

sproutsocial

The 2025

Sprout Social Index™

UK Edition



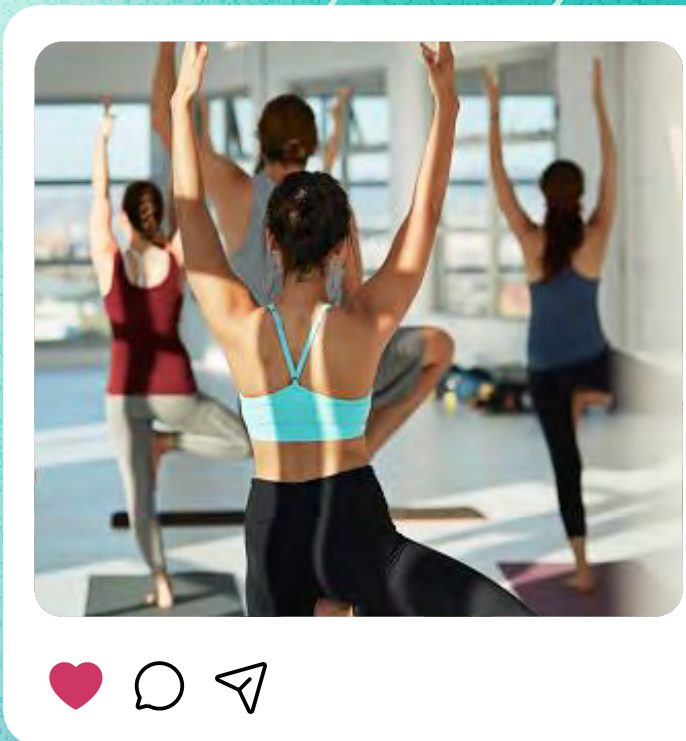


# Social media is the epicentre of culture

What happens on social sways the topics journalists cover, the products we buy and the causes we care about.

But as platforms become more saturated, it's getting harder to earn (and keep) consumer attention. Brand content shows up on consumers' feeds alongside content from other brands, news outlets, creators, influencers, friends and family. Social marketers are burnt out trying to occupy (and compete for) space—on top of convincing their executive teams why social deserves meaningful investment.

Here we spotlight UK data from the 20th edition of the Sprout Social Index™, offering a view into what consumers expect from brands on social, how social marketers can build stronger business cases for more resources, and how AI might alleviate creative fatigue and help build more sophisticated social teams.



