



GLOBAL CONTENT MARKETING FUTURES

2022 WORLD MEDIA AWARDS SURVEY



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Introduction

Welcome to the Global Content Marketing Futures survey, conducted by The World Media Group, a strategic alliance of the world's leading media brands committed to promoting award-winning journalism and the role of international media. This annual Report explores how international, content-led marketing strategies are adapting to new challenges and opportunities. As the world emerges from the impacts of the pandemic, the 2022 survey looks at investment intentions and implementation strategies – and asks how brands and their agency and media owner partners are planning to achieve cut-through and engagement.

We were delighted to receive over 260 responses from all around the world: 21% of respondents were advertisers, 38% were from agencies, 27% from media owners, and 14% other consultants.

Increase in Content budgets

Responses to the survey provide a positive outlook with budgets expected to increase for content-led marketing, particularly across trusted digital media brands and paid social platforms. There's a clear belief in the importance of context for providing the right engagement and impact for brand storytelling, with advertisers rating this at 8.8 out of 10 on a sliding scale of importance.

Brand storytelling in the “always on” world

Our advertisers' responses also suggest a growing understanding of the importance of being “always on” – of using brand storytelling to build long-term engagement with the audience so that when decisions are made, brands are top of mind. Whilst advertisers believe that the content-led approach is primarily best for building brand engagement, our agency leaders' responses make clear that a content-led approach can be best for changing perceptions of the brand.

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About The World Media Group

The World Media Group is an alliance of leading international media organisations that connect brands with highly influential audiences in the context of trusted and renowned journalism. Our members share the same values and principles, and we promote their many synergies whilst championing the role of trusted international media.

www.world-media-group.com

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About The World Media Awards

Organised by the World Media Group, the World Media Awards celebrate the creativity and effectiveness of cross-platform, cross-border content-driven advertising. With an independent jury of international brand and agency leaders and content publishers, the Awards are recognised by the WARC Media 100. Our co-Chairs for the 2022 Awards are Hamish Goulding, Head of Global Brand Strategy for HSBC, and Ritu Lakhanpal, Managing Partner for IPG Media Brands.

www.world-media-group.com/awards

Why use a content-led approach?

We asked our respondents why they take a content-led approach to their international advertising – what do they think it is best for? **The majority of advertisers [41%] believe that content-led advertising is best for brand engagement.** Whilst most agency respondents [37%] believe that content-led advertising is best for changing brand perceptions, only 6% of advertiser respondents agreed. A small majority of media owners [at 33%] believe that advertisers can use the content-led approach to demonstrate thought leadership, but 31% also believe it is best for brand engagement.

What is a content-led approach best for?

	Advertisers	Agencies	Media owners	Other (consultancy)
Brand engagement	41%	23%	30%	41%
Building awareness	20%	15%	10%	11%
Thought leadership	15%	15%	34%	11%
Increasing purchase intent	12%	2%	3%	22%
Lead generation	6%	2%	3%	11%
Changing perception	6%	35%	20%	4%
Other	0%	8%	0%	0%

Given that advertisers believe that the content-led approach is best for brand engagement, **it's not surprising that time spent with the content has been a main KPI for the most number [23%] of advertisers.** It's interesting to see that a shift in brand perceptions has been a main KPI for the same number of advertisers even though they did not rate that as an advantage of the content-led approach. The shift in brand perceptions was the main KPI cited by the most agencies [43%] and media owners [34%].

For the most recent content-led campaign you worked on, what was the main KPI?

	Advertisers	Agencies	Media owners	Other (consultancy)
Time spent with content	23%	6%	23%	26%
Shift in brand perceptions	23%	43%	34%	12%
Increase in brand awareness	21%	30%	29%	23%
Click through to client / brand site	15%	21%	5%	15%
Likes / shares	9%	0%	0%	0%
Purchase intent	6%	0%	1%	18%
Other	3%	0%	8%	6%

What makes the content-led approach more effective?

