

Gartner Marketing Predictions

6 actionable insights for what's
next in marketing strategy and AI
integration in 2025 and beyond

Prepare to serve human and machine customers

Marketing leaders are bracing for a future powered by artificial intelligence (AI). AI will radically reshape social media and search landscapes, creative work, brand positioning and perceptions of truth.

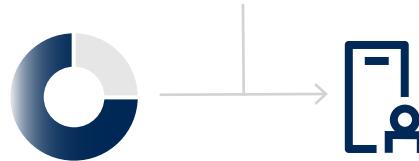
Here are six marketing predictions from Gartner experts that offer a perspective on the opportunity created by social media's decay, an AI-free approach to communicating brand value and the myriad ways in which generative AI (GenAI) will change the landscape of everything from search behavior to staffing considerations.

CMOs can use these predictions to:

- Establish GenAI upskilling for in-house creatives
- Invest in cross-functional teams to ensure all brand content adheres to guidelines
- Refocus customer acquisition and loyalty strategies to offset social media attrition
- Audit and test how AI-free experiences impact brand engagement
- Develop unique branded research to ensure mentions in GenAI search

CMOs will build AI experimentation into their mobile app roadmap

By 2027, mobile app usage will decrease by 25% as audiences shift to using AI assistants. CMOs should begin scenario planning for the impacts of decreased mobile app usage.



The evidence

Global app downloads across iOS and Google Play declined by 1.7% YOY in Q224. With ChatGPT being one of the fastest growing apps in history, CMOs must prepare for the impact this will have on their brand and the opportunities it presents.



The impact

Mobile app development costs will decrease for brands that aren't overly reliant on driving revenue via apps. Other brands may be severely impacted by users increasingly turning to AI assistants for services, resulting in the loss of first-party data collection and reach.



The opportunities

- ✓ Create an app task force and focus on internal app consolidation opportunities first.
- ✓ Explore mobile app partnerships or consortiums.
- ✓ Build AI assistant experimentation into your mobile app roadmap.

Enable mobile app relevance with AI experimentation

Customer chatbots and digital humans, powered by GenAI, offer a scalable, efficient and highly interactive way to engage with customers, providing immediate assistance and tailored support.

To build AI-assisted experimentation into your mobile app roadmap, marketing leaders should:

- Initially leverage GenAI in chatbots for triage purposes to ensure basic queries are efficiently handled by AI
- Maintain a balance between AI assistance and human interaction, so brands can improve customer satisfaction and trust in their AI-driven solutions
- Experiment with using digital humans to act as shopping assistants to deliver personalized and enhanced online shopping experiences
- Ensure transparency, accuracy and appropriateness — and provide a way to deactivate AI features



“CMOs should include AI assistant experimentation into their mobile app roadmaps to prepare for opportunities to integrate with AI assistants, and bolster app usage by joining with AI assistants to maintain relevance.”

Brad Jashinsky, Gartner Director Analyst

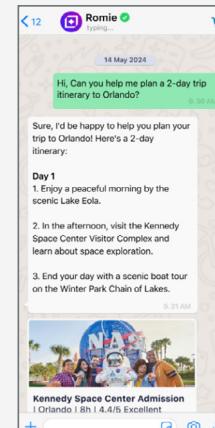
Expedia's AI Assistant (Romie)

Expedia needed to:

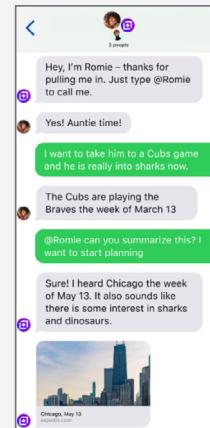
- Support customers at every step of their trip
- Simplify travel booking and experiences
- Create personalized travel experiences

GenAI travel assistant:

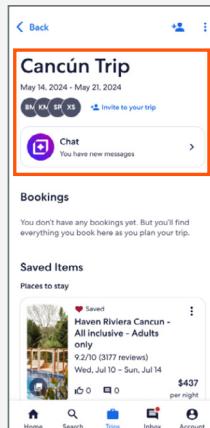
- Combines travel agent, concierge and personal assistant
- Helps users throughout their trip with planning via group chat, smart search, dynamic service and intelligent assistance



Assists with planning trip on WhatsApp



Included in group chat via SMS



Group chat on the Expedia app

Source: Gartner

CMOs will invest in talent and content to adapt for GenAI-powered search

By 2026, more than one-third of web content will be developed exclusively for AI and search engine consumption.



