

The background is a solid blue color with a subtle pattern of white dots and larger, faint white geometric shapes like triangles and squares. In the top right and bottom left corners, there are clusters of squares in various shades of blue, creating a pixelated or mosaic effect.

AI

and the Future of Marketing

A report by the humans at

Basis[®]
Technologies

Introduction

It's been less than two years OpenAI introduced the public to ChatGPT and officially ushered in the generative AI era, and the technology has quickly become the hottest topic in all of marketing.

Agencies and in-house teams have rushed to begin using new AI solutions in pursuit of greater efficiency, deeper insights, and creative inspiration, while adtech and martech companies have eagerly promoted their own AI capabilities in the hopes of cashing in on the buzz.

Amidst this flurry of excitement and activity around AI's potential, marketers and advertisers have begun facing a steady increase in pressure to demonstrate the impact of these new tools. Is AI, in fact, driving new levels of efficiency and facilitating stronger work? Are industry professionals still as excited about this still-emerging tech as they were a year ago, during its relative infancy? Do its many much-touted upsides outweigh a laundry list of potential risk factors? And how much of this AI hype cycle is just that: hype?

For this report, we surveyed marketing and advertising professionals from top agencies, B2B and B2C companies, non-profits, and publishers to see how marketers are using and feel about AI today, and to explore how the technology is poised to shape the industry going forward.

Survey of 141 marketing and advertising professionals conducted June 26 – July 23, 2024.

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How Marketers Are Using AI

Marketers have found a lot to like about generative AI, embracing its ability to identify patterns, offer predictive text, and generate images to inspire and enhance their work. Its capabilities have provided marketing and advertising professionals much-coveted efficiencies across a range of processes and tasks, leading to mass adoption at organizations throughout the industry and an increasingly positive outlook on the technology and its potential.



How are marketers and advertisers using generative AI to enhance their work?



ChatGPT *(Note: The following is AI-generated content)*

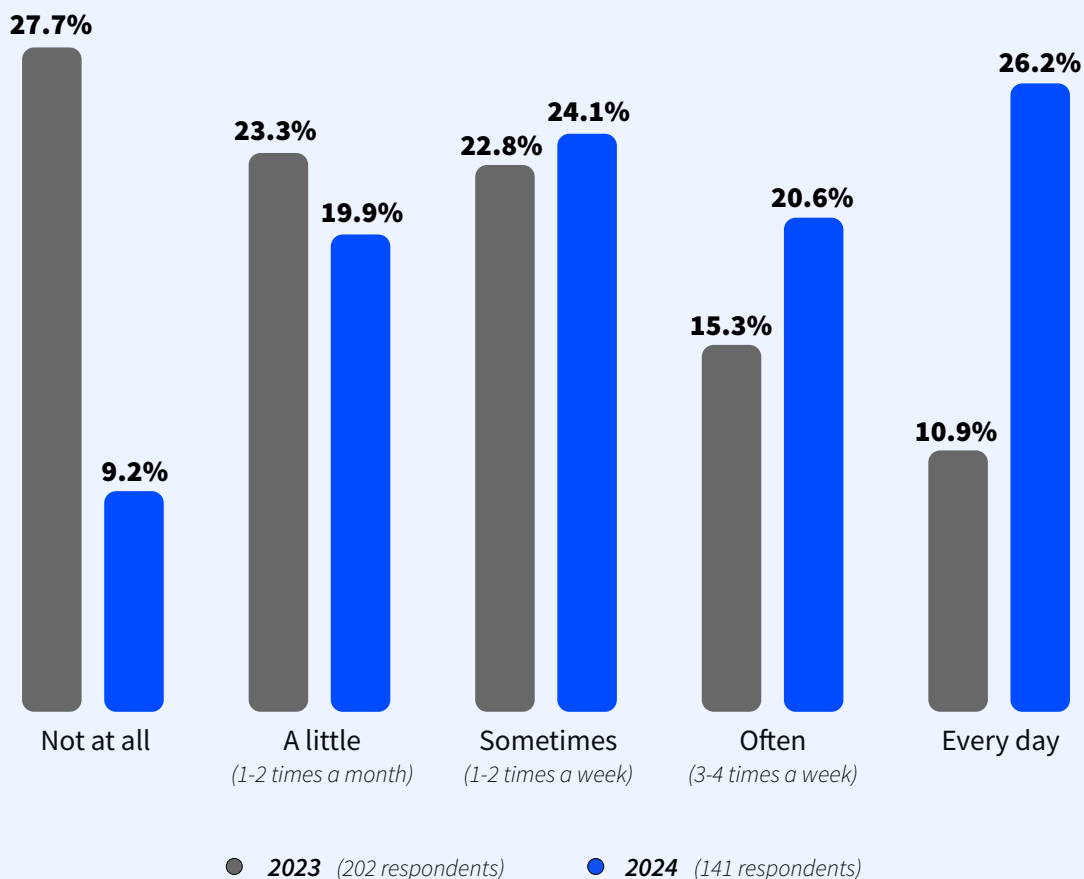
Marketers and advertisers are leveraging generative AI to personalize and automate content creation at scale. AI tools generate personalized ad copy, images, and videos tailored to specific audiences, enhancing engagement and conversion rates. Marketers use AI-driven analytics to gain insights from vast amounts of data, optimizing campaigns in real-time and predicting consumer behavior. AI also enables dynamic content adaptation, allowing ads to adjust based on user interactions and preferences. Additionally, chatbots powered by AI provide personalized customer interactions, improving customer service and satisfaction. These advancements streamline workflows, reduce costs, and increase the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

How Marketers Are Using AI

In the last year, generative AI use appears to have gone from “optional toy” to “requisite tool” for a vast majority of marketers and advertisers. More than 90% say they use generative AI as part of their digital marketing/advertising work at least once a month, and 70.9% use them at least once a week—up from just 49% a year ago. Additionally, more than one-quarter (26.2%) of industry professionals are turning to generative AI every day.

Meanwhile, the number of marketers that have been reticent to embrace the technology has shrunk substantially: Just 9.2% say that they and their organizations don’t use generative AI at all, down from more than a quarter of respondents (28%) in 2023.

Approximately how often do you or your organization use generative AI tools as part of your digital marketing/advertising work?

