



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Master's Degree in
Communication Strategies

*The impact of Artificial Intelligence on Advertising Strategies:
Analysis of Personalized Targeting Techniques and Automated Creativity*

Thesis supervisor

Prof. Paolo Magaudda

Candidate

Chiara Dainese

2124675

Academic years 2024/2025

*A chi c'era,
a chi c'è sempre stato,
a chi c'è oggi,
e a chi ci sarà domani.*

Index

Introduction.....	4
Chapter I.....	9
1.1 Consumer Society and Advertising in the Digital World.....	9
1.1.1 The Evolution of Advertising: From Traditional to Digital.....	9
1.1.2 The Role of Data and Personalization in Modern Advertising.....	13
1.2 The Evolution of Artificial Intelligence.....	17
1.2.1 From Early AI to Modern Developments.....	17
1.2.2 Key Technologies: Machine Learning, Deep Learning, NLP, and LLMs.....	21
1.3 AI and Consumer behaviour.....	27
1.3.1 How AI Shapes Consumer Preferences and Choices.....	27
Chapter II.....	32
2.1 AI Transformations in Advertising.....	32
2.1.1 AI’s Impact on Content Creation and Campaign Development.....	32
2.1.2 AI in Targeting and Personalization Strategies.....	38
2.1.3 Case Studies of AI-Driven Advertising Campaigns.....	41
Coca-Cola: The “Masterpiece” Campaign.....	42
Nike: The “Nike By You” Campaign.....	45
Spotify: The “Wrapped” Campaign.....	47
Starbucks: The “Deep Brew” platform.....	49
L’Oréal: AI-Powered Beauty Tech and Personalized Marketing.....	51
2.1.4 Comparative Results: Engagement, ROI, and Innovation in AI-Driven Campaigns.....	54
2.2 AI Tools in Advertising.....	55
2.2.1 Content Creation: From Automated Copywriting to Visual Design.....	55
2.2.2 Programmatic Advertising and Real-Time Bidding (RTB).....	57
2.2.3 Chatbots and Conversational Marketing.....	58
2.3 Advantages and Challenges of AI in Advertising.....	61
2.3.1 Efficiency, Scalability, and Precision in Campaigns.....	62
2.3.2 Ethical Challenges: Privacy, Transparency, and Bias.....	64
2.3.3 Barriers to Adoption: Cost, Knowledge Gaps, and Technological Complexity.....	66
Chapter III.....	70
3.1 Rationale and Research Objectives.....	70
3.2 Theoretical and Epistemological Framework.....	72
3.3 Interview Structure and Thematic Focus.....	74
3.3.1 Professional Background and Role Orientation.....	75
3.3.2 Use and Integration of AI Tools.....	75
3.3.3 Changes in Planning, Creativity, and Strategic Thinking.....	76
3.3.4 Personalization, Targeting, and Data Use.....	76

3.3.5 Opportunities, Limitations, and Critical Reflections.....	77
3.3.6 Future Scenarios, Expectations, and Fears.....	77
3.4 Sampling Strategy and Participant Profiles.....	78
3.5 Conducting the Interviews: Practical and Ethical Considerations.....	82
3.6 Data Analysis Approach: Thematic Coding and Interpretation.....	84
3.6.1 Familiarization with the data.....	85
3.6.2 Generating initial codes.....	85
3.6.3 Searching for themes.....	85
3.6.4 Reviewing and refining themes.....	86
3.6.5 Defining and naming themes.....	86
3.6.6 Producing the report.....	87
3.7 Researcher Reflexivity and Methodological Limitations.....	87
3.7.1 Sample Scope and Diversity.....	88
3.7.2 Self-Selection and Reflexivity Bias.....	88
3.7.3 Temporal Context.....	89
3.7.4 Translation and Linguistic Interpretation.....	89
3.7.5 Analytical Subjectivity.....	89
3.7.6 Practical Challenges and Problem-Solving.....	90
3.8 Synthesis of the Research Design.....	91
Chapter IV.....	95
4.1 Perceptions and Use of AI in Advertising Practice.....	97
4.1.1 Tools and Practices: AI Integration in the Daily Advertising Workflow.....	98
4.1.2 Adoption Drivers and Professional Attitudes.....	102
4.2 Creativity and Automation: Tensions and Synergies.....	104
4.2.1 Creative Freedom vs. Prompt Engineering.....	106
4.2.2 From Ideation to Execution: What AI Can and Cannot Do.....	107
4.2.3 The Role of the Human Touch: Style, Nuance, and Voice.....	109
4.3 Ethical Reflections and the Challenge of Personalization.....	111
4.3.1 Between Customization and Invasiveness.....	112
4.3.2 Awareness of Bias, Data Ownership, and Consent.....	114
4.3.3 Professional Responsibility and Algorithmic Ethics.....	116
4.4 Adoption Barriers and Enablers: Insights from the Field.....	118
4.4.1 Technical Limitations and Learning Curve.....	119
4.4.2 Organizational Constraints and Cost Factors.....	120
4.4.3 Cultural Resistance and Misconceptions.....	122
4.5 Future Expectations and Strategic Visions of Professionals.....	124
4.5.1 AI as a Creative Assistant or Replacement?.....	125
4.5.2 The Rise of New Roles and Workflows.....	127
4.5.3 Wearables, Predictive AI, and Ambient Creativity.....	128
4.6 Synthesis and Theoretical Integration: Comparing Field and Literature....	130
4.6.1 Confirmations: What Practice Validates from Theory.....	131

4.6.2 Tensions Between Theoretical Models and Practical Realities.....	133
4.6.3 Emergent Gaps and Future Research Directions.....	136
4.7 Chapter Conclusion.....	138
Conclusions.....	140
Empirical Contributions to Understanding AI in Advertising.....	141
Critical Reflections on AI, Creativity, and Professional Agency.....	144
Recommendations for Businesses.....	146
Best Practices for Integrating AI into Communication Strategies.....	147
Key Factors for Creating Successful AI-Driven Campaigns.....	149
Future Research Directions.....	152
Areas for Further Study in AI and Marketing.....	154
Emerging Themes and Technological Developments.....	156
Final Consideration.....	158
Reference.....	160
Sitography.....	167
Ringraziamenti.....	175

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving digital communication landscape, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a marginal technology, but a central agent of transformation for the advertising industry. If in the past it was imagined as a futuristic support for operational activities, today AI runs through every stage of the marketing process: from data collection to audience segmentation, from real-time personalization to creative development. In addition to improving efficiency, AI is profoundly redefining how communication is produced and how creativity-related job roles are shaped. This perspective is in line with contemporary debates in Media Studies and Science and Technology Studies (STS), which conceive AI not only as a technical innovation, but as a social, symbolic and institutional phenomenon.

The adoption of AI in advertising has accelerated with the development of generative systems that can produce language, images, sounds and graphic layouts in seconds. This transformation can be seen in the widespread use of tools such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, Midjourney and Adobe Firefly, which are now fully integrated into creative processes from conception to content delivery. Alongside these technologies, real-time bidding platforms and predictive analytics tools now enable marketers to build highly targeted campaigns, adaptable in real time to behavioral data, device type, emotional context, and even users' future intentions. It is precisely this double change—in creative processes and targeting strategies—that forms the starting point of analysis in this thesis.

Personalized targeting and automated creativity, besides having operational relevance, are dense with symbolic and ethical implications, as they affect not only the behavior of individuals, but also norms, values and visions of the future. This perspective relates to Jasanoff and Kim's (2015) concept of "socio-technical imaginaries", according to which technologies reflect and establish collective visions of what is desirable, legitimate, and possible in a society. Personalized targeting harnesses data to create hyper-relevant messages shaped by the user's behaviors, interests, and contexts; but this very relevance raises questions about autonomy, surveillance, and manipulation. It is the tension known as the personalization paradox: the more targeted a communication is, the thinner the line between relevance and intrusiveness.

Automated creativity, on the other hand, challenges traditional models of authorship and originality. Using generative tools, professionals can produce drafts, images, voice-overs, or

layouts in seconds, dramatically reducing the time and effort traditionally required in creative processes. However, this speed imposes a renegotiation of the very meaning of creativity: where does it originate? Who owns it? Is it still possible to call a campaign “creative” if it is largely generated by a machine? And how does the perception of one’s role change as the work shifts from creation to activation, selection and review?

Although these transformations are prominent, the scholarly literature still tends to focus primarily on the technical aspects and market implications of AI, neglecting the human experience of technology adoption in everyday professional contexts. While contributions on ethics, automation and measurement are on the rise, less attention has been given to how advertising professionals actually use AI in their work. How do they perceive the potential and limitations of these tools? How do they redefine control, ownership, and responsibility in AI augmented work contexts? What tensions emerge in the professional identities of creatives, strategists, and content creators?

This thesis aims to address these limitations through an exploration of the lived experience, perceptions and critical reflections of advertising professionals as they integrate AI into their practices. It does so by adopting a qualitative stance that prioritizes that privileges the construction of meaning, professional culture, and ethical negotiation, rather than technological determinism. The goal is not to evaluate the performance of AI, but to understand how it is interpreted, incorporated, and imagined within everyday communication practices.

The theoretical framework of the research is based on interpretive approaches in the field of communication and draws on STS, with particular reference to the concept of socio-technical imaginaries (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015), which highlight how technologies are co-produced by institutional, cultural, and discursive dynamics. In opposition to a deterministic view of AI, this thesis adopts a sociomaterial perspective (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), according to which technology is inextricably intertwined with human action, symbolic languages, and organizational routines. According to this view, AI is not simply used within professional environments, but constructed actively through discursive practices, interactions, and institutional arrangements. The research also intersects with critical media theory (Crawford, 2021), which questions the neutrality of AI and highlights its connection to power relations and contested values.

Methodologically, the study adopts a reflexive and interpretive perspective that recognizes knowledge as partial, situated, and co-constructed (Finlay, 2002; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The empirical design is based on semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), allowing for an in-depth exploration of how professionals read and negotiate issues of responsibility, agency, and authorship in AI-mediated environments. In this way, the research contributes to an understanding of AI not only as a technical infrastructure, but also as an ethical and cultural phenomenon, inscribed in changing professional identities and practices.

One of the central contributions of this study is the focus on the Italian context, which is still underrepresented in the international literature. Although Italy boasts a strong tradition in branding, design and strategic creativity, AI adoption has been slower and more fragmented. Through interviews conducted with professionals active in Italy—from agencies, consultancies, startups and freelance activities—the thesis offers a close perspective on how AI is transforming advertising from within, in a context that combines elements of tradition and innovation.

The research questions guiding this investigation can be declined as:

- How is AI redefining the professional identity and workflows of creatives and advertisers?
- How does AI affect the creative process, particularly with respect to ideation, authorship, and originality?
- What ethical concerns emerge with the increasing use of AI in personalization and targeting?
- How do professionals react to the tension between automation and human judgment?
- What new figures, skills, and imagery are emerging in the advertising industry augmented by AI?

These issues are explored from a qualitative and interpretive perspective, in which technology is treated not as a neutral entity but as a socio-technical reality co-constructed through practices, organizations and discourses. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a diverse set of professionals—digital strategists, art directors, and copywriters—diverse in role, seniority level, and type of organization. The data were analyzed through careful thematic coding, with a focus on contradictions, symbolic tensions, and professional imaginaries. This made it possible to read AI not only as a technical support, but as a cultural and organizational actor, deeply influenced by communication values and professional practices.

The thesis structure reflects the interdisciplinary and reflexive approach that guided its theoretical and methodological framework, articulating into four main chapters followed by a concluding chapter.

- Chapter I introduces the research topic, critically framing the transformation of advertising communication in the age of Artificial Intelligence. It defines the object of study, outlines its theoretical and operational context, and presents the research questions that guide the investigation.
- Chapter II offers critical literature review, analyzing the main technological transformations related to the adoption of AI in advertising, with a focus on personalization and automated processes. The chapter also presents relevant theoretical and ethical frameworks, including the socio-technical perspective, critical media theory, and algorithmic ethics studies.
- Chapter III describes the methodological design adopted, outlining the epistemological positioning of the research, the qualitative approach, sampling criteria, interview structure, and thematic analysis strategy employed in processing the empirical data.
- Chapter IV presents the findings of the survey, organized in thematic cores reflecting the main lines of emergence: applications of AI in creative processes, transformation of professional roles, ethical implications of personalization, and co-production

dynamics between intelligent systems and human actors.

- The concluding Chapter closes the thesis with a critical synthesis of the emerged findings, discussing their theoretical and practical implications. The chapter makes some strategic recommendations for organizations in the field and identifies future research directions, with a focus on the relationship between AI, creativity and professional agency.

Through this framework, the thesis aims to develop a critical understanding of the transformations that Artificial Intelligence is introducing into the advertising industry and its professions. The central argument is that AI can be understood neither as a simple tool nor as an external threat, but as a relational and symbolic agent that redefines the cultural and ethical conditions of contemporary communication.

In this sense, the paper aims to contribute to the academic debate on the future of creative work, the ethics of personalization, and the role of human agency in the age of intelligent automation. It is a call to move beyond instrumental approaches, promoting critical, person-centered interaction with AI—in the knowledge that the future of advertising will depend not only on the capabilities of machines, but on how professionals choose to interpret and integrate them into their work culture.

Chapter I

Advertising in the AI Era

Advertising has historically evolved in response to shifts in technology and consumer behavior. The digital age has introduced a new era of advertising where Artificial Intelligence is at the center of shaping personalisation, automation, and data-driven strategies. Through an analysis of the evolution of advertising, the development of AI and its impact on consumer behaviour, this chapter will focus on how these forces are shaping the marketing and communication landscape in general.

1.1 Consumer Society and Advertising in the Digital World

Consumers have changed a lot in the digital age and this has had a big impact on their interaction with products and brands, as well as on the creation and presentation of advertising. In fact, the shift from ordinary marketing to digital marketing has reshaped it significantly, mainly due to the increasing importance of data on consumer behaviour (Davenport, et. al., 2020, p.25). We will therefore begin by discussing how advertising methods have changed, focusing on the role of data and personalisation in the creation of today's marketing strategies.

Advertising used to consist mainly of one-way messages with the sole purpose of selling, whereas now it is about two-way communication and interactive experiences with consumers. Marketers had also focused first on product orientation, then on sales and finally on relationships. Now the emphasis has shifted to creating and executing communication that leads consumers not only to buy the product, but also to have a long-term relationship with the brand. The future of advertising, however, goes beyond a focus on relationships and engagement (Kumar & Gupta, 2016, p. 302).

1.1.1 The Evolution of Advertising: From Traditional to Digital

Advertising has shifted from mass communication to interactive, an indication of cultural and technological changes. This change has transformed how brands draw in with purchasers, making versatility a key promoting challenge (Kumar & Gupta, 2016). Advertising has its roots in the early days of civilisation, when merchants depended on word of mouth to sell

their goods and services. Merchants used public spaces or markets as places to promote and announce their products; therefore, their voice was the main means of communication. This simple methodology marked the beginning of advertising's work in associating producers with buyers. It was initially used to convey information, but soon evolved into an art of persuasion.

The history of advertising experienced a revolutionary transformation in the 19th century. The Industrial Revolution witnessed various emerging brands entering a market already in rapid expansion, each seeking ways to differentiate themselves from others. Print media became the leading mass medium of communication for delivering advertisements, with newspapers and magazines offering brands the potential of reaching the masses. In the 1920s, radio revolutionized advertising with the introduction of auditory storytelling. For the first time in history, brands could emotionally engage consumers through the use of music, jingles and stories. This audio-based platform had a lasting impact on the listener and allowed for brands to directly connect with target audiences. Television emerged as the most powerful form of advertising in the 1940s and 1950s. Its ability to combine image and sound amazed spectators in a way that no previous medium had yet been able. Notable examples are Coca-Cola's "I Might want to Purchase the World a Coke" (Image 1), and Marlboro's rough cowboy symbolism (Image 2), which demonstrated TV's power in creating areas of strength for characters and social relevance. During this period, advertising turned into a significant driver of buyer culture, greatly influencing purchase choices (Kumar & Gupta, 2016).



On the left (Image 1), there is a still from the 1971 Coca-Cola “Hilltop”, an ad from the “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke” campaign. On the right (Image 2), is a poster from the 1986 “Marlboro Man” campaign, which accompanied the TV commercials of the same year.

Despite the fact that consumers still get bombarded with ads, old-school advertising, which is particularly good at brand recognition, might experience some issues. These initiatives are often dependent on mass media exposure, which results in consistently high expenses and inaccurate audience targeting. In specific cases, even though the wider audience was reached, a large part of the impressions were wasted since they were seen by individuals outside the intended target parameters, such as different demographic traits. Moreover, traditional advertising did not have tools for real-time feedback or direct interaction with consumers leading to difficulties for brands to assess their efforts or to dynamically adapt campaigns. Alternatively, while advertisers could estimate audience size through circulation figures or television ratings, they had little information about how audiences interacted with the ad message. This inability to foster personalised connections or refined strategies mid-campaign presented challenges for advertisers seeking better results (Kotler, et. al., 2022, chap. 12).

The end of the 20th century saw the invention of the web, and consequently, welcomed the arrival of a new generation of marketing characterized by targeted ads, interactivity, and measurable outcomes. The digital technology allowed the corporations to communicate with their publics like never before through personalized messages and live interaction. Digital media platforms, the likes of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, which were initially conceptualized for direct interaction, became advertising hubs at a rapid pace, and as a result,

they reached people all around the world. These platforms have allowed the companies to open up two-way communication and deepen the bonds with customers (Kotler, et. al., 2022; Chatterjee, et. al., 2020). Advanced inventive promotion strategies presented, including behavioural targeting, automated advertising and personalised content delivery. Treats and information examination empowered brands to follow client conduct and inclinations, fitting promotions to individual necessities. For instance, a potential consumer looking for running shoes could see promotions for sports equipment across different stages, because of automatic's publicizing skill to convey content across gadgets progressively. This versatility situated computerized promoting as a foundation of present day showcasing methodologies, making consistency across channels while streamlining productivity and profit from speculation (Kotler, et. al., 2022, chap. 13).

As we know, Instagram is a social media platform which is visually focused. Thus, it turned out to be one of the most successful tools for lifestyle and fashion brands, while YouTube's long-form storytelling abilities had been utilized for in-depth product demonstrations. These platforms reshaped the way of customer and brand interactions through real-time engagement and also elicited feedback. The rise of influencer marketing was another interesting development which aimed at making use of the authenticity of trustworthy individuals to get across promotional messages in a way that was friendly. Consumers were becoming less trusting of brand advertising and more trusting of influencer endorsements, which emphasized trust in contemporary marketing. Liu (2015) pointed out that trust and online reputation are the most important factors in the selection of the most efficient influencers who are to be used in eWOM campaigns, thus, are also a major driver of digital advertising. Trust in the age of influencers was one of the discussed concepts, as trust and online reputation are crucial in choosing the most effective influencers for eWOM campaigns, thus a main part of digital advertising.

As advertising has progressed, the combination of conventional and computerised approaches has become crucial. Conventional media, with their ability to provide broad coverage and reliable information, have complemented the accuracy and versatility of computerised media (Chatterjee, et. al., 2020). For example, a television broadcast can create initial awareness, while online targeting promotions support the message and make it more personal. These co-ordinated systems allow brands to convey corporate stories across numerous channels, providing the buyer with a smooth and connected insight. Embedded promotion efforts are

aimed at the perfection of these efforts, consolidating the qualities of traditional and computerised media for maximum effect.

The new trend such as AR and generative AI have resulted in the reinvention of the ad industry. Augmented reality is responsible for creating lifelike scenarios that are not only observable but also which can be inserted in the space between the actual and the digital worlds (Eyice Başev, 2024; Feuerriegel et al., 2024). On the other side, generative AI opens the door to using very specialized promotional materials which is unique and suitable only for the individual person. As these technologies offer new ways of engaging with consumers, they also pose unresolved ethical questions—especially with regard to data privacy and algorithmic bias.

Consequently, such tech can be a powerful tool to break down barriers to trust between marketer and consumer in the future but marketers have to face the fact that it has flaws like privacy issues and algorithmic bias as well.

The combination of traditional and computerised media, together with the spread of mobile phones, continues to reshape the way shoppers engage with brands. Coordinated showcasing efforts that influence the dynamic delivery of promotional messages demonstrate the need for imagination, accuracy and flexibility in today's competitive and rapidly changing climate (Liu et al., 2015; Kotler, et. al., 2022, chap. 12).

1.1.2 The Role of Data and Personalization in Modern Advertising

The spread of the internet and social media has radically revolutionized how marketing operates. Such a radical change, however, brings several challenges that must be addressed. Today, consumers are not only more knowledgeable but also more interconnected with the rest of the world. They are suspicious of advertising that has no tangible evidence, and are so least concerned about the quantity but the quality of the people around them being happy with a product or service. At the same time, the expansion of multinational companies has introduced new challenges for advertisers, including cultural adaptation, technological advancements, and shifting consumer perceptions (Kumar & Gupta, 2016).

In today's digital landscape, data is at the core of modern advertising strategies. The collection and analysis of customer data help advertisers to personalise messages by focusing on a certain audience that they are more interested in (Chatterjee, et. al., 2020). Behavioural

tracking, psychographic profiling, and sentiment analysis are all techniques that have led to the ability to predict and influence consumer behaviour, the multimodality of which has been dealt with (Ford et. al., 2023; Gao et. al., 2023). These data-orientated methods help companies to have a thorough idea about human behaviour, predict customer choices, and make individualised notifications. Although they boost consumer engagement and raise the ratio of conversation, they still bring some ethical issues when it comes to privacy and security (Bharti & Park, 2023; Amil, 2023). In addition to the ability of data to create effective advertising, the protection of consumers' rights has become a difficult challenge for the industry. It seems that AI is developing and is expected to become an important tool in the analysis of consumer data and the personalisation of advertising strategies (Davenport et. al., 2020).

The advancement in technology through Artificial Intelligence has made the game more interesting in the modern world of advertising, making the usage of data and personalization that were unthinkable in the past possible. The most recent technological advancements in machine learning, predictive analytics, and automation also have been a part of the development that has reshaped the way brands acquiescents to the consumers' demand (Haleem et al., 2022). This section explores how data and personalization are affecting on current advertising practices while also considering their ethical implications.

This new direction in advertising has been the result of technological advances, the AI-based technology can go through the gigabytes of data of consumers, discover the most important findings, and then use them to target even more campaigns in a hyper-precise way. For instance, AI devices examine behavioural patterns, purchase histories, and demographic information to produce reflective customer segments. These data allow brands to refine their messages and deliver them more effectively (Kotler, et. al., 2022, chap. 13).

Data is the main element of modern advertising, on the basis of which insights are gathered for the better targeting and planning. Big data analytics permit advertisers to reveal detailed insights about customer's behaviour, their tastes, and the trends they are following regarding the purchasing of items. These insights, which are the results of such analyses, give advertisers the chance to implement such personalized campaigns that are not only the most relevant but also the most effective. For instance, big data allows computational advertising to automate media planning, optimise ad placement, and personalise better outcomes for campaigns (Ford et. al., 2023).

For example ChatGPT models are good for words, but they might not be the best at working on creative things. As an example, Predictive Analytics and AI were the strongest tools in generating leads by the AI advertising of Harley Davidson which was a very impressive 2390% rise in leads. The company foresightful use of the analysis tool helped it to be easily noticed and to deploy the right demographic targeting precision. This AI tool is already integrated with the marketing analytics and automation platform, so it will deliver outstanding measurable outcomes (Power, 2017).

Personalization has become a key strategy to gain a competitive edge in advertising, making the consumer engagement a pleasurable experience by tailoring content to their own preferences. With advanced technologies such as NLP (Natural Language Processing) and ML (Machine Learning), companies can figure out user behaviors and even give tailored recommendations to the customers. Customer loyalty increases when brands uses personalized communication.

For example, AI-driven tools like chatbots and virtual assistants demonstrate how personalisation has become integral to advertising. Intelligent systems that, using state-of-art algorithms, mimic human communication and customize recommendations, thus give users a sense of fulfillment with the aim to loyalty.

The research of the Harley Davidson AI implementations, finds that personalization processes not only influence the level of user involvement but also reinforce the emotional connection between consumers and brands, which in turn, contributes to strong brand relationships (Ford et. al., 2023). Besides that, programmatic advertising showcases the fusion of data, AI, and personalisation. This method of AI empowerment combines real-time analytics and predictive modeling to create automated ad delivery, thus guaranteeing that the required audience is addressed at the best time. Programmatic display advertising is able to increase ROI and efficiency by altering campaigns on the fly through processing users' interactions, and considering context. When AI and big data are combined, advertisers are enabled to obtain benefit from real-time processing in order to make the right decisions which can result in improved campaign performance (Kotler, et. al., 2022, chap. 13).

Down the line, personalization was even more enhanced by social media platforms. With access to user-generated content as well as social interactions analysis, brands can choose fitting messages perfectly, which are the mirror of the user's interests or values. In this way,

the platforms like Instagram and YouTube, through which we are able to do it and moreover, with a richer palette of colors and an emphasis on interactivity have become the ground of personalized advertising. Influencer marketing has been identified as an effective tool for personalized promotion because influencers are perceived as more likeable and relatable to audiences. Their popularity contributes to their role as trusted sources of information. While various factors influence the success of influencer marketing, trust and credibility are central elements that enhance the perceived authenticity and effectiveness of these new advertising techniques (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

There is no doubt that data and personalization are a goldmine for advertisers however, they also ignite some ethical concerns that are hard to overlook. The problems rooted in AI algorithms, data breaches, and tracking of consumers badly intensifying the brand image, turn the customers away and do not let the product get popular (Bharti & Park, 2023; Voigt & Bussche, 2017). The “privacy-personalisation paradox” illustrates the consumers facing the opposite conditions of satisfaction: with the intention of enjoying the personal experiences receiving specific content but also worried about the way their information is collected, used, and protected. The clients are driven by the convenience and usefulness of targeted advertising, still, the fear of tracking, unauthorized data usage, or even privacy leakage remains thereby. As human reasoning provokes according to Ford (2023), businesses are promptly moving towards prioritizing the transparency and responsibility issues related to the data exploiting in order to deal with the specific challenges effectively.

In a fresh perspective, now that technology is bringing to the fore the issue of individualization, the ethical queries move from the one of academic deliberations to the one of the most crucial ones. The issue of algorithmic bias, for instance, targets certain groups unfairly or excludes them from a particular action, and data breaches typically result from the loss of personal data of consumers, which further corrodes trust and may harm brand reputations. Based on the research findings, it is evident that consumers are more vigilant than before about how companies treat their data and are the first to walk away if those companies do not prove transparency, accountability, and responsibility. These topics will be discussed in more detail later in chapter “2.3.2 Ethical Challenges: Privacy, Transparency, and Bias”.

Enlargement of advertising driven by Artificial Intelligence is just one aspect. AI is evolving from being employed as a marketing tool to becoming a source of more general technological

innovation. On the basis of the time that AI has undergone from the conventional to advanced technologies such as deep learning, only through the transforming potential of AI can we take a closer look at industries like healthcare and be able to analyze their way of development (Russell & Norvig, 2022).

1.2 The Evolution of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence has developed from an imaginary idea to be a significant driver of technical advancements in many industries. Initially thought for the mid-20th century, AI was created to make it possible for machines to perform tasks that were otherwise reserved for people such as reasoning, perception, and decision-making (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). The early AI was just a matter of rule-based programming. Despite the period's being the most innovative, the computational power was not enough and the rigid definitional rules were the boundaries. Nevertheless, rapid progress in data computation, machine learning, and computational power has turned AI into a continuously improving and dynamic technology (Kotler, et. al., chap. 12).

AI's development from theoretical to practical can be described along two main dimensions. First, its historical journey, from the early symbolic systems to the current data-driven models, underlines the major developments, the challenges faced, and the paradigm shifts encountered (Ai-admin, 2024). The sequence of time when there was growth and then stagnation in the implementation of the technology has set the capability level and the type of the currently used applications of AI.

Second, the underlying technologies of AI that will taste the most success in the next decade, such as machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing, are underpinning the Industries' new level of automation, the advent of predictive analytics, and beginning and humanlike interactions.

1.2.1 From Early AI to Modern Developments

AI has evolved from grand principled ideas to a very serious and transformative technology upon which so many industries rely today. AI begins with the mid-20th century, especially the 1956 Dartmouth Conference that is thought to be the start of AI as an academic field.

Among the various capabilities at the meeting, the researchers visualized machines could think like humans which includes problem-solving, symbolic reasoning, and even games playing. The early systems such as “The Logic Theorist” and “The General Problem Solver” are the best examples of them. The progressive Artificial Intelligence technology firstly showed the possibilities of machines to perform human-like reasoning which was the beginning of efforts to replicate human cognition and even overtake it. Nevertheless, they were limited by the insufficient computational power and oversimplified algorithms of their time (Russell & Norvig, 2022, pp. 24-25).

The postulation of AI in its early development can be classed into four discernible approaches.

- “Acting humanly” was a from exposition of the approach. This, particularly, gives us the information about the “Turing Test” that entails measuring the capability of response-exchanging.
- A second way of looking at AI is through the idea of “thinking humanly”. It was motivated by the concept of cognitive modeling which thought of the human mind as a computer that could compute, and modeled that way.
- Another way is “thinking rationally” which is based on formal logic which attempts to create systems that reason rightly.
- Then, the last method of AI modeling is “acting rationally” from the rational agent approach that is now the central theme of the AI discussion focusing on the design of the optimal AI systems in various contexts (Russell & Norvig, 2022, pp. 20-22).

The 1970s saw what is now referred to as the “AI winter”, a period when the gap between early expectations and real-world capabilities became evident. Research money diminished, and people’s interest in AI waned as the technology did not satisfy the bombastic promises made in the first place. In contrast, the 1980s brought about expert systems that are rule-based architectures and that can simulate decision processes in the specialized domain such as healthcare and engineering. During this time, a very important debate between two paradigms was taking place.

The symbolic approach (GOF AI or Good Old-Fashioned AI), which was self-explaining through logic and rule-based systems and the connectionist approach, which was based on neural networks and was more about learning from data than programming (Russell & Norvig, 2022, p. 27).

While some restrictions related to their flexibility are observed, expert systems indicated the possibilities that AI held within specific settings to enact problem-solving capabilities. In “La Scoriatoia” (2022), Nello Cristianini indicates that they are another step up in the journey for AI, developing from symbolic reasoning to dynamic learning models.

In the 1990s, the fusion of the data that the internet made available, blazing computational capability expansions, and rapid strides made in the machine-learning algorithms signaled the beginning of the AI revolution. With the exquisite learning, AI shifted from rule-based systems to systems that could straightforwardly learn from the data, unearth patterns, and make pertinent predictions. This being said, according to Marco Pierani and Marco Scialdone in “Vivere con l’Intelligenza Artificiale” (2021), the kind of scalability that machine learning permitted would apply to AI more at the everyday level in recommendation systems, fraud detection, and so on. The groundwork for much more monumental innovations such as autonomous vehicles, next-gen robotics, and virtual assistants was concurrently laid out while these were happening.

Machine learning shifted AI from static rule-based systems to adapting performance over time models. The basis for modern applications such as speech recognition, fraud detection, recommendation systems and autonomous vehicles was laid by this transition.

The 21st century is marked by a new era of big data and deep learning whereby vast data sets, cloud computing, and neural networks are at the core for unprecedented accuracy and efficiency in image recognition, language processing and predictive analytics. Crawford (2021), in “Atlas of Ai: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence”, critiques this shift by pointing out that while AI has become smarter, its reliance on mass data collection raises ethical concerns for privacy, surveillance, and exploitation. She argues that AI programs now, while very powerful, are not actually “intelligent” in the human sense of the term, but are simply well adapted to specific tasks, making decisions based on statistical approximations. Her critique is based on the importance of distinguishing between the utility of AI and the broader issue of whether or not it is possible for it to be cognitively human-like.

In the advertising industry, AI exemplifies both its technical capabilities and ethical complexities. As detailed by Yongqi Yu (2022), AI-driven systems analyse consumer behaviour to craft hyper-targeted campaigns, while generative models such as GANs create personalised ad content. Albert.ai and its AI-powered marketing platform are examples of how automation can be more efficient than human teams using dynamic allocation of budgets and optimization of ad placements. However, the use of AI in advertising may sometimes lead to problems with transparency and manipulation, as Pierani and Scialdone (2021) have demonstrated. The authors challenged the view that online advertising can only become faster and more precise at the expense of human dignity and health, in particular, the issues of fatigue and burnout. AI has become the forefront of efficient and growth-oriented marketing strategies. Thus, the authors suggest that AI could speed up the whole production process from design to the market, and even beyond via 3D business printing of different materials.

Despite its remarkable progress, AI faces enduring challenges. Ethics should not be put aside when considering AI's application in digital media. Crawford (2021), for instance, highlights how the costs for AI lie in its energy-intensive labor, as well as environmental problems. Still, the poor and disadvantaged people make up a bulk of the data being collected. Such limitations show the need for the development of a critical approach in AI design with fairness, accountability, and sustainability as the fundamental elements.

Cristianini (2022) adds an additional critique of the AI fever dream as "intelligent", suggesting that AI is most successful not in trying to copy the human mind but in taking a shortcut to doing without it. It is a means of reaching results via statistical models and computational resources instead of actual understanding. This view fits into a broader view that considers AI to be transformative, but never to replace or oppose human creation or judgement, rather a multitude.

From here on out, the evolution of AI will keep transforming the industries and society. The emerging technologies like generative AI and blockchain will introduce more transparency and innovation. However, as Crawford (2021) discovers, accountability of AI depends on effective governance frameworks and collaboration among stakeholders to reconcile ethical and social implications. Such an outlook will need to be reinforced, referencing that technological progress needs to be aligned with consumer trust and long-term value creation.

The evolution of Artificial Intelligence reflects both technological progress and ongoing ethical debate. The history of the AI industry is not only made up of breakthroughs and successes, but also pauses and readjustments. According to Pierani and Scialdone (2021), the coexistence with AI is only feasible with the understanding of its capabilities as well as the commitment to its ethical incorporation into society. Through this constant exchange, we will determine the future of AI, thus it will be a demonstration of a tool of innovation and progress without neglecting important human qualities.

1.2.2 Key Technologies: Machine Learning, Deep Learning, NLP, and LLMs

According to AI, in particular integrated Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DL), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and Large Language Models (LLMs), the world of advertising has changed significantly. These technologies demand marketing tools to be much faster in operation while at the same time providing a far deeper understanding of consumer behaviour, which, in turn, allows a far more effective engagement with target audiences.

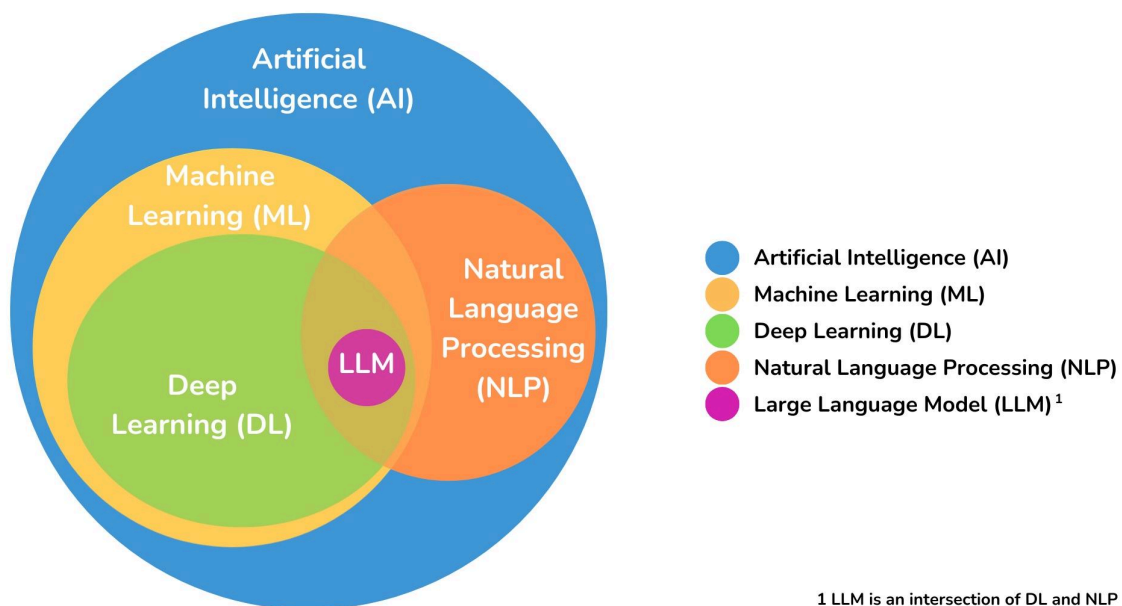


Image 3. Venn diagram showing the relationship between ML, DL, NLP, and LLMs

Machine learning (ML) is a subpart of AI that develops algorithms that serve the purpose of learning from patterns of data and making predictions or decisions without direct programming. Unlike traditional methods, where instructions are provided, ML allows for systems to learn independently, identify patterns, and independently make decisions. The applications of machine learning have been in demand by marketers as they allow marketers

to extract insights through the effective analysis of very large datasets (Russell & Norvig, 2022).

Machine learning could be classified into three major classes: supervised, unsupervised, and reinforcement learning. Supervised learning involves teaching a model on a labeled dataset with known outputs and is therefore commonly deployed for classification tasks predictive of whether a customer will respond to a marketing campaign. The training of the supervised model is typically fed historical data.

Unsupervised learning, which deals with unlabeled data, focuses largely on hidden patterns and intrinsic structures that reside in the data. Clustering algorithms come in here and are popularly used to group consumers according to like behaviours or preferences.

In reinforcement learning, algorithms are trained with trial and error, wherein the model learns to make several sequential decisions while receiving feedback based on the actions it took. It is very useful in environments of rapid change, such as online ads, where strategies dynamically change to monitor new data to assess efficacy (Kotsiantis et al., 2007).

Deep learning (DL) represents the evolution of machine learning into a more sophisticated form that is most suitable for various types of data, which is based on the fact that the word “deep” stands for the multiple hidden layers of neural networks. Marketing is where its popularity is growing due to the fact it can make sense of unstructured data like images, audio, and text, which in turn enables better performance of campaigns and customer communication (LeCun et al., 2015).

DL has been applied in a variety of advertising-related aspects. For instance, advertisers employ deep learning algorithms to analyse images that consumers share on social media. By determining which images resonate most with their audience, brands could further develop their visual content strategies (Krizhevsky et al., 2017).

Thus, deep learning techniques can analyse textual data contained within reviews and social media posts to make the sentiment analysis about products or brands among consumers because this analysis allows marketers to gauge public perception and influence their messages correspondingly. Most importantly, looking at historical consumer behaviour data, deep learning models now predict customers’ purchasing choices and allow advertisers to send targeted offers to consumers (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

Natural Language Processing (NLP) is another major part of AI; its main job is the relationship between Artificial Intelligence and people using the natural language. NLP is a

computer's capability to recognise, decipher, and generate conversational human language. There are several applications of these in marketing subdividing, significantly improving customer engagement. Several companies now deploy chatbots powered by NLP to provide customer support and assistance instantaneously. These bots can understand user queries and respond appropriately, thus improving customer satisfaction while reducing operational costs (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020).

In addition, the equipment can understand existing content and generate new marketing materials accordingly tailored for specific audiences. This ability makes it easier to create content while keeping it relevant. Lastly, marketers must optimise their content for voice queries, considering the growing frequency of voice searches. NLP brings the most frequent questions and statements consumers ask while shopping into words that brands can change their SEO based on.

Large Language Models (LLMs) are a pivotal move in Artificial Intelligence that brings the work of traditional machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing to a new level. ML and DL address pattern recognition and predictive analytics, and NLP enables the communication between humans and machines. LLM combines all these functions so that the most intelligent text-based AI systems can be created. These models, such as OpenAI's GPT series and Meta's LLaMA, are able to process large volumes of data to form an understanding and generate and optimise human-like language, which in return has a significant influence on marketing and advertising strategies (Schweidel & Reisenbichler, 2024).

LLMs are a very effective way to produce content, being a dynamic tool that helps brands create personalised, consistent, and high-quality messaging on a massive scale. Unlike traditional automated copywriting tools, LLMs can automatically alter the tone, style, and messaging based on the different segments of the audience. Data scientists analyse consumer sentiment and engagement to send the right advertisements to the targeted people, ensuring relevance across different demographics and cultural contexts (Sadıkoğlu et al., 2023).

One of the main advantages of large language models (LLMs) is that they can enhance brand communication. They are both a current trend and a future development direction for products, but an accurate description or advertising of a product remains a difficult and time-consuming task. The LLMs generate content utilising keyword analysis tools to assist the search engines in picking out their written materials. E-commerce platforms, for example, use this technology to automatically generate product descriptions optimised for search engines while maintaining a natural and persuasive tone (Zhang et al., 2024).

Even though ML and DL have brought data analysis into marketing, LLMs go a step ahead by putting together unstructured data from various sources, including social media discussions, customer reviews, and forum posts. It helps marketers to track new trends, hypnotise what customers feel about products, and predict which brands consumers will switch to more accurately (Chen & Chan, 2024).

LLMs also activate A/B testing and ad performance analysis. In the traditional procedures, only arithmetic indicators are available, while LLMs can derive evaluations by means of lexical analysis of the qualitative feedback, which is the reason for the buy-in of the audiences. They also generate actionable recommendations for marketers out of the natural language feedback they get in reviews and surveys for improving customer engagement (Praveen et al., 2024).

