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## Artificial Intelligence in Marketing: Trends, Opportunities and Challenges

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## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MARKETING: TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

### **ABSTRACT**

*The rapid development and application of artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming marketing practices and altering the way companies engage with customers. The changes are multifaceted and are reflected in improved message personalization, optimization of communication channels, detailed data analysis, and enhanced customer experience. The aim of this research is to analyze the role and significance of AI in contemporary marketing communications, with a special focus on how it transforms the approach, form, and effectiveness of communication between companies and consumers. The paper is based on a literature review and reports, with a particular focus on the latest research on the application of AI in marketing. Sources were selected based on relevance and timeliness, and the analysis was conducted through systematization and interpretation of key trends. The findings are discussed in the context of the existing literature and practical implications for the use of artificial intelligence in marketing. The findings suggest that AI in marketing is not only a technical tool but also a strategic resource for sustainable competitiveness and digital transformation acceleration, with its adoption in organizations continuously increasing. This reveals the need for further research and careful application of AI tools in business practice, as well as the alignment of educational and development policy to meet the needs of the digital economy.*

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, marketing communications, digital marketing, personalization, market segmentation.

**JEL:** M31, M39, O33

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The contemporary business environment is characterized by extremely rapid technological change that continuously redefines the way organizations operate, communicate, and create value. In the context of globalization and digitalization, technology has become one of the key determinants of competitiveness and long-term growth. Its role is no longer merely operational but increasingly strategic. Technology profoundly influences business models, consumer relationships, and decision-making processes across all sectors of the economy (Davenport et al., 2020). In this regard, artificial intelligence (AI) represents one of the most significant phenomena of the modern era, whose impact extends beyond technical innovation and deeply permeates economic, social, and ethical dimensions.

AI can be defined as the capability of computer systems to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence such as learning, reasoning, pattern recognition, and decision-making (Huang & Rust, 2021). Today, AI is applied across a wide range of business functions, from process automation, supply chain management, and financial analytics to personalized marketing and customer relationship management (Shankar, 2018).

From an academic perspective, research on the role of AI in marketing and marketing communications holds dual significance. First, it enables a better understanding of how technology is transforming into a tool for strategic communication and brand reputation management. Second, it opens the possibility of redefining theoretical models of consumer behavior within the digital environment (Huang & Rust, 2021).

This paper focuses on analyzing the role of AI in marketing, particularly within marketing communications, and identifying key trends in this field. The aim of the study is to highlight the fundamental benefits and challenges that organizations face when implementing AI in communication with consumers. Accordingly, the research addresses how artificial intelligence transforms marketing communications, as well as the advantages and challenges arising from its development and application. The paper also analyzes current trends in the use of artificial intelligence in business and factors that influence its acceptance by companies.

The methodological framework of this study is based on a qualitative approach, specifically the analysis of relevant academic and professional literature, reports of international organizations, and market research findings related to the use of AI in business. By employing the desk research method, the study identifies key trends, opportunities, and challenges in the digital transformation of marketing and marketing communications. This approach contributes to a deeper understanding of the impact of artificial intelligence on modern business and provides a foundation for future empirical studies and practical implications in the field of marketing communication.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Driven by the pace of technological advancement, marketing is undergoing a process of structural transformation. Within this context, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a dominant catalyst of change, offering numerous benefits while simultaneously presenting a range of challenges (Gayaparsad & Ramlutchman, 2024). In its broadest sense, AI encompasses a set of methods machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and expert systems that enable computer systems to perform tasks associated with human cognition, such as learning, reasoning, prediction, and adaptive decision-making (Huang and Rust, 2021).

