



2027 MARKETING PREDICTIONS

Boom, Bust, or Backlash?

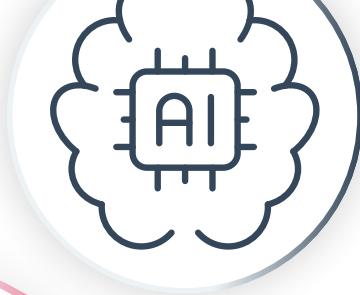
What more than 200 marketers, agencies, and founders actually expect from the year ahead.

A first-party research report. Data gathered at [MAD//Fest 2026](#).

Hurree.co



What's inside:



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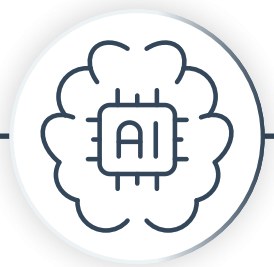
An industry that cannot agree

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An industry that cannot agree

We asked over 200 marketing professionals a single open question: what is your marketing prediction for 2027? The answers don't point in one single direction. They point in three, and those three contradict each other.

Artificial intelligence dominates the conversation, appearing in close to half of all substantive answers. Beyond that, agreement breaks down. Some expect AI to keep expanding until it runs most of marketing, while others expect the hype to collapse. An entirely separate group predicts a human and offline reaction against AI, built on trust, authenticity, and real-world experience.

47%

of predictions
mention AI

25%

expect AI
dominance

32%

expect a bust or
human backlash

That last figure is the one worth sitting with. Added together, the marketers who expect the bubble to burst, the ones who expect a human and authenticity backlash, and the ones calling a return to offline and in-person marketing outnumber the straightforward AI optimists. The loudest prediction is not the most common one.

“

Everyone has got AI,
so personality wins.

- Marketing Manager

”

This report breaks down what the field expects, shows how those expectations differ by job function and industry, and draws out the **one point almost everyone agrees on**, even the people who agree on nothing else.

