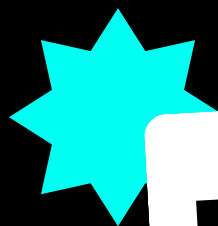




VENNGAGE



**Design &**

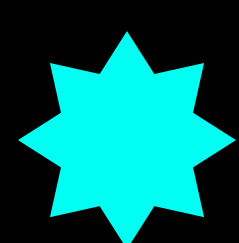
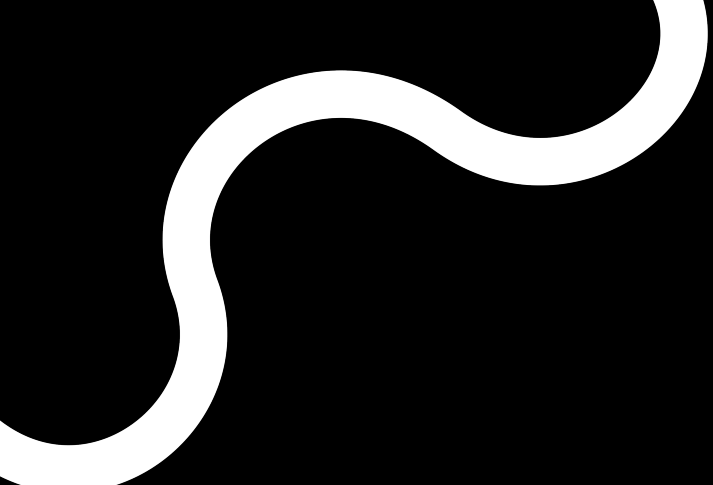
**Marketing**

**Predictions**

**vs**

**Reality**

**in 2025**



**Trend posts are fun - but how many  
of us actually check back to see  
what happened? At Venngage,  
we're holding ourselves accountable.**

This is Part 1 of a two-part series.  
We'll separate the reality from hype, share what  
we've learned, and preview what's next.



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# What Stuck, Shifted, or Slipped Away?

## What We Predicted

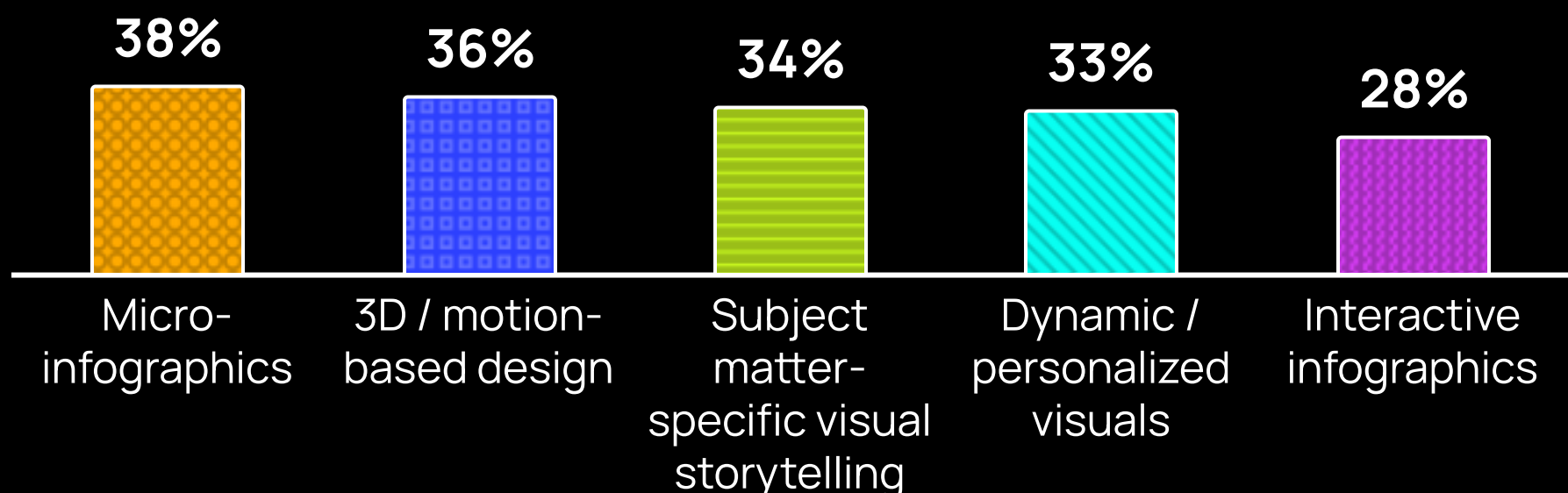
### Predicted Design Trends for 2025

- Interactive storytelling
- SEO-friendly designs
- Micro-infographics for social media
- Subject matter expert visualizations

VS

## What the Data Says

### Top 5 Design Trends Actually Used in 2025



## Performance Reality Check: Which Design Trends Delivered?

High  
Engagement

53%



Interactive  
Infographics

The clear winner  
for audience interaction

Strong Performance  
& Reach

50%



SEO-Optimized  
Visuals

Consistently  
driving visibility

Exceeded  
Expectations

30%



Subject matter-  
specific visual  
storytelling

The surprise  
outperformer

## What We Heard From Users / Creators



AI has broadened my mind in ways I never expected, giving me ideas I'm not sure I would have thought of on my own. The challenge isn't avoiding AI influence anymore;

**It's learning how to stay authentically me while letting it expand my thinking.**

Anonymous Marketer



# What Stuck, Shifted, or Slipped Away?

## Verdict

### Mostly Accurate

Our predictions aligned well with reality. Micro-infographics and interactive storytelling dominated, while subject-matter expertise became crucial for standing out.

