



# The new era of connected media



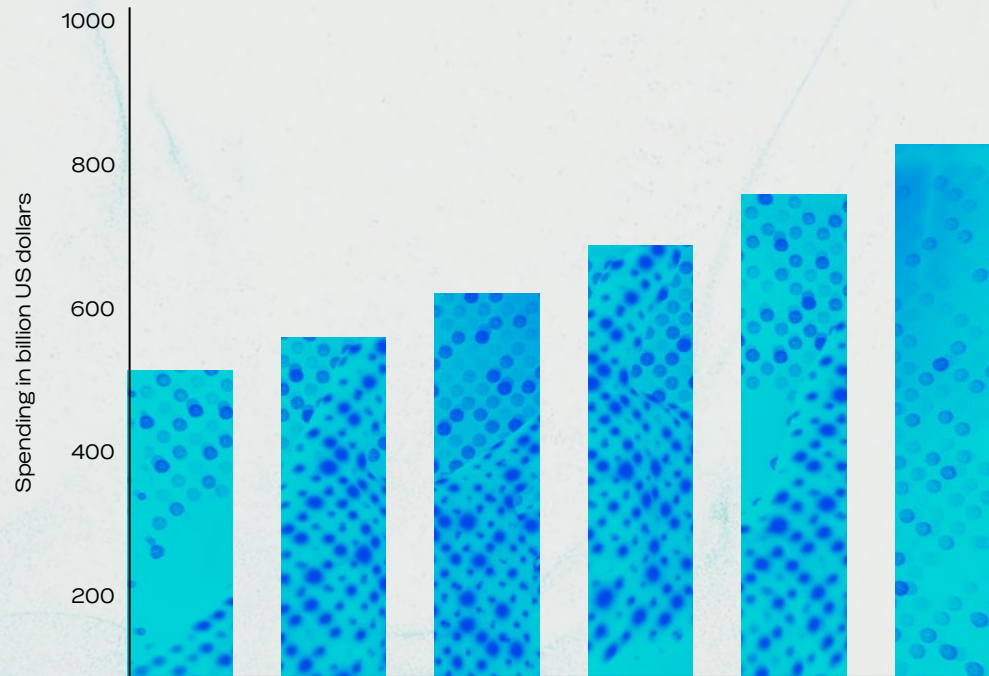
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# Introduction

We live in an age when every scroll, click and swipe generates a lasting digital footprint. The realm of marketing and media is evolving by the minute, and brands rise and fall with viral trends. Here, strategies mutate at a rapid pace, and the distinction between consumers and creators becomes blurred. This interconnected world of media is a space in which businesses fiercely compete for attention, relevance and conversions in ways that would have been unthinkable even a few years ago. This digital world is expanding in size, complexity and relevance.

Digital advertising spending worldwide from 2021 to 2026  
(in billion US dollars)



# An ever-evolving ecosystem

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# Continuous growth in ad spending

Worldwide digital advertising spend has been in a perpetual upward spiral for years and is projected to reach \$836 billion by 2026<sup>1</sup>. In the pursuit of consumer attention, companies around the world, big and small, are pouring their resources into their ever-expanding marketing efforts.

Meanwhile, ecommerce is no longer just a web shop but an omnipresent enterprise trying to reach every possible customer in the best possible way, and growth in online shopping is scheduled to continue. Our 2023 Future Shopper report that surveyed over 31,000 consumers in 18 countries reveals that 58% of all consumer spending is now online, with that figure set to rise to 64% in 10 years' time, according to consumer predictions.

