



MEDIA IMPACT REPORT

Welcome to the Tasting Menu: AI Search is Curated, Not Crawled

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Search is Social Now: What That Means for Brands



/BRIEFING ROOM

Welcome to the Tasting Menu: AI Search is Curated, Not Crawled

By [Stasia Fulginiti](#), Director, Paid Search + YouTube

Back when we said “[AI is eating search](#)”, we weren’t trying to be dramatic—we were sounding the alarm. Traditional, keyword-first strategies? They’re relics. Consumers are no longer patiently waiting for moments of intent to arrive in a tidy funnel. They’re jumping in and out of platforms, pulling from generative search results, watching YouTube Shorts, discovering in Google Maps, and clicking on Gmail ads—all within seconds.

And now with Google Marketing Live (GML) 2025, that shift has been fully productized. Google’s vision for search is no longer “type and respond”—it’s “anticipate and assist.”

Search is a System, Not a Moment

As we said in March, “AI doesn’t just respond—it anticipates.” That prediction was validated with the rollout of AI Mode, a new conversational, multimodal experience that brings together Search, Shopping, Maps, YouTube, and more to solve user needs in real time—not just respond to queries.

For brands, this is a wake-up call. You don’t get to wait around at the bottom of the funnel anymore.

You have to show up across moments that may signal intent, even if they don’t convert right away.

Power Pack = Full-Funnel AI Activation

Google introduced a refreshed Power Pack of offerings to drive performance across AI-enhanced surfaces. These include:

- **AI Max for Search:** A new optional setting in Search campaigns that leans into automation, real-time bidding, and broad match to unlock reach across Google’s full ecosystem.
- **Performance Max—Channel Performance Transparency:** This gives marketers a clearer view into how specific platforms (like YouTube, Discover, Gmail, etc.) contribute to results—finally answering one of the biggest calls from performance marketers.
- **Demand Gen:** Continuing to mature as the engine for visual, discovery-based campaigns across YouTube and Gmail.

Together, this trio aims to cover the full user journey—from passive discovery to active consideration.

Takeaway: Start treating search as a behavioral signal, not just a media channel.

YouTube & Shorts = Performance, Not Just Awareness



The narrative that YouTube and Shorts are “upper funnel only” channels has been obliterated. Shorts now see 70 billion daily views, and Google is connecting the dots between creative formats and commerce with:

- Swipeable shopping ads and AI-powered product tags
- 3D try-ons and visual-first experiences
- Demand Gen tapping into affinity, not just search intent

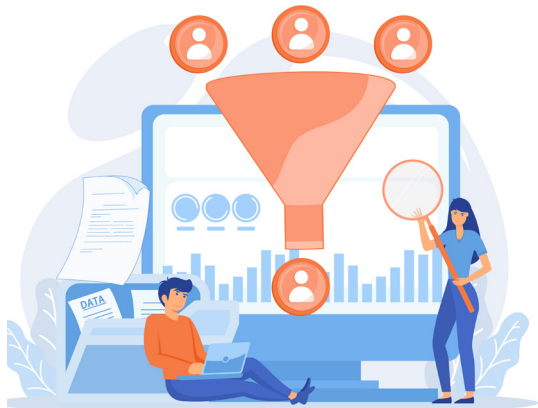
We said it before: visual behavior is the new search behavior. People don’t always start with a question—they start with a scroll, a swipe, or a spark of interest. This is where your brand needs to earn its place.

First-Party Data = The Input That Powers Everything

GML reinforced what we already know: AI is only as good as the data it ingests. With updates to Google Ads Data Manager, it’s easier to unify first-party data, clean it, and push it into campaigns.

We ***stressed this before***: your CRM and owned channels are no longer sideshows—they’re center stage. Without clean, actionable first-party data, you’re either feeding the machine bad inputs or defaulting to the same audience signals as your competitors.

Don’t rent relevance. Build it.