LLMs, further, revamp the ML-driven ad targeting scenario by empowering real-time personalisation of the marketing messages. The LLMs differ from traditional ways of segmentation, which were just categorising consumers into predefined segments, by giving the ads instantaneous dynamically based on the individual behaviour of the customers online, their browsing history, and engagement patterns. This results in highly customised user experiences, leading to increased conversion rates (Schweidel & Reisenbichler, 2024).

The LLMs, on the other hand, use AI technology to automate the aggregate communication for advertisers by providing the machine with context in real time. The science of Artificial Intelligence is currently undergoing many transformations in the advertising domain. The right model can, for example, assess the ad placement, conduct a contextual analysis of the performance, and suggest the best place to display the ad. As a result, not only do the placements become better aligned, but they also appear with the specific messages that people are currently interested in (Lee & Misra, 2024).

The NLP-framework chatbots that are powered with AI have already brought considerable improvements in the area of the automatic customer assistance sector, but on the next spot, LLMs bring an even more human-like experience, thereby paving the way for near-human conversational capabilities. Customarily, chatbots programmed from the script give answers that are predetermined, so they would not respond to questions that are not on the script. On the other hand, LLM-powered virtual assistants interact non-politely with natural language understanding and context-aware dialogues, which in turn make the customer service experience better and thus improve customer retention.

For example, AI-powered intelligent agents in enterprises like the retail and hospitality industries can recognise previous interactions, recommend personalised items, and even

envisage customer needs based on past requests. As a result, it not only makes the user experience easier but also cuts the workload of humans, thereby letting them turn to harder issues (Chen & Chan, 2024).

Despite their numerous advantages, LLMs come along with ethical dilemmas alike the ones of MLs and DLs. LLMs rather often learn from large sets of data, which may cover some inadequate information, and as a result, they can by mistake portray stereotypes in advertising. The matter is getting more and more complicated, especially in the case of programmatic ad placement, where biased models tend to include only one demographic group and not others, which potentially gives birth to discriminatory marketing procedures (Lee & Misra, 2024).

In addition, a problem that arises is the comprehensibility of the LLM-based recommendations. While marketers rely on AI-driven insights to optimise campaigns, the decision-making process behind LLM outputs is often a mystery. The lack of interpretability makes it difficult for advertisers to justify AI-generated strategies to stakeholders and consumers (Yang et al., 2023).

To address these issues, companies must implement fairness auditing protocols, ensure diverse and representative training datasets, and develop transparent AI governance policies. Additionally, ongoing research aims to improve LLM interpretability, allowing for more ethical and accountable AI usage in advertising (Praveen et al., 2024).

As AI technology continues to evolve, future applications of LLMs in marketing will focus on even deeper personalisation, multimodal AI integration, and becoming self-activated marketing systems. A few of the main ones include: (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Chen & Chan, 2024; Ford et al., 2023)

- Conversational commerce: LLMs will enable AI-powered voice and chat interfaces to facilitate effortless transactions via natural conversation.
- AI-Powered Video and Visual Marketing: In addition to text advertisements, LLMs will be combined with generative models to create hyper-personalized video ads and interactive brand experiences.
- Autonomous Campaign Management: AI-powered systems will autonomously design, deploy, and optimize marketing campaigns with minimal human intervention and maximal efficiency.

Data mainly constitutes the core of all AI-based technologies used for advertising. The responsiveness of ML, DL, NLP, and LLM algorithms is mostly contingent on the quantity

and quality of data available for any algorithmic analysis. A wide variety of methods are used by companies to collect data for AI-driven advertising. Interaction of users provides insight through data collected from user engagement with websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications; this involves clicking, viewing, sharing, and commenting. Another method in which companies seek consumer feedback is surveys to give them current information about their customer base, desires, and issues with their products or services. Many companies also purchase third-party data to aggregate advertising data from various platforms.

Although ML, DL, NLP, and LLM have several advantages in advertising, many challenges remain. Many machine learning algorithms work as a “black box”, meaning that they may be able to answer very difficult problems but lack interpretability or believability in how they come to their prediction. This would require a marketer to know what was done or how the decision was made when employing this technology (Lipton, 2016). Moreover, biased training data may lead to unfair or discriminatory results when AI technologies are applied to advertising. For instance, if historical data reflects some bias toward certain demographic groups, trained ML models would continue using this way of targeting. Furthermore, it can be difficult and expensive to integrate AI technologies with current marketing systems, requiring time and resources to manage staff training and make sure the new systems can work together with legacy systems (Chui et al., 2016).

As AI technology develops, there are emerging directions in its application in advertising. For instance, Automated Machine Learning (AutoML) allows users to apply machine learning models to real-world problems without needing to be highly knowledgeable about the field by automating the entire workflow from the lab to the field. This democratisation of ML can allow more marketers to use advanced analytics without needing specialised technical knowledge (Google Cloud, 2024; Russell & Norvig, 2022). Ethical issues will come first when a technology company is deciding whether to use AI; marketers must find ways to inform the public effectively, to ensure the public is held accountable, and to make it fair in their ads when AI is used (Gabriel, 2024; Bharti & Park, 2023).

Advertising is experiencing a rapid paradigm shift toward hyper-personalisation, tailored to the tastes and habits of individual consumers. This personalised approach is enabled by the ability of AI to analyze large amounts of data rapidly and accurately (Gao et al., 2023; Ford

et al., 2023). This reflects a shift toward more dynamic and real-time interactions, in which AI enables marketers to generate content and target audiences with unprecedented accuracy.

1.3 AI and Consumer behaviour

Artificial intelligence has taken center stage in influencing consumer behavior, transforming how consumers think and shop about brands. To create more personalised recommendations and deeper relationships between customers and companies, advanced algorithms dig deep into the huge databases of social media and purchase histories. AI finds application on websites such as Amazon that sort through products and make recommendations based on purchase history and chronology history, which in turn leads to customer loyalty and satisfaction (Jain et al., 2024).

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has been the reason for the faster use of AI, as companies have had an enormous rise of demand for online purchases and services, and in consequence they have used AI served solutions to obtain those demands. AI makes a deep impression on consumer behavior, improvements such as generative AI or chatbots drive personalization up, but their use also makes the importance of transparency and fairness unremarkable in order to retain customer trust (Dias et al., 2023).

1.3.1 How AI Shapes Consumer Preferences and Choices

AI is revolutionizing significantly the manner in which brands are talking with consumers and influencing buying behavior. As the business sector widely applies AI, understanding its influence on consumer preferences and decision-making remains a must (Jain et al., 2024). AI's ability to handle and analyze extensive datasets allows organizations to have a profound insight into customers' behavior. Machine learning algorithms go through the mining of data to find hidden patterns of consumer choices by analyzing historical data, social media engagement, and purchasing behavior (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

An example of e-commerce is Amazon, as a matter of fact, is one of the best AI consumers influencers, through its sophisticated recommendation algorithms and AI-powered shopping tools. Amazon is able to achieve this through the provision of AI-led sophisticated recommendation algorithms and AI-focused shopping feature. AI technology has allowed Amazon to examine an excessive amount of information, which in turn enables the company

to produce extensively detailed shopping stories that are not only an impetus for the buyer's decision, but are also able to affect the preference for specific brands. For example, the company's Alexa technology has developed into a smart helper that can conduct private interactions, propose solutions for customers, and address specific questions in an instant manner, thus raising customer satisfaction and engagement (Amazon Web Services, 2025). Furthermore, AI technology helps develop the right product description to fit each customer. In addition, AI-powered Shopping Guides bring together product information and recommendations, making the decision-making process less and the shopping experience more thrilling. These are examples of how Artificial Intelligence improves personalization and increases customer experience by minimizing unnecessary choices and strengthening brand loyalty. In this manner, AI not only encourages personalization but also in a manner persuades consumers to choose certain products and brands, making decision-making easy and opening a new mental path towards product loyalty (Dias et al., 2023; Amazon Web Services, 2025).

Kotler (2022) emphasize that knowing consumer markets involves understanding the reactions of customers to advertisements. AI not only gives that but also improves customer interactions with chatbots and virtual assistants, providing instant assistance and customized experiences. AI-powered platforms simulate human-like chat, providing real-time, customized feedback to customer inquiries, ultimately enhancing satisfaction. AI-conversed interactions provide real-time support, facilitating an easier and quicker way for customers to engage. Kotler (2022) highlight that AI communication enhances the reputation of a brand and fosters repeat purchasing. AI further reinforces customer relationship management (CRM) by providing greater insight into consumers' requirements. This demonstrates how AI tools bridge the gap between consumers and brands, enabling easier engagement at a deeper and more meaningful level.

AI has also effectively reshaped consumer behaviour by making itself the forethought to the forecast of what someone will most likely prefer based on past habits. The data generated through AI models that can predict the trends of the purchasing process in the future are the technological development that comes with it. Companies are consequently able to act upon the customer needs even before they express their intentions. Such influence is mainly applicable to the markets where the best knowledge of the customer's desire can offer the company much leverage over its rivals. As companies try to predict consumers' new

interests, the strategy could be to adapt it to the market situation, thus, they remain used to the changes and succeed. Kotler (2022), also, describe the processes by which marketers can design new strategies with the help of AI information. The latter is centred on consumer behaviour and is the executive of the changes.

The personalisation enabled by AI is not limited to product recommendations only; also, it works for marketing messages and promotional strategies. With the help of the analysis of consumer data, firms can design targeted advertising campaigns that fit the respective audience segments. Just to give an example, the targeted ads based on the user's previous activity can lead up to the three times higher open rate than the ads that are sent to everyone (Jain et al., 2024). This targeted way is not only related to the conversion chances but it also supports the identification of the feeling of relevance of the consumers who feel that brands are getting to know their personal needs.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had the effect of speeding up the adoption of AI technologies among various sectors has happened to be the highest contributory factor for this particular trend of consumer behaviour changes. Since face-to-face interactions were reduced to a bare minimum during lock-down, many consumers replaced their conventional shopping practices with commodities to be shipped by using AI-driven platforms. Studies carried out at these times showed that people did not mind being served by AI systems during automated interactions, therefore they are accepting them more. The pandemic as mentioned above contributed to a downturn in the preference of traditional shopping methods among individuals. This led businesses to invest more in AI technologies and make better use of this potential (Dias et al., 2023).

Besides personalization and engagement, AI technology makes the use of the own reputation to attract consumers. AI has been used in the construction of social proof mechanisms within some digital platforms that analyze the data derived from the users, thereby giving everyone an almost inescapable misperception of the product or trend's popularity (Wang & Yu, 2017). This occurrence illustrates how AI goes past the mere individual and also involves the collective trends within social networks. Individuals very often become influenced by the things their friends embrace or talk about online, thus, they decide to follow the majority and in so doing ignore the real unique characteristics of the product.

Furthermore, using generative AI tools in marketing allows brands to create compelling content that resonates with specific audiences of consumers. Generative models can generate tailored ads or marketing content based on analysis of existing data regarding consumer behavior and interest (Feuerriegel et al., 2024). This capability enhances the relevance of marketing messages and increases the probability of capturing the attention of consumers.

The Customer journey mapping (Image 3) can be improved by using AI technology to connect the points of the customer interaction in a positive way across channels. Companies that identify customer touchpoints, and therefore understand the customers' interaction with a brand at various stages, such as through social media engagement or website visits, are able to modify their strategies so as to improve the overall customer experience (Jain et al., 2024). This overview enables marketers to find solutions to the pain points that customers experience during the purchase process.

Customer Journey Maps

Type The Subtitle Of Your Great Here

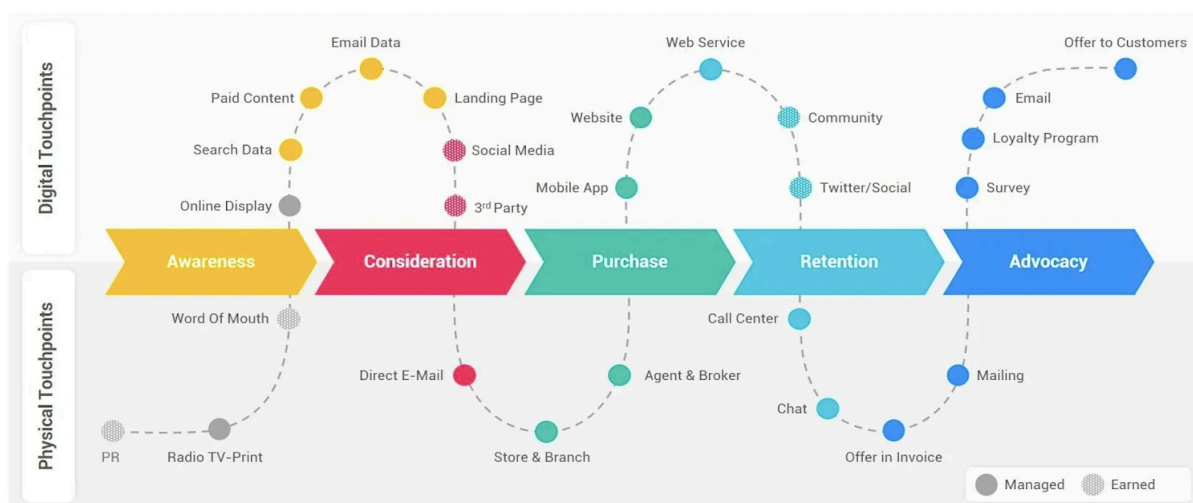


Image 4. *Customer Journey Map Example*. Woopra Blog. from <https://www.woopra.com/blog/customer-journey-map>

AI is employed the most by commercial entities regarding technologies that enable AI to predict and influence consumption modes while holding the responsibility to protect ethical privacy issues and eliminate bias by remaining transparent while doing their internal controls. Finding the balance between personalisation and the respect of consumer autonomy will be crucial to the marketing of brands when they face the challenges of a data-driven and data-generating market (Bharti & Park, 2023).

Nonetheless, adoption of AI-driven personalization on a wide-scale is accompanied by a number of critical ethical concerns. Even though the possibility to provide custom experiences increases consumer engagement and their satisfaction, important restrictions of privacy, transparency, and the power of personal data to manipulate individual choices arise. Personal experiences highly tailored to the preferences of the person is suspect of limiting the autonomy of the consumer when the person is confined to an information bubble by the algorithm-driven filter, which prevents the person from exposure to alternative options. Besides, collecting and using personal data on a large scale poses critical problems connected with the security and safe handling of sensitive information. The mentioned problems serve as the heart of the discussion on the chances and the risks of AI-driven personalisation, which is a part of the next chapter (Jain et al., 2024).

Chapter II

Literature Review: AI and Its Role in Advertising

2.1 AI Transformations in Advertising

As discussed in the previous chapter, AI has reshaped advertising practices which has influenced how brands develop, deliver, and optimize their marketing strategies. Advertising was mainly based on intuition, human creativity, and manual work in the past. This situation usually caused inefficiency and robotic attitudes, which lacked the characteristics of personalization (Ford et al., 2023). Thanks to AI, machine learning, and deep learning developments, advertisers can now use data-driven insights to integrate hyper-personalization, make real-time adjustments to their campaigns, and have a more profound engagement with customers (Feuerriegel et al., 2024).

This section examines how AI impacts such areas as advertising, including content creation, campaign management, and audience targeting. Tools powered by AI enable brands to minimize the need to do human labor in the creative process and thus lead to more efficient creation of personalized content as well as better advertising (Büyüksomer & Tekeoğlu, 2024). Moreover, companies harness AI images and predictive data analysis to improve audience engagement and thus obtain a higher return on investment (ROI).

AI's role in advertising grows as it continues to evolve allowing marketers the ability to use AI for storytelling, content generation, and real-time decision-making which means more flexible and consumer-oriented campaigns. In the meantime, this change has brought up worries about ethics, transparency, and the maintenance of the balance between automation and human creativity (Cristianini, 2023). The next sections will look into these transformations in detail, and they will focus on AI's impact on content generation, programmatic advertising, targeting strategies, and ethical considerations which are shaping the future of AI-driven marketing.

2.1.1 AI's Impact on Content Creation and Campaign Development

The aspect of content creation is drastically changed thanks to AI, in the past, advertising heavily depended on human creativity and manual execution, which made the process both time-consuming and expensive (Ford et al., 2023). Today, AI-powered tools have transformed

this landscape by automating workflows, improving efficiency, and enabling brands to create highly personalized and engaging advertisements at scale (Büyüksomer & Tekeoğlu, 2024). Today, machine learning and deep learning algorithms give the power to the marketers to carry out the analysis of massive data sets, to find the good insights from them and to put together the right advertising content according to the audience they are targeting (Feuerriegel et al., 2024). A standout example of AI-powered content creation is Coca-Cola's *Masterpiece* campaign, where AI was used to animate classical artworks, creating an engaging storytelling experience. The campaign illustrated how AI can effectively merge data-driven strategy and creativity (Lal, 2024). This example will be analyzed in chapter "2.1.3 Case Studies of AI-Driven Advertising Campaigns".

Generative AI in Advertising

Generative AI has broad potential to transform the way in which companies create visual and textual content in relation to how it has transformed the way companies create visual and written content. Tools like DALL·E,¹ MidJourney,² and Deep Dream³ make it possible for businesses to produce the optimal visuals in line with their ad campaign goals, hence they only require a slight human interaction. Through this cutting-edge technology, such as the fashion and retail industry, businesses have the capability of producing hyper-realistic product images and original ad creatives, which could boost consumer engagement to a great extent.

For instance, L'Oréal implemented generative AI within its "*Perso project*", an AI-based beauty-tech solution allowing the user to access the information relevant to its skincare and makeup preferences as well as environmental factors. *Perso* was the star of CES 2020⁴ when

¹*DALL·E* is a text-to-image model developed by OpenAI that generates images from text input. It can generate highly detailed and imaginative images from prompts, making it a useful tool for digital art, design, and concept visualization (OpenAI, 2025).

²*Midjourney* is a self-supporting research institution that trades in AI-created visuals, offering an effective tool to digital artists, designers, and creatives. Unlike other visual design software, it operates through a Discord interface, where users input descriptive command text prompts inside the /imagine command. The platform offers wide application across advertising, architecture, and the creative industry in instant prototyping and concept visualizing (Midjourney, 2025).

³*DeepDream* is a computer vision software created by Google in 2015 to show the way neural networks see images. It uses convolutional neural networks (CNNs) to enhance patterns, creating dreamlike surreal images with enhanced shapes and textures. Originally created for AI research, it has been utilized to affect AI-created art and utilized to explore neural network perception (Deep Dream Generator, 2015).

⁴*CES* is the Consumer Electronics Show, one of the world's largest and most influential technology trade shows. Organized by the Consumer Technology Association (CTA), CES showcases the newest consumer electronics trends, including AI, robotics, smart home, health tech, car tech, and more. Is widely recognized as a global platform for innovation where brands reveal next-generation technologies to media, industry professionals, and investors (Consumer Technology Association, 2020).

it was launched and its concept was that L'Oréal's ModiFace AI technology was integrated with geo-location data to provide the inclusive perspective. People can simply take a selfie via the individualized *Perso* app. Using Artificial Intelligence, the application calculates skin factors such as wrinkles, fine lines, dark spots and pores; moreover, data accumulated imitates environmental conditions such as UV index, humidity, temperature and pollution in order to offer more accurate and comprehensive recommendations. According to the findings, *Perso* administers a unique blend of skincare products containing serums and moisturizers in small doses for individual use. It also extends its functionality to create custom lipsticks and foundations, adapting over time by learning from user interactions. Through this integration of real-time data analysis and adaptive AI, L'Oréal's *Perso* exemplifies how AI can elevate consumer experiences in beauty, making product application both personalized and dynamic (L'Oréal, 2025).

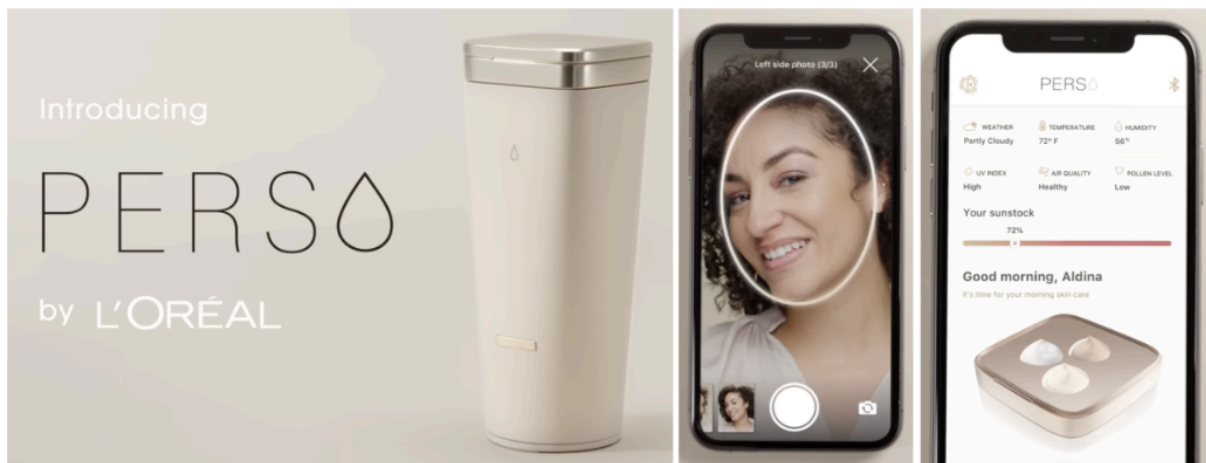


Image 5. *Introducing Perso, a 3-in-1 at-home personalized beauty device by L'Oréal.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfRGxklIF5M>

Aside from conventional imagery, Artificial Intelligence has managed to enter the field of video and motion graphics as well. AI-powered video editing tools like *Sora*,⁵ *Runway ML*,⁶ and *Synthesia*⁷ allow brands to make a high-quality video ad with less cost, hence enjoying a

⁵*Sora* is an AI-powered video generation model by OpenAI that creates realistic videos from text prompts. It can understand complex prompts, physics, and spatial continuity, leading to consistent characters, environments, and motion within generated video clips. *Sora* revolutionizes advertising, filmmaking, and content creation, making high-quality video creation possible without the need for conventional filming or animation. <https://openai.com>

⁶*Runway ML* is an applied research company focused on video, image, and multimedia content creation using generative Artificial Intelligence. They have used their AI tools on high-profile creative projects, including films like "Everything Everywhere All At Once" and music videos for artists like ASAP Rocky and Kanye West. Runway provides both web-based applications and API access to facilitate AI-enabled content creation for solo creators to global brands. In September 2024, it partnered with Lionsgate to build a custom video generation model, leveraging the studio's extensive film and TV library to bring AI into mainstream filmmaking. <https://runwayml.com/>; Porter, J. (2024).

⁷*Synthesia* is an AI-powered video creation platform that allows users to generate videos featuring lifelike AI avatars by simply inputting text. Founded in 2017, it supports 140+ languages and is widely used in corporate

significant cost reduction and not requiring large production teams. A case in point, the “Never Done Evolving” campaign of Nike which was based on AI technology as it reborn old images of Serena Williams, has been able to cause the nostalgic feelings in many while at the same time, enthraling the audience. With the help of AKQA, Nike employed advanced machine learning techniques in the form of the latest Supervised Learning Algorithms to analyze Serena’s gaming style across the old eras and to evaluate her decision-making, shot selection, reaction time, agility, and recovery from scratch

The campaign utilized “vid2player”, a technique developed by Stanford University, to create an AI-driven simulation where 1999 Serena competes against her 2017 self. This groundbreaking approach not only showcased Serena’s evolution but also highlighted the potential of AI in redefining storytelling in sports and advertising (AKQA, 2025).

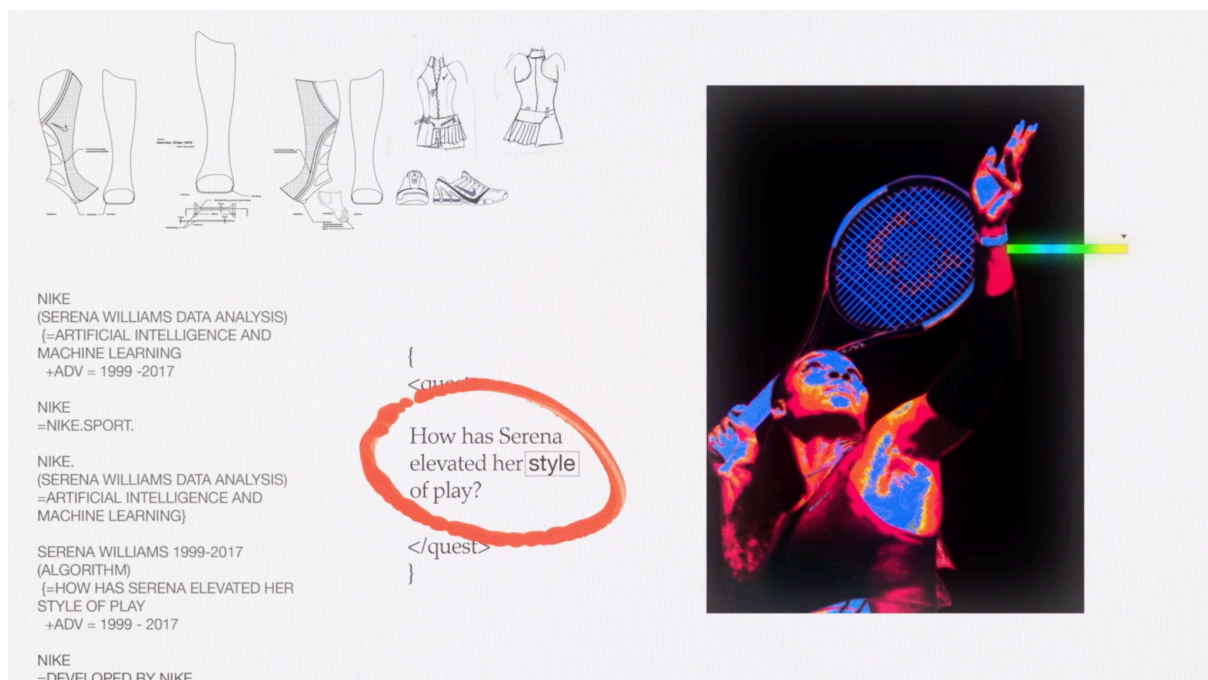


Image 6. Nike 50th Anniversary. *Never Done Evolving, The Greatness of Serena Williams.*
<https://www.akqa.com/work/nike/nike-50th-anniversary/never-done-evolving/>

AI in Programmatic Advertising and Optimization

AI is also essential in real-time campaign optimization. AI-driven programmatic advertising automatically places and buys ads on digital media (Martinez-Sala & Monserrat-Gauchi, 2024). Companies like Google and Meta utilize AI-driven ad platforms that determine user

training, marketing, and content localization. The company prioritizes ethical AI use, implementing safeguards against deepfake misuse while advocating for responsible AI development. <https://www.synthesia.io/>

engagement, optimize ad placements, and adjust targeting strategies in real time. Google's *Performance Max*⁸ and Meta's *Advantage+*⁹ optimize campaigns continually to deliver optimal engagement and conversion.

Google *Performance Max* Campaign is an important solution for advertisers whose target is to enhance ad performance by using Google's AI. Advertisers can get to all the advertising products from Google like Search, YouTube, Display, Discover, Gmail, and Maps through a single campaign. *Performance Max* is an AI-driven tool that takes over the complete process of the auto-bidding, budget optimization, customer targeting, ad development, and attribution. By analyzing real-time data, it aims to increase conversions and overall campaign value. Advertisers simply provide creative assets, audience signals, and goals, and Google's AI dynamically assembles and delivers the most effective ads across channels. This automation enables more efficient and adaptive advertising tailored to user behavior and intent (Google, 2024).

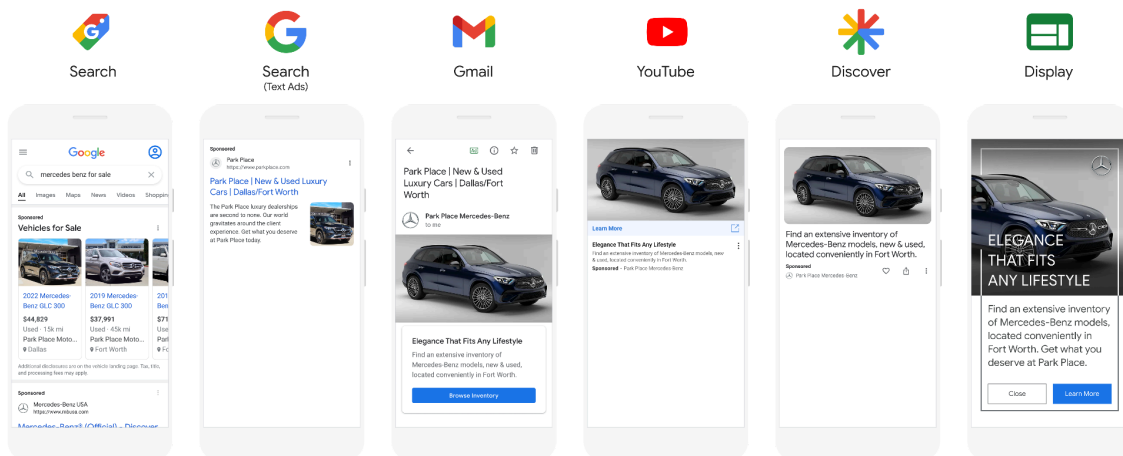


Image 7. Example of how Google Performance Max can maximise the engage showing a advertising campaign through all of Google's advertising inventory. <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/13837303?hl=it>

Meta's *Advantage+* is a suite of AI-powered advertising tools designed to enhance campaign performance through automation and machine learning. These technologies are designed to optimize the various areas of digital marketing like targeting the audience, placing ads and

⁸Google *Performance Max* is an AI-driven, goal-based campaign type within Google Ads that enables advertisers to access all of Google's advertising channels through a single campaign. This includes platforms such as Search, Display, YouTube, Discover, Gmail, and Maps.

https://ads.google.com/intl/it_it/home/campaigns/performance-max/

⁹Meta *Advantage+* is a suite of automated advertising solutions offered by Meta (formerly Facebook) designed to simplify the management of ad campaigns and make them more effective. Leveraging advanced machine learning algorithms, Advantage+ automates various campaign management tasks, including budget allocation, audience targeting, and creative optimization, to provide enhanced performance and efficiency.

<https://www.facebook.com/business/help/397103717129942>

personalizing the creative designs, across Meta's platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. This marketing technology of dynamic ad delivery by *Advantage+* lets advertisers reach their target groups at the right moment and with the right content they need by making the process more streamlined, thus, in the end, it reduces costs and increases return on ad spend (ROAS). Among its core features, *Advantage+ Shopping Campaigns* identify users with the highest probability to make a purchase and will facilitate the ad delivery with as little manual input as possible, which will lead to a primary focus on the driving of online sales. Similarly, *Advantage+ Catalog Ads* dynamically showcase products from a brand's catalog to users based on their interests, intent, and behaviors, enhancing personalization and the likelihood of engagement.

Alongside campaign automation, Meta provides *Advantage+ Creative Enhancements*, a collection of AI tools made to increase ad creatives' potential. Few of these enhancements are: here is a photo-based set with text overlay, there's the possibility of visual adjustments like brightness, contrast and aspect ratio, and the fourth aspect is the so-called text optimization that dynamically moves copy to the most suitable place. Other features such as 3D animation, AI-generated image expansion to fit multiple aspect ratios, music integration, and the highlighting of relevant user comments further personalize ads and increase user engagement. These creative tools allow advertisers to scale high-quality, engaging content across Meta's ad placements without requiring extensive manual editing or design resources. Through its combined focus on automation and creative personalization, Meta's *Advantage+* helps advertisers deliver more adaptive, impactful campaigns, enhancing both user experience and advertising effectiveness (Meta, 2024; Stark, 2024).

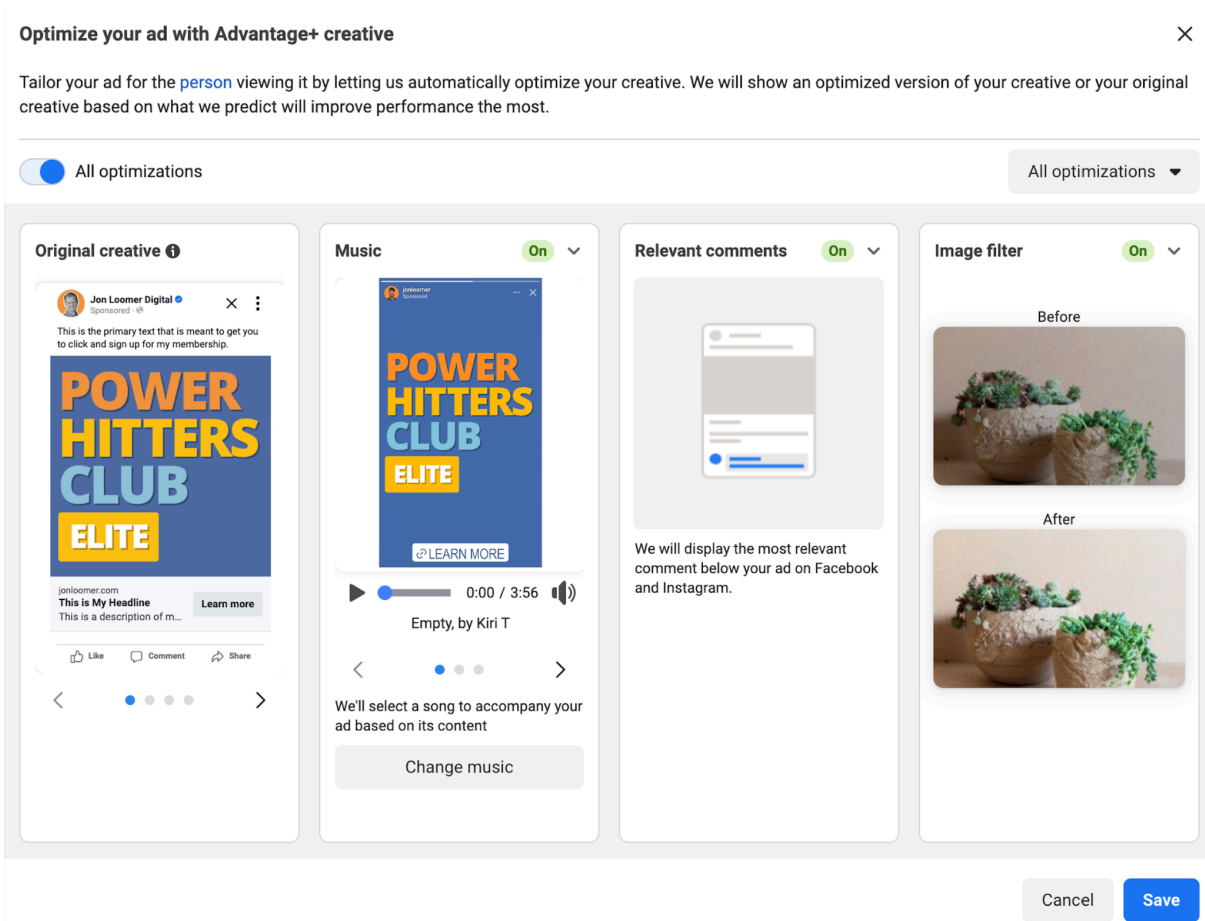


Image 8, explain how Advantage+ creative is showed to a user. Photo taken fom: Loomer, 2024, *Which Advantage+ creative enhancements should you turn on?* Jon Loomer Digital. <https://www.jonloomer.com/advantage-plus-creative-enhancements/>

AI also enables predictive ad analytics, whereby AI is able to predict consumer purchase habits by analyzing historical customer data, thus maximizing ad targeting (Ali et al., 2022). As a concrete example of that, Starbucks’ “Deep Brew”, an AI system that tailors offers on the basis of customers’ behavior to drive revenue and establish customer relationships (we will analyze this concrete case in section “2.1.3 Case Studies of AI-Driven Advertising Campaigns”). AI also makes A/B testing easier by allowing marketers to test multiple ad variations simultaneously, with unparalleled accuracy identifying the top-performing creatives (Dias et al., 2023).

2.1.2 AI in Targeting and Personalization Strategies

AI-Driven Targeting and Personalization in Advertising

AI has transformed how advertisers connect with consumers, making targeting and personalization more precise and effective. Before AI, marketers primarily used broad

demographic data and generic messaging, which often resulted in wasted ad spend and low engagement (Ford et al., 2023).

Analysts having a framework based on Artificial Intelligence and machine learning help enterprises to develop even more individualized and user-specific informational content as they have access to the customer's habits and interactions that occur in real-time (Feuerriegel et al., 2024). AI leads to an increase in the relevance of ads and, as a result, the conversion rate, customer satisfaction, and the return-on-investment (ROI) of the company.

Predictive Analytics and Consumer Behavior

One of AI's biggest strengths is predictive analytics, which helps brands anticipate consumer behavior using past data and real-time interactions. By analyzing past purchasing patterns, search history, and social media activity, AI models can predict user interests and serve personalized ads accordingly (Ali et al., 2022). Amazon, for example, is a company that applies Artificial Intelligence to produce customer behavior-based recommendations for products boosting sales and customer engagement (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2016). Meanwhile, *Spotify's Discover Weekly* module through machine learning creates playlists that are designed according to user preferences and therefore improve the advertising strategies. We will explore Spotify AI implementations in the section "2.1.3 Case Studies of AI-Driven Advertising Campaigns".

Real-Time Dynamic Content Adaptation

AI has also enabled real-time content adaptation, allowing ads to change dynamically based on user behavior (Neves & Pereira, 2025). For example, as we see previously Google's *Performance Max* campaigns use AI to fine-tune ad creatives, formats, and placements in real time, optimizing engagement across platforms. This approach ensures that the delivery to users of content that is relevant to their context and at the right time, is this process of making marketing more efficient (Google, 2024). Likewise, through the use of AI, Netflix's thumbnails recommendation system customizes the box and images for different movies and shows according to the user's watch history, which in turn, has an effect of increasing the turn-out rates (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2016).

Contextual and Behavioral Targeting

One more major aspect of AI when it comes to personalization is contextual and behavioral targeting. AI technology empowered the move from the traditional cookie-based tracking to a novel way where real-time analysis of the user's actions leads to context-based ad serving—such as browsing patterns, time of day, and device usage (Rajawat et al., 2025). It is incredibly effective in programmatic advertising where AI algorithms instantly deliver ads in front of the most relevant audiences, thanks to the effect of optimized ad placement in milliseconds (Neves & Pereira, 2025). *The Trade Desk*¹⁰ it's a platform that adopts AI-based real-time bidding (RTB) which involves optimizing ad placements and making every impression a great success and impact (The Trade Desk, 2024).

Conversational AI and Chatbots for Personalization

Chatbots and conversational AI were designed as a form of AI for precise target personalization (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). Such companies as Sephora, H&M, and Starbucks are using chatbots powered by AI to talk to customers in real-time and provide personalized suggestions and promotions based on past purchases (Chatterjee et al., 2020). This kind of an AI-supported user service not only improves user experience but also acts as a data collection instrument, refining AI-driven targeting strategies over time (Haleem et al., 2022). We will talk in a deeper way in the paragraph “2.2.3 Chatbots and Conversational Marketing”.

AI in Email Marketing and Content Recommendations

Email marketing and content recommendation that is evolving due to AI and hence offers hyper-personalized communication through which customers are more engaged and retained. The models developed through the collection of user engagement metrics, such as open rates, click-through rates, and time spent on webpages, by Artificial Intelligence are used to improve the marketing strategies delivering more relevant and timely messages. Machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics, on the other hand, are the

¹⁰*The Trade Desk* is a leading demand-side platform (DSP) that enables advertisers to purchase and manage digital ad campaigns on a variety of channels, including display, video, audio, and connected TV. Using AI-driven real-time bidding (RTB) and advanced data analytics, the platform helps brands target audiences in real time and optimizes ad placements so that each impression provides maximum engagement and impact. The Trade Desk empowers omnichannel advertising and emphasizes transparency, efficiency, and measurable results, allowing advertisers to execute data-driven approaches with precision and at scale. The Trade Desk. (2024). *About us*. <https://www.thetradedesk.com/>

technologies that play the most influential role in identifying such advantages as the generation of subject lines, content, visuals, and send times respectively based on personalized data of the user as well as his behavior and preferences (Patil, 2024). This data-driven personalization not only covers email but also recommends content where an AI suggests products, articles, or services that exactly match user interest which in turn may lead to the improvement of conversion rates and user experience.

AI-Powered Sentiment Analysis in Advertising

Artificial Intelligence is indispensable in sentiment analysis to help businesses figure out the moods of customers and then personalize advertising. Sentiment analysis in AI enables businesses to quickly know which way the wind blows. This is a feat that is made possible through the AI-based application of text data analysis. This kind of text is typically in the form of social media posts or in the form of customer reviews and online discussions. The traditional methods that were applied are not existing anymore. The latest way of sentiment analysis is an AI-driven one that cannot only recognize specific words but can also grasp the entire situation, tone, and the emotion of the word by methods of machine learning and natural language processing applications. This frequent adjusting of brands' messaging strategies besides the idea of customer engagement optimization is another concern for brands in the competition that is common according to Khan et al. (2023).

2.1.3 Case Studies of AI-Driven Advertising Campaigns

AI has revolutionized advertising so that brands can create highly targeted and data-driven campaigns. AI-based marketing has led to increased customer engagement, improved targeting of ads, and enhanced creative storytelling. The following case studies highlight some of the most effective and ground-breaking AI-driven ad campaigns over the past few years. AI in advertising is a powerful tool for crafting highly personalized and data-driven campaigns. AI's growing capabilities have transformed advertising, which can now be categorized into four key areas: AI-enabled content generation, Hyper-personalization and predictive analytics, Real-time optimization and automation, and in the end Conversational AI for consumer engagement.

