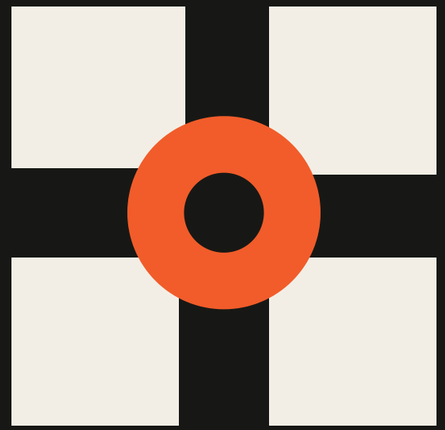
The changing shape of *marketing*

Data, AI and technology are reshaping marketing operations. Explore the structures emerging, the capabilities they need and the changing relationships between people, platforms, agencies and markets.



Future-ready marketing operations

Explore the *changing operation*

From the forces changing marketing to the evidence that helps us assess new approaches.

01 Why marketing is changing — SLIDE 03

02 Structures and capabilities — SLIDE 04

03 Agencies and markets — SLIDE 07

04 Governance and success — SLIDE 09

05 Following the evidence — SLIDE 11

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The possibility of a *fundamental restructure*

The working hypothesis: as AI reshapes engagement, production and operations, data, engineering and optimisation become strategic capabilities across marketing.

Engagement

How people use platforms and technology to discover, evaluate and engage with brands.

Production

How marketing teams create, adapt and evaluate assets using AI.

Operations

How teams activate, measure, coordinate and make decisions with AI, improving quality and speed.

Test whether these capabilities and the people developing them gain strategic authority.

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Different structures are *taking shape*

Two documented arrangements show how capability can sit within a marketing operation.

Chime: dedicated AI leads

A team within marketing owns AI initiatives from beginning to end, alongside in-house creative capability.

Thoughtworks: AI and Data in the CMO office

AI & Data moved from go-to-market operations into the CMO office. AI engineering graduates work alongside marketers.

These are emerging arrangements, with different contexts and limits.

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How do the functions *connect?*

Search capability is connecting more closely with the wider marketing operation.

HubSpot: a dedicated AEO team

Its CMO describes the team becoming more integrated with other marketing teams, including YouTube and Reddit activity.

Webflow: a wider search programme

The practitioner account describes contributions from brand, PR, community, content and customer marketing.

What to establish

Broader coordination does not by itself prove a new reporting line or greater strategic authority.

`Discoverability connects brand, product and experience.`

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Broader roles still need *expertise*

In a P&G experiment, AI-assisted individuals produced proposals rated similarly to those from pairs without AI.

What it tested

Product-innovation workshops involving 791 professionals, comparing individual and paired work with and without AI.

What remains open

Long-term team performance, specialist development and permanent organisational design.

What to follow

Role breadth, demonstrated skills, junior development and retained judgement.

`Task performance is one part of organisational capability.`

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Agency relationships are *part of the structure*

New technology can change how internal teams and external specialists work together.

CBA: shared internal delivery

CBA announced specialised CMOs alongside an expanded internal agency for creative, media, planning, delivery, content and social.

Perk: changed agency scope

Its marketing VP describes a content-operations role managing AI processes and localisation brought in-house, with unchanged content-team headcount.

Compare capability, responsibility and total cost alongside the agency fee.

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Global systems and *local expertise*

Coca-Cola's October 2026 announcement combines global creative and media arrangements with different regional media partners.

What can be shared?

Data infrastructure, asset libraries, production systems and measurement standards.

What needs market knowledge?

Language, cultural judgement, customer context, commercial relationships and local requirements.

Who can adapt the work?

Follow how global and local teams divide authority and resolve disagreements.

`Examine each capability before deciding where it sits.`

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Privacy shapes *the operation*

Connected systems require clear responsibilities across marketing, privacy, legal, security and technology.

Understand the data

Know what information flows between platforms, people and partners.

Assign responsibility

Identify who assesses a use, maintains controls and can intervene.

Maintain the arrangement

Build training, contractor controls and review into ongoing operations.

Governance is part of how the operation works.

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What would make a *restructure successful?*

The proposed assessment connects operational improvements with marketing effectiveness and sustained capability.

Commercial contribution

Demand, retention, contribution and agreed brand outcomes.

Delivery and economics

Cycle time, quality and total cost, including review and rework.

People and markets

Skills, development, retained judgement and local effectiveness.

`Record the baseline, timeframe, scope and competing explanations.`

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Keep the claim and *the evidence together*

Different sources establish different things. Follow an initiative beyond its first announcement.

Announced

Coca-Cola identifies partners and a future implementation date. Outcomes remain unknown.

Reported in operation

Chime describes an existing marketing AI team. Its performance claims remain company-reported.

Tested in a task

The P&G experiment tests an intervention. Its results have a defined setting and scope.

