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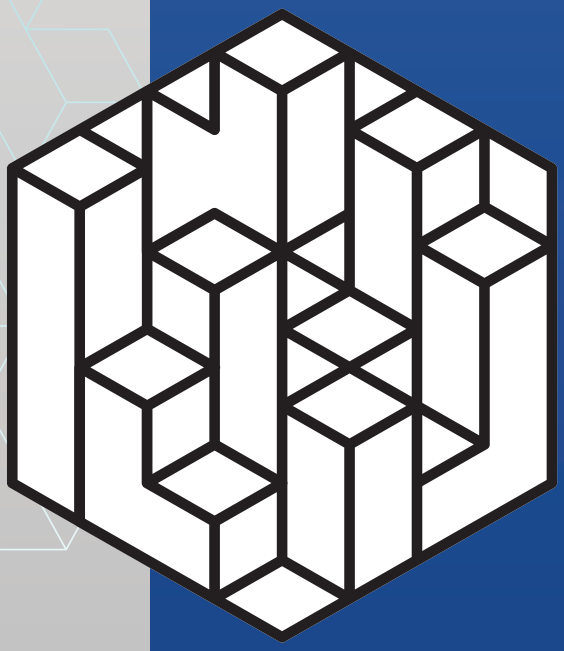
How AI is Transforming Marketing

Making the Impossible Possible



Rise of the Marketing Machine

The customer journey is growing increasingly complex. At the same time, marketing is getting a bigger seat at the executive table with record-high technology budgets that are expected to surpass those of CIOs this year. To top off this added complexity and growing accountability, buzzed-about advances in data analytics have stakeholders assuming marketing can seamlessly report on the evolving landscape they operate in.

Yet, many marketers remain in the dark. Even as the customer journey grows more complex, the processes used to connect and analyze marketing data are changing. Bigger budgets and more sophisticated customers mean more marketing technologies and tools within marketing stacks. This in turn means more diverse data sources in more formats to integrate– today, next month, and for the foreseeable future. Data and analytics are a mainstay, and marketers must look to new technological breakthroughs to make these processes as fluid and scalable as possible.

Few technological advances complement marketing as well as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. Playing a key role in everything from data integration to insight generation, AI enables marketers to scale endlessly while never missing an insight.

This paper discusses how AI is enabling the future of marketing.

Robotic Adoption

In the last few years, AI and marketing-based analytic data models have made it possible to do things that marketers have talked about for decades. This conversation has become reality thanks to on-demand computing power, increasingly connected consumers, and advances in AI.

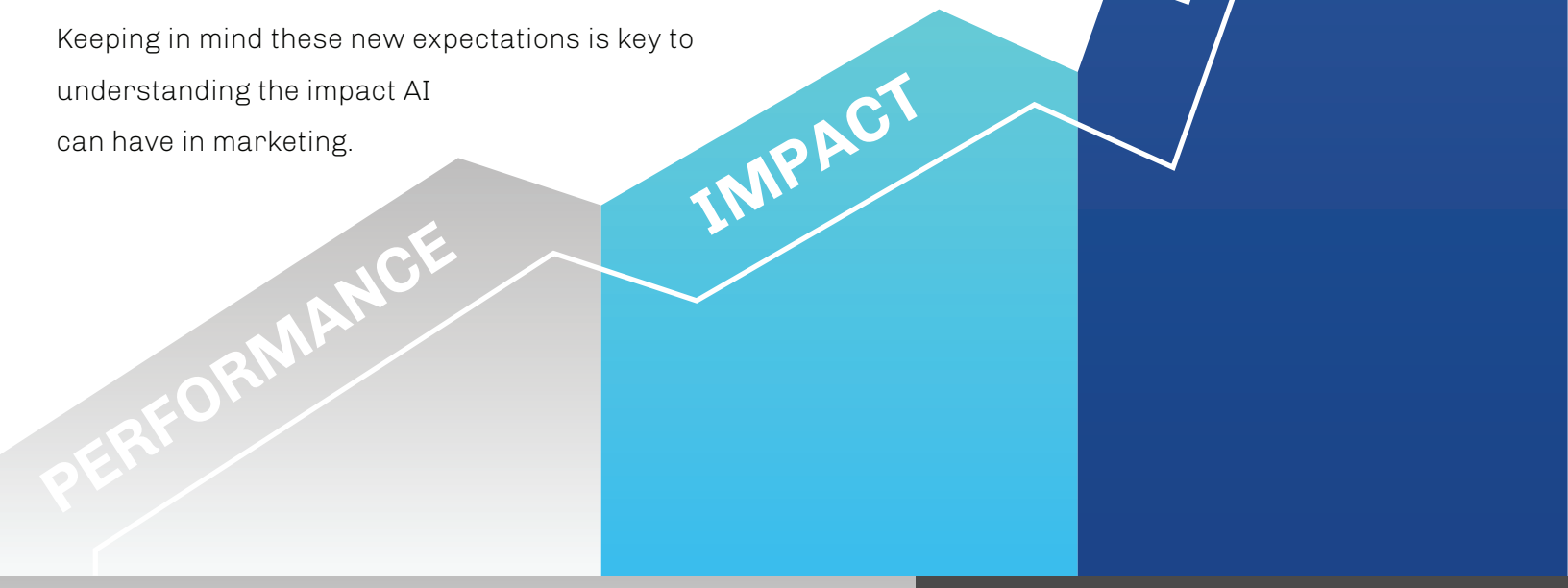
That means marketers can drive better marketing performance and understand ROI properly for the first time.