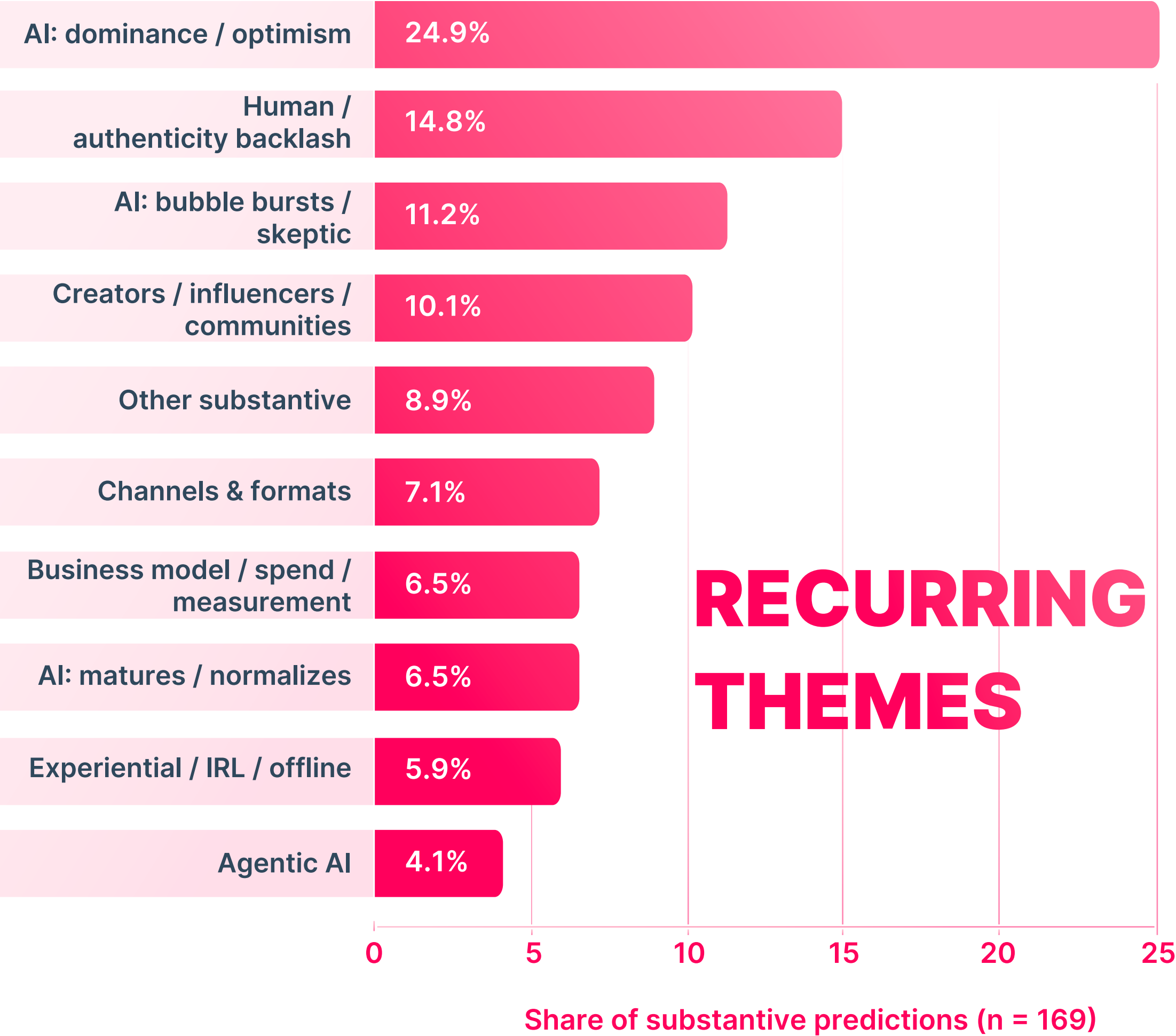
**HOW TO
READ
THIS
REPORT**

221 people responded at MAD//Fest 2026. The sample leans toward marketing roles and marketing-sector respondents, and some job function and industry segments are small, so segment figures are directional rather than precise. Figures are flagged where a group is too small to lean on.



The Great AI Split

AI is the single biggest theme by a wide margin. The main takeaway is that the **AI responses do not agree with each other**. They fall into four distinct positions.



02 THE GREAT AI SPLIT

25%

The Optimists

The largest single group expects AI to keep expanding across every part of marketing. Predictions here range from broad (“greater AI adoption by brands”) to dramatic. Many are short and confident rather than detailed.

“

AI agents will outnumber employees 10 to 1 in leading firms.

”

- Marketing VP, Real Estate

11%

The Skeptics

A second group expects a correction. The words “bubble”, “hype” and “slop” recur, alongside a practical concern that costs will climb faster than value.

“

AI tools will get very expensive very fast.

”

- Data & Analytics Manager, Retail

6%

The Pragmatists

A smaller and notably more senior group predicts neither boom nor bust. They expect AI to settle into the background as ordinary infrastructure, stop being a talking point, and stop being a source of competitive advantage on its own.

“

“AI will become an enabler, not a center of gravity for the business, as costs and efficiencies normalize.

”

- Marketing, C-Suite

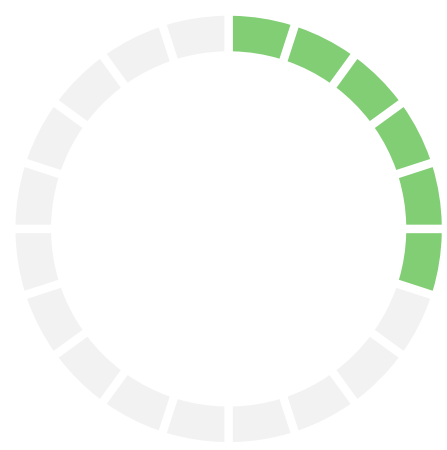
4%

The Agentic Camp

A distinct minority focuses specifically on autonomous agents and agent-to-agent commerce, a narrower and more technical bet than general AI enthusiasm.