The evidence

In 2024, the average brand saw just over a 1% lift in mobile-driven paid search and almost flat traffic from organic search in the first three quarters of 2024 compared to 2023. Yet 45% of CMOs increased their paid search budget this year, and 40% increased their SEO investment.



The impact

To adapt for the future of search, CMOs will need to adjust their content strategy to keep up with evolving search algorithms by investing in or upskilling talent in SEO fundamentals and GenAI utilization to drive growth and impact.



The opportunities

- ✓ Remain competitive by hiring or investing in talent to create insight-driven content.
- ✓ Protect your website's commercial impact by advocating for continued paid search investment to ensure future traffic growth and stability.
- ✓ Do not abandon longstanding search fundamentals; foundational work will ensure continued performance and adaptation.

Establish and maintain a strong search foundation to ensure stability and growth

Search marketing is a critical component of every CMO's digital strategy. Successful execution of search marketing hinges on an understanding of the evolving channel landscape, a dedicated customer focus and strong fundamentals.

Marketing leaders can integrate these 4 steps to maintain and improve search performance:

- Step 1: Review and refresh keyword strategies.
- Step 2: Evaluate the balance of paid and organic search.
- Step 3: Establish search marketing success measures.
- Step 4: Determine how to spend search marketing budgets.

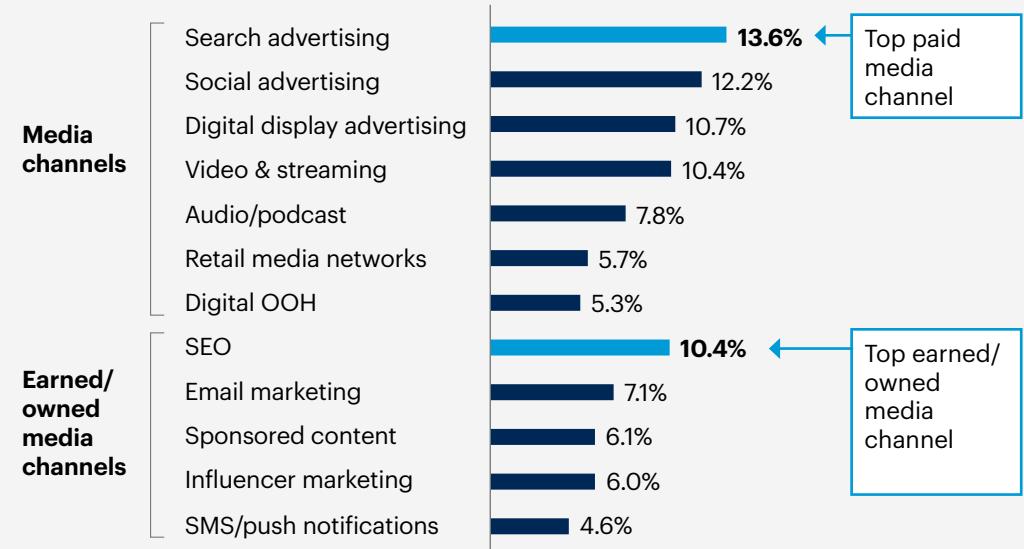


"CMOs and their teams will need to adjust their web content strategy to support or better inform evolving search engines. The right combination of investment in people, process and tech is needed."

Kassi Socha, Gartner Director Analyst

Search Marketing Tops 2024 Digital Channel Investment Allocations

Mean percentage of digital channel budget shown



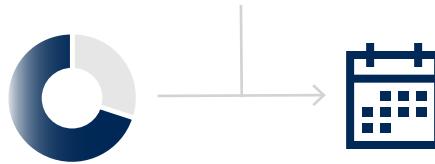
n = 383 CMOs allocating budget to digital channels

Q. How is your 2024 total marketing expense budget allocation for digital channels being allocated to or spent on each of the following digital channels?

Source: 2024 Gartner CMO Spend Survey

CMOs will shift 30% of their budget to subscription-based social platforms

By 2028, digital marketers will allocate 30% of their paid social budget to support advertising and partnerships on subscription-based channels.