As an emerging technological solution, AI has found extensive application across various business domains, including marketing. Early traces of automated “intelligence” in the consumer environment can be observed in recommendation systems and collaborative filtering experiments from the late 1990s. However, the exponential rise in marketing-related applications occurred after 2010, driven by the availability of large-scale data sets, the advancement of GPU computing, and progress in deep learning (Shankar, 2018; Davenport et al., 2020). The current wave includes NLP-powered chatbots and generative AI tools that automate content creation and enable hyper-personalization across multiple channels (Huang & Rust, 2021; Verma et al., 2021). Numerous studies and reports highlight the benefits of applying artificial intelligence in business, especially in marketing and communications, including improved targeting, personalization of content and more effective decision-making. From a marketing perspective, AI is most frequently applied in the stages of market analysis and consumer behavior prediction, as well as in the tactical phase of marketing mix development. AI also enhances decision-making accuracy and facilitates greater personalization of marketing activities (Ljepava, 2022). In marketing practice, AI is operationalized through data analytics, predictive modeling, recommender systems, dynamic segmentation, and real-time communication automation (Davenport et al., 2020; Wedel and Kannan, 2016).

The development and use of AI are redefining how marketing communications are created and experienced (Nesterenko & Olefirenko, 2023). In communication with consumers, AI enables two-way, 24/7 interactions through chatbots and virtual assistants, supports intent and sentiment recognition, and guides adaptive user journeys (Shankar, 2018). According to Davenport et al. (2020), the integration of AI into marketing redefines the very nature of the brand–consumer relationship. Companies are moving away from traditional mass communication toward personalized, data-driven, and automated interactions. For instance, AI systems enable the dynamic adjustment of advertisements, content, and offers according to user context, behavior, and preferences. As a result, marketing becomes more precise, relevant, and cost-effective, yet also more complex in terms of ethics and privacy (Verma et al., 2021). The rise of digital platforms and the abundance of data have enabled companies to analyze consumer behavior in real time and tailor communication to their needs, interests, and values (Wedel & Kannan, 2016).

Crucially, AI enhances data processing and interpretation, accelerates test–learn cycles, and improves the accuracy of communication attribution (Guha et al., 2021; Wedel and Kannan, 2016). In terms of customer experience (CX), it facilitates omnichannel contact orchestration and predictive churn prevention (Huang and Rust, 2021). Haleem et al. (2022) identify data analysis as one of the most significant advantages of AI in

marketing. Moreover, AI is transforming content creation by enabling faster and more efficient production with reduced costs (Murár and Kubovics, 2023). Empirical evidence demonstrates that AI significantly reduces costs and increases efficiency through the automation of repetitive processes and better allocation of media resources (Davenport et al., 2020; Shankar, 2018).