58%

of all consumer spending is now online

64%

of spending will be online in 10 years' time, according to consumer predictions

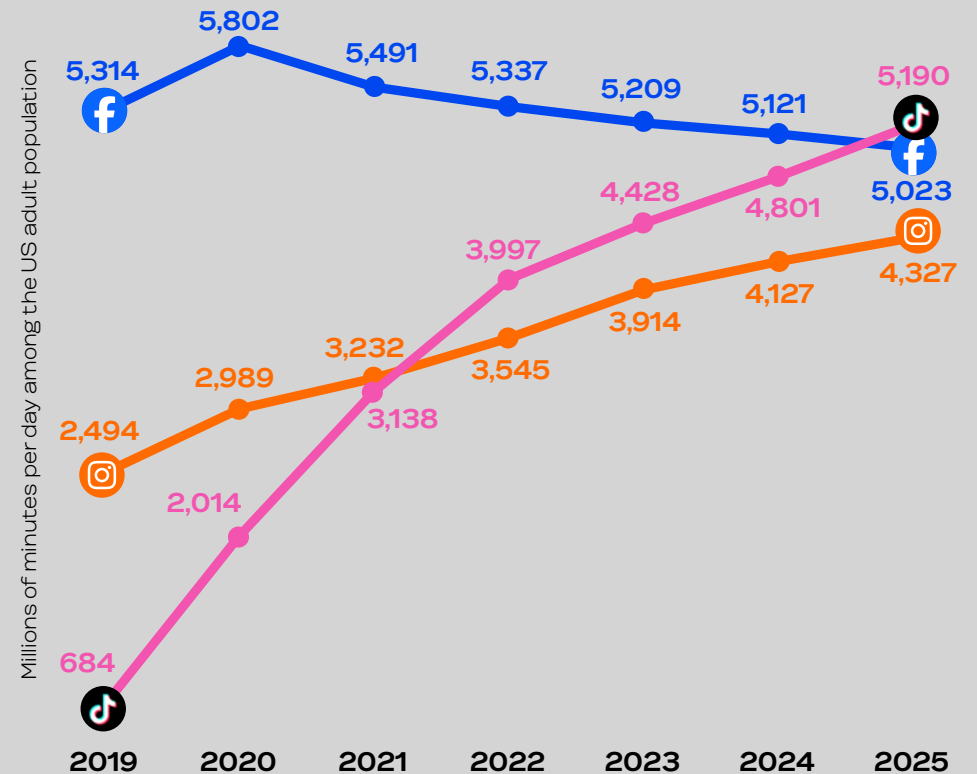
67%

of global shoppers say they have already bought through a social media channel

Furthermore, the proliferation of channels shows no abating with 67% of global shoppers saying they have now bought through a social media channel, and hours spent on social media continually on the rise.

<sup>1</sup> [www.statista.com/statistics/237974/online-advertising-spending-worldwide](http://www.statista.com/statistics/237974/online-advertising-spending-worldwide)

TikTok passed Instagram in total daily minutes in 2022 and will pass Facebook in 2025



Note: ages 18+; includes all the time spent via any device. Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer, June 2023.

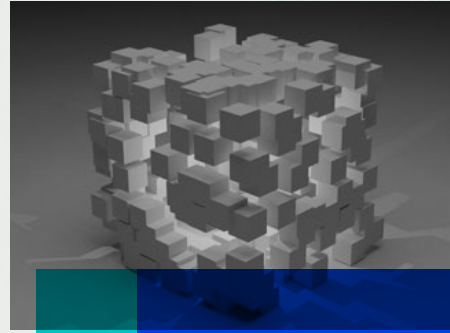
It's no surprise then that the fundamental shift from traditional to digital advertising is being followed by advertising budgets reaching every available digital channel.



## Increasing complexity

This surge in advertising spend doesn't come without its challenges. The digital realm is a double-edged sword, offering boundless opportunities while simultaneously posing formidable complexities. As marketers chase their target audiences across a labyrinth of platforms, the complexity multiplies exponentially. Each channel has its unique nuances, and audiences and businesses must adapt their strategies for each, all while maintaining a consistent brand voice.

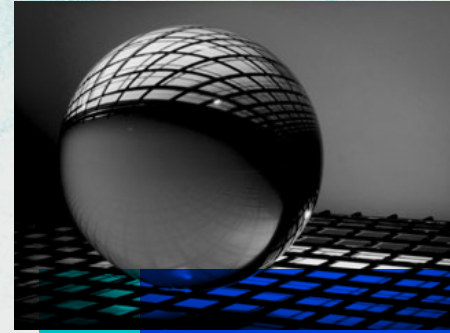
Staying ahead of the curve demands not only an understanding of current trends but also a proper handling of the budget allocation complexity. Companies need to anticipate how to find an optimum balance between earned and owned channels, now and in the future. Technological advancements, including artificial intelligence, data analytics, and programmatic advertising, are reshaping the marketing landscape at an astonishing pace. This results in an increasingly intricate web of possibilities and challenges for brands to navigate.