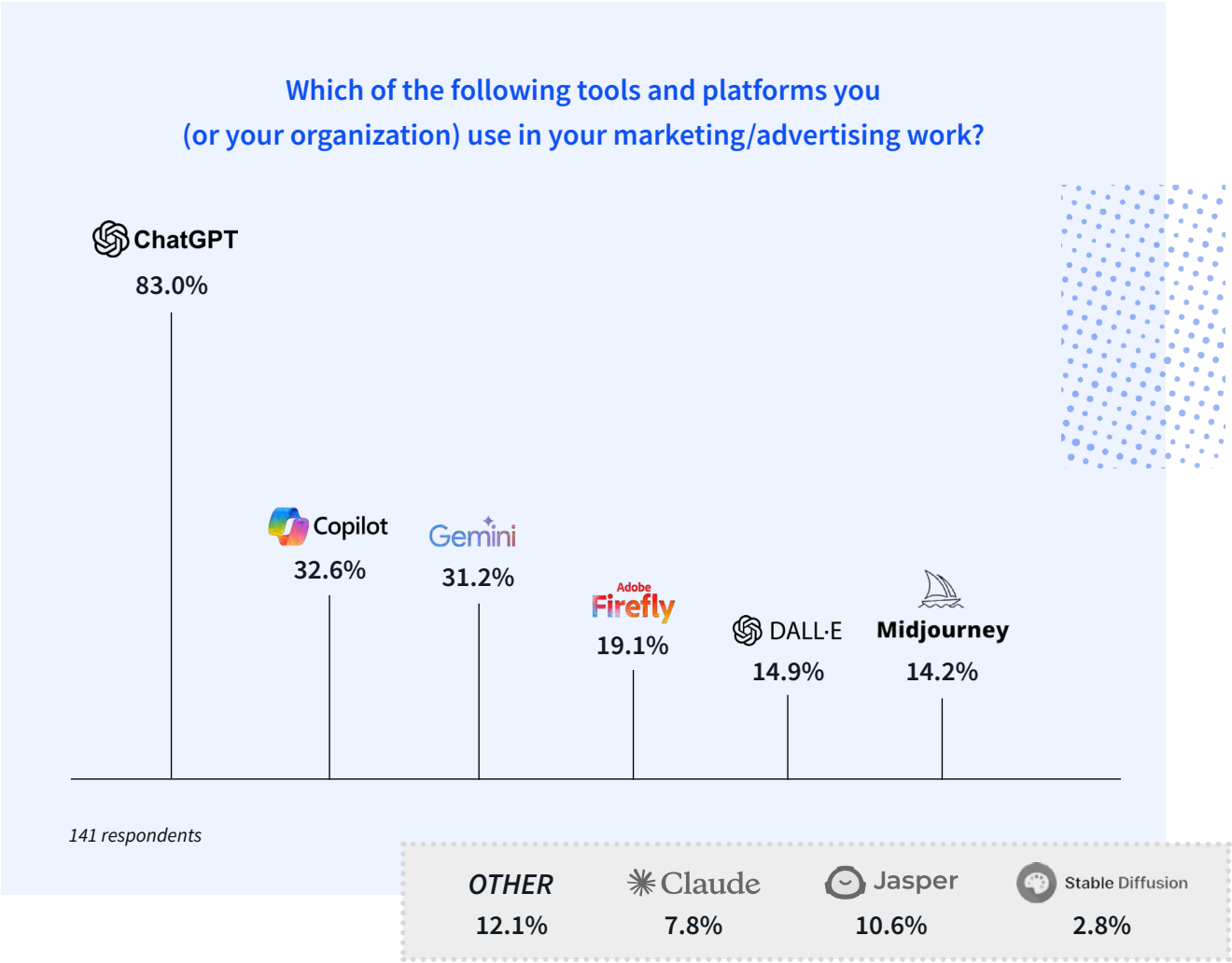


How Marketers Are Using AI

When it comes to generative AI apps, ChatGPT remains the most popular tool among marketing and advertising professionals by a wide margin, with 83.0% saying they or their organization use the pioneering platform in their marketing/advertising work, showcasing both the benefits of being first-to-market as well as the strength of the app itself.

The GPT-powered Microsoft Copilot is used by 32.6% of industry professionals, followed by Google’s Gemini (31.2%), which has made a large, splashy, and controversy-riddled entrance to the market.

Design resources such as Adobe Firefly AI (19.1%), DALL-E (14.9%), and Midjourney (14.2%) have also seen some adoption.

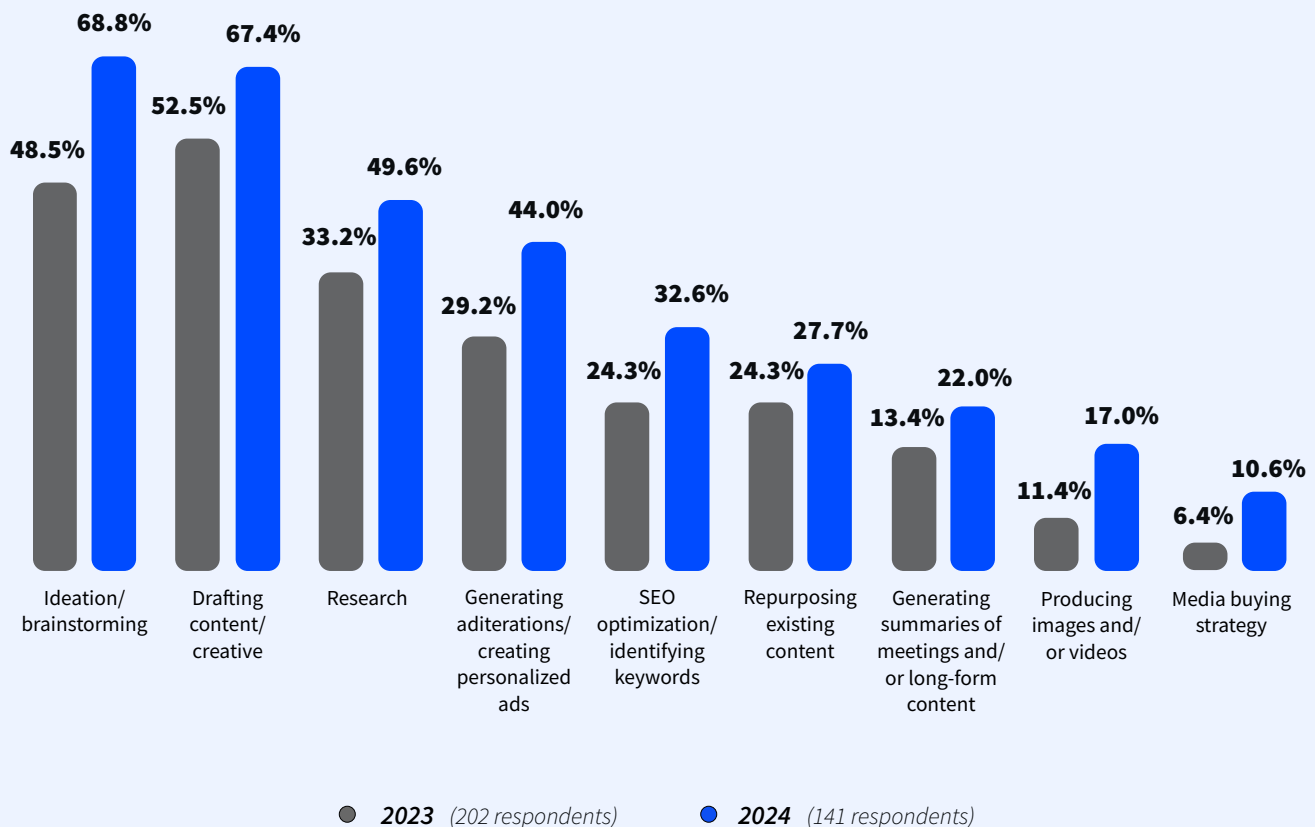


How Marketers Are Using AI

When it comes to how marketing and advertising professionals are leveraging generative AI today, more than two-thirds say they use it for ideation and brainstorming purposes (68.8%) and for drafting content/creative (67.4%). Nearly half (49.6%) of marketers are turning to generative AI during the research process—though hopefully they are verifying those findings elsewhere to avoid hallucination-related risks—and 44.0% are relying on it to generate summaries of meetings and/or long-form content.

