



GETCRISP

# Marketing for the UK Telecoms and IT Sector in 2026

The GetCrisp Report

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# Key Market Headlines

**At GetCrisp, we've supported comms providers, distributors, suppliers and MSPs with their digital marketing for almost a decade now. Staying ahead of trends and market changes has been our mandate throughout this time. This year we're sharing what goes into our processes. We'll break down the industry updates that we've flagged as ones to watch and our take as marketers on how to respond to them.**

We've also taken a closer look at what will remain the biggest topic for marketers this year, AI. We'll break down how it's affecting the industry, the opportunity from a marketing perspective, and where you can differentiate yourself.

Finally, we've taken our telco market research as well as expert opinions from industry leaders and our own in house team leads and turned them into our own digital marketing playbook.

**If you saw that contents page and thought "...nah", we get it, you're busy, we're busy.**

So we've listed our **top 3 predictions** for the year.

- 1. Vendors and distributors will move beyond product launches and start giving partners ready-made sales toolkits that explain use cases and vertical-specific outcomes to buyers.**
- 2. More websites will add llms.txt files to clearly tell AI tools what content can be used, cited and trusted, in the same way robots.txt shaped early SEO.**
- 3. As sales cycles get longer, marketing will be expected to carry more of the proof, supporting buyers with clear evidence and reassurance at every stage of the decision.**



# Telecoms and IT in 2026 – What's changed? And how it affects your marketing

## UK market context and economic forces

The big theme we've been seeing this year is **'durability'**. Businesses as a whole are starting to batten down the hatches right now. Volatile supply chains, cost pressure and geopolitical uncertainty are all contributing to a less-than-comfortable environment overall. That macro environment is reflected on a smaller scale in tech and telecoms.

A good example are customer priorities. **Resilience and compliance are two of the biggest, especially in professional services.** Customers' attitudes are changing too, with demands for fewer dependencies and clearer accountability from service providers when things go wrong. For telco and IT, that translates into sharper scrutiny of SLAs, suppliers and security.

These are all angles that can be pursued in your marketing output this year and are potentially key differentiators. **Standing out from the crowd is essential, especially considering our next point.**



## Telecoms and IT convergence. Resellers becoming MSPs

**The line between comms and IT services are continuing to blur.** Telecoms resellers are increasingly moving into IT services. The goal here is naturally to grow monthly recurring revenue and create opportunities to cross-sell. That's not the full story though, there's a demand from customers for providers to hold their own across connectivity, cloud, security, and business continuity as one joined-up service.

Gamma's partner view is blunt: customers will **"lean hard on you"** as external factors increase their operational risk and expenditure, so service providers also become their first line of defence for security, but also their first port of call for new technology and AI adoption.

**There's a big opportunity here. This is why more resellers are moving into MSP territory:** recurring managed contracts are a broader commercial agreement that lets you incorporate more ongoing services like proactive monitoring, security controls, AI tools and the support layer. It's not all commercial though, customer expectations are the biggest driver for all of these services.

*Quick fact...*

**As of 2025, 44 % of UK channel partner businesses identify as managed service providers (MSPs), up from around 28 % in 2020**

**CyberSmart MSP Survey 2025**

*Customers expect more from their providers now. **They need a partner who understands cloud, security and business continuity as part of the same service.** That shift means resellers of every size need to think bigger about what they offer, and how they talk about it in real, practical terms.*

**Steffan Dancy - CEO, Rydal Group**

## Vendor ecosystem, M&A in telco, and competitive threats

The competitive threat in 2026 isn't only the operator down the road, it's the entire ecosystem compressing around a smaller number of larger VARs, who now work with an ever-smaller number of platforms. Whether this is in **communications, cybersecurity, IT or connectivity**, there's a real concerted push from customers to shrink the number of suppliers they work with, and the industry is changing accordingly.

Advisers tracking the UK MSP/VAR space report more than 11 significant UK MSP and VAR acquisitions in just the first half of 2025, with that trend continuing throughout the rest of the year. So, with smaller resellers and service providers continuing to get snapped up, channel SMEs and new entrants left in the space have to consider their approach this year carefully.

A consolidating market doesn't mean the door is closing for SMEs, but it does often require a refocus to keep up with the big boys.

