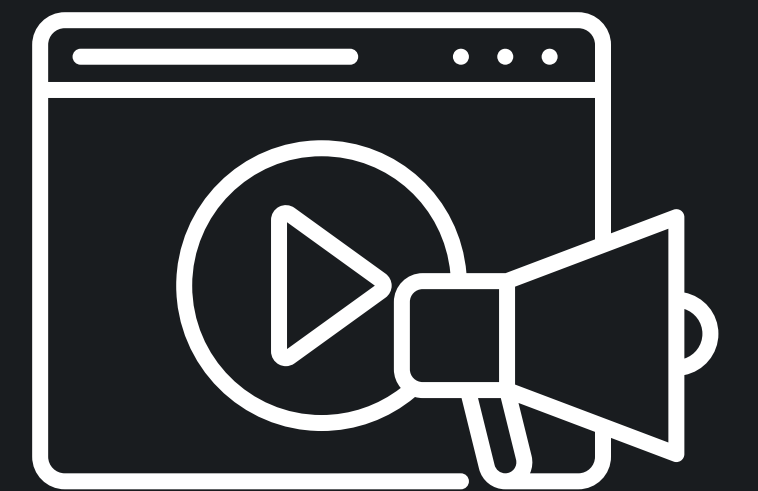
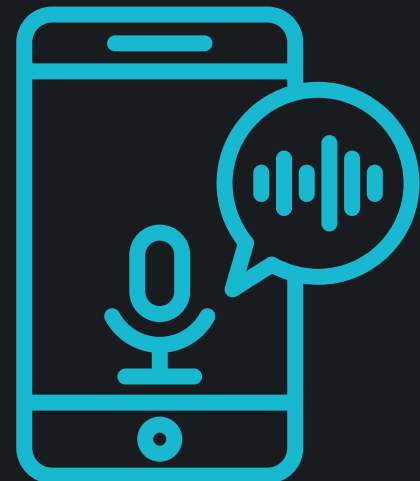
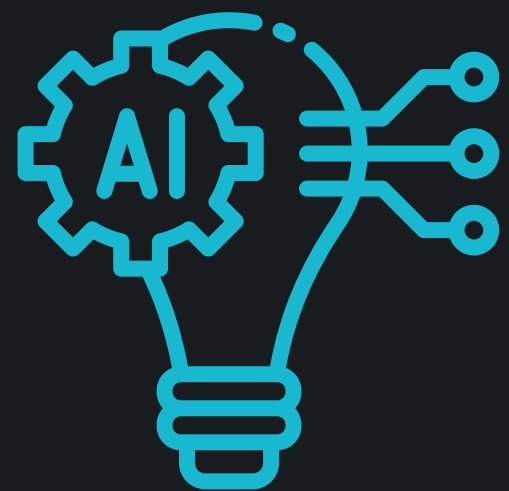


Outrank.

# Outrank Marketing Trends 2024



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# The State of Marketing

We know that as a business owner, your plate is already full.

Tackling digital marketing, with its rapid changes and complex jargon, can be understandably overwhelming. This guide is crafted to cut through that complexity, offering you clear and actionable insights tailored for SMEs.

Here, you won't find any convoluted language or abstract concepts. Instead, we present straightforward, concise insights – the kind that you can read today and apply to your business tomorrow. We've tapped in with leading industry experts and analysed countless online data points to present only the most relevant and impactful trends for SMEs as we move in 2024.

Expect to find actionable strategies, not just overviews of what's trending. Each section is crafted with a focus on practicality, offering steps that you can implement immediately to see tangible results. We understand the unique challenges that businesses face, and every piece of advice is given with these in mind.

And how do we know this?

Every actionable strategy within this report is something we've tested and refined within our own agency. We're sharing this insight, free of charge, not just as a resource but as a testament to what works in the real world of digital marketing for SMEs.

Let's dive in...

# Part 1 – Life Trends

If the customer is always right, the first step is understanding them – truly understanding them.

Part one of our report delves into three pivotal trends that are reshaping the landscape of customer interaction and expectation, influencing how they think, feel, and most importantly, buy.

It's important to note, it's not just about keeping up with these trends; it's about understanding the 'why' behind them. Why do these shifts matter to your customers? How can your business respond in a way that resonates deeply and meaningfully?

These are the Top 3 life trends Accenture expect will change the way people experience and interact with brands, organisations, governments and systems in 2024.