Other top uses for generative AI include optimizing content for SEO optimization/identifying keywords (32.6%), repurposing existing content (27.7%), generating ad iterations/creating personalized ads (22.0%) and producing images and/or videos (17.0%).

For what types of tasks do you or your organization use generative AI?

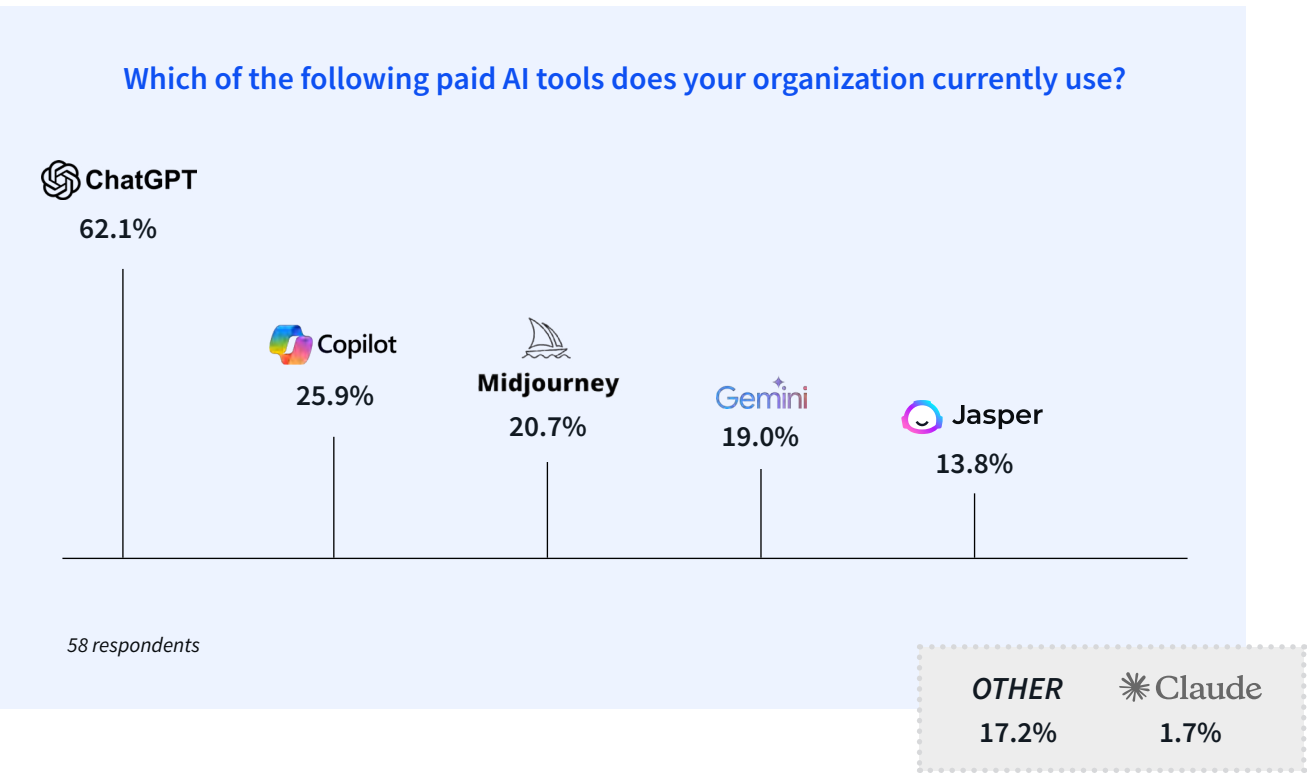


How Marketers Are Using AI

With generative AI now firmly part of many processes for marketers and advertisers, organizations are beginning to allocate budgetary dollars toward premium subscriptions. Just under half of marketers say their organization currently pays for access to generative AI tools.



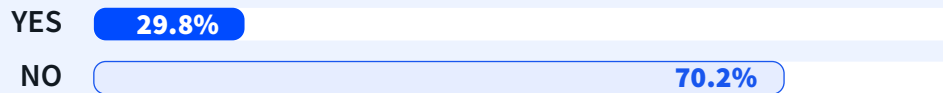
Among those who are paying for premium generative AI tools, GPT Plus is far and away the most popular paid generative AI solution among marketing and advertising professionals, with nearly two-thirds of respondents (62.1%) saying they or their organization subscribe to the OpenAI tool. Over one-quarter (25.9%) of marketers are using a paid version of Microsoft Copilot, while design powerhouse Midjourney (20.7%) and Google’s premium Gemini Advanced and Gemini Pro models (19.0%) are also earning marketing budgets.



AI and Content Creation

While an increasing number of marketing and advertising professionals have begun embracing generative AI as part of their content creation process (67.4% in 2024 vs 52.5% in 2023), most still view the resulting work as inferior to their own. Nearly three-quarters (70.2%) said they don't think AI-generated content is as good as their organization's human-generated content—nearly identical to last year (70.3%).

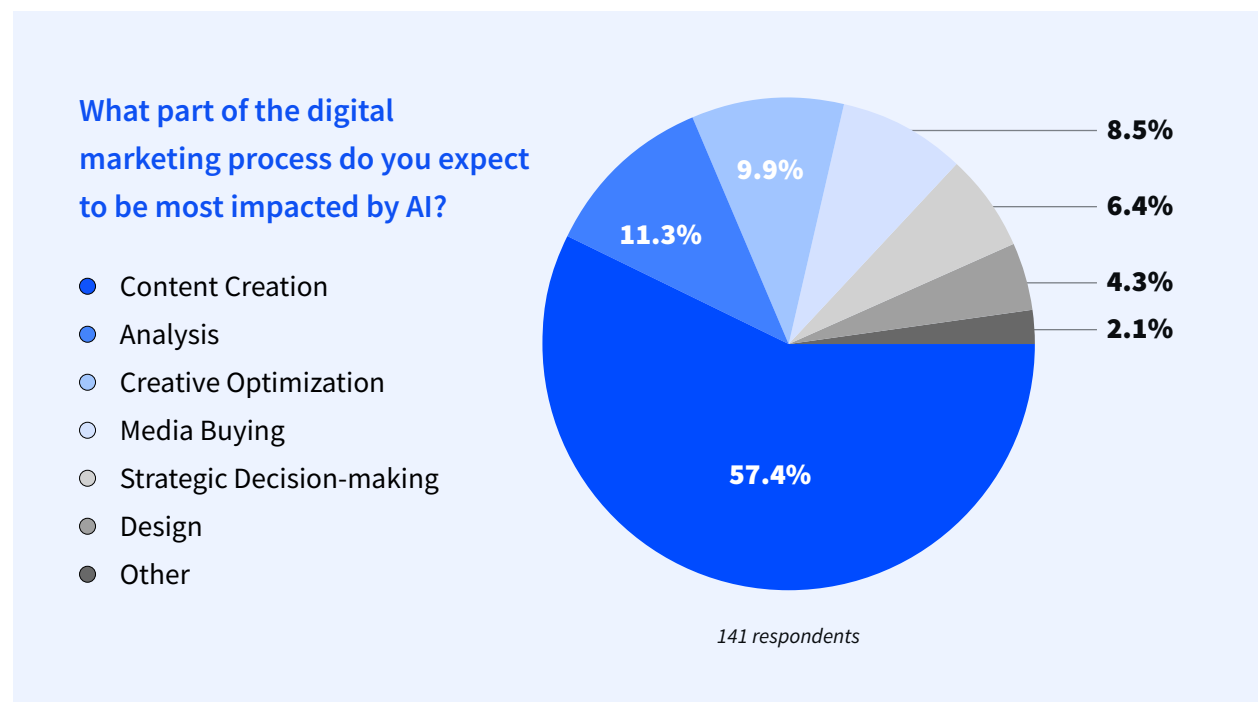
Is AI-generated content as good as (or better than) your organization's current human-generated content?



