

GUIDE

# Leading generative AI deployment for marketing.

Overcoming three hurdles in generative AI adoption.



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# Executive Summary

Generative AI is defining the next generation of marketing today. Delivering hyper-personalized, multi-channel customer experiences at a fraction of the time and cost. Helping you glean insights from your data in an instant. Detecting and responding to conversion opportunities in real time. Experimenting to enhance customer experience and deliver results at pace.

This year, 98% of CEOs will invest in their company's generative AI capability. But 66% remain uncertain of the optimal adoption path for their organization.<sup>1</sup> To assist, Adobe collaborated with the EY organization to undertake a series of structured, qualitative interviews to learn from generative AI first movers.

We spoke with leading executives around the world across marketing, creative, CX, data, legal, risk, and compliance.

We uncovered three primary challenges to generative AI adoption: managing customer privacy and experience expectations, transforming employees concerned about their jobs into champions and innovators, and establishing governance that enables generative AI innovation to flourish.

Through our interviews with early adopters, we found these consistent challenges and uncovered resolutions to overcome them.

## Customers

### **Dial up transparency as you improve the relevance of customer experiences.**

With generative AI, customers expect improved personalization from brands—but their trust in organizations to use their data responsibly is limited. Generative AI can help you please your customers with relevant and timely experiences. But to stand out in a crowded field, your focus on their needs must be tangible at every touchpoint.

**Resolution:** Design every step in your generative AI journey for transparency and accountability to customers to deliver meaningful experiences they trust.

**80%**

of customers prioritize knowing when they are talking to a human being or a bot.<sup>2</sup>

**81%**  
Employees expect AI to free them to focus on higher-value tasks.<sup>3</sup>

## Employees

### **Transform skeptical and novice employees to empowered, generative AI pros.**

Early adopters are making their first returns on investment in generative AI by automating lower-value, repetitive tasks, for example, in content production. However, this is also where employees will be most anxious about role reductions. To make progress, organizations should reassure and incentivize employees to master the tools, to experiment, and to contribute toward the future of their function.

**Resolution:** Prove the value of generative AI to employees, demonstrating job enrichment, time savings, new opportunities, and career advancement.

## Organization

### **Drive generative AI innovation with confident governance.**

Innovation in generative AI can drive efficiency and deliver new opportunities for revenue, but the pace at which you realize these gains is dependent on governance. Your external vendors and partners should offer not just innovative tools, but also responsibly developed ones. You'll also need your internal stakeholders to flag the right opportunities, share data, and collaborate on new governance processes to work at pace with your vendors.

**Resolution:** Level up your leadership oversight and governance processes and focus on commercially safe solutions that help you manage risk while taking advantage of the opportunities generative AI offers.

**#2 Priority**

Data security and AI governance frameworks are second only to employee skills in execs' 2024 priorities for AI.<sup>4</sup>

# Thought leaders in generative AI.

Adobe and EY specialists are privileged to work with a wide range of organizations around the world, facilitating their deployment of generative AI especially in the domain of customer experience (CX).



The world's leading brands and agencies are partnering with Adobe to drive greater efficiency in their organizations, applying our natively integrated generative AI in Creative Cloud and Experience Cloud today to empower their teams to boost productivity and deliver personalization at scale. We believe 2024 will be a watershed moment in developing customer experience."

**Eric Hall**

SVP and Chief Marketing Officer,  
Digital Experience, Adobe



Far from taking away creative work, we see generative AI supercharging it, creating exponential value, and putting a new palette of CX capabilities at the fingertips of your whole team, which further builds confidence. Customer expectations will change in 2024 through exposure to hyper-personalized experiences. We are inspired by this generational opportunity, and the extraordinary uses our clients are already making of it, keeping people at the center."

**Laurence Buchanan**

Global Customer and Growth Leader, EY

From this experience and discussion with industry leaders we've distilled insights to support marketing and CX leaders as they evaluate, implement, and harness the power of generative AI. This guide concludes with a checklist to help you assess and refine your immediate priorities this year.

