

Closing the AI Maturity Gap.

The 2026 Australian AI in Marketing Benchmark Report.

Original research from ACAM supported by Kantar.
July 2026



AI is everywhere. Advantage is not.

AI has moved from curiosity to daily marketing reality. Our 2026 Benchmark Report, based on responses from **126 Australian CMOs**, shows an industry making real progress but still working out how to turn AI activity into sustained commercial impact.

What changed

AI adoption is no longer the main barrier. Maturity leadership confidence is rising, use cases are expanding and governance is becoming more visible. The market has moved from Established Beginner to Early Emerging levels.

Where the gap sits

The maturity gap is now structural. Marketing teams are active, but roadmaps remain weak, workflow redesign is immature and ROI proof is inconsistent. Momentum is outpacing the operating system needed to scale.

What it means for CMOs

The next phase is not about trying more tools. It is about building the capability, discipline and confidence to use AI systematically across teams, workflows, data, governance and measurement.

The challenge ahead

AI will not create advantage on its own. Advantage will come from how well CMOs turn AI activity into measurable value, stronger human + AI collaboration and more distinctive marketing.

Contents

1. Introduction.

Pages 4-8



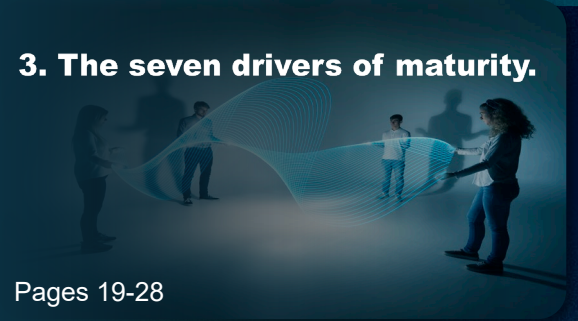
2. The AI maturity gap.

Pages 9-18



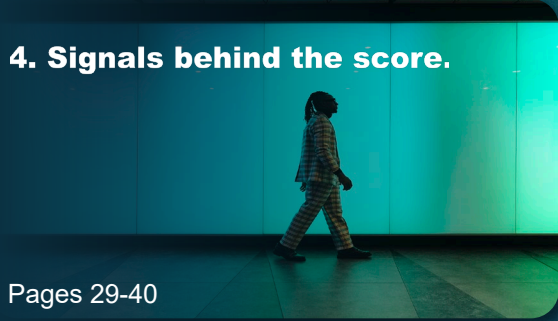
3. The seven drivers of maturity.

Pages 19-28



4. Signals behind the score.

Pages 29-40



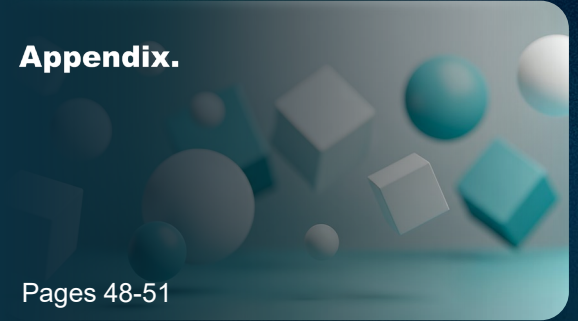
5. The CMO action agenda.

Pages 41-47



Appendix.

Pages 48-51



1. Introduction.

Why the question has changed since 2025.



Welcome to our second annual study into AI in marketing in Australia.
Since 2025, the question has changed.



2025 was about adoption and experimentation.



2026 is about maturity, scale and ROI.

Introduction. Measuring what matters.

AI in marketing has moved beyond the fashion accessory stage.

Twelve months ago, much of the conversation was about experimentation and early adoption. In 2026, the question has changed. It is no longer what AI tools marketing teams are using. It is whether they are building the maturity to turn AI activity into serious commercial impact.

This report captures the views of 126 Australian CMOs and senior marketers across 12 industries. We are deeply grateful to every leader who contributed. Their openness, honesty and willingness to share where their teams really are helps lift the whole industry.

The findings show real progress: AI maturity confidence is growing, use cases are expanding and governance is becoming more visible. But the maturity gap is also clear. Roadmaps remain weak, workflow redesign is immature and ROI proof is inconsistent.

This report introduces ACAM's expanded AI Maturity Framework to help CMOs see where the gap shows up inside their organisation, and what it will take to close it.

Douglas



Douglas Nicol
Co-founder, ACAM

AI is not the advantage. Execution is.

Right now, most organisations are not failing to adopt AI. They are failing to operationalise it. Pilots are everywhere. Scaled impact is not. ACAM and Kantar have partnered to close that gap. This is about moving from curiosity to commercialisation. From isolated use cases to enterprise-wide capability.

Our joint approach reveals where ambition is outpacing reality. It surfaces how marketing leaders are actually using AI, where confidence breaks down, and which structural barriers are holding back progress day to day.

The objective is simple but urgent: help organisations understand how ready they really are, where they are underdeveloped, and what it will take to scale with discipline. Because without measurement, there is no momentum. And without structure, there is no scale.

Kantar brings robust, outcome-led measurement to quantify impact. ACAM provides the frameworks to embed capability systematically across teams, workflows and decision-making.

Karin



Karin Du Chenne
Group Executive Director, Kantar Australia

How to read the 2026 report.