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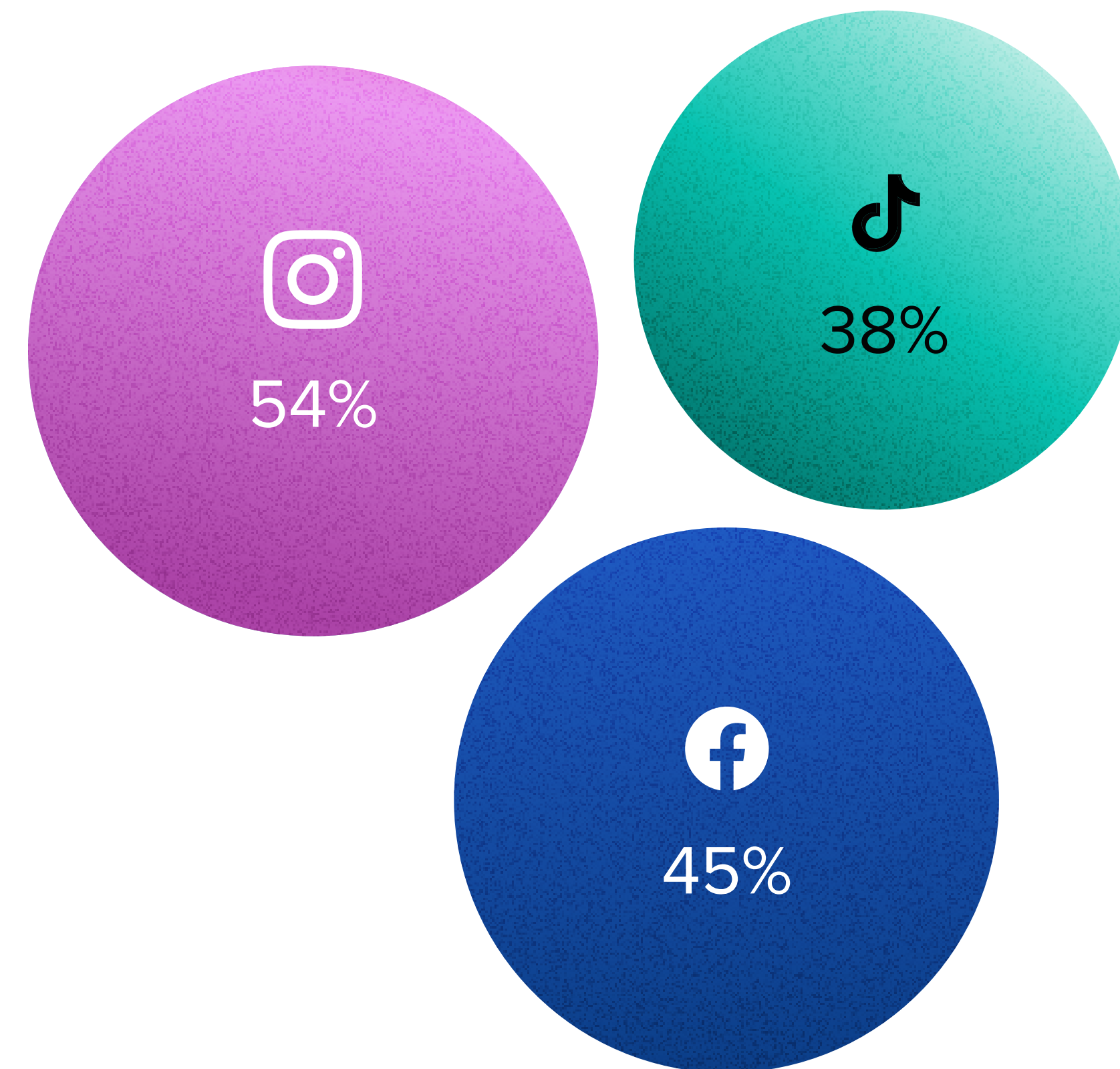


# Keeping up with culture

91% of UK consumers agree: Social is how they keep up with trends and cultural moments—and they expect brands to tune in accordingly.

- The majority of social users (56%) plan to maintain the same level of social media usage they did in 2024, while 30% plan to use it more.
- 94% agree that most brands' social media content does a good job of keeping up with online culture—which is good because another 95% of UK users agree it's important for brands to do so.

## Top social networks for keeping up with trends in the UK





# What makes brands stand out

Consumers want brands to have a pulse on culture—but that doesn't mean jumping on every trend. Consumers want to be listened to, not talked at, and they reward brands who prioritise originality, relatability and audience engagement.

