

2026 Priorities for Demand Generation Leaders

B2B demand generation leaders must adapt to AI's transformative impact and unlock the value of their function as:

- ✓ Internal use of AI is redefining roles and processes.
- ✓ Externally, AI is changing buyer behavior and disrupting traditional marketing channels.
- ✓ Siloed operations within and outside the marketing team prevent organizations from realizing the function's full value.

Trends impacting demand generation leaders in 2026

The majority of demand generation teams are piloting or planning to pilot AI agents.

AI is changing how buyers make buying decisions.

Demand generation is often seen as executing tactics vs. driving strategic growth.

Priority 01

Double down on AI-empowered tech marketing.

Priority 02

Navigate to the increasingly hard-to-reach tech buyer.

Priority 03

Reclaim demand generation's relevance.

Actions demand generation leaders should take

Priority 01 Double down on AI-empowered tech marketing.

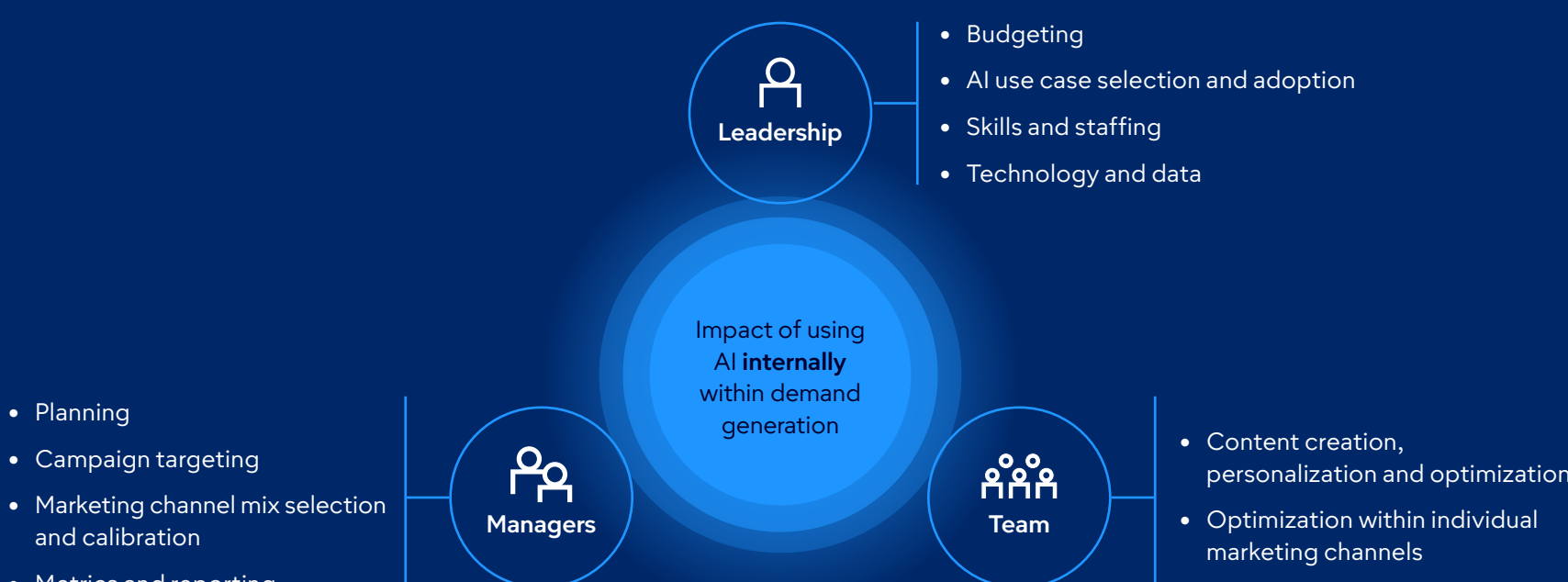
Generative AI has already started to influence the way demand generation teams operate, introducing new efficiencies and capabilities. Looking ahead, AI agents hold even greater potential to transform the demand generation function in more profound ways.

