

The future of growth marketing

**Data-driven insights to help you
achieve your 2026 marketing goals**

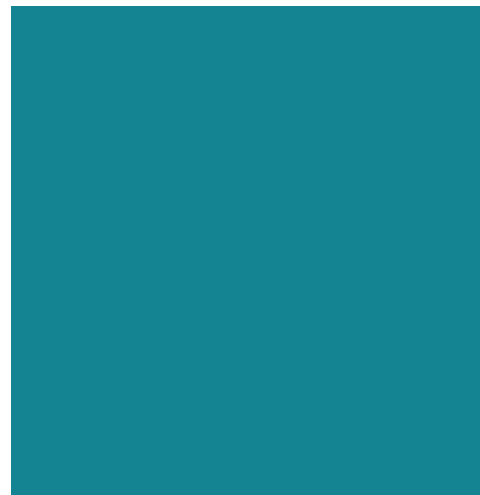
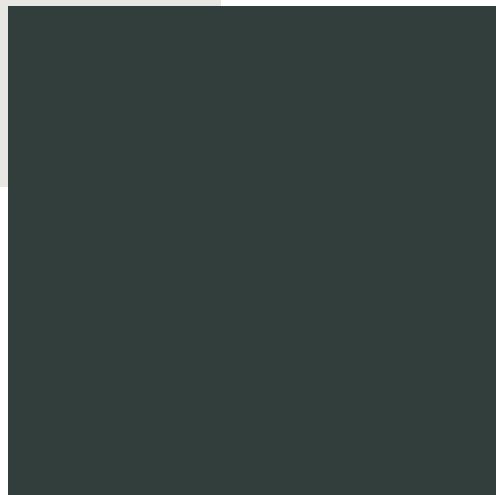




Table of CONTENTS

03 Understanding
marketing stats

04 Social media
marketing

07 Paid advertising
(Google vs
LinkedIn)

10 Paid vs Organic
search (SEO, GEO,
AEO, and AI search)

13 Content
marketing

16 Use of AI in
marketing

19 Success markers
for 2026

Data-driven insights to help you achieve your 2026 marketing goals.





Marketing is now viewed as a primary growth driver, with 71% of CMOs stating that marketing leads organizational growth (Deloitte, 2025).

Marketing stats aren't just numbers. They reveal what is working, what is shifting, and where marketing leaders should focus next. For marketing leaders, quick access to actionable insights is essential for planning and executing campaigns that deliver real results.

Teams are re-evaluating KPIs to balance brand equity with short-term ROI, and 51% of brands are restructuring their martech stacks for AI readiness (Salesforce, 2025).

Understanding trends is more important than ever, but translating data into clear action is what separates high-performing teams from those who fall behind.

In this guide, you'll gain:

Insight into key stats across major marketing channels to help you translate numbers into strategy.

Practical recommendations for 2026 strategies.

A clearer view of what to prioritize as marketing evolves.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



Social media remains a major driver of engagement, brand awareness, and lead generation. In 2025, platforms evolved quickly, with short-form video, interactive content, leadership visibility, and community-driven marketing dominating the landscape.

What we saw in 2025

Micro influencers drove the majority of influencer ROI, proving smaller creators outperform large influencers in relevance and engagement (CreatorIQ, 2025).

Online communities, such as Slack groups and forums, grew 32% year over year (CMX, 2025).

TikTok overtook Google as Gen Z's preferred platform for product discovery (Forrester, 2025).

Ad fatigue accelerated with engagement dropping after 4.2 impressions. Using dynamic creative, however, extended engagement by 31% (Google Marketing Insights, 2025).

What this means

Senior marketing leaders should invest in social content that feels real, human, and participatory. User-generated content (UGC) and micro influencer partnerships will outperform traditional social content. Community-led strategies will continue to grow, especially for brands targeting Millennials and Gen Z.

And because attention spans are continuing to shrink, short-form and interactive formats are no longer a nice-to-have; they're required.

An authentic leadership presence generated trust. 82% of consumers reported higher trust in brands whose leaders show up on social media (Edelman, 2025).

Your next steps

1

Prioritize platforms where your ICPs spend the most time.

You do not need to win everywhere, but you do need to win where your buyers are already consuming content, engaging with communities, and making decisions.

2

Test dynamic content formats such as polls, quizzes, video carousels, and UGC.

These formats drive higher interaction. They also give you behavioral data you can use to refine your messaging, positioning, and future campaign angles.

