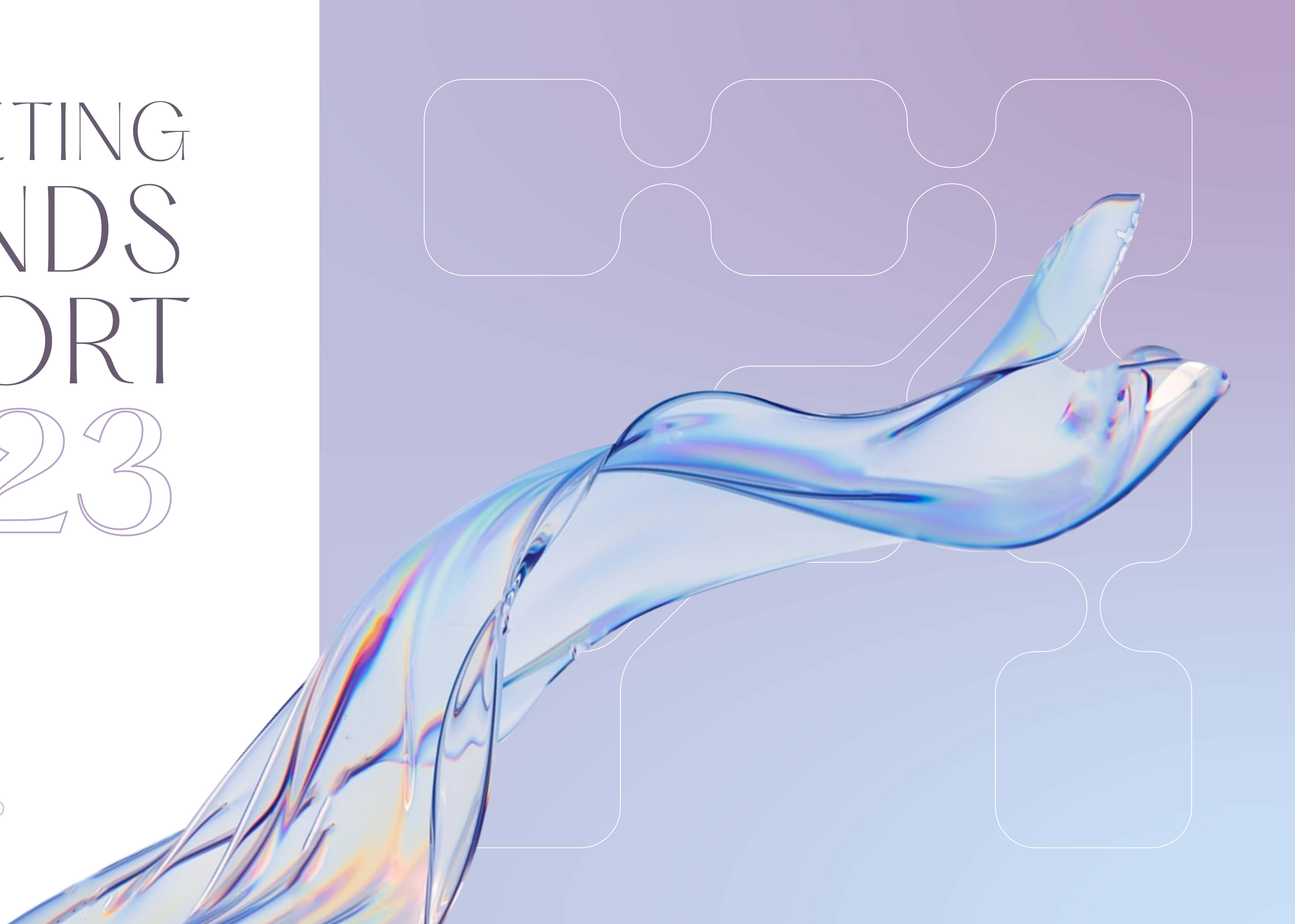


MARKETING TRENDS REPORT 2023

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Preamble

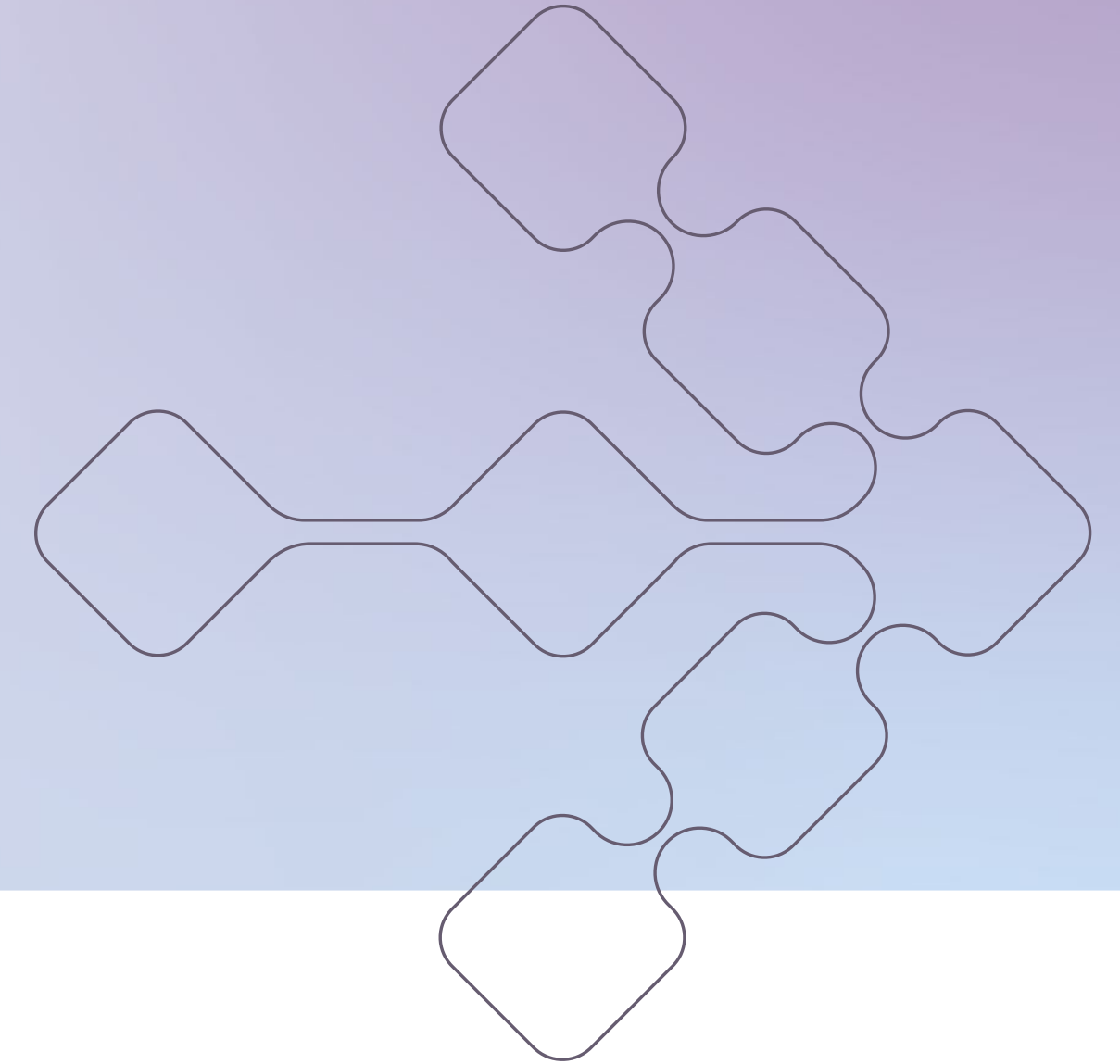
In a year of splintered company performances marked by a volatile economic climate, the CMOs' mind space, preoccupied with heightened sustainability concerns and tightened data privacy regulations, still gave us remarkable marketing breakthroughs; that will now pave the way for 2023's marketing strategies and plans.

As always, the goal will remain adapting these marketing strategies in a way that takes advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

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Just when we thought we are recovering from the reverberations of a post-masked world, new economic disturbances and newer technologies, trends and strategies unmask themselves, making marketing turn on its already spinning head.



CRISES MAKETH PEOPLE

Crisis always makes people evaluate and reevaluate their priorities, and just when we marketers were getting comfortable with the new world and its new purpose, recession reared its ugly head. As the roller coaster continues, one of the most important questions marketers will look at is – what is going to be my customer’s disposition today...and tomorrow?

Recent history tells us a customer’s mindset has been profoundly impacted by concerns of

safety, health, convenience and social responsibility.

Corporates and brands who thrived not only understood, but also responded to this new worldview shift. They became more purpose driven. Experience teaches us that while these will continue to be main guiding factors, there will be more nuisances that marketers will need to address as a result of political unrest, economic downturns as well as generational shifts.

TECHNOLOGY TAKES THE CAKE

We are no strangers to digital technology. Social media platforms and the opportunities thereof, conundrum of good data v/s bad data, AI, metaverse, AR, VR – technology has been shaping and will continue to shape the way marketers approach customers and adapt their way of working.