The following case studies illustrate how major brands leverage AI to enhance their advertising strategies.

Coca-Cola: The “Masterpiece” Campaign

Coca-Cola has been always at the top level of innovation technologies with its marketing strategies. Using *Masterpiece* as an example, they had used Artificial Intelligence to create an innovative advertising. This campaign proves that AI animation and machine learning algorithms can be used not only for brand storytelling but for audience targeting and maker of interactive digital experiences (Marr, 2023; Springer, 2024).

Masterpiece became a notable example of AI’s role in fine art advertising. The worked-up software checked world-famous paintings such as Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*, Johannes Vermeer’s *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, Vincent van Gogh’s *Bedroom in Arles*, and others and paintings linked them to an exciting story. To be more exact, AI-originated graphics, on the one hand, and visual animations, on the other hand, refined the pictures and thus produced a synthetic compilation of novel artistic forms and ideas that underwent visual transformations. While traditional techniques do not involve much human intervention, AI-based rendering automatically adjusted every frame and generated clean transitions and fluid interaction of visual elements. This approach demonstrates AI’s potential to enhance artistic expression within automated advertising (Denney, 2024; Forbes Technology Council, 2023).

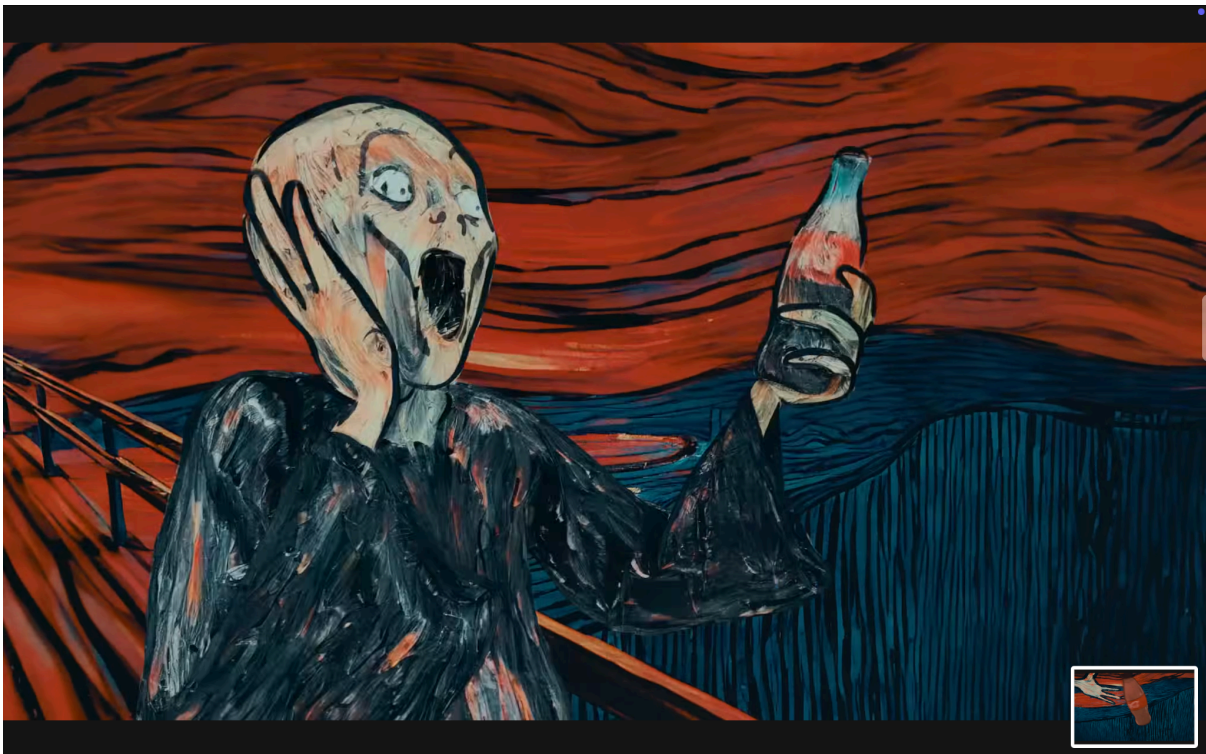


Image 9. Commercial Coca-Cola “*Masterpiece*”, <https://youtu.be/VGalimApfdg?si=he8zp8M46jkEnxh9>

Apart from the content creation business, Coca-Cola integrated AI technology to personalize their marketing campaigns and thereby, make them reach and attract more people. Machine learning algorithms sifted through data from consumers, social media activities, and interactive platforms to select optimum delivery channels, ad copy segments, and suitable times to run ads. The models powered by the advanced analytics via AI facilitated continuous measurements and adjustments at scale. Coca-Cola managed to adapt and refine content through real-time feedback thus ensuring visuals and copy to customer estimation. As a result, the improvements made with the use of the data science reflect AI's growing importance in direct marketing where programmed actions continually improve strategies effectively to generate more benefit than the cost.

More than just a customer-engagement booster, Coca-Cola bound the *Masterpiece* campaign to digital platforms and made it an interactive experience through the “*Create Real Magic*” initiative. Powered by OpenAI, the AI-based platform ushered in a new era of interactive art, allowing users to create custom designs using DALL·E and GPT-4. The campaign characterized the move from passive to active customer participation through consumer-directed Coca-Cola arts and AI, the potential power of AI in the creation of user-generated and co-creative materials. This action of consumers is considered the latest trend in the interactivity model being used by companies using AI for greater customer involvement and brand loyalty (Coca-Cola Company, 2023; Forbes Communications Council, 2024).

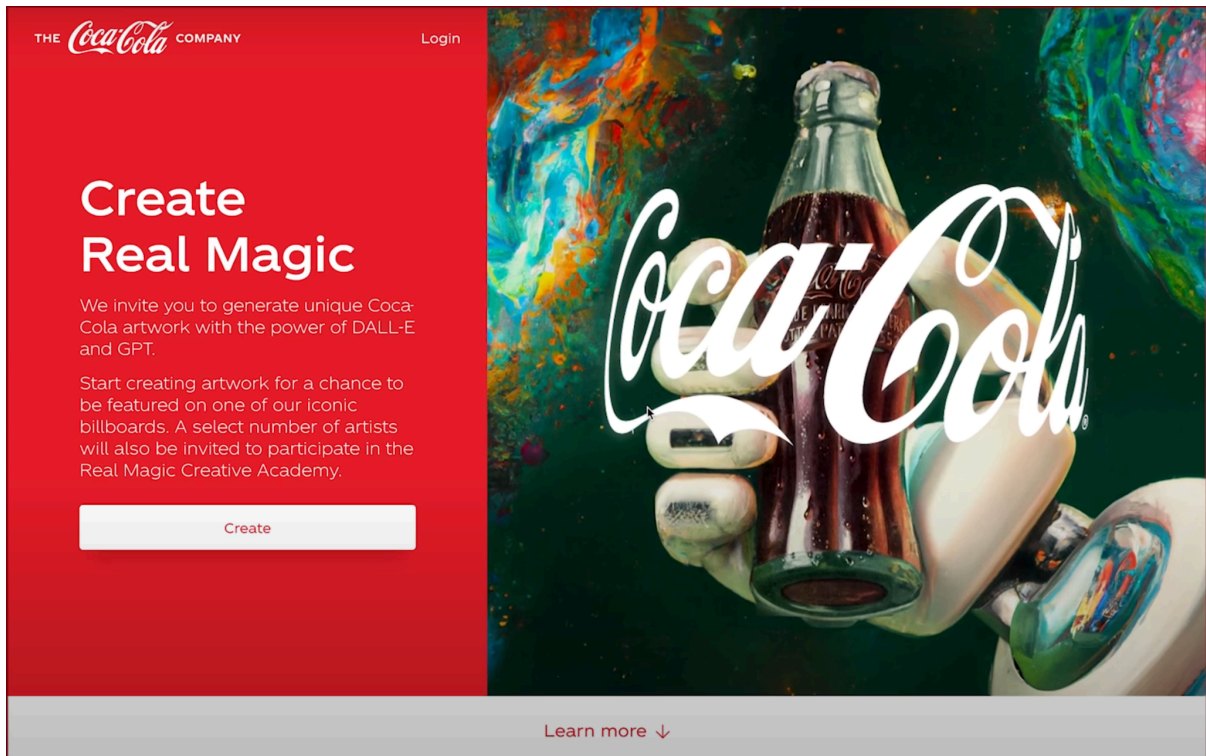


Image 10. Campaign Coca-Cola “*Create Real Magic*”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPGDMj1QUBE>

A major channel distribution plan for the campaign was another key point that emphasizes the role of AI as an optimization tool in the area of the real-time advertising. Coca-Cola leveraged AI in programmatic advertising to deliver personalized content across social media, digital billboards, and streaming platforms. Using real-time tracking and predictive modeling, AI dynamically optimized ad placements and budget allocations to maximize results across different regional markets. Besides, Coca-Cola is implementing AR-based augmented reality AI experiences wherein users have to scan Coca-Cola packaging QR codes in order to enjoy the interactive AI-generated animations. This kind of integration of AI, digital interactivity, and physical branding is an AI application that enables companies to integrate offline and digital consumer interactions (Digital Defynd, 2024).

As reported by the articles on Forbes and Ad Age, the company used AI to generate animations, assist in content creation, and enhance consumer engagement, positioning the campaign as a milestone in AI-driven marketing innovation. This illustrates how AI can serve both as a creative catalyst and an operational enhancer, driving customization, automation, and more dynamic audience interaction in the advertising landscape (Marr, 2023; Springer, 2024).

Nike: The “Nike By You” Campaign

Nike, a global leader in sportswear and innovation, has integrated Artificial Intelligence into its product development and marketing strategy. The most impressive and talk-about case of its like was *Nike By You* that represented in the form of AI hyper-personalization and product innovation that is a real blast of enriching experience to the Nike customers.

Originally introduced *Nike iD* and then rebranded to *Nike By You* to stress its co-creative explanation, the platform enables the user to take part in designing their own products. Their participation is realized in interactions that extend beyond the mere picking of aesthetics themselves and thus, the AI-powered tools that can maintain users’ customized design trajectories. After taking part in the campaign, both online and in several handpicked in-store spots, the consumers start out by picking a product template, such as a sneaker or apparel item. From there, they are presented with a range of customization options including colors, materials, patterns, and personalized text or graphics. These options are dynamically adjusted by AI algorithms based on real-time consumer inputs, previous behavior, and trending design preferences (AIM Research, 2024; Nike, 2023).



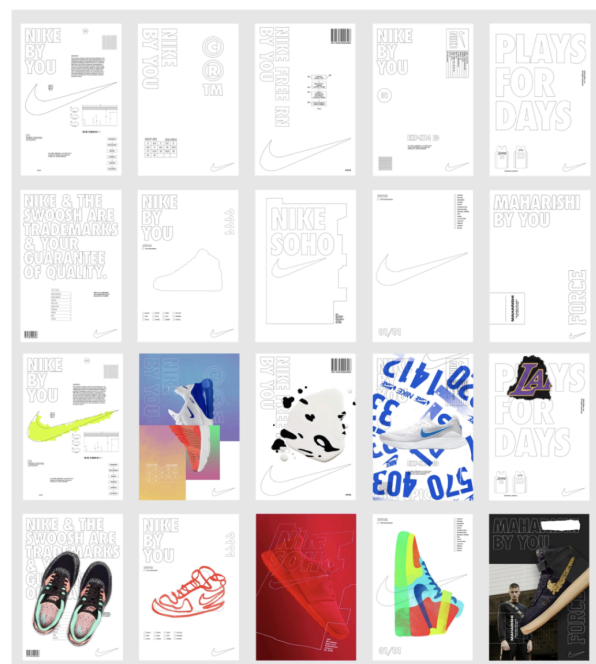
Image 11. Example of how the Nike shoe can be personalized. With options regarding the style of the shoe, the colors and a silhouette of the shoe itself to customize as desired. photo taken from the site: <https://gretelny.com/nike-by-you>

In the centre of this, AI-driven recommendation engines are the key ones which are using predictive analytics and customer insights to offer product combinations related to the users' personal style and functional needs are built. For an instance, if a client previously has designed bright colorways for running shoes, and the AI could be similar to the former options in the interface. This not only simplifies the design process but also enhances consumer satisfaction by aligning product creation with individual identity.

Beyond customization, Nike integrates AI-based demand forecasting models to analyze historical purchase data and regional consumer behavior. Thanks to this, Nike becomes able to develop inventory management and supply chain operations, which in turn, guarantees the fact that the custom products are made in an efficient and waste-free manner. Nike, as per the trend of actual consumer demand, reduces the number of the products and helps to promote the sustainable practices list (Nike, 2023).

Focusing on the product area, Nike utilizes the power of generative AI techniques dealing with immense amounts of data that include the athletic metrics and more recent fashion trends on one hand and assist the designers to invent new product ideas on the other. These models facilitate the design process as they generate prototypes at a very high rate that are then perfected using 3D printing technologies. This combination allows Nike to test and perfect designs on the basis of expected levels of performance, preserving time-to-market without sacrificing creativity and product quality (AIM Research, 2024).

Furthermore, Nike applies AI in its marketing strategies, ensuring that personalized messages and product recommendations reach the right audience at the right time. Through behavioral data and real-time advertisement adaptation, Nike ensures a consistent and tailored brand experience across digital platforms. Technologies such as computer vision are also employed to analyze in-store consumer interactions, informing accurate product placement and enhancing the overall retail experience (Nike, 2023).



This image 12 showcases a series of minimalist, typographic poster designs developed for the rebranding of Nike iD to Nike By You, a project led by the creative studio Gretel. (Creative Boom, 2018)

Spotify: The “Wrapped” Campaign

The *Wrapped* campaign of Spotify is a perfect example of AI incorporation in the digital marketing lead to personalized user experiences. Launched in 2016, Spotify’s *Wrapped* campaign is an annual summary of users’ listening habits. The outline is generally made up of the top artists, songs, genres, and total minutes streamed, and is presented in a very engaging manner because of the use of visual narratives by us (Hightouch, 2023). The project turned into a powerful data-driven storytelling tool that started individual listening behavior changes into personalized digital experiences and therefore led to the participation and sharing of the information in social media (Campaign Del Mar, 2023).

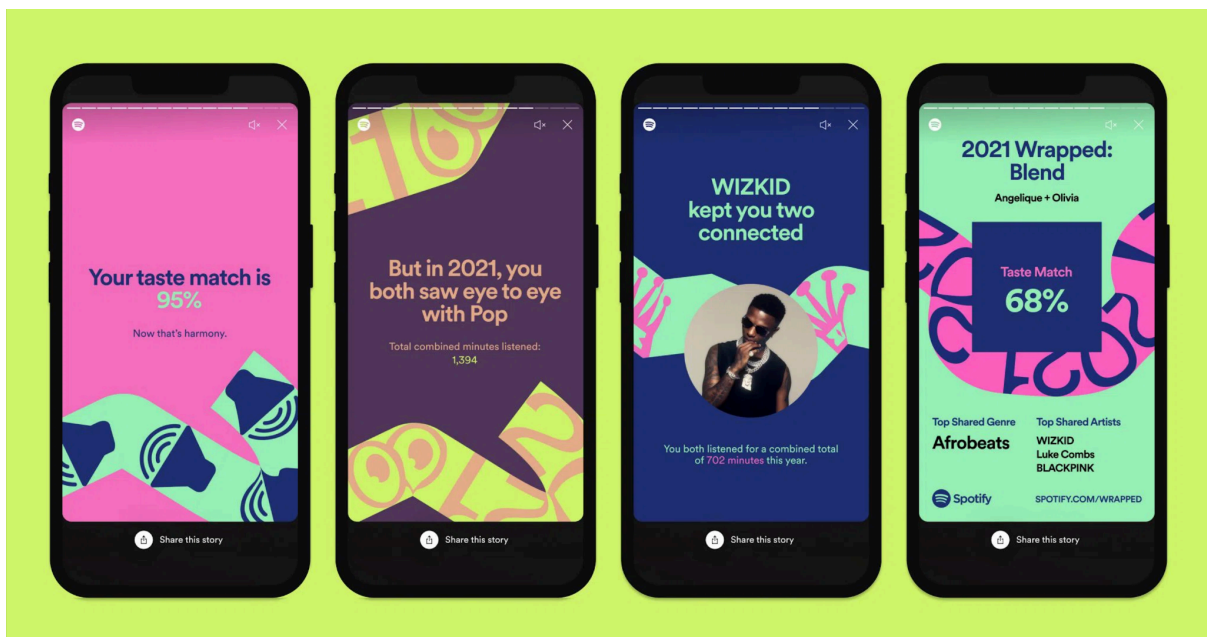


Image 13. Demonstration of how it is shared via social media spotify wrapped. Photo taken from: <https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/spotify-wrapped-campaign-identity-2022-graphic-design-301122>

Spotify’s AI has the highest importance in the *Wrapped* campaign and machine-facilitated learning which is embraced by Artificial Intelligence and machine learning and billions of data points are processed to produce unique user summaries. AI-guided collaborative filtering algorithms also analyze data on listening tracks to find out similarities between different songs, artists, and genres thus bringing users the most unique recommendations (Marketing AI Institute, 2023). These reports are not only visually appealing but also urging the users to share them via social media. The design is successful because the user is given the choice of

self-expression through music thus sparking word of mouth marketing on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok (NoGood, 2025).

The company's AI technology goes beyond the *Wrapped* campaign by Spotify that also uses deep learning models for choosing personalized playlists as its practice of *Discover Weekly* and *Release Radar*. These metrics employ a mixture of historical user behavior and real-time factors such as time of day, mood-based listening habits, and trending tracks, to give users the best of its services (Marketing AI Institute, 2023). Artificial Intelligence is also involved in the creation of natural language processing (NLP) models, which further help in the task by serving as tools for analyzing metadata, lyrics, and blog discussions to provide song categorizations that are more appropriate, thus their recommendations are more precise (Hightouch, 2023).



Image 14. How Discover Weekly works. Photo taken from: youBEAT. (2020, August 24). Spotify: Come funziona l'algoritmo di Discover Weekly? <https://www.youbeat.it/spotify-algoritmo-discoverweekly/>

Besides, Spotify's predictive technology referred to in content strategy and ad targeting is another big player. Spotify's AI techniques use the demographic data, behavioral trends, and the geography of the user are put into consideration so that the ad delivery for both free-tier users and premium subscribers is optimized. Brands being able to create and adjust audio and visual ads specifically to the listener no matter where they are at the moment, is what Spotify achieves through programmatic advertising. This kind of approach results in higher conversion and engagement rates for the given ads (NoGood, 2025).

The success of *Spotify Wrapped* is a case study in how AI can enable highly personalized and emotionally resonant marketing campaigns. Instead, Spotify has opted for a blend of active and passive consumption. Thus we have to regard Spotify not only as a music streaming service but also a data-driven engagement platform creating the interaction with the user and music (Campaign Del Mar, 2023). The campaign's ultimate success together with the further development of experiential marketing powered by AI is a strong signal showing how the enterprises can use the user data to develop truly interactive and emotional brands experiences (Marketing AI Institute, 2023).

Starbucks: The “Deep Brew” platform

Launched in 2019, *Deep Brew* is Starbucks' strategic use of Artificial Intelligence within its business practices. Designed to enhance customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and sustainable growth, *Deep Brew* showcases Starbucks' emphasis on innovation by transforming areas such as personalized advertising, store management automation, and inventory optimization (Hyperight, 2021).

At the heart of *Deep Brew* is its ability to use AI-driven data analytics to deliver hyper-personalized customer experiences. By collecting and analyzing data from the *Starbucks Rewards loyalty program*¹¹ and mobile app, the system delivers personalized product recommendations, offers, and promotions based on individual purchase history, location, and time of day (Digital Defynd, 2025). Additionally, voice assistant integration allows users to interact with Starbucks via *Alexa*¹² or *Siri*,¹³ enabling hands-free ordering and real-time suggestions, thus enriching the digital experience (PYMNTS, 2024).

Deep Brew extends beyond customer engagement to optimize operational processes. Starbucks has been going through a process of AI-based real-time sales data analysis, past

¹¹*Starbucks Rewards* is a free, points-based loyalty program where members earn stars for each purchase, which can be redeemed for free drinks, food, and merchandise. Members use the Starbucks app to track their stars, order, and receive targeted offers. The program rewards and incentivizes repeat visits and customer engagement through tiered benefits and rewards tied to spend. LoyaltyLion. *How Starbucks scaled success with its Rewards loyalty program*. <https://loyaltylion.com/blog/scale-success-story-starbucks-rewards-program>

¹²*Alexa* is Amazon's native voice assistant within Echo devices whose mission is to provide a smart interactive experience by way of voice instructions. They can play music, control compatible smart devices, read real-time information, set timers and alarms, deal with calendars, and lots more without raising an eyelid.

Amazon. (2025). *Echo Pop, Smart speaker with Alexa, Lavender Bloom*. Amazon. https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DCCNHV5?ref=aucc_web_red_xaa_evgn_tx_0001

¹³*Siri* is Apple's Artificial Intelligence voice assistant that one can use on iPhones, iPads, Macs, and HomePods. Siri guides users to take actions through voice commands such as sending a message, setting an alarm, taking directions, or controlling smart devices using Apple's ecosystem. Apple. (2025). Siri. Apple Italia. <https://www.apple.com/it/siri/>

purchasing trends, and external variables like the weather and local events. This information is in turn, the backbone of an optimized staff roster ensuring stores are effectively run during the busy hours, as well as, the diminishing of overstaffing. Moreover, AI demand forecasting that is powered by AI contributes to a better inventory process lower product loss, appropriate stock levels consistently and thus to better profitability and sustainability (Future Stores, 2024; Forbes, 2024).

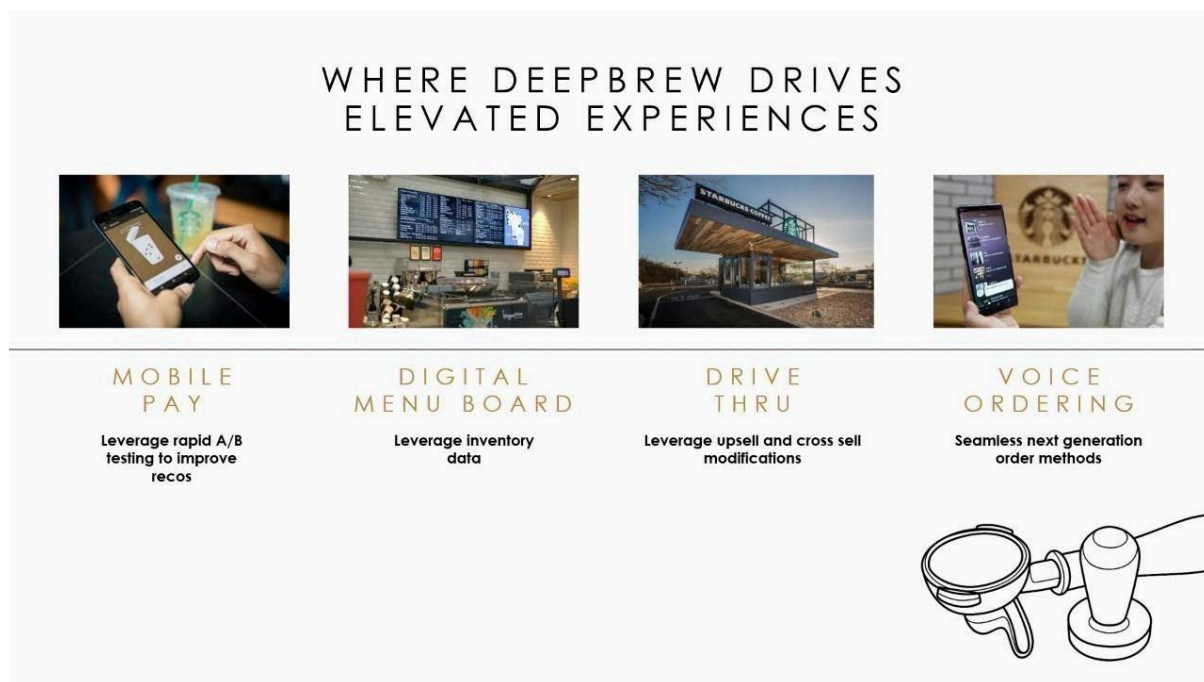


Image 15. Starbucks. (2021). *Deep Brew: How Starbucks uses AI to enhance customer experience* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/XxKIPyaF1bw>

Internet of Things (IoT) technology has been in association with *Deep Brew* a derivative Starbucks’ operations. Espresso machines and brewing equipment featuring AI and sensors are designed with sensors to facilitate machines and provide predictability in their maintenance needs. This proactive system reduces machine downtime, ensures consistent beverage quality, and supports a reliable customer experience (Future Stores, 2024).

During their marketing processes, *Deep Brew’s* AI algorithms synthetically tailor customers to the specifics of their purchases as well as engagement levels. This is allowed the company to communicate with a return audience by, for example, sending them appropriate offers and promotions. Meanwhile, Starbucks’ employs programmatic advertising and one of its features is the use of AI to automatically place dynamic ads and deliver tailored content thus maximize user conversion and retention (PYMNTS, 2024). These strategies are driven by data and revolve around get the right message for every consumer at the most efficient cost.

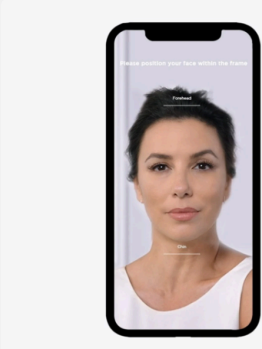
At its core, *Deep Brew* is concomitant with the principle of customer-oriented approach to technology advances that Starbucks instills. Moreover, the combination of IoT and Artificial Intelligence technologies contributes to the development of both customer satisfaction and operational efficiency for Starbucks, resulting in lower costs, greater income, and a more loyal customer base over time. This AI-driven system serves as an attractive instrument for marketing through its use as creative force in personalization and as a work tool for the effective operation of the company (Forbes, 2024).

L'Oréal: AI-Powered Beauty Tech and Personalized Marketing

L'Oréal has embarked on a strategic path of inserting AI into their work in order to thrive on customer engagement, products that are optimized, and the finer use of marketing strategies. Because of this process, the business has had spectacular victories in the beauty tech sector, so far been labeled as a globally recognized AI-based personalization and innovation leader by the company (L'Oréal, 2024, <https://www.loreal-finance.com>).

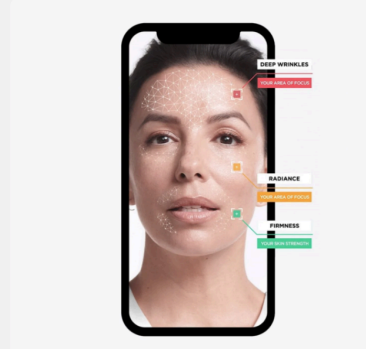
As discussed in Section “2.1.1 AI’s Impact on Content Creation and Campaign Development”, the *Perso* project exemplifies L'Oréal’s use of Generative AI to deliver hyper-personalized skincare and makeup solutions by combining real-time data analysis with adaptive technology. Building on this, *Skin Genius* is another AI-powered tool that provides personalized skincare diagnostics. By analyzing a selfie uploaded via smartphone, *Skin Genius* evaluates key skin attributes—such as fine lines, wrinkles, firmness, pore quality, and radiance—using advanced algorithms trained on dermatological data. It then offers tailored product recommendations, enhancing both the shopping experience and skincare outcomes (L'Oréal, 2024, <https://www.loreal.com>).

HOW TO USE SKIN GENIUS STEP-BY-STEP



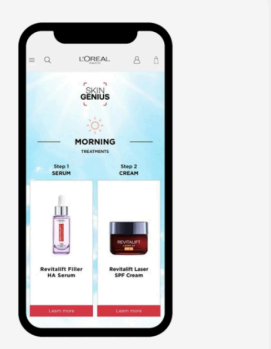
Step 1

Ready for your close-up? Remove glasses, make-up, and hair from your face. Take a selfie in well-lit, natural light for the optimal skin assessment. For those prone to pouting—neutral facial expressions work best.



Step 2

Once your selfie's quality has been verified, input your age, skin type (dry, normal, combination, or oily), and skin sensitivity level. This information helps Skin Genius devise a skincare routine just for you.




Step 3


After Skin Genius has computed your results, you can visualize skin strengths and areas of focus for each of the 8 skin attributes, along with your personalized skincare routine recommendation. We don't store your selfie—it's deleted after the skin analysis.

Image 16. Step-by-step explanation of how the skinn genius app works. (L'Oréal Paris, 2024)

L'Oréal's digital-first approach further enriches the customer journey, reducing uncertainty in product selection and increasing consumer confidence. In line with this, the company established the *CREAITECH Generative AI Beauty Content Lab*, a dedicated team using Generative AI tools to produce visually consistent, brand-specific marketing content. This automated system accelerates content creation across all 37 of L'Oréal's beauty brands, allowing the company to respond rapidly to emerging trends while maintaining brand identity (L'Oréal, 2024, <https://www.loreal-finance.com>).




VIRTUAL BEAUTY TOOLS
Beauty Just Got Smarter




SKIN GENIUS
Skin Genius
Analyze your skin for a custom skincare routine

TRY THIS SERVICE




Match My Shade
Match My Shade
Find the perfect foundation match for you

TRY THIS SERVICE




MakeUp TryOn
MakeUp TryOn
Live try on your favorite make up products

TRY THIS SERVICE



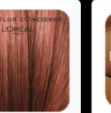
HairColor TryOn
HairColor TryOn
Live try on your favorite hair color products

TRY THIS SERVICE




Men Shade Matcher
Men Shade Matcher
Find the shade that will best match your natural haircolor for grey coverage

TRY THIS SERVICE



HairColor Concierge
HairColor Concierge
Introducing Haircolor Concierge from the #1 at-home hair color brand.

TRY THIS SERVICE



Ingredient Library
Ingredient Library
We are committed to providing you information about our ingredients

LEARN MORE

Image 17. Ai Beauty tools offered by L'Oréal Paris. (L'Oréal Paris, 2024)

Generative AI also plays a central role in product innovation. L'Oreal and IBM are in partnership to create AI models that could analyze large clusters of data about chemicals, formulations, and things that consumers patronize. These models lead to the testing of

product easier, clearer, and quicker so they reduce side effects and increase the survivability and environment-friendly (IBM Newsroom, 2025). Additionally, L'Oréal uses Artificial Intelligence via 3D bioprinted skins that are animal-free in order to test the products ethically and without causing any harm, which is in line with their commitment to the beauty that is sustainable (L'Oréal, 2024, <https://www.loreal-finance.com>).

Consumer Goods Technology (2025) states that L'Oréal can now do real-time consumer behavior analysis through the use of the programmatic advertising-presented by machine learning technology. As a result, the company can reach the potential customer more efficiently and more accurately. Moreover, L'Oréal, in collaboration with Meta, is researching the linker of AI and AR technology with a goal of creating 3D content that will immerse and elevate the digital campaigns for brands like Lancôme and L'Oréal Paris (Forbes, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com>). By combining the three before mentioned technologies, L'Oréal beauty tech innovation has made much headway, ultimately, the brand's marketing automation and AI-driven product development are the ones that are more advanced, Generative AI integration being the key driver in the story of the world's trusted company mastering technology and changing the paradigm of sustainability and data privacy to meet enhanced customer needs.

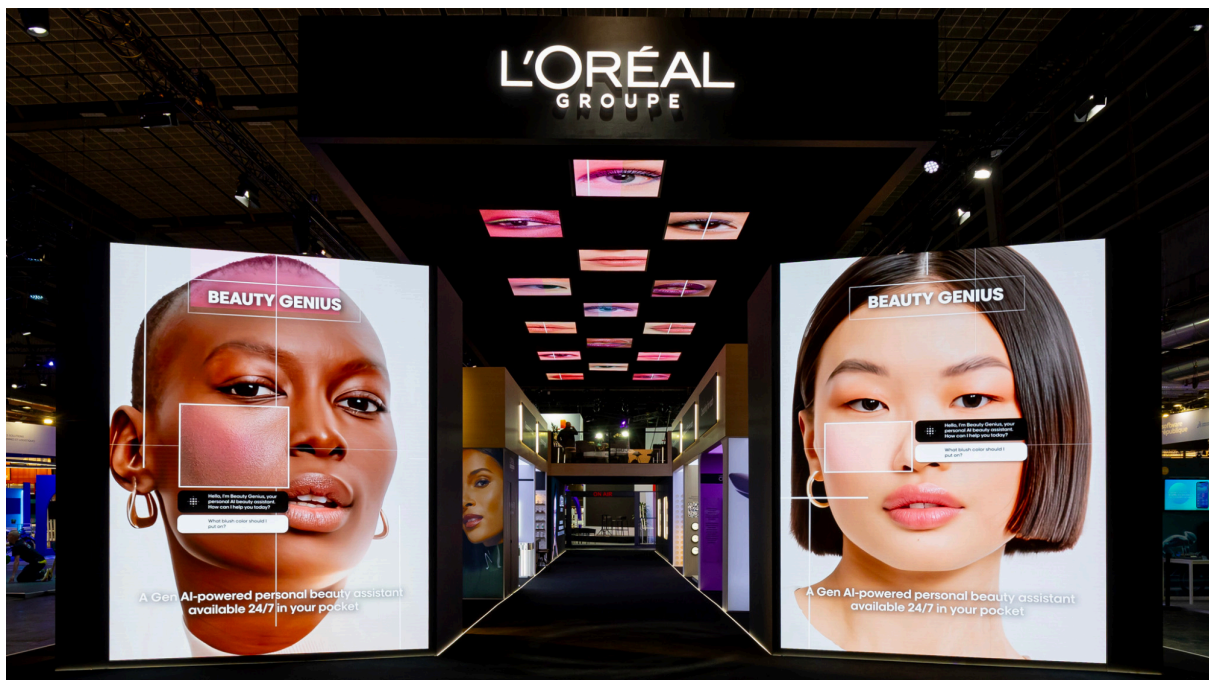


Image 18. Ads of Beauty Genius L'Oréal Groupe at Vivatech 2024, Europe's largest tech convention that brings together startups, industry leaders, and beauty innovators to explore the latest in technology. Oxenham, L. (2024, June 27). *Top beauty innovations unveiled at VivaTech 2024*. Marie Claire UK. <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/beauty/Top-beauty-innovations-unveiled-at-VivaTech-2024>

2.1.4 Comparative Results: Engagement, ROI, and Innovation in AI-Driven Campaigns

This part compares the engagement, return on investment (ROI) and innovation achieved by the Artificial Intelligence-driven campaigns observed.

Brand	Engagement	ROI Impact	Innovation
Coca-Cola	AI-generated art (<i>Masterpiece</i>), interactive user participation via "Create Real Magic" (OpenAI/DALL·E, GPT-4), real-time content adaptation	Programmatic advertising with real-time optimization; enhanced delivery efficiency and budget use across regions	AI in motion graphics, AR integration, user-generated content platforms, real-time adaptive advertising (Marr, 2023)
Nike	AI-guided customization journey in <i>Nike By You</i> , real-time design suggestions, consumer co-creation in-store and online	Reduced overproduction via AI forecasting; improved supply chain efficiency; higher conversion from personalized products	Generative AI for prototyping, 3D printing for rapid testing, predictive analytics on design trends (AIM Research, 2024)
Spotify	Personalized "Wrapped" summaries, high social media sharing rates, interactive user experience through AI-curated data storytelling	Improved ad engagement via AI targeting; higher conversion for advertisers with demographic and behavioral segmentation	AI for collaborative filtering, NLP analysis of music metadata, predictive playlist creation (NoGood, 2025; Hightouch, 2023)
Starbucks	Personalized app promotions; AI-driven voice assistant ordering (Alexa, Siri); real-time user recommendations through Deep Brew	Staffing and inventory cost reduction; optimized operations and reduced waste; increased store-level profitability	IoT-linked predictive maintenance, AI for real-time inventory and staffing, customer segmentation via <i>Deep Brew</i> (Forbes, 2024)
L'Oréal	AI skin diagnostics via <i>Skin Genius</i> , real-time personalization with <i>Perso</i> , immersive AR product trials, data-driven product suggestions	Faster product testing via AI models; reduced R&D time and costs; higher campaign efficiency via automated content labs	Generative AI lab (CREAITECH), AI-powered R&D with IBM, bioprinted skin for ethical testing, AR-powered marketing (Forbes, 2024)

Table 1. Comparative Results of AI-Driven Advertising Campaigns

2.2 AI Tools in Advertising

AI-powered tools have transformed the advertising landscape, providing brands with innovative ways to create, optimize, and distribute content more effectively than ever before. AI is redefining marketing campaigns, from generating written and visual content to optimizing ad placement and engaging with consumers through intelligent chatbots. This section explores the key AI-driven tools used in advertising and their impact on marketing strategies.

2.2.1 Content Creation: From Automated Copywriting to Visual Design

Building on the content creation techniques presented above, this part tackles the tools enabling such transformations. Thanks to AI, brands have been able to create advertising materials in a faster and more efficient way, which results in a reduced need for intensive human involvement. The usage of AI content generation tools such as ChatGPT, Jasper AI,¹⁴ and Copy.ai¹⁵ allows marketers to produce a wide range of ad copy, social media content, and marketing emails very fast; thereby, they can reduce their overall content production time drastically (Feuerriegel et al., 2024). By leveraging natural language processing (NLP) and deep learning, these programs gauge brand sentiment, audience preference, and industry trends to assist in designing effective and audience-centric marketing messages (Gao et al., 2023). Artificial Intelligence copywriting technology has been quite successful especially in real-time ad optimization since it enables the testing of different versions of ad text and adjusting the messages according to engagement metrics and consumer sentiment dynamically. Although it is deemed efficient, the computer-generated writing still needs the help of humankind to be refined properly so that it keeps the emotional impact, creativity, and cultural awareness (Ford et al., 2023).

¹⁴Jasper.ai is an advanced generative AI content creation platform that allows users to generate high-quality marketing materials, including blog posts, social media posts, emails, ad creatives, and web content. Jasper.ai utilizes natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning to create readable content from inputs, striking a balance between speed and creativity. Jasper.ai sees widespread use in content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and advertising with functionalities like brand voice adjustment, content templates, and team collaboration tools. Jasper.ai. (2024). *Jasper AI: The generative AI content platform for business*. <https://www.jasper.ai/>

¹⁵Copy.ai is a generative AI copywriting platform designed for individuals and businesses to create marketing copy, blog content, emails, product descriptions, social media content, and more. Through natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning, Copy.ai makes it easier for users to write text by feeding in prompts or selecting from pre-existing templates. Copy.ai is mainly utilized in content marketing and e-commerce, and using automated copywriting tools, it saves time while maintaining brand consistency. Copy.ai. (2024). *Create marketing copy with AI in seconds*. <https://www.copy.ai/>

AI is likewise changing the visual content creation space, which allows brands to create high-quality images and video clips effortlessly. DALL·E, MidJourney, and Runway ML are all examples of tools that use generative adversarial networks (GANs) to create hyper-realistic visuals that are tailored to the specific advertising needs such as producing custom advertisements (Geeks for Geeks, 2025). One striking example is Coca-Cola's "*Create Real Magic*" campaign, digital artists to utilize DALL·E and GPT-4 from OpenAI to produce the brand's artwork, which will display AI potential in the industry. The campaign stimulated user involvement, interacting with thousands of AI-generated visuals that were posted on social media, thereby brand engagement was increased while the AI was also shown in the process of creating content (Marr, 2023).

The AI-developed video content on the other hand has significantly redefined the production mode of advertising which is the means of cutting costs with the least jeopardizing of the high creativity level. Synthesia and Runway ML are some of the platforms using AI that give brands equal flexibility in creating realistically virtual models and animated commercials just as if there is no need for filming or editing (Runway, 2025; Synthesia, 2025). These tools enable marketers to produce multilingual video ads, featuring AI-generated avatars that deliver messages in various languages with natural lip synchronization, increasing accessibility and global reach. For example, Nike launched the "*Never Done Evolving*" campaign, in which AI was used to produce a deepfake-style commercial with Serena Williams, AI-driven animation technology uninterruptedly gathered the past and practiced performance of the character to make her feel more intriguing, and the whole storytelling experience was a perfect match for the brand (AKQA, 2025; AIM Research, 2024). Through Nike's AI-generated video, it combined innovation and emotional resonance, capturing audience attention across multiple digital platforms

Despite the fact that AI is able to create more and more content material, it has still some problems, let alone these with originality and human authenticities in marketing. Even though AI-generated visuals and text are cost-effective, they do not always convey the same degree of emotion or the similar level of wit and cultural references that human creatives bring to ad campaigns (Bharti & Park, 2023). On the negative side, problems such as the lack of intellectual property rights, deepfake abuse, and the existence of AI biases have brought the issue of the responsible use of AI in marketing to the surface (Gao et al., 2023; Gabriel, 2024). The companies shall adjust AI-driven automation and human creativity to nullify the

tension of whether their advertising is real, fascinating, and consistent with brand identity. In a prospective manner, we are looking forward to the expansion of AI-generated content into an advanced level of personalization, adaptive storytelling, and real-time audience engagement, as these factors are expected to shape the new era of digital marketing (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Schweidel et al., 2023).

2.2.2 Programmatic Advertising and Real-Time Bidding (RTB)

AI-powered programmatic advertising has also transformed the way in which brands place and buy ads, replacing traditional manual negotiations with automated, real-time bidding (RTB) systems. Machine learning algorithms under programmatic advertising are what analysis user behavior, browsing patterns, and contextual data to ensure that ads will be displayed at the most relevant users in the right time. Not only this method increases the targeting accuracy, but it also decreases the number of unwanted ads (Ford et al., 2023; Gao et al., 2023). The three companies that are dominating the technology are *Google Ads*, *The Trade Desk*, and *Meta's Advantage+* through which Artificial Intelligence is utilized for real-time bidding, adjusting dynamically the placements of ads in websites, social media, and streaming platforms according to the users' interactions (Google, 2024; Meta, 2024; The Trade Desk, 2024).

