

A modern approach to MarTech:

Transforming the customer experience

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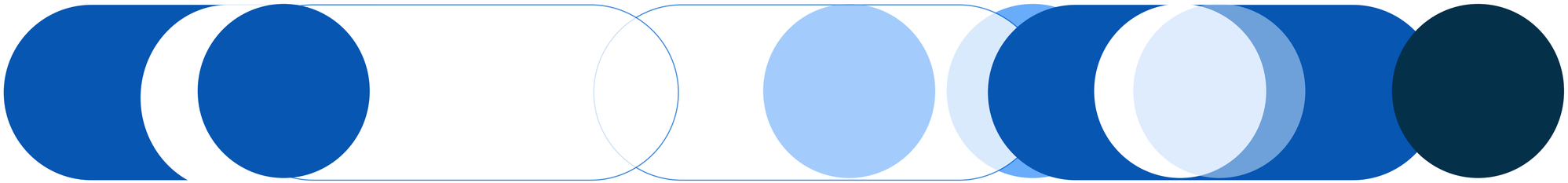
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01

A journey through changing times

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." That famous line from Charles Dickens also applies to our modern-day tale of marketing and marketing technology in managing the customer journey at the dawn of the era of AI.

Welcome to an era of incredible disruption

It's "the best of times" because we're fortunate to be working in a period of disruption in marketing and business overall. We should consider disruption as our good fortune: It's an opportunity to shake things up and forge the future by penning the playbook for others to follow. All this disruption serves as the backdrop for pioneering new ideas and finding innovative ways to attract, engage and delight customers.

But it's also "the worst of times" because everything is changing so quickly – especially when it comes to **AI** and how it affects customer expectations. On top of that, you've got to decide which changes to embrace – including when and how – and ultimately drive their adoption through your organization.

The struggle is real: Martec's Law

The gap between the rapid pace of technological change and the slower pace of organizational adaptation is referred to as "**Martec's Law**." Think of having one foot on a dock and one on a ferry as it pulls away. We're now operating in an environment where the pace of change always exceeds the capacity to fully catch up. All organizations struggle with this, but the ones that manage it best will prevail.

Successfully managing Martec's Law requires two key levers:

1. **Strategy**. Make a few clear choices about what changes to make and put effort behind them. Be specific about market changes you will not chase.
2. **Agility**. Build adaptable systems, refine workflows and empower teams to ensure the success of your strategic choices.

Expert Take

"A generational moment of disruption – such as we're experiencing now – gives us the chance to innovate better ways of attracting, engaging and delighting customers."

Scott Brinker, Editor of chiefmartec



Delivering epic experiences along the journey

Brands should strive to deliver frictionless experiences, ones that anticipate and deliver what customers need effortlessly. All brands dream of doing this at scale because it gives customers a magical feeling. Such experiences not only drive loyalty but also fuel growth.

