

GIANT RESOURCE DOWNLOAD

AWAKEN YOUR 2025 STRATEGY: TOP DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS TO WATCH

From AI-powered efficiency to content that truly cuts through the noise, the right strategies can help you connect, convert, and build trust like never before.

Heard the buzz about AI in Digital PR? Wondering what it actually means for your strategy? You're in the right place.

We've put together a no-nonsense guide to what's changing, why it matters, and how you can use AI to work smarter—not harder. From optimising your media pitches to proving real impact, it's all in here. Let's jump in.

CONTENTS:

AI, Ads & the Battle for Relevance

AI-Driven Search: Winning in a Zero-Click World

Authentic Storytelling: Cutting Through the AI Noise

AI & Data: The New Rules of Measurement

AI in 2025: Power Meets Purpose



AWAKEN YOUR 2025 STRATEGY: TOP DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS TO WATCH

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a future concept – it's a fundamental part of digital marketing. As AI integrates deeper into our workflows, from content automation to Google Workspace tools, brands need to rethink their strategies to stay competitive. But with AI-generated outputs becoming more widespread, how do you ensure your brand stands out?

The key lies in trust, strategy, and smart engagement. While AI enables efficiency and scalability, success isn't just about producing more – it's about delivering quality, relevance, and authenticity. In fact, **68% of marketers believe AI-driven personalisation will have the most significant impact on paid advertising strategies in 2025.*** This shift signals a critical need for brands to move beyond

automation and create meaningful connections with their audience. This year, three key factors will shape marketing success: AI advancements, personalised marketing, and evolving consumer behaviours. Audiences are more discerning than ever, seeking authentic, meaningful interactions – even from AI-driven platforms. Digital marketing is evolving rapidly, and the brands that embrace AI with intention – while keeping a human touch – will lead the way.

Here, we explore expert insights, predictions, and practical strategies to refine your digital marketing approach across core channels – including paid advertising, SEO, content, and data & analytics.

AI, ADS & THE BATTLE FOR RELEVANCE: WHY SMART STRATEGY WINS IN 2025



AI is reshaping paid advertising, making campaigns more efficient and personalised. However, whilst automation unlocks new possibilities, it cannot be a substitute for strategic thinking. **Over 30% of marketing professionals acknowledge the paradox of authenticity, where brands are scrambling to create human connections with customers using AI influencers*.**

"AI will change paid advertising, but brands can't rely on machine learning alone - human oversight is still essential," says Yumna Kumran, Paid Lead at Sleeping Giant Media. The rapid adoption of AI-powered tools enhances targeting and ROI, yet the sheer volume of AI-generated content means that trust and quality will be the key differentiators.

"AI-powered automation in paid media is here to stay, but success comes from knowing when to trust AI - and when to step in," Yumna explains.

and relationships – which it otherwise might not know about."

EMERGING TRENDS: CTV & SHORT-FORM VIDEO

Connected TV (CTV) is gaining traction, offering a bridge between traditional television and digital advertising. But brands need a strategic approach to CTV. Yumna cautions: "CTV is growing, but it's high in the funnel and doesn't always drive immediate conversions." Aligning CTV ads with broader marketing objectives ensures meaningful engagement and measurable impact.

Meanwhile, video continues to dominate. Platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram are influencing search behaviours, requiring brands to rethink their approach. Instead of spreading budgets too thin across multiple channels, brands should refine their presence and focus on where their audience is most active.

KEY TAKEAWAY

AI-driven advertising is the future, but brands must test and optimise now. **"If you're not experimenting with AI-powered tools, like Meta's Advantage**

Plus, you risk falling behind when they become industry standard," summarises Yumna. The winning strategy? Combining AI's efficiency with human expertise to create authentic, high-impact campaigns.

AI, ADS & THE BATTLE FOR RELEVANCE: WHY SMART STRATEGY WINS IN 2025

ONE MAJOR SHIFT: THE RISE OF ZERO-CLICK SEARCHES

AI-generated overviews provide users with instant answers, often reducing the must-visit websites. That said, this isn't necessarily a loss – it's an opportunity. **"If your brand appears in AI-generated results, that's valuable digital real estate,"** Kathryn points out. Instead of solely chasing rankings, marketers must focus on earning trust to ensure their content is surfaced in chatbot responses and AI summaries.

BEYOND CLICKS: BUILDING TRUST & AUTHORITY

With AI shaping search results, trust and credibility matter more than ever. Brands that rely on generic AI-generated content won't meet Google's E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) standards. **"AI can assist with content creation, but originality and human insight remain essential,"** Kathryn adds. The future of search will prioritise content that demonstrates real expertise and adds genuine value to users.



KEY TAKEAWAY

SEO is no longer just about rankings – it's about visibility and trust. To succeed in AI-driven search, brands must focus on entity SEO, digital PR, and demonstrating expertise. The future isn't just about being found; it's about being recognised and chosen.



AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING: CUTTING THROUGH THE AI NOISE

Audiences are overwhelmed by mass-produced, generic content. As AI-generated material floods the digital space, authenticity is more important than ever. **"Consumers connect with brands that feel real, offering unique insights and human experiences AI can't replicate,"** says Steven Westgate, Head of Content at Sleeping Giant Media.

