

MARKET STUDY



THE STATE OF VISUAL COMMERCE

SEPTEMBER 2015



NOT NEW, BUT DIFFERENT

Content marketing isn't so much a trend as it is a longstanding brand tradition. For decades, marketers have been utilizing imagery and the power of storytelling to engage their customers, to position their products, and to grow their brand.

But while content marketing isn't new, it has certainly evolved. Digital media has proliferated the channels on which content lives. Social media has diversified the ways in which content is shared. And mobile has made all of this content available anytime, anywhere.

With 2.6 billion images shared daily across visual channels, consumer shopping behaviors have indelibly changed.

Boundless access to beautiful imagery has given the present-day consumer a growing number of opportunities to discover desirable products in new places – from social sites and shopping apps to online publishers and blogs. And with “buy buttons” everywhere, consumers can now turn a flash of aspiration into action.

In this new world of retail, it's not just about clicks. As a brand, you're competing for revenue. Every picture is a potential point of purchase – an opportunity to drive a sale.

Content has long been critical to connecting with consumers. Now, it's the driving force behind commerce, too.

VIS•U•AL COM•MERCE

/viZH(ew)el kämers/

noun

Visual commerce is the full-funnel approach used in making all of the images both within and outside of a brand's control actionable at every point of the customer journey. This is accomplished by directly linking images to the products or services associated with them, resulting in traffic, conversions and revenue.

As marketers continue to optimize for changing consumer behaviors, visual commerce will continue to be shaped and defined. But here's what we know. As of today, **77% of marketers agree that there is an increasing amount of pressure to show ROI on visual content.** And the need to show a return on visual marketing efforts will continue to grow.

This survey illuminates how marketers are currently leveraging images, how success is being defined and measured, and the areas in which marketers need support to connect their visual content to commerce.



5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

MARKETERS ARE FEELING THE HEAT.

- 77% of marketers agree that there is an increasing amount of pressure to show ROI on visual content. (p6)
- Marketers cite clicks, traffic, revenue and conversions as the most important metrics when gauging campaign success. (p7)
- Many doubt or are unconfident in their ability to measure and report on conversions. (p8)

2

MARKETERS ARE FAILING TO TAILOR THEIR CREATIVE.

- More than half of marketers are actively publishing images in social channels (84%), email (77%) digital ads (58%), print assets (57%), ecommerce (53%), and brick-and-mortar locations (51%). (p9)
- 86% of marketers agree that type of channel is important when selecting images to use in different marketing scenarios. (p11)
- However, 78% of marketers agree that they are currently sharing the same images across every, or most, channels on which they are active. (p10)

3

VISUAL CONTENT IS UNDERPERFORMING.

- Just 11% of marketers believe that their team is leveraging images “very effectively” across the entire breadth of their marketing channels. (p13)
- Even fewer—7%—feel that their visual content is “very successful” in supporting their overall marketing goals. (p13)
- A small portion of marketers believe that images are sufficiently being used in emails (8%), ads (11%) and within the ecommerce environment (8%). (p15-16)

4

MOBILE IS LAGGING.

- About one-third of marketers are currently utilizing mobile to reach consumers with visual content. (p9)
- Yet marketers feel that their visual content is weakest within mobile commerce environments, as well as apps. (p14)

5

BIGGEST CHALLENGES:

- 1 - Developing new, creative content
 - 2 - Choosing imagery that resonates
 - 3 - Measuring ROI
- (p17)

77% OF MARKETERS AGREE
THERE IS AN INCREASING
AMOUNT OF PRESSURE TO SHOW
ROI ON VISUAL CONTENT.

QUESTION

Do you agree with the following statement:
There is an increasing amount of pressure
to show ROI on visual content.

