

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE EVOLUTION OF MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS:
A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA**

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer limited to campaign automation and personalization; it is reshaping the very organization of marketing departments. While prior research has focused on consumer-facing applications, little is known about AI's structural and leadership implications inside organizations. This paper addresses the question: *How does AI reshape the organization of marketing departments?* Drawing on a systematic literature review of 104 academic publications and 45 industry reports, we identify eight dimensions of organizational change, including new departmental structures, cross-functional collaboration, reconfigured tasks, decision-making architectures, and shifting leadership roles. Our findings highlight AI as a structural and cultural driver that repositions marketing as strategically central and redefines the Chief Marketing Officer as a hybrid leader balancing technical expertise, ethics, and strategic vision. We contribute by reframing AI as a force of organizational transformation in marketing and outline a research agenda for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand and shape this change.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Marketing Organization, Organizational Design, Organizational Change, Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)

INTRODUCTION

The adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) has moved far beyond developer-driven tools to become deeply embedded in everyday business applications. What once appeared as a technical domain is now shaping strategy, operations, and leadership across industries. For companies, keeping pace with AI is no longer only about implementing new technologies; it requires rethinking processes, redesigning departments, and reconfiguring how people and machines work together. Among all corporate functions, marketing is particularly exposed to this shift. Positioned at the interface between customers, data, and technology, marketing departments face some of the strongest pressures for AI-driven adaptation (Bain & Company, 2025; Boston Consulting Group, 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2024a, 2024b).

This transformation also revives long-standing debates about the strategic role of marketing and the relevance of its leadership, especially the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) (Germann et al., 2015; Homburg et al., 1999, 2015). For decades, scholars and practitioners have questioned whether marketing is losing influence within the firm. The rise of AI now brings this debate into sharper focus. Marketing is no longer only about hyper-personalization or campaign automation. AI increasingly shapes how teams collaborate across functions, how decisions are distributed, and what leadership competencies are needed to integrate technical capabilities with strategic and ethical judgment (Cruz, 2024; Hermann & Puntoni, 2025a; Holm et al., 2023; Robertson et al., 2025).

Yet despite the visibility of these changes, the organizational implications of AI in marketing remain underexplored. Research has tended to emphasize consumer-facing applications such as content creation, while overlooking the structural and leadership shifts that AI triggers inside organizations. This paper addresses this gap by asking: *How does AI adoption reshape the organization of marketing departments?* In particular, we investigate how tasks, roles, and leadership responsibilities are shifting, with a focus on the evolving role of marketing leadership and the position of the CMO.

To answer these questions, we conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) that integrates insights from 104 academic papers and 45 practitioner reports. This dual perspective allows us to map how AI is reshaping organizational design in marketing and to highlight the CMO's changing role. We conclude by identifying key points of structural transformation and outlining a research agenda for scholars and practitioners navigating marketing's organizational future.

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

To examine how AI adoption reshapes the organization of marketing departments, we conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) that integrates insights from both academic research and practitioner reports. This approach allows us to capture not only the theoretical state of knowledge but also the rapidly evolving practices observed in managerial contexts. We followed established and state-of-the-art standards for SLRs as outlined in current marketing studies (De Keyser et al., 2020; Mehmood et al., 2023).

Database Search. The primary database was Scopus, selected for its comprehensive coverage of management and business research, as well as its methodological reliability. To ensure quality and relevance, we applied several filters: (i) English-language publications, (ii) journal articles classified within management, business, and accounting, and (iii) journals ranked ABS 3 or higher. This ensured that only high-quality, peer-reviewed sources formed the academic foundation of our review.

