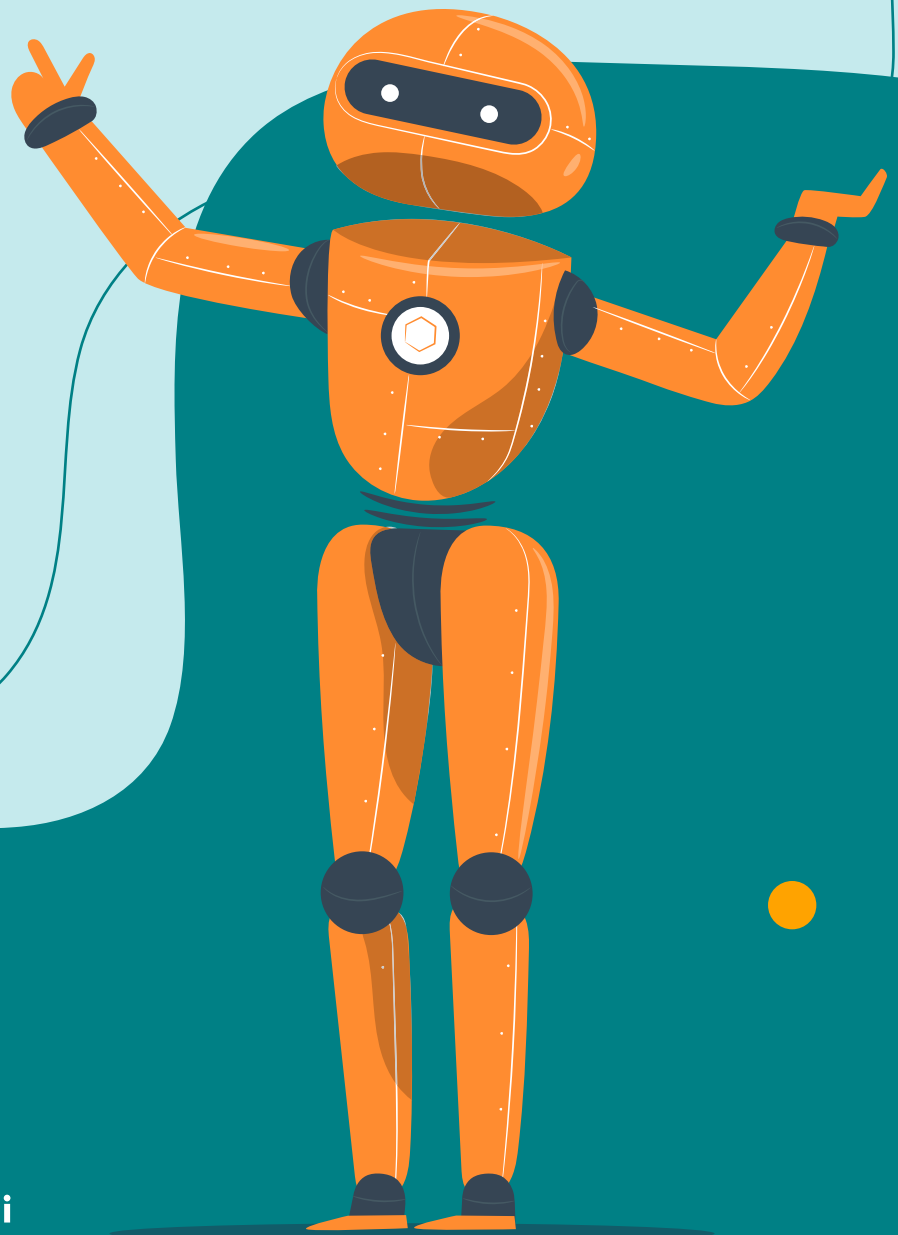# State of AI Adoption in
Marketing Teams

The age of generative AI is here; marketers stand to gain a lot from learning how to leverage this technology to their advantage.

In 2024, Brafton conducted a survey involving 127 marketers worldwide. We learned that at an individual level, AI is automating tedious manual tasks so marketers can focus on more demanding aspects of their jobs. Ultimately, this boosts internal productivity.

At the same time, certain respondents note that generative AI's role in the ideation, planning, outlining and production phases helps their brand strategize more effectively and scale production.

But the results were far from unanimous. Certain marketers across industries and throughout the world still hesitate to embrace the technology. Survey results revealed that marketers *are* using AI, but ...

There Are Challenges To Overcome

Despite the

79.5%

of survey respondents who use generative AI tools in their marketing workflows, challenges remain that need addressing.

The most common challenges include:

Policies

73.3% of respondents do not have AI policies to protect data, outline applicable use cases or provide appropriate disclaimers surrounding AI usage to third parties. The brands that have them cited both advantages and disadvantages.