141 respondents

AI and Content Creation

Looking ahead, 57.4% of marketers see content creation being the aspect of the digital marketing process most impacted by AI. Much of this may well be recency bias and marketing, as the latest wave of AI has largely centered around the advent of chatbots like ChatGPT. However, given AI's propensity for pattern recognition and data processing, it's easy to imagine a world where analysis (11.3%), creative optimization (9.9%), media buying (8.5%), and even strategic decision-making (6.4%) are significantly impacted by the emerging technology.

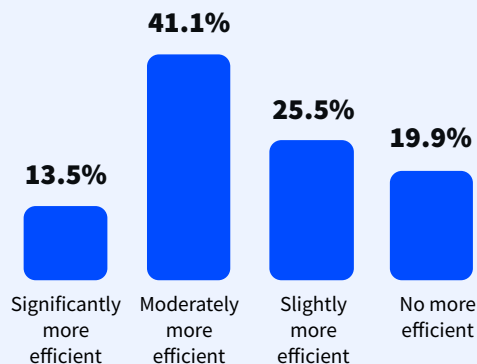


AI in Marketing: The Impact So Far

Generative AI comes with the promise of delivering new efficiencies for overworked marketers, allowing them to streamline processes and do more work (and better work) in less time. But has that hype matched the reality? For most marketers, the answer appears to be yes...at least, to an extent.

Four in five marketing and advertising professionals (80.1%) say AI has made them more efficient at their job, while just over half (54.6%) believe it's made them moderately-to-significantly more efficient. That does, however, leave 19.9% of industry professionals who say AI has made them no more efficient, indicating that optimal use of the technology to maximize its benefits is still out of reach for many organizations, often due to a lack of training or clarity around best practices.

Over the course of the last year, do you believe that
AI has made you more efficient at your job?



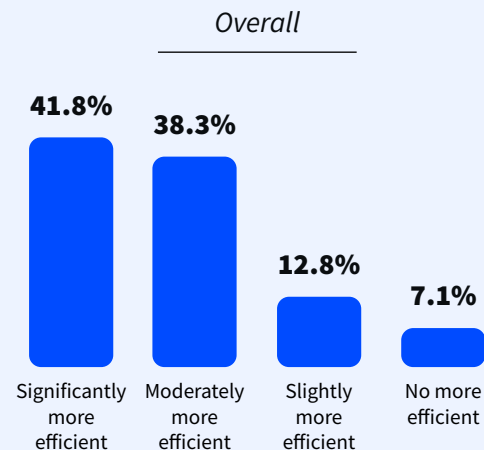
141 respondents

AI in Marketing: The Impact So Far

Looking ahead, marketers generally agree that generative AI will make them more efficient. The question, however, is just how *much* more efficient.

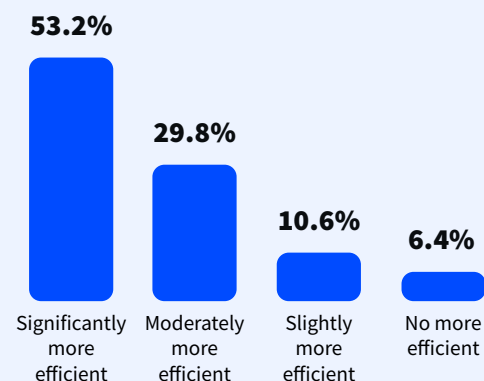
Overall, 92.9% of marketers say they believe AI will make marketers more efficient at their jobs within the next 3-5 years, with approximate four in five marketers (82.1%) believing that AI will make them either moderately or significantly more efficient. Notably, expectations around efficiency appear meaningfully higher among industry leaders, with 53.2% of C-Suite and VP-level professionals saying they believe AI will make marketers significantly more efficient vs. just 36.2% of entry-to-mid level employees—aka the people most likely to use the tech (or even, potentially, have their jobs replaced by it).

Do you believe that AI will make marketers more efficient at their jobs within the next 3-5 years?



141 respondents

Marketing and advertising leaders (VP-level and above)

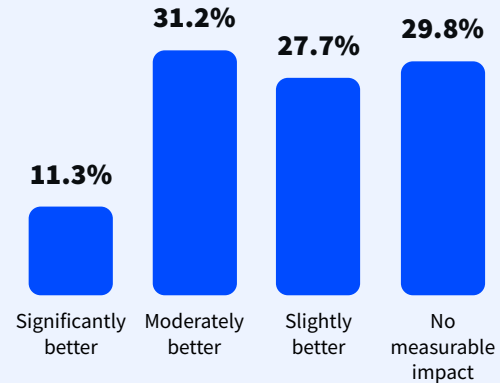


47 respondents

AI in Marketing: The Impact So Far

In terms of overall performance, over two-thirds (70.2%) of marketers believe AI has made them better at their jobs, with 42.5% saying it's made them moderately-to-significantly better at their jobs. Nearly one-third (29.8%) of marketing and advertising believe AI has had no measurable impact on their job performance, showing there is still ample room for AI-derived efficiencies and performance improvements across the industry.

Over the course of the last year, do you believe that AI has made you better at your job?



141 respondents

Looking Toward the Future

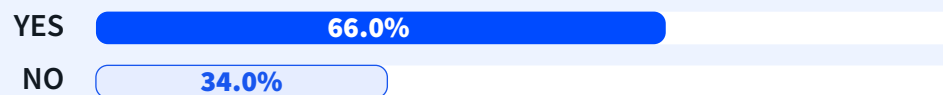
Part of maximizing the potential of AI will depend on organizations' willingness to invest in new technology to increase efficiency and support their teams. Marketing and advertising professionals appear to recognize this opportunity, with well over half of marketers (61.0%) saying their organization has invested in technology to automate or streamline processes within the last 12 months, while around two-thirds (66.0%) say their organizations have plans to invest in automation technology within the next 12 months.

Within the last 12 months, has your organization invested in new technology to automate or streamline processes?



141 respondents

Does your organization have plans to invest in new technology to automate or streamline processes within the next 12 months?



