

Liquid

Your 2026 Zero-Click Marketing Planning Guide

Budgeting Beyond the Click

Clicks aren't the whole story anymore. In 2026, the brands that win will earn attention, trust, and influence long before anyone visits their site.



Align Your 2026 Marketing Plan Around the Right Questions

In a zero-click world, both your stakeholders and your team need a clear view of what success looks like. Use the following questions (and answers) to guide conversations.

Questions You'll Hear (and How to Answer)

“Where’s the ROI if no one clicks?”

Visibility builds demand—branded search, trust, and recall are real outcomes, even if they don’t show up in attribution tools.

“Why aren’t we seeing more conversions?”

The journey is longer. We’re influencing decisions upstream so that when buyers are ready, they choose us.

“So this is just brand marketing?”

It’s integrated. Brand creates awareness; performance captures it. They’re inseparable now.

“If we can’t measure it, why invest?”

We can—through leading indicators like engagement depth, sentiment, and branded search lift.

“What’s the actual goal?”

To be remembered, trusted, and chosen. The click is the byproduct—not the goal.

Questions to Ground Internal Planning

- ♦ Are we showing up where people already seek answers?
- ♦ Is our content delivering value in-feed, not just post-click?
- ♦ Are we budgeting for creative that educates and influences early?
- ♦ Are we measuring signs of momentum—not just conversions?



Signals to Watch When Clicks Don't Tell the Full Story



Don't just ask "Did they click?" Ask:

- ◆ Did branded search increase?
- ◆ Are people saving, sharing, or watching longer?
- ◆ Are influencers sparking relevant discussion?
- ◆ Is the brand being mentioned organically?

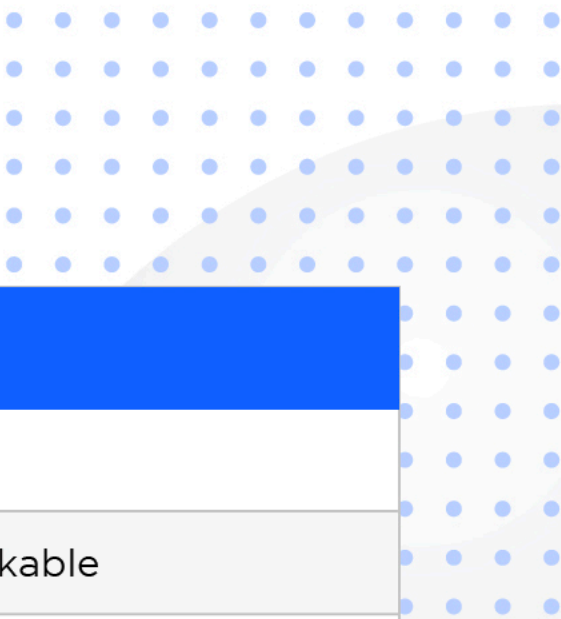


Plan to track:

- ◆ Branded search volume (Google Search Console)
- ◆ Social engagement depth (shares, saves, replies)
- ◆ Influencer impact (DMs, comments, mentions)
- ◆ Sentiment & mentions (AI tools or social platforms)

