Deloitte. Digital



Content demand is growing. Is your business keeping up?

Research reveals how leading marketing organizations are accelerating content delivery with GenAl and automation.

JUNE 2025

Content

KEY INSIGHTS FROM OUR RESEARCH



As marketing content continues to demonstrate its value as a driver of growth, today's marketing leaders face unprecedented demands to increase output and efficiency from content operations.



Generative AI (GenAI) has demonstrated its impact across a range of use cases in content operations. However, adoption slowed in 2024.



Many organizations focused on meeting demand through content supply chain automation—and saw improvements in key performance metrics.



Organizations investing in *both* GenAl and automation significantly outperformed their competitors.



SENSING SIGNS OF A [R]EVOLUTION

Page 3

BOLD MOVES DRIVE BIG IMPACT

Page 4

03

MARKETERS (RE)FOCUS
ON AUTOMATION

Page 11

HIGH AUTOMATION PRODUCES HIGH VALUE

Page 12

CONTENT DEMAND GROWS— AS DO THE TABLE STAKES

Page 5

AUTOMATING IMPACT

Page 13

02

GENAI ADOPTION SLOWS
AS COMPANIES CONFRONT
READINESS CHALLENGES

Page 6

(1)43

MARKETERS WANT TO IN-HOUSE CONTENT DEVELOPMENT.
OUTSOURCING IS UP. WHAT GIVES?

Page 15

GENAI USERS: FEWER OBSTACLES, FASTER GROWTH

Page 8

05

PIECING IT ALL TOGETHER

Page 16

GENERATING SUCCESS WITH GENAI

Page 9

JOIN THE CONTENT [R]EVOLUTION

Page 17



09

INTRODUCTION

Sensing signs of a [R]evolution

As a marketing leader, you see the writing on the wall ... and in your emails, on the web, on social and beyond: Effective content can help build meaningful relationships with customers and drive significant growth for your brand.

You hear the rallying cries from your business— Give us more content to engage more audiences across more channels—and the cautionary pleas from customers: Be authentic, be relevant ... or go away.

You observe the obstacles that stand in your way: Slow processes, outdated technologies, disorganized data, overstretched talent.

So you listen to the pitches from technology and service providers: automation platforms to smooth your processes, customer data platforms to glean new insights, agencies and Generative AI tools to produce more content.

You sense we're in the midst of a Content [R]evolution—a convergence of rapid marketplace evolution and technological revolution that is rewriting the rules of engagement for marketers.

The question is: What to do now?

3

Bold moves drive big impact

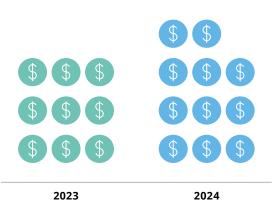
Despite growing complexity and economic uncertainty, CMOs today are ramping up their focus on content marketing. According to new research commissioned by Deloitte Digital,* content marketing—along with the technologies, talent and processes that enable it—now represents one of the largest areas of spending for marketing organizations in the United States. And its slice of the budget pie is growing fast.

The reason for this growing emphasis? Content drives enterprise value. Surveyed marketing leaders estimated that content marketing efforts were directly responsible for 11% of total company revenues in 2024—a 22% increase from the previous year. (See graphics.)



DESPITE SLOW BUDGET GROWTH, CMOS INCREASED INVESTMENTS IN CONTENT Content marketing spend While total marketing spend grew only 4% in 2024¹ ... Content marketing spend grew 15%—comprising 34% of overall budgets, on average.

THE RESULT? INCREASED REVENUES FOR THE BUSINESS



In 2024, leaders estimated **content marketing** was directly responsible for 11% of company revenues—up from 9% the previous year.

^{*} Unless otherwise noted, statistics highlighted in this report are based on a Deloitte Digital survey of 650 marketing leaders at US-based B2C and B2B companies, conducted in September 2024. See page 18 for full methodology.

Content demand grows— as do the table stakes

What's growing even faster than content marketing budgets? Content marketing demand. On average, marketing leaders said demand from the business nearly doubled between 2023–2024. That's on top of a 54% increase the previous year.

