



# 2026

# GLOBAL COMMS PREDICTIONS



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# Introduction

The marketing and communications landscape is undergoing a profound shift shaped by the duality of AI and consumer demand for greater transparency. In parallel, marketers have gained a key seat in the boardroom as CEOs realize the clear value of communicating with their audiences.

Global advertising spend is on track to exceed \$1 trillion in 2025, a staggering number considering the latest [Gallup polls](#) show trust in "mass media" is at its lowest in five decades. For brand marketers, this paradox underscores the need to balance AI-driven efficiency with human authenticity. By 2026, [Gartner forecasts](#) that 70% of CMOs will prioritize predictive analytics over historic reporting, signaling a redefinition of value from storytelling in the present to building foresight for the future.



# The Cost of Chaos

CMOs and CCOs today face a cycle of challenges and are primarily responsible for the "cost of chaos" placed on their organizations. Whether brought on by ceaseless news cycles or shrinking attention spans, leaders are expected to pivot on well-intended plans instantly. The leaders emerging unscathed are those adapting strategies to stay both relevant and resilient.

## A minute to win it

A brand's response to a timely event is now mission-critical in a news environment where substance is fleeting. Brand leaders are investing in agile teams and advanced social listening to capitalize on current events rather than relying solely on long-lead campaigns. The approach is simple: connect in the "now" to maximize that moment for the longer term.

With audience attention spans averaging less than eight seconds, the key is agility and making audiences feel heard. Predicting consumer moves allows you to meet them in the moment before they even get there. Considering that 71% of consumers want brands to deliver relevant, personalized interactions, a moment-based strategy is necessary for long-term success.

# 71%

of people want  
personalized interactions  
with brands.



## Operating at the speed of brand

First mover advantage is no longer enough to break through the noise. It is nearly impossible for a brand to keep up without leveraging scalable AI across every phase of the customer journey. AI's real power lies in personalization and predictive analytics. For instance, Starbucks uses its DeepBrew platform to enable dynamic, individualized offers for millions of members.

Tech giants like Amazon and Netflix deploy AI recommendation engines that learn from user behavior to streamline everything from retargeting to A/B testing. According to McKinsey, scalable AI automation has enabled brands to cut customer acquisition costs by up to 25%, while Gartner projects that 30% of large enterprise marketing messages are now fully AI-driven.

# 30%

of enterprise marketing messages will be AI-generated by 2026 according to Gartner.