### Expert Insight

Visual content needs shifted dramatically post-ChatGPT. Creators now focus on AI-human collaboration rather than pure manual design.

# Reality check

## What We Predicted

AI would become core to ideation, design, and optimization

VS

## What the Data Says

### The AI Adoption Spectrum

All in on AI

58%



are fully integrating AI into their workflows and creation.

Still on the sidelines

25%



haven't touched AI yet in their marketing or content.

Testing the waters

17%



are curious, but not yet implementing AI in processes or content.

### AI in Content & Design Workflows

## How Marketers Are Actually Using AI



#### Content Ideation

60% treat AI as their creative partner



#### Visual Generation

55% using AI for charts, infographics & templates



#### Personalization

40% tailoring content to audiences at scale



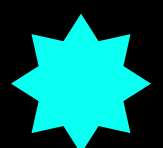
#### Copywriting & Rewriting

35% refining and remixing content



#### Workflow Automation

32% streamlining repetitive tasks





## AI in Content &amp; Design Workflows

## Surprising Benefits (and Drawbacks) of Using AI

**Speed & Efficiency**

- Saves hours of manual work
- Delivers quick results
- Cuts project timelines in half

“ AI speeds up my workflow – I get from idea to first draft so much faster.

**Creativity Boost**

- Fresh brainstorming angles
- Overcomes writer's block
- Inspires unexpected visuals

“ AI sparks ideas I wouldn't have thought of – it feels like a creative partner.

**Productivity Gains**

- Improves writing quality
- Supports team collaboration
- Boosts overall content output

“ It's made things easier for me and my team – quality has improved across the board.

**Drawbacks & Limitations**

- Trial and error with prompts
- Spelling/grammar errors
- AI-looking visuals need touch-ups

“ You still need to double-check for mistakes and AI visuals often need editing.

AI is speeding things up and sparking creativity – but human oversight is still the key to accuracy and quality.

## What We Heard From Users / Creators

“ One of the most surprising benefits has been how versatile and adaptive the technology is. It's impressive how capabilities can help the creative team and the data analysts simultaneously.

“ Some of the visuals that it generates are obviously AI generated. Especially if we are trying to create images of humans.

Points to need for human oversight



# Reality check

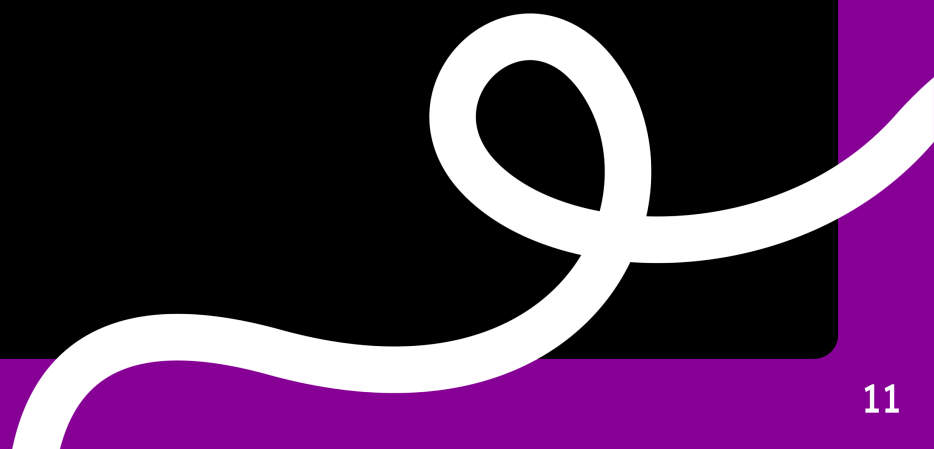
## Verdict

### Spot on

AI became not just core, but revolutionary. Our prediction was conservative compared to the actual transformation.

### Expert Insight

AI hasn't replaced the creative process—it's reshaped it entirely. Teams now think in terms of human-AI collaboration workflows.



# Overhyped or Underrated?

## What We Predicted

- AI content creation goes mainstream
- Short-form/vertical video dominance
- Visual SEO rises
- AR + livestreaming in e-commerce