**90%**

of \$5 billion+ revenue companies remain at proof-of-concept or isolated capabilities in generative AI

Source: May 2023: EY Innovation Realized pulse survey, C-suite executives from majority \$5bn+ global companies

# Dial up transparency as you improve the relevance of customer experiences.

Adobe's *State of Digital Customer Experience* research revealed that 56% of consumers believe that generative AI will make digital experiences more personalized, 54% believe content will be more relevant to their preferences, and 53% expect to see an increase in product and service innovation.<sup>6</sup>

However, generative AI also poses new questions about privacy, transparency, and control. Consumers are wary—79% are concerned or very concerned about how companies are using their personal data.<sup>7</sup> So, CX leaders must bring the voice of the customer to every part of the business that's experimenting with this technology.

Marketing leaders must validate that every touchpoint that makes up the brand experience remains meaningful and authentic. The organization will need their leadership to keep the focus on differentiating the brand and building trust, regardless of function or touchpoint. On this solid foundation, you can push forward to deliver the personalization that customers value.

## To help resolve the tension between privacy and relevance, take these actions that we see first movers doing:

### Be transparent while building your first-party data.

Organizations are adapting to a cookieless future by expanding and enriching their own first-party customer data, with the right permissions and consents. This also means working with your data partners to determine how to collaborate to enrich data without relying on third-party cookies.

As you shift to a clear first-party data strategy you must also set clear expectations as you gather data. One CDO at a **global consumer packaged goods** (CPG) business explained to us that offering customers clarity in the moment about how the company will hold and use data is essential to winning trust and the consents they need to engage customers with their augmented reality experiences.



Customer acquisition costs through digital marketing are still pretty high right now. One change that motivates is to really think about your first-party data—what data do we want to own and how do we get that data with the right consent and permissions to be able to use it?"

**Laurence Buchanan**

Global Customer and Growth Leader, EY

## Match generative AI to customer expectations.

Organizations need guidelines for disclosure around the use of generative AI. Regulators and governments do not always keep up with the rapid pace of change, so marketing leaders need to champion the best interests of their customers.

An example of this is to take extra care when leveraging generative AI to represent human appearance or voice—customers may be upset by mistaking a generative AI experience for an actual human being. A global **CPG** organization commits not to use generative AI for any front-of-packaging images of people—employing it instead for close-ups where customers expect to see illustrations or infographics. A **US top-5 insurer** has set similar guidelines that permit the use of generative AI for creating product images, but never for images of humans.

## Make customer benefits central to decisions.

It's vital to look beyond immediate business value to target potential benefits for customers. How are you considering customer preferences? Could the generative AI you're deploying today make a customer experience more empathetic, more accessible, or more timely?

As you weigh your priority initiatives, factor in satisfaction ratings or other customer experience indicators—to start where the real customer value is and to monitor the impact on your customer experiences.

One **multinational retail organization** measures the impact of their generative AI chatbot not only through customer satisfaction ratings, but also by the percentage of conversations contained within the chatbot rather than being transferred to an employee, and any increases in sales following a chatbot interaction.



As a creative team, we decided from day one that we need to make sure that we're upfront about when we're using AI versus not. Part of why we work with Adobe is because of their stance on ethics. The idea that they're making sure that they're pulling everything from their own stock images which are sourced ethically, that was a big deal for us. They are also working on creating watermarking, so viewers know when it was generated by AI, that we can then adapt in our marketing material."

### Bridget Esposito

Vice President, Head of Creative, Brand, Prudential



We have some special opportunities and possibilities to create quite stunning digital experiences for our customers, or to have a much more immersive shopping experience. That is a super big moon shot but you can imagine a tool that would generate how a product would look in your space. These are real possibilities."

