

quinn **thomas**

2025 Marketing & Creative Trends Report

How to help your campaign resonate in 2025

quinnthomas.com

Report Introduction

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

The 2025 Marketing Climate

7 Marketing & Creative Trends for 2025, featuring:

- Trend Predictions
- Trend Insights
- Trend Creative Examples
- Trend Campaign Examples

2025 Marketing Takeaways

2025 Creative Takeaways

For marketers, communicators, and advertisers, a new year brings the duality of new challenges and big opportunities. As we look at 2025, on the one hand, we have a new administration, legal battles against major social media and advertising platforms, and unpredictable channel patterns. On the other hand, we have emerging trends shaped by AI, a societal craving for in-person experiences, and plenty of out-of-the-box opportunities to catch diminishing attention spans and stop scrolls. Our intention for this report is to help you make sense of both the challenging and the exciting to produce best-in-class campaigns in 2025.

One of the many roles [Quinn Thomas](#) plays is helping marketing and communications leaders make sense of today's landscape and understand what tactics can be leveraged to help their messages resonate, connect, and drive impact. In addition to monitoring industry shifts and cultural patterns, we collaborated with our research partner—[DHM Research](#)—to conduct original research to inform these trends, surveying residents of the Pacific Northwest to understand their outlook for 2025 and ensure each industry trend connects to local perspectives.

This report will walk you through 7 of the top marketing and creative trends predicted to shape the advertising landscape most in 2025. Whether on the brand or agency-side, we hope this report will spark inspiration to help you launch campaigns poised to resonate in 2025.

The 2025 marketing climate at a glance:

Tech companies are making unpredictable moves

The lines between politics and tech offerings are blurring. TikTok's future is still uncertain. DEI and fact checking shifts are making Meta users wary. X continues with its own political agenda, and WordPress is being sued, and many sites marketers are driving to may have to be reimaged.

App usage patterns are shifting as a result

With TikTok's future unknown, users are seeking alternatives. SkyLight Social / Bluesky are emerging as alternatives. RedNote is having a moment. And existing platforms like Substack, LinkedIn, and Meta are pulling out all the stops to attract TikTok refugees.

Despite the volatility, ad spend is projected to increase

Even with the unpredictable nature of the first two points, ad spend is projected to grow in 2025. Marketers feel a sense of cautious optimism, noting a distrust in the economy as a source of their caution, and emerging trends as a source of their positivity.

Marketing in 2025 won't be linear (or easy). This report is designed to help you:

01

Explore what channels to use despite uncertainties

02

Connect with your audience regardless of where they are

03

Find creative ways to make your marketing dollars go further

The 7 marketing & creative trends for 2025 campaigns

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TREND #1

Abnormal social norms

APP USAGE SHIFTS • NEW CHANNELS • NIMBLE TACTICS

The new normal for 2025 will be that nothing is normal, especially in the world of social media. As lines between platforms and politics blur, users are migrating between channels rapidly and inconsistently; marketers must stay nimble, up to date, and prepared to guide their brands to advertise according to where their audience is in real time.

TREND PREDICTIONS

01

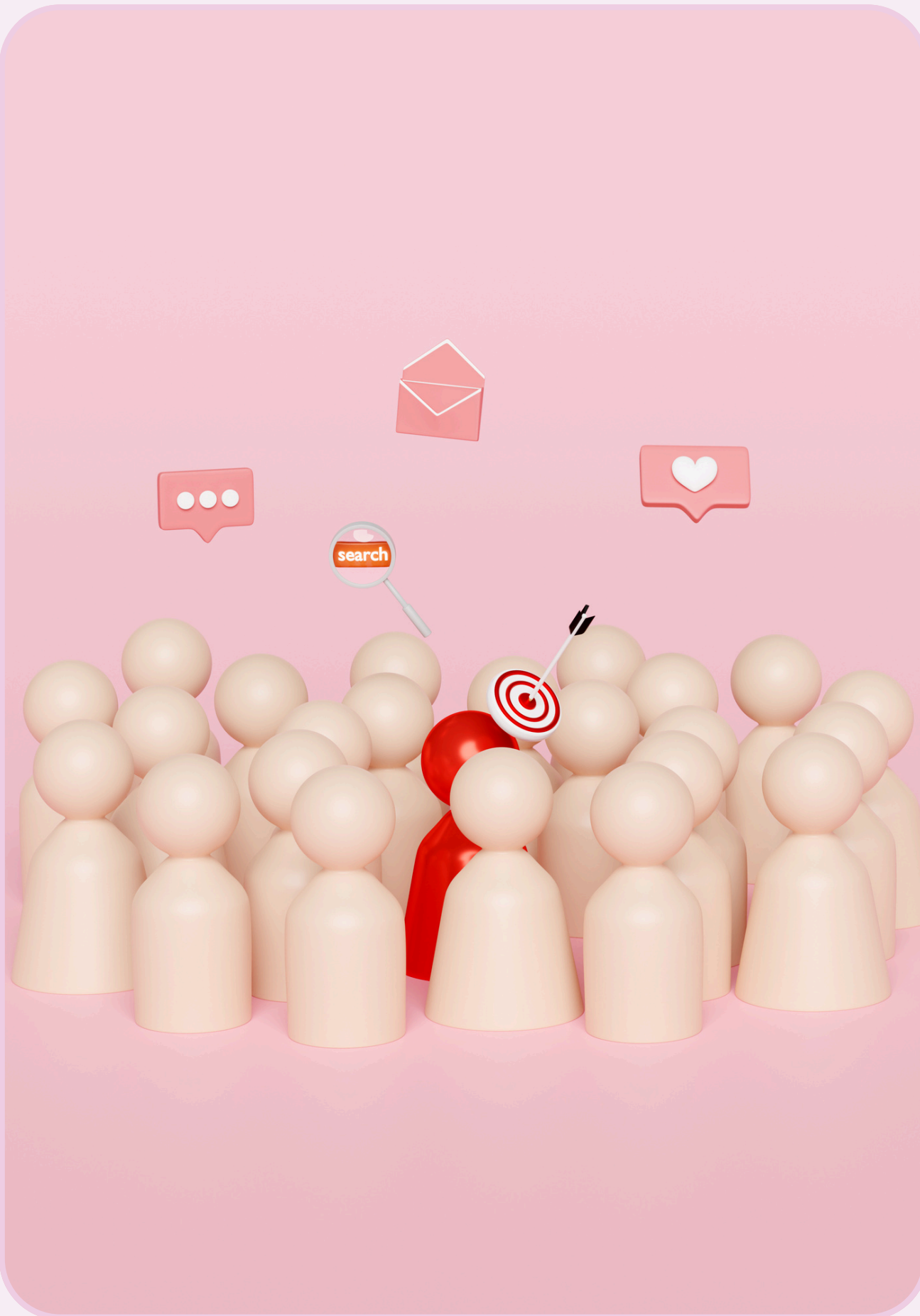
YouTube and LinkedIn continue to give creators, marketers, and brands a sense of solid ground

02

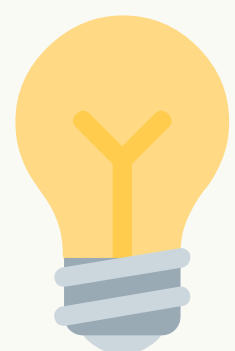
Reddit continues to grow as a viable channel for reaching niche audience segments

03

Meta, X, and TikTok see the biggest changes; marketers seek alternatives



Regional trend insight



3 out of 4 Pacific Northwest residents have an active presence on YouTube.