3

Monitor social conversations weekly to identify rising trends.

Use social listening tools and organic comments to uncover what your audience actually cares about. Add leadership or brand point-of-view posts to build trust and authenticity.

4

Expand micro-influencer partnerships to diversify reach and relevance.

Micro-influencers maintain higher trust and engagement than macro creators. Integrating multiple smaller voices increases message credibility and expands audience touchpoints.

5

Refresh creative more frequently to avoid ad fatigue and declining performance.

Since performance typically drops after 4.2 impressions, rotate new variations every one to two weeks. Watch for rising CPL, falling engagement, or stagnant CTR as signals that it's time to swap creatives.

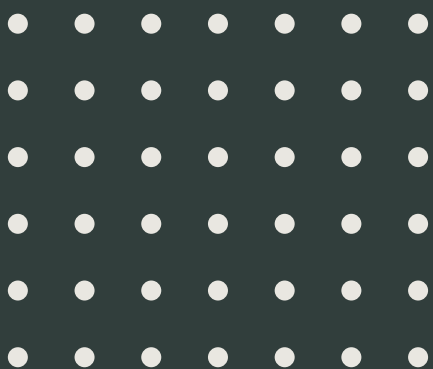


You don't need to win everywhere; **you need to win where your buyers are already engaging with content and communities.**



G o o g l e v s L i n k e d I n

PAID ADS



Paid advertising remains one of the most measurable ways to scale marketing impact. Google excels at capturing high-intent demand, while LinkedIn dominates when reaching B2B decision makers.

What we saw in 2025

Digital ad spend is projected to reach \$745B by 2026, with connected TV and retail media seeing double-digit growth (WARC, 2025).

Google CPCs increased as brands competed for shrinking keyword inventory, especially in B2B SaaS and professional services.

LinkedIn ad engagement grew as the platform prioritized thought leadership, video ads, and professional creator tools.

Privacy-first frameworks forced advertisers to rebuild targeting strategies. Only 18% of marketers still rely on third-party cookies (IAB, 2025).

What this means

Email automation and intent-driven workflows matter because both Google and LinkedIn ads perform better when audiences are remarketed through personalized nurture paths.

That said, LinkedIn remains the strongest channel for ABM campaigns because of its ability to target by role, industry, company size, and buying committee function. Google is best for capturing existing demand and driving conversions at scale.

The maturity of predictive analytics is helping advertisers forecast conversion likelihood and providing guidance on ways to allocate budgets more effectively (Salesforce, 2025).

Your next steps

1

Match channel selection to campaign goals.

Use Google when your goal is conversions, and use LinkedIn when your goal is reaching B2B decision makers or activating ABM plays.

2

Test multiple ad formats.

Know the time to refresh creative when CTR drops by 20%, or when frequency passes four impressions without a conversion lift.

3

Use intent data to refine retargeting pools.

On LinkedIn, sync CRM lists, firmographic filters, and website visitor segments. On Google use predictive signals and custom intent audiences.

4

Replace cookie-based targeting.

Use first-party data, engagement retargeting and CRM synced audiences to enhance targeting efforts.

5

Track cost efficiency by segment.

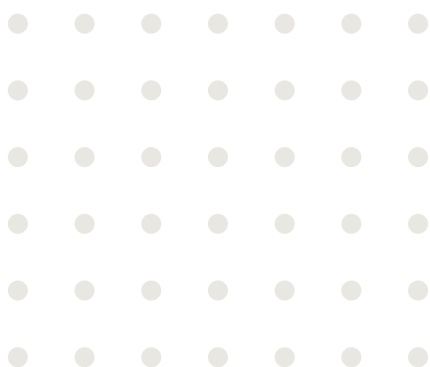
Compare CPL and CPAs across industries, job titles, and keyword groups to identify where spend is wasted and where scaling is profitable.





SEO, GEO, AEO,
& AI search

PAID vs ORGANIC SEARCH



Search is experiencing its biggest shift in a decade. Traditional SEO still matters, but AI search, GEO (generative engine optimization), AEO (answer engine optimization), and voice search are reshaping how users find information.

What we saw in 2025

Google increased the visibility of AI Overviews, shifting traffic away from traditional organic listings.

Video content ranked higher in AI-driven search results, especially explainer videos and authentic short-form clips.

Voice search grew to 31% of all searches (Comscore, 2025).

