



2025

Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

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Priority Media Agency



2025

Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

Published by Priority Media Agency (PMA), this report explores the evolving balance between human intelligence and Artificial Intelligence in advertising. It is intended for informational purposes only and should not be taken as financial or legal advice.

All findings and forecasts are based on available data and industry insight as of 2025 and may evolve as technology and market behaviours change.

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Executive
Introduction from
David Allen

Human Intelligence in Advertising



Coca-Cola

McDonald's

BEACH

Create your character at LittlePicca.com

Pears

BELIEVED IN EVER SINCE

Boots

pharmacy

Shop High Street to High Street
Fashion Online. No Competition.

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in the world's toughest



Human Intelligence in Advertising

Executive Introduction from David Allen,
Managing Director of Priority Media Agency

¹ Learn more about PMA's expert team and experience at prioritymediaagency.co.uk/about/pma

At Priority Media Agency, we tend to go on about expertise - which we'll refer to, for the purposes of this report, as human intelligence. It's the wealth of knowledge drawn from years in the field: the instincts honed by trial, training, and trusted mentors.

Our in-house experts¹ have built careers that span decades across Out-of-Home, Radio and Television; channels that defined advertising long before algorithms entered the room.

Is the future of brand advertising **man vs machine?** Or can the two co-exist?

² For definitions of Human Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence, see page 20 of this report.

We've had to confront the uncomfortable question ourselves: **how does an agency built on experience coexist with technology designed to replicate and replace it?** Assuming others had posed the same query, we endeavoured to explore how human intelligence² in advertising can compare with ever-accelerating Artificial Intelligence in an increasingly digital world.

Our findings offer encouraging answers and reaffirm something simple and vital - that lived experience, intuition, and human creativity maintain an integral and meaningful place in modern advertising.

This report is designed to equip marketers and specialists navigating this new terrain, as we all work to balance progress with tradition.



David Allen
Managing Director, PMA



Photograph: **White Fox** Bus Wrap Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

Summary of Key
Insights and Findings

The 2025 Report at a Glance





We're part of the
Go Ahead
Group

BUS DRIVER VACANCIES
www.goaheadlondon.com



EH280



Photograph: **White Fox** Bus Wrap Campaign with PMA,
2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

The 2025 Report at a Glance

Summary of Key Insights and Findings

This report exists to **examine the role of human intelligence in advertising** for 2025, and beyond.

Only 5% of marketers feel very confident in their campaigns.

80%

Of marketers are now using AI tools. Adoption is nearly universal, but confidence hasn't caught up.

Rising **competition**, shifting **algorithms** and **over-exposure** have flattened performance across major digital platforms.

44%

Of marketers have never run an Out-of-Home, radio or TV campaign. A generation raised on dashboards has drifted from the tangible power of traditional media



The 2025 Report at a Glance

Summary of Key Insights and Findings

Audiences are signalling digital fatigue, with attention dropping as repetition rises.

**63% of UK
adults** dislike
video ads that
interrupt content

57% of consumers
find seeing the
same ad multiple
times frustrating

Key Insight

Audiences crave freshness and creativity, not frequency. Over-targeting has become the new under-performing.

¹ Learn more about PMA's services at prioritymediaagency.co.uk

Marketers are using AI to fight ad fatigue, but audiences reject AI ads

Traditional media is more relevant than ever¹

Key Insight

As both marketers and audiences grow weary of digital sameness, formats like OOH, radio and TV continue to command attention and credibility - proving that presence still matters.

Proprietary Research and Data Transparency

Research Framework

We considered how Human Intelligence in Advertising could be measured in modern marketing. It's built on three guiding principles - each paired with a tangible outcome illustrating how they appear in practice.

Principle
Expertise

Outcome
Confidence and
Capability

Expertise reflects accumulated skill and intuition, producing **Confidence and Capability** in how marketers plan, adapt, and lead advertising campaigns.

*Questions and responses regarding Confidence and Capability show measurable human **Expertise**.*

Principle
Authenticity

Outcome
Trust and
Transparency

Authenticity reflects the accurate transmission of intended messaging, producing **Trust and Transparency** and increasing brand value.

*Questions and responses regarding **Trust** reveal perceived authenticity.*

Principle
Ingenuity

Outcome
Creativity and
Efficiency

Ingenuity reflects the drive to create and problem-solve, producing **Creativity and Efficiency** in campaign execution.

*Questions and responses regarding **Creativity** and **Efficiency** help evaluate ingenuity in advertising.*

These principles form the *Human Intelligence in Advertising Index* - our framework for measuring human expertise in modern marketing. For the purposes of this report, and in line with our findings, Artificial Intelligence is considered a tool utilised by humans rather than a direct competitor to human intelligence.

Research Methodology

In order to present a holistic conclusion on the subject, this report draws on multiple sources. Data was gathered digitally as well as in-person to ensure validity and depth.

General Population Survey

Conducted digitally across the UK, this survey captured everyday audience attitudes towards advertising - from trust and recall to creative perception and digital fatigue.

Marketing Professionals Survey

Responses from active industry specialists were collected to evaluate current advertising practices, next gen tool integration, and confidence in campaign performance.

Street Interviews

We carried out in-person interviews in the UK's capital to capture real audience opinions on advertising - what resonates, what doesn't, and how people feel about media saturation.

Industry Commentary

We paired these insights with conversations from industry professionals, adding context on how marketers interpret audience sentiment and adapt to evolving markets.

Third-Party Data

In addition to proprietary research, this report incorporates third-party data and published statistics from reputable industry sources. Each instance of external data is clearly cited.

Expert Commentary

We compiled results from multiple data sources and partnered them with in-person interviews for qualitative depth. Themes such as digital fatigue and traditional media resilience were consistently reflected in participant responses, hence the report's focus.



Respondents and Participants

Two core respondent groups form the basis of this report – supported by in-person interviews and expert commentary. These datasets provide a holistic perspective on how advertising is created, perceived, and evolving in 2025.

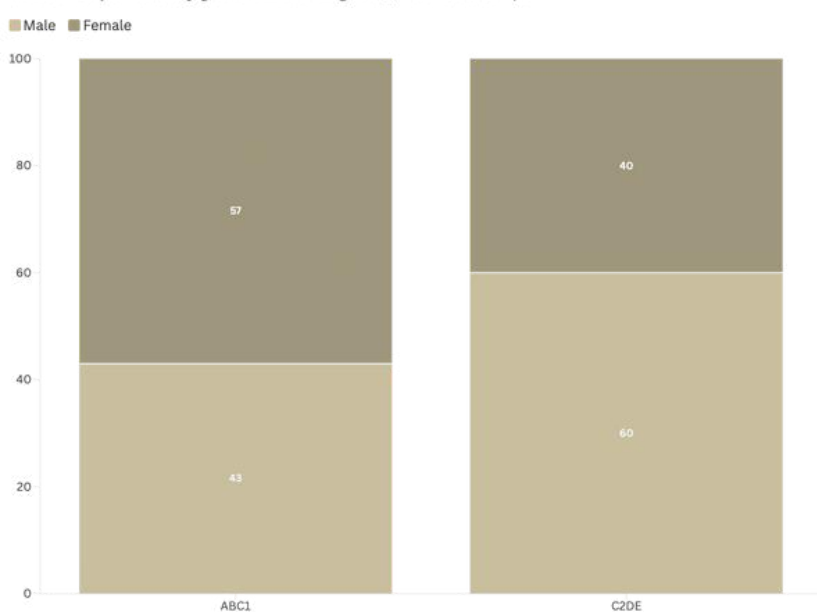
¹ For definitions of Human Intelligence and Advertising, see page 14 of this report.