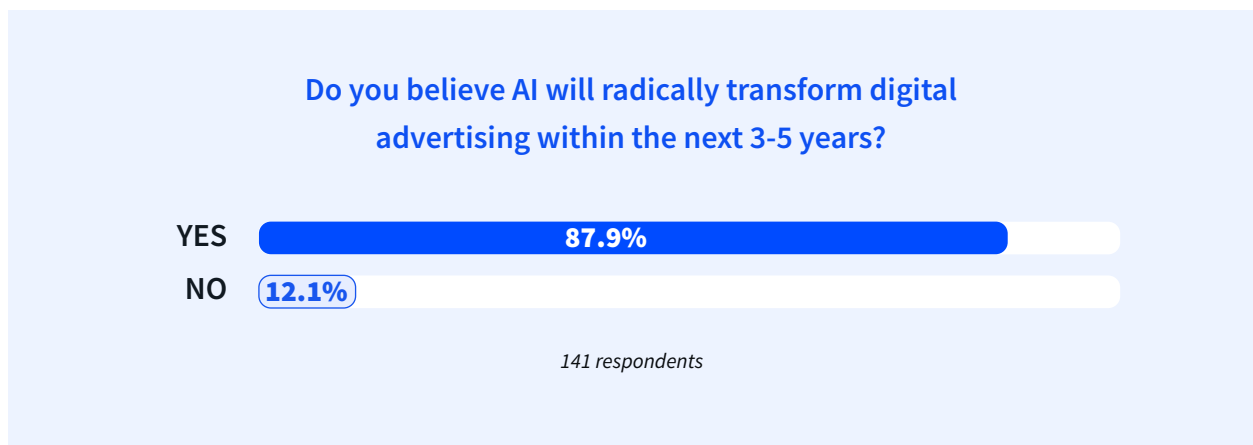
141 respondents

Looking Toward the Future

After just two years, it's become clear that AI could reshape advertising like nothing since the emergence of the smartphone.

AI tools have already found a home at the vast majority of advertising agencies and marketing departments, and with Big Tech giants like Microsoft, Google, Meta, and others investing heavily in the technology and swiftly infusing it in their suite of products, marketers appear convinced of AI's potential to revolutionize the industry.

An overwhelming 87.9% of marketing and advertising professionals believe AI will radically transform digital advertising within the next 3-5 years.



AI and Marketing: The Risks

For all the excitement over the many time- and money-saving possibilities that AI affords marketers, there are nevertheless some very real, very substantial risks to widespread use of the technology. From concerns around authenticity, to brand safety and misinformation landmines, to climate-damaging energy consumption, to insecurity around job security and more, increasingly widespread AI use in marketing and advertising is not without its perils.

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What are AI's
biggest risks to
marketers and
advertisers?



ChatGPT *(Note: The following is AI-generated content)*

AI's biggest risks to marketers and advertisers include privacy concerns, data security, and ethical issues. As AI systems increasingly handle personal data to deliver targeted advertising, they can inadvertently violate privacy regulations or misuse sensitive information, leading to legal and reputational risks. AI can also introduce biases in data analysis, resulting in discriminatory advertising practices that alienate certain consumer groups. The reliance on AI for automation can diminish creativity and human intuition in marketing strategies. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of AI technology might outpace the ability of marketers to keep up, potentially leading to a reliance on outdated or misunderstood tools. The spread of deepfakes and AI-generated content could also harm brand reputation by misleading consumers or creating trust issues. Lastly, excessive use of AI lead to job displacement, reducing opportunities for human workers in the marketing and advertising sectors.

AI and Marketing: The Risks

Well over half (60.3%) of industry professionals believe consumers will find a brand less authentic if it uses AI-generated content in its marketing or advertising efforts, up from just 55.0% last year after numerous brands waded through controversies that stemmed from AI-related ads¹. This presents a significant downside at a time when authenticity is valuable currency among Gen Z and millennials, among others.

Do you believe consumers will find a brand less authentic if it uses AI-generated content in its marketing or advertising efforts?

2024 (141 respondents)

60.3% YES

39.7% NO

2023 (202 respondents)

55.0% YES

45.0% NO

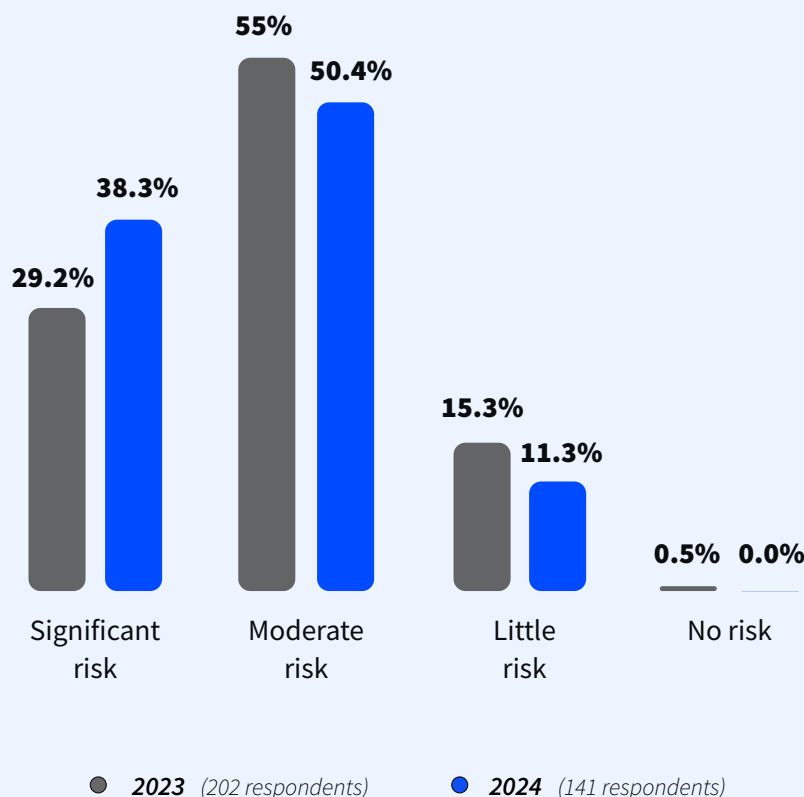
¹ <https://www.adweek.com/creativity/5-of-the-biggest-ai-ad-snafus-so-far/>

AI and Marketing: The Risks

Experts on misinformation have flagged generative AI as a potentially destructive presence that could lead to soaring rates of mis- and disinformation across the internet. To advertisers, this means escalating brand safety concerns—not to mention the headaches posed by publishing inaccurate content generated by AI on owned channels.

Marketing and advertising professionals have universally recognized these threats, with 100% of respondents agreeing that generative AI poses a brand safety and misinformation risk for digital marketers, and a resounding 88.7% calling it a moderate to significant risk. Notably, the number of marketers who say generative AI poses a significant brand safety and misinformation risk is up significantly year-over-year (38.3% in 2024 vs. 29.2% in 2023), demonstrating how one of AI's most pressing risks is already drawing more attention from across the industry.

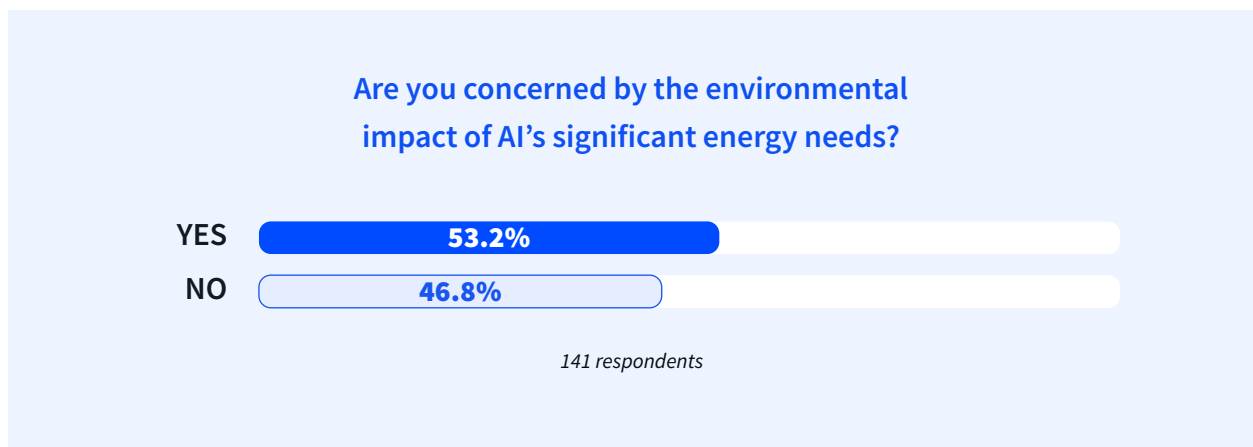
Do you believe generative AI poses a brand safety and misinformation risk for digital marketers?