Disagree

23%

77%

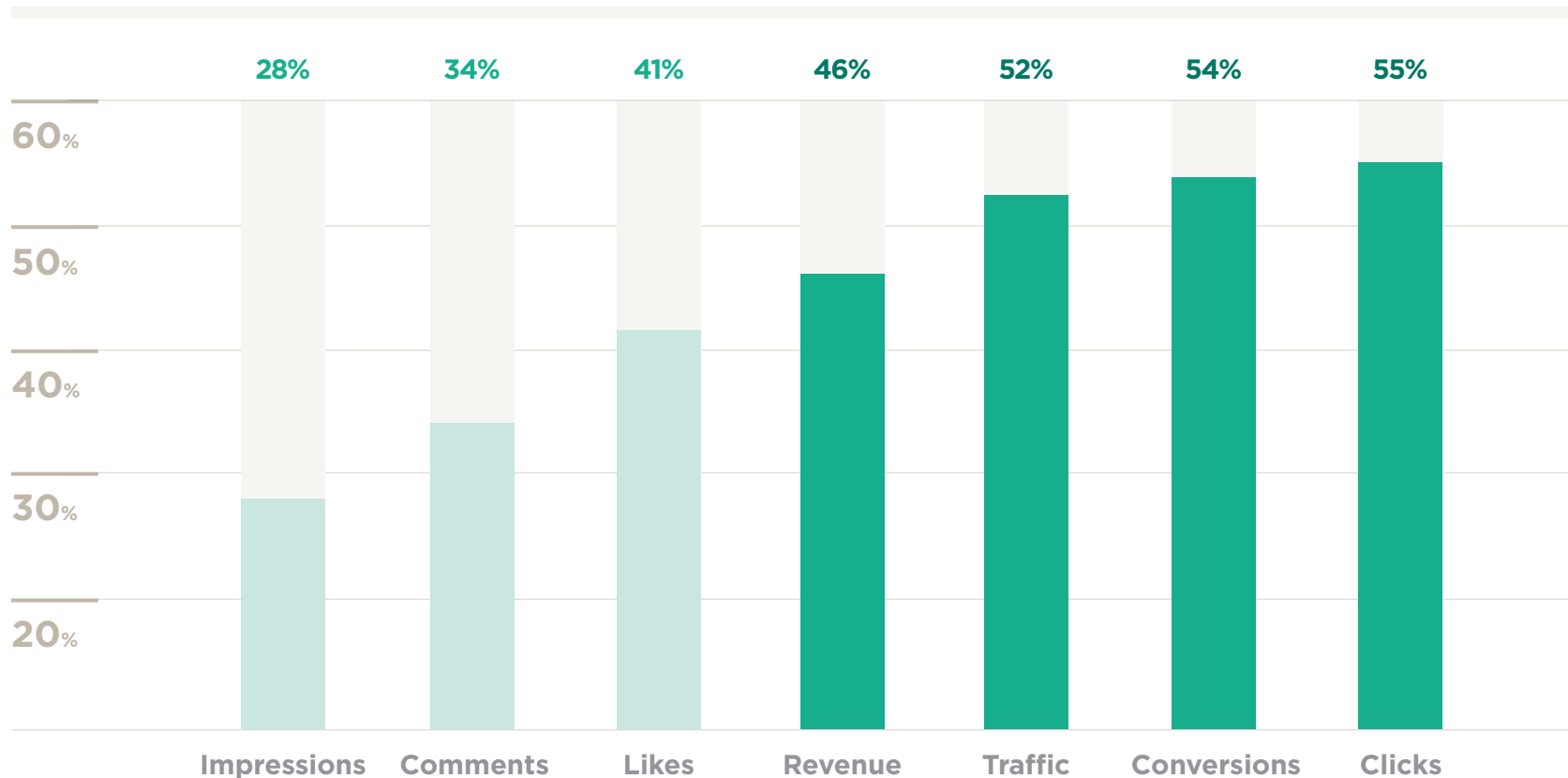
Agree

THE NEW ROI: RETURN ON IMAGES

Once used to measure success, vanity metrics (i.e. likes, comments and impressions) are less important to marketers than dollar-driven data.

QUESTION

What are the KPIs that your team uses to determine the success of a marketing campaign?



54% OF MARKETERS DOUBT THEIR ABILITY TO REPORT ON CONVERSIONS.

QUESTION

Are you reporting on visual marketing conversions effectively?

