

AI Adoption Among US Marketers Reaches Near-Universal Levels, But Usage and Confidence Decline, New Report Finds

The 2026 Voice of the US CMO shows a gap between how CMOs use AI and how comfortable consumers are with it, and a decline in AI use despite universal adoption.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nearly all US marketing

“

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Nicky Marks, Censuswide CEO

teams have now adopted artificial intelligence in some form, but a majority of CMOs are scaling back how much they rely on it, and consumers remain considerably less comfortable with AI in marketing than CMO usage patterns suggest. The findings come from the [2026 Voice of the US CMO report](#), published today by independent research consultancy [Censuswide](#), based on a survey of 500 US CMOs and 1,000 US consumers.

Ninety-nine percent of surveyed CMOs said their organization has adopted AI in some form, and 91% reported using generative AI tools specifically. Despite this,

generative AI usage declined year over year across most applications tracked in the study, including ad and campaign creative generation (62% to 56%), video content generation (55% to 48%), and email marketing automation (55% to 47%). The share of CMOs who said AI had exceeded their expectations also fell, from 63% in 2025 to 54% in 2026.

The report also points to a gap between CMO AI usage and consumer comfort with it. Fifty-nine percent of CMOs said they use generative AI to create social media content, compared with 34% of consumers who said they are comfortable with brands doing so.

"AI adoption in marketing is effectively universal at this point, so the more interesting story this year is how they're rebalancing AI vs. the human touch," said Nicky Marks, CEO of Censuswide. "CMOs are being more deliberate about where AI adds value and where it doesn't, and consumers are telling us clearly that comfort with AI-generated content depends a lot on context."

Additional key findings from the report:

- Brand discovery varies significantly by generation: Gen Z (58%) and Millennials (48%) primarily discover brands through social media, while Gen X (44%) and Baby Boomers (43%) rely more on word-of-mouth recommendations.
- Fewer CMOs describe their brand as highly active and vocal on social or political issues than in 2025 (34%, down from 44%), even as 61% of Gen Z consumers say they want or expect brands to take a public stand on such issues.
- 85% of CMOs report facing budget challenges, and only 56% say their stakeholders fully understand and support their marketing strategy.
- CMOs who incorporate market research into how they measure marketing effectiveness are more likely to report full stakeholder buy-in than those who do not (58% vs. 51%).

Methodology

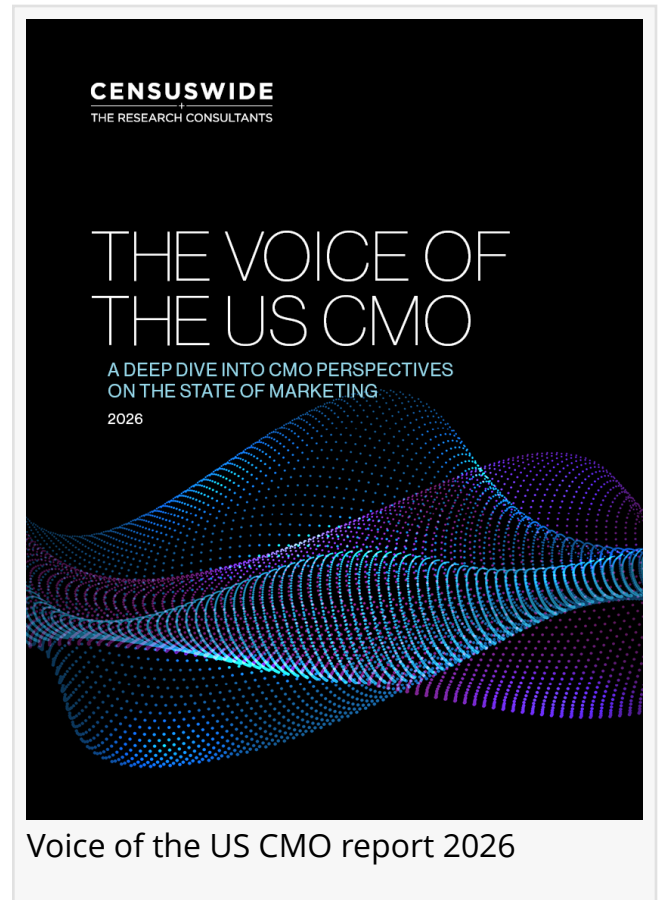
The research was conducted by Censuswide among 500 US CMOs aged 25 and older, surveyed between March 3–10, 2026, and 1,000 US consumers aged 16 and older, surveyed between March 3–6, 2026. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS Code of Conduct and ESOMAR principles.

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