126

CMOs and
Senior Marketers

12

Industries
Represented

6

Maturity
Levels

7

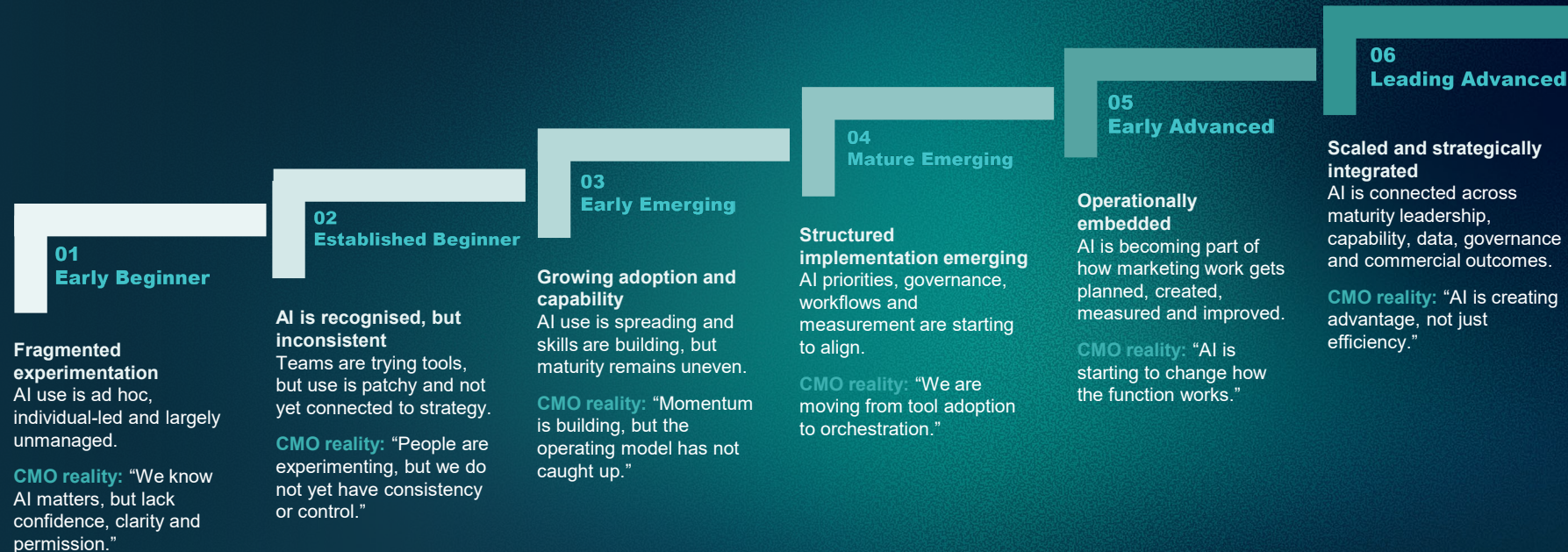
Maturity
Drivers

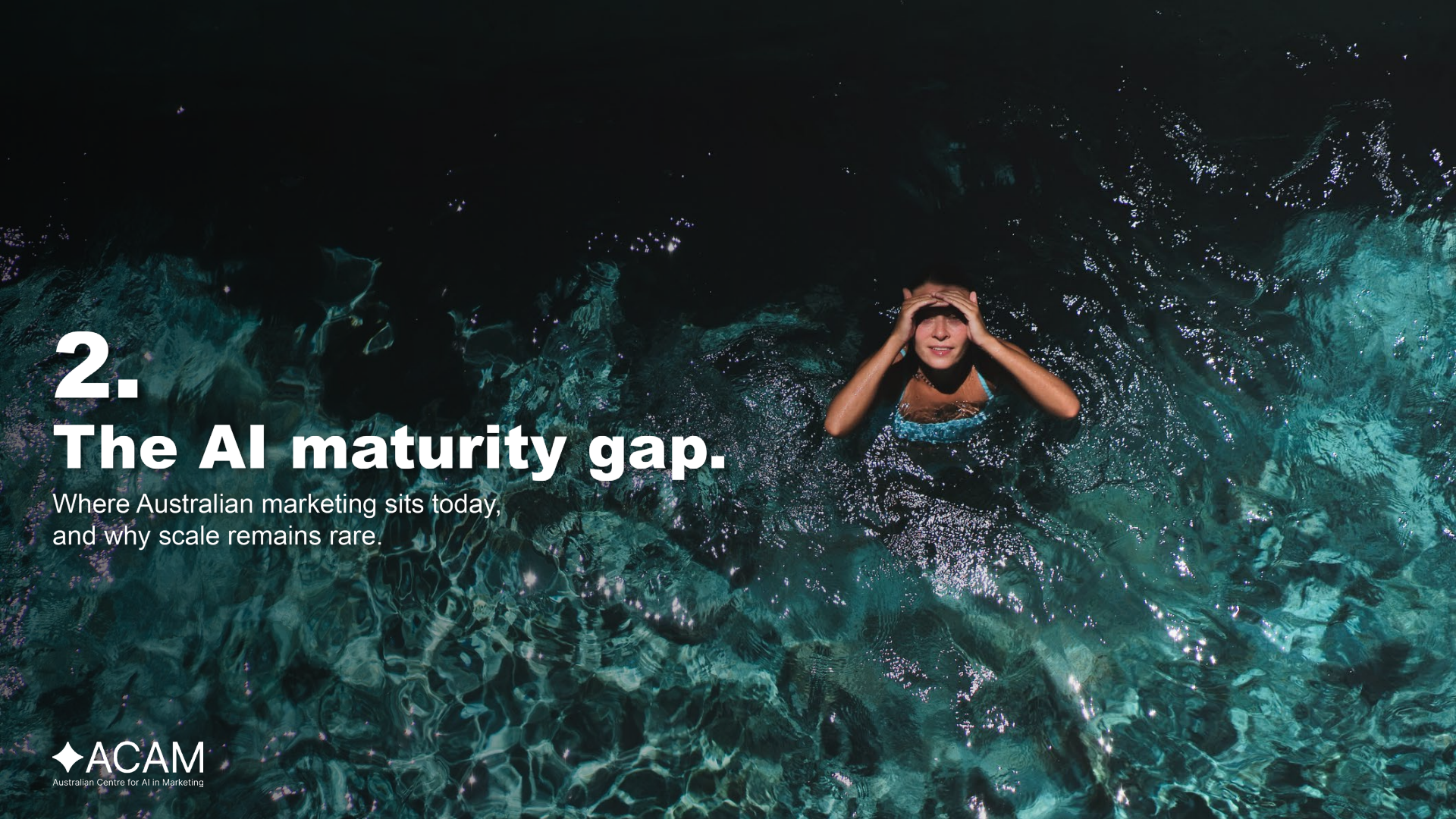
The 2026 benchmark report measures AI maturity in marketing in Australia scored across 18 maturity inputs, supported by context and profile questions. Scores are rounded to two decimal places and mapped to ACAM's six maturity levels.

The overall 2026 score is calculated from the full scored response set. It is **not** a simple average of the seven displayed driver scores. Industry ranges show where the middle 50% of organisations sit.

The ACAM six levels of AI marketing maturity.

Benchmarking where marketing teams sit on this journey, and what needs to improve to close the maturity gap.



A woman in a blue dress is floating in dark, rippling water. She has her hands over her eyes, suggesting a sense of being lost or overwhelmed. The water is dark with some light reflecting off the surface, creating a moody and mysterious atmosphere.

2. The AI maturity gap.

Where Australian marketing sits today,
and why scale remains rare.

