

AI in Marketing:

Cutting through the hype and harnessing the potential for marketers





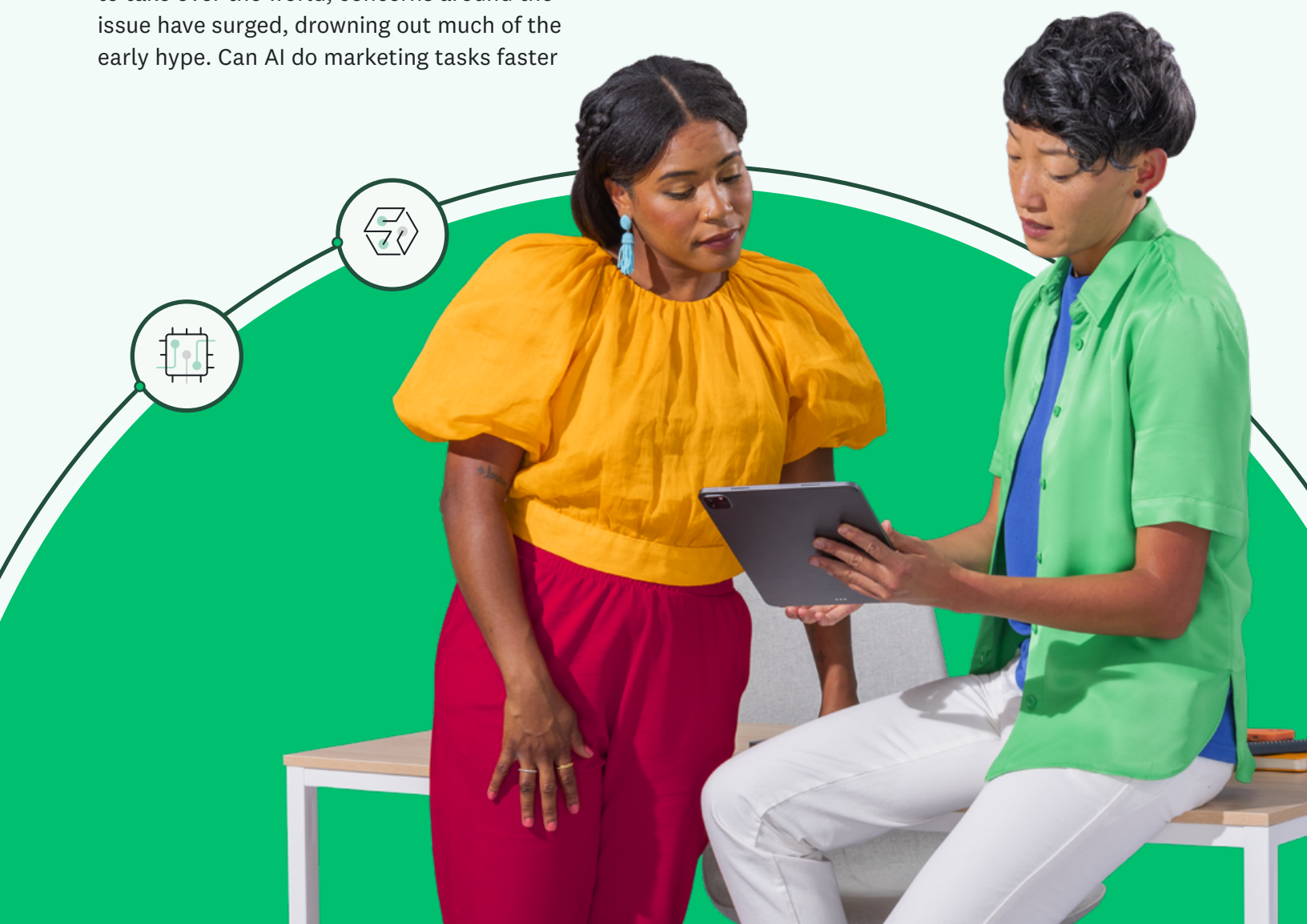
Introduction

As a marketer, if you had any doubts about the inevitability of artificial intelligence (AI), the last few months were likely an eye opener. Seemingly overnight, social feeds and news cycles were filled with AI-generated images, AI-altered video, and AI-created articles; all of it shocking high-fidelity. Even the most forward-thinking marketers must have been a little startled by the evidence of AI's real potential and velocity of its spread.