But authenticity isn't just about what you say – it's about how you say it. **"There's a growing fatigue around high-volume, low-value content. Marketers need to prioritise relevance over sheer output,"** Steven adds. Instead of flooding channels with AI-generated material, brands should focus on high-value content that provides genuine insight.

SHORT-FORM VIDEO: RAW, RELATABLE, & RELEVANT

Short-form video continues to rise, with consumers favouring content that is quick, engaging, and digestible. But high production value isn't always necessary. **"Audiences prefer authenticity over perfection – relatable, lo-fi content often performs better than polished ads,"** adds Steven. The key? Prioritise speed and authenticity over a super polished output.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In 2025, brands that prioritise storytelling, trust, and high-value content will stand out. AI can assist, but it can't replace genuine human connection.

AI & DATA: THE NEW RULES OF MEASUREMENT

AI is shaking up data analysis, giving marketers sharper insights into consumer behaviour while throwing some serious privacy questions into the mix. As regulations tighten, the days of relying on third-party tracking are fading fast. First-party data is now the name of the game, offering a more compliant and personalised approach.

"With stricter privacy laws, brands can't

afford to lean on third-party tracking anymore. A strong first-party data strategy is essential for personalisation and compliance," explains Chris Hirlemann, Associate Director of Data and Insight at Sleeping Giant Media. Here's the challenge - when users opt out of data collection, accuracy takes a hit. Some brands are getting creative with solutions like pseudo-anonymisation to

EVENT-BASED TRACKING: THE SMARTER ALTERNATIVE

One trend leading the charge? Event-based tracking. Instead of focusing on outdated session-based metrics, brands are shifting towards tracking key interactions - like video views, clicks, and purchases - to get a clearer picture of engagement.

"Brands using AI-driven predictive analytics will have a serious edge,"

Chris adds. AI helps fill in the gaps left by privacy restrictions, allowing businesses to spot trends without

relying on personal data. But while the tech is powerful, many brands are still treading carefully when it comes to fully integrating AI into their decision-making.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Old-school tracking is on its way out. The future of measurement isn't about collecting more data - it's about collecting smarter data. By embracing AI, first-party data, and event-based tracking, brands can stay ahead of the curve and navigate the evolving world of digital privacy with confidence.





AI IN 2025: POWER MEETS PURPOSE

AI is transforming digital marketing, but success won't come from simply using it - it will come from using it wisely. The brands that thrive will be those who balance automation with strategy, scalability with authenticity, and data-driven insights with human creativity.

Whether in paid media, search, content, or analytics, success in 2025 will depend on trust, adaptability, and smart engagement. AI is a powerful tool, but its real value lies in how brands apply it. The biggest challenge of 2025? Striking the right balance between AI's capabilities and authentic, human-driven marketing.

Sign up for the next edition of the Marketing Leadership Series to gain exclusive insights into the latest digital trends. If you want to make an impact in 2025, contact our team today and discover how we can help you lead the way.

**Research conducted via a poll of participants attending the Sleeping Giant Media Marketing Leadership Series No. 12 Webinar, hosted in January 2025.*

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



LUKE QUILTER CEO & CO-FOUNDER

With over 20 years of experience in the industry, Luke has built a reputation as a thought leader, helping brands navigate the world of digital. As CEO and co-founder, Luke combines his expertise in digital marketing with a passion for education, empowering businesses to think smarter, act bolder, and achieve measurable results. Luke regularly shares his insights through talks, workshops, and leadership events, inspiring marketers to embrace innovation and drive real impact.



KATHRYN BEVAN HEAD OF SEO

As Head of SEO here at Sleeping Giant Media, Kathryn is a search engine optimisation expert with over 10 years of experience in the industry - both in SEO and previously as a Senior Account Manager. She has worked with a wide range of clients, from enterprise brands through to small businesses, gaining vast experience in delivering SEO strategies, including international SEO projects for clients across multiple markets.



CHRIS HIRLEMANN ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF DATA & INSIGHT

Working with us since 2011, Chris has seen his fair share of digital changes, and has kept us at the forefront of data-based innovation for over a decade. Chris specialises in tag management, Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO), paid search and paid social, and spends his time helping businesses in all sectors make sure that they've got the best possible data to make informed decisions for the future of their online



STEVEN WESTGATE HEAD OF CONTENT

With a flair for storytelling and a keen eye on digital trends, Steven excels in crafting strategies that amplify brand engagement and spark growth. Steven has led high-performing teams and collaborated with industry giants like Unilever, Clarins, and Campari to deliver impactful results. His dedication to innovation makes him a go-to expert for brands looking to elevate their digital presence.



YUMNA KUMRAN PAID LEAD

Yumna helps brands maximise their digital potential through expertly crafted PPC strategies. She specialises in using data and creativity to create campaigns that drive engagement and ROI. With a keen eye on industry trends like AI-driven advertising, video innovations, and omnichannel marketing, Yumna ensures impactful and sustainable campaigns that deliver success.

THANK YOU FOR READING

Interested in learning more about us?
Visit our site to find out more, and sign up
to our [newsletter](#) for regular updates and
content like this.

www.sleepinggiantmedia.co.uk

Follow us on social media!

