ADLIFT

CONTENT MARKETING 2026

How AI Is Rewriting Discovery, Engagement & Growth

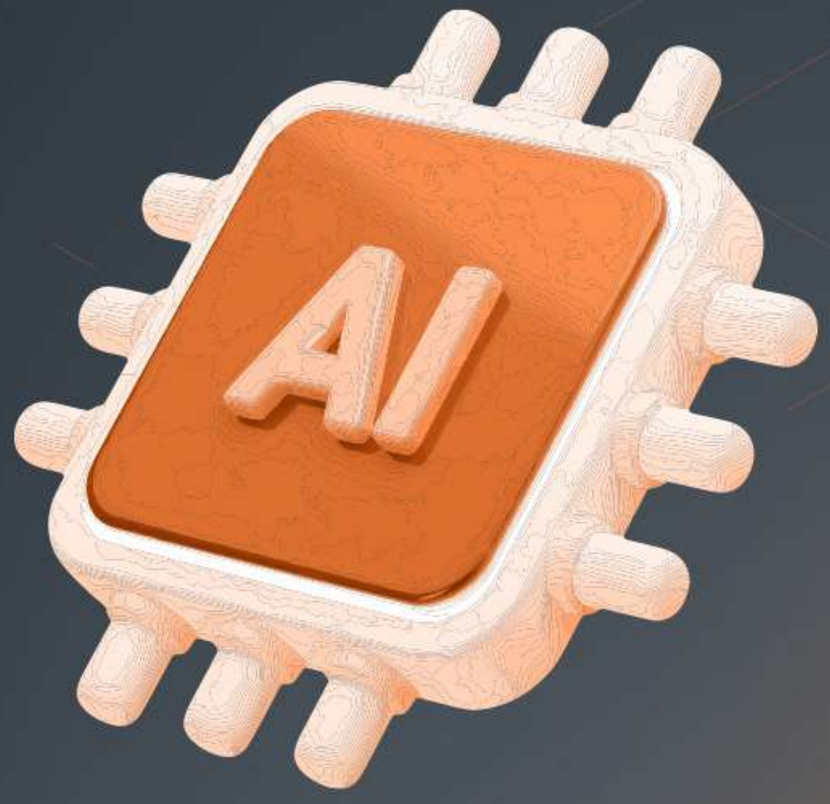
BY ADLIFT

Powered by: Tesseract & ContentLift

By 2028, 15% of everyday work decisions will be made autonomously by agentic AI and with 75% of enterprise marketers already using AI (up from 58% last year), the shift is well underway.

So the real question is

where are you on the AI curve?



The Evolution of Content Strategy: From SEO-First to AI-First

Content strategy has evolved fast:

Year	Focus	Dominant Format	Growth Driver
2015	SEO-first	Blogs, Listicles, Long-form Content	Keywords, Organic Search
2025	AI-assisted	Written, Video and Interactive Content	Engagement and Personalization
2026	Answer-first/ AI-first	Generative Content, Video, AI Snippets, Conversational Interfaces	Visibility, Trust, Hyper-Personalization

The takeaway?

The smarter your content is at answering questions, the more it gets seen and trusted.

Content Meets the AI-Shift

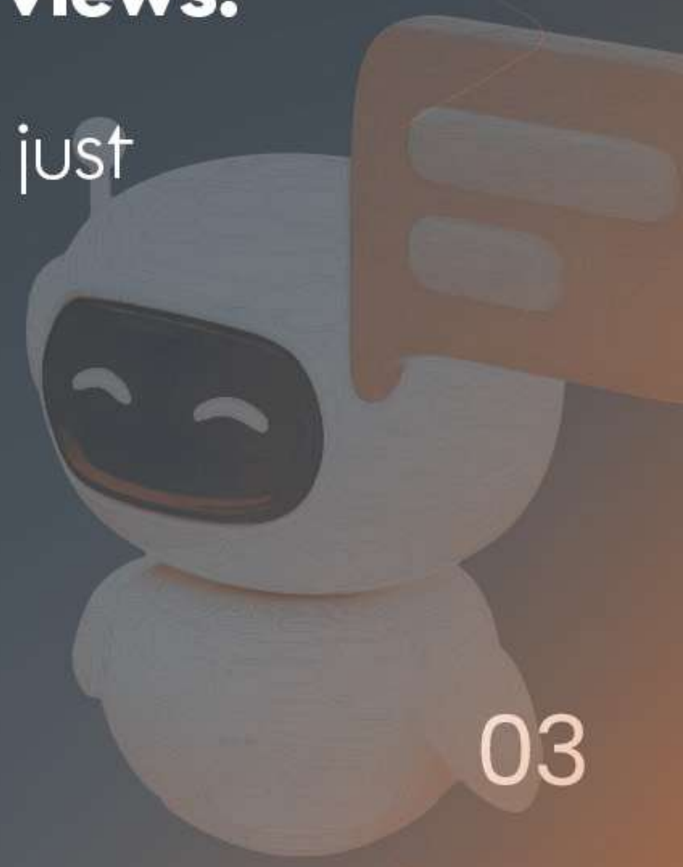
We're officially in the **AI era** where agents influence AI, and even machine customers are reshaping how we market and make decisions. While some leaders are still figuring out how to harness this shift, others are already using it to drive engagement and conversions.