General Population Respondents

Understanding the average adult's perceptions of marketing is critical to measuring Human Intelligence in Advertising¹. To evaluate outcomes according to the aforementioned framework, we surveyed the general UK population to gauge how real audiences interpret advertising today. Their views allowed us to test whether UK marketing in 2025 inspired confidence, earned trust, and demonstrated creativity.

General Population respondents are 50% Male/Female with a balanced mix of social grades

Share of respondents by gender and social grade(1) % of total sample



Social Grade Classifications

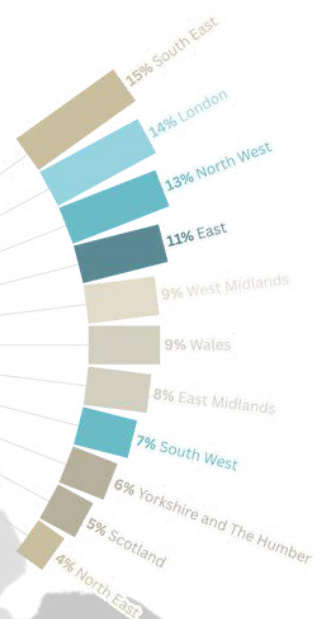
UK audience data is often segmented by social grade – a system based on occupation and socioeconomic status used in market and media research. 1 ABC1 – Higher and intermediate social grades, including professionals, managers, and skilled office or technical workers. 2 C2DE – Lower social grades, including skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled manual workers, as well as those not in employment.

© Priority Media Agency

General Population respondents(1) where pulled from across the UK

Share of respondents by Region % of total sample

North East North West Yorkshire and The Humber East Midlands
South East South West Scotland Wales
West Midlands East London



30%

Of respondents are
pre-family: 15-45 years
old without children

General Population respondents represent a wide spectrum of age groups

Share of respondents by generation(1) % of total sample

Gen Z (1997 and later) Millennial (1982 - 1996) Gen X (1965 - 1980) Baby Boomer (1946 - 1964) Silent Generation (1928 - 1945)



1 Base: 1,000 UK respondents aged 18-85. Source: PMA Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

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Respondents and Participants

Respondents and Participants Continued

This respondent group for marketing professionals - individuals currently working across advertising, communications, and creative sectors.

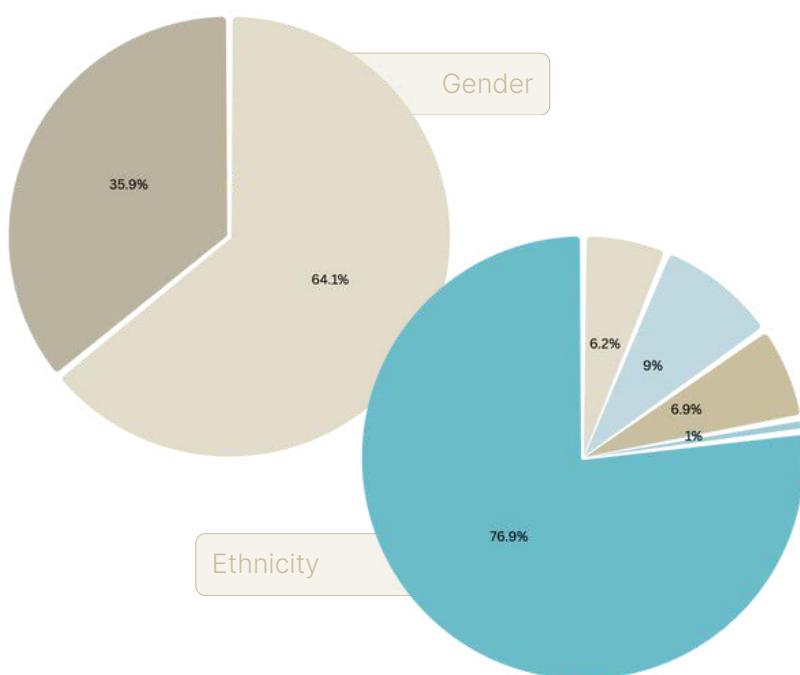
Marketing Professionals Respondents

Over 300 marketing professionals participated in this study, contributing insights across agency, brand, and freelance settings. Participants were mid-to-senior level professionals, reflecting real-world conditions.

Market Population respondents (1) represent a wide spectrum of age groups

Respondents by gender and Ethnicity % of total sample

Female Male White Black Mixed Asian Other



35 years

Median Age of Respondents

100%

Of respondents hold Undergraduate Degrees (BA/BSc)

57%

Of respondents are UK Nationals

Defining Salient Terms Featured In Reporting

To ensure clarity and consistency throughout this publication, the following terms are defined as they are applied within this report.

Advertising

Advertising refers to the strategic communication of messages designed to inform, influence, or persuade audiences toward a brand, product, or idea. Within this report, advertising includes both traditional and digital formats (from large-scale broadcast campaigns to personalised digital placements).





Defining Salient Terms Featured In Reporting

Traditional Advertising

Refers to established, offline media channels including Out-of-Home (OOH), Radio, and Television. Traditional advertising relies on physical and broadcast reach and general targeting.

Digital Advertising

Encompasses all forms of online paid communication including social media ads, search engine marketing (Google Ads, Bing), display networks, video platforms, and programmatic placements. In this report, digital advertising represents the data-driven ecosystem where AI now plays a central role in content creation, targeting, and performance optimisation.

Marketer

A marketer is defined here as any professional responsible for planning, executing, or analysing advertising and promotional activity. This includes agency specialists, brand managers, media buyers, and creative strategists. In this report, the term marketer specifically refers to respondents within the professional survey group — individuals with active roles in advertising, communications, or marketing decision-making.

Digital Advertising Plateau

A digital advertising plateau describes the stage at which digital ad growth stagnates due to saturation, fatigue, and over-reliance on identical technologies. It is marked by declining engagement, rising costs per click, and minimal differentiation across campaigns.



Human Intelligence

In its broadest sense, human intelligence refers to the cognitive ability to learn, reason, create, and apply knowledge through lived experience. Within this report, Human Intelligence is used synonymously with human expertise.

Artificial Intelligence

Encompasses all forms of online paid communication including social media ads, search engine marketing (Google Ads, Bing), display networks, video platforms, and programmatic placements. In this report, digital advertising represents the data-driven ecosystem where AI now plays a central role in content creation.

AI-Generated Content

Any image, video, or text wholly created by AI tools with minimal or no human input. Common examples include text produced by ChatGPT or Claude, images rendered through Midjourney or DALL-E, or video content generated by Pika Labs, or Sora.

AI-Enhanced Content

Any image, video, or text created by humans but edited, improved, or re-composed with the assistance of AI tools. Examples include upscaling visuals using Topaz AI, rewriting copy via Grammarly AI or ChatGPT, or refining footage with Runway.



Photograph: **Dojo** Multi-Channel Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

On the Precipice
of a Digital Plateau

The State of Play





Photograph: **Dojo** Multi-Channel Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

The State of Play

On the Precipice of a Digital Plateau

¹ AI Slop — a colloquial term used to describe generic, uninspired content generated by artificial intelligence with minimal human input or creative refinement.

² Source: The state of AI: How orgs are rewiring to capture value, Alex Singla - March 2025.

