ADLIFT

DECODING 2026:

HOW AI **WILL SHAPE** BRANDS, CONSUMERS, AND CREATIVITY

Digital Marketing Forecasts & Strategic Guides for 2026 and Beyond

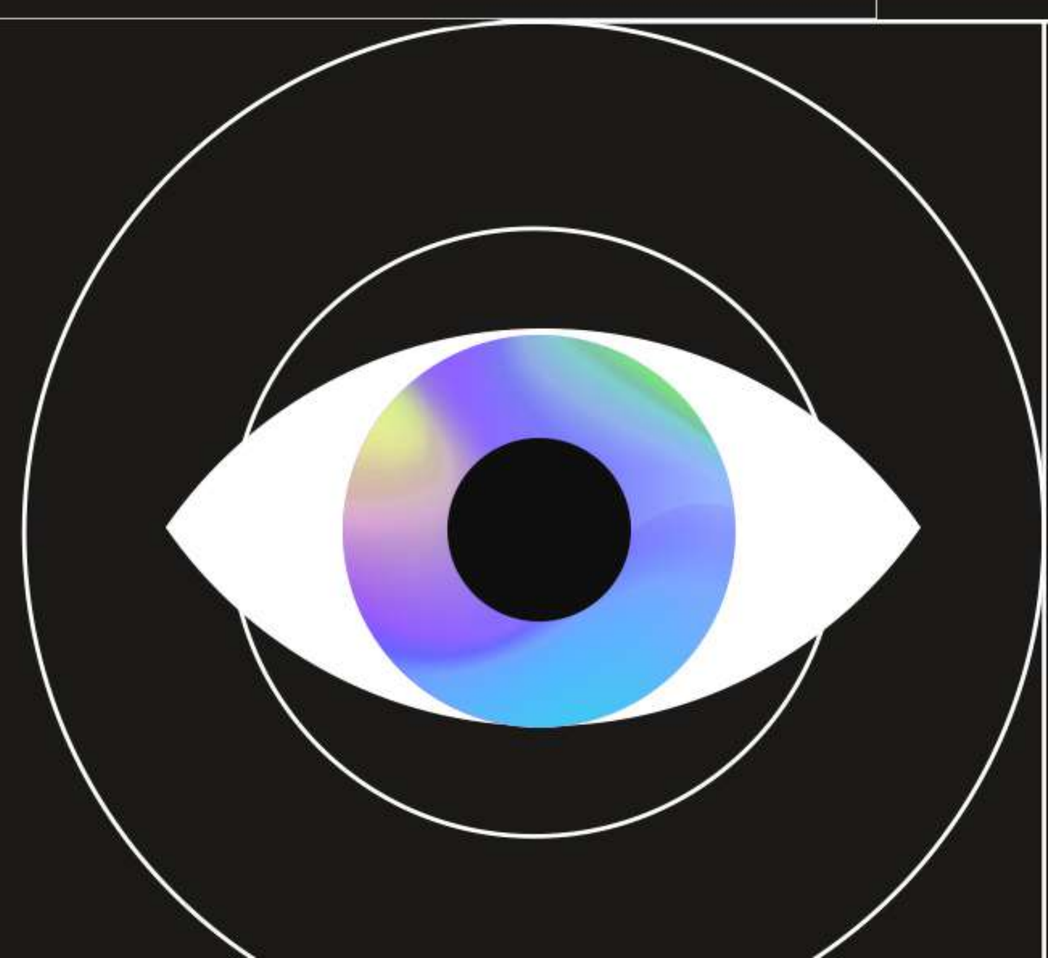
BY ADLIFT

Powered by: Tesseract & ContentLift

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By 2026, AI-powered programmatic advertising will drive a staggering **90% of global display ad budgets** reshaping how campaigns are planned, bought, and optimized.

SO THE QUESTION IS - WHEN THE MACHINES RUN THE MEDIA, WHAT'S LEFT FOR THE MARKETERS TO MASTER?



FROM THEN TO NEXT: HOW MARKETING PILLARS HAVE EVOLVED

If AI is rewriting the **rules of advertising,** it's also redefining every pillar of modern marketing. Here's how the journey unfolds, from where we started, to where we stand today, and where we're headed next.

