AI: The Next Frontier for Brands

How AI is Shaping the Future for
Marketing & Creative Professionals

Contents

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Introduction

Marketers' and creatives' jobs are becoming harder than ever.

Why? It's getting progressively more difficult to stand out in a saturated marketplace. In order to differentiate themselves from competition, brands need higher volume of and more personalized content.

Marketers face new challenges to deliver compelling, personalized campaigns, often on stricter deadlines, with tighter budgets, and fewer resources.

To keep up with demand and stand out from the competition, many marketers are turning to AI to streamline their workflows and produce content at scale.

While many industry professionals are seeing benefits from AI, there is shared sentiment that AI implementation needs to prioritize ethics in content, marketing and branding.

We surveyed over 600 individuals working full-time as marketing and creative professionals in brand, social media, communications, marketing, and design to uncover the impact of content demand on marketing and creative teams, how AI plays a role, and the outlook of the future of marketing for brands.

Let's dive into what we found.
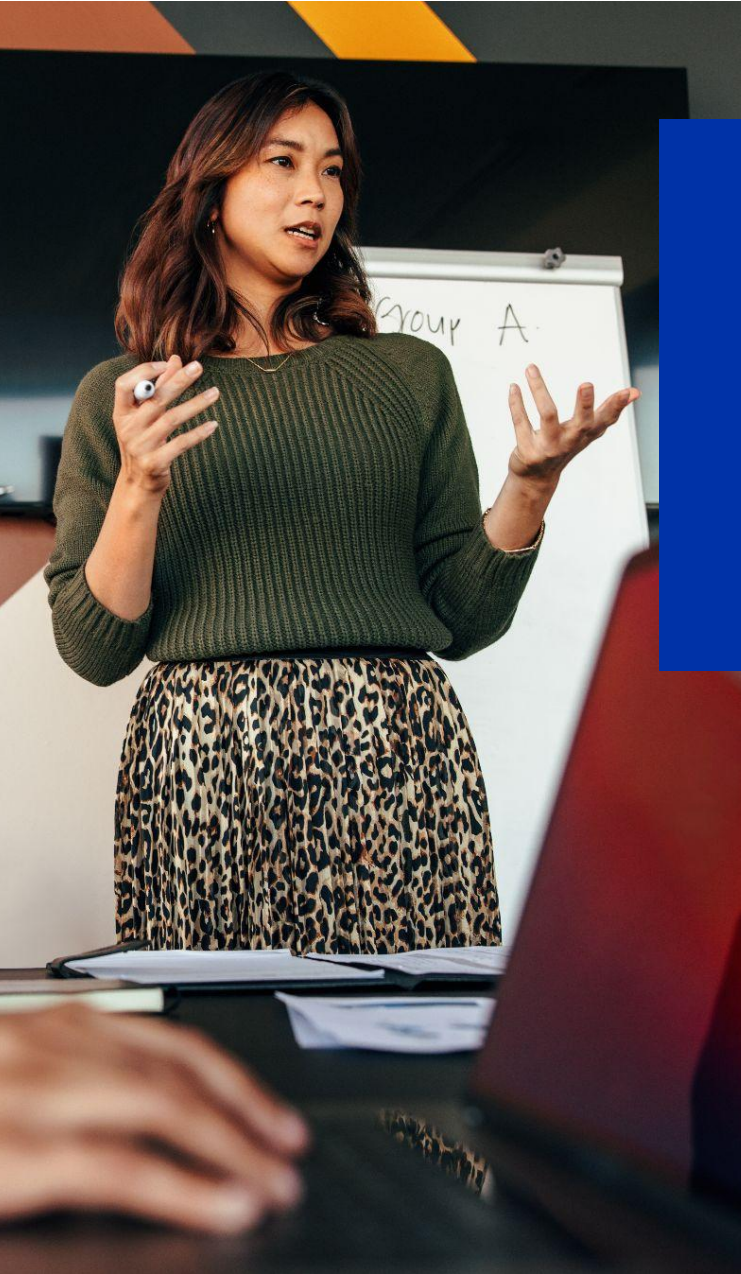
The Challenge: Marketers And Creatives are Under Pressure

Creative professionals and marketers are under pressure to maximize results while minimizing budgets and resources. The report found that **76% of respondents agree that economic fluctuations have amplified the need for strategic pivots in teams' workflows.**

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Marketing Challenges by the Numbers

