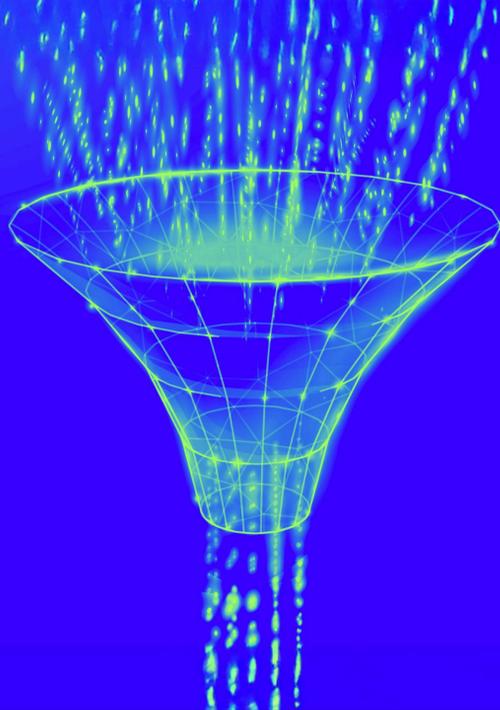


The AI Marketing Strategy Playbook



Strategies for every subcategory of marketer in the AI era

AI is changing the rules of marketing. Team structures are already shifting as production needs decrease, hyperpersonalization is no longer an impossibility at scale, and search might be meeting its final boss. Every part of the marketing org is being disrupted by AI and it's time for a new playbook.

We gathered 8 marketing leaders to share their tips, tricks, and tactics for meeting buyers where they're at in the AI era. In this working playbook, you'll learn from them directly – and gain strategies to take back to your own company.

The top 10 strategies for AI-powered marketers

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 1

Pivot from SEO to AEO.

Shift focus from keywords to earning citations on high-authority third-party platforms, as AI models rely heavily on external validation.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 2

Prioritize Performance over Promise.

Reallocate capital from traditional advertising into product innovation and distribution. In an AI era, superior products find their own audience through the social graph.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 3

Build a Modular AI Architecture.

Construct your AI stack like LEGO bricks so individual models can be swapped out as technology improves without breaking entire workflows.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 4

Adopt a Chain of Agents Workflow.

Instead of asking one AI to perform multiple tasks, break processes into a chain of specific agents to reduce hallucinations and improve quality.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 5

Establish a Human-in-the-Loop Standard.

Use AI to scale production and handle people admin, but rely on human creativity for the unique, risk-taking salsa that AI cannot replicate.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 6

Implement an Outcome Loop.

Store all AI-generated outputs and use reviewer agents to analyze which versions led to successful results, allowing the system to self-correct over time.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 7

Shift Measurement to "Answer Coverage".

Move beyond traditional click-through rates to track how often your brand is cited as the definitive answer by AI assistants.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 8

Mandate Builder Skills for Marketers.

Require teams to learn developer-adjacent tools so they can build their own custom agents and internal SaaS applications without constant engineering help.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 9

Prioritize Behavioral Context over Firmographics.

Configure AI agents to look for how a user is currently interacting with a product rather than relying on generic data.

AI-POWERED MARKETING STRATEGY / 10

Formalize AI Ethical Governance.

Establish active monitoring for misinformation and bias – protecting the brand from AI-generated ethical pitfalls is now a core marketing responsibility.



The buyer journey for the AI-native era

WITH TAHNEE PERRY, AI AT WORK

The traditional SEO and static funnel is being disrupted. As AI-native consumers shift from clicking blue links in search results to receiving direct answers from AI assistants, marketing leaders must redefine how they measure authority and discovery.

“AI won't kill our jobs. It'll just **completely change** how we do them.”

Key insights:

1 Measurement is shifting.
Traditional click-through rates are becoming less relevant. Start tracking how often your brand is retrieved and cited as the definitive answer within AI chatbot results.

2 Authority is moving off-site.
AI sources content from authoritative platforms like Reddit and major publishers; brands must be active in these forums to be cited by AI models.