A high number of respondents believe that context is important for creating the right engagement and impact for brand storytelling – advertisers rate the importance at an average of 8.8 out of 10 and agencies, media owners, and consultants rate it at 8.9.

We wanted to dig deeper into how advertisers strategise their content-led marketing. We asked advertisers to reflect on their customers' decision-making journey, and indicate what they thought would be the most effective approach.

The majority of advertisers [62%] believe that it is important to be “always on” – using brand storytelling to build long-term engagement with the audience so that, when decisions are made, the brand is top of mind. The majority of advertisers implement this approach, with 56% saying that they do.

24% of advertisers believe that personalised targeting of brand storytelling to target individuals at decision-making moments would be effective, but only 15% implement this approach – with more advertisers scheduling brand storytelling at times when they know their audience is most likely to be considering decision-making.

Asked to explain why, for some advertisers, their current approach differs from what they believe to be effective, the most commonly cited reason was budget [“always on” is more expensive] although the lack of opportunity to implement personalised targeting [lack of data, lack of skills] was also mentioned.

Thinking about your customer's decision-making journey...

[All advertisers]

...which statement reflects what you think would be the **most effective approach** to implementing content-led communications?

...which statement most accurately reflects your **current approach** to implementing content-led communications?



Investment in brand storytelling

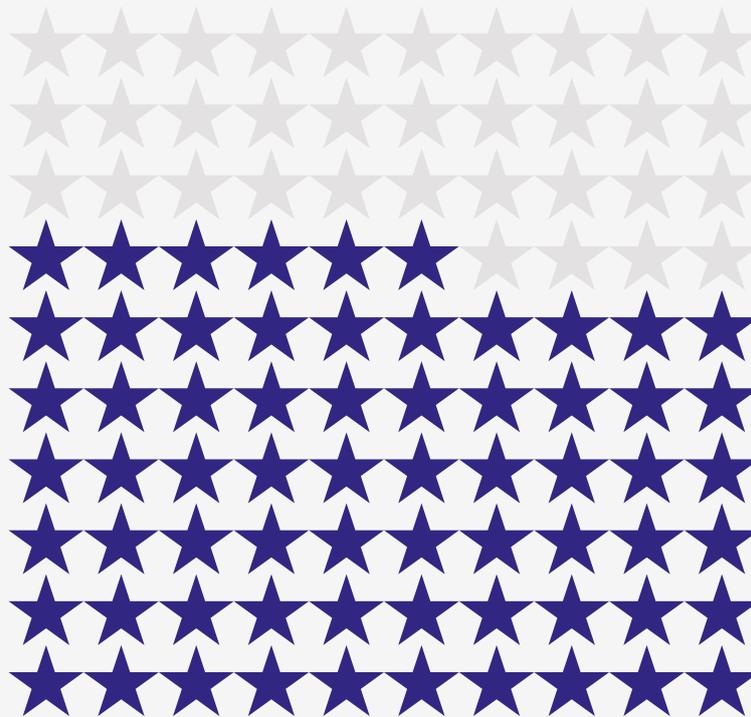
We wanted to know where advertisers are investing to amplify and share their brand storytelling. Asked to indicate all the platforms they use, the most popular platforms were trusted digital media channels and paid social media channels, with each platform earning votes from 82% of the respondents. Paid social channels were where most advertisers [47%] expect to increase investment, closely followed by trusted digital media channels [38%]. The open programmatic marketplace was the least used platform for amplifying content, with 24% of responses, but 26% of advertisers plan to increase investment in this platform for amplifying their content.

	Invested in over the past 12 months	Over the next 12 months, do you plan to increase / maintain / decrease your investment			
		Increase	Maintain	Decrease	N/A
Paid social media channels	82%	47%	47%	3%	3%
Trusted digital media channels	82%	38%	62%	0%	0%
Brand's own channels	65%	32%	59%	3%	6%
Trusted broadcast media channels	47%	26%	47%	9%	18%
Trusted print media channels	32%	9%	26%	21%	44%
Open programmatic marketplace	24%	26%	23%	6%	44%

Creative's next big thing

Future talents

Also looking to the future, we asked our respondents how confident they were in the pipeline of creative and talented rising stars joining the international marketing, advertising and media sector. 66% of respondents were quite or very confident that the creative and innovative future for international, content-led marketing was safe in the hands of the new talent entering the industry.