UNSURE

NO

YES

CONVERSIONS

20%

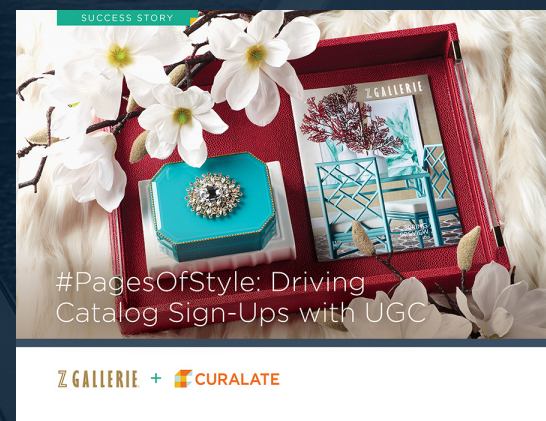
34%

46%

BRAND INSIGHT

Z GALLERIE

Better visibility into top performing images, marketing channels and consumer behaviors enabled home goods retailer Z Gallerie to drive a **24% increase in campaign conversions.**



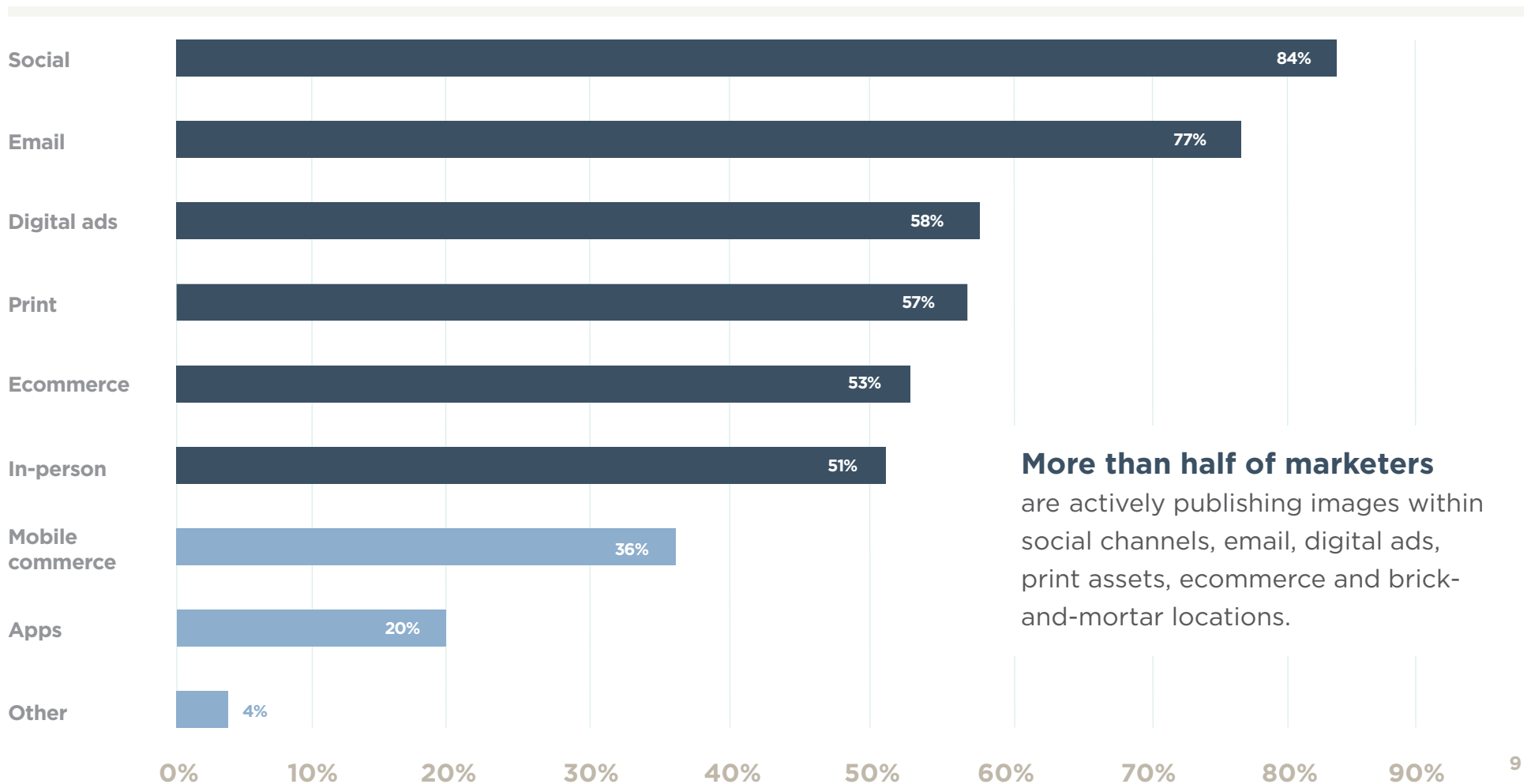
LEARN MORE

IMAGES LIVE EVERYWHERE

Marketers are distributing their visual content across nearly every marketing channel – from social to email to company ads and apps...