AI and Marketing: The Risks

In a larger sense, the potential of AI—both upsides and downsides—extend far beyond the marketing realm. The AI industry’s own leaders and top experts have warned that the technology could pose the same risks to humanity as pandemics or nuclear war². More recently, experts have sounded the alarm on AI’s substantial energy needs³ and the associated impact on climate change⁴. At a time when companies and consumers alike profess to be especially attuned to their carbon footprint, this poses a significant risk to AI’s continued growth and sustained usage.

This sentiment is shared by a majority of marketing and advertising professionals, with more than half (53.2%) saying they are concerned by the environmental impact of AI’s significant energy needs.



² <https://www.safe.ai/statement-on-ai-risk>

³ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-ai-boom-could-use-a-shocking-amount-of-electricity/>

⁴ <https://www.technologyreview.com/2024/05/23/1092777/ai-is-an-energy-hog-this-is-what-it-means-for-climate-change/>

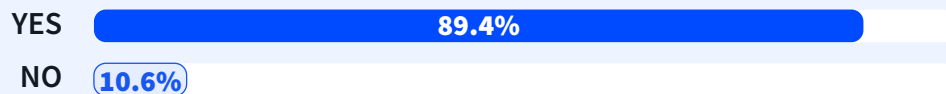
AI and Marketing: The Risks

While AI (and generative AI in particular) can sometimes feel like magic, the reality is that the technology is essentially pattern recognition on a massive scale, training computer models on mass quantities of data based on specific parameters and then using those models to create content with similar characteristics based on a user's prompt(s).

However, in order to train those models, companies have often taken significant liberties when it comes to data harvesting, scraping the internet for any and all published content and utilizing a vast amount of copyrighted works in the process. This has resulted in lawsuits from creators⁵ and publishers⁶ alike, and it's forced AI users to take a long second look at when, where, and how they deploy any AI-generated assets.

A whopping 89.4% of marketers say they are concerned by the copyright risks and potential legal liabilities that could come with the use of generative AI, showcasing the clear need for careful vetting, editing, and refining of anything creating with AI prior to usage.

Are you concerned by copyright risks/potential legal liabilities that could come with the use of generative AI?



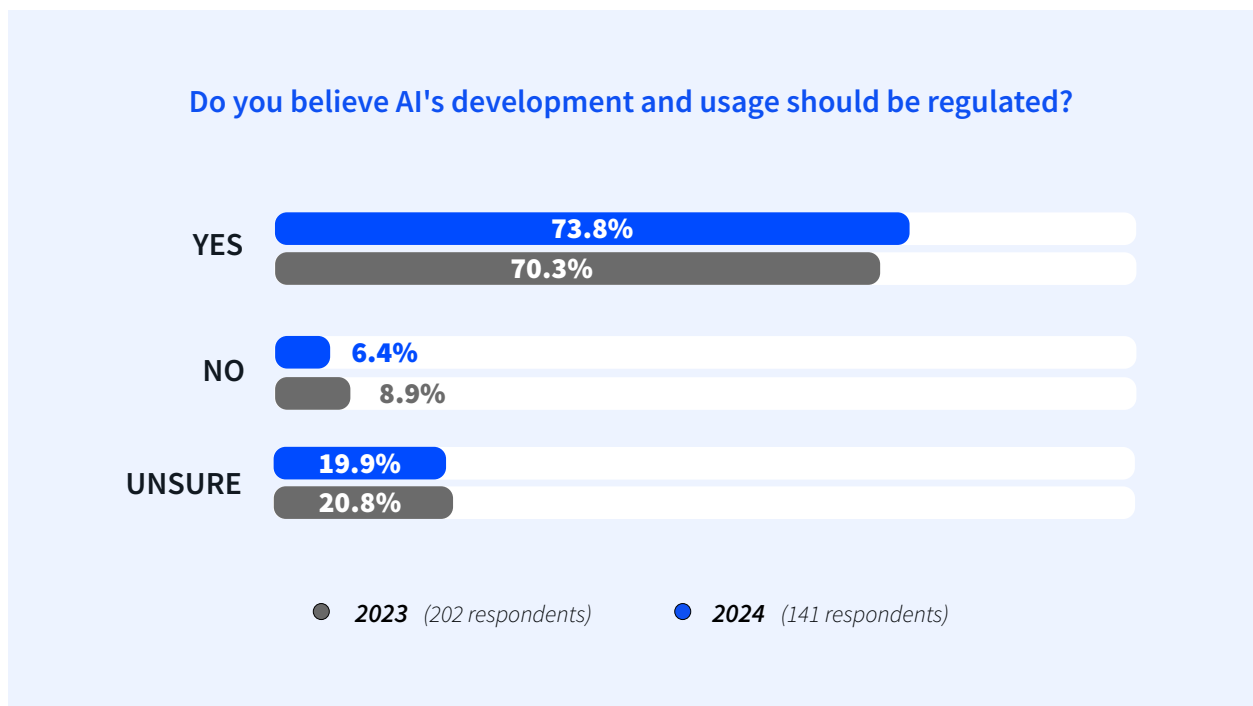
141 respondents

⁵ <https://www.theverge.com/2024/2/13/24072131/sarah-silverman-paul-tremblay-openai-chatgpt-copyright-lawsuit>
⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/business/media/new-york-times-open-ai-microsoft-lawsuit.html>

AI and Marketing: The Risks

Just as marketers are trying to determine the right balance between AI's upsides and downsides, so too are another key group of decision-makers: regulators.

Where does the industry stand on the issue? Nearly three-quarters (73.8%) of marketing and advertising professionals say they believe AI's development and usage should be regulated—up slightly from 2023—joining AI leaders and experts such as OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and Google CEO Sundar Pichai in calling on governments to set regulatory limits on the industry.



AI's Impact on Marketing Jobs

In under two years, generative AI has gone from non-factor to game-changer, and the technology has already begun to shape significant portions of the marketing and advertising world. In addition to its lauded efficiencies, AI has also begun usurping tasks that previously belonged to human beings, a sign to some of the technology's potential—and, to others, of perhaps its greatest risk.

More than one-fifth (21.3%) of marketers say their organization has replaced human tasks with AI solutions in the last 12 months, up sharply from just 10.4% in 2023.

Within the last 12 months, has your organization replaced any human tasks with AI solutions?

