



AI for CMOs: The Real-World Blueprint for AI-Powered Digital Transformation

(2nd Edition)

Sponsored By

Intellimize

Table of Contents

3	A Letter from Tracy Sestili, CMO at Intellimize	
4	The AI Opportunity for CMOs	
6	Intro to AI for CMOs	
	What Is AI?	6
	Machine Learning and Deep Learning	7
	Large Language Models and Generative AI	8
9	AI Use Cases for CMOs	
	Advertising	9
	Analytics	10
	Content Marketing	10
	Customer Experience	10
	Ecommerce	11
	Email Marketing	11
	Social Media Marketing	12
	SEO	12
13	How Real-World CMOs Are Using AI	
	How Are CMOs Using AI Today?	13
	What Challenges and Concerns Do CMOs Have Regarding AI?	14
	How Will Hiring and Strategy Change in the Age of AI?	14
16	Scaling AI for CMOs	
	The Need for Scale	16
	The 10-Step Framework	16
21	It's Time to Become a Next-Gen Marketing Leader	

A Letter from Tracy Sestili, CMO at Intellimize

The world has changed entirely since the first edition of this AI for CMOs guide was published in the middle of 2022.

Today, we're witnessing the dawn of the AI revolution—at least the dawn that is now more apparent to the majority of the world.

With the explosion of powerful generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, the promise—and risk—of artificial intelligence has become viable to every leader, professional, and citizen on the planet.

Now, anyone has access to incredibly powerful—and rapidly advancing—AI. Generative AI alone is now reshaping how we write, create, and code. It is changing how we search for information. And it carries the promise that, one day soon, we'll have access to AI assistants that can follow our commands autonomously.

But, in reality, AI has been quietly growing in power, scale, and affordability behind the scenes, and largely out of the public eye, for the last decade. (A trend both [Intellimize](#) and [Marketing AI Institute](#) saw early and acted on when our respective companies were formed back in 2016.)

ChatGPT is just the tip of the iceberg. AI as a whole, of which generative AI is a single piece, has far greater implications across every major area of business and marketing, from strategy to content to personalization to analytics to SEO and beyond.

That's because the real AI revolution isn't simply about the development of generative AI that can create at will. It's about the development of intelligent machines that can do what humans do best: think and reason. In the process, the entire landscape of work as we know it will change.

In marketing alone, most of the tasks we do to create value for our customers, our brands, and our companies are types of personalization and knowledge work. We use our abilities to think and reason through problems to create business value—and we leverage our creativity to produce communications that resonate with other human beings.

On one hand, the power of AI to think and reason promises a bright future. AI has the potential to supercharge what we already do best, giving every professional on the planet the ability to scale up the knowledge work that they do and to make those communications more human. It gives you a strategic competitive advantage over the competition as well.

On the other hand, rapid innovation of machines that can think and reason has the potential to go wrong very fast. There is already growing concern that powerful AI technology can be used to cause harm, either intentionally or accidentally, by promoting misinformation and disinformation, furthering harmful bias and toxic behavior, and replacing millions of knowledge work jobs. (Some even worry we could lose control of future super-smart AI systems entirely.)

The result, for marketers in general and CMOs in particular, is that the present moment is filled with hope and fear in equal measure. And, as a result, CMOs are charged with an unenviable balancing act:

They are facing enormous pressure from the market and leadership teams to understand the actual short-term and long-term implications and applications of AI for their business—and to do so fast. With so many solutions on the market promising this and that, the pressure lies in CMOs quickly selecting the right combination of tools to stay ahead, while simultaneously rolling out the technology responsibly and safely.

The potential of AI far outweighs any pitfalls in tool selection and it's important to take a holistic approach with your marketing channels. In this guide, you'll read use cases for various individual channels, but the bigger picture is delivering a personalized, cohesive experience across all of your marketing channels, campaigns, and programs, accelerating conversions and driving revenue. This is where AI can make the greatest difference. Done right, the CMOs who win at AI stand to win big in their markets and careers. This guide is here to help you do just that.

It's designed to help CMOs understand and seize the AI opportunity as quickly as possible, by providing a highly practical playbook to understand and adopt AI across marketing use cases.

This is the second edition of the AI for CMOs guide. It's been fully updated for 2023, with largely brand-new content, as well as commentary from real-world CMOs. Even if you read 2022's guide, this one has plenty of fresh insights that have not been published elsewhere.

Once you read it, you'll be prepared to begin your AI journey.

The AI Opportunity for CMOs

The world of CMOs today can be summed up in four simple words:

Do more with less.

Inflation is hitting businesses hard. Budgets are facing serious scrutiny. And layoffs are gutting teams.

In fact, nearly 41% of CMOs were less optimistic about the economy in Q1 2023 than they were the previous quarter, according to the [CMO Survey](#) from Deloitte, Duke University, and the American Marketing Association (AMA). And 71% of CMOs think they lack sufficient budget to execute their marketing strategies in 2023, [says Gartner](#).

Gartner says 75% of CMOs are facing pressure to get more results with fewer resources in order to deliver profitable growth in 2023. Of this group, a whopping 86% say they need to make “significant changes to how the marketing function works” to do that.

In this climate, keeping the status quo is simply not an option.

