every year in digital and social media brings surprises: brand-new platforms, algorithm changes and game-changing technology. 2023 will be no different. Some of the global changes are already happening: seismic shifts in cryptocurrency, a shake-out in the NFT market and incredible advances in A.I. (especially in chatbot technology), for example.



There are other trends, emerging and continuing, in 2023 that will affect brands significantly. 360PR+'s digital experts recently gathered to discuss what trends and issues we see as the most likely to impact the day-to-day business of our clients. Some present opportunities, others challenges to be in position to manage: the future of Twitter, getting real about TikTok while recognizing new opportunities with YouTube, next-level influencer marketing, aligning brand values with customers' values, more robust video content, and social commerce.



We hope you enjoy this digital digest. We're here to help if you want to dive deeper into one or more of these trends or discuss other ways to evolve your brand's digital footprint - with new platforms, new content, and new distribution strategies that integrate with and amplify other communications and marketing to increase ROI of our work together.



1. Wither Twitter?

FEARS ABOUT THAT BILLIONAIRE ELON MUSK WILL SINK TWITTER IN 2023

When Elon Musk purchased Twitter in October for \$44 billion, Fortune called it “one of the most overpaid tech acquisitions in history.” It’s all been downhill since.

Musk immediately laid-off half of Twitter’s workforce and followed it up by demanding unpaid overtime from the remaining staff, which led to another mass exodus of employees. Twitter may have lost upwards of 75% of its staff.

Twitter was already plagued by trolls, disinformation and fraud before Musk took over. His declaration of “free speech” purity led to an immediate rise in hate speech on Twitter and several brands being targeted with misinformation. It didn’t help that Musk himself has engaged in spreading conspiracy theories and actively attacked his detractors via tweet.

Many advertisers, spooked by the chaos, have either abandoned Twitter or paused their advertising spending, including General Motors, Pfizer, Volkswagen and General Mills. There are growing concerns that without robust moderation and a skeletal staff, Twitter is in danger of being forced into bankruptcy in 2023. Musk recently banning journalists and other critics hasn’t helped. Certainly, the social media powerhouse is on shaky ground as it starts the new year.

360PR+ RECOMMENDS:

Pausing any paid programs or campaigns until there are signs the platform is stabilizing. Brands currently using Twitter can continue to post organically, but we advise backing up any content that needs to be saved and increased community management. Twitter remains a powerful platform for social listening and identifying emerging trends and breaking news.

2. TikTok: One Platform to Rule Them All

ONCE RIDICULED AS A LIP-SYNCHING APP FOR TWEENS, TIKTOK IS NOW A SOCIAL MEDIA GOLIATH

You know you've made it to the top when your competitors start to copy you. That's the story with TikTok as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter scramble to develop short video solutions to compete with TikTok.

Unlike its quickly aging competitors, TikTok is fast, easy and purpose-built for a younger audience.

TikTok reached one billion users faster than any other social platform (5.1 years vs. Facebook's 8.7 years) and the platform's explosive growth continues as older users begin to hop onboard and its search function continues to improve.

TikTok has become a pop culture meme machine as many online trends (from songs and food to fashion and entertainment) get their start on TikTok, not to mention it's become a go-to search engine for many people. With a lightning-fast pace and an audience often hostile to overt advertising, TikTok can be a challenge for brands. There are challenges ahead as it faces regulatory hurdles and the pains that come with rapid growth, but TikTok is poised to drive the social media storyline this year. In fact, 55% of marketers plan to increase their spend on TikTok in 2023.

360PR+ RECOMMENDS:



The best way to start on TikTok is to partner with TikTok influencers. Remember that TikTok influencer marketing is best executed when a brand gives their partners creative license to be authentic to themselves and their audience. Always remain FTC-compliant while making sure the partnership does not feel forced and turn viewers off. It's also time to start making your own branded TikTok videos. Just make sure to be real and authentic.

55%

of marketers plan to increase spending on TikTok in 2023





3. Next-Level Influencer Marketing

WHEN TRUSTED PERSONALITIES ADVOCATE FOR A PRODUCT OR SERVICE, CONSUMERS LISTEN AND BUY

With the continued success of influencer marketing in nudging consumers to open their wallets, it's no surprise marketers plan to open their own billfolds and increase their influencer spending by 24% this year.

One of the key reasons? Authenticity. People want to buy from people they trust.

It's hard to argue against it. 92% of consumers prefer to take buying advice from influencers over “regular” celebrities. 63% of consumers, especially younger consumers, trust influencers more than brands to help in buying decisions.

The reason for the success of influencers is their ability to build niche audiences on social media platforms, create relevant and compelling content and attract like-minded individuals to follow them. There are influencers for every sort of brand – food, travel, gaming, beverage and even more narrow categories like gardening, woodworking and book collecting.

What we see changing in 2023 is deeper partnerships between brands and influencers: more exclusivity, longer-term relationships and the ability of influencers to add commerce to their posts with direct links to sales, affiliate marketing and even live shopping.

360PR+ RECOMMENDS:

There are many ways for brands to partner with influencers beyond just sponsored posts. Brands should consider exploring options like Livestream shopping, video content, co-creating products, long-term collaborative partnerships and tapping micro-influencers. Using micro-influencers, those with 10k-80k followers, is a strategy for reaching an engaged audience at far more reasonable fees compared to macro-influencers.