## Changing consumer behaviors

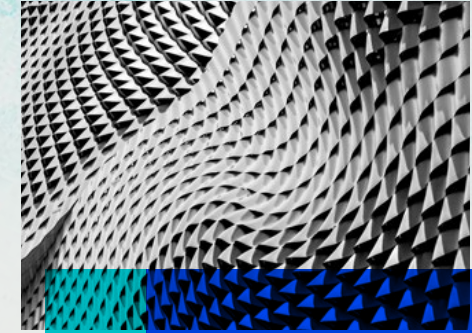
No longer passive spectators, consumers have become active participants in the creation and sharing of content. They are the curators of their own digital experiences and that of their peers, shaping trends, dictating preferences, and demanding and valuing authenticity.

Consumer behaviors now fluctuate across an expansive spectrum of digital touchpoints. For instance, US influencer marketing spend will grow more than three times faster than social ad spend in 2023, and it will remain ahead through 2025, according to an Insider Intelligence/eMarketer forecast<sup>2</sup>. Influencer marketing is steering consumer choices more and more by personal endorsements. Online audiences experience rapidly shifting trends, demanding a level of agility from brands and specifically marketers.



## Tech revolutions

In parallel, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics have become the trusted allies of businesses seeking to understand, predict and tailor to changing consumer behavior. Data-driven decisions born from these advancements fuel personalized marketing strategies, automating and optimizing engagement and conversion.



## Working towards a remedy

This backdrop of continuous growth, increasing complexity, changing consumer behaviors, and tech advancements are all intensifying the media challenges brands face. In this guide, we will delve deeper into these, highlighting the specific pain points experienced by businesses navigating the media landscape and exploring how Connected Media can offer a remedy.

<sup>2</sup> [www.insiderintelligence.com/content/influencer-spend-growing-faster-than-social-ad-spend](https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/influencer-spend-growing-faster-than-social-ad-spend)

It's everywhere  
and always  
accelerating

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# It's everywhere and always accelerating

The contemporary media landscape is characterized by an unrelenting demand for content, constantly escalating in both speed and volume. With every consumer having their highly unique digital experiences, every platform, interaction, and click presents an opportunity for engagement.

Brands and marketers are not merely competing with each other; they are in a race against their own capabilities, striving to meet the ceaseless expectations of their audiences.

The challenge here isn't solely in content production but also in showing up consistently and managing it all efficiently. It involves strategically orchestrating content across a myriad of channels, each with its distinct audience, format, and rules of engagement. This multifaceted challenge of delivering the right content on the right platform at the right moment lies at the heart of the interconnected media landscape and touches every aspect of marketing operations.

## Localization

In a global world, businesses must tailor their messaging to resonate with diverse audiences across different regions and languages. The connected media landscape magnifies this challenge as content, campaigns, and communications must be localized and adapted at scale. Neglecting this can lead to misinterpretation, alienation, or worse, damage to the brand's reputation.

## Key Performance Indicators

Metrics and key performance indicators are the compass by which businesses navigate the digital landscape. The rapid pace of content production and the multiplicity of channels make it challenging to identify and measure the right indicators. Traditional KPIs may need to be redefined or supplemented with new metrics to capture the nuances of the plethora of digital consumers' journeys.

## Data

Data presents both a goldmine and a minefield. The sheer volume of data generated across channels can be overwhelming. Yet, it's not just about collecting data; it's about extracting meaningful insights that inform decision-making. The risk here is drowning in data without finding the pearls of wisdom hidden within; collecting too much while leveraging too little. Reviewing results without taking action. You need robust data strategies to filter the noise and unearth actionable intelligence that's aligned with objectives, KPIs and drivers of success.

## Content creation

The heart of connected media lies in content creation. It's not about producing more; it's about producing better and tailored towards individuals. Quality is king in a world where attention spans are fleeting. Crafting content that captures attention, resonates with the audience, and compels action, is an ever-growing challenge. Figure out what your customers need, where they are searching and what they expect. To make an impact, you need to tailor your content. The real challenge is to do this at scale.

## Personalization

To cater to every customer's unique preferences, behaviors, and interests, an almost infinite volume of content is required. This challenge extends beyond content creation to the challenging task of consistent delivery and efficient management. Strategically orchestrating content across channels, each with its particular audience, format, and engagement rules, adds complexity. Delivering the right content on the right platform at the right moment touches every aspect of marketing operations.



What problems  
are we solving?

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# What problems are we solving?

Brands and organizations frequently pose questions that reflect the complexities of the media landscape, and addressing them effectively is essential for success.

