How can AI tools enhance digital marketing strategies?

AI in digital marketing is the use of artificial intelligence to plan, execute, or optimize a company's marketing efforts. AI marketing aims to improve the company's marketing performance, efficiency, and cost savings.

AI uses machine learning and large-language models (LLM) to analyze big data and turn it into actionable insights, automated actions, and content.

AI can even interact with customers who perform a specific behaviour on your website, like clicking a button or liking a social media post.

What does this mean for you? With AI, you can analyse customer behavior, predict outcomes, automate marketing tasks, and create and personalize marketing content.

New AI tools are coming on the market every day. They promise to help marketers do their jobs faster, smarter, and more easily. Since these tools are still emerging, not everyone is a home run, and the number of tools to research is overwhelming.

1. Data Analytics

Struggling to make sense of large data sets? Most digital marketing tools give you analytics, but marketers often have to export and piece together data from different platforms like puzzle pieces to get the big picture. AI can collect and sift through large amounts of data from multiple marketing platforms and summarize the findings.This will help you save time when strategizing and developing marketing assets for your campaigns.

2. Content Creation

Digital marketers can instruct AI to write marketing content, including captions, social media posts, email copy, and even blog copy. Beyond writing, marketers can use AI for multimedia like images, audio, and even video.

It's important to note that most AI-generated content isn't ready for publishing immediately. Most marketers today use generative AI as a starting point — whether that's ideation, an outline, or a few paragraphs to ignite your creativity.

Just 6% of marketers using AI say that they publish AI-generated content with no changes. You should always fact-check, edit, and adjust AI's writing to make it sound more human and on-brand.

3. Reducing Admin Work

Like any professional role, digital marketers spend a significant amount of time sitting in meetings and doing administrative tasks. In fact, business professionals save an average of two hours and 24 minutes *per day* by using AI and automation tools. AI tools can tackle manual tasks like scheduling meetings, summarizing articles and research, and taking notes.

For example, 63% of marketers are using AI tools to take notes and summarize meetings. These functions aren't sexy, but they free up a marketer's time to spend on more important, creative parts of their jobs. Or take Superhuman, the email known for its speed. Its AI features save hours in your inbox by summarizing whole email threads, preparing draft replies in your voice, and an AI search 2-3x faster than Gmail's or Outlook's.

3. Content Personalization

Of marketers using AI, 71% say it helps them personalize the experience customers get with their company. This means AI can change the customer's experience depending on their online behaviour or whether or not they've filled out a form for your company. For example, dynamic content changes depending on the user their name, occupation, online behaviour, etc. AI analyses a user online and gives them a more personal experience with marketing assets, including web pages, social media posts, and emails.

4. Media Buying

Another way to use AI in marketing is through media buying. Gone are the days when junior media buyers hand-select websites or billboards to advertise on. Instead, AdTech platforms use AI to choose the most effective ad and media placements to reach a target audience and maximize ROI. If you use Google Ads, you've already encountered the AI feature that assists with the auction process.

5. Chatbots

One use of AI in marketing that we've seen for years is chatbots. Chatbots, created with natural language processing (NLP), can answer common questions, nurture leads, schedule demo calls, and more. A chatbot can personalize the customer journey during the stage when they're consuming marketing content. This tool can also answer customer questions.

Let's look at Drift, for example. The company has trained its chatbot to answer questions, even outside of a pre-programmed path. This way, if a person has a question that isn't loaded into the system, the user will still get an answer.

6. Automated Email Marketing Campaigns

Automated email marketing has also been around for years. However, AI tools can help produce more engaging email content and learn about your email list behaviours. The goal is to have your marketers spend less time researching and brainstorming so they can focus on sending successful campaigns. As AI expands and improves, automated email marketing software becomes even more important to include in your marketing stack.

7. Predicting Customer Behaviour

Another great use of AI in digital marketing is to forecast customer behaviour and sales. AI can predict the outcome of marketing campaigns by using historical data, such as consumer engagement metrics, purchases, time-on-page, email opens, and more. AI helps marketers understand the predicted outcome of their campaigns and marketing assets and forecast outcomes. These insights help marketers develop better, more dynamic campaigns that produce sales and boost ROI.

8. Improving Customer Experience

Digital marketing is all about the customer experience, and AI can help marketers deliver the best experience for their visitors to convert them into leads. AI can help increase customer retention and loyalty, delight customers with personalized content, and improve assets.

AI Marketing Pros and Cons

While AI has a lot of great benefits, it's still an emerging technology and has some drawbacks. Let's examine some of the advantages and disadvantages of AI in digital marketing.

Pros of AI in Digital Marketing

1. Increased ROI

As you can see, the main goal of using AI in digital marketing is to increase performance and ROI for your campaigns. Rather than running an ineffective ad for an entire campaign, you can harness data analytics and insights to produce better marketing assets in real-time.

