



NEWS RELEASE

# New Research Finds AI Is Now Foundational to Modern Marketing

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AI's Impact on Marketing Doubles as Teams Move from Experimentation to Embedded Use

SAN JOSE, Calif. & SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- NetApp® (NASDAQ: NTAP), the Intelligent Data Infrastructure company, today announced its participation in a new marketing research study conducted by Callan Consulting, a Silicon Valley executive marketing consulting firm, joining 18 B2B and B2C technology companies to examine how AI is reshaping modern marketing organizations, marking a clear shift from early experimentation to embedded, enterprise-wide adoption.

According to the State of AI in Technology Marketing 2026 report, based on in-depth interviews with CMOs and senior marketing leaders at the participating companies, the study finds that AI is becoming rapidly integrated across core marketing teams and workflows—from content development and research to campaign optimization and analytics. As adoption deepens, data quality, accessibility, and governance are emerging as critical priorities.

"AI doesn't change what great marketing is supposed to do. It just removes the excuses for not doing it," said Gabie Boko, Chief Marketing Officer at NetApp. "When your data is clean, accessible, and trusted, your team stops managing chaos and starts making decisions. That's when you get to the work that actually moves the business."

The report highlights several notable changes since Callan Consulting's prior study dated November 2024, including the emergence of "Born in AI" companies that built marketing organizations around generative AI from day one, the rapid expansion of AI use cases across the marketing lifecycle, and the growing importance of new disciplines such as Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) as customers' buying patterns shift toward AI-driven interfaces.

While enthusiasm for AI adoption is high, marketing leaders also point to ongoing challenges. Many respondents cite difficulty measuring AI's direct return on investment, with benefits more often seen anecdotally in speed, output, and cost avoidance rather than traditional performance metrics. The findings also reinforce the danger of overreliance on AI and the importance of maintaining human oversight, governance, and input as AI-generated content becomes more prevalent.

"What's changed most dramatically since our last study is that AI is no longer treated as a bolt-on or side project,"

said Ed Callan, Chief Executive Officer at Callan Consulting. "Marketing leaders now view AI as a baseline expectation, similar to analytics or marketing automation. At the same time, we're starting to see signs of overreliance on the tools, with leaders recognizing that human judgment, creativity, and discipline are more important than ever."

Looking ahead, marketing leaders expect deeper AI integration over the next 12 months, including increased use of agentic AI, consolidation of marketing technology stacks, and continued evolution in how brands engage both human buyers and AI-driven decision systems.

"In an era of AI-driven content, marketers struggle to drive visibility and differentiation. Now with answer engines fast becoming the new way of search, it's an opportunity to put content back in the strategic seat—intelligent content that is structured, accurate, trustworthy, and accessible to everyone," said Jen Jones, CMO of Siteimprove and one of the contributors to the report. "Marketers will still need to be successful in traditional SEO, and AEO is the expanded discipline that moves beyond rankings and into answer engines."

The 2026 State of AI in Technology Marketing report is available now from Callan Consulting, at [www.callanconsulting.com/state-of-ai-report](http://www.callanconsulting.com/state-of-ai-report) and accompanying infographic at [www.callanconsulting.com/state-of-ai-infographic](http://www.callanconsulting.com/state-of-ai-infographic).

## **About Callan Consulting**

Callan Consulting has been helping leading technology companies bring products to market since 2000. The firm brings decades of marketing experience and has completed thousands of strategic marketing engagements for clients ranging from established global brands including Docusign, SAP, IDC, Google, and Amazon to Born in AI startups. Callan offers a broad range of product marketing services, including research, strategy, content, and sales enablement.

Callan's research services span both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and are used by clients to support thought leadership, inform product roadmaps, understand customer journeys and buyer behaviors, and develop personas and ideal customer profiles. With Callan Consulting's AI Enablement Service, the firm works with its clients to ensure they are making the best use of AI in their marketing organizations. AI Enablement service offerings include quick-start assessment and plans; AI tool market scan and selection; pilot implementation and support; skills training; and change management centered around adoption, measurement, and optimization.

Learn more at [www.callanconsulting.com](http://www.callanconsulting.com) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

## **About NetApp**

For more than three decades, NetApp has helped the world's leading organizations navigate change – from the rise of enterprise storage to the intelligent era defined by data and AI. Today, NetApp is the Intelligent Data Infrastructure company, helping customers turn data into a catalyst for innovation, resilience, and growth.

At the heart of that infrastructure is the NetApp data platform – the unified, enterprise-grade, intelligent

foundation that connects, protects, and activates data across every cloud, workload, and environment. Built on the proven power of NetApp ONTAP, our leading data management software and OS, and enhanced by automation through the AI Data Engine and AFX, it delivers observability, resilience, and intelligence at scale.

Disaggregated by design, the NetApp data platform separates storage, services, and control so enterprises can modernize faster, scale efficiently, and innovate without lock-in. As the only enterprise storage platform natively embedded in the world's largest clouds, it gives organizations the freedom to run any workload anywhere with consistent performance, governance, and protection.

With NetApp, data is always ready – ready to defend against threats, ready to power AI, and ready to drive the next breakthrough. That's why the world's most forward-thinking enterprises trust NetApp to turn intelligence into advantage.

Learn more at [www.netapp.com](http://www.netapp.com) or follow us on [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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