With AI predictive could, marketers have the chance to foreknow the consumers' intention, personalize their ad experiences, and get greater ROI in digital advertising (Ford et al., 2023). One of the most awesome AI-driven programmatic advertising is the Coca-Cola FIFA World Cup campaign that employed AI tools that inserted ads in real-time during the key game moments, thereby ensuring a real-time engagement with football fans across the globe (Springer, 2024).

AI-driven real-time ad optimization is a perfect tool for enterprises to even be able to perform cross-platform campaign management, that is mergeable with the aim of the brand's association of all digital touchpoints. In certain cases, for the production of AI-driven ads, such as a Nike ad campaign, programmatic advertising is used to adapt message in real-time as per the users' share of contents, social media, and browsing behavior (AIM Research, 2024). The continuous monitoring of AI also includes measuring the performance metrics like click-through rates (CTR), conversion rates, and engagement levels and therefore allocation of marketing budgets that are result-oriented and increase the impact of brands in

digital worlds (Digital Defynd, 2024). This kind of automation system takes out the risk of media buying and lets the marketer to put more attention on creative strategy and brand storytelling (Ford et al., 2023).

One of the main advantages of AI-powered ad buying is the ability to provide personalized and highly relevant ads to the target audience. But nevertheless, it also brings worries about the privacy of the user' data, user tracking, and the transparency of ads. Advertisers are becoming more and more interested in using AI to access first-party data due to complaints about cookies and online tracking. GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in Europe and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) as examples of legal restrictions on the use of third-party cookies and consumer data, forced advertisers to look for the AI-centric first-party data solutions (Voigt, & Bussche, 2017). Today marketers are choosing data anonymized AI technologies that should use techniques like federated learning for training machine learning models and contextual information for targeting ads to users without the need for personal data (Gao et al., 2023).

Looking into the future, it is very possible for programmatic and RTB that they will likely involve greater integration of AI-powered predictive analytics, emotion detection, and real-time creative adaptation. Moreover, the next generation of AI and cognitive science-driven advertising will emphasize adaptive storytelling, a new concept of the ad that substitutes itself on the base of the receivers' engagement and emotional responses. With brands going through the digital transformation through AI, it is very important to the programmatic era that they will have to maintain a balance between automation, ethical data practices, and human creativity, to thus create authentic and highly performing ad experiences (Gao et al., 2023).

2.2.3 Chatbots and Conversational Marketing

AI-chatsbots and conversations marketing are very popular marketing strategies at the present moment they have been used in the last decade. These tools have a way of creating a personalized experience with the customer, and it is an automatic alignment of the platform with the customer. Chatbots do not require human beings, as it is the case with traditional customer service that answers the calls. Through the use of natural language processing (NLP) technology and machine learning, the chatbots will be taught to understand, process, and promptly reply to customer concerns in the fastest possible time. They can do any job

that is naturally carried out by humans like assisting inquires, providing product recommendations, processing transactions, giving personalized promotional messages, etc. Indeed, with many benefits for the client and companies and also the reduction of costs tied to business, customer satisfaction is much higher than it could be (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

Types of AI Chatbots: Deterministic vs. Generative

Regarding the two major groups of chatbots, AI chatbots are mostly identified as deterministic and generative. It is important to note that each category contains its own unique types of chatbots, which are adaptable to various businesses and customer service scenarios.

An example of a deterministic Chatbot includes defining rules, pre-written scripts, and decision trees, while a chatbot of this kind operates. Those bots follow a designed path that consists of a sequence of specific answers, which users get based on their inputs. They are mainly useful for managing frequent questions, directing users through standardized operations, and keeping up with agitated experien-phases. Their major point is that they can predict and control, although they are quite rigid when dealing with complex or new issues (Google Cloud, 2024).

In contrast, Generative Chatbots also uses AI technologies such as large language models (LLMs) to create content that is relevant to specific text segments or paragraphs. They are capable of processing user data in real time, thus enabling a more natural flow of communication and adaptation. Generative chatbots are creative in answering complex and open-ended questions, the reason, therefore, they are useful in marketing that deals with personalized suggestions or storytelling. The drawback of these chatbots is the assurance of the correctness, conveying of coherence, and the appropriateness of the reply (Google Cloud, 2024).

Real-World Applications and Case Studies

Several global brands have successfully implemented AI-chatbots to enhance customer engagement, blending both deterministic and generative approaches:

- Starbucks: Through the “Deep Brew” program Starbucks deliver personalized product recommendations, loyalty benefits, and promotional offerings on the basis of an individual’s

purchase behavior and location data that were collected and then processed by the bank (PYMNTS, 2024; Digital Defynd, 2025). In this way the customer can introduce voice-based ordering through connecting with such assistants as *Alexa* and *Siri* that will enhance the customer service experience.

- Sephora: Artificial Intelligence is placed at the forefront of the chatbot named Virtual Artist as it merges computer vision and face recognition to allow users to virtually try on makeup and get personal product recommendations. This technology tool has resulted in better customer conversion records through the courage it has given consumers to make a purchase (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

- H&M: The fashion retailer uses AI-driven chatbots on services like WhatsApp and Instagram whose task is to give the user the best look possible. These chatbots are designed to examine the user's browsing history and preferences and with this come up with a unique fashion advice that could improve the customer engagement strength of the brand (DevRev, 2024).

- Nike: Nike's AI chatbots offer personalized shopping experiences across digital platforms, dynamically adjusting recommendations based on user behavior and real-time engagement metrics. This facilitates a consistent and engaging brand experience across multiple touchpoints (AIM Research, 2024).

Voice Assistants and Conversational Commerce

Amazon Alexa, *Google Assistant*, and *Apple Siri* are some of the most powerful AI-powered voice-activated chatbots that take the dominance of digital marketing to a whole new level. For example, Domino's Pizza have embarked on a successful journey of integrating an AI-based voice ordering system, wherein the customers can place their orders through smart speakers, thus enabling the restaurant to provide improved convenience and accessibility (Marketing AI Institute, 2023).

Emotionally intelligent AI-driven chatbots and conversational marketing are developing towards predictive engagement, multimodal interactions, and visual AI, bringing together text, voice, and visual AI interfaces. The companies which excel in this integration—using automation as a tool to maintain ethical, authentic, and seamless omnichannel

experiences—will be more successful in the digital market (Gabriel, 2024; Feuerriegel et al., 2024).

2.3 Advantages and Challenges of AI in Advertising

The great improvement of the adoption of AI in advertising has affected the change of the way brands came into contact with consumers, greatly improved the marketing strategy, and optimization of the campaign performance. Thanks to AI-driven technologies, which are characterized by an unprecedented level of automation, personalization, and predictive analysis, advertisers are now able to scale their work while remaining both precise and relevant (Ford et al., 2023). Through machine learning algorithms, big data analytics, and real-time decision-making, AI has been able to completely change the advertising ecosystem in terms of both content creation, audience targeting, campaign management, and performance measurement (Feuerriegel et al., 2024).

Without a question, one of the main advantages of AI in advertising is the automation of repetitive tasks. Social and environmental problems such as: data privacy, transparency, and bias that are caused by algorithms to have a good explanation and responsible AI to be trustworthy are an issue (Bharti & Park, 2023). In addition to this, the cost of AI implementation, the steep learning curve associated with AI adoption, and the technological complexity of integrating AI systems into the company's existing marketing infrastructures are some of the biggest problems (Deloitte, 2023).

This part provides the reader with a dual perspective toward AI as it addresses both those advantages that make its use justifiable and those challenges that normally confront its implementation. Alongside that, this work throws light on the ethical issues connected with AI-claimed targeting, transparency, and fairness among the businesses in the AI-affected advertising environment. AI is known for offering many benefits to the business world and the AI sector's success is based on the fact that they can offer viable solutions to real problems. They need to provide businesses the ability to freely use these options of AI with certain safeguards while, at the same time, making their implementation processes more efficient.

2.3.1 Efficiency, Scalability, and Precision in Campaigns

Artificial intelligence has had a deep impact on the advertising ecosystem by amplifying the efficiency, scalability, and precision in campaign management. AI has made marketing a process more automated, data-driven, and real-time. The length of data analytics has been shortened freeing marketers to manually find the most appropriate and relevant consumer groups. AI applications can smartly handle piles of data in milliseconds gathering the actionable clues and understanding the patterns of behavior, that would take the marketers a lot of time to figure out manually. Thus, brands can send out timely and accurate messages to the appropriate audience, and this would lead to an improvement in their operational efficiency (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

AI-driven platforms like Google's Performance Max exemplify how automation enhances campaign outcomes. The optimization of ad budgets over various digital channels is primarily done by these systems. They monitor the engagement signals and user's behavior before instructing the automatic ad placements to maximize the ROI (Gao et al., 2023). Admitting that traditional trial-and-error approaches were replaced with data-informed strategies, AI makes the marketing budget use more effective, and as a result, both the campaign performance and cost-efficiency are enhanced (Ford et al., 2023).

Besides the greater power of AI to streamline the marketing process, AI also introduces a significant amount of scalability in advertising. The traditional market used to create tailored content for each platform, which was time-consuming and labor-intensive. AI-driven automated marketing tools manage these tasks scalable, branding multichannel campaigns are now real time. For example, *Meta's Advantage+* and *The Trade Desk* use programmatic advertising that automates the process of bidding and ad placement according to the user data. Through such automation, the brands are able to launch campaigns on the global level yet provide the personal messaging at the individual level (Eyice Başev, 2024).

To illustrate, Nike's AI strategy incorporates real-time bidding (RTB) into their advertisement processes in order to provide consumers with custom ads that are much more engaging and conversion rates get significantly higher. Along the same lines, Starbucks' *Deep Brew* AI makes use of purchase history and seasonal trend royalties to give out personalized offers that together with it help to create a more loyal consumer relationship and thus increase sales (PYMNTS, 2024). These cases show it clearly how AI brings exact targeting by not only

focusing on demographic data but also by considering behavioral, contextual, and psychographic insights (Jain et al., 2024).

AI is also advancing predictive personnel and services that are made possible through tools such as *Adobe Sensei*¹⁶ and *IBM Watson Advertising*,¹⁷ and these technologies that combine consumer's browsing history, social media activity, and other unequivocal sources of data to predict consumer intent allow the delivery of highly relevant ad experiences. This approach of extreme personalization through the AI technology boosted the system's click-through rates (CTR), conversion rates, and also the overall return on ad spend (ROAS), which was essential for making campaigns more effective and measurable (Gao et al., 2023).

At the same time, Artificial Intelligence which creates ads and determines their targets on its own seems to be a problem, which is linked to the possible loss of brand authenticity and emotional appeal. Opponents argue that to a great extent, while AI is crucial in the effectiveness of delivery, it is not able to impart emotions and creativity that are important for compelling storytelling. This issue is being resolved with companies integrating AI with human's creative processes. For instance, Coca-Cola's "*Masterpiece*" campaign was an exceptional combination of AI-generated visual animations and human artistic direction, where the designers employed the new data-driven design approach and emotive storytelling to make the final product visible and true (Springer, 2024).

Thinking ahead, advertising is thought to be furthered by AI's employment in emotional AI, adaptive storytelling, and privacy-first targeting solutions. The firms that will be able to mindfulness a balance between mechanization and innovation will not only the expected successful performance of the campaign be seen but also the brands to establish trusting relationships with end-consumers. In a dynamic advertising landscape, the people that are clever enough to match AI with human imagination will also be the people with the power to create excitement, loyalty, and growth.

¹⁶*Adobe Sensei* is Adobe's machine learning and AI core designed to drive creativity and marketing productivity by means of automation, content creation, and data intelligence. It integrates generative AI capabilities into Adobe's creative and marketing applications so that users can accelerate work and deliver more tailored experiences. Adobe. (2024). *Adobe Sensei: Generative AI for creativity and marketing*. <https://www.adobe.com/it/sensei/generative-ai.html>

¹⁷*IBM Watson Advertising* is IBM's Artificial Intelligence powered advertising platform that leverages Watson's advanced data analysis and machine learning capabilities to enhance audience targeting, optimize creative content, and boost campaign performance. It offers solutions like predictive analytics, weather targeting, and conversational AI to help brands deliver more effective and targeted advertising. IBM. (2021). *IBM Watson Advertising*. IBM Newsroom. <https://newsroom.ibm.com/IBM-watson-advertising?item=30279>

2.3.2 Ethical Challenges: Privacy, Transparency, and Bias

With increasingly enhanced involvement of Artificial Intelligence in marketing strategies, ethical considerations related to privacy, transparency, algorithmic biases, and control by consumers are now most imperative. These anxieties set the parameters for businesses to implement safe practices of AI that promote responsible convergence with societal progress.

Data privacy is considered to be an important issue that should be addressed quickly. The employment of AI technologies in digital advertising is directly linked to users' information collection and processing, for instance, their online activity, purchasing decisions, and even their biometric traits (Pasupuleti, 2025). On the one hand, this data enables more deep personalization, but by the same token, it brings forth a number of worries like consumer surveillance, data breaches and unauthorized access by third parties. Legal frameworks, specifically the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States, give the necessary grounding for data handling. Nevertheless, enforcement of these regulations remains weak (Davenport et al., 2020; Voigt & Bussche, 2017). In response, companies are developing approaches to solve privacy issues, such as federated learning and differential privacy, which ensure that users' data is kept decentralized and anonymized during AI model training (Amil, 2023).

Privacy and algorithmic bias are closely connected, they are the result of AI systems that are often trained on historical data and thus may inadvertently perpetuate or even exacerbate social inequalities. For example, the research finds that AI-powered advertising algorithms have disproportionately targeted men for high-paying job roles, which indicates the existing gender disparities and even increases the likelihood of new opportunities for men (Forbes Technology Council, 2024). Such discriminatory patterns generally result from biased training datasets or unintentional biases in model design. To deal with this discriminatory situation, employing diversified and representative datasets, integrating bias detection mechanisms, and conducting regular AI audits to assess fairness and inclusivity will be among the methods to use (Barocas et al., 2023).

Transparency and accountability in AI advertising also are important aspects of AI advertising ethics. Many AI systems work as "black boxes", meaning the processes of ad placement and content personalization are obscured too much for users and regulators to understand what decisions are made (Lipton, 2016). Such non-transparency consumes

consumer trust and makes the potential for unethical behavior and manipulative practices, especially AI that can generate content itself or target users based on sensitive behavioral cues, higher. The solution provided by academics is the implementation of explainable AI, which will make AI decision-making more accessible to humans (Yang et al., 2023). The regulatory steps such as disclosure requirements and algorithmic accountability are being moved to the center of the stage to provide more clarity in AI-mediated interactions (Mazzucato et al., 2023).

Beyond the technical and legal dimensions, AI's capacity for hyper-personalization raises questions about manipulation and consumer autonomy. AI systems can predict emotional states and tailor advertisements to exploit consumer insecurities or behavioral tendencies, potentially crossing ethical lines from influence to manipulation (Chaudhary & Penn, 2024). To address it we need robust consent mechanisms, user control over personalization, and clear disclosure of targeting strategies (Gabriel, 2024). Ethical boundaries maintenance guarantees that the snaps are not on the sway to the individual agency or do not wipe out consumer faith will be.

On the other hand, the rise of AI-generated content further complicates the matter of copyright infringement. The question of authorship, ownership, and just compensation for creative products is raised when AI techniques are used to synthesize pictures or use data from media. The existing legal framework, now in question, is mostly a subsisting one and is not suitable when it comes to the differentiation between a machine and a human (Clark, 2024). As a matter of fact, legal consultants are inclined to stress the need for updated regulations, where AI authorship rights are clearly defined and unauthorized reuse of copyrighted material is prevented.

Lastly, the replacement of creativity and strategic roles through AI automation is an ethical issue that is related to the employment and job displacement. The loss of jobs has been experienced in copywriting, media planning, and customer support as AI has progressively become more efficient (Deloitte, 2023). While automation can be beneficial for work processes and enterprises, the organizations should also invest in education and AI literacy, thus promoting a moving aspect of human aptitude (Ford et al., 2023).

The contrast between the application of the innovative technology and the societal responsibility plays the decisive role in AI deployment in marketing. By implementing moral

norms, this, in return, stimulates the legislation compliance and consumers' preference towards the company. A business owner will be able to utilize AI's advantages while ensuring the privacy, standard of justice as it is evolving and in digital ecology.

2.3.3 Barriers to Adoption: Cost, Knowledge Gaps, and Technological Complexity

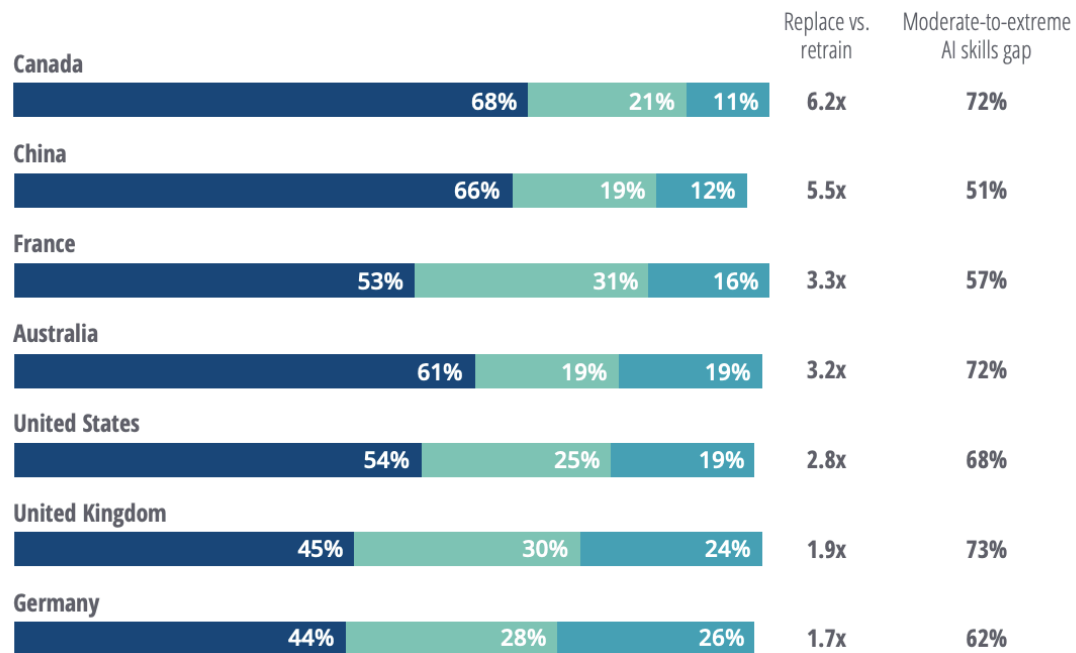
The adoption of Artificial Intelligence represents a major transformation in advertising; but a lot of companies are still not confident enough to fully integrate it into their marketing.

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), financial limitations are the first factor of a small business owner's concern. For the installment of AI-based marketing tools, one of the most common expenses is the acquisition of software, setting up cloud infrastructure, and last but not least technical expertise. Although companies like Coca-Cola, Nike, and Starbucks have been implementing AI successfully in their advertising campaigns, the use of AI has frequently been in personalization, predictive analytics, and customer engagement. Therefore, the possibility not being able to allocate the financial resources for the small brands to be able to compete at a similar level with the larger brands (Eyice Başev, 2024). The doubt of immediate profits from AI financing complicates the process of approval of AI solutions, and this is a motive for most businesses not to be able to validate the appearance of AI in their marketing techniques (Davenport et al., 2020).

Additionally, the paucity of AI-proficient staff is another major bottleneck. The effective use of AI in advertising is not just about technology but also about a deep understanding of data science, machine learning, and algorithmic ethics. A significant number of marketing teams lack the required background to leverage the full functionality of AI programs; thus, their usage is limited (Ford et al., 2023). A Deloitte report found that 68% of the surveyed executives in the United States felt there was only a moderate to extreme AI skills gap in their organizations, of which 27% reported the gap to be "major" or "extreme".

Across surveyed countries, AI adopters consistently prefer hiring new talent to address their AI skills gap

- Tend to replace employees with new talent
- Keep and replace employees in equal measure
- Tend to keep and retrain current employees



Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to a small number of respondents who answered "Don't know."
 Source: Deloitte analysis based on Deloitte's AI in the Enterprise, 2nd Edition survey of 1,900 AI early adopters in seven countries.

Image 19. Tabs taken from Deloitte. (2023). Talent and workforce effects in the age of AI. Deloitte Insights. Retrieved from: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/6546_talent-and-workforce-effects-in-the-age-of-ai/DI_Talent-and-workforce-effects-in-the-age-of-AI.pdf

Equally, the IBM AI Adoption Index (2023) study discovered that the biggest barrier in marketing analytics was the lack of internal expertise. Besides, women have been found to be less likely to know how to use AI than men with genders showing 42% more males than women who claim the proficiency in the AI-related skills. In other words, the inclusive upskilling programs are necessary to correct the imbalance (Randstad, 2024).

Technological integration is the second most significant hindrance in that it is tough to break. The substantial majority of the organizations are supplied with the systems from the past that bear incompatibility issues with the AI-driven platforms and that make the integration process very demanding and, therefore, costly. The integration involving AI in largely used systems such as customer relationship management (CRM) software, data management platforms (DMPs), and traditional advertising tools is not only complex but also needs the reengineering of infrastructure. These transformations result in the longer time needed to

execute, the higher operational costs, and the system being out of sync with its environment especially when shifting from a manual to an automatic workflow (Chatterjee et al., 2020). In addition, AI's reliance on high-quality, well-structured data adds more elements to this difficult equation. Not only does low data quality make AI less effective but it also can cause mistargeting and poor campaign performance (Bharti & Park, 2023).

To alleviate these obstacles, organizations are now turning to low-code and no-code AI solutions that simplify AI deployment without requiring a technician with verse technical expertise. Platforms such as *Google AutoML*,¹⁸ *Salesforce Einstein AI*,¹⁹ and *Microsoft Azure AI*²⁰ provide the user-friendly interface for AI application by marketing teams in the areas of personalization and automation with little or no coding knowledge (Martinez-Sala & Monserrat-Gauchi, 2024). In addition, *AI-as-a-Service (AIaaS)*²¹ models have subscription-based services that have lower costs and offer the ability for SMEs to adopt AI more easily when they get common advanced AI tools which will decrease the need for bigger initial investments (Gao et al., 2023).

As AI techniques become more user-friendly and economically affordable, these barriers will be overcome, opening the way for broader interpretations and applications of the technology. However, to unleash AI's potential for advertising fully, companies need to place AI education higher on their agenda, promote ethical and accurate data management, and come up with plans for the seamless integration of a new system within the existing one. Businesses that can close the AI knowledge gap and incorporate their operations with modern

¹⁸*Google AutoML* is a suite of machine learning tools by Google Cloud that enables users—regardless of their level of experience—to train their own models for applications such as image classification, natural language processing, and data analysis. It simplifies the process of creating high-quality AI models by removing the drudgery of model selection and hyperparameter tuning. Google Cloud. (2024). *Google AutoML: Custom machine learning for your business*. <https://cloud.google.com/automl?hl=it>

¹⁹*Salesforce Einstein AI* is Salesforce's integrated Artificial Intelligence platform designed to maximize customer relationship management (CRM) through intelligent insight, predictive analytics, and automated processes. It allows organizations to personalize customer interactions, forecast sales, and optimize marketing efforts leveraging AI-powered recommendations and automation. Salesforce. (2024). *Salesforce Einstein AI: Artificial Intelligence for CRM*. <https://www.salesforce.com/eu/artificial-intelligence/>

²⁰*Microsoft Azure AI* is a comprehensive suite of AI services and tools offered through Microsoft's cloud platform. Microsoft Azure AI enables developers and enterprises to build, deploy, and manage intelligent applications using services such as machine learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and conversational AI, with support for scalability and other Microsoft offerings. Microsoft Azure. (2024). *Azure AI: Artificial Intelligence solutions*. <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/solutions/ai>

²¹*AI-as-a-Service (AIaaS)* refers to cloud-based services providing access to Artificial Intelligence infrastructure and tools on a pay-per-use or subscription basis. It allows businesses to leverage AI capabilities such as machine learning, natural language processing, and computer vision without the need to create or manage their own AI systems, avoiding costs and technical challenges. Microsoft Azure. (2024). *What is AI-as-a-Service (AIaaS)?* <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/resources/cloud-computing-dictionary/what-is-ai-aaS>

AI capabilities will be better able to achieve a competitive advantage in a marketing sector increasingly driven by AI.

Chapter III

Research Design and Methodology of the Qualitative Interview

3.1 Rationale and Research Objectives

One of the most significant technological revolutions in advertisement and communication is the application of Artificial Intelligence to advertisement (Davenport et al., 2020), with uses ranging from content generation to hyper-personalized targeting. While much of the existing literature has focused on the technical possibilities of AI, fewer studies have examined how advertising professionals engage with these tools in their everyday creative and strategic workflows.

The objective of this research is to fill that gap by taking a qualitative and interpretive approach, with a view to gaining understanding of the experience of advertising professionals who are working with Artificial Intelligence and discovering the complexity, ambiguity, and negotiation that are characteristic of human-machine interaction in creative tasks (Crawford, 2021), where AI must be interpreted as a socio-technical system rather than a neutral device.

Starting from this perspective, the study aims at two major objectives. The first of these is to analyze the reactions of professionals across different domains of advertising confronted with Artificial Intelligence in their line of work, such as in art direction, copywriting, brand strategy, and more. The goal is to understand their views in terms of application, adoption, and trust of these technologies, considerations that in turn reflect wider transformations in the relationship between technological innovation and creative practice (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). The second is to comprehend the way in which these professionals frame ethical challenges, tensions between creative work and technology, and evolutions of their roles in an AI-driven working environment.

The study was conducted with 14 semi-structured interviews of professionals across a range of the advertising and communications area in Italy. The participants were selected to be representative of a variety of professional roles, levels of experience and types of organization, such as freelancers and those who are employed in agencies. This diversity allowed for a better comprehension of the concrete application of AI in the sector, gathering a

wide variety of opinions ranging from admiration for its use to more cynical and critical approaches.

The research is guided by the following objectives:

1. To explore how AI tools are utilized in different stages of ad work, such as brainstorming, targeting, campaign creation, testing phase, launching, and checking performance.
2. Acknowledge how professionals are exposed to AI and the degree to which its use is seen as influencing their creativity and strategic dimension of work, considering workflow adjustment, changes in communication channels, and the role of human intuition and creative thinking.
3. Discuss perceptions of opportunities and limitations arising from AI adoption, referencing factors such as time saving, support in decision-making, content quality, and technical challenges.
4. Describe ethical issues in the use of AI, particularly those related to data privacy, hyper-personalization, algorithmic transparency, and broader concerns around trust and communication transparency.
5. In order to examine recent hopes, concerns, and visions about the future of AI in advertising based on what Jasanoff and Kim (2015) define as “socio-technical imaginaries”, i.e., those shared visions that motivate the application of a new technology, the creation of new occupations, the construction of hybrid skills, and social changes in terms of automation and creativity.

This study adopts a non-positivist reasoning of inquiry, with depth over generalization and interpretation over measurement. The qualitative method used facilitates a contextual and reflexive exploration, able to draw out how meaning is co-constructed from occupational discourse and everyday interactions with technology (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Finlay, 2002). Rather than addressing AI as a necessary entity, the study reads AI as a discursively

and performative occurrence, continually remodeled in use, resistance, and institutional framing.

This research aims to contribute new insight to current knowledge about the use of AI in advertising, adding depth with insights offered by critical theory. By doing this, the research attempts to offer useful guidance to professionals in the industry who work in an ever-more AI-dominated creative environment.

3.2 Theoretical and Epistemological Framework

This study draws on a qualitative and interpretive epistemology, one which conceives of knowledge as something that is constructed through human association, enriched and contextualized by reflection (Schwandt, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The new paradigm departs from the idea of looking for regularities of broad application and instead focuses on understanding subjective explanations that persons give for actions and experiences (Schwandt, 2000). It thus offers a suitable approach to the research of the creative and strategic actions of advertising practitioners, with a view to investigating how they understand Artificial Intelligence.

From this perspective, social reality is understood as something dynamic, stratified, and constructed through symbols, language, power relations, and cultural norms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Thus, the purpose of the study is not to test hypotheses or to control variables, but to analyze the intricate, situated, and sometimes contradictory ways in which AI is conceived and integrated into professional practices.

From a theoretical viewpoint, this study is constructivist in its approach, recognizing that participants' relationships with AI are influenced by the broader technological and organizational contexts in which they work. AI is not considered to be an unproblematic or neutral innovation but a system embedded in institutional practices (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), resisting deterministic explanations of technology. According to this perception, technology does not in itself determine the result, but guides human activity in situation-specific ways which themselves change over the span of time.

Critical media studies and science and technology studies (STS) (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015) underpin the primary theoretical framework of this paper, particularly for mapping institutional logics and cultural imaginaries-related processes. In particular, work theories in the context of platform capitalism²² are relevant too since they offer a valuable tool for the analysis of how professionals deal with conflicts between authorship and automation, between efficiency and novelty, and between data logics and human intuition. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) describe media workers as dealing with an unstable but highly felt job organized by economic and institutional logics. This perspective allows AI to be read not only as a set of tools, but also as a symbolic and ideological construct that determines how creative work is imagined and valued.

Methodologically, the most suitable tool for the aims of the study is semi-structured interviews, which offer a flexible structure to study the type of discourse that professionals utilize, their experiences, and the settings in which they work. These interviews are thus a space of mutual meaning creation, where the researcher is also actively and reflexively contributing to defining the meaning content of the research topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The traditional role of the researcher as an objective observer is thus abandoned for that of one who, along with collecting data, also interprets and analyzes them (Finlay, 2002).

For the analysis phase, the study utilizes thematic analysis, not as a formulaic method of categorization, but as an interpretative process to seek patterns of meaning, metaphors, and underlying assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006), recognizing that themes are not found by passive discovery, but actively constructed through analytic work with data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). These themes that emerge operate to link situated experience with broader theoretical and cultural discussions regarding Artificial Intelligence, creativity, and technological transformation.

Finally, this framework places particular stress on the political and ethical dimensions of Artificial Intelligence in the context of advertising. It considers how experts grapple with issues such as data privacy, bias in algorithms, and the impact of automation on creative autonomy, not as abstract problems, but as actual concerns based on empirically informed

²²Platform capitalism is a business model in which digital platforms act as intermediaries that organize and coordinate interactions between different groups of users, including consumers, workers, and advertisers. The platforms harvest and sell the data generated by the interactions, thereby reconstituting traditional economic and labor relations. (Langley & Leyshon, 2017)

work environments (Crawford, 2021), in which AI systems are irrevocably linked with relations of power, systemic biases, and institutional values. Through a focus on practitioners' voices and reflexivity, the study offers a more nuanced understanding of how technological change is lived, interpreted, and in some cases resisted in contemporary communicative work.

This epistemology avoids framing Artificial Intelligence in crude terms, as if it were only entirely positive or entirely negative. Rather, it looks at how AI is used in practice, debated, and instantiated in working life, and the connections between such integrations and larger narratives regarding creativity, identity, and media culture in an age of automation.

3.3 Interview Structure and Thematic Focus

Since this study is positioned within an interpretive and qualitative orientation, the primary data collection method used is the semi-structured in-depth interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This is particularly suitable for investigating how people construct their understanding within social and professional contexts. Due to its dialogical and flexible nature, the interview has enabled exploration of individual experiences and meaning attribution processes within concrete situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The novelty of this non-standardized method is that it actively involved participants in building the narrative through exploratory and probing questions, which not only generated rich and reflective data but also assisted in ensuring coherence between emerging themes.

The interview guide was developed from the research questions (section 3.1), theoretical framework (section 3.2), and initial interactions with participants. Although all interviews were organized around the same topic areas, the wording and sequence of questions were dynamically adapted to the flow of each interview, encouraging a dialogical process in which interviewer and participant jointly construct meaning (Brinkmann, 2013).

They were held after six main thematic blocks, which ensured coherence among thematic analysis and data collection (Nowell et al., 2017). Each thematic area was covered through open-ended questions meant to elicit descriptive stories as well as interpretive insights.

3.3.1 Professional Background and Role Orientation

This section attempted to discover the participants' professional background and how they integrate AI tools into their workday. The interviews started with questions about the number of years they have been in the advertising and communications industry, what they are doing currently, and what type of organization they are from, whether freelance, agency, or institution. Then, they were asked when they started using AI in their workflow and what tools they are currently using. These initial questions allowed them to build an overall picture of their knowledge of AI and understand what needs or goals guide their use of these technologies.

Questions posed to participants:

- *How long have you been working in the advertising/communication industry?*
- *What is your current role?*
- *When did you start integrating AI tools into your work?*
- *Which AI tools do you use in your work, and what do you primarily use them for?*

3.3.2 Use and Integration of AI Tools

In this part, they explored how the professionals have innovated the working methodology after integrating Artificial Intelligence in their regular tasks, focusing on on tools such as *ChatGPT, MidJourney, Photoshop AI,*²³ *Fireflies.ai,*²⁴ *Tactiq,*²⁵ and *Gemini.*²⁶ The idea was to analyze how these are used in the creative and strategy-making processes, at which phases of the process, and how, for the purposes of producing content, for task automation, for visual prototyping, or analysis. The subjects were asked to recall concrete episodes where AI was

²³Adobe Photoshop's Generative Fill is an AI-based feature where users can delete, insert, or alter image content using simple text inputs. Developed natively in Photoshop and powered by Adobe Firefly, it enables non-destructive editing by generating new content in separate layers. This capability is fully in sync with the lighting, viewpoint, and style of the available image to assist in object addition, background extension, and scene change with more realistic and accurate control. Adobe. (2025). *Photoshop: Generative Fill*. <https://www.adobe.com/it/products/photoshop/generative-fill.html>

²⁴Fireflies.ai is an AI-powered assistant that utilizes automation for recording, transcribing, and analyzing voice conversations from meetings. It has the capability to integrate with Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams to offer transcripts, summaries, and action items to enhance team collaboration and productivity. Fireflies.ai. (2025). *Fireflies: AI meeting assistant*. <https://fireflies.ai/>

²⁵Tactiq is a real-time transcription, speaker—tagged Artificial Intelligence—powered meeting assistant for meetings taken on Google Meet, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. It has integration opportunities for applications like ChatGPT to introduce actionable suggestions and automate post-meeting procedures. Tactiq. (2025). *Tactiq: AI meeting assistant*. <https://tactiq.io/>

²⁶Gemini Deep Research is an aspect of Google's Gemini AI designed to assist users in conducting deep research work. Powered by advanced AI, it can analyze complex questions, search through vast web content, and compile results into comprehensive reports. The tool is particularly ideal for deep research, providing users with structured information and knowledge on different topics. Google. (2025). *Gemini Deep Research, your personal research assistant*. <https://gemini.google/overview/deep-research/>

involved in shaping their practices, emphasizing the practical application, trial, and adjustment of workflows. The aim was to follow not only the tasks attributed to the tools but also their position in broader professional practices.

Questions posed to participants:

- *How has AI changed the way you think or design your works?*
- *Could you share any specific cases in which the use of AI had a clear impact, either by enhancing the effectiveness of a project or process, or, conversely, by creating challenges or outcomes that led you to reconsider its use?*

3.3.3 Changes in Planning, Creativity, and Strategic Thinking

This section discussed how the professionals deal with the innovative element of advertising work since the arrival of Artificial Intelligence.

Interview participants were requested to reflect on how AI impacts their practice of creating ideas, creating projects, and producing works of expression. They were asked about views of how AI is applied—as an extension or as a constraint to creativity—and the framing of originality in comparison to content produced or enabled by computer-based systems. The aim was to explore the manner in which professionals negotiate the changing relationship between automation and authorship in contemporary creative activity (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011).

Questions posed to participants:

- *Do you think AI limits or enhances creativity? Could you give a concrete example to better understand your point of view?*
- *In your opinion, how “original” is content created or assisted by AI?*

3.3.4 Personalization, Targeting, and Data Use

This section addressed how the practitioners use Artificial Intelligence for personalization and targeting. The participants were provided with a moment of reflection on whether and how they utilize AI to segment their audiences, predict behavior, and personalize messages. The questions also created a space for questioning the ethical foundations of these tactics, such as questions about privacy issues, transparency concerns, and risk exposure to bias (Crawford, 2021). The goal was to get a better idea of how personalization is conceptualized and executed in this new advertising and marketing communication strategy.

Questions posed to participants:

- *What is the right balance between effective personalization and intrusiveness?*
- *Do you think AI can reduce intrusiveness by improving the precision of targeting?*
- *Have you ever questioned the ethics of data usage?*

3.3.5 Opportunities, Limitations, and Critical Reflections

This part analyzed the real opportunities and difficulties that participants encountered in accessing and making use of Artificial Intelligence tools. They were asked to mark any restrictions they encountered, either technical, organizational or economic. They were then asked to re-evaluate what AI function and features they found most useful or relevant to their day-to-day work. The last of this series of questions partially complements a previously existing question in the first block (*“Which AI tools do you use in your work, and what do you primarily use them for?”*), the aim being to go on and add more detail. This was inserted after conducting the first interviews, as it was realized that, as the interview progressed, the respondents recalled other tools or ways of working with them. This allowed them to add or affirm aspects of their own experience with AI before completing the interview.

Questions posed to participants:

- *Have you experienced limitations or problems with certain AI tools?*
- *What were the main challenges (technical, organizational, costs)?*
- *Which AI tools and features do you consider essential or most useful and relevant in your work?*

3.3.6 Future Scenarios, Expectations, and Fears

This last section prompted respondents to consider their expectations and worries about the future of Artificial Intelligence, both within advertising and more broadly in society. The questions invited them to think about how AI might evolve in the next five years and to share hopes and fears about its increasing application, especially to professional work, creative practice, and potential cultural and ethical implications of more prevalent automation (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015).

Questions posed to participants:

- *What do you expect from the evolution of AI in the next 5 years in this industry? And in general?*
- *What are your biggest hopes or fears about AI in general, and specifically in the field of advertising?*

All of the interviews were conducted in Italian, the native language of the researcher and participants, allowing for more nuanced expression depending on cultural context (Finlay, 2002). Sessions were recorded with informed consent, fully transcribed and then translated into English for analysis and editing of findings. Interviews ranged from 35 to 70 minutes.

The strategy followed to conduct the interviews permitted comparison between the different interviews and space for more private and detailed dimensions to emerge. This balance allowed the corpus to achieve higher empirical and interpretive levels. In addition, the majority of the participants also described applying AI for reasons other than purely creative, including transcribing applications (*Fireflies.ai*, *Plaud.ai*²⁷), synthesis, SEO optimization, and applying customized GPT agents.²⁸ These examples illustrate how AI is becoming more omnipresent in operational and analytical workflows as well (Cristianini, 2023), reshaping not just productivity but how humans and machines' collaboration is even imagined.

3.4 Sampling Strategy and Participant Profiles

The sample method employed within the current study reflects the qualitative and interpretive nature of the research. Rather than pursuing statistical representativeness, every effort was made to create a heterogeneous sample rich in perspectives and insights (Patton, 2002) to provide a broad variety of experiences, attitudes, and opinions towards the utilization of Artificial Intelligence in advertising and communication.

To write the sample, the study was conducted on purposive sampling with maximum variation, following the suggestion made by Palinkas et al. (2015). The aim was to enlist a combination of professionals in different roles and settings. Some were freelancers, others worked in agencies, studios, companies, or institutions. They had different connections with AI as well, ranging from regular use in everyday activities to an exploratory or cautious use.

²⁷Plaud.ai offers the Plaud Note, a compact AI-powered voice recorder that captures, transcribes, and summarizes conversations. It's designed for business professionals and is capable of syncing with smartphones to record calls and meetings, with organized notes and insights accessible through its companion app. Plaud.ai. (2025). *Plaud Note: Your professional AI note-taking solution*.
<https://www.plaud.ai/products/plaud-note-ai-voice-recorder>

²⁸Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPT) are large pre-trained language models developed by OpenAI, and they are transformer-based. Two stages are used to train them: first, unsupervised pre-training on large text databases, and then supervised fine-tuning on downstream tasks. GPT models are trained to generalize over wide ranges of language understanding tasks with minimal task-specific adaptation (Radford et al., 2018).

This open approach facilitated the inclusion of perspectives that might remain underrepresented in more structured studies that has focused solely on AI adoption might not necessarily emerge. It also made it easier to provide space for critical or anxious voices most relevant in the context of creative work, where ambivalence and challenge are most likely to impact reception and adoption of new tools (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011).

The final sample consisted of 14 participants who all worked in Italy in advertising, branding, communication strategy, content design, and creative direction. Occupations represented include marketing consultants, visual designers, copywriters, project managers, communication managers, and multidisciplinary artists. This diversity allowed the gathering of a range of voices—as defined by Nowell et al. (2017)—from those which welcomed automation as a route for creative empowerment to those with questions, ethical concerns, or a more strategically cautious position, thus adding to the credibility and interpretive depth of the thematic analysis. Special care was also taken to diversity in terms of seniority, gender, and career path, both junior individuals and experienced professionals.

Recruitment of participants was carried out through professional networks, direct contacts and snowball sampling.²⁹ Interviewing took place in March and April 2025. The participants were coded with a unique identification code (P1-P14), as per ethical advice on protection of identity in qualitative research environments (BERA, 2018). This ensured consistency of citation of data and facilitated comparative analysis without the loss of individual or attributory information regarding the organizations where they are employed.