The point to take away here is that if you're adding genuine value to your customers with new services, you need a clear marketing plan to get that point across in the clearest possible way. **This will help you make the most of every launch.**



## Are we still talking about the switch-off in 2026?

If you have been around the UK channel long enough, the ISDN/PSTN switch off can feel like telecoms' answer to a repeatedly postponed farewell tour. **Plenty of businesses are going to keep banging this drum in 2026**, but there's more opportunity available for those who want to push their campaigns that bit further.

## “So, what do we talk about instead?”

### Sector opportunities (SME, mid-market, enterprise)

**In 2026, MSP and telco marketing needs to be far more deliberate about who it's for and what problem it solves.** Providers focused on SMEs have a clear opportunity to lead with simplicity and consistency. That means clearly packaged connectivity, managed IT, backup, and support services that reduce day-to-day disruption. Marketing should focus on keeping businesses running, handling issues before they escalate, and acting as a single, dependable point of contact for organisations without dedicated IT teams. So far, so similar to last year.

Mid-market providers operate in a more complex environment. Their opportunity sits in supporting internal IT teams with services such as managed security, compliance support, cloud optimisation, and business continuity planning.

Marketing here should demonstrate how these services plug gaps, improve visibility, and reduce risk, rather than replacing existing capability. This is about showing control, clear processes, and the ability to support growth without adding operational burden.

At the enterprise end, the **niche becomes about scale and accountability.** Providers serving larger organisations need to market their ability to manage multi-site networks, complex security requirements, and integration across multiple platforms and vendors. Messaging should focus on reliability, resilience, and the confidence that comes from proven delivery at scale, particularly where downtime, data loss or compliance failures carry significant cost.



## New regulation, compliance, and cloud data security trends

There's two points to make here depending on your position in the market. For MSPs, compliance is a big theme for customers you already sell cybersecurity to. For resellers starting to sell cybersecurity, **compliance should take centre stage in the messaging you approach new customers with.**

Research shows that **over half (53%) of UK SMEs say security is the main reason they turn to an MSP, and nearly two-thirds of SMEs plan to increase their reliance on managed security services this year** specifically because they lack the skills to manage complex cybersecurity and compliance requirements themselves. [channelweb.co.uk](https://channelweb.co.uk)<sup>1</sup>

That shift is reflected in how MSPs are investing too. In the UK and beyond, **more than three-quarters of MSPs have increased spend on security tools and specialist hires, and around 60% are bringing in regulatory expertise to meet client expectations around frameworks like Cyber Essentials, ISO27001, NIS2 and the forthcoming Cyber Security and Resilience Bill.**

Put simply, businesses aren't just buying managed services for monitoring or support anymore they're buying peace of mind and a way to demonstrate compliance with evolving laws and standards. **Providers that can clearly explain how they help customers meet legal requirements, reduce risk and respond to incidents will stand out.**

*As more businesses understand the real risk cyberattacks pose, **security is increasingly the first thing they raise with providers.** Our channel partners that succeed are the ones who don't just deliver cybersecurity, but explain it clearly, what's at stake, and why it matters without overloading people with jargon or buzzwords.*

**Angus Shaw - Managing Director, Brigantia**

## Vendors and distributors creating marketing campaigns for their resellers

We've seen a large increase in vendors and distributors creating marketing materials to help their resellers to win more deals. It's easy to see why.

For vendors and distributors, there's peace of mind knowing that resellers are as well-equipped as possible to go to market with their solutions, and **everyone's on the same page** in terms of available features. It's a use of marketing resource that has a marked impact on ROI.

Gamma's partner messaging leans into this: suppliers should provide not just technology, but guardrails, governance, data insights and practical enablement so partners can take new capabilities to market with confidence.

For resellers though, it's worth bearing in mind that when you receive these marketing toolkits and resources, you're not the only ones who have them. **Winners will take these materials, and adapt them into something that contains the most relevant information, but also reflects your own brand and USP.**



*Sales enablement resources only work if they solve a genuine need for reseller sales and marketing teams, delivered in an easy to use format. It's about giving them personalised resources, based around relevant verticals, that genuinely engage their sales teams and by extension, their customers. **Only then does it become a win-win for all parties.***

**Will Morey - Managing Director, Gamma**

## Design overview in 2026 for B2B

When AI floods the market with competent-but-generic content, brand and design become the quickest shorthand for **“these people are real, credible, and safe to bet on.”**

From a purely scientific perspective, that clear visual hierarchy, accessible UX, and confident use of motion and video heavily influence people’s trust in a brand and increased their perceived expertise, especially for businesses with complex technical offerings.