VS

## What Really Happened

### Trends That Took Off



#### Short-form video

49% exceeded expectations, 52% planning more in 2026



#### AI-generated content

48% say it outperformed expectations



#### Personalized video & motion

47% exceeded expectations

## What Really Happened

### Mixed Signals



Dynamic email personalization

42% saw neutral/mixed results



AR / VR design

26% adoption, but 39% mixed success

### Missed Calls



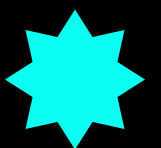
AR still niche

27% didn't use at all



Live-streaming lagged

14% found it overhyped or ineffective



## What Really Happened

### 5 Surprises on the Horizon (2026 Predictions)

1

**Real-time AI infographics**

50% expect it to break through

2

**Synthetic brand avatars**

44% predict major emergence

3

**Motion-first branding**

41% see this as an under-the-radar shift

4

**Hybrid AR / VR phygital events**

35% expect immersive crossovers

5

**Accessible content**

Designs meeting WCAG 2.2+ seen as a rising priority

# Overhyped or Underrated?

## Verdict

### Mostly right but big misses

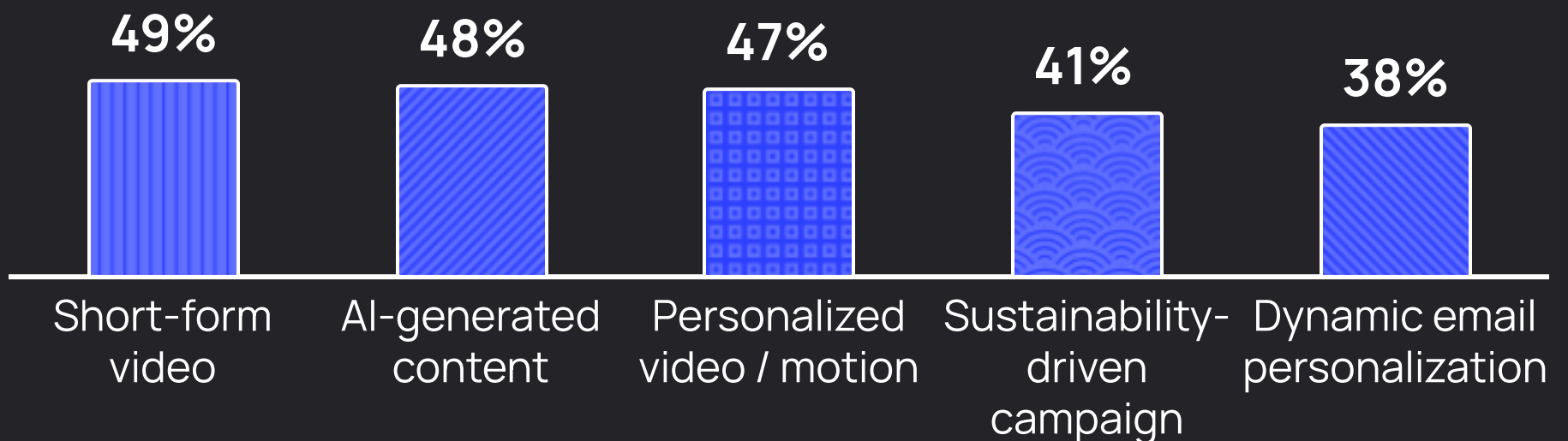
We nailed AI content and short-form video dominance. Visual SEO is rising as predicted. But we overestimated AR/livestreaming adoption.

### Expert Insight

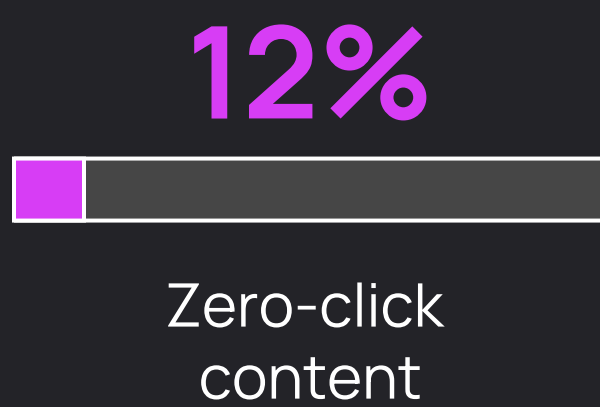
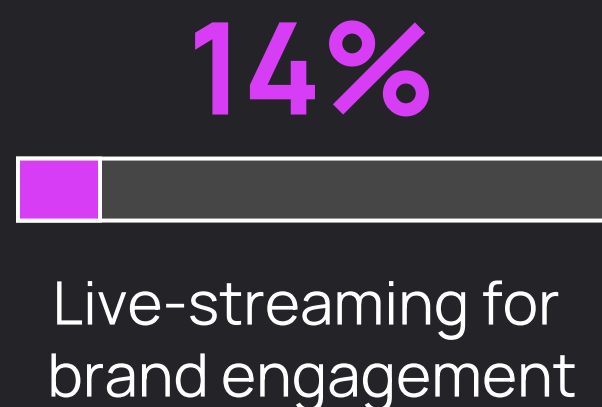
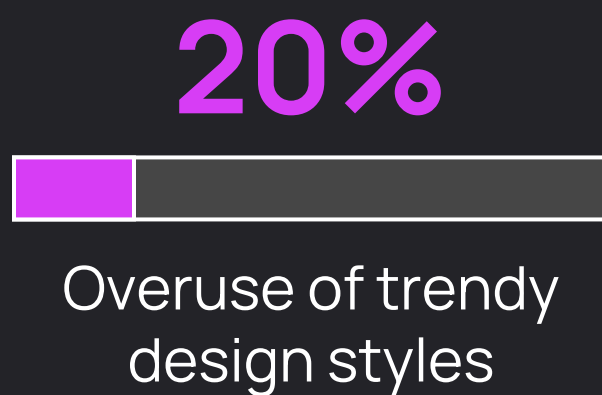
Visual elements (alt text, schema, image quality) are driving measurably more impact in 2025, but the real surprise is how AI is automating this optimization.