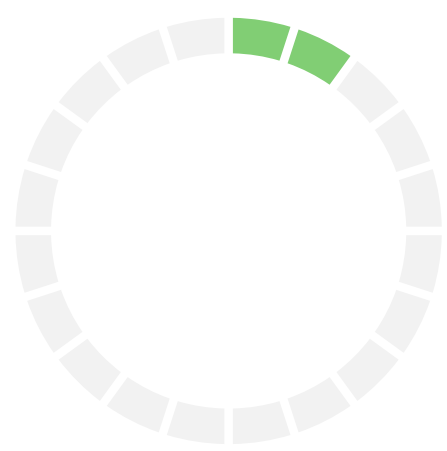
Combined, these four positions cover close to half of all responses and disagree on almost everything except that AI matters.

The AI camps set against the human and offline counter-current.



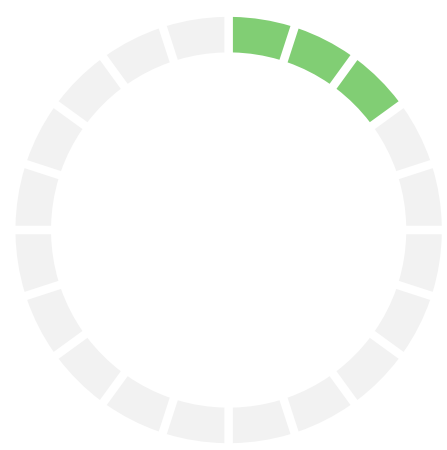
29.0%

AI Optimists
(dominance + agentic)



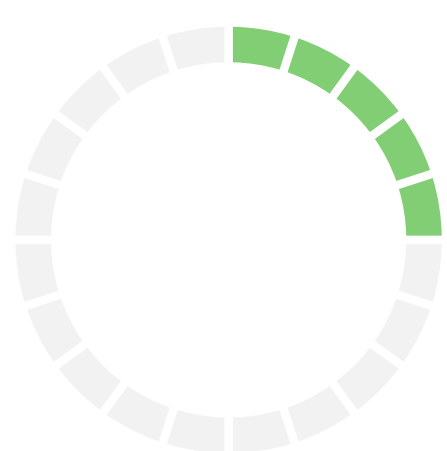
6.5%

AI matures into
infrastructure



11.2%

AI skeptic /
bubble bursts



20.7%

Human & offline
counter-current



The Authenticity Backlash

The second-largest theme focuses on the human element. Roughly one in seven substantive predictions describes a human reaction against AI, namely a rising premium on trust, authenticity, personality, and real human connection as AI-generated content becomes common.



03 THE AUTHENTICITY BACKLASH

“Trust will become the new currency. As AI-generated content floods our feeds, people are craving brands that feel real. Authenticity, transparency and genuine expertise will be what cuts through the noise, and the brands that earn trust will be the ones that win.”

- Marketing, Executive/Specialist

Alongside this sits a related expectation of a return to physical and in-person marketing: out-of-home, experiential activity, and face-to-face events. Taken together, the authenticity and offline predictions form a coherent counter-position to the AI-dominance camp, and they come overwhelmingly from marketers rather than from technical or data roles.

For a brand, the practical read is that authenticity is becoming something to plan for and measure, not just to claim. If trust is the advantage, then the signals that build it, consistency, transparency, and a clear point of view, need to be tracked like any other performance metric.

“Dead Internet theory will come through, and we will return to physical advertising and experiences.”