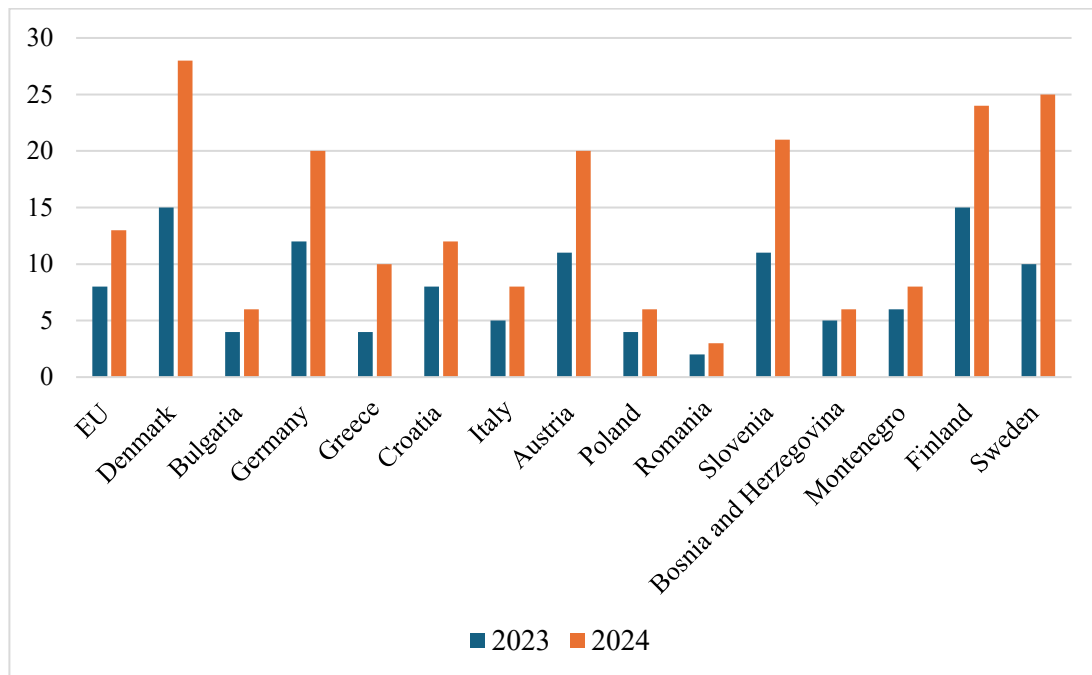
Huang and Rust (2021) argue that AI can improve consumer loyalty by enabling personalized experiences. More relevant messages and recommendations enhance satisfaction, engagement, and long-term customer value. According to certain studies, the implementation of AI in marketing leads to more efficient segmentation and precise consumer targeting (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Specifically, AI facilitates the creation of dynamic and predictive consumer segments that are continuously updated based on new data, allowing marketing messages to be more precisely tailored to relevant target groups. This results in more efficient budget utilization and a higher return on investment (ROI). For segmentation and targeting, machine learning (ML) models form dynamic, high-throughput audiences that are continuously refined based on real-time behavioral data (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Guha et al. (2021) emphasize that AI substantially enhances the measurement of marketing effectiveness and enables real-time campaign optimization, leading to improved overall performance. Thus, through the use of machine learning algorithms, AI supports market segmentation, campaign optimization, and trend prediction, thereby increasing the precision and efficiency of marketing decision-making (Guha et al., 2021).

Artificial intelligence involves the use of advanced algorithms and machine learning to automate, personalize, and optimize marketing decisions and consumer interactions (Davenport et al., 2020). The integration of AI into marketing communications has provided organizations with substantial benefits, including deeper insights into consumer behavior and the automation of key processes, leading to improved resource management. These technologies allow for the creation of personalized customer experiences that foster engagement and loyalty while simultaneously optimizing marketing strategies and enhancing data analytics (Gökerik and Aktaş, 2024). Despite its numerous benefits, the application of AI also introduces a series of challenges. The most critical among them concerns ethical responsibility and algorithmic transparency. Issues such as data bias, privacy protection, and accountability in automated decision-making have become central to modern marketing practice. AI technologies carry ethical risks, particularly regarding algorithmic bias and the lack of transparency, which may lead to discriminatory practices and reduced accountability. Consequently, there is an increasing need for explainable and responsible AI systems that provide greater insight into model reasoning and decision logic (Jobin et al., 2019).

Gayaparsad and Ramlutchman (2024) emphasize that an ethical approach is essential in implementing AI within marketing communications. Their research highlights the importance of transparent AI usage so that consumers are aware and informed when interacting with AI-generated content. Some studies further suggest that consumers perceive AI-generated messages differently from those created by humans. Nesterenko and Olefirenko (2023) note that consumers often view AI-generated messages as less authentic, which can evoke moral discomfort and negative emotional responses. Similarly, Kirk and Givi (2025) underline the necessity of a cautious approach to AI-generated marketing content to preserve authenticity and build consumer trust. When considering the main challenges of AI implementation, Verma et al. (2021) particularly stress organizational barriers, pointing to the competence gap between marketing professionals and data experts. Their findings suggest that a lack of skills and preparedness within organizations remains a key obstacle to the successful adoption of AI solutions. In addition to human factors, technological infrastructure plays a crucial role. Wedel and Kannan (2016) note that fragmented systems and inconsistent, biased, or incomplete data severely undermine AI model performance, limiting their reliability in practice. The implementation of AI technologies can also be complicated by regulatory factors that impose restrictions, particularly regarding data accessibility and usage (Davenport et al., 2020). Shankar (2018) warns about the high initial costs of implementation and operational challenges related to model maintenance over time, including the need for mature MLOps practices and managing model drift. Moreover, internal characteristics, such as internationalization and firm size, as well as external factors, including the availability of digital skills and infrastructure, are recognized as key drivers of enterprise-level digitalization and therefore important determinants of AI adoption (Segarra-Blasco et al., 2025).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, through a review of the relevant literature, numerous benefits of applying artificial intelligence in marketing were identified, including improving targeting accuracy, optimizing costs and improving customer experience. Owing to the wide range of benefits, AI is becoming an indispensable component of business processes for an increasing number of enterprises. These observations are further supported by data from the latest Eurostat report (2025), according to which the share of companies in the European Union that use at least one artificial intelligence technology increased from 8.0% in 2023 to 13.5% in 2024, which represents a growth of more than five percentage points.