QUESTION

Which of the following marketing channels are you currently distributing your visual content to?



...BUT **78% OF MARKETERS**
ARE STILL PUBLISHING THE
SAME IMAGES EVERYWHERE.

QUESTION

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: My brand currently shares the same images across every, or most, marketing channels on which we are active.

Disagree

22%

78%

Agree

Marketers say that “type of channel” weighs heavily on which images they select.

QUESTION

How important are the following factors when selecting which images to use in marketing?

Not at all Not very Neutral Somewhat Very important

Type of channel
(social, ecomm,
email, ads)



Demographic/
audience



Timeliness



Historical
engagement
data



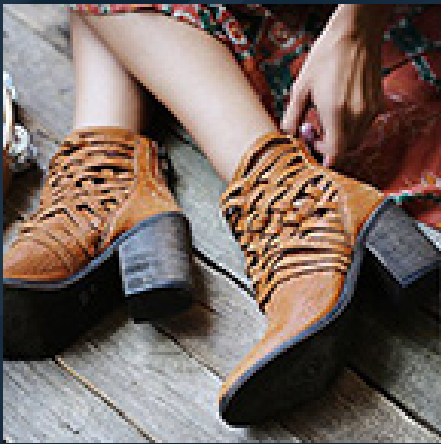
Gut instinct



Based on traditional
company branding



EDITORIAL-STYLE PHOTOS ARE RANKED MOST IMPORTANT TO MARKETING STRATEGY.



1 BRAND EDITORIAL IMAGES



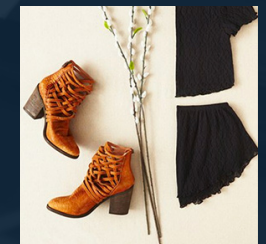
2 USER-GENERATED IMAGES



3 BRAND STOCK IMAGES



4 INFLUENCER IMAGES



5 PARTNER IMAGES

QUESTION

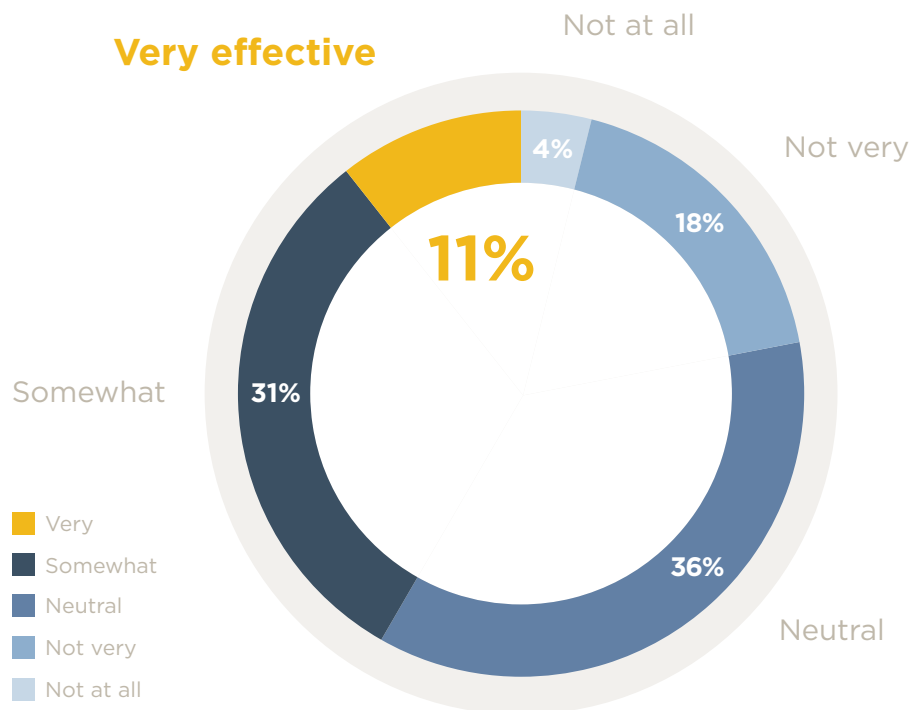
Rank the following types of images in terms of how important they are to your marketing strategy.

