



# Marketing Trends that Shaped 2025 & Forward

*WHAT BRANDS NEED TO KNOW*

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## INTRODUCTION

Marketing has continued to move fast, and 2025 has pushed brands to rethink how they communicate. Consumers are tired of overly curated and copy-and-paste content.

As a master's marketing student with experience working in creative marketing strategy roles, I pay close attention to the trends and what stands out to users online. I see that audiences crave honest stories, human connections, nostalgia, and real emotions.

The e-book breaks down the key trends shaping the marketing world in 2025 and future years. My goal for this e-book is to explain these trends in a way that helps brands understand why they matter. Marketing works best when it is human, just like the user on the other side of the screen.

## TREND 1: HOW CONSUMERS PROCESS CONTENT

One of the biggest shifts in 2025 is the way users process content while they scroll. They move fast to decide what feels worth their time. Content that is simple and easier to process performs better because it feels familiar and real. The cues help users judge if something feels worth stopping for and worth watching.

Cues like a handheld selfie shot, natural lighting, and a casual tone make content easier to process. Marketers used to, and still, assume that polished production wins attention. That is no longer true. People enjoy content that feels like it came from someone they know. They scan content for quick markers of trust, real voices, behind-the-scenes clips, and short and natural demos. These cues change the way someone reads a message without thinking twice.



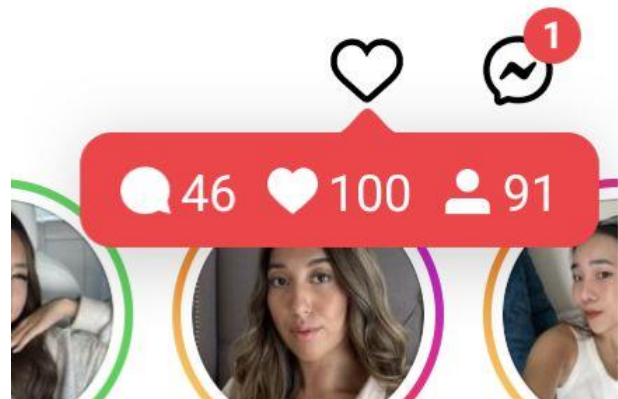
Brands built on these cues have higher engagement rates because people interact with content that matches their everyday experiences. When content is simple and easy to follow, people are more likely to share it, save it, and respond.

Brands that use this shift and their content will build stronger relationships with their audiences. It gives their brand room to show personality while still keeping a strategy. This shift is changing the way people see brands, and I notice it in almost every campaign I look at.

## TREND 2: THE POWER OF MICRO INFLUENCERS

Influencer marketing looks a lot different in 2025. I see it in every campaign I work on and even on my own TikTok. My more casual videos always do better than the ones I try to perfect, which shows people want real voices. Brands are moving away from mega and celebrity influencers. Micro influencers build trust faster in a way that a mega influencer cannot. Their followers know what products they really use and trust their opinions when they review something.

Marketers look at three things when choosing an influencer. Influencers' content must be relevant to the brand's values. The influencer's resonance focuses on depth of engagement, not the size of the audience. The consistency of the influencer shows which creators show up often, create quality content, and maintain a clear, consistent style.



Engagement rate and conversion rate help marketers understand whether the partnership is working. Discount codes, referral links, and tagged product data make it easier to track influence or impact. Smaller creators are the easiest to collaborate with because they respond faster and like to share ideas. Brands need to find micro influencers with a strong connection to their audience. If the influencer has already been using the product or uses similar products, it's more believable and more authentic.

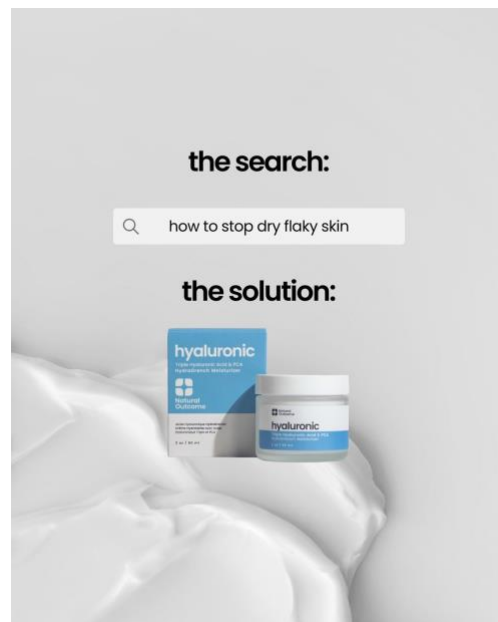
Brands should spread their efforts across many micro influencers who already reach niche communities. These communities trust the creator's voice, which creates stronger engagement and more meaningful visibility.