# Humans Trusting Humans

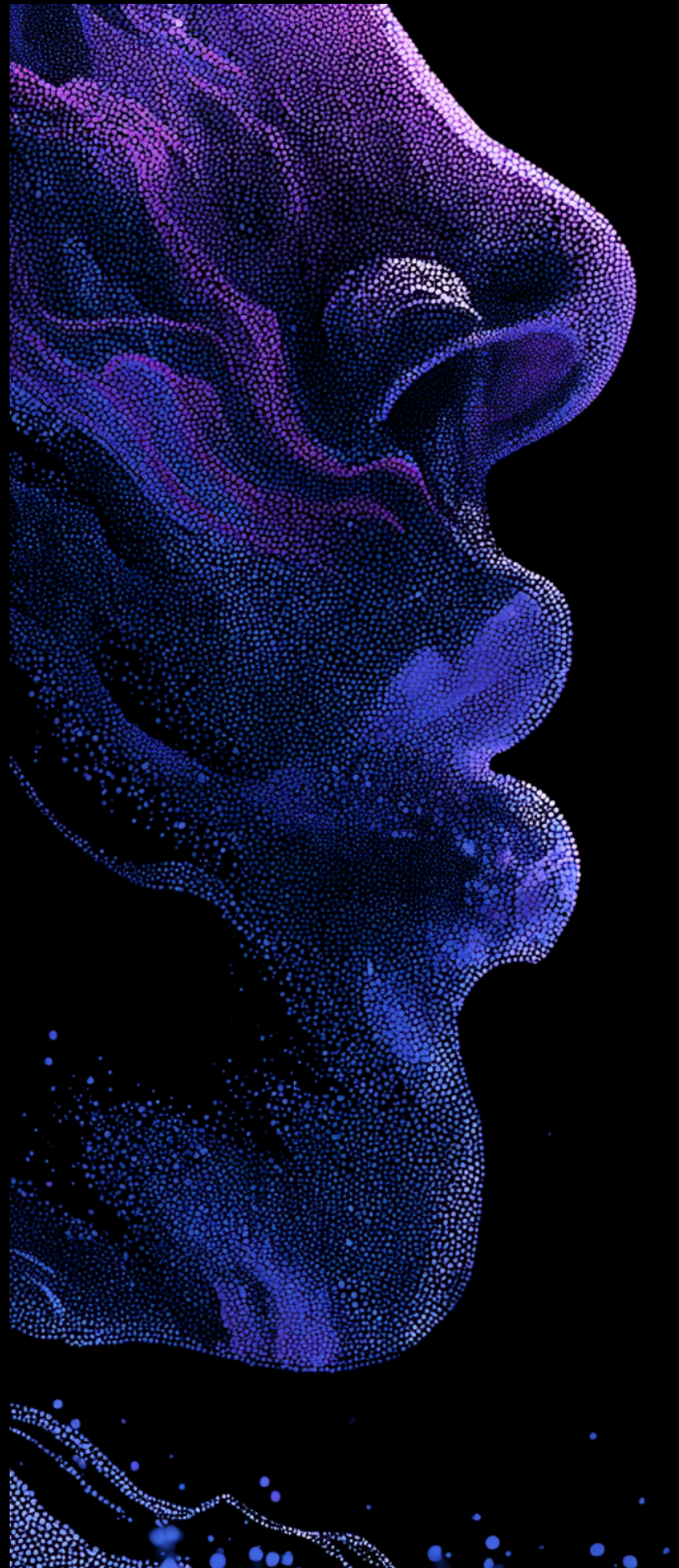
## The customer is always...human

As we enter an era where AI is shaping every touchpoint of the customer journey for a brand, the most successful brands are the ones that inject humanity into their messaging. Winning brands understand that technology should amplify human needs, creating experiences that feel deeply personal and familiar. Organizations are expected to leverage these emerging technologies while showcasing how their principles are adapting with them.

## Culture by design

When implementing new technology, brands must start with the humans who represent them: their employees. Building brand ambassadors is critical in a world where the C-suite is held accountable and culture is directly tied to company values.

When organizations invest in internal culture, the work naturally makes its way to external perception. Your brand message should be shaped by your values, as employees exemplify them in everyday interactions. Companies that successfully tie internal communications to external messaging will appear more authentic overall.



## AI on the board

Most critically related to the AI versus Human debate is governance. AI is driving conversations at the board level due to its ties to operational efficiency. Research from Forbes Advisor shows 72% of businesses have adopted AI, and it will create around 21% of US GDP by 2030.

Thriving brands will establish clear principles around brand humanity to ensure every AI interaction enhances human connection. Forward-thinking organizations are developing AI ethics frameworks that prioritize transparency and fairness. The future belongs to organizations that can harness AI while preserving "authentic intelligence," ensuring human needs are not left behind as technology pushes us forward.

*"Authentic Intelligence thrives on a well-educated, empowered population equipped to utilize AI strategically."*

**CEO of BRANDi and  
Companies**



# Looking Around Corners

## Always-on, outcome-oriented marketing

Marketing is no longer about moments in time; it is about systems in motion. The traditional campaign mindset is fading as CMOs face pressure to do more with less. Leading CMOs are designing perpetual growth engines powered by agentic AI that continuously learn and optimize toward business outcomes.

Communications must now move at the speed of innovation through "velocity branding," which pairs technical progress with narrative clarity. Successful CMOs connect creative energy with commercial performance to translate brand value into measurable growth.

## Designed for glass ball predictions

In a volatile economy, the best marketing leaders are evolving from storytellers to strategic sensors. The ability to predict what is around the corner is becoming a defining capability that embeds foresight directly into daily operations.

CMOs are working closely with finance and strategy teams to model multiple futures. Research from KPMG's [\*Futures Report\*](#) underscores that the fastest-growing companies use foresight tools to identify weak signals and align resources for what comes next. Strategic foresight is a necessity for brands that want to lead change rather than chase it.



## Find your people and partner

No brand can go it alone anymore. According to IBM, 73% of CMOs are leveraging ecosystem partnerships to expand market reach and access innovation. These alliances now extend beyond sponsorships into data sharing and the co-development of AI tools. The strongest ecosystems turn marketing into a collective advantage by creating shared intelligence that no single company could achieve alone.

## Move from reacting to anticipation

Reactive storytelling is not enough in a world where policy and sentiment change overnight. The next era of brand leadership will be defined by anticipation and the ability to forecast sentiment.

Reputation sits at the heart of that effort, with data from Deloitte and Echo Research showing brand reputation can account for up to 30% of a company's market value. Bain's B2B Growth Divide study reinforces that long-term brand building drives nearly twice the profit growth of short-term activation. CMOs who thrive will turn volatility into opportunity by combining storytelling, predictive analytics, and collaboration.

**In essence:** The future belongs to marketers who can think further ahead, act faster, and design for what comes next. The brands that learn to look around corners will be the ones that lead the next decade of growth.



# In Conclusion

For CMOs and chief communications officers, 2026 will be a critical year to show clear implementation of the technologies brewing over the past few years. To act on the latest data, these strategies will position CMOs for enduring success:

## Operationalize AI with Purpose and Precision

Move beyond pilots and treat AI as a core marketing system with clear ownership and compliance guardrails. By 2026, nearly half of all marketing efforts will be AI-powered. Focus initial implementation on audience discovery, creative versioning, and media optimization.

## Double Down on Real-Time, Moment-Based Engagement

Strengthen your ability to act when consumer attention is highest by integrating agile social listening. Companies like Nike and Zomato have shown measurable uplift by embedding real-time responsiveness into their playbooks.

## Prioritize Human Authenticity in Digital Brand Experiences

Use data to build authentic customer experiences that feel personal. Aim for communication that blends insight-driven prediction with real meaning to establish your brand as technologically advanced yet emotionally resonant.

## Design for Foresight and Continuous Growth

Shift from reactive planning to outcome-oriented marketing that evolves in real time. Leading CMOs are using agentic AI and scenario planning to anticipate change before it arrives, turning foresight into a true growth advantage.

### Learn more

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