We have progressed from Established Beginner in 2025 to Early Emerging in 2026

AI usage in Australia by marketers has increased in maturity in the last year but momentum is outpacing the systems needed to scale it.

What has improved

Marketing AI confidence is rising

AI use cases are expanding

Governance is more visible

What is holding scale back

Not enough focus on AI roadmaps/planning

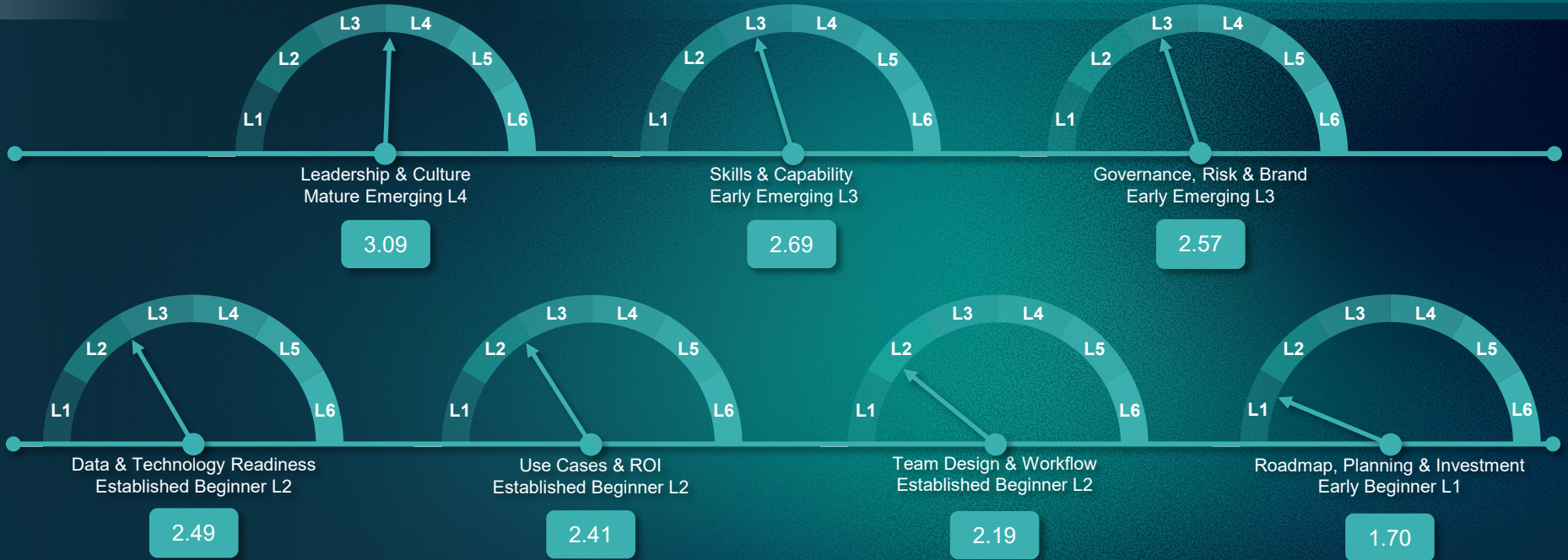
Workflow redesign is not at pace with change

ROI measurement systems are inconsistent



**2026 Overall Australian
marketing industry maturity:
Early Emerging**

The 7 drivers of AI maturity: 2026 industry view.



The 7 drivers of AI maturity: industry view.

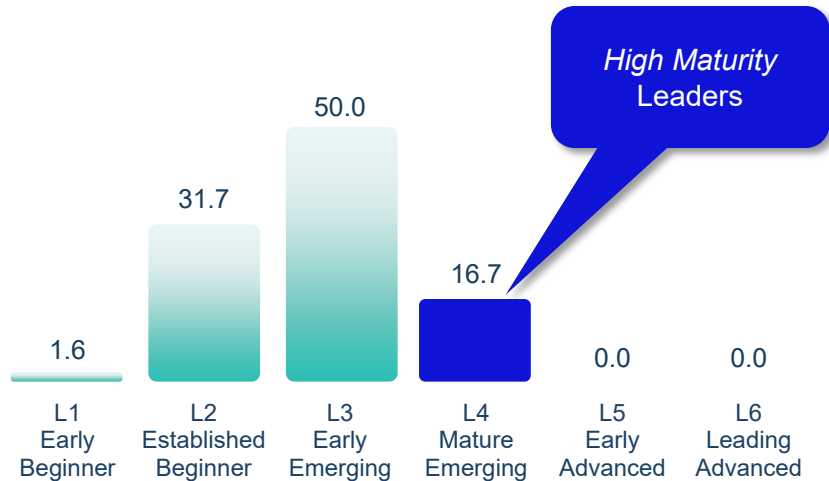


Marketing AI maturity in Australia in 2026 is not a lack of ambition. It is a lack of clear plans

CMOs report stronger levels in **Maturity Leadership & Culture, Skills & Capability** and **Governance, Risk & Brand**.

But there is still work to be done in **Roadmap, Planning & Investment, Team Design & Workflow** and **Use Cases & ROI**.

Most marketing teams are in the middle of their AI maturity journey. Advanced leadership is rare.



83%

of organisations sit in the early stages of maturity (L1–L3). More smaller businesses are classified as High Maturity Leaders

“

We've moved quickly to get people using AI. What we haven't done yet is define how it drives growth.

Survey respondent

”

The gap: showcasing where High Maturity leaders excel.



 The High Maturity leaders' advantage

What sets the High Maturity leaders apart from less mature organisations is a clear roadmap and better planning and investment in making AI a core element of their marketing toolkit.

Evolving from tinkering to blueprints

- High Maturity leaders are reducing random acts of AI, turning to a more focused roadmap process, which redesigns their workflows

Focusing on consumer behaviour

- High Maturity leaders are using AI to fundamentally reshape how customers experience their brands

Using tools to foster psychological safety

- High Maturity leaders recognise that cultural safety is an ultimate accelerator of tech adoption

A silhouette of a person with long hair, seen from behind, holding a lit cigarette or smoke stick. The person is positioned in the center-left of the frame. The background is a vibrant sunset or sunrise with a bright orange and yellow sun partially obscured by dark, silhouetted clouds. The sky transitions from a deep blue on the left to a bright orange on the right. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

High Maturity
AI marketing leaders
are 30X more likely
to have a fully
documented AI
roadmap in place.

The rest of the market is stalling here due to an absence of documented roadmap blueprints.

