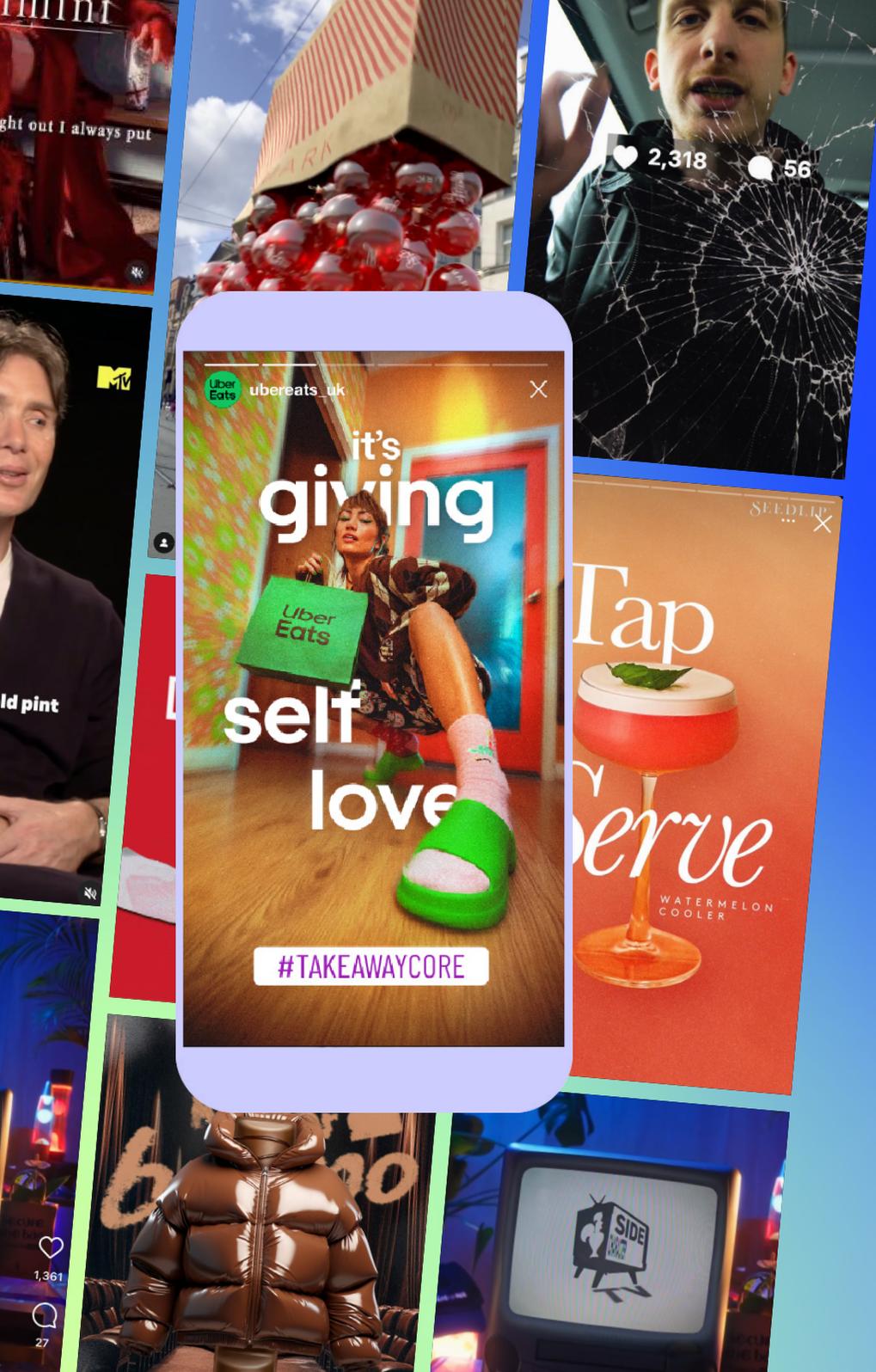


Social Trends & Predictions for 2024

This is the Year of the
Social-First Brand
Are you ready?



Welcome

We are undoubtedly going to see 2024 as the year of social-first brand strategy.