Here's what the numbers are saying:

- **AI-powered** content creation in the U.S. was $198M in 2024 and is set to soar to $740M by 2033, growing 15.8% annually.
- Media, marketing, and publishing are leading the charge, automating content and **working smarter,** not harder.

Why it matters?

- 1 in 4 Google searches now surface **AI overviews.**
- **98%** of AI-driven search traffic comes from just ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini.



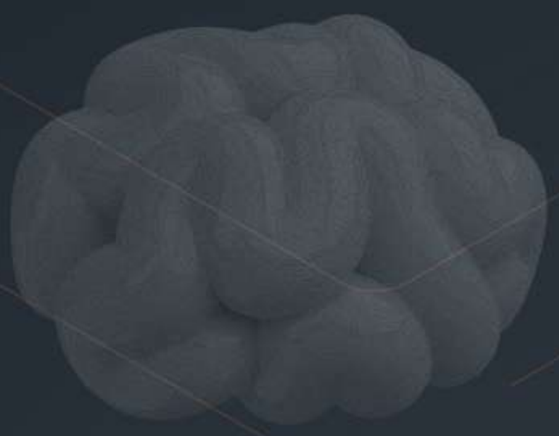
Impact on Teams & Productivity

AI is changing the game:

- **87%** of teams using AI report higher productivity
- **80%** see better efficiency
- **Quality?** Mixed: 58% improved, 39% better performance, 12% report dips

The key:

Measuring AI's true impact as teams refine their frameworks.

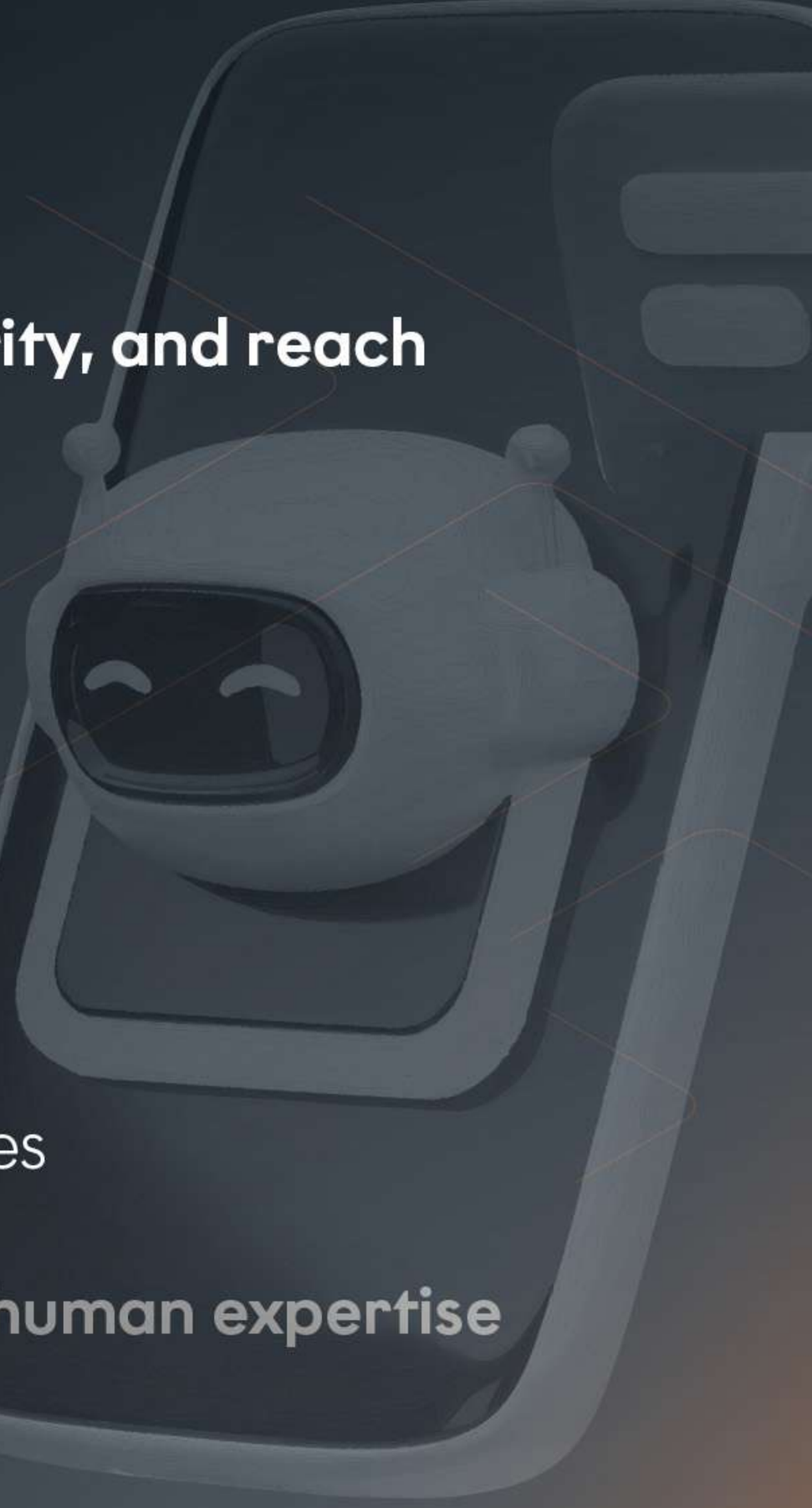


Winning Formats in a Zero-Click World

Not all content needs clicks. High-ROI formats today:

- **Featured** snippets
- Optimized **FAQ** sections
- **Native** social media content

These formats boost visibility, authority, and reach without making users click through.