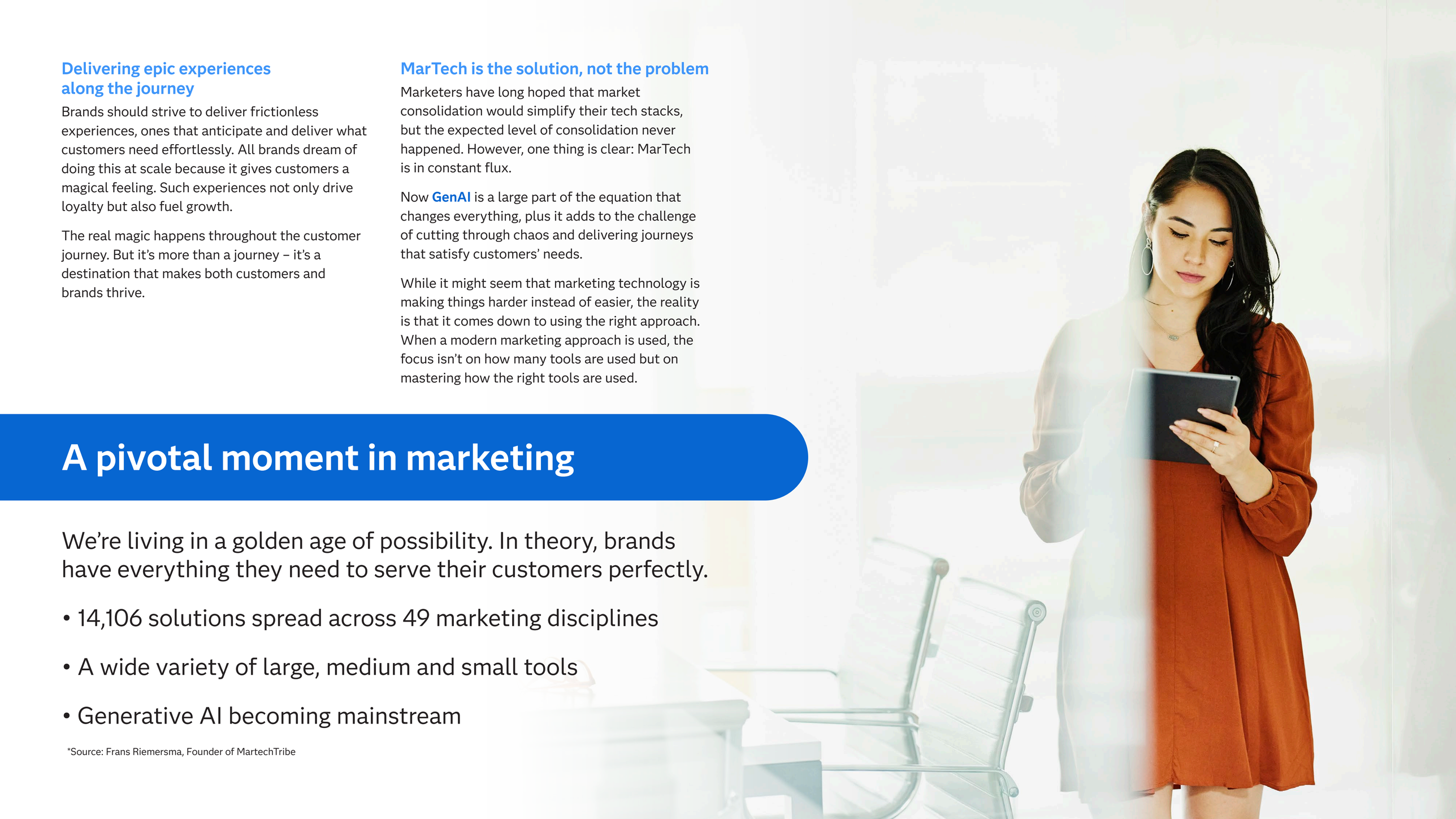
The real magic happens throughout the customer journey. But it's more than a journey – it's a destination that makes both customers and brands thrive.

MarTech is the solution, not the problem

Marketers have long hoped that market consolidation would simplify their tech stacks, but the expected level of consolidation never happened. However, one thing is clear: MarTech is in constant flux.

Now **GenAI** is a large part of the equation that changes everything, plus it adds to the challenge of cutting through chaos and delivering journeys that satisfy customers' needs.

While it might seem that marketing technology is making things harder instead of easier, the reality is that it comes down to using the right approach. When a modern marketing approach is used, the focus isn't on how many tools are used but on mastering how the right tools are used.



A pivotal moment in marketing

We're living in a golden age of possibility. In theory, brands have everything they need to serve their customers perfectly.

- 14,106 solutions spread across 49 marketing disciplines
- A wide variety of large, medium and small tools
- Generative AI becoming mainstream

*Source: Frans Riemersma, Founder of MartechTribe

02

Why marketing modernization is important

Though modern marketing is built on the foundation of traditional marketing approaches, it goes well beyond the basics to meet increasingly higher customer expectations and demands in a dynamic environment.

Modern times call for a modern approach

Marketers still need to identify and segment customers into audiences before crafting **personalized messages** to send to them; that hasn't changed. What has changed is the need to do this in a more agile and strategic manner (think Martec's Law) that aligns with business strategies that are adapting and changing faster than ever to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

Modernization allows organizations to address changing market dynamics. Adopting a composable approach (one that combines a variety of different components or applications) to building a MarTech stack addresses the dynamics in customer behavior and demand without changing everything each time an adjustment is needed.

The heart of a successful modernization strategy must manage the challenges of Martec's Law – finding that balance between rapid technological change and slower organizational adaptation – while providing room for experimentation and maximizing business opportunities.

First things first: What to consider before embarking on your modernization journey

It's easy to just focus on – and worry about – **securing a budget** for your modernization program. But there's good news: Modernization doesn't mean ripping out all existing technology and replacing it with something new.

The process of deciding what stays, goes and needs to be bought can be made easier by considering the following elements for each component of your MarTech stack:



Expert Take

"Brands that embrace modern marketing aren't just keeping up – they're leapfrogging the competition. Customers reward brands that deliver relevance, timeliness and ease. In today's market, that's not a luxury. It's the new standard."