### TREND 3: SOCIAL SEARCH REPLACING TRADITIONAL SEARCH

Many people have started relying on social media as their primary search engine. They search for information on TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest in the same way they use Google. Users want answers, and they want visuals. They want to see what something looks like in a real situation. For example, when people want jeans, they go to TikTok and search for someone trying them on. Then they check the comments, where other people talk about their experience and fit of the same pair. It works like a live review section and feels more trustworthy than the product page.

Brands need to think about search engine optimization in a whole new way. Viewers look for phrases like "how to," tips, "best ways to." The titles, captions, and even spoken keywords in a video play a huge role in whether the content shows up for someone. Users type in real questions, not perfect marketing lines. Strong social search strategies are simple phrases that match exactly what a user is trying to solve. For example, someone with sensitive, acne-prone skin might search for a phrase similar to "best non-comedogenic foundation for oily skin." When brands use these phrases naturally in the video or the caption, the platforms recognize the brand and consumer connection and push the content to the right audience.

People scroll on their phones all day, so they want answers that are instant and easy to follow. A brand that optimizes social search will reach more people and show up naturally in feeds without paying for ads.



## TREND 4: SHORT-FORM DOCUMENTARY CONTENT TAKING OVER

Short-form documentary-style videos are becoming a popular format. Brands are showing behind-the-scenes clips, meet-the-team videos, workplace tours, real customer testimonials, and unscripted, raw moments to show how their products fit into daily life. This type of content works because it feels like proof.

It also works on platforms driven by watch time. I see that natural clips hold attention longer and lead to stronger performance in the algorithm. People like content that feels spontaneous because it reveals a brand's personality.



The videos are easy to skim and replay, leading to higher views. They work well in short formats posted on TikTok and Instagram Reels. They stand out because they do not look like traditional ads. When a brand opens the door and invites viewers to look in, it creates a sense of community. A brand can show its product-creation process, not just the final product.

Not only does this approach resonate with audiences, but it is easier to produce and less expensive. The brand doesn't need a perfectly lit or staged set. Human energy is enough to create meaningful content.

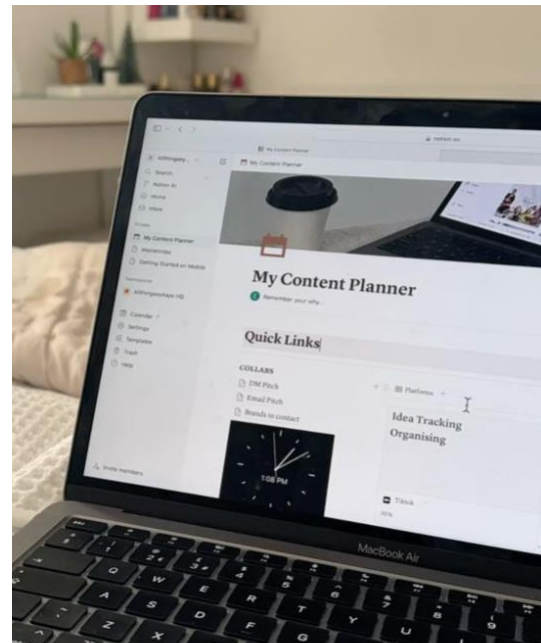
## TREND 5: USING AI AS A SUPPORT TOOL IN MARKETING

AI is everywhere now. It is in search results, filters, editing tools, emails, and apps that people use without realizing it is there. I see AI in my own work all of the time. It helps me outline ideas when I am stuck, do deep research, and stay organized. Some marketers think AI will take their jobs, but the brands that stay ahead treat it as a tool, not a replacement.

In my own projects, AI helps me with small tasks that normally take hours. It helps me sort TikTok trends, brainstorm captions, pull phrases people search for, and organize my content calendar. It speeds up the process, but it does not change the creative part. AI cannot feel what makes something emotional or understand why a joke works. It can never re-create lived experiences.

The brands doing it right use AI like a teammate. They use it for research or planning, but the message and personality come from the marketer. Using AI for ideas while keeping your own

personality in the message leads to stronger content. It lets marketers spend more time on strategy and less time on busy work. AI is here to stay, and brands need to learn how to use it to keep their brand human.



## CONCLUSION

The marketing world in 2025 is shaped by connecting with a community and personality. People want content that feels real. Brands that focus on people stand out the most.

These trends also reflect the type of marketer that I strive to be. I care about creating a campaign message that resonates with an audience and adds value to their lives. I use storytelling, creativity, strategy, and clear communication in every one of my projects. I value honest marketing and content that feels human, because connection will always matter in marketing.