

**B2B Touchpoint**

# TRENDS

2025 Report





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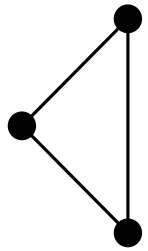
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# THAT'S A WRAP



**The world of B2B communications and marketing is undergoing a seismic shift. As audiences become more demanding of the brands that seek to capture their attention, functional, feature-first messaging that's long been a hallmark of B2B brands is no longer enough. The answer? Brands seeking a deeper connection with their audiences need to start embracing a more human and emotionally resonant approach.**



At Nelson Bostock, we know that creating a meaningful connection starts with understanding. That's why our Human Understanding Lab, a 120-strong team of neuroscientists, behavioural scientists, data analysts and technologists, has applied an insight-driven lens to analyse key communication and marketing touchpoints across 150 B2B brands. From tone to channels and messaging to influencers, we've gained unique insights into what the B2B conversation will look like in the year ahead.

**Our 2025 B2B Touchpoint Trends Report uncovers:**

- What topics trended in 2024, and how this will shift in the year ahead;
- Where these conversations will take place;
- Who will drive the dialogue;
- And how these insights can help brands not only join but lead the conversations shaping their industries in 2025 and beyond.



**Lucy Watson**

Managing Director, Nelson Bostock



Chapter 1

# THE TONE OF THINGS TO COME

B2B Bringing the Joy in 2025

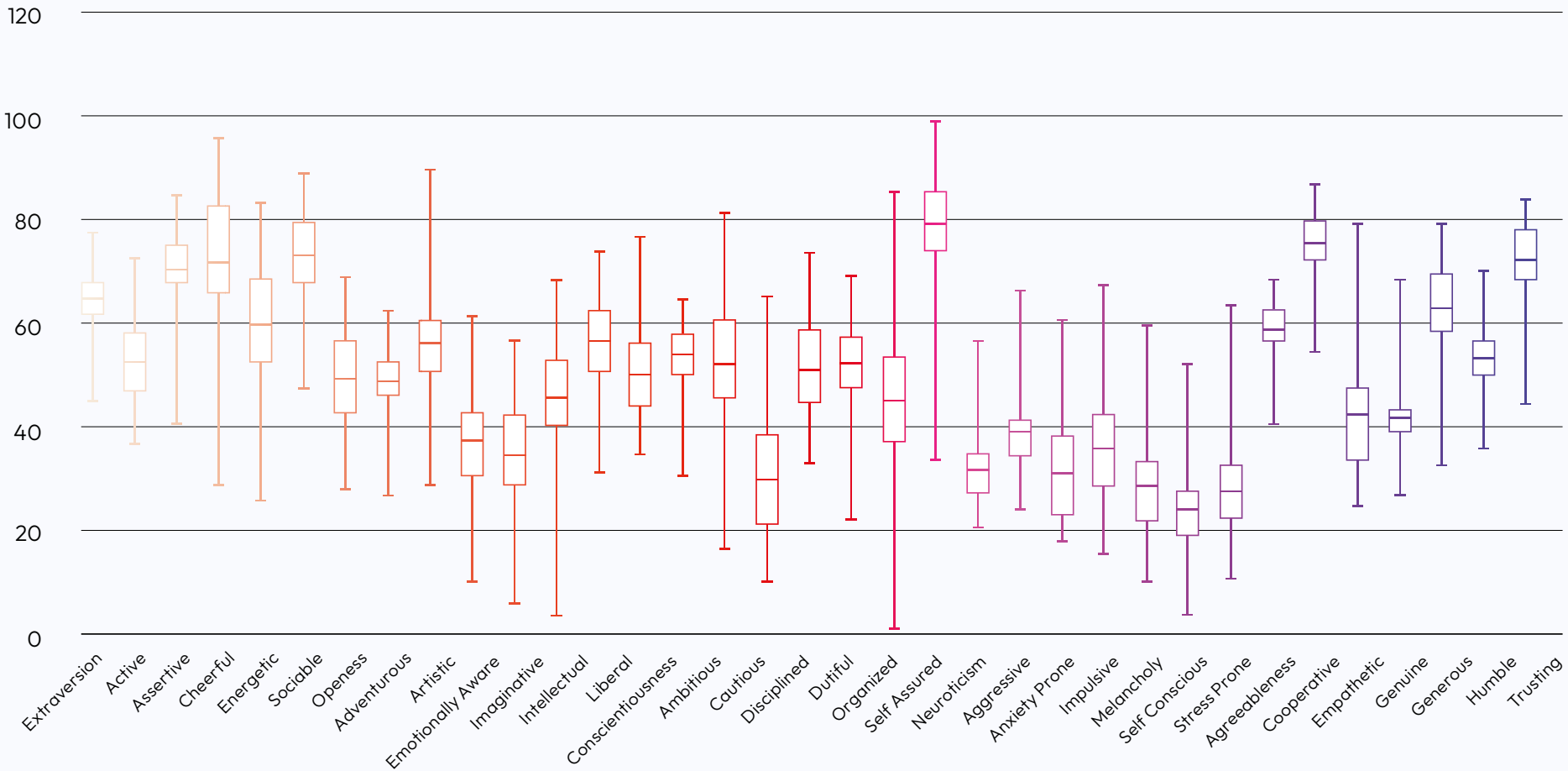


Traditionally, B2B marketing hasn't had the most exciting image, with some going as far as to dub it 'Boring to Boring'. But, as the line between our work and personal lives continues to blur, we're seeing more B2B brands bravely shake off the dust and bring a more personal touch to their communications.