Between the accessibility of ChatGPT and escalating headlines predicting AI's ability to take over the world, concerns around the issue have surged, drowning out much of the early hype. Can AI do marketing tasks faster

and better than humans? Could AI connect with customers better than marketers? Will marketers use AI to game the system and dominate their competitors? The answer to these questions is may be yes, however it's more complicated than that.

As the hysteria dies down, we decided to check in with marketers and understand what's really happening in their world. In a recent SurveyMonkey study*, we asked 403 marketing professionals how they feel about AI: its impact, their usage, and its promise for the future. Here's what we learned.





THE REALITY

Marketers are already embracing AI

For marketers, AI is everywhere. It's under the hood running automations, in the background completing sentences and spell checks, and highlighting statistically significant shifts in reporting data. Many of the solutions marketers use have integrated AI into their toolsets, and marketers have jumped on board.

Even so, marketers AI adoption and usage and awareness is surprisingly high. The large majority of marketers claim to spend a significant amount of time using AI on a regular basis, and for a variety of tasks.

74% of marketers are using AI weekly or more frequently

If that sounds high, there's more. Over a third (36%) of marketers are using AI daily—and this number is even higher in larger organizations. According to our study, almost half (44%) of marketers in companies with more than 500 people are using AI daily.

Developments around AI are happening quickly and companies are making moves to adjust. Almost eight out of ten (79%) marketers say AI is more important this year than it was last year, and marketers are preparing for a future where AI is a part of their planning process.



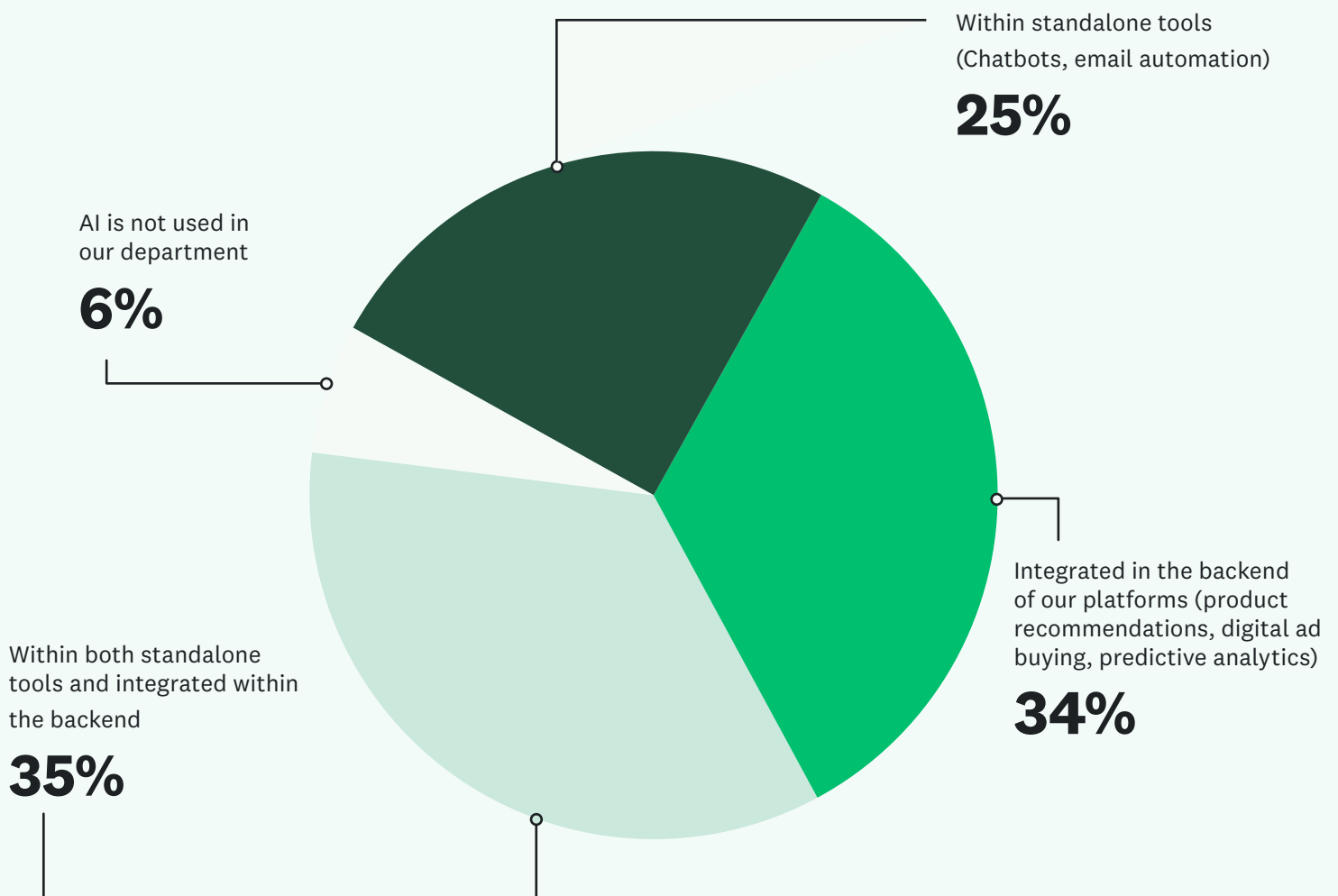
of marketing teams say they are prepared to adapt their strategies to the new AI landscape