For telcos and MSPs, investing in design is therefore a pragmatic hedge against AI driven content noise: a strong, consistent visual identity helps buyers remember who provided the insight long after they have forgotten the exact blog or whitepaper.



*With AI flooding the internet with content, your brand becomes a huge differentiator. **Good branding and thoughtful design make it easier for someone to say ‘yes’** the moment they land on your page, because your business feels organised and credible straight away.*

**Jonny Rae - Channel Marketing Expert**

# The AI Disruption to Search, SEO and New Business

**AI-driven search is no longer a future trend, it is already shaping how buyers first encounter telecoms and IT providers. Google's AI Overviews and emerging AI search modes are compressing the top of the sales funnel, reducing the number of clicks available, and shifting value away from rankings alone toward visibility inside AI-generated answers.**

### **How Google's AI Mode affects telco and IT**

Google's AI Mode and AI Overviews now sit above traditional organic results for a huge percentage of searches. Instead of presenting ten blue links, Google increasingly offers a prescriptive response that explains options, compares approaches, and highlights a small number of cited sources. It then usually steers you to one set course of action. E.g. if someone questions their poor broadband in their office, AI mode will weigh up the options, explain a few, and may just end by flat out recommending that they install a leased line.

### **Google AI Mode**

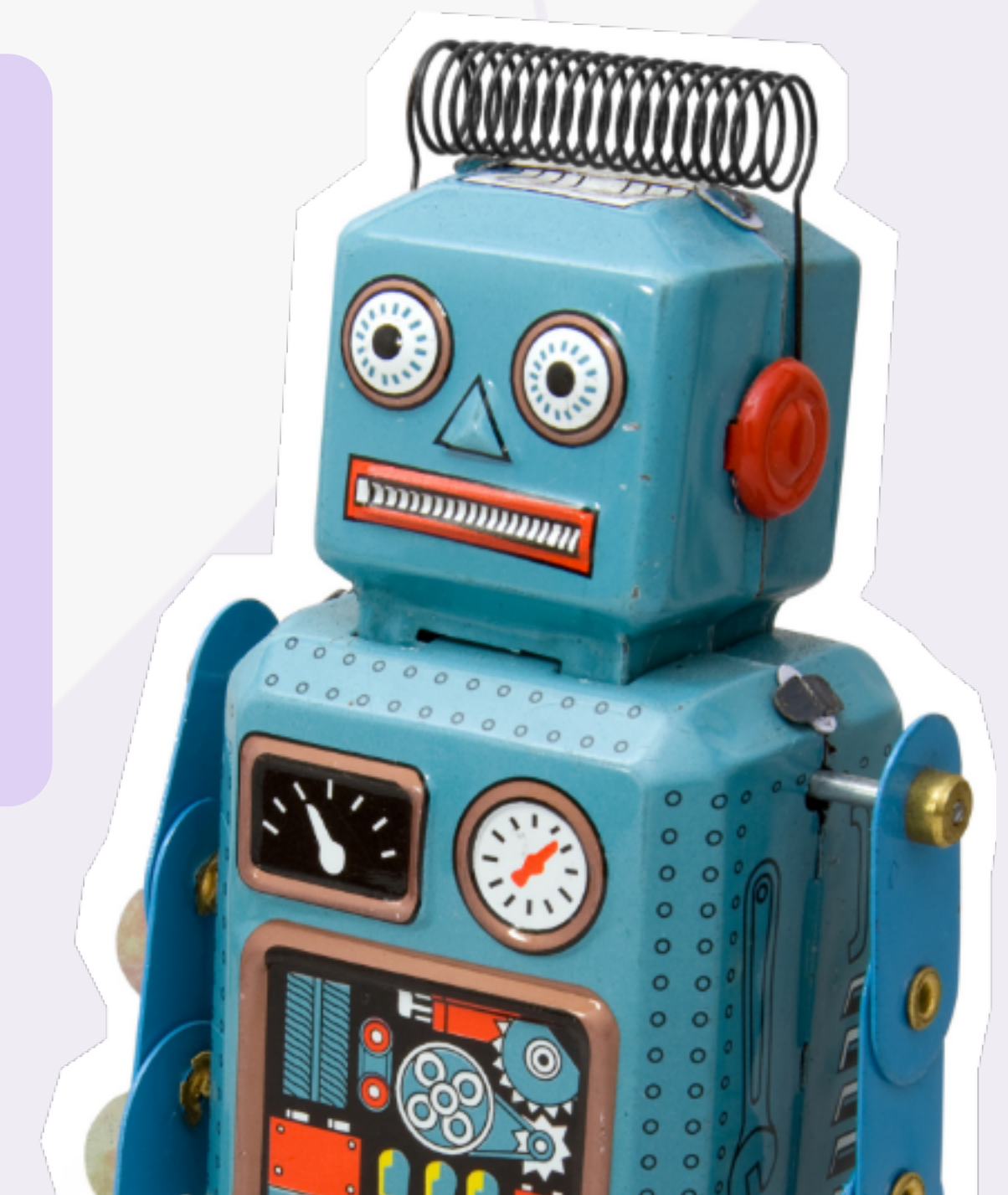
Google's new, AI-powered search experience that provides prescriptive, conversational answers instead of a traditional list of links.

