

**THE
UNTAPPED
POWER OF
CUSTOMER
INSIGHTS**

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WHAT'S DRIVING CUSTOMER CONTEXT?

Today's data-driven marketing has one goal in mind: delivering an experience that feels natural, timely and personal.

None of that is possible without an awareness of customer context.

Customer context is not a new concept, but it is now more important than ever. It can be defined as the needs, preferences and actions a customer takes when considering or purchasing your brand's products or services. It's the foundation of relationships.

When you interact with a person, you expect them to understand your needs, your values and your emotions

in that particular moment. That's the essence of effective communications. Understanding circumstances creates empathy and opens people up to conversation and connection.

The same is true when you interact with a brand. It's why understanding the customer's journey is so important. Consumers put out signals about what they need, and they expect the brands they interact with to respond to those signals. That's what personalized marketing is all about. When a marketing email, text message or ad campaign reflects this kind of deep understanding of needs and values, it feels appropriate and welcomed. You can just picture the shopper thinking, "They get me."

All of this requires a commitment to predictive insights and customer intelligence. You need to know more about a shopper than their name and purchase history to know their wants, needs and journey. You need to know what they're talking about, what's important to them, how they're acting across a wide range of digital and real-world channels and what market factors are impacting them.

To find out more about how marketers today approach and use customer insights and

customer intelligence, Adweek Branded, in association with Quid, conducted an exclusive, survey of more than 100 marketing leaders at brands and agencies. The results show that while most view customer insights as a critical component of successful data-driven marketing, the tools many marketers are using may not be cut out for today's fast-paced market.

Clearly, marketers understand that context and personalization are ways to deliver a customer experience that sets their brands apart. In the survey, 86% of respondents strongly agreed (53%) or agreed (33%) that being able to understand a customer's emotions and attitudes would give their company a distinct competitive advantage. But at the same time, 83% indicated that they're struggling with executing personalized marketing programs at scale.

Marketers have access to a wealth of data about their customers, but they're still grappling with turning those data points into insights and action. With the right tools and the promise of advanced technologies like AI, they can create a strategic advantage. *Read on* to find out more about what the surveyed marketers said about tapping into the power of customer insights.



KEY FINDINGS

Customer Insights Need More Agility and Speed

There is little doubt that marketers understand the value of consumer intelligence and generally feel like they have a clear picture of the needs and behaviors of their customers. In fact, nearly two-thirds (64%) of survey respondents indicated their company understands customer needs/behaviors very well. But the customer insights tools they're relying on today are expensive and time-consuming old-school tactics—the two that were ranked most important by the marketers surveyed were focus groups (25%) and research reports (14%); just 6% indicated that a customer intelligence platform was their most important. It's not that focus groups and research reports are ineffective. But in today's market, customer preferences and attitudes can change at a moment's notice. The lack of real-time intelligence has the potential to hamper marketers' ability to maintain the agility and speed today's personalized campaigns require.

Too Little Focus on Predictive Analytics

What are marketers using customer intelligence tools for? Many appear to be focused on gaining a sense of the context of past customer behavior, failing to take advantage of the ability of these platforms to predict future trends that will impact long-term strategy. The most common reasons cited by survey respondents for using customer intelligence were to understand the values of their customers (37%) and understand market trends (34%). Certainly, these are important to marketing success. But far fewer were looking at customer intelligence as something that can drive overall strategic planning, and this could be a missed opportunity—just 19% said they're using customer intelligence to identify new and emerging trends, and 18% indicated the tools are valuable to uncover unmet customer needs.

Marketers Are Challenged Turning Data Into Action

There's a relevant marketing cliché that "data is the new oil." But that statement isn't simply related to both being valuable commodities. Rather, both data and oil have little value unless they are refined. That's the challenge many marketers are facing when it comes to consumer and market intelligence. Their organizations have tons of data points about their customers, but they are challenged turning that information into insights and then turning those insights into actionable marketing strategies. In the survey, respondents identified a number of critical challenges that relate to the clarity timing and accuracy of the data-driven customer insights they're receiving. The top challenges they identified included difficulty understanding the insights generated (31%), a lack of real-time insights (29%) and customer data and insights that seem inaccurate (29%).