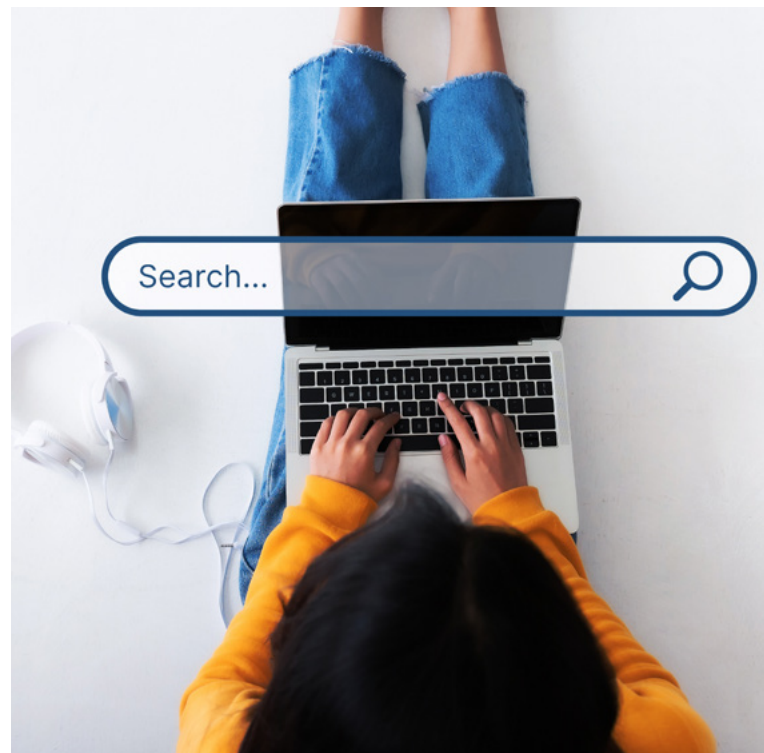
Privacy-first data frameworks influenced over \$1T in ad spend decisions (PwC, 2025).

ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google Gemini, and Meta AI changed how people search for summaries, comparisons, and recommendations.

What this means

Marketers need to implement strategies that go beyond keyword optimization. GEO requires creating content that AI tools can easily summarize and surface. AEO requires structured answers, conversational phrasing, and clear takeaways.

And because search tools increasingly show video instead of text, marketers must diversify content beyond blogs.



Your next steps

1

Invest in AI-driven SEO

by restructuring content into scannable sections, clear answers, and conversational queries.

2

Strengthen organic visibility

with video content that answers questions directly.

3

Use paid search

to reinforce high-intent terms that AI might suppress from organic visibility.

4

Optimize for voice queries

by including natural language phrasing, such as question-oriented headlines and direct answers.

5

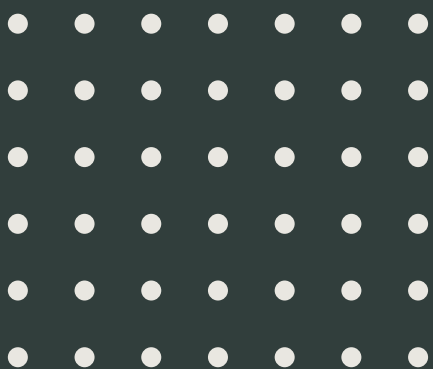
Ensure compliance with privacy-first frameworks

by using first-party data and consent-based tracking.





CONTENT MARKETING



Content marketing remains at the center of marketing strategy, but the definition of high-performing content is changing. Audiences want authenticity, relatability, and emotional resonance.

What we saw in 2025

Emotion-driven campaigns produced 23% more long-term ROI (System1, 2025).

Long-form storytelling retained viewers 37% longer when aligned with a clear narrative arc (Wistia, 2025).

Brands prioritizing distinctiveness grew 2.6 times faster than those focused only on differentiation (IPA, 2025).

Podcast consumption grew significantly, with podcast ads projected to exceed \$4B in revenue by 2026 (IAB, 2025).

What this means

Content must feel human and helpful to earn attention. Emotional relevance and authentic voices outperform polished, overly produced content. Growth in video, podcasts, and long-form storytelling proves that audiences want depth, not just promotion.

Hyper-personalized experiences improved conversion rates by up to 300% (Dynamic Yield, 2025).



Your next steps

1

Build content calendars

aligned to each stage of the buyer journey and map content types appropriately.

2

Repurpose content

across multiple channels to expand reach and reinforce messaging consistency.

3

Strengthen emotional resonance

by using stories, customer voices, behind-the-scenes content, and founder perspectives.