ABOUT 1 IN 10 MARKETERS STRONGLY BELIEVES THEIR VISUAL CONTENT IS WORKING.



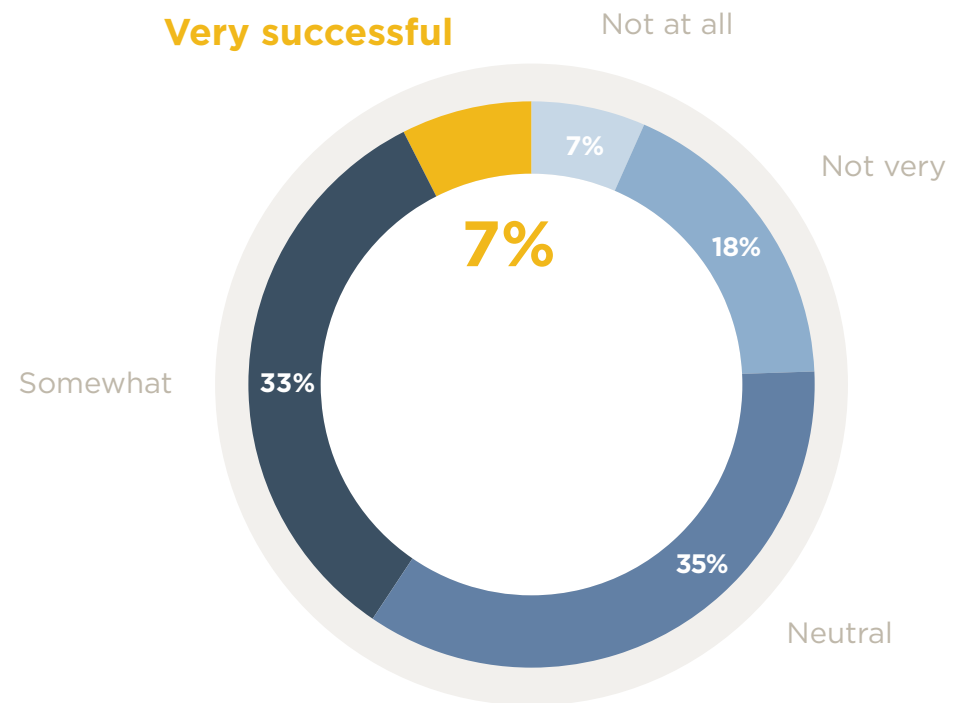
QUESTION

Do you feel that your team is effectively leveraging images across all of the channels on which your brand is active?



QUESTION

How successful do you feel your visual content strategy is in supporting your overarching marketing goals?