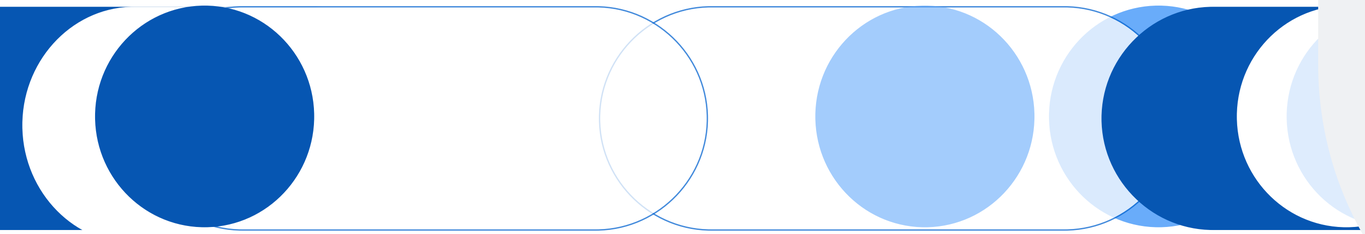
Frans Riemersma, Founder of MartechTribe

- **Business and performance alignment**. Assess whether the solution will meet future business needs, integrate well with other tools and support long-term growth. If it lags in performance, lacks essential features or hinders efficiency, consider enhancement or replacement.
- **Cost vs. value analysis**. Compare maintenance and upgrade costs against the business value each element delivers. If enhancements are cost-effective and meet evolving needs, invest in improvements. If costs outweigh value, replacement may be a better option.
- **Scalability and future readiness**. Evaluate whether the solution can adapt to new technologies (e.g., AI cloud, automation) and evolving security standards. If it's outdated and difficult to modernize, doesn't integrate well or provide open data access, then deprecation or replacement is necessary.

Performing this exercise is invaluable as it allows you to identify the size of the gap between your existing solutions and your future business needs. Next, you can divide your solutions into three categories:

1. **Deprecations** – solutions you want to remove from the stack (cost savings).
2. **Enhancements** – investments may be required or enabled by your acquisition strategy (investment or enablement).
3. **Acquisitions** – capabilities you need to acquire with clear definitions of how they fit within your existing MarTech stack, including what functionality they deliver to meet your business needs (investment).

A balanced approach like this allows you to offset investments against savings and improve ROI on existing solution components.



Out with the old, in with the new

Is your MarTech stack taking an outdated or modern approach? If the characteristics of an outdated stack ring true, it's time to consider modernization.

Outdated MarTech does not let you:

- Keep your data where you want it due to high movement costs or an inability to move it.
- Integrate standalone solutions with other MarTech stack components.
- Extend your choice of marketing channels beyond those already in your existing solution.
- Recognize customer "moments that matter" until after they have occurred – or not at all.
- Make changes to marketing activities without involving multiple people and departments.

Modern MarTech does let you:

- Access your data regardless of location and identify relevant insights that can easily be acted upon.
- Take advantage of composable solutions that are flexible to meet market demands.
- Predict potential customer "moments that matter" and pivot operational journeys and campaigns to support them.
- Integrate all existing MarTech solutions without IT resources, data engineers or system integrators.
- Be agile to quickly and effectively adjust marketing activities and activate new channels.

So, where does your stack stand – **outdated** or **modern**?

Take the assessment and find out!

03

Must-haves for a modern marketing platform

Modern MarTech stacks access data anywhere, have composable solutions, predict key customer moments, integrate without IT resources and quickly adjust marketing activities. It's a tall order, but totally within your reach with the right capabilities.

Data everywhere and anywhere

You must be able to access data in any location at any time – and not rely on complex data transformation engines or other IT-based complexities. Making data available in a truly federated way is an essential feature of a modern marketing platform. You choose where the data resides, including how and when it's used in a fully compliant manner.

Audience building

Connecting to the data is only part of the answer. You should be able to build audiences of various segments without complexity limitations. Those audiences should be easily connected, including their ability to be included or excluded from a journey or campaign activity. There should also be flexibility in how often audiences are updated, plus the ability to recognize changes in audience members during any marketing communication.

Customer journeys without boundaries

Customer journeys need to be built with flexibility so both scheduled and real-time interactions are possible. Setting and defining business objectives for each journey with real, measurable outcomes should be possible beyond just click-through rates and opened emails.

A modern marketing platform doesn't just support your marketing plan – it also advises and recommends changes based on customer behaviors as they travel through the customer journey.

Real-time insights should be a key part of the journey strategy, including alerts when processes fail or business objectives aren't being met. This is key for knowing whether your journey strategy is working.

Diversified channels

Moving journey orchestration to where the data resides and using a composable solution approach to channel management opens the potential for quickly and easily adding new channels to the marketing mix. No heavy IT or system integrator involvement is required.

A MarTech platform that lets you separate journey orchestration from channel management makes it possible to remove costly elements of the platform when utilization falls below an acceptable level – improving performance, flexibility and total cost of ownership.

