How marketing leaders are using Al today

Our second annual survey of leaders in marketing about their use of Al shows that they are currently most often using it for creating content today. Looking just two years ahead, they expect the top three uses to be revenue planning, customer value analysis, and recruitment. In addition, notably fewer marketing leaders this year said that AI talent was too hard to find.



officers; chief supply chain and operating officers; chief digital, technology, or information officers; and chief AI officers. Other survey reports and other insights on leadership and AI can be found on heidrick.com.

Separate surveys explored the perspectives of chief people officers; chief legal officers; chief sales officers; chief strategy

leaders want to move even faster

Usage is widespread—but most

it across most or all of the organization—the highest share across functions, and tied with HR leaders. Not yet using Al Using it in

35%

Only 6% of marketing leaders say their companies are not yet using AI, and 10% say their company is using

6%

Piloting it in some functions or business units

it in some functions or business units

most or all functions or business units

50%

50%

10%

6%

However, half of marketing leaders say their companies are adopting AI too slowly,

which is similar to what most of their C-suite peers say. At the right speed Too fast Too slowly Don't know

and productivity gains A strong majority of marketing Internal use

A focus on internal use

to say so among their C-suite peers, and tied with sales leaders. They are currently most often using Al for creating content, such as copy or images. Looking just two years

ahead, the shares of marketing leaders who expect to be using AI for all tasks

In two years, the top three uses for Al

marketing leaders most often name

are revenue planning, customer value

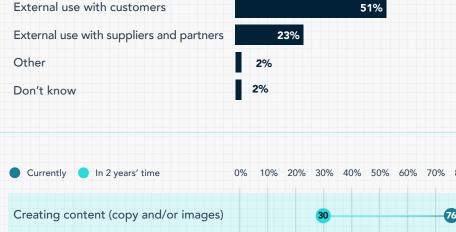
are notably higher.

leaders say they are focused on

Al for internal use, though over half are also using it externally,

with customers—the highest share

analysis, and recruitment.



10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% Support for internal functions (for example, drafting documents) Developing customized advertising/customer messaging Process automation Customer or technical service Market analysis

Product or service development Customer sentiment analysis Mining subscriber data Speeding up ROI return data Risk and cybersecurity Customer value analysis Recruitment HR operations Revenue planning Other

quickly companies are adopting it, marketing leaders, as well as most of their peers across functions, indicate that their companies aren't investing just

Despite the hype about AI and how

Measuring ROI

to keep up with peers: they are measuring success based on their goals, as they would any other investment.

Who's taking the lead?

Faster time to market 24% Improved customer engagement scores 12% Increased market share Other Don't know

As for the board, 36% of marketing leaders do not think the board is spending enough time on AI. This share is similar across most

20%

40%

36%

62%

52% 53%

50%

Across functions, the person who is most often cited as owning AI strategy is the chief information, technology, or digital officer. About 10% say it's the CEO. And just over 10% say no one.1

in setting AI policies, and just over 60% say the digital leader is involved. There's little consistency among survey respondents in who else is involved, though general counsels and chief information security officers are cited

more often than most other leaders by

leaders across functions.

Forty percent say the CEO is involved



Developing internally, including upskilling

or reskilling existing workforce

Spending too much time Overseeing as part of their normal oversight of strategy and risk

Seeking input from executives about Al's development and opportunities

21%

Asking for special reports on AI policies 6%

functions.

Spending enough time

Spending too little time

Improved productivity

Cost reduction

Asking for special reports on AI's effect on strategy 8% Asking for special reports on Al's risks

16% Seeking input from external experts about Al's development and opportunities

Other 3% Don't know

Collaborating with external technology partners or vendors

24% **Engaging consultants** 15% 11%

9%

Engaging on-demand talent Hiring full-time leaders

Other

We aren't trying to build AI expertise

2023 2024

Too few leaders who

can combine AI and

business expertise

available

Don't know

4% 2% 5% 13% 4% When asked about the challenges they are experiencing in building AI expertise in their function, an increasing share say there are too few people who can combine AI with business expertise. However, there was a notable drop year over year in the share who said AI talent was too hard to find at any level—an encouraging sign for the talent market. Too few people with Too few leaders with We don't know how Too few leaders who to define roles Al expertise Al expertise have run a large Al related to AI available at any level available program available

We have other Lack of interest People with AI No specific Our compensation priorities for among leaders at expertise are less challenges for AI talent is not our company in investing in talent interested in our competitive developing AI industry than others

Other

expertise themselves

Don't know

We aren't trying to build AI expertise 3%

Across functions, it's still hard for companies to find the AI talent they need. As leaders seek to use AI for a broadening range of tasks and projects—eventually rewiring business processes across the enterprise—we

Talent considerations for leaders



personal computing to cloud, in which specific technical expertise was in high demand during the transition, but then declined as the relevant knowledge became a part of every person's role. In other words, we expect that basic working knowledge of AI will be as fundamental an expectation for senior leaders as being digitally savvy is today. That said, we also expect every enterprise will have a senior leader responsible for the AI strategy and for AI platforms and tools. This executive may or may not have a chief AI officer title.

expect high demand for Al-specific expertise at all levels to continue for three to six years. In the long run, it seems likely demand will follow a pattern similar to that in earlier waves of computing innovation, from

¹Notably, only 31% of the respondents who said no one owns the Al strategy also said their company is not yet using Al; 39% said their company is piloting, and another 29% said their company is using it in some areas.

About the research

In spring 2024, we surveyed 1,894 executives: 518 executives in finance; 401 executives in human resources; 153 executives in legal; 335 executives in marketing; 93 executives in sales; 90 executives in strategy; and 304 executives in supply chain and operations. This survey had a global reach; respondents represent the full range of industries, company revenue levels, and various company ownership structures. In 2023, we conducted similar surveys, including a survey of 111 marketing leaders.

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