The New Marketing Mandate: Growth

Ultimately, AI should support the new marketing mandate: driving growth. But what does growth look like? Essentially, it breaks into three main goals:

- **Performance:** Optimizing marketing campaign performance across every campaign, channel, audience segment, product line and market.
- **Impact:** Connecting marketing performance with sales and revenue across new and existing customers.
- **Loyalty:** Improving customer experiences across the customer journey.

Keeping in mind these new expectations is key to understanding the impact AI can have in marketing.



Where Technology Makes the Difference

AI and machine learning are extremely complementary to marketing because of the efficiency and adaptability they lend to your analytics and reporting system. This is especially apparent when it comes to prioritizing the various optimizations of your marketing efforts. If there's been one constant in marketing within the past ten years, it's rapid change. The ability of a system to improve its intelligence by leveraging crowd-sourced knowledge provides marketers with real benefits, including:

- **Rapid time to value in connecting and unifying data from disparate sources**
- **Automating and future-proofing data models for scale and maturity**
- **Shrinking optimization cycles into hourly and daily windows instead of weeks**

Connecting to Data with AI in a Post-API World

The first question most marketers confront when embarking on a unified marketing intelligence strategy is:

> How do we connect all our data across the marketing ecosystem of tools and partners?

According to the latest Chief Martec MarTech Landscape, there are over 5,000 different solutions available to marketers today– all of which generate data and insights. From these, marketers pick the combinations that help them manage campaigns and engagement data on a daily basis. With this amount of diversity, marketers quickly encounter the limitations of using APIs exclusively when it comes to connecting their data together. (If you're new to the API concept, in data analysis these are the protocols in technology platforms that allow you to pull data out.)

The first issue is that even among tools that offer a library of API connectors, it's quickly becoming impossible to stay abreast of every one of the thousands of marketing platforms available. Secondly, when tools offer APIs for bringing data into other platforms, the fields available are often limited or even deprecated as API upkeep happens at a slower rate than the development of the platform itself. And lastly, there are many data sources without APIs or those that sit in files, databases, or big data stores (not to mention offline data). The API-only method is failing to hold up in the rising tide of marketing data platforms.

In the pre-AI world, your only option would be to build and maintain custom APIs. Whether attempted in-house or via a services partner, the custom API path quickly becomes overwhelming, time consuming and expensive as the requirement to stay ahead of updates translates into project cycles with no endpoint.

AI can transport you to a "post-API" world of unified marketing intelligence, where any data you need can be added to the picture immediately– and by the marketing organization itself. To get this done, AI-powered data integration turns any data reporting source in the form of a feed or file into a continuous data connection that leverages email, FTP or other storage locations to maintain continual updates. AI acts like the human eye, recognizing what these sources are and how they should be mapped into a data model automatically by looking at the file input. Without this crucial function, data connections will often break, requiring the expertise of data scientists or external services teams to fix.

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AI can assist marketers by being a foundational layer on which to build a panoramic view of all your customer touch points. Using AI to augment data integration can effectively replace the spreadsheets, reports, one-off dashboards or multiple systems previously needed to go to get a holistic view of marketing. This makes a formerly impossible task of integrating any new data in minutes– by marketers themselves– possible. Day to day, this means you can easily start reporting on your newest campaigns immediately, switch out platform A for platform B in your stack without a hitch, or bring a new data source into the mix to answer a deeper question– all at the speed of marketing.