Today's growing appetite for content is propelled by a range of factors. As the din of our digital world grows louder, customers increasingly expect relevant, accessible, personalized offers and messages. As competitors jockey for position in a world of seemingly endless choices, businesses need distinctive content that drives purchases and sustains loyalty. And as digital touch points expand and audiences become more fragmented, marketers themselves need content that conforms to specifications across a dizzying array of media channels and digital platforms.

On-message, on-target, just-in-time, righton-spec ... It all adds up to unprecedented demands and complexity for marketers.

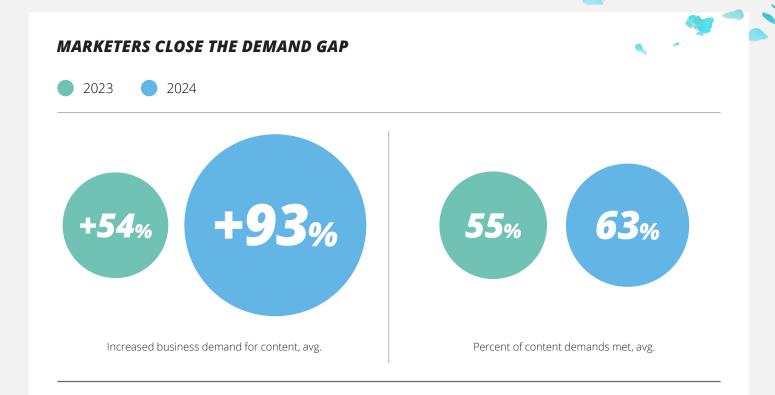
The good news is, marketing organizations are meeting content demands more consistently than in 2023. (See chart.) The not-so-good news? Simply producing and distributing more content isn't enough in today's evolving environment. In fact, the percentage of marketing leaders who said their content marketing efforts had improved brand awareness, customer trust and other key metrics dropped in 2024.

Authenticity and human connection are the new table stakes of content marketing success. Our research revealed that many organizations lack the technologies, resources and connections to enable personalized content marketing at scale—

and to streamline efficiency across the content supply chain.

Some companies—in this report we refer to them as *front-runners*—are piecing it together. They're tapping GenAl's potential to effectively develop and rapidly personalize content assets. They're automating repetitive tasks such as metadata tagging and time-sensitive needs such as campaign analytics in ways that break open bottlenecks in the content supply chain. As a result, they're driving new growth for the entire business.

In this paper we explore the strategies that are working—and the results that are being achieved—by the front-runners of today's Content [R]evolution.





GenAl adoption slows as companies confront readiness challenges

Perhaps no business technology in history has arrived with greater fanfare than Generative AI. At the beginning of 2023, marketing leaders, technology providers and trade publications were proclaiming high expectations and outlining ambitious plans for how it could soon transform processes and increase creative outputs.

In a September 2023 survey, we found that 26% of responding companies had already implemented GenAl in content operations. An additional 18% said they planned to do so by the end of that year.² For many, those plans didn't materialize.

In our September 2024 survey, just 29% of all respondents had implemented GenAl—meaning

15% of surveyed marketing organizations were running at least nine months behind previously anticipated adoption schedules.

Why did so many delay their plans? Respondents cited diverse and growing challenges, primarily around organizational readiness. (See graphic, page 7.) When asked about current concerns, 3 in 4 companies that hadn't yet adopted GenAl cited worries about change management. And when discussing current obstacles, 1 in 3 cited issues around integrating GenAl into existing systems and workflows, long implementation times and governance.



CONFIDENCE GREW AMONG GENERATIVE AI USERS

Compared to those already using the technology in 2023, current GenAl users in our latest survey were ...

