



STATE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

With AI In Its Infancy, B2B Orgs
Begin To Prioritize Early Adoption



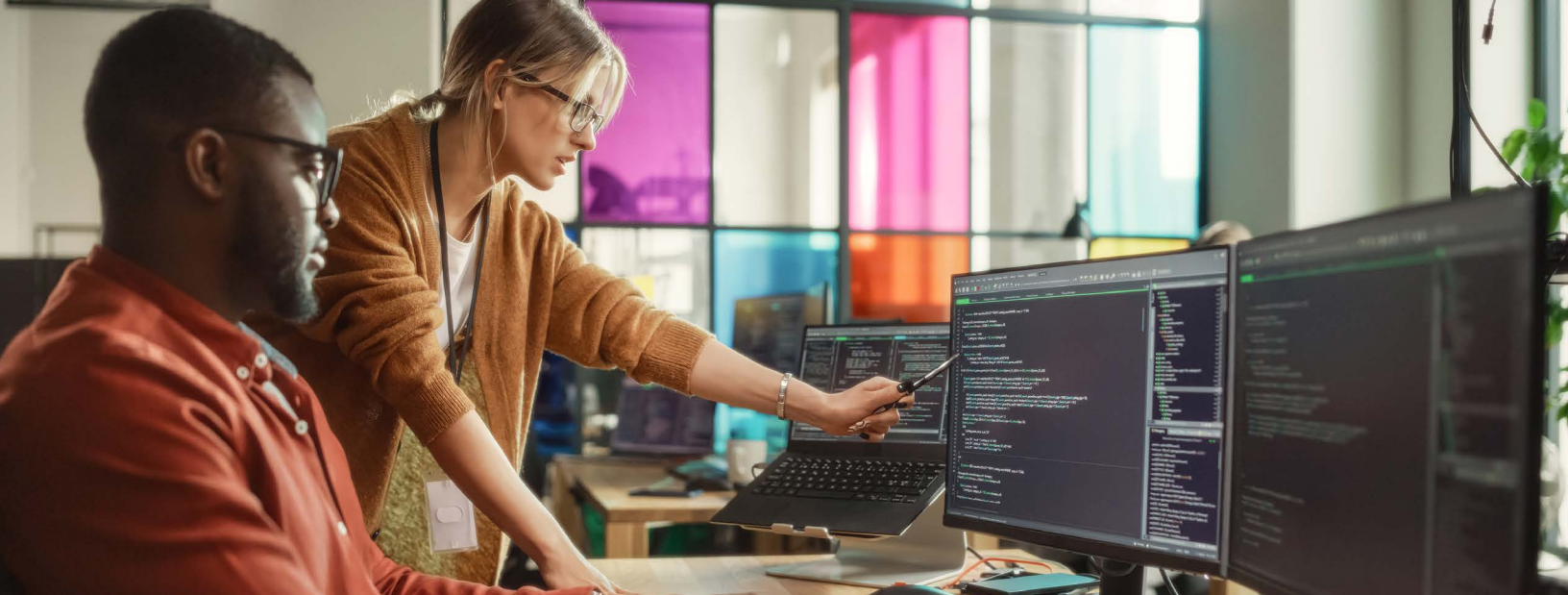
INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the B2B industry due to its uncanny ability to automate human-like outreach by analyzing behavioral data and intent signals. Although AI's potential is high, the technology is still in its relative infancy: Only **6% of C-suite practitioners** adopted AI-powered solutions across their business, even though 95% believe their organization would benefit from embedding AI into their daily operations.

AI has the power to enhance all the areas of an organization it touches, but so far, the most positive effects have been seen in marketing and sales, **McKinsey** reported. In fact, 70% of organizations using AI for marketing and sales said it has increased their revenue by 5% or more.

With **75% of enterprises** shifting from piloting AI to operationalizing it — and thereby solidifying AI as an integral part of marketing operations — this report examines:

- How B2B marketers are currently using AI;
- The areas in which AI shows the greatest promise;
- The challenges and risks of using AI for B2B marketing; and
- Best practices for incorporating AI into marketing operations.



ANALYZING THE EVOLUTION OF AI IN MARTECH

Machine learning algorithms that recognize patterns and make predictions have been embedded into marketing software platforms for years, but the explosive growth of [OpenAI's](#) ChatGPT has brought generative AI into the limelight. Generative AI enables practitioners to perform a variety of marketing tasks faster than ever before by identifying patterns and producing personalized content based on user prompts, data inputs, real-time customer interactions and more.

However, the B2B industry is still at the beginning of the AI curve, explained Pam Didner, Founder of marketing consultancy [Relentless Pursuit](#), because “there are no marketing robots yet.” When it comes to marketing, Didner continued, today’s AI can help make decisions, predict outcomes and enhance efficiency and customer experience. According to Forrester’s “[State Of AI In B2B Marketing](#)” survey report, the top five most common applications of AI in B2B marketing include:

- Targeting (40%);
- Personalization (36%);
- Marketing automation/tactic orchestration (36%);
- Conversation automation using chatbots and virtual assistants (33%); and
- Audience insights (31%).

Currently, AI's biggest strength is its ability to quickly solve complex problems that were previously handled manually. At digital marketing agency [Makeway](#), AI has been most useful for streamlining repetitive tasks.

"AI is more effective in volume campaigns, where you're trying to cast a very wide net and filter people through the funnel," said Josh Lowery, Makeway's Co-founder and Director of Operations. "We use AI to automate that as much as possible before it takes up a human's time."

