

TOP TOPICS 2025



CONSUMER & CATEGORY INSIGHTS SHAPING THE YEAR(S) AHEAD

TOP TOPICS 2025 PRELUDE: THE CASE FOR CREATIVITY

Originality and creativity seem to be dissipating in a society that prizes efficiency, artificiality, and recycled ideas. However, humans benefit from creative content, including entertaining advertising. Whether acknowledging the fragmentation of information, addressing cravings for tangibility and structure, understanding redefined households, or embracing fantastical expressions, brands that engage in the top cultural topics can champion creativity and break through.

↗ **42%**

In the 1990s, only about 12% of the domestic box office went to sequels, whereas in the ten years between 2014 and 2023, it was an average of **42%**.

- FORBES

“Brands that can show imagination and originality will become pioneers of the new age.”

- FORBES

69%

69% of U.S. adults are tired of their social media feeds showing the same content over and over.

- HORIZON MEDIA

“Creativity is no longer about grabbing attention or raising consumer awareness. Its goal is to remind consumers about what is fundamental and gratifying about a brand.”

- PETER A. GEORGESCU, AMERICAN ADVERTISING FEDERATION ADVERTISING HALL OF FAME

71%

71% of U.S. respondents agree that commercials and advertisements should always be entertaining.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

TOP TOPICS

1. Information Fragmentation
2. Tangible Comforts
3. Celebrating Structure
4. Absurdist & Fantastical
5. Redefining Communities

INFORMATION FRAGMENTATION

Fragmented media sources and exponential content options continue to mince consumers' attention spans. People are favoring bite-sized content in every form from music to literature and entertainment while losing taste for main-course-style books and legacy media. Organizations that share substantive content in a consumable form and tap into niche communities will provide the most value.

7 MIN.

Kids' shows are getting shorter with episodes of the popular show, Bluey, averaging about **seven minutes**.

- VULTURE

Pop songs have gotten more repetitive since the 1980s to increase shareability on platforms like TikTok.

- FORBES

88%

88% of Americans engage in niche communities.

- CONFIDANT AND VYTAL SURVEY IN AXIOS

Distrust in legacy media has contributed to an increasingly fragmented news landscape.

- AXIOS

84% & 94%

84% of millennials and **94%** of Gen Z are simultaneously splitting their time between televisions and other devices.

- HORIZON MEDIA

AVERAGE LITERACY SCORES DROPPED IN 20 COUNTRIES, WHICH SOME RESEARCHERS BLAME ON LESS READING AND MORE SCROLLING.

- THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



TANGIBLE COMFORTS

To offset screen-fatigued lives, consumers are finding comfort in tangible in-person offerings that now feel novel. Despite premature eulogies, in-store shopping and physical books have not become obsolete in the wake of Amazon’s rise nor have movie theaters folded under the prevalence of at-home video streaming [yet]. Physical goods and experiences offer a comforting appeal, allowing brands to meaningfully connect with audiences.

42%

42% of people surveyed said their most enjoyable experience the previous week was physical vs. only 15% who said the same about digital.

- ACCENTURE

There are 2,433 independent bookstores in the U.S.—almost double the number in 2016, with 190 more planned to open in the next two years.

- AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION
DATA IN MORNING BREW

60%

60% of all consumers planned to visit stores in person for holiday purchases.

One-fifth of Gen Z (21%) make an event out of shopping trips by combining them with other activities.

- PWC

Movie theaters continue to draw attendance with box office hits such as Wicked and Gladiator 2 dominating recent pop culture.

- FORBES

79%

79% of Gen Z say it’s a goal to be able to interact with people more in the real world.

- THE HARRIS POLL

↑22%

Bible sales were up 22% YOY in the U.S. through the end of October 2024 as worries about the economy, conflicts abroad, and uncertainty over the election pushed readers toward the publication.

- CIRCANA BOOKSCAN DATA IN
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



CELEBRATING STRUCTURE

As Americans feel a loss of control over what is happening in their lives, there is a longing for the routine, mundane, and structured. From avoiding risks to reveling in simple pastimes, what was once considered boring is now more appealing. Brands that provide consistent performance and live up to expectations can be trusted partners in people's lives.

"Today's junior employees say they are pleasantly surprised with their office jobs and the structure they offer."

- THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

83%

83% of U.S. respondents say things feel out of control in America.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

"Bed rotting" is a trend popular on TikTok that involves spending extended periods of time in bed engaging in passive activities to help combat burnout.

- TREND HUNTER

IN RESPONSE TO A CRAVING FOR COMFORT, PANTONE'S COLOR OF THE YEAR FOR 2025, MOCHA MOUSSE, REPRESENTS THE FIRST SHADE OF BROWN SELECTED.