Industry professionals are struggling across the board to **create relevant content that reaches their target audience and current clients, that also stands out from the competition.** Marketers feel that they can't keep up with the volume of demand creating personalized content at scale requires.
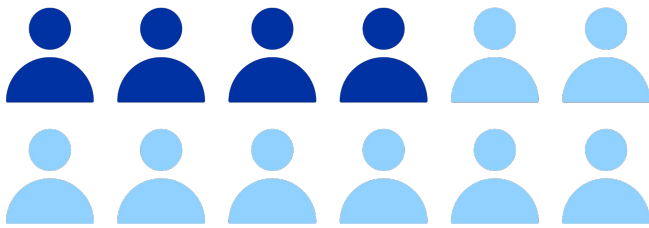
45%
Struggle to stand out from the competition

38%
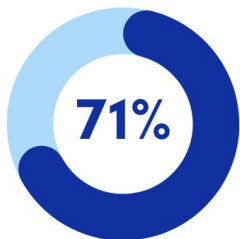Face challenges creating relevant content

32%
Don't feel they can keep up with content demand

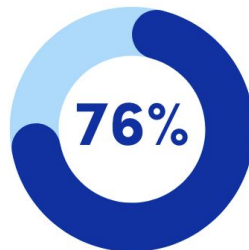**4 in 10** have trouble driving higher brand engagement

For many, challenges come down to finances:

71%
Have long-standing concerns about budget

76%
Say economic fluctuations have required pivots

"What is your biggest challenge?"

"Creating content that not only attracts our target audience, but puts our brand offers and services in front of our ideal clients."

All Work, No Flow

A staggering 85% of marketing and creative professionals reported facing increasing pressures to produce content more rapidly, creating numerous challenges with their content creation workflows. Other insights marketers shared include:

- 1 in 2 respondents expressed a strong desire for streamlined content creation tools
- 42% reported trouble driving higher brand engagement

Marketing and creative professionals have identified content creation as the stage of their workflow with the most friction. So it's no surprise that 65% of marketing professionals believe this friction negatively impacts revenue-driving functions.

49% of creative professionals would like to see content creation become more streamlined, making this the #1 area in which creatives would like to see work go faster, and those who work in creative/design/photo/video roles were 22% more likely than average to say this.

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Enter AI: The Competitive Edge for Marketers & Creatives

In response to these challenges, many marketers have already started adopting AI tools and DAM (Digital Asset Management) platforms to increase team efficiency and productivity, and the quality of their content. **In fact, 69% believe AI could help their company expand to new markets, while 71% believe that companies that don't embrace it will lose their competitive edge.**

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AI Is Changing the Game for Marketers & Creative Professionals

AI is Helping. Where Can It Do More?
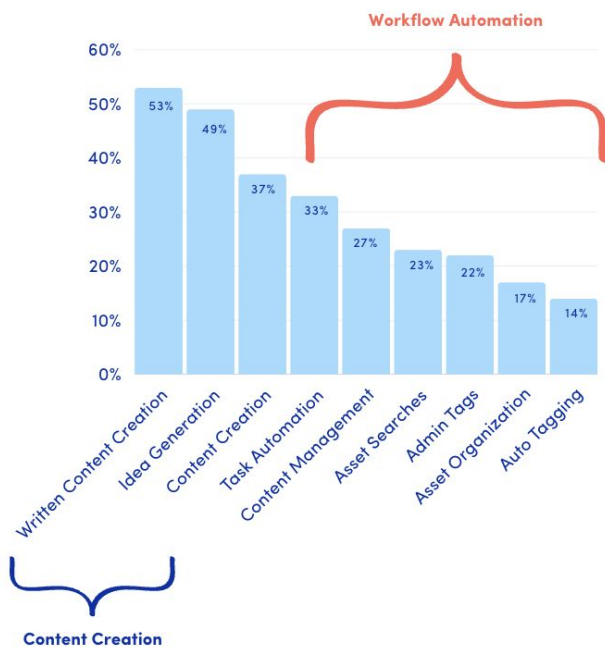
Object 1: How marketers and creatives are using AI

Marketing professionals believe that companies that embrace AI tools are more likely to gain a competitive edge, while those that don't, are leaving opportunities behind. Overall, current AI users are reaping significant benefits and are seeing the positive impacts of AI.