Trust in the AI Era

"Trustworthy content" now means:

- **Transparency** on AI's role
- Human editorial **oversight**
- **Fact-checking** and credible sources

Brands that combine AI smarts with human expertise stand out from the AI noise.

Where Trends Are Headed

Trend	Data	Takeaway
Zero-click SEO	58%+ of searches end without clicks	AI summaries and snippets dominate
E-E-A-T as Differentiator	Teams prioritizing E-E-A-T see up to 62.8% YoY traffic growth	Human expertise + credibility = better performance
AI-Driven Content Creation	90% of U.S. content marketers use AI: ideation 68%, outlining 71.7%, drafting 57.4%	Efficient AI use = 62.8% YoY traffic growth
Generative Engine Optimization	Market: $848M in 2025, 50.5% CAGR, reaching $33.7B by 2034	Winning the AI search game starts with GEO-ready content

Why is this important?

Gartner estimates a **25%** drop in traditional organic traffic for non-AEO-optimized sites by the end of **2026.**

Strategic Playbook for CMOs: Content in the AI Era

Trend	Data	Takeaway
Discovery	Understand audience intent, pain points, and content gaps	Tesseract for AI visibility, Google Search Console, Semrush, SparkToro, BuzzSumo, ContentLift (competitor backlink intelligence & domain research)
Strategy	Build an AI-first content roadmap aligned with business goals	AEO & GEO frameworks, topic clusters, zero-click content planning, content scoring models
Creation	Produce high-authority, human-led content supported by AI	Jasper / Copy.ai (drafting), SurferSEO / Clearscope (NLP optimization), human editors, brand voice guidelines
Expansion	Repurpose and personalize content for channels & personas	ChatGPT workflows, Canva, HubSpot CRM personalization, LinkedIn Thought Leadership posts, short-form video
Optimization	Improve rankings across Google + AI Overviews + LLMs	Tesseract (LLM rankings), Featured Snippets optimization, schema markup, site speed and UX fixes
Distribution	Maximize reach through earned, owned, and paid channels	ContentLift (publisher outreach, backlinks, digital PR), LinkedIn Ads, Meta Ads, email automation, partner syndication
Measurement	Track business KPIs, not vanity metrics	Tesseract dashboards, GA4, Looker Studio, CRM attribution, ContentLift reporting for backlink performance
Iteration	Continuous improvement with data-led insights	Content refresh frameworks, A/B testing, competitive tracking, AI Overviews volatility monitoring

AI-Optimized Content. Real-World Wins from the Banking Industry

By pairing AI-first content frameworks with Tesseract's LLM visibility tracking and ContentLift's digital PR + backlink intelligence, we delivered:

- **271%** increase in AI-related keywords where the brand appeared, signaling a surge in semantic authority and AI search relevance across key markets
- **83%** jump in total search impressions, driven by higher discoverability in AI Overviews and organic results
- **55%** lift in credit card page impressions and 12% improvement in loan page engagement, impacting high-intent BFSI revenue drivers

AI-Optimized Content.Real-World Wins from the Financial Services Industry

With Tesseract monitoring brand performance across AI Overviews and ContentLift amplifying earning links + mentions, results compounded fast:

- Surfaced **47 high-intent** keywords inside Google AI Overviews, gaining leadership in non-branded debt-relief queries
- **42% growth** in website sessions from informational content, proving stronger trust and engagement
- **53% increase** in non-branded search impressions, expanding visibility across AI-powered search and traditional SERPs

With **Tesseract** monitoring brand performance across AI Overviews and ContentLift amplifying earning links + mentions, results compounded fast:

ContentLift is AdLift's digital PR and link-building platform that helps brands earn high-authority backlinks and publisher mentions. It boosts credibility, domain strength, and search visibility by connecting brands to trusted media, blogs, and news platforms across industries.

The Bottom Line

Content is no longer competing only on keywords, it's competing inside AI Overviews, LLMs, answer engines, and zero-click surfaces. The brands that win are the ones building content that AI trusts, cites, and recommends.

That's where platforms like ***Tesseract*** and ***ContentLift*** create real advantage. Tesseract shows exactly where a brand stands across AI-driven results, while ContentLift strengthens credibility with authoritative publisher mentions and backlinks.

The message is clear:
In 2026, visibility won't be about showing up on page one, it will be about showing up in the answer.
Brands that adopt **AI-first** content now will lead this shift.