You've likely heard it — maybe even said it yourself. **Digital advertising just isn't hitting like it used to.**

Call it AI slop¹ or simple fatigue, but it's clear that audiences are tuning out, and marketers are feeling the shift. Campaigns that once promised precision, now deliver diminishing returns.

We're standing at what can only be described as a **digital plateau**: a moment where the relentless climb of digital innovation has levelled out, exposing cracks in audience engagement, trust, and creative effectiveness

According to McKinsey's 2025 State of Marketing AI Report², **over 40% of marketing teams say they are now re-evaluating their use of AI tools**. Not because the technology has failed, but because the results have flattened. Nearly 1 in 3 report that ad performance has stagnated despite increasing automation, signalling what McKinsey calls "the maturity ceiling" of digital transformation.

1 in 3¹ marketers report that ad performance has stagnated

Representative data %based on of total sample data



¹Source: The state of AI: How organisations are rewiring to capture value, Alex Singla - March 2025

At PMA, we've seen this frustration first-hand; brands investing more, getting less, and questioning whether the machine-led methods of modern marketing deliver the excellence.

The research that follows explores this from both sides; marketers navigating the tools and pressures of a new era, and the audiences deciding whether to trust, ignore, or embrace the messages they see.



Photograph: **Smyths** Bus Wrap Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

Part One

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025





Photograph: **Smyths** Bus Wrap Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

Marketer Confidence in Decline

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025

Only 5% of marketers feel very confident in their campaigns (have a clear long-term strategy)

Confidence is becoming a scarce commodity in marketing. According to our data, just 5% feel very confident, reporting a clear, long-term digital advertising strategy. At the opposite end, 6% admit to having mostly short-term or partially reactive approaches - a signal that strategic certainty is eroding across the industry.

Marketing Professional respondents share confidence in marketing plans

■ Not confident at all ■ Not very confident ■ Somewhat confident ■ Very confident

How confident are you in your long-term online digital strategy?



This low confidence speaks directly to the Expertise pillar within the *Human Intelligence in Advertising Index*. Expertise thrives on time, training, and trust — all of which are being tested in an era of constant change. As automation accelerates, marketers are finding it harder to distinguish instinct from algorithm, and harder still to feel secure in their own judgement.

For many, it's not a lack of knowledge but a lack of clarity. The tools are multiplying; the outcomes, less certain. What once felt like progress now feels precarious — a reminder that human intelligence remains the most adaptable, yet most unsettled, force in modern marketing.

Marketer Confidence in Decline

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025

AI isn't bolstering confidence

Although nearly 80% of marketers are now using AI in some form, there's little evidence that adoption is translating into greater confidence. Among those who do feel more confident, AI-assisted ad copywriting and creative ideation appear to be most effective.

Conversely, confidence is lowest among marketers using AI for textual content creation (such as blogs or caption writing), where automation can feel repetitive and detached from brand voice. **The marketers thriving in 2025 aren't the ones using the most AI - they're the ones using it most intelligently.**

36%

Of marketers use AI for ad copywriting and creative ideation

20.4%

Of marketers are not currently using AI

How confident are you in your long-term online digital strategy?

Not confident at all

Not very confident

Somewhat confident

Very confident



How do you currently
use AI tools in your
marketing, and what for?



The Digital Plateau

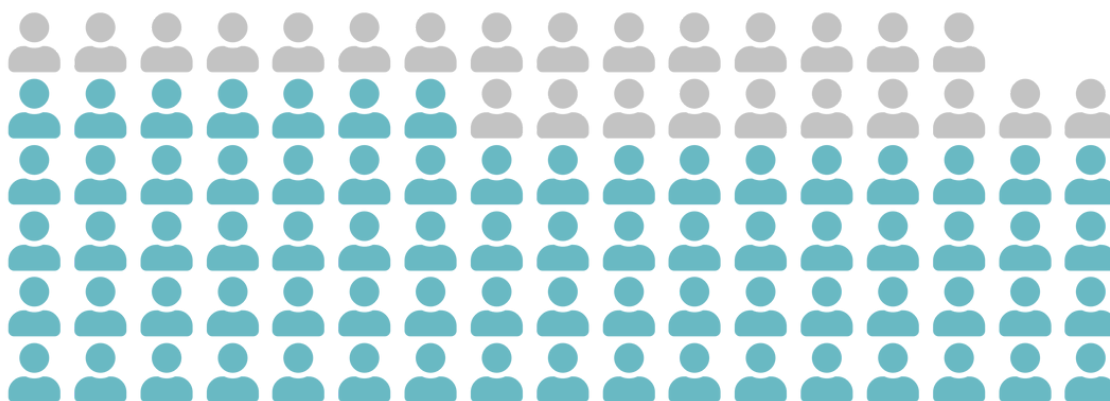
The Perspective of Marketers in 2025

The era of endless digital growth has slowed. Three in four marketers (75%) report diminishing returns from digital channels over the last 12–18 months — a clear sign that performance is plateauing even as investment continues to rise.

24% believe algorithm and AI changes are reducing the reach of their digital ads.

75% of marketers have noticed diminishing returns on digital channels over the last 12–18 months.

1 = 1 Yes No



For many, the problem isn't lack of effort but overexposure. One in three (30%) marketers cite audience fatigue or ad saturation as major challenges, while 24% believe constant algorithm and AI updates are reducing campaign reach. At the same time, 21% point to increased competition driving up the cost of impressions and clicks, stretching budgets thinner than ever.

This convergence of factors has created a market where efficiency feels elusive and creative stand-out harder to achieve. Automation promised precision; instead, it's produced predictability. The result? A crowded landscape where every campaign competes for attention within the same digital noise.

21%

Of marketers believe increased competition is driving up costs of digital ads.

30%

Of marketers are struggling with audience fatigue/ad saturation across digital ads.

Expert Commentary



This plateau doesn't signify failure, but maturity. It's a point in every industry where rapid innovation gives way to reflection, and digital marketing is no different. The tools have evolved faster than the strategies that govern them, and in that gap, we're seeing the limits of automation laid bare. Technology has made advertising faster, but not necessarily better. It's safe to assume that what defines the next phase won't be the next algorithm - as it has been for nearly a decade - it'll be unique strategies governed by Human Intelligence.



The AI Marketing Reality Check: Integration of AI Tools in 2025

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025

Tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Midjourney, Stability AI, and Sora have made automation accessible to almost every team. Yet, ubiquity doesn't always equal utility. For many, AI has shifted the challenge from creation to calibration: trusting what's generated, understanding bias, and ensuring that output aligns with brand identity.



In 2025, **Nutella** used generative AI to create 7 million unique package designs.

¹ Ogilvy Italy. (2025). Nutella Unica Campaign [Advertising campaign]. Ferrero S.p.A.

The AI Marketing Reality Check: Integration of AI Tools in 2025

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025



Creative ideation and ad copywriting rank among the most successful AI applications, with marketers reporting higher satisfaction when the tools enhance rather than replace human thought. By contrast, areas such as text-based content creation (blogs, social captions) generated the least confidence — a reminder that efficiency doesn't always equal effectiveness.

