

TIMES

TECH MARKETING

FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS
IN TIMES OF CHANGE





Tech **MARKETING** in the **Era** of the Anonymous **Buyer**

Today's tech buyers are searching for innovation, and the initiative to purchase can come from almost anywhere – but with 81% of buyers revealing that they avoid filling in website contact forms, gaining new leads is becoming increasingly difficult for tech companies.

While the dream scenario for tech marketers includes buyers discovering their public content, providing their contact details to access exclusive assets, and then being happy to receive a call from the sales team to close the deal – the anonymous buyer is much harder to capture.

With more pressure being added to marketing teams and budgets having to stretch further, effective tech marketing has never been more crucial.

In this edition, we'll discuss the latest insights and best practices for tech marketing in 2024 so you can create more value for customers and generate high-quality leads that are more likely to convert.

The Era of the Anonymous Buyer

In today's digital-first economy, tech buying is a company-wide enterprise, with the drive to buy stemming from more than just a single IT decision-maker. While this means a wider base of customers passionate about the difference your technology can make, research finds they are much less likely to offer up their contact information, making it a huge challenge to turn them into leads.

The Anonymous Buyer

Across many organisations, those with buying authority aren't searching for the best technology for the entire company, leaving department heads and other employees motivated to find more advanced solutions for their teams. This means that the people discovering your website through a search or clicking your advert on social media could come from any number of different roles (e.g., CTO, procurement, HR, or operations / customer services).

Those working in sales, marketing, or finance who are researching new technologies for their departments won't consider themselves IT buyers – but this doesn't exclude them from exploring their options, testing solutions, and pushing the buying process forward. To stay competitive, tech marketers need to move away from focusing their efforts exclusively on IT teams and adapt their strategies for the anonymous buyer.

Helping the Anonymous Buyer Buy

As tech marketers, your role is to generate leads. But despite the increasingly high demand for the latest technology, the modern tech buyer goes out of their way to avoid becoming a lead. According to LinkedIn, 81% of buyers today say they avoid filling in contact forms, while 60% of buyers say they're not comfortable sharing information with a business they haven't already worked with.

With this many potential customers unwilling to provide their details at the first point of contact, solely focusing on lead generation as a strategy is no longer the way to go. Instead, tapping into the opportunity to reach this wider customer base involves quality marketing strategies that are adapted to suit the anonymous tech buyer and the experiences they expect.



81% of top-performing tech companies attribute their content marketing success to knowing their audience.

5 Key Marketing Strategies for Technology Companies

1. Flip the Marketing Model

Traditional tech marketing strategies prioritise capturing details first, then aim to educate and nurture customers towards a sale later. This is hugely ineffective in the era of the anonymous buyer, where only 25% of tech buyers are willing to share their details to access exclusive content.

Today, tech marketers must focus on delivering value from the first touch to generate high-quality leads later. The first step is to put aside “gated” content and instead offer free trials and discounts, host virtual and in-person events, and provide attentive online support through video enablement or podcast series for those experimenting with new tools and software.

2. Invest in Broader Campaigns

According to LinkedIn's B2B Institute, the optimum mix for tech marketing involves an approximately 50:50 split between closely targeted activation campaigns such as short-term lead generation activity, and broader brand campaigns that intend to raise salience among a wider audience over a longer period.

Broader campaigns that offer valuable content such as guides, blogs, videos, podcasts, or reviews will attract visitors who are looking for help or to answer a question. This type of content doesn't encourage people to make a purchase or hand over their contact details, but it is an investment that builds a solid foundation for driving sustainable growth and generating leads in the future.

3. Maximise the Three Rs

LinkedIn's research into the tech buying journey shows that anonymous buyers will consider the pros and cons of potential solutions – not in terms of detailed pricing and specs, but in terms of the three Rs: Reputation, Reviews, and Recognition. Tech brands that are commonly recognised and talked about have a huge advantage as a result.

To maximise the three Rs for your organisation, tech marketers must prioritise delivering value for prospects over acquiring contact details, while also investing in relevant, unique thought-leadership content. This is essential for growing positive reviews and securing a category-wide reputation.

4. Adjust Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL) Targets

In the era of the anonymous buyer, a lead is the endpoint of the nurturing journey, rather than the beginning of it. After flipping the traditional marketing funnel, the leads will inevitably be different to the MQLs that many tech marketing targets are built around; there will be fewer, but the quality will be greater.