Data and Analytics Gaps Impact Customer Context

While 84% of survey respondents indicated that customer context was extremely (44%) or very (40%) important to the success of their marketing campaigns, they also identified several critical "context gaps" that were impacting their ability to understand and utilize customer context. These gaps can suck the air out of a marketing campaign by creating disconnected channel experiences, messaging or promotions that don't relate to each other; divided online and offline experiences; or other gaps that make a compelling customer experience seem impossible. The top gaps cited by survey respondents included: integrating external and internal data (37%), the inability to link what marketers are hearing to what marketers are communicating (35%) and a lack of journey orchestration (34%).

AI Will Be a Critical Insights Tool

Generative AI holds enormous promise for transforming how marketers approach customer intelligence. It can unlock marketer productivity by helping them work smarter with less effort, bringing efficiency to tasks like content or campaign creation. At the same time, AI in consumer and market intelligence platforms can summarize and provide actionable insights from trillions of data points in a matter of seconds. In the survey, 81% of marketers agreed that AI will be critical to turning insights into action. Similarly, 89% said they plan to use generative AI to turn insights into messaging to customers or prospects.

Methodology

Adweek Branded, in association with Quid, conducted an exclusive, online, self-reported survey of 115 marketing executives to better understand how they discover and use customer insights and how they are approaching the concept of customer context.

The survey was conducted in September and October 2023. All respondents self-identified as being involved in marketing either directly for a brand or for an agency. All respondents had a manager-plus job title, and 57% were either VP-level or C-level.

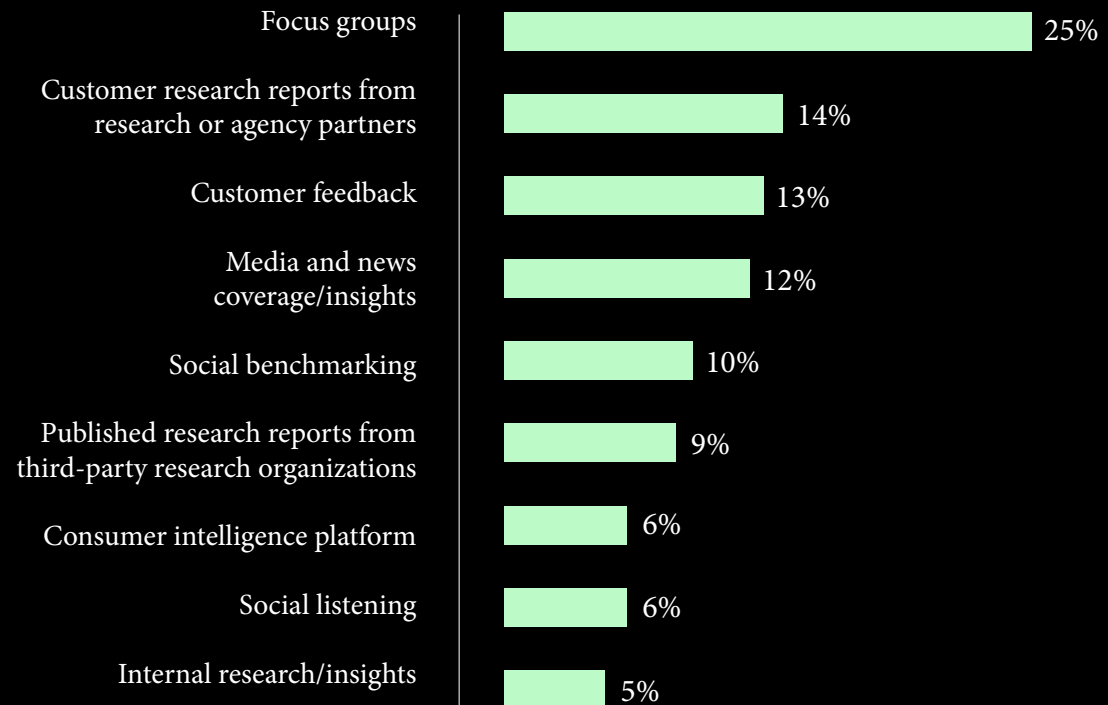
Unless otherwise cited, all figures and charts in this report are derived from this research.



