

2026 Executive Summary

As the demands of your role continue to evolve, embrace guidance to bridge the gap between strategy and execution, orchestrate impactful customer journeys, and differentiate and grow your brand.

We hope to see you at Gartner Marketing Symposium/Xpo 2027!



Julie Reeves,
Conference Chair and VP Analyst, Gartner



Top takeaways

1

Advance to AI confident leadership

Secure your position as a Go-To-Market leader by transitioning your organization from "AI Curious" to "AI Confident". Avoid competency traps like adopting a more is more approach or overwhelming your staff with change. Instead, strategically deploy AI to drive targeted customer engagement and elevate your team's capabilities. By decisively boosting C-suite confidence, you can capture vital territory before your leadership window closes.

"AI is a magnifier of disruption and organizational fault-lines."

Kristina LaRocca-Cerrone,
VP Analyst, Gartner

2

Unlock competitive advantage through human-AI collaboration

Drive AI adoption by treating it as both a leadership and organizational challenge, not just a technology shift. When you re-skill teams and redesign workflows, collaboration between humans and AI agents becomes seamless. Amplifying human strengths—judgment, trust, and creativity—ensures your marketing organization thrives. With a clear action plan, you transform AI-driven change into lasting competitive advantage.

"In a world of AI, competitive advantage belongs to organizations that amplify distinctly human capabilities."

Jen Kady,
VP Analyst, Gartner

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Top takeaways

3

Accelerate growth through strategic budgeting

Maximize growth by adopting agile, data-driven budgeting to address the strategic trilemma of driving results, accelerating AI adoption, and managing tighter budgets. Reallocating spend from legacy processes to high-growth opportunities positions your team for success. Because embedding AI at your core and upskilling talent closes performance gaps, challenging outdated assumptions keeps your organization resilient and primed for transformation.

“AI is reshaping marketing spending and strategies. Our benchmarks and insights help CMOs understand what separates leading AI-driven marketing teams from the rest of the pack.”

Ewan McIntyre,
VP Analyst, Gartner

4

Achieve success with Genius brand strategies

Benchmark your digital marketing against Genius leaders to identify gaps and opportunities. When you prioritize AI-powered personalization and encourage cross-functional collaboration, your team unlocks new efficiencies. Genius brands invest in talent and agile tech stacks, so upskilling and aligning resources ensures you stay competitive. These proven strategies position your brand for industry-leading success.

“Leaders in digital marketing approach key priorities differently, which drives their success. You can shortcut your path to best-in-class performance if you learn from the strategies they pursue.”

Matt Moorut,
Sr Director Analyst, Gartner

5

Enhance personalization to boost engagement

Balance passive and active personalization to deliver genuinely helpful customer experiences. By using fewer data dimensions and inviting customers to share information at meaningful moments, you build trust and relevance. Since today’s consumers value control and transparency, respecting their preferences and empowering choices drives both engagement and loyalty.

“Great personalization does not mean knowing everything about your customer.. it means knowing enough about your customers to provide a helpful and personable experience.”

Carlos Guerrero,
VP Analyst, Gartner



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