MARKETING IS NOT A STANDALONE GIG

Marketing has undergone a transformation in recent times, with a greater emphasis on

collaboration and coordination across teams and channels. This has given rise to new roles and disciplines, such as content marketing, influencer marketing, and customer experience management. These disciplines seek to create a holistic and positive experience for customers, leading to increased brand loyalty and success for companies. It is a testament to the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of the field of marketing.

SOME TRENDS, SOME CLASSIC

The above could be fleeting trends and/or could have long-lasting business impacts. For example:- Fear as a result of the pandemic may have been transitory, **“purpose”**, on the other hand, has become a permanent phenomena. Regardless of the nature of a trend or event, it is essential to take notice and consider its potential impact.

2022

In this unpredictable environment, marketers need to and have pivoted. Sometimes multiple times. **83% of those who pivoted in 2021, changed course two to four times in one year.**

84% of marketers had invested in an SEO strategy in 2022

Only 31% of marketers said their sales and marketing teams are strongly aligned.

Video dominated the marketing space in 2022.

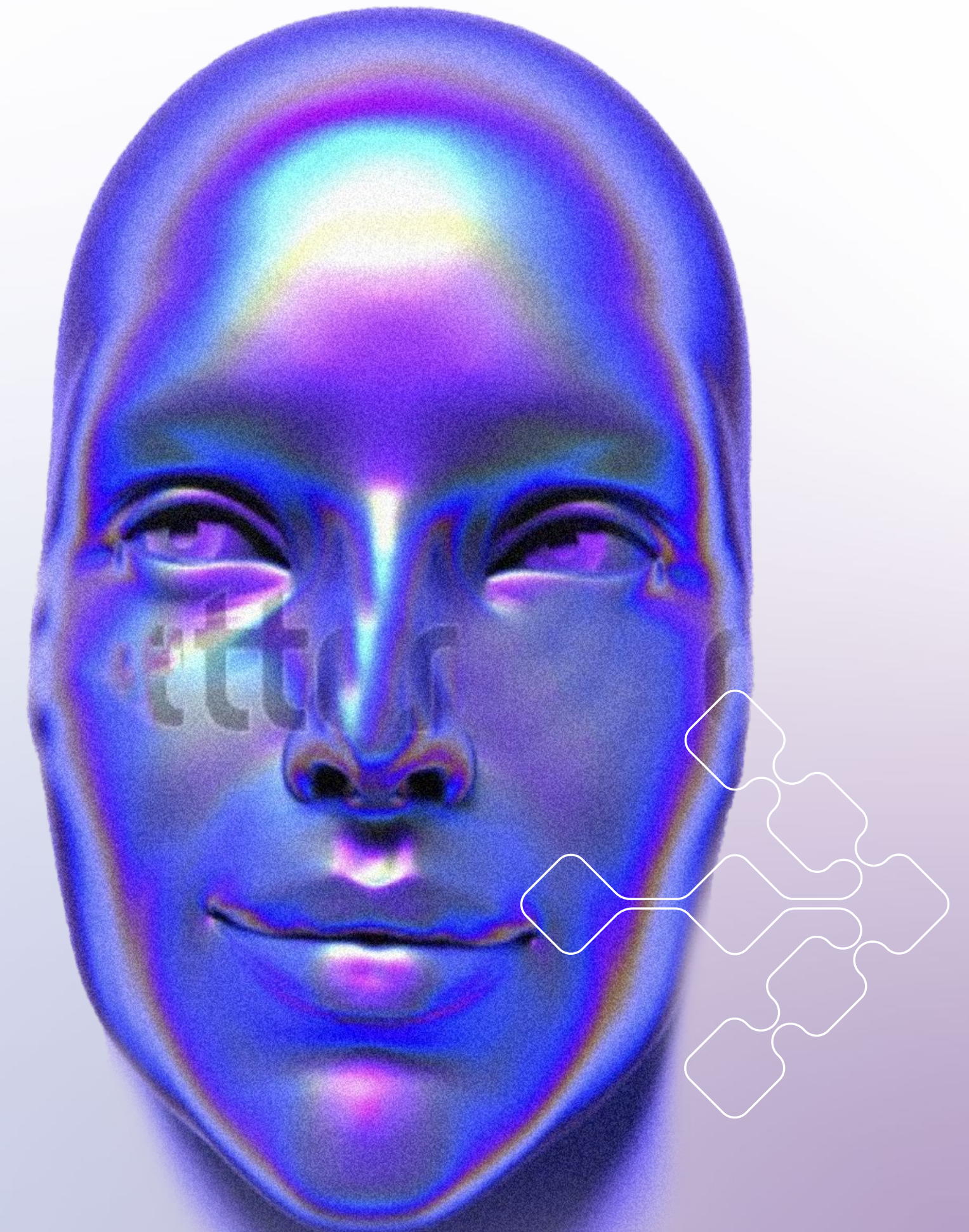
2023

20% of marketers have already pivoted due to the ongoing recession. 2023 will continue to see shifts around this.¹

This trend continues with an uptick to 88% of marketers investing in SEO in the upcoming year.

