

Excel in Communications



2026

Marketing & Communications Survey

I. AI Use

II. Marketing Challenges & Priorities

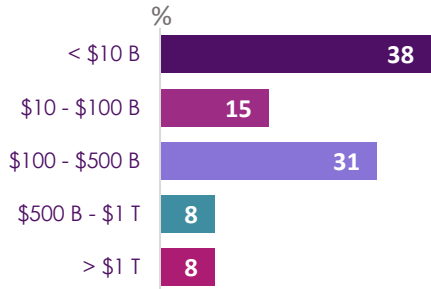
Conducted and Prepared by



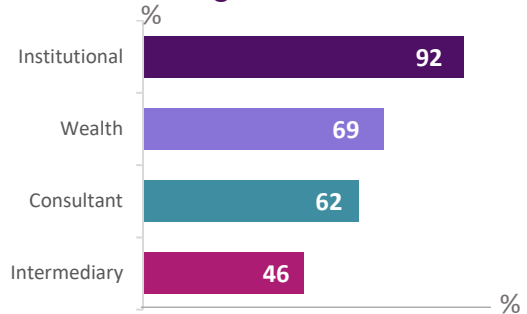
August 2026

Survey participants were diverse in terms of firm size, target markets, and roles.

Respondent Firms' AUM



Target Markets

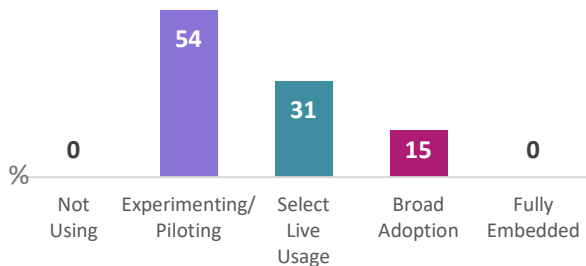


Work Areas



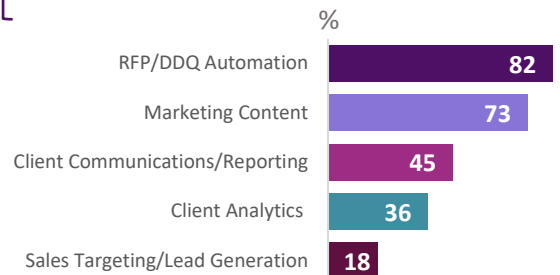
Firms' Use of AI in Marketing & Communications

While all firms reported using AI to some extent, none consider AI to be Fully Embedded. Most firms are in the Experimenting/Piloting stage with AI.



Where Firms Are Using AI in Marketing & Communications

AI is used most for RFP/DDQ Automation and Marketing Content.

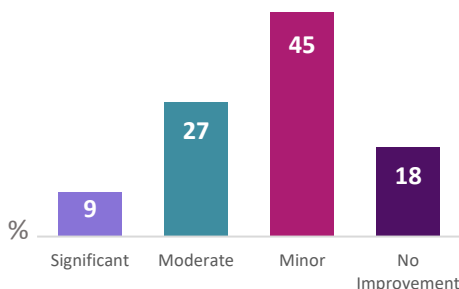


Comments

- Our AI approach emphasizes human accountability
- AI is considered across all functions as an accelerant, not a replacement
- Not that advanced as of yet to use in marketing/client communications
- Very conscious of regulatory issues

Level of Improvement

(Relevant to achieving firm's marketing and communication goals)



Although the initial gains from AI adoption have been modest, respondents expect that to improve as they expand AI use.

Comments

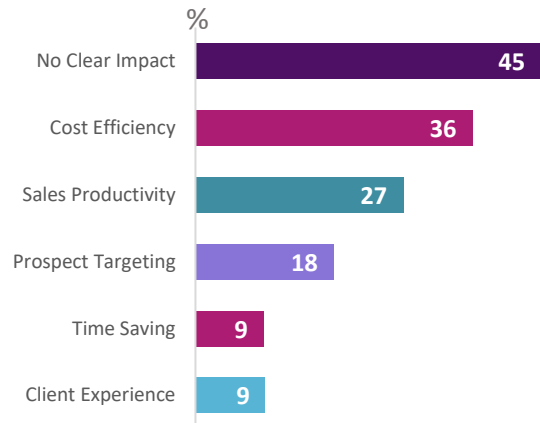
- We are still in exploratory testing phase with limited routine usage; we expect this response to move to Moderate to Significant in the next 6-12 months
- Just getting started on broader use cases and anticipate greater improvement in the coming months

Areas Where AI Has Had the Greatest Impact

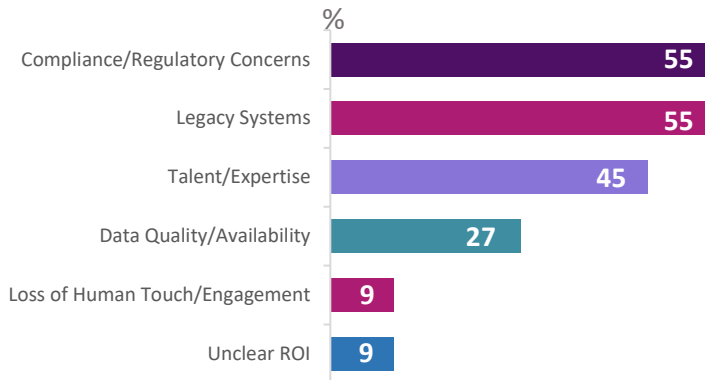
The majority of respondents cited **No Clear Impact** from AI use. **Cost Efficiency** was cited as a benefit for many.