Learning curves

Many AI-powered tools are purpose-built for specific workflows. It isn't easy to know at the outset if a tool genuinely meets organizational needs, and finding out can be resource-intensive.

Content quality

Most marketers in the survey found AI's content outputs at or below average. Editing and polishing AI-generated content is still more time-consuming than marketers would prefer.

Personal views

Respondents showed a blend of optimism and pessimism for AI adoption in their workflow, indicating that AI's perceived value is in question.
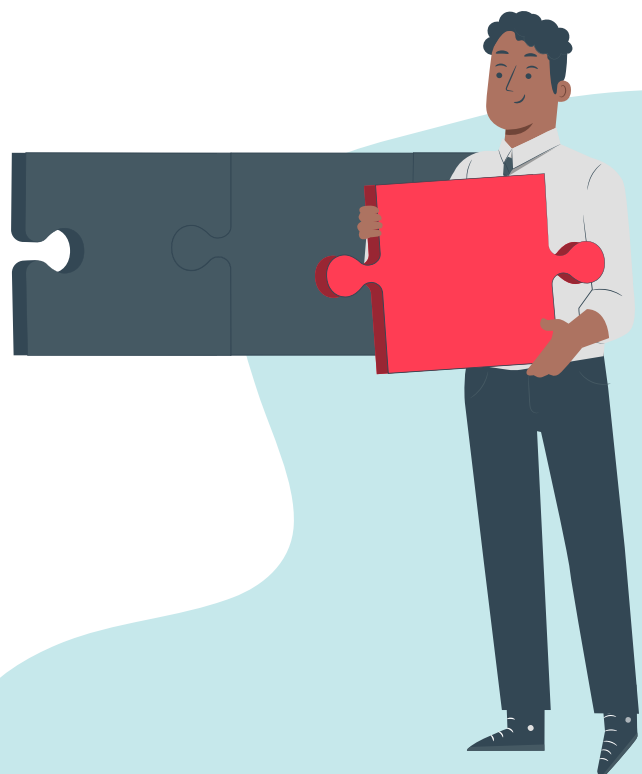
Overcoming Challenges is Not Always Straightforward

There is a broad spread of reasons marketers face challenges in AI adoption. The most pertinent among them are:

AI is relatively new

While AI has sufficiently rooted itself in the market for innovators and early adopters to leverage it for good use, a lack of awareness, familiarity or public and private policy is still enough to deter some marketers.

Company policies fall short

Some marketers find in-house AI usage policies restrictive and low-impact. Others say it's too soon to know whether these policies are genuinely effective.

AI is constantly evolving

It is still a relatively new technology in the market and AI innovations and capabilities are continually developing. Brands risk draining resources training teams on AI technologies if a more appropriate or accurate technology comes to market shortly after.

No one knows what's next

Today, marketers apply AI in previously unimaginable ways. This early in the game, it's difficult to predict where we'll be 10 or even 5 years from now.

There Are So Many Platforms To Choose From

Marketers are experimenting with a wide range of AI platforms:

44%
opt for paid subscriptions

37%
stick with free versions

19%
use AI capabilities embedded within existing tools

Reflecting a trial-and-error approach as they search for genuine business value. This fragmented adoption highlights one final critical challenge:

Many available AI solutions aren't purpose-built for marketing needs, forcing teams to navigate steep learning curves and adapt to constantly emerging, often imperfect technologies.

These trends signal that marketers operate in a dynamic environment where adaptability is key to fully harnessing AI. As the market evolves, we expect a growing demand for more tailored, marketing-specific AI platforms that simplify workflows and deliver real-world results.

AI for Content Creation

Marketers primarily leverage AI to streamline manual tasks. 77.2% of respondents use it for research and planning, 67.3% for outlining, 66.3% for crafting metadata and headlines and 60.4% for primary copy production. This indicates a clear trend: AI is not replacing creative talent but serving as a right-hand assistant in the content lifecycle.

When it comes to handling AI-generated output, nearly all users revise and fact-check their content before publishing. A significant 77% edit for clarity and tone, while 65.3% ensure every piece is factually correct — underscoring the need for human oversight to maintain quality and relevance.

However, the journey isn't without challenges. The survey highlights that 72% of respondents struggle with writing effective prompts, while 54% face issues with content personalization and 24% find it challenging to generate specific content formats, such as white papers and eBooks. These challenges, compounded by concerns over thin or irrelevant outputs (42.4%) and outdated references (26.3%), suggest the need for refined strategies.

Tips for Addressing These Challenges

◉ **Enhance prompt strategy**
Invest time crafting detailed prompts that align with brand guidelines to guide AI outputs effectively.