Harmonizing Your Data with AI

Centralizing data is step one, and step two is getting it organized. But with data coming from many different sources and platforms– this doesn't just happen on its own. It takes the process of data harmonization through a data model to get every performance, outcome and investment talking together. At marketing's scale, this can sound daunting– and without the right approach it is, and worse, at scale can grow impossible. With AI, it's possible for data to self-organize for you.

When you need to measure and monitor business goals and compare and contrast performances, you want your data from all of its different sources to line up by region, product, or the teams you support.

On the marketing side, you want to be able to drill down from the highest level of each ROI, growth or loyalty KPI, to every level beneath it. And you need to be able to do this across programs, campaigns, channels, content, audience and customer segments.

Before AI-assisted marketing, creating data models to enable this would require vast time and expertise.

It would take continuous investments to build models from the ground up, relationship by relationship, within the data.

But within marketing data, the relationships are complex and numerous to begin with across channels, campaigns, media buys, landing pages, and conversion points– and they change as marketing evolves and redesigns its approach over time.

Harmonizing Your Data with AI (cont.)

The new approach is to use dynamic data models that continually expand their knowledge from across customers to provide expert-in-the-box understanding of how marketing data should be related. Paired with AI and machine learning, integrated data can be automatically mapped into the model with no need to create or maintain a model from scratch.

Together with centralizing data, these AI and machine learning applications dramatically improve initial time to value as well as provide ongoing agility as marketing's data continually changes and scales. As they scale, they make it possible for marketers to get the best of both worlds- total organization and total flexibility, to continually and evolve their models with no projects, advanced skills sets or even downtime.

This becomes not just a nice-to-have, but a need-to-have as your marketing evolves and your intelligence efforts span to new teams and regions with success.

Looking ahead to the next step, they're also the essential building blocks of moving to AI powered always-on optimization across all your data.

Making Smarter, Faster Decisions with AI-assisted Insights

AI-assisted insights is the latest modern application of AI that works on behalf of marketers to elevate information that supports better decision making. While this has been called the next wave over the past few years, it's here now– and it's powerful.

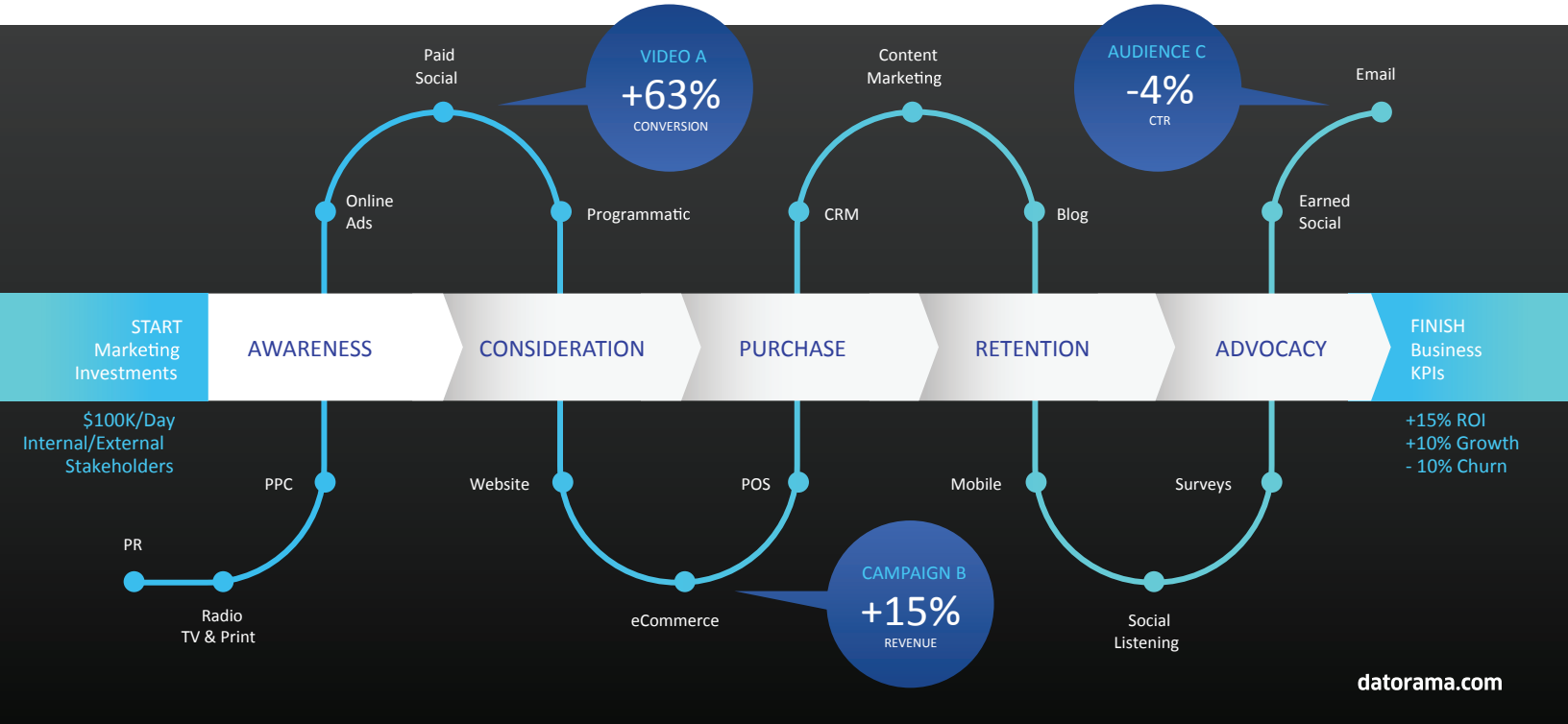
Whether the marketing budget is $1M, $100M or $1B a year, CMOs in central roles within the business are being asked to make performance and results more predictable. Outputs have much wider visibility and peers are counting on marketing to deliver.