## Trends That Surprised Marketers in a Good Way

### Exceeded expectations (Top)



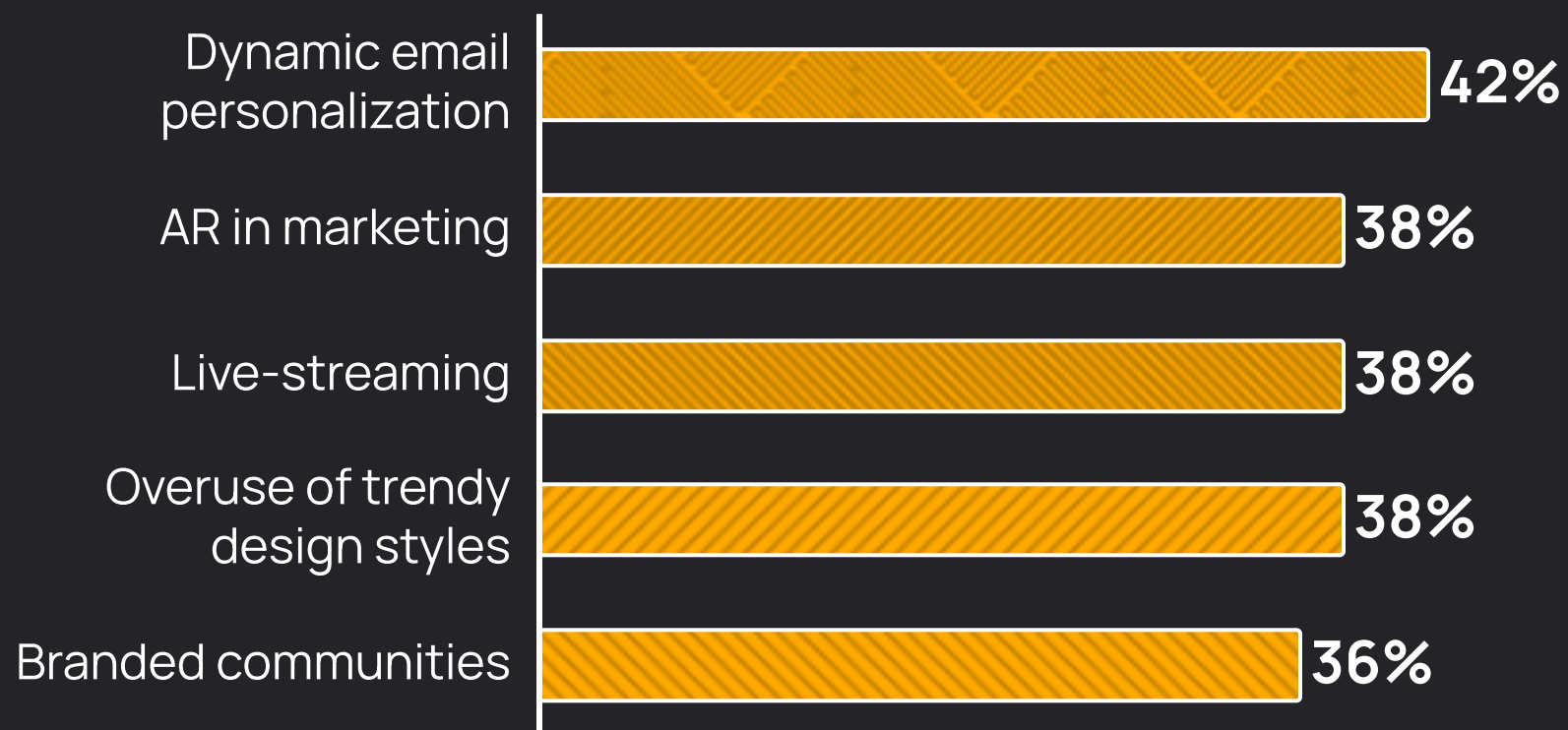
### Didn't work / Overhyped (Highest)



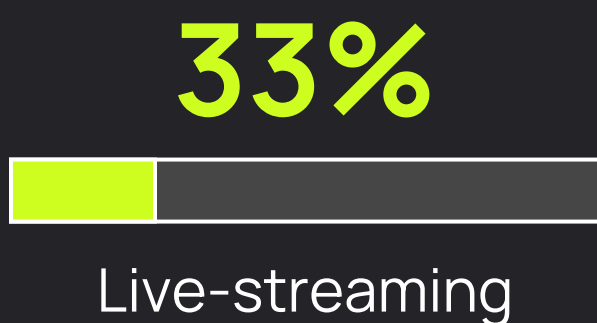
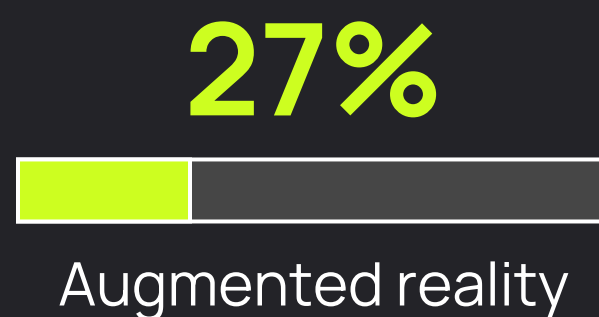
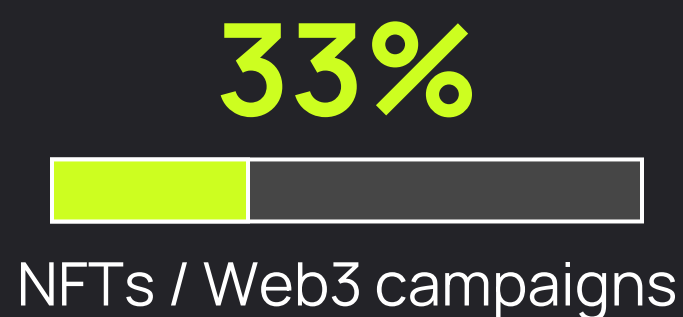


## Trends That Surprised Marketers in a Good Way

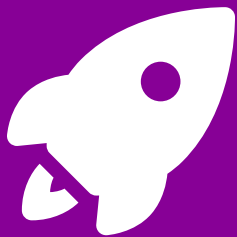
### Neutral / Mixed results (Most mixed)



### I did not use this (Highest non-adoption)

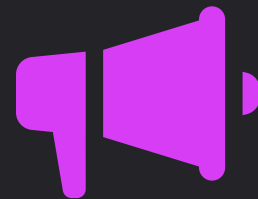


## Trends That Surprised Marketers in a Good Way



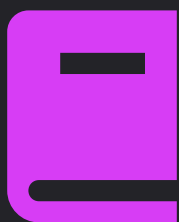
### AI Everywhere

From image generators to education tools, AI became the unexpected sidekick.