MARKETING LEVER	2015 (THEN)	2025 (NOW)	2026+ (NEXT)
Personalization	Mass marketing, broad targeting	AI-driven hyper-personalization at scale	Predictive, autonomous personalization powered by AI
Social Media Marketing	Organic growth on Facebook, Twitter	Paid ads dominate; short-form video on multiple platforms	Decentralized, AI-optimized social ecosystems
SEO & Content Strategy	Keyword-focused SEO, blog-heavy content	AI-powered SEO, user intent, generative content	AI co-created, semantic search and zero-click indexing
Advertising & Media Buying	Manual, human-driven buys	Programmatic buys with AI decisioning (90% global display)	Fully autonomous AI media buying & optimization
Customer Engagement	Email newsletters, generic CRM tools	Automated, personalized omnichannel journeys	AI-managed, real-time interactive consumer experiences
Data & Privacy	Third-party cookies, limited data	First-party, consent-based data, privacy-first by design	Federated learning, edge AI for real-time privacy
Content Formats	Long-form blogs, static images	Multi-format including video, reels, AI-generated content	Dynamic, personalized generative content on demand

INTRODUCTION

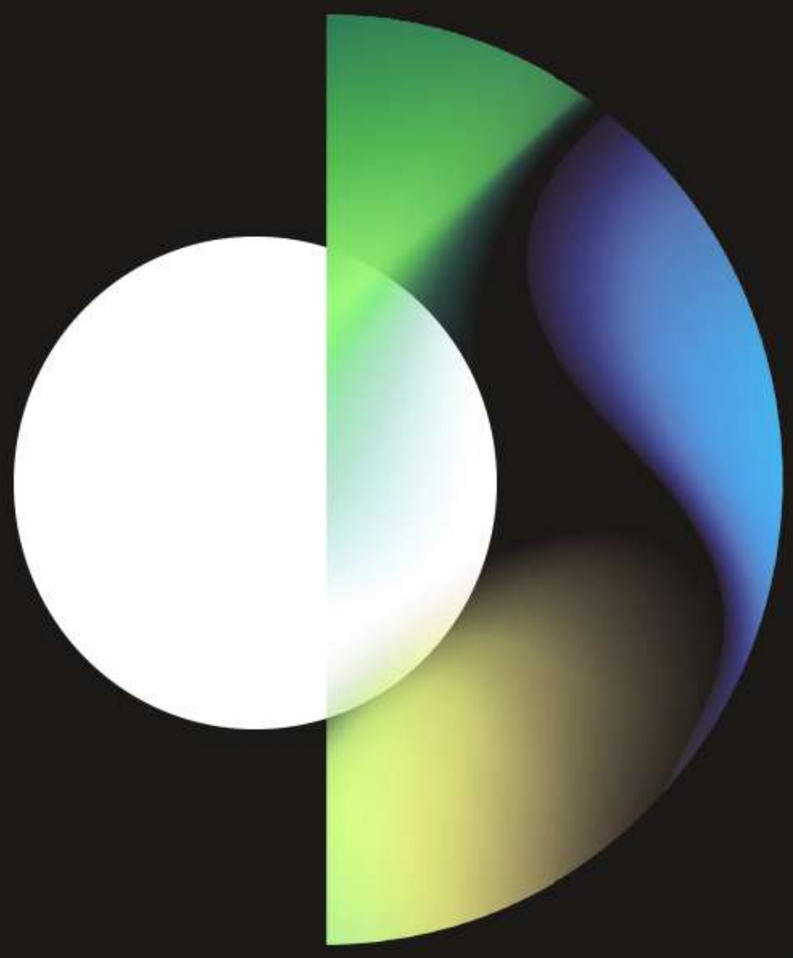
LET'S BE REAL, 2025 HASN'T BROUGHT ANY MAJOR BUDGET SURPRISES AS:

- Marketing spend is holding steady at **7.7%** of total company revenue, the same as last year. Budgets aren't growing, but they're not shrinking either which is a clear sign that marketers are balancing cost pressures with steady investment.
- Still, **59%** of CMOs say they don't have enough funding to fully execute their plans. The fix? Squeezing more out of every dollar through AI and data-driven efficiency.
- And it's working. Generative AI is proving its worth as **49%** of CMOs are seeing faster turnaround times, **40%** report cost savings, and **27%** are producing more content without extra resources.
- AI's impact doesn't stop there. **39%** of CMOs plan to trim agency and labor costs, simplifying roles and redirecting budgets toward AI-led capabilities.
- Across North America and Europe, **41%** of CMOs now rely on AI and analytics to optimize performance and boost productivity proving that in 2025, smarter really does mean leaner.

INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE TODAY

- Over half of marketers **(56%)** are already using AI, and another **43%** are testing it so by 2025, almost every CMO has AI in the mix.
- Across organizations, **88%** have adopted AI in at least one function with sales + marketing leading the charge.
- Search is shifting too: **47%** of SERPs now show AI Overviews.
- And the investment is only growing as AI marketing spend is set to jump from **$47B in 2025 to $107B+ by 2028.**

THE AI ERA ISN'T COMING.
IT'S **ALREADY HERE.**



FORECASTED TRENDS (2026+)

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TREND	WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY
AI-Driven Personalization	With **71% of consumers expecting personalized content** and 67% feeling annoyed when it's not, it's clear why leaders are generating **40% more revenue** through better personalization.
Neuromarketing +AI	With the market at **$1.45B in 2024** and heading to **$1.58B in 2025,** neuromarketing is accelerating fast and is expected to touch **$3.02B by 2032** at a **9.57% CAGR.**
Voice and Visual Search	Voice assistants have officially taken over, **8.4B** of them worldwide and with **75%** of homes now owning smart speakers, voice search is becoming everyone's go-to.
Predictive Analytics	AI-driven analytics is helping companies make decisions **78% faster** and forecast with **50% better accuracy.**
Hyper-Personalized Journeys	With **75%** of B2B buyers expecting personalization by 2026 and conversion rates rising by up to **35%** because of it, AI-driven journey orchestration is becoming standard.
Ethical AI	The AI ethics market is set to grow by **$1.6 billion** from **2025 to 2029** at a **29.5%** CAGR with North America leading the charge thanks to its strong private-sector involvement and solid regulations
Wildcard: Search Without Search	Gartner says AI assistants and LLMs will take over roughly **25%** of global search queries by 2026, replacing many traditional search habits.

EXPERT VOICES

- **Snowflake CEO Says AI ROI Starts With Getting The Data Right-** "AI should not be a Big Bang, it should be a series of little projects that show value every step of the way. Don't start with flashy demos or massive model investments. Start with data. Start small. Prove value. Then build".

- **Google's CEO, Sundar Pichai, said Artificial Intelligence will save us not destroy us-** "AI is probably the most important thing humanity has ever worked on. I think of it as something more profound than electricity or fire. Any time you work with technology, you need to learn to harness the benefits while minimising the downsides."

ADLIFT CLIENT WINS

HOW TESSERACT TRANSFORMED PERFORMANCE FOR VARIOUS INDUSTRIES:

THE EDTECH INDUSTRY

- We took their top **10 keyword rankings** up by **183% YOY** (8,656 → 24,514)
- Their organic sessions almost doubled too by a massive **94% YOY** (134,617 → 260,951)
- Non-branded clicks nearly doubled, giving them stronger visibility beyond just their name.
- And branded clicks shot up by **182%,** strengthening trust among students and parents.

THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

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

THE BFSI INDUSTRY

- We drove a **53% boost in non-branded impressions,** expanding their reach beyond direct searches.
- Blog-to-form conversions climbed **35%,** meaning more readers actually took action.
- Overall impressions saw a solid **83% jump,** signalling stronger visibility across the board.
- Their **AI-related keyword presence skyrocketed by 271%,** placing them firmly in the emerging search space.
- We also delivered a **53% lift in impressions** without any change in rank, purely through smarter optimization.
- And their credit card pages? Those **impressions surged 55%,** putting key products in front of more high-intent users.

IN 2026, BRANDS THAT GO **AI-FIRST,** OWN THE ANSWER AND NOT JUST RANKING WILL LEAD

THAT'S WHERE TESSERACT AND CONTENTLIFT CREATE THE EDGE.

Tesseract reveals how your brand performs across **AI-driven platforms.**

ContentLift strengthens authority through credible publisher mentions and **backlinks AI values.**

BUILD WHAT SCALES.
STAY RELEVANT IN 2026.

Contact **AdLift.**

https://www.adlift.com/in/