Gartner for Marketers

Gartner Top Marketing Predictions 2020: Balancing Trust With Insights
Get ready for your future

Are you ready for what’s next? Customer insights, data ethics and customer trust are the dominant themes running through the Gartner top 5 2020 predictions for marketing leaders.

Marketing leaders today contend with a collection of ideals that are seemingly at odds with one another.

Customers reward companies that “know” them, yet express concern about having their personal information in the hands of third parties. Marketers have invested millions in data and analytics capabilities, yet haven’t achieved the data maturity they need to show return on those investments. The pressure is on to show business results from high-profile initiatives such as influencer marketing and personalization, yet the available metrics are indirect.

“Marketers strive to engage prospects and customers on an intimate, personal level,” says Charles Golvin, Senior Director Analyst at Gartner. “The mantra of one-to-one marketing was born of this goal and marketers are constantly on the hunt for data to fine-tune their algorithms and campaigns. Next on their shopping list is data that identifies a person’s emotional state. Will data investments yield the desired result? It’s getting harder now that consumers have developed a jaundiced eye toward marketers.”

Ways to approach customer insights, data ethics and customer trust to generate marketing returns run through the Gartner top 5 2020 predictions for marketing leaders.
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Consumers Choose Experience Over Influence

By 2023, CMO budget allocation on influencer marketing will decrease by a third as consumers continue to lose trust in brands and entities they don’t personally know.

Source: Gartner
**Consumers Choose Experience Over Influence**

**What we found**

Consumer trust in large, abstract entities like “government” or “corporate America” has taken a nosedive in recent years. Influencers are caught up in this trend, their downward spiral accelerated by influencers who express racist views or promote poor-quality products. Consumers rely instead on family, friends and local businesses for advice and service.

**What it means**

Marketing leaders were already struggling to find relevant influencer partners that bring measurable results. Brands also face reputational risks when influencers express views or behave in ways that are counter to the brand. In response, marketers are de-emphasizing influencers in their marketing strategies.

**What you should do**

Influencer marketing won’t go away entirely, but marketers should shift focus to small-scale influencers with 25,000 or fewer followers that are well aligned with the brand’s values. These influencers have more engaged audiences and they post more often, creating an accessible, focused persona that mimics the experience consumers have with the providers they trust in their communities. Look to foster long-term integrated partnerships.
By 2024, AI identification of emotions will influence more than half of the online advertisements you see.

Source: Gartner
AI Emotions
Guide Advertisements

What we found

A branch of AI known as artificial emotional intelligence (AEI) can now capture the conscious and unconscious signals humans send about how they’re feeling. The chocolate cookie your customer treats himself to every Friday, or the way he tugs his hair when he’s stressed — AEI solutions capture these gestures as audio, computer vision, biometric data (such as heartrate) and text inputs, and analyze them to gain insight into the person’s emotional state. Over time, emotional insights can predict actions.

What it means

Marketers — including 25% of Fortune 500 companies — are already using AEI in market research to gauge consumer responses to digital content. As it matures, AEI will allow marketers to capture a customer’s real-time reaction to a product or marketing message, and adapt what they deliver. Think of it as empathy at scale.

What you should do

Deploy AEI slowly. The technology is still in its early stages of development and could raise privacy concerns. Marketers can get ahead of potential backlash with transparency about what you are doing with AEI, explaining how it benefits consumers and giving people the choice to opt out.
Embrace Behavioral Science

By 2022, 25% of marketing departments will have a dedicated behavioral scientist or ethnographer as part of their full-time staff.

Source: Gartner
Embrace Behavioral Science

What we found

The quest for customer insights have led to significant investments in data and analytics, but returns have yet to vest: only 22% of marketers report they have insights into customer values and drivers. In an effort to speed up the translation of data into insights, marketing leaders are employing social scientists and ethnographers who can structure research from the outset with an eye on the social and cultural context.

What it means

Social scientists are trained to gather and interpret qualitative and quantitative data through the lens of human behavior and values. These specialized skills require training usually obtained through master’s degree or Ph.D. programs; in-house training isn’t enough. Behavioral scientists can also develop customer personas and journey maps, and provide insights that guide changes to the brand and customer experience to align with cultural and social expectations.

What you should do

Hire or partner with social scientists who have quantitative skills or a qualitative background that complement existing resources.
Build Data Ethics Guardrails

In 2023, one-third of all brand public relations disasters will result from data ethics failures.

Source: Gartner
Build Data Ethics Guardrails

What we found
Malicious data breaches like the ones against Quest Diagnostics in March 2019 and Capital One in July 2019 are becoming more frequent, yet data threats are not limited to external actors. When brands access or share data in ways that consumers or companies deem out of bounds, the PR and regulatory fallout can be worse.

What it means
The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal is often held up as a classic example of corporate data policy that failed customers. The stakes of overstepping are getting higher, as companies in industries as diverse as digital commerce and automotive develop new revenue streams from customer data.

What you should do
Take proactive steps to stay in the good graces of customers with strong data policies. Remove personal identifiers from data or use aggregated data to protect the privacy of sources. Keep a keen eye on the potential for bias in the algorithms used to deliver marketing messages or offers. When possible, be transparent about the data used and give consumers the option to be forgotten or provide consent.
Personalization Faces a Looming Deadline

By 2025, 80% of marketers who have invested in personalization will abandon their efforts due to lack of ROI, the perils of customer data management or both.

Source: Gartner
Personalization Faces a Looming Deadline

What we found
Fourteen percent of the total marketing budget is now dedicated to the pursuit of personalization. Technology plays a big role in these initiatives, absorbing 44% of personalization spending. *

What it means
High budgets come with high expectations, yet returns on personalization investments remain hard to quantify for marketing. Only half of all business users of personalization engines focus on marketing and customer experience. They rely on Net Promoter Score and customer satisfaction metrics, which only indirectly connect to business value. This won't be enough to maintain high financial support for these initiatives.

What you should do
Go back to basics when it comes to personalization. Only 40% of marketers report having a clear personalization strategy and roadmap, so start there to develop a strategy and identify high-potential use cases. * Marketers should also take a step back to refocus on segments and test tailored recommendations for them to see what drives results.

*Source: Gartner
Interested in learning more?

Watch the webinar
Gartner Top Marketing Predictions for 2020 and Beyond

About Gartner for Marketers

Gartner for Marketers provides the objective, expert advice and proven tools you need to seize the right opportunities with clarity and confidence and stay ahead of the trends that matter. Benchmark your performance with data-driven insights. Prioritize investments and areas of improvement. Execute your mission-critical priorities with speed and confidence.

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