ABNORMAL SOCIAL NORMS

Social tips for 2025

2025 Level of Trust Toward Paid Ads on Online Platforms (Stacked Marketer)

- LinkedIn Ads are the most trusted (22%), but ROI can be challenging. A strong offer is key.
- TikTok Ads have a surprising trust level (19%). Authentic, creative content can enhance credibility, assuming the platform stays around in 2025.
- Google, Meta, and X Ads face the most skepticism. Transparency, nurturing, and social proof are essential for success.
- YouTube was ranked by Pew Research as the most widely-used platform, showing its trust.

01

Go where your audience is.

As audiences are exploring new apps, deleting old ones, and rethinking their relationship with social media, you might find your current platforms are still working great, or find a new opportunity to reach your customers.

02

Don't try to be everywhere.

Don't give into the temptation to have a brand presence on all platforms, or even more than 3 for that matter. Whether new or existing, pick 2-3 channels that yield the best results for your brand, help you connect with your audience best, and align with your company's values most.

03

Watch and wait.

What's popular this week might not be popular next. Though it can make a statement to be an early adopter on a new platform, if your team can't commit to a longterm strategy on it, simply wait to see what happens and plan your next move accordingly.

TREND #2

Analog meets digital (URL to IRL)

EVENTS • PRINT • "NEWSTALGIA" DESIGNS

Americans are increasingly using digital channels to find ways to connect in-person or find inspiration for analog hobbies in an effort to fight digital fatigue. Activations are rising in popularity, and physical ad formats will help marketers reach offline audiences.

TREND PREDICTIONS

01

Brands show up IRL as societal appetite for activations, run/walk/book clubs, and in-person moments grow

02

Print formats and sensory marketing tactics combat digital fatigue and channel uncertainties

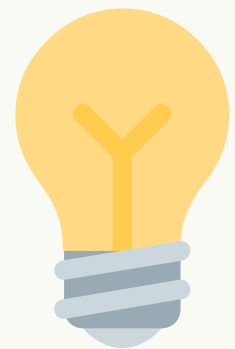
03

Analog and AI converge in design to address consumers' nostalgia for simple days-of-old in the digital age



ANALOG MEETS DIGITAL (URL TO IRL)

Regional trend insight



The PNW trusts local TV, print/online news, public radio, and friends and family as their sources of information, and small businesses garner more local confidence than any other type of institution.

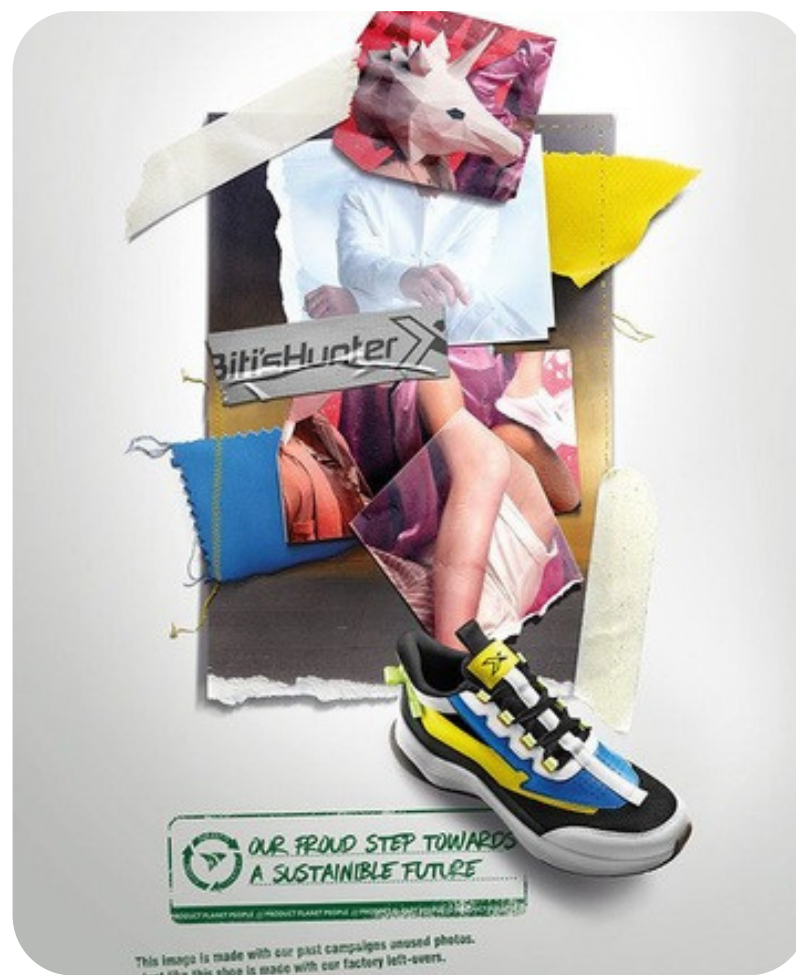
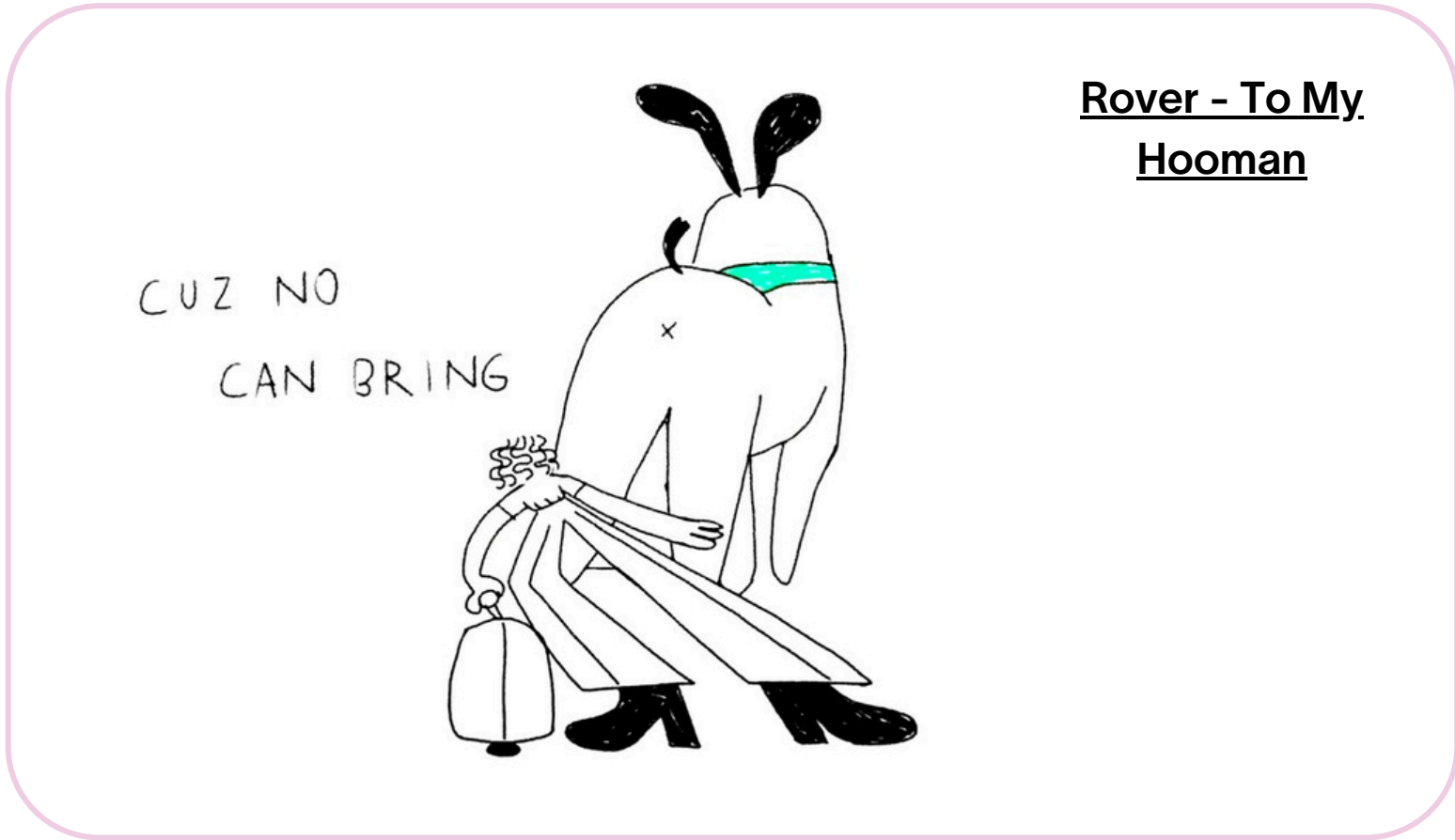