What UK consumers say makes their favourite brands stand out on social

**1** Quality of their product or service

**2** Originality of their content

**3** How they engage with their followers

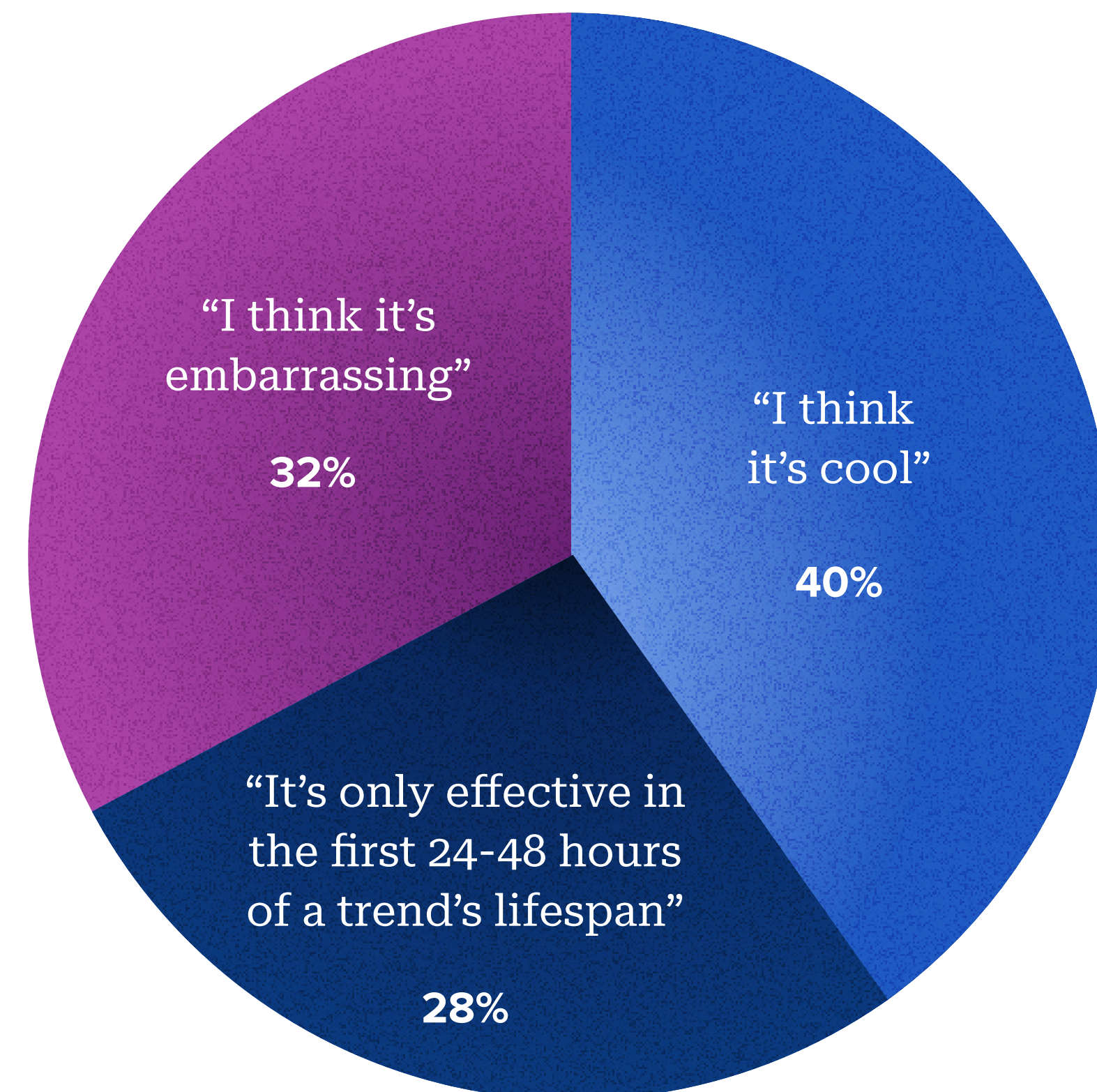


# Chasing trends isn't enough to break through the noise

When consumers rank the most important traits of brand content, authenticity and entertainment value top the list. Reactive content, high production value and product-centricity are markedly less important to consumers. People don't really care how lo- or hi-fi content is, as long as brands are able to relate directly to their target audience.

Given brands' role as stewards and bastions of online culture, 94% of consumers agree brands need to take up the torch to combat misinformation more than they do today—with 57% strongly agreeing.

## UK consumer reactions to brands jumping on viral trends





# UK social commerce and customer care

Every stage of the customer journey exists on social. Algorithms and social search drive discoverability. Comment sections, @-mentions and DMs are consumers' preferred method of customer service. In 2025, social will play an even larger role in all commerce—a shift that's been years in the making.