Key actions

- Be preemptive and ready for AI by remodeling your demand generation processes.
- Examine each role across the demand generation team and identify AI's implications for each element of the role.
- Consider impacts, for example, upstream effects on budgeting and planning, as well as downstream impacts on content creation and channel optimization.
- Determine which automation, human activities or automation-human combination should be incorporated within the function, and the skills, staffing, technology and data needs that result from these decisions.

Internal use of AI is poised to transform demand generation

Demand generation roles and example elements affected



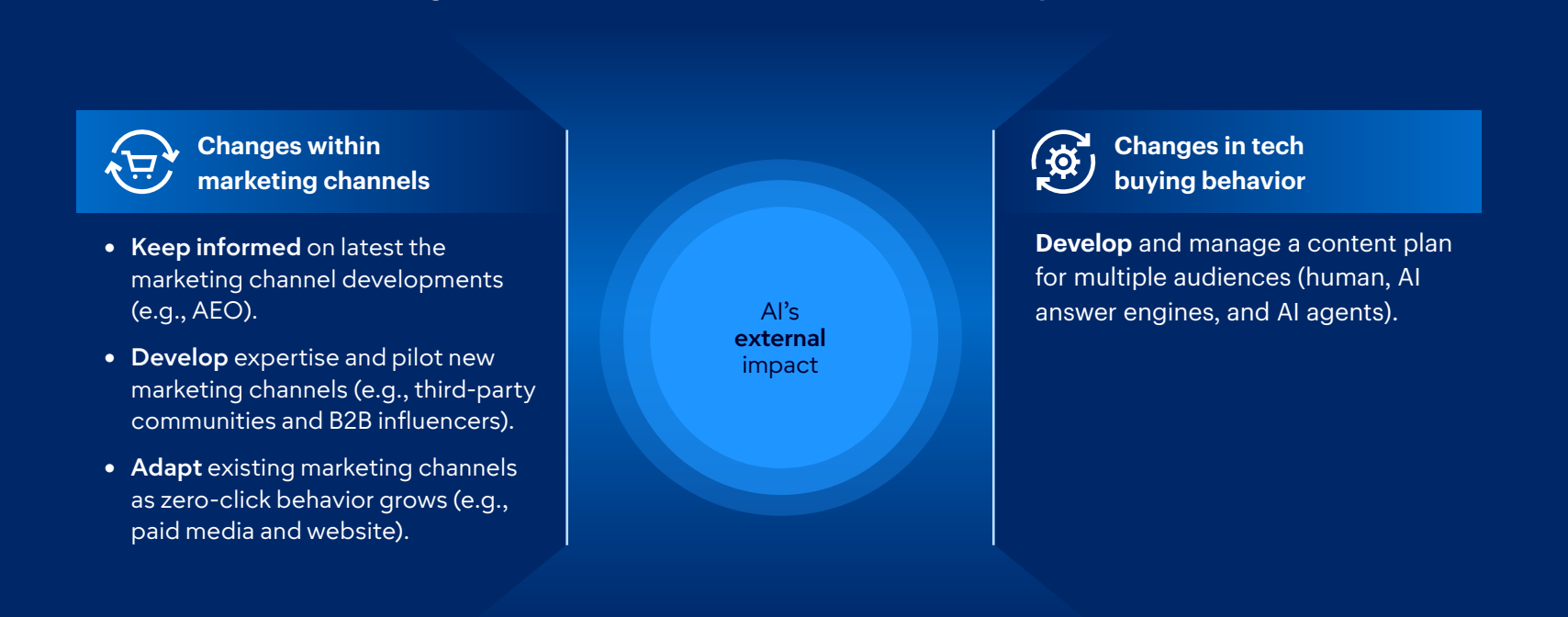
Priority 02 Navigate to the increasingly hard-to-reach tech buyer.

AI's influence on demand generation extends beyond internal applications; external forces are also driving significant change. Demand generation teams must contend with the evolving behavior of tech buyers, who increasingly begin their solution research using generative AI tools.

Key actions

- Stay ahead of AI's transformation of marketing channels and buying behavior with a proactive approach to keep up with the latest advancements, including updates to SEO and AEO.
- Anticipate piloting new channels, which may require new, nontraditional areas of expertise, such as leveraging platforms like third-party communities and working with B2B influencers.
- Recognize that existing channels may be impacted by the rise of zero-click behavior and require ongoing adaptation.
- Design to engage multiple audiences, including human, AI answer engines and AI agents, and make needed changes in content structures and workflows.