The high adoption rates might partially be influenced by the fact that marketers are aware of AI at work, even when it is embedded in the systems and solutions they use every day. Automation programs, optimizations, and analytics tools powered by AI are part of most marketers' arsenal.

84% of marketing teams have spent a great deal or a fair amount of time developing new AI skills

Where AI is being used in marketing departments





THE HOPE

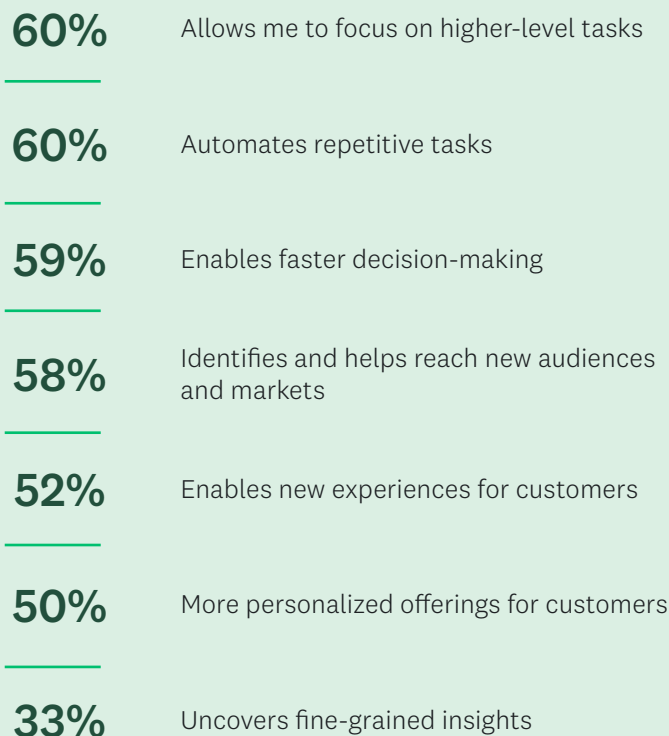
Helping marketers do more things better

There's a lot of excitement around AI amongst marketers and the large majority see the upside. Perhaps because they have to be proficient at so many diverse things—from creating marketing materials to analyzing data and reporting results—they may be uniquely open to anything that offloads them of rote, repetitive tasks, or areas where they lack expertise.

75% of marketers say AI makes their job easier

AI applications are varied and mainstream, and a workhorse for some of the most mission-critical areas of marketing. Not only will AI make life easier for marketers, it will likely enable new capabilities and produce outcomes that currently aren't possible.

What marketers are most excited about when it comes to AI





As marketers face increasing pressure to deliver results, doing more of the same things won't necessarily help them reach their goals. AI might hold the keys to providing more effective ways to approach challenges, and ensure marketers' efforts pay off.