What CMOs are saying about embracing AI in marketing.



The language of CMOs reveals the emotional reality behind this report.

AI is creating genuine excitement around speed, productivity and new ways of working.

But their sentiments also point to pressure: lack of time, limited support, capability gaps and concern about brand, risk and human impact.

The mood is not resistance. It is excitement under pressure.

CMOs are both excited and apprehensive about AI.

The attractions.

- Saving time and moving faster
- Freeing people up for strategy and creative work
- Improving productivity, output and ROI
- Helping with writing, thinking and analysis
- The sense that this is a real game changer

The concerns.

- Job losses and fewer pathways for junior talent
- The pace of change and feeling behind
- Not enough tools, time, training or support
- Privacy, ethics, bias and inaccurate outputs
- Losing the human edge and ending up with bland work

“

The progression from 2025 to 2026 shows an industry moving forward on AI. The shift from Established Beginner to Early Emerging maturity is encouraging because AI is becoming part of how marketing teams think, plan and operate. But it is also a reality check. We are not yet at scale. The next challenge for CMOs is turning rising confidence and activity into capability, clearer roadmaps, governance and measurable commercial impact.

”

Natalie Lockwood

Chief Marketing Officer
NAB

Connect on [**LinkedIn**](#)



The background of the slide features a dark, teal-toned image. In the center, a large, glowing blue wave-like structure, composed of many thin, curved lines, flows horizontally across the frame. Four people are visible, interacting with this digital element. On the left, a woman in a dark top and pants is looking towards the wave. In the middle-left, a man in a light shirt and dark pants is also looking at the wave. On the right, a man in a light shirt and dark pants is looking at the wave. On the far right, a woman with long curly hair, wearing a light top and dark pants, is reaching out with her right hand towards the wave. The overall atmosphere is futuristic and technological.

3.

7 drivers of AI marketing maturity.

A deep dive into where the industry is strong, and where the maturity gap is holding back scale.

Leadership is leaning in. Teams are still catching up.



The strongest progress so far is cultural.

Marketing teams increasingly believe in AI and leaders are endorsing it. But belief does not build operating models or create advantage. Without structure, momentum remains fragile and difficult to convert into growth.

Growth is not created by intent. It is created by consistency and structure. Right now, the industry has strong cultural alignment but weak operational architecture. This is why momentum is failing to convert into advantage.

“

“This is a people/culture change - this is the biggest and hardest part.”

“Deployed correctly AI can be very energising for a team and make their jobs more enjoyable.”

“The real advantage still comes from skilled humans who can ask the right questions, think strategically, interpret results and turn outputs into meaningful action.”

“I think organisations have a moral responsibility to invest in upskilling their workers with AI skills to futureproof their organisations and the careers of those employees.”

“AI transformation is a people transformation.”

”

Survey respondents

AI doesn't scale through specialists alone. It scales when teams work together. At this stage less than 1 in 2 feel confident



The AI journey is frustrating and resources are thin.

Training remains too informal and capability is still uneven across marketing teams. A few confident users can mask a broader gap, with only 4% of teams considered highly skilled (up from 27% in 2025).

Many teams are still dealing with limited time, thin resources and uncertainty about the skills they need to become the 'marketing team of the future'.

“

"We need more people to embrace the change and take responsibility for their continued personal development, so they are ready for being part of a marketing team of the future."

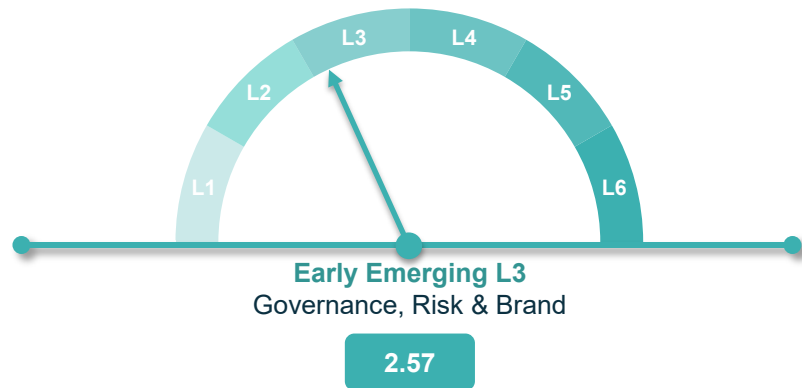
"AI should help people think more clearly, not encourage them to stop thinking altogether."

"Businesses that embrace AI well will become faster, more relevant and easier to deal with."

”

Survey respondents

AI governance is starting to get attention.



Governance is improving, yet it's not yet enabling scale. The key challenge is that brand risk not fully understood by employees while CMOS are concerned by 'AI slop', time and resourcing limitations, and bias.

“

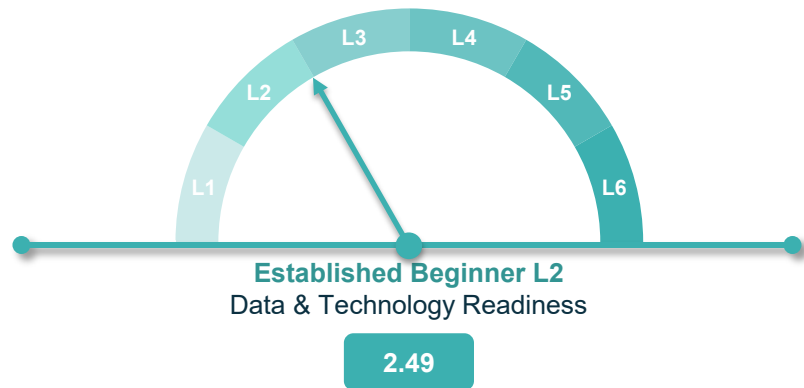
"My main concern is around data privacy and ethical use, especially as AI becomes more integrated into customer data platforms. Maintaining trust will be critical."

"AI has allowed marketers to generate content faster and engage their audiences with higher accuracy; however, this comes with higher levels of risk associated with brand, context and information accuracy."

”

Survey respondents

AI is ready. The data isn't.



Current infrastructure constraints limits scale. Frameworks are emerging but not yet confidentially embedded. This is making data readiness a growing barrier to growth. 'AI slop' is also contributing to brand risks fears held by CMOs.

“

"There is a real need for investment in critical tech and data, just to get to base level of AI readiness."