ANALOG MEETS DIGITAL

Creative inspiration

AUTHENTIC • PERSONAL • UNIQUE

Informed by a longing for what was, sketches, handwritten text, and collage meets modern digital techniques and texture. It evokes emotion and nostalgia while fostering connection with viewers. When used, the creative feels more personal and authentic.



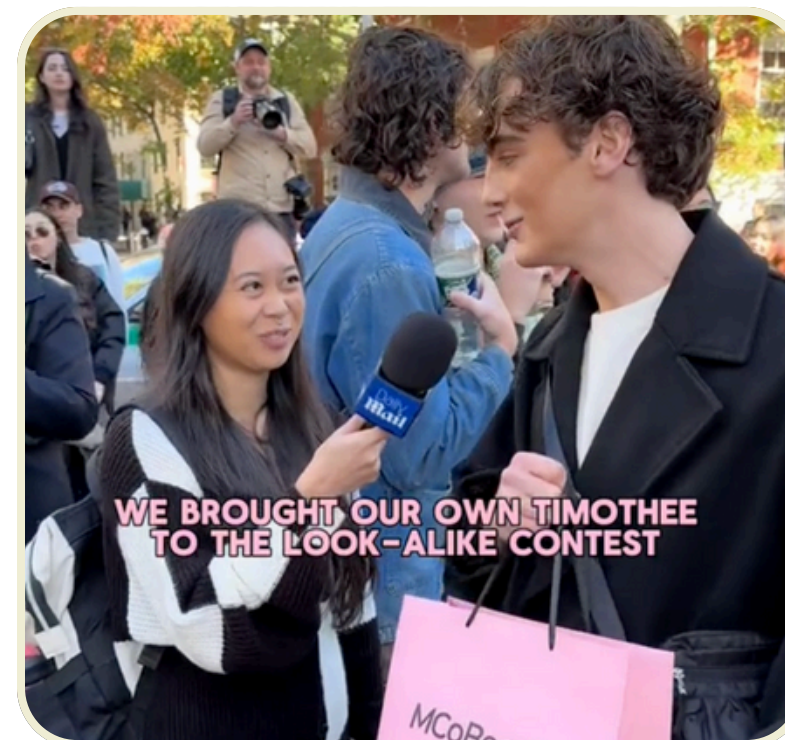
ANALOG MEETS DIGITAL (URL TO IRL)

Campaign inspiration



Digital elements on print placements tease NB's new drop

New Balance's "Too New to Preview" campaign perfectly embodies the spirit of analog meets digital. They leveraged digital elements smartphone users are all-too-familiar with to promote a physical product in physical spaces, driving sells for their newest line of shoe (which happens to scream 'newstalgia').



Does your brand look like Timothee Chalamet?

Australian beauty brand MCoBeauty caught wind of the Timothee Chalamet lookalike contest happening in NYC. They flew an employee who fit the bill, and for the cost of a plane ticket, they made invaluable, first-hand connections with their gen Z target audience.



AppleTV makes "behind the scenes" literal

Ahead of Severance season 2's launch, AppleTV pulled off a full-cast IRL brand stunt at Grand Central Station in NYC. The public got to witness life inside of Lumen's MDR department, building first-hand excitement for the show's new season.

TREND #3

Laughs and Levity

HUMOR • LEVITY • COMMUNITY-FIRST • AUTHENTICITY

Customer trust is harder to create + maintain than it's ever been, but it's still the ultimate brand currency. In a serious world, audiences are craving humor and levity, which are two factors that build brand trust. Brands who use a focused approach to incorporating humor and fun in their marketing will build meaningful audience connections in 2025.

TREND PREDICTIONS

01

Audiences want to be entertained; campaigns and designs leaning into humor and levity resonate best

02

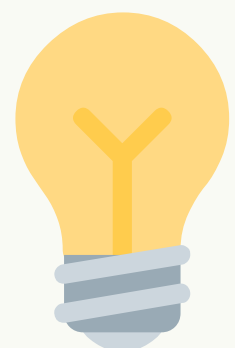
Social is a two-way street. Consumers want to see brands playfully post and engage with authentic content

03

Video goes further to show humor and build brand connections



Regional trend insight



More than two out of three PNW residents are optimists who prefer to look on the bright side. 72% say the outdoors and being close to family are what they enjoy most. Local brands can consider incorporating these elements in their campaigns to resonate positively.