Using our personality profiler tools, we compared more than 150 of today's B2B brands to get a sense of who they really are. We wanted to know what they stand for, how they present themselves and, crucially, how they connect with their audiences.

The overarching impression of B2B brands is a blend of confidence and reliability, with the traits Self-Assured, Organised and Conscientious scoring the highest. What's particularly interesting, though, is there's a growing inclination towards showing some personality. Traits like Cheerful and Friendly also scored highly, indicating there's a desire to build more personal connections with audiences.

Personality Traits – The Full Cohort







Many of our B2B clients operate in highly competitive spaces, where it's hard to get traction with product features and benefits alone.

At the end of the day, brands operating in the same sector will offer comparable product capabilities, so the need to lean into human motivations is crucial. And, from a strategic and creative standpoint, this provides B2B brands with a much richer starting point from which to build their campaigns.

This persona data shows us that B2B brands are taking steps to connect on a human level. But over the next year, those that are able to incorporate light-heartedness, humour or even just some fun into their communications will capture hearts and minds. The 'attention economy' is not just for consumer brands. At the end of the day, we all want to be entertained – and it's the brands who can do this authentically that will succeed."

**Olivia Harry**, Associate Creative Director.



This interpretation of the data is reinforced by the 2024 awards season, which saw brands that took a human-centric approach winning out. From purpose-driven work to human interest pieces, to making light of the corporate world, these campaigns captured attention and reaped the rewards.

**Just look at Hiscox's**  
[The Most Disastrous Campaign Ever.](#)

To dig a little deeper, we evaluated more than 50 B2B campaigns that were shortlisted for awards in 2024.



It turns out that over a fifth of campaigns were purpose-focused, while nearly a quarter (23.5%) used humour or fun to convey their message.



1/5

purpose-focused



23.5%

used humour or fun  
to convey their message

It's hardly surprising that The Drum has now included a category specifically for Humour.