The following table is a resume of the respondents' main characteristics:

²⁹Snowball sampling is just one type of non-probability sampling by which existing participants invite future participants from their personal network. Snowball sampling proves to be specially useful in studies of hard-to-reach groups or populations who share similar features (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Participant ID	Professional Role	Type of Organization	Professional Experience	AI Experience	AI Tools Used	Application in Work
P1	Marketing Strategist	Strategic Branding Studio	23+ years	2 years	ChatGPT, TurboScribe;	introspective prompting, synthesis, education support
P2	Copywriter	Strategic Branding Studio	7–8 years	6 months	ChatGPT, NotebookLM, Plaud.ai;	copywriting, editing, speed optimization
P3	Sales Process Analyst / Project Associate	Strategic Branding Studio	2 months	2 months	ChatGPT, Unriddle.ai;	idea generation, structure drafting, concept mapping
P4	Graphic Designer	Strategic Branding Studio	2 years	6 months	ChatGPT, Claude, DALL·E, Photoshop AI, Sora;	layout, placeholder copy, proofreading
P5	Junior Copywriter / Social Media & Marketing Analyst	Strategic Branding Studio	6 months	6 months	ChatGPT, Plaud.ai;	editorial copywriting, SEO copywriting, tone/style adaptation
P6	Project Manager (Operations & Account)	Communication Agency	7 years	2 years	ChatGPT, Firefly, Tactics, Fliki, Plaud.AI, Claude;	onboarding, emails, summaries, prototyping, branding workflow
P7	Graphic and Web Designer	Digital agency	5 years	1 year	ChatGPT, Gemini, Photoshop AI, Illustrator AI, Canva AI, Freepeek AI;	SEO content, image generation, web chatbot integration
P8	Digital Product Designer	UX-driven software house	3 years	1 year	ChatGPT, Gemini, Sora, Creatie, UX Pilot;	SEO texts, visual strategy, interfaces, email support
P9	Junior Digital Art Director	Digital agency	3 years	1 year	ChatGPT, MidJourney, Wan, Flair, Adobe AI;	visual prototyping, asset design, mockups, copywriting

Participant ID	Professional Role	Type of Organization	Professional Experience	AI Experience	AI Tools Used	Application in Work
P10	Multidisciplinary Artist	Independent / Art-based Projects	6–7 years	4–5 years	Custom-built AI, ChatGPT, ThisPersonDoesNotExist;	conceptual/artistic AI, installation-based creation
P11	Creative Director (Art, Video, Copy)	Freelance	23+ years	1 year	ChatGPT, MidJourney, Photoshop AI;	light use for drafts, emails, narrative styling
P12	Photographer / Visual Narrator	Independent Visual Communication Studio	15+ years	1 year	Photoshop AI;	generative fill, background adjustment, visual refinement
P13	Head of Communications, Press & Social Media	Cultural Institution	15+ years	< 1 year	ChatGPT;	ironic tone, social content writing
P14	Marketing Consultant & Marketing Manager	Marketing consultant (SMEs)	30 years	1 year	ChatGPT Plus (custom agents), Copilot, Perplexity, Fireflies;	SEO, data analysis, dashboarding, creative prompting

This thoughtfully crafted and strategically framed sample allowed the study to examine the delicate dance between technological mediation, creative labor, and professional expertise. Not only did respondents talk about the tools they used, but also why they were chosen, the motivations that compelled them to experiment with certain solutions, and the constraints that influenced their choices.

The sample heterogeneity directly worked to enrich and deepen the thematic analysis in the next chapter, verifying the validity of the research as a situated and critically aware representation of the way Artificial Intelligence is understood and translated into practice within communicative work today.

3.5 Conducting the Interviews: Practical and Ethical Considerations

This chapter sets out the methodological and ethical guidelines that guided the planning, conduct, and analysis of the semi-structured interviews, the focal point of this research. Based in a qualitative and interpretivist paradigm, the process was designed to be flexible and rigorous, respecting empathy, reflexivity, and sensitivity to the rich professional narratives emerging over Artificial Intelligence in the advertising profession.

All interviews were conducted in accordance with internationally accepted best practice standards in ethics for social science research (BERA, 2018), where informed consent, participants' autonomy, and ensuring confidentiality of data are emphasized. Prior to participation in the study, all individuals were provided with verbal and written information about the aims of the study, how it would be conducted, and measures for protection of data. Informed consent was obtained formally, ensuring participants were aware they had a right to anonymity, were at liberty to withdraw at any point, and what would happen to their collected data. These measures were necessary, especially considering the sensitivity of some of the issues being debated, such as organizational dynamics, ethical concerns, and personal attitudes toward new technology.

The interviews were conducted in Italian—the researcher and participants' mother tongue—in order to achieve linguistic complexity and cultural expressiveness (Finlay, 2002), which are key features in developing situated and authentic narratives. Most of the meetings were conducted using videoconferencing platforms such as *Zoom*,³⁰ *Google Meet*,³¹ or *Microsoft Teams*,³² whereas some interviews were conducted face-to-face, where the situation

³⁰Zoom is a cloud-based tool that offers video conferencing, webinars, team chat, VoIP phone service, and collaboration features like whiteboards and AI-powered meeting notes. It enables users to join and work on any device and operating system with no hassle. Zoom Video Communications. (2025). *Zoom: One platform to connect*. <https://www.zoom.com/it>

³¹Google Meet is a safe, easy-to-use video conferencing service developed by Google. Google Meet enables people to arrange and join high-definition video meetings in a web browser or mobile app without any downloads of other software needed. Meet also integrates easily with other Google tools like Gmail and Google Calendar so that people can easily schedule and join meetings. Top features include real-time captions, screen sharing, virtual backgrounds, and noise cancellation that enhance the meeting experience overall. Google Meet can be accessed by individual customers as well as organizations by subscribing to Google Workspace, where scalable solutions address various levels of communication. Google. (2025). *Google Meet*. <https://meet.google.com/landing>

³²Microsoft Teams is a collaboration platform that brings together chat, video, file sharing, and productivity apps in one shared workspace. Users can host online meetings, share files, and collaborate in real-time across any number of devices and operating systems. Microsoft. (2025). *Microsoft Teams*. <https://www.microsoft.com/it-it/microsoft-teams/log-in?market=it>

allowed. This hybrid approach made it flexible and accessible, with participation from different geographic points and in response to individuals' professional needs.

All the interviews were recorded as voice with explicit consent and later fully transcribed. Where necessary, the exercise of transcription was facilitated by AI-powered software such as *TurboScribe*.³³ These did not replace the interpretive role of the researcher but supplemented it, and this had a methodological cohesion with the very topic of the research, i.e., the integration of AI into creative processes. Transcripts were carefully screened, hand-checked, and completely anonymized. Reference to companies, clients, or identifiable individuals was removed to assist in preserving confidentiality.

The length of the interviews was between 35 and 70 minutes, depending on the participants' seniority level, narrative strategy, and acquaintance with Artificial Intelligence. The older professionals tended to give broader insights, stating ethical issues, automation-related conditions and symbolic representations of AI. The younger respondents were more interested in operational devices, skill building and learning pathways. These differences created a more nuanced contrast, enlightening the body of information on conceptual as well as experiential levels.

In the interviews, the researcher employed a reflexive and dialogic practice (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), recognizing that meaning is co-constructed in the dialogue between interviewer and participant. Conversations were rooted in pre-agreed themes (section 3.3), but left open to new topics, affective resonance, and critical detours. Some participants were ambivalent—even anxious—about AI (Crawford, 2021). These answers are symptomatic of broader sociopolitical issues around algorithmic systems, including issues regarding creative authorship, over-reliance on automation, and ethical opacity in data exploitation and personalization.

One of the significant aspects of the interview process was the focus on power imbalances (Finlay, 2002), where the researcher's position must be constantly evaluated in terms of social positioning and discursive power. Although most of the participants were given expert

³³TurboScribe is an AI-powered transcription service that converts audio and video files into accurate text within seconds. It offers over 98 languages, unlimited transcriptions, speaker identification, and secure data handling. Transcripts are exportable in various formats, including DOCX, PDF, TXT, and captions (SRT, VTT). TurboScribe. (2025). *TurboScribe: Unlimited audio and video transcription*. <https://turboscribe.ai/it/>

positions, their degree of familiarity with Artificial Intelligence was vastly varied. The approach used recognized doubt and uncertainty as legitimate sources of information, taking into consideration these aspects as compelling ideas regarding how experts interact with evolving technologies. This willingness was particularly important for freelancers, new professionals, and individuals whose opinions are typically marginalized in technology-driven discussions.

In an effort to ensure privacy and consistency, all organizations that emerged during the course of interviews were anonymized using generic categories (e.g., “*strategic branding studio*”, “*UX-driven software house*”, “*cultural institution*”). The quotes included in subsequent chapters have been minimally altered for readability purposes without sacrificing speaker intent and meaning.

The interview structure was planned with the goal of balancing ethical responsibility, methodological precision and narrative richness. The data collected are representative of a richly varied and verbally competent set of lived experiences characterized by enthusiasm, wariness, critique and exploratory creativity. This variety—and the care it was given and protected—constitutes the empirical and moral basis for Chapter 4 thematic analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis Approach: Thematic Coding and Interpretation

Qualitative data from 14 in-depth semi-structured interviews were examined by thematic analysis, a method perfectly suited to identifying, interpreting and describing patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a prevalent approach within qualitative research owing to its flexibility and receptiveness to a variety of theoretical positions. Rooted within the interpretivist tradition, thematic analysis has enabled detailed, context-sensitive, participant-centered reading that is attentive to ambiguity, contradiction, and situated meaning.

This is consistent with the ontological and epistemological foundations of the study and is open to constructivist and realist explanations, depending on the researcher’s position. From a constructivist perspective, meaning is not discovered but co-constructed in language, interaction, and contextual framing (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thematic analysis is thus not so

much a technique as a theoretical position (Braun & Clarke, 2019), in which meaning is generated through the interpretive activity of the researcher. Data are not conceived as raw material, but as discursive material shaped by social, cultural, and emotional conditions, and interpreted through the researcher's lens.

In accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggested model, the analysis was a six-step iterative process, which was adapted to the specifics of the dataset and the research goals of this study.

3.6.1 Familiarization with the data

The interviews were listened to multiple times in an effort to develop technical familiarity and interpretive sensitivity. Immersion by this stage extended beyond content to encompass tone, metaphor, and discursive rhythm. The interviews were transcribed, and the transcripts were annotated with tentative observations, repetition of words, emotional turns, and potential contradictions.

3.6.2 Generating initial codes

A combination of deductive and inductive approaches was employed to support the initial coding process. The researcher developed initial categories through exploratory reading with the assistance of computational tools, and then further refined and tested the codes through manual interpretation, as aligned with the reflex approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019). Coding was done manually following a hybrid strategy: inductive codes like "*AI saves time*", "*ethical hesitation*", or "*creative co-dependence*" emerged naturally from participants' discourse. While deductive ones like "*algorithmic opacity*" or "*automation vs. authorship*", were guided by the theoretical framework. The process relied on close and reflective reading of the transcripts to allow the researcher to highlight significant text, initial impressions and recurring themes, but remain close to the discursive nuances and context.

3.6.3 Searching for themes

Here, the early codes were grouped into preliminary thematic clusters that identified repeated concerns, shared perspectives or points of tension which emerged from how participants spoke about their experiences. The themes were mapped both across interviews and within

single conversations, providing a multi-layered description of the data. While the six thematic categories of the interview guide were a good starting point, new themes surfaced—some cutting across categories, others radically redefining them. Themes like “*Negotiating Authority with AI*”, “*Data as a Double-Edged Resource*”, or “*Tactical Integration vs. Structural Resistance*” began to crystallize from recurring language and the interpretive reading of how participants articulated their experiences.

The goal here was not to superimpose data onto rigid categories, but to remain attentive to its complexity, without closing the door to contradictions, overlaps, and open questions.

3.6.4 Reviewing and refining themes

Themes that emerged were then reconsidered in light of the entire set of data (Nowell et al., 2017) in order to ensure consistency, coherence, and credibility while developing final themes. Overlapping or overly broad categories were refined, and thematic boundaries were clarified and sub-themes were inserted as appropriate in order to define internal variation. For instance, the subject “*AI and Creativity*” featured opposing views: some writers identified AI as an assisting companion that boosts creative ability, while others were concerned that it would annihilate uniqueness and reduce the personal element of creative work. Contrasting cases were maintained and examined not as outliers but as worthwhile instantiations of the heterogeneity of the sample.

Visual tools such as thematic maps and coding matrices eased the process, and it served to elicit the interconnection between themes and theoretical references. This process reaffirmed the active involvement of the researcher in constructing the thematic form through constant dialogue with the data.

3.6.5 Defining and naming themes

Each theme was defined by a brief narrative summary, outlining its boundaries, scope, and internal logic. The terms that were assigned to the themes were chosen to enhance clarity and conceptual prominence, often selecting a direct quote from the participants’ own words, in an effort to preserve discursive authenticity. Theme labels were analytically situated and readable, often employing participants’ own terms in order to keep things authentic. This includes a theme such as “*Creative Automation or Automated Creativity?*” that encompassed contrasting views on the role of AI in idea generation and the production process.

3.6.6 Producing the report

The last step was the identification of meaningful quotes and the construction of an analytical narrative organized around the final themes. The quotes were chosen for their explanatory potential, not merely representativeness, and were set within the context of more in-depth discussions regarding AI, creative work, and professional identity. The interpretation aimed for interpretive multiplicity, rather than reductionist generalizations, in line with Braun & Clarke's (2019) reflexive thematic analysis model.

This analytical process allowed the researcher to move from a disparate set of narrative sources to a structured thematic framework and a rich level of understanding of the data. The emergent themes are not to be taken as solutions, but as means of access to the lived density of the integration, resistance, and reworking of AI within contemporary advertising practice. This thematic organization provides a multi-dimensional perspective from which to examine how AI technologies are entangled with creativity, strategy, and professional transformation—a conversation that will be explicated in Chapter 4.

3.7 Researcher Reflexivity and Methodological Limitations

In qualitative research, even in an interpretive tradition, the researcher is not just an objective observer, she is integrated within it. This study is based on the assumption that knowledge is not “out there” but constructed in and through interactions, shaped by how researcher and participants construct meaning together (Finlay, 2002).

Being reflexive is to take a step back and ask how the one's own perspective—shaped by one's own background, assumptions, and positioning—may shape what one observes, the way that one poses questions, and how one interprets participants' responses. It is not a question of following a method, but of staying open and responsible to one's own location within the research. This sensitivity means being attentive to dynamics like authority, common language or even individual interests, which may quietly affect the direction and meaning the study evolves in.

The researcher came from a communication and media studies base and had a very personal interest in digital creativity and emerging technology. This inevitably influenced the

conduction of the study. It made it possible to create a sense of familiarity with engaged participants in innovative and strategic roles, but it required constant effort to be constantly aware of possible bias as well as the inclination to read data through one's own lens.

During the interviews, the aim was to create a setting at once informal and respectful, where participants would feel at ease to respond and were given time to reflect. The semi-structured nature allowed this to be done. There were questions scripted beforehand, and others came up as they spoke. For the most part, what participants provided steered the conversation into new but meaningful directions. Those moments which might have seemed like digressions were in fact typically the most contemplative, especially in the case of conflicts like genuine working around automation, or managing the rules and routines of organizational contexts.

Some of the participants stated that the interview provided an exceptional opportunity to reflect consciously and critically on Artificial Intelligence and rise above instrumental thinking. This emphasizes the co-constructed nature of the corpus of data: knowledge constructed was not merely a product of information gathering but one of mutual construction and shared understanding. The collaborative and performative nature of the interview also confirms giving consideration to data not as neutral or simply extracted facts (Braun & Clarke, 2019), but as a product of interaction, narrative building, and the dynamics and relationships of fieldwork between the researcher and participant.

3.7.1 Sample Scope and Diversity

Although the sample combines professional roles—creative directors, strategists, designers, and consultants—with organizational types (agencies, freelance workers, cultural institutions, businesses), it is qualitatively, not statistically, representative. All of the participants are working in Italy and are primarily active in digitally developed sectors (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), and this enhances the contextual, biased nature of the qualitative data. Those professionals rooted in more conservative or analog communications contexts are not well represented, positioning the results within a certain professional and technical context.

3.7.2 Self-Selection and Reflexivity Bias

Participants were recruited through professional contacts and by means of snowball sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015), a sound procedure for accessing expert groups but subject to potential

self-selection bias. It is reasonable to assume that those predisposed to reflexivity in advance or already testing Artificial Intelligence would be most likely to be willing to take part. Thus, the corpus may reflect above-average levels of reflexivity, curiosity, and critical thinking, compared to a broader or more randomized sample.

3.7.3 Temporal Context

The interviews were conducted over a relatively short period of time (March-April 2025), at a period of pace-heightened technological transformation. Because AI instruments develop in a dynamic fashion, laws and public opinion, the data collected will have to be brought to serve as a “snapshot”, a time-limited observation of a fluid, constantly developing phenomenon. Certain impressions can be quickly made obsolete, while others could become increasingly relevant as patterns evolve.

3.7.4 Translation and Linguistic Interpretation

All the interviews were conducted in Italian and then translated into English for writing and quotation within the thesis. Although every effort was made to maintain tone, style, and conceptual accuracy, it is possible that some idiomatic expressions, cultural references, or rhetorical nuances were lost. The process of translation thus added an additional layer of interpretation (Finlay, 2002), emphasizing again the role of language and mediation in constructing qualitative accounts, which must be recognized as part of the final presentation of participants’ voices.

3.7.5 Analytical Subjectivity

The method used in this study acknowledges the researcher’s subjectivity not as a weakness, but as an essential resource in meaning construction. In accordance with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019), the process of interpreting the data was not viewed as objective or neutral, but as the outcome of an immediate interaction between the text and the researcher’s perspective. Analytical choices—from early-stage codes to theme construction—were inevitably influenced by the researcher’s theoretical stance and teaching background. As a reminder, Saldaña (2021) encourages being transparent and rigorously interpretive in acknowledging this impact. Reflexivity was maintained at all times throughout the analysis, with the constant aim of questioning the researcher’s interpretive choices.

Despite these limitations, the study offers an empirically dense, ethically respectful, and contextually situated account of how Artificial Intelligence is managed in contemporary advertising practice. Rather than attempting universal conclusions, the research foregrounds partiality, inconsistency, and practitioners' ascription of meaning to their experience. In this way, it contributes to a broader understanding of the lived experience and symbolic negotiations characterizing the contemporary convergence of automation, creativity, and human-machine collaboration.

3.7.6 Practical Challenges and Problem-Solving.

Throughout the conduct of the research, there were several practical and methodological problems that required adaptive solutions and reflective decisions. These problems were not merely logistical, but epistemologically important inasmuch as they worked to delimit both the meaning and the scope of the empirical data.

The most persistent challenge was that of scheduling and availability of participants, particularly those at executive or senior levels within agencies. Whereas professional networks and snowball sampling facilitated initial contact, arranging interview times often required multiple follow-ups and fitting around time slots, which included weekends and evenings. Accordingly, the researcher adopted a mixed model of interviewing (in-person and remote), which increased participation levels and respected the professionals' time constraints and working environments.

Another significant challenge related to the scope and relevance of AI tools addressed in the interviews. Due to the rapid evolution of technologies, some interviewees had limited or older experience with more recent tools, and others referred to experimental applications still in progress. To allow for this breadth, the interview guide was revised after the initial discussions to leave more space for open-ended comment, such as unsolicited references to previously unmentioned tools or novel methods. This dynamic structure helped ensure the inclusion of emerging insights without restricting participants to a predefined narrative.

Transcription and translation also presented major challenges. Interviews were conducted in Italian in order to capture linguistic and cultural nuance, but translating emotionally loaded, professionally technical language into English risked flattening or distorting crucial phrases.

In order to counter this, the researcher maintained a two-step process: initial machine-assisted transcription (e.g., through TurboScribe) then close manual revision and interpretive annotation. Particular care was exercised to preserve idiomatic expressions, culturally located metaphors, and rhetorical style, in an effort to preserve participants' voice and meaning.

The open-ended format of the interviews occasionally led to sensitive conversations, especially on issues like automation, job insecurity, and data ethics. Occasionally, participants asked how their responses were going to be represented or understood. These concerns were alleviated through reiterating ethical guarantees of anonymity, encouraging openness regarding the research purpose, and giving participants the right to view and correct their quotation when applicable.

Lastly, the interpretive nature of thematic analysis generated its own set of problems. Danger of overcoding, thematic inflation, and imposing researcher bias was constant and addressed by memoing, peer debriefing, and successive theme refinements. Rather than considering ambiguity a shortcoming, the researcher regarded it as generative force within qualitative research, putting tensions and contradictions first in understanding professional imaginations of AI.

These issues, though challenging, ultimately served to make the research stronger through increased methodological agility, greater reflexivity, and greater ethical sensitivity. They also reinforced the very basis of the research: that human-technology interaction, especially in creative activities, is shaped by uncertainty, negotiation, and relational complexity as much as innovation and efficiency.

3.8 Synthesis of the Research Design

This concluding section is not intended to recapitulate the methodological phases previously established, but to critically synthesize the manner in which the research design, defined as the confluence of epistemological positioning, methodological inclination, and practical execution, has enabled an elaboration of a situated, context-sensitive, and interpretative understanding of the integration of Artificial Intelligence in advertising practice.

The research consists of a qualitative and interpretivist epistemology that conceptualizes knowledge as co-constructed, mobile, and contextualized in professional and social environments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Schwandt, 2000). Such conceptualization is particularly appropriate when researching emergent phenomena like AI adoption among creative industries, where meaning is not fixed but negotiated in practice, discourse, and reflexivity. Within this paradigm, the researcher does not occupy the role of detached observer but that of an active participant within meaning production—mediating, interpreting, and coproducing knowledge with participants (Finlay, 2002).

From this foundation, all steps of research were designed to maintain consistency between theory and method. Use of semi-structured interviews was in response to the need to explore individual narratives, situated accounts, and subjective dilemmas with respect to the use of AI tools in an open-ended and qualitative manner. Use of this approach allowed participants to express their views in their own terms, eliciting a range of reflection on creativity, data ethics, automation, and professional identity. Rather than remaining purely technical, the interviews often became reflective spaces where participants articulated not only their excitement but also their anxieties regarding technological transformation.

The sample design also enriched the research. The application of purposive and maximum variation sampling made it possible to recruit diverse professional profiles such as freelancers, agency employees, strategists, designers, and creative directors that operate in a range of organizational settings and have differing levels of familiarity and interest in AI. Such heterogeneity was not merely beneficial but necessary for avoiding homogeneous or unrepresentative accounts of technological adoption. Rather, the research did capture both AI adoption's promises and contradictions, such as concerns regarding control, authorship, creativity, and strategic alignment.

The analysis process—informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2019) theorizations of reflexive thematic analysis—was not pursued as a linear exercise in coding, but as an interpretive and iterative exploration of the material. Codes and themes were not imposed a priori but developed through a dialogic interaction between data, theory, and researcher positionality. The intention was not to simplify complexity, but rather to respect it—to bring into visibility the contradictions, uncertainties, and shifting viewpoints that define the present moment in which AI is insinuating itself into the cultural logic of creative labor.

To that degree, the thematic codes created in Chapter 4 have no universalistic claims but rather present situated accounts of how advertising professionals in Italy are making sense of Artificial Intelligence as it relates to their everyday practices. These themes chart a spectrum of positions—from adoptive enthusiasm to strategic reserve, from tactical exploration to resistant critique—and send us back to the broader imaginaries that professionals associate with AI, such as empowerment, displacement, augmentation, or loss of authorial agency.

Ethical sensitivity was also a key aspect of this research design. From informed consent to data anonymization and choice of language, all steps were informed by standards of respect, confidentiality, and sensitivity to the power dynamics in the research interaction. The interview process conducted in the language of the participants (Italian) and then translated into English adds another level of interpretative mediation and aids in strengthening the argument that qualitative research is never neutral but always discursively constructed and situated (Finlay, 2002).

Further, the study design makes explicit its limitations. The cultural specificity of the sample, the contemporaneity of data gathering (during a period of accelerating change in technology), and likely biases from self-selection are not framed as methodological flaws, but as characteristics intrinsic to qualitative research. These limits also imply reflexivity and transparency as ways to guarantee the credibility and analytical robustness of the research.

Taken as a whole, the characteristics of this design offer an integrated, critically informed, and epistemologically sophisticated way of exploring the adoption of Artificial Intelligence in contemporary advertising practice. Rather than offering generalizable findings or normative judgments, the design allows for a multi-dimensional reading of the ways professionals negotiate, interpret, and internalize technological transformation within their creative and strategic work.

The methodological and analytical choices outlined here reflect a commitment to understanding AI not as a neutral tool, but as a culturally embedded and professionally contested phenomenon. The research, therefore, appreciates ambiguity, contradiction, and complexity as valid forms of knowledge, understanding that the work of AI in advertising is

still in the making—conceived not only by technology potential but also by human imagination, institutional conventions, and sociocultural conflict.

The next chapter directly builds upon this foundation, offering an interpretive explanation of the empirical data. Rather than reproducing the interviews in a neutral style as raw data, Chapter 4 interprets them as meaning-making sites where practitioners construct visions of the future and present of AI—visions filled with hope, skepticism, strategy, and ethical concern. This shift from research design to interpretation does not represent a break, but rather an intensification of the central questions—revealing how advertising professionals are actively redefining the role of AI within their cultural, strategic, and creative practices.

Chapter IV

Field Results: Alignments and Contrasts Between Theory and Practice

This chapter presents the results of qualitative field research with industry executives in advertising and communications. Based on 14 semi-structured interviews, analysis examines how professionals experience, interpret, and respond to growing use of AI tools by their creative and strategic work. The findings are synthesized into six overarching thematic categories, each reflecting a key dimension of how AI reshapes advertising practice in advertising—ranging from adoption as an instrument and creative autonomy to personalization and ethics.

These themes are not just responding to theoretical expectations; rather, they reveal the richness, ambiguity, and negotiation characteristic of real human-machine relations in the business. Specialists express all sorts of affective reactions—from excitement and engagement to caution and critical resistance—highlighting both the potential and the conundrum of AI-enabled advertising.

In order to offer orientation to the reader, Table 4.1 below offers a summary of the overall themes that arose, along with descriptive findings and representative quotes from the interviews.

Table – 3 Key Themes Emerging from Qualitative Analysis

Main Theme	Simplified Description	Sample Quote
AI Integration in Daily Workflow	Participants describe different levels of AI use depending on roles and workplaces. Some professionals use tools like ChatGPT, MidJourney, or Fireflies every day to write content, take notes, or create drafts. Others use AI only occasionally or to experiment. How often and how well AI is used often depends on personal learning and how open the organization is, showing that there are still no shared or standard methods.	“Sometimes it feels like we’re all figuring it out alone—there’s no shared roadmap.” (P4)

Main Theme	Simplified Description	Sample Quote
Creativity and Prompt Engineering	Creative professionals are using AI more and more by learning how to write good prompts. They don't see this as just a technical skill, but as a new way to shape ideas and express creativity. Some see writing prompts as a creative act in itself, while others feel that it leaves less room for instinct and spontaneous thinking.	“The real creativity now is in designing the right prompt—it’s a different kind of authorship.” (P3)
Ethical Concerns and Data Use	Many professionals are concerned about the ethical use of AI, especially when it comes to consent, transparency, and how data is protected. They often point out that there are no clear internal rules or training on these issues, and feel unsure about how to deal with problems like bias, surveillance, or what clients expect. As a result, ethical decisions are often made on a case-by-case basis.	“Nobody ever explained how far we can go with targeting—sometimes I just guess what’s okay.” (P9)
Personalization vs. Intrusiveness	Even though hyper-personalization is seen as useful for strategy, some participants feel uneasy about how it tracks users and makes content too targeted. They worry that it removes spontaneity and leaves no space for different interpretations, which can hurt trust and authenticity. Some are also concerned that this kind of personalization might start to feel manipulative.	“It’s useful, yes, but it knows things about our users that feel... too personal.” (P11)
Human-AI Collaboration	AI is not seen as something that replaces professionals, but as a tool that helps them work faster—by speeding up idea generation, offering different options, or taking care of repetitive tasks. Still, important decisions about creativity, brand voice, and overall strategy are seen as things only humans can do well, which shows how important human judgment and storytelling still are.	“You still need someone to give meaning. AI is fast, but it doesn’t understand brand essence.” (P1)
Emotional Ambivalence and Future Visions	Interviewees have mixed emotions about AI. Some feel curious, excited, and even inspired by it, while others feel anxious about losing creative skills, job stability, or the importance of their role. They see the future of AI as both full of possibilities and potential risks, showing a strong sense of uncertainty.	“Exciting and terrifying—it’s like watching the rules of our jobs change in real time.” (P13)

4.1 Perceptions and Use of AI in Advertising Practice

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a novelty in the advertising industry; to the majority of the interviewed professionals, it is now an integral part of their workday. As revealed by the interviews, the use of AI crosses functions—strategy, creativity, management, and operations—although the means are varied by role and level (P2, P5, P8, P13). Initially driven by curiosity, experimentation with AI has grown to become routine use, a shift from periodic testing towards systematic use (Feuerriegel et al., 2024).

One of the most used tools that is commonly quoted is ChatGPT due to its breadth of applications in writing, editing, brainstorming, adjusting tone, and building creatively. As social media manager P13 put it succinctly, *“I use ChatGPT to write fun and deliberately ‘nonsense’ stuff quickly that matches our tone of communication. Definitely saves me time”*. Visual creatives complement text generation with tools like Midjourney, DALL·E, and Adobe Firefly to sketch out visual concepts and moodboards at the front end of ideation. Occasionally, AI is also used to maintain consistency between formats and workstreams *“it’s not just a question of velocity but of internal governance”*, added a marketing strategist (P1). To document and coordinate, there are tools like Plaud.ai and Fireflies.ai used to transcribe calls and record follow-up tasks. For them, integration is also order of operations. *“I use AI to reorder tasks and capture what otherwise would get buried in a thousand meetings”*, said one sales process analyst (P3).

Usage differs by role and seniority. Junior creatives and freelancers use AI more for operational independence and creative confidence, with tools such as Photoshop AI or Canva AI. Strategists and account managers use AI more for organizing data and extracting insights. This modular and adaptive application reflects a distributed logic: AI is not used continuously but selectively activated where it can bring maximum benefit—whether in brainstorming, copy rewriting, or deliverable planning. This confirms the idea that AI is not a fixed technical level, but as a situated practice shaped by context, purpose and human interpretation—what Suchman (2007) has referred to as the embedded and contingent nature of technological action.

Despite its utility, early interaction with AI was often frustrating due to generic or overly mechanical replies. As time passed, however, practitioners reported significant improvement

by way of more advanced prompting methods, attesting to the value of prompt engineering as a creative skill (Kumar & Gupta, 2016).

Participants consistently emphasized the need for human intervention. Outputs are analyzed, edited, and put into context before they are delivered. For instance, many professionals point to the need to “humanize” outputs. *“I always have to step in on the tone, because it flattens the brand voice too much”*, said a copywriter (P5). For most of those surveyed, rather than replacing creativity, Artificial Intelligence enhances it by speeding up repetitive tasks and expanding the range of investigation. As many interviewees noted, AI provides an opportunity to experiment and develop thought in the moment: *“It’s a way to start thinking”*, as one marketing consultant (P14) said; *“It’s like arguing with someone who gives you back possibilities, even when you’re alone”* (P1).

4.1.1 Tools and Practices: AI Integration in the Daily Advertising Workflow

Across the advertising industry, Artificial Intelligence has transitioned from being an occasional novelty to a ubiquitous and functioning element of regular creative work. Among the specialists interviewed, AI-informed tools are no longer add-on options but integral tools woven into regular procedures—particularly for those projects that require speed, iteration, or linguistic nuance. As the following participants described, AI is “always on” and is eminently amenable to becoming integrated into the workflow by multiple participants (e.g., P6, P11).

Text-generation instruments like ChatGPT are the most widely employed. They are employed for the extensive range of micro-tasks such as writing initial drafts, rewriting messages, translating technological reports, creating editorial blueprints, writing video scripts, summarizing interviews, or tuning tone of voice. *“It is like having a smart secretary who perfects and rephrases texts within seconds”*, quoted a marketing planner (P1). Others make reusable prompt templates or task-based “agents” for repeat client briefs, which optimize both time and consistency.

Visual creation workflows incorporate tools like Adobe Firefly, Midjourney, and *Freepik AI*.³⁴ These are used to develop rapid mock-ups, establish reference images, or moodboards in the initial stages of ideation. *“They enable me to convey the idea before the shooting process”*, explained a junior art director (P9). These come with heightened expectations: clients anticipate prototypes early on in the process, in some cases before a proper briefing is done. *“I do layouts in Firefly to provide the client with a strong visual suggestion prior to moving on to the final design”*, a graphic designer (P7) recalled.

As we will discuss in section 4.1.3, AI is typically integrated at specific project phases, based on its added value and contextual relevance, rather than applied in a continuous, linear fashion. Professionals use AI tools only at pivotal moments—when creativity is in short supply, time is short, or multiple types of content are needed. A common sequence is producing content manually, refining it with AI, and personal touches added afterwards. An older creative (P11) defined AI as an on-demand aid system something which becomes part of the process selectively, based on what one is doing, not directing the whole project from the very beginning. It’s this framing which shows the hybrid and non-linear thinking common to AI-based workflows.

Administrative and organizational functions also benefit from AI. Tools such as Plaud.ai, Fireflies.ai, and Tactics assist in transcribing meetings, extracting key points, and creating follow-up tasks. This is especially common in account and strategy roles. AI is particularly appreciated for simplifying coordination and task management. *“I save hours every week just by using AI to prepare and summarize meetings”*, explained an account executive (P6), detailing the organizational rather than creative advantage of integration. At some agencies, shared tools also help to centralize strategic insights and documentation across departments. The interviewee (P6) also added, *“We use AI tools to turn complex research into internal guides, AI bridges the gap between teams”*. This interdepartmental value suggests a broader trend for AI-enabled collaboration. AI was said to facilitate collaboration across creative specialties such as strategic and media groups, especially in translating planning documents into successful creative direction. *“I recreate strategic decks in ChatGPT so that our copywriters don’t get caught up in the technical jargon”*, added a marketing strategist (P1).

³⁴*Freepik AI Image Generator* is software that creates images using Artificial Intelligence, based on descriptions of text. It offers different modes of generation and styles to be able to deliver results in real-time. The images can be personalized by applying styles, color filter and point of view without entering lengthy commands. It is designed to be easy to use, thus even those without great technical skills can use it to produce images. Freepik. (2025). *AI Image Generator - Free Text to Image*. <https://www.freepik.com/ai/image-generator>

AI's contribution to pre-client delivery phases was frequently highlighted. Professionals described how generative tools such as Midjourney and Firefly help produce fast visual prototypes that can be shown to clients before formal storyboard development. *"These tools let me convey a visual idea at an early stage, giving the client something concrete to react to"*, explained a junior art director (P9). Rather than waiting on full creative production, others leverage AI to provide solid first drafts. *"For rough proposals, I use Firefly to create visual previews without relying entirely on the design team"*, added the same creative (P9), pointing to the speed and autonomy AI can provide in pre-production.

Another practice that emerged from the interviews is constructing personalized *"AI stacks"*, pre-established combinations of tools tailored to specific project workflows. For example, a campaign launch might begin with Perplexity for competitive intelligence, then ChatGPT for copy drafts, Firefly for mock-up creation, and Figma³⁵ for final build-out. These tailored sequences show greater sophistication in how professionals choreograph different AI tools based on task, function, and client.

AI also enables documentation and management of knowledge. Some of the respondents employed summarization tools to summarize campaign histories, translate pitch decks into internal training slides, or store learnings in search-based formats. *"We turn complex research into concise guides for colleagues through AI. It is one such method of sharing knowledge with greater ease"*, said a marketing strategist (P1).

Perhaps the greatest disparity emerged between junior and senior professionals. Junior creatives and freelancers would make use of AI for further confidence and speed, particularly when working independently. *"It gives me the security I still lack when writing long-form content"*, admitted a young product designer (P8). *"Sometimes I get stuck because I don't know how to write the right prompt"*, mentioned a junior web designer (P7). Conversely, professional creators harness AI to extend conceptual space or try out stylistic possibilities without relinquishing strict authorial control. As a creative put it, *"For example (AI) It helps me stretch an idea in five different directions in no time"*, described a multidisciplinary artist (P10).

³⁵ Figma AI refers to a collection of Figma features integrated in order to assist designers throughout the design process. The features employ Artificial Intelligence to generate content, suggest changes, and repeat tasks, thereby facilitating real-time prototyping as well as collaboration. Figma AI integrates with the Figma user interface in a manner where intelligent assistance adapts automatically according to designers' workflow requirements. Figma. (2025). *Figma AI*. <https://www.figma.com/ai/n>

The versatility of AI also carries over to different usefulness based on experience: newcomers benefit from organization and guidance, while expert practitioners use it to push past current conventions. Issues of quality and redundancy remain. *“At first, the outputs were mechanical and formulaic”*, said one project manager (P6). Some of the participants in the interview noted that effective use of AI is heavily dependent on prompt designing and editing—something akin to Kumar and Gupta’s (2016) *“prompt engineering as a creative competency”*.

The theme of personalization and control is a recurring one. *“If you don’t use it in the right way, it returns with plain content”*, warned a product designer (P8). The majority have developed personal techniques of combining AI with brand tone, communication style, and audience. *“Sometimes the output looks perfect but feels artificial. I worry that I don’t really know what’s generating it”*, explained a visual designer (P12).

Temporal dynamics have also been revolutionized by AI. Activities like producing a white paper or developing a storyboard, which were time-consuming, now take hours. *“What took me a week before now takes one day”*, answered one project manager (P6). Such velocity holds possibilities and dilemmas: tighter delivery cycles, but more client pressure and narrower margins for iteration.

Some interviewees even reported using AI in real-time or ambient scenarios. *“I dictate potential headlines into ChatGPT while I’m on a call, just to see what sticks”*, said a strategist (P1). Though still emerging, this integration points toward future shifts in how AI will be embedded into mobile, wearable, or voice-driven interfaces. *“I use it for only some stages: to confirm a hunch, not to plan an entire campaign”*, responded one sales process analyst (P3), demonstrating focused and not continuous use.

Lastly, some of the experts pointed out the absence of standard policies or official training on teams. *“Everyone does it differently, but we still don’t have a common way”*, said a project manager (P6), citing variability of adoption. Ad hoc efforts—e.g., shared prompt libraries or group Slack threads³⁶—were mentioned by some of the respondents, but that organizational sponsorship remains inconsistent. *“The issue isn’t the tool itself, but the lack of internal*

³⁶Slack threads enable people to respond to individual messages in a channel, thus creating structured sub-conversations that minimize clutter and maintain focused discussions. This feature enables teams to discuss many topics at once without clogging the main chat stream. Slack. (2025). *Use threads to organize discussions*. <https://slack.com/help/articles/115000769927-Use-threads-to-organize-discussions>

control over how it's utilized", warned a marketing strategist (P1), and arguing that there needs to be improved procedures and training. As one strategist put it, *"It's not the AI that makes the distinction, it's the way you frame your questions, interpret the results, and understand your goals"* (P1).

4.1.2 Adoption Drivers and Professional Attitudes

The adoption of AI advertising tools is driven by a mix of operational, personal, and cultural factors. While efficiency is usually the most frequently cited key benefit, interviews revealed a far more complex set of motivations—ranging from curiosity and source of inspiration through to institutional, identity-based, and other drivers.

Operational necessity is highly relevant, especially in pressure situations. The majority of professionals concurred that AI helps them deal with greater content volumes and tighter deadlines. *"It frees me from repetitive tasks so I can focus on conceptual thinking"*, a project manager said (P6). Others referred to AI as an *"invisible colleague"* (P9), doing first drafts, formatting, and content alternatives to allow more time for high-leverage decision-making.

Other than productivity, adoption of AI is also prompted by whim or curiosity. Several of the respondents recalled first-time experimentation with applications like ChatGPT or Midjourney for sheer self-interest—writing poems, mixing and matching visuals, or automating tasks. *"At first I was using it to craft humorous emails, and then I saw that I could use it to write serious proposals too"*, shared a creative director (P11). This strategy of a curiosity-driven approach also aligns with Bharti and Park's (2023) *"emergent adoption"* theory, wherein the use begins as casual and ultimately becomes part of conscious professional uptake.

However, not all have a universally positive view of AI. Some professionals were uncomfortable with the aesthetic or moral implication of AI-produced content. *"It flattens everything; it's too perfect, too generic"*, warned a photographer (P12), as part of a wider concern that losing the creative spark and the emotional resonance would be the outcome. Others were wary of the algorithms' transparency and unclear origins of training data, but these were not generally boiled down to outright dismissal of the tools. *"I use it, but I don't fully trust it"*, admitted a marketing consultant (P14). In line with this cautious approach, a sales process analyst stated, *"I try it, but each output has to be verified. It's useful, but not 100 percent reliable"* (P3).

Professional identity is fundamental to AI adoption. Creatives will use AI to create ideas or explore directions, while strategists see it as a sparring partner for scenario planning or information aggregation. *“I don’t want answers; I want better questions”*, said a marketing strategist (P1), describing ChatGPT as a tool for cognitive structuring rather than an automation device. These differences are reflective of how AI isn’t simply a utilitarian tool but a reflection of the way that practitioners view their own job and value.