Almost half of marketers are shifting their goals in 2023 towards sales and marketing alignment.

90% of marketers who currently leverage short-form video will increase or maintain their investment in 2023.



71% of Gen Z-ers prefer to discover new products on social media. The same is true for 51% of Millennials

30% of marketers are currently creating content that reflects their brand's values, making it the third most popular trend right now.

Over 1 in 4 marketers currently leverage influencer marketing and it offers the 2nd highest ROI of any trend.

In 2022, 43% of marketers agree that automation will help their organizations grow.

A rising trend will see marketers focus on social media for lead generation in 2023

16% of marketers plan to leverage content that reflects their brand's values for the first time in 2023, and 89% of those already investing in it plan to increase or maintain their investment.

In 2023, 17% of marketers planning to invest in it for the first time and 89% of marketers using it will increase or maintain their investment next year. the short-form video proves to have the best ROI when compared to other media formats.

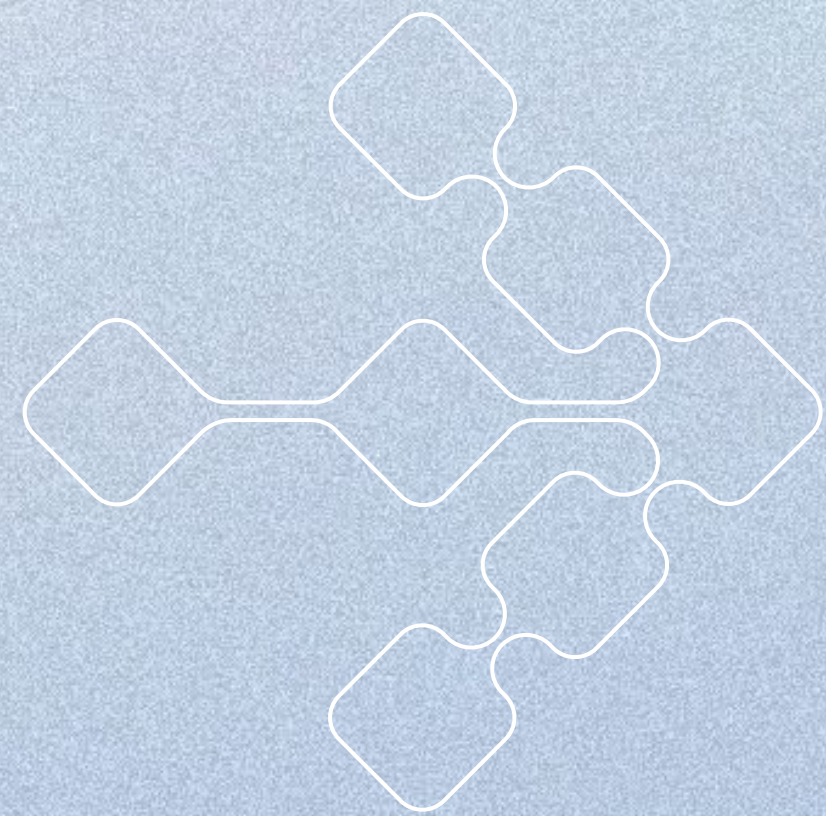
In 2023, focus on creating people-first content, content that's authentic and unique that your readers will value in comparison to AI-driven content

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One thing is clear - to survive in this evolving world of marketing, marketers need to stay true to their core - customer says what? Get distracted by the above without keeping them in mind and it's a rabbit hole. Customer journey mapping, customer data management, and customer service. How well you adapt these in the light of new, old, upgraded circumstances is how well you will thrive.

So what does 2023 hold in store for CMOs, brands and marketers?