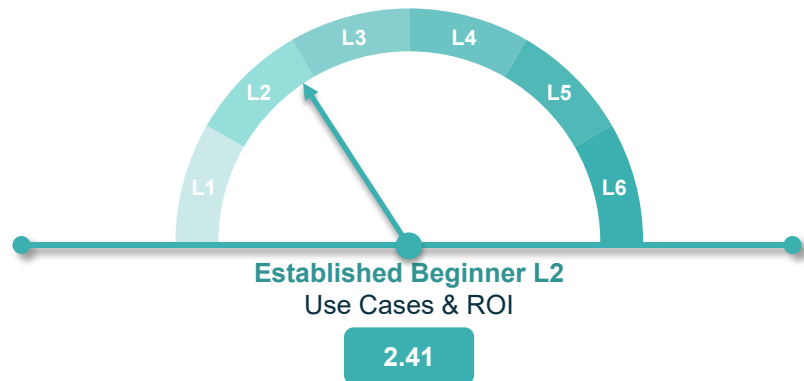
"We lack the unified platform that connects people, data and decisions across the customer lifecycle."

"No support from the business. Limited access to tools, training and guidance with restrictive usage policies that hamper adoption."

”

Survey respondents

More use cases. Same problem: inconsistent impact.



We are witnessing more use cases in action but their impact remains inconsistent.

Just 41% of cited use cases show a clear ROI revealing a bias to volume without validation. However, the data reveal high experimentation with those citing 16 or more use cases experiencing strong growth up from 3% to 11% since 2025.

“

"A positive experience has been releasing pilot agents across our sales and marketing platform, which are seeing greater ROI and better efficiencies than we were getting."

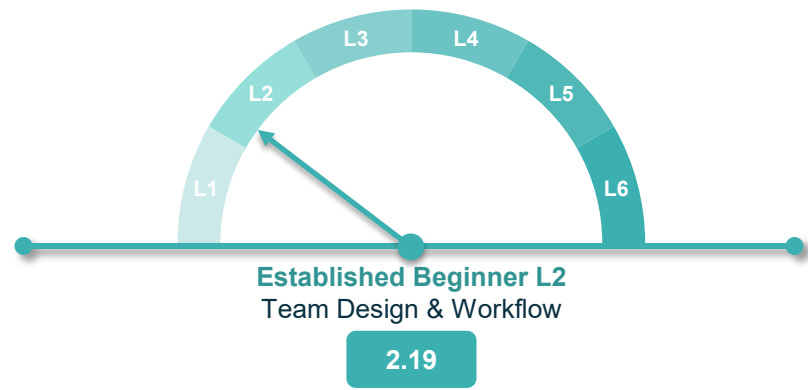
"From an industry perspective, it feels like there is quite a way to go from talking about AI to actioning."

"I work across several industries and see exciting pilots of precise use cases where there is immediate impact."

”

Survey respondents

AI is being layered into existing workflows, but is not yet second nature.



AI is not currently redesigning marketing teams but starting to have an effect on how AI is utilised across the marketing function.

One in 10 CMOs have a clear vision on how their marketing teams should be structured around AI (9%). While this is a low base, over half have partly formed an AI vision (54%).

“

There's going to be a big shift in how we operate as a team.

AI has the ability to transform our workflows and reimagine the marketing flywheel.

AI for me should be the enabler or the stage for marketing, not the star. I see it as an opportunity to free us up from the mundane tasks and workflows to do more meaningful, higher-value work.

”

Survey respondents

Not having a clear roadmap is the growth gap.



We note a few more saying they have a plan but that the plans are not yet working effectively - and this is the lowest maturity driver contributing to scale. In fact, just 16% are happy with their AI plan's results.

Results have not progressed from 2025 making Roadmap, Planning & Investment a strong area for focus in 2026 and beyond. Without written plans, scale and satisfaction stall.

“

"We are still in experimentation phase and without a clear roadmap and use cases with a view of ROI we may not realise the benefits."

"Lots of opportunity, but needs a clear, defined pathway from personal productivity to bottom line impacting opportunities."

"No support from the business. Limited access to tools, training and guidance with restrictive usage policies that hamper adoption."

”

Survey respondents

“

The positive story is that marketing teams are no longer standing still. They are testing, piloting and finding new ways to use AI across the marketing function. But the next level of maturity is about proving what works. More pilots, agents and content do not automatically create value. The opportunity now is to connect AI use cases to customer outcomes, brand growth and measurable ROI from the start, so experimentation becomes a system for commercial impact.

”

Miki Luong

Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
IBM Australia & New Zealand

Connect on [**LinkedIn**](#)



Belief in AI has outpaced build.

The 7 maturity drivers show a clear pattern in Australia's adoption of AI in marketing. AI confidence is rising, but the systems needed to scale it are still underdeveloped.

Where maturity momentum is building

- Maturity leadership confidence
- Growing skills and capability
- Governance awareness
- Use-case experimentation

Where low maturity is still holding back scale

- Roadmap discipline
- Team design and workflow
- ROI measurement
- Data and technology readiness

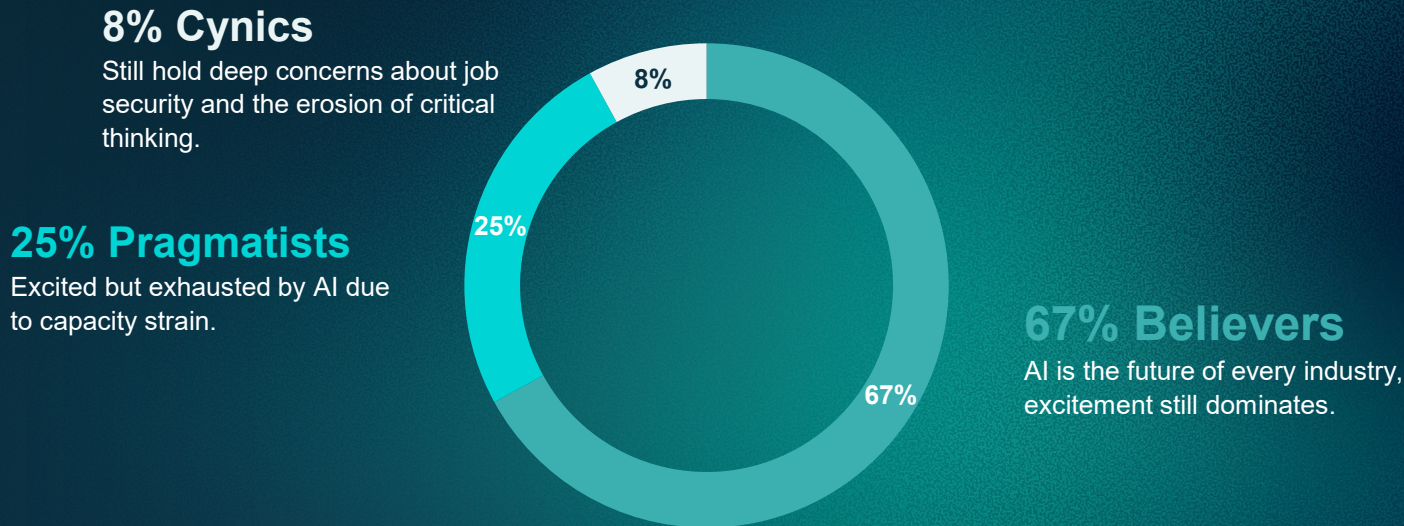
4.