Organizational setting also determines adoption styles. Freelancers and junior staff often embrace AI tools more freely, valuing them as skill multipliers in low-resource settings. *“It helps me deliver without depending on an entire team”*, said a product designer (P8). Larger agencies, by contrast, make use of guidelines, approval processes, and legality concerns that might constrain more experimental uses. *“We need licenses, approvals, and sometimes AI just won’t fit the process”*, one communications lead (P13) said.

One of the most compelling insights from the interviews is the creation of personal methodologies. Nearly all participants emphasized that effective use of AI involves active learning, trial and error, and learning to accommodate. *“At first I hated the results. Then I learned how to train the tool to my style”*, described a multidisciplinary artist (P10). This recursive practice suggests that AI literacy is not merely technical but also reflective and identity-based: specialists come to build their use of AI while simultaneously building their notion of authorship and process.

Several of the interviewees likened their experience of being with AI to a dialogue: *“It’s like a sparring partner; it pushes me, but I still lead”* (P14). Some articulated it in emotional or relational terms: *“It gives me the confidence to start. I don’t feel lonely anymore when I am writing”* (P8). These metaphors allude to the affective and psychologic sides of tool take-up, not encountered in classical innovation processes.

Regarding the ethical aspect, opinions were very different. Some thought there should be increased transparency, traceability, and in-house codes of conduct. Others viewed such concerns as secondary to performance. One visual designer (P12) noted, *“As long as it serves the purpose, I’m less concerned about where it’s sourced from”*, suggesting a pragmatic stance that prioritizes functionality over provenance. However, the majority did express concern about over-dependence: the idea that AI, if used uncritically, could destroy

originality, voice, and critical distance. *“You still have to ask yourself: is this really good? Or is it just quick?”* (P11).

These differing attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence—operational, exploratory, and identity-based—are clearly also mirrored in the ways experts deal with creativity itself. It is here that some of the most significant tensions begin to arise. These personal observations regarding motivations and resistances raise a fundamental question: how does AI actually impact the creative process?

4.2 Creativity and Automation: Tensions and Synergies

In the advertising context, Artificial Intelligence has an ambiguous yet potentially fertile space: the domain of creativity. The question is essentially whether AI can truly create creative material or merely offer a suggestion, a draft, or a prompt that needs a human touch. Interviews discover a wide range of stances, wherein excitement is knitted with precaution, and practical utility sits alongside fear of standardization.

AI is seen by most professionals as an idea enhancer that can free up time and mental energy to focus on ideas, concepts, and storytelling. *“It takes away the burden of first drafts and lets you focus on what you really want to say”* (P8). Such an approach does not take away from authorship but rather reinforces it: the AI is a sort of *“accelerator of trials”*, useful for testing more solutions more quickly, while the human remains responsible for choosing, editing, or branching.

Within this logic, AI’s generativity is not perceived as a replacement but as collaborative. Some define it as a form of brainstorming, others as a patient partner that returns suggestions on request, without judgment. In this sense, AI is most often positioned at the beginning of the creative process, when ideation is still fluid, open, and divergent.

But along with these positive tales are tensions too. Some of the most common is the fear of standardization of output. All but two interviewees believed that proposals generated by AI are like clones of one another, replicate prevailing patterns, or offer the *“easy option”*. *“It gives you something that sounds good right away, but it’s never surprising”* (P11). That ease

has the risk of silencing broader inquiry, satisfying the need for an answer too early, and dulling intuition.

Some professionals also warned against operational dependency, an over-reliance on AI in the early stages of ideation. The risk is not only technical but symbolic: relinquishing that empty moment of frustration or uncertainty, which too commonly leads to originality. *“If you don’t pause to think, you accept the first answer. And the first idea is nearly always the wrong one” (P12).*

The conflict between speed and profundity is another crucial point. AI enables faster and greater content production. AI facilitates more rapid and deeper content creation. However, creativity sometimes needs slowness, meandering, and even failure. This opposition cannot be completely overcome but can be negotiated. A few interviewees explained turning AI into a stress test, requesting five or ten iterations of the same idea to compel themselves to dig deeper and proceed from surface-level notions.

Synergy, therefore, works best when AI is being put in dialogue with a thoughtful approach to design, rather than as an automatic default process. *“Sometimes I generate five or six options with AI simply to challenge myself, without necessarily aiming to use them”*, said a graphic and web designer (P7), detailing an exploratory rather than solely productive role. Most of the creative innovation happens within this tense balance: the ability to combine the machine’s generative power with the human’s selective sensitivity.

In short, AI does not replace creativity but redefines its boundaries and timing. It demands new skills, not only technical ones (prompting, A/B testing, iterative reformulation), but also cognitive and moral ones: the ability to distinguish what works from what is new and to understand when AI amplifies and when it stifles. As a respondent put it, *“AI is an accelerator, not an invention. If there’s invention, it still has to come from you” (P1).*

In this framework, the creative professional’s work is changed: no longer just an author, but also a selector of output content, a critical choice between automated output and the project’s vision. AI is thus a strong tool, but one with strength only if applied in the right position: at the beginning of the process, as a spark, not at the end as the final answer.

4.2.1 Creative Freedom vs. Prompt Engineering

One of the most compelling tensions to emerge from the interviews concerns the balance between creative freedom and the technical restriction required in order to approach Artificial Intelligence usefully. While, on the one hand, AI is recognized as a collaborator in creative blockage breakthrough, on the other hand, requires a set of new, almost designer-like skills in designing practical, clear, and well-constrained prompts. This paradox—more freedom, yet more order—was noted by many professionals. Creatives variously supported that while AI is useful, crafting a good prompt can sometimes require more intellectual effort than the creative task itself (P7, P10, P14).

Different interviewees mentioned that writing a prompt is becoming an essential aspect of the creative process. Writing a prompt doesn't necessarily imply being accurate, but it means knowing what you want the result to be, which parameters to set, and how to interpret the answers of the AI. *"Sometimes I spend more time writing the prompt than actually doing something with the generated content"*, said a marketing manager (P14). Here, the prompt is not just a design move, a semantic gesture. The experts speak of *"training"* the AI in their own eye, of introducing it to a tone, an aesthetic, a point of view, a process that demands more than a command and has a gestation.

This need for precision creates tension with the more intuitive and discovery-oriented side of creativity. A few designers indicated that they feel constrained by the syntactical rules of prompting or frustrated at the rigidity of the results. Others view this as a new way to approach digital craftsmanship: *"If you learn to guide it, AI becomes an extension of your thinking"* (P8). *"Sometimes I get stuck because I don't know how to write the right prompt. I have to try out several until I find the one that works"*, a junior graphic and web designer (P7) said. Some professionals stress the importance of training the AI to match a specific style. *"The best output comes when I help it understand my tone. Otherwise, everything sounds the same"* (P10). In this view, AI is similar to a musical instrument; it needs technique to play nicely, yet sensitivity to make it into meaningful expression.

As a result, creativity is evolving, not only in the output but also in the ability to design intentional input. This is evident in the literature as a new creative literacy (Kumar & Gupta, 2016), whereby the creative practitioner is no longer simply a writer but an intelligence orchestrator who can interact with generative systems without compromising intentionality. A

few interviewees referred to systematic processes such as individualized prompt libraries, task-oriented “agents”, or iterative question sequences, evidence that in today’s time creativity also contains an algorithmic side. This illustrates how certain experts are now beginning to utilize AI not only as an execution tool but, most importantly, as a thinking partner in creating and refining their original work.

However, not everyone views this change in a good light. Some of the interviewees are concerned that emphasizing the importance of prompt design too much can draw attention away from the conceptual value of the idea and into the performance of the tool. That is, one will be lost between technical skill and creative value. “*A good prompt is worthless if the idea is weak*”, opined a creative director (P11). Others are concerned that the nature of AI interface encourages shortcuts, offering instantaneous output without necessarily examining coherence or communicative effectivity.

Some professionals propose approaching the prompt more as a space for design thinking rather than as a command. In this manner, AI writing is merely explaining what you want to do: what you want, what alternatives you’re considering, and what constraints you’re setting. “*Writing the prompt helps refine your thinking. If you’re confused, the AI will be too*” (P1). Prompting, therefore, approximates the art of creative briefing; it is a practice in clarity, strategy, and vision. Creatives say AI does not give “correct” responses, but useful prompts. As the multidisciplinary artist (P10) explained more than once, “*It’s not really about what it writes, but about what it makes me think of*”, or “*I treat it like a dialogue. I ask it things just to see where it takes me*”.

4.2.2 From Ideation to Execution: What AI Can and Cannot Do

One of the central questions to emerge from conversations with professionals concerns the limits and potential of Artificial Intelligence in the whole creative process, from idea generation to implementation. The interviews present a rich context in which AI is admired for its versatility and speed, but its conceptual, aesthetic, and cultural limitations are also recognized.

The majority of interviewees agreed in their description of AI as a helpful tool from the outset of the project, helping to generate rough ideas, alternative narratives, titles, terminology, or reference images. “*I use it when I’m stuck. It gets me start, then I take over*” (P10). The majority of interviewees agreed in their description of AI as a helpful tool from

the outset of the project, helping to generate rough ideas, alternative narratives, titles, terminology, or reference images. *“What matters to me is that the tool aligns with the brand identity. If the tone doesn’t match, I won’t use it”* (P13), stated a head of communication. Others described AI as a form of *“augmented brainstorming”*, replacing the old whiteboard and its dozens of hypotheses to combine or discard. This manner, AI is valued for minimizing the intellectual cost of getting engaged.

Opinions vary more for the execution phase. Some professionals also use AI for upper-level operational tasks, i.e., creating secondary copy, developing mid-level graphics, or automating formats (e.g., newsletters, banners, social media posts). Others do draw a qualitative line beyond which they would prefer to go back to manual work. *“Once the concept is finalized by the client, I prefer redoing everything from scratch rather than depending on AI output”* (P11). This boundary is not only aesthetic but also ethical; it assumes creative jurisdiction and formal responsibility for the final product.

Among the most prevalent cited limitations is a lack of stylistic or visual consistency in AI-generated content, especially when working with pre-existing brands or projects with strict aesthetic guidelines. AI-generated visuals were widely described as *“surreal”*, *“too stock”*, or difficult to contextualize. Some in the industry scorned the recurrence of visual clichés or over-rendered shininess, far from the spontaneity or imperfection occasionally called for in a given campaign.

Similarly, AI-created content almost always requires revision at a fundamental level, as it is generic, toneless, or impersonal. *“It writes well but says nothing. If you don’t give it the content, it won’t get it”* (P12). AI tends to draw from established patterns, and that can be limiting if working with distinctive positioning or strongly branded language.

Contextual sensitivity is another key challenge. Even though AI may be taught from massive data sets, it does not get the cultural nuances, local references, irony, or emotional richness. *“AI is great at filling space, but not at building meaning”* (P14). His argument is quite insightful regarding the distinction between data and meaning, between information processing and making sense of stories. In industries like food, luxury, fashion, or culture, this limitation is particularly obvious.

Many professionals conceded that AI can be of particularly great assistance at the prototyping stage, when one must quickly generate a mock-up, a sample, or an example demonstrative

layout. *“I use it to prepare visually strong slides to send to the client, even before they go through the design team”*, said an art director (P9). Speed and visual impact are more significant at this point than precision. *“To convince a client, sometimes all you need is a strong suggestion, even if it’s imperfect. You can refine it later”* (P6). AI is thus employed at a rhetorical and strategic level, and this works better when it comes to selling the idea rather than providing the end result. *“I use it to organize presentation elements, create variants and concepts to bring to meetings; it’s more of an organizational support rather than a creative one”*, noted a consultant and marketing manager (P14).

Sometimes, the presence of AI also alters the relationship dynamic with the client. Some of the interviewees indicated utilizing AI-created prototypes to accelerate approvals, display more alternatives, or test responses in real time. This is altering the notion of what constitutes a draft versus the final product, reimagining feedback timelines and expectations over intermediate quality.

As almost all respondents affirmed, something that AI is not yet able to do is make conscious design decisions. It can’t decide, but it can assist, motivate, and add value to. The final word remains human, as does the responsibility for the outcome. *“It gives me a head start, but every output needs to be filtered and carefully evaluated. It’s a support, not a guarantee”*, stated a copywriter (P2). *“In the end, the client calls me, not the AI”* (P1). This encapsulates the core of the human-AI relationship: it’s not all about output. It’s all about reputation, trust, and professional ethics.

4.2.3 The Role of the Human Touch: Style, Nuance, and Voice

Despite the expression abilities of Artificial Intelligence, all the interviewees agree on one fundamental point: AI can never replace the *“human touch”*, or the ability to imbue content with meaning, personality, and depth. While generative technologies can replicate known styles, produce grammatically correct sentences, or form cohesive imagery, lacking in the calculation is authorial intention, the subtlety and nuance that make communication real and memorable.

Tone of voice is most emphasized by experts, not just as a linguistic trend, but as a brand, author, or a vision for a project’s consistent conveyance. *“AI writes correct sentences, but you can’t tell it’s us”* (P14), highlighting the gap between formal accuracy and communicative genuineness. The recognizability issue is not about the content quality; it also

affects the audience relationship: impersonal messaging does not evoke connection, empathy, or trust. *“Even when it’s formally correct, the text feels flat”*, noted a copywriter (P2). Another professional observed, *“AI gives you a voice, but it doesn’t give you your voice”* (P9), indicating the risk of flattening of identity.

The challenge, then, is to humanize the output, to intervene in the generated words to reestablish coherence, character, and contextual appropriateness. Some insiders have reported starting from scratch, rewriting AI outputs to meet tone demands; others prefer to create highly specific prompts to determine the register to begin with. In each case, the need is to reclaim one’s voice: not just to make AI speak, but to make it say something that has meaning both for the writer and the reader. This interaction reflects what Sawyer (2012) has called distributed creativity, where creativity is not the work of an isolated individual genius but of the productive interaction between people, tools, and interpretative context.

The same issue is valid on the visual side. AI pictures are *“cold”*, *“perfect but empty”*, without the imperfection that makes a photo feel alive, a composition believable, or a design efficient. *“AI knows how to compose, but not how to see”* (P12). A few of the interviewees explained that they used AI images as a draft or reference for beauty only, to then substitute them in delivery. Others added that the hyperrealism of AI can also, ironically, produce emotional detachment, *“a kind of perfection that’s visually sterile”* (P8).

No doubt one of the most valuable elements of the human touch is also critical thinking. Whereas AI might be forceful and linear in its output, human creativity thrives on doubt, contradiction, and ambiguity. *“AI solves. Humans question”* (P11). Questioning is essential to creating meaning; it provides for reflection on what works, what does not, what surprises, and what moves. The ability to disrupt the linearity of the machine and deviate from the quickest solution is the most valuable skill for imaginative work.

Human involvement, then, goes beyond having the output be lovely—it is about steering the project, choosing between alternatives, assigning value to an intuition, and being capable of viewing a creative mistake as an opportunity. Several interviewees indicated returning to craftsmanship, that is, attending to detail, contextual savvy, and sensitivity to micro-signals. AI can help create, but what proves valuable is the person listening, observing, and deciding. *“The problem is not the tool but the fact that there is no shared vision for the use of AI throughout teams”*, explained a head of communications (P13).

A broader consideration also emerged with regard to the idea of intentional and moral voice. Whereas AI simply imitates patterns, humans determine what to communicate, why, and to whom. Communicative intention is a responsible act, in which every word, image, and tone is balanced in terms of context, concern for the other, and the values at stake. Certain experts called for insistence on this reality: *“I can use AI, but I still decide what’s allowed and what isn’t”* (P1).

While human judgment remains essential to stylistic coherence and emotional nuance, it also shows increased responsibility: steering the ethical ramifications of AI-driven personalization. Directing language, imagery, and tone is not merely an artistic pursuit but an ethical one. This shift—from stylistic craftsmanship to ethical responsibility—introduces a broader consideration of how AI remodels not just what we create, but how we engage with audiences, data, and values.

4.3 Ethical Reflections and the Challenge of Personalization

The use of Artificial Intelligence in advertising involves serious ethical issues, especially regarding the personalization of content. On the one hand, the capacity of AI to adapt messages, images, and formats to various user profiles is a very valuable communication resource; on the other hand, it poses multifaceted problems regarding transparency, privacy, informed consent, and behavior manipulation.

The majority of professionals interviewed see the promise of deep personalization but question where the line is between relevance and intrusion. *“Sometimes we get too close. It almost feels like the ad is reading your mind”* (P14). This perception of intrusiveness, which some describe as *“creepy”*, is especially intense when there is no transparency regarding how user data was collected, processed, or exploited to make the content. *“The real issue is that we don’t even know ourselves what happens to data that we process. We lack internal tools to interpret it or to describe it”*, explained a project manager (P6).

Data privacy was the most prominent concern. Some participants mentioned that they feel uneasy using tools that don’t explicitly declare the source of their datasets or tools that collect user data without explicit consent. Others merely expressed a kind of resignation: *“We give up data every day. AI just uses it better”* (P12). This pragmatic stance is combined with a

sense of regulatory impotence and generalized absence of critical literacy about how AI models operate.

The issue of behavioral manipulation was not addressed so obviously but came implicitly in several answers. Several experts inquired whether algorithmic personalization is a silent micro-manipulation, exerting the ability to nudge imperceptibly towards decisions. *“It’s not just saying the right thing to the right person. It’s making them believe that the idea was already theirs”* (P1). Such influence is objectionable since it revolves around the slippery line between good persuasion and unintended conditioning.

The second, and very significant, issue is transparency of process. Some interviewees described how, even if you want to, it’s difficult to trace the decision-making process that leads to content being delivered in a certain manner to a certain user. This problem—algorithmic opacity—denuclears human control, both by professionals and by users themselves. *“If we can’t see why AI is creating a specific image, how can we be sure if it’s ethical?”* (P3).

Some interviewees—largely those with more experience—advocated creating internal moral codes or guidelines for responsible AI use. *“We need ethics policies together. We can’t leave the management of such powerful tools to individual sensitivity”*, stated a veteran marketing manager (P14). Others believed that the future of customized communication will require new professional roles in charge of managing the balance between efficiency and moral duty. Among junior professionals, though, sentiment was more ambivalent: they were enthusiastic about technical potential but showed scant concern with underlying processes or indirect effects.

4.3.1 Between Customization and Invasiveness

The line between effective personalization and perceived intrusiveness is thin and constantly shifting. With use cases to customize ad content to users’ needs and behaviors, AI technologies possess the ability to build deeply suitable experiences. But when accuracy gets too aggressive—or somehow mysterious—there is a risk of triggering negative reactions, such as rejection or confusion.

Some respondents described this effect as an “*uncanny valley*”³⁷ of advertising: a point at which content is so carefully calibrated to the user that it feels suspicious. “*If I see an ad that preempts what I’m going to do or say, I feel I’m being watched more than served*” (P14). Relevance is therefore not just about data, but timing, tone, and channel. Even a helpful message can make one uncomfortable if it comes at the wrong time or in what is felt to be an overly monitored context.

Some professionals believe AI makes communication better, provided it is used consciously and in context. In particular, such features as recommendation and behavioral profiling-based dynamic content are viewed with interest, assuming they preserve a certain “*emotional distance*”. “*I want to know what my audience is interested in, but I don’t want them to feel manipulated*” (P8). This distance is necessary to prevent encroachment onto invasive ground: AI must aid us in understanding, not in surveilling.

One of the methods most commonly employed is intent-based segmentation; not simply looking at demographic information or touchpoints, but understanding where the user is on their journey, in what mindset, and with what receptiveness. Such a more qualitative and nuanced approach is seen as one possible antidote to algorithmic overexposure. Interviewees speak of “*gentle algorithms*”, capable of suggesting rather than demanding and proposing rather than intruding. Personalization, in this sense, should always be helpful, never manipulative.

Not everybody is that sensitive to it, however. Some professionals—particularly in high-performance environments—downplay the ethical dimension and prioritize results. “*If it works, it’s fine. If it sells, it’s right. Users know how the game works by now*” (P6). While common, such an attitude attests to growing tension between optimization logic and ethical principles. Its legitimacy rests on the assumption that users have accepted profiling as a price of digital modernity, an assumption not shared by all professionals.

Several interviewees offered that it’s not personalization that generates distrust, but insufficient transparency. If users understand why a given item of content is being shown to them, they will tolerate even a high level of targeting. In contrast, highly accurate yet

³⁷ The 1970 term “uncanny valley”, coined by Masahiro Mori, describes the creepy feeling one gets when an artificial thing is almost human but not quite, and there’s something indefinably “wrong” about it that provokes revulsion. In marketing, the concept is used for material so personalized as to be disconcerting, appearing to “know too much” about the consumer and provoking distrust over interest. Mori, M. (1970). *The uncanny valley*. *Energy*, 7(4), 33–35.

unexplained content creates disconnection, suspicion, or even annoyance. Some professionals proposed introducing elements of meta-communication into content, small signals that explain how or why a message was constructed. *“We’re testing a call-to-action that says: ‘This message was generated based on your interests.’ It’s a way to be transparent”*, said a copywriter (P2).

And finally, the frequency and repetition of personalized content is another critical area. Even a welcome message can become annoying if shown too often in an automated and repetitive way. Effective personalization, according to some, needs to be dynamic and fleeting as well, capable of evolving along with the evolving behavior and expectations of the user.

4.3.2 Awareness of Bias, Data Ownership, and Consent

One of the most vexed and least addressed spheres in AI use in advertising is critical awareness of data: where data come from, who has ownership of it, how it is processed, and with what reasoning one makes personalized outputs. Data processing and gathering are the drivers of personalization, but they are also a sphere of ambiguity from which open questions of ethics, jurisprudence, and culture are a part.

The interviews reveal significant disparities in professionals’ sensitivity. Some show strong concern regarding algorithmic bias and data transparency. *“When I work with some tools, I wonder: what data is this response based on? Who determined what is included and what isn’t?”* (P1). *“I use some tools, but every time I wonder if the data is representative. AI doesn’t necessarily read the right context”*, said a sales process analyst (P3). Others admitted they’ve never really researched the subject in depth, relying on the tool being neutral or certified at the very least. *“I trust the result, even if I don’t know where it comes from”* (P9); *“I accept the terms to use the AI, but I’ve never really understood what happens to the data. It’s all very unclear”* (P7). *“It feels like an intermediary entity, like an interface—but you don’t know what’s behind it”*, added a sales process analyst (P3), repeating a general sense of cognitive distance and opacity around AI systems. These words express a kind of passive but common trust.

Bias is among the most underestimated—but also most pervasive—issues. Only a few interviewees acknowledged that AI results can capture structural injustices baked into training datasets. Generative technologies learn from enormous, uncontrolled content reservoirs, which include past biases, lopsided representations, and asymmetries of visibility.

A few experts provided particular examples: AI images that reproduce homogeneous beauty standards, texts assuming classical gender roles or cementing class stereotypes. Nevertheless, few organizations possess internal verification systems or wide sensitivity for monitoring outputs from this viewpoint.

Ownership of the data is also still under debate. Some artists wondered who exactly owns AI-generated content, especially when it's generated from custom prompts or uploaded user material. *"If I upload a script to improve it with AI, then who owns the result?"* (P6). Others wondered the opposite: who protects the data that users have unwittingly provided to train AI through years of web surfing, often without clear permission?

In this context, there is also concern with commercial reappropriation of user information: user-created or user-motivated content is rendered into benefit for the firms developing AI without user engagement in either economic or decision-making benefit. Interviewees referred to this as *"data parasitism"*, and interviewees spoke about others requesting new symbolic or contractual recompense for use of data on aggregated terms. This dynamic demonstrates what Crawford (2021) calls the extractive logic of AI systems, where user practice and cultural labor are systematically extracted to generate commercial value without transparency, remuneration, or even permission.

Consent is the other fundamental issue. While GDPR provides a formal framework, in reality many AI tools operate with low transparency, especially in data collection and aggregation. Experts underlined the difficulty of understanding what is actually in control and what is beyond control. *"You accept everything without reading, and by then it's too late"* (P12). Others suggested a radical rethinking of consent models—based on understandable transparency, easier interfaces, and real accessibility to shared data.

Some recommended adding auditing³⁸ and traceability software for AI-produced content, a type of process labeling that would allow users and producers to trace sources, models, and logic used. Others called for the presence of ethical governance roles within communication teams: legal advisors, data officers, and AI ethics leads. But most conceded that a general culture of algorithmic accountability does not yet exist.

³⁸ Auditing, in generative AI, refers to a systematic monitoring, tracing, and evaluation of how AI models operate, including their source of training data and rationale for their output. Audits are meant to facilitate transparency, fairness, and responsibility, especially worth having in creative industries where origin and intention are important. (Raji & Buolamwini, 2019).

An additional layer of complexity involves confusion between human and AI-generated content. Some participants were worried that as models get better, it will be increasingly difficult to tell the difference between content that comes from lived experience and that which is generated through statistical interpolation. *“If I don’t know whether a voice is real or generated, what’s its value?”* (P14). This time, there’s a heightened risk of a generalized crisis of trust, not just in content, but in media and in the individuals who create and disseminate it.

4.3.3 Professional Responsibility and Algorithmic Ethics

In the context of the growing application of Artificial Intelligence in advertising communication, a consideration of the professional as an ethical—as well as technical—actor is becoming increasingly urgent. For all that AI opens up for us in terms of operational potential, it also opens up for us in terms of new responsibilities in how content is created, distributed, and consumed. In this situation, ethics cannot be left either to the technology or to software companies; ethics becomes part of the day-to-day professional practice.

The majority of interviewees agree that human responsibility is not abolished by AI use; instead, it is expanded. *“If a piece of content is poorly generated, I can’t blame the machine. I’m the one who chose it, guided it, and approved it”* (P1). *“Even if AI personalizes well, I always read everything again. It takes very little to send the wrong message”*, said a copywriter (P2). This understanding assumes that AI is not an autonomous entity but a tool that amplifies human intentions, biases, and decisions. AI, in this perspective, is never neutral—it escalates whatever the professional chooses to apply it to. As one strategist explained, *“I think it helps bring order, but if you don’t know what you want, you’ll get lost”* (P4). This points out the need for explicit intentionality: without direction, the tool can create confusion rather than clarity.

Some professionals stress the need for critical thinking in evaluating AI-generated output. *“AI makes things easier, but it doesn’t replace you. If you don’t read, if you don’t filter, you’re giving up your role”* (P6). A point was made by a sales process analyst: *“I try it, but I don’t take it at face value. It needs to be filtered”* (P3), which points towards a discerning and cautious approach to generative tools. De-responsibilization at an operational level is likely the most real threat from this perspective, not in so much error, but in relinquishing control

and judgment. Professionals reported that junior employees over-rely on AI tools and are less inclined to query their sources or outputs.

One of the most sensitive issues is how to approach the secondary effects of AI content—not anymore if an ad is effective, but what it reveals about a culture, a society, or symbolically. Some interviewees asked themselves whether words and images created by AI reinforce clichés, are excluding underrepresented groups, or make very complex topics trivialized. *“Every time you publish something, you’re contributing to an imaginary. It’s not just a campaign; it’s a statement”* (P11). Advertising is inherently politicized, and appeal to AI cannot be made to eliminate political or cultural intentionality.

Under this regime, ideas were put forward for practicing ethics internally: codes of conduct, in-house standards, and interdisciplinary team checking. It was proposed by certain professionals that an ethical checklist be incorporated into the production process, along with the brief and timeline. Others proposed inserting *“pause moments”* within the workflow of the project in order to consider the potential impact of the content. In a couple of cases, there was even a suggestion to establish a special role within creative teams: an *“AI ethics referent”* to be in place alongside the art director or strategist at critical moments.

Here, algorithmic ethics is not imagined as the problem of regulatory compliance but as a quotidian practice of subjective responsibility. That is, questioning not only what one can do with AI, but what one should do. *“AI can write in ten different styles. But do we know why we’re choosing that one?”* (P14). Choosing the tone, the image, and the narrative structure becomes as much an ethical choice as a creative one.

Another problem is that of ongoing professional development. Some interviewees underlined the need to include not only technical skills in working with AI but also means of critically interpreting its effects. Ethics are not considered an add-on but part of the professional profile. *“Being creative today means having the courage to reject content that doesn’t feel right, even if it performs well”* (P8).

The ethical obligations examined thus far do not sit in isolation. They are informed—and sometimes restricted—by actual conditions in which the professionals work. From the availability of tools to training needs, organizational culture, and budget constraints, AI integration into advertising work is anything but straightforward. The following section

investigates these structural and cultural obstacles, as well as enablers that influence AI adoption among agencies and job roles.

4.4 Adoption Barriers and Enablers: Insights from the Field

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into advertising work—though steadily increasing—is not uniform nor linear. The interviews provide a nuanced topography of desire and resistances, experimental momentum and cultural hesitation, varying by age, organizational structure, and technological capital access. This chapter analyzes the key determinants that facilitate or complicate the uptake of AI as part of the routine practice of communication agencies and professionals.

One of the main enablers is individual curiosity, which often proves stronger than any top-down corporate push. In the majority of cases, AI use begins with individual experimentation, a test, a *“playful use”* that eventually becomes part of habitual practices. *“I began because I was curious. Now I use it daily, even just to check a tone or summarize something”* (P9). This bottom-up pattern is particularly dominant among freelancers, junior profiles, and transversal or hybrid functions.

In the meantime, the biggest hindrances are lack of training, technology performance anxiety, and, overall, a sense of technical inadequacy. A number of professionals remembered feeling overwhelmed by the pace at which tools were evolving and by the challenge of distinguishing between genuinely useful technologies and transient fashions. *“There’s always a new tool, a new plug-in. And I ask myself: am I falling behind? Am I doing something wrong?”* (P6). This kind of pressure not only can generate confusion but also a form of intellectual burnout.

Organizational support is also the key facilitator. When companies provide tools, training, or simply a culture that allows for experimentation, adopting AI is simpler and more structured. Some of the interviewees referred to actual internal sharing sessions, in which prompts, examples, and case studies are exchanged. Where there is no such conducive environment, use of AI remains peripheral, limited to isolated efforts.

Structure and team size come into play here too. In small organizations, AI is seen as an enabling resource, a tool to double up skills and ease workloads. In large settings, where are

more specialist jobs, it has the potential to be more mechanistic, unless complemented by shared vision. *“Everyone has their own way of using it, but no one actually incorporates it into the process”* (P14).

Finally, the relationship with AI is strongly conditioned by cultural and value-based factors. People who view creativity as a craft process—tied to imagination and inventiveness—often see AI as a cold shortcut or an adversary of inventiveness. Others, being more strategic or data-driven, recognize its worth as a multiplier and accelerant of creative processes.

4.4.1 Technical Limitations and Learning Curve

Despite the increasing prevalence of Artificial Intelligence products, professionals are responsible for technical limitations and pedagogic issues that stand in the way of widespread and intentional use. The overall picture is one of a powerful but still partially inscrutable technology that is often developed for technically sophisticated users or *“tinkerers”* rather than for artists with a humanities-focused or interdisciplinary approach.

One of the most prevalent issues involves user interface and user experience. Some of the tools are found to be unintuitive, too technical, or too fragmented. *“You have to use a different tool for everything, and each of them has its own logic and commands. The learning curve is something no one can afford”* (P6). The fragmentation reduces usability on a day-to-day basis and introduces more confusion, especially in the absence of specific training or organizational structured guidance.

The difficulty of finding relevant, personalized, and contextualized answers is another major stumbling block. Disappointment on the part of beginning users with generic, nonsensical, or even incorrect returns is extremely prevalent. It is not just a quality problem but a methodological one. *“If you don’t know how to write a good prompt, AI returns things you cannot use. And mastering how to prompt is not trivial”* (P1). So-called *“prompt literacy”* is not well developed and rarely included in professional development initiatives.

Beyond prompt writing, many experts regret the lack of constructive feedback from AI platforms: users receive an answer but no mechanism to determine what worked, what didn’t, or how to improve their next interaction. Several of the interviewees suggested that platforms should include contextual guides, predefined prompt templates, or virtual tutors that can lead users through the iterative process.

This rapid rate of platform, model, and feature development is also experienced as a barrier. Some professionals noted feeling as though they were constantly “*trying to catch up technologically*”. Without structured training, this development risks excluding just the more senior or strategy-driven profiles who could otherwise contribute insightful critical and contextual feedback to AI deployment.

Another critical issue concerns output reliability. Some tools occasionally return content that appears correct but contains logical errors, inconsistencies, or inaccuracies—commonly known as “*hallucinations*”. This takes additional time and skill for verification and correction, and thus reduces the hoped-for gain in productivity. “*The machine gives you something that looks right, but you still have to rewrite it. In the end, I wasted time twice*” (P14).

From a visual perspective, limitations occur in outputs that look “*too generic*”, “*plasticky*”, or with obvious compositional errors. Extra fingers, improbable positions, and unnatural textures are still common in many AI-generated images. These have an impact on the validity of the prototype and the credibility of AI as a tool for concept development.

Some specialists pointed out that AI—while powerful—lacks the context of the actual world it is being used in. It can’t understand subtext, cultural tensions, and implied allusions. That makes it less suitable to be utilized in campaigns that require strategic sensitivity, brand positioning, or social insight.

Whereas not every observation made in this section has been followed by direct quotes, they are based on prevailing trends evident in interviews. Visual constraints and the inability of AI to grasp cultural allusions or intricate contexts, for example, were evident explanations given by respondents such as P12 (visual narrator) and P8 (product designer). These were not direct quotes but still supported and validated more extensive patterns evident in the field.

4.4.2 Organizational Constraints and Cost Factors

Apart from technological limitations, AI adoption in advertising is also shaped by organizational and economic considerations. Interviews reveal how investment decisions, organizational culture, and available resources can support or hinder the deployment of AI tools in everyday workflows.

One of the first obstacles mentioned is cost. Many advanced AI platforms (such as pro versions of ChatGPT, Midjourney, Fireflies, or visual automation tools) require monthly subscriptions, multi-user plans, or enterprise licenses. *“You can’t use everything with a free account. And not all clients are willing to pay for that”* (P9). For freelancers or small studios, this is a considerable investment, usually unsustainable without an immediate payoff. Some professionals say they limit themselves to free tools or opt for less powerful alternatives, sacrificing efficiency or quality.

Another challenge is the lack of internal regulation. There is no AI usage policy in most companies: who uses it, for what, with what tools, and at what process stages. This normative gap is the origin of uncertainty and is illustrated in unsystematic or incoherent application. *“Nobody said what’s allowed. We just go by instinct, and that doesn’t constitute a methodology”* (P6). On occasion, this doubt even results paradoxically in a preventive block, refusing innovation for fear of transgressing non-existent rules.

In more structured environments, role compartmentalization is also an issue. Some professionals argue that AI is considered primarily a creative tool, yet strategic, commercial, or account teams tend not to be involved. This creates a divide between experimenters and managers, making systemic integration difficult. *“I use it for visual concepts, but my colleague still does pitches with PowerPoint like it’s 2013”* (P14). In this regard, the uptake of AI strengthens prevailing inequalities in internal digitalization.

However, some more developed agencies have established authentic internal sharing mechanisms. Slack groups, shared prompt folders, and peer-to-peer training groups add to collective competence—reducing the expense of individual learning and increasing collective impact. These practices are not yet prevalent and generally appear to be driven by individual informal leaders rather than being codified at an organizational level. Without an explicit mandate or concrete incentive, AI use could be ad hoc and sporadic.

Scalability is also a challenge: a tool that works for one project may not be suitable for more complex organizational environments. AI tools become harder to deploy in regulated or corporate environments due to considerations of compatibility, cybersecurity, data privacy requirements, and version control. Some tools are not enterprise security policy compliant or are additional work to accommodate approved processes—particularly in major agencies or international networks.

Resistance to indirect costs is another limiting factor. Applying AI tools requires not only monetary expenses but also time, human resources, workflow changes, and job redefinition. Agencies struggle to justify the effort against observed short-term benefits. *“In certain companies I work with, they would rather stick to the traditional ways because at least those are known. Changing would mean rethinking workflows, training staff, re-evaluating habits, and there’s often little inclination or time to do so”*, said a marketing consultant (P14).

Finally, many professionals have reiterated a need for centralized strategic guidance to bring unity of purpose to AI adoption. Without leadership that sets goals, assessment criteria, and ethical frameworks, each team will necessarily operate in isolation, resulting in duplication, inefficiencies, or conflicting approaches. Some suggest the creation of cross-functional roles (e.g., AI coordinator or innovation lead) capable of driving decisions in a shared and aligned manner.

4.4.3 Cultural Resistance and Misconceptions

In addition to economic and technical limitations, cultural resistance and the continued inaccurate beliefs regarding what AI is, how it operates, and what its impact entails also remain among the prime hindrances to AI adoption in advertising agencies on a grand scale. The interviews reveal how fear, misperceptions, and value-based legacies significantly influence the way professionals handle such tools.

One of the earliest forms of resistance is the belief that AI will kill human creativity. Some professionals—especially more senior ones—are strongly resistant to tools perceived as homogenizing, mechanical, or impersonal. *“I don’t want a machine telling me how to write a headline. That’s my job”* (P11). This view sets artistic intuition in opposition to algorithmic automation and does not consider the potential for human-machine cooperation. The belief that true creativity must be the product of an exclusively human process is deeply rooted and is typically combined with the romanticized image of the profession.

Another barrier is the negative mythologization about AI as a distinct, impenetrable, and maybe even dangerous entity. A number of interviewees spoke about the technology in general, anthropomorphic terms: *“It’s scary because you don’t know what it will say back to you”* (P3). This kind of viewpoint perpetuates fears and mental resistance and tends to be supported by sporadic and non-educational use of the tools. AI is experienced as other

technologically beyond reach or morally suspect, hindering a pragmatic and experimental attitude.

Conversely, an opposing misconception is the excessive idealization of AI as flawless, flawless, or even a “*magical*” tool that never goes wrong. On slightly hopeful premises, however, some, especially novice, users assume of generative tools what they are actually unable to deliver, commanding beyond structural limits, bias, or requirements for successful results. “*You just tell it what you want, and it does it*” (P9). Overexpectation can be maddening and disappointing when the output fails to live up to those expectations and causes people to abandon the tool before they make a meaningful, substantial use of it.

Another source of resistance is professional replacement anxiety. Participants worry that AI adoption will make conventional jobs obsolete, leaving fewer opportunities or devaluing accumulated expertise. “*I don’t want clients thinking they can do everything themselves without a copywriter, without a designer*” (P6). This fear is most significant in more competitive or financially strained settings, where cost-saving is a strong driver. The risk is that the AI will be employed as a replacement for human work, not as a tool to assist it.

Aside from these phobias, most resistance is based upon a failure of critical training that does not prepare professionals to sort out potential from hype. Lack of shared forums of discussion, terminology, and technical literacy distorts attempts at a balanced narrative about AI. Some interviewees lamented the polarization of the debate: on one side, those who praise AI’s power uncritically; on the other, those who condemn it outright. In both cases, what’s missing is a pragmatic and informed middle ground. Without critical tools, professionals struggle to integrate AI in a functional and responsible way.

Another factor is values-based resistance. Some creatives associate automation with a loss of meaning, quality, or professional ethics. They feel that AI mechanizes content, driven by performance indicators rather than purposeful communication intent. “*If everything becomes a prompt, where’s the reflection? Where’s the choice?*” (P14). Not just a technical conflict, but a cultural one. It’s a matter of the identity of professionals working in the field of communication and the value they attribute to their profession.

Despite this, there are hopeful hints of change. Several experts described a change in mindset caused by direct experience, guided experimentation, or debate with colleagues. “*Initially I doubted it, but then I saw that it might help me. Not to do it in my place, but to make me think*

better” (P1). These kinds of testimonies reveal that resistance is never absolute; it’s situational, dependent on team culture and quality of interaction. AI will be more easily embraced if presented as a facilitator rather than a replacement.

4.5 Future Expectations and Strategic Visions of Professionals

Between optimism and caution, most interviewed experts believe that Artificial Intelligence will increasingly have a basic role in the advertising career of tomorrow. It is not merely considered a device to be optimized, but a structural transformation that will redefine the method, functions, and ethics of communication. But the expectations expressed are not monolithic: they oscillate between hopes for greater efficiency and anxiety about losing control, between visions of change and nightmares of decay.

More than half of respondents expect AI to be more integrated into workflows further than in content development, but also in planning, analysis, and decision-making. Others envision a future when whole campaigns might be created out of a single brief conversation, through tools that can generate headlines, visuals, script, and cross-channel re-conceptions. *“I think that in the future AI will not only do the drafts, but also the final version—and it will monitor performance in real time”* (P14).

Yet another shared expectation is the redefinition of professional roles. Creatives forecast the emergence of new hybrid figures such as prompt designers, AI supervisors, or algorithmic content planners. Here, humans do not disappear; they take different jobs, from being producers themselves to choreographers of the process. *“We will not be the ones who write everything, but rather those who select from the AI’s suggestions and improve it”* (P6). Another perspective highlights AI’s potential in supporting divergent thinking. *“I treat it like a dialogue I ask it things just to see where it leads me... Sometimes the answers don’t matter. I’m more interested in the questions it brings back to me”* (P10). This transformation implies a shift in competencies, with more emphasis on critical, curatorial, and qualitative control skills.

The time factor is another refrain that keeps recurring: while AI might save hours on repetitive or technical tasks, there is a risk this time will be immediately occupied by new demands thus increasing workload and reducing space for reflection. Some hope the

productivity benefit will get reinvested in creative quality, research, and experimentation. Others fear that speed will become an end in itself rather than a means. *“The risk is that we’ll be asked to do everything instantly, always with the idea that AI will just fix it”* (P9).