Nearly one in five marketers believe AI tools exhibit cultural or ethnic bias²

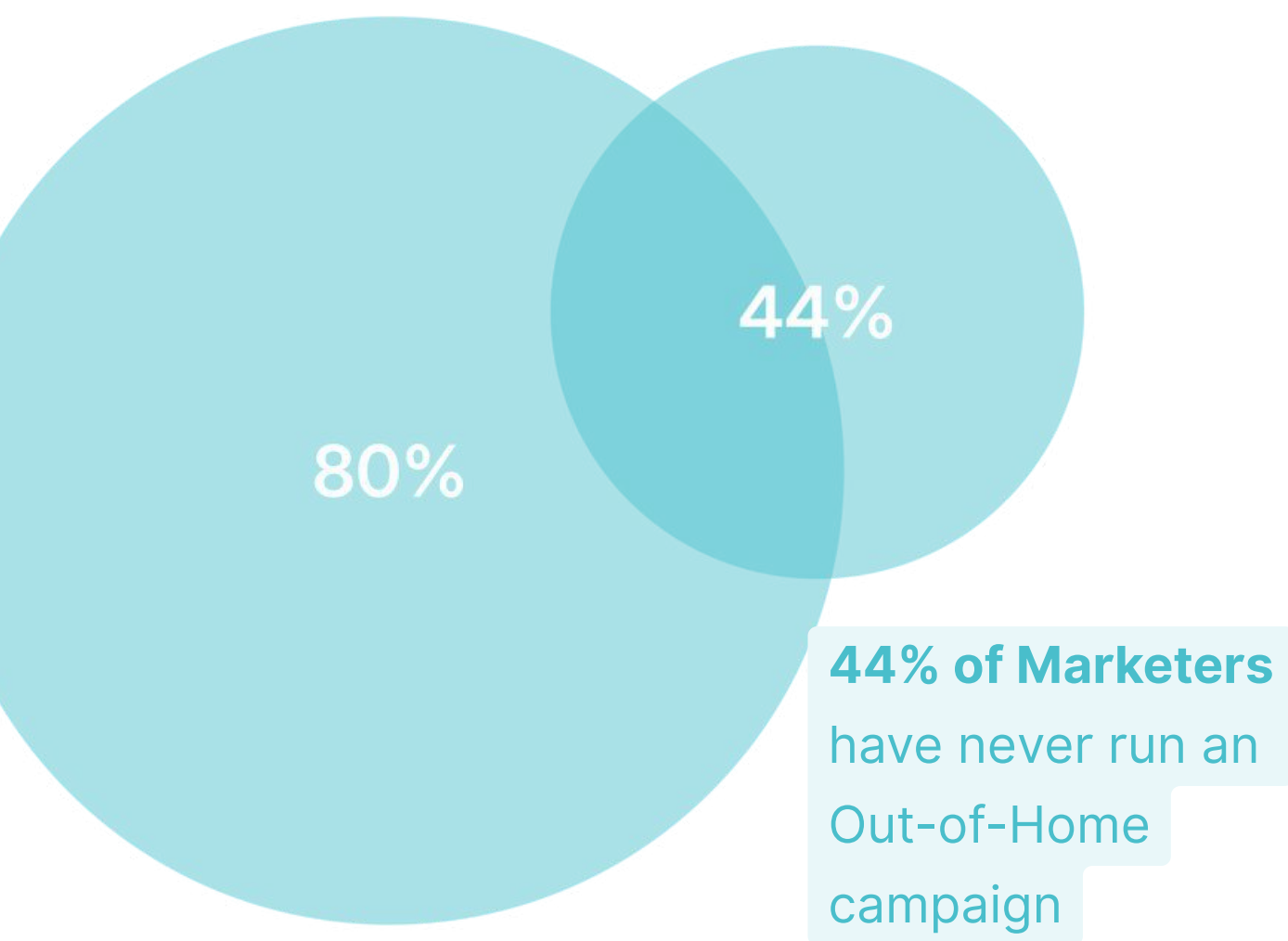
² Base: 300 Marketing Professional respondents. Source: PMA Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

Nearly one in five marketers believe AI tools exhibit cultural or ethnic bias, and **over a quarter say outcomes vary depending on the platform used**. This variability underlines a growing need for oversight, transparency, and discernment in AI-assisted marketing.

Traditional Advertising and the Missing Medium

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025

Marketing Professional respondents:
comparing AI adoption to Traditional Advertising



Base: 300 Marketing Professional respondents. Source: PMA
Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

© Priority Media Agency

Nearly eight in ten marketers are now using AI to create, plan, and optimise campaigns. But despite this surge in digital sophistication, almost half (44%) have never run an Out-of-Home, radio, or television campaign.

Traditional Advertising and the Missing Medium

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025

Expert Commentary



The industry's collective gaze has narrowed; fixated on screens, data, and automation, while some of the most trusted and effective formats sit idle.

For a generation raised on dashboards and metrics, traditional media can seem outdated: slower to execute, harder to measure, less flexible. Yet the very limitations of these channels may be what makes them powerful. Out-of-Home still commands physical attention; radio builds routine familiarity; and television continues to deliver scale, emotion, and cultural reach.



¹ Bournemouth University. (2020). Transforming advertising and the commuter journey on the Transport for London network: REF2021 impact case study (UoA34 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management). Retrieved from <https://ref2021impact.bournemouth.ac.uk>

80% of commuters recall OOH campaigns

Research from Bournemouth University's "*Transforming Advertising and the Commuter Journey*"¹ study (2020) highlights the power of OOH clearly. Their work found that 80% of commuters recalled Fujifilm's OOH campaign; a rate far higher than the digital average of 40–67%. Moreover, 72% of commuters who recalled a John Lewis campaign said it made them want to engage with the brand; with 62% actually interacting with it in-store or online afterwards

Traditional Advertising and the Missing Medium

The Perspective of Marketers in 2025

Expert Commentary

“ Out-of-Home isn't what it used to be. We've now got DOOH screens updating in real time, location-based audio ads triggered by where you walk, even reactive creative slapped on the side of a double-decker bus. The mediums we used to call “traditional” are anything but.

What still brings millions together for the big, emotional, cultural moments? TV. What holds a place in people's daily driving routines? Radio. And what makes them stop and look up in the real world? OOH. Three very different strengths, all doing what digital alone can't.

Compared to the endless scroll of digital feeds, these formats actually feel real. They exist in the world, not just on a screen. And as marketers quietly lose faith in digital ROI, the answer isn't to ditch data or AI - it's to rebalance the mix and bring some physical impact back into play.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Matthew Davis

Commercial Director, PMA



Photograph: **Paddy Power** Bus Wrap Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.



Photograph: **The Anfield Wrap** Digital Billboard Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

Part Two

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

ER,
ILES TO THE COUNTRY'S
ESSFUL FOOTBALL CLUB.

TAW
THE AIRFIELD WARP

TRAFFORD

MANCHESTER,
JUST 37 MILES TO THE COUNTRY'S
MOST SUCCESSFUL FOOTBALL CLUB.

TAW
THE ANFIELD WRAP

Photograph: **The Anfield Wrap** Digital Billboard Campaign with
PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

Ad Fatigue, Ad Blockers and The Creativity Gap

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

20% of men use ad blockers

29%

Of women over 35 say they often feel overwhelmed and put off using social media.

44%

Of men over 44 believe AI content lacks creativity compared to human-made content.

80%

Of women over 35 find pop-ups and banner ads annoying/frustrating.

63%

Of UK adults dislike video ads before/during content.

For audiences across the UK, the experience of online marketing now often feels **less engaging and more exhausting**.

In 2025, majority of UK adults say they dislike video ads before or during content, while 20% of men report using ad blockers to avoid them altogether. But it's not only frequency that's wearing audiences down — it's familiarity.

Audiences have decreased patience for repetitive ads. Audiences also claim they can tell when advertising is AI-generated. Across demographics, **44% of men over 44 and 42% of women over 35 believe that AI content feels less creative than human-made work**, suggesting an emerging creativity gap that technology alone can't bridge.