No wonder so many CMOs are paying attention to artificial intelligence.

AI offers the promise of productivity and performance at scale, allowing even smaller teams to dramatically increase the quality and volume of their output, as well as open up levels of prediction and personalization that were previously impossible with standard software.

In the last 12 months, the AI landscape has changed dramatically. The dawn of generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, has changed everything. Anyone who can type a text prompt now has access to incredibly powerful—and rapidly advancing—AI that is transforming marketing as we know it.

Today, marketing teams are achieving breathtaking results using generative AI tools—results that are forcing marketers to fundamentally rethink how the discipline works. (Exhibit A: Business professor Ethan Mollick used AI to [build an entire campaign from scratch](#) in 30 minutes on his own.)

And generative AI is just the beginning. ChatGPT and similar tools are getting all the attention right now. But AI technology has been quietly growing in power, scale, and affordability for the last decade, largely behind the scenes. For the most part, CMOs are just now seeing the tip of the iceberg of what’s coming.

In reality, generative AI alone has the potential to change how CMOs plan, produce, and perform. But AI as a whole has far bigger implications across every major area of marketing, from strategy to content and personalization, to analytics to SEO and beyond.

CMOs that embrace AI technology now stand to develop a potentially insurmountable competitive advantage in their markets, their companies, and their careers.

There’s just one problem...

AI moves so fast—and there’s so much hype and misinformation in the market—that actually figuring out what AI is, how you can actually use it, and where to focus your efforts is a major challenge.

This guide is here to help...

AI offers the promise of productivity and performance at scale, allowing even smaller teams to dramatically increase the quality and volume of their output, as well as open up levels of prediction and personalization that were previously impossible with standard software.

At [Marketing AI Institute](#), we've been educating marketers on how to understand, pilot, and scale AI since 2016, half a decade before today's current generative AI craze and the rise of overnight AI "experts" on social media.

Since then, we've grown into a leading source of industry education as we teach other marketing leaders how to apply AI to their work and businesses—just like we've done in our own.

In this guide, we've partnered with the experts at [Intellimize](#), a leading AI tool for website experience optimization and personalization, to cut through the noise and help you make sense of AI—and your AI strategy—starting today.

This blueprint will provide you with:

- Clear, actionable definitions of AI, machine learning, deep learning, and generative AI...
- Specific AI use cases across eight major areas of marketing, from advertising to ecommerce to social media...
- Real-world examples of how CMOs are using AI, in their own words, over interviews with 14 leaders...
- And a practical playbook to start adopting and scaling AI in your organization.

By the time you're finished with this guide, you'll have a clear picture of exactly how AI can start benefitting you.

Intro to AI for CMOs

Here's the good news...

You don't have to have a computer science or machine learning background to take advantage of the opportunities that AI provides. You just need to have a solid understanding of how AI works and what it can do.

What Is AI?

You might be forgiven for thinking that AI means "ChatGPT."

After all, ChatGPT has become the fastest-growing consumer app in history, reaching 100 million users just two months after launch. It dominates the headlines. And it has everyone paying attention to AI.

But, in reality, AI is much more—and has far bigger implications than—ChatGPT.

So, what is AI exactly?

One of our favorite definitions of artificial intelligence comes from Demis Hassabis, co-founder and CEO of DeepMind, a major AI company that now forms the backbone of Google's AI efforts. He says:

"AI is the science of making machines smart."

We would add to that definition:

By "being smart," these machines enhance human knowledge and capabilities.

But what does "being smart" actually mean?

The traditional (non-AI) software that your team uses every day is quite dumb. It only follows strict rules and instructions that you provide it. At every step of the way, you must tell it precisely what to do—then the machine executes your instructions to the letter. And this entire process requires lots of manual labor from you.

In any given marketing campaign, you still create all the marketing assets, specify lists, workflows, and logic, and determine the strategies used to achieve marketing objectives. Once that's all done, the machine performs its given tasks (sends an email, executes a workflow, displays a popup, etc.). Then you repeat the process every time you launch a campaign or marketing activity.

At no point does your traditional software make dynamic changes based on campaign performance. At no point does it automatically adjust direction in response to data. And it doesn't make any real strategic recommendations on how to improve your results.

AI is fundamentally different from traditional software. With AI, you work in tandem with a smart machine that can both do things you can't and enhance your capabilities:

ChatGPT has become the fastest-growing consumer app in history.

1. AI can determine its own rules and instructions without human oversight in order to achieve your goals.
2. AI can plot its own pathways to achieve the goals that you give it—pathways that humans may not be capable of seeing.
3. And AI can learn and improve on its own, improving performance without a human explicitly telling it how to do so.

A very basic example can illustrate the difference between traditional software and AI.

Let's say you are sending an email to 10,000 subscribers and you want to make sure it has the highest open rate possible by optimizing the send time. To do that with traditional software, you might do the following:

- Evaluate past emails in your system to determine which send times performed best when sending similar emails.
- Research best practices on the best times to send emails based on available research and commentary online.
- Look at your audience breakdown to determine how different time zones might impact send time—or use a feature in your email software to send your email at the same time in different time zones.
- When all that's done, you make an educated guess on the best time to send, then schedule the email.

This approach takes a fair amount of work. And it's not very scientific.