### Stefan Esping

Data & Machine Learning Domain Manager, Ingka

## Amplify creativity without replacing human judgement.

Have a clear strategy to validate that any generative AI content is true to your brand, creatively enriching, and never generic. As you free up creative teams from lower-value tasks such as image variation, the team can refocus on larger, more impactful creative work for your brand.

Additionally, it is critical to apply generative AI via a custom model that can be trained on your own brand content, tone, style, images, and standards so the outputs retain your brand's unique traits.

First movers tell us they retain a human in the loop to keep consistency in brand messaging, imagery, and tone of voice. This helps you to guarantee meaningful customer experiences every time.

A **technology executive for a CPG company** explained that generative AI is already deployed in drafting a significant proportion of the product copy that's displayed on retail websites in the US and the UK to engage consumers with their products' features and benefits. None of it goes live without human approval. In a **global fashion brand**, generative AI develops prompts and visualizations for product designers, drawing on trends harvested from customer sentiment analysis.

## Transform skeptical and novice employees to empowered generative AI pros.

### Demonstrate generative AI as a creative, career-building opportunity.

Generative AI creates real opportunity for professional development and career enhancement, but it's only natural that some employees may feel anxious around generative AI initiatives within their organizations. This tension may be the most important blocker you face. You need your teams to have appetite for exploring generative AI, before they can begin to capture the new opportunities it brings.

**98% to 12%**

**Reduction in proportion of employees concerned about generative AI after participating in pilot.**

Source: January 2024: EY generative AI tool deployment – internal study

The senior executives surveyed in *Adobe Digital Trends 2024* cited "advanced AI skills training for key staff" and "basic AI understanding for all employees" as their top two priorities for preparing their employees to work effectively with generative AI.<sup>8</sup> Assigning pilot projects and letting insight grow organically is an essential first step. Marketing leaders need to make these opportunities visible and relevant to each team member, to build the "what's in it for me" of the technology.

As one leader explained, on average, employees can expect their roles to become more strategic.

Our interviewees recommend content creation and content workflows as tasks that allow you to move swiftly to demonstrate benefits for employees and customers. In an analysis of a generative AI deployment undertaken by EY LLP, a 12-week pilot in a specific use case dramatically improved employees' ability to grasp the opportunity beyond the risks <sup>9</sup>:

- Understanding the potential of generative AI grew from 37% to 84%
- Concerns about using generative AI fell from 99% to 12%
- Confidence in personal ability to work with generative AI improved from 28% to 77%

## To turn uncertain novices into empowered professionals, marketing leaders need to:

### Prioritize upskilling at all levels.

Success depends on the readiness of your teams to leverage generative AI tools and processes. To enable them to become fluent in generative AI, define and deliver training programs for all employees, from executives to practitioners.

One **marketing leader at a global professional services firm** recommends creating "learning labs" with access to generative AI tools, giving employees guidance and hands-on experience with tools to reduce uncertainty. Another organization has an internal portal where employees can request a license for pre-approved generative AI tools.

A **digital executive in a CPG organization** spoke about building a Center of Excellence. They provided education for every one of their 10,000 employees to create a common baseline of understanding across every employee, and published white papers about generative AI on the company portal. One **Global Chief Marketing Officer in professional services** holds "promptathons," a series of prompting sessions to upskill her team in the "art of the prompt."

**Adobe** has established an AI Center of Excellence that oversees strategic alignment, compliance, and governance of AI initiatives. To ensure employees are equipped to apply AI in their roles, Adobe has comprehensive training programs, resources, and podcasts to upskill the workforce and personalize career development.

**“** At Shiseido, we prioritize the continuous learning and development of our employees. Through our internal Digital Academy, we provide accessible programs and certifications in data and AI advancements. This education is crucial for our team's success.”