The evidence

While CMOs have prioritized social channels, brand engagement from consumers has been declining since 2021. Consumers have become disenchanted with traditional social media channels as a source of entertainment, product inspiration and trusted product recommendations.



The impact

Subscription-based channels like Substack, Patreon and Discord already report healthy usage rates, with indications of growth. Popular content creators are expanding to these platforms, and consumers will be soon to “follow.”



The opportunities

- ✓ Audit social media channels for reach and engagement impact.
- ✓ Create opportunities to extend existing influencer partnerships onto subscription platforms.
- ✓ Socialize and gain buy-in for investment in subscription-based platforms.

Audit your social media performance and prepare for shifting media behaviors

CMOs are challenged to maintain and grow their reach and engagement with consumers who are shifting their media behaviors away from social media.

Marketing leaders should take these 4 steps to keep up:

- Ensure social advertising strategies drive performance against key marketing goals and objectives.
- Identify the best platform for campaign activation by considering consumption trends.
- Prioritize platform activation for ads that are not solely conversion-based, like educational or informational ads, and measure consumer engagement with your brand.
- Support performance against brand awareness and conversion marketing by experimenting with closed community platforms.

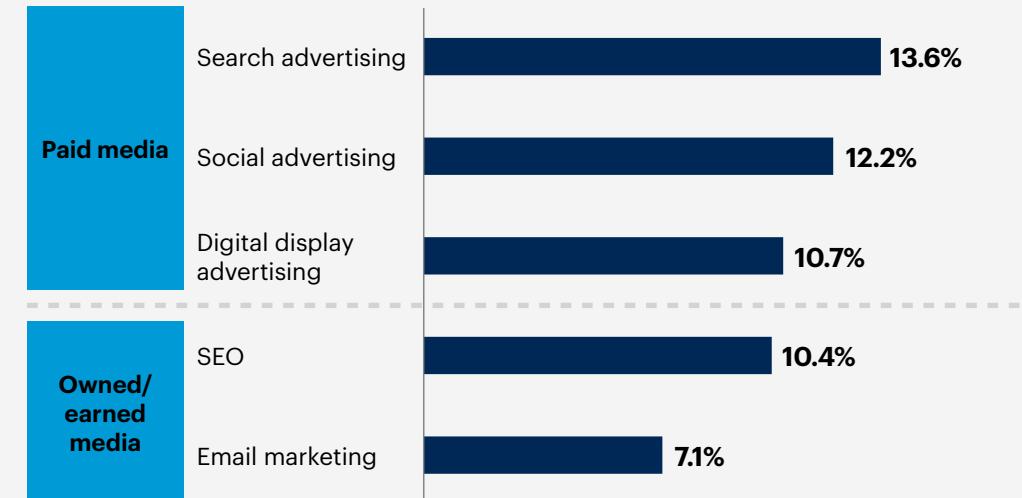


“Subscription-based content channels offer a more authentic experience to social-media-weary consumers. Brands have an opportunity to get in on the ground floor with these emerging channels to reach highly engaged audiences.”

Emma Mathison, Gartner Senior Principal, Research

2024 Top Digital Channel Investment Allocations

Mean percentage of digital channel budget



n = 383 CMOs with budget allocated to digital channels

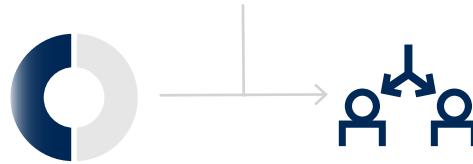
Q: How is your 2024 total marketing expense budget allocation for digital channels being allocated to or spent on each of the following digital channels?

Source: 2024 Gartner CMO Spend Survey

Note: Only showing highest budget allocations for paid media and for owned/earned media.

CMOs will build brand trust by embracing uniform pricing

By 2028, half of B2C companies that use dynamic-pricing algorithms will abandon them to foster trust and differentiate their brands with consumers.



The evidence

Forty-eight percent of consumers disagree that dynamic pricing helps consumers get the best prices. Offering nondynamic, consistent pricing is a powerful tool for building brand trust, with 79% of consumers agreeing that they are more likely to buy from brands that have consistent pricing.