17% less concerned about negative impacts on **creative quality**

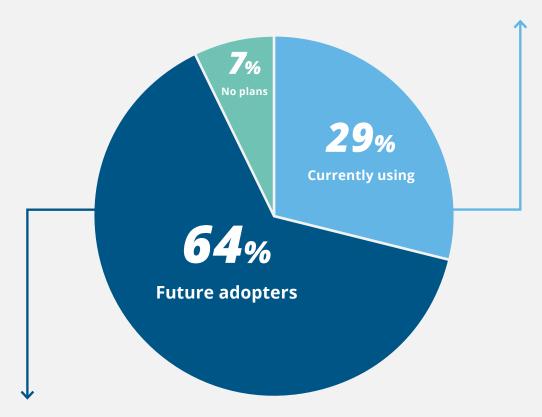
15% less challenged by long implementation times

12% less concerned about change management

13% less concerned about IP & legal risks

8% less challenged by **integration issues** with existing systems / workflows

7% less challenged by governance issues



MEANTIME, CONCERNS GREW AMONG FUTURE ADOPTERS

Compared to future adopters in 2023, **future adopters in our latest survey were ...**

16% more concerned about negative impacts on creative quality

32% more challenged by long implementation times

24% more concerned about change management

21% more concerned about IP & legal risks

42% more challenged by **integration issues** with existing systems / workflows

19% more challenged by governance issues

GenAl users: fewer obstacles, faster growth

Compared to companies that hadn't adopted GenAl, organizations already using the technology reported being less worried about *nearly every* concern or obstacle. Even compared to 2023's early adopters of GenAl, respondents using GenAl in 2024 were less worried about every issue, save governance.

Today, their primary focus has turned to experiential considerations such as ensuring GenAl is not used in ways that circumvent "the human touch" or that fail to account for cultural nuances. To solve those lingering concerns, leaders are focused on improving

human—Al collaboration while letting GenAl handle simpler deliverables such as short-form text, newsletters and social media posts. (See graphics.)

This approach is paying off in improved employee productivity, with respondents saying GenAl saved the average content marketer 11 hours of work per week—giving them more time to focus on producing high-impact content. It's improving overall output as well: Companies using GenAl extensively meet content demands 30% more often than future adopters of the technology.

With these approaches in place, **GenAl is helping marketers where it matters most: the bottom line**. Surveyed companies using GenAl extensively reported 1.5x greater revenues derived from content marketing compared to other companies—and exceeded their annual revenue goals by 22%, on average. At the same time, they're cutting expenses, with 41% of respondents saying GenAl had lowered the overall cost of content production.

THE EVOLUTION OF GENAI USE CASES



2023



2024

Why marketers use GenAl

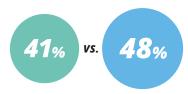


Significantly *more* use GenAl to **brainstorm content ideas**

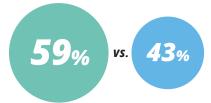


Significantly *fewer* use GenAl to **automate content production**. Automation can be a powerful use case for agentic Al *(see p. 13)*.

What marketers produce with GenAl



Significantly *more* use GenAl to produce **short-form text**.

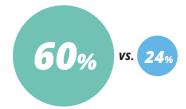


Significantly *fewer* use GenAl to produce **data visualizations & infographics**. This use case can require significant human intervention to produce effective communication.

Where marketers use GenAl



Significantly *more* use GenAl to create **newsletters**.



Significantly *fewer* use GenAl to create **advertisements**. GenAl-produced ads demand thoughtful risk analysis and creative review by humans.

Generating success with GenAl

Companies that successfully implement GenAI at scale typically have four things in place.

- Strategically prioritized use cases: It's important to be clear about your business goals when selecting GenAl use cases—whether that's faster speed to market, reduced costs, improved quality or other aims. Then, prioritize those use cases that promise the fastest return on investment (ROI) while establishing the foundations for the use cases that will follow. There's no one-size-fits-all here. Your industry and regulatory realities, business models and market positioning, existing technology and talent will as come into play—as will the demands and expectations of your audiences.
- smart deployment of existing tech and data: Today there are GenAl-enabled tools, platforms and integrations that can strengthen nearly every link in the content supply chain. But we've found it's unrealistic—and potentially detrimental—to try to select, implement, connect and activate them all at once. Begin by taking inventory of the GenAl enhancements already available in your tech stack and identifying how they can map to priority use cases. This approach can significantly reduce risk and speed to market.