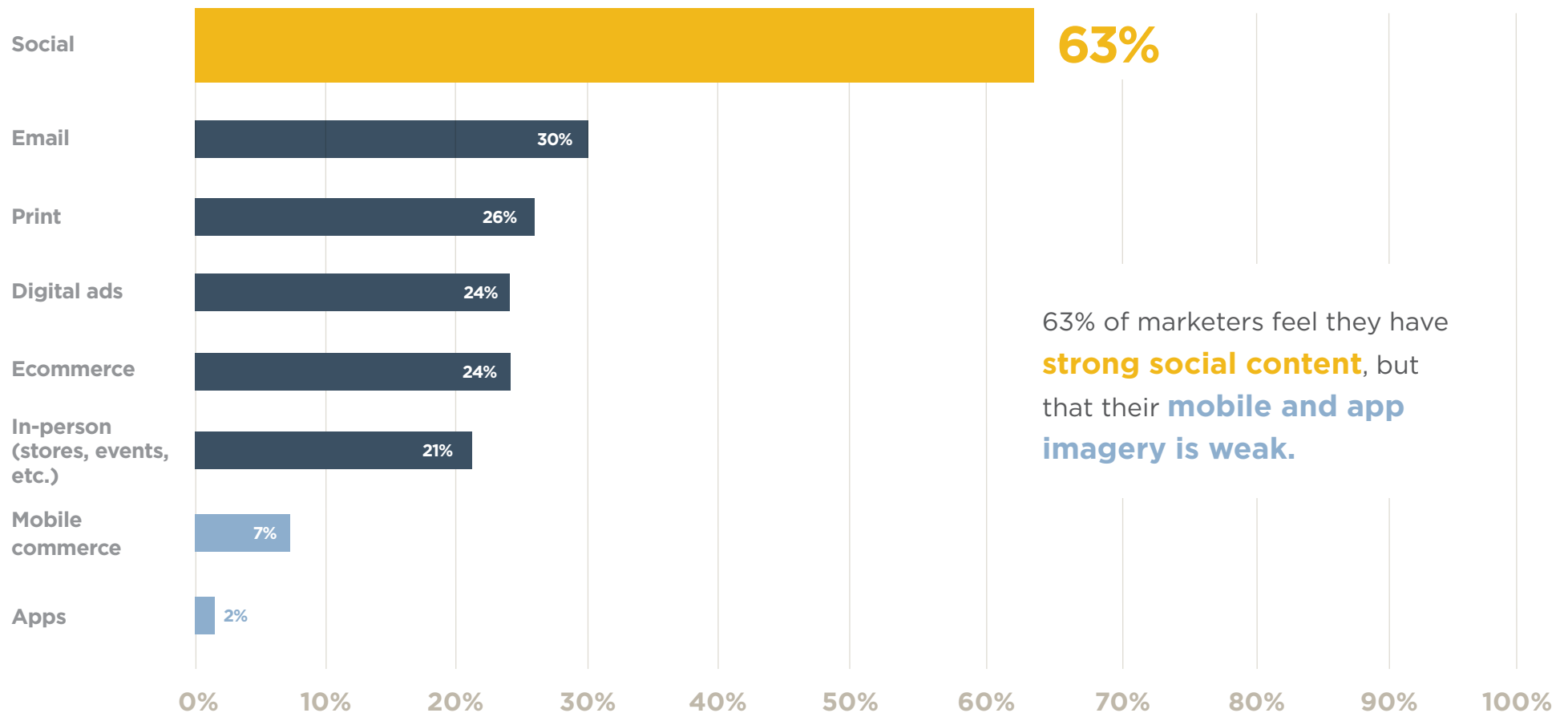


CONFIDENCE IN SOCIAL IS HIGH

But marketers agree they could do better across their other marketing channels.

QUESTION

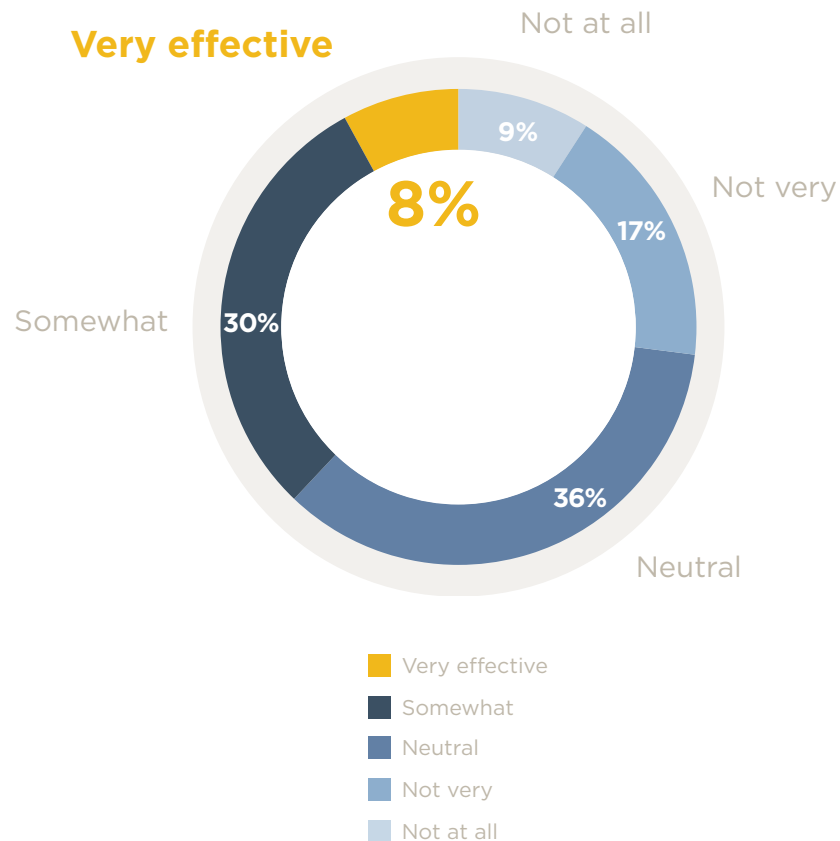
Choose the two touch points on which your visual content is strongest.



