Beyond Imagination: The Creative Power of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Marketing

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Introduction

Empowered, not obsolete—the future of marketing will require humans to wield generative artificial intelligence tools in a new era of creative collaboration (Kalendra 2023).

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has emerged recently as a revolutionary force across industries, redefining traditional business practices and shaping new horizons across the entire value chain. In the marketing world, GenAI is a game-changer, offering unprecedented opportunities for content creation, personalisation and engagement, and increasing efficiency and productivity. This article explores the transformative potential of GenAI in marketing, highlighting its benefits, ethical considerations and the role of human creativity in this dynamic landscape.

GenAI and Content Creation

GenAI leverages advanced algorithms to produce content autonomously, transforming the content creation process. GenAI-powered tools, including language models like ChatGPT and image models like DALL-E (both by OpenAI), can be further fine-tuned for specific marketing content by securely uploading information about a business to models such as Jasper. Marketers are harnessing such tools to conceptualise unique content strategies, automate various aspects of content creation, optimise existing content through analysing data patterns and user feedback, and creating visuals to enhance storytelling and social media elements. This technology offers marketers an efficient means to amplify their content production capabilities and maximise search engine optimisation while maintaining a consistent brand voice. One effective example is ClickUp's use of GenAI to boost blog traffic by 85% via identifying opportunities for content optimisation and determining ideal keywords and article structure.

Personalisation and Engagement

One of the most remarkable aspects of GenAI is its ability to facilitate hyper-personalisation at scale. By analysing vast datasets, GenAI can tailor content to match specific audience segments and resonate deeply with individuals. This personalised approach improves customer experiences and drives higher engagement rates. A noteworthy example is eBay, which utilised GenAI-generated content to craft personalised email campaigns to over 101 million subscribers in the US, UK and Germany, resulting in a remarkable 16% increase in the average open rate and 31% increase in the average click rate, providing a consistent return on investment on all campaigns. The campaigns delivered 700,000+ incremental opens and 56,000+ incremental clicks, on average, per campaign.

Other notable examples include:

- [Coca-Cola's launch of its own GenAI platform](#) to prompt fans to create their own digital artwork based on branded assets such as its distinctive contour bottle and logo

- [Unilever's use of GenAI](#) to synthesise insights from various sources (including social listening, customer relationship management and traditional marketing research) to discover a link between ice cream and breakfast, resulting in developing cereal-flavoured Ben & Jerry's ice creams.

Measurable Benefits of GenAI in Marketing

Despite few resources being allocated to artificial intelligence development historically, [investments have increased substantially](#) with the arrival of GenAI. Boston Consulting Group's April [2023 GenAI survey](#) across North America, Europe and Asia revealed that chief marketing officers are succeeding with GenAI, with 70% of respondents already using GenAI in their organisations and another 19% testing it. Some 93% reported a positive or very positive improvement in how they organise their work, and 91% reported a positive or very positive impact on their efficiency—suggesting GenAI could yield as much as 30% in productivity gains. Respondents were confident that GenAI can handle a broad range of operation tasks faster, with less risk and with greater efficiency; reduce the time employees spend on tedious tasks; and [free up time for value-added work](#).

Ethical Considerations

While GenAI's potential is awe-inspiring, ethical considerations loom large. As marketers embrace GenAI, an ongoing commitment to ethical content creation must guide every decision; it is vital to ensure GenAI-generated content is free from bias and maintains authenticity. Further, as GenAI becomes more proficient in mimicking human creativity, questions about plagiarism, copyright infringement and ownership arise.

Bias and Representation

Striking the right balance between automation and human oversight is crucial to safeguard brand reputation. GenAI models are trained on vast quantities of data; without careful curation, they can [perpetuate biases](#) present in the data. Businesses must be vigilant to prevent GenAI content from reinforcing stereotypes or excluding certain demographics; ensuring [diversity and inclusion in the training data](#) can help mitigate these issues.

Authenticity and Transparency

GenAI content may create challenges in distinguishing between human-authored and AI-authored works. Transparency is vital to upholding trust, and businesses should clearly indicate when content is AI-generated. 'Deepfakes' are images or videos created by GenAI that purport to be realistic and could be used for misinformation and propaganda, such as the faked images of [Donald Trump's imagined arrest](#). While ['watermarking' ChatGPT, DALL-E and other GenAIs](#) could help protect against

fraud and misinformation, additional controls will be needed as text, image, audio and video creation becomes increasingly mainstream.

