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Agency expert: Marketers must shape AI's role in creative

Article

As marketers integrate generative AI (genAI) into their creative workflows, they must ensure the technology enhances, rather than replaces, creativity. Creatives must be active in AI policy development, maintain transparency of AI use, and be thoughtful about the way they use genAI. Brands that balance AI efficiency with human insight will stand out.

"It's really important for the creative industry to advocate for itself as AI continues to evolve," Alexia Adana, director of creative tech and innovation at Edelmen, said during Marketing Brew's [Tactical MarTech: The Future of AI, Attribution, and Privacy](#) event last week. Adana argued for "craft-centered" AI use, which she defined as using AI for augmentation, rather than automation.
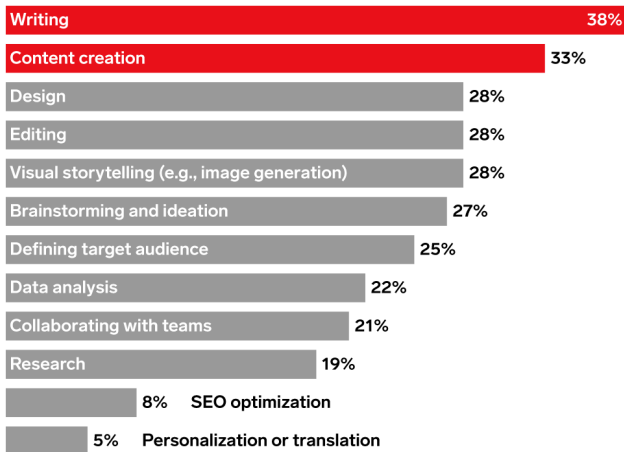
Shaping policy

Concerns surrounding intellectual property rights and human oversight in AI-driven creative will both be shaped by policy, so marketers need to help shape these conversations.

"None of us are truly experts because these things are growing by the day," Adana said. But because marketers are using these tools in their day-to-day, they need to offer their expertise to policymakers.

Writing and Content Creation Are Marketers' Top Use Cases for Generative AI (GenAI)
% of US marketers who use genAI more than once per month, Sep 2024

Q: What are the most common tasks where you actually use generative AI?

Task	%
Writing	38%
Content creation	33%
Design	28%
Editing	28%
Visual storytelling (e.g., image generation)	28%
Brainstorming and ideation	27%
Defining target audience	25%
Data analysis	22%
Collaborating with teams	21%
Research	19%
SEO optimization	8%
Personalization or translation	5%

Note: respondents could select up to 3
Source: Lightricks survey conducted by American Marketing Association (AMA), Dec 12, 2024
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Lead with transparency

Clients and brands should be upfront about AI use, Adana said. Policy may not dictate AI disclosure, so marketers should lead by example.

"Because transparency isn't right now woven into the best practices, we need to be transparent with how we're using AI," she said.

Something as simple as using the "made with AI" label on social media posts can help normalize AI transparency in the industry.

Augmentation over automation

While some marketers are confident in genAI's rapid content creation potential, others think it will create content that *looks* like it was made by AI, something Toys R Us was criticized for after releasing a [Sora-generated ad](#) last year.

These campaigns happen when marketers start "with the machine instead of the craft," according to Adana. But that doesn't mean genAI can't fit into creative workflows.

When evaluating genA useI, Adana said, creatives should ask themselves:

- What is my POV on AI at large?
- What am I uniquely solving with AI?
- Can I execute this idea without AI?
- How does AI fit into my creative process?
- What is my goal in this campaign, views or impact?

If marketers are aiming for a lot of views, genAI creative may be the way to go, since it can churn out content at a high volume. But if they're going for impact, human-first creative is more likely to resonate by offering consumers something new.

Even with human-first creative, AI is useful for simulating audience reactions based on demographics, age groups, or interest areas, Adana said.

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