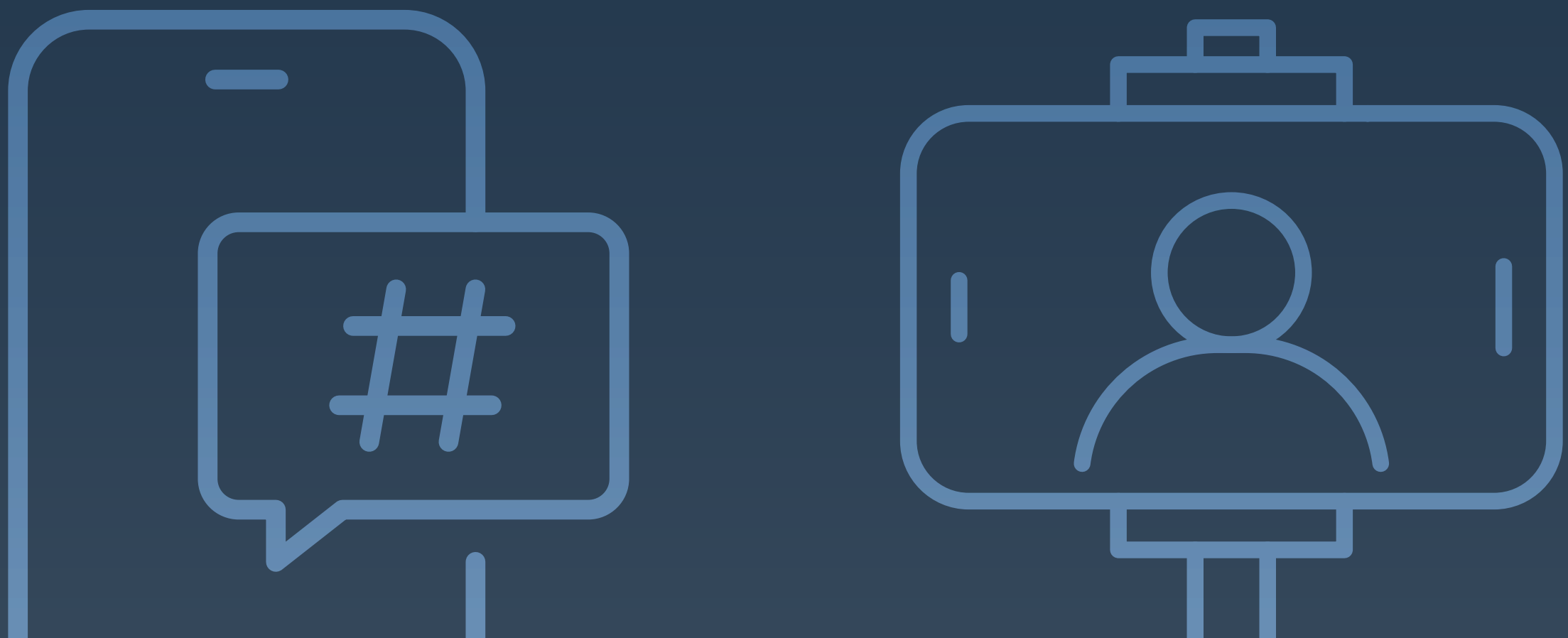
- Marketing Assistant

Creators, communities, and channels



After AI and authenticity, the next cluster concerns **who carries the message and where.**

About one in ten substantive predictions points to creators, influencers, and communities, with a consistent tilt toward smaller, more engaged audiences over large, passive ones.



“

The smart ones will start paying more for small creators with genuinely engaged fans instead of big-name influencers with huge but passive followings.

- Marketing Manager, Media

”

Two specific shifts recur:



1

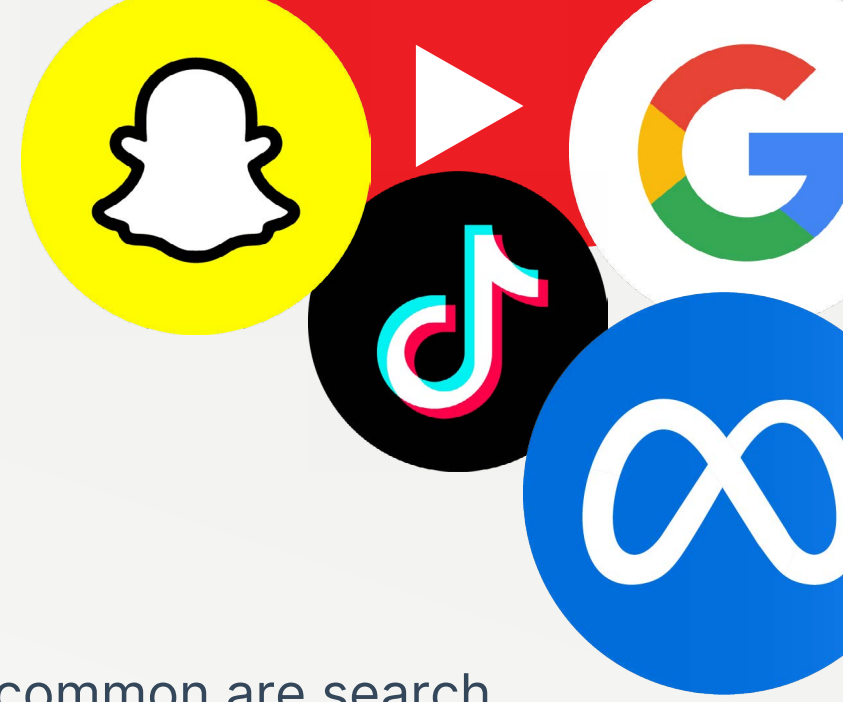


Communities becoming more valuable than raw follower counts.

2



Creators being brought into closer, more employee-like relationships with the brands they work with.



Channels and Formats

A further group makes concrete channel calls for 2027. The most common are search behavior moving toward TikTok and AI assistants, growth in short-form and partnership formats, and audio expanding into new spaces such as the car.



Search and discovery shifting from Google toward TikTok and AI assistants.



YouTube Shorts and partnership ads growing as formats.



WhatsApp and private communities becoming places brands build presence beyond open social feeds.

“

Search and discovery will increasingly happen through AI assistants, making brand trust, quality content, and strong first-party customer data more important than ever.

- Operations Manager, Marketing

”



The quiet consensus: Measurement

The camps in this report disagree about the future, but they quietly agree about one requirement for surviving it. Running through the more considered responses is a shift in how marketers expect to judge their own work: away from reach and vanity metrics, toward outcomes, quality measurement and first-party data.



05 THE QUIET CONSENSUS: MEASUREMENT

“Brands will shift budget away from paying for reach and toward paying for outcomes.”

- Business Development Executive

This appears from several directions. Sales and business development respondents frame it as outcome-based planning and budget accountability. Others point to first-party data and independent measurement becoming central. A recurring worry about rising martech and AI-tool costs sharpens the same point, that being that spending has to be justified against results.

This is the common ground beneath the disagreement. Whether AI booms, busts, or fades into the background, and whether audiences reward automation or authenticity, the marketers who can see clearly what is working will adapt faster than those arguing about which prediction was right. Clear measurement is what lets a team change its mind on evidence rather than on noise.

“Marketers start caring less about performance and ROAS and more on quality measurement capabilities.”