These are the areas where AI presents the highest-return solutions:

Time Savings

82% of creative professionals who use AI for content report that it has streamlined their processes, allowing them to focus more on creativity and less on manual tasks. Entry-level employees were 13% more likely than those in top-level management to say this.

Campaign Optimization

AI empowers creative professionals, with 39% of those who use it for content reporting campaign optimization as a significant benefit, and those in top-level management were 31% more likely than average to report this.

Reduced Expenses

Additionally, 35% of those who use AI for content note reduced expenses, and those in top-level management were 46% more likely than average to report this.

AI Solutions by the Numbers

Creatives are recognizing the potential of AI to enhance their work. **88% say that AI has increased the ROI** of their work by freeing up time for more meaningful tasks.

78%
Believe AI can increase their revenue

56%
Say their company has increased their AI budget

59%
Report implementing AI solutions into workflows

AI is Transforming Today's Work for Marketers

6 out of 10 marketers and creatives are leveraging AI in their workflows and 86% of marketing users report higher levels of job satisfaction, as AI streamlines their tasks and frees up more time for strategic thinking and creativity.

Marketers and creatives are seeing significant benefits in time saved on content using AI. Here is a breakdown of the ways industry professionals are using AI in content and how much time they are saving per month:

- Content generation: **24 hours/month**
- Content management: **20 hours/month**
- Content distribution: **16 hours/month**
- Content analysis: **20 hours/month**

AI is Serving as a Catalyst for Innovation

Beyond solving challenges, 84% of AI marketing users are leveraging it to improve data-driven decision making in their content creation.

41% reported faster decision making and 52% reported spending less time on manual tasks.

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Teams Without AI Are Feeling the Burnout

55%

Increased company expenses

36%

Campaign performance issues

27%

Lead generation issues

24%

Bandwidth constraints across teams

Teams that aren't leveraging the power of AI are more often than not suffering negative consequences across the board:

Increased Expenses

32% of those who don't use AI have experienced increased expenses in the past 12 months, and those working in social media were 16% more likely than average to say this

Bandwidth Constraints

32% of those who don't use AI have experienced bandwidth constraints in the past 12 months

Campaign Performance

29% of those who don't use AI have experienced issues with campaign performance in the past 12 months, and those working in social media were 28% more likely than average to say this

The Future of AI in Marketing

Looking ahead, **82% of creative and marketing professionals believe that AI will redefine the future of branding and marketing.**

However, marketers and creatives also raised concerns around ethics, transparency, and bias that may impact the future of work.

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AI is More Prevalent in the Workplace

Increased investment in AI

56% say their organization has already increased its AI budget allocations over the past year. And 39% say their company has plans to invest in additional AI tools in the next year.

New Employer Expectations

81% of survey respondents believe that managing AI tools will be a key qualification in the future.

44% saying that new hires in their department are expected to have prior experience with AI tools.

AI Tools Training Gaps

New technology calls for new skills training, and too often, organizations are leaving staff behind. Despite investments, only 38% of marketers and creatives have received training when AI tools were implemented.

Potential is Growing in Generative AI

39% of marketing and creative professionals are **using generative AI for both written and visual content.**

21% of marketers who use AI for content, report leveraging generative AI for visual content and those in social media roles were more than 2X more likely than average to say this.

38% use generative AI for written content, and those working in marketing were 16% more likely than average to say this.

Responses Are Divided on AI Transparency, Ethics, and Bias

Embracing AI technology is not without its concerns. There is a shared sentiment that AI has a place in content creation but AI implementation needs to prioritize ethical considerations in content, marketing and branding.

66%
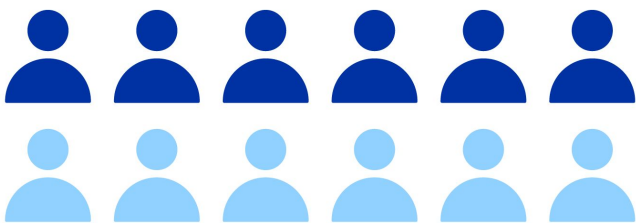Have concerns about AI's **ethical implications** in marketing & branding