For this change to be effective, tech marketers will need to work closely with their sales teams on restructuring expectations around MQLs by focusing less on lead volume and more on the revenue they will deliver. To credibly reduce their targets, marketing teams must demonstrate the process involved in nurturing leads before generating them and how this is a win-win for both teams.



5. Find Value-Adding Ways to Introduce Sales

Anonymous buyers may not be the ones to sign off on the purchase decision, but they're potentially more open to speaking with advisors, consultants, and experts who can help them get the information they need, set them up with a trial POC (Proof of Concept), or get more value from a freemium solution. These pre-sales interactions are increasingly important for the marketing and sales process.

This means equipping your sales teams to take on the role of consultants if the anonymous buyer demonstrates a level of engagement that suggests they are likely to influence an imminent purchase decision. An effective method might include tracking the buyer's engagement with content and resources through a scoring system, and if they achieve a certain number of points, they are then targeted with marketing that introduces sales reps as experts in the areas they are interested in.

It's Time to Flip the Tech Marketing Model

There was a time when the role of the tech marketer was to help sellers sell to an audience who were glad to hear from them. Now, tech marketers must help the anonymous buyers buy – and do so on their own terms. Anonymous buyers aren't interested in the traditional purchase journey; they want to discover, explore, and experience your brand, business, and solutions. With the right approach, this is the journey that sales and marketing can align on delivering.

Top Performing Content

Getting Implementation & Delivery Right

In the era of the anonymous buyer, tech marketers need to flip the marketing funnel and concentrate less on gated content as a means of capturing contact details and more on creating free, accessible value for customers at the first touch. So how should they do it?

Moving Beyond Gated Content

For tech companies, content marketing is an invaluable approach to efficiently reach and connect with customers. This type of marketing involves the creation and sharing of original online material such as videos, infographics, thought leadership articles, whitepapers, eBooks, blogs, and more. While traditional tech marketing methods offer certain assets after capturing contact details, the anonymous tech buyer wants to see value before filling in that form.

Flipping the marketing model to focus on top-of-funnel content means providing content which doesn't explicitly promote your brand. Instead, content should aim to stimulate interest in your products and services by educating customers about things they care about, answering common questions, and addressing typical pain points.

But just attracting customer interest is not enough; you need to secure their attention so you can begin to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. This starts with positioning your company as a trusted information source and is where it becomes essential to deliver the three Rs (Reputation, Reviews, and Recognition), so you can become the company that buyers turn to when they're ready to make a purchase.



Top-Performing Content Marketing Strategies for Tech Companies

In the era of the anonymous buyer, there's no telling whether the person who has clicked through to your website is an IT decision-maker or an employee from an entirely different department. While tech marketers may have no idea who they're talking to, content marketing enables them to explain their products and services in a way that is inclusive of non-technical tech buyers.

As a bonus, content marketing is one of the most efficient marketing methods. According to Demand Metric, content marketing costs 62% less than traditional marketing while delivering 3x as many leads per pound spent. With figures like these, how could your tech company not afford to invest in content marketing?

61%

of tech marketers say creating the right content for their audience is a challenge.

1. Give the Anonymous Buyer Content They Crave

Simply talking about your latest product or technology may be of little interest to potential customers who don't already know, like, and trust your brand. To maximise your reach, identify common questions and problems within the market that your company can solve and address them with guidance, freemium services, and other relevant, high-quality assets. If you offer valuable content that tech buyers want or need, they will listen to what you have to say.

2. Create Exceptional Content & Campaigns

As we've learnt, effective tech marketing often relies on a balance between focused, short-term campaigns and broad, long-term campaigns. To ensure you stand out from your competition and offer exceptional value, consider the three Es: Entertain, Educate, and Engage. Most of all, aim to create compelling content that is unique to your company and includes distinct insights only your company could have.

3. Invest Where Tech Buyers Find Value

There are many types of content marketing, and you may find that certain efforts gain more traction for your company than others.