We've seen major and micro social channels continue to grow in their influence over our daily lives in 2023. They are now the number one form of media by time spent for 16-44 year olds, around the globe.

According to WARC, social is set to overtake search and TV to become the largest media channel globally in Q4 2024. Marketers are responding. Iconic brands like Guinness, McDonald's, Ryanair and Heinz are rethinking their marketing mix. For the first time, they are pivoting their position to start with social.

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This shift has deep implications for brands and their leaders. So the Born Social team has looked at what marketers needs to consider for the year ahead. This is about finding competitive advantage.

We've compiled five themes, which together, paint a compelling picture of what and how to ensure you're set up for social-first success into 2024.

Enjoy.

Callum McCahon
Chief Strategy Officer



Contents & Executive Summary

What unifies these five trends is the need to recognise that from here on in, social gets serious. Serious for brand building and serious for business growth, even for the most iconic advertising brands.

*2024 marks
a move to the
top table*

From here on in putting social at the heart of marketing plans is going to be essential to building great brands.

01 Creators at the Core

Influencers will become the power play for brands that leverage them across all brand communications, with creators acting as consultants.

02 The Return of Earned Reach

With the rise of pay-to-avoid-ad models, brands will need paid, owned and earned approaches working in tandem. United, not divided.

03 The Ascendancy of Social-First Craft

Social-first craft will break out from the screen and become the central consideration for brands, who will adopt it across their full suite of channels including OOH, Retail and Experiential.

04 Social Commerce will Collapse the Funnel

Brands will rely on social media platforms and their burgeoning shopping functionalities as consumers explore and buy simultaneously, collapsing the sales funnel.

05 AI accelerates the Measurement Stack

Brands will race to build bespoke social measurement stacks, powered by AI. This will help them to prove the value of social and uncover insights faster, feeding learnings back into the creative work itself.

Creators at the Core

By Lucy Edgerley, *Director of Influence*

In 2024 Creators will become one of the most influential forms of media out there: defining cultural references, influencing lifestyle choices and purchasing decisions.

It's unsurprising, then, that investment in Creators is set to grow 3.5x faster than regular paid social spend.

Next year we expect to see leading brands reflect this shift in their creator strategies. Creators will no longer sit in a silo, separate from brand activity. They will play a pivotal role, integrated across all brand communications - extending beyond the FYP and amplified across the full ecosystem.

Integration with paid media and SEO strategies will be considered business as

usual, but we don't see it stopping there - this will extend to more traditional touch points like OOH, TV and Print.

TikTok's new 'Out of Phone' offering showed the way as we move into a new era where social-first creators and traditional celebrities become one and the same.





We'll see Creators being contracted as long term ambassadors who provide brands with a route into culture. With that, they will act as consultants as much as content producers, co-creating product lines and advising on creative strategy. This won't just be mega creators with 5M+ followers, expect to see more micro creators taking centre stage as well.

This increasingly integrated approach to Creators will mean that partnerships will have more eyeballs on them than ever before.

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*Creators will no longer sit in a silo,
separate from brand activity*
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With that, creator selection processes will evolve and emphasis will be on community insights and cultural truths, as opposed to a creators performance metrics alone.

Brands will need to truly know their community and the place they hold in culture to ensure their partnerships are authentic enough to cut through and avoid the ever fear-inducing possibility of being #cancelled.

The Return of Earned Reach

By Essi Nurminen, *Head of Strategy*

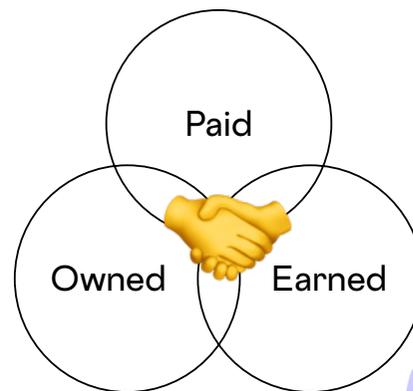
To win in 2024, social-first brands will need paid, owned and earned working in tandem. United, not divided.

It is set to be the first year when the attention economy will no longer be driven by advertising alone.

We'll see an increased range of monetisation models for social. Most notable will be the introduction of subscription services, which will allow users to pay to opt out of ads on social platforms like Meta and TikTok.