2024

21.3% YES

78.7% NO

141 respondents

2023

10.4% YES

89.6% NO

202 respondents

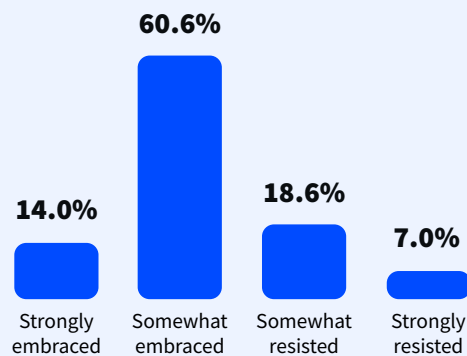
AI's Impact on Marketing Jobs

When it comes to reactions among workers themselves, a large majority of industry leaders say their employees have embraced the use of generative AI in their marketing and advertising work, including 60.6% who say their teams have somewhat embraced the tech and 14.0% who say their teams have strongly embraced its usage. However, the sentiment is not exactly universal, with just over one-quarter (25.6%) of marketing and advertising leaders saying their employees have resisted using the technology.

Leaders can earn greater adoption and buy-in from their employees by implementing effective training and best practices around the use of AI, instituting safety guardrails to prevent AI-derived risks, and by listening to employees' concerns around use of the technology to better understand and address their fears.

Have you found that your employees have embraced the use of generative AI in their marketing/advertising work?

Marketing and advertising leaders (VP-level and above)



43 respondents

AI's Impact on Marketing Jobs

Many of the greatest fears around AI stem from its potential threat to marketing and advertising jobs. As for how this risk is manifesting in the real world, it does appear that AI has slowly begun to reshape the marketing and advertising workforce. Notably, 18.6% of marketing and advertising leaders say they have used AI to replace human employees (and/or that have existing plans to do so at this time), up from 11.5% in 2023.

**Have you used AI to replace human employees,
and/or do you presently have plans to do so?**

Marketing and advertising leaders (VP-level and above)

2024

18.6% YES

81.4% NO

43 respondents

2023

11.5% YES

88.5% NO

52 respondents

AI's Impact on Marketing Jobs

Looking ahead, marketing and advertising professionals are growing increasingly optimistic about future human job security in an AI-driven world, though with the sentiment is far from conclusive. Less than half (41.1%) of all marketers believe AI will lead to substantial job losses in their industry within the next 3-5 years, down from 48.5% of industry professionals who felt that way in 2023.

Do you believe that AI will lead to substantial job losses in digital marketing within the next 3-5 years?

Overall

2024

41.1% YES

58.9% NO

141 respondents

2023

48.5% YES

51.5% NO

202 respondents

Notably, among industry leaders whose employees have embraced generative AI, that number is strikingly higher, with 53.1% believing AI will soon lead to substantial job losses.

Do you believe that AI will lead to substantial job losses in digital marketing within the next 3-5 years?

Marketing and advertising leaders (VP-level and above) whose teams have embraced generative AI

YES

53.1%

NO

46.9%

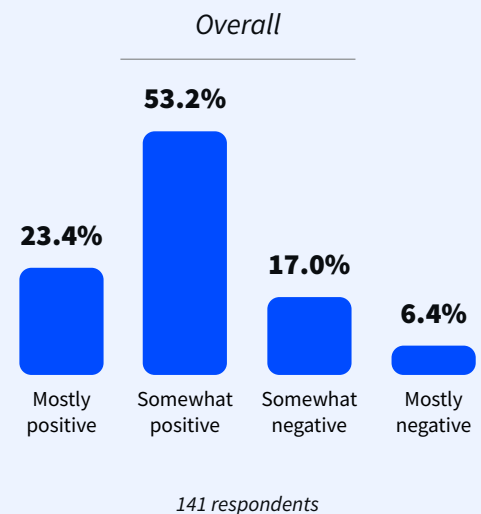
32 respondents

How Marketers Feel About AI in Marketing

When it comes to AI in marketing, the industry's outlook appears to be generally quite rosy. More than three-quarters (76.6%) of marketing and advertising professionals believe that generative AI will have a positive impact on their industry.

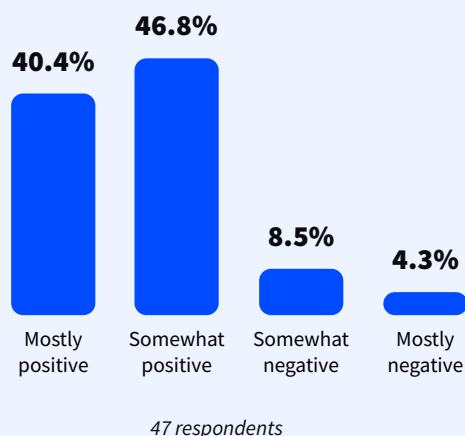
But simmering beneath the surface is a significant enthusiasm gap between decision makers and the entry-to-mid level employees who are much more likely to use the technology in their day-to-day work. While an overwhelming 87.2% of industry leaders hold a positive view of generative AI's potential impact on marketing and advertising—including nearly one-quarter of leaders who believe it will have a mostly positive impact—just 71.3% of those director-level and below feel the same, the overwhelming majority of whom feel that impact will be only somewhat positive impact.

What impact do you believe generative AI will have on the marketing/advertising industry?

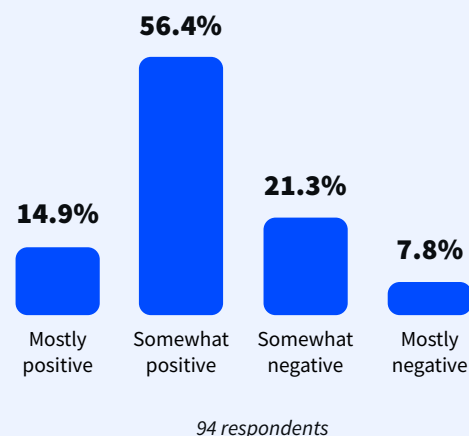


What impact do you believe generative AI will have on the marketing/advertising industry?

Marketing and advertising leaders (VP-level and above)

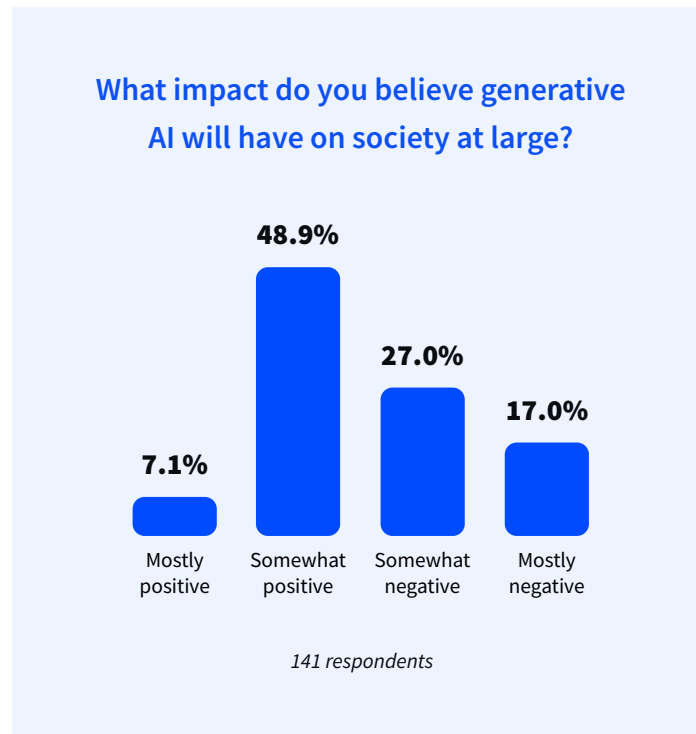


Entry-to-mid level employees (Director-level and below)



