



AI in beauty equals
risk – and opportunity
– for the PR & comms
industry

Introduction and methodology

Improving, editing, and altering to showcase something in its best, most becoming, light... AI, or PR? Both have surface similarities in function, but one is a source of potential risk for the other, particularly now in times of such speedy innovation and application.

One industry racing ahead in its adoption of artificial intelligence in its services, products, and campaigns is the beauty space – serving as a bellwether for other industries also integrating AI. We examine the impact AI has so far on beauty, tracking public and media attitudes, and how the comms industry has responded so far.

This report will cover:

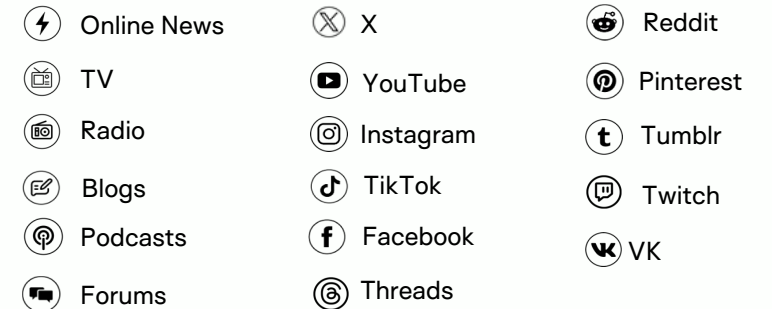
- How the UK press are reporting on AI use in the beauty industry and which stories are getting the most engagement
- The issue of authenticity for campaigns that utilise AI imagery and enhancements
- How beauty brands are tackling the ethics of AI with their comms, and why other PR sectors should take note

Approach

Data Collection Period:

1 February 2024 – 31 January 2025

Channels:



Markets/Languages:

UK data collection.
Analysis collects all mentions in English language

Sources:

Vuelio Media Monitoring
Vuelio Political Monitoring
ResponseSource Journalist Enquiry Service
Pulsar TRAC


Public and press interest in AI's impact on beauty is rising alongside increased regulation


Clever lighting set-ups, Photoshop, filters – AI beauty apps are just the latest method for 'beautifying' at our disposal. But what makes AI a key concern for those in the UK comms industry, in contrast to its forebears, is how quickly it's growing, and the ways in which the [Online Safety Bill](#) – instituted into law on 26 October 2023 – will impact its evolution and use.

In parallel to this increase in regulation in the UK has been a rise in conversation regarding AI in beauty across social and media platforms.

This hasn't just consisted of excitement for the integration of apps like TikTok's 'Bold Glamour' (more on that later...) but also discussion of ethical concerns.

The press, and public, attitude to AI in beauty is one of contrasts and conflicting outlooks. Is AI a smart choice for brands seeking to engage the public and gain media coverage, or should it be approached with caution?




 Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

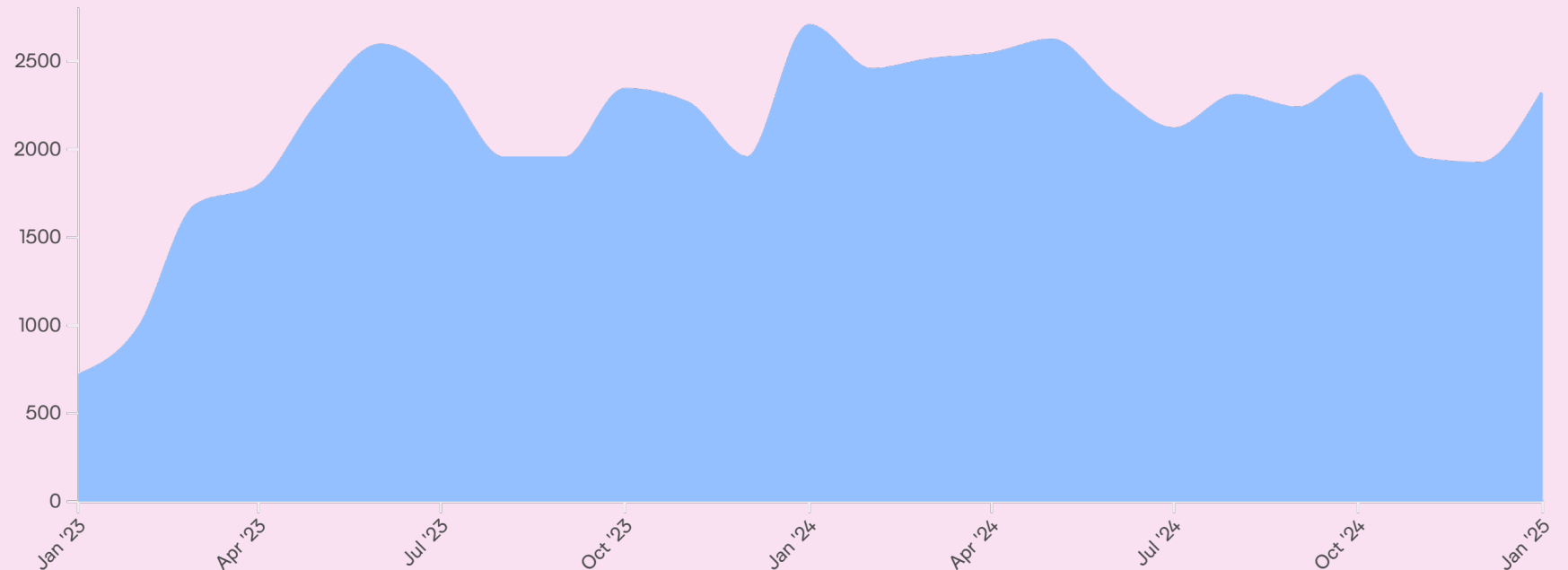


The Online Safety Bill receives Royal Assent

The UK will be the safest place to be online

It will:

-  Increase protection for children
-  Give adults greater control over their online experience
-  Keep illegal content away from users



Online news, TV, radio, and blog mentions of AI in beauty between Jan 2023 to Jan 2025. Source: Vuelio Media Monitoring and Pulsar TRAC.

How the UK press is researching their AI in beauty reporting

Beauty is a perennially popular topic for UK media professionals sourcing expertise via the [ResponseSource Journalist Enquiry Service](#), and 2024 was no different. Over 2,500 beauty-related requests were sent out to PR inboxes from journalists, broadcasters, and influencers across the country. Alongside beauty, AI is a topic only growing in interest for the UK media – just over 1,800 enquiries featuring the

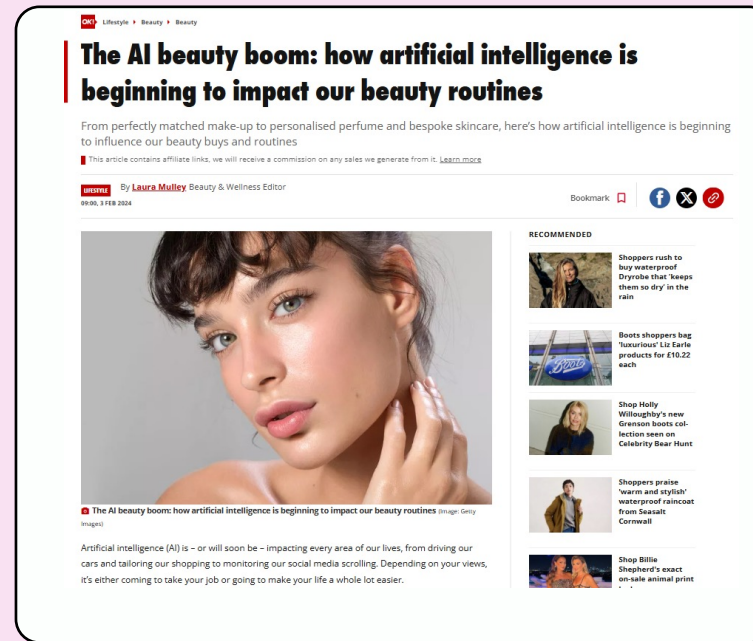
phrase came from the press, spanning far beyond technology-focused journalists.