**Angelica Munson**  
Global Chief Digital Officer,  
Shiseido

### Begin with content creation.

We consistently hear that optimizing content creation or content workflows is a powerful first move. It's where your employees are spending a lot of time and does not require a lot of data connectivity to get started. Starting points for generative AI usage in content workflows include:

- Creative conceiving and ideation
- Copy drafting and iterations
- Image drafting and refinement
- Production of content variations for testing across:
  - different channels
  - different markets
  - different personas

Generative AI helps teams overcome the content scalability challenge, boosting the quality, quantity, velocity, findability, and reusability of the content you need to drive personalization across multiple channels.

**“** If you think about the previous world, you would have a great concept, a great idea. That would take time to really bring to life to share with your 'buyer'. Now generative AI can bring that idea very quickly to some sort of visualization. That speed is a clear benefit.”

**Duncan Avis**  
Americas Customer & Growth Leader, EY

## Use short-term comparison metrics.

Several first-movers report success using comparison metrics to motivate employees and engage budget-holders with the before-and-after progress they're making. For example, 82% of employees taking part in a **global professional services** generative AI pilot reported faster task completion.<sup>10</sup>

Choose metrics that build confidence:

- Workplace satisfaction
- Time saved
- Volume of content created
- People required
- Cost per asset
- Speed to launch

## Appoint generative AI pioneers.

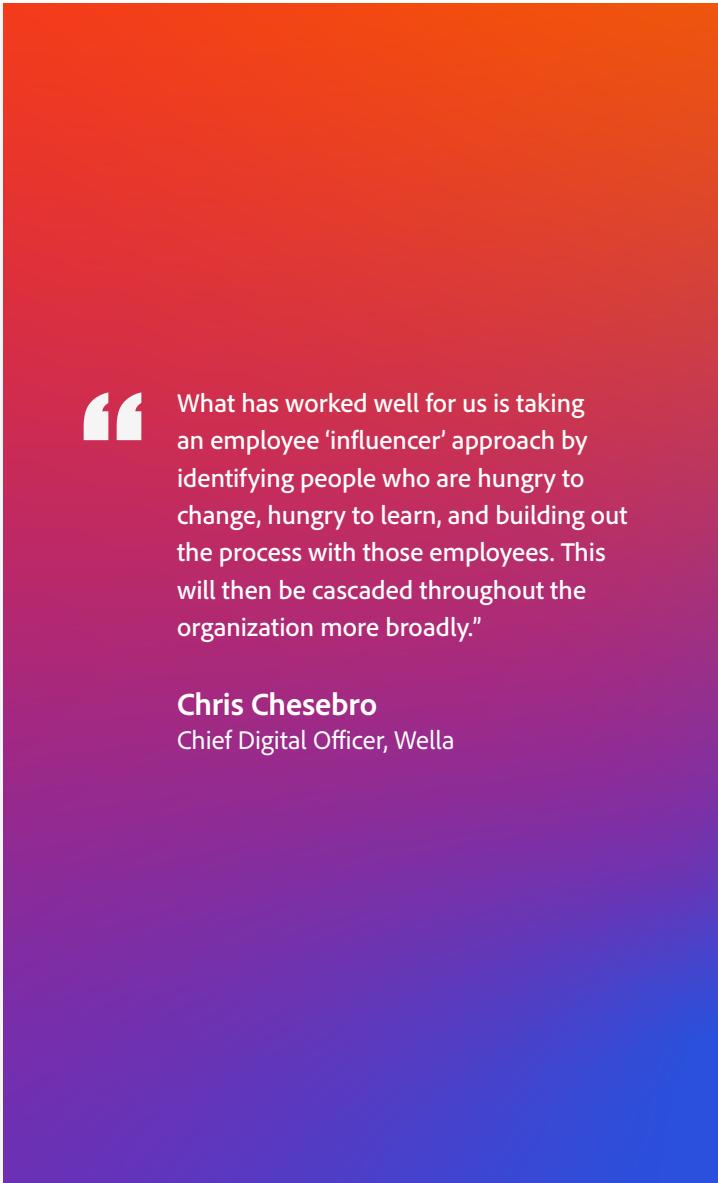
In some areas, activating the organization to adopt generative AI will be similar to change programs you may have led in the past. The network of early adopters in your org needs to be experienced in their professional disciplines and able to mentor others.