With AI, things look a little bit different. With AI, your process might look something like this:

- Use [an AI tool](#) that automatically analyzes subscriber email open behavior and sends your emails to each of your 10,000 subscribers at the time they're most likely to open.

In this example—and many others—AI not only automates part or all of a marketing process, it actually works more autonomously to achieve goals more efficiently and effectively at scale in ways that humans can't.

Because AI can determine its own rules, chart its own paths, and learn and improve on its own, it provides a smarter way of doing, well, almost anything.

This is what it means to make machines—the software you use every day—truly smart.

So, when we talk about “artificial intelligence,” we're using that term as an umbrella term—an umbrella term for all the different tools, techniques, and technologies that make machines smart.

Machine Learning and Deep Learning

The core subset of artificial intelligence is machine learning. This involves literally teaching machines how to learn to achieve goals. Once we teach a machine how to achieve a goal using training data, it can then go accomplish that goal on new data. What's more, it can learn to improve its performance over time.

Within machine learning, there's a highly advanced subset called deep learning. Deep learning is concerned with not only machines that can learn and improve but machines that can do so at human-like tasks.

These aren't just machines making predictions (though they do that). They're machines that can read, write, speak, reason, and understand.

Large Language Models and Generative AI

Two types of deep learning, in particular, are currently taking the world by storm: Large language models (LLMs) and generative AI.

Large language models are deep learning models trained to understand language. You may have heard about prominent large language models like GPT-4 from OpenAI, PaLM from Google, or LLaMA from Meta.

Large language models start off as general-purpose models. But they can be fine-tuned to specific use cases for different industries.

Take GPT-3, for instance, the predecessor of GPT-4. It is a general-purpose model that uses language in a lot of useful but generic ways. But you can also train GPT-3 on different types of industry-specific data to make it more useful for a particular type of business. In fact, that's exactly what Bloomberg did when they fine-tuned GPT-3 to create [BloombergGPT](#), a large language model that has been "specifically trained on a wide range of financial data."

Once trained, large language models can be used in many *generative AI* applications.

Generative AI is any type of AI that can produce content on its own, including text, images, audio, code, 3D images, and more. LLMs are used in generative AI tools that deal with language. Other models are used to power generative AI that creates non-language outputs like images.

Examples of generative AI tools include [Writer](#) and [Jasper](#) for text generation, [Midjourney](#) for image generation, and [Gen-2 from Runway](#) for video generation.

Generative AI isn't the only type of artificial intelligence, but it is one of the fastest-growing and attention-getting categories in AI today, so it's worth paying attention to.

But don't put blinders on. There are hundreds of use cases for artificial intelligence for CMOs, including, but not limited to, generative AI.

Let's look at some of the top ones.

AI Use Cases for CMOs

AI's value goes far beyond generative AI. AI can transform every major aspect of your marketing organization by making it more intelligent. Marketing AI Institute's [5Ps of Marketing AI framework](#) can help you understand how:

- **Planning:** AI can help you build intelligent strategies.
- **Production:** AI can generate intelligent content.
- **Personalization:** It can power intelligent consumer experiences.
- **Promotion:** It can help you manage intelligent cross-channel promotions.
- **Performance:** And it can turn data into intelligence.

Across the 5Ps, AI can also help you capture significant benefits like better optimization through lowering CAC and promoting revenue growth and smarter predictions that drive tangible business value.

In fact, today, the world's most successful brands are using AI to achieve a range of business outcomes that lead directly to the results that executives care most about, including:

- Accelerate revenue growth.
- Create personalized consumer experiences at scale.
- Drive costs down.
- Generate greater return on investment (ROI).
- Get more actionable insights from marketing data.
- Predict consumer needs and behaviors with greater accuracy.
- Reduce time spent on repetitive, data-driven tasks.
- Shorten the sales cycle.
- Unlock greater value from marketing technologies.

In marketing, there are literally hundreds of ways to use AI. However, there are a handful of core marketing use cases where AI can start making the biggest impact for any CMO—areas where AI is widely commercially available and able to improve performance quickly.

Advertising

Predict ad performance and efficiently manage campaigns.

AI can analyze your advertising performance, ad spend, and audience data from your ad platforms—and it can do it at scale. It can then use that information to tell you what's working, what might work next, and what to do about it. Language and visual AI tools can even write ad copy for you or build hundreds of ad creative variations in seconds.

Today, you can use AI advertising tools to:

- Allocate budget to the right audiences and channels.
- Find new audiences interested in your ads.
- Manage and adjust budget automatically.
- Predict which ads work before you launch.
- Scale one piece of creative across platforms and regions.
- Write ad copy and copy variations.

Analytics

Get priceless insights from your data.

Pattern recognition and prediction are at the heart of what AI can do. Currently available AI tools use pattern recognition to process massive amounts of your website and customer data, then extract valuable information that humans often miss. AI can also use this data to make predictions about which actions, pages, or users drive the most performance.

AI-powered analytics tools empower marketers to:

- Analyze competitors' websites and marketing activities.
- Automatically answer common questions about data.
- Create comprehensive profiles of valuable users and customers.
- Identify changes in data that humans should pay attention to.
- Predict what users want to see, do, read, or buy next.
- Understand and segment target audiences.