Just some of the outlets reporting on the convergence of the two topics, highlighting the growth in interest in the impact of AI on the beauty industry, were fashion and luxury magazine Vogue Business, entertainment and celebrity outlet OK! Magazine, and trade title HR Grapevine.

Angles spanned from concern regarding impacts on self-confidence, to considerations of criticism regarding AI influencers in the media, to more positive takes on how apps are revolutionising the beauty industry and self-care routines. Seeking coverage from the press on this topic? Have experts ready to discuss the moral implications alongside the strides in innovation.

'AI-generated content is everywhere [...] How will all this affect beauty standards? What is it going to do to young women, whose sense of self has already been harmed because they're being served thousands of images of idealised beauty, in the form of influencers, each day? What will the beauty standard be in the future?'

Request submitted via the Journalist Enquiry Service, 29 January 2025



'AI beauty boom' on OK! Online, 3 February 2024

'The online lifestyle, fashion, and beauty magazine SheerLuxe has come under scrutiny over the last week for 'hiring' their first AI (artificial intelligence) employee as fashion lifestyle editor, Reem.'

'Readers have not been happy with the bold marketing move for multiple reasons [...] perpetuating unrealistic beauty standards due to the manufactured good looks of the bot.'

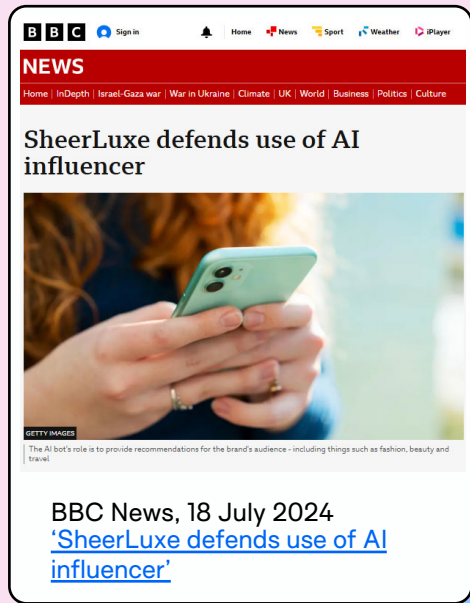
Request submitted via the Journalist Enquiry Service, 23 July 2024

Top stories: The press portrayal of AI and beauty so far

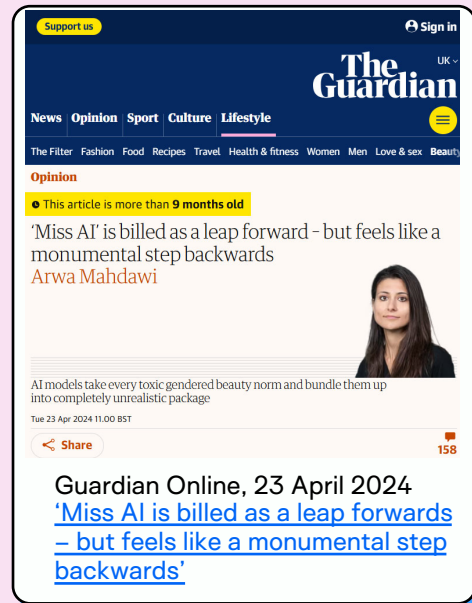
Tracking the top stories in the UK press on this topic over the last year shows a mix of trepidation towards the use of AI in beauty, and excitement for the possibilities... providing the tools are employed mindfully. SheerLuxe's defence of its 'AI Influencer' got coverage from BBC News, and lots of clicks, with the focus going to what this may mean for the media industry. Opinion columns in

national press titles The Guardian and The Independent shared cautionary takes on the adoption of AI, pondering the implications for the mental wellbeing of women, and teenagers, in particular. Offering a more positive take was consumer lifestyle-focused magazine Stylist, highlighting how women in tech are using AI to drive innovation in their

