

CMO HUDDLES + BENCHMARKIT

Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark 2026

Moving beyond personal productivity to business impact

Fielded July-August 2026

Written for CMOs and aspiring CMOs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The next AI advantage will be operational

AI adoption is nearly universal. Marketing leaders now need to turn widespread experimentation into repeatable workflows, trusted decisions and measurable business impact.

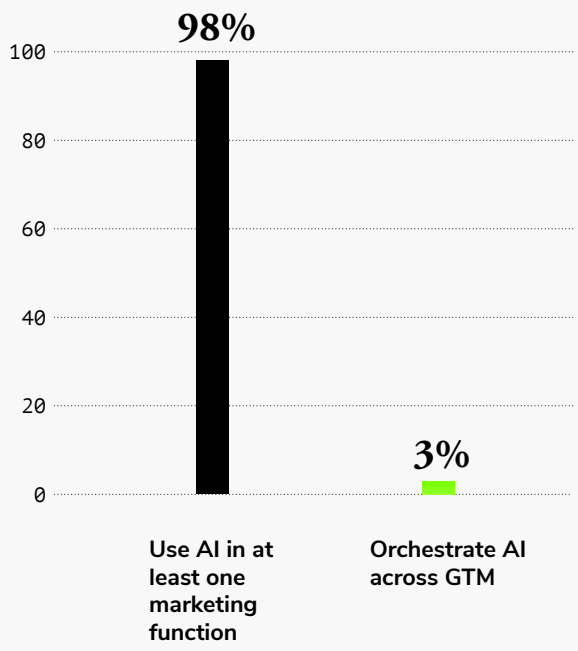
Marketing has crossed the adoption threshold. Ninety-eight percent of respondents use AI in at least one marketing function (Figure 1), and 95% self-report impact somewhere. That is the good news. The more revealing news is where that impact stops: productivity and content volume lead, while revenue, cost and full cross-GTM AI orchestration remain uncommon. The investment thesis is equally clear: 73% rank productivity among their top three reasons to invest in AI, while 21% include competitive differentiation and just 4% rank differentiation first. For most organizations today, AI is funded primarily as an efficiency lever rather than a differentiation lever.

Figure 1

AI adoption is nearly universal. Orchestration is not.

Share of valid respondents

Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study, CMO Huddles and Benchmarkit. Adoption and GTM integration questions, n=176 valid responses. Percentages are rounded.



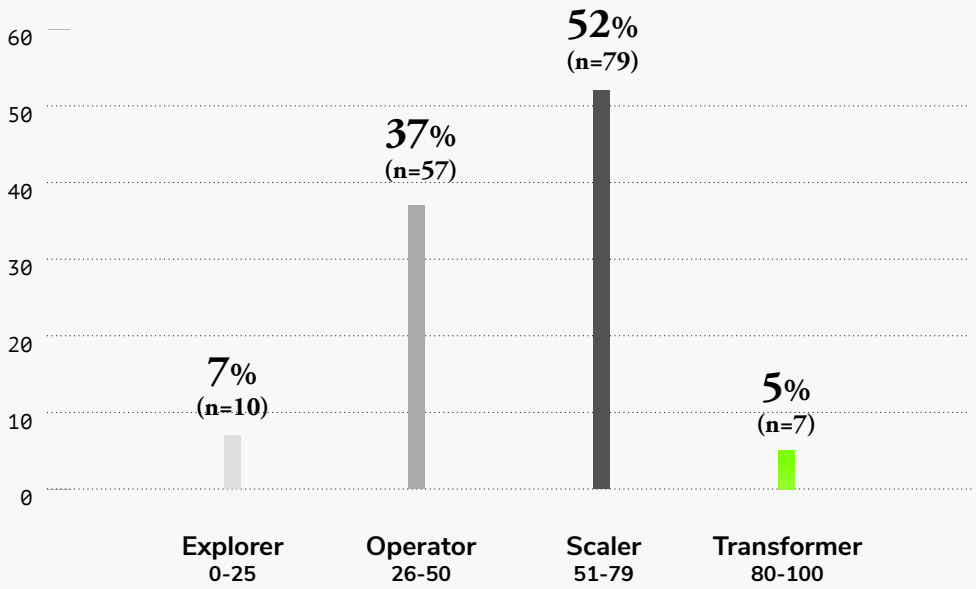
“The early AI story was about experimentation. The next one is about leadership: choosing the right workflows, giving them owners and proving what changed.”

Drew Neisser
Founder and CEO, CMO Huddles

Figure 2

Most organizations are AI Operators or AI Scalers

Distribution of 153 scoreable responses, with tier score ranges



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. Tier distribution based on 153 complete, scoreable responses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

The median AI maturity score is 53 out of 100. Respondents fall into four tiers (Figure 2): Explorer (7%), Operator (37%), Scaler (52%) and Transformer (5%). Curiosity and effort are widespread. The harder work is building an AI operating system across five connected dimensions: Strategy, Workflow, Talent, Governance and Measurement.

Three findings deserve a place on every CMO agenda. First, data quality and access are the leading constraints. Second, CMOs may own the strategy, but informal champions still carry much of the work. Third, measurement thins out as it approaches business outcomes. These are fixable management problems, and that is the study’s most encouraging finding.

HUDDLE UP

Name the one AI-enabled workflow that would matter most to your 2027 marketing plan and the executive who will own the outcome.

Activity is high. Operating maturity is scarce.

The headline numbers reveal a productive tension. AI is already embedded in the daily work of marketing, yet only a small minority of organizations have connected that activity to cross-functional processes, durable governance and business-level measurement.

A high adoption rate should not be mistaken for transformation. The study's most useful numbers are the ones that sit side by side: 98% use AI, but only 3% achieve full cross-GTM AI orchestration; 95% self-report impact, but only 6% connect AI-enabled workflows to business or capacity metrics; 17% report revenue or customer outcomes, while just 5% reach the Transformer tier (Figure 3).

These gaps are not a verdict. They map where the work is moving now, from individual acceleration to organizational advantage.

Figure 3

The benchmark in eight numbers

A fast view of adoption, impact and operating maturity

98% USE AI	**95%** SELF-REPORT IMPACT	**60%** GAIN PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY	**17%** REPORT REVENUE / CUSTOMER OUTCOMES
53% CITE DATA AS A BARRIER	**37%** LACK COST VISIBILITY	**6%** TIE AI TO BUSINESS METRICS	**5%** REACH TRANSFORMER

Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. Multi-select questions allow more than one response; percentages are rounded.

HUDDLE UP

Use these eight numbers to start a leadership-team conversation about which gap matters most in your organization.

METHODOLOGY

A maturity model built around operating capability

CMO Huddles and Benchmarkit fielded the study in July and August 2026 among B2B marketing leaders. The study captured 194 responses (Figure 4). Of those, 153 supplied complete answers to the scored questions and form the benchmark population used for overall scores, tiers and dimension comparisons. Question-level findings use all valid responses for that item; bases generally range from 164 to 180, with smaller bases identified for scored and subgroup analyses.

Figure 4

How the benchmark was built

A transparent model designed for practical self-assessment

194	153	5	100
RESPONSES CAPTURED	COMPLETE, SCOREABLE RESPONSES	OPERATING DIMENSIONS	POSSIBLE POINTS

FIELDWORK	CO-AUTHORS	SCORING
July–August 2026	CMO Huddles + Benchmarkit	Weighted, judgment-based

ROBUSTNESS CHECKS Scored items are highly consistent (alpha = 0.88) | Results hold under equal weighting (r = 0.999)

Seventeen scored questions cover five operating dimensions: Strategy, Workflow, Talent, Governance and Measurement.