According to Content Marketing Institute, the six most popular channels used by tech marketers in order are:

1. Short-form articles / posts (< 3,000 words)
2. Videos
3. Webinars / virtual events / online courses
4. Case studies
5. Infographics
6. eBooks / whitepapers

Long-form articles, podcasts, and research reports are also popular choices for content marketing in the tech industry. For tech buyers, on the other hand, research shows a slightly different mix of preferred content marketing types:

1. Webinars / virtual events / online courses
2. Research reports
3. Short-form articles / posts (< 3,000 words)
4. eBooks / whitepapers
5. Case studies
6. Videos

In-person events also produced strong results, along with long-form articles, infographics, live-streaming content, and podcasts. **Important to highlight are the top three favoured video formats, which are webinars and web series, interviews with industry experts, and how-to videos.**

4. Lean into Social Media

Social media is a cost-effective way to engage directly with your customers and build closer relationships. One of the most popular approaches to social media is social listening, where you track mentions of your company or brand and evaluate those mentions for useful insights. Tech marketers can also proactively use social media to post engaging content, such as short-form videos, accompanied by relevant hashtags to target an audience searching for specific content.

5. Don't Abandon Lead Generation

Traditional lead generation campaigns aim to capture contact details first and add value afterwards, which is increasingly ineffective in the era of the anonymous buyer. But this doesn't mean you should abandon lead generation altogether – after all, it's ultimately the end goal of your efforts.

Instead, your tech marketing strategy should revolve around building a foundation that will inevitably generate high-quality leads that are more likely to convert and generate more revenue for your company. In other words, your top-of-funnel content should intentionally help you take the customer on a journey towards handing over their contact information and closing the deal.

Value First, Leads Later

Tech marketing teams need to adapt quickly to succeed in the era of the anonymous buyer, with strategic implementation and delivery becoming crucial for engaging and gaining the trust of tech buyers. With a clear focus on delivering what the customer wants and needs, tech companies can grow and sustain a competitive reputation in the market. This will play an important role in building the foundation from which valuable and rewarding leads can be generated.

Marketing Budgets in Tech

Even with an optimised approach and exceptional content suited to helping the anonymous buyer buy – if tech companies don't have the right budget and enough resources to power their marketing, their efforts will fall flat.

Why Do You Need a Marketing Budget?

Today's marketing landscape is complicated, and with company budgets being stretched further, tech marketing teams are under more pressure to prove their value. According to HubSpot's State of Marketing Report, nearly 60% of marketers say the way they spend their budget is being scrutinised somewhat or much more now than in the past.

While cutting back on marketing might save company costs in the short term, it can quickly become counterproductive; limiting the opportunity to connect with new and existing customers can lead to long-term negative effects which are likely to be more challenging and costly to rectify in the future.

To stay competitive, tech companies must refine their marketing budget. By continuing to invest in quality marketing strategies, you can:

- Prioritise campaigns to invest in
- Allocate funds for product purchases, future campaigns, and personnel
- Compare quarterly or year-to-year progress
- Justify the importance of specific strategies
- Show the value of proposed marketing campaigns to higher-ups
- Calculate the ROI from marketing efforts to secure a better budget in the future

Here are a few real-world examples of some well-known SaaS companies and the average percentage of revenue they put back into sales and marketing:



46%



39%



21.8%

Here are some examples of successful tech companies and the average percentage of revenue they put back into sales and marketing:



11.9%



11.9%



15%

66% of tech marketers are faced with a lack of resources.

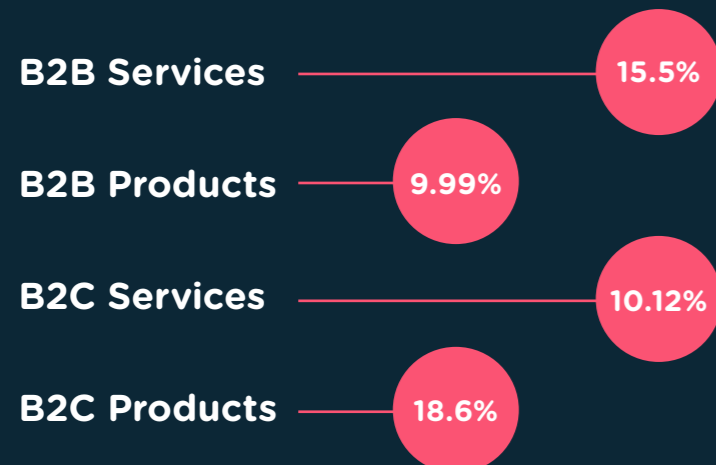
Typical Content Marketing Budgets for Tech Companies

There are many reasons why businesses might not be spending the appropriate amount on marketing to hit their targets, including not knowing if their spending is in line with other companies of their size and vertical.