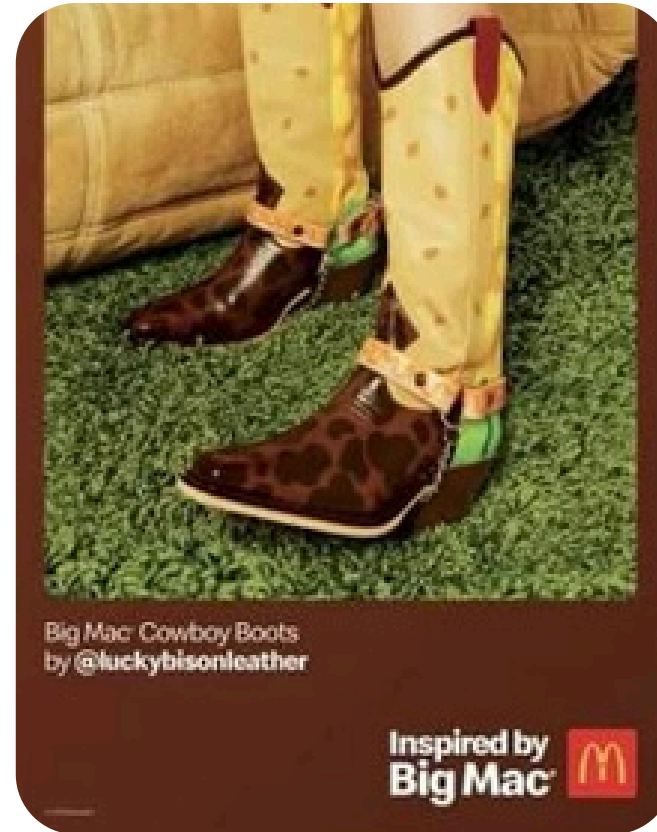
LAUGHS AND LEVITY

Creative inspiration

AUTHENTIC • LIGHTHEARTED • PLAYFUL

Humor is a powerful weapon—when deployed effectively—and can take the sting out of serious subjects (like State Farm’s humorous approach to talk about accident protection). It helps brands stand out and elevates an ad’s enjoyability.

Expect to see more designs leaning into playful elements in 2025. From brand characters, custom fonts to tongue in cheek copy, and pop culture references.



LAUGHS AND LEVITY

Campaign inspiration



Comedy as a content hook

Comedy as a content hook isn't new, but in a serious world, it continues to help campaigns stand out, especially for traditionally serious topics. Case in point, the Washington Health Benefit Exchange partnered with Seattle comedian [Tori Gresham](#) to add a playful tone to talking about health insurance. The client loved the results so much that they bought the content & ran it as paid media, becoming one of the campaign's top-performing assets.



Serious topic, uplifting story

[Pfizer's Super Bowl commercial](#) opens in a playful way, lifting your spirit and building enthusiasm before ending sentimentally, driving home their commitment to knockout cancer. It's a great example of the spirit of this trend, showing that even serious topics can use levity to capture attention and resonance.



Late night texts from ~~your ex~~ ikea

Ikea capitalized on culture to take a funny but attention-grabbing approach to its latest campaign. It sent "[u up](#)" texts to anyone who was still online late at night, following up with, "if you are, you probably need a new mattress." Those who responded received a mattress discount. They leaned into a playful and fun message/tactic to help people realize they did, in fact, need a new mattress.



TREND #4

Commerce media takes flight

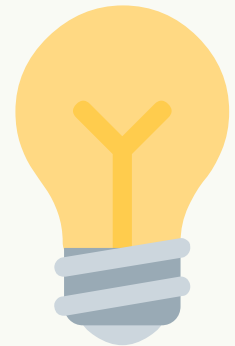
RETAIL • FINANCE • TRAVEL

1st party data has never been more valuable. Knowing this, brands are launching their own advertising solutions, known as Commerce Media Networks, to connect advertisers directly to their audiences and data.

TYPES OF COMMERCE MEDIA TO EXPLORE IN 2025:

- 01 **Retail Media Advertising connect non-retail brands to shoppers**
 - Amazon Ads, Walmart Connect, Target's Roundel
- 02 **Finance Media Advertising puts brands in front of savvy spenders**
 - Chase Media Solutions, PayPal
- 03 **Travel Media Networks book users' flights and attention**
 - Expedia Group Media Solutions, United Airlines

Regional trend insight



A majority of Pacific Northwest residents have traveled multiple times outside of the United States, a trend seen across income levels. If you're a brand in the PNW, consider advertising on Travel Media Networks to connect with local travel enthusiasts.



How to get started with commerce media

01

Uncover your audience's behaviors & affinities

- Analyze your customer demographics, purchase behaviors, and brand affinities to determine where they engage most.
- Identify commerce media networks that align with your industry (e.g., retail, finance, travel) and customer base.
- Evaluate the network's targeting capabilities and audience reach to ensure it matches your goals.

02

Engage a media network that aligns best

- Research media network offerings, including ad formats, pricing, and first-party data access.
- Connect with the network's sales or partnership team to explore campaign options.
- Review case studies or advertiser success stories to inform your approach.

03

Optimize campaigns for performance

- Leverage the network's insights and analytics tools to refine targeting and messaging.
- Test different ad placements, creatives, and audience segments to maximize engagement.
- Continuously monitor performance and adjust budgets based on ROI metrics.

TREND #5

More with less

BREVITY • VISUAL EMPHASIS • IMAGINATION

Attention spans are dwindling, and creative should go the extra mile to encapsulate messages with strong designs, concise headlines, and imaginative approaches to visuals.

TREND PREDICTIONS

01

Strong visuals and more concise headlines bring more advertising value than longwinded copy

02

Clean lines and minimalistic white space pair with bold color choices and fonts to help brands express more with eye-catching elements