Response options were mapped to progressive maturity point values, from limited or informal practice through coordinated, governed and measurable practice, and then rolled into five weighted dimensions. Those weights and tier cutoffs are judgment-based design choices developed by CMO Huddles and Benchmarkit, not an external industry standard. The 17 scored items demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.88), and an equal-weight sensitivity check produced a 0.999 correlation with the published scores. These checks support the model's coherence and show that the findings are not materially dependent on the chosen dimension weights. The model is intended as a consistent, practical diagnostic for leadership teams. Read it directionally, especially for smaller segments.

HUDDLE UP

Treat your score as the beginning of a management conversation, not as a grade.

THE SCORING MODEL

Five dimensions. One connected operating system.

Figure 5

Five dimensions roll up to a 100-point score

Weights reflect the operating disciplines required to move from use to advantage



Transformer requires an 80+ overall score and 70+ in Workflow, Governance and Measurement.

Source: CMO Huddles and Benchmarkit scoring model. Weights total 100 points; tier cutoffs and the Transformer gate are judgment-based diagnostic rules.

Strategy (20 points) asks whether AI has a clear owner, a disciplined way to set priorities and a meaningful executive review cadence (Figure 5). Workflow (24 points) assesses functional breadth, agentic workflows, GTM integration and the quality of the data foundation.

Talent (16 points) covers dedicated capabilities, competency programs and adoption or change management. Governance (18 points) includes policies, human oversight, investment visibility and buy-build-customize discipline. Measurement (22 points) looks at what the organization measures, where impact appears and whether insights affect decisions.

Scores translate into four tiers: Explorer (0-25), where activity remains early or informal; Operator (26-50), where useful practices are becoming repeatable; Scaler (51-79), where AI practices are becoming more coordinated and standardized, though material gaps may remain in workflow, governance or measurement; and Transformer (80-100), where AI is embedded as a connected, learning operating capability. These are diagnostic bands, not a forced distribution or industry grading curve. Transformer status also requires scores of at least 70 in Workflow, Governance and Measurement. That gate prevents a high aggregate score from masking weakness in the capabilities that make AI scalable, responsible and provable.

A dimension score below 70 means the organization earned less than 70% of the available points in that dimension. It is a judgment-based diagnostic threshold, not a statistical cutoff.

HUDDLE UP

Do not chase a higher total first. Find the weakest dimension that is limiting the rest of the system.

IN-REPORT SELF-DIAGNOSTIC

Where does your organization sit today?

Before you look at the remaining findings, answer five questions with your leadership team. Use a simple three-point scale: Not yet, Partly or Consistently.

STRATEGY: Do we have one accountable owner and a short, prioritized portfolio of AI initiatives tied to GTM or company priorities?

WORKFLOW: Have we redesigned at least one important marketing workflow around AI, with dependable data and clear handoffs?

TALENT: Do our people have the roles, skills, time and change support required to use AI consistently?

GOVERNANCE: Are approved tools, data rules, human review and investment decisions built into how the work gets done?

MEASUREMENT: Can we connect AI-enabled workflows to quality, speed, capacity, pipeline, revenue or cost, and use those insights to decide what happens next?

Use this answer key to interpret your team's answers, then confirm with the full AI Maturity Calculator.

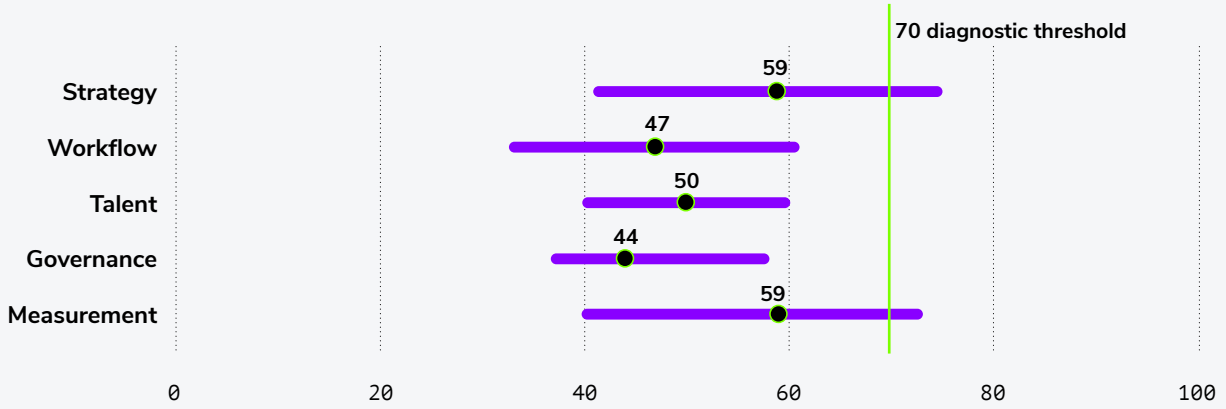
Mostly Not yet = Explorer or early Operator
Mostly Partly = Operator or early Scaler
Mostly Consistently = Scaler or above

The cohort medians (Figure 6) show the greatest room to advance in Governance, Workflow and Talent. Measurement ties Strategy for the highest median (59) because most organizations measure something, but the measurement remains broad and shallow: only 6% reach business or capacity metrics. Finding 10 examines that gap. A full score requires the 17-question AI Maturity Calculator, but these five questions will quickly surface where your team agrees, and where it does not.

Figure 6

The cohort is strongest in Strategy and Measurement

Median score and middle 50% of 153 scoreable responses



n=153 scoreable responses. Bars show the middle 50% of scores; dots show medians. The 70 line is a diagnostic threshold, not an external standard.

FINDING 1

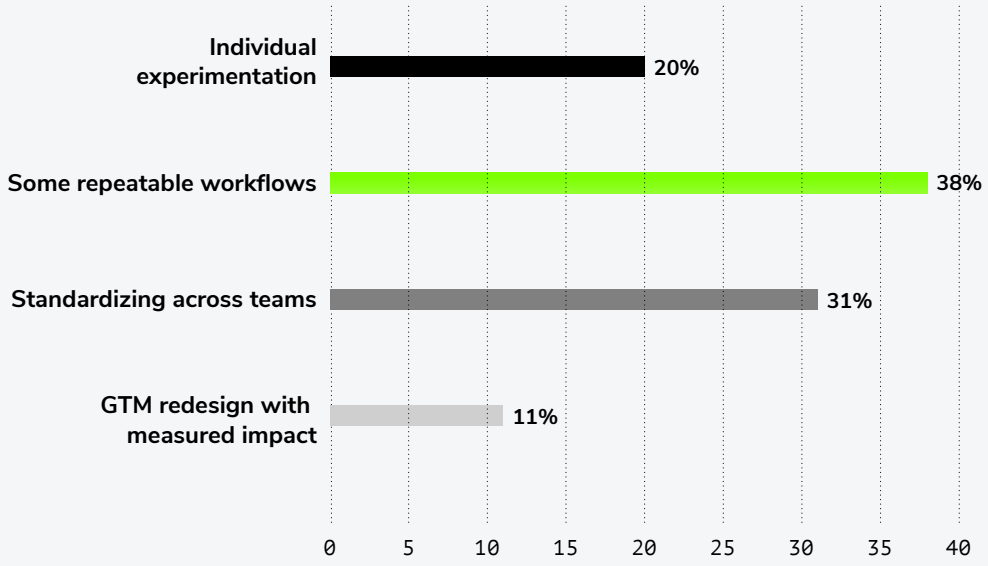
Adoption is widespread. Redesign is still rare.