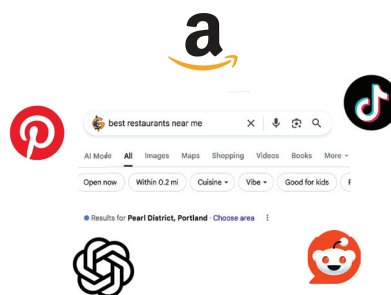
Funnels Are Fiction. Moments Are Reality.

Consumers don’t move through a funnel anymore—they hop between tabs, apps, voices, and screens. The challenge isn’t mapping their journey—it’s meeting them mid-jump with relevance and speed.

Google is building tools that acknowledge this chaos: AI Mode, multimodal search, and the entire Power Pack are built around moment-based activation, not linear paths.

We said it best in our last POV: “In this new search reality, your brand must be present where consumers are paying attention—not just where you hope they’ll land.”

Don’t Just Optimize for Google. Expand the Playing Field.



While GML 2025 doubled down on Google’s vision, one thing’s clear: Google isn’t the only search player anymore. From Amazon and Pinterest to TikTok, Reddit, and ChatGPT, search-like

behaviors are evolving across platforms. Consumers are finding, evaluating, and purchasing in places that don’t even look like traditional search.

Marketer mandate: Diversify. Test new platforms. Show up where your consumers search—even if there’s no query box.

TL;DR — What Should Marketers Do Now?

1. Test the full Power Pack with clear measurement frameworks
2. Shift from keyword obsession to moment optimization
3. Activate and scale first-party data immediately
4. Lean into creative variety and modular storytelling
5. Treat Shorts and YouTube like performance workhorses
6. Diversify across emerging search experiences—don’t stay Google-only

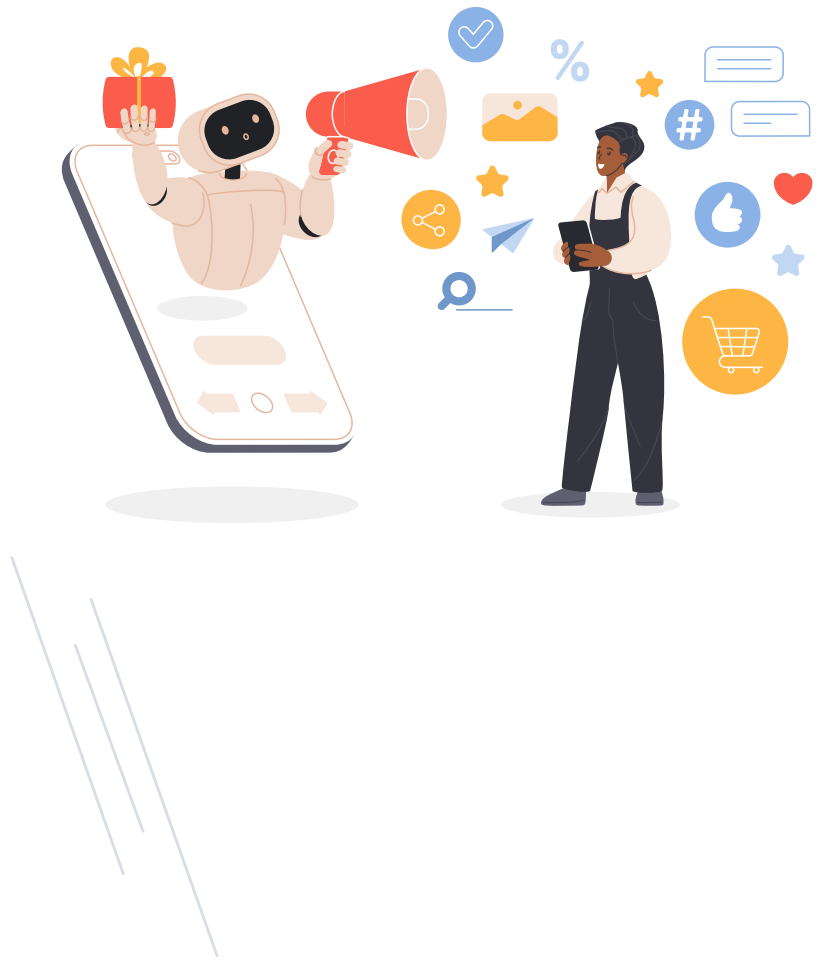
Final POV: Stop Chasing the Algorithm. Start Following the Consumer.