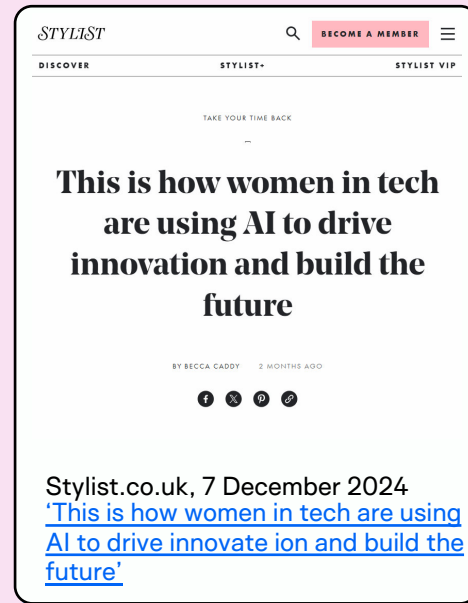
industries, spotlighting Yuty founder Simi Lindgren's success with AI integration. In contrast, advertising and marketing trade title Little Black Book 'held up a mirror' to AI use in the beauty sphere, asking whether the investment will ultimately be worthwhile, or ethically questionable – something the PR & comms industry will also need to ponder.



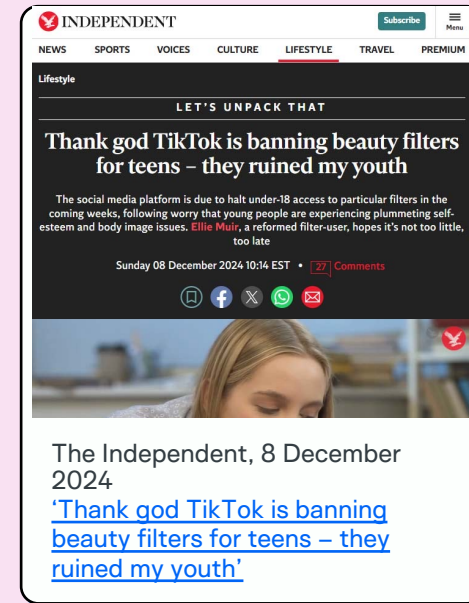
Commentary on media industry adoption of AI influencers



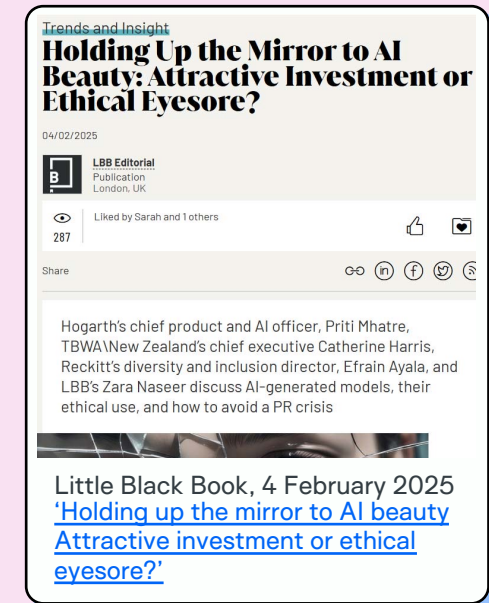
Considerations of AI's potential impact on gender equity