Search String. In line with establish standards (De Keyser et al., 2020; Mehmood et al., 2023), our search string was kept deliberately broad, combining terms related to AI (e.g., *artificial intelligence, AI, generative AI, genAI*) with those related to organizational change (*organizational/organisational change, adaptation, structure, transformation*) and marketing leadership (*CMO, chief marketing officer, marketing manager, marketing organization/organisation, marketing department, leadership, role transformation*). This enabled us to capture work not only at the intersection of AI and marketing but also studies focused on AI-driven organizational transformation and leadership more broadly. More precisely, our search string is

TITLE-ABS-KEY (((*"artificial intelligence" OR "AI" OR "generative AI" OR "genAI") AND ("organizational change" OR "organisational change" OR "organizational transformation" OR "organisational transformation" OR "organizational adaptation" OR "organisational adaptation" OR "organizational structure" OR "organisational structure")*) OR ((*"artificial intelligence" OR "AI" OR "generative AI" OR "genAI") AND ("CMO" OR "chief marketing officer" OR "marketing director" OR "marketing manager" OR "marketing organization" OR "marketing organisation" OR "marketing department" OR "marketing team" OR "marketing operations" OR "marketing ops" OR "brand manager" OR "product manager" OR "customer experience manager" OR "cx manager" OR "leadership" OR "digital leadership" OR "technology leadership" OR "innovation leadership" OR "ai leadership" OR "role change" OR "changing roles" OR "role transformation")*)))

Screening Process. The initial search yielded 122 publications. After title and abstract screening, we identified 70 papers as highly relevant to our research questions. We then conducted a backward search of references, which added 34 further studies. In total, 104 journal articles formed the core academic body of the review.

Triangulation With Practice Source. Alongside academic sources, we included 45 practitioner and industry reports published from 2015 to 2025 to reflect emerging practices driven by the rapid development of AI-related management. These reports served as a form of descriptive triangulation, offering practical insights that complement our academic findings. The reports focus heavily on recent developments (78% published between 2023 and 2025), primarily from leading consulting firms such as McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group, and Bain & Company. They provide insights into how firms are currently applying AI in organizational practice and highlight ongoing structural and leadership challenges. Managerial reports were not treated as equal empirical evidence. Instead, they were used to triangulate and contextualize academic insights on organizational change.

Analysis. After assembling the final corpus of 104 academic publications and 45 practitioner reports, we followed a structured, qualitative coding process to synthesize insights across the diverse sources. Inspired by the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013), we treated each publication as a data point and extracted relevant statements, findings, and arguments concerning AI's influence on marketing departments, organizational design, and leadership roles. In the first-order coding stage, we identified key concepts directly from the language of the reviewed sources (e.g., "AI enables cross-functional collaboration," "the CMO role is diminishing," "decision-making architectures require reconfiguration"). In the second-order coding stage, we grouped these concepts into broader themes that captured recurring patterns across studies (e.g., cross-functional integration, leadership transformation, task reconfiguration) that represent the structural and cultural dimensions of AI-driven organizational change in marketing. These categories form the foundation of our findings.

This systematic coding approach ensured that our review moved beyond a descriptive overview toward a theoretically informed synthesis. By combining academic rigor with practitioner insights, the coding allowed us to identify convergent themes, highlight tensions between theory and practice, and outline a future research agenda. To enhance coding consistency, the first author conducted the coding independently and discussed all ambiguous cases with a second senior researcher, ensuring shared interpretation of categories without inflating coding claims.

FINDINGS

Our analysis reveals that AI is not just a tool but a structural and cultural driver of organizational change in marketing. It repositions marketing as strategically central, transforms department structures into more modular, cross-functional forms, and redefines the CMO as a hybrid leader balancing technical orchestration, ethics, and strategic vision. More specifically, we find that AI reshapes marketing organizations in eight categories, which we identified as second-order categories in our coding of existing studies. Each category represents a cluster of organizational change supported by both academic and practitioner literature.

Marketing's Strategic Relevance. Over the past decade, the marketing department has gradually lost its influence due to operational focus and a significantly higher focus on financial matters. Even leadership positions like the CMO have diminished in importance for strategic decision-making, as many CMOs are being pushed out of the CEO's round table (McKinsey & Company, 2023). However, with the rise of AI, the relevance of marketing has been reignited. It offers new strategic leverage as it requires a strategic realignment of not only how marketing is done, but also how marketing needs to be positioned in a company's body (McKinsey & Company, 2024a).