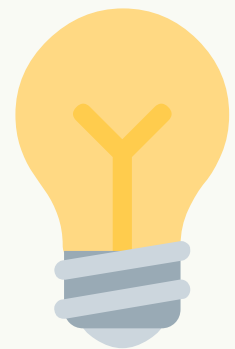
03

The right ad placement wins over audiences, especially when it's unexpected



MORE WITH LESS

Trend insight



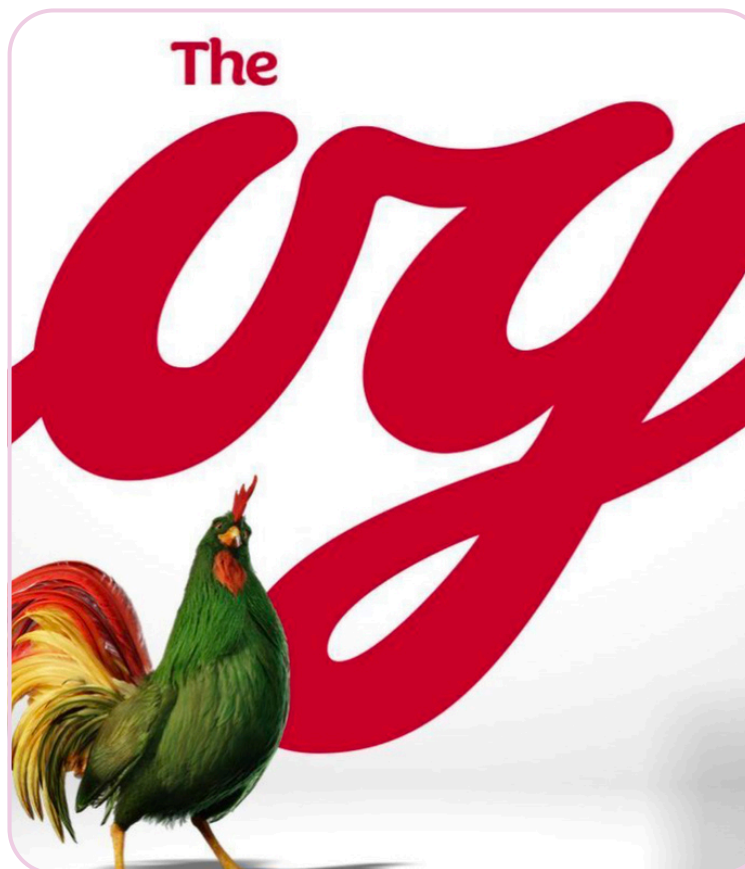
"The attention span has dropped to 8 seconds, shrinking nearly 25% in just a few years. Consider creating eye-catching visuals to complement your text. Images with color increase someone's willingness to read a piece of content by 80%."

MORE WITH LESS

Creative inspiration

BOLD COLORS • BIG GRAPHICS • SHORT COPY

Minimalism has been a dominant design trend for years of Millennial influence. In 2025, as we continue to respond to preferences of Gen Z, begin to learn more about Gen Alpha, and meet the first of Gen Beta, a collision of preferences blend together. Bold colors, oversized type, and splashy design elements meet clean lines, and efficient, hardworking executions.



MORE WITH LESS

Campaign inspiration



Ikea product pricing proof point

Ikea used simplicity to its advantage in the "Don't Worry, You Can Afford It" campaign. Ikea is leaning into the reality that accidents happen, and when they do, it shouldn't break the bank. Their affordable products are easy to replace.



Uber Trains

This campaign is a great example of right copy, right placement. Placed throughout London tube stations, the headlines catch your eye, confuse, then click when you see "trains—now on Uber."



Uber OOH

This Uber placement is so smart and speaks louder than a campaign. Uber went straight to their target audience—riders waiting for the bus sit—and reminded them to take an Uber instead.



Volkswagon ID - Buzz

In their "Life Half-Full" spot, VW used a very bold, singular accent color throughout each revolving frame while the remaining elements become more of a backdrop.

TREND #6

Full-funnel creators

EGC • BRAND FACES • LIFECYCLE

Creator partnerships are now more than just an awareness marketing tactic. In 2025, creators will look a lot like employees, play a part in the full buyer journey, act as faces of brands, and contribute to campaign ideas for out-of-the-box outcomes.

TREND PREDICTIONS

01

Employees secure their alt. title as creators, and brands lean into employee-generated content (EGC) to stand out

02

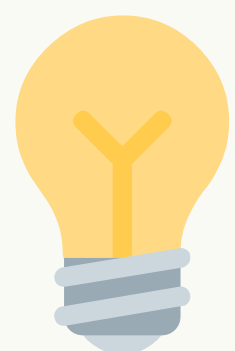
More brands hire creators as their “face of the brand” and invite creators to add their own ideas to the brief in an effort to better relate with target audiences

03

Creators drive awareness and purchases; brands put creator-made content in all stages of the funnel



Regional trend insight



PNW residents from ages 18 - 65 say they regularly use Creators to get their news and information, with Gen Z preferring creators more than 2x other generations.



FULL-FUNNEL CREATORS

Campaign inspiration



Big papers, even bigger results

HootSuite flipped the switch on LinkedIn. Instead of a typical whitepaper, they partnered with 9 LinkedInfluencers (Content Strategists, Marketing Directors, Social Media Managers) to post simultaneously about the brand's 2025 social trends report. They partnered with their target audience on the platform to reach their target audience on the platform.



EGC in action

Lockton is leaning into employees as influencers and are proactively encouraging EGC as a counterpart to recognizing their staff. When an employee receives a brand package, they're encouraged to post on LinkedIn and share their Lockton POV.



Creator hired as brand CTO

Part brand stunt, part marketing lever, John Deere hired a "face of the brand," its first ever Chief Tractor Officer. This is a one-year contract position that will create content for the company's social media channels, a move more and more companies are adopting.



Creators make Varsity

Dick's Sporting Goods just launched an initiative it's calling "Dick's Varsity Team," a group of young, emerging athletes hired on a 10-month contract to create brand content. They'll act as both faces of the brand, as well as internal ideators who will attend monthly meetings to shape their content strategy, expanding their creators beyond employees.



TREND #7

Representation reimaged

ACCESSIBILITY • INCLUSIVITY • SUBTLETY

As more companies move away from DEI initiatives, staying as inclusive as possible in ways you might not always consider will be vital. Representation is still pivotal for building brand trust, and in 2025, seamless adoption of representation approaches will be critical.

TREND PREDICTIONS

01

Gen X holds the largest spending power in the market, and ageism awareness helps brands reach them

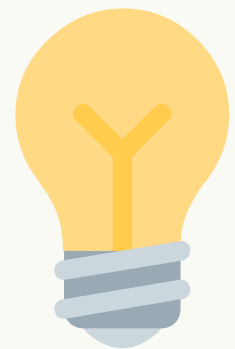
02

Inclusivity is subtly incorporated in brand campaigns

03

Accessibility integrates into every step of the creative approach

Regional trend insight



PNW residents have a positive view of brands that include people who look like them in marketing and advertising.