Positive coverage of AI innovation in industries, including beauty



Mental health-related think pieces



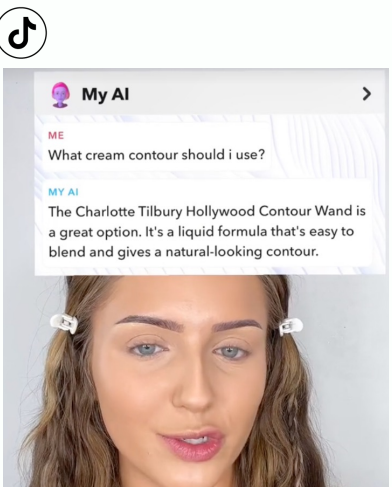
Questions on the ethics of investment

The public perception: AI beauty conversation, by social platform

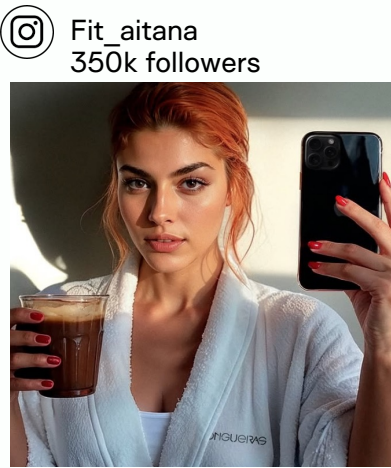
How the public posts about AI and beauty on social media shows a divergence in approach and outlook on each platform. Perhaps the natural homes for AI use when it comes to beauty are image-focused platforms TikTok and Instagram, but they do have differences. Viral challenges – like ‘AI chooses my make up’ – abound on TikTok, while Instagram can be seen as a

gallery of influencer attitudes towards, and their use of, AI. On text-centred platforms Reddit and X, more critical stances surface, with posts debating the ethical side of AI alongside considerations of its impact on beauty standards, mental health, and self-confidence. Threads, a social space relatively new, still securing its position in the social media ecosystem,

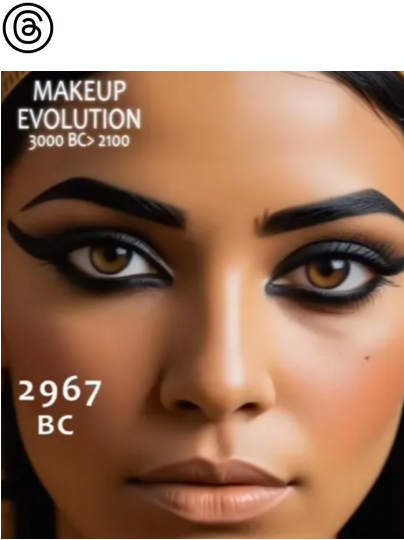
so far serves as a middle-ground, leaning positive towards AI in beauty. Here, posts on trend-led aesthetics intermingle with experiments regarding AI’s potential. As [legislation](#) for social platforms will only [increase](#) in the UK, brands entering these social conversations must plan their own approach to AI.



My snapchat **AI chooses my makeup products?! 🤖** I think my AI is an og makeup girly 🥰
lb @Natalie ♡ #Fyp #AI #SnapchatAI #Makeup #MakeupChallenge



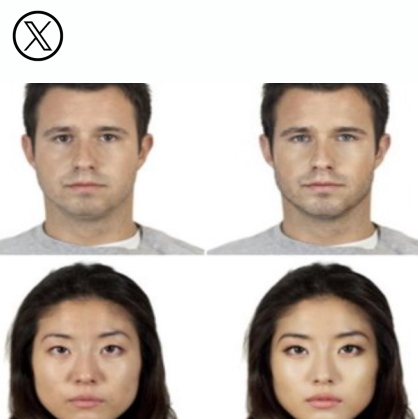
Today I came to @llonguerasoficial to get my skin ready for the holidays ✨ [...] I have come to the salon de gracias and they have treated me great



Makeup evolution made by AI
#makeup #evolution #ai



Instead of making me angry I think this process is a pretty effective lens to explore (and even satirise) the what whys and wherefores of beauty as a concept. Why give something so much power when it's so ephemeral and unearned?



The attractiveness halo effect is a cognitive bias where people tend to associate positive attributes, such as intelligence or honesty, with perceived attractiveness. But how does this effect work in the age of beauty filters and AI?