Comments

- Cost Efficiency thus far; some vendors can be eliminated or streamlined in certain functions, especially RFP production
- Still too early to tell



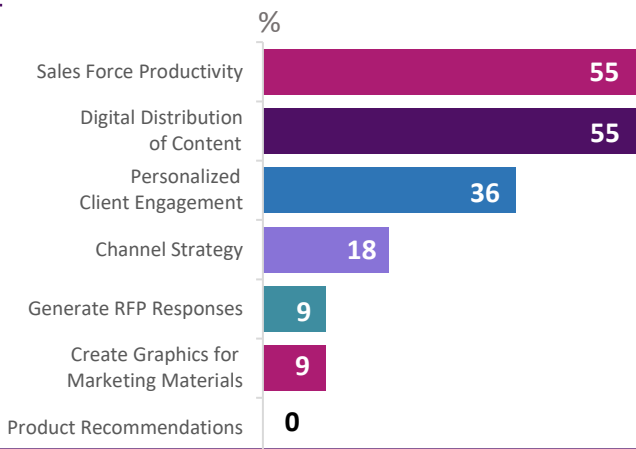
Biggest Barriers to Scaling AI in Marketing & Communications



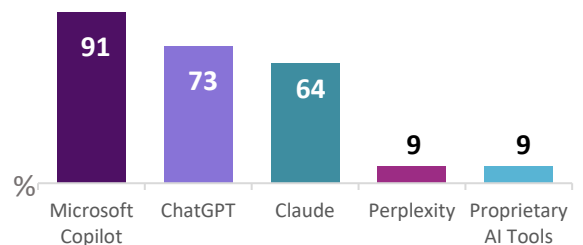
Not surprisingly, **Compliance/Regulatory Concerns** are one of the biggest barriers to scaling AI; **Legacy Systems** are cited as equally challenging

Where AI Is Expected to Have the Most Impact in 2 to 3 Years

Respondents expect the most impact from AI in **Sales Force Productivity** and **Digital Distribution of Content**



AI Applications Used at Work



Almost all respondents use **Microsoft Copilot** as an AI tool. **ChatGPT** came in second.

Comment

- AI is embedded in systems, such as Responsive and Seismic/Showpad

Where AI Adds the Most Value

Efficiency/ Time Savings

- Saving time by helping create, summarize, and organize information
- Tasks that would take hours can be completed more efficiently
- Increases the speed of execution of mundane tasks (client follow-ups; thought leadership pieces; contact management; email editing; manually searching the internet for content, competitive info, etc.)
- Data aggregation

Graphic Creation

- For internal presentations
- Improved charting and graphical representations

RFP/ Questionnaires

- Efficient process; quality responses

Improved Communications

- Easy grammar or sanity check when writing marketing content
- Integration of video and audio features

Research

- Prepping for meetings
- Summarizing research findings

Dissatisfaction with AI & Areas to Improve

Learning Curve

- Need time to learn and implement while still performing daily tasks manually
- Experience will resolve the issues

Number of Iterations

- The number of iterations can get frustrating; you can lose the spirit of your original version. (This will diminish as prompting improves.)

Lack of Objectivity

- Compliments your suggestions, which is counterproductive – you're looking for AI to make suggestions
- Can be overly agreeable and biased toward slight variations in prompt language, rather than purely objective

Internal Approvals

- Current limitations to internal data sets given data security concerns limits AI's usefulness significantly