◉ **Stay on top of quality control**
Implement a thorough and replicable review process to ensure clarity, accuracy and authenticity in every piece.

◉ **Tailor content approaches**
Customize AI usage to fit specific content formats and integrate human creativity to boost personalization efforts.

While AI offers vast efficiencies in content creation, marketers can more fully capture its value when they infuse AI outputs with their human expertise.
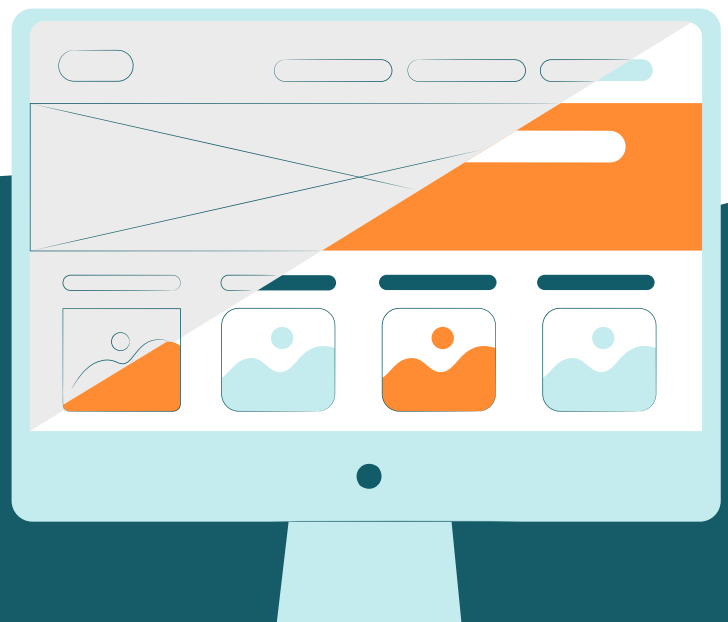
AI for Data Analysis and Automation

Marketers are cautiously taking their first steps toward AI-driven solutions in data analysis and automation. According to our survey, 35.6% of respondents compile data and feed it into tools like ChatGPT for analysis, while another 16.8% rely on integrated capabilities within platforms such as Hubspot or Salesforce. These practices help automate routine analytical tasks and provide quick insights, but they also raise legitimate concerns regarding data security and privacy.

Given the sensitive nature of the information often handled — especially in industries like health care, finance and education — marketers should take proactive precautionary measures regarding the kind of information they input into AI tools. One way to do this could be to align AI practices with established company policies to avoid exposing sensitive or proprietary data.

Data Analysis and Automation Use Cases

Routine data analysis
Leveraging AI to compile and analyze marketing metrics for more agile decision-making.

Integrated automation
Using built-in analytics within CRM and marketing platforms to streamline reporting processes.

Enhanced insights
Automating segmentation and performance tracking to identify trends and optimize campaigns.

Data analysis and automation slash time spent manually crunching numbers. However, the key is to balance automation with data governance to fortify productivity *and* compliance.
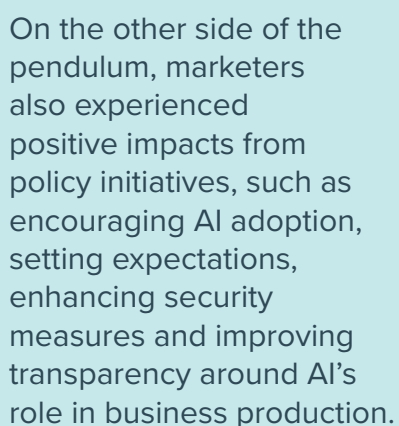
The AI Policy Conversation

Despite a growing reliance on AI, nearly 75% of marketers don't have a formal AI policy in place. For those that do, policies generally focus on regulating input data (59.3%), defining the tasks AI can handle (55.6%) and outlining disclosure practices (48.1%). Surprisingly, only a tiny fraction of respondents address data security and ethical considerations in their policies (3.7%).

While it's encouraging that organizations are beginning to define AI policies, there is a gap presenting both challenges and opportunities. Organizations risk inconsistent practices and potential vulnerabilities in data privacy and compliance without clear guidelines. The repercussions of mispractice could lead marketers and organizations to hot legal waters for compromising data leaks, loss of IP or copyright infringement.

Conversely, overly rigid standards hinder innovation and slow down AI adoption. Respondents mentioned that AI policies at times caused frustrations, including limiting AI-generated content to specific formats, having little to no direct impact on actual AI usage or that it's too soon to analyze policies' tangible net impact.

> On the other side of the pendulum, marketers also experienced positive impacts from policy initiatives, such as encouraging AI adoption, setting expectations, enhancing security measures and improving transparency around AI's role in business production.