Originality and Copyright

Businesses must navigate the legal landscape carefully to ensure that generated content respects copyright laws and properly attributes human creators' work. Currently, as Weller Potter (Lecturer in Law, University of New England) highlights, if ChatGPT wrote it, copyright ownership depends on location. For example, in Australia, the *Copyright Act 1968* does not consider a GenAI user an author for copyright purposes. In contrast, the UK has made provision for a person who prompts a GenAI work to be considered an author for copyright purposes. The European Union has implemented a text and data mining exemption to avoid infringing others' copyright through accessing data in training. Australia could follow such examples to amend its Copyright Act to address AI copyright issues more effectively.

Regulatory Issues

As legal experts have highlighted, regulating AI is vital but difficult. To be regulated effectively, AI must be defined and associated risks and benefits must be understood; however, because AI is still emerging, it is difficult to predict future risks and benefits. Lawmakers are slow to adapt, potentially leading to legal barriers for social benefits, such as if regulators in one country act to slow AI progress consequently push investment and innovation elsewhere, or legal loopholes for harmful conduct, such as if data protection laws vary in the use of individual-level data depending on the type of data, who is using it and their intended purpose.

Human-Centric Collaboration

Contrary to concerns regarding GenAI replacing human creativity, its true power may lie in collaboration. Human marketers and GenAI tools can infuse their unique insights and creativity in a symbiotic relationship that fosters innovation as human creativity refines and elevates GenAI contributions.

In considering how GenAI is changing creative work, Thomas H. Davenport (President's Distinguished Professor of Information Technology and Management, Babson College) and Nitin Mittal (Principal, Deloitte Consulting) agree that AI will not likely replace humans—yet. Human involvement is still required to use GenAI effectively. Initially, a human must enter a prompt; at the end of the process, a human must evaluate and edit the generated content. For example, despite the utility of GenAI tools in marketing, Kris Ruby (owner, Ruby Media Group) highlights the importance of human oversight; in her work, she estimates that 'the AI is 10%, I am 90%', as there is considerable prompting, editing and iteration involved.

The same is certainly true for creative work. Jason Allen winning the Colorado State Fair's 'digitally manipulated photography' competition with the assistance of Midjourney (a text-to-image tool) represents a notable example of human–AI creativity. He spent 80 hours making more than

900 iterations of the art, fine-tuning prompts each time. Then, he used Adobe Photoshop to remove visual artifacts and Gigapixel AI to increase the quality and sharpness of the image before printing the three pieces on canvas.

David De Cremer (Provost's Chair and Professor in Management and Organisations, National University of Singapore Business School), Nicola Morini Bianzino (EY Global Chief Technology Officer) and Ben Falk (Director, EY Chief Technology Office) have explored three non-exclusive scenarios of how GenAI could disrupt creative work. The first scenario could see an explosion of GenAI-assisted innovation where people use GenAI to augment their work, leading to greater productivity, as businesses recognise the importance of adopting GenAI and experimenting with it in creative work. However, they appreciate that the arrival of GenAI could also up-end the status of creative work. Unfair algorithmic competition and inadequate governance could lead to a feared second scenario where machines monopolise creativity and GenAI creates a flood of cheap content that drives out human creatives. However, in response, a third potential scenario could see human-made creative work demanding a premium due to a 'techlash' resulting in people valuing authentic human creativity and being willing to pay a premium for it.

Future Trends

Looking ahead, the trajectory of GenAI in marketing is promising. Real-time content generation, driven by GenAI's lightning-fast capabilities, holds the potential to transform marketing campaigns into dynamic and responsive experiences. Interactive content, where GenAI adapts content based on user interactions, could revolutionise customer engagement and immersion. Further, as technology evolves, GenAI's integration with augmented reality and virtual reality could introduce entirely new dimensions to marketing strategies. For example, Richard Branson's cruise ship company Virgin Voyages' recently introduced Jen AI, a GenAI avatar created in the likeness of megastar Jennifer Lopez (with her permission), which produces personalised videos inviting customers to cruise with them (based on the kind of celebration they want).

Conclusion

GenAI is revolutionising marketing by enabling automated content creation, hyper-personalisation and unprecedented engagement strategies, and increasing productivity and efficiency. While reaping the benefits of GenAI, marketers must navigate ethical considerations and ensure human creativity remains central. The future of marketing promises a harmonious fusion of GenAI and human ingenuity, pushing the boundaries of what is possible and unlocking a new era of dynamic and impactful content creation.

Article written by the author (with some editorial support from generative artificial intelligence and the editorial team of the *AIB Review*).

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