### Personalized Marketing

Dynamic email & tailored campaigns drove stronger engagement.



### Storytelling Wins

Creative content & interactive social boosted growth

(+1500 followers in 3 days).



### Human-Centric Tech

Calm-tech & Web3 designs showed new directions.

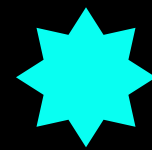
# What Creators Really Used

## What We Predicted

- Personalized branding
- Psychedelic nostalgia
- Zero-waste/eco themes
- 3D & motion-heavy visuals

VS

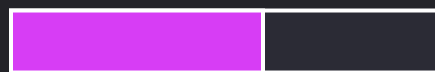
## What the Data Shows



### Clear Winners

Short-Form  
Video

53%



Exceeded  
expectations

AI-Generated  
Content

25%



Exceeded  
expectations

Personalized Video  
/ Motion

17%



Exceeded  
expectations

VS

## What the Data Shows

Continuation

### High Performers

Dynamic /  
Personalized Visuals

46%

Saw high engagement

AR / VR Design

48%

Delivered strong  
performance

3D & Motion Design

41%

High  
engagement

41%

Strong  
performance

### Most Overhyped

Trendy Style Overuse

20%

Disappointed

NFTs / Web3

14%

Underperformed

Live-Streaming

14%

Failed to deliver

## Infographic 2025 Trend Scorecard

	Exceeded expectations	Didn't work / Overhyped	Neutral / Mixed results
Short-form video	49%	8%	33%
Live-streaming for brand engagement	24%	14%	38%
Augmented reality in marketing	26%	9%	38%
AI-generated content	48%	10%	27%
Dynamic email personalization	38%	5%	42%
Branded communities or private groups	38%	11%	36%
Personalized video or motion content	47%	5%	35%
Sustainability-driven branding campaigns	41%	5%	35%
Zero-click content	37%	12%	35%
Overuse of trendy design styles	23%	20%	38%
NFTs or Web3-based campaigns	23%	14%	30%

### AI's Impact on Design



#### Streamlined Workflows

AI tools now simplify infographic creation, from data input to finished design.



#### Automation in Action

Designers rely on AI to generate charts and auto-adjust layouts.



#### Personalization at Scale

Infographics are starting to adapt style and data based on different audiences.



#### The Human Touch

Some designers add intentional “analogue” imperfections to balance out AI’s polished look.

### What We Heard From Users / Creators



Survey findings show creators prioritizing efficiency and engagement over purely aesthetic trends.

# What Creators Really Used

## Verdict

### Partially right

3D / motion and personalization took off as predicted. Psychedelic trends underperformed. Eco-themes are growing but slower than expected.

### Expert Insight

Design choices in 2025 are most influenced by platform formats and AI capabilities, with aesthetic trends taking a back seat to performance and efficiency.

# What Marketers Can Learn From This

## Key Lessons



### Don't Chase Every Shiny Trend

- Focus on trends that align with your audience and capabilities
- Performance data beats aesthetic appeal



### AI Won't Fix Bad Fundamentals

- 60% of successful AI users still emphasize human oversight
- Quality content strategy remains essential foundation



### The Leadership Gap is Real

- 45% cite lack of executive buy-in as #1 obstacle to skill development
- Teams are ready to evolve faster than leadership can adapt



# What Marketers Can Learn From This

## Apply It Forward

### How to Run Your Own Trend Audit



Track what you actually implemented vs. planned



Measure performance, not just adoption



Survey your team on workflow impact

### Questions to Ask Before Jumping on a Trend



Does this solve a real problem for our audience?



Do we have the skills/resources to execute well?



Can we measure meaningful impact?

# Looking Ahead to 2026

## Forces Shaping Marketing and Design

### AI Dominance & Evolution

- AI as the backbone of workflows
- Generative visuals, video, personalization at scale
- Faster, more efficient creative processes

“ AI will move from hype to backbone—powering personalization, automating design, and accelerating creative output

“ By 2026, AI will deliver truly individualized experiences, moving beyond segmentation to predict and cater to individual needs.

### Human Creativity & Authenticity

- Pushback against AI sameness
- More demand for originality, simplicity, and human voice

“ Amid AI growth, authenticity and human creativity will be the ultimate differentiators.

“ Audiences want something real—authentic storytelling that cuts through doomscrolling.

## Forces Shaping Marketing and Design

### Emerging Tech Beyond AI

- AR and “phygital” experiences
- Stronger use of video + interactive design

“AR, video, and immersive design will redefine how customers engage with brands.

“We’ll see phygital touchpoints—packaging, storefronts, even coffee cups becoming shoppable canvases.

### Cultural & Market Forces

- Political & economic shifts
- Generational audience preferences
- Small businesses adapting fast

“External forces—politics, economy, and generational shifts—will shape marketing strategies as much as technology.