Some professionals anticipate greater focus on ethics, transparency, and regulation. Some envision working where the use of AI is governed by clear-cut policies, in-house monitoring, and special roles for assessing the social and cultural implications of generated content. This vision requires investment in infrastructure and a shift in attitude, especially at decision-making levels. *“I’d like AI to become something we use consciously, not just to move faster”* (P1).

Finally, there is a strategic vision for AI, a vision not as a destination, but rather as an evolutionary catalyst. Other practitioners point out that AI will be truly valuable only if it is part of a broader cultural evolution of the ad industry. This includes reconsidering briefs, testing methodologies, and measures of success. AI alone is not the solution; it’s a tool that can either support or ruin whatever organizations choose to do with it.

4.5.1 AI as a Creative Assistant or Replacement?

One of the most frequently raised questions in the course of the interviews is about the possible future function of Artificial Intelligence: will it be an imaginative aid, meant to add to and assist human endeavor, or will it increasingly replace skills, functions, and even jobs? The opinions collected exhibit some polarization, but also many nuanced positions, bearing witness to an ongoing and complex process of reflection.

For the majority of professionals, AI will only be a support tool—able to speed up procedures, creating ideas, and offering alternatives. *“I use it to get started, a first spark. Then I add my tone, my vision”* (P9). In this context, AI is saving time and resources but not diminishing the dominance of human input. Against this, it allows for more time to be spent at the upper-level strategic and concepting phases, refining the final quality of outcomes. Others use it as an internal motivator. *“I set up the brief with AI, then I read it back to check if actually it does make sense. It’s like a test for me”* (P4). By doing so, AI is being employed as a metacognitive activator as opposed to a content creation tool. Others have characterized the relationship as that of a partnership between machine and mind, with AI as a catalyst rather than an independent engine.

Others, however, observe that some work is already being done—especially that which is mechanical, repetitive, or for mass production. *“Simple copy for posts, videos, DEM³⁹... a lot of companies already have that done by ChatGPT”* (P14). This type of automation is less an imminent danger, and more of a trend destined to reshape the creative field, creating imbalances between those who adopt it and those who cling to old models. Even those already employing AI are conflicted about the shift: *“Sometimes I keep two tabs open, one with my writing, and one with ChatGPT, just to compare. I want to see if what I’ve written holds up”* (P4). This human-machine comparison has become a daily practice to validate the authenticity of one’s work.

Some interviewees pointed out that the real difference is not in the output, but in the process. AI can generate a graphic or a headline, but it doesn’t understand why it’s doing so—nor can it evaluate the symbolic, cultural, or relational value of the content. *“It writes, but it doesn’t know what it means to move people. It has no context, no responsibility”* (P1). From this perspective, AI remains a wonderful simulator—but incapable of creating value apart from human oversight. Generating syntactic variations is not a replacement for sensitivity to message and intent. Such sensitivity to the human function as a necessary filter is widely shared. *“The problem isn’t what AI creates, but whether we know how to recognize it as being valuable or not”*, stated a communication head (P13), highlighting that true value lies in judgment and decision.

There is also an in-between vision, suggesting that AI takes over certain functions but generates new ones. Prompt engineers, content auditors of AI, and controllers of narratives are some of the careers hinted at. Advocates of this view identify the necessity of foreseeing this transformation through upskilling, retraining, and inter-disciplinary learning.

This viewpoint aligns with Kumar and Gupta’s (2016) observations on the emergence of hybrid professional identities in advertising professions that integrate creative, technological, and ethical skills in response to AI-augmented work’s shifting demands. Others suggest that

³⁹ The abbreviation DEM is Direct Email Marketing and refers to a direct communication method which uses the scheduled and targeted sending of emails to profiled databases to achieve marketing, informational, or relational purposes. In Artificial Intelligence, AI technologies are increasingly used to automate content, personalize the message to the user’s behavior, optimize the timing and frequency of sending, and analyze campaign performance in real-time. This enables maximum campaign management effectiveness and enhanced open and conversion rates. (Patil, 2024)

communication schools have certain modules on how to use, evaluate, and ethically manage AI.

Several specialists pointed out that the main threat is not full replacement, but loss of individuality: if AI generates generic text, human value will lie in the ability to distinguish, to be different, to produce unique narratives. In this way, AI might equalize the average, but it also can compel professionals to focus on their individuality.

Finally, some interviewees warned of a potential paradox of efficiency: AI allows for faster production, but this may raise client or managerial expectations, compressing time for reflection and depth. *“I’m afraid they’ll ask us to do in a day what used to take a week. And in doing so, we’ll lose quality”* (P6).

4.5.2 The Rise of New Roles and Workflows

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into advertising work is not just updating the tools but remaking the skills sets, operating dynamics, and very composition of creative teams as well. The interviews indicate that new professional roles are being created and workflows are being redirected more and more toward human-machine collaboration.

One of the most frequently cited jobs is that of prompt engineer: a specialist who can speak properly to generative systems by crafting unique, strategic inputs that coordinate tone, purpose, and communicative context. *“We need someone who knows how to write for AI, not for people. And that’s not the same thing”* (P1). This capability is a combination of language precision, strategic thinking, and understanding of algorithmic logic. Some agencies have begun realizing that this capability is a value for young professionals, or even a selection parameter for idea and copy teams.

Another emerging figure is that of the AI content editor, who can evaluate, select, re-write, or refine AI output, acting in whenever automation breaks or is inappropriate. Interviewees noted that this work is already being done in practice, although not yet with a designated title. *“I always review what AI generates; it’s never ready to go live”* (P6). There is the need for linguistic sensitivity, cultural translation skills, and strong editorial judgment. One of the subjects emphasized, *“I always revise the output. Even if it’s formally correct, it often lacks flow and rhythm”* (P4). Such revision turns into a critical step in the process, testifying to the continued validity of advanced editing skills even for AI-assisted workflows.

Alongside these roles, the need for process coordinators is becoming more apparent: specialists who need talent at positioning different technologies and varieties of stakeholders in congruence with each other seamlessly, so that workflow is simpler to navigate. Interviewees called them AI strategists or workflow integrators people who define what tools are being used, when they need to be turned on, and how they are sent into classical blocks of creativity. In advanced environments—where creative team members, technical units, and data analysts cooccupy the terrain—this job might become a keystone grasp of project cohesion.

This change also reshapes workflow structures. Where creative workflows typically followed a linear sequence (brief, concept, implementation), the use of AI inserts an iterative and module dimension, whereby machine content generation starts as early as the exploratory phase—to test with alternatives and continually refine proposals. *“Today we generate 10 headlines even before writing the concept. It’s a different way of thinking”* (P14). This approach encourages rapid experimentation but demands discernment to wade through the chaos and extract worth

Some specialists highlight that these new workflows operate on different temporal rhythms more adaptable but also more discontinuous. Instead of moving in linear phases, teams now operate in micro-sprints of innovation. This requires faster decision-making, adaptability, and smooth collaboration between diverse expertise areas (technical, linguistic, strategic). Furthermore, teams must adopt beneficial collaborative tools so that AI utilization does not remain compartmentalized in individual projects but rather becomes shared knowledge.

A second core theme is cross-functionality of skill sets. Future professionals will need to combine historically distinct disciplines: writing and algorithmic logic, strategy and visual creativity, storytelling and automated data analysis. This calls for new training tracks not only in schools but within agencies themselves, which will need to invest in upskilling and continuous learning. Effective utilization of AI necessitates interactive response: *“Working with AI is like a training partner. It is useless if you don’t respond”* (P10).

4.5.3 Wearables, Predictive AI, and Ambient Creativity

In the future, many predict the emergence of Artificial Intelligence not just in terms of generated content, but also in form and context of interaction. Perhaps the most widely circulated prediction is one of a trend away from discrete, on-demand technology towards

pervasively embedded technology—capable of turning on smoothly and seamlessly in routine workflows.

It might be that some of the interviewees envision a close future when AI becomes increasingly wearable interfaces or embedded in mobile phones in an effort to sense environmental, contextual, and emotional cues. “We won’t have to sit down at a computer to use it. It will be with us, listening to us, it will be an extension of our thinking” (P6). Watches, earbuds, augmented reality glasses, or interactive tables are seen as the interfaces where AI may potentially suggest, generate, edit, record, or forecast content in real time.

This vision is part of a broader vision of ambient creativity, where AI technologies are an invisible layer that gently extends, enhances, and records the cognitive and relational labor of creative professionals. Others see applications that can jot down ideas that occur as one walks, suggest creative references based on mood, or generate layouts while freehand drawing on a tablet. Such experiences require not only computational power, but also deep contextual understanding.

One of the most anticipated abilities are smart prediction—algorithms that can recognize repeated patterns of behavior, projects, or user data in an effort to predict suggestions, corrections, or edits. For advertising, this could include optimizing a campaign prior to launch, predicting audience reaction, generating in-real-time A/B tests, or offering adaptive micro-optimizations based upon performance metrics.

If effectively applied, all of these technologies had the potential to free up time and mental energy by streamlining the cognitive effort of small operational decisions. Some see this as a huge potential for more fluid communication and more responsive innovation. Others warn of the risk of hyper-automation dampening creative diversity and decreasing the surprise element, errors, and hunches. *“If everything is predicted, generated, and optimized, what room is left for the unexpected?”* (P14).

A lot of the introspection concerns the ethical dimensions of these technologies. The expansion of AI to ambient interfaces raises new concerns about surveillance, handling of biometric information, transparency, and agency loss. If AI can listen, record, and recommend at all times, who controls these engagements? Who establishes the boundary between assistance and intrusion? Some of the participants call for anticipatory regulation so that these

technologies are planned with fairness, transparency, and human dignity. *“I want the technology to empower me, not to decide for me”* (P1).

In addition, some experts emphasize the need for a non-algorithmic human space, a space where one can be slow, uncertain, and adventurously exploratory. If every action already comes with a potentially opened automated suggestion, then there is the risk of cognitive overload, reduced creative freedom, and constant pressure to produce. Therefore, the future of creative AI is not only about efficiency but also about balance, mental ecology, and ecologically friendly work methodologies.

While the predictions by specialists present prescient directions on future paths for AI applications in advertising, it is important to consider how these align or diverge from existing theoretical models. The following section provides a critical synthesis of the empirical observations against the academic work explored in Chapters I and II.

These prognostic visions—from new occupations to predicted technologies—signal not only where the profession may be going, but where current theory may fall short. To grasp fully the implications of these professional insights, it is important to compare them with the academic settings described above. The next section combines empirical findings with theoretical discussion, noting parallels, differences, and emerging gaps.

4.6 Synthesis and Theoretical Integration: Comparing Field and Literature

After a cautious consideration of the perceptions, practices, and future visions of advertising professionals regarding Artificial Intelligence, this chapter aims to cross-fertilize the empirical research of the interviews with the theoretical and academic evaluation covered in earlier chapters. Practice theory comparison allows us to evaluate areas of convergence, divergence, and critical areas for action and research.

One of the strongest arguments of convergence concerns the role of AI as a creativity enhancer. Both qualitative data and literature (Kumar & Gupta, 2016; Bharti & Park, 2023) situate AI primarily as an accelerator—an aid that can support operational stages, stimulate ideas, and facilitate low-value automation of work. The interviewees confirm that AI is used

most commonly at the beginning of the creative process, to generate options and enable time on conceptual work.

But several significant dissonances also occur. While the majority of literature is prone to highlight the prospect of AI for systems, its tangible shortcomings are nevertheless experienced by professionals: pre-formatted answers, lack of contextual coherence, and continuous rewriting and proofing needs (Cristianini, 2023; Crawford, 2021). These limitations are typically received with a pragmatic, adaptive frame of mind, with experts devising individual strategies for reaching satisfactory outcomes.

Another fundamental issue is the skills gap, widely cited in theoretical models (Feuerriegel et al., 2024) and vividly supported in the interviews. Not only technical, but cultural and values-based is the chasm between those who know how to use AI and those who are at the margins. Where the literature speaks of adoption resistance, the qualitative data indicates that resistance is more likely to be found in an identity-based understanding of creative work, rather than blanket opposition to technology.

On the ethical front as well, deep similarities are encountered. Theoretical discussions around bias, opacity, and surveillance (Crawford, 2021) find resonance in interviewees' preoccupations with a common absence of transparency, opaque tools, and uncertainty regarding ownership of content. However, compared to theory, the empirical findings underscore a lack of concrete, common tools for responding to these issues in daily practice.

As for future prospects, both theory and empirical observations converge on one point: AI will not replace humans, but it will redefine how work is designed and distributed. The empirical results confirm theoretical hypotheses about hybridization of occupations, the emergence of new professional roles, and the reorganization of workflows. Recent literature (Bharti & Park, 2023; Feuerriegel et al., 2024) discusses collaborative ecosystems and distributed intelligence concepts that are clearly echoed in the collected testimonies.

4.6.1 Confirmations: What Practice Validates from Theory

Examining theoretical speculations regarding AI-facilitated change vis-a-vis communicators' daily practices, we see sure areas of convergence but also sites of structural divergence that raise questions and point to emerging areas of inquiry, policy, and pedagogy.

A first area of convergence is the recognition of AI's operational value as a creative support tool. Both academic literature (Kumar & Gupta, 2016; Bharti & Park, 2023) and interview data highlight AI's role in accelerating production timelines, increasing idea diversity, and facilitating concept generation. AI is described not as a replacement, but as an automated collaborator—one that provides inspiration, alternatives, and drafts without undermining professional autonomy. On this point, there is significant congruence between the role described in literature and everyday practice in creative teams.

However, when the real conditions of use are considered, a systematic disparity between theory and practice can be perceived. While theoretical discourse has a tendency to presume the presence of general skills, combined structures, and common processes, field research reveals an atmosphere of individual experimentation, in-place fixes, and absence of coordination. Theory sees intelligent ecosystems; actually, practice is broken down into isolated microcosms, more driven by personal motivation than coordinated company directive. AI adoption remains largely “informal”, uncoordinated with strategic plans.

A second axis of alignment concerns ethics risk and system concerns. Problems such as algorithmic bias, interpretability of models, and accountability for generated content are the focus of research writing (Crawford, 2021; Cristianini, 2023) and practice as well. But when it comes to concrete handling of these issues, divergence occurs. While theory predicts regulatory systems, normative codes, and moral guidelines to the practitioners, practitioners lament having too few work tools, accessible policies, and formal discussion forums. Most often, no official guidance is offered by agencies, so one has to make do with intuition or personal values.

Still another gap is foresight about the future of AI. While writers have generally forecast systemic conditions—new models of management, new professional occupations, and redesigned organizational cultures (Feuerriegel et al., 2024)—working professionals are more focused on immediate, tangible impacts: workload management, productivity rates, and altered rhythms of production. This conflict between macro-vision and micro-practice scares the need for more effective incorporation of enhanced scales of analysis, in order not to reinforce a widespread gap between the designers of AI (policymakers, developers, theorists) and daily users of it in production environments.

Another discontinuity is how humans function in creative activities. Theory is positive, emphasizing the ongoing importance of human critical and cultural abilities, but practitioners feel increasing tension between human merit and algorithmic compliance. Anxiety about becoming a “*filter*” and not a “*source*” of material is strong. “*My worth isn’t writing faster, it’s writing something a machine can’t produce*” (P11). This conflict cannot be solved by technology but needs cultural, pedagogical, and organizational means: moments of inner debate, training according to the strategic vision of innovative work, and cross-functional team discussion.

Finally, there is variation in how learning and training are represented. Theory calls for models of lifelong learning and reskilling, but in practice, there could be no system in place to render these available, viable, or institutionally accredited. All interviewees portrayed sole self-training episodes marked by uncertainty and with no professional acknowledgment. Information about AI remains implicit or informal, variably distributed, and rarely integrated into HR processes or career planning.

4.6.2 Tensions Between Theoretical Models and Practical Realities

Against the backdrop of the theory-practice comparison, there emerges a clear need to create an agreed-over framework of reference to help professionals cope with the use of Artificial Intelligence in advertising. It is more about presenting cutting-edge tools or platforms, but rather about building a common working culture a one that can combine innovation and accountability, efficiency and creativity, human agency and machine collaboration.

One of the most important findings of the interviews is that AI deployment happens informally, based on individual initiative and ad hoc testing. While such openness has advantages, it can risk producing organizational fragmentation, duplicated effort, and variable or lagging learning curves. In order to mitigate these risks, some interviewees proposed the creation of common operating practices, experience-based but validated at the organizational level. “*The danger is that each person experiments individually and no one actually takes advantage of the experience*” (P6).

A common framework must have at least three interconnected and scalable levels:

- Guidelines for Ethics and Responsibility: Set borders between proper and critical use, human responsibility and algorithmic delegation, and privacy and transparency. That

entails creating effective guiding principles, defining human oversight thresholds, and assigning reference numbers (e.g., AI ethics lead, data guardian). A corporate AI ethics policy must guide decisions in controversial instances and ensure conformity between organizational values and activities.

- Adaptive Process Models and Workflows: Establish workflows in which AI is intentionally integrated, with differentiated roles, checkpoints, and co-creation phases. Other agencies are already experimenting with dedicated internal task forces, where AI is tested on small projects and results are cross-reported across departments. This level should also include formalized best practices, timely documentation, and the illumination of critical points where human input is unavoidable.
- Sustained and Customized Training Paths: Provide training for availability and recency addressing technical skills (e.g., prompt engineering, dataset management), cultural competencies (e.g., evaluating created content), and relational competencies (e.g., collaboration between hybrid roles and teams). AI literacy has to be incorporated into career development tracks, facilitated by internal certificates, incentives, continuous learning opportunities, and formal recognition of experimentation time.

In addition to these structural conditions, several practitioners emphasized the necessity of creating space for collective reflection—space to share experiences, best practices, failures, and lessons learned. AI culture will not emerge from use but requires shared language, open communication, and room for professional storytelling. *“AI is a mirror, but we need to know what we want to see in it”* (P1). This awareness must be cultivated deliberately through internal events, team learning sessions, and interactive workshops.

An effective common framework will also need to have agile governance models that are able to react to the rapid evolution of technologies and markets. That means not only codifying best practices, but also creating a design-thinking culture, one founded on continuous feedback, iterative policy improvement, and inclusive participation. Those institutions that succeed in creating a culture of lifelong learning will be best placed to survive future technological disruption.

These divergences between literature and lived experience reveal a gap between theoretical abstraction and the concrete realities of AI implementation. While academic models often emphasize strategic coherence, empirical findings portray a more fragmented and adaptive landscape.

Table 4.1 summarizes the main points of convergence and divergence between the theoretical expectations outlined in Chapter 2 and the empirical insights collected during fieldwork.

Table 4.1 – AI in Advertising: Theoretical Expectations vs. Field Evidence

Comparison of dominant themes from the literature with insights gathered from advertising professionals in the field.

Topic of Analysis	What Theory Suggests	What Professionals Report
Personalized Targeting	AI enables precise audience segmentation, higher ROI, and dynamic content delivery tailored in real time.	True in part, but hyper-targeting can feel invasive. Many express discomfort over privacy risks and a lack of user consent.
Automated Creativity	AI can generate endless content variations, saving time and enhancing creative productivity.	Useful for speeding up drafts and testing ideas, but lacks originality and emotional depth. Human revision is always needed.
Human Role	Humans remain essential as editors, curators, and ethical decision-makers within AI-assisted workflows.	Confirmed: professionals describe AI as a tool that amplifies, not replaces. Human judgment ensures brand voice and coherence.
Ethics and Governance	Ethical concerns are well known (bias, surveillance, data use), and should be managed through policy and oversight.	Most organizations lack internal policies. Decisions are often improvised, and professionals feel unprepared for ethical issues.
Tool Adoption	AI should be integrated across organizations with structured strategies and training.	Adoption is uneven: some use AI daily, others sporadically. Use often depends on individual curiosity rather than strategy.
Creativity vs. Uniformity	AI expands creative options and helps overcome blocks by offering alternative drafts and visual ideas.	There's a risk of repetitive or predictable results. Outputs often feel too generic or similar across projects and platforms.
Emotional Impact	Emotional responses are rarely addressed in theoretical models.	Interviewees feel both empowered and anxious. Excitement about new tools coexists with fear of losing relevance or professional value.

4.6.3 Emergent Gaps and Future Research Directions

The findings of this thesis, contrasted with the background of contemporary literature, confirm several prevailing presuppositions regarding AI in advertising yet also expose critical areas where theoretical frameworks are insufficient or lack empirical basis. These emerging divergences suggest productive areas for ongoing research in both communication studies and marketing innovation.

Of central concern is the co-evolutionary dynamic between AI tools and human workers. Interviews demonstrate that AI is neither simply taken up nor rejected, but instead is endlessly negotiated, tinkered with, and reimagined in the course of everyday work. This contrasts with binary framings of “assistance vs. replacement” and calls for more research to place AI not as a prefigured actor but as a relational and situated one, in keeping with Suchman’s (2007) framing of intelligence as situated in human-machine interaction.

Similarly, the idea of creativity as a distributed and collective process (Sawyer, 2012) gained traction in the field but remains undertheorized in AI-pertinent advertising research. Further work needs to consider how creative value is co-created across teams, tools, and cultural imperatives, and how AI redistributes the balance of authorship and responsibility in communicative labor.

Another understudied area is which organizational infrastructure enables lasting AI adoption. Current work uses technological competence or skills shortages, but the findings show peer learning, experimental informal activity, and cross-functional discussion as key enablers. Future work will investigate how these elements can be systematically scaffolded through organizations, potentially by utilizing internal innovation mechanisms or collaborative forms of governance.

A final and urgent research agenda addresses AI literacy and ethical agency. Surveys revealed a lack of shared vocabulary, knowledge, and ethical consideration tools among creative teams. With greater sophistication in AI systems is the need for a boost in the communicative competence of the experts working with them. There is a possibility of longitudinal studies of how ethical frameworks, training programs, and institutional culture affect the responsible and inclusive use of generative tools.

These guidelines speak to the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches bringing together qualitative fieldwork, critical theory, organizational studies, and media ethics. It is only by bridging these fields that future studies can enable an advertising culture that is innovative as well as responsible in the era of intelligent automation.

4.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided a close-up description of how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the operational, symbolic, and ethical fabric of advertising work. Under the watchful eye of qualitative fieldwork, it has unveiled not only the technical adoption of AI tools, but also the emotional, professional, and organizational compromises that inform their use in day-to-day creative and strategic work.

One of the key conclusions is the hybrid and non-linear character of AI integration. Instead of substituting human imagination, AI is selectively incorporated in ideation, production, and evaluation stages as an adaptable assistant, inspiration source, and time-saving tool. The interviews reveal that AI does not exist as a neutral technology: its output is being rewritten, explained, and “humanized” by professionals who are nevertheless ultimately accountable for tone, coherence, and ethical impact. This confirms that the value of AI is co-constructed—arising not through automation per se, but through the interpretive and relational work of professionals working with it.

The chapter also documents the emergence of new workflows and professions, in which specialists carry out tasks that combine content creation, algorithmic review, and ethical judgment. These new practices allow for a redefinition of creativity—not as a singular act of originality, but as a distributed and continuous process, whereby tools, teams, and objectives converge in real-time. The boundaries between ideation and doing, human and machine, become increasingly disordered.

Yet the integration of AI is not seamless. Participants conveyed concern about the loss of depth, nuance, and authorship in AI-generated content, particularly if speed and scale are prioritized over meaning and emotion. The study suggests that, while AI can streamline productivity, it also compels professionals to defend and redefine the human values that distinguish their work—intuition, empathy, critical thinking, and cultural sensitivity.

Ethical concerns emerged emphatically during the interviews, notably with respect to algorithmic opacity, data provenance, and behavioral personalization. Opacity in AI systems and the absence of shared ethical norms were highlighted as significant barriers to responsible adoption. In this respect, AI is not merely a technical innovation but a site of moral and cultural negotiation: its use demands intentionality, literacy, and public debate.

This perspective aligns with sociomaterial approaches that conceptualize technology not as an external tool, but as inherent in human agency, professional routines and institutional meaning-making (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Suchman, 2007).

The second half of the chapter has followed how field observations both support and complicate the above theoretical assumptions. Some scholarly theory accords with professional practice—particularly in viewing AI as a cue to creative support—while other theory appears too idealistic or distant from everyday complexities of use. Theory assumes systemic coordination, whereas practice is fractured, adaptive, and driven by incidental learning.

These tensions underline the importance of bridging theory and practice more effectively through education and organizational structures that enable uses of AI responsibly. As Artificial Intelligence continues to evolve, so must the frameworks by which we interpret and guide its contribution to communicative labor.

For this purpose, the next chapter turns from analysis to synthesis. It integrates the academic and practical contributions of this thesis and offers recommendations for institutions and practitioners who wish to integrate AI in an effective and ethical manner into their communications practice. These reflections help frame the broader conclusions of the thesis, prefiguring the practical and educational implications that will be explored in the following chapter.

Conclusions

The research presented in this thesis aimed to investigate how Artificial Intelligence is transforming contemporary advertising strategies, with a focus on personalized targeting and automated creative. Through a combination of a critical literature review and a qualitative field study conducted with advertising professionals, the investigation not only documented the technological changes taking place, but sought to understand how these transformations are being experienced, reinterpreted, and made meaningful in everyday communication practices. This perspective is based on a socio-technical conception of technology, which highlights how AI adoption is deeply influenced by the cultural, professional and institutional contexts in which it is implemented (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Jasanoff & Kim, 2015).

Work in the field has shown that the adoption of AI in advertising does not follow a linear or neutral path. AI-based tools are not simply received as they are, but are repurposed, reinterpreted, and integrated in creative, strategic, and ethical ways. Professionals in the field do not see AI as a replacement for human work, but rather as a tool that needs human framing, guidance, and validation. This view is consistent with the human-machine co-production approach, according to which technology takes shape within situated contexts, institutional norms, and interpretive processes (Suchman, 2007). In particular, human input remains crucial in areas such as tone of voice, brand identity, emotional resonance, and the management of ethical implications—for example, in deciding whether and how to address vulnerable groups, in dealing with sensitive issues, or in preventing the reproduction of cultural and social stereotypes.

The research also shows that AI is creating a gradual reconfiguration of workflows, work and occupations. New hybrid roles are emerging, such as “prompt designers”, “AI copy editors” or “content automation strategists”, who operate at the intersection of creativity, technology and strategy. An AI copy editor, for example, could be tasked with refining AI-generated texts, ensuring their consistency with the brand’s tone, correcting any semantic errors, and ensuring narrative consistency across different communication channels, such as social media, websites, email marketing, and digital advertising campaigns.

Existing creative processes are also becoming increasingly modular and iterative as work is divided and redistributed between human experts and Artificial Intelligence systems. This

transformation indicates a shift toward collaborative forms of creativity, in which ideation and authorship are co-constructed by multiple actors-human and algorithmic-through integrated workflows (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011). In this new configuration, creativity is no longer seen as the result of isolated individual inspiration, but as a collective, mediated and shared practice driven by human intentionality and context sensitivity.

The study also identified significant tensions and risks associated with integrating AI into advertising processes. These are the leveling of stylistic uniqueness, the over-optimization of content at the expense of semantic richness, and the absence of institutional policy defining ethical practice. Although many practitioners have demonstrated high levels of critical consciousness, they have predominantly operated in fragmented environments lacking shared policies, ethical guidelines or structured training. These findings are consistent with broader concerns in the literature on AI ethics, which points out that ethical risks emerge not only from the algorithms themselves, but also from the institutional vacuums in which they are developed and used (Barocas et al., 2023). With these arrangements, decisions between transparency, fairness, and accountability are made at the discretion of the individual. This fragmentation reveals a structural gap that cannot be overcome by technical solutions, but requires the establishment of interdisciplinary literacy and regulatory standards at the sectoral level.

Based on these findings, the following sections present actionable recommendations and identifies the main areas to target future research.

Empirical Contributions to Understanding AI in Advertising

The research analyzes how Artificial Intelligence is interpreted, incorporated and adapted within communicative and organizational contexts, highlighting the symbolic, ethical and procedural dimensions that characterize its implementation in professional advertising contexts.

On the theoretical level, the study builds on some central approaches of Science and Technology Studies (STS), including the concept of socio-technical imaginaries, which describes how collective visions of the future influence the development, use, and governance of technological systems (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015). This is complemented by the media studies perspective, which allows for critical interrogation of AI as a symbolic and cultural

infrastructure, highlighting its implications in terms of power, representation, and communicative normativity (Crawford, 2021).

The thesis also adopts the perspective of sociomateriality, according to which technology and human action co-determine each other. This approach highlights how digital tools are deeply intertwined with organizational routines, cultural norms and material practices (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). This is complemented by critical media theory, particularly through the work of Crawford (2021), who critiques the idea of abstract AI separate from material reality, arguing instead that such systems should be understood as political and material infrastructures, shaped by human labor, power imbalances and structural biases.

These theoretical references make it possible to overcome a view of AI as an autonomous or neutral force, proposing it instead as a technology deeply embedded within cultural visions, professional practices and institutional logics. Adopting this perspective allows us to read collaboration between humans and machines as a situated and relational process, in which creativity is not replaced, but is constructed through practices of interpretation, adaptation and attribution of meaning.

Methodologically, the thesis adopts an interpretive and reflexive approach (Finlay, 2002), integrating thematic analysis with semi-structured interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2019) to understand how advertising professionals transpose and integrate AI into their workflows. Instead of seeking generalizations, the analysis focuses on the tensions, ambiguities, and local interpretations that reveal how AI is actually constructed and shaped in practical contexts. This methodological choice echoes Finlay's (2002) idea of reflexivity as a tool for accessing meanings within complex professional environments.

The research proposes a qualitative exploration of the opinions and experiences of 14 Italian advertising professionals, fitting into a national context still little investigated in the international literature. The interviews collected outline a wide variety of ways of interacting with AI tools, ranging from functional use to strategic experimentation to attitudes of cautious enthusiasm or explicit ethical skepticism. These differences are influenced by a combination of factors-such as role held, level of seniority, organizational structure, and degree of digital maturity-that confirm the high heterogeneity in AI adoption in the industry.

Among the main empirical contributions that have emerged is the identification of new hybrid professional roles, born out of the integration of AI into creative processes, such as

Prompt Designers, AI Content Editors, and Workflow Coordinators. Although not yet fully institutionalized, these emerging roles are already influencing creative channels and agency decision-making processes. Far from being merely technical functions, these positions require rhetorical skills, mastery of brand language, and ethical sensibilities, confirming a reconfiguration of creative work in line with what Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) observed with respect to the evolution of media professions in contexts of technological transformation.

The interviews show how many professionals redefine their roles within workflows in which AI acts as an assistant and collaborator. The introduction of generative systems is redefining how authorship and decision-making responsibility are conceived, leading to new forms of editorial control. Participants underscore the need to guide, rework, and contextualize machine-generated content—activities that reinforce human intentionality but at the same time introduce new vulnerabilities, such as excessive operational dependence, stylistic flattening, or loss of critical distance.

A transversal issue of concern is the absence of organizational structures that are able to support AI use that is both strategic and ethically conscious. Although many respondents demonstrate individual initiative and critical thinking, they often operate in environments lacking shared terminology, structured training paths, or clear internal guidelines. This deficiency reflects broader tensions between regulation and innovation, and mirrors concerns expressed in the literature on algorithmic ethics, which highlights how ethical risks emerge not only from the technology itself, but also from the institutional vacuums in which it is applied (Barocas et al., 2023). In such contexts, complex decisions related to transparency, equity, and accountability are often left to individual discretion. This fragmentation indicates a systemic gap that cannot be filled solely by technical solutions, but requires the development of interdisciplinary literacy and the adoption of shared normative standards at the sectoral level.

Finally, the study finds a marked fragmentation of knowledge among professional fields. Key technical terms—such as prompt engineering or training data—are often interpreted differently within creative teams, with the result that strategic decisions tend to reflect biased or unbalanced views. In light of this, the urgency of promoting AI literacy that goes beyond the mere use of tools to include symbolic, ethical and strategic skills emerges strongly. This implies the need for cross-functional training programs capable not only of imparting

technical skills, but also of building a shared language and a culture of collaboration across disciplines.

Critical Reflections on AI, Creativity, and Professional Agency

In this regard, the results of this research offer a more nuanced picture of how Artificial Intelligence is changing the circumstances under which creativity and professional agency are practiced in advertising. Rather than seeing Artificial Intelligence only as a threat to creative work or as a neutral tool to make work more efficient, participants described it as a catalyst for reshaping the boundaries of authorship, judgment, and moral responsibility. The introduction of generative systems does not eliminate human input, but displaces it. As a result, creative work is increasingly focused on curating, editing and evaluating machine-generated content, rather than creating it from scratch. This trend is indicative of the continuing transformation of professional identity in creative work, where autonomy and originality are reconfigured in relation to technological and economic pressures (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011).

This transformation, however, is not without consequences. Several experts expressed concern about the growing risk of stylistic homogenization and reduced creative complexity. As results are optimized for speed, scalability, or algorithmic performance, participants noted a trend toward emotionally flat or generic results. These reflections resonate with criticisms from media and culture studies (Crawford, 2021), which warn that automation has the potential to replace not only work but also the critical and affective dimensions of communication. The data suggest that the value of creative work is shifting ever more from invention to framing and selection, in contrast to the traditional idea of originality and ownership.

Ethics also emerged consistently throughout the interviews. Despite a widespread awareness of the risks associated with bias, manipulation, and transparency, many participants reported that they operate in the absence of shared ethical standards or organizational frameworks of reference. As discussed above, the lack of appropriate institutional frameworks, even according to the AI ethics literature (Barocas et al., 2023), means that responsibilities fall to individuals. In the advertising context, this means that personalization, surveillance, and automation are managed in ad hoc ways, increasing the risk of inconsistent or ethically fragile outcomes.

Another theme concerns the fragmentation of knowledge and vocabulary along organizational roles. As noted earlier, emerging roles such as “AI editors” or “prompt engineers” reflect a shift in skill configuration. Participants emphasized the need for cross-functional dialogue and shared literacy to ensure that strategic decisions involving AI are inclusive and critically informed. Without these resources, there is a risk that AI will be used only according to what is technically possible, without paying sufficient attention to ethics, creativity, or communication goals.

The interviews also revealed ambivalence on the issue of professional autonomy. While AI accelerates content generation and supports routine tasks, it can also produce a kind of cognitive dependence. Some interviewees noted that machine-generated suggestions were accepted without critical evaluation, leading to a possible decline in creative judgment. This dynamic is in line with the concept of delegated agency, in which humans increasingly abandon judgment in favor of algorithm results, potentially reducing critical intervention (Suchman, 2007). This issue is in line with contemporary discussions of delegated agency in human-AI interaction (Suchman, 2007), where intelligent systems not only assist, but actively shape the way humans make decisions. In advertising, this could lead to a limitation of creative vision, with practitioners focusing more on what the system suggests than on their own ideas.

A final reflection concerns the broader implications for the evaluation and legitimization of creative work. Many of the participants pointed out that current performance criteria—such as efficiency, virality, or engagement—do not reflect the communicative or cultural value of advertising. There was a consensus that the integration of AI requires a parallel evolution in the way creativity is evaluated: not only through output metrics, but in terms of consistency, ethical alignment, and emotional resonance. This observation highlights the need to revise standards for evaluation according to the symbolic and structural impacts of AI on the profession.

Table 4 – AI in Advertising: Theoretical Assumptions vs. Professional Experience

Comparison of academic writing and empirical observations from the field.

Topic of Analysis	What Theory Suggests	What Professionals Report
Personalized Targeting	AI enables precise audience segmentation, higher ROI, and dynamic content delivery tailored in real time.	True in part, but hyper-targeting can feel invasive. Many express discomfort over privacy risks and a lack of user consent.
Automated Creativity	AI can generate endless content variations, saving time and enhancing creative productivity.	Useful for speeding up drafts and testing ideas, but lacks originality and emotional depth. Human revision is always needed.
Human Role	Humans remain essential as editors, curators, and ethical decision-makers within AI-assisted workflows.	Confirmed: professionals describe AI as a tool that amplifies, not replaces. Human judgment ensures brand voice and coherence.
Ethics and Governance	Ethical concerns are well known (bias, surveillance, data use), and should be managed through policy and oversight.	Most organizations lack internal policies. Decisions are often improvised, and professionals feel unprepared for ethical issues.
Tool Adoption	AI should be integrated across organizations with structured strategies and training.	Adoption is uneven: some use AI daily, others sporadically. Use often depends on individual curiosity rather than strategy.
Creativity vs. Uniformity	AI expands creative options and helps overcome blocks by offering alternative drafts and visual ideas.	There's a risk of repetitive or predictable results. Outputs often feel too generic or similar across projects and platforms.
Emotional Impact	Emotional responses are rarely addressed in theoretical models.	Interviewees feel both empowered and anxious. Excitement about new tools coexists with fear of losing relevance or professional value.

Recommendations for Businesses

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into marketing and advertising workflows is no longer a matter of opportunity, but of mode. As shown in this thesis, AI is already present—in a more or less explicit form—within the creative processes, strategic planning and organizational routines of communication professionals. However, such integration

remains uneven and immature, often characterized by improvisation, ad-hoc initiatives, and deep ethical and organisational gaps.

Qualitatively, the results show that although AI offers potential benefits—such as automation of repetitive tasks, expansion of ideational possibilities, and data-driven personalization—these benefits are neither automatically nor uniformly realized. In many contexts, the absence of shared standards, critical training and internal regulations leads to fragmented adoption, inconsistent practices and widespread uncertainty regarding content authorship, professional responsibility and ethical use of technologies.

All this suggests that the challenge for companies is not so much technical as cultural. Integrating AI into advertising contexts does not simply mean introducing new tools into existing workflows, but requires a profound rethinking of how creative work is ethically and organizationally conceived, evaluated, and regulated. The success of this transition depends on the ability of companies to align technological potential with the professional values, communication goals and expectations of their target audiences.

In light of this complexity, this section offers a set of strategic recommendations aimed at organizations that want to integrate AI in an effective, accountable and people-centered way. The recommendations are divided into two domains: operational practices (*Best Practices for Integrating AI into Communication Strategies*) and strategic factors (*Key Factors for Creating Successful AI-Driven Campaigns*), and are designed to support the transition from isolated experimentation to structured, ethically conscious, and sustainable adoption of smart technologies.

Taken together, these recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive, but to provide a starting point for stimulating critical reflection, contextual adaptation, and ongoing institutional learning processes.

Best Practices for Integrating AI into Communication Strategies

Integrating AI into advertising practice requires more than enthusiasm for innovation or access to advanced tools. As confirmed by this study, AI implementation is often fragmented, driven by individual initiatives rather than cohesive organizational strategies. This reflects what Crawford (2021) identifies as the infrastructural opacity of AI: technologies embedded in systems of power and abstraction, but often poorly understood by their users.

In line with this perception, Barocas et al. (2023) point out that the lack of clear internal governance systems can increase ethical risks and lead to unpredictable or ad hoc decisions. Second, the interviews in this study also revealed that digital and ethical skills are not shared on an equal basis among teams, limiting critical debate and the effectiveness of interdisciplinary work.

In light of these dynamics, the need emerges for thoughtful and planned approaches capable of promoting technological innovation that is both consistent with professional values and strategic communication goals. A key first step is to clearly define the role of AI within communication processes. Organizations must avoid a generic or indiscriminate application of technologies, and instead precisely identify the stages of the workflow where AI can make a concrete contribution—for example, in ideation, language translation, or visual draft generation—distinguishing them from those where human judgment remains irreplaceable, such as in final control, tone calibration, or value choices. By consciously mapping these functions, mechanical, redundant or decontextualized uses can be prevented, ensuring that automation actually serves communicative intentionality.

A second crucial issue concerns the establishment of internal policies and shared ethical standards. Professionals interviewed often expressed uncertainty about what should be considered acceptable use of AI, particularly in relation to data provenance, content authorship, and consent. Thus, companies should develop transparent and adaptable guidelines that can reflect both brand values and the flexibility of the technologies adopted. Such policies should not remain abstract or isolated, but should be integrated into the organizational culture and team habits over the course of time, thereby ensuring collective responsibility and internal consistency.

In parallel, it becomes essential to promote effective collaboration between different departments and professions. AI has a cross-cutting impact, involving creative, technical, legal and experiential aspects; addressing it in a sectoral or isolated way reduces the quality of decisions and increases the risk of misalignment. Creating spaces for confrontation between heterogeneous professional figures—such as designers, strategists, analysts, and lawyers—makes it possible to build a shared language and coordinate complementary skills, reducing overlap and generating more effective solutions.

In addition to collaboration, there is a need to invest in AI literacy pathways that go beyond technical skills. Understanding the logic that governs the operation of algorithms, being able to recognize their limitations and potential biases, knowing how to ask the right questions about the results produced-these are all key to maintaining an active role in the creative process. Training should therefore also include ethical, social and interpretive aspects, so that teams can work with AI consciously and critically, treating it not as an opaque system but as a true collaborator under human control.

To support innovation, organizations should also provide safe and structured spaces for experimentation. Learning through trial and error, in fact, is one of the most effective ways to internalize the use of emerging technologies. Creating dedicated “sandboxes” for AI - understood as moments, tools or environments for free exploration - allows isolated insights to be transformed into shared knowledge and build a solid foundation for continuous improvement.

In addition, content generated by AI tools should never be published without careful oversight. Editorial reviews, peer feedback, and quality checks are essential to ensure consistency with the brand voice, informational accuracy, and communicative relevance. These control processes also help teams improve their interaction with generative systems over time, promoting increasingly responsible and refined use of technologies.

Finally, it is essential to keep human responsibility central. As much as AI can support and optimize creative processes, it cannot take on the burden of meaning, value choices, or ethical impact of a message. All communication content still bears the signature of the brand and the people who represent it. Therefore, it is essential that the roles of review and approval are well defined to ensure that each output is the result of a conscious choice, in line with the business strategy and the context in which it is placed.