## Organizational dilemmas

“  
*How should we organize global and local operations to facilitate excellent connected media?*  
”

One pressing concern is how to organize global and local efforts within a brand's marketing strategy. Companies often grapple to strike the right balance between centralization and localization. They must determine how to harmonize global objectives with local nuances, ensuring that their campaigns resonate with diverse audiences across the world, while remaining cost effective.

## Data-informed decision-making

“  
*How do we set up our tech and data infrastructure to create actionable insights to make informed decisions?*  
”

Data is the compass in the media landscape, but the abundance of data can be overwhelming, especially if the architecture and infrastructure to collect, store and use data are lacking. Clients are eager to make data-informed decisions but struggle with sifting through the noise to extract valuable insights.

## Setting the right objectives

“  
*Can you help us set the right objectives and find ways to properly measure them?*  
”

The task of setting objectives in a dynamic environment can be daunting. Brands often seek guidance on establishing precise and actionable goals that align with their overarching strategy. The challenge is not merely setting objectives but also monitoring and adjusting them in real-time to adapt to the ever-shifting digital landscape.

## AI-enhanced content creation

“  
*Do we need to use AI to augment content creation, and how do we use it safely and efficiently?*  
”

The advent of artificial intelligence offers unprecedented opportunities for content creation, but it also poses questions about how to harness its full potential. Clients often inquire about how to use AI for content creation, ensuring that it not only enhances efficiency but also maintains the human touch required for authentic engagement.

## How to balance campaigns

“  
*How should we balance our investments in paid and organic media to grow sustainably?  
How do we efficiently orchestrate campaigns based on push and pull mechanisms?*  
”

Clients enquire about how to effectively balance paid media efforts with organic strategies. Determining where to invest resources for maximum impact – whether it's in paid advertising or organic content – is a critical decision that requires a nuanced approach.

The background features a dark, reflective glass bottle, possibly a perfume bottle, with various words and phrases reflected on its surface. The reflections are in shades of gray and include terms like 'Identify, Disrupt', 'Comprehend, Transform', 'Distinguish', 'Discern, Measure', 'Create', 'Integrate', 'Harmonize', and 'Coalesce'.

# Introducing Connected Media

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## Introducing Connected Media

In addressing the challenges above, Connected Media emerges as the solution.

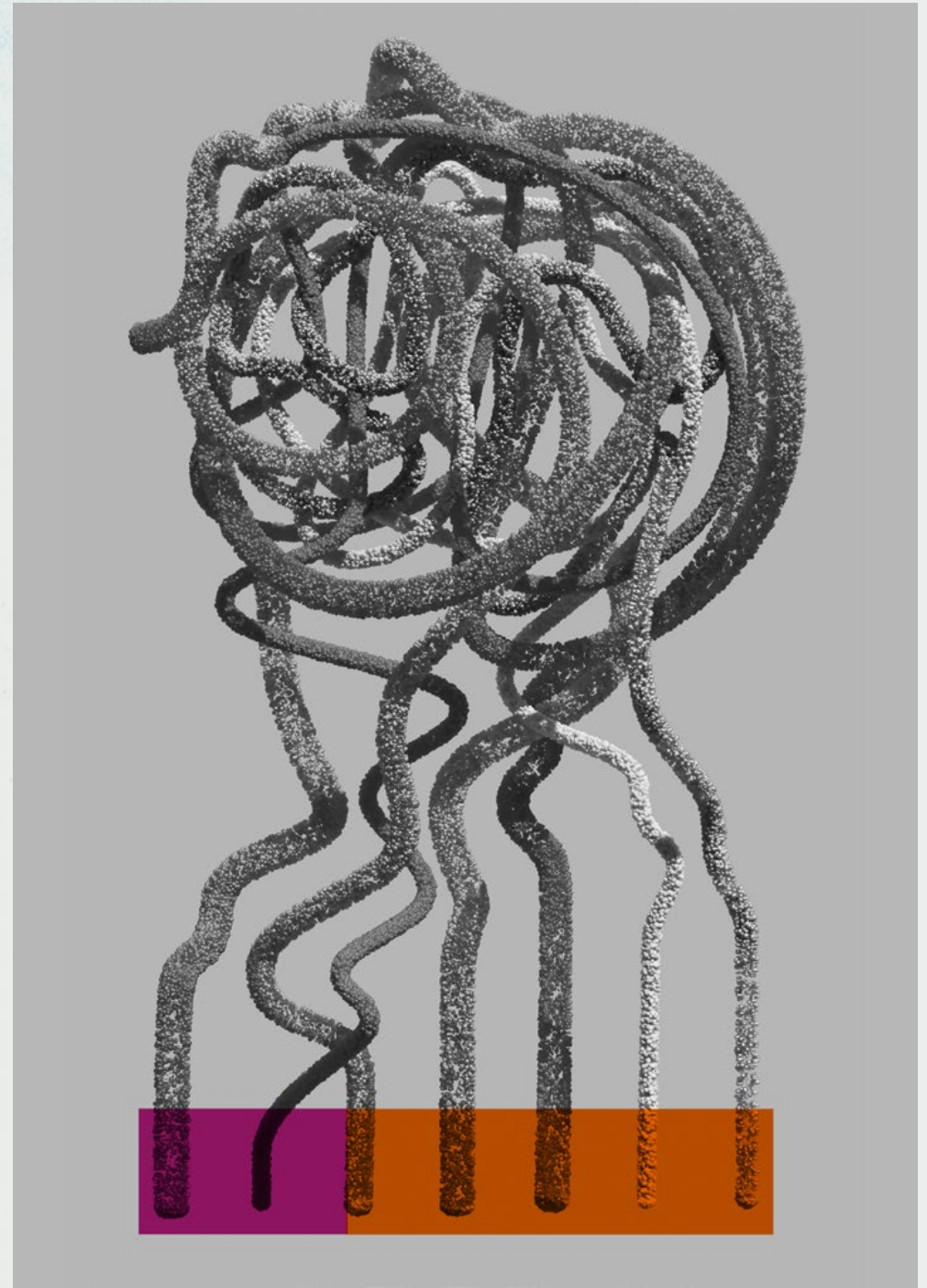
Connected Media is our integrated, full-service global media practice, focused on delivering customer experiences for ambitious brands. We've been working with clients to solve their media-related challenges for years. By introducing Connected Media, we are bringing all our media services together into one holistic offer, closely aligned to our other areas of expertise.