As AI remakes how people discover, evaluate, and buy, marketers face a choice: keep reacting to platforms, or move with the people.

At Rain the Growth Agency, we're choosing the latter.

Because this isn't about gaming Google; it's about staying relevant to your audience wherever they show intent, however it looks, and whenever it happens.

The goal isn't to predict the path. It's to show up powerfully at every point along it.



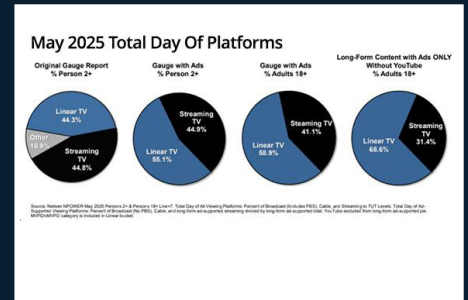
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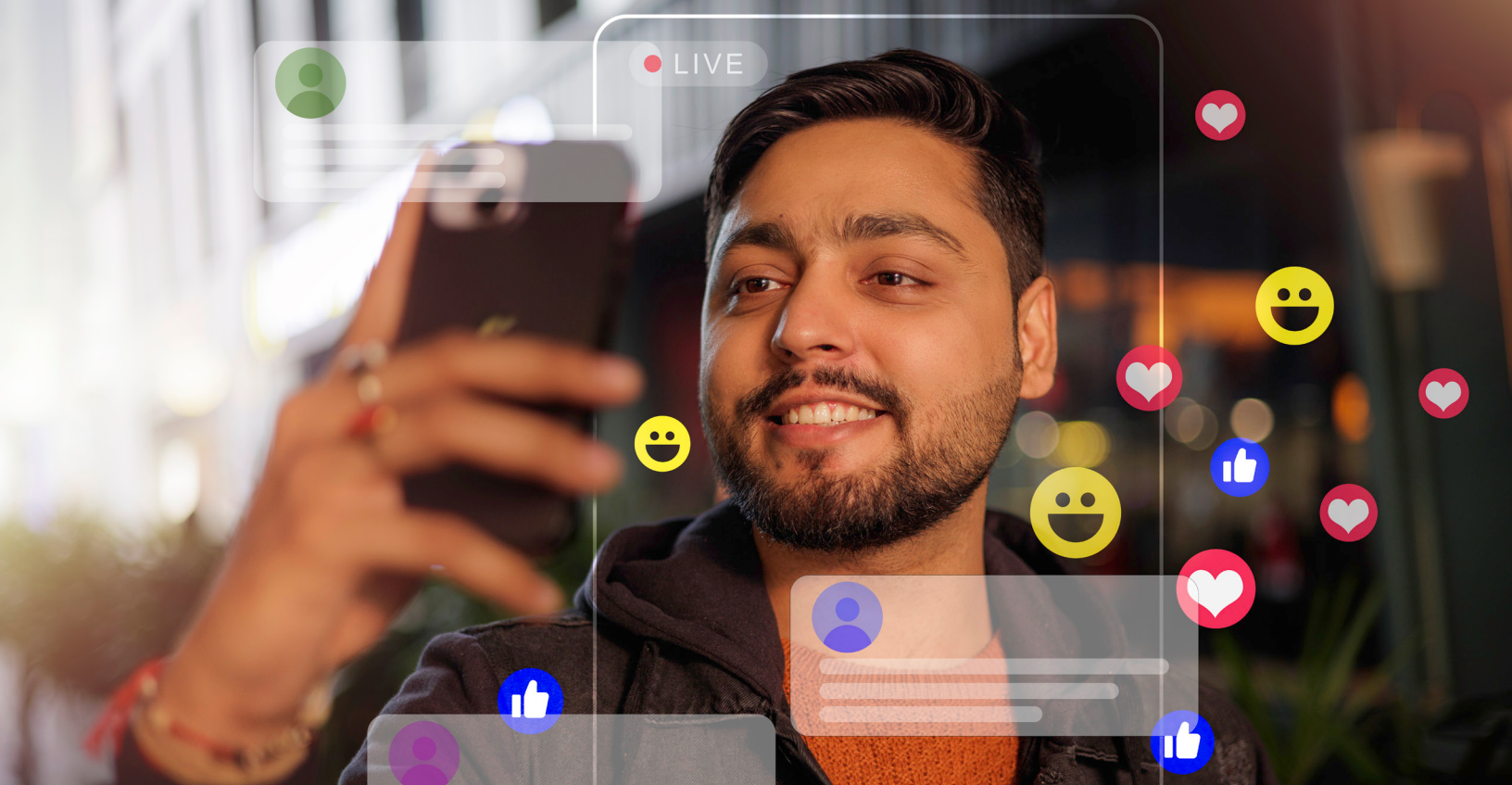
Amazon Doubles
Prime Video Ads
to 6 Minutes Per Hour
[\[AdWeek\]](#)