### **What is Zero-click search?**

**Zero-click search is not new, but AI has accelerated it dramatically.** Buyers now complete much of their initial research without visiting multiple vendor websites. AI Overviews summarise the landscape, explain terminology and outline solution paths before a user ever clicks. It's easy to understand the challenge from a marketing perspective. A site can still rank well in traditional results but receive far fewer clicks if an AI Overview answers common queries directly. It means that a change of tactics is required. Content needs to be understandable by both Google's search algorithm, and the AI site crawlers putting together these longer responses.

*Quick fact...*

**For MSPs and telcos, AI changes where discovery happens and what "good SEO" actually looks like.**



## AI Overviews:

### ***AI-generated summaries that appear at the top of Google search results.***

For telecoms and IT providers, this particularly affects early-stage queries around migrations, comparisons, cybersecurity and “what is” searches. These are the queries that used to come from the top of the sales funnel.

### ***Zero-click search***

A search where the user gets the answer they need directly from The impact on SEO traffic for MSPs and telcos.

The result is a shorter, more compressed journey.

By the time someone does click through to your site, they are further along in their thinking and less tolerant of vague messaging.

**Discovery still happens, but it happens inside the search interface first.**

## The impact on SEO traffic for MSPs and telcos

Many providers are already seeing the pattern: impressions holding steady or increasing, while organic traffic drops for some blog content. **This does not mean SEO has stopped working, but AI has added an extra step.**

There’s still a big reason to create news and blog content, because that’s what AI search will be looking for. Getting cited in AI results improves the authority of your site, and with that comes traffic and authority for relevant pages. **Optimising for AI is called GEO (Generative Engine Optimisation).**

AI Overviews tend to reduce clicks on educational content, but more commercially aligned pages, branded searches and direct visits don’t often trigger AI Overviews at all. **SEO is still really important for attracting traffic to these pages, especially because they often have higher buying intent.**

This is especially relevant for MSPs and telcos selling complex services. Users may answer the “what” and “why” before even reaching your site, but buyers still need reassurance around delivery, risk and fit. That reassurance happens on your site, not in the overview.

## Measuring success when organic traffic drops

**If more people are relying on AI, showing up in those results are arguably as important as showing up in search.** The issue with this is that it's often hard to show the tangible impact here.

There are some other metrics we've been looking at which show where optimising for AI search has come in handy.

More useful indicators include:

- Growth in branded search and direct traffic following AI visibility
- Assisted conversions where organic content appears earlier in the journey
- Engagement and conversion rates from lower but more qualified traffic
- Visibility metrics such as impressions on AI-affected queries and featured placements

For MSPs and telcos, this means aligning SEO reporting with CRM and pipeline data. Fewer clicks can still produce the same or better commercial outcomes if the right people are finding you.

## What this points to in 2026–2027

Over the next two years, AI-driven discovery will continue to expand. Informational queries will increasingly be answered without clicks, and AI-generated summaries will become richer and more authoritative.

The opportunity is not to fight this shift, but to implement GEO to take advantage of it. Providers that treat AI visibility, brand clarity and content quality as connected systems will be better placed than those still chasing clickbait. The role of SEO is changing, but its strategic importance is not disappearing.

One trend we're expecting to see in 2026 are more lms.txt files to their sites. These files list a selection of your site's most AI-friendly content in a way that's more readable for LLMs, boosting your site's visibility in AI searches <https://yoast.com/features/lms-txt>.