73% of marketers feel AI helps them do their job better job easier

AI provides new approaches to solving problems, which could give marketers an edge. From delivering new levels of personalization and product recommendations or "listening" to what's happening on social media, identifying trends or unraveling complicated segmentation strategies; AI promises to provide marketers with the insights and guidance to perform better at their jobs.

How marketing organizations are using AI

55%

Chatbots for lead generation and customer service

54%

Analyze social media sentiment

49%

Automate marketing campaigns

47%

Personalize product or service recommendations

37%

Programmatic advertising

35%

Audience segmentation





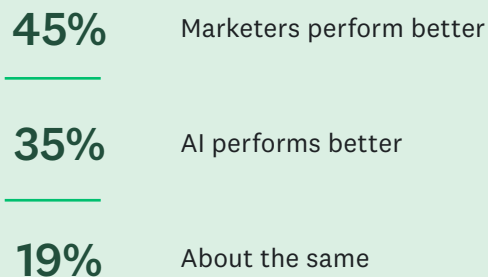
THE FEARS

Is AI a better marketer than you?

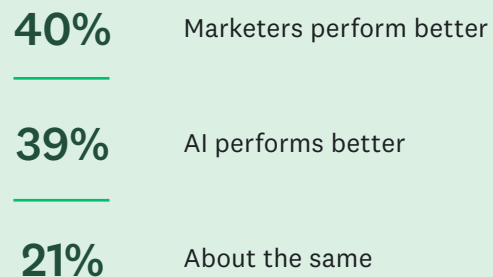
While the excitement for AI is real, so is the nagging suspicion that the gap between what a marketer does and what AI can do has turned into a line, and that line is getting blurry. Marketers may welcome AI as a way to cut through time-consuming tasks, however, the downside result might be job elimination or reduced control and responsibilities.

When asked to rank the performance of AI vs. marketers in a series of common tasks, marketers frequently gave AI the edge.

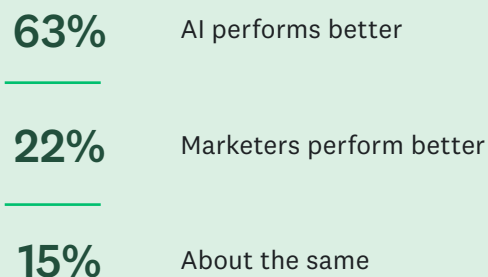
Creating marketing campaigns



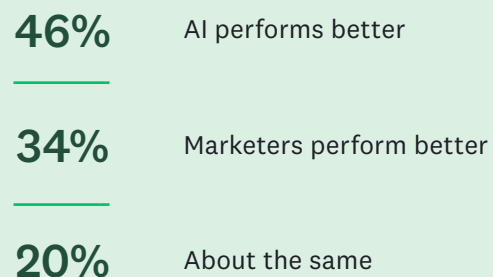
Understanding your organization's target audience



Gaining insights from data



Making product recommendations





Marketers also feel a little unsure of their ability to use AI, which is understandable as AI toolsets vary and it's not always clear when AI is powering a task. Four out of ten marketers say they lack the knowledge to use it effectively.

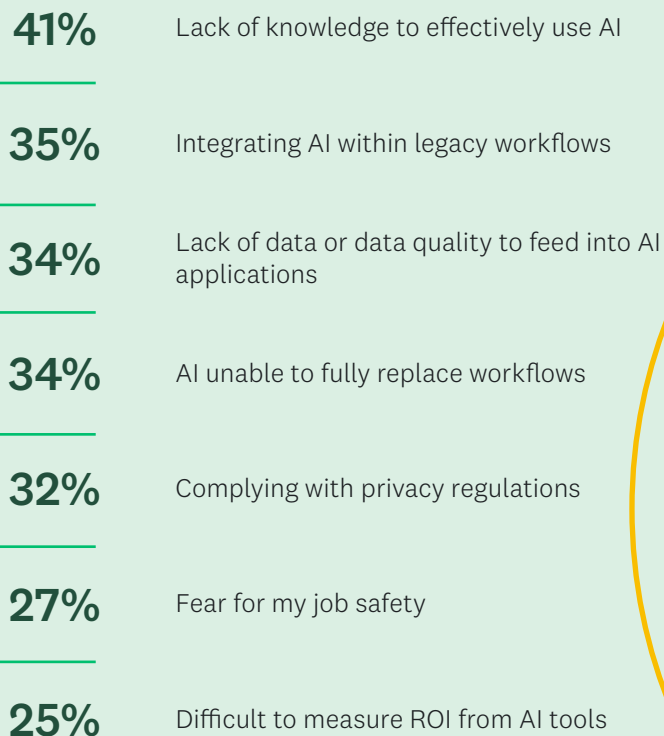
There's also the FOMO of AI; marketers that recognize its power also realize how much they might fall behind companies that harness it effectively. With AI's ability to churn out marketing materials, marketers with access to the tools (and budgets) to integrate AI into their campaigns will have a significant leg up.