Where to Invest in 2026

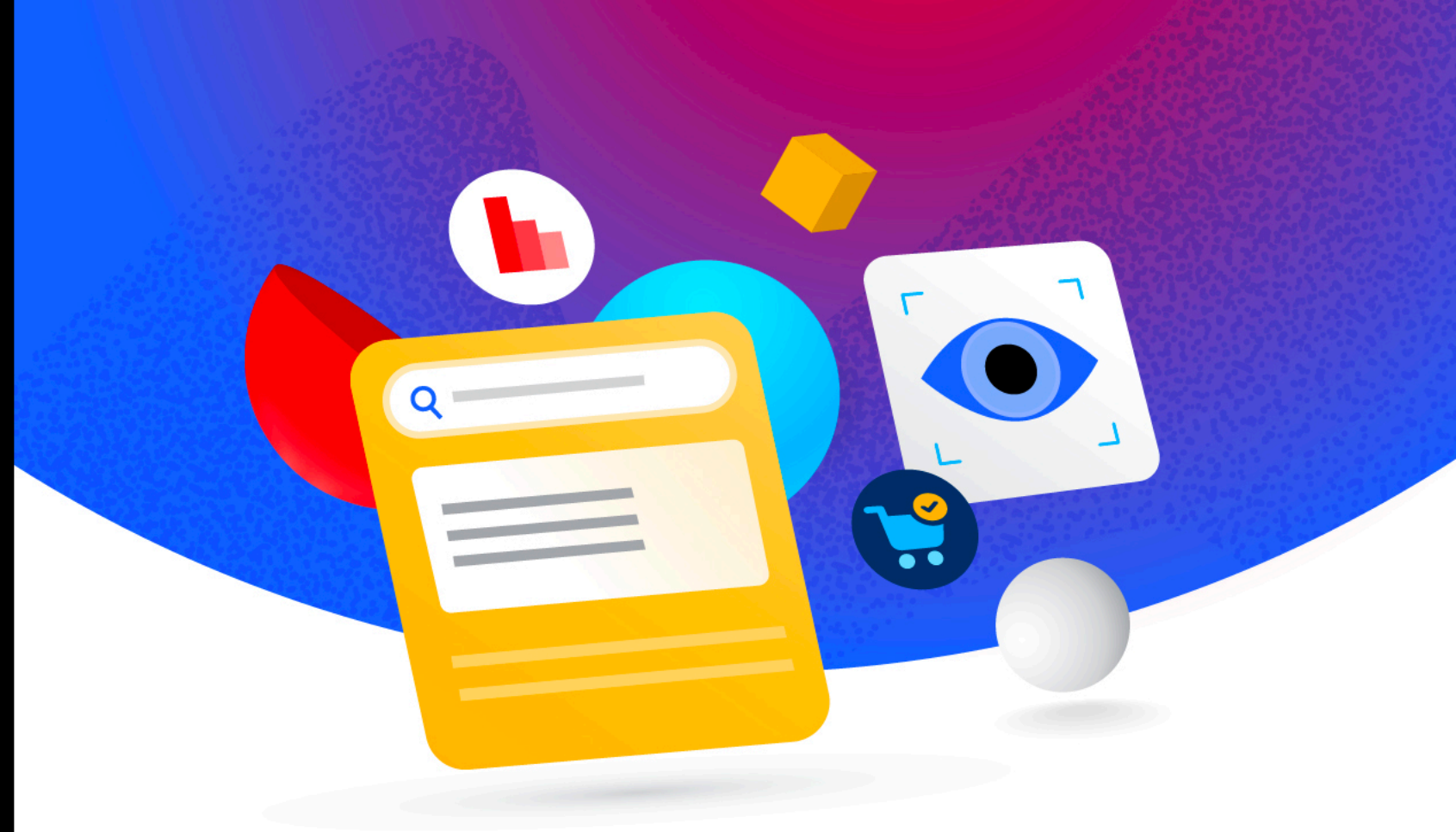
Old approach: Spend to drive people to the site
New approach: Spend to deliver value within the feed



Investment Types	Previous Focus	2026 Focus
Performance Ads	Click first	Story-first
Organic Social	Link-out posts	Native, educational, snackable
Influencer Partnerships	Link-in-bio	Content that answers and entertains
Video + Storytelling Content	Lo	Increase significantly
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	SERP visibility	LLM visibility

2026 Budget Planning Checklist

- ✓ Shift from lead generation only to brand and performance mix
- ✓ Budget for creative that educates in-feed
- ✓ Plan for multi-touch tracking—not just last-click
- ✓ Include high-trust voices: influencers, partners, employees
- ✓ Don't lose focus on a web experience that converts after offline or zero-click touchpoints
- ✓ Plan for content that ranks and trains LLMs
- ✓ Include measurement for unlinked impact (sentiment, mentions, branded search)



Final Word

The click is the byproduct—not the goal.

In 2026, the brands that win will be those that build trust before attribution kicks in. Your budget should reflect that.

Need help ensuring next year's budget gets stuff done? Let's talk.

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