## Where is the Love?

Ever felt like cutting costs might cut corners on customer love? We're exploring this tightrope walk. It's all about giving your customers real value without breaking the bank. Remember, it's not just what you sell; it's how you make them feel.

## The Great Interface Shift

AI is the new cool kid on the block, and it's changing the game in how we chat and connect online. But guess what? It's not just about fancy tech. It's about using AI to get closer to your customers, understanding them like never before.

## Meh–diocrity

In a world full of AI-generated 'same old', standing out is the new gold. We're looking at how to sprinkle your unique magic into the mix. It's time to let your brand's personality shine through the digital noise.

# Where is the Love?

“ Companies should find a way to balance cost and profit without passing the price increase onto the customer. ”

Yaotao - Accenture Life Trends survey

Let's talk about a tricky balancing act - keeping your customers happy while managing your costs.

Ever heard of 'shrinkflation' or 'skimpflation'? These are fancy terms for when businesses cut corners to save money, like making products smaller or skimping on service. But here's the catch: customers notice, and they don't like it. It's a tough spot for businesses.

In today's economy, we're all feeling the pinch. But when businesses start cutting costs, it's often the customer experience that takes the first hit. Think smaller portions, less staff, longer wait times. It's understandable, but risky. Why? Because customers start feeling less valued, and that's a fast track to losing their trust and loyalty.

So, how do you keep your customers loyal during tough times?

It's all about the experience. Sure, your product or service matters, but it's the whole package that counts. Small gestures can make a big difference.

Show your customers they matter, and they'll stick with you, even when times are hard.

## Focus on Value, Not Just Cost

Even small gestures or improvements in service can make your customers feel valued. It's not always about the price.

## Communicate Openly

Be transparent with your customers about changes. Honesty builds trust.

## Invest in Experience

A great customer experience is more than just the product. It's about how your customers feel when they interact with your business.

# 47%

**of customers feel less valued when they face difficulty reaching or talking to unsupportive customer service agents.**



# The Great Interface Shift

“ I see that with the new AI there are new ways of working, new ways of researching and new ways of discovering the world. ”

**Pedro** – Accenture Life Trends survey

Welcome to the future of online interaction, where AI isn't just a tool – it's a game changer.

We're moving from the old 'click and search' to a world where AI helps us communicate our needs more personally. For businesses, this presents a golden opportunity to make every customer feel like they're your only customer, with responses that are tailored just for them. But even just thinking about AI can be a bit overwhelming, right?

The good news is that you don't have to dive in headfirst. Start with something simple, like a chatbot on your website that answers basic questions. It's like having a helpful assistant who's always there, ready to chat with your customers, day or night. This way, you're not just keeping up with the big players; you're playing the game your way, with a personal touch.

Now, you might be thinking, 'Won't AI make my business feel less human?' Not at all! It's all about balance.

Let AI take care of the routine stuff, like answering common questions. This frees you up to jump in with that personal touch when it's really needed. It's like having a super-efficient team member who handles the groundwork, so you can focus on adding that human sparkle that makes your customers feel special.

## Humanise Your AI

Use AI to add a personal touch to your digital interactions. Think of AI as your digital ambassador, reflecting your brand's personality.

## Understand Your Customers

Dive into what your customers really want. Use AI to gather insights and tailor your online presence to their preferences.

## Keep It Simple

While AI can be complex, your customer interactions shouldn't be. Focus on creating clear, conversational exchanges.

39%

of people aged 18–34 are excited about conversational answers over standard internet searches.

42%

are comfortable using conversational AI to find product recommendations.

# Meh-diocrity

“ The lack of original content is frustrating; it’s just reboots and film series now. It’s become boring and seems lazy. ”

**Matt** – Accenture Life Trends survey

Feel like everything online is starting to look the same?

That's the 'Meh-diocrity' effect.

It's easy to fall into the trap of using AI to churn out content that blends into the background. But for businesses like yours, there's a huge opportunity to stand out with something genuinely original.

AI is a fantastic tool, but it's got a bit of a habit of making things look and sound similar. The real challenge for small businesses isn't just to use AI, but to use it cleverly, by mixing its undeniable efficiency with the unique flair only you can bring. It's best to think of AI as your assistant, not your replacement.

