

Digital Marketing Trends 2024

Galactic Fed Marketing Lab: Issue 13

Happy New Year! Hope you had a stellar time however you were celebrating and are now ready to start off strong and make 2024 your best year yet 🚀

To give you some inspo, we decided to make this issue a recap of all the best and biggest things from 2023. From steal-worthy marketing campaigns to crucial industry updates, let's rewind and reminisce together.

Buckle up!



What were the biggest industry updates?

In short: AI, GA4, Core Updates, Threads, VR/AR ads

Artificial Intelligence

We can't remember the last time we went on LinkedIn without seeing a "10 AI tools to 100x your productivity" post. So yeah, AI was the biggest thing of 2023.

Albeit almost going from novelty to a dime-a-dozen, AI tools revolutionized most aspects of digital marketing and ushered in an entirely new era. 2024 will see it unfold. Especially now that ChatGPT is no longer the only player: healthy competition with Bard, Grok, Gemini, and alike will no doubt accelerate AI adoption and its capabilities.

Google Analytics 4

The biggest newsmaker and updates-shipper was, obviously, Google. Arguably the biggest event was the (untimely) demise of Universal Analytics and the **transition to GA4**. Dreaded by many, the switch went better than expected. Plus, it's set to prepare advertisers in particular and marketers in general for the inevitable deprecation of third-party cookies.



Google Core Updates

Not as groundbreaking but just as impactful were the two Google Core Updates released unusually close to each other in October and November. The former was especially deadly, with thousands of low-quality websites going down. But both essentially targeted the same search algorithms, doubling down on the E-E-A-T approach. Read between the lines - helpful quality content is still king.

Threads

Meta was neck and neck with Google, making a lot of (questionable and not) headlines and updates. From rather minor but impactful changes like Facebook ads budget scheduling to ad-free subscriptions, Meta was keeping everyone busy.

The biggest still was the launch of Threads, a new social media platform, the "Twitter killer" (no). It set a new record in user acquisition, gaining 100 MILLION accounts in just 5 days. Shortly after, things started to go downhill, with the platform currently reporting around 10m daily active users. And yet, with the much-anticipated launch in Europe and an upcoming ads platform, Threads may still surprise us this year. Here's a [quick guide](#) on how to get started.

Quest 3

And then there was also Meta Quest 3 which opened up a whole new spectrum of opportunities for VR advertising. With the launch of Apple's Vision Pro set sometime this year, we're about to witness some incredibly annoying futuristic ads.

What was everyone talking about?

In short: Let's pretend we were talking about something besides AI ☹️

Twitter becoming X

We doubt Meta could kill Twitter, but an inside job just might. It's been almost 6 months since the blue bird became the black X, and yet we still can't fully make sense of the decision. The platform is losing its revenue, advertisers pull out, Elon Musk provides **bridge-burning directions**... Seems like the saga will continue this year, so time to stock up on popcorn.

Las Vegas Sphere

We thought we saw it all in terms of OOH advertising, but then Las Vegas Sphere opened and left us speechless. And yet it caused burning discussions: whether it was ugly or cool, how much it cost to run, how much it costs

to advertise (a whopping \$450,000 per day, btw), and how realistic the projections were. It's one of the few examples we can think of when people talk about not just an ad itself but also its placement.

Nepo Babies

Nepotism isn't new so we can't even remember what caused a massive crusade against celebrities with influential parents. Nonetheless, the media eagerly picked up on the new hot topic. BuzzFeed, for instance, only had a few articles dedicated to nepo babies before 2023 yet went full-on BuzzFeed last year gifting us the "Let's Find Out Which 'Nepo Baby' Is Your 2023 Soulmate" and similar Gen Z magnets.



Hollywood Strikes

Not everyone welcomes AI as heartily as marketers. Hollywood writers and actors, for instance, felt threatened enough to go on the first joint strike since 1960 against producers. This clash of titans went on for over 6 months, crippling the industry and delaying the release and production of hundreds of titles. Some of them indefinitely, including the final season of Stranger Things *sob*.

Roman Empire

Last year we learned that most men regularly think about the Roman Empire. It all started with a TikTok with a baffled girl who just made this stunning discovery and encouraged others to question men around them. Not the worst thing to think about, if you ask us.



▶ What were the marketing campaigns that blew us away?

In short: Barbenheimer, non-human influencers, Duolingo, the unburnt Stanley Cup, MSCHF's Big Red Boots

Barbenheimer: capitalizing on unsolicited hype

Remember that weekend in July when both Barbie and Oppenheimer premiered? The same-day release of two potential blockbusters should have turned one of them into a complete flop. Instead, it birthed a cultural phenomena - Barbenheimer. And absolutely rocked the box office with combined ticket sales grossing over \$2 billion.

Barbie's marketing was impeccable and expensive (amounting to over \$150 million), but it was the internet that played a major role by making everyone obsessed with the Barbenheimer memes. The teams behind the films didn't miss the opportunity to capitalize on that, organizing joint Margot Robbie and Cillian Murphy appearances and interviews. Well played.



