

AI will transform practice of marketing

Marketers are increasingly using artificial intelligence (AI) for marketing applications. AI continues to be the buzzword du jour to describe a host of "intelligent" features aiming to augment the functions performed by marketers in their everyday jobs.



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Bryan Yeager, research director, Gartner for Marketers says: "AI has the potential to transform the practice of marketing in significant ways over the next decade-plus. As hype intensifies, marketing leaders must exercise patience, persistence and long-term thinking in how they approach the use of AI."

Individualised, contextual relationships

AI will power insight, intuition and scale to help marketers realise the long-held desire of building individualised, contextual relationships with each prospect and customer. Although several years away from being realised by even the most advanced marketers, the long-term effects of AI should not be underestimated.

According to a 2017 Gartner Research Circle survey, most organisations are investigating or developing a strategy for how AI will apply to their business. Customer engagement and digital marketing stand out as top areas where enterprises are running early AI experiments. An array of noteworthy applications used today will grow in prevalence over the next several years:

- **Conversational experiences:** Advances in natural-language processing (NLP) enable people to have increasingly conversational experiences with computers through text and voice. Current implementations are rudimentary, but as platforms grow more capable and marketers onboard more of their own data, individual conversations based on customer context will be delivered at scale.
- **Real-time personalisation:** Context, intent and journey stage are extracted from interactions to inform the delivery of tailored content, offers and promotions using propensity modelling, machine learning, machine vision and NLP.
- **Identity resolution:** Machine learning algorithms help sift through and map billions of ad impressions and hundreds of millions of device identifiers to provide marketers with greater confidence that the right message reaches the right person.

- **Marketing orchestration:** As AI takes on more campaign orchestration duties, the construct of the campaign dialogue or journey management workboard, where marketing specialists connect different triggers, channels and content, may become obsolete.
- **Augmented marketing analytics:** Easier-to-use analytical capabilities continue to expand across the marketing technology landscape, including natural language querying, natural-language contribution analysis, prescriptive actions and logo detection.

Next steps

Connect with other leaders in your organisation to ensure everyone has the same level of understanding of current AI projects. Prioritise inventorying and sharing data resources.

Focus near-term AI initiatives on data-centric, time-intensive marketing challenges. Predictive and prescriptive analytics that improve accuracy over time or testing and optimising thousands of different data and content variables are potential initial use cases.

The topic of AI in marketing and other verticals will be more broadly covered at the Gartner Symposium in Cape Town from 17 to 20 September.

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