To identify your generative AI pioneers across the organization, start with employees who:

- Have a direct interest in AI capabilities, from the perspectives of the business, marketing, tech, and risk
- Have the skills and appetite to communicate the benefits and to positively influence employee culture
- Hold aspirational, mid-level roles with a degree of decision-making, managing more junior levels in the organization
- Are commercially aware and risk-informed, capable of assessing innovations from both perspectives

Collaborate with them to research and propose a set of generative AI design principles and equip them to experiment. Their example and enthusiasm can inspire the team to move faster and move past any uncertainties.

One **CPG organization** has chosen 30 employees from middle management to take part in the first generative AI pilot in a sandbox environment. They were tasked to identify risks and share learnings.



“What has worked well for us is taking an employee 'influencer' approach by identifying people who are hungry to change, hungry to learn, and building out the process with those employees. This will then be cascaded throughout the organization more broadly.”

**Chris Chesebro**  
Chief Digital Officer, Wella

# Drive generative AI innovation with confident governance.

## Develop generative AI controls and partners that can help you navigate risk and opportunity.

To deliver business outcomes such as cost savings or content acceleration with generative AI, companies must choose solutions that are built for business use cases. The right generative AI tools will need to meet some unique criteria and have the right controls in place:

- The base model must give you transparency into the data provenance and be designed for commercial safety.
- You must be able to apply custom models that are trained on your own data to keep outputs relevant for your brand and your business.
- Your data must be secure and private, not shared with other businesses or used to train a publicly available model.
- Your partners should prioritize ethical, responsible AI development to protect your brand.

In addition to careful selection of the generative AI solutions that fit your business, companies must optimize governance of those tools within their organization. Your existing internal controls framework will need to evolve.



AI governance is not just about setting rules, it's about striking the right balance. It's about fostering creativity and innovation while ensuring accountability, responsibility, and transparency. At the heart of AI governance is the commitment to respect our customers and align with our values. It's about turning AI potential into real-world applications, responsibly and ethically."

**Cynthia Stoddard**  
CIO of Adobe

## To unleash the full potential of innovating in generative AI, leaders have learned how to:

### Map and mitigate novel generative AI risks.

Use an evaluation framework for generative AI tools that screen for solutions with responsibility engineered into their tools, including:

- Clear intellectual property rights accounted for and indemnification provided to minimize lawsuit risk
- Robust security and privacy of your data
- Fairness and bias controls built-in
- Transparency in how models are built

Select vendors and partners who are passionate about preserving intellectual property and content credentials and are helping to guide global regulation. Check if they participate in industry standard-setting, for example in the Content Authenticity Initiative, the NIST AI Risk Management Framework or the EU AI Elections Accord. By thinking ahead of regulations, these vendors will help to future-proof your developing generative AI capability.

### Establish a single point of control.

As marketing organizations move generative AI from pilot to production, they need "air traffic control"—a team comprising marketing, compliance, and technology heads—to coordinate and direct generative AI development across the organization. They will:

- Define and communicate a governance framework for generative AI
- Assess risk for new generative AI vendors and proposals
- Prioritize for customer and commercial relevance
- Direct capital investment in generative AI

This control function should be a distinct practice of an overall delivery-focused generative AI Center of Excellence, whose scope it is to govern:

- The business model—generative AI opportunities for product portfolios, value proposition, growth opportunities
- The operating model—generative AI potential to reduce cost, accelerate, evolve the organization
- Risk management—identifying and mitigating novel risks, such as data privacy, bias, IP, and so on



I don't want to use an AI that's been trained on non-licensed materials. We expect our bigger agencies to self-certify for responsible practices and we will write it into their contracts."