The impact

Marketing leaders who embrace dynamic pricing will see benefits to the bottom line in the short term, but those gains will come with increased risk to long-term brand reputation.



The opportunities

- ✓ CMOs should look hard at the long-term brand impacts of short-term revenue gains.
- ✓ Offering uniform, consistent pricing is a powerful tool for building brand trust. Embrace uniform pricing as a brand differentiator.
- ✓ CMOs of organizations where dynamic pricing is nonnegotiable must be sure dynamic pricing is well-positioned as a tool to benefit both customers and the business.

Improve and foster brand trust in untrusting times

Brand trust has substantial commercial implications. Yet many marketing leaders deploy trust strategies that fall short, trading long-term brand impact with short-term revenue growth.

Marketing leaders can efficiently drive brand trust by improving customer perception of brand dependability.

To build consumer trust, marketing leaders should:

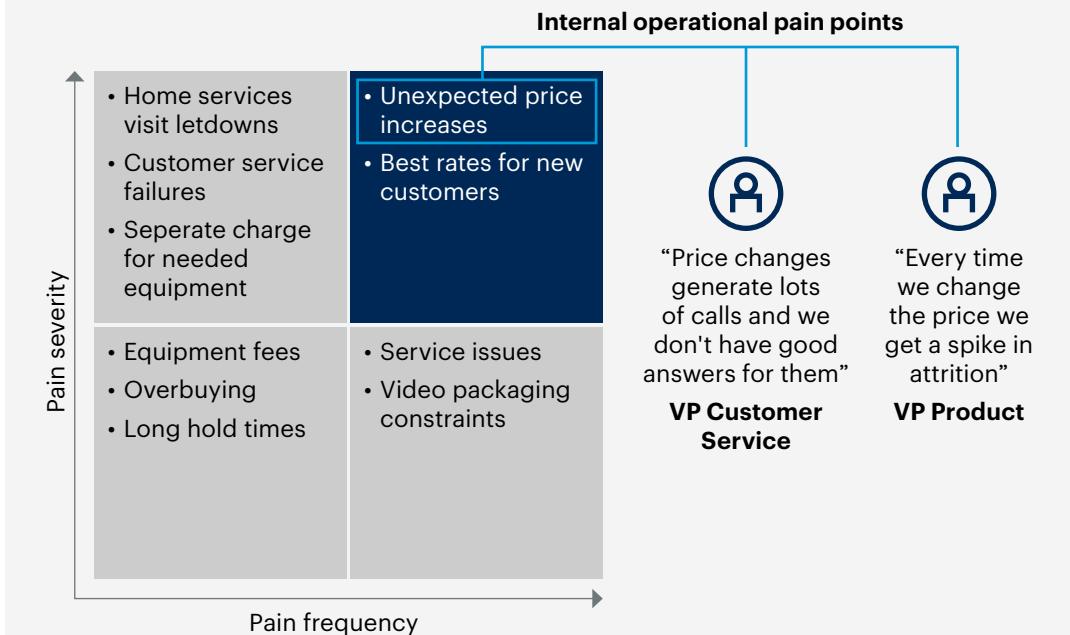
- Bring your brands' existing pro-customer processes and policies to the foreground by clarifying how your brands provide value to customers.
- Extend the brand promise to include new unexpected value in key customer moments.
- Secure organizational buy-in to take action on high-priority trust eroders by connecting customer pain to internal stakeholder pain.



“Dynamic pricing might juice revenue for brands in the short term. But in the long term, that approach to pricing will erode consumer trust.”

Kate Muhl, Gartner VP Analyst

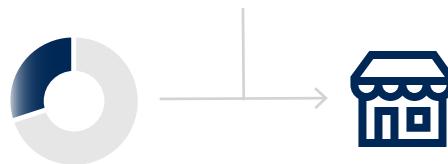
Align Stakeholders Through Pain Mapping



Source: Adopted from Cox

CMOs will increase offline investment to support new content consumption patterns

By 2028, mass digital detoxing will force CMOs to spend 70% of their total marketing budget on offline channels to better engage consumers.



The evidence

Driven by fatigue and poor customer experiences, consumers are actively reducing their screen time, favoring experiences that balance digital with physical experiences.