FRESH INSIGHTS FROM STALE PLATFORMS?

For all the talk of digital transformation and real-time insights, it's interesting to see that many marketers still depend on tools like focus groups and research reports to identify the trends and behaviors impacting their audiences. Taken another way, these traditional research tools typically include an expert voice-over and insights from an analyst with knowledge of the market. That comes at a cost, both in terms of dollars and time. The lack of real-time insights could mean that even the most forward-thinking marketer could be six to 12 months behind the times.

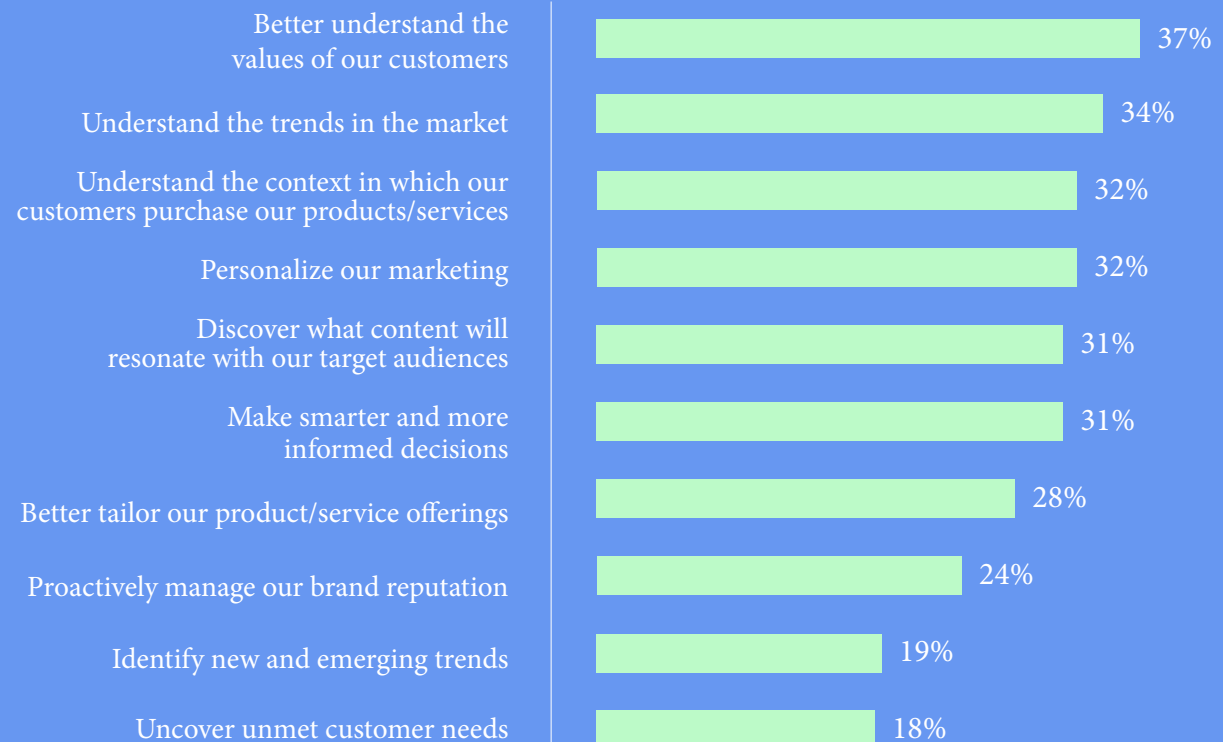
Which of the following is the most important method for understanding the market trends important to your customers and their behavior?



MISSING OUT ON STRATEGY

Marketers certainly recognize the value of consumer and market intelligence as a window into customer values, market trends and the overall journey—the top three reasons they cited in the survey. But it is also interesting to see what dropped down to the bottom of the list: just 19% turn to consumer intelligence to identify what’s next, and only 18% see it as a way to uncover unmet customer needs. As a result, they’re overlooking important insights that should be part of any marketing team’s strategic planning.