4

Personalize content

using behavioral data and segmentation. Speak to specific motivations and challenges, not generic personas.

5

Expand into high-growth formats,

such as video explainers, founder videos, and audio content.





USE OF AI IN MARKETING



AI is central to marketing operations. Teams that embrace AI and learn how to leverage it effectively will move faster, personalize better, and implement more accurate and effective optimization strategies.

What we saw in 2025

AI copilots replaced manual execution tasks for 58% of teams (HubSpot, 2025).

73% of marketers experimented with GenAI, but only 21% had governance frameworks (Adobe, 2025).

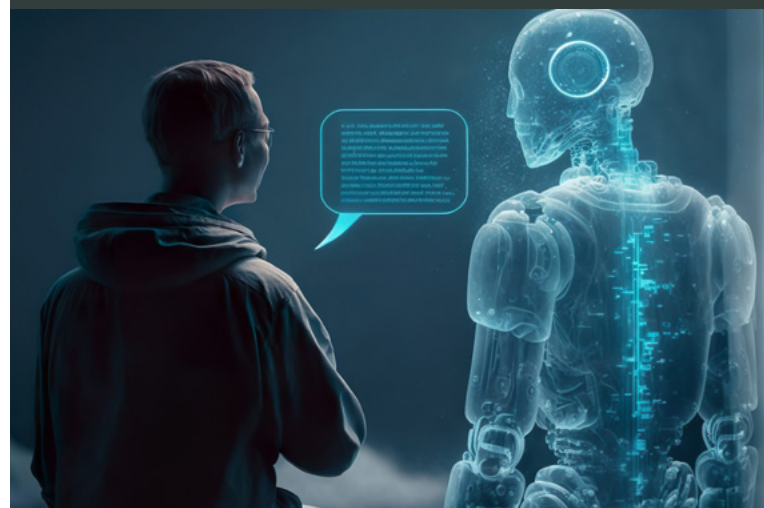
Composable martech stacks tripled in adoption as teams prioritized flexibility (Gartner, 2025).

AI-driven sentiment analysis reduced crisis response time by 64% (Sprinklr, 2025).

What this means

Campaign performance will increasingly depend on how well teams integrate AI into content creation, testing, personalization, and analytics. AI is not replacing marketers. **It is amplifying those who use it strategically.**

AI-powered creative ideation increased output volume and testing frequency by more than 40% (HubSpot, 2025).



Your next steps

1

Start small by identifying one workflow to automate,

such as reporting, content draft creation, or ad variations. Small wins drive internal adoption.

2

Test predictive insights

by using AI models to forecast conversion probabilities, LTV, and engagement trends. This helps allocate budget more efficiently.

3

Use AI for campaign experimentation

by generating multiple variations of ad copy, email copy, and social posts to find top performers faster.

4

Implement governance

frameworks to ensure ethical, brand-aligned, and secure AI usage.

5

Train your team on prompt writing

and AI tools to improve output quality and speed.



Success markers for 2026



Marketing in 2026 will require stronger community engagement, authenticity, and multi-channel orchestration. Testing, personalization, and AI integration will determine which teams accelerate and which struggle to keep up.

KEY TRENDS TO WATCH INCLUDE :

- 1 The evolution of SEO, GEO, and AEO, and how information discovery shifts.
- 2 Continued dominance of short-form video and social algorithms prioritizing authentic voices.
- 3 AI adoption across creative development, analytics, content creation, and campaign management.

Use these insights to shape your 2026 plans to ensure marketing is accurately portrayed as a driving force of organizational growth.

References

[HubSpot Marketing Statistics 2025/2026](#)
[Statista – Online Marketing Trends](#)
[LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Blog](#)
[Content Marketing Institute – Research](#)
[Think With Google – Insights](#)

[MarTech – AI Marketing Tools & Trends](#)
[Salesforce State of Marketing 2025](#)
[Deloitte CMO Survey 2025](#)
[Gartner Marketing KPIs & Org Trends 2025](#)
[IPA Brand Distinctiveness Study 2025](#)

[System1 Marketing ROI 2025](#)
[Edelman Trust Barometer 2025](#)
[WARC Digital Ad Spend Forecast 2025](#)
[Comscore Voice Search Insights 2025](#)
[Sprout Social Authentic Content Study 2025](#)
[TikTok Creative Center UGC Ads 2025](#)

Marketing ⁱⁿ *Progress*

Brought to you by Creo Collective