Nearly every respondent uses AI somewhere in marketing. The typical organization is no longer asking whether employees should experiment; it is trying to convert experimentation into a repeatable way of working. Thirty-eight percent describe some repeatable workflows, and another 31% say they are standardizing across teams (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Most teams have moved beyond experiments

Self-described operating stage, n=180



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. Self-described operating stage, n=180 valid responses. Cross-GTM orchestration is based on a separate integration question, n=176.

But the finish line remains distant. Only 11% say they have redesigned meaningful parts of GTM around AI-enabled workflows and measurable impact. On a separate integration question, just 3% report full cross-GTM AI orchestration with shared data, workflows, governance and measurement.

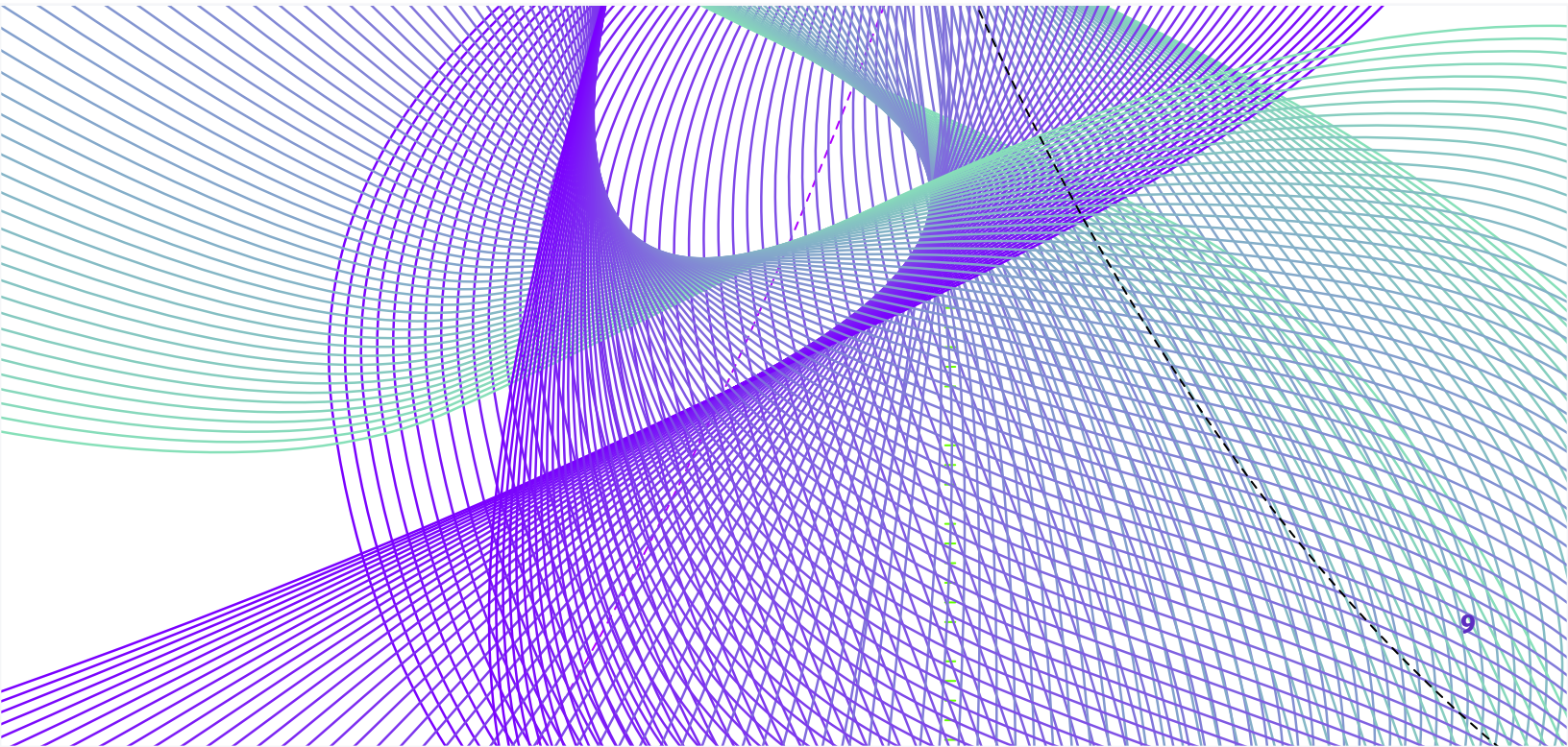
Usage has spread faster than the operating model. Processes, ownership, data and measurement have not caught up.

"AI adoption has become nearly universal. The next leap will come from redesigning the work, not adding another tool to the stack."

Drew Neisser
Founder and CEO, CMO Huddles

HUDDLE UP

Pick one recurring workflow with visible business relevance.
Map its current steps, redesign it with AI and assign one accountable owner.



FINDING 2

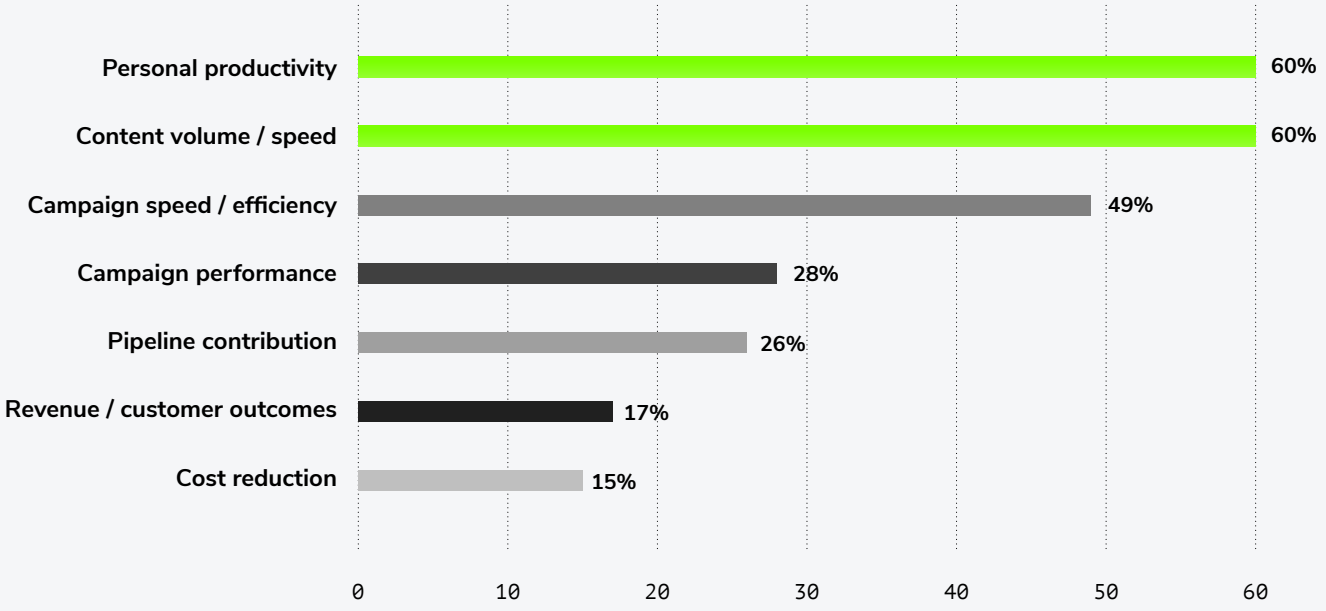
AI is changing how marketing works faster than what it delivers

The impact is real, but it is concentrated near the work itself. Personal productivity and content volume or speed are each cited by 60% of respondents (Figure 8). Campaign speed or efficiency follows at 49%. These are meaningful wins: reclaimed time, faster cycles and more output can create capacity for better work.