**IT Engineering Director,**  
Global packaged good organization



It's crucial for marketing to be positioned at the heart of an AI control tower strategy, serving as a central hub that coordinates with legal, cybersecurity, privacy, and technology stakeholders to harness and action data insights effectively. This centralized approach helps establish that the CMO and marketing teams are integral to the collaborative network, facilitating a unified direction and decision-making across the various departments, to move at the speed of business while mitigating risk."

**Tom Edwards,**  
Managing Director,  
Applied & Generative AI Lead, EY

## Organize your goals into the right sequence.

A key role for leaders governing generative AI in their organization is to recognize the different ways it affects customers and employees and to sequence your projects to suit.

Aim to prove concepts and cultivate skill and insight within the team before taking on more complex use cases. The typical order, from simple to complex, will be:



# A checklist to start now.

To get started now and deliver on the full potential of generative AI in marketing and CX, organizations should focus on the following key areas identified from our research with marketing leaders and subject matter experts:

## 1. Customer trust

- Do we have a list of customer pain points?
- Is customer experience fully visible and factored into the way we assess generative AI priorities?
- Have we defined specific customer-centric principles for uses of generative AI?
- Does our existing research gather data on customer attitudes to generative AI?
- Have we reviewed current brand guidelines to fit with generative AI applications?

## 2. Employee empowerment

- Do we have a cross-functional list of employee pain points?
- Do we have the right communications plan and training resources in place?
- Do we have experiments up and running—and are we capturing what we learn?
- Have we created space for open-ended innovation during generative AI discovery and experimentation?
- Does the team have a mandate to discover its own metrics as projects progress?
- Are we investing in generative AI training for all levels?
- Have we created simple, accessible ways for employees to access and familiarize themselves with generative AI tools?
- Are we refining roles and responsibilities to keep a human in the loop?
- Have we defined scope and nominated advocates for a network of generative AI champions?

## 3. Organizational opportunity

- Do we have an evaluation process in place to screen tools for risk mitigation?
- Do we understand where generative AI is being assessed or implemented across the organization?
- Is there a team in place applying a common framework or governance to align and maximize benefits?
- Have we defined an efficient process to evaluate and implement generative AI technology in partnership with our technology and legal peers?
- Are we clear how our vendors and strategic partners' generative AI initiatives map to our needs? Have we made full use of their advice and resources?
- Have we considered our customers and employees in the sequencing of our generative AI initiatives?
- Is our mid- to long-term data transformation plan defined?

## Conclusion

# Leading the marketing function in the era of generative AI.

Generative AI is here to stay as a transformative force across every part of the organization. But it has special relevance for marketing and CX. In some capacity, 83% of creative professionals are already using generative AI tools in their work. Among Gen-Zs, it's above 90%.<sup>11</sup>

As a marketing or CX leader, applying generative AI means designing a plan for the marketing function that helps drive profitable demand, inspires your employees, and enriches the customer experiences you deliver. It's critical to keep these three challenges in mind at every step: for your organization, your employees, and your customers.

## Methodology

Structured interviews were conducted with participants in 30-, 45-, or 60-minute sessions with external organizations (n=11) and subject matter experts (n=10).

Sample consisted of participants from across marketing, CX, digital, data, legal, and creative.

Focus of the discussion looked to explore relevant use cases, partnerships, and lived experiences from individuals in the support of, exploration, and deployment of generative AI within a commercial context to gather lived experiences and practical advice from participants.

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## ABOUT ADOBE

Adobe Experience Cloud is the most comprehensive suite of customer experience management tools on the market. With solutions for data, content delivery, commerce, personalization, and more, this marketing stack is created with the world's first platform designed specifically to create engaging customer experiences. Each product has built-in artificial intelligence and works seamlessly with other Adobe products. And they integrate with your existing technology and future innovations, so you can consistently deliver the right experience every time.



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EYG no. 005649-24Gbl

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