New Structure Of Marketing Department. The advancement of AI has shown us that it enables a leaner and more flexible structure that breaks up traditional siloes. This increased the adaptability of specific departments such as sales, marketing, and IT. Departments are increasingly required to collaborate or even work together to form a single unit (Kolbjørnsrud, 2024). Moreover, this technology leads to a need to balance human-AI integrated teams that need to work together across all functions. AI is not being seen as a separate unit, but embedded in hybrid teams that collaborate (Bonetti et al., 2023).

New Role Of Marketing Across Functions. As traditional siloes among different departments will be broken up, marketing needs to work closely with IT, data science, and sales to leverage AI's full potential. Hence, a cross-collaboration requires a more efficient and seamless data sharing between separate departments (Fontaine et al., 2019; Olan et al., 2022).

New Task For Marketing Department. AI's capabilities and usability are evolving quickly and are already handling routine-based tasks (Ritala et al., 2024). This allows marketers to focus on relevant strategic judgment, creativity, and ethical considerations. The tasks and skills require redefinition with a leadership that develops AI literacy with knowledge about AI's possibilities and limitations to apply it strategically (Hermann & Puntoni, 2025a, 2025b; Robertson et al., 2025). Coding expertise is secondary, as AI is capable of complex coding itself.

New Organizational Leadership And CMO Role. Structural shifts in departments lead to fundamental changes in leadership roles and responsibilities. CMOs must combine technical understanding of AI with strategic awareness and act as intermediaries between AI and employees to maximize efficiency. The point is made that some key responsibilities, like ethics and brand reputation, should not be handed over to AI (Hermann & Puntoni, 2025b). Instead,

leadership should create decision-making frameworks that let AI play a supporting role (Cruz, 2024; Konsynski et al., 2024).

Role And Workflow Reconfiguration. Many people view AI as a competitor in today's workplace, primarily due to its reputation as a threat to jobs, which fuels employee skepticism. However, AI can also be seen as a valuable ally that enhances employee workflow. The level of acceptance depends on how it's governed and the culture promoted by senior leadership (Cruz, 2024; Ritala et al., 2024). Additionally, existing teams evolve with AI adoption, requiring continuous role adjustments rather than a one-time restructuring (Taherizadeh & Beaudry, 2023).

Decision-Making Architecture. Integrating AI into decision-making requires a clear structural framework in which interconnected structures, processes, and governance mechanisms enable organizations to define problems, allocate resources, and align their AI initiatives with strategy. Including people in AI decision-making will build trust and make adoption better aligned with people, tasks, structure, and technology (Konsynski et al., 2024; La Torre et al., 2023; Robertson et al., 2025). Hence, joint decision-making enables a systematic integration as it helps define problems and adapts workflows (Robertson et al., 2025). For example, Konsynski et al. (2024) created the Helix Model of Decision Journey, which represents cognitive reapportionment as a dynamic reallocation of decision rights. By using decision journeys that assign responsibilities based on deductive, inductive, or abductive reasoning, this approach helps organizations decide when and how to delegate authority to AI while maintaining strategic control and oversight (Konsynski et al., 2024). Responsibilities shift towards AI in data-driven, low-risk situations, but in ambiguous contexts, they lean towards humans.

New Ethical And Cultural Dynamics. Many questions emerge about the boundaries of AI autonomy, trust, transparency, and governance. People are often not prepared for the fast development of AI, which raises awareness of ethical rules and frameworks. Organizations must delineate clear boundaries to protect their companies and must inform all their people and customers. Ethical frameworks in transparent environments that build on trust are prerequisites for organizational acceptance of AI systems and faster adoption (Bankins & Formosa, 2023; Hermann & Puntoni, 2025b; Jarrahi et al., 2023).

DISCUSSION & OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our review advances research on AI in marketing by shifting the conversation from applications to organizations. While most AI-in-marketing studies focus on consumer-facing outcomes (e.g., personalization, content creation), we show that AI is also a structural and cultural force that reconfigures how marketing departments are organized, how tasks are distributed, and how leadership roles evolve. In doing so, we extend prior debates on the declining influence of marketing (Germann et al., 2015; Homburg et al., 1999, 2015) by demonstrating that AI not only halts this trajectory but may actively reverse it. AI positions marketing as strategically central, requiring flatter, modular, and cross-functional organizations.