`A source can establish a change without proving its commercial value.`

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Building the evidence *over time*

The research will follow how marketing structures develop, what they deliver and what changes again.

Signals

Document qualifying developments and their evidence.

Field Notes

Explore the implications and test the working hypotheses.

Guide and advisory

Bring the evidence together and support particular choices as it develops.

`2027 is a restructuring hypothesis to investigate.`

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▼ Explanations and sources

01 / The changing shape of marketing

Research context: BCG CMO Survey, June 2026 (https://www.bcg.com/publications/2026/making-the-agentic-marketing-transformation-a-reality)

02 / Explore the changing operation

Research baseline: The CMO Survey 2026 (https://cmosurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/The_CMO_Survey-Topline_Report-2026.pdf)

03 / The possibility of a fundamental restructure

This develops a hypothesis formed in 2023. The three pillars describe where AI changes marketing; they are not a proposed organisation chart. Marketers with data, engineering and optimisation skills may gain a wider role alongside brand and communications. Technology adoption alone does not establish a restructure.

The Three Pillars Field Note (https://paulthinks.com/field-notes/ai-across-the-marketing-operation/)

04 / Different structures are taking shape

Company accounts establish the described capabilities. They do not establish a universally best model. Thoughtworks does not establish its previous reporting hierarchy or the budget authority attached to the new position.

Chime: marketing AI team, June 2026 (https://www.chime.com/newsroom/chime-cmo-vineet-mehra-on-ai-brand-evolving-role/)

Thoughtworks: operating model, February 2026 (https://www.thoughtworks.com/en-gb/insights/blog/generative-ai/rethinking-go-to-market-AI)

05 / How do the functions connect?

The first two examples describe practitioner accounts. The relationship between brand, product, experience and discoverability is the author’s working model. These sources do not establish that an SEO team moved into a brand reporting line.

HubSpot: CMO interview, July 2026 (https://agilebrandguide.com/hubspot-cmo-kipp-bodnar-on-brand-discovery-in-an-age-of-ai-search/)

Webflow: Vivian Hoang interview, May 2026 (https://www.masters-of-search.com/podcast/webflow-ai-search-playbook-vivian-hoang-aeo-seo-lead-webflow)

06 / Broader roles still need expertise

The final paper reports 776 complete-data responses from 791 workshop participants. This preregistered experiment concerns a defined task in one company, not permanent team design.

The Cybernetic Teammate, Organization Science, June 2026 (https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/orsc.2025.20702)

07 / Agency relationships are part of the structure

CBA’s announcement does not attribute the marketing restructure to AI. Perk’s practitioner account reports lower agency spending without quantified savings; total cost, language quality and commercial outcomes remain to be established.

CBA: marketing leadership announcement, October 2026 (https://www.commbank.com.au/articles/newsroom/2026/10/commbank-marketing-leadership-team-announcement.html)

Perk: Jada Balster interview excerpt, October 2026 (https://www.youtube.com/shorts/lgeReoBBi7o)

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08 / Global systems and local expertise

The questions are a proposed comparison framework. Coca-Cola's phased implementation begins 1 December 2026; results are not yet established at this edition's cutoff.

Coca-Cola: agency appointments, October 2026 (https://investors.coca-colacompany.com/news-events/press-releases/detail/1175/the-coca-cola-company-selects-agency-partners-to-accelerate-the-future-of-marketing)

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09 / Privacy shapes the operation

Existing APP 1 accountability applies now. From 10 December 2026, APP 1.7–1.9 add privacy-policy disclosures for covered entities when a computer program uses personal information to make, or directly and substantially support, decisions that could reasonably be expected to significantly affect an individual's rights or interests. The new threshold does not cover every marketing use of AI.

OAIC: APP 1 guidelines, updated September 2026 (https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles/australian-privacy-principles-guidelines/chapter-1-app-1-open-and-transparent-management-of-personal-information)

10 / What would make a restructure successful?

This is the guide's proposed assessment framework. Survey measures of performance provide context; they do not prove that a particular restructure caused an outcome.

The CMO Survey 2026: capabilities, jobs and performance measures (https://cmosurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/The_CMO_Survey-Topline_Report-2026.pdf)

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11 / Keep the claim and the evidence together

Coca-Cola: announcement (https://investors.coca-colacompany.com/news-events/press-releases/detail/1175/the-coca-cola-company-selects-agency-partners-to-accelerate-the-future-of-marketing)

Chime: company account (https://www.chime.com/newsroom/chime-cmo-vineet-mehra-on-ai-brand-evolving-role/)

P&G: field experiment (https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/orsc.2025.20702)

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12 / Building the evidence over time

Evidence cutoff: 3 November 2026. Planned monthly research includes follow-ups, failures and reversals. The source index below is one research baseline, not the source of the 2027 hypothesis.

Continuing research baseline: CMO Survey archive (https://cmosurvey.org/results/)