THIS INCLUDES ECOMMERCE...

QUESTION

Do you feel that you are currently optimizing the images featured on your **website** effectively?



BRAND
INSIGHT



Learn how Sigma Beauty delivered nearly a **4x increase in time-on-site** and a **16x ROI** by bringing user- and influencer-generated images onto their site.

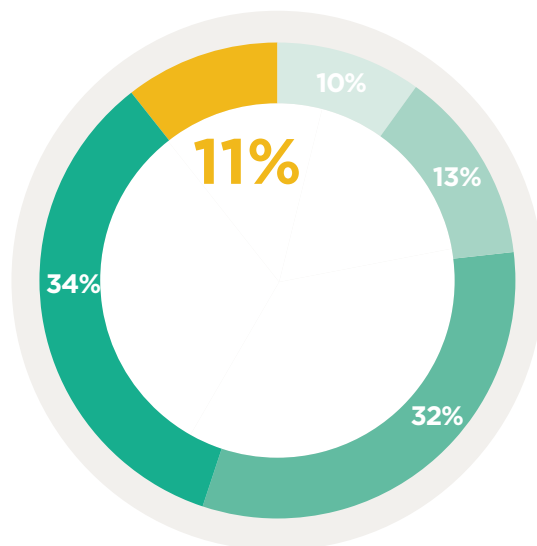


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...AS WELL AS ADS AND EMAIL.

QUESTION

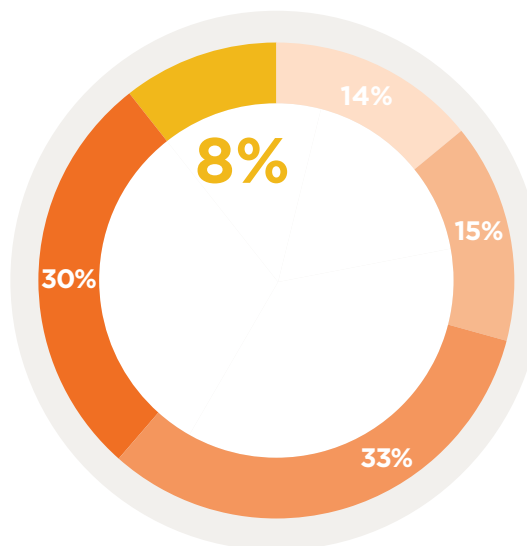
Do you feel that you are currently optimizing the images used within **ad creative** effectively?



- Very effective
- Somewhat
- Neutral
- Not very
- Not at all

QUESTION

Do you feel that you are currently optimizing the images used with **emails** effectively?



- Very effective
- Somewhat
- Neutral
- Not very
- Not at all

BRAND INSIGHT



THE GROMMET®

The Grommet, a platform for launching unique products, generated a **50% lift in digital ad CTRs** by using visual insights to optimize ad creative and messaging.