Of course, GenAl tools can only perform as well as you train them. It is essential that every GenAl tool in your content operations has access to approved, relevant and trustworthy data. This includes not only owned customer and enterprise data but also third-party channel, platform and market data. It's a lot to harness and manage—but it is an important key to producing effective content and reducing risks related to ethics, privacy and security.

- Integrated workflows: In most marketing organizations, the content supply chain is riddled by weak links: budgets managed on spreadsheets, manual handoffs between teams, tedious resizing and spec-checking of assets, delayed performance reports, and so on. The most effective companies are those that look beyond GenAl implementation within workflows to GenAl integration across the content supply chain. This way, human marketers are able to focus on improving outcomes rather than moving content.
- The talent for change: The most effective marketers constantly think outside the box—coming up with new avenues to reach audiences, novel approaches to tell brand stories, fresh insights to improve campaign performance. As GenAl gets infused into your content operations, marketers will need to grow outside the box—learning new skills and roles, collaborating in new ways with (and through) technology. One in five leaders at companies using GenAl said a lack of internal expertise is an obstacle in their organizations, and the most extensive users of GenAl were by far the most likely group to predict the technology will require substantial expansion of their content marketing teams. Well-designed change management, training and talent acquisition programs will therefore be needed to help prepare today's workforce for tomorrow's realities.

Extensive users of GenAl are



as likely to say the technology will necessitate **substantial growth of content marketing teams**.*

* When compared to future adopters of GenAl.



Generative AI in the content supply chain

GenAl has the potential to **reduce repetitive work and improve quality in nearly every function** of content operations. Below we've highlighted a few example use cases where today's leading companies are achieving value.

STRATEGY & PLANNING

- · Resource management
- Content ideation
- Calendar development & predictive planning
- · Content briefing
- Brand guideline socialization
- Audience identification & segmentation

TECHNOLOGY & IMPLEMENTATION

- Content categorization
- Metadata mapping & tagging
- Versioning
- Archiving
- Routing for creation
- Campaign setup across channels (i.e., email)
- Programmatic ad buying

PRODUCTION

- · Creative development
- Translation & localization
- · Creative tool integration
- Content modularization & reusability
- Budget tracking
- Agency management
- SEO optimization

REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

- Approval routing
- · Auto-scheduling
- Syndication
- · Channel distribution
- Updating across platforms
- · Newsletter distribution
- Ad placement
- Quality assurance

OPTIMIZATION & MEASUREMENT

- · A/B testing
- Personalization
- · Analytics reporting
- Real-time performance tracking
- · Sentiment analysis
- ROI calculation
- · Performance benchmarking
- · Content refreshing
- Channel optimization

USE CASE

Content ideation: Large language models prompted with content / campaign briefs and audience insights help brainstorm campaign concepts.

Content categorization: Content analysis software analyzes text, video, audio and images and automatically classifies assets for easy retrieval and activation.

Creative development: Image, video, audio and/or text generators adapt approved campaign concepts into content that meets tactical and channel specifications.

Quality assurance: Content management platforms use company data, brand standards and regulatory guidelines to identify and correct content errors and inconsistencies.

Personalization: Customer data platforms identify and serve individuals with content adapted to their personal information and engagement history.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Rapid generation of creative options
- Improved alignment between goals, audiences & messaging
- New avenues of creative collaboration / iteration
- Simplified asset management
- · Conversational asset retrieval
- Expanded options for intuitive categorization (e.g., by color themes, emotional tone, etc.)
- · Greater volume of content produced
- Less manual resizing and file preparation work
- · Improved adherence to platform specifications
- Reduced risk
- Fewer layers of human review
- Better audience experiences
- · Greater content relevance
- Scalability of "the human touch"
- Increased customer loyalty





03

Marketers (re)focus on automation

The modern enterprise content supply chain is complex, often with as many dependencies as the physical supply chains that businesses rely on for the production and delivery of goods and services. Strategies for pricing and priorities need to be set and aligned across businesses and functions. Technologies need to be implemented and integrated. Data about customers, trends, products, pricing and availability needs to be cleaned, unified and made accessible. Talent and content resources need to be developed, managed and deployed where they can have the most impact. Processes need to be continually streamlined to amplify speed and efficiency.