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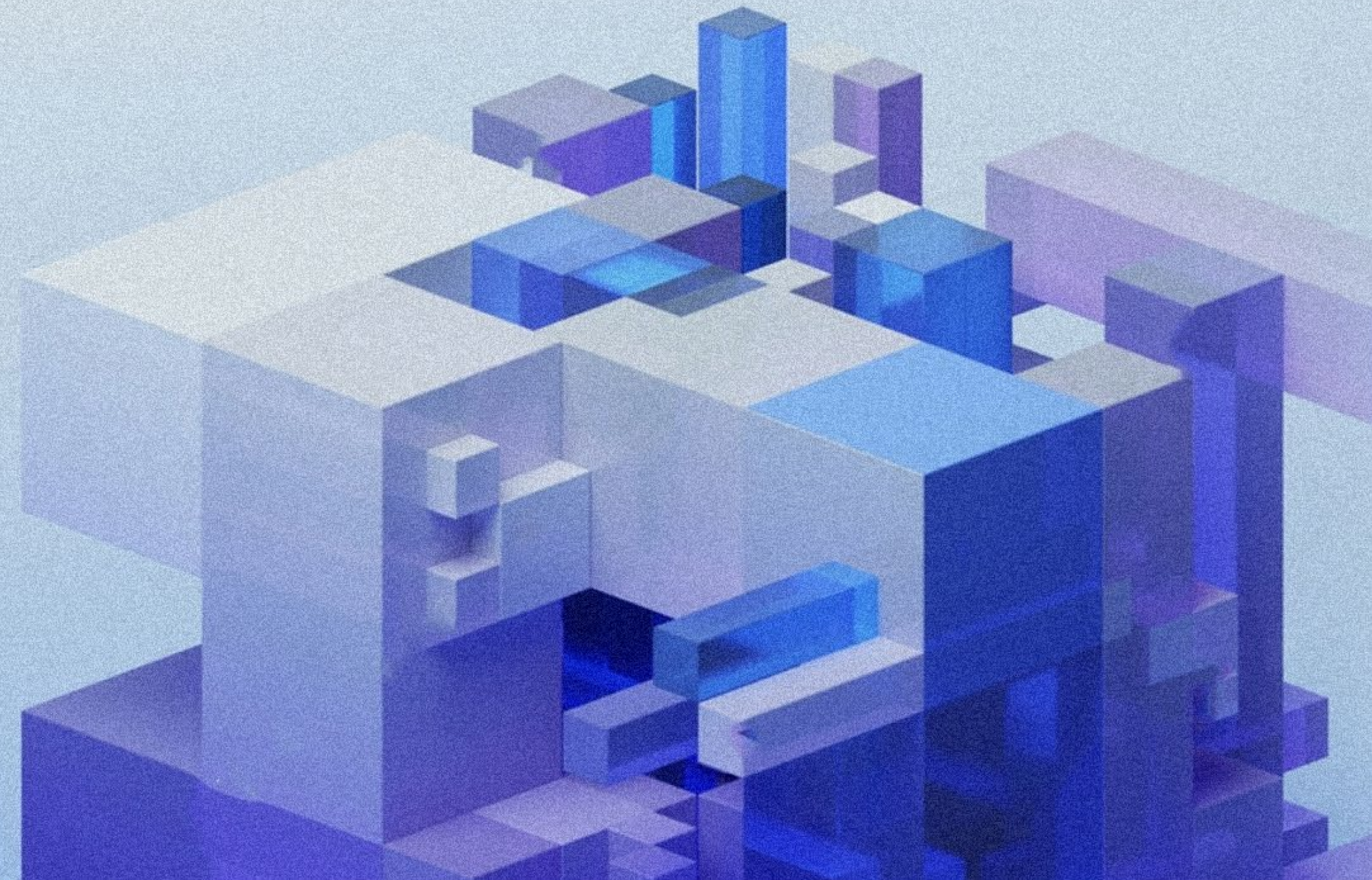
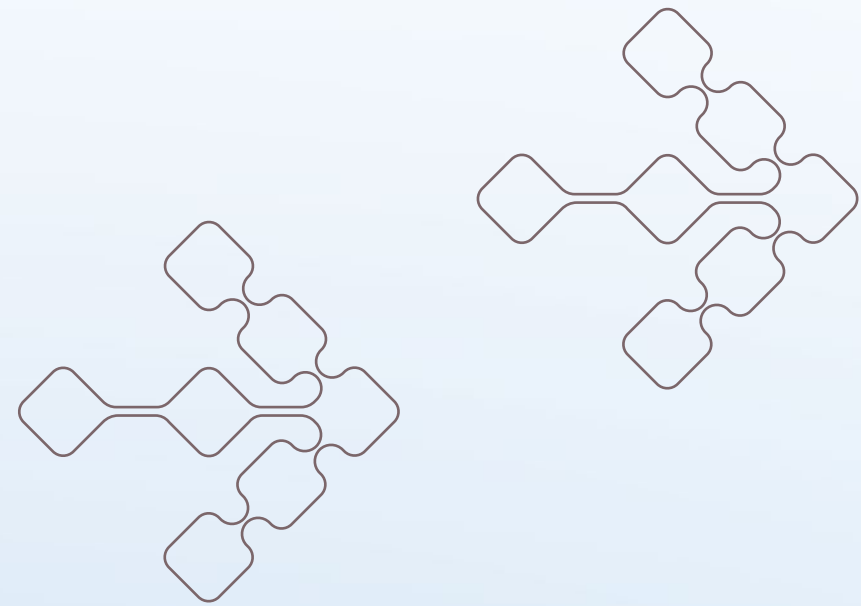