“Finding ways to reach younger generations will drive the next wave of design.

### AI Skepticism & Ethical Concerns

- Worries about over-reliance on AI
- Ethical backlash and loss of human creativity

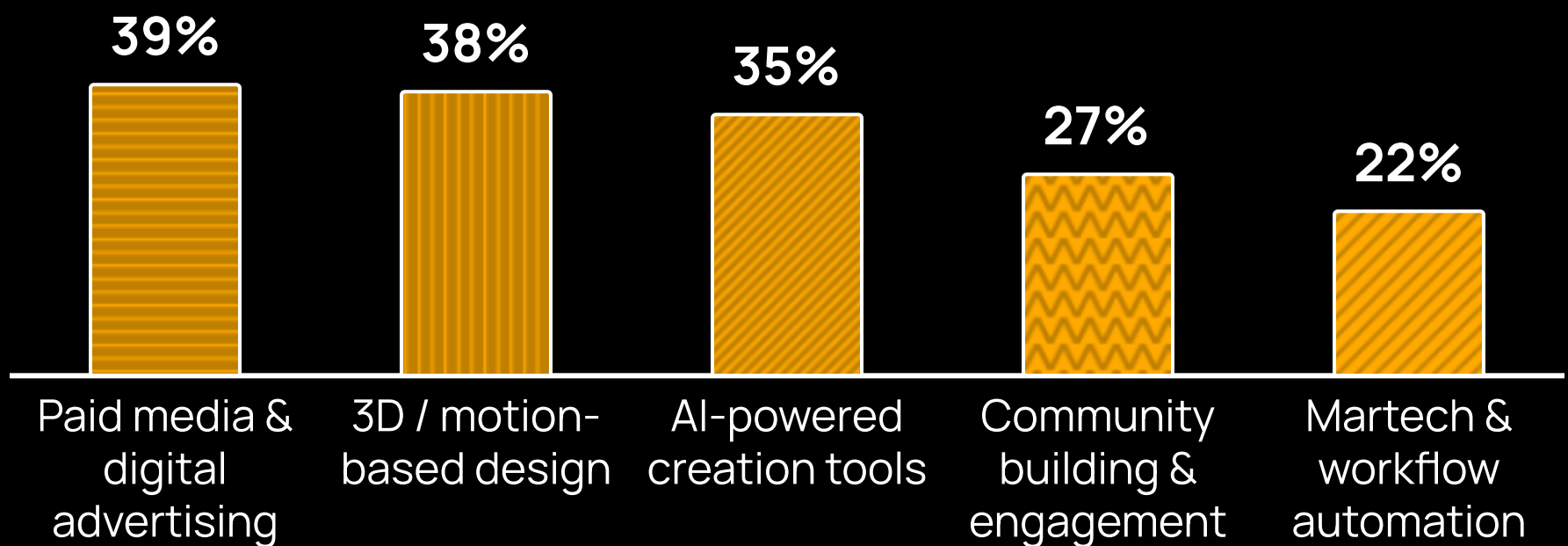
“AI is helpful, but every use undermines human creativity—we risk losing ourselves.

“Only use AI if it’s believable—otherwise it hurts trust.

## Early 2026 Marketing Predictions

### The 2026 Playbook - Where to Invest

Budget Priorities for 2026



#### Insight for you

Marketers aren't just choosing ads or content anymore—they're betting on storytelling, AI, and efficiency. The winning 2026 strategies will blend paid reach, AI-driven creation, and community trust.