# GENERATIVE OR GENERIC?

Battling Gen AI in B2B Content



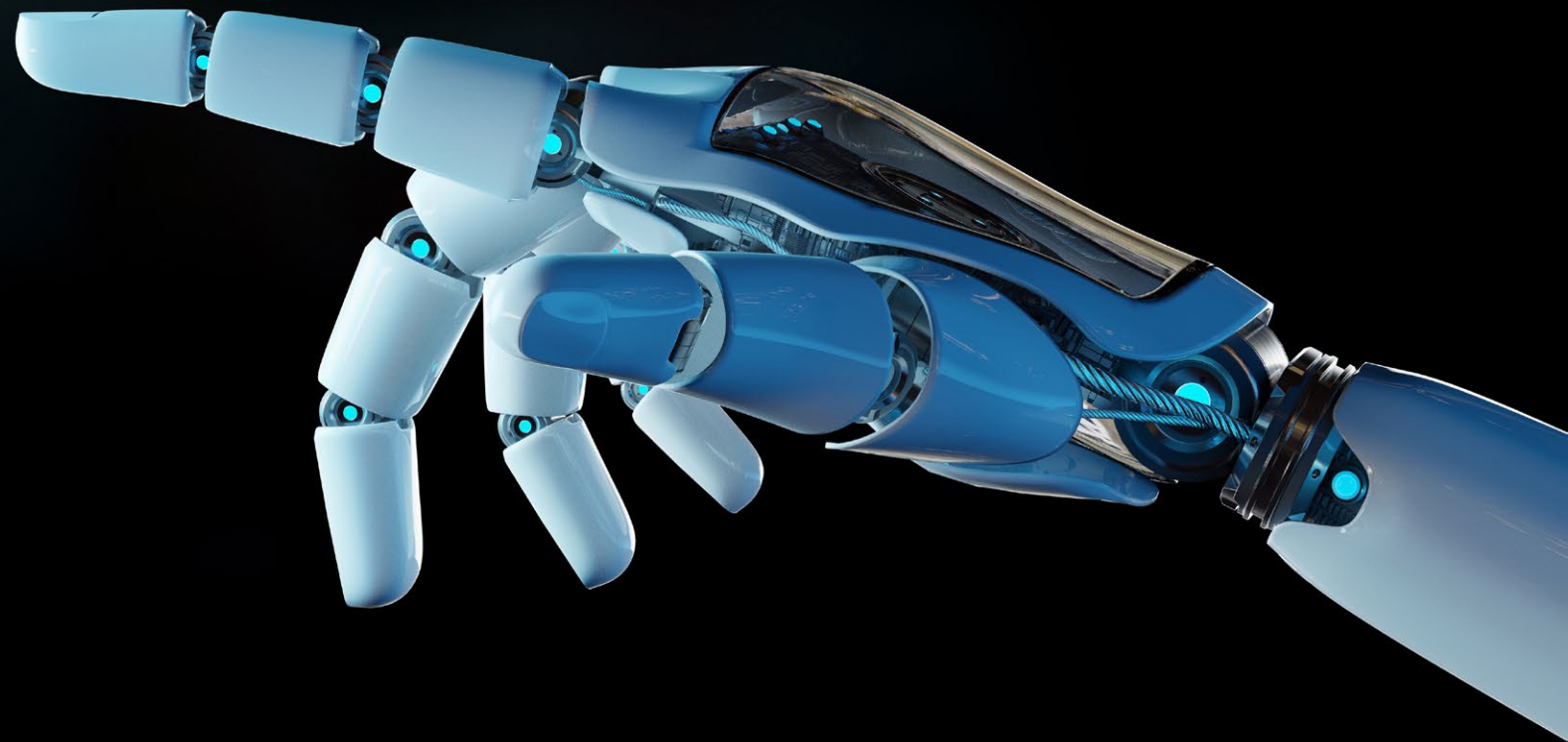


## B2B Buzzword of the Year:

# AI

As brands seek to build an authoritative yet approachable voice to help them stand out from the crowd, messaging is everything. But too often, brands fall into the trap of using industry buzzwords to demonstrate they're tapped into the latest trends.

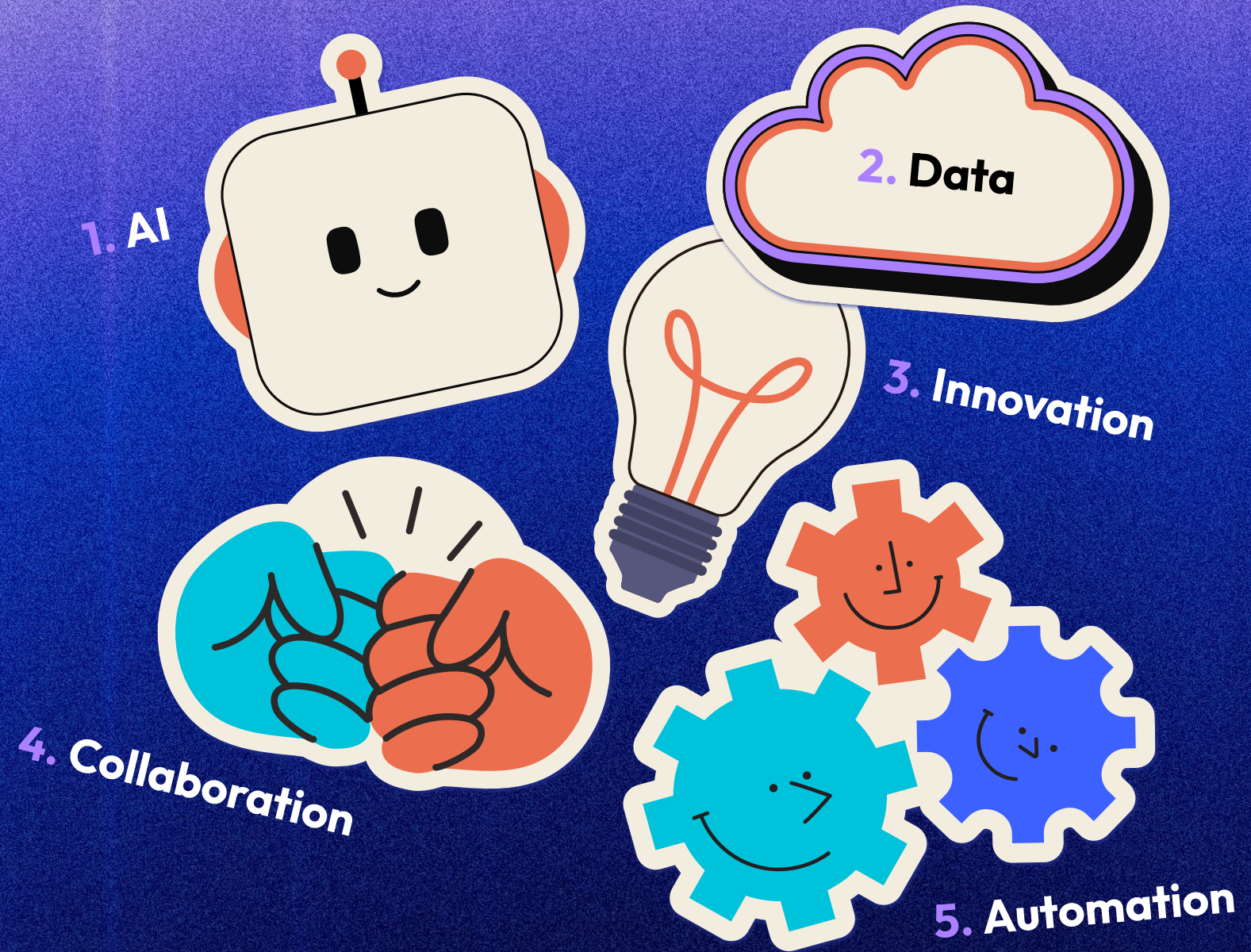
While this tends to create a sea of content sameness, these buzzwords do give us a sense of what B2B brands are betting big on in the coming year.





# Top 5 B2B Buzzwords of 2024

It won't come as a shock that AI was the biggest buzzword (well, initialism) of 2024. Our audit of nearly 150 B2B brands – analysing over 2 million words from their LinkedIn and X posts – revealed that 'AI' was used nearly four times more than the second-most used buzzword, 'Data'.







