



# **AI in Marketing: Enhancing, Not Replacing Human Expertise**

Companies that have activated marketing strategies are already using AI in some form, they just don't think of it that way. Automated email marketing, content scheduling, landing pages, and personalization data are all a form of AI.

But in recent years, AI has made a new leap: the ability to generate new content. Should marketers take advantage of this technology?

As in all industries, the idea of using AI for marketing has some in the industry concerned about the future of human resources. There is a tendency to avoid new technology because celebrating its useful place in the industry may be equated with acknowledging a form of defeat.

According to an article entitled, "Will AI Replace Marketing Jobs?" by Neil Patel, among in-house marketers, over 56% believed that AI would replace humans in marketing in the near future. Balancing that statistic is the belief of 44% among those responding that AI will have a positive impact on their career.

As with any new development in the industry, it is also worth asking whether companies can afford to ignore AI. As forward-thinking companies embrace it, those reluctant to use AI may find that the jobs they feared losing are no longer in existence because of a refusal to move forward and stay competitive.

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## The Growth of the Role of AI in Marketing

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*Forbes* recently stated that, "Marketing is one of the areas of business operations where it is widely predicted that artificial intelligence (AI) will drive enormous change," in a September 2022 article entitled, "Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Marketing."

For most companies, AI has long been a part of their strategies. They may be using AI tools within platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn to identify specific market segments for better targeting.

What is changing in marketing AI is twofold: AI is moving from being an ad-hoc, efficiency-gaining tool to being approached in a strategic, comprehensive way, and AI is gaining the ability to create new content, which is called generative AI, rather than simply automating tasks, or driving data analytics.

Apps like ChatGPT make it clear that AI is no longer simply for automating the distribution of blogs but can write the blogs from scratch.

Or can it? AI produces content but there are elements that can never replace human expertise.





HubSpot completed a report, “The State of Marketing in 2023” and found that only approximately 35% of marketers use AI in their jobs. While they broadly recognize that there are benefits to be gained through some AI tools, challenges and obstacles abound:

- Organizations struggle to ensure that the data foundation of AI is accurate and reliable.
- The ways in which AI is being utilized must be consistent across the organization.
- Marketing departments are reluctant to put in the short-term time for the long-term gain, learning new systems and processes to improve efficiency.

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## Effective Use of AI in Marketing

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When it comes to AI in marketing, as with any marketing development, a look to the past can offer guidance for the future. The growth of digital marketing and social media was a no-man’s-land that many companies were reluctant to navigate. Those who opted out watched as competitors gained market share.

Similarly, companies face a new fork in the road where they need to decide whether to implement AI tools or risk watching their market share decline.

There are many ways to use AI in marketing that produce new efficiencies and even supplement creativity and brainstorming capabilities in unexpected ways.

### ***Campaign Ideas:***

Generative AI does not possess the same level of creativity as the human mind, but it can be a springboard for new ideas. When a team seems to be churning the same topics or hooks, an AI tool can generate campaign concepts that enhance the brainstorming discussion and lead to a unique campaign. AI can also spot what may be on the horizon with new trends, allowing companies to emerge on the front end of a concept.

### ***Blog Topics:***

Similarly, when a long-running blog is beginning to come to the tail end of



the topic list, AI can come up with new suggestions and breathe new life into one of the key ways that brands connect with audiences.

### ***Automation and Personalization:***

This is a key area that many companies are already tapping into AI, and it is expected to only become more efficient, sleek, and smart. From generating “thank-you” emails after a recent purchase, to creating promotions tailored to a customer’s buying history, these tools are assisting companies in their efforts to develop good relationships based on loyalty and trust with customers.

### ***Targeting and Segmentation:***

Another technology that marketers have been using for years, targeting and segmentation tools, allow for more specific ad displays to specific audiences on social media, for instance. It is also used for PPC ads on Google. The use of AI is only ever as good as the foundational data, so this area of AI improves with data integrity,

cleansing practices, and an overall commitment to reliable data sources.

AI shines in areas like automation, personalization, targeting, and segmentation because the data collection and analysis allows marketers to pivot quickly, adjusting messaging, techniques and strategy based on audience behaviors and responses.

### ***Visual Analysis:***

AI tools are becoming useful in visual content marketing. There are features that allow marketers to analyze color codes and determine how to improve engagement on social media and other online channels based on color combinations.

### ***Strengthening SEO:***

Search engine optimization (SEO) algorithms change quickly on Google and other search engines. AI tools allow marketers to automatically update strategies to match best practices and maintain high rankings for their websites.