3 Personalization at scale with first-party data.
Use AI to deliver thousands of customized 1-to-1 experiences (like individualized carousels or landing pages) by connecting first-party data to gen-AI models.

4 Re-wire, don't retire, roles.
Transition your team from content creators to editors-in-chief and from SEO specialists to discovery strategists as the buyer journey evolves.

“People are no longer clicking those blue links. You need to measure answer coverage and you need to look at AI chatbot share.”

Consumers expect brands to anticipate their needs as seamlessly as Netflix or Amazon; AI is the only way to meet this expectation at scale.



Brand building in the age of AI

WITH SCOTT GALLOWAY, PIVOT

Brand value is shifting from promise (advertising) to performance (product innovation and distribution) as AI makes information transparency absolute. Human-centered design and narrative are the ultimate moats against AI slop.

“The **worst thing** I can say to my analyst when I get the draft of something is it feels like it was **written by AI.**”

Key insights:

1 Focus capital on performance, not promise.
Move funds away from pre-purchase advertising and into the product itself. In an AI world, 10x better products find their own audience through the social graph.

2 Human-centered design is a moat.
As AI slop creates a regression to the mean, visually arresting and risk-taking design is a premium asset.

3 Narrative is power.
Focus on storytelling. Branding is increasingly about creating a narrative of leadership to secure cheap capital and pull the future forward.

Physical and digital distribution (like Apple Stores) remains a more sustainable moat than traditional brand associations.

Use AI to scale production and media planning, but rely on human creativity for the salsa—the unique, non-average ideas.

Expect rapid product parity in AI capabilities; your unique brand story and proprietary data are what will separate you from everyone else.



Building an AI-first go-to-market model

WITH KIERAN FLANAGAN, HUBSPOT

To transition from volume to value and build a high-conversion GTM model, focus on Answer Engine Optimization (AEO), AI-personalized inbound prospecting, and chat as a front door to your business.

“Your usage of AI and your experience of it is probably capped by your limitations and **how good you think it is.**”

Key insights:

1 Leverage Answer Engine Optimization (AEO).
Invest in earning third-party citations on platforms like Reddit—AI models rely on external validation more than your own website.

2 Drive more high-intent chat conversion.
Prospective clients arriving from AI assistants convert at 5x–11x the rate of those from standard search because the AI has already qualified the lead. Aim for a chat-first experience where users can have deep discovery conversations.

“Your website is really just a **catalog for agents** to ingest. What matters is when someone comes to your website, there's a chat experience.”

3 Personalize your inbound.
Use AI to analyze sales transcripts and personalize follow-ups based on specific problems to increase meeting bookings.

4 Internal hackathons accelerate adoption.
Run internal hackathons with your marketing teams to solve specific conversion or workflow problems using AI tools.

Use AI to handle the tedious aspects of marketing, so your best individual contributors can focus on high-impact work.

Every new hire should come with their own suite of AI assistants; this is the only way for small teams to out-compete larger rivals.



Orchestrating an AI-driven omnichannel journey

WITH AUDE GANDON, ESTÉE LAUDER

Use AI to connect creative content with commerce data and consumer insights, but make sure to maintain brand equity through strategic human decision-making.

Key insights:

1 Connect creative, channels, and commerce.
The winning strategy is a fully integrated ecosystem where content, media data, and commerce signals are connected.

2 Focus on high adoption over tool volume.
It is better to have fewer tools with 90%+ adoption (like Shopify for global commerce) than a fragmented tech stack of the latest gadgets.

3 Use AI to augment your strategic decisions.
AI can help sift through vast amounts of consumer data, allowing humans to focus on high-level brand strategy and the right to win.

“Better to have **less tools** with **high adoption**. That is the way you're really going to impact the performance of your company.”

Use AI to ensure that a customer's digital journey follows them into the physical store for a seamless experience.

Don't try to build every LLM in-house; partner with the best tech providers so you can focus on your core business.



The new AI martech stack

WITH DAN SLAGEN, ZAPIER

Marketers must become builders who use AI as infrastructure rather than just as a supplemental tool.

“I’m both as **excited** for those people embracing something like Cursor as I am **worried** about those that aren’t.”