With AI-powered analytics, marketing leaders finally have the ability to extract maximum value from the data at their fingertips.

Content Marketing

Create and personalize content at scale.

No matter what types of content you create or promote, there's a good chance AI can help you do it better. Today, AI can not only understand natural language in written, video, and audio form, it can also write, create images, generate video, and create audio.

This opens up powerful AI use cases for content marketers, empowering them to:

- Align content with user intent.
- Create and edit images, audio, and video.
- Optimize content for search and voice.
- Personalize content recommendations for each and every website user.
- Personalize the right language to the right users in every marketing message.
- Research and create content calendars and strategies.
- Suggest content topics and brainstorm content angles.
- Write and edit blog posts, landing pages, pages, and content.

Thanks to AI, it's never been easier to create, personalize, and scale a content marketing program.

Customer Experience

Personalize exceptional digital experiences across channels.

Designing an exceptional customer experience today without smarter technology is impossible. Consumers demand always-on, frictionless experiences with brands. It's impossible to keep up, regardless of your headcount, without technology that can deliver personalization at scale.

With the power of AI-driven personalization, brands now have the ability to tailor messaging, services, and offers to each and every person that engages with them. Using AI, you can do things like:

- Analyze data to improve experience quality.
- Answer questions, solicit feedback, and offer intelligent searches for customers.
- Direct customers to relevant resources, content, and products.
- Field customer questions and comments.
- Personalize messaging and offers to individual customers.
- Predict customer churn.
- Unify customer data for richer behavioral profiles.

An always-on, high-quality customer experience is no longer optional in a fully online world. AI makes it possible to provide these types of experiences in effective—and cost-effective—ways.

Ecommerce

Sell more of what consumers want more often.

The predictive power of AI has massive implications for ecommerce, as demonstrated by how Amazon has transformed the online shopping experience through prediction and personalization. Today, brands that sell online can use AI to make predictions big and small, from making macro decisions around inventory to micro-targeting a single user's product preferences.

In ecommerce, AI can:

- Enable virtual try-on and testing.
- Forecast product demand.
- Intelligently manage inventory and fulfillment.
- Make product search and discovery more intelligent.
- Predict which products, features, and prices will succeed in the market.
- Personalize product features and qualities to individual preferences.
- Personalize product recommendations to individual consumers.

The beauty of ecommerce AI solutions is that many existing platforms offer them or integrate with them. Amazon's personalization AI is available for purchase, and Shopify's integration ecosystem has plenty of AI apps to plug into a current store.

Email Marketing

Intelligently segment and send more successful email messages.

Every brand sends emails, and every brand that sends emails should be using AI. That's because most email marketing that's done without AI functions on educated guesswork. What subject lines work best? What content will perform? Who should we send to, and when?

AI removes the head-scratching and creates high-impact email campaigns. With it, you can:

- De-duplicate and clean up email list data.
- Personalize email content for individual prospects or customers.
- Personalize email send times to individual prospects or customers.
- Write email newsletters automatically.
- Write email subject lines that improve open rates.
- Write portions of emails or entire emails automatically.

There's no longer any need to hit send and pray. AI has changed the level of performance and predictability possible in email marketing.

Social Media Marketing

Drive more social engagement and reach at scale.

Social media platforms rely on AI to populate your feeds with content you'll engage with. But AI is also used by brands to create that content and get consumers to engage with it more. By using AI social media tools, you can:

- Automatically create social posts and ads.
- Determine which posts and types of content work best.
- Develop the right messaging and creative for each platform and user.
- Find the right influencers for the right audience.
- Identify your brand logos and visuals in consumer posts.
- Manage mentions, comments, and engagement.
- Measure brand sentiment, consumer sentiment, and market trends.
- Scale up social posts and ad creation.

Don't worry: AI doesn't remove humans from the loop. Social success depends more than ever on authentic human engagement from individuals and brands. AI just makes the process easier and more intelligent.

SEO

Improve search rankings and appear in more relevant results.

Search engines use AI to determine exactly which search results to show you for any given query at any given time. It only stands to reason you'd use AI to make sure you show up in the right place. Today, AI for SEO can:

- Automatically identify and address technical SEO factors.
- Create and optimize content for voice search.
- Identify core topics and keywords to cover in new content to rank.
- Identify key ranking factors needed to own search results across topics.
- Optimize existing content to rank better.
- Quickly update and optimize local search results across locations.
- Perform keyword research and construct keyword databases.

Human marketers understand best what consumers are looking for in comprehensive, compelling content and give them what they want. AI understands best what search algorithms are looking for when ranking search results and gives them what they want.

It's the perfect marriage of human and machine.

How Real-World CMOs Are Using AI

Now that you have a solid understanding of AI and its potential for CMOs, let's take a look at how real-world CMOs are actually using it.

We spoke to 14 CMOs or executives on CMO career tracks (marketing VPs and higher) to get the inside scoop on how they're approaching AI today.

How Are CMOs Using AI Today?

Every CMO or executive we spoke with is using AI today or rolling out pilots in the next several months. Unsurprisingly, ChatGPT was a popular AI tool being used by these leaders. But they also report using a range of other AI tools, including:

- [6sense](#)
- [Adobe's native AI features](#)
- [Beautiful.ai](#)
- [BrandMuscle.ai](#)
- [Canva's native AI features](#)
- [Content at Scale](#)
- [DALL-E](#)
- [Engage AI](#)
- [Grammarly](#)
- [Jasper](#)
- [Intellimize](#)
- [Midjourney](#)
- [Topaz AI](#)
- Proprietary tools and algorithms trained on customer data.