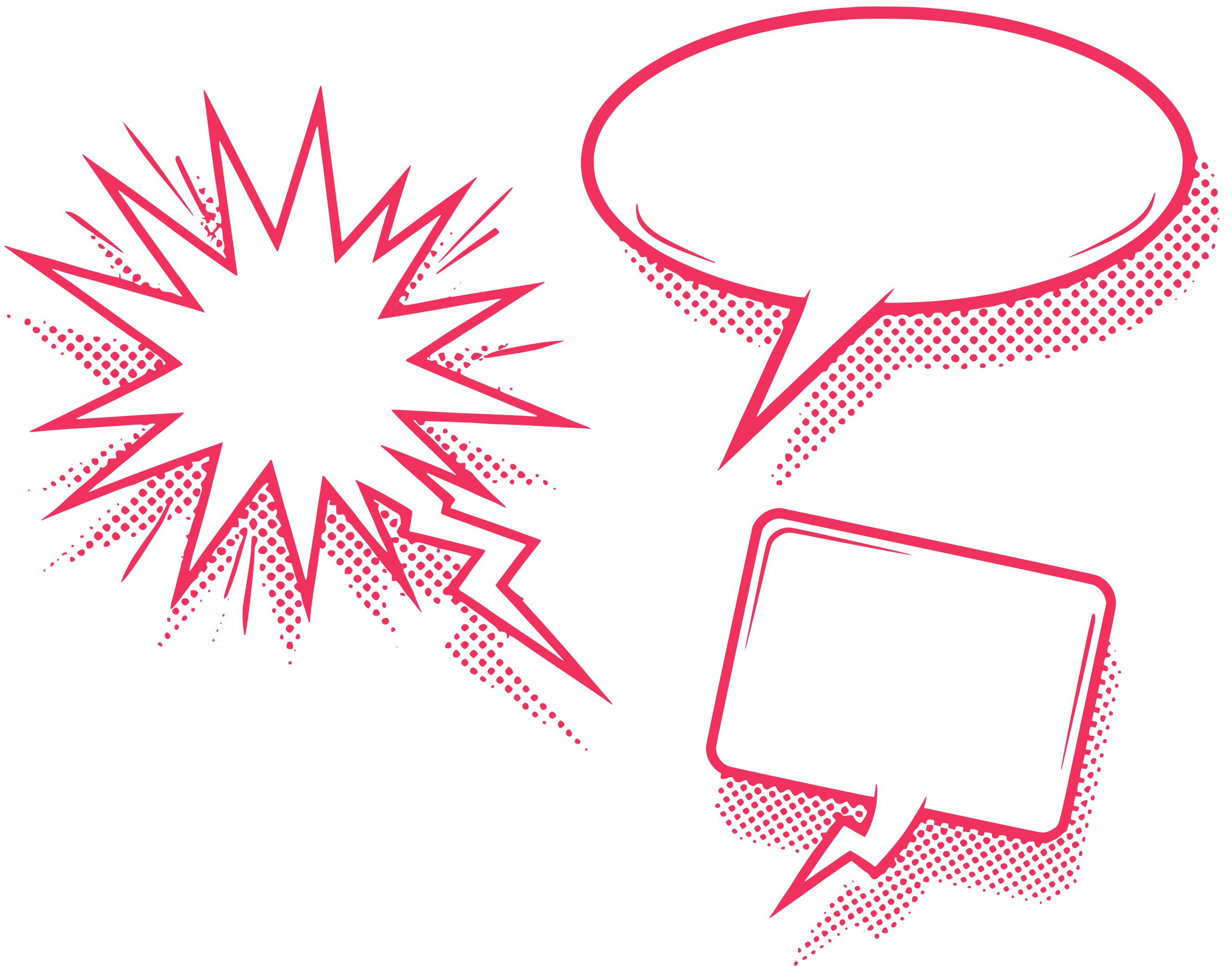
- Customer Success Manager, Media

A note from Hurree

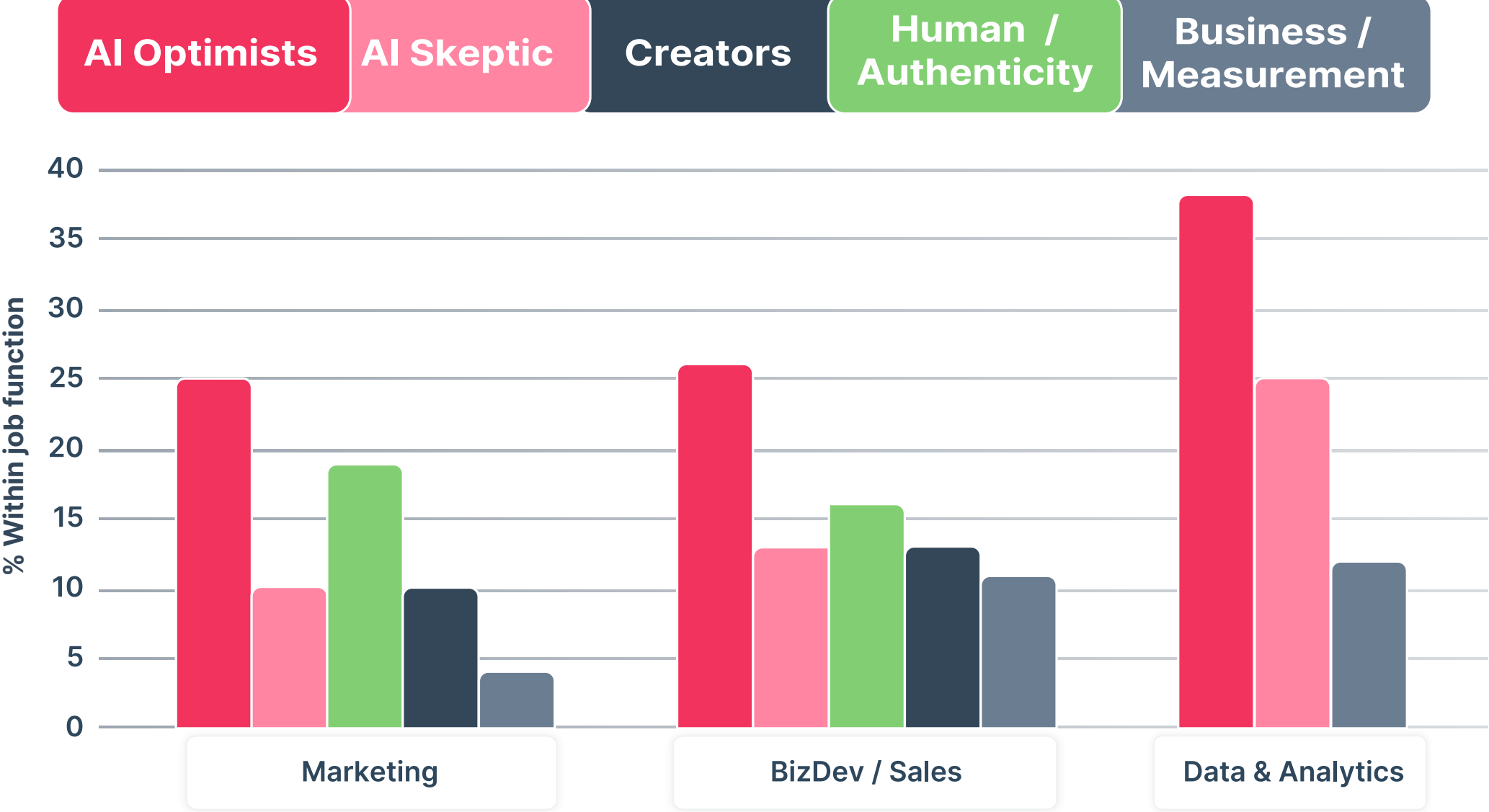
This research reflects our own view of the year ahead: the advantage in 2027 goes to teams that can measure clearly across every channel. Hurree brings scattered marketing data into one dashboard so you can see what is working without switching between tools. If that is useful to you, there is a free plan to start with.

It depends **who you ask**

The same question produces different answers depending on the respondent's role. Job function shapes the view more than industry does.



Themes by Profession



Selected themes as a share of each job function's responses.
Data & Analytics is a small group (8 responses) and is directional only.

JOB FUNCTION	DISTINCTIVE LEAN
Marketing	Carries almost the entire authenticity backlash; makes most channel and format calls.
Business Development / Sales	Commercial framing: budgets, outcomes and accountability over creative themes.
Data & Analytics	Most polarized on AI, both optimistic and skeptical; voices no human-touch predictions at all.
Ops, events, founders	Source of most experiential and in-person predictions.

The clearest contrast is between marketers and data roles. Marketers are the ones forecasting a return to trust, personality and human connection. The data and analytics respondents, though a small group, never raise that theme once, and split hard between expecting AI to take over and expecting it to collapse. Sales and business development respondents think in budgets and outcomes. Reading across the industry cut, media respondents lean most heavily toward AI dominance and agents, while the authenticity theme is almost entirely a marketing-sector view.

One caution: several of these segments are small, particularly outside marketing roles and the marketing sector. Treat the direction of each contrast as reliable and the exact figures as indicative.

What this means for you

IF YOU ARE A MARKETER

The field is split three ways, so committing fully to one AI narrative is a risk. Plan for more than one outcome, and treat authenticity as measurable rather than assumed. Track the trust signals, consistency, transparency and repeat engagement that the backlash camp expects audiences to reward, so you can prove they work instead of hoping they do.