**Fig. 1.** Use of AI Technologies in Enterprises across Selected EU Economies, 2023–2024 (%)

*Source:* Eurostat (2025), Usage of AI technologies increasing in EU enterprises,

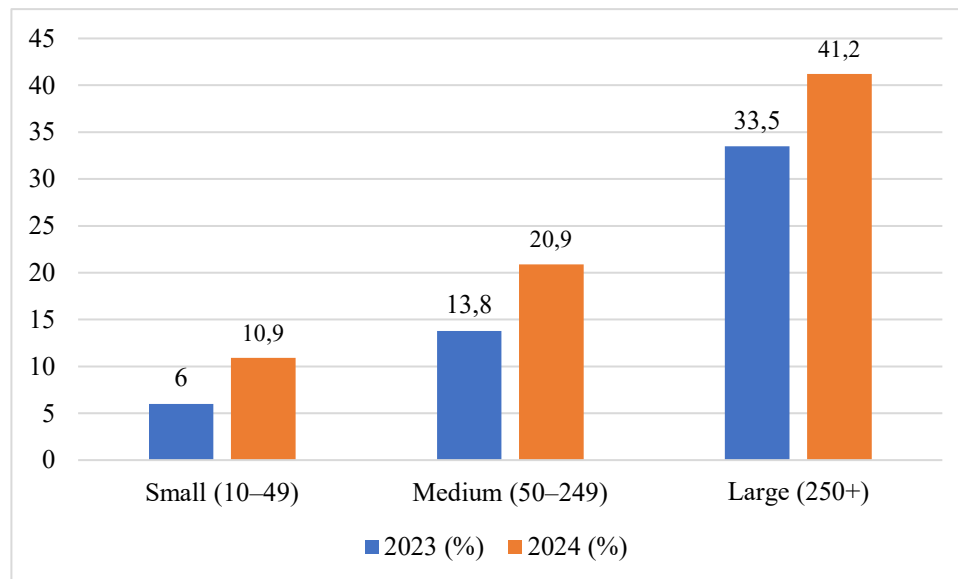
The literature also indicates that the application of artificial intelligence in marketing can be limited, as it depends on resources, technological infrastructure and professional staff in the organization. Findings from multiple studies indicate that company size significantly influences both the diversity and intensity of use of AI technologies, with larger organizations having a wider range of uses, while smaller firms still use AI to a more limited extent. Eurostat (2025) data show that large enterprises (with more than 250 employees) are significantly more active in the use of AI solutions 41.2% of them implemented AI in 2024, compared to 33.5% in 2023. Among medium-sized enterprises, the share of AI users increased from 13.8% to 20.9%, while in small enterprises the growth was more modest yet noticeable, rising from 6.0% to 10.9%. At the EU level, AI is most used in enterprises for marketing and sales, organization of business processes and management, with larger enterprises also applying it extensively in areas such as IT security, production and logistics (Eurostat, 2025). Similarly, McKinsey & Company (2025) confirms that larger organizations with annual revenues exceeding USD 500 million tend to implement AI more rapidly than smaller firms.