These executives use these tools and others across a diverse range of use cases. Many of their initial use cases, though not all, are generative. These include:

- Creating internal communications and reports.
- Creating buyer personas.
- Drafting sales and marketing emails.
- Gap analysis.
- Generating social media posts.
- Generating visual creative assets.
- Personalizing the customer journey.
- Predicting which accounts are in-market.
- Research assistance.
- Summarizing content.
- Writing and editing content.

Not to mention, most CMOs and executives we talked to are seeing tangible benefits from the technology. These benefits typically fall into one of two categories:

- **Reducing costs.** CMOs are using AI to increase efficiency and boost team productivity across common marketing tasks.
- **Increasing revenue.** CMOs report that AI usage has led to higher conversion rates and revenue uplift.

When asked how AI was benefitting his company, Dariusz Paczuski, CMO at [Confiant](#), said:

“It’s augmented intelligence. It makes us smarter, faster, and more productive.”

What Challenges and Concerns Do CMOs Have Regarding AI?

But AI adoption, despite its benefits, isn’t always easy. Leaders we spoke to cited a common set of challenges and concerns related to AI as they go about understanding and using the technology.

These include:

- **Keeping up with AI.** AI is moving forward at lightspeed. Several leaders said they struggle to stay on top of all the AI tools available and their capabilities. (Not to mention, the noise online around AI makes it even harder to know who and what to trust.)
- **Ethical and legal considerations.** More than one leader referred to AI today as the “Wild Wild West.” Leaders struggle with the lack of current regulations around the technology, as well as how to use the technology responsibly. They also struggle to create policies to govern the internal use of AI and worry about using AI in a way that doesn’t violate copyright.
- **Data and privacy concerns.** Leaders are treading carefully when it comes to giving AI tools access to sensitive data—and using AI in a way that respects customer privacy.
- **Fear.** At least one leader said their team was afraid AI could negatively impact their jobs and roles. Some leaders cited how difficult change management could be, noting challenges in getting teams onboarded with AI effectively and quickly.
- **Impact on buyers.** Some leaders find it difficult to gauge how AI will impact buyer behavior and how content consumption patterns (like in organic search) will change as a result of AI tools.
- **Accuracy.** AI still makes plenty of mistakes. Several leaders worried that those mistakes can be difficult or time-consuming to spot.

How Will Hiring and Strategy Change in the Age of AI?

AI is already changing how CMOs and leaders think about hiring and strategy.

Even when CMOs told us that AI wouldn’t change their strategy, it is changing their expectations.

“We still need the same people but should expect more productivity from them in certain cases,” Paczuski at Confiant told us.

However, others are already changing their hiring practices in response to AI.

Wendy White, CMO at [Daxko](#), said she’s now on the hunt for “AI whisperers.” Finding them is critical to her hiring strategy moving forward.

Jeff Staats, CMO at [Haley Marketing](#), couldn’t agree more.

“I think you will see more marketers looking to find prompt engineers and those people who can really leverage AI from an ideation standpoint to create great posts, headlines, ad messaging, etc.,” he said.

It's clear that CMOs expect experienced marketing hires to now have AI skills. But it doesn't stop there. Expectations around new hires have changed, too.

"New graduates need to be skilled in AI," says Jon Russo, founder and CMO at [B2B Fusion](#).

Regardless of seniority level, certain existing skills will still be highly valuable—or even increase in value—in the age of AI.

"Strategy, measurement, sales, consulting, training, and making people feel special: these are the jobs that are still in demand," says Andy Crestodina, CMO and co-founder at [Orbit Media Studios](#).

Along with hiring, strategy is evolving in response to AI as well.

"Strategy will still be driven by the CMO, but AI will allow for faster testing and learning, speed to failure, and course correction," says Helen Baptist, Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer at [BrandMuscle](#).

Many leaders agree that the pace of strategy creation and execution is going to accelerate dramatically thanks to AI.

"The insights you can pull and the way you can communicate strategy will be improved exponentially with AI," says Staats at Haley Marketing.

Several leaders said they're paying very close attention to how AI is changing content marketing strategies.

"Now that anyone can spin up an ebook or 1,500-word blog post in minutes, I believe it's imperative that our content be more human, opinionated, and interactive," says Kathie Kinde Clark, VP of Marketing at [Elastio](#). "SEO and content marketing will be forever changed."

Scaling AI for CMOs

The market for generative AI alone is projected to grow to \$1.3 trillion by 2032 from just \$40 billion in 2022, according to [Bloomberg](#). Non-generative AI will have up to a \$6 trillion annual business impact on marketing and sales alone, estimates [McKinsey Global Institute](#).

The size and speed of AI's impact will vary across different industries and marketing functions. But the sheer size of these numbers should open your eyes to the fact that AI is going to have a very big impact on business as usual—very, very quickly.

While the financial rewards for adopting and scaling AI are significant, the reality is that most businesses are still in the infancy of AI adoption.