## Early 2026 Marketing Predictions

### Why These Areas Are Top Priorities

3 biggest drivers

39%



Create higher-quality content & campaigns

38%



Boost team efficiency & output

37%



Stay competitive with industry trends



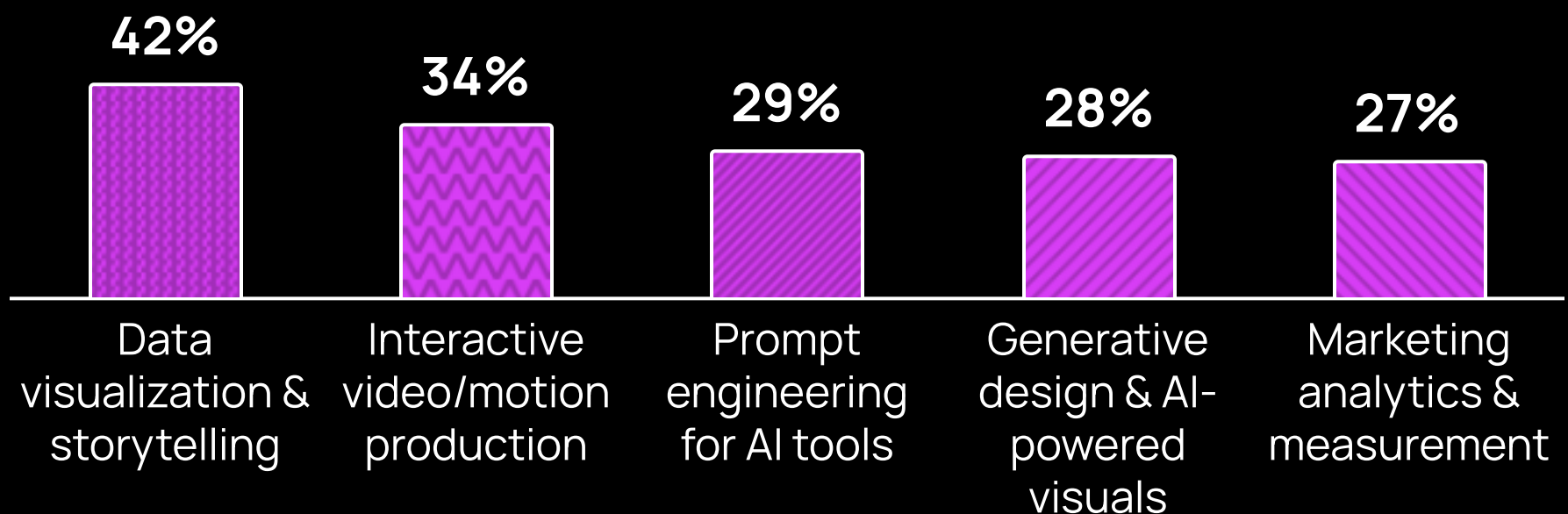
#### Insight for you

Quality + efficiency = survival. The competitive edge isn't just about producing more content—it's about producing smarter content, faster.

## Early 2026 Marketing Predictions

### The Skills Marketers Need Most Before 2026

Top 5 Skills to Build Now



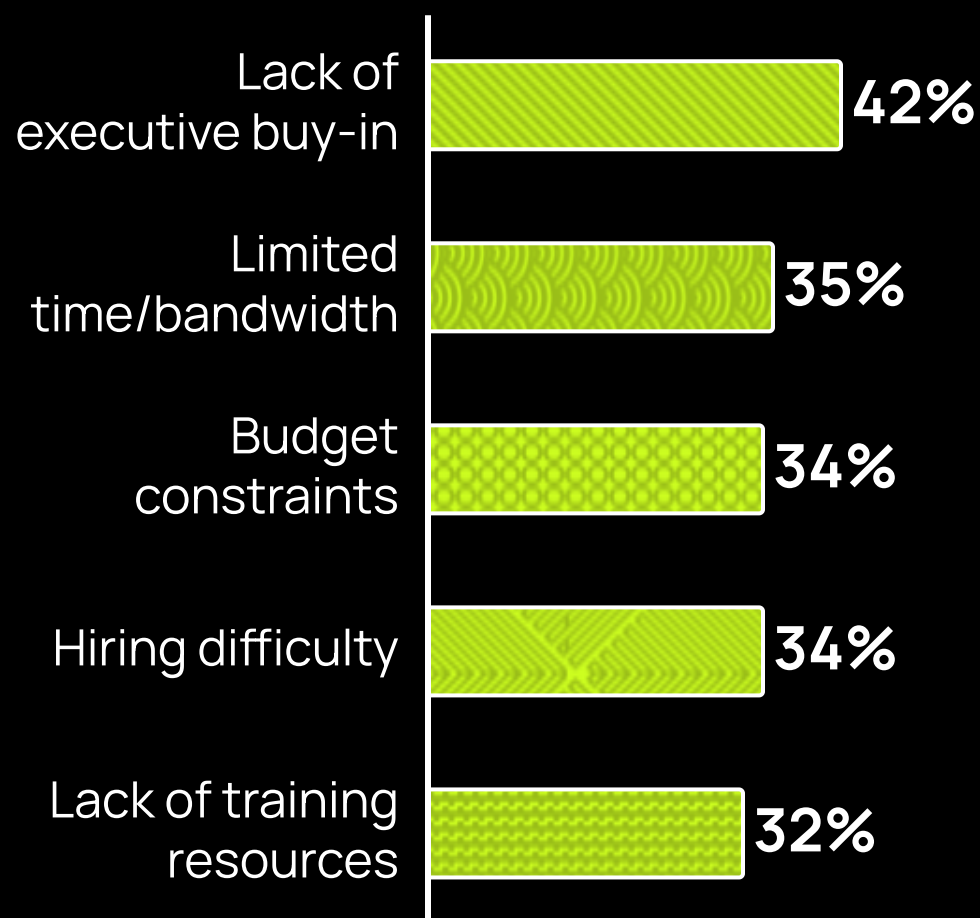
#### Insight for you

AI alone isn't the skill. The winners will pair storytelling with technical fluency, using data to fuel bold, human narratives.

## Early 2026 Marketing Predictions

### What's Blocking Marketers From Building These Skills

Top obstacles



#### Insight for you

Skill-building isn't just about capability—it's about leadership buy-in and resources. In 2026, the biggest wins will come from marketers who can make the business case for training and tech.