Ad Fatigue, Ad Blockers and The Creativity Gap

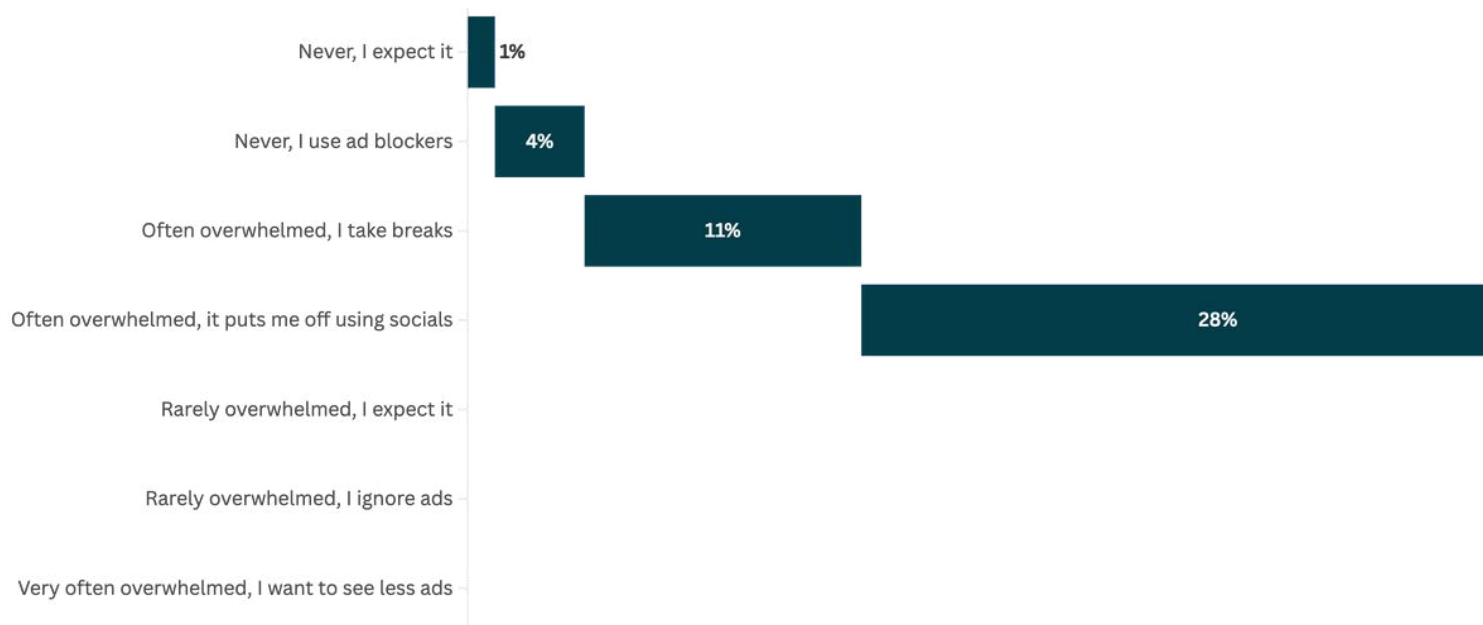
UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

Despite the ubiquity of digital marketing, audiences increasingly perceive it as an interruption rather than an invitation. Our findings reveal that nearly two-thirds of UK adults (63%) dislike video ads that appear before or during online content, **with frustration levels peaking among older demographics.**

Digital ads are considered intrusive by the General Population

General Population respondents(1)
share how often they feel overwhelmed by online ads

Share of respondents % of total sample

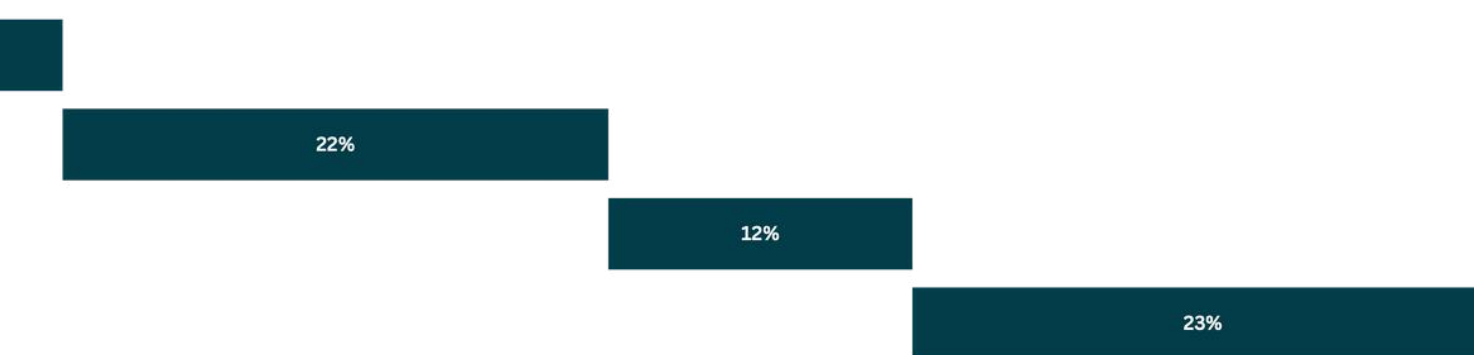


¹ Base: 300 Marketing Professional respondents. Source: PMA Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

Digital Ad avoidance is becoming second nature

For many, avoidance has become second nature. One in five men (20%) now use ad blockers, and 80% of women over 35 report irritation with pop-ups and banner ads. This paints a clear picture of digital fatigue; one driven not just by overexposure, but by declining creative quality and a lack of emotional resonance.

As algorithms optimise for attention, audiences are optimising for escape. The modern consumer is not disengaged from brands - they're disengaged from noise.



