

Marketing, sales and service powered by generative AI

Today's gen AI moment: Marketing and sales

Generative AI is already reinventing how businesses engage with customers. In fact, it is estimated that 50%-70% of the immediate opportunity to create value with generative AI lies in the customer space. [76% of the leaders in our research](#) say they are sitting on the sidelines until they can better manage risks, potentially losing market share and never being able to catch up. It is hard to know where to start or where to prioritize investment, much less how to scale it to drive growth.

For those acting today, reinvention starts with no-regret moves—looking at opportunities for automation and augmentation that generative AI can unlock to drive productivity. This creates capacity, capability and efficiency within the organization, which in turn opens up resources to pursue innovation use cases and drive customer-led growth.

If you're thinking of gen AI as a 10x productivity improvement, you're thinking about it wrong. Think about what you could do if you had a 10x the workforce that you couldn't do today.

Opportunities and challenges

There is a relevance gap between customers and businesses, and it is widening every day. Businesses are struggling to keep pace with customer change. [According to our generative AI for customer survey, 2023](#), 85% of Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) say it is more difficult to stay relevant than at any time before. Gen AI is a potential force to help revolutionize the industry and reinvent the relationship with customers. [93% of CMOs](#) expect gen AI and related technologies to change their relationship with their customers in their industry within the next five years.

However, most companies are not moving beyond the experimentation of gen AI due to reputational and legal risks. Others may have constraints related to talent, technology or data. But in today's fast-changing market, inaction is the greatest risk. Decisions made today regarding generative AI will significantly affect future growth trajectories.

Prioritizing action

Enterprises can't afford to sit on the sidelines and wait while the early adopters not only pull ahead, but change the customer engagement game.

Early movers are reshaping their whole customer value chain, from strategy and products to creative and storytelling:

3.7x

They are 3.7x more likely to use generative AI to identify new and unmet customer needs. By synthesizing huge amounts of customer and market data—doing it with a responsible AI framework and practices in place—they come up with unique insights that they can use to test and develop product concepts. And they are seeing as much as an 80% reduction in data processing time that supports a 40% improvement in speed to market with new products and services.¹

5.6x

They are also 5.6x more likely to believe that generative AI can bring radical innovation to marketing. They are turning creative ideas into global campaigns tailored to individual customers—and doing it cost-efficiently (94% savings in production time). Meanwhile, they're also solving production and scale challenges (300%–400% increase in content versions).¹

¹ Averages and ranges calculated from Accenture Song generative AI projects as of February 1, 2024.



Unlocking value

With half of Accenture's 700+ gen AI projects completed in the customer space, there is a clear opportunity to use gen AI for productivity gain to fuel new areas of growth. The key to unlocking this value is understanding the five key areas where organizations need to foster new strategies and capabilities.

Lead with value

When businesses shift from siloed use-cases to prioritizing capabilities across the customer value chain, the customer becomes the heart of the business. A forensic assessment across the organization to identify opportunities for creating more value and relevance for customers will help set priorities.

Companies applying generative AI to customer-related initiatives can expect to achieve 25% higher revenue after five years than companies that focused only on productivity.²

Understand and develop an AI-enabled, secure digital core

The digital core is the engine of customer relevance. It starts with what you already know about customers—first-, second-, and third-party data. It gathers momentum with generative AI, which helps you discover how you can offer customers more meaningful experiences.

Starting from a vision of where customer value can be created will help you get an understanding of what your digital core means for you. This can help contextualize the roadmap for how architecture, technologies, security practices and the generative AI backbone come together in a digital core that will support customer relevance.

² Modeling based on the Accenture Generative AI for Customer Growth survey. The difference in growth trajectories was calculated by modeling the growth trajectories of two groups: the 20% of companies that focused most on investing in generative AI toward transformative customer-related use cases and the 20% of the companies that focused most on productivity use cases.

Reinvent talent and ways of working

In the past year, we've read a lot about how generative AI is going to impact talent, especially across marketing, sales and service. But generative AI depends on people and how they use it. Wherever automation frees people's time, it should be seen as an opportunity to reinvest in areas that were once out of reach.

Our research shows that involving people in reimagining how work is done with generative AI can help increase the speed and scale of reinvention by as much as 1.7x and 1.6x respectively.³ Creative teams are already experimenting with how to fold generative AI workflows into the creative process. They are developing and becoming versed in prompt engineering and responsible AI principles and practices. As they learn, they are reinventing the creative process, content production and collaboration.

Close the gap on Responsible AI

Generative AI is unique in the way it engages and learns from people, so responsibility and governance are central and must be a first step. Responsibility speaks to the importance of intellectual property, ethics and bias to the customer relationship. When assessed from the perspective of what creates value and customer relevance, the task of adopting responsible AI principles with a clear accountability and governance strategy isn't simply onerous or about hygiene.

With only 2% of companies reporting that they have operationalized an approach to responsible AI,⁴ this is an opportunity to embrace a wider strategy for differentiation through relevance—specifically by baking into your strategy the values and ethical concerns that people care about such as fairness, trust, equality and privacy.

³ Accenture Total Enterprise Reinvention Survey (Oct-Nov 2023): n=1,500 CxOs

⁴ Accenture AI CEO survey, August-September 2023

Drive continuous reinvention

Generative AI can't be implemented only in pockets of the organization. If marketing, sales and service represents one of the biggest immediate opportunities for generative AI, it is essential that is led by the C-suite, with the board aligned on the vision to create value with and for people.

With a focus on reinvention and enough investment, implementing generative AI gives back through its combinatorial effect. When generative AI applications interconnect, it accelerates and integrates insights and capabilities from across the customer organization, spurring innovation and creating the speed to be able to answer customer needs in real-time, driving growth.

Client stories

[BBVA](#) is staying ahead of the curve by continuing to reinvent its business model with generative AI. It is building a generative AI-powered financial coach assistant that is designed to disrupt how banks connect with customers while they reinvent the digital core to become even more efficient. These are part of their ongoing implementation of generative AI, which is transforming BBVA's operations and digital marketing while helping employees be more productive.

[BMW](#) is using a generative AI platform called EKHO to simplify choosing car features and options. Between the paint, tech, interiors and accessories, there are nearly 10 million possible car configurations, and not all are compatible with each other. In the past, a BMW salesperson consulted different physical manuals to understand possible configurations and help customers outfit their new car. This took a lot of time amid the excitement of a new car purchase. Now salespeople ask EKHO. EKHO draws on the applicable knowledge bases to aggregate relevant configuration options and then fine-tunes answers in response to follow-up questions. EKHO has already reduced this time-consuming step by 30%, freeing salespeople to spend more time connecting with customers.



Get in touch

Explore the next steps and opportunities for new growth and customer relevance by bringing your team to our Accenture Gen AI Studios.