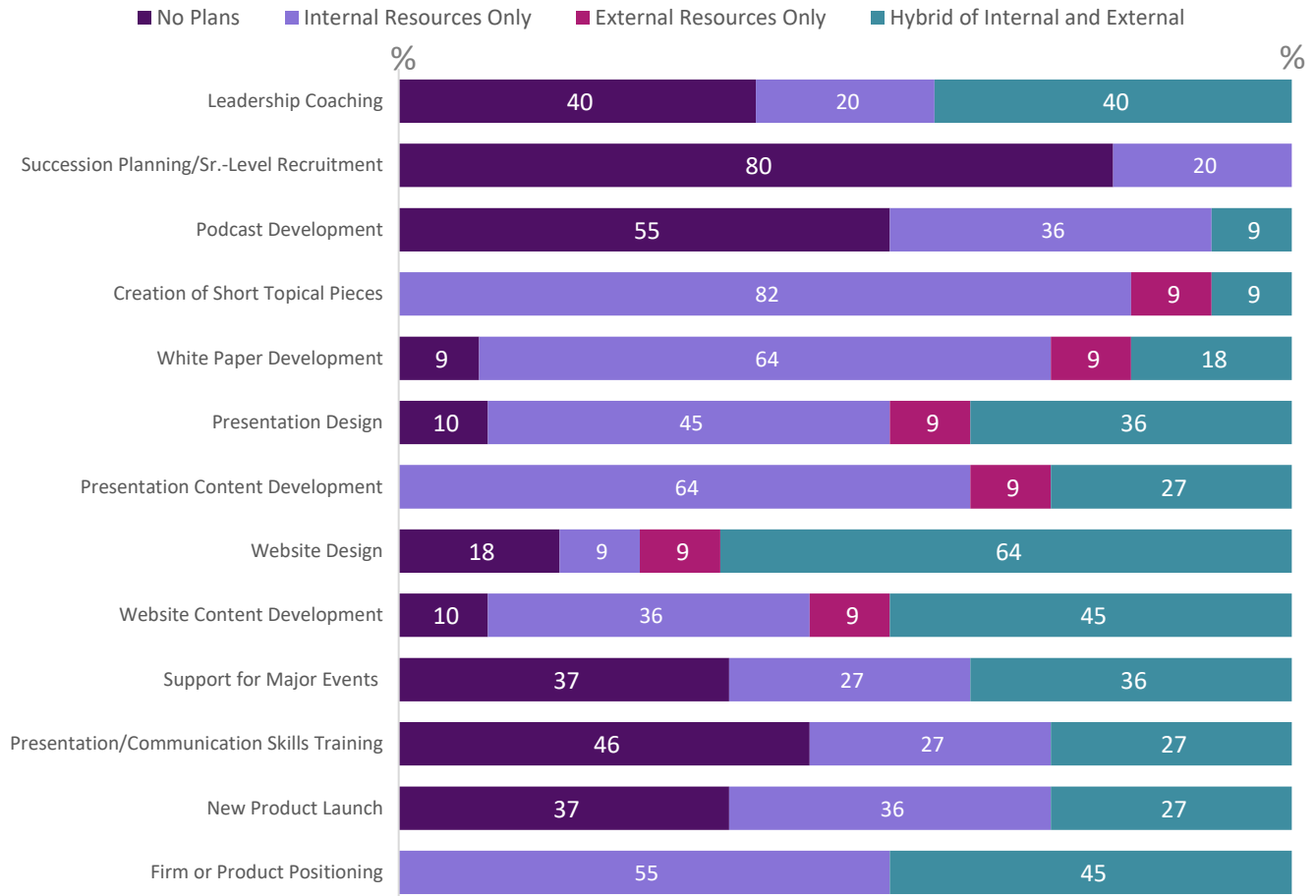
Tone

- AI doesn't always nail the human tone in its writing, despite using prompts to direct AI otherwise

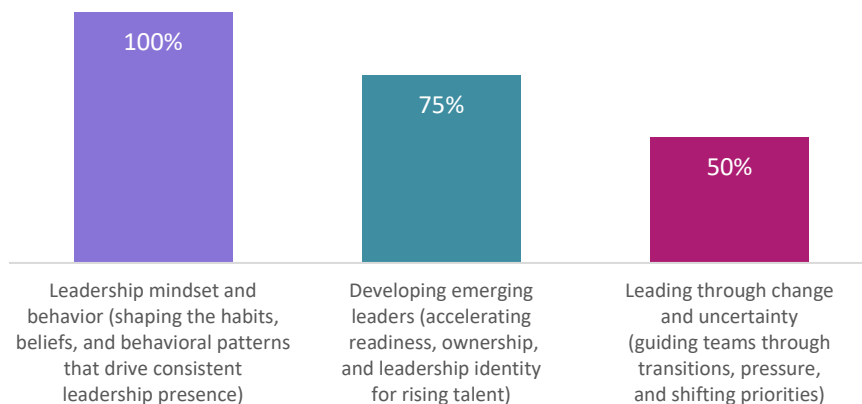
Lack of Capability

- AI doesn't do what AI companies said AI would do

Over the next 6-24 months, which of the following initiatives do you plan to undertake, and how will you resource them?



If you are planning some type of leadership coaching, which challenges within your organization would benefit most from external assistance/support?



Biggest Challenges Facing Participants

Resource Constraints

- Shortage of strong writers
- Small team; large opportunity set
- Absence of video capabilities
- Shrinking internal resources
- Client service team's marketing collateral needs exceed the marketing team's current capacity
- Lack of resources/competing with other parts of the organization for resources

Planning & Product-Related

- Clear business strategy
- Product alignment with current trends
- Niche product line-up
- Performance challenges

Marketing

- Product differentiation
- Finding ways to competitively position investment strategies in hyper-competitive categories
- Extending our reach

Learning & Development

- Lack of knowledge
- Discerning which conferences and other industry events to attend, as there are so many these days and hard to find which are most worthwhile
- Time limitations to learn AI

Rising Costs

- Costs
- Rising technology costs

Keeping Current

- Finding ways to reduce manual processes to keep up with a growing product set and a growing client base
- Landscape changing so quickly -- are we using the right tools, and will they be the right tools tomorrow?



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