22%

12%

23%

Ad Fatigue, Ad Blockers and The Creativity Gap

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

The Most Annoying Digital Ads according to the UK General Population

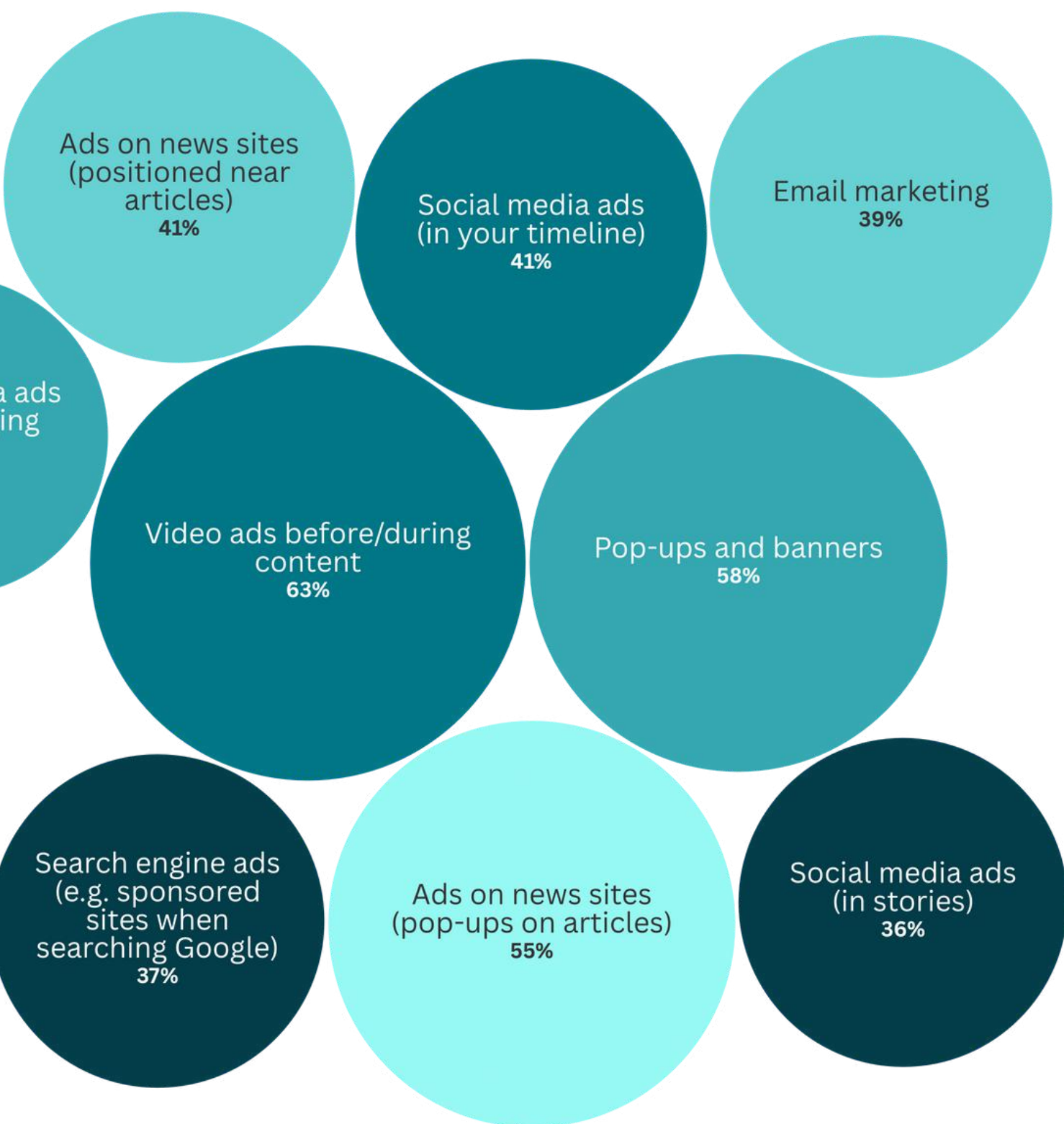
Social media
(in messaging
apps)
34%

General Population respondents⁽¹⁾
most disliked ads (multi-choice)

Share of respondents % of total sample

- Social media ads (in stories) ■ Social media ads (in your timeline) ■ Social media ads (in messaging apps)
- Ads on news sites (pop-ups on articles) ■ Search engine ads (e.g. sponsored sites when searching Google)
- Pop-ups and banners ■ Email marketing
- Ads on news sites (positioned near articles)
- Video ads before/during content

¹ Base: 300 Marketing Professional respondents. Source: PMA Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report





Photograph: **Priority Media Agency** Digital Billboard Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

Trust in AI vs. Traditional Media: Street Interviews in the UK Capital

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

To complement the quantitative data captured through national surveys, **a series of street interviews were conducted across central London to understand how audiences are experiencing advertising in real time.** These qualitative conversations provide texture around the three outcomes we measure: Confidence, Trust, and Creativity.

Where surveys quantify sentiment, these interviews humanise it. They reveal what trust feels like, how creativity is recognised, and where confidence in advertising begins — or breaks down.

“Billboards I feel like they’re [brands are] spending a lot of money on it... the messages are clear and straight to the point,” **said one participant.** “Online, it’s cheap. You can tell when something’s just been pumped out by a computer.”

That reaction wasn’t isolated. Across dozens of conversations, respondents repeatedly revealed a trust bias towards OOH media.

“If it’s on a billboard or TV, I take it more seriously,” **said another participant.**

Priority Media Agency. (2025, October). Street interviews: UK audience perceptions of advertising and trust in AI [Primary qualitative research dataset]. Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report.

Trust in AI vs. Traditional Media: Street Interviews in the UK Capital

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

Public perceptions align closely with the data. **Nearly half of men (48%) say they do not trust or click on AI-generated ads.** Meanwhile, 17% of men over 44 perceive brands advertising through TV, OOH, or radio as more trustworthy and successful; suggesting that media format itself now signals credibility.



48%

Of men do not trust or click on AI-generated ads.

17%

Of men over 44 see brands that advertise on TV/OOH/radio as more trustworthy, established, or successful.

42%

Of AB social class watch TV every day.

Even those open to AI-generated adverts expressed mixed feelings.

“It’s clever, but it doesn’t feel human,” **one respondent said.** “You can tell it’s AI. The words don’t sound right. It’s like talking to a chatbot that’s trying too hard.”

Priority Media Agency. (2025, October). Street interviews: UK audience perceptions of advertising and trust in AI [Primary qualitative research dataset]. Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report.

The assumption that digital is the most effective route to reach everyone is increasingly untrue. Among higher-income audiences (those within the AB social class) **42% still watch television every day**, suggesting that for many of the most financially influential consumers, traditional media remains part of their daily routine.

Men, despite being a demographic often associated with heavy digital usage - are becoming harder to reach online. **One in five use ad blockers**, however majority of men interviewed could easily recall physical advertising they had seen that day — from billboards and bus wraps to shopfront posters.

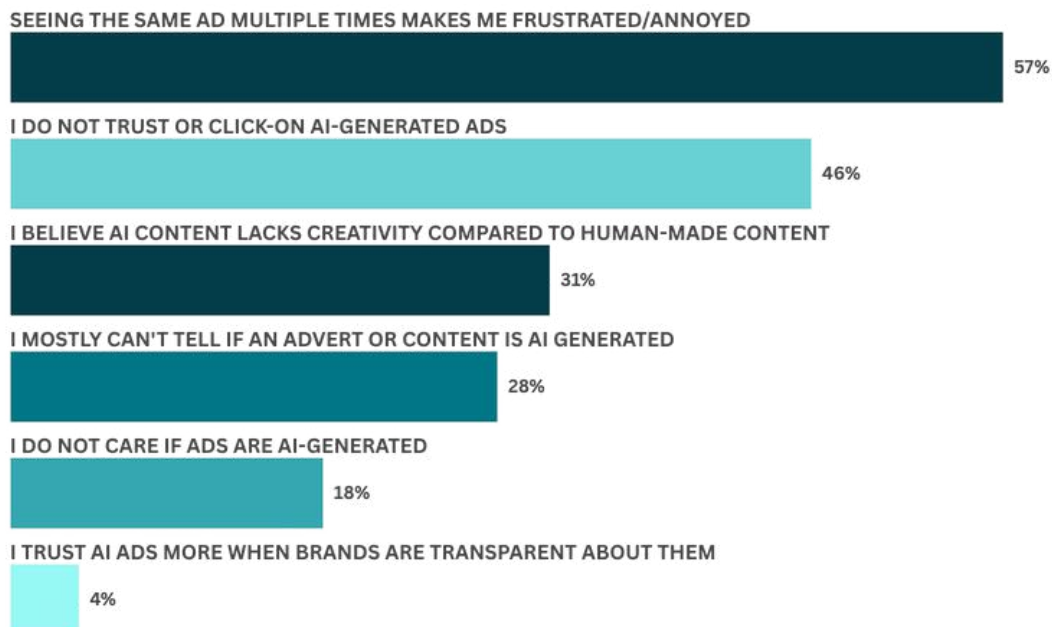
Trust in AI vs. Traditional Media: Street Interviews in the UK Capital

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

As previously explored, marketers are well aware of the slowdown happening across digital channels. Many openly acknowledge that performance decline is being driven by ad fatigue, oversaturation, and repetitive creative. Simultaneously, 80% of marketers have turned to AI tools to accelerate ad production - with image and video generation ranking as the third most common use of AI behind ad copywriting and textual content creation.