Signals behind the score.

What CMOs are saying about confidence, pressure, risk and execution.

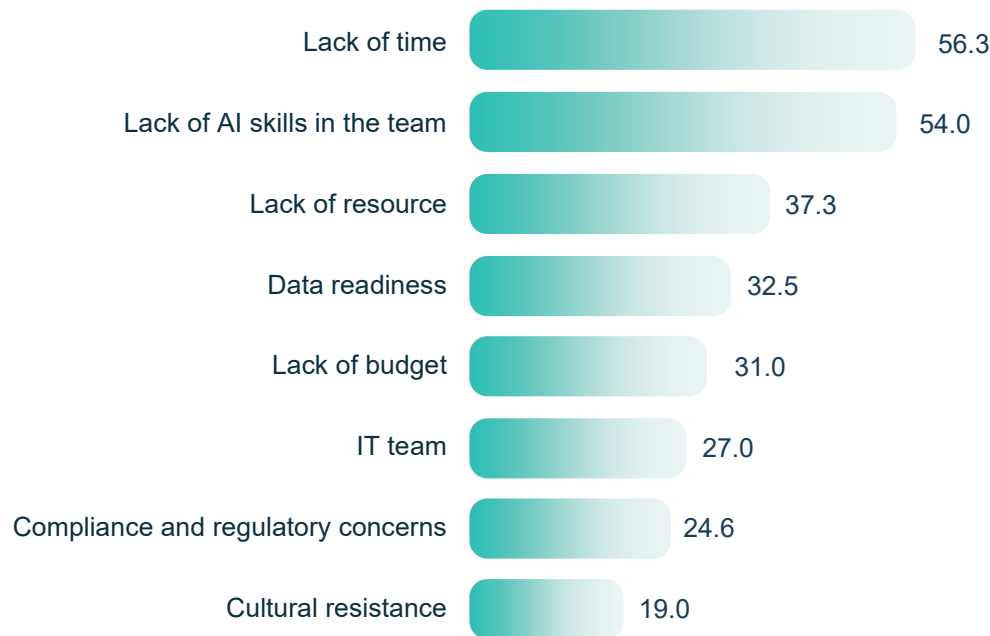


CMOs are believers in the advantages of AI in marketing.



The needle has moved: pure cynicism is fading and blind hype is gone too. Today's CMOs are navigating a complex middle ground balancing personal excitement, team exhaustion and real fears about brand safety.

Capability shortage is compounded by time constraints.



The biggest barriers to AI maturity are practical, not philosophical. CMOs are not dealing with widespread resistance. They are dealing with teams that are stretched, under-skilled and short on time.

This explains why AI adoption can feel energetic but uneven. Teams want to move faster, but many do not yet have the capacity, capability or support to turn experimentation into repeatable ways of working.

A confidence divide is emerging inside marketing teams.

We asked CMOs how their team is feeling about AI in marketing, what was the majority team sentiment and what was the minority team sentiment

69%

Of marketing teams have a
'excited but cautious' majority
team sentiment

but

56%

Of marketing teams have a
concerned minority who are 'cautious',
'negative' or 'scared'

CMO takeaway:

The 'scared' sentiment as a proportion of the concerned minority has increased +22 points since 2025. The challenge is managing a widening confidence divide inside teams: keeping the excited majority moving forward while supporting smaller pockets of caution, negativity and fear.

“

The encouraging signal is that most marketing teams are not resisting AI. The dominant mood is excited but cautious, which is exactly where you would expect smart teams to be when the technology is moving this quickly. But the benchmark also shows a widening confidence divide. Some people are leaning in, while others are still cautious or scared. The CMO's job is to close that gap by creating the safety, training and clarity that help more people move from concern to capability.

”

Uma Oldham

Director of Marketing and Audiences
SBS

Connect on [**LinkedIn**](#)



The fear of 'brand sameness' is real.

As AI accelerates production, low-quality synthetic content is flooding the market.

When everyone uses the same models, output converges, and 'Meaningful Difference' becomes even more valuable.

AI slop

#1 operational concern in 2026

71% vs. 32%

High Maturity
leaders understand
AI brand risk

Lower Maturity
organisations understand
AI brand risk

A cultural safety net is vital for increased AI exploration.

High Maturity leaders create a 'safe environment' for AI exploration and adoption by building a cultural safety net, including trying and failing fast. This empowers the fostering of positive, structured training. Treating unsuccessful AI pilots as learning opportunities rather than performance management issues is critical.

High Maturity AI marketing leaders fostering a culture that supports trial without penalty build teams that are the multiplier, not the barrier.

67%

of High Maturity AI marketing leaders
enable safe experimentation

2.5x more likely
to foster a culture supporting trial

An arranged marriage: marketing teams and enterprise AI platforms.

Access to AI tools is not the same as marketing value. Many teams have platforms in place chosen at an enterprise level that do not have the data, the workflows or support needed to embed appropriately for optimal workflow.