You can take this even further by blending AI's power with your unique brand story. Use AI to handle the heavy lifting, like data analysis and basic content creation. Then, add your personal touch.

It could be your local knowledge, your personal service, or your unique brand voice. This is where your small business can really shine – by being boldly human in a digital world.

## Use AI as a Tool, Not a Crutch

Let AI do the routine work, but always add your unique brand touch to make your content stand out.

## Stay True to Your Brand

Use AI to enhance your brand's voice, not drown it. Your authenticity is your biggest asset.

## Keep Innovating

Experiment with how you can use AI creatively. It's a rapidly evolving field, and there's always a new way to surprise and delight your customers.

# 35%

**of respondents find app designs indistinguishable across brands; nearly 40% among 18–24 year olds.**

# Part 2 – 6 Emerging Marketing Trends for 2024 and Beyond

So, we've got a grip on what consumers want. Now, how do we make it happen for your business? Part Two is all about that – taking those insights from Part One and turning them into real action.

Big brands are often the trailblazers in digital marketing, setting trends that define the industry. But here's the thing – their strategies can offer valuable lessons for businesses of all sizes. We've picked apart these top-tier tactics to bring you something practical, something you can actually use.

Think of this section as your toolkit. Implementing even one of these trends could open new doors for your business. It's not about grand gestures; sometimes, a small tweak, inspired by the best in the business, can make a world of difference. It's time to take what the big players do and make it work for you.

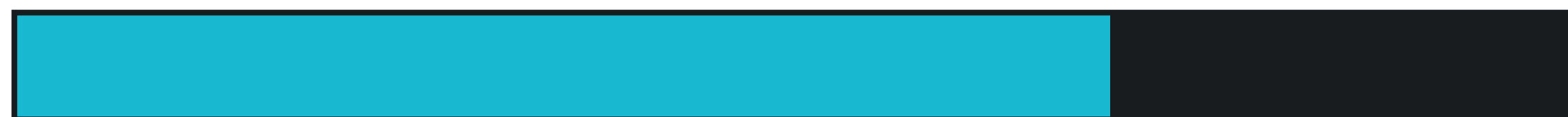
**An overwhelming 98% of marketers are already using AI in some form, with 45% experimenting and 29% integrating it into their daily workflows.**



**TikTok's audience comprised 21.5% women and 17% men between 18 and 24 years, underscoring its appeal to the younger demographic.**



**71% of consumers preferring to use voice search over traditional typing methods.**



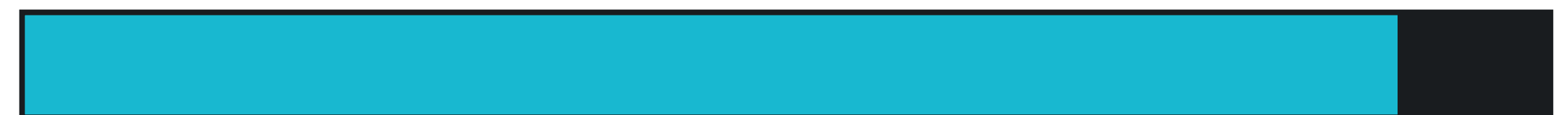
**A substantial 90% of leading marketers acknowledge that personalisation significantly boosts business profitability.**



**A significant 91% of marketers assert that marketing automation is vital to achieving their objectives.**



**73% of consumers prefer watching short-form videos to learn about a service or product.**





## AI Tools

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the digital marketing sphere, offering pivotal tools for businesses to stay ahead. A striking 64% of marketers regard AI as crucial for success, up 13 points from the previous year, highlighting its growing importance.

**98%**

of marketers are already using AI in some form, with 45% experimenting and 29% integrating it into their daily workflows.

AI is revolutionising how businesses interact with customers, offering personalised experiences through advanced chatbots and data-driven insights for optimising marketing strategies.

With AI, businesses can predict customer behaviour, ensuring that marketing campaigns are not only targeted but also resonate on a personal level.

This level of precision and personalisation is not just a nice-to-have; it's becoming essential in a highly competitive digital marketplace. For businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, adopting AI tools means staying relevant and ahead in the game, turning every marketing effort into an opportunity to deeply engage and understand their audience.

## TikTok

TikTok's ascent as a primary search engine for younger users signals a paradigm shift in the digital landscape.

**2022**

TikTok's audience comprised 21.5% women and 17% men between 18 and 24 years, underscoring its appeal to the younger demographic.