General Population respondents(1) opinions on digital and AI ads (multi-choice)

Share of respondents % of total sample





1 Base: 300
Marketing
Professional
respondents.
Source: PMA
Human Intelligence
in Advertising 2025
Report

Comparison between Marketers and Audiences

In theory, this use of AI is meant to solve the problem: to refresh creative faster and combat fatigue. But in practice, it may be making things worse.

On the audience side, **57% of respondents admitted that seeing the same ad multiple times made them frustrated or annoyed**. However, the disconnect in the solution is striking. **46% said they don't trust or click on AI-generated ads**, and **33% believe AI content lacks creativity** compared to human-made work. Many respondents also felt they could tell when an advert was AI-generated.

Priority Media Agency. (2025, October). Street interviews: UK audience perceptions of advertising and trust in AI [Primary qualitative research dataset]. Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report.

An interviewee summarised the predicament well;

“Yeah, I’d say we love AI — but it’s becoming a bit repetitive. It’s hard to make something feel new these days because most things have already been done. So, yeah... I’m not really the biggest fan of ads anymore.”

AI-generated and AI-enhanced content have quickly become standard tools in the modern era. It’s understandable that brands are eager to use them. However, overreliance risks creative flattening. In a saturated market, originality isn’t optional; **it’s the only real differentiator left**.



Photograph: **Priority Media Agency** Digital Billboard Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

The Power of Presence in Out-of-Home

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

While digital advertising dominates screen space, physical media continues to dominate mental space. Across every demographic, daily exposure to traditional channels - particularly Out-of-Home (OOH) - remains high, and heads are still turning,

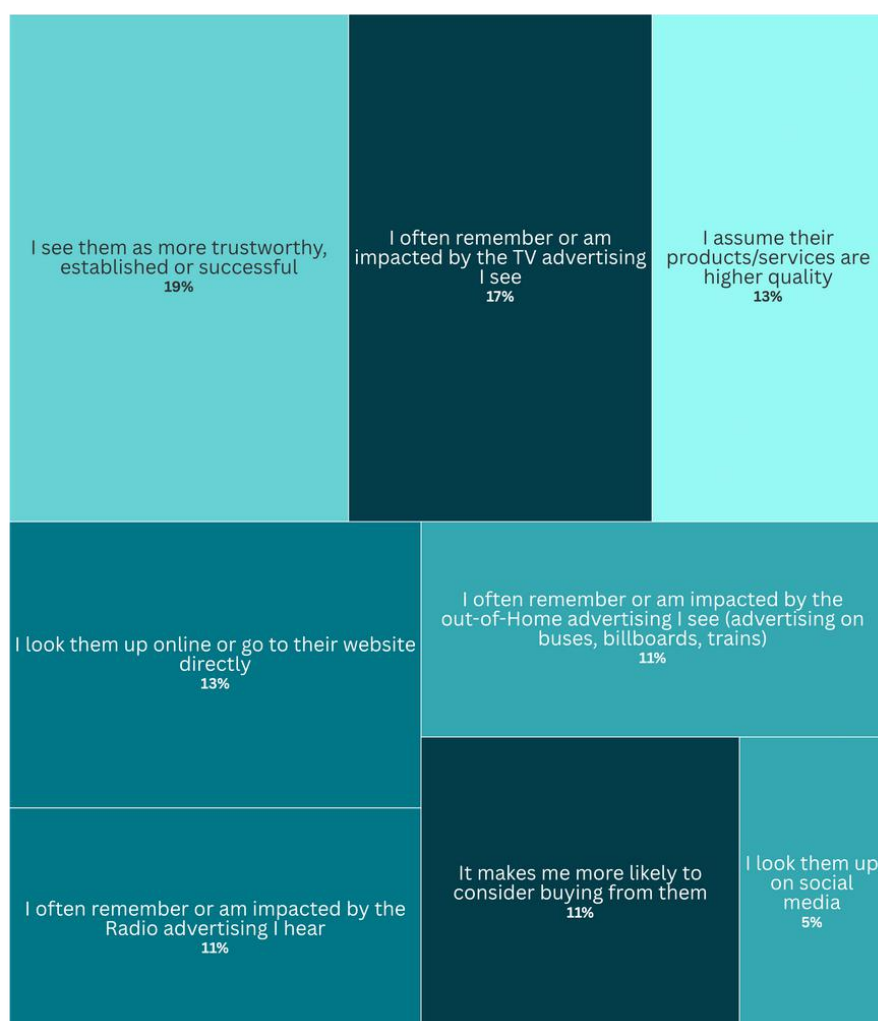
46%

Of people are impacted by Traditional Advertising they encounter.

¹ Base: 1,000+ UK respondents aged 18–85.
Source: PMA Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

General Population respondents(1)
opinions on brands that advertise on TV, Radio, Billboards and Buses

Share of respondents % of total sample

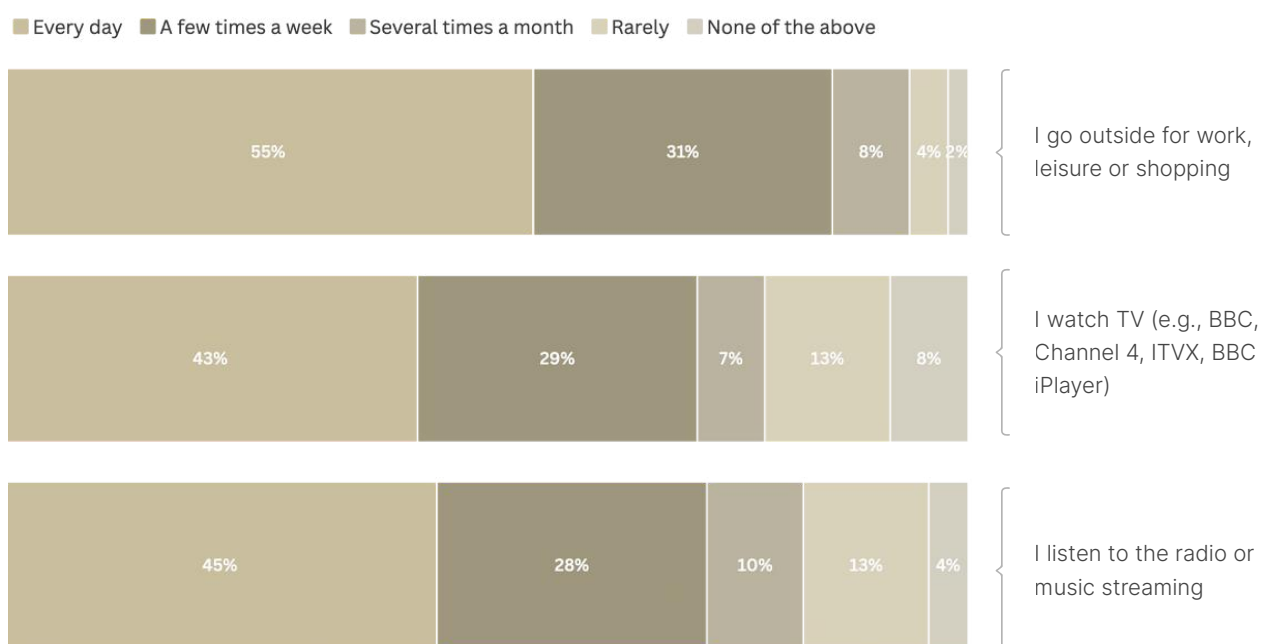


The Power of Presence in Out-of-Home

UK General Population Advertising Perceptions in 2025

General Population respondents share their travel and media habits

Share of respondents by generation(1) % of total sample



63%

Of women over 35 listen to radio or music streaming every day.