Figure 8

AI is changing how marketing works before what it delivers

Multiple responses allowed, n=173



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study, n=173 respondents reporting impact. Multiple responses allowed, so percentages do not sum to 100.

> “AI should give the team more than higher output. It should free us to spend more time on work that customers and the business value most.”
>
> **Michael Atalla**
> **Chief Marketing Officer, UiPath**

The further the metric moves from the task, however, the thinner the evidence becomes. Twenty-eight percent report improved campaign performance, 26% pipeline contribution, 17% revenue or customer outcomes, and 15% cost reduction.

The pattern may reflect adoption moving faster than attribution and measurement, rather than an absence of financial value. Reclaimed hours become strategic value when leaders decide where to reinvest them.

Respondents most often name marketing efficiency as the business outcome improved most by AI, at 47%, while only 14% select revenue. Competitive differentiation appears among the top three investment rationales for 21% and ranks first for just 4%. For now, the evidence is stronger for AI as an efficiency lever than as a growth or differentiation engine.

HUDDLE UP

For every productivity claim, identify where the saved time goes and which business or customer outcome it is meant to improve.

FINDING 3

Data, not culture, is the binding constraint

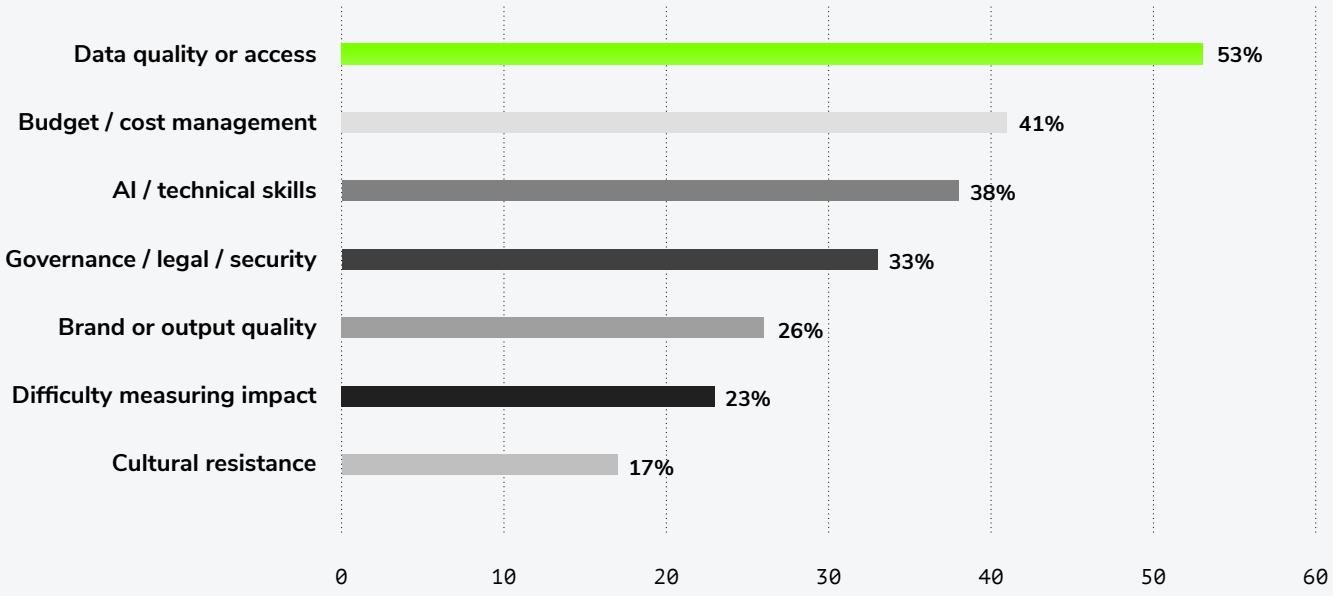
Data quality or access is the most frequently cited barrier to scaling AI in marketing, named by 53% of respondents (Figure 9). Budget and cost management follow at 41%, then insufficient AI or technical skills at 38%, and governance, legal or security risk at 33%.

Cultural resistance or change fatigue ranks last at 17%. That is a useful corrective to the easy story that people are simply unwilling to change. The evidence points instead to structural friction: fragmented data, uncertain access, missing standards and systems that were not designed for AI-enabled work.

Figure 9

Data, not culture, is the binding constraint

Up to three responses; n=176



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study, n=176 valid barrier responses. Respondents selected up to three barriers; percentages do not sum to 100. Revenue-band data-foundation comparison: below $10 million n=46; above $500 million n=15. Segment comparisons are directional.

“Agentic GTM depends on connective tissue: trusted data, clear handoffs and operating rules that let teams scale beyond isolated wins.”

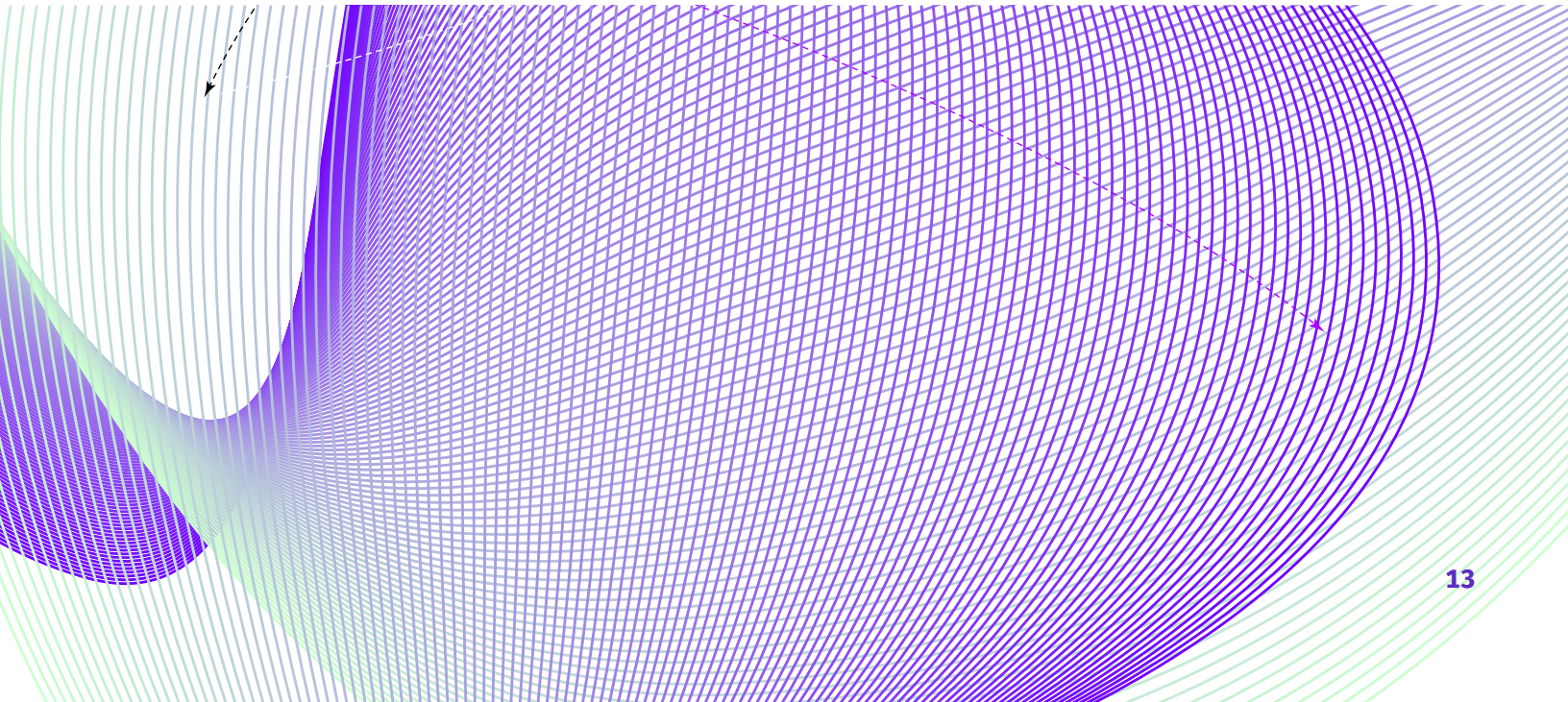
Craig Rosenberg
Chief Platform Officer, Scale Venture Partners