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

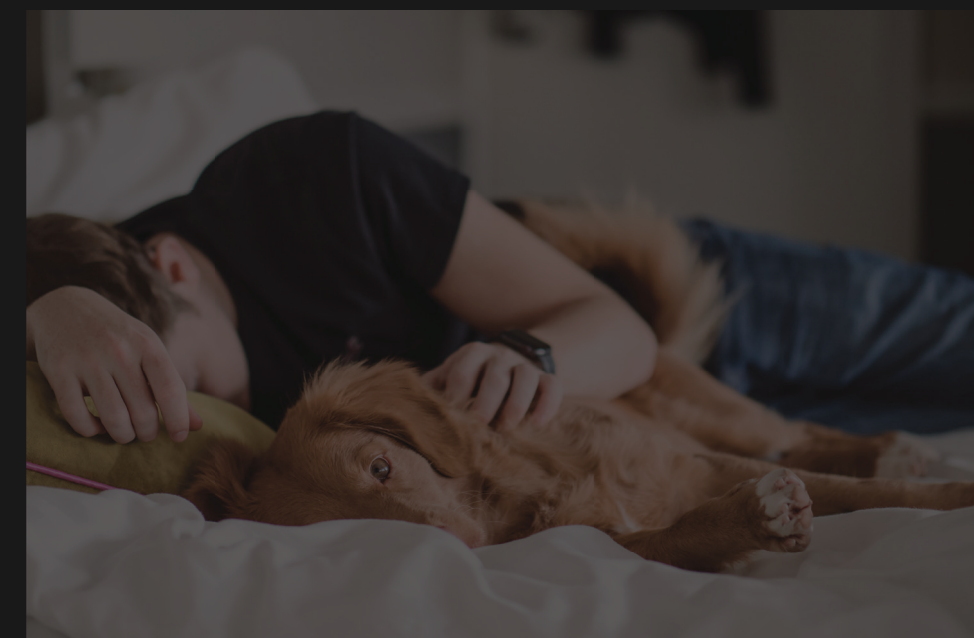
52% VS. 48%

52% of U.S. respondents say they prefer to play it safe and not take unnecessary risks vs. 48% who say they are happy to take some risks for the chance to enjoy greater rewards.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

PNC Bank ran a recent campaign based on being "Brilliantly Boring," celebrating the value of reliability, while a recent Seat Geek campaign encouraged audiences to "expect the expected."

- KANTAR



ABSURDIST & FANTASTICAL

To balance the new-found comfort in routines, an infusion of absurd, fantastical, and maximalist aesthetics is sweeping culture. Colorful makeup, campy parties, and eclectic design offer playful expression, while surrealist or nonsensical content is further accelerated by AI and brands looking to capture attention. Organizations that allow themselves to have fun with frivolity and color will provide welcomed escapism for consumers.

Dunkin' Donuts-themed makeup by Elf, which sold out swiftly, showcases how humor and cultural aesthetics resonate deeply with younger audiences.

- VOGUE BUSINESS

The frill-forward Rococo era is predicted to influence everything from events to apparel in 2025 with Pinterest searches for Rococo party (+140%), Rococo outfit (+5465%) and Rococo makeup (+70%) trending up.

- PINTEREST

TikTok users are garnering millions of views through #randommakeup filters where they let miscellaneous filters choose their makeup looks for a playful break from the norm.

- HORIZON MEDIA

Jaguar's recent campaign "copy nothing" features brightly-clad models yet no cars, drumming up major discussion with those who hate or appreciate the undeniably bold ad.

- NBC NEWS

+70% **+40%** **+215%** **+300%**

Pinterest searches for Modern surrealism (+70%), Salvador Dali aesthetic (+40%), Eclectic maximalism (+215%) and Chaos gardening (+300%) are trending up.

- PINTEREST

"THE RISE OF BRAIN ROT CONTENT [LOW QUALITY, NON-SENSICAL CONTENT] SPEAKS TO A MUCH LARGER CULTURAL TREND...IT'S PART OF A CULTURAL CRAVING FOR VERY DUMB COMFORT RIGHT NOW, OR JUST DUMB FUN."

- ADAGE

REDEFINING COMMUNITIES

Household makeup is experiencing a makeover as the typical family unit continues to evolve with multiple generations, pets and non-relatives becoming part of the core. Meanwhile, consumers are turning to their closest circles and looking for more intimate connections to counter the chaos of the greater society. Demonstrating an understanding of new “family units” through representation in content will make brands more relatable.

70%

Grandparents are becoming more involved with **70%** of Americans saying it is good for everyone when grandparents are involved in childcare.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

3+

16% of U.S. homes (21% among Hispanic households) are made up of **3+** generations in 2024, up from 12% in 2020.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

7 IN 10

Close connections provide support, with around **7 in 10** Americans agreeing that they spend more time with close friends and family amidst all the conflict and controversy in the country.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

53% ↘ 47%

There is a continued evolution of the “typical” American household with the percent of married couple households on a decline from **53%** in 2000 to **47%** in 2024, while non-family and ‘other family’ households are on the rise, now making up 36% and 17% respectively.

- U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

9 IN 10

Pets earn familial status with over **9 in 10** respondents agreeing that their pet is a member of the family.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

Brands such as Kyndr, a kindness-focused social media platform, are creating new offers focused on more intimate connections, offsetting the negativity of the algorithm-driven platform giants.

- TREND HUNTER



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