How Marketers Feel About AI in Marketing

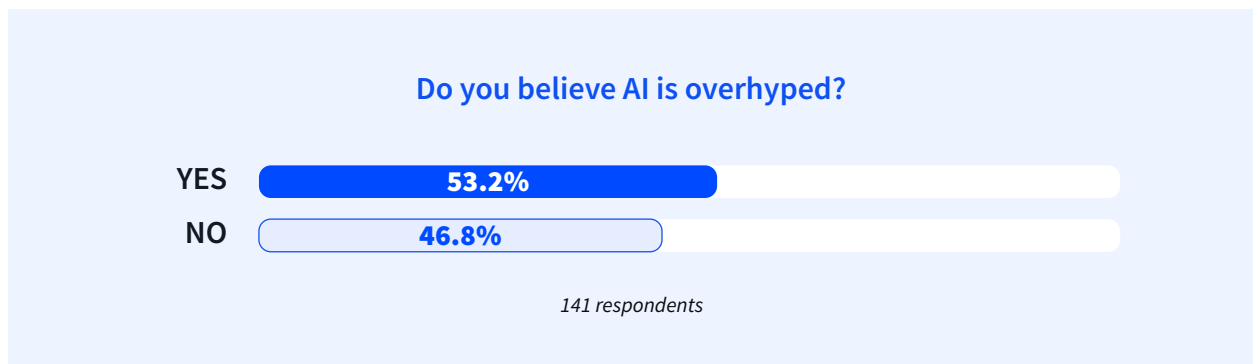
In a grander sense, marketers are significantly less optimistic when it comes to AI's potential impact on society at large. Sentiment is split fairly evenly on what impact marketers and advertisers believe generative AI will have on society at large, with 56% feeling positive and 44% skewing negative.



How Marketers Feel About AI in Marketing

Even when accounting for its vast and fairly immediate impact, there is a clear limit to what AI can do for marketing and advertising professionals (at least so far...) and marketers are growing increasingly skeptical of the revolutionary, pie-in-the-sky promises that many tech companies have been making about the still-emerging technology.

More than half (53.2%) of marketing and advertising professionals say they believe AI is overhyped.

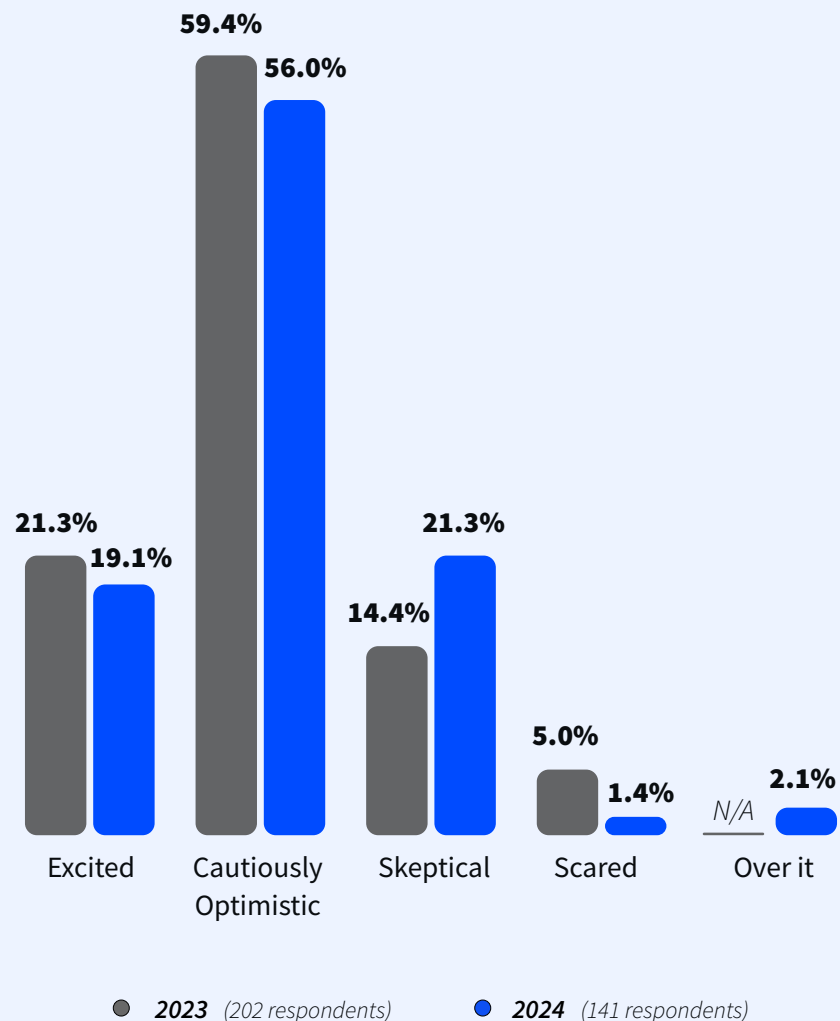


How Marketers Feel About AI in Marketing

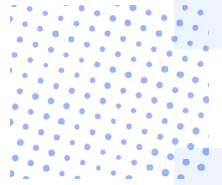
As for current attitudes on AI in marketing, the sentiment among industry professionals is largely positive: 56.0% say they are cautiously optimistic about AI, while 19.1% say they're excited about the emerging technology—both down slightly from a year ago.

That said, not everyone is sold on generative AI, and more marketers are today say they are primarily skeptical of the technology's potential in digital marketing (21.3% in 2024 vs. 14.4% in 2023).

What is your current attitude towards AI in digital marketing?



AI and Marketing: What's Next



The AI buzz in marketing is reaching a fever pitch. On the whole, marketing and advertising professionals appear to be adopting and embracing the technology, and they continue to be intrigued by its potential. Most of the industry is now using generative AI on a regular basis, many have begun to “delegate” some of their day-to-day tasks to AI-powered tools, and it’s all resulted in some much-desired new efficiencies across an array of processes.

However, despite these positive developments, skepticism abounds. More than half of industry professionals think AI is overhyped, and around one-third believe AI has had no measurable impact on their job performance. So while AI can offer marketers significant gains in efficiency and performance—the evidence of which is beginning to grow for early adopters—many of those gains remain untapped.

When it comes to AI’s potential impact, the data in this report also demonstrates a meaningful disconnect between the sky-high expectations of industry leader and the more muted outlook of their entry-to-mid level employees, who seem eager to take advantage of AI-driven opportunities but remain largely unconvinced of the technology’s ability to deliver anything more than incremental results. Marketing and advertising leaders who are enamored with AI’s potential and relying on the technology to produce new levels of efficiency and creativity into the workplace must first invest in the tools, resources, and training their teams will need to successfully achieve those goals. Otherwise, AI-derived growth will stagnate.

Organizations that take a deliberate, thoughtful approach to AI that’s adequately funded and rooted in best practices stand to make the most of the technology and will be best positioned to thrive in an AI-powered future.



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