When you consider that many of the top recurring words are centred around driving efficiency and showing technical leadership, it's not surprising that B2B messaging is falling flat (as far as serving a more humanised tone of voice is concerned).

There's a lot of tech-centric and jargony language here. Ever was it thus, but AI is taking things to the next level.

**AI will be a gamechanger for most industries, but many of us are already experiencing AI-fatigue. The phrase itself is becoming copy wallpaper – anything that was once dubbed ‘automation’ or ‘machine learning’ has been hastily rebadged as AI, as every business that can do so is looking to leverage AI’s moment in the sun to grab attention. In the coming year, I think we’ll see a tonal shift away from ‘AI everything’ and towards showing the benefits the technology actually brings. AI as a feature will be table stakes; as a result, AI will become less of a key message in itself and more of a proof point that underpins real, human benefits."**

**Will Findlater**  
Group Head of Content

The increased use of AI in generating B2B content hasn't gone unnoticed. Eagle-eyed readers are quick to pick up on the tell-tale signs that ChatGPT and other flavours of Generative AI have created a piece of content. These range from repeated phrases and sentence structures to a love of specific words.

**In fact, AI has started to create its own B2B buzzwords.**



# Top 5 AI-generated B2B Buzzwords

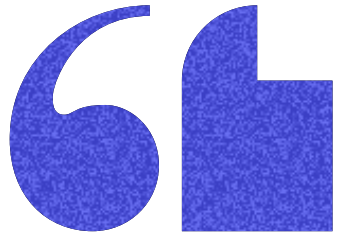
We asked ChatGPT to write 500 prompts in the typical style of B2B users and then got it to generate responses to all these prompts. We analysed the resulting words – all 1.5 million of them – to create a list of 110 buzzwords.

Here are the top five...





Eek. We've all been guilty of rolling out an 'enable' or two when we've already used our quota of 'allows', right? After all, using the word 'enable' is pivotal to enhancing the cut-through of deep-dive B2B content in the current landscape... or something. Being of curious mind, we decided to explore this even further – seeing if we could use our list of buzzwords to predict how much B2B content is generated by AI.

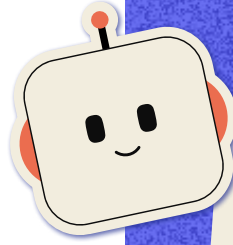


It's inevitable, of course, but the prevalence of the lazy use of AI in creating B2B content is disappointing, as it's only going to exacerbate B2B's boringness problem.

You can see that in the above list of AI-generated B2B buzzwords – a generic, standard-issue B2B word salad. AI can't originate unique thought and opinion like human experts can, and as a storytelling agency, we know that is the stuff that gets headlines and wins engagement," continues **Will**.

"All that said, AI can be amazingly powerful once you've done the research and the thinking to find your point of view. Used well, it helps free you from the minutiae so you can focus more on the work that matters. For example, if you create a whitepaper with new research and expert opinions, the content within it becomes great training data for a generative AI agent. You can feed it this information and it will smash it apart and distil it into emails, social posts, commentary or releases. It can personalise your comms for specific individuals and demographics.

I think, when it comes to B2B comms and marketing, AI will be a game-changer for delivering content at scale – as long as brands take the time to feed it something fresh."



We found that more than half (54%) of LinkedIn posts from B2B brands had traits of AI written content!

54%

of LinkedIn posts  
had traits of AI  
written content



Chapter 3

# THE BIG PICTURE

Visual Trends in B2B Branding

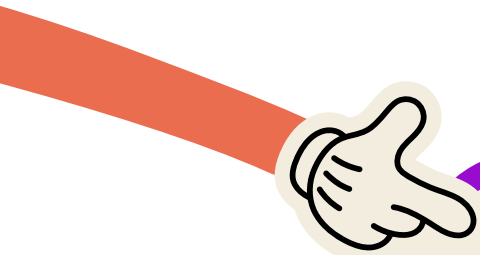


As B2B tone and positioning evolves, what impact will this have on visual communication?

Branding allows B2B brands to express their personality and identity in a much richer way than written content alone. It also provides a crucial opportunity to show what they stand for.

So, what will B2B brands look like in the years ahead?

**Stock imagery is becoming less 'corporate', but not more diverse.**



And this suggests B2B brands have a lot of work to do if they want to walk the walk when it comes to inclusivity.

It seems men still dominate the visual language of B2B brands, with images tagged 'man' by our AI models used over 14,000 times (14,263). That's over triple the number of women found in images (3,915).

14,263

images tagged 'man'



3,915

images tagged 'woman'







In some ways, it's a surprising finding as it's something our own clients are trying to actively combat.

However, it's an issue we need to take seriously, especially with the increasing use of AI in design. Because these tools will be tailored to individual preferences, those trained with a lack of diversity will multiply and amplify it. So, it's crucial that the B2B space looks at how we can make a meaningful shift in the visual language we use," said **Sean Clayton**, Head of Design at Nelson Bostock.