This saves your marketing team time and money, allowing them to work more efficiently and increase profits. Cutting staff time and production costs also boosts your ROI.

2. Speed and Efficiency

I'll say it again: Two-thirds of marketers say that time savings is the biggest advantage of generative AI in marketing. How much? Marketers report that they save over three hours for every piece of content that they produce with AI.

This frees up your time and capacity to do more and invest your time where it matters most, but it also helps your brand. All marketers know that being first in a market is a major advantage. Whether you're spinning out social media campaigns based on pop culture moments or launching digital campaigns, the ability to pivot and launch campaigns in days or even hours is pure gold.

3. Better Customer Experience

Another advantage to using AI in marketing is that it can improve your relationship with your customers. The more personalized your recommendations are and the deeper your relationships are, the more likely they'll become repeat buyers. AI can also identify customers at risk of churn and put them in an automated marketing campaign to get them to re-engage with your company.

4. Data-Based Marketing Decisions

AI can make scaling your business easier, using data to analyse, predict, and create marketing assets that sell. See how your team can use artificial intelligence and automation in this course from HubSpot Academy.

Cons of AI in Digital Marketing

1. Content Quality and Accuracy

While generative AI has come a long way, its content isn't flawless. Factual errors are a particular issue: 47% of marketers say that generative AI has provided them with inaccurate information. If you're going to use AI to generate content without having a human edit it, you may see a drop in the quality. The success of AI is reliant on high-quality data that is accurate and timely. Without a human editor, AI can produce content with factual inaccuracies, bias, or a divergent tone from your brand. Using AI requires human oversight so these types of mistakes don't happen.

2. Privacy

As marketing assets have become more personalized through the years, customers are beginning to value privacy more and more. With AI, some of these techniques require using a customer's cookies and previous internet behaviour to predict future purchases.

3. Copyright Concerns

As a new technology, the legal framework for AI is still being built. Generative AI tools are trained on public content from thousands of companies, so it's possible they could generate content that's a little *too* close to your competitor's. Copyright laws are written around human authorship, so it's unclear if you actually own AI-generated content in the same way.

4. Evaluating non-quantifiable KPIs

It might be hard to get buy-in to invest in AI at your company because there are non-quantifiable KPIs at play. Certain metrics will be easy to track, but others like improving the customer experience, increasing brand awareness, or improving reputation will be much harder. That's why it's important to have the right measurement tools in place. The platform lets you track KPIs across all your marketing channels under unified dashboards from website traffic and page views to the number of leads generated through ad campaigns, and more.

What are the best practices for using AI tools?

1 - Choose the right AI tool for your needs

It's essential to keep in mind that not all AI software is created equal. For example, you've got AI software that's fantastic at crunching numbers and extracting insights from large datasets. Then there are AI tools that excel at generating creative and engaging content, making them perfect for writing, marketing, and overall content creation.

And let's not forget about AI systems that can recognize objects, and faces, or even drive autonomous vehicles. Basically, each type of AI is designed to tackle particular tasks and challenges. By understanding your team's specific needs, you can pick the AI tool that best aligns with your requirements and helps you achieve your goals. For instance, if you want an AI tool that can help you speed up your course creation process.

2 - Set a clear AI strategy and objectives

Having a solid AI strategy in place is absolutely crucial for businesses. It's like having a roadmap that helps you identify the best applications, allocate resources smartly, and align your AI initiatives with your overall organizational goals.

When you have clear goals in mind, it becomes much easier to choose the right AI technologies and frameworks that will truly make a difference. You can concentrate your efforts on the areas where AI can bring the most value and maximize its potential.

By taking the time to establish a well-defined AI strategy, you're setting yourself up for success and making sure that your business stays on the right track! Proper objective setting also helps you and your team steer clear of any potential ethical and legal problems.

3 - Establish data privacy

Another AI practice that organizations need to prioritize right from the start is data privacy. To achieve this, they can start by taking steps like anonymizing user data, minimizing how much data is collected, and applying protective measures to keep it safe.

But that's not all. Organizations should also put transparency and user consent front and center. It's important for individuals, especially their customers, to fully understand what data is being collected and how it's being processed by AI systems. By being open and upfront about these activities, organizations can build trust among their customers or users.

Last but not least, companies should make sure to comply with constantly evolving data privacy regulations. By keeping a watchful eye on privacy practices and making sure they align with regulations, organizations can adapt and address any potential privacy risks that may pop up along the way.

