

THE STATE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING 2026

MARKETERS ARE BALANCING GROWING DEMAND WITH FLAT RESOURCES AND AI-POWERED TRANSFORMATION

Here's what hundreds of marketers say will define 2026*



IMPLEMENT AI IN MARKETING WORKFLOWS

82%

of marketers say AI improves productivity



but most gains are moderate (47%) rather than significant (35%)

Top areas of future investment:



Insight: AI success now depends on upskilling and workflow integration, not experimentation



DIVE INTO YOUR INFLUENCER MARKETING FUNNEL



67%

plan to increase influencer budgets in 2026



58%

plan to test or expand virtual influencer partnerships



65%

say relatable creator content drives purchases - micro & macro creators (47% each) lead investments



Insight: Influencer marketing is now full-funnel. Pair macro "heroes" for reach with micro "halos" for trust and content volume

USER-GENERATED CONTENT IS POWERFUL BUT UNDERUSED

82%

see UGC as critical but only 31% actively scale it

Top UGC formats:



Insight: UGC is an affordable content engine. Operationalizing it (rights management + automation) unlocks scale and measurable ROI

SOCIAL MEDIA IS BECOMING A GROWTH MACHINE

69%

Brand awareness



Top goals:

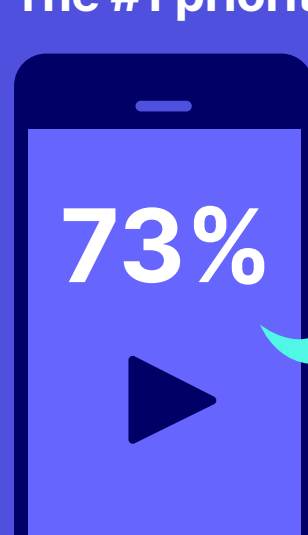
52%

Community Loyalty

51%

Conversions

the #1 prioritized content for 2026:



73%

say short-form video is the #1 content type



Insight: Brands are diversifying presence and using automation, AI scheduling, and cross-channel analytics to scale efficiently

GOOD MARKETING LEADERSHIP FOSTERS INNOVATION

37%

collaborate "very closely," leaving room for alignment

50%

want more joint planning across marketing, commerce, and care

84%

of marketers feel some leadership support for adopting new tech, but only 65% get consistent budgets or tools



Insight: Encouragement without enablement slows innovation. Unifying teams and data delivers faster insights and stronger ROI



PREVENT SOCIAL TEAM BURNOUT WITH BETTER WORKFLOWS

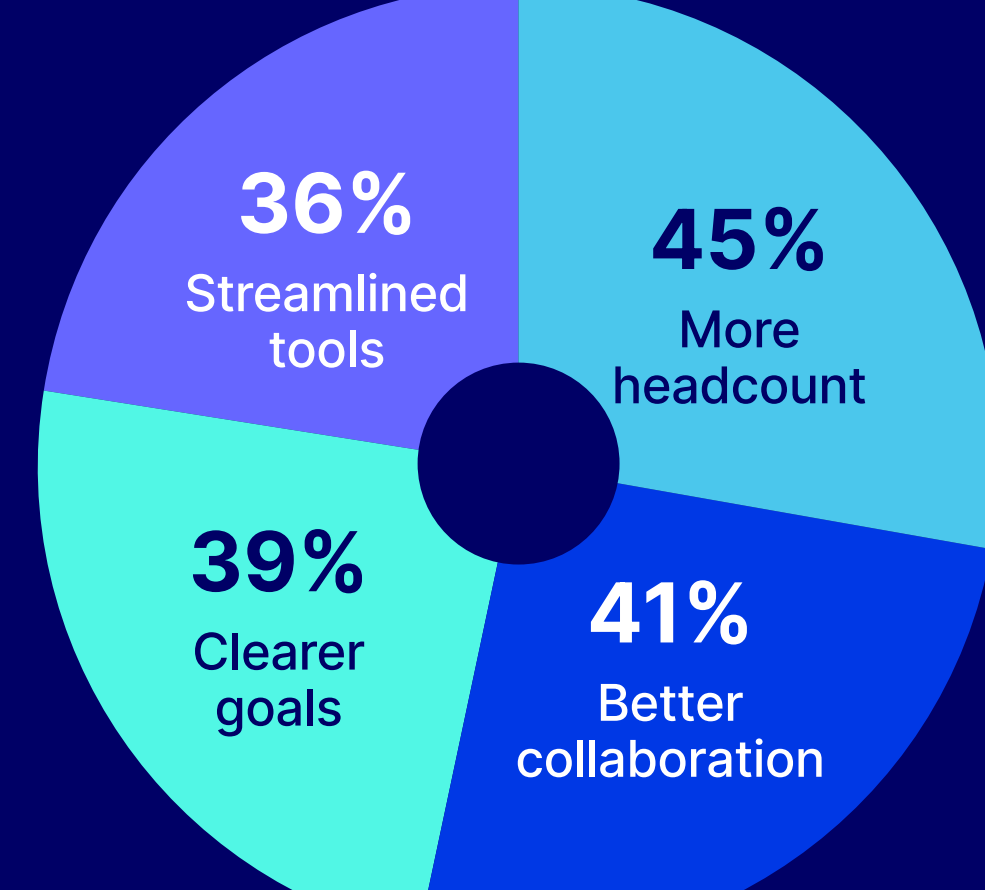
57%

of social teams have fewer than 6 people

76%

feel burnout at least occasionally

Top needs:

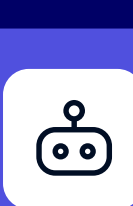


Insight: Lean teams need AI-driven workflows and automation to scale without sacrificing creativity or well-being

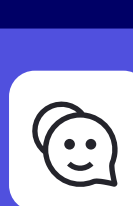
THE 2026 PLAYBOOK — WHAT WINNERS WILL DO

Marketers who thrive in 2026 will:

Harness AI for productivity without losing creativity



Treat influencers as long-term partners



Scale UGC through structured campaigns



Build video-first, data-informed strategies



Connect marketing, commerce, and care teams



Invest in workflows that reduce burnout



*Methodology

Nature of survey: This was an online survey offered in English only
When: Data collected September, 2025

Sample size: The sample was 564 marketers across B2C and B2B roles
Qualifications: Must work in a marketing-related role

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