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EMPLOYER BRANDING AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

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The usefulness of information is directly proportional to the guidance provided on how to utilize it. Consequently, this report delineates the practical applications of the trends outlined within it. We will evaluate each trend (or event) within the spectrum of the following:



CONTEXT

As a marketer, how do I interpret it?

Guided by micro and macro events and circumstances that interlink, context is a dynamic and layered concept.

Today, like never before, CMOs and marketing teams must seize the context of any conversation to flip it into an opportunity.

The potency of marketing context unfolds in deciphering its relationship with the past in a way that births the desired business future.

Above all, contextualization forms the indispensable conduit for marketing value creation.

This report highlights focus areas that CMOs can use to harness value through contextualization.

SUBTEXT

What comes next in the form of a probable future?

The subtext or the underlying meaning begins to emerge as one reflects on the growth insights revealed from contextualization.

To borrow an analogy, if the context is likened to a flash of lightning – quick, unexpected, and insight-filled, then the clap of thunder that follows – longer, expected, and meaning-filled

is the subtext. Further, codified inside a context, how a subtext shapes up is determined by the prevalent marketing leadership mindsets and aspirations. Subtextualization in marketing is the crucial agent (or volition) that actively selects, discards, merges, experiments, prototypes, and synthesizes the numerous possibilities that lie dormant in a context.

This report discusses major marketing contexts where CMOs use subtextualization to prepare for an