The OECD (2025) report also highlights significant disparities in the level of artificial intelligence adoption among firms of different sizes and sectors. Compared to large corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lag considerably in implementing AI technologies, primarily due to limited financial and technical resources, a shortage of skilled personnel, and underdeveloped data management infrastructure. Additional barriers include organizational cultures resistant to change and an insufficient understanding of the specific ways in which AI can enhance business processes and market competitiveness (OECD, 2025).

These results are not unexpected, as large enterprises easily use artificial intelligence thanks to the abundance of resources and professional staff, which further confirms that available resources and digital maturity strongly influence the ability to implement AI technologies. This is particularly evident in marketing and

communication, where both technological capacity and analytical expertise are required (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Larger enterprises have established infrastructures for data collection and analysis, while smaller firms continue to rely on external solutions and limited budgets for digital transformation.

On the other hand, considering the specific characteristics of small businesses and the growing importance of marketing communication in today's business environment, the application of modern information technologies can help small enterprises overcome weaknesses in marketing performance (Lazarević-Moravčević, 2019, p. 111; Lazarević-Moravčević et al., 2018, p. 45). In this context, the application of AI in small businesses is extremely desirable, because small organizations using it can significantly improve business efficiency, optimize marketing activities and improve user experience with relatively low costs of introducing modern technologies.



**Fig. 2.** Share of enterprises by size using AI technologies in the EU, 2024 (%)

*Source: Eurostat (2025), Usage of AI technologies increasing in EU enterprises,*

Despite existing barriers and uneven adoption levels across enterprises, available data indicate that AI continues to expand within European companies at a pace consistent with global technological trends. The most prominent areas of application include those directly related to marketing, such as language analysis and generation, speech recognition, and consumer data analytics all increasingly used for personalized campaigns and the optimization of customer experience (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021). As organizations achieve higher levels of digital maturity, AI is increasingly utilized for dynamic segmentation, predictive targeting, and campaign attribution, leading to reduced costs and improved efficiency (Wedel and Kannan, 2016; Guha et al., 2021).

From the perspective of marketing practice, industry surveys reveal that a growing number of professionals use AI tools daily, primarily for text generation, idea development, headline creation, and content drafting (Social Media Examiner, 2025; SurveyMonkey, 2025). Although not peer-reviewed, these findings align with the academic “collect-reason-act” framework, according to which AI transforms data into insights and subsequently into automated recommendations and decisions (Huang and Rust, 2021; Davenport et al., 2020). According to AllAboutAI (2025), the use of AI tools in marketing has increased substantially, with 88% of marketers now employing them daily. The AI marketing industry has reached a global value of USD 47.32 billion, with continued growth projected. Between 2022 and 2025, AI adoption in marketing rose by 36 percentage points. The United States currently leads in adoption, followed by China and the United Kingdom, positioning these regions as key drivers in shaping global best practices for AI-powered marketing campaigns. In terms of future perspectives, the literature points toward a shift to prescriptive decision-making systems, where AI not only predicts outcomes but also recommends specific next steps such as the optimal communication channel, posting time, or tailored offer for an individual user (Guha et al., 2021; Verma et al., 2021; Jobin et al., 2019). At the same time, generative AI is rapidly advancing, increasingly taking on roles in creative development and automation of service processes. The principles of Explainable and Responsible AI

are gaining particular attention, as transparency, ethics, and data protection become central themes in the evolution of AI-driven marketing.

The latest report from McKinsey & Company (2025) also provides evidence of the continued growth of the application of artificial intelligence in business, although, despite wider adoption, a significant number of companies are still not seeing measurable effects on profits. Despite the perceived lack, organizations increasingly recognize the need to integrate AI technologies strategically, including necessary organizational changes and the establishment of leadership roles dedicated to AI oversight. Moreover, an increasing number of companies are proactively mitigating risks associated with generative AI, such as inaccuracies, cybersecurity threats, and intellectual property violations, while simultaneously employing new experts, including ethics and compliance specialists (McKinsey & Company, 2025).