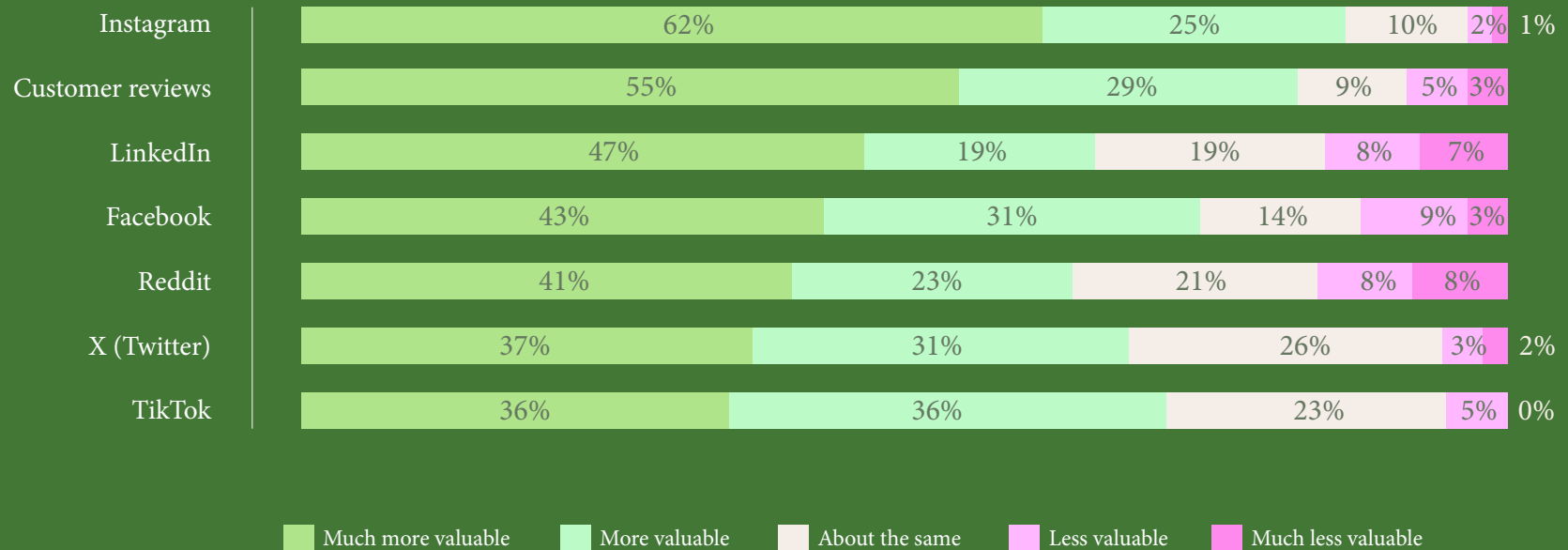
What do you use the information you get from consumer intelligence for?



REVIEWS' RISING IMPORTANCE

While a consumer intelligence platform taps into a wide range of channels beyond social media, there is still value in keeping tabs on what's being said on social. Survey respondents overwhelmingly said insights they're getting from social are more valuable, and they particularly identified customer reviews as an important source. It's also interesting to see that there's an undercurrent of frustration with the insights they're getting from LinkedIn, Reddit and Facebook.