This matters as marketing moves toward agents and cross-functional workflows. An AI system cannot make dependable decisions from data that teams do not trust or cannot access. Company scale does not automatically solve the problem. Among organizations below $10 million in revenue, 15% report connected data sources and 28% report governed, reliable data.

Above $500 million, connected sources rise to 40%, while governed, reliable data falls to 7%. The comparison is directional because the groups are small, but it suggests that larger organizations may connect more data without governing it more effectively. The CMO does not need to become the chief data officer, but marketing does need a clear data agenda and shared accountability with IT, Sales and Operations.

HUDDLE UP

Choose one critical workflow and document the three data conditions it needs: source, owner and acceptable quality.



FINDING 4

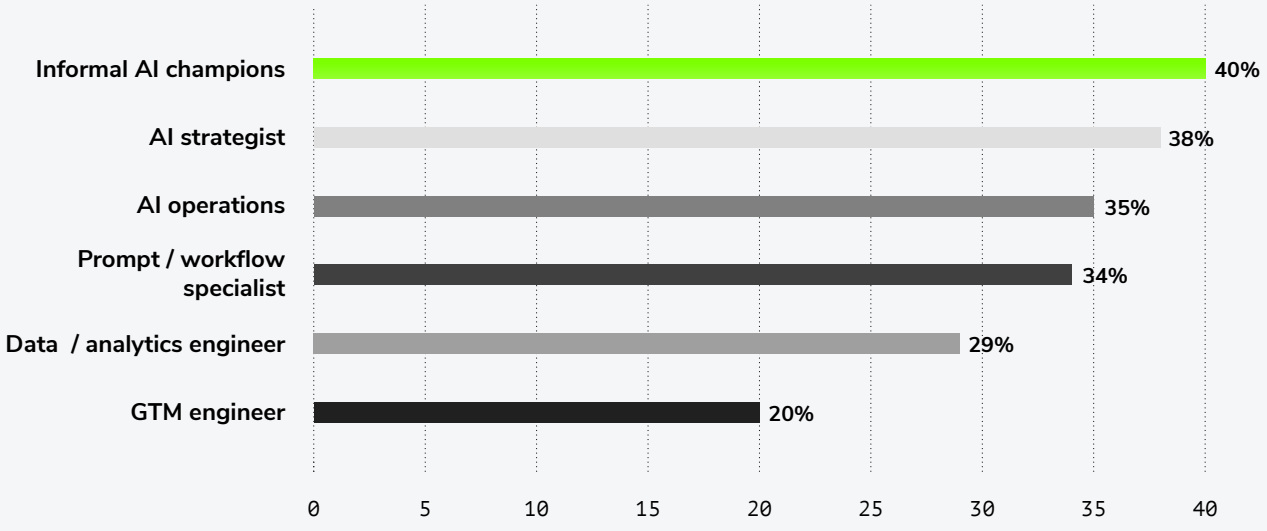
Ownership is ahead of organizational capability

Forty-five percent of respondents say the CMO or senior marketing leadership owns AI strategy, 26% name marketing team leaders, 18% report no clear owner or rely on informal champions, and 12% name a cross-functional GTM or executive group (percentages are rounded). That is an important sign that AI has moved onto the leadership agenda. Yet the work beneath that ownership is still frequently informal.

Figure 10

Informal champions remain the most common AI capability

Multiple responses allowed; n=164



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study, n=164 valid responses. Multiple capabilities could be selected; percentages do not sum to 100.

> “Informal champions helped us discover what was possible. Clear ownership, dedicated time and measurable expectations made that progress repeatable.”
>
> **Amy King**
> **Chief Marketing Officer, Relias**

Informal AI champions are the most common capability, present in 40% of organizations (Figure 10). AI strategists appear in 38%, AI operations in 35%, prompt or workflow specialists in 34%, data or analytics engineers in 29%, and GTM engineers in only 20%.

Champions are valuable catalysts. They discover use cases, reduce fear and teach by doing. But volunteer energy is not an operating model. As AI becomes more consequential, organizations must decide which capabilities become explicit roles, shared services or durable responsibilities within existing jobs.

Organizations do not need a large new AI department. They need clarity about who sets priorities, designs workflows, owns the data, approves risk and proves value.

HUDDLE UP

Make a one-page responsibility map for your top three AI workflows. Any role assigned to “everyone” needs a named owner.

FINDING 5

Executives and practitioners are seeing different AI realities

The study surfaces a constructive perception gap (Figure 11). Sixty-six percent of C-level respondents say the CMO owns AI strategy, while only 19% of managers agree; half of managers instead name marketing team leaders. C-level respondents cite skills as a barrier at 49%, compared with 21% of managers. VPs cite difficulty measuring impact at 48%, versus 12% of C-level respondents. Directors report revenue outcomes at 28%, compared with 14% of C-level respondents.

These differences do not tell us which group is right. They show that title changes the vantage point. Executives may see formal accountability and capability requirements; practitioners may see where decisions and work actually live. Senior leaders may hear the business case, while operators experience the measurement burden.