71%
Expressed concerns **maintaining transparency** with AI-generated content

66%
Are worried about **bias** when using AI-generated content

50%
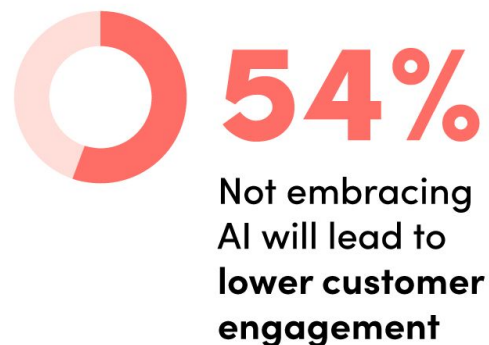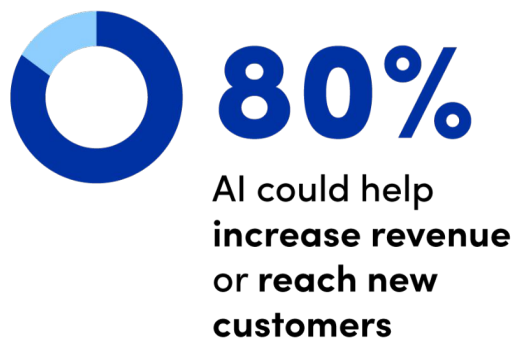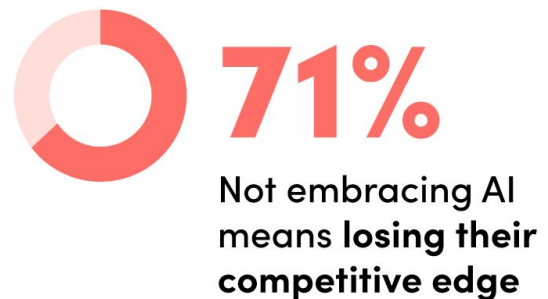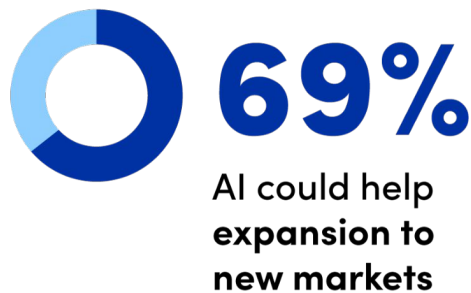of marketers do not trust the quality of AI-generated content for branding and marketing
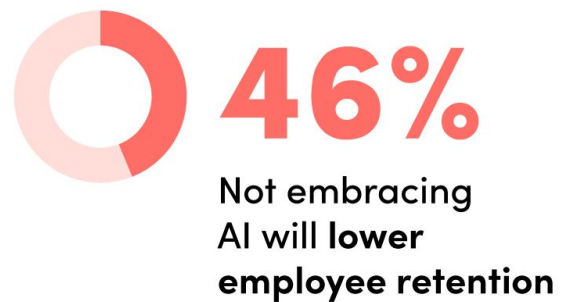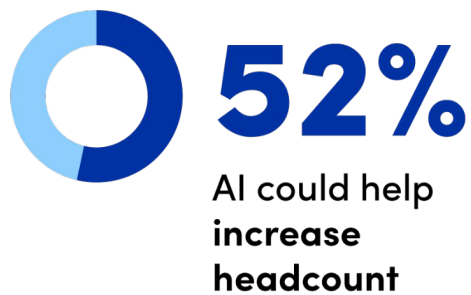
"What are your biggest concerns about the use of AI in your work?"

" **I am concerned with the ethical issues with using AI as well as legal copyright."**

Marketers Believe AI Rewards Outweigh Risks

The numbers show that marketing and creative teams believe that the benefits of AI are too great to risk getting left behind. Many believe that AI can help increase headcount, expansion into new markets, and increase revenue or reach new customers.

52%
AI could help **increase headcount**

46%
Not embracing AI will **lower employee retention**

69%
AI could help **expansion to new markets**

71%
Not embracing AI means **losing their competitive edge**

80%
AI could help **increase revenue** or **reach new customers**

54%
Not embracing AI will lead to **lower customer engagement**

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DAM Maximizes the Power of AI

Digital asset management tools are proving to be standout assets, especially when paired with AI technology.

52% say they use a Digital Asset Management system to facilitate their workflows.