4 - Strengthen security measures

Just like we lock our doors to protect our homes, businesses need to implement robust security measures to safeguard their data, and infrastructure from potential harm. You see, AI systems can be vulnerable to attacks but they can also be misused for harm, so it's vital to be proactive and stay one step ahead of potential threats. By implementing strong security measures, you can create a shield of protection around your valuable company assets.

Regular security audits can help you constantly monitor and evaluate the security landscape. It can also identify any vulnerabilities or gaps that may exist in your organizational systems and AI tools, allowing you to patch them up before any harm can be done.

You can also take advantage of encryption techniques to keep your data under lock and key. They ensure that even if unauthorized individuals use AI to access your information, it remains unreadable and protected. Access controls also add an extra layer of security by allowing only authorized individuals to interact with your AI systems. By carefully managing who has access and what they can do, you minimize the risk of unauthorized tampering or misuse.

5 - Prepare clear and concise prompts

AI tools thrive when you give them simple, clear, and precise instructions and that's where prompts come into play. Prompting in AI helps you get the most out of AI systems, guiding them to churn out relevant and accurate responses.

Think of it as pointing your AI tool in the right direction, giving you what we're looking for, and delivering exactly what you need. By crafting clear, concise, and focused prompts, you can communicate your intentions to the AI in a way that gets you the desired output.

You can then use this precise information to make better decisions and unlock innovative solutions that streamline your workflow. Mastering the art of prompting also helps reduce errors and minimize misunderstandings with AI tools.

6 - Review and fact-check content

Sometimes, AI tools may slip up, misunderstand context, or even rely on unreliable or biased sources. That's why it's important to double-check the facts and take a look at reliable sources before hitting that publish button. To ensure accuracy, there are some handy tools and methods at your disposal. Fact-checking websites and online databases can be a great help in verifying information and claims in your AI-generated content.

But don't forget, good old-fashioned research can be a valuable tool in your fact-checking arsenal. Dig deeper, verify the information, and make sure your content is reliable. After all, it's your organization's reputation on the line. Also, giving credit where it's due is always a good practice. When you use sources to back up your AI-generated content, make sure to cite them. Apart from acknowledging these sources that give you valuable information, it also adds a touch of credibility to your work.

7 - Avoid plagiarism and copyright infringement

AI language models like ChatGPT are built using text input and rely heavily on previous data to generate responses. As AI language models process vast amounts of text data, they may unintentionally reproduce content that resembles existing works. While these tools try to minimize this possibility, it's worth noting that the AI responses are generated based on patterns and examples from the training data it has been exposed to.

To make sure you're creating content ethically, it's always a good practice to verify the originality of the AI-generated output. And, when it comes to publishing online content or writing academic work, it's important to prioritize originality and avoid any form of plagiarism or copyright infringement. A great way to avoid this is to run any generated content through plagiarism and AI detection tools or conduct your own checks to verify its uniqueness.

8 - Understand the limitations of AI

As powerful as it is, AI is not perfect. It has its own set of limitations, including lack of context, common sense, creativity, and a big humanizing factor, emotion. Also, AI models heavily rely on patterns found in training data, which may sometimes hinder their ability to fully grasp the intricacies of the real world.

AI has an incredible impact on different industries and holds exciting possibilities for the future. We can't deny that it has revolutionized the way we work and live, and there's no doubt it will continue to do so. But, it's crucial to approach its advancements and limitations with a clear understanding to ensure ethical and responsible AI use. When implementing AI systems, it's important to stay mindful of their ever-evolving nature. Organizations should actively develop strategies to address its limitations while embracing its potential to enhance lives. By striking this balance, they can make the most of AI's capabilities while upholding ethical standards.

9 - Encourage continuous learning and upskilling

In this fast-paced field of AI, continuous learning is the secret ingredient to success. That's why we're here to shed light on the importance of investing in ongoing education programs that will supercharge your workforce and boost their AI literacy. By doing so, you're setting the stage for a workforce that not only collaborates effortlessly with AI systems but also becomes a driving force for innovation within your organization.

And with groundbreaking advancements happening at every turn, it's important to equip your employees with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate this exciting terrain. Continuous learning programs and AI technology training courses give your team the chance to stay in sync with the latest AI practices, concepts, and techniques. By investing in your workforce's growth and development, you're not just future-proofing your organization; you're also igniting a spark of curiosity and creativity within your employees.

10 - Monitor and mitigate bias

When it comes to AI systems, it's important to address a potential challenge – unintentional biases that might creep in from the training data, resulting in unfair outcomes. To tackle this issue head-on, it's crucial to implement robust monitoring mechanisms and techniques to detect and address biases.

Think of it like having a trusty watchdog or a safety net in place. Algorithmic audits and using diverse training data sets can help keep AI biases in check. By regularly evaluating and mitigating bias, you're ensuring that your AI applications are fair and promote equity for all.