Connected Media drives performance and growth, bridging brand and performance marketing for omni-channel results. It provides a framework that enables businesses to harmonize their owned, earned and paid media effort, both globally and locally.

With Connected Media you can set precise objectives, and strategically orchestrate campaigns. It empowers data-driven decision-making by streamlining data analysis, and it harnesses AI for content creation that resonates with target audiences.

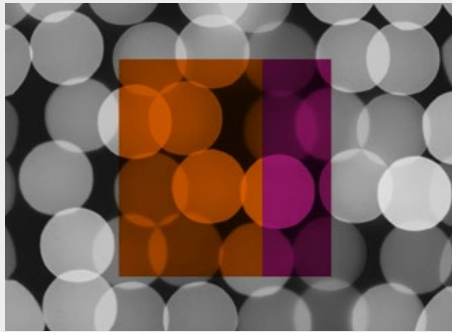
It is of paramount importance to optimize the full spectrum of customer journeys and keep doing so.

We support our clients to drive measurable business outcomes, equipping them with strategies, tools, and expertise needed to thrive in this digital age.





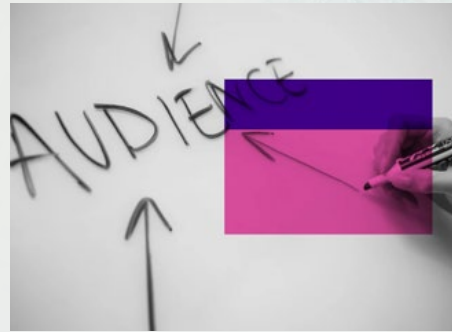
# Our Connected Media services



## Planning and strategy

We recognize that achieving omni-channel growth begins with defining precise targets, optimal audiences, and selecting the right channels. Our dedicated experts only allocate budgets where it drives impact, to ensure maximum return on investment.

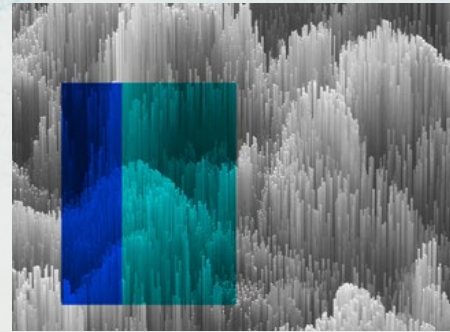
Our expertise in planning and strategy encompasses market research & analysis, marketing strategy development, segmentation & targeting, brand positioning & messaging, channel selection & integration, and long-term planning & adaptability.