45%

say their AI platforms are **disappointing, harder than expected, or only OK**

55%

say their AI platforms are **pretty good or overdelivered**

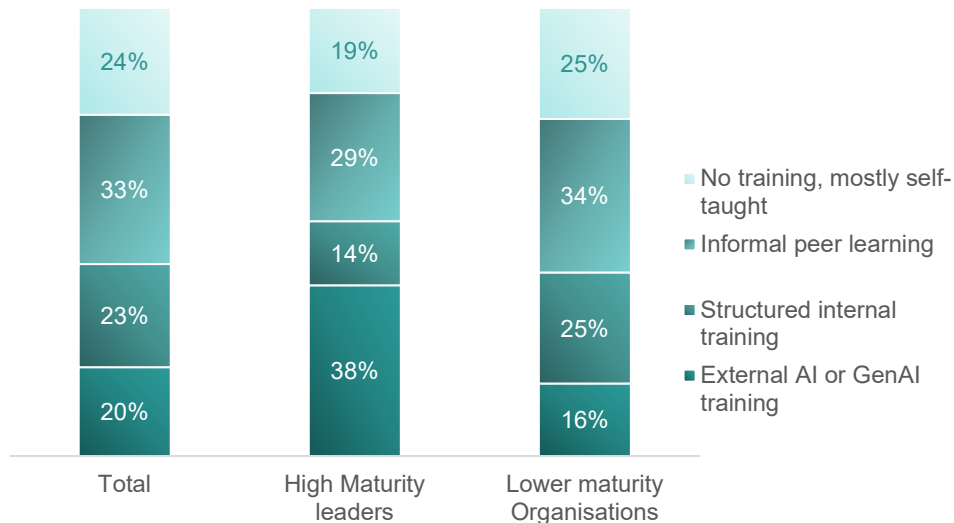
60%

of those 'underwhelmed/only OK' group have **501+ employees**

The platform issue is not just access. It is fit.

Marketing teams need AI platforms that connect to real use cases, usable data, workflow design and team capability. Otherwise, enterprise AI access risks becoming another tool mandate rather than a source of marketing advantage.

Training is becoming more structured, but capability is still uneven.



In 2025, AI capability was largely built through self-teaching, informal experimentation and a few confident users.

In 2026, more organisations are investing in structured internal and external training.

That is progress, but it is not yet scale. Too much capability still sits with a small number of power users, while many teams remain short on time, support and confidence.

High Maturity leaders are the most likely to have invested in external AI training (38% compared to just 16%). Lower Maturity organisations are mostly relying on internal peer learning.

As organisations grow, AI transformation leaders are critical to connecting technology with people and culture.

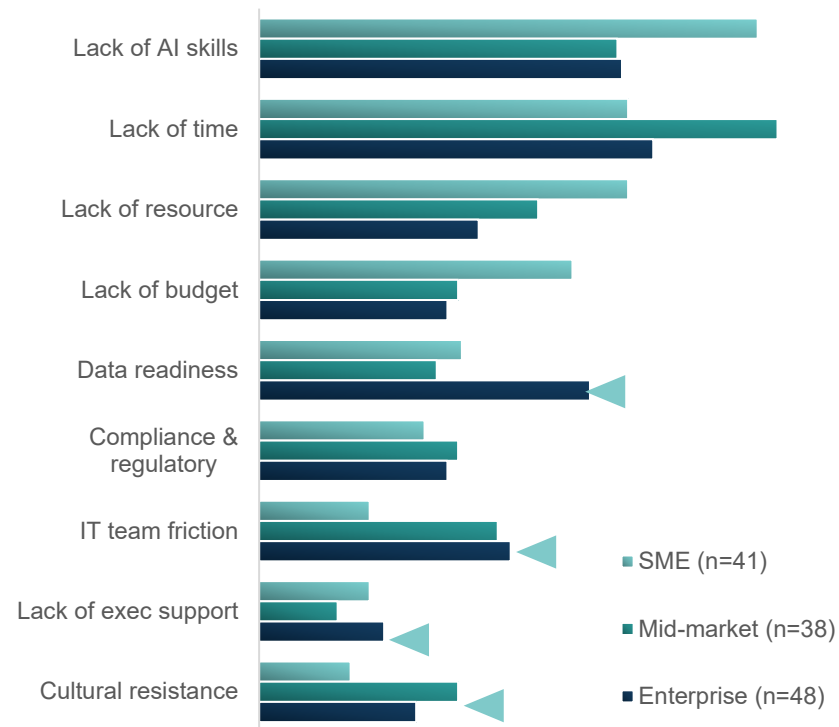
Across all segments, the primary barrier to AI deployment is a shortage of advanced AI capability, but the specific blocker shifts with organisation size. Marketers are being pulled in two directions: they are starved of the time and training needed to master basic workflows, yet they are already under pressure to adapt to sophisticated, machine-readable ecosystems like AEO to combat zero-click search drops.

Challenges:

SMEs: lack of skills, time, resources and budget

Mid-market: lack of time, IT friction

Enterprise: lack of time, skills and resources along with data readiness and IT friction starting to play a greater role



The ROI proof gap.

AI activity only becomes an advantage when it is connected to measurable value.

31%

say fewer than 1 in 5 use cases deliver clear ROI.

52%

report an ROI success rate of 40% or below.

53%

have fewer than 5 live use cases, and most cannot link them to business outcomes.

CMO implication

Marketing teams are doing more with AI but too many are still unable to prove what it is worth. Use case activity is rising faster than measurement discipline, leaving CMOs with more experimentation, more output and less clarity on commercial impact.

“

Budget Direct is invested in understanding how AI-driven discovery is reshaping the customer journey and making changes now to position ourselves for that future. Encouragingly, we're already seeing positive signs from this work, as can be seen from our leadership in AI Visibility, giving us confidence that the organisations willing to adapt early will be better placed to capture growth in the years ahead.

”

Jonathan Kerr

Chief Growth Officer
Budget Direct

Connect on **LinkedIn**





5. The CMO action agenda.

What leaders can do now to close the maturity gap.

What CMOs can do now to optimise AI in marketing.

Five actions to move from AI activity to AI advantage.

- 1. Diagnose the maturity gap, not the tool stack.**
Do not start by asking which AI tools the team is using. Start by identifying which maturity driver is holding scale back: roadmap, workflow, data, governance, capability or ROI.
- 2. Build the AI growth blueprint.**
Move from scattered experimentation to a clear plan for where AI will create value. Define the priority use cases, investment model, owners, guardrails and measures of success.
- 3. Redesign the way of working, not just the assets.**
AI maturity comes when workflows, roles, decision rights, agencies, platforms and data start to change. The goal is not just faster production. It is a better operating model.
- 4. Build team confidence as a capability system.**
Training is not enough on its own. Teams need permission to test, fail, share and learn safely, so confidence spreads beyond a few power users.
- 5. Prove value while protecting the human edge.**
Connect AI use cases to commercial outcomes, customer value and brand distinctiveness. More AI output is not the goal; measurable, trusted and meaningfully different marketing is.

Scale is a by-product of the system.