This is set to have a direct effect on how users experience paid content and will

challenge advertisers to think beyond ad placements. It shouldn't be a cause for concern, as much as an encouragement to ensure brands are using a wider spectrum of tactics to reach people.



Generating earned reach, on top of paid efforts, will no longer be optional - it will be crucial for brands to get in front of their audiences. This means reviewing your full social ecosystem to ensure all tactics are building towards the same objectives and measured using the right KPIs.

Brands need to use clusters of formats and channels across the ecosystem.

Prioritise earned reach, diversify it by using creators and reactive content, and most importantly - continue to invest in creative effectiveness. At the end of the day, it's the most impactful way to keep our eyeballs glued to our screens.

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Ascendancy of Social-first Craft

By Paddy Smith, *Chief Creative Officer*

2024 will mark the crystallisation of social-first craft, graduating from low-hanging fruit to a brand building fundamental. Ideas with a social-first approach baked into them will be the big winners next year, so here are four considerations if you want to win big.

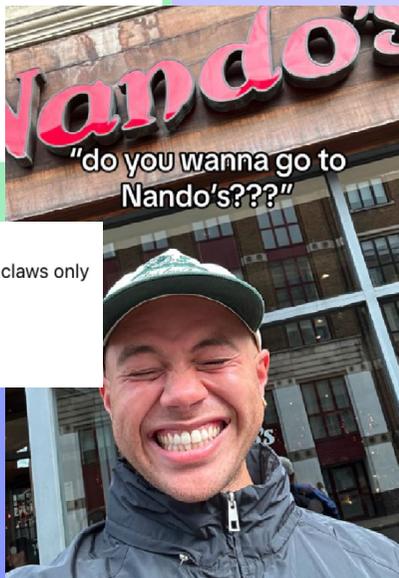
01 Blurring of IRL & URL

2023 was the year of the fake OOH, coined by brands like Maybelline and 3D artists Ian Padgham, surreal CGI took the top spot of 'thumb stopping' creative strategies. In 2024 we're going to see the continued rise of fake OOH and as technological innovation continues to blur the boundaries between IRL and URL, brands will scramble to use deception to increase memorability, proving that traditional formats often only exist to spark social discussions.

02 'meme-ability'

We see a year of brainstorming packed full of "but will it meme", as creatives are forced to consider what the community will do with their work. This dialect will be used when critiquing any and every idea as brands actively search for ways that a piece of crafted creative can be shared out of context. Considerations like "how does this idea impact our social search" will become second nature for any brand wanting to arrive organically into their audiences lives. Where as settling for a 'social cutdown' will only prove that you are in fact a fossil.





03 Embracing Inconvenient Truths

The brands that will win, will embrace the public discourse and play creatively with brand truths that are owned by the community. Brands can no longer paint over the cracks, and instead can thrive when they truly appreciate the often inconvenient truths. The winner will use these as tools to elevate their positioning by showing self awareness and platforming a self referential stance that shows they actually use the internet.

04 IYKYK

We're going to see the continued adoption of 'social literacy', with common visual and dialect motifs seeping their way from the confines of the 'big three' social apps into everyday lives of the consumer. But brands won't (shouldn't) stop there. Instead, they should truly embrace the social-first state of mind, pro actively considering how to integrate social-first language into their point of sale, creators into their products, and even meme formats into their window displays. This is how brands capitalise on the IYKYK of great social ideas, actively showing their audience 'they get it too'.

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Social Commerce & The Collapse of the Funnel