The reported partnership between TikTok and Google reflects a strategic move to integrate search functionalities, presenting a unique marketing opportunity.

For businesses, especially those targeting younger audiences, this evolution offers a new avenue for engagement and promotion.

The potential integration of Google and TikTok search queries could provide an innovative tool for marketers, blending the search engine's vast reach with TikTok's engaging format.

The key will be to create content that resonates with this younger audience, leveraging TikTok's format for visibility and Google's robust search capabilities for reach. This dual-platform strategy could be a game-changer, offering a way to organically or perhaps through paid avenues, integrate into these search queries, thereby enhancing visibility and engagement.

# Voice Search

Voice search is swiftly becoming a pivotal aspect of digital marketing.

**71%** of consumers prefer to use voice search over traditional typing methods.

This emerging trend necessitates a shift in SEO strategies to cater to voice-based queries. The increasing reliance on voice assistants like Siri and Alexa means businesses must adapt their content to be more conversational, focusing on long-tail keywords and natural language processing. This change in search behaviour demands a fresh approach to content optimisation, emphasising the importance of crafting responses that align with the conversational and question-based nature of voice searches. For businesses, this represents a significant opportunity to optimise their online presence for a voice-driven future, ensuring their content resonates with and is accessible to an audience increasingly turning to voice search as their go-to method for finding information online.



# Hyper-Personalisation Through Big Data and Analytics

**90%** of leading marketers acknowledge that personalisation significantly boosts business profitability.

This approach hinges on the vast data available from various channels, enabling brands to tailor their marketing strategies to individual consumer preferences.

**91%** of consumers are more likely to shop with brands that recognise, remember, and provide them with relevant offers and recommendations.

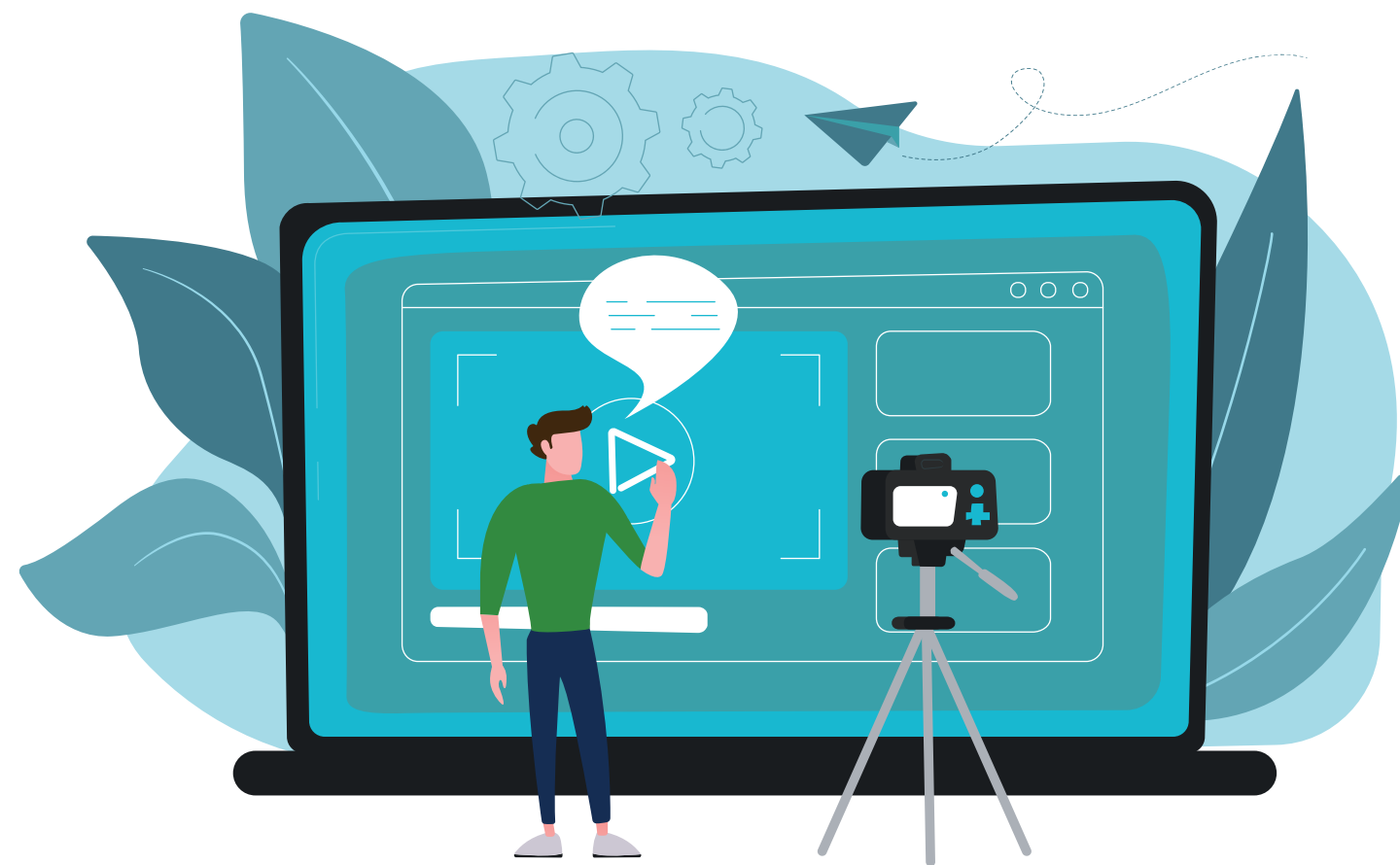
As big data technologies and machine learning algorithms continue to evolve, hyper-personalised marketing is becoming increasingly sophisticated, making generic mass marketing strategies less effective. This shift towards customised content, product recommendations, and advertisements, designed for individual consumer profiles, is not just a fleeting trend but a fundamental shift in how businesses will engage with their customers moving forward. For businesses, especially in the competitive digital landscape, adopting hyper-personalisation is crucial to creating more meaningful and successful customer interactions.