Key Factors for Creating Successful AI-Driven Campaigns

Although *Best Practices* provide a critical operational foundation for AI adoption in communications, their long-term success depends on deeper, cultural and strategic conditions. As this research highlights, organizations that succeed in effectively integrating AI are not limited to the adoption of technological tools, but foster environments where innovation, critical thinking, and human values coexist and intertwine with technological ambition.

It is necessary to maintain a balance between automation and brand identity. Although AI systems are capable of producing grammatically correct, visually appealing and stylistically varied content, they fail to capture the deep nuances of the message. This confirms that automation, however sophisticated, cannot replace human intervention, particularly when it comes to tone, emotional impact, and symbolic meaning (Crawford, 2021). Interview participants emphasized the importance of adapting AI-generated content to the brand's own stylistic and value codes, avoiding mechanical reliance on system-generated propositions.

A second factor relates to building a long-term oriented culture of innovation. AI adoption should not be limited to isolated projects or the actions of specialized teams, but become an integral part of the daily mindset of the organization, stimulating curiosity, experimentation and continuous learning at all levels. As suggested by Orlikowski and Scott (2008), technological innovation develops organically alongside an organization's shared routines, practices and norms; in this sense, it is as much cultural as technical. Sustaining this transformation requires leadership capable of creating an organizational climate that fosters exploration, tolerance for error, and individual initiative. Organizations that treat AI as an evolutionary partner rather than a temporary solution demonstrate greater adaptability and vision.

Personalization is an area where AI shows great potential, but also significant risks. While one of the most tangible benefits of AI is being able to produce highly customized content on a large scale, research findings highlight that excessive specificity can be invasive. This is in line with Barocas et al.'s (2023) assertion that unregulated algorithmic personalization can compromise privacy, reinforce stereotypes, and generate subtle forms of manipulation. Instead, the most effective strategies are based on an empathetic and respectful approach, attentive to users' emotional boundaries and oriented toward relationship, not control focused. In other words, good personalization is not only accurate, but humanly sensitive.

Another relevant principle is that of transparency. As public exposure to AI-generated content increases, so does the expectation of clarity from users. Explicitly stating where and how AI is used-through disclaimers, design solutions, or targeted communications-is no longer a sign of weakness, but of trustworthiness. In more sensitive sectors, such as healthcare, education, or public services, transparency was recognized by participants as a key element in building trust, especially when it comes to high-impact communications or engagement.

Performance measurement, another key factor, requires updating traditional metrics. Quantitative metrics such as reach or click-through rate remain relevant, but are insufficient to assess more qualitative dimensions such as the quality of the engagement or the actual resonance of the message. It's therefore essential to place relational and value metrics alongside these data, asking questions such as: Did the campaign establish meaningful connections with the audience? Did it respect and enhance users' values? Was it consistent with brand identity and purpose? Only by including factors such as emotional appeal, communicative clarity, and ethical alignment can we move from a concept of efficiency to a broader and more relevant one of effectiveness.

In an ever-changing environment, the ability to plan for the unexpected is an additional strategic competency. Technologies change, regulations update, and platforms may change or disappear. Businesses must therefore adopt scenario planning tools to prepare for possible futures, such as legislative changes, public resistance, or technology failures. Flexibility, more than optimistic planning, is the true foundation of adaptive innovation.

Finally, but across all the points listed above, the central role of ethical leadership emerges. To successfully lead AI integration, operational speed is not enough: a long-term vision that combines strategic thinking and accountability is required. Educating for ethics does not mean imposing limits, but activating critical thinking as a lever for innovation. Companies that promote inclusive design, fair practices in the use of data, and transparent stakeholder communication do more than just protect their reputations; they actively contribute to defining future industry standards.

Thus, we can say that success in integrating AI in advertising depends not only on the adoption of the tools, but on a set of enabling conditions of an organizational, cultural and ethical nature. Evidence suggests that an AI-based campaign is not effective as a technical product, but as a communicative and relational outcome built through the alignment of technology, human judgment, shared values and strategic coherence.

To provide an overview of the strategic imperatives and activities outlined in the Recommendations for Businesses Section, Table 5 provides a set of practical recommendations for companies that want to target AI intentionally, at scale, and with value.

Table 5 – Practical Recommendations for AI Integration in Advertising Workflows

Key focus areas, recommended actions, and expected benefits derived from the empirical findings and theoretical synthesis.

Area of Focus	Recommended Action	Goal / Expected Benefit
1. Skills and Training	Offer regular workshops and tutorials on prompt writing, tool evaluation, and content validation.	Help professionals use AI tools with more confidence, creativity, and critical awareness.
2. Internal Guidelines	Create clear internal policies on how and when AI should be used across different roles and tasks.	Ensure consistency, reduce uncertainty, and support team-wide alignment on AI usage.
3. Cross-Team Collaboration	Facilitate dialogue between creatives, strategists, developers, and data analysts through shared projects and meetings.	Break down silos, improve innovation, and develop richer, multidisciplinary approaches to campaigns.
4. Human Supervision	Maintain human review and refinement of AI outputs, especially for brand tone, cultural sensitivity, and message clarity.	Safeguard narrative quality, brand identity, and emotional resonance in communication.
5. Ethics and Transparency	Introduce ethical codes for AI use, clarify data ownership, and explain how AI-generated content is used to clients.	Build trust with stakeholders, prevent misuse, and ensure respect for privacy and professional responsibility.
6. Experimentation Culture	Encourage pilot tests, feedback loops, and informal trials of AI tools in real campaigns.	Stimulate learning, accelerate tool adoption, and adapt solutions to team needs through trial and error.
7. Strategic Leadership	Appoint AI champions or coordinators to monitor usage, collect best practices, and guide long-term integration.	Promote coherent, scalable, and goal-oriented use of AI aligned with company values and creative vision.

Future Research Directions

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into advertising represents a profound, lasting and multidimensional transformation, involving technological, cultural and ethical aspects in an interconnected manner. As highlighted by this thesis, the empirical findings confirm many of the trends already highlighted in the literature, but also reveal shadowy areas and complexities not yet fully explored by existing research. These gaps provide fertile ground

for future investigation, especially at the intersection of AI, creativity, and communicative responsibility.

The evidence collected clearly shows that the adoption of AI is not a passive or merely technical process, but involves interpretation, adaptation and reconfiguration by practitioners, in the midst of daily practices. This finding contradicts binary narratives that pit human creativity against technological automation. On the contrary, a dynamic of co-evolution emerges between humans and machines, where value, meaning and authorship are co-constructed through interaction. Future research will need to interrogate more specifically how such co-creation is articulated, not only in advertising, but also in other areas of communication and creative work.

One notable point of attention concerns the transformation of professional roles and identities. This thesis has highlighted the emergence of new hybrid figures, such as prompt engineers, AI-generated content editors, or creative curators, who often operate informally and non-institutionalized within agencies. Empirical insights are needed to understand how these roles are evolving, what recognition they receive from organizations, and what kinds of skills-technical, communicative, critical-are actually redefining the profile of creative work in AI-mediated environments.

Analysis of the results clearly shows a persistent absence of institutional support. Most professionals interviewed report working independently, relying on exploratory experiences or individual attempts, without structured training, ethical guidelines or strategic direction. Future research should therefore focus on the organizational conditions that enable or hinder the responsible adoption of Artificial Intelligence. This includes the study of peer learning models, the implementation of ethical review procedures, and the promotion of cross-functional forms of collaboration between creative, technical, and managerial functions.

One of the key areas undoubtedly concerns communication ethics, which highlights the need to improve critical AI literacy (Long & Magerko, 2020). With the advancement of generative technologies and the increasing opacity of their processes, the ability of professionals to critically evaluate AI-assisted outputs is not only a technical skill, but a fundamental ethical responsibility. It is therefore imperative to deepen the role that educational systems and industry partners can play in fostering this form of advanced literacy, especially in a

landscape where the boundaries between written, assisted and automated content are increasingly blurred.

Finally, it is important to recognize that much of the research on AI has so far focused on its functional capabilities, neglecting its symbolic, cultural and interpretive dimensions. As argued in this thesis, AI systems are not neutral tools, but are embedded in cultural imaginaries and socio-institutional processes that help shape professional identities, communicative norms, and social relations. To fully understand these dynamics, future research will need to adopt more interdisciplinary and integrated approaches, drawing on critical theory, media studies, and the sociology of organizations. Only then will it be possible to interrogate not only what we communicate with AI, but also how and why we choose to do so in certain ways.

The following sections delve into two main lines of development: on the one hand, areas of research that are immediately relevant in the short term, with a focus on the area of marketing and communication; on the other hand, emerging technological and cultural challenges that require critical analysis and perspective in the long term.

Areas for Further Study in AI and Marketing

Despite the broadening academic debate on Artificial Intelligence applied to marketing and communication, important areas of inquiry persist that have yet to be explored. As AI increasingly penetrates creative, decision-making and strategic processes, research must also evolve, moving beyond technological emphasis to more nuanced investigations of how these transformations are redefining the discipline from within.

A first priority line of research concerns the concrete conditions under which AI is used in everyday marketing practices. Much of the current studies focus on algorithm efficiency or performance optimization, but understanding how practitioners actually interact with these tools remains limited: how they interpret the generated outputs, adapt them to strategic goals, or negotiate the balance between automation and creativity. In this sense, ethnographic approaches would be particularly useful to take a closer look at the dynamics of working in teams, changes in power relations, and the renegotiation of professional roles in AI-mediated environments.

Linked to this perspective is the need to map the emergence of new hybrid figures within organizations. Evidence suggests the emergence of roles such as prompt designers, generative content editors or automation strategists: profiles that are still not institutionalized but are increasingly influential in decision-making and creative processes. Future research should clarify the skills associated with these roles, their positioning in corporate hierarchies, and how they integrate with existing creative, analytical, and strategic functions.

Alongside these transformations, the ethical and communicative implications of AI-driven personalization need to be explored. The increasing reliance on predictive models raises urgent questions about the boundaries between relevance and manipulation. How are algorithmically generated hyper-personalized messages perceived by users? In which cases do they enhance engagement and in which do they undermine trust? These questions require interdisciplinary approaches capable of interweaving marketing studies, media ethics, cognitive psychology, and algorithmic criticism.

A further critical issue concerns the transparency of generated content. With the adoption of generative technologies in advertising campaigns, product naming, visual design, and social management, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish what is human-produced from what is machine-generated. As Crawford (2021) suggests, AI acts not only as a technical tool, but as a symbolic infrastructure that can conceal intentions, authorship, and purpose. It is therefore necessary to investigate how transparency-through disclaimers, design choices, or brand policies-influences public perception in terms of credibility, authenticity, and value.

Closely related to this issue is the problem of algorithmic governance and accountability over data. In many marketing contexts, practitioners are unaware of the data sets used to train the models, the mechanisms that generate the outputs, or the biases embedded in the tools. Empirical studies are therefore needed that explore how organizations address these risks in daily practice and how emerging regulations-such as the European AI Act-may shape the future of communication practices. Indeed, the AI Act represents an ambitious attempt by the European Union to regulate the development and use of Artificial Intelligence in a manner consistent with the fundamental rights and security of European citizens. However, for such regulation to be effective, it will need to be accompanied by forms of organizational support and operational guidelines that facilitate compliance, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and limit its disincentive impact on innovation. In this sense, the role of

regulation also becomes one of ensuring conditions of transparency and traceability, as well as spaces for responsible experimentation (Hacker, 2023).

Finally, how AI impacts brand building and long-term narrative design is still poorly investigated. The dominant literature tends to focus on tactical applications-such as content automation or targeting-while neglecting the potential of AI to transform the way brands generate meaning, symbolic coherence, and emotional connection across channels. What is the role of AI in co-creating brand storytelling? How does it affect narrative consistency across platforms and symbolic identity over time?

Overall, these areas of research point to the need for more integrated approaches that combine empirical analysis and critical theory. The aim is not only to understand how AI is used in marketing, but also to analyze how it helps redefine the very boundaries of communicative responsibility, professional ethics, and creative work.

Emerging Themes and Technological Developments

Although most studies on Artificial Intelligence in advertising currently focus on short-term applications, including automated content creation, predictive targeting, and performance measurement, it is also important to consider the broader implications of the technological and cultural changes that are reshaping the communication landscape. With applications of Artificial Intelligence increasingly integrated into everyday work and decision making, new questions surround identity formation, power relations, and imagination.

Perhaps the most significant change in these areas is the pervasive integration of AI into creative work. With the advent of wearables, voice interfaces, and predictive interfaces, AI is no longer an occasional assistant: it's now an ubiquitous presence silently shaping how humans think, make, and communicate in real time. It is an example of what Orlikowski and Scott (2008) refer to as "socio-technical entanglement", in which technologies and work practices are deeply integrated and constantly evolving.

The presence of AI in the work environment poses new research questions: not only productivity, but also creativity, autonomy and emotional labor. What happens to originality and concentration when ideation is repeatedly prompted by algorithmic suggestions? How do specialists maintain space for critical thinking, reflection, or surprise in a world increasingly filled with predictive feedback?

Adding to this is the new discovery of predictive and generative AI tools that are intended to replicate entire advertising ecosystems ranging from textual content and imagery to brand tone and cross-platform coordination. While these tools can improve consistency and productivity, they also present the risk of reducing creativity and perpetuating prevailing cultural narratives. Crawford (2021) argues that AI replicates dominant ideologies, which may limit expressive diversity. As more and more brands rely on these technologies to predict audience reaction and pre-test messages, researchers need to investigate the epistemological consequences: How does optimizing feedback limit creative experimentation? What are the cultural consequences of constructing predictions?

Another emerging theme is the rapidly diminishing difference between human—and machine—written content. Deepfakes, fake influencers, and Artificial Intelligence voices erase the traditional boundaries between authentic and artificial. However, this is not only a legal or technical issue, but also an ethical and ontological one: What is authentic communication if the modes of expression can be accurately reproduced? How do users judge the credibility of information whose author is unknown? And what new criteria must be established for attribution and accountability?

These concerns are echoed by those of Barocas et al. (2023), who point to the ways in which the opacity of algorithms disrupts long-standing models of responsibility and authorship. It is necessary for scientific inquiry and professional ethics to know how these technologies make human intentionality opaque.

Moreover, future studies would benefit from further exploring the affective aspect of working with AI. While technical competence and productivity are the focus of most research, respondents in this thesis tended to talk about AI from an affective perspective, talking about enthusiasm, curiosity, fear, or loneliness. Investigating how these emotional responses evolve over time and how they affect identity, job satisfaction, and collaboration could provide useful insights into the human impact of AI adoption.

These forces do not take place in a vacuum. AI adoption intersects with platformization, surveillance capitalism, and the automation of knowledge work at scale. As more and more communication infrastructure is infused with AI, scholars must look beyond functional analysis to ask a more fundamental question: Who produces and owns these tools? Who benefits and who does not? Questions of access, equity and power in institutions will become

more pronounced, particularly with the centralization of control in a few leading platforms in AI systems.

As this study's fieldwork shows, AI already puts professionals under pressure to reexamine the experience of authorship and originality. As a result, new thinking about creativity is needed: What is creative work if machines can recreate artistic creation? How to distinguish imitation from invention, technical performance from human purpose?

To move forward, future research must synthesize philosophical, sociocultural and organizational critiques. Instead of treating AI as a neutral tool, researchers should treat it as a communicative infrastructure—an infrastructure that reflects and solidifies certain symbolic logics, institutional asymmetries, and sociomaterial arrangements. Without regulation and careful oversight, algorithmic systems risk producing ethically inconsistent and fragmented types of accountability, problems already widely documented in the literature on AI governance and institutional accountability (Barocas et al., 2023).

As Orlikowski and Scott (2008) remind us, technologies are deeply embedded in communication routines and professional cultures. For this reason, AI adoption is not a one-time affair, but a never-ending socio-technical process that must be constantly critically examined by researchers and practitioners.

Final Consideration

Artificial Intelligence should be approached neither with uncritical enthusiasm nor exaggerated fear, but rather with analytical clarity, a sense of responsibility, and critical consciousness. As this thesis has shown, the role of AI in advertising is neither fixed nor neutral: it is formed by human decisions, organizations' values, and the ethical boundaries that guide communication. The future of this sector will be determined not only by the level of technological progress achieved, but more importantly by how these technologies are integrated in a way that is intentional, conscious, and oriented toward the common good.

From this perspective, the adoption of AI cannot be conceived as a mere technical upgrade, but rather as a reflexive process that requires attention to its cultural, professional and ethical implications. Indeed, innovation is not just a matter of tools, but of strategic vision, responsible governance and collective commitment. It is on these assumptions that the

possibility for the advertising world to build a future in which AI does not replace, but enhances and enhances, the human contribution to communication will depend.

Reference

- Adamopoulou, E., Moussiades, L. (2020). *Chatbots: History, technology, and applications*. *Machine Learning with Applications*, 2, 100006. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mlwa.2020.100006>
- Ali, A., Razak, S. A., Othman, S. H., et al. (2022). *Financial fraud detection based on machine learning: A systematic literature review*. *Applied Sciences*, 12(19), 9637. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app12199637>
- Amil, Y. (2023). *Impact of AI-driven personalization tools on privacy concerns*. Master Thesis, University of Liège.
- Barocas, S., Hardt, M., Narayanan, A. (2023). *Fairness and machine learning: Limitations and opportunities*. MIT Press.
- Bharti, P., Park, B. (2023). *The ethics of AI in online marketing: Examining the impacts on consumer privacy and decision-making*. *The Journal of The Institute of Internet Broadcasting and Communication* 15, 227–239.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. SAGE Publications.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). *Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis*. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Brinkmann, S. (2013). *Qualitative interviewing: Understanding qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.
- Büyüksomer, A. E., Tekeoğlu, A. N. (2024). *Enhancing marketing communications with generative AI: A systematic literature review*. *Journal of Industrial Policy and Technology Management*, 7(2), 109–122.
- Chatterjee, P., Rana, N. P., Tamilmani, K., Sharma, S. (2020). *Artificial Intelligence in marketing: A review*. *Journal of Business Research*, 113, 17–29.

Chaudhary, Y., & Penn, J. (2024). *Beware the Intention Economy: Collection and Commodification of Intent via Large Language Models*. *Harvard Data Science Review*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.21e6bbaa>

Chen, Z., Chan, J. (2024). *Large Language Model in Creative Work: The Role of Collaboration Modality and User Expertise*. *Management Science*, 70, 12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2023.03014>

Cristianini, N. (2023). *La scorciatoia: Come le macchine sono diventate intelligenti senza pensare in modo umano*. Il Mulino.

Crawford, K. (2021). *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*. Yale University Press.

Davenport, T., Guha, A., Grewal, D., Bressgott, T. (2020). *How Artificial Intelligence will change the future of marketing*. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(1), 24–42. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00696-0>

Dias, T., Gonçalves, R., Costa, R. L., Pereira, L. F., Dias, Á. (2023). *The impact of AI on consumer behavior and business activity*. *Human Technology*, 19(1), 121–148. <https://doi.org/10.14254/1795-6889.2023.19-1.8>

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. 189–213.

De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). *Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude*. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>

Eyice Başev, S. (2024). *The role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the future of the advertising industry: Applications and examples of AI in advertising*. *International Journal of Education Technology and Scientific Researches*, 9(26), 167–183.

Feuerriegel, S., Hartmann, J., Janiesch, C., Zschech, P. (2024). *Generative AI*. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, 66(1), 111–126. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-023-00834-7>

- Finlay, L. (2002). "Outing" the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4), 531–545. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973202129120052>
- Ford, J., Jain, V., Wadhvani, K., Gupta, D. G. (2023). *AI advertising: An overview and guidelines*. *Journal of Business Research*, 166, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114124>
- Gao, B., Wang, Y., Xie, H., Hu, Y. (2023). *Artificial Intelligence in advertising: Advancements, challenges, and ethical considerations in targeting, personalization, content creation, and ad optimization*. *SAGE Open*, 13, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231210759>
- Gomez-Uribe, C. A., Hunt, N. (2016). *The Netflix recommender system: Algorithms, business value, and innovation*. *ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems*, 6(4), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2843948>
- Goodfellow, I. J., Pouget-Abadie, J., Mirza, M., Xu, B., Warde-Farley, D., Ozair, S., Courville, A., Bengio, Y. (2014). *Generative Adversarial Networks*. *Advances in neural information processing systems*, 27. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1406.2661>
- Hacker, P. (2023). *AI Regulation in Europe: From the AI Act to Future Regulatory Challenges*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2310.04072>
- Haleem, A., Javaid, M., Qadri, M., Singh, R., Suman, R. (2022). *Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications for marketing: A literature-based study*. *International Journal of Intelligent Networks*, 3, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijin.2022.08.005>
- Hesmondhalgh, D., & Baker, S. (2011). *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*. Routledge.
- Hutt, M. D., & Speh, T. W. (2021). *Business Marketing Management: B2B* (13th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Jain, V., Wadhvani, K., Eastman, J. K. (2024). *Artificial Intelligence consumer behavior: A hybrid review and research agenda*. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 23(2), 676–697. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2233>

Jasanoff, S., & Kim, S. H. (2015). *Dreamscapes of modernity: Sociotechnical imaginaries and the fabrication of power*. University of Chicago Press.

Kaplan, A., Haenlein, M. (2020). *Rulers of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence*. *Business Horizons*, 63(1), 37–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2019.09.003>

Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., Chernev, A. (2022). *Marketing management* (16th ed.). Pearson Education.

Kotsiantis, S.B., Kanellopoulos, D.N., Pintelas, P.E. (2007). *Data Preprocessing for Supervised Learning*. *International Journal of Computer Science*. 1. 111–117.

Krizhevsky, Alex, Ilya Sutskever, and Geoffrey E. Hinton. (2017). *ImageNet Classification with Deep Convolutional Neural Networks*. *Communications of the ACM*, 60(6), 84–90. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3065386>

Kumar, V., & Gupta, S. (2016). *Conceptualising the Evolution and Future of Advertising*. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(3), 302–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2016.1199335>

Kumar, V., & Gupta, S. (2016). *Conceptualizing the role of Artificial Intelligence in personalized advertising*. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 56(4), 345–359.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://archive.org/details/interviewslearni0000kval>

Lal, R. & Aarzo (2024). *Artificial Intelligence-Driven Emotional Storytelling for Brand Narrative Strategies and Consumer Perception*. *SSRN Electronic Journal* <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4954803>

Langley, P., & Leyshon, A. (2017). *Platform capitalism: The intermediation and capitalisation of digital economic circulation*. *Finance and Society*, 3(1), 11–31. <https://doi.org/10.2218/finsoc.v3i1.1936>

LeCun, Y., Bengio, Y., Hinton, G. (2015). *Deep learning*. *Nature*, 521, 436–444. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature14539>

- Lee, K., Misra, S., Angelopoulos, P. (2024). *Causal Alignment: Augmenting Language Models with A/B Tests*. SSRN. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4781850>
- Lipton, Z. C. (2016). *The mythos of model interpretability*. *Communications of the ACM*, 61(10), 36–43. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3233231>
- Liu, S., Jiang, C., Lin, Z., Ding, Y., Duan, R., Xu, Z. (2015). *Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: A domain-aware approach*. *Information Sciences*, 306, 34–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ins.2015.01.034>
- Long, D., & Magerko, B. (2020). *What is AI literacy? Competencies and design considerations*. *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376727>
- Martinez-Sala, A. M., Monserrat-Gauchi, J. (2024). *Use of AI tools in communication companies*. Taylor & Francis.
- Mazzucato, M., Strauss, I., O'Reilly, T., Ryan-Collins, J. (2023). *Regulating big tech: The role of enhanced disclosures*. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 39(1), 123–142.
- Mori, M. (1970). *The uncanny valley*. *Energy*, 7(4), 33–35.
- Neves, J. & Pereira, M. C. (2025). *A Marketing Perspective on the Roles of AI and ML in Shaping Contemporary Programmatic Advertising*. *International Journal of Digital Marketing, Management, and Innovation (IJDMMI)*, 1(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJDMMI.368043>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). *Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria*. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Orlikowski, W. J., & Scott, S. V. (2008). *Sociomateriality: Challenging the separation of technology, work and organization*. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 2(1), 433–474. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520802211644>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). *Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method*

implementation research. Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42, 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>

Pasupuleti, M. K. (2025). *AI-driven marketing innovations: Personalization and ethics in the digital era*. International Journal of Academic and Industrial Research Innovations (IJAIRI), 5(3), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.62311/nesx/rr625>

Patil, D. (2024). *Email marketing with Artificial Intelligence: Enhancing personalization, engagement, and customer retention*. SSRN. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5057438>

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Pierani, M., Scialdone, M. (2021). *Vivere con l'intelligenza artificiale: Società, consumatori e mercato*. Espress Edizioni.

Praveen, S.V. & Gajjar, Pranshav & Ray, Rajeev Kumar & Dutt, Ashutosh, 2024. *Crafting clarity: Leveraging large language models to decode consumer reviews*, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103975>.

Rajawat, A. S., Prakash, V., Chauhan, S. S. (2025). *AI-powered navigation of digital marketing trends*. Taylor & Francis.

Raji, I. D., & Buolamwini, J. (2019). *Actionable auditing: Investigating the impact of public Alaudit frameworks*. In Proceedings of the AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society, 429–435. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3306618.3314244>

Russell, S. J., Norvig, P. (2022). *Artificial Intelligence: A modern approach* (4th ed.). Prentice Hall Series in Artificial Intelligence. Pearson.

Rust, R. T., Ambler, T., Carpenter, G. S., Kumar, V., Srivastava, R. K. (2004). *Measuring marketing productivity: Current knowledge and future directions*. Journal of Marketing, 68(4), 76–89. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.4.76.42721>

Sadikoğlu, E., Gök, M., Mijwil, M. M., Kösesoy, İ. (2023). *The Evolution and Impact of Large Language Model Chatbots in Social Media: A Comprehensive Review of Past, Present, and Future Applications*. Veri Bilimi.

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Sawyer, R. K. (2012). *Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human Innovation* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. 229–444.

Schwandt, T.A. (2000). *Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism*. In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., Eds., *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2 Edition), Sage Publisher, 189–213.

Schweidel, D. A., Reisenbichler, M., Reutterer, T., Zhang, K. (2023). *Leveraging AI for content generation: A customer equity perspective*. *Review of Marketing Research*, 125–145. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1548-643520230000020006>

Suchman, L. (2007). *Human-Machine Reconfigurations: Plans and Situated Actions* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. 1–185.

Voigt, P., Bussche, A. v. d. (2017). *The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): A practical guide*. Springer International Publishing.

Wang, Y., Yu, C. (2017). *Social interaction-based consumer decision-making model in social commerce: The role of word of mouth and observational learning*. *International Journal of Information Management*, 37(3), 179–189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2015.11.005>

Yang, Q., Nikolenko, S., Ongpin, M. (2023). *Against Opacity: Explainable AI and Large Language Models for Effective Digital Advertising*. *Proceedings of the 31st ACM Conference*.

Yu, Yongqi. (2022). *The Role and Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Advertising Industry*. Sanya. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220105.037>

Zhang, X., Chen, X., Liu, Y., Wang, J., Hu, Z., Yan, R. (2024). *SAGraph: A Large-scale Text-Rich Social Graph Dataset for Advertising Campaigns*. *arXiv Social and Information Networks* <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2403.15105>

Sitography

Adobe. (2024). *Adobe Sensei: Generative AI for creativity and marketing*. Retrieved from: <https://www.adobe.com/it/sensei/generative-ai.html>

Adobe. (2025). *Photoshop: Generative Fill*. Retrieved from: <https://www.adobe.com/it/products/photoshop/generative-fill.html>

Ai-admin. (2024, January 11). *Traditional AI vs Modern AI—A Comparative Analysis of Traditional Artificial Intelligence Methods and Modern Machine Learning Techniques. AI for Social Good*. Retrieved from: <https://aiforsocialgood.ca/blog/traditional-ai-vs-modern-ai-a-comparative-analysis-of-traditional-artificial-intelligence-methods-and-modern-machine-learning-techniques>

AIM Research. (2024). *How Nike is using AI to transform product design, customer experience, and operational efficiency*. Retrieved from: <https://aimresearch.co>

AKQA. (2025). *Nike 50th anniversary: Never done evolving: The greatness of Serena Williams*. Retrieved from: <https://www.akqa.com/work/nike/nike-50th-anniversary/never-done-evolving/>

Albert.ai. (2025). *Official website*. Retrieved from: <https://albert.ai/>

Amazon. (2025). *Echo Pop, Smart speaker with Alexa, Lavender Bloom*. Amazon. Retrieved from: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DCCNHV5?ref=aucc_web_red_xaa_evgn_tx_0001

Apple. (2025). *Siri. Apple Italia*. Retrieved from: <https://www.apple.com/it/siri/>

Brandvertising (2023). *The Marlboro Man Phenomenon: How a Cowboy Redefined Cigarette Marketing in the 1950s*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brandvertising.ch/2023/08/marlboro-man/>

British Educational Research Association (BERA). (2018). *Ethical guidelines for educational research (4th ed.)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018>

Campaign Del Mar. (2023). *Four reasons why Spotify Wrapped is marketing genius*. Retrieved from: <https://www.campaigndelmar.com>

Clark, E. (2024). *The ethical dilemma of AI in marketing: A slippery slope*. Forbes. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com>

Coca-Cola. (2023). *Masterpiece. Coca-Cola* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from: <https://youtu.be/VGa1imApfdg>

Coca-Cola Company. (2023). *Coca-Cola invites digital artists to 'Create Real Magic' using new AI platform*. Retrieved from: <https://www.coca-colacompany.com>

Coca-Cola Company. (2025). *Creating "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke"*. Retrieved from: <https://www.coca-colacompany.com>

Consumer Goods Technology. (2025). *L'Oréal is using Gen AI to boost product personalization*. Retrieved from: <https://consumergoods.com>

Consumer Technology Association. (2020). *CES 2020 highlights: The global stage for innovation*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ces.tech/>

Copy.ai. (2024). *Create marketing copy with AI in seconds*. Retrieved from: <https://www.copy.ai/>

Creative Boom. (2018). *Gretel designs the perfect fit for Nike iD by rebranding it as Nike By You*. Retrieved from: <https://www.creativeboom.com/inspiration/gretel-designs-the-perfect-fit-for-nike-id-by-rebranding-it-as-nike-by-you/>

Deloitte. (2023). *Talent and workforce effects in the age of AI*. Deloitte Insights. Retrieved from: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/6546_talent-and-workforce-effects-in-the-age-of-ai/DI_Talent-and-workforce-effects-in-the-age-of-AI.pdf

Denney, S. (2024). *3 marketing strategies to keep up with AI*. Ad Age. Retrieved from: <https://adage.com>

Deep Dream Generator. (2015). *DeepDream Official website*. Retrieved from: <https://deepdreamgenerator.com/>

Digital Defynd. (2024). *Ways Coca-Cola uses Artificial Intelligence in advertising*. Retrieved from: <https://digitaldefynd.com>

Digital Defynd. (2025). *5 ways Starbucks is using AI-Case study*. Retrieved from: <https://digitaldefynd.com>

Figma. (2025). *Figma AI*. Retrieved from: <https://www.figma.com/ai/n>

Fireflies.ai. (2025). *Fireflies: AI meeting assistant*. Retrieved from: <https://fireflies.ai/>

Forbes Communications Council. (2024). *Why generative AI isn't just about creating marketing content*. Forbes. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescommunicationscouncil/2024/03/13/why-generative-ai-isnt-just-about-creating-marketing-content>

Forbes Technology Council. (2023). *AI's influence on the programmatic advertising industry*. Forbes. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2023/12/05/ais-influence-on-the-programmatic-advertising-industry>

Forbes. (2024). *VivaTech: Why L'Oréal is partnering with Meta and leveraging Gen AI*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com>

Forbes. (2024). *Why boards need to clone Starbucks digital leadership*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/noahbarsky/2024/03/18/ai-ready-starbucks-is-the-digital-transformation-gold-standard/>

Freepik. (2025). *AI Image Generator - Free Text to Image*. Retrieved from: <https://www.freepik.com/ai/image-generator>

Future Stores. (2024). *How Starbucks is using AI and more to better serve its customers*. Retrieved from: <https://futurestores.wbresearch.com/blog/starbucks-ai-serve-customers-strategy>

Gallo Amy (2017), *A Refresher on A/B Testing*. *Harvard business review*. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2017/06/a-refresher-on-ab-testing>

Google. (2024). *About Performance Max campaigns*. Google Ads Help. Retrieved from: <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/13837303?hl=en>

Google. (2025). *Gemini Deep Research, your personal research assistant*. Retrieved from: <https://gemini.google/overview/deep-research/>

Google. (2025). *Google Meet*. Retrieved from: <https://meet.google.com/landing>

Google Cloud. (2024). *Generative vs deterministic chatbots*. Retrieved from: <https://cloud.google.com/dialogflow/cx/docs/generative-deterministic>

Google Cloud. (2024). *Google AutoML: Custom machine learning for your business*. Retrieved from: <https://cloud.google.com/automl?hl=it>

Google. (2025). *Performance Max campaigns*. *Google Ads*. Retrieved from: https://ads.google.com/intl/it_it/home/campaigns/performance-max/

Hightouch. (2023). *How does Spotify Wrapped work?* Retrieved from: <https://hightouch.com/blog/how-spotify-wrapped-works>

Hyperight. (2021). *Deep Brew: Transforming Starbucks into a Data-Driven Company*. Retrieved from: <https://hyperight.com/deep-brew-transforming-starbucks-into-a-data-driven-company/>

IBM. (2021). *IBM Watson Advertising*. IBM Newsroom. Retrieved from: <https://newsroom.ibm.com/IBM-watson-advertising?item=30279>

IBM. (2023). *How to clear 5 hurdles to AI adoption in marketing analytics*. IBM AI Adoption Index. Retrieved from: <https://martech.org/how-to-clear-5-hurdles-to-ai-adoption-in-marketing-analytics/>

IBM Newsroom. (2025). *IBM and L'Oréal to build first AI model to advance the creation of sustainable cosmetics*. Retrieved from: <https://newsroom.ibm.com>

Jasper.ai. (2024). *Jasper AI: The generative AI content platform for business*. Retrieved from: <https://www.jasper.ai/>

Llama. (2025). *Official website*. Retrieved from: <https://www.llama.com/>

Loomer, J. (2024). *Which Advantage+ creative enhancements should you turn on?* Jon Loomer Digital. Retrieved from: <https://www.jonloomer.com/advantage-plus-creative-enhancements/>

L'Oréal. (2020, January 6). *Introducing Perso, a 3-in-1 at-home personalized beauty device by L'Oréal [Video]*. YouTube. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfRGxklIF5M>

L'Oréal. (2024). *L'Oréal accelerates Beauty Tech leadership with advanced bioprinted skin technology and GenAI content lab to augment creativity*. Retrieved from: <https://www.loreal-finance.com>

L'Oréal. (2024). *L'Oréal's ModiFace brings AI-powered virtual makeup try-on to Amazon*. Retrieved from: <https://www.loreal.com>

L'Oréal. (2025). *Unveil Perso, the world's first AI-powered device for skincare and cosmetics*. L'Oréal. Retrieved from: <https://www.loreal.com/en/news/research-innovation/unveil-perso-the-worlds-first-ai-powered-device-for-skincare-and-cosmetics/>

L'Oréal Paris. (2024). *Official site*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lorealparisusa.com>

LoyaltyLion. (2022). *How Starbucks scaled success with its Rewards loyalty program*. Retrieved from: <https://loyaltylion.com/blog/scale-success-story-starbucks-rewards-program>

Marketing AI Institute. (2023). *How Domino's uses voice AI in ordering*. Retrieved from: <https://www.marketingaiinstitute.com>

Marketing AI Institute. (2023). *How Spotify uses AI (and what you can learn from it)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.marketingaiinstitute.com>

Marr, B. (2023). *The amazing ways Coca-Cola uses generative AI in art and advertising*. Forbes. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com>

Meta. (2024). *About Meta Advantage+ Shopping Campaigns*. Meta Business Help Center. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/1362234537597370>

Meta. (2025). *About Meta Advantage+ automated ads*. Meta for Business. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/397103717129942>

Microsoft. (2025). *Microsoft Teams*. Retrieved from: <https://www.microsoft.com/it-it/microsoft-teams/log-in?market=it>

Microsoft Azure. (2024). *Azure AI: Artificial Intelligence solutions*. Retrieved from: <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/solutions/ai>

Microsoft Azure. (2024). *What is AI-as-a-Service (AIaaS)?* Retrieved from: <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/resources/cloud-computing-dictionary/what-is-ai-aaS>

Midjourney. (2025). *Midjourney official website*. Retrieved from: <https://www.midjourney.com/>

Nike. (2023). *Nike By You: Customization, AI, and product innovation*. Retrieved from: <https://gretelny.com/nike-by-you>

Nike. (2023). *Nike By You: Personalized footwear through AI innovation*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nike.com>

NoGood. (2025). *Spotify Wrapped marketing strategy: Viral phenomenon*. Retrieved from: <https://nogood.io>

Ojo, K. (2022). *Spotify Wrapped 2022 focuses on the listener and “feeling seen”. It’s Nice That*. Retrieved from: <https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/spotify-wrapped-campaign-identity-2022-graphic-design-301122>

OpenAI. (2025). *Official website*. Retrieved from: <https://openai.com/>

Oxenham, L. (2024). *Top beauty innovations unveiled at VivaTech 2024*. Marie Claire UK. Retrieved from: <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/beauty/Top-beauty-innovations-unveiled-at-VivaTech-2024>

Plaud.ai. (2025). *Plaud Note: Your professional AI note-taking solution*. Retrieved from: <https://www.plaud.ai/products/plaud-note-ai-voice-recorder>

Porter, J. (2024). *Lionsgate partners with Runway to develop AI-powered video generation tools*. The Verge. Retrieved from: <https://www.theverge.com/2024/9/18/24248115/lionsgate-runway-ai-deal>

Power, B. (2017). *How Harley-Davidson used Artificial Intelligence to increase New York sales leads by 2,930%*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org>

PYMNTS. (2024). *Starbucks uses AI-powered personalized rewards to boost frequency and spend*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pymnts.com>

Radford, A., Narasimhan, K., Salimans, T., & Sutskever, I. (2018). *Improving language understanding by generative pre-training*. Retrieved from: https://cdn.openai.com/research-covers/language-unsupervised/language_understanding_paper.pdf

Randstad. (2024). *AI skills gap widens: The divide in AI training and workforce opportunities*. Retrieved from: <https://www.randstad.com>

Runway. (2025). *Runway official website*. Retrieved from: <https://runwayml.com/>

Salesforce. (2024). *Salesforce Einstein AI: Artificial Intelligence for CRM*. Retrieved from: <https://www.salesforce.com/eu/artificial-intelligence/>

Sciencedirect (2017). *Electronic Word of Mouth*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/electronic-word-of-mouth>

Slack. (2025). *Use threads to organize discussions*. Retrieved from: <https://slack.com/help/articles/115000769927-Use-threads-to-organize-discussions>

Springer, J. (2024). *5 Ways Coke is Using AI to Enhance Its Marketing*. Ad Age. Retrieved from: <https://adage.com/article/digital-marketing-ad-tech-news/how-coke-using-ai-enhance-marketing/2563521>

Starbucks. (2021). *Deep Brew: How Starbucks uses AI to enhance customer experience* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from: <https://youtu.be/XxK1PyaF1bw>

Stark, M. J. (2024). *Meta's Advantage+ creative enhancements: A comprehensive guide*. Revel Interactive. Retrieved from: <https://www.revelinteractive.com/blogposts/2024/7/1/met-as-advantage-creative-enhancements-a-comprehensive-guide>

Synthesia. (2025). *Synthesia official website*. Retrieved from: <https://www.synthesia.io/>

Tactiq. (2025). *Tactiq: AI meeting assistant*. Retrieved from: <https://tactiq.io/>

Teads. (2025). *Official website*. Retrieved from: <https://www.teads.com/>

The Trade Desk. (2024). *About us*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thetradedesk.com/>

TurboScribe. (2025). *TurboScribe: Unlimited audio and video transcription*. Retrieved from: <https://turboscribe.ai/it/>

Woopra. (2025). *Customer Journey Map Example*. Woopra Blog. Retrieved from: <https://www.woopra.com/blog/customer-journey-map>

youBEAT. (2020). *Spotify: Come funziona l'algoritmo di Discover Weekly?* Retrieved from: <https://www.youbeat.it/spotify-algoritmo-discoverweekly/>

Zoom Video Communications. (2025). *Zoom: One platform to connect*. Retrieved from: <https://www.zoom.com/it>

Ringraziamenti

Desidero esprimere la mia sincera gratitudine al Professore Paolo Magaudda per avermi offerto l'opportunità di sviluppare questa tesi e per il prezioso supporto e la guida forniti durante l'ultima fase del mio percorso universitario.

Un sentito ringraziamento va ai miei genitori, che con costanza e affetto mi hanno sostenuta in ogni tappa di questo cammino. Sono grata anche ai miei amici, che hanno condiviso con me momenti di vicinanza, leggerezza e forza.

Infine, un sentito ringraziamento a tutte le persone che hanno contribuito, in modo diretto o indiretto, alla realizzazione di questa tesi, mettendo a disposizione tempo, competenze e collaborazione.

In particolare:

l'azienda Liquid Diamond, con Samuel Gentile e il suo team: Chiara, Stefano, Mattia e Martino;

l'azienda Parsifal Agency, con Jacopo Marcato;

e Fabrizio Spucches, Marco Abrate (Rebor), Marco Rubiola, Silvio Salvo, Domenico Tosello, Irene Giacomini, Davide Luchini e Victoria Procop.