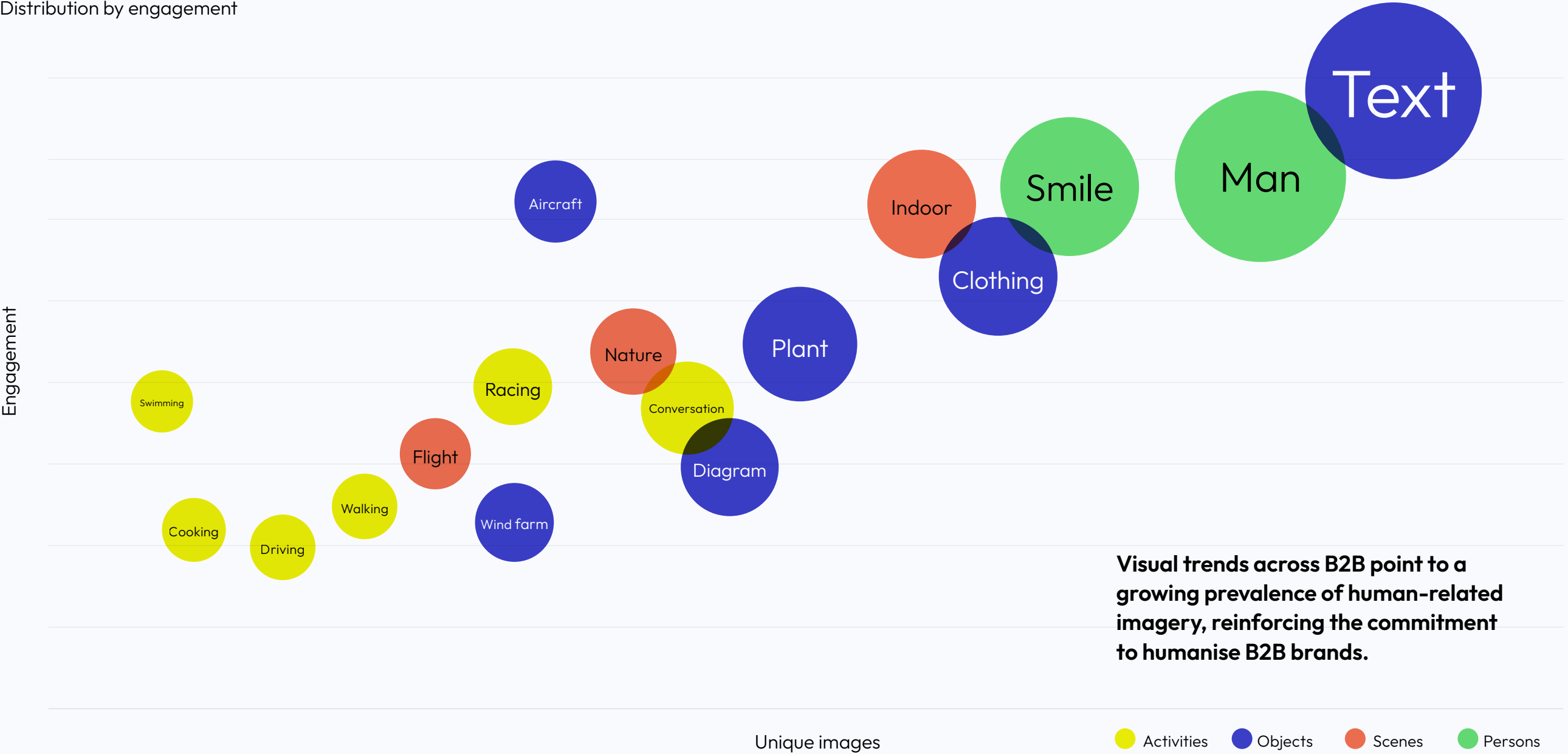
This reinforces the commitment of B2B brands to humanise themselves and create more relatable and emotionally-resonant content. Crucially, there's also been a shift away from traditional corporate environments, with imagery tagged as 'plant' or 'nature' having notable engagement compared to more traditional corporate visuals.



There are some positive visual trends, too. Human-related imagery, such as those tagged 'smile', 'clothing', 'sitting' and 'conversation', all had above-average engagement.



Distribution by engagement





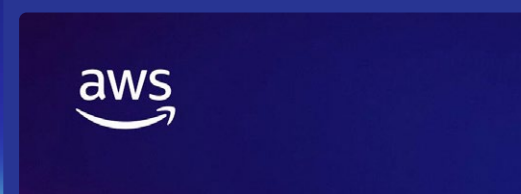
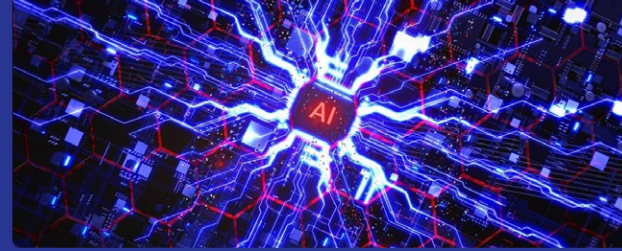
# The B2B Colour of the Year

Move over, Pantone! Keen to explore the role of colour in B2B brands today, we analysed 150 B2B brands' social media platforms to identify the B2B Colour of the Year.

According to our findings, the colour that best defines these brands is...