Expert Take

"Modern marketing focuses on one thing: Serving customers in moments that matter. The focus on customer journeys solves the disconnect between what customers need and what brands deliver. It uses data, technology and strategy to anticipate customer needs, eliminate friction and turn insights into meaningful actions."

Frans Riemersma, Founder of MartechTribe

Hack, pack and stack your way to the ultimate customer journey

Modern marketing helps marketers understand that not all journeys are created equal

- **Hack:** Focus on experimentation, find and prove value that drives future revenue.
- **Pack:** Rationalize data, integrations and features of the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to prepare for zero legacy and zero maintenance.
- **Stack:** Focus on exploitation to ensure scalable, repeatable, reliable results that drive current revenue.

*Source: Frans Riemersma, Founder of MartechTribe

04

AI: The powerhouse of modern marketing

In today's digital-first world, any discussion about a modern marketing platform would be remiss if it did not include AI, which is a core element of any modernization strategy. AI-powered marketing changes the game so organizations operate smarter, faster and more efficiently.

Personalization at scale

Customers expect hyperpersonalized experiences across every touch point. According to a recent survey by Plainly, **80% of consumers feel that personalization improves their customer experience**. AI analyzes vast amounts of data, including behavioral, purchase history and real-time interactions to dynamically tailor content, offers and recommendations.

Smarter decisions

Marketing based on gut feeling is a thing of the past. AI-driven predictive analytics helps marketers forecast trends, optimize campaigns and identify high-value customers. Using AI, brands can make insight-driven decisions that deliver better engagement and higher ROMI.

Automation

AI-powered automation streamlines everything from email marketing and social media management to chatbot-driven customer support. Marketers can focus on strategy and creativity while AI handles repetitive tasks with speed and precision.

Real-time journey optimization

As customers navigate across multiple channels (e.g., web, social and email), they expect a seamless **omnichannel experience**. AI continuously adjusts customer journeys based on real-time behaviors so that every interaction is relevant and highly personalized.

Clear competitive advantage

AI isn't a luxury for modern MarTech platforms – it's a necessity. Brands that embrace AI as part of their MarTech stack gain a competitive advantage by delivering customer experiences that retain customers and attract new ones.

Expert Take

"As you move forward and modernize your MarTech capabilities – technology, tactics and talent – for this era of AI-powered marketing and customer experiences, I encourage you to seize the opportunity to also develop your meta-level muscles for mastering change."

Scott Brinker, Editor of chiefmartec

Making the case for AI

89%

Of marketing leaders say AI-driven initiatives have directly contributed to increased revenue over the past year

2024 Marketing Executive AI Sentiment, Conversica

63%

Of marketers use GenAI in their professional lives daily

GenAI in Marketing: Are we ready for this?

55%

Of organizations that have deployed AI now take an AI-first strategy for every use case they evaluate

Gartner press release: **Gartner Survey Finds 55% of Organizations That Have Deployed AI Take an AI-First Strategy With New Use Cases**

05

Modern marketing in motion: Real results

Organizations are transforming their marketing efforts with modern platforms that help them connect with customers, driving unparalleled engagement and growth.

Viking Europe

Challenge:

- Needed to consolidate marketing operations across multiple regions, languages and currencies.
- Required a shift from push marketing to personalized, data-driven marketing.

Approach:

- Implemented SAS® Customer Intelligence 360 to centralize and streamline marketing efforts.
- Focused on using data to drive personalized campaigns and improve customer experience.

Results:

- Reduced print costs by 20% while maintaining stable sales.
- Improved response rates, customer sales and overall marketing efficiency.

Learn more

Jyske Bank

Challenge:

- Needed to improve customer experience and loyalty in a digital economy.
- Required personalized, timely communications tailored to individual customer needs.

Approach:

- Implemented SAS Customer Intelligence 360 on AWS to centralize and optimize marketing efforts.
- Used behavioral data modeling and tracking to create personalized, always-on campaigns.

Results:

- Created more than 100 always-on marketing campaigns.
- Achieved a 10%-50% increase in campaign results.

Learn more

ING Belgium

Challenge:

- Relied on multiple legacy systems that could not manage data sets that exceeded 2 million records.
- Constrained by manual workflows and outdated infrastructure that resulted in a 5% campaign failure rate.

Approach:

- Used a phased approach to implement SAS Customer Intelligence 360, starting with data migration from legacy systems to a centralized environment.
- Automated workflows to streamline campaign execution and reduce reliance on manual tasks.

Results:

- Increased campaign execution capacity from fewer than 100 to more than 700 daily, with failure rates decreasing from 5% to less than 1%.
- Processed more than 2 million records – which was previously impossible – using a unified and scalable platform.

Learn more

Ready to continue your journey toward a modern MarTech platform?

Visit SAS to learn more about our modern, multichannel marketing hub.





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