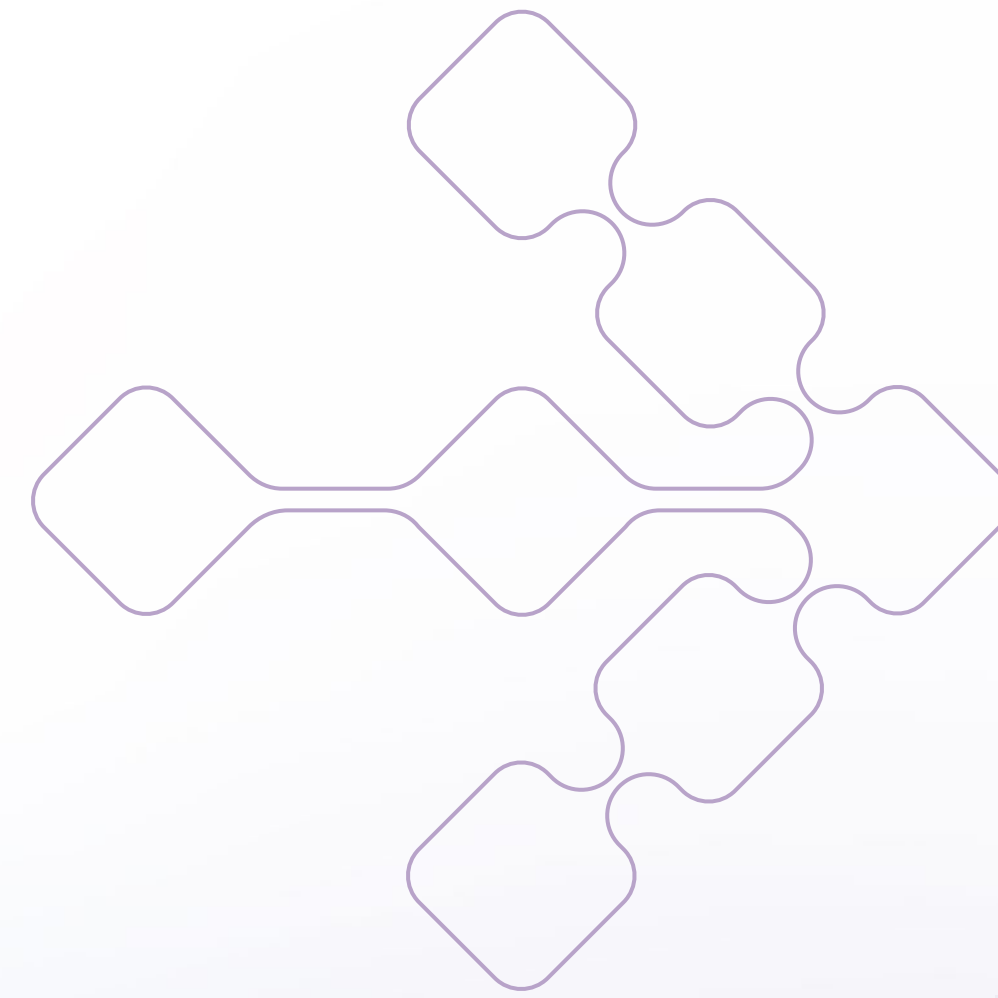
TEXT

How do I then address it?

Intuitively grasping a context and subtextualizing it to connect with organizational aspirations brings us to “text” – the set of visible actions that ultimately create marketing breakthroughs. Easily the most well-recognized and understood of the three, Text, or the collection of tangible activities, are not mired in the daily or mundane that marketing teams perform by rote.

Instead, as inspired CMOs act on the uniquely relevant insights subtextualized by organizational convictions, their nuanced actions are differentiated through impact, sustainability, and replicability.

This report showcases marketing areas where contexts, subtexts, and texts are traced for CMOs to appreciate how to create peerless value.



Trend

**Sugar-free ice
creams have become
all the rage**

Context

**People have become
health - conscious**

Subtext

- 1.**More Flavours of ice cream that are sugar free will come to the market.
- 2.**There will be consumers who will look for other sugar free desserts
- 3.**Consumers will start talking a lot about health and healthy alternatives

Text

Marketing self as a 'Health-conscious' brand

- 1.**As a competing ice-cream brand, how do I convince consumers I am better. Example: Influencer Marketing Maybe I create my own niche and stand out from the noise.
- 2.**Example: Start a New Trend
- 3.**As a non-participating/competing brand, how can I interest and engage with this audience? Example: Topical Social Media Marketing

TREND 01

SEO, SEO, WHERE ART THOU?

- 1.** 61% of marketers say improving search engine optimization (SEO) to grow their organic presence online is their top inbound marketing priority.
- 2.** 84% of marketers had invested in an SEO strategy in 2022. This trend continues with an uptick to 88% of marketers investing in SEO in the upcoming year.
- 3.** One more point needed on how SEO efforts/ strategies are going to see an uptick or have already seen an uptick (updated below)
- 4.** 52% of marketers plant to accelerate investment in AI-powered software in order to understand consumer behavior and search patterns in order to improve their SEO strategies (<https://www.overtopseo.com/google-seo-trends/>)

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Brands and marketers are increasingly focusing on maximizing their SEO efforts to connect with customers and remain relevant. As they search for the most effective SEO strategies, it is important to understand the reasons behind this trend, the challenges that may arise, and how we can adjust our efforts in 2023.

The World of Data that governs digital marketing is headed one way – the direction our moral compass has always pointed. As for going back to the future, marketers do not have a time machine. But, what we do have is...well data.

LAWS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT MEANT TO BE BROKEN

Remember the whole Facebook–Cambridge Analytica thing happened and people didn't quite like their data being misused? It's no surprise that after that, the European Union decided to step in and implement the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to make sure companies couldn't exploit personal information anymore.

Recently, India also stepped in with its new Digital Personal Protection Bill, 2022, covering important aspects of the GDPR, but also taking into account things like ease of doing business and cross-border cooperation. China follows a close regime with restrictions on cross-border data transfers. US addresses 'right to information', while still playing catch-up with regulations regarding use, collection and disclosure of data.

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[Unrelated, but interesting fact: A first in India's legislative history, the bill uses "her" and "she" for an individual, irrespective of gender—a welcome populist and inclusive move.]

THE SEO IMPACT

- As the regulatory landscape shifts, it will be incumbent upon marketers to ensure that their data collection practices align with the new legal framework. It will no longer be acceptable to purchase email lists, and opt-in email marketing will likely become the standard. Data protection on cloud servers, updating privacy policies on your website and other measures will become the lowest bar to clear.
- It is important to consider the benefits of having clear and transparent policies for collecting and using personal data, as well as the potential risks of non-compliance with data protection laws. Having clear and transparent policies and ensuring they are prominently displayed and easily accessible, can contribute to a positive user experience.
- A positive user experience can be a factor in ranking in search results, as search engines aim to provide users with the most relevant and useful results.