1. Skills



2. Data



3. Roadmap



4. ROI



Scale

Weakness in any node constrains the whole system.

All drivers contribute to maturity and scale, but the lowest maturity drivers are holding scale back: Roadmap, Team Design, Use Cases and ROI.

“

This report should give CMOs confidence as well as urgency. The industry has moved forward, and AI is becoming part of how marketing teams think, plan and operate. But the absence of advanced maturity shows the work still ahead. The opportunity now is to build the operating discipline around AI: clearer roadmaps, redesigned workflows, better data, safer teams and stronger links to commercial value. That is how AI moves from activity to advantage.

”

Corrina Brazel

General Manager Marketing
Wesfarmers Health

Connect on [**LinkedIn**](#)



Turning ACAM benchmark insights into measurable AI transformation.

About ACAM

Our purpose is to help marketing leaders embed AI as strategic infrastructure - not just a tool, but a capability that reshapes how teams think, operate and create value.

We make AI adoption practical, ethical and commercially accountable.

We bring independent research, real-world insight and clear guardrails to the biggest questions shaping our industry, so marketers move beyond experimentation and lead responsibly.

We remain pro-purpose: blending commercial work with reinvestment into education, advocacy and measurable social impact.

Through its industry research, National AI Benchmark and work with leading organisations, ACAM identified a consistent challenge: marketing teams do not need another AI tool or another one-off training course. They need a systematic and consistent way to embed AI into their teams, transform how work gets done and measure progress over time.

In response, ACAM developed **ART, AI Results Transformation**, a proprietary transformation system designed specifically for marketing teams.

Built on the insights from ACAM's industry research and maturity framework, ART gives marketing leaders a practical way to assess where they are today, identify priority gaps, build capability across their teams, establish governance, prioritise investment and track progress against the **ACAM 6 Levels of AI Marketing Maturity**.

At the centre of ART is a regular **AI maturity baseline**, giving CMOs a clear view of their current score, the drivers holding back scale, and the actions needed to move up the maturity curve.

ART helps marketing teams turn benchmark insights into measurable business outcomes, stronger operating discipline and sustained organisational change.

Contact us for more information info@acam.ai

Thank you to Kantar, our insights and analytics partner.

About Kantar

Kantar is the world's leading marketing data and analytics business. We deliver the intelligence needed to power brand growth.

We provide the signals that help organisations act quickly and confidently. We empower brands to make effective marketing decisions based on predictive evidence. And we help them craft powerful growth strategies rooted in the connection between consumers, brands and enterprise value.

All this is powered by our uniquely robust human and synthetic data, our unrivalled IP, our AI-native platform and the team of global brand experts that bring this all together.

www.kantar.com

Kantar delivers the intelligence to power brand growth in the AI era.

Imagine a world where AI is more than a tool, it's your strategic partner, transforming marketing decision-making. At Kantar, our proprietary AI models, built on **validated expertise, proven frameworks and high-quality data**, unlock the true value of your information.

We help organisations turn complexity into clarity, empowering teams to make smarter decisions faster, scale insight across the business, and uncover new opportunities for growth. This is AI designed for brands – intelligent, validated, adaptive and built to drive meaningful brand growth.

Signal Intelligence

Keep a constant pulse on consumers and markets

- Brand Guidance
- Customer Experience

Decision Intelligence

Power optimal marketing choices with predictable ROI

- Analytics and ROI
- Creative
- Innovation
- Media
- Sensory

Strategic Intelligence

Drive growth strategies that connect brand actions to enterprise value

- Brand Strategy
- Consulting
- Qualitative
- Sustainability

Powered by the Kantar Intelligence Engine

For more information, please contact Karin.Duchenne@kantar.com
or visit <https://kantaraustralia.com/ai-hub/>

Acknowledgements.

This report was developed through a partnership between the Australian Centre for AI in Marketing (ACAM) and Kantar.

Douglas Nicol, Co-founder of ACAM, led the development of the AI Readiness Framework, research design and overall study methodology. Drawing on ACAM's expertise in AI adoption and organisational transformation, Douglas shaped the structure, drivers and maturity model that underpin the report.

Mitchell Hill, Senior Researcher at Kantar, led the analysis, data tracking, synthesis and interpretation of the findings. In undertaking this work, Mitchell applied advanced analytical techniques and AI-powered tools to support data processing, pattern identification and insight generation.

All findings, conclusions and recommendations were reviewed and validated to ensure they met Kantar's standards of analytical rigour, quality and integrity. This collaboration combines ACAM's leadership in AI readiness and capability development with Kantar's expertise/AI tools and evidence-based analysis to provide a robust assessment of AI readiness across the marketing profession.



Appendix.

Technical description: AI maturity methodology

The 2025 benchmark used a simpler three-stage readiness model (Beginner, Emerging and Advanced).

In 2026, ACAM introduced a more detailed 6 level maturity framework with 7 maturity drivers. To enable year-on-year comparison, 2025 results have been retrospectively mapped to the 2026 model. These comparisons should be viewed as directional, as both the survey design and scoring methodology evolved.

The 2026 overall maturity score is based on all scored benchmark responses from the final valid sample. Dimension scores reflect average maturity across the 7 capability areas and are reported separately to highlight strengths and constraints. As a result, the overall score is not a simple average of the dimension scores. Industry ranges represent the middle 50% of organisations, reducing the influence of unusually high or low results. Scores are rounded to two decimal places and mapped to ACAM's six maturity levels. Scores are rounded to two decimal places and mapped to ACAM's six maturity levels.

Level	Maturity level	Exact score range	Plain-English meaning
L1	Early Beginner	1.00 to 1.99	Fragmented experimentation
L2	Established Beginner	2.00 to 2.49	AI recognised, but inconsistent use
L3	Early Emerging	2.50 to 2.99	Growing adoption and capability
L4	Mature Emerging	3.00 to 3.49	Structured implementation emerging
L5	Early Advanced	3.50 to 3.99	AI becoming operationally embedded
L6	Leading Advanced	4.00 to 5.00	Scaled and strategically integrated AI

Context questions, such as barriers, concerns and priority use cases, are used for supporting insight and are not always included in maturity scoring.

Acknowledgement of Country.

At the Australian Centre for AI in Marketing (ACAM), we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, learn, and work across Australia. We recognise their deep and enduring connection to land, waters, and culture and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging. We are committed to learning from First Nations knowledge and perspectives.



Closing the AI Maturity Gap.

The 2026 Australian AI in Marketing Benchmark Report.

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