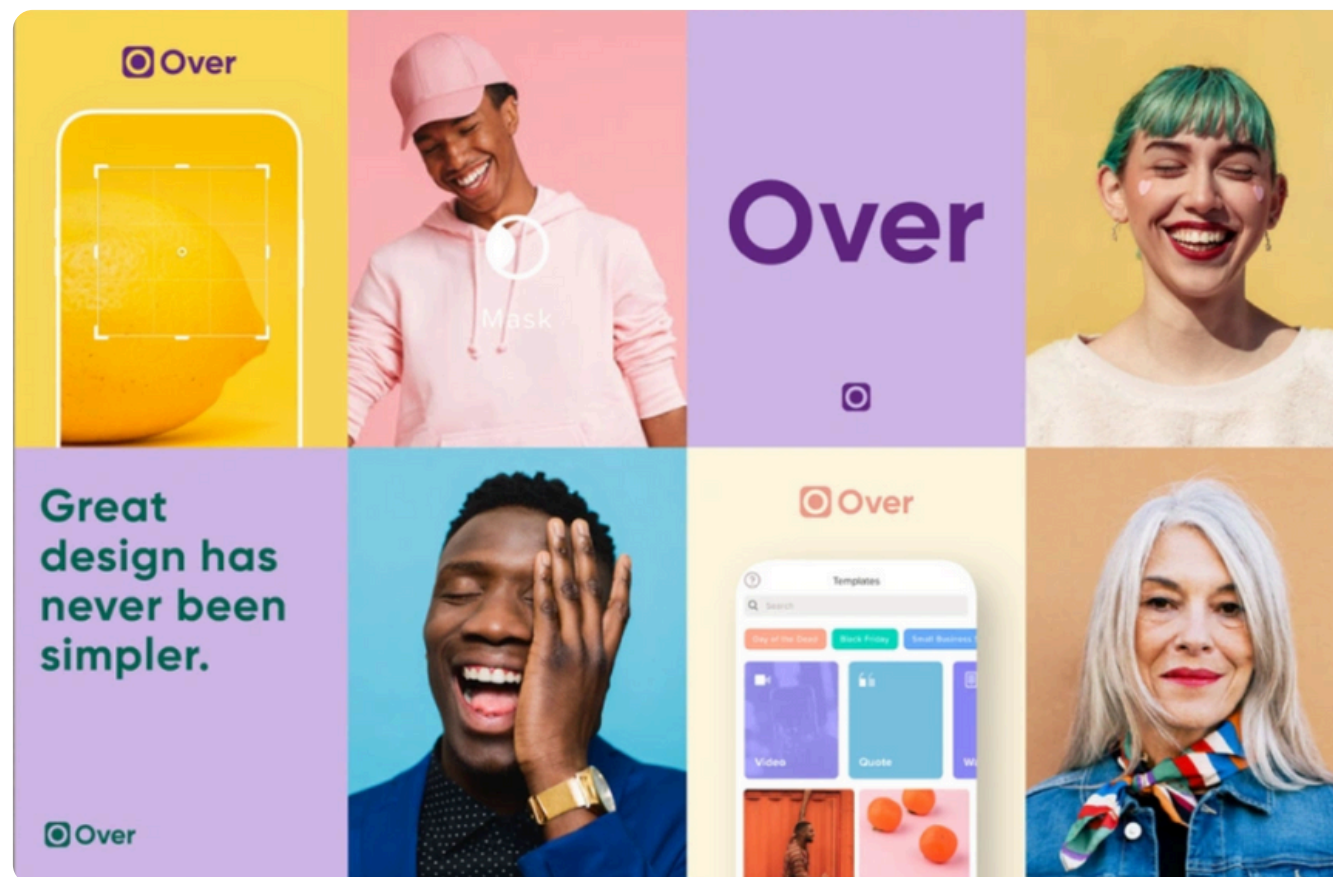
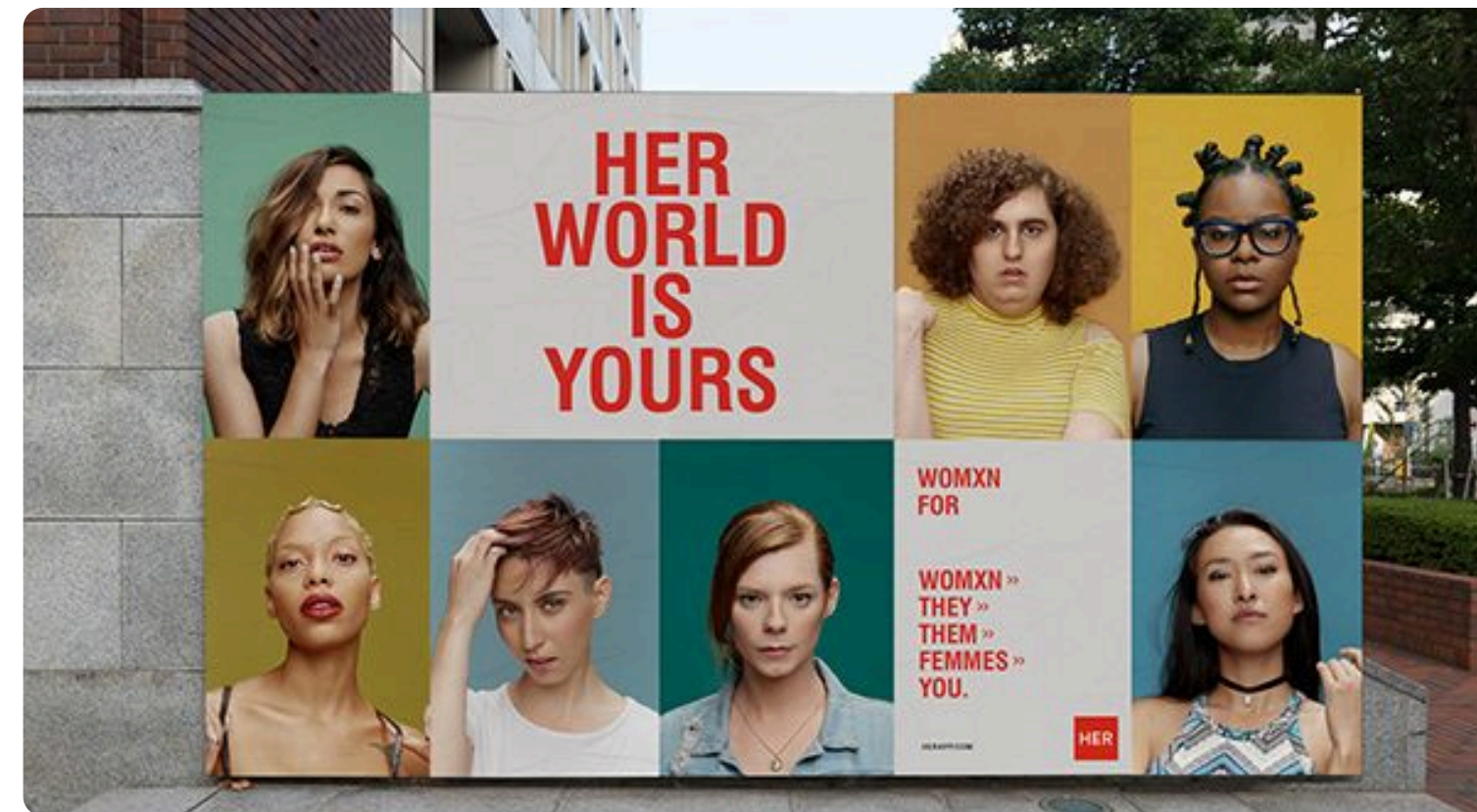


REPRESENTATION REIMAGINED

Creative inspiration

BREVITY • VISUAL EMPHASIS • IMAGINATION

Brands are moving beyond tokenism and into genuine representation. This inclusivity shift reflects a brand's deeper understanding of audience needs and experiences. It reflects empathy and fosters trust and loyalty with consumers.