- 71% of social users agree that if a brand doesn't respond to customer service questions on social media, they will buy from that brand's competitor next time—21% of those respondents strongly agreed.
- Over one-third of social users (35%) make spontaneous purchases based on social media content a few times per year, with a comparable 33.5% reporting that they make spontaneous purchases on a monthly basis.

UK consumers search for new products and services on social media when they need the product

**1 Within the next month**

**2 ASAP**

**3 Even when they have no concrete timeline for buying**



# Does leadership *fully* understand the impact of social?

Executives say they grasp the impact of social media, but many teams are sceptical. Social marketers report resource gaps and lack of buy-in that leaves their teams feeling constrained.

- 61% of UK marketing leaders attest that their execs completely trust their social team.
- Only 51% of social practitioners say their executive team deeply understands the business impact of social, compared to 67% of marketing leaders.
- 39% of social practitioners report their greatest fear is company leadership not trusting them to publish content that will perform best.

## What UK social practitioners wish their executives understood

**1 Better technology is required to track performance and impact**

**2 Social content needs to be audience-centric**

**3 Stronger collaboration is needed across departments**



# Making the case for more resources

Most UK marketing leaders (79%) say organic social media is a top priority for their organisation, behind only website marketing. With so much pressure on social, leaders need to see proof that their team's strategies are working.

Practitioners report using metrics like volume of positive feedback from leadership (52.5%), content production efficiency (52%) and number of teams outside of social who use social data to inform their work (46%) as their internal barometers for success.

## How UK marketing leaders will measure social media success in 2025

- 1 Overall engagement
- 2 Social interactions (i.e., comments)
- 3 Audience growth
- 4 Social shares
- 5 Share of voice

## What marketing leaders say is crucial for securing social investment

- 1 Demonstrating how social media campaigns are tied to business goals
- 2 Quantifying the cost savings of using social compared to other channels
- 3 Sharing customer insights gained through social