Although artificial intelligence is increasingly being integrated into various industries, most companies have still not managed to achieve significant benefits from its application. The prevailing trend shows that only a limited number of companies have developed advanced AI capabilities that yield significant outcomes. Conversely, the majority of organizations are still in the early stages of adoption, striving to build the necessary capacities. Sectors such as fintech, software development, and banking currently demonstrate the highest concentration of AI adoption leaders (Boston Consulting Group, 2025).

It is important to highlight that recent research emphasizes that the speed of technological integration is often not matched by the development of ethical frameworks and governance mechanisms necessary for responsible use (Floridi & Cowls, 2019; Taddeo & Floridi, 2018). The integration of AI into marketing communication thus raises complex questions regarding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the transparency of automated decision-making processes. As digital ecosystems evolve, companies are increasingly expected to align AI-driven marketing strategies with ethical principles such as accountability, fairness, and consumer autonomy (Pasquale, 2017). These expectations are particularly relevant in the European context, where regulatory frameworks such as the EU Artificial Intelligence Act aim to ensure that technological innovation proceeds hand in hand with consumer protection and societal trust.

From a strategic standpoint, organizations that approach AI implementation through the lens of ethical sustainability are more likely to achieve long-term brand equity and customer loyalty (Haenlein et al., 2022). Ethical AI is thus emerging not only as a compliance requirement but also as a competitive differentiator, shaping public perception and stakeholder relations. In this regard, the marketing discipline is undergoing a paradigmatic shift from a purely efficiency-oriented perspective toward one that integrates ethical, social, and environmental dimensions into digital transformation strategies (Akter et al., 2023).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The analysis of contemporary trends demonstrates that artificial intelligence has become a key driver of transformation in marketing and market communication, reshaping how companies understand, target, and engage with consumers. AI fundamentally changes the paradigm of marketing communication and practice by introducing new forms of interaction between brands and consumers. It not only enables personalized and data-driven communication but also transforms the entire marketing decision-making process from market research and message design to campaign performance measurement. Companies increasingly employ algorithms that analyze vast amounts of data to understand consumer needs, predict behavior, and automatically adapt content and offers in real time. This approach accelerates the cycle of testing and optimization while enhancing the relevance and emotional tone of messages.

Official statistics confirm that AI technologies are being adopted in European enterprises at an accelerating pace and on an ever-wider scale, with implementation levels strongly influenced by organizational size and digital maturity. Marketing is increasingly integrating AI into its everyday processes, both in content creation and optimization, further supporting theoretical findings on the importance of resources, organizational readiness, and close integration between marketing, IT, and analytics. The next phase of development is expected to be marked by a shift from predictive to prescriptive decision-making systems, accompanied by the expansion of generative models and the broader adoption of explainability and responsible AI principles. The integration of these principles is likely to become a standard component of future AI-driven marketing systems, particularly in alignment with regulatory frameworks ensuring data privacy and algorithmic transparency.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that AI has become an essential element in the transformation of marketing from traditional, linear, and campaign-based communication toward continuous, adaptive, and automated interaction between consumers and brands. Consequently, the role of marketers is being redefined: instead of intuitive decision-making, the focus shifts to analytical, experimental, and data-driven management of consumer relationships, enabled by the combination of machine learning, automation, and generative intelligence.

Through a comprehensive literature review, this study offers a deeper understanding of AI applications in marketing, highlights its growing importance for business, and identifies the key patterns shaping AI use among enterprises. A key methodological limitation lies in the fact that the analysis is based primarily on secondary sources, without direct empirical investigation in a specific business environment. Due to the limited availability of recent data for Serbia and neighboring countries, the study primarily relies on analyses reflecting global and European developments. The lack of local data constrains the ability to accurately assess the specific challenges and opportunities of AI implementation in regional marketing contexts. The identified gap underscores the need for future research that would include empirical data from Serbia and the surrounding region, with particular emphasis on industry-specific applications, market segments, and the practical implications of AI use. Such research would enable a deeper understanding of the degree of digital transformation in regional marketing and provide a foundation for developing strategies for responsible and sustainable AI integration in business processes.

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