The Need for Scale

The learning curve and costs associated with deploying AI are major barriers to entry for many marketing leaders and businesses. However, the early movers who crack the code of how to profitably adopt and scale AI can build nearly insurmountable competitive advantages.

Even if you're just getting started, it's not too early to plan your AI strategy with scaling in mind. With hundreds of AI tools launching every week—and billions in funding flooding into AI innovation—you can expect even nascent AI markets and use cases to mature quickly.

That means marketing will get much smarter sooner than you think.

Now is the time to start preparing your organization for the coming changes.

AI will reshape how all organizations work. It won't just augment your team members—it will literally be one of your team members.

Very soon, humans will work fully hand-in-hand with intelligent systems to play to each other's strengths. Humans will increasingly offload repetitive tasks and data-driven predictions to machines. Machines will, in turn, provide guidance that humans will follow to successfully complete the high-value strategic and creative tasks they're best at.

Roles and organizations will change as a result of this division of labor. The marketer of tomorrow will need to understand how to adopt and scale AI in order to build the hybrid human/machine teams required to compete.

Our framework for adopting and scaling AI shows you how.

The 10-Step Framework

This framework is excerpted, adapted, and updated from [Marketing Artificial Intelligence: AI, Marketing, and the Future of Business](#) by Paul Roetzer and Mike Kaput.

The book draws on years of research and dozens of interviews with AI marketers, executives, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Roetzer and Kaput present the current potential of AI, as well as a glimpse into a near future in which marketers and machines work seamlessly to run personalized campaigns of unprecedented complexity with unimaginable simplicity.

You can order the book [here](#).

1. Create an Internal AI Council

You cannot solve for scaling AI alone, no matter how smart you are or how much time and money you have. You need to involve invested stakeholders across every business function in your company when formulating near- and long-term AI strategy, developing policies and practices, identifying use cases, and deploying technology.

Ideally, this council brings together leaders and champions from every part of the organization to drive every step of the AI-powered digital transformation process.

2. Develop Responsible AI Principles for Your Organization

In the process of making software more intelligent, AI has the potential to make brands more human by enabling organizations to focus increased time and energy on communications, creativity, culture, community, and the human condition.

AI should make all of us better people, professionals, and organizations. However, this will not happen without a continuous focus on the responsible application of AI across all business functions. Before you embark on AI-powered digital transformation, your organization's leaders must clearly define responsible AI principles, policies, and procedures. This includes both general AI policies as well as policies specific to how generative AI will and won't be used by your company. You can see examples of these types of policies from [WIRED](#) and the [City of Boston](#).

Every organization will have different policies to address different needs and perspectives. But, for a starting point, you can use Marketing AI Institute's responsible [AI manifesto](#) under a Creative Commons license to build on.

3. Develop an AI Roadmap with an Impact/Exposure Assessment

AI needs to solve real business problems.

There's no magic to AI, despite its powerful capabilities. Your marketing doesn't just become smarter by buying an AI tool. And there's no single AI platform to replace all of your existing martech.

Instead, AI performs narrow, specific tasks at superhuman levels, so in all likelihood, you'll be adopting a number of different tools for different use cases.

That means you have to map out a strategic vision first, one that includes real business cases for AI that directly impact costs and revenue. Then, you must begin patiently experimenting with tools that have the potential to realize that strategic vision, with the understanding your martech stack will likely expand, not contract.

This can take the form of an AI roadmap, a dynamic 3-5 year plan that prioritizes AI use cases and projects and defines how to infuse AI across key areas of your marketing and business.

Ideally, an AI roadmap should include:

- **Discovery** — An audit of your organization's existing understanding and use of AI, as well as its marketing strategy and goals. Discovery work may also include a wider analysis of your industry as a whole and opportunities to build a fundamentally smarter business powered by AI within it.
- **Use Cases Priorities** — AI pilot projects for narrow use cases build a foundation for success. Your AI roadmap should include ideation and prioritization of near-term use cases that you can start piloting AI for in order to secure quick wins.
- **Problem-Based Priorities** — In tandem with short-term pilots, your roadmap should also include long-term initiatives to solve high-value business problems on multi-year timelines.

- **Timelines** — You'll want to map out parallel timelines for all use case priorities and problem-based priorities.
- **Budgets** — Budgets may change over time, but it helps to begin anticipating the costs of both short- and long-term initiatives.
- **Action Plans** — Action plans bring together all previous steps into projects with teams and owners who can turn ideas into actions on established timelines.

As part of your roadmap or as a complement to it, you'll also want to conduct an impact and exposure assessment.

These assessments look at how AI technology might impact or disrupt current roles and career paths within your organization. It is a key element of any AI-powered digital transformation, allowing leaders to anticipate AI's impact on human capital and take steps to mitigate that impact, provide new opportunities to employees, and appropriately message around changes to internal roles.

4. View Data as Essential to Success

As you build and follow your AI roadmap, it helps to remember that data is at the heart of all AI adoption and scaling.

All AI adoption and scaling efforts start and end with assessing opportunities to get more out of your data.

You'll want to look at every aspect of your marketing program that uses data—or should be. You'll want to look at how data is acquired, cleansed, labeled, and structured. You'll also want to consider where it is stored and how it might be used to make your marketing smarter. Your data strategy must also consider privacy concerns, data security, and issues around biased datasets.