IF YOU ARE AN AGENCY

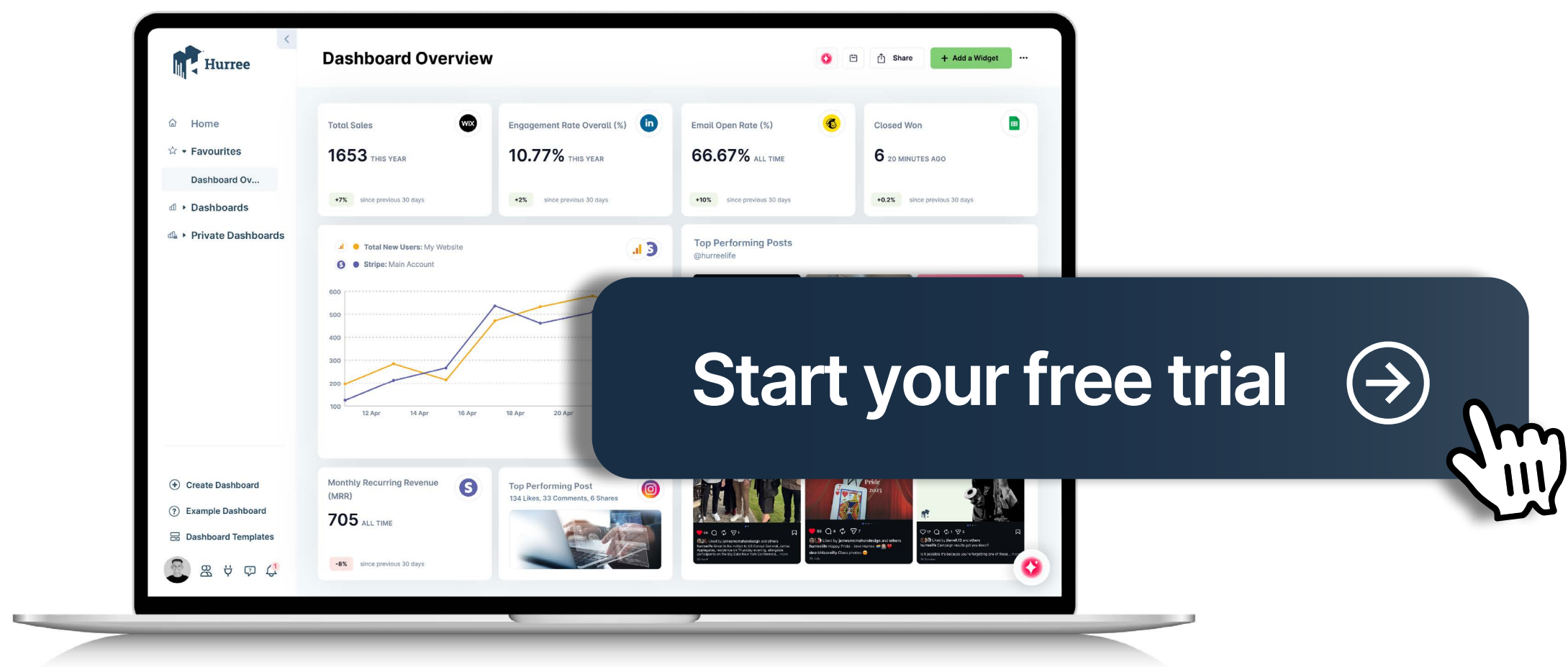
Clients are hearing the same contradictory predictions you are. Guessing the winning forecast is a weaker position than offering clear measurement across whichever direction each client leans. When budgets move toward outcomes, the agency that can show results across channels keeps the account.

IF YOU ARE A FOUNDER OR SMALL TEAM

Loud predictions pull small teams into over-investing in whatever is fashionable. The response with the least regret is to spend against measurable outcomes and keep enough visibility to change course quickly. You do not need more tools so much as one clear view of the ones you already use.

See what is working in your own marketing

Hurree connects your marketing data into one dashboard and uses AI to summarize what is changing and why. There is a free plan to start with, no card required.



Source: Hurree 2027 Marketing Predictions survey, 221 responses collected at MAD//Fest 2026; 169 substantive predictions analyzed. Percentages use the substantive base. Verbatim responses are lightly cleaned for spelling only. Segment figures for small groups are directional.

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★★★★★
4.8 OUT OF 5.0