### **Visibility vs Traffic**

Visibility refers to how often your brand or content is seen or referenced in search results or AI summaries, even if it doesn't generate a click. Traffic measures visits to your website.

### **Brand search**

Searches that include your company name or branded terms.



# How your content strategy needs to change

As AI reshapes discovery, content strategy becomes more about **quality than quantity.**

## Thought leadership in a crowded market

**AI systems are very good at summarising average opinions.**

Thought leadership content is refreshing because it goes in the other direction. We're experiencing the first signs of AI fatigue as people discover the telltale signs of content that clearly came out of ChatGPT (like those LinkedIn posts where every sentence needs its own line and an emoji bullet point).

**The easy solution here is to get your thoughts down on paper.**

**AI struggles to replicate is lived experience, sector-specific**

**insight and practical guidance.** If your competitors aren't doing this it can potentially act as a huge advantage. It flags to your customers that your expertise is genuine, and you're people they can feel comfortable reaching out to.

**For MSPs and telcos, effective thought leadership in 2026 comes from explaining how things actually work in practice.** This kind of content is also more likely to be surfaced by AI, because it introduces original framing rather than repeating common talking points.

### ***Thought leadership***

Content, usually written in first-person from a senior person within a business that demonstrates expertise by explaining how things work in practice, sharing lessons learned, or offering informed views.

## Creating a brand voice in an AI-dominated environment

**As AI-generated content becomes ubiquitous, brand voice becomes a commercial asset rather than a stylistic one.**

There's a real risk that if AI produces too much of your brand voice, then there will be nothing about it that stands out. AI-generated content is aggregated from existing work, so you'll be waiting a while if you need it to create something unique.

While there's a statistical implication here, the real impact is on how people feel when they land on your site. **In a sector where a lot of businesses sell the same products, building trust early is essential**, and the tone of which you explain your service offering gives you a massive head start here.

Clear, consistent language helps both humans and algorithms understand who you are and what you stand for.

For providers, this means resisting generic phrasing and vendor-led terminology. Plain English explanations, consistent naming of services, and a recognisable point of view help AI systems associate your brand with specific problems and solutions.

**In practice, this is less about tone for tone's sake, and more about reducing ambiguity.** If your content clearly explains what you do, who it is for, and where you specialise, it is easier for both buyers and AI systems to place you correctly.

## Data-led content, calculators and tools

**Interactive tools are becoming one of the most defensible forms of content.** Calculators, audits and assessment tools offer something AI summaries cannot easily replace.

For MSPs and telcos, examples include security readiness checks, migration cost estimators, continuity planning tools or compliance self-assessments. These assets attract higher-intent users and the data captured from them can be used across a variety of different marketing materials.

For example, if you receive a load of audit responses from prospects who lack Cyber Essentials, then you can bet that covering that in a future email campaign will reach even more businesses in the same situation.

**They also shift the relationship from passive consumption to active engagement,** which remains valuable regardless of how discovery evolves.

## Vertical content strategies

Finally, specialisation matters more than ever. Vertical-specific content helps providers escape the noise of broad competition and aligns naturally with AI-driven discovery.

Content tailored to healthcare, legal, education or retail environments gives AI clearer context and gives buyers

greater confidence. In a market where platforms are consolidating and services are increasingly similar, **relevance to individual business cases is more important than just being the biggest.**

### **Vertical content**

Content tailored to a specific industry or sector, such as healthcare, legal or education.



# The GetCrisp Marketing Playbook for 2026

## Website strategy: your primary sales engine in a self-serve market

In 2026, your website does the job sales teams used to do at the start of the funnel. They are no longer looking to be persuaded that technology matters; they are looking to understand whether you are a credible partner.

From our work with MSPs and telcos, the strongest-performing sites share a common trait: **they don't make users think.**

AI-driven discovery reinforces this shift. When buyers land on your site via an AI summary or branded search, they are often close to decision-making. At that point, vague positioning actively harms conversion. Clear service definitions, sector relevance and visible proof of delivery shorten sales cycles and improve lead quality.

## SEO for the age of AI search

**SEO is undergoing its most significant change in over a decade,** not because it has stopped working, but because its role has expanded. Google's AI Overviews and AI Mode mean that much of the early research phase now happens without clicks.