MSCHF's Big Red Boots: capitalizing on virality

How did the “ugliest boots in history” (sic.) become so viral that even **celebrities** rushed to sport them? Ridiculously looking knee-high, bright red, rubbery plastic design garnered nearly 115 million views on TikTok, became a coveted sensation, and quadrupled its price from \$350 retail to a staggering \$1500 on a reseller marketplace. A great lesson on creating hype out of thin air.



AI Influencers: capitalizing on technology

This is not a drill - we have officially entered our non-human influencer era and it looks like it's bound to stay. AI-generated influencers, like **Spanish model Aitana Lopez**, created by The Clueless, are raking in thousands of \$\$\$ monthly. Some brands now prefer partnering with AI-influencers as they are easier to work with than humans who don't show up for shoots on time or start thinking too much of themselves. Enter even crazier beauty standards?

Stanley Cup: capitalizing on UGC

Do you remember that **viral TikTok** with a woman showing her Stanley cup surviving a car fire (with some ice still in)? A lot of user-generated content goes unnoticed by brands, so it was awesome to see Stanley President Terence Reilly timely play this out by promising to replace not just the cup but also the car!

This heartwarming response garnered over 32 million views, turning it into the feel-good story of the season in record time. Plus, well over 100 million impressions and a truckload of positive PR for the brand.

Duolingo: capitalizing on unhinged marketing

Have you ever seen a social media post and thought "how on earth was it approved"? You definitely have if you follow Duolingo on TikTok. They moved away from polished corporate "5 tips to learn a new language" types of posts and let Duo - their mascot - take center stage. It's utterly unhinged which perfectly resonates with the audience, especially Gen Zers. And last year, when they launched an online merch store, they also did this:



The risk pays off greatly: Duolingo remains one of the most popular education apps with 62% YoY increase in daily users. Now, go learn some Spanish!

▶ What celebrities taught us the best/worst business lessons?

In short: Taylor Swift, Rhianna, Sam Altman, Britney Spears, Prince Harry

Best: Taylor Swift and hard work

If there was anything bigger than AI in 2023, that was Taylor Swift. Highest-grossing music tour ever, highest-grossing concert film of all time, fans literally causing an earthquake of 2.3 magnitude in Seattle, appearance at a boyfriend's football game skyrocketing merch sales by 400%... The list goes on. Whatever Taylor touches turns into a money-making machine. Nepo baby or not, she's one of the hardest-working celebrities in the industry, and we couldn't help but admire her dedication.

Worst: Prince Harry and family skeletons

We're not here to judge or gossip, but as marketing professionals, we felt rather confused watching Prince Harry last year. More in terms of a lesson on how not to build your personal brand. Inconsistency in character and rhetoric, complaining about paparazzi but **allegedly staging a car chase**, wanting to patch things up with the royal family and then releasing an extremely... exposing book. Whatever the reason, we can't get on board with trying to capitalize on the family's privacy.

Best: Rhianna and 6th business sense

Such a brilliant business plan:

Disappear for a few years -> Spread rumors about being pregnant -> Appear at Super Bowl -> Reveal a baby bump -> Set a new views record and make everyone talk about your upcoming world tour. Most celebrities know how to turn their life events into media coverage, but the way Rhianna pulled that off was just next level.



Best: Sam Altman and turning the tide

Getting fired sucks. Getting fired as the CEO of the hottest company must be even worse. On Nov 17th (Friday), Sam Altman was ousted by OpenAI's Board of Directors, kickstarting a chain of nail-biting events. Fast-forward to Sunday, Microsoft hired him to lead a new AI research unit. By Wednesday, Altman gets reinstated and 5/6 members of the Board are pushed out. We're still not sure what it was, but here's a quick recap of one of the greatest business gambits in history.

Worst: Britney Spears and going viral

They say, 'all attention is good attention' and being forgotten is probably the biggest celebrity nightmare. But after watching Britney last year, we're not so sure. Of course, every piece of content she put out there (including her memoirs) caused a massive surge of media and social mentions, but mostly because people were genuinely concerned about her mental and physical well-being. Not the sentiment we would normally recommend our clients to aim for.



What were the biggest Galactic achievements?

In short: Where do we begin...

2023 was a *fantastic* year for Galactic Fed! Not to brag, but we were able to squeeze in a lot of stuff in those 365 days. Here's a quick recap of some of our favorite updates:



1 We onboarded 96 new clients 🤖


2 We hired 52 new crew members 🤖



We became the official sponsors of the #1 Digital Nomad podcast "The Maverick Show" 🚀


3 THE MAVERICK SHOW

4



We scored a bunch of new certificates, including Top SEO Agencies, Amazon Verified Partner, Purpose Jobs Verified, Google Premier Partner, and some more 🏆

5 We redesigned many pages on our website, released multiple **high-value toolkits**, dedicated an entire team to our creative and organic services, and became obsessed with our **creative reel**



We're truly excited about 2024! And hope you're as well!

That's a wrap!

Thank you for reading our report!

If you want more juicy insights,
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See you!