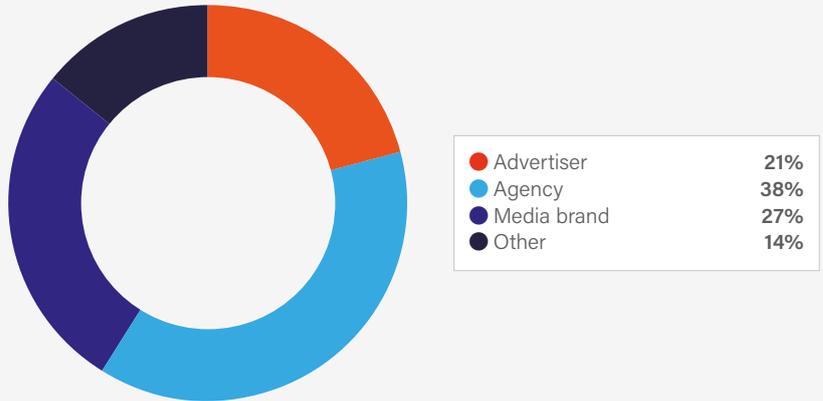


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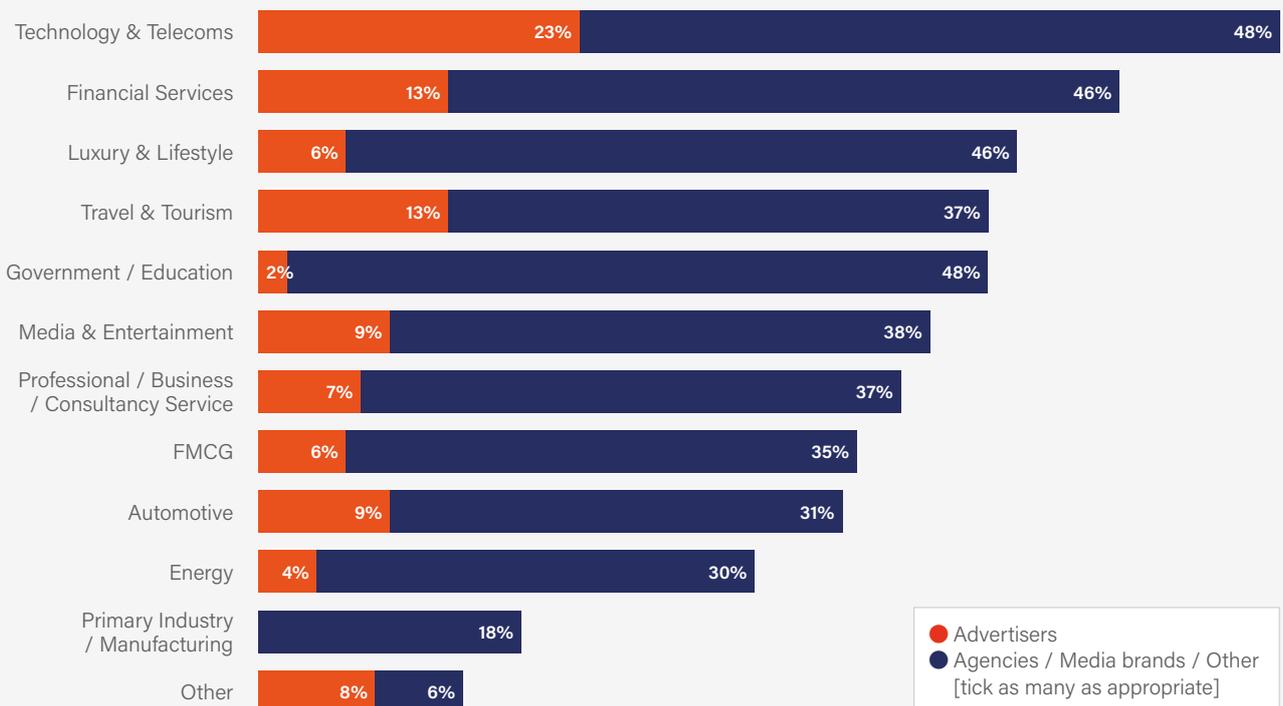
Who we are talking to