## Media management

The core of effective media management lies in defining audiences based on data, and driving transactions with media and content where they are in their journey, across paid, owned, and earned channels. We figure out how to balance channels to avoid cannibalization.

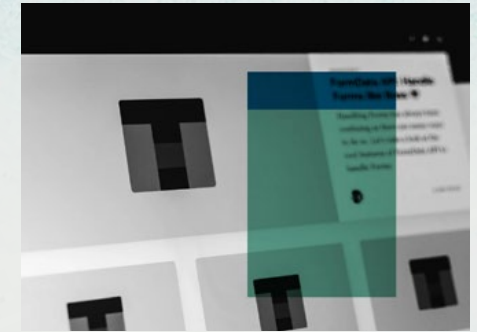
Our expertise in this domain lies in audience segmentation, data analytics, channel selection, content strategy, budget allocation and performance optimization.



## Measurement and reporting

It's crucial to understand that driving impact can't be done solely by guessing. It's science, starting with measuring the right performance indicators. We begin by establishing a core objective. From there, we define the key metrics within a comprehensive KPI framework.

We excel in data analytics, performance metrics, dashboard creation, attribution modelling, A/B testing and experimentation, and ROI analysis.

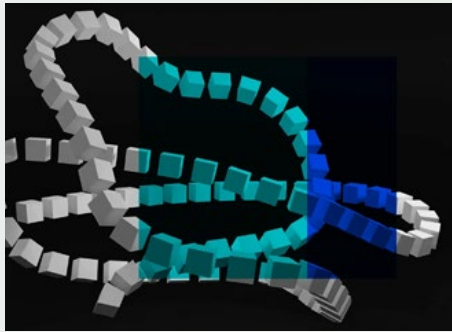


## Campaign optimization

We engage in real-time analysis and make necessary adjustments for optimal marketing impact, ensuring that your campaigns maintain agility and adapt to evolving consumer behaviors and emerging trends.

Whether it's orchestrating campaigns using push and pull mechanisms or crafting content tailored to diverse audiences across various channels, our focus remains on delivering results that matter. With a keen eye on ROI, we measure the impact of owned channels to only allocate budgets where they are needed.

# Our Connected Media services



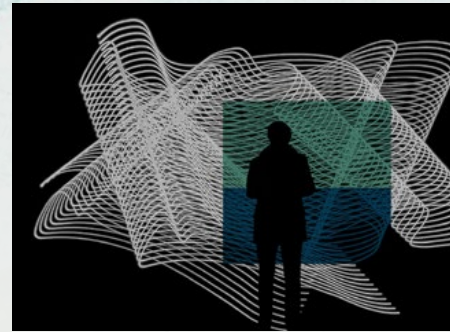
## Auditing

Our dedicated teams delve into your existing setup to pinpoint areas for enhancement and optimize every facet to yield instant results, along with long-term strategic initiatives that promise lasting impact. We prioritize incremental value to your operations, highlighted in a roadmap to elevated success.



## In-housing

Our team of experts is well-equipped to collaborate closely with your teams, offering guidance and expertise to help structure your organization for success. Through close collaboration, we work with clients to identify which aspects of their media strategy can be transitioned in-house, all while ensuring that efficiency and effectiveness remain paramount. Our approach extends beyond conventional agency-client dynamics with expertise in this field being training & skill development, process and workflow optimization, technology integration, strategic planning and execution, performance measurement and analytics, and change management and cultural integration.



## Localization

We harness the strength of our international network to not only define, create, and translate but also to optimize hyper-local content and campaigns, tailored to specific regions to easily enter new markets.

Our localization expertise includes cultural sensitivity & adaptation, language expertise, market research & analysis, user experience (UX) & user interface (UI) design, SEO and keyword analysis, and legal and regulatory compliance.



## Training

Whether you're at the management level or the operational level, we provide training for teams and individuals at every tier. This spans various aspects of the ever-evolving digital landscape, ensuring that you remain at the forefront of industry trends.

Our hands-on learning courses include strategy and planning, media management, data and analytics, conversion rate optimization, and CRM and marketing automation.