Trendy AI beauty challenge

AI beauty influencer & aesthetics

A mix of trendy & critical AI takes

AI Beauty’s impact discussion

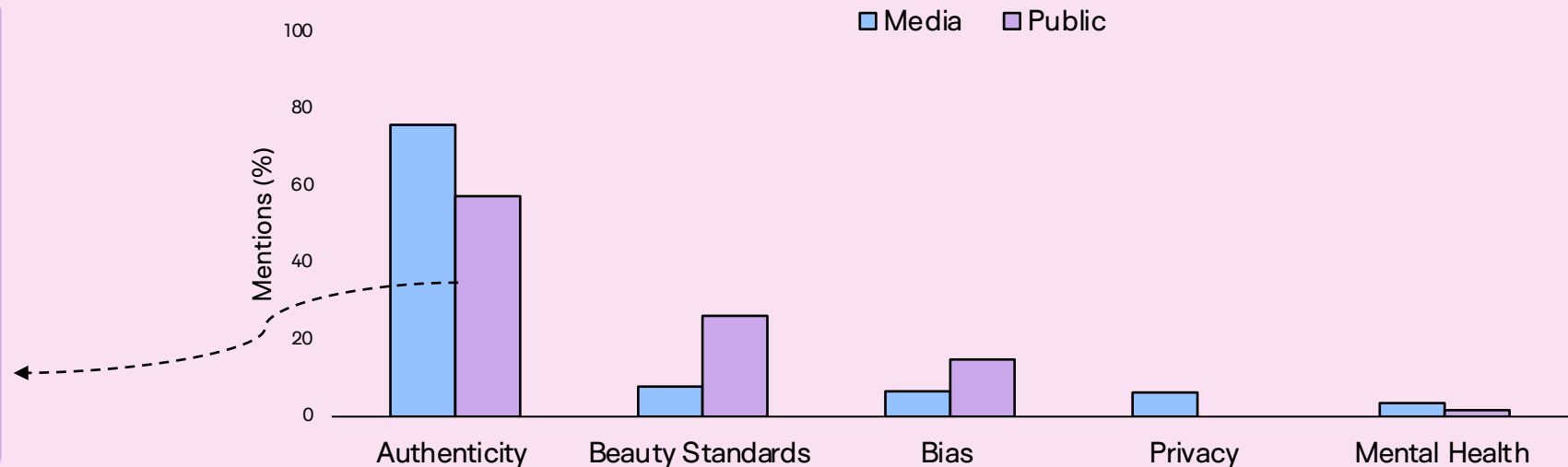
AI beauty criticism & ethics

AI and authenticity: Risky business for brands?

Authenticity is a key concern in PR, and also happens to be a major focus within the AI beauty conversation online. Around 76% of media discourse revolves around authenticity, 19% more than in the public's conversation. Beauty brands can quickly sour relationships with potential customers if unrealistic AI imagery is too centred in campaign visuals (as a number of cosmetic companies – including Ensley Reign – have already found to their cost). But the influencer space is driving much of the concern for the media and public –

chief examples being the SheerLuxe story; the Miss AI pageant; TikTok's [ban](#) on beauty filters for teens; and AI influencer [deepfakes](#). Organisations in this space, and outside of it, need to proceed with caution when it comes to AI in comms. 'Beauty' has expanded to encompass self-care, general wellbeing, and mental health – a shift sped up by lockdown era switches to skincare and self-pampering from make-up. Just as the beauty and grooming industry has traditionally targeted women as its main consumers, AI

beauty disproportionately impacts them. From tracking the conversation, the public clearly cares about AI's impact on beauty standards, and this should not be ignored. AI-generated visuals of unrealistic faces and bodies proliferate social media – a creeping of this aesthetic into comms campaigns could give pause to consumers who value authenticity and truth from the brands they buy from and engage with.



Which beauty brands are most linked with AI, and how are they approaching the association?