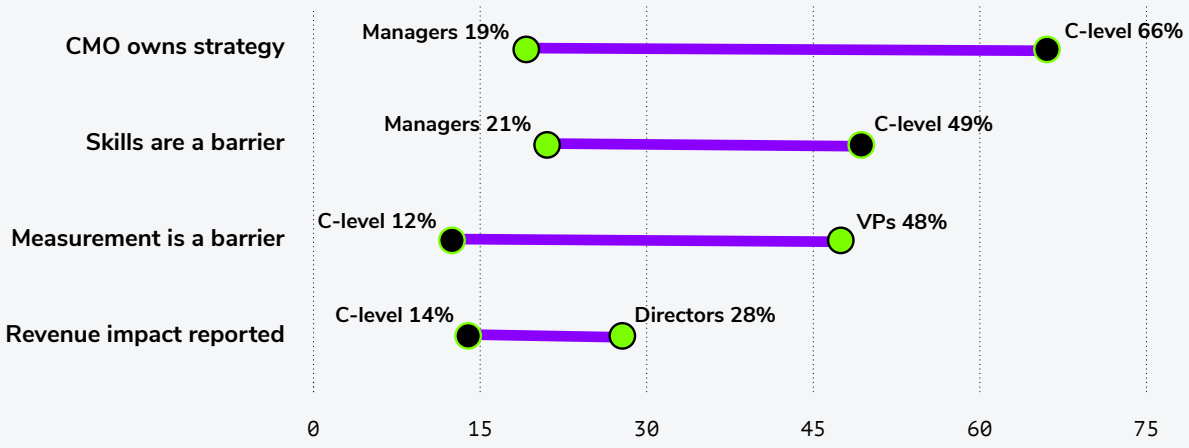
A maturity conversation becomes more valuable when the team compares perceptions before selecting priorities. The disagreement itself is useful data.

> "AI transformation is partly a shared-language problem. Leaders and practitioners can be working hard on the same agenda while describing ownership, risk and value very differently."
>
> **Carilu Dietrich**
> **Operating Partner, Andreessen Horowitz**

Figure 11

Different roles see different parts of the AI operating system

Percent within each role; question-level bases shown in the report source note



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. Role bases: C-level n=65, managers n=42, VPs n=21 and directors n=36; valid bases vary by question. Subgroup comparisons are directional, not causal.

HUDDLE UP

Ask your team the same five maturity questions you answered. Compare answers before deciding where to invest.

FINDING 6

Workflow and governance are where momentum gets stuck

The broadest dimension gaps sit in Governance, Talent and Workflow. Governance scores below the model's 70-point diagnostic threshold for 89% of scoreable respondents, Talent for 88% and Workflow for 87%. These disciplines reinforce each other: workflow without governance is difficult to scale safely, while governance without workflow design can remain abstract.

Thirty-six percent of respondents have documented standards for approved tools, data use and review processes (Figure 12). That is progress. But 49% have either no defined governance or only basic guidance that varies by team or use case.

Only 9% have governance built into AI workflows, and just 6% coordinate governance across functions on a regular cadence. Human oversight shows the same progression: 45% review outputs for most AI-assisted workflows, 25% define review points based on workflow risk or business impact, and 22% have no defined oversight or rely on informal review.

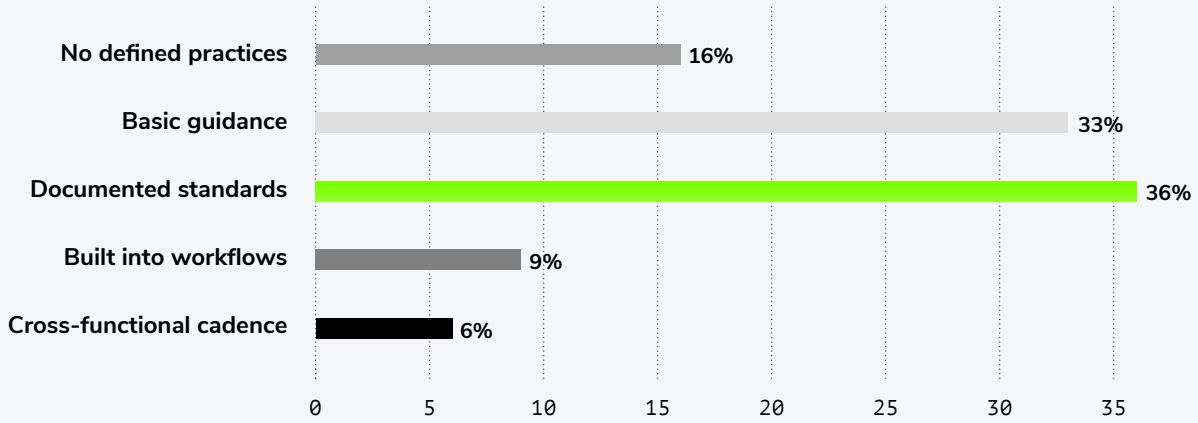
The distinction matters. A policy document can create a boundary; operational governance makes decisions dependable. It specifies which data may be used, where human review belongs, how exceptions are handled and who has authority to approve risk.

> "Good AI governance lives in the workflow. It is a set of decisions that helps teams move faster with confidence."
>
> **Lauren Boyman**
> **Chief Marketing Officer, KPMG North America**

Figure 12

Governance is more often documented than operationalized

Single response; n=174



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. Governance practices and human oversight questions each have n=174 valid responses. Percentages are rounded.

Governance need not become a brake. Done wtell, it increases speed by reducing uncertainty and preventing every team from solving the same trust questions independently. The most mature approach is proportional: lighter controls for low-risk work and stronger review for customer-facing, regulated or consequential workflows.

HUDDLE UP

Select one high-value workflow and define its approved tools, data rules, human review point and exception owner.

FINDING 7

AI spend is ahead of investment discipline

> "AI spend becomes an investment when every initiative has an owner, a workflow and an expected outcome."
>
> **Ray Rike**
> **Founder and CEO, Benchmarkit**

Thirty-seven percent report either individual or team-level purchases with limited coordination, or multiple funding sources with limited visibility into total marketing AI cost (Figure 13). Only 15% manage AI as a portfolio with named owners and expected outcomes, and only 11% review AI investment regularly across Marketing, IT and Finance. Forty percent have no defined buy-build-customize approach or decide case by case based on immediate need and tool availability.

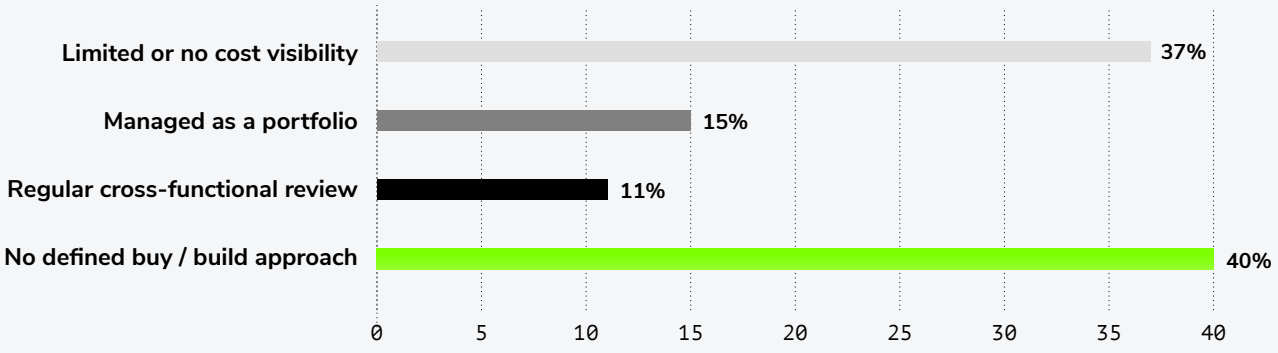
This is the finding your CFO will raise first. Tool-level experimentation may be inexpensive, but the full cost of AI includes licenses, data, integration, security, change management, workflow redesign and the opportunity cost of fragmented effort. Without a portfolio view, leaders cannot compare initiatives or stop those that no longer deserve resources.