Our analysis of AI search behaviour shows that influence has replaced traffic as the primary outcome. Content that is clearly structured, well-evidenced and written from experience is far more likely to be surfaced, summarised or cited by Google AI Mode or Chat GPT.

For MSPs and telcos, this means SEO strategies must prioritise:

- Clear answers to specific buyer questions
- Consistent terminology around services and outcomes
- Authority signals such as case studies, named experts and original insight

Measurement must evolve alongside this. Organic traffic alone no longer reflects performance. **Brand search growth assisted conversions and pipeline influence give a far clearer picture of SEO's commercial contribution.**

*With the increase in zero click searches, the focus more than ever is on having relevant content on your website. **Content needs to be clear and talk to genuine buyers rather than trying to attract anyone to visit your site just for vanity metrics.***

**Lewis Early - Operations Director**



## Design and brand: differentiation in an AI-commoditised content market

As AI accelerates content production, brand and design have taken on a new role. They now act as shorthand for credibility.

In regulated, risk-sensitive markets like telecoms and IT, buyers make rapid judgements about operational maturity based on how information is presented. **Inconsistent branding, unclear navigation or poorly explained services introduce doubt before a conversation ever begins.**

Our experience shows that design-led improvements often deliver faster commercial impact than additional content. Clear visual hierarchy, consistent messaging and intuitive user journeys help buyers understand complex services.

**Design in 2026 is not about standing out visually. It is about making your organisation feel controlled, reliable and easy to work with. That perception is difficult for competitors to replicate, particularly with AI-generated content.**

*As AI makes it easier for everyone to produce content, how you present yourself matters more than ever. **Strong, consistent design builds trust quickly.** It signals clarity, confidence and professionalism, helping people understand you faster and feel comfortable choosing you, even in a crowded, AI-driven market.*

Tom Lewis - Lead Designer



## Events and PR: rebuilding trust and thought leadership

While digital channels fragment attention, **trust is increasingly built offline or through credible third-party validation.**

Events and PR play a renewed role here.

For telcos and MSPs, the most effective events are those that create space for education rather than promotion. Roundtables, briefings and sector-specific discussions position providers as peers rather than vendors.

PR works best when it reinforces this positioning. Commentary grounded in real delivery experience carries far more weight than generic trend analysis. **Being visible in respected industry publications helps buyers validate decisions internally, particularly at board level.**

## Video: the most credible format for technical audiences

**Video continues to outperform almost every other format when trust is the objective.** For complex, high-risk services, seeing and hearing from the people behind the delivery matters.

We consistently see higher engagement and stronger conversion when video is used to explain services, processes and decision points. Buyers want to understand how problems are approached rather than just which applications that need to be used.

Importantly, video content compounds. A single shoot can support website pages, proposals, sales follow-ups and social channels. **In a market where buyers want proof of capability, video provides context that written content alone cannot.**



## Social media: building authority where buyers spend time

Social media's role has narrowed and sharpened. **It is no longer a reliable source of direct demand, but it remains central to brand validation.** For B2B buyers, LinkedIn in particular acts as a credibility check. They look for signs of consistency, expertise and relevance. Providers that share practical insight, delivery lessons and sector-specific commentary build familiarity long before a sales conversation begins. **The strongest social strategies mirror the rest of the marketing system.** They reinforce key messages, amplify long-form content and support sales teams by keeping the brand visible and credible.

**In 2026, social media supports trust more than it drives traffic.**

***Social media is often the first place people check when they hear about a brand or business. Showing up regularly with honest, helpful content builds trust, keeps you top of mind and makes your business feel more human.***

**Jodie Moore - Head of Social**



## Content production: high-trust, high-signal content for the AI era

Finally, content production must become more intentional. AI has made average content abundant. What remains scarce is content that reflects real understanding.

High-performing content now tends to be:

- Specific rather than broad
- Grounded in delivery rather than opinion
- Designed to help buyers make decisions

Tools, calculators, assessments and sector-specific resources consistently outperform generic blogs. They provide tangible value to users and are difficult for AI to replicate convincingly.

*AI has sped up content creation. But without careful prompting, a lot of AI-assisted work is easy to spot and light on substance. **The way to stand out is still to be genuinely useful: know who you're writing for, what decision you're helping them make and bring real expertise.** And if you're using AI, make sure your prompts include that context.*

Robin Buckland - Head of Content





**Let's get in touch.**

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