Netflix Patent Could Automate
Content-Clipping As Streamer
Aims To Boost Discoverability
[\[MarketingBrew\]](#)



TVB: Ad-Supported
Linear TV Still Tops
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/UPDATES

Search is Social Now: What That Means for Brands

By [Shatesha Scales](#), Paid Social Supervisor

Brands can't deny the glaring reality: consumer search behavior has shifted drastically over the last four years. The phrase "Google it" is losing cultural weight as consumers pivot from traditional search engine models to a more fluid, social-first discovery purchase loop.

A recent Forbes Advisor and Talker Research [survey](#) reported that a quarter (24%) of people primarily use social media to search online. Gen Z is predictably leading the charge with a 30 percent point drop in "[reliance on traditional search engines for brand discovery when comparing Baby Boomers \(94%\) to Gen Z \(64%\)](#)." Just like we saw with Millennials leading the early social shift, this generational trend isn't one to ignore—especially now that [one in five people](#) say they don't even feel the need to use search engines anymore.

Why Are People Ditching Search Engines for Social?

- **Convenience:** Brands historically relied on consumers to discover content and search for branded keywords via search engines. However,

with the ability to seamlessly access websites directly from the platform, users no longer feel motivated to leave.



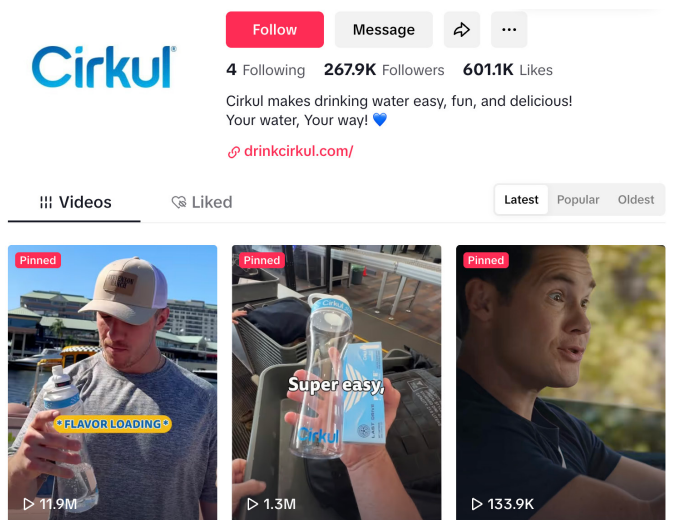
- **Relevancy:** Social media's AI-driven algorithms allow for real-time predictive behavior. So, when users do search, results are tailored to their unique interests and usage patterns, not just keywords. Unlike static results from traditional search engines, two users can search for "DIY

backyard makeovers,” and one will see luxury design inspo, while the other can see budget-friendly tips based on prior behavior.