Immediate actions for demand generation leaders to address AI's external impacts



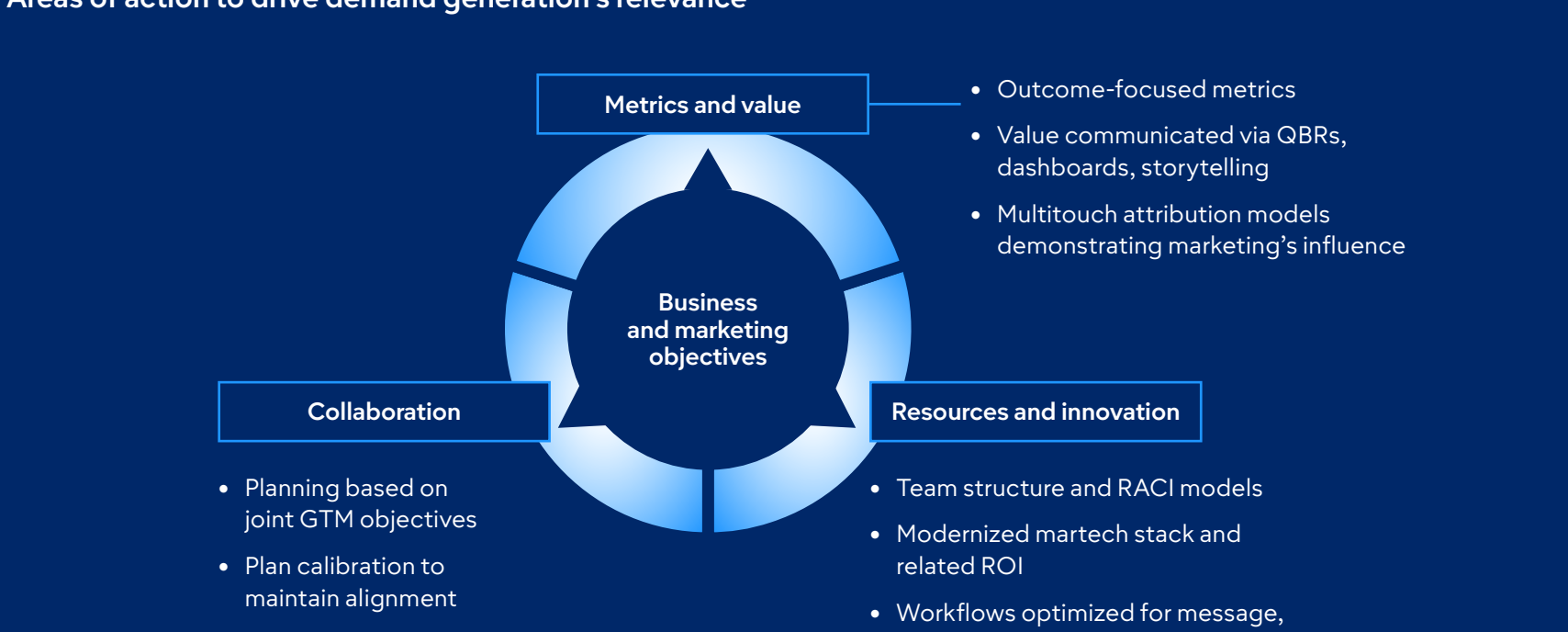
Priority 03 Reclaim demand generation's relevance.

The demand generation function has long been relegated to executing tactics, rather than being recognized as a strategic driver of growth. With AI rapidly reshaping go-to-market models and strategies, overcoming this challenge is becoming increasingly urgent.

Key actions

- Elevate demand generation with a multipronged approach that puts business objectives central to the following three key components:
 - First, select the right metrics to shape team actions and behaviors, and effectively communicate results to executive stakeholders to influence how demand generation is perceived.
 - Second, support ongoing collaboration within the marketing team (including product marketing and marketing operations), and across the broader go-to-market organization (such as sales and customer success), to make sure that demand generation operates as part of a cohesive, unified team.
 - Third, align the team's structure with technologies and processes that foster innovation to help demand generation stay responsive to current market conditions.

Areas of action to drive demand generation's relevance



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