Centralizing every purchase is unnecessary. The priority is portfolio visibility and a small number of consistent decision rules. What problem are we solving? Who owns adoption? What data and integration does it require? What result should change? When will we review the evidence?

Figure 13

AI investment is growing faster than investment discipline

Valid bases range from n=173 to n=174



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. Investment-governance question n=174: limited coordination or cost visibility 64 respondents (37%); managed portfolio 26 (15%); regular cross-functional review 19 (11%). Buy-build-customize question n=173. Percentages are rounded.

HUDDLE UP

Know your total marketing AI spend before your CFO asks for it, and identify the owner and expected return for every material initiative.

FINDING 8

GTM design shapes how AI moves from use to value

Sales-led organizations trail their hybrid and product-led peers on several operating signals. Twenty-eight percent of sales-led respondents say AI is not integrated into GTM workflows, compared with 11% of hybrid organizations and 14% of product-led companies (Figure 14). Twenty-two percent of sales-led companies do not formally measure AI impact, versus 17% of hybrid and 6% of product-led companies.

The outcome pattern moves in the same direction. Pipeline contribution is reported by 16% of sales-led organizations, 33% of hybrid organizations and 36% of product-led companies.

These comparisons are directional and do not establish that one GTM model causes greater maturity. They suggest that AI scales more readily when product, marketing, sales and customer data move through connected feedback loops.

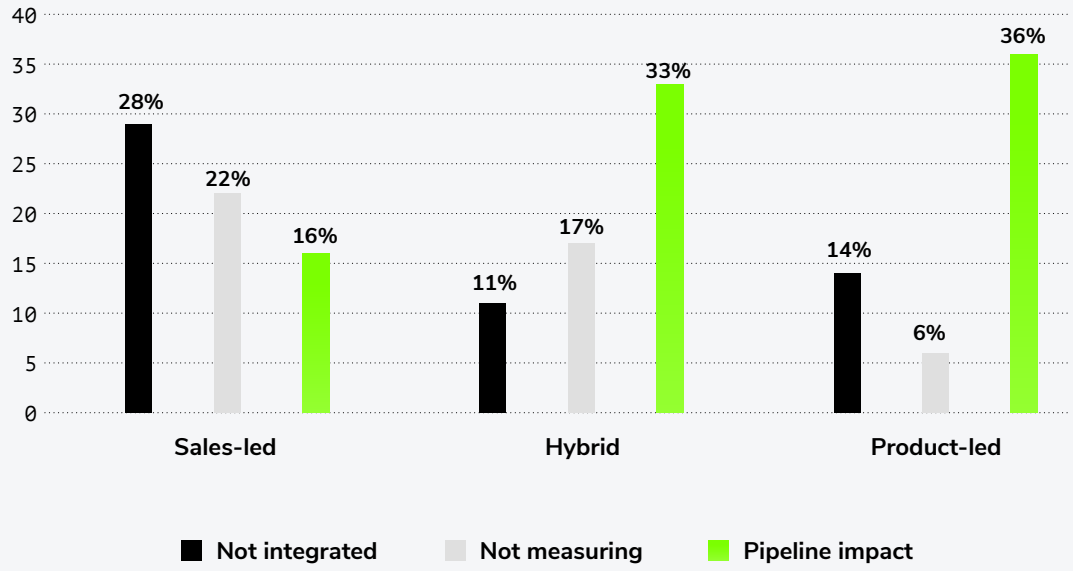
> "Sales-led companies should use the pressure of AI to redesign broken handoffs, rather than automate around them."

Craig Rosenberg
Chief Platform Officer, Scale Venture Partners

Figure 14

GTM design shapes integration, measurement and outcomes

Share within each GTM model; valid base varies by question



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. GTM model groups in the source data: sales-led n=88, hybrid n=66 and product-led n=40; valid bases vary by question. Comparisons are directional.

HUDDLE UP

Choose one marketing-to-sales handoff and make its inputs, decision rules, owner and success measure explicit before adding automation.

FINDING 9

Operating discipline matters more than funding source

Funding source did not produce a statistically distinguishable maturity hierarchy in this sample. Median overall scores cluster tightly: 50 for bootstrapped companies, 52.5 for private-equity-backed companies, 51 for public companies and 55.5 for venture-backed companies (Figure 15). A permutation test found no statistically significant difference (p=0.29), and funding source explained only 2.5% of overall score variation.

Figure 15

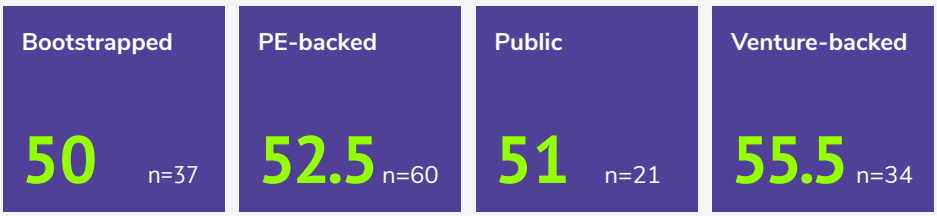
What the evidence can and cannot support

A signal-strength guide, with funding-source medians shown as a null result

BROAD COHORT FINDINGS	
Adoption, impact, barriers, ownership, governance and measurement	***Strong descriptive evidence***
DIRECTIONAL SEGMENT FINDINGS	
GTM model, role-level perception gaps and company-scale data patterns	***Useful signals; not causal***
HYPOTHESES TO TEST	
Funding source, industry and selected revenue-band differences	***No maturity hierarchy established***

Median overall score by funding source

n=152 with a stated funding source, permutation test p=0.29; funding explains 2.5% of score variation



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study, n=152 scoreable responses with a stated funding source. Subgroups: bootstrapped n=37, PE-backed n=60, public n=21, venture-backed n=34. Funding-source comparison: permutation test p=0.29; eta-squared=0.025. Medians are descriptive; findings are not causal.

“There is no corporate-structure shortcut to AI maturity. The advantage comes from management disciplines that can be learned.”

Drew Neisser
Founder and CEO, CMO Huddles

That restraint is itself useful. It would be easy to assume that PE-backed companies are uniformly more disciplined, venture-backed companies more experimental or public companies more governed. The data does not support those shortcuts. Individual practices vary, and some groups show relative strength on selected measures, but funding source is not destiny.

The same is true of most industry cuts: they provide useful color, not a universal explanation. Broad cohort findings such as adoption, barriers and measurement are the study’s strongest descriptive evidence. GTM, role-level and scale comparisons are directional. Funding, industry and selected revenue-band differences are hypotheses to test, not maturity hierarchies.

HUDDLE UP

Borrow practices, not stereotypes. Ask which operating discipline a peer has solved, and how it could translate to your environment.

FINDING 10

Measurement thins out as it approaches the business

Seventeen percent of respondents do not formally measure AI impact, and another 19% track only tool adoption or usage (Figure 16). Taken together, 36% measure nothing beyond tool usage. Twenty-eight percent measure productivity or time savings, meaning 64% stop at productivity or below. Twenty-nine percent reach workflow-level measures such as cost, speed, quality or conversion. Only 6% connect AI-enabled workflows to business or capacity metrics.