## Paid Automation

# 2024

the automation and optimisation of ad campaigns are set to play a crucial role in digital marketing. A significant 91% of marketers assert that marketing automation is vital to achieving their objectives, and those who utilise automation report being 46% more likely to have an effective marketing strategy.

Automation in advertising allows for more efficient campaign management, reducing overhead costs and enabling marketers to concentrate on strategic aspects. This shift is not just about efficiency; it's about enhancing campaign effectiveness. Through automation, businesses can achieve improved conversions and a lower cost per click, making each pound spent work harder.



## Video Marketing and Short-Form Content Dominance

In the rapidly evolving world of digital marketing, short-form video content has emerged as a dominant force. It's the most popular trend among marketers, boasting the highest return on investment (ROI) and is poised for significant growth.

This trend aligns with consumer preferences.

# 73%

of consumers prefer watching short-form videos to learn about a service or product.

The ephemeral and visually engaging nature of short-form content resonates with the modern audience's dwindling attention spans, making it an essential tool for storytelling, product launches, and customer testimonials.

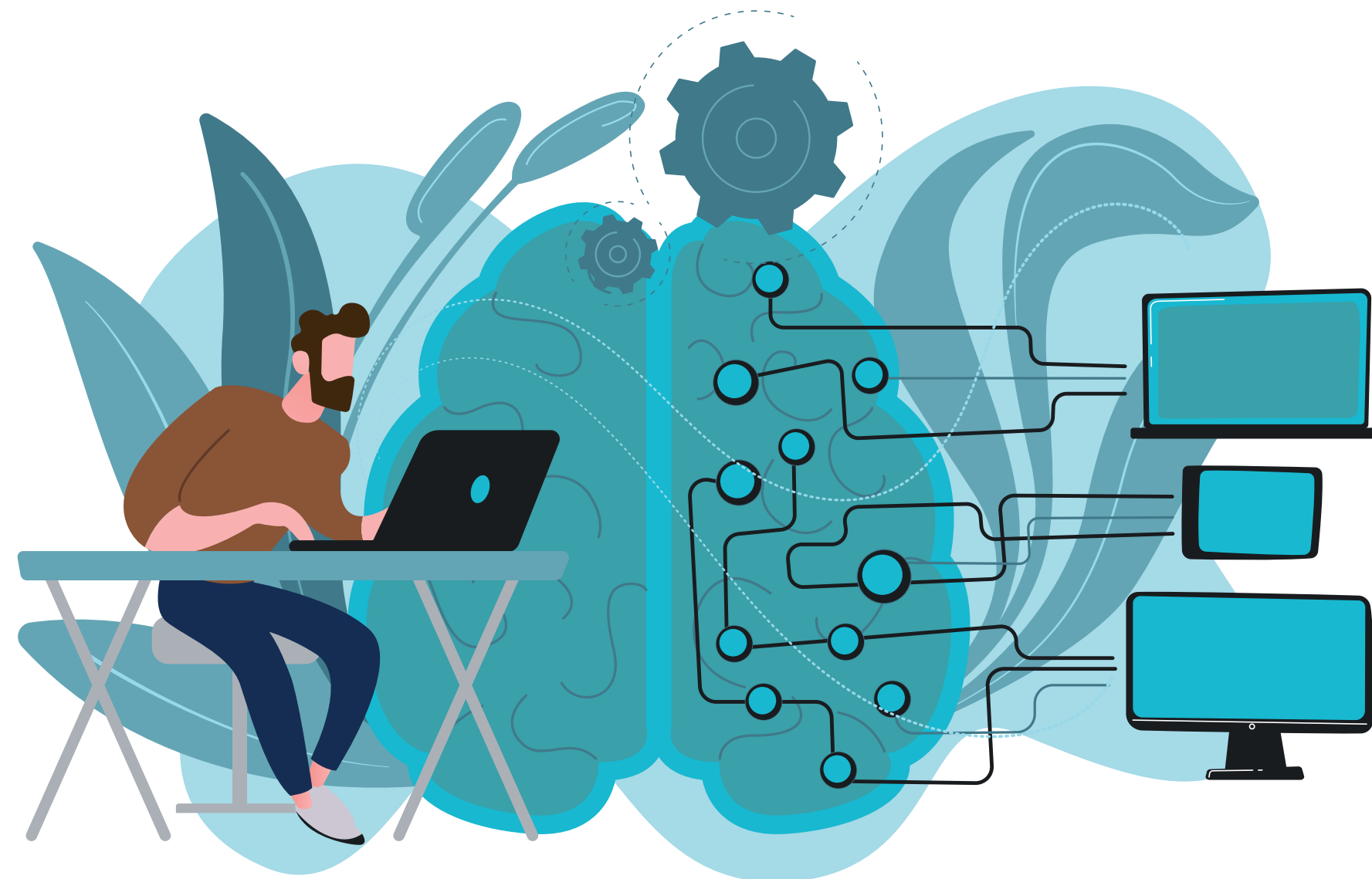
For businesses, particularly those keen on capturing the attention of a digitally-savvy audience, leveraging short-form video content is not just a trend to follow; it's a strategic imperative.