4. Let's Relate

APPROACHABLE MARKETING - WHERE BRANDS ALIGN THEIR VALUES WITH THOSE OF THEIR CUSTOMERS - WILL BE ALL THE RAGE IN 2023

Consumers want brands to feel like their friends, especially while they're scrolling; anything else is a disruption. Users are gravitating toward more "unedited" or "real" content that drives emotional connections. In other words, consumers don't want to be overtly marketed to - they want you to relate to them.

The brands that are establishing a consistent POV and brand voice resonate the most with today's consumers because they appear transparent and approachable. Content and copy that feels born of the platform it's viewed on is more likely to grab engagement and ultimately translate to long-term affinity and product sales.

In 2022, 40% of consumers said they based a buying decision on whether a brand's values aligned with their own - up 17% from 2021. And it's not only B2C companies. LinkedIn recently reported that its top performing B2B posts in 2022 were those that leveraged an emotional impact. LinkedIn also reported that brands harnessing emotion acquired 198% more followers than brands that did not.

In 2023, brands that market to their customers in an approachable way - using their own unique voice - will be the ones leading the pack.

360PR+ RECOMMENDS:



Create content that provides value to your audience. Stop overt selling and listen to what customers really want and need from you. This means listening and engaging with people online - tapping into the trends and conversations that matter and creating content that reflects on that and resonates with your customers.



40%

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5. Video Killed the Internet Star

IT'S NOT EVEN CLOSE ANYMORE - SOCIAL CONTENT HAS TRANSFORMED FROM STILLS TO VIDEO

So far, video has won the online content war. Already, the average adult spends 140 minutes per day on video-first platforms like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. Those numbers explode when talking about 18-24-year-olds who spend 10.5 hours per week on TikTok and 6.9 hours on YouTube - more than two full 8-hour work shifts!

The video-first approach will continue into 2023 in a big way. "The shift to video is part of Instagram's efforts to stay current with how people are interacting with and sharing content," Instagram CEO Adam Mosseri said recently. "More videos are being shared on the app, and Instagram is going to lean into that shift."

Why fight it? Half of social media users prefer video over any other type of content and 85% of consumers say they want more video content from brands. That's one reason why social media users share videos twice as much as other types of content. The opportunities for brand videos are plenty: interviews/Q&As, behind-the-scenes, how-to and product demos, livestreams, giveaways and promotions, product announcements and original programming.

360PR+ RECOMMENDS:



Video should be integrated into your marketing mix, especially videos with an editorial rather than an advertorial slant. Video allows for visual storytelling, increased engagement and better conversions than other types of digital content.

6. Buy Social

SOCIAL COMMERCE - THE ABILITY TO PURCHASE A PRODUCT OR SERVICE DIRECTLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA - WILL SURPASS \$1B IN 2023

Social media isn't just for messaging and engagement anymore. In 2022, 98% of social media users made a purchase directly from a social media platform - without ever having to leave it. This year, for the first time ever, shoppable ads on social networks will crest \$1 billion in sales.

If you're a brand that sells directly to consumers, it's time to start thinking about using shoppable ads. If you're a brand that sells through third parties, social platforms like Meta will allow you to use collaborative ads (where consumers can browse and buy your product from retail and grocery stores).

Commerce will continue to be seamlessly integrated into social media in 2023 as Twitter, TikTok and YouTube roll-out new products and enhance existing features to make purchasing easier.

360PR+ RECOMMENDS:

As e-commerce options evolve and grow in popularity, brands should consider setting aside budget to explore shoppable ads on social networks and/or experiment with collaborative ads with retailers to give their audiences greater flexibility to purchase their products. 360PR+ can help you figure out a strategy that works for your brand and your budget.

98%

of social media users have already made a purchase directly from social media in 2022

7. YouTube Rising

OFTEN COUNTED OUT AND IGNORED, YOUTUBE IS EMERGING AS TIKTOK'S HOTTEST COMPETITOR IN 2023

YouTube is a platform that continually flummoxes experts. Is it a social network? A video streaming platform? A search engine? Well, it turns out YouTube is all of the above.

One thing that's undisputable is YouTube's traffic. With many visitors spending chunks of time on the platform, users are taking YouTube everywhere they go. 75% of all the videos played on YouTube are on a mobile device. This might help explain why 68% of YouTube users say the platform helps them make purchasing decisions. Consumers are taking their phones shopping with them - and watching YouTube videos to help them decide what to buy.

YouTube isn't sitting still either. The platform recently launched YouTube Shorts - a product similar to TikTok videos. Shorts are an influencer's delight as YouTube will share 45% of revenue with creators for any Shorts they post and monetize (almost as good as the 50% provided by TikTok).

As YouTube sets its sights on TikTok, the platform has the advantage of already being the second most used search engine (right behind its parent company Google) and the largest streaming video platform in the world (with two billion users).

360PR+ RECOMMENDS:

There are two ways for brands to harness the power of YouTube. First, they can encourage influencers to post their sponsored content created for Instagram and TikTok as a YouTube Short (more bang - and reach - for the buck). Second, brands should begin to use YouTube Shorts as "teasers" for longer video content and develop content for audiences looking for purchasing information.

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