# indigo!

#283593



Sean continued,  
"Given the appetite for B2B brands to position themselves as innovators, particularly with the rise in adoption of AI, it makes perfect sense that the colour of the year would be indigo. It's a colour that conveys wisdom and higher knowledge, as well as integrity. We often see indigo hues associated with young, fresh brands. It also works well as a high contrast colour against bright hues, to form unconventional colour combinations, which is a continuing design trend we'll see in 2025."





# Warmer tones are also predicted for 2025.

Pantone released its colour of the year, which was Mocha Mousse – and although it caused some controversy, the colour itself shows a move towards comfort and harmony that B2B brands will likely embrace to build stronger connections with their audiences."

**Mocha  
Mousse**  
17-1230

**PANTONE®**

**Colour of the Year 2025**



# b2B CHANNEL WAR⚡

LinkedIn Makes a Landgrab





**It's been more than two years since Elon Musk took over X. And the platform has seen significant change, from rebranding and legal battles to warnings of misinformation and extremism. So, the question on everyone's mind is, is X dying? And if so, where is everyone going and what does that mean for me as a B2B brand?**

Well, let's tackle the first question. X, of course, wants us to believe that more people than ever are on the platform. But as it's no longer a public company, the truth is a little unclear. According to GWI data, X usage hasn't fluctuated much between 2020 and Q3 2024, with daily users in the UK going from 3.81m in 2020 to 3.64m in 2024.

To get a better view on the matter, we put this question to the minds of our Human Understanding Lab. They found that B2B brands are using the platform more than ever, predominantly as a customer support function. From our list of the top 150 B2B brands, we've seen the frequency of tweets going up from 187,000 last year to more than 275,000 this year.

That being said, search volume for key phrases related to deleting or deactivating an X account shows a fair amount of traffic. So, X isn't exactly dying but the way it's traditionally been used likely is.



## Which leads us to the trickier question: where are B2B conversations going?

Media coverage would have you believe Bluesky is emerging as the winner. However, when we took a small sample (three million posts) of the 900 million posts on Bluesky to see if B2B brands are using the platform, we found that the answer is, “not really”.

Only 25 of the top 150 brands  
we looked at have a presence on  
the platform, and the majority of  
accounts that exist are dormant,  
with brands clearly looking to just  
reserve their handle.

 **25**  
of the 150 have  
a presence on  
the platform



**Comparatively, there are more than 26k people on the platform that self-describe as journalist, reporter or editor. When cross-referenced with a list of journalists from UK national and business publications, we found 2,300 UK journalists on the platform. Despite this, just six of the 20 national media titles have a corporate profile.**


So, while early signs suggest Bluesky may not have taken X's crown yet, the press is definitely exploring its potential for news and source gathering. But what's important for B2B brands to understand is Bluesky doesn't use an algorithm – it's a stream of chronological posts from people you have followed over time. This means it's not a great tool for brand or influencer discovery.





Meanwhile, LinkedIn is surging in popularity amongst B2B brands and influencers.

According to LinkedIn's own data, there has been a 35% increase in C-suite professionals in the US on LinkedIn over the last five years, and a 30% rise in the UK.

**35%**   
increase in C-suite  
professionals in the US

 **30%**  
rise in the UK



LinkedIn's new releases to the platform across 2024 have been timed brilliantly. Long-form articles, newsletters and the rise of collaborative articles all tap into the growth of thought leadership and LinkedIn as a business news source," said **Caroline Coventry**, Managing Partner.

"People are even more important to the 'brand sell' in B2B than in consumer, so these formats for sharing knowledge and expertise are receiving significant investment growth from B2B marketers. What's more, short-form video outperforms other content on LinkedIn and the options for marketers to integrate this video into new LinkedIn formats makes the platform even more attractive. Ultimately though, success all comes down to being where the audience is consuming the content. So, as LinkedIn attracts more business audiences, it becomes ever more powerful in the comms mix."



Chapter 5

# BUILDING B2B INFLUENCE

The Human Touch



We often think of influencers as the preserve of B2C communication, but the reality is they are even more important in B2B communication. In fact, **90%** of every B2B sale is influenced by word of mouth, compared to just **50%** in consumer purchases. So, it should be no surprise that businesses are investing heavily in building the profile of their senior executives.



of every B2B sale is influenced by word of mouth



in consumer purchases

Of course, CEOs are prime candidates for this. **This year, CEOs are shaping B2B conversations.**

We’ve already highlighted that LinkedIn is a key platform for this group, but their influence stretches well beyond that. Across social and traditional platforms, our 150 B2B CEOs were mentioned over 10,000 times in the last year, with mentions peaking in the first half of the year thanks to AI enthusiasm.

Unsurprisingly, this meant that Tech CEOs were dominating mentions within media, particularly financial and business outlets.