- **Recency:** Social search relies on the most recent, trending, and culturally relevant content vs the top-ranking indexed pages of traditional SEO. Which makes social search more reliable for immediate needs.
- **Community perspective:** Testimonial content works and social channels are abundant with real people reviews rather than faceless SEO-optimized blog posts. Platforms like TikTok, Reddit, and Instagram allow consumers to see how their peers use the product or service, and unfiltered comments and opinions on posts help validate decisions.

What Does That Mean for Brands?

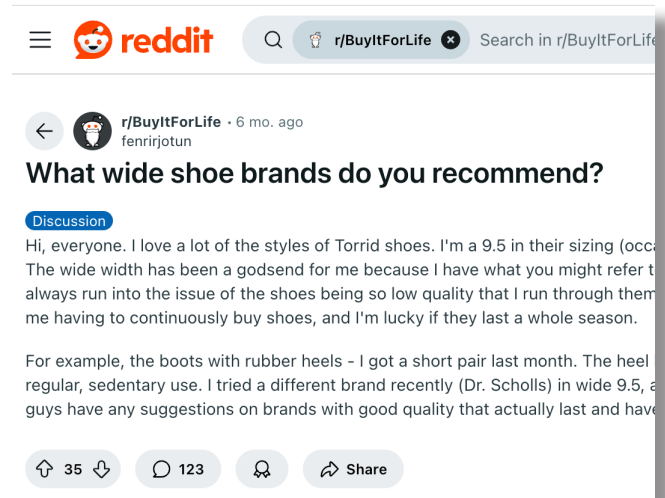
This means social media strategy should no longer be an afterthought or viewed as a place for just viral content. Brands must be intentional about their long-term social presence and treat social media as an extension of their website content strategy across both organic and paid initiatives.



Your social presence is no longer supplemental. In fact, it is most consumers’ first exposure to your brand. So, if you’re not showing up on TikTok or Instagram search results, you’re missing out on key conversions.

How Brands Can Win in the Age of Social Search

- **More Than Just Hashtags:** Search has expanded from keywords to full-on conversational queries. Think: “best shoes for wide feet,” not just “2025 shoe trends.”



- **Plan Content Around Searchable Moments:** Aim to structure content around how users ask for content by using language that matches how users speak or search in real-time. Incorporate terms like “how to,” “best,” “what to try,” and “X ideas for...” Include in metadata (captions, alt text, titles) for search visibility.
- **Build a Cohesive Search Strategy Across Platforms:** Treat TikTok, Instagram, Pinterest, and Reddit as individual search engines. Use consistent phrasing, tailor content to each platform’s behavior, and optimize everything—captions, overlays, titles—for discoverability.
- **Include user-generated content (UGC) and Reviews:** Real people using your product in real ways builds trust. UGC isn’t just a nice-to-have. It’s social proof embedded in the discovery loop. Treat this as a Web 2.0 deep link for your social brand presence.
- **Leverage Platform AI:** Tools like TikTok’s Creative Center, Pinterest Trending Keywords, or Meta’s Advantage+ help brands auto-optimize for trending queries and feed behavior. Use these to stay relevant and visible.

In a world where AI is constantly building and sorting data, consumers turn to video-first content from real people that social search offers to help cut through the noise. AI is great at surfacing results fast, but it can only work with what it's given. That means brands need to keep showing up with authentic, searchable content. The more relevant and relatable your content is, the more likely it is to show up in-feed when someone searches for exactly what you offer.

Social platforms have come a long way from double-tapping your favorite influencer's newest outfit, to wishing your old college buddy a happy birthday. Social isn't just where people doom scroll—it's where they also search, discover, validate, and decide. It's now a critical part of discovery.

The good news is that this shift in consumer search behavior has been evolving for years, so brands that have prioritized social-first content, user-generated content (UGC), and platform-native strategy aren't starting from scratch—they're already ahead of the curve.



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