



2022

Ariad

Digital Marketing

Trends Review

Insights from Ariad's experts in the field

Ariad

Through the maze of change.

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A closer look

We took the biggest trend predictions of 2022 and offered them up for judgement to the most qualified minds we know: our consultants and team, the people working hands-on with these topics every day for leading European brands.





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About us

Ariad offers consultancy and staffing in digital customer experience (CX), operating in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain. We're active in the top five brands per industry, counting with 100+ active consultants working on in-house projects at clients, as well as staffing of digital specialties and executive roles.



Consultancy



Outsourcing &
project staffing



Direct & executive search

With a goal of growing and optimizing business, we work with the top digital experts who can make real impact. But just as important as expertise, we highly value culture fit and never forget to focus on the human side of change management.

What's in this report

Some of the most predicted 2022 trends have been evaluated by a variety of Ariad's digital consultants. We asked them to rate the trend from 1 to 5, 1 suggesting that the prediction was way off, and 5 meaning they wholeheartedly agree.



One predicted trend is described on each page, followed by the Ariad consultant score, which is the average of all ratings from Ariad digital consultants. Each trend and rating is also presented with discussion about the viability of the trend, with quotes from the consultants.

Read on to find their comments and what other trends they think should have made the list!



Digital marketing trend forecast for 2022

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What are the big trends that will shake up the digital marketing scene in 2022?

There are plenty of articles making predictions, but what is one voice compared to many? We rounded up some of the top digital marketing trends predicted to make a splash in 2022, and brought them to our network of consultants to get their take.

The following five 2022 digital marketing trends have been evaluated by a variety of Ariad's digital consultants. We asked them to rate the trend from 1 to 5, 1 suggesting that the prediction was way off, and 5 meaning they wholeheartedly agree.

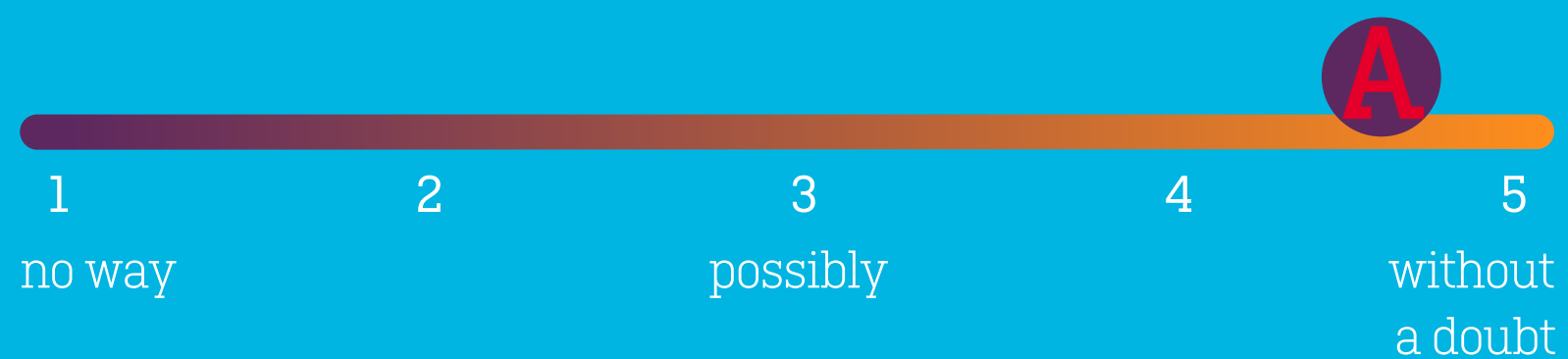
Read on to find their comments and what other trends they think should have made the list!

Digital marketing trend 1:

The cookie has crumbled

With third-party cookies losing support, marketers will need new ways to target.

Ariad consultant score: 4.6



Spoiler alert: this is the highest rated trend that our consultants reviewed for 2022 by a landslide. It's clear that cookies are out, and new solutions are IN. If cookie systems are the basis for your marketing actions, it's definitely time to build your next strategy.

For many companies, preparing for life after cookies is not yet on their radar. Some engagement-focused brands will lead the way for others to follow. Shares Ariad consultant Lionel Fays, "innovating, reinventing, finding the system that will allow brands, customers to reach more and better, for some companies it is a way of life, so I think they are already ready for the future."