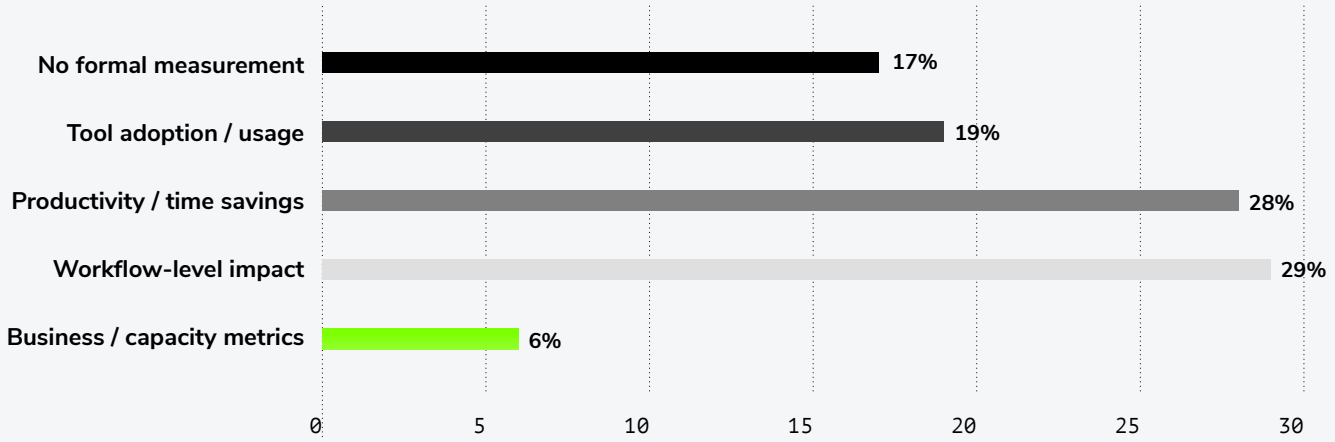
36%
measure nothing beyond usage

64%
stop at productivity or below

Figure 16

Nearly two-thirds do not measure beyond productivity

Single response; n=172



Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study, n=172 valid responses. Single-response question; percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100.

“Measurement is the feedback loop that makes every other dimension of AI maturity smarter.”

Ray Rike
Founder and CEO, Benchmarkit

Every earlier finding depends on measurement. Measurement ties for the highest dimension median (59) because the model credits organizations for measuring anything; this ladder shows how few reach the business. Without stronger measurement, leaders cannot tell whether productivity becomes capacity, whether faster campaigns improve decisions, or whether workflow redesign improves pipeline, customer outcomes or cost.

Not every use case needs a revenue-attribution model. Each workflow deserves proof appropriate to its purpose. A content workflow might measure cycle time, reuse and quality. A demand workflow might add conversion and pipeline. A planning workflow might measure forecast accuracy or decision speed. Define the measure before scaling the workflow, then use the evidence to continue, change or stop.

A directional comparison suggests that higher maturity is associated with stronger reported revenue impact. Fifty-three percent of organizations in the top maturity quartile rank revenue among their three most improved business outcomes, compared with 32% in the bottom quartile. This relationship is descriptive and does not establish that maturity caused the difference.

Figure 17

Higher-maturity organizations are more likely to report revenue impact

Revenue ranked among the top three outcomes improved by AI

MATURITY GROUP	REVENUE RANKED IN TOP THREE
Top maturity quartile	53%
Bottom maturity quartile	32%

Source: Marketing AI Maturity Benchmark Study. Top and bottom maturity quartiles n=38 each. Outcomes are self-reported; comparison is descriptive, directional and not causal.

HUDDLE UP

For your next AI initiative, write the baseline, the leading workflow metric and the business or capacity metric before implementation begins.

THE PATH FORWARD

A practical next move at every maturity tier

Suggested action horizons are guidance, not benchmark-derived timelines

Explorer	Operator	Scaler	Transformer
Focus	**Standardize**	**Connect**	**Optimize**
NEXT 90 DAYS	NEXT 1-2 QUARTERS	NEXT 2-4 QUARTERS	ONGOING
Choose a few safe, high-value use cases. Goal: disciplined learning before scale.	Turn successful experiments into owned, repeatable workflows. Goal: repeatability.	Link workflows, data, governance and metrics across GTM. Goal: coordinated business impact.	Manage AI as an evolving capability and continuously redesign the work. Goal: a learning system.

Source: CMO Huddles and Benchmarkit maturity framework. Recommended actions and action horizons are interpretive guidance based on the scoring model and study findings; the benchmark did not measure timelines.

"AI maturity means redesigning the marketing organization so people, data and AI can create better outcomes together. It does not mean replacing the team."

Liza Adams
Founder and Human+AI Organization Advisor, GrowthPath Partners

HUDDLE UP

Choose one action for the next 30 days, one workflow milestone for 90 days and one business proof point for the next planning cycle.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Turn your benchmark into a leadership agenda

This report describes the market. Your next step is to understand your organization. Take the free AI Maturity Calculator at cmohuddles.com/ai-maturity-calculator to receive a score, maturity tier, dimension profile and practical recommendations. Then bring the results to your team. Compare perceptions, choose the constraint that is holding back the system and identify one workflow where better ownership, data, governance or measurement can create visible progress.

Scan to assess your organization

Three ways to use this report with your team

1
ASSESS
Take the full AI Maturity Calculator for a score and tailored recommendations.

2
ALIGN
Ask your leadership team the same questions and compare where your views diverge.

3
ADVANCE
Choose one workflow, one owner and one business measure for the next 90 days.

Source: Study and scoring model, CMO Huddles and Benchmarkit, 2026. Calculator and membership links current as of publication.

Next, translate your AI investments into the ROI language your CFO and CEO already use. It is the strongest case for more marketing AI budget and a bigger seat at the executive table. Only 6% of respondents connect AI-enabled workflows to business or capacity metrics. These three metrics close that gap.

Three ways to report your AI ROI to the CFO and CEO

1

Pipeline Growth Efficiency

Total marketing expense per $1 of qualified pipeline (lower is better)

2

New ARR Efficiency

Total marketing expense per $1 of new and expansion ARR (lower is better)

3

Funnel Performance

Conversion rate from qualified lead to closed-won. Shorter sales cycles and higher ACV are bonus proof points.

Expect the CFO to ask how much of the change came from AI. Establish baseline measurements before an AI-enabled workflow launches, then track the trend afterward. That makes the ROI claim defensible rather than just correlated.

Continue the conversation with your peers.
CMO Huddles helps B2B marketing leaders turn challenges like these into practical action through confidential peer Huddles, expert conversations and one-to-one connections. Explore membership at cmohuddles.com/for-active-b2b-marketing-leaders.

Source: Study and scoring model, CMO Huddles and Benchmarkit, 2026. Calculator and membership links current as of publication.

About the authors

CMO Huddles is the only peer community committed to helping B2B CMOs succeed and endangered penguins survive. Through peer Huddles, expert-led conversations, one-to-one connections, member resources, PR opportunities, and the annual CMO Super Huddle, CMO Huddles helps over 800 B2B marketing leaders navigate the coldest job in the C-suite. CMO Huddles donates 1% of revenue to the Global Penguin Society because CMOs and penguins know one thing for sure: it's warmer in the huddle.

Benchmarkit is a benchmarking and research firm that helps B2B software and AI-native companies make data-driven, benchmark-informed decisions to accelerate efficient revenue growth. Founded by Ray Rike, it brings deep expertise in SaaS, software, subscription businesses and revenue metrics.

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