Our findings further contribute to leadership and organizational research (Bailey et al., 2022; Germann et al., 2015; Joseph & Sengul, 2025) by highlighting the emergence of the hybrid CMO, which is a role that combines technical fluency with strategic orchestration and ethical stewardship. This reframes AI as more than an efficiency tool: it is a driver of organizational transformation that reshapes both structure and culture.

While AI offers significant potential for organizations, our review also highlights several constraints that marketing leaders need to face. First, AI-related decision-making introduces risks related to intransparency and explainability, especially when outputs influence strategic choices. Second, organizational readiness varies widely, and misalignment between marketing, IT, and data functions can hinder AI initiatives. Third, effective AI integration depends on strong data governance, which many organizations still lack. These factors underscore that AI-driven transformation is not solely beneficial and requires strong leadership.

Moreover, building on the eight categories we identified, we outline research directions that can guide scholars in deepening the study of AI-driven organizational change, as outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Summary Table: Implications For Further Research

Research Dimensions	Guiding Research Questions
Marketing's Strategic Relevance	How does AI reshape marketing's influence in relation to other functions (e.g., finance, operations)?
	Under what conditions can AI strengthen marketing's voice at the executive table?
New Structure of Marketing Department	What forms of modular or cross-functional design are most effective for integrating AI?
	How do firms balance centralization (AI centers of excellence) with decentralization (embedding AI in hybrid teams)?
New Role of Marketing Across Functions	How does AI affect interdepartmental collaboration, particularly between marketing, IT, and data science?
	What governance mechanisms enable effective data sharing across functional boundaries?
New Task for Marketing Department	Which tasks are most effectively delegated to AI, and which require human judgment?
	How should AI literacy and strategic creativity be developed as core marketing skills?
New Organizational Leadership / CMO Role	How is the CMO role evolving into a hybrid leadership position?
	What competencies and career paths prepare CMOs to integrate AI strategically while safeguarding ethics and brand reputation?
Role and Workflow Reconfiguration	How do employees perceive AI as a collaborator versus competitor?
	What leadership and cultural interventions foster acceptance of human-AI collaboration?
Decision-Making Architecture	How should firms design governance frameworks to allocate decision rights between humans and AI?
	Under what conditions should decision authority shift dynamically between AI-driven and human-driven processes?
New Ethical and Cultural Dynamics	How do firms build trust and transparency in AI-enabled organizations?
	What ethical frameworks best guide marketing leaders in defining boundaries for AI autonomy?

For practitioners, our review emphasizes that adopting AI is not simply about implementing tools but about managing organizational redesign. Firms must rethink structures, redefine workflows, and prepare leaders who can bridge technology, strategy, and ethics. The success of AI integration depends not only on technical implementation but also on cultural acceptance and governance frameworks that balance human-AI collaboration.

TABLE 2
Summary Table: Managerial Implications

Managerial Implications	Explanation
Marketing's Strategic Relevance	Position marketing as the integrator of data, technology, and customer insights.
	Elevate marketing leadership into enterprise-wide steering roles.
New Structure of Marketing	Shift to modular, hybrid teams blending marketing, data, and engineering talent.
	Build flexible governance systems enabling rapid AI deployment.
Cross-Functional Role of Marketing	Establish joint operating forums between marketing, IT, and data science.
	Implement enterprise-wide data-sharing protocols.
New Tasks for Marketing	Delegate routine tasks to AI and focus human effort on strategic evaluation.
	Build AI literacy and ethical judgment as core competencies.
Leadership and CMO Role	Develop hybrid CMOs balancing technical, strategic, and ethical responsibilities.
	Formalize ethical guardrails and human-in-the-loop oversight.
Role and Workflow Configuration	Communicate benefits of AI augmentation to reduce resistance.
	Continuously refine roles as AI capabilities expand.
Decision-Making Architecture	Create dynamic decision-rights frameworks for human-AI allocation.
	Assign responsibility based on risk, ambiguity, and reasoning mode.
Ethical and Cultural Dynamics	Develop transparent AI policies and training programs.
	Embed explainability and accountability into all AI-enabled workflows.

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