## Our channels



Paid Search



SEO



Commerce &  
Retail Media



Social



Programmatic



Audio



OOH  
(Out of Home)



Connected TV



Direct Mail



Email



# Success stories

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## Success stories



### Revolutionizing outdoor brand distribution

In response to a changing retail landscape, an iconic family of outdoor brands partnered with us to address their distribution challenges. Focused on a D2C strategy, we revamped their approach, leveraging digital channels such as web and social experiences, targeted advertising, and data-driven insights. The results were transformative:

**400%**

growth in revenue  
(year 2)

**30%**

D2C revenue share  
(year 3)

**40%**

'find in store' clicks  
increase  
(year 4)



### Precision lead generation in luxury property sales

In pursuit of efficiently connecting with potential luxury property buyers, we implemented a targeted strategy that yielded remarkable results in just 90 days. Our approach focused on smarter targeting and engagement, generating high-quality leads for a luxury property development in India:

**700+**

marketing qualified  
leads in just  
90 days

**\$2 million  
USD**

in property sales

**25x ROI**

on media spend



## Success stories



### Growing portfolio revenues with Amazon DSP

For a global consumer packaged goods (CPG) leader based in Luxembourg, we embarked on a mission to combat market saturation and drive growth among new-to-brand customers through Amazon advertising. The solution, leveraging Amazon DSP, yielded impressive outcomes:

**2.37**  
**ROAS**

**56%**  
increase in new-to-  
brand customers

**+311%**  
increase in orders  
vs previous year



### Ultra-personalization of cinemas in the age of streaming

Where streaming platforms were reshaping the landscape of cinema attendances, we turned to an innovative approach to boost online sales and fill theatre seats for Cinemex in Mexico. The solution, Biocinema, is an ultra-customized strategy for each film and potential movie-goer, with maximum precision ads. Deep personal analysis combined with a collection of data provided by today's tools resulted in filled theatres and showed that Mexicans do buy online, if they are effectively engaged.

**+190%**  
online sales

**23%**  
reduced cost per  
acquisition

**620+**  
theatres filled in  
one year with tickets  
sold through  
digital campaigns

# Embracing the power of Connected Media

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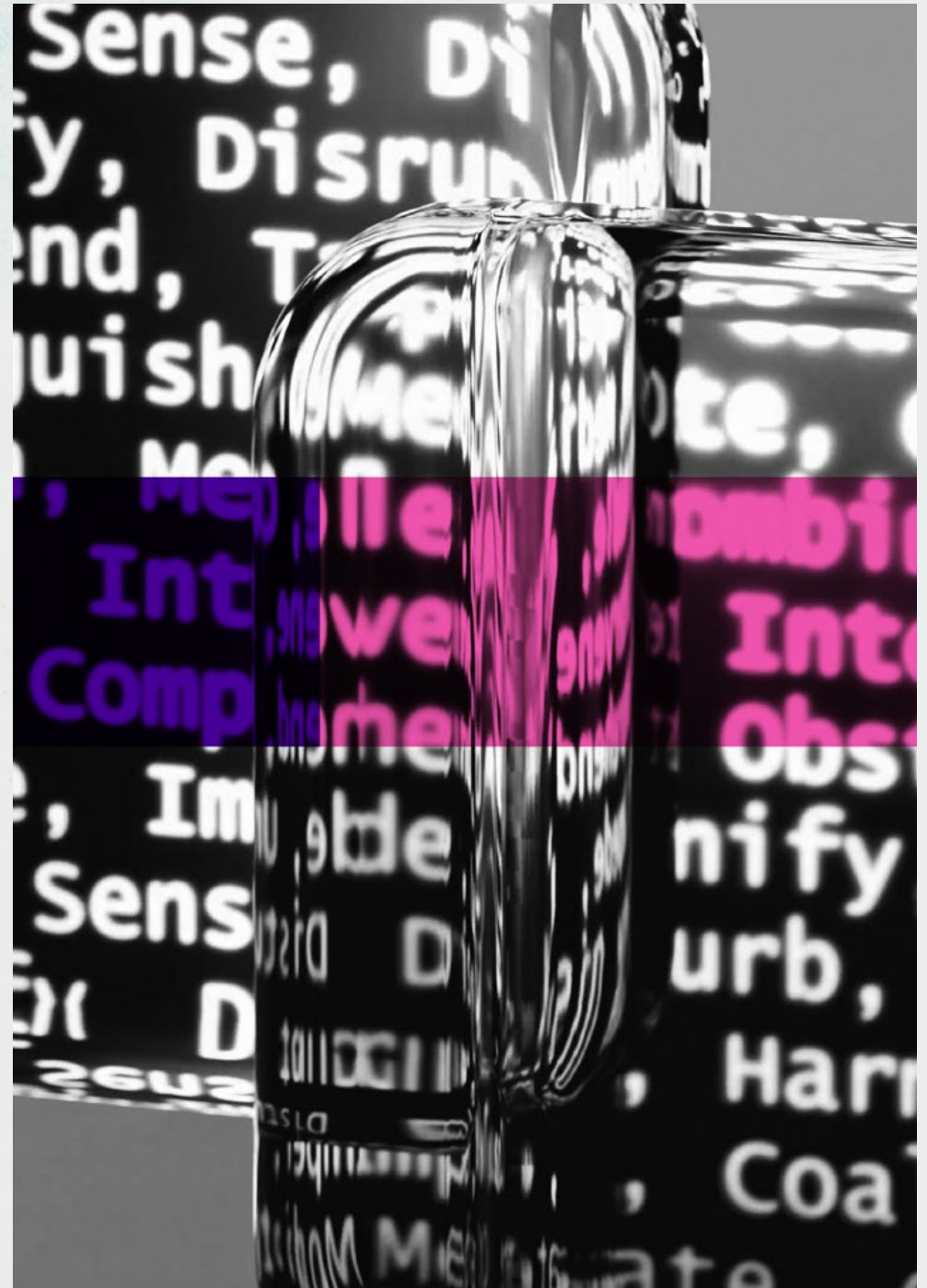