- This can help to prevent users from leaving a website due to concerns about their privacy, which can negatively impact the website's bounce rate. A high bounce rate can be a negative signal to search engines, as it may indicate that the website is not providing a good user experience.

“SEO doesn't just involve changing the text on a page. It can also involve choosing and optimizing the right videos or images for a page to help it rank in Google images or search engine video carousels. Currently, 53% of marketers who leverage SEO have a strategy for optimizing videos and images. Of those marketers, 49% say image and video optimization is their most effective

SEO tactic.”

On the flip side, updating privacy policies on a website will have an impact on SEO efforts as well. It will involve making changes to the website's code and structure. If these changes are not implemented correctly, they could potentially impact the website's crawlability and indexability, which could affect its visibility in search results.

Talking about a website's visibility...

LOST ON A TECHNICALITY

JavaScript is everywhere, and it has created quite the conundrum. Brands employ the use of JS to craft interactive and dynamic websites, elevating the user experience and potentially garnering favor from search engines. However, SEO experts have raised red flags regarding its impact on indexability, crawlability, and performance, which can negatively impact a website's visibility and ranking in search results.

A study by Onely reveals that "Google Needs 9X More Time To Crawl JS Than HTML." Until Google addresses this issue and makes dynamic rendering a possibility, it falls upon us marketers to devise a workaround that is palatable to 'search'.

THE SEO IMPACT

While we wait for Google to innovate something complex and simplify this in the future, we must currently resort to SEO hacks to get by.

Make sure that search engines can crawl and index the content on the page: This can be done by using server-side rendering or by providing an HTML snapshot of the page.

Use descriptive, relevant page titles and meta

descriptions: These elements can help search engines understand the context and relevance of the page's content.

Use descriptive, relevant URLs: Descriptive URLs can help search engines understand the content of the page and can also make it easier for users to understand the page's content.

Use header tags (H1, H2, etc.) to structure the content: Header tags can help search engines understand the hierarchy of the content on the page and can also make it easier for users to understand the page's content.

Use alt tags for images: Alt tags can help search engines understand the content of images on the page, which can help the page rank for relevant keywords.

Optimize the page's loading speed: Faster loading times can improve the user experience and can also be a positive signal to search engines.

Use structured data: Structured data can help search engines understand the content of the page and can also enhance the appearance of the page in search results.

Using HTML may be the simpler option for search engine optimization (SEO), but it is likely that branding considerations will take precedence. This seems to be the case, as data shows us an upsurge in recent increase in SEO efforts.

BRANDS BECOME THE COOKIE MONSTERS

In the sense that cookies are being eaten up. Apple has already blocked many third-party cookies with updates to its Intelligent Tracking Prevention feature (ITP). Google is resolving its timeline to remove third-party cookies from Chrome and reconfigure app tracking in Android. While Google's Privacy Sandbox is poised to help businesses deliver targeted advertising, as well as maintain user privacy, how much will businesses actually gain from it is still uncertain.

THE SEO IMPACT

As a result marketers will need to eventually stop relying on third-party cookies and instead focus more on attaining first-party data. With consent. In the long run, this may be a more fruitful way of approaching customers as we move from a third-party (ethically and now legally questionable tactics) to first-party customer-approved data to improve overall user-experience.

In short, in these uncertain times, SEO might just become your ace in the hole, as marketing efforts shift from a push to a more pull tactic, making strategies more organic with greater focus on content and design.

Event

SEO Strategies are becoming more and more mainstream.

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Context

SEO efforts are being driven by data privacy laws and regulations as well as changes in technology platforms.

There is now a need to:

- 01.** Curtail fraud
- 02.** Contain Waste
- 03.** Cut the Clutter

Subtext

01. Big Tech Apple, Amazon, Google and Meta quickly follow privacy regulations and use their infrastructure to dominate enterprise ad budgets by offering access to protected media and marketing data.

02. As retargeting minimizes, a new balance between paid and organic search comes into play in this consent economy

Text

01. Marketing teams must gain competence across platform-based analytics tools such as Google's Ads Data Hub and Amazon's marketing cloud. Assessing and optimizing platform-specific marketing performance will mean deep familiarity with SEO tools and tactics that can adapt to compliance.

02. Besides offering transparency, control, and governance, marketers now (more than ever before) must provide meaningful value propositions so that customers and prospects share relevant data on first party platforms. The answer lies in a robust content and design strategy.