Charlotte De Kesel explains the basic strategy for approaching this challenge, with a strong word of advice: "First gain trust of people, then offer them something [in exchange for] their data. Finally send relevant info and don't abuse the system. Only then will they collaborate with your brand. Everyone likes to hear from people they like, no one wants to be stalked or harassed by brands they have no interest in!"



A lot of companies have always underestimated (or underused) their first party data. Now is the time (if not too late) to activate this great source of information and insight they have about their customers. Let's hope it's structured though!

- Julien Vero

E-commerce Manager & Digital Strategy Expert

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Digital marketing trend 2:

Community is the new king:

Companies will be creating or investing in communities of their target audiences. This is even true in B2B, since purchasing patterns have changed.

Ariad consultant score: 3.4



With an approval score of 3.4 out of 5, the digital marketing experts are hesitantly betting on brands who aim to build community to come out as the winners this year. The key? Brands have to execute this strategy with unapologetic authenticity and obvious value. This will look different across markets, but can even find its place in B2B strategies.

One expert offers this advice: "Brands need to be personal. A faceless company lacking branding won't make it in this world. Performance and objective USP's will only get you so far. Considering it takes less effort to bind existing customers to you than trying to seduce new ones, focusing on building and maintaining a community means nurturing a solid target audience. **AND** this is also helpful in a world where retargeting is made difficult."



We do see a 'tribalisation' of society. Companies tying customers to their brand through likeminded communities seems a direct consequence of this.

For B2B, it depends on the business and sector. Some companies are, unfortunately, still living in the digital stone age. Most of them will have to adapt to the new B2H (business to human) world, others will just disappear.

- Peter Devos

Marketing Automation & Digital Marketing Consultant

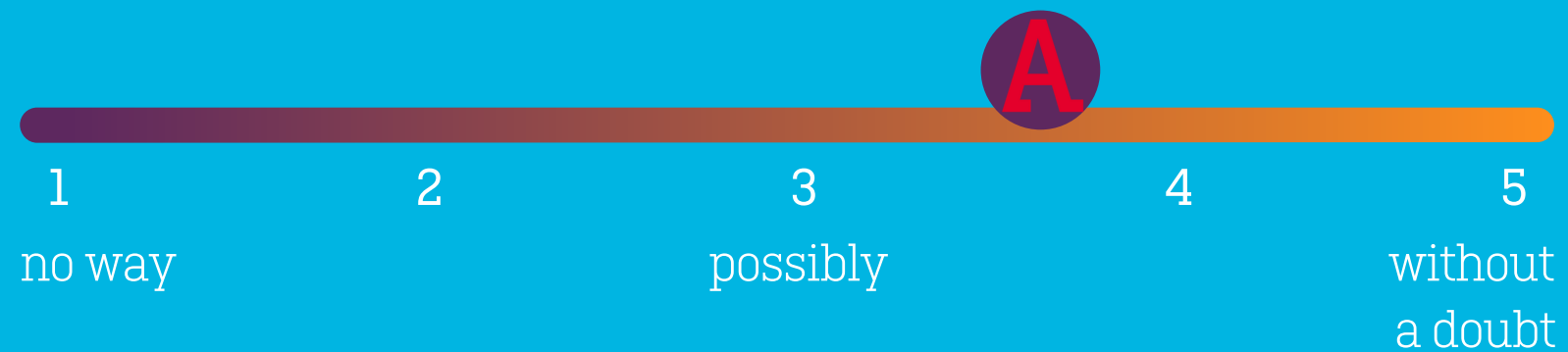
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Digital marketing trend 3:

Events will go on, hybrid-style

Live events will continue to grow, but always including digital components like streaming, AR and VR for immersive virtual experiences.

Ariad consultant score: 3.6



Yes, live events will keep going and yes, a lot of them may happen behind your screen. For now at least! The experts believe that many companies will continue with digital event strategies given the ease of implementation, potentially higher ROI and accelerated adoption of the different formats.

Of course, a Zoom webinar is only the beginning. Live events can (and will) feature a variety of digital enhancements bolstered by advancements in AR, VR and other technology. As we move toward larger-scale, in-person events, it will be wise to enhance customer ease and experience pre-, post- and during your event by leveraging digital developments.



I think that live events and the various technologies used today are only temporary. Innovation has allowed us to continue to be able to offer quality events, but regardless of the technology, the physical event will always have a greater value. So the various technologies have been crucial, but they've been there to help us wait until we can put the human touch back into the events.