In short, once you have a strategic vision, your next step is to get your hands dirty by documenting where all of your data lives and what it looks like.

5. Become an Informed Buyer of AI-Powered Technology

Marketers who lack confidence in evaluating AI will struggle to adopt and scale it.

At the end of the day, AI is just smarter marketing technology. But you need to understand how AI is smarter in order to confidently evaluate it for your adoption and scaling needs.

Just because marketing technology companies claim they use AI, machine learning, or deep learning doesn't necessarily mean their solutions are more intelligent than what you're already using. Not to mention, some companies have overhyped branding that exaggerates what their AI is capable of doing.

As you search out technology to run pilots and longer-term problem-based initiatives, you'll want to ask vendors several (or all) of the following questions to start understanding if what they offer does what they say it does.

- How does the vendor use AI (i.e. machine learning, NLG, NLP, deep learning, LLMs, generative AI, etc.) in its products?
- What are the primary marketing use cases for the company's AI-powered solutions?
- What makes the vendor's solutions smarter than traditional approaches and products?
- Are there any minimum requirements (e.g. for data or list size) to get value out of the technology?
- What data does the technology use and/or need?
- How does the technology improve over time?
- What training is needed for our team? Does the vendor provide it?

- Will we need additional outside support to use the technology?
- Do you integrate with other technologies in my current tech stack?
- How does this technology solve for my current problem/need?

6. Educate and Engaged Leadership

Early setbacks are normal at every stage of the process and cannot be allowed to stall long-term AI plans.

There is a reasonable probability that one or more early pilot projects won't meet the goals your team sets. This cannot stop you from adopting AI. To make sure it doesn't, you'll want to get your leadership team involved in the process from the start.

They must understand the potential short-term challenges, embrace the value of learning through experimentation, and provide the necessary resources to succeed. This support becomes easier to secure when you have clear plans, communicate with consistency and clarity, and always connect AI projects to business goals that matter to your peers on the leadership team.

7. Reimagine Your Marketing Team

Your marketing team five years from now may look nothing like it does today.

In coming years, AI-focused roles—like marketing AI specialist, AI ops leader, AI trainer, machine manager, recommendation engine director, director of deep learning, VP of augmented intelligence, and chief algorithms officer—could all find their way into your organizational structure. In the process, they will redefine the knowledge and skills needed to drive growth.

Every business in every industry is susceptible to being obsoleted by someone who uses AI to build a smarter business model and the talent organizations they build along the way. The time is now to start taking the steps needed to reimagine roles and career paths. It's also time to start identifying AI-driven marketing agencies and consulting firms that can help you level up your capabilities while you invest in upskilling your team.

As you hire new talent, consider the job description and role for each hire:

- What tasks could AI take over?
- What tasks won't be necessary?
- How can we reskill our team members to protect their roles in the coming years?

8. Train Your Team and Explore AI Together

Team education is key to unlocking AI's value for your company.

Most organizations lack formal training programs to get existing employees up to speed on AI. Yet, AI will be integrated into every aspect of marketing, impacting the roles and responsibilities of every professional. If you are going to unlock the value AI can create, you will need education programs designed to advance your entire marketing team.

AI education in the enterprise needs to be a top priority and a constantly evolving initiative as technology advances at such a rapid pace. The knowledge and skills your team needs will be a moving target, and marketers will have to constantly evolve to stay ahead of the curve and remain relevant.

And that education must look a lot different than the marketing education of the past. The new age of marketers won't just need to understand marketing. They'll also need to be proficient in data analysis and be able to work with AI to run marketing experiments.

9. Focus on Mutual Learning Between Humans and Machines

Companies that win with AI are the ones that learn alongside machines.

Companies that outpace their peers with AI focus on continuous organizational learning, specifically creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge between humans and machines, according to research from [MIT Sloan Management Review](#). These organizations are learning how to systematically change processes based on learning with the outputs provided by machines.

According to the research, these organizations share three essential characteristics:

- They facilitate systematic and continuous learning between humans and machines.
- They develop multiple ways for humans and machines to interact.
- They change to learn and learn to change.

In fact, the organizations that invest in these activities are 73% more likely to achieve a significant impact with AI.

10. Consider How AI Can Make Your Brand More Human

AI can be used for good or for evil, and the outcome is up to you.

In the process of making marketing more intelligent, AI has the potential to make brands more human by enabling marketers to focus increased time and energy on listening, relationship building, creativity, empathy, culture, and community. At the end of the day, AI should make us better people, professionals, and brands.

However, this won't happen without a focus on privacy, ethics, and morals.

Used in the right way, AI can actually preserve consumer privacy, allowing brands to speak to customers without collecting intrusive data about them. It has the potential to help uncover what consumers respond to without invading their personal lives. AI can even be the perfect bridge between the consumer who wants to be protected and wants brands to speak to them in personalized ways.

In fact, we believe AI will have a disproportionately net positive impact on industry and society. But it will alter career paths, shift jobs, and chip away at consumer privacy. We must be willing to have the hard conversations as an industry now, to make sure we do not ruin what will be the most transformative technological shift we will experience in our lifetimes.

Those conversations start at the top, with you leading them.