61% of marketers are concerned about losing search traffic to platforms that use AI to directly suggest and recommend content

On the flip side, marketers recognize that using AI will elevate their marketing efforts. Whether it's by optimizing search or more effective targeting, almost three-quarters of marketers say AI will help them attract customers to their business.

74% of marketers say AI will make it easier for consumers to discover their company's products and services

Key challenges marketing teams face when using AI





THE STICKY PART

Conflicts and contradictions

One of the biggest areas of concern for marketers revolves around AI-generated content—from copy and articles, to images, ads, and videos. For a variety of reasons, marketers are cautious about these AI capabilities and the impact it would have on their jobs.

27% of marketers fear that AI will challenge their job safety

On one hand, there are tedious tasks that are a huge time and resource drain for marketing teams.

Transactional emails, segmentation and targeting, and lead scoring and routing could all be handled by AI. AI can also quickly and effectively version images or ads, creating testing opportunities and personalization that would elevate performance.

When asked what promotional items AI could potentially handle, marketers have high levels of confidence for many elements that would typically require human intervention. Emails topped the list, but SEO copy, images, blogs and articles ranked high for over four in ten marketers.

What promotional materials marketers think AI could successfully create

56%	Allows me to focus on higher-level tasks
53%	Automates repetitive tasks
46%	Enables faster decision-making
43%	Identifies and helps reach new audiences and markets
41%	Enables new experiences for customers
41%	More personalized offerings for customers
40%	Uncovers fine-grained insights
38%	Customer and sales presentations





But here lies the contradiction—there's a difference between what AI can do, and what AI should be allowed to do. Even though almost a third (32%) of marketers are already using AI for SEO copy, a large majority indicate support for AI regulations. Three-quarters of marketers say AI should not be allowed to generate content that could create SEO disadvantages.

75% support AI-generated content being excluded from search engine results

Further, 81% of marketers at companies with 500 or more employees are more likely to support AI-generated content exclusions, compared to 65% of marketers at companies with fewer employees.

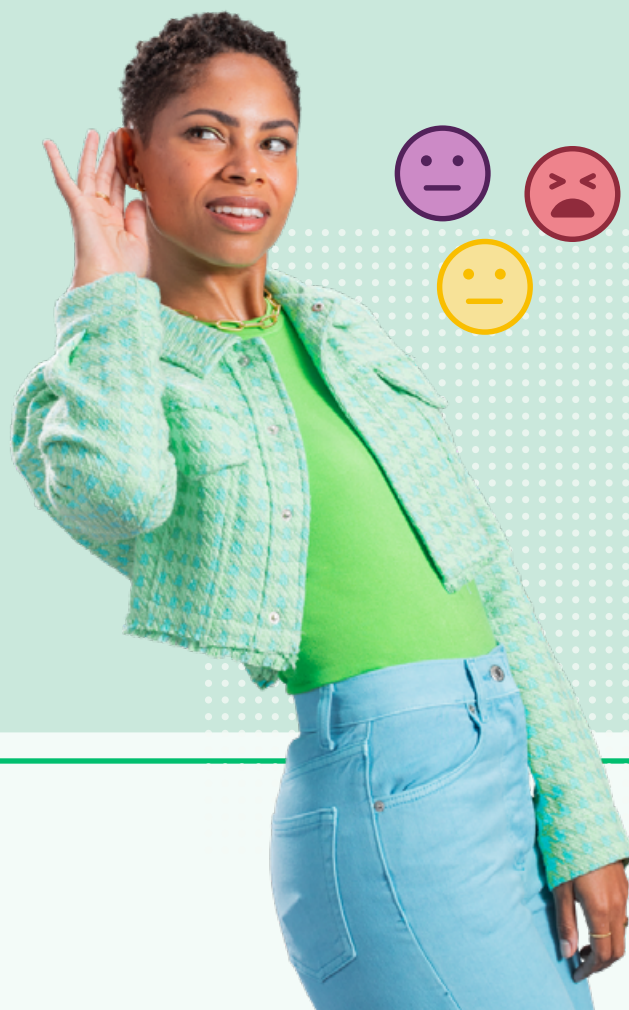
A word from your customers:

AI has made it into the consciousness of most consumers, who have very different takeaways than marketers. In a separate study of 2,201 U.S. adults**, we asked them about their perceptions of AI and its importance in their lives.

While the impact of AI is inevitable, consumers seem to think of AI as a future state that will impact them down the road. We found that only half of Americans say AI will have a major impact on their lives over the next five years. Younger generations have slightly higher awareness, with 59% of GenZ saying it will have an impact compared to 51% of GenX.

There is a significant amount of skepticism around the accuracy of AI. Only half (51%) of GenZ trust AI content, with older generations being more cynical. Over six out of 10 (64%) of GenX distrust AI content, while 57% of Gen X and 56% of Boomers are fearful of AI, vs. hopeful.

Companies might want to consider consumer perceptions when using AI, and how they use solutions like chatbots, automations, targeting, and personalization in a way that feels trustworthy.





How marketers can adapt and thrive in an AI world

Ask. Listen. Act.

We've now seen a glimpse of future and clearly AI is here to stay. AI. The good news is that AI can be used with the kind of authentic feedback marketers collect on customers and the market every day. Feedback can help you make more informed decisions about whether to test new forms of AI, how to improve the current experience, and where you may have an opportunity to differentiate your brand from the competition.



Ask: Stay on top of the trends

AI technology is constantly evolving, which means that companies that want to use it have to be regularly evaluating how it's working. If you're concerned about your customer's reactions to new AI-enabled services, like chatbot interactions, product recommendations, or personalization, it might make sense to check in to see if these services are delivering as promised.

The bottom line is that marketers who aren't using AI to automate menial tasks, scale their outreach, or personalize customer experiences will get left behind. If your company isn't investing in AI, use our data to show stakeholders why you need to.



Listen: Augment AI with authentic inputs

We've all experienced an unwanted ad, prompt, or offer from a company that just didn't make sense, or worse yet, gotten caught in an automated loop that ultimately didn't answer our question or solve a problem.

Give customers, prospects, and site visitors an immediate outlet for feedback so they get the information they need. By incorporating surveys throughout the customer journey, you'll give your target audience a way to provide authentic feedback, instead of forcing them down a predetermined path.



Act:

Use feedback to understand where to invest next

From your C-Suite to your customer success team, your company should understand what your target audience wants, and what drives purchase. It might be personalized recommendations, or a customized pricing model, or virtual customer service. All of these require a significant investment and without understanding its value, may not deliver an ROI.

Proactively asking your target audience what they care about will help your company avoid investing in an experience that isn't meaningful. It can also help you understand where you can make the biggest impact in the buyer's journey—are your top-of-funnel strategies capturing attention? Do you need to give them more reasons to purchase at the end? Collecting feedback throughout the process gives you the answers you need to get your strategy right.

Like all technology, AI is a tool. Used correctly, it can bring you closer to your customers and deliver a better, more modern experience. You just need to be

Ready to start collecting insights on your customer and market?

SurveyMonkey makes it easy to take a pulse on everything from AI to the market, your competitors and customers, with quick and easy-to-use features.

Start now

*This SurveyMonkey study was conducted among 403 marketing professionals on July 11-18, 2023. Respondents were selected from an online non-probability panel.

**This SurveyMonkey study of 2,201 U.S. consumers aged 18+ was conducted from April 17 - 19, 2023, weighted by age, race, gender, education, geography, using the Census Bureau's Community Survey to reflect the demographic composition of the United States.