We invited people to complete the survey between 5 January and 9 February 2022. Responses were encouraged through emails and social media outreach to our global contacts. We received a total of 262 responses: 21% of responses were from brand advertisers, 38% were from agencies, 27% from media brands, and 14% were from other types of organisations, such as consultancies working with clients on international content marketing. Our respondents represented a breadth of business sectors and were responsible for making decisions for marketing campaigns all around the world. 78% of our respondents have worked on a content-led campaign designed to target multiple countries and/or internationally.

Who do you work for?

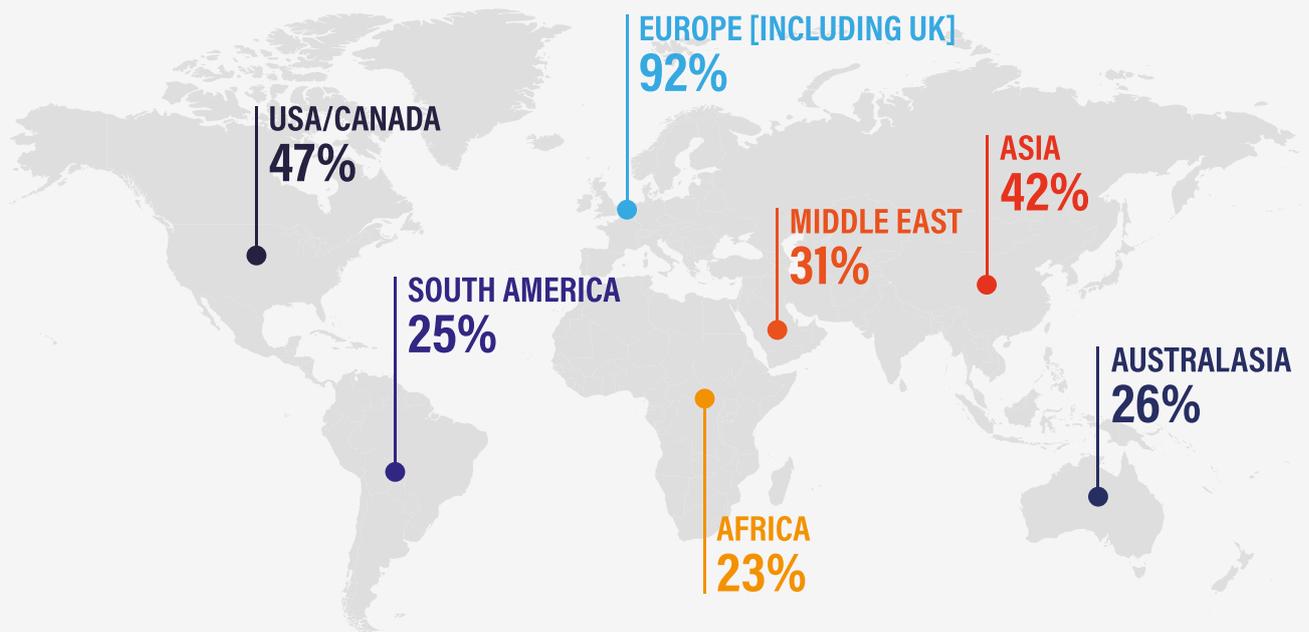


What broad business sectors do you / your clients work in?



Who we are talking to

In which of the following regions are you involved / responsible for making decisions?
[All respondents]



What proportion of the campaigns you work on include a branded content component?