Making Smarter, Faster Decisions with AI-assisted Insights (cont.)

But in order to get to meet goals, smarter decisions need to happen on a more frequent basis– across the entire customer journey. The sheer scale of data in a pre-AI world has limited marketers' ability to see opportunities and take action. But, it stands to reason that if results need to be predictable, marketers need a pipeline of insights to become more predictable as well. It should be as easy to get new ideas on improving marketing as it is to browse a feed of stories on your favorite social networks. This is where AI is entering now. Across the millions or billions of rows of data marketers are expected to make sense of, the bots are being released to find not only what's moving and shaking in their performance– but also answering why it's happening and what they can do about it. These are the optimization paths CMOs and their teams can use to flip that switch to always-on optimization.

If dashboards help answer the questions you have already– AI helps you know what you don't know. This introduces a new way to collaborate with your marketing technology. You provide an agenda composed of the KPIs you want to watch on an ongoing basis, and off goes your "assistant" into your data. Now, millions of data points get analyzed on a continual basis to tell you what's driving KPI performance, in a prioritized order of impact.

You might want to keep an eye on channel or campaign Marketing ROI, campaign engagement or conversion Rate, or campaign CPM or CTR.



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Making Smarter, Faster Decisions with AI-assisted Insights (cont.)

Rather than rely on a labor-intensive, manual effort that can miss critical findings in your ever-expanding data, imagine a marketing world where your KPI performance could be better understood via intelligent insights that help you learn what's actually driving your KPI performance up or down That way you know exactly which campaigns and similar attributes are the root drivers of your marketing ROI and which are pulling it down.

From executives to campaign managers and analysts, there are answers in your data that can help you hit your goals through better curated information each day. The challenge is surfacing them in time to activate them. With AI, marketers can leave less opportunity on the table– at scales and speeds that previously couldn't be accomplished through manual analysis.

Staying Sentinel

AI isn't replacing creativity or human decision making. But it can play the role of sentinel, working tirelessly to ensure you never miss a beat. Marketing is getting a bigger seat at the executive table. This means more accountability, and more potential for impact. Marketing as a practice is changing, as rapidly and constantly as the consumer journey. AI and machine learning are rising to meet the challenges of modern marketing, providing an adaptability and ability to scale that saves marketers time– and makes them smarter.

So where does AI and machine learning fit in marketing?
The answer is: at every step of the process.

Connect. Unify. Analyze. Visualize. Act.

Datorama provides an end-to-end solution for marketing analytics, so your team can easily get all the answers — all in one place.

Request a demo at http://datorama.com/demo/ and see how you can elevate your decision making with intelligent marketing analytics.

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