It's Time to Become a Next-Gen Marketing Leader

You have a chance to be a pioneer in one of the most profound technological shifts in human history.

CMOs are in a rare position to create change, to reinvent what it means to be a marketer. You don't have to become a machine learning or data science expert to take advantage of what AI enables. You simply need to understand what's possible with smarter technologies—and apply that knowledge to your business and career.

The reality is that tomorrow your career, campaign strategies, daily tasks, budgets, and tech stack will look a lot like today. And next week will be similar to the week before. But month by month, year by year, the marketing industry and profession will slowly, and then suddenly, look nothing like it does today.

As AI advances what's possible with technology, a next generation of marketing leaders is emerging.

These leaders aren't defined as next-gen marketing leaders because of age but rather because of their approach to embracing change and applying smarter technologies.

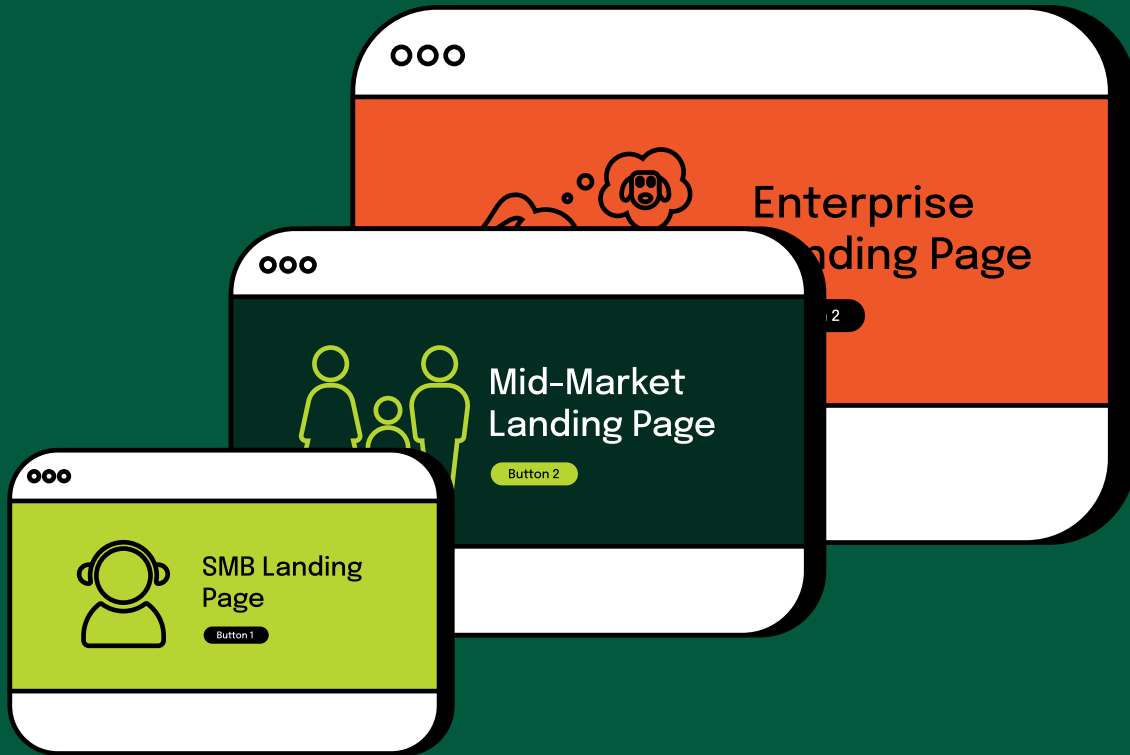
Next-gen marketing leaders use AI to deliver the personalization and experiences modern consumers expect, unlock previously unimaginable creative possibilities, and drive efficiency, revenue growth, profits, and societal impact that the rest of the C-suite demands. The marketing leaders who take action have the opportunity to create a significant and sustained competitive advantage for their businesses and themselves.

The choice is yours.

Will you embrace change?

Will you commit to unlocking your true potential in your company and career? Will you become a next-gen marketing leader?

Intellimize



Personalize your website for every persona

Learn more at intellimize.com

About Marketing AI Institute

Marketing AI Institute is a media, event, and education company founded in 2016 that makes AI approachable and actionable for marketers and business leaders. The Institute owns and operates the Marketing Artificial Intelligence Conference (MAICON), AI for Writers Summit and AI for Agencies Summit, hosts The Marketing AI Show podcast, runs the AI Academy for Marketers featuring dozens of on-demand courses, and published *Marketing Artificial Intelligence: AI, Marketing, and the Future of Business* (Matt Holt Books, 2022). Learn more at www.marketingaiinstitute.com.

About Intellimize

Intellimize is an experience optimization and personalization SaaS platform that uses AI to dynamically personalize website experiences across the entire buyer's journey. Marketing teams gain a competitive edge when using Intellimize to drive efficient pipeline and revenue growth in a cookieless world. Leading marketing teams at Gong, Mercari, Okta, Dermalogica, Drift, Tubby Todd and more trust Intellimize to inspire, test and learn faster, drive revenue, and be more efficient. Intellimize is backed by Cobalt Capital, Addition, Amplify Partners, Homebrew, and Precursor Ventures. Learn more at www.intellimize.com.