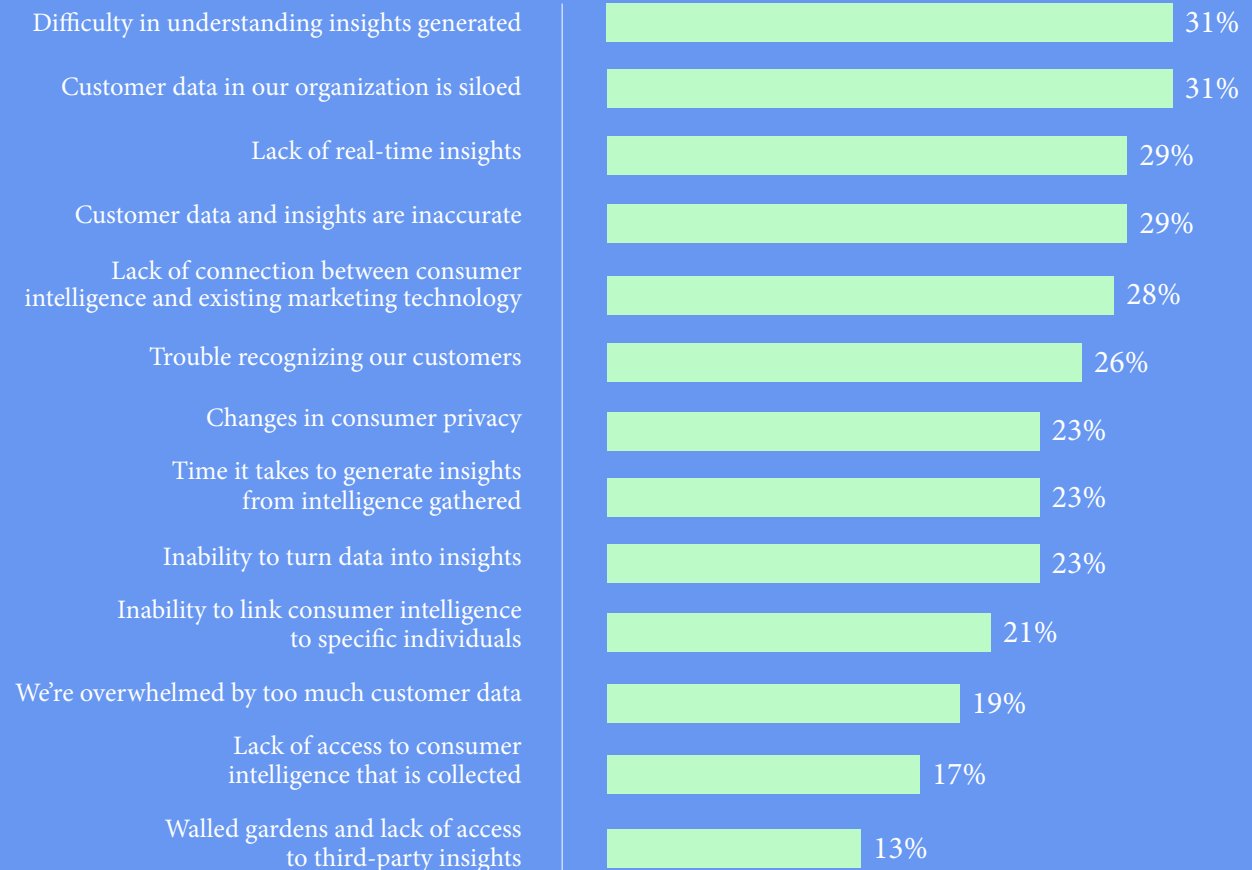
Compared to 3 years ago, are the insights you're getting from listening to or benchmarking the following channels more or less valuable to your marketing?



WHERE DATA DISCONNECTS

It's one thing to have insights into consumer preferences and behavior; it's quite another to turn those insights into action. Marketers need their consumer intelligence platform to interact with their entire marketing tech stack. But that's not always the case. As this chart indicates, insights aren't always straightforward, timely or accurate. At the same time, data is not fully democratized as data silos and a lack of connection between insights, platforms, and marketing tech make it inaccessible.

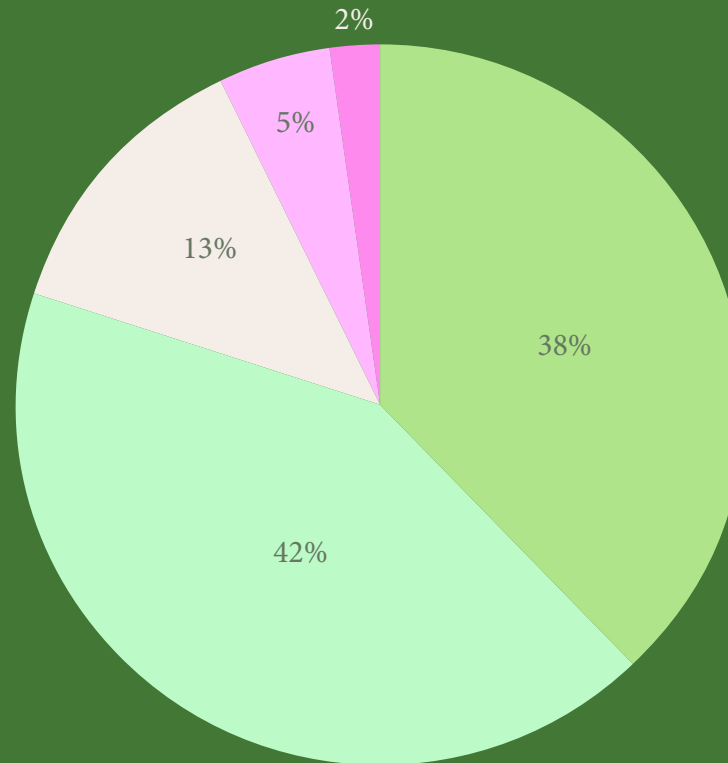
What are the biggest challenges you face in turning consumer intelligence insights into actionable marketing benefits?