Looking ahead, Gartner predicts AI technology will enable 65% of B2B sales organizations to move from [intuition-based to data-driven](#) decision-making by 2026. But AI's potential to power data-driven marketing requires high-quality data, which is often in short supply. A major technology challenge around AI is "ingesting, processing and managing data to feed it," reported organizations in a [Juniper study](#), which uncovered that just 15% of practitioners said their data was optimized.

"The biggest problem with AI is that it's 'garbage in, garbage out,'" explained Didner, elaborating that the technology and processes to collect, cleanse, label and govern data is essential for companies hoping to scale AI solutions. Feeding AI incorrect datasets could result in inaccurate predictions or misleading results that could negatively impact a business's bottom line.

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UNDERSTANDING THE PROMISES & PITFALLS OF CREATIVE AI

In 2014, Google engineer [Ray Kurzweil](#) predicted that while AI would exist by 2023, it would take another six years for computers to develop the capacity to think like humans. Yet, generative AI's ability to create content such as blogs, social media posts, marketing and sales emails, images and videos provides a preview of what the near future may hold.

Currently, just 3% of B2B marketers use AI-generated copy and only 2% use AI-generated content briefs, according to Forrester. But marketers experimenting with these solutions see both quick wins and long-term potential. For instance, waiting for subject matter experts' (SMEs) input before writing website copy used to create bottlenecks for the Makeway creative team, Lowery explained. Now, they use AI to generate ideas and content that SMEs then review and edit.

"It cuts out a lot of what used to be a very long process," said Lowery, continuing that AI also assists his team with brainstorming, because "we can bounce ideas off of AI to get the creative juices flowing."

Generating content is time-consuming for marketers, but the need to feed the content beast is growing exponentially as buyers' reliance on content increases. More than half (55%) of B2B buyers said their dependence on content when researching and purchasing has increased compared to a year ago, according to *Demand Gen Report's* "[2022 Content Preferences Survey Report](#)." Nearly two-thirds (62%) of B2B buyers consume three to seven pieces of content before ever engaging with a salesperson.

BUILDING THE CONTENT ENGINE TO SUPPORT AI

Creating content is only the beginning; marketers also need to ensure their sales team, customers and prospects can access the right content at the right time.

"Customer expectations for personalization have far outpaced our ability to serve those expectations, and AI-driven content intelligence can help," said Phyllis Davidson, VP and Principal Analyst at [Forrester](#), in her #B2BMX presentation. "Eventually, automated content engines will piece together content experiences to enable content customization at scale."

While Davidson believes AI has the potential to go beyond marketing and sales and incorporate enterprise-wide content to ultimately drive the complete end-to-end customer experience, she noted that reaching this goal is still a long way off. While 39% of marketers in a Forrester survey said modular content, automation and AI are a top focus, 46% admitted they're "beginners" at content performance and operations, while just 24% describe their organizations as digitally advanced.

Creating the hyper-personalized experiences customers expect requires feeding content modules into the machine and auto-tagging them at a much deeper level than humans can perform. Noting that humans are notoriously bad at taxonomy, Davidson added that using AI to tag content can improve consistency and findability and reduce content waste, which "plagues" 65% of organizations. Expanding metadata and investing in content operations resources to help train content-generating AI, manage automation and build taxonomies is key to successfully operationalizing AI, she continued.

LEVERAGING THE BEST PRACTICES FOR AI IMPLEMENTATION

With so many AI-powered solutions clamoring for attention, selecting the right tools to incorporate into marketing processes can feel overwhelming. Choosing the right solution starts with understanding internal workflows, explained Relentless Pursuit's Didner.

As modern marketers, you need to understand the back end," she explained. "Identify places where processes need to be streamlined and clearly define what you want AI to do."

Assessing existing resources, capabilities and budget will help ensure that organizations are utilizing all available resources efficiently. To avoid any unnecessary spending or complications down the line, Didner said marketers should start exploring AI features in their existing platforms and then purchasing AI-based tools to fill in the gaps.

The experts explained that the human side of the new technology integration process — getting teams to adopt new workflows — is often the toughest part. Lowery advised marketers to expect a learning curve for both humans and machines — "Like any technology, AI requires time upfront to understand the process, perfect it and learn to integrate it," he explained.

Training both teams and the AI solution itself is key to success and requires high-quality data, and marketers should invest in content operations tools to help build taxonomies and train content AI. As teams become more proficient, Didner explained, they can create an internal machine learning model by working with their data team to create predictive analytics models that can answer specific questions.

When testing AI tools, Lowery added that marketers should look for measurable results but keep the subjective aspect in mind.

"Ask yourself, 'Does this feel helpful and valuable?'" said Lowery. "You may save a lot of time generating ideas, but are they good ideas? Is the tool pushing you forward as a professional?"



CONCLUSION

AI won't entirely replace human marketers unless their goal is churning out generic content at scale, explained Lowery, adding that practitioners, "can't become too dependent on methodical, robotic processes in the name of revenue and efficiency." Instead, the experts believe that realizing the full promise of AI will require a partnership between humans and machines.

"AI makes recommendations, but you need to use your gut to see if the recommendations make sense," said Didner. "That balance of AI versus your own intelligence is important."

By handing mundane activities over to computers that can perform them more accurately and efficiently, AI will allow marketers to deploy their own intelligence in more strategic, challenging and creative ways.

"The premium on originality is going to go up," said Lowery. "In creative fields, like marketing, often it's the unexpected idea that only humans can come up with what truly resonates. By challenging us to prove humans can do what it can't, AI can push marketers to new heights."



State Of Omnichannel
Marketing



What's Working In
Demand Generation?



What's Working In
Database Strategies?



Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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