Overall, establishing clear AI policies is a strategic move that can mitigate legal and operational risks, and promote a culture of transparency and innovation. Marketers can confidently harness AI's capabilities by defining guidelines that balance security and flexibility. Here are some practical takeaways for creating effective AI policies tailored to your marketing operations.

AI Policies
Practical Takeaways for Marketers

Define clear objectives

Start by determining AI's core benefits in your marketing efforts. Establish policies based on a foundation that focuses on areas like data integrity and permissible use cases.

Build flexibility into your policy

Create an agile framework. Periodic reviews and updates can help your brand contend with developing AI technologies — and associated risks.

Prioritize training and communication

Educate teams on AI's potential and their associated responsibilities. Regular training ensures everyone understands how to leverage AI tools while maintaining ethical and secure practices.

Proactively address compliance and ethical considerations

Include clear guidelines around sensitive data handling, disclosing AI-generated content and mitigating AI biases to ensure responsible usage across marketing functions.

Balance governance with creativity

A well-rounded policy should empower innovation rather than constrain it. Encourage responsible experimentation by outlining boundaries that protect your brand while creating space for creative exploration.
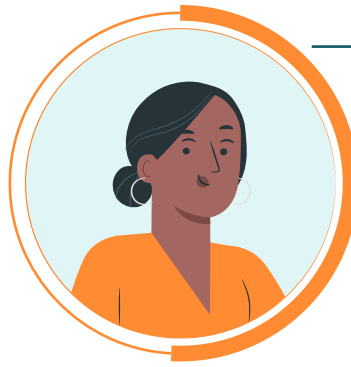
Who Isn't Using AI *Yet?*

Out of 127 survey respondents, 26 haven't integrated AI into their workflows.

Among the non-adopters,
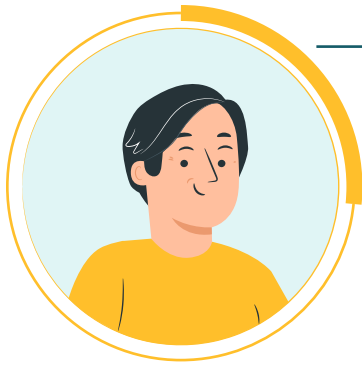
28%
plan to embrace AI within the year

52%
remain uncertain about a 2025 rollout, hinting at internal communication gaps.

This slow adoption invites a classic debate: being an innovator or early adopter versus joining as part of the late majority or even lagging behind. Early adopters often enjoy a competitive edge, experimenting with efficiency gains and smoother processes — albeit with the risk of early-stage technology pitfalls.

Conversely, late adopters typically benefit from more refined, proven AI solutions, though they risk missing out on transformative productivity boosts. For companies on the fence, balancing measured innovation with strategic planning is key to capitalizing on AI's potential without compromising core values.

Overcoming AI 'Sales Objections'

Notably, industries such as nonprofit and social services, manufacturing and industrial, and beauty and personal care exhibit higher reluctance to integrate AI into their workflow.

Below is a summary of the key concerns cited and practical solutions to overcome them.

Data privacy
Implement reliable data governance frameworks and clear usage policies to secure sensitive information.

Training
Invest in targeted AI education and pilot programs to build in-house expertise and confidence in using AI tools effectively.

Tool suitability
Evaluate and select AI solutions that align with your organizational needs. Start with free or scalable tools to test the waters.

Budget
Consider phased investments that allow for gradual integration, managing financial risks while you explore AI's benefits.

Environmental impact
Assess and adopt sustainable AI practices, weighing the ecological footprint against potential productivity gains.
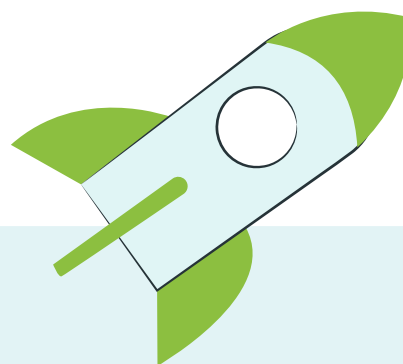
Summary

AI is a reality that's been reshaping marketing for some years. Our findings suggest that marketers who make AI a core part of their workflows, fine-tune their approach and combine digital proficiency with human creativity are well-positioned to lead. Those merely testing the waters without a coherent plan may struggle to achieve meaningful gains. Meanwhile, businesses that delay adoption risk standing at the doorway while more agile competitors advance.

The adoption of AI doesn't come without its challenges. However, there's clear evidence to suggest that integrating it within marketing workflows in a measured and sustainable way can bring significant gains in individual productivity and content scalability. To achieve success, focus on investing in training, maintaining proper controls and continuously refining your approach based on tangible, real-world outcomes.

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