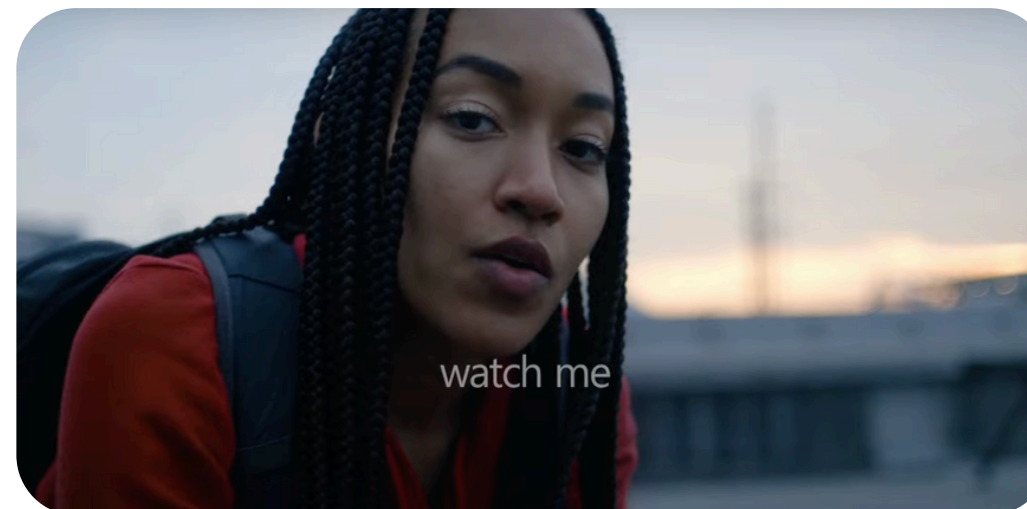
REPRESENTATION REIMAGINED

Campaign inspiration



Etsy - Growing Up

Etsy's "Growing Up" spot is a great example of marketing representation done in a subtle but meaningful way. Watch the spot with this in mind, then watch it again. Though you likely didn't see it on the first watch, you may have noticed on the replay that the daughter only has one arm, but it isn't the point of the spot. To girls who look like her, though, the representation went the extra mile.



"Watch Me"

To promote the capabilities of its new AI companion, Copilot, Microsoft centered its campaign around those whose dreams are typically doubted.



"Stairs"

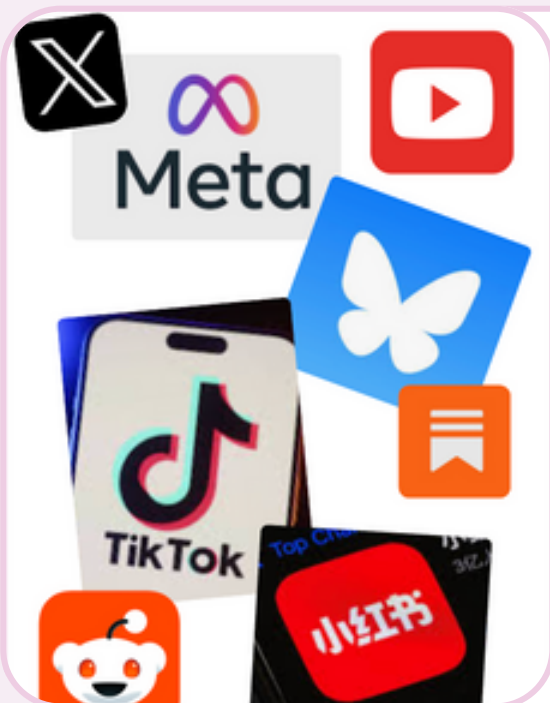
In their post-marathon spot, "Stairs," Nike reminded us that, though not all New York marathon runners may look like Usain Bolt or Sha'Carri Richardson, all are athletes.



"See My Name"

Many women athletes' names are covered on their jerseys by their longer hair. As the official jersey sponsor of the Professional Women's Hockey League, Molson placed their name where it might be hidden so "hers could be seen."

2025 Marketing Takeaways



Prepare for platform shifts and leverage trusted channels for 2025 marketing



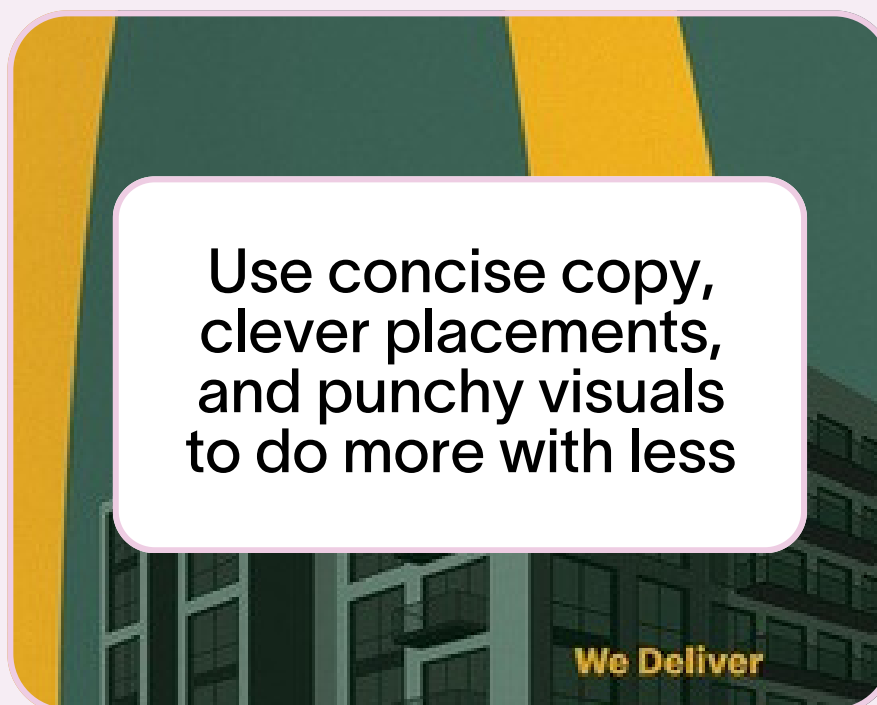
Explore ways to take your brand from URL to IRL, like print ads or local events



Lean into levity, hope, and humor to help your brand stop scrolls and resonate



Explore commerce media advertising to help your brand reach audiences where they're traveling, banking, or shopping