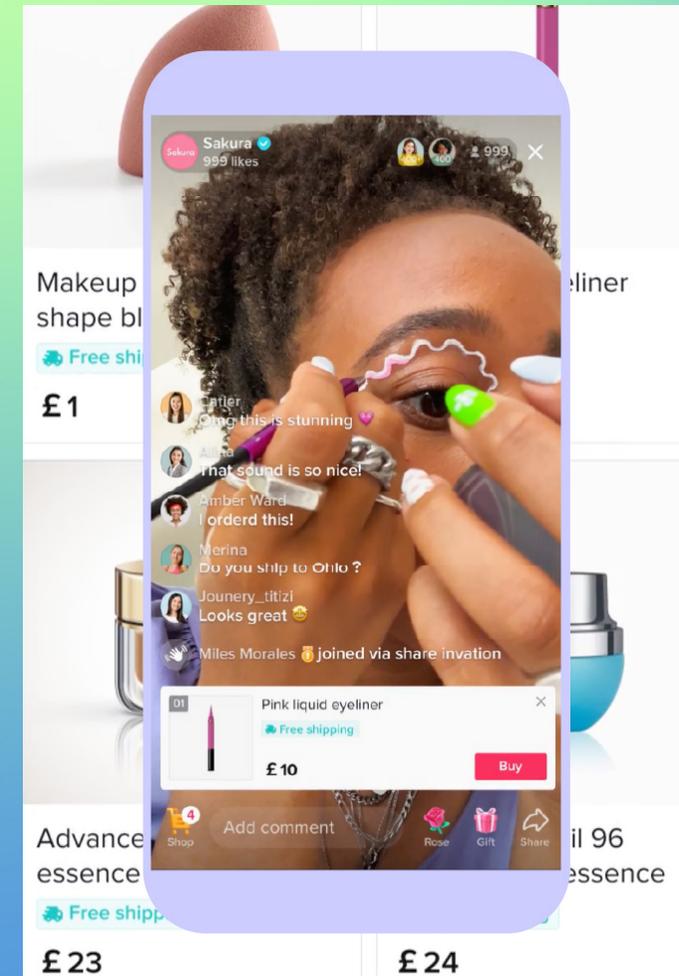
By Maddie Stewart-Williams, *Media Planning Director*

Prepare yourself to shift from mindless scrolling to mindless shopping.

Next year it's expected we'll see social commerce rushing to occupy the growing, cookie shaped hole forming in brand's marketing strategies.

Social's finely tuned algorithms will help push products to people who are engaged in real-time, making social commerce the place to be for e-commerce marketers in 2024.

All platforms are pushing their commerce offerings, from Amazon partnering with Meta and Snapchat to offer in-app purchase, to TikTok Search overtaking Google for Gen Z - all signs point to a boom in social commerce for 2024.



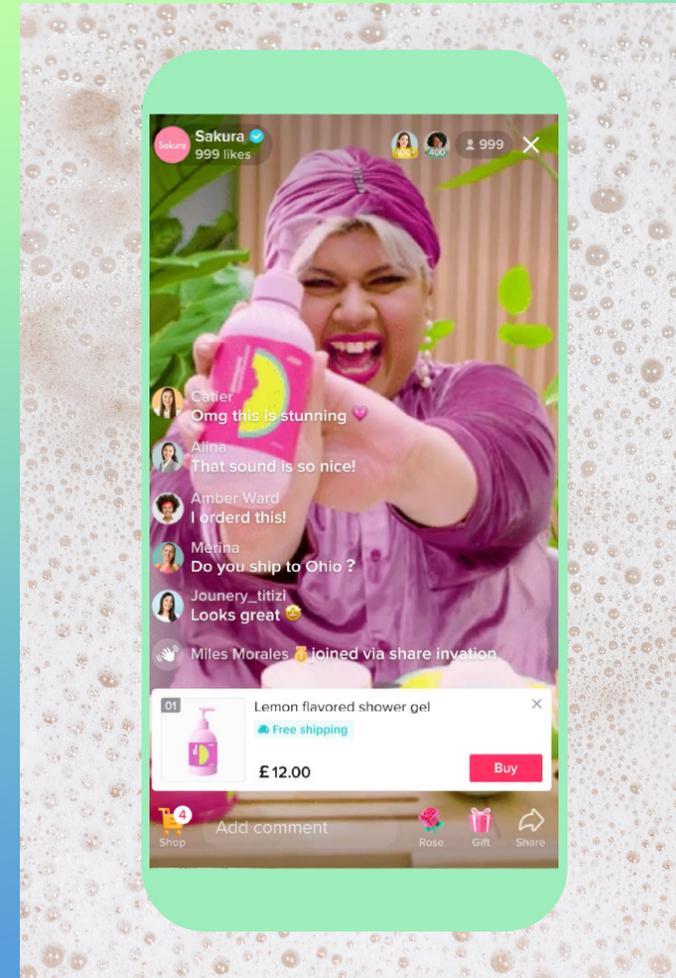
This brings an opportunity for brands to redirect e-commerce budgets from traditional channels such as search and display, into social commerce. Whilst there's a perception that social commerce is only suited to impulse purchases (TikTok made me buy it...), the reality is quite the contrary, with social purchases often being influenced over longer periods of time, using a blend of hyper-personalization and content algorithms to guide you to the purchase point.