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DAM is Empowering Marketers & Creatives to Do More with AI

Digital Asset Management tools are notably empowering marketers and creatives to do more, especially with AI technology.
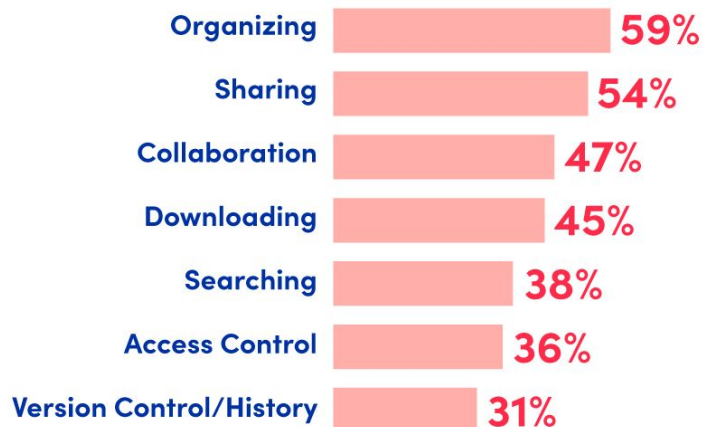
Notable Workflow Improvements

Here's where survey respondents saw the largest improvements:

- Productivity: 90%
- Quality of work: 84%
- Efficiency: 88%
- Work environment: 81%

88% of marketers and creatives also saw an increase in job satisfaction while 69% saw a decrease in workload.

DAMs Prove To Be An Essential Tech Asset to Marketers

Category	Percentage
Organizing	59%
Sharing	54%
Collaboration	47%
Downloading	45%
Searching	38%
Access Control	36%
Version Control/History	31%

Object 2: How are marketers using DAM tools?

Marketers and departments that adopt AI, especially those that leverage DAM with their AI technology, are slated to drive better results for their organizations, helping them expand to new markets, capture new customers and increase revenue.

Methodology

PhotoShelter conducted the AI: Brand's Next Frontier survey online between October and November 2023. The survey was conducted at 95% confidence with a +/- 4% margin of error.

Qualifiers

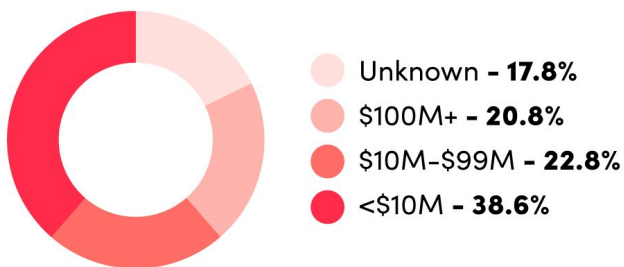To participate in this survey, respondents needed to meet the following criteria:

- Live in the US
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Work full-time as a marketing or creative professional (brand, social media, communications, marketing, design)
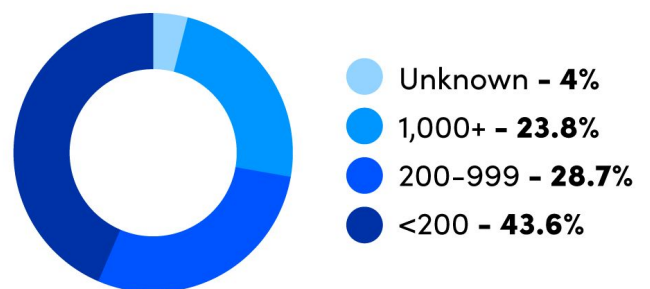
Respondents

- 601 respondents
- Male: 35% | Female: 63% | Non-binary: 1%
- Average age: 37 years old

Methodology: Company

Survey respondents represented marketing and creative professionals at companies of varying sizes and across a wide range of industries.

Unknown - **17.8%**
$100M+ - **20.8%**
$10M-$99M - **22.8%**
<$10M - **38.6%**

Company Annual Revenue

Unknown - **4%**
1,000+ - **23.8%**
200-999 - **28.7%**
<200 - **43.6%**

Company Size
(by number of employees)

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About PhotoShelter:

PhotoShelter is an industry-leading digital asset management solution that helps you organize, manage, distribute, instantly share, and collaborate with your team on digital content.

Thousands of organizations and enterprises globally like Delta Airlines, FreshDirect, IMG Golf, Wendy's, and more trust PhotoShelter with their success.

With the acquisition of Socialie, PhotoShelter is able to help brands activate the social channels of all their stakeholders via automated content distribution and better understand how social content is performing across partner channels to drive engagement.

We talk to marketing professionals every day about the hurdles they face depending on their content strategy and company goals.

Contact brands@photoshelter.com to get started.