- Lionel Fays
Creative Content Specialist

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Digital marketing trend 4:

CSR at the center

Brands will continue to realize the importance of ethics to their consumer, and put their values and purpose at the front of their messaging.

Ariad consultant score: 3.8



Between consumer and employee demand for Corporate Social Responsibility, there is a great amount of optimism that brands will also see the value in putting purpose and social value at the core of their work. That said, our experts also indicate much less optimism when it comes to *authentically* activating and communicating these topics.

While authenticity is an important factor, many experts see clearly that there is no other way to win in 2022. "In a hyper-opinionated world, you need to take a stand. Ethics and morals are at the forefront of your communication, whether that's the environment, diversity or the wage gap. This is closely related to creating personal brands."

So, will it improve and reform in 2022? Peter Devos' take: "Yes and no. Brands see the business value of being sustainable. How this actually translates in benefits for our natural world and living environment remains to be seen. Governments can play an important role here demanding a high level of sustainability in all products and services. But that will only happen if consumers demand it."



I hope so. But the more I see brands claiming values, the less reality in them I see. A value has to be incarnated, not just said or written in corporate.

- Charlotte De Kesel
Customer eXperience Consultant

Digital marketing trend 5:

Social commerce is the new storefront

All brands will continue to open up shop on socials, leveraging platforms like Instagram Checkout as a significant sales strategy.

Ariad consultant score: 3.7



With a score of 3.7/5, this trend is likely to grow through 2022 and beyond. B2C lines should have this trend on their radar, while also understanding the needs and nuances of their audience. Explains one expert, "it's a growing market, fitting in with the need for ease for your customers. It's definitely worth a try and testing if it's a good fit for your business."

Lionel Fays notes how the Coronavirus pandemic has affected this trend. "Once again Covid has only accelerated a process that was already underway. Online shopping has become easier than ever: all the necessary comparisons can be made, delivery services are fast, after sales services are better. Covid has forced many clients to step up their online business presence and this has proved successful for many." 2022 could be a definitive year when it comes to seeing where this trend's chips fall.



Again, not all brands will do this, but those who do certainly have a leg up and realize that not all of their customers are like themselves. Some customers are actually much younger or much older than the typical marketer and use different channels than Facebook or Instagram.

- Peter Devos
Marketing Automation & Digital Marketing Consultant

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What else we're watching in 2022

What did the reports miss? Our consultants see other trends building for 2022, **from a focus on sensory experience to yes, a visit to the Metaverse.** These predictions of trends to watch in 2022 are just a few examples of what might be defining points for digital marketing into the future.

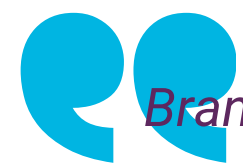
What digital marketing trends could (or should) emerge in 2022?



I think that everything that has been achieved in recent years will remain so, but that 2022 will be above all (from the summer onwards I hope) a year of a great return of the human factor. I think that after 2 incredibly difficult years, the health situation will settle down in a few months and people will travel again, go to restaurants, music festivals. So I think that for brands and clients, the most important thing will be to maintain the course of their current online strategies, while putting a real boost on the real life experiences.

- Lionel Fays

Creative Content Specialist



Brands offering Experience beyond the product. Even if you buy online you should be able to live a brand experience. An ambiance, a scent, special music, material, texture, colour... delivered with the product itself.

- Charlotte De Kesel

Customer eXperience Consultant



Most new 'stuff' is just an evolution of what is now already possible. It will just become available to a bigger audience. Think: automatic content creation by AI, next best offer/step algorithms; in car marketing for self-driving cars, AR advertising (watch Facebook for this), CDP's, action around crypto, gamification, and tie-ins between brands

- Peter Devos

Marketing Automation & Digital Marketing Consultant



The Metaverse, of course. It's already there and I believe brands will increasingly advertise (and sell) on it. I'm thinking about insurances for instance, who will have the great opportunity to insure digital assets rather than classic brick-and-mortar buildings and people. Or will Kaspersky take the lead? Well, after thoughts, this is more for 2030 in Belgium.

- Julien Vero

E-commerce Manager & Digital Strategy Expert

Bring it on, 2022!

Is your organization ready to evolve? Let's plot the right course through the shifting maze of digital change. We'll help you determine what digital skills you need now, and find the right experts to bring it to life.



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