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## **Where AI Falls Flat in Marketing**

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### **AI Fails at Relationships**

An AI tool can produce content for a blog, and a company’s customers may still access the information they need. While producing resources that offer information is a key benefit of a content marketing strategy, there are other reasons to produce content:

- Each brand has a unique voice and tone to their communications, something that is thoroughly analyzed and considered during a marketing strategy development process. An AI tool is not able to reproduce a unique voice and a brand that trades their voice for efficiency may not develop the same kind of relationship with customers.

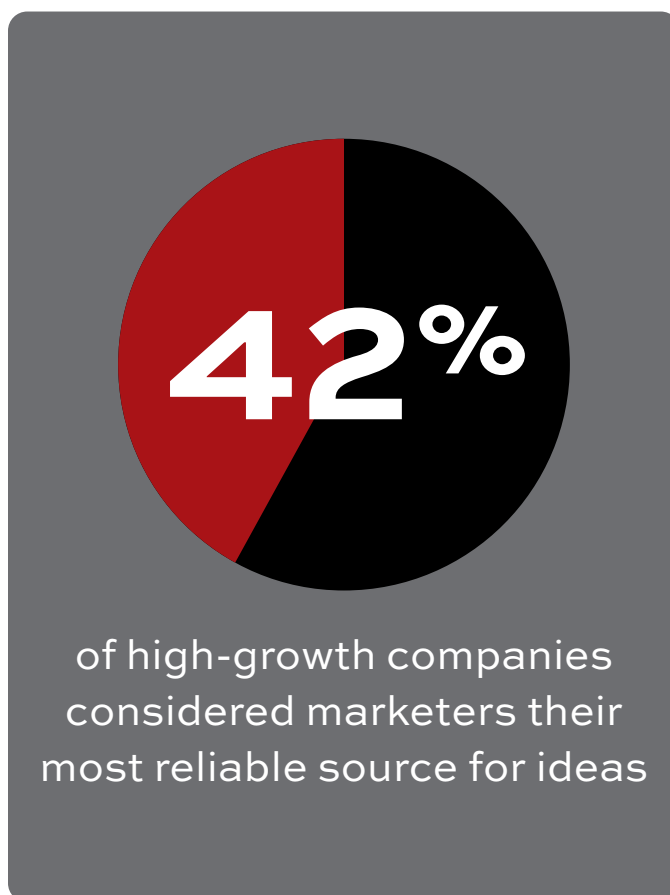


- An important reason for investing in content is to build trust with audiences. It isn't difficult for loyal customers to recognize when social media posts and blogs start to "sound" different than they did in the past.
- Audiences know how to do an Internet search, and they know how to use ChatGPT. They don't need a company to do this for them; what they need is for an expert to offer insights, and only an organic approach provides true expertise.

## An Overreliance on AI Hinders Creativity

A report from Deloitte Insights found that 42% of companies designated as high growth found marketers to be their most reliable source for ideas. AI may be helpful in generating discussions and brainstorming, but the most effective campaigns tend to come from marketers. Their ability to read audiences and interpret relevant data, and perhaps most importantly, incorporate concepts like humor and irony into campaigns makes them irreplaceable in the creative process.

There are additional reasons to avoid an overreliance on AI. If marketers are using AI in inconsistent ways, without a comprehensive strategy that establishes standards for data sourcing, methods for analysis and other baselines, a company could broadly miss trends, audience responses, and other critical aspects of a successful strategy.



## Inaccuracies Abound

Using AI in marketing relinquishes some control and opens up marketers to supposed insights and trends that are inaccurate because of poor sourcing and other problematic information. This is an area of AI that will continue to advance, but it may be too risky for companies to trust it for certain areas of marketing.

In addition, problems are emerging in AI related to copyrighting. If a marketer creates visual content that pulls from hundreds or even thousands of images, there are questions whether the sources must be credited. The same is true for generative AI text-based content. Where is the line between plagiarism and generative AI?



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## Conclusion

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AI already plays an important role in the marketing efforts of successful companies, though many would not have recognized the audience segmentation, content distribution or email automation tasks as being AI. The emergence of generative AI feels different to many marketers, and they are asking whether it has a place in a field that is so creative.

The key to using AI well in marketing is to know where it can be effectively utilized and where it is more appropriate as a supplemental tool. For companies that need guidance in the adoption of AI tools, SJC Marketing offers an innovative and forward-thinking approach tempered with the decades of experience with emerging technology that the team brings to every client.



### About SJC Marketing

SJC Marketing is a full-service marketing, communication and content creation company that enjoys designation as a woman-owned business and is a State of Missouri and University of Missouri System Approved Vendor. They offer professional communication solutions for small to medium businesses and non-profits. With a team of web developers, marketing professionals, and visual arts experts, they offer targeted and highly focused content and marketing plans. SJC delivers high-value strategies and unique content that are backed with research and creativity.