THE GEN AI GENERATION

The rise of generative AI was perhaps the biggest tech development of the past year. Sooner rather than later, it will have the ability to transform all aspects of consumer intelligence (not to mention the company itself). Per the survey, most respondents believed Gen AI will be a very important tool for generating insights from consumer intelligence.

How important do you think generative AI will be to help you generate insights from your consumer intelligence?



Extremely important Very important Important Somewhat important Not important

MIND THE CONTEXT GAP

Context gaps are a huge problem for companies looking to scale a more personalized approach to marketing. If you can't connect what you're hearing to what you're communicating, or you're unable to deliver marketing messages at the time when people are most open to hearing them, your campaigns will fall flat. Or worse, your customers won't feel like you're delivering the experience they need.

Which of the following “context gaps” are currently impacting your ability to understand and better utilize customer context?





WHAT'S NEXT FOR MARKETERS

Here are
some steps
to take to tap
into the power
of customer
insights:



Start Generating Insights

Modern businesses are awash in data, but all too often it feels like that data doesn't lead to actual insights or meaningful action. Marketers need to take a hard look at their tech stack and determine if they're just collecting data or if they're using it to learn about their customers. After all, only data brokers can turn data collection into a revenue source. Marketers also need to look at how emerging technologies like generative AI can be used to translate data into a clear and actionable set of insights.

Commit to Consumer Context

The contemporary customer journey is far from linear. The days of "see ad, go to store, make purchase" are long gone. Today's consumers zigzag across a wide range of touch points and channels from discovery to the final purchase. At each moment, context changes. Your messaging must align with those shifting needs to cut through the noise and get noticed. If you're not providing a seamless, consistent and personalized experience across those channels, you've put your customer relationships at risk.

Build Your AI Strategy Wisely

Marketing is still a human-focused endeavor that requires a mix of creativity, strategy and empathy. But AI will play a huge role. Today, many marketers see AI as a tool to automate repetitive tasks, analyze data and provide insights that were previously time consuming. But generative AI can go beyond that to become an asset for strategic planning by identifying and predicting opportunities and trends, and uncovering unmet needs in the marketplace. It can be an essential element to customer context efforts, powering a more personalized approach that really gets at the wants and needs of your audience.

Look at Context Holistically

A strong consumer insights platform takes a holistic view of your customers' context. It doesn't just listen to what they're saying, but it gauges their sentiment and turns patterns into predictions that marketers can use to power their strategies and delight their audiences. While there is value in traditional research tools like focus groups and syndicated studies, be wary of insights that are based solely on past behavior. Truly predictive analytics are necessary to identify the trends that will guide the future.



ABOUT QUID



Quid is at the forefront of AI-powered consumer and market intelligence, serving as a compass in a rapidly changing business landscape. With a foundation built on advanced AI, Quid processes vast amounts of structured and unstructured data, translating it into actionable insights that drive business reinvention. Its platform doesn't just gather information, it anticipates the future, bridging the gap between data accumulation and predictive precision. Trusted by top companies like Ogilvy, T-Mobile, Lufthansa, NASA and Louis Vuitton, Quid is the go-to partner for a holistic understanding of customer context, fostering data-driven decisions and impactful strategies.



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