# Recommendations

## Embrace AI & Automation

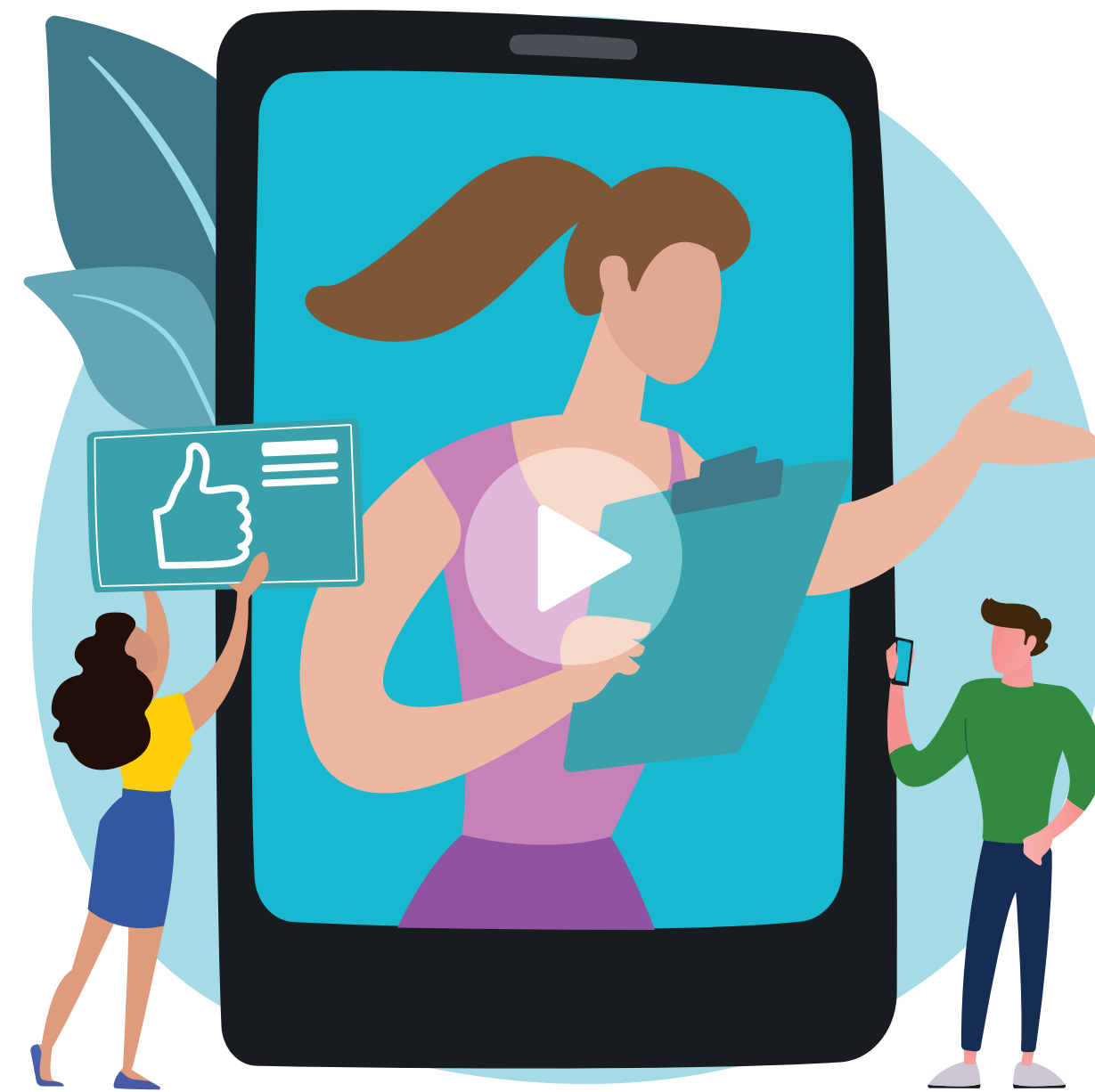
Envision AI and automation as the sharpening stones for your marketing toolkit. With AI, you're not just guessing what your audience wants; you're knowing it, thanks to deep insights gleaned from data. Automation in your ad campaigns isn't just a time-saver; it's a strategy enhancer. It's about making each marketing effort count, ensuring you're not just firing arrows in the dark but hitting the bullseye every time. Embrace these tools, and watch your marketing strategies transform from educated guesses into data-driven masterpieces.





# Leverage Short-Form Video Content

Short-form videos are like modern haikus in the digital marketing world – brief, impactful, and memorable. This format isn't just about hopping on a trend; it's about speaking the language your audience loves. In a fast-paced world, these quick snippets are your chance to tell a story, create a moment, and make a lasting impression. Are those few seconds of video translating into longer engagement on your site? Is your brand's personality shining through in each clip? Leveraging short-form content effectively means blending creativity with strategy to captivate your audience in the blink of an eye.



## Optimise for Spoken Query

The rise of voice search is like a new dialect emerging in the SEO world. Optimising for voice search isn't just about staying relevant; it's about being part of your customer's everyday conversation. This means adapting your content to be more conversational, answering the questions your customers are asking their voice assistants. Are your keywords mirroring how people naturally speak? Is your content the answer Siri or Alexa is providing? By aligning your SEO strategy with voice search trends, you're ensuring your brand isn't just found; it's heard, loud and clear.



## Acknowledgements

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## Sources

accenture



Google

statista

HubSpot



oBERLO

wyzowl



# We turn trends into triumphs!

At Outrank, we don't just report on these trends; we live them. Our approach is about making digital marketing manageable, measurable, and achievable, no matter the size of your business or the complexity of the challenge. We've shared these insights because they are the very strategies we use and refine daily in our work with businesses across the UK.

Implementing even a fraction of these strategies could mark a turning point for your business. And if you need a hand in putting these into action, we're just a conversation away. Our team is ready to help you tailor these trends to fit your unique needs, ensuring your digital marketing strategy is not just current, but cutting-edge.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Whatever trends come next, we'll be there to help you stay ahead.

Let's Talk!