Dove (a brand that specialises in purposeful PR) is most linked with AI by the public, its AI-critiquing campaigns sparking more conversation on social media than brands that actually feature AI beauty applications on their websites. In contrast, brands most covered by the press were those learning into the integration of AI positively, with L'Oréal (which has partnered with IBM) and Estée Lauder (collaborating with Microsoft and OpenAI) gaining glowing write-ups in

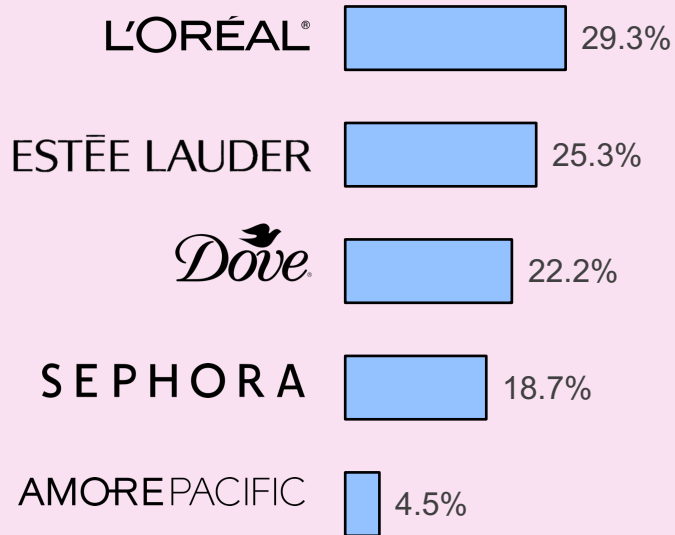
[Glossy](#) and Vogue Business. Something for the media to consider, perhaps: the significant public engagement gained by a [Freeda Facebook post](#) asking whether the industry should prioritise AI policies.

Which side has the PR and comms industry fallen on – skepticism, or excitement? So far: healthy hesitance, and a willingness to explore. Last year's Dove campaign [#TurnYourBack](#) won the brand and Oglivy

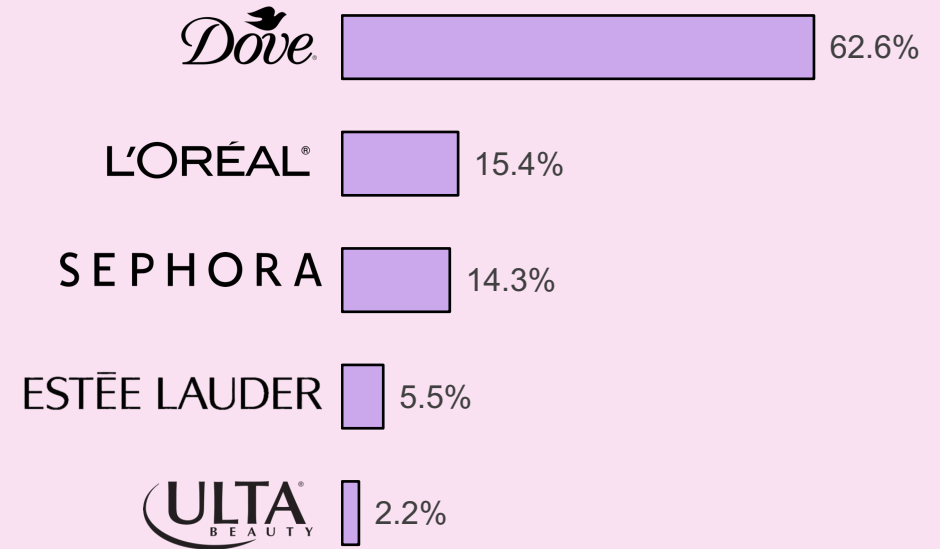
accolades and awards across the industry. Created in response to the Bold Glamour filter, it explicitly positioned the use of AI beauty as 'toxic'.

'Dove stood out in 2024,' says No Strings Public Relations founder Riley Gardiner. 'This wasn't just an ad – it became a movement, driven by its commitment to inclusivity and sincerity.'

Media top-mentioned brands SOV



Social top-mentioned brands SOV



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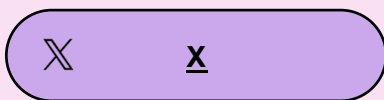


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