Shift your mindset from using AI to **building** with AI to solve unique business problems.

Key insights:

1 **Mandate builder tools.**
Require your team to learn developer-adjacent tools. Once marketers get over the initial setup hurdle, they can build their own custom agents without engineering help.

2 **Automate manual internal processes.**
Use agents to scan Slack conversations for content ideas or scan video transcripts for recurring themes automatically.

3 **Build your own internal SaaS.**
Enable marketers to build small, specific applications for their own needs. Even non-coders can use AI to build complex automations; the key is persistence and finding a buddy to help with the technical hurdles.

The only thing AI can't replicate is your own unique usage data and customer insights.



Key 2026 AI trends for marketers

WITH SHIV SINGH, EX-LENDINGTREE

In the not-so-distant future, ethical governance will be a brand-level responsibility.

“Work identity will **break down** before organization charts do.”

Governance is the new marketing; protecting the brand from AI-generated ethical pitfalls is as critical as any creative campaign

Key insights:

1 **Prepare for jagged capabilities.**
AI is brilliant at some tasks and dumb at others. Identify where your team should be centaurs (using AI for discrete tasks) versus cyborgs (integrated human-AI work).

2 **Anticipate cost savings.**
CEOs and CFOs increasingly expect AI to drive significant budget efficiencies. Proactively find these savings before they are forced upon you.

3 **Address ethical code reds.**
Brands will inherit ethical risks (misinformation, bias) from their AI use. Establish governance and compliance monitors as a primary marketing responsibility.

4 **Consider optimizing for good-enough creative.**
AI creative will flood the market. While it may not be brilliant, it will often perform well enough to meet digital advertising benchmarks at a fraction of the cost.

Startups will have an advantage by being AI-native from day one; legacy brands must work harder to redesign their fundamental workflows.

Don't dismiss AI because it fails occasionally; learn to work within its specific areas of excellence.

“Leadership quality will become the **largest performance variable.**”



The new AI-powered content strategy

WITH JOCELYN ARTHUR, PALO ALTO NETWORKS

Don't get caught in a content speed trap—move from automation to augmentation to preserve quality and intent.

“AI doesn't make content human, **humans** make the content human.”

Trust is the primary metric. Align your content with the “E-E-A-T” (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) rubric to succeed in AI-driven search environments.

Key insights:

1 **Move from volume to value.**
Don't just optimize for speed. Use AI to augment thinking while keeping humans accountable for the swing—the unique expertise and authoritativeness.

2 **Audit for emotional intent.**
Use AI to look for blind spots, such as when your team is in buy mode while the audience is still in education mode.

3 **Use AI as a pattern finder.**
Instead of a truth engine, use AI to synthesize engagement signals and identify which technical deep-dives are actually resonating with your audience.

Active brand penalization can occur if you flood your domain with low-quality AI slop.

Use AI to sharpen the story and answer editorial questions like “Where does this lose momentum?” or “What assumptions are we making about our reader?”



Hyperpersonalization with AI in growth marketing

WITH JACOB BONETA, GRAFANA LABS

Don't fall into the traditional marketing tendency to over-plan, and consider shipping early to let real-world data refine your AI agents.

“Treat agents like toddlers—assign **one agent per specific task** rather than one agent for ten tasks.”

The best way to understand AI is to launch a small vibe-coded automation today rather than wait for a perfect enterprise solution.

Key insights:

1 **Stop asking one AI agent to perform ten tasks.**
Break your workflow into a chain of small, specific agents (e.g., one to research, one to draft, one to edit). This drastically reduces hallucinations and increases output quality.

2 **Prioritize context over firmographics.**
Generic data leads to generic emails. Configure your agents to look for behavioral context—how is the user actually interacting with your product right now?

3 **Build an outcome loop.**
Store every AI-generated output. Periodically have a reviewer agent analyze which outreach led to a meeting so the system can self-correct its tone and strategy over time.

Modular architecture is key: build your AI stack like LEGO bricks. If one model improves or fails, you should be able to swap it out without breaking your entire workflow.

The goal of AI agents isn't to close the deal; it's to create a high-quality opening so a human can step in and do what humans do best: build a relationship.