¹ Base: 1,000+ UK respondents aged 18–85.
Source: PMA Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report

Our findings reveal that 64% of men over 44 leave their homes daily for work, leisure, or shopping, while 35–55-year-olds remain the easiest group to reach via traditional media.

Even younger audiences show signs of renewed engagement: under-35s report being more affected by traditional advertising than their older counterparts. Audio media, too, shows continued resilience — 62% of under-35s and 63% of women over 35 say they listen to radio or music streaming daily. This habitual exposure makes Audio and OOH two of the few channels where audience attention still matches audience reach.

Reclaiming Attention Beyond the Screen

In contrast, digital environments are seeing rapidly diminishing returns. According to the *2025 State of Marketing AI Report* (SmarterX, 2025), nearly half of marketers (45%) describe their confidence in evaluating AI-powered marketing technology as only “medium.”¹ Despite widespread adoption, confidence has not scaled with capability, and performance metrics across digital campaigns are flattening.

¹ SmarterX. (2025). *2025 State of Marketing AI Report*. Cleveland: Marketing AI Institute.

Commuters exposed to OOH recalled brand messages **up to 4x longer** than digital display ads viewed in social feeds²

Traditional advertising, by comparison, offers something AI cannot replicate: real-world human attention. A Bournemouth University impact case study (2020) found that commuters exposed to OOH campaigns recalled brand messages up to four times longer than digital display ads viewed in social feeds.

As digital confidence stalls, physical advertising’s strength lies in its simplicity; **attention earned, not automated**. The daily rhythms of travel, listening, and public life continue to make traditional media the quiet constant in an increasingly algorithmic age.

² Bournemouth University. (2020). Transforming advertising and the commuter journey on the Transport for London network: REF2021 impact case study (UoA34 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management). Retrieved from <https://ref2021impact.bournemouth.ac.uk>



Big Mary Burger

~~BURGER?~~
~~SANDWICH?~~
= DELICIOUS.

📍 Odyssey Place
2 Queens Quay

m:
CHICKEN

Photograph: **MB Chicken** Proximity Billboard Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.



Report Conclusion

The Future of Brand Advertising: Human Intelligence and AI



Photograph: **MB Chicken** Proximity Billboard Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

The Future of Brand Advertising: Human Intelligence and AI

Report Conclusion

The findings of this report reveal a marketing landscape caught between acceleration and fatigue. Marketers are using more technology than ever — 80% now rely on AI tools — yet only 5% feel truly confident in their campaigns.

80%

Of Marketers rely on AI tools for content generation and enhancement.

5%

Only 5% of Marketers feel truly confident in their campaigns.

75% of marketers admit to diminishing returns on digital ads

57% of audiences admit to becoming frustrated with repeating digital ads

Performance across digital channels has plateaued, with most attributing the slowdown to saturation, competition, and creative repetition. Audiences, meanwhile, echo that sentiment from the other side: **63% dislike video ads**, **57% are frustrated by repetition**, and many openly distrust AI-generated content. The irony is clear - while brands turn to automation to create more, consumers are asking for better.

Traditional Media is due for a comeback

Traditional media, once sidelined, has re-emerged as a **creative, memorable** preferred advertising method that can earn trust, attention, and authenticity.



Photograph: **Lime Bike** Legal Flyposting Campaign with PMA, 2025. Image courtesy of Priority Media Agency.

END OF REPORT



Priority Media Agency

About PMA

2025 Recap

Priority Media Agency (PMA) is a full-service advertising agency specialising in traditional media, while also managing digital campaigns across paid social, programmatic, and content-led formats.

Our approach is rooted in expertise, powered by an in-house team with over 100 years of combined experience in media planning, buying, and creative delivery.

In 2025, PMA has continued to build on a record year of successful partnerships. From White Fox Clothing's high-impact city rollouts to Paddy Power's humour-led campaigns, Two Chicks' brand refresh, and The Anfield Wrap's award-winning campaign.

Other standout collaborations include MB Chicken and a growing roster of independent brands finding their voice through high-visibility media.

This year's successes reflect more than campaign outcomes; they inform us on industry-wide shifts. Many of our clients have raised questions about what's next for advertising as digital performance flattens and costs rise. *The Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report* was developed to answer these questions: exploring the causes of this digital plateau and reaffirming the enduring value of human expertise in brand communication.

PMA has helped brands of every size make their mark in the physical and digital world alike.

Bringing Insights to You, All Together

We sincerely hope this report offers practical perspective and renewed confidence for marketers navigating change. Thank you for reading, and for continuing to build what's next with PMA.



David Allen
Managing Director, PMA



Steven Ryan
Head of Digital & Design, PMA

Appendix & References

Appendix A | Proprietary Research Framework

The Human Intelligence in Advertising Index was developed by Priority Media Agency (PMA) to evaluate human capability within modern marketing. It is structured around three principles — Expertise, Authenticity, and Ingenuity — each paired with measurable outcomes: Confidence & Capability, Trust & Transparency, and Creativity & Connection.

Data Sources This report draws on mixed-method quantitative and qualitative research conducted between August and October 2025.

- General Population Survey: 1,000+ UK respondents aged 18–85, balanced by gender, - Marketing Professionals Survey: 300+ active UK marketers across seniority levels and industries.
- Street Interviews: 20+ in-person interviews in London exploring audience trust and ad perception.

Appendix B | Key Figures and Methodology Notes

Survey Period: August–October 2025 **Data Collection:** Online survey platforms and in-person interviews **Analysis Conducted By:** JaDID & Co. Limited on behalf of Priority Media Agency **Sample Weighting:** Representative of UK demographics (ONS, 2024 benchmarks)

References

Primary Data (Proprietary)

Priority Media Agency. (2025). Human Intelligence in Advertising 2025 Report – Proprietary Research Dataset. London: PMA. Priority Media Agency. (2025, October). Street Interviews: UK Audience Perceptions of Advertising and Trust in AI [Primary Qualitative Research Dataset].

Third-Party Data and Supporting Research

Bournemouth University. (2023). Transforming Advertising and the Commuter Journey on the Train. UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) Case Study. McKinsey & Company. (2024). The State of AI in 2024. McKinsey Global Survey. SmarterX / Marketing AI Institute. (2025). 2025 State of Marketing AI Report. Cleveland, OH: SmarterX Publishing. Ofcom. (2024). Media Nations: UK 2024. London: Ofcom. YouGov. (2025). UK Consumer Trust and Advertising Attitudes Tracker.

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Use of AI in Reporting

AI Disclaimers

Artificial intelligence was used in the production of this report strictly to support efficiency, accuracy, and readability. Tools were applied for functions such as summarisation, grammar and spell checking, and readability refinement. All data interpretation, analysis, and editorial decisions were made by human researchers and editors.

Priority Media Agency follows the guidance outlined in the **NIST AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF)** for responsible and transparent AI usage. All AI tools used in this report adhere to self-certification standards in line with the AI RMF's principles of accountability, fairness, and human oversight.