The impact

New content consumption patterns will require CMOs to develop more adaptable marketing strategies and rethink investment decisions to reach their most valuable customers through omnichannel versus solely digital experiences.



The opportunities

- ✓ Invest in strategies that harmonize in-person and digital interactions.
- ✓ Upskill your employees to more successfully meet customers with the right message, on the right channel at the right time.
- ✓ Evaluate your tech stack and explore solutions that are aligned with consumers' evolving engagement patterns.

Seize the opportunity of digital and physical customer experiences

Bridge the gap between physical and digital customer experiences by:

- Understanding where customers already engage with brands through digital and physical channels and where journeys can be improved by creating intentional phygital experiences
- Developing points throughout the physical customer journey that can be improved or streamlined with phygital experiences
- Enhancing the digital customer journey with physical touchpoints



“Digital detoxing will push CMOs to rethink strategies, shifting budgets offline. As audiences unplug, meet them with engaging, real-world experiences that seamlessly blend the physical and digital.”

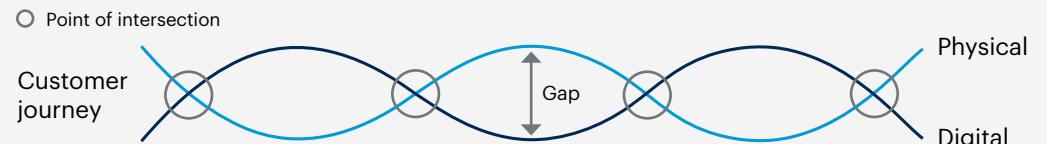
Claudia Ratterman, Gartner Director Analyst

The Past, Present and Future of Digital, Physical and Phygital Customer Journeys

Past: Physical and digital were separate



Present: Physical and digital intersect



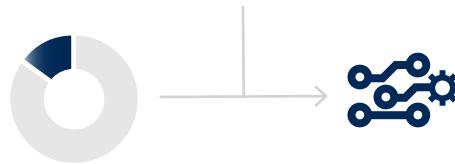
Future: Hybrid behaviors normalize and there will be smaller gaps and the points of intersection will increase



Source: Gartner

CMOs will prepare data for automated interactions led by AI agents

By 2027, 85% of customer data will be generated from automated interactions or those led by AI agents.



The evidence

Current AI models, such as large language models (LLMs), lack the agency to autonomously execute tasks and adapt in complex environments. However, as new levels of intelligence are added, new AI agents are poised to expand quickly as brands seek to address customer-facing use cases.



The impact

GenAI agents will proliferate faster than human-led product organizations can track their performance, safety and appropriate use without AI help. Marketers will need to determine when and how they can trust AI agents to take action on behalf of the brand and customers across key areas.



The opportunities

- ✓ Prioritize data preparation; high-quality data is essential for maximizing the potential of AI-driven customer insights.
- ✓ Expand your personalization capabilities using AI-generated insights.
- ✓ Establish robust data governance frameworks to ensure ethical use of customer data.
- ✓ Equip employees with the necessary skills to work alongside AI agents.

Scale GenAI by addressing the top 3 barriers to implementation

CMOs anticipate GenAI to have a positive impact and are ready to move from pilot to implementation. To successfully scale, marketing leaders must address their biggest challenges with: data quality, technology, and talent and ethics.

Take these steps to address these challenges and facilitate a smooth GenAI implementation process:

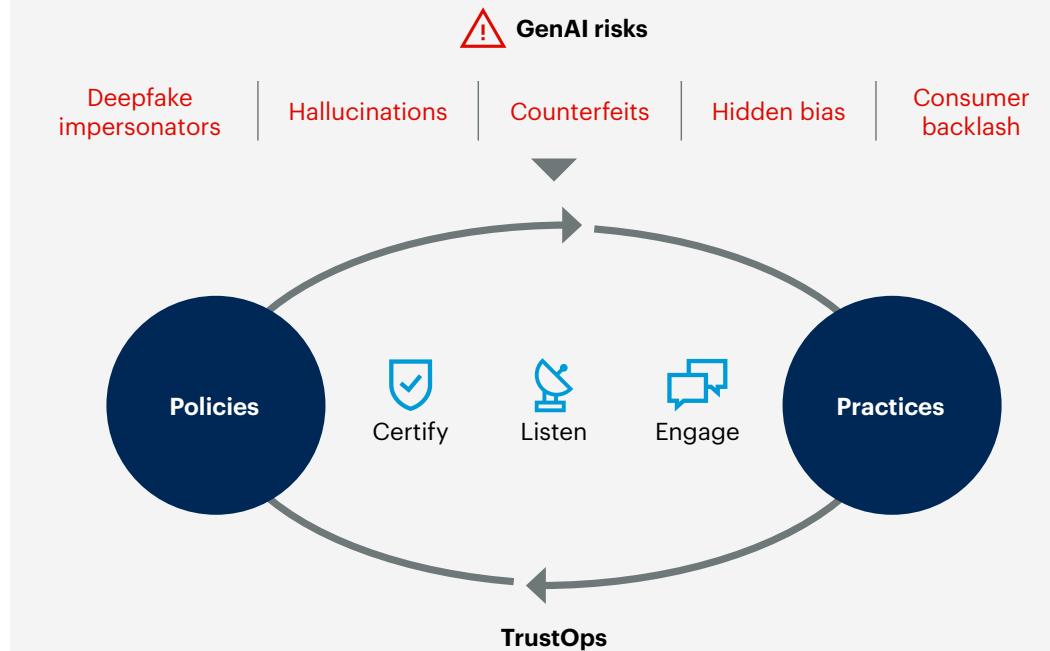
- Establish a cross-functional AI council.
- Prepare your data for GenAI. Identify opportunities to improve data quality and establish or improve your data governance and metadata management practices.
- Work with partners to discover if there are any existing GenAI technologies and partners across your enterprise.
- Build customers' trust in your brand's use of GenAI by being transparent about your GenAI-created content.



“Identify use cases where you can effectively deploy AI agents today to begin developing the human-machine relationship and drive future transformation.”

Nicole Greene, Gartner VP Analyst

Confronting Risk With TrustOps for Content



Source: Gartner



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Gartner Engagement Plan: Marketing Predictions 2025

Initiatives and Milestones	Key Challenges	Target Outcomes	
 <p>Prepare for disruption and position your organization to capitalize on unique opportunities</p>	 <p>CMOs are contending with organizational changes, privacy concerns and fallout from misinformation overload, all while AI cements its place within the marketing function</p>	 <p>Establish organizational readiness and prepare for future disruption</p>	
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Research and Tools <p>Leverage Predicts 2025: Marketers Must Prepare to Serve Human and Machine Customers (Link Coming Soon!) to understand future trends impacting Marketing and plan for their impacts.</p> <p>Complete your Score assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of your current marketing function and opportunities to position your organization for future disruption.</p>	<p>Leverage Hype Cycle for Digital Marketing, 2024 to identify marketing technologies and innovations to help manage evolving market conditions.</p> <p>Support your spend dialogues and critical resource requests with the Marketing Budget & Efficiency Benchmark by creating custom comparisons of marketing budget allocations against those of peers.</p>	<p>Understand how to use insights from Gartner's Top U.S. Consumer and Cultural Trends for 2025 to create effective plans and programs.</p> <p>Explore CMOs' Guide to Omnichannel Marketing Strategy to create unified, customer-centric approaches across marketing channels that leverage multichannel and omnichannel tools and strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Especially relevant for predictions 2 and 4 	<p>Use A CMO's Guide to Implementing Generative AI to help you scale GenAI by addressing the top areas for concern: data quality, technology, and talent and ethics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Especially relevant for predictions 1, 5 and 6 <p>Elevate your AI-enabled capabilities with insights from Develop an AI Strategic Roadmap for Marketing and leverage the human-machine relationship across strategic planning to reach marketing goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Especially relevant for predictions 1, 5 and 6
Expert Advisory <p>Engage in FYFI (First Year, First Inquiry) with a Gartner expert to explore how your marketing milestones and challenges can be addressed by GML/CME's capabilities.</p>	<p>Review the results of your Score assessment with a Gartner expert to identify areas of opportunity.</p>	<p>Determine improvement areas to optimize your marketing function and strategy and drive smooth change management by consulting with a Gartner expert.</p>	<p>Explore best practices to demonstrate marketing's connectedness to enterprise vision and convey the value and impact of marketing to the enterprise by consulting with a Gartner expert.</p>

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