## Early 2026 Marketing Predictions

### Content Formats on the Rise in 2026

What's growing fastest

39%



Short-form  
vertical video

33%



AI-generated  
content

29%



Podcasts &  
audio series



#### Insight for you

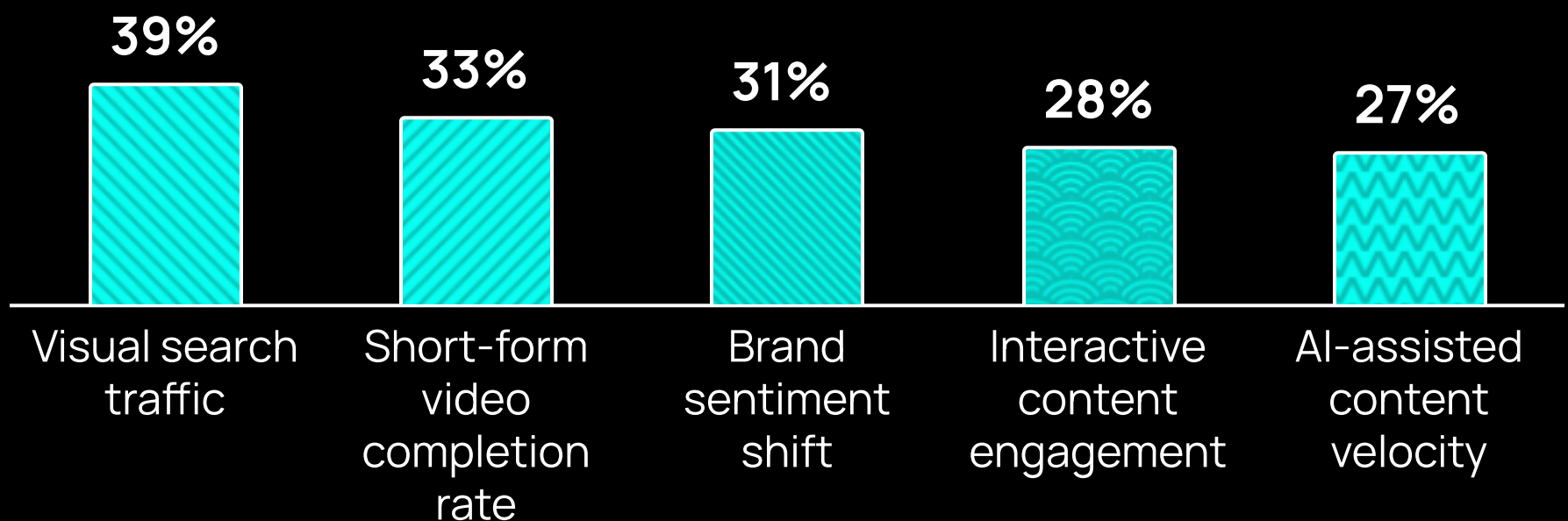
Static blogs aren't dead—but they're no longer the frontline. In 2026, bite-sized video and AI content will lead, with blogs as support.



## Early 2026 Marketing Predictions

### New Success Metrics for 2026

New KPIs to Track



#### Insight for you

Measurement is shifting from clicks to context. Marketers now track how visuals, interactivity, and sentiment resonate—but the drop in accessibility tracking risks leaving users behind.

## Early 2026 Marketing Predictions

### Under-the-Radar Trends Experts Are Watching

20%



Real-time AI-generated  
infographics

14%



Synthetic brand avatars  
& spokespeople

14%



Motion-first branding &  
micro-interactions

12%



Phygital AR /  
VR events

### What this means for your strategy



#### Invest in AI now

Early adopters are 2x more likely to increase budgets.



#### Build the business case

Use data to win leadership buy-in.



#### Focus on AI-human collaboration

The winners won't replace people; they'll amplify them.

## **Bold Takes for 2026**

The teams mastering the human–AI interface today will dominate tomorrow.

**Don't just chase trends—measure them, adapt to them, and evolve faster than your competition.**



## Bold Takes for 2026

### AI Will Dominate Creativity & Workflows

AI is rapidly expanding in capability, efficiency, and creativity, becoming cheaper, integrated into all work, and viewed as supportive rather than replacing jobs.

“ AI has broadened my mind in ways I never expected... the challenge isn’t avoiding AI influence, it’s staying authentically me.

“ AI’s gonna make marketing and design hyper-personal—every ad will feel like it’s made just for you.

“ AI is not going to take our jobs, but helps us execute them well.



#### Insight for marketers

AI is becoming baseline marketing infrastructure, not an add-on. Winning teams will pair AI tools with governance, ethics, and creative oversight to keep outputs on-brand.

## Bold Takes for 2026

### Hyper-Personalization, AR & Future Tech

AI is driving personalized ads and campaigns, fueling AR/“gamified” shopping experiences, and sparking speculation on AGI, multimodal systems, and energy-efficient AI.

“ By 2026, AR will turn shopping into a game.

“ Multimodal AI systems integrating text, images, audio, and video will transform industries by 2026.



#### Insight for marketers

The next frontier of differentiation is immersive design and personalization. Early movers in phygital experiences (digital + physical) will stand out in crowded markets.

## Bold Takes for 2026

### Authenticity, Trust & Values as Differentiators

Brands that win on clarity, purpose, and transparency are turning trust into a competitive advantage, with sustainability and “planned disappearance” campaigns leading the way.

“ The most successful brands won’t be the ones with the loudest voices, but the ones with the clearest values.

“ Planned disappearance will become the ultimate flex of sustainability, trust, and taste.



#### Insight for marketers

As AI levels the playing field, values become the differentiator. Campaigns built on authentic storytelling, human tone, and sustainable practices will build trust where “AI sameness” falls flat.

## Bold Takes for 2026

### Uncertainty & Mixed Feelings

There's growing excitement but also nervousness about rapid tech evolution, alongside ongoing questions around originality and creativity.

“Technology is changing at an unprecedented rate—exciting, but also a little nervous.

“Is it really an idea if it doesn't come from the mind?




#### Insight for marketers

Uncertainty signals opportunity. As doubts around originality grow, human judgment and curation will matter more than ever. Marketers who apply a strong creative/editorial lens to AI outputs will win trust.

## Final Takeaway

Marketers aren't just predicting AI dominance —they're revealing the conditions under which it will work best:

**Paired with authenticity, guided by human creativity, and integrated into immersive experiences.**



Stay tuned for Part 2:  
**The Complete 2026 Predictions Playbook**