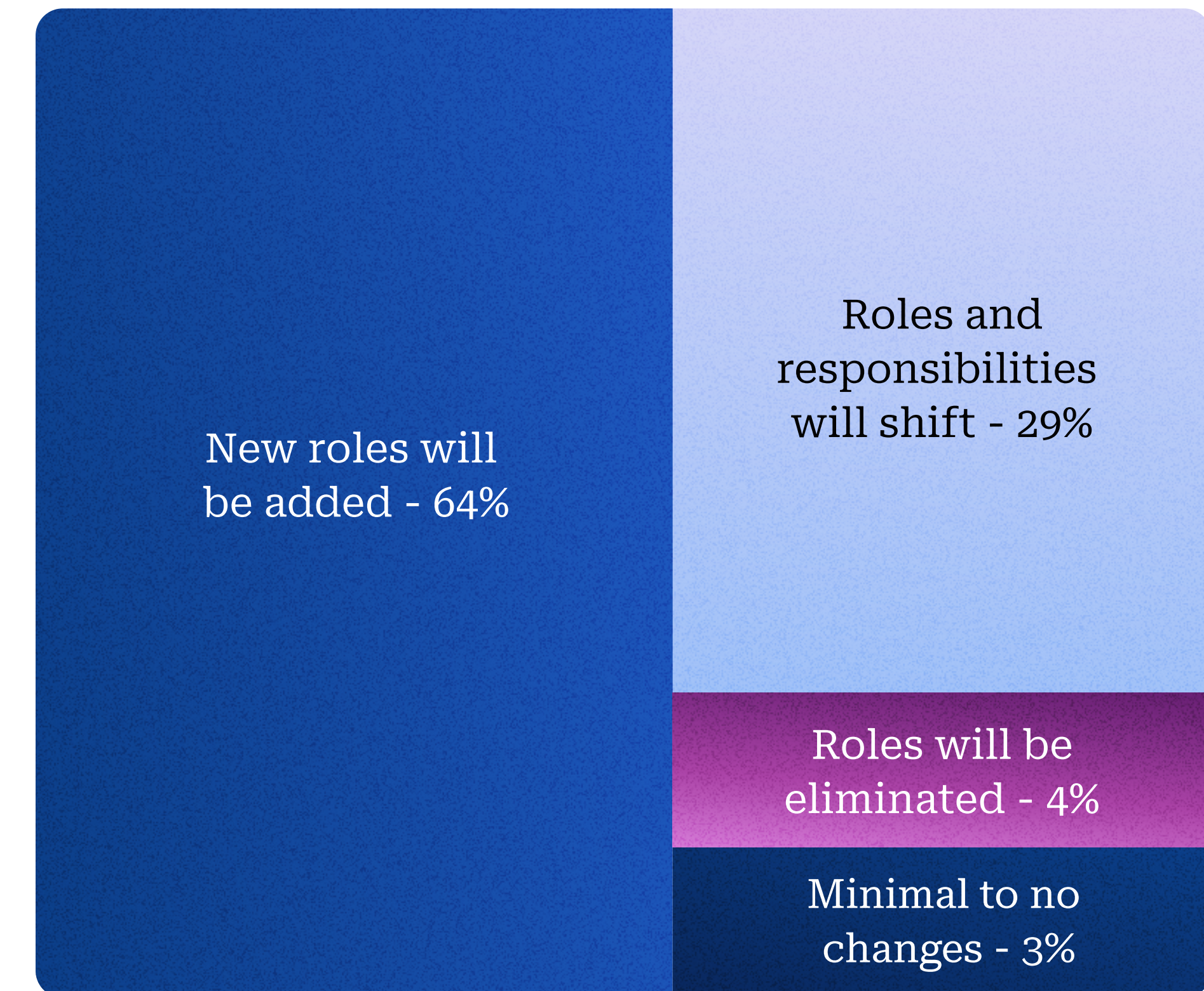


# AI's impact on the future of social teams

Today, almost all teams are using AI to some extent in their workflows, and it's emerged as a hero in the battle against creative burnout. In 2025, it could be the key to finally unlocking highly specialised roles.

- 40% of UK marketing leaders say they will invest in new AI tools in 2025, while 59% will maximise the tools they already have. 96% agree that all marketers should know how to use AI in their work.
- 45% of social practitioners report feeling the same amount of creative fatigue as a year ago, while 42% report feeling more. But over half (51%) are very confident AI can be a resource to help alleviate it.

## How UK marketing leaders say AI will impact social teams





# A push toward specialised social skillsets

AI can take administrative tasks off your plate, but it can't necessarily direct the next Cannes Lion winner. The skills practitioners and marketing leaders think are most important for 2025 offer a glimpse into how AI adoption will push teams to become more specialised—and why the need for human experts isn't going away.

The skills UK practitioners and marketing leaders think are most important for 2025

## Practitioners

### Functional skills

- 1 Social listening
- 2 Creative direction
- 3 Data analysis and storytelling

### Soft Skills

- 1 Brand voice development
- 2 Project management
- 3 Cultural competence

## Leaders

### Functional Skills

- 1 Social listening
- 2 Creative direction
- 3 Finding opportunities for AI

### Soft Skills

- 1 Project management
- 2 Brand voice development
- 3 Cultural competence



# About the data

This research was conducted online by Glimpse on behalf of Sprout Social. Participants included 1,011 UK consumers who follow at least five brands on social media. Additionally, 244 full-time social media practitioners involved in managing their brand's social media strategy and 100 marketing leaders (who oversee social media teams) were surveyed from a cross section of UK businesses. Both surveys were conducted from September 13 through September 27, 2024.

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# About Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a global leader in social media management and analytics software. Sprout's intuitive platform puts powerful social data into the hands of more than 30,000 brands so they can deliver smarter, faster business impact.

With a full suite of social media management solutions, Sprout offers comprehensive publishing and engagement functionality, customer care, influencer marketing, advocacy and AI-powered business intelligence. Sprout's award-winning software operates across all major social media networks and digital platforms.

[Learn more at sproutsocial.com](https://sproutsocial.com)

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