Top 5 most mentioned CEOs

Pat Gelsinger  
(formerly Intel)

Marc Benioff  
(Salesforce)

Jensen Huang  
(Nvidia)

Lisa Su  
(AMD)

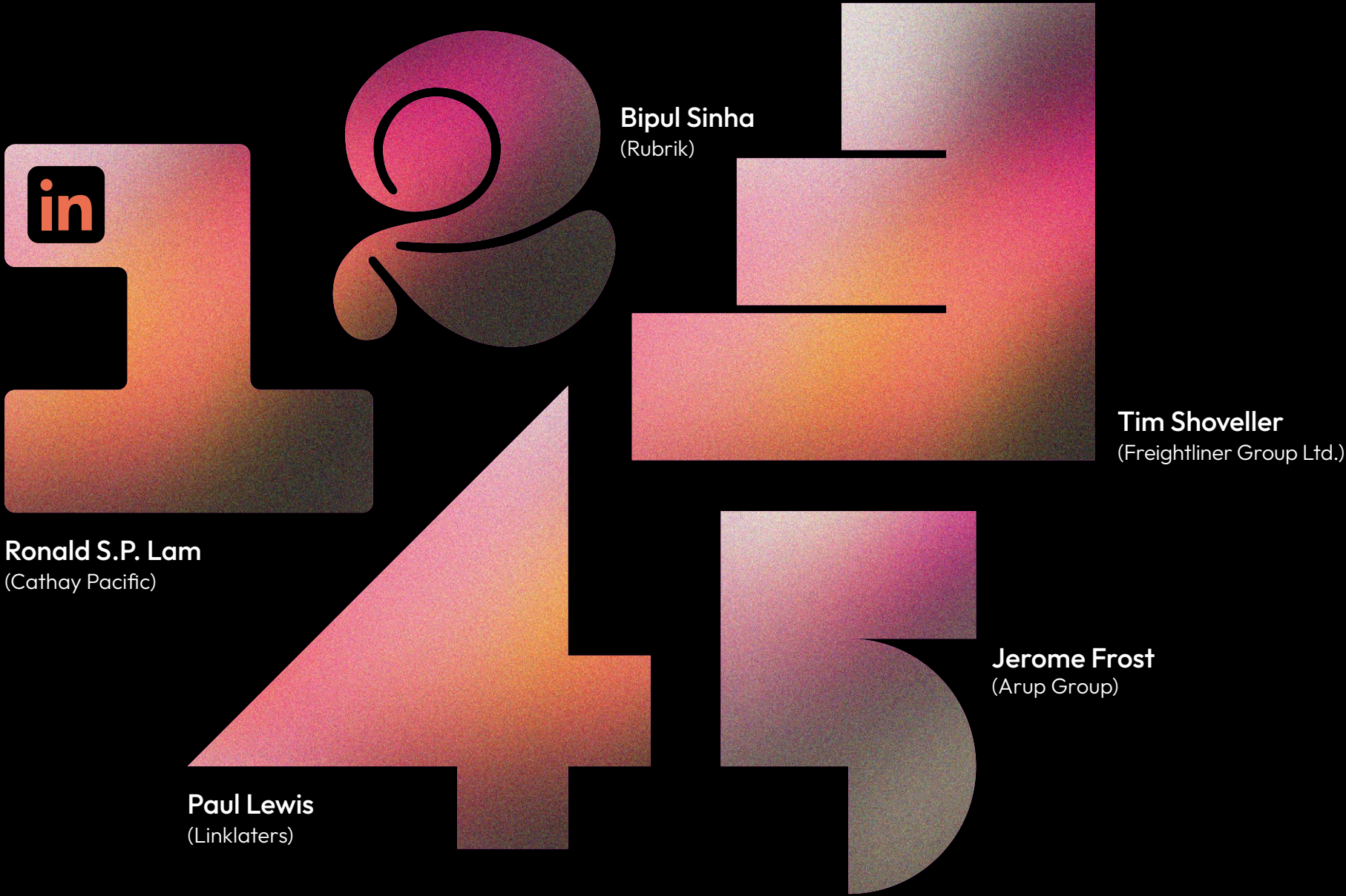
Bryan Johnson  
(Kernel)



# Top 5 best performing CEOs on LinkedIn

And our analysis shows these mentions are driven by corporate and media narratives which change quickly due to economic shifts.

In contrast, the list of top-performing CEOs on LinkedIn looks quite different.





Featuring CEOs from across travel, tech and legal industries, this contrast underscores LinkedIn's focus on professional leadership and engaging content, while broader media visibility is shaped by market relevance, public perception and economic triggers. As a result, the top-performing CEOs on LinkedIn typically fit into the **'Outlaw'** or **'Magician'** archetype of Jung's categorisation – they tend to push boundaries or offer a fresh vision.



**Caroline Coventry,**  
Managing Partner noted,

Most influential voices on LinkedIn typically have a strong educational role to play in their field of expertise.

There are a few exceptions where influencers have risen through entertainment value, and our prediction is that we'll see more of this type of influence coming through, such as Rob Mayhew with cross-pollination from TikTok."







To drive this, our cohort built success on the platform by delivering more human-centric content. For instance, leadership and career milestones dominated, helping to build relatable narratives that foster trust and emotional connection. Likewise, influencers like Ronald S.P. Lam and Paul Lewis lean heavily on image-based posts to support visual storytelling and capture attention on busy feeds.

But a key part of building a strong influencer strategy that comms professionals need to understand, is its role in search. SEO Manager, **Rejoice Ojiaku** highlighted that,

**Social search is quickly becoming a game-changer for B2B marketing. It's no longer just about finding viral trends or product recommendations – decision makers are actively turning to platforms like LinkedIn, TikTok and even Instagram to discover solutions, validate expertise and connect with brands that get them.**

**Why? Because social search offers more than traditional search engines – it brings a human touch. It's about real conversations, authentic content and communities that influence purchasing decisions. If your B2B brand isn't showing up here, you're missing the opportunity to build trust, share valuable insights and meet your audience where they already are.**

**The future of B2B isn't just SEO – it's creating content that thrives on both search engines and social feeds, because that's where the next business decision starts."**



# THAT'S A WRAP



# Our key Takeaways

2024 has been a big year for B2B comms and marketing. There's been a notable shift in the way that brands are connecting with audiences – they're shaking off some of the professional veneer in favour of making human connections and experimenting with the potential of AI and emerging social channels.

While that's an incredibly exciting change for PR and marketing professionals, it's not without its challenges.

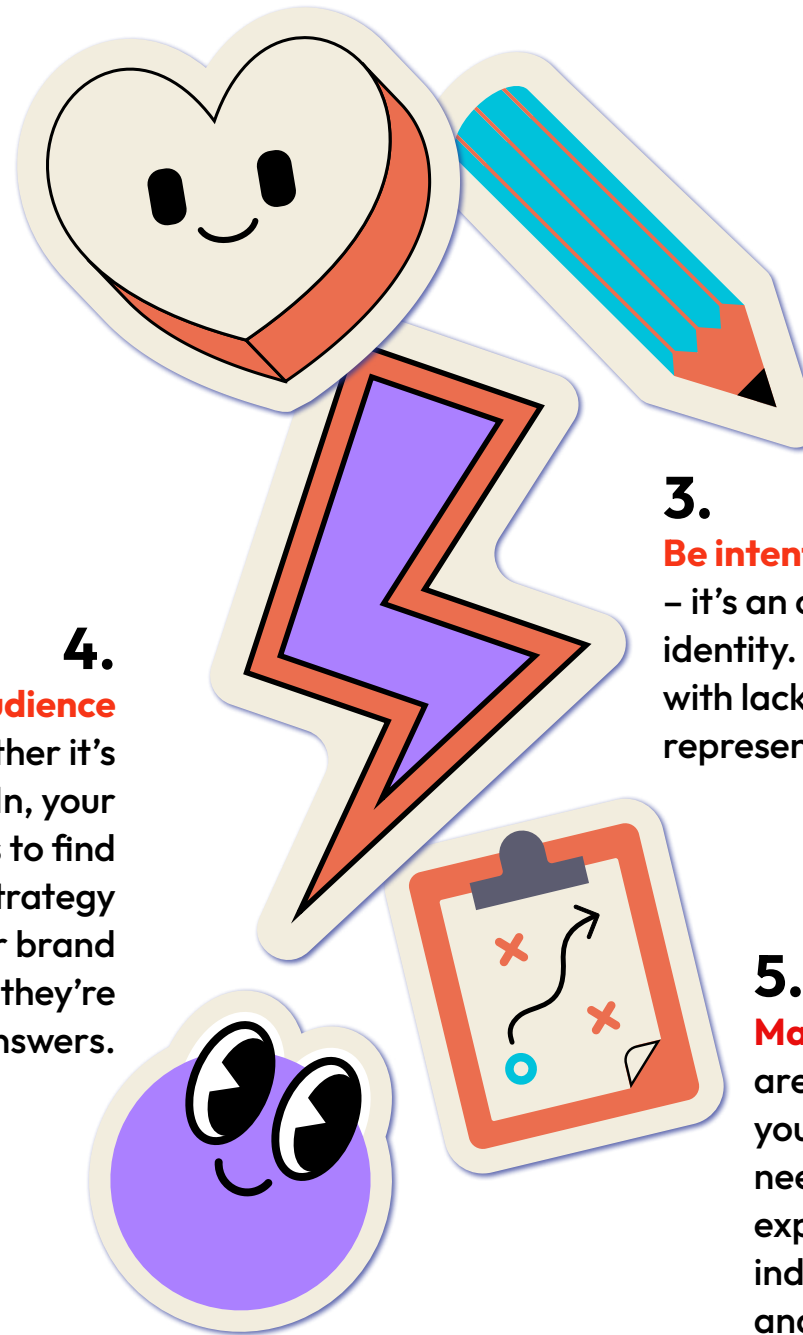
**1.**  
**Put joy at the heart of your campaigns** – not only will it put a smile on your audiences' faces, but it will help you build brand affinity in a competitive market.

**4.**  
**Be where your audience is searching** – whether it's Google or LinkedIn, your audience expects to find you easily. Build a strategy that ensures your brand shows up wherever they're looking for answers.

**2.**  
**Make sure you've done the work before you let AI loose** – do the critical thinking, build your ideas and perspectives, then let AI help you scale up.

**3.**  
**Be intentional with your visual language** – it's an opportunity to build your brand identity. Brands easily fall into stereotypes with lacklustre stock imagery that fails to represent them or their customers.

**5.**  
**Make it personal** – because people are at the heart of B2B buying, your CEOs, execs and influencers need to bring more than just expertise; they need to bring their individuality into the mix to connect and entertain.





**Nelson Bostock is a communications agency that helps innovative brands find their voice and change the conversation.**

We use real-time insight from our Human Understanding Lab, a 120-strong team of behavioural scientists and data analysts, to identify the people and topics that matter, creating ideas and content that make B2B brands worth talking to.

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