## Embracing the power of Connected Media

In an age defined by digital footprints and exponential change, the realm of marketing and media has evolved into a dynamic landscape where brands battle for attention, and consumers wield unparalleled influence. As advertising spend continues its upward spiral, opportunities in the digital realm go hand-in-hand with complexities. Technology, changing consumer behaviors, and the unrelenting demand for personalized content underscore the challenges faced by businesses in this landscape.

Connected Media emerges as the solution, bridging brand and performance marketing for omni-channel success. It empowers global and local efforts, sets precise objectives, orchestrates strategic campaigns, and leverages data and AI for impactful content. With Connected Media, you only spend budgets where they drive impact. Our comprehensive services, from planning and strategy to media management, enable our clients to navigate this digital age confidently.

In this dynamic digital era, our commitment is to drive measurable business outcomes, equipping clients with strategies and expertise to thrive in the interconnected world of Connected Media. Together, we navigate complexity, harness opportunities, and achieve success.





# Connect with us

Email a member of our team in your region to talk to them about how you could harness Connected Media to drive growth.



## Kiessé Lamour

Global Head of Media

**UNITED KINGDOM**



## Alex Steer

Global Chief Data Officer

**UNITED KINGDOM**



## Tarik Windle

Connected Media EMEA /  
Global Head of Media Solutions WT MAP

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## Anna Ketting

Connected Media Lead EMEA /  
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Connected Media NA Lead /  
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## Aadit Bimbhet

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Regional Commerce Director, APAC

**SINGAPORE**



## Glenda Kok

Connected Media LATAM Lead /  
Chief of Technology Business, LATAM

**ARGENTINA**



## About VML

VML is a leading creative company that combines brand experience, customer experience, and commerce to create connected brands and drive growth. VML is celebrated for its innovative and award-winning work for blue chip client partners including AstraZeneca, Colgate-Palmolive, Dell, Ford, Intel, Microsoft, Nestlé,

The Coca-Cola Company, and Wendy's. The agency is recognized by the Forrester Wave™ Reports, which name WPP as a “Leader” in Commerce Services, Global Digital Experience Services, Global Marketing Services and, most recently, Marketing Measurement & Optimization. As the world's most advanced and largest creative company, VML's global network is powered by 30,000 talented people across 60-plus markets, with principal offices in Kansas City, New York, Detroit, London, São Paulo, Shanghai, Singapore, and Sydney.

Our Connected Media practice is made up of over 500 colleagues, across 4 regions, representing over 30 nationalities and languages.

VML is a WPP agency (NYSE: WPP). For more information, please visit [www.vml.com](http://www.vml.com), and follow along on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [X](#). [#VMLconnected](#)

## Connect with us

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