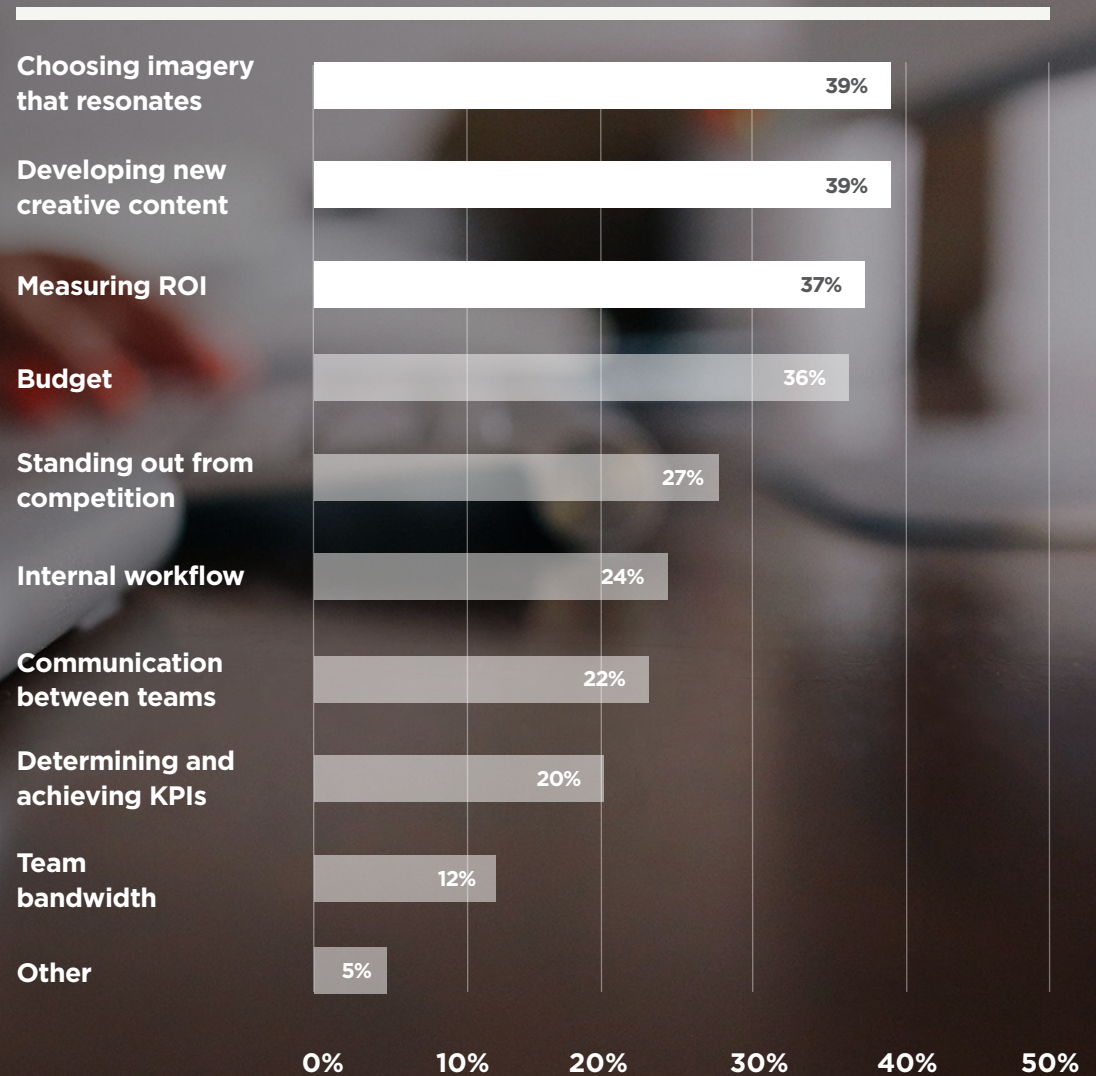
[LEARN MORE](#)

THE TOP THREE BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

In order to succeed, today's marketers need access to **better images, better insights** into which images will work, and **better tools** to measure how images perform across every channel.

QUESTION

What are the three biggest challenges in executing an effective visual commerce strategy?



METHODOLOGY

Curalate commissioned this survey with the Internet Marketing Association. The online survey was completed by 200 marketers. All data was collected between August and September 2015.



ABOUT CURALATE

Curalate is the leading visual commerce platform used by hundreds of the world's most loved brands. Curalate solutions touch millions of consumers daily by enabling brands to unlock the power of pictures. For more information, visit www.curalate.com

ABOUT THE INTERNET MARKETING ASSOCIATION

The IMA is the industry's largest organization dedicated to the profession with over one million members worldwide. It serves as a knowledge-sharing and networking platform to connect members and partners with the certified education, advocacy, market research, thought leadership and recognition necessary to succeed in today's fast-changing online business environment.

LEADING RETAILERS CURALATE

ANTHROPOLOGIE

NORDSTROM

BuzzFeed

J.CREW

Neiman Marcus

LOFT

STAPLES

free people

WILLIAMS-SONOMA

Lilly Pulitzer


REFINERY29

FOREVER 21

LUCKY  BRAND
EST. 1990


SWAROVSKI

BARNEYS
NEW YORK

Madewell

URBAN OUTFITTERS

NASTY GAL

The Herschel
SUPPLY CO. BRAND

POTTERY BARN

DAVID'S™
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