

Harnessing AI

Harnessing the power of AI in branding, marketing & communications

By **Nicole Fung** · Tuesday, August 22, 2023 · Updated Oct 2026 · 6 min read

Thanks for listening to the beat.

In an era marked by the digital revolution, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a game-changing tool in various fields. One of its most profound impacts has been on branding, marketing, and communications strategies. Leveraging AI in these areas can yield remarkable results, streamlining processes, enhancing customer experiences, and driving growth.

Updated Oct 2026. This guide first ran in August 2023. The three areas and the sample prompts are kept. New notes cover what has changed for marketing teams since, with sources at the end.

What has changed since 2023

In 2023, using AI in marketing mostly meant typing a prompt into a chat window. In 2026, it is part of everyday work. McKinsey's 2026 global survey finds that revenue gains from AI are most often reported in marketing and sales, ahead of every other business function.¹ Microsoft and LinkedIn's 2024 survey found that 75% of knowledge workers already use AI at work.²

Two things have not changed. The prompts below still work as starting points, and the output still needs a human editor. What is new is the context around them: tools that can search and act on their own, customers who meet brands through AI answers, and rules that require AI use to be disclosed in some cases.

Three ground rules before you start

- 1. Use approved tools.** Microsoft's 2024 survey found that 78% of AI users bring their own AI tools to work.² Agree on which tools the team uses and what may never be pasted into them, such as customer data or unreleased plans.
- 2. Give it your material.** AI works best on sources you supply. Out of the box it can be wrong with confidence. In a 2025 Columbia Journalism Review test, eight AI search tools gave incorrect answers to more than 60 percent of queries about news articles.³

3. **Keep a human editor.** Every claim, quote, and number gets checked before it goes out. One person signs off.

AI in Branding

Branding is all about establishing a distinct identity and emotional connection with customers. AI can assist in this process by analyzing vast amounts of data to uncover valuable insights about consumer preferences, sentiments, and behaviors. These insights, in turn, can be used to shape branding strategies.

Sample GPT prompts for ideation and strategy within branding:

PROMPT: Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the top three competitors in the (industry)

PROMPT: How can (business name) position itself as a leader in (area) in the (industry)?

PROMPT: Propose a strategy to build a loyal online community around (brand name) that actively advocates for our products.

PROMPT: Propose a plan to use AI and machine learning to offer personalized experiences to our customers that is in line with our brand.

2026 note. Your brand is now also described by AI. When people ask an assistant about your category, the answer is built from what is written about you across the web. A clear, consistent positioning line, used everywhere, makes it more likely the summary sounds like you. Paste your own positioning and competitor copy into the first prompt, rather than asking the AI to work from memory.

Be careful about how you talk about AI in your own brand, too. A Washington State University study of more than 1,000 U.S. adults found that describing products as using artificial intelligence made them less popular. The lead author, Mesut Cicek, said: “When AI is mentioned, it tends to lower emotional trust, which in turn decreases purchase intentions.”⁴ Lead with the benefit, not the label.

AI in Marketing

Marketing, the cornerstone of business growth, has been revolutionized by AI. Through data analysis, predictive modeling, and automation, AI empowers marketers to optimize campaigns, target audiences effectively, and deliver personalized content.

Sample GPT prompts for ideation and strategy marketing:

PROMPT: Describe the primary psychological triggers that drive customers to purchase products like (product) and how can we tap into them more effectively?

PROMPT: Design a (type) marketing campaign for (product name) targeting (audience)

PROMPT: Design a campaign to encourage and leverage user-generated content to promote (product name)

2026 note. The time savings are well documented. In an MIT experiment with 453 professionals, including marketers, ChatGPT cut the time spent on writing tasks by 40 percent, and quality rose by 18 percent.⁵ The same tools can now chain steps together: research, a draft, a check against your guidelines, then a person approves.

Search is changing what campaigns are measured against. Pew Research Center found that Google users who saw an AI summary clicked a traditional result in 8% of visits, compared with 15% when there was no summary.⁶ Add “are we mentioned in AI answers?” to your campaign reports, next to traffic.

AI in Communications

Effective communication is at the heart of any successful business. AI aids in enhancing communication strategies by enabling automated responses, sentiment analysis, and natural language processing

Sample GPT prompts for ideation and strategy communications:

PROMPT: Develop a risk management strategy for (business name) using AI to predict and mitigate potential business threats

PROMPT: Analyze data from (paste or web). Create a content heat map, then list the top five focuses for our communication.

PROMPT: Propose a plan for (business name) to establish itself as a thought leader in (industry) through content creation, seminars, and collaborations.

PROMPT: Design a chatbot strategy for (business name) that handles customer queries, boosts engagement, and drives sales on the website.

2026 note on chatbots. A chatbot speaks for your company. In a 2024 Canadian case, Air Canada was held responsible for wrong refund advice its website chatbot gave a customer, after arguing the chatbot was responsible for its own actions.⁷ Give any customer-facing bot approved answers to work from, and a clear route to a person.

2026 note on disclosure. In Europe, the AI Act's transparency rules came into effect in August 2026. Among other things, people should be made aware when they are talking to a chatbot, and deepfakes must be clearly labeled.⁸ Even outside the EU, telling people when they are talking to a machine is a simple way to protect trust.

Keeping the human touch

As organizations continue to embrace AI, it's essential to approach its implementation thoughtfully. Data privacy and ethical considerations must be paramount, ensuring that AI-driven strategies respect customer rights and build trust. Moreover, while AI enhances efficiency, the human touch remains irreplaceable, especially in areas requiring emotional intelligence and creative thinking.

The research agrees. In a Harvard Business School study with Boston Consulting Group, consultants using AI were 19% less likely to get the right answer on a task chosen to fall outside AI's strengths.⁹ AI is a strong assistant for drafts and options. Judgment, taste, and relationships stay with the team.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

- Agree on approved tools and what never goes into them, before anyone starts prompting
- Feed the prompts your own material (positioning, research, past campaigns) for grounded output.
- Report on AI visibility next to traffic: are you mentioned in AI answers?
- Give chatbots approved answers and a route to a person, and tell people when they are talking to a machine.

SOURCES

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Frequently asked questions

What ground rules should a team set before using AI?

Three: use approved tools, give the AI your own material, and keep a human editor who checks every claim, quote, and number before it goes out. One person signs off.

Should you tell customers your product uses AI?

Lead with the benefit, not the label. A Washington State University study of more than 1,000 U.S. adults found that describing products as using artificial intelligence made them less popular.

Is a company responsible for what its chatbot says?

Yes. In a 2024 Canadian case, Air Canada was held responsible for wrong refund advice its website chatbot gave a customer. Give any customer-facing bot approved answers and a clear route to a person.

Do you have to disclose AI use in the EU?

In some cases. The EU AI Act's transparency rules came into effect in August 2026: people should be made aware when they are talking to a chatbot, and deepfakes must be clearly labeled.

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