SEE OVER >>

Marketing Budgets by Sector

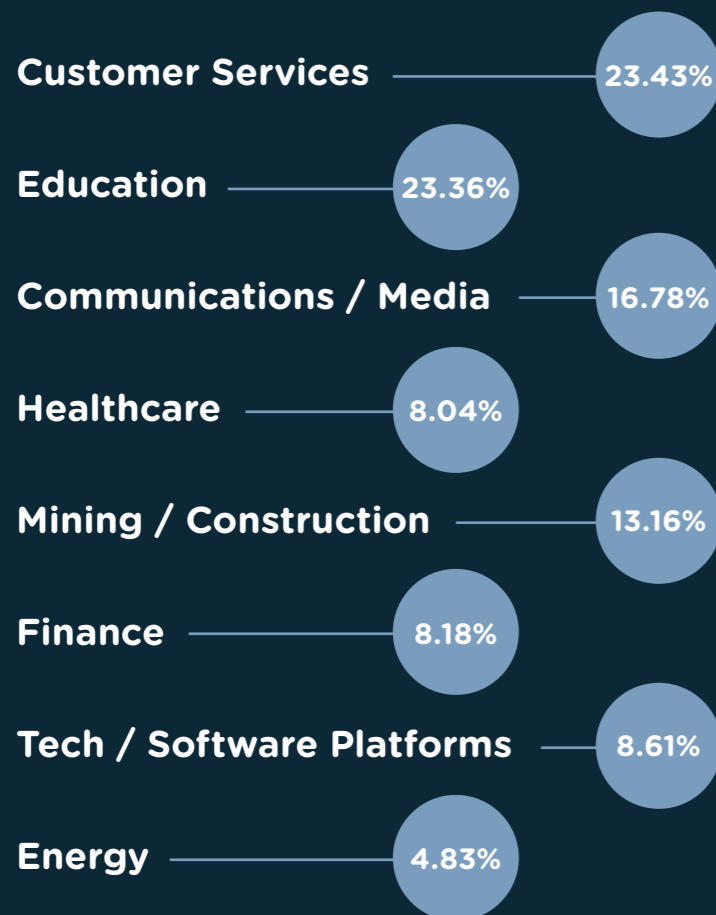
Generally, the percentage of your company's total revenue that you should expect to spend on marketing will depend on your products or services.



Within this budget, marketers suggest allocating around 25-30% directly to content marketing.

Marketing Budgets by Industry

Research from How to SaaS shows budgets as high as nearly 24% and as low as nearly 5% of total revenue for companies across various industries.



Companies earning between £1 and £5 million in revenue, however, may spend more.

How to Allocate Your Marketing Budget

Ultimately, how you allocate your marketing budget is down to the needs of your company, and there is no perfect formula to guarantee your success – but there are some things you can do to get off to a great start.

1. Identify Core Business Priorities

If you've identified your company's overall objectives and how they can be achieved, you should establish a timeline for implementation and the results you expect to see at each stage. Gathering a holistic picture of your strategy will help to align support and resources for different areas of priority and provide a good indication of how to balance your budgeting activity across various short-term and long-term pursuits.

2. Examine New & Existing Strategies

Examine the top-performing content marketing channels for tech companies alongside the past performance of your previous marketing efforts and use this data to guide your future planning. While successful content marketing strategies will vary from business to business, you can regularly run experiments and track metrics to identify the areas that contribute most positively to your bottom line and allocate more funds to nurturing them.

3. Address Budget Allocation by Channel

You may be wondering how much of your budget you should dedicate to nurturing your top-performing channels. The 70-20-10 distribution rule is a reliable foundation to start with and adapt over time. This structure means spending around 70% of your content marketing budget on proven channels you are confident will work, 20% on channels you expect to work but are still analysing, and 10% on "out there" ideas you are willing to test or simply lack experience in.

4. Estimate All Marketing Costs

One of the most important steps in budgeting your marketing strategy is to consider all the costs at the first stage – discovering unexpected costs later on can quickly derail your plans. Holistic budgeting will estimate the salaries to hire full-time employees, payments to any freelancers or consultants, costs of different tools and technology that the team uses, website or application charges, and costs for content marketing research and analysis.



5. Make Room for Adjustments Depending on ROI

Whatever your expectations are, there are many things you can't predict. Thus, when budgeting for your marketing strategy you will need to allow flexibility. If a campaign continues to fail, be prepared to pause it, and reallocate your budget to something else. Similarly, if an activity is yielding excellent results, ask higher-ups for a bigger budget to focus efforts elsewhere or shuffle existing resources from less-performing to higher-performing campaigns.