All this affects the ability of marketing organizations to meet the growing business demand for content. And all of it is important for companies that seek to foster authentic, personalized, responsive and valuable relationships with customers.

Many content teams are struggling with the assignment. According to a separate Deloitte Digital survey conducted in 2024 that focused on the state of marketing personalization, both consumer brands and B2B companies required an average of three weeks to create and distribute personalized advertising and content.³

This is a problem for marketers and businesses that need revenues, as well as for leads and customers who demand relevance. GenAl can help accelerate *production* of personalized marketing assets—but that speed means little if *process* bottlenecks remain. That's why an increasing number of surveyed marketing organizations have renewed their focus on content supply chain automation.



High automation produces high value

Automation isn't new to marketing. But thanks to recent technology advancements and increasingly flexible platform integrations, it has become easier and less costly than ever.

This is helping companies across industries rapidly improve the amount and sophistication of automations in content operations. In our 2024 survey, a third of surveyed marketing leaders reported a *very high* level of content automation. That's a 60% increase compared to 2023, indicating leaders are now not only aware of automation's importance, but acting on it.

Content automation brings value via higher volume, faster deployment and more revenue. Companies with very high content automation are improving performance across these and other critical success metrics. (See graphic.)

Successful content automation depends in particular on the use of analytics to **predict** content demand and **prioritize** content requests. Surveyed organizations that combine very high automation with sophisticated analytics systems are more than 12 times as likely as low-automation companies to say they can deliver most content in the pipeline ahead of demand.

Also critical are fully connected processes, tools and project management support to **plan** and **deliver** content where and when it's needed. Very highly automated organizations with those systems and tools in place are able to fulfill content demands from the business 30% more often than companies with low automation and planning / delivery capabilities.

Content marketing organizations with very high automation achieved significantly better results than organizations with low automation:



more likely to **meet** content demands



more likely to report more **qualified leads**



more likely to report higher **customer engagement**



greater **revenue impact** from content marketing





Automating impact

It is essentially impossible to scale content delivery and personalization successfully without deploying automation in the content supply chain. To get started or move ahead, consider the following steps.

- Establish the foundation: Ensure your operations have a strong foundational workflow process for the content life cycle. Automating a broken process will not fix inefficiencies but rather emphasize their existence. Focus on defining a content strategy and governance process and map that to your existing marketing resource management system. (And, if needed, research possible changes or upgrades to your systems.)
- Automate every step: Once you have automation-ready processes in place, it's time to reduce manual inefficiencies through marketing technology (martech) tools that reduce or remove manual handoffs and traffic control requirements across

- the content life cycle. (See next page for a few examples.) This will set up your organization to handle a larger volume of content.
- Scale authenticity: After your workflows are automated and your business is ready to handle a higher volume of content, you are ready to focus on automations that can rapidly produce relevant, authentic content at scale. This is where capabilities such as personalization based on customer data and content adaptation using GenAl can help you move beyond process efficiency to content effectiveness. We discuss the compounding impacts of automation and GenAl in the final section of this report.

AGENTIC AUTOMATION

GenAl has helped automate a range of *tasks* across marketing processes. Al agents—the next evolution of cognitive technology— expand what's possible by autonomously planning and executing entire *workflows*.

Read more:

"A digital labor force for marketing, sales and service"



Automation in the content supply chain

Automation can **increase efficiency and accelerate velocity of nearly every process** across content operations. Below we've highlighted a few example use cases where today's leading companies are achieving value.

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- Personalization
- · Analytics reporting
- Real-time performance tracking
- · Sentiment analysis
- ROI calculation
- · Performance benchmarking
- · Content refreshing
- Channel optimization

USE CASE

Resource management: Using capacity planning tools, your content gets automatically assigned to the strategist or designer with the right skills and available capacity.

Metadata mapping & tagging: An automation tool analyzes content and assigns appropriate categories based on predefined taxonomy, ensuring consistent organization.

Creative tool integration: Automation platforms connect different creative tools, allowing seamless transfer of assets and data between them.