The rise of this more fluid way of shopping means discovery, exploration and conversion will all take place simultaneously, collapsing the conversion funnel. Brands will rely on social media platforms and their newly integrated shopping functionalities as a lead channel to get the job done from start to finish. The need to worry about data and expensive re-targeting audiences for people 'in the buying mindset' will diminish.

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Social's finely tuned algorithms will help push products to people who are engaged in real-time

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AI accelerates the Measurement Stack

By Dan Pereira, *Data & Insight Director*

In 2024 we'll see brands racing to develop their brand-specific social measurement stacks that will help them to prove the value of social and get to better insights, faster.

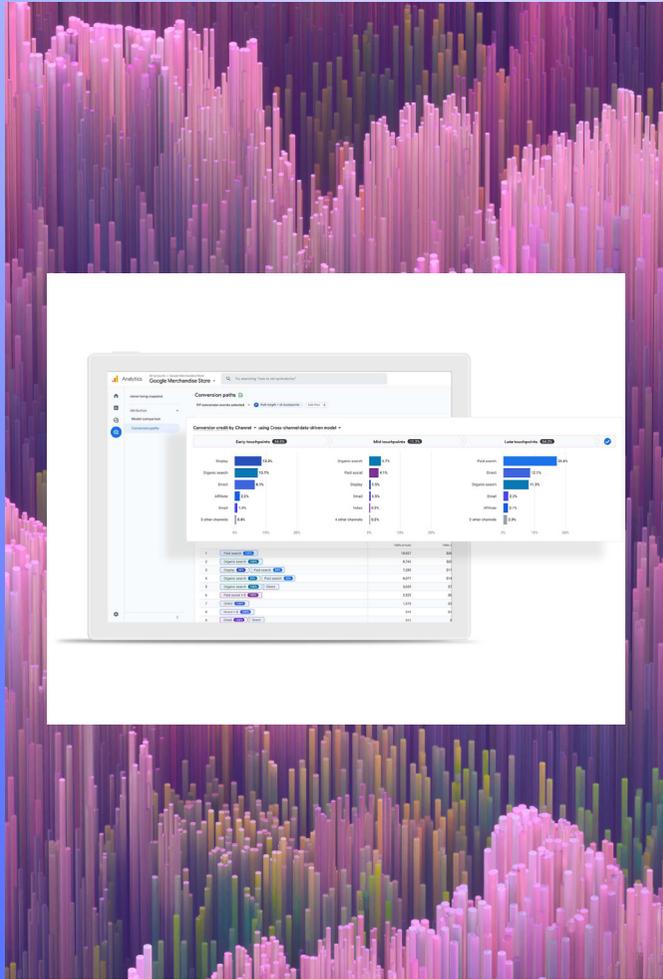
Historically this has presented a serious challenge for social marketing experts, who deal with a disjointed data landscape where the platforms refuse to play nicely.

It's been very difficult to produce a clear view of social media's impact on brand building and conversion without deep expertise and significant investment. As social media claims the lion's share of advertising budgets in 2024, brands will need to show social's impact on business metrics, not just vanity KPIs like Followers and Likes. CMOs (and CFOs) will engage and demand a better industry standard for measurement.

Brands require a solution which is faster, cheaper, and better.

We'll see AI providing this boon to the social measurement space, with its ability to pull clear insights from large sets of unstructured data.

The democratisation of AI will enable social-first brands to develop their own bespoke social measurement stacks, consolidating data from across the full social ecosystem - paid, owned, and earned - and making sense of it. Critically, it will help them to uncover insights faster, feeding learnings back into the creative work itself.



We're Born Social, a full service social media agency.

We build social-first brands.

Want to chat? shout@bornsocial.com