Making ROI a Priority

Demonstrating ROI is now a top priority for tech marketers – not only for effective budget management, but also for demonstrating their value to clients and higher-ups and ensuring that companies can continue to invest in the most powerful strategies for lead generation.



Tech Marketers Must Prove Their Value

Today's tech marketers are under more pressure to prove they can quickly and efficiently achieve new marketing goals while consistently demonstrating a clear ROI (return on investment). According to LinkedIn, 46% of tech marketers have budget allocation discussions every month. Consequently, 77% of tech marketers attempt to prove the ROI from their campaigns within a month of them running.

This is a huge problem for any tech marketer – because there's no way for a campaign to deliver a return over such a short period. With a sales cycle average of six months, even a closely targeted demand generation campaign is unlikely to positively impact the bottom line in just a month.

Measuring ROI consistently is essential for identifying which investments are delivering clear and tangible benefits to tech companies. But without the right measurement strategies, tech marketers can't effectively determine whether social media posts lead to more revenue than video marketing, or if infographics and whitepapers drive increased customer spend.

Demonstrating ROI

The most used performance metrics are click-through rate (CTR) and cost-per-click (CPC), which have the advantage of being immediately available for monthly budget discussions. The trouble is, they aren't measuring the return of your investment – they're only measuring the cost.

Knowing how many clicks you generated and how much they cost doesn't tell you what revenue they produced and if those figures were worth what you paid for them.

Accurate ROI reporting for tech companies should indicate the profitability and success of marketing campaigns by comparing the revenue generated during a sales cycle with the amount invested during a sales cycle. By analysing ROI in this way, tech marketers can recognise which marketing efforts are most efficient and make data-driven decisions to optimise their budgets.

The first step is to define your marketing objectives and what effective ROI looks like for your company, then establish a sensible sales cycle over which to calculate it. The value of a long-term marketing investment comes from growing ROI throughout several sales cycles. For example, engaging a broad base of anonymous buyers with memorable, quality content marketing primes those buyers to respond more positively and in greater numbers when asked for contact details and to close the deal later on.

Measuring ROI for tech marketing properly will take time. To buy yourself that time, it can be helpful to point to more immediate figures that will reassure clients or higher-ups that your marketing investment is busy paying its way.

- **If you need to give some indication of ROI, but it can be quite straightforward** – measure cost-per-lead (CPL)
- **If you need to show detailed and robust ROI reporting** – measure cost-per-acquisition (CPA) alongside estimated customer lifetime value (CLV)
- **If you need to report some data, but it doesn't necessarily need to demonstrate ROI** – measure click-through rate (CTR)

You could also measure the number of positive reviews or referrals that the company receives or use social media listening to analyse word-of-mouth. However, the most compelling evidence comes from data showing your campaign's direct impact on the bottom line.

One option is to evaluate instances of ROI from moments in your marketing calendar that repeat annually – such as Black Friday campaigns. Whichever reports you decide to share, remember to compare periodical data to accurately demonstrate your performance over time.

Maximising ROI

Regularly evaluating ROI is crucial for maximising the impact of your marketing efforts, but your expectations need to be realistic; depending on your objectives and chosen channels, you may not see results immediately. The important thing is to stay flexible and adapt so you can experiment with a combination of strategies to find what works best for your company.

Maximising the ROI from your marketing strategy starts with:

- Understanding your audience
- Establishing clear, measurable goals
- Researching successful marketing channels
- Prioritising investments that generate the greatest returns
- Leveraging data analytics to identify opportunities
- Continuously monitoring and adapting your approach
- Embracing marketing trends to stay competitive

44%

of tech marketers believe better measurement of ROI is one of their top priorities for the year ahead.

The Era of the Anonymous Buyer

Ultimately, for tech marketers to continue driving results in today's digital landscape, they need to be prepared to execute a data-driven, ROI-focused strategy. Demonstrating ROI consistently enables tech companies to focus their attention on the areas that really count and achieve their goal of gaining more for less.

Emerging Trends in Tech Marketing

Staying ahead of the curve isn't always easy, so we've put together 10 emerging trends in tech marketing to help you run more innovative campaigns, stand out against your competition, and maintain a sense of relevance with your audience.



1. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Many tech marketers are now leveraging AI-powered tools to help them complete tasks better and faster, but 63% say they lack guidelines for using them. At this stage, AI should be treated as an assistant (not someone's replacement) that helps generate ideas, repurpose content, and write outlines, which the team can monitor and edit to ensure originality, relevance, and quality.

48% of tech marketers use AI to write first drafts.

2. High-Quality, Reliable & Trustworthy Content

Today's customers can see right through a pushy sales tactic – especially when the reason they engaged was to access what was initially educational content. Now, companies are investing more in high-quality content marketing, with an emphasis on case studies, blogs, infographics, and podcasts, to drive search discoverability, brand credibility, and customer engagement.

AT LEAST 47% of buyers view three to five pieces of content before engaging with a sales rep.

3. User-Generated Video Content

User-generated videos are created by real customers who have actually used a company's products or services, and they are more likely to be trusted over high-production videos made by the company itself. This type of marketing is not only cost-effective, but it also offers a level of authenticity that makes viewers more likely to become customers themselves.

4. Short-form Video Content

Short-form videos such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts are highly successful at capturing and holding people's attention; they are easy to digest and often provide immediate answers to viewers' questions. This provides tech marketers with the opportunity to deliver accessible, thought-leadership content to help build relationships with potential customers.

17% of tech marketers use TikTok – up from 5% the previous year.

5. Partnership Marketing

This year, more companies are likely to partner with others in their industry by co-producing webinars, collaborating on reports, making guest appearances on one another's podcasts, or mutually sharing social media activities. This is an effective way for both parties to:

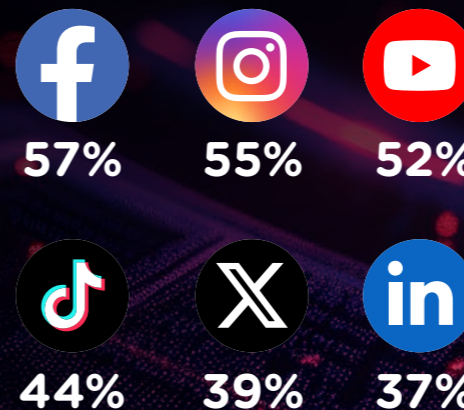
- Reach more potential customers
- Connect with industry leaders
- Access new resources and technologies

6. Micro-Influencer Marketing

According to HubSpot, 50% of the marketers who currently use influencer marketing plan to increase their investment, and 20% of those who don't use it yet plan to try it for the first time this year. Interestingly, marketers find more success working with micro-influencers because they are less expensive and thus easier to establish long-term partnerships with.

7. Targeted Social Media Use

Tech companies are now realising that not every platform is helping them reach their target audience effectively. Instead, they're prioritising the social media channels that are most likely to help them achieve their objectives. On average, marketers are leveraging four social media platforms, with the most used being:



LAST YEAR SAW A **34%** decrease in X / Twitter use and a 24% decrease in Facebook use.

8. Social Shopping

With an increasing demand for seamless online shopping experiences, tech companies are tapping into the e-commerce potential of social media and streamlining the customer journey. With enhanced features such as in-app purchases and shoppable posts, customers now have the convenience of buying products without leaving the platform.

9. Sustainability & Ethical Marketing

Today's customers go beyond simply buying products and services – they want to know about the company's values, especially in terms of social and environmental responsibility. In a HubSpot survey, nearly half of the respondents said they're more likely to buy from a business that is actively striving to reduce its environmental impact.

10. Virtual & Augmented Reality

While virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR) may have lost traction in 2023, only 13% of marketers are planning to decrease their investment in VR and AR this year. More tech companies are now strategically adopting exciting and interactive VR and AR experiences into their marketing campaigns to increase engagement, boost brand loyalty, and stand out in today's tech-driven world.

84% of marketers plan on investing the same amount or more into leveraging VR and AR in 2024 as the previous year.

Top Challenges Ahead

Changes to data privacy regulations have been a challenge for marketers over the past few years, and recently, they have been increasingly concerned with the impact of:

- Google Chrome's third-party cookie phaseout
- Apple iOS Privacy Protection features
- GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

The problem is that marketers aren't quite prepared for this shift, with 81% revealing that their marketing activities rely on third-party cookies to some degree and around one in five saying they're not ready to lose access to them.

Now, many tech companies are exploring alternatives to third-party cookies, with first-party data collection and targeted social media ads being the most favoured solutions, followed by Google Topics API, contextual advertising, and universal identifiers.



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