Use concise copy, clever placements, and punchy visuals to do more with less



Invite creators to be a part of each stage of the marketing funnel

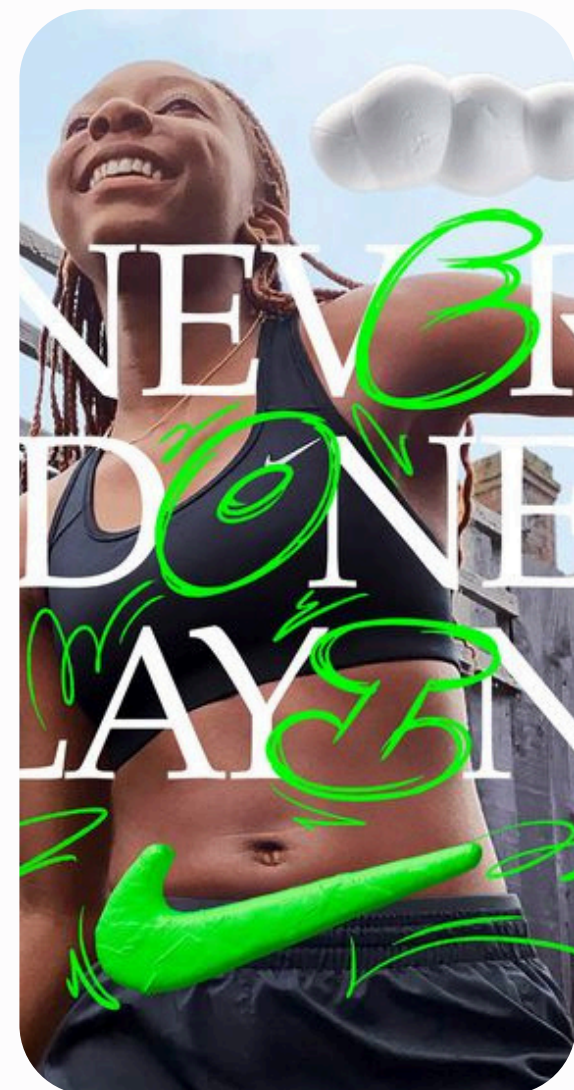


Help your audience subtly but intentionally see themselves in your marketing

2025 Creative Takeaways



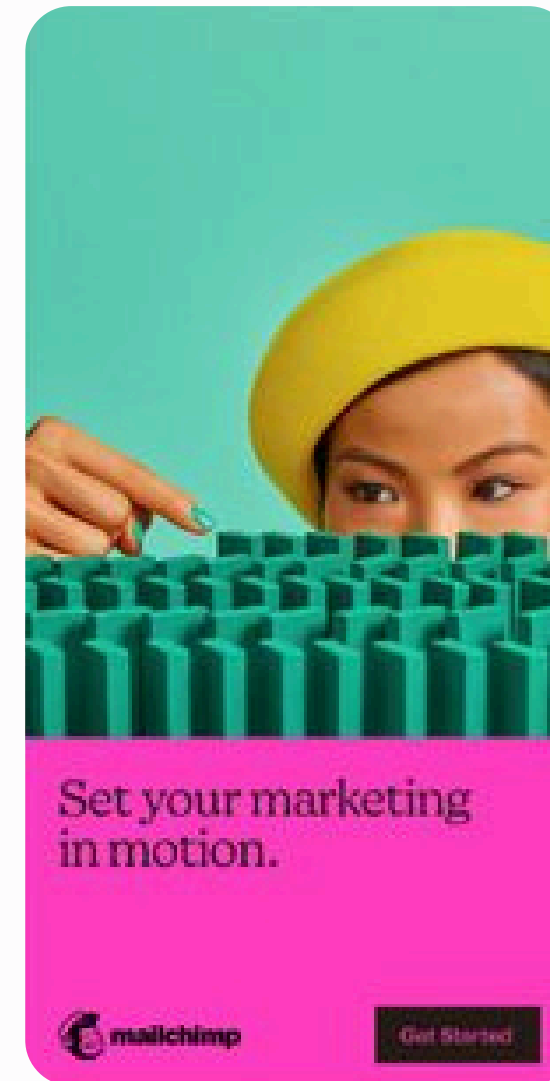
Mocha Mousse is the Pantone color of the year



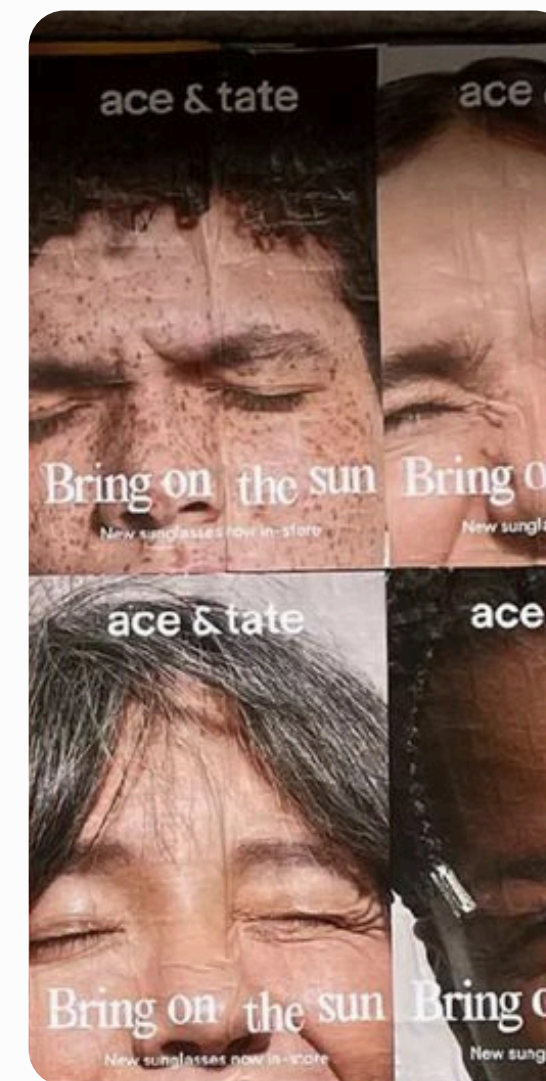
Nostalgia and Technology collide



Design should be fun



Explore minimalist maximalism



Representation still matters

Get to know our experts



MK Marti

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

MK spearheads integrated marketing strategy and execution at Quinn Thomas for a wide range of public and private sector brands, working to create campaigns that resonate deeply and drive bold outcomes.



Ellen Wendel

SENIOR VISUAL DESIGNER

Working within the creative team, Ellen leads all graphic design and production of creative assets. Her experience in brand identity and responsive design assist in creative concept development and research that informs design.



Sharon Nalley

EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Sharon has a passion for finding innovative ways to tell clients' stories. Along with all aspects of creative strategy, Sharon leads development and execution of creative efforts from briefing to final production.



Devin Bales

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH
DHM RESEARCH

Devin oversees research product quality at DHM Research, an independent research firm that provides high-quality, objective information to help organizations and leaders make informed decisions about complex issues.

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That's a wrap on 2025 trends ✨

Which one will you use first?

1

Abnormal social norms

2

Analog meets digital (URL to IRL)

3

Laughs and levity

4

Commerce media takes flight

5

More with less

6

Full-funnel creators

7

Representation reimagined

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Looking for a custom
approach to applying
these trends? Let's chat!

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