Approval routing: Workflow management systems ensure the right stakeholders see and approve the content at the right time.

Analytics reporting: Data analytics platforms provide real-time insights into content performance across channels, creative executions and audiences.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Better workload balance across teams
- Improved fit between talent & assignments
- Greater visibility of capacity for planning
- Fewer campaign tracking & analysis errors
- · Less manual work for human marketers
- Faster campaign implementation
- Streamlined team collaboration
- Better governance of licensed assets
- Fewer mistakes as content moves through development & revisions
- · Reduced risk
- · Less "following up"
- Simplified sign-off documentation
- Improved tactical agility
- Less wasted spend
- Better understanding of audiences





Marketers want to in-house content development. Outsourcing is up. *What gives?*

Despite a desire to bring content production in-house, many marketing organizations increased their reliance on third parties for content creation in 2024. In fact, external vendors and agencies produced more than half of branded content, on average— a significant increase compared to 2023. (See graphic.)

The growing gap between in-housing intention and outsourcing reality reflects the bind many CMOs find themselves in today. Squeezed between fast-growing business demand for content and slow-growing marketing budgets to support talent and technology investment, marketing leaders often have little choice but to seek external creative and production support.

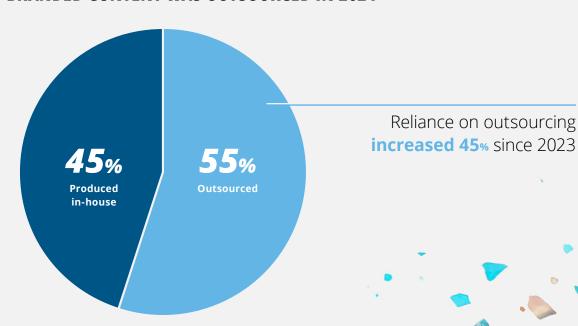
CMOs should engage best-fit resources to fill capability gaps today—as opposed to single-source solutions, according to Jenny Kelly, managing director and head of content at Deloitte Digital.

"Regardless of the demand you face, you should be very clear about when, where and why you deploy available resources," Kelly said. "For example, your agency may be the best resource to set the creative direction for campaigns; but for adaptation and localization of content, consider offshore or content factory resources since those can be more cost-effective at scale. Meantime, your internal teams may be in the best position to utilize company and customer data for activities like personalization."

Perhaps most important, leaders should work to ensure all resources—internal and external—are integrated into automated workflows. The resulting efficiencies will not only help drive better near-term results, but will also enable leaders to advance their long-term visions.

"Outsourcing should ultimately save you money and save people time," Kelly said, "which can then be used to train and build out teams and capabilities internally."

MOST BRANDED CONTENT WAS OUTSOURCED IN 2024



Piecing it all together

So far, we've seen how marketing organizations that use GenAl and, separately, those that focus on automation in their content operations are improving speed to market, scaling capacity to meet demand, and producing business and customer value.

What about organizations that combine extensive use of GenAI with very high **automation?** There aren't many of them yet: Just 23% of surveyed companies fit the bill in 2024. But those companies—the front-runners of the Content [R]evolution—are rewriting the terms of engagement, upsetting the balance of power in their industries, and setting new standards of success.

Here's what that looks like.

FRONT-RUNNERS AREN'T JUST **MEETING CONTENT DEMAND—** THEY'RE BEATING IT.

Able to deliver most content ahead of demand



Front-runners



Other companies

THEY UNDERSTAND HOW TO **COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY** WITH GENAI.

GenAl expertise is advanced or expert



Front-runners



54%

Other companies

THEY'VE DEVELOPED BETTER PROCESSES.

Processes, tools and project management support are fully connected



Front-runners

Other companies

THE RESULT: [R]EVOLUTIONARY VALUE.

Compared to other companies, front-runners are ...

+33% as likely to report higher customer loyalty

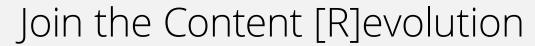
+42% as likely to report **higher customer engagement**

+26% as likely to report **higher customer trust**

Resulting in ...

greater impact from content marketing on +27% greater impact non-company revenues





Plenty of companies face a long road ahead before they can become leaders in today's Content [R]evolution. Among survey respondents, nearly 1 in 4 reported low levels of automation *and* no GenAl use. Not surprisingly, those companies also find themselves achieving the least benefit from their content marketing efforts.

To move into the fast lane, here's what we recommend.

- Identify the starting line—and the definition of winning: Given all that's involved and all that's possible with GenAl and automation, it's important to align business ambitions with operational realities. That means auditing your existing tech stack and content supply chain to identify unused GenAl capabilities, opportunities for integration improvements, data disconnects and talent gaps. It also means working with partners in the business to ensure you know why content is needed and how it should ultimately serve the business. These efforts will give you a more realistic map of the fine-tuning you need now, the quick wins you can achieve next and the synergies that will ultimately be needed to get ahead in your industry.
- Begin with automation: The speed at which GenAl can complete tasks is certainly alluring to organizations that struggle to meet content demands. But when processes themselves aren't built for speed, GenAl simply gives you a fast car on a track lined with stop signs. By starting with content supply chain automation and then implementing GenAl, you can help your organization clear the roadway—and open the throttle.
- Fuel with data: Scalable authenticity, operational efficiency and risk reduction all depend on having clean, fresh, wellorganized and well-governed data available to the right people and systems across the content supply chain. Without it, GenAl and automation can just take you on a quicker ride in the wrong direction. For many organizations, data modernization is still
- very much a work in progress. So, as you consider the use cases and automations that can help improve operations, pay close attention to data quality and availability—and set priorities accordingly.
- Close the loop: When business demand is high, marketers often find themselves "running to stand still" in an effort to improve content output. But as discussed earlier in this report, more isn't always better. What matters most is content impact. That's why it's important to have metadata, analytics, reporting and optimization capabilities that are integrated with each other and within every campaign. This will allow you to close the loop between production, performance and spend in ways that continuously improve efficiency—and drive results automatically.



AS YOU CONSIDER HOW TO MEET YOUR OWN COMPANY'S DEMAND FOR CONTENT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What bottlenecks in the content supply chain are constraining my ability to meet business and operational goals?
- Where can I gain efficiencies in my content supply chain through the use of better automation and/or GenAl—and what should I do with those gains? (E.g., should I invest in talent upskilling? Should I improve my technology stack? Should I contribute efficiency savings to the bottom line?)
- What are the GenAl and automation use cases that are easiest to implement and that can deliver rapid ROI?

- How should I ensure the right data is in the right places with the appropriate guardrails to support automation and/or GenAl use cases?
- Do I have the right measurement and reporting capabilities in place to provide actionable insights about my content's effectiveness?
- What change management programs and incentives are needed to ensure rapid adoption?



METHODOLOGY

Unless otherwise noted, all statistics cited in this report are based on a blind survey conducted by Lawless Research on behalf of Deloitte Digital in September 2024. Respondents included 650 leaders at US business-to-consumer and business-to-business companies with 100 or more employees and \$50 million or more in annual revenue.

Respondents represented the following types of businesses: automotive, consumer goods / services, education, energy / utilities, financial services, insurance, health care, life sciences, hospitality, manufacturing, media / entertainment / publishing, real estate, retail, technology, telecommunications, travel, and transportation.

All respondents were senior managers or above working in e-commerce, marketing and/or product marketing departments, with responsibility for one or more of the following: communications, content creation / marketing, and/or editorial / publishing.

ENDNOTES

- 1. Deloitte LLP, Duke University and American Marketing Association, "Firm and Industry Breakout Report," *The CMO Survey*, p. 21, fall 2024, https://cmosurvey.org/results/fall-2024/; and "Firm and Industry Breakout Report," *The CMO Survey*, p. 30, fall 2023, https://cmosurvey.org/results/fall-2023/ (accessed May 7, 2025). Referenced data reflects responses only